

*A SERVICE OF HEALING:
MODELLING ESSENTIAL THEMES AND APPROACHES*

PRESENTED AT

מאין יבוא עזרי

*MEI'AYIN YAVO EZRI:
SOURCES OF HEALING WITHIN JUDAISM*

NOVEMBER 6, 1995

AT

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Acknowledgments

1. WELCOME AND OPENING

Niggun

Handwashing

אַרְחִץ בְּנִקְיוֹן כַּפָּי וְאֶסְבְּבָה אֶת־מִזְבֵּחַךְ יְהוָה:

I wash my hands in purity, and encircle Your altar, Adonai!
(Psalms 26:6)

2. BODY AND SOUL

Asher Yatzar: For Our Bodies

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר יָצַר אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּחָכְמָה, וּבָרָא בּוֹ נְקָבִים נְקָבִים, חֲלוּלִים חֲלוּלִים. גָּלוּי וְיָדוּעַ לְפָנַי כְּסֵא כְבוֹדְךָ, שָׂאֵם יִפְתַּח אֶחָד מֵהֶם, אוֹ יִסְתֵּם אֶחָד מֵהֶם, אֵי אֶפְשֶׁר לְהִתְקַיֵּם וְלַעֲמוֹד לְפָנֶיךָ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי, רוֹפֵא כָּל־בֶּשֶׂר וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.

Blessed are You, our Eternal God, Creator of the Universe, who has made our bodies in wisdom, creating openings, arteries, glands, and organs, marvelous in structure, intricate in design. Should but one of them, by being blocked or opened, fail to function, it would be difficult to stand before You. Wondrous Fashioner and Sustainer of Life, Source of our health and our strength, we give You thanks and praise.

Elohai Neshamah: For Our Souls/Spirit

אֱלֹהֵי, נִשְׁמָה שֶׁנָּתַתָּ בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא! אַתָּה בְּרָאתָהּ, אַתָּה יָצַרְתָּהּ, אַתָּה נִפְחַתָּהּ בִּי, וְאַתָּה מְשַׁמְרָהּ בְּקִרְבִּי. כָּל־זְמַן שֶׁהַנְּשָׁמָה בְּקִרְבִּי, מוֹדָה/מוֹדָה אָנִי לְפָנֶיךָ, יי אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי, רַבּוֹן כָּל־הַמַּעֲשִׂים, אֲדוֹן כָּל־הַנְּשָׁמוֹת. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי, אֲשֶׁר בִּידוֹ נִפְּשׂ כָּל־חַי, וְרוּחַ כָּל־בֶּשֶׂר־אִישׁ.

My God, the soul which You have placed within me is pure. You have created it, You have formed it, You have breathed it into me. You preserve it within me, and You will one day take it from me and restore it to me in time to come. So long as my soul is within me, I make acknowledgment before You, my God and God of all generations. Blessed are You, God, who restores my soul each day, that I may once again awaken.

3. DARKNESS AND LIGHT

Out of the Depths

יִגְעַתִּי בְקָרְאֵי נַחַר גְּרוּנִי כְּלוֹ עֵינַי מִיַּחַל לְאֱלֹהִים:

I am weary with calling, my throat is dry;
my eyes fail while I wait for God.

(Psalms 69:4)

אֲזַכֵּרָה אֱלֹהִים וְאֶהְמִיָּה אֲשִׁיחָה וְתַתְּעִטֶנּוּ רֹחִי סָלָה:

I call God to mind, I moan, I complain, my spirit fails.

(Psalms 77:4)

נִקְטָה נַפְשִׁי בַחַיִּי אֶעְזֹבָה עָלַי שִׁיחִי אֲדַבְּרָה בְּמַר נַפְשִׁי:

I am disgusted with life;
I will give rein to my complaint,
speak in the bitterness of my soul.

(Job 10:1)

לָמָּה יְהוָה תִּזְנַח נַפְשִׁי תִסְתִּיר פְּנֵיהָ מִמֶּנִּי: עָנִי וְגֹעַז מִנְעֵר נִשְׁאַתִּי אִמִּיה אֶפְוֶנָה:

Why, Adonai, do You reject me?
Why do You hide Your face from me?
From my youth I have been afflicted and near death;
I suffer Your terrors wherever I turn.

(Psalms 88: 15-16)

אֵלֵי אֱלֹהִים לָמָּה עֲזַבְתָּנִי רְחוֹק מִשְׁוֹעָתִי דְבַרִּי שָׁאֲגָתִי:
אֱלֹהִים אֶקְרָא יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָלָה וְלֹא תִעַנֶּנּוּ וְלֹא יִדְוַמְיָה לִּי:

My God, my God, why have You abandoned me;
why so far from delivering me
and from my anguished roaring?

My God, I cry by day -- You answer not;
by night, and have no respite.

(Psalms 22:2-3)

יְהוָה שְׁמַעָה תִפְלְתִי וְשׁוֹעָתִי אֶלֶיךָ תָּבוֹא: אֵלֵי־תִסְתַּר פְּנֵיהָ מִמֶּנִּי בַיּוֹם צַר לִי הִטָּה־אֵלַי
אֲזַנְךָ בַיּוֹם אֶקְרָא מִהַר עֲנֵנִי:

Adonai, hear my prayer,
let my cry come before You.
Do not hide Your face from me in my time of trouble.
Turn Your ear to me when I cry, answer me speedily!

(Psalms 102: 2-3)

Nissim B'khol Yom: The Miracles of Daily Life

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, שעשני בצלמו.

Blessed is the Source of Life, who has made me in the divine image.

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, שעשני ישראל.

Blessed is the Source of Life, who has led me to my Jewish heritage.

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, שעשני בן/בת חורין.

Blessed is the Source of Life, who has made me free.

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, פוקח עורים.

Blessed is the Source of Life, who opens the eyes of those who would not see.

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, רוקע הארץ על המים.

Blessed is the Source of Life, who establishes firm ground amidst the waters.

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, שעשה לי כל צרכי.

Blessed is the Source of Life, who provides for all my needs.

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, אזור ישראל בגבורה.

Blessed is the Source of Life, who girds us with courage.

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, מתיר אסורים.

Blessed is the Source of Life, who brings freedom to the captive.

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, זוקף כפופים.

Blessed is the Source of Life, whose power lifts up the fallen.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמְכִיז מִצְעָרֵי גֹבֵר.

Blessed is the Source of Life, who makes firm each person's steps.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַנּוֹתֵן לַיָּעָר כֹּחַ.

Blessed is the Source of Life, who gives strength to the weary

We now add blessings of our own.

4. A WORD OF TORAH

וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אַבְרָהָם אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּרְפָּא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וְאֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאִמְהַתָּיו וַיֵּלְדוּ:
כִּי־עָצַר עָצַר יְהוָה בְּעַד כָּל־רַחֲמֵם לְבֵית אֲבִימֶלֶךְ עַל־דְּבַר שָׂרָה אִשְׁתׁ אַבְרָהָם:

וַיְהִי כִּי־פָקַד אֶת־שָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה לְשָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר: וַתֵּהָר וַתֵּלֶד שָׂרָה
לְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן לְזִקְנָיו לְמוֹעֵד אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר אֲתוֹ אֱלֹהִים:

...Abraham then prayed to God and God healed Avimelekh, his wife and his slave girls, and they bore children. For Adonai had sealed up all the wombs in the household of Avimelekh because of the matter with Sarah, wife of Avraham.

21 Adonai remembered Sarah, as He had promised, and did for Sarah that which He had spoken. Sarah conceived and bore a son to Avraham in his old age, at the juncture which God had described...

(Genesis 20:17-18 and 21: 1-2)

כִּי הֵם חַיֵּינוּ וְאַרְךָ יְמֵינוּ, וּבְהֵם נִהְגָה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה:

Ki hem hayyenu, v'orekh yamenu,
u-vahem neh-geh yo-mam va-laila.

Indeed, they are our life and the length of our days;
We will meditate on them day and night.

5. PRAYERS FOR HEALING

Mi Sheberakh: May the One Who Blessed

מִי שְׁבֵרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרָהֶם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ, שָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל, וְלֵאָה הוּא יְבָרַךְ אֶת
הַחֹלִים ... הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִמְלֵא רַחֲמִים עֲלֵיהֶם לְהַחֲלִימָם וּלְרַפְּאֵתָם וּלְהַחֲזִיקָם וְיִשְׁלַח
לָהֶם מְהֵרָה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה רְפוּאַת הַנֶּפֶשׁ, וּרְפוּאַת הַגּוּף, בְּתוֹךְ שְׁאֵר חוֹלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַשְּׂתֵא
בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְו קָרִיב וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

May the One who blessed our ancestors, Sarah and Abraham, Rebecca and Isaac, Leah, Rachel and Jacob bless all the ill among us. Grant insight to those who bring healing, courage and faith to those who are sick, and love and strength to all of us. God, let Your spirit rest upon all who are ill and comfort us. May we soon know a time of complete healing, a healing of the body and a healing of the spirit, and let us say, Amen.

Mi Sheberakh avoteynu
Mekor Habrakha l'imoteynu
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 Sheberakh imoteynu
Mekor Habrakha l'avoteynu
Bless those in need of healing
With refuah shleyma:
The renewal of body,
The renewal of spirit,
And let us say: Amen.

Prayer for Those Who Help

May the One who blessed our forbearers be present to those who provide help for the ill and troubled among us. May they be filled with fortitude and courage, endowed with sympathy and compassion, as they give strength to those at their side. May they fight against despair, and continue to find within themselves the will to reach out to those in need. And in their love of others, may they know the blessing of community, and the blessing of renewed faith.

A Litany for Healing

When Miriam was sick her brother Moses prayed: "O God, pray, heal her please!" We join in this responsive prayer based on Moses' words:

We pray for those who are now ill.

Source of Life, we pray: Heal them.

We pray for those who are affected by illness, anguish and pain.

Heal them.

Grant courage to those whose bodies, holy proof of Your creative goodness, are violated by illness and the pain of illness.

Encourage them.

Grant strength and compassion to families and friends who give their loving care and support, and help them to overcome despair.

Strengthen them.

Grant wisdom to those who probe the deepest complexities of Your world as they labor in the search for treatment and cures.

Inspire them.

Grant clarity of vision and strength of purpose to the leaders of our institutions and our government. May they be moved to act with justice and compassion and find the courage to overcome fear and hatred.

Guide them.

Grant insight to us, that we may understand that whenever death comes, we must accept it -- but that before it comes, we must resist it, by prolonging life and by making our life worthy as long as it is lived.

Bless and heal us all.

6. REMEMBRANCE

Selections from Psalm 139

O God, You have searched me
and know me well.
You understand all my thoughts
and every word upon my tongue.
Your presence surrounds me;
You touch me with Your hand.
It exceeds my own perception;
it is a wonder beyond imagining...

If I say,
"Let darkness hide me
and turn the light to darkness,"
even the darkness is not dark for You;
the night shines forth like day;
the darkness is as light for You.

How precious are Your thoughts to me, O God,
how endless their number,
more numerous than the grains of sand.
When I awake, I am still with You.

Search my soul, O God,
and know my heart.
If there is sorrow in me,
lead me in Your everlasting ways.

Unending Love

We are loved
by an unending love.
We are embraced
by arms that find us
even when
we are hidden from ourselves.
We are touched
by fingers that soothe us
even when
we are too proud for soothing.
We are counseled
by voices that guide us
even when
we are too embittered to hear.

We are loved
by an unending love.
We are supported
by hands that uplift us
even in
the midst of a fall.
We are urged on
by eyes that meet us
even when
we are too weak for meeting.

We are loved
by an unending love.
Embraced, touched, soothed, and
counseled...
ours are the arms,
the fingers, the voices;
ours are the hands,
the eyes, the smiles;
We are loved
by an unending love.

The Kaddish

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעַלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ; וְיִמְלִיךָ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּיכוּן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוּן,
וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.
יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וְלְעַלְמֵי עַלְמַיָּא.
יְתַבְרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם, וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר, וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְקַדְשָׁא,
בְּרִיךְ הוּא, לְעַלְמָא (לְעַלְמָא) מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא, תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא, דְאָמִירוּן בְּעַלְמָא,
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.
יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא, וְחַיִּים, עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.
עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

7. CLOSING PRAYERS

Birkat Kohanim: The Priestly Blessing

We give our blessing to one another. Please add any personal words of blessing you wish to offer.

יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ.
יָאֵר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיַחַנֶּךָ.
יֵשָׂא יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ,
וְיֵשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.

Y'va-reh-kh'kha Adonai v'yish-m'reh-kha.

Ya-air Adonai pa-nav ey-leh-khah veey'hoo-neh-kha.

Yi-sah Adonai pa-nav ey-leh-khah v'ya-seim l'kha shalom.

May God bless you and keep you.

May the Light of God's Presence shine on you and be gracious to you.

May God's Presence be near to you and bless you with peace.

Oseh Shalom: The One Who Makes Peace

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

*O-seh shalom bimromav, Hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu, v'al kol Yisrael
v'imru amen.*

Ya-aseh shalom, ya-aseh shalom, shalom aleinu v'al kol haolam.

May the One who makes peace in the heavens let peace descend upon us, upon all Israel and all the world and let us say: Amen.

Acknowledgments

This service is inspired by the format of "A Service of Healing" created by Ruach Ami: Bay Area Jewish Healing Center and Congregation Sha'ar Zahav of San Francisco.

Section 2, "Body and Soul," drawn from the daily Shaharit service.

Section 3, "Out of the Depths" verses compiled by Rabbi Joseph Edelheit of Minneapolis, MN. Blessings drawn from the daily Shaharit service.

Section 5, "Prayers for Healing" incorporates the traditional Mi Sheberakh prayer with translations and prayers drawn from "A Service of Healing," above. Mi Sheberakh song (c) Debbie Friedman.

Section 6, "Unending Love" by Rami Shapiro.