Hope upon Hope: An Anthology of Jewish Sources on Hope

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Introduction

There are many ways to approach the study of Judaism as a source of hope, but one might be to simply immerse ourselves in Jewish texts on hope. This anthology will provide that opportunity by surveying a broad array of Jewish texts on hope, beginning with the Book of Genesis and concluding with a 2021 statement by Ruth Messinger, former Manhattan Borough President and longtime President of the American Jewish World Service. Sources run the gamut, from the Bible and midrash to philosophy and poetry. Most of these passages view hope in positive terms, though some look upon it as dangerously misguided.

Many entries, especially those before the modern era, speak of God as the ultimate source of hope. They do so despite—or because of—the fact that, over the millennia, God has often not seemed to honor the Divine covenantal promises set forth in the Bible: "And if you do obey these rules and observe them carefully, your God YHWH will maintain faithfully for you the covenant made with your fathers: [God] will favor you and bless you and multiply you… You shall be blessed above all other peoples" (Deut. 7:12, 14).

Contemporary Jewish theologians no longer expect God to fulfill our hopes but leave that task to us—human beings created in the image of God and therefore endowed with virtually unlimited creative powers. From this vantage point, how might we relate to the ancient texts of our tradition that look to God to realize our hopes?

Part of the answer to that question comes from an observation by the historian Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi (1932-2009), who said, "to explain hope with a mere shrug of the shoulders by saying 'but of course, they believed in God,' is merely to postpone the question at one remove and therefore to explain nothing. Is belief in God immutable?"[1] The tension between unfulfilled covenantal promises and the vicissitudes of Jewish history infuses many of these readings with a hope-filled pleading that transcends the bounds of simple faith. The fact is that unswerving faith in God's power and willingness to act raises as many questions about hope in God as it answers. For those who hold this faith, God's failure to act puts that hope to a severe test.

Near the end of *Choosing Hope*, I discuss an eleventh-century midrash (number 25 in this anthology) that speaks poignantly of the struggle to maintain hope over despair in the face of God's palpable absence from the stage of history in times of large-scale Jewish suffering. I suggest that:

> [T]exts like these reveal the struggle to hold onto fundamental beliefs that sustain hope—in the trustworthiness of either God or humanity—[which] gives us an entryway to relate to them. We can identify with this author's refusal to relinquish a particular hope against a wash of experience over the centuries that might well justify despair. Hope versus

despair: It's a test we all face, regardless of our beliefs. Texts like this shine a light on how hard our ancestors fought to choose hope and can provide inspiration to us as we try to do the same (214).

This lens will be useful for reading many of the pre-modern texts you'll find here. In the end, the very fact that our forebears managed to hold on to hope may prove more important to understand than the particular content of their hopes, or the object toward which they looked for their fulfillment. My understanding of hope includes a commitment to take action to fulfill our hopes. But I still have no doubt that immersion in the hopes of our forebears and contemporaries can sharpen your personal understanding of hope—and what it means to have your hope tested—and augment your willingness to act in hope.

A Note on Gendered Language and Translation

I've tried to add gender sensitivity to texts that refer to God with masculine pronouns or other masculine terminology. YHWH replaces "Lord" and "God," and YHWH (depending on the context) often replaces masculine pronouns. For a gender-sensitive translation of passages from the Pentateuch, I have generally used *The Contemporary Torah: A Gender-Sensitive Adaptation of the JPS Translation*, edited by David E. S. Stein (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2006). Since there is not yet a published gender-sensitive adaptation of JPS's translation of Prophets and Writings, I've tried to adapt this approach when quoting passages from biblical books beyond the Torah. When possible, I have gender-sensitized non-biblical quotations as well. The presence of bracketed text often indicates that the text has been modified to create a more gender-sensitive text.

In the introduction to Choosing Hope (xxiv), I review my approach to translating biblical passages that contain Hebrew words that I believe are best rendered as "hope." While the JPS Tanakh is my default translation, suffice to say, when it comes "hope," I always choose translations that render "hope" as opposed to "wait," "trust," or "look" (as in, wait for God, trust in God, or look to God) or other variations on that theme.

NOTE: A number of these sources appear in *Choosing Hope*, but most do not. For those that do, I've included the relevant page number in the notes. An asterisk after an endnote indicates that the note contains additional information about the text beyond a bibliographical note. This anthology is a work in progress. Some entries are accompanied by contextual commentary, for most others that work remains to be done.

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1. I hope for Your salvation, O YHWH!
   —Genesis 49:18[2]*

   In the Five Books of Moses, the word "hope" (root: kof-vav-hey, as in the familiar "tikvah") appears only once, uttered by Jacob as an aside in the middle of his deathbed

*blessing of his son Dan. Just 3 words in Hebrew, this verse has had a fascinating career in Jewish magic, mysticism, and prayer. While the plain meaning of the verse speaks of waiting for salvation **by** God, numerous commentators have read the verse to refer to the salvation **of** God, suggesting that both God and humanity need and hope for salvation.*

2. [8][YHWH] shall swallow up death forever, and YHWH God [Adonai Elohim] shall wipe the tears from every face, and [God's] people's disgrace [God] shall take off from all the earth, for [YHWH] has spoken. [9] On that day they shall say: "This is our God; we hoped in Him and He delivered us. This is YHWH, in whom we hoped; Let us rejoice in [YHWH's] deliverance."

    —Isaiah 25:8-9[3]

    This passage comes from a section of the book of Isaiah known as the Isaiah Apocalypse (chapters 24-27, viewed as a later addition to the book, dating from between the sixth and third centuries BCE). The messianic prophecy of God's swallowing up death hearkens back to Canaanite mythology, in which Mot (Death) swallows another god, Baal. Here God triumphs over death in a way that is reminiscent of the last verse of the Passover song "Had Gadya," in which God slaughters the Angel of Death. In Talmudic times, an interpretive tradition arose that imagined verse 25:9 as describing a dance in the world to come, with the righteous circling God, pointing to God, and saying, "This is YHWH*, in Whom we had hoped," etc. Since at least the twelfth century, verse 25:9 has been included in a series of verses recited in the liturgy for Simchat Torah, which celebrates the conclusion of the year's cycle of Torah reading and the beginning of the new year's cycle. The Hebrew for "and He delivered us" (*v'yoshi'ainu*) versus "in His deliverance" (*b'yishuato*) set the stage for interpreters to draw a distinction between, in the first case, God as the source of deliverance, and, in the second, God as the object of deliverance.*[4]

3. [40:31]But they who hope in [YHWH] shall renew their strength as eagles grow new plumes; they shall run and not grow weary, they shall march and not grow faint. [41:8]Seed of Abraham My friend…[41:10]Fear not for I am with you, be not frightened for I am your God.

    —Isaiah 40:31, 41:8, 10[5]

    Beginning with chapter forty, the book of Isaiah's tone shifts from oracles of doom to prophesies of hope and consolation. The reference to eagles' plumes may hearken back to a belief "that when eagles regain their youth they molt," as is suggested in Psalm 103:5.[6] *But the eagle also evokes God's description of the Exodus from Egypt: "I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you to Me" (Exod. 19:4). The prophecy addresses the disconsolate exiles in Babylonia, urging them to retain hope for the reappearance of God's saving hand and assuring them that God would be with them through their trials,*

as God had been with Abraham through his. A densely layered text of hope, this passage appears in the Haftarah for Lekh Lekha, *which recounts God's call to Abraham to leave behind the familiar and set off on a journey of promise. Hope is the first step in any journey.*

4. Thus said YHWH: "A cry is heard in Ramah [or on a height]—wailing, bitter weeping—Rachel weeping for her children. She refuses to be comforted for her children who are gone." Thus said YHWH: "Restrain your voice from weeping, your eyes from shedding tears; for there is a reward for your labor"—declares YHWH. "They shall return from the enemy's land. And there is hope for your future"—declares YHWH: "Your children shall return to their country."

   —Jeremiah 31:15-17

   Jeremiah, another prophet who lived in the period of the destruction of the First Temple in 586 BCE, also offers hope and a promise of return to the exiles. As Jacob refused to be comforted when he thought his beloved son Joseph had been killed, here the spirit of Joseph's mother, Rachel, likewise inconsolably wails for her descendants who have disappeared from their homeland. For the Haftarah of the second day of Rosh Hashanah, the Talmud prescribes a reading from Jeremiah (31:2-20) that includes this passage, thus pairing it with the story of the Binding of Isaac, the Torah reading for that day. Though there may be other reasons why the Talmud chose this passage for this particular day's prophetic reading, the restoration to their parents of children marked for exile or death constitutes a theme that links the Binding of Isaac and the Haftarah from Jeremiah. In both case, a parent's hope for the safe return of a child (or children) proves triumphant.

5. And [God] said to me, "O mortal, these bones are the whole House of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, our hope is gone [*avdah tikvateinu*]; we are doomed." Prophesy, therefore, and say to them: "Thus said YHWH God: I am going to open your graves and lift you out of the graves, O My people, and bring you to the land of Israel."

   —Ezekiel 37:11-12

   Ezekiel prophesied in exile in Babylonia, having lived through Nebuchadnezzar II's destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem in 586 BCE. Here he offers hope to the beleaguered exiles. Although some traditional sources cite this text as evidence of the resurrection of the dead, others, including Maimonides and most contemporary scholars, understand it as metaphorical, referring to the restoration of the exiles to their homeland. More than twenty-five hundred years after Ezekiel, the poet Naftali Herz Imber would write "Ha-Tikvah," *a poem affirming that the people of Israel had "not yet lost our hope,"* od lo avdah tikvatenu. *A modified version of Imber's poem now serves as Israel's national anthem.*

6. … [4]I am exhausted from my calling out. My throat is hoarse. My eyes fail from hoping for my God. … [7]Let not those who hope for You be disgraced through me … [21]Reproach breaks my heart, I am in despair, I hope for consolation, but there is none . . . [22]They gave for my nourishment wormwood … [30]But I am lowly and in pain; Your help, O God, keeps me safe. … [33]The lowly have seen and rejoiced, those who seek God, let their hearts be strong. [34]For YHWH listens to the needy … [36]For God will rescue Zion and rebuild the towns of Judea…

—Psalms 69[7]

7. You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in your word. Depart from me, you evil doers; for I will keep the commandments of my God. Uphold me according to your word, that I may live; and do not let me be ashamed of my hope.

—Psalms 119:114-116[8]

8. Since the beginning of all participation in good things is hope … the sacred historian [who composed the book of Genesis] has named the first lover of hope, Enos [Hebrew *Enosh*, which means *man, mankind*], giving him the name of the whole race as an especial favor. For … [they] called man Enos as if he were the only real man, who lived in expectation of good things, and who is established in good hopes; from which it is evident that they do not look upon the man devoid of hope as a man at all, but rather as an animal resembling a man, inasmuch as he is deprived of that most peculiar possession of the human soul, namely hope.

—Philo of Alexandria, born Yedidiah Ha-Cohen (c. 20 BCE–50 CE, Alexandria, Egypt; philosopher)[9]*

9. Now that hope which depends not on …[one's own] own power, but on other's ill success, is a very ticklish thing for there is no certainty among …[other people] either in their bad or good fortunes.

—Flavius Josephus, born Yosef ben Matityahu (37-100 CE, Israel/Rome; historian)[10]

10. Rabbi Yochanan said … As long as a person lives there is hope for him. Once he dies, his hope is lost.

—Jerusalem Talmud, Berakhot 9:1, 63b), fifth century

11. Everything comes through hoping … The sanctification of the Divine Name comes through hoping. The merits of the ancestors accrue to us through hoping. The yearning for the world to come comes through hoping … Divine favor comes through hoping. As it says, "God, grant us favor. We have hoped to You" (Ps. 33:22). Forgiveness from God comes from hoping. For it is written, "For with You is forgiveness" (Ps. 130:4). And what is written in the next verse? "I hoped for YHWH, my being hoped, and for [God's] word I hoped" (Ps. 130:5).

—Genesis Rabbah, 98:14, fifth-century midrash

12. *This midrash plays with the fact that the root ש ב ר can have multiple meanings, including "provisions," as in food (shever); destruction or calamity (shever); or hope (saivere).*
"And Jacob saw that there was provision [i.e., food, *shever*] in Egypt" (Gen. 42:1), as Scripture says, "Happy is one who has the God of Jacob for one's God, whose hope [*sivro*] is in YHWH, [Jacob's] God (Psalms 146:5). … There was calamity [*shever*, another way of reading what Jacob saw in Gen. 42:1]," this refers to the famine [but at the same time] to the hope (*saivere*) that there were provisions in Egypt. "There was calamity [*shever*]," this refers to Joseph's having been brought down to Egypt [but at the same time] there was hope, which alludes to the fact that Joseph had become viceroy of Egypt. "There was calamity [*shever*]," this refers to God's statement to Abraham (Gen. 15:13) that his descendants would be enslaved and oppressed [but at the same time] refers to hope (*saivere*) in that God also told Abraham that "in the end they shall go forth with great wealth" (Gen. 15:14).
——Genesis Rabbah, 91:1, fifth- century midrash[11]*

13. If one sees an ass in a dream, he may hope for salvation, as Scripture says, "Your king is coming to you. He is victorious, triumphant, yet humble, riding on an ass…" (Zechariah 9:9).
— Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 56b, sixth century[12]*

14. When the rabbis would take leave of each other from the study hall of Rabbi Chanina, they would say one to the other, "May you see your world [may you benefit from all of the good in the world], in your lifetime, and may your end be to life in the World-to-Come, and may your hope [be sustained] for many generations."
—Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 17a, sixth century[13]*

15. Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Eliezer both said, "Even if a sharp sword is resting upon a person's neck, one should not prevent oneself from praying for mercy, as Scripture says, 'Though He slay me, I will hope in Him'" (Job 13:15).
— Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 10a, sixth century[14]*

16. Ulla Bira'ah said in the name of Rabbi Eleazar: "In the days to come the Holy Blessed One will hold a chorus for the righteous and . . . will sit in their midst in the Garden of Eden, and every one of them will point with [a] finger towards [God], as it is said, "And it shall be said in that day: 'Behold, this is our God; we hoped . . . that God would save us; this is YHVH to Whom we have hoped, let us exult and be glad in [God's] salvation'" (Is. 25:9).
—Babylonian Talmud, Ta'anit 31a, sixth century

17. May our future not end in failure nor our hopes languish in despair.

—Amram Gaon (810-875, Babylonia; liturgist, leader of Babylonian Jewish community)[15]

18. Unless [people] had the confidence that there exists in the world such a thing as true report, no [one] would build any hopes on any report [one] might be told about success in any branch of commerce, or of progress in any art … since it is gain which [a person] requires and for which [one] exerts [one's] strength. Nor would [one] fear what [one] should guard against, be it the dangerous state of a road, or a proclamation prohibiting a certain action. But if a [person] has neither hopes nor fears, all [that person's] affairs will come to grief.

—Sa'adia Gaon (882-942, Babylonia; rabbi, philosopher, leader of Babylonian Jewish community)[16]*

19. "*I urgently hoped for YHWH, God bent down toward me and heard my voice*" (Ps. 40:2). These words are to be considered in light of the verse, "Behold, this is our God; we hoped . . . that God would save us; this is YHWH to Whom we have hoped, let us exult and be glad in God's salvation" (Is. 25:9). It is not in the power of Israel to do anything but to hope that God will redeem them as a reward for saying, "*I urgently hoped for YHWH*," as it is written, "YHWH is good to those who hope in God" (Lam. 3:25) … But perhaps you say, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" (Jer. 8:20). Then "Hope to YHWH! Let your heart be firm and bold, and hope to YHWH" (Ps. 27:14). Note: "hope to YHWH" and again "hope to YHWH." Keep on hoping and hoping. So, though you are still not saved, "Let your heart be firm and bold" (Ps. 27:14); hope and hope again … *God lifted me out of the miry pit, the slimy clay, and set my feet on a rock …* (Ps. 40:3). And why did God do all this for me? Because of my hope, because of my hoping [see the source above based on the previous verse in Psalms, which refers to hope]. God does not desire burnt offerings, whole offerings, or sacrifices, but only hope.

—Midrash on Psalms, compiled between the tenth and thirteenth centuries[17]*

20. This is what scripture means when it says, "For we are sojourners with You, mere transients like our [ancestors]; our days on earth are like a shadow, and there is no hope" (I Chron. 29:15). "For we are strangers with You" means to say that the dwelling of a person in this world is like that of a stranger who wanders from inn to inn, today here and tomorrow there, so too with a mortal, here today, tomorrow in the grave. "Our days on the earth are like a shadow," as scripture says, "A human is like a breath; one's days are like a passing shadow" (Ps. 144:4). And scripture also says, "Our days on earth are a shadow" (Job 8:9). And what does the verse from Chronicles mean when it says, "and there is no hope"? Doesn't scripture say, "Hope to YHWH. Strengthen your heart and hope to YHWH" (Ps. 27:14)? Hope and hope again in everything. So what does this verse in Chronicles mean when it says, "there is no hope"? It means that David [who spoke these words in Chronicles] said this before God: "It's possible for a person to hope for all these qualities: to be a hero, to be rich, to be wise, or to be a king. A person

may hope for all these qualities, but that one will live forever—it is impossible to hope. Thus the verse says, "there is no hope."

—David ben Amram of Aden, Midrash HaGadol (thirteenth century)[18]*

21. With permission, give ear to the broken blast of the Shofar and pardon and forgive, Judge of all the earth … revoke the exile put in place. . . . Hear my prayer, YHWH, and listen to my plea. Take hold of shield and buckler and arise to my aid … Please answer me, for Your kindness is good, and turn to my words. Let my prayer come before you on the day I call … Because you are God, my redeemer/savior, my strength, my song. And you are my hope, my expectation, my yearning (*tikvahti, v'tochalati, u's'varati)*. …

—David ben Amram of Aden, Midrash HaGadol (thirteenth century)*[19]

22. The Jews of Shushan beamed with Joy when they beheld Mordecai robed in royal blue. You, God, have always been our deliverance, our hope in every generation. Those who place their hope in You will never be ashamed.

—*Shoshanat Ya'akov*, "The Rose of Jacob," a poem of uncertain origin and date, traditionally recited after reading the *Megillah* on Purim.[20]*

23. "YHWH will reign forever and ever" (Ex.15:18). The sages said: "Moses said to Israel, 'You saw the miracles and mighty deeds that God did for you. God will do more and more for you in the future in this world and in the world to come.'" In this world there are wars, troubles, the evil inclination, and Satan, and the angel of death are permitted to rule. But in the world to come there are no troubles, no sighs, no oppression, no evil inclination, no Satan, and no angel of death. As it is written, "[God] will destroy death forever. YHWH God will wipe the tears away from all faces and will put an end to the reproach of God's people over all the earth" (Is. 25:8). And it is written, "Behold, this is our God; we hoped . . . that God would save us; this is YHWH to Whom we have hoped, let us exult and be glad in God's salvation" (Is. 25:9).

—Midrash Vayoshah, late-eleventh century[21]

24. *Let him sit alone and be silent when God has set it upon him. Let him put his mouth into the dust—perhaps there is still hope* (Lam. 3:28-29). *Let him sit alone and be silent* … When you see a person whom suffering has come upon don't kick him because it may be revealed that he is suffering from the yoke of oppression. *God has set it upon him*. For indeed God has decreed it until the time of redemption; therefore, let Israel put its *mouth into the dust* and fall in supplication before its Creator every day. *Perhaps there is still hope*. Maybe God will remember on Israel's behalf the merit of Abraham their ancestor.

—Midrash Lekach Tov, compiled by Tuvia ben Rabbi Eliezer (northern Greece, eleventh century)[22]

25. [A commentary on a verse from the Song of Songs: *I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had turned away, and was gone. My soul failed when he spoke; I sought him, but I could not find him; I called, but he gave me no answer* (5:6).] Many times the people of Israel opened the door of repentance and they thought they would be redeemed. *But my beloved had turned away …* And the time of redemption receded from

them. … This is how they cry out in exile and they are not answered. *My soul failed when he spoke* … These are the words the Prophets spoke in the name of our God: We hope and we expect. And the people of Israel sacrifice themselves on account of these words, as it says, "And for [God's] word I hoped" (Ps. 130:5). And scripture says, "Though my life is always in danger, I do not neglect Your teaching (Ps. 119:109). For behold, Israel hopes in every generation for God's salvation, and they are slaughtered to sanctify God. And still we are expectant, we wait, we hope, "Maybe there is hope" (Lam. 3:29). As scripture says, "Hope, O Israel, for YHWH is steadfast with kindness, and great redemption is with God" (Ps. 130:7). *I sought him, but I could not find him* … This is like what the prophet Habbakuk said, "For there is yet a prophecy for a set term, a truthful witness for a time that will come. Even if it tarries, wait for it still; for it surely will come, without delay" (2:3). … *I called, but he gave me no answer* … As scripture says, "I am exhausted from calling out. My throat is hoarse. My eyes fail from hoping for God (Ps. 69:4). … And there are many references in scripture that speak to the long exile we are in.

— Midrash Lekach Tov, compiled by Tuvia ben Rabbi Eliezer (northern Greece, eleventh century)[23]*

26. Timidity is incompatible with hope, as is bashfulness with wisdom. … Good counsel cannot be expected from the fickle, nor concord from the schismatic, nor tranquility from hope deferred.

—Solomon Ibn Gabirol (c. 1020-1057, Spain; poet, philosopher)[24]

27. My God, if my punishment is too great to bear (Gen. 4:13*), "what will You do for the sake of Your great name?" (Josh. 7:9). And if I do not hope for Your mercy, who beside You will have pity on me? Therefore even if you slay me, I will hope to You (Job 13:15*). And if you "seek my iniquity" (Job 10:6), I will flee from You toward You and will shelter from the heat of Your anger in Your shadow. And I will grasp the hem of Your mercy until You have mercy on me and "I will not let You go unless You bless me" (Gen. 32:27). "Consider that You fashioned me like clay" (Job 10:9), and with these hardships you tested me. Therefore do not measure me by my actions nor feed me on the fruit of my deeds.

—Solomon Ibn Gabirol (c. 1020-1057, Spain; poet, philosopher), "*Keter Malkhut*," *The Crown of Kingship*[25]*

28. [A dialogue between God and Israel:]

God: Though bereaved and in mourning, why sit thus in tears? Shall thy spirit surrender its hopes to its fears? Though the end has been long and no light yet appears,
Hope on, hapless one, a while longer. …
Israel: How long, O my God, shall I wait Thee in vain? How long shall Thy people in exile remain? Shall the sheep ever shorn never utter their pain
But dumbly through all go on waiting? …
God: Hope on for a shelter and a refuge. With healing shall yet thy entreaties be graced … And the flowers cast off shall re-bloom in the waste,
Hope on but a little space longer.

—Solomon Ibn Gabirol (c. 1020-1057, Spain; poet, philosopher), "God and Israel."[26]

29. Can I say aught but that this is the fruit of a wisdom which I am unable to grasp, and that I must submit to [God] who is called: "The Rock whose doing is perfect" (Deut. 32:4). Whoever reflects on this will do as did Nachum of Gamzu[a], of whom it is related that no matter what happened to him, he always said: "This, too, is for the best." He will, then, always live happily, and all tribulations will fall lightly upon him. He will even welcome them if he is conscious of having transgressed, and will be cleansed through them as one who has paid his debt, and is glad of having eased his mind. He looks joyfully forward to the reward and retribution which await him; nay, he enjoys affording mankind a lesson of patience and submission to God, not less than gaining a good reputation. Thus it is with [his own troubles, and also with] those of mankind at large. If his mind is disturbed by the length of the exile and the diaspora and degradation of his people, he finds comfort first in "acknowledging the justice of the decree," as said before; then in being cleansed from his sins; then in the reward and recompense awaiting him in the world to come, and the attachment to the Divine Influence in this world. If an evil thought make him despair of it, saying: 'Can these bones live?' (Ezekiel 37:3)—our traces being thoroughly destroyed and our history decayed, as it is written: they say: "our bones are dried" ["our hope is lost"] Ezekiel 37:11)—let him think of the manner of the delivery from Egypt and all that is put down in the paragraph: "For how many favors do we owe gratitude to God?"[b] He will, then, find no difficulty in picturing how we may recover our greatness, though only one of us may have remained.

—Judah Halevi (1075-1141, Spain, died in Israel; poet, physician, philosopher), *The Kuzari: In Defense of the Despised Faith*[27]*

30. May hope remain young! May your heart remain strong in hope! Why do you calculate the end of misery, almost listlessly? Stand up and speak, and lyrics compose anew!

—Judah Halevi (1075-1141, Spain, died in Israel; poet, physician, philosopher)[28]*

31. Without hope those who wait will expire.

—Moshe ibn Ezra (c. 1060-c. 1139, Spain; philosopher, poet)[29]

32. "On the Management of Health": Acts of thinking leading to depression about something that is expected to come to pass in the future ought … also to be abandoned. This is because everything that a man expects is within the realm of possibility: it may take place or it may not take place. Hence, just as he becomes distressed and grieves lest what he expects occur, so too he ought to delight his soul with anticipation and hope that perhaps the opposite of what he expects will take place. After all, the expected matter and its opposite are both possible.

—Maimonides (1135-1204, Spain, Egypt, Israel; philosopher, legal scholar, physician)[30]

33. *To You silence [dumiya] is praise …* (Ps. 65:2). The plain meaning of scripture is [not silence, as others have said], but *To You hope [tochelet] is praise* for all those who hope to You obtain their wish…

—Nachmanides (1194-1270, Spain and Israel; Bible commentator, kabbalist, philosopher).[31]*

34. There will be times when Israel despairs of redemption but they need to remember that they will be remembered after their despair. That's what Isaiah meant when he said, "Look back to the rock that you were hewn from, to the quarry you were dug from. Look back to Abraham your father and to Sarah who brought you forth. For he was only one, when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many. Truly YHWH has comforted Zion … [God] has made her wilderness like Eden … The coastlands will hope in Me. They shall wait in hope for My arm" (Is. 51: 1-3, 5). Isaiah refers to Zion being comforted after mentioning Abraham and Sarah because after their despair they were remembered as was Zion. None of the other nations believed that they would have a son, just like none of the nations would have believed that Israel had any hope of redemption [from Babylonia].

—Bachya ben Asher (1255-1340, Spain), *The Jar of Flour*[32]

35. … A person should hope that God in his compassion and mercy will make his way straight, will deliver him from harm, and will choose what is good and suitable for him by putting in his heart to choose the good and reject the evil. … This kind of hope is fulfilled through prayer. … The Psalmist alludes to this when he says, "Hope to the Lord! Let your heart be firm and bold, and hope to the Lord" (Ps. 27:14). This shows that hope is the cause of strength, and that strength is a cause for more hope. … The two mutually reacting upon each other.

—Joseph Albo (1380-1444, Spain; rabbi, philosopher)[33]

36. "*A gibberish nation [goy kav kav] and defeat whose land is cut through with rivers*" (Is. 18:2). The expression "gibberish nation" [*goy kav kav*] is really an expression of Israel's hope [*tikvah*] and great faith in its God. Even though it is defeated, plundered and subservient. The rivers that cut the land represent the kingdoms that rule the land of Israel, sometimes Christian and sometimes Muslim. But with all this Israel would still constantly hope for God's redemption. And for this reason they are called, "prisoners of hope" (Zech. 9:12).

—Isaac ben Judah Abarbanel (1437-1508, Portugal, Spain, Italy; statesman, bible commentator, philosopher), c. 1511[34]*

37. …It behooves us to hold on to the [norm] of trust and hope … and not let our heart despair over the length of the exile [a]… Let us hope in God, for we shall yet praise God for the salvation of God's countenance in the future redemption. … For as in the days of the exodus from Egypt [God] will show [us] marvelous things …[b] Although their [i.e., the Jewish people's] degradation is great, their hope is not lost and their prospects are not frustrated. Such hope will be strengthened by passing before our memory all the goodness of the promises of the prophets …[c] From the depths of the earth God will return and raise them up. As the sages said [in a midrash on the Exodus] … Israel will always ascend from the lowest degradation …[d] Accordingly, the statement of the Psalmist rises to our mouth: *Recall the word to Your servant for which you made me hope* (Ps. 119:49). This means: remind us [of] the promise by means of which You have set our soul in the hope and trust that it [i.e., the promise] will come to pass whatever

happens. …[God] has set our hope in life *and our hope is* not *lost* … [Ezek. 37:11. Where the prophet Ezekiel says *our hope is lost,* Moscato says it is *not* lost. His words anticipate those of Israel's national anthem, *od lo avda tikvahtenu,* Our hope is not yet lost.] … For proud thoughts occurred to my mind and with seductive persuasion they … make me fall into deep pits of despair overstating our degradation throughout the long duration of the exile. Yet *from Your teaching I have not turned* (Ps. 119:102) although my thought lays a snare for my life to trouble me …[e]

—Judah Moscato (c 1530-c.1593, Italy; Chief Rabbi of Mantua, philosopher, kabbalist), excerpts from a sermon for the seventh day of Passover, published in 1588[35]*

38. The coming of the Messiah is the hope of Israel and their expectation (*tikvat Yisrael v'tochlatam*) of Israel… Children-of-the-Living-God, seed of Abraham, descendants of Isaac, offspring of Jacob, this expectation and hope should not be small in your eyes for it is a source of eternal merit and righteousness. It demonstrates that the true seed will not prove false in their faith—the people [of Israel] who sit in darkness who are bearing the yoke of exile and degradation by the nations of the world from one era to the next. This certainly proves their faithfulness. And according to the midrash, *"So love the Lord, all you faithful; the Lord guards the believers…"*(Psalms 31:24) refers to those who say, "Amen" with faith, who say "[God] gives life to the dead" [thrice daily in the Amidah] though they have seen it only once, they believe I give life to the dead. It refers to those who call Me "redeemer of Israel" [said just before the Amidah] though up to now they only experienced redemption once, and they were enslaved again, and they believe that in the future I [God] will redeem them." And You must say that "*the Lord guards the believers*." This is meant to indicate that faith is a very great thing, because one believes in redemption though one has not yet seen it. And it shows that one cleaves to God completely, that all one's hope and expectation are in God. Therefore God will guard and preserve them…. Therefore when Israel believes in God with complete trust, then the exiles will be brought to God. How pleasant is our hope in God and how wonderful is the future of our hope and expectation because if God credited Abraham with eternal merit, how much more so the people of Israel who continually follow God's way and whose eyes are forever looking to God in hope.

—Yehudah Loeb ben Bezalel, The Maharal of Prague (c. 1520-1609 philosopher, Talmudist, kabbalist), 1599[36]*

39. *From a sermon for Shabbat Nachamu, the first of seven Sabbaths of consolation leading up to Rosh Hashanah:* "Go back to the fortress, you prisoners of hope: even today I will restore to you a double promise" (Zech. 9:12). The verse connects "even today" with "you prisoners of hope" and speaks to the heart of those enduring the current exile which has gone on for so long. During the earlier exiles it wasn't so surprising that Israel would be strengthened and sustained by their hope (*tikvatam*) and expectation (*tochalatam*). Those exiles were never more than several hundred years and never reached a thousand years. But this bitter exile has now lasted more than a thousand years and it is a great thing that they [the Jewish People] are still strengthened by the integrity of hope in all its force. They have not abandoned this hope. Nor has despair taken root in their hearts despite the fact that our opponents use the length of this exile to belittle us, as is well-known. Therefore in the verse from Zechariah, as if

speaking to a future generation that would merit redemption and a pardon after so many years, God said, "'Return to the fortress,' you of brave heart and strong faith, you who are 'prisoners of Hope even today.' For today after so many long years you are still prisoners, bound by chords of love through the hope that you do not abandon. To the contrary, in strong faith you hope and are expectant, relying on me, turning to nothing else." Through this alone isn't your merit sufficiently great? As the Sages said, "If Israel had no merit other than hope, it would be sufficient for them to be redeemed as a reward for their hope" (Yalkut Shimoni on Psalms 736). Therefore, behold, your reward is with you, your comfort doubled. And I will grant you compensation through those who will tell of your success and overflowing good fortune—"double," twice over. And you will hear this and your heart will rejoice.

—Azarya Peugot (Figo) (1579-1647, Venice; rabbi and teacher), undated[37]

40. Hope is nothing else but an inconstant pleasure, arising from the image of something future or past, whereof we do not yet know the issue. Fear, on the other hand, is an inconstant pain also arising from the image of something concerning which we are in doubt. If the element of doubt be removed from these emotions, hope becomes Confidence and fear becomes Despair.

—Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677, Netherlands; philosopher), 1664-1665[38]

41. *From the tale of an imprisoned physician who describes a potion of seven herbs that help him withstand suffering and torture*: "The first herb is the trust I have in the Holy One … who can protect me from all troubles and anxieties … The second herb is hope and the good advice I give myself: that I take everything for good and accept my pains with love. That is the advice that I give myself so that I am not lost in despair."

—Glückel of Hameln (1646-1724, Germany; business woman and diarist), 1690-1719[39]

42. "For Your salvation I hope" (Gen. 49:18): The beginning of creation is in hope because all the lower world hopes for an overflow from the upper world by means of prayer or song. It is written, "In the beginning God created …" (Gen. 1:1). There is no beginning but hope. There is no *tzimtzum* [the Divine contraction that preceded creation, resulting in a complete void] done but for the hope that the *kav Ain Sof* [the beam of light, literally the "line," that emanates from the *Ain Sof*, through which creation began] … will enter it. This *kav* [or line]—is an expression of hope, *kivou'i*, and desire.

—Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, the *Ramchal* (1707-1746, Italy, Amsterdam, Israel; kabbalist, ethicist)[40]

43. Fear and hope are no criteria for truth… Fear and hope act upon men's *appetitive urge*, rational arguments on their *cognitive faculty.* You lay hold of the wrong means when you seek to induce men, through fear and hope, to accept or reject certain propositions. Indeed, even if this is not altogether your object, you still impede your better intentions if you do not try to keep fear and hope out view as far as possible.

—Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786, Germany; philosopher of the Jewish enlightenment), 1783[41]

44. King Solomon once sought a remedy for despair. He gathered all his wise men and told them of his problem. The wise men thought and thought and finally gave him this advice: The King should make a ring and inscribe these words on it, "This too shall pass." They gave him this advice and made the ring for him. The King wore the ring and whenever he was sad or felt despair he would look at the ring and his mood would immediately improve.

—A folktale, the earliest written record of which may date from the eighteenth century[42]*

45. This is the nature of turning [of *t'shuvah*, repentance]: When a man knows he has nothing to hope for and feels like a shard of clay because he has just upset the order of life, and how can that which was upset be righted again? Nevertheless, though he has no hope, he prepares to serve God from that time on and does so. That is true turning, and nothing can resist it.

—Simcha Bunim of Peshisca (1767-1827, Poland; Hasidic scholar and leader), undated[43]

46. Losing hope is like losing your freedom, like losing your self.
Never despair! It is forbidden to give up hope.

—Nachman of Breslov, (1772-1810, Ukraine; Hasidic scholar and leader), c. 1808[44]

47. The proscribed, outlawed, universally persecuted Jew felt a sublime, noble pride in being singled out to perpetuate and to suffer for a religion which reflects eternity, by which the nations of the earth were gradually educated to a knowledge of God and morality, and from which is to spring the salvation and redemption of the world. … Such a people, which disdains its Present, but has the eye steadily fixed on its Future, which lives, as it were, on hope, is on that very account eternal like Hope.

—Heinrich Graetz, (1817-1891, Poland and Germany; historian), 1873[45]

48. A dream! A dream! For at a touch 'tis gone.
O mocking spirit! Thy mere fools are we,
Unto the depths from heights celestial thrown.

From these blind gropings toward reality,
This thirst for truth, this most pathetic need
Of something to uplift, to justify,

To help and comfort while we faint and bleed,
May we not draw, wrung from the last despair,
Some argument of hope, some blessed creed,

That we can trust the faith which whispers prayer,
The vanishings, the ecstasy, the gleam,
The nameless aspiration, and the dream?

—Emma Lazarus (1849-1887, United States; poet, political activist), 1874[46]

49. Helena and I stood pressed to each other, enraptured by the sight of the harbour and the Statue of Liberty suddenly emerging from the mist. Ah, there she was, the symbol of hope, of freedom, of opportunity! She held her torch to light the way to the free country, the asylum for the oppressed of all lands. We, too, Helena and I, would find a place in the generous heart of America. Our spirits were high, our eyes filled with tears.

—Emma Goldman (1869-1940, Russia, United States, Canada; anarchist, political activist), 1885[47]

50. … Man's hope is transformed into faith when he no longer thinks of himself alone, that is, of his salvation here and now, or of his eternal salvation … Hope is transformed into faith when man associates the future with the emergence of a community whose concerns reach beyond its everyday concrete reality. Such a community will not be composed merely of man's immediate circle of friends or family nor will it include only those who share his own cherished beliefs; indeed it will even cut across the borders of his own country because it will represent the community of mankind. As faith in mankind, Israel's faith is hope.

—Hermann Cohen (1842-1918, Germany; philosopher), c. 1892[48]

51. Make fun, but I also believe in friendship
And I believe that I shall yet find a heart,
A heart that comprises my hopes and its own hopes
And which will feel joy and understand pain.
I shall believe in the future too,
Even if that day grows ever yet distant,
For one day it surely shall arrive and they shall bring peace
To one another, and blessing—one nation to another.

—Saul Tchernichovsky, (1875-1943, Ukraine and Israel; poet), 1892[49]

52. A person should not say, "How can the Messiah come in our times since our deeds do not merit it?" This is not true. Because it is known that the Holy One wants to redeem us and is not overly concerned about our deeds. As the midrash teaches, "God desires to deliver you and disregards your evil deeds." Nor should a person despair of redemption based on the idea that the time for redemption has not arrived. This is not true either. Because the Talmud teaches, "I am the Lord. I will hasten it if you deserve it and if you don't it will come in its due time." Nor should a person say, "How can our generation merit redemption when earlier generations did not?" This presents no difficulty. In truth we are lesser than our ancestors, but the Holy One joins the merit of one generation to that of preceding generations so we are dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants and we can see further. Therefore every Jew should look to/hope for redemption every day because God's redemption can come in the blink of an eye. In our daily prayers we say, "For we hope for God's redemption all day long." Commentators say that this does not just refer to redemption on a grand scale. One should also look to/hope for God's relief from day to day troubles … and if one does that one will be counted among those who continually hope for God's redemption and will therefore merit true redemption at once.

—Israel Meir Kagan, the *Chofetz Chaim* (1839-1933, Belarus, rabbi, ethicist,

scholar of Jewish law), 1891.[50]*

53. *Israel to the World in Greeting*
Unto the world, with Time's Peace-offering,
What treasure gifts does Ancient Israel bring?
…
The boundless Trust, uplifting captive sorrow,
From Israel's stricken heart, enkindled hope;
That evermore the dark, uncertain morrow,
Flushed with the glory of the Future's scope.
—Cora Wilburn (1824-1906, Alsace and United States; poet), 1893[51]*

54. *On the Slaughter* [written in response to the 1903 Kishinev pogrom]
Heavens, demand mercy for me!
If there is a God in you and if the God has a path in you—
And I have not found it—
[Then] You pray for me.
I—my heart is dead and there is no longer prayer on my lips,
And the hand has already weakened and there is no longer hope—
How long? Until when? How long?
—Chaim Nachman Bialik (1873-1934, Russia, Germany, Palestine; poet), 1903[52]

55. Israel has never lived in the present. The present, with its evil and its wickedness, has always filled us with anguish, indignation, and bitterness. But just as constantly have we been inspired with brilliant hopes for the future, and an ineradicable faith in the coming triumph of the good and the right; and for these hopes and that faith we have always found support in the history of our past, whereon our imagination has brooded, weaving all manner of fair dreams, so as to make the past a kind of mirror of the future. Our very Hebrew language, the garment of the Jewish sprit, has no present tense, but only a past and future. The question has been much debated, whether the fundamental characteristic of the Jewish spirit is optimism or pessimism; and extreme views have been propounded on both sides. But all such discussion is futile. The Jew is both optimist and pessimist; but his pessimism has reference to the present, his optimism to the future.
—Ahad Ha-Am (1856-1927, Ukraine, England, Palestine; essayist, founder of cultural Zionism), 1904[53]

56. The … state of mind in which expectation is colored by hope and faith, is an effective force with which we have to reckon, strictly speaking, in *all* our attempts at treatment and cure.
—Sigmund Freud (1856-1939, Austria and England; physician, founder of psychoanalysis), 1905[54]

57. A famous philosopher has formulated the mystery of human existence in the words: *Cogito, ergo sum*, "I think, therefore I am." The secret of national existence may, in a similar manner, be expressed in the formula: "I hope, therefore I am." A nation, which is not subject to physical death, lives as long as it hopes, as long as it has something to live for. The Judean exiles in Babylonia who complained to Ezekiel: "Our bones are dried

up, our hope is lost," were soon lost themselves and disappeared. But those who, taught by the scribes and cheered by the prophets, continued to hope, survived.

—Israel Friedlander (1876-1920, Poland and United States; rabbi, educator, bible scholar), 1919[55]

58. *Franz Kafka*: We are nihilistic thoughts, suicidal thoughts the come into God's head … our world is only a bad mood of God, a bad day of his.
Max Brod: Then there is hope outside this manifestation of the world that we know?
Franz Kafka: Oh, plenty of hope, an infinite amount of hope—but not for us.

—Franz Kafka (1883-1924, Prague, author), c. 1920[56]

59. Eternity was: instead of the naturally frantic change of the possibilities in its eternal return, the peaceful rhythm of reality (the year and so on)—and instead of the moral unsinkability as regards all possibilities, the moving rhythm of reality. In both cases, however, rhythm. The promise [God's promise of an ultimate peaceful balance between seemingly irreconcilable strivings, e.g., happiness versus loving-kindness] ruptures the rhythm. It sets up a goal, it allows hope, it gives direction. Direction toward what? Hope for what? To begin quite simply: for the *future*.

—Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929, Germany; philosopher, theologian, author), 1922[57]

60. Where the world ceases to be the scene of our personal hopes and wishes, where we face it as free beings, admiring, questioning, and observing, there we enter the realm of art and science. We do science when we reconstruct in the language of logic what we have seen and experienced; we do art when we communicate through forms whose connections are not accessible to the conscious mind yet we intuitively recognize them as something meaningful.

—Albert Einstein (1879-1955, Germany and United States; physicist), 1921[58]

61. I am a Jew because in every age when the cry of despair is heard, the Jew hopes.

—Edmund Fleg, (1874-1963, France; novelist, playwright, essayist), 1929[59]

62. We shall carry on because it is our destiny. Our destiny is written in the annals of history and sanctified by a martyrdom of ages; this is our hope, this is our faith and this gives us courage. … A man can put up with a good deal of suffering if he sees a hope in front of him. That is not applicable to the …. millions of young [Jewish] men and women in … Central and Eastern Europe. … They are doomed, they are exasperated, they are in despair … [I have been charged with saying] that if Jews do not get Palestine the Jews may destroy the world. That is arguable, but since my early youth ... I have fought the destructive tendencies in Jewry, but it is almost impossible to avoid the destructive tendencies amongst the younger generation, unless some hope is given to them that one day, some day in some distant future, one in ten, one in five, one in 20, will find refuge somewhere where he can work, where he can live and were he can straighten himself up and look with open eyes at the world and at his fellow-men and women.

—Chaim Weizmann (1874-1952, Belarus, England, Israel; Zionist leader,

first president of Israel), 1936[60]

63. I hope always, I desire much, I expect little.
—Ze'ev Jabotinsky (1880-1940, Russia, Palestine; Revisionist Zionist leader, author, poet), 1937[61]*

64. To find life in the present worth living, …[one must have faith in a future. The ultimate tragedy is not suffering or even death, but hopelessness. This is the true meaning of damnation.
—Mordecai Kaplan (1881-1983, United States; rabbi, spiritual founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, theologian, author), 1981[62]

65. God is in the faith
By which we overcome
The fear of loneliness, of helplessness,
Of failure and of death.
God is in the hope
Which, like a shaft of light,
Cleaves the dark abysms
Of sin, of suffering and of despair.
—Mordecai Kaplan (1881-1983, United States; rabbi, spiritual founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, theologian, author), 1945*[63]

66. Religion must no longer betray the hopes of …[humanity] for the abolition of poverty, oppression and war on this earth by regarding these evils as mere "trials and tribulations" or "chastisements of love," for which we shall be compensated in another world. It must cease waiting for an act of miraculous intervention to remove these evils "in the end of days." It must encourage …[people] with faith and hope to apply human intelligence and good-will to the removal of these evils in the achievement of the social salvation of mankind.
—Mordecai Kaplan, (1881-1983, United States; rabbi, spiritual founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, theologian, author), 1937[64]

67. Jews walk around broken in pieces, bent to the ground, and filled with the deepest despair and depression … Although a person needs to hope at every moment to be saved by God, he must not depend entirely upon his hope that the outcome will be immediate salvation. For if he puts all his trust in this hope and, God forbid, time passes and rescue still does not come, he suffers what is described in the verse (Proverbs 13:12) "Hope deferred sickens the heart…" This is especially so when people place all their faith in a prediction they were given or in some natural event, saying, "Ah! Now salvation must happen." When rescue does not materialize, the person's spirit falls even further and he becomes even more broken. Therefore, concomitant with belief in immediate redemption, we must also repeat the words of Eli the High Priest: "He is Elohim—God—and will do what's best in His eyes (I Samuel 3:18).
—Kalonymous Kalmish Shapira, (1889-1943, Poland; Chasidic rabbi in the Warsaw Ghetto whose writings were buried and discovered after the war), 1942[65]

68. Jewish memory, far from turning into a collection of stale reminiscences, was kept alive by the power of hope and imagination, transcending the limits of believing. What seemed unbelievable became a forgone conclusion. …We are what we are by what we come from. We achieve what we do by what we hope for. Our ultimate hope has no specific content. Our hope is God. We trust that He will not desert those who trust in Him.

—Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972, Poland and United States; theologian, social activist, author), 1943 and 1973[66]

69. When peace comes we dare not lose our moment out of fear and hope, the two archenemies of Jewish politics. … The Germans made meticulous use of both fear and hope. … Each person had his own special reasons for fear and hope. A few weeks later the inhabitants of the ghetto abandoned hope. The truth about the deportees' destination had leaked out, and every illusion about "resettlement" was destroyed. But this did not result in resistance either. Fear abruptly took the place of hope. … At the end of August [1942] a group of workers and intellectuals realized that armed resistance was the only moral and political way out. … Everyone knew that the coming war [i.e., ghetto uprising] could end only in military defeat and would lead to physical annihilation. Everyone knew—in the words of the Polish underground newspaper—"that the passive death of Jews had created no new values; it had been meaningless; but that death with weapons in hand can bring new values into the life of the Jewish people." A final attempt by the Nazi commandant to reawaken illusions of hope in the ghetto found no response. Fear and hope had left the ghetto.

—Hannah Arendt (1906-1975, Germany and United States; philosopher, political theorist, author), 1944[67]*

70. *From a talk given to his fellow concentration camp inmates in 1944 or 1945:*
Then I spoke about the future. I said that to the impartial the future must seem hopeless. I agreed that each of us could guess for himself how small were his chances of survival. I told them that although there was still no typhus epidemic in the camp, I estimated my own chances at about one in twenty. But I also told them that, in spite of this, I had no intention of losing hope and giving up. For no man knew what the future would bring, much less the next hour. Even if we could not expect any sensational military events in the next few days, who knew better than we, with our experience of camps, how great chances sometimes opened up, quite suddenly, at least for the individual. For instance, one might be attached unexpectedly to a special group with exceptionally good working conditions— for this was the kind of thing which constituted the "luck" of the prisoner. … I asked the poor creatures who listened to me attentively in the darkness of the hut to face up to the seriousness of our position. They must not lose hope but should keep their courage in the certainty that the hopelessness of our struggle did not detract from its dignity and its meaning. I said that someone looks down on each of us in difficult hours— a friend, a wife, somebody alive or dead, or a God— and he would not expect us to disappoint him. He would hope to find us suffering proudly— not miserably— knowing how to die.

—Viktor Frankl (1905-1997, Austria; psychiatrist, founder of logotherapy), 1944

or 1945[68]

71. *On a visit to a displaced persons camp in Babenhausen, Germany:*
I come to you with empty pockets. I have not British [entrance] certificates to give you. I can only tell you that you are not abandoned, you are not alone, you will not live endlessly in camps like this. All of you who want to come to Palestine will be brought there as soon as is humanly possible. I bring you not certificates—only hope. Let us sing our national anthem—*Hatikvah* (The Hope).
—David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973, Poland and Israel; first Prime Minister of Israel), 1945[69]

72. As far as historical reality is concerned, we are confronted here with a phenomenon that has almost no parallel in mankind's history: a people that has been disappearing constantly for the last two thousand years, exterminated in dozens of lands all over the globe, reduced to a half or third of its population by tyrants ancient and modern—and yet it still exists, falls, and rises, loses all its possessions and reequips itself for a new start, a second, a third chance—always fearing the end, never afraid to make a new beginning, to snatch triumph from the jaws of defeat whenever possible. There is no people more dying than Israel, yet none better equipped to resist disaster, to fight alone, always alone. ... [E]xaggerated optimism is no less dangerous than the pessimism of Israel's end. … Neither may we approach the Jewish problem from an optimistic or pessimistic angle. Optimism and pessimism are only expressions … of our fears, doubts, hopes and desires. Hopes and desires we must have; fears and doubts we cannot escape. Yet what we need most at present is a dynamic Jewish realism that will see our reality, the reality of the world, our problem, the problem of the world, in its entirety, without any dualism—hell-paradise or whatever.
—Simon Rawidowicz (1897-1957, Poland, England, United States; philosopher), 1948[70]

73. The hope for this hour depends upon the hopers themselves, upon ourselves. I mean by this: upon those among us who feel most deeply the sickness of present-day …[humanity] and who speak in …[its] name the word without which no healing takes place: I will live. … And yet this must be said again and again, it is just the depth of the crisis that empowers us to hope. … The power of turning that radically changes the situation never reveals itself outside of crisis. This power begins to function when one gripped by despair, instead of allowing himself to be submerged, calls forth his primal powers and accomplishes with them the turning of his very existence.
—Martin Buber (1878-1965, Austria and Israel; philosopher, theologian), 1952 and 1953[71]

74. *On her unsuccessful defense of Willie Magee, a black man who was executed in 1951 for raping a white woman in New Orleans*:
You can't go through something like that and not have hope. I was motivated by hope. I still am. Everything that goes down I take seriously. I'm pained by it, but I still have the

optimism that it can be changed. That's essentially another guideline of my life.

—Bella Abzug (1920-1978, New York; lawyer, feminist, politician), 1951[72]

75. … The Messianic idea is not only consolation and hope. Every attempt to realize it tears open the abysses which lead each of its manifestations *ad absurdum*. There is something grand about living in hope, but at the same time there is something profoundly unreal about it. … Thus in Judaism the Messianic idea has compelled *life lived in deferment*, in which nothing can be done definitively, nothing can be irrevocably accomplished.

—Gershom Scholem (1897-1982, Germany and Israel; scholar of Jewish mysticism, author), 1959[73]

76. The key intellectual problem of our time, then, is not science or technology but meaning; or to put it in Camus's affecting way, hope. Man's mind and man's society cannot provide either, for both rest on the reality of moral values. These need to be grounded in something transcending man himself. So somewhere at the core of his being, each man must make up his mind as to whether there is meaning and hope for life or not. . . . The distinctive mood, then, of the Jewish religion is, of all things, hope. It is obviously not a simple trust that God will literally not suffer us to stumble. Egypt was our house of bondage for four centuries before it was the place of Exodus. And before Auschwitz and Treblinka, there was Assyrian genocide, Roman savagery, Crusader zeal, and Cossack brutality. Jewish hope is not to be dissociated from Jewish suffering. It is born in Jewish pain; that is why Jews have known how, religiously, to sigh—the impossible equivalent in a tranquil English to what the Yiddish feels as *krechtz*.

—Eugene Borowitz (1924-2016, United States; rabbi, theologian), 1966[74]

77. Hope is paradoxical. It is neither passive waiting nor is it unrealistic forcing of circumstances that cannot occur. It is like the crouched tiger, which will jump only when the moment for jumping has come. Neither tired reformism nor pseudo-radical adventurism is an expression of hope. To hope means to be ready at every moment for that which is not yet born, and yet not become desperate if there is no birth in our lifetime. There is no sense in hoping for that which already exists or for that which cannot be. Those whose hope is weak settle down for comfort or for violence; those whose hope is strong see and cherish all signs of new life and are ready every moment to help the birth of that which is ready to be born. … To hope is a state of being. It is an inner readiness, that of intense but not-yet-spent activeness. … Faith, like hope, is not prediction of the future; it is the vision of the present in a state of pregnancy. … Hope is the mood that accompanies faith. Faith could not be sustained without the mood of hope. Hope can have no base except in faith.

—Erich Fromm (1900-1980, Germany, United States, Mexico, and Switzerland; psychoanalyst, humanistic philosopher), 1968[75]

78. Lift your eyes with hope
not through the rifles' sights

sing a song for love
and not for wars.
Don't say the day will come
bring on that day –
because it is not a dream –
and in all the city squares
cheer only for peace!

—Yaakov Rotblit (1949-, Israel; musician, songwriter), 1969[76]*

79. A Jew cannot afford the luxury of not being optimistic.

—Golda Meir (1898-1978, Ukraine, United States, Israel; Prime Minister of Israel), 1971[77]

80. If you ask yourself just one simple question, "How come Jews are still around after thousands of years, mostly exiled?' there is only one answer, and that answer is *hope*. … I think merely to survive, to exist as a Jew after Auschwitz, is to be committed to hope: to hope because you are commanded to hope, because to despair would be a sin. It is to be commanded to hope that a second Auschwitz will not happen, not for Jews, not for anyone. It will not happen because it must not happen. You might say there isn't much empirical evidence … But, I think, to give in to the demons of Auschwitz by despair is to do belatedly the work of Hitler.

—Emil L. Fackenheim, (1916-2003, Germany and Israel; rabbi, philosopher), 1970[78]

81. We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to end despair,
For you have already given us the power
To clear away slums and to give hope
If we would only use our power justly. …
Therefore we pray to You instead, O God,
For strength, determination, and willpower,
To do instead of just to pray,
To become instead of merely to wish;
That our world may be safe,
And that our lives be blessed.

—Jack Riemer (1928/29-, United States; rabbi, liturgist, poet), c. 1973*[79]

82. … Hope is the opposite of security. It is the opposite of naïve optimism. The category of danger is always within it. … Hope is not confidence. If it could not be disappointed, it would not be hope. … However, hope still nails a flag on the mast, even in decline, in that the decline is not accepted, even when this decline is still very strong. … Hope is surrounded by dangers, and it is the consciousness of danger and at the same time the determined negation of that which continually makes the opposite of the hoped-for object possible.

—Ernst Bloch (1885-1977, Germany; Marxist philosopher, author), 1975[80]

83. Zionism is not one more nationalism or particularism; nor is it a simple search for a place of refuge. It is the hope of a science and of a society, which are wholly human. And this hope is to be found in Jerusalem, in the earthly Jerusalem, and not … in pious thoughts.

—Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995, Lithuania and France; philosopher), 1979[81]

84. Please don't uproot what's been planted
Don't forget the hope
Lead me home and I will return
To the good land.

—Naomi Shemer (1930-2004, Israel; musician, songwriter), 1980[82]

85. *Rich's poem,* Dreams Before Wakening, *begins with two epigraphs. The first is by Elie Wiesel: "Despair is the question." The second is by the Cuban poet, Nancy Morejón: "Even your country changed. You have changed it yourself."* Dreams Before Wakening *consists of seven paragraphs exploring the transition from despair to hope. The selection below is the last paragraph.*

What would it mean to live
in a city whose people were changing
each other's despair into hope?—
You yourself must change it.—
what would it feel like to know
your country was changing?—
You yourself must change it.—
Though your life felt arduous
new and unmapped and strange
what would it mean to stand on the first
page of the end of despair?

—Adrienne Rich (1929-2012, United States; poet, feminist, essayist), 1983*[83]

86. During these years I have met people who have been weakened from constant disappointments. They continually create new hopes for themselves, and as a result they betray themselves. Others live in the world of illusions, hastily and incessantly building and rebuilding their world in order to prevent real life from ultimately destroying it. What then is the solution? The only answer is to find the meaning of your current life. It's best if you are left with only one hope—the hope of remaining yourself no matter what happens. *Don't fear, don't believe, and don't hope. Don't believe words from the outside; believe your own heart. Believe in that meaning which was revealed to you in this life, and hope that you will succeed in guarding it.*

—Natan Sharansky (1948-, Former Soviet Union and Israel; refusnik, human rights activist, Israeli politician), from a c. 1984 letter that appears in *Fear No Evil*[84]

87. It we find a single repeated message in the rabbinic system as a whole, it is that [the people of] Israel bears ultimate responsibility for its own condition. Israel therefore has

the power, also, to reshape its destiny. Blaming one's own sins for what has happened carries a powerful message of hope: just as we did it to ourselves, so we can save ourselves. Indeed, this sense of mastery of one's own destiny through the conduct of the moral life and the sense of guilt for having brought about the present unenviable situation form a single message of comfort.

—Jacob Neusner, (1932-2016, United States; rabbi, professor, scholar of rabbinic literature, author), 1984[85]

88. Certainly hope is facilitated by belief in God. Still, to explain hope with a mere shrug of the shoulders by saying "but of course, they believed in God," is merely to postpone the question at one remove and therefore to explain nothing … I dare say that we may yet learn as much about the dynamics of Jewish hope from the prayers recited thrice daily by all Jews, those added by different generations or different communities, the ritual practices that were standard and those deriving from local custom, as we will from reading explicit messianic tracts …Why [write] a history of hope? To assuage our loneliness. To realize that we are not the first to whom despair was not alien, hope a gratuitous gift, and that by the same token we are not necessarily the last. And that, perhaps, may be a small and modest step toward hope itself.

—Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi (1932-2009, United States; professor of Jewish history, culture, and society), 1985[86]

89. We are living in the worst of all possible worlds in which there is still hope. There are, indeed, worlds below us in which there is no hope at all, and this is what we call "Hell." But to speak of the entire structure of our own world: it really is a world on the very brink. If it were to be slightly, just slightly, worse than it actually is, then its basic structure would become entirely hopeless; the balance would be irreversible and evil would be irrevocable. … What I am saying is not usually understood as a Jewish idea, but I think that it is really a statement of what I would call "Jewish optimism." If a person sees the world as all pink and glowing, …[one] is not an optimist, …[one is] just a plain fool. An optimist, on the other hand, is one who in spite of seeing the terrible facts as they are, believes that there can be improvement. If everything were all right, then you wouldn't have to be an optimist. So I do believe that we, as Jews, are optimists because we are a people with hope and we have a theology of hope. … To have a real road test to prove that a car really works, I have to put it under, and I would say this again, the worst conditions in which there is yet hope. I cannot test it by driving it off a cliff, but I can test it on the roughest terrain where I must come to the edge of a cliff and have to stop. How is a new plane tested? They put it under nearly impossible conditions, which the plane must withstand. Otherwise the whole experiment doesn't prove anything. The same with Creation. Creation would have been pointless unless it was a Creation under precisely these difficult circumstances. So I am saying, theologically speaking, that the worst possible world in which there is yet hope is the only world in which Creation makes sense.

—Adin Steinsaltz (1937-2020, Israel; Rabbi, follower of Chabad,Talmud scholar and translator, philosopher), in a 1987-1990 interview[87]

90. *On the opening line of "Chorus of Comforters," by Nelly Sachs, "We are gardeners who have no flowers":*

How could a people so brutally cast down, a people without flowers, take up the work of gardening? How could a despondent people find room for hope? Here, then, is the last small piece of understanding: If we are a witness people, what we can attest to is not only man's capacity for evil but also man's capacity for hope.

—Leonard Fein (1934-2014, United States; social activist, author), 1988[88]

91. … Judaism… [is] a religion of hope for a world redeemed. What distinguishes hope from escapism? A hope is a dream that has accepted the discipline of becoming a fact. Jewish faith is the communal commitment to work at realizing the hope.

—Irving Greenberg (1933-, United States; rabbi, Modern Orthodox leader, pioneer in interfaith understanding), 1988[89]

92. Jewish hope has been a questionable asset in this century, and if you are going to feed it to your children, they'd be well advised to live on tight rations.

—Ruth R. Wisse (1936-, Ukraine and United States; professor of Yiddish literature and comparative literature, scholar of Jewish history and culture), 1992[90]

93. Anxiety and despair can be lethal; confidence and hope, life-giving.

—Jerome D. Frank (1909-2005, United States; psychiatrist), 1993[91]

94. Still, at the edge of … despair there is a kind of determined light which has been called hope. Hope is not an ephemeral thing. It's a reality created out of our long human history of birth and rebirth, in which bravery, mutual aid, stubborn struggle, and imagination have been powerful enough to shift the awesome downward trajectories of war and oppression.

—Grace Paley (1922-2007, United States; poet, political activist, teacher), 1998[92]

95. Here in these mountains, hope belongs to the landscape
like the water holes. Even the ones with no water
still belong to the landscape of hope.

—Yehudah Amichai, (1924-2000, Israel; poet), 2013[93]

96. In Jerusalem, hope springs eternal. Hope is like a faithful dog.
Sometimes she runs ahead of me to check the future, to sniff it out,
and then I call her: Hope, Hope, come here, and she
comes to me. I pet her, she eats out of my hand.
And sometimes she stays behind, near some other hope,
maybe to sniff out whatever was. Then I call her my Despair,
I call out to her: Hey, my little Despair, come here,
and she comes and snuggles up, and again
I call her Hope.

—Yehuda Amichai, (1924-2000, Israel; poet), 2006[94]

97. A night drive to Ein Yahav in the Arava Desert,
a drive in the rain. Yes, in the rain.
There I met people who grow date palms,
there I saw tamarisk trees and risk trees,
there I saw hope barbed as barbed wire.
And I said to myself: That's true, hope needs to be
like barbed wire to keep out despair,
hope must be a minefield.

—Yehuda Amichai, (1924-2000, Israel; poet), 1998[95]

98. To be a Jew thus becomes a matter of making a statement, or reminding the world of the possibility of survival for those who would seem to have no hope, of speaking with an authentic and distinct voice that has something to say to human beings wherever they may languish.

—Daniel Gordis (1959-, U.S. and Israel; rabbi, author), 2000[96]

99. And Yet. One must wager on the future. I believe it is possible, in spite of everything, to believe in friendship in a world without friendship, and even to believe in God in a world where there has been an eclipse of God's face. Above all, we must not give in to cynicism. To save the life of a single child, no effort is too much. To make a tired old man smile is to perform an essential task. To defeat injustice and misfortune, if only for one instant, for a single victim, is to invent a new reason to hope. Oh yes, I know: It is not always easy to hope. Also, hope can become a trap whose victims are as unhappy as victims of despair. Just as despair can be given to me only by another human being, hope too can be given to me only by another human being. Mankind must remember too that, like hope, peace is not God' s gift to …[God' s] creatures. Peace is a very special gift–it is our gift to each other. For the sake of our children and theirs, I pray that we are worthy of that hope, of that redemption, and some measure of peace.

—Elie Wiesel (1928-2016, Romania, France, United States; writer, professor, Holocaust survivor, Nobel Laureate), 2005[97]

100. Hope is a transcendental act which accompanies us all in our endeavors and allows us to go beyond our limits so as to enter an uncertain future where dream and desire have the force of memory. Where, under which sky, would we be if we were deserted by hope? We would no longer sense the fragrance of dawn or the nocturnal breath coming from an open window. We would be rendered superfluous, withered branches left behind by the wind. Nothing would elicit our interest because no goal would await us. Hope being the key to freedom, without it life itself would become a prison.

—Elie Wiesel, (1928-2016, Romania, France, United States; writer, professor, Holocaust survivor, Nobel Laureate)[98]

101. It is really the Jew in me that says that we must go on, we must build endurance, no matter what. We must show that although there is no hope, we must invent hope.

—Elie Wiesel (1928-2016, Romania, France, United States; writer, professor, Holocaust survivor, Nobel Laureate), after the birth of his son, 1972[99]

102. What happens when our hearts flatten, our hopes become subterranean? That is not human. That is not womanly. So we have no choice but to dream though these last days of this century, staking our claim into the next, that unknown time, with the practicality of our hopes and visions. And, when that time comes, that utopia for which we work and pray, the end of our dreaming will be in joy and music which we will indeed soon hear.

—E. M. Broner (1927-2011, United States; feminist activist, author), 1999[100]

103. … [T]he word for hope—*ayachel*—[I will hope] … contains the root for "space" (*chalal*) within it. Hope becomes necessary, even intelligible, only where there is a break in continuity. While two are merged, God and the human being, the mother and the child, hope has no meaning. It is in separation, as a space widens between self and other, that hope, the interrelation of two selves, like the mute interplay of the edges of two curtains, becomes possible.

—Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg (1944-, United Kingdom and Israel; scholar, author, teacher), 2001[101]

104. Pain cannot be redeemed. Just as the happiness of humanity does not justify the mystery of the individual, retribution in the future [*avenir*] does not wipe away the pains of the present. There is no justice that could make reparations for it. One should have to return to that instant, or be able to resurrect it. To hope then is hope for the reparation of the irreparable; it is to hope for the present. … Time is not a succession of instants filing by before an "I," but the response to the hope for the present, which in the present is the very expression of the "I," and is itself equivalent to the present. All the acuteness of hope in the midst of despair comes from the exigency that the very instant of despair can be redeemed. To understand the mystery of the work of time, we should start with the hope for the present, taken as a primary fact. Hope hopes for the present itself. … At the very moment where all is lost, everything is possible.

—Jacques Derrida (1930-2004, Algeria and France; philosopher), 2002[102]

105. Dissents speak to a future age … But the greatest <u>dissents</u> do become court opinions and gradually over time their views become the dominant view. So that's the dissenter's hope: that they are writing not for today but for tomorrow.

—Ruth Bader Ginsburg (1933-2020, United States; Supreme Court Justice), 2002[103]

106. I always have hope and I think of it as an optimistic hope—that is that things will turn out as I hope them to—that I might live to an old age. Yet what happens each day is I hope for that day and the next—and I hope that the drug that I am taking will work longer rather than shorter. I do not believe it will last longer. I do not believe that I will live to see old age. So perhaps I am not optimistic in that I don't think I know what will

come. I am just hopeful—hoping it will be and if what I hope for doesn't happen, then I hope I have made the best of my time. So perhaps I can reduce my hope to the hope that I am living well, that I do more good than bad, that I bring joy to those who love me.

—Patricia Barr (1950-2003, United States; lawyer, founder of National Breast Cancer Alliance, leader of American Friends of Peace Now), 2003*[104]

107. Hope has never trickled down. It has always sprung up.

—Studs Terkel (1912-2008, United States; historian, author, broadcaster, actor), 2003[105]

108. Judaism is a religion of details, but we miss the point if we do not sometimes step back and see the larger picture. To be a Jew is to be an agent of hope in a world serially threatened by despair. Every ritual, every mitzvah, every syllable of the Jewish story, every element of Jewish law, is a protest against escapism, resignation or the blind acceptance of fate. Judaism is a sustained struggle, the greatest ever known, against the world that is, in the name of the world that could be, should be, but is not yet. There is no more challenging vocation. Throughout history, when human beings have sought hope they have found it in the Jewish story. Judaism is the religion, and Israel the home, of hope.

—Jonathan Sacks (1948-2020, United Kingdom; former Chief Rabbi of Great Britain), 2008[106]

109. "In every generation, we are to look at ourselves as if personally delivered from Egypt" (from the Passover Haggadah). This text reminds us that it is a curse to be a slave, irrespective of the nature of the enslavement, and it is a blessing to be liberated. But what causes the blessing to soar heavenward, and to take us on its wings, is the message of unyielding hope that is held aloft along the way.

—Kerry Olitzky (1954-, United States; rabbi, author, Jewish educator), 2009[107]

110. Like a hangover, a hopeover comes from having overindulged in something that felt good at the time but wasn't really all that healthy, leading to feelings of remorse, even shame. It's the political equivalent of the crash after a sugar high. Sample sentence: "When I listened to Obama's economic speech my heart soared. But then, when I tried to tell a friend about his plans for the millions of lay-offs and foreclosures, I found myself saying nothing at all. I've got a serious hopeover."

—Naomi Klein (1970-, Canada; author, social activist, filmmaker), 2009[108]

111. Hope is a category of transcendence that expands our sense of the possible beyond what we sense and experience directly. It is the belief or conviction that present reality (what I see) does not exhaust the potentialities of the status quo. Hope opens the present to the future; it enables us to look ahead, to break the fixity of what we observe, and thus to perceive the world as open-textured. The categories of possibility and transcendence

interweave a closely stitched psychological and spiritual fabric; hope says that tomorrow can be better than today.

—David Hartman (1931-2013, United States and Israel; rabbi, philosopher), 2012[109]

112. … Humankind and God of the Universe. And we do hear and respond to one another. From the fear of death and the longing for a Living God, we bring forth our life, our time and place, our society and context. From moment to moment the reflection of God touches our reflection and awakens faith in us. Take notice, says God. Take notice, I repeat to myself. Not to despair, not to stumble, not to wither. To open door after door to the Living God, to open it within myself and in reality, door after door, hope after hope.

—Tamar Eldad Appelbaum, (1975-, Israel, rabbi and founder of Congregation of Zion in Jerusalem, founder of the Beit Midrash for Israeli Rabbis), 2010[110]

113. Hope enables our imagination, moral and otherwise, to take flight. It lifts us above immediacy and fills our expectation with confidence. Without hope, we are consigned to fate. We acquiesce in the status quo; we repudiate our partnership with God to advance the good that resides in creation. But hope also pinions us to our dreams. It undercuts or complicates our rational assessment of possibility, rendering us vulnerable to fantasy and illusion. Hope can be injurious and false. True hope, whatever that might mean, ennobles us. False hope can distract and debase. With hope comes risk.

—Alan Mittleman (1953-, United States; professor of Jewish philosophy at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America), 2012[111]

114. The secret of being young and old simultaneously is maintaining hope, looking ahead, overcoming gloom and failure by focusing on the brightness on the horizon.

—Marc D. Angel (1945-, United States; Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Shearith Israel, the historic Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in New York City), 2016[112]

115. What happened can never be forgotten and can never be changed. But over time I learned that I can choose how to respond to the past. I can be miserable, or I can be hopeful—I can be depressed, or I can be happy. We always have that choice, that opportunity for control ... My patients, the unique and one-of-a-kind humans … have taught me that healing isn't about recovery; it's about discovery. Discovering hope in hopelessness, discovering an answer where there doesn't seem to be one, discovering that it's not what happens that matters—it's what you do with it.

—Edith Eva Eger (1927-, Hungary, United States; Holocaust survivor, psychologist, consultant to the U.S. military), 2017[113]

116. How easy it is to despair, to forget the promise of the past…. At this time of acute internal division and continued conflict between Israel and her neighbors, may we have the courage and fortitude to remain steadfastly faithful to our goal of creating a New

Israel, one that is wholly based on the principles that led to the establishment of an independent Jewish state, while also striving to develop and encourage those elements that seek to bring greater good to more people and thus to fully implement the noble promise of Israel's founders as expressed in the Declaration of Independence: that Israel be a state in which all citizens enjoy total equality, regardless of race, gender, and faith; a state that ensures freedom of religion, conscience, language, education, and culture …. As the tablets that were smashed [when Moses learned the Israelites had worshipped the golden calf] were re-written after being destroyed in anger and despair, so may we re-write our own Torah … and pledge ourselves never to despair.
Echoing the words of our national anthem, let us declare:
Od lo avdah tikvateinu. We have not lost hope. And let us add: We **shall** not lose hope!

—Alice Shalvi (1926-, Germany, United Kingdom, Israel; professor of English literature, educator, feminist, founder of the Israel Women's Network), 2019[114]

117. Hope is a challenging spiritual practice. It is not the same thing as optimism, which is a belief that things will work themselves out on their own. Our tradition tends not to be optimistic; our Bible is anything but optimistic. But it is deeply hopeful. … We practice hope when we refuse to accept the world as it is, trust in a vision of what it should be, and commit to doing our small part to make it so. … Hope is active and empowering. Practicing hope is our human link and sacred task in the process of redemption.

—Betsy Forester (United States; rabbi of Beth Israel Center, Madison, Wisconsin), 2020[115]

118. Between what we're doing to our planet (which disproportionately harms those who are most vulnerable), and the impact of anti-maskers and anti-vaxxers on public health (ditto), and the persistence of the Big Lie that the presidential election was "stolen," and the lack of accountability around the Jan. 6 insurrection, it's hard not to despair. How can I write sermons from this place? I'm pretty sure no one comes to High Holiday services to hear their rabbi admit that she's given up hope. I poured out my heart about this to my chavruta partner [study partner], who reminded me that in Torah even God sometimes despaired of humanity. When God despaired of us, it was our ancestors' job to push back and remind God of reasons to hope for humanity's future. This is part of why we live (and learn!) in community: to help each other find hope when our hearts despair.

—Rachel Barenblat, the "Velveteen Rabbi" (1975-, United States; rabbi, blogger, spiritual director), 2021[116]

119. We need leaders in our community, now more than ever … who can convey a sense of hope and possibility. One further word here about this issue of hope and possibility. Leaders must operate, often if not always, with a sense of optimism. They must convey the belief that things can be better and that we each have a role in making that happen. In

challenging moments and in tough times we must remember—and remind others—that despair is not a strategy, that we cannot retreat to the convenience of being overwhelmed. Note that this does not mean that we will never feel overwhelmed, never experience a moment of despair. It simply, or not so simply, means that we need to live in those spaces for a few minutes and then remember, if we wish to lead, that people need to believe that there is a way from here to there, that small acts make a difference.

—Ruth Messinger (1940-, United States; former Manhattan Borough President and former president of American Jewish World Service), 2021[117]

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[1] Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, "Toward a History of Jewish Hope," in David N. Myers and and Alexander Kaye, eds., *The Faith of Fallen Jews: Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi and the Writing of Jewish History* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2014), loc. 6277, Kindle.

[2] Most translations render "wait" instead of "hope." Everett Fox goes with "wait-in-hope." Birnbaum's *Daily Prayer Book* (2) renders: "For thy salvation I hope, O Lord." My translation follows Jacob Neusner's. See his *The Components of The Rabbinic Documents* (Tampa: University of Southern Florida, 1997), vol. 9, part 6, 240 and 241. For more on the biblical background of this verse and its history Jewish magic, mysticism, and liturgy, see David Arnow, "Jacob's Hope for Salvation: The Extraordinary Career of Gen. 49:18," *Zeramim* (Spring/Summer, 2020).

[3] 25:9 follows NJPS, but I've substituted "hope" for NJPS's "trust," as does Robert Alter in *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2018, Kindle).

[4] The verse is recited prior to Hakafot, the circling of the pulpit while dancing with Torah scrolls on Simchat Torah. The verse is found in the Simchat Torah liturgy in the Machzor Vitry (section 413), which dates from 1105; it was composed by Rabbi Simcha ben Shmuel of Vitry, a disciple of Rashi. See the commentary on BT Ta'anit 31a, *Chidushei Agadot* by Samuel Eliezer ben Judah HaLevi Edels (the Ma'harsha, 1555-1632, Poland). The Ma'harsha explains that the reference to the "deliverance *of* God is like what is found in Psalms 91:15, 'I will be with him in distress.' And when God redeems us, God will be redeemed with us."

[5] NJPS, except that I've rendered "hope" instead of "trust." Alter has "wait," but in his note on the verse he writes, "God's inexhaustible nature is transferred to those who wait or hope for" God.

[6] Michael Fisbane, *The JPS Bible Commentary: Haftarot* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2002), 20.

[7] Verse 21 follows JPS. The others follow Alter.

[8] Soncino translation.

[9]Philo of Alexandria, "On Abraham," 2:7, in C.D. Yong, trans., *The Works of Philo*: *Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 411. Philo seems to base his comment on the translation of Gen. 4:26 found in the Septuagint, the third-century-BCE Greek translation of the Bible: "And Seth had a son, and he called his name

Enos: he hoped to call on the name of the Lord God." Typical English translations of the second part of the verse read: "It was then that men began to invoke the Lord by name" (JPS). See Yong, trans., *The Works of Philo*, 411.
[10] Flavius Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, 1:19:4, in William Whiston, trans., *Josephus: The Complete Works* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 687.
[11] Gen. 42:1, Alter. In order to make it clear when the midrash is referring to hope, it uses the Hebrew ס ב ר, which also means "hope" and could sound the same as ש ב ר when the dot is on the left side above the first letter. Avivah Zornberg offers a beautiful interpretation of this midrash: "What Jacob sees is a dialectical vision of *shever/sever* [brokenness/hope]. When things fall apart, the opportunity for *sever* arises. Before such a crisis, in a condition of wholeness and security, hope is irrelevant. After it, some plausible reconstruction of the shards becomes essential. … What Jacob sees, then, is the necessary relation between disaster and hope. He sees the condition of the … emptiness [due to the loss of his beloved son, Joseph], disappearance, loss, as generating hopeful hypotheses. The fundamental polarity of disaster and hope is thus expressed in the single word *shever*, as the midrash refracts it…. [Jacob] must act on the basis of hope, of a vision of life-in-death." Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, *The Beginnings of Desire: Reflections on Genesis* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 302-303. For a related midrash, also on Gen. 42:1, see Gen. Rabbah 91:6.
[12] Erica Brown explains: "Contrary to expectation, a dream about a donkey is not a sign that the dreamer is absurd or insignificant. Redemption may come from unexpected places in the hands of unsuspecting people and unassuming animals." Erica Brown, *Leadership in the Wilderness: Authority & Anarchy in the Book of Numbers* (Jerusalem: Maggid, 2013), loc. 3166-3167, Kindle.
[13] The William Davidson Talmud offers clarifications in brackets.
[14] This rendering follows Masoretic notes specifying how the verse is to be read and understood. This guided the translation in the old 1917 Jewish Publication Society (OJPS), though I prefer "hope" rather than "trust," as in OJPS. These Masoretic notes yield a reading directly opposed to how the verse is written, which guided the 1999; New Jewish Publication Society Tanakh (NJPS): "He may well slay me; I may have no hope." For more on the ambiguity of this verse, see *Choosing Hope*, 117-19.
[15] Prayers for Supplication (*Tachanun*) in Daniel Goldschmidt, ed., *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* (Jerusalem: Mosad Ha-Rav Kook, 1971), 38.
[16]Alexander Altmann, ed. and trans., The *Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*, Commandment and Prohibition, (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2002), 110. Altmann notes that "Saadya sees in Hope and Fear—the two cardinal themes of the Greek Tragedy—the prime movers in human affairs" (110).
[17] Midrash on Psalms 40:1-2, Bar Ilan Responsa Project 26+. Ps. 40:2 follows Alter. Is. 25:9 follows Artscroll. In other verses I've consistently rendered "hope" in contrast to William Braude who generally translates "wait" in place of "hope." For more on my preference for "hope" over wait, see *Choosing Hope*, xxiv. See William Braude, *The Midrash on Psalms* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), vol. 1, 432-33. This midrash is similar to one that uses the same biblical verses but links them specifically to the Exodus from Egypt. This latter one, found in Midrash Tanchuma, Beshalach, 12, Ex. 15:1, picks up on the verse *Moses and the Israelites sang this song to YHWH* (Ex.15:1). The verse introduces the song that Moses and the Israelites sang after safely passing through the Red Sea, thus escaping from the Egyptians, who ultimately drowned in the Sea:

> *Then Moses sang*. This verse is related to *I urgently hoped for YHWH* (Ps. 40:2). Rabbi Pinchas ben Chamah the Priest said: "If you hoped urgently and God did not come continue to hope." David said: *Hope for YHWH!* [*Let your heart be firm and bold, and hope for YHWH*](Ps. 27:14). If your hope is fulfilled, good, and, if not, continue to hope. David said: *I urgently hoped for YHWH* and because of that hoping [*God*] *bent down toward me and God heard my voice* (Ps. 40:2). *And God heard their moaning* [of the Israelites in Egypt]. *And* [*God*] *brought me up from the roiling pit, from the thickest mire* (Ps. 40:3), that is, from Egypt, from the clay of the bricks.

[18] The opening verse of the midrash offers a clear statement of the predominant biblical view on the universality and finality of death. NJPS translates the last phrase, "*v'ain mikveh,*" as "with nothing in prospect." Rashi reads *v'ain mikveh* to mean, "No one has hope that one will not die." The Targum on Chronicles reads this phrase similarly. Further on, the midrash explores the question of why the righteous should devote themselves to a life of toil to fulfill mitzvot if they will meet the same end as the wicked. The midrash does suggest that after death, the ultimate fate of the righteous and the wicked are not the same and invokes a verse from Ecclesiastes to prove the point: "Who knows if a person's lifebreath does rise upward and if a beast's breath does sink downward?" (Eccl. 3:21). The midrash suggests that the souls of the righteous ascend upward, while those of the wicked "sink downward." Given the proclivity of so many midrashim to answer this question by elaborate assurances about the life the righteous will enjoy in the World to Come, this midrash offers only a faint nod to this option, concluding with a reference to the

death of Moses, to prove that even he could not escape death. See Shlomo Fish, ed., *Midrash Hagadol* (Jerusalem: Mosad Ha-Rav Kook, 1997), Deuteronomy, vol. 2, 663.

[19] Midrash HaGadol, opening poem to Deuteronomy 32, Ha'azinu. This portion is generally read in close proximity to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur; hence the poem's opening reference to shofar and themes of Divine pardon and forgiveness. The reference to "judge of all the earth" quotes Genesis 18:25, the expression Abraham uses to confront God's questionable decision to destroy the innocent along with the wicked in Sodom and Gomorrah. The author of the midrash steps into Abraham's shoes and argues with God for Israel's salvation. The author puns on the name Rachel, which can also mean "sheep" or "ewe." The reference to a "dayworker hoping for a wage" is to Job 7:2. See Fish, ed., *Midrash Hagadol*, Deuteronomy, vol. 2, 681.

[20] These are the last two verses of *Asher Heni* (*Shoshanat Ya'akov*), an alphabetic acrostic *piyut*, or liturgical poem. Strikingly, the *piyut* ascribes salvation of the Jews of Shushan to God, although God is conspicuously absent from the book of Esther. Some suggest that the style of this *piyut* argues for a date of composition no later than the fifth century. See Piyut North America, Shoshanat Ya'akov (Asher Heni). In written sources, *Shoshanat Yaakov* only begins to appear in the medieval period. See, for example, the 12th-century *Machzor Vitry*, siman 248, which attributes the *piyut* to the "men of the Great Assembly," a body traditionally thought to have existed between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE. This translation of *Shoshanat Ya'akov* follows *Siddur Sim Shalom* (New York: Rabbinical Assembly, 2003), 195. The last sentence quotes Psalms 25:3.

[21] Midrash Vayoshah on Ex. 15:18. See J. D. Eisentstein, *Otzar Midrashim A Library of Two Hundred Minor Midrashim*. 2 Vols. (Hebrew) New York: J. D. Eisenstein, 1915), 155, Bar Ilan Responsa Project 26+.

[22] *Lekach Tov*, also known as *Pesikta Zutarta*, Tuvia ben Rabbi Eliezer, comp., *Lekach Tov on the Five Megillot*, (London: Solomon Buber, 1909), on Lam. 3:38. The verses from Lamentations follow Alter.

[23] *Lekach Tov*, on Song of Songs 5:6, 70-71. HB 14120, Bar Ilan Responsa Project 26+. The translation of Song of Songs 5:6 follows Koren, and that of Ps. 69:4 follows Alter. Early in this lengthy midrash, the author explicitly describes the slaughter of pious Jews in Ashkenaz in 1096 during the early days of the First Crusade. For a reference to this in Song of Songs 1:3, see the 1909 edition, 15. Another reference can be found in the midrash on Leviticus 22:33 in *Lekach Tov on the Five Books of the Torah* (Vilna, 1880), 62a, HB14106, Bar Ilan Responsa Project 26+. Many Jews were murdered by marauding Christians, but large numbers of Jews also killed their families and then themselves, lest they fall into the Crusaders' hands. These deaths, especially those wrought by Jews, were viewed as supreme acts of sanctification of God's Name. Building on a verse from the Song of Songs, a biblical book often interpreted as an allegory of the love between the Divine and Israel, the midrash recounts Israel's experience of abandonment by God.

[24] Solomon Ibn Gabirol, *A Choice of Pearls*, ed. B. H. Ascher (London: Trubner & Co., 1859), 9 and 39.

[25] *Keter Malkhut*, stanza 38. The translation is the author's. Biblical passages with an asterisk reflect paraphrases of verses or phrases. The poet uses passages from Job a number of times, and thus the theme of being tested by God also recurs. The relationship between hope and the trial, so central to Job, recurs in Gabriel Marcel's work on hope. See "What Is Hope?" under Resources on this website. Also see the chapter on Job in *Choosing Hope*, and especially the discussion of Job 13:15 there.

[26] Solomon Ibn Gabirol, "Redemption for the Fourth Shabbat after Passover in the Form of a Dialogue between God and Israel," trans. Israel Zangwill, in *Selected Religious Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, ed. Israel Davidson (Skokie, IL: Varda, 2002), no. 18. Zangwill (1864-1926, England) was an early Zionist leader and author. His rendering departs significantly from the text and may be regarded more as a poetic interpretation than a true translation.

[27] The Kuzari is a fictional account by Judah Halevi of a dialogue between a Jew, a Christian, and a Muslim, who each attempt to win over the Khazar king to their religion. Scholars debate the historicity of the conversion of some Khazar nobility to Judaism, which is said to have occurred in the mid-tenth century. The translation from the Arabic is by Hartwig Hirschfeld, *Kitab al Khazari* (New York: E.P. Duttun, 1905), 3:11. **a**: Nachum of Gamzu: *Gam zu le'tovah*, "This too, *gam zu*, is for the good." The Talmud, Ta'anit 21a (and elsewhere) recounts the story of Nachum, a blind pious miracle worker with no hands or feet, whose body was covered with sores. He willed these afflictions upon himself when he delayed—for just a moment—responding to a poor man's request for food. During this brief delay, the poor man died. **b**: A reference to the words that precede *Dayennu*, the song in the Passover Haggadah that recounts fifteen miracles wrought by God for the Israelites from the Exodus in Egypt to the building of the Temple in the Land of Israel. The earliest written record of the song appears in the prayer book of Sa'adia Gaon (882-942, Babylonia), and it was commonly found in European medieval illuminated Haggadot.

[28] Judah Halevi, "God Speaks," in Franz Rosenzweig, *Ninety-Two Poems and Hymns of Yehuda Halevi*, ed. Richard A. Cohen (New York: SUNY Press, 2000), 154. Here is part of Rosenzweig's commentary on the poem: "The power that eternally sustains life is hope. In this poem, which could not be part of the Bible for it is filled with the

kind of certitude that only an exile of a thousand years could ripen, God Himself calls upon Israel to have hope. Now hope has become "the greatest'" of all; it has absorbed the forces of love. The poem flatly states that it is Judaism's secret to transmute love into hope for redemption: 'Your loving is most beautiful while you await Him who will redeem you.' This is a hope not because but in spite of everything. It is a hope that is not allowed to calculate deadlines since all of them have elapsed (Rosenzweig, 155).

[29] Moshe ibn Ezra, *Shirai ha-Chol*, ed. Chaim Brody (Berlin: Schocken, 1935), 101.This is from a poem that begins גבירי בלתך עיני מבכים / "My lord, without you my eyes weep."

[30] Maimonides, "On the Management of Health," in *Ethical Writings of Maimonides*, ed. Raymond L. Weiss with Charles E. Butterworth (New York: Dover, 1975), 110.

[31] See Nachmanides on Ex. 15:11. Albo agrees with Nachmanides in this reading of Ps. 65:2. See Joseph Albo, *Sefer Ha-Ikkarim: Book of Principles*, vol. 4, part 2, trans. Isaac Husik (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1946), 471. The Hebrew word in question, *dumiya*, has many meanings, including "silence." Modern scholarship suggests the following: *dumiya* "can actually be translated by 'quiet expectation' [as in Ps 65:2] … and it is connected with *tikvah*, "hope," and *yeshu'ah,* "salvation…" See Johannes Botterweck and Helmber Ringren, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1978), vol. 3, 264.

[32] Kad ha-Kemach, Redemption: 1, Bar Ilan Responsa Project 26+. The reference to waiting "in hope for my arm" seems to be a counterpoint to a verse in the previous chapter, when God asks, "Is my arm, then, too short to rescue?" (Is. 50:2). See Walter Brueggeman's wonderful chapter ("Only Memory Allows Possibility") on these verses from Isiah in his *Hopeful Imagination: Prophetic Voices in Exile* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1986).

[33] Joseph Albo, *Sefer Ha-Ikkarim*, trans. Isaac Husik, vol. 4, part 2, 464, 466, 470.

[34] Isaac ben Judah Abarbanel, Commentary on Isaiah 18:2. Bar Ilan Responsa Project 26+. The translation of Is.18:2 follows Alter, using "defeat" instead of "sowing defeat." In his note, Alter says that "defeat" is a literal translation, and this seems closer to the way that Abarbanel understands the verse. Abarbanel's commentary is interesting because where some might read "gibberish," he finds a profound expression of hope. Some later commentators seem to have followed his lead, e.g., Joseph David Azoulai and Metzudot David (David and Hillel Altshuler). Earlier commentators (e.g., Rashi) read *kav kav* as "line for line," implying punishment in kind, as in Is. 28:17: "But I will apply judgement as a measuring line [*l'kav*] …"

[35] Judah Moscato, *Nefutzot Yehudah* (Warsaw, 1871), sermon 21, HB 6084, 54b-57b. Moscato's sermon begins by quoting Midrash Tanchuma, Beshalach 12. See this anthology,note 17. This translation of the sermon appears in Gianfranco Miletto and Guiseppe Veltri, ed. and trans., *Judah Moscato: Sermons*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), sermon 21, 251-280. Superscripted letters refer to page numbers in Miletto and Veltri's translation: a, 252; b, 271; c, 272; d, 276, see Exodus Rabbah 1:9; e, 277. In Moscato's sermons, almost every phrase is either quoting or alluding to the Bible or other rabbinic sources. For a complete listing of them, see Miletto and Veltri. The translation of passages from Psalms follows Robert Alter, rather than OJPS, which Miletto and Veltri used. In the translation of the sermon, the notion that Israel has "not lost hope" appears twice. In the first case, the root of the verb is *samech, vet, reish*, not *kof, vav, hey*, as it is in the second case and in Ezekiel 37:11 as well.

[36] Yehudah Loeb ben Bezalel, *Netzach Yisrael* (Prague, 1599), chapters 27 (39a) and 28 (40a), HB 44279 and Bar Ilan Responsa Project 26+. In the Bar Ilan edition, these chapters are numbered 28 and 29. The midrash referred to is Yalkut Shimoni on Psalms, section 717. For a closely related source, see the Midrash on Psalms 31, section 8, on Ps. 31:24. The reference to God's crediting Abraham with eternal merit evokes the story in Genesis when Abraham questions God about when the Divine promise of progeny will be fulfilled. God reiterates the promise, and Genesis states: "And because he [Abraham] put his trust in YHWH, [YHWH] reckoned it to his merit" (15:6).

[37] Azarya Peugot (Figo), *Bina Le-Itim*, Sermon 52, Bar Ilan Responsa Project 26+. Translation of Zechariah 9:12 follows Koren.

[38] Baruch Spinoza, *The Ethics*, trans. R.H.M. Elwes (London: George Bell and Sons, 1901), part 2, proposition 18, note 2, https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/spinoza-the-chief-works-of-benedict-de-spinoza-vol-2

[39] Glückel of Hameln, *The Life of Glückel of Hameln Written by Herself* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 6.

[40] Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, Sermon on Hope, (https://ramhal.net/6455), *Otzrot Ramch"al, D'rush B'inyan Ha-Kivoui*, 246–47, HB 51264. Luzzatto believed that with the proper words and intention, prayer had the power to reveal and enhance the ultimate unity of God and the *Shikhanah*. To that end, he composed 515 short prayers of hope, each ending with "For Your salvation I hope, YHWH" (Gen. 49:18). For a selection of these in Hebrew, see ספר תקט"ו תפילות, https://ramhal.net/תקטו-תפילות/. For background, see *ספר מרי"ח ניחוח*, by Ran Yosef Masud and Moshe Abuchatzira, (Afula, n.p., 2013), *https://www.shabes.net/shabat-files/alonim/ramchal.pdf*. In addition, Luzzatto's teaching that the word for line, *kav*, is connected to hope, as in *kivou'i* or *Tikvah*, may be based on a similar observation that appears in the work of the Spanish kabbalist Joseph Gikatilla (1248-c. 1305). See his

Sha'arei Tzedek (1561), 7b, upper-left column. This is the earliest source of which I am aware that makes this connection.
[41] Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem, or on Religious Power and Judaism*, trans. by Allan Arkush (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2013), 43 and 62.
[42] This version of the tale is a bit more complete than others. It was recorded by Heda Yazon, a folklorist who wrote down the tale as told to her by a man in Turkey; it was published in 1958 by the Israel Folktale Archives, catalogue number 910*Q. Hebrew readers interested in some of the earlier sources where the story appears can see https://forum.otzar.org/viewtopic.php?t=37240. For one of the earlier references to this expression's being inscribed on Solomon's ring, see Haim Yosef David Azoulai (1724-1806, Israel and Italy), *Sefer Chadrai Beten* (Jerusalem: A.M. Dzyalovski, 1989), 79, no. 31.
[43] Simcha Bunim of Peshisca, in Martin Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim* (NY: Schocken, 1947), book 2, 262.
[44] Nachman of Breslov, *The Empty Chair: Finding Hope and Joy—Timeless Wisdom from a Hasidic Master, Rebbe Nachman of Breslov*, ed. Moshe Mykoff (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 1996), 253, Likutei Moharan 2:78, Kindle.
[45] Heinrich Graetz, *The History of the Jews*, vol. 4, *From the Downfall of the Jewish State to the Conclusion of the Talmud*, trans. Bella Löwy (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1873), xiii.
[46] Emma Lazarus, from "Aspiration," in *The Poems of Emma Lazarus* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1889), vol. 1, 145.
[47] Emma Goldman, "My Trip to America," in Emma Goldman, *Living My Life* by (New York: Cosimo, 2011), 11.
[48] Hermann Cohen, "The Messianic Idea," in Eva Jospe, ed. and trans., *Reason and Hope: Selections from the Jewish Writings of Hermann Cohen* (Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College Press, 1993), 123-24.
[49] Saul Tchernichovsky, "I Believe" (1892), in *Shirim* (Berlin: Moriah, 1922), 146, quoted in the commentary on Pirkei Avot by Tamar Elad-Appelbaum and Gordon Tucker, *Pirkei Avot Lev Shalem* (New York: Rabbinical Assembly, 2018), 24. Thanks to Rabbi Gordon Tucker for bringing this to my attention.
[50] Israel Meir Kagan, *Machene Yisrael, The Last Gate* (1891), Bar Ilan Responsa Project 26+. For the midrash, see Song of Songs Rabbah 2:21, and, for the Talmudic source, see BT Sanhedrin 98a, which comments on Is. 40:22.
[51] Cora Wilburn, "Israel to the World in Greeting," in *Papers of the Jewish Women's Congress, Chicago, 1893* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1894), 122. Cora Wilburn was a well-known Jewish poet and author of the first novel about Jewish life in America. For more, see Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Forgetting of Cora Wilburn: Historical Amnesia and The Cambridge History of Jewish American Literature," *Studies in American Jewish Literature*, vol. 37 no. 1 (2018), 73-87.
[52] Chaim Nachman Bialik, "On the Slaughter," in Stanley Burnshaw, T. Carmi, and Ezra Spicehandler, eds., *The Modern Hebrew Poem Itself: From the Beginnings to the Present* (New York: Schocken, 1966), 32.
[53] Ahad Ha-'Am, "Moses," in Leon Simon, ed. and trans., *Selected Essays of Ahad Ha-'Am*, (New York: Atheneum, 1970), 328.
[54] Sigmund Freud, "Psychical Treatment," in *The Collected Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), vol. 7, 289.
[55] Israel Friedlander, *Past and Present: A Collection of Jewish Essays* (Cincinnati: Ark, 1919), 29.
[56] Walter Benjamin, "Franz Kafka: On the Tenth Anniversary of His Death," in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (1968; repr. New York: Schocken, 2007), 116.
[57] Franz Rosenzweig, *The Science of God in God, Man and the World: Lectures and Essays*, ed. and trans. Barbara E. Galli (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 55.
[58] From *Menschen*: *Zeitschrift neuer Kunst* 19, no. 4, Feb. 1921, 19, qtd. in Alice Calaprice, ed., *The Ultimate Quotable Einstein* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 415.
[59] Edmund Fleg, *Why I am a Jew* (New York: Bloch, 1929), 94.
[60] Chaim Weizmann, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann: Series B*, vol. 2, *1931-1952* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction, 1983), 100 ("Restraint the Answer to Terror," London, 31 May 1936) and 104 ("The Jewish Case Testimony before the Royal Peel Commission," Jerusalem, 25 November 1936).
[61] H. Sonnabend, "A Memory of Jabotinsky in Johannesburg," *Jewish Affairs* (Johannesburg), July 1950, 17. The article was published to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Jabotinsky's death. The author recalls a conversation with Jabotinsky that took place in 1937. Jabotinsky, who loved the Italian language and spoke it fluently, explained—in Italian—his philosophy of life: *Spero sempre, bramo molto, aspetto poco*. The quotation in English appears (with inadequate citation and no background) in Alfred J. Kolatch, *Great Jewish Quotations* (Middle Village, NY: Jonathan David, 1996), 225.
[62] Mordecai Kaplan, *The Future of the American Jew* (New York: Reconstructionist Press, 1981), 266.
[63] Mordecai Kaplan, Eugene Korn, Ira Eisenstein, and Milton Steinberg, eds., *A Sabbath Prayer Book* (New York: Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, 1945), 391. Jack Cohen described the reaction when Kaplan read this prayer

during the *shiva* period of mourning for his first wife in 1958: "While leading the service he read from one of his original prayers. The worshippers were transfixed by the deep emotion with which Kaplan prayed, particularly when he came to [this prayer]." See Jack J. Cohen, *Guides for an Age of Confusion: Studies in the Thinking of Avraham Y. Kook and Mordecai M. Kaplan* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999), 138.

[64] Mordecai Kaplan, *The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1994), 57.

[65] Kalonymous Kalmish Shapira, "Mishpatim (Parashat Sh'kallim)—February 14, 1942," in *Sacred Fire: Torah from the Years of Fury 1939-1942*, ed. Deborah Miller and trans. J. Hershy Worch (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 2002), 294.

[66] Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity*, ed. Susannah Heschel (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996), 40 and 371.

[67] Hannah Arendt, "Days of Change," July 28, 1944, in Hannah Arendt, *The Jewish Writings* (New York: Schocken, 2007), 215-17. Tadeusz Borowski (1922-1951), a well-known non-Jewish Polish poet who had survived Auschwitz, expressed sentiments similar to those of Arendt: "It is hope that provokes men to march indifferently to the gas-chambers, and keeps them from conceiving of an insurrection … Never has hope provoked so much ill as in this war, as in this camp. We were never taught to rid ourselves of hope, and that is why we are dying in the gas-chambers." Cited in Emil L. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1970), 104, n. 59. Borowski committed suicide by breathing in gas from a stove. He did this a few days after his wife gave birth to their daughter.

[68] Victor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy* (originally published 1946; Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), pp. 82 and 83, Kindle.

[69] Herbert Friedman, *Roots of the Future* (London: Gefen, 2001), 97.

[70] Simon Rawidowicz, "Israel the Ever-Dying People (1948)," in Simon Rawidowicz, *State of Israel, Diaspora and Jewish Continuity: Essay on the "Ever-Dying People*," ed. Benjamin C.I. Ravid (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press and University Press of New England, 1986), 61-63.

[71] Martin Buber, "Hope for this Hour (1952)," 228, and "Genuine Dialogue and the Possibilities of Peace (1953)," 237, in Martin Buber, *Pointing the Way* (New York: Schocken, 1974).

[72] Suzanne Levine, *Bella Abzug* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 53.

[73] Gershom Scholem, "Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea," in Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken 1971), 35.

[74]Eugene Borowitz, "The State of Jewish Belief: A Symposium," *Commentary Magazine*, Aug. 1966, https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/the-state-of-jewish-belief/

75 Erich Fromm, The Revolution of Hope: Toward a Humanized Technology (New York: American Mental Health Foundation, 1968), loc. 184-187, 187-189, 226, 251-252, 268-269, Kindle.

[76] From *"Shir la-Shalom*, The Song for Peace," lyrics by Yaakov Rotblit, melody by Yair Rosenblum. After Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by Yigal Amir in 1995, the bloodstained lyrics of this song were found in his pocket.

[77] Francine Klagsbrun, *Lioness: Golda Meir and the Nation of Israel* (New York: Knopf, 2019), 598.

[78] Emil Fackenheim, "The Commandment to Hope: A Response to Contemporary Jewish Experience," in Walter H. Capps, ed., *The Future of Hope* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 69 and 91.

[79] Jack Reimer, "We Cannot Merely Pray to You (c. 1973)," in Sidney Greenberg and Jonathan D. Levine, *Likrat Shabbat* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981), 73.

[80] Ernst Bloch, *Something's Missing in the Utopian Function of Art in Literature: Selected Essays*, trans. Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), 16-17.

[81] Emmanuel Levinas, "Cities of Refuge," in Emmanuel Levinas, *Beyond the Verse: Talmudic Readings and Lectures*, trans. Gary D. Mole (New York: Continuum, 2007), 52.

[82] Naomi Shemer, "*Al Kol Eleh"* ("Over All These"), 1980.

[83] Adrienne Rich, "Dreams before Wakening (1983)," in Adrienne Rich, *Your Native Land, Your Life* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), 45-46. The statement by Wiesel comes from his 1984 "Days of Remembrance" address delivered at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. The event served as a "symbolic ground-breaking ceremony" for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. I do not know the source of the other epigraph.

[84] Natan Sharansky, *Fear No Evil* (New York: Random House, 1988), p. 371, Kindle (italics in original).

[85] Jacob Neusner, *Messiah in Context: Israel's History and Destiny in Formative Judaism* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1984), 184-85.

[86] Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, "Toward a History of Jewish Hope" (1985) in David N. Myers and Alexander Kaye, *The Faith of Fallen Jews: Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi and the Writing of Jewish History*, Tauber Institute Series for the

Study of European Jewry (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2014), loc. 6276-6278, 6427-6429, 6471-6473, Kindle.
[87] "The Mystic as Philosopher—An Interview with Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz," interview by Sanford L. Drob and Harris Tilevitz, *The Jewish Review.*
[88] Leonard Fein, *Where Are We? The Inner Life of American Jews* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 74-75.
[89] Irving Greenberg, *The Jewish Way* (New York: Summit, 1988), 94.
[90] Ruth R. Wisse, *If I Am Not for Myself: The Liberal Betrayal of the Jews* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 18.
[91] Jerome D. Frank, *Persuasion and Healing* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 112.
[92] Grace Paley, *Just As I Thought* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998), 197.
[93] Yehudah Amichai, "Summer Evening in the Jerusalem Mountains," in Chana Bloch and Stephen Mitchell, eds. and trans., *Selected Poetry of Yehudah Amichai,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 174.
[94] Yehudah Amichai, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Why Jerusalem," in Yehudah Amichai, *Open Closed Open: Poems*, trans. Chana Bloch and Chana Kronfeld (New York: Mariner, 2006) 141.
[95] Yehuda Amichai, "Ein Yahav," in Amichai, *Open Closed Open*, trans. Chana Bloch and Chana Kronfeld, 69.
[96] Daniel Gordis, "The Miracle of Jewish Survival," in Noam Zion and Barbara Spectre, eds., *A Different Light: The Hanukkah Book of Celebration* (New York: Devora, 2000), 198.
[97] "On God, Indifference, and Hope: A Conversation with Elie Wiesel," *Reform Judaism*, 2005.
[98] Elie Wiesel, *A Meditation on Hope*, Inaugural May Smith Lecture on Post-Holocaust Christian/Jewish Dialogue, March 10, 2003 (Boca Raton: Florida Atlantic University, 2003), 7-8.
[99] Adam Fisher, *An Everlasting Name: A Service for Remembering the Shoah* (New York: Behrman House, 1991), 53.
[100] E. M. Broner, *Bring Home the Light: A Jewish Woman's Handbook of Ritual* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1999), 194.
[101] Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, *The Particulars of Rapture: Reflections on Exodus* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 389.
[102] Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar (New York: Routledge, 2002), 392-93.
[103] Ruth Bader Ginsburg, interview with Nina Totenberg, National Public Radio, May 2, 2002.
[104] An edited version of this statement appears in a remembrance of Patricia Barr written by Sally Gottesman for the Jewish Women's Archive. Thanks to Sally Gottesman for sharing the original with me. She wrote them some months before she died of breast cancer, fifteen years after she had first been diagnosed with the disease.
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[111] Alan Mittleman, "Messianic Hope," in Robert W. Jenson & Eugene B. Korn, eds., *Covenant and Hope: Christian and Jewish Reflections: Essays on Constructive Theology from the Institute for Theological Inquiry* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2012), p. 222, Kindle.
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[113] Edith Eger, *The Choice: Embrace the Possible* (New York: Scribner, 1917), pp. 6 and 273, Kindle.
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[115] Betsy Forester, "Practicing Hope: Our Sacred Task in the Process of Redemption," Jewish Federation of Madison (WI), Sept. 11, 2020.
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[117] Ruth Messinger, "Leadership and Moral Courage," 236, in Louis E. Newman, Ruth Messinger, Deborah Waxman, and Georgette Kennebrae, "Jewish Ethics and Leadership: Four Perspectives," *Journal of Jewish Ethics* 6, no. 2 (2021), 224-50.