

Laments איכה

Translations of *Eikhah* for our world

<http://neohasid.org/resources/laments>



Laments 4:1, Margaret Adams Parker
www.margaretadamparker.com
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neohasid.org

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This work is dedicated to all refugees

Kaddish for a Human Minyan, facing this sacred reality and its destruction, neohasid.org/resources/humankaddish/

Tisha B'Av is about the destruction of the Temple and becoming refugees, but the Temple itself is about sustaining Creation and is modeled on Creation. The greatest sacred Temple is the Earth itself. When we destroy ecosystems, when we turn species into refugees, we bring extinction. When our actions disrupt the climate, we also turn vast numbers of people into refugees. We must learn to pay attention to what we are doing to our sacred planet, and that also means learning to grieve what is being lost.

Mourners/Leaders: May the Name that fills all names be blessed and strengthened in this created world. May the Breath of Life that fills all breaths fill us with Life, and may it guide and rule our actions and visions, in our lives and in our time, now in this world, and in every moment to come. And let us say: Amen.

Everyone: Amen. May that great Name be blessed within us and in all worlds, for all time.

Mourners: May Holiness stream forth from its Source, full of blessing and beauty. May the Name that weaves together all Life and all creatures be blessed and praised, made beautiful and resplendent, lifted up and exalted, to the highest and most majestic...

Everyone: Blessed be!

Mourners: ...beyond all the praises and blessings and songs and prayers that can ever be said in the whole world. And let us say: Amen. *Everyone:* Amen.

Mourners: May our prayers be received by the One who is our source, and may we be nourished and sustained along with everyone everywhere who seeks to embrace this Name and this holiness. May the Life and Love within us and between us be strengthened. May the Breath that fills all breaths fill all Creation with Peace, and may Peace and Life flow to us, to our community, to all peoples, and to all beings in this world. And let us say: Amen. *Everyone:* Amen.

Mourners: The One who makes Peace in the furthest reaches of Creation will bring Peace to us and to all living beings. And let us say: Amen.

Everyone: Amen.

For the billions of animals
living lives of torture to satisfy
human gluttony,
and for the pandemics and
plagues that can spread from
them to humanity
Al eleh anu bokhot

For the untold losses and
annihilations suffered by the
creatures of the Earth,
and for the ignorance that sees
not, and the callous hearts not
broken
Al eleh anu bokhim

For the wicked who prosper
from war, homelessness,
poverty, and from the land's
ruin,
and for the horror they bring on
all of us, while they shelter in
their mansions
– Alas, how long will they
prosper?
Al eleh anu bokhot

For the governments refusing
to act,
and for the leaders who thwart
and reverse policies that would
save species, habitats,
ecosystems,
Al eleh anu bokhim

Rabbi David Seidenberg,
neohasid.org, 2020
neohasid.org/docs/AIEleh.doc

For violent storms and the fires,
and for the forest sanctuaries
lost
Al eleh anu bokhot

For a world suspended in the
nothingness of space,
and for the anxiety we live in,
imagining this refuge lost
Al eleh anu bokhim

For our own sore hearts, living
in a world of wounds,
and for our children and
generations to come, for their
fears and their hopes for a
better world
Al eleh anu bokhot

For the wounding of God's
works, and for the wounding of
God's image,
Al eleh anu bokhim

For the Breath of Life,
desecrated, destroyed, defiled!
Can You hear us, can You save
us from ourselves?
Al eleh anu bokhot, for these
we cry

Teach us to care, teach us to sit
still, to understand, for the time
is late.
Impel us to act, participate,
triumph, at least enough, lest
there be no one left to cry

A prayer for democracy, that it may not fall nor fail, not in Israel, nor
Ukraine, nor the U.S., not anywhere. May all Israel realize that the
occupation is inimical to democracy. May we gain inspiration and power
from the mass movement to protect Israeli democracy, which transformed
after October 7 to become a network to support displaced Israelis and
demand a ceasefire deal, and from Standing Together, the network of
Palestinian and Jewish Israelis fighting for true democracy for everyone.

May You tear out autocracy, tyranny and despotism,
rend the power of those who cheat and deceive,
and upend those who oppress the vulnerable.
Make the reign of the arrogant disappear from all lands.
May the people attacking democracies everywhere
stumble and fail, and may their plans be as nought.
Stop them, humble them, bring on their downfall,
soon, in our days, for You humble the arrogant.

May You give to all the peoples of the world
the strength and will to pursue righteousness
and establish justice, and to seek peace as a unified force,
so that violence be uprooted, and healing, good life
and peace may flourish, for You are the Ruler who loves
righteous justice. (Amen.)

תַּעֲקֹר רוֹדְנוֹת וְטִירוֹנִיָּא וְעֲרִיצוֹת
וְתִשְׁבֵּר רַמָּאִים וְתַמְגֵּר עֲשָׂקֵי נְדָכָאִים
תַּעֲבִיר מִמְשָׁלַת זֶדוֹן מִן הָאָרֶץ
תִּכְשִׁיל פּוֹגְעִים בְּדְמוּקְרַטְיָה וְתִפְרֹ תַחֲבִילוֹתָם
תַּכְלִם וְתִשְׁפִּילֵם וְתַכְנִיעֵם בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ
כִּי מִכְנִיעַ יוֹדִים אֶתָּה

וְכֵן תִּתֵּן לְכָל אַמּוֹת הָעוֹלָם הַכֹּחַ וְהָרָצוֹן לְרֹדֵף צֶדֶק
לְכוֹנֵן מִשְׁפָּט וּלְבַקֵּשׁ שְׁלוֹם כְּאַגְדָּה אַחַת
לַעֲקֹר חָמָס וּלְהַצְמִיחַ רְפוּאָה וְחַיִּים טוֹבִים וְשְׁלוֹם
כִּי אַתָּה הוּא מֶלֶךְ אֱהָב צֶדֶקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט (וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן)

This prayer is based on one section of neohasid.org's voting prayer. You
can also add it to the 12th blessing of the *Amidah*. Get the prayer for voting
here: neohasid.org/resources/votingprayer

“Zion through justice will be redeemed.” (Isaiah 1:27)

What does it mean today to be *Aveilei Tziyon* אֲבֵילֵי צִיּוֹן—one among the “mourners of Zion”—when Jerusalem is rebuilt, when her development knows no bounds, when the state of Israel has one of the most powerful militaries in the world, and uses its power to take land from Palestinian farmers in the West Bank? What does it mean when the state that was supposed to liberate the Jews from exile looks so different from redemption as envisioned by the prophets? When it can’t defend its *kibbutzim*? When its social reality, for the foreigner and the poor, for the Christian or Muslim vs. the Jew, looks so different than justice – especially in the territories of ancient Israel, now called the West Bank or Judea and Samaria? When the government tries to neuter the courts, when it pursues war without end? When those settlers most passionate about “redemption” lead pogroms against Palestinians? (972mag.com/pogroms-west-bank-soldiers-settlers/) What about a state whose fascist factions try to starve all of Gaza? Is this the beginning of “our redemption”? Or the unraveling of redemption?

If our covenant is real, that covenant promises this: a state that rules through such injustice will not stand. Should we then anticipate such destruction? Or reject the thought of it? Perhaps by mourning now—and by using that impulse to unknot injustice—we can avert the worst. That is what the rabbis and prophets of old believed. That is something all lovers of justice can get behind, whether or not we call ourselves Zionist, or emphasize *doikeit*, the power of living in diaspora. That is a meaning of *Aveilei Tziyon* all can embrace.

On the day that we cried out and no one answered us,

We said: “It shall not be thus in our places.”

“When the time comes,” we promised, “we will rise up at the head of the people.”

And yet here is the day, and where is our reaction? where is our outcry?

We mumble “God have mercy” and we just say another prayer.

“And in truth, it is amazing that the world is still standing after so many cries for help such as these”

Is this the fast that I would choose—a day in which people hunger for bread? Is this not the fast I would choose: a day on which we rise to righteousness.

excerpt from R. Aryeh Cohen, אֲדוֹן לֵלֵב שְׂאִינָה שְׁבִינָה,

“Woe to the Heart that is not Broken”, <https://opensiddur.org/?p=29657>

If you are an *Aveil leTziyon*, a mourner for Zion, join allies on fb:

[Drachim—A new path forward for Israel/Palestine.](#)

Al eleh anu bokhim, anu bokhot, For these we weep, An eco-lament

For the Amazon, the lungs of the world,
and for the greed that goads people to burn the jungles
Al eleh anu bokhim

For the ocean’s rising acidity,
and for the heat that bleaches wondrous corals
Al eleh anu bokhot

For Redwoods clearcut,
and for their multitudes of species that have lost their homes ~ *Al eleh anu bokhim*

For plastic found in deepest ocean and upon highest mountain, and for a throwaway culture that devalues everything in our lives
Al eleh anu bokhot

For the murder of elephants, rhinos, pangolins,
and for the retribution their extinction must deserve
Al eleh anu bokhim

For the birds and insects gone silent, and for the starlight smothered by our lights
Al eleh anu bokhot

For the generations whose home we are ruining,
and for the generation that knows this but doesn’t change course
Al eleh anu bokhim

For the Antarctica glaciers and the polar ice caps,
and for the penguins and polar bears endangered
Al eleh anu bokhot

For snowpack and glaciers everywhere,
and for the billions whose cities will be drowned, and whose farms will have no water
Al eleh anu bokhim

For drought drying forests and expanding deserts,
for desert habitats shrinking from before human development, and for the Saharah cheetah, the fringe-toed lizard, and the addax
Al eleh anu bokhot

For the undiscovered species whose lives we will never know, and for the loss of wisdom, truth and beauty each one embodies on this planet
Al eleh anu bokhim

Eli Tsiyon, selected verses

<i>Eli Tsiyon v'areha k'mo ishah v'tsireha v'khivtulah chagurat sak al ba'al n'ureha</i>	My God, Zion and her towns, like a woman in travail of labor, like a virgin wearing sackcloth for the husband of her youth
<i>Alei hegyon m'choleha asher damam b'areha V'al va'ad asher shamam uvitul sanhed'reha</i>	For her dancers' lyricism now silenced in her towns and for the mob that destroyed, and ended her high court of justice
<i>Alei galut m'shartei El n'imei shir z'mareha V'al kolot m'charpeha b'eit rabu f'gareha</i>	For the exile of God's servants sweet singers of her songs and for her scorers clamoring while the corpses piled up
<i>Alei pesha asher av'tah s'lol derekh ashureha V'al tsiv'ot k'haleha sh'zufeha sh'choreha</i>	For the perversion she twisted paving the path of the well-off and for her amassed community her field workers, her brown, her black people
<i>Alei shimkha asher chulal b'fi kamai m'tseireha V'al tachan y'tsavchu lakh Kashuv ush'ma amareha.</i>	For Your name desecrated in the mouth (of those) who stood over her oppressed, and for the plea they scream to You – focus and listen to her message

*Im eshkachekh Y'rushalayim tishkach y'mini.
Tidbak l'shoni l'chiki im lo ezk'rekhi,
im lo a'aleh Y'rushalayim al rosh simchati.*

If I forget you Jerusalem, may my right hand forget.
May my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth, if it fails to
remember, if I don't lift up Jerusalem ahead of my joy.

To imagine what happened to *Eretz Yisrael* when the second Temple was destroyed, picture Russia's war against Ukraine, or picture the scenes of Gaza's destruction: the devastation of civilians, and the destruction of everything that supports normal life. In the Jewish people's timeline, the Roman invader wrought destruction, murder, torture, and enslavement. Or if you want to imagine the devastating massacres of the Crusade of 1096, picture the images of senseless death wrought by Hamas on October 7. Never in our lifetimes have there been so many accessible and *contemporary* pictures of how "death has come up through our windows" (Jeremiah 9:5).

Now imagine all those refugees from the land of Israel, pursued throughout the world by enslavers, kidnappers, traffickers, tormentors. Or just imagine ICE, may they be thwarted and ruined. *Tisha B'Av* is not and was never primarily about the Temple and its sacrifices. It's about the refugee and the persecuted, about populations facing famine and mass death. It's also a call to become aware of the ways we abuse the power and privilege we have, whether in the U.S., Israel and Palestine, or anywhere, and to do *t'shuvah*, before cataclysmic consequences strike us. This includes the many ways the human species is willfully disrupting the climate, extinguishing the Life we are commanded to choose, turning vulnerable people and species into refugees.

As the world also struggles to face so many plagues, including racism, anti-immigrant hatred, and global climate disruption, Jews also face ballooning anti-Semitism, enflamed by protests against the war, along with pressure to say that anti-Semitism isn't real because people are just protesting Israel, or because Jews are privileged and so many Jews present as white. And as the many storms and fires remind us, climate cataclysm edges ever closer. *Oy meh hayah lanu!*

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Learn more about Standing Together, the organization fighting both for democracy and against the occupation, including organizing Jewish-Palestinian watches to support communities inside Israel: <https://www.standing-together.org/en>

*IF I MUST DIE*  
by REFAAT ALAREER  
قال بد أن تعيش أنت

If I must die,  
you must live  
to tell my story  
to sell my things  
to buy a piece of cloth  
and some strings,  
(make it white with a long tail)  
so that a child, somewhere in Gaza  
while looking heaven in the eye  
awaiting his dad who left in a blaze—  
and bid no one farewell  
not even to his flesh  
not even to himself—  
sees the kite, my kite you made, flying  
up above  
and thinks for a moment an angel  
is there  
bringing back love  
If I must die  
let it bring hope  
let it be a tale

*Refaat Alareer was one of the tens of thousands of civilian casualties of Israel's war against Hamas after the Hamas attack. He died on December 6, 2023 at the age of 44.*

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Can we keep the tragedies
of the Jewish people, and
the tragedies of the
Palestinian people, front
and center at the same
time? If so, how will we also
keep justice front and
center?

UNDER THE RUBBLE (excerpt)
by MOSUB ABU TOHA

He left the house to buy some bread
for his kids.
News of his death made it home,
but not the bread.
No bread.
Death sits to eat whoever remains of
the kids.
No need for a table, no need for bread.

בנפשינו נביא לחמינו
For our lives we bring our bread...
~ *Laments 5:9*

ONE TREE IN KIBBUTZ BE'ERI
by ORIAN CHAPLIN

One tree in Kibbutz Be'eri
Saw things trees are never
supposed to see.
One tree in Kibbutz Be'eri heard too
much
And could not escape smells.
Its roots held their breath,
Its branches trembled
Its leaves fell like tears
Its heart was crushed
Depressed Yearning
Amputated Silenced.
One tree in Kibbutz Be'eri
On the morning of October 7
No longer wanted to be a tree
In a place where there is no one left to
protect.
One tree in Kibbutz Be'eri
asked to be a bench,
Maybe someone will come back,
And they might want to sit down.
In the destruction of Kibbutz Be'eri
Even trees cannot stand.

Lament for a Beloved Land

We will yet return and rebuild you,
the soil of our homeland
We will yet return and sing in your fields
a joyous song
Your sons will yet return
to love and forgive
Your daughters will yet return
to complete the thankful song
For neighbors and fellows who had
become our enemies,
When our eyes will behold
peace between us.

And we will cast a prayer together
for borders of tranquility,
For becoming good neighbors,
for leaders with humility
That we will respect each other,
sisters and brethren
When O land, you will sprout
grain and wheat, again

“Hasbaritis” 8/25/2024
by David Seidenberg

A man grieving, from Hevron,
aka al-Khalil, “the friend”, grieving his
brothers and sisters in Gaza:
20,000 children dead, he says, and
who knows how many more dead
under the rubble. “If you go to one
jinaza,” he struggles for the English
word, “one fu-, fu-, funeral every day,
you will go to funeral for 54 years.”

In my head I calculate, “20,000
children – that’s almost certainly an
exaggeration. Maybe it’s only
7,500 children.
That’s only 20 years of funerals.”
Only.

(continued)

עוד נשוב ונבנה אדמת מולדת,
עוד נשוב ונרנן בשדותיך
נשיר מזמור
עוד ישובו בנים
לאהב ולסלח,
עוד תשובנה בנותיך הלל לגמר
על שכינים, על רעים,
שקיו לאויבינו,
כאשר תחזינה עינינו
בשלוש בינינו.

ותפל נשא יחד
לגבולות של שלום,
לשכנות טובה,
למנהיגים עם ענוה
שנכבד איש אחיו, אשה אחותה,
עת תצמיחי שוב,
ארז, דגן וחסה.

*My daughter people –so cruel,
like ostriches in the wilderness*
~ *Laments 4:3*

Lament for a Beloved Land*

by Leora Ayalon,

survivor of the slaughter in Kibbutz Kfar Aza

How have your dwellings been
turned into ruins,
Your people become exiles
in their own land?
O Betrayed land, your sons betrayed you,
They put their desires before all else,
They sealed your fate
with their very tongues,
They abandoned you in their hearts,
lost, errant in their ways.

How your Kibbutzim were destroyed,
cities made desolate,
Your people dead,
your fields wasting away.
Furrows hacked, become fields of horror,
All eyes devastated, dried out of tears.

Your sons, daughters butchered
undefended,
Fair maidens hauled into captivity.
And the plotters standing before them
Whispering, rustling, and the land was
silent

Woe unto you, you cowards,
Sitting carelessly in your cushioned chairs,
Entrusted with the lives of
beloved captives
While mothers and fathers
are wrapped in their grief.

* translated by Yehuda Mirsky; minor edits made by
David Seidenberg

קִינָה לָאָרֶץ אֲהוּבָה

לִיאֹרֵה אֵילָו,

שורדת הטבח בקיבוץ כפר עזה

איכה הפכו משכנותיך
לעזי חרבות,
אנשיך לגולים בארצם?
הוי ארץ נבגדת, בגדו בך בניה,
שמו מאווייהם בראש מעינם,
חרצו גורלך במו לשונם,
עזבוך בלפם,
תועים בדרךכם.

איכה חרבו קבוציך,
ערים שמימו,
אנשיך מתים, שדותיך נשמו.
נירים רטשו, הפכו שדות אימה,
עין כל חרבה, יבשה מדמעה.

בניה, בנותיך נטבחו בלי מגן,
אל שבין הובלו עלמות חן.
ועומדים מנגד חורשי המזמה
לוחשים, רוחשים, והארץ
דממה

אבוי אתם, מוגי הלבב,
היושבים בכסאותיכם,
על עצמות המושב,
אמונים על חיי יקירים חטופים
עת אמהות ואבות
באבלם עטופים.

(continued on next page)

O How She Sat Alone*

by Nurit Hirschfeld-Skupinsky,

*survivor of the slaughter
in Kibbutz Nahal Oz*

O How She Sat Alone
Nir Oz, full of blood
Sderot, was like a widow
A city stunned, and who left
are her faithful?

O How They Sat Alone
In the shelter room
One family, and another,
And another, and another one.

O How They Sat Alone
The women look-outs, full-eyed
at the observation posts
But there was no listening,
And deliverance – none.

O How They Sat Alone
Young women and young men
Hiding in pits and shrubs.
Their dancing halted,
And who will rescue them?

O How They Sat Alone
Captive women and captive men
And sitting there, still:
men, women,
elders and children.
Crying, they are crying at night
Tears on their cheeks
And there is no one who comforts.

Both Hebrew laments for October 7 were
published first in *Times of Israel* and
appeared in *Dirshuni: Contemporary*
Women's Midrash Vol. 2. Commissioned by
Tamar Biala. See Tamar Biala's TOI article,
[“How she sat alone: New laments for a
beloved land”](#).

איכה ישבה בָּדָד

נורית הירשפלד-סקופינסקי,
שורדת הטבח בקיבוץ נחל עוז

איכה ישבה בָּדָד
ניר עז רבתי דם.
שדרות היתה כאלמנה,
קרִיה הלוּמה, ומי נאמנה?

איכה ישבה בָּדָד
במִמָּד

משפחה, ועוד אחת,
ועוד, ועוד אחת.

איכה ישבו בָּדָד
תצפתניות רבתי עין,
ולא היתה הקשבה,
וישועה – אין.

איכה ישבו בָּדָד
צעירות וצעירים
במסתורי שוחות ושיחים.
פסקו רקודיהם,
ומי יחלצם?

איכה ישבו בָּדָד
חטופות וחטופים,
ועדן יושבים:
גברים, נשים,
קשישים וילדים.
בכו בוכים בלילה,
דמעות על לחייהם, ואין מנחם.

* translated by Yehuda Mirsky with minor edits
made by David Seidenberg

Count the days between Tisha B'Av and
Rosh Hashanah using Omer Counter –
neohasid.org/omer/apps