

Torah Portion: Exodus 23:1-12

Modeh Ani/Hareini

Music by Gabriel Meyer Halevy

Modeh / Modah ani l'fanecha, מוֹדֵה/מוֹדָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ,
Melech chai v'kayam, מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם,
she-hechezarta bi nishmati שְׁהֶחֱזַרְתָּ בִּי נִשְׁמָתִי
b'chemlah, rabbah emunatecha. בְּחֶמְלָה רַבָּה אֶמוּנָתְךָ.

I offer thanks to You, ever-living Sovereign,
that You have restored my soul to me in mercy:
How great is Your trust.

Hareini mekabel alai הֲרִינִי מְקַבֵּל עָלַי

Behold, I here by take upon myself

et mitzvat haboreh אֶת מִצְוַת הַבּוֹרֵא

the Instruction of the Creator:

v'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocho וְאַהֲבַתְּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ

"You shall love your fellow as yourself"

Asher Yatzar

Music by Dan Nichols

I thank You for my life, body and soul
Help me realize I am beautiful and whole
(oh so beautiful, oh so holy)
I'm perfect the way I am and a little broken too
I will live each day as a gift I give to you (my God, my God)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי, רוֹפֵא כָּל בָּשָׂר וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.

Baruch Atah, Adonai, Rofei chol basar u'mafli la'asot

Blessed are You, Adonai, who heals all flesh,
working wondrously.

For the Study of Torah on Repro Shabbat 2023

Rabbi Becky Silverstein (he/him)

The discussion of who is permitted to eat on Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, has much relevant wisdom to offer. Most Jewish people observe Yom Kippur by incorporating prayer into a set of rituals that includes a 25-hour fast. But what happens if someone is ill and cannot fast on Yom Kippur?

The Talmud (Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 83a) invokes part of verse 14:10 from the biblical Book of Proverbs, to teach that the sick person is actually the expert who should make this decision.

לֵב יוֹדֵעַ מַרְתַּת נַפְשׁוֹ וְיָבִשׁ מִחָתוֹ לֹא יִתְעַרֵּב זָר:

"Lev yodea marat nafsho,"

The heart alone knows the bitterness of the soul, and no outsider can share in its joy.

The text of the Talmud even says that nobody can possess more expertise on such a question than the sick person themselves... In this way, Judaism's principle of "lev yodea marat nafsho" authorizes as experts both pregnant people who want to end a pregnancy and trans people seeking gender-affirming care or the right to live as their true selves. It demands that we honor the self-knowledge of those individuals.

A PRAYER FOR REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM

May we always remember that each person is created in the image of the Sacred, endowed with the inherent right to autonomy and respect.

May we create a caring and loving community and nation that reveres this dignity in each of us. May we understand our obligations to one another; we are all inherently holy and should be treated as such.

May we find within ourselves the collective will to create a just society in which reproductive justice — the holy right to own the personhood of one's own body, to have or not have children, to raise any children in safety and community — is foundational.

May we endow each other with the strength, resolve, and courage we need as we walk together towards a liberatory world.

May we always follow the leadership of those most impacted by the harms of reproductive oppression. May we listen and learn.

May our country become a place of true liberty and justice for all. May our relationships with each other be ones of care and deep respect. May we walk together on the path of community as we work together to ensure truly accessible abortion care for all.

AMEN.

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