

Laments איכה

Translations of *Eikhah* for our world

This translation of *Laments*, the book of mourning poems read on *Tish'a B'Av*, uses principles of the Buber-Rosenzweig Bible. It strives to be “concordant”, translating related Hebrew words with related English words and following the order and syntax of the Hebrew where possible. It also focuses on the more physical, earthy meaning of words, in order to draw the modern reader towards more ancient ways of seeing and feeling. Sometimes alternate translations are given, indicated by a slash. (When reading aloud, simply pick one of the translations. For *YHVH*, you can read *Adonai* or *Hashem* or “the Eternal”.) James Moffat’s 1922 translation was consulted. As a somewhat literal translation, *Laments* uses “He” and “His” as pronouns for God, though Torah and common sense command us not to make an exclusively male or female image of God. If you are using *Laments* liturgically, please feel encouraged to change the pronouns. For brief essays on the theology of *Eikhah*, refugees, the Earth, and more, see the end of this booklet.



Laments 4:1, Margaret Adams Parker
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Read sections from Rabbi Seidenberg’s groundbreaking book, now in paperback, *Kabbalah and Ecology: God’s Image in the More-Than-Human World* (Cambridge U., 2015) at kabbalahandecology.com.

Find more *Tisha B’Av* resources, songs, and teachings online at: theshalomcenter.org/node/1733 and neohasid.org/zman/tisha_bav/.

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כְּהִנֵּיהּ נֶאֱנָחִים
 בְּתוֹלְתֶיהָ נוֹגֹת
 וְהִיא מֵרָלָה:
 הָ הָיוּ צָרֶיהָ לְרֹאשׁ
 אִיבֶיהָ שָׁלוֹ
 כִּי־יְהוָה הוֹגָה
 עַל־רֶב־פְּשָׁעֶיהָ
 עוֹלָלֶיהָ הִלְכוּ שְׁבִי
 לִפְנֵי־צָר:
 וַיֵּצֵא מִן־בֵּת־צִיּוֹן
 כָּל־הַדָּרָה
 הָיוּ שָׂרֶיהָ כְּאַיִלִּים
 לֹא־מָצְאוּ מְרֻעָה
 וַיִּלְכוּ בְּלֹא־כֹחַ
 לִפְנֵי רוֹדְף:
 זַ וַיִּזְכֹּר יְרוּשָׁלַם
 יְמֵי עֲנִיָּה
 וּמְרוֹדֶיהָ
 כָּל־מַחֲמָדֶיהָ
 אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ מִיָּמֵי קָדֶם
 בְּנִפְלַעַת עַמָּהּ בְּיַד־צָר
 וְאֵין עֹזֹר לָהּ
 רְאוּהָ צָרִים
 שִׁחֲקוּ עַל מִשְׁבֹּתֶיהָ:
 ח חָטְא חָטְאָה יְרוּשָׁלַם

Her priests are moaning,
 her girls grieving;
 And she – it is bitterness for her.
 5 Her tormentors were at the head,
 her enemies had ease
 For YHVH / the Eternal aggrieved her
 for the greatness of her sins.
 Her babes walked captive
 before foe;
 6 and all her splendor went out from
 daughter Zion!
 Her ministers were like deer,
 not finding a place to graze;
 and (so) they walked, without strength,
 before a pursuer.
 7 Jerusalem remembered
 the days of her poverty / affliction
 and her downsliding,
 all her precious things
 which were from days long ago,
 while her people fell into a foe's hand;
 and there is no help for her.
 They saw her, her tormentors,
 laughing over her becoming stilled.
 8 Sinning she sinned, Jerusalem.

אַ אֵיכָה |
 יֹשְׁבָה בָדָד
 הָעִיר רַבַּתִּי עָם
 הָיְתָה כְּאַלְמָנָה
 רַבַּתִּי בְּגוֹיִם
 שָׂרְתִי בְּמַדִּינֹת
 הָיְתָה לְמָס:
 בַּ בָּכוּ תִבְכָּה בְּלַיְלָהָ
 וְדַמְעָתָהּ עַל לַחֶיהָ
 אֵין־לָהּ מְנַחֵם
 מִכָּל־אֲהָבֶיהָ
 כָּל־רֵעֶיהָ
 בִּגְדוּ בָּהּ
 הָיוּ לָהּ לְאִיבִים:
 גַּ גָּלְתָה יְהוּדָה
 מֵעֲנִי וּמִרַב עֲבֹדָה
 הִיא יֹשְׁבָה בְּגוֹיִם
 לֹא מָצְאָה מְנוּחַ
 כָּל־רֹדְפֶיהָ הִשִּׁיגוּהָ
 בֵּין הַמְּצָרִים:
 דַּ דִּרְכֵי צִיּוֹן אֲבֵלוֹת
 מִבְּלִי בָּאֵי מוֹעֵד
 כָּל־שַׁעְרֶיהָ שׁוֹמְמִין

1 Eikhah! How can it be –
 she sat alone,
 the city so great / so swelled with people?
 She was like a widow.
 The one great among the nations,
 ministering among the states,
 became a slave caste.
 2 Crying, she will cry in the night,
 her tear upon her cheek
 There is none for her, no comforter,
 from all her lovers.
 All her companions
 played traitor with her.
 They became for her enemies.
 3 She, Judah, was exiled,
 by poverty, and by (so) much hard labor
 She sat among the nations,
 not finding any rest;
 All her pursuers caught up with her
 between the confined places.
 4 Zion's roads are mourning
 from being without festival-goers,
 all her gates desolated;

כָּל-עֹבְרֵי דֶרֶךְ
 הַבִּיטוּ וּרְאוּ
 אִם-יֵשׁ מִכְאוֹב כְּמִכְאוֹבִי
 אֲשֶׁר עוֹלָל לִי
 אֲשֶׁר הוֹגָה יְהוָה
 בְּיוֹם חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ:
 יג מִמָּרוֹם שָׁלַח-אֵשׁ
 בַּעֲצָמַי וַיִּדְבֶּנָה
 פָּרַשׁ רֶשֶׁת לְרַגְלִי
 הִשְׁכִּינֵנִי אֲחֹרֶר
 נִתְּנֵנִי שְׁמָמָה
 כָּל-הַיּוֹם דָּוָה:
 יד נִשְׁקַד עַל פִּשְׁעֵי
 בִידּוֹ יִשְׁתַּרְגְּנוּ
 עָלוּ עַל-צַוָּארִי
 הִכְשִׁיל כַּחֲוִי
 נִתְּנֵנִי אֲדֹנָי בְּיָדִי
 לֹא-אוּכָל קוּם:
 טו סֵלָה
 כָּל-אַפְיָרִי | אֲדֹנָי בְּקֶרְבִּי
 קָרָא עָלַי מוֹעֵד
 לִשְׁבֹּר בַּחוּרִי
 גֵּת דֶּבֶר אֲדֹנָי
 לְבָתוּלַת בֵּת-יְהוּדָה:
 טז עַל-אַלְהָה | אֲנִי בּוֹכָה

all who pass on the way.
 (All of you) look, and see –
 could there be pain like my pain
 which was doled out to me,
 which *YHVH* caused to grieve
 in the day of His furious anger?
 13 From a height He sent fire
 in my bones and overwhelmed them.
 He spread out a net for my feet;
 He turned me / repelled me backward;
 He made me desolate,
 all day – sickness.
 14 The harness of my sins lashed on,
 they were tied down by His hand,
 brought up onto my neck,
 making my strength fail.
Adonai gave me over into (such) hands
 that I am unable to stand up.
 15 *Adonai* spurned
 all my mighty warriors within me,
 He called out over me a feast
 for breaking my boys;
 a winepress—*Adonai* stomped—
 for daughter Judah's girl.
 16 Over these, I am crying;

עַל-כֵּן לְנִידָה הָיְתָה
 כָּל-מִכְבְּדֶיהָ הִזְלִוָהּ
 כִּי-רָאוּ עֲרוּתָהּ
 גַּם-הִיא נֹאנָחָה
 וַתִּשָּׁב אֲחֹרֶר:
 ט טִמְאָתָהּ בְּשׂוּלֶיהָ
 לֹא זָכְרָה אַחֲרִיתָהּ
 וַתִּרְדּוּ פְּלָאִים
 אֵין מְנַחֵם לָהּ
 רְאֵה יְהוָה אֶת-עֲנִיִּי
 כִּי הִגְדִּיל אוֹיֵב:
 י יָדוֹ פָּרַשׁ צֹר
 עַל כָּל-מִחְמַדֶּיהָ
 כִּי-רָאָתָהּ גּוֹיִם
 בָּאוּ מִקְדָּשָׁהּ
 אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָהּ
 לֹא-יָבֹאוּ
 בְּקָהֶל לָךְ:
 יא כָּל-עַמָּה נֹאנָחִים
 מִבִּקְשִׁים לֶחֶם
 נָתְנוּ מִחֲמוּדֵיהֶם
 בְּאֹכַל לְהָשִׁיב נַפְשׁ
 רְאֵה יְהוָה
 וְהִבִּיטָהּ כִּי הֵיטִי זוּלָלָהּ:
 יב לֹא לְוָא אֵלֶיכֶם

For this an outcast / *nidah* she became.
 All who honor her despise her,
 for they saw her nakedness.
 Also her, she is moaning,
 and turned around backward.
 9 Her blood / *tum'ah* in her skirts,
 she didn't remember her end after,
 she descended wondrously.
 There is no comforter for her.
YHVH, see my poverty / my humiliation,
 for an enemy became great.
 10 A foe / Trauma spread out his hand
 over all her precious things;
 She saw other nations
 come within her holy place,
 which You commanded her:
 "They won't come in
 with the community to you."
 11 All her people are moaning
 seeking bread;
 They gave up their precious things
 for food to restore life.
 See, *YHVH*,
 and look (at how) I was despised.
 12 Never to you,

נִהְפָּךְ לִבִּי בְּקִרְבִּי
כִּי מָרוּ מְרִיתִי
מִחוּץ שְׂכָל־הַחָרֵב
בְּבֵית כָּמוֹת:

כֹּא שָׁמְעוּ כִּי נֶאֱנַחָה אָנִי
אֵין מְנַחֵם לִי
כָּל־אֵיבֵי שָׁמְעוּ
רַעְתִּי

שָׁשׂוּ כִּי אָתָּה עָשִׂיתָ
הִבֵּאתָ יוֹם־קִרְאָתָּ
וַיִּהְיוּ כָמוֹנִי:

כָּב תָּבֵא כָּל־רַעְתֶּם לְפָנַי
וְעוֹלָל לָמוּ כְּאִשָּׁר
עוֹלָלָתָ לִי עַל כָּל־פְּשָׁעֵי
כִּי־רַבּוֹת אֲנִחָתִי
וּלְבִי רָגִי:

my heart overturned within me,
for rebelling I rebelled.
From outside sword bereaving;
In the house, like death itself.

21 They listened – for I am moaning,
there is no comforter for me.
All my enemies listened
for my evil (doom).
They rejoiced, for You did it,
You brought the day You called for –
and let them be(come) like me.

22 May all their evil come before You,
and deal to them as
You dealt to me for all my sins.
For so much are my sighs,
and my heart is sickened.

CHAPTER 2

אֵיכָהּ

יָעִיב בְּאַפּוֹ |
אֲדֹנָי אֶת־בֵּת־צִיּוֹן
הַשָּׁלֵךְ מִשָּׁמַיִם אֶרֶץ
תַּפְאֶרֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל

1 *Eikhah!* How can it be –
in His anger *Adonai* / the Lord
clouded over daughter Zion.
He cast down, from skies (to) earth,
Israel's glory,

עֵינַי | עֵינַי יִרְדּוּ מַיִם
כִּי־רָחֵק מִמֶּנִּי מְנַחֵם
מִשְׁעִיב נֶפְשִׁי
הָיוּ בְנֵי שׁוֹמְמִים
כִּי גִבֹר אוֹיֵב:

יֵן פִּרְשָׁה צִיּוֹן בְּיָדֶיהָ
אֵין מְנַחֵם לָהּ
צִוָּה יְהוָה לְיַעֲקֹב
סָבִיבוּ צָרָיו
הִתְעָה יְרוּשָׁלַם
לְנִדָּה בֵּינֵיהֶם:

יח צִדִּיק הוּא יְהוָה
כִּי פִּיהוּ מְרִיתִי
שָׁמְעוּ־נָא כָּל־הָעַמִּים
וְרָאוּ מְכַאֲבִי
בְּתוֹלָתִי וּבְחוּרֵי
הָלָכוּ בְּשָׁבִי:

יט קִרְאָתִי לְמַאֲהָבִי
הִמָּה רְמוּנֵי

כְּהֵנִי וְזִקְנֵי
בְּעִיר גּוֹעִו
כִּי־בִקְשׁוּ אֲכָל לָמוּ
וַיִּשְׁיבוּ אֶת־נַפְשָׁם:
כֹּ רָאָה יְהוָה כִּי־צָרָלִי
מִעֵי חֲמָרְמוֹרוֹ

my eye, my eye, she drops water.
For so far from me is any comforter,
a restorer for my life.
My children were decimated,
for an enemy overwhelmed / triumphed.

17 Zion spread out with her hands,
there is no comforter for her.
YHVH commanded for Jacob,
surrounding him, his tormentors.
Jerusalem became
outcast / *nidah* between them.

18 Righteous is *YHVH*,
for His mouth I rebelled (against).
Listen, please—all peoples—
and see my pain!
My girls and my boys
walked captive / into captivity.

19 I called to my lovers.
Those deceived me.
My priests, and my elders,
they wasted away in the city,
while they sought food for themselves
(that) would bring back their life / soul.
20 See *YHVH* – for mine is torment,
my guts were churning,

שַׁחַת מִבְצָרָיו
 וַיִּרְבֵּל בְּבֵת־יְהוּדָה
 תִּפְאֲנֶיהָ וְאַנְיָהּ׃
 וַיִּחַמַּס כְּגֹן שָׂפוֹ
 שַׁחַת מוֹעֲדוֹ
 שָׁפַח יְהוָה | בְּצִיּוֹן
 מוֹעֵד וְשֹׁכֵת
 וַיִּנְאֹץ בְּזַעַם־אָפוֹ
 מֶלֶךְ וְכוֹהֵן׃
 ז וַנֹּחַ אֲדֹנָי | מִזִּבְחוֹ
 נֹאֵר מִקִּדְשׁוֹ
 הִסְגִּיר בְּיַד־אֹיֵב
 חוֹמַת אֲרָמְנוֹתֶיהָ
 קוֹל נְתָנוּ בְּבֵית־יְהוָה
 כִּיּוֹם מוֹעֵד׃
 ח חָשֵׁב יְהוָה | לְהַשְׁחִית
 חוֹמַת בֵּת־צִיּוֹן נֹטָה לָּו
 לֹא־הָשִׁיב יָדוֹ
 מִבִּלְעַד
 וַיִּאֲבֹל־חֵל וְחוֹמָה
 יִחָדְדוּ אִמְלָלוּ׃
 ט טָבְעוּ בָאֶרֶץ שַׁעֲרֶיהָ
 אֲבַד וְשֹׁבֵר בְּרִיחֶיהָ
 מִלְכָּה וְשָׂרֶיהָ בְּגוֹיִם
 אֵין תּוֹרָה

undermined His fortifications;
 And He multiplied in daughter Zion
 grief and groaning.
 6 Like a garden, He tore apart His sukkah,
 destroyed His feast.
 YHVH caused Shabbat and festival
 to be forgotten in Zion,
 by the rage of His anger
 king and priest.
 7 Adonai abhorred His altar,
 disdained His holy place.
 He made shut with an enemy's hand
 the walls of her citadels.
 They gave a shout in YHVH's house
 like a festival day.
 8 YHVH plotted to ruin
 daughter Zion's wall, stretched a line,
 didn't turn back His hand
 from swallowing up,
 and He made rampart and wall mourn,
 together made wretched.
 9 They drowned in the earth, her gates.
 He smashed and broke her bars.
 Her king and her ministers in the nations,
 there is no Torah / no teaching.

וְלֹא־זָכַר
 הֶלֶם־רַגְלָיו
 בְּיוֹם אָפוֹ׃
 ב בִּלְעַד אֲדֹנָי לֹא חָמַל
 אֶת כָּל־נְאוֹת יַעֲקֹב
 הָרַס בְּעִבְרָתוֹ
 מִבְצָרֵי בֵת־יְהוּדָה
 הִגִּיעַ לָאָרֶץ
 חָלַל מַמְלָכָה וְשָׂרֶיהָ׃
 ג גִּבַּע בַּחֲרִי־אֶף
 כָּל קַרְנוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל
 הָשִׁיב אַחֲוֹר יָמִינוֹ
 מִפְּנֵי אוֹיֵב
 וַיִּבְעַר בִּיעָקֹב כְּאֵשׁ
 לָהֶבֶת אֲכָלָה סָבִיב׃
 ד דָּרַךְ קִשְׁתּוֹ כְּאוֹיֵב
 נָצַב יָמִינוֹ
 כְּצֹר
 וַיַּהַלֵּךְ כָּל
 מִחְמַד־יָעִין
 בְּאַהֲלֵ בֵת־צִיּוֹן
 שָׁפַךְ כְּאֵשׁ חֲמָתוֹ׃
 ה הָיָה אֲדֹנָי | כְּאוֹיֵב
 בִּלְעַד יִשְׂרָאֵל
 בִּלְעַד כָּל־אֲרָמְנוֹתֶיהָ

and didn't remember
 His foot's resting place
 in His day of anger.
 2 Adonai devoured—He had no pity—
 all of Jacob's pastures.
 He tore down with His burning
 daughter Judah's fortifications;
 He reached to the very ground.
 He violated kingdom and her ministers.
 3 With ferocious anger He hacked off
 all of Israel's horn.
 He turned His right hand backward
 before the enemy.
 Burning into Jacob, like fire
 flaming, consuming (all) around.
 4 He worked His bow like an enemy,
 He stood firm His right hand
 as a foe / a tormentor
 and He murdered everything
 precious to the eye;
 In daughter Zion's tent
 He poured out His wrath like the fire.
 5 Adonai was like an enemy;
 He devoured / swallowed Israel.
 He devoured all her citadels,

וַאֲנִי־חֲמֹד׃
בְּתוּלַת בֵּת־צִיּוֹן
כִּי־גָדוֹל כַּיָּם שִׁבְרָךְ
מִי יִרְפָּא־לָךְ׃
יָד נְבִיאֶיךָ חָזוּ לָךְ
שׁוֹא וְתַפֵּל
וְלֹא־גָלוּ עַל־עוֹנֶיךָ
לְהָשִׁיב שְׁבוּתֶךָ
וַיַּחֲזוּ לָךְ
מַשְׁאוֹת שׁוֹא וּמַדּוּחִים׃
טו סָפְקוּ עָלֶיךָ כַּפִּים
כָּל־עַבְרֵי דָרְךָ
שָׁרְקוּ וַיִּנְעוּ רֹאשָׁם
עַל־בֵּת יְרוּשָׁלַם
הִנָּאת הָעִיר שִׁיאֲמְרוּ
כְּלִילַת יָפִי
מִשׁוּשׁ לְכָל־הָאָרֶץ׃
טז פָּצוּ עֲלֶיךָ פִּיהֶם
כָּל־אֹיְבֶיךָ
שָׁרְקוּ וַיַּחֲרִקוּ־שֹׁן
אָמְרוּ בְּלָעֲנוּ
אָךְ זֶה הַיּוֹם שִׁקְוִינָהוּ
מִצָּאֵנוּ רְאִינוּ׃
יז עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר זָמַם
בַּצֵּעַ אֲמָרְתוֹ

(that) I may comfort you,
daughter Zion's girl?
For great, like the sea, is your shattering
– who will bring healing to you?
14 For you did your prophets envision
deception, and irrelevance,
revealing nothing for your wrong
to turn back your destiny / your captivity,
and they envisioned for you
a burden of deceit and dejections.
15 They struck their hands over you,
all who passed on the road,
they hissed and they shook their head
over daughter Jerusalem:
“Is this it? The city they said (was)
beauty's completion,
joy's source for all the earth?”
16 They crack open their mouth over you,
all your enemies.
They hissed, and they grit teeth.
They said: We swallowed;
Akh! This day that we hoped for,
we found, we saw!
17 *YHVH* did what He conspired;
He pushed through His saying

גַּם־נְבִיאֶיהָ
לֹא־מָצְאוּ חֲזוֹן מִיְּהוָה׃
י יֵשְׁבוּ לָאָרֶץ
יָדְמוּ וְזָנְי בֵּת־צִיּוֹן
הָעָלוּ עָפָר עַל־רֹאשָׁם
חָגְרוּ שָׁקִים
הוֹרִידוּ לָאָרֶץ רֹאשָׁן
בְּתוּלַת יְרוּשָׁלַם׃
יא כָּלוּ בְּדַמְעוֹת עֵינַי
חֲמַרְמְרוּ מִעֵי
נִשְׁפָּךְ לָאָרֶץ כְּבֹדִי
עַל־שִׁבְרִי
בֵּת־עַמִּי
בַּעֲטָף עוֹלִל וְיוֹזֵק
בְּרַחֲבוֹת קִרְיָה׃
יב לְאִמָּתָם יֹאמְרוּ
אֵיךְ דָּגָן וַיֵּין
בְּהִתְעַטְפָם
כְּחָלָל בְּרַחֲבוֹת עִיר
בְּהִשְׁתַּפֵּךְ נַפְשָׁם
אֶל־חֵיק אִמָּתָם׃
יג מֶה־אֶעֱיִיד׃
מֶה אֲדַמֶּה־לָּךְ
הַבֵּת יְרוּשָׁלַם
מֶה אֲשׁוּהֶה־לָּךְ

Also her prophets,
They found no vision from *YHVH*.
10 They sat down to the earth, they
stayed silent, daughter Zion's elders,
they lifted dust over their head,
tied on sackcloth.
They let their head down to the earth,
Jerusalem's girls.
11 My eyes were used up by the tears,
my guts churned up,
my liver poured out to the ground
over the shattering of
my daughter people,
with exhaustion of babe and suckling
in the town's squares.
12 To their mothers they would say,
“Where is grain and wine?”,
stretching themselves out,
like a corpse, in city streets,
with their life-force pouring itself out
onto their mothers' chest.
13 What can I make testify?
What will I liken to you?
O daughter Jerusalem!
What can I compare to you

כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁכְבוּ לָאָרֶץ חַיּוֹת
נָעַר וְזָקֵן בְּתוֹלְתֵי וּבְחוּרֵי
נָפְלוּ בַּחֶרֶב
הִרְגֵתָּ בַּיּוֹם אֶפְרָיִם
טָבַחְתָּ לֹא חֶמְלָתָּ:
כִּי תִקְרָא כַּיּוֹם מוֹעֵד
מִגּוּרֵי מִסְכֵּיב
וְלֹא הָיָה בַּיּוֹם אֶף-יְהוָה
פָּלִיט וְשָׁרִיד
אֲשֶׁר-טִפַּחְתִּי וְרַבִּיתִי
אֵיבֵי כָלָם:

21 Laid down to the earth (in the) streets,
young and old, my girls and my boys,
they fell by sword;
You murdered in the day of Your anger.
You slaughtered, You had no pity.
22 You would call, like a festival day,
(for) my neighbors from all around;
and (so) in *YHVH*'s day of anger
there weren't any escaped or remaining
which I had nursed and raised –
my enemy finished them all.

CHAPTER 3

אֲנִי הַגִּבֹּר רָאָה עָנִי
בְּשֵׁבֶט עֲבָרְתּוֹ:
בְּאוֹתֵי נְהָג וּיִלָּךְ
חֹשֶׁךְ וְלֹא-אוֹר:
גַּם אֵפוֹד בִּי יֵשֵׁב
יִהְיֶה יָדוֹ כָּל-הַיּוֹם:
ד' בָּלָה בְּשָׁרִי וְעוֹרִי
שָׁבַר עֲצָמוֹתַי:
ה' בָּנָה עָלַי וַיִּקָּה
רֹאשׁ וּתְלָאָה:

1 I am the man who saw affliction
through the rod of His burning anger.
2 Me did He drive and He led –
darkness and no light;
3 *Akh* – Even against me He turned
upending His hand, all the day.
4 He wore away my flesh and my skin,
He broke my bones;
5 He built against me and surrounded
– gall and wormwood.

אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה מִימֵי-קֶדֶם
הָרָס וְלֹא חֶמֶל
וַיִּשְׂמַח עָלֶיךָ אוֹיֵב
הָרִים קִרְן צָרִיף:
יח צָעַק לָבָם אֶל-אֲדֹנָי
חוֹמַת בֵּת-צִיּוֹן
הוֹרִידִי כִנְחָל דִּמְעָה
יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה
אֶל-תַּתְנִי פּוּגַת לֶךְ
אֶל-תָּרוֹם בֵּת-עֵינֶךָ:
יט קוּמִי | רִנֵּי בַלִּילָה
לְרֹאשׁ אֲשִׁמְרוֹת
שִׁפְכִי כַּמִּים לִבְךָ
גִּבַּח פָּנֶי אֲדֹנָי
שָׂאִי אֵלָיו כַּפֶּיךָ
עַל-נֶפֶשׁ עוֹלְלֶיךָ
הַעֲטוּפִים בָּרָעַב
כִּרְאֹשׁ כָּל-חוּצוֹת:
כ רָאָה יְהוָה וַהֲבִיטָה
לְמִי עוֹלְלֹת כָּה
אִם-תֹּאכְלֶנָּה נָשִׁים פְּרִיָם
עָלְלֵי טַפָּחִים
אִם-יִהְיֶה בְּמִקְדָּשׁ אֲדֹנָי
כִּהֵן וְנָבִיא:

which He commanded from early days.
He tore down and showed no pity.
He made an enemy rejoice over you;
your tormentors' horn was exalted.
18 Their heart screamed out to *Adonai*.
Wall of daughter Zion,
let down a tear like a torrent,
day and night.
Don't give yourself any break;
Don't let your daughter eye fall silent.
19 Get up! Sing out in the night
to the first of the nightwatches:
Pour out your heart like water
right before *Adonai*!
Lift your palms toward Him –
for the life of your babies
stretched out by famine
at every street head!
20 See, *YHVH*, and look:
to whom did You deal thus?
If women will eat their fruit,
coddled babies—!
If priest and prophet are murdered
in *Adonai*'s holy place—!

טז וַיִּגְרַם בַּחֲצֵץ שָׁנִי
הַכְּפִישָׁנִי בְּאַפֶּרֶ:
יז וַתִּזְנַח מִשְׁלֹם נַפְשִׁי
נָשִׁיתִי טוֹבָה:
יח וָאָמַר אֲבַד נַצְחִי
וַתּוֹחַלְתִּי מִיְּהוָה:
יט זְכַר-עֲנִי
וּמְרוֹדֵי לַעֲנָה וְרָאשׁ:
כ זְכוֹר תִּזְכּוֹר
וַתִּשְׁוַח עָלַי נַפְשִׁי:
כא זֹאת אֲשִׁיב אֶל-לִבִּי
עַל-כֵּן אוֹחִיל:
כב חֲסִדֵי יְהוָה
כִּי לֹא-תִמְנוּ
כג לֹא-כָלוּ רַחֲמָיו:
כד חֲדָשִׁים לְבָקָרִים
רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ:
כה חֶלְקִי יְהוָה
אָמְרָה נַפְשִׁי
עַל-כֵּן אוֹחִיל לּוֹ:
כו טוֹב יְהוָה
לְקוֹ

16 He broke my teeth with gravel,
and pressed me into the ashes.
17 My soul was spurned from peace;
I forgot goodness,
18 and I said, “I have lost from *YHWH*
my endurance and my hope!”
19 Remember my affliction and
my scattering – wormwood and gall;
20 Remembering, she will remember,
my soul, and will sink down upon me.
21 (Still) this will I turn toward my heart,
for so will I hope:
22 *YHWH*’s love / kindness
– they are never done,
for His mercies were not used up.
23 They are new by every morning;
great is Your trust / faithfulness!
24 My portion is *YHWH*
—said my soul—
therefore so will I hope for Him.
25 Good is *YHWH*
to those waiting for Him,

ו בַּמַּחֲשָׁכִים הוֹשִׁיבָנִי
כְּמֵתֵי עוֹלָם:
ז גָּדַר בְּעֵדִי
וְלֹא יֵצֵא
הַכְּבִיד נִחַשְׁתִּי:
ח גַּם כִּי אֶזְעַק וְאֶשׁוּעַ
שָׁתַם תַּפְלִתִּי:
ט גָּדַר דְּרָכִי
בְּגִזִּית נְתִיבֹתַי עֲוֹה:
י נָלַב אֲרֵב הוּא לִי
אֲרִי בַּמְסֻתָּרִים:
יא דְּרָכֵי סוּרָר וַיִּפְשְׁחֵנִי
שָׁמַנִּי שָׁמָם:
יב דִּבְרֹךְ קִשְׁתּוֹ וַיִּצְיָבֵנִי
כַּמִּטְרָא לַחֲזִץ:
יג הִבִּיא בְּכִלְיוֹתַי
בְּנֵי אֲשַׁפְתּוֹ:
יד הִיִּיתִי שֹׁחַק לְכָל-עַמִּי
נְגִינָתָם כָּל-הַיּוֹם:
טו הִשְׁבִּיעַנִי בַּמְרוֹרִים
הַרְוֵנִי לַעֲנָה:
6 In darkening-nights He made me dwell
like those ever dead;
7 He barricaded against me,
and I cannot go out / get away,
He weighed down my bronze (shackle).
8 Even when I would cry and plea,
He stopped up my prayer;
9 He barricaded my ways with
stone blocks; my paths He twisted.
10 For me He was a bear ambushing,
a lion in hiding places / stalking;
11 My ways He diverts and He would tear
me up; He made me desolate.
12 He worked His bow and made me
stand as the target for the arrow;
13 He guided into my kidneys
what came from His quiver,
14 I was a laughingstock for all my
people, their song all the day.
15 He sated me with bitter herbs,
and overfilled me with wormwood;

אֲדֹנָי לֹא רָאָה:	struggle – wouldn't Adonai see (that)?	לְנֶפֶשׁ תִּדְרֹשְׁנוּ:	to a soul / person that would seek Him.
לֹא מִי זֶה אָמַר וַתְּהִי	37 Who is this who spoke and it was	כֵּן טוֹב וַיַּחֲלִי וְדוּמָם	26 Good – and he should wait and
אֲדֹנָי לֹא צִוָּה:	– didn't Adonai so command?	לְתַשׁוּעַת יְהוָה:	be silent, wait for YHVH's salvation.
לֹחַ מִפִּי עָלִיוֹן לֹא תֵצֵא	38 From the mouth of the Highest	כֵּן טוֹב לְגֹבֵר	27 Good it is for a man
הָרָעוֹת וְהַטּוֹב:	don't the evils and the good come out?	כִּי־יִשָּׂא עַל בְּנֵעוּרָיו:	that he carry a yoke in his youth.
לֹט מִה־יִּתְאוּנוּ אָדָם חַי	39 How could a living person complain,		
גֹּבֵר עַל־חַטָּאיוֹ:	a man, (if punished) for his sins?	כח יֵשֵׁב בְּדֶרֶךְ וַיִּדָּם	28 Let him sit alone and be silent,
מ נִחְפְּשָׁה דְרָכֵינוּ וְנִחְלְרָה	40 Let us search our ways and dig deep,	כִּי נִטַּל עָלָיו:	since He laid (it) on him;
וְנָשׁוּבָה עַד־יְהוָה:	and let us return until YHVH,	כט יִתֵּן בְּעַפְרֹ פִּיהוּ	29 he should put his mouth in the dust –
מֵאָה נִשָּׂא לְבַבְנוּ	41 Let us lift our hearts	אוֹלֵי יֵשׁ תִּקְוָה:	maybe there is hope;
אֶל־כַּפָּיִם	up to our hands (stretching them)	ל יִתֵּן לְמַכּוֹהוּ לְחַי	30 Put out his cheek for the one who
אֶל־אֵל בְּשָׁמַיִם:	toward God in the heavens.	יִשְׂבַּע בְּחִרְפָּה:	strikes, be satiated with shame.
מִבְּנַחְנוּ פָשַׁעְנוּ וּמָרִינוּ	42 Us, we sinned and rebelled.	לֹא כִּי לֹא יִזְנֶה	31 For Adonai would not
אַתָּה לֹא סָלַחְתָּ:	You – You did not pardon.	לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנָי:	spurn forever;
מִגְּסִיתָ בְּאַף	43 You took shelter in such anger,	לִבִּי כִּי אִם־הוֹלָה וְרַחֵם	32 for if He aggrieved and showed mercy,
וַתִּדְרֹפֵנוּ	and You would pursue us,	בְּרַב חֲסָדָיו:	it is according to His love's abundance;
הָרַגְתָּ לֹא חֲמִלְתָּ:	You murdered without pitying;	לִגְ כִּי לֹא עָנָה מִלְּבוֹ	33 for He did not afflict from His heart
מִדְּסִכּוּתָהּ בְּעֵצוֹן לָךְ	44 You sheltered Yourself within a	וַיִּגָּה בְּנִי־אִישׁ:	and aggrieve human beings.
מִעֲבוֹר תְּפִלָּה:	cloud, far beyond prayer;	לֹד לְדַכּא תַּחַת רַגְלָיו	34 To crush under His feet
מִה סְחִי וּמֵאֹס	45 Scum and refuse	כָּל אֲסִירֵי אֶרֶץ:	all imprisoned of the land,
תְּשִׁימֵנוּ	You would make us	לֹה לְהַטּוֹת מִשְׁפָּט־גֹּבֵר	35 to make bent a man's judgment,
בְּקֶרֶב הָעַמִּים:	in the midst of the peoples.	וְגֵד פָּנָי עָלִיוֹן:	right to the face of the Highest,
		לֹ לְעוֹת אָדָם בְּרִיבּוֹ	36 to twist / wrong a person in his

אל-תַּעֲלֵם אָזְנוֹךָ
לְרוֹחֲתִי לְשׁוּעָתִי:
נָו קָרַבְתָּ בַּיּוֹם אֶקְרָאָךְ
אֲמַרְתָּ אֶל-תִּירָא:
נַח רַבָּתִי אֲדֹנָי
רִיבִי נִפְשִׁי גָאֲלָתָּ חַיִּי:
נָט רָאִיתָה יְהוָה עֲוֹתָי
שָׁפְטָה מִשְׁפָּטִי:
ס רָאִיתָה כָּל-נִקְמָתָם
כָּל-מַחֲשַׁבְתָּם לִי:
סֵא שָׁמַעְתָּ חֲרָפְתָם יְהוָה
כָּל-מַחֲשַׁבְתָּם עָלַי:
סֵב שִׁפְתֵי קָמִי
וְהִגִּינוֹם עָלַי כָּל-הַיּוֹם:
סֵג שִׁבְתָּם וְקִימָתָם
הַבִּיטָה אֲנִי מִגִּינָתָם
סֵד תִּשְׁיב לָהֶם גְּמוּלָה
יְהוָה כְּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם:
סֵה תִתֵּן לָהֶם מִגִּנַּת-לֵב
תִּאֲלָתֶךָ לָהֶם:
סֵו תִרְדֹּף בָּאֵף וְתִשְׁמִידֵם
מִתַּחַת שָׁמַיִ יְהוָה:

Don't hide / conceal your ear
to my (plea for) relief, to my cry.
57 You were near the day I would call,
You said, "Don't fear."
58 Adonai, You struggled (in) my
soul's struggles; You saved my life.
59 You saw my twisting;
(now) judge my judgment!
60 You saw all their vengeance
all their designs for me.
61 You heard their shaming, YHVH,
all their designs against me,
62 the speech of those rising at me,
their obsession over me every day,
63 (whether) sitting or rising up –
Look! I am their singsong!
64 You will pay them back, YHVH,
according to the work of their hands;
65 You will make theirs a heart walled
up – let Your curse be for them!
66 Pursue in anger and destroy them
from under YHVH's heavens.

מִן פָּצוּ עֲלֵינוּ פִּיהֶם
כָּל-אִיְבֵינוּ:
מִן פָּחַד וּפַחַת הָיָה לָנוּ
הַשָּׂאת וְהַשָּׁבֵר:
מַח פִּלְגֵי-מַיִם תִּרְדַּ עֵינַי
עַל-שָׁבֵר בֵּית-עַמִּי:
מִט עֵינַי נִגְרָה
וְלֹא תִדְמָה
מֵאִין הַפְּגוֹת:
נַעַד-יִשְׁקִיף
וְיִרָא יְהוָה מִשָּׁמַיִם:
נֵא עֵינַי עוֹלָלָה לְנִפְשִׁי
מִכָּל בָּנוֹת עִירִי:
נֵב צוֹד צְדוֹנִי כַצֹּר
אִיבֵי חֲנָם:
נֵג צָמְתוּ בַּבּוֹר חַיִּי
וַיִּדּוּ-אֶבֶן בִּי:
נֵד צָפוּ-מַיִם עַל-רֹאשִׁי
אֲמַרְתִּי נִגְזַרְתִּי:
נֵה קָרָאתִי שְׁמֶךָ יְהוָה
מִבּוֹר תַּחְתִּיּוֹת:
נֵו קוֹלִי שָׁמַעְתָּ
46 All our enemies crack open
their mouth against us;
47 Trepidation and trap were ours,
the ruination and the shattering.
48 My eye drops floods of water
for my daughter people's shattering;
49 My eye streams
and won't silence herself,
(she cries) with no breaks / no stutters,
50 until YHVH would look down
and see from heaven.
51 My eye doles sorrow to my soul
over all my city's daughters.
52 Hunting, they hunted me, like a bird,
(becoming) my enemies for no reason;
53 they sealed off my life in the pit,
and cast stone against me;
54 waters flowed over my head,
"I am cut off," I said.
55 I called Your name, YHVH,
from a pit far underground.
56 You heard my voice:

מִחֲטָאת סֹדֶם
 תִּהְיוּכָה כְּמוֹ-רֹגֶעַ
 וְלֹא-תָלוּ בָּהּ יָדַיִם:
 ז וְכֹו נְזִירֶיהָ מִשְׁלֵג
 צָחִי מִחֶלֶב
 אֲדָמוֹ עֲצָם מִפְּנִינִים
 סַפִּיר גִּזְרָתָם:
 ח חֲשֹׁךְ מִשְׁחֹר
 תִּאָּרֵם
 לֹא נִכְרוּ בַּחוּצוֹת
 צֶפֶד עוֹרֶם עַל-עֲצָמָם
 יָבֵשׁ הָיָה כַּעֲץ:
 ט טוֹבִים הָיוּ חֲלָלֵי-חֶרֶב
 מִחֲלָלֵי רָעֵב
 שֶׁהֵם יוֹבֵבוּ מִדְּקָרִים
 מִתְּנוּבַת שְׂדֵי:
 י יְדֵי נָשִׁים רַחֲמָנִיּוֹת
 בִּשְׁלוּ יִלְדֵיהֶן
 הָיוּ לְבָרוֹת לָמוֹ
 בִּשְׁבֵר בֵּת-עַמִּי:
 יא כָלָה יְהוָה אֶת-חֲמָתוֹ
 שָׁפַךְ חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ
 וַיִּצַּת-אֵשׁ בְּצִיּוֹן
 וַתֹּאכַל יְסוּדֶתֶיהָ:
 יב לֹא הֵאֱמִינוּ

grew great, beyond the sin of Sodom,
 the one overthrown, as (in) a moment,
 and no hands were laid on her.
 7 Her Nazirites were pure beyond snow,
 clearer than milk,
 red of bone, more than rubies,
 their cut shape sapphire crystal.
 8 (Now) darkened beyond black soot
 is their form,
 they are not recognized in the streets,
 their skin stretched taut over their bone,
 it was dried out like a stick.
 9 Better were the sword-slain
 than the famine-slain,
 for those drain away, stabbed through
 from (want of) produce of the field.
 10 Merciful hands of merciful women
 stewed their children –
 they became provision for them
 in the shattering of my daughter people.
 11 YHVH used up His fury,
 poured out His burning anger,
 and He kindled a fire in Zion,
 and she consumed her foundations.
 12 They would not have believed,

אֵיכָּה
 יוֹעַם זָהָב
 יִשְׁנָא הַכֶּתֶם הַטּוֹב
 תִּשְׁתַּפְּכֶנָּה אַבְנֵי-קֹדֶשׁ
 בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל-חוּצוֹת:
 ב בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן הַיְקָרִים
 הִמְסָלָאִים בַּפֹּז
 אֵיכָּה נִחְשְׁבוּ
 לְנִבְלֵי-חֶרֶשׁ
 מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי יוֹצֵר:
 ג גַּם-תַּנִּינִים חָלְצוּ שָׂדֶה
 הַיְנִיקוּ גּוֹרֵיהֶן
 בֵּת-עַמִּי לְאֶכָזָר
 כִּיעֲנִים בַּמִּדְבָּר:
 ד דִּבֶּק לְשׁוֹן יוֹנֵק
 אֶל-חִכּוֹ בְּצִמָּא
 עוֹלָלִים שָׁאֲלוּ לֶחֶם
 פָּרֶשׁ אֵין לָהֶם:
 ה הָאֶכְלִים לְמַעַדְנִים
 נִשְׁמָו בַּחוּצוֹת
 הָאֱמָנִים עָלֵי תוֹלַעַ
 חִבְקוּ אִשְׁפֹּתוֹת:
 ו וַיִּגְדַּל עֲוֹן בֵּת-עַמִּי

1 Eiklah! How can it be –
 gold becomes dull,
 the best gold transmuted,
 stones of the holy poured / dumped out
 at every street head;
 2 Zion's children, precious ones,
 weighed against the purest gold –
 how can it be that they are counted
 as clay jars,
 work of a maker's hands?
 3 Even jackals draw out a breast,
 would give suck to their cubs.
 (But) my daughter people – so cruel,
 like ostriches in the wilderness.
 4 A suckling's tongue, stuck
 to its palate with such thirst;
 babes sought bread –
 none break it off for them.
 5 The ones who eat for delicacies
 were wasted in the streets,
 the ones nursed on scarlet
 were hugging trash heaps.
 6 And my daughter people's iniquity

בַּצְפִּיתָנוּ צָפִינוּ אֶל־גּוֹי
לֹא יוֹשֵׁעַ:
יח צְדוּ צַעְדֵינוּ
מִלִּכְתּוֹת בְּרַחֲבֵינוּ
קָרַב קִצֵּינוּ מִלְאוּ יְמֵינוּ
כִּי־בָא קִצֵּינוּ:
יט קָלִים הָיוּ רֹדְפֵינוּ
מִנְּשָׁרֵי שָׁמַיִם
עַל־הַהָרִים דָּלְקָנוּ
בַּמִּדְבָּר אָרְבוּ לָנוּ:
כ רוּחַ אִפְּינוּ מְשִׁיחַ יְהוָה
נִלְכַּד בְּשַׁחֲתוֹתָם
אֲשֶׁר אָמְרָנוּ בְּצִלּוֹ
נִחְיָה בְּגוֹיִם:
כא שִׂישִׁי וְשִׂמְחִי בַת־אֲדוֹם
יוֹשֶׁבֶת בְּאֶרֶץ עוּץ
גַּם־עֲלֶיךָ תַעֲבֹר־כּוֹס
תִּשְׁכַּרְי וְתִתְעָרִי:
כב תִּם־עוֹנֶיךָ
בַת־צִיּוֹן
לֹא יוֹסִיף לְהִגְלוֹתְךָ
פָּקַד עוֹנֶיךָ
בַת־אֲדוֹם
גָּלָה עַל־חַטָּאתֶיךָ:

In our seeking, we sought / we peered
toward a nation not (able to) save.
18 They hunted / tracked our steps,
(driven) from going in our squares.
Our end draws close, our days filled,
for our end has come.
19 Swift were they, our pursuers,
more than eagles of the heavens.
Over the mountains they chased us,
in the wilderness they laid ambush for us.
20 Breath of our nose, YHVH's anointed,
he was trapped by their destructions,
(the one) whom we said, "In his shade
we will live with the nations."
21 Rejoice and be happy, daughter Edom,
dwelling in the land of Utz –
a cup will also pass over (to) you,
you will drink and strip yourself naked.
22 Complete be your iniquity,
daughter Zion,
no more to be exiled / exposed.
He has charged your iniquity,
daughter Edom,
exposed (you) for your sins.

מְלִכֵי־אֶרֶץ
כָּל יֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֶל
כִּי יִבֹּא צָר וְאוֹיֵב
בְּשַׁעְרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם:
יג מִחַטָּאת נְבִיאֶיהָ
עוֹנֹת כְּהֻנָּהָ
הַשֹּׁפְכִים בְּקִרְבָּהָ
דָּם צַדִּיקִים:
יד נָעוּ עוֹרִים
בַּחוּצוֹת נִגְאָלוּ בָדָם
בְּלֹא יוֹכְלוּ
יָגְעוּ בְּלִבְשֵׁיהֶם:
טו סוּרוּ טֹמֵא
קָרְאוּ לָמוֹ
סוּרוּ סוּרוּ אֶל־תִּגְעוּ
כִּי נָצוּ גַם־נָעוּ
אָמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם
לֹא יוֹסִיפוּ לָגוֹר:
טז פָּנֵי יְהוָה
חֲלָקָם לֹא יוֹסִיף
לְהִבִּיטָם
פָּנֵי כְהֵנִים לֹא נִשְׂאוּ
וְזִקְנִים לֹא חָנְנוּ:
יז עוֹלֵינוּ תִכְלֶינָה עֵינֵינוּ
אֶל־עֲזָרָתָנוּ הֶבֶל

kings of the earth
all the inhabitants of the world,
that tormentor and enemy would come
into the gates of Jerusalem –
13 because of her prophets' sins,
her priests' wrongs / iniquities,
the ones who poured out inside her
the blood of righteous people.
14 They were shaking / staggering, blind
in the streets, defiled with the blood,
with none able / none willing (to)
come in contact with their clothes.
15 "Get out! Contaminated! / Tamei!"
they would call to them,
"Get out! Get out! Don't touch!"
For they fled, even staggered.
They said in the nations,
they will no more (be allowed) to dwell.
16 YHVH's presence / face
divided them, He would no more
look at them / notice them –
(for) priest's faces they did not lift up,
and (to) elders they did not show grace.
17 Still will our eyes be used up / failing,
toward our help, (which is) emptiness.

יב שָׂרִים בְּיָדָם נָתְלוּ
פָּנֵי זְקֵנִים לֹא נִהְדְּרוּ:
יג בַּחֹרִים טָחוּ נָשָׂא
וּנְעָרִים בַּעֲץ כָּשְׁלוּ:
יד זְקֵנִים מִשְׁעָר שָׁבְתוּ
בַּחֹרִים מִגִּינָתָם:
טו שְׁבַת מְשׁוֹשׁ לִבָּנוּ
נִהְפָּה לְאַבֵּל מִחֻלָּנוּ:
טז נִפְלָה עֲטֶרֶת רֹאשֵׁנוּ
אִי־נָא לָנוּ כִּי חָטֵאנוּ:
יז עַל־זֶה הָיָה דָּוָה לִבָּנוּ
עַל־אַלֶּה חֲשָׁכוּ עֵינֵינוּ:
יח עַל הַר־צִיּוֹן שָׁשִׁמָּה
שׁוֹעֲלִים הִלְכוּ־בוֹ:
יט אַתָּה יְהוָה
לְעוֹלָם תֵּשֵׁב
כִּסְאֶךָ לְדָר וָדוֹר:
כ לָמָּה לִנְצַח תִּשְׁכַּחֲנוּ
תַּעֲזֹבֵנוּ לְאֶרֶץ יָמִים:
כא חֲשִׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
וְנִשׁוּבָה
חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם:
כב כִּי אִם־מָאֵס
מֵאִסְתָּנוּ קִצְפָּתָ עָלֵינוּ
עַד־מָאֵד

12 Ministers by their hand were hung.
Elders' faces shown no majesty / respect.
13 Boys would carry a millstone,
and youths, stumbling with wood.
14 Elders ceased from gate,
boys from their play.
15 Our heart ceased / stopped any joy,
our dance overturned into mourning.
16 The crown on our head is fallen;
Oy for us! For we sinned.
17 For this our heart was sickened.
For these our eyes darkened.
18 For Mount Zion, that was desolated,
foxes went through her.
19 You, YHVH
will sit for all world-time,
Your throne (lasts) for generations.
20 Why would you forget us forever?
Abandon us for the span of time's days?
21 Turn us, YHVH, toward you,
and we will turn.
Renew our days, like long before,
22 for (what) if rejecting you did reject
us / loath us, were enraged over us,
so very much—!

א זְכוֹר יְהוָה מָה־הָיָה לָנוּ
הַבִּיטָה וּרְאָה
אֶת־חֲרָפָתָנוּ:
ב נִחַלְתָּנוּ נִהְפְּכָה לְזָרִים
בְּתֵינוּ לְנֹכָרִים:
ג יְתוּמִים הָיִינוּ וְאֵין אָב
אִמֵּיתֵנוּ כְּאַלְמָנוֹת:
ד מִיָּמֵינוּ בְּכֶסֶף שָׁתִינוּ
עֵצֵינוּ בְּמִחְרֵי יָבֹאוּ:
ה עַל צַוְאֲרֵנוּ נִרְדְּפָנוּ
יִגְעֵנוּ וְלֹא הוֹנַח־לָנוּ:
ו מִצֵּרִים נָתַנוּ יָד
אֲשׁוּר לְשַׁבֵּעַ לָחֶם:
ז אֲבֹתֵינוּ חָטְאוּ וְאִינָם
וְאִנְחָנוּ עוֹנֵתֵיהֶם סָבְלָנוּ:
ח עֲבָדִים מָשְׁלוּ בָנוּ
פָּרַק אֵין מִיָּדָם:
ט בְּנִפְשֵׁנוּ נָבִיא לַחֲמֵנוּ
מִפְּנֵי חֶרֶב הַמִּדְבָּר:
י עוֹרֵנוּ כִּתְנוֹר נִכְמְרוּ
מִפְּנֵי זִלְעָפוֹת רָעָב:
יא נָשִׁים בְּצִיּוֹן עָנוּ
בְּתֻלַת בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה:

1 YHVH, remember what was ours.
Look, and see
our abuse / our shame!
2 Our inheritance overturned to strangers,
our houses to foreigners.
3 We were orphans, there is no father,
our mothers like widows.
4 Our water we drank for money;
our wood came (only) with a price.
5 On our neck were we pursued,
weary, and none would let us (rest).
6 Egypt, we stretched a hand,
Assyria, to satisfy bread.
7 Our fathers sinned and are not,
and we shouldered their iniquities.
8 Slaves ruled us.
None can break us out from their hand.
9 For our lives we bring our bread,
from before the wilderness's sword.
10 Our skin like a furnace, glowing,
from before the delirium of hunger.
11 Women in Zion were victimized,
girls, in Judah's towns.

Some notes on the theology of *Eikhah*:

1. *Tish'a B'Av* could not be more relevant than it is today, when the crisis of war refugees and fear of terrorism have overwhelmed the political process in so many countries. We think of *Tish'a B'Av* as a time of mourning, but it is more importantly a call to identify with the experience of refugees who are forced to risk their lives and even their children's lives in order to escape violence, hunger, devastation. That's what the Jewish people went through when the Temple, and the nation and society it stood for, were destroyed, when they became "like deer, not finding a place to graze, walking without strength before a pursuer." (1:6)

2. The idea that tragedy and disaster are punishment for sins seems alien to many modern Jews. This is also why it can be hard to connect the Holocaust with *Tish'a B'Av*. But this theology can also be consoling, because it allows people to find meaning in tragedy.

3. The author(s) of *Eikhah* (traditionally Jeremiah) believed that what happened to Jerusalem expressed divine judgment. For our ancestors, the choice was to believe either that the destruction was God's punishment, or that God no longer cared about what happened to them. It is easy to imagine people choosing a punishing God over an uncaring God (though the latter possibility is also suggested in the last verse of *Eikhah*). Even though *Eikhah* sounds like it's about God punishing us, it's not really a theodicy, a justification of God. Rather, it expresses the hope that tragedy proves that God cares about us, instead of proving the opposite.

4. That doesn't mean we need to accept that theology – even in *Eikhah* itself, this idea is questioned. Only in chapter three is Zion's destruction consistently seen as fair and just punishment. In all the other chapters, the degree of divine punishment is described as excessive and abusive. In every chapter, the poet begs God to pay attention: "See, YHVH, and look: to whom did You deal thus? If women will eat their fruit, coddled babes – !" (2:20; also 1:9, 1:11, 1:20, 3:63, 4:16, 5:1). It's as if other people could see and understand the tragedy that unfolded (1:12), but God could not.

5. This suggests one way to confront the images of sexual abuse in *Eikhah*: "All who honor her despise her, for they saw her nakedness." (1:8; also 1:10, 4:21, 5:11) In the prophets, such abuse is a metaphor for the "just" punishment that follows Israel's "adulterous" pursuit of other gods. But in *Eikhah*, the metaphor is used to hold up a mirror to God, to show that the punishment was intolerably abusive.

6. The real theology of *Eikhah* is summed up in the verse, "What can I compare to you, daughter Jerusalem, that I may comfort you?" (2:13) What images, what words, can help people bear the memory of tragedy? The poet is willing to say whatever is needed to enable the people to find meaning.

7. There is another way to understand the destruction of Jerusalem. According to Jeremiah, the reason for the exile was that Israel did not let the land rest every seven years after they entered the land. (2 Chron. 36:21) Since 490 years had passed without a sabbatical year, Israel had to go into exile for 70 years.

Hashiveinu השיבנו
 Adonai elekha יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 v'nashuvah וְנָשׁוּבָה
 Chadash yamenu חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ
 k'kedem כְּקֶדֶם

Some more songs:

*Shifkhi kamayim libeikh
 nokhach p'nei Hashem*

Pour out your heart like water
 right before Hashem

*Yehudah l'olam teishev,
 Yerushalayim l'dor vador*

Judah will dwell for all time,
 Jerusalem for generations

By the waters of Babylon we sat
 down and wept for thee Zion
 We remember thee Zion

*Nachamu 'ami.
 Anokhi hu m'nachemchem*

Take comfort my people
 I am the one who comforts you

*Eli Tsiyon v'areha
 k'mo ishah v'tsireha
 v'khivtulah chagurat sak
 al ba'al n'ureha*

My God, Zion and her towns, like
 a woman in travail, like a virgin
 wearing sackcloth for the
 husband of her youth

Turn us,
 YHVH, toward you,
 and we will turn.
 Make our days new again,
 like dawn / long ago.

The observances of Tish'a B'Av

The observances of *Tish'a B'Av*—not wearing fresh clothes, not washing, fasting from eating and drinking and sexual contact, not greeting each other, not sitting anywhere except on the ground—are closer to the experience of being a refugee than to being a mourner. The destruction of the Temple stands not just for the destruction of Jerusalem, but for the city being turned into a war zone, and the people becoming prey to hunger, violence, and death. *Tish'a B'Av* is not primarily about the Temple – *Chaza"l*, the rabbis, figured out how to live without the Temple long ago. Rather, *Tish'a B'Av* is about homelessness, fleeing from war into famine, being thrown into a hostile world without shelter or protection – things all too present in our world. It's an opportunity empathize, to confront the ways we abuse our power, as individuals, as a society, as a people, and as a species, turning other people and other species into refugees.



City Shelter, Kathe Kollwitz, 1926, public domain

8. What does this mean? The Torah portrays the land as a subject with rights and interests that take priority over our needs. Especially in the flood story and the laws of Jubilee and sabbatical years (Lev. 25)—and in the consequences that are supposed to befall the people if they do not observe these laws (Lev. 26)—the Torah teaches that God will take the side of the land against the people if forced to. The land will “enjoy her Sabbaths” (Lev. 26:34,43) – even if that means the people are exiled or wiped out. From the divine perspective, the land can sue for justice. What has intrinsic value is not humanity but justice, which is humanity’s potential. See: neohasid.org/torah/genesis-shmitah

9. The Torah outlines six curses for not observing the sabbatical year that describe an unraveling relationship between people and land. Two curses involve children being eaten – by wild animals (v.22), then by their parents (v.29). That image is repeated in *Eikhah* (2:20, 4:10), and it is the main connection between *Eikhah* and Leviticus. The final curse in Leviticus is that “you will be lost in the nations and the land of your enemies will eat you” (v.38). The last curse does not sound like the worst. But if the land eats us, this represents a complete reversal of the right relationship between the people and the land.

10. In ancient times, people believed that the Temple existed to promote fertility and abundance. Temple rituals were performed for the sake of the land and for all life, not just for the Jews or even for all humanity. The Temple’s purpose had already been destroyed by the way people treated the land.

11. The idea that destruction came because of how the Jewish people treated the land is not found in *Eikhah*, where identification of the land with the people is total. Instead, Jerusalem’s downfall results from the moral downfall in relationships between human beings. In Jeremiah too, the fate of Jerusalem is sealed only after the rich, who briefly set their slaves free, re-enslave them when it looks like the danger has passed. (Jer. 34) How we treat the stranger, the poor, the refugee, is what determines if we have the right to be in the land.

12. Creation is compared to a sacred Temple (*Tanchuma Pekudei, P’ri Eitz Hadar*). In an age when our ecological “sins” are coming home to roost, the connection between natural disaster and divine retribution is not farfetched. However, when the Jerusalem Temple was destroyed, there were other lands to flee to. If we destroy the Temple that is this Earth, there will be no place to flee. (Cantor Richard Kaplan’s *Kinah L’churban Gan Eden*, on neohasid.org, can help you focus on this theme.)

13. We can expect more wars over resources, as well as people fleeing areas that have flooded or become deserts, as climate change puts more pressure on our ecosystems and our social systems. We need all the spiritual resources we can muster to stay open to the humanity of the refugee and the stranger while also taking care of each other. *Eikhah* is an invitation to move towards justice for all people, for all species, and for the land herself.

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