

A Service of Comfort in the Shadow of Loss
Kol HaNeshamah:
West Seattle's Progressive Synagogue Community

Psalm 121

Esa Einai, el he'harim
Mey'ayin mey'ayin yavo ezri?
Ezri Mey'im HaShem
Oseh Shamayim V'aretz.

Dr. Geoff Greenlee

I lift up my eyes unto the mountains
From where does my help come?
My help comes from the One
Maker of the heavens and the earth.

Reading: Out of the Depths:

A heavy burden has fallen upon us and sorrow has bowed our heads. 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 Your world weeps with us in this time of sorrow. We seek comfort and solace from the distress that has overtaken us. Let us find that comfort and solace in the love of family and friends, in the sources for healing that are found in all of our wisdom traditions, and in the resilience of the human spirit that helps us endure through our most difficult trials and troubles.

Grant us the strength to endure what is inescapable, the wisdom to accept what cannot be done undone, and the courage to go on without bitterness or despair. Amen.

Adapted from Rabbi Chaim Stern from *On the Doorposts of Your House*.
Copyright 2010 by the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

Introductory Words

Rabbi Zari Weiss

Reading:

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 the 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.

Oseh Shalom

Oseh Shalom Bimromav

Hu yaaseh shalom

Aleinu v'al kol Yisrael,

Y'al kol yoshvei tevel. V'imru Amen.

Dr. Geoff Greenlee

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.

By Rabbi Edythe Mencher, from L'chol Z'man V'Eit. Copyright 2015 by
the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

Reading: The Meditations of our Hearts

The meditations of our hearts are not always acceptable
to You, O God, or even to ourselves.

Sometimes our thoughts are bitter with anger,
and sometimes they are sour with remorse.
Sometimes they are gloomy with doubt,
and sometimes they are heavy with despair.

We acknowledge that we are creatures of many moods;
And that when we face the loss of loved ones, friends, and members of our extended family,

Our emotions may reflect our inner turmoil and deep distress.

Help us to cope with our feelings, with honesty and with patience,
Help us to ponder the immediate in the perspective of the eternal.

In our days of pain and anguish
In our nights of tearful sorrow,
Give us faith, O God, to trust in Your healing power.
Help us to draw strength from the assurance
That Your lovingkindness has not departed from us;
That we will yet know again,
the blessings of serenity and peace.

Reading:

When evil obscures our world, let us be bearers of goodness.
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 through 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.

Psalm 19:15**Dr. Geoff Greenlee**

Y'hiyu, l'ratzon, imrei fee, v'hey'gee-yon, libi, l'fanecha. Adonai, Tzuri, v'go'ali.

May the words and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to You, Eternal One, my rock and my redeemer.

Reading:

We have lived in numberless towns and villages; and in too many of them we have endured cruel suffering. Some we have forgotten; others are sealed in our memory, a wound that does not heal. A hundred generations of victims and martyrs; still their blood cries out from the earth. And so many, so many at Dachau, at Buchenwald, at Babi Yar . . .

We can we say? What can we do? How bear the unbearable, or accept what life has brought to our people? All who are born must die, but how shall we compare the slow passage of time with the callous slaughter of the innocent, cut off before their time?

They lived with faith. Not all but many. And surely, many died, with faith in God, in life, in the goodness that even flames or bullets cannot destroy. May we find a way to the strength of that faith, that trust, that sure sense that life and soul endure beyond these bodies' deaths.

They have left their lives to us: let a million prayers rise whenever Jews worship: let a million candles glow against the emptiness of these unfinished lives.

(Rabbis Chaim Stern and Henry Cohen)