

קִינַת בְּאֵרִי - יַגַּל הַרוּשׁ
A Lament for Be'eri – Yagel Haroush

Translation: Yosef Goldman

אֵיכָה בְּאֵרִי / הִפְכָה לְקַבְרִי וַיּוֹם מְאוּרִי / הִפְךָ שְׁחֹרִי וְהִשְׁחַת כָּל פְּרִי / וְנִהְפָּךְ שִׁירִי עֵינַי נוֹבְעָה מֵיַם / מֵעֲמֻק שְׁבָרִי	Eikhah ¹ - Alas! my well ^{2 3} / has turned into my grave And the day of my light ⁴ / has become my darkness And all fruit has been destroyed / and my singing overturned My eyes pour forth water ⁵ / from the depth of my brokenness
אֵיכָה תּוֹרָה / עֲרוּכָה וְסֻדּוּרָה וְכָל פְּאָרָה / לֹא עָמַד לְעֲזָרָה וּבַיּוֹם הַזֶּה / הִשְׁחַת תְּאֵרִי עֵינַי נוֹבְעָה מֵיַם / מֵעֲמֻק שְׁבָרִי	Eikhah - Torah / so orderly and arranged So full of splendor / did not come to our aid And on the day of her exalting ⁶ / I have lost my standing My eyes pour forth water / from the depth of my brokenness
אֵיכָה יִשְׂרָאֵל / בַּיּוֹם קָרוּא אֵל וְחַיִּים שׁוֹאֵל / וּמְהוּמָה קָבַל זָקֵן וְעוֹלָל / בְּדָם מִתְגוֹלָל וְחֵגוּ חֲלָל / אוֹיֵב אֶכְזָרִי עֵינַי נוֹבְעָה מֵיַם / מֵעֲמֻק שְׁבָרִי	Eikhah - Israel / on a day of calling to God Life was requested / but chaos received Elder and infant / wallow in blood ⁷ The festival desecrated / by a merciless enemy My eyes pour forth water / from the depth of my brokenness
אֵיכָה אִמּוֹת / וְיָלְדוֹת וְנַעֲרוֹת בְּשִׁבֵי מוֹלְכוֹת / כְּבַיְמֵי פְרָעוֹת וְנִפְרְצוּ גְדָרוֹת / צֹאן יִשְׂרָאֵל וּפְסָקוּ מְחֹלוֹת / וּנְגִינוֹת מְשׁוֹרְרֵי עֵינַי נוֹבְעָה מֵיַם / מֵעֲמֻק שְׁבָרִי	Eikhah - mothers / girls and young women Taken into captivity / as in the days of pogroms And fences were breached / righteous sheep And the dancing ceased / and the songs of my singers My eyes pour forth water / from the depth of my brokenness
וְאֵיכָה אֶתְמָה / בּוֹרָא רוּמָה עַד אֵן אֶמָה / תִּהְיֶה מְהוּמָה עַד אֵן קוּמָה / תִּשְׁפַּל אֶדְמָה וְעַתָּה קוּמָה / לְהַאִיר נְרִי וּבְעֵינֵי רַחֲמֶיךָ / תִּרְפֵּא שְׁבָרִי וְעֵינַי הַנוֹבְעֵת / תִּשְׁקָה בְּאֵרִי	And Eikhah - I wonder / You who enobled her- How long shall a nation / live in upheaval How long shall her stature / be brought low to the ground And now, arise / to kindle my lamp ⁸ And from the wellsprings of your mercy / heal my brokenness And my eye ⁹ that pours forth / will water Be'eri.

A kinnah (lament) written by Israeli payytan (liturgical poet & composer) Yagel Haroush, Heshvan 5784.

On October 7, 2023, militants from the terror group Hamas carried out a massacre at Kibbutz Be'eri in Southern Israel near the Gaza Strip. The community was decimated, with at least 130 people murdered, including women, children, and infants. Dozens of homes were burned down. Massacres were also perpetrated on multiple neighboring kibbutzim and towns, including Ofakim, Netiv haAsara, K'far Aza, and the Nova music festival at Re'im. In all, more than 1,400 people were killed in Israel in the attacks of that day, and more than 4,500 were critically wounded. At least 243 people of multiple nationalities were taken hostage to Gaza.

In Israel, October 7, 2023 was both Simchat Torah, the day of rejoicing in and exalting the Torah, as well as Shemini Atzeret, the culmination of the Sukkot festival, on which Jews pray for blessing of rain and sustenance for the year ahead.

¹ The opening word of the Book of Lamentations, “אֵיכָה” – translated as “alas!” or “how?!” – is often used in Jewish poetry of lament – *kinnot* – that memorialize the Jewish people, from the liturgy for mourning the Temple’s destruction to today.

² The literal translation of *Be'eri* is “my well.”

³ In TaNaKh and Rabbinic literature, Torah is compared to both light and water. (See Shir Hashirim Rabbah 1:2)

⁴ “כִּי נֵר מִצְוָה וְתוֹרָה אֹר” “For the commandment is a lamp, The teaching of Torah is a light” (Proverbs 6:23)

⁵ The waters of Torah wisdom are juxtaposed with tears of grief. Proverbs 18:4 - וְנַחַל נֹבֵעַ מִקְוֵי חֲכָמָה... “A flowing stream, a fountain of wisdom.” Lamentations 1:16 - עֵינַי יִרְדּוּ מֵיַם - “For these do I weep, My eyes flow with tears: far from me is a comforter who might revive my spirit; my children are forlorn, for the foe has prevailed.”

⁶ I.e. Simchat Torah

⁷ See Ezekiel 16:6 - וְאָעִבֵר עֲלֶיךָ וְאֶרְאֶךָ מִתְבוֹסֶסֶת בְּדַמֶיךָ וְאָמַר לְךָ בְּדַמֶיךָ חַיִּי וְאָמַר לְךָ בְּדַמֶיךָ חַיִּי וְאָמַר לְךָ בְּדַמֶיךָ חַיִּי “When I passed by you and saw you wallowing in your blood, I said to you: ‘Live despite your blood. Live despite your blood.’”

⁸ “כִּי אֶתְּהָ תֹאִיר נְרִי, ה. אֶלְהֵי נִגְיָה חֲשָׁכִי” “It is You who light my lamp; Adonai, my God, lights up my darkness.” (Ps.18:29)

⁹ עֵינִי, *ayin*, means both spring and eye.