

Blessings

Category: Healing

written by Pamela Adelstein | February 3, 2021

During a routine Thursday evening clinic, I knock on the exam room door, enter, and greet my patient. She is an elderly Puerto Rican woman with worsening Type 2 diabetes, a new bleeding sore on her face, and chronic back pain.

As I log onto the computer, my patient and her niece discuss how *guapa* I am, and I blush silently. The patient smiles, at ease, as her niece laughs wildly, such music to my ears.

As this visit concludes, we plan a telemedicine follow-up in three months. My sweet patient forgoes her pre-pandemic kisses and hugs, and instead says to me, in rapid Spanish: "May God keep you safe, bless your children, and protect your husband. Take care of yourself, my kind doctor. You have helped me so much. I pray for you and your family." This song fills the room – and then heals my heart.

Immediately my mind flashes to my family's weekly Friday evening dinner, when husband and I place our hands on our daughters' heads. When they were younger, they would squirm, smile and laugh in response. Now, as teenagers, they grudgingly grant us this privilege – to bless them in the Jewish tradition. After we recite the Hebrew prayer, we carefully kiss their adolescent heads.

"Ye'simech Elohim ke-Sarah, Rivka, Ra-chel ve-Lay'ah... May God bless you and watch over you. May God shine God's face toward you and show you favor. May God be favorably disposed toward you and grant you peace."

I exit the exam room and feel joy, fullness and peace. Under my constricting mask and scratched face shield, I smile and laugh. How can I not? I have been blessed by a grandmother.

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