

Laments איכה

Translations of *Eikhah* for our world

<http://neohasid.org/resources/laments>



Laments 4:1, Margaret Adams Parker
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This work is dedicated to all refugees

Tisha B'Av is not primarily about the Temple – *Chaza"l*, the rabbis, figured out how to live without the Temple long ago. Rather, *Tisha 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.

Last year, *Tisha B'Av* was especially weighty. So many continue to suffer the loss of community, wealth, and mental well-being. As the world struggles to face the plagues of racism and the pandemic, both plagues make each other worse. There is hope in the U.S., with a government that isn't putting refugees in detention camps and that acknowledges systemic racism. At the same time, Jews we face growing anti-Semitism, along with pressure from some on the left to say that anti-Semitism isn't so important. And climate cataclysm comes ever closer. We remain in difficult times. *Oy meh hayah lanu!*

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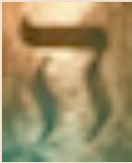
# Laments איכה

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.



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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](http://kabbalahandecology.com).

Find more *Tisha B'Av* resources, songs, and teachings online at: [theshalomcenter.org/node/1733](http://theshalomcenter.org/node/1733) and [neohasid.org/zman/tisha\\_bav/](http://neohasid.org/zman/tisha_bav/).

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## CHAPTER 1

- א איכה | 1 *Eikhah!* How can it be –  
ישבה בָּדָד,  
העיר רַבַּתִּי עָם?  
היתה כְּאַלְמָנָה  
רַבַּתִּי בַגּוֹיִם,  
שָׂרְתִי בַמְּדִינֹת  
היתה לְמָס:  
ב בָּכוּ תַבְּכָה בַלַּיְלָה  
וְדַמְעָתָהּ עַל לַחְיָהּ  
אִין־לָהּ מְנַחֵם  
מִכָּל־אֲהָבָיָהּ  
כָּל־רֵעֵיהָ  
בְּגָדוּ בָּהּ  
היו לָהּ לְאֵיבִים:  
ג גָּלְתָהּ יְהוּדָה  
מֵעֲנִי וּמְרַב עֲבֹדָה  
היא יִשְׁבָּה בַגּוֹיִם  
לֹא מְצָאָה מְנוּחַ  
כָּל־רֹדְפֶיהָ הַשִּׁיגוּהָ  
בֵּין הַמְּצָרִים:  
ד דְּרָכֵי צִיּוֹן אֲבֵלוֹת  
מִבְּלִי בָאֵי מוֹעֵד  
כָּל־שַׁעְרֶיהָ שׁוֹמְמִין
- 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;

בְּהִנֵּיָהּ נֹאֲנָחִים  
 בְּתוֹלְתֶיהָ נוֹגְוֹת  
 וְהִיא מֵרָלָה:  
 הָיוּ צָרֶיהָ לְרֹאשׁ  
 אֵיבֵיהָ שָׁלוֹ  
 כִּי־יְהוֹה הוֹגָה  
 עַל רֵב־פְּשָׁעֶיהָ  
 עוֹלָלֶיהָ הִלְכוּ שְׁבִי  
 לִפְנֵי־צָר:  
 וַיֵּצֵא מִן־בֵּית־צִיּוֹן  
 כָּל־הַדָּרָה  
 הָיוּ שָׂרֶיהָ כְּאַיִלִים  
 לֹא־מָצְאוּ מְרֻעָה  
 וַיִּלְכוּ בְּלֹא־כֹחַ  
 לִפְנֵי רוֹדֵף:  
 זָכְרָה יְרוּשָׁלַם  
 יְמֵי עֲנָוָהּ  
 וּמְרוֹדֶיהָ  
 כֹּל מִחֲמֻדֶיהָ  
 אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ מִיְמֵי קָדָם  
 בְּנֶפֶל עַמָּהּ בְּיַד־צָר  
 וְאֵין עֹזֵר לָהּ  
 רְאוּהָ צָרִים  
 שֹׁחֲקוּ עַל מִשְׁבַּתָּהּ:  
 חָטְאָה 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.

על־כֵּן לְנִידָה הָיְתָה  
כָּל־מְכַבְּדֶיהָ הִזְלוּהָ  
כִּי־רָאוּ עֲרוּתָהּ  
גַם־הִיא נֹאנָתָה  
וַתִּשָּׁב אָחֹר:

ט טַמְאָתָה בְּשׂוּלֶיהָ  
לֹא זָכְרָה אַחֲרֵיתָהּ  
וַתִּרְדּוּ פְּלָאִים  
אִין מְנַחֵם לָהּ  
רְאֵה יְהוָה אֶת־עַנְיִי  
כִּי הִגְדִּיל אוֹיֵב:

י יְדוּ פָּרֶשׁ צָר  
עַל כָּל־מַחְמָדֶיהָ  
כִּי־רָאִתָּה גוֹיִם  
בָּאוּ מִקְדָּשְׁךָ  
אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָה  
לֹא־יָבֹאוּ  
בְּקִהְל לָךְ:

יא כָּל־עַמָּה נֹאנָחִים  
מִבְּקָשִׁים לֶחֶם  
נָתְנוּ מִחֲמוּדֵיהֶם  
בְּאֹכֵל לְהַשִּׁיב נַפְשׁ  
רְאֵה יְהוָה

וְהִבִּיטָה כִּי הָיִיתִי זוֹלָלָה:  
יב לֹא 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,

כָּל־עַבְרֵי דְרָךְ  
 הַפִּיטוּ וּרְאוּ  
 אִם־יֵשׁ מִכְּאוֹב כְּמִכְאוֹבִי  
 אֲשֶׁר עוֹלַל לִי  
 אֲשֶׁר הוֹגֵה יְהוָה  
 בְּיוֹם חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ:  
 יג מִמְרוֹם שָׁלַח־אֵשׁ  
 בְּעֲצָמַי וַיִּרְדְּנָה  
 פָּרֶשׁ רַגְשִׁי לְרַגְלִי  
 הִשְׁיבֵנִי אֲחֹזֵר  
 נִתְּנִי שְׁמֵמָה  
 כָּל־הַיּוֹם דָּוָה:  
 יד נֶשְׁקַד עָלַי פְּשָׁעֵי  
 בְּיָדוֹ יִשְׁתַּרְגְּוּ  
 עָלַי עַל־צוּרָאֵי  
 הַכֶּשֶׁל כַּחֲוִי  
 נִתְּנִי אֲדָנָי בְּיָדֵי  
 לֹא־אוּכַל קוּם:

טו סֶלָה

כָּל־אֲבִירַי | אֲדָנָי בְּקֶרְבִי  
 קָרָא עָלַי מוֹעֵד  
 לְשֹׁבֵר בַּחוּרַי  
 גַּת דְּרָךְ אֲדָנָי  
 לְבַתּוּלַת בַּת־יְהוּדָה:  
 טז עַל־אֵלֶּה | אֲנִי בּוֹכֶה

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;

עֵינַי | עֵינַי יִרְדָּה מַיִם  
 כִּי־דָרְתָק מִמֶּנִּי מִנְחָם  
 מִשְׁבִּיב נַפְשִׁי  
 הָיוּ בְנֵי שׁוֹמְמִים  
 כִּי גָבַר אוֹיֵב:  
 17 זֶן פָּרְשָׁה צִיּוֹן בְּיָדֶיהָ  
 אֵין מִנְחָם לָהּ  
 צִוָּה יְהוָה לְיַעֲקֹב  
 סָבִיבּוֹ צָרָיו  
 הִיטָה יְרוּשָׁלַם  
 לְנִדָּה בֵּינֵיהֶם:  
 18 יח צַדִּיק הוּא יְהוָה  
 כִּי פִּיהוּ מְרִיתִי  
 שְׁמַעוּ־נָא כָּל־הָעַמִּים  
 וּרְאוּ מַכְאֲבֵי  
 בְּתוֹלְתַי וּבַחֹרֵי  
 הֶלְכוּ בְּשָׁבִי:  
 19 יט קָרָאתִי לְמֵאֲהָבֵי  
 הִמָּה רְמוּנֵי  
 כֹּהֲנֵי וְזִקְנֵי  
 בְּעִיר גּוֹעֵו  
 כִּי־בִקְשׁוּ אֲכָלִי לָמוֹ  
 וַיִּשְׁבּוּ אֶת־נַפְשָׁם:  
 20 כ רְאֵה יְהוָה כִּי־צָר־לִי  
 מֵעַי חֲמָרְמָרוּ

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,



נְהַפְּדוּ לִבִּי בְּקִרְבִּי  
 כִּי מָרוּ מִרִּיתִי  
 מִחוּץ שֶׁבֶלֶה-חָרָב  
 בַּבַּיִת כַּמּוֹת:

כֹּא שָׁמְעוּ כִּי נֶאֱנַחָה אָנֹכִי  
 אֵין מְנַחֵם לִי  
 כָּל-אֵיבֵי שָׁמְעוּ  
 רָעָתִי

לָשׁוּ כִּי אַתָּה עָשִׂיתָ  
 הַבֵּאתָ יוֹם-קִרְאָתָּ  
 וַיְהִיו כַּמוֹנִי:

כָּב תָּבֵא כָּל-רָעָתְךָ לְפָנָי  
 וְעוֹלֵל לָמוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר  
 עוֹלָלָתָ לִי עַל כָּל-פְּשָׁעַי  
 כִּי-רַבּוֹת אַנְחוֹתַי  
 וּלְבִי רָוִי:

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

אֵיכָּה  
 יָעִיב בְּאַפּוֹ |  
 אֲדַנִּי אֶת-בֵּת-צִיּוֹן  
 הַשְׁלִיךְ מִשְׁמַיִם 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,

וְלֹא־זָכַר  
 הַלֶּסֶד־רַגְלָיו  
 בַּיּוֹם אַפּוֹ:  
 בַּבֹּלַע אֲדֹנָי לֹא חָמַל  
 אֵת כָּל־נְאוֹת יַעֲקֹב  
 הָרַס בְּעִבְרָתוֹ  
 מִבְּצֻרֵי בֵּת־יְהוּדָה  
 הִגִּיעַ לְאַרְזִי  
 חָלַל מִמְּלֻכָהּ וּשְׂרָיָהּ:  
 גַּגְדָּע בְּחֵרֵי־אֶף  
 כָּל קַרְנוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 הִשְׁיב אֲחֹזֵר יְמִינוֹ  
 מִפְּנֵי אוֹיֵב  
 וַיִּבְעַר בְּיַעֲקֹב כְּאֵשׁ  
 לִקְהָלָהּ אֲכָלָהּ סָבִיב:  
 דַּדְרֹךְ קִשְׁתּוֹ כְּאוֹיֵב  
 נִצָּב יְמִינוֹ  
 כְּצֹר  
 וַיַּהַרֵג כָּל  
 מִחֲמַדֵּי־עֵינַיִן  
 בְּאֹהֶל־בֵּת־צִיּוֹן  
 שָׁפַךְ כְּאֵשׁ חֲמָתוֹ:  
 הָיָה אֲדֹנָי כְּאוֹיֵב  
 בַּלַּע יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 בַּלַּע כָּל־אַרְמְנוֹתֶיהָ

- 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,

שֶׁחַת מִבְּצָרָיו  
 וַיִּרְבֵּב בְּבַת־יְהוּדָה  
 תִּיאַנְיָה וְאַנְיָה:  
 וַיִּחַמַס כְּגֹן שָׁלוֹם  
 שֶׁחַת מוֹעֲדוֹ  
 שָׁפַח יְהוָה | בְּצִיּוֹן  
 מוֹעֵד וּשְׁבֹת  
 וַיִּנְאַץ בְּזַעַם־אָפוֹ  
 מֶלֶךְ וְכֹהֵן:  
 זֶזַח אֲדוֹנָי | מִזִּבְחֹו  
 נֶאֱרַר מִקִּדְשׁוֹ  
 הִסְגִּיר בְּיַד־אֹיֵב  
 חוֹמַת אֲרָמְנוֹתֶיהָ  
 קוֹל נָתְנוּ בְּבֵית־יְהוָה  
 כַּיּוֹם מוֹעֵד:  
 ח חָשַׁב יְהוָה | לְהַשְׁחִית  
 חוֹמַת בַּת־צִיּוֹן נְטָה קוֹ  
 לֹא־יִשְׁיֵב יָדוֹ  
 מִבְּלִיעַ  
 וַיִּאֲבֹל־חֵל וְחוֹמָה  
 יַחְדָּו אִמְלָלוּ:  
 ט טָבְעוּ בָאָרֶץ שְׁעָרֶיהָ  
 אֲבַד וְשַׁבַּר בְּרִיחֶיהָ  
 מִלְּפֹה 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.

גם־נְבִיאֶיהָ  
 לֹא־מָצְאוּ חֲזוֹן מִיְהוָה:  
 וַיֵּשְׁבוּ לָאָרֶץ  
 וַדְּמּוּ וַזְּקֵנֵי בֵּת־צִיּוֹן  
 הֶעֱלּוּ עָפָר עַל־רֹאשָׁם  
 חָגְרוּ שַׁקִּים  
 הוֹרִידוּ לָאָרֶץ רֹאשָׁן  
 בְּתוֹלֵת יְרוּשָׁלַם:  
 וַיֵּאֲרָא כָּלֹו בְּדַמְעוֹת עֵינָי  
 חָמַרְמְרוּ מֵעֵי  
 נִשְׁפָּךְ לָאָרֶץ כְּבַדִּי  
 עַל־שִׁבְר  
 בֵּת־עַמִּי  
 בְּעֹטֶף עוֹלָלִ וְיוֹנֵק  
 בְּרַחֲבוֹת קִרְיָה:  
 וַיִּבְרָחוּ לְאִמָּתָם יְאֻמָּו  
 אֵיךְ דָּגְנוּ וַיִּזְנוּ  
 בְּהִתְעַטְפָם  
 כְּחָלָל בְּרַחֲבוֹת עִיר  
 בְּהִשְׁתַּפֵּךְ נַפְשָׁם  
 אֶל־חֵיק אִמָּתָם:  
 וַיִּגְמַה־אֶעֱיִדָךְ  
 מָה אֲדַמְּהֶךָ  
 הַבֵּת יְרוּשָׁלַם  
 מָה אֲשׁוּהֶךָ

Also her prophets,  
 They found no vision from *YHWH*.  
 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

וַאֲנַחֲמֶךָ  
בְּתוֹלַת בֵּת צִיּוֹן  
כִּי־גָדוֹל כַּיָּם שִׁבְרֶךָ  
מִי יִרְפָּא־לְךָ:  
יְד נְבִיאֶיךָ חָזוּ לְךָ  
שׁוּא וְתַפֵּל  
וְלֹא־גָלוּ עַל־עוֹנֶךָ  
לְהָשִׁיב שְׁבוּתֶךָ  
וַיַּחֲזוּ לְךָ  
מִשְׂאוֹת שׁוּא וּמְדוּחִים:  
טו סָפְקוּ עַלְיָךְ כַּפַּיִם  
כָּל־עַבְרֵי דָרֶךְ  
שָׁרְקוּ וַיִּנְעוּ רֹאשֵׁם  
עַל־בֵּת יְרוּשָׁלַם  
הַנְּאֻת הָעִיר שִׁיאֲמְרוּ  
כְּלִילַת יִפִּי  
מִשׁוֹשׁ לְכָל־הָאָרֶץ:  
טז פָּצוּ עַלְיָךְ פִּיהֶם  
כָּל־אֹיְבֶיךָ  
שָׁרְקוּ וַיִּחְרְקוּ־שִׁין  
אָמְרוּ בְּלִעְנֵנוּ  
אָךְ זֶה הַיּוֹם שִׁקְוִינָהוּ  
מִצָּאֵנוּ רְאִינוּ:  
יז עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר זָמַם  
בְּצַע 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

אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה מִימֵי-קֶדֶם  
 הָרַס וְלֹא חָמַל  
 וַיִּשְׂמַח עָלֶיךָ אוֹיֵב  
 הָרִים קֶרֶן צָרֶיךָ:  
 יח צָעַק לָבָם אֶל-אֲדֹנָי  
 חוֹמַת בֵּית-צִיּוֹן  
 הוֹרִידִי כַנַּחַל דְּמָעָה  
 יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה  
 אֶל-תַּתְּנִי פּוּגַת לֶךְ  
 אֶל-תָּדִם בֵּית-עֵינֶיךָ:  
 יט קוּמִי אֲרֻנִי בַלַּיְלָה  
 לְרֹאשׁ אֲשִׁמְרוֹת  
 שִׁפְכִי כַמַּיִם לְבֶרֶךְ  
 נִכַּח פְּנֵי אֲדֹנָי  
 שְׂאֵי אֵלָיו כַּפְיֶךָ  
 עַל-נַפְשׁ עוֹלְלֶיךָ  
 הֶעֱטוּפִים בְּרָעַב  
 בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל-חוֹצְוֹת:  
 כ רֵאֵה יְהוָה וְהִבִּיטָה  
 לְמִי עוֹלְלֹת בָּהּ  
 אִם-תֹּאכְלֶנָּה נְשִׁים פְּרִיָם  
 עַלְלֵי טַפְחִים  
 אִם-יִהְרַג בְּמִקְדָּשׁ אֲדֹנָי  
 כִּהְזֹן 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—!

כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁכַבוּ לְאֶרֶץ חוּצוֹת  
 נַעַר וְזָקֵן בְּתוֹלְתַי וּבַחֹרֵי  
 נָפְלוּ בְּחֶרֶב  
 הִרְגַתָּ בַּיּוֹם אַפְּךָ  
 טָבַחְתָּ לֹא חֲמִלְתָּ:  
 כַּבֵּר תִּקְרָא כְּיוֹם מוֹעֵד  
 מִגֹּדְרֵי מְסָבִיב  
 וְלֹא הָיָה בַּיּוֹם אֶחָד־יְהוָה  
 פָּלִיט וְשָׁרִיד  
 אֲשֶׁר־טִפַּחְתִּי וְרַבִּיתִי  
 אֵיבֵי כָלֵם:

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 עֲנִי  
 בְּשֵׁבֶט עֲבָרְתּוֹ:  
 בָּאוֹתֵי נְהַג וּלְךָ  
 חֹשֶׁךְ וְלֹא־אוֹר:  
 גַּאֲפִי בִּי יֵשֵׁב  
 יִהְיֶה יָדוֹ כָּל־הַיּוֹם:  
 דַּבְּלָה בְּשָׂרִי וְעוֹרִי  
 שָׁבַר עֲצָמוֹתַי:  
 הִבְנֶה עָלַי וַיִּקְרָה  
 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.

וּ בַמְחֹשְׁכִים הוֹשִׁיבָנִי  
כְּמֵתֵי עוֹלָם:

6 In darkening-nights He made me dwell  
like those ever dead;

ז גָּדַר בְּעַדִּי  
וְלֹא אֵצֵא

7 He barricaded against me,  
and I cannot go out / get away,  
He weighed down my bronze (shackle).

הַכְּבִיד נִחַשְׁתִּי:  
ח גַּם כִּי אֶזְעַק וְאֶשׁוּעַ  
שְׁתֵּם תִּפְלְתֵי:

8 Even when I would cry and plea,  
He stopped up my prayer;

ט גָּדַר דְּרָכֵי  
בְּגִזִּית נְתִיבֹתַי עֲנָה:

9 He barricaded my ways with  
stone blocks; my paths He twisted.

י נֵב אֲרַב הוּא לִי  
אֲרִי בַמְסֻתָּיִם:

10 For me He was a bear ambushing,  
a lion in hiding places / stalking;

יא דְּרָכֵי סוּרָר וַיִּפְשַׁחֲנִי  
שָׁמְנֵי שָׁמַם:

11 My ways He diverts and He would tear  
me up; He made me desolate.

יב דָּבַר קִשְׁתּוֹ וַיִּצְיָנֵנִי  
כַּמִּטְרָא לַחֲזִץ:

12 He worked His bow and made me  
stand as the target for the arrow;

יג הִבִּיא בְּכִלְיוֹתַי  
בְּנֵי אֲשַׁפְתּוֹ:

13 He guided into my kidneys  
what came from His quiver,

יד הָיִיתִי שְׂחֹק לְכָל-עַמִּי  
נְגִינָתָם כָּל-הַיּוֹם:

14 I was a laughingstock for all my  
people, their song all the day.

טו הִשְׁבִּיעַנִי בְּמַרְוֹרִים  
הַרוֹנֵי לַעֲנָה:

15 He sated me with bitter herbs,  
and overfilled me with wormwood;



טז וַיִּגְרַם בְּחֶצֶץ שֹׁנֵי  
הַכִּפְּשֵׁי שְׁנֵי בְּאַפֵּר:  
יז וַתִּזְנַח מִשְׁלוֹם נַפְשִׁי  
נָשִׁיתִי טוֹבָה:  
יח וָאָמַר אֲבַד נִצְחֵי  
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 *YHVH*  
my endurance and my hope!”

יט זְכַר-עֲנִי  
וּמְרוֹדֵי לַעֲנָה וְרָאשׁ:  
כ זְכוֹר תִּזְכּוֹר  
וַתִּשׁוּחַ עָלַי נַפְשִׁי:  
כא זֹאת אֲשִׁיב אֶל-לִבִּי  
עַל-בֶּן אוֹחֵל:

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:

כב חֲסֵדֵי יְהוָה  
כִּי לֹא-תִמְנוּ  
כג לֹא-כָלוּ רַחֲמָיו:  
כד חֲדָשִׁים לְבִקְרִים  
רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ:  
כה חֶלְקִי יְהוָה  
אָמְרָה נַפְשִׁי  
עַל-בֶּן אוֹחֵל לּוֹ:

22 *YHVH*'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 *YHVH*  
—said my soul—  
therefore so will I hope for Him.

כה טוֹב יְהוָה  
לְקוֹ

25 Good is *YHVH*  
to those waiting for Him,

לְנַפֵּשׁ תִּדְרָשׁוּנוּ:  
כִּי טוֹב וַיְחַיֵּל וְדוּמָם  
לְתַשׁוּעַת יְהוָה:  
כִּי טוֹב לְגֹבֵר  
כִּי־יִשָּׂא עַל בְּנֵעוּרָיו:

to a soul / person that would seek Him.  
26 Good – and he should wait and  
be silent, wait for *YHVH*'s salvation.  
27 Good it is for a man  
that he carry a yoke in his youth.

כִּי יֵשֵׁב בְּדָר וַיִּדְלֵם  
כִּי נִטַּל עָלָיו:  
כִּי יִתֵּן בְּעַפְרֹת פִּיּוֹ  
אוֹלֵי יֵשׁ תִּקְוָה:  
לִי יִתֵּן לְמַכְהוֹ לְחֵי  
יִשְׂבַּע בְּחַרְפָּה:

28 Let him sit alone and be silent,  
since He laid (it) on him;  
29 he should put his mouth in the dust –  
maybe there is hope;  
30 Put out his cheek for the one who  
strikes, be satiated with shame.

לֹא כִּי לֹא יִזְנֹחַ  
לְעוֹלָם אֲדָנִי:  
לִבִּי כִּי אִם־חִוָּה וְרַחֵם  
כָּרַב חֲסָדָיו:  
לִגִּי כִּי לֹא עָנָה מִלְּבֹו  
וַיִּגָּה בְּנִי־אִישׁ:

31 For *Adonai* would not  
spurn forever;  
32 for if He aggrieved and showed mercy,  
it is according to His love's abundance;  
33 for He did not afflict from His heart  
and aggrieve human beings.

לֹד לְדַכָּא תַחַת רַגְלָיו  
כָּל אֲסִירֵי אֶרֶץ:  
לֹה לְהַטּוֹת מִשְׁפַּט־גֹּבֵר  
נִגְדַת פְּנֵי עֲלִיוֹן:  
לוֹ לְעוֹת אָדָם בְּרִיבֹו

34 To crush under His feet  
all imprisoned of the land,  
35 to make bent a man's judgment,  
right to the face of the Highest,  
36 to twist / wrong a person in his

אֲדַנִּי לֹא רָאָה:

struggle – wouldn't *Adonai* see (that)?

לֹא מִי זֶה אָמַר וְתָהִי  
אֲדַנִּי לֹא צִוָּה:  
לֹחַ מִפִּי עֲלִיזוֹן לֹא תֵצֵא  
הָרָעוֹת וְהַטּוֹב:  
לֹט מִה־תְּאוֹנֵי אָדָם חַי  
גִבּוֹר עַל־חַטָּאָיו:

37 Who is this who spoke and it was  
– didn't *Adonai* so command?  
38 From the mouth of the Highest  
don't the evils and the good come out?  
39 How could a living person complain,  
a man, (if punished) for his sins?

מִן נַחֲפָשָׁה דְרָדִינוּ וְנִחְלַקְרָה  
וְנָשׁוּבָה עַד־יְהוָה:  
מֵאֵל נִשְׂא לְבַבֵּנוּ  
אֶל־כַּפָּיִם  
אֶל־אֵל בַּשָּׁמַיִם:  
מִבַּ גָּחַנוּ פָשַׁעְנוּ וּמְרִינוּ  
אַתָּה לֹא סָלַחְתָּ:

40 Let us search our ways and dig deep,  
and let us return until *YHVH*,  
41 Let us lift our hearts  
up to our hands (stretching them)  
toward God in the heavens.  
42 Us, we sinned and rebelled.  
You – You did not pardon.

מִגַּ סִבֵּתָהּ בְּאַף  
וְתִרְדְּפֵנוּ  
הָרַגְתָּ לֹא חַמְלָתָּ:  
מִדַּ סִבּוֹתָהּ בְּעֵנֹל לָךְ  
מִעֲבוֹר תִּפְלָהּ:  
מִה סְחִי וּמְאוּס  
תִּשְׁיַמְנוּ  
בְּקֶרֶב הָעַמִּים:

43 You took shelter in such anger,  
and You would pursue us,  
You murdered without pitying;  
44 You sheltered Yourself within a  
cloud, far beyond prayer;  
45 Scum and refuse  
You would make us  
in the midst of the peoples.

- מו פָּצוּ עֲלֵינוּ פִּיהֶם  
 כָּל-אֲבֵינֵנוּ:  
 46 All our enemies crack open  
 their mouth against us;
- מז פֶּחַד וּפְחַת הָיָה לָנוּ  
 הַשָּׂאת וְהַשֹּׁבֵר:  
 47 Trepidation and trap were ours,  
 the ruination and the shattering.
- מח פִּלְגֵי-מַיִם תִּבְרַד עֵינַי  
 עַל-שֹׁבֵר בֵּת-עַמִּי:  
 48 My eye drops floods of water  
 for my daughter people's shattering;
- מט עֵינַי נִגְרָה  
 וְלֹא תִדְמָה  
 מֵאִין הַפְּגוּת:  
 49 My eye streams  
 and won't silence herself,  
 (she cries) with no breaks / no stutters,
- נ עד-יִשְׁקִיף  
 וְיִרָא יְהוָה מִשָּׁמַיִם:  
 50 until *YHVH* would look down  
 and see from heaven.
- נא עֵינַי עוֹלָלָה לְנַפְשִׁי  
 מְכַל בָּנוֹת עִירִי:  
 51 My eye doles sorrow to my soul  
 over all my city's daughters.
- נב צוֹד צְדוּנִי כַצֹּד  
 אִיבֵי הַנֶּם:  
 52 Hunting, they hunted me, like a bird,  
 (becoming) my enemies for no reason;
- נג צָמְתוּ בַבּוֹר חַיִּי  
 וַיִּדְוּ-אֶבֶן בֵּי:  
 53 they sealed off my life in the pit,  
 and cast stone against me;
- נד צָפוּ-מַיִם עַל-רֹאשִׁי  
 אָמַרְתִּי נִגְזַרְתִּי:  
 54 waters flowed over my head,  
 "I am cut off," I said.
- נה קָרָאתִי שְׁמֶךָ יְהוָה  
 מִבּוֹר תַּחְתִּיּוֹת:  
 55 I called Your name, *YHVH*,  
 from a pit far underground.
- נו קוֹלִי שָׁמְעָה  
 56 You heard my voice:

אל־תַּעְלִם אָזְנְךָ  
לְרוֹחֹתַי לְשׁוֹעָתִי:  
נָו קָרַבְתָּ בְּיוֹם אֶקְרָאָךְ  
אָמַרְתָּ 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."

נָח רַבַּת אֲדֹנָי  
רִיבֵי נַפְשֵׁי גְאֻלַּת חַיֵּי:  
נָט רְאִיתָה יְהוָה עֲוֹתַי  
שָׁפְטָה מִשְׁפָּטֶי:  
ס רְאִיתָה כָּל־נִקְמָתָם  
כָּל־מַחְשְׁבֹתָם 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.

סֵא שָׁמַעְתָּ חֲרָפְתָם יְהוָה  
כָּל־מַחְשְׁבֹתָם עָלַי:  
סב שִׁפְתַי קָמִי  
וְהִגִּיזוּנָם עָלַי כָּל־הַיּוֹם:  
סג שְׁבַתָם וְקִימָתָם  
הִבִּיטָה אֲנִי מִנְּגִינָתָם

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!

סד תָּשִׁיב לָהֶם גְּמוּלָה  
יְהוָה כַּמַּעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם:  
סה תִּתֵּן לָהֶם מְגִנַת־לֵב  
תִּאָלְתָךְ לָהֶם:  
סו תִּרְדֹּף בְּאַף וְתִשְׁמִדֵם  
מִתַּחַת שָׁמַיִ 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.

## CHAPTER 4

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;">א איכה<br/>יועם זָהָב<br/>יִשְׁנָא הַכֶּתֶם הַטּוֹב<br/>תִּשְׁתַּפְּכֶנָּה אַבְנֵי-קֹדֶשׁ<br/>בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל-חֻצּוֹת:<br/>ב בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן הַיְקָרִים<br/>הַמְּסֻלָּאִים בַּפֶּז<br/>איכה נִחְשְׁבוּ<br/>לְנִבְלֵי-חָרָשׁ<br/>מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי יוֹצֵר:<br/>ג גַּם-תַּנִּינִים חָלְצוּ שֵׁר<br/>הַיְנִיקוּ גִּוְרֵיהֶן<br/>בַּת-עַמִּי לְאַכְזָר<br/>כִּי־עֲנִים בַּמִּדְבָּר:<br/>ד דְּבֶקֶל לְשׁוֹן יוֹנֵק<br/>אֶל-חִכּוֹ בְּצַמָּא<br/>עוֹלָלִים שָׁאֲלוּ לָחֶם<br/>פָּרַשׁ אֵינן לָהֶם:<br/>ה הָאֲכָלִים לְמַעַרְזִים<br/>נִשְׁמָו בַּחֻצּוֹת<br/>הָאֲמָנִים עָלַי תּוֹלָע<br/>חִבְקוּ אֲשֵׁפֶתוֹת:<br/>ו וַיִּגְדַּל עֲוֹן בַּת-עַמִּי</p> | <p>1 <i>Eiklah!</i> How can it be –<br/>gold becomes dull,<br/>the best gold transmuted,<br/>stones of the holy poured / dumped out<br/>at every street head;</p> <p>2 Zion's children, precious ones,<br/>weighed against the purest gold –<br/>how can it be that they are counted<br/>as clay jars,<br/>work of a maker's hands?</p> <p>3 Even jackals draw out a breast,<br/>would give suck to their cubs.<br/>(But) my daughter people – so cruel,<br/>like ostriches in the wilderness.</p> <p>4 A suckling's tongue, stuck<br/>to its palate with such thirst;<br/>babes sought bread –<br/>none break it off for them.</p> <p>5 The ones who eat for delicacies<br/>were wasted in the streets,<br/>the ones nursed on scarlet<br/>were hugging trash heaps.</p> <p>6 And my daughter people's iniquity</p> |
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מִחַטְאַת סֹדֶם  
הִתְפּוֹכָה כְּמוֹ-רְגֵעַ  
וְלֹא-תָלוּ בָּהּ יָדַיִם:  
ז זָכוּ נְזִירֶיהָ מִשְׁלֵג  
צָחוּ מִחֶלֶב  
אָדָּמוּ עֵצֵם מִפְּנִינִים  
סִפִּיר גִּזְרֹתָם:  
ח חֲשֹׁךְ מִשְׁחֹר  
תִּאָּרֵם  
לֹא נִכְרָו בַּחוּצוֹת  
צָפַד עוֹרָם עַל-עֲצָמָם  
יָבֵשׁ הָיָה כְּעֵץ:  
ט טוֹבִים הָיוּ חֲלֵי-חֶרֶב  
מִחֲלֵי רָעֵב  
שָׁהָם יוֹבוּ מִדְּקָרִים  
מִתְנוֹבֵת שְׂדֵי:  
י יְדֵי נָשִׁים רַחֲמָנִיוֹת  
בִּשְׁלוּ יַלְדֵיהֶן  
הָיוּ לְכֵרוֹת לָמוֹ  
בְּשִׁבְרַת בְּתַעֲמִי:  
יא יָא כִלְהָ יְהוָה אֶת-חַמָּתוֹ  
שָׁפַךְ חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ  
וַיִּצְתֶּ-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,

מְלֹכֵי-אָרֶץ  
כָּל יֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֶל  
כִּי יָבֹא צָר וְאוֹיֵב  
בְּשַׁעְרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם:  
יג מִחַטָּאת נְבִיאֶיהָ  
עֲוֹנוֹת כֹּהֲנֶיהָ  
הַשֹּׁפְכִים בְּקִרְבָּהָ  
דָּם צְדִיקִים:  
יד נָעוּ עֹרִים  
בַּחוּצוֹת נִגְאָלוּ בְּדָם  
בְּלֹא יוֹכְלוּ  
יָגְעוּ בְּלִבְשֵׁיהֶם:  
טו סִוְרוּ טָמְאָה  
קָרְאוּ לָמוֹ  
סִוְרוּ סִוְרוּ אֶל-תִּגְעוּ  
כִּי נָצוּ גַם-נָעוּ  
אָמְרוּ בַגּוֹיִם  
לֹא יוֹסִיפוּ לָגֹר:  
טז פָּנֵי יְהוָה  
חִלְקָם לֹא יוֹסִיף  
לְהִבִּיטָם  
פָּנֵי כֹהֲנִים לֹא נִשְׂאוּ  
וְזִקְנִים לֹא חָנְנוּ:  
יז עוֹלֵינוּ תִכְלֶינָה עֵינֵינוּ  
אֶל-עֲזָרָתְנוּ הַבֵּל

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.



בְּצַפִּיתָנוּ אֶל־גּוֹי  
לֹא יוֹשֵׁעַ:

יח צְדוּ צְעָדֵינוּ

מִלְכַת בְּרַחֲבֵינוּ

קָרַב קִצֵּינוּ מְלֵאוֹ יְמֵינוּ  
כִּי־בָא קִצֵּינוּ:

יט קָלִים הָיוּ רֹדְפֵינוּ

מִנְשָׁרֵי שָׁמַיִם

עַל־הַהָרִים דָּלְקָנוּ

בַּמִּדְבָּר אָרְבוּ לָנוּ:

כ רִיחַ אִפְּנוֹ מִשִּׁיחַ יְהוָה

נִלְכַד בְּשִׁחִיתוֹתֵם

אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְנוּ בְּצִלּוֹ

נִחְיֶה בְּגוֹיִם:

כא שִׂישִׁי וְשִׂמְחֵי בַת־אֱדוֹם

יֹשֶׁבֶת בְּאֶרֶץ עוּץ

גַּם־עֲלֶיךָ תִּעְבֶּר־כּוֹס

תִּשְׁכַּרְיָ וְתִתְעַרְיָ:

כב תִּמְצֹנֶךָ

בַּת־צִיּוֹן

לֹא יוֹסִיף לְהִגְלוֹתְךָ

פָּקַד עוֹנֶיךָ

בַּת־אֱדוֹם

גְּלָה 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.

## CHAPTER 5

א זְכוֹר יְהוָה מִה־הָיָה לָנוּ  
הַבִּיטָה וּרְאֵה  
אֶת־חַרְפֹּתֵינוּ:  
ב נִחַלְתָנוּ נְהַפְכָה לְזָרִים  
בְּתֵינוּ לְזָכְרִים:  
ג יְתוּמִים הָיִינוּ וְאִין אָב  
אִמֹתֵינוּ כְּאַלְמָנוֹת:  
ד מִיַּמֵּינוּ בְּכֶסֶף שָׁתִינוּ  
עֵצֵינוּ בְּמַחִיר יָבֹאוּ:  
ה עַל צְוֹאֲרֵנוּ נִרְדְּפָנוּ  
יִגְעֵנוּ וְלֹא הוֹנִח־לָנוּ:  
ו מִצְרַיִם נָתַנוּ יָד  
אֲשׁוּר לְשַׁבַּע לָחֶם:  
ז אֲבֹתֵינוּ חָטְאוּ וְאִינָם  
וְאִנְחָנוּ עוֹנֵתֵיהֶם סָבְלָנוּ:  
ח עֲבָדִים מָשְׁלוּ בָנוּ  
פֶּרֶק אִין מִיָּדָם:  
ט בְּנַפְשֵׁנוּ נָבִיא לְחַמְנוּ  
מִפְּנֵי חֶרֶב הַמִּדְבָּר:  
י עוֹרֵנוּ כְּתִנּוֹר נִכְמְרוּ  
מִפְּנֵי זַלְעָפוֹת רָעֵב:  
יא נָשִׁים בְּצִיּוֹן עָנּוּ  
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.

- יב שָׂרִים בְּיָדָם נִתְּלוּ  
 פְּנֵי זְקֵנִים לֹא נִהְדְּרוּ:  
 יג בַּחֹרִים טָחוּז נָשְׂאוּ  
 וּנְעָרִים בְּעֵץ כָּשְׁלוּ:  
 יד זְקֵנִים מִשְׁעַר שָׁבְתוּ  
 בַּחֹרִים מִנְּגִינְתָּם:  
 טו שָׁבֵת מְשׁוֹשׁ לִבֵּנוּ  
 נִהְפָּךְ לְאַבֵּל מִחֵלְנוּ:  
 טז נִפְּלָה עֲטֶרֶת רֹאשֵׁנוּ  
 אוֹי־נָא לָנוּ כִּי חָטֵאנוּ:  
 יז עַל־זֶה הִזָּה דָוָה לִבֵּנוּ  
 עַל־אַלֶּה חֲשָׁכוּ עֵינֵינוּ:  
 יח עַל הַר־צִיּוֹן שָׁשְׂמִם  
 שׁוֹעֲלִים הִלְכוּ־בוּ:  
 יט אַתָּה יְהוָה  
 לְעוֹלָם תִּשֵּׁב  
 כְּסֵאֲךָ לְדָר וְדוֹר:  
 כ לָמָּה לְנַצַּח תִּשְׁכַּחֲנוּ  
 תַּעֲזֹבֵנוּ לְאַרְבַּי יָמִים:  
 כא הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֵלֶיךָ  
 וְנִשׁוּבָה  
 חֲדַשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדְמָם:  
 כב כִּי אִם־מָאֵס  
 מְאִסְתָּנוּ קִצְפַּתָּ עֲלֵינוּ  
 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 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—!

Hashiveimu      הֲשִׁיבֵנוּ  
 Adonai elekha      יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
 v'nashuvah      וְנָשׁוּבָה  
 Chadesh yamenu      חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ  
 k'kedem      כְּקֶדֶם:

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

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

*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

*Eli Tsiyon, selected verses*

- |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Eli Tsiyon v'areha<br/>k'mo ishah v'tsireha<br/>v'khivtulah chagurat sak<br/>al ba'al n'ureha</i></p>                | <p>My God, Zion and her towns,<br/>like a woman in travail of labor,<br/>like a virgin wearing sackcloth<br/>for the husband of her youth</p>                      |
| <p><i>Alei hegyon m'choleha<br/>asher damam b'areha<br/>V'al va'ad asher shamam<br/>uvitul sanhed'reha</i></p>             | <p>For her dancers' concentration<br/>whose blood (ran) in her towns<br/>and for the mob that destroyed<br/>and ended her high court of<br/>justice</p>            |
| <p><i>Alei galut m'shartei El<br/>n'imei shir z'mareha<br/>V'al kolot m'charpeha<br/>b'eit rabu f'gareha</i></p>           | <p>For the exile of God's servants<br/>sweet singers of her songs<br/>and for her scorners clamoring<br/>while the corpses piled up</p>                            |
| <p><i>Alei peshah asher av'tah<br/>s'lol derekh ashureha<br/>V'al tsiv'ot k'haleha<br/>sh'zufeha sh'choreha</i></p>        | <p>For the perversion she twisted<br/>paving the path of the well-off<br/>and for her amassed community<br/>her field workers, her brown,<br/>her black people</p> |
| <p><i>Alei shimkha asher chulal<br/>b'fi kamai m'tsareha<br/>V'al tachan y'tsavchu lakh<br/>Kashuv ush'ma amareha.</i></p> | <p>For Your name desecrated<br/>in the mouths who stand against<br/>her oppressed<br/>and for the plea they cry to You<br/>focus and listen to her word</p>        |

“The Hope of How” - By Yehudah Webster & Zahara Zahav  
(via Detroit Jews for Justice)

“My insides are churning” –

A most sacred home, in flames, deemed worthless, disposable; How?  
Eikhah? A pastor and worshipers slain, heads bowed, in the  
sanctuary; How?

A mother sits in the street where her son’s soul was poured out;  
How? A world turns its back again, again, again – there is none to  
comfort her; How?

A people shown their Black bodies, tears, families do not matter;  
How?

How have we fallen to such disgrace? How long will we slink away  
from justice? How do we allow? How do we hope? How do we dance  
when so heavy with grief? How do we turn to face each other?

A woman climbs where no one dared, tears down a flag of hatred;  
How? A mother refuses to back down, power yields to her demands;  
How?

A wave of clergy rise up to meet resounding call for a different world;  
How? A movement plants seeds everywhere, sprouts flowers over  
burial ground; How?

A black man’s cry, “I can’t breathe” amplified in the streets for all to  
hear; How?

With this hope we pray that we do not reach the point of total  
destruction. We pray that we desist from senseless hatred and  
brutality. That sacred places remain holy, unstained from the blood of  
racism. That we do not repeat the mistakes of our ancestors, taking  
instead honest account of our obligations.

May community, allyship and love forge new bridges of  
understanding and trust. That we continue to hope and believe in  
each other. Demanding as one that black lives truly do matter. All  
these things we pray in solidarity together

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.

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](http://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](http://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.

Rabbi David Mevorach Seidenberg  
2018/5778. Some of this material is taken from *Kabbalah and Ecology*.