

# Just Breathe

A Service for Healing on Yom Kippur



The Kotzker Rebbe taught, “We pile words upon the heart so that when the heart inevitably breaks open, the words, prayers, and instruction to pay attention and connect will fall in. Nothing is so whole as a broken heart.”



***El na r'fa na la* by Rick Recht**

*El na r'fa na la, r'fua shlema.  
El na r'fa na la, please heal this soul.*

*Mi sheberach, Avraham v'Sara  
Yitzchak v'Rivkah, Ya'akov Rachel v'Leah*

"God, please heal her" with a full and complete healing. May the One who blessed our ancestors, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob, Rachel and Leah bless us and heal us with wholeness.

With faith and love  
together we bring  
hope and healing  
to those in need  
without judgment  
without explanation  
we are all God's creation.

***Just for today* by Abigail Van Buren (AKA Dear Abby)**

Just for today, I will live one day only,  
Forgetting yesterday and tomorrow,  
And not trying to solve the whole problem of life at once.

Just for today, I will be unafraid of life and death;  
Unafraid to enjoy the beautiful and be happy.  
I wish to be as happy as I make up my mind to be.

Just for today, I will adjust myself to what is  
And not try to adjust everything to suit me.  
If I cannot have what I like, I will try to like what I have.

Just for today, I will be agreeable, cheerful, charitable,  
Do my best, praise people for what they can do,  
Not criticize them for what they cannot;  
And if I find fault, I will seek to forgive, if not forget.  
I will try not to improve nor regulate anybody but myself.

Just for today, I will have a plan.  
I may not follow it exactly, but I will have one.  
It will save me from worry, hurry, and indecision.

Just for today, I will get people off my nerves.  
And try to not get on theirs.  
I will appreciate them for what they do and what they are.

Just for today, I will not get lost in hurt feelings.

Just for today, I will find a little time for quiet, to relax,  
And to realize what life is and can be.  
Time to think about God,  
And get a better perspective of myself.

Just for today, I will look at life with fresh eyes  
And discover the wonder of it.  
I will know that as I give to the world, so the world will give it to me.

***That Lonesome Road by James Taylor***

Walk down that lonesome road all by yourself  
Don't turn your head back over your shoulder  
And only stop to rest yourself  
When the silver moon  
Is shining high above the trees

If I had stopped to listen once or twice  
If I had closed my mouth and opened my eyes  
If I had cooled my head and warmed my heart  
I'd not be on this road tonight

Carry on, carry on, carry on  
Never mind feeling sorry for yourself  
It doesn't save you from your troubled mind

Walk down that lonesome road all by yourself  
Don't turn your head back over your shoulder  
And only stop to rest yourself  
When the silver moon  
Is shining high above the trees

## ***Life Calls* by Rabbi Scott Hausman-Weiss**

Life calls  
and we follow  
with no premonition of mind.  
Birthed into the world  
with neither plan nor vision,  
we step in with the costume provided,  
this mélange of mind and muscle  
personas yet to be.  
With partners and teammates  
along for the ride,  
who knows what awaits?  
Adventures AND boredom,  
both will visit in kind;  
but if we dare to love and to live,  
what a remarkable world we will find.

And inevitably because we do wish  
to build more than we know,  
highs and lows will join us on our paths as we grow.

No person can face life without experiencing countless fears and worries. They are part of the fee we pay for citizenship in an unpredictable universe.

### **'Tis a fearful thing, to love what death can touch.**

A fearful thing  
to love, to hope, to dream, to be—  
to be,  
And oh, to lose.

A thing for fools, this,  
And a holy thing,  
a holy thing  
to love.

For your life has lived in me,  
your laugh once lifted me,  
your word was gift to me.  
To remember this brings painful joy.

'Tis a human thing, to love,  
a holy thing, to love  
what death has touched.  
**(by Rabbi Yehudah HaLevi)**

### ***That Lonesome Road (reprise)***

Walk down that lonesome road all by yourself  
Don't turn your head back over your shoulder  
And only stop to rest yourself  
When the silver moon  
Is shining high above the trees

### ***God, Help Me by Rabbi Sam Karff***

Oh God, help me when I don't feel very good about myself,  
    help me to know that I am loved.  
When I feel selfish,  
    help me to think of others.  
When I have lost or failed,  
    give me courage to keep trying.  
When I feel everything in my life is going wrong,  
    help me to see that I have important reasons to be thankful.  
When I feel alone,  
    help me to know that you are with me.

### ***Unknowable by Heather Paul***

God is unknowable,  
but here's what I know:  
God yearns to be known.  
God is sitting alone in the schoolyard,  
wearing black and listening to death metal.  
God's not sure why  
it sounds like a prayer.  
God is writing a poem  
about us and isn't sure  
what's missing.  
God is writing a letter,  
but can't find an ending.  
God is refreshing God's Twitter feed.  
God is liking posts on Instagram.  
God has 6 million unread emails.  
God's connection is unstable.  
God is stuck in traffic.  
God is in the hospital waiting room.  
God is singing at a campfire.

God is pulling an all-nighter  
in the university library.  
God is sighing, buying fruit  
in the grocery store—  
Even organic doesn't taste  
like the Garden.  
God is grieving  
God's own inability  
to heal all who need healing.  
God is trying to remember  
that when someone is suffering,  
God's Presence is enough.  
No one wants to be  
alone in the end,  
not even God.  
God is asking  
for our forgiveness  
on Yom Kippur.  
God's not sure if God  
believes in us, but can't  
stop searching for us anyhow.  
It's the world's longest game  
of Marco Polo:  
"Can you hear Me now?" God asks  
"Did you call My name?" God stammers,  
or was it only the echo  
of My own voice?"  
Maybe we are God's echoes.  
Maybe God is inside each of us.  
Maybe we are inside of God.  
Maybe God is unknowable,  
but there's one thing I know:  
God yearns to be known.

***We Are Loved* by Rami Shapiro and Shir Yaakov**

We are loved, loved, loved  
By unending love, an unending love  
We are embraced by arms that find us  
even when we are hidden from ourselves  
We are touched by fingers that soothe us  
even when we are too proud for soothing  
We are counseled by voices that guide us  
even when we are too embittered to hear

We are supported by hands that uplift us  
even in the midst of a fall  
We are urged on by eyes that meet us  
even when we are too weak for meeting

Embraced, touched, soothed, and counseled  
Ours are the arms, the fingers, the voices  
Ours are the hands, the eyes, the smiles  
We are loved by an unending love

***Ashrei Yoshvei Veitecha* by Rabbi Sheila Peltz Weinberg**

Just to take your seat and enter fully into this moment is  
to recognize that we are part of something so much  
greater than ourselves.

Happy is the one who sits in Your house.

*Ashrei yoshvei veitecha.*

We relax into this moment remembering that we do  
not possess this house: this moment, this body, this world. And that makes it all the  
more precious.

In the simplicity of returning again and again  
to this breath, this sensation, this sound, we are practicing  
happiness.

The happiness of peace and contentment.

The happiness of feeling connected.

The happiness of greeting the sun in the morning or just  
taking another breath.

The happiness of knowing that this bad mood will pass  
and this harsh thought has no substance.

The happiness of letting go of ill will for this moment.

The happiness of allowing desire to come to its natural  
end in the mind.

The happiness of growing still.  
The happiness of seeing life and death in everything and  
not being afraid.  
Is this political? Well, I think it is.  
This happiness doesn't hurt people we do not know.  
This happiness doesn't tell us to be ashamed of growing  
old.  
This happiness doesn't tell us we aren't okay but can fix  
that if we try hard enough.  
This happiness doesn't attract a lot of buyers and sellers.  
It calls for careful cultivation like a field of precious  
jewels.  
Moment after moment.  
It calls for dedication and community and willingness  
and faith.  
It calls upon wisdom and courage.  
It is itself a child of goodness.  
So simple.  
So huge.  
But it is the only happiness there is.

### **A Prayer for Healing**

*Dear God,  
Please hear my prayer,  
and let my cry come to You.  
Do not hide from me on the day of my distress.  
Turn to me and speedily answer my prayer.  
Eternal God, Source of healing,  
out of my distress I call upon You.  
Help me sense Your presence at this difficult time.  
Grant me patience when the hours are heavy;  
in hurt or disappointment, give me courage.  
Keep me trustful in Your love.  
Give me strength for today,  
and hope for tomorrow.  
To your loving hands I commit my spirit  
when asleep and when awake.  
You are with me; I shall not fear.*

## **A Prayer for the Body**

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe.  
With divine wisdom You have made our bodies,  
combining veins, arteries, and vital organs  
into a finely-balanced network.  
Wondrous Maker and Sustainer of life,  
were one of them to fail -  
how well we are aware -  
we would lack the strength to stand before You.  
Blessed are You, Adonai,  
Source of our health and strength.

### ***Listen by Doug Cotler***

When you're lost, you feel afraid  
And you don't know what to say  
Then listen, listen to our God.  
if there's a question on your mind, if the answer's hard to find  
Then listen, listen to our God.

Listen with all your heart and soul  
And with all your might.  
Write them and learn them and teach them well  
Every morning and night.  
Close your eyes and listen

Quiet yourself,  
There's nothing to say.  
Stop all the chatter that gets in the way.  
And listen, listen to our God.  
When the wind and thunder finally disappear  
There's still a voice that you can hear  
If you listen, listen to our God.  
You can hear it from the top of the highest hill  
Or from the valley below.  
It can come from the edge of the universe,  
It can come from within your soul.  
Close your eyes and listen.

### **Prayer for the Soul**

אֱלֹהִי, נְשָׁמָה שֶׁנָּתַתָּ בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא. אַתָּה  
בְּרָאתָהּ, אַתָּה יִצְרַתָּהּ, אַתָּה נִפְחַתָּהּ בִּי,  
וְאַתָּה מְשַׁמְרָהּ בְּקִרְבִּי. כָּל זְמַן שֶׁהַנְּשָׁמָה  
בְּקִרְבִּי, מוֹדָה/מוֹדָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ, יי אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי  
אֲבוֹתַי וְאֲמוֹתַי, רַבּוֹן כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים, אֲדוֹן כָּל  
הַנְּשָׁמוֹת. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֲשֶׁר בִּידוֹ נִפְּשׁ כָּל חַי  
וְרוּחַ כָּל בֶּשֶׂר אִישׁ.

*Elohai, n'shamah sh'natata bi t'horah hi.  
Atah b'ratah, atah y'tzartah, atah n'fachta  
bi, v'Atah m'shamrah b'kirbi.  
Kol z'man shehan'shamah b'kirbi, modeh/  
modah ani l'fanecha, Adonai Elohai v'Elohei  
avotai v'imotai. Ribon kol hamaasim, Adon  
kol han'shamot. Baruch Atah, Adonai, asher  
b'yado nefesh kol chai v'ruach kol basar ish.*

My God, the soul You have given me is pure.  
You created it, You shaped it, You breathed it into me,  
and You protect it within me.  
For as long as my soul is within me,  
I offer thanks to You, Adonai, my God  
and God of my ancestors, Source of all Creation,  
Sovereign of all souls. Praised are You, Adonai,  
In whose hand is every living soul and the breath of humankind.

### **Birchot Hashachar - Blessings of Every Day**

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam ...*

*Who has implanted mind and instinct within every human being.*

*Who lifts me up with hope when all seems so bleak.*

*Who makes firm my steps as I walk into the unknown.*

*Who blesses me with strength when I feel weak and determined when I  
feel lost.*

*Who allows me to see the good and the beautiful that can emerge  
from the bad and the ugly.*

*Who infuses me with a second wind when I feel beaten and  
alone.*

*Who removes the sleep from my eyes with the  
knowledge that with every new sunrise, new  
possibilities for holiness abound.*

## ***A Love Letter to God by Rabbi Scott Hausman-Weiss***

Dear God, it's me.  
Yeah, you know, the one who's been a bit absent lately.  
I just don't know what I think about you—Or is it You?  
And that seems to get in my way.  
I know, because I do read and think about Y(y)ou.  
People around me seem to be pretty sure they know your address  
or at least how to reach you.  
They say they feel Y(y)ou and some even claim  
they are sure they KNOW what Y(y)ou believe.  
Believe? Is that the right word for Y(y)ou?  
After all if they "KNOW" what Y(y)ou believe,  
then y(Y)ou must KNOW better than they, right?

Here's what I do KNOW— sorry that it's not so much about Y(y)ou,  
it's not for a lack of trying.  
I KNOW that I feel more than my life has experienced thus far.  
I KNOW that I am different from my dog, or my dolphin or my elephant (if I owned a dolphin or  
an elephant, that is).  
Without boasting too much, I'm pretty sure that I could  
beat them at chess, make a much better sandwich,  
and probably do a better job on a standardized test.  
I know that I am special, in a way that human beings are...  
And I credit You for that, I mean, where else could it come from?  
We're the only animals on the entire planet that can walk upright, while we balance a plate on  
our heads and chew gum— We didn't get this way without a little bit of help from Y(y)ou?  
Maybe...  
But what to do now, that's where I get stuck.  
So, I've struck a deal with myself.  
I'll work on the things that I believe Y(y)ou would tell me to do if I could hear Y(y)ou).  
And put KNOWING the existential reality of Y(y)our being on the back shelf.  
Maybe when I'm much older?  
In the meantime, I've gotta go, the world is calling. Love, Me

***May I Suggest?* by Susan Warner**

May I suggest  
May I suggest to you  
May I suggest this is the best part of your life  
May I suggest  
This time is blessed for you  
This time is blessed and shining almost blinding  
bright  
Just turn your head  
And you'll begin to see  
The thousand reasons that were just beyond your  
sight  
The reasons why  
Why I suggest to you  
Why I suggest this is the best part of your life

There is a world  
That's been addressed to you  
Addressed to you, intended only for your eyes  
A secret world  
A treasure chest to you  
Of private scenes and brilliant dreams that  
mesmerize  
A tender lover's smile  
A tiny baby's hands  
The million stars that fill the turning sky at night  
And I suggest  
Yes I suggest to you  
Yes I suggest this is the best part of your life

There is a hope  
That's been expressed in you  
It's the hope of seven generations, maybe more  
And this is the faith  
That they invest in you  
It's that you'll do one better than was done before  
And inside you know  
Inside you understand  
Inside you know what's yours to finally set right  
And I suggest  
Yes I suggest to you  
Yes I suggest this is the best part of your life

This is a song  
Comes from the west to you  
Comes from the west, comes from the slowly  
setting sun  
This a song with a request of you  
To see how very short the endless days will run  
And when they're gone  
And when the dark descends  
Oh we'd give anything for one more hour of light  
And I suggest this is the best part of your life

***The Peace of Wild Things* by Wendell Berry**

When despair for the world  
grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the  
least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the  
wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the  
water, and the great heron  
feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild  
things  
who do not tax their lives with  
forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-  
blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a  
time  
I rest in the grace of the world,  
and am free.

***Esa Einai* by Dan Nichols**

*Esa einai el he-harim*  
*Mei ayin yavo, yavo ezri*  
Where will my help come from? Where will my help come from?  
My help will come from God Maker of heaven and earth

***Prayer Before the Prayer by Bishop Desmond Tutu***

I want to be willing to forgive  
But I dare not ask for the will to forgive  
In case you give it to me  
And I am not yet ready  
I am not yet ready for my heart to soften  
I am not yet ready to be vulnerable again  
Not yet ready to see that there is humanity in my tormentor's eyes  
Or that the one who hurt me may also have cried  
I am not yet ready for the journey  
I am not yet interested in the path  
I am at the prayer before the prayer of forgiveness  
Grant me the will to want to forgive  
Grant it to me not yet but soon

Can I even form the words,  
Forgive me?  
Dare I even look?  
Do I dare to see the hurt that I have caused?  
I can glimpse all the shattered pieces of that fragile thing  
That soul trying to rise on the broken wings of hope  
But only out of the corner of my eye  
I am afraid of it  
And if I am afraid to see  
How can I not be afraid to say,  
Forgive me?

Is there a place where we can meet?  
You and me  
The place in the middle  
The no man's land  
Where we straddle the lines  
Where you are right  
And I am right too  
And both of us are wrong and wronged  
Can we meet there?  
And look for the place where the path begins  
The path that ends when we forgive.

### ***For Good from Wicked***

I've heard it said  
That people come into our lives  
For a reason  
Bringing something we must learn  
And we are led to those  
Who help us most to grow if we let them  
And we help them in return  
Well, I don't know if I believe that's true  
But I know I'm who I am today  
Because I knew you

Like a comet pulled from orbit  
As it passes the sun  
Like a stream that meets a boulder  
Halfway through the wood  
Who can say if I've been changed for the better  
But because I knew you  
I have been changed for good

It well may be  
That we will never meet again  
In this lifetime  
So, let me say before we part  
So much of me  
Is made of what I learned from you  
You'll be with me  
Like a handprint on my heart  
And now whatever way our stories end  
I know you have rewritten mine  
By being my friend

Like a ship blown from its mooring  
By a wind off the sea  
Like a seed dropped by a sky bird  
In a distant wood  
Who can say if I've been changed for the better  
But because I knew you  
Because I knew you  
I have been changed for good

And just to clear the air  
I ask forgiveness  
For the things I've done, you blame me for  
But then I guess  
We know there's blame to share  
And none of it seems to matter anymore

Like a comet pulled from orbit (like a ship blown from its mooring)  
As it passes the sun (by a wind off the sea)  
Like a stream that meets a boulder (like a seed dropped by a bird)  
Halfway through the wood (in the wood)  
Who can say if I've been changed for the better  
I do believe I have been changed for the better  
And because I knew you  
Because I knew you  
Because I knew you  
I have been changed  
For good

### **Heal Us Now by Bonia Shur**

*R'-fa-ei-nu A-do-nai v'-nei-ra-feh,  
ho-shi-ei-nu v'-ni-va-shei-ah.*

*Eil ka-rov l'-chol ko-rav.  
Ach ka-rov li-rei-av yi-sho.*

We pray for healing of the body.  
We pray for healing of the soul.  
For strength of flesh and mind and spirit.  
We pray to once again be whole.

*Eil na r'-fa na.  
Oh, please, heal us now.  
R'-fu-at ha-ne-fesh, u-r'-fu-at ha-guf,  
r'-fu-ah sh'-lei-mah. Heal us now.*

*Ho-sh-ia et a-me-cha  
u-va-reich et na-cha-la-te-cha  
U-r'eim v'-na-s'-eim ad ha-o-lam.  
Mi she-bei-rach a-vo-tei-nu,  
mi she-bei-rach i-mo-tei-nu,  
Ana A-do-nai ho-shi-ah na.*

We pray for healing of our people.  
We pray for healing of the land.  
And peace for every race and nation,  
every child, every woman, every man.

*Eil na r'-fa na.  
Oh, please, heal us now.  
R'-fu-at ha-ne-fesh, u-r'-fu-at ha-guf,  
r'-fu-ah sh'-lei-mah. Heal us now.*

***Teach us to Listen* by Bruce Coriell**

Teach us to listen  
To the silence posed by unanswerable questions  
To the silence imposed by the rupture of safety  
And to that most frightening silence  
When we can no longer find you  
Anywhere

Help us to remember  
When the memory is too distant  
And when the memory is too fresh  
When the memory is too painful  
And when the memory is too dull  
When the memory is too horrible  
And when the memory is too mundane  
And when we cannot remember,

Remember for us, inspire us to act  
With extraordinary courage in the midst of ordinary times  
With ordinary goodness in the face of extraordinary crisis  
And with unbounded imagination that dares to risk the possibility of hope.  
Teach us, help us, and inspire us  
To listen, to remember, and to act  
And never to quit. Amen.

