

Give Me Your Hand*

a Service of Healing

for

HELP, HOPE AND HEALING:
MENTAL ILLNESS AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

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October 20th, 2002
Temple Beth Jacob
Redwood City, California

*Talmud Bavli, Brachot 5b



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Service prepared by Rabbi Eric Weiss, © 2002

GATHERING

We begin the service with a *niggun*, a melody without words.

Kavvanah: *May this melody and this gathering help me to quiet my mind and open my heart.*

All the world is just a narrow bridge
And above all—is not to fear it all.

(R. Nāhman)

כָּל הָעוֹלָם כְּלוֹ	Kol ha-oh-lam ku-lo
גֶּשֶׁר צָר מְאֹד	geh-sheer tzar m'od
וְהַעִיקָר לֹא לִפְחֹד כְּלָל	v'ha-i-kar (2x) lo l'fa-hed k'lal

Texts can be like gazing into a pool of water and seeing oneself. Why is this? Even the most still water is not an exact mirror. In water, we see ourselves reflected in another aspect of Creation. In some way we are in relationship to the water. Our face has a flexibility a mirror may not show. And yet our reflection in the water is unmistakably our own. So too is looking at a text. We may see something of ourselves in it. *

Reflection:

Once when Rabbi Hillel had finished a lesson, his students asked, "Where are you going now?" "To perform a religious duty," he answered. "To bathe in the bathhouse."
"Is that a religious duty?" they asked.
"If somebody is appointed to clean the statues of the king that stand in the theaters and circuses, and is paid for that work," he answered, "should not I, who am created in the image and likeness of God, take care of my body?"

My God, the Soul you have given me is pure.

אֱלֹהֵי נַשְׁמָה שְׁנֵיתָ בִּי Eh-lo-hai n'sha-ma sheh-na-ta-ta bi
טְהוֹרָה הִיא teh-ho-ra hi

When all seems dark and the darkness is harsh, GIVE ME YOUR HAND.*

When I cannot see light even in the brightest day, GIVE ME YOUR HAND.

When you are tired and every breath is heavy, GIVE ME YOUR HAND.

When my words do not grasp the depth
of yearning in my soul, GIVE ME YOUR HAND.

When your feelings are overwhelming or dulled, GIVE ME YOUR HAND.

When I am confused and don't know what to do, GIVE ME YOUR HAND.

So that we may be together, GIVE ME YOUR HAND.

Please feel free to add your own desire to which we can all respond: GIVE ME YOUR HAND.

Reflection:

God speaks within every moment
and creates the world with every breath.
God speaks from the center of the universe,
in the silence beyond all thought.
Mightier than the crash of a thunderstorm,
mightier than the roar of the sea,
is God's voice silently speaking
in the depths of the listening heart. [Psalm 93; based on a translation by Stephen Mitchell]

* Rabbi Eric Weiss, based on text from Talmud Bavli, Brachot 5b and inspired by sermon by Rabbi Susan Lippe, Congregation Beth Am, Los Altos Hills, titled "A Jewish Response to Mental Illness" delivered June 21, 2002/11 Tammuz 5762.

Mi Shebeirach [song]

מִי שִׁבְרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה לְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ

Mi-sheh-bay-rah ah-vo-tay-nu,

Meh-kor ha-b'ra-ha le-i-mo-tay-nu

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.

מִי שִׁבְרַךְ אֲמוֹתֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ

Mi-sheh-bay-rah i-mo-tay-nu

Meh-kor ha-b'ra-ha la-ah-vo-tay-nu

Bless those in need of healing

with שְׁלֵמָה רְפוּאָה re-fu-ah sh'lay-ma,

the renewal of body,

the renewal of spirit,

and let us say: Amen.

(Debbie Friedman)

Prayer for Those Who Help

May the One who blessed and led our forbearers give countenance unto 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 feel the blessing of community and the blessing of renewed faith.

Susan Feldman

Reflection:

In pre-modern, pre-feminist times, Jews were called by their first names and the names of their fathers. Praying for healing is the only occasion when one is *traditionally* called by one's first name and the name of one's *mother*. (In modern feminist Jewish communities, people are generally called by their first names and the names of both their mothers and fathers.)

What is the origin of this custom? Perhaps when praying for health, healing, and life, the mother as a symbol of the life force is invoked. Alternatively, the mother may be remembered (by many of us) as the one who tended us when we were sick and nursed us to health. There may also be a theological reason. In this prayer, we ask for God's *rachamim* (compassion). In the early midrashic literature, God is portrayed as having both a masculine and a feminine side. God's masculine side is associated with *midat ha-din*: judgement, justice, measure for measure, getting what we deserve. God's feminine side is associated with *midat ha-rachamim*: compassion, mercy, empathic loving presence and unconditional regard. At times of illness, we do not appeal to God's *din*; in fact, we want nothing to do with it! Instead, we appeal to God's *rachamim*: the motherly love of the Almighty. *Rechem*, the root of *rachamim* means womb.

MOURNER'S KADDISH

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא.
בְּעֻלְמָא דֵּי בְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ.
וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּינוּ וּבְיוֹמֵינוּ.
וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל.
בְּעֻגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Yit-ga-dal ve-yit-kadash sh'may ra-ba,
be-al-ma di-v'ra hir-u-tay, ve-yam-lih
mal-hu-tay, be-ha-yay-hon
u-ve-yo-may-hon u-ve-ha-yay de-hol
bayt Yis-ra-el, ba-aga-la u-viz-man
ka-riv, ve-i-me-ru: ah-mayn.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעַלְמֵי
וְלְעַלְמֵי עֻלְמָיָא:

Ye-hay sh'may ra-ba me-va-rah,
le-ah-lam u-le-al-may al-ma-ya.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם
וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל
שְׁמֵהּ דְקַדְשָׁא בְרִיךְ הוּא
לְעַלְמֵי מִן כּוֹל בִּרְחָתָא וְשִׁירָתָא.
תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנִחַמְתָּא
דְאִמְרִין בְּעֻלְמָא וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Yit-ba-rah ve-yish-ta-bah, ve-yit-pa-ar
ve-yit-ro-mam, ve-yit-na-say
ve-yit-ha-dar, ve-yit-ah-leh, ve-yit-ha-lal
sh'may de-ku-de-sha, b'rih hu,
le-ay-la min kol bir-ha-ta ve-shi-ra-ta,
tush-be-ha-ta ve-ne-he-ma-ta,
da-ah-mi-ran be-al-ma, ve-i-me-ru:
ah-mayn.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים
עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כּוֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Ye-hay sh'la-ma ra-ba min she-ma-ya
ve-ha-yim ah-lay-nu ve-al kol Yis-ra-el,
ve-i-me-ru: ah-mayn.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו
הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
וְעַל כּוֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל (וְעַל כּוֹל הָעוֹלָם).
וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן:

O-seh sha-lom bim-ro-mav,
hu ya-ah-seh sha-lom ah-lay-nu
ve-al kol Yis-ra-el
(ve-al kol ha-o-lam),
ve-i-me-ru: ah-mayn.

