

North American Inclusion Month

NAIM

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE JEWISH COMMUNITY

You Have to be Deaf to Understand

What is it like to “hear” a hand?
You have to be deaf to understand!

What is it like to be a small child,
In a school, in a room void of sound~
With a teacher who talks and talks and talks;
And then when she does come around to you,
She expects you to know what she’s said?
You have to be deaf to understand.

Or the teacher who thinks that to make you smart,
You must first learn how to talk with your voice;
So mumbo jumbo with hands on your face
For hours and hours without patience, or end,
Until out comes a faint resembling sound?
You have to be deaf to understand.

What is it like to be curious,
To thirst for knowledge you can call your own,
With an Inner desire that’s set on fire-
And you ask a brother, sister, or friend
Who looks in answer and says, “Never mind!”?
You have to be deaf to understand.

What is it like in a corner to stand,
Though there’s nothing you’ve done really wrong.
Other than try to make use of your hands
To a silent peer to communicate
A thought that comes to your mind all at once?
You have to be deaf to understand.



For more information contact:
Yachad, The National Jewish Council for Disabilities



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What is it like to be shouted at
When one thinks that will help you to hear;
Or misunderstand the words of a friend
Who is trying to make a joke clear,
And you don't get the point because he's failed?
You have to be deaf to understand.

What is it like to be laughed in the face
When you try to repeat what is said;
Just to make sure you've understood,
And you find that the words are misread-
And you want to cry out, "Please help me friend!"?
You have to be deaf to understand.

What is it like to depend
Upon one who can hear to phone a friend;
Or place a call to a business firm
And be forced to share what's personal, and,
Then find that your message wasn't made clear?
You have to be deaf to understand.

What is it like to be deaf and alone
In the company of those who can hear-
And you can only guess as you go along,
For no one's there with a helping hand,
As you try to keep up with words and song?
You have to be deaf to understand.

What is it like to comprehend
Some nimble fingers that paint the scene,
And make you smile and feel serene
With the "spoken word" of the moving hand
That makes you part of the world at large?
You have to be deaf to understand.

What is it like to "hear" a hand?
Yes, you have to be deaf to understand!



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