

# **A Positive Spin on Disconnect – Alternative liturgy/Alternative voices**

compiled by David Reinhart

## Live On<sup>1</sup>

We pray, we don't pray.  
We pray and don't.  
Each day is its own day,  
yet days blur together.  
The Same,  
the Different,  
the All, at once.  
Together, different, do and don't.  
How do we do,  
when we feel like we don't?  
Mustn't we do?  
Might we don't?  
Yet days blur together, the all at once.  
We pray, we don't pray,  
We do and, we won't...

We all have those moments when we feel ... off. Something is missing, something is different, something's not right, but it's hard to identify what that might be. Everything seems present, normal and, yet, wrong. This isn't how I normally feel. This isn't necessarily how I want to feel. But that's how we feel in that moment, and that is important. And it might be enough. So we live. And, in this moment, we pray.

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<sup>1</sup> an original composition by David Reinhart

**Modeh/Modah Ani – Pg. 24**

**Reading – Pg. 25**

To be “religious” might mean to have an intuitive feeling of the unity of the cosmos. ... Oneness is grounded in scientific reality: we are made of the same stuff as all of creation. The deepest marvel is the unity in diversity. -*Daniel Matt* (MT pg. 7)

**Asher Yatzar – English Pg. 33**

We are called unto life, destiny uncertain.  
Yet we offer thanks for what we know,  
for health and healing, for labor and repose,  
for renewal of beauty in earth and sky,  
for that blend of human-holy which inspires compassion,  
and for hope: eternal, promising light.

*For life, for health, for hope,  
for beautiful, bountiful blessing,  
all praise to the Source of Being.*

*Baruch atah, Adonai,  
M'kor nefesh kol chai.  
(Elyse Frishman – MT pg. 2)*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי,  
מְקוֹר נַפְשׁ כָּל חַי.

**Reading – Pg. 41**

Cherish your doubts, for doubt is the handmaiden of truth. Doubt is the key to the door of knowledge; it is the servant of discovery. A belief which may not be questioned binds us to error, for there is incompleteness and imperfection in every belief.

Doubt is the touchstone of truth; it is an acid which eats away the false.

Let none fear for the truth, that doubt may consume it; for doubt is a testing of belief.

For truth, if it be truth, arises from each testing stronger, more secure. Those who would silence doubt are filled with fear; the house of their spirit is built on shifting sands.

But they that fear not doubt, and know of its use, are founded on a rock.

They shall walk in the light of growing knowledge; the work of their hands shall endure.

Therefore, let us not fear doubt, but let us rejoice in its help: It is to the wise as a staff to the blind; doubt is the handmaiden of truth. (Robert T. Weston – GoP pg. 711)

## Laasok – Pg. 42

As soon as, in accordance with Jewish teaching, your lives have been touched by aspiration, all your windows are thrown open and the light of infinite hope enters. Then the community as a whole demands your help and you dare not say, “Why bother?” ... Let us consider well, in the light of religion, what are the things worth bothering about. Perhaps we shall find ourselves bothering about mere trivialities – indulging in fears which have no foundation now and never will have any reality. Perhaps we are wasting our opportunities altogether or using them in a futile way. Let us pray for guidance, and as we pray let us remember that when all rubbish is pushed to one side, there are many things which we shall have to bother about, which concern us immensely because they concern the wellbeing of the community as a whole. ... In spite of our absurd inadequacy, in spite of all our weaknesses, [we can] affect by our lives, the life of humanity in its progress towards God. -*Lily Montagu* (MT pg. 49)

## (Yitgadal)

God can hardly be listening to the actual words of our prayers: how unendingly boring to hear such repetition days without number! And anyone who prays with any regularity or sincerity knows that the same prayers mean different things on different readings. Instead, each prayer is a metaphoric representation of the speaker’s heart and mind. Now to God, that is an interesting and unending text, ever-changing, and God is the ultimate reader of nuance and allusion.

-*Adam Sol* (MT pg. 224)

## Bar’chu – Pg. 58

O God, You are near as the very air we breathe and the light around us, yet our thought’s farthest reach falls short of You.

*We yearn to reach You. We seek the light and warmth of Your presence, for we are lost without You. Though we say You are near, we are lonely and alone.*

O let our desire be so strong that it will tear the veil that keeps You from our sight! Let Your light penetrate our darkness, to reveal to us the glory and joy of Your eternal presence.

*As the fish gives himself to the sea, as the bird gives herself to the air, as all life gives itself to life, so may we give ourselves to You, O God.* (Israel I Mattuck – GoP pg. 665)

בְּרִיךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, יוֹצֵר הַמְּאוֹרוֹת.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, yotzeir ham'orot.*

## Ahavah Rabbah – English Pg. 63

## Sh'ma

And what is my life span?  
I'm like a man gone out of Egypt;  
the Red Sea parts, I cross on dry land,  
two walls of water; on my right and on my left  
Pharaoh's army and his horsemen behind me.  
Before me the desert,  
perhaps the Promised Land, too.  
That is my life span.  
(Yehuda Amichai – MT pg. 73)

The help we really need is spiritual. What we really need is courage, patience, strength, wisdom, and serenity. These can only come to us from the realm of the spirit, from that source of spirit that we call God ... but strength and courage, fortitude and patience and hope are not tangible and have no sound. They have no sound; they have no touch. Yet when you need them they are more real and more true and more important than anything tangible could ever be. *-Harold Hahn* (MT pg. 56)

### **Silent Amidah/T'filat HaLev**

### **Torah Service**

**Aleinu – Pg. 591**

**Kaddish Yatom – Pg. 598**

**Reading – Pg. 225**

What makes a fire burn  
is the space between the logs,  
a breathing space.  
Too much of a good thing,  
too many logs  
packed in too tight  
can douse the flames  
almost as surely  
as a pail of water.

So building fires  
requires attention  
to the spaces in between,  
as much as to the wood.

When we are able to build  
open spaces  
in the same way we have learned  
to pile on the logs,  
then we can come to see how  
it is fuel, and absence of fuel  
together, that make the fire possible.

We only need to lay a log  
lightly from time to time.  
A fire grows  
simply because the space is there,  
with openings in which the flame  
that knows just how it wants to  
burn  
can find its way.  
(Judy Brown – MT pg. 225)