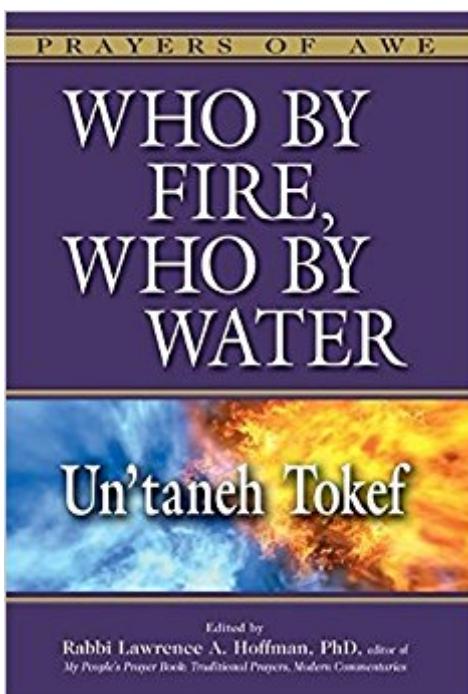


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# Who By Fire, Who By Water: Un'taneh Tokef (Prayers Of Awe)



## Synopsis

The most controversial prayer of the Jewish New Yearâ •what it means, who wrote it, why we say it. Over forty contributors who span three continents and all major Jewish denominations examine Un'taneh Tokef's theology, authorship, and poetry through a set of lively commentaries. Men and women, scholars and rabbis, artists and poets trace the history of Unâ ™taneh Tokef and connect the prayer to its biblical and rabbinic roots. They wrestle with the personal and community impact of its deeply moving imagery, probe its haunting message of human mortality, and reflect on its call for sanctity, transformation and renewal. Prayers of Awe: A multi-volume series designed to explore the High Holy Day liturgy and enrich the praying experience for everyoneâ •whether experienced worshipers or guests who encounter Jewish prayer for the very first time. Contributors Merri Lovinger Arian Rabbi Tony Bayfield, DDr Rabbi Sharon Brous Dr. Marc Brettler Dr. Erica Brown Rabbi Ruth Durchslag, PsyD Rabbi Edward Feinstein Rabbi Elyse D. Frishman Rabbi Andrew Goldstein, PhD Dr. Joel M. Hoffman Rabbi Delphine Horvilleur Rabbi Elie Kauner Rabbi Karyn D. Kedar Dr. Reuven Kimelman Rabbi Lawrence Kushner Rabbi Noa Kushner Rabbi Daniel Landes Rabbi Ruth Langer, PhD Liz Lerman Rabbi Asher Lopatin Catherine Madsen Rabbi Jonathan Magonet, PhD Rabbi Dalia Marx, PhD Ruth Messinger Rabbi Charles H. Middleburgh, PhD Rabbi Rachel Nussbaum Rabbi Aaron Panken, PhD Rabbi Or N. Rose Rabbi Marc Saperstein, PhD Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso Rabbi Jonathan P. Slater, DMin Rabbi Brent Chaim Spodek Rabbi David Stern Rabbi David A. Teutsch, PhD Rabbi Gordon Tucker, PhD Dr. Ellen M. Umansky Rabbi Avraham Weiss Rabbi Margaret Moers Wenig, DDD Dr. Ron Wolfson Rabbi David J. Wolpe Rabbi Daniel G. Zemel Dr. Wendy Zierler

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman, PhD, has served for more than three decades as professor of liturgy at Hebrew Union Collegeâ "Jewish Institute of Religion in New York. He is a world-renowned liturgist and holder of the Stephen and Barbara Friedman Chair in Liturgy, Worship and Ritual. His work combines research in Jewish ritual, worship and spirituality with a passion for the spiritual renewal of contemporary Judaism. His many books, written and edited, include seven volumes in the Prayers of Awe series: Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ •Un'taneh Tokef; All These Vowsâ •Kol Nidre; We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ •Ashamnu and Al Chet; May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaismâ •Yizkor; All the World: Universalism, Particularism and the High Holy Days; Naming God: Avinu Malkeinuâ •Our Father, Our King; and Encountering God: El Rachum V'chanunâ •God Merciful and Gracious. Hoffman also edited the ten-volume series My Peopleâ ™s Prayer Book: Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries, winner of the National Jewish Book Award; and coedited My Peopleâ ™s Passover Haggadah: Traditional Texts, Modern Commentaries, a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award (all Jewish Lights). Rabbi Hoffman cofounded and developed Synagogue 2/3000, a transdenominational project to envision and implement the ideal synagogue of the spirit for the twenty-first century. In that capacity, he wrote Rethinking Synagogues: A New Vocabulary for Congregational Life (Jewish Lights). Merri Lovinger Arian is on the New York faculty of the Hebrew Union Collegeâ "Jewish Institute of Religion and its School of Sacred Music. In addition, she serves there as Synagogue 3000's consultant on liturgical arts, supervising rabbinic and cantorial students in the art of leading and creating worship collaboratively. Rabbi Tony Bayfield, CBE, DD (Lambeth), is president of the Movement for Reform Judaism in the United Kingdom. He teaches personal theology at the Leo Baeck College in London. He contributed to We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ •Ashamnu and Al Chet, Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ •Un'taneh Tokef, and All These Vowsâ •Kol Nidre (all Jewish Lights). Dr. Marc Zvi Brettler is the Dora Golding Professor of Biblical Studies at Brandeis University. He contributed to all volumes of the My People's Prayer Book: Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries series, winner of the National Jewish Book Award, and to My People's Passover Haggadah: Traditional Texts, Modern Commentaries; Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ •Un'taneh Tokef; All These Vowsâ •Kol Nidre; May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaismâ •Yizkor; and We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ •Ashamnu and Al Chet (all Jewish Lights). He is coeditor of The Jewish Annotated New Testament and The Jewish Study Bible, which won the

National Jewish Book Award; co-author of *The Bible and the Believer*; and author of *How to Read the Jewish Bible*, among other books and articles. He has also been interviewed on National Public Radioâ™s *Fresh Air* by Terry Gross. Rabbi Sharon Brous is the founding rabbi of IKAR ([www.ikar-la.org](http://www.ikar-la.org)), a spiritual community dedicated to reanimating Jewish life through soulful religious practice that is rooted in a deep commitment to social justice. She has been noted as one of the leading rabbis in the country in *Newsweek/Daily Beast* and has been listed among the *Forward*'s fifty most influential American Jews numerous times. She serves on the faculty of the Wexner Heritage Program, the Shalom Hartman Institute, and Reboot and sits on the board of Rabbis for Human Rights. Dr. Erica Brown, an inspiring writer and educator, is scholar-in-residence for the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington. She consults for the Jewish Agency and other Jewish non-profits, and is a faculty member of the Wexner Foundation. She is an Avi Chai Fellow, winner of the Ted Farber Professional Excellence Award, and the recipient of a Covenant Award for her work in education. She is author of *Confronting Scandal: How Jews Can Respond When Jews Do Bad Things*; *Inspired Jewish Leadership: Practical Approaches to Building Strong Communities*, a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award, and *Spiritual Boredom: Rediscovering the Wonder of Judaism*; and co-author of *The Case for Jewish Peoplehood: Can We Be One?* (all Jewish Lights). She contributed to *We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ•Ashamnu and Al Chet, Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ•Un'taneh Tokef and All These Vowsâ•Kol Nidre* (both Jewish Lights). She lectures widely on subjects of Jewish interest and leadership. She lives in Silver Spring, Maryland, with her husband and four children, and can be reached at [www.EricaBrown.com](http://www.EricaBrown.com). Rabbi Ruth Durchslag, PsyD, is a rabbi and successful clinical psychologist. She is passionate about bringing Judaism to alienated and disaffected Jews who have never found a way into organized Jewish life and reaching out to anyone seeking personal meaning within Jewish tradition. She is also an avid meditator and seeks to create bridges between meditation and Judaism. Toward that end, Rabbi Durchslag is involved in founding the Center for Jewish Mindfulness in Chicago, and works in the federal prison to create interfaith programs for inmates. Rabbi Edward Feinstein is senior rabbi of Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, California. He is an instructor in the Ziegler Rabbinical School of American Jewish University and the Wexner Heritage Program. He is the author of *Tough Questions Jews Ask: A Young Adult's Guide to Building a Jewish Life* (Jewish Lights) and *Capturing the Moon*; and the editor of *Jews and Judaism in the 21st Century: Human Responsibilities, the Presence of God, and the Future of the Covenant* (Jewish Lights). He contributed to *May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaismâ•Yizkor; Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ•Un'taneh Tokef and We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ•Ashamnu and Al Chet*

Chet (all Jewish Lights). Rabbi Elyse D. Frishman is editor of *Mishkan T'filah: A Reform Siddur* and rabbi of The Barnert Temple in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey. She contributed to *We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaism* •*Ashamnu* and *Al Chet*, and *Who by Fire, Who by Water* •*Unâ™taneh Tokef* (Jewish Lights). Rabbi Andrew Goldstein, PhD, is the rabbinic advisor to the European Union for Progressive Judaism and coeditor of *Machzor Ruach Chadashah*. He contributed to *May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaism* •*Yizkor*, *Who by Fire, Who by Water* •*Un'taneh Tokef*, *All These Vows* •*Kol Nidre*, and *We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaism* •*Ashamnu* and *Al Chet* (all Jewish Lights). Dr. Joel M. Hoffman lectures around the globe on popular and scholarly topics spanning history, Hebrew, prayer, and Jewish continuity. He has served on the faculties of Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York. He is author of *And God Said: How Translations Conceal the Bible's Original Meaning* and *In the Beginning: A Short History of the Hebrew Language*, and has written for the international *Jerusalem Post*. He contributed to all ten volumes of the *My People's Prayer Book: Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries* series, winner of the National Jewish Book Award; to *My People's Passover Haggadah: Traditional Texts, Modern Commentaries*; and to *May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaism* •*Yizkor*, *Who by Fire, Who by Water* •*Unâ™taneh Tokef* and *We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaism* •*Ashamnu* and *Al Chet* (all Jewish Lights). Rabbi Delphine Horvilleur is the rabbi of congregation MJLF (Mouvement Juif Libéral de France) in Paris. She was ordained at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York in 2008 and is one of two women rabbis in France. She is the creative director of *Le Café Biblique*, a pluralistic group of Jewish study, and chief editor of *Tenou'a* ([www.tenoua.com](http://www.tenoua.com)), a French magazine of Jewish thought. She contributed to *May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaism* •*Yizkor*, *Who by Fire, Who by Water* •*Un'taneh Tokef*, *All These Vows* •*Kol Nidre*, and *We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaism* •*Ashamnu* and *Al Chet* (all Jewish Lights). She is author of *En Tenue d'Ève* (Grasset), a renewed understanding of modesty and women's bodies in Jewish thought. Rabbi Elie Kaunfer, named one of the top fifty Jewish leaders by *The Forward*, and one of *Newsweek's* top fifty rabbis, is co-founder and executive director of *Mechon Hadar* ([www.mechonhadar.org](http://www.mechonhadar.org)), an institute that empowers Jews to build vibrant Jewish communities. *Mechon Hadar* has launched the first full-time egalitarian yeshiva program in North America, *Yeshivat Hadar* ([www.yeshivathadar.org](http://www.yeshivathadar.org)), where Rabbi Kaunfer teaches Talmud. A Dorot Fellow and Wexner Graduate Fellow, Rabbi Kaunfer co-founded *Kehilat Hadar* ([www.kehilathadar.org](http://www.kehilathadar.org)), an independent minyan in Manhattan committed to spirited traditional prayer, study and social action.

He was selected as an inaugural Avi Chai Fellow, known as "The Jewish Genius Award." Rabbi Karyn D. Kedar teaches matters of the spirit to groups throughout the U.S. She is senior rabbi at Congregation B'nai Jehoshua Beth Elohim in the Chicago area, and the inspiring author of The Bridge to Forgiveness: Stories and Prayers for Finding God and Restoring Wholeness; Our Dance with God: Finding Prayer, Perspective and Meaning in the Stories of Our Lives; and God Whispers: Stories of the Soul, Lessons of the Heart and contributed to May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaism •Yizkor; Who by Fire, Who by Water •Un'taneh Tokef; and All These Vows •Kol Nidre (all Jewish Lights). Rabbi Lawrence Kushner is one of the most widely read authors by people of all faiths on Jewish spiritual life. He is the best-selling author of such books as Invisible Lines of Connection: Sacred Stories of the Ordinary; God Was in This Place & I, I Did Not Know: Finding Self, Spirituality and Ultimate Meaning; Honey from the Rock: An Introduction to Jewish Mysticism; The Book of Letters: A Mystical Hebrew Alphabet; The Book of Miracles: A Young Person's Guide to Jewish Spiritual Awareness; The Book of Words: Talking Spiritual Life, Living Spiritual Talk; Eyes Remade for Wonder: A Lawrence Kushner Reader; I'm God, You're Not: Observations on Organized Religion and other Disguises of the Ego; Jewish Spirituality: A Brief Introduction for Christians; The River of Light: Jewish Mystical Awareness; The Way Into Jewish Mystical Tradition; and co-author of Because Nothing Looks Like God; How Does God Make Things Happen?; Where Is God?; What Does God Look Like?; and In God's Hands. He is the Emanu-El Scholar at San Francisco's Congregation Emanu-El and an adjunct professor of Jewish mysticism and spirituality at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Rabbi Lawrence Kushner is available to speak on the following topics: ¢ Jewish Mystical Imagination ¢ Rymanover's Silent Aleph: What Really Happened on Sinai ¢ Zohar on Romance and Revelation ¢ What Makes Kabbalah Kabbalah ¢ Sacred Stories of the Ordinary: When God Makes a Surprise Appearance in Everyday Life [Click here](#) to contact the author. Rabbi Noa Kushner is founding rabbi of The Kitchen. One part indie-Shabbat community, one part San Francisco experiment, and one part tool kit for DIY Jewish practice. The Kitchen is building a connected, spiritually alive Jewish generation and a new resonance approach to religious life. She contributed to Who by Fire, Who by Water •Un'taneh Tokef, All These Vows •Kol Nidre and We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaism •Ashamnu and Al Chet (all Jewish Lights). Rabbi Daniel Landes is the director and rosh hayeshivah of the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem. Pardes brings together men and women of all backgrounds to study classical Jewish texts and contemporary Jewish issues in a rigorous, challenging and open-minded environment. Rabbi Landes is also a contributor to the My People's Prayer Book: Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries series, winner of the National

Jewish Book Award and My People's Passover Haggadah: Traditional Texts, Modern Commentaries, a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award; Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ •Unâ ™taneh Tokef; We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ •Ashamnu and Al Chet and All These Vowsâ •Kol Nidre (all Jewish Lights).Rabbi Ruth Langer, PhD, is professor of Jewish studies in the Theology Department at Boston College, where she also serves as associate director of its Center for Christian-Jewish Learning. She received her PhD in Jewish liturgy and her rabbinic ordination from Hebrew Union Collegeâ “Jewish Institute of Religion. She contributed to Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ • Un'taneh Tokef and We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ •Ashamnu and Al Chet (both Jewish Lights).Liz Lerman is founding artistic director of the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange. A member of Temple Micah in Washington, DC, she was the Sally Priesand Visiting Professor at Hebrew Union Collegeâ “Jewish Institute of Religion. She is the recipient of the National Foundation for Jewish Culture Award in Performing Arts, the American Jewish Congress Golda Award, and a MacArthur Fellowship. Her latest book is Hiking the Horizontal.Rabbi Asher Lopatin is the spiritual leader of Anshe Sholom B'nai Israel Congregation, a modern Orthodox synagogue in Chicago. On a Rhodes Scholarship, he completed an MPhil in medieval Arabic thought from Oxford University and did doctoral work at Oxford on Islamic fundamentalist attitudes toward Jews. He was ordained by Rabbi Ahron Soloveichik, Yeshivas Brisk, and Yeshiva University. He is the incoming president of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, succeeding Rabbi Avi Weiss.Catherine Madsen is the author of The Bones Reassemble: Reconstituting Liturgical Speech; In Medias Res: Liturgy for the Estranged; and a novel, A Portable Egypt. She is librettist for Robert Stern's oratorio "Shofar" (on the CD Awakenings, Navona Records NV5878), and bibliographer at the Yiddish Book Center. She contributed to May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaismâ •Yizkor, Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ •Un'taneh Tokef, All These Vowsâ •Kol Nidre, and We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ •Ashamnu and Al Chet (all Jewish Lights).Rabbi Jonathan Magonet, PhD, is emeritus professor of Bible at Leo Baeck College in London, where he was principal (president) from 1985 to 2005. He is coeditor of three volumes of Forms of Prayer (the prayer books of the British Movement for Reform Judaism) and editor of the eighth edition of Daily, Sabbath and Occasional Prayers. He contributed to May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaismâ •Yizkor, Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ •Un'taneh Tokef, All These Vowsâ •Kol Nidre, and We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ •Ashamnu and Al Chet (all Jewish Lights).Rabbi Dalia Marx, PhD, is a professor of liturgy and midrash at the Jerusalem campus of Hebrew Union Collegeâ “Jewish Institute of Religion and teaches in various academic institutions in Israel, and Europe. Rabbi Marx earned her doctorate at

the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and her rabbinic ordination at HUCâ "JIR in Jerusalem and Cincinnati. She is involved in various research groups and is active in promoting progressive Judaism in Israel. Rabbi Marx contributed to *May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaismâ •Yizkor, Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ •Un'taneh Tokef, All These Vowsâ •Kol Nidre, and We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ •Ashamnu and Al Chet* (all Jewish Lights). She writes for academic journals and the Israeli press, and is engaged in creating new liturgies and midrashim. Ruth W. Messinger is the president of American Jewish World Service. She contributed to *We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ •Ashamnu and Al Chet, Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ •Un'taneh Tokef and All These Vowsâ •Kol Nidre* (both Jewish Lights). Rabbi Charles H. Middleburgh, PhD, is rabbi of the Cardiff Reform Synagogue and director of Jewish studies at Leo Baeck College in London, where he has taught since 1984; and coeditor with Rabbi Andrew Goldstein, PhD, of the *Liberal Judaism Machzor Ruach Chadashah*. He contributed to *May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaismâ •Yizkor, Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ •Un'taneh Tokef, All These Vowsâ •Kol Nidre, and We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ •Ashamnu and Al Chet* (all Jewish Lights). Rabbi Rachel Nussbaum is rabbi and executive director of the Kavana Cooperative in Seattle, Washington. She was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. She was recently awarded an Avi Chai Fellowship for her innovative approach to Jewish community building. Rabbi Aaron D. Panken, PhD, teaches Rabbinic and Second Temple literature at Hebrew Union Collegeâ "Jewish Institute of Religion in New York. He is author of *The Rhetoric of Innovation* (University Press of America), and contributed to *May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaismâ •Yizkor, Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ •Un'taneh Tokef, All These Vowsâ •Kol Nidre, and We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ •Ashamnu and Al Chet* (all Jewish Lights). Rabbi Or N. Rose is an associate dean at the Rabbinical School of Hebrew College. He is the coauthor of *God in All Moments: Mystical and Practical Spiritual Wisdom from Hasidic Masters* and coeditor of *Righteous Indignation: A Jewish Call for Justice; Jewish Mysticism and the Spiritual Life: Classical Texts, Contemporary Reflections and Speaking Torah: Spiritual Teachings from around the Maggid's Table*, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2 (all Jewish Lights). Rabbi Marc Saperstein, PhD, formerly principal of Leo Baeck College, currently serves as professor of Jewish history and homiletics at Leo Baeck College and as professor of Jewish studies at King's College London. Previously he taught for twenty-nine years at three leading American universities. He has published four books on the sermon as source for Jewish history and culture, and contributed to *Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ •Unâ ™taneh Tokef, All These Vowsâ •Kol Nidre and We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ •Ashamnu and Al Chet* (all Jewish

Lights). Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, a parent, spiritual leader, and storyteller, is the awardwinning author of God's Paintbrush, In God's Name, God In Between and many other inspiring books for children of all faiths and backgrounds. The second woman to be ordained as a rabbi (1974) and the first rabbi to become a mother, she and her husband, Dennis, were the first rabbinical couple to jointly lead a congregation •Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis. They have two children, David and Debora, and three grandchildren. Sasso, who holds a doctorate in ministry, is active in the interfaith community, and has written and lectured on the renewal of spirituality and the discovery of the religious imagination in children of all faiths. Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso is available to speak on the following topics:/p>Nurturing the Spiritual Imagination of Children Tell Me a Story: Reading the Bible and the Religious Imagination of Children Filling in the Blanks: How Women Read the Bible Women and Judaism: A Personal Journey Midrash as a Tool for Spiritual Reflection Rabbi Jonathan P. Slater, DMin, was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and has a doctor of ministry degree from the Pacific School of Religion. He is the author of Mindful Jewish Living: Compassionate Practice and codirector of programs at the Institute for Jewish Spirituality, as well as an instructor in meditation at the JCC in Manhattan and other venues. He contributed to Who by Fire, Who by Water •Un'taneh Tokef, We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaism •Ashamnu and Al Chet and All These Vows •Kol Nidre (both Jewish Lights). Rabbi Brent Chaim Spodek is the rabbi in residence of American Jewish World Service. Rabbi David Stern is senior rabbi of Temple Emanu-El in Dallas, Texas. He contributed to May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaism •Yizkor, Who by Fire, Who by Water •Un'taneh Tokef and All These Vows •Kol Nidre (all Jewish Lights). Rabbi David A. Teutsch, PhD, is the Wiener Professor of Contemporary Jewish Civilization and director of the Center for Jewish Ethics at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, where he served as president for nearly a decade. He was editor in chief of the seven-volume Kol Haneshamah prayer book series. His book A Guide to Jewish Practice: Everyday Living (RRC Press) won the National Jewish Book Award for Contemporary Jewish Life and Practice. He is also author of Spiritual Community: The Power to Restore Hope, Commitment and Joy (Jewish Lights) and several other books. He contributed to May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaism •Yizkor, Who by Fire, Who by Water •Un'taneh Tokef, All These Vows •Kol Nidre, and We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaism •Ashamnu and Al Chet (all Jewish Lights). Rabbi Gordon Tucker, PhD, is senior rabbi at Temple Israel Center in White Plains, New York, and adjunct assistant professor of Jewish philosophy at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America where he formerly served as dean of its rabbinical school. He is the editor and translator of Heavenly Torah: As Refracted through the

Generations.Dr. Ellen M. Umansky is the Carl and Dorothy Bennett Professor of Judaic Studies at Fairfield University in Fairfield, Connecticut. She is currently working on a book focusing on Judaism, liberalism, feminism, and God. She contributed to Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ •Un'taneh Tokef, We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ •Ashamnu and Al Chet and All These Vowsâ •Kol Nidre (both Jewish Lights).Rabbi Avraham Weiss is the founder and president of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, the Modern and Open Orthodox Rabbinical School in New York. He is also the senior rabbi of the Hebrew Institute in Riverdale. Most recently, he founded Yeshivat Mahara't, an Orthodox school ordaining women to become spiritual leaders. Rabbi Weiss was named one of the fifty most influential rabbis in America by Newsweek magazine. He is the author of Spiritual Activism: A Jewish Guide to Leadership and Repairing the World (Jewish Lights).Rabbi Margaret Moers Wenig, DD, teaches liturgy and homiletics at Hebrew Union Collegeâ "Jewish Institute of Religion in New York and is rabbi emerita of Beth Am, The People's Temple. She contributed to May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaismâ •Yizkor, Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ •Un'taneh Tokef, All These Vowsâ •Kol Nidre, and We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ •Ashamnu and Al Chet (all Jewish Lights).Dr. Ron Wolfson, visionary educator and inspirational speaker, is Fingerhut Professor of Education at American Jewish University in Los Angeles and a cofounder of Synagogue 3000. He is author of Relational Judaism: Using the Power of Relationships to Transform the Jewish Community; The Seven Questions You're Asked in Heaven: Reviewing and Renewing Your Life on Earth; Be Like God: God's To-Do List for Kids; God's To-Do List: 103 Ways to Be an Angel and Do God's Work on Earth; Hanukkah, Passover and Shabbat, all Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs Art of Jewish Living family guides to spiritual celebrations; The Spirituality of Welcoming: How to Transform Your Congregation into a Sacred Community; A Time to Mourn, a Time to Comfort: A Guide to Jewish Bereavement and Comfort; and, with Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman, What You Will See Inside a Synagogue (all Jewish Lights), a book for children ages 6 and up. He contributed to May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaismâ •Yizkor, Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ •Un'taneh Tokef, All These Vowsâ •Kol Nidre, and We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ •Ashamnu and Al Chet (all Jewish Lights).Dr. Ron Wolfson is available to speak on the following topics: Building Good Tents: Envisioning the Synagogue of the FutureGod's To-Do ListThe Seven Questions You're Asked in HeavenBlessings and Kisses: The Power of the Jewish FamilyA Time to Mourn, a Time to ComfortClick here to contact the author. Rabbi Daniel G. Zemel is the senior rabbi of Temple Micah in Washington, D.C. He contributed to Jewish Men Pray: Words of Yearning, Praise, Petition, Gratitude and Wonder from Traditional and Contemporary Sources, May God Remember: Memory

and Memorializing in Judaismâ •Yizkor, Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ •Un'taneh Tokef, All These Vowsâ •Kol Nidre, and We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ •Ashamnu and Al Chet (all Jewish Lights).Dr. Wendy Zierler is professor of modern Jewish literature and feminist studies at Hebrew Union Collegeâ "Jewish Institute of Religion, New York. She is translator and coeditor with Rabbi Carole Balin of To Tread on New Ground: The Selected Writings of Hava Shapiro (forthcoming) and a Behikansi atah (Shapiro's collected writings, in the original/Hebrew). She is also author of And Rachel Stole the Idols and the feminist Haggadah commentary featured in My People's Passover Haggadah: Traditional Texts, Modern Commentaries (Jewish Lights), a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award. She contributed to May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaismâ •Yizkor, Who by Fire, Who by Waterâ •Unâ ™taneh Tokef, All These Vowsâ •Kol Nidre, and We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaismâ •Ashamnu and Al Chet (all Jewish Lights).

Anyone expecting Rabbi Hoffman's book to contain imaginative and sermonic material built on but unrelated to the true history, content, difficulties, and relevance of one of the most moving prayers of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, will be pleasantly surprised, because the book does not do so. Rabbi Hoffman offers his readers a wealth of information about the poem/prayer Un'taneh Tokef and introduce them into the history of prayers, why the ancients set aside a special prayer book, called machzor, for holidays, when and why poems, such as Un'taneh Tokef, were added to the service, who wrote this poem, why, and what meaning it can have for us today. The book includes essays by over forty rabbis and scholars from three continents, from all the major Jewish denominations, from mystics to rationalists, from halakhics to dancers. There is a legend that the poem was composed by a rabbi who suffered martyrdom. Rabbi Hoffman presents the legend translated into English from its original Hebrew source, analyses it, and shows that while the tale is inspiring and meaningful, it is not true. One contributor translates Un'taneh Tokef, offers a line by line commentary, and shows the sources of the poet's imagery, and the difficulties that exist in virtually every line because it is composed in ancient poetic Hebrew, because it is a composite of at least two original poems, and we do not know what the editor of the composite intended to convey. The book defines Un'taneh Tokef as "And let us acknowledge the power (of this day's holiness)." Some contributors point out the difficulties they see in the ideology and theology of the poem. Others highlight the seeming contradiction between the poem saying that a person's fate is sealed on Yom Kippur, while it later says that "repentance, prayer, and charity help the hardship pass." The primary image of the prayer/poem is God possessing tablets or scrolls in which He

inscribes the deeds and destinies of human beings. This notion predates Israel. The people of ancient Mesopotamia held the identical idea. Many of the writers in this volume found this view of God disturbing. Do we want to portray God anthropomorphically, like a forgetful king who needs to write himself post-um notes to prompt him to remember to act? Another central idea of the poem is that God is involved in producing evil. Is he responsible for the holocaust? Did he cause men and women to have cancer? Another idea is that "penitence, prayer, and charity avert the evil decree" (or, as translated in the volume, "help the hardship pass

The first site offering the book at a discount to the original publisher. Good price

Some things are lightning rods of controversy. *Un'taneh Tokef* is one of them. "Who By Fire, Who By Water" is a collection of Rabbis and other Jewish thinkers as they converge and offer their own thoughts and opinions on the controversial piece of Jewish literature and what it means in regard to the Jewish new year. For those seeking a fascinating look into one of the hotly debated topics of modern Judaism, "Who By Fire, Who By Water" is a core addition to any Judaic studies collection.

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