Acknowledgments xvii
Introduction xix
First Reflections 1
And You Shall Afflict Your Souls 3
A Techine for Yom Kippur 3
Is This the Fast I Have Chosen?—It Wasn't My Turn 4
What Is Life Without <i>Teshuvah</i> ? 5
Returning to Ourselves 5
God's Book of Life 7
The Cab Ride 8
Preface to the Amidah 10
Introduction to the <i>Amidah</i> —God's Presence Vibrates on Our Lips 10
Moving toward the Light of God 11
Spiritual Flutterings 12
Kol Nidre—Our Vows and Promises 15
Kol Nidre: Nothing Affects the Human Being
More Than Music 17
Kavanah for Kol Nidre 17
Can a Sinner Dare to Pray? 18
Quoting God 18
The Jew Must Stand for Something 19
Our Vows Are Not Vows 20
Blessing the Children Yom Kippur Eve 21
Prayer of the Hidden Jews 22
Kol Nidre: Drawn into Heaven's Womb 22

vi Contents

Kol Nidrei: Why Three Times? 22
Whose Vows—Ours or God's? 23
Who Are the <i>Avaryanim</i> ? Permission to Pray with the Iberians (?) 23
Forgiveness on Kol Nidrei 24
Sin 27
The Capture and Release of the <i>Yetzer Ha-Ra</i> 29
Is Reciting <i>Al Het</i> Reason to Rejoice? 31
Don't Be Judgmental 31
Bold, Humble, Daring 32
Dibbur Peh Leshon Ha-ra—Even If True,
Gossip Is Still a Sin 32
Gossip: A Chronic Infectious Disease 35
Al Het: The Need for Community 36
Ashamnu Bagadnu—Neither Repentance Nor Confession 36
The Power of Words 37
Can You Cross the River? 37
Recognize Our Own Flaws 37
<i>Yetzer Ha-Ra</i> —For the Sin of the Evil Impulse 38
Lashon Ha-Ra—Traditional Sources 38
Lashon Ha-Ra—Be Careful of Unnecessary Words! 39
On Justice, for All Children 40
Lashon Ha-Ra: Judaism Is, Above All, a Love of Language 40
Ve-Khof Et Yitzrenu Le-Hishtabed Lakh—Direct Our Impulses [Yetzer] 41
We Humans Are Cracked Vessels: <i>Ashamnu</i> , <i>Bagadnu</i> , <i>Gazalnu</i> —We Have Sinned, We Have Dealt Treacherously 42
Sweetening the Evil 43
Ashamnu—A to Z 44
The Consequences of Sin and the Meaning of Evil 44
Let Them Fix Their Errors 45

Al Chet 46 The Body/Mind Connection 47 What We Have Lost Sins of the Tongue— ... B'Dibbur Peh, ... B'Siah Siftotenu, ... B'Leshon Ha-Ra 48 49 Gossip No Time for Sin 49 Ve-al Dibbur Peh ... Sins of the Tongue 49 An Interview with God 50 Watch Out for the "Little" Sins 51 Al Het for Our Age of Violence 51 God's Questions *Al Het*—Is It Possible to Change? 53 Ashamnu—We Have Sinned 54 Al Het ... B'timbon Levav—For the Sin ... of Confusion of Values 55 Sins Are Parts of Us Yet to Complete 56 How Do We Abolish Sin? 57 ... B'Dibbur Peb—Leprosy of Irresponsible Speech 57 Al Het ... B'timbon Levar—By Confusion of Values, by Spoiling Our Planet ... B'timbon Levay—By Confusion of Values 59 Alternative *Al Het* 60 Al Het—Yom Kippur, a Loving Laundromat 61 Forgiveness 63 What Forgiveness Is 65 Forgiving as an Essential Human Attribute—To Make Peace with Ourselves, and with Others, to Move Forward with Hope Sweetening the Evil in Yourself Forgive Yourself 69 Let's Forgive Each Other—Unlocking the Gates of Forgiveness: A Personal Prayer 70

viii Contents

<i>Vidui</i> —An Annotated Report 71
Pardon Our Iniquity and Our Sin (Exodus 34:9)— Can We Pardon Without Apology? 72
Forgiveness in Hebrew Scriptures 73
Forgiving Debts 75
Sources on Forgiveness 75
Adonai, Adonai—The Thirteen Attributes of God's Mercy: Why Is the Ineffable Name Repeated? 78
All in the Family 79
Forgive and Forget! 80
Getting Rid of the Mud 81
Day of Reconciliations 81
Hear, O Israel: God, Love and Learning 85
Can Love Be Commanded? 87
When Words Enter the Heart 87
Who Will Recite the <i>Shema</i> with Our Grandchildren? 87
Shema Yisrael 89
Radiance and Light— <i>Pirkei Avot</i> 2:13 91
Shema: God's Oneness 92
Sh²ma 92
Shema: One Universe 93
Shema—The Lord Is One: Hear, O Israel, Adonai Is Our God, Adonai Alone 94
Shema—And You Shall Love Adonai Your God 94
Ve-Shenantam Le-Venekha—The Tradition of Study 94
Teach Them Diligently to Your Children— Jacob and Esau 95
Ve-sheenantam Le-vanekha—Educate, Educate, Educate 95
Shema—Teach Them Well to Your Children 96
On the Doorposts of Your House—Two Approaches to Life 96
The Quality of Our Love 97

You Shall Teach Them Diligently to Your Children— Weaving the Loom of Future Years 98 Shema 99 How Fortunate Are You, Rabbi Akiva 100 Bless God Even for Evil 100 Widening Our Circle of Compassion 101 The Calming, Nourishing Effect of Shema Yisrael Shema: God and God's World 102 I Will Love the Lord My God 103 Sh'ma: ... Ve-shenantam le-vanekha—A Jew Must Learn! 103 *Sh'ma*—Teach Them Diligently to Your Children Avinu Malkenu 105 Live, Read, Grow, and Be a Mensch! 107 Avinu Malkenu, Kotvaynu Be-Sefer Z'khuyot—Don't Just Ask— Tell God: Send Me! Avinu Malkenu—A Tenacious Link 107 Avinu Malkenu 108 Roots and Themes from the Torah 111 Repentance as Halakhah 113 Teshuvah and the Sacred Year 114 Inclusion in the Covenant 115 Fasting: Who Can and Who Has To? 116 Yom Kippur and the "Scapegoat"—Seeking Meaning for the Strange Ritual of the Scapegoat 116 Azazel and Magic 120 The Goat's Journey to the Desert 122 Why Do We Fast? 122 **Judaism and Atonement** 123 Atonement in the Desert 124 Celebrating Yom Kippur in the Past Kohen Gadol Could Not Enter Holy of Holies Wearing Gold 125

x Contents

Where God Can't Enter 126
A Sabbath of Sabbaths 126
Parshat Nitzavim: Choose Life 127
Deciding for God or for Azazel 128
The Basis of Sin: Self-Deception 129
Celebrating and Revealing the Invisible—Yom Kippur Torah Reading 129
Torah Reading—Yom Kippur 132
Aaron's God—and Ours 133
Peace between People 135
When God Is High Above, Awe Comes; When God Is Close, Love Comes—Peace to the Far, Peace to the Close (Isaiah 57:19) 135
Is Not This the Fast I Have Chosen to Feed the Hungry, Clothe the Naked 136
What Does God Ask of Women? 137
The High Priest: An Eager Servant Awaiting Rebirth 138
Just When An Introduction in Poetry, to the Haftarah of Yom Kippur Morning 139
Shalom Shalom La-rahok Ve-la-karov 141
The Ritual of the Goats 143
T'shuvah, T'fillah, T'zedakkah (Repentance, Prayer and Acts of Righteousness) 145
Maimonides' Eight Degrees of Charity 147
I Am Canceling My Word and Fulfilling Yours—The Thirteen Divine Attributes 147
U-Teshuvah 148
Fund-Raising Story 148
Kedoshim Tih'yu—Be Holy! 149
Atonement and Repentance 149
Like a Fading Flower, a Passing Shadow, a Fugitive Cloud and a Vanishing Dream 150
U-teshuvah—How to Cleanse Ourselves 151
U-Tefilah Can Prayer Heal? 152

Contents xi

	How Prayer Leads to Morality 152
	Teshuvah: A New Factor in the Divine Relationship 153
	Homecoming and Teshuvah 154
	U'netaneh Tokef 155
	Teshuvah Is Not Repentance, Tefillah Is Not Prayer, and Tzedakah Is Not Charity 156
	Teshuvah, Tefilah and Zedakah—Judaism Is a Religion of Action More Than Thought 158
	U-tzedakah—Make Your Home a Wellspring of Charity 158
	Tzedakah: How Important a Value for Us? 159
	Tzedakah Lines in Our Personal Budgets 159
	Zedakah: Money, Money 160
	Penitence 160
	The Chance to Repent 161
	Remaking Yourself 162
	<i>U-tzedakah</i> —There Is a Healing Power in Doing Good 162
	U'Tzedakah—God Makes Opportunities for Redemption 162
	Acts of Lovingkindness 163
	U'Tzedakah 163
	Ve-tiftah et Sefer Ha-Zikhronot—You Record and Seal, Count and Measure 164
	Repentance, Prayer and Tzedakah 165
	Memory and Teshuvah 168
	Man and Beast Will Be Saved by God 169
	Repenting for Those Who Cannot 169
Fa	nith and Beliefs 171
	Ve-khol Ma-aminim—Emulating God's Attributes 173
	Where Is God? 173
	The Glory of Life 175
	Ve-khol Ma-aminim—We All Hope We Trust 175
	Saving God's Life 176
	Ve-khol Ma-aminim—All Believe 177

xii Contents

*Ve-khol Ma-aminim*—Defining Faith, the Jewish Way 177 Ve-khol Ma-aminim—Trying to Believe 178 On Eagles' Wings 179 *Yizkor*—In Memoriam 183 Yom Kippur and Memory 185 Time Out—Life Is Temporary 186 Death Does Not Exist 188 Together We Can Stand Anything 188 Driving Sorrow Out of Your Life 189 A Special Prayer for Those Not Saying *Yizkor* for Parents 189 The Plan of the Master Weaver 190 Still Warm from an Old Jacket 191 So Too Does the Soul Evolve.... 192 Yizkor 192 From Beyond the Grave Our Loved Ones Reach Out and Touch Us 193 A *Yizkor* Guided Imagery Exercise 194 Good Grief 195 Lesson from the *Titanic*—Love Flows Continuously 197 Judaism's Advice for a Meaningful Life 198 The Rest Is Up to Me.... 200 A Short Visit—For a Divine Purpose 200 The Common Lot of All of Us 200 Yizkor 201 Martyrology 203 Punished for Being Jewish 205 A Martyr's Prayer for the New Year 205 A *Kaddish* for the Children 206 There Is One Synagogue Left in Kiev 209 The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: Opening Ceremonies Remembering, Not Forgetting 210

We Will Outlive You, Globochnik! 211 211 Martyrology—The 614th Commandment A Jew Cannot Be Without God An Elegy for the Six Million Remember Us unto Life 214 A Memoir of the Yom Kippur War 214 My People Are Being Consumed 217 Golden Silence 218 What Did We Lose? 218 Looking into Our Own Hearts 220 Zakhor—Never Forget 220 Why We Stay in Israel 221 Martyrology—9/11 and Lamentations 222 Before the Kaddish: At the Funeral of Those Who Were Killed in the Land of Israel 2.24 Musaf—V'ye-e-tayhu 225 The Service of the High Priest: In the Temple Times and Today 227 Avodah: Service 229 Avodah: The Story of the High Priest 229 The Root of All Holiness 230 Being Better—Serving Better 230 The Meaning of *Avodah* 231 Avodab—For Whom Do the Priests Pray? 232 Avodah—Community Service Avodah: Community Service—Serving Others, We Serve Ourselves 233 The Ritual of the Goats—We Are Left with Words.... 233 Through Service to God [Avodah] I Add to the Good of the World Reciting the Avodah in the Diaspora 235 Avodah: We Are Defined by Our Connections 236 Service 236

xiv Contents

Belonging 237
Giving Generously of Ourselves 237
Rise with Strength Renewed 238
God and the Kohen Gadol 238
Avodah Service 239
Yom Kippur Customs 241
The Kittel 243
A Meditation on Fasting 244
Dress 246
(Alternative) Yom Kippur Chant 247
Why Fast? 247
We Are Clay in the Potter's Hands 249
Teshuvah: Forgiveness Walks 250
La-Brit Habet—Recall Your Covenant 251
Never Lose Hope: Uve-khen tikvah le-dor-shekha 251
Ve-Yaya-su Kulam Agudah Ehat—The Importance of Community 252
Get a Life 253
The Origins of Yom Kippur 253
Who Fasts? 254
May We Rise Along with Our Prayers 254
A New Ya-aleh 255
U'v'khen Ten Kavod Le-amekha—Give Dignity to
Your People—Kavod: Honor Connected to
Our Deepest Selves 256
Kavanah for the Amidah—Devekut: Clinging to God 257
Introduction to the <i>Amidah</i> 257
Ki Hineh KaHomer 258
Hayom—The Opportunity of the Present Moment 259
Hayom—Today 261
Aleinu—The Kabbalistic Origins of Tikkun Olam 261
Sim Shalom—A Prayer for Peace 262
Yaaleh—Let Us Rise in Torah Knowledge: Flying Words 262

Contents xv

Ve-yaa-su Khulam Agudah Ehat—Gathered Embers Generate Heat 264 V'tivneha M'herah Ut'gadel K'vodah—Rebuild and Glorify Your Land 264 *Piyyutim:* Liturgical Poetry 265 Jonah and Human Responsibility Jonah: Running Away from Ourselves The Book of Jonah: A Lesson on Happiness 269 Jonah and Self-Change 270 Ionah: A D'var Torah 271 274 Ionah Learns about Love The Book of Jonah: A Summary 275 Why Are You Sleeping? Mah Lekha, Nirdam?—Jonah 1:6 278 Of What People Are You?—I Am a Hebrew (Jonah 1:8–9) 282 Choosing to Change 283 The Book of Jonah—Whose Story Are We Telling? 284 Closing the Gates 287 The Gates Are Open—God Accepts All 289 Pidyonenu Ad Arev—May Redemption Come to Us at Dusk 289 Walking through Different Kinds of Doors—Judge Us Not for What We Were, but for What We Can Be 290 Is It Too Late? 290 *N'eilah*—The Closing of the Gates 291 The Final Shofar Blast Closing Gates, New Beginning 292 294 Shofar The Gates Clang Shut—Neilah 295 N'eilah 296 A Meditation before Neilah 298 Displaced Persons 301

xvi Contents

## Next Year in Jerusalem 303

Jerusalem Rebuilt—This Year in Jerusalem! 305 Next Year in Jerusalem—Guide Our Steps 306

From the Shofar 306

Suspended between Heaven and Earth 307

La-shanah Ha-ba-ah (Ha-zot!) B'yerushalayim—Whatever We Have Lost, We Can Find in Jerusalem 307

La-shanah Ha-ba-ah B'Yerushalayim—How Seriously
Do We Mean It? 308

Moshe Dayan at the Kotel—This Year in Yerushalayim! 309

Next Year in Yerushalayim!—Finding a Way to Return 310

Next Year in Yerushalayim 310

La-shanah Ha-ba-ah B'yerushalayim!—To Jerusalem 311

La-shanah Ha-ba-ah B'Yerushalayim 311

Sources 313
About the Contributors 325
Credits 332