

The Physician's Daily Prayer

(attributed to Maimonides)



Almighty God –
You have created the human body with infinite wisdom.
In Your eternal providence,
You have chosen me
to watch over the life and health of Your creatures.

I am now about to apply myself to the duties of my profession.
Support me in these great labors that they may benefit humankind.
For without Your help, not even the least thing will succeed.

Inspire me with love for my art and for Your creatures.
Do not allow thirst for profit, ambition for renown and admiration
to interfere with my profession.
For these are the enemies of truth and can lead me astray
in the great task of attending to the welfare of Your creatures.

Preserve the strength of my body and soul
that they may ever be ready to help
rich and poor, good and bad, enemy as well as friend.
In the sufferer let me see only the human being.

Enlighten my mind that it may recognize what presents itself
and that it may comprehend what is absent or hidden.
Let it not fail to see what is visible
but do not permit it to arrogate to itself
the power to see what cannot be seen
for delicate and indefinite are the bounds
of the great art of caring for the lives and health of Your creatures.

May no strange thoughts divert my attention at the bedside of the sick
or disturb my mind in its silent labors.
Grant that my patients may have confidence in me and in my art
and follow my directions and my counsel.
When those who are wiser than I wish to instruct me
let my soul gratefully follow their guidance
for vast is the extent of our art.

Imbue my soul with gentleness and calmness.
Let me be contented in everything
except the great science of my profession.
Never allow the thought to arise in me
that I have attained sufficient knowledge
but vouchsafe to give me the strength and the ambition
to extend my knowledge.
The art is great,
but the mind of a person is ever-expanding.
I now rise to my calling.

Translation/Adaptation © by Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, CSW, 2000