

I fully support the National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS Day. This is not a spiritual issue limited to any one faith community. All of our spiritual communities need to come together in spiritual commitment to bringing this so needed healing. We are all created in the image of the One. But, until we join together and engage in God-like activity we are not full co-partners with the Source of Healing. The Talmud, teaches that just as God visits the sick, so must we. In the face of HIV/AIDS, we reaffirm our traditional and profound obligation of *pikuach nefesh*, the saving of lives. Jewish tradition has a long and strong spiritual commitment to praying for and with those in need. Praying for the Healing of AIDS is a paramount moment calling for such prayers.

The challenge of Jewish tradition in responding to HIV/AIDS is clear. Where pain and suffering exist, we must bring comfort and solace. Where prejudice and ignorance prevail, we must provide acceptance and knowledge. *Bikur cholim*, *pikuach nefesh*, *gemulit chasidim*, caring for the sick, saving lives, deeds of loving kindness; these have been Jewish values and our commitments since Sinai.

When we join together, shoulder to shoulder, prayer with prayer, then we, created in the Image of God also shine the Likeness of God- for we have walked the God-talk of our combined prayers by joining with each other.

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Ben Romer