

## A SERVICE OF KOHELET

### Music

### Reader

The words of Kohelet, Sage of ancient Israel:

Two are better than one;

for if they fall

the one will lift up the other

(Eccl. 4:9,10; selection)

### Reader and Congregation

Gathered together in a community of concern, we turn the vast reaches of the universe into home. Gathered together in a community of care, we turn the black spaces of the heavens into light. Gathered together in a community of compassion, we turn the cold brightness of distant stars into warmth.

Two are better than one;

for if they fall

the one will lift up the other

טובים השנים מן־האחד  
*Tovim hashnayim min ha-echad*  
כי אם־יפלו  
*Ki im yipolu*  
האחד יקים את־חברו  
*ha-echad yakim et chavero.*

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## Song

How good and how pleasant it is  
when fellow humans dwell together  
in harmony.

הנה מה טוב ומה נעים  
*Hinei mah tov umah na-im*  
שבת העם גם יחד.  
*shevet ha-am gam yachad*

### Reader

I Kohelet applied my mind  
to know and to search out,  
to seek understanding  
and an explanation of things.

I Kohelet sought to  
find out words of delight  
and what is written correctly;

I Kohelet sought words of truth.

(Eccl. 7:25,12:10; selections, adapted.)

### Reader and Congregation

Out of creation's wellspring, whence our lives flow, comes the power of mind and its quest for life's meaning. Yet knowledge is not received as a gift, we must search to attain understanding. Answers to the questions our lives raise bring delight; words of truth bring pleasure.

סבותי אני ולבי  
*Saboti ani velibi*  
לדעת ולתור  
*lada-at velatur,*  
ובקש חכמה  
*uvakeish chochmah*  
וחשבון  
*vecheshbon*  
אני קהלת בקשתי  
*Ani Kohelet bikashti*  
למצא דברי־חפץ  
*limtzo divrei-chefets*  
וכתוב ישר  
*vechatuv yosher;*  
אני קהלת בקשתי דברי אמת.  
*Ani Kohelet bikashti divrei emet*

I Kohelet sought to  
find out words of delight  
and what is written correctly;  
I Kohelet sought words of truth.

אָנִי קִהַלְתִּי בְקִשְׁתִּי  
*Ani Kohelet bikashti*  
לְמִצְא דְבַר־חֶפֶץ  
*limtzo divrei-chefets*  
וְכָתוּב יִשְׂרָאֵל  
*vechatuv yosher;*  
אָנִי קִהַלְתִּי בְקִשְׁתִּי דְבַר־אֱמֶת.  
*Ani Kohelet bikashti divrei emet*

**Reader**

Understanding is a greater  
stronghold to the wise  
than ten rulers that are in a city.

הַחֲכָמָה תְּעוֹז לְחָכָם  
*Hachochmah ta-oz lechacham*  
מֵעֲשָׂרָה שְׁלִיטִים  
*mei-asarah shalitim*  
אֲשֶׁר הֵיוּ בְּעִיר  
*asher hayu ba-ir.*

(Eccl. 7:19)

**Reader and Congregation**

Life comes to us unfinished; our task is to shape who we will be. Through freedom and the teaching of a community of wisdom, we create ourselves in the image of that which we desire. So does understanding fashion mind and heart, and guide our way on future paths.

Understanding is a greater  
stronghold to the wise  
than ten rulers that are in a city.

הַחֲכָמָה תְּעוֹז לְחָכָם  
*Hachochmah ta-oz lechacham*  
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*mei-asarah shalitim*  
אֲשֶׁר הֵיוּ בְּעִיר  
*asher hayu ba-ir.*

**(Congregation rises)**

**Reader**

Bless the community of Israel  
that serves as a blessing.

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת קְהַל יִשְׂרָאֵל  
*Barechu et kehal Yisra-el*  
הַמְבָרַךְ.  
*hamevareich.*

**Reader and Congregation**

Blessed is the community  
that serves as blessing a  
forever and ever.

בְּרוּךְ הַקְהָל  
*Baruch hakahal*  
הַמְבָרַךְ  
*hamevareich*  
לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.  
*le-olam va-ed.*

**(Congregation is seated)**

**Reader**

Order and disorder share the world. Justice and injustice pervade human life.

**Reader and Congregation**

Working diligently, we may fail;  
Pursuing health, we may fall sick;  
Doing good, we may receive ill;  
Giving friendship, we may make foes;  
Reaching for others, we may stand alone.

**Reader**

So we read in the words of Kohelet that under the sun it may perhaps happen:

The race is not won by the swift,

nor the battle by the brave

nor is food won by the wise,

nor wealth by the intelligent,

nor favor by those who know.

For time and chance

play a part everywhere.

(Eccl. 9:11)

### Congregation

This is the way of the world; the innocent may suffer and the deserving go without reward. Still, let us keep hope and walk the path of courage. We may not always succeed, yet let us try always to succeed. Our efforts may not bring happiness, yet let us strive to be happy in our efforts. Though a perfect world is beyond our power, we have the power to make the world more perfect than it is.

Cast your bread upon the waters,

for you shall find it after many days.

In the morning sow your seed,

and till the evening give your hand no rest.

For you know not which will prosper,

כִּי לֹא לַקְלִים הַמְרוֹץ  
*Ki lo lakalim hamerotz,*  
 וְלֹא לַגְּבוּרִים הַמְלַחֵמָה  
*velo lagiborim hamilchama;*  
 וְגַם לֹא לַחֲכָמִים לֶחֶם  
*ve-gam lo lachachamim lechem,*  
 וְגַם לֹא לַנְּבוֹנִים עֵשֶׂר  
*ve-gam lo lanevonim osher,*  
 וְגַם לֹא לַיֹּדְעִים חֵן  
*ve-gam lo layod-im chein.*  
 כִּי־עֵת וְפִנֵּעַ  
*Ki eit vafega*  
 יִקְרָה אֶת־בְּלָם.  
*yikreh et kulam.*

this one or that,

or whether both alike shall be good.

(Eccl. 11:1,6)

### Music (Congregation rises)

#### Reader

We are children of time. In time we are born, and in time our lives unfold.

### Congregation

Time is never the same. Life, carried in the flow of time, ever changes. Living time is a chain linked by seasons, a chain we create and in which we are created.

### Reader and Congregation (May be chanted after reading)

Hear O Israel,

the source of creation

is a source ever new.

Blessed is the chain of creation

forever and ever.

### Congregation is seated)

*Ki einecha yodei-a ei zeh yich-shar*

הָיָה אוֹזְהָ

*hazeh o-zeh,*

וְאִם־שְׁנֵיהֶם כְּאַחַד טוֹבִים.

*ve-im shnei-hem ke-echad tovim..*

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל

*Shema Yisra-el,*

מְקוֹר מִתְחַדֵּשׁ

*mekor mitchadeish,*

מְקוֹר בְּרִיאָה.

*mekor beri-ah.*

בְּרוּכָה שְׁלֹשֶׁת הַבְּרִיאָה

*Beruchah shalsholet haberi-ah*

לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

*le-olam va-ed.*

**Reader**

A season is set for everything,

לְכֹל זְמַן

*Lakol zeman*

a time for every event under heaven.

וְעֵת לְכֹל־חַפְזֵי תַחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם.

*ve-eit lechol cheifets tachat hashamayim.*

**Congregation**

A time to die and a time to be born,

עֵת לָמוּת וְעֵת לְלֵדָת

*Eit lamut ve-eit laledet,*

A time to weep and a time to laugh.

עֵת לְבִכּוּת וְעֵת לְשִׂחוֹק

*Eit liv-kot ve-eit lis-chok.*

**Reader**

A time to lose and a time to seek;

עֵת לְאַבֵּד וְעֵת לְבַקֵּשׁ

*Eit le-abeid ve-eit levakeish,*

A time to mourn and a time to dance;

עֵת סִפּוּד וְעֵת רִקּוּד

*Eit sefod ve-eit rekod.*

**Congregation**

A time for breaking down  
and a time for building up;

עֵת לְפְרוֹץ וְעֵת לְבִנּוּת

*Eit lifrots ve-eit livnot*

A time to be silent and a time to speak;

עֵת לְחֶשֶׁת וְעֵת לְדַבֵּר

*Eit lachashot ve-eit ledabeir.*

**Reader and Congregation**

A time to hate and a time to love;

עֵת לְשִׂנְאָה וְעֵת לְאַהֲבָה

*Eit lisno ve-eit le-ehov,*

A time for war and a time for peace.

עֵת מִלְחָמָה וְעֵת שְׁלוֹם.

*Eit milchamah ve-eit shalom.*

**Reader**

The seasons of life are many: infancy and childhood, youth and maturity. Each brings its promise, and each its duty. Even as we enjoy one season, the next and future seasons call to us.

**Congregation**

To the summons of our seasons we must give answer, for we are all our seasons. As we meet their challenges, we fulfill life's promise. So do we travel in truth the stages of life's way. For everything has been made beautiful in its season.

**(Music – Silent Meditation)**

Life, life's many seasons  
have their beauty and reasons.  
Links in a chain of days,  
Promising tomorrows to yesterdays.

**Reader**

Though life may be troubled, we are here;  
Despite all our sorrow, we are here.

**Congregation**

We know of pain and failure,  
Still we are here.

**Reader**

For the sun can shine on a wintry day.  
And a warm embrace bring tomorrow's hope.

### Congregation

We have come together to create light,  
We have come together to create meaning.

### Reader

Life is a sacred gift,  
let us rejoice in its many blessings;  
Sadness can serve happiness,  
sorrow can teach joy.  
Giving, taking,  
our pleasures are many:  
Working, resting,  
may all our times be good.

### Reader and Congregation (May be chanted after reading)

Joyful are we,  
how goodly is our portion,  
how pleasant is our lot,  
how beautiful is our inheritance.

אֲשֶׁרֵינוּ  
*Ashreinu,*  
מֵה-טוֹב חֶלְקֵנוּ  
*Mah tov che-.kein-u,*  
וּמֵה-נְעִים גּוֹרְלֵנוּ  
*U-mah na-im go-ra-lie-nu,*  
וּמֵה-יָפָה יְרֻשָׁתֵנוּ  
*U-mah ya-fah ye-ru-sha-tei-nu.*

### Responsive Reading

### Reader

So writes Kohelet:

How sweet is the light,

מֵתוֹק הָאוֹר  
*Matok ha-or,*

and what a delight it is for the eyes  
to see the sun.

וְטוֹב לְעֵינַיִם  
*vetov la-einayim*  
לְרִאוֹת אֶת-הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ.  
*lir-ot et hashemesh.*

### Congregation

Go eat your food in joy,  
and take your drink in gladness.

לֶךְ אֲכַל בְּשִׂמְחָה לַחֲמֶךְ  
*Leich, echol besimchah lachmecha,*  
וּשְׁתֵּה בְּלֵב-טוֹב יַיִןךָ  
*ushetei velev tov yeinecha.*

### Reader

Though it be many years one may live,  
one should rejoice in all of them.

אִם-שָׁנִים הַרְבֵּה יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם  
*Im shanim harbei yichyeh ha-adam,*  
בְּכֹלֵם יִשְׂמַח  
*bechulam yismach.*

So banish care from your minds,  
and remove sorrow from your flesh.

וְהָסֵר כְּעַם מִלְּבָבְךָ  
*Vehaser ka-as milibecha,*  
וְהָעֲבֵר רָעָה מִבְּשָׂרְךָ  
*veha-aver ra-ah mibesarecha.*

### Congregation

Enjoy your youth,  
enjoy life with those whom you love,  
all the days of your life.

שִׂמַח בְּיַלְדוּתְךָ  
*Semach beyaldutecha.*  
רְאֵה חַיִּים עִם-אֲשֶׁר-אַהַבְתָּ  
*Re-eih chayim im asher ahavta*  
כָּל-יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ  
*kol yemei chayecha.*

### Reader

Whatsoever you are able to do,

כָּל אֲשֶׁר תִּמְצָא יָדְךָ לַעֲשׂוֹת  
*Kol asher timtza vadecha la-asot*

do with all your might.

בְּכַחַד עָשָׂה.

*Bechochacha asei.*

For that is what you get out of life

כִּי הוּא חֶלְקֶךָ בַּחַיִּים

*Ki hu chelkecha bachayim,*

and the work you do

וּבְעַמְלֶךָ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה עֹמֵל

*uva-amalecha asher atah amel*

under the sun.

תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ

*tachat hashemesh*

(Eccl. 9:7,9-10;11:7-10; selection, adapted.)

**(Kiddush may be recited here)**

**(Congregation rises)**

**Reader and Congregation**

Let us rejoice in the everliving creation, and give praise to the greatness that is manifest throughout the world. In the heavens above and the earth below, the divine glory stands revealed. Yet creation is never ended and the universe never full. Potentialities remain unrealized and promises unfulfilled. Thus even as we affirm the present, we commit ourselves to the future, to the ideal of ever higher being, and to the richness of the coming life.

We acknowledge,

וְאֵנַחְנוּ בּוֹרְעִים

*Va-anachnu kore-im,*

reverence and are grateful

וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים

*umishtachavim umodim*

before the holy and blessed flow

לְפָנֵי שְׁפַע זְמַן וּבְרִיאָה

*lifnei shefa zeman uveri-ah*

of time and creation.

הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

*hakadosh, baruch hu.*

**(Congregation is seated)**

## Threnody (Concluding Meditation)

**Reader**

Though one may live many years,

אִם־שָׁנִים הַרְבֵּה יַחֲיֶה הָאָדָם

*Ki im shanim harbeh yich-yeh ha-adam,*

one should rejoice in them all;

בְּכֻלָּם יִשְׂמַח

*Be-chulam yis-mach,*

before the sun is darkened,

עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִחְשַׁךְ הַשָּׁמֶשׁ

*Ad asher lo tech-shach hashemesh,*

with the light, the moon, and the stars,

וְהָאוֹר וְהַיָּרֵחַ וְהַכּוֹכָבִים

*veha-or, vehayarie-ach, ve-hakochavim.*

and the clouds return after the rain.

וְשָׁבוּ הָעַנָּנִים אַחַר הַגֶּשֶׁם

*Veshavu he-avim achar hagashem.*

Before the silver cord is snapped asunder,

עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִרְחַק חֶבֶל הַכֶּסֶף

*Ad asher lo yieracheik chevel hakesef,*

and the golden bowl is shattered,

וְתֵרֵץ גִּלְתֵּי הַזָּהָב

*Vetaruts gulat hazahav,*

and the pitcher is broken at the fountain

וְתִשְׁבֵּר כַּד עַל־הַמְּבֹועַ

*Vetishaver kad al hamabu-a*

and the wheel falls shattered, into the pit,

וְנִרְץ הַגִּלְגָּל אֶל־הַבּוֹר

*Venarots hagalgal el habor,*

and the dust returns to the earth

וְיָשַׁב הָעָפָר עַל־הָאָרֶץ

*Veyashov he-afar al ha-arets*

as it was.

בְּשִׁהָיָה.

*keshehayah.*

(Eccl. 11:8; 12:2,6; selection, adapted)

**(Kaddish may be recited here)**