

From *Voices Within the Ark- The Modern Jewish Poets* , edited by Howard Schwartz and  
Anthony Rudolf, 1980, Avon Publishers

“Abraham in Egypt” by Howard Schwartz

Somehow  
I had come to the desert  
Too soon  
There nothing flourished  
But the twin herbs of fear  
And despair  
And there was nothing  
Not even a single star  
To guide me  
For my fire was out.

Still  
I kept watch  
And so I saw the white bird  
Flying towards me  
That dropped a single seed  
At my feet  
And I cradled it  
And kneaded the earth to make it ready  
And planted it  
While the seed was still damp  
From its source.

In this way  
White blossoms came to appear  
And soon there was a single fruit  
And when I broke it open  
I found as many seeds  
As stars  
And when I tasted it  
I drank from the spring that winds  
Within  
And followed it as far as I could  
Knowing it would lead me  
Out of Egypt.

From *Voices Within the Ark- The Modern Jewish Poets* , edited by Howard Schwartz and Anthony Rudolf, 1980, Avon Publishers

“Thoughts for My Grandmother” by Laya Firestone

The sound of your lips beating  
Against each other in prayer  
Like the flapping of wings  
Preparing for flight.  
And the power in your stare---  
Your every movement was strength.  
Even the clenching of your teeth  
Was as deliberate a command as I'd ever heard.

But I didn't understand your ways.  
I cried for days.  
Only now do I begin to see  
How you boomed,  
Vibrated, shouted  
In utter self-restraint.

**On those days when we need strength and courage to correct serious situations: ( Chazak v'Ematz)**

From *Talking to God*

by Rabbi Naomi Levy, 2002, Random House

**A Prayer for Bad Days:**

Be with me, God. I feel so lost. I can't seem to escape the dark cloud that is hanging over me today. Help me, God. Give me strength to combat despair and fear. Show me how to put my pain into perspective. Teach me to have faith in the new day that is coming.

Thank You, God, for today's blessings , for tomorrow's hope, and for Your abiding love. Amen

**A Prayer for Healing from the Pain of a Relationship that has Failed:**

I am holding it all together on the outside, God, but inside my heart is so crushed. I never imagined the future without him/her.

Help me , God. Give me the courage to face the past and to learn from it. Remind me to take the time to grieve for all that is no more. I feel so alone. Be with me, God. Teach me to believe that there is hope for me, that I will find love again.

Heal my heart, God. Fill me with the strength to gather up all the broken pieces and begin again. Amen.

**A Prayer During a Difficult Pregnancy:**

Help me , God. Help me to endure this time of pain and discomfort. Remind me that this unpleasantness will pass. In the end may my labors be rewarded with a precious new life.

Fill me with strength, God, with patience and stamina and faith. Grant me health , God, and grant health to the sweet sacred life growing within me. Amen.

**A Prayer for Healing:**

I am sick, God. And I am frightened. I feel so alone. I am scared of doctors. I am scared of pain and uncertainty, of feeling helpless.

Be with me, God. Be there when others fail me. Be my friend.

Hear me, God. Heal me, God. Lead me back to strength, God, back to health, back to life, back to you, Amen.

**On those days when we need continued strength and courage to ensure a positive outcome:  
( Chazak v'Ematz)**

From *Talking to God*

by Rabbi Naomi Levy, 2002, Random House

**A Prayer for the End of the Ninth Month:**

God, as the days of my pregnancy draw to a close, I want to thank You for allowing me to carry this precious life inside me, for the gift of watching and feeling my baby grow.

As the hour of labor approaches, I pray to You , God, for the strength and the courage to face and endure labor. May my labor not be too painful or too long. Let my delivery go smoothly. Grant my doctors, nurses, and midwives the wisdom and skill to care for my child and for me properly. But most of all God, I pray that our baby will be born healthy, swaddled I blessings and in love. Amen.

**A Prayer for a Career Change:**

Life is short, God. I want to make a change. I am unhappy in my work, God. It's hard to invest so much time in something unfulfilling. I'd like to try something new, but I'm frightened. I'm scared of the financial strain this will put on my family. I'm worried about what people will say.

Help me , God. Give me the strength to make this leap. Fill me with courage and with the stamina I will need to see this through. Let the disapproval of others not hinder me in my quest.

Be with me, God, along this difficult journey. When the obstacles seem insurmountable, fill me with hope and persistence. When I begin to doubt myself, fill me with faith. When I lose my way, God, be my guide on the road to meaning, pride , and deep satisfaction. Amen.

**A Prayer for Wisdom and Guidance:**

God, I need to make an important decision, and I don't know which way to turn . I feel ambivalent and insecure. I wish I had eyes to peer into the future to know which path is the correct one.

Help me , God. Send me your guidance. Fill me with the insight to choose wisely. Remind me not to panic; remind me to take the time I need to make an informed decision. Teach me how to properly weigh each option. Give me the courage to trust my instincts, the faith to trust my intuition.

Be with me , God; lead me.

**“Helen Keller”**

By Langston Hughes

She  
In the Dark  
Found light  
Brighter than many ever see.  
She,  
Within herself,  
Found loveliness,  
Through the soul’s own mastery.  
And now the world receives  
From her dower:  
The message of the strength  
Of inner power.

**“ A Psalm of Life”**

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Tell me not, in mournful numbers  
Life is but an empty dream!  
For the soul is dead that slumbers  
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!  
And the grave is not its goal;  
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,  
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow  
Is our destined end or way;  
But to act, that each tomorrow  
Find us farther than today.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting  
And our hearts, though stout and brave,  
Still, like muffled drums, are beating  
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle  
In the bivouac of Life,  
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!  
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!  
Let the dead Past bury its dead!  
Act,-- act in the living Present!  
Heart within, and God is o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another  
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,  
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate;  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor and to wait.

## **“Woman of Strength”**

By Sharon Simani

A strong woman works out every day to keep her body in shape  
But a woman of strength kneels in prayer to keep her soul in shape.

A strong woman won't let anyone get the best of her  
But a woman of strength kneels in prayer to keep her soul in shape.

A strong woman isn't afraid of anything  
But a woman of strength shows courage in the midst of her fear.

A strong woman won't let anyone get the best of her  
But a woman of strength gives the best in what she does.

A strong woman makes mistakes and avoids the same in the future  
But a woman of strength realizes life's mistakes can also be God's blessings and capitalizes on them.

A strong woman walks sure-footedly  
But a woman of strength also knows God will catch her when she falls.

A strong woman wears the look of confidence on her face  
But a woman of strength wears grace.

A strong woman has faith that she is strong enough for the journey  
But a woman of strength has faith that it is in the journey that she will become strong.