

## Breathing Yahweh



The Jewish people did not speak the name of God. This unspeakability has long been recognized, but now we know it goes even deeper: formally the name of God was not, could not be spoken at all—only *breathed*. Many are convinced that its correct pronunciation is an attempt to replicate and imitate the very sound of inhalation and exhalation. *Inhale-Yah, exhale-weh*. Therefore, the one thing we do every moment of our lives is to speak the name of God. This makes the name of God our first and last word as we enter and leave the world.

When considered in this way, *God is suddenly as available and accessible as the very thing we all do constantly—breathe*. Exactly as some teachers of prayer say, “Stay with the breath, attend to your breath”—the same breath that was breathed into Adam’s nostrils by this Yahweh (Genesis 2:7); the very breath “spirit” that Jesus handed over with trust on the cross (John 19:30) and then breathed on us as *shalom*, forgiveness, and the Holy Spirit all at once (John 20:21-23). We are living God’s presence—in the simplicity and persistence of breath.

A simple way to practice.  
Breathe the syllables with open mouth and lips, relaxed tongue:

**Inhale—Yah**  
**Exhale—weh**

-Source Richard Rohr, *The Naked Now: Learning to See as the Mystics See*