

A Sacred Conversation *Havdala*

*A Jewish ritual to sanctify the conversation about end of life care
drawing inspiration from the havdala ceremony (Rabbi Zoe Klein)*

Havdala separates the sacred from the mundane. Today, we move from the wonderful busy clatter of everyday life to enter a new space. We are grateful to share the intimacy of our hopes and our fears.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-Olam,
shechechianu v'kiyamanu lazman ha-zeh.*

Blessed are You, our God, Soul of the world,
Who has sustained us, supported us and brought us to this moment.

Thank you for being such a meaningful person in my life.

Wine - פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

As we prepare for this conversation of meaning, we express gratitude for the sweetness of our time together. We raise our glasses in tribute to the mysteries of life and death. What a wonder it is to bear witness to the world! And how pleasant to share the journey with ones we cherish.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, Borei p'ri ha-gafen.

Blessed are You, our God, Soul of the World, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

With the taste of wine on our tongue, and the warmth of togetherness in our hearts, we step into this special moment of understanding and love.

Conversation is devoted to the naming of a trusted person who could make medical decisions for you, if you were not able, based on your expressed wishes and documented preferences. Consider what special instructions should be given and what limits should be observed by this person who would act as your “healthcare agent.” Think about choosing a physician who would be the right one to guide your agent and to act upon the decisions made for your care. This conversation may be revisited and the decisions reconsidered as needed.

Spices - בְּשָׂמִים

Neshama is the Hebrew word for both soul and breath. God breathed our soul into us, making our lives God’s exhalation. Our deeds spice and perfume the air. Each facet of life is to be breathed in and appreciated, from our first breath to the moment the world kisses us and takes our breath away.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מֵיְנֵי בְּשָׂמִים.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, Borei minei v'samim.

Blessed are You, our God, Soul of the World, Who creates a variety of spices.

Conversation is devoted to the issues surrounding end-of-life decisions including such as the limits to care in settings in which a return to baseline health status is not likely. Consideration is also given to the balance between the burden of care that would be acceptable in settings in which a return to baseline quality of life might not be not possible. Organ donation is discussed. This conversation may also be revisited and decisions reconsidered.

Thank you for respecting and heeding my wishes, and imbuing my spirit with dignity.

Candle - מאורי האש

The Life of Eternity - Gates of Prayer

Life is finite. Like a candle, it burns, it glows, it is radiant with warmth and beauty; then it fades; its substance is consumed, and it is no more.

In light we see; in light we are seen. The flames dance and our lives are full. But as night follows day, the candle of our life burns down and gutters. There is an end to the flames. We see no more and are no more seen. Yet we do not despair, for we are more than a memory slowly fading into the darkness. With our lives we give life. Something of us can never die: we move in the eternal cycle of darkness and death, of light and life.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מְאוֹרֵי הָאֵשׁ.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, Borei m'orei ha-aish.

Blessed are You, our God, Soul of the World, Who creates the light of fire.

Signature - חתימה

A ritual for when you are ready to sign the Advanced Healthcare Directive:

Rabbi Shimon said: There are three crowns: the crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of royalty. But the crown of a good name excels them all.
(Pirkei Avot 2:17)

When the person to act as healthcare agent has been chosen and goals and preferences have been outlined, the advance directive form can be signed. To become effective, it can be notarized or signed by two witnesses. In the latter case, the healthcare agent cannot also serve as a witness. The directive should be supplied to the primary care physician, to the agent and to key family members who may also wish to discuss the directive. It can be revised as needed if preferences evolve or circumstances change.

Thank you for the seal of your good name. May your

name be a blessing for all time.

המבדיל - Blessing of Separation

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמְבַדֵּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחוֹל, בֵּין אֹר
לְחָשֶׁךְ, בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּים, בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי לְשֵׁשֶׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה. בָּרוּךְ
אַתָּה יי, הַמְבַדֵּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחוֹל.

*Barukh Atah Adonai, Eloheinu, Melech ha'olam hamav'dil bein kodesh l'chol bein
or l'choshech bein Yisra'eil la'amim bein yom hash'vi'i l'sheishet y'mei
hama'aseh. Baruch Atah Adonai, hamav'dil bein kodesh l'chol.*

Blessed are You, our God, Soul of the World, Who separates between sacred and secular, between light and darkness, between Israel and the nations, between work and rest. Blessed are You, God, who separates between sacred and secular.

We conclude our ceremony with song. The music of our lives is part of the great symphony of eternity.

עֲשֵׂה שָׁלוֹם בְּמִרְוַמָּיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

*Oseh shalom bimromav, Hu ya-aseh shalom aleinu
v'al kol Yisrael. V'imru, amen.*

Maker of abundant peace, God will make peace for us,
for all Israel, and for all the world. Amen.