



Yom HaShoah Ceremony Readings

At some unconscious level, the image of the Holocaust is “with us”
a memory which haunts, a sounding board for all subsequent evil
in the back of the mind, not only for the normal, well-intentioned people ...
but for all of us now living:
we, the inheritors.

The triumph of the SS required that the tortured victim allow himself to be led to the gallows
without protesting ...

There is nothing more terrible than these processions of human beings walking straight forward
towards the unknown, living in hope based on their faith in man.

Jean François-Steiner

To seek A Human / Hanna Senesh

In the flames of war, of fire, of the burned
In the stormy oceans of blood
I shall light my little lamp
To seek, to seek a human
The flames of the fire weaken my lamp
Lights of fire are blinding my eyes
How shall I see
How will I look
How will I know
How will I recognize
When he shall stand in front of me?
Give me a sign God,
Put a sign on his face
Due to the fire, the burning and blood
So that I shall recognize the pure brightness, the eternal
I have been seeking for:
A human.



Elegy for the Little Jewish Towns

Gone now are, gone are in Poland those little Jewish towns
Hrubieszow, Karczew, Brody, Falenica
You look for candlelight in the windows
And for song in the wooden synagogue in vain

Vanished the last leftovers, Jewish tatters
Blood was buried by sand, traces were cleared
And walls were lucidly whiten by glaucous lime
Just like after a plague or for big holiday

Here glitters one moon, cold, pale, alien
Already out of town, on the street, when night lights up
My Jewish relatives, poetic boys
Will not find two golden moons of Chagall

The moons are now above other planet
They flew away frightened by grim silence
Gone now are those little towns where the shoemaker was a poet,
The watchmaker a philosopher, the barber a troubadour

Gone now are those little towns where the wind joined
Biblical songs with Polish tunes and Slavic rue
Where old Jews in orchards in the shade cherry trees
Lamented for the holy walls of Jerusalem.

Gone now are those little towns, they went away by shadow
And the shadow will fall between our words
Until will come closer brotherly and will join again
The two nations fed by centuries of suffering.

Antoni Słonimski (1947, translation: P. Dorman)



I remember myself as a small girl from the Warsaw Ghetto –

I remember myself from those days
as a small girl
who walked the noisy streets
in spite of the cruelty
I remember looking at the people
at the big buildings
at the sky and at the consistent sun
rising my face to them, warming myself
in that remote sun
at night through my window I counted stars
trying to foretell the future:
will there be for me another tomorrow
will I be still alive the next night?
I remember those people
who hurried through crowded streets
their clothes, faces—glances
countless times I pushed my way among them, watching
wishing to grow up faster—to be their equal
they seemed to me then powerful, eternal
in spite of that cursed fear
they were so full of life, constant movement
inconceivably ingenious
later I have seen the same streets abandoned and empty
I was taken through those deaden streets
in the midst of the rubble of burned buildings
those powerful crowds were missing among the living
only that usual sky
far away stars
and the sun

Halina Birenbaum



The Face of the Future: Written from within the Krakow ghetto by the underground Jewish youth movement

In view of the tragic existence of the Jews, where the life of the individual depends on chance and the life of the community as a whole has long been on the brink of cessation, one must, more than ever, see the situation comprehensively. As an individual point of view – everyone will surely understand that now – is of no significance today. As individuals, we may all be lost. The likelihood of staying alive is minute. Broken and alone – there is not much we can expect. Dying together with Polish Jewry, we must clearly visualize for ourselves the historic character of this time and tell ourselves with courage that our death does not spell the end of the world. The record of humanity and of the Jewish people will continue at its own speed in the future, even after we are safely under the ground.

The numerical balance-sheet of the Jews will be said when peace finally comes to the world after the historical blood-bath. This is indeed not the first defeat of a defenseless people scattered over the face of the earthy. Slaughter, murders, confiscation of property, and the burning alive of people – all these have been known to us for generations as the essential elements of our martyrology. But there has never been such wholesale extermination. Never did a situation develop like this, where there is no way out. Never before did great numbers of people armed with the most modern technology move against the an entire people. Of 16 million Jews in the world, we shall scarcely reach 9 million after the war. And, most important of all, the Jews of Europe will no longer be there, those who up to now made up the healthiest part of the nation...

Few held out a helping hand to the Jews who were being destroyed. Nobody made any effort to help them to the extent that they could escape from the danger of extermination. They looked on our destruction as on the death of maggots, and not as the loss of a nation with high cultural values. When the question of the Jews came up even the hatred towards the Germans lessened. There was solidarity with the enemy in the joy over the fall of the Jews. Only a few retained any degree of humanity, and even they did not dare to give this public expression. The truth of aloneness was again confirmed.

We shall carry the heavy burden of this isolation until the end of our days, and it points to the fact that the only proper approach is that of self-liberation: We have nobody on whom to depend except ourselves.

Im ayn ani li, mi li? Hillel



Yizkor
by Abba Kovner

Let us remember our brothers and our sisters
the homes in the cities and houses in the villages
The streets of the town that bustled like rivers
And the inn standing solitary on the way.
The old man with his etched-out features
The mother in her sweater
The girl with the plaits
And the children.
The thousands of communities of Israel with their families
The whole Jewish people
That was brought to the slaughter on the soil
of Europe by the German destroyer.
The man who screamed out suddenly and died while screaming
The woman who clutched her baby to her breast and whose arms tumbled down.
The baby whose fingers groped for her mother's nipple
which was blue and cold
The legs, the legs that sought refuge
and there was no escape.
And those who clenched their hands into fists
The fist that gripped the steel
The steel that was the weapon of the vision
the despair and the revolt.
And those with staunch hearts and those with open eyes
And those who sacrificed themselves without
being able to save others.
We shall remember the day
The day in its noon, the sun
That rose over the stake of blood
The skies that stood high and silent
We shall remember the mounds of ash
beneath flowering parks.
Let the living remember his dead for
behold they are here
Before us
Behold their eyes cast around and about.
So let us not rest
May our lives be worthy of their memory.



We take this oath: we take it in the shadows of flames, whose tongues scar the soul of our people; we vow in the name of our dead parents and children; we vow we shall never let the sacred memory of our perished six million of our brethren be forgotten or erased.

We saw them hungry, in fear, we saw them in the loneliness of night, we saw them at the threshold of death; true to their faith. We received their silence in silence, we merged their tears with ours, we are the remaining witnesses.

Of deportations, executions, mass graves, death camps, mute prayers and cries of revolt. The young, the old, the rich and the poor. The ghetto fighters, the partisans, the scholars and the messianic dreamers, the tradesmen and the businessmen, the Chassidim and the Misnagdim. Like a cloud we saw them vanish.

We take this oath: visions become word, to be handed down from father to son, from mother to daughter, handed down from generation to generation.

Zachor, Remember

What the Nazi murderers and their accomplices did to our Jewish people. Remember them with rage and contempt. Remember what an indifferent world did to us and to itself. We also must remember the good deeds of the righteous gentiles.

We took this oath in Israel to the Kotel. There we handed down a legacy to our children in the shadows of the flames of six symbolic candles. Today, we reaffirm our oath in the shadows of the flames honoring the memory of our six million, Acheinu B'nei Yisrael, our Jewish brethren.

We take this oath: Our memory should become words, words of history of the Holocaust to be handed down from generation to generation.

M'dor L'dor – our Holy ones will never be forgotten.

Undzere k'doshim mir velen eich keimol nit fargesen.



THE CREED OF A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR
by Alexander Kimel

I do believe, with all my heart,
 In the natural Goodness of Man.
Despite the blood and destruction,
 Brought by one man, trying to be God,
In the Goodness of Man, I do believe.
I do believe, with all my heart,
 That God gave man the blessing and the curse.
Man can select the curse of envy, hatred and prejudices,
 Or the blessing of love, harmony and beauty.
Despite the painful curses of the past,
 In the blessing of the Creator, I do believe.
I do believe, with all my heart,
 That God created a beautiful world,
The sun and the trees, the flowers and the bees.
 And the best way to serve God, is
To enjoy the fruits of His labor of love.
 Despite the painful memories from the past,
In the joyful celebration of life, I do believe.
I do believe with all my heart,
 That God has created man in image of His own.
And killing of man, is like killing of God.
 Despite the massacres in Rwanda, the cleansing in Bosnia,
The folly of Muslim fanatics, and the cruelty of Pot Pol.
 In the love and compassion of the Creator, I do believe.
I believe with all my heart,
 That the Messiah and the Kingdom of Heaven will come;
When man will conquer his destructive urge,
 And learn how to live in harmony with nature and himself.
When all the preachers of hate will be silenced,
 And man will become his brother's keeper.
When man will stop killing man, in the name of God,
 And nation will not lift weapons against nation.
When it will be, I do not know, but
 Despite all the signs to the contrary.
In the dawn of a Better World, I do believe.



Yizkor for Victims of the Shoah

אבינו מלכנו אל אלהי הרוחות לכל-בשר. תן מנוחה נכונה על-בפני השכינה במעלות קדושים וטהורים קודם
הרקיע מזוהרים את-גשמותיהם של שש מאות רבבות אלפי ישראל אנשים ונשים ילדים וילדות שנהרגו ושנטבחו
ושנחנקו ושנקברו חיים בידי מפלצות הצוררים בגלות אירופה. כלם קדושים וטהורים. בהם גאונים וצדיקים ארזי
הלגנון ואדירי התורה. בגן עדן תהא מנוחתם. לכו בעל הרחמים יצור בצרור החיים את-גשמותם ה' הוא נחלתם.
וזכר לנו עמדתם ותעמד לנו ולכל ישראל זכותם. ארץ אל-תכסי דמם ואל-יהי מקום לועקתם. בזכותם נדחי ישראל
ישובו לאחזתם והקדושים לזכרון תמיד נגד עיניך צדקתם. יבואו שלום ינוחו על-משכבותם. ונאמר אמן:

May G-d remember the souls of all the communities of Israel in the European Diaspora who were sacrificed on the altar during the years of the Holocaust (1939-1945): six million men and women, boys and girls, young men and women, infants and the elderly, who were cruelly slain and butchered, and mass murdered in their dwelling places and cities, and in the forests and villages.

Those surviving were brought like sheep to the slaughter to the concentration camps where they died unnatural deaths, and were burned to ashes in the furnaces of the terrible camps of destruction in Germany and Poland, and in the rest of the occupied countries, at the hands of the murderous German people and their Allies, all of whom were of one counsel to annihilate, kill, and utterly destroy the Jewish people, to wipe out the memory of Judaism, and to erase any association with the name of Israel.

G-d of vengeance, Judge of the Earth, remember the streams of blood that were spilled like water, the blood of fathers and sons, mothers and sucklings, rabbis and their students, and repay the oppressors of your people seventy times over.

Do not silence the scream of "Shema Yisrael" uttered by those who were taken to their death, and let the groan of the afflicted ascend before the throne of your glory. Avenge, speedily in our days, before our eyes, the blood of your pure and sanctified sons and daughters who never had the privilege to be buried as Jews...As it is written: "For he will avenge the blood of His servants, and vengeance he will serve on their oppressors, and He will atone the Land of His people."
Amen. Selah.



Mourner's Kaddish

יְתַגְדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא (אָמֵן)

Yeetgdal v' yeetkadash sh'mey rabbah Amen.

May His great Name grow exalted and sanctified Amen.

בְּעֵלְמָא דֵּי בְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ

B'almah dee v'rah kheer'utey

in the world that He created as He willed.

וְיַמְלִיךָ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּינוּ וּבְיוֹמֵינוּ

v' yamleekh malkhutei, b'chahyeykhohn, uv' yohmeykhohn,

May He give reign to His kingship in your lifetimes and in your days,

וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל

uv'chahyei d'chohl beyt yisrael,

and in the lifetimes of the entire Family of Israel,

בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְנוֹ קָרִיב וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן

ba'galah u'veez'man kareev, v'eemru: Amein.

swiftly and soon. Amen.

(אָמֵן) יְהִי שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעַלְמֵי עַלְמֵינָא

(Cong: Amein. Y'hey sh'met rabbah m'varach l'alam u'l'almei almahyah)

(Cong Amen. May His great Name be blessed forever and ever.)

יְהִי שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעַלְמֵי עַלְמֵינָא

Y'hey sh'met rabbah m'varach l'alam u'l'almei almahyah.

May His great Name be blessed forever and ever.

וְיִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא

Yeet'barakh, v' yeesh'tabach, v' yeetpa'ar, v' yeetrohmam, v' yeet'nasei,

Blessed, praised, glorified, exalted, extolled,

וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא

v' yeet'hadar, v' yeet'aleh, v' yeet'halal sh'mey d'kudshah b'reekh hoo
mighty, upraised, and lauded be the Name of the Holy One, Blessed is He

(בְּרִיךְ הוּא)

(Cong. b'reekh hoo).

(Cong. Blessed is He)

לְעֵלָא מִן כָּל בְּרַכָּתָא וְשִׁירָתָא

L'eylah meen kohl beerkhatah v'sheeratah,

beyond any blessing and song,

תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא דְאִמְרוּ בְּעֵלְמָא וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן

toosh'b'chatah v'nechematah, da'ameeran b'al'mah, v'eemru: Amein

praise and consolation that are uttered in the world. Amen.



יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שָׁמַיָא וְחַיִּים

Y'hei shlamah rabbah meen sh'mahyah, v'chahyeem
May there be abundant peace from Heaven, and life

עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן

aleynu v'al kohl yisrael, v'eemru: Amein
upon us and upon all Israel. Amen.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם

Oseh shalom beem'roh'mahv, hoo ya'aseh shalom,
He Who makes peace in His heights, may He make peace,

עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן

aleynu v'al kohl yisrael v'eemru: Amein
upon us and upon all Israel. Amen.

El Maleh Rahamim

אל מלא רחמים שוכן במרומים, המצא מנוחה נכונה תחת כנפי השכינה במעלות קדושים וטהורים כזוהר הרקיע
מזהירים את נשמת פלוני בן פלוני, שהלך לעולמו בעבור ש {בן המשפחה} נדב אדקה בעד הזכרת נשמתו. בגן
עדן תהא מנוחתו. לכן בעל הרחמים יסתירהו בסתר כנפיו לעולמים, ויצרור בצרור החיים את נשמתו. וי הוא
נחלתו וינות בשלום על משכבו, ונאמר אמן:

O G-d, full of mercy, who dwells on high, Grant proper rest on the wings of the Divine Presence
In the lofty levels of the holy and pure, Who shine like the glow of the firmament.

For the souls of the Six Million Jews, victims of the European Holocaust
Who were killed, slaughtered, burned and wiped out For the Sanctification of the Name By the
murderous Germans and their allies, Because, without making a vow, All the community will
pray For the uplifting of their souls. Therefore, my the Master of mercy Shelter them in the
shelter of His wings for eternity; And may He bind their souls in the Bond of Life and grant that
the memories of my life inspire me always to be noble.

The L-rd is their heritage. And may their resting-place be in the Garden of Eden, And may they
reach their destiny at the end of days. And let us say Amen.

HATIKVAH



כל עוד בלבב פנימה
נפש יהודי הומיה
ולפאתי מזרח קדימה
עין לציון צופיה

עוד לא אבדה תקותנו
התקוה בת שנות אלפים
להיות עם חופשי בארצנו
ארץ ציון וירושלים

Kol od ba-levav penimah
Nefesh Yehudi homiyyah
U-le-fa'atei mizrach kadimah
Ayin le-Tziyyon tzofiyyah.

Od lo avdah tikvatenu
Ha-tikvah bat shnot alpayyim
Lihiyot am chofshi b'Artzeinu
Eretz Tziyon v'Yerushalayim

As long as deep in the heart
The soul of a Jew yearns
And towards the east
And eye looks on Zion

Our hope is not yet lost
The hope of two thousand years
To be a free people in our land
The land of Zion and Jerusalem