

*This is a very difficult time for Israel and the Jewish people. We mourn the loss of every Israeli soldier and civilian; we pray for the speedy recovery of those wounded. We are saddened that innocent Palestinian civilians have been caught in the crossfire designed by Hamas. We hope and pray that the fighting will end soon so legitimate leaders will be able to create an environment wherein discussions of peace can resume.*

*Immediately after the announcement of the death of the three kidnapped Israeli boys, my friend Rabbi Tamar Eldad-Appelbaum, spiritual leader of Kehillat Tziyyon in Jerusalem, wrote this adaptation of Psalm 23. It brings Ps. 23's statement that G-d is with us directly into the terrible events happening in Israel. Through the bombings and torment may Psalm 23 continue to express the feelings, hopes and prayers of all of us. May peace ultimately prevail.*

*Rabbi Janise Poticha*

“Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I fear no evil,  
You are with me.” [Ps 23:4]

For with You I yearned for the youths  
With You I prayed for their lives, their dreams  
With You I gazed in awe at parents whose lips and hands were steadfast  
With You I pleaded that the power of love and kindness might grow in the land.

And with You I was soul-torn when I heard that they were no more  
With You I lamented over our brothers who will not return  
With You I wept at the ruins of a human being who took the life of another  
With You I trembled at the dark evil within him.

And with You I shall create a soul-saving distance from vengeance and blood  
With You I shall be restrained so that the holiness within me not be wiped away.

With You I shall hear the cry of children rising up from the earth  
From amidst the shards of humanity, of nations, and the darkest of evil.

And with You I pray - That I will again regain my spirit  
That I will again believe in the human creature  
That I will again hear every cry and weeping,  
The voices of all human beings wherever they are.

For You, Who in every generation has heard the cries of the innocent,  
Must grant me the strength not to despair so that I can proclaim before You:

“I hereby take upon myself the yoke of the kingdom of life,  
Of compassionate speech, of peace, and of love of humanity.”  
Grant me strength so that my soul not die while I live,  
So that it see the light of eternity begin to break through.

My God, I will again build - A home, a life, a world,  
And Your light will guide my path.

The full stature of humanity will again be revealed.

I will not be afraid. I will not fear. I will not retreat, for You are with me.

And the life and holiness and gentleness that You have planted  
In every person, in every nation, and in every tongue,  
In every creature of the universe,

They will comfort me. (Translation by Rabbis Peretz Rodman & David Ackerman)