



- 00:00:00 [music] You are not moving, you are being moved.
You are not singing, you are being sung.
You are not praying, you are being prayed
Prayed at the speed of love.
- 00:01:08 Janet Conner: The truth is you are not praying, you are being prayed. You are not praying, you are being prayed. And you're being prayed at a depth, at a speed that we simply cannot comprehend, and it has come to me to simply call that the speed of love. No matter how many times I listen to Sofia singing that chorus, no matter how many times I say it, no matter how many times those words come through on my deep soul writing pages, I'm stunned.
- 00:01:44 I'm still floored by this concept that when I pray... because the English sentence sounds like, "I this person called Janet am doing this thing called praying," right? It sounds like it's a subject, take an action, object and it doesn't fit [laughter]. It doesn't fit. This is a mystical experience. So I this person named Janet may be choosing to enter into an experience of prayer with my Beloved, but the truth is I'm being prayed.
- 00:02:22 And we could sit with that a long, long time [laughter] to try to metaphorize it, visualize it, drop into the mystic. It's a mystical truth. It's not something, I think, our forebrains are capable of comprehending and yet I know it's true. You are not praying, you are being prayed. Prayed at the speed of love. I'm Janet Conner and it has been given to me to call myself a *Prayer Artist*.
- 00:02:53 That's item number two I can't get over. I am Janet Conner, and I am a *Prayer Artist*. And you, you have arrived in exquisite timing, perfect timing, speed of love timing to this tenth episode, number ten, the tenth conversation in my new podcast *Praying at the Speed of Love*. Now, if you've been reading any of my books, listening to anything I talk about or do, any of my prayer intensives, read my *Sunday Notes from the Field*, you know I pay attention to the numeric vibration.
- 00:03:35 And this started for me reading Margaret Starbird's book about Mary Magdalene. She's written five or six or seven, and one day back in December of 2014, during that time period that I now see as my initiation into the Divine Feminine, I read

them all. I read them all in order. I was just immersed for weeks on end in Mary Magdalene.

00:04:02 Well, one of the books is called *Magdalene's Lost Legacy*, and in that book I was introduced to the ancient Hebrew and ancient Greek numeric vibration called *gematria* where numbers are embedded in the words. And this is one of the gazillion reasons that we, reading in English all of these sacred texts, miss. We just miss. It's not there. We're not trained. We're not seeing the Aramaic or Hebrew words. We don't know that there is this vibration.

00:04:39 And so as soon as this awareness came to me, Emma Kupu Mitchell dropped into my life who is a depth numerologist, and now I can't help it [laughter]. I see the numbers. I feel the numbers. I know the numbers. I'm even offering a prayer intensive in August with Emma called *The Numbers in You*. So it's not an accident that this is the tenth episode because if you look at the number 10, everything gets reduced to one digit, so 1 plus 0 is a 1.

00:05:10 Yeah, the 1 and 0 in a 10 is a 1. What is one? New beginnings, new beginnings. We could not have a more perfect numeric vibration for this conversation, a very real conversation, with Rabbi Tirzah Firestone. Rabbi Tirzah is a woman who has helped hundreds of people experience a whole new beginning—their one—as they heal their deeply buried intergenerational Jewish trauma.

00:05:48 We now know through epigenetics... the first person I'm aware of—doesn't mean the first person that talked about it—but the first person that I heard this word from is Bruce Lipton. And now, it seems to be out in the general conversation. We know through epigenetics that trauma is passed on, whether you know what happened to your ancestors or not. But we do know, don't we? We know what happened in the Holocaust, and we therefore must know what is happening right now.

00:06:26 As children are once more rounded up and placed in concentration camps, this time on the United States border, this conversation with Rabbi Tirzah matters. Her work is of the utmost importance for Jewish descendants of survivors of the Holocaust and for every single one of us.

00:06:52 In this conversation, there is something, there is something waiting for you: some nugget of healing, some nugget of trauma, some nugget of prayer. It's hovering in the air waiting to enter your heart and transform your life. So let us begin this conversation as we always do, listening to the call of the voice of the sacred Tibetan bowl as she invites us to open, yes, our physical ears. She makes a physical vibration sound.

00:07:32 But she's really asking you to open your invisible ears, the ears of your heart, that you may at last hear what wants to be heard.

- 00:07:49 [the bowl rings]
- 00:08:20 Janet Conner: I don't know if you could hear that third ring. It was so tiny, so small, but the bowl wanted to welcome us three times. She has something, a special song for Rabbi Tirzah. This is the first time you have heard me have a conversation with Rabbi Tirzah, and so I want to take a moment to introduce her. She is a psychotherapist and the founding rabbi of a congregation in Boulder, Colorado called *Nevei Kodesh*.
- 00:08:49 She has counselled hundreds of Jewish families and individuals for over 30 years, helping each one of them heal their intergenerational trauma. She put all this together in a gorgeous brand new book called *Wounds into Wisdom, Wounds into Wisdom*. It's just now out from an imprint of Monkfish Publishing. Welcome, Rabbi Tirzah.
- 00:09:18 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Thank you. Delighted to be here, Janet.
- 00:09:21 Janet Conner: Mm. I am so looking forward to this conversation, and the listeners know that this podcast is about prayer, personal prayer lives. As far as I know, it's the only place on the internet that you can hear someone talk about, at a very intimate, deep level, their personal prayer life. But this book, this book. If you don't mind, I'd like to ask you to talk to us about the book before we get into your personal prayer life.
- 00:09:49 And I have a feeling those are very interwoven conversations anyway, but this book is just too important. Would you start there and tell us what is *Wounds into Wisdom*? Why did you write it, and why is it so important right now?
- 00:10:05 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: I would be happy to. I hold *Wounds into Wisdom*, Janet, as a prayer for the world really. It's filled with the stories of people from all parts of the planet who suffered enormous traumas: the extreme events of the Holocaust, but not only the Holocaust, also exile from their homes in Arab countries, people who lost children in suicide bombings, in war etc.
- 00:10:35 And all of these people, they did not... these are the people who are the great people of humanity. They did not succumb to hatred or fear. They did not brand themselves as victims and walk around as victims for the rest of their lives. These are the great people who show us how to get up, in the midst of our suffering, not to bypass our pain for sure, but rather to do the hard work of transforming our wounds into wisdom, our painful scars into strengths.
- 00:11:09 So this book is about people who suffered themselves, but it's also about inherited trauma. So inherited trauma, as you just told us, is a new field called epigenetics or sometimes called behavioral epigenetics, and it is about intergenerational trauma. It's about the residue, the residue of our ancestors' extreme life

experiences that are passed down to us because they simply could not be processed.

- 00:11:42 They couldn't be swallowed. These things happen to our ancestors that was faster than the speed of love, if you will, to use your terminology. It was too fast, too soon, too much for them to metabolize, and so the residue of that comes down to us in all kinds of forms. In the form of anxiety or guilt or feelings of loneliness or feelings of existential quandary, all kinds of residues.
- 00:12:14 And they land in us, and we don't even know where they came from. And sometimes we feel guilty that we have so much baggage, but we came by it honestly. The question that these stories ask us is will we let our pain flatten us, or will we use our tears and our suffering to water, if you will, to water our prayer seeds for the world and for our lives.
- 00:12:48 I guess I can tell you that I wrote this book as an answer to my own life and the unwell patterns that I inherited from my own family because my parents came out of the Second World War very scathed. My mother was a German Jew who escaped Nazi Germany in 1939 on the *Kindertransport*, a train that took out 10,000 children thanks to the Quaker movement. She got out but she left behind scores of her relatives, cousins and uncles and aunts, and they were all killed.
- 00:13:25 And she never spoke about them. She never named them. She never told us about them. It was after I turned 40 that I even found out about them. My father was American-born, and he served in the US Army in World War II. And he was sent... he was stationed over in Germany and stationed in the most devastated parts of Germany in a bomb detection squadron.
- 00:13:55 And he found himself in April 1945 in Bergen-Belsen as it was being liberated by the British, and the things he saw there are the unseeable things that he locked in his heart. And I never heard anything about that until after he died. And after he died, we went into his file cabinets to clean it out, and there was a file of photographs that he took there that we found.
- 00:14:30 But he had never told us about it and the most heinous things. So I learned from these untold stories that trauma passes down, and it comes through even if the stories are not told. It comes through in mother's milk and in father's temper and in different looks on their faces or the spoken things or unspoken things. It just comes through us, to us, and lands in us.
- 00:14:59 And that was the impetus I had to heal myself, and so I made a study of it. And then as I'm studying intergenerational trauma, I realized this stuff affects all of us. It applies to all of us. Certainly, not only Jews. Every people on earth who have ever known oppression. I think it applies to every woman on earth. I think it applies to everyone who has ever been objectified.

- 00:15:30 These are things that we grow up with in our bodies, and we need to know how to, as I say in the book, stop the trauma train.
- 00:15:42 Janet Conner: The phrase that just made me go, "Woah," is we know it in our bodies. We know it in our bodies. And I'm finding myself, since the *Prayer Artist* thing, that I have to pray with my body. My whole body has to move, and I find myself dropping, dropping, dropping. I am not interested in the thinking thoughts. And in the spiritual world, people have been saying for quite a while, "Drop into your heart, drop into your heart."
- 00:16:11 That's not low enough for me. I've found myself, without hearing anybody talk about it, that I needed to go into my womb. I needed to go into my gut. And so without any... I mean, there's no books out there talking about this, so I just thought, "Well, I'm a little crazy, but I know I need to pray in my womb. I know that comes first." And so the minute you said that, the body knows. Well, and I'm flashing right now upon hearing the body knows... it's on my bookshelf.
- 00:16:43 There's a famous book by a therapist with an unpronounceable name called *The Body Keeps the Score*, right?
- 00:16:51 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Yes. That's one of my teachers, Dr. Bessel van der Kolk who is of Dutch origin. And he is one of the great traumatologists in the world right now. *The Body Keeps the Score*. And he talks exactly of this, how it lives in our cells. Our traumas live in our cells, but so do our prayers and so does our health. And so that's where we have to reach for.
- 00:17:16 Janet Conner: So in hearing you talk about the fact that this is true for everyone, as a result of your book, I found myself feeling such empathy for my mother's family Cunningham. They left Ireland because they were starving to death. Now, there was no conversation about that, and yet I'm going into my body to feel that pain. They were very unhappy people.
- 00:17:45 These were dower... you know, we think of the Irish as being happy-go-lucky. Not in my family. No, no, no, no. My grandmother was the... hmm. I don't I ever saw the woman smile. Somebody took a photograph of her. It was actually for the Catholic Church, and they posed her on her grandpa's knee. And they were smiling, and we all looked at this picture went, "Who are these people? We've never seen them smile. What are you talking about [laughter]?"
- 00:18:15 It's like what? And that's when it dawned on me. She doesn't smile. I've never seen her smile. And then on the other side, my mother, long before the computer, was really into genealogy, so this was typing carbon letters and traipsing through graveyards. She went to Ireland to traipse through graveyards.
- 00:18:34 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Wow.

- 00:18:34 Janet Conner: And, yeah. It's really a treasure. But you know what she came up with on my father's side? And this was a shock. They're Huguenots. They're Huguenots, and the Huguenots were suffering horrific religious persecution. They got on a boat in Belgium, and his relatives came on the boat right after the Mayflower. If it weren't for your book... I mean, when Mom gave us the genealogy, she cared, but it wasn't about healing the trauma [laughter].
- 00:19:09 In fact, her intention upon... she was ecstatic when she found out that my father goes back to the boat after the Mayflower because her daughters, we could join the Daughters of the American Revolution [laughter]. And my sister and I went, "Over our dead bodies. No. We don't want to do to the DAR." My mother was crushed, crushed because she couldn't be in the DAR as a starving Irish woman, right, but we could've. So she was very upset that we did not appreciate the great glory of being in the DAR.
- 00:19:43 But now, when I open her genealogies and see these documents of people coming from Ireland and coming from religious persecution in the 1600s, and I put that in the light of your book? So it's true isn't it? This is everyone.
- 00:20:08 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Mm-hmm. I think so. I think so. And it has the word Jewish in the title, *Healing Intergenerational Jewish Trauma*, but the truth is that's just one small group amongst so many. And Jews, for better or for worse, we have known about persecution, we've know about oppression for centuries and centuries, and so we have this gift, I think.
- 00:20:39 I truly believe that we have this gift to feel more empathy and more compassion for what's going on in the world right now because we've been there. We've had our children separated from us and put into camps. We've gone through these bitter, bitter trials, and so if we don't have compassion, who can?
- 00:21:05 Janet Conner: And here we are today, this conversation is being recorded at the tail end of June in 2019, and the thing that we are seeing in the news is about the migrant children in concentration camps—there is nothing else we can call them—and it's so horrific. And we think, I think, "How, how can this be happening again?"
- 00:21:40 But it is happening again, and so now society is creating another generation of traumatized children, traumatized families. So you didn't plan this, Tirzah, but your book simply could not have more perfect timing, could it?
- 00:22:02 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Yeah. Very sadly, very sadly. We're encountering this enormous rise of hate in the world and of rallying in our own and protecting our own at the expense of the other. And we're encountering walls of racism and "othering." Put that word in quotes. "Othering," the other.

- 00:22:38 Yet, as a rabbi, I know that not one, not a dozen, but three dozen times in the Old Testament and the Hebrew bible and the Torah do we hear this powerful injunction that says, "You were once other. You were once strangers. You were once the alien, so you must love the stranger in your midst." That's what God wants of you. Do not kick him out. Do not kick her out. Do not other them. Bring them in and make them part of your family.
- 00:23:13 And that's the bitter pain that many of us are feeling right now that we are living through this again. So it is a sacred obligation now to pray our hearts out, to act our hearts out, to really pray with our, as Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said, pray with our feet. If that means showing up, showing up on the border. If it means writing letters or if it means making calls, however we do that, pray with our mouths, our hearts, our legs, our arms, any way we can.
- 00:23:51 Janet Conner: So let's talk now about your personal prayer life. I'm very curious how you grew up in an Orthodox Jewish family, right?
- 00:24:02 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Yes.
- 00:24:02 Janet Conner: So how were you taught to pray as a child, and then did your prayer life evolve and change?
- 00:24:12 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Absolutely [laughter]. I was taught to pray from a book, from a Siddur, from a Jewish prayer book, and that was fantastic because I learned many things by heart. And I learned how to pour my heart out, and now I don't pray with a prayer book or seldom do I. I pray from my heart. I have many prayers and psalms in particular—I love psalms—committed to memory.
- 00:24:40 And I go under my prayer shawl, which is a place of my power, my invisibility cloak, if you will, where I get invisible to the world. And I really go inside, and I sit in God's presence. And I pour my heart out for whatever is going on in myself, in my family, in the world.
- 00:25:08 And I think all of us need to find our own way to pray. For me, it's not out of the book now, but I am so deeply grateful that I was given a sense of God, a sense of the divinity, the sense of the divine. And it really took for me. And as a little girl I always felt God's presence, so that's one of my greatest richest riches that I inherited from my family.
- 00:25:39 When I'm thinking about the rich legacies and then the rupturous legacies, I got both. Most of us do. So each of us has to learn how we pray best, and maybe it's out in nature, maybe it's pulling the blanket over our head and praying under the covers, maybe it's when we pet our animals, our dogs, our cats. And each of us has to find a living god, a living god, a living face of god.
- 00:26:09 In other words, it's where it's really electric, where we know there's another presence or something bigger than us that's with us.

- 00:26:21 Janet Conner: I love the idea of your prayer shawl. So is it in the tradition? Is it a traditional prayer shawl, or did you make it? If a listener... I mean, just like right now the idea went, "Woo hoo! Woo hoo! Prayer shawl [laughter]." A person could [crosstalk] prayer shawl, right?
- 00:26:46 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Yeah. I personally pray under a traditional prayer shawl but that doesn't mean you have to. It could be any beautiful shawl or blankie or piece of silk fabric or something that's an heirloom from your grandmother. It could be a quilt. It could be any piece of fabric that you love that you make a habit of going under for your sacred work because—here's the magic of it—when we go under it time and time again, day in, day out, when we are crying, when we are really feeling our feelings, when we're really asking god, when we're praising god, when we're singing our songs, that piece of fabric just accrues the, I could say, the holiness, the Shakti, the vibration of our prayers.
- 00:27:42 And so every time we go under it, it makes it easier for us to pray, to go into the prayer zone because it carries inside of the molecules of the fabric, if you will, our prayers. It collects it. It collects all our prayers, so once you have a prayer shawl going, you don't really... it might be a ratty piece of fabric, but you go back to it because it's carrying the magic.
- 00:28:11 Janet Conner: Well, and this idea, to bring it together with *Wounds into Wisdom*, if perhaps it is from family, then it's almost as if we can help them heal.
- 00:28:28 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Beautiful. Oh, love it.
- 00:28:29 Janet Conner: Right? In the mystic, doesn't matter who's alive and dead, right? So I can pray for my grandmother, my Irish grandmother.
- 00:28:39 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Absolutely.
- 00:28:41 Janet Conner: I have to think really hard what I have of hers. I bet you there's a hankie around here somewhere, right? What a beautiful... and what if families remembered that? At least the listeners now could look at something, especially when a family member dies, and treasure it. This is a treasure to pass on and pass on and turn it into a prayer shawl. When my ex-husband died... it's not exactly a prayer shawl, but this is an idea that could be turned into a prayer shawl.
- 00:29:13 He was the first director of field operations for CNN, so anywhere President Reagan went, he went. So he had this wild accumulation of t-shirts. I think lots and lots of people have this ridiculous accumulation of t-shirts, and they sit. They're just going to sit in a drawer until finally somebody donates them to goodwill. So I don't know where I got the idea, but I opened this drawer of historic events. The Checkpoint Charlie when it was still Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin, he had a t-shirt from that.

- 00:29:49 And then he had a t-shirt from the day he picked up his Harley in York, Pennsylvania, and he had a t-shirt for his sailboats. He had a t-shirt for this and a t-shirt for that. I gave them all to a woman who can sew and said, "Okay. Let's make a..." it's sort of the size of a baby quilt, and I meant it as a gift for our son. And it is spectacular. Now, wouldn't that be... if we made a prayer shawl with that intention. This is my grandmother. This is my grandfather.
- 00:30:20 And I mean, it could be a current event. It could be anything. If we then... isn't that a great idea? Wouldn't it be lovely?
- 00:30:25 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Beautiful, beautiful idea. Yes. And we really are praying, in that sense, praying backwards and praying forwards and healing backwards and healing forwards. And it's gorgeous. I love it because one of the things that we do in Jewish ancestral healing or in all kinds of ancestral healing is first we reach back to the healthy and well and bright ancestors.
- 00:30:57 Even if we didn't know them by name, we imagine them. We call them in because every family, every bloodline has healthy people who weren't traumatized. It might be a thousand years ago or a hundred years ago [laughter]. We call them in. We know that they are beaming to us their goodwill and their desire that we be happy and their desire that we be whole. And we use them as, in a sense, an anchor. We ask them if they would be our guides, if they would be our protectors and our guardians as we do the harder work.
- 00:31:31 The harder work is stopping that trauma train. The harder work is working with people who we know in our families really were deeply distressed and were not whole because they had just seen too much, had gone through too much. And so we use the healthy, bright, tranquil ancestors, the healthy ones, to anchor us as we reach back. And this prayer shawl idea, I love it. I think we're going to implement that in my community [laughter]. Great.
- 00:32:05 Janet Conner: Well, and, you know, I cannot plan these conversations. I have a few questions in mind, but I can't plan these things that are going to happen. But I don't think it's an accident that this morning, a matter of a few hours ago as I was doing my deep soul writing, I suddenly knew that in this ceremony that I'm creating called *Goddess Rising*, which is a memory. You said all women carry this trauma. Well, we've been carrying it for 5000 years.
- 00:32:33 The patriarchal religions really came into strength at 3000 BCE, so it's been 5000 years. And it has come to me to create a ceremony, a living ceremony, where we embody the goddess rising again, the Divine Feminine. Everybody is talking about this and, of course, the Jewish tradition is way ahead of us because you have been calling in the *Shekinah* on Friday evening for thousands and thousands and thousands of years.
- 00:33:04 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: That's right.

- 00:33:04 Janet Conner: So just this morning in my deep soul writing, it came to me that as a part of this ceremony, as the women enter and start going around this quilt that my sister-in-law is making that's going to have an image of the sacred fire—because we always prayed around the fire, right, a zillion years ago—that we would chant in, call in eight goddesses. So we're going to chant in Hecate. We're going to chant in Isis [laughter]. We're going to...
- 00:33:35 And as I looked at that and I felt it, I went, "Oh, yes! We're going to do that." And here you are talking about chanting in the great-great-grandmothers and bringing them forward. It's exactly the same.
- 00:33:48 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Yes. Beautiful.
- 00:33:49 Janet Conner: It's exciting, so thank you for confirming what my deep soul writing told me a couple of hours ago. See this is the way things are in the mystic. Time is irrelevant. We don't have to go from you get an idea, you create that idea. It's not linear. And so I can get an idea before you give me the idea [laughter]. There's no explanation for this. It's the speed of love, right? It's not linear.
- 00:34:16 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: It's not linear at all.
- 00:34:18 Janet Conner: So I'm wondering if, as you were writing this book—now, you've been doing this research for 30 years—did the research, did the experiences with the families, did helping people heal their intergenerational trauma change how you pray?
- 00:34:40 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Oh, such a good question. It made my prayers larger. It spread them out vertically to the ancestors. It opened up all kinds of doors to the ancestors and also understanding that even our children who are unborn are with us. So there's a big, much bigger vertical line. There's a much bigger horizontal line. My prayers are for people I've never met and from around the world who are suffering the way my ancestors did right now.
- 00:35:14 And so, yes. It just, it keeps enlarging itself, these prayers.
- 00:35:23 Janet Conner: That's the key word, isn't it? That the heart of the divine is so beyond our comprehension. There is no end. It just grows and grows and everyone and everything and every planet and every drop of water, everything is welcome, included. And then we try to open our little hearts to experience this limitless love. Whew.
- 00:35:59 So I have a selfish question for you because it has come to me to redefine prayer, and I am in the process. I think it'll be the rest of my life, but I am experimenting with exploring whole new definitions of prayer because when I open the Oxford English dictionary and look at the definition of prayer, I think, "Talk about a tiny,

pukey, little box. No." It's so small to be supplicating some sort of external male god while following a formula, reading the book.

00:36:29 I grew up reading a book, too, right? The prayers were in the Missal, and that's a lovely foundation. But it doesn't continue to feed me, so I'm defining prayer as the love songs of your personal, intimate, ecstatic sacred marriage. I'm defining prayer as medicine. This is divine medicine. I think that's what we're talking about. This is medicine. Generational, divine, exquisite, healing, healing medicine.

00:37:00 As a relationship that when I pray, I'm stepping into this river that goes back in all time and goes forward. I'm not quite sure how that works, but as I pray, my great-great-future-grandchildren [laughter] are included in this river of prayer. And another definition is that it's the vibration of love squared. When you go to my website, janetconner.com, you see this L2 which is a cute little picture the photographer took as a joke. I just said, "Hey," because my formula so to speak for prayer is prayer is the vibration of love squared.

00:37:35 So I said, "Hey," and I held up my one hand in an L and one hand in a two. I said, "Take this little snap." I just thought it was a joke. I had no intention of using it, and my web designer took one look at that picture. It is now... that's Janet. It's the picture for *Praying at the Speed of Love* podcast. It's the main picture on my website, and so I'm redefining prayer in these ways that just crack my heart open. How do you define prayer?

00:38:05 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Oh. Okay. I would only add on to your definitions and say, very simply, when I pray I'm sitting in God's presence, just sitting in God's presence and listening, and listening to my heart and listening to the bigger voice. This question is bringing to mind a story I just heard about Mother Teresa. She was in an interview and the interviewer, I think it was a guy who said, "What do you actually say to God when pray, Mother?"

00:38:43 And she answered, "Well, I don't say anything. I just listen." And then the interviewer asked, "Well, what does God say to you?" And she said, "God doesn't say anything to me. God just listens [laughter]," and then she topped it off by saying, "And if you don't understand that, I can't explain it to you [laughter]."

00:39:07 Janet Conner: I can just see the look on that guy's face because she just left all definitions of prayer completely behind.

00:39:14 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: In the dust. In the dust. So I think for me it's, of course, pouring my heart out, but it's also... the word Kabbalah in Jewish mysticism and what I've learned from *Shekinah*, who is my face of God, my living face of God, is about receiving. And sometimes, I pour my heart out and then I have to just shut up and listen and get really receptive—Kabbalah means receiving—and just receive.

- 00:39:47 Receive God's prayer, receive guidance, receive love. Just let it pour back into me. So in a way, God is praying, as you said so beautifully, God is praying us. And it's like a circle. It's a big prayer wheel. Who knows where one begins and the other stops?
- 00:40:10 Janet Conner: Well now, there's another fabulous... we all know what a prayer wheel is, and we have a tendency to think of it as a thing. That's a thing and you can turn it. But I am a prayer wheel. Tirzah is a prayer wheel. Everybody listening is a prayer wheel. Now, that is a whole other deeper... that's you are not praying, you're being prayed.
- 00:40:39 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Yeah.
- 00:40:40 Janet Conner: This is a dangerous conversation, Tirzah. You're giving me [laughter]... and we're making prayer shawls, and we are standing and seeing ourselves as a prayer wheel. So on this show, we don't just talk about how we pray, we actually pray together. So do you have an experience that we can do together?
- 00:41:06 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Oh, yes. I have a couple of prayers. One is a prayer that I sing to the *Shekinah*, and it was written by a rabbi friend of mine, Rabbi Aryeh Hirschfield, so I can sing that one. Another one is extremely ancient, and it's both in ancient Hebrew and in English as well. And it's filled with *gematria*, as you mentioned, or filled with the mystical numerology that you talked about. [crosstalk] we do that?
- 00:41:38 Janet Conner: Ooh, ooh. Yeah, well, we can do them both.
- 00:41:42 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Okay.
- 00:41:42 Janet Conner: But then explain so it's "*guh-matria*," not "*juh-matria*," huh?
- 00:41:46 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: "*Guh-matria*" is how we say it, *gematria*. And it's every letter has its own numerical value and sometimes certain letters add up, certain words add up, and then they equal the vibratory frequency, the numerology value, of another word. And then you know that those two words are the same.
- 00:42:12 For instance, okay. We could go on forever here, but let me just say that the word love in Hebrew, *ahava*, is equal to 13 if you add it up.
- 00:42:24 Janet Conner: Thirteen, the number of the Divine Feminine!
- 00:42:27 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Yes, and so is another word which is a major word for all mystics around the world. It's at the core of the "Shema Yisrael," the core of the central mystical prayer in Judaism. It's *echad* which is oneness. So oneness and love are both equal to 13 which, without having to go into it, we know that they're

the same because they have the same value. So that's just a little *gematria* tidbit [laughter], factoid.

- 00:43:04 Janet Conner: It's fabulous. So what are we going to do first? Are we chanting, or?
- 00:43:08 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: So let me chant. This is well over 2000 years old, this chant, and it's for situations like we find ourselves in now. When we have created such knots and such tangles for people, and we've forgotten the dignity of each of us and we're really... we've got some problems and we need some divine intervention.
- 00:43:36 This prayer is about calling God's presence and power in to help us get out of our own self-made tangles. It's called the "Ana Bekoach," and I'll just do a couple of lines of it.
- 00:43:55 *Ana Bekoach,*
g'dulat yemincha,
tatir tz'rura, ay-yai-yai.
- Source of mercy*
with loving strength
untie our tangles, ay-yai-yai.
- Baruch shem k'vod*
malchuto,
le'olam va'ed, ay-yai-yai.
- Through time and space,*
your glory shines,
please help us Majestic One, ay-yai-yai.
- 00:45:02 And the *ay-yai-yai* or the *oy-yoi-yoi*, as we all know, is the universal cry. You don't have to be Jewish to say oy [laughter].
- 00:45:13 Janet Conner: That is so beautiful. Do you have that recorded anywhere?
- 00:45:19 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Ah, no. I do not because that's just a very ancient tune, but I have others that I'll share [crosstalk] the gift bag.
- 00:45:28 Janet Conner: Oh, yay. All right. Let's put a sacred chant in. We need two gift bags. I trust your publisher will give us an excerpt from *Wounds into Wisdom* so that the listeners can click, read a little bit, realize how desperately they need to transform their own wounds into wisdom and then... oh, yes. Let's have some singing, some chanting. There's something so gorgeous about singing your prayers.
- 00:46:03 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: I agree.

- 00:46:06 Janet Conner: So then the one with *gematria*?
- 00:46:09 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Well, that one has huge *gematria*. The other one is just an English chant that is directed to the Divine Feminine. It's a very personal one. You can sing it in first person singular or in first person plural, we and our. And if you do this in a group, you can just let harmonies come when you sing her name.
- 00:46:39 *Shekinah, Shekinah*. It's a call and response. And *Shekinah* literally means "the indwelling one." She who indwells. She who lives within us, within our pulsing, blood-flowing bodies. She is right here, right now. There's nothing abstract about her. She is breathing us. She is pulsing us. She's beating our hearts. She's flowing our blood.
- 00:47:09 And she lives in animals. She lives in every living thing, and we can feel it when we awaken our sensibilities. So this one goes... and it's, again, a call and response.
- 00:47:21 *Shekinah, Light of my soul*
Help me to be whole
Help me to love myself and others freely
In a way that's healing
Shekinah, Shekinah, Shekinah.
- 00:48:05 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: So anyone can sing. If I can sing, anyone can sing that and call her in. She who has so many names, as you've already said, and allow her to touch us and help raise us up.
- 00:48:19 Janet Conner: Yeah. The name for the Divine Feminine for me is Sophia. But when I do a whole circle chant, it's Sophia, Shakti, Shekinah, Chokmah, Mother Mary, Mary Magdalene, Tara, Kuan Yin [laughter], Lakshmi, Kali. We just go around the world and bring her in by all of her names.
- 00:48:47 So you've just opened all our hearts so much. This is such a gorgeous conversation and yet, of course, it never ends. Prayer is never finished with us. The *Shekinah* doesn't say, "Okay, Tirzah. You got that now. We're done here [laughter]." There's always another depth, so what are you curious about right now? Where are you sensing prayer, the Divine Feminine, is taking you?
- 00:49:18 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: Oh. I am curious and my prayers are all about how we are going to achieve some midcourse correction that we need to make in our world. And I know... I believe in miracles. I know that we can do this. I know that we can give back the dignity that belongs to every human being. I know that we're created in God's image, and we've veered off course. I know that we need to do better protecting our earth which is her body, her eminent body, her divine body, *Shekinah's* body.

- 00:49:56 That's what I'm praying about these days and what I'm curious about. And I'm looking for every possible way to find that, to link up with other people in prayer circles of all kinds and other clergy who are marching, other clergy who are writing letters. It just really doesn't matter. We all have to band together now, so that's where my prayers are taking me now. And I'm so grateful to you for bringing back the power of prayer to all of us, Janet. Thank you so much.
- 00:50:33 Janet Conner: Oh. Well, we can thank Sophia. She's the one that woke me up in the middle of the night and said, "*Prayer Artist*." And I was frightened. I mean, I said, "Excuse me. What's that [laughter]?" And I didn't do it right away, but eventually I googled *Prayer Artist* and then I really got frightened. So it's a good thing I didn't do it right away. Billions and billions of searches and not a single use of the phrase *Prayer Artist*.
- 00:50:59 And then I went, "Wait a second. Wait, wait, wait. You want me? I'm your *Prayer Artist*? Oh." But of course, I said yes because I do have such an intimate relationship with Sophia that the answer's yes. You want me to be your *Prayer Artist*? Okay. I have no idea what this means, but I'll be your *Prayer Artist*. Well, it changed everything, everything: the new website, I no longer teach my courses, I only offer prayer intensives. I had to close a very successful radio show *The Soul Directed Life* because I had to do this.
- 00:51:33 I had to offer *Praying at the Speed of Love*, and this conversation, Tirzah, is proof that Sophia knows what she's doing. This is so rich, so gorgeous. We are just having... you cannot have more fun than to pray together.
- 00:51:48 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone: I agree.
- 00:51:49 Janet Conner: Right? And we're dropping into the mystic together. Woah. So listeners, just in case... now, if you're at my website, you're already there, janetconner.com/10. But if you're listening on iTunes, all the gazillion places that you can hear this conversation, do come over to janetconner.com/10. If you don't remember the 10, just janetconner.com and click on the Podcast because you want to meet Rabbi Tirzah, know more about her, links to her website, her book.
- 00:52:26 Get a transcript of this show. Thank you Maureen Carter for creating these magnificent transcripts. You want to sing along, practice the prayer and open your Prayer Bags and receive your gifts. And then click on Join the Facebook Community because Rabbi Tirzah is joining us and you can meet her there and talk to her about any questions, any experiences in this gorgeous conversation #10.
- 00:53:01 Now, I always close with a little snippet from one of my prayers that I think somehow mirrors, picks up, the heart of our conversation. And because this is about, her book is about healing intergenerational trauma... oh, [voice cracks]

you can tell already I'm not going to make it through this prayer. I want to read "If I Forgave You." "If I Forgave You" was a complete surprise.

00:53:30 I was praying Ho‘oponopono, a prayer I adore, and one day, I don't know why, I turned to Archangel Michael who's always with me when I pray and I said, "You know, Michael..." I had begun to pray it for my mother, and I said, "Michael, I've been praying for my mother for five years now. She's forgiven, okay? She is forgiven. Will you please go back in time and find the tap root. When did this experience of being silenced begin?"

00:54:06 Now, I had no idea, no idea what I was doing and what was about to happen. But the second I said it, I felt a presence in the room. Didn't see, I didn't see this man, but I felt a presence. And [laughter] I felt that he was kind of like going, "What? Woah? Uh, huh, meh. What just happened?" And I knew instantly that this was the first man that silenced me, and I was married to him. Okay.

00:54:33 So with tears just pouring down my face, I said Ho‘oponopono to release him, to forgive him. And then I realized that this cuts these negative aka cords—call it guilt, call it pain, call it whatever you want—not only for he and I as husband and wife and our children, but for our children's children and our children's children covering 5000 years.

00:54:59 I did a simple mathematical, and I think it's at least 125 generations that experienced some kind of release through this prayer. So the next day, this prayer came through, and I'm going to try to read without completely falling apart. This is the most powerful prayer I've ever written. "If I Forgave You," written on February 5th of 2018.

00:55:31 If I forgave you for silencing my voice
Ending the music
Closing the dance

If I forgave you for shutting the temple
Dispersing the women
And trampling the fire

If I forgave you for bowing to power
Crushing our love
And selling your soul

Was it worth it, my dear?
Was it worth it?

If I forgave you for rattling your chains
Betraying my trust

And trading your honor

For what I wonder?
For what?

If I absolved your sins
If I wiped your face
If I unlocked the love songs so long buried in our hearts

Would you hear them?
Would you lift your feet?
Would you fall to your knees?
Would you?
Could you?

If I cut the cords of betrayal that bound us then
And bind us still
Would you feel a touch of freedom?
Would our children?
And their children and their children and all the children?
Because they are all our children.

If I forgave you, would you be free?
After all these years, would you?
Would we?
Would I be free?

If I forgave you, who would you be?
Who would you be?
Who would I be?

00:57:28 Timothy Frantzich's Voice: This conversation in the mystic with *Prayer Artist* Janet Conner has been rated L.

00:57:38 [music] You are not moving, you are being moved.
You are not singing, you are being sung.
You are not praying, you are being prayed
Prayed at the speed of love.