

October 29, 2024

Daily Reflections



Center for Spiritual Development

RETURN AGAIN

By Julie Mussché

A Quote

Dear Reader,

I am writing this reflection during the break between morning and afternoon services on Yom Kippur. Last evening was Kol Nidre, the opening liturgy for the Day of Atonement. As shared in prior reflections, the prayers, readings and music guiding these days are haunting and compelling. Here are some inspirations that surfaced through my heart and spirit.

“If I could see God’s face within my heart...

*I’d see the human face in a thousand acts of mercy—
the one who gives bread to the hungry and shelters the lost,
who hears the voice of grief
and makes room for the stranger;
who brings relief to the blind, the bent, the unjustly imprisoned;
and is true to the essence of holy work;*

*defying evil, healing brokenness, easing pain;
and, in the end, forgiving ourselves as God forgives us.”*

MISHKAN HANEFESH, MACHZOR FOR THE DAYS OF AWE, 108

Reflection

I have been attending High Holy Day services for almost 30 years; it has become ingrained in my yearly spiritual journey. While familiar, every year some new truth surfaces, a fresh glimpse of something sacred. What captured my attention this year is our origin story as children of God.

One of the prayers from last evening’s service remembers that God was present and responded to pleadings from the beginning of the relationship with humankind: Sarah; Abraham; Isaac; Rebeca; Jacob; Leah; Rachel; Joseph; Shiphrah and Puah; Yacheved; Moses; the daughters of Zelophehad, and Elijah. In that recitation, both at the beginning and the end of the litany of names and respective events, there is a communal supplication of “answer us.” The answer requested: to be forgiven and that God recognizes the community’s desire to atone, to be and do better as a new year begins.

What impressed me was the implied expectation that we too are a part of the same lineage. Yes, not particularly breaking news, and at the same time, a significant thing: we are connected over time and generations through a Sacred Source. “If I could see God’s face within my heart” deepens the connection toward communal responsibility to live out that inheritance as God’s children enacting kindness, mercy, and truth in our day-to-day lives.

Well, the break period is coming to an end, and I hear simple lyrics being sung as a guitar is gently strummed: “Create your heart in me, Great Spirit.”



Silhouette of a Person's Hands Forming the Heart Shape

Photo by Fahd Dajani

For Pondering

- What is your origin story as a child of God?
 - How are you called to create God's heart in you?
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For Prayer

*The Lord is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?*

*The Lord is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?*

*One thing I ask from the Lord,
this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the Lord
and to seek him in his temple.
For in the day of trouble
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;*

*he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent
and set me high upon a rock.*

PSALM 27:1, 4-5

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