



As we all know so well, this crazy virus has complicated everything. Everything. Living in a world of masks and vaccinations, it is still not possible to get back to a normalized world. Covid outbreaks cancel and complicate cruises, close down classrooms, and nursing homes, to name but a few places.

As a result, oftentimes I have had to say the final prayer, "the Vidui," from a distance. Connecting families from near and far via face-time or phone. It has always been so difficult.

And even more so, as I said the Vidui for my own mother.

My family went to see Mom at the end of December after she seemed to recover from pneumonia. She began eating again and even managed to walk again. I returned home to Las Vegas and soon thereafter her decline resumed.

Even so, I have seen bodily declines many times before. It can take days or weeks before death is near. And then I received the call from my eldest sister. The hospice nurse says it will be 24-48 hours. The nurses can be wrong, but not too often. So, while waiting to get there one final time, I decided it was best to say the Vidui by phone. My need to say goodbye in person should not delay her ability to pass and end what has been a very difficult year.

I have said the words hundreds of times over the years. Maybe more. But even by phone, they were the hardest words I have had to say. There is a power to the words:

My God and God of all who have gone before me,
Author of life and death, I turn to You in trust.
Although I pray for life and health,
I know that I am mortal.
If my life must soon come to an end,
let me die, I pray, at peace...
Protector of the bereaved and the helpless,
Watch over my loved ones.
Into Your hand I commit my spirit;
Redeem it, O God of mercy and truth.

Saying these words made a difficult moment very real. Denial, bargaining, and acceptance all came into play. But saying these words brought a spiritual dimension when faith and love are all that remains. I pray that these words help send my mom to a place where she is at peace.

We are here for such a short time. We only realize how short when someone we truly love passes away. At that moment, the clock speeds up too quickly. So, cherish each moment. Each and every moment.

Rabbi Sanford Akselrad

Rabbi Akselrad's mother, Marge Akselrad, passed away peacefully on Monday, Jan. 31, 2022. There will be a private burial service for the family on Friday, Feb. 4.

The congregation is invited to attend a memorial service and celebration of Marge's life on Sunday, Feb. 6, at 4:00 p.m. via Zoom:

Meeting ID: 834 9203 8536
Passcode: 729298
Dial-in: 669-900-6833

Zichrono L'vracha-may her memory be for a blessing.

