

Soften the Harshness of the Decree: Meditation before U-Netaneh Tokef

Zahara Heckscher

Adonai, we pray, soften the harshness of the decree.

If it be Your will, give us more time.

One more birth to celebrate, one more bar mitzvah to dance, one more chance to throw candy at the fiancés, one more baby to hold in our hands.

If it be Your will, we ask, give us one more year with those we love, one more month of heartfelt work, one more day to learn, one more minute to pray.

Adonai, we don't know when, but we know that one year you will not be able to change the decree of time.

We don't know why, but we understand dimly that the beauty of the cycle is in its completeness.

So we ask You, we pray, soften the decree in other ways.

Help us stretch each year by filling it with adventures, and wisdom earned by travels through hardship as well as joy.

Help us stretch each month by giving us focus, increasingly our ability to see the path you have chosen for us, and giving us the force to walk that path with a clearer sense of our purpose, our direction.

Help us stretch each day by filling us with Your love, filling us until we overflow, so we can express kindness to strangers, and so we can fulfill the sometimes harder task of ever expressing kindness to those who are close to us.

Help us stretch each minute by calling us to You, moment by moment, letting us hear the still small voice, reminding us that every moment is a chance for prayer, a chance to connect with You, a chance to redeem another spark of light.

This we pray: Soften the heart harshness of the decree. Soften the harshness of the decree. Soften the harshness of the decree.

And let us say, Amen.



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