

## Source Sheet Class 17-“2000 Years of Jewish History”-Rabbi Menachem Levine

### Source 1

“There are those who wish to study and have no financial means to do so, and those who wish to study and are financially able to do but have no teacher to guide them in the true path of analytical study...and they are like sheep without a shepherd ... and even though I am unworthy of a crown that does not truly befit me...nevertheless, [I see] a time not far distant when the Jewish people will be without leaders...and the doors of the house of study will be locked...Therefore do I call all of my beloved brethren to hear the truth...to repair the breach in our wall and to support G-d’s Torah [through this yeshiva] with all our might, whether by supplying proper students, whether by providing the necessary financial support.”

Rav Chaim Volozhin quoted in Etz Chaim, pp. 33-34

### Source 2

“Expulsions, deportations, arrests, and beatings became the daily lot of the Jews, not only of their lower class, but even of the middle class and the Jewish intelligentsia. The government of Alexander III waged a campaign of war against its Jewish inhabitants... The Jews were driven and hounded, and emigration appeared to be the only escape from the terrible tyranny of the Romanovs.”

Berel Wein in Triumph of Survival (p. 173)

### Source 3

ARISE and go now to the city of slaughter; Into its courtyard wind thy way;  
There with thine own hand touch, and with the eyes of thine head,  
Behold on tree, on stone, on fence, on mural clay,  
The spattered blood and dried brains of the dead.  
Proceed thence to the ruins, the split walls reach,  
Where wider grows the hollow, and greater grows the  
breach; Pass over the shattered hearth, attain the broken wall  
Whose burnt and barren brick, whose charred stones reveal  
The open mouths of such wounds, that no mending  
Shall ever mend, nor healing ever heal.  
There will thy feet in feathers sink, and stumble  
On wreckage doubly wrecked, scroll heaped on manuscript,  
Fragments again fragmented—  
Pause not upon this havoc; go thy way.  
The perfumes will be wafted from the acacia bud  
And half its blossoms will be feathers,  
Whose smell is the smell of blood!  
And, spiting thee, strange incense they will bring—  
Banish thy loathing—all the beauty of the spring,  
The thousand golden arrows of the sun,

Will flash upon thy malison;  
The sevenfold rays of broken glass  
Over thy sorrow joyously will pass.....  
Tomorrow the rain will wash their mingled blood  
Into the runners, and it will be lost  
In rubbish heap, in stagnant pool, in mud.  
Its cry will not be heard.  
It will descend into the deep, or water the cockle-burr.  
And all things will be as they ever were....  
To seal with a last look, as with their final breath,  
The agony of their lives, the terror of their death.  
Tumbling and stumbling wraiths, they come, and cower there  
Their silence whimpers, and it is their eyes which cry  
Wherefore, O Lord, and why?  
It is a silence only God can bear.  
Lift then thine eyes to the roof; there's nothing there,  
Save silences that hang from rafters  
And brood upon the air:  
Question the spider in his lair!  
His eyes beheld these things; and with his web he can  
A tale unfold horrific to the ear of man:  
A tale of cloven belly, feather-filled;  
Of nostrils nailed, of skull-bones bashed and spilled;  
Of murdered men who from the beams were hung,  
And of a babe beside its mother flung,  
Its mother speared, the poor chick finding rest  
Upon its mother's cold and milkless breast;  
Of how a dagger halved an infant's word,  
Its ma was heard, its mama never heard.  
O, even now its eyes from me demand accounting,  
For these the tales the spider is recounting,  
Tales that do puncture the brain, such tales that sever  
Thy body, spirit, soul, from life, forever!  
Then wilt thou bid thy spirit—Hold, enough!  
Stifle the wrath that mounts within thy throat,  
Bury these things accursed,  
Within the depth of thy heart, before thy heart will burst!...

H.N. Bialik, "The City of Slaughter" in Complete Poetic Works of Hayyim Nahman Bialik,  
Israel Efros, ed. (New York, 1948): 129-43 (Vol. I)