

Ultimate Fighting Champion Hall of Famer, Bas Rutten, on Tim Ferriss' podcast said "The survival rule of three states that the average human being can go three weeks without food, three days without water, three minutes without oxygen. So if you don't have oxygen for three minutes, you might die. So that's the number one priority in the world."

<https://tim.blog/2022/09/15/bas-rutten/>

Three minutes without breathing can change our lives irreparably. We all have to breathe, B-R-E-A-T-H-E

Breathe deeply in each moment

Really pause to just be

Elevate each moment and each breath to count

Acept each breath as you accept each day

Take time to make what we can of our days

Heal ourselves with every breath

Embody the spirit you wish to bring into the now.

In the beginning God breathes life into Adam, filling him with God's spirit, God's essence, a breath that begins all other breaths. Each of our breaths continues the endless cycle of breathing from our first breath to our last breath. The final act of each human is releasing God's breath back into the universe as we release our hold on this world.

If we don't breathe enough we pass out. If we breathe in too much smoke filled air we might damage our lungs or risk our lives. When holding our breath beyond 30 seconds, we feel our body fight to live, fighting to convince us to take our next breath.

Three days without water feels like an eternity. Few if any of us have ever had to go two days without water. On Yom Kippur we are commanded to drink water if our fast threatens our health in any way. Yom Kippur is the only day many of us experience even a single day without food or water in our year. While we may last three weeks without food, even a day without water begins to weaken us. The effects of dehydration can be felt on our lips, in our body, by our brains.

Water is one of the most important elements ever created. It is also one of the most abundant elements on our planet and throughout space. Next time you pour yourself a glass of water just look at the water before drinking it. What other liquid or consumable is as pure and translucent? Nothing. I love looking at water and wonder at its incredible simplicity and vast complexity. It makes up 60% of the human body. The Torah coins the phrase *Mayim Chayim* - Water of Life. Water is the essence of life and the universe as we know it.

Go make a glass of water. No, don't go to the faucet or fridge and pour yourself a glass with water. Go to the store and pick up the ingredients to make home made water.

What do you mean that we can't just go buy some oxygen and two parts Hydrogen and mix up a homemade batch of water? Sure we can buy some ice and wait for the transformation, we can buy pre-bottled water in a bottle, but we can't actually buy the ingredients to make fresh water at home. Ok, maybe the chemists in the congregation could actually order an oxygen tank and a hydrogen tank and create home made H₂O, but why go to all the trouble?

We all take water for granted almost every single day. Most of us enjoy living functionally dehydrated, present company included, because not all water tastes the same. Some taps and water fountains definitely taste better/worse than others. Everyone in my house knows to fill our water pitchers for dinner from the filtered water from our fridge dispenser. I can always tell when the lazy among my family have filled our water pitchers with tap water. I can just tell. I can taste the difference.

Take a glass of water and pour some sugar into it. A little and it is sweet, Too much and it becomes something else, most likely undrinkable. I come from a soda family. My grandfather worked from nothing up to owning three truck routes for Pepsi delivering soda all over New York City. We all loved soda in our family. Soda helped put my father, my uncle and me through

college. It helped make the down payment on my first house. Soda made a difference in my life, felt to this day.

When we drink soda we all feel the difference having just one soda compared to drinking an entire two liter bottle. Soda is a treat that can also destroy our health. Sugar water tastes amazing at times, but all benefits of water have been removed just by adding sugar, flavoring and artificial flavors.

Of course many of us pour hot water over finely ground magic beans each morning and find ourselves prepared to face the day. Many line up for this magic elixir in Israel at Kochavim Dollarim, better known here as Starbucks. No it is not really called Kochavim Dollarim, it is just said with a really thick Israeli accent "Starbucks." Others steep old, dry leaves in boiling water for minutes and claim it makes them feel calmer and healthier.

IV solution saves lives every day when administered to patients when they need fluids the most. The sodium chloride and water composition must be mixed precisely or it won't work properly. Too much salt and it will harm a patient. Too little salt can just as easily result in bodily harm also. We all know that drinking even a quarter of a glass of Dead Sea water can kill us. Water holds within it the essence of all existence, and as a planet we simply take it for granted.

Just last week raging winds and rising waters played havoc across Cuba, Florida, the Carolinas, destroying so much in its path and ending many lives. Water can save us as easily as it can destroy us. It can fill us with sustenance or drown us in dire moments like the innocent life of three year old Josiah Brown, murdered by his own aunt when pushed into Lake Michigan the other week. We see racism, hatred and intolerance in the indifference of public officials who allowed the water of Flint, Michigan to be poisoned for decades or who allowed the entire water system to fail in Jackson, Mississippi just a few weeks ago. Water is life unless it will save the constituents who you don't like.

This moment in time makes many of us feel as if we can't breathe, as if we are drowning. Too many of us feel the lack of acceptance by much of humanity who won't accept others for who they are, don't believe in our right to be, to exist in our identity, to live our lives in peace and comfort.

Just like water can be safe to consume or dangerous to drink, religion can be safe to experience or dangerous to espouse. As modern Jews we've learned to be accepting of one another and of most of humanity. Many religionists do not want to be accepting or tolerant of the rest of humanity. Many of them don't even want to live in a modern world. Too many humans at this moment consume too much hatred and too much intolerance.

Each year Yom Kippur is a breath in time. We both look forward to the High Holy Days each year and dread the arrival of Yom Kippur. I look forward to seeing you all and spend months dreading whether I will have anything worth saying.

The High Holy Days present us with the wonder and joy of celebrating creation at Rosh Hashanah and the dread of fasting at Yom Kippur while looking inward and evaluating how we feel about our behavior, our deeds in the year past, how we treated one another and how we treated ourselves. On Yom Kippur we stand together while feeling ourselves in a spotlight of introspection. This is me God. I stand before you all that I am. I am how you made me, yet so much more. I am the potential you put into me and your partner in becoming my true self breath by breath, moment by moment.

We always have the potential to create great change in our lives, towards becoming our best selves. As Jews, Yom Kippur annually presents us with a day to really think about taking better care of ourselves. It nudges us towards really appreciating those we love the most in our inner circles. Yom Kippur urges us to become better individuals so that we might bring more light into the world to make it a better place.

Almost a decade ago I shared this story: "A man carried water from a stream to his house every day. He carried it in two large pots hung on each end of a pole slung across his neck. He called them his "wonderful pots." One pot was perfect. It was always full of water at the end of the long walk from the stream. The other pot was cracked. It leaked, and always arrived at the house only half full. One day by the stream the cracked pot spoke to the man.

"I am ashamed of myself," it said.

"Why?" the man asked.

"Water leaks out the crack in my side all the way back to your house," the pot said. "Because I'm not perfect, you can't bring home two full pots of water. I'm a failure, just a cracked pot."

"You should not feel that way," the man said. "You are not a failure. You are a wonderful pot. And, you can prove it to yourself. As we return to the house today, look carefully alongside the path. When we get home, tell me what you see."

All the way home, the cracked pot paid attention to everything it saw.

At home the man asked, "What did you see?"

"Flowers," said the cracked pot. "I saw lots of flowers."

"Yes you did. Aren't they beautiful?"

"Yes," said the pot. "But, once again, half the water I was carrying leaked out. I'm sorry."

"There is no need to be sorry," said the man. "Tell me, did you notice where the flowers were growing?"

"Well, yes," he said, a little puzzled. "They were only on my side of the path, but not on the other side. Why is that?" "For all these years," the man said, "I have planted flower seeds on your side of the path. Every day as we walked back from the stream..." "Ohhhhhhhh!" the pot interrupted, shaking with excitement. "I watered the seeds through the crack in my side, and the seeds sprouted and the flowers bloomed, and..." "Yes," said the man. "I noticed your crack, your flaw. But I knew it could be used for good, to bring true beauty into the world."

We are all the pots with a crack in us that hopefully help bring growth and beauty into the world. And yes, some of us are just cracked pots, but water

changes us each day, allowing us to live our lives most fully. The water of our souls spreads throughout the world each day making it brighter, more colorful, more caring, filled with more love. Through our inner cracks our light shines through while also allowing those around us see where we need love, care and tenderness.

Water allows great beauty to grow and bloom in each of us as well as in every garden it rains upon. Each breath is a gift in time allowing us the next moments we take in. Yom Kippur is the healing we need in time and space. Once again God asks us to stand within the light of creation in hopes that we've learned to accept ourselves. God hopes that in a year we've learned to judge ourselves less sharply. God hopes that we've learned to spread kindness and compassion both within ourselves and out into the world. God doesn't want to see our destruction, God wants to see us become our true selves. We breathe. We take in water. We take in sustenance on any other day. But this day God commands us simply to breathe. God commands us to lose the weight of the burdens in our minds and upon our hearts. God asks us to forgive ourselves and to forgive those who may have wronged us. God asks us to be forgiving, loving and accepting of both ourselves and all of humanity in all its flawed perfection. May this be the year we truly accept ourselves for who we are. May this Yom Kippur bring us the peace and forgiveness we seek. May this fast make all the difference in our lives towards making the world a better place. May you all be written in the book of life for a sweet and healthy year.

Cayn yehi ratzon - may this be God's will.

May your fast be light. L'shana tova u'metukah

[Anthem - This is Me - Greatest Showman Soundtrack](#)