

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 reader from modern 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, even 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* 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.

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This work is dedicated to all refugees fleeing war and upheaval, and to our remembering their needs.

neohasid.org

כְּהַנִּיחַ נֶאֱנָחִים
 בְּתוֹלְתֶיהָ נוֹגֹת
 וְהִיא מֵרָלָה:
 הָ הִיוּ צָרֶיהָ לְרֹאשׁ
 אֵיבֶיהָ שָׁלוֹ
 כִּי־יְהוֹנָה הוֹגָה
 עַל־רַב־פְּשָׁעֶיהָ
 עוֹלָלֶיהָ הִלְכוּ שְׁבִי
 לְפָנֵי־צָר:
 וַיֵּצֵא מִן־בֵּית־צִיּוֹן
 כָּל־הַדָּרָה
 הִיוּ שָׂרֶיהָ כְּאֵילִים
 לֹא־מָצְאוּ מְרֻעָה
 וַיִּלְכוּ בְּלֹא־כֹחַ
 לְפָנֵי רוֹדְף:
 זַ זְכָרָה יְרוּשָׁלַם
 יְמֵי עֲנִיָּה
 וּמְרוֹדֶיהָ
 כֹּל מִחֲמֹדֶיהָ
 אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ מִימֵי קָדָם
 בְּנֶפֶל עַמָּהּ בְּיַד־צָר
 וְאֵין עֹזֵר לָהּ
 רָאוּהָ צָרִים
 שֹׁחֲקוּ עַל מִשְׁבַּתָּהּ:
 חַ 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 |
 יִשְׁבֶּה בְּדָד
 הָעִיר רַבַּתִּי עָם
 הָיְתָה כְּאַלְמָנָה
 רַבַּתִּי בְּגוֹיִם
 שָׁרְתִי בְּמַדִּינֹת
 הָיְתָה לְמָס:
 בַּ בָּכוּ תַבְּכָה בַלַּיְלָה
 וְדַמְעָתָה עַל לַחְיָהּ
 אֵין־לָהּ מְנַחֵם
 מִכָּל־אֲהָבֶיהָ
 כָּל־רֵעֶיהָ
 בְּגָדוּ בָּהּ
 הָיוּ לָהּ לְאֵיבִים:
 גַּ גָּלְתָה יְהוּדָה
 מֵעֲנִי וּמֵרַב עֲבֹדָה
 הִיא יֹשְׁבָה בְּגוֹיִם
 לֹא מָצְאָה מְנוּחַם
 כָּל־רֹדְפֶיהָ הִשִּׁיגוּהָ
 בֵּין הַמְּצָרִים:
 דַּ דְּרָכֵי צִיּוֹן אֵבֵלוֹת
 מִבְּלִי בָאֵי מוֹעֵד
 כָּל־שַׁעְרֶיהָ שׁוֹמְמִין

1 Eikhah! How can it be –
 that 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 דָרֶךְ
 הַבִּיטוּ וּרְאוּ
 אִם־יֵשׁ מִכְּאוֹב כְּמִכְּאֹבִי
 אֲשֶׁר עוֹלַל לִי
 אֲשֶׁר הוֹגְהָ יְהוָה
 בְּיוֹם חֲרוֹן אַפָּוֹ:
 יג מִמְּרוֹם שָׁלַח־אַשׁ
 בְּעֲצָמַי וַיִּרְדְּנָה
 פָּרֶשׁ רַגְשֵׁי לְרַגְלִי
 הִשְׁיבֵנִי אֲחֹזֶר
 נִתְּנֵנִי שְׁמֵמָה
 כָּל־הַיּוֹם דָּוָה:
 יד נִשְׁקַד לְעַל פְּשָׁעַי
 בְּיָדוֹ יִשְׁתַּרְגְּנוּ
 עָלַי עַל־צַוְאָרִי
 הִכְשִׁיל כַּחֲוִי
 נִתְּנֵנִי אֲדֹנָי בְּיַדִּי
 לֹא־אוּכַל קוּם:
 טו סֵלָה
 כָּל־אֲבִירֵי | אֲדֹנָי בְּקִרְבִּי
 קָרָא עָלַי מוֹעֵד
 לְשֹׁבֵר בַּחוּרֵי
 גַת דְּרֶךְ אֲדֹנָי
 לְבַתּוּלַת בֵּת־יְהוּדָה:
 טז עַל־אַלְהָה | אֲנִי בּוֹכֶיָה

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־מְכַבְּדֶיהָ הִזְלוּהָ
 כִּי־רָאוּ עֲרוּתָהּ
 גַּם־הִיא נֹאנְחָה
 וַתִּשָּׁב אַחֲזֹר:
 ט טִמְאַתָּה בְּשׂוּלֶיךָ
 לֹא זָכַרְהָ אַחֲרֵיתָהּ
 וַתִּרְדּוּ פְּלָאִים
 אֵין מְנַחֵם לָהּ
 רְאֵה יְהוָה אֶת־עַנְיִי
 כִּי הִגְדִּיל אוֹיְבִי:
 ו יָדוֹ פָּרֶשׁ צָר
 עַל כָּל־מַחְמַדֶּיהָ
 כִּי־רָאָתָהּ גּוֹיִם
 בָּאוּ מִקְדָּשָׁהּ
 אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָהּ
 לֹא־יָבֹאוּ
 בְּקִהְלָ לָךְ:
 יא כָּל־עַמָּה נֹאנְחִים
 מִבְּקָשִׁים לָחֵם
 נָתְנוּ מַחְמוּדֵיהֶם
 בְּאֹכֵל לְהַשִּׁיב נַפְשׁ
 רְאֵה יְהוָה
 וְהִבִּיטָה כִּי הֵיטִי זוּלָלָהּ:
 יב לֹא אֶלֶיכֶם

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 בְקִרְבִּי
 כִּי מָרוּ מְרִיתִי
 מִחוּץ שִׁפְלָה־חָרֵב
 בְּבַיִת כַּמּוֹת:
כא שָׁמְעוּ כִּי נִאֲנַחָה אָנֹכִי
 אֵין מְנַחֵם לִי
 כָּל־אֵיבֵי שָׁמְעוּ
 רַעְתִּי
 לָשׁוּ כִּי אָתָּה עָשִׂיתָ
 הַבָּאת יוֹם־קִרְאָתָּ
 וַיְהִיו כְּמוֹנֵי:
כב תָּבֵא כָּל־רַעְתֶּם לְפָנָי
 וְעוֹלָל לָמוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר
 עוֹלָלְתָּ לִּי עַל כָּל־פְּשָׁעַי
 כִּי־רַבּוֹת אַנְחָתִי
 וְלִבִּי 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

א אֵיכָּהּ
 יַעֲיֵב בְּאַפּוֹ |
 אֲדוֹנָי אֶת־בֵּת־צִיּוֹן
 הַשְׁלִיךְ מִשָּׁמַיִם אֶרֶץ
 תִּפְאֶרֶת 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 נַפְשִׁי
 הָיוּ בְנֵי שׁוֹמְמִים
 כִּי גִבַר אוֹיֵב:
 יז פָּרְשָׁה צִיּוֹן בְּיָדֶיהָ
 אֵין מְנַחֵם לָהּ
 צִוָּה יְהוָה לְיַעֲקֹב
 סָבִיבֵי צָרָיו
 הִיטָה יְרוּשָׁלַם
 לְנִדָּה בֵּינֵיהֶם:
 יח צַדִּיק הוּא יְהוָה
 כִּי פִּיהוּ מְרִיתִי
 שָׁמְעוּ־נָא כָּל־הָעַמִּים
 וּרְאוּ מַכְאֲבֵי
 בְּתוֹלְתֵי וּבְחוּרֵי
 הָלְכוּ בְּשָׁבִי:
 יט קִרְאתִי לְמֵאֲהָבֵי
 הִמָּה רְמוּנֵי
 כִּהְנִי וּזְקֵנֵי
 בְּעִיר גּוֹעִו
 כִּי־בִקְשׁוּ אֶכְלִי לָמוּ
 וַיִּשְׁיבוּ אֶת־נַפְשָׁם:
כ רְאֵה יְהוָה כִּי־צָר־לִי
 מֵעֵי 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,

שחת מבצרו
 וירב בבת־יהודה
 תאניה ואניה:
 ו ויחמס כגן־שכו
 שחת מועדו
 שפח יהוה | בציון
 מועד ושבת
 וינאץ בזעם־אפו
 מלך וכהן:
 ז זנח אדני | מזבחו
 נאך מקדשו
 הסגיר ביד־אויב
 חומת ארמנותיה
 קול נתנו בבית־יהוה
 כיום מועד:
 ח חשב יהוה | להשחית
 חומת בת־ציון נטה קו
 לא־השיב ידו
 מבלע
 ויאבל־חל וחומה
 יחדו אמללו:
 ט טבעו בארץ שעריה
 אבד ושבר בריחה
 מלכה ושריה בגוים
 אין תורה

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 shut by 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.

ולא־זכר
 יהם־רגליו
 ביום אפו:
 ב בלע אדני לא חמל
 את כל־נאות יעקב
 הרס בעברתו
 מבצרי בת־יהודה
 הגיע לארץ
 חלל ממלכה ושריה:
 ג גבע בחר־אף
 כל קרן ישראל
 השיב אחור ימינו
 מפני אויב
 ויבער ביעקב כאש
 להבה אכלה סביב:
 ד דרך קשתו כאויב
 נצב ימינו
 כצד
 ויהרג כל
 מחמד־יעין
 באהל בת־ציון
 שפך כאש חמתו:
 ה היה אדני | כאויב
 בלע ישראל
 בלע כל־ארמנותיה

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 fire.
 5 *Adonai* was like an enemy;
 He devoured / swallowed Israel.
 He devoured all her citadels,

וַאֲנַחְמֶךָ
בְּתוֹלַת בֵּת צִיּוֹן
כִּי־גָדוֹל כַּיָּם שִׁבְרֶךָ
מִי יִרְפָּא־לְךָ:
יָד נְבִיאֶיךָ חָזוּ לְךָ
שׁוֹא וְתַפֵּל
וְלֹא־גָלוּ עַל־עוֹנֶךָ
לְהָשִׁיב שְׁבוּתֶךָ
וַיַּחְזוּ לְךָ
מִשְׁאֲוֹת שׁוֹא וּמַדּוּחִים:
טו סִפְקוּ עַלְיָךְ כַּפַּיִם
כָּל־עַבְרֵי דָרֶךְ
שָׁרְקוּ וַיִּנְעוּ רֵאשִׁים
עַל־בֵּת יְרוּשָׁלַם
הַזֹּאת הָעִיר שִׁיאֲמְרוּ
כְּלִילַת יָפִי
מִשׁוֹשׁ לְכָל־הָאָרֶץ:
טז פָּצוּ עַלְיָךְ פִּיהֶם
כָּל־אֹיְבֶיךָ
שָׁרְקוּ וַיִּחְרְקוּ־שִׁנָּיִם
אָמְרוּ בְּלִעְנֵנוּ
אָךְ זֶה הַיּוֹם שִׁקְוִינָהוּ
מִצָּאֵנוּ רְאִינוּ:
יז עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר זָמַם
בְּצַע אָמְרָתוֹ

(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 מִיְהוָה:
ו יִשְׁבוּ לָאָרֶץ
יְדַמּוּ וְזָקְנֵי בֵּת־צִיּוֹן
הֵעִלוּ עָפָר עַל־רֵאשֵׁם
חָגְרוּ שַׁקִּים
הוֹרִידוּ לָאָרֶץ רֵאשָׁן
בְּתוֹלַת יְרוּשָׁלַם:
י אַ כָּלוּ בְדַמְעוֹת עֵינַי
חֲמַרְמְרוּ מֵעֵי
נִשְׁפָּרוּ לָאָרֶץ כְּבֹדִי
עַל־שִׁבְרִי
בֵּת־עַמִּי
בַּעֲטָף עוֹלֵל וְיוֹזֵק
בְּרַחֲבוֹת קִרְיָה:
י בְּלֹאֲמַתֶּם יֹאמְרוּ
אֵיךְ דָּגָן וַיֵּינ
בְּהִתְעַטְפֶם
כְּחָלָל בְּרַחֲבוֹת
עִיר בְּהִשְׁתַּפֵּךְ נַפְשֶׁם
אֶל־חֵיק אֲמַתֶּם:
י ג מַה־אֲעִידֶךָ
מַה אֲדַמֶּה־לְךָ
הַבֵּת יְרוּשָׁלַם
מַה אֲשׁוּהָ־לְךָ

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 organs 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 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

נַעַר וְזָקֵן בְּתוֹלַתִּי וּבְחוּרֵי
נָפְלוּ בְּחָרֶב
הִרְגַתָּ בַּיּוֹם אַפְּךָ
טִבַּחַתָּ לֹא חֲמַלְתָּ:
כָּבֵד תִּקְרָא כִּיּוֹם מוֹעֵד
מִגּוּרֵי מִסְבִּיב
וְלֹא הָיָה בַּיּוֹם אַף־יְהוָה
פָּלִיט וְשָׁרִיד
אֲשֶׁר־טַפַּחְתִּי וְרִבִּיתִי
אִיבֵי כֻלָּם:

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 רָאֵה עֲנִי
בְּשֵׁבֶט עֲבָרְתוֹ:
בֹּא אוֹתִי נְהַג וּיִלְךְ
חֹשֶׁךְ וְלֹא־אוֹר:
גִּבְרַתִּי בִּי יֵשֶׁב יִהְפֹּךְ יָדוֹ
כָּל־הַיּוֹם:

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.

ד בָּלָה בְּשָׂרִי וְעוֹרִי
שִׁבְרָה עֲצָמוֹתַי:
ה בָּנָה עָלַי וַיִּקְרַח
רֹאשׁ וּתְלָאָה:

4 He wore away my flesh and my skin,
broke my bones;
5 He built against me and surrounded
– gall and wormwood.

אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה מִימֵי־קֶדֶם
הָרַס וְלֹא חֲמַל
וַיִּשְׂמַח עַל־יָדְךָ אוֹיֵב
הָרִים קֶרֶן צָרִיף:
יח צָעַק לְבָם אֶל־אֲדֹנָי
חוֹמַת בַּת־צִיּוֹן
הוֹרִידִי כַנַּחַל דְּמָעָה
יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה
אֶל־תַּתְנֵנִי פּוּגַת לֶךְ
אֶל־תִּדְרֹם בַּת־עֵינֶיךָ:
יט קוּמִי | רִנֵּי בַלַּיְלָה
לְרֹאשׁ אֲשֶׁמְרוֹת
שִׁפְכִי כַמַּיִם לַיָּבֵד
גִּבַּח פָּנַי אֲדֹנָי
שָׂאֵי אֵלָיו כַּפְּיךָ
עַל־נֶפֶשׁ עוֹלְלֵיךָ
הַעֲטוּפִים בְּרָעַב
בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל־חוּצוֹת:
כ רֹאֵה יְהוָה וְהִבִּיטָה
לְמִי עוֹלְלֹת כָּה
אִם־תֹּאכְלֶנָה נְשִׁים פְּרִים
עַל־לֵי טַפְחִים
אִם־יִהְרַג בְּמִקְדָּשׁ אֲדֹנָי
כִּהֵן וְנִבְיָא:
כא שָׁכְבוּ לְאָרֶץ חוּצוֹת

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:
whom did You treat / deal with thus?
If women will eat their fruit,
coddled babies –;
If priest and prophet are murdered
in *Adonai's* holy place –!
21 Laid down to the earth (in the) streets,

טז וַיִּגְרַם בְּחֶצֶץ שֹׁנֵי הַכֶּפֶשׁ שְׁנֵי בְּאַפֶּר: יז וַתִּזְנַח מִשְׁלוֹם נַפְשִׁי נִשְׁיִיתִי טוֹבָה: יח וְאָמַר אֶבְרָד נִצְחִי וַתּוֹחַלְתִּי מִיְהוָה:	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 <i>YHVH</i> my endurance and my hope!"	ו בְּמַחְשָׁכִים הוֹשִׁיבָנִי כְּמַתֵּי עוֹלָם: ז גָּדַר בְּעַדִּי וְלֹא אֵצֵא הַכְּבִיד נִחַשְׁתִּי: ח גַּם כִּי אֶזְעַק וְאֶשׁוּעַ שִׁתֶּם תִּפְלְתִי: ט גָּדַר דְּרָכִי בְּגִזִּית נִתְיַבְתִּי עֲוֹה:	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 brass (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.
יט זְכַר-עֲנִי וּמְרוּדִי לְעֵנָה וְרֹאשׁ: כ זְכוֹר תִּזְכּוֹר וַתִּשְׁוַח עָלַי נַפְשִׁי: כא זֹאת אֲשִׁיב אֶל-לִבִּי עַל-כֵּן אוֹחִיל:	19 Remember my affliction and my scattering – wormwood and gall; 20 Remember, my soul will remember, and she will sink down upon me. 21 (Still) this will I turn toward my heart, for so will I hope:	י יָדַב אֲרֵב הוּא לִי אֲרִי בְּמַסְתָּרִים: יב דְּרָכֵי סוּרָר וַיִּפְשַׁחֲנִי שָׁמְנֵי שָׁמֶם: יג דָּבַד קִשְׁתּוֹ וַיִּצְיַבְנִי כַּמִּטְרָא לַחֲזָז:	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 stood me up as target for the arrow;
כב חֲסִדֵי יְהוָה כִּי לֹא-תִמְנוּ כִּי לֹא-כָלוּ רַחֲמָיו: כג חֲדָשִׁים לְבִקְרִים רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ: כד חֶלְקִי יְהוָה אָמְרָה נַפְשִׁי עַל-כֵּן אוֹחִיל לּוֹ:	22 <i>YHVH</i> 's love / kindnesses – 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 <i>YHVH</i> – said my soul – therefore so will I hope for Him.	יד הִבִּיא בְּכִלְיוֹתַי בְּנֵי אֲשַׁפְתּוֹ: יז הִיִּיתִי שְׁחֹק לְכָל-עַמִּי נְגִינָתֶם כָּל-הַיּוֹם: טו הִשְׁבִּיעַנִי בְּמְרוּרִים הַרוֹנֵי לְעֵנָה:	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;
כה טוֹב יְהוָה לְקוֹ?	25 Good is <i>YHVH</i> to those waiting for Him,		

אֲדֹנָי לֹא רָאָה:	struggle – wouldn't Adonai see (that)?	לְנַפְשׁ תִּדְרָשׁוּנוּ:	to a soul/person that would seek Him.
לֹא מִי זֶה אָמַר וַתְּהִי	37 Who is this who spoke and it was	כִּי טוֹב וַיַּחֲלֵל 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.
לֶחַ מִפִּי עָלִיוֹן לֹא תֵצֵא	38 From the mouth of the Highest	כִּי טוֹב לְגֹבֵר	27 Good it is for a man
הַרְעוֹת וְהַטּוֹב:	don't the evils and the good come out?	כִּי-יִשָּׂא עַל בְּנֵעוּרָיו:	that he carry a yoke in his youth.
לֹט מֵהַ-יְתֵאוּנוּ אַתְּמָה חַי	39 How could a living person complain,	כַּח יֵשֵׁב בְּדָד וַיִּדָּם	28 Let him sit alone and be silent,
גֹּבֵר עַל-חַטָּאָיו:	a man, (if punished) for his sins?	כִּי נִטַּל עָלָיו:	since He laid (it) on him;
מִנְחַפְשָׁה דְרָכֵינוּ וַנִּחְקְרָה	40 Let us search our ways and dig deep,	כִּי יִתֵּן בְּעַפְרֹ פִּיהוּ	29 he should put his mouth in the dust –
וְנָשׁוּבָה עַד-יְהוָה:	and let us return until YHVH,	אוֹלַי יֵשׁ תִּקְוָה:	maybe there is hope;
מֵאֵי נִשָּׂא לְבַבְנוּ	41 Let us lift our hearts	לֵא יִתֵּן לְמַכְהוֹ לְחַי	30 Put out his cheek for the one who
אֶל-כַּפָּיִם	up to our hands (stretching them)	יִשְׂבַּע בְּחַרְפָּה:	strikes, be satiated with shame.
אֶל-אֵל בַּשָּׁמַיִם:	toward God in the heavens.	לֹא כִי לֹא יִזְנַח	31 For Adonai would not
מִבְּנַחְנוּ פָשַׁעְנוּ וּמְרִינוּ	42 Us, we sinned and rebelled.	לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנָי:	spurn forever;
אַתְּהָ לֹא סָלַחְתָּ:	You – You did not pardon.	לִבִּי כִי אִם-הוֹלָה וְרַחַם	32 for He aggrieved and showed mercy,
מִגְּסַבְתָּהּ בְּאַף	43 You took shelter in such anger,	בְּרַב חַסְדָּיו:	according to His love's abundance;
וַתִּדְרָשׁוּנוּ תִרְגַּת לֹא	and You would pursue us, You	לִגְ כִּי לֹא עָנָה מִלְּבוֹ	33 for He did not afflict from His heart
חִמְלַת:	murdered without pitying;	וַיִּגָּה בְּנִי-אִישׁ:	and aggrieve human beings.
מִדְּסִבּוֹתֶיךָ בְּעֵנֶן לְךָ	44 You sheltered Yourself within a	לֹד לְדַכָּא תַחַת רַגְלָיו	34 To crush under His feet
מִמְעַבּוֹר תִּפְלָה:	cloud, far beyond prayer;	כָּל אֲסִירֵי אֶרֶץ:	all imprisoned of the land,
מִדָּה סְחִי וּמְאֹס	45 Scum and refuse	לֵא לְהַטּוֹת מִשְׁפַּט-גֹּבֵר	35 to make bent a man's judgment,
תְּשִׁימֵנוּ	You would make us	וַיַּגֵּד פְּנֵי עָלִיוֹן:	right to the face of the Highest,
בְּקֶרֶב הָעַמִּים:	in the midst of the peoples.	לֹא לְעוֹת אָדָם בְּרִיבּוֹ	36 to twist / wrong a person in his

אל־תַּעֲלֵם אָזְנוֹךָ לְרוּחֹתַי לְשׁוֹעֲתַי: נָו קָרַבְתָּ בַּיּוֹם אֶקְרָאָךָ אֲמַרְתָּ אֶל־תִּירָא:	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."	מִן פָּצוּ עֵלְיָנוּ פִּיהֶם כָּל־אֵיבֵינוּ: מִז פָּחַד וּפַחַת הָיָה לָנוּ הַשָּׂאת וְהַשָּׁבַר: מִח פִּלְגֵי־מַיִם תִּרְד עֵינַי עַל־שֹׁבַר בֵּת־עַמִּי:	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;
נָח רַבַּת אֲדֹנָי רִיבֵי נַפְשִׁי גָאַלְתָּ חַיִּי: נָט רָאִיתָה יְהוָה עֲוֹתַי שָׁפְטָה מִשְׁפָּטִי: ס רָאִיתָה כָּל־נִקְמָתָם כָּל־מַחְשְׁבֹתַם לִי:	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.	מַט עֵינַי נִגְרָה וְלֹא תִדְמָה מֵאִיז הַפְּגוּת: נ עַד־יִשְׁקִיף וְיִרָא יְהוָה מִשָּׁמַיִם: נֹא עֵינַי עֹלְלָה לְנַפְשִׁי מִכָּל בָּנוֹת עִירִי:	49 My eye streams and won't silence herself, (she cries) without 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.
סֵא שָׁמַעְתָּ חֲרַפְתָּם יְהוָה כָּל־מַחְשְׁבֹתַם עָלַי: סב שִׁפְתַי קָמִי וְהִגִּיזוּם עָלַי כָּל־הַיּוֹם: סג שָׁבַתְם וְקִיַּמְתֶּם הַבִּיטָה אֲנִי מִנְּגִינָתָם	61 You heard their shaming, YHVH, all their designs against me, 62 the speech of those rising against me, their obsession over me every day, 63 (whether) sitting or rising up – Look! I am their singsong!	נב צֹד צְדוֹנֵי כַצְפּוֹר אֵיבֵי חֲנָם: נג צָמְתוּ בַּבוֹר חַיִּי וַיִּדּוּ־אָבֹן בִּי: נד צְפוּ־מַיִם עַל־רֹאשִׁי אֲמַרְתִּי נִגְזַרְתִּי:	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.
סד תִּשְׁיב לָהֶם גְּמוּלָה יְהוָה כַּמַּעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם: סה תִּתֵּן לָהֶם מְגִנַּת־לֵב תִּאֲלָתֶךָ לָהֶם: סו תִּרְדֵּף בְּאַף וְתִשְׁמִדֵם מִתַּחַת שָׁמַיִם יְהוָה:	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.	נח קָרַאתִי שְׁמֶךָ יְהוָה מִבוֹר תַּחְתָּיוֹת: נו קוֹלִי שָׁמַעְתָּ	55 I called Your name, YHVH, from a pit far underground. 56 You heard my voice:

מִחַטָּאת סֹדֶם
 הִתְפּוּכָה כְּמוֹ-רֹגֵעַ
 וְלֹא-תָלוּ בָּהּ יָדַיִם:
 ז וְכֹו נְזִירֵיהָ מִשְׁלֵג
 צָחֹו מִחֶלֶב
 אֲדָמוֹ עֵצִים מִפְּנִינִים
 סִפִּיר גְזָרְתָם:
 ח חֲשׂוֹךְ מִשְׁחֹור
 תִּאָּרֶם
 לֹא נִכְרוּ בַּחוּצוֹת
 צָפַד עוֹרֶם עַל-עֲצָמָם
 יָבֵשׁ הָיָה כְּעֵץ:
 ט טוֹבִים הָיוּ חֲלָלֵי-חֶרֶב
 מִחֲלָלֵי רָעֵב
 שֵׁהֶם יִזּוּבוּ מִדְּקָרִים
 מִתְּנוּבַת שְׂדֵי:
 י יְדֵי נָשִׁים רַחֲמָנִיוֹת
 בִּשְׁלוּ יִלְדֵיהֶן
 הָיוּ לְבָרוֹת לָמוֹ
 בְּשִׁבְרַת בַּת-עַמִּי:
 יא כָּלָה יְהוָה אֶת-חֲמָתוֹ
 שָׁפַךְ חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ
 וַיִּצְתֵּ-אֵשׁ בְּצִיּוֹן
 וַתֹּאכַל יְסוּדֹתֶיהָ:
 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,

א אֵיכָּה
 יוּעַם זָהָב
 יִשְׁנֶא הַכֶּתֶם הַטּוֹב
 תִּשְׁתַּפְּכֶנָּה אַבְנֵי-קֹדֶשׁ
 בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל-חוּצוֹת:
 ב בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן הַיְקָרִים
 הִמְסָלָאִים בַּפֹּז
 אֵיכָּה נִחְשְׁבוּ
 לְנִבְלֵי-חָרָשׁ
 מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי יוֹצֵר:
 ג גַּם-תַּנִּים חֲלָצוּ שָׂדֶה
 הַיְנִיקוּ גּוֹרֵיהֶן
 בַּת-עַמִּי לְאֶכְזָר
 כִּי־עֲנִים בַּמִּדְבָּר:
 ד דִּבֶּק לְשׁוֹן יוֹנֵק
 אֶל-חִכּוֹ בְּצִמָּא
 עוֹלָלִים שָׁאֲלוּ לָחֶם
 פָּרֵשׁ אֵינן לָהֶם:
 ה הָאֶכְלִים לְמַעַדְנִים
 נִשְׁמָו בַּחוּצוֹת
 הָאֱמָנִים עָלֵי תוֹלַעַ
 חֲבָקוּ אֲשֵׁפֹתוֹת:
 ו וַיִּגְדַּל עֲוֹן בַּת-עַמִּי

1 *Eiklah!* How can it be
 that 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

בְּצַפִּיתָנוּ צְפִינוּ אֶל־גּוֹי
לֹא יוֹשֵׁעַ:
יח צָדוּ צְעָדֵינוּ
מִלְכַת בְּרַחֲבֵינוּ
קָרַב קִצְיוֹ מֵלֵאוּ יָמֵינוּ
כִּי־בָא קִצְיוֹנוּ:
יט קָלִים הָיוּ רֹדְפֵינוּ
מִנְשָׁרֵי שָׁמַיִם
עַל־הַהָרִים דָּלְקָנוּ
בַּמִּדְבָּר אָרְבוּ לָנוּ:
כ רוּחַ אֶפְיוֹ מְשִׁיחַ יְהוָה
נִלְכַּד בְּשַׁחֲתוֹתָם
אֲשֶׁר אָמְרָנוּ בְּצִלוֹ
נִחְיֶה בְּגוֹיִם:
כא שִׂישִׁי וְשִׂמְחֵי בַת־אֲדוֹם
יֹשֶׁבֶת בְּאֶרֶץ עוּץ
גַּם־עֲלֶיךָ תִּעְבֶּר־כּוֹס
תִּשְׁכַּרְי וְתִתְעַרְי:
כב תִּמְצֹנֶךָ 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 Completed your iniquity, daughter Zion,
no more to be exiled / exposed.
He has charged your iniquity,
daughter Edom,
(to) expose (you) for your sins.

מְלֹכֵי־אָרֶץ
כָּל יֹשְׁבֵי תְּבֵל
כִּי יבֹא צָר וְאוֹיֵב
בְּשַׁעְרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם:
יג מִחַטָּאת נְבִיאֶיהָ
עוֹנוֹת כְּהֻנָּהָ
הַשֹּׁפְכִים בְּקִרְבָּהָ
דָּם צְדִיקִים:
יד נָעוּ עוֹרִים
בַּחוּצוֹת נִגְאָלוּ בְּדָם
בְּלֹא יוֹכְלוּ
יָגְעוּ בְּלִבְשֵׁיהֶם:
טו סוּרוּ טִמְאָה
קְרֹאוּ לָמוֹ
סוּרוּ סוּרוּ אֶל־תִּגְעוּ
כִּי נָצוּ גַם־נָעוּ
אָמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם
לֹא יוֹסִיפוּ לְגוֹר:
טז פָּנֵי יְהוָה
חֲקָלָם לֹא יוֹסִיף
לְהִבִּיטֵם
פָּנֵי כְּהֵנִים לֹא נִשְׂאוּ
וְזִקְנִים לֹא חָנְנוּ:
יז עוֹלֵינוּ תִּכְלֶינָה עֵינֵינוּ
אֶל־עֲזָרָתְנוּ הִבֵּל

kings of the earth
all worldly inhabitants,
that tormentor and enemy would come
into the gates of Jerusalem.
13 (It was) 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 / 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 נִתְּלוּ
 פְּנֵי זְקֵנִים לֹא נִהְדָּרוּ:
 יג בַּחֹרִים טָחוּז נִשְׂאוּ
 וּנְעָרִים בַּעֲזַם כְּשָׂלוּ:
 יד זְקֵנִים מִשְׁעַר שַׁבְּתוֹ
 בַּחֹרִים מִגְּיָנֶתָם:
 טו שָׁבֶת מְשׁוֹשׁ לִבְנוֹ
 נִהְפָּד לְאַבֵּל מִחֻלְנוֹ:
 טז נִפְּלָה עֲטֻרַת רֹאשֵׁנוּ
 אִוִּי-נָא לָנוּ כִּי חָטָאנוּ:
 יז עַל-זֶה הָיָה דָוָה לִבְנוֹ
 עַל-אַלֶּה חֲשָׁכוּ עֵינֵינוּ:
 יח עַל הַר-צִיּוֹן שָׁשְׂמָם
 שׁוֹעֲלִים הִלְכוּ-בוֹ:
 יט אַתָּה יְהוָה
 לְעוֹלָם תֵּשֵׁב
 כְּסֵאֲךָ לְדָר וָדוֹר:
 כ לָמָּה לִנְצַח תִּשְׁכַּחֲנוּ
 תַּעֲזֹבֵנוּ לְאַרְבַּי יָמִים:
 כא הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 וְנִשׁוּבָה
 חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדְמָם:
 כב כִּי אִם-מָאֵס
 מְאֹסֵתָנוּ קִצְפָּתָ עָלֵינוּ
 עַד-מְאֹד

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 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 except if rejecting you rejected us /
 loathed us, were enraged over us,
 so very much—!

א זְכוֹר יְהוָה מַה-הָיָה לָנוּ
 הַבֵּיטָה וּרְאֵה
 אֶת-חֲרַפְתָּנוּ:
 ב נִחַלְתָּנוּ נִהְפְּכָה לְזָרִים
 בְּתֵינוּ לְנֹכְרִים:
 ג יְתוּמִים הָיִינוּ וְאִין אָב
 אִמֹתֵינוּ כְּאִלְמָנוֹת:
 ד מִיָּמֵינוּ בְּכֶסֶף שָׁתִינוּ
 עֵצֵינוּ בְּמַחִיר יָבֵאוּ:
 ה עַל צַוְאֲרֵנוּ נִרְדְּפָנוּ
 יַגְעֵנוּ וְלֹא הוֹנַח-לָנוּ:
 ו מִצְרַיִם נִתְּנוּ לְיָד
 אֲשׁוּר לְשַׂבֵּעַ לָחֶם:
 ז אֲבֹתֵינוּ חָטְאוּ וְאִינָם
 וְאִנְחָנוּ עֲוֹנֹתֵיהֶם סָבְלָנוּ:
 ח עֲבָדִים מִשְׁלוּ כֻּנוּ
 פֶּרֶק אִין מִיָּדָם:
 ט בְּנַפְשֵׁנוּ נָבִיא לַחַיִּנוּ
 מִפְּנֵי חֶרֶב הַמִּדְבָּר:
 י עוֹרֵנוּ כְּתִנּוֹר נִכְמְרוּ
 מִפְּנֵי זִלְעָפוֹת רָעֵב:
 יא נָשִׁים בְּצִיּוֹן עָנוּ
 בְּתֵלֹת 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. *Tisha 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 *Tisha B'Av* as a time of mourning, but it is more importantly a call to identify with the experience of the refugee, being thrown into a hostile world without shelter or protection. That's what happened to the Jewish people 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 author(s) of *Eikhah* (traditionally Jeremiah) believed that what happened to Jerusalem was an expression of divine judgment. The idea that tragedy and disaster are punishment for our sins may seem alien to most modern Jews. This is also why it is hard to connect the Holocaust with *Tish'a B'Av*. But this theology can be consoling, because it allows people to find meaning in tragedy.

3. For the ancients, the choices were to believe that the destruction was God's punishment, or that God no longer cared about what happened to them. It is easy to imagine why people would choose a punishing God over an uncaring God (though the latter possibility is suggested in the very last verse of *Eikhah*). Even though *Eikhah* sounds like it's about God punishing us, it's not really a theodicy, but a prayer that tragedies prove God still cares about us, instead of proving God's indifference.

4. That doesn't mean we need to accept this theology – even in *Eikhah* itself, this idea is questioned. Only in the third chapter is Zion's destruction seen consistently as fair and just punishment. In all the other chapters, the degree of divine punishment is (subtly) described as excessive and abusive. The poet repeatedly begs God to pay attention: "See, YHVH, and look: whom did You treat thus? If women will eat their fruit, coddled babes – !"(2:20; also 1:9,11,20, 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 expressed 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 people to find meaning.

7. There is another way to look at the idea of divine punishment. According to Jeremiah, the reason for exile was that Israel did not let the land rest every seven years during the Sabbatical year. (2 Chron. 36:21) That is why 490 years without *Shmitah* were followed by 70 years of exile. In an age when we have

Hashiveinu הֲשִׁיבֵנוּ
Adonai elekha יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
v'nashuvah וְנָשׁוּבָה
Chadesh 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, with all that entails: 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

reason to believe that our ecological “sins” are coming home to roost, the connection between natural disaster and divine retribution is not so farfetched.

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 the Jubilee and *Shmita* years (Lev. 25)—and in the consequences that are supposed to befall if the people do not observe these laws (Lev. 26)—the Torah teaches that God will take the side of the land against the people if force 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, justice encompasses the land. 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 how the relationship between the people and the land can unravel. Two curses involve children being eaten – first by wild animals (v.22) and 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 curses in Leviticus end with: “you will be lost in the nations and the land of your enemies will eat you” (v.38). Because the Jewish people was in exile for so long, 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 people and land.

10. In ancient times, people believed that the Temple existed to promote the

fertility of the land and the people. The Temple brought abundance into the world; its rituals were performed for the sake of the land and all her species, not just for the Jews but for all humanity and all life. So one more way to look at the Temple’s destruction is that its purpose had already been destroyed by the way the people treated the land.

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

12. 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. If we sympathize with these ideas, *Eikhah* is an invitation to move towards justice for all people, for all species, and for the land herself.

Rabbi David Mevorach Seidenberg, 2017/5777. Some of this material is taken from *Kabbalah and Ecology*. Find more *Tish’a B’Av* resources, songs, and teachings at: theshalomcenter.org/node/1733 and at: neohasid.org/zman/tisha_bav