

Caretaking

BY DEBBIE PERLMAN

On the afternoon of April 17th, the twenty-first day of the *Omer*, my husband's heart attacked him. The following morning, Reid underwent coronary artery bypass surgery. After nearly a quarter century of increasing physical dependence on my husband, I became his caretaker.

*Your arm has sheltered us before,
Again we call Your name for healing;
Your vigilance deferred disaster,
Holy One, Your care will sustain us.*

*Join us on this new path of recovery,
Guard the newness and sameness of the road;
Bless our years of love, our compass,
The beacon of affection that leads us home.*

For many caretakers, the physical strain of the role is paramount. I am accustomed to not only allowing help but welcoming it. Although the emotional responsibilities of caretaking were mine, I had experience in mustering the resources that would allow me to fulfill my role. And it was one I zealously guarded. I needed to have the surgeon speak to me alone—not to the whole room of family who waited. I wanted to be the one to respond to nurses' questions, to listen to the doctor's discharge plans. Being fully engaged with Reid's doctors helped me support his recovery. I discovered the privilege of being the caretaker.

*Settle us, Divine Healer, in these days of recovery;
They are a mid-western spring: warmth, then cold rain.
Make our new life rhythms gentle,
Your hand marks the cadence of our adaptations.*

*Reach into this sphere of caring,
Guard us both, patient and helper;
Let rest come, sleep and healing dreams,
Let morning find our strength renewed.*

We were privileged in atypical ways. Reid was cared for by doctors he handpicked from his own colleagues. We were accustomed to hospital routines, in a familiar place. I was never afraid he would not survive. Without fully articulating it, we both knew his recovery would happen only if he took ownership of it. I could be a facilitator, but I refused to be a nag. Just as I had linked the days of his recovery to my

counting of the *Omer*, we completed four weeks of his recovery on the day before *Shavuot*. To me, this coincidental confluence had to have a deeper meaning. Perhaps as our people realized the new duties they accepted at Sinai, so we grew to understand the life changes that provided the guidelines for Reid's renewed health.

*As the Israelite children measured the journey to Sinai,
So have we tallied the distance to recovery;
As You helped them grow into freedom,
So have we learned the bounty of survival.*

*Teach us the meaning of Your lessons,
We hear and obey, we cling to new meaning;
Sustain us as we learn right choices,
Decisions that sustain, destiny restructured.*

Now, I admit, we are back to our previous roles. Reid is maintaining his excellent recovery, caring for me physically as before. Yet we are in a different place of reciprocity, the give and take of love.

*We thank You, our Protector, for these days.
We store up summer warmth,
We feast on the fruits of recovery,
Tasting the tang and sweet of this victory.*

*We find You in the nuance of gratitude;
You bless our evolution.
On the bounty of the season
We grow strong and whole.*

IN MEMORY

As this issue was going to press, we were shocked and deeply saddened to learn of the untimely death of Debbie Perlman. Psalmist-in-Residence at Beth Emet Free Synagogue in Evanston, IL, and a frequent contributor to these pages, Debbie was a deeply gifted spiritual poet, a committed member of both the local and international Jewish community, and a shining example, herself, of caregiving—her words of struggle and praise reaching many thousands faced with illness, suffering, disability, and loss. We offer our deepest condolences to her loving family and friends, and pray that we may continue to amplify her voice and emulate her example of reaching out to others, reaching up to God, and reaching in to our inner resources of connection, support, and lovingkindness.

The OUTSTRETCHED ARM

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JEWISH HEALING PROGRAMS A Growing Network for Spiritual Care and Well Being

Here is a list of contact information for this growing network of care. If you are in a community with an active Jewish healing program, please contact them to learn more about their work and the ways in which you can become an active partner. Many of the healing programs include training and support of Bikur Holim, Jewish spiritual support groups, individual pastoral counseling, conferences or training opportunities on related topics, and more. Programs with an asterisk offer some programs for caregivers.

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Our Community Consultation Program is supported by a generous grant from the Katzin Family Foundation.

Since joining the staff of the National Center, I am awestruck by the creativity, sense of purpose and determination I encounter in my networking and consultation with individuals and their organizations, across our nation and in Canada, who are building programs of Jewish Healing. Viewed as a whole, their work is like a quilt, with each panel reflecting a unique texture and color. However, these programs all share a common thread—the culling and integrating of Jewish spiritual resources into programs that address the tough times in life, such as illness, loss, caregiving, mental illness, and terrorism. And some are expanding into programming that addresses issues of self-care and well-being.

Jewish healing centers, many of which now find their home in Jewish family service agencies, are also breaking down walls. They are building more partnerships with synagogues, Jewish community centers, hospitals, hospice programs and chaplaincy programs in order to reach those in need. Through collaborative training initiatives, centers are increasing the capacity of both professionals and volunteers to serve the spiritual needs of those in their care. As rabbis, cantors, medical and mental health professionals, *Bikur Holim* volunteers, chaplains, spiritual counselors, and Jewish educators come together to develop interdisciplinary teams, we are challenged by our differences and determined to both transform and enhance the way in which we work together. This challenge is perhaps our new horizon. Here are a few of the many wonderful examples of models of community partnership that are emerging:

- **The Bay Area Jewish Healing Center, San Francisco**—Conducted a conference, "Mental Illness in the Jewish Community: Help, Hope and Healing" in cooperation with local and national partners. Designed to start breaking the silence and offer a comprehensive response, including spiritual resources.
- **Twin Cities Jewish Healing Center, JF&CS Minneapolis/St. Paul**—Provides professional training for local hospice providers in addressing the end of life needs of their Jewish patients and families.
- **MetroWest Jewish Health & Healing Center, NJ** This healing center is located in

the JCC and based on a partnership model between the Healing Center, JCC and JFS. Project SHIN, offers nursing and spiritual support to seniors through a collaborative project with synagogues.

- **Jewish Healing Connections of JF&CS, Boston** partnered with a synagogue in reaching out to all of the Jewish community; over 400 people attended a Jewish Healing Service entitled *Hope, Healing and Transformation in Uncertain Times*, to commemorate communal losses of 9/11.

- **NY Jewish Healing Center, JBFCS New York** delivers spiritual support groups and workshops addressing the spiritual needs of bereaved Jews, survivors of a loved ones suicide, people with chronic illness and caregivers through collaboration with the JCC of Manhattan and Dorot, a senior service provider.

- **Fleischer Jewish Healing Center, St. Louis** offers monthly Healing Circles/Services which rotate through local synagogues.

- **Jewish Healing Center, JFS of San Diego** with strong support from their local Federation, and in partnership with synagogues, melds community chaplaincy services and *Bikur Holim* groups to produce a seamless system of communal services to those who are ill and need visiting.

- **Chaplaincy and Jewish Healing Program, JF&CS, Philadelphia** develops formal partnerships with nursing homes and rehabilitation centers to provide spiritual care to Jews who are living in institutions.

- **Jewish Healing Partners of JFSMW, Framingham, MA** provides information on its interfaith partners through the development and distribution of a community resource guide *A Spiritual Tool Kit for Healing and Well-being*.

- **Jewish Healing Center of JFS Orange County, CA** developed a model and funding for a partnership with a local hospice organization to deliver spiritual care and counseling to Jewish patient and their families

- **Washington Jewish Healing Network** partners with local synagogues in providing spiritual support groups as well as opportunities for community education.

Long Distance Caregiving for Elderly Parents

SUSAN ROSENTHAL

Seven Ways of Asking

When we reach out to help someone who is ill, we often forget that there may be a loved one in the role of caregiver, who is equally in need of support and/or concrete help. But simply asking "How are you?" may not convey authentic, personal interest and may not open up 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 seems to come 'attached' to automatic, expected answers such as "I'm OK" or "Fine, thanks," which may not be a sincere reply, or may not be the whole story. So here are seven alternative ways of asking.

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?

From the Alzheimer's/Dementia Foundation, I learned that despite our coast to coast relationship, my brother and I were indeed our parents' long distance caregivers. Why did I think that one needed to live under the same roof to earn this label? The label mattered because all the stress, worry, responsibility, wear and tear we experienced now made sense. We had much to learn.

I found myself following in the footsteps of my friends at shul who walked and more often crawled along this path before me. I watched them make the same trips home with ever increasing frequency; agonize and wrestle with the tough issues of respecting their parents' fierce independence and determination to live in their own home on the one hand and building in care and safety on the other.

I worried about our health and well-being because we were not taking care of our own bodies and spirits. In the face of long periods

And, I continue to learn that despite the pain and exhaustion of this journey, there can be openings—moments of profound intimacy and/or reconciliation—which enable me to say it is a privilege.

of helplessness, self-care seemed like the last item on our "To Do" list.

However, I did feel supported and deeply blessed that I had discovered the great treasure and teachings of Torah just 7 years earlier. Torah, this big container or holding environment is the place where friends and I can wrestle, from the head and the heart, with how to act—where to find strength and meaning—when the right answers aren't clear.

And, I continue to learn that despite the pain and exhaustion of this journey, there can be openings—moments of profound intimacy and/or reconciliation—which enable me to say it is a privilege.

Two years ago on Shavuot, the holiday celebrating the giving of the Torah, I waited in synagogue (not so patiently) for the piece of Torah I might personally receive that day. And then, just like that, I saw an image of my father as a young man carrying the Torah down from the top of Mount Sinai. Like Moses, his eyes were full of light, and I started to sob tears that cleanse the soul and open the heart. I realized that my father, by his lifelong example, had given my brother and I the Torah teaching of Hesed (Lovingkindness), his eternal gift to us. Once again, I found that the Source of Life had blessed me with a spiritual resource that lifted my spirits as I boarded the plane that very evening to fly to the other coast to tend to my increasingly frail parents.

The flights continue and so do the challenges and gifts...

Caring for a Difficult Person at the End of Life

PENINAH SAKOW

I have had the privilege of taking care of two people as they made their end of life journey. The first was my grandfather, whom I loved and admired all my life. And the second was my sister-in-law, which was a more emotionally complicated experience because the history our relationship was just so. Through it, I found that the *mitzvot*, which bring a sense of commandedness and of duty, can move us and even move circumstances in ways we never thought possible, and start us on a healing path.

I quickly learned that we are blessed with a humanity that can allow all past hurts and pain to vanish in the face of another lying frail and vulnerable in a hospital bed. I spent 10-12 hours a day by her side, and during that time she revealed a secret to me that she had never revealed to anyone. Much of what I learned made me sad, and I regretted that we hadn't had these conversations 30 years ago. But 30 years ago she wasn't ready to have them and I didn't have the maturity to appreciate them. Now I was learning that caring for a dying person with whom we have had a less than perfect relationship can afford us the time and possibility of healing old wounds, of forgiving past hurts, of transcending feelings that have kept us stuck in a destructive emotional state.

As it turned out, the person with whom I had experienced a good deal of resentment and anger gave me some of the greatest gifts I will ever know: trust, love, honesty, understanding, forgiveness, and healing. Before she died, she said I was no longer her sister-in-law, but her sister. I was privileged to hear her prayer.



*A religious man is a person who holds
God and man in one thought at one time,
who suffers harm done to others,
whose greatest passion is compassion,
whose greatest strength is love
and defiance of despair.*

ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

The Torah of Self-Care

*Three things restore a person's
good spirits: beautiful sounds,
sights, and smells.*

BABYLONIAN TALMUD, BERAKHOT 57B

*If I am not for myself,
who will be for me?
And if I am only for myself,
what am I?
And if not now, when?*

PIRKE AVOT 1:14

Why is it, that when caring for a loved one, the hardest thing to do is make time to care for ourselves? There are a million reasons—there is no time, my loved one needs me all of the time, I feel guilty if I take some time for myself, we can't afford any help—no doubt you know them all. But these nuggets of wisdom from our tradition remind us of the importance of self-care. Think about making small signs of them and putting them up as reminders!

And don't forget the little things that can make such a difference—a bouquet of beautiful flowers, some nourishing and delicious food, a few extra moments in the shower or bath, a favorite piece of music, talking to a friend on the telephone, laughing at a silly sit-com on TV, taking a 10 minute walk around the block, or sitting on the porch in the fresh air. Make a list of those things that strengthen you, entertain you, comfort you, or nourish your soul. Perhaps it will help make this kind of self-care a part of your day. And you may find yourself coming back to your caregiving role with renewed vigor, more patience, and the strength to face the next challenge.

Finding Solace and Meaning in the Psalms

RABBI STEPHANIE DICKSTEIN, CSW



The group sat on chairs in a circle. They were strangers to each other. The only thing they knew about each other was that each one carried the responsibility of seeing to the care of a loved one. I welcomed the group and introduced myself. We began with a song and then I handed out pages with verses from *Tehillim*, the Book of Psalms.

Psalms can be a resource at so many times in our lives, but most especially when life becomes challenging. As each psalm expresses a myriad of emotions, it often seems as if the Psalmist has an inability to focus on any one feeling or idea for more than a few verses at a time. But as we come to understand how these religious poems work, we can better appreciate how this spectrum of feelings, so eloquently expressed, can reflect the complexity of our own inner lives.

In preparation for this session of the group, I had read through many of the Psalms associated with healing. I found a number of verses which I felt gave language to the varied emotions that loved ones can experience in any day, and over the course of their caregiving responsibilities. I asked the members of the group to take a few moments to look over these verses and to choose one or two to which they are drawn. While there was some uncertainty at first, as people began to read the verses, their faces would light up. It wasn't long before individuals were ready to speak.

Hear me, O Lord, when I cry aloud; have mercy and answer me. (27:7)

"This is what I need, that God hears my prayers, for me and for my mother. I try to pray, but I don't feel an answer yet," offered the first person to speak. I saw many heads nodding around the circle.

An older woman spoke next. "My husband was fine, though his blood pressure was a little high. Three days after returning from a trip, he had a massive stroke. He can't speak and he cries all the time. I don't know how I can bear it."

When I was untroubled, I thought, "I shall never be shaken, for You, O Lord were pleased, made me firm as a mighty mountain. When You hid Your face, I was terrified." (30:7-8)

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me. (23:4)

"We live in the shadow of death now," says another participant, "but our community has been such a support to us; they offer us comfort."

"I don't live with my mother, but I can't stop thinking about her. Every day, it seems there is another crisis. I can't escape from this and I can't make it better for her." *Where can I flee Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I descend to sheol, You are there, too. (139:7)*

The span of our life is seventy years, or given the strength, eighty years. But the best of them are trouble and sorrow. They pass by speedily and we fly away. Teach us to count our days rightly, that we obtain a heart of wisdom. (90:12) "My father is almost 80 now, and it is hard to see him so physically frail, when his spirit is still so strong. He lived such a full, good life, and even now I am blessed by how he teaches me about getting old."

Those who see me on the street avoid me. I am put out of the mind like the dead; I am like an object given up for lost. (31:12-13)

"My husband has been homebound for so long that we have lost most of our friends. Who wants to listen to me anymore? I have nothing to talk about but the details of his struggle."

The last speaker had sat quietly through the turns of the others. Now she explained the verse she had chosen. *This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us exult and rejoice in it. (118:12)*

"It has not been easy to see my sister live with her disability. There are many bad days and bad hours, but we are grateful for every day. We go more slowly now, but the good is very good, and the joy is very precious."

May the gates of prayer be open
before all of their words.

Below, you will find other verses I chose for this group. Take some time to look at the list—perhaps once a day, or once a week. Which of the verses speak to you? Try writing down the verse or verses, and then describing what you feel. You may discover that the same verses may have different meanings for you each time they are read. One day the words may seem to praise God, another day, they may serve to challenge God. One day, you may need to read words expressing great distress to know that you are not alone in that feeling. Another day, you may have reason to choose words of thanksgiving for some improvement in your loved one's situation, or verses which may express the gratitude you feel for the preciousness of life.

- 1) You turned my lament into dancing,
You undid my sackcloth and girded me with joy
That my whole being might sing hymns to you endlessly
O Lord my God, I will praise you forever. (30:12-13)
- 2) I say to God, my rock
“Why have You forgotten me,
why must I walk in gloom
oppressed by my enemy?” (42:10)
- 3) My deep distress increases;
Deliver me from my straits.
Look at my affliction and suffering,
And forgive all my sins. (25:17-18)
- 4) For night and day
Your hand lay heavy on me:
my vigor waned
As in the summer drought
Then I acknowledged my sin to You
I did not cover up my guilt;
I resolved, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord”
And You forgave the guilt of my sin. (32: 4-5)
- 5) Let me enlighten you
and show you which way to go
let me offer counsel; my eye is on you. (32: 8)
- 6) Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud:
Have mercy on me, answer me. (27:7)
- 7) Had I not the assurance that I would enjoy
The Lord's goodness in the land of the living...
Hope in the Lord;
Be strong and of good courage!
O, look to the Lord. (27: 13-14)
- 8) Into Your hand I entrust my spirit;
You redeem me, O Lord, faithful God
- Let me exult and rejoice in Your faithfulness
When You notice my affliction,
Are mindful of my deep distress.
Do not hand me over to my enemy,
But grant me relief. (31: 6-9)
- 9) The Lord is close to the brokenhearted;
Those crushed in spirit God delivers.
Though the misfortunes of the righteous be many,
The Lord will save her from them all. (34: 19-20)
- 10) Turn, O Lord!
How long?
Show mercy to Your servant.
Satisfy us at daybreak with Your steadfast love
That we may sing for joy all our days...
Let your deeds be seen by Your servants,
Your glory by their children. (90: 13-16)
- 11) As a father has compassion for his children,
So the Lord has compassion for those in awe of Him
For God knows how we are formed
God is mindful that we are dust.
Human beings, their days are like that of grass;
They bloom like a flower in the field;
A wind passes by and they are no more.
Their own place no longer knows them.
But the Lord's steadfast love is for all eternity
Toward those in awe of God. (103: 13-17)
- 12) Do not cast me off in old age;
When my strength fails, do not forsake me.
I come with praise of Your mighty acts, O Lord God;
I celebrate your beneficence, Yours alone.
You have let me experience it, God, from my youth;
Until now I have proclaimed Your wondrous deeds,
Even in hoary old age do not forsake me, God,
Until I proclaim Your strength
to the next generation. (71: 9, 16-18)

A Mother's Tale

ANITA ALTMAN

I am a single parent of a beloved son Sascha, who has struggled for the last 8 years with a severe mental illness, bi-polar disorder. I have spent years grappling with my own heartbreak of seeing the person dearest to me in such agonizing pain and despair; the terror and fear of what his future might be; and the challenge of figuring how best to mobilize the services and supports to help get him beyond the periodic psychotic breaks and on the road to recovery.

Two years ago, Sascha descended into madness after refusing to take his medication and ended up in a psychiatric hospital inside the prison system. As I struggled through one of the darkest periods of my life, I realized that I couldn't pray, that God seemed absent from my life, that I found no solace in my religious tradition. Attending services on *Shabbat*, which has become such an important and integral part of my life, became a challenge. This was particularly true for *Kabbalat Shabbat* services, which at my synagogue (B'nai Jeshurun in NYC) are so joyful. I just couldn't be in a place of joy when my heart was breaking.

I met with my beloved rabbis, who tried to comfort me. Recognizing my crisis of faith, they didn't challenge me to pray. Instead, they urged me to maintain the human connections, stressing how important it is to allow

oneself to receive the care, support and affirmation of a community. I heard them. So rather than avoid participating in our Friday night service, I timed my entrance after our ecstatic dancing concluded.

In the midst of his crisis I was reminded of Moses' admonition to the Israelites, and like Moses told him he had a choice, he could choose death or he could choose life. I pleaded with him to choose life, and he has. And I had to give myself the same choice. After many months of struggle, my son's psychosis lifted, and he began not only to accept the reality of his disease, but to take on the challenge of how to live with it. Sascha is now in the process of building a productive and rewarding life for himself, committed to using his gifts as a writer and community organizer to help others who are living with this disease find ways to communicate and connect.*

And I have returned to prayer. My prayers are prayers of gratitude. I learned that for me appreciation and thanksgiving is how I relate to God, and believe me, I am truly grateful. I learned that through the hard, dark, bitter times whatever solace I can find comes through human connections. And how grateful I am to those who stood by me as I struggled to be there for my son.

*Please log on to Sascha's website at www.theicarusproject.net

A Midrash on Honoring Caregivers

BARBARA S. KANE

The only arms that protect are the arms of people who convey in some way that they get it; that they recognize with tenderness what we're going through and they have the capacity to honor us. Why honor? The days of illness, whether one's own or one's beloved, may strip a certain dignity from life as bodily functions deteriorate and the mind loses its capacity to focus. Our sense of essential humanness and worth may even be lost. I know. My husband suffered 10 years of ALS and shortly after he died, I developed a breast cancer. My friends have experienced their own illnesses or those of loved ones. How do we reach out—how do we receive comfort and strength?

I wrote a note to a dear friend who once again had to change our getting-together plans, such a common phenomenon of hard times. I tried to stretch out my arm, saying:

"Of course it's all right to change plans, darling friend.

I know about these long and profound journeys and I am beginning to grasp that they are not the interruptions of life that I used to think they were. They are instead, the very essence of what I like to believe we are here for. I believe this life puts us through a long, sometimes ecstatic and sometimes mundane process which refines us, distilling the best and the worst out of us. I hold to the possibilities of the transformation of our selves toward becoming the angels we once were and may become again. It's similar, perhaps, to that alchemical process which turns lead, however gradually, into gold.

So, dear friend, you are presently depleted and replete at the same time. You are replete with love in action, as we both accompany each other and others to come on this journey...living this process of *Tikkun Olam*: to heal, repair and transform the world."

That is the best we might do; perhaps all we might do in this distraught world.

Comforting
the mourner,
visiting the sick,
and deeds of
lovingkindness
bring good
to the world.

AVOT DERABBI NATAN, 30



*The test of a people
is how it behaves
toward the old.
It is easy to love
children,
Even tyrants and
dictators make a point of
being fond of children.
But affection and care
for the old, the
incurable, the helpless,
are the true gold mines
of a culture.*

ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

El Na, Refa Na La.

God, Please Heal Her, Please

(NUMBERS, 12:13)

This was Moses' brief, yet powerful spontaneous prayer for his sister, Miriam, after she was stricken with the biblical disease, *tzara'at*.

Kept private or shared, spontaneous prayer can be used to help you:

Pray for your loved one.

Pray for yourself.

Pray when you feel alone.

Pray when you are frustrated or angry.

Pray when you need strength.

Pray when you need hope.

Pray when you can acknowledge thanksgiving and gratitude.

Things can change so quickly in the course of a caregiving experience—you hardly have the time to acknowledge and name your feelings. We encourage you to try your hand at composing the prayers of your heart as a means of articulating these moments.

Here is a fairly simple structure that can be used as a guideline.

1. Begin by addressing your prayer. Call that address a name which is comfortable to you. Here are some examples: Source of Life, Creator, Merciful One, Holy One, *Shekhinah*.
2. State what is going on at this moment. Be honest. State what you feel about the situation right now. Note any changes or transitions you may be facing. Do not be afraid to express anger and other negative feelings.
3. Call out for what you want and or need or hope. You can use words like: help me; guide me; let me; may I...
4. If you feel you can, try to include in your prayer an expression of gratitude—naming the good that is present in your life.

Source of All Creation,

Today has been so hard. The doctors have called with more bad news.

When hope is gone, where can I find comfort? Where can I find You in this dark time?

Help me to find the strength to face what is ahead.

Give me the wisdom to live each remaining moment with my loved one to the fullest.

Shelter my whole family beneath your wings of peace.

I am grateful for all the wonderful times we have had. May those memories continue to comfort and inspire us.

Amen

I Lift Up My Eyes to the Mountains, From Where Will My Help Come?

(PSALM 121:1)

Dear Friends,

It is a hard time for all of us; our world is suffering from fear and loss. Those of us who are ill, who are caring for loved ones or who are grieving, suffer all the more. The National Center for Jewish Healing (NCJH) continues to respond to these challenges in so many ways. Please consider supporting the work of the NCJH, a program of the Jewish Board of Family and Childrens' Services of New York.

Your contribution:

- supports the publication of our newsletter, *The Outstretched Arm*
- helps us promote the growth of local healing programs in North America by providing consultation and training
- supports the development and publication of new resources (widely used by individuals, rabbis and cantors, *Bikur Holim* groups and pastoral care departments of many hospitals), such as the recently published "*Guide Me Along the Way: A Jewish Spiritual Companion for Surgery*"
- helps us provide a referral network for callers who need support in the face of illness and loss, as well as to rabbis and others who want to help individuals in their own communities.
- allows us to continue to mine the depths of Jewish wisdom and tradition for its Jewish healing resources.

We appreciate your generosity in these difficult times. Please use the attached envelope to make your contribution. For more information about a special gift to underwrite a new publication or an issue of *The Outstretched Arm*, please call us at 212-399-2320 ext. 209.

We are grateful for your continuing interest and support.

B'shalom,

Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub
Rabbinic Director

Susie Kessler and Susan Rosenthal
Co-Coordinator

(JBFCS is a 501" c" 3 organization. Your contribution is fully tax-deductible)

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The heart's intention is the measure of all things.

MAIMONIDES, LETTER TO HASDAI
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THREE USEFUL WEBSITES FOR CAREGIVERS

The National Family Caregivers Association has a good website with practical and political information. The address is www.nfcares.org

Another good site is the National Alliance for Caregiving, www.caregiving.org. Including AXA Foundation Family Care Resource Connection, with annotated descriptions and recommendations of books and pamphlets by topic.

Finally, www.lastacts.org is an extremely important and comprehensive website, which will be useful to all caregivers.

Healing of Soul, Healing of Body, Spiritual Leaders Unfold the Strength and Solace in Psalms. Edited by Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, CSW. (*Jewish Lights* 1994). A source of solace for those who are facing illness, as well as those who care for them. These Psalms and the inspiring commentaries that accompany them offer an anchor of spiritual support.

When The Body Hurts, The Soul Still Longs to Sing. A prayer booklet of heartfelt blessings for times of illness (written by Jewish laywomen). A loving gift for anyone needing spiritual uplift in the midst of illness.

With Healing on Its Wings. Masorti Publications, London. A healing collage of selections from the *Shabbat* and weekday liturgy, Genesis, Psalms, Talmud, medieval and contemporary Jewish literature.

A Leader's Guide to Services and Prayers of Healing. This helpful guide walks you through some of the central practical issues involved in planning and running a service of healing, whether it be free-standing or incorporated into a traditional service. Sample service included.

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Caregiving and Caregivers, Part 1

This issue is devoted to those who participate in or have the full responsibility for the on-going care of a family member or loved one.

EACH SITUATION IS UNIQUE

- the nature of the caregiving relationship;
- the type, duration, and characteristics of the illness or condition;
- the range of things for which you are responsible;
- the location in which or from which you provide care;
- the physical, emotional, and spiritual support you may have or need.

AND YET, THERE IS MUCH THAT IS SHARED

- feelings of sadness and a sense of isolation;
- upheaval in family dynamics;
- anger or frustration at the "system";
- the challenge of facing difficult decisions;
- the pain of seeing a loved one suffer;
- exhaustion and stress;
- lack of time for self-reflection and self-care.

THERE ARE ALSO UNEXPECTED GIFTS

- discovering that you have the strength and power to make a difference;
- learning that you can survive the most difficult of trials;
- that you can reach out and find or even create a caring and supportive community;
- understanding that hope, gratitude, and joy can exist even in the most difficult situations.

Deeds of lovingkindness are equal
in weight to all the commandments.

JERUSALEM TALMUD, PEAH 1:1

As this publication contains a representation of God's name, please treat it with the proper care and respect.

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of this newsletter, please
send it along to a friend.

A Jewish Connections Program of Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services

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