

Meditations

WORLD AIDS DAY

Service of Hope and Healing

For those of all faiths touched by AIDS

Tuesday, December 1, 1998

*Temple Beth-El
70 Orchard Avenue
Providence RI*

*Sponsored by the AIDS Task Force
Community Relations Council
Jewish Federation of Rhode Island*

Meditations

We don't have to beg or bribe God to give us strength or hope or patience. We need only turn to the One, admit that we can't do this on our own, and understand that bravely bearing up under illness is one of the most human, one of the most godly, things we can ever do. One of the things that constantly reassures me that God is real, and not just an idea that religious leaders made up, is the fact that people who pray for strength, hope, and courage so often find resources of strength, hope, and courage that they did not have before they prayed.

Rabbi Harold Kushner

Dear God,

We are bound by 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.
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 teeth clenched, our jaws locked, our legs crossed,
our shoulders stooped, our backs bent,
our chests from inhaling and exhaling
the sweet fullness of life's breath.
O, God, untie all our knots!

My God, let me focus not on what my body cannot do, but on what my body can do. Let me give thanks for what still works. Let me hope for what does not work. For no matter what, no matter how my body lapses, my soul, with each breath that I take, is like the flicker of a candle within my being.

Service of Hope and Healing

We come together this evening for healing and for solace, but also to remember and to celebrate, for we stand in the midst of a great cloud of witnesses who have shown courage, compassion, and faithfulness, often in the face of indifference, hostility, even antagonism. We pray that you give us courage to mourn unashamedly, to celebrate exuberantly, and to mark and testify to all the occasions of grace in our lives.

How good it is to gather, in a rainbow of affections and orientations, in the presence of a God who loves without limit and forever.

How sweet it is to gather, women and men together, in the presence of a God who transcends human limits and categories.

How pleasant it is to gather together in the presence of a God who hears the prayers of all people

How fine it is to gather, people with firm beliefs together with people who have questions in their hearts; in the presence of a God who values deeds of caring and justice far above the recitations of creeds.

What better way to glorify God then for friends and strangers to gather to love, support and offer hope to one another?

Hineh Ma Tov/How Good

*Hineh ma tov u'mah na'im
shevet achim gam yachad.*

How good and how pleasant it is when brothers
and sisters dwell together in peace.

Help Me to Pray

God of the universe, teacher of prayer
open your lips within me, for I cannot speak

*Send me words to help me shape Your praise,
to bring peace and blessing to my days.*

Too often the world has stifled
all the words of blessing within me.

So much has threatened to break my spirit.

Help me, Adonai, for I have been so very low,
And You heal the broken in spirit and joy.

*In your compassion, in Your boundless love,
give me words of prayer; then accept them from me.*

May my words, Your words, be sweet and whole before You
as the words of King David, sweet singer of psalms.

*I am so often weary, empty, dry,
In thirst, in hunger, I seek comfort, even joy.*

Transform my sorrow Adonai.
Help me to renew my faith, my hopes,
As I raise my soul toward You.

*Open Your lips within me, Adonai.
that I may speak your praises.*

A Litany for Healing

"El Na - ReFana La/Lo/Lanu"

Oh God, Please Heal Her/Him /Us

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, 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 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.

Musical Selection

Sh'ma Kolynu – Hear Our Voice

We take a few moments silently to offer the prayer that only we, ourselves, can pray — the prayer of our own hearts.

Adonai our God, hear our voice. Have compassion upon us, pity us, accept our prayer with loving favor. You listen to entreaty and prayer. Do not turn us away unanswered, Our Ruler, for You mercifully heed Your people's supplication.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה.

Baruch Ata Adonai, shomayah t'fillah

Blessed are You, Adonai, who hears prayer.

Awareness and Healing

Grief can have a quality of profound healing because we are forced to a depth of feeling that is usually below the threshold of awareness.

- Steven Levine

AIDS has taken its toll and many of us are numb. We've got a lot of grieving to do, and some major weeping and wailing. We need to open up to where our pain lives, where our loss is stored. We need to cry alone, and we need to cry together.

Even as we celebrate our living, we need to mourn our losses. AIDS opens up a great sadness for us as individuals and as a community. To discount our sadness, or to ignore it, is to deny ourselves the opportunity to heal.

Personal grief opens us to being more fully human. we become aware of how deep and far our feeling goes, of how big we are. Community grief joins us together and makes us stronger. Through our grief, we become more vulnerable, more inclusive, more alive than ever before.

The Color of Light: Daily Meditations For All of us Living with AIDS, October 28th

Refaynu – Heal Us

We take a few moments to focus on those who need healing.

Heal us, O Adonai, and we shall be healed. Help us and save us, for
You are our glory. Grant perfect healing for all our afflictions.

May it be Your will, Adonai my God and God of my ancestors, to
send perfect healing, of body and of soul, to _____,
along with all others who are stricken.

בָּרַךְ אֱתָהּ יְיָ, רוֹפֵא הַחֹלִים.

Baruch Ata Adonai, rofe ha-cholim

Blessed are You, Adonai, Healer of the sick.

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.

Mi Sheberakh: May the One who Blessed

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.*

This is our Challenge

We are faced with a challenge.
We the lovers,
We the parents,
We the children,
We the friends.
We the neighbors,
We the faces in the crowd.
Each of us faces a responsibility;
Each of us shares a challenge
To enhance the lives
Of people living with AIDS.

In the face of darkness,
Through times of despair,
We create hope;
We make the light.

Together we can sing,
Together we can eat.
Together we can pray.

As we listen to the stories,
We hear.
As we share memories, we smile.
A moment lived
Can be a moment of holiness.
Let each of us strive
To make it so.

Barry Block and Rabbi Daniel Frelander

To Be Strong

Names Words and Music by Cathy Fink

A patchwork of thousands of precious names
There must be someone that you know
Woven together in a quilted frame
Names the loved ones won't let go

Chorus:

And I know that my name could be there
And I feel the pain and the fear
And as human love and passions do not make us all the same
We are counted not as numbers, but as names

We grieve for the lovers and the families
And I pray that they'll meet again some day

But until that time I will carry the flame
As the numbers grow we'll not forget their names

Chorus:

A lover, a father, a friend A sister, a Rabbi, a mom
Each quilted piece holds a memory
Each memory helps us to go on

Chorus (2X)

We Remember Them

In the rising of the sun and in its going down, we remember them.

In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter, we remember them.

In the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring, we remember them.

In the blueness of the sky and in the warmth of summer, we remember them.

In the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn, we remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength, we remember them.

When we are lost and sick at heart, we remember them.

When we have joys we long to share, we remember them.

So long as we live, they, too shall live, for they are now a part of us as we remember them....

Mourner's Kaddish

*Yit-ga-dal ve-yit-ka-dash she-
me ra-ba, be-al-ma di-ve-ra
chi-re-u-tei, ve-yam-lich mal-
chu-tei, be-cha-yei-chon u-ve-
yo-mei-chon u-ve-cha-yei de-
chol beit Yis-ra-eil, ba-a-ga-la
u-ve-ze-man ka-riv, ve-i-me-
ru: a-main.*

*Ye-hei she-mei ra-ba me-va-
rach le-a-lam u-le-al-mei al-
ma-ya*

*Yit-ba-rach ve-yish-ta-bach,
ve-yit-pa-ar ve-yit-ro-mam ve-
yit-na-sei, ve-yit-ha-dar ve-
yit-a-leh ve-yit-ha-lal she-mei
de-ki-de-sha, be-rich hu.*

*Le-ei-la min kol bi-re-cha-ta
ve-shi-ra-ta, tush-be-cha-ta
ve-ne-che-ma-ta, da-a-mi-ran
be-al-ma, ve-i-me-ru:
a-mein.*

*Ye-hei she-la-ma ra-ba min
she-ma-ya ve-cha-yim al-lei-
nu ve-al kol Yis-ra-eil, ve-i-
me-ru: a-mein.*

*O-seh sha-lom bi-me-ro-mav,
hu ya-a-seh sha-lom a-lei-nu
ve-al kol Yis-ra-eil, ve-i-me-
ru: a-mein.*

וַיִּתְגַּדַּל וַיִּתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ
רַבָּא בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי-בְרָא
כְּרַעוּתָהּ, וְנִמְלִיק מְלֻכוּתָהּ
בְּחַיִּיכוּן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוּן וּבְחַיֵּי
דְכָל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעֵגְלָא
וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ
לְעָלְמָא וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמֵיָא

וַיִּתְבָּרַךְ וַיִּשְׁתַּבַּח,
וַיִּתְרוֹמַם וַיִּתְנַשֵּׂא, וַיִּתְהַדָּר
וַיִּתְעַלֶּה וַיִּתְהַלַּל שְׁמֵהּ
דְּקוּדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא

לְעָלְמָא מִן-כָּל-בִּרְכָתָא
וְשִׁירָתָא, תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא
וְנִתְחַמְתָּא דְאָמִירוֹ בְּעֵלְמָא
וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמֵיָא
וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל-
כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן

עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא
יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל
יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן

May the Source of peace in the heavens bring peace to us and to all Israel, and we answer: *Amen*.

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

♫ *Oseh Shalom bim-ro'av*

Hu ya'asey shalom aleinu

(x2)

V'al kol Yisrael

Ve-imru, imru amein.

Ya'aseh shalom, ya'aseh shalom

Shalom aleinu v'al kol Yisrael.

Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 17a

Translated by Lawrence Kushner

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.

A Final Prayer

May you live to see your world fulfilled
May your destiny be for worlds still to come
May you trust in generations past and yet to be

May your eyes shine with the light of holy words
and your face reflect the brightness of the heavens
may your lips ever speak wisdom
Your fulfillment be in justice
Even as you ever yearn to listen to the words of
The Holy Ancient One of Old

May your heart be filled with intuition
May your words be filled with insight
May songs of praise be upon your tongue
Your vision straight before you
Even as you ever yearn to listen to the words of
the Holy Ancient One of Old

Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 17a
Translated by Lawrence Kushner

Unending Love

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