

אִזְכָּרָה  
לְקַדוֹשִׁים



**MARTYROLOGY SERVICE**

**AZKARAH LA-KEDOSHIM**

## Israel's martyrdom

✿ If there are ranks in suffering, Israel takes precedence of all the nations. If the duration of sorrows and the patience with which they are borne ennobles, the Jews can challenge the aristocracy of every land. If a literature is called rich in the possession of a few classic tragedies—what shall we say to a national tragedy lasting for almost two millennia, in which the poets and the actors were also the heroes?

*Leopold Zunz*

✿ Combine all the woes that temporal and ecclesiastical tyrannies have ever inflicted on individuals or nations, and you will not have reached the full measure of suffering which this martyr people was called upon to endure century upon century. It was as if all the powers of earth had conspired—and they did so conspire—to exterminate the Jewish people, or at least to transform it into a brutalized horde. History dare not pass over in silence these scenes of well nigh unutterable misery. It is her duty to give a true and vivid account of them; to evoke due admiration for the superhuman endurance of this suffering people, and to testify that Israel, like Jacob in the days of old, has striven with gods and with men, and has prevailed.

*Heinrich Graetz*

## Eyleh Ezkerah: THESE I DO REMEMBER



Elegy lamenting the death of The Ten Martyrs during the unsuccessful uprising of Bar Kokhba.

אֵלֶּה אֶזְכְּרָה וְנַפְשִׁי עָלֵי אֲשַׁפְּכָה.  
כִּי בְלָעוּנוּ זָדִים כְּעֵנָה בְּלִי הַפּוֹכָה.  
כִּי בִימֵי הַשָּׂר לֹא עָלְתָה אֲרוּכָה.  
לְעֵשְׂרָה הַרוּגֵי מְלוּכָה:

These things I do remember;  
O I pour my soul out for them.  
All the ages long hatred hath pursued us;  
Through all the years,  
Ignorance, like a monster, hath devoured  
Our martyrs as in one long day of blood.

Rulers have risen through the endless years,  
Oppressive, savage in their witless power,  
Filled with a futile thought: to make an end  
Of that which God hath cherished.

*Interpretive translation by Nina Salaman*

Eyleh ez-k'rah v'naf-shi alai esh-p'ḥah,  
Ki v'la-unu zeydim k'ugah b'li hafuḥah,  
Ki viy-mey ha-sar lo altah aruḥah,  
La-asarah harugey m'luḥah.

## The parchment burns, the letters soar

✿ During the Hadrianic persecutions, decrees were promulgated imposing the most rigorous penalties on the observers of the Jewish Law, and especially upon those who occupied themselves with the promulgation of that Law. Nevertheless Hananiah ben Teradyon conscientiously followed his chosen profession; he convened public assemblies and taught the Law.

Once he visited Jose ben Kisma, who advised extreme caution, if not submission, saying, "My brother, I hear that you occupy yourself with the Torah, even calling assemblies and holding the scroll of the Law before you."

To this Hananiah replied, "Heaven will have mercy on us."

Jose became impatient on hearing this, and responded, "I am talking logic, and to all my arguments you answer, 'Heaven will have mercy on us!' I should not be surprised if they burned you together with the scroll."

Shortly thereafter Hananiah was arrested at a public assembly while teaching with a scroll before him. Asked why he disregarded the imperial edict, he frankly answered, "I do as my God commands me." For this he and his wife were condemned to death, and their daughter to degradation.

His death was terrible. Wrapped in the scroll, he was placed on a pyre of green brush; fire was set to it, and wet wool was placed on his chest to prolong the agonies of death. "Woe is me," cried his daughter, "that I should see you under such terrible circumstances!" The martyr serenely replied, "I should indeed despair were I alone burned; but since the scroll of the Torah is burning with me, the Power that will avenge the offense against the Torah will also avenge the offense against me."

His heartbroken disciples then asked: "Master, what do you see?" He answered, "I see the parchment burning while the letters of the Torah soar upward."

S. Mendelsohn, based on Talmud, Avodah Zarah 17b, et seq.

## Akiba's last moment

✎ Akiba was brought to trial; his judge was to be his former friend, Rufus. There was no possible defense against the charges. Akiba had violated the law by offering instruction to his disciples.

Akiba was found guilty and condemned to death. Still attended by his faithful Joshua, he retained his courage and his strength of mind until the very end.

The popular story tells that the Romans killed him by tearing his flesh from his living body. As he lay in unspeakable agony, he suddenly noticed the first streaks of dawn breaking over the eastern hills. It was the hour when the Law requires each Jew to pronounce the *Shema*.

Oblivious to his surroundings, Akiba intoned in a loud, steady voice, the forbidden words of his faith: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

Rufus, the Roman general, who superintended the horrible execution, cried out: "Are you a wizard or are you utterly insensible to pain?"

"I am neither," replied the martyr, "but all my life I have been waiting for the moment when I might truly fulfill this commandment. I have always loved the Lord with all my might, and with all my heart; now I know that I love Him with all my life."

And, repeating the verse again, he died as he reached the words, "The Lord is One."

The association of the *Shema* with the great martyr's death made its recitation a deathbed affirmation of the faith, instead of a repetition of select verses. And to this day, the pious Jew hopes that when the end comes he may be sufficiently conscious to declare the Unity of God, echoing with the last breath the words which found their supreme illustration in Akiba's martyrdom.

*Louis Finkelstein*

## Nevertheless they remained steadfast

Wednesday, 26 May 1171 (20th Sivan)

✎ A Jew of Blois was riding at dusk toward the Loire in order to water his horse. He met there a groom, whose horse shied at a white fleece which the Jew wore beneath his cloak, and growing restive, refused to go to the water. The servant, well aware of the Jew-hating character of his master, the mayor of the town, concocted a story which served as ground for an accusation. He claimed that he had seen the Jewish horseman throw a murdered child into the water.

The mayor, who bore a grudge against an influential Jewish woman, Pulcelina, repeated the lie about the murder of the child; now the charge read: "The Jews crucified it for the Passover, and then threw it into the Loire." Count Theobald of Chartres thereupon commanded that all the Jews should be put into chains, and thrown into prison. . . .

The Jews had but one glimmer of hope: an appeal to the notorious avarice of the Count. He had sent a Jew of Chartres to ask what sum they were willing to pay in order to be acquitted of this charge of murder. . . . It was arranged that one hundred pounds of ready money, and one hundred and eighty pounds of outstanding debts—probably the whole wealth of the small community—would be sufficient.

At this point, however, a priest addressed the Count warmly, beseeching him not to treat the matter lightly. . . .

Count Theobald issued an order condemning the entire Jewish congregation at Blois to death by fire.

When they were brought out to a wooden tower, and the wood was about to be kindled, the priest begged them to acknowledge Christianity, and thus to preserve their lives. Nevertheless, they remained steadfast to their faith, and were first tortured, and then dragged to the stake. Thirty-four men and seventeen women died amid the flames while chanting the prayer which contains the confession of faith in One God.

*Heinrich Graetz*

*During the Crusades, dozens of Jewish communities in Europe and the Middle East were massacred. Many more were terrorized and looted. The following, excerpted from a medieval Dirge for Jewish Martyrs, was written following the First Crusade (c. 1096).*

אב הרחמים שוכן מרומים ברחמי העצומים הוא יפקוד  
ברחמים החסידים והישרים והתמימים קהלות הקדש שמסרו  
נפשם על קדשת השם. הנאהבים והנעימים בחייהם ובמותם  
לא נפרדו. מנשרים קלו ומארויות נברו. לעשות רצון קונם וקפץ  
צורם: וזכרם אלהינו לטובה עם שאר צדיקי עולם וינקום נקמת  
דם-עבדיו השפוד: ככתוב כידורש דמים אותם זכר לאשכח  
צעקת ענוים: ואמר ידן בגוים מלא נזיות מחץ ראש על-אדן  
רבה: מנחל בדרך ישמה על-בן ירים ראש:

May our merciful Father remember the upright and innocent souls and the holy Jewish communities who laid down their lives for the sancification of the divine name. May God remember them together with all the other righteous individuals of the world. May God avenge the blood of His servants which has been shed; may He crush all evil and reign triumphant.

### **A Jew I shall remain**

✿ I heard from some elders who fled from Spain that one of the boats was infested with the plague; the captain put the passengers ashore at some uninhabited place. There most of them died of starvation, while some gathered up all their strength and set out on foot in search of some settlement.

There was one among them who struggled on afoot together with his wife and two children. The wife, unaccustomed to so much difficult walking, grew faint and died. The husband carried his children along until both he and they fainted from hunger. When he regained consciousness, he found that his two children had died.

In great grief he rose to his feet and said, "Lord of the universe, You are doing a great deal that I might desert my faith. But know for a certainty that—even against the will of Heaven—a Jew I am and a Jew I shall remain. And neither that which You have brought upon me nor that which You will yet bring upon me will be of any avail."

Thereupon he gathered some earth and some grass, covered the boys, and went forth in search of a settlement.

*Solomon Ibn Verga*



## We remember the Holocaust



*We recall with bitter grief the catastrophe which overwhelmed our people in Europe, adding an unprecedented chapter to our history of suffering.*

We mourn for six million of our people, brutally destroyed by “civilized people” behaving like savages. The cruelties of Pharaoh, Haman, Nebuchadnezzar, and Titus cannot be compared with the diabolical schemes of the modern tyrants in their design to exterminate an entire people.

*The blood of the innocent who perished in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Dachau, Treblinka, and Theresienstadt, cries out to God and humanity.*

We will never forget the burning of synagogues and houses of study, the destruction of holy books and scrolls of Torah, the sadistic torment and murder of scholars, sages, and teachers.

*They tortured the flesh of our brothers and sisters; but they could not crush their spirit, their faith, their love.*

We recall our brothers and sisters in the Warsaw Ghetto and in other hellish places who valiantly rose up and defied the monstrous adversaries.

*We recall the heroism of those who, in the face of unprecedented and overwhelming force, maintained Jewish life and culture, and asserted Jewish values in the very midst of enslavement and degradation.*

Even as we mourn, we recall those precious few compassionate men and women of other faiths and nationalities who, at the peril of their lives, saved some of our people. Truly, “The righteous of all nations have a share in the world to come.”

*O Lord, remember Your martyred children. Remember all who have given their lives for the sanctification of Your name.*

*Morris Silverman (adapted)*

## Wherever I go . . .



Wherever I go, I hear footsteps:

*My brothers on the road, in swamps, in forests,  
Swept along in darkness, trembling from cold,  
Fugitives from flames, plagues and terrors.*

Wherever I stand, I hear rattling:

*My brothers in chains, in chambers of the stricken.  
They pierce the walls and burst the silence.  
Through the generations their echoes cry out  
In torture camps, in pits of the dead.*

Wherever I lie, I hear voices:

*My brothers herded to slaughter  
Out of burning embers, out of ruins,  
Out of cities and villages, altars for burnt offerings.  
The groaning in their destruction haunts my nights.*

My eyes will never stop seeing them  
And my heart will never stop crying "outrage";  
Every one will be called to account for their death.

*The heavens will descend to mourn for them,  
The world and all that is therein will be a monument  
on their grave.*

*Shin Shalom, translated by David Polish*

## At my Bar Mitzvah—and his



*Dedicated to the memory of a thirteen-year-old hero of the Resistance.*

When I was thirteen, I became Bar Mitzvah.

*When he was thirteen, he became Bar Mitzvah.*

When I was thirteen, my teachers taught me—to put Tefillin on my arm.

*When he was thirteen, his teachers taught him—to throw a hand grenade with his arm.*

When I was thirteen, I studied—the pathways of the Bible and roadways of the Talmud.

*When he was thirteen, he studied—the canals of Warsaw and the sewers of the Ghetto.*

At my Bar Mitzvah, I took an oath to live as a Jew.

*At his Bar Mitzvah, he took an oath to die as a Jew.*

At my Bar Mitzvah, I blessed God.

*At his Bar Mitzvah, he questioned God.*

At my Bar Mitzvah, I lifted my voice and sang.

*At his Bar Mitzvah, he lifted his fists and fought.*

At my Bar Mitzvah, I read from the Scroll of the Torah.

*At his Bar Mitzvah, he wrote a Scroll of Fire.*

At my Bar Mitzvah, I wore a new Tallit over a new suit.

*At his Bar Mitzvah, he wore a rifle and bullets over a suit of rags.*

At my Bar Mitzvah, I started my road of life.

*At his Bar Mitzvah, he began his road to martyrdom.*

At my Bar Mitzvah, family and friends came—to say *l'chayim*.

*At his Bar Mitzvah, Rabbi Akiba and Trumpeldor, Hannah and her seven sons came—to escort him to Heaven.*

At my Bar Mitzvah, they praised my voice, my song, my melody.

*At his Bar Mitzvah, they praised his strength, his courage, his fearlessness.*

When I was thirteen, I was called up to the Torah—I went to the Bimah.

*When he was thirteen, his body went up in smoke—his soul rose to God.*

When I was thirteen, I became Bar Mitzvah—and lived.

*When he was thirteen, he became Bar Mitzvah—and lives now within each of us.*

Howard Kahn

## The letter of the ninety-three maidens



*When the Nazis captured Warsaw, Poland, they ordered pupils and teachers of a Beth Jacob Girl's School to prepare themselves to serve the pleasures of the soldiers. To avoid this defilement, the girls offered their last prayer, took poison, and died, "in order to sanctify the name of God by their death as well as by their lives."*

We washed our bodies and we are clean;  
We purified our souls and we are at peace.  
Death does not terrify us; we go out to meet it.

We served our God while we were alive,  
And we shall know how to sanctify Him by our death.  
We made a covenant in our hearts:  
Together we learned the Torah and together we will die.

We read the Psalms together and we were relieved;  
We confessed our sins together and our hearts grew strong.  
Now we feel prepared and ready to die.

Let the unclean come and defile us; we are not afraid.  
We will drink the cup of poison  
And perish in front of their eyes,  
Pure and undefiled, as befits the daughters of Jacob.

We will come to Mother Sarah and say:  
Here we are!  
We met the test, the test of the binding of Isaac!  
Arise and pray with us for our people Israel.

O merciful Father, bless Your people with Your mercy,  
For there is no human mercy.  
Reveal Your hidden lovingkindness and save Your  
oppressed people;  
Save and keep Your world!

The hour of *Neilah* has come, and our souls grow quiet.  
One more prayer we utter:  
Brethren, wherever you are, say the Kaddish for us,  
For the ninety-three Jewish maidens.

Translated from the Hebrew of Hillel Bavli, based on a letter by Haya Feldman,  
one of the ninety-three young girls, dated Rosh Hodesh Elul, 5704 (1944).

## A Jew forever



A Jew in departing, a Jew in arriving;  
A Jew in arising, a Jew in sitting;  
A Jew in walking, a Jew in standing;  
A Jew in thought, a Jew in deeds;  
A Jew in trouble, a Jew in joy;  
A Jew in speech, a Jew in silence;  
A Jew in drinking, a Jew in eating;  
A Jew in business, a Jew in studying;  
A Jew in shoes, a Jew in clothing;  
A Jew in hatred, a Jew in love;  
A Jew in God, a Jew in people;  
A Jew in life, a Jew in death;  
A Jew in heaven, a Jew on earth;  
A Jew you were born, a Jew you will die.

*Moshe Flinker, age 17.  
Written under Nazi occupation, 1943.*

## I believe



I believe in the sun even when it is not shining.  
I believe in love even when not feeling it.  
I believe in God even when He is silent.

*Inscription found on the wall of a cellar in Cologne,  
where Jews hid from the Nazis.*

## ANI MA-AMIN

אָנִי מְאָמִין בְּאֵמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה בְּבִיאַת הַמָּשִׁיחַ.  
וְאִף עַל פִּי שִׁיתְמֵהָ. עַם כְּלִיזָה אָנִי מְאָמִין:

*Ani ma-amin be-emuna sh'leyma b'vi-at ha-mashiah,  
V'af al pi sh'yitma-mey-ha, im kol ze ani ma-amin.*

I believe in the coming of the Messiah, although he may tarry.

## A lover of God, but . . .

*From the Last Testament of Yossel Rakover, during the last hours of the Warsaw Ghetto on April 28, 1943:*

✿ I die peacefully, but not complacently; persecuted, but not enslaved; embittered, but not cynical; a believer, but not a supplicant; a lover of God, but no blind amen-sayer of His.

I have followed Him even when He repulsed me. I have followed His commandments even when He castigated me for it; I have loved Him and I love Him even when He has hurled me to the earth, tortured me to death, made me an object of shame and ridicule.

And these are my last words to You, my wrathful God; nothing will avail You in the least. You have done everything to make me lose my faith in You, but I die exactly as I have lived, crying:

“Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.”  
“Into Your hands, O Lord, I consign my soul.”

*Zvi Kolitz*

## My prayer



My prayer—I don't know where to offer it; but I offer it.  
My prayer—I don't know how to say it; but I say it.  
My prayer—It freezes to my palate; but I offer it.  
My prayer—It lives on my smoldering anger, and I say it.  
My prayer—It falters again and again; but I offer it.  
My prayer goes out over six million graves, and I say it.  
My prayer falls down and dies without words; but I offer it.  
My prayer—I don't know if anyone hears it—and I say it.

*H. Leivick*

## Hymn of the Partisans



Never say that you now go on your last way,  
Though darkened skies may now conceal the blue of day;  
Because the hour for which we've hungered is so near,  
Beneath our feet the earth shall thunder, "We are here!"

From land of palm-trees to the far-off land of snow  
We shall be coming with our torment, with our woe;  
And everywhere our blood has sunk into the earth  
Shall our bravery, our vigor blossom forth.

We'll have the morning sun to set our day aglow;  
Our evil yesterdays shall vanish with the foe.  
But if the time is long before the sun appears,  
Then let this song go like a signal through the years.

This song was written with our blood, and not with lead;  
It's not a song that summer birds sing overhead;  
It was a people, amidst burning barricades,  
That sang this song of ours with pistols and grenades.

So never say you now go on your last way,  
Though darkened skies may now conceal the blue of day,  
Because the hour for which we've hungered is so near,  
Beneath our feet the earth shall thunder, "We are here!"

*Yiddish text by Hirsch Glick*

### "ZOG NIT KEYNMOL"

1.

Zog nit keynmol  
Az du geyst dem letztn veg,  
Ven himlen bla-yene  
Farshteln bloye teg,  
Veyl kumen vet noch  
Undzer oisgebenkte sho,  
S'vet a poyk ton  
Undzer trot: Mir zeynen do!

זאג ניט קיינמאל  
אז דו גייסט דעם לעצטן וועג,  
ווען הימלען בלייענע  
פארשטעלן בלויע טעג,  
ווייל קומען וועט נאך  
אונדזער אויסגעבענקטע שעה,  
ס'וועט א פויק טאן  
אונדזער טראט: מיר זיינען דא!

2. פון גרינעם פאלמען לאנד  
 בוז ווייטן לאנד פון שניי,  
 מיר זיינען דאָ  
 מיט אונדזער פיון, מיט אונדזער וויי,  
 און וואו געפאלן ס'איז א שפראַך  
 פון אונדזער בלוט :  
 וועט נאָך א שפראַך טאָן  
 אונדזער גבורה, אונדזער מוט.

Fun grinem palmen land  
 Biz veytn land fun shney,  
 Mir zeynen do  
 Mit undzer peyn, mit undzer vey,  
 Un vu gefaln s'iz a shprots  
 Fun undzer blut:  
 Vet noch a shprots ton  
 Undzer gvure, undzer mut.

3. ס'וועט די מאַרגנדזון  
 באַגילדן אונדז דעם היינט,  
 דער שוואַרצער נעכטן  
 וועט פאַרשווינדן מיטן פיינט,  
 און אויב פאַרזאַמען  
 וועט זון אין דעם קאַפּאַר,  
 ווי א פאַראַל זאָל גיין  
 דאָס ליד פון דור צו דור.

S'vet di morgn-zun  
 Bagildn undz dem heynt,  
 Der shvartzער nechtn  
 Vet farshvindn mitn feynt,  
 Un oyb farzamen  
 Vet zun in dem ka-yor,  
 Vi a parol zol geyn  
 Dos lid fun dor tzu dor.

4. געשריבן איז דאָס ליד  
 מיט בלוט און ניט מיט בליי,  
 ס'איז ניט א ליד פון  
 זומער-פויגל אויף דער פריי,  
 נאָר ס'האַט א פאַלק  
 צווישן פאַלנדיקע ווענט  
 דאָס ליד געזונגען מיט נאַגאַנעם  
 אין די הענט.

Geshribn iz dos lid  
 Mit blut un nit mit bley,  
 S'iz nit a lid fun  
 Zumer-foygl oyf der frey,  
 Nor s'hot a folk  
 Tzvishn falndike vent,  
 Dos lid gezungen  
 Mit naganes in di hent.

5. דערפאַר, זאָג ניט קיינמאַל  
 אז דו גייסט דעם לעצטן וועג,  
 ווען הימלען בלייענען  
 פאַרשטעלן בלויז טעג,  
 ווייל קומען וועט נאָך  
 אונדזער אויסגעבענקטע שעה,  
 ס'וועט א פויק טאָן  
 אונדזער טראַט : מיר זיינען דאָ !

Derfar zog nit keynmol  
 Az du geyst dem letztn veg,  
 Ven himlen bla-yene  
 Farshteln bloye teg,  
 Veyl kumen vet noch  
 Undzer oisgebenkte sho,  
 S'vet a poyk ton  
 Undzer trot: Mir zeynen do!



## The Silver Platter



*"No state is handed to a people on a silver platter."*

—Chaim Weizmann

The earth grows still,  
The lurid sky slowly pales  
    over smoking borders.  
Heartsick, but still living a people  
    stands by  
To greet the uniqueness of the miracle.  
Readied, they wait beneath the moon,  
Wrapped in awesome joy, before the light.  
—Then, soon,  
A girl and boy step forward.  
And slowly walk before the  
    waiting nation;  
In work garb and heavy-shod climb  
In stillness  
Wearing yet the dress of battle,  
    the grime  
Of aching day and fire-filled night  
Unwashed, weary unto death,  
    not knowing rest,  
But wearing youth like dewdrops  
    in their hair.  
—Silently the two approach  
And stand  
Are they of the quiet or of the dead?  
Through wondering tears, the  
    people stare.  
"Who are you, the silent two?"  
And they reply:  
"We are the Silver Platter  
Upon which the Jewish Nation was  
    served to you."  
And speaking, fall in shadow  
At the nation's feet.  
And the rest will be told  
    in Israel's chronicles.

*Nathan Alterman*

## In memoriam



Let us stand silent in memory of our dearly beloved sons and daughters who gave their lives for the liberation of our homeland and the security of our people. They gave all they had. They poured out their very lifeblood for the freedom of Israel, even as the living waters quench the thirst of the arid soil. Not in monuments of stones or trees shall their memories be preserved, but in the reverence and pride which will, until the end of time, fill the hearts of our people when their memory is recalled.

*David Ben Gurion*

## Blessed is the match

אֲשֶׁרִי הַנִּפְרָרִי שֶׁנִּשְׂרַף וְהִצִּית לְהַבּוֹת.  
אֲשֶׁרִי הַלְּהַבָּה שֶׁבְּעֵרָה בְּסִתְרֵי לְבָבוֹת.  
אֲשֶׁרִי הַלְּבָבוֹת שֶׁיָדְעוּ לְחַדּוֹל בְּכָבוֹד.  
אֲשֶׁרִי הַנִּפְרָרִי שֶׁנִּשְׂרַף וְהִצִּית לְהַבּוֹת:

Blessed is the match that's consumed in kindling a flame.  
Blessed is the flame that burns in the secret depths  
of the heart.

Blessed are the hearts that know when 'tis honor to cease.  
Blessed is the match that's consumed in kindling a flame.

*Hannah Senesh*

*Ashrey ha-gafrur sheh-nisraf v'hitzit l'havot,  
Ashrey ha-lehavah sheh-ba-arah b'sitrey l'avot,  
Ashrey ha-l'avot sheh-yad-u la-ḥadol b'ḥavod,  
Ashrey ha-gafrur sheh-nisraf v'hitzit l'havot.*

## A soldier weeping at the Western Wall



Asa, my uncle, died at the wall—  
In a village called Lublin, he died at the wall,  
With twenty-six others  
The SS shot them all.  
For him, and for them, I weep at the Wall.

Sarah, my cousin, died at the wall—  
In a chamber of Auschwitz, she died at the wall.  
With a child at her breast.  
So hungry—so small.  
For her and the child, I weep at the Wall.

Shalom, my brother, died at the wall,  
On the Syrian border, he died at the wall  
Of the house he had built:  
He was rugged and tall.  
For my brother Shalom, I weep at the Wall.

O God of my ancestors, I fought for this Wall  
For my uncle and those who fell with him—for all;  
For my cousin, her baby, so hungry, so small  
For my brother Shalom—rugged and tall  
Now let my tears win the right—just to fall.

*Sister Felicia*

## For those who died in the wars of Israel



When a human king who goes to war against his enemies  
Bringing forth his force to kill and to be killed,  
There is doubt whether he loves his soldiers,  
Or whether they are important in his eyes . . .

But our King,  
The King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He,  
Desires life, loves peace, and pursues peace;  
Loves Israel His people, and has chosen us from the nations,  
Not because we are greater in number—  
For we are the least in number—  
But because He loves us; and because we are few in number,  
Each of us is as important in His eyes as a whole regiment.  
Therefore, we pray after the death of each Jew,  
*Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'mey raba,*  
May the power of the Name be magnified,  
And may no lessening of power come to Him,  
Who is blessed and sanctified,  
In the world He has created according to His will.

And if we pray thus for each one who dies,  
How much the more so for our dear brothers and sisters,  
The children of Zion,  
The slaughtered ones of the Land of Israel,  
Whose blood was spilled for the glory of His name—  
For His people, for His land, and for His inheritance.

Therefore, O our brethren, of the whole house of Israel,  
Who participate in this mourning,  
Let us turn our hearts to our Father in heaven,  
The King and Redeemer of Israel,  
And pray—for ourselves and for Him:  
That we may be worthy to live and see with our very eyes,  
*Oseh shalom bi-m'romav,*  
*Hu b'rah'amav ya-aseh shalom aleynu v'al kol yisrael,*  
That He who, in His mercy, makes peace in the heavens,  
Will make peace for us and for all Israel.  
And let us say: Amen.

*S. Y. Agnon (adapted)*

## The chain continues . . .



The chain has not been broken  
The chain continues still  
From fathers to sons  
From bonfires to bonfires  
The chain continues . . .

The chain has not been broken  
The chain continues still  
From nights of rejoicing in the Torah  
To nights of rejoicing on Masada  
The chain continues . . .

So our forefathers danced  
One arm around a comrade  
The other holding a Torah scroll  
Carrying the nation's suffering with love  
So our forefathers danced . . .

So will we dance too  
One arm around a comrade  
The other embracing a generation's suffering . . .  
So will we dance too.

When our forefathers danced  
They closed their eyes tight  
And thus opened wellsprings of ecstasy  
Their feet were light  
When their eyes were closed  
So our forefathers danced . . .

They knew, our forefathers did  
That they were dancing on an abyss  
And if they opened their eyes  
The wellsprings of ecstasy would close  
And the chain would crumble to nothing.  
They knew, our forefathers knew.

So will we dance too  
Our eyes closed  
So will we continue the chain . . .

*Itzhak Lamdan, translated by M. Benaya*

---

## The debt



Gather together  
The congealed tears  
Covered with blood.

Sort them out  
And string them  
On a red thread;  
Heaven forbid  
They should pale.

Hang them up  
On your looking-glass  
So that in your hours  
And in your days and years  
They shall serve  
As a symbol,  
As a flaming prayer,  
Of anger and grief.

And in your memory  
Their plaint will remain:  
"Behold!  
Remember!  
We, the tears,  
Have risen  
To the heights  
On wings  
Of living smoke."

In humility,  
I bow down  
Before these tears.

I will believe  
They were transformed,  
Have been reborn  
As eternal,  
Coruscating stars,  
Under the besmoked  
Heavenly blue.

This is the eternal debt,  
Yours and mine:  
To heed the call  
Of generations erased,  
The wailing plaint  
Of the tears  
That have become  
Our shining stars.

Never again  
Must we permit  
These tears  
To recede  
From our memory  
Till the very end  
Of all generations!

*A. Joachimowicz*

**These I do remember: EYLEH EZKERAH**

זאת קראתנו וספרנו בשנון.

ושפכנו לב שפול ואנון.

ממרום הסכת מחנון.

יי אל רחום וחנון:

חנון הביטה ממרומים.

תשפכת דם הצדיקים ותמצית דמים.

תראה בפרגודך והעבר בתמים.

אל מלך יושב על כסא רחמים:

This hath befallen us. All this I tell  
As I beheld it passing through the years  
Of bygone ages. And subdued and crushed,  
We pour our hearts out supplicating Thee.

Lord, Lord, give ear; O pitying, merciful,  
Look from Thine height upon the blood outpoured  
Of all Thy righteous. Make an end of blood  
Poured out and wasted; wash the stain away  
God, King, who sittest on a gracious Throne.

*Interpretive translation by Nina Salaman*

## A protest . . . a prayer



Dear God, so much innocent bloodshed!  
We are supposed to be created in Your image,  
But O how we have distorted it.

*When we recall the beastly acts of people,  
We are ashamed to be human.  
When we read of the nobility of their victims,  
We are proud to be Jews.*

Teach us, O God, to honor our martyrs,  
By being vigilant in defense of our people everywhere,  
And by fighting cruelty, persecution, and hate.

*But must cruelty always be?  
Must viciousness ever be the signature of humanity?  
No! No! We refuse to accept that!  
We refuse to give hatred the last word,  
Because we have known the power of love.*

We refuse to believe that cruelty will prevail,  
Because we have felt the strength of kindness.  
We refuse to award the ultimate victory to evil,  
Because we believe in You.

*So help us, O God, to draw strength from our faith,  
And help us, our Father, to live by our faith.*

Where there is hatred, may we bring love.  
Where there is pain, may we bring healing.  
Where there is darkness, may we bring light.  
Where there is despair, may we bring hope.  
Where there is discord, may we bring harmony.  
Where there is strife, may we bring peace.  
Make this a better world and begin with us.



## Magnified and sanctified



Praised <i>Auschwitz</i>	And praised <i>Theresienstadt</i>
Be <i>Maidanek</i>	Be <i>Warsaw</i>
The Lord <i>Treblinka</i>	The Lord <i>Vilna</i>
And praised <i>Buchenwald</i>	And praised <i>Skarzysko</i>
Be <i>Mauthausen</i>	Be <i>Bergen-Belsen</i>
The Lord <i>Belzec</i>	The Lord <i>Janow</i>
And praised <i>Sobibor</i>	And praised <i>Dora</i>
Be <i>Chelmno</i>	Be <i>Neuengamme</i>
The Lord <i>Ponary</i>	The Lord <i>Pustkow</i>

*André Schwarz-Bart*

## Yet weeping, we affirm . . .



We mourn them and vow not to forget them.  
We are heirs to their horror, their heroism, their hopes.  
We see no reason, we sense no purpose, we claim no justice  
in this vast martyrdom;  
Yet, weeping, we affirm the sanctity of life,  
God's elusive wisdom and compassion,  
The hidden, waiting goodness within Man,  
The eternal destiny of the House of Israel.

*Andre Ungar (adapted)*

### A Kaddish of remembrance

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא. בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי־בְרָא  
כְּרַעוּתָהּ. וְנִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוּן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוּן וּבְחַיֵּי  
דְּכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב. וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:  
יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וְלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא:

יְתַבְרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרַמֵּם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדַּר  
וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלַּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקַדְשָׁא. בְּרִיךְ הוּא. לְעֵלְמָא  
וְלְעֵלְמָא מְכַל־בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא  
דְּאַמִּירָן בְּעֵלְמָא. וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל־  
יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל־  
יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Yit-gadal v'yit-kadash sh'mey raba,  
B'alma di v'ra hirutey, v'yam-lih mal-hutey  
B'ha-yey-hon uv-yomey-hon uv-ha-yey d'hol beyt yisrael  
Ba-agala u-vizman kariv, v'imru amen.

**Y'hey sh'mey raba m'varah l'alam ul-almey alma-ya.**

Yit-barah v'yish-tabah v'yit-pa-ar v'yit-romam v'yit-na-sey  
V'yit-hadar v'yit-aleh v'yit-halal sh'mey d'kud-sha,  
**B'rih hu**, l'eyla ul-eyla mi-kol bir-hata v'shi-rata  
Tush-b'hata v'ne-hemata da-amiran b'alma, v'imru amen.

Y'hey sh'lama raba min sh'ma-ya  
V'ha-yim aleynu v'al kol yisrael, v'imru amen.

Oseh shalom bi-m'romav, hu ya-aseh shalom  
Aleynu v'al kol yisrael, v'imru amen.