



Excerpt from September Bulletin
New Prayer Books for the High Holy Days
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Reform Judaism has always led the Jewish world in liturgical and worship innovation. Our Movement has created, and then recreated, the most inspiring, accessible, meaningful prayers and music, often later adopted by our more traditional coreligionists, because we Reform Jews understand that prayer must both bind us to our ancient tradition and also meet the sensibilities of the modern Jew, so our prayers can ascend, authentic and true, to the highest heights.

I am pleased to announce that our Reform Movement's Central Conference of American Rabbis has produced new prayer books for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The books are magnificent. They are both traditional and modern, containing the beautiful, rich ancient prayers that mark this most sacred season, and adding new interpretive readings and explanations that will make those prayers come alive for us. Transliteration for every Hebrew prayer rests alongside the Hebrew itself, enabling greater participation regardless of your background.

The Holy Day services are supposed to be an emotional and psychic challenge. We are required to ask searing, probing questions of ourselves, honestly measuring how we've fallen short in our conduct, in our relationships, in our lives. The prayers we recite and sing must speak to this most difficult and often painful work of introspection, work our tradition calls *cheshbon hanefesh*, an accounting of the soul. Most appropriately, our new prayer books are called *Mishkan HaNefesh*, The Sanctuary of the Soul. These beautiful books, the next iteration in our Reform Movement's brilliant, spiritual liturgical evolution, will enable a deeper connection to our tradition's most meaningful prayers, and transform our souls into sanctuaries for the divine presence.

Services this Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur will be remarkable spiritual and soulful experiences indeed. When you open *Mishkan HaNefesh*, you will discover new English readings to spark spiritual renewal. The music of our cantors and choir, the beautiful, memorable Yom Kippur afternoon service led by our teens, the sound of the shofar, the difficult yet inspiring evocation of memory at Yizkor, and more, will elevate and inspire us all. I look forward to sharing these sacred days with you and your family. May the new year grant you and those you love much blessing.