



# LITURGY FOR MOMENTS OF COMMUNAL CRISES

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## FACING ADVERSITY

### BEFORE A MAJOR STORM

God of the heavens —  
nature and all that You have created are truly awesome.  
Often, we take these wonders for granted.  
Teach us to cherish all of Your gifts.  
Try as we might, we know that we cannot control  
the oceans, the mountains, the weather.  
We also firmly believe that ever since the time of Noah,  
You do not send floods,  
make the earth shake,  
or dispatch weather formations such as hurricanes,  
as warnings or punishments.  
So we ask, as this storm approaches,  
that You shelter all who will be in its path.  
Watch over our loved ones, friends, and members of the community,  
many of whom will spend tonight —  
and perhaps many nights —  
away from their homes.  
Give them strength, courage, and resolve to ride out this storm;  
answer their prayers and ours  
that they be blessed with goodness and be spared from harm.  
Blessed are You, Source of life and nature,  
whose awesome power and strength fill our world  
and inspire us to be strong in the face of all of life's difficulties.

אֱלֹהִים, אֱלֹהִים, שְׁלֵא יִגְמַר לְעוֹלָם:  
הַחוֹל וְהַיָּם, רִשְׁרוּשׁ שֶׁל הַמַּיִם,  
בְּרַק הַשָּׁמַיִם, תִּפְלַת הָאָדָם.

*Eli, Eli, shelo yigameir l'olam:  
Hachol v'hayam, rishrush shel hamayim,  
b'rak hashamayim, t'filat baadam.*

O God, my God, I pray that these things never end  
The sand and the sea, the rush of the waters,  
The crash of the heavens, the prayer of the heart. (Hannah Senesh)

## **AT A TIME OF 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.” Amen.

## A LULLABY FOR COURAGE

Through this long night of pain;  
Lay Your cool hand upon our souls.  
As a mother strokes the fevered brow  
Of her beloved child,  
Give us succor.  
O Eternal, clasp us to You,  
And rock us with quiet motion,  
To and fro as the seconds pass,  
Waiting, waiting for the next relief,  
Stretching endlessly toward dawn.  
O Eternal, sing us to calm,  
Humming a lullaby our grandmothers sang  
As she arranged the soup bowl on the tray,  
And brought it to us with the warmth of her smile.  
Sing us that song to soothe my soul.  
Adonai, guard us through this darkness.  
Wrap us in a soft, worn quilt of Your regard  
That we might find a paragraph of flickering comfort  
To read and remember  
Within this long, grim novel.  
O Eternal, keep us safe through this night;  
And let the morning come to renew us,  
To turn us, to heal us.

## ANSWER US

Answer us,

You who answered our mother Sarah in her old age

You who answered our father Abraham on Mount Moriah

You who answered their son Isaac, when bound upon the altar

You who answered Rebecca when she cried, “Why do I exist?”

You who answered Jacob at Beth El, “Israel shall be your name”

You who answered Leah in her sadness

You who answered Rachel in her pain

You who answered Joseph in the prison-house

You who answered the midwives — Shiphrah and Puah —

at the birthing stones

You who answered Yocheved’s courage on the bank of the Nile

You who answered our fathers and our mothers at the Sea of Reeds

You who answered Moses at Sinai: “I bore you on eagles’ wings”

You who answered the daughters of Zelophehad,

who stood up for their rights before Moses and God

You who answered Elijah with a “still, small voice” in the wilderness

You who answered the righteous ones before us,

men and women of integrity and compassion —

Answer us.

## IN THE AFTERMATH OF TRAGEDY

### AFTER A NATURAL DISASTER

God of heaven and earth,  
Source of all,  
The storm has passed.  
Earth, sea, and sky are quiet.  
The tempest has moved on.  
Thank You for the kinship of neighbors and friends  
As we work together to clean up and repair our community.  
Bless those who were injured with healing and recovery.  
Bless those who lost family or friends with comfort and hope.  
Provide food and clothing, warmth and comfort, to all in need.  
Thank You for providing safety and shelter to those in need.  
Thank You for the emergency and rescue workers  
who kept watch and risked their lives to help us.  
As we return to our daily lives,  
we pray for the victims of any disaster —  
any violence, suffering, or despair.  
Blessed are You, our Rock and our Shelter.

## AFTER NATIONAL OR COMMUNAL TRAGEDIES

We stand in grief  
with the devastated families in our nation/community.  
We weep  
over the incomprehensible loss of life.  
We cry out  
with shock, confusion and pain.  
We mourn together  
over this senseless act of violence and destruction.

Be with us, God, in this time of sorrow and fear.  
Help us, God, to offer comfort  
to those whose hearts are shattered.  
Rekindle hope and trust and courage within us and them.  
Help us, God, to sustain our belief in the promise  
that even in the darkest times —  
even when we feel most discouraged —  
there is reason to trust  
that love is never extinguished  
and that light and spirit will prevail.

Help us, God, to rededicate ourselves  
to building a world that is safer for our children.  
Help us, God, to rededicate ourselves  
to building a world that is safer for all people.  
During these difficult days and nights, God,  
bring comfort and peace and hope and light  
to broken hearts and a broken world.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו,  
הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ,  
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל,  
[וְעַל כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל]. וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

*Oseh shalom bimromav  
hu yaaseh shalom  
aleinu v'al kol Yisrael,  
v'al kol yoshvei teivail. V'imru: Amen.*

May the One who causes peace to reign in the high heavens,  
let peace descend on us, and on all Israel, and on all the world.  
Together we say: *Amen*.

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## WHEN EVIL DARKENS OUR WORLD

When evil darkens our world, let us be the bearers of light.

When fists are clenched in self-righteous rage, let our hands be open for  
the sake of peace.

When injustice slams doors on the ill, the poor, the old, and the stranger,  
let us pry the doors open.

Where shelter is lacking, let us be builders.

Where food and clothing are needed, let us be providers.

Where knowledge is denied, let us be champions of learning.

When dissent is stifled, let our voices speak truth to power.

When the earth and its creatures are threatened, let us be their guardians.

When bias, greed, and bigotry erode our country's values,  
let us proclaim liberty throughout the land.

In the places where no one acts like a human being,

let us bring courage;

let us bring compassion;

let us bring humanity.

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## **WE STAND AS ONE**

We stand as one on this night of remembrance.

United in grief, united in loss,

united in the power of a promise:

God has made us; God will sustain us.

We give praise to this life

and rise up together to renew our strength.

By Rabbi Janet Marder and Rabbi Sheldon Marder from *Mishkan HaNefesh: Machzor for the Days of Awe*.  
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## OUT OF THE DEPTHS

Out of the depths I cry to You, Adonai;  
hear my supplication.

A heavy burden has fallen upon us and sorrow has bowed our heads. And now we turn to You, the Source of life, for comfort and help. Give us the eyes to see that pain is not Your will, that somewhere there weeps with us One who feels our trouble and knows the suffering of our souls. We seek the light that will dispel the darkness that has overtaken us. Let us find it in the love of family and friends, in the sources of healing that are implanted within all the living, in the mind that conquers infirmity and trouble. Grant us the strength to endure what is inescapable, the wisdom to accept what cannot be undone, and the courage to go on without bitterness or despair. Amen.

Ner l'ragli d'varecha,  
v'or lin'tivati.  
B'or'cha nireh or.

נֵר לְרַגְלֵי דְבָרְךָ,  
וְאוֹר לְנִתְיָבְתִי.  
בְּאוֹרְךָ נִרְאָה אוֹר.

Your word, O God, is a lamp to my feet, a light to my path.  
By Your light shall we see light. [Psalms 119:105, 36:10]

## PRAYERS FOR HEALING

### Embracing Shattered Hearts

In the Talmud,  
we are taught that the Ark held  
both the shattered fragments of the first set of tablets  
and the whole, unbroken second set. (BT *B'rachot* 8b)

While we never lose our brokenness,  
we can become whole again —  
we can embrace our shattered hearts.

We can become more compassionate, caring, and forgiving  
because we feel our brokenness when we share the pain of others.

In our souls,  
we carry both sets of tablets.

## **MAY THE KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR NEARNESS BE OUR STRENGTH**

Eternal God, you are close to the hearts of the sorrowing. You strengthen and console them with the warmth of Your love, and with the assurance that the human spirit is enduring and indestructible. Even as we pray for perfect peace for those whose lives have ended, so do we ask You to give comfort and courage to the living. May the knowledge of Your nearness be our strength, O God, for You are with us at all times: in joy and sorrow, in light and darkness, in life and death.

**ESAH EINAI – Psalm 121**

ESAH EINAI el heharim  
mei-ayin yavo ezri?  
Ezri mei-im Adonai,  
oseih shamayim vaaretz.  
Al yitein lamot raglecha,  
al yanum shomrecha.  
Hinei lo yanum v'lo yishan  
shomeir Yisrael.  
Adonai shomrecha,  
Adonai tzilcha al yad y'minecha.  
Yomam hashemesh lo yakeka,  
v'yarei-ach balaila.  
Adonai yishmarcha mikol ra,  
yishmor et nafshecha.  
Adonai yishmor tzeitecha uvo-echa,  
mei-atah v'ad olam.

I TURN MY EYES to the mountains;  
from where will my help come?  
My help comes from Adonai,  
maker of heaven and earth.  
God will not let your foot give way;  
your guardian will not slumber;  
See, the guardian of Israel  
neither slumbers nor sleeps!  
Adonai is your guardian,  
Adonai is your protection  
at your right hand.  
By day the sun will not strike you,  
nor the moon by night.  
Adonai will guard you from all harm;  
God will guard your life.  
Adonai will guard your going and coming  
now and forever.

אָשָׂא, עֵינַי, אֶל-הַהָרִים  
מֵאֵין יָבֹא עֲזָרִי?  
עֲזָרִי מֵעִם יי,  
עֹשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ.  
אֶל-יָתֵן לְמוֹט רַגְלֶךָ,  
אֶל-יָנוּם שׁוֹמְרֶךָ.  
הִנֵּה לֹא-יָנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן  
שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל.  
יי שׁוֹמְרֶךָ,  
יי צִלְךָ עַל-יַד יְמִינֶךָ.  
יוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא-יִכָּכֵה,  
וַיָּרֵחַ בַּלַּיְלָה.  
יי יִשְׁמָרְךָ מִכָּל-רָע,  
יִשְׁמֹר אֶת-נַפְשֶׁךָ.  
יי יִשְׁמֹר-צֵאתְךָ וּבֹאֶךָ,  
מֵעַתָּה וְעַד-עוֹלָם

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## PREPARING FOR *BIRKAT HAGOMEIL*

A teaching of our Sages:  
in the presence of the sacred scroll,  
we give thanks for the blessings in our lives.  
Rav Judah said in the name of Rav:  
“Who should offer thanksgiving?  
Those who have completed an arduous voyage,  
those who have recovered from an illness or injury,  
and prisoners who have been set free.”  
In the midst of the congregation,  
we honor those who have come through  
times of challenge, difficulty, or danger.  
Today we celebrate their survival.  
Together we give thanks:  
for the resilience of the body,  
for the strength of the human spirit;  
for the precious gift of life,  
experienced with new intensity  
when life has been at risk.

Rabbi Janet Marder and Rabbi Sheldon Marder, *Mishkan HaNefesh: Machzor for the Days of Awe*.  
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