

**Yom Kippur Afternoon Healing Service
Leader's Narrative – Some Suggestions and Themes**

Rabbi Stephanie Dickstein, LMSW
for the Highland Park Conservative Temple © 5764

Note: The afternoon break between Musaf and Mincha can be a very good time to offer a Afternoon Healing Service or Circle. Here are some ideas.

1. Begin with the niggun "Pitchu li".

2. Offer some introductory comments: *Pitchu li* is the song in our congregation that marks the beginning of the Kol Nidre service, and the unity of the congregation, despite the three different High Holiday services which are held. (It is the custom for all of the klei kodesh and board members to carry the Torahs through each meeting room singing this song.) To me, this song brings to mind those who are caregivers. They truly are *tzaddikim*- and as difficult as it can be sometimes, you need to acknowledge and be acknowledged for what you do.

Yom Kippur a time when each is put in touch with vulnerability, weakness, mortality... The symbols and activities of the holiday are not even subtle about this connection with our mortality- the *kittel* we wear reminds of the shroud- not eating, other practices of denial also found in the observances of shiva.

The ocean of words of the Yom Kippur prayers - some of which we will say in this service as well - cry out our insecurity, our fears.

And of course, the words of *unetaneh tokef*- which echo throughout the holiday move every worshipper - but in years when we or a loved are suffering, or ill, or we have lost one who was dear to us - they are almost too painful to hear- *mi yamut, u miyechyeh* - who shall die and who shall live? We are overwhelmed- with anger at God, or a doctor, or the community, or paralyzed by fear- in this the year... We wish that, like the rest of the congregation, we could experience the awe of the poet's words and images, and then, we would turn the page and go ahead in the *mahzor*. But these words remain with us, long after the others have moved on in the liturgy.

This is why we meet together this afternoon... because you are not alone in these words being so immediate and powerful for you, or for those you love. So we gather for these moments, to acknowledge that even with all the words of this long day- we need to offer more, to pour out the prayers of our heart for healing and for comfort in the presence of others, who while traveling their own unique road, understand and can offer support and love within this community.

U ne taneh tokef reaches its climax with the words- *u tshuvah, u tfillah u tzedakah maavirin et roah hagezarah*- These, I believe are some of the most comforting words in our liturgy- they do not offer us false hope. The wonders of modern medicine may offer physical or mental cure... or they may not. The *gezerah*, the decree is there- but the evilness, the severity of the decree, can be eased- the way that we experience the good and the bad in our lives, the meaning we give to our days can be enhanced **by reaching out in reconciliation, by deeds of loving kindness and by prayer.**

3. Shema Kolenu - chant the first few lines in Hebrew and read the English

4. Body and Soul- *ha nishama lach*

Comments: One understanding of Jewish Healing is that it is the return to awareness that the body and soul are both God's creations and that they are intimately connected. We know that when a person is in severe physical pain, they often face a spiritual crisis, and that the physical pain must be treated to bring healing to the soul. However, we also know that when the soul is strengthened, the body can find comfort and healing. This idea is expressed in another prayer of the slichot section of today's liturgy. –

Chant two lines in Hebrew, then read in English.

4. Psalm 27 (comments) From the beginning of Elul till Hoshanna Rabbah we recite Psalm 27. It is a psalm in which the poet speaks of his fear that in the face of his enemies, he will be abandoned. He appears to express his confidence in God- yet his words are repeated so often that we understand that it is a prayer, a plea that God indeed be with him. It is no stretch at all to read the enemies in this prayer as his illness- and his strongest yearning is that he not be alone. Isolation is so often a by-product and experience of illness and aging.

It is often pointed out that the last line, which seems to express confidence, actually uses a word of uncertainty- *lulei*- let it be that I will see God's goodness in the Land of the living- but the rabbis turn it around- *lulei* are the letters of Elul- and elul stands for *Ani l'dodi, v'dodi li*- I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine. Love, relationship, that is truly our hope and our strength; that is where we see God's goodness and where we find our hope. Let us read together these intimate words, and then we will sing the poet's prayer to always be aware of living in God's presence.

5. Read Psalm 27 in English

6. Hebrew sing - Ahat Shaliti

7. Introduction to a piece by Debbie Perlman, Z'I was a modern psalmist. Out of the experience of her life threatening and then chronic illness, she began to write - not just poems, but prayers or really psalms. In fact, she the Psalmist- in-residence at a synagogue in Chicago. For more than a decade, words poured out of her heart, not just for her self, but others, who commissioned her to write psalms for them. She was called to write in front of God's throne this past winter, but I commend to you her book "Flames to Heaven" and the website healingpsalm.com for other samples of her writing. In the fall of 2000, she reflected on the Days of Awe in *The Outstretched Arm*, the journal of the National Center for Jewish Healing.

"Viewing the Days of Awe"- leader reads...

Illness and disability lend an altered flavor to the Days of Awe. We taste the honey, but before we can savor it on our tongue, our teeth crush the apple's tartness and we are left with the endless duality that is our life. When everyday activities are a struggle, when necessary routines and medications threaten to become the focus and center of our lives, it is hard to pay attention to the still small voice.

One year, as I listened to the Rosh Hashanna liturgy from my bed in the intensive care unit, I wept. "Who shall live and who shall die?" was a very real and urgent question for me. In my passion to find that place of acceptance and wholeness- the peace, the shalom- that will allow me to continue despite- despite everything, I am constantly turning back to God. It is the only choice I have -- that I am free to make regardless of disability. In making that choice I am eternally equal with everyone else. I am whole."

8. Join me in reading "One hundred and eighty one-Shabbat Shuva"

9. In traditional words of the holiday we also express our longing to turn to God and to have God gather us in his arms as a father cares for a child. There is so much we don't understand, so much that is lacking, yet we cry out- grant us of your *hesed*, your loving kindness

Sing together *Avinu Malkanu* and comment. *Continue humming the melody quietly as you close your eyes and breathe.*

Breathing is one of the acts we take most for granted. Modern medicine and therapy are discovering just how important breathing and learning to relax are for our physical and mental health. (Instruct in simple breathing.)

10. A moment of breathing- focusing on prayer for healing, for comfort, for peace

11. The MiSherberach In this moment of open prayer- when we ask for *hesed*, we offer the *misheberach*- the traditional prayer for healing. As we go around the room fill in the name- traditionally with Hebrew name and the name of the mother- but any form, any language- your name or of that of another.

Offer the Mi Sheberach for healing in Hebrew

12. Prayer of the Kohen Gadol

While we focus today on our individual suffering, our tradition teaches us that our prayers are only effective when we offer them with the awareness of others who are also in need of healing. We live in a world which is surely in need of healing and we must keep all of God's creations in our mind at this time. The prayer that I will ask that we offer for our modern world is an ancient one- The prayer which the high priest recited after he had come out of the holy of holies.

Read together Prayer of the Kohen Gadol

13. Forgiving Those Genes - Modern science offers us great insights into our medical situation – we understand more about what makes us sick, and more about how much can be fixed, and cured, or lacking that, how we can have more time. Yet for all that we have learned, there is also much that we don't understand. And as much of what we don't understand is the good, as well as the bad. For a text today I bring a writing by Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, *Forgiving Those Genes*. (Read)

14. Moving to closure - As we near the end of this time of prayer, we again turn to the liturgy of these Days of Awe and we remind God that Life is not just what we desire, but it is also God's desire- we ask that we, and all those we love be inscribed in the book of life, here and in life eternal

B' sefer hayyim Sing

15. Gratitude and reciting the shehechyanu

One of the most important tools we have for any kind of healing is gratitude, the ability to appreciate the blessing which we have. No matter how difficult and painful sometimes, life is the great blessing, and it is essential that we express our appreciation and acknowledge the wonder that each of us is here today-

20. Kol hanishama t'hallel ya The great book of Psalms concludes with the phrase... Please join me now. All those who breathe praise you, even when we have no words, we can offer the gift of our breath. As we make the transition to Mincha, often the most challenging service of the day, we call on all of our reserves of energy and so we who breathe offer you our song and our praise, and our prayers.

Kol hanishama tehallelya (Debbie Freidman melody- hallelu, hallelu...)

Amen!

A Service of Prayers for Healing

Yom Kippur Afternoon before Mincha

The themes of Yom Kippur can be especially challenging for those who are living with their own illness or that of a loved one, who are suffering, or who have experienced a loss during the past year.

Join Rabbi Stephanie Dickstein for a special service of prayer, song and story in which we will use the liturgy of Yom Kippur and other texts as a source for the expression of our distress and longing for healing, comfort and hope.

Monday, October 6, 2003

3:45 p.m.

Highland Park Conservative Temple

All members of the community are welcome

yom kippur service of prayers for healing (5764)



opening niggun

Pitchu li sha'aray tzedek, avo vam, odeh Yah

Open to me the gates of righteousness;
That I may enter and praise God.

פְּתַחוּ לִי שַׁעַר צֶדֶק, אָבֵא בָם אֲוֹדָה יְהוָה

welcome:

shema kolenu – hear our voices

שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ,
וְקַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרַצוֹן אֶת־תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ.

Hear our voice, Lord our God, pity us, save us.
Accept our prayers with compassion and kindness.

Help us return to You and we shall return;
Renew our lives as when we were young.

Cast us not away from Your Presence,
Take not your holy spirit from us

Cast us not away when we are old.
When our strength is gone, do not abandon us.

Do not abandon us, Lord our God, do not be far from us.

Show us a sign of grace, in spite of our foes;
For You are our help and our comfort.

Hear our words, O Lord, and consider our inmost thoughts.

May the words of our mouth and the meditations of our heart
Be acceptable to You, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer.

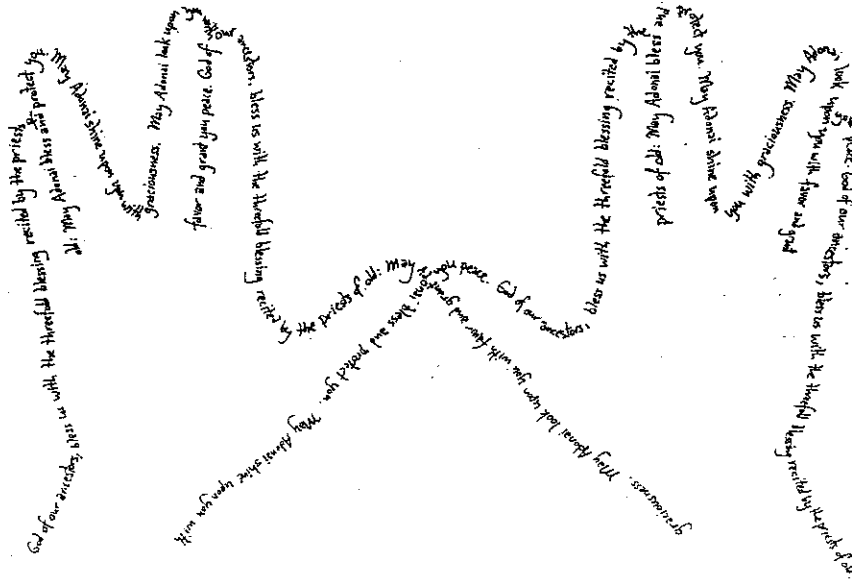
For You we wait, our God; You, O Lord will answer.

your handiwork

הַנְּשָׁמָה לְךָ וְהַגּוּרָה פָּעָלְךָ . הָרוּסָה עַל עַמְלֶךָ .
הַנְּשָׁמָה לְךָ וְהַגּוּרָה שְׁלֶךָ . ייַּ צַּשָּׁה לְמַצֵּן שְׁמֶךָ .

The soul is Yours, the body is Your creation
 Lord, have compassion upon Your handiwork

The soul is Yours, the body is Yours.
 Deal with us according to Your name.



psalm 27 - a psalm of david

Adonai is my Light and my Help; whom shall I fear?
 Adonai is the strength of my life; Who can make me afraid?

When evil people draw near to devour my flesh-
 It is these foes and enemies who stumble and fall.

Even if an army rises up against me, my heart will have no fear!
 Even if a whole war besets me, I will still feel secure.

One thing I ask of Adonai, one thing I seek:
To dwell in Adonai's house all the days of my life,
To gaze upon the beauty of Adonai, to explore Adonai's sanctuary.

Adonai will shelter me in a Sukkah on an evil day;
Adonai will conceal me in the secret shelter of a tent,
raise me up safely upon a rock.

My head is high above my enemies around me;
I sacrifice in Adonai's tent, to the blasts of trumpets,
Singing and chanting a hymn to Adonai.

Adonai—sh'ma/ hear my voice when I call!
Have mercy on me and respond!

You seek my heart, my heart seeks You- I seek Your Presence.

Do not hide Your face from me; Do not turn Your servant away in anger!
You have always been my Help so do not abandon me;
Do not forsake me, my God, my Saving One.

Even if my father and mother abandoned me,
Adonai would gather me in.

Teach me Your ways, Adonai,
Guide me on a straight and level path, because of my watchful enemies.

Do not hand me over to my foes;
ignore the false witnesses and unjust accusers who rise up against me
breathing violence.

I believe I will yet see Adonai's goodness in the Land of Life

Hope in Adonai!
Be strong inside and let your heart be brave!
Yes, yes, hope in Adonai!

Translation by Rabbi Simkha Weintraub

אחת שאלתי מאת יי אֹתָהּ אֲבַקֵּשׁ, שְׁבִתִי בְּבֵית יי כָּל-
יְמֵי חַיִּי, לַחַיּוֹת בְּנֶעֱמִים יי וְלִבְקֹר בְּהֵיכָלוֹ.

*A-hat sha-al-ti, mei-eit Adonai, O-tah a-va-kesh:
Shiv-ti b'vet A-do-nai kol ye-mei ha-yai.
La-ha-zot b'no-am, b'no-am A-do-nai, u-l'va-kerr b'hei-kha-lo.*

viewing the days of awe

**One Hundred Eighty -One
Shabbat Shuva**

I wander this path of hallowed days,
Twisting, twisting in search of You;
My body broken slows my steps,
Burdens my weary thoughts.

Frustration and yearning mingle before You,
For You are the sum of my being;
Hints of restoration revive my spirit
As I grasp their fragile threads.

If I can not turn and be made well,
Let me turn and be made whole;
Dislodge the distress that blocks my way,
Bring me home to You in peace.

By Debbie Perlman z'l

avinu malkeinu - grant us hesed

Avinu malkeinu, answer us though we have no deeds to plead our cause;
Save us with mercy and lovingkindness.

אָבֵינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, הַגֵּנוּ וְעֲנֵנוּ, כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים,
עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.

*Avinu malkeinu, honeinu v'aneinu, kee ein banu ma'asim.
Asei eemanu tzedakah vahesed vehoshee-einu.*



misheBerach

May the One who Blessed our ancestors, Avraham, Yitzhak and Yaakov Sarah, Rivka, Rahel and Leah, bless and heal those who are ill, _____
Son/ daughter of _____

May the Blessed Holy One fill them with mercy and revive them and heal them and strengthen them and give them life. May God quickly send them complete healing, healing of spirit and healing of body, among all of those who are ill. On this day of Yom Kippur may healing come very soon and let us say: Amen.

the prayer of the kohen gadol

May it be Your will, Lord our God and God of our ancestors, to grant us, with all Your People Israel, a year of blessing, a year of corn and wine and oil, a year of prosperity, of assembly in Your Temple, a year of abundance, of happy life, of dew and rain and warmth, of ripening fruits, a year of atonement for our sins, a year in which You bless our food and drink, a year of commerce, a year of plenty, a year of joy, a year in which You bless the fruit of the womb and the fruit of the land, a year in which You show us Your compassion, a year of peace and tranquility, a year in which You bring us rejoicing to our land, a year in which Your People Israel will not require support from one another or from other people, the work of their hands being fully blessed by You. And for the inhabitants of the region of Sharon, who lived in peril of sudden earthquakes, he prayed: May it be Your will, Lord our God, that their homes not become their graves.

forgiving those genes

By Rabbi Simkha J. Weintraub

I know that my diabetes is "heavily genetic." Same with the thyroid problems, probably. And truth be told, I could also list acne, premature graying, and a few other irritating challenges. Looking in the proverbial crystal ball, I might anticipate heart disease, colon cancer and more, on this, my ledger of genetic burdens, contingencies, debits and insults!

But then, that's not fair to you, genes of mine! For I have also drawn on you, quite heavily for some remarkable treasures- familial love, Jewish neshama, a tendency to hope, quirky sense of humor, substantial flexibility and patience, general adaptability, and so much more. Why impugn my gene package by highlighting only certain angles? Unfair to you- and unhelpful to me.



Back to the diabetes. My mediocre pancreas links me to my paternal grandmother, who lived with diabetes for the second 49 of her 98 years, may she rest in peace. Sure, it influenced her life and those of caretaking family members, but so did her sweetness, her devotion, her softest cheeks and audible, inhaling kisses, her worn book of Psalms and storied of the Vilna Gaon, her patched linens and sturdy love of family, God and people.

When I look at the whole picture, the big picture, which isn't often enough, I surely come out way ahead in the trade-off. That's my prayer, to look at the whole picture. Thank you, God, for giving me these genes. Your explanation will follow someday, I hope.

B'sefer hayyim

Remember us that we may live, O King, who delights in life. Inscribe us in the Book of Life, for Your sake, living God.

וְזָכְרֵנוּ לְחַיִּים מֶלֶךְ חַפֵּץ בְּחַיִּים,
וְזָכְרֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים לְמַעַן אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים.

Zokhrei-nu l'hayyim melekh hafeitz b'hayyim
v'khot-veinu b'seifer ha-hayyim, l'ma-ankha Elohim hayyim.

thanksgiving for life

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁחַיֵּינוּ וְקִיָּמֵנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה.

Praised are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, for granting us life, for sustaining us and for helping us to reach this day.

haleluyah- from psalm 150

With every breath, let all that breathe praise You.

כָּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְהַלֵּל יְיָ. הַלְלוּהוּ.

This service was prepared by Rabbi Stephanie Dickstein
for the Highland Park Conservative Temple and Center, 5764

Most traditional liturgical selections are from the *Harlow Mahzor* of the Rabbinical Assembly.
Debbie Perlman's Psalms can be found at www.healingpsalm.com
The Outstretched Arm is a publication of the National Center for Jewish Healing/JBFCS.

