

תְּשֻׁעָה בְּאָב - Tisha B'Av

♪ By the Waters of Babylon

By the waters, the waters of Babylon
We lay down and wept, and wept, for thee Zion
We remember thee, remember thee, remember thee Zion
(Psalm 137)

On Tisha B'Av, we mourn the loss of our sacred space, the Temple in Jerusalem, a loss born out of baseless hatred and senseless destruction. We remember and lament all the tragedies that occurred on this fateful day throughout Jewish history. We collapse time by grieving for old wounds as if they were only just inflicted, and reaching our hands to those who suffered long ago as if they were beside us.

As we are reminded by our reading of the Book of Lamentations, we must grieve with our fellow human beings not only of time past, but also of the present. Let us expand our grief to include those around the world today who continue to lose that which is sacred to them to forces of violence, destruction and oppression.

They cry out to us from across space:

Do not shut your ear to my groan, to my cry.
(Lamentations 3:56)

As we open our ears to sounds of their weeping, we respond:

My eyes shed streams of water over the ruin of my poor people.
(Lamentations 3:49)

♫ Esa Eynai

אֲשָׂא עֵינַי אֱלֹהֵהֶרֶם מֵאֵין יְבֵא עֲזָרִי:
עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יְהוָה עֲשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ:

I lift up my eyes to the mountains
from where does my help come?
My help comes from Adonai,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
(Psalm 121)

As we widen the source of our grief to include the destruction that continues to take place today, we declare:

Let us search and examine our ways and turn back to the Eternal. Let us lift up our hearts with our hands to God in heaven.
(Lamentations 3:40)

And as we open our hearts to others and remind ourselves that we must not only bemoan their suffering but also act to prevent it, we command ourselves:

Arise! Cry out in the night at the beginning of the watches. Pour out your heart like water in the presence of the Eternal.
(Lamentations 2:19)

As we mourn for the loss of all that is sacred, may our grief compel us to respond to the suffering of others. May we arise and reach our hands outward. And may we cry out—not only in mourning, but also in an ongoing effort to alleviate pain and destruction across the world.

(American Jewish World Service)

♪ Dona

On a wagon bound for market
There's a calf with a mournful eye
High above him there's a swallow
Winging swiftly through the sky
How the winds are laughing
They laugh with all their might
Laugh and laugh the whole day through
And half the summer's night

Dona Dona Dona Dona
Dona Dona Dona Don
Dona Dona Dona Dona
Dona Dona Dona Don

"Stop complaining," said the farmer
Who told you a calf to be
Why don't you have wings to fly with
Like the swallow so proud and free
How the winds are laughing
They laugh with all their might
Laugh and laugh the whole day through
And half the summer's night

Dona...

Calves are easily bound and slaughtered
Never knowing the reason why
But whoever treasures freedom
Like the swallow has learned to fly
How the winds are laughing
They laugh with all their might
Laugh and laugh the whole day through
And half the summer's night

Dona...

We have lived in numberless towns and villages; and in too many of them we have endured cruel suffering. Some we have forgotten; others are sealed in our memory, a wound that does not heal. A hundred generation of victims and martyrs; still their blood cries out from the earth. And so many, so many at Dachau, at Buchenwald, at Babi Yar... What can we say? What can we do? How bear the unbearable, or accept what life has brought to our people? All who are born must die, but how shall we compare the slow passage of time with the callous slaughter of the innocent, cut off before their time? They lived with faith. Not all but many. And, surely, many died, with faith in God, in life, in the goodness that even flames cannot destroy. May we find a way to the strength of that faith, that trust, that sure sense that life and soul endure beyond this body's death. They have left their lives to us: let a million prayers rise whenever Jews worship; let a million candles glow against the darkness of these unfinished lives.

(Chaim Stern and Henry Cohen)

Mourner's Kaddish

וְתִגְדֹּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא. אָמֵן: בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ
וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּינוּ וּבְיוֹמֵינוּ וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וְלְעֵלְמֵי עֵלְמֵינָא:

וְתִבְרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה
וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְקֻדְשָׁא. בְּרִיךְ הוּא. לְעֵלְמָא מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא
וְשִׁירָתָא תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמַתָּא דְאִמְרִין בְּעֵלְמָא. וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:
יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמֵינָא וְחַיִּים עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל.
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן: עוֹשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵינוּ
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן: