

Service of Healing
NAJC 5778

Strands of strength built from the prayers of the heart

Don't hide Your face from me;
I'm asking for Your help.
I call to You;
Please hear my prayers, O God.
If You would answer me
As I have called to You,
Please heal me now - Don't hide Your face from me.
Psalm 102

Finding healing here, together in this sacred space, is possible because we are together. We all bring *tzorot* from our own lives: past hurts, current sadness, anxiety and concern for those we love. For these feelings that we carry in our hearts, we need God, and so we ask God to give us strength and patience and hope and ultimately we pray that we will be brought, at some later point in time, to gratitude.

Sing: *Min haMetzar, karati Yah ..*
Min hametzar karati Yah
Anani va'merchav Yah

But we also stand here in need of collective healing. And for this, we need each other. Such a mixture of feelings that one almost expects a thunderstorm to let loose inside us, as heated emotions clash with cool compassion. Some of us may experience a myriad of feelings simultaneously; others, mostly one. Disbelief, anger, sadness, confusion, concern, incredulity and sorrow. Fury and love and fill in the blanks. For whatever reason we are here, we are reminded of our human frailties, our own struggles to do our best, to be good to our families, partners and friends; to be inspiring and comforting to our patients, clients and residents.

To serve *amcha*.

To make a difference. To change our little bit of the world.
To walk a *holichah kedoshah*. And for this, we need strength.

To you, *Adonai*, I call
And to *Adonai*, I appeal;
Hear, God, and have compassion on me,
God - be my help. *Psalm 30: 9,11*

Sing:

*The Time is now
We've gathered 'round.
So bring all your gifts,
And bring all your burdens with you.*

*No need to hide.
Arms open wide,
We gather as one.
To make a makom kadosh.*

*We come to tell.
We come to hear
We come to teach, to learn,
We come to grow. And so we say,*

*The time is now
Sing to the One
God's Presence is here
Sh'china you will dwell among us.*

*We'll make this space
A holy place
So separate, so whole,
Rejoice every soul
Who enters here.*

Music and words by Debbie Friedman

Each of us comes to this service from a different time and place along the journey of our lives:
Some of us to find a way to celebrate our healing and to thank God for bringing us back to health and well being.

Some need to reach out to others to form a spiritual community for much needed human support.

Some need to ask God for help in getting safely to the other side of an ordeal.

Some hearts ache with sorrow; disappointments weigh heavily upon them, and they have tasted despair; families have been broken, loved ones lie on a bed of pain. Death has taken those whom they cherished. May our presence and sympathy bring them comfort.

Some are embittered: they have sought answers in vain; ideals are mocked and betrayed; life has lost its meaning and value. May the knowledge that we, too, are searching, restore their hope and give them courage to believe that not all is emptiness.

Some spirits hunger: they long for friendship; they crave understanding; they yearn for warmth.

May we, in common need and striving, gain strength from one another as we share our joys, lighten each other's burdens and pray for the welfare of our community.

Sing: Hal'luyah

*Va-anach-nu n'vareich Ya
Mei-ata v'ad olam (3x) Hal'lu-Ya*

*We will bless God now and always. Hal'luyah
Psalm II 5:18/Debbie Friedman*

The Intention: (Read)

Healing is both an exercise and an understanding,
And yet, not of the will
Nor intention.
It is wisdom and a deeper knowledge
Of the daily swing
Of life and death
In all creation.
There is defeat
To overcome,
And acceptance of living
To be established,
And always there must be hope.
Not hope of healing,
But the hope which informs
The coming moment
And gives it reason.
The hope which is each one's breath,
The certainty of love
And of loving.
Death may live
In the living
And healing rise in the dying
For whom the natural end
Is part of the gathering and of the harvest
To be expected.

To know healing
Is to know that all life is one
And there is no beginning and no end
And the intention is loving. *By Margaret Torrie*

Morning Poem by Mary Oliver

Every morning
the world
is created.
Under the orange

sticks of the sun
the heaped
ashes of the night
turn into leaves again

and fasten themselves to the high branches ---
and the ponds appear
like black cloth
on which are painted islands

of summer lilies.
If it is your nature
to be happy
you will swim away along the soft trails

for hours, your imagination
alighting everywhere.
And if your spirit
carries within it

the thorn
that is heavier than lead ---
if it's all you can do
to keep on trudging ---

there is still
somewhere deep within you
a beast shouting that the earth
is exactly what it wanted ---

each pond with its blazing lilies
is a prayer heard and answered
lavishly,
every morning,

whether or not
you have ever dared to be happy,
whether or not
you have ever dared to pray.

We have each come together to pray as a community,
Yet each of us is strangely solitary in Your presence.

Each of us comes before You with special hopes and dreams.
Each of us has personal worries and concerns.

Each of us has a prayer no one else can utter.
Each of us brings praise no one else can offer.

Each of us feels a joy no one else can share.
Each of us has regrets which others cannot know.

And so we pray.
If we are weary, give us strength.
If we are discouraged, give us hope.
Unto You, *Adonai*, I call and unto You I make supplication.
Hear, Eternal; One and are gracious to me.
Adonai, be my helper.

Sing: O Guide My Steps by Debbie Winston

*O guide my steps and help me find my way,
I need Your shelter now,
Rock me in Your arms
And guide my steps
And help me make this day
A song of praise to You,
Rock me in Your arms
And guide my steps.
Ufros aleinu, sukkat shlomeicha (2)*

Untie my Knots by Sheila Peltz Weinberg

Dear God,
We are bound with very tight knots.
They choke off air and stop the blood from pulsating freely.
The knots make us like computers with carefully controlled circuitry.
The knots in our brains tie our creativity, our link with You.
We follow the knot around in intricacy - but it remains a knot.

The knots in our hearts keep us from crying and dancing when we long to.
They tie us to the posts of the fences that separate us from each other.
The knots in our muscles keep our chests tight, our teeth clenched, our jaws locked,
our legs crossed, our shoulders stooped, our backs bent,
They stop us from inhaling the full sweetness of life's breath.
O, God, untie all the knots!

Judaism begins with the declaration: "*Sh'ma Yisrael*...Hear, O Israel..."

But what does it truly mean to hear?
The person who listens to the words of friends, spouse or children,
And does not catch the note of urgency,
"Notice me, help me, care about me,"
Hears – but does not really hear.

The person who hears the cantor pray
And does not feel the call to join along,
Hears—but does not really hear.

The person who listens to the rabbi's sermon,
Agrees, but thinks that someone else is being addressed,
Hears – but does not really hear.

The person who hears the Shofar's sound
And does not feel the need to change his ways,
Hears—but does not really hear.

**As this conference continues, O God,
Strengthen our ability to hear.**

May we hear the call for help of the lonely soul,
And the sound of the breaking heart.
May we hear the words of our friends,
And also their unspoken pleas and dreams.
And may we hear you, Adonai
For only if we hear You do we have the right
To pray that You will hear us.

(Adapted from Rabbi Harold Kushner and Rabbi Jack Riemer: *Tikun HaNefesh* –
Renewal of the Soul Services for Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur)

May I be at peace.
May my heart remain open.
May I know the beauty of my own true nature.
May I be healed.

May we find the world in our lifetime,
Our completion in the World to Come,
And our hopes realized in those who follow us.
May our hearts meditate in understanding,
Our mouths speak wisdom, Our tongues sing songs of jubilation.

Community: *Sing Kol Haneshamah*
Kol Haneshamah te-hallel Ya, Hal'lu-ya!
Let every living things praise God!

Creating Sacred Narratives:

Telling of our own stories: choose one short story about yourself or your mother, grandmother, sister or friend.

Creating Sacred Space Within:

If I search for You, God,
will I find You?
I have looked in all the places
where I find lost things,
The corners of my house where things
fall and stay, forgotten
Until Shabbat cleaning flushes
them out again.
I have searched the fields
where rabbits and moles,
insects and birds
hide among the grasses.
I have stood against the face
of the wind and rain that brings life
to the land, trying to see Your hand
In the stinging, cold drops.
Help me search, God, the one place left:
myself.

By Cantor Shira Nafshi

Meditations:

1. Where can we find comfort? Solace? What will be the first step on the road to healing? How do we begin? The answers change from year to year, from person to person. Some find spiritual healing in music. For others, the poetic imagination is a necessary refuge. We find healing in our connections to loved ones and in our encounters with strangers. We find it in ritual, in prayer, and in the ongoing loop of our own memories. We find healing in new experiences, in doing good deeds, in discovering new perspectives. We find healing in letting go and in the simple passage of time. *Craig Taubman – The World is a Narrow Bridge.*

2. We can help each other heal, but doing so means coming down from the attic; from the place of false heroism, from obstinate self-possession. It means opening the front door and letting others in. 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 means accepting the blessings of life, moving from despair to affirmation, from denial to acceptance to celebration. In healing, we learn to endure-to-withstand the loss, and still fill life with meaning. Even in the face of death, we can affirm life; we can share blessings. Traditionally, Jews pray for *efuah shelayma*, “a healing of wholeness.” We do not seek a life without suffering – that is not the human condition. We pray for the wisdom and courage to embrace life in the very midst of death. “I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life.” This is the most difficult mitzvah in the Torah. It is also the most important. *Ed Feinstein – rabbi of Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, CA*

3. “It’s only when we are ripped apart that we can taste and understand what pure joy is.” *Shlomo Carlebach*
4. What do you do with the hole in your heart? She said, “It’s always there, but I have planted flowers around it.” *Neshama Carlebach*
5. Healing, I’ve found, is very different than curing or being cured. Cure implies a successful clinical outcome and the eradication of disease from the body. Healing, on the other hand is born out of self-discovery, part of an inner process, the recovery of the whole self from the trauma of disease and its pervasive impact on every aspect of our lives. Healing takes place over time. It is a process – and a person can be cured even before they are healed, just as they can be healed without every being cured. *Selma R. Schimmel (CEO founder of Vital Options International Tele Support Cancer Network)*

*Refrain: Mishe-bei-rach avo-tein-nu, Avraham, Yitzhak v’Ya’akov
Mishe-bei-rach imo-teinu, Sarah, Rivkah, Leah v’Rachel
May the One who blessed our mothers, may the One who blessed our fathers.
Hear our prayer (hear our prayer) 4x and bless us as well.*

*Bless us with the power of Your healing,
Bless us with the power of Your hope.
May our hearts be filled with understanding
And strengthened by the power of Your love.*

*Refrain: Mishe-bei-rach avo-tein-nu, Avraham, Yitzhak v’Ya’akov
Mishe-bei-rach imo-teinu, Sarah, Rivkah, Leah v’Rachel
May the One who blessed our mothers, may the One who blessed our fathers.
Hear our prayer (hear our prayer) 4x and bless us as well.*

*Bless us with the vision for tomorrow.
Help us to reach out to those in pain.
May the warmth of friendship ease our sorrow,
Give us courage, give us faith, show us the way,*

*Mishe-bei-rach avo-tein-nu, Mishe-bei-rach imo-teinu,
Hear our Prayer (hear our prayer)(4x) and bless us as well. (2x)*

Healing
Heal me, O God
That is a plea I cannot make.
I do not believe it is possible
For God to do that.
Instead I pray, empower me!
God, give me the strength
To fight so that I may do whatever I must to heal.
God, give me the courage to endure what I must, to heal.
God, give me the time I must have to gain the knowledge
I need in order to make the right choices.
God, give me the ability to continue to live my life and grow
In the face of such adversity.
God, give me peace so that I may enjoy
My family, my friends, music, nature, all that I love.
Oh, God, Empower me! *By Janet Pransky*

Prayer for Those Who Help

Sustainer of the universe, help me to care with hope, courage and sensitivity.

Redeemer, grant me the insight, resourcefulness and the ability to ask for and accept help, so that the flame of my faith may never burn low.

Healing One, may I find the patience and resolves to overcome difficult moments, and to find meaning and purpose in the smallest task.

Compassionate One, help me remember to take care of myself so that I may have the strength to help others.

Merciful One, when I tire physically or mentally, bless me with renewed vigor so that I may provide comfort and care with love. *By Amy Bernard and Corrine Stern*

Becoming a Blessing by Blessing another:

Each of us, having shared our voices and our hopes, is connected with one another. Turn to the one to your right, and ask them for a special blessing, then bless them with what they ask. Then allow them to do the same for you.

(Quiet time with the soft playing of "Open Up Our Eyes.")

*Open Up Our Eyes, teach us how to live,
Fill our hearts with joy, and all the love you have to give.
Gather us in peace as You lead us to Your Name,
And we will know that You are One. Words and Music by Cantor Jeff Klepper*

Hope:

The last word has not been spoken,
The last sentence has not been written,
The final verdict is not in.
The final verdict is not in.
It is never too late
To change my mind,
My direction,
To say no to the past
And yes to the future,
To offer remorse,
To ask and give forgiveness.
It is never too late
To start over again,
To feel again
To love again
To hope again ...

by Rabbi Harold Schulweis

And the hope?

May I be at peace.
May my heart remain open.
May I know the beauty of my own true nature.
May I be healed.

May we find the world in our lifetime,
Our completion in the World to Come,

And our hopes realized in those who follow us.
May our hearts meditate in understanding,
Our mouths speak wisdom,
Our tongues sing songs of jubilation.

And then all that had divided us will merge
And then compassion will be wedded to power
And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind
And then both men and women will be gentle
And then both women and men will be strong
And then no person will be subject to another will
And then all will be rich and free and varied
And then the greed of some will give way to the needs of many
And then all will share equally in the earth abundance
And then all will care for the sick and weak and the old
And then all will nourish the young
And then all will cherish life creatures
And then all will live in harmony with each other and the earth
And then everywhere will be called Eden once again. (Judy Chicago)

It isn't always easy: it probably shouldn't be, given the work we do. But even when we are overwhelmed, or physically exhausted and spiritual spent, we return: to our corridors, and units, our hospice rooms or offices or scenes of disaster when we are called out to bring peace in the middle of chaos and tragedy.

Sing: Kol Haolam kulo, gesher tzar me'od (x3)
VeHaikar, veHaikar, lo lefakhed klal.

Tefilat Haderech by Debbie Friedman

<i>May we be blessed as we go on our way,</i>	<i>May we be sheltered by the wings of peace,</i>
<i>May we be guided in peace;</i>	<i>May we be kept in safety and in love;</i>
<i>May we be blessed with health and joy,</i>	<i>May grace and compassion find their way</i>
<i>May this be our blessing, Amen</i>	<i>to every soul</i>
<i>May this be our blessing, Amen.</i>	