



LITURGY FOR CONCERNS REGARDING THE CORONAVIRUS

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* Added April 2020

A Blessing for Washing Hands During a Pandemic

As we wash our hands
We pray,
Blessed is the Soul of the Universe,
Breathing us in and breathing us out.
May our breaths continue
And our health and the health of all
Be preserved
In this time of sickness and fear of sickness.
Holy Wholeness,
We take as much responsibility for it as we can
By observing the obligation to wash our hands,
Using lots of soap and hot water,
Thoroughly:
For as long as it takes to say this prayer.
Amen

On Anxiety

Adonai, You abide though all things change. I am anxious and fearful, and I turn my heart to You, looking to You and leaning on Your strength.

It is written, “Blessed is the one whose strength is in You.” Bless me now with faith and courage. Help me to feel that You are with me, steadying and sustaining me with the assurance that I am loved. Be with me and bring me hope, that in the days to come, my aspirations may be fulfilled for my good and the good of those I love who depend on me. Banish my fears with the sense that You are always present, to uphold and sustain me, as it is written, “Have no fear, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with the power of My righteousness” (Isaiah 41:10). Amen.

By Rabbi Chaim Stern, from *Mishkan R'fuah: Where Healing Resides*. Copyright © 2013 by the Central Conference of American Rabbis. All rights reserved. Not to be distributed, sold, or copied without express written permission. Originally appeared in *On the Doorposts of Your House*, Revised Edition © 1994, 2010 by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, p. 163.

Disappointed

Light of Hope, Lens of Vision
You made us eager and excited,
Setting our hearts on celebrations and pride
In milestones reached and challenges overcome.

Yet you forged us for loss,
For grief, for anger and for the pain
Of what could have been.

Does One depend on the Other,
To make meaning, to focus view,
To feel blessed rather than cursed,
Contented over wanting?

Are we to nurture a seedling
Of character, or humility,
To better sense our place,
Or privilege, or fortune
In merely being?

Or is this just the way things are,
As we fix our needs and desires,
Our dreams and our faith,
Upon a world and life
That rises to meet us,
Or simply drifts away.

And so, we find You,
Not in the futile plaint,
But in the length of road;
Not in the absence or void,
But in the space, newly found;
Sparks from the silence,
Stoked into resilience.

Blessed Are You, The Holy One of Hope,
Who holds out the horizon,
And turns us into
Another day.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us have faced or are facing the reality of long-awaited celebrations and gatherings suddenly canceled or postponed—b'nei mitzvah, weddings, holidays, even Shabbat services. Rabbi Daniel A. Weiner shares a poem he wrote to offer some perspective and hope to help us manage the sense of disappointment, frustration, and loss that we face when our much-anticipated in-person gatherings turn virtual.

By Rabbi Daniel A. Weiner, 2020

FROM RAVBLOG: <https://ravblog.ccarnet.org/2020/04/a-prayer-for-the-frustrated-and-disappointed/>

When Fears Multiply

When fears multiply
And danger threatens;
When sickness comes,
And death confronts us—

It is God's blessing of *shalom*
That sustains us
And upholds us,

Lightening our burden,
Dispelling our worry,
Restoring our strength,
Renewing our hope—
Reviving us.

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Prayer for God's Love

We are loved
by an unending love.
We are embraced
by arms that find us
even when
we are hidden from ourselves.
We are touched
by fingers that soothe us
even when
we are too proud for soothing.
We are counseled
by voices that guide us
even when
we are too embittered to hear.

We are loved
by an unending love.
We are supported
By hands that uplift us even in
the midst of a fall.

We are urged on by eyes that meet us
even when
we are too weak for meeting:

We are loved by an unending love.
Embraced, touched, soothed, and counseled . . .
ours are the arms, the fingers, the voices;
ours are the hands, the eyes, the smiles;
we are loved
by an unending love.

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A Prayer for Medical Scientists

God 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.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, רוֹפֵא כָּל בָּשָׂר, וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.

Baruch atah Adonai, rofeh chol basar, umafli laasot.

Praised are You God, healer of flesh, maker of wonders.

A Prayer for Those Who Help

May the One who blessed and led our forebearers give countenance unto those who provide help for the ill and troubled among us. May they be filled with fortitude and courage, endowed with sympathy and compassion, as they give strength to those at their side. May they fight against despair and continue to find within themselves the will to reach out to those in need. And in their love of others, may they feel the blessing of community and the blessing of renewed faith.

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A Prayer for Those Fighting the Coronavirus

Divine Source of Love,

send your blessings of wisdom, patience, and compassion to the health care professionals who tirelessly and selflessly put their own safety at risk to care for the sick, each and every day. Watch over them, bless the work of their hands, so that they may continue to work with kindness, strength, and love. Let each of them—doctors, nurses, therapists, first responders, and all other medical professionals and support staff, as well as their family members—know that they are appreciated for the incredible work they do each day. Bless them with safety and health.

Source of Compassion,

bless the essential workers whose efforts allow us to continue our lives in safety. Let us show our gratitude to them so they may know that they are valued and respected.

Rock of the World,

we also ask that you send wisdom to those in national leadership positions as they respond to this crisis. Show us all a righteous path that supports, through words and actions, the brave souls on the front lines of fighting the disease.

Fountain of Goodness,

we ask that you bless all of us as we navigate this new world together. Strengthen the bonds of our communities, even as we have to be physically distant from one another. Grant us calm through the anxiety; companionship, even virtually, through the isolation; and love for one another.

Amen.

By Rabbi Jordan Ottenstein and Rabbi April Davis, 2020

A Medical Practitioner's Prayer

God, uniquely created in Your image, I have used my gifts and talents, my training and experience, to bring my skills to support healing. As I begin this procedure/examination, may I fully appreciate that the work of my hands reflects the work of Yours. May my attentiveness reflect the trust placed in me by each patient, my colleagues, and You. May my work reflect the best I have to offer from the depth of my mind and soul. May the blessing of life and love be ever present to my patients and myself. Amen.

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T'filat HaDerech—A Prayer for an Uncharted Journey While Being Separated from Loved Ones in Need of Care

מאי דְּכַתִּיב (דברים יג, ה) אַחֲרֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם תֵּלְכוּ וְכִי אֶפְשֶׁר לֹו לְאָדָם לְהֵלֵךְ אַחֵר שְׂכִינָה ...
אֲלֵא לְהֵלֵךְ אַחֵר מִדֹּתָיו שֶׁל הַקַּב"ה: מָה הוּא מְלַבֵּשׁ עָרוּמִים... אֲף אֶתְהָ הַלְבֵּשׁ עָרוּמִים הַקַּב"ה
בִּיקָר חוֹלִים ... אֲף אֶתְהָ בִּיקָר חוֹלִים הַקַּב"ה גִּיחֵם אֲבֵלִים... אֲף אֶתְהָ גִיחֵם אֲבֵלִים...

What is the meaning of that which is written: "You shall walk after Adonai your God?" Is it possible for people to walk in God's ways?...Rather, the meaning is that we should imitate God's attributes: Just as God clothes the naked...so too you should clothe the naked. Just as God visits the sick...so too you should visit the sick. Just as God comforts mourners...so too you should comfort mourners....
—Jerusalem Talmud, *Sotah* 14a:3–4

But what if we cannot, in the way that we would want to?

טָרָם אֶקְרָא אֵלֶיךָ אֶתְהָ תַעֲנֶנָּה ... *Terem ekra eilecha Atah taaneh*, Hear our cry Adonai, that You might answer us even before we cry out to You. May we know that God hears our cry.

וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּדַע אֱלֹהִים.
וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּדַע אֱלֹהִים.

God heard their moaning, and God remembered the covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them. —Exodus 2:24–25

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ.

Y'bi ratzon milfanecha, Adonai, Elobeinu v'Elobei avoteinu v'imoteinu.

May it be Your will, Eternal One, our God and God of our ancestors, that You will support our footsteps on this uncharted journey.

Guide us and our loved ones toward peace and wholeness and help us reach our destination committed to life, joy, and peace, and unbroken by our new reality.

Help us to know that our loved ones, whether near or far, are with us. Their love for us will sustain us wherever our journey might lead. As circumstances arise that had been previously unimaginable, help us to know that their love for us, and ours for them, is an unbreakable bond.

May those caring for them in our absence be blessed and held in this holiest of work. Though separated from them, we affirm that we are present with them through You, wherever our journey might lead. Like the Pillar of Cloud dwelling upon the Israelites as they wandered in the desert (Exodus 13:21–22), You are ever-present. We shall not fear.

May You hear the sound of our prayers, because You are the God who hears prayers and supplications. Blessed are You, Eternal One, who ever hears our prayers.

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

This prayer is for anyone who cannot physically be with a loved one who is sick. May they be blessed with a renewal of body and spirit.

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/them} 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.

By Rabbi Marci Bloch, 2020

FROM RAVBLOG: <https://ravblog.ccarnet.org/2020/04/prayer-for-a-person-isolated-from-a-loved-coronavirus/>

Seder P'reidah—A Ritual of Farewell from Afar

This ritual is intended for close relatives or friends who cannot be at the bedside of their dying loved one because of distancing measures. It is intended to replicate and facilitate saying goodbye in order to provide a sense of closure and peace for the loved ones. The ritual can be performed with an individual or group in one home or with a small group over the phone or video conferencing. There is an option to light a candle during this ceremony and to extinguish it at the conclusion in grape juice or sweet wine to represent the emotional mixture of grief and happy memories.

1. Psalms of Comfort

“Because you are devoted to me, I will deliver you; I will keep you safe for you know My name. When you call on Me, I will answer you; I will be with you in distress; I will rescue you and make you honored.”

—based on Psalm 91:14–15

“God will guard your life. The Eternal will guard your going and coming, now and forever.”

—based on Psalm 121:7–8

“O Eternal, God of my deliverance, when I cry out in the night before You, let my prayer reach You; incline Your ear to my cry. I call to You, O Eternal, each day; I stretch out my hands to you.”

—based on Psalm 88:2,10

2. Sharing Personal Memories

Each person present (in person or remotely) shares a memory or blessing of the loved one. If desired, each person can light a candle at the start of their remarks.

יְהִי לְרָצוֹן אֱמֹרֵי פִי וְהִגִּיוֹן לִבִּי לְפָנֶיךָ, יי צוּרִי וְגֹאֲלִי.

Yib'yu l'ratzon imrei fi, v'hegion libi l'fanecha, Adonai tzuri v'goali.

May the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable to you, my Rock and my Redeemer.

—based on Psalm 19:15

3. *Vidui*—Confession on Behalf of the Loved One

Adonai, God of our ancestors, all is now in Your hands.

Forgive and release any hurts or wrongdoings
done consciously or unconsciously.

Lift up all _____'s worries and fears.

Wash them away.

Let goodness flow over {him/her/them} and surround {him/her/them} now.

Help {him/her/them} as {he/she/they} readies/y for {his/her/their} next passage.

May {his/her/their} worries for us be eased.

Let {him/her/them} know You will walk alongside, and be present for us, for {his/her/their} soul
is entwined with ours.

As {he/she/they} comes close to You, bathe {him/her/them} in Your light.

Love {him/her/them}

and carry {him/her/them}.

Shelter {him/her/them} under Your wings.

Into Your hand we trust {his/her/their} soul.

Gently, lovingly, tend {him/her/them} now.

By Rabbi Vicki Hollander, printed in L'chol Z'man V'eit, © 2015 CCAR Press, Mourning, p. 6

4. The Priestly Blessing

[Masculine:]

Y'varech'cha Adonai v'yishm'recha.

Ya-eir Adonai panav eilecha vichuneka.

Yisa Adonai panav eilecha v'yasem l'cha shalom.

יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה וַיְשַׁמְרֶךָ.
יְאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיְחַנֶּךָ.
יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.

[Feminine:]

Y'var'cheich Adonai v'yishm'reich.

Ya-eir Adonai panav elayich vichuneich.

Yisa Adonai panav elayich v'yasem lach shalom.

יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה וַיְשַׁמְרֶךָ.
יְאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיְחַנֶּךָ.
יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.

[Plural:]

Y'varech'chen/ m Adonai v'yishmarchen/ m.

Ya-eir Adonai panav aleichen/ m vichun'chen/ m.

Yisa Adonai panav aleichen/ m v'yasem l'chen/ m shalom.

יְבָרְכֶכֶם יְהוָה וַיְשַׁמְרֶכֶם.
יְאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֵיכֶם וַיְחַנְּכֶם.
יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֵיכֶם וַיִּשֶׂם לְכֶם שְׁלוֹם.

Adonai blesses you and watches over you.
Adonai's Presence shines upon you and sheds grace all around you.
Adonai garbs you in light and bestows peace upon you.

–Numbers 6:24–26

5. Calling upon God

שְׁמַע, יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד!

Sh'ma, Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad!

Hear, O Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is One!

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Baruch shem k'vod malchuto l'olam va-ed.

Blessed is God's name whose glorious dominion is forever and ever.

יְיָ הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים.

Adonai bu HaElohim.

Adonai is God.

6. Final Verses

In God's hand I entrust my spirit, when I sleep and when I am awake. As long as my soul is with my body, the Eternal is with me, I shall not fear.

Lech/L'chi/L'chu l'Shalom.

Go in peace.

(The flames are extinguished.)

Prayer for Rising Waters: Getting through COVID-19

We, who strive to illuminate for others the blessings that surround us, seek guidance from our ancient teachers. The Torah is replete with heroes forced to adjust and adapt to their new realities. This prayer invokes the Source of Life to guide us to learn from their examples and imbue us with courage, flexibility, and faith.

Source of our Wonder and Life,
Please guide us with *chesed*
So that
With planning and love,
And laughter and hope,
We will find a way to cope,
And we will find a way through.

One of Blessing,
Who once blessed our ancestors,
Shine for us
A light forward,
To illumine
The unknown ahead.

Grant us resilience,
Like those who came before us:
And hope amidst the worry,
And promise amidst the fear.

•••

Guide us
Like You guided,
Noah and Naamah,
Partners who planned quickly
for unanticipated days—
Building an ark,
And gathering the animals,
And collecting the seeds
To seed a future unknown.

Help us to hear,
That in spite of our fear,
We must plan together,

Anticipating unsettling weather,
So that our small arks will float above rising waters,
And through raging storms yet to come.

•••

And please hold our children,
Like You held
Isaac the assaulted,
Who struggled to find meaning
After his life was torn apart.

Don't let this
Childhood trauma
Close up their hearts.
Rather grant us the smarts,
And a love
Deep like Rebekah's,
To get them through this era
By teaching them a lesson:

That by loving each other,
And by sharing our hearts,
We can overcome
Even the most debilitating
Worry, anxiety, and fear.

•••

And uplift each of us too
Like You uplifted
Sarai the soulful,
Who dug deep amidst her despair,
To discover strength
Hidden within.

Like she who fed the others,
Those three stranger-wanderers
Who arrived from a distance
So far, far away.
May we feed each other,

With manna from our souls,
Shrinking the distance between us
With words we text, tweet, or say.

Send us hope for the future—
Like her child to be born!—
So that we too may laugh,
As we telegraph,
Amidst the greatest of fear
Now sitting with us here,
That amongst all of the oys,
We will still find great joy,
Unbounded,
Unending,
And *simchahs* so deep.

By Rabbi Paul J. Kipnes, 2020

FROM RAVBLOG: <https://ravblog.ccarnet.org/2020/03/prayer-for-rising-waters-covid-19/>

Healing from Coronavirus

Source of healing,
Cast the light of health and well-being
On those who've been exposed to coronavirus,
Those who have contracted the disease
And those -- God forbid -- who contract the disease in the future.
Bless them, protect them and bring them speedily to full recovery.
Bless all who are ill
With healing of body
Healing of soul
And healing of spirit.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, מִקּוֹר חַיִּים.

Baruch atah Adonai, m'kor chayim.

Blessed are You Adonai, source of Life