

Resources for
Patients, Family Members,
Friends, Clergy and
Health-Care Professionals

Jewish Spiritual Companion for Medical Treatments

A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT OF
**The Twin Cities Jewish Healing Program and
The National Center for Jewish Healing**



Foreword

The journey of illness is in many ways a solitary experience. Whether or not we have loved ones by our side, there may be moments when we feel that others cannot fully understand what we are going through. No one can stand inside the experience with us, and our words often fail to fully express what we are experiencing. There are times when we find ourselves alone, face to face with our own powerlessness, painfully aware of the fragility of human life.

Jewish tradition addresses the painful solitude of illness with a range of rituals and images, and a great depth of empathy and understanding. Jewish communities have reinvigorated the traditional practice of *"bikkur holim,"* the mitzvah of visiting the ill, to soothe suffering with the balm of human presence and caring.

So, too, our tradition assures us that when we are ill, there is special comfort to be found from beyond the human realm — from our Source, the Infinite, from God. The author of the biblical book of Psalms promises, "God will sustain you on your sickbed; God will transform your bed of suffering." (Psalm 41:4) From this verse the Rabbis of the Talmud developed the remarkable idea that the Divine Presence rests above the head of our bed when we are ill. This beautiful image suggests that it is possible to find comfort, to sense a loving Presence beyond and within ourselves, and to sustain hope. This teaching confirms what we know from experience, that times of suffering may open the heart, making love more real and making healing and transformation possible.

The Twin Cities Jewish Healing Program, in collaboration with the National Center for Jewish Healing, has created this beautiful collection of prayers and reflections, bringing together wise Jewish voices, both ancient and contemporary, to offer comfort and inspiration in the midst of illness. We hope that these pages may help you to feel less alone and sustain you in moments of distress. We pray that as you read these pages, you will breathe in the wisdom of those who have gone before you, and sense the presence of others who have struggled as you do.

May this book of prayer in some way contribute to the unfolding of healing. And may healing come soon to all those in need.

Rabbi Amy Eilberg

May 2007

Acknowledgments

The creation of the *Jewish Spiritual Companion for Medical Treatments* was made possible by the heartfelt participation of a number of organizations and many individuals who dedicated creative energy and financial resources to this endeavor.

First and foremost, we extend our deep appreciation to Margie Weil and the entire staff of the Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis for their support and encouragement that enabled the idea for this guide to grow from inspiration to reality. Special thanks goes to Robin Gale, Healing Program Assistant, Sara Jay, Healing Program Volunteer and Margie Glazer, editor and writer, all of whom worked enthusiastically and tirelessly over the past year.

The steadfast dedication of the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, New York, NY, has enabled a range of resources to be developed out of its Rita J. Kaplan Jewish Connections Programs. A special *Thank You* goes to Alisha Goodman and Jonathan Katz for their assistance in helping to prepare this guide for publication and international distribution. We appreciate the inspiration and support provided by the UJA-Federation of New York's Caring Commission's-Spiritual Care Task Force, which has dedicated itself to facilitating the integration of Jewish spiritual care into health, behavior health and social worker practice.

Participants from throughout the national network of Jewish Healing Centers helped cull spiritual resources, prepare original works, and carefully consider how to offer a guide that would be highly accessible. We want to especially thank Marjorie Sokoll, M.Ed., (Jewish Healing Connections, JF&CS, Boston) and Rabbis Amy Ruth Bolton (The Living Room/JFS Bergen County, NJ) and Amy Eilberg for understanding the need for this resource and dedicating significant time to giving it shape and spirit.

And, to all the writers represented in this guide, we offer our appreciation for generously sharing your personal journeys and Jewish wisdom — thereby helping to illuminate the path for all of us.

L'shalom,



Judy Marcus, MSW

Twin Cities Jewish Healing Program/
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Rabbi Stephanie Dickstein, LMSW

National Center for Jewish Healing/
Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services

Introduction

Whether in a hospital setting, at an out-patient center, or in one's own living room, so many of us find ourselves spending time receiving medical treatments. Some of us are assisted by medical providers, some by visiting nurses, some by family members, and some are on our own. But wherever the treatment takes place, and whoever is involved, many challenges confront us — coping with uncertainty and confusion, with the length of treatment, with the possibilities of pain and isolation, and with the need to mobilize strength, courage, and hope.

Indeed, *Jewish Spiritual Companion for Medical Treatments*, grew in response to a request from a new state-of-the-art medical center that had an unmet need. The planners had carefully acquired the latest technology, designed the building to be light and airy, and furnished it with comfortable chairs in soothing colors. When the center opened, it became clear that everything was in place except for spiritual resources.

Judy Marcus, Twin Cities Jewish Healing Program Coordinator, had the wisdom to recognize the importance of this request. She dedicated herself to developing this resource and collaborated with the National Center for Jewish Healing to prepare it for national distribution. The Twin Cities Jewish Healing Program, a program of Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis, is one of the oldest Jewish healing centers in the United States.

This *Jewish Spiritual Companion for Medical Treatments* aims to provide care for the soul. It is designed to offer accessible spiritual resources for people going through many types of tests and treatments. The reader does not need to be Jewishly knowledgeable or have Hebrew language skills in order to draw spiritual support, strength, and insights from this guide. Those with a background of Jewish learning may find new meanings and ways of looking at familiar texts and practices.

This guide offers a variety of contemporary poems, psalms, rituals, brief memoirs, and other healing tools alongside ancient biblical texts, rabbinic teachings and medieval prayers. The narrative voices reflect a sampling of different types of medical challenges and responses to them, offering wisdom that, while specific to a particular condition, also holds threads common to the experience of many.

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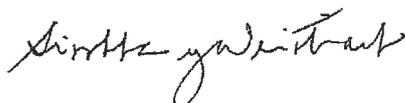
We have organized this guide into four chapters that suggest a journey with beginnings, middles, and endings. However, in reality, when thrust into medical treatments, one may be on many levels, at different points in the process, simultaneously. We invite you to become familiar with the various chapters and turn to those sections that speak to you at any particular juncture. You may encounter narratives that are less helpful, and if so, we encourage you to move on. Likewise, we invite you to reflect on, and make a companion of, those pieces that speak to your experience at any given point in your journey.

When it comes to drawing strength and guidance from the Jewish tradition and the Jewish community, we think of the ancient statement of Ben Bag Bag, a 1st century BCE scholar:

“Turn it over, and turn it over again, for all is within it.”

— Pirke Avot 5:22

We hope and pray that these resources and voices offer helpful companions on your journey of healing, and wish you *refuah shleymah*, a complete healing, of body, mind, and spirit.



Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW
Rabbinic Director



Susan Rosenthal, LCSW
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Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services

To learn more about Jewish healing and spiritual care, locate your local Jewish Healing Center or access other Jewish spiritual resources, publications, bibliographies and links, visit us at www.ncjh.org.



EAR FRIEND,

The *Mi Sheberach*, the Jewish prayer for healing, recognizes that there are two components of health: the body and the soul. This guide provides resources to strengthen and accompany you on your journey toward health.

Many of the enclosed prayers and personal stories were written by fellow travelers, seeking to weave the rich spiritual resources of Jewish tradition with contemporary wisdom on health and healing. All of these writers have experienced significant illness or loss either within their own lives or within the lives of loved ones. We honor their life experiences as we honor yours.

While each individual's spiritual journey is unique, there is much that we all hold in common. We hope you will find support and comfort within these pages.

This guide encourages you to direct your journey in several directions: turning inward to gather strength, reaching upward in prayer, and reaching outward in search of hope and connections to your community. The journey toward healing includes all of these paths. As Reb Nachman of Breslov taught, "A person reaches in three directions: inward to self, up to the Divine Presence, and out to others. The miracle of life is that in truly reaching in any one direction, one embraces all three."

Please remember, you do not have to walk this journey alone. There are many Jewish spiritual resources available to you. To find your nearest Jewish Healing Center and other resources, visit the National Center for Jewish Healing at www.ncjh.org.

May blessings and hope surround and sustain you. May you have a complete healing, one of body and soul.

Judy Marcus

Judy Marcus, MSW

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"Encouraging words are as honey, sweet to the soul and health to the being."

— Proverbs 16:24



CHAPTER 1

Beginnings: Diagnosis and Medical Treatment

At some point along the way, perhaps when talking with a doctor or while waiting for a test result, we suddenly realize we've been thrust onto a different path. The ground does not seem quite as solid. We are facing new challenges and may be experiencing feelings ranging from fear, confusion, anger, and loneliness to great hope and determination.

Feeling shaky on this new ground, we may find ourselves looking for something to steady us as we find our bearings. This chapter provides a sampling of Jewish spiritual resources for support along the path. And, since a number of points in our medical treatment may feel like new beginnings, we might find ourselves returning to this chapter often.

"A Jewish approach to healing...comforts us with the knowledge that Jews have walked this path for thousands of years, finding light in the midst of darkness. It reminds us that we are not alone."

Rabbi Rachel Cowan

T'filat Haderech (The Traveler's Prayer)

תפלת הדרך

 In the Jewish tradition, one recites *T'filat Haderech* (The Traveler's Prayer), before traveling a road filled with challenges. As you continue on your journey, we hope you may draw strength from this prayer.

As we set out on our journey
May it be Your will,
O Sheltering One,
to guide our footsteps toward
peace and wholeness.

Help us reach our desired destination
with life, gladness and well-being.

Rescue us from all harm:
from dangers known and unforeseen
along our way.

Bless all the work of our hands.
Grant us grace, kindness and compassion in
Your eyes and in the eyes of all whom you meet.

Hear the sound of our call
You who hearkens to our voice.
Blessed are You,
O Compassionate One.
You respond to our prayers.

*From the Liturgy, Creative Translation
by Judy Marcus, MSW*

*"Behold, I am sending an angel before you to guard you on your path
and to bring you to your destination."*

Exodus 23:20

Releasing Fear

It is natural to be frightened when we become ill. We feel vulnerable. We worry; we want to know that everything will turn out all right. We sometimes feel alone even when loved ones are by our side. The illness lies within us, and no one else knows exactly how we feel.

Prayer has the power to transform our fear into faith. It reminds us that we are never alone. Everything we are, body and soul, is in the hand of God, whose presence fills the universe and who is as close to us as our own breath. No matter what this unpredictable world sends our way, with God by our side we can find the strength to confront our fears. So pray and welcome God's healing power.

Rabbi Naomi Levy



May God heal you, body and soul.
May your pain cease,
May your strength increase,
May your fears be released,
May blessings, love and joy surround you.
Amen.

Rabbi Naomi Levy



**"A person walks through life on a very narrow bridge.
The most important thing is to not be afraid."**

Reb Nachman of Breslov

At Diagnosis

*S*it beside me, O Eternal:
Comfort my soul.

At the clamouring bell of news revealed,
You listen with me,
Hearing my disbelief,
Absorbing my gasp of fright.

Wait beside me, O Eternal:
Comfort my soul.

Recall to me my cherished memories
To bring me forward through adversity,
To stretch from then to now to beyond,
Beckoning to a future You will guard.

Walk beside me, O Eternal:
Comfort my soul.

Help me find the broken pieces,
Gathering them to my trembling hand,
Raw materials for my future life.
Let me find Your hand in this design.

Watch beside me, O Eternal:
Comfort my soul.

Reform me to a different vessel:
Altered by dark fires of fortune,
Hardened in an unknown kiln,
Burning away the superficial.

Wrap me in Your healing light,
Wrap me in Your healing light.

Debbie Perlman

After the Diagnosis

The human spirit is a powerful factor in what lies ahead after a diagnosis. There is the will to live, something that can't be measured by science, but something, that plays out in people's lives in a daily way."

"Most of us fear that we would fold our tents, go home and hide, but very few humans do that. Instead, most people begin to live more passionately than ever before, as if they don't have time for anything that is not true."

These reflections by Rachel Naomi Remen were shared during a radio interview with Daniel Gottlieb. Rachel went on to describe her own experience with illness: "I was 15 years old and I had just been given the diagnosis of Crohn's Disease. I was told that I would not live beyond the age of 40. I walked out of my doctor's office in Manhattan and I noticed two healthy blades of grass growing right through the cement. I felt that if grass can be so resilient and have such a powerful, unstoppable life force to grow in such a hostile environment, I, too, would be resilient... I am now over 60 years old. I have outlived that diagnosis by more than 20 years."

Referring to the resilient blades of grass, Daniel added, "The Talmud says: Every blade of grass has an angel standing over it saying, 'Grow! Grow!' Something in us yearns toward our own dreams of ourselves and that something is what our medical team needs to partner with to help us meet our dreams."

*Public broadcast interview with
Daniel Gottlieb, PhD, and Rachel Naomi Remen, MD*

Power

*F*or a moment, I feel strong,
I am fighting a powerful enemy
That threatens my body and spirit,
But I know that I am not alone.

O God, I dare to believe
That You stand with me in this trial.
I believe You want me to win —
Whatever that means,
That You want for me
To bring all my strength to living with this.

Promise me
That You will bless me in the midst of this,
That You will guide me to the treasure
That may be hidden for me within this struggle.

O God,
Rage with me against this enemy.
Be with me in my anger.
Remember that I am Your child.
Help me as I fight to live
As fully as I can through this.
Be my support, my courage, my strength.
Hold me when I fall,
Love me when I doubt,
Cheer me on when
I have moments of triumph.
Dear God, with You on my side,
I can go on.

Rabbi Amy Eilberg



The Dew of Life

n Judaism, dew is a restorative elixir graciously dispensed by the hand of God. When the Jews in the desert were desperate for food, God gave them manna, described in the Torah as the "blessing of dew." The prophet Isaiah spins a vision of wholeness in which the dew of light brings healing. And, the Rabbis employ the richness of these images in the Prayer for Dew, recited on the first day of Passover, the holiday of our release from bondage.

Medicines which drip into our bodies offer the possibility and gift of healing. However, this gift sometimes comes with distressing strings attached which may interfere with our ability to fully welcome the healing potential of these droplets.

This adaptation of the traditional "Dew" prayer acknowledges the risk and danger, while inviting us to welcome the treatment like "the parched earth that blossoms from the life renewing dew."

A PRAYER TO RECITE WHEN ANY INTRAVENOUS PROCEDURE IS STARTED.

**Merciful One, open the gates of Your wondrous storehouse
releasing Your sparkling dew.**

**Droplets of life, flow gently, mending the hurt in this body of mine,
watering the vines of this garden.**

**Droplets of blessing, come gently, fetching a year of goodness,
filling with peace the reservoir of my soul.**

**Droplets of dew, heal gently, softening this hard place of blessing,
giving praise to the work of our Creator.**

**Droplets of dew,
come for a blessing and not a curse.
Come for life and not for death.
Come bringing plenty and not emptiness.**

Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin

Verses for Calming and Meditation

edical treatments — including the anticipation, the procedures, the waiting, can be stressful and, at times, physically uncomfortable or painful. Many people find that some form of controlled meditative breathing, visualization and chanting can be helpful.

Concentrating on the breath is key to many meditative traditions. In Judaism, there are daily prayers which make reference to receiving our souls through the breath of God. The Hebrew words for *neshima* (breath) and *neshama* (soul) are closely related.

One simple, calming breathing exercise focuses on the word *Shalom*, which means “peace” and is connected to the words for wholeness and well-being. Sit in, or imagine being in, a comfortable position. Breathe in and out slowly and deeply. Each time, as you breathe in, think of saying the word *Shalom*, slowly, as if it has three or more syllables and then exhale slowly.

Chanting involves the repetition of syllables, words, phrases or verses. A chant may or may not have a melody. The words or verses often have a meaning, which may be amplified with the repetition. Reciting the same phrase multiple times can trigger a calming, “relaxation response,” as breathing slows and focuses the mind.

Below we offer just three verses from Biblical and prayer texts. You can understand them literally, or as metaphors. If you want, try the Hebrew sounds; however, chanting in English can be equally supportive.

Kol haneshama t'hallel Yah, halleluyah

All that breathes, with every breath, I will praise You, halleluyah

Psalms 150:6

Ozi v' zimrat Yah v'yehi-li lishua

God is my strength and my song, and will be my deliverance

Exodus 15:3

Hazorim b'dima, b'rina yiktsoru

Those who sow in tears will reap in joy

Psalms 126:5

Rabbi Stephanie Dickstein, LMSW

Always Present: Psalm 121

A SONG OF ASCENTS

שִׁיר לַמַּעֲלוֹת. אֲשָׂא עֵינַי אֶל-הַהָרִים מֵאֵין יָבֵא עֲזָרִי:



will lift up my eyes to the mountains. From where does my help come?

My help comes from God, Maker of heaven and earth.

God will not let your foot stumble; the One who watches over you will not slumber.

Behold, the One who watches over Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

God is your protector; God is your shade upon your right hand.

The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

Adonai will preserve you from all evil; God will safeguard your soul.

God will guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and for ever.



When experiencing physical or emotional pain, we may feel lonely, isolated, misunderstood. We look for steadiness, for comfort, for answers. The words of this Psalm reassure us that God is always present, manifest in our lives in different ways. Sometimes we need God to take charge as our Guardian (*Shomer*), to watch over and care for us, so that we can let down our guard and simply be. Sometimes God is our comforting Shadow (*Tzel*), that silent, invisible presence that is always with us.

In the last verse, we are assured that both our "going out and coming in" are protected. We are encouraged to go forward on this journey that has been thrust upon us, knowing that God's Eternal Protection will envelop us. And we are reassured that whatever journey we are on, we are not floundering. We are always "coming in," returning home, returning to ourselves, returning to God.

Rabbi Amy Ruth Bolton and Judy Marcus, MSW



CHAPTER 2

Calling Out: Prayers for Healing

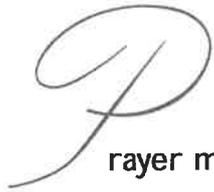
Prayer holds a unique, often intensely private meaning for each of us. It may take the form of set words from a traditional prayer book. Or it may find expression in communing with nature, witnessing a sense of order and wonder in the world. For some, prayer emerges through study or music. The variations are endless.

In times of illness, new questions may emerge about prayer: In what ways might prayer work? Where is God in all of this? What am I praying for? How and where do I pray? This chapter provides traditional and contemporary prayers, psalms and reflections for exploring our relationship to prayer as well as a guide to creating your own prayers.

*"Prayer can water an arid soul,
mend a broken heart,
and rebuild a weakened will."*

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

How Prayer May Work



Prayer may work
in that we may have asked God for something
which indeed came about.

Prayer may work
by invoking a greater sense of God's presence.

Prayer may work
by way of distraction, momentarily pulling us out of pain
or discomfort into a place of beauty or transcendence.

Prayer may work
by deeply grounding us as we focus mindfully
on our present moment.

Prayer may work
by quieting and centering the self.

Prayer may work
by connecting us with the wider Jewish community and
with traditions that may provide additional strength.

Prayer may work
by helping us connect to a deep level of the self which is already healed and whole,
reminding us of our essential wholeness.

Prayer may work
in focusing us, the pray-ers, on the blessings in our lives,
enabling our sense of gratitude to blossom.

Rabbi Amy Eilberg



I Prayed for Wisdom, Courage, and Patience

Prayer was an important source of strength for me while battling cancer. When undergoing treatment, I must confess that I did not always know what to pray for. Because I believe in a living limited God who is not the cause of life's difficulties or illness, I reasoned then that God cannot provide the cure.

So I prayed instead for wisdom not to lose perspective, to remember, in the midst of helplessness, the blessings that I continued to possess, to remain as even-tempered as possible despite being afraid or in pain. I prayed for courage to cope with whatever lay ahead and for strength to sustain the hopes of my family and friends. In those moments when I felt absolutely powerless, something particularly difficult for a person as independent as I am, I prayed for patience and the ability to endure a little more. When I was too weak to pray, I hoped that God's love would envelop me, that God's embrace would bring me comfort and lift me up from the depths of despair.

In an episode of *All in the Family*, Archie Bunker, more of a believer than he would ever admit, was in trouble one day and looked up to heaven saying, "Lord, A. Bunker here." That memory continues to bring a smile to my face, knowing as I do that God is our faithful Friend, the One who listens, and the One who understands.

Rabbi Sally J. Priesand

A Song of Healing

Soothe away my fears, Holy One;
Order these difficult days.
Praising You, I reach for healing,
Holding close Your constancy.
In between each today and tomorrow,
Arrange my move toward wholeness.

Bring Your strength to my need!
A mending and a healing,
True and straight.

Every day stronger, I bless You:
Small steps to complete healing.
Trusting You, I accommodate these changes,
Helped by skilled hands,
Embraced by love and concern,
Resting in Your care.

Debbie Perlman



A Nature Prayer

God:

Grant me the ability to be alone!
May it be my custom to go outdoors each day
among the trees and grass-
among all growing things,
and there may I be alone,
and enter into prayer,
to talk with the One to whom I belong.

May I express there everything in my heart,
and may all the foliage of the field-
all grasses, trees and plants-
awake at my coming,
to send the powers of their life into the words of my prayer
so that my prayer and speech are made whole
through the life and the spirit of all growing things,
which are made as one by their transcendent Source.

May I then pour out the words of my heart
before your Presence like water, God,
and lift up my hands to You in song,
on my behalf, and that of my children!

*Adapted from Likutey Moharan, Part I, # 52
Reb Nachman of Breslov*



Reb Nachman of Breslov, an 18th century Hasidic Master, teaches that prayer can bring us in touch with our innermost selves. For him, the secret of sincere prayer is to find those quiet moments when you can speak to God in the language of your heart, in your words, in your own language. Nature is a particularly conducive place to quiet oneself. By setting aside some time each day for focused private prayer, we enter a special dimension in which the heart can open to intimate communion with God.

Refaeinu (Heal Us) Daily Prayer

Three times each weekday this prayer for healing is recited as part of the central Jewish prayer, *The Amidah* (The Standing Prayer), a collection of 19 blessings and petitions. Traditionally one can add personal requests by naming one who is ill, after the phrase "to all our wounds,"

Refaeinu/Heal us, Adonai,
and we shall be healed;
Save us
and we shall be saved;
for You are our Praise.
Lift up a complete and perfect healing,
a healing of body and spirit,
to all our wounds,
for _____
for You are a Ruler
Who heals
with faithfulness/trust/reliability,
mercy/and compassion.
Blessed are You, Adonai,
Healer of the sick
among Your people of Israel.

*Translation by
Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW*



Healing: Commentary on Psalm 86

*G*ive ear, O Eternal, to my prayer, heed my plea for mercy.
In my time of trouble I call You, For You will answer me.

When pain and fatigue are my companions,
Let there be room in my heart for strength.

When days and nights are filled with darkness,
Let the light of courage find its place.

Help me to endure the suffering and dissolve the fear,
Renew within me the calm spirit of trust and peace.

Baruch ata Adonai, Rofeh Ha'Cholim.
We praise You, O God, Healer of the Sick.

Central Conference of American Rabbis



Introduction to *Mi Sheberach* (Jewish Prayer for Healing)



One of the central Jewish prayers recited for those who are ill or recovering from illness or accidents is known as the *Mi Sheberach*. The name is taken from the prayer's first two words which mean "May the One Who Blessed." It asks for physical cure and spiritual healing, seeking blessing, compassion, restoration and strength, within the community of others facing illness as well as all Jews and all human beings.

Traditionally this prayer is recited during synagogue prayer services when the Torah scroll is open. Increasingly, the *Mi Sheberach* has moved into other settings and other junctures. Chaplains, doctors, nurses, and social workers are now joining patients and those close to them in saying the *Mi Sheberach* at various junctures such as before and after surgery, during treatments, upon admission or discharge, on the anniversary of diagnosis, and more.

We offer you several versions of the *Mi Sheberach*: a traditional one, a contemporary one, one for you to offer for family and friends, and one for you to offer to your health care professionals. Feel free to add to them and to compose your own personal prayers in your own words.

Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW



Traditional *Mi Sheberach* (Jewish Prayer for Healing)

מי שְׁבֵרַךְ לְחֹלִים

מִי שְׁבֵרַךְ
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב
וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ שָׂרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה
הוּא יְבָרְךָ וְיִרְפָּא אֶת הַחֹלִים

May the One who blessed our ancestors —
Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
Matriarchs Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah
Bless and heal the one who is ill:

_____ son/daughter of
_____.

הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
יְמַלֵּא רַחֲמִים עָלֶיךָ
לְהַחֲלִימֶם וּלְרַפְּאֵתָם
לְהַחֲזִיקֶם וּלְהַחֲיֹתָם

May the Holy One, the fount of blessings,
Shower abundant mercies upon him/her,
Fulfilling his/her dreams of healing,
Strengthening him/her with the power of life.

Merciful One:
Restore him/her,
Heal him/her,
Strengthen him/her,
Enliven him/her.

וְיִשְׁלַח לָהֶם מְהֵרָה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה
רְפוּאַת הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְרְפוּאַת הַגּוּף
בְּתוֹךְ שְׂאֵר חוֹלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
הַשְּׂתָא בְּעִגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב
וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן

Send him/her a *refuah shleymah*/a complete healing,
A healing of spirit and a healing of body —
Together with all who are ill,
Among all the people of Israel and all humankind,
Soon, speedily, without delay, let us all say: Amen!

Translation by
Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW



Contemporary *Mi Sheberach*



i Sheberach avoteynu

(May the One Who Blessed our fathers)

Mekor Haberacha l'imoteynu

(Source of Blessing to our mothers)

May the Source of Strength

Who blessed the ones before us

Help us find the courage

To make our lives a blessing.

And let us say: Amen.

Mi Sheberach imoteynu

(May the One Who Blessed our mothers)

Mekor haberacha la'avoteynu

(Source of Blessing to our fathers)

Bless those in need of healing

With *refuah shleymah*:

A renewal of body,

A renewal of spirit.

And let us say: Amen.

Debbie Friedman

Mi Sheberach for Family Members or Close Friends



FOR YOU TO OFFER

May the One who blessed our Matriarchs and Patriarchs

Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

bles and strengthen

my (family member, good friend, etc.)

May s/he be instilled with patience and fortitude,

sensitivity and understanding,

with courage and hope.

May others reach out to her/him

with tenderness and loving kindness

and may s/he receive

the blessings offered

by our community and tradition.

Help her/him to know

how much I appreciate her/his love and devotion.

Give her/him a long, full, peaceful, and happy life

marked by a complete healing,

a healing of spirit, and a healing of body,

now and always,

and let us say,

Amen.

Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW

Mi Sheberach for Health Care Professionals



FOR YOU TO OFFER

ay the One who blessed our Matriarchs and Patriarchs
Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
bless and strengthen
my (doctor, nurse, etc.)
and all who seek to heal those who are suffering.

Imbue her/him with courage, confidence,
understanding, and compassion
so s/he may join You
in the work of healing.

May s/he not surrender in despair,
uncertainty, or fatigue,
but engage in Your work
with wholeheartedness and devotion.

Help her/him to accompany me
throughout my journey-
to speak with me,
to listen to me,
to be with me
so that together we may strive
for a complete healing,
a healing of body and a healing of spirit,
soon, speedily, without delay,
and let us say,
Amen.

Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW



Writing Your Own Prayers From Your Heart

*“G*od, please! Heal her, please!” (Numbers 12:13)
Ei Na R’fa Na La

This was Moses’ brief, yet powerful spontaneous prayer for his sister, Miriam, after she was stricken with the biblical disease, *tzara’at*.

During difficult times — the sharp moments of uncertainty, disbelief, pain, as well as the roller-coaster of ongoing emotions — our desire and ability to pray may vary. For some, spontaneous prayer is our natural response. But for others, anger or hopelessness may prevent us from using these expressions of the heart.

Things can change so quickly in the course of a medical treatment—we hardly have the time to acknowledge and name our feelings. We encourage you to try your hand at composing the prayers of your heart as a means of articulating these moments. Whether kept private or shared, this kind of prayer can help you:

Pray for your loved one
Pray for yourself
Pray when you feel alone
Pray when you are frustrated or angry
Pray when you need strength
Pray when you need hope
Pray when you feel gratitude

Here is a fairly simple traditional structure that can be used as a guideline.

1. Begin by addressing your prayer with a name which is comfortable to you. Here are some examples: Source of Life; Creator; Merciful One; Holy One; *Shekhinah*, etc.
2. State what is going on at this moment. Be honest. State what you feel about the situation right now. Note any changes or transitions you may be facing. Do not be afraid to express anger and other negative feelings.

-
3. Call out for what you want, need or hope for: help me; guide me; may I; etc...
 4. If you feel you can, include in your prayer an expression of gratitude — naming the good that is present in your life.

E X A M P L E :

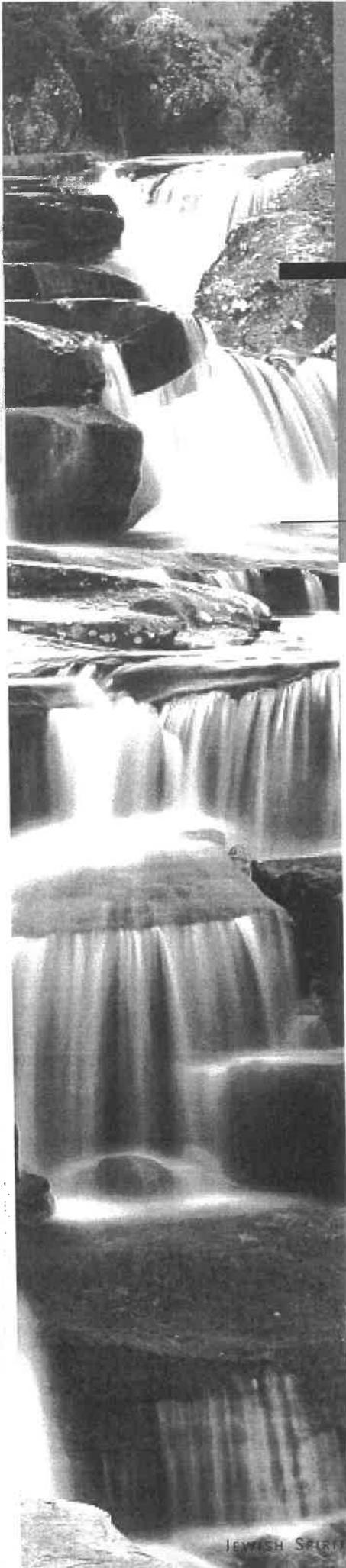
Source of All Creation,

Today has been astonishing. The doctors called with great news. I am starting to recover. I was prepared for the worst; it never came! My joy is overflowing and my hope renewed. In what ways can I express my gratitude to You and all who supported me? Help me to find the strength to face the uncertainty that lies ahead. Give me the wisdom to live each moment with my loving community to the fullest. Shelter us all beneath your wings of peace. I am grateful for the fullness of my life. Amen

In her book, *Talking To God*, Rabbi Naomi Levy reminds us that God hears our prayers and answers us, "but we should not confuse prayer with magic." So don't expect a magical response, but be on the lookout for responses to come in the most unexpected forms — a visit or a phone call from a dear friend, a gesture of caring from a medical professional, some laughter, a moment of deep understanding, and in the form of "a still, small voice..."

Susie Kessler and Susan Rosenthal, LCSW





CHAPTER 3

In the Company of Hope: The Winding Road

Hope provides the strength to journey through unfamiliar territory and face new challenges. Hope has always been a central foundation of Jewish tradition, empowering our ancestors to survive in difficult times. *HaTikvah* (the hope), Israel's national anthem, reminds us of the importance of sustaining hope against all odds.

Reaching for hope invigorates the soul. It animates our healing. As we settle into the routine of medical treatment, with all its twists and turns, ups and downs, our heart and soul give voice to the many challenges and blessings along the path. This chapter provides glimpses of the day-to-day realities of living with illness. It also honors the resilient and irrepressible will to live and love fully.

"Perhaps the wisdom lies in engaging the life you have been given as fully and courageously as possible and not letting go until you find the unknown blessing that is in everything."

Rachel Naomi Remen, MD

Taking Comfort When Ill

H

oly One of Blessing, Your Presence fills creation.
You know my life, my story, my triumphs and losses.
You understand me completely.
I feel You with me in times of illness, injury, doubt, and pain —
Or strength and happiness.

Be with my body and spirit now as I travel a winding road
From illness toward recovery.
Stay near to remind me, I am never alone on this journey.

When the sun rises, reassure me that I will rise as well.
When the sun reaches noon, renew my hope
As I look up to be warmed by its radiance.
When the sun slides toward twilight,
I will give thanks for a day that has lifted my spirit.

Through every long night, stay by my side.
Comfort me as phantoms of fear fly through my imagination,
Then out into my darkened room.
Help me contain them: hold my hand.

Bless my many caregivers: they freely give skill, companionship,
And the fruits of their deep knowing and loving kindness.

Living in this interlude of uncertainty,
I feel guided toward the misty shores of recovery.
Help me see Your face shining upon me as my strength grows,
Self-confidence increases, and faith deepens day by healing day.
Surely I'm cared for silently through time and space.

May the words of my mouth and thankful meditations of my heart
Remind me now and always of Your sustaining love
And everlasting healing powers.

David R. Breakstone

On Waiting and Hoping

K-V-H ק-ו-ה



One of the most challenging aspects of the treatment experience is the *waiting* — whether waiting for an appointment, for test results, for treatments to take effect or end, and so on. Waiting can be maddening and intensely boring; it can feed worry and exacerbate stress. But it is part of life, and certainly a feature of any medical journey or illness odyssey.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE WAIT?

Biblical Hebrew may help us here. In Hebrew, the three-letter root “K-V-H” does indeed mean to “wait,” but it also means to “hope” (readers may recognize the name of Israel’s national anthem, *HaTikvah*, “The Hope”). During some Waits, if not all, we can reach for Hope; we can decide that this waiting is but a pause, a plateau on our climb out of suffering. We await health and joy, freedom and growth — all worth waiting for.

Imagine seizing The Wait by the hand and making it your opportunity to envision a return of healing and wholeness, even against official odds:

“My soul waits only for God in silence; for my hope is from God.

God alone is my rock and my salvation; God is my refuge; I shall not be moved.”

Psalms 62:6-7

Alternatively, The Wait might utilize one other meaning of the Hebrew root “K-V-H”, which is “to collect.” (A “*mikvah*” is where fresh water is collected.) The Wait is my time to collect myself and to assemble nurturing, sustaining resources — whether the reservoir of pleasant memories, readings that might lift the spirit, cell phone calls to loved ones, or other transformative tools.

If nothing else, try meditating on Isaiah’s promise at the end of Chapter 40:

“But those who wait for Adonai shall renew their strength;

they shall mount up with wings as eagles;

they shall run, and not be weary;

and they shall walk, and not faint.”

Isaiah 40:31

Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW

Able to Fly

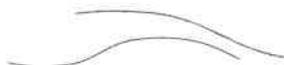
*A*s a person with cancer, some days are filled with anxiety and fear, but then some “random” thing will happen which gives me a lift. One time, for example, someone gave me an anonymous quote from “I Can Cope,” a support organization for people living with cancer:

“When we come to the edge
of all the light we have
and we must take a step into
the darkness of the unknown,
we must believe one of two things:

Either we will find something
firm to stand on
or we will be taught to fly.”

It reminded me that while I may frequently swoop and crash as I try to cope, my capacity for deeply meaningful exchanges, even with strangers, often allows me to fly naturally with no apparent instruments.

Unknown Author



My God! Our God!



MY GOD! OUR GOD! Could You please add to my blessings?

Would You bless me with days and weeks and months in my life when I don't have to pick and choose between the normal daily activities because the resources for energy are running too low for all of them?

Would You bless me with the strength of an immune system and body so that if I want to smother a runny nose baby or coughing hacking adult with my affections I can do it without concern of compromising my own health?

Would You bless me with blood test reports that confound medical science and put the numbers in the realm of a miracle?

And while You are assessing what is possible and how everything actually fits together... given the free will of our human realm and the complexities of Your creation...

Would You continue to bless me with the Courage to wake up, get dressed, and get going...?

Would You continue to bless me with the Will to fight, argue and act on behalf of myself and my health?

Would You continue to bless me with the Grace I strive to carry in my life and into all of my relationships every time I give of myself and try and share my lessons about faith, friendship and love.

Would You continue to bless me with Community who pray for me, care for me and celebrate life with me?

O MY GOD! O OUR GOD! I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE BLESSINGS THAT CONTINUE... AND FOR THE ONES THAT ARE YET POSSIBLE.

Could You please add to my blessings?

Betty Ann G. Miller

Pain and Praise on the Long and Bumpy Road Toward Healing: Psalm 30 and Commentary

1. A Mizmor/Psalm; a song of dedication of the House/Temple, of David.
2. A-donai, my God, I extol You, for You have drawn me up, and not allowed enemies to rejoice over me!
3. A-donai, my God, I cried out to You and You healed me.
4. A-donai, You lifted my *nefesh*/my being from nether-world; you revived me from descent into the Pit.
5. Sing out to A-donai, all who are devoted, full of *hessed*/lovingkindness — praise/give thanks to God's holy name.
6. For God is angry but a moment; life is God's favor!
Weeping may linger for a night, but joy comes in the morning!
7. In my tranquil moments, I said, "I will never be shaken,"
8. For You, A-donai, as You please, You made me firm as a mighty mountain, and when You hid Your presence, I was terrified.
9. To You, A-donai, I call, and to A-donai, I appeal:
10. "What gain is there in my blood; what value in my descent to the grave?
Will dust thank/praise You? Can it recite Your truth, declare Your faithfulness?"
11. *Sh'ma*/Hear, A-donai, and be gracious unto me; A-donai, be my help!"
12. You turn my mourning into dancing for me; You loosen my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness!
13. So that my whole being sings praises to You, so I am not silent; A-donai, my God, I will thank/praise You forever.

Most of the commentaries suggest that this Psalm was written after a deliverance from some difficult or dangerous situation.

Several times the Psalmist speaks of transformation. Verse 6, for example, reads — "Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes in the morning." Or, Verse 12, "You turned my mourning into dancing for me; You loosened my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness!"

(continued on page 30)

A cursory reading of Psalm 30 might suggest that we are simply being told, "Things will get better, just ask for God's help." A deeper reading might tell us something different.

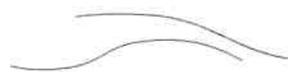
The road to healing is truly a long, winding and often bumpy one. This does not mean we cannot hope. Hope is always there, but we have to ask, "For what are we hoping?" And for what do we ask God? The Psalm hints at an answer.

First there is praise for God of deliverance and healing — for not allowing our souls to sink. We are grateful that weeping can lead to joy. But it seems that the path is not straight or predictable. In the Psalm, following the assurance that tears lead to gladness, we are still calling out to God, asking, still pleading (Verses 8,9,11). Deliverance does not come easily. But at the end we are assured again that "sackcloth" (mourning garments) can lead to gladness.

The Radak (R. David Kimchi, 12th c. Sephardic commentator) writes about this reference to sackcloth turning into gladness. He comments, "*Tachat HaSak*" which usually means that the gladness is instead of the sackcloth. But the Hebrew, *tachat*, besides its meaning of instead can also mean underneath. This suggests that the gladness is somewhere underneath the sackcloth. It may take a while to find, discover, or bring out. This also implies that the sackcloth never fully goes away. It is still there, remaining with us. Even after we have reached a place of joy and serenity, even after we have come to a space of deliverance, the experience of trauma, of pain and sadness are still with us. The element of suffering somehow clings to us during and after healing.

Being in relationship with the Other, the Beloved Friend, allows us to recognize that our suffering and our loss can lead to joy, even while still being a part of our life experience. It allows us to offer praise to the Holy One for what we do have, and not to be silent, just as the last verse tells us.

Rabbi Joseph S. Ozarowski, DMin.



In the Company of Hope

From deep inside out
My eyes communicated
Hope and surety
That I'd be okay. That it was okay.

I pushed away those
Whose eyes met mine
And unintentionally sought to
Deny me my hope.

Those eyes that felt
Abandoned by my hope
Left alone
In their great sorrow and fear.

The doctors' eyes that met mine
were the saddest of all
Eyes trapped by a science
that denied them their capacity and right to hope.

How hard it is, sometimes, to hope
Why does it feel like
The stakes are so high?
The gamble so great?

When
The worst is already known
And will be
If it is meant to be...

What a nice way
To spend one's time
In the company of hope.

Susan J. Rosenthal, LCSW

Birkat HaGomel:

A Blessing of Thanksgiving for Making It Through



av Judah said in the name of Rav:

There are four [classes of people] who have to offer thanksgiving:

those who have crossed the sea,

those who have traversed the wilderness,

one who has recovered from an illness,

and a prisoner who has been set free.

Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 54b

The ancient blessing of *HaGomel*, below, is traditionally and most commonly recited in the presence of a *minyan*, a quorum of ten in Jewish prayer services, as a public acknowledgement of God's deliverance. While it is not appropriate to recite this prayer routinely, for those whose treatments are, themselves, perilous, it is appropriate to say this blessing at any number of points along the way. The time to say *Birkat HaGomel*, is when you feel you are ready to acknowledge having come through something dangerous.

ONE WHO HAS COME SAFELY THROUGH A DANGEROUS EXPERIENCE RECITES:

Barukh Ata

Blessed/Bountiful are You

Adonai, Eloheinu, Melekh HaOlam

Adonai, our God, Ruler of the Universe,

HaGomel l'Hayavim Tovot

Who bestows goodness even on the undeserving,

Sheh-g'malani Kol Tov

and has shown me such kindness.

TO WHICH THOSE WHO ARE GATHERED RESPOND:

To a male: *Mi Sheh-g'mal-kha Kol Tov, Hu Yigmalkha Kol Tov, Selah.*

To a female: *Mi Sheh-g'malekh Kol Tov, Hu Yigmalekh Kol Tov, Selah.*

"May the One who has shown you every kindness always deal kindly with you!"

Translation by

Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW



Shehecheyanu (Who has kept us Alive)

Traditionally the *Shehecheyanu* (sheh-heh-cheh-yah-nu) blessing is recited at special moments of celebration or momentous firsts, i.e. when lighting candles on the first night of Passover, on the occasion of a bar/bat mitzvah or when eating a new fruit. While not recited routinely, this prayer captures the well of emotions in reaching a valued milestone.

The blessing essentially says: Blessed are you, Source of life, who has given us life, sustained us, and allowed us to reach this (precious) moment.

Many people have used this blessing to express gratitude or acknowledge “firsts” or significant milestones in their journeys of treatment and healing — i.e. when returning home from a hospital stay; upon doing a mitzvah one hasn’t been able to do for a period of time; when able to walk or breathe again unassisted; at the first taste of solid food; at an important family gathering; after completing the last of a series of treatments; when a port or other surgical device is removed; when noticing a wound has finally healed or a depression has lifted.

It can be helpful to pause and recognize such “*Shehecheyanu* moments” when they occur. Whether alone or with loved ones or caregivers, you can use the words of the traditional blessing, expand on the ancient formula, or speak (chant, contemplate, gesture...) from the heart in your own way.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ד' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam,
shehecheyanu v'kimanu v'higi-anu laz-man ha-zeh!

Rabbi Natan Fenner, BCC

Strengthen Me

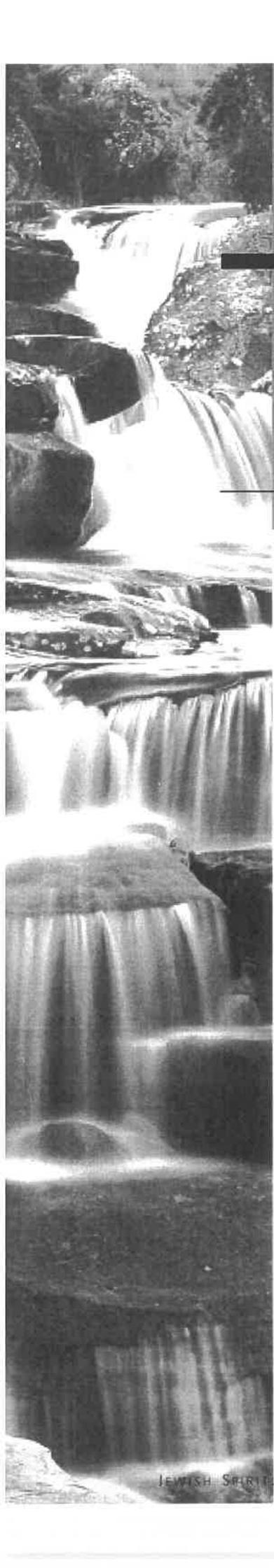
Strengthen me, Holy One, on my journey through illness;
Steady my steps on this difficult path.
Bring me through signposts of remedies and therapies,
Secure in Your guidance as I face these changes.

You are my Strength and my Hope,
The Author of my healing.
You are my Promise and my Courage,
Guiding my helpers as I move toward healing.

Guard the encouragement of simple improvements,
Every day praising Your loving concern.
Make me Your partner, Divine Physician,
Restoring me for your Name's sake.

Debbie Perlman





CHAPTER 4

Gathering Community: Stories and Rituals

In times of illness, we may be inclined to withdraw, thinking we should be strong and self-sufficient. We may also want to protect others from our pain. Eventually, we come to understand that everyone in our network is affected and will be challenged and transformed by our journey. We are all learners, both able to heal and in need of healing. We come with the pieces of ourselves that are vulnerable and broken and we come with our unique strengths and gifts.

Our tradition has much to say about the healing power of community. For example, according to the Talmud, being visited by someone who cares can remove 1/60th of a person's suffering — a powerful reminder that sharing our challenges with those in our lives can bring healing.

This chapter contains personal narratives and reflections that remind us of the connections that sustain us and the small but powerful ways they can be fostered.

"Sometimes our light goes out but is blown into flame by an encounter with another human being. Each of us owes the deepest thanks to those who have kindled this inner light."

Albert Schweitzer, MD

Making Caring Visible



One of the most common things people with cancer tell me is that experiences of hospitalization and treatment are profoundly isolating. I suspect that this sense of aloneness may even undermine the will to live. When we feel the support of others, many of us can face the unknown with greater strength. I often use ritual to help people at times like this.

For more than twenty years, I have offered a very simple yet powerful ritual to people before their radiation, chemotherapy, or surgery. I suggest they meet together with some of their closest friends and family the day before their procedure. It does not matter how large or small the group is, but it is important that it be made up of those who are connected to them through a bond of the heart.

Before this meeting I suggest they find an ordinary stone, a piece of the earth, big enough to fit in the palm of their hand, and bring it to the meeting with them. The ritual begins by having everyone sit in a circle. In any order they wish to speak, each person tells the story of a time when they too faced a crisis. People may talk about the death of important persons, the loss of jobs or of relationships, or even about their own illnesses. The person who is speaking holds the stone the patient has brought. When they finish telling their story of survival, they take a moment to reflect on the personal quality that they feel helped them come through that difficult time. People will say such things as, "What brought me through was determination," "What brought me through was faith," "What brought me through was humor." When they have named the quality of their strength, they speak directly to the person preparing for surgery or treatment, saying, "I put determination into this stone for you," or, "I put faith into this stone for you."

Often what people say is surprising. Sometimes they tell of crises that occurred when they were young or in wartime that others, even family members, may not have known before, or they attribute their survival to qualities that are not ordinarily seen as strengths. It is usually a moving and intimate meeting and often all the people who participate say that they feel strengthened and inspired by it. After everyone has spoken, the stone is given back to the patient, who takes it with them to the hospital, to keep nearby and hold in their hand when things get hard.

I have had several patients go to their chemotherapy, their radiation, or even their surgery with their stones strapped with adhesive tape to the palm of one of their hands or the bottom of their foot.

Over the years, many of the oncologists and surgeons in our community have learned about these stones from their patients and are very careful about them. One surgeon even had the staff go through the hospital laundry in search of a stone that was accidentally thrown away with the sheets in the recovery room. I asked him why he had done this and he laughed and said, "Listen, I have seen people do badly after surgery and even die when there was no reason for it, other than the fact that they believed they wouldn't make it. I need all the help I can get."

Actually, no one has chemotherapy or radiation or goes into an operating room without the thoughts, hopes, and prayers of many people going with them. The stone seems to make all that a little more plain to people and reminds them of the strength and beauty of what is natural. In an environment which is highly technical and sterile, it connects them to the earth. Ritual is one of the oldest ways to mobilize the power of community for healing. It makes the caring of the community visible, tangible, real.

Rachel Naomi Remen, MD

Opening a Door

In my forties, I was treated for colon cancer. The hardest part was not the surgery, the chemotherapy, the fatigue or the fear. The hardest part was talking about it to my wife and children — acknowledging that our lives had changed. The hardest part was sharing the struggle. I remember rehearsing my resolution: "I have spent a lifetime learning to be strong; I'm not going to change now." "I solve problems for a living; I'll handle this." "My job in life is to protect my family." So I remained stoic and silent.

No one is strong enough to handle life, much less a life-threatening disease alone. My isolation way up in the lonely garrets of stubborn masculine self-sufficiency, deprived others who wanted and needed to help me. And while I built this edifice of stoic fortitude with its endless network of catwalks and trapdoors, I was blind to the fact that the cancer had spread, metastasizing to my wife and my children, to my family and friends. My resolution didn't shield them. On the contrary, because of my stoicism, they suffered more.

We can help each other heal. But that means coming down from the attic; down from the place of false heroism, from obstinate self-possession. It means opening the front door, and letting others in.

No one asks for cancer. No one deserves it. But once it has found its way into our lives, it can become a powerful teacher. My body may be susceptible to cancer and its symptoms. My spirit is mine to keep strong and healthy. Cancer can teach us to take seriously the purposes for which we live. Cancer is random. It teaches us not to allow life to be random. Cancer is lonely. It can teach us the power of love and friendship to raise a tired body and revive an exhausted spirit. In one moment, cancer changes everything. Cancer can teach us to embrace and celebrate the moments that matter — moments of closeness, of insight, of meaning. We who experience illness have much to teach. Begin today. Share your wisdom with those you love.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe taught that God constantly rains blessings of healing down on the earth. The problem is that not everyone owns a bucket. Not everyone is ready to accept and gather the blessing. Healing is a matter of transcending our losses and accepting the blessings of life, moving from despair to affirmation. The traditional Jewish prayer is for *refuah shelayma*, "a healing of wholeness." We pray, not for a life without suffering — that is not the human condition. We pray for the wisdom and courage to embrace life.

Rabbi Ed Feinstein



My Upshirin (Hair Cutting Ceremony)

*I*n anticipation of my hair loss due to chemotherapy, I recast a traditional Jewish rite of passage, an Upshirin, a ritual hair cutting ceremony for three year old boys. Through the use of creative ritual, I transformed a potentially TRAUMATIC EVENT into an opportunity for communal and spiritual SUPPORT.

My Upshirin took place on the last day of the Hebrew month of *Shevat* — an auspicious time for a healing ritual. The day before *Rosh Chodesh* (first day of the month) is a *Yom Kippur Katan* — (little *Yom Kippur*). It is a day for cleansing, purification, and preparation — just what my shaving my head represents as I enter the second week of my second round of chemotherapy.

That my Upshirin falls on the cusps of the months of *Shevat* and *Adar* seems all the more propitious. The landscape of *Shevat*, the month in which we in Southern California celebrate the subterranean rebirth of the trees, is a vegetative mirror of a baldhead. The trees, particularly the sycamore, which has guided me through many years of challenge, are leafless. Inside those fragile-looking trees, we are told by tradition the sap is rising and the tree is being watered with life-giving elixirs that will bring it back to life. And while we know from experience that Spring will come, the trees of *Shevat* may often look like brittle sticks for whom healing seems unlikely. This, of course, is the feeling that is hard to escape when the limitations caused by chemotherapy make it difficult to believe that this torture is actually good for me.

But *Adar* is coming and with it joy and celebration. In addition to the lifting of the weight of winter and of the fluids that run through the trees, swelling the buds and propelling green shoots in preparation for the sensual explosion of Spring, *Adar* is the month of reversals. In *Adar*, in *The Scroll of Esther*, we learn that stories of gloom and doom can surprise us with happy endings. I am embracing that healing metaphor as a beacon for my healing journey, linking my bodily resurrection to that of the 80-year-old Sycamore tree which stands in my garden.

My tree stands ever ready to teach me of the paradox of constancy and change that is the grace of the seasons. Embracing my tree as a companion has wedded me to life — and to the life-affirming progression of the seasons. On the wings of time, my tree carried me forward into healing. Time — gentle, ruthless, wise and constantly chang-

ing — created a path for me and awaits me now as the month of Adar beckons me, with its smiles and surprises, to once again use time as a healer.

For the *Upshirin*, I decorated a chair with ribbons in purple, green and gold — Mardi Gras colors to mark the mutual healing that I hope will happen as my beloved hometown and my own body struggle to come through this flood of toxic chemicals. I set up the chair in the middle of a wide hall and put a sheet on the floor to catch the falling hair. After explaining the intention and the plan for the ritual, I introduced a prayer, which encapsulates my vision for healing and encouraged others familiar with the prayer to join in.

THE PRAYER: DEAR GOD

Gimme a head with hair
Long beautiful hair
Shining, gleaming,
Streaming, flaxen, waxen

Give me down to there hair
Shoulder length or longer
Here baby, there mama
Everywhere daddy daddy

Hair, hair, hair, hair, hair, hair, hair
Flow it, show it
Long as God can grow it
My hair

And then the cutting began, with people holding a lock, making a snip, and giving a blessing. After I received my blessing from each person, I asked him or her to cut a length of ribbon that they would display prominently in their lives. I requested that when they saw the ribbon, they be moved to pray for my healing, the healing of New Orleans, the planet and

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all those who suffer. The blessings ran the gamut from heart-rending pleas for my safety to humor. One friend told me (in Hebrew) that he had just purchased a tree and was going to mulch it with my cut hair. He was going to take pictures of his tree so that I could see its progress. My ex-husband reminded me of my mother's dictum, "there's nothing as temporary as a haircut."

In between blessings, my guests chanted the short healing prayer of Moses when his sister was stricken with disease: "*El Na Rafana la* (God please heal her)." And I responded to the blessings and to each crunch of the scissors on my locks of hair with tears and laughter. After the blessings, my hair stood in uneven strands on my head or lay in piles on the sheet on the floor.

Newly a woman with a buzz-cut, I spoke about being a walking testimony for the disease of the planet. I prayed for the courage to not cover the truth in order to protect those uncomfortable with the anomaly of a bald woman and perhaps in denial about the state of the earth. I spoke of the link of my healing to the healing of my beloved city of New Orleans and to all those who suffer.

Then we took the sheet out to the garden. And while we sang the *Mi Sheberach*, we sprinkled the hair among the roots of my tree — to nourish it as it nourishes me. I hope a bird chooses some of my hair for a nest.

Anne Brener, LCSW



Reflections on Heart Surgery

*M*y reflections on the meaning of my bypass surgery are a work in progress. The first night of Passover, instead of attending a Seder, I had coronary bypass surgery. From the moment I awoke, I have been monitoring my reaction to the event. I entered the surgery with the anesthesiologist, a member of our congregation, putting me to sleep and more importantly, waking me up. Prayers and visits of friends eased my recovery. I felt loved and supported. A month after surgery, my new granddaughter was born on my mother's birthday — was it a sign from Heaven or just my mother watching over me?

My relationship with God is tried on a daily basis — the fact that people suffer, tears at the fabric of my faith. And yet, my faith lives with the contradictions. It enables me to pray for the miraculous and not be surprised when it does not always occur. Healing is learning to respond positively to life when life is not perfect.

I believe that our reactions to our medical treatment are influenced greatly by the approach of our healthcare partners. If during treatment we lose our sense of ourselves as incarnations of the divine image, our medical treatments may feel more difficult. When we are treated with dignity, not as a statistic, our sense of personhood remains intact. Feeling the care of community and friends also increased my desire to recover quickly so that I could enter the community again.

In some way this Passover was a journey not unlike those of our ancestors at liberation. It has a *haggadah* that I am only beginning to write. Its texts are not fully understood. The final destination remains unclear. I do not yet know what to make of my surgery. There was no obvious revelation, no epiphany which instantaneously changed me. The scar on my chest makes me a permanent member of the "zipper club."

So when people ask me, "Are you fully recovered? Are you back to yourself?" My response is, "I feel completely recovered. I am me. Yet I wonder if I can really ever be the same after others have literally held my heart in their hands."

May each day be an opportunity for each of us to sanctify the ordinary and to sustain each other in love.

Rabbi Peter S. Knobel

Maggid (The Telling)

For the past 30 years, I have lived with painful, incurable, potentially life-threatening twin diseases: systemic lupus and demyelinating polyneuropathy. During those years, I've done everything I could to help myself and my family: using a plethora of medications, specialists, clinics, and hospitals; several support groups; hypnosis and self-hypnosis; psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, family therapy.

Being a realist, I turned my attention years ago from a search for curing my body to a quest for healing my spirit. And thus began a spiritual journey which, despite the lack of any previous formal religious education, took me deep down to my Jewish roots. The search drew me to Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in New York City, where I learned how to pray and study Torah, and learn Hebrew and cantillation in order to become a "Bat Torah" at age 55. As a writer, the discipline of "taming by naming" — pinning down the difficulties of disease in words on a page in order to understand and examine both their profound influences and their limitations — is also a cherished resource in adversity.

As my tandem journeys into the worlds of illness and Judaism knit inextricably together, I feel a deep need not merely to transcend my experience of illness, but to sanctify it. Long ago, I bid farewell to the unanswerable, uninteresting question "Why me?" and replaced it with a new, more important challenge: "What now?" For while I know that I cannot control which cards I might be dealt in my life, I believe it is my profound responsibility to actively choose how to play them.

Ellen Schecter



Zap Love Faith. Today.

*M*ost people feel more comfortable knowing how to pronounce my name. It's "gar-ee" — the first syllable rhymes with star or scar...three of them to be exact, and they are mine.

Picture a clock superimposed on a beautiful breast. My breasts were never stand-out, but since I'm telling the story, picture a beautiful breast. On the left breast at 12 o'clock there is a scar hovering where a large fibroadenoma was removed. This large tissue mass was allegedly non-cancerous, but could change over time. At 2 o'clock, a small scar signals where three sentinel nodes were taken with no lymph node involvement. At 4 o'clock — a thin line remains on the surface of the surgically eliminated, early-diagnosed, good-prognosis, estrogen-based cancer.

Four zaps/five days a week/seven weeks. Arms in reverse stirrups over my head, as this phase of my treatment begins, I wonder what other people think about while on the radiation table. These have been the deepest moments in my sentient experience, and I want to know how it is for everyone. It's too personal a question to ask my compatriots in the waiting room. What would I say — "How do you organize your thoughts?", Mr. Man-with-face ablaze? "Do you pray?", lovely Young-bald-mother-with-kids-at-hand. What else do we have in common?

ZAP ONE:

Hear oh Israel, Adonai our God, Adonai is One. This ancient prayer is said by Jews both daily and in redemptive dark moments, minutes before death — an affirmation that God is present. God is here in my cancer moments. God is in the doctors who treat me, the surgeon who cut me, the therapists who heal me, the nurses who prep me, the radiologists who zap me. God is in these buildings, in these minutes, in the radiation and in the guiding hand of my father...himself succumbing to cancer less than ten months ago. God is in me.

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ZAP TWO:

Blessed are you, Sovereign of the Universe, for bringing me to this moment. This Shehecheyanu prayer is often reserved for happy occasions with family and friends gathered round. A prayer said to welcome a new holiday or first fruits. A prayer that says, "I am Here, thank you, on a table receiving radiation — the good kind? — in this moment. And I am grateful."

ZAP THREE:

I love my family and I pray: I love my husband, I love my Hannah, I love my Molly. My Molly, my Hannah, my Michael, my Molly, my Michael, my Hannah. Whoops, where am I in this equation? I change mantra number three quickly: Gari Michael Hannah Molly Molly Hannah Michael Gari Hannah Michael Molly Gari. I am an integral part of this foursome. Don't take me out yet.

ZAP FOUR:

I panic! I only have three scars and each meditation focuses on a surgical site as if my thoughts could harness and direct the radiation. If I don't have a mental scenario then the radiation will zap my breast randomly, uncontrolled. I am forced to live in this moment, in this day. Zap my entire breast, caress it with deadly radiation but please give me today... *HaYom...om...ommmm.*

An acquaintance asked if I would be one of those women who define herself via her cancer. What's up with that question? Even if you don't wear pink ribbons the rest of your life you cannot come out of this the way you entered.

I count the days. Only five more zaps, I tell my girls, only three, only two. Tomorrow is my last one. On the last day, I whisper goodbye to the table, the faces, the sounds, the gowns, the machinery, the waiting, the stirrups, the creams, the doctors, the nurses.

My very own radiation has ended. And today, three scars remain on my now beautiful, standout breast, my very own constellation of love and faith.

Gari Julius Weilbacher

Passage to Wholeness

Being sick can be like being a stranger to one's own life. We feel it most acutely in our intimate circles. With illness comes profound changes in our relationships. Loved ones must consider our needs in a different way. Friendships must adjust to survive. It is a time when we may find comfort by drawing upon spiritual resources. For some, it can be a time to deepen our connection with our Jewish souls.

When Margalit (not her real name) first called me, she had been recently diagnosed with cancer and yearned for Jewish resources to draw upon at this challenging time in her life.

When Margalit and I met, I asked what gave her a sense of awe.

"When I'm doing things with my family," she replied. "It's just amazing to me that I have this wonderful husband who loves and supports me, and a daughter I once dreamed of having who's now a wonderful young woman. It's a blessing."

As she spoke, she realized that being with her family was helping her to overcome fear about the future. "With them I somehow don't feel so afraid of all the medical treatments," she said, an uplift in her voice. "I need to take my family with me on my healing journey."

The chemotherapy Margalit underwent was difficult. She wondered where God was while she was in her bed watching the clear fluid enter into her veins. Margalit assumed that God did not enter hospitals, and this intensified her sense of estrangement. I suggested she use her imagination and sense of wonder to bring God into the room.

In ancient times a *mezuzah*, a small parchment scroll placed on the doorpost, was actually a door frame. The words of the *Shema* — "Hear, O Israel, *Adonai* is our God, *Adonai* is One" — contained in the *mezuzah* today were once written on the door frame itself.

"What if the room itself became a *mezuzah*?" I asked.

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"Then the hospital room would be a holy place where God listened," Margalit replied. Margalit invited God into the hospital room and her sense of God's presence reduced her anxiety.

We began a tradition of reciting a spontaneous prayer that suited the moment and concluding it with the priestly benediction: "May God bless you and protect you always. May God's face shine upon you and may this light and warmth be gracious to you. May God's face be ever lifted up toward you, and may this Divine regard for you, this holy attention, bring you the most precious of all sacred gifts: peace, wholeness, *shalom*."

When the chemotherapy treatment cycle ended, Margalit wanted to bring her circle of caring to a ritual of thanksgiving that recognized this transition.

"I once went to a *mikveh* (ritual bath) with a friend. It was so powerful." Margalit decided to create a circle of caring ritual with her closest women friends at the local *mikveh*.

"*Baruch ata Adonai*. Blessed are you, *Adonai* our God, Sovereign of the universe, whose nurturance of us as we travel through life, has brought us to this particular time and place."

Margalit and her female friends recited this *shehecheyanu* blessing as they immersed themselves in the living waters of the ritual bath. In the currents, Margalit expressed her gratefulness for life, her thankfulness to all the loved ones who had *shlepped* her to doctors' offices, helped with errands, sent cards, left supportive messages on her answering machine, and prayed for her in so many ways. She sang songs, recited prayers, laughed, and cried as she immersed herself in the water, acknowledging all that was sacred to her about life. After each dip and each prayer, her friends uttered, "Amen."

Radiation therapy can be among the most isolating of medical treatments. A door closes and the patient is left alone beneath a machine which delivers powerful bolts of radiation. During those moments, Margalit felt disconnected, shut out of her circle of caring. Together we discovered a solution.

Margalit would count the *omer* (a sheaf of barley) of her radiation, just as Jews traditionally counted the *omer* of the barley harvest from Passover to Shavuot. Counting the days to its harvest was a way our ancestors contained the anxiety of waiting for what they hoped would be a bounty of food, and therefore a good outcome.

Each time Margalit went to the doctor's office for her radiation treatment she would say: "This is the fourth day of the second week of radiation." And then recite, "*Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheynu Adonai Echad*. Hear O Israel, *Adonai* is our God, *Adonai* is One." She would allow her inner thoughts to surface, then sit down in a corner of the doctor's office and record the experience in her journal. At the end of Margalit's radiation cycle, we read the journal. Her reflections had helped define her path to an ever deepening relationship to God and her loved ones.

The vastness of our tradition allows a unique path towards healing for everyone. As we each find our way through the crisis, we have many resources from which to draw strength. For Margalit, it was Torah, the foundation upon which our tradition is built. It was as if she truly embodied the words we say during Shabbat as we return the Torah to its ark: "*kol netivotecha shalom*: all journeys that begin with Torah lead to wholeness."

This narrative is offered as Margalit wanted to share her journey as a gift to others facing similar challenges. Whatever resources you use, may your own unique journey lead to wholeness.

Rabbi Eric Weiss

Companioning

Companioning is about honoring the spirit;
it is not about focusing on the intellect.

Companioning is about curiosity;
it is not about expertise.

Companioning is about learning from others;
it is not about teaching them.

Companioning is about walking along side;
it is not about leading or being led.

Companioning is about being still;
it is not about frantic movement forward.

Companioning is about discovering the gifts of sacred silence;
it is not about filling every pitiful moment with talk.

Companioning is about listening with the heart;
it is not about analyzing with the head.

Companioning is about bearing witness to the struggle of others;
it is not about judging or directing their struggles.

Companioning is about being present to another person's pain;
it is not about taking away or relieving pain.

Companioning is about respecting disorder and confusion;
it is not about imposing order or logic.

Companioning is about going to the wilderness of the soul
with another human being;
it is not about thinking you are responsible for finding the way out.

Alan Wolfelt, PhD

Seven Ways of Asking

When we reach out to connect with someone in our network who is affected by medical treatment, we often forget that there may be others who are equally in need of support and/or concrete help. Whether we are the "ill person" or part of the "support team," we can all benefit from ways of improving how we reach out.

Simply asking "How are you?" may not convey authentic, personal interest and may not open up an honest, expressive response. Some people who are struggling have criticized this common question because it doesn't seem to acknowledge the very different course their life has taken, and seems to come 'attached' to automatic, expected answers such as "I'm OK" or "Fine, thanks," which may not be a sincere reply, or may not be the whole story. So here are seven alternative ways of asking.

1. How are you doing with all of this?
2. How are your spirits?
3. How are you hanging in?
4. What do you need the most, right now?
5. What's helping you get through this?
6. What's been on your mind as you try to cope with all of this?
7. What are some of the obstacles to your managing/copeing?

Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW



Beside(s) Prayer: Seven Other Jewish Spiritual Activities While Negotiating Treatments

 In the Jewish world and tradition, prayer is important, but it isn't the whole game. Here are a few other directions or strategies you might consider to strengthen your spirits while undergoing treatments. Choose, of course, what is right for you and for your current needs, but don't be afraid to experiment from time to time.

DEEDS OF HESSED/LOVINGKINDNESS: Few things are as important as those random (and not-so-random) deeds of lovingkindness that can feed hope and help restore trust. Take advantage of opportunities to listen attentively to others, to assist them with small tasks, to give inexpensive but sincere gifts of care, or to share a wise saying or poem that moved you at some point. Even a smiling "Hello" or "Take care now" can be a great gift, one that neither depletes the giver nor burdens the recipient.

HUMOR: Jews, like other folks, have relied on humor to sustain their spirits through challenging times. Consider acquiring collections of Jewish (and other) humor, to enjoy before, during, or after treatments. Or buy a magazine and draw moustaches on political leaders, or draw word balloons and put words in their mouths. If you're expecting visitors, ask or require them to bring you a joke. If you're up to it, put on a clown nose or a funny hat just as friends or medical staff approach. The possibilities for lightness are many when we open ourselves to them. (Example: for a free Bikur Cholim Joke Book, visit www.bikurcholimcc.org/publications.php).

TORAH: The Jewish calendar gives us weekly Torah portions, generally of 3-4 chapters, from the Five Books of Moses, that contain narrative, laws, poetry, and more; turning to printed commentaries or "parasha" websites, you can seek teachings that can support you in any week's challenges. But beyond these, if you have struggled with questions — whether about suffering, relationships, God, or whatever — you can use treatments to read a brief reflection as an installment in your journey. Bringing Torah to treatments can add transcendence and growth, perspectives and wisdom, despite pain and inconvenience. (Example: for free "Torah Reflections", Jewish healing commentaries on the weekly Torah portion, visit the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center at www.jewishhealingcenter.org/bajhc-Reflections.htm. Also, you can search the web for "Weekly Torah portion" and find many resources).

RITUAL: For many, rituals enable them to express heartfelt emotions and to dedicate their treatments to healing and peace. Use objects that trigger memories of positive times or helpful relationships. Before or after a treatment, recite words — your own or another’s — that speak to your wishes for health, happiness, and peace. If an activity such as encircling the room, pausing silently, or chanting a wordless melody is appropriate and helpful, weave that into the treatment experience. (Example: for a large sampling of Jewish creative rituals visit www.ritualwell.org).

NATURE: In addition to Reb Nachman’s Nature Prayer (see page 14), we can turn to the many resources of Creation — water, pets, plants, aromas, etc. — that, when approached properly and positively, can further healing in reconnecting us to the Big Picture. In the Jewish schema, each element in Nature gives us an opportunity to say and actualize a *b’rakhah*, a blessing — and thereby to reaffirm, with our very physical, sensual beings, that we are *ba’alei hayyim*, in possession of life, even with the medical challenges we face. (Example: for a sampling of *18 Healing Activities and Accompanying Psalms* go to <http://ncjh.org/tools.html#Nature>).

TZ’DAKAH: This means “righteousness” or “justice,” but is called “charity” or “philanthropy” in English, has been explained as “elevating the material to the level of the spiritual.” By giving to worthy causes, we correct imbalances in society and relate to the world through justice, concern, and active involvement. Many who are undergoing treatments have discovered how potent they can be in repairing the world — as volunteers in shelters or hunger projects, as donors and fundraisers, or by otherwise assisting someone in need. Through *Tz’dakah*, we reaffirm and return to potent personhood — capable, resourceful, and impactful — and bring new meaning and life to our existence. Some people donate *Tz’dakah* to causes that mean much to them, in honor of each treatment session. (Example: for a sample of projects relating to Judaism and Health, go to www.huc.edu/Kalsman).

MUSIC: Music captures, manages, shapes, directs, contains, and celebrates Time, and can be a critical spiritual resource for the treatment journey, which is so much about Time. CDs/iPods can bring music that lifts the spirit, distracts the body, and gives voice to intense emotions. Some people arrange to have something new and different to

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listen to each treatment, as well as a reliable favorite; the combination allows for the possibility of taking oneself to a new place, as well as falling back on reassuring familiarity, everything from klezmer to reggae, soul to Hasidic Niggunim, 60s folk to jazz, classical to Israeli rock can be enlisted for their healing power.

Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW



*"...Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun,
and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days,
on the day that the Lord binds up the breach of his people,
and heals the stroke of their wound."*

Isaiah 30:26

Shema

Deuteronomy 6:4

*W*e hope this helps open your heart and soul on your medical journey bringing you to one of the core prayers of our Jewish Tradition.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, ד' אֱלֹהֵינוּ, ד' אֶחָד

Shema Yisrael, A-donai Eloheynu, A-donai Echad

Listen Israel, the Eternal is our God, the Eternal is One

THE *SHEMA* CAN BE RECITED:

in near silence;

chanting;

with intense concentration;

as a repeated routine;

at bedtime;

upon awakening;

wholeheartedly;

brokenheartedly;

as an affirmation;

as a plea;

when dying;

as a form of witness to life's precious fullness;

making ourselves witness to God's Oneness;

acknowledging God's witnessing of our lives;

with gratitude for any and all goodness and strength and healing in our lives

and in the world;

with acceptance in acknowledging the

sorrows and challenges in our lives and in the world;

surrendering into God's hands;

as a deep reflective listening practice;

as an encouragement to *mitzvot* and holy action;

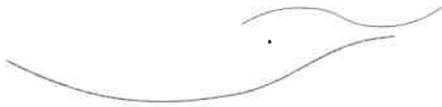
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as a connection to the People Israel;
with the full spectrum of our human emotion;
when seeking spiritual shelter;
facing the place where all is connected, holy, divine — One.

Listen, dear Israelite friend,
to your own voicing of the words;
to your own heart's expression:
what do you hear?

Rabbi Natan Fenner, BCC



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1. BEGINNINGS: DIAGNOSIS AND MEDICAL TREATMENT

T'filat Haderech (Traveler's Prayer), translation by Judy Marcus, MSW, Coordinator, Twin Cities Jewish Healing Program, a program of Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis, MN. www.jfcsmpls.org

Releasing Fear, excerpt from "Illness and Fear" in *Talking to God: Personal Prayers For Times of Joy, Sadness, Struggle and Celebration*, by Rabbi Naomi Levy. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002.) All rights reserved. Reprinted by arrangement with Knopf Publishers.

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The Jewish Woman's Book of Wisdom: Thoughts from prominent Jewish women on spirituality, identity and sisterhood, family and faith. Copyright © 1998 by Ellen Jaffe-Gill (Birch Lane Press, 1998.) All rights reserved. Reprinted by arrangement with Kensington Publishing Corp. www.kensingtonbooks.com.

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On Waiting and Hoping, by Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW © 2007, Rabbinic Director, National Center for Jewish Healing, JBFCS. www.ncjh.org

Able to Fly, Anonymous.

My God! Our God!, by Betty Ann G. Miller, *Jewish Readings and Prayers for Comfort, Support and Hope*, (Boston: JF&CS, 2005) for Jewish Healing Connections of Jewish Family & Children's Service of Greater Boston, www.jfcsboston.org

Pain and Praise on the Long and Bumpy Road Toward Healing, Commentary of Psalm 30, by Rabbi Joseph S. Ozarowski, DMin © 2007, Rabbinic Chaplain, Jewish Healing Network of Chicago, Jewish Child and Family Service, www.jfcschicago.org

In the Company of Hope, by Susan J. Rosenthal, MSW, 1984, composed while in the midst of three years of chemotherapy.

Birkat Hagomel, translated by Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW © 2005, Rabbinic Director, National Center for Jewish Healing, JBFCS. www.ncjh.org

Shehecheyanu by Rabbi Natan Fenner, BCC © 2007, Bay Area Jewish Healing Center, San Francisco, California. www.jewishhealingcenter.org

Strengthen Me®, Psalm 142, (title adapted), *Flames to Heaven: New Psalms for Healing & Praise*, by Debbie Perlman (Wilmette, IL; Rad Publishers, 1998.)

4. GATHERING COMMUNITY: STORIES AND RITUALS

Making Caring Visible[®], from *Kitchen Table Wisdom* by Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D., copyright © 1996 by Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D. Used by permission of Riverhead Books, an imprint of Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

Opening A Door[®], excerpt from "The Questions That Won't Go Away" and "Opening a Door" by Rabbi Ed Feinstein, Rabbi, Valley Beth Shalom, Encino, CA, © 2002.

My Upshirin (Hair Cutting Ceremony), by Anne Brener, LCSW © 2006, Therapist, Spiritual Director and Lecturer.

Reflections on Heart Surgery[®], excerpts from article by Rabbi Peter Knobel, Spiritual Leader of *Beth Emet*, The Free Synagogue in Evanston, Illinois.

Maggid (Telling), by Ellen Schechter, writer, educator, and was a TV and video producer FOR MANY YEARS.

Excerpt from, *The Outstretched Arm*, Volume 2, Issue 1, (New York: National Center for Jewish Healing/JBFCs, 1999)

Zap Love Faith. Today., excerpts from article by Gari Julius Weilbacher, personal life coach partnering with people facing all stages of illness and health. www.coachingpartnerships.com

Passage To Wholeness, excerpt from article first published in Reform Judaism, Spring 2000, by Rabbi Eric Weiss, Executive Director of the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center, San Francisco, California. www.jewishhealingcenter.org

Companioning[®], by Alan Wolfelt, PhD., C.T., Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Seven Ways of Asking, by Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW, © 2001, Rabbinic Director, National Center for Jewish Healing, JBFCs. www.ncjh.org

Beside(s) Prayer: Seven Other Jewish Spiritual Activities by Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW, © 2007, Rabbinic Director, National Center for Jewish Healing, JBFCs. www.ncjh.org

Shema (Listen), by Rabbi Natan Fenner, BCC, © 2007, Bay Area Jewish Healing Center, San Francisco, California, 2007, www.jewishhealingcenter.org

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Ethical Wills: Putting Your Values on Paper, 2nd Edition,
Da Capo Press, 2006, www.ethicalwill.com

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The ICC in Manhattan. www.jccmanhattan.org/makom

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— Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky,
Executive Director of the Jewish Outreach Institute, www.joi.org and author of
Jewish Paths to Healing and Wholeness: A Personal Guide to Dealing with Suffering,
Jewish Lights Publishing, www.jewishlights.com

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