

A Ritual for Retirement

As co-created by the 2018/5778 Retirement Ritual Lab



B'nai
JESHURUN
בני ישראל

The Center for Prayer and Spirituality at B'nai Jeshurun is a hub of expansive spiritual practice, devotional music, innovative ritual, and immersive experience, providing the tools for personal and communal transformation. When courageous innovation is brought to the richness of Jewish tradition, we can affirm the notion of why prayer matters, harness the power of spiritual practice to build community, and realize the possibility of transformation that is true and enduring:

INWARD cultivating a deeper sense of awe (yir'ah), lovingkindness (hesed), and gratitude (hoda-ah).

UPWARD enabling us to revitalize and nurture intimate relationships with the Divine Presence

OUTWARD heightening personal relationships and profound connections within the embrace of a spiritual community

FORWARD inspiring and propelling a community of spiritual practice toward making meaningful change in our world

BJ Ritual Labs

We know that so many in our community are in the midst of significant life transitions: marking a retirement, sending a child off to college, coming out, at various points in the midst of treatment for an illness, or embarking on a significant journey. With this in mind, we have launched a series of Ritual Labs to explore some of these transitions through a Jewish framework, and together, create rituals to bring these moments into a holy space.

Cantor David Mintz

Director, Center for Prayer and Spirituality

Rabbi Michael R. Boino

Coordinator, Pastoral Care and Support

*We begin seated in a circle with a table in its center.
A lighted havdalah candle is placed on the center of the table,
along with two smaller candles for each of us to light.*

קבלת פנים

Gathering

*We come together by singing a niggun (a wordless melody)
and sharing words of welcome.*

We rise.

הדלקת נרות א

First Candlelighting

A single small candle is lighted from a central Havdalah candle.

We recite together:

Open my eyes, O Eternal, to change;
Fill me with longing for possibilities.
Let my life before be stepping blocks
To what You want me to become.

Open my eyes, O Eternal to change;
Let me write beyond my narrow descriptions
To begin a new narrative,
Underlined with Your Name.

Open my heart, O Eternal
To put You ever before me;
Help me discard the insubstantial
And replace it with Your Words.

Debbie Perlman, z'l

We return to our seats.

*Just as on Simhat Torah, where we read the conclusion of the Torah immediately followed by its beginning,
we study the Torah's conclusion silently.*

עיון סיום

Torah Study: Completion

Deuteronomy, Chapter 34

1) Moses went up from the steppes of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the summit of Pisgah, opposite Jericho, and the Eternal showed him the whole land: Gilead as far as Dan;

2) all Naphtali; the land of Ephraim and Manasseh; the whole land of Judah as far as the Western Sea;

3) the Negeb; and the Plain—the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees—as far as Zoar.

4) And the Eternal said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, ‘I will assign it to your offspring.’ I have let you see it with your own eyes, but you shall not cross there.”

5) So Moses the servant of the Eternal died there, in the land of Moab, at the command of the Eternal.

6) He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, near Beth-peor; and no one knows his burial place to this day.

7) Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eyes were undimmed and his vigor unabated.

8) And the Israelites bewailed Moses in the steppes of Moab for thirty days. The period of wailing and mourning for Moses came to an end.

9) Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands upon him; and the Israelites heeded him, doing as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

10) Never again did there arise in Israel a prophet like Moses—whom the Eternal singled out, face to face,

11) for the various signs and portents that the Eternal sent him to display in the land of Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his courtiers and his whole country,

12) and for all the great might and awesome power that Moses displayed before all Israel.

(א) וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה מִמִּדְבַּר מוֹאָב אֶל הַר נְבוֹ רֹאשׁ הַפְּסָגָה אֲשֶׁר עַל פְּנֵי יְרִיחוֹ וַיִּרְאֶהוּ יְקֹנֵק אֶת כָּל הָאָרֶץ אֶת הַגִּלְעָד עַד דָּן:

(ב) וְאֵת כָּל נַפְתָּלִי וְאֵת אֶרֶץ אֶפְרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה וְאֵת כָּל אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה עַד הַיָּם הָאַחֲרוֹן:

(ג) וְאֵת הַנֶּגֶב וְאֵת הַפְּתָח וְאֵת הַבְּקָעָה יְרִיחוֹ עִיר הַתְּמָרִים עַד צֹעַר:

(ד) וַיֹּאמֶר יְקֹנֵק אֵלָיו זֹאת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלִיעֲקֹב לֵאמֹר לְזֶרַעְךָ אֶתְנַנֶּה הָרְאִיתִיךָ בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְשָׂמָה לֹא תַעֲבֹר:

(ה) וַיָּמָת שָׁם מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד יְקֹנֵק בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב עַל פִּי יְקֹנֵק:

(ו) וַיִּקְבֹּר אֹתוֹ בְּגֵי בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב מִוַּל בֵּית פְּעוֹר וְלֹא יָדַע אִישׁ אֶת קְבֻרָתוֹ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה:

(ז) וּמֹשֶׁה בֶּן מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה בָּמָתוֹ לֹא כָהָתָה עֵינָיו וְלֹא נָס לַחֵה:

(ח) וַיִּבְכּוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת מֹשֶׁה בְּעֶרְבַת מוֹאָב שְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם וַיִּתְּמוּ יָמָי בְּכִי אַבְל מֹשֶׁה:

(ט) וַיְהִי וַשֹּׁעַ בֶּן נוּן מְלֵא רוּחַ חֵכְמָה פִּי סִמַּךְ מֹשֶׁה אֶת יָדָיו עָלָיו וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֵלָיו בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְקֹנֵק אֶת מֹשֶׁה:

(י) וְלֹא קָם נְבִיא עוֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כְּמֹשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר יָדָעוּ יְקֹנֵק פְּנִים אֶל פְּנִים:

(יא) לְכֹל הָאֵתָת וְהַמוֹפְתִים אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחוּ יְקֹנֵק לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

לְפָרְעָה וְלְכֹל עֲבָדָיו וְלְכֹל אֶרְצוֹ:

(יב) וְלְכֹל הַיָּד הַחֲזָקָה וְלְכֹל הַמְּוֹרָא הַגָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה מֹשֶׁה לְעֵינֵי כָל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

As we complete the study of this chapter, we come together in song once again.

הנני

Hineini

We take turns assisting each other in rising from our seats, and being assisted in rising in the following manner with following words of greeting:

The person assisting stands and says to the person seated:

הַנִּנִּי

hineini

I am ready (to be present for you).

The person seated responds:

הַנִּנִּי

hineini

I am ready (to rise, and to be present to you).

As we rise, we gather around the center table.

הדלקת נרות ב

Second Candlelighting

A second small candle is lighted from the first candle.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melek ha-olam

הַמְרַבֵּה לְנוֹעָזִים עֲצֻמָּה וְכַח הַתְּחַלְפוֹת,

ha-marbeh le-noazim otzmah ve-khoah hit^halfut

שֶׁהִרְבֵּנִי שֶׁפַע עֲצֻמָּה.

she-hirbani shefa otzmah.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe,
Who bestows upon the daring personal strength and the power to change,
Who has granted me an abundance of personal strength.

We remain standing.

הדרן עלך

We Will Return to You

Reader:

Our tradition teaches that upon completion of a major piece of Jewish learning, we are to recite a supplication about the learning itself:

הדרן עלך ... והדרך עלן
Hadran alach...vehadran alan
We will return to you...and you will return to us.

Inherent in the process of Jewish learning is the recognition that in life, we don't simply complete a milestone, congratulate ourselves, and move on. Our tradition acknowledges that the process of learning is ongoing. Even in moments that appear to be endings, we affirm the cyclical nature of our world.

Indeed, we are strengthened by the work we have done and the experiences we have had. They have transformed us, and yet, they will return to us. They have enriched our lives, and yet, we will return to them. While the light of our initial candle may grow dim and ultimately go out, it has enabled a new light to shine. As we are guided by the light of this new flame, may we be reminded of its source, and the source for all.

We recite together:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ
barukh atah Adonai
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
Eloheinu melekh ha-olam
הַמְחַדֵּשׁ יָמֵינוּ
ha-m'hadeish yameinu

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Renewer of our days

We return to our seats, and study the opening chapter of the Torah, silently.

עיון ההתחלה

Torah Study: Beginning

Genesis, Chapter 1

- 1) When God began to create heaven and earth—
- 2) the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water—
- 3) God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.
- 4) God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness.
- 5) God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, a first day.
- 6) God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the water, that it may separate water from water.”
- 7) God made the expanse, and it separated the water which was below the expanse from the water which was above the expanse. And it was so.
- 8) God called the expanse Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.
- 9) God said, “Let the water below the sky be gathered into one area, that the dry land may appear.” And it was so.
- 10) God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering of waters He called Seas. And God saw that this was good.
- 11) And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation: seed-bearing plants, fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so.
- 12) The earth brought forth vegetation: seed-bearing plants of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that this was good.
- 13) And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.
- 14) God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate day from night; they shall serve as signs for the set times—the days and the years;
- 15) and they serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth.” And it was so.
- 16) God made the two great lights, the greater light to dominate the day and the lesser light to dominate the night, and the stars.
- 17) And God set them in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth,
- 18) to dominate the day and the night, and to separate

- (א) בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:
- (ב) וְהָאָרֶץ הִיְתָה תְהוֹ וּבְהוּ וְחָשֶׁךְ
עַל פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים
מְרַחֶפֶת עַל פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם:
- (ג) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי אוֹר:
- (ד) וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאוֹר כִּי טוֹב
וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ:
- (ה) וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְאוֹר יוֹם וּלְחֹשֶׁךְ קֶ
רָא לַיְלָה וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי
בִקְרַת יוֹם אֶחָד:
- (ו) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי רְקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ
הַמַּיִם וַיְהִי מַבְדִּיל בֵּין מַיִם לְמַיִם:
- (ז) וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַרְקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם
אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת לְרְקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר
מֵעַל לְרְקִיעַ וַיְהִי כֵן:
- (ח) וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְרְקִיעַ שָׁמַיִם וַיְהִי
עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בִקְרַת יוֹם שֵׁנִי:
- (ט) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקְוּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם
אֶל מְקוֹם אֶחָד וַתִּרְאֶה הַיַּבְשָׁה
וַיְהִי כֵן:
- (י) וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לַיַּבְשָׁה אָרֶץ וּלְמַקְוֵה
הַמַּיִם קָרָא יַמִּים וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי
טוֹב:
- (יא) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תִּדְשָׂא הָאָרֶץ
דָּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזֵּרִיעַ זֵרַע עֵץ פְּרִי עֵשֶׂה פְּרִי לְמִינֹו
אֲשֶׁר זֵרְעוּ בּוֹ עַל הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי כֵן:
- (יב) וַתִּוצֵא הָאָרֶץ דָּשָׂא
עֵשֶׂב מִזֵּרִיעַ זֵרַע לְמִינֵהוּ וְעֵץ פְּרִי
אֲשֶׁר זֵרְעוּ בּוֹ לְמִינֵהוּ וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי
טוֹב:
- (יג) וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בִקְרַת
יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי:
- (יד) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹרֹת בְּרְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם
לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיוּ
לְאֹתוֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיָמִים וּלְשָׁנִים:
- (טו) וְהָיוּ לְמְאֹרֹת בְּרְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם
לְהַאֲיִר עַל הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי כֵן:
- (טז) וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת שְׁנֵי הַמְּאֹרֹת הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת הַמְּאֹר הַגָּדֹל
לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת הַמְּאֹר הַקָּטָן לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת
הַלַּיְלָה וְאֵת הַכּוֹכָבִים:
- (יז) וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים בְּרְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם
לְהַאֲיִר עַל הָאָרֶץ:
- (יח) וּלְמַשֵּׁל בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה וּלְהַבְדִּיל

light from darkness. And God saw that this was good.
 19) And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.
 20) God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and birds that fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.”
 21) God created the great sea monsters, and all the living creatures of every kind that creep, which the waters brought forth in swarms, and all the winged birds of every kind. And God saw that this was good.
 22) God blessed them, saying, “Be fertile and increase, fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.”
 23) And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.
 24) God said, “Let the earth bring forth every kind of living creature: cattle, creeping things, and wild beasts of every kind.” And it was so.
 25) God made wild beasts of every kind and cattle of every kind, and all kinds of creeping things of the earth. And God saw that this was good.
 26) And God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. They shall rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth.”
 27) And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
 28) God blessed them and God said to them, “Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it; and rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth.”
 29) God said, “See, I give you every seed-bearing plant that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit; they shall be yours for food.
 30) And to all the animals on land, to all the birds of the sky, and to everything that creeps on earth, in which there is the breath of life, [I give] all the green plants for food.” And it was so.
 31) And God saw all that He had made, and found it very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

בין האור ובין החשך וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי טוֹב:
 (יט) וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר
 יוֹם רְבִיעִי:
 (כ) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-לֹהִים יִשְׂרְצוּ הַמַּיִם שָׂרָץ
 נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה וְעוֹף יַעֲוֹף עַל הָאָרֶץ עַל
 פְּנֵי רְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם:
 (כא) וַיִּבְרָא אֱ-לֹהִים אֶת הַתַּנִּינִם הַגְּדֹלִים וְאֵת כָּל
 נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה הַרְמֹשֶׁת
 אֲשֶׁר שָׂרְצוּ הַמַּיִם לְמִינֵהֶם וְאֵת כָּל עוֹף כְּנָף
 לְמִינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי טוֹב:
 (כב) וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱ-לֹהִים לֵאמֹר פְּרוּ
 וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת הַמַּיִם בַּיַּמִּים וְהָעוֹף
 יִרְבַּ בָּאָרֶץ:
 (כג) וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר
 יוֹם חַמִּישִׁי:
 (כד) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-לֹהִים תּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ
 נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה לְמִינָהּ בְּהֶמָּה וּרְמֶשׂ
 וְחַיִּתוֹ אֶרֶץ לְמִינָהּ וַיְהִי כֵן:
 (כה) וַיַּעַשׂ אֱ-לֹהִים אֶת חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ וְאֵת הַבְּהֶמָּה
 לְמִינָהּ וְאֵת כָּל רֶמֶשׂ הָאֲדָמָה לְמִינָהּ
 וַיֵּרָא אֱ-לֹהִים כִּי טוֹב:
 (כו) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-לֹהִים נַעֲשֵׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ
 כְּדֹמוֹתֵינוּ וַיִּרְדּוּ בְדִגְתַּי
 הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל הָאָרֶץ
 וּבְכָל הָרֶמֶשׂ הַרְמֹשׁ עַל הָאָרֶץ:
 (כז) וַיִּבְרָא אֱ-לֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצַלְמֵ
 אֱ-לֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא
 אֹתָם:
 (כח) וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱ-לֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱ-לֹהִים
 פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ וּכְבֹשׁוּהָ
 וּרְדוּ בְּדִגְתַּי הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם
 וּבְכָל חַיַּת הָרְמֹשֶׁת עַל הָאָרֶץ:
 (כט) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-לֹהִים הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת כָּל יִצְבָּב זֶרַע זֶרַע
 אֲשֶׁר עַל פְּנֵי כָל הָאָרֶץ וְאֵת כָּל הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בּוֹ פְּרִי עֵץ
 זֶרַע זֶרַע לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָהּ:
 (ל) וּלְכָל חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ וּלְכָל עוֹף
 הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְכָל רוֹמֵשׁ עַל הָאָרֶץ
 אֲשֶׁר בּוֹ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה אֵת כָּל יִרְקָה
 יִעֲשֶׂב לְאֹכְלָהּ וַיְהִי כֵן:
 (לא) וַיֵּרָא אֱ-לֹהִים אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה
 טוֹב מְאֹד וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי
 בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי:

As we complete the study of this chapter, we come together in song once again.

We rise.

תפילת הדרך

Prayer for the Journey

Reader:

Our lives are always changing, and change brings with it fear of the unknown.
The journey into the unknown is fraught with danger, yet rich with possibility.
It has always been so - as Abraham and Sarah went forth, as Rebecca and then Jacob went forth.

Our ancestors across time have looked to you for protection,
from the wild beasts of the road, from the vagaries of weather.
So too, we, in this place, in this time, look to You.

*Here, the Reader acknowledges those present individually,
and those who wish share a personal prayer, text, or reflection.*

We recite together:

Help me to remember my strength and courage,
help me to see clearly, to listen deeply, to act wisely.
Help me to be my best self in this new place and time.
Every journey leads into the unknown.
May the unknown ahead of me offer blessing.

Merle Feld

כיבוי נרות א

Extinguishing of the First Candle

The first candle is extinguished, leaving only the second candle remaining.

We gather together under a tallit for the Priestly Blessing:

ברכת כוהנים

Priestly Blessing

יְבָרֶכְךָ יְיָ וְיִשְׂמְרֶכָּךְ

yevarekhekha Adonai ve-yishmerekha

יָאֵר יְיָ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיְחַנֶּכָּךְ

yaeir Adonai panav eilekha vi-huneka

יְשֵׂא יְיָ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וְיִשֵּׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

yisa Adonai panav eilekha ve-yaseim lekha shalom

Numbers 6:24-26