

PRAYERS AND READINGS
FOR THE 9TH OF AV
תפילה לתשעה באב



*For these things do I weep, my eyes flow with tears.
Far from me is any comforter who might revive my spirit.
– Eicha (Lamentations) 1:16*

During the hottest time of the summer, when the land of Israel is parched and dry, we pause for the holiday of Tisha b'Av. It commemorates the destruction of the first and second temples in Jerusalem and provides the opportunity to mourn for the suffering of our people and suffering throughout the world.

In ancient times, we connected to the Divine mainly through sacrifices in the Temple in Jerusalem, which became the focus of religion, politics and national pride for many centuries. In about 586 BCE the Temple was destroyed by the Babylonian Empire, and many were brought to Babylon as slaves. This led to a great challenge to our very existence; our philosophy, theology and society had to change. When we were permitted to return and rebuild our Temple, we faced the consequences of these changes: a society split between our homeland and new communities in Babylonia.

Centuries later, under the Roman Empire, King Herod expanded the Temple complex to include the Western Wall many of us have seen in pictures or in person. This Temple was violently destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE, after a devastating siege of Jerusalem. Once again, we were thrown into Exile.

According to tradition, both Temples were destroyed on the 9th day of the month of Av. On this day we observe a day of mourning and remembrance for these and numerous other massacres, tragedies and terrible events which we have experienced on that date since then.

Havdalah Blessings

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.
Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu, melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מִיְנֵי בְשָׂמִים.
Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu, melech ha'olam, borei minei v'samim.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מְאוּרֵי הָאֵשׁ.
Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu, melech ha'olam, borei m'orei ha'eish.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמְבַדֵּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחֹל, בֵּין אֹר לְחָשֶׁךְ,
בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי לְשֵׁשֶׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַמְבַדֵּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחֹל:
Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu, melech ha'olam, hamav'dil bein kodesh l'chol, bein or
l'choshch, bein yom hash'vi'i l'sheshet yamei hama'asei
Baruch atah Adonai, hamavdil bein kodesh le'chol

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine. Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, Creator of varied spices. Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, Creator of lights of fire. Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who distinguishes between holy and ordinary, between light and darkness, between Shabbat and the six days of labor. Blessed are you, Adonai, who distinguishes between holy and ordinary.

By the waters of Babylon

Al naharot Bavel
sham yashavnu gam bachinu
b'zochreinu et Tziyon.

עַל נְהָרוֹת בָּבֶל

עַל נְהָרוֹת בָּבֶל
שָׁם יִשְׁבְּנוּ גַם בְּכִינוּ
בְּזָכְרֵנוּ אֶת צִיּוֹן.

*By the waters of Babylon
We sat down and wept for thee Zion.
We remember thee Zion.
– Psalm 137:1*

As Tisha b'Av Approaches
We begin our descent toward the rubble.
Our hearts crack open
and sorrow comes flooding in.
Help us to believe
that tears can transform,
that redemption is possible.
The walls will come down:
open our eyes,
give us strength not to look away.

– Rabbi Rachel Barenblat



Entering Tisha b'Av

Tisha b'Av recalls tragedies of Jewish history – destruction of the Temple, the Crusades, repeated exiles, and the "final solution" of the Holocaust. In our own day, Tisha b'Av beckons us into the darkness of inner exile, so we can emerge into the Season of Teshuvah. Enfolded in community, we invoke the depth of Tisha b'Av for the purpose of rising anew. Our descent tonight is for the sake of ascent tomorrow. The Merciful One will cover iniquity and not forever destroy. Soon may God withdraw anger; may divine rage not be aroused.

How can we respond to suffering? In response, I said something like this:

It's always my temptation, at times like these, to find a way to look on the bright side. I want to find a way to make things better, to turn from despair to hope, to argue that everything's going to be okay and that we can make the world a better place. But I don't think that's the right answer for tonight. On Erev Tisha b'Av, we can't go there yet. Our obligation tonight is to witness the brokenness of the world. Maybe by late tomorrow we can begin moving toward a place of hope, but for now all we can do is sit with the awareness of what's broken.

The Month of Av Stands Alone

In all of our history,
With all that we have been through,
The month of Av stands alone...
Going back to the destruction of King
Solomon's Temple,
Back even before that,
Back to a time that we stood
Gazing upon the promised land,
Afraid to enter,
Afraid of what we had been told,
Ever since that trial of faith,
Av has stood alone...

The litany of evils is long and harsh,
The list of wrongs done to us is cruel
The worst of things continue even today.

Tisha B'Av is a day we fast,
A day we mourn,
A day we remember.
Tisha B'Av calls to us,
With echoing voices from long ago,
Voices lost as sword upon sword fell.

Yet, those voices call with a message,
A message of strength not loss,
Av does indeed stand alone...

If I were to tell of all we have lost
If I were to recount the destruction
If I were to enumerate the horrors,
Relive all the pain and the tears,
I would be telling you truth, But I would be
promoting a lie.

You see there is always another side,
To every story, every tale
Every detail and every recounting,
Because in the telling of what we mourn,
We must also find reason to celebrate,
A reason to find joy in knowing we survive.
In all of our history,
With all that we have been through,
The month of Av does indeed stand alone...
And so today, as we fast and pray,
As we allow ourselves to mourn the losses,
We must also remember to celebrate...
We must acknowledge the miracle of
survival,
Despite the destruction of King Solomon's
Temple,
Despite the ovens, and rampant
antisemitism,
Despite all of that and so much more
We, stand here today...
We stand ready and able to testify,
To the truth of our survival,
To the proof that Adonai shelters us,
Even through the most devastating of
storms.
And that is why,
The month of Av,
Has and always will,
Stand alone...

-Suzanne Sabransky

Sackcloth: A Poem for Tisha B'Av

As Jacob responded to the news of Joseph's death,
As Mordechai learned of Haman's decree,
As the king of Ninevah proclaimed a fast that extended even to the cattle,
So she, too, wrapped herself in the harsh embrace of sackcloth.

Arms raised to the heavens,
she fasted,
tore her hair and rent her garment,
beat her breast.
Tides of anxiety, violence and despair
engulfed her world.

Strapping on her sandals,
invisible in the mass of weeping exiles,
she searched through columns of cedar
broken as her people
found a forgotten ember,
breathed it into memory, a dream.



Struggling from the rubble,
her presence undimmed but hidden as the new moon,
she stepped onto the road leading to all the worlds,
joined with the mourning women
and raised a wailing heard in every generation.

How can our eyes not run down with tears
our eyelids not flow with water
as we, Shekhinah in our midst,
journey from destruction to destruction?

– Rabbi Janet Madden

Eili, Eili

Eili, eili, shelo yigameir l'olam
Hachol v'hayam, rishrush shel hamayim
B'rak hashamayim, t'filat haadam]

אֵלִי, אֵלִי שְׁלֹא יִגְמַר לְעוֹלָם
הַחֹל וְהַיָּם, רִישׁ רִישׁ שֶׁל הַמַּיִם,
בְּרַק הַשָּׁמַיִם, תְּפִילַת הָאָדָם

Oh God, my God, I pray that these things never end:
The sand and the sea, the rush of the waters
The crash of the heavens, the prayer of the heart.

Finding Creation in Destruction: A Meditation for the Month of Av

Beyond the plot points of collective memory and a seemingly dark, perpetual mourning,
Lie wide open spaces beckoning us to enter.

Spaces beyond constrictions, Jerusalem's crumbling walls.

What exists there is unknown and yet, what is known is there are places to be born.

Un-made places in and beyond each of us.

Waiting to be given purpose. Waiting to be given life.

Perhaps our destruction is all we have been waiting for.

And creation? What is made possible when we redeem our ruins.

How many are the things You have made, O Lord.

You have made them all with wisdom. The earth is full of your creations (Psalms 104:24).

– *Devon Spier*

The Temple

Do not mourn

For the Temple Mount.

The stones mourn for you.

They mourn for you who have forgotten

That God's Voice

Can still be heard in the hills.

The stones mourn for you

Who have forgotten

That God's Voice can still be heard in the valleys,

In the forests and deserts,

In the waters and skies.

Do not mourn

For the lost priests.

The tribes mourn for you.

They mourn for you who have forgotten

That God's people are one.

Ephraim and Judah,

The Levites and the daughters of Zelophehad,

Ask why we still divide the House of Israel,

Why we still cast judgment,

Why we spurn each other with anger.

The tribes mourn for you who have

Forsaken your brothers

And rejected your sisters,

Closing your minds and hardening your hearts.

Do not mourn

For the lost sacrifices.

The yearling without blemish,

The ephah of fine flour and the hin of oil,

Mourn for you.

They mourn for you who have forgotten

That God requires your love and your power,

Your hope and your deeds.

The yearling, the flour and the oil mourn for you

Who have forgotten

That God wants the blood that flows through you,

The strength of your days,

Your song and your laughter,

Your wisdom and healing.

Tear your clothes

And sit in ashes

If you must.

Then, rise up!

Rise up and listen to God's call:

Love My People Israel,

Love all of My People Israel.

Then, you will know the depth

of My righteousness

And will drink from the well of My compassion.

Give them your heart.

Give them your days in service,

With joy and thanksgiving,

So that My Glory will dwell among you,

And that your days are long on this earth.

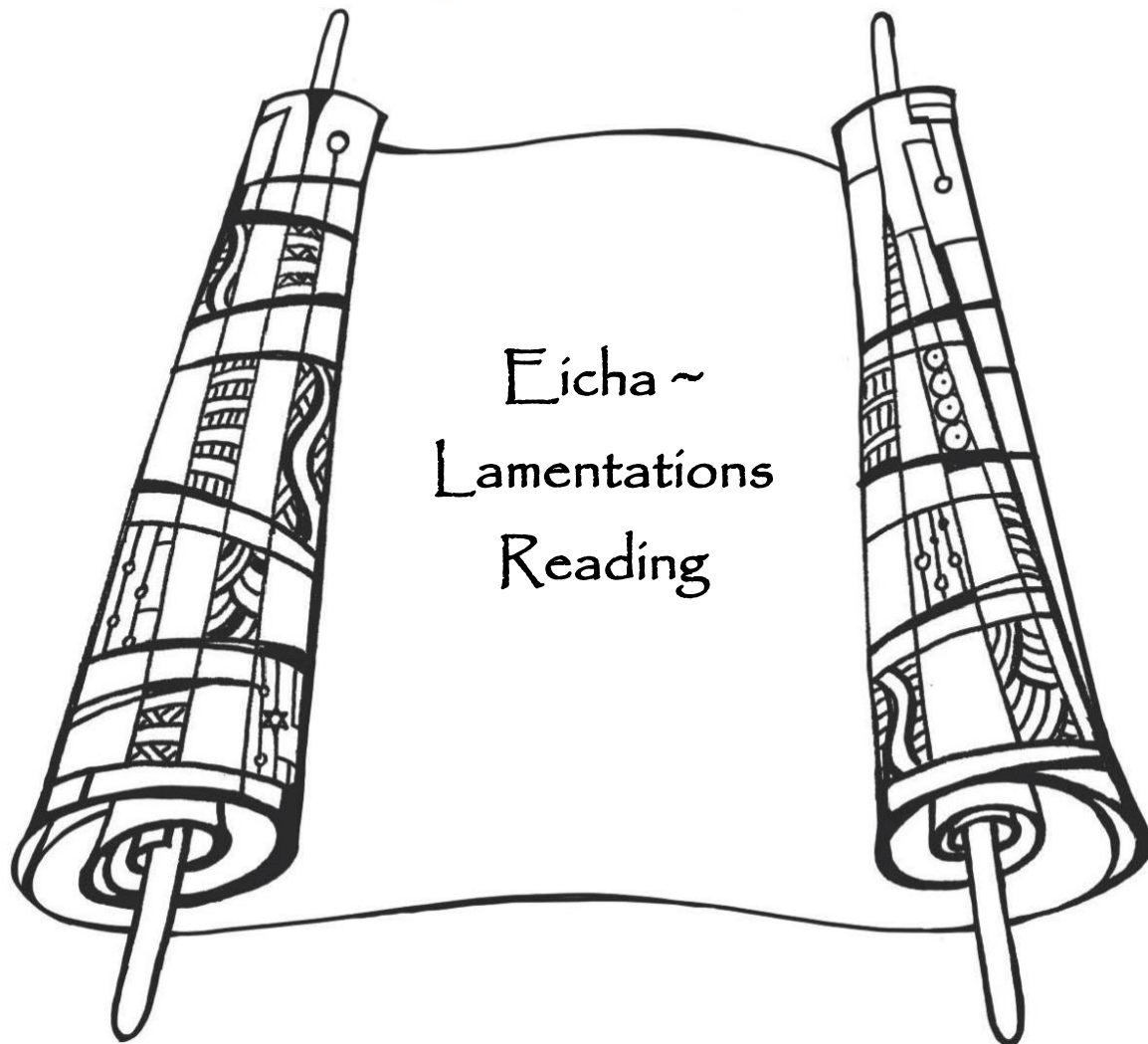
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Psalm 130 (adapted)

From the deepest place within me, I call out to You.
God, hear what is in my voice.
Hear my pleading tone.
Were You to look for imperfection—
who could stand it? Who could stand it?
You are so generous with pardon, but we fear to seek it.
Still I hope, God. My very soul hopes for it:
Please send me Your loving word.
Among the watchers for the dawn, my God,
I yearn for Your grace to end my darkness.
Israel looks to You, God, who are so gracious.
So easily You can free all of us.
Lift us from all our brokenness.

– Rabbi Zalman Shachter-Shalomi



We Return/Hashivenu

We return, we return,
we return return again

... to love, love
... to truth, truth
... to You, You

–Elana Arian/Noah Aronson

*Take us back to Yourself, O Lord,
and let us come back;
Renew our days as of old.*

–Lamentations 5:21

After the Fall (Tisha b'Av)

The Mishna says
senseless hatred knocked the Temple down
not the Romans with their siege engines –
or not only them, but
our ancestors too
who slipped into petty backbiting
ignored Shabbat
forgot how to offer their hearts
we're no better
we who secretly know we're right
holier-than-they
we who roll our eyes
and patronize, who check email
even on the holiest of days
who forget that
a prayer is more than a tune
more than words on a page
after every shooting parents weep
and we're too busy arguing
motive to comfort them
across the Middle East parents weep
and we're too busy arguing
borders to comfort them
in our nursing homes parents weep
shuddering and alone
and we're too busy –
even now what sanctuaries
what human hearts
are damaged and burned
while we snipe at each other
or insist we're not responsible
or avert our gaze?

– Rabbi Rachel Barenblat

Ahavat Olam for Tisha B'Av

O Holy One
We have turned our backs on You
and sent ourselves into exile.
But because You love us
and have compassion upon us,
Shechinah Your Holy Presence
goes with us.
Shechinah, You sit here on the floor with us
as we feel our grief
as we experience our isolation
when we don't know how to let You in.
Shechinah, You sit with us
catching our tears in Your hand
waiting patiently with us
until the day
we hope and You hope with us
that the day will be soon
that we learn to turn around
and see
that Your love has been with us
always.

– Margot Barnet



El Malei Rachamim

El malei rachamim, shochen bamromim.
Hamtzei m'nuchah n'chonah
tachat kanfei haSh'chinah.
Im k'doshim ut'horim
k'zohar haraki-a mazhirim
l'nishmot yakirenu
shehalchu l'olamam.
Ba-al harachamim
yastirem b'seter k'nafav l'olamim.
V'yitzror bitzror hachayim et nishmatam.
Adonai Hu nachalatam
v'yanuchu b'shalom al mishkavam.
V'nomar, amen.

אל מלא רחמים

אל מלא רחמים, שוכן במרומים,
המצא מנוחה נכונה
תחת כנפי השכינה,
עם קדושים וטהורים
בוהר הרקיע מזהירים,
לנשמת יקירינו
שהלכו לעולמם.
בעל הרחמים
יסתירם בסתר כנפיו לעולמים,
ויצרור בצרור החיים את נשמתם,
זי הוא נחלתם,
ויגדלו בשלום על משכבם.
ונאמר אמן.

Merciful God,
God most high,
let there be perfect rest
for the souls of our loved ones who have entered eternity.
May they find shelter in Your Presence
among the holy and pure
whose light shines like the radiance of heaven.
Compassionate God, hold them close to You forever
May their souls be bound up in the bond of life eternal,
and may they rest in peace.
Together we say, Amen.



Mourner's Kaddish

קדיש יתום

Leader:

Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'mei raba
b'alma div'ra chirutei,
v'yamlich malchutei b'chayeichon
uv'yomeichon uv'chayei d'chol beit Yisra-el,
ba-agala uviz'man kariv, v'imru: Amen.

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא.
בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי בְרָא כְרַעוּתֵיהּ,
וְיַמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתֵיהּ בְּחַיֵּיכוּן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוּן
וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל.
בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Congregation:

Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varach l'alam
ul'almei almaya.

יְהִי שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלָם
וּלְעֲלָמֵי עֲלָמַיָּא:

Leader:

Yitbarach v'yishtabach v'yitpa-ar,
v'yitromam, v'yitnasei, v'yit'hadar, v'yit'aleh,
v'yit'halal, sh'mei d'kud'sha, b'rich hu.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם
וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל
שְׁמֵהּ דְקֻדְשָׁא בְרִיךְ הוּא

L'ela min kol birchata v'shirata,
tushb'chata v'nechemata
da-amiran b'alma, v'imru: Amen.
Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya v'chayim,
aleinu v'al kol Yisra-el,
v'imru: Amen.
Oseh shalom bimromav, hu ya-aseh
shalom aleinu v'al kol Yisra-el,
v'imru: Amen.

לְעֵלָא מִן כָּל בִּרְכָתָא וּשְׁיָרָתָא,
תְּשׁוּבָתָא וְנִחְמָתָא,
דְאָמִירֵן בְּעֵלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:
יְהִי שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים
עָלֵינוּ וְעַל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:
עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה
שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Let the glory of God be extolled, and God's great name be hallowed in the world
whose creation God willed. May God rule in our own day,
in our own lives, and in the life of all Israel, and let us say: Amen.
Let God's great name be blessed for ever and ever.
Beyond all the praises, songs, and adorations that we can utter
is the Holy One, the Blessed One,
whom yet we glorify, honor, and exalt. And let us say: Amen.
For us and for all Israel, may the blessing of peace and the promise of life come true,
and let us say: Amen.
May the One who causes peace to reign in the high heavens,
let peace descend on us, on all Israel,
and all the world, and let us say: Amen.

May the Source of peace send peace to all who mourn, and comfort to all who are bereaved.

Home: A Poem for Tisha B'Av

Where are we now?
Not in Babylon
Or Spain;
Not in Germany
Or even Russia.
We are back in Jerusalem
Not to rebuild
A past we can never recreate
Or to yearn for a time when
Animal sacrifice still had meaning.
What shall we build now?
Not a structure of stone
Cut with the implements of war;
Not a city where divisions tear us apart
And hatred burns away all the softness,
But a temple of justice
A tent of peace
A diversity of belonging
A home.

-Rabbi Jill Hausman



Olam Chesed Yibaneh

Olam chesed yibaneh
Yai lai lai, lai lai, yai lai lai lai

I will build this world from love, Yai lai lai...
And you must build this world from love, Yai lai lai...
And if we build this world from love, Yai lai lai...
Then God will build this world from love, Yai lai lai...

- Menachim Creditor