

A Ritual for Entering Into Fall

Adapted, with gratitude, from the teachings of Rabbi Jill Hammer.

(begin with a niggun / wordless melody)

Take a breath and hold it, still:

feel the cusp on which we are poised.
Light and darkness in balance.

What do you hope for
during this darkening season
of dreams and visions?

This year the autumn equinox falls during the Ten Days of Teshuvah. What deeds will we inscribe in the book of our lives during the autumn to come? What new name for God will we receive at Yom Kippur a few shortening days from now?

Rabbi Jill Hammer teaches that "If Rosh haShanah is a book of light, Yom Kippur is a book of shadows. Together they are the balance of day and night at this autumn season." During these Ten Days of Teshuvah, we balance between them like the earth balanced between one season and the next.

Equinox

11:45 eastern daylight time
is when this hemisphere,
balanced on the knife-edge
of summer, tilts into fall.

Rise from the clutter of your desk
rotate your creaking neck
and slide the screen door open.
Remember how to breathe.

Walk across the wild thyme.
In the corner behind the lilac
past the tiny backyard meadow
the berry canes are fruiting.

Here are tight red berries
on their way to blackening.
And here ripe ones, dark and lush
glimpsed beneath serrated leaves.

What a way to mark the moment,
the hard work of two springs ago
paying off now as if by magic.
Recognize grace. Open your hands.

(Rabbi Rachel Barenblat)

Havdalat ha Tekufah / Equinox Havdalah

Hold up the glass of wine or grape juice.

*Baruch ata Adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam
borei p'ri hagafen.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Blessed are You, Adonai, our divinity who guides the world, creator of the fruit of the vine.

Hold up the seasonal herbs, then pass them around and inhale their sweetness.

*Bruchah at Shekhinah eloheinu ruach ha'olam,
boreit isvei vesamim.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתְּ שְׁכִינָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרְאִית עֵשְׂבֵי בְשָׁמִים:

Blessed are You, Shekhinah, our divinity who embodies the world, creator of fragrant plants and grasses.

*Baruch ata adonai eloheinu melekh ha'olam,
oseh vereishit, asher bit'vunah meshaneh itim
umachalif et hazemanim. Od kol yemei
ha'aretz zera vekatzir vekor vechom vekayitz
vechoref veyom velailah lo yishbotu.
Beruchah at shekhinah, mevarechet
hashanim.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, עוֹשֶׂה
בְּרִישִׁית, אֲשֶׁר בְּתִבּוּנָה מְשַׁנֶּה עֵתִים, וּמַחְלִיף
אֶת הַזְּמַנִּים. עַד, כָּל-יְמֵי הָאָרֶץ: זָרַע וְקָצִיר
וְקָר וְחָם וְחֹרֶף, וַיּוֹם וְלַיְלָה--לֹא יִשְׁבְּתוּ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתְּ שְׁכִינָה, מְבַרְכֶת הַשָּׁנִים.

Blessed are you, Adonai, our Divinity who guides the world, who makes creation, whose wisdom changes the times and turns the seasons. As long as the days of the earth endure, planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease. Blessed are you, Holy One, who blesses the years.

Amen!

(end with a niggun / wordless melody)