

CHAPTER 1

- א איכה | 1 *Eikhah!* How can it be –
יְשְׁבָה בְּדָד | that she sat alone,
הָעִיר רַבַּתִּי עָם | the city so great / so swelled with people?
הִיְתָה כְּאַלְמָנָה | She was like a widow.
רַבַּתִּי בְּגוֹיִם | The one great among the nations,
שָׁרְתִי בְּמַדִּינֹת | ministering among the states,
הִיְתָה לְמָסִ: | became a slave caste.
- ב בְּכוּ תִבְכֶּה בַּלַּיְלָה | 2 Crying, she will cry in the night,
וְדַמְעָתָהּ עַל לַחֲיָהּ | her tear upon her cheek
אֵין־לָהּ מְנַחֵם | There is none for her, no comforter,
מִכָּל־אֲהָבֶיהָ | from all her lovers.
כָּל־רֵעֶיהָ | All her companions
בְּגָדוּ בָּהּ | played traitor with her.
הָיוּ לָהּ לְאֹיְבִים: | They became for her enemies.
- ג גָּלְתָהּ יְהוּדָה | 3 She, Judah, was exiled,
מֵעֲנִי וּמֵרַב עֲבֹדָה | by poverty, and by(so)much hard labor
הִיא יְשְׁבָה בְּגוֹיִם | She sat among the nations,
לֹא מְצָאָה מְנוּחַ | not finding any rest;
כָּל־רֹדְפֶיהָ הִשִּׁיגוּהָ | All her pursuers caught up with her
בֵּין הַמְּצָרִים: | between the confined places.
- ד דְּרָכֵי צִיּוֹן אֲבֵלוֹת | 4 Zion's roads are mourning

Laments

A new and old translation of *Eikhah*

This booklet uses two translations of Laments, the book of mourning poems read on *Tish'a B'Av*. Chapters 1, 2 and 5 were translated by Rabbi David Mevorach Seidenberg, with attention to the principles of the Buber-Rosenzweig Bible. This translation strives to be “concordant” by translating related Hebrew words with related English words, and by following the order and syntax of the Hebrew as much as possible. In some cases alternate translations are given, indicated by a slash. This translation also focuses on the more physical, earthy meaning of words, drawing the reader from modern thought patterns towards more ancient ways of seeing and feeling. Chapters 3 and 4 were translated by James Moffat over a half century ago, according to the principles of “idiomatic” translation. This translation strives to recast the Hebrew according to the word order, meaning, and sense of everyday English, even to the point of reordering the verses (see 49-51 of chapter 3). Moffat, more than most idiomatic translators, is able to evoke the emotional depth of the Hebrew.

Please copy! Copies must include this title page. Rights are granted to make 10 copies per download. If you want to make more copies, please consider sending a donation to support www.neohasid.org. For more information, or for inquiries about teaching, please write to Rabbi David Seidenberg at rebduvid86@gmail.com. Visit NEOHASID.ORG on the web for this file or for other liturgy resources, *nigunim* and songs, and Chasidische Torah. Please also visit neohasid.org/stoptheflood and savethenegev.org for eco-Torah.

Translation revised from 2002, 2003 editions for the Aleph Kallah and the NHC Institute. Original translation © 1993, David Seidenberg. James Moffat's translation, from the Hodder and Stoughton edition (out of print), has been revised and updated in minor ways for this booklet. Based on layout for 2003 edition by Mark Frydenberg. This booklet contains the sacred name in Hebrew for God. Please do not destroy it or dispose of it improperly. ©July 2007, 2008, all applicable rights reserved.

neohasid.org

ראוה צרים
 שחקו על משבתה:
 ח חטא חטאה ירושלם
 על-כן לנידה היתה
 כל-מכבדיה הזיליה
 כי-ראו ערותה
 גם-היא נאנחה
 ותשב אחור:
 ט טמאתה בשוליה
 לא זכרה אחריתה
 ותרד פלאים
 אין מנחם לה
 ראה יהוה את-עניי
 כי הגדיל אויב:
 י ידו פרח צר
 על כל-מחמדיה
 כי-ראתה גוים
 באו מקדשה
 אשר צויתה
 לא-יבאו
 בקהל לה:
 יא כל-עמה נאנחים
 מבקשים לחם

They saw her, her tormentors,
 laughing over her becoming stilled.
 8 Sinning she sinned, Jerusalem.
 For this an outcast / *nidah* she became.
 All who honor her despise her,
 for they saw her nakedness.
 Also her, she is moaning,
 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;

מבלי באי מועד
 כל-שעריה שוממין
 כהניה נאנחים
 בתולתיה נוגות
 והיא מר-לה:
 ה הוי צריה לראש
 איביה שלו
 כי-הונה הונה
 על רב-פשעיה
 עולליה הלכו שבי לפני-צר:
 ו ויצא מן-בת-ציון
 כל-הדרה
 הוי שריה כאילים
 לא-מצאו מרעה
 וילכו בלא-כח
 לפני רודף:
 ז זכרה ירושלם
 ימי עניה
 ומרודה
 כל מחמדיה
 אשר הוי מימי קדם
 בנפל עמה ביד-צר
 ואין עוזר לה

from being without festival-goers,
 all her gates desolated;
 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 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, like deer,
 not finding a place to graze;
 They walked, without strength,
 before a pursuer.
 7 Jerusalem remembered
 the days of her impoverishment
 and her downsliding,
 all her precious things
 which were from early days,
 while her people fell into a foe's hand;
 And there is no help for her.

טו סֵלָה 15 Adonai spurned
 כָּל־אֲבִירַי | אֲדֹנָי בְּקִרְבִּי
 קָרָא עָלַי מוֹעֵד
 לְשֹׁבֵר בַּחֲוָרַי
 גַּת דְּבַר אֲדֹנָי
 לְבַתּוּלַת בֵּת־יְהוּדָה:
 טז עַל־אֵלֶּה | אֲנִי בּוֹכֶיָה
 עֵינַי | עֵינַי לְדָדָה מַיִם
 כִּי־רַחֵק מִמְּנִי מְנַחֵם
 מִשְׁעִיב נַפְשִׁי
 הָיוּ בְנֵי שׁוֹמְמִים
 כִּי גִבֵּר אוֹיְבִי:
 יז פָּרְשָׁה צִיּוֹן בְּיָדֶיהָ
 אֵין מְנַחֵם לָהּ
 צִוָּה יְהוָה לְיַעֲקֹב
 סְבִיבָיו צָרָיו
 הִיטָה יְרוּשָׁלַם
 לְגִדָּה בֵּינֵיהֶם:
 יח צַדִּיק הוּא יְהוָה
 כִּי פִיהוּ מְרִיתִי
 שְׁמַעוּ־נָא כָּל־הָעַמִּים
 וּרְאוּ מִכְּאֲבִי
 בְּתוּלַתִי וּבַחֲוָרַי

נָתַנוּ מִחַמּוּדֵיהֶם
 בְּאֹכֵל לְהַשִּׁיב נַפְשׁ
 רֵאֵה יְהוָה
 וְהִבִּיטָה כִּי הִיטִיתִי זוּלָּלָה:
 יב לֹא לְוָא אֵלֵיכֶם
 כָּל־עַבְרֵי דְרָךְ
 הַבִּיטוּ וּרְאוּ
 אִם־יֵשׁ מִכְּאוֹב כְּמִכְּאֲבִי
 אֲשֶׁר עוֹלָל לִי
 אֲשֶׁר הוֹגָה יְהוָה
 בַּיּוֹם חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ:
 יג מִמְרוֹם שָׁלַח־אֵשׁ בְּעַצְמֹתַי
 וַיִּדְרֶנָּה
 פָּרַשׁ רֶשֶׁת לְרַגְלִי
 הִשְׁבִּנִי אַחֲוֹר
 נִתְּנִי שְׁמֵמָה
 כָּל־הַיּוֹם דָּוָה:
 יד נֶשְׁקַדְתִּי עַל פְּשָׁעֵי
 בְּיָדוֹ יִשְׁתַּרְגְּוּ
 עָלָו עַל־צַוְאַרְתִּי
 הִכְשִׁיל כַּחֲוִי
 נִתְּנִי אֲדֹנָי בְּיָדִי
 לֹא־אוּכַל קוּם:
 They gave up their precious things
 for food to restore life.
 See, YHVH!
 Look (how much) I was despised.
 12 Never to you,
 all who pass on the way.
 Look, you must 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 he overwhelmed them.
 He spread out a net for my feet;
 He repelled me back;
 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.

כִּי־רַבּוֹת אֲנַחֲתִי
וְלִבִּי דָוָי:

For so much are my sighs,
and my heart is sickened.

CHAPTER 2

אֵת אֵיכָהּ |
יַעֲיֵב בְּאַפּוֹ |
אֲדַנִּי אֶת־בֵּת־צִיּוֹן
הִשְׁלִיךְ מִשָּׁמַיִם אֶרֶץ
תְּפִאֲרַת יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְלֹא־זָכַר
הַדָּם־רַגְלָיו
בְּיוֹם אַפּוֹ:
בַּבֹּלַע אֲדָנִי
לֹא חָמַל
אֶת כָּל־נְאוֹת יַעֲקֹב
הָרָס בְּעִבְרָתוֹ
מִבְּצֻרֵי־בֵת־יְהוּדָה
הִגִּיעַ לָאָרֶץ
חָלַל מַמְלָכָה וְשָׂרֵיהָ:
גַּגְדַּע בְּחִרְי־אָף
כָּל קַרְן יִשְׂרָאֵל
הִשִּׁיב אַחֲרָיו יְמִינוֹ

1 *Eiklah!* How can it be!
In his anger
Adonai darkened daughter Zion.
He cast down, from skies (to) earth,
Israel's glory,
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

הִלְכוּ בְּשָׁבִי:
יט קָרָאתִי לְמֵאֲהָבֵי
הִמָּה רְמוּנֵי
כְּהִנֵּי וּזְקֵנֵי
בְּעִיר גּוֹעֵו
כִּי־בִקְשׁוּ אֹכֶל לָמוֹ
וַיִּשְׁיבוּ אֶת־נַפְשָׁם:
כ רָאָה יְהוָה כִּי־צָר־לִי
מִצֵּי חֲמָרְמָרוּ
נִהְפָּה לִבִּי בְּקֶרְבִּי
כִּי מָרוּ מְרִיתִי
מִחוּץ שֶׁכְּלָה־חֲרָב
בְּבַיִת כַּמּוֹת:
כא שָׁמְעוּ כִּי נֶאֱנַחָה אֲנִי
אֵין מְנַחֵם לִי
כִּלְ־אֵיבֵי שָׁמְעוּ רַעֲתִי
שָׁשׂוּ כִּי אָתָּה עָשִׂיתָ
הַבָּאת יוֹם־קִרְאָתְךָ
וַיְהִי כַּמוֹנִי:
כב תָּבֹא כָל־רַעֲוֹתֶם לְפָנָיִךְ
וְעוֹלָל לָמוֹ
כַּאֲשֶׁר עוֹלָלְתָּ לִּי
עַל כָּל־פְּשָׁעָי

walked captive / into captivity.
19 I called to my lovers.
Those deceived me.
My priests, and my elders,
they wasted away in the city,
seeking food for them,
and to bring back their life.
20 See YHVH – for mine is torment,
my guts were churning,
my heart overturned within me,
for rebelling I rebelled.
From outside sword striking down;
In the house, like death itself.
21 They listened. 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 they will be(come) like me.
22 All their evil will come before you
Treat them
like you treated me
for all my sins.

הסגיר ביד־אויב
חומת ארמנותיה
קול נתנו בבית־יהוה
כיום מועד:
ח חשב יהוה | להשחית
חומת בת־ציון
נטה קו
לא־השיב ידו
מבלע
ויאכל־חל וחומה
יחדו אמללו:
ט טבעו בארץ שעריה
אבד ושבר בריחיה
מלכה ושריה בגוים
אין תורה
גם־נביאיה
לא־מצאו חזון מיהוה:
י יִשְׁבוּ לָאָרֶץ יְדֵמוּ
זקני בת־ציון
העלו עפר על־ראשם
הגרו שקים
הורידו לָאָרֶץ רֹאשָׁן
בתולת ירושלים:

He turned over to an enemy's hand
the walls of her citadels.
They gave a shout in YHVH's house
like a festival day.
8 YHVH determined to ruin
daughter Zion's wall.
He stretched a line,
he didn't turn his hand back
from swallowing up,
and he made rampart and wall,
mourn together, 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.
Also her prophets,
They found no vision from YHVH.
10 They sat down to the earth, silenced,
daughter Zion's elders,
they lifted dust over their head,
tied on sackcloth.
They let their head down to the earth,
Jerusalem's girls.

מפני אויב
ויבער בעקב כאש להבה
אכלה סביב:
ד דרך קשתו כאויב
נצב ימינו
כצד
ויהרג כל
מתמדי־עין
באהל בת־ציון
שפך כאש חמתו:
ה הִיָּה אֲדֹנָי | כְּאוֹיֵב
בלע ישראל
בלע כל־ארמנותיה
שחת מבצרי
וירב בבת־יהודה
תאניה ואניה:
ו ויחמס כגן שכו
שחת מועדו
שכח יהוה | בציון
מועד ושבת
וינאץ בנצם־אפו מלך וכהן:
ז זנח אדני | מזבחו
נאר מקדשו

before the enemy.
Burning into Jacob, like fire flaming
consuming (all) around.
4 He worked his bow like an enemy,
he stood his right hand firm
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 Israel.
He devoured all her citadels,
undermined his fortifications;
And he multiplied in daughter Zion
grief and groaning.
6 Like a garden, he tore apart his sukkah,
he 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.

שׁוֹא וְתַפֵּל
 וְלֹא־גָלוּ עַל־עֲוֹנֶךָ
 לְהִשָּׁיב שְׁבוּתֶךָ
 וַיַּחֲזוּ לָךְ
 מִשָּׂאוֹת שׁוֹא וּמַדּוּחִים:
 טו סָפְקוּ עֲלֶיךָ כַּפַּיִם
 כָּל־עַבְרֵי דָרֶךְ
 שָׁרְקוּ וַיִּנְעוּ רֹאשָׁם
 עַל־בֵּת יְרוּשָׁלַם
 הַזֹּאת
 הָעִיר שְׁיֹאֲמָרוּ
 כְּלִילַת יָפִי
 מִשׁוֹשׁ לְכָל־הָאָרֶץ:
 טז פָּצּוּ עֲלֶיךָ פִּיהֶם
 כָּל־אֹיְבֶיךָ
 שָׁרְקוּ וַיִּחְרְקוּ־שֵׁן
 אָמְרוּ בְלַעַנּוּ
 אַךְ זֶה הַיּוֹם שֶׁקִּוִּינָהוּ
 מִצָּאֵנוּ רְאִינוּ:
 יז עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר זָמַם
 בְּצַע אָמָרְתוֹ
 אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה מִימֵי־קֹדֶם
 תִּרְס וְלֹא חָמַל

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, gritting 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
 which he commanded from early days.
 He tore down and showed no pity.

יֵאָר כָּלוּ בְדַמְעוֹת עֵינַי
 חֲמַרְמְרוּ מֵעֵי
 נִשְׁפָּךְ לָאָרֶץ כְּבִדֵי
 עַל־שֹׁכֵר
 בַּת־עַמִּי
 בְּעֵטָף עוֹלָל וַיִּזְנֶק
 בְּרַחֲבוֹת קִרְיָה:
 יב לְאִמָּתָם יֹאמְרוּ
 אֵיךְ דָּגַן וַיַּיֵּן
 בְּהִתְעַטְּפֵם
 כְּחָלָל בְּרַחֲבוֹת
 לְעִיר בְּהִשְׁתַּפֵּךְ נַפְשָׁם
 אֶל־חֵיק אִמָּתָם:
 יג מָה־אֶעֱיִדֶךָ
 מָה אֲדַמֶּה־לָּךְ
 הַבַּת יְרוּשָׁלַם
 מָה אֲשׁוּהֶ־לָּךְ
 וַאֲנִיחֶמְךָ
 בְּתוֹלַת בַּת־צִיּוֹן
 כִּי־גָדוֹל כַּיָּם
 שִׁבְרֶךָ
 מִי יִרְפָּא־לָּךְ:
 יד נְבִיאֶיךָ חֲזוּ לָךְ

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 infant
 in city 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
 (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

נָעַר וְזָקֵן
 בְּתוֹלְתַי וּבְחֹרַי
 נָפְלוּ בַחֶרֶב
 הִרְגַתְּ בַיּוֹם אַפְּךָ
 טַבַּחְתָּ לֹא חֲמִלְתָּ:
 כִּי תִקְרָא כְּיוֹם מוֹעֵד
 מִגּוּרֵי מְסָבִיב
 וְלֹא הָיָה בַיּוֹם אֶף-יְהוָה
 פָּלִיט וְשָׂרִיד
 אֲשֶׁר-טַפַּחְתִּי וְרַבִּיתִי
 אִבִּי 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

[Moffat translation begins here.]

אֲנִי הַגֹּבֵר רָאָה עָנִי
 בְּשֹׁבֵט עֲבָרְתוֹ:
 בָּאוֹתִי נִתַּג וַיִּלְךְ
 חֹשֶׁךְ וְלֹא-אֹר:
 גַּם אֵךְ בִּי יָשַׁב יַהֲפֹךְ יָדוֹ
 כָּל-הַיּוֹם:
 דְּבָלָה בְּשָׂרִי וְעוֹרִי
 שִׁבְרָ עֲצָמוֹתַי:

1 I am the man who has suffered
 under the rod of his anger:
 2 I am the man he has been leading
 on a dark, unlighted road;
 3 he has baffled me over and again,
 all the day long;
 4 he has worn away my skin and flesh,
 and broken my bones;

וַיִּשְׂמַח עָלֶיךָ אוֹיֵב
 הָרִים קַרְן צְרִיף:
 יַח צָעַק לְבָם אֶל-אֲדֹנָי
 חוֹמַת בַּת-צִיּוֹן
 הוֹרִידִי כַנַּחַל דְּמָעָה
 יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה
 אַל-תִּתְּנֵי פּוּגַת לֶךְ
 אַל-תִּתְּדִם בַּת-עֵינֶיךָ:
 יט קוּמִי | רְנִי בַלַּיְלָה
 לְרֵאשׁ אֲשֶׁמְרוֹת
 שִׁפְכֵי כַמִּים לְבָרֶךְ
 גִּזְחַ פְּנֵי אֲדֹנָי
 שְׁאֵי אֵלָיו כַּפְּיךָ
 עַל-נֶפֶשׁ עוֹלְלֶיךָ
 הָעֲטוּפִים בְּרָעַב
 בְּרֵאשׁ כָּל-חוּצוֹת:
 כ רָאָה יְהוָה וַתִּבְיֹטָה
 לְמִי עוֹלְלֹת כֹּה
 אִם-תֹּאכְלֶנָה נְשִׁים פְּרִיָם
 עֲלֵלֵי טַפָּחִים
 אִם-יִהְרַג בְּמִקְדָּשׁ אֲדֹנָי
 כְּתֹן וְנִבְיָא:
 כא שִׁכְבוּ לְאָרֶץ חוּצוֹת

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 like this?
 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,

נְגִינַתְּם כָּל־הַיּוֹם: burden of their satire all day long.
 טו הִשְׁבִּיעַנִי בַמְרוֹרִים 15 He has filled me up with bitter herbs,
 הִרְוַנִי לַעֲנָה: and sated me with wormwood;
 טז וַיִּגְרַס בְּחֻצֵי שֹׁנֵי 16 He has broken my teeth with gravel,
 הִכְפִּישָׁנִי בְּאַפָּר: and covered me with ashes.
 יז וַתִּזְנַח מִשְׁלוֹם נַפְשִׁי 17 He has bereft me of all bliss,
 נִשְׁיִתִי טוֹבָה: I forget what it is to prosper,
 יח וָאָמַר אֲבַד נִצְחִי 18 I said, "My strength is gone,
 וַתִּוְחַלְתֵּנִי מִיְהוָה: and my hope in the Eternal [YHVH]!"
 יט זְכַר־עֲנָנִי וּמְרוֹדֵי 19 The thought of my stress and scattering
 לַעֲנָה וְרָאשׁ: is bitter gall to me;
 כ זְכוֹר תִּזְכּוֹר 20 my soul is always thinking of it,
 וַתִּשׁוּחַ עָלַי נַפְשִׁי: and is crushed within me.
 כא זָאת אֲשִׁיב אֶל־לִבִּי 21 But I will call to mind,
 עַל־כֵּן אוֹחִיל: to give me hope,
 כב חֶסֶד־יְהוָה כִּי לֹא־תִמְנוּ 22 that the Eternal's love is lasting,
 כִּי לֹא־כָלוּ רַחֲמָיו: and will never fail.
 כג חֲדָשִׁים לְבֹקְרִים 23 Fresh every morning is your kindness,
 רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ: great is your faithfulness!
 כד חֶלְקִי יְהוָה 24 The Eternal is my allotted share,

ה בָּנָה עָלַי וַיִּקְרָה 5 he has piled troubles up against me,
 רָאשׁ וַתִּלְאַחַה: right round my head;
 ו בְּמַחְשָׁכִים הוֹשִׁיבָנִי 6 he has made me dwell in the dark,
 כְּמֵתֵי עוֹלָם: like those long dead;
 ז גָּדַר בְּעֵדְי 7 he has walled me round,
 וְלֹא אֵצֵא: till I cannot go out,
 ח הִכְבִּיד נְחֹשְׁתַּי: He has loaded me with chains;
 ח גַּם כִּי אֶזְעַק וַיֹּאשְׁוֹעַ 8 and when I fain would cry for help,
 שָׁתַם תְּפִלָּתִי: He stops my prayer;
 ט גָּדַר דְּרָכִי בְּגִזִּית 9 He blocks my way with boulders,
 נְתִיבַתִּי עֲוָה: till my course is twisted;
 י יָבֵב אֶרֶב הוּא לִי 10 He lurks for me like a bear,
 אֶרֶי בְּמִסְתָּרִים: like a lion in ambush;
 יא דָּרַכִי סוּרָר וַיִּפְשַׁחֲנִי 11 He has chased and mangled me
 שָׁמְנֵי שָׁמִים: and left me all forlorn;
 יב דִּבְדָּה קִשְׁתּוֹ 12 He has bent his bow
 וַיַּצִּיבֵנִי כַמִּטְרָא לַחֲץ: and made me target for his arrows;
 יג הִבִּיא בְּכִלְיוֹתָי 13 he has driven his shafts home,
 בְּנִי אֲשַׁפְתּוֹ: right into me;
 יד הֵייתִי שְׂחָק לְכָל־עַמִּי 14 I am the butt of all nations,

לג כי לא ענה מלבו
 ויגה בני-איש: 33 he is loathe to cause pain
 to grieve the sons of men.

לד לדכא תחת רגליו
 כל אסירי ארץ: 34 When a whole people is taken
 prisoner and downtrodden,

לה לה להטות
 משפט-גבר 35 when a man
 is deprived of his rights,
 נגד פני עליון: under the eyes of the Most High,

לו לו לעות אדם בריבו
 אדני לא ראה: 36 when a person does not get justice,
 does the Lord not see it?

לז מי זה אמר ותהי
 אדני לא צוה: 37 Who can carry out his will,
 unless it is the Lord's order?

לח לח מפני עליון לא תצא
 קרעות והטוב: 38 Are not weal and woe alike
 decreed by the Most High?

לט מה-יתאונן אדם חי
 גבר על-חטאיו: 39 Then why should mortal men complain,
 when they are punished for their sins?

מ נחפשה דרכינו ונחלקה
 ונשובה עד-יהוה: 40 Let us scan and search our lives,
 let us return to the Eternal,

מא מא נשא לבבנו אל-כפים
 אל-אל בשמים: 41 lifting our hearts up with our hands
 to God in heaven;

מב מב נחנו פשענו ומרינו 42 The sin is ours, we have rebelled,

אמרה נפשי
 על-כן אוחיל לו: I say,
 therefore I will hope in him.

כה כה טוב יהוה
 לקו 25 The Eternal is good
 to those who wait for him,
 לנפש תדרשנו: to a soul that seeks him.

כו כו טוב ויחיל ודומם
 לתשועת יהוה: 26 It is good to wait in silence
 for the help of the Eternal;

כז כז טוב לגבר
 כיי-ישא על
 בנעוריו: 27 it is good for a man
 to bear without a word
 the rebuke of the Eternal;

כח כח ישב בדרד ויחם
 כי נטל עליו: 28 Let him sit alone in silence,
 since it is the Eternal's hand;

כט כט יתן בעפר פיהו
 אולי יש תקנה: 29 let him lay his lips to the dust –
 there may be hope for him;

ל ל יתן למכהו לחי
 ישבע בחרפה: 30 let him offer his cheek to the striker,
 and suffer all taunts.

לא לא כי לא ינח
 לעולם אדני: 31 For the Lord [Adonai] will not
 always discard life;

לב לב כי אם-הוזה ורחם
 כרב חסדיו: 32 he wounds, but he has pity,
 so rich is his love;

נא עיני עוללה לנפשי
 מכל בנות עירי:
 נב צוד צדוני כצפור
 איבי חנם:
 נג צמתו
 בבור חלי
 וידו-אבן בי:
 נד צפומים על-ראשי
 אמרתי נגזרתי:
 נה קראתי שמך יהוה מבור
 תחתיות:
 נו קולי שמעת
 אל-תעלם אנך
 לרוחתי לשועתי:
 נז קרבת ביום אקראך אמרת
 אל-תירא:
 נח רבת אדני ריבי נפשי
 גאלת חיי:
 נט ראיתך יהוה עונותי
 שפטה משפטי:
 ס ראיתך כל-נקמתם

51 my eyes are sore with sorrow
 for all the woes of my city.
 52 They have hunted me like a bird,
 with no reason for their hate;
 53 they dropped me
 to die in a dungeon,
 flinging stones at me;
 54 waters flowed over my head,
 “I am lost,” I said.
 55 From the depth of the dungeon
 I called, O Eternal, to you;
 56 you did hear me crying
 “Give ear, don’t hide
 from my plea and cry”;
 57 you came at my call,
 bidding me, “Fear not.”
 58 O Lord, you did take my part
 and save my life.
 59 And now you see my wrongs;
 Oh vindicate me!
 60 You have seen all the revenge

אתה לא סלחת:
 מג ספתה באף
 ותרדפנו
 הרגת לא חמלת:
 מד סכותה
 בענן לך
 מעבור תפלה:
 מה סחי ומאוס
 תשימנו
 בקרב העמים:
 43 You have veiled your face in anger,
 pursuing us,
 killing without pity;
 44 you have covered
 yourself with a cloud
 no prayer can pierce;
 45 you have made us
 mere scum and refuse
 in the world.

מו פצו עלינו פיהם
 כל-איבינו:
 מז פחד ופחת תיה לנו
 השאת והשבר:
 מח פלגי-מים תרד עיני
 על-שבר בת-עמי:
 46 Our foes all yell
 against us;
 47 dismay and destruction befall us,
 ravage and ruin.
 48 Tears are flooding from my eyes
 for the ruin of my people;
 [Next 3 verses were reordered by Moffat,
 sequenced in his translation: 51; 49; 50.]
 מט עיני נגרה ולא תדמה
 מאין הפגות:
 נ עד-ישקיף
 וירא יהוה משמים:
 49 My eyes stream without ceasing,
 without rest,
 50 till the Eternal will look down
 from heaven above,

ב בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן הַיְקָרִים 2 the priceless sons of Zion,
 הַמְּסֻלָּאִים בַּפֶּזֶז 2 worth their weight in gold,
 אֵיכָה נִחְשְׁבוּ לְנִבְלֵי-חֶרֶשׁ 2 count no more than crockery,
 מְעֵשָׂה יְדֵי יוֹצֵר: 2 mere pots of clay!
 ג גַּם-תַּנִּים תִּלְצוּ שֵׁד 3 Even jackals give the breast
 הַיְנִיקוּ גּוּרֵיהֶן 3 and suckle their whelps;
 בַּת-עַמִּי לְאֶכְזָר 3 but the women of my people are cruel
 כִּי־עֲנִים בַּמִּדְבָּר: 3 as the ostrich wild;
 ד דִּבְק לְשׁוֹן יוֹנֵק 4 For the tongue of the nursling cleaves
 אֶל-חִכּוֹ בְּצִמְאָ 4 for thirst to the roof of its mouth,
 עוֹלָלִים שְׂאֵלוּ לָחֶם 4 the children beg for food,
 פֶּרֶשׁ אֵינֹן לָהֶם: 4 and no one gives it.
 ה הָאֶכְלִים לְמַעַד נֵיִם 5 Those who fared on dainties
 נִשְׁמוּ בַחֲוֹצוֹת 5 rot upon the street;
 הַיַּמְנִים עָלַי תוֹלָע 5 those who lay on scarlet rugs
 חִבְּקוּ אֶשְׁפָּתוֹת: 5 huddle on an ash-heap.
 ו וַיִּגְדַּל עֲוֹן בַּת-עַמִּי 6 The guilt of my people was greater
 מִחַטָּאת סֹדֶם 6 than even the sin of Sodom,
 הַקְּפוּכָה כְּמוֹ-תֹדֵעַ 6 Sodom that fell in a flash,
 וְלֹא-חָלוּ בָּהּ יָדַיִם: 6 before any could wring his hands.
 ז זָכוּ נְזִירֶיהָ 7 Her headmen were brighter
 מִשֶּׁלֶג 7 than snow,
 צָחוּ מִחֶלֶב 7 and whiter than milk,

כָּל-מַחְשְׁבֹתַם לִי: they have plotted against me.
 סא שָׁמַעְתָּ חֲרָפָתָם יְהוָה 61 You have heard all the insults
 כָּל-מַחְשְׁבֹתַם עָלַי: they plotted against me,
 סב שִׁפְתַי קָמִי וְהִגִּיזוּם עָלַי 62 the talk of the ones who attack me,
 כָּל-הַיּוֹם: their muttering all the day long.
 סג שִׁבְתֶּם וְקִימְתֶם הַבִּיטָה 63 Look at them, sitting or rising –
 אֲנִי מִנְגִּינְתֶּם I am the burden of their satire!
 סד תִּשְׁיב לָהֶם גְּמוּל יְהוָה 64 You will requite them, O Eternal,
 כְּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם: for all they have done;
 סה תִּתֵּן לָהֶם מַגְנַת-לֵב 65 you will blind their vision –
 תִּאֲלָתֶךָ לָהֶם: your curse be upon them!
 סו תִּרְדֹּף בְּאַף 66 You will chase them angrily,
 וְתִשְׁמִידֵם and crush them
 מִתַּחַת שָׁמַיִם יְהוָה: out of life.

CHAPTER 4

א אֵיכָה 1 Eikhah! Ah!
 יוֹעַם זָהָב how the gold is dimmed,
 יִשְׁנָא הַכֶּתֶם הַטּוֹב how changed the gold so pure!
 תִּשְׁתַּפְּכְנָה אֲבִי-קֹדֶשׁ the sacred gems are scattered
 בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל-חֲוֹצוֹת: over every street;

יג מַחֲטָאת נְבִיאֶיהָ
 עֲוֹנוֹת כֹּהֲנֶיהָ
 הַשֹּׁפְכִים בְּקֶרְבָּהָ
 דָּם צְדִיקִים:
 יד נָעוּ עֲוָרִים בְּחוּצוֹת
 נִגְאָלוּ בַדָּם
 בְּלֹא יוֹכְלוּ יָגְעוּ בְּלִבְשִׁיהֶם:
 טו סוּרוּ טִמְאָא
 קָרְאוּ לָמוֹ
 סוּרוּ סוּרוּ אֶל-תִּגְעוּ
 כִּי נָצוּ גַם-נָעוּ
 אָמְרוּ בַגּוֹיִם לֹא יוֹסִיפוּ לָגוּר:
 טז פְּנֵי יְהוָה
 חֲלָקָם
 לֹא יוֹסִיף לְהַבִּיטָם
 פְּנֵי כֹהֲנִים לֹא נִשְׂאוּ
 וְזִקְנִים לֹא חָנְנוּ:
 יז עוֹלֵינוּ תִכְלִינָה עֵינֵינוּ
 אֶל-עֲוֹרֹתֵנוּ הֶבֶל
 בְּצַפְיָתֵנוּ צִפִּינוּ אֶל-גּוֹי
 לֹא יוֹשֵׁעַ:
 יח צְדוּ צְדוּ צְעֵדֵינוּ
 מַלְכָת בְּרַחֲבֵינוּ

13 It was all for the sin of her prophets,
 for the crime of her priests,
 who shed in her
 the blood of the just.
 14 Now, stained with blood,
 they wander blindly about the streets,
 brushing against men they once avoided.
 15 “Begone! You are unclean!”
 men shout at them,
 “Begone! Avoid us.”
 So they stagger and wander,
 finding no more shelter abroad.
 16 The Eternal himself
 has scattered them,
 caring no more for them,
 disregarding the priests,
 and heedless of the prophets.
 17 Our eyes are strained and failing,
 as we look for aid, empty of hope;
 watching for a nation
 that never brought salvation.
 18 Foes dog our steps,
 till we dare not walk in the street,

אָדָמוּ לְעֶצֶם מְפַנִּינִים
 סַפִּיר גִּזְרָתָם:
 ח הַשֶּׁד מִשְׁחֹר
 תֵּאָרָם
 לֹא נִכְרוּ בְּחוּצוֹת
 צַפֵּד עוֹרָם עַל-עֲצָמָם
 יבֵשׁ הָיָה כְּעֵץ:
 ט טוֹבִים הָיוּ חֲלָלֵי-חֶרֶב
 מִחֲלָלֵי רֶעֶב
 שִׁיהֶם יוֹבֹבוּ מִדְּקָרִים
 מִתְּנוּבַת שִׁדְיָ:
 י יָדַי נְשִׂים רַחֲמַנִּיּוֹת
 בִּשְׁלוּ יְלָדֵיהֶן
 הָיוּ לְבָרוֹת לָמוֹ
 בְּשֶׁבֶר בַּת-עַמִּי:
 יא כָלָה יְהוָה אֶת-חַמָּתוֹ
 שָׂפָד חֶרֶז אָפוּ
 וַיִּצַּת-אֵשׁ בְּצִיּוֹן
 וַתֹּאכַל יְסוּדֹתֶיהָ:
 יב לֹא הָאֱמִינוּ מַלְכֵי-אֲרָץ
 כֹּל יִשְׁבֵי תִבְל
 כִּי יבֹא צָר וְאוֹיֵב
 בְּשַׁעְרֵי יְרוּשָׁלָּם:
 ruddier than rubies,
 their bodies veined like sapphires;
 8 and now they look
 more darksome than the night –
 none knows them as they pass –
 their skin drawn tight over the bone,
 dry as a stick.
 9 Better to die by the sword
 than by starving,
 stabbed to death by hunger
 suddenly in the field!
 10 The hands of tender women
 have cooked their own children,
 making that their food,
 amid the wreck.
 11 The Eternal has carried out his fury,
 vented his hot anger,
 lit a fire in Zion
 that burns her to the base.
 12 None could believe, no king,
 no one in all the world,
 that foe or enemy could ever enter
 inside Jerusalem.

את־חַרְפֹּתֵנוּ: our abuse / our shame!
 ב נַחֲלֵתָנוּ נִהְפָּכָה 2 Our inheritance overturned,
 לְזָרִים to strangers
 בְּתֵינוּ לְנֹכְרִים: our houses to foreigners.
 ג יְתוּמִים הָיִינוּ וְאִין אָב 3 We were orphans, there is no father,
 אִמֹּתֵינוּ כְּאַלְמָנוֹת: our mothers like widows.
 ד מִיַּמֵּינוּ בְּכֶסֶף שָׁתִינוּ 4 Our water we drank for money;
 עֲצֵינוּ בְּמַחִיר יָבֵאוּ: our wood came (only) with a price.
 ה עַל צוּאֲרֵנוּ נִרְדָּפְנוּ 5 On our neck we were pursued,
 יִגָּעֵנוּ וְלֹא הוֹנַח־לָנוּ: tired out, without letting us rest.
 ו מִצְרַיִם נִתְּנוּ יָד 6 Egypt, we stretched a hand,
 אַשּׁוּר לְשִׁבְעַת לֶחֶם: Assyria, to satisfy bread.
 ז אֲבֹתֵינוּ חָטְאוּ וְאִינָם 7 Our fathers sinned and are not,
 וְאִנְחָנוּ עֲוֹנֹתֵיהֶם סָבְלָנוּ: and we shouldered their evils.
 ח עֲבָדִים מְשֻׁלּוּ בָנוּ 8 Slaves ruled us.
 פָּרַק אִין There is none to break us out
 מִיָּדָם: from their hand.
 ט בְּנַפְשֵׁנוּ נָבִיא לַחֲמֵנוּ מִפְּנֵי 9 For our lives we bring our bread,
 חֶרֶב הַמִּדְבָּר: from the wilderness' sword.
 י עוֹרֵנוּ כִּתְנוֹר נִכְמָרוּ 10 Our skin like a furnace, glowing,
 מִפְּנֵי זַלְעָפוֹת רָעֵב: from the delirium of hunger.
 יא נָשִׁים בְּצִיּוֹן עָזוּ 11 Women in Zion were victimized,
 בְּתֵלֵת בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה: girls, in Judah's towns.

קָרַב קִצְיָנוּ מְלֵאוּ יָמֵינוּ 19 More swift were our pursuers
 כִּי־בָא קִצְיָנוּ: for our end has come.
 יט קָלִים הָיוּ רֹדְפֵינוּ 19 More swift were our pursuers
 מִנְּשָׂרֵי שָׁמַיִם than eagles of the air,
 עַל־הַהָרִים דָּלְקָנוּ hunting us over the hills,
 בַּמִּדְבָּר אָרְבוּ לָנוּ: ambushing us on the wilds;
 כ רֹחַ אֶפְרָיִם מְשִׁיחַ יְהוָה 20 They trapped the king, the Eternal's
 נִלְכַּד בְּשַׁחֲתוֹתָם choice, breath of our lives,
 אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְנוּ בְּצִלּוֹ of whom we said, "Under his reign
 נַחֲיָה בְּגוֹיִם: we shall hold out among the nations!"
 כא שִׂישִׁי וְשִׂמְחִי בַת־אֲדוּם 21 Rejoice and be glad in your
 יוֹשֶׁבֶת בְּאֶרֶץ עֹז home-land, O maiden Edom!
 גַּם־עֲלֶיךָ תֵּעָבֵר־כּוֹס But the cup will come round to you,
 תִּשְׁכָּרִי וְתִתְעָרִי: and leave you drunk and disheveled.
 כב תִּם־עֹנֶיךָ בַת־צִיּוֹן 22 Zion, your guilt is over and gone,
 לֹא יוֹסִיף לְהִגְלוֹתְךָ no more exile for you!
 פָּקַד עֹנֶיךָ But Edom,
 בַת־אֲדוּם your guilt shall be punished,
 גָּלְהָה עַל־חַטָּאתֶיךָ: your sins laid bare!

CHAPTER 5

א זְכֹר יְהוָה מַה־הָיָה לָנוּ 1 YHVH, remember what was ours.
 הַבִּיטָה וְרֵאָה Look, and see

לְאָרְךָ יָמִים:
 כִּי הִשְׁיִבְנוּ יְהוָה | אֵלֶיךָ
 וְנִשְׁוִבָה
 חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם:
 כִּי בִי אִם-מָאֵס מְאַסְתָּנוּ
 קִצְפָּת עָלֵינוּ עַד-מָאֵד

 הִשְׁיִבְנוּ יְהוָה | אֵלֶיךָ
 וְנִשְׁוִבָה
 חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ
 כְּקֶדֶם:

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 if loathing, you should loathe us,
 be enraged over us, so very much—!

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

Some notes on the theology of *Eikhah*:

The idea that tragedy and disaster are punishment for our sins is alien to most modern Jews. The author(s) of *Eikhah* believed that what happened to Zion was divine punishment. (This is one reason why it is hard to connect the Holocaust with what we mourn on *Tish'a B'av*.)

Besides the obvious consolation of believing that the tragedy had meaning, the reader might also consider that for the ancients, the two choices were to believe that the destruction was punishment, or that God simply had no interest in them. It is easy to imagine why people would choose the image of a punishing God over the complete absence of God – though the latter possibility is suggested in the very last line of the text, before we go back to repeat the more comforting line “Turn us...”

Only in chapter 3 is the destruction of Zion consistently seen as fair and just punishment. In other chapters, the degree of divine punishment is (subtly) described as excessive and abusive (e.g. “See YHVH and look: Whom did you treat like this?” in chapter 2).

According to Jeremiah, the reason for exile was that Israel had not allowed the land to rest during her Jubilee years – an outcome promised in the Torah. (This idea is not found in *Eikhah*, where the identification of the people with the land is total.) In an age when we have good reason to believe that our ecological “sins” are coming home to roost, the connection between disaster and divine retribution may not seem so farfetched. If we sympathize with this idea, we can read *Eikhah* as an invitation to change our lives, towards justice for all peoples, for all species, and for the land herself.

יָב שָׂרִים בְּיָדָם נִתְּלוּ 12 Ministers by their hand hung.
 פְּנֵי זְקֵנִים לֹא נִהְדָּרוּ: Elders' faces were void of majesty.
 יָג בַּחֹרִים טְחוּז נָשְׂאוּ 13 Boys would carry a millstone,
 וַיִּזְעָרִים בְּעֵץ כְּשֵׁלוֹ: and youths, stumbling with wood.
 יָד זְקֵנִים מִשְׁעַר שְׁבָתוֹ 14 Elders ceased from gate,
 בַּחֹרִים מִנְּגִינָתָם: boys from their play.
 טו שְׁבַת מְשׁוֹשׁ לִבְנוֹ 15 Our heart stopped any joy,
 נִהְפָּדוּ לְאֵבֶל 16 our dance overturned
 מְחֻלְנוּ: into mourning.
 טז נִפְלָה עֲטֹרַת רֵאשֵׁנוּ 16 The crown on our head fell;
 אִי-נָא לָנוּ כִּי חָטָאנוּ: Oy for us! For we sinned.
 יז עַל-זֶה הָיָה דָוָה לִבְנוֹ 17 For this our heart was sickened.
 עַל-אַלְהָה חֲשָׁכוּ עֵינֵינוּ: For these our eyes darkened.
 יח עַל-הַר-צִיּוֹן 18 For Mount Zion,
 שְׁשָׁמִם that was desolated,
 שׁוֹעֲלִים הִלְכוּ-בָּהּ: foxes went through her.
 יט אַתָּה יְהוָה 19 You, YHVH
 לְעוֹלָם תֵּשֵׁב will sit for all world-time,
 כְּסִיֶּךָ your seat
 לְדָר וְדוֹר: through generations and generations.
 כ לָמָּה 20 Why
 לִנְצַח תִּשְׁכַּחַנוּ would you forget us forever?
 תַּעֲזֹבֵנוּ Abandon us