

Dear Friends -

I am angry.
I am so angry. And so afraid.

I have no words -
And I have so many.

But most of what I have are tears.
I am so so sad.

This morning - I know -
I need to put aside my anger in order to make room for my grief.

We need the space to mourn.

To mourn for each and every soul stolen from us --
To weep for the terrible, devastating way that it happened, with such hate and
violence
To weep for the country that is meant to be our safeguard
To mourn for the peace that now seems only possible in messianic times

For all these things - I weep

But most of all -
I weep when I look at my little, sweet 4-month old,
And I hold her so tightly - and
I weep for the babies
I weep for the children
I weep for their families

And I cry for the mothers - So many mothers

And I plead and cry out to my God
Why did you create the world this way?

And I realize - It has always been this way

The Torah is full of weeping mothers
And my heart breaks again

Eve - *Chavah* - The first mother - *eim kol chai* - The mother of all life,

Is also the first *Eim Shechula* - The first bereaved mother

And the Midrash tells us perhaps we should spell her name with an Ayin instead of an Aleph

Im Kol Chai - That she is *with* all life

And so we ask her to be with us today - to be with the too many mothers

Im Kol Chai -

The mothers are weeping.

Eim Kol Chai -

hold them.

Eim Shechula -

weep with them.

Too many mothers are weeping.

Too many babies are without their mothers.

Too many families are without their fathers.

The Midrash tells us that you, too, *Eim kol chai* - did not know what to do.

That when one of your sons murdered the other

Over jealousy

Over land

Over a different relationship to God

For no justifiable reason

Or that while the explanation might be complex - Might be nuanced

The pain is not.

Your pain is always raw - can not be interpreted or explained

Even as it is used for someone else's political gain

Eve - *Chava* - Mother of all mothers-

I ask you - when will it stop?

How do we make it stop?

The Midrash tells us that you sat next to your beloved child, Abel

And you did not know what to do --

You wept over his body

You recalled his tiny hands and toes

Remembered the intense power and vulnerability of birth

Of holding creation on your chest

And now - your life-giving power stolen

Spat on - defiled

The Midrash tells us that in this moment of profound confusion and grief
That a raven landed near you-

His friend, another bird, had just died, And the raven said, "I will teach you what to do."
He brought his friend near to you, dug a hole, placed him in it, and covered him with earth.

You watched - and said, "I will do as this raven has done."
You dug a hole, and you buried your child.

Eve- You were not given a dove -
No one came to you with an olive branch in their mouth - no gift of peace
That is for someone else -
Not for our mothers - who bury and who weep.

Instead - you learned how to move on with half a heart. How to turn your weeps into
whimpers.

Eve- did you teach this lesson to Sarah when she thought her child would be used as a pawn
in someone else's test of faith?

Did you teach this lesson to Hagar when she thought her child would die in the desert?

Did you teach this lesson to Rivka when she was asked to ensure that one son would prevail
against the other?

Did you teach the lesson to Leah when her daughter was raped and then used to justify
more violence?

Did you teach this lesson to Yocheved when she sent her little baby down the river? To the
mothers whose sons Pharaoh decreed death? To the Egyptian mothers who woke up on the
morning of the 10th plague?

So many weeping mothers.

Why? How does it stop? Tell us, teach us, mother.

We are too tired to burn hot with rage.
We need our tears to do something

The Midrash comes to teach us again -
That the knife in Abraham's hand was melted by the tears of angels

We plead: Can our tears do the same?

We are taught that the call of the shofar is a war cry
 Called as soldiers are rushing into battle
Our tradition is not without war - justified, necessary war

We prefer peace, certainly - but war - both ones we wage, and ones we are swept up in, have
a justified place in our tradition

But can we also remember that the shofar is not just the battle cry but also the the mother's
wailing

 At her child's birth - knowing the world she will be born into
 And at her child's death - knowing she couldn't fix it for him

Eve -

 Help us hear the mother's cry
 Help us hear all of them

Help us remember that we are fighting so that no more mothers have to weep

And that When we hear the cry of the shofar, it doesn't just militarize us,
 It als humanizes us.

For we know that every wailing mother is an unmeasurable tragedy - one is not more tragic
than the next

 We have to hear them all - we can not rank the pain of one mother against the other

So Help us hear the cry of the mother - so that we are not robbed of our humanity

 Because that is what they want - to turn us into monsters
 So that we turn more and more mothers into mourners.

Eve - mother of all life -

Hear this prayer. Teach us.
We are a nation of mourners -

Next year -
 When we hear the call of the shofar
 We pray - no new mothers crying.