

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

What does it mean today to be *Aveilei Tziyon* אבלי ציון—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/](http://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, *אוי ללב שאינה שבורה*,

“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.](#)

2025 Supplemental Readings

# Laments איכה

Translations of *Eikhah* for our world

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



Laments 4:1, Margaret Adams Parker  
[www.margaretadamparker.com](http://www.margaretadamparker.com)  
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This work is dedicated to all refugees

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>

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 עֲשָׁקִי נְדָכָאִים  
תַּעֲבִיר מִמְשָׁלַת זֶדוֹן מִן הָאָרֶץ  
תִּכְשִׁיל פּוֹגְעִים בְּדַמוּקְרַטְיָה וְתִפְרֹ תַחֲבוּלוֹתָם  
תַּכְלִם וְתִשְׁפִּילִם וְתַכְנִיעֵם בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ  
כִּי מִכְנִיעַ יָדִים אַתָּה

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

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

*Eli Tsiyon, selected verses*

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

Kaddish for a Human Minyan, facing this sacred reality and its  
destruction, [neohasid.org/resources/humankaddish/](http://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.

***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,  
and 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*

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

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.*

~~~~~

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.

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 עוז רבתי דם.  
שְׁדֵרוֹת הָיְתָה כְּאַלְמָנָה,  
קְרִיָה הִלּוּמָה, וּמִי נֹאֲמָנָה?

איכה ישבה בָּדָד  
בְּמִקְוֵה  
מְשֻׁפָּחָה, וְעוֹד אַחַת,  
וְעוֹד, וְעוֹד אַחַת.

איכה ישבו בָּדָד  
תַּצְפִּיתִינִיּוֹת רַבִּיתִי עֵינַי,  
וְלֹא הָיְתָה הַקִּשְׁבָּה,  
וְיִשׁוּעָה – אֵין.

איכה ישבו בָּדָד  
צְעִירוֹת וְצְעִירִים  
בְּמִסְתוּרֵי שׁוֹחֲזוֹת וְשִׁיחִים.  
פָּסְקוּ רְקוּדֵיהֶם,  
וּמִי יִחְלָצֵם?

איכה ישבו בָּדָד  
חֲטוּפוֹת וְחֲטוּפִים,  
וְעֵדֵינוּ יוֹשְׁבִים:  
גְּבָרִים, נָשִׁים,  
קְשִׁישִׁים וְיֻלְדִים.  
בָּכוּ בֹכִים בְּלֵילָה,  
דְּמָעוֹת עַל לִחְיֵיהֶם, וְאֵין מְנַחֵם.

\* 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](https://neohasid.org/omer/apps)**

***Lament for a Beloved Land\****

**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 with minor edits  
made by David Seidenberg

**קִינָה לְאֶרֶץ אֲהוּבָה  
ליאורה אילון,**

שורדת הטבח בקיבוץ כפר עזה

איכה הפכו מְשְׁכֹנֶיךָ  
לְעֵי תְּרֵבוֹת,  
אֲנָשֶׁיךָ לְגוֹלִים בְּאַרְצָם?  
הוּא אֶרֶץ נִבְגָּדָת, בְּגָדוּ בְּךָ  
בְּנֶיךָ,  
שָׂמוּ מֵאוּיֵיהֶם בְּרֹאשׁ מַעֲיָנָם,  
תָּרְצוּ גּוֹרְלֶךָ בְּמוֹ לְשׁוֹנָם,  
עָזְבוּךָ בְּלִבָּם,  
תּוֹעִים בְּדַרְכָּם.

איכה תָּרְבוּ קְבוּצֶיךָ,  
עָרִים שְׂמֵמוֹ,  
אֲנָשֶׁיךָ מֵתִים, שְׂדוֹתֶיךָ נִשְׁמוֹ.  
נִירִים רָטְשׁוּ, הִפְכוּ שְׂדוֹת  
אִימָה,  
עֵין כָּל תְּרֵבָה, יִבְשָׁה מִדְּמָעָה.

בְּנֶיךָ, בְּנוֹתֶיךָ נִטְבְּחוּ בְּלִי  
מָגֵן,  
אֵל שִׁבְּנָן הוֹבִילוּ עֲלֵמוֹת חָן.  
וְעוֹמְדִים מִנֶּגֶד חוֹרְשֵׁי הַמָּזְמָה  
לוֹחֲשִׁים, רוֹחֲשִׁים,  
וְהָאֶרֶץ דֹּמָמָה

אָבוּי אִתָּם, מוֹגֵי הַלֶּכֶב,  
הַיּוֹשְׁבִים בְּכִסְאוֹתֵיכֶם,  
עַל עֲצֻמוֹת הַמוֹשָׁב,  
אֲמוּנִים עַל חַיֵּי יִקְרִירִים  
תְּטוּפִים  
עַת אֲמָהוֹת וְאָבוֹת  
בְּאֶבְלָם עֲטוּפִים.

(continued...)

***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)

עוֹד נָשׁוּב וְנִבְנָה אֶדְמַת מוֹלָדָת,  
עוֹד נָשׁוּב וְנִרְנָן בְּשִׂדּוֹתֶיךָ  
שִׁיר מְזֻמּוֹר  
עוֹד יָשׁוּבוּ בְּנֶיךָ  
לְאַהֵב וּלְסַלֵּחַ,  
עוֹד תִּשְׁכְּנָה בְּנוֹתֶיךָ הַלֵּל לְגִמְרָה  
עַל שְׂכָנִים, עַל רְעִים,  
שֶׁהָיוּ לְאוֹיְבֵינוּ,  
כְּאִשֶּׁר תִּתְּחַזֵּינָה עֵינֵינוּ  
בְּשָׁלוֹם בֵּינֵינוּ.

וְתִפְלֶה נֶשְׂא יַחַד  
לְגִבּוּלוֹת שָׁל שְׁלֹוה,  
לְשִׁכְנוֹת טוֹבָה,  
לְמִנְהִיגִים עִם עֲנוּה  
שֶׁנִּכְבֵּד אִישׁ אֶחָיו, אִשָּׁה אַחֹתָה,  
עֵת תִּצְמִיחַ שׁוֹב,  
אֶרֶץ, דָּגָן וַחֲטָה.

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