

תשעה באב תש"פ Tisha B'Av 5780

Woodstock Jewish Congregation - July 29, 2020

Al eileh ani bokhiya, ani bokhiya

על-אלה אני בוכיה

Eini, eini yordah mayim

עיני עיני ירדה מים

Ki rakhak mimeni menakhem meishiv nafshi

כי-רחק ממני מנחם, משיב נפשי

For these things do I weep, my eyes flow with tears;
Far from me is any comforter who might revive my spirit
Lamentations 1:16

אֵיכָהּ יֹשְׁבַה בְּדָד, הָעִיר רַבַּתִּי עֵם

Eikhah yashvah badad ha'ir rabati am

Lamentations 1:1

Crying Out

Rabbi Rachel Barenblat

Lonely sits the city once great with people --
her subways now empty, her classrooms closed.

Refrigerator trucks await the bodies of the dead
wrapped in sheets of plastic and stacked like logs.
Mourners keep a painful distance, unable to embrace.

At testing sites cars line up for hours before dawn

only to be turned away when swabs and reagents run out.
At food pantries cars line up for hours before dawn
creeping across asphalt until a stranger masked and gloved
places a too-small box of food in the trunk.

And our children: the lucky ones ache
for their friends, forget what school felt like,

cry for lost birthday parties and closed playgrounds.
Some wake in the night from nightmares of the virus,
a rising tide washing everyone away. Some die.

We suffer anxiety attacks in the grocery store;
did someone breathe virus in this recirculated air?
Things we've lost: touch, song, trust, safety,
a year of childhood -- if we're fortunate. If.
Where are the seeds of hope on this darkest day?

We stay home to protect the vulnerable.
We pace confined spaces, memorize every inch of wall.
Our synagogues are shuttered, we are exiled to Zoom.

We cry out from the depths. Do You suffer with us, God?
Who will we be when the pandemic is gone?

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Eikhah yashvah badad ha'ir rabati am

Lamentations 1:1

ALAS

Trisha Arlin

1.

Alas, the city!

All the good things of a city,
These marvelous people,
And all that push and that pull!

All that effort and disputation,
Those meetings and glorious conversations,
And all those show-offs and all the crowds that love to watch and listen to them!

All that science and knowledge,
The teaching and that learning,
All this glorious movement of air and breath!

Alas, the city,
Shut down.
The city cries.
We have lost our hearts.
Blessed Holy Wholeness,
Breathing us in and breathing us out,
We forgot to give thanks.

All recite: *For these things do I weep, my eyes flow with tears.*

2.

Alas, God's anger!

Let's assume that God,
However you understand or don't understand God,
Is irked.

It's only logical.
Yet is unclear which irks God the most: The lies, the greed and corruption,
Or is it a package deal?
But perhaps these are "only"
Sins against people, not sins against God,
So as to be dealt with during Elul
While we work it out amongst ourselves
Because we will have our say:
We have
Our lawyers, our judges, our prisons,
Our protests, our actions, our votes.
And everyone knows what you've done.

But for the sins against the One-ness,
Prepare yourself to be weighed and found wanting.
You reveled in how you broke our connection to the Whole,
You are appalling!
You attacked our hearts and
You used our fear against us.
These are sins against God,
The ones that break true connection,
And it is known who and what you are.
Alas, Gods anger, Is fierce
And deserved.

All recite: For these things do I weep, my eyes flow with tears.

3.

Alas, loneliness!

Eating, Sleeping, Walking Alone

TV, Facebook, Prayer Alone

Coughing, Crying, Dying Alone

Alas, loneliness!

I am so frightened.

I weep and who will hear me?

All recite: For these things do I weep, my eyes flow with tears.

4.

Alas, compassion!

You were willfully foolish.
You were cruel and used hate as a tool.
In your greed and stupidity,
You ignored the degradation of our planet
And the answers of science
And look where it has led us!
Species and forests disappear.
Old people and the poor are sacrificed.
Essential workers, disproportionately People of Color,
Are used and discarded
And die in disproportionate numbers.
Racism is celebrated,
Misogyny extolled.
Where is normal human empathy?
It's so creepy.

We grieve for the sick and the dead
We grieve for the murdered and the neglected
We grieve for all we have lost and will lose.

Alas, compassion!
Pray for mercy.

All recite: For these things do I weep, my eyes flow with tears.

5.

Alas, memory!

We remember

Those who died by virus

And those who died by police,

Those who died by gas

And those who died by suffocation,

Those who died by infection

And those who died from neglect.

We remember

Those who were shot in trenches

And those who died alone in the ICU,

Those who died by starvation

And those who were shot in the back,

Those who died with a knee on their neck

And those who died hanging from a tree.

And because we remember

We resist our privilege if we have it;

We resist racism when we see it;

We resist cruelty and stupidity when they beckon;

We resist lethargy and despair when it calls us.

Alas, memory!

We remember and promise to change

Ourselves and the world,

Returning to our true selves

Via

Holy Conversation

Sacred Disturbance

And Necessary Trouble.

Amen

הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנָשׁוּבָה, חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם

Hashiveinu Adonai eilekha v'nashuvah, khadesh yameinu k'kedem

Lamentations 5:21

All recite: For these things do I weep, my eyes flow with tears.

I Can't Breathe

We Can't Breathe

Earth Can't Breathe

Rabbi Arthur Waskow

"I Can't Breathe"

Again and again,
With gun or chokehold.
Police steal the breath of Black Americans
The police are not merely police
For they hold a national authority
To use violence on behalf of the nation:
To serve us all, protect us all.
When they subjugate the Black community
They implicate us all,
They make us all Subjugators
And their misdeeds have stirred
A great Uprising against racism.

We can't breathe.

All humanity is choking
From a virus that invades our lungs.
We have left no space for other species
And the virus leaps into our lives,
And then when our rulers ignore the danger
It becomes still worse--
Choking our societies, our jobs, our businesses,
Our democracy.
Our lives.

Earth Can't Breathe

All life on Earth depends on Interbreathing
Plants breathe in Carbon dioxide, breathe out Oxygen.
Animals breathe in Oxygen, breathe out Carbon dioxide.
Our Interbreathing is the Breath that keeps all Earth alive.
Nishmat kol chaj, tivarekh et shimcha: Yahhhh elohenu:
The breath of all life praises Your Name;
For your Name in truth whispers all life.
YyyyHhhhWwwwHhhh/ Yah, is **our** God.
The God of all life.

But too much CO2 is the “climate crisis” --
Chokes our breathing.
Earth can’t breathe.

"You shall not take My Name with an empty heart."
Every breath we take
Is Itself the Name,
Part of that great Breath that is the Holy One.
You shall not rob My peoples
And My life-forms
Of My Name, My Breath.
We must breathe.

For Tisha B'Av 5780 by Rabbi Arthur Waskow of [The Shalom Center](https://theshalomcenter.org) 7/27/2020

נְשִׁמַת כָּל חַי תְּבָרַךְ אֶת שִׁמְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ

Nishmat kol khai t'varech et shimkha Adonai Eloheinu

Special thanks to:
The Shalom Center <https://theshalomcenter.org>
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