

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

A thing I discovered recently:

I love stillness. Slowness. When nothing is happening. The blueness of the sky. Inhaling clear air. Birdsong over traffic. Lone footsteps. Spring flowers blooming with defiance. I used to think the quiet patches felt dead. Now they feel more alive. Like leaning over and listening to the earth's heartbeat.

Matt Haig

Pirkei Avot 1:14

הוא הָיָה אֹמֵר, אִם אֵין אָנִי לִי, מִי לִי. וְכִשְׁאֲנִי לְעַצְמִי, מָה אָנִי. וְאִם לֹא
עֲכָשִׁיו, 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 גְּוִיֹּתִי.
<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.

Happiness occurs when you forget who you're expected to be. And what you're expected to do. Happiness is an accident of self-acceptance. It's the warm breeze you feel when you open the door to who you are.

Matt Haig

When one door of happiness close, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.

Helen Keller, 'We Bereaved'

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

Scroll your mind

Social media can be a gallery of lives you aren't living. Of diets you aren't following. Of parties you're not attending. Of holidays you're not on. Of fun you're not having. So, cut yourself a break and scroll your mind instead. Scroll your consciousness for reasons to be grateful to be you. The only fear of missing out that matters is the fear of missing out on yourself.

Matt Haig

Gesher Tsar Me'od, Nachman of Bratslav

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

כָּל הָעוֹלָם כְּלוּ
גֶשֶׁר צַר מְאֹד
וְהַעִיקָר לֹא לִפְחֹד כְּלָל

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 בם, 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.

Why break when you can bend?

You don't have to cope with everything.
You don't have to handle everything.
You don't have to keep a lid on everything to get through a day.
You can't turn tides.
You can't defy gravity.
You can't go against the grain without getting splinters.
But you can drop the disguise.
You can feel what you feel.
You can stretch out inside yourself.
You can cry. You can feel.
You can show what you are.
You can, in fact, be you.



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

Shiviti

Psalm 16:8

Music: Daphna Rosenberg

שׁוֹיִתִּי הָיָה לְנֶגְדִי תָמִיד - הָיָה אֲהָבָה

I keep God/being before me always – being/God is love!

Shiviti havayah lenegdi tamid – havayah ahavah

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

הלל אומר: אל תפוש מן הצבור

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.

As we learn to live with pandemic, how can we continue to link with our families in a safe way? We have thought creatively, and managed to adapt to new technologies that will continue 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. These new ways of connecting will continue to help us to stay in touch even after the pandemic has passed.

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.

As we learn to live with pandemic, it is easy to sit in a chair all day and have no real movement. For those of us who started new exercise routines during lockdown, it may be tempting to return to more a more stationary existence. 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 היה אומר, לא עליך המלאכה לגמר, ולא אתה בין חורין לבטל ממנה.
אם למדת תורה הרבה, נותנים לך שכר הרבה. ונאמן הוא בעל מלאכתך
שישלם לך שכר פעלתך. ודע מתן שכרן של צדיקים לעתיד לבא

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?

As we learn to live with pandemic, the physicality of learning may still 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.

As we learn to live with pandemic, we can seek to continue the kindness that people showed to each other in those first fearful days of lockdown. We are all still obliged to 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. שִׁיפְנֶה אֶת לְבוּ מְכַל הַמַּחֲשָׁבוֹת וַיִּרְאֶה עֲצָמוֹ כְּאִלוֹ הוּא
עוֹמֵד לְפָנָי הַשְּׁכִינָה
לְפִיכָךְ צָרִיךְ לֵישֵׁב מֵעַט קֹדֶם הַתְּפִלָּה.

Now, true kavannah is emptying one's 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.

As we learn to live with pandemic, we continue to feel the trauma that it has caused us. 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 בְּמִרְמֵיּוֹ. הוּא
יַעֲשֵׂה שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל-
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל-כָּל-יְיֹשְׁבֵי-טֶבֶל
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.