



How?!

Tisha b'Av 5784 / 2024

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On Tisha b'Av we confront the world's brokenness, and our own. In many ways, 5784 has felt like a whole year of Tisha b'Av. These words are some of our hearts' cries this year as Tisha b'Av approaches.



Eikhah for Israel and Gaza

Walls burned or broken
Peacemakers kidnapped and slaughtered
Children terrorized

Buildings bombed to rubble
Hospitals destroyed
Cisterns emptied

Everywhere pictures of the hostages
Everywhere reminders of the martyrs
Everywhere parents burying children

Our grief and fury could wash away creation.
Will anyone survive, clinging to this battered ark?
Is there an olive tree left anywhere?

R. Rachel Barenblat

An Eikhah for Us and Them

*Alas! She that was great among nations
Is become like a widow.
There is none to comfort her
Of all her friends.*

Bitterly she weeps in the night.
All her allies have betrayed her.
Her infants have gone into captivity,
Her people fell by enemy hands.

*My life is bereft of peace,
I forget what happiness is.
I dwell in darkness
Like those long dead.*

God has shattered my bones.
God has walled me in and I cannot break out.
God has weighed me down with chains.
God isn't listening.

*I have called on Your name, O God,
From the depths of the pit.
Hear my plea;
Do not shut Your ear to my cry!*

Because of this our hearts are sick,
Because of these our eyes are dimmed:
Because of all the places
That lie desolate—

*The Reim Music Festival, Kibbutz Nir Oz,
Kfar Aza, Kibbutz Holit, Kibbutz Beerit,
Sderot, Netiv Ha-Asara, Metula,
Kibbutz Alumim, Kiryat Shmona.*

Madinat Ghaza, Beyt Haanoun,
Khan Younis, Jabaaliya, Deir al-BalaH,
Mukhayyam al-NuSeirat, Mukhayyam
al-Maghazi, al-Bureij, Bani Suheila, RahaH.

*Gone is the joy of our hearts;
Our dancing is turned into mourning.
But You, God, are enthroned forever,
You endure through the ages.*

Why have You forgotten us utterly,
Forsaken us for all time?
Return us, God, to You, and let us return;
Renew our days as of old!

Lines from Eikhah

The Laughter (Genesis 21:9)

וַתֵּרָא שָׂרָה אֶת-בְּנֵהָגֵר הַמִּצְרִית אֲשֶׁר-לָדָה לְאַבְרָהָם מִצְחָק:

Sarah saw the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham laughing.

Eikha
How
How and how
Have we got here
When could we have stopped
What should we have done
Was there an I in this We that could have
 known what to do
Would it have mattered?

How
Tell me how
Friend across the ocean and the sea
Next to the river
How can our children play together
On these graves
In the comforting shade
 of an eucalyptus tree?

R. Sonja K. Pilz, PhD

How
How and how
Are we supposed to rebuild these walls
 and homes
How and how
Are we supposed to raise a people
Unafraid, beautiful,
And strong,
And even stronger.

Eikha
How
How and how
Can we dance and laugh again
In peace
(Whatever that is).
Can we play again together?

How
How and how
Can we eat oranges and mangos
And sing our babies to sleep.
And cook dinners and establish companies,
Teach our stories,
And bury our dead together.

An Eicha איכה

איך

How can this be happening?
Ecological devastation
Of our oceans, rivers, and air.
Global warming,
Overuse of fossil fuels,
Destroying Temple Earth.
Chemicalized and synthesized foods
Destroying Temple Body.
Religions and denominations
That wish to triumph over one another
Destroying Temple Faith.

איך

How can this be happening?
More wars. Exploitation. Terrorism.
Sex slaves. Sexual abuse.
Female genital mutilation.
Denial of science.
Poverty, hunger, starvation.
Bullying, name calling,
Scapegoating immigrants,
Scapegoating Jews.

איך

How is this even possible?
The pogroms and the Shoah
And the fear of being “other”
That has left our people divided
Between secular and religious,
And those who long ago
buried their Jewishness
In order to “pass.”
I lament the divisiveness
Between religious Jew and religious Jew
And those who would dare say
That what we’re doing
Is not Judaism
Because we don’t do it their way.

The second Temple is still
Being destroyed by שנאת חנם
sinat chinam
Senseless hatred of each other.

I lament racism
I lament the denial of systemic racism
I lament sexism
I lament the denial of systemic sexism
I lament antisemitism
I lament the denial of antisemitism
I lament the scapegoating of Israel
For the problems in the Middle East
I lament the strengthening of white
supremacy and crazed conspiracy theories

איכה

Alas, the City of of our beloved
Judaism is still in ruins.
G’d called to Adam “*Ayeka?* Where are you.”
It’s the same word as *Eicha*, how?”
How can this still be happening?
So the question to each of us
from the Holy One
Just might be *Ayeka*,
where do you stand in all of this?
And *Eicha*, how can you let it happen?

הפכת מספדי למחול לי פתחת שקי ותאזרני שמחה
You turned my mourning into dancing,
loosened my sackcloth
and surrounded me with joy.
Want the joy of Simchat Torah?
Not so fast. First we have to mourn.
That’s what Tisha B’av is all about.
The High Holidays begin...now.

Rabbi David Zaslow

Our Losses

Blessed One-ness

Nuance is abandoned
In this era of existential threats.
Perhaps it was always a middle class luxury.
Now everybody seems to think
The survival of who they are
Is on the line.

*But we miss it
And mourn our loss
And pray for its return*

Empathy is superfluous
In this time of extreme right and wrong
Perhaps it was just a pretense.
Isn't it fun to be cruel?
Anyone else's feelings
Are a bore.

*But we miss it
And mourn our loss
And pray for its return*

Kindness is for suckers
In this new time of trolls and happy attackers.
Perhaps we just awaited the internet
To show our creepiest sides.
When no one knows your name,
Why care?

*But we miss it
And mourn our loss
And pray for its return*

Grief is the outcome
So let us sit on the ground
In this time of sanctioned sorrow
And pound the passive floor.
Let us be angry
At the unnecessary pain.

*We do miss who we thought we were.
We shall mourn all the murdered.
We must pray we improve.*

Amen

Trisha Arlin



In This Moment

The next barrage from the sky is readied.
The world holds its breath on razor's edge.
Diplomats pre-script tired condemnations.

Nations learn war: some choose, others must.
Hate holds hostages both dead and alive.
Victims are blamed, aggressors comforted.

Tunnels pierce our guts.
Rockets shatter our hearts.
No damage is collateral to the victim.

Even if the world loves dead Jews,
Still we rend our hearts for every death
Though some deny our common humanity.

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, promised city of peace,
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth:
Without righteousness, words mean nothing.

If we must fight in this upside-down world,
Let our own tears remind us why:
That someday, none will live afraid.

If this moment must be,
Let it finally be the bottom.
From this moment, at last ascent.

R. David Evan Markus and R. Rachel Barenblat

About Us



Co-created by members of Bayit's Liturgical Arts Working Group, 2024.

At Bayit, we empower Jewish community by developing innovative tools and resources that foster spiritual connection, education, and growth. Together our visionary teams of clergy, liturgists, artists, game designers, and educators create, test, refine, and share tools for a Jewish future always under construction.

Find our collaborations here: [Liturgical Arts Working Group](#)

And our bios here: [Builder Biographies](#)