



**Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5774**

## **MI SHEBEIRACH**

### **Help Us, Also, to Be Resilient**

Few modern thinkers better express the relationship between prayer and healing than Debbie Friedman (ז"ל). In her exquisite *Mi-shebeirach* prayer, now commonly used in Reform and Conservative congregations throughout North America, Friedman has transformed the plea for healing from a prayer hastily chanted by the rabbi or cantor, to a stirring melody sung by the entire congregation.

Friedman's version subtly deflects some of the language of the traditional *Mi-Shebeirach*, recited during the Torah service:

*"May God who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah bring blessing and healing to [petitioner adds name]. May the Holy One mercifully restore him/her to health and vigor, granting him/her physical and spiritual well-being .....*

*The congregation responds: "Amen."*

Friedman's text reads:

*Mi shebeirach avoteinu  
M'kor hab'racha l'imoteinu*

May the source of strength,  
Who blessed the ones before us,  
Help us find the courage to make our  
lives a blessing,  
and let us say, Amen.

*Mi shebeirach imoteinu  
M'kor habrachah l'avoteinu*

Bless those in need of healing with  
*r'fuah sh'leimah*,  
The renewal of body, the renewal of  
spirit,  
And let us say, Amen

Friedman focuses, also, or rather, on the need for courage in the face of physical challenge – a courage that allows us to see our lives as blessed. The shift in language is subtle, but its intention is

ingenious. The restoration of health and vigor is not always assured, but courage to confront its challenges is crucial to spiritual wellbeing.

Dr. Barbara Levin cites Friedman's healing words, "May the source of strength who blessed the ones before us, help us find the courage to make our lives a blessing..." Levin concludes that "the overall goal of developing resilience is moving ahead with one's life and being able to keep one's traumas and challenges in proper perspective."

As you listen [LINK TO <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHKo3CjuzpY>] to Friedman's *Mi-Shebeirach*, think about its invention and its ability to move even the most skeptical worshipers with its incredible energy, both for the individual and the community.