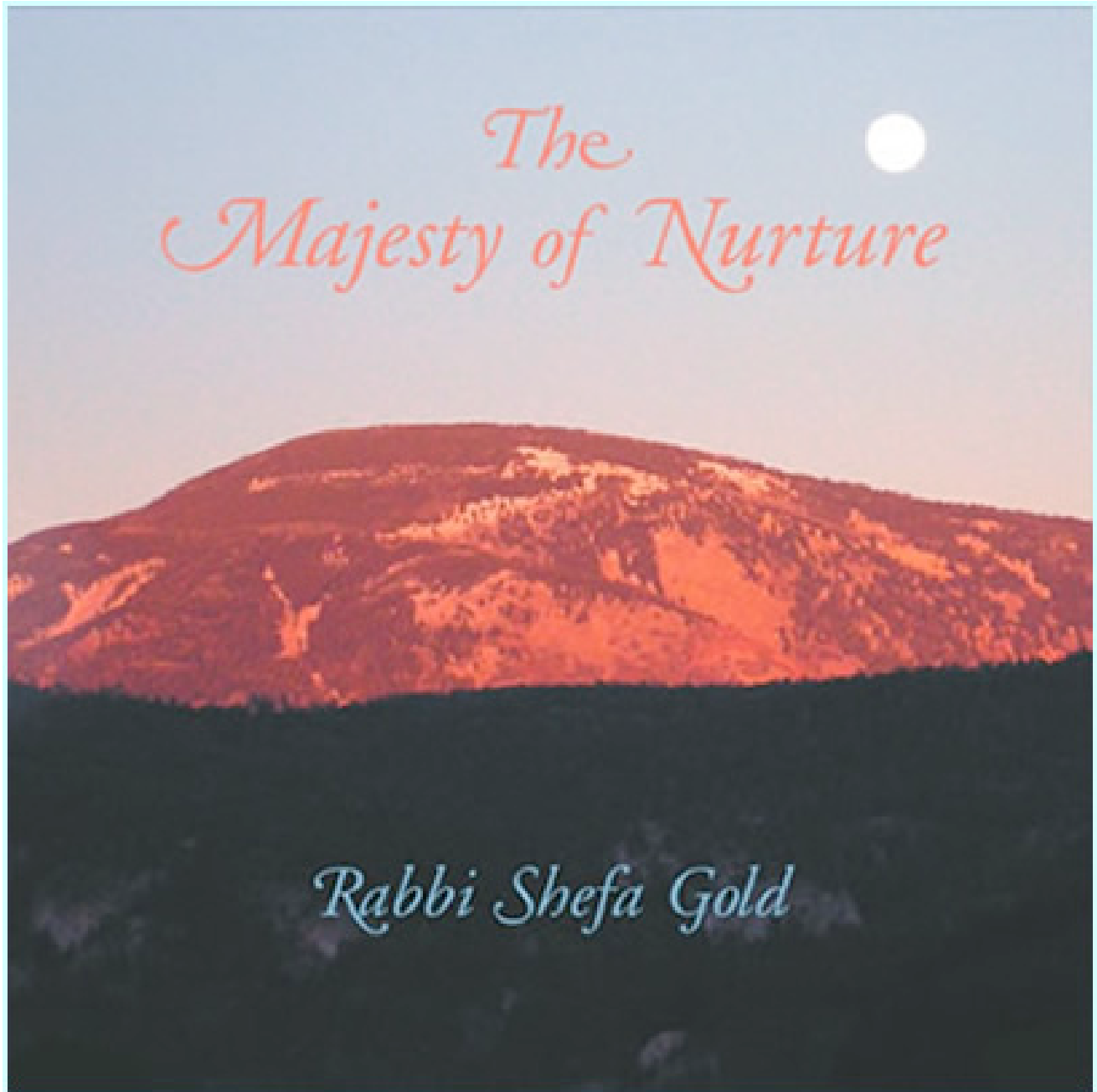


Liner Notes



The Majesty of Nurture

Rabbi Shefa Gold

1. Procession
2. Modah Ani
3. Oh Pure Soul
4. Ozi
5. Sa'b'aynu
6. Hodiyaní
7. With Every Breath
8. Eagle's Wings
9. Jeremiah
10. The Majesty of Nurture
11. Adon Olam
12. Kol Zimra
13. Pírchuli Havdalah

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(I am grateful to Evelyn Katz and Judith Dack who contributed both resources and love to make this project a reality. Thank you to Rabbi Arthur Waskow for the inspiration of the Title.)

The Majesty of Nurture takes us on a journey of prayer. We begin by invoking the Divine presence in order to unify the places of duality in us. We turn then to the practice of gratefulness for our lives. We acknowledge the purity and infinite potential of our souls and then do the work of balancing the forces of will and surrender. We invite in a vision of our future self in order to see who we are becoming and then we celebrate, first with the practice of complete satisfaction and then exuberant praise. We turn then to the inspiration of Torah and to the wisdom of the Prophets. Our prayer concludes an affirmation of our participation in the process of the evolution of consciousness, a hymn to the mystery of God, and a celebration of Joy. The last step of our journey is a ceremony of Havdalah that takes us through four gates back into the holiness of our lives.

1. Processional

Mi adir al HaKol? Mi baruch al HaKol? Mi gadol al HaKol?
Hu yivarech Hachanan v'HaKallah.

These words are from the beginning of the traditional wedding service. I wrote this processional in honor of Danya and Eyal's wedding, but then I began singing it as I woke up each morning as a way of invoking the Divine Presence that would marry me to myself.

I offer it here as a practice of calling in the Unifying force whose very Presence makes me whole.

2. Modah Ani: Gratefulness

Modah ani l'fanecha , Ruach chai v'kayam
She'hechazarta bi nishmati b'chemla , Raba Emunatecha

Thank you God for my life, Spirit moves ever on,
You return my soul to me with compassion,
Great is Your Faith in me!

3. Oh Pure Soul

Elohai n'shama she'natata bi t'hora hi
Oh Pure Soul in you I see endless possibility!

A rabbi-friend who is a hospital chaplain asked me to write a chant that she could sing to the tiny babies who were born prematurely and were struggling to come fully into their embodied life. When I imagined singing these words to them, I realized that there is a tiny, fragile baby inside of me who also needs encouragement in order to be fully realized. When I sing to her each morning, I am calling forth her potential and gently welcoming her into form.

4. Ozi: Balancing Will and Surrender

Ozi v'Zimrat Yah Vayahí li lishuah

My Strength (balanced) with the Song of God will be my salvation.

(Psalm 118:14 and Exodus 15:2)

In this practice I find and express my strength, my will, my effort and desire when I chant "Ozi". When I chant "v'zimrat Yah," I open and surrender to the God-song and let it be sung through me. Then in the last phrase, "Vayahí li lishuah," I balance those two aspects of my practice.

5. Hodiyani: Inviting our Future Selves

Hodiyani Yah kitzi, u'midat yamai ma hi

Oh God, show me my end, and what is the measure of my days?

(Psalm 39:5)

With this chant we can pray for a vision of who we are becoming. At the end of the chant, open up to receive a visit from your future self. Receive her gift, wisdom, guidance or blessing.

6. Satisfaction and its Fruits

Sab'enu vaboqer chasdekha;

Un'ran'nah v'nism'chah b'chol yameynu.

May Your Loving-kindness satisfy us in the morning;
and we will sing out and we will rejoice for all our days. (Psalm 90:14)

Satisfaction is a daily practice of opening to the flow of God's love and receiving that flow in gratefulness. Then we can let our lives be an expression of the wonder, surprise, appreciation, awe and delight that comes from receiving the gift of our lives each day. The practice of satisfaction requires that I

suspend my habitual complaint, create a space of inner stillness and receptivity, and then open my senses to the subtle flows of loving-kindness that are always flowing into our world. That flow may come through the color of the sky or the song of a bird or the touch of silk against my skin. That flow may come through the rhythm of my breath, through a sudden inspiration, or through the kindness of a friend. Our practice is to become attentive to that flow, be filled by it and then let our lives become a response to this divine generosity.

7. With Every Breath

Kol Han'shama t'halelYah

Every soul praises God with every breath,
From the moment of birth until Death! Haleluyah! (Psalm 150:6)

8. Eagle's Wings

chorus: Va'esa etchem al kanfay n'sharim, v'avi etchem aylai

I did lift you up on eagle's wings and brought you back to Me,
For the love I give in the gift of this world,
Is the power that sets you free.

Enslaved in your narrow places,
Separated by creeds and races,
Will you open your eyes
And take off my disguise?

Will you open your eyes to Me?

I did lift you up on eagle's wings and brought you back to Me,
For the love I give in the gift of this world,
Is the power that sets you free.

Enslaved in your negative thinking,
Sailing off in a boat that is sinking,
When you open your mind,
then My Presence you'll find,
Will you open your mind to Me?

I did lift you up on eagle's wings and brought you back to Me,
For the love I give in the gift of this world,
Is the power that sets you free.

Enslaved in your fears and trepidation's,
Separated by genders and nations,
When you open your heart,
We will never be apart,
Will you open your heart to Me?

I did lift you up on eagle's wings and brought you back to Me,
For the love I give in the gift of this world,
Is the power that sets you free.

This prison is all your own making,
And your freedom will come with awaking,
To the love that I give,
In the gift of this world,
Will you open your self to Me?

Va'esa etchem al kanfay n'sharim, v'avi etchem aylai

I did lift you up on eagle's wings and brought you back to Me,
For the love I give in the gift of this world,
Is the power that sets you free.

9. Jeremiah 9:22-23

Al yit'halel Chacham b'Chochmato
(Let not the wise glory in their wisdom)

V'Al yit'halel hagibor bigvurato
(Let not the strong glory in their strength)

Al yit'halel ashir b'ashro
(Let not the rich glory in their riches)

Ki im b'zot yit'halel hamit'halel
(If you must glory then glory in this)

Haskel v'yadoah oti
(That you understand and know Me)

Haskel v'yadoah oti.

For I am God who makes love and justice

and all that is Right...

In these things I delight

In these things I delight.

10. The Majesty of Nurture

L'takayn Olam b'malchut Shaddai

Healing the World through the Majesty of Nurture

These words are found in the prayer which is called "Alaynu." It comes near the end of the prayer service and is meant to energize us for our holy work. This translation was given to me by Rabbi Arthur Waskow, whose dedication to the

holy work of healing the world is an inspiration for me. The Divine name Shaddai is related to the word for Breast. It is an ancient name of God that invokes the Source of all nurturance. As we chant these words, we align ourselves with the Majesty of Nurture by expressing the awesome healing power of compassion for all Life.

11. Adon Olam

The words of this hymn are attributed to Rabbi Schlomo ibn Gibirol, the great liturgical poet who lived in Spain during the eleventh century. This melody came to me on the last night of my hermitage at the Lama Foundation in the mountains of northern New Mexico, and I dedicate it in gratefulness for that holy place of refuge.

Here is an interpretive translation that I wrote with my friend and colleague Rabbi Goldie Milgram:

Thresh-hold of Infinity which is the organizing principle,
Before all form was created,
When with his desire, everything was made,
Then Melech its name was called.
And after the end of everything,
Alone will he Melech awesomely.
It was, it is, it will be in Beauty,
It's One and not dual, to compare it or match it up,
Without beginning, without end – it's the Strength and it's in charge.
It's my God and the life of my redemption (Its life redeems me.)
Rock of my breath at the time of trouble,
It's my miracle and my place to fly,
The portion of my cup on the day I call out.
Into its hand I entrust my spirit,

At the time I sleep and when I awake,
And with my spirit my body is,
YHVH is with me, I will not fear.

12. Kol Zimra

This song is directly inspired by Isaiah, particularly the words of Haftorah Ekev. It is dedicated to the students of Kol Zimra (my leadership training program) who are my daily inspiration.

Sason v'simcha y'matzei va
Todah v'Kol Zimra..(repeat)...

(Overchant):

Joy can be found in the places within
Overflowing in song when you let God in!

You are the lines engraved on my hands,
(Chorus): How can I forget you?

I am the river that flows through your lands,
(Chorus): How can I forsake you?

You are the child sleeping at my breast,
(Chorus): How can I forget you?

I am the Mother that loves you best,
(Chorus): How can I forsake you?

I will turn your wilderness into Delight,
Your darkness will become a radiant light.

I will turn your wilderness into Delight,
Your darkness will become a radiant light.

13. Pitchuli-Havdalah

This ceremony facilitates the journey from Shabbat into the week. Each step of the journey is celebrated with a verse from Psalm 119 that helps us to open the gates of our hearts and enter into a state of empowered gratefulness. Then a series of biblical verses that include Isaiah 12:2-3, Psalms 3:9, 46:12, 84:13, 20:10, Esther 8:16 and Psalm 116:13 are all recited to invoke the spirit of redemption as we journey through the passage from Shabbat into the rest of our lives. Our intention is to harvest the holiness of Shabbat and bring that holiness into every moment of living, to allow the rarified air of Shabbat to lift up our awareness so that we can live that holiness every day. To accomplish that journey, we move through four gates:

As we move through the Gate of Wine, we bless the intoxication of Shabbat and allow its power to transform our consciousness. Moving through the Gate of Spices, we call up all the sweet memories of Shabbat and plant them within like seeds, so that the sweetness of Shabbat can grow inside us throughout the week. As we walk through the Gate of Fire, we open to the illumination and radiance of Shabbat to light our way with insights and revelation. And as we move through the Gate of Holiness, we affirm that holiness is everywhere and it is our job to discern and call forth all the different kinds of holinesses as we step into the world.

Pitchuli sha'arei tzedek; Avovam odeh Yah! (Psalm 119:19)

Open for me the Gates of Righteousness; I will enter them and thank God.

Entering the Gate of Wine:

Baruch Ata Yah, Eloheynu Ru-ach Ha-Olam boray p'ri ha-gafen
Blessed are You, our God, Living Spirit of the World who creates the fruit of
the vine.

Entering the Gate of Spices:

Baruch Ata Yah, Eloheynu Ru-ach Ha-Olam boray minay b'samim
Blessed are You, our God, Living Spirit of the World who creates various
spices.

Entering the Gate of Fire:

Baruch Ata Yah, Eloheynu Ru-ach Ha-Olam boray m'oray ha-aysh
Blessed are You, our God, Living Spirit of the World who creates the light of
fire.

Entering the Gate of Holiness:

Baruch Ata Yah, Eloheynu Ru-ach Ha-Olam ha-mavdil bayn k'dushot ba-kol
Blessed are You, our God, Living Spirit of the World who distinguishes between
different kinds of holinesses in everything.