



## Torah for Turbulent Times

"A Time for Healing"

"A season is set for everything, a time for every experience under heaven... A time for tearing down and a time for healing." (Ecclesiastes 3:1-3) Even before this passage was quoted by the new President-elect on Saturday night, we could feel it in our *kishkes*, in our insides. We've known it all along. Lately, there's so much need for healing in our world, in our country, and in our hearts, bodies and souls.

The Hebrew root word, "*r'fuah*/healing," appears 67 times in the Torah (mostly referring to G-d as *the* Healer). Our imperative is to take active measures to heal ourselves, and not just leave it up to nature. Generally we visit our doctors for physical healing, but as for spiritual healing? We can find guides to give us pointers and show us the trail markers, but mostly we're on our own for this one. Except, we have community. Rav Kook, one of our great "soul doctors" reminds us of the complexity of being human. "The human being is an organic creature. The many functions of the human body and soul are intertwined and interdependent." Maimonides, another giant on the "soul staff" in his Physicians Blessing, noted, "You have blessed Your earth, Your rivers and Your mountains with healing substances; they enable Your creatures to alleviate their sufferings and heal their illnesses. You have endowed us with the wisdom to relieve the suffering of our brothers..."

Given the complexity and interdependence of our human essence, perhaps it's natural then to turn outside of ourselves for guidance and support. American Jewish healers explain that, "*It isn't always possible to cure, but healing always is possible.*" Healing is not just about the alleviation of physical symptoms. It's also about drawing upon Jewish resources and the community to develop strength, courage, a positive identity, a sense of meaning, and the feeling of belonging both to an ancient tradition and to an active local community. Jewish healing is described in communal terms: When the individual is ill, he or she often suffers from social isolation. Thus a key part of Jewish healing focuses upon *healing the community*...(Susan Sered)

I share this inspiring prayer excerpt with you from The Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth, Rabbi Ephraim Mervis. "Bless with strength those who are suffering. Bless with resilience those in isolation. Bless with hope those who are

despondent. Bless with wisdom all those who seek a cure and bless with compassion all those who offer comfort. Bless the leaders of our nations. Give them and their advisors knowledge and foresight to act with wisdom and sincerity for the wellbeing of all whom they serve...Almighty God of healing and hope, at this time of heightened global awareness of our mutual interdependence, enable all of humankind to appreciate the strength that comes from being united in concern and love, rather than divided with hate and prejudice. As we look to the future, may You endow all people with the capacity to build and sustain societies of unity, tolerance, harmony and peace.”

And locally, if you're in need of any “healing of the spirit,” or if you're just curious, join me this Sunday morning at 10 am for our first ["Pop-Up" Healing Space](#). With song, blessing, teaching and a cleansing ritual of washing our hands, we'll do our part. Healing, like change, takes time.

Rabbi Mark