A Warm Blanket

Healing Service for Yom Kippur Afternoon

SHMA KOLEINU



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Yom Kippur Afternoon Healing Service "A Warm Blanket"

Introduction

The most important principle for seeking healing and wholeness is the reminder that none of us were truly whole before we became ill. There are none who remain unscathed among us. As we sit here this afternoon, we have laid bare, to ourselves and to our God, our own transgressions, our own weaknesses, our own quietly spoken mis-truths and half-truths. We yearn for a return to wholeness once again.

We pray each and every week for healing and wholeness for others – for their physical pain, for their mental anguish, for their family squabbles and for their deep and sorrowful loneliness. The *Mi Shebeirach* prayer asks for both physical cure and spiritual healing, seeking blessing, compassion, restoration and strength, with the community of others facing illness as well as all Jews, all human beings. Jewish tradition is mindful of everyone who feels the impact of illness, pain, and loss, including but not limited to the individuals who are themselves suffering. It understands that all those near and dear to the patient face their own set of challenges that often, without notice, change the rules of the game. That may be the most difficult part of all.

From the deepest part of who I am, I place before You God, Healer of shattered hearts, the purest offering I can muster.

In the midst of this broken world, may I know wholeness once again.

In the midst of this challenged life, may we know trust again.

In the midst of this congregation, surrounded by so many whose deepest losses keep their souls from taking flight, may we all soar once again to the heights of life where fear is lost and courage fills our hearts.

El Na R'fa Na La

El na r'fa na la Refuah shleimah El na r'fa na la Please heal this soul

Mi sh'beirach Avraham v'Sarah Yitzhak v'Rivka Yaakov, Rachel v'Leah

El na r'fa na la Refuah shleimah El na r'fa na la Please heal this soul ¹

"God, please heal her" with a full and complete healing.
May the One who blessed our ancestors,
Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob, Rachel and Leah
bless us and heal us with wholeness.

Stricken

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 seemingly unbearable pain, disbelief and despair, as well as the rollercoaster of ongoing anxiety, concern, numbing emotional and physical exhaustion, we reach out to God.

God hears our prayers and answers us, but we must not confuse prayer with magic. Instead of a magical response, the answers often 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, the courage to face what we have feared, or the strength to carry on. The answers most often come in the form of "a still, small voice . . . " ²

¹ Music and lyrics by Rick Recht, based on Numbers 12:13

² Talking to God, Rabbi Naomi Levy

God's answer may be the ability to accept what we have been denying. Or it may appear as hope in the face of despair.

God is neither distant nor deaf. We are not alone. God is present in our lives.

When we stop bargaining with God and start opening up our souls to God, our prayers suddenly do start working.

We can pray for strength and receive strength.

Prayer is ultimately an experience, not a request.

It is a sense of being connected, of being part of something larger than ourselves. It is an attempt to be in the presence of God.

On Prayer

Prayer is our attachment to the utmost. Without God in sight, we are like the scattered rungs of a broken ladder. To pray is to become a ladder on which thoughts mount to God, to join the movement upward and inward that surges unnoticed throughout the entire universe. We do not step out of the world when we pray; we merely strive to see the world in a different way. ³

"Al Tasteir/Don't Hide Your Face From Me"

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. 4

³ Abraham Joshua Heschel

⁴ Music by Debbie Friedman, lyrics based on Psalm 27-:9

A Prayer for Healing

God, hear my prayer, and let my cry come to You.

Do not hide from me in the day of my distress.

Turn to me and speedily answer my prayer.

Eternal God, Source of healing, out of my distress I call upon You.

Help me sense Your presence at this difficult time.

Grant me patience when the hours are heavy; in hurt or disappointment, give me courage.

Keep me trustful in Your love.

Give me strength for today, and hope for tomorrow.

To your loving hands I commit my spirit when asleep and when awake.

You are with me; I shall not fear. 5

Please heal me now Don't hide Your face from me.

Prayer for the Body

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe. With divine wisdom You have made our bodies, combining veins, arteries and vital organs into a finely-balanced network.

Wondrous Maker and Sustainer of life, were one of them to fail — how well we are aware — we would lack the strength to stand before You.

Blessed are You, Adonai, Source of our health and strength.

בּרוּךְ אַתָּה יָיָ, רוֹפֵא כָל בְּשֶׂר וּמַפְלִיא לַאֲשׂוֹת. Baruch Atah, Adonai, rofeh chol basar umafli laasot.

⁵ Jewish Link, a web site totally devoted to promoting Jewish healing and spirituality (www.jewishhealing.com)

Prayer for the Soul

Elohai, n'shamah sh'natata bi
t'horah hi.

Atah b'ratah, atah y'tzartah,
atah n'fachta bi,
v'Atah m'shamrah b'kirbi
Kol z'man shehan'shamah b'kirbi,
modeh / modah ani l'fanecha,
Adonai Elohai v'Elohei avotai v'imotai,
Ribon kol hamaasim,
Adon kol han'shamot.
Baruch atah, Adonai,
asher b'yado nefesh kol chai
v'ruach kol b'sar ish.

אֶלהַי, נְשָׁמָה שֶׁנָּתָתָּ בִּי טְחוֹרָה הִיא. אַתָּה בְּרָאתָהּ, אַתָּה יְצַרְתָּהּ, אַתָּה נְפַחְתָּהּ בִּי, וְאַתָּה מְשַׁמְרָה בְּקֹרְבִּי, כְּל זְמֵן שֶׁהַנְּשָׁמָה בְּקֹרְבִּי, מוֹדֶה / מוֹדָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהַי וֵאלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵי וְאִמּוֹתֵי, רְבּוֹן כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים, בְרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ נָפֶשׁ כָּל חֵי וְרְוּחַ כָּל בְּשָׂר אִישׁ.

My God, the soul You have given me is pure.
You created it, You shaped it, You breathed it into me, and You protect it within me.
For as long as my soul is within me,
I offer thanks to You,
Adonai, my God
and God of my ancestors,
Source of all Creation, Sovereign of all souls.
Praised are You, Adonai,
In whose hand is every living soul and the breath of humankind.

1 Listen

When you're lost, you feel afraid And you don't know what to say Then listen, listen to our God. If there's a question on your mind, If the answer's hard to find Then listen, listen to our God. Listen with all your heart and soul
And with all your might.
Write them and learn them and teach them well
Every morning and night.
Close your eyes and listen

Quiet yourself,
There's nothing to say.
Stop all the chatter that gets in the way.
And listen, listen to our God.
When the wind and thunder finally disappear
There's still a voice that you can hear
If you listen, listen to our God

You can hear it from the top of the highest hill Or from the valley below. It can come from the edge of the universe, It can come from within your soul. Close your eyes and listen ⁶

The Shofar

On Rosh Hashanah, we sound the shofar,

A sound that awakens our souls

Like flint to a rock, struck hard and struck fast

Lighting a fire from within, fueling its coals.

So many thoughts rarely spoken

Yet awaken we must to the new days ahead.

We still have much to be grateful for,

So much life with which to be fed.

Tekiah, a strong and forceful sound,

Challenging us to let go of our fear.

It moves through us with rhythm reverberating from bone and sinew

As we wonder what is to come to us this year.

⁶ Music and lyrics by Doug Cotler and Jeff Marx

Shevarim, three blasts of might, the latest bad news.

If we can just hold on through,

Breathe, reflect, and allow the worry to subside,

we may find a new path to choose.

Teruah, nine quick sounds, friends and family who drop in for a moment And we know which ones are calm, and which ones are in pain But the attention and distraction helps us get through the day Until that time when we are so ready for them all to get on their way.

Birchot Hashachar - Blessings of Every Day

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam . . .

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּח יְיָּ, אֱלהַינוּ מָלֶךְ הָעוֹלֶם,

Who has implanted mind and instinct within every human being.

Who lifts me up with hope when all seems so bleak.

Who makes firm my steps as I walk into the unknown.

Who blesses me with strength when I feel weak and determined when I feel lost.

Who allows me to see the good and the beautiful that can emerge from the bad and the ugly.

Who infuses me with a second wind when I feel beaten and alone.

Who removes the sleep from my eyes with the knowledge that with every new sunrise, new possibilities for holiness abound.

A Warm Blanket

The greatest gift I was ever given when I was ill wasn't medicine or a great recommendation. It wasn't advice or groceries or a ride. It wasn't a visit from a long, lost friend. It wasn't a loan and it wasn't even a meal. although all these things were wonderful. No, the greatest gift I ever was given was a warm blanket. I was cold and scared and I just couldn't stop shivering. There was a whirl of activity as my siblings kindly competed for what they thought they knew best: Receiving the delivery of an extra freezer for the meals set to arrive, mopping, vacuuming, filling the pantry with their Trader Joe's runs. But my friend, you saw me shivering. When you left the room I wondered where you had gone. Then you reappeared from behind me and wrapped around my shoulders an old blanket you had placed in the dryer. The warmth permeated the layers of my flesh, soothed my bones, and reminded me that my body could still feel and be soothed by the simplest of gestures.

Developing an Attitude of Gratitude

The story is told of Simon and Levi who were two of the Israelite slaves who came forth out of Egypt. Like everyone, they celebrated the tenth plague and quickly left Egypt. But no sooner were they out of Egypt did the work of freedom begin to make them upset. They grew tired and weary. They complained that the sand was hot. They even began wishing they were back in Egypt. At least there, we had a little shade, they thought. And they shared this with each other. Each day, they complained. They pushed others away. All they could do was look down in front of their feet, which they just shuffled along. Kvetch, kvetch, kvetch. Then, just a few days into their trek, they noticed the ground was wet. Now, not only were they tired and sun burnt and hungry and had blisters on their feet, they had wet sand, irritating their bunions! And they shuffled along. They even began complaining of some strange fish smell! Well, finally, because they began hearing shouts of joy and tears of happiness, they looked up and saw that everyone

around them was singing. That Miriam girl who was always so happy was dancing and everyone was following her!

When we don't look up and all we can see is the few feet in front of us, we miss the miracles that are just beyond. 7

O Lord Prepare Me

O Lord prepare me
To be a sanctuary
Pure and holy, tried and true
And in thanksgiving
I'll be a living
Sanctuary for you 8

Prayer for Expressing Gratitude

Gracious God, in the busy-ness of my day, I sometimes forget to stop to thank you for all that is good in my life. My blessings are many and my heart is filled with gratefulness for the gift of living, for the ability to love and be loved, for the opportunity to see the everyday wonders of creation, for sleep and water, for a mind that thinks and a body that feels.

I thank you, too, for those things in my life that are less than I would hope them to be -- things that seem challenging, unfair, or difficult. When my heart feels stretched and empty, and pools of tears form in my weary eyes, still I rejoice that you are as near to me as my next breath and that in the midst of turbulence, I am growing and learning. In the silence of my soul, I thank you most of all for your unconditional and eternal love. Amen. ⁹

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Based on Midrash from Exodus Rabbah

Music and lyrics by John Thompson and Randy Scruggs

I am grateful for:

My life

My parents

My spouse

My partner

My sisters and brothers

My best friends

My children

My grandchildren

My great grand children

My work

My wisdom

My mistakes

My learning

My potential

My faith

My endeavors

My travels

My zest for adventure

My satisfaction with what is

My hope for what can be

Shehecheyanu

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu melech

Melech haolam,

shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higianu

laz'man hazeh.

בָּרוּדְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהָינוּ מַלֵדְ הָעוּלָם,

שֶׁהֶרֶטְיָנוּ וְקִיְּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ

לוְמֵן הוָה.

Blessed are You, Source of creation and healing, Who continues to inspire us to life, to recognize the miracle of being present and alive and Whose spirit infuses us when we are depleted. Thank You, God, for this moment at this time in this place.

The Bright Light of Hope is Sometimes Too Much To Take

There are days when I find a moment or an hour or even a half day of wholeness When my mind is fresh and connects readily to my heart.

Too often I like to just sit in the darkness.

The sunlight sometimes overwhelms my eyes.

But then there are days when my courage runs deep

And I find that I can take the steps, on my own, out into the light of day.

There, with no one else around,

I spread out my arms and open my eyes as wide as I can muster.

I worship the sunlight like it is my god.

I invite in the rays to infuse me with healing.

I imagine the UV waves causing positively charged molecules to do positively charged work in my brain,

to kick start it again like I was an infant with blood vessels still finding their way and mapping my fresh, yet to be lived, approach to life.

In that moment, I am healing, I am becoming whole again.

The angels whisper in tones of kindness, reminding me that I am so much more than the file that describes my treatment and my pain.

I don't remain in the sunlight too long, though.

After a little while, the bright light of hope is too much to take.

So I retreat once again and struggle not to return

to the reality that keeps me moored in sadness.

Maariv Aravim

Lai, lai, lai, lai.....

Baruch atah Adonai,

Eloheinu Melech haolam,

asher bid'varo maariv aravim,

b'chochmah potei-ach sh'arim,

u-vit'vunah m'shaneh itim

u-ma-chalif et haz'manin,

Um'sadeir et kochavim

b'mishm'roteihem barakia kirtzono.

בָּרוּדְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֶלהָינוּ מָלֶדְ הָעוֹלֶם, אֲשֶׁר בִּדְבָרוֹ מַעֲרִיב עֲרָבִים, וּבִתְבוּנָה מְשַׁנָּה עִתִּים, וּמַחֲלִיף אֶת הַוְּמַנִּים, וּמְסֵדֵּר אֶת הַכּוֹכָבִים בִּמִשְׁמְרוֹתִיהֶם בָּרָקִיעַ כִּרְצוֹנוֹ. בִּמִשְׁמְרוֹתִיהֶם בָּרָקִיעַ כִּרְצוֹנוֹ. Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe,
Who speaks the evening into being,
Skillfully opens the gates,
Thoughtfully alters the time and changes the seasons,
And arranges the stars in their heavenly courses according to plan. 10

The Busyness of Sunlight Falls, And the Quiet of Night Arrives

God, You make evening fall. The sun sets, the day departs. Family and friends go home To where they can return to "normal" once again. We walk the thin line of light through the crack of the door. Even in the dark, the light still shines. Even in a room dedicated to seeing me as one in need of fixing, The light shines on me as whole: Whole, complete, unbroken, unchained, unchanged, unmasked Just as I am known to God, Just as I am known to those closest to me, Just as I am known to the deepest part of myself. And Divine light flows through me with energy and life and hope and faith that healing will come. This is my faith. This is my hope.

The Healing Sukkah

As we look ahead to healing, so too do we look ahead to the holiday of Sukkot. Today we combine the image of the Sukkah with the healing force of the *Mi Shebeirach*, the communal prayer that acknowledges our need for support and care. The Sukkah is the temporary dwelling, reminding us that the things we count on can sometimes be taken away.

When we build the Sukkah, we are commanded to make it fragile, as we are now forced to realize that our bodies, our psyches, our minds and our hearts are fragile. The Sukkah teaches us to acknowledge and accept $Sukkat\ Shalom-a$

¹⁰ Music by Steve Dropkin; lyrics from liturgy

shelter of peace. Sukkah shleimah – a shelter of wholeness. On this day of turning inward, we look for that "at-one-ment," that wholeness we seek.

On this day of days we will build a sukkah from a tallit made by our Religious School students – a temporary structure to shelter us all. This Sukkah will provide a shelter above the heads of all those in need of healing: those who are ill, the family members who care for the ill, and any and all medical professionals who, day by day, see to the physical as well as emotional wellness needs of so many. As Jews have found comfort by wrapping themselves in the tallit, so too do we enwrap each other through support and care. As the tallit reminds us of a loving God, so too do we feel loved by God and by one another.

In a moment, we will call people to the Sukkah to receive a prayer of healing: those in need of physical healing, those in need of healing from emotional grief and loss, those loving and giving care to those suffering from physical or emotional pain, and those feeling diminished in some way. Once I conclude the following invitations, please come forward and gather under our giant tallit for a very special blessing:

We invite to the bima all those who, voluntarily or professionally, devote themselves to the healing of body and spirit.

We invite to the bima all those family members giving care to those suffering from physical or emotional pain.

We invite to the bima all those in need of physical healing.

We invite to the bima all those in need of healing from emotional grief and loss.

We invite to the bima all those feeling less than whole at this time.

Please come forward and gather under this *Sukkat Shalom*, a shelter of peace, infused with the love and comfort and hope of our community.

An Offering of Blessing

May the One who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, bless and support those here today in need of physical healing.

May the One who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, bless and support those here today in need of healing from emotional grief and loss.

May the One who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, bless and support those here today who are a blessing and support to their loved ones.

May the One who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, bless and support those here today who offer treatment and do research and seek to combine the collective wisdom of the world's scientific professionals in order to alleviate pain and suffering in our world.

May you find strength and support, peace and respite from pain. May the spirit of this community be with you in your time of need, and for the length of your days, and let us say, *Amen*.

Mi Shebeirach

Mi she-bei-rach A-vo-tei-nu
M'kor hab'rachah l'Imoteinu
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 she-bei-rach Imoteinu
M'kor hab'rachah l'Avoteinu
Bless those in need of healing with r'fuah shleimah
The renewal of body, the renewal of spirit,
and let us say, Amen. 11

¹¹ Music by Debbie Friedman; lyrics by Drorah Setel, based on *Mi Shebeirach* Prayer

May We Be Blessed

Each of us has come 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 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.

May we be at peace.

May our hearts remain open.

May we know the beauty of our own true natures.

May we be healed. 12

¹² Rabbi Shira Stern

Shower the People

You can play the game and you can act out the part
Though you know it wasn't written for you.
But tell me, how can you stand there with your broken heart,
Ashamed of playing the fool?
One thing can lead to another; it doesn't take any sacrifice.
Oh, father and mother, sister and brother,
If it feels nice, don't think twice

Just shower the people you love with love, Show them the way that you feel. Things are gonna work out fine if you only will Shower the people you love with love, Show them the way you feel. Things are gonna be much better if you only will.

You can run but you cannot hide;
This is widely known.
And what you plan to do with your foolish pride
When you're all by yourself alone?
Once you tell somebody the way that you feel
You can feel it beginning to ease.
I think it's true what they say about the squeaky wheel,
Always getting the grease.

Better to shower the people you love with love, Show them the way that you feel. Things are gonna be just fine if you only will Shower the people you love with love, Show them the way that you feel. Things are gonna be much better if you only will Shower the people you love with love . . . ¹³

¹³ Music and lyrics by James Taylor

[&]quot;A Warm Blanket" was written and compiled by Rabbi Scott Hausman-Weiss and Barbara Loeser.