

# Alyth



# Wellbeing and Martyrology

## **Breathing In and Out**

Breath. Until recently, something I never really thought about. Once I became aware of my breath, everything changed.

I had no idea how often I held my breath.

When I hold my breath I hold things in.

When I hold things in I become unwell on all levels – mentally, physically, spiritually and emotionally.

Things start piling up inside and they manifest in many unpleasant ways. Never has this been so apparent as in the last year.

After two years of chronic physical pain after the sudden and violent death of a loved one, I began monthly therapeutic breathwork sessions. My life was transformed as my body let go and unwound. Breath was the vehicle that took me to this transformation. Something as simple as breathing in and out, something I've rarely given any thought to, changed my life in the most profound ways. Not only is the pain gone, but I am filled with peace and clarity, purpose and enthusiasm once again. I am fond of saying we don't know what we don't know and sometimes I discover that I've forgotten the most simple things. Those simple things that are the most healing and life affirming. Take time to breath and see what bubbles up. You deserve it.

*Deb Karpak – Reiki Master/Teacher*

## **Asher Yatzar**

**Dan Nichols**

I thank you for my life, body and soul  
Help me realise I am beautiful and whole  
I'm perfect the way I am and a little broken too  
I will live each day as a gift I give to you

Baruch atah Adonai, rofei chol  
basar umafla la'asot

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה. רוֹפֵא כָּל-בָּשָׂר.  
וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת:

*Blessed are You God, who heals our flesh and performs such wonders*

## I martyr myself when I don't prioritise ME

Little is known about the person, Jabez. What we do know is that his name means, “born of sorrow” and that he was one of many siblings. He did not appear to be blessed with much and whilst in his moment of despair seemed to still hold on to his faith, turning to God and asking for help. His direct request for personal help shows us that before we ask for others, we should ask for ourselves so that we have the strength to help those around us who are in need.

Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, “Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm, so that I will be free from pain”. And God granted his request.

*1 Chronicles 4:10*

### **Pirkei Avot 1:14**

הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, אִם אֵין אָנִי לִי, מִי לִי. וּכְשֶׁאֲנִי לְעַצְמִי, מָה אָנִי. וְאִם לֹא  
עֲבָשׁוּ, אֵימָתִי :

Rabbi Hillel used to say: If I am not for myself, who is for me? But if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?

God, thank You for helping me see  
That each phase of my life is perfect  
That I have arrived,  
That I've always been where I need to be  
Living perfect moments...  
With Your help, I relinquish my need to judge.  
Embrace my heart as it beats, even as it bleeds.  
Help me grow with love, acceptance, and curiosity.  
Thank You for lighting my way.  
For gently illuminating a path in the darkness...  
Let it now be and always be  
Yet another exquisite phase.  
For the crimes against myself, I am sorry,  
For all my slips and slides, I forgive myself.

*Rabbi Karyn D. Keder*

## Shulchan Arukh, Choshen Mishpat 427:9

וכן כל מכשול שיש בו סכנת נפשות מצות עשה להסירו ולהשמר ממנו ולהזהר בדבר יפה שנאמר השמר לך ושמור נפשך ואם לא הסיר והניח המכשולות המביאים לידי סכנה ביטל מצות עשה ועובר בלא תשים דמים:

Likewise, one has a positive duty to remove and guard oneself of any life-threatening obstacle, as it is said "beware and guard your soul". If one did not remove said obstacles, one has cancelled a positive commandment and transgressed "do not bring bloodguilt" (Deut. 22:8).

### Song from Adon Olam Music: Debbie Friedman

<i>B'yado afkid ruchi,</i>	בְּיָדוֹ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי.
<i>b'eit ishan v'a'irah.</i>	בְּעֵת אִישָׁן וְאֶעִירָה:
<i>V'im ruchi g'vi'ati,</i>	וְעִם רוּחִי גְּוִיָּתִי.
<i>Adonai li v'lo ira.</i>	אֲדַנִּי לִי וְלֹא אֵירָא:

In my Maker's hand I lay my soul  
both when I sleep and when I wake,  
and with my soul my body too,  
my God is close, I shall not fear.

As we make our way through our busy and often lonely days, may our thoughts lead us back to times of smiles and laughter. May our tears and pain be eased by the comfort of our memory. And may God offer us strength and comfort now and always.

Amen

*Naomi Levy*

## How can I *not* martyr myself in the world I live

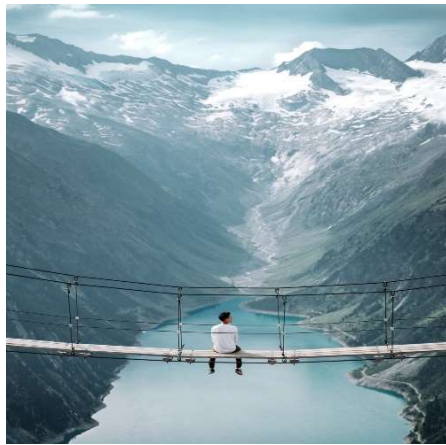
There are three levels of response to the Covid 19 virus: how it affects us physically, mentally and spiritually.

The physical response came first, and by now everyone knows about self-isolation, social distancing and testing.

The second effect, on our psyches, is being experienced personally but with only fitful answers and advice. The best advice in the mental area is meditation and yoga, relaxation techniques and paying attention every day to finding not just relaxation but joy and comfort in your life.

Your soul is the most intimate part of you, and it isn't found by running away. Write down how you can perform an act of kindness today, show appreciation to someone, offer help to those in need, or bring comfort to someone feeling lonely and anxious — the simple human gestures we tend to overlook. In a time of crisis, the impulse is to go into emergency mode, fear, concern and panic. Giving in to those impulses will engender an epidemic of soul sickness.

*Deepak Chopra*



### **Gesher Tsar Me'od, Nachman of Bratslav**

Kol ha'olam kulo  
Gesher tsar me'od  
Veha'ikar lo lifached k'lal.

כָּל הָעוֹלָם כֵּלּוֹ  
גֶּשֶׁר צַר מְאֹד  
וְהַעִיקָר לֹא לִפְתֹּךְ כָּלֵל

All the worlds a very narrow bridge, but the main thing to recall  
is to have no fear at all.

What an extraordinary gift it is – what a blessing, what a miracle  
To have been raised by imperfect parents who did their very best;  
To share our life with a partner no more flawed than we are;  
To count as a friend one who understands and accepts us most of the  
time.  
How brave, how hard it is to be ‘good enough’ in our ties to one another:  
To give, even when we’re exhausted; to love faithfully;  
To receive with grace the love imperfectly offered to us.

Can this day set us free from the tyranny of expectations?  
Can this day release us from fantasies impossible to fulfil?

We resolve this day to embrace the practice of forgiveness:  
To forgive others who fail to be all we hoped they would to.  
To forgive ourselves when we fall short of what others hoped we would  
be.

We declare this night that we will cherish goodness wherever it is found,  
And open ourselves to the gifts that are before us.



*Rabbi Lewis Kamrass*

Servants of time are slaves of slaves  
The servant of God alone is free  
When each one therefore seeks his lot  
My soul says, ‘God my lot shall be.’

*Yehuda Halevi*

## Kanfei Ruach – Wings of spirit

Words: Rav Kook, Orot HaKodesh 1:4:4:1 (adapted)

Music: Avigail Uziel-Amar

בן אדם עלה למעלה עלה,  
עלה למעלה עלה בן אדם  
עלה למעלה עלה

כי כח עז לך, יש לך כנפי רוח,  
יש לך כנפי רוח, כנפי נשרים אבירים.  
אל תכחש במ, פן יכחשו לך,  
דרוש אותם דרוש בן אדם וימצאו לך מיד.

Ben adam, aleh l'ma'alah aleh  
Aleh l'ma'alah aleh ben adam, aleh l'ma'alah aleh

Ki koach az l'cha, yesh l'cha kanfei ruach  
Yesh l'cha kanfei ruach, kanfei n'sharim abirim  
Al t'chachesh bam, pen y'chachashu l'cha  
D'rosh otam, d'rosh ben adam, v'yimatzu l'cha miyad

Ben adam, aleh l'ma'alah aleh  
Aleh l'ma'alah aleh ben adam, aleh l'ma'alah aleh

Bat adam, ali l'ma'alah ali  
Ali l'ma'alah ali bat adam, ali l'ma'alah ali

B'nei adam, alu l'ma'alah alu  
Alu l'ma'alah alu b'nei adam, alu l'ma'alah alu

Ki koach az lachem, yesh lachem kanfei ruach  
Yesh lachem kanfei ruach, kanfei n'sharim abirim  
Al t'chachashu vam, pen y'chachashu lachem  
Dirshu otam, dirshu b'nei adam, v'yimatzu lachem miyad

*Human being, ascend towards the heights, ascend!  
For you have the strength. You have wings of spirit  
Wings of mighty eagles.  
Do not forsake them, lest they forsake you.  
Seek them, and they will find you immediately.*

## **I martyr myself when I don't do things that bring me JOY**

Joy and Laughter are key to healthy physical and mental wellbeing. We should try to find joy and laughter each day, even when life does not seem to be joyful or funny. Look at what we have rather than what we don't have. Read a funny book; find a funny joke; go and sit in a café and see the world go by; don't do those things that feel burdensome or a chore; Nothing is more important than being well and content and even through the hard times we can try and look to find the blessings in our life – however small they seem; whatever they may look like.

Most Jews still think that fasting is more righteous than feasting. Yet the Talmud suggests that in the world to come a person will have to stand judgment for every legitimate pleasure in this life that was renounced. The Nazirite—the person who gave up the pleasures of wine and family life to devote himself entirely to God—was called a sinner on the grounds that he gave up the joys of wine when the Torah did not require him to do so.

Rabbi Israel Salanter once wrote that to be a good Jew one has to have every human quality and its opposite. The Torah does not consecrate prohibition; it offers the full range of human emotion and behaviour. There is “a time to cry and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance” (Ecclesiastes 3:4). Correct behaviour consists of when one does all these acts and how.





## **If not now, tell me when?**

Music: Carrie Newcomer

If not now, tell me when?  
If not now, tell me when?  
We may never see this moment  
Or place in time again.  
If not now, if not now,  
Tell me when?

I see sorrow and trouble in this land  
I see sorrow and trouble in this land  
Although there will be struggle  
we'll make the change we can.  
If not now, tell me when.

We may never see the promised land.  
We may never see the promised land.  
And yet we'll take the journey  
We'll walk it hand in hand  
If not now, tell me when.

## **A Song of Healing**

From Caring for the Soul Ed: Richard F Address

Soothe this soul of troubles, my Healer  
Take my hand in courage;  
Embrace me with hope and calm,  
Lingering reminders of Your care.  
Let each new day bring progress,  
Aligning me toward wholeness.

Bring strength and healing,  
A new day of brightness  
Trouble-free nights of kind dreams.

May I walk renewed in wonder  
At the person You have created,  
Senses attuned again to beauty,  
Hate and bitterness now set aside,  
A long journey safely ended.

## **Mi Shebeirach**

*Mi shebeirach avoteinu*

*M'kor hab'racha l'imoteinu*

May the source of strength,

Who blessed the ones before us,

Help us find the courage to make our lives a blessing,

and let us say, Amen.

*Mi shebeirach imoteinu*

*M'kor habrachah l'avoteinu*

Bless those in need of healing with r'fuah sh'leimah,

The renewal of body,

the renewal of spirit,

And let us say, Amen

## Next year, I will not martyr myself. Instead I will...

(based on the NHS 5 Steps to Mental Wellbeing)

### 1. Connect

#### Pirkei Avot 2:4

הִלֵּל אוֹמֵר: אַל תִּפְרָשׁ מִן הַצְּבוּר

Hillel says: Do not separate yourself from the community.

Spending time with your family, friends, colleagues and community can help you to feel connected. A problem shared, is a problem halved and when you have people around you that you can talk to, the things you are worrying about may not seem so bad.

*In a world of pandemic, how can we continue to link with our families in a safe way? We need to think creatively and use the tools that are at hand to enable us to stay connected; whether that be by zooming, face time, telephone calls, writing letters or speaking with people where possible “over the garden fence” at a safe distance and wearing a mask.*

### 2. Be active

#### Maimonides, On the Regimen of Health, Chapter 1

Exercise counters the harm caused by most bad patterns of behaviour that most people get into. But not all movement is considered exercise. Exercise is defined as either vigorous or gentle movement, or a combination of the two, which done repeatedly, causes one’s breathing to change such that one starts to take deep breaths. Whatever exceeds this is called exertion, that is to say very heavy exercise is called exertion. But not everyone can take such exertion, nor would it be necessary.

To be active you don’t have to go to the gym! Take a walk, go cycling, play a game of football, practice yoga. Find an activity that you enjoy and make it a part of your routine.

*In a world of pandemic, it is easy to sit in a chair all day and have no real movement. Walk up and down your stairs, take a stroll around the block, drive out to the countryside and walk for a while, put music on and dance your favourite moves, walk around your garden, buy some weights and do some gentle body strengthening, clean a different room of your home each day. Make a conscious effort to move on an hourly basis.*

### 3. Keep learning

#### Pirke Avot 2:16

הוא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, לֹא עֲלִיךָ הַמְּלָאכָה לְגַמֵּר, וְלֹא אַתָּה בֶּן חוֹרִין לְבִטֵּל מִמְּנָה.  
אִם לְמִדַּת תּוֹרָה הֲרֵבָה, נוֹתְנִים לָךְ שְׂכָר הֲרֵבָה. וְנֶאֱמָר הוּא בְּעַל מְלָאכְתָּךְ  
שִׂישִׁילִם לָךְ שְׂכָר פְּעֻלָּתְךָ. וְדַע מִתֵּן שְׂכָרְךָ שֶׁל צְדִיקִים לְעֵתִיד לְבָא

He [Rabbi Tarfon] used to say: It is not your duty to finish the work, but neither are you free to desist from it; If you have studied much Torah, you shall be given much reward. Faithful is your employer to pay you the reward of your labor; And know that the grant of reward for the righteous is in the age to come.

Learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence. So why not try something new?

*In a world of pandemic, the physicality of learning may not be possible. However, those who teach have found new ways to enable people to keep learning. We must continue to be a community of learners – whether it be how to cook a new dish or explore academic subjects of interest. We now have an opportunity to read the books upon our shelves that have been collecting dust. Our homes are our new classrooms and the internet our new window on the outside world, through which to learn new things.*

## 4. Give to others

### Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 49b

וא"ר אלעזר אין צדקה משתלמת אלא לפי חסד שבה שנאמר זרעו לכם  
לצדקה וקצרו לפי חסד

Rabbi Eliezar said: The value of a charitable act is in its kindness, as it is said, 'Sow for yourselves according to charity; reap according to kindness'. (Hosea 10:12)

In giving to others the smallest act can count, whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Acts of kindness can improve your mental wellbeing and help you build new social networks.

*In a world of pandemic, we can still carry out acts of kindness. We are all obliged to still look after each other by speaking to, listening to and holding each other virtually. Together we bring a spark of light to many by our actions and good deeds.*

## 5. Be Mindful

### Mishneh Torah, T'filah, 4:16

כִּיצַד הִיא הַפְּנִיָּה. שִׁפְפָנָה אֶת לְבוּ מְכַל הַמַּחְשָׁבוֹת וְיִרְאָה עֲצָמוֹ כְּאֵלוֹ הוּא  
עוֹמֵד לְפָנֵי הַשְּׂכִינָה  
לְפִיכָךְ צָרִיךְ לֵישֵׁב מְעַט קֹדֶם הַתְּפִלָּה

Now, true kavannah is emptying ones mind of all extraneous thought – then one may come to see themselves in the presence of the divine. Therefore one should sit for a while before praying.

Be more aware of the present moment, how you are feeling, your body and the world around you. Being mindful about what you are doing and paying attention to how it affects your mood and body, can positively change the way you feel about life, and how you approach new challenges.

*In a world of pandemic, it's okay to say out loud how you are really feeling. If one day its happy and the next it is sad, that's natural. If it's a bad day,*

*acknowledging how you feel is the first step to restoring the self. Try to find the one thing that you can do that makes you happier. Try to find the one thing that will help you realise that you may be lonely, but you are not alone. Try to find the one thing that will lift your mood and say, "world, hineini, - here I am!"*



Father Mother God, thank You for Your presence during the hard and mean days. For then we have You to lean upon.

Thank You for Your presence during the bright and sunny days, for then we can share that which we have with those who have less.

And thank You for Your presence during the High Holy Days, for then we are able to celebrate You and our families and our friends.

For those who have no voice, we ask You to speak.

For those who feel unworthy, we ask You to pour Your love out in waterfalls of tenderness.

For those who live in pain, we ask You to bathe them in the river of Your healing.

For those who are lonely, we ask You to keep them company.

For those who are depressed, we ask You to shower upon them the light of hope.

Dear Creator, You, the borderless sea of substance, we ask You to give to all the world that which we need most – Peace.

Amen

*Maya Angelou*

Oseh shalom bimromav hu  
ya'aseh shalom aleinu  
v'al kol yisra'el v'al kol ha-olam,  
v'imru amen.

עֲשֵׂה שָׁלוֹם בְּמִרְמֵי. הוּא  
יַעֲשֵׂה שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל-  
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל-כָּל-הָעוֹלָם.  
וְאָמְרוּ. אָמֵן :

*May the Maker of peace in the highest bring this peace upon us and upon all Israel and upon all the world. Amen.*