

A MEDITATION FOR ONE WHO CANNOT FAST

Though Yom Kippur is a fasting holiday — a day during which we abstain from eating, drinking, and even brushing our teeth or using perfumes — Jewish tradition recognizes that fasting is not a safe practice for all Jews. For this reason, children under the age of 13 and individuals who are pregnant or ill are not required to fast in Yom Kippur. For those who fall into this category, the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services provides a special meditation to recite instead, written by Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub.

Ribbono shel Olam / Master of the Universe;

Creator of All, Source of All Life,

Who Knows What is Deep in Human Hearts,

Who Nurtures Every Living Being:

As You know, dear God,

Yom Kippur is fast approaching, and because of my condition,

I am not able to keep the traditional fast —

I cannot abstain totally from eating.

On this Day of Atonement, this Sabbath of Sabbaths,

this year and every year,

it is so central to join the people of Israel

in denying ourselves food and drink for one day

so that we focus on correcting our misdeeds,

on knowing our mortality;

on reaching for a life of Torah, mitzvot, and lovingkindness;

on You.

You know, dear God, that it is not my intent

to be apart from our people and our tradition.

My current state of health makes it unsuitable for me to fast

So, dear God, I turn to You now in sincerity and openness:

Help me in the coming year to do my best in guarding my health.

Help us, Your children, learn how to protect our bodies from harm.

Help us support others in caring for their tzelem Elokim, their Image of God.

Teach us to help one another grow and thrive in Body, Mind, and Spirit.

Guide caring family and health care professionals in their partnering with you

to bring healing if not cure, support and strength if not an end to symptoms.

And if there is an opportunity for me to help others who suffer

by doing something they need or by being attentive company —

Grant me the ability to do this mitzvah with love and devotion.

Rofeh khol basar / Healer of all living creatures:

I thank You for the breath that is in me

for the community of Israel that lives

for the possibilities of today and tomorrow.

May my eating be as a fast;

May it be dedicated to You, to T'shuvah —

to the Renewal and Restoration of my relationship to You, to Others, and to Myself.

Amen!