



## Navigating Peoplehood and Humanity in a Hostile World

**Elana Stein Hain & Dyonna Ginsburg**

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Nearly two years after October 7 and more than 700 days of war, many Jews enter this High Holiday season with trepidation, facing what feels like an increasingly hostile world. In this episode of *TEXTing IRL*, **Elana Stein Hain** and OLAM CEO **Dyonna Ginsburg** turn to Rav Kook's "Fourfold Song" to explore how Jews can navigate competing commitments of caring for their own communities and for the wider world.

*This source sheet is part of the **September 15, 2025** episode of the podcast **TEXTing IRL - Ideas for Real Life**. Host **Elana Stein Hain** sits down with guests who are accomplished practitioners in their fields to explore how classic and modern Jewish texts can help us wrestle with and act with integrity in the face of the big dilemmas of our time.*

**Elana Stein Hain** is the Rosh Beit Midrash and a senior research fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America, where she serves as lead faculty and consults on the content of lay and professional programs.

A widely well-regarded thinker and teacher, Elana is passionate about bringing rabbinic thought into conversation with contemporary life. To this end, she teaches [Talmud from the Balcony](#), an occasional learning seminar exposing the big ideas, questions, and issues motivating rabbinic discussions. Elana is the author of [Circumventing the Law: Rabbinic Perspectives on Legal Loopholes and Integrity](#) (Penn Press, 2024) which uses loopholes as a lens for understanding rabbinic views on law and ethics.

She earned her doctorate in Religion at Columbia University and is an alumna of the Yeshiva University Graduate Program in Advanced Talmudic Studies (GPATS) as well as the Consortium in Jewish Studies and Legal Theory Graduate Fellowship at Cardozo School of Law. She also served for eight years as a clergy member on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, at both Lincoln Square Synagogue and the Jewish Center, has taught at the Wagner School at NYU, and sits on the board of Sefaria: A Living Library of Jewish Texts.

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**Dyonna Ginsburg** is the CEO of OLAM. Prior to OLAM, Dyonna served as Director of Education and Service Learning at The Jewish Agency; Executive Director of Bema'aglei Tzedek, an Israeli social change NGO; and co-founder of Siach, a global network of Jewish social justice and environmental professionals.

A frequent lecturer, Dyonna was named "one of Israel's 50 most inspiring women" by Nashim magazine in 2015. Dyonna was awarded the Simon Rockower Award for Excellence in Jewish Journalism by the American Jewish Press Association; the Schusterman Fellowship; and the World Council of Jewish Communal Service's Ted Comet Exemplar Award for Outstanding Leadership in Strengthening the Jewish People. Dyonna has also co-lead a research team on Israel, North American Jewry, and Global Social Justice at the Shalom Hartman Institute.

Dyonna currently sits on the advisory boards of Yanshoof and the Global Jewry initiative. Dyonna has a BA in International Relations from Columbia University and an MA in Jewish Education from Hebrew University.

**The Shalom Hartman Institute** is a leading research and educational center serving Israel and world Jewry. We work to enrich the moral and spiritual life of Israel and the Jewish people, deepen the commitment to pluralism and Israel's Jewish and democratic character, and rebuild the covenant between Israel and the Jewish world. Through our community of outstanding scholars and educators, the Institute develops innovative responses to the challenges of our time, cultivates a new generation of leaders and change agents, and builds transformational educational projects that help inspire a better Judaism and a better Israel for the 21st century.

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**Abraham Isaac HaCohen Kook, "שיר המרובע" (Shir HaMruba) / The Fourfold Song,"**  
**in Shemona Kevatzim 7:112, Orot HaKodesh 2:444-5; ca. 1917**

*Adapted from the translation by Benjamin J. Samuels*

יש שהוא שר שירת נפשו, ובנפשו הוא מוצא את הכל, את מלא הספוק הרוחני במלואו.  
ויש שהוא שר שירת האמה, יוצא הוא מתוך המעגל של נפשו הפרטית, שאינו מוצא אותה  
מרוחבת כראוי, ולא מישבת ישוב אידאלי, שואף למרומי עז, והוא מתדבק באהבה עדינה  
עם כללותה של כנסת ישראל, ועמה הוא שר את שירה, מצר בצרותיה, ומשתעשע  
בתקוותיה, הוגה דעות עליונות וטהרות על עברה ועל עתידה, וחוקר באהבה ובחכמת לב  
את תכן רוחה הפנימי.

ויש אשר עוד תתרחב נפשו עד שיוצא ומתפשט מעל גבול ישראל, לשיר את שירת האדם,  
רוחו הולך ומתרחב בגאון כללות האדם והוד צלמו, שואף אל תעודתו הכללית ומצפה  
להשתלמותו העליונה, וממקור חיים זה הוא שואב את כללות הגיונותיו ומחקריו,  
שאיפותיו וחזיונותיו.

ויש אשר עוד מזה למעלה ברחב יתנשא, עד שמתאחד עם כל היקום כולו, עם כל בריות,  
ועם כל העולמים, ועם כלם אומר שירה, זה הוא העוסק בפרק שירה בכל יום שמבטח לו  
שהוא בן עולם הבא.

ויש אשר עולה עם כל השירים הללו ביחד באגדה אחת, וככלם נותנים את קולותיהם, כלם  
יחד מנעימים את זמריהם, וזה לתוך זה נותן לשד וחיים, קול ששון וקול שמחה, קול  
צהלה וקול רנה, קול חדנה וקול קדשה.

שירת הנפש, שירת האמה, שירת האדם, שירת העולם, כלן יחד מתמזגות בקרבן בכל עת  
ובכל שעה.

והתמימות הזאת במלואה עולה היא להיות שירת קדש, שירת אל, שירת ישראל, בעצם  
עזה ותפארתה, בעצם אמתה וגדלה, ישראל שיר אל, שיר פשוט, שיר כפול, שיר משלש,  
שיר מרבע. שיר השירים אשר לשלמה, למלך שהשלום שלו.

There is one who sings the **Song of Self**, and within one's self, finds everything: the full of  
one's spiritual satisfaction within one's own fullness.

And there is one who sings the **Song of Nation**, who steps out from the circle of one's  
private concern, which they don't find sufficiently broad, nor idealistically grounding. This  
person strives for fierce heights yet attaches themselves with gentle love to the ensemble  
of *Knesset Yisrael* – the Jewish people, and with her sings her songs, shares in her  
distresses, delights in her hopes. Engrossed is this one with thoughts elevated and pure  
regarding her past and future; with love and wise-heart, studying her inner spiritual  
essence.

And there is one who broadens further one's sense of self until it extends and expands beyond the boundary of Israel to sing the **Song of Humanity**. Their spirit advances and encompasses the majesty of humanity, the splendorous dignity of its divine image. This person is drawn to common destiny and yearns for humanity's sublime self-actualization. From this life source, this person draws the principles of their ruminations and investigations, their ambitions and dreams.

And there is one who still more expansively rises higher until one unifies one's self with all existence, with all creatures, and with all worlds. With all of them, one sings. This one engages one's self with *Perek Shira* – the daily **Song of World-Creation**, to whom it is forepromised that one will be worthy of the World-Yet-to-Come.

And then there is one who arises with all these songs together in concert, all parts contributing their voices, all together harmonizing their melodies, one with another creating polyphonic vitality and life: They are the sounds of joy and jubilation, the sounds of rejoicing and exultation, the sounds of ecstasy and holiness.

The Song of Self, the Song of Nation, the Song of Humanity, the Song of World-Creation – they all symphonize together within this person at every moment and at all times.

And this perfection in its plenitude ascends to become the song of holiness, the **song of El (God)**, the song of Israel, with passionate intensity and beauty, with fierce integrity and grandeur. *Yisrael shir El* – Israel [means] the song of God. It is a simple song, a twofold song, a threefold song, a fourfold song. It is the **Song of Songs** of Solomon, *Shir haShirim asher liShlomo*, [the song] of the King in whom is the peace of wholeness.