

Hillel Bavli was born in Lithuania in 1893, and in 1919, began teaching Bible, Hebrew and modern Hebrew literature, which he continued for more than 40 years. He embodied the very best of the Hebrew cultural renaissance unleashed by the eruption of Zionism. He also was a public critic of the Jewish Theological Seminary's ambivalence over the creation of Israel in 1948. Above all, Bavli wrote Hebrew poetry that spanned the many layers of the language and alluded to every corner of its literature. He ranked as America's finest Hebrew poet. Following is one of his poems befitting the High Holy Days

This is my prayer to you, my gentle God—
Let me not stray from my life's course
Let not my spirit fall into decay,
And may it never cease to thirst for you.
And for the energizing dew
That you have sprinkled on it
Ever since my life was new.
And let my heart be open to
The downtrodden, and to the orphaned life,
And to all who stumble
And to one entangled in hidden sorrows,
And to one who struggles in the dark.
And bless my eyes, and let me merit
To behold the human beauty in this world.
Deepen my senses, widen their grasp
So they absorb a green and flowing
And budding world, and take from it
The secret blossoming within a silence.
Grant me with strength to yield
The best of fruits. Let my life grow
A wealth of word and deed, steeped
In the fountain of my being,
Without my measuring all things
For only what they have to offer me.
And when my day shall come
Let me slip into the land of night,
Without asking anything of others
Or from you, God.