



## **Recovery Speakers and Stories**

Serenity Shabbat is an ideal opportunity to share a Shabbat meal with someone from the Jewish community who is in recovery, which includes loved ones of those who have struggled with addiction, and invite them to share their story of recovery. We can connect you to one of our volunteers in long term recovery; such individuals focus on the life affirming message of recovery, share the spiritual gifts they have received in recovery, and give particular attention to their Jewish recovery journey. You might also read published stories of Jewish individuals in recovery: many have published their stories to help others understand their journeys. The Jewish Addiction Awareness Network, a comprehensive resource website for information and connection, features many voices sharing Jewish perspectives on addiction and recovery.

<https://www.jaanetwork.org/perspectives/personal-stories.php>

## **Prayers, Readings, and Observances**

Addiction-related readings or prayers can be incorporated into your home observances, including discussions during or after Shabbat meals or while learning. Readings and prayers that complement the theme of Serenity Shabbat include:

### **Serenity Shabbat Prayer for Healing**

Mi Shebeirach Avotainu, Avraham, Yitzchak, V'Yaakov, Sarah, Rivka, Rachel V'Leah—may the one who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, bless those who are in need of healing from addiction. May those who are suffering from cravings and triggers find the strength of King David who prayed “this too will pass.” May those who feel alone and lost find the guidance that Abraham found in a Higher Power he called “Eyl Elyon”-- God most High -- and went to a land he did not know. May mothers and fathers who suffer as they witness the pain of their children be heard like Rachel who wept “for her children and refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are away. For it is written ‘And G-d will answer her: Restrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for your work will be rewarded, says G-d, and they will return from the land of the enemy. There is hope for your future . . . (Jeremiah 31:14-16)’” May families pulled apart by addiction find the healing that Joseph knew when he said to his brothers “‘please come closer to me,’ and they drew closer.” O God, please heal us now. Together we say: Amen.

### **Serenity Shabbat Memorial Prayer**

In the fullness of complexity that is the human condition, we acknowledge the good and the bad in the lives of our loved ones who have died of addiction. The moments of light and darkness, the disease of addiction and moments of sobriety, the mistakes and the



desire to change, the hope and the loss. May their memory forever be a blessing. With the collective knowledge of their deaths, we lift up feelings of loss and hope, discouragement and relief, anger and awareness—to name a few of the emotional energies in the room. Each of these emotions serves a purpose, and may we be gentle with ourselves and one another as we experience them. We now remember them in our hearts and in our minds. Let us take a moment of silent reflection and personal remembrance of our loved ones who died at the hands of addiction. May God remember them and may we, without obligating ourselves with a vow, offer tzedakah and acts of loving-kindness for their sake. With this merit, may their souls be bound up in the bonds of life with the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah so that their memories may become a blessing. And let us say, Amen.

T'filat haShalvah/The Serenity Prayer

The Serenity Prayer is a common feature at the end of 12-step fellowship meetings like AA (Alcoholics Anonymous), NA (Narcotics Anonymous), OA (Overeaters Anonymous), FA (Families Anonymous), and Al-Anon throughout the United States and the world. Below is the Serenity Prayer in English, Hebrew, and transliteration.

The Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity  
 To accept the things I cannot change,  
 The courage to change the things I can,  
 And the wisdom to know the difference.

א-ל-י-ת-ן ב-י א-ת-ה שֶׁ-לֹא-נֹהַל ק-בֶּל אֶת-הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁ-אֵין בְּיָכוֹל תִּי לִשְׁנוֹתֵם אִמְרָן לִשְׁנוֹת אֶת-  
 הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר בְּיָכוֹל תִּי וְיִתְּבוּנָה לְהַבְחִין בֵּין הַשְּׂנִיִּים

AyLEE tayn bi et hashal VAH  
 l'kaBAYL et had'vaREEM she'AYN b'YAcholtee  
 l'shanoTAM ooMETZ l'shaNOTE et had'vaREEM aSHAYR b'yacholTEE  
 ut'VUnah l'havCHEEN bayn hash'NAYim

Celebrating Sober Birthdays: Cake Taking

Many people in recovery celebrate sober birthdays (the anniversary of a person's sobriety). Sober birthdays are often celebrated in 12-Step fellowships, during which members are given a cake on their sober birthdays. This is sometimes known as “taking your cake” or “getting my cake.” This week’s parsha, *Naso*, is when the Torah teaches that one of the pathways to be close to God involves abstinence from mood altering substances. A person whose spiritual journey included abstaining from alcohol and



other drugs would go to the Temple in Jerusalem and make a commitment to following the spiritual program. Part of that ceremony in ancient days included placing a cake in the hands of the person making the commitment. Currently, as we celebrate the birthdays and anniversaries of those who dedicate their lives, one day at a time, to following a program of sober spiritual living, we can celebrate those birthdays and anniversaries with a cake. Consider having cake for dessert at one of your Shabbat meals to celebrate addiction recovery...that of someone you know or for all who are living a life free of addiction!

“(Name/s of participants) I offer you this cake in celebration of the anniversary of your Recovery. May you find strength in following your program, and from the people, places, and things that support Recovery and may you be guided on your journey by a power greater than yourself. Yom Echad B’chol Pa’am—One day at a time.”