

The future. We cannot know the future.

We cannot know the future. Untold books and movies and TV shows have been predicated on the opposite — what would we do if we knew?

In our liturgy, we consider some possibilities for the new year: death by any number of means; or, living distressed or tranquil, uplifted or downtrodden, and so on. (p 143)

And we have declared that three kinds of corrective, healing, actions — *teshuva*/repentance, *tefilla*/prayer, and *gemilut chassadim*/acts of generosity — will ameliorate any harsh Divine decrees for the year. We have been doing this for eons, yet, this year, I felt that something is missing from the prescription list.

In addition to the classic, time-tested three — *teshuva*, *tefila*, *tzedaka* — perhaps there should be a fourth.

Love? It may be too subjective to demand, even though Torah does it — *v'ahavta* ... love your God, love your neighbor — but it's a hard ask. **Respect?** Respect for whom, for what, and how do we express it? **Gratitude?** How much appreciation is appropriate, and whom should we be thanking?

We could vote, but I'm going with **gratitude**. But who do we thank for what? Our tradition offers a crutch: In the morning, what's the first thing we should say upon awakening? *Mode ani* — I am grateful for the soul that You, God, have returned to my body. **Thank God I'm awake!**

We can discuss the peripatetic soul another time. Today, I want to focus on gratitude, for example:

Thank You for the morning's shine.

Thank You for the fruit of the vine.

Thank You for the arguments of our sages.

Thank You for the myriad pages.

Thank You for the serendipity of being.

Thank You for the gift of seeing.

Thank You for the velvet of her skin.

Thank You for the tickle of his chin.

Thank You for the 3-year-old's wake up call.

Thank You for the original art on our walls.

Thank You for the ability to sing.

Thank You for listening.

Thank You for the ways she draws me out.

Thank You for the many ways I can pout.

Thank You for the nest at our door.

Thank You for the clothes in my drawer.

Thank You for the inspiration of tradition.

Thank You for the opportunity of contrition.

Much of the Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur liturgy is set up as *alef-bet* acrostic: *ashamnu bagadnu gazalnu*, or *al cheit* for the sin of..., and many *piyyutim* / liturgical poems.

The acrostic form may have made it easier to learn or memorize the texts, many of which were composed before printing made *machzorim* / High Holy Day prayerbooks more easily available.

The *ashamnu* and *al cheit* litanies are familiar to us. They catalogue a good many — or should it be, a **bad** many? — things or ways we may have done wrong over the last year. Even though they are all in the plural — we're in this together — we need to consider them personally, and offer atonement as is appropriate.

And we will: Yom Kippur is only 9 days from now, on the 10th of Tishrei. Just as there is no starting date for transgression or doing wrong — the 11th of Tishrei? — there is no "best by" or expiration date on repentance, atonement, forgiveness.

Nor is there any kind of limitation on gratitude. Whether as individuals or as a community, do we offer enough thanks for what we have, for what others do for us or with us, for our relationships, for the good in our lives?

With gratitude, I would like to acknowledge you who have contributed to our community's vitality. Please rise at your place when you hear something that applies to you, and remain standing as you're able.

Please rise if you've ever...

- helped in the synagogue kitchen or delivered meals
- learned with Shirat Hayam, on Torah Thursdays, at one-off programs or other opportunities
- led all or part of a service, any service
- read Torah or chanted haftara or a megilla
- registered for Life & Legacy

- been a sponsor of our major events
- solicited gifts for the shul
- attended a game-day or other public event here
- sponsored a kiddush lunch or mitzva meal
- helped the office prepare the newsletter for mailing
- chaired a committee or served on a committee
- worked in the garden
- assisted with chair day and changing out the Torah covers
- served as president or trustee of Shirat Hayam
- supported the professional repair of our Torah ornaments
- been an usher, greeter, ambassador
- shared your children with us on Sunday mornings
- volunteered to help in our Sunday classes
- **attended a service here, even if only just this once**

There are so many ways to help uplift our community!

For what would you like to stand up next year? We can help make it happen!

Thank you all! Please be seated.

Torah speaks of being gifted at Mt. Sinai to all Jews who ever were, are or will be. Also, Torah tells us that it is readily accessible and understandable.

Opportunities here at Shirat Hayam are likewise accessible to all ... and appreciated. To all of you — all who have done, are doing, or will do — **THANK YOU.**

UZI CHITMAN was an Israeli musician, songwriter and performer. He died at age 52 in 2004, having written more than 650 songs since his teens. Some of those songs are in the Israeli canon of pop standards.

Chitman's song "Todah/Thank you" is still popular. You may recognize it... (**SING first verse**).

Thank You for all that You have created,
Thank You for what You've given me.

For the glow of eager eyes,
For having a friend or two,
For what is mine in this world.
For mellifluous song
For a forgiving heart
Because of all this — I am.

For children's laughter,
For blue skies,
For this planet and a warm home.
For having a corner of my own,
And a loving parent.
Because of all this — I am.

For a joyful day,
For innocence and honesty,
For the sadness that has faded.
Two thousand kudos and clapping hands!
(*Good job, God!*)
Because of all this — I am.

Thank You for all that You have created,
Thank You for what You've given me.

This is the **13th** Rosh Hashana service I have led in this sacred space. Thank you for the vast range of experiences and relationships **you have given me.**

Toda rabba, Shana tova!