



Selichot

Selichot: Spiritual Preparation for the High Holy Days

Saturday evening, August 28th, 7:30 p.m.
by Jane Sloven

The Kabbalists teach that everything we do stirs up a corresponding energy in other realms of reality. When we remain cognizant of this mystical system, we are careful about what we do, say, or even think, for we know that everything is interdependent; we know that a seemingly insignificant gesture could have weighty consequences. (God is a Verb by Rabbi David A. Cooper, p.132)

Selichot is the worship service that helps us to prepare to enter the High Holy Days mindfully. It is also the word for prayers for forgiveness. We recite these prayers during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur as we seek forgiveness for ourselves and our community, hoping to be inscribed in the Book of Life for another year.

These prayers are part of Teshuva, our process of returning to ourselves—re-centering, reorganizing, recommitting—or simply reaching out to collect the parts of ourselves that have floated off during the year. At this time in the cycle of our holidays, we focus on returning to right relationship with ourselves and doing the work of returning to right relationship with others and with The Holy One of Blessing.

This process formally begins in the month of Elul (which starts on August 9th this year) and ends when the gates close at the completion of Yom Kippur. Our tradition instructs us to engage in a thoughtful review of our lives at this time of the year, to evaluate how we have lived in the past year, to examine how we have missed the mark, and to resolve to do better so that we can enter the new year committed to a life that more closely comports with our values.

One's actions, particularly deeds of lovingkindness, profoundly impact upon the universe. Minor actions can have significant consequences...everything happening to us is connected with a complex weave of variables. Moreover, angelic forces are associated with our thoughts, words and deeds. (God is a Verb; Rabbi David A. Cooper, p.28)

Our tradition offers us this annual opportunity to engage in self-reflection, to soften around the hurts we have suffered, to release resentments, grudges, and self-righteousness. Through this preparation we work towards becoming ready to do two things:

1. To offer heartfelt apologies to those we have hurt, and
2. When it is appropriate—and when we are emotionally willing and able to do so—to accept the apologies we are offered.

Compassion and lovingkindness for ourselves and others are crucial qualities in this endeavor, and they can become more accessible to us through the rituals of Elul, Rosh Hashana, and Yom Kippur.

The Jewish mystical point of view is that creation is based upon compassion and loving-kindness. (God is a Verb; Rabbi David A. Cooper, p. 244)

Our Selichot service, co-led by Jane Sloven, Sharon Newman, Daniel Oppenheim, and Joseph Py, will be pre-recorded and available to watch from home. It is filled with beautiful poetry and prayers written by Rabbi Rachel Barenblat, Rabbi Jill Zimmerman, and Rabbi Yael Levy, all of whom have generously shared their work.

Our Selichot worship offers the opportunity to engage in the process of Teshuva with our community.

This is what you can anticipate experiencing during our Selichot service:

- Carefully selected and meaningful prayers, psalms, melodies, and poems.
- Readings and talks that illuminate the origins of the prayers we recite during these holidays.
- Clarification of the connections between our history and our worship on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.
- Insight into a template set by our mystical tradition's creation story—one of error and shattering, followed by rectification and repair.
- The opportunity to truly hear the voice of the shofar.
- Guided meditations carefully crafted to help us review the ways we may have missed the mark in the past year, and helping us to prepare to ask for forgiveness and offer it.

...Deep spiritual work can open the gates of heaven. (God is a Verb; Rabbi David A. Cooper, p.28)

Our Selichot service offers spiritual preparation for the High Holy Days. Please join us by registering for the link to the pre-recorded service below. Service links will be emailed to registrants on Saturday, August 28th by 5:00 p.m.

[Register HERE](#)

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