

RESPONSIVE READING FOR MOTHER'S DAY

Hearing the approaching step of his mother, Rabbi Joseph would say: "I must stand up, for the Glory of God enters."

God could not be everywhere, so he created mothers.

According to Jewish law, the life of the mother is paramount, even taking precedence over the life of her unborn child.

One Rabbi said, "Honor your mother at heart, in speech and by action."

A loving mother is God's deputy on earth.

A mother understands what her child does not say.

A Yiddish proverb states, "There is no bad mother and no good death."

One mother achieves more than a hundred teachers.

In 1844 the German Jewish poet Heinrich Heine wrote the following, describing how his mother received him after an absence of 13 years:

"My boy! It's all of 13 years!
Let me look at you, are you fatter or thinner?
Thirteen years: You must be hungry for sure!
Now, what would you like for dinner?"

Rabbi Tarfon used to help his mother get into bed by bending down and allowing her to use his back as a step ladder.

Nowadays, most children prefer to tell their mothers to get off their backs.

"You cannot imagine the respect I felt for my mother," wrote a Jew who lived in a European Shtetl a century ago. "There is a Jewish expression for it: Derech Eretz. It does not mean fear. If it were fear, then the respect would be asked of the child, and my parents never asked for anything.

So here's to the woman who never asks for anything. Here's to mother, the bearer of life.

And here's to Anna Jarvis, who in 1907 campaigned for a national day to honor Mothers. It is said that she was at odds with her mother at the time. Ah, the power of maternal guilt...

And the power of maternal love. So let the phones ring and the restaurants fill and may there be a bouquet on every hall table.

And may all mothers have a Happy Mother's Day.

AMEN