

JEWISH MEDITATION @ HOME/CAMP

Alison's Notes to guide your Practice

Always begin with your breath

Find yourself in a comfortable, upright, seated position. Ground and uplift yourself.

Sit how you'd like to feel. Take a few deep breaths. Remind yourself that this is what it feels like to breathe. When your mind inevitably wanders, which is what minds do, gently return to your breath. Practice teshuvah (returning), and return again and again and again and again and again to your breath, your self, your source.

YHVH

This Kabbalistic practice uses the letters Yud Hay Vav Hay, the word or name that signifies G'd, divinity, the universe, the flow and source of all things. You can "pronounce" these four letters as a breath and visualize each letter with each breath. Try wrapping your inhale and exhale around the letters in your mind. Visualizing the letters vertically, you can embody this concept. Imagine them on your body and guide your breath to follow their shape on your body: Yud around your head, Hay across your shoulders and down your arms, Vav up your torso, and Hay across your hips and down your legs.

Sh'ma

Use the radical call of the Sh'ma to place yourself firmly in the present tense by listening to all the sounds around you. Sit and listen to sounds that are far away. Bring your attention to nearby sounds, and eventually to the sounds within you. Listen for the sound of the letter Shin that starts the word Sh'ma, "shhhh," in your breath. Sit with all of the sounds within and beyond you, practicing the Sh'ma and experiencing echad, oneness. Sit with awareness and bring your attention back to the act of listening each time you are distracted.

Guidance on creating a daily practice

Make a commitment to take three conscious breaths every day. When you forget, before you go to sleep, take your three breaths. When you remember, do a few more because it feels really good. Commit to sitting each morning for 5 minutes. Then one day sit for 20. Make commitments. Forget. Get too busy, skip it. Come back. It's called practice for a reason. There's no failure in spiritual practice, just learning and growing. This returning and realigning is the practice of meditation. Sometimes just showing up and going through the motions is enough to create habits and foundations of practice that can't not benefit you and the world. Return again, that's the practice.

Recommended Reading List

Books on meditation - Jewish and not- and Jewish spirituality, in no particular order:

<https://www.alisonlaichter.com/readinglist>

**May your practice be a source of peace and joy in your life.
May all of the benefits of your practice fill you up and radiate out into the world,
through your thoughts and your words and your actions.**

www.alisonlaichter.com