

# Additional Discussion Questions

## On *Un'taneh Tokef*

1. Margaret Moers Wenig, "The Poetry and the Power of Paradox," *CCAR Journal*, Spring 2009.  
In the case of *Un'taneh Tokef*, is there justification for removing or editing the text of the liturgy? Why or why not, and if yes, what is that justification? How can the complex poetic structure and use of imagery in this *piyut* bring our prayers to a new level? What are your thoughts on the inclusion of an unabridged version of the *piyut* in the Reform *machzor*?
2. Daniel Plotkin, "Giving Meaning to Our Days: Reimagining *Un'taneh Tokef*—A Survey of Selected Sermons," *CCAR Journal*, Spring 2009.  
With which of these sermons do you identify the most? Which present the greatest challenge to your beliefs? Explain your responses. How do current events influence our interpretations of the liturgy?

## On *Kol Nidrei*

Read the transcript of the end-of-call discussion between Rabbis Prinz, Zimmerman, Zecher, and Spicehandler, which includes their personal experiences and memories of *Kol Nidrei*. How do they use the liturgy of *Kol Nidrei* to help bring comfort during times of difficult economic realities? What are their views on the importance of consulting both other clergy and laypeople when making liturgical decisions? What else do you find interesting about their comments, and why?

## On Other Parts of Yamim Noraim Liturgy

1. Bernard M. Zlotowitz, "The Torah and Haftarah Readings for the High Holy Days," *CCAR Journal*, Fall 1975.  
What connections can you make between the Torah and haftarah readings and the themes of the Yamim Noraim? What implications does the theory that these readings serve as a polemic against Christianity have for our communities?

2. Leo Trepp, *Yamim Nora'im: The Traditional Liturgy and Gates of Repentance*," *CCAR Journal*, Summer 1991.  
What themes of the liturgy do the textual changes and creative ideas in this article highlight? How might you incorporate some of these ideas into your services?
3. Herbert Bronstein, "Yom Kippur Worship: A Missing Center?" *CCAR Journal*, Summer 2004.  
How is the Yom Kippur *Avodah* service a relevant piece of liturgy for our time? In what other areas of worship or Jewish practice might you utilize "creative retrieval" or "resourcement"?

### **On the Reform Jewish Approach to High Holy Day Liturgy**

1. Eric L. Friedland, "Gate of Repentance: A Review-Essay," *CCAR Journal*, Winter 1977.  
How does this review of *Gate of Repentance*, the *machzor* of the London-based Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues, contribute to our understanding of the development of our High Holy Day liturgy?
2. Eric L. Friedland, "Historical Notes on the American Reform High Holy Day Liturgy" *Journal of Reform Judaism*, Summer 1988.  
How does the author's commentary on *Gates of Repentance* shed light on the context and intention of the decisions made by the editors of the *machzor*? What do you see as the "next step" for the liturgical pieces that he discussed in his article over twenty years ago?

### **On God Imagery, Language, and Theology**

1. Joel Mosbacher, "Searching for God in the 7th Grade," *CCAR Journal*, Spring 2009.  
In your experience, what best facilitates the spiritual expression of your congregation? In what areas might you want to encourage theological development? How can the Yamim Noraim serve as an opportunity for spiritual exploration, expansion, and education?
2. Nancy Flam, "The Angels Proclaim It, But Can We? 'The Whole Earth is Full of God's Glory,'" *CCAR Journal*, Spring 2009.  
According to Rabbi Flam's expanded definition of *din*, what manifestations of *din* have you witnessed in the past year, and how can you respond to them with *rachamim*? What opportunities can you provide for the practice of mindfulness during services or through other programs?

3. Yoel H. Kahn, "Wrestling with God's Image in the High Holy Day Liturgy," *CCAR Journal*, Spring 2009.  
How do you respond when you feel torn between the historical value of the liturgy and a personal objection to its message? Can a piece of liturgy be spiritually meaningful even if its message is problematic? Why or why not? What is your response to the idea presented in this essay of searching for countertexts, rather than "fixing" the liturgy itself?

### **Poetry for the High Holy Days**

1. Martin W. Levy, "Dreams and Promises for the New Year," *CCAR Journal*, Summer/Fall 1995.  
Which images in this poem express the condition in which we enter the month of Elul? Who are the "demons" in the beginning of the poem? What is the role of the shofar in this poem?
2. Ephraim M. Rosenzweig, "Rosh Hashanah Morning," *CCAR Journal*, Summer 1973.  
What is the role of faith in the story of the *Akeidah*? How does this compare to the role that you see faith playing in your life? In the lives of those in your congregation?
3. Martin W. Levy, "The Penitent's Hour," *Journal of Reform Judaism*, Summer 1989.  
What mood does this poem express regarding the moment of *Kol Nidrei*? Which aspects of the *Kol Nidrei* experience that are highlighted in the imagery of this poem resonate most strongly with you, and why? What thoughts and emotions do you experience when standing before the open ark on *Kol Nidrei*, and what effect do these have on you?