

Dearest God, source of life, source of every single life, in whose image every one of us is crafted, you teach us:

It is not good for humans to be alone (Bereshit 2:18a).

We learn from our holy books what we discern from our lives as we live them:

That isolation is contrary to the divine intention for human existence.

For this reason the rabbis of the Talmud cry out: Give me companionship or give me death (Talmud Ta'anit 23a)

But it is NOT death you desire oh God – not death of body, not death of mind, not death of spirit – not for any of us - rather it is a return to life that you desire a return to you, a return to one another.

And so we repent. We repent that in a free and democratic society, we have let the physically, emotionally, spiritually, mentally, and socially crippling practice of solitary confinement go on for as long as we have. For we know that every single thing we do to one another in this life matters. Every single thing we do or let others do to one another diminishes or adds to our common humanity.

So we pray that you instill in us all a hunger for solutions that protect us *all* in body and mind, and support rehabilitation, reintegration and return. Instill in us a hunger not satisfied until we have put an end to the practice of solitary confinement.

God, you alone can penetrate any wall, break through any barrier, enter every heart. So we pray that you accompany each and every person trapped in solitary confinement today and every day. Fortify their spirits, comfort their hearts, strengthen their minds, keep alive in them hope.

Strengthen the spirits and resolve of their friends and families. And may the hearings today give these families not only voice but real reason for hope.

May our nation be disquieted by these hearings. May these hearings arouse in our nation un-ease, inflict us with a dis-ease with the practice of solitary confinement. May these hearings make our nation see that the cost to our humanity of the practice of solitary confinement is way too high.

Grant our leaders at this hearing today eyes that can see, ears that can hear and hearts that can receive – so all they learn may take root in their souls,

and implant in them the passion, drive and commitment to end the destructive, inhumane, torturous practice of solitary confinement now.

Can yehi ratzon – so may it be your will.

And we say: Amen