

When I was in rabbinical school I spent two summers working as a hospital chaplain at Beth Israel Singer Division under the wonderful direction of Reverend Trudi Jinpu Hirsch, a Buddhist monk and CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) supervisor. Of all the many amazing rabbis and teachers I have had in my life, Trudi is amongst the very most influential, helping me to learn about holy listening and conquering fear, speaking one's truth and the sacred power of presence. She also taught me a great deal about gratitude.

On many occasions, Trudi and I would have lunch together and she would always begin these meals in the same way – by closing her eyes, taking a moment of silence, and then gently bowing towards her food. I always found this gesture deeply moving, no matter how many times we ate together, and I even noticed myself feeling a bit jealous of Trudi, envying her enormous capacity for gratitude and her connection to a faith tradition that offered such beautiful practices through which to acknowledge God's gift of good. It was only towards the end of the summer that I realized that Judaism, too, contains a similar ritual to recognize God's beneficence. We call it the *motzi*.

Jewish tradition indicates that a person should say 100 *brakhot* (blessings) daily, inter-weaving an acknowledgement of God throughout even the most mundane of moments and infusing our entire day with gratitude and appreciation. There are blessings to say when one wakes up in the morning and when one goes to sleep at night, when one eats food or participates in study, when one performs religious acts and even when one goes to the bathroom. There are blessings to say upon hearing both good and bad news, upon seeing objects of great beauty, upon doing new things and meeting great people. Judaism encourages us to close our eyes in gratitude not only when we sit down to enjoy a good meal but rather throughout the whole day, sanctifying and elevating the otherwise ordinary events of our lives. It is up to us to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity.

Today I share with you one of my most favorite blessings, *T'fillat HaDerekh* (The Prayer for Travel), which may be said before setting out on any kind of significant (generally defined as lasting 72 minutes or more) journey by land, air, or sea. *T'fillat HaDerekh* speaks to the very real anxiety that many of us encounter while traveling, acknowledging that all journeys have their dangers and asking that God return us home again safely and in good health. While not in the original words, I also believe that *T'fillat HaDerekh* can help us to express a sense of gratitude that we are fortunate enough to travel in the first place, for indeed it is a true luxury to be able to leave one's home to explore and enjoy new venues. How grateful we are for the gift of leisure!

As we enter this Memorial Day weekend, a time during which many of us may be traveling ourselves or looking forward to coming summer weeks filled with adventure, I offer *T'fillat HaDerekh* below in Hebrew, English, and transliteration as a way of sanctifying and deepening the many journeys on which we will soon embark. *Nesiya Tova* – travel safely – and come back to us soon with great stories to share!

Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi Annie Tucker

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' א-להינו וא-להי אבותינו, שתוליכנו לשלום ותצדינו לשלום. ותסמכנו לשלום.
ותדריכנו לשלום. ותגיענו למחוז חפצנו לחיים ולשמחה ולשלום ותצילנו מכף כל אויב ואורב ולסטים
וסיזת רעות בדרך ומכל מיני פורעניות המתרגשות לבוא לעולם ותשלח ברכה בכל מעשה ידנו,
ותתנו לחן ולחסד ולרחמים בעיניך ובעיני כל ראינו ותשמע קול תחנונינו. כי א-ל שומע תפלה
ותחנון אתה: ברוך אתה ה', שומע תפלה.

*Y'hi ratzon milfanekha A-donai E-loheinu ve-lohei avoteinu she-tolikhenu l'shalom
v'tatz'idenu l'shalom v'tadrikhenu l'shalom, v'tagi'enu limhoz heftzenu l'hayim ul-
simha ul-shalom. V'tatzilenu mi-kaf kol oyev v'orev v'l'istim v'hayot ra'ot ba-derekh, u-
mi-kol minei pur'aniyot ha-mitrag'shot la-vo la-olam. V'tishlah b'rakha b'khol ma'a'se
yadeinu v'tit'nenu l'hen ul-hesed ul-rahamim b'einekha uv-einei khol ro'einu.
V'tishma kol tahanuneinu ki E-l sho'me'a t'fila v'tahanun ata. Barukh ata A-donai
sho'me'a t'fila.*

May it be Your will, Lord our God and God of our ancestors, that You lead us toward peace, guide our footsteps toward peace, and make us reach our desired destination for life, gladness, and peace. May You rescue us from the hand of every enemy and disaster along the way, and from all manner of calamities that threaten to come to earth. May You send blessing to our handiwork, and grant us grace, kindness, and mercy in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who see us. May You hear the sound of our humble request because You are God Who hears prayers and requests. Blessed are You, Adonai, Who hears prayer.