

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
HIGH HOLIDAY RABBINIC SEMINAR**

**August 14, 2012**

## TESHUVA - RETURNING TO OUR INNER GOODNESS

a.

<p>And it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you take them to heart among all the nations, where the Lord your God has driven you.</p> <p>And you shall return to the Lord your God, and hearken to His voice according to all that I command you this day, you and your children, with all your heart, and with all your soul.</p>	<p>וְהָיָה כִּי-יָבֹאוּ עָלֶיךָ כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה, הַבְּרָכָה וְהַקְּלָלָה, אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי, לְפָנֶיךָ; וְהָשִׁבָה תָּה, אֶל-לְבָבְךָ, בְּכָל-הַגּוֹיִם, אֲשֶׁר הִדִּיחַךְ יְהוָה אֶל-הָיָךְ שָׁמָּה</p> <p>וּשְׁבַתָּ עַד-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלוֹ, כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-אָנֹכִי מְצַוְךָ, הַיּוֹם: אֶתָּה וּבְנֶיךָ, בְּכָל- לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ</p>
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(Deuteronomy 30:1,2)

b.

<p>A person does not conjure up the memory of a past sin or sins, but in a general way he or she feels terribly depressed. He feels himself pervaded by sin; that the Divine light does not shine on him; that there is nothing noble in him; that his heart is unfeeling...</p> <p>The primary role of penitence, which at once sheds light on the darkened zone, is for the person to return to himself, to the root of his soul and [from there] immediately return to God.</p>	<p>אִין חֲטָא אוּ חֲטָאִים שְׁל עֵבֶר עוֹלָיִם עַל לְבוֹ, אָבֵל בְּכָלֵל הוּא מְרַגֵּישׁ בְּקִרְבּוֹ שֶׁהוּא מְדַכָּא מֵאֵד, שֶׁהוּא מְלֵא עוֹז, שְׂאִין אוֹר ה' מְאִיר עָלָיו, אִין רוּחַ נְדִיבָה בְּקִרְבּוֹ, לְבוֹ אָטוּם...</p> <p>הַתְּשׁוּבָה הַרְאֵשִׁית, שֶׁהִיא מְאִירָה אֶת הַמְחַשְׁבִּים מִיָּד, הִיא שְׂיִשׁוּב הָאָדָם אֶל עֲצָמוֹ, אֶל ש' רֵשׁ נִשְׁמָתוֹ, וּמִיָּד יָשׁוּב אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים...</p>
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(Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak HaKohen Kook, *Orot HaTeshuva*)

c.

<p>He (Rabbi Meir) replied: “You, too, go back (do teshuva).”</p> <p>[Aher] answered: “Have I not already told you that I have already heard from behind the veil: ‘return, you backsliding children’ (Jeremiah 3:22) – except Aher.”</p>	<p>אָמַר לִיָּהּ: אַף אַתָּה חֲזוֹר בְּךָ.</p> <p>אָמַר לִיָּהּ: וְלֹא כָבֶר אֶמְרָתִי לְךָ: כָּבֶר שְׁמַעְתִּי מֵאַחֲרֵי הַפֶּרֶגוּד שׁוּבוּ בְּנִים שׁוֹבְבִים - חוּץ מֵאַחֵר.</p>
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(Hagiga 15a)

d.

<p>The mitzva of shofar [is the following]... through <i>Teshuva</i> we can stir the inner voice found in the souls of the Jewish people.</p>	<p>מִצְוַת שׁוֹפָר... וְעַל יְדֵי תְּשׁוּבָה יְכוּלִין לְעוֹרֵר הַקּוֹל הַפְּנִימִי שֶׁנִּמְצָא בְּנַפְשׁוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.</p>
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(Sefat Emet, Rosh HaShana, 5651, s.v. *mitzvat shofar*.)

## 2. TESHUVA - RENDEZVOUSING WITH GOD

a.

<p>They said that whoever knows his soul knows his Creator, and whoever is ignorant of knowing his soul is ignorant of the knowledge of his Creator. How can one believe that a person is wise concerning something else when he is ignorant concerning himself? ... Therefore, they said that the knowledge of the soul is prior to the knowledge of God.</p>	<p>וְאָמְרוּ מִי שֵׂידַע נַפְשׁוֹ יֵדַע בּוֹ רְאוּ, וְכֹל מִי שֶׁהוּא          סָכַל בִּידְעוּת נַפְשׁוֹ כֹּל שֶׁכֵּן שֶׁהוּא סָכַל בִּידְעוּת          בּוֹרְאוֹ. וְאִיךָ יֵאָמֵן בְּאָדָם שֶׁהוּא חָכֵם בְּזוּלָתוֹ וְהוּא          סָכַל בְּנַפְשׁוֹ... וְעַל כֵּן אָמְרוּ כִּי יְדִיעַת הַנַּפֶּשׁ קוֹדֶמֶת          לִידְעוּת הָאֱלֹהִים יִתְבָּרַךְ.</p>
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(Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera, Introduction to *Sefer HaNefesh*)

b.

<p>“As face answers to face in water,          So does one man’s heart to another.”</p> <p>Like water upon which one gazes and sees his reflection.</p> <p>If he’s pleasant and gracious the reflection is such,          and if he is pained and angry, the reflection is such.</p> <p>So, too, is one’s heart in sync with one’s fellow person.          If one loves the other, the other loves him; if he hates the          other, the other hates him.</p>	<p>כַּמַּיִם הַפָּנִים לַפָּנִים          כֵּן לֵב הָאָדָם לְאָדָם.</p> <p>הַמַּיִם הַלְלוּ שֶׁאָדָם צוֹפֶה בָּהֶן וְרוֹאֶה בָּהֶם פָּנִים          כְּפָנָיו</p> <p>אִם הוּא שׁוֹחֵק הֵם שׁוֹחֵקוֹת          וְאִם הוּא עוֹקֵם הֵם עֲקוּמוֹת,</p> <p>כֵּן לֵב הָאָדָם לְאָדָם הָאֲחֵר -          אִם הוּא אוֹהֵב אֶת זֶה גַּם זֶה הוּא אוֹהֵבוֹ          וְאִם הוּא שׁוֹנֵא אֶת זֶה גַּם הוּא שׁוֹנֵאוֹ.</p>
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(Proverbs 27:19, Rashi, Yevamot 117a)

c.

If you want to encounter HaShem’s [God’s] essence, then you have to be willing to expose your own essence to HaShem. HaShem can only reflect what you’re presenting. If you present yourself with genuineness, with authenticity – your beauty in truth – then you reveal your essence and the essence of HaShem will be revealed to you. You have to be real to see the Real.

(Rabbi David Aaron, *Seeing God*)

d.

<p>I have sought Your nearness, With all my heart have I called You, And going out to meet You I found You coming toward me.</p>	<p>דָּרָשְׁתִּי קִרְבָּתְךָ בְּכָל לִבִּי קָרָאתִיךָ וּבִצְאָתִי לְקָרָאתְךָ לְקָרָאתִי מִצְּאֵתִיךָ</p>
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(Selected Poems of Yehuda HaLevi, translated by Nina Salaman)

e.

<p>It has been taught, Rabbi Jose stated, Neither did the <i>Shekhina</i> ever descend to earth, nor did Moses or Elijah ever ascend to Heaven, as it is written, “The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth has He given to the sons of human beings” (Psalms 115:16).</p> <p>But did not the <i>Shekhina</i> descend to earth? Is it not in fact written, “And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai” (Exodus 19:20)? That was above ten handbreadths [from the summit].</p> <p>But did not Moses and Elijah ascend to Heaven? Is it not in fact written, “And Moses went up unto God” (Exodus 19:3)? [That was] to a level lower than ten [handbreadths from heaven]. But is it not written, “And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (II Kings 2:11)? [That was] to a level lower than ten handbreadths.</p>	<p>תִּנְיָא, רַבִּי יוֹסֵי אוֹמֵר: מֵעוֹלָם ל' אַ יִרְדֶּה שְׁכִינָה לְמַטָּה, וְל' אַ עָלוּ מ' נִשָּׂה וְאֵלֶיהוּ לְמָרוֹם, שְׂנַאֲמַר: הַשָּׁמַיִם שָׁמַיִם לַה' וְהָאָרֶץ נָתַן לְבְנֵי אָדָם.</p> <p>וְל' אַ יִרְדֶּה שְׁכִינָה לְמַטָּה?! וְהִכְתִּיב: וַיֵּרַד ה' עַל הַר סִינַי! לְמַעַלָּה מִעֲשָׂרָה טַפְחִים.</p> <p>וְל' אַ עָלוּ מ' נִשָּׂה וְאֵלֶיהוּ לְמָרוֹם?! וְהִכְתִּיב: וּמ' נִשָּׂה עָלָה אֶל הָאֵל-ל' הַיָּמִים! לְמַטָּה מִעֲשָׂרָה. וְהִכְתִּיב: וַיַּעַל אֵלֶיהוּ בְּסַעֲרָה הַשָּׁמַיִם! לְמַטָּה מִעֲשָׂרָה.</p>
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(Sukka 5a)

### 3. TESHUVA – LONGING FOR THE LAND OF ISRAEL

a.

And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests. In this fashion you will be the treasure of them all by being a kingdom of priests <b>to understand and teach the entire human race that all shall call in the Name of Hashem and serve Him in one accord.</b>	ואתם תהיו לי ממלכת כהנים ובזה תהיו סגולה מכולם כי תהיו ממלכת כהנים להבין ולהורות לכל המין האנושי לקרוא כולם בשם ה'.
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(Sforno, Exodus, 19:6)

b.

This is the longing...to deliver mankind from the terrible suffering of spiritual and material troubles and bring it to a life of freedom, full of slender and sensitivity, illuminated by the divine idea, and to cause all men to prosper. For the fulfillment of this longing, it is really necessary that this society should possess a political and social state with a seat of national government, at the peak of human culture, 'a wise and understanding people and a great nation': and the absolute Godly idea should reign there, reviving the people and the land with its life.

(Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak HaCohen Kook, Orot)

c.

In order to explain the difference between a People of Fate and a Nation of Destiny it is appropriate to deal with a different contrast – that between an Encampment and a Congregation. The Torah used both of these concepts with respect to Israel. "Make for yourself two silver trumpets of hammered work; and they shall be to summon the *congregation (eidah)* and for causing the *encampments (mahaneh)* to set forth" (Numbers 10:2, emphasis added).

Encampment and Congregation constitute two different sociological experiences, two separate groups that have nothing in common and do not support one another. An Encampment is created out of a desire for self-defense and thrives on fear. A Congregation is fashioned out of longing for the realization of an exalted moral idea and thrives on love. In the Encampment, fate's rule is unlimited, whereas destiny rules the Congregation. The Encampment represents a phase in the development of the nation's history. The continued survival of a people is identified with the existence of the Congregation....

...An encampment is created solely from fear. When fateful, choiceless existence terrifies man, the individual grasps the inadequacy of his strength and aligns himself with others for purposes of self-defense, in order to prevail over a common enemy...

....the Congregation has a special place in the kingdom of man and in his mighty spirit. The Congregation is man's characteristic creation, and his glorious *persona* hovers over it. The Congregation is not created as a result of negative causes or out of fear of the fate that pursues man, who senses his own misery and feebleness, but rather as a result of positive impulses. Destiny is the foundation of the Congregation.

(Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Kol Dodi Dofek*, pp. 69-71)

#### **4. REMEMBERING WITH MERCY**

a.

<p>Go and proclaim in the ears of Jerusalem, saying: So says the LORD: I remember for you the affection of your youth, your love as a bride; how you went after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.</p>	<p>הָלַךְ וְקָרְאתָ בְּאָזְנֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר ה' זְכַרְתִּי לְךָ חֶסֶד נְעוּרֶיךָ אֶהְבֵּת פְּלוּלְתֶיךָ לְכַתֵּךְ אַחֲרַי בַּמִּדְבָּר, בְּאַרְץ ל' א זְרוּעָה.</p>
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(Jeremiah 2:2)

b.

<p>Even as God destroys Jerusalem, He will be merciful as He remembers our loyalty when we followed Him into the desert after leaving Egypt.</p>	<p>אע"פ שאני מביא עליך רעה...לא אעשה אותך כלה...כי זכרתי לך חסד נעורייך</p>
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(Radak on Jeremiah 2:2)

c.

“With one quick look, you and I perceive three wine glasses on a table; Funes perceived every grape that had been pressed into the wine...He knew the forms of the clouds in the southern sky on the morning of April 30, 1882”...

“He was able to reconstruct every dream, every daydream he had ever had. Two or three times he had reconstructed an entire day... but each reconstruction had itself taken an entire day. ‘I, myself, alone, have more memories than all mankind since the world began’...And also...‘My memory, sir, is like a garbage heap.’”

“In the seventeenth century Locke postulated... [that] each individual thing – every stone, every bird, every branch – would have its own name. Funes...[insisted that was] too general. Funes remembered not only every leaf of every tree in every patch of forest, but every time he had perceived or imagined that leaf.”

(Jorge Luis Borges, Funes the Memorius)

## 5. THE SECRET TO HAPPINESS

a.

<p>And you shall keep the feast of weeks for the Lord your God...</p> <p>And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you, and your son, and your daughter, and your man-servant, and your maid-servant, and the Levite that is within your gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are in your midst,</p> <p>You shall keep the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that you have gathered in from your threshing-floor and from your winepress.</p> <p>And you shall rejoice in your feast, you, and your son, and your daughter, and your man-servant, and your maid-servant, and the Levite, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within your gates.</p>	<p>וְעִשִׂיתָ חַג שָׁבָעוֹת, לַה' אֱ-לֹהֵיךָ ...</p> <p>וְשִׂמְחֶתָ לִפְנֵי ה' אֱ-לֹהֵיךָ, אֶתְּךָ וּבִנְךָ וּבִתְּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמָּתְךָ, וְהַלְוִי אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ, וְהַגֵּר וְהַיְתוּם וְהַאֲלֻמָּנָה אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּךָ ...</p> <p>חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת תַּעֲשֶׂה לָּךְ, שִׁבְעַת יָמִים: בְּאֶסְפָּךְ-- מִגְרְנֶךָ, וּמִקִּרְבְּךָ</p> <p>וְשִׂמְחֶתָ, בְּחַגְךָ: אֶתְּךָ וּבִנְךָ וּבִתְּךָ, וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמָּתְךָ, וְהַלְוִי וְהַגֵּר וְהַיְתוּם וְהַאֲלֻמָּנָה, אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ</p>
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(Deuteronomy 16: 10,11,13, 14)

b.

<p>It is better for a person to be liberal with his or her donations to the poor (<i>matanot la'evyonim</i>) than to be lavish with the Purim feast (<i>se'udat Purim</i>) or in sending portions to friends (<i>mishloach manot</i>). For the greatest joy is to bring happiness to the hearts of the poor, the orphans, the widows and the strangers. For one who brings happiness to the hearts of these unfortunate individuals resembles the Divine Presence, as it says, "who revives the spirit of the lowly and the brokenhearted" (Isaiah 57:15).</p>	<p>מוֹטֵב לְאָדָם לְהִרְבּוֹת בְּמַתָּנוֹת אֲבִיוֹנִים מִלְּהִרְבּוֹת בְּסַעֲוֹדָתוֹ וּבְשִׁלּוּחַ לְרַעֲיוֹ, שְׂאִין שֵׁם שְׂמִחָה גְדוֹלָה וּמִפִּי אָרָה אֵלָּא לְשִׂמְחַת לֵב עֲנִיִּים וַיְתוּמִים וְאֲלֻמָּנוֹת וַיְגֵרִים, שְׂהַמְשִׁימַח לֵב הָאֲמִלְלִים הָאֵלּוּ מִדְּמָה בְּשִׂכְיָנָה, שְׁנֵאֲמַר: לְהַחְיֹת רוּחַ שְׂפִלִים וּלְהַחְיֹת לֵב נִדְכָּאִים.</p>
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(BT Moed Katan 28a)

c.

Let me explain why I have employed the term "logotherapy" as the name for my theory. Logos is a Greek word that denotes "meaning"! Logo-therapy focuses on the meaning of human existence as well as on man's search for such a meaning. According to logotherapy, the striving to find a meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man. That is why I speak of a will to meaning in contrast to the pleasure principle on which Freudian psychoanalysis is centered, as well as in contrast to the will to power stressed by Adlerian psychology.

(Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, pp. 153-154)

## 6. IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

a.

Therefore the well was called <i>Be'er-lahai-roi</i>	עַל כֵּן קָרָא לְבְּאֵר לְחַי רֹאִי
(Genesis 16:14)	

b.

And Isaac came from the way of <i>Be'er-lahai-roi</i>	וַיִּצְחָק בָּא מִבּוֹא בְּאֵר לְחַי רֹאִי
(Genesis 24:62)	

Isaac had gone to bring Hagar, the one who had sat by the well, and sought out God, saying, 'look at my misery.'	הֵלֵךְ לְהַבִּיא אֶת הַגֵּר אֹתָהּ שִׁישְׁבָה עַל הַבְּאֵר וְאָמְרָה לְחַי עוֹלָמִים רְאֵה בְעַלְבוֹנִי
(Bereishit Rabbah 60:14)	

Isaac had gone to bring Hagar back to Abraham, that he might take her again as his wife.	הֵלֵךְ לְהַבִּיא אֶת הַגֵּר לְאַבְרָהָם אָבִיו שִׁישְׁאָנָה
(Rashi, Bereishit 24:62)	

c.

And Isaac went out to meditate in the field.	וַיֵּצֵא יִצְחָק לְשׁוּחַ בְּשָׂדֵה
It is the way of one who repents to be bowed and humble.	דְּרַכְּנָא דְּבַעֲלֵי תְּשׁוּבָה לְהִיּוֹת... שָׂחָ וּשְׁפַל
(Midrash Menorat Ha'Maor 3:74)	

And Isaac dwelt by <i>Be'er-lahai-roi</i>	וַיֵּשֶׁב יִצְחָק עִם בְּאֵר לְחַי רֹאִי
(Genesis 25:11)	

## 7. WALKING HAND IN HAND: THE CHALLENGE OF JEWISH UNITY

a.

Rabbi Eliezer said on Rosh Hashanah Joseph was freed from prison.	תניא, רבי אליעזר אומר: ... בראש השנה יצא יוסף מבית האסורין.
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(Rosh Hashanah 10b)

b.

And he spoke kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon.	וַיְדַבֵּר אֵתוֹ, ט' בֹּת; וַיִּתֵּן, אֶת-כִּסֵּאוֹ, מֵעַל כִּסֵּא הַמְּלָכִים אֲשֶׁר אֵתוֹ, בְּבָבֶל.
And he changed his prison garments, and did eat bread before him continually all the days of his life.	וַשָּׂא, אֶת בְּגָדֵי כְלָאוֹ; וְאָכַל לֶחֶם תָּמִיד לְפָנָיו, כָּל-יְמֵי חַיָּו.

(II Kings 25:28, 29)

Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon. And he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.	וַיִּשְׁלַח פַּרְעֹה ה' וַיִּקְרָא אֶת-יוֹסֵף, וַיְרִיצֵהוּ מִן-הַבּוֹר; וַיִּגְלַח וַיַּחְלֶף שָׂמֶל תָּיו, וַיָּבֵא אֶל-פַּרְעֹה ה'.
You shall be over my house, and according to your word will all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than you.	אָתָּה תִּהְיֶה עַל-בֵּיתִי, וְעַל-פִּיךָ יִשָּׁק כָּל-עַמִּי; רַק הַכִּסֵּא, אֶגְדֹּל מִמֶּךָ.

(Genesis 41:14, 40)

c.

Common prayer has many advantages...An individual rarely accomplishes his prayer without slips and errors. It has been laid down, therefore, that the individual recites the prayers of a community, and if possible in a community of not less than ten persons, so that one makes up for the forgetfulness or error of the other. In this way [a complete prayer is gained, read with wholly pure devotion.]	היתרון לתפילה בציבור, מכמה פנים...ומהם, שמעט הוא שתשלם תפילת-יחיד מבלי שגגה ופשיעה, ומפני כן קבעו לנו שיתפלל היחיד תפילת הציבור, ושתהיה תפילתו בציבור לא פחות מעשרה, כל-עוד שיוכל, כדי שישלימו אלו מה שיחסר אצל אלו בשגגה או בפשיעה. ותהיה...
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(Kuzari, Part 3 Paragraph 19)

d.

The community [in Judaism] is not just an assembly of people who work together for their mutual benefit, but a metaphysical entity, an individuality; I might say, a living whole. In particular, Judaism has stressed the wholeness and the unity of Knesset Israel, the Jewish community. The latter is not a conglomerate. It is an autonomous entity, endowed with a life of its own.... However strange such a concept may appear to the empirical sociologist, it is not at all a strange experience for the Halachist and the mystic, to whom Knesset Israel is a living, loving, and suffering mother.

(Community by Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik)

e.

“Gather round, gather round, gather down by the river. Every day, right here, right now, one day, all over the world – gather round.”

(Debbie Friedman)

## 8. THE MANY SIDES OF SILENCE

1. a.

<p>Then Mordecai told them to return this answer to Esther: 'Do not think to yourself that you will escape [because you are] in the king's house, unlike the other Jews.</p> <p>If you hold your piece at this time, relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you are not in the royal estate exactly for a time like this?'</p>	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר מֶרְדֵּכַי, לְהַשִּׁיב אֶל-אֶסְתֵּר: <b>אַל-תִּדְמִי בַנְּפִשׁךְ</b>, לְהַמְלִיט בֵּית-הַמֶּלֶךְ מִכָּל-הַיְהוּדִים.</p> <p>כִּי אִם-הִחַרְשׁ תַּחֲרִישִׁי, בְּעֵת הַזֹּאת--רִנּוּחַ וְהַצִּלָּה יֵעָמֹד לַיהוּדִים מִמְּקוֹם אַחֵר, וְאַתָּה וּבֵית-אָבִיךָ תֵּאבְדוּ; וְיָמֵי יוֹדֵעַ--אִם-לָעֵת כִּזֹּאת, הִגַּעְתָּ לַמְּלָכוּת.</p>
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(Esther 4: 13-14)

b.

<p>And He said: 'Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lordssed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake;</p> <p>And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.</p>	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר, צֵא וְעַמַּדְתָּ בְּהָר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה, וְהִנֵּה יְהוָה עֹבֵר וְרוּחַ גְּדוֹלָה וְחֶזֶק מִפָּרֶק הַרִים וּמִשִּׁבְר סְלָעִים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה, לֹא בָרוּחַ יְהוָה; וְאַחַר הָרוּחַ רֶעַשׁ, לֹא בְרֶעַשׁ יְהוָה.</p> <p>וְאַחַר הָרֶעַשׁ אֵשׁ, לֹא בָאֵשׁ יְהוָה; וְאַחַר הָאֵשׁ, קוֹל דְּמָמָה דְּקָה.</p>
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(I Kings, 19:11-12)

2. a.

<p>And a great shofar will be sounded, and a silent sound will be heard.</p>	<p>וּבשופר גדול תוקע וקול דממה דקה ישמע</p>
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(Un'taneh Tokef)

b.

<p>And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden toward the cool of the day; ...</p>	<p>וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶת-קוֹל יְהוָה אֵלֵּהֶם, מִתְהַלֵּךְ בַּגֶּן--לְרוּחַ הַיּוֹם; ...</p>
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(Genesis 3:8)

3.

There are two kinds of silence. One of these is natural silence, and is characterized by the absence of noise. It is a modulation, a diminishment, a negative valence. The other kind of silence is spiritual, and is characterized by potentiality and anticipation.... With respect to music, anticipatory silence helps prepare the self to hear sound sounding; for it focuses attention on the transition from silence to sound. With respect to deliberate speech, silence conveys the ethical potential of words; for it sharpens the transition from inwardness to worldly expression. Prayer may also stand at this juncture of silence and speech.

(Dr. Michael Fishbane, Sacred Attunement: A Jewish Theology)

4.

<p>The highest holiness is the holiness of silence, the holiness of existence, when an individual feels of no account.</p> <p>And one lives an all-encompassing life, the life of everything. One feels the life of the inanimate object, the life of vegetation, the life of all living beings, the life that is all embracing, of each and every person of the world.</p> <p>The life of all that is all. And the individual is not sanctified by being separate and apart. But the individual is living. All of one's life is the holy of holies, the life of all living as they are.</p>	<p>הקדושה העליונה היא קדושת הדומיה, קדושת ההויה שאדם מכיר את עצמו בטל בפנימיותו הפרטית.</p> <p>והי חיים כללים חיי כל. מרגיש הוא חיי הדומם חיי הצומח חיי החי חיי הכלל כולו שכל מדבר שכל איש מאישי האדם.</p> <p>חיי כל שכל. והוא אינו מתקדש נבדל ונפרש. חי הוא, וכל חייו קודש קדשים, חיי חיים הם.</p>
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(Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, *Arpalei Tohar*)

5.

Hello darkness, my old friend  
I've come to talk with you again  
Because a vision softly creeping  
Left its seeds while I was sleeping  
And the vision that was planted in my brain  
Still remains  
Within the sound of silence

In restless dreams I walked alone  
Narrow streets of cobblestone  
'Neath the halo of a street lamp  
I turned my collar to the cold and damp  
When my eyes were stabbed by the flash of a  
neon light  
That split the night  
And touched the sound of silence

And the people bowed and prayed  
To the neon god they made  
And the sign flashed out its warning  
In the words that it was forming  
And the sign said, "The words of the prophets are written on the subway walls  
And tenement halls"  
And whispered in the sounds of silence (Paul Simon, The Sound of Silence)



# SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

## GOALS OF PRAYER

### 1. PRAYER AS RESPONSIBILITY

a.

<p>It is an affirmative commandment to pray every day, as it says, “And you shall serve the Lord your God” [Exodus 23:25]. From tradition, we have learned that “service” is prayer, as it says “And to serve Him with all your heart (<i>ule’avdo bekhool levavkhem</i>)” [Deuteronomy 11:13]. The sages commented, “What is the service of the heart? This is prayer.”</p>	<p>מִצְוַת עֲשֵׂה לְהִתְפַּלֵּל בְּכָל יוֹם, שְׁנֵאמַר: "וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֶת ה' אֱ-לֹהֵיכֶם." מִפִּי הַשְּׁמוּעָה לְמַדוּ שְׁעַבֹּדָה זֶה הִיא תְּפִלָּה. וְנֵאמַר: "וְלַעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל לְבַבְכֶם", אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים: "אִי זֶה הִיא עֲבֹדָה לְשִׁבְלֵב? זֶה תְּפִלָּה."</p>
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(Maimonides, Code, Laws of Prayer 1:1)

b.

*Hitpalel*, from which “*tefilla*” is derived, originally meant to deliver an opinion about oneself, to judge oneself... Thus it denotes to step out of active life in order to attempt to gain a true judgment about oneself, that is, about one’s ego, about one’s relationship to God and the world... Accordingly, you should at times tear yourself loose from this existence which endangers your true life, and strive in *tefilla* to renew your strength for life and regain your right and your will for truth, righteousness and love, as well as the power and the courage for victorious battle.

(Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Horeb)

### 2. PRAYER AS RELIANCE

a.

<p>That we pray to Him in times of distress (<i>be’et hatzarot</i>), and that our eyes and hearts be directed towards Him like servants in the hands of their masters (כְּעֵינֵי עֲבָדִים אֶל יְד אֲדוֹנֵיהֶם). And this is the meaning of the sentence, “And when you come to war in your land against an enemy who has besieged you, and you will sound the trumpets and you will be remembered before the Lord your God” [Numbers 10:9]. And it is a commandment to call out (<i>litzok</i>) to God for every distress that comes upon the community.</p>	<p>שְׁנֵתְפַלֵּל אֵלָיו בְּעֵת הַצָּרוֹת וְתִהְיֶינָה עֵינֵינוּ וְלִבֵּנוּ אֵלָיו לְבַדּוֹ כְּעֵינֵי עֲבָדִים אֶל יְד אֲדוֹנֵיהֶם. וְזֶה כְּעֵנֶן שִׁפְתוֹב וְכִי תָבֹא אוֹ מִלְחָמָה בְּאַרְצְכֶם עַל הַצָּר הַצּוֹרֵר אֶתְכֶם וְהִרְעוֹתֶם בְּחִצּוֹצְרוֹת וּנְזִפְרוֹתָם לְפָנֵי ה' אֱ-לֹהֵיכֶם וְהִיא מִצְוָה עַל כָּל צָרָה וְצָרָה שִׁתָּבֵא עַל הַצָּבוּר לְצִעוּק.</p>
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(Nahmanides, Sefer HaMitzvot, Positive commandment 5)

b.

An alternative meaning: פָּלַל (*palal*), according to Rabbi Ed Feld, can also mean hope, as when Jacob, after many years of separation from Joseph, finally sees his son and declares, “I never gave up hope of seeing your face” (Genesis 48:11). On a deeper level, the word פָּנִיךָ may refer to God. In this reading, Jacob proclaims: “By seeing Your Face, by being reliant upon You and certain of Your love, concern and support, I never lost hope.”

c.

Prayer finds its full exoteric expression in the spiritual act of lifting up one's eyes - the inner cry of dependence upon God, the experience of complete, absolute dependence portrayed by the Psalmist: "I lift my eyes towards the mountain, from where will come my aid?" (Psalms 121:1).

When man is in need and prays, God listens. One of God's attributes is *Shome'ah Tefilla* – "He who listens to prayer." Let us note that Judaism has never promised that God accepts all prayer.

Acceptance of prayer is a hope, a vision, a wish, a petition, but not a principle or a premise. The foundation of prayer is not the conviction of its effectiveness but the belief that through it we approach God intimately, and the miraculous community embracing finite man and his Creator is born.

The basic function of prayer is not its practical consequences but the metaphysical formation of a fellowship consisting of God and man.

(Rabbi Joseph B. Solovetichik, *Worship of the Heart*)

### 3. PRAYER AS FEELING GOD'S PRESENCE

a.

There is a fundamental difference between prayer and tefilla, which is the Hebrew term commonly used for prayer. While the English word "prayer" means to ask or implore, tefilla is associated with the Hebrew word נָפַל (nafal), which means literally "to fall." Thus, unlike prayer, tefilla entails falling before God, and feeling His presence on an intimate level.

This concept of tefilla is captured in an early interaction between Abraham and God. When God changes Abram's name to Abraham and spells out his mission as the patriarch of Israel who will be an אב הַמּוֹן גּוֹיִם – "a father of a multitude of nations," the Torah states וַיִּפֹּל אֶבְרָם עַל פָּנָיו – "Abram fell (vayipol) on his face" (Genesis 17:3–5). Here, vayipol is a form of tefilla. Even as Abraham assumes his new responsibility, he recognizes the awesomeness of the task before him and his need for God's help. On a deeper level, וַיִּפֹּל אֶבְרָם עַל פָּנָיו can be read not as Abraham falling on his face, but as falling on God's "face," as Abraham fully feels God's presence.

## SO CLOSE AND YET SO FAR

1. a.

And God created Adam in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.	וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ, בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ: זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה, בָּרָא אֹתָם.
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(Genesis 1:27)

b.

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the place with flesh instead thereof.	וַיִּפֹּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים תְּרֵדָמָה עַל-הָאָדָם, וַיִּישָׁן; וַיִּקַּח, אֶחָת מִצִּלְעֵי תָיו, וַיִּסְגֹּר בְּשָׂרָה, תַּחְתָּנָהּ.
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(Genesis 2:21)

2. a.

Rabbi Shmuel the on of Nahman says: When the Holy One Blessed Be He created Adam,  He created him double-faced,  then He split him and made him of two backs...	אמר ר' שמואל בר נחמן בשעה שברא הקודש ברוך את אדם הראשון  דיו פרצופים בראו  ונסרו ועשאו גבנים
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(Eruvin 19a)

b.

Mi'tzalotav: [This means] of his sides, as it says, "And for the side of the Tabernacle" (Exodus 26:20).	מִצִּלְעֵי תָיו: מסטריו כמו ולצלע המשכן
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(Rashi, Genesis 2:21 s.v. mi'tzalotav)

3.

If pressed for an interpretation of the pronouncement "Lo tov heyot ha'Adam levado," Adam the first would paraphrase it as "It is not good for man to work alone." ...

Adam the second is still lonely.... He is a citizen of a new world, the world of man, but he has no companion with whom to communicate and therefore he is existentially insecure. Neither would the availability of the female, who was created with Adam the first, have changed this human situation if not for the emergence of a new kind of companionship.

(The Lonely Man of Faith, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik)

4. a.

And the cherubim shall spread out their wings on high, screening the ark-cover with their wings, <b>with their faces toward one another;</b>	וְהָיוּ הַכְּרֻבִּים פְּרָשֵׁי כַנָּפֵיהֶם לְמַעַלָּה, סִכְכִּים בְּכַנְפֵיהֶם עַל-הַכַּפֹּרֶת, וּפְנֵיהֶם, אִישׁ אֶל-אָחִיו.
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(Exodus 25:20)

b.

The wings of these cherubim spread themselves forth twenty cubits; and they stood on their feet, <b>facing the Temple</b>	פְּנֵי הַכְּרוּבִּים הָאֵלֶּה, פְּרָשִׁים אַמּוֹת עֶשְׂרִים; וְהָם עַמְּדִים עַל-רַגְלֵיהֶם, וּפְנֵיהֶם לְבַיִת.
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(II Chronicles 3:13)

5. a.

There is no difficulty; the former [was] at a time when Israel obeyed the will of the Omnipresent.  The later [was] at a time when Israel did not obey the will of the Omnipresent.	לֹא קָשָׁא כּאֵן בְּזִמְן שִׁישְׂרָאֵל עוֹשִׂין רְצוֹנוֹ שֶׁל מְקוּם  כּאֵן בְּזִמְן שֶׁאִין יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹשִׂין רְצוֹנוֹ שֶׁל מְקוּם.
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(Baba Bathra 99a)

b.

This is the image of husband and wife who love each other...  And when they do not they turn their faces from each other.	דוּגְמַת חֵבֶת זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה הָאוֹהֲבִים זֶה וְזֶה ...  וּכְשֶׁאִינוֹ עוֹשִׂין הוֹפְכִים פְּנֵיהֶם פְּנֵיהֶם לְבַיִת
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(Rashi, Ibid., S.V. *Kan b'zman*)

## CREATING SPIRITUAL MOMENTS

### 1. *Defining Spirituality*

a.

<p>“What should a person do to live? Let him mortify himself [‘kill himself’ with study and hard work].”</p>	<p>מָה יַעֲבִיד אִינִישׁ וְיִחְיֶה - יָמִית עֲצָמוֹ</p>
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(Tamid 32a)

b.

<p>A person is concerned about the loss of money and not the loss of days. Money can be replenished; days cannot</p>	<p>אָדָם דּוֹאָג עַל אִיבוֹד דְּמִיו וְאִינוֹ דּוֹאָג עַל אִיבוֹד יָמָיו, דְּמִיו חוֹזְרִים יָמָיו אֵינָם חוֹזְרִים</p>
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(Ibn Ezra)

2.

Oh, Mama, just look at me one minute as though you really saw me. Mama, fourteen years have gone by. I’m dead. You’re a grandmother, Mama. I married George Gibbs, Mama. Wally’s dead, too. Mama, his appendix burst on the camping trip to North Conway. We felt just terrible about it – don’t you remember? But, just for a moment now, we’re all together. Mama, just for a moment, we’re happy. Let’s look at one another.... ...

I can’t. I can’t go on. It goes so fast. We don’t have time to look at one another.

I didn’t realize. So all that was going on and we never noticed. Take me back – up the hill – to my grave. But first: wait! One more look.

Good-by, Good-by, world. Good-by Grover’s Corners... Mama and Papa. Good-by to clocks ticking... and Mama’s sunflowers. And food and coffee. And new-ironed dresses and hot baths... and sleeping and waking up. Oh, earth, you’re too wonderful for anybody to realize you.

Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it? – every, every minute?

(Our Town, Thornton Wilder)

3.

Nothing can be more grotesque and more undignified than a futile attempt to hold on. Let us think of the men and women who cannot grow old gracefully because they cling too hard to a youth which is escaping them. Of parents who cannot let their children go free to live their own lives. This then is the great truth of human existence. One must not hold life too precious. One must always be prepared to let it go.

(A Believing Jew, Rabbi Milton Steinberg)

## COPING WITH ADVERSITY

1.

R. Jacob said: "There is no reward for precepts in this world."	רבי יעקב...אמר: שכר מצוה בהאי עלמא ליכא.
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(Kiddushin 39b)

Raba said: "[Length of] life, children and sustenance depend not on merit but [rather on] mazzal."	אמר רבא: חיי, בני ומזוני, לא בזכותא תליא מילתא, אלא במזלא תליא מילתא.
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(Moed Kattan 28a)

For it was taught: "The number of thy days I will complete" (Exodus 23:26) refers to the years of the generations.	דתניא: את מספר ימיך אמלא אלו שני דורות.
If one is worthy one is allowed to complete the full period; if unworthy the number is reduced; so said R. Akiba.	זכה - משלימין לו, לא זכה - פוחתין לו, דברי ר' עקיבא;
But the Sages said: If one is worthy years are added to one's life; if unworthy, the years of his life are reduced.	וחכמים אומרים: זכה - מוסיפים לו, לא זכה - פוחתין לו.

(Bavli Yevamot 49b)

2.

In short, the "I" of fate asks a speculative metaphysical question with regard to evil, and this question is not susceptible to solution and has no answer.

In the second dimension of man's existence, destiny, the question of suffering takes on new form. What is an "Existence of Destiny?"

This is an active existence in which man confronts the environment into which he was cast with an understanding of his uniqueness, value, freedom and capacity without compromising his integrity and independence in his struggle with the outside. The slogan of the "I" of destiny is "Against your will you are born, and against your will you die [but with your free will do you live]." Man is born as an object, dies as an object but it is within his capacity to live as a "subject" – as a creator who impresses on his life his individual imprimatur and who lives autonomously. According to Judaism, man's mission in his world is to turn fate into destiny – an existence that is passive and influenced, to an existence that is active and influential; an existence of compulsion, perplexity, and speechlessness, to an existence full of will and initiative.

(Fate and Destiny by Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik)

But repentance, prayer and charity cancel the evil decree.	ותשובה ותפלה וצדקה מעבירין את רע הגזרה.
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(Rosh Hashanah Machzor)

## HEARTFELT READINGS

### 1. The Art of Coping

a.

<p>To what can death be compared?</p> <p>To a person who enters a darkened room for the first time and trips over the furniture. Each time he enters the room, he learns more and more where the furniture stands.</p> <p>In time he becomes familiar with the room, and despite the darkness knows how to get around.</p> <p>So, too, death. There is darkness in death that cannot be chased away. But it is possible to learn how to continue to live despite the darkness which forever remains.</p>	<p>מָשָׁל, לְמָה הַדָּבָר דּוֹמֶה, לְאָדָם שֶׁנִּכְנָס לְתוֹךְ חֶדֶר חָשׁוּךְ וְנִתְקַל בְּכָל מִינֵי דְבָרִים שֶׁמְפּוֹזְרִים בְּתוֹךְ הַחֶדֶר. בְּכָל פַּעַם שֶׁנִּכְנָס לְחֶדֶר הוּא לּוֹמֵד יוֹתֵר וְיוֹתֵר בְּדִיוּק אִיפֹּה הַדְּבָרִים נִמְצָאִים. וְכֵן נִתְקַל בָּהֶם פְּחוֹת וּפְחוֹת, עַד שֶׁאֲחֲרֵי זְמַן מָה, הוּא מְפִיר אֶת הַמְּקוֹם הַיָּטֵב וְלֹא נִתְקַל בְּשׁוֹם דָּבָר, לְמֵרוֹת שֶׁהַחֶדֶר עֲדִיין חָשׁוּךְ. כְּמוֹ כֵן הַמָּוֶת יֵשׁ חוֹשֶׁךְ בְּמָוֶת שְׂאֵי אֶפְשָׁר לְגַרְשׁוֹ. אָבֵל אֶפְשָׁר לְלַמּוֹד אִיךָ לְהַמְשִׁיךְ לַחַיּוֹת לְמֵרוֹת הַחַיּוֹשֶׁךְ הַגָּדוֹל.</p>
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(Holistic Prayer)

b.

Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack in everything  
That's how the light gets in.

(Leonard Cohen)

### 2. Saying Farewell

Do you know the way you walk back from the Holy Wall? You don't turn around and walk away. When you meet the Czar of Russia, you don't turn around and walk away, you walk backwards. And I want to bless you, when your children grow up and they walk out of your house, and they build their own houses, sad enough, a lot of children turn around and they don't build a Jewish house anymore. I want to bless you; your children should walk away backwards.

(Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach)

### 3. Appreciating God's Gifts

מְזֹמֹר לְדָוִד ה' רֵעִי לֹא אֶחְסֵר  
God is my shepherd, I shall not lack.  
*I never have lacked.*

בְּנֵאוֹת דֶּשָׁא יִרְבִּיצֵנִי עַל מֵי מְנַחֵחַת יְנַהֲלֵנִי  
In lush meadows He lays me down, beside tranquil waters He leads me.  
*This year I have been able to feel a peace that I had not previously known -- in Hebrew, "nachat ruach."*

נִפְשִׁי יִשׁוּבֵב  
He restores my soul  
*Which I believe is eternal.*

יְנַהֵנִי בְּמַעְגְלֵי צְדָקָה לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ  
He leads me on paths of justice for His name's sake.  
*I can only hope that I have followed these paths more often than I have shunned them.*

גַּם כִּי אֵלֶךְ בְּגִיא צְלֻמּוֹת לֹא אִירָא רָע כִּי אִתָּה עִמָּדִי  
Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me.  
*Throughout this ordeal, I have never been afraid. Perhaps it is because I am a person of faith? Or maybe I am too simpleminded to recognize the magnitude of the loss that I am facing?*

שִׁבְטְךָ וּמַשְׁעֲנֹתֶיךָ הֵמָּה יְנַחֲמֵנִי  
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.  
*I interpret God's "rod" and "staff" to be my family and friends, respectively.*

תַּעֲרֹךְ לִפְנֵי שִׁלְחֹן נֶגֶד צָרָרִי  
You prepare a table before me in view of my tormentors  
*I think about the tables in my life. . . my childhood dinner table . . . breakfast before school with my kids at a cafe table . . . the seder table . . . the table from which I read the Torah in synagogue.*

דִּשְׁנַת בִּשְׁמֵן רֵאשִׁי  
anointed my head with oil  
*I was brought up to believe I was special and could accomplish anything that I wanted.*

כּוֹסֵי רְנוּחָה  
my cup overflows.  
*A phrase I have uttered to myself each Friday night before the words of Kiddush.*

אֲךָ טוֹב וְחֶסֶד יִרְדְּפוּנִי כָּל יְמֵי חַיַּי וְשִׁבְתִּי בְּבֵית ה' לְאָרְךָ יָמִים  
May only goodness and kindness pursue me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of God for eternity.

*Although I am saddened by what I will miss, the days with which I have been blessed have been full.*

(Matt Fenster, z"l)