

Rabbi Jill Zimmerman

Healing

**Your Guide For
Soul & Body**



Healing

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“Healing” is a resource for individuals and communities. It intends to give voice to the many manifestations of pain we experience, and provide sources of comfort.

We are a world in pain right now. There is hardly a corner of this planet unaffected by the pandemic. This epidemic has exacerbated the suffering of what we might call “ordinary pain” by limiting how we can receive and give support.

When you arrive at a certain age, you recognize that adversity is part and parcel of being a human being. Our bodies and emotions are fragile and easily broken. We hurt physically, emotionally and spiritually. We experience fear and loss. There is no way to avoid the vicissitudes of life which bring cancer, broken bones, depression and chronic illness into our lives.

Yet, as human beings, we also hold the power to comfort others and ourselves. When we bring presence and acknowledgment to the distress of others and our own pain, we shine a light. As sure as morning follows night, we can begin to have faith in the process of change.

In our pastoral counseling courses in rabbinic school, we learned that the most important thing we can offer others is our “non-anxious presence.” Bringing comfort is not about having the right things to say, but by showing up with compassion.



About This Ebook

Included in this ebook are teachings about how we think about pain and suffering. You will find prayers and blessings for illness and emotional, mental and spiritual distress. There is a selection on anonymous loss, when you lose someone to dementia or estrangement.

To meet this particular moment in time, several prayers are dedicated to the challenges of the pandemic. There are prayers for those who are ill, for caregivers and health workers; there is a beautiful blessing to say upon receiving the Coronavirus vaccine.

How To Use This Ebook

Prayers for healing and comfort are most consoling when they are said aloud. Read these prayers out loud and picture them coming from someone who cares for you. In this way, you can become your own “non-anxious presence.”

The links to the beautiful music at the end of this ebook are an audible source of comfort.

To share this book with others, please use this link: <https://jewishmindful.org/healing>

The sources are mostly but not exclusively from the Jewish tradition. However I believe that the principles expressed are universal. Feel free to adapt them to your own faith tradition or read the prayers without the God language if it does not fit for you. I encourage you to expand your images of the Great Mystery – the Living Presence – to include more process-oriented metaphors, such as Source of Healing, Well of Wisdom, Source of All.

Sending you blessings for healing,

— RABBI JILL

jewishmindful.org



RABBI JILL ZIMMERMAN

“You are on the path of healing when you can hope again.”

– RABBI FRANCINE ROSTON

Pain, Suffering & Lament

The very first step in any healing process is acknowledging the reality of our suffering. Sometimes we mistakenly think that if we deny or avoid telling the truth about our pain that it will go away. However, when we name the affliction or admit that we are hurting, we have begun the path of healing.

Our admission of our wounds, whether physical or psychic, opens a door.

Many people have expressed to me that they feel guilty for their own “small losses” this time presents: how can I be upset about not being able to visit my grandparents, when there are people who don’t have enough to eat? As my friend and colleague Rabbi Joshua Lesser taught at the beginning of the pandemic - give yourself permission to grieve even the smallest losses. They matter.

In this dialogue from Heschel, an elderly Jewish man in Los Angeles, he shares beautifully how pain works for him:

So I’m going to tell you how to survive, but you won’t like it. Every time I say anything about it, people shudder. But you couldn’t get away from it, the thing I’m talking about. The word is “pain.” Pain is the avenue to getting a soul, getting quality from yourself...When the pain comes, I am patient, I shut up, active silence. I bear it, wait, even overnight, but I mean I bear it. I stand before it, I call the pain out. After you go through this you discover you got choices. This is the task of our life. I want

to live this kind of life so I can be alive every minute. I want to know when I’m awake, I’m altogether awake. When I’m asleep, I’m asleep.

– HESCHEL IN [NUMBER OUR DAYS: A TRIUMPH OF CONTINUITY AND CULTURE AMONG JEWISH OLD PEOPLE IN AN URBAN GHETTO](#)
BY BARBARA MYERHOFF

Rabbi Rachel Adler writes movingly here about the ancient practice of lament. Crying, weeping and raging about disorder and grief is the first step in reconstituting the broken world:

Lament can help us to bear witness to violence and injustice in the life of the community, to respond with indignation and outrage and then with constructive action. We do not know and will not know why God does not protect us from atrocities or genocide or why



God created a world which can be devastated by tsunamis or hurricanes, but we can express our anger, our grief, our sense of abandonment. We can bring to God not only our best behaved happy selves but also selves seized by despair, brokenness, a thirst for revenge and other so-called “unacceptable” feelings. This is lament, the first step in reconstituting the broken world.

– [RABBI RACHEL ADLER](#), FOR THESE I WEEP:
A THEOLOGY OF LAMENT

An expression of pain and suffering is often the beginning of prayer. Our very souls seek healing.

I do not pray to God for healing, but rather to be part of the healing process, if possible. I don't expect an answer from God. I am praying, because I am seeking a way to deal with the illness and pain, from a God who created both the good and the bad, from the God who is the Creator and Sustainer of life in the face of adversity, from a loving Parent who doesn't always have ultimate power or control and can't always change the world for us, but wants to help make our lives bearable.

– [RABBI AMY R. PERLIN, D.D.](#) IS THE FOUNDING
RABBI EMERITA AT [TEMPLE B'NAI SHALOM](#) IN
VIRGINIA.

We Need Each Other

In this following famous text from the Talmud, we learn foundational principles of healing. Rabbi Yohanan was known as a healer, and had endured enormous suffering. Ten of his children died. Now, Rabbi Yohanan himself is ill. His colleague

Rabbi Hanina visits Rabbi Yohanan. We learn that even a healer like the great Rabbi Yohanan needs others to help heal him.

“A prisoner cannot free oneself from prison.

Rabbi Yohanan was sick. Rabbi Hanina went to visit him.

He [Rabbi Hanina] said to him, “Are your sufferings dear to you?”

He [Rabbi Yohanan] replied “Not them and not their reward.”

He said: “Give me your hand.”

He gave him his hand and he raised him up.

Why doesn't Rabbi Yohanan stand himself up?

They (the Gemara) say - A prisoner cannot generally free himself from prison, but depends on others to release him from his shackles.

ר' יוחנן חלש על לגביה ר' חנינא א"ל
חביבין עליך יסורין א"ל לא הן ולא
שכרן א"ל הן לי ידך יהב ליה ידיה
ואוקמיה אמאי לוקים ר' יוחנן לנפשיה
אמרי אין חבוש מתיר עצמו מבית
האסורים רבי

– THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD BRAKHOT 5B

“Suffering is suffering. It can neither be controlled nor explained. But we can meet it with compassion, with presence.”

– RABBI ALAN LEW BE STILL AND GET GOING



Seven Ways Of Asking “How Are You?”

Sometimes we don’t know what to say when we call or visit people who are ill. Rabbi Simkha Weintraub offers this teaching:

Simply asking “How are you?” may not convey your authentic personal interest and invite an honest, expressive response. Some people who are suffering have criticized this common question because it doesn’t seem to acknowledge the very different course their life has taken—and can encourage automatic expected answers such as “I’m OK” or “Fine, thanks,” which may not be a sincere reply or convey the whole story. Below are some suggested alternatives.

1. *How are you doing with all of this?*
2. *How are your spirits?*
3. *How are you hanging in?*
4. *What do you need the most, right now?*
5. *What’s helping you get through this?*
6. *What’s been on your mind as you try to cope with all of this?*
7. *What are some of the obstacles to your managing/coping?*

– BY RABBI SIMKHA Y. WEINTRAUB, LCSW

[CONVERSATION ESSENTIALS FOR
BIKUR CHOLIM](#)

Healing Prayers

The acknowledgment of our own pain or other's sufferings may move us to pray. Many such prayers emerge from our lips spontaneously ("There are no atheists in foxholes.") Others find comfort in prayers offered in prayer books, such as the traditional Mi Sheberach prayer for healing or the daily healing request in daily prayer services.

In the Talmud, prayer is referred to as "service of the heart – avodah shebalev." (Taanis 2a) Whether or not we believe that there is an All Knowing Ever Present Source (God) that hears and answers us, prayer creates and expresses an intention in our heart or out loud for the alleviation of suffering.

It needs to be acknowledged that there are illnesses, conditions, and relationships that cannot be healed or cured. Still, our prayers express the hope in our hearts for mending.

Please remember to include yourself in your prayers for healing.

“Whoever visits the sick removes one sixtieth of his illness.

– TALMUD BAVLI MASSEKHET
BABA METZIA 30B



For Body Mind, & Spirit

Mi Sheberach

“May the One who blesses...”

This traditional prayer, chanted, sung, or recited at prayer services or individually requests a “refuah shlemah” – a complete healing – of body, mind and spirit. The prayer invokes our ancestors who came before us and asks God to bestow upon us and the people we love healing and attention.

May the one who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, bless (insert names here). May The Holy One be compassionate to them/him/her, strengthen them/him/her, and heal them soon, body and soul, together with others who suffer illness. May God send them/him/her a complete healing of body and soul together with all who suffer illness. And let us say Amen.

Mi Sheberach

מִי שְׁבֵרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ, אַבְרָהָם
 יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, שָׂרָה רִבְקָה, רָחֵל וְלֵאָה,
 הוּא יְבָרַךְ אֶת הַחֹלִים.... הַקְדּוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ
 הוּא יִמְלֵא רַחֲמִים עֲלֵהֶם, לְהַחֲלִימָם
 וּלְרַפְּאֵתָם וּלְהַחֲזִיקָם, וְיִשְׁלַח לָהֶם
 מְהֵרָה רְפוּאָה, רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה מִן
 הַשָּׁמַיִם, רְפוּאָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ, וְרְפוּאָה הַגּוּף,
 הַשְׁתָּא בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב. וְאָמַר: אָמֵן

*Mi Sheberach Avoteinu V'imoteinu: Avraham,
 Yitzhak, v'Yaakov, Sarah, Rivka, Rachel v'Leah,
 Hu yivarech virapei et haholim/hacholeh/
 hacholah/ (insert names)*

*HaKadosh Baruch Hu yimalei rachamim
 aleihem/alav/aleha, l'hachalimo/l'hachlimah,
 u-l'rap'oto/u-l'rap'otah, l'hachaziko/l'hazikah,
 u-l'chay-oto/u-l'chay-otah.*

*V'yishlach la'hem/lo/lah bim-hera refuah
 shlemah, r'fu-at hanefesh u-r'fu-at hagoof,
 hashta ba'agalah u-vizman kariv, v'no-mar,
 Amen!*

The Shortest Prayer

When Moses find his sister Miriam stricken with a skin disease, he cries out:

Please, God, heal her.

אֵל נָא רְפָא נָא לָהּ...

El Na R'fa Na La

- NUMBERS 12:13

for healing-

please

G-d

heal

her

and through

Her

heal

Us

El na rfa na lanu

- [DEVON SPIER](#)

DEVON IS AN AUTHOR AND VISUAL POET.
 HER LATEST BOOK IS [WHATEVER IT IS GENTLY,
 QUIET MEDITATIONS FOR THE NOISE OF THE
 PANDEMIC](#)

For Ambiguous Loss

Jewish tradition has profound rituals for grieving a loss. However, what happens when we lose someone before they are physically gone?

Therapist Pauline Boss coined the term “ambiguous loss” to describe loss without clear closure. We may “lose” our parents to dementia, and others to addiction, mental illness, or estrangement.

Rabbi Rachel Timoner and I wrote a paper called Ambiguous Loss: A Jewish Response.

We offer this prayer as a Mi Sheberach that acknowledges ambiguous loss:

Many of us suffer from pain that is ambiguous – breaches in relationships that may not be easily (or ever) healed. We may have parents whom we are losing to dementia or who are profoundly changed by stroke or trauma. Or we may feel the pain of losing someone we love to addiction or mental illness. Some of us may live with the pain of being estranged from family members. And some of us may live with the loss of someone we love who is so caught up with their work that while their body may be present, we still feel alone.

...We want to give voice to this kind of suffering, in addition to physical illness, when we pray for healing in our Mi Sheberach prayer. We can ask God to comfort us in our relentless uncertainty and grief for those who are still alive, but lost to us. We ask God to be present with us, and for our community to acknowledge our pain and help us feel less alone.

We acknowledge these losses, and ask for our hearts to be mended and comforted.

Amen.

– RABBIS RACHEL TIMONER AND JILL ZIMMERMAN, AMBIGUOUS LOSS: A JEWISH RESPONSE (NOT YET PUBLISHED)

RABBI TIMONER IS SENIOR RABBI AT [CONGREGATION BETH ELOHIM](#) IN BROOKLYN. RABBI ZIMMERMAN IS THE FOUNDER AND SPIRITUAL LEADER OF [PATH WITH HEART AND HINENI](#).



For Challenging Times

Mi sheberach avoteinu v'imoteinu – May the One who blessed our mothers and our fathers, May God bless you and heal you.

May God's presence wrap you in a blanket of comfort and renewal at this time, and may you find peace and healing in God's embrace.

May you be surrounded by love as you move through this difficult time, finding angels and moments of grace in those that surround you.

May you experience refuah shlemah (a complete healing) of body, of mind and of spirit.

And let us say, Amen.

– RABBI JILL ZIMMERMAN

“*There is nothing so whole as a broken heart...*

– RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL OF KOTZK (1827–1859)

Coronavirus: A Prayer for Medical Scientists

*G-d of wisdom,
Bless medical scientists and researchers around
the world
With insight and skill, dedication and fortitude,
As they combat coronavirus,
So that their work yields knowledge and
understanding,
Speedily finding a vaccine, treatments and
deterrents to its spread.
Source of life,
Grant public health and government officials
The strength to act swiftly and decisively,
With compassion and understanding,
In service to humankind,
Fighting this outbreak
And the other diseases that still plague the
planet,
Diseases threatening the lives of our brothers
and sisters,*

*Nations and communities,
Young and old.
Rock of Ages,
Bring an end to disease and suffering,
So that all may know
Your compassion and Your grace.*

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', רוֹפֵא כָּלֵל בָּשָׂר, וּמַפְלִיא
לַעֲשׂוֹת:**

*Praised are You G-d, healer of flesh, maker of
wonders.*

– ALDEN SOLOVY

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ENTISTS" IS ©2020 ALDEN SOLOVY AND WWW.TOBENDLIGHT.COM. USED WITH PERMISSION.
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Blessing for the Vaccine

Makor Hachaim, O Source of Life,

Thank you for the gift of modern medicine and for helping me to reach this moment. Thank you for all those who were instrumental in creating this vaccine.

May I be blessed with protection and healing. May my loved ones, and all those in our world, also be blessed with protection and healing.

The pandemic is not yet over...but today I am hopeful. May we continue to do our part to help keep all safe and healthy.

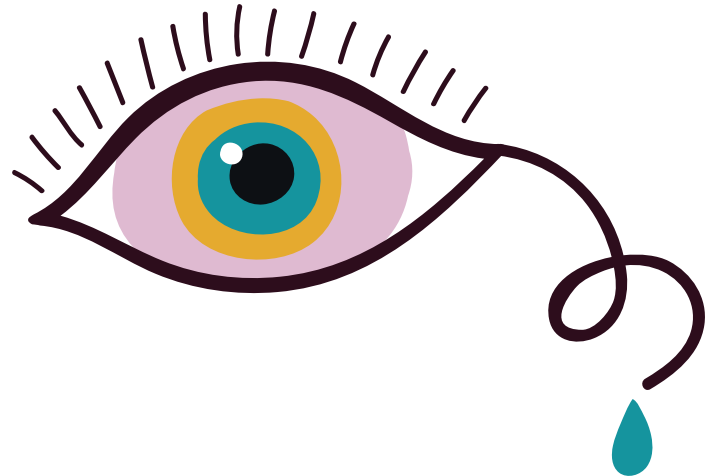
ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם,
שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעַנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higiyanu laz'man hazeh.

Blessed be You, Sovereign of all, for giving me life and for enabling me to reach this moment.

– BY RABBI [MARCI R. BLOCH](#)

RABBI BLOCH IS THE RABBI OF [TEMPLE DOR DORIM](#) IN WESTON, FLORIDA



Emotional Healing

When we experience times of darkness – isolation, fear, loneliness, depression, anxiety, and addiction - we may lose hope that we will ever see light again.

Many therapists warn that we are at a crisis point in regards to mental and emotional health. The changes to the way we work and gather, the fear of a virus that keeps mutating, neighbors who won't follow the rules – all of these bruise and batter our souls.

We are isolated from each other in ways not experienced before. And this is to say nothing about the enormous grief at losing so many lives. Each person, according to Jewish tradition, is an entire world.

A Prayer of Healing for Mental Illness

May the One who blessed our ancestors bless all who live with mental illness, our caregivers, families, and friends. May we walk in the footsteps of Jacob, King Saul, Miriam, Hannah, and Naomi who struggled with dark moods, hopelessness, isolation, and terrors, but survived and led our people.

Just as our father, Jacob, spent the night wrestling with an angel and prevailed, may all who live with mental illness be granted the endurance to wrestle with pain and prevail night upon night.

Grace us with the faith to know that though, like Jacob, we may be wounded, shaped and renamed by this struggle, still we will live on to continue an ever unfolding, unpredictable path toward healing.

May we not be alone on this path but accompanied by our families, friends, caregivers, ancestors, and the Divine presence. Surround us with loving-kindness, grace and companionship and spread over us a sukkat shalom, a shelter of peace and wholeness.

And let us say: Amen.

– BY RABBI ELLIOT KUKLA

RABBI KUKLA IS A RABBI AT THE BAY AREA JEWISH HEALING CENTER: [HTTPS://JEWISHHEALING-CENTER.ORG/RESOURCE/A-PRAYER-OF-HEALING-FOR-MENTAL-ILLNESS/](https://jewishhealing-center.org/resource/a-prayer-of-healing-for-mental-illness/)



Untitled

*May it be Your will, our God,
that we be allowed to stand in places of
astonishing light
and not in dark places,
and may our hearts know no pain,
and may our vision not be so clouded
that we would not see all the blessings of Life
that You have given us.*

– RABBI ALEXANDRAI'S PRAYER (OR THE PRAYER
OF RAV HIMNUNA)

TALMUD BERACHOT 17A

A Prayer for a Person Isolated from a Loved One Due to Coronavirus

Hold me God...hold me now.

I am afraid.

My (husband/ wife/ sister /brother /child / mother /father /loved one) is alone, and my heart is breaking.

I want so bad to hold his/ her /their hand and comfort him /her /them —

but I can't.

Help me to know that even though I am not physically there with him/ her/them....

I am very much there.

Give me hope, oh God.

Help me to put all my trust in his/her/ their doctors and his/ her/their medical staff to make the right decisions.

Fill my loved one's lungs with air and restore him/her to life.

Protect him/ her/ them, watch over him/ her / them, heal him /her /them.

Give me strength, oh God in this hour of darkness to know you are there holding me.

Amen.

– RABBI MARCI BLOCH

[HTTPS://WWW.RABBIMARCIBLOCH.COM](https://www.rabbimarcibloch.com)

[HTTPS://RAVBLOG.CCARNET.ORG/2020/04/PRAYER-FOR-A-PERSON-ISOLATED-FROM-A-LOVED-CORONAVIRUS/](https://ravblog.ccarnet.org/2020/04/prayer-for-a-person-isolated-from-a-loved-coronavirus/)



Psalm 30

Psalms are a wellspring of expression for universal fears and hopes. A suggestion: read psalms like poetry. Find one verse or phrase that resonates with you and use it for meditation or reflection.

This English translation of Psalm 30 by my beloved teacher Rabbi Richard Levy, z"l who taught the Psalms often with tears in his eyes, reflects the poetry and alliteration of the original Hebrew.

Psalm 30 (Translation)

*I will raise you high, Adonai,
For You have pulled me up,
And You have not let my enemies
Rejoice over me.*

*Adonai my God, I cried out to You –and You
healed me.*

*O God, You brought me, body and spirit, up
from Sheol,
You have kept me alive that I
Should not plunge into the Pit.*

*Sing to Adonai, members of the covenant—
Give thanks to God's holy presence!*

*For there is a moment of Your anger,
A lifetime of Your favor;
In the evening, crying moves in,
But in the morning – song!*

*As for me, I would say when I
Was prosperous:
'I shall not ever be shaken.'*

*Adonai, it pleased You to
Establish a stronghold on my
Mountain.
Then You hid Your face— I was
Terrified!*

*To You, Adonai, I call,
To my Superior I plead for grace:
When I was untroubled, I thought, "I shall
never be shaken,"
for You, O God, when You were pleased, made
[me] firm as a mighty mountain. When You
hid Your face, I was terrified.*

'What profit is there in my

*Blood, in my plunging into the Pit?
Can dust praise You? Can it
Declare Your truth?*

*Listen, Adonai— show
Graciousness to me;
Adonai—be a help to me!'*

*You have turned my wail into a waltz for me!
You've untied my tatters, You've
Girded me with joy—*

*So that Glory may sing a psalm
To You, and spare the silence, the
Silence of blood;
Adonai my God, my thanks I give
To You forever!*

– PSALM 30 IN SONGS ASCENDING; [THE BOOK OF PSALMS IN A NEW TRANSLATION WITH SPIRITUAL COMMENTARY](#), VOLUME 1; RABBI RICHARD LEVY.



Hebrew, Psalm 30

(א) מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר־חֲנֻכַּת הַבַּיִת לְדָוִד: (ב)
 אֲרוּמָמָךְ יְהוָה כִּי דָלִיתָנִי וְלֹא־שָׁמַחַת
 אִיבִי לִי: (ג) יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שׁוֹנְעֵתִי אֵלַיךְ
 וַתִּרְפָּאֵנִי: (ד) יְהוָה הִעֲלִיתָ מִן־שָׂאוֹל
 נַפְשִׁי חַיִּיתָנִי מִיּוֹרְדֵי־[מִיְרֵדֵי] בּוֹר: (ה)
 זָמְרוּ לַיהוָה חֲסִידָיו וְהוֹדוּ לְזִכָּר קִדְשׁוֹ:
 (ו) כִּי רָגַע | בְּאִפְּוֹ חַיִּים בְּרָצוֹנוֹ בְּעָרֵב
 יִלִּין בְּכִי וּלְבָקָר רָנָה: (ז) וְאֲנִי אֲמַרְתִּי
 בְּשָׁלוֹם בַּל־אֶמּוּט לְעוֹלָם: (ח) יְהוָה
 בְּרָצוֹנָךְ הִעֲמַדְתָּה לְהַרְרִי עַז הַסִּתְרָתְךָ
 פָּנֶיךָ הִיִּיתִי נִבְהָל: (ט) אֵלַיךְ יְהוָה אֶקְרָא
 וְאֶל־אֲדֹנָי אֶתְחַנֵּן: (י) מֶה־בָּצַע בְּדָמַי
 בְּרִדְתִּי אֶל־שֹׁחַת הַיּוֹדֶךָ עֶפְרַיִם הַיְגִיד
 אֲמַתְּךָ: (יא) שְׁמַע־יְהוָה וְחַנּוּנִי יְהוָה
 הִי־הָעֶזֶר לִי: (יב) הַפְּכֵת מִסְפְּדִי לְמַחֲוֹל
 לִי פִתְחֵת שִׁקִּי וַתֹּאזְרֵנִי שְׂמֵחָה: (יג)
 לִמְעַן | יִזְמְרְךָ כְּבוֹד וְלֹא יִדָּם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי
 לְעוֹלָם אֲוֹדְךָ:



Bringing Compassion To Our Own Selves

When you are hurting, bring loving kindness and compassion to yourself. Many of us are great at caring for others, but fail to bring that same love to our own aching hearts.

The Jewish Buddhist Sylvia Boorstein is a great teacher for us in this regard:

"...I consider my meditation practice a success because of one crucial and definite change in me in the thirty years since I began...I know that my suffering begins whenever my mind, for whatever reason—the enormity or the suddenness of the challenge, its own exhausted state—becomes confused. In its confusion, it seems to forget everything it ever knew. It tells itself stories, alternatively angry ("This isn't fair!") or pitiful ("Poor me!") or frightening ("I can't stand it if things aren't different!"). No inner voice of wisdom...can make itself heard to soothe the distress. I continue to suffer, stumbling around in stories of discontent, until I catch myself, and stop, and allow myself to know, and deeply feel, that I am frightened or confused or disappointed or angry or tired or ashamed or sad—that "I'm in pain!" Then my own good heart, out of compassion, takes care of me. It all happens when I am able to say to myself (I honestly do use these very words), 'Sweetheart, you are in pain. Relax. Take a breath. Let's pay attention to what is happening. Then we'll figure out what to do.'"

– SYLVIA BOORSTEIN

RESTORING THE MIND TO KINDNESS



“Know! when a person prays in the fields, all the flora enters into the prayer, helping him and strengthening his prayer.

– LIKUTEI MOHARAN, PART II 11
NACHMAN OF BRATZLAV

Trauma

When the source of one's trauma has the ability, but not the willingness to apologize or make amends, we are left to find ways to heal our own inner pain. If you have experienced abuse at the hands of someone who has died, or who refuses to acknowledge the hurt they caused, seek support. Trauma gets embedded in our bodies.

Rabbi Francine Roston offers the following teaching about trauma:

If you are experiencing too much stress inside your body, practicing a Help Now! skill could help you activate your resiliency, calm your nervous system's traumatic response and experience some relief in your body. It is important not just to do the action, but also, as you are doing it to notice bodily sensations. If you identify unpleasant sensations, acknowledge them and continue scanning. The more you can pay attention to neutral or positive sensations that appear in your body, the stronger the message to your survival brain that you are safe and have no need to fight or flee. It often does not take more than a minute

or two to regain sensations of well-being and stability. If the skill you first tried is not giving you relief, shift to a different skill! You never need to “work at it” or “force it”. Remember you are seeking out well-being and we know that what we pay attention to grows!

Here is a list of some Help Now! Skills to help you experience some relief in your body. Consider posting a list of the skills near your workspace or somewhere where you will see them and they can remind you how to access well-being and calm your nervous system.

1. Drink a glass of water or juice. Sense the glass on your lips and the liquid as it moves through your mouth, down your throat and through your body.
2. If you are outside, touch the surface of something in nature--grass, a tree, water, or whatever is in the environment. Notice the texture, temperature and sensations in your hand and arm and body.
3. Name six colors you see in the space that you are in - outside or inside. In your mind or out loud you can say: I see green, I see red, I see blue, etc.
4. Count backwards from 20 as you walk around the room.
5. If you're inside, notice the furniture or fabrics nearby and touch the surface - noticing if it is hard, soft, rough, cold, warm, etc...Stroking a pet and paying attention to texture, temperature and sounds could also help.
6. If you're outside or inside, walk and pay attention to the movement in your arms and legs and how your feet are making contact with the ground.
7. Push your hands slowly against the wall or door, desk or pole, and notice your muscles pushing.



– FRANCINE GREEN ROSTON

RABBI OF GLACIER JEWISH COMMUNITY/B'NAI SHALOM IN NORTHWEST MONTANA, CERTIFIED CRM™ TEACHER, TRAUMA RESILIENCY CONSULTANT (CRM IS THE [COMMUNITY RESILIENCY MODEL™](http://www.communityresiliency.com))

Prayer for Our Country

The divisions and polarization in our country have never been so stark. Our foundation has been shaken. As we seek to heal and pursue the bedrock ideals of justice and compassion, Rabbi Ayelet Cohen offers this prayer:

*Our God and God of our ancestors,
bless this country and all who dwell within it.*

*Help us to experience the blessings of our
lives and circumstances,
To be vigilant, compassionate, and brave.*

*Strengthen us when we are afraid,
Help us to channel our anger,
So that it motivates us to action.
Help us to feel our fear,
So that we do not become numb.*

*Help us to be generous with others,
So that we raise each other up.*

*Help us to be humble in our fear, knowing
that as vulnerable as we feel, there are those at
greater risk, and
that it is our holy work to stand with them.*

*Help us to taste the sweetness of liberty,
To not take for granted the freedoms won in
generations past or in recent days.
To heal and nourish our democracy,
that it may be like a tree planted by the water
whose roots reach down to the stream;
it need not fear drought when it comes,
its leaves are always green (Jeremiah 17:8).*

*Source of all Life,
Guide our leaders with righteousness,
Strengthen their hearts,
but keep them from hardening.
That they may use their influence and*

*authority to speak truth and act for justice
(Isaiah 16:3-5).*

*May all who dwell in this country
share in its bounty, enjoy its freedoms, and be
protected by its laws.*

*May this nation use its power and wealth
to be a voice for justice,
peace, and equality for all who dwell on earth.
May we be strong and have courage
To be bold in our action and deep in our
compassion,
To discern when we must listen and when we
must act,
To uproot bigotry, intolerance, misogyny,
racism,
discrimination, and violence in all its forms,
To celebrate the many faces of God reflected in
the wondrous diversity of humanity,
To welcome the stranger and the immigrant
and to honor the gifts of those who seek refuge
and possibility here, as they have since
before this nation was born.*

*Let justice well up like waters, and
righteousness like a mighty stream (Amos
5:24)*

© EXCERPTED - RABBI AYELET COHEN. THIS PRAYER WAS ORIGINALLY COMMISSIONED FOR CONGREGATION BEIT SIMCHAT TORAH IN NEW YORK, NEW YORK.

Music

The healing power of music cannot be overstated. Musicians, along with authors, artists and poets, have been very hard hit by the pandemic because their touring has been curtailed. Please support these artists by purchasing their work. You can find most of these songs at the [Heal Playlist](#) on YouTube in addition to the links provided below.

Cantor Leon Sher: Heal Us Now

<https://youtu.be/zBkC6yxlzOE>

Music and English Text: Leon Sher, 2002
Hebrew Text: Healing Liturgy, Numbers 12:13, Psalms:145:18, 85:10

Psalms:145:18, 85:10

*R'faeinu Adonai v'neirafeh, hoshi-einu
v'nivasheah. El karov, l'chol korav, ach karov,
li-reav, yishoh.*

*Heal us Adonai, and we shall be healed. Save
us and we shall be saved. God is close to all
who call out to God. Surely, help is near to all
who call out to God.*

*"We pray for healing of the body. We pray for
the healing of the soul. For strength of flesh
and mind and spirit. We pray to once again be
whole."*

*El na, r'fa na lah, r'fuat hanefesh, u'r'fuat ha-
guf, refuah shleimah.*

*Oh God, please heal us now; healing of the soul
and healing of the body, a complete healing.*

Mi Sheberach: by Cantor Lisa Levine:

https://youtu.be/VF6SS5GvA_8

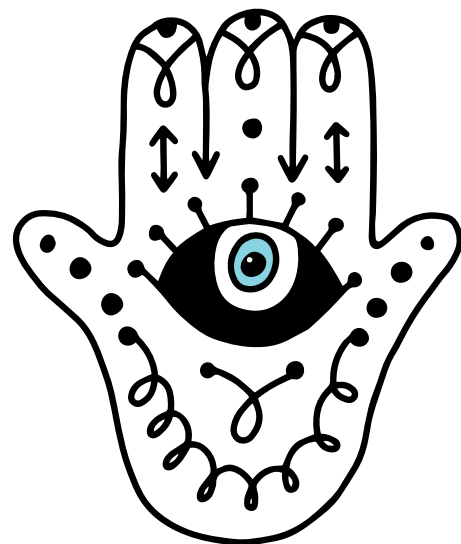
Cantor Levine wrote this version of the Mi Sheberach upon hearing of the death of her dear friend Cantor Stuart Pittle who she had the honor of serving with as faculty on several Union for Reform Judaism Kallot.

Lo Ira, I Am Not Afraid, A New Song For Healing:

<https://youtu.be/B9LGswehAB0>

Cantor Levine wrote "Lo Ira" as her anthem for Covid-19. She writes: "The text is one of the most healing in our tradition and I wanted to create an easy to sing and teach setting that would resonate for our times."

You can find more of Cantor Levine's work at her website. Her newest album, Sound of Your Soul will be available soon.



Mi Sheberach by Debbie Friedman z"l:<https://youtu.be/pHKO3CjuzpY>

Debbie Friedman's z"l version of Mi Sheberach is beloved in synagogue prayer services. In this video, she poignantly asks the audience, who know the lyrics by heart, to imagine that she is singing the healing prayer to themselves, as they offer prayers to others.

Elana Arian - Nachamu:<https://youtu.be/9ei28eRlpPY>

You can find Elana's soulful music at her website, www.elanaarian.com.

Shir Yaakov – Healer of the Broken-Hearted<https://youtu.be/AyyUR2K29BM>

Shir's beautiful healing piece is based on Psalm 147. Shir Yaakov's latest album release can be found on his website, www.shiryaakov.com.

Psalms 147:3-4*Healer of the broken-hearted**Binder of our wounds**Counter of uncountable stars**You know who we are***תהילים קמ"ז:ג'-ד'****הַרְפֵּא לְשִׁבּוּרֵי לֵב****וּמַחְבֵּשׁ לְעֻצְבוֹתָם:****מוֹנֶה מִסֶּפֶר לְכוֹכָבִים****לְכֹלֵם שִׁמוֹת יִקְרָא:***Ha-ro-fei lish·vu·rei lev**Um·cha·besh le·atz·vo·tam**Mo·neh mis·par le·ko·cha·vim**Le·chu·lam she·mot yik·ra**Ana El Na R'fa Na La*

Thank you.

I hope the readings and prayers in this book have brought you comfort. Remember that the most important principle in healing is *presence*. Being present with whatever you are experiencing, and showing up with your whole self for others who are hurting is everything. It is far more important than any particular words you say..

Please connect with me on your favorite social media platform. Check out the spiritual community I founded and lead, Hineni to discover the ways I am helping others remain present and balanced during challenging times.



About Sharing This Resource

Please use this link to help others receive this book:

<https://jewishmindful.org/healing>

Wishing you peace – shalom – and healing.

– Rabbi Jill
jewishmindful.org



Additional Resources

- [Trauma Resource Institute](#)
- [Jewish Sacred Aging](#), founded by Rabbi Richard Address
- [Bay Area Jewish Healing Center](#)
- Jewish Addiction Resources: [Blue Dove Foundation](#)
- [Jewish Spiritual Healing Center](#), Westchester NY, Rabbi Pamela Wax
- Ritual Well, [Healing and Hard Times](#)
- Healing Playlist:
<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3LWxjNw0MPeoqyyS-kVQUgqtb2IsCtqI>



Credits:

I deeply appreciate all the people whose prayers and writings are included in this ebook. Thank you for your beautiful teachings and holy words. I also want to give thanks to our beautiful [Hineni Spiritual Community](#) who teach me about healing and presence all the time. Also, a huge thank you to my team that helped create this ebook, and the others in the series: my husband, Ely, Mary Ann Malkoff, Rabbi Francine Roston, Rabbi Richard Meirowitz, Lionel Church, and the amazing graphic designer, Jim Nelson.