



A FOCUS ON HEALING



Have faith in medicine



BY RABBI DENNIS C. SASSO

In the waiting room of a local hospital I saw the following photocopied sign:

Good Morning!

This is God.

I will be handling all of your problems today.

I will not need your help.

So, relax and have a great day.

I approached the receptionist behind the desk and said, "Could you give me a copy of that sign?" Delighted, she pulled one out and said, "We have them ready! Have a great day!"

Clearly, the sign was not a "hospital-approved" display, but rather the well-meaning effort of an employee or volunteer. Yet there it stood, in the surgery waiting area of a hospital, in stark contrast to what this room and the rooms behind it were all about.

Who would deny the importance of faith in the healing process? Prayer and trust in a benevolent God can certainly help us cope with life's trials and difficult transitions. But we need to be careful of a naïve faith that promises what may not be achieved, and gives a poor reputation to religion.

Deciding to have surgery is an act of faith. It implies faith in the qualifications of the hospital, the skills of the surgeon and medical staff. It also is faith in the healing powers of the body to do its natural tasks in the process of restoring us to strength.

But faith is not an abdication of reason or effort. Faith is not surrender. Faith is a sense of trust complemented by resolve. Faith is shaped by humility, but not by self-denial. Faith does not assume that we are puppets of God, but partners of God. God does not want us to "sit back and relax." God expects us to step up and do what needs to be done.

In contrast to the sign in question, the 18th-century Jewish sage from Jerusalem, Rabbi Hayyim Azulai, offers the following advice: "One must not rely on miracles. The sick person is duty bound to act in accordance with the natural order by calling on a physician for healing. Presuming greater merit than the many saints who were cured by physicians, implies arrogance. One should act as all do, and be healed by physicians."

In Judaism, the obligation to seek and provide healing overrides most other commandments: "Danger to life and health is of greater religious concern than other matters." In pre-modern times, before health insurance was available, the *Shulhan Arukh*, the code of Jewish law, established that all were

A note about healing work



BY DEBBIE FRIEDMAN,
OF BLESSED MEMORY

We are powerful. It is hard to remember that. Sometimes life takes its turns into the unknown and presents us with challenges we would have preferred not to encounter under any circumstances. Suddenly we are confronted with our pain.

It is a strange thing that pain creates beauty and potential for healing. It is hard to imagine that it can provide a foundation for beautiful moments to arise. We attempt to find a way to manage survival from one minute to the next, as pain becomes the overriding force. When we experience emotional discomfort, we need to find a safe place to express our grief and loss.

The willingness to both offer and receive blessings of healing and well-being allows one who is wounded to transform and unravel their pain. Our pain need not bury us, instead it may elevate us to the point of healing – if we choose to allow it.

It is with this concept in mind that the *Mi Shebeirach*, the prayer for healing which is a concise English translation of the traditional prayer, is now available for you to download. For those who know it and use it, use it in good health. Use it for yourselves, for others, and for those in your lives who do not know it, but may need it.

With this, you become the messenger. We are not just the recipients of blessings, but the messengers of blessing as well. Remember, out of what emerges from life's painful challenges will come our healing. And ultimately, our greatest healing will come when we use our suffering to heal another's pain – "to release another from their confinement."

And you shall be a blessing.

As a tribute to Debbie Friedman, these paragraphs are reprinted from www.debbiefriedman.com ✨

entitled to medical care: "He who has medicine and his sick neighbor requires it, is forbidden to raise the price...."

As the debate on medicine and its increasing bureaucracy and costs rages, let us apply our faith to find ways of providing optimal and maximal medical care in the most efficient and compassionate ways, for all members of our society.

In matters of illness and health we cannot rely only on prayer or expect miracles. We must seek and provide the best possible medical care. This is an act of faith!

Sasso is senior rabbi at Congregation Beth-El Zedek in Indianapolis. Reprinted with permission from The Indianapolis Star Dec. 14, 2010. ✨

Bikkur Cholim – immeasurable reward



BY RABBI REBECCA Yael SCHORR

Each morning, our daily liturgy includes a Talmudic section (*Shabbat 127a*) that outlines several obligations whose reward is immeasurable. Immeasurable, I believe, because there is no way to quantify the positive effect that comes from fulfilling our duties to others.

Hardly a day passes that word does not come of an injury or illness of someone in our extended congregational family. When friends or family members are in the hospital, there are many ways for us to show support. Personal visits fulfill the *mitzvah* (commandment) of *bikkur cholim*. Often considered to be the responsibility of the rabbi, the obligation to visit the sick falls, in fact, to *each* Jew, as supported by teachings of Isaiah b. Mili di Trani the Elder, a 12th century Italian Talmudic commentator, writing on *Kiddushin 42b*.

In addition to visits, a handwritten note or card can truly brighten the day. Just the knowledge that someone is thinking of the patient can alleviate some of the pain, worry, and fear. It is amazing how an action that requires very little time can have such a powerful impact.

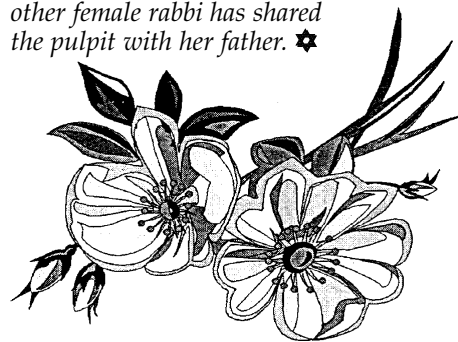
A recent letter to "Dear Abby" highlighted two very important things to consider when sending a card to someone in the hospital:

Address the envelope with the patient's own name – like, "Sydelle Cohen" instead of "Mrs. Hyman Cohen."

Use the patient's home address as the return address on the envelope. That way, the patient is certain to receive it should the letter or card arrive after the patient has been discharged from the hospital.

Helping to ease the pain of others; surely one of the obligations who reward is without measure.

Rabbi Schorr serves Congregation B'nai Tzedek in Fountain Valley, Calif. This is from their Nov. 2010 bulletin. She is the associate rabbi and her father, Stephen J. Einstein, is the senior rabbi. Her election to this position is a historical one as no other female rabbi has shared the pulpit with her father. ✨



A Prayer for Prayer



BY RABBI SHELDON ZIMMERMAN

O my God
My soul's compassion
My heart's precious friend
I turn to You.

I need to close out the noise
To rise above the noise
The noise that interrupts –
The noise that separates –
The noise that isolates
I need to hear You again.

In the silence of my innermost being,
In the fragments of my yearned-for wholeness,
I hear whispers of Your presence –
Echoes of the past
when You were with me
When I felt Your nearness
When together we walked –
When You held me close,
embraced me in Your love,
laughed with me in my joy,
I yearn to hear You again.

In Your oneness, I find healing.
In the promise of Your love,
I am soothed.

In Your wholeness,
I too can become whole again.
Please listen to my call –
help me find the words
help me find the strength within
help me shape my mouth,
my voice, my heart
so that I can direct my spirit
and find You in prayer
In words only my heart can speak
In songs only my soul can sing
Lifting my eyes and heart to You.

Adonai S'fatai Tiftach – open my lips,
precious God, so that I can speak with
You again.

"A Prayer for Prayer" is from *Healing of Body, Healing of Soul: Spiritual Leaders Unfold the Strength and Solace in Psalms*, edited by Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub" 1994 by the Jewish Healing Center. Permission granted by Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock, VT, www.jewishlights.com.

Rabbi Zimmerman is the rabbi of the Jewish Center of the Hamptons. He has served as rabbi at Central Synagogue, NYC, for 15 years, and Temple Emanu-El of Dallas, for 11 years. He has served as president of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, executive VP of Birthright Israel, North America, and VP for Jewish Renaissance and Renewal of the United Jewish Communities. ✨



Jewish Chaplain

BY RABBI LEON OLENICK

The Survivor

I am frequently asked to officiate at funerals. I sometimes know the family well, and other times I have met them only once or twice or not at all. I was to officiate at the funeral of an elderly woman. The funeral director wanted me to officiate because it was a special case, which would require compassion, patience, and understanding. I met with the woman's husband prior to the service to find out some facts about his wife, himself and their family.

Max was a man about five feet three inches tall. He had a round face and his bulging cheeks stood tall and reached his eyes. His white beard hid his many chins. His eyes were red from crying and his spotted hands were unsteady. He told me that he and his wife, Sadie, met before the war. And then in his deep Polish accent, he told me his story.

"We were teenagers, but I knew she was my *besheret* (destiny). It was hard those days in Poland. I saw families being persecuted, and some of my friends disappeared. I knew times would get better and this was temporary. Life went on. I don't have to tell you, things got worse, a lot worse. The Nazis were in control and they had a mission to wipe us out."

He began to weep.

"I was a young man when our door was broken down. They stormed our house. They took all my parent's possessions from the house prior to burning it while we watched. We were lined up with our neighbors – my mother, father, two sisters, grandmother, and me. We stood in a straight line as ordered. I glanced across the road and noticed my Sadie, my *besheret* from across the street, standing with her family. Our eyes met and instead of looking at these mean people, we stared at each other. When they completed their destruction they went down the row inspecting everyone. I was ordered to stand to one side. I obeyed. I saw across the road that my Sadie was also on the side. When they completed their inspection they ordered the line of people that were on the opposite side of me to walk to the large crater a few meters down the road. I stayed in my assigned space. From the distance I heard the piercing blasts of machine guns. People were screaming with pain and terror. I then heard the sound of bulldozers as they filled the crater with dirt. My family, my neighbors, my friends were dead. Their bodies were covered with dirt. I was filled with terror, fear and rage as the soldiers returned telling jokes

and laughing. I, along with the others in my line, was placed on a truck and taken to a work camp. It was filthy and smelled of death. Flying insects and rats ran freely. They tattooed us like cattle."

He rolled up his sleeve revealing the faded numbers on his arm.

"We were stripped of our clothes and dignity and handed dirty prison cloths to wear. A few people complained, or asked a question and they were shot. I kept my mouth shut. My mind was with my family and with my Sadie. Was she alive? Time passed, as torture and death became a common part of life. When a person died, we scurried to get their shoes, thinking maybe they had fewer holes than ours. We took their possessions. Our interest was living for the next day. I had become an animal that scavenged for food and drink. Hate kept me going from day to day. I knew there was no God!

One day, after about a year and a half, I walked from the tiny barracks and found the camp deserted. What was happening? I heard trucks and hid. When I dared to peek, I saw American soldiers. We were liberated! I was taken to a hospital. I was fed and my decayed body was mended. My teeth were pulled because they could not be saved and I was given false teeth. The tattoos remained on my arm, and the vision of my family being murdered remained on my soul.

I returned to my village to find destruction – total destruction. Rabbi, it was terrible. All the beauty was gone. I met others who also wandered from place to place in an attempt to rebuild what used to be their home. I stayed for a while attempting to find my Sadie. I did not. I walked to the crater to visit my family. Grass had grown over it, and weeds had taken over.

I was able to gain passage on a ship for America, and I left Europe. The ship was crowded, and quarters were tight. I slept on the deck. This was a great improvement from the camp. We pulled into New York and passed the Statue of Liberty. Goose bumps, tears of joy, hope! A new life. While they processed me on Ellis Island, I looked around at the thousands of people. Before my eyes I saw the most beautiful sight in the world. My Sadie – my *besheret*. I ran to her. We embraced and have never parted until now.

So rabbi, I have to tell you, nobody ever recited Kaddish for my family, and up to this time, I did not want to recite any prayers."

His copious tears were massive as they engulfed his face.

"Would it be all right for me to recite the Kaddish at Sadie's grave?"

His tears continued to flow from the deepest part of his soul. Family, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances attended the chapel service. I was touched as I blessed his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren with the blessing of

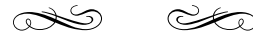
Book Review

REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

Wisdom, faith, trust, and hope

How We Age. By Marc E. Agronin. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2011. 320 Pages. \$25.

Since 1999, author Agronin, a geriatric psychiatrist, has been working as the Director of Mental Health and Clinical Research at the Miami Jewish Health Systems, formerly known as the Miami Jewish Home and Hospital for the Aged at Douglas Gardens. A summa cum laude graduate of Harvard, Agronin earned his MD degree at Yale and then did residencies in psychiatry in the Boston area and in Minnesota. He is board-certified in geriatric psychiatry



l'dor v dor, to remember their Bubbie and teach her lessons, and tell her stories to their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I told them this enables her to live through them for many generations and fulfills the *mitzvah* of *l'dor v dor*. I recited *el malay rachamim*, and we proceeded to the grave. We lowered the coffin as I recited psalms. I told them that Sadie had been here the entire service – she was not here to hear my words, but to join with all the souls who were present, individually, in their hearts. I continued to tell them that as the coffin is covered with earth, her soul will be released to complete its mission. I asked Max to lead the recitation of *Kaddish*.

"*Yis-gad-dal v'yis-kad-dash sh'mey rabbo.....*"

Max's voice pierced the hearts of all present – and all those who passed from his world. As he announced each word, you could feel the angels surrounding the entire cemetery. His trembling, heartfelt voice sounded like blasts from a shofar. He opened the gates for all the lost souls. Tears came to my eyes, and my body trembled with goose bumps *Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh* – all is Holy. Amen.

Leon H. Olenick is a rabbi and board certified chaplain. He offers spiritual and pastoral care to his patients, families and caregivers spanning a multicultural and religious sphere. He currently is employed by VITAS Innovative Hospice in South Florida. He is married to Jackie Olenick, a Judaic artist. He has three children and nine grandchildren. The stories are taken from a book of short stories that is in progress, *Encounters with the Last Dance*. His intention in sharing his real-life stories is to help people who are facing difficult health, caregiving and end of life issues. The stories are true, only the names have been changed. ✨

and has published several books and articles on the subject. *How We Age*, his latest book, is scheduled for release in February, 2011.

Agronin's purpose is to counter the negative views of aging so frequently confronted. Too often in our society, there is low esteem for old people. This runs against Jewish tradition which tells us to "rise before the aged" (Leviticus 19) and to "show respect to an old man" (Talmud). The Book of Job says that "with age comes wisdom." Perhaps the gloomiest anxiety of the aged is set forth in the 71st Psalm: "Do not cast me off in old age...do not forsake me."

Among the pre-Communist Chinese, filial piety demanded deference and consideration for elders, partly because wisdom resided among them.

By presenting a number of case illustrations, Agronin realistically shows the inevitable changes that occur with aging as well as the strengths that can provide balance. To validate this positive perspective, Agronin describes his experience at Harvard in 1984 when he was a 19-year-old sophomore and took a course with 82 year old Erik Erikson who had been analyzed by Anna Freud and whose 1950 book, *Childhood and Society*, greatly enhanced our understanding of the life cycle. He characterized the eighth stage of life – old age – as a struggle between despair and achieving a sense of integrity. Although Agronin was awed, he realized that Erikson's limited participation in the seminar was because he had early stage dementia. Looking back at his experience, Agronin points out that today, a complete examination would lead to appropriate care, including the possibility of medications. Perhaps more important, he learned from Erikson's work that there is the potential for change in each stage of life, including the last.

Agronin goes on to consider the role of memory in old age; the meaning and development of wisdom; and, finally, how we can learn from the aged as we inevitably reach that stage of life. In addition to his amplification of these subjects based on the descriptions he offers of his patients, including Holocaust survivors, Agronin reports what he learned from interviews he conducted with Sophie Freud, granddaughter of Sigmund Freud, George McGovern, Democratic candidate for President in 1972, and Bernard Lown, the cardiologist who invented the cardiac defibrillator and who won the Nobel Peace Prize for his activism against nuclear war. He also recounts what he absorbed from such experts on aging as Robert Butler, Leonard Hayflick, and Eugene Cohen.

Agronin's extensive interviews with patients and others lead to his assertion that aging doesn't necessarily equate with deterioration and enfeeblement. It can be a stage of life marked by wisdom, faith, trust, and hope. ✨



Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

The pain of loss

The mystics teach us that to appreciate the joy and fulfillment of life, we must experience pain. The teachings go further with an example of thirst. We surely can appreciate water if we are thirsty, but if we satisfy that thirst and then are given a glass of some other cool refreshing drink, we would not want to indulge because our need has been satisfied. The conclusion reached is that agony and ecstasy were created because life does not exist with just one or the other.

Sometimes we lose sight of this fact. We rush to accomplish so much we tend to ignore the signs of defeat. Nothing ever accomplished is done without working at it and, in some instances, struggling for it. Even those who inherit must work at keeping what is given so that it can enrich their lives and those that follow.

And there are losses that have no comparison. These losses create in us a vacuum that defies explanation. The most devastating of these is the loss of a child. We understand that in the course of human existence the younger bury the older. But when we are faced with the task of opening the earth to receive a child, not only do we mourn, but the angels sob uncontrollably for the pain that this loss inflicts.

Life is filled with anticipation and expectation. We melt into a dream of delightful embrace and complete this magical adventure by bringing forth another human being. We look at this creation and begin the journey of contemplation and anticipation. Should he be a doctor, should she be a teacher? Will she look like her mother or he like his father? Will I make the same mistakes my parents made or will I be different? I will be the best parent. That is my pledge as I watch this tiny creature reach out to touch the world.

These dreams and visions are interrupted by tragedy. Our child has died and so has our posterity. The romantic notions of success and abundance are lost in a tunnel of emptiness and despair. There is no light in this tunnel, just a darkness that envelops and consumes us. We sink into the depths of dejection. Where is my little one? Why is there an empty bed and an empty place in our heart? Why can't I cry? I need to shed tears where smiles once lived and grieve for the hopelessness. I am stunned and frozen. Everything moves around me, but I am motionless.

I recall the cry of King David when he learned of the death of his son Absalom:

"O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Could it only be, I would die for you, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (II Samuel 19:1) Nothing brings more joy than to see our children grow and prosper and then the greatest of pain gives us pause and we too are consumed by the madness of a forfeited future.

Is this what the mystics referred to in their declarations of pain endurance? Must there be bereavement in order to appreciate life? We all know that we are born to die, but there are paths to the end of days, and they should not include the young. Age is a blessing that is not just reserved for the aged but rather is a gift earned through great effort. Are not the young entitled to experience the durability associated with growth?

I believe that our ancestors were trying to teach us how to cope with adversity, some so devastating as to cause us to languish in total sadness. I believe the message is that terrible things happen and we have the ability to overcome these troublesome experiences by learning to extend a helping hand and to comfort and offer solace. This is our obligation as human beings. This is our duty as survivors.

We need not try to make sense of diminishing involvement but rather take the memory of the love we gave and the love we received and bundle them into a treasure chest of keepsakes and recollections. We must endeavor to release the guilt because it only prolongs the agony and causes us to fall deeper into the pit. There is no one to blame. And for sure God was not there to steal the future but rather to aid in the comfort needed to walk through the valley into a new day, a new life, a new beginning. We never forget, but we can't stop time and remain in this spot forever.

I am reminded of a story of two men, both seriously ill, who occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each day to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back. The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in military service, where they had been on vacation.

Every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window. The man in other bed began to live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and color of the world outside. The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst the flowers of every color, and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance.

Kavannah Before Kaddish

RABBI WAYNE DOSICK, PH.D.



Particularly when saying kaddish alone.

In the Name of God,
Source of All Being:
I call upon the Heavenly Hosts,
who surround the Place of Glory;
And I call upon the Archangels,
who fashion and shape the universe;
And I call upon the Angels,
who serve the Divine will;
And I call upon the Guides
and the MasterGuides,
who watch over me and protect me;
And I ask you All:
Be with me now,
and give power to my words.

In the Name of God,
Source of All Becoming:
I say to my (*choose one or more*)
holy/revered/loved/devoted/sweet
father, mother, brother, sister, son,
daughter, husband, wife, (*name*),
In every place and in every space
in this great cosmos,
it is known and revealed
that you have left your Earthly body
and this physical world.
God has called you home.
I remain ever-glad and ever-grateful
for the Divine-gift of your life,
and though my heart still yearns
for your physical presence,
with love, with honor, and with blessing,
I give you back to God,
and release you to eternity.
I celebrate your soul-journey to the Light –
to that awesome place of
revelation and knowing,

As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene. One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man couldn't hear the band – he could see it in his mind's eye as the gentleman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words. Days and weeks passed.

One morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths only to find the lifeless body of the man by the window who had died peacefully in his sleep. She was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take the body away.

As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone. He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bed. It faced a blank wall. The man asked the

of redemption, and salvation,
of peace and harmony,
of grace, and compassion,
and infinite love.
I am comforted and enheartened
knowing that you dwell
in God's Sheltering Presence,
immersed in God's Holy Spirit.
For, with God,
it is safe, and sweet, and good.

To the Name of God,
Source of All Blessing:
I come before You at that most sacred
and wondrous place
Where Heaven and Earth touch.
I stand with all those
of the Divine Assembly,
and with all who desire to do holy work,
to speak these words that echo through
there, and here, and everywhere,
through then, and now, and forever;
these words of hope and promise,
transformation, and evolution,
faith and love.
To You, O God,
I speak these ancient and ageless words
of praise and glory,
to Your Great and Holy Name.
Yitgadal v'yitkadash s'may rabbah...

Rabbi Wayne Dosick, Ph.D., is the spiritual guide of The Elijah Minyan, an adjunct professor at the University of San Diego, and the Director of The Soul Center for Spiritual Healing. He is the award-winning author of six critically acclaimed books, including Golden Rules, Living Judaism, and Soul Judaism: Dancing with God into a New Era.

This is reprinted from our July 15, 2007 healing section. Originally it was published in The Forward, Sept. 5, 2003, and was dedicated to the memory of Dosick's father, Hyman Dosick, zt'l on his second yearzeit. In Jan. 2004 it appeared in the San Diego Jewish Times. ★

nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window. The nurse responded that man was blind and could not even see the wall. She said, "Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you."

I believe that is what the ancients were trying to tell us when they talked about pain and how to appreciate it because of the painless possibilities in our lives. It is never easy to explain away a loss – a loss of a child, but maybe we should try to understand that pain can be relieved with hope and faith and a belief that things happen and we need to learn to role with the punches so that life will continue.

We never forget, but we learn to live with memories that can and should help us reach another day filled with light and sunshine and the promise of tomorrow.

Rabbi Irwin Wiener is spiritual leader of the Sun Lakes Jewish Congregation near Phoenix, Ariz. He welcomes comments at ravyitz@cox.net. ★

The Source of Healing



BY RABBI MORRIS LICHTENSTEIN

I know of no term that has had such a vast variety of interpretation as the term religion. Ask, what is religion? And you will hear a multiplicity of answers. Many will say at once that religion is the belief in the existence of God. Others contend that religion has essentially to do with conduct, the God-idea taking a very secondary place. My religion, said a famous teacher, is to be honest and upright and sincere. You will find some who identify religion almost entirely with charity. They feel that benevolent endeavor is the sole content of religion. "My religion is to give," said a well known philanthropist, and he voiced the views of many others engaged in the great task of ameliorating the conditions of evil and want. There are those who identify religion with ritual and ceremony. There are people who are neither very charitable, nor highly ethical, nor given to thinking with earnestness of God, but who are extremely careful to practice all the traditional observances, down to the ones of minutest significance.

We, in Jewish Science, do not in any way disparage the wholesome views and practices crowded under the name religion. Moral conduct is indeed a part of religion, and belief is vital in religion, and, finally, the ritual, the ceremonies, are highly important in religion, but religion is more than any of these, more than all of these combined. Religion to us is essentially a realization of God's Presence, and a deep conviction of His goodness and His never-ending kindness to all that He called into existence. You can see why belief alone is not sufficient to constitute religion. Belief only in God's existence without a deep realization of His care for the wellbeing of mankind will never make one yearn for Him, or seek Him or pray to Him, or supplicate His help, or feel grateful to Him for abundance and happiness. He or she will simply believe that God is some remote essence responsible for the creation of the universe, and nothing more. But religion teaches us that He is not only far, but also near; that He is not only interested in the immense worlds of the universe, but also in the minute world of the individual; that He not only sustains the immeasurable planets but also the least significant being on each planet.

We, in Jewish Science, recognize the fact that there is an Infinite Power, Who is not only the Fountain of life and light, but who is also the Source of restoration and perfection. Let us demonstrate it. Cause an injury to a plant, and if the plant is not completely uprooted, you will observe that in time the injury will

be mended, and the plant will be strong and healthy again. Cause an injury to the body of a tree, and if you note carefully you will see that after a lapse of time, it will cast off its injury and be whole again. If but a tiny bird suffers an injury, it will surely be healed; the wound, if not fatal, will close, the pierced part will be made well. And so it is with every creature, big and small that is on this earth. So it is with mankind. A cut, a wound, in one's flesh, will, in due time, disappear, and their flesh will be made whole. An injured organ, a broken bone, if not constantly aggravated by one's own recklessness, will gradually be restored to health.

Now, let me ask you: who does the work of healing and restoring each individual and thing? I know that some of you will come forward with a ready answer: nature does it. But what do you mean by saying that nature does it? Do you mean that nature is intelligent, that it understands the character of your ailment and knows how to heal it? Do you also mean that nature is kind and benevolent and that it seeks to help and restore you? If this is the case, why then not worship nature? Why not express thanksgiving to nature, why not pray to nature? And yet if someone were actually to tell you that he or she prays to nature you would consider them a pagan, you would look upon them as belonging to the ages of barbarism, and you would point out to them the absurdity of praying to nature. And you would be quite in the right. For, as far as we know, nature has no consciousness of its own, no vision of its own, no benevolence of its own. It cannot therefore be that nature is the ultimate source of healing – a process which involves deep understanding, deep mercy and loving kindness.

Who, then, is the source of healing? We say that there is no other source than God. He who is merciful and abounding in love. Who is powerful and for Whom naught is impossible. Who is the Source of wisdom and understanding, before Whom all the mechanisms of creation are revealed, and from Whom all life flows and all strength emanates. He is the true Healer and Restorer. And it is to Him that we pray for health, for strength and for healing. But you may further inquire: if it is God Who heals the wound of the plant and of the beast and of the bird and of humanity, why then pray to Him? Why supplicate His help, if His help comes from its own accord? Let me then state that mankind is the only one to whom divine healing does not always come of its own accord. Injuries to other beings usually come from without; injuries to man, with the exception of some accidents, usually come from within. Other beings are mostly hurt by their foes, man is mostly hurt by himself. Most of our ailments come from within, they usually originate in the mind; they make their inception

from worry and fear and excitement and uncontrolled temper. They may express themselves in bodily disorder or in disturbed mental states, but they generate from within. And injuries that come from within often resist healing.

Let me say at this juncture that healing is best possible when the individual is in a passive state, when his mind is at peace, above all, when he offers no resistance to healing either consciously or unconsciously. I shall illustrate what I mean by resistance. If a plant is injured by a passing footstep, it will, if the stem is not completely severed, quickly straighten itself out and recover. But if a weight is placed on it, although the weight not be heavy enough to crush it, only to injure it, the injury will not disappear as long as the weight is still there. Strike a beast with an arrow. If the arrow flew past it, inflicting only a flesh wound, that wound will quickly heal. But if the arrow remains imbedded in the flesh, though the wound itself may be a slight one, it will not heal so long as the arrow remains lodged in it; for it offers resistance to healing. This holds true also with the healing of mankind.

The greater part of one's hurts, we have said, come from within, from our negative mental states, from worry and fear and intensity and excitement. Now if an inner organ becomes afflicted through worry, or an inner function becomes disturbed through fear, the first essential step in its healing would be to cease worrying, to cease fearing, in other words, to remove the fatal arrow. But men and women, as a rule, do not take this step. They will do, in fact, everything else, but not that. They will swallow all kinds of pills and drink all kinds of useless and sometimes harmful mixtures, but they will not stop worrying or fearing or arousing themselves to a high pitch of excitement. In fact, in cases of ailment, they will worry still more and excite themselves still further. And this constant unwholesome state offers great resistance to healing.

We find that through prayer, first, these objective barriers to healing are demolished. The interfering mental state is destroyed, and the individual becomes more and more receptive to healing. Then, also, we find that through prayer, the very process of healing becomes accelerated. God invested us with the power of prayer; He therefore bound Himself to hear and answer our prayer. We have learned in Jewish Science that prayers, when properly offered, are always answered. God desires us to seek His help, even as a parent desires his child to come to him or her in his troubles. God desires us to seek His aid, for we thereby declare our kinship to God. But we must pray wholeheartedly, without doubt and without hesitation; we must pray with the consciousness that everything depends on the devotion and earnestness of prayer. And our prayer will be answered.

There is healing through gratitude

What is the Psalmist grateful for?

I will tell you very briefly, and you will realize that you today have the very same reasons for gratitude. The Psalmist is grateful to God, and so tells us in his psalms, for having made the heavens and the earth, and all that is therein, for having made the sun to shine by day, and the moon and the stars by night, for having made the earth to blossom, for covering it with the beauty of tree and leaf and flower, for having caused it to bring forth abundance of fruit and vegetation, for having created man and set him on this earth to enjoy the fullness thereof, for having created in man a perfect bodily mechanism functioning with marvelous and miraculous precision, for having endowed this wonderful creature man with the gifts of heart and mind and soul which makes him one in power and goodness with God, for having planted love and kindness in his heart, for giving him a sense of kinship with his fellow men, for having instilled in him hope and aspiration and faith and belief.

And he is grateful to God for "having saved Israel again and again from the wrath of its enemies, renewing and rekindling its spirit in each generation that it might continue to proclaim His word to all mankind.

Gratitude turns our gaze outward and inward, and yet away from our small limited self.

Submitted by Jack Botwin, of blessed memory, (see p. NAT 3) as stated by Jewish Science: www.appliedjudaism.org. ✨

Founder of Society of Jewish Science

Rabbi Lichtenstein was born in a town near Memel, Lithuania in 1889. He left his home at the early age of 13 to study at the Yeshiva of Bialystock, where he received his Rabbinical Diploma at the age of 18. In 1907 he had planned to go to Germany for further study. At the last minute he changed his mind in favor of coming to America.

Following his emigration he studied at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati where he received ordination in 1916. While at HUC, he also studied at the University of Cincinnati, and was graduated from both institutions simultaneously.

Lichtenstein was a rabbi in Amsterdam, Troy and Flushing, N. Y., and at Athens, Ga. While holding posts in New York, he received his Masters Degree in Psychology from Columbia University in 1919.

In 1921, he left his post in Athens, Ga., and returned to New York to found the Society of Jewish Science. He died in New York at the age of 48. Lichtenstein was clearly a pioneer in the area of self-help. His wife Tehilla assumed leadership of Jewish Science upon his death. ✨