

Holy

Work inspired by the Kedusha blessing of the Amidah

The text of that blessing appears, in Hebrew and in English, at the end of the PDF.

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Introduction

The third blessing of the Amidah speaks of *kedusha*, holiness. What does it mean to be holy, or to say that God is holy? What might angels, or our bodies, have to do with it? How about the planet, the cosmos, the elegance of mathematics? Does holiness have a “where”?

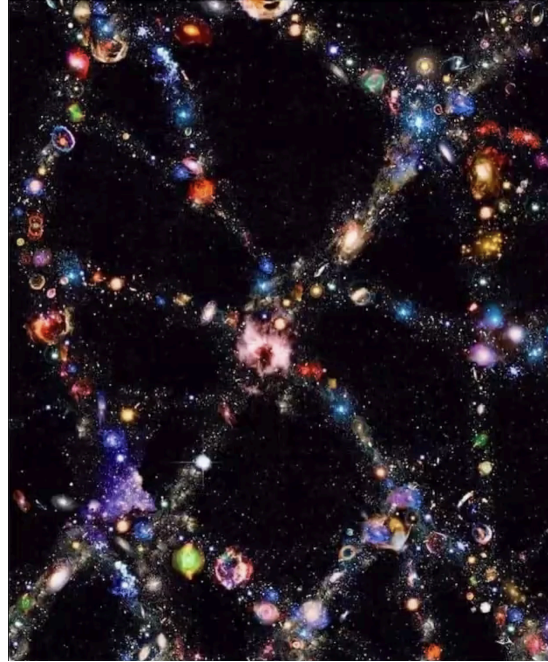
This offering emerges out of these questions and more. This offering also arises during continuing war between Israel and Hamas. The prayer, worry, and grief in which our hearts continue to steep shapes our sense of holiness too, and our yearning for holiness, whatever it might be.

Pray these alone or in community. Read them, argue with them, sing them, share them. Save the artwork or slides to your device. Make the visual art your desktop background or phone lock screen. Write or draw your own ideas about holiness, in response to this, and share that with us.

In short: use this offering however you need. We hope it speaks to you, whoever and wherever you are.

– *The Builders at Bayit*

N'kadesh / נְקַדֵּשׁ



You who fill and surround creation, Who adorned the heavens in time before time
with the sparkling net of galaxies like gems in the sky's expanse –
You don't need us to make Your name great
throughout the world. It's all we can do
to hold this scant fractal
encoded in our limbs,
our temporary breath.

We praise anyway,
through our generations –
not because You need to hear it
but because something in us shifts
whether we whisper this reminder or shout it to the skies:
You are upwelling, indwelling, holy: the song that sings in us.
Blessed are You, Holy One, God Who is holy. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הָאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ

R. Rachel Barenblat

Sparkling net of galaxies. This image is an artist's rendering of a supercluster of galaxies, from [the Smithsonian magazine](#). **Fractal / encoded in our limbs.** The four-letter Name of God can be understood to map to the human body: *yud* is the head, *heh* is the arms, *vav* is the spine, *heh* is the legs. **[O]ur temporary breath.** R. Arthur Waskow [teaches](#) that we speak the Name every time we breathe.

Holy

Holy is this human body, aging, aching, sagging, maybe bowing over,
Holy is our skin in all its colors, whether wounded or whole.
Holy are our pulsing organs, may they never stop their work,
Holy is the way we walk, we reach toward the highest bookshelves, the way we carry our
grocery bags.

Holy is the rock I found yesterday on a walk
Holy the flower, the tree, and the wind.
Holy the smells of dust, light, and wet stones,
Holy are the colors from dark to light.

Holy is the sensing that there is more to the world,
Holy is giving in to receive.
Holy is rising to the oddest moments,
Holy is being again with You.

Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh–Atah.

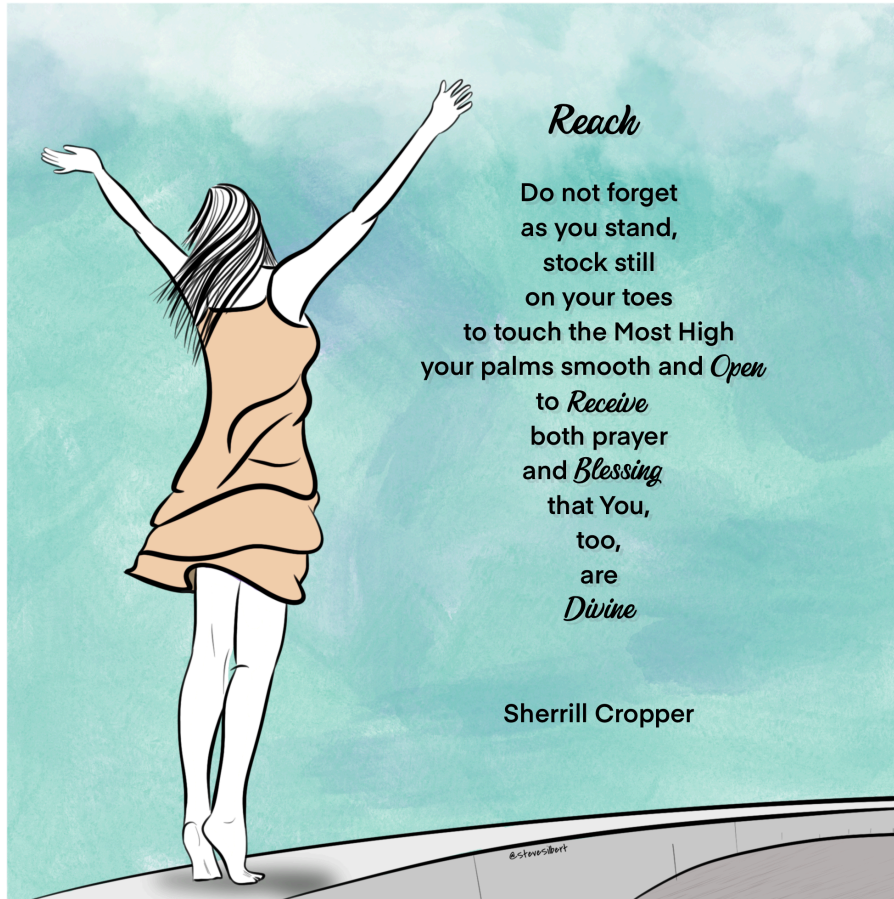
Rabbi Sonja K. Pliz, PhD

Presence



Joanne Fink

Reach



Words by Sherrill Cropper; illustration by Steve Silbert

Holy, Holy Holy



Joanne Fink

The Cosmos is Full / מלא כל-הארץ

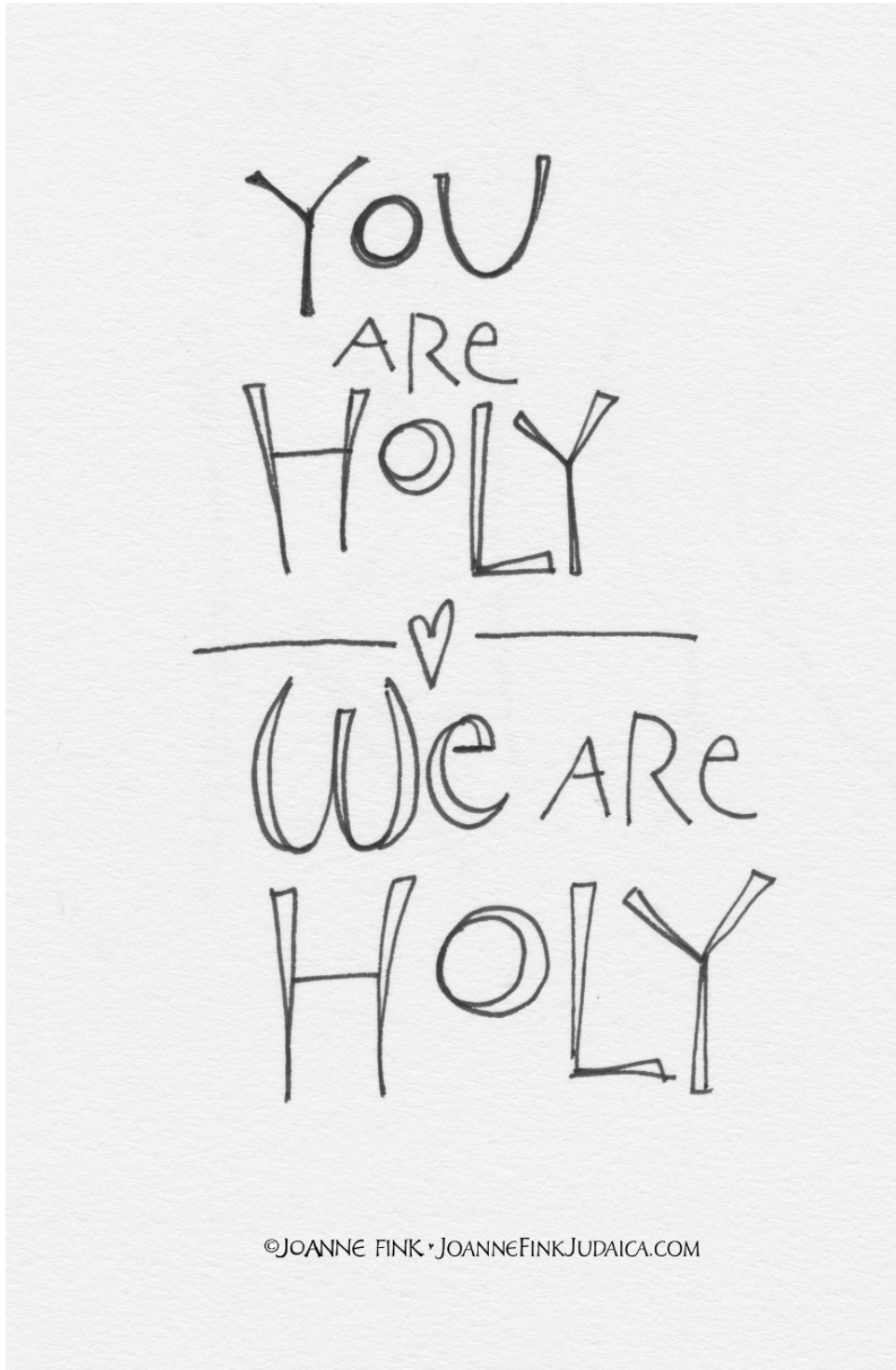
Some know the sequence¹ 0, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21...
each number the sum of the preceding two.
Nature and mathematics reflect the same truth
(as above, so below): lilies have 3 petals
while buttercups have 5, cosmos have 8,
marigolds have 13, black-eyed Susans 21.
Seed head swirl patterns on a sunflower:
always 21 swirls, or 34 swirls, or 55, or 89.
Cucumbers and tomatoes have 3 seed cavities
while apples and watermelons split into 5.
Pinecone and cauliflower spirals. Artichoke leaves.
Nautilus shells echo hurricanes echo galaxies.
The flight pattern of a hawk swooping toward its prey.
The spiral of a ram's horn...
The angels call out this rhythm of creation
in a constant Tekiah Gedolah:
"Holy, Holy, Holy, YHVH of Hosts,
the cosmos is full of God's Glory!"



Steve Silbert

¹ For more on this mathematical construct, see en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fibonacci_sequence

You and We



Joanne Fink

On My Toes

1

In shul Shabbat morning,
After we consider God-ness
Creating light, dark, love, unity and truth,
I stand for the standing prayer,
Legs together
Like an angel with only one lower limb.
I sway from side to side,
Seeking a chat with the Sacred Artist.

2

I stand so I can shuckel,
Rhythmic comfort movements
Side to side
Up and down
Knees bent.
Voice chanting
As my body prays
Like an angel dancing in a mosh pit
Hopping with God and the congregation,
Acolytes to the beat of *Tefillah*
(And it feels so good).

3

Then I drop the angel thing
And stand with legs akimbo
In perfect balance
To safely launch myself into the air three times:
Ecstasy! Sanctity! Blessing!
God exists forever in this moment.
Here I am
In holy conversation
And this is an excellent party.

4

I stand for the need for meaning
When there are no answers.
I stand for the divine Wholeness
In and around me.
I stand for the glory of Oneness
From generation to generation.
I stand for the thousands of years
We have prayed this prayer.

5

Well, I don't actually stand,
Not anymore.
My knees hurt,
My back aches
And walking is easier than standing still.
Worried about what others might think,
I used to lift up my carcass anyway,
But all I could pray about was my pain
Which wasn't enough.
So now I stay in my chair,
Put the book aside,
Scootch up to the front of the seat,
Sit up straight
And pay attention hard.

6

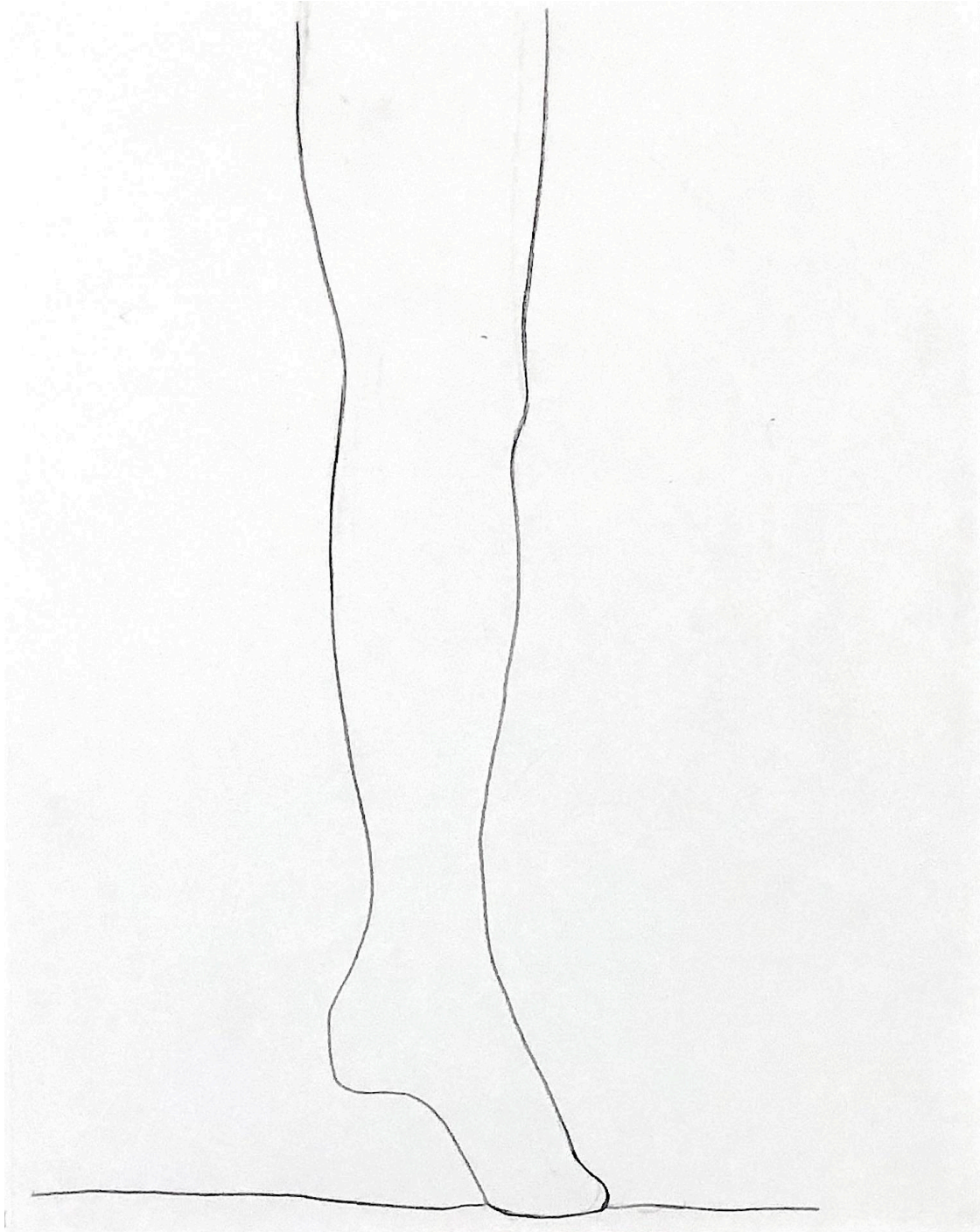
B'emet,
Sitting there
Slightly impaired,
I'm more aware
Of my body
As a vehicle for prayer
Than ever before.
On my toes
In my heart,
I declare,
Holy holy holy!

7

And let us say
Amen.
Please be seated.

Trisha Arlin

Up On Toes



Mike Cockrill



The One

תְּחִלָּה וְאַחֲרָיֶיךָ תְּחִלָּה

Ehad, Yaheed, Oom'yūhad

The One. Every single one.

Each one joined and united to the One.

Words by Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto ל"ר.

English by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi ל"ר.

[Chant melody by R. David Zaslou](#)

Ladder To Holiness

In the highest world all is one.

Ehad One תְּחִלָּה

Undifferentiated,

so it can't be called holy.

There's nothing to compare it to.

Dazzling? Yes, but not holy. Not yet.

In the next world, each part
of the one is counted

Yaheed Every single one תְּחִלָּה

Each part of the One

is separated and counted.

You're one. You're one. You're one.

Every single one.

Differentiated? Yes! But not holy.

Amazing? Yes! But not holy. Not yet.

The lowest world is where holiness
takes root.

Oom'yūhad תְּחִלָּה

Each one joined and united to the One.

Now, that's holy.

I imagine Reb Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto teaching:

“At first, all is One but not holy.

Then all the ones within the One are differentiated.

Each one is counted and made to feel whole
within itself, but still not holy.

It's in the third world
that all are known
to be true at once:

All is One.

Each one of the One
is known to be within the One.

Then each one of the One
known to be within the One

is joined and united
to each of the other ones –
joined one to another.

You and I.

One and yet apart.

Separate and yet joined.

Then we realize

to be holy, each one within the One
must be joined to one another

and united to the One.

Now, that's holy!”

Rabbi David Zaslou

Ladders



Mike Cockrill

Be Present and Holy



Joanne Fink

All the Earth / מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ

*If all the earth
is full of Your glory*

(the asparagus fields,
the trance festival grounds

now marked with memorial signs,
even somehow

the miles of tunnels
and the cities now rubble)

holiness must also be here
amidst these tears.

You call us to seek
and find – and make – the sacred

amidst force and forces,
fighters and mourners.

Some days we cry whole seas
and all that they contain.

All the earth can't be so heavy
as our grieving hearts.

Don't let us stop there. Rouse us,
Counter of uncountable stars.

It's up to us what we will choose
to fill the rest of Your creation.

R. Rachel Barenblat

Looking For Holy / Falling Ballet



Mike Cockrill



Looking for The Holy

Blessed Sacred Mystery,

We search for the holy amidst pain
And memories of pain.
We touch the divine with our bodies.

We feel the threats of violence and
We give thanks if we are alive and whole.
Bless those who are safe.

We fear for those in danger.
We mourn for those who are dead or injured.
Bless those who are not safe.

We must help if we can.
Perhaps that is where we will find
The holy.

Amen

Trisha Arlin

Holy

קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ

Kadosh Kadosh Kadosh

Holy Holy Holy

Wholly Wholly Wholly

Heal, Heal, Heal²

The holy world

The whole world

The healed world

יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

Havaya tzva-ote

The One who brings

the holy, whole, healed array together

מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ

m'lo chol ha-aretz k'vodo

And fills the earth with Her Glory.

We make it so

by seeing it so

May it be so!

words by Rabbi David Zaslow

art by Steve Silbert



² In English the words holy, whole, and heal all share the same etymological root.

Kedusha - Blessing for Holiness (Reform version)

N'kadesh et shimkha ba'olam k'shem
sh'makdishim oto bishmei marom. Kakatuv al
yad nevi'ekha vekara zeh el zeh ve'amar:

נְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ בְּעוֹלָם כְּשֵׁם שְׁמִקְדִּישִׁים
אוֹתוֹ בְּשִׁמֵי מְרוֹם. כְּכַתּוּב עַל יַד נְבִיאֶךָ
וְקָרָא זֶה אֶל זֶה וְאָמַר:

**Kadosh kadosh kadosh YHVH tz'va'ot!
M'lo khol ha'aretz k'vodo!**

**קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת!
מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ!**

Adir adireinu, YHVH adoneinu, mah adir
shimkha b'khol ha'aretz.
Barukh k'vod YHVH mimkomo!

אֲדִיר אֲדִירֵנוּ, יְהוָה אֲדוֹנֵינוּ, מָה אֲדִיר
שְׁמֶךָ בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ.
בְּרוּךְ כְּבוֹד יְהוָה מִמְּקוֹמוֹ!

May Your name be sanctified in the world as the angels sanctify it in the heavens above. As
Your prophet wrote, they cry out to one another: **Holy, holy, holy is YHVH Tzevaot! The whole
earth is filled with Your glory!**

Wondrous of all wonders, YHVH our strength, how majestic is Your name in all the earth.
Blessed is YHVH's glory wherever God dwells!

Ehad hu Eloheinu, hu avinu,
hu malkeinu, hu moshi'einu vehu yashmi'einu
b'rah^{am}av le'einei kol hai.

אֶחָד הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ, הוּא אָבִינוּ,
הוּא מַלְכֵנוּ, הוּא מוֹשִׁיעֵנו וְהוּא יִשְׁמִיעֵנו
בְּרַחֲמָיו לְעֵינֵי כָּל חַי.

Ani YHVH Eloheikhem!

אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם!

Yimlokh YHVH l'olam Elohayikh Tziyon
l'dor vador. Halleluyah!

יִמְלֹךְ יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם אֱלֹהֶיךָ צִיּוֹן
לְדוֹר וָדוֹר. הַלְלוּיָהּ!

L'dor vador nagid godlecha. U'l'netzah
netzahim k'dushatekha nak'dish,
v'shivch'ha Eloheinu mipinu
lo yamush l'olam va'ed.

לְדוֹר וָדוֹר נִגִּיד גְּדֻלָּתְךָ. וּלְנִצְח
נִצְחִים קִדְשְׁתֶּךָ נְקַדִּישׁ,
וְשִׁבַּחְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִפִּינוּ
לֹא יָמוּשׁ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

God is our One—our parent, our ruler, our redeemer. With compassion, God is revealed before
the sight of all who live, saying: I am YHVH your God! May YHVH, your God, O Zion, rule from
generation to generation. Hallelujah! May each generation speak of Your greatness to the next.
For all eternity, may we sanctify Your holiness. May Your praise never depart from our lips.

Barukh atah YHVH, ha-el hakadosh.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה הָאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ.

Blessed are You, YHVH, Holy God.

Kedusha (Conservative / Orthodox version)

N'kadesh et shimkha ba'olam k'sheim
shemakdishim oto bishmei marom. Kakatuv al
yad n'viekha v'kara zeh el zeh v'amar: **Kadosh,
kadosh, kadosh YHVH tz'vaot m'lo khol ha-aretz
k'vodo.**

Az b'kol ra'ash gadol adir v'ḥazak mashmi'im kol
mitnasim l'umat s'rafim. L'umatam barukh
yomeru: **Barukh k'vod YHVH mimkomo.**

Mimkom'kha malkeinu tofia v'timlokh aleinu ku
m'ḥakim anahnu lakh. Matai timlokh b'tzion
b'karov b'yameinu l'olam va'ed tishkon.
Titgadal v'titkadash b'tokh Yerushalayim irekha
l'dor vador u'l'netzah netzahim. V'eineinu tireina
malkutekha kadavar ha'amur b'shrei uzekha al
y'dei David moshiah tzidkekha. Yimlokh YHVH
l'olam elohayikh tzion l'dor vador halleluyah.

L'dor vador nagid godlecha. U'l'netzah
netzahim k'dushatekha nak'dish,
v'shivch'ha Eloheinu mipinu
lo yamush l'olam va'ed ki el melkh gadol
v'kadosh Atah. Barukh atah YHVH, ha-el
hakadosh.

נְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ בְּעוֹלָם כְּשֵׁם שְׁמִקְדִּישִׁים
אוֹתוֹ בְּשָׁמַי מְרוֹם. כַּכְּתוּב עַל יַד נְבִיאֶךָ.
יְקַרְא זֶה אֶל זֶה וְאָמַר: **קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ
קָדוֹשׁ יי' הוֹה צְבָאוֹת מְלֵא כָּל-הָאָרֶץ
כְּבוֹדוֹ:**

אֲזִ בְּקוֹל רַעַשׁ גָּדוֹל אֲדִיר וְחָזֵק
מְשִׁמְעִים קוֹל מְתַנַּשְׂאִים לְעַמַּת
שְׂרָפִים. לְעַמַּתְּם בְּרוּךְ יְאֻמְרוּ: **בְּרוּךְ
כְּבוֹד יְהוָה מִמְּקוֹמוֹ:**

מִמְּקוֹמְךָ מְלַכְנוּ תוֹפִיעַ וְתִמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ
כִּי מַחְפִּים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ מְתִי תִמְלֹךְ בְּצִיּוֹן
בְּקָרוֹב בְּיָמֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד תִּשְׁכֹּן:
תִּתְגַּדֵּל וְתִתְקַדֵּשׁ בְּתוֹךְ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִירְךָ
לְדוֹר וָדוֹר וּלְנֹצֵחַ נְצָחִים: וְעֵינֵינוּ
תִּרְאֶינָה מְלֻכּוֹתֶךָ כְּדָבָר הָאָמוֹר בְּשִׁירֵי
עֲזָרָה עַל יְדֵי דָוִד מְשִׁיחַ צְדָקָה: **יְמַלֵּךְ
יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם אֱלֹהֶיךָ צִיּוֹן לְדוֹר וָדוֹר
הַלְלוּיָהּ:**

לְדוֹר וָדוֹר נִגִּיד גְּדֻלָּתְךָ וּלְנֹצֵחַ נְצָחִים
קְדֻשְׁתְּךָ נְקַדִּישׁ וְשִׁבְחְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִפִּינוּ
לֹא יָמוּשׁ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד כִּי אֵל מְלֹךְ גָּדוֹל
וְקָדוֹשׁ אַתָּה: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', הָאֵל
הַקָּדוֹשׁ:

Let us sanctify Your name throughout the world, as is done on high. As is written by the hand of Your prophet, the angels call one to the other and proclaim: **"Holy, Holy, Holy, YHVH of Hosts, the entire world is filled with God's Glory."** Then with a great and mighty voice, powerful and strong, the seraphim proclaim: **"Blessed is the Glory of YHVH in Its Place."**

From your place, O sovereign, may you be praised; and may you wholly rule over us. When will You reign in Zion? May it be soon and in our days, speedily and forever. May You be magnified and sanctified in the midst of Jerusalem Your city, from generation to generation. May our eyes soon see Your majesty and rule, as it is said in the words of Your prophet in songs of praise, by the hands of David Your Messiah: "YHVH shall reign forever, Your God, O Zion, from generation to generation, Halleluyah."

May each generation speak of Your greatness to the next. For all eternity, may we sanctify Your holiness. May Your praise never depart from our lips. Blessed are You, Holy God.



About Us



Co-created by members of Bayit's Liturgical Arts Working Group, 2024.

Bayit is building a soulful, inclusive and meaningful Jewish life for all ages and stages. Our visionary teams of clergy, liturgists, artists, educators and other thought leaders across and beyond denominational life develop, test, refine and distribute tools for a Jewish future always under construction.

Find our collaborations here: [Liturgical Arts Working Group](#)

And our bios here: [Builder Bioographies](#)