

Dear Open Temple Friends,

One of my Rabbinic Colleges prepared this source sheet as a response to the question: “what do I do through all that I am witnessing?” Along with it, I add: Live Gently. The War in Israel touches us in so many ways and on so many levels. Practice compassion and curiosity, both within and without.

Here are Dean/ Rabbi Stephen Slater’s words:

In this moment of profound uncertainty and fear, we want to share some texts that inspire us with *Hope*, enable us to *Pray*, and give us courage to share *Torah* with our community. As you teach, please remember that everything you do is modelling *spiritual leadership*. We asked our amazing faculty, “standing on one foot, before Shabbat enters, what are some texts, songs, prayers that help you, when you are facing uncertainty?” Here are their answers.

Rabbi Stephen Slater, Rabbinical School Dean

Reciting Tehillim

“Psalms recited with Kavanna strengthen our faith. For that reason, we have been reciting extra psalms in morning minyan, praying for peace and the resilience to cope with this overwhelming trial. I like Psalm 121, 130 and 23.”

Rabbi Mel Gottlieb

Tehillim 131

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת לְדָוִד י״ | לֹא־גִבָּה לִבִּי וְלֹא־רָמוּ עֵינַי וְלֹא־הִלָּכְתִּי | בְּגִדְלוֹת וּבִנְפִלְאוֹת מִמֶּנִּי:
אִם־לֹא שְׁוִיתִי | וְדוֹמַמְתִּי נַפְשִׁי בְּגִמְלָה עָלַי אִמּוֹ בְּגִמְלָה עָלַי נַפְשִׁי: יַחַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵלֵּי יִמְעֲתָה וְעַד־
עוֹלָם:

A song of ascents. Of David.

O LORD, my heart is not proud

nor my look haughty;

I do not aspire to great things

or to what is beyond me.

but I have taught myself to be contented

like a weaned child with its mother;

like a weaned child am I in my mind.

O Israel, wait for the LORD
now and forever.

Rabbi Ebn Leader

Pirkei Avot 4:19

Shmuel Hakatan said: "If your enemy falls, do not exult; if he trips, let your heart not rejoice, lest the Lord see it and be displeased, and avert his wrath from him" (Proverbs 24:17).

Rabbi Stephen Slater

Yisrael Sheli - My Israel

<https://youtu.be/X-zVT8PH3Wo?si=EQHg4YgcseXsqHN>

Dr Tali Tadmor

Acheinu - Our Brothers

<https://youtu.be/tvB3unNn1Hg?si=1zT9xnpw7WH2OcUv>

Cantor Marcus Feldman

I Shall Not Fear

<https://open.spotify.com/track/3GsaLzl9cXlx1ZvPejKn9g>

Rabbi Cantor Sam Radwine

Out of the Depths

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQmqhYUmSyY>

Rabbi Margie Jacobs

Sanhedrin 72a, Babylonian Talmud

תְּנוּ רַבָּנִי: "אֵין לוֹ דְּמִים. אִם זָרְחָה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ עָלָיו". וְכִי הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ עָלָיו בְּלֵבַד זָרְחָה?
אֵלֶּא, אִם בְּרוּר לֶךְ הַדִּבֶּר בַּשֶּׁמֶשׁ נִשְׁאֵין לוֹ שְׁלוֹם עִמָּךְ – הִרְגָּהוּ, וְאִם לֹא – אֵל תִּהְרָגְהוּ.

Apropos of a burglar who breaks into a house, the Sages taught in a *baraita*:

The verse states: “If a burglar is found breaking in, and is smitten and dies, there shall not be blood shed on his account. If the sun is risen upon him, there shall be blood shed on his account” (Exodus 22:1–2).

A question may be raised: But did the sun rise only upon him? Rather, these words must be understood in a metaphoric sense: **If the matter is as clear to you as the sun that the burglar is not coming to you in peace**, but rather his intention is to kill you, **arise and kill him first**. But if you are not sure about his intentions, do not kill him.

Exodus 22:1–2

If the thief is seized while tunneling and beaten to death, there is no bloodguilt in that case.

If the sun had already risen, there is bloodguilt in that case. —[The thief] must make restitution, and if lacking the means, shall be sold for the theft.

אם־בַּמְחִתְרֶת יִמָּצֵא הַגֵּנֵב וְהָיָה וָמָת אֵין לוֹ דָּמִים:
אם־זָרְחָה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ עָלָיו דָּמִים לוֹ שְׁלֵם יִשְׁלֵם אִם־אֵין לוֹ וְנִמְכָּר בַּגֵּבֻתוֹ:

Rabbi Stephen Slater

Tehillim 121

A song for ascents.

I turn my eyes to the mountains;
from where will my help come?

My help comes from the LORD,
maker of heaven and earth.

נִשִּׁיר לַמַּעֲלוֹת אֲשָׁא עֵינֵי אֱלֹהֵהֶרִים מֵאֵין יְבֹא עֲזָרִי:
עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יי עֹשֶׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ: אֲלֵי־יֵתָן לַמּוֹט רַגְלִי אֱלֵי־יָבוֹם שְׁמִרָה:
הִנֵּה לֹא־יָבוֹם וְלֹא יִשְׁנֹן שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל:
יי שְׁמִרָה יי צִלָּה עַל־יָד יְמִינִה: יוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא־יִכָּפֶה וַיָּרֶם בַּלַּיְלָה:
יי יִשְׁמְרֶנּוּ מִכָּל־רָע יִשְׁמֹר אֶת־נַפְשִׁי: יי יִשְׁמֹר־צִאתָהּ וּבֹאָהּ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם:

Rabbi Stephen Slater

A Prayer in times of Uncertainty

Ribbono Shel Olam,

At a moment when our people need a steady rock, a ‘Tzur,’ to cling to,

We ask You, Holy One, to pour your Shefa down upon us.

Fill each of us with your steady presence and with the light of hope.

Guide us towards good counsel and wise decisions.

Bless us with inner strength and resilience in such moments of unknowns,

And the need to surrender to one another for support and care.

Be an inspiration for trust and faith, *Emunah*,

And embrace us all with *Shleymut*, wholeness, and *Shalom*, peace.

Baruch Atah Adonai v'At Shechinah, Who holds us and lifts us in moments of uncertainty.

Rabbi/Cantor Eva Robbins

From "The Iron Wall," by Vladomir Jabotinsky

All this does not mean that any kind of agreement is impossible, only a voluntary agreement is impossible. As long as there is a spark of hope that they can get rid of us, they will not sell these hopes not for any kind of sweet words or tasty morsels, because they are not a rabble but a nation, perhaps somewhat tattered, but still living. A living people makes such enormous concessions on such fateful questions only there is no hope left. Only when not a single breach is visible in the iron wall, only then do extreme groups lose their sway, and influence transfers to moderate groups. Only then would these moderate groups come to us with proposals for mutual concessions. And only then will moderates offer suggestions for compromise on practical questions like a guarantee against expulsion, or equality and national autonomy.

I am optimistic that they will indeed be granted satisfactory assurances and that both peoples, like good neighbors, can then live in peace. But the only path to such an agreement is the iron wall, that is to say the strengthening in Palestine of a government without any kind of Arab influence, that is to say one against which the Arabs will fight. In other words, for us the only path to an agreement in the future is an absolute refusal of any attempts at an agreement now.

Rabbi Philip Graubart

Sanhedrin 72a.2, Babylonian Talmud

אמרה תורה: ימות זכאי ואל ימות חייב, שמיתתן של רשעים - הנאה להם והנאה לעולם, ולצדיקים - רע להם ורע לעולם. שינה ויין לרשעים - הנאה להם והנאה לעולם, לצדיקים - רע להם ורע לעולם. שקט לרשעים - רע להם ורע לעולם, ולצדיקים - הנאה להם והנאה לעולם. פיזור לרשעים - הנאה להם והנאה לעולם, ולצדיקים - רע להם ורע לעולם.

The Torah said that it is better that a person should die when he is still innocent, than to die later when he is guilty of grave sin. This is because the death of the wicked is beneficial to them and also beneficial to the world, while the death of the righteous is detrimental to them and detrimental to the world.

The sleep and wine of the wicked is beneficial to them and beneficial to the world, while that of the righteous is detrimental to them and detrimental to the world.

The tranquility of the wicked is detrimental to them and detrimental to the world, while the tranquility of the righteous is beneficial to them and beneficial to the world.

The dispersal of the wicked is beneficial to them and beneficial to the world, while the dispersal of the righteous is detrimental to them and detrimental to the world.

Rabbi Stephen Slater

Tehillim 27

Of David. The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, my enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though a host should camp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, even then I will be confident.

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

For in the day of evil he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the covert of his tent he shall hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. And now shall my head be lifted up above my enemies round about me: therefore I will offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, and I will make melody to the Lord.

Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice: be gracious to me, and answer me.

Of Thee my heart has said, Seek my face. Thy face, O Lord, I seek. Hide not Thy face from me; put not Thy servant away in anger: Thou hast been my help; abandon me not, nor forsake me, O God of my salvation. For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me up. Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and lead me in an even path, because of my enemies. Deliver me not over to the will of my enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out violence. Were it not that I believed I should see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait

on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart: and wait on the Lord.

Rabbi Mark Diamond

Deuteronomy 20

When you [an Israelite warrior] take the field against your enemies, and see horses and chariots—forces larger than yours—have no fear of them, for your God, who brought you from the land of Egypt, is with you. Before you join battle, the priest shall come forward and address the troops. He shall say to them, “Hear, O Israel! You are about to join battle with your enemy. Let not your courage falter. Do not be in fear, or in panic, or in dread of them. For it is your God who marches with you to do battle for you against your enemy, to bring you victory.” Then the officials shall address the troops, as follows: “Is there anyone who has built a new house but has not dedicated it? Let him go back to his home, lest he die in battle and another dedicate it. Is there anyone who has planted a vineyard but has never harvested it? Let him go back to his home, lest he die in battle and another harvest it. Is there anyone who has paid the bride-price for a wife, but who has not yet taken her [into his household]? Let him go back to his home, lest he die in battle and another take her [into his household as his wife].” The officials shall go on addressing the troops and say, “Is there anyone afraid and disheartened? Let him go back to his home, lest the courage of his comrades flag like his.” When the officials have finished addressing the troops, army commanders shall assume command of the troops. When you approach a town to attack it, you shall offer it terms of peace.

If it responds peaceably and lets you in, all the people present there shall serve you at forced labor.

If it does not surrender to you, but would join battle with you, you shall lay siege to it; and when your God delivers it into your hand, you shall put all its males to the sword. You may, however, take as your booty the women, the children, the livestock, and everything in the town—all its spoil—and enjoy the use of the spoil of your enemy, which your God gives you. Thus you shall deal with all towns that lie very far from you, towns that do not belong to nations hereabout. In the towns of the latter peoples, however, which your God is giving you as a heritage, you shall not let a soul remain alive. No, you must proscribe them—the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites—as your God has commanded you, lest they lead you into doing all the abhorrent things that they have done for their gods and you stand guilty before your God. When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down. Are trees

of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city? Only trees that you know do not yield food may be destroyed; you may cut them down for constructing siegeworks against the city that is waging war on you, until it has been reduced.

I Samuel 8:1-18

And it came to pass, when Shemu'el was old, that he made his sons judges over Yisra'el.

Now the name of his firstborn was Yo'el, and the name of his second, Aviyya: they were judges in Be'er-sheva. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after unjust gain, and took bribes, and perverted justice. Then all the elders of Yisra'el gathered themselves together, and came to Shemu'el to Rama, and said to him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

But the thing displeased Shemu'el when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Shemu'el prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Shemu'el, Harken to the voice of the people in all that they say to thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

According to all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Mizrayim, and to this day, in that they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so they also do to thee. Now you must hearken to their voice: nevertheless you should solemnly forewarn them, and relate to them the customary practice of the king that shall reign over them. And Shemu'el told all the words of the Lord to the people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the custom of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself on his chariot, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariot. And he will appoint for himself captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to plough his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and the instruments of his chariots.

And he will take your daughters for perfumers, and cooks, and bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your best oliveyards, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and you shall be his servants.

And you shall cry out on that day because of your king which you shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you on that day.

Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Shemu'el; and they said, No: but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. And Shemu'el heard all the words of the people, and he spoke them in the ears of the Lord.

Code of Ethics of the Israel Defense Forces

1. **Devotion to Mission and Drive for Victory:** A soldier will fight and act courageously in the face of all dangers and obstacles before him, and will adhere to his mission with determination and wisdom, even to the point of risking his life.
2. **Responsibility:** The soldier will see himself as an active partner in the defense of the state's security, its citizens, and residents. The soldier will act with consistent involvement, initiative, and diligence, within his authority, ready to bear responsibility for the outcomes of his actions.
3. **Integrity:** The soldier will present things as they are, completely and accurately, in planning, execution, and reporting, and will act so that his peers and commanders can rely on him in carrying out missions.
4. **Personal Example:** The soldier will behave according to what is required of him and will fulfill what he demands of others, recognizing his ability and responsibility, both in and out of the army, to set a worthy example.
5. **Human Life:** The soldier will act sensibly and safely in all his actions, recognizing the supreme importance of human life. In combat, he will risk himself and his peers to the extent necessary to accomplish the mission.
6. **Purity of Arms:** The soldier will use his weapons and force only for the mission, only to the extent necessary, and will maintain human dignity even in combat. The soldier will not use his weapons and power to harm non-combatants and prisoners, and will do everything in his power to prevent harm to their lives, bodies, honor, and property.
7. **Professionalism:** A soldier will strive to acquire the professional knowledge and skills required to perform his role and will implement them while striving for continuous improvement of personal and unit achievements.
8. **Discipline:** The soldier will act to the best of his ability to fully and successfully fulfill what is required of him according to the commands and their spirit. The soldier will ensure that only lawful orders are given and will not obey manifestly unlawful orders.

9. **Comradeship:** The soldier will act out of brotherhood and dedication to his fellow servicemen and will always come to their aid when they need him or depend on him, despite any danger or difficulty, even to the point of risking his life.
10. **Mission:** The soldier will see his military service as a mission; he will be ready to contribute everything in his power to the defense of the state, its citizens, and residents.

[Operation Rising Lion | IDF](https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/operation-rising-lion/) <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/operation-rising-lion/>

Psalm 3:7-9

I have no fear of the myriad forces
arrayed against me on every side.
Rise, O LORD! Deliver me, O my God.
For You slap all my enemies in the face; You break the teeth of the wicked
Salvation belongs to the Lord: Thy blessing be upon Thy people.
Sela.

לֹא־אִירָא מִרְבָּבוֹת עִם אֲנֹכִי סָבִיב שְׁתוּ עָלַי:
קוּמָה יי | הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי אֱלֹהֵי כִּי־הִכִּיתָ אֶת־כָּל־אֹיְבֵי יְחִי שְׁנֵי רָשָׁעִים שִׁבְרָתָ:
לֵי יְהוֹשֻׁעָה עַל־עַמֶּךָ בְּרִכְתֶּךָ סֵלָה:

R Sam Radwine

Ribbono Shel Olam, Divine One Who Sustains All, Hear my prayers. I pray for the children who do not understand. I pray for the mothers who feel helpless in their ability to provide protection. I pray for the women who have been denied dignity and freedom for decades. I pray for rulers whose hearts have hardened. I pray for those living under laws of intimidation to find their voices of liberation. I pray that all of the hostages be returned home so the real healing can begin. I pray for a day when we don't live in fear. I pray to return to my own humanity. I

by Zelda (Schneurson Mishkovsky), Israeli poet, 1914-1984 Translated
by Dr Melila Hellner Eshed

<p>בילדותי, השתוקקתי לגור בבית של ברזל...אולי מפני שנולדתי במלחמה וינקתי עם חלב אמי את הפחדים מפני האש .</p> <p>אחר כך ידעתי שגם בתים של ברזל, של נחושת או של אבן, בנויים על אדמה סלעית ועומדים על דיוטות של מים במרחק גדול מכבשן האש של לב הארץ,</p> <p>ורק קו האור שאי אפשר לתפוס אותו בידיים ולראותו, שיוצא מן הנפש אל מרחקי המרחקים עד מעבר לחושים אל הבורא, רק הוא מגן עלי מפני התוהו והבוהו .</p> <p>כי האדמה מתנועעת והשורשים מתנועעים בתוכה והכוכבים מתנועעים, כל אחד, כל יסוד בקצב אחר. והדם בתוכי מתנועע ומחשבותי מתנועעות, והמנוחה רק בקו הזה.</p> <p>אך לפעמים יש הסתרת פנים – והחוט ניתק ..</p>	<p>When I was little, I wanted to live in a house made of iron...maybe because I was born during a war and with my mother's milk I suckled the fears from fire.</p> <p>Later, I understood that even houses made of iron—or of bronze or stone, for that matter—are still built on stony earth, that stand atop reservoirs of water, at a great distance from the great furnace at the heart of the world.</p> <p>Nothing but that thin beam of light,intangible and invisible, traversing the greatest of distances from the soul, beyond the senses, to the Creator, protects me from the chaos and the void.</p> <p>For the earth moves and the roots move within it and the stars move—each one, each element, with its own rhythm. The blood within me moves and my thoughts move, and repose can be found only within this beam [kav].</p> <p>Sometimes, however, there is the concealment/ turning away of the Face [hastarat panim]—the thread breaks.</p>
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- What feels solid to you right now? What are you holding on to? What has fallen away?
- How does the idea kav (beam of light) or thread of grace, and tikkvah(hope) resonate (or not) with you?
- What is the state of your emunah right now? is it bright or dim, thick or thin, strong or fragile?

Rabbi Margie Jacobs

Rest, Renewal, and Mindset

“An artist cannot be continually wielding his brush.” from Talmud page

These are exhausting, deeply trying times. And yet, we are called to act to heal our very broken world. How do we know when to engage in the urgent work of tikkun olam, and when to engage in tikkun hanefesh – taking time to restore our own souls? Rabbi Isaac Luria’s concepts of *mohin degadlut* and *mohin dekatnut*, which we might

understand as expanded and constricted consciousness, can be helpful in discerning when to “wield our brush”, and when to put it down and reflect on our work and our own inner landscape.

When we are in a state of *mohin degadlut*– spacious, stable awareness, we are more likely to engage in the world in ways that are wise, generative and healing. We make better choices. We are better able to listen– to take in a different opinion from our own, or the heartbreaking news of world events– and be moved to growth, insight, or wise action.

The Hasidic commentator, the Me’or Eynaim, wrote that “The secret meaning of the exile in Egypt is.. that awareness was in exile.” When we are in a state of *mohin dekatnut*– when our awareness is in “exile,” or is constricted, we are like the Israelites in Egypt who “couldn’t listen to Moses because of *kotzer ruach* (*anguished spirit or shortness of breath*)” (Exodus 6:9)– In *katnut*, we lose hope, and are unable to internalize or imagine the possibility of redemption. Like an artist who has lost connection to their internal source of creativity, this might be a moment to put down our paintbrush, turn inward, and allow our “*kotzer ruach*” our tight, constricted breath and spirit, to settle and soften.

I invite you to explore how we might look to the length of our breath as a clue to the quality of our awareness and our capacity to listen, to bring healing presence to a challenging experience.

When Things Fall Apart: Divine Presence and Absence (on the shechina)

<https://evolve.reconstructingjudaism.org/when-things-fall-apart-divine-absence-and-presence>

Rabbi Margie Jacobs