



Fostering Healing Conversations: How Ancient Texts and Modern Reflections Help Us Care

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At NYP, Rabbi Kalish served as manager of Pastoral Care and Education for the East Campus and coordinator for the Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital. She was the vice chair of the Pediatric Ethics Committee and the facilitator of the Schwartz Center Rounds. Rabbi Kalish worked previously as the Jewish Chaplain in Palliative Care at Calvary Hospital. She is a past president of Neshama: Association of Jewish Chaplains.

Rabbi Kalish has extensive experience in interreligious dialogue and its application for peace-building and community relations. She was a founding national co-chair of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom’s Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day. Rabbi Kalish received a JTS Seeds of Innovation Grant in 2018 for her volunteer work in coordinating teen interreligious dialogue activities in her home community of Hudson County, New Jersey, one of the most religiously and ethnically diverse communities in the United States. She has developed and incorporates diversity and inclusion in her chaplaincy and pastoral counseling teaching.

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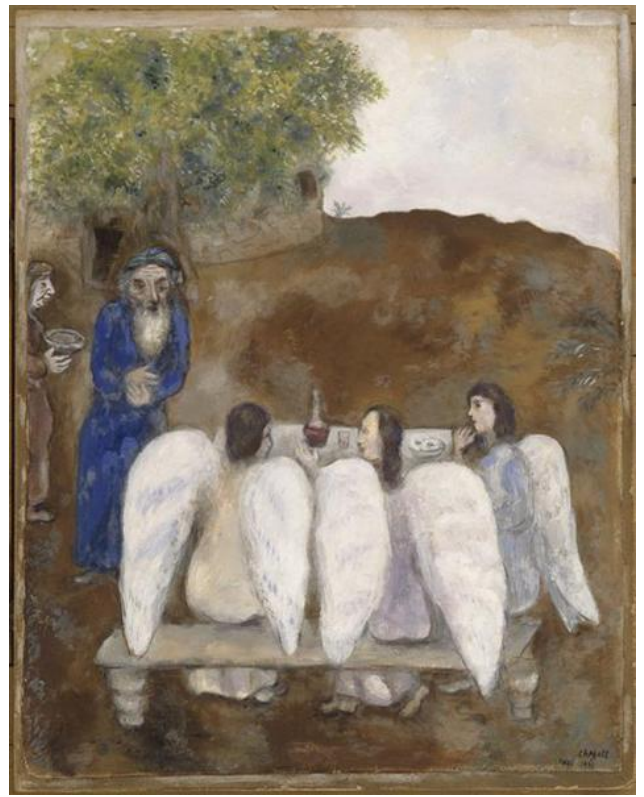
Harold and Carole Wolfe Director of the Center for Pastoral Education

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Saint Martin Dividing his Cloak , 1618 (Anthony van Dyck)



Three angels visit Abraham, 1931 - Marc Chagall



Part I: Spiritual Distress and Healing

Avot D'Rabbi Natan 4:5

פעם אחת היה רבן יוחנן בן זכאי יוצא מירושלים והיה רבי יהושע הולך אחריו וראה בית המקדש חרב [אר"י אוי לנו על זה שהוא חרב] מקום שמכפרים בו עונותיהם של ישראל. א"ל בני אל ירע לך יש לנו כפרה אחת שהיא כמותה ואיזה זה גמ"ח שנאמר כי חסד חפצתי ולא זבח.

Characters: Narrator, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabban Yochanan

Narrator	Once, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai was walking with his student Rabbi Joshua, near Jerusalem after the destruction of the Temple. Rabbi Joshua looked at the Temple ruins and said:
Rabbi Joshua	Woe! The place that atoned for the sins of the people Israel lies in ruins!
Narrator	He said to him:
Rabban Yohannan	Don't be afraid, my son. There is another way of gaining atonement, even though the Temple is destroyed. And what is it? It is through deeds of loving-kindness. For it is written 'Lovingkindness I desire, not sacrifice.'" (Hosea 6:6)

Part II: The Process of Spiritual Caregiving

Avot D'Rabbi Natan 14:6

כשמת בנו של רבן יוחנן בן זכאי נכנסו תלמידיו לנחמו. נכנס רבי אליעזר וישב לפניו וא"ל רבי רצונך אומר דבר אחד לפניך א"ל אמור. א"ל אדה"ר היה לו בן ומת וקבל עליו תנחומין. ומניין שקבל עליו תנחומין שנא' (בראשית ד':כ"ה) וידע אדם עוד את אשתו אף אתה קבל תנחומין א"ל לא די לי שאני מצטער בעצמי אלא שהזכרת לי צערו של אדה"ר. נכנס ר' יהושע וא"ל רצונך אומר דבר אחד לפניך א"ל אמור. א"ל איוב היו לו בנים ובנות ומתו כולם ביום אחד וקבל עליהם תנחומין אף אתה קבל תנחומין. ומניין שקבל איוב תנחומין שנא' (איוב א':כ"א-כ"ב) ה' נתן וה' לקח יהי שם ה' מבורך. א"ל לא די לי שאני מצטער בעצמי אלא שהזכרת לי צערו של איוב. נכנס ר' יוסי וישב לפניו וא"ל רבי רצונך אומר דבר אחד לפניך א"ל אמור. א"ל אהרן היו לו שני בנים גדולים ומתו שניהם ביום אחד וקבל עליהם תנחומין שנאמר (ויקרא י':ג') וידם אהרן אין שתיקה אלא תנחומין ואף אתה קבל תנחומין. א"ל לא די לי שאני מצטער בעצמי אלא שהזכרת לי צערו של אהרן. נכנס ר"ש וא"ל רבי רצונך אומר דבר אחד לפניך א"ל אמור. א"ל דוד המלך היה לו בן ומת וקבל עליו תנחומין ואף אתה קבל תנחומין ומניין שקבל דוד תנחומין שנא' (שמואל ב' י"ב:כ"ד) וינחם דוד את בת שבע אשתו ויבא אליה וישכב עמה ותלד בן ויקרא את שמו שלמה אף אתה רבי קבל תנחומין. א"ל לא די שאני מצטער בעצמי אלא שהזכרת לי צערו של דוד המלך. נכנס ר"א בן עזריה כיון שראהו אמר לשמשו טול לפני כלי ולך אחרי לבית המרחץ לפי שאדם גדול הוא ואיני יכול לעמוד בו נכנס וישב לפניו ואמר לו אמשול לך משל למה"ד לאדם שהפקיד אצלו המלך פקדון בכל יום ויום היה בוכה וצועק ואומר אוי לי אימתי אצא מן הפקדון הזה בשלום אף אתה רבי היה לך בן קרא תורה מקרא נביאים וכתובים משנה הלכות ואגדות ונפטר מן העולם בלא חטא [ויש לך לקבל עליך תנחומים כשחזרת פקדונך שלם] א"ל ר' אלעזר בני נחמתי כדרך שבני אדם מנחמין.

Characters: Narrator, Rabban Yohanan, Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Yose, Rabbi Shimon, Rabbi Eleazar ben Arakh, Servant

Narrator:	When Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai's son died, his disciples came in to comfort him. Rabbi Eliezer entered, sat down before him, and said:
R. Eliezer:	Rabbi, if you please, may I say something to you?
Narrator:	He responded:
Rabban Yohanan:	Speak.
Narrator:	He said to him:
R. Eliezer:	Adam had a son who died, yet he received comfort for the loss. How do we know that he was comforted for him? Because it is said in the Torah, "And Adam knew his wife again." ¹ May you too be comforted.
Narrator:	He responded:
Rabban Yohanan:	Is it not enough that I grieve over my own? Do you have to remind me of Adam's grief?
Narrator:	Rabbi Yehoshua entered and said:
R. Yehoshua:	Rabbi, if you please, may I say something to you?
Narrator:	He responded:
Rabban Yohanan:	Speak.
R. Yehoshua:	Job had sons and daughters, all of whom died in one day, and he was comforted for the loss of them. May you, too, be comforted. How do we know that Job was comforted? Because Job said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord." ²
Narrator:	He said to him:
Rabban Yohanan:	Is it not enough that I grieve over my own? Do you have to remind me of Job's grief?
Narrator:	Rabbi Yossi entered, sat down before him, and said,
R. Yossi:	Rabbi, if you please, may I say something to you?

¹ Genesis 4:25

² Job 1:21

Narrator:	He responded:
Rabban Yohanan:	Speak.
Narrator:	He said:
R. Yossi:	Aaron had two grown sons, both of whom died in one day, yet he was comforted for the loss of them, as it is said, "And Aaron was silent." ³ – his silence implies a willingness to be comforted. May you, too, be comforted.
Narrator:	He said to him:
Rabban Yohanan:	Is it not enough that I grieve over my own? Do you have to remind me of Aaron's grief?
Narrator:	Rabbi Shimon entered and said:
R. Shimon:	Rabbi, if you please, may I say something to you?
Narrator:	He responded:
Rabban Yohanan:	Speak.
Narrator:	He said to him:
R. Shimon:	King David had a son who died, yet he allowed himself to be comforted for the loss of him. How do we know that David was comforted? Because it is said, "And David comforted Batsheva his wife, and went to her, and lay with her; and she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon." ⁴ May you, too, be comforted.
Narrator:	He said to him:
Rabban Yohanan:	Is it not enough that I grieve over my own? Do you have to remind me of King David's grief?
Narrator:	R. Eleazar ben Arakh entered. As soon as Rabban Yohanan saw him, he said to his aid:
Rabban Yohanan:	Take my clothing and follow me to the bathhouse, for he is a great man, and I shall be unable to withstand him. ⁵
Narrator:	He entered and sat down before him and said:

³ Leviticus 10:3

⁴ The root of the name Solomon can mean "peace" or "consolation." 2 Samuel 12:24.

⁵ ואיני יכול לעמוד בו

R. Eleazar:	May I tell you a parable? To whom may you be likened? To a man with whom the king deposited an object. Each and every day the man would weep and cry out, saying, "Woe is me! When shall I be safely relieved of this trust?" You too, rabbi, had a son: he studied the Torah, the Prophets, the Writings; he studied Mishnah, <i>Halakhah</i> , and Midrash, and departed from this world without sin. May you be comforted because you have returned unimpaired what was given you in trust.
Narrator:	He said to him:
Rabban Yohanan:	Eleazar, my son, you have comforted me the way people should give comfort!

Part III: Spiritual Care for the Caregiver

Edvard Munch, The Sick Child, 1896)



Abraham Weeping for Sarah, 1931 - Marc Chagall -



Disenfranchised Grief

"[G]rief that results when a person experiences a significant loss and the resultant grief is not openly acknowledged, socially validated, or publicly mourned. In short, although the individual is experiencing a grief reaction, there is no social recognition that the person has a right to grieve or a claim for social sympathy or support."

Doka, K. J. (2008). Disenfranchised grief in historical and cultural perspective. In M. S. Stroebe, R. O. Hansson, H. Schut, & W. Stroebe (Eds.), *Handbook of bereavement research and practice: Advances in theory and intervention* (pp. 223–240). American Psychological Association

Compassion Fatigue and Secondary Traumatic Stress

We can define STS as the natural consequent behaviors and emotions resulting from knowing about a traumatizing event experienced by a significant other-the stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized or suffering person.

Charles S. Figley and Kathleen Regan Figley, "Compassion fatigue resilience," *The Oxford Handbook of Compassion Science* (2017): 387-398.

Ring Theory, developed by clinical psychologist Susan Silk and arbitrator Barry Goldman



[In trying times, try using Ring Theory | Holyoke Enterprise](#)

Supporting Characters

- Characters that are supporting -- “both [as providing] emotional support to the heroes and moral support to the dominant cultural narratives embodied by the heroes” as well as in “in the literary sense of not being the main protagonist of a given narrative.”
- They are “people *in relationship* to people in positions of cultural power”
- “Rather than viewing these supporting characters as appendages to the heroes they orbit [...] their vantage point will be the lens through which we examine these stories. When we do, we find that, alongside the dominant values they have been understood and used to perpetuate, certain other values and critiques have been preserved in surprising ways, awaiting discovery and appropriation.”

Tova Hartman and Charlie Buckholtz, *Are You Not a Man of God? Devotion, Betrayal, and Social Criticism in Jewish Tradition* (United States: Oxford University Press, 2014)

Rabban Yochanan's supporters:

Rabbi Eliezer

"And Adam knew his wife again."⁶

Rabbi Yehoshua

Job said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord."⁷

Rabbi Yossi

"And Aaron was silent."⁸ – his silence implies a willingness to be comforted.

Rabbi Shimon

"And David comforted Batsheva his wife, and went to her, and lay with her; and she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon."⁹

Rabbi Eleazar ben Arakh

May I tell you a parable? To whom may you be likened?

Job, Chapter 2:11-13

וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה רֵעֵי אֱיֹזָבָה אֶת כָּל־הַרָעָה הַזֹּאת הַבָּאָה עָלָיו וַיָּבֹאוּ אִישׁ מִמְּקוֹמוֹ אֶל־פֶּז הַתִּימְנִי וּבִלְדָּד הַשׁוּחִי וְצֹפָר הַנַּעֲמָתִי וַיֵּצְדּוּ יַחְדָּו לָבוֹא לְגֹדֶלְוֹ וּלְנַחֲמֹו: וַיֵּשְׂאוּ אֶת־עֵינֵיהֶם מֵרְחוֹק וְלֹא הִכִּירוּהוּ וַיֵּשְׂאוּ קוֹלָם וַיִּבְכּוּ וַיִּקְרְעוּ אִישׁ מְעָלוֹ וַיִּזְרְקוּ עָפָר עַל־רָאשֵׁיהֶם הַשָּׁמַיְמָה: וַיֵּשְׁבוּ אֹתוֹ לָאָרֶץ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים וְשִׁבְעַת לַיְלֹת וְאִין־דָּבָר אֵלָיו דָּבָר כִּי רָאוּ כִּי־גָדַל הַכָּאֵב מְאֹד:

When Job's three friends heard about all these calamities that had befallen him, each came from his home—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They met together to go and console and comfort him. When they saw him from a distance, they could not recognize him, and they broke into loud weeping; each one tore his robe and threw dust into the air onto his head. They sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights. None spoke a word to him for they saw how very great was his suffering.

⁶ Genesis 4:25

⁷ Job 1:21

⁸ Leviticus 10:3

⁹ The root of the name Solomon can mean "peace" or "consolation." 2 Samuel 12:24.