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Background on *Selichot*:

- ### Texts and Questions for *Selichot*:

“[it calls out] ‘Awake, awake, O sleeper, from your sleep; O slumberers, arouse yourself from your slumbers; examine your deeds, return in repentance, and remember Your Creator.

The shofar is also said to be our wake-up call. Are there wake up calls that have happened to you this year that could serve as a reminder to pay attention to our actions and prepare for what lies ahead?

One of the central prayers of a Selichot service that is read comes from the Book of Exodus (34:6-7) and is referred to as the 13 Attributes of God.

וַיַּעֲבֹר יִתְנָה | עַל-פְּנֵי נִיקְרָא יִתְנָה | יְהִיָּה אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וּרְב־חֶסֶד וְאַמֶּת | נִצֵּר חֶסֶד לְאֱלֹפִים נִשְׂא עֲזָן וּפָשַׁע | וְחִטָּאָה וְנִשְׁקָה לֹא יִנְשֵׂה פֶקֶד | עֲזֹן אֲבוֹת עַל-בָּנִים וְעַל-בְּנֵי בָנִים עַל-שְׁלֹשִׁים וְעַל-רַבְעִים:

The Lord! The Lord! A God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, rich in steadfast kindness, extending kindness to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; yet He does not remit all punishment... (Exodus 34:6-7)

*The kabbalists introduced the custom of also reciting the 13 Attributes of Mercy before taking the Torah from the ark during the three pilgrimage festivals of Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot.

*How do you view God? If you have a God concept, does this fit with it?
This sounds aspirational. I.e., slow to answer, abundant in kindness. Taking these words personally, could they also be used to describe you? How easy or challenging do you think it is to reach these personality attributes? Has this described how you related to people in the past year?*

Wrapping Yourself in a Tallit for Selichot:

”וַיַּעֲבֹר ה' עַל פָּנָיו וַיִּקְרָא”. אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: אֵלֶּמְלָא מְקַרָּא כְּתוּב, אִי אֶפְשָׁר לְאוּמָרוּ. מְלַמֵּד שְׁנֵיתֵי עֶשְׂרִי הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא. כְּשֶׁלִּיחַ צָבוּר, וְהִרְאָה לוֹ לְמֹשֶׁה סֵדֶר תְּפִלָּה. אָמַר לוֹ: כָּל זֶמֶן שִׁישְׁרָאֵל חוֹטְאִין — יַעֲשׂוּ לְפָנַי כְּסֵדֶר הַזֶּה וְאֲנִי מוֹחֵל לָהֶם. The verse states: “And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed” (Exodus 34:6). Rabbi Yohanan said: Were it not explicitly written in the verse, it would be impossible to say this, as it would be insulting to God’s honor. The verse teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, wrapped Himself in a prayer shawl like a prayer leader and showed Moses the structure of the order of the prayer. He said to him: Whenever the Jewish people sin, let them act before Me in accordance with this order. Let the prayer leader wrap himself in a prayer shawl and publicly recite the thirteen attributes of mercy, and I will forgive them. (Rosh Hashanah 17b)

*It is customary to wear a Tallit for Selichot even though you generally don’t wear one when it’s dark out (except for Yom Kippur or when you serve as Shaliach Tzibur, prayer leader...).

*Can you imagine God wrapped in a Prayer Shawl?
Do you own a Tallit, or have you worn one before?
Do you think ritual garb helps us enter into a time for prayer?
This Talmudic text teaches that God will forgive us when we repent and try harder. Do you think that forgiveness is important in your life today?
Are there some people that you need to forgive?
Do you need to be forgiven for something? A time when you missed the mark or acted beneath you?*

As you prepare for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur ask yourself:

- What are 5 regrets that I have from this past year?
- What are 3 relationships that I want to prioritize this year?
- What are 5 hopes I have for the new year?