



A Siddur For Humanistic Judaism

Edgar Bronfman's 12 Principles of Humanistic Judaism (from *Why Be Jewish?*)

1. Revere godliness: the true, the good, and the beautiful.
2. Ask questions.
3. Commit to repairing the outer and inner world.
4. Perform acts of loving-kindness.
5. Assist society's weakest members.
6. Champion social justice and environmental causes.
7. Welcome the stranger.
8. Engage with Jewish traditions, texts, philosophy, history, and art.
9. Study and strive for excellence in the humanities and other secular fields.
10. Promote family and community.
11. Embrace key Jewish holidays and life-cycle events.
12. Conduct business ethically.

Weekday Morning and Evening Liturgy

Opening Blessings:

(Morning) Remembering my obligations and the generations before me, I wrap myself in the tallit as I envelop myself in meditation and prayer.ⁱ

(Morning) As I awaken, let this be my thought: may my day be filled with acts of lovingkindness. Let me be drawn to learning and discernment, and may my actions be shaped by mitzvot. Let me cultivate a life of goodness by living my life with compassion and love.ⁱⁱ

How lovely are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel! We enter into this house reverently to pay honor to our highest values, making this place a temple for what is sacred.

We give thanks for the intricate network of veins, arteries, and vital organs which make our bodies function. May we always be grateful for our health and strength and call to mind the holiness of the body.

These are the obligations without measure, whose reward, too, is without measure;

To honor father and mother;
To perform acts of love and kindness;
To attend the house of study;
To welcome the stranger;
To visit the sick;
To rejoice with newlyweds;
To console the bereaved;
To make peace when there is strife.

But study encompasses them all because it leads to them all.ⁱⁱⁱ

For our teachers and their students, and the students of the students, we hope for peace and lovingkindness. May they be blessed with all they need. And let us say: *Amen.*^{iv}

For all that is our life, we give our thanks and praise; for all life is a gift to build the common good and make our own days glad.^v

The Shema and Its Blessings

Let us bless the source of life.

As we bless the source of life so we are blessed.

As we bless the source of life so may we be blessed.^{vi}

The vast universe in all its splendor becomes self-reflective in us. We gaze upon the stars and learn the secrets of their birth and their role in the creation of the universe as we know it. Light and dark, gravity and heat, matter and energy create all that we see: the trees and the animals, mountains and seas. We stand in awe before the grandeur of creation.

We bless the universe, the source of life.

The forces of nature have equipped us to know what is good and helpful. Evolution has made us a cooperative species capable of living with one another to build our lives together. With wisdom and the guidance of

conscience we know what it is to live together in peace and unity.

We bless the universe, the source of knowledge.

Hear O Israel: Everything is connected; the Universe is One.

We shall revere the web of life with all our mind, heart, and strength. And be mindful of all the obligations interdependence places upon us. At one with our forebears, we affirm that righteousness, justice, and compassion shall be our lamp.^{vii}

May our devotion to the sanctity of life lead to our redemption from all that plagues our world. May our work for *tikkun olam* bear lasting fruit for us and our descendants.

We bless the universe, the source of faith, hope, and redemption.

The good in us will win, over all the wickedness, over all the wrongs we have done. We will look back over at the pages of written history, and be amazed, and then we will laugh and sing, and the good that is in us, children in their cradles, will have won.^{viii}

The Amidah *All Rise*

(Festival Amidah begins on pg. 33)

Let my mouth declare the beauty and worth of life.

HONORING OUR ANCESTORS

Our Fathers and Mothers prayed, each through their own experience of God, each through their own visions which we have come to share. Abraham with the fervor of justice, pleaded the cause of cities. Sarah, in the pain of waiting, dared to hope for new life. Isaac, meditating alone in the field, lifted his eyes to find love. Rebecca asked for the ability to discern God's call. Jacob climbed the rungs of his night into heaven, seeking destiny. Leah dreamed of love, and Rachel sought harmony. We as they seek the presence of the divine.^{ix}

SALVATION, LIFE, AND DEATH

The forces of the universe have created all that we need for salvation. With love we can sustain the living. With compassion we can sustain life for all. We can help the falling and heal the sick; bring freedom to the captive, and keep faith with those who came before us.

Let us bless the universe, source of life and death.

SANCTITY OF LIFE

Days pass and the years vanish, and we walk sightless among miracles.^x We sanctify life when we revere the web of life. Holiness occurs when power and goodness coexist in perfect harmony.^{xi}

Let us bless the universe, source of life and sanctity.

FOR WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING

Let us always strive to grow in knowledge, understanding, and insight.

Blessed is the mind which grows in wisdom.

FOR REPENTANCE

May we always return to our ideals and draw near to the highest values of our lives. Let us come back to goodness in perfect repentance of our mistakes.

Blessed is the conscience which calls for repentance.

FOR FORGIVENESS

May we seek forgiveness from all those who we hurt and pardon those who hurt us. May we forgive others in the same spirit in which we seek forgiveness.

Blessed is the one whose forgiveness is abundant.

FOR MUTUAL AID

Let us be aware of the problems of others and help them in their need. Let us give to those in need from the abundance of our own possessions and satisfy the demands of human goodness.

Blessed is the one who helps those who are in need.

FOR HEALTH

Let us remember all those who are injured and in poor health and do all that we can to alleviate their suffering.

Blessed is the one who alleviates the suffering of others.

FOR ABUNDANCE

May the products of our labors bring us well-being and well-being to all people. May we protect the bountiful earth that it may continue to sustain us, and let us seek sustenance for all who dwell in the world.

Blessed are those who protect the earth and its abundance.

FOR FREEDOM

Sound the great horn to proclaim freedom, let us be inspired to strive for the liberation of the oppressed, and let the song of liberty be heard throughout the earth.^{xii}

Blessed is the one who redeems the oppressed and fights for the downtrodden.

FOR JUSTICE

May we elect just and upright leaders who govern fairly and with compassion.

Blessed are those who govern with justice and goodness.

FOR GOODNESS

Let us strive for the highest ethical standards that we may embody goodness in our lives for our own sake and the sake of our communities.

Blessed are those who dedicate themselves to goodness.

FOR ISRAEL

We hope for peace in the land of Israel and compassion and justice in the hearts of her inhabitants.

Blessed are those who make peace in Israel.

FOR WORSHIP

That which dominates our imaginations and our thoughts will determine our lives, and our character. Therefore, it behooves us to be careful what we worship, for what we are worshipping, we are becoming.^{xiii}

Blessed is the one who worships goodness, compassion, and justice.

THANKSGIVING

We gratefully acknowledge the blessings of our lives. The breath in our lungs, the food we consume, and the ones we love and who love us in return. For all that is our life, we give our thanks and praise.

PEACE

Peace, happiness, and blessing; grace and love and mercy: may these descend on us, on all Israel, and all the world. Let us love kindness and justice and mercy, and seek blessing, life, and peace.^{xiv}

Blessed is the one who creates peace.

SILENT MEDITATION

I will keep my tongue from evil and my lips from deceit.
I will be silent in the face of derision, humble in the
presence of all. I will open my heart to the truth and
hurry to perform an act of goodness and mercy.^{xv}

May the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my
heart lead to actions which further *tikkun olam*.

Optional Torah Service on page 18

Continue with the Aleinu and Kaddish on page 19

Shabbat Liturgy (For Erev Shabbat or Shacharit)

Candle Lighting for Shabbat Eve

As these Shabbat candles give light to all who behold them, so may we, by our lives, give light to all who behold us.

As their brightness reminds us of the generations of Israel who have kindled light, so may we, in our own day, be among those who kindle light.^{xvi}

Baruch ha-or ba-olam. Baruch ha-or ba-adam. Baruch ha-or ba-Shabbat.

Blessed is the light in the world. Blessed is the light in humanity. Blessed is the light of Shabbat.^{xvii}

*Let there be joy!
Let there be peace!
Let there be light!
Let there be Shabbat!*^{xviii}

Opening Blessings:

(Shabbat Morning) Remembering my obligations and the generations before me, I wrap myself in the tallit as I envelop myself in meditation and prayer.

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(Song)

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We shall revere the web of life with all our mind, heart, and strength. And be mindful of all the obligations interdependence places upon us. At one with our forebears, we affirm that righteousness, justice, and compassion shall be our lamp.

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(Song)

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SANCTITY OF LIFE

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Let us bless the universe, source of life and sanctity.

FOR SHABBAT

On the seventh day our people rest from their labors and reflect on the values and ideals most precious to them. To love mercy, to act justly, and to walk the path of life humbly with others. Let our rest on this day remind us of what is holy and precious in life.

Blessed is life, and blessed are those who revere life. Let us hallow the Sabbath, and let us keep it.

FOR WORSHIP

That which dominates our imaginations and our thoughts will determine our lives, and our character. Therefore, it behooves us to be careful what we worship, for what we are worshipping, we are becoming.

Blessed is the one who worships goodness, compassion, and justice.

[FOR ROSH CHODESH TURN TO PAGE 26]

THANKSGIVING

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PEACE

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SILENT MEDITATION

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I will be silent in the face of derision, humble in the
presence of all. I will open my heart to the truth and
hurry to perform acts of goodness and mercy.

May the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my
heart lead to actions which further *tikkun olam*.

(Song)

*(Insert a brief reading from the weekly Torah or
Haftarah portion, or some other Jewish literature.
Optional "Torah Service" begins on next page. Continue
with a Shabbat message or discussion based on the
reading.)*

Continue with the Aleinu and Kaddish on page 19

Optional Torah Service

THE ARK IS OPENED AND TORAH TAKEN OUT

Let us bless those who came before us and passed on to us the records of their wisdom.

THE SHEMA

***Hear O Israel: Everything is connected; the
Universe is One.***

Insert appropriate song as the procession with the Torah or other book is done through the congregation.

BLESSING BEFORE READING

Let us bless the source of life!

Blessed is the source of life from which all goodness flows!

We give thanks for our ancestors who have blessed us with teachings of wisdom. Blessed are our ancestors, the creators of Torah.

BLESSING AFTER READING

Blessed are the seekers of wisdom and the teachers of the next generation.

After the reading, invite the congregation to share personal joys and sorrows.

The Aleinu

Let us praise the majesty of the universe, old beyond imagining, source of all things, which has created diversity and interdependent unity.

We stand in awe before the majestic, terrifying power of the creative and destructive forces of the universe, and recognize our smallness in relation to eternity and our dependence on one another.

Recognizing our limits in this world which sustains and destroys life, we affirm our hope for a society built on justice, equity, and compassion. May the idols of greed and selfishness fall to the overwhelming power of cooperation and righteousness.

May all who live acknowledge the rule of justice and swear loyalty to a life of goodness.

And may the establishment of the just and compassionate society come soon and in our day. On that day, goodness shall reign over all the earth; and humanity shall be one.

Humanist Kaddish

We remember our loved ones whom death has recently taken from us and those who died at this time in previous years. The martyrs of our people are always in our thoughts. May their memories be a blessing to all.

NITGADAL V'NITKADASH B'RUAKH HAADAM

Let us enhance and exalt ourselves in the spirit of humanity.

Let us acclaim the preciousness of life.

Let us show gratitude for life by approaching it with reverence.

Let us embrace the whole world, even as we wrestle with its parts.

Let us fulfill, each of us in our own way, our share in serving the world and seeking truth.

May our commitment to life help us strengthen healing of spirit and peace of mind.

May healing and peace permeate and comfort all of Israel and all those who dwell on earth.

NITGADAL V'NITKADASH B'RUAKH HAADAM

Let us enhance and exalt ourselves in the spirit of humanity.

And let us say: Ken y'hee. May it be so.

Jon Dickman and Congregation Kol Shalom inspired by Rabbi
Rami Shapiro

May all who mourn find peace and live in peace.

Kiddush and Ha-Motzi

With wine, our symbol of joy, we celebrate this Shabbat, a day of rest for the Jewish people.

Let us bless the earth, the source of life, which brings forth the fruit of the vine for our enjoyment.

With challah, the symbol of sustenance and the interdependence of all life, we give thanks for this Shabbat meal.

Let us bless the earth, the source of life, which brings forth the food that sustains us.



Shabbat Dinner

CANDLES

Baruch ha-or ba-olam; baruch ha-or ba-adam; baruch ha-or ba-Shabbat.

Blessed is the light in the world. Blessed is the light in humanity. Blessed is the light of Shabbat.

(Song)

BLESSING THE CHILDREN

[Child's Name] Be who you are, and may you be blessed in all that you are.^{xix}

BLESSING THE SPOUSE

You have captured my heart, my own, my husband/wife. You have captured my heart with one glance of your eyes.

How sweet is your love, my own, my husband/wife. How much more delightful your love than wine.^{xx}

WINE

N'vareykh et eyn hachayim matzmichat p'ri hagafen

Let us bless the source of life that ripens fruit on the vine.^{xxi}

HANDWASHING BEFORE THE MEAL

Washing the hands, we call to mind the holiness of the body.^{xxii}

BREAD

B'rukhim hamotzi'im lechem min haaretz.

Blessed are those who bring forth bread from the earth^{xxiii}

BLESSING AFTER THE MEAL

Leader: As it is written: When you have eaten and are satisfied, give thanks for this good earth.

Response: Let us acknowledge the source of life, source of all nourishment.

May we protect the bountiful earth that it may continue to sustain us, and let us seek sustenance for all who dwell in the world.^{xxiv}

Havdalah

Kindle the candle

With wine, candles, and spices we mark the end of shabbat and the beginning of the new week. The wine reminds us of the joy of shabbat; the candle reminds us that life depends on the work of the coming week; and the spices remind us to look forward to next shabbat.

The cup of wine is raised.

Blessed are the earth, the sun, and the rain which create the fruit of the vine.^{xxv}

The wine is circulated.

We are thankful for the earth which produces all spices.

The spice box is circulated.

We are grateful for the light and warmth of fire which has blessed humanity.

As we mark the separation of shabbat from the rest of the week, we commit to separating ourselves from immorality, hatred, and injustice. May we be inspired to live lives of righteousness and compassion in the coming week. We give thanks for our minds and consciences which can separate what is right from what is wrong.

The candle is extinguished.

(Song: optional)

Miscellaneous Blessings

WINE

N'vareykh et eyn hachayim matzmichat p'ri hagafen

Let us bless the source of life that ripens fruit on the vine.

Or

B'rukhim ha-adama, hashemesh, v'hageshem asher yotzrim p'ri hagafen.

We rejoice in the earth, the sun, and the rain, which produces the fruit of the vine.^{xxvi}

Or

B'ruchah simchah ba-olam, m'sumenet bi-fri hagafen.

Blessed is the joy in the world, symbolized by the fruit of the vine.^{xxvii}

BREAD

N'vareykh et eyn hachayim hamotzi'ah lechem min ha-aretz.

Let us bless the source of life that brings forth bread from the earth.^{xxviii}

Or

B'rukhim hamotzi'im lechem min haaretz.

Blessed are those who bring forth bread from the earth.

OTHER FOODS

B'ruchah adamah b'firyah uv'tuvah. B'rucha adamah
b'kol od tifartah.

The earth is blessed in its fruitfulness and goodness. The
earth is blessed in all of its glory.^{xxix}

Or

Let us bless the source of life that brings forth food
from the earth.

HAND WASHING

Washing the hands, we call to mind the holiness of the
body.

BIRKAT HAMAZON

Leader: As it is written: When you have eaten and are
satisfied, give thanks for this good earth.

Response: Let us acknowledge the source of life, source
of all nourishment.

May we protect the bountiful earth that it may continue
to sustain us, and let us seek sustenance for all who
dwell in the world.

FOR A MEZUZAH

We put up this mezuzah as a symbol of the sanctity of
the home and as a reminder of our moral obligations to
others.

Holidays

Candle Lighting

Baruch ha-or ba-olam.

Baruch ha-or ba-adam.

Baruch ha-or ba-Yom Tov

-Hanukkah

-Rosh Hashanah

-Yom Kippur^{xxx}

The following meditations can be inserted into the service on the holiday or the Shabbat closest to it.

Rosh Chodesh

This ___ [day of the week] ___ will be Rosh Chodesh ___ [name of the new month] ___, a festival for us and all Israel.

May the month of _____ be a month of blessing.^{xxxi}

Sukkot

Earth and sky, rain and sun, flower and fruit speak to us of the creative power of the universe. Like generations before us, we give thanks for the earth's bounty.

Into this sanctuary we have brought the symbols of Sukkot: the lulav, the palm that resembles the human spine, to remind us that we can stand straight with courage and integrity.

May we serve humanity by standing up for justice, truth, and peace.

The myrtle, whose leaves are shaped like eyes that can behold the grandeur and beauty of the universe.

May we serve humanity by looking with kindness at every living being.

The willow of the brook, whose leaves are shaped like human lips.

May these lips sing with joy and bless the lives of all.

The etrog, shaped like a human heart. May we remember that love is the doorway through which we pass from selfishness to service, and from loneliness to kinship with all the world.

With palm and myrtle, willow and etrog, with spine and eyes, with lips and heart, we bless the source of life and so we are blessed.^{xxxii}

Simchat Torah

Education is life: From the moment we are born we begin to learn, and until the day we die we continue to learn.^{xxxiii} Simchat Torah is a holiday for us to rejoice in our learning and celebrate our continuing commitment to education. While we do not believe the Torah to be the word of God, it remains the symbol of our people's commitment to lifelong education. Just as we have celebrated the bounty of the earth with Sukkot, we now

celebrate the bounty of the human mind with Simchat Torah.

Hanukkah

The Festival of Hanukkah commemorates the victory of the Maccabees over the Greeks. Once the land of Israel was free from Greek tyranny, the Jews rededicated the Temple and relit the great Menorah, which legend says remained miraculously lit for eight days on oil sufficient for only one day. The Hanukkah menorah is a symbol of our freedom from tyranny and the miracle of our survival throughout millennia.

Tu Bi-Shevat

Tu Bi-Shevat is the New Year of the Trees. This holiday has had many meanings over the millennia. Most recently, as awareness of the environment has become a more pressing concern for many people, Tu Bi'Shevat has become a "Jewish Arbor Day," a day on which we recognize our ethical obligations to care for the planet and its inhabitants.^{xxxiv} As we eat fruit and drink wine, let us remember our dependence on the earth and recommit ourselves to its repair and well-being.

The earth is blessed in its fruitfulness and goodness. The earth is blessed in all of its glory.

Purim

The book of Esther is the story of Purim. Esther was a Jewish hero. She was a brave woman who saved her people from death and destruction. When she discovered that Haman was plotting to kill all the Jews, she persuaded her husband, King Ahashverosh, to protect the Jews and punish Haman for his treachery.^{xxxv} On this holiday of mirth, we celebrate her bravery and leadership, and the courage of all the Jews who have faced and overcome adversity through the millennia.

Yom HaShoah

Candlelighting

We remember six million innocent victims who were brutally murdered by a heartless enemy. We remember six million men and women who died because they were Jewish. The assault was unprovoked. The fury was without reason. The crime was immeasurable. It is too late for justice. The past is regrettably unchangeable. We cannot bring the victims back to life. We can only remember and never forget.^{xxxvi}

Memorial Song

Mourners Kaddish

NITGADAL V'NITKADASH B'RUAKH HAADAM

Let us enhance and exalt ourselves in the spirit of humanity.

Let us acclaim the preciousness of life.

Let us show gratitude for life by approaching it with reverence.

Let us embrace the whole world, even as we wrestle with its parts.

Let us fulfill, each of us in our own way, our share in serving the world and seeking truth.

May our commitment to life help us strengthen healing of spirit and peace of mind.

May healing and peace permeate and comfort all of Israel and all those who dwell on earth.

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Let us enhance and exalt ourselves in the spirit of humanity.

And let us say: Ken y'hee. May it be so.^{xxxvii}

Yom Haatzma'ut

“Eretz Yisrael was the birthplace of the Jewish people...After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people remained faithful to it throughout their dispersion, and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration of their political freedom.” –Preamble to the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel, 5th of Iyar 5708^{xxxviii}

So long as within the inmost heart a Jewish spirit sings, so long as the eye looks eastward, gazing toward Zion, our hope is not lost—the hope of two thousand years: to be a free people in our land, the land of Zion and Jerusalem.

Song: HaTikvah

Shavuot

Poets and sages wandered through the centuries of our history and wove the strands of our heritage with the flair of their talents. In the special joy of Shavuot we remember their gifts and reach out with gratitude to use their creation. People of the past who plant the seeds of wisdom in the minds of others bequeath to the present the harvest of a better world. Others have sowed and we have reaped; we shall sow and others will reap.^{xxxix}

Festival Amidah

Let my mouth declare the beauty and worth of life.

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FOR YOM TOV

May this Feast of _____ renew in us love and compassion, goodness, life, and peace. May this be a feast of gladness and a season of joy.

Blessed is life, and blessed are those who revere life. Let us hallow the festival, and let us keep it.

FOR WORSHIP

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Songs^{xl}

Lo Yisa Goy

Lo yisa goy el goy cherev,
V'lo yilm'du od milchamah

Nation shall not take up sword against nation; they shall
never again study war.

Siman Tov Umazal Tov

Siman tov umazal tov.
Umazal tov v'siman tov.
Y'hei lanu.
Y'hei lanu, y'hei lanu, ul'chol Yisrael.

It is a good and lucky sign for us and all Israel!

Turn, Turn, Turn

To everything turn, turn, turn
There is a season turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under heaven

A time to be born, a time to die
A time to plant, a time to reap
A time to kill, a time to heal
A time to laugh, a time to weep

A time to build up, a time to break down
A time to dance, a time to mourn
A time to cast away stones

A time to gather stones together

A time of love, a time of hate
A time of war, a time of peace
A time you may embrace
A time to refrain from embracing

A time to gain, a time to lose
A time to rend, a time to sew
A time of love, a time of hate
A time for peace, I swear it's not too late!

Let My People Go

When Israel was in Egypt land,
Let my people go!
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go!

Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt land
Tell old Pharaoh, to let my people go!

Thus saith the Lord, bold Moses said,
Let my people go!
If not I'll smite your firstborn dead!
Let my people go!

No more shall they in bondage toil,
Let my people go!
Let them come out with Egypt's spoil,
Let my people go!

Miryam Han'viah

Miryam han'viah oz v'zimrah b'yadah
Miryam tirkod itanu
L'hagdil zimrat olam.
Miryam tirkod itanu
L'takein et haolam.
Bimheira b'yameinu hi t'vi-einu
El mei hay'shuah.

Miriam the prophet, strength and song are in her hand.
Miriam will dance with us to swell earth's song.
Miriam will dance with us to mend the world.
Soon, in our day, she will bring us to the waters of
redemption.

Gesher Tzar M'od

Kol haolam kulo gesher tzar m'od
V'ha-ikar lo l'facheid klal.

The entire world is but a narrow bridge; the most
important thing is not to be afraid.

Heivenu Shalom Aleichem

Heivenu shalom aleichem
Aleichem heivenu shalom.

Let us bring you peace.

Hinei Mah Tov

Hinei mah tov umah na-im
Shevet achim gam yachad

How good and how pleasant it is that brothers and
sisters dwell together.

Lo Alecha

Lo alecha ham'lachah ligmor
V'lo atah ben chorin l'hitbateil mimenah.

It is not your duty to complete the work.
Neither are you free to desist from it.

By the Waters of Babylon

By the waters of Babylon
We lay down and wept, and wept for thee Zion
We remember thee, remember thee, remember thee
Zion.

Mah Yafeh Hayom

Mah yafeh hayom, Shabbat shalom.

How lovely today is, Shabbat shalom!

Dodi Li

Dodi li vaani lo haro-eh bashoshanim.
Mi zot olah min hamidbar,
M'kuteret mor ul'vonah?
Libavtini, achoti challah.
Uri tzafon uvo-i teiman.

My beloved is mine, and I am my beloved's, a shepherd
among the lilies.
Who is this that comes up from the desert, fragrant
with myrrh and frankincense?
You have captured my heart, my sister, my bride.
Awake O north wind. Come O south wind!

Hatikvah

Kol od balevav p'nimah
Nefesh Y'hudi homiyah
Ul'faatei mizrach kadimah
Ayin l'Tzion tzofiyah.
Od lo avdah tikvateinu
Hatikvah bat sh'not alpayim
Lih'yot am chofshi b'artzeinu
Eretz Tzion viY'rushalayim

So long as within the inmost heart a Jewish spirit sings,
so long as the eye looks eastward, gazing toward Zion,
our hope is not lost—the hope of two thousand years:
to be a free people in our land, the land of Zion and
Jerusalem.

Commentary

“Why fixed prayers? To learn what we should value, what we should pray for. To be at one with our people, the household of Israel. To ensure that the ideals painfully learned and purified, and for which many have lived and died, shall not perish from the community, and shall have a saving influence upon the individual.”

Gates of Prayer, pg. 8

This siddur is an amalgamation of my own writing, texts from other siddurim (*Mishkan T'filah, Gates of Prayer, The Book of Blessings* by Marcia Falk, *Celebration* by R. Sherwin Wine), and other Humanistic Jewish sources (Rabbis Jeffrey Falick and Miriam Jerris and the denomination website shj.org). I have cited my sources as they appear, but did not cite the same text more than once when it was repeated, e.g. most citations for the Amidah and Shema can be found in the “Weekday Service.” Some texts have been copied in their entirety, others were edited to reflect the philosophy for which this siddur was created.

I have always been troubled by the idea of a personal God, yet I cannot shake a sense that there is some sacred aspect to existence. This siddur is the result of my dissatisfaction with both Reform and Humanist siddurim and was inspired by Marcia Falk’s siddur *The Book of Blessings*, which avoids addressing God as a person. Rather the book engages in a process of “passionate reflection” using the outline and themes of the traditional siddur. This is essentially what I have

attempted to do while reflecting my own humanistic “theology.”

It is my belief that an effective spirituality or religion must have some metaphysical truth on which to build spiritual and ritual practices. My troubles with a personal God are largely due to my pantheistic tendencies. Rather than conceptualizing God as a person who exists outside the universe, I am much more inclined towards the idea that the universe has a sacred quality that suffuses it. I experience this quality in a few ways: moral goodness, love, connection and interdependence, awe, music, and gratitude. The best summation of my theology comes from the seventh principle of Unitarian Universalism: “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.” Reverence for the interdependent web of existence, i.e. the universe/the planet/life, has been the primary objective of this siddur.

In order to achieve this I had to answer the question, “what does it mean to respect the interdependent web of existence?” The short answer is that to respect the web of life means to honor our connection to and dependence on all other things. To recognize the unity that underlies existence and to act in ways which support harmony and peace. Regarding other people, this means acting morally and supporting the fight for social justice so that we all can live in peace with equity for everyone. Recognizing that our lives are fundamentally dependent on the well-being of other animals and the planet itself, this means vegetarianism or veganism, animal rights and welfare, and a

commitment to environmental justice. The protection of resources, the reduction of waste and pollution, and working towards cleaning our planet and restoring the balance of nature are central to this mission of reverence for life. Recognizing our unity with all life on this planet must lead to a commitment to ethical living, which must include a commitment to environmental sustainability and animal welfare.

My attempt at a reinterpreted Shema tries to capture this central theological tenet in a few memorable lines. Going off the traditional Shema which proclaims the unity of God and the basic requirements of Judaism, I used my Humanist Shema to stress the unity of all existence and proclaim the basic duties, as I understand them, of Humanistic Judaism. This statement of faith and obligation is the basis for the rest of the siddur.

The structure of this siddur is far more traditional than any other Humanist siddur I have come across so far. I have tried to parallel the structure of the traditional siddur with layout and theme, while providing meditations which reflect my own beliefs. I have provided a weekday service, although I recognize that most Humanistic Jews do not feel a need to “pray” or meditate every day. I have also provided miscellaneous blessings for food, hand washing, and mezuzah.

I added these parts to the siddur because of my belief in the function of religion. In short, religion is meant to be a process of spiritual and moral education, growth, and discipline. Through reciting prayers or reflections which express our highest ideals and deepest beliefs, we can

more consciously commit ourselves to living according to those ideals and beliefs. Respect for the web of life means not only a commitment to ethics, but also a commitment to sanctifying our own personal, daily lives. The means by which I accomplish this is meditation on the ideals I hold dear.

The “Optional Torah Service” is inserted for the sake of providing a space for some form of textual study in the context of the service. While Humanistic Jews do not believe the Torah to be the word of God, nor do they care to read it in the synagogue in the traditional manner, it is still the sourcebook of Judaism. My version can use a traditional Torah, a translation, or another book altogether. It can be as formal or informal as the congregation would like. Nor do I think it would be necessary to read the entire parsha, but rather a relevant verse or passage would suffice for the purposes of this siddur. My intention was to maintain a connection to Jewish sources and open up a space for discussion of those sources within the weekly gathering of the congregation. Rather than the Misha Berakh, the Torah Service has time for the congregation to share their joys and sorrows about their personal lives.

It is my hope that this siddur will fulfill a need for others who want a more traditional structure to their practice of Humanistic Judaism without compromising their beliefs by saying words they do not necessarily believe.

Source Citation (in order of appearance)

- ⁱ Inspired by Marcia Falk's blessing for tallit in *The Book of Blessings*
- ⁱⁱ Adapted from *Mishkan T'filah*
- ⁱⁱⁱ Adapted from *Gates of Prayer*
- ^{iv} Adapted from *Mishkan T'filah*
- ^v From *Singing the Living Tradition*
- ^{vi} Bar'chu from Marcia Falk's *The Book of Blessings*
- ^{vii} At one with [...] be our lamp; written by Rabbi Jeffrey Falick
- ^{viii} From *Mishkan T'filah*
- ^{ix} Ibid.
- ^x Ibid.
- ^{xi} Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan
- ^{xii} From *Gates of Prayer*
- ^{xiii} Ralph Waldo Emerson
- ^{xiv} Adapted from *Gates of Prayer*
- ^{xv} Ibid.
- ^{xvi} From *Gates of Prayer*
- ^{xvii} Rabbi Sherwin Wine
- ^{xviii} From *Gates of Prayer*
- ^{xix} Marcia Falk's *The Book of Blessings*
- ^{xx} From the Song of Songs, JPS translation
- ^{xxi} Marcia Falk's *The Book of Blessings*
- ^{xxii} Ibid.
- ^{xxiii} Rabbi Sherwin Wine
- ^{xxiv} Marcia Falk's *The Book of Blessings*
- ^{xxv} Rabbi Miriam Jerris
- ^{xxvi} Ibid.
- ^{xxvii} Rabbi Jeffrey Falick, *A Humanistic Seder*
- ^{xxviii} Marcia Falk's *The Book of Blessings*
- ^{xxix} Rabbi Jeffrey Falick, *A Humanistic Seder*
- ^{xxx} Rabbi Sherwin Wine
- ^{xxxi} Marcia Falk's *The Book of Blessings*
- ^{xxxii} Adapted from *Gates of Prayer*
- ^{xxxiii} Rabbi Sherwin Wine, *Celebration*

^{xxxiv} <http://www.shj.org/humanistic-jewish-life/about-the-holidays/tu-bishevat/>

^{xxxv} Rabbi Sherwin Wine, with slight modification, *Celebration*

^{xxxvi} Rabbi Sherwin Wine, *Celebration*

^{xxxvii} Jon Dickman and Congregation Kol Shalom inspired by
Rabbi Rami Shapiro

^{xxxviii} From *Mishkan T'filah*

^{xxxix} Rabbi Sherwin Wine, *Celebration*

^{xl} All songs from *Mishkan T'filah*