

Special Readings for Bar and Bat Mitzvah Celebrations

Jewish Readings

On Sacred Space

On Gathering in a Sanctuary

A sanctuary is a place of refuge;
We seek to escape from everyday
And find something out of the ordinary.

We cannot expect to leave the sanctuary a different person,
But if we leave it without some new insight,
Thought or question, we have not used the
Sanctuary to its best potential.

We enter the sanctuary as individuals,
But we come together as a group;
We pray each prayer in our own way,
But we do so as a congregation.

We leave the sanctuary with our own conclusions,
But we come to those conclusions through shared experience.
And for what shall we pray?

Let us ask that we be cheerful, kind and friendly;
That we seek the good in all, the hatred in none;
That we try never to criticise, make no promise we cannot keep,
That we be loyal to our community, our family and our friends;
That we be calm in times of trouble, think before we speak;
Hold on to our temper when things go wrong;
And every day by word or deed, in some unselfish way,
May we try to make someone happy.
And may the Almighty help us to see our prayers answered.

On Peace

Thoughts on Peace I

We pray for the land of Israel and all of its peoples.
May its borders know peace, its inhabitants tranquility.
May the bonds of faith and fate, which unite Jews of all lands
Be a source of strength to Israel and to us all.
May Israel find peace in the world....and in our lifetime.

Thoughts on Peace II

May we find peace with those we love, and with those we find hard to love, growing together with understanding over time.

May we be at peace with ourselves, and with the labors that fill our days.
May we render peace in our world, with wisdom and gentle patience.
May we be at peace with the Source; let understanding come our way.

Prayer for Peace

Dear God, we pray for peace in our lifetime.
The peace that comes when nation stops fighting nation.
The peace that comes when strangers don't hate strangers
Based on their religion or the color of their skin.

We pray for peace of mind,
Knowing that our children will grow up
In a world that is safe and caring,
On a planet that is nurtured, not abused.

We pray for peace in our hearts,
That we may feel Your love
Through our connection to our community,
Our family and our friends.
Blessed are You, O God, the Eternal Source of Peace.

Peace: Our Gift to the Future

Each generation is challenged to pursue peace.
Some meet that challenge better than others.
If peace eludes us, we must ask if it is because of
Circumstances beyond our control, or because
Our attitudes interfere with its realization.
When we are cynical instead of idealistic, do we not
Interfere with peace?
We work for peace when we believe it is an ideal.
When we are filled with despair instead of faith,
Do we not interfere with peace?
We gain the strength for peace by joining with others.
To those who claim that peace is not possible, we say:
People who believe in nothing, change nothing for the better.
We must risk believing in peace and work for its achievement.

This is our legacy from the past.
This is our gift to the future.

Blessing of Peace

Eternal Wellspring of peace
may we be drenched with the longing for peace

that we may give ourselves over
as the earth to the rain, to the dew
until peace overflows our lives
as living waters overflow the seas.

As we bless the source of life
so we are blessed.

For Peace

O God, You have called us to peace, for You are Peace itself.
May we have the vision to see that each of us, in some measure,
Can help to realize these aims.

Where there are ignorance and superstition,
Let there be enlightenment and knowledge.

Where there are prejudice and hatred,
Let there be acceptable and love.

Where there are fear and suspicion,
Let there be confidence and trust.

Where there are tyranny and oppression,
Let there be prosperity and health.

Where there are strife and discord,
Let there be harmony and peace.

On Remembrance

We Remember (Rabbi Jack Riemer)

At the rising of the sun and at its going down, we remember them.
At the blowing of the wind and the chill of winter, we remember them.
At the opening of the buds and the rebirth of spring, we remember them.
At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer, we remember them.
At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn, we remember them.
At the beginning of the year and when it ends, we remember them.
As long as we live, they too will live; for they are now a part of us, 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 joy we crave to share, we remember them.
When we have decisions that are difficult to make, we remember them.
When we have achievements that are based on theirs, we remember them.
As long as we live, they too will live; for they are now a part of us,
As we remember them.

The Journey

Physical death is certain.

There is "a time to be born, and a time to die."

But the spiritual mysteries of life and death are only mysteries when they are clouded by the limitations of earthbound existence and earthbound knowledge.

For at its deepest and most hidden place, each God-created transcendent soul--each human being--knows its origins, its pathways, and its destinations:

From God.

To God.

In the light of God.

The circle is never-ending. The circle continues still.

"Blessed are you in your coming in. Blessed are you in your going out."

"Blessed are you in your coming in. Blessed are you in your going out."

From the Talmud

There are stars whose light only reaches long after they've fallen apart. There are people whose remembrance gives light in this world. Long after they have passed away. This light shines in our darkest nights on the road we must follow.

In Loving Memory

I thought of you with love today, but that is nothing new.

I thought about you yesterday and days before that, too.

I think of you in silence, I often speak your name.

All I have are memories and your picture in a frame.

Your memory is my keepsake, with which I'll never part.

God has you in His keeping, I have you in my heart.

Memorial Meditation (Author Unknown)

Those we love who have gone from life,

We know they will never vanish,

So long as heart and thought remain with us.

By love they are remembered.

In memory they live.

On God and Faith

Dear God

Dear God, we praise You for the world and its beauty,

For family and friends, neighbors and cousins--

Dear God, We thank You for friendship and love,

For kind hearts, smiling faces, and helping hands--

Dear God, we praise You for those who care for others.

For commandments that teach us how to live--

Dear God, we thank You for those who help us understand Your laws,

And for making us one family on earth.

Dear God, we praise You, who made all people different, yet alike.

For Spiritual Spring Cleaning

We lift our hearts to the Source of Life, to the One who nourishes and sustains all living things. As we observe the rebirth of life with the coming of Spring, may we too be reborn. Remove from us all thoughts, feelings, memories and desires that do not contribute to our positive growth. Help us to accept those things in our lives that cause us difficulty. Teach us to deal with them creatively and successfully. Strengthen those ideas, feelings and desires that are life affirming, positive and beneficial to us. Help us experience the world with a sense of awe and joy. We praise and thank you God.

Connecting with God

Tell God your gladness and your joy; tell God your sadness, your hurt, your pain.
Tell God your doubts, your worries, your fears.
Tell God your needs, your wants, your desires.
Tell God your hopes, your yearnings, your aspirations.

To hear answers, first ask questions.

Ask about the great mysteries of the universe, the vast unknown, the hidden and secret, the perplexing and as yet unanswered questions of life and death.

Ask about the purpose of existence and about your own purpose, your task, your mission here in this lifetime on earth.

Ask for a melding, a unity, with all that is wise, all that is beautiful, all that is meaningful.
Ask that a measure of all of God's positive attributes be reflected in you.

Ask the way toward health and well-being.
Ask for guidance and good counsel.
Ask for wisdom and enlightenment, harmony and inner peace.
Ask to be bathed in God's light; and ask to be a reflector of God's light.

And then listen.

Listen very carefully, because God answers. God's talk can come in many different ways.
You may hear God's voice
Or you may hear the voice of one of God's angels.
Or you may hear the voice of one of your spirit guides.
Or you may hear your own voice--the voice that you think is yours, but that may really be God's
Or you may hear your own thoughts--the thoughts that you think are yours but that may really be God's
Or you may hear God-inspired words or thoughts that come through your hand to paper or canvas.
Or you may hear God through the sounds of silence.
Or you may see God's word in a dream or a vision.
Or you may see God reflected in the face of another.
Or, looking in the mirror, you may see God reflected in your own face.

You may experience God through what seems to be chance or coincidence, and you will know that, for God, there is no such thing as chance or coincidence.

O God Be Not Silent (Based on Psalm 109)

O God, be not silent:

The children of Israel are suffering too much.
Their enemies surround them, as in ancient times.
The children of the world are suffering too much.
Their freedom is threatened. Their lives are snuffed out.

O God, be not silent:

Let Justice uncover her eyes and see what is done.
Let Liberty hold tight her torch, lest it fall from her grasp.
Let the desperate who stalk the streets find their souls.
Let us walk in peace.

O God, be not silent:

Help us to know the heart of the stranger.
Help us to reason together.
We pray for wisdom and for strength to persevere
when success seems remote.

Let Your voice resound--for all to hear:
Proclaim peace among the nations and
Unto all the people of the earth.

O God, grant us peace.

Meditations of Hope and Doubt

The future is ours to create--
What a terrifying thought!
Who are we to be entrusted
with such a mission,
such a challenge,
such a responsibility?

How do we know what to do?
Where do we start?

WE call upon our heritage--
Rich and embracing,
Filled with love and support
Never defeating, always reassuring.
It strengthens us in mind, body and soul.

Foremost in our thoughts--
Not to disappoint those who came before us,
Those who sanctioned us with precept
to do what is right,

to help those in need,
to be sensitive to the feelings of others,
to refrain from hurting anyone.

The future is ours to create--
What an exhilarating prospect!
What a challenge!
What a responsibility!

God, help us to know what to do.
Guide us,
Nurture our strength and
Sustain our courage.

Untitled

Oh God, who has given us the privilege of choosing good over evil,
grant me I pray, one attribute above all others--Grant me kindness.

If I am kind, I cannot do unto others that which I would not have done unto me.

If I am kind, I cannot be selfish and grasping,
but must share Your bounty with others causing joys, both great and small, by thoughtful deeds
and gifts.

If I am kind, I cannot dishonor my parents by hard word or wicked deed.

If I am kind, I cannot carry hurtful gossip to break another's heart,
nor could I bear false witness against my neighbor.

If I am kind, I cannot take another's possessions for my own.
I cannot steal that which another holds dear and labored to obtain.

If I am kind, I cannot covet that which belongs to my neighbor.
Longing to deprive him of his loved ones, his home, his possessions, and to take them or
or my own. Rather would I rejoice in his good fortune.

If I am kind, above all, I cannot kill--
I cannot harm or hurt the weak, the poor, the young, the old.
I cannot cause a little child to cry nor mistreat a helpless creature.
I cannot take pleasure in the weeping of women nor the despair of men.
I cannot hate. I cannot revile.
I cannot ignore the needs of others.

And so I pray, Oh God: grant me kindness--
Your all encompassing kindness.

We Thank You (Sidney Greenberg in Likrat Shabbat)

We thank You, O God, for our family and friends and what we mean and bring to one another. We are grateful for the bonds of loyalty and affection which sustain us and keep us close to one another no matter how far apart we may be.

We thank You for implanting in us a deep need for each other, and for giving us the capacity to love and to care.

Help us be modest in our demands of one another, but generous in our giving to each other.

May we never measure how much love or encouragement we offer, may we never count the times we forgive.

Rather, may we always be grateful that we have one another and that we are able to express our love in acts of kindness.

Keep us gentle in our speech. When we offer words of criticism, may they be chosen with care and spoken softly. May we waste no opportunity to speak words of sympathy, of appreciation, of praise.

Bless our family and our community of loved ones with health, happiness and contentment. Above all, grant us the wisdom to build a joyous and peaceful home in which the awareness of Your presence will always abide.

Declaration of Faith

Loving Life
And its mysterious source
With all our heart
And all our spirit,
All our senses and strength,
We take upon ourselves
And into ourselves
These promises
To care for the earth
And those who live on it,
To pursue justice and peace
To love and kindness and compassion
We will teach this to our children
Throughout the passage of the day
As we dwell in our homes
And as we go on our journeys,
From the time we rise
Until we fall asleep.

Meditation

Often our world is dark and our way confused. We search within for a light to illumine life's path. We grope for a clearer, more certain truth. The days pass, and still we yearn for the road to be revealed. O God, we remember that once our people saw a way, as it is written: "You show me the path of life."

Therefore, as we awaken to Shabbat, may understanding, to, awaken within us. May the light of Torah shine within us, to dispel our darkness, to reveal Your path.

Hail the hand that scattered space with stars,
Wrapped whirling wind world in bright blue blanket, air,
Made worlds within worlds, elements in earth,
Souls within skins, every one a teeming universe,
Every tree a system of semantics, and pushed
Beyond probability to place consciousness
On this cooling crust of burning rock.

Oh praise that hand, mind, heart , soul, power, or force
That so enclosed, separated, limited planets, trees, humans
Yet breaks all bounds and borders
To lavish on us light, love, life
This trembling glory.

On Torah

Meditation

Listen
Can you hear me?

I am the Torah
Unraveling the holidays of the Jewish people

I celebrate the warmth of the candles on Shabbat
the sweetness of honey on Rosh Hashanah
the quiet of remembering mistakes on Yom Kippur
the joy of sharing on Sukkot
the hope of freedom on Passover
the pride of learning on Shavuot

I am the Torah
unraveling the laws of the Jewish people

I teach love and respect for parents
honesty and kindness to friends
sharing with others
keeping Shabbat holy
using words and deeds that help and heal
praying to one God for peace everywhere

I am the Torah
unraveling the stories of the Jewish people

I speak of the love of Abraham and Sarah
the trust of Isaac
The courage of Ruth
The wisdom of Solomon

The guidance of Moses
The strength of David

Listen!
Have you heard me?
I am your Torah.

What is Torah?

What is Torah? It is what God has revealed to us, and what we have come to understand about God. It is the ideas and ideals, the laws and commandments, that make up our religious heritage. It is the experience of Abraham and Sarah, the legislation of Moses, the vision of the Prophets, the commentary of the Rabbis, the insight of the Mystics. It is the questions we ask, and the answers we receive, when we seek to understand God, the world, and ourselves.

It is the way of life; the path to self-fulfillment; the design for a better world.

Untitled

Me
My Family
And Torah, A Tree of Life
Roots Holding On To The Past
Branches Reaching To The Future
Leaves Dancing Like Children
Growing and Changing
With The Seasons
Teaching:
Peace
Caring
Sharing
Tolerance
Understanding
From Parent To Child
From Generation to Generation

Bible Then, Bible Now

The Bible is an enduring treasure.

In it is our past, for it is the record of the encounter between God and the Jewish People.

And from it comes our future, for it invites us to ongoing dialogue with God: to seek and affirm faith, to hear continuing revelation, and to add our own explanations and interpretations to the ever-unfolding wisdom of Torah.

By understanding the source of the Bible, by realizing the purpose of the Bible, by believing the truths of the Bible, we can explore all of Judaism, which was born and is rooted in the Bible.

The birth-gift of the Bible is a great inheritance.
Its message is now ours to learn.

By Parents

Parent's Blessing

May your eyes sparkle with the light of Torah,
and your ears hear the music of its words.
May the space between each letter of the scrolls,
bring warmth and comfort to your soul.
May the syllables draw holiness from your heart,
and may this holiness be gentle and soothing to the world.
May your study be passionate,
and meanings bear more meanings
until Life itself arrays itself to you
as a dazzling feast.
And may your conversation,
even of the commonplace,
be a blessing to all who listen to your words
and see Torah glowing on your face.

Planting for the Future (From the Babylonian Talmud Taanit 23A)

The Talmud tells the story of an old man who was seen planting a carob tree. As the king rode by he called out, "Old man, how many years will it be before that tree bears fruit?"

The old man replied, "Perhaps seventy years."

The king asked, "Do you really expect to be alive to eat the fruit of that tree?"

"No," answered the old man, "but just as I found the world fruitful when I was born because my ancestors planted for me, so I plant trees for my children and my children's children."

Blessing of the Children (Rabbi Leah Kroll)

May you know God as Abraham our father did, and face your trials with great dignity.
Like our mother Sarah, may you be gracious and kind to those who pass your way.
May you be gentle as Isaac and as determined as Rebecca.
Like Jacob, may you be dedicated and conscientious in all you set out to do.
May you be blessed, as Leah was blessed, with a close and loving family.
And like Rachel, may you radiate warmth from your soul to everyone whose life touches yours.

A Wish for You, My Daughter (Donna Dargis)

If there could be only one thing
in life for me to teach you,
I would teach you to love.
To respect others so that you may
find respect in yourself.
To learn the value of giving,
so that if ever there comes a time

in your life that someone really needs,
you will give.
To act in a manner that you would wish to be treated;
to be proud of yourself.
To laugh and smile as much as you can,
in order to help bring joy
back into this world.
To have faith in others;
to be understanding.
To stand tall in this world and
to learn to depend on yourself.
To only take from this Earth
those things which you really need,
so there will be enough for others.
To not depend on money or material things
for your happiness, but
To learn to appreciate the people who love you, the simple beauty that God gave you and to find peace
and security within yourself.
To you, my child, I hope I will teach all these things,
for they are love.

May You Live To....

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 you live to see your world fulfilled.
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 you live to see your world fulfilled.

Untitled (Leila Brenner)

May you know great joy, happiness and fulfillment in your life.
May you walk with your people in pride, and may you understand that to be a Jew is a source of joy and
meaning and an important responsibility.
May you honor your parents, recognizing that they have brought you into the world in love and in hope,
and may you bring them great joy.
May you go from strength to strength, yet always be able to accept your own weaknesses and those of
others.
May you judge yourself and others with fairness and compassion, without harshness.
May you have the confidence and self-esteem to move towards whatever goals you choose for yourself.
May you have the wisdom and courage to change your mind if your original goals are replaced by newer
and better ones.
May you allow yourself to dream your dreams and soar with flight of fancy and imagination.
May you always keep a precious part of yourself as "Child" even as you move into adulthood.
May your ears be filled with music of every imaginable kind, and may the rhythms be of your own
making. Allow yourself to march at your own pace.

May you experience those inevitable moments of sadness and pain, which are also a part of life, in a way which will give these moments meaning and add value to your life.
May you live in a world blessed with peace and harmony and may your future be as bright and as hopeful as the world's first rainbow.

Amen.

Our Wish

We wish for you to be a person of character
Strong, but not tough
Gentle, but not weak.

We wish for you to be righteous, but not self-righteous
Honest, but not unforgiving.

Wherever you journey,
May your steps be firm
and may you walk in just paths and not be afraid.

Whenever you speak,
May your words be words of wisdom and friendship.

May your hands build and your heart preserve what is
good and beautiful in the world.

May the voices of the generations of our people move through you
And may the God of our ancestors be your God as well.

May you know that there is a people,
a rich heritage, to which you belong.
And from that sacred place,
you are connected to all who dwell on earth.

May the stories of our people be upon your heart,
And may the grace of the Torah rhythm dance in your soul.

Untitled

Dear God, thank you for the gift of this child to raise.
Let us never betray this child's trust,
dampen this child's hope
Or discourage this child's dreams.
Help us dear God to help this precious child
become all You mean her to be.
Let your grace and love fall on her like gentle breezes.
And give her inner strength, peace
and patience for the journey ahead

Untitled

You are not today as you were yesterday,

Nor are we.
Something has occurred.

We sit with the congregation
You stand alone on the *bimah*.
You lead the congregation,
We follow.
You sing, pray, speak,
We listen.

Not a mere echo of our sound,
You have words of your own.
The still, small voice of conscience stands alone.
Stronger in you now than ever before.
A blessed distance between us,
You are ours but also your own.

You are called to the Torah,
Your names and ours interwoven,
You are not us,
We are not you,
But we are inseparable.

A Parent's Perspective (Rabbi Harold Shulweis)

You are not today as you were yesterday,
Nor are we.
Something occurred.

We sit with the congregation,
You stand alone on the *bimah*.
You lead the congregation
We follow.
You sing, pray, speak,
We listen.

Not a mere echo of our sound,
You have words of your own.
The still, small voice of conscience stands alone
Stronger in you now than ever before.
A blessed distance between us,
You are ours but also your own.

You were called to the Torah,
Your name and our names interwoven,
You are not us,
We are not you,
But we are inseparable.

The Day After (Rabbi Harold Shulweis)

It is over now

The chanting, the speech,
The candies, the gifts,
The band, the music,

It is the next day, the day beyond.

Now the real choice begins.

Now you are responsible, accountable,
It is you who must choose.

Will you choose to live what you have spoken?

Or will those promises, rapturous sentiments
Waft aimlessly in the air, cling to the ceiling of the synagogue?

The ceremony is over.

Will you shut the Book?
Shelve the texts,
Prematurely end your growth?

Or will you continue to flourish

In fidelity to our people,
In mastery of our culture?

Will you take your place

Beside those who have sanctified the world,
Bring them the vitality of your youth,
Share with them the freshness of your promise?

It is over now.

You no longer face your congregation.
It is the day after and you stand alone
Before the mirror of your soul.

A Parent's Ambition (Rabbi Harold Shulweis)

“Protect my children from my secret wish
to make them over in my image and illusions.
Let them move to the music that they love
dissonant perhaps to me.” (Ezekiel Nissim)

We have raised them, sculpted them, schooled them,
Exposed them to our ways and our world.
Who can blame our parental conceit,
Imposing our dreams on their heads.

Give us the courage and wisdom
To sever the incestuous ties
Free them from bondage of mimicry.
Not in our image are they created,

Extensions of our ambitions,
Duplications of our aspirations.

Let them imitate God, not us.
Let them be freed of servitude to anyone.
Give us the wisdom to let go of them,
The moral way to hold them close.

My Grandson's Bar Mitzvah (Rabbi Harold Shulweis)

My grandson, a bar mitzvah.
Child of my child called to the Torah.
Bringing one face to face with the future.
Geography has distanced us.
I have not raised him,
Nor given him instruction,
Bound his wounds, absorbed his sobs,
Rallied him to victory.

Yet from a distance
I have heard and imagined
His defeats and triumphs.

Now here he is
For me to see.
I listen to a chant, a prayer, a benediction
I too once sang.

Now
Before family and friends,
I receive unmerited blessing.

In him,
I am continued.
In his chanting
Is confirmation of my immortality.

A grandson in the presence of our community,
Alone, on his own two feet.
We are bound together as never before,
My grandson and I.

Accept Our Gratitude

For the blessing which You lavied upon us in forest and sea, in mountain and meadow, in rain and sun, we thank You.

For the blessings You implant within us, joy and peace, meditation and laughter, we are grateful to You

For the blessings of friendship and love, of family and community;

For the blessings we ask of You and those we cannot ask;

For the blessings You bestow upon us openly and those You give in secret;

For all these blessings, O God of the universe, we thank You and are grateful to You.

For the blessings we recognize and those we fail to recognize;

For the blessings of our tradition and of our holy days:

For the blessing of return and forgiveness, of memory, of vision, and of hope.

For all these blessings, which surround us on every side, O God, hear our thanks and accept our gratitude.

The days come and go imperceptibly our lives change. We grow older and are hardly aware of it. Our children grow up and we hardly notice. Then, suddenly, we come to this time and we realize that our sons and daughters are children no longer. They have become young men and women, ready to take their first step into adulthood.

We are grateful that we have been able to bring them this far. We are thankful for the strength to cope with the stresses and responsibilities of rearing them. And we give thanks for the pleasure and pride we have had in them.

Now we realize they are children no longer. Only another year, two, three, and they will begin to go from our homes to find their own way in the world.

We ask ourselves, have we truly prepared them for this? Have we done enough, taught them enough? we are almost afraid to let them go.

Yet it was for this that we raised them, that they might grow up to take their places in their places in the world.

Parent's Blessing

O God of all humanity:

We lift our voices in gratitude that the Torah has come into the world through the Jewish people. WE lift our voices in gratitude for the ideals it teaches: justice, compassion, devotion; the partnership of mind, heart, and deed.

We lift our voices in gratitude that NAME today takes his place among the people of Israel. We pray that he will do so with pride and joy. As You called Israel to be a light to the nations, so too, we pray that our **SON/DAUGHTER** will be **HIS/HER** own ray of light to the world.

On Children and Parents

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's long for itself.
They come through you but not from you.
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.
You may give them your love but not your thoughts,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and God bends you with His might that His arrows
may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves the bow that is stable.

On Ritual

Before the Tallit Blessing

Recalling the generations,
I wrap myself in the tallit.

May my mind be clear,
My spirit open,
As I envelop myself in prayer.

Rituals

Almost every religion and faith community has a set of rituals and rites that serve to reinforce, enhance, and intensify its belief system.

Participating in religious ceremonies can provide a link to the history and practices of a people.

Rituals can bring rhythm and cadence to life; they can bring beauty and meaning to existence; they can make the ordinary holy and make the everyday sacred; they can be an avenue to faith.

But rituals and rites, customs and ceremonies are so very much more. Rituals are performed to bring us to a deeper place in the human psyche than words can touch. Rituals are without words, before words.

Jewish rituals are especially rich because they are rooted in the sense of mitzvah--in the commands that God issued. The notion is that if we follow all of God's injunctions--if we observe God's ritual laws as the instrument that will lead us to observe God's ethical laws--then we are rightly headed to the fulfillment of the mandate and the promise.

You shall be holy because I the Holy One of Blessing your God am holy.

Prayers from Our Kol Haverim Community

Be Yourself (Melanie Katz)

Be yourself,
For you are the only one who truly knows you,
The only one who can express your genuine feelings,
The only one who can find the sincere meaning of your life.

Be yourself,
Not who someone else wants you to be,
Someone whom you do not agree with,
Someone that is not you.

Be yourself,
Don't be afraid to show your true colors,
To be independent
Or reveal to others what you are all about.

Be yourself,
It does not matter who accepts you and who doesn't
Or how many friends you have,
For the ones that love you for you are the only ones that matter.

Be yourself,
No matter what your race or religion,
Your gender or age,
You should never hide yourself.

Be yourself,
Because groups and cliques deserve no meaning,
Diversity and variation have great importance,
And there should never be anything holding you back.

Be yourself,
Because everyone serves a purpose,
Everyone shines bright,
But only you know who you truly are.

Waiting at Sinai (David Shainess)

Looking up into the moonlit sky, you can see glimmering stars as though they were small golden grains of sand below a cerulean blue blanket of thick atmosphere. You slowly tilt your head and as you lower your head, you see the small peaks of the mountains become the large aread of ground that you are standing on. Into the distance, you see small children playing. The questioning looks on their mother's faces tell you they're nervous about what will take place in the days ahead. Gazing at the great Mount Sinai gives me a feeling of comfort. Knowing that God created the land, the people and everything around us.

I'm excited, yet scared--excited about the fact that we're here and we've made it this far. But scared what will happen next...

I Am (Kaela Soltoff)

I am from the cereal my dad pours everyday.
From the coffee that my mom pours into her mug everyday.
The milk and honey she adds after.
I'm from the sweet smell of daisies in the summer.
I am from the memory of my grandma.
I am from the Hebrew that I practice.
Trees that grow.

Music I practice,
The pages that I draw on.

On Prayer

Untitled (From *Mishkan T'filah*)

We begin with a prayer of gratitude
for all that is holy in our lives.
God needs no words, no English or Hebrew,
no semantics and no services.
But we need them.
Through prayer, we can sense our inner strength,
our inner purpose,
our inner joy, our capacity to love.
As we reach upward in prayer,
we can sense the qualities of the Creator.
To love God is to love each other,
to work to make our lives better.
To love God is to love the world God created
and to work to perfect it.
To love God is to love dreams of peace and joy
that illuminate all of us,
and to bring that vision to life.

Readings from Jewish Text and Authors

From Psalm 139

God, You see through me, and You know me.
You know my coming and my going: You understand my every thought.

You observe my waking and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.
God, there is nothing I can say that You do not know completely.

Whither can I go from Your spirit? Whither can I flee from Your presence?
If I ascend to the heavens, You are there! If I make my home in the lowest depths, behold, You are there!

If I take up the wings of the morning and dwell on the ocean's farthest shore.
Even there Your hand will lead me. Your right hand will hold me.

And if I say: "Let only the darkness cover me, and the light about me be night."
Even the darkness is not too dark for you, for whom the night is bright as day!

Reflection from the Talmud (*Berachot 17a*)

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

May your heart be filled with intuition

And your words be rich in understanding.

May songs of praise ever be upon your tongue,
And may your gaze be straight and sure.

May your eyes be lit with Torah's lamp,
And your face aglow with heaven's radiance.

May your lips express words of knowledge,
And your inner-self be alive with righteousness.

May you always rush in eagerness to hear the words of the Ancient One of Holiness.

May you have the strength for the tough times and the wisdom to appreciate the good times.

May your life be filled with love.

Meditation by Elie Weisel

To be Jewish means to be a poet. There is poetry in Jewish existence, and we are commanded to see its poetic dimension. We are to write it down in order to share it with as many people as possible; every Jew is commanded to read the Torah, to write it, and thus to transmit it.

Talmudic Teaching (Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 17a)

May you trust in generations past and yet to be and may your face reflect the brightness of the heavens.

Forever Young (Bob Dylan)

May God bless and keep you always
May your wishes all come true
May you always do for others
And let others do for you
May you build a ladder to the stars
And climb on every rung
May you stay forever young
Forever young, forever young
May you stay forever young.

May you grow up to be righteous
May you grow up to be true
May you always know the truth
And see the lights surrounding you
May you always be courageous
Stand upright and be strong
May you stay forever young
Forever young, forever young
May you stay forever young.

May your hands always be busy
May your feet always be swift

May you have a strong foundation
When the winds of changes shift
May your heart always be joyful
And may your song always be sung
May you stay forever young
Forever young, forever young
May you stay forever young.

The Sweetest of Nights and the Finest of Days (Judith Viorst)

I wish you, I wish you,
I wish you these wishes:
Cool drinks in your glasses.
Warm food in your dishes.
People to nourish and cherish and love you.
A lamp in the window to light your way home in the haze.
I wish you the sweetest of nights
And the finest of days.

I wish you, I wish you
A talent for living.
Delight in the getting.
Delight in the giving.
A song in your soul, and someone to hear it.
The wisdom to find the right path when you're lost in a maze.
I wish you the sweetest of nights
And the finest of days.

A snug roof above you.
A strong self inside you.
The courage to go where you know you must go.
And a good heart to guide you.
And good friends beside you.

I wish you, I wish you
A dream worth the doing.
And fortune's face smiling
On all you're pursuing.
And pleasures that far far
Outweigh your small sorrows.
Arms wide to embrace your tomorrows.
A long sunlit sail on the bluest and smoothest of bays.
I wish you the sweetest of nights
And the finest of days.

On Bar/Bat Mitzvah

For Bar/Bat Mitzvah

My God and God of my ancestors, in truth and sincerity, I lift my eyes to You on this great and sacred day and say: "My childhood days have passed and I take upon myself the responsibilities of a Jew. It is

my duty to keep the commandments and I must answer when called upon for my own actions, for which you hold me responsible. Until now I have been a Jew by circumstance alone, but today I freely enter your congregation and before all the world I revere your name.

On Freedom

Help Us to Be Free

Slavery is not only a problem of the past. Modern men and women can be slaves.

When we think of only ourselves, we are slave to selfishness.

When we are hateful to others because of their color or creed, we are slaves to prejudice.

When we always crave what others have, we are slaves to greed.

When we spread lying words about others, we are slaves to falsehood.

When we always have to be right, or the winner, we are slaves to false pride.

When we are afraid to speak out against something we know is wrong, we are slaves to fear.

O Eternal One our God, help us to be free.

Free to Sing

Eternal truth it is that You alone are God,
And there is none else.

*May the righteous of all nations rejoice in Your love
And exult in your justice.*

Let nation not lift up sword against nation;
Let them study war no more.

*You shall not hate another in your heart;
You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*

Let the stranger in your midst be to you as the native;
For you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

*From the house of bondage we went forth to freedom,
So let all be free to sing with joy.*

Readings on Intercultural or Interfaith Spirituality

An Old Irish Blessing

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind always be at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
And rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

The Blessing of Light (Traditional Scottish blessing, adapted by the Gwyneth Walker)

May the blessing of light
be on you, light without and light within.
May the sunlight
shine upon you and warm your heart till it glows
like a great peat fire.
And may the blessing of the rain
be on you, the soft sweet rain.
May it fall upon your spirit so that
all the little flowers may spring up
and shed their sweetness on the air.
And may the blessing of the earth
be upon you, the great round earth.
And may you open your heart with love
to the people you pass along the road.
May the blessing of light
be on you, light without and light within.

The Circle of Days (Reeve Lindbergh, based on Cantic of the Sun, Francis of Assisi)

God, we offer thanks and praise
For the circle of our days.
Praise for radiant brother sun
Who makes the hours around us run.
For sister moon, and for the stars,
Brilliant, precious, always ours.
Praise for brothers wind and air,
Serene or cloudy, foul or fair.
For sister water, clear and chaste,
Useful, humble, good to taste.
For fire, our brother, strong and bright,
Whose joy illuminates the night.
Praise for our sister, mother earth,
Who cares for each of us from birth.
For all her children, fierce or mild,
For sister, brother, parent, child.
For creatures wild and creatures tame,
For hunter, hunted, both the same.
For brother sleep, and sister death,
Who tend the borders of our breath.
For desert, orchard, rock, and tree,
For forest, meadow, mountain, sea,
For fruit and flower, plant and bush,
For morning robin, evening thrush.
For all your gifts, of every kind,
We offer praise with quiet mind.
Be with us, Lord, and guide our ways
Around the circle of our days.

On Morning Wings, in Oceans Deep (Reeve Lindbergh based on Psalm 39)

God, you look at me and know me,
Every step I take, you show me.
When I rise, and when I rest,
You will always know me best.
Where I walk, or sit, or stand,
You still hold me in your hand.
And if I don't know how to pray,
You understand me, anyway.
Once when I was lost, you found me.
Then I felt your arms around me.
When I'm afraid and want to hide,
You are always by my side.
When I'm lonely, you are near,
When I'm angry, you stay here,
High as heaven bright, you greet me,
Down in darkness, too, you meet me.
You are with me everywhere:
In light and shadow, fire and air;
In every tiny grain of sand;
And in the desert, vast and grand;
On morning wings, in oceans deep;
When I'm awake, and when I sleep.
In my secret self, you made me,
In the blazing sun, you shade me.
Know me, lead me, guide my way
Through every hour of every day,
For all my life, in all I do,
Let me always be with you.

Readings on General/Secular Spirituality

i thank You God for this most amazing day (e.e. cummings)

i thank You God for most this amazing
day:for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth
day of life and of love and wings: and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any--lifted from the no
of all nothing--human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

Hold on Tightly to What Is Truly Important in Life (Kelly D. Caron)

Hold on to faith; it is the source of believing
that all things are possible. It is the fiber
and strength of a confident soul.

Hold on to hope; it banishes doubt and enables
attitudes to be positive and cheerful.

Hold on to trust; it is at the core of fruitful
relationships that are secure and content.

Hold on to love; it is life's greatest gift of all,
for it shares, cares and gives meaning to life.

Hold on to family and friends; they are the most
important people in your life, and they make
the world a better place. They are your roots
and the beginnings that you grew from;
they are the vine that has grown through time
to nourish you, help you on your way,
and always remain close by.

Hold on to all that you are and all that you have
learned, for these things are what make you unique.

Don't ignore what you feel and what you believe
is right and important; your heart has a way
of speaking louder than your mind.

Hold on to your dreams; achieve them diligently
and honestly. Never take the easy way or
surrender to deceit. Remember others on your way,
and take time to care for their needs.

Enjoy the beauty around you.

Have the courage to see things differently and clearly.

Make the world a better place one day at a time,
and don't let go of the important things that
give meaning to your life.

If (Rudyard Kipling) ('Brother Square-Toes'—Rewards and Fairies)

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;

If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

Life Just Isn't (Author Unknown)

Life isn't about keeping score. It's not about how many people call you and it's not about who you've dated, are dating or haven't dated at all. It isn't about who you've kissed, what sport you play, or which guy or girl likes you. It's not about your shoes or your hair or the color of your skin or where you live or got to school. In fact, it's not about grades, money, clothes, or colleges that accept you or not. Life isn't about if you have lots of friends, or if you are alone, and it's not about how accepted or unaccepted you are. Life just isn't about that.

But life is about who you love and who you hurt. It's about how you feel about yourself. It's about trust, happiness, and compassion. It's about sticking up for your friends and replacing inner hate with love. Life is about avoiding jealousy, overcoming ignorance and building confidence. It's about what you say and what you mean. It's about seeing people for who they are and not what they have. Most of all, it is about choosing to use your life to touch someone else's in a way that could never have been achieved otherwise. These choices are what life's about.

About Things That Matter (Mattie Stepanek)

It matters that the world knows
We must celebrate the gift of life
Everyday in some way, and
We must always remember
To play after every storm.

It matters that the world knows
All children are truly blessed
With the innocent gifts of gentleness,
Trust, and compassion, which

Should guide the wisdom of the grown-ups.

It matters that the world knows
We all have a song in our heart
That can inspire us in good times and
Hard times if we take the time to listen.

It matters that the world knows
Our senses help discover
The hidden and non-hidden
Enchantment in life, if we use them fully.

It matters that the world knows
We must carefully choose our words and wants carefully
Or we could forever hurt others
With these dangerous weapons.

It matters that the world knows
Strength and value of all things created
Must be measured by character and commitment
Rather than by might and wealth.

It matters that the world knows
Strength and value of all things created
Must be measured by character and commitment
Rather than by might and wealth.

It matters that the world knows
We must heed the lessons of
Everyday life, through the celebration of
Children and heartsongs, senses and words.
Or we could lose in our journey
To the future

It matters that the world knows
A person by my name and being existed
With a strong spirit and an eternal mindset
To become a peacemaker for all,
By sharing the things that really matter.

We Pray for the Children

We pray for the children who give sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions, who sleep with their do and who bury their goldfish, who hug us so tightly and who forget their lunch money, who squeeze toothpaste all over the sink, who watch their fathers shave, and who slurp their soup.

And we pray for those who will never get dessert, who have no favorite blanket to drag around behind them, who watch their fathers suffer, who cannot find any bread, who do not have any rooms to clean up, whose pictures are on milk cartons instead of on dressers, and whose monsters are real.

We pray for the children who spend all their allowance by Tuesday, who pick at their food, who love ghost stories, who shove their dirty clothes under the bed and never rinse the bathtub, who love visits from the Tooth Fairy, even after they find out who it really is, who do not like to be kissed in front of the school bus, and who squirm during services.

And we also pray for those children whose nightmares occur in the daytime, who will eat anything, who have never seen a dentist, who are not spoiled by anyone, who go to bed hungry and wake up hungry, who live and move and have no address.

We pray for those children who like to be carried and for those children who have to be carried, for those who give up and those who never give up, for those who will grab the hand of anyone kind enough to offer it and for those who find no hand to grab.

For all these children, we pray today, for they are all so precious.

Everyone Plays a Role

If what Shakespeare said is true, and “the world is a stage,” then everyone plays a role. Today is another showing of one of God’s plays. If you are a mother, you will nurture and protect your children, and show them a love that has no boundaries. If you are a father, you will guide your children in word, and in deed, being a model of loyalty, trust and faith.

In the role of brother and sister, you may tease and bother your sibling, thinking life is a comedy, but when push comes to shove, and drama gets serious, you will be the one who stands by their side. If you are a grandparent, cousin, aunt or uncle, you are a key player in the supporting cast. Though your time on the stage is shorter, the unconditional love, guidance and support you provide makes the play a full production.

If you are a teacher, your love of learning translates into beautiful scripts enacted in the lives of your students. If you are a friend, you’re the source of laughter, joy and comfort. And if you’re one of the countless other players in the productions of today, and of tomorrow, you have the power to shine God’s light in every act you make.

Courage (James Lane Allen)

Where there is faith, there is courage, there is fortitude, there is steadfastness and strength.

Faith bestows that inspiring courage that rises superior to the troubles and disappointments of life, courage that acknowledges no defeat except as a step to victory; courage that is strong to endure, patient to wait, and energetic to struggle.

Light up, then, the lamp of faith in your heart.

Young and Old

We can be young and old at the same time.

We can be young enough to believe in people,

But old enough not to expect them to give more than we could ourselves.

We can be young enough to enjoy pleasure,

But old enough to know that we miss the whole point of living if pleasure is all we pursue.
We can be young enough to acquire new ideas.
And old enough to surrender an ancient prejudice.
We can be young enough to strive for success,
But old enough to treasure the things that money can't buy.
We can be young enough to want to be attractive,
But old enough to appreciate the beauty that we find in ourselves.
We can be young enough to seek companionship,
But old enough to appreciate solitude.
We can be young enough to crave happiness,
But old enough to know that our happiness is usually proportional to the happiness we instill in others.
We can be young enough to want to be loved,
But old enough to strive to be lovable.
We can be young enough to pray as if everything depended upon it,
But old enough to act as if everything depended upon us.

The Foundation of a Man

In athletics, we often hear the phrase, "He has the will to win." But unless we have prepared, it is of little use. Really, it should be the "will to prepare." Those who succeed have this will, whether it be in athletics, whether it be in school, whether it be in their chosen vocation, or in almost any other phase of their life. Luck is an often-used word. I believe luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.

While everyone strives to win, sportsmanship, win or lose, is the true measure of success. Good sportsmanship encompasses many aspects of a person's character, the most fundamental being respect. The good sportsman respects both his teammates and his opponents as equals. He plays with integrity. A win that does not come fairly holds no satisfaction for him. He is honest in his dealings with his opponents because he treats them the way he wants to be treated. He is unselfish in his desire to see all his teammates participate and enjoy the game. He is humble in his victories and has the proper perspective on his losses.

The qualities that make a good sportsman are the same ones that are the foundation of a great man.

May you have.....

Enough happiness to keep you sweet,
Enough trials to keep you strong,
Enough sorrow to keep you human,
Enough hope to keep you happy;
Enough failure to keep you humble,
Enough success to keep you eager,
Enough friends to give you comfort,
Enough wealth to meet your needs;
Enough enthusiasm to look forward,
Enough faith to banish depression,
Enough determination to make each day better than yesterday.

Untitled

If there is sincerity in the heart,
There will be beauty in the character.

If there is beauty in the character,
There will be harmony in the home.
If there is harmony in the home,
There will be order in the nation.
When there is order in the nation,
There will be peace in the world.

Be Strong! (Anonymous)

Be strong enough to lead when you should.
Be wise enough to know that you cannot do everything alone.
Be willing to share your joys generously.
Be willing to share the sorrows of others.
Be a leader when you see a path others have missed.
Be a follower when others show the way.
Be understanding of your enemies.
Be loyal to your friends.

Take time to read--reading gives knowledge and perspective.
Take time to reflect--reflection gives strength in times of trouble.
Take time to love--love and friendship make life worthwhile.
Take time to laugh--laughter is the music of the soul.
Take time to think--thoughts are the source of wisdom.
Take time to play--play renews the spirit.
Above all, take time to know yourself.
Above all, take time to enjoy the world.

Faith

Faith is the foundation on which all human activity is founded, maintained and advanced. When there is no faith, things begin to crash. Even ability is lost without faith to back it up.

Faith is the element out of which confidence is born. It is the mental generator which supplies the vision to see things to be done, the courage to set out and execute them, and the fortitude and patience to stick to it until the job is done, in spite of obstacles.

Life is filled with trials and set-backs, and time and time again, in the course of one's daily experiences, dark clouds arise, stone walls are encountered, disappointments occur. Faith, like a giant pile drive truck, enables us to drive right through them.

Faith is an element which has done more things to amaze the world than any other factor in human history. It is an element conceded to be the connecting link between heaven and earth.

Faith is the source of all accomplishment.

Take Time

Take time to think: it is the source of all power.
Take time to read: its the foundation of all wisdom.

Take time to play: it is the secret of staying young.

Take time to be quiet: it is the opportunity to seek God.

Take time to laugh: it is the music of the soul.

Take time to be friendly: it is the road to happiness.

Take time to be aware: it is the opportunity to help others.

Take time to love and be loved: it is God's greatest gift.

Take time to dream: it is what the future is made of.

Take time to pray: it is the greatest power on earth.

Frog in a Milk Pail

A frog was hopping around a farmyard, when it decided to investigate the barn. Being somewhat careless, and maybe a little too curious, he ended up falling into a pail half-filled with fresh milk.

As he swam about attempting to reach the top of the pail, he found that the sides of the pail were too high and steep to reach. He tried to stretch his back legs to push off the bottom of the pail but found it too deep. But this frog was determined not to give up, and he continued to struggle.

He kicked and squirmed and kicked and squirmed, until at last, all his churning about in the milk had turned the milk into a big hunk of butter. The butter was now solid enough for him to climb onto and get out of the pail!

"Never Give Up!"

Musical Selections

Listen (Doug Cotler)

If you're lost, you feel afraid And you don't know what to say Then listen, listen to our God.

Is there a question on your mind? Is the answer hard to find? Then listen, listen to our God.

Listen with all your heart and soul And with all of 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 the 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.

Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad Baruch Shem K'vod,

Shem k'vod mal'chuto l'olam va'ed.

Listen, listen to our God. Listen, listen to our God.

***Lechi Lach* (Debbie Friedman)**

L'chi lach, to a land that I will show you

Leich l'cha, to a place you do not know

L'chi lach, on your journey I will bless you
And (you shall be a blessing)3x *l'chi lach*
L'chi lach, and I shall make your name great
Leich l'cha, and all shall praise your name
L'chi lach, to the place that I will show you
(*L'sim-chat cha-yim*)3x *l'chi lach*

The Higher Moment (Steve and Ellen Harris)

The sun goes up, the sun goes down. life made of days.
The road goes on and on. Those who walk that road with us, we're always in their gaze. They hold us and mold us until we look and they are gone.

When the bond between us shatters, we hear that voice within that tells us to begin. We learn what really matters is that the ones we cannot see they live in you and in me.

And so we praise Your name. We can't help but heed the call to the higher moment in us all. And so we praise Your name awakened to the love that speaks of You.

Family, friends and those we love, ties that seem so strong. A song that we adore they sing with us in harmony and carry us along. They hold us, enfold us 'til a songbird sings no more.

When cherished ties are broken with a grief that's all unfurled, we turn and face the world. So many words unspoken, those you love never depart because they live inside your heart.

And so we praise Your name. We can't help but heed the call to the higher moment in us all. And so we praise Your name, awakened to the love that speaks of You.

And just as winter turns to spring, take my hand and let us sing of light and hope, renewal and rebirth, and though our joy mingles with sorrow, we will face a new tomorrow and glorify Your name throughout the earth.

There are memories of all kinds in our hearts and in our minds. Of roads and songs and people we recall. From September to September we give thanks and we remember that a higher moment waits within us all.

And so we praise Your name. We can't help but heed the call to the higher moment in us all. And so we praise Your name, awakened to the love that speaks of You.

Child of the Community (Arnie Davidson/Fred Mann)

You have friends you've yet to greet
And worlds still to explore
Challenges left to complete
Adventures still in store

Your congregation welcoming
A child of our community
Before God on this *Bimah*.
To join our daughters and our sons
Receive the light, be blessed this day
With words of our Torah.

You'll soar high as if with wings
And reach for distant stars
Discover and delight in things you
Find in journeys near and far

Your congregation welcoming
A child of our community
Before God on this *Bimah*.
To join our daughters and our sons
Receive the light, be blessed this day
With words of our Torah.

Look back and smile for younger years
And know that they're not gone
Look out to see your parent's tears
Applauding this new road you're on

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Giver of Life (Arnie Davidson)

Giver of life, River of abundant blessings
Carry my thoughts and prayers and open up my heart,
Connect my voice with everyone in this congregation
As we affirm your Name.

*Al shloscha dvarim, l'chol kol haverim
Al ha-Torah v'al avodah v'al gimilut chasadim
Send us refuah shlema, tachat kanfeh
Shichina aleinu v'al kol yisrael vimru. Amen.*

Giver of life, *mavdil bein or lichoshech*
Shine brightness down to keep the darkness from our lives.
Bless us with peace. *Yisah Adonai panav
Elecha, v'yasem l'cha shalom.*

I Hope You Dance (LeAnn Womack)

I hope you never lose your sense of wonder,
You get your fill to eat but always keep that hunger,
May you never take one single breath for granted,
GOD forbid love ever leave you empty handed,
I hope you still feel small when you stand beside the ocean,
Whenever one door closes I hope one more opens,

Promise me that you'll give faith a fighting chance,
And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance.
I hope you dance....

I hope you never fear those mountains in the distance,
Never settle for the path of least resistance
Livin' might mean takin' chances but they're worth takin',
Lovin' might be a mistake but it's worth makin',
Don't let some hell bent heart leave you bitter,
When you come close to sellin' out reconsider,
Give the heavens above more than just a passing glance,
And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance.
I hope you dance....

I hope you still feel small when you stand beside the ocean,
Whenever one door closes I hope one more opens,
Promise me that you'll give faith a fighting chance,
And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance.
I hope you dance....

Time is a wheel in constant motion always rolling us along
Tell me who wants to look back on their years and wonder where those years have gone