

“Zion through justice will be redeemed.” (Isaiah 1:27)

What does it mean today to be *Aveilei Tziyon* אבלי ציון—one among the “mourners of Zion”—when Jerusalem is rebuilt, when her development knows no bounds, when the state of Israel has one of the most powerful militaries in the world, and uses its power to take land from Palestinian farmers in the West Bank? What does it mean when the state that was supposed to liberate the Jews from exile looks so different from redemption as envisioned by the prophets? When it can’t defend its *kibbutzim*? When its social reality, for the foreigner and the poor, for the Christian or Muslim vs. the Jew, looks so different than justice – especially in the territories of ancient Israel, now called the West Bank or Judea and Samaria? When the government tries to neuter the courts, when it pursues war without end? When those settlers most passionate about “redemption” lead pogroms against Palestinians? (972mag.com/pogroms-west-bank-soldiers-settlers/) What about a state whose fascist factions try to starve all of Gaza? Is this the beginning of “our redemption”? Or the unraveling of redemption?

If our covenant is real, that covenant promises this: a state that rules through such injustice will not stand. Should we then anticipate such destruction? Or reject the thought of it? Perhaps by mourning now—and by using that impulse to unknot injustice—we can avert the worst. That is what the rabbis and prophets of old believed. That is something all lovers of justice can get behind, whether or not we call ourselves Zionist, or emphasize *doikeit*, the power of living in diaspora. That is a meaning of *Aveilei Tziyon* all can embrace.

On the day that we cried out and no one answered us,

We said: “It shall not be thus in our places.”

“When the time comes,” we promised, “we will rise up at the head of the people.”

And yet here is the day, and where is our reaction? where is our outcry?

We mumble “God have mercy” and we just say another prayer.

“And in truth, it is amazing that the world is still standing after so many cries for help such as these”

Is this the fast that I would choose—a day in which people hunger for bread? Is this not the fast I would choose: a day on which we rise to righteousness.

excerpt from R. Aryeh Cohen, ארי ללב שאינה שבורה,

“Woe to the Heart that is not Broken”, <https://opensiddur.org/?p=29657>

If you are an *Aveil leTziyon*, a mourner for Zion, join allies on fb:
[Drachim—A new path forward for Israel/Palestine.](#)

2025 Supplemental Readings

Laments איכה

Translations of *Eikhah* for our world

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



Laments 4:1, Margaret Adams Parker
www.margaretadamparker.com
used with permission



neohasid.org

Laments ©2022 by David Mevorach Seidenberg
This work is dedicated to all refugees

To imagine what happened to *Eretz Yisrael* when the second Temple was destroyed, picture Russia's war against Ukraine, or picture the scenes of Gaza's destruction: the devastation of civilians, and the destruction of everything that supports normal life. In the Jewish people's timeline, the Roman invader wrought destruction, murder, torture, and enslavement. Or if you want to imagine the devastating massacres of the Crusade of 1096, picture the images of senseless death wrought by Hamas on October 7. Never in our lifetimes have there been so many accessible and *contemporary* pictures of how "death has come up through our windows" (Jeremiah 9:5).

Now imagine all those refugees from the land of Israel, pursued throughout the world by enslavers, kidnappers, traffickers, tormentors. Or just imagine ICE, may they be thwarted and ruined. *Tisha B'Av* is not and was never primarily about the Temple and its sacrifices. It's about the refugee and the persecuted, about populations facing famine and mass death. It's also a call to become aware of the ways we abuse the power and privilege we have, whether in the U.S., Israel and Palestine, or anywhere, and to do *t'shuvah*, before cataclysmic consequences strike us. This includes the many ways the human species is willfully disrupting the climate, extinguishing the Life we are commanded to choose, turning vulnerable people and species into refugees.

As the world also struggles to face so many plagues, including racism, anti-immigrant hatred, and global climate disruption, Jews also face ballooning anti-Semitism, enflamed by protests against the war, along with pressure to say that anti-Semitism isn't real because people are just protesting Israel, or because Jews are privileged and so many Jews present as white. And as the many storms and fires remind us, climate cataclysm edges ever closer. *Oy meh hayah lanu!*

~~~~~

Learn more about Standing Together, the organization fighting both for democracy and against the occupation, including organizing Jewish-Palestinian watches to support communities inside Israel: <https://www.standing-together.org/en>

A prayer for democracy, that it may not fall nor fail, not in Israel, nor Ukraine, nor the U.S., not anywhere. May all Israel realize that the occupation is inimical to democracy. May we gain inspiration and power from the mass movement to protect Israeli democracy, which transformed after October 7 to become a network to support displaced Israelis and demand a ceasefire deal, and from Standing Together, the network of Palestinian and Jewish Israelis fighting for true democracy for everyone.

May You tear out autocracy, tyranny and despotism,  
rend the power of those who cheat and deceive,  
and upend those who oppress the vulnerable.  
Make the reign of the arrogant disappear from all lands.  
May the people attacking democracies everywhere  
stumble and fail, and may their plans be as nought.  
Stop them, humble them, bring on their downfall,  
soon, in our days, for You humble the arrogant.

May You give to all the peoples of the world  
the strength and will to pursue righteousness  
and establish justice, and to seek peace as a unified force,  
so that violence be uprooted, and healing, good life  
and peace may flourish, for You are the Ruler who loves  
righteous justice. (Amen.)

תַּעֲקֹר רוֹדְנוֹת וְטִירוֹנִיָּא וְעֲרִיצוֹת  
וְתִשְׁבֵּר רַמָּאִים וְתַמְגֵּר עֲשָׁקִי נְדָכָאִים  
תַּעֲבִיר מִמְשָׁלַת זֶדוֹן מִן הָאָרֶץ  
תִּכְשִׁיל פּוֹגְעִים בְּדַמוּקְרַטְיָה וְתִפְרֹ תַחֲבוּלוֹתָם  
תַּכְלִם וְתִשְׁפִּילִם וְתַכְנִיעֵם בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ  
כִּי מִכְנִיעַ יָדִים אַתָּה

וְכֵן תִּתֵּן לְכָל אַמּוֹת הָעוֹלָם הַכֹּחַ וְהַרְצוֹן לְרִדְף צֶדֶק  
לְכוֹנֵן מִשְׁפָּט וּלְבַקֵּשׁ שְׁלוֹם כְּאַגְדָּה אַחַת  
לַעֲקֹר חֶמְס וּלְהַצְמִיחַ רַפּוּאָה וְחַיִּים טוֹבִים וְשְׁלוֹם  
כִּי אַתָּה הוּא מֶלֶךְ אֱהָב צֶדֶקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט (וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן)

This prayer is based on one section of [neohasid.org](https://neohasid.org)'s voting prayer. You can also add it to the 12<sup>th</sup> blessing of the *Amidah*. Get the prayer for voting here: [neohasid.org/resources/votingprayer](https://neohasid.org/resources/votingprayer)

# Laments איכה

Translations of *Eikhah* for our world

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



*Laments 4:1*, Margaret Adams Parker  
[www.margaretadamparker.com](http://www.margaretadamparker.com)  
*used with permission*



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/).

*Laments* ©2019 (v.4.2.1) by David Mevorach Seidenberg. First published by [neohasid.org](http://neohasid.org) in 2007, based on translations for the Aleph Kallah and National Havurah Institute in 2002 and 2003; translation begun 1993. Layout based on 2003 design by Mark Frydenberg. This booklet contains the sacred name in Hebrew for God. Please do not destroy or dispose of improperly. Download this booklet at: [neohasid.org/resources/laments](http://neohasid.org/resources/laments) Rights granted for ten copies per download. To donate go to:

# neohasid.org

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

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

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

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

כָּל-עֹבְרֵי דֶרֶךְ  
 הַבִּיטוּ וּרְאוּ  
 אִם-יֵשׁ מִכְאוֹב כַּמְכֹאֲבִי  
 אֲשֶׁר עוֹלָל לִי  
 אֲשֶׁר הוֹגָה יְהוָה  
 בְּיוֹם חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ:  
 יג מִמָּרוֹם שָׁלַח-אֵשׁ  
 בַּעֲצָמַי וַיִּרְדָּנָה  
 פָּרֶשׁ רַגְשִׁי לְרַגְלִי  
 הִשְׁכַּחְנִי אֲחֹרֶרֶת  
 נִתְּנִי שְׁמָמָה  
 כָּל-הַיּוֹם דָּוָה:  
 יד נִשְׁקַד לֵעַל פִּשְׁעֵי  
 בִידּוֹ יִשְׁתַּרְגְּנוּ  
 עָלַי עַל-צַוֹּאֲרִי  
 הַכְשִׁיל כַּחֲזִי  
 נִתְּנִי אֲדֹנָי בִּידֵי  
 לֹא-אוּכָל קוֹם:  
 טו סֵלָה  
 כָּל-אַפְיָרִי | אֲדֹנָי בְּקֶרְבִּי  
 קָרָא עָלַי מוֹעֵד  
 לִשְׁבֹּר בַּחֲוָרִי  
 גֵּת דֶּבֶר אֲדֹנָי  
 לְבַתּוּלָת בַּת-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-מִכְבְּדֶיהָ הִזְלִוָהּ  
 כִּי-רָאוּ עֲרוּתָהּ  
 גַּם-הִיא נֹאנָחָה  
 וַתִּשָּׁב אֲחֹרֶרֶת:  
 ט טִמְאָתָהּ בְּשׂוּלֶיהָ  
 לֹא זָכְרָה אַחֲרִיתָהּ  
 וַתִּרְדּוּ פְּלָאִים  
 אֵין מְנַחֵם לָהּ  
 רֹאֶה יְהוָה אֶת-עֲנִיִּי  
 כִּי הִגְדִּיל אוֹיֵב:  
 י יָדוֹ פָּרֶשׁ צָר  
 עַל כָּל-מַחֲמָדֶיהָ  
 כִּי-רָאָתָהּ גּוֹיִם  
 בָּאוּ מִקְדָּשָׁהּ  
 אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָהּ  
 לֹא-יָבֹאוּ  
 בְּקָהֶל לָךְ:  
 יא כָּל-עַמָּה נֹאנָחִים  
 מִבִּקְשִׁים לֶחֶם  
 נָתְנוּ מִחֲמוּדֵיהֶם  
 בְּאֹכֶל לְהַשִּׁיב נַפְשׁ  
 רֹאֶה יְהוָה  
 וְהִבִּיטָהּ כִּי הֵיטִי זוּלָלָהּ:  
 יב לֹא לְוָא אֵלֶיכֶם

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

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

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

שָׁשׂוּ כִּי אָתָּה עָשִׂיתָ  
הִבֵּאתָ יוֹם־קִרְאָתָּ  
וַיִּהְיוּ כָמוֹנִי:

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

my heart overturned within me,  
for rebelling I rebelled.

From outside sword bereaving;

In the house, like death itself.

21 They listened – for I am moaning,  
there is no comforter for me.

All my enemies listened

for my evil (doom).

They rejoiced, for You did it,

You brought the day You called for –

and let them be(come) like me.

22 May all their evil come before You,  
and deal to them as

You dealt to me for all my sins.

For so much are my sighs,

and my heart is sickened.

## CHAPTER 2

אֵיכָהּ

יָעִיב בְּאַפּוֹ |

אֲדֹנָי אֶת־בֵּת־צִיּוֹן

הַשָּׁלַךְ מִשָּׁמַיִם אֶרֶץ

תַּפְאֶרֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל

1 *Eikhah!* How can it be –

in His anger *Adonai* / the Lord

clouded over daughter Zion.

He cast down, from skies (to) earth,

Israel's glory,

עֵינַי | עֵינַי יִרְדּוּ מַיִם

כִּי־רָחֵק מִמֶּנִּי מְנַחֵם

מַשְׁיֵב נֶפְשִׁי

הָיוּ בְנֵי שׁוֹמְמִים

כִּי גִבֹר אוֹיֵב:

יֵן פִּרְשָׁה צִיּוֹן בְּיָדֶיהָ

אֵין מְנַחֵם לָהּ

צִוָּה יְהוָה לְיַעֲקֹב

סָבִיבֵי צָרָיו

הִיטָה יְרוּשָׁלַם

לְנִדָּה בֵּינֵיהֶם:

יֵחַ צִדִּיק הוּא יְהוָה

כִּי פִיהוּ מְרִיתִי

שָׁמְעוּ־נָא כָּל־הָעַמִּים

וְרָאוּ מַכְאֲבִי

בְּתוֹלָתִי וּבַחוּרֵי

הָלָכוּ בַשָּׁבִי:

יֵט קִרְאָתִי לְמַאֲהָבִי

הִמָּה רְמוּנֵי

כֹּהֲנֵי וְזִקְנֵי

בָּעִיר גּוֹעִו

כִּי־בִקְשׁוּ אֲכָל לָמוּ

וַיִּשְׁיבוּ אֶת־נַפְשָׁם:

כִּי רָאָה יְהוָה כִּי־צָר־לִי

מִעֵי חֲמָרְמוֹרוֹ

my eye, my eye, she drops water.

For so far from me is any comforter,

a restorer for my life.

My children were decimated,

for an enemy overwhelmed / triumphed.

17 Zion spread out with her hands,

there is no comforter for her.

*YHVH* commanded for Jacob,

surrounding him, his tormentors.

Jerusalem became

outcast / *nidah* between them.

18 Righteous is *YHVH*,

for His mouth I rebelled (against).

Listen, please—all peoples—

and see my pain!

My girls and my boys

walked captive / into captivity.

19 I called to my lovers.

Those deceived me.

My priests, and my elders,

they wasted away in the city,

while they sought food for themselves

(that) would bring back their life / soul.

20 See *YHVH* – for mine is torment,

my guts were churning,

שֶׁחַת מִבְצָרָיו  
 וַיִּרְבֶּ בֵּת יְהוּדָה  
 תִּאֲנִיָּה וְאֲנִיָּה:  
 וַיִּחַמַס כְּגֹן שֹׁכֵי  
 שֶׁחַת מוֹעֵדוֹ  
 שָׁפַח יְהוָה | בְּצִיּוֹן  
 מוֹעֵד וְשֹׁבֵת  
 וַיִּנְאֹץ בְּזַעַם-אָפּוֹ  
 מֶלֶךְ וְכֹהֵן:  
 ז וַנֹּחַ אֲדֹנָי | מִזִּבְחוֹ  
 נֹאֵר מִקִּדְשׁוֹ  
 הִסְגִּיר בְּיַד-אֹיֵב  
 חוֹמַת אֲרָמְנוֹתֶיהָ  
 קוֹל נִתְּנוּ בְּבֵית-יְהוָה  
 כִּיּוֹם מוֹעֵד:  
 ח חָשֵׁב יְהוָה | לְהַשְׁחִית  
 חוֹמַת בֵּת-צִיּוֹן נִטָּה לָּו  
 לֹא-הָשִׁיב יָדוֹ  
 מִבִּלְעַ  
 וַיִּאֲבֹל-חֵל וְחוֹמָה  
 יִחָדְדוּ אִמְלָלוֹ:  
 ט טָבְעוּ בָאֶרֶץ שְׂעָרֶיהָ  
 אֲבָד וְשֹׁבֵר בְּרִיחֶיהָ  
 מִלְכָּה וְשָׂרֶיהָ בְּגוֹיִם  
 אֵין תּוֹרָה

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

וְלֹא-זָכַר  
 הֶלֶם-רַגְלָיו  
 בְּיוֹם אָפּוֹ:  
 ב בִּלְעַ אֲדֹנָי לֹא חֲמַל  
 אֶת כָּל-נְאוֹת יַעֲקֹב  
 הָרֶם בְּעִבְרָתוֹ  
 מִבְצָרֵי בֵת-יְהוּדָה  
 הִגִּיעַ לָאָרֶץ  
 חָלַל מַמְלָכָה וְשָׂרֶיהָ:  
 ג גִּבַּע בַּחֲרִי-אֶף  
 כָּל קַרְנוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 הָשִׁיב אֲחוֹר יָמִינוֹ  
 מִפְּנֵי אוֹיֵב  
 וַיִּבְעַר בִּיעָקֹב כְּאֵשׁ  
 לָהֶבֶת אֲכָלָה סָבִיב:  
 ד דָּרַךְ קִשְׁתּוֹ כְּאוֹיֵב  
 נָצַב יָמִינוֹ  
 כְּצָר  
 וַיַּהַלֵּךְ כָּל  
 מִחְמַד־יָעִין  
 בְּאֶהֱל בֵּת-צִיּוֹן  
 שָׁפַךְ כְּאֵשׁ חֲמָתוֹ:  
 ה הָיָה אֲדֹנָי | כְּאוֹיֵב  
 בִּלְעַ יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 בִּלְעַ כָּל-אֲרָמְנוֹתֶיהָ

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

וַאֲנִי־חֲמֹד׃  
בְּתוּלַת בֵּת-צִיּוֹן  
כִּי-גָדוֹל כִּיָּם שִׁבְרָךְ  
מִי יִרְפָּא-לָךְ׃  
יָד נְבִיאֶיךָ חָזוּ לָךְ  
שׂוֹא וְתַפֵּל  
וְלֹא-גָלוּ עַל-עוֹנֶךָ  
לְהָשִׁיב שְׁבוּתָךְ  
וַיַּחֲזוּ לָךְ  
מַשְׁאוֹת שׂוֹא וּמַדּוּחִים׃  
טו סָפְקוּ עָלֶיךָ כַּפִּים  
כָּל-עַבְרֵי דָרְךָ  
שָׁרְקוּ וַיִּנְעוּ רֹאשָׁם  
עַל-בֵּת יְרוּשָׁלַם  
הִנָּאת הָעִיר שִׁיאֲמְרוּ  
כָּל־יִלְדֵי יֶפִי  
מָשׁוּשׁ לְכָל-הָאָרֶץ׃  
טז פָּצוּ עֲלֶיךָ פִּיהֶם  
כָּל-אֹיְבֶיךָ  
שָׁרְקוּ וַיַּחֲרִקוּ-שֵׁן  
אָמְרוּ בְּלָעֵנוּ  
אָךְ זֶה הַיּוֹם שִׁקְוִינָהוּ  
מַצָּאֵנוּ רֵאִינוּ׃  
יז עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר זָמַם  
בַּצֵּעַ אֲמָרְתוֹ

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

גַּם-נְבִיאֶיהָ  
לֹא-מָצְאוּ חֲזוֹן מִיְהוָה׃  
י יֵשְׁבוּ לָאָרֶץ  
יָדְמוּ וְזָנְי בֵּת-צִיּוֹן  
הָעָלוּ עָפָר עַל-רֹאשָׁם  
חָגְרוּ שָׁקִים  
הוֹרִידוּ לָאָרֶץ רֹאשָׁן  
בְּתוּלַת יְרוּשָׁלַם׃  
יא כָּלוּ בְדַמְעוֹת עֵינַי  
חֲמַרְמְרוּ מַעֵי  
נִשְׁפָּךְ לָאָרֶץ כְּבֹדִי  
עַל-שִׁבְרִי  
בֵּת-עַמִּי  
בַּעֲטָף עוֹלִל וְיוֹזֵק  
בְּרַחֲבוֹת קִרְיָה׃  
יב לְאִמָּתָם יֹאמְרוּ  
אֵיךְ דָּגָן וַיֵּין  
בְּהִתְעַטְּפָם  
כְּחָלָל בְּרַחֲבוֹת עִיר  
בְּהִשְׁתַּפֵּךְ נַפְשָׁם  
אֶל-חֵיק אִמָּתָם׃  
יג מַה-אֶעֱיִיד׃  
מַה אֲדַמֶּה-לָךְ  
הַבֵּת יְרוּשָׁלַם  
מַה אֲשׁוּה-לָךְ

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



כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁכְבוּ לָאָרֶץ חַיּוֹת  
 נָעַר וְזָקֵן בְּתוֹלְתַי וּבְחוּרַי  
 נָפְלוּ בַּחֶרֶב  
 הִרְגַּתְּ בַּיּוֹם אֶפְרַיִם  
 טָבַחְתָּ לֹא חֶמְלָתָּ:  
 כִּי תִקְרָא כַּיּוֹם מוֹעֵד  
 מִגּוּרֵי מִסְכִּיב  
 וְלֹא הָיָה בַּיּוֹם אֶחָד־יְהוָה  
 פָּלִיט וְשָׁרִיד  
 אֲשֶׁר־טִפַּחְתִּי וְרַב־יָתִי  
 אִיבֵי כָלָם:

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

### CHAPTER 3

אֲנִי הַגִּבֹּר רָאָה עָנִי  
 בְּשִׁבְט עֲבָרְתּוֹ:  
 בְּאוֹתֵי נְהָג וַיִּלְךְ  
 חֹשֶׁךְ וְלֹא־אוֹר:  
 גַּם אֵד בִּי יָשָׁב  
 יִהְיֶה יָדוֹ כָּל־הַיּוֹם:  
 דַּ בָּלָה בְּשָׂרִי וְעוֹרִי  
 שָׁבַר עֲצָמוֹתַי:  
 הָ בָנָה עָלַי וַיִּקָּה  
 רֹאשׁ וּתְלָאָה:

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

אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה מִימֵי־קֶדֶם  
 הָרָס וְלֹא חֶמֶל  
 וַיִּשְׂמַח עָלֶיךָ אוֹיֵב  
 הָרִים קֶרֶן צָרִיךְ:  
 יָח צָעַק לָבָם אֶל־אֲדֹנָי  
 חוֹמַת בֵּת־צִיּוֹן  
 הוֹרִידִי כִנְחָל דִּמְעָה  
 יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה  
 אֶל־תַּתְנֵנִי פּוּגַת לֶךְ  
 אֶל־תִּדְּרִם בֵּת־עֵינֶיךָ:  
 יָט קוּמִי | רִנֵּי בִלְיָלָה  
 לְרֹאשׁ אֲשִׁמְרוֹת  
 שִׁפְכִי כַמִּים לִבְךָ  
 גִּבַּח פָּנֶי אֲדֹנָי  
 שְׂאֵי אֵלָיו כַּפֶּיךָ  
 עַל־נֶפֶשׁ עוֹלָלֶיךָ  
 הָעֲטוּפִים בָּרָעַב  
 בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל־חוּצוֹת:  
 כִּי רָאָה יְהוָה וַהֲבִיטָהּ  
 לְמִי עוֹלָלָת כָּהֵן  
 אִם־תֹּאכְלֶנָּה נָשִׁים פְּרִיָם  
 עֲלִילֵי טַפִּימִים  
 אִם־יִהְיֶה בְּמִקְדָּשׁ אֲדֹנָי  
 כֹּהֵן וְנָבִיא:

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

טז וַיִּגְרַס בַּחֲצֵץ שְׁנִי  
הַכְּפִישְׁנִי בְּאַפֶּרֶ:  
יז וַתִּזְנַח מִשְׁלֹם נַפְשִׁי  
נָשִׁיתִי טוֹבָה:  
יח וָאָמַר אֲבַד נִצְחִי  
וַתוֹחַלְתִּי מִיְּהוָה:  
יט זְכַר-עֲנִי  
וּמְרוֹדֵי לַעֲנָה וְרָאשׁ:  
כ זְכוֹר תִּזְכּוֹר  
וַתִּשְׁוַח עָלַי נַפְשִׁי:  
כא זֹאת אֲשִׁיב אֶל-לִבִּי  
עַל-כֵּן אוֹחִיל:  
כב חֲסִדֵי יְהוָה  
כִּי לֹא-תֵמָנוּ  
כִּי לֹא-כָלוּ רַחֲמָיו:  
כג חֲדָשִׁים לְבָקָרִים  
רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ:  
כד חֶלְקִי יְהוָה  
אָמְרָה נַפְשִׁי  
עַל-כֵּן אוֹחִיל לָו:  
כה טוֹב יְהוָה  
לְקָוֹ

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!”  
19 Remember my affliction and  
my scattering – wormwood and gall;  
20 Remembering, she will remember,  
my soul, and will sink down upon me.  
21 (Still) this will I turn toward my heart,  
for so will I hope:  
22 *YHVH*’s love / kindness  
– they are never done,  
for His mercies were not used up.  
23 They are new by every morning;  
great is Your trust / faithfulness!  
24 My portion is *YHVH*  
—said my soul—  
therefore so will I hope for Him.  
25 Good is *YHVH*  
to those waiting for Him,

ו בַּמַּחֲשָׁכִים הוֹשִׁיבָנִי  
כְּמֵתֵי עוֹלָם:  
ז גָּדַר בְּעֵדִי  
וְלֹא אֵצֶא  
הַכְּבִיד נִחַשְׁתִּי:  
ח גַּם כִּי אֶזְעַק וְאֶשׁוּעַ  
שְׁתֵּם תַּפְלִתִּי:  
ט גָּדַר דִּרְכִּי  
בְּגִזִּית נְתִיבֹתַי עֲוֹה:  
י נָלַב אֲרֵב הוּא לִי  
אֲרִי בַּמְסֻתָּרִים:  
יא דִּרְכִּי סוּרָר וַיִּפְשְׁחֵנִי  
שָׁמַנִּי שָׁמָם:  
יב דִּבְרֹךְ קִשְׁתּוֹ וַיִּצִּיבֵנִי  
כַּמִּטְרָא לַחֲזִץ:  
יג הִבִּיא בְּכִלְיוֹתַי  
בְּנֵי אֲשַׁפְתּוֹ:  
יד הִיִּיתִי שֹׁחַק לְכָל-עַמִּי  
נְגִינָתָם כָּל-הַיּוֹם:  
טו הִשְׁבִּיעַנִי בְּמְרוֹרִים  
הַרְוֵנִי לַעֲנָה:

6 In darkening-nights He made me dwell  
like those ever dead;  
7 He barricaded against me,  
and I cannot go out / get away,  
He weighed down my bronze (shackle).  
8 Even when I would cry and plea,  
He stopped up my prayer;  
9 He barricaded my ways with  
stone blocks; my paths He twisted.  
10 For me He was a bear ambushing,  
a lion in hiding places / stalking;  
11 My ways He diverts and He would tear  
me up; He made me desolate.  
12 He worked His bow and made me  
stand as the target for the arrow;  
13 He guided into my kidneys  
what came from His quiver,  
14 I was a laughingstock for all my  
people, their song all the day.  
15 He sated me with bitter herbs,  
and overfilled me with wormwood;

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

אל-תַּעֲלֶם אָזְנוֹךְ  
לְרוֹחֲתִי לְשׁוֹעָתִי:  
נָו קָרַבְתָּ בַּיּוֹם אֶקְרָאָךְ  
אֲמַרְתָּ אֶל-תִּירָא:

נָח רַבַּת אֲדֹנָי  
רִיבֵי נַפְשִׁי גָאֲלָתָּ חַיִּי:  
נָט רָאִיתָה יְהוָה עֲוֹתַי  
שָׁפְטָה מִשְׁפָּטִי:  
ס רָאִיתָה כָּל-נִקְמָתָם  
כָּל-מַחֲשַׁבְתָּם לִי:

סֵא שָׁמַעְתָּ חֲרָפְתָם יְהוָה  
כָּל-מַחֲשַׁבְתָּם עָלַי:  
סֵב שָׁפְטֵנִי קָמִי  
וְהִגִּינוּם עָלַי כָּל-הַיּוֹם:  
סֵג שִׁבְתָּם וְקִימָתָם  
הַבִּיטָה אֲנִי מִגִּינָתָם

סֵד תִּשְׁיֵב לָהֶם גָּמוּל  
יְהוָה כְּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם:  
סֵה תִתֵּן לָהֶם מִגִּנַּת-לֵב  
תִּאֲלָתֶךָ לָהֶם:  
סֹו תִרְדֹּף בָּאֵף וְתִשְׁמִידֵם  
מִתַּחַת שָׁמַיִ יְהוָה:

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

מִן פָּצוּ עֲלֵינוּ פִּיהֶם  
כָּל-אִיְבָנוּ:  
מִן פָּחַד וּפַחַת הָיָה לָנוּ  
הַשָּׂאת וְהַשָּׁבֵר:  
מַח פִּלְגֵי-מַיִם תִּרְדַּ עֵינַי  
עַל-שָׁבֵר בֵּית-עַמִּי:

מַט עֵינַי נִגְרָה  
וְלֹא תִדְמָה  
מֵאֵין הַפְּגוּת:  
נַעַד-יִשְׁקִיף  
וְיִרָא יְהוָה מִשָּׁמַיִם:  
נֵא עֵינַי עֹלְלָה לְנַפְשִׁי  
מִכָּל בָּנוֹת עִירִי:

נֵב צוֹד צְדוֹנִי כַצֹּר  
אִיְבֵי חֲנָם:  
נֵג צָמְתוּ בַּבּוֹר חַיִּי  
וַיִּדּוּ-אֶבֶן בִּי:  
נֵד צָפוּ-מַיִם עַל-רֹאשִׁי  
אֲמַרְתִּי נִגְזַרְתִּי:

נֵה קָרַאתִי שְׁמֶךָ יְהוָה  
מִבּוֹר תַּחְתִּיּוֹת:  
נֹו קוֹלִי שָׁמַעְתָּ

46 All our enemies crack open  
their mouth against us;  
47 Trepidation and trap were ours,  
the ruination and the shattering.  
48 My eye drops floods of water  
for my daughter people's shattering;  
49 My eye streams  
and won't silence herself,  
(she cries) with no breaks / no stutters,  
50 until YHVH would look down  
and see from heaven.  
51 My eye doles sorrow to my soul  
over all my city's daughters.  
52 Hunting, they hunted me, like a bird,  
(becoming) my enemies for no reason;  
53 they sealed off my life in the pit,  
and cast stone against me;  
54 waters flowed over my head,  
"I am cut off," I said.  
55 I called Your name, YHVH,  
from a pit far underground.  
56 You heard my voice:

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

grew great, beyond the sin of Sodom,  
 the one overthrown, as (in) a moment,  
 and no hands were laid on her.  
 7 Her Nazirites were pure beyond snow,  
 clearer than milk,  
 red of bone, more than rubies,  
 their cut shape sapphire crystal.  
 8 (Now) darkened beyond black soot  
 is their form,  
 they are not recognized in the streets,  
 their skin stretched taut over their bone,  
 it was dried out like a stick.  
 9 Better were the sword-slain  
 than the famine-slain,  
 for those drain away, stabbed through  
 from (want of) produce of the field.  
 10 Merciful hands of merciful women  
 stewed their children –  
 they became provision for them  
 in the shattering of my daughter people.  
 11 YHWH 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  
 יוֹעַם זָהָב  
 יִשְׁנָא הַכֶּתֶם הַטּוֹב  
 תִּשְׁתַּפְּכֶנָּה אַבְנֵי-קֹדֶשׁ  
 בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל-חוּצוֹת:  
 ב בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן הַיְקָרִים  
 הִמְסָלָאִים בַּפֹּז  
 אֵיכָּה נִחְשְׁבוּ  
 לְנִבְלֵי-חָרָשׁ  
 מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי יוֹצֵר:  
 ג גַּם-תַּנִּינִים חָלְצוּ שָׂדֶה  
 הַיְנִיקוּ גּוֹרֵיהֶן  
 בֵּת-עַמִּי לְאַכְזֹר  
 כִּיעֲנִים בַּמִּדְבָּר:  
 ד דִּבֶּק לְשׁוֹן יוֹנֵק  
 אֶל-חִפּוֹ בְּצִמָּא  
 עוֹלָלִים שָׁאֲלוּ לֶחֶם  
 פָּרֵשׁ אֵין לָהֶם:  
 ה הָאֲכָלִים לְמַעַדְנִים  
 נִשְׁמָו בַּחוּצוֹת  
 הָאֱמָנִים עָלֵי תוֹלַעַ  
 חִבְקוּ אֲשֵׁפֶתוֹת:  
 ו וַיִּגְדַּל עֲוֹן בֵּת-עַמִּי

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

בַּצְפִּיתָנוּ צָפִינוּ אֶל־גּוֹי  
לֹא יוֹשֵׁעַ:  
יח צְדוּ צִדְּנוּ  
מִלִּכְתּוֹת בְּרַחֲבֵינוּ  
קָרַב קִצְּנוּ מָלְאוּ יְמֵינוּ  
כִּי־בָא קִצְּנוּ:  
יט קָלִים הָיוּ רֹדְפֵינוּ  
מִנְּשָׁרֵי שָׁמַיִם  
עַל־הַהָרִים דָּלְקָנוּ  
בַּמִּדְבָּר אָרְבוּ לָנוּ:  
כ רֹחַ אֶפְיָנוּ מְשִׁיחַ יְהוָה  
נִלְכַּד בְּשַׁחֲתוֹתָם  
אֲשֶׁר אָמְרָנוּ בְּצִלּוֹ  
נִחְיָה בְּגוֹיִם:  
כא שִׂישִׁי וְשִׂמְחִי בַת־אֲדוֹם  
יוֹשֶׁבֶת בְּאֶרֶץ עוֹץ  
גַּם־עָלֶיךָ תַּעֲבֹר־כּוֹס  
תִּשְׁכַּרְי וְתִתְעָרִי:  
כב תִּם־עוֹנֶיךָ  
בַת־צִיּוֹן  
לֹא יוֹסִיף לְהִגְלוֹתְךָ  
פָּקַד עוֹנֶיךָ  
בַת־אֲדוֹם  
גָּלָה עַל־חַטָּאתֶיךָ:

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

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

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

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

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

א זְכוֹר יְהוָה מָה־הָיָה לָנוּ  
הַבִּיטָה וּרְאָה  
אֶת־חֲרָפָתָנוּ:  
ב נִחַלְתָּנוּ נִהְפְּכָה לְזָרִים  
בְּתֵינוּ לְנֹכָרִים:  
ג יְתוּמִים הָיִינוּ וְאֵין אָב  
אִמֵּיתֵנוּ כְּאַלְמָנוֹת:  
ד מִיָּמֵינוּ בְּכֶסֶף שָׁתִינוּ  
עֵצֵינוּ בְּמִחְרֵי יָבֹאוּ:  
ה עַל צַוְאֲרֵנוּ נִרְדְּפָנוּ  
יִגְעֵנוּ וְלֹא הוֹנַח־לָנוּ:  
ו מִצֵּרִים נָתַנוּ לָד  
אֲשׁוּר לְשַׁבֵּעַ לָחֶם:  
ז אֲבֹתֵינוּ חָטְאוּ וְאֵינָם  
וְאִנְחָנוּ עוֹנֵתֵיהֶם סָבְלָנוּ:  
ח עֲבָדִים מִשְׁלּוֹ כָּנוּ  
פָּרַק אֵין מִיָּדָם:  
ט בְּנִפְשֵׁנוּ נָבִיא לַחַיִּנוּ  
מִפְּנֵי חֶרֶב הַמִּדְבָּר:  
י עוֹרֵנוּ כְּתִנּוֹר נִכְמְרוּ  
מִפְּנֵי זִלְעָפוֹת רָעָב:  
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. *Tish'a B'Av* could not be more relevant than it is today, when the crisis of war refugees and fear of terrorism have overwhelmed the political process in so many countries. We think of *Tish'a B'Av* as a time of mourning, but it is more importantly a call to identify with the experience of refugees who are forced to risk their lives and even their children's lives in order to escape violence, hunger, devastation. That's what the Jewish people went through when the Temple, and the nation and society it stood for, were destroyed, when they became "like deer, not finding a place to graze, walking without strength before a pursuer." (1:6)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Some more songs:

*Shifkhi kamayim libeikh  
 nokhach p'nei Hashem*

Pour out your heart like water  
 right before Hashem

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

Judah will dwell for all time,  
 Jerusalem for generations

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

*Nachamu 'ami.  
 Anokhi hu m'nachemchem*

Take comfort my people  
 I am the one who comforts you

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

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

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

*The observances of Tish'a B'Av*

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



*City Shelter*, Kathe Kollwitz, 1926, public domain



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

*Eli Tsiyon, selected verses*

|                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Eli Tsiyon v'areha<br/>k'mo ishah v'tsireha<br/>v'khivtulah chagurat sak<br/>al ba'al n'ureha</i>                 | 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                              |
| <i>Alei hegyon m'choleha<br/>asher damam b'areha<br/>V'al va'ad asher shamam<br/>uvitul sanhed'reha</i>              | For her dancers' lyricism<br>now silenced in her towns<br>and for the mob that destroyed,<br>and ended her high court of justice                                 |
| <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>            | For the exile of God's servants<br>sweet singers of her songs<br>and for her scorers clamoring<br>while the corpses piled up                                     |
| <i>Alei pesha asher av'tah<br/>s'lol derekh ashureha<br/>V'al tsiv'ot k'haleha<br/>sh'zufeha sh'choreha</i>          | 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          |
| <i>Alei shimkha asher chulal<br/>b'fi kamai m'tseireha<br/>V'al tachan y'tsavchu lakh<br/>Kashuv ush'ma amareha.</i> | For Your name desecrated<br>in the mouth (of those) who stood<br>over her oppressed,<br>and for the plea they scream to You –<br>focus and listen to her message |

*Im eshkachekh Y'rushalayim tishkach y'mini.  
Tidbak l'shoni l'chiki im lo ezk'rekhi,  
im lo a'aleh Y'rushalayim al rosh simchati.*

If I forget you Jerusalem, may my right hand forget.  
May my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth, if it fails to  
remember, if I don't lift up Jerusalem ahead of my joy.

Kaddish for a Human Minyan, facing this sacred reality and its  
destruction, [neohasid.org/resources/humankaddish/](http://neohasid.org/resources/humankaddish/)

*Tisha B'Av is about the destruction of the Temple and becoming refugees, but  
the Temple itself is about sustaining Creation and is modeled on Creation.  
The greatest sacred Temple is the Earth itself. When we destroy ecosystems,  
when we we turn species into refugees, we bring extinction. When our action  
disrupt the climate, we turn vast numbers of people into refugees. It is  
imperative that we learn to pay attention to what we are doing to our sacred  
planet, and that also means learning to grieve what is being lost.*

*Mourners/Leaders:* May the Name that fills all names be blessed and  
strengthened in this created world. May the Breath of Life that fills all  
breaths fill us with Life, and may it guide and rule our actions and visions, in  
our lives and in our time, now in this world, and in every moment to come.  
And let us say: Amen.

*Everyone:* Amen. May that great Name be blessed within us and in all  
worlds, for all time.

*Mourners:* May Holiness stream forth from its Source, full of blessing and  
beauty. May the Name that weaves together all Life and all creatures be  
blessed and praised, made beautiful and resplendent, lifted up and exalted, to  
the highest and most majestic...

*Everyone:* Blessed be!

*Mourners:* ...beyond all the praises and blessings and songs and prayers that  
can ever be said in the whole world. And let us say: Amen. *Everyone:* Amen.

*Mourners:* May our prayers be received by the One who is our source, and  
may we be nourished and sustained along with everyone everywhere who  
seeks to embrace this Name and this holiness. May the Life and Love within  
us and between us be strengthened. May the Breath that fills all breaths fill  
all Creation with Peace, and may Peace and Life flow to us, to our  
community, to all peoples, and to all beings in this world. And let us say:  
Amen. *Everyone:* Amen.

*Mourners:* The One who makes Peace in the furthest reaches of Creation will  
bring Peace to us and to all living beings. And let us say: Amen.

*Everyone:* Amen.

***Al eleh anu bokhim, anu bokhot, For these we weep, An eco-lament***

For the Amazon, the lungs of the world,  
and for the greed that goads people to burn the jungles  
*Al eleh anu bokhim*

For the ocean's rising acidity,  
and for the heat that bleaches wondrous corals  
*Al eleh anu bokhot*

For Redwoods clearcut  
and for their multitudes of species that have lost their homes ~ *Al eleh anu bokhim*

For plastic found in deepest ocean and upon highest mountain, and for a throwaway culture that devalues everything in our lives  
*Al eleh anu bokhot*

For the murder of elephants, rhinos, pangolins,  
and for the retribution their extinction must deserve  
*Al eleh anu bokhim*

For the birds and insects gone silent,  
and for the starlight smothered by our lights  
*Al eleh anu bokhot*

For the generations whose home we are ruining,  
and for the generation that knows this but doesn't change course  
*Al eleh anu bokhim*

For the Antarctica glaciers and the polar ice caps,  
and for the penguins and polar bears endangered  
*Al eleh anu bokhot*

For snowpack and glaciers everywhere,  
and for the billions whose cities will be drowned, and whose farms will have no water  
*Al eleh anu bokhim*

For drought drying forests and expanding deserts,  
and for desert habitats shrinking from before human development, and for the Saharah cheetah, the fringe-toed lizard, and the addax  
*Al eleh anu bokhot*

For the undiscovered species whose lives we will never know,  
and for the loss of wisdom, truth and beauty each one embodies on this planet  
*Al eleh anu bokhim*

For the billions of animals living lives of torture to satisfy human gluttony,  
and for the pandemics and plagues that can spread from them to humanity  
*Al eleh anu bokhot*

For the untold losses and annihilations suffered by the creatures of the Earth,  
and for the ignorance that sees not, and the callous hearts not broken  
*Al eleh anu bokhim*

For the wicked who prosper from war, homelessness, poverty, and from the land's ruin,  
and for the horror they bring on all of us, while they shelter in their mansions  
– Alas, how long will they prosper?  
*Al eleh anu bokhot*

For the governments refusing to act,  
and for the leaders who thwart and reverse policies that would save species, habitats, ecosystems,  
*Al eleh anu bokhim*

Rabbi David Seidenberg,  
neohasid.org, 2020  
neohasid.org/docs/AIEleh.doc

For violent storms and the fires, and for the forest sanctuaries lost  
*Al eleh anu bokhot*

For a world suspended in the nothingness of space,  
and for the anxiety we live in, imagining this refuge lost  
*Al eleh anu bokhim*

For our own sore hearts, living in a world of wounds,  
and for our children and generations to come, for their fears and their hopes for a better world  
*Al eleh anu bokhot*

For the wounding of God's works, and for the wounding of God's image,  
*Al eleh anu bokhim*

For the Breath of Life, desecrated, destroyed, defiled!  
Can You hear us, can You save us from ourselves?  
*Al eleh anu bokhot*, for these we cry

Teach us to care, teach us to sit still, to understand, for the time is late.  
Impel us to act, participate, triumph, at least enough, lest there be no one left to cry

*IF I MUST DIE*

by REFAAT ALAREER

قال بد أن تعيش أنت

If I must die,  
you must live  
to tell my story  
to sell my things  
to buy a piece of cloth  
and some strings,  
(make it white with a long tail)  
so that a child, somewhere in Gaza  
while looking heaven in the eye  
awaiting his dad who left in  
a blaze—  
and bid no one farewell  
not even to his flesh  
not even to himself—  
sees the kite, my kite you made,  
flying up above  
and thinks for a moment an angel  
is there  
bringing back love  
If I must die  
let it bring hope  
let it be a tale

*Refaat Alareer was one of the tens of thousands of civilian casualties of Israel's war against Hamas after the Hamas attack. He died on December 6, 2023 at the age of 44.*

~~~~~

Can we keep the tragedies
of the Jewish people, and
the tragedies of the
Palestinian people, front
and center at the same
time? If so, how will we
also keep justice front and
center?

UNDER THE RUBBLE (excerpt)

by MOSUB ABU TOHA

He left the house to buy some bread
for his kids.
News of his death made it home,
but not the bread.
No bread.
Death sits to eat whoever remains of
the kids.
No need for a table, no need for
bread.

בנפשינו נביא לחמינו

For our lives we bring our bread...

~ *Laments 5:9*

ONE TREE IN KIBBUTZ BE'ERI

by ORIAN CHAPLIN

One tree in Kibbutz Be'eri
Saw things trees are never
supposed to see.
One tree in Kibbutz Be'eri heard too
much
And could not escape smells.
Its roots held their breath,
Its branches trembled
Its leaves fell like tears
Its heart was crushed
Depressed Yearning
Amputated Silenced.
One tree in Kibbutz Be'eri
On the morning of October 7
No longer wanted to be a tree
In a place where there is no one left
to protect.
One tree in Kibbutz Be'eri
asked to be a bench,
Maybe someone will come back,
And they might want to sit down.
In the destruction of Kibbutz Be'eri
Even trees cannot stand.

*O How She Sat Alone**

by Nurit Hirschfeld-Skupinsky,
survivor of the slaughter
in Kibbutz Nahal Oz

O How She Sat Alone
Nir Oz, full of blood
Sderot, *was like a widow*
A city stunned, and who left
are her faithful?

O How They Sat Alone
In the shelter room
One family, and another,
And another, and another one.

O How They Sat Alone
The women look-outs, full-eyed
at the observation posts
But there was no listening,
And deliverance – none.

O How They Sat Alone
Young women and young men
Hiding in pits and shrubs.
Their dancing halted,
And who will rescue them?

O How They Sat Alone
Captive women and captive men
And sitting there, still:
men, women,
elders and children.
Crying, they are crying at night
Tears on their cheeks
And there is no one who
comforts.

Both Hebrew laments for October 7 were published first in *Times of Israel* and appeared in *Dirshuni: Contemporary Women's Midrash Vol. 2*. Commissioned by Tamar Biala. See Tamar Biala's TOI article, "[How she sat alone: New laments for a beloved land](#)".

איכה ישבה בָּדָד
נורית הירשפלד-סקופינסקי,
שורדת הטבח בקיבוץ נחל עוז

איכה ישבה בָּדָד
ניר עז רבתי דם.
שְׁדֵרוֹת הָיְתָה כְּאַלְמָנָה,
קְרִיָה הִלּוּמָה, וּמִי נֹאֲמָנָה?

איכה ישבה בָּדָד
בְּמִקְוֵה

מְשֻׁפָּחָה, וְעוֹד אַחַת,
וְעוֹד, וְעוֹד אַחַת.

איכה יָשְׁבוּ בָּדָד
תְּצִיטִינִיּוֹת רַבָּתִי עֵין,
וְלֹא הָיְתָה הַקְשָׁבָה,
וְיִשׁוּעָה – אֵין.

איכה יָשְׁבוּ בָּדָד
צְעִירוֹת וְצְעִירִים
בְּמִסְתוּרֵי שׁוֹחֹת וְשִׁיחִים.
פָּקְדוֹת רְקוּדֵיהֶם,
וּמִי יִחְלָצֵם?

איכה יָשְׁבוּ בָּדָד
חֲטוּפוֹת וְחֲטוּפִים,
וְעֵדֵינוּ יוֹשְׁבִים:
גְּבָרִים, נָשִׁים,
קְשִׁישִׁים וְיֻלְדִים.
כָּכוּ בּוֹכִים בְּלִילָה,
דְּמָעוֹת עַל לִחְיֵיהֶם, וְאֵין מְנַחֵם.

* translated by Yehuda Mirsky with minor edits
made by David Seidenberg

**Count the days between Tisha
B'Av and Rosh Hashanah
using Omer Counter –
neohasid.org/omer/apps**

Lament for a Beloved Land*

Leora Ayalon,
survivor of the slaughter
in Kibbutz Kfar Aza

How have your dwellings been
turned into ruins,
Your people become exiles
in their own land?
O Betrayed land, your sons betrayed
you,
They put their desires before all else,
They sealed your fate
with their very tongues,
They abandoned you in their hearts,
lost, errant in their ways.

How your Kibbutzim were destroyed,
cities made desolate,
Your people dead,
your fields wasting away.
Furrows hacked, become fields of
horror,
All eyes devastated, dried out of tears.

Your sons, daughters butchered
undefended,
Fair maidens hauled into captivity.
And the plotters standing before them
Whispering, rustling,
and the land was
silent

Woe unto you, you cowards,
Sitting carelessly in your cushioned
chairs,
Entrusted with the lives of
beloved captives
While mothers and fathers
are wrapped in their grief.

* translated by Yehuda Mirsky with minor edits
made by David Seidenberg

**קִינָה לְאֶרֶץ אֲהוּבָה
לִיאֹרֵה אֵילָוִן,**

שׁוֹרֶדֶת הַטֶּבַח בְּקִיבוּץ כִּפּוֹר עֲזָה

אֵיכָה הִפְכוּ מְשְׁכֹנֶיךָ
לְעֵי תְּרֻבוֹת,
אֲנָשֶׁיךָ לְגוֹלִים בְּאַרְצָם?
הוּא אֶרֶץ נִבְגָּדָת, בְּגָדוּ בְּךָ
בְּנֶיךָ,
שָׂמוּ מֵאוּיֵיהֶם בְּרֹאשׁ מַעֲיָנָם,
תָּרְצוּ גּוֹרְלֶךָ בְּמוֹ לְשׁוֹנָם,
עָזְבוּךָ בְּלִבָּם,
תּוֹעִים בְּדַרְכָּם.

אֵיכָה תָּרְבוּ קְבוּצֶיךָ,
עָרִים שְׂמֵמוֹ,
אֲנָשֶׁיךָ מֵתִים, שְׂדוֹתֶיךָ נִשְׁמָו.
נִירִים רָטְשׁוּ, הִפְכוּ שְׂדוֹת
אֵימָה,
עַיִן כָּל תְּרֻבָּה, יִבְשָׁה מִדְּמָעָה.

בְּנֶיךָ, בְּנוֹתֶיךָ נִטְבְּחוּ בְּלִי
מָגֵן,
אֵל שֶׁבִּינָן הוֹבִילוּ עֲלֵמוֹת תָּן.
וְעוֹמְדִים מִנֶּגֶד חוֹרְשֵׁי הַמְּזֻמָּה
לוֹחֲשִׁים, רוֹחֲשִׁים,
וְהָאֶרֶץ דֹּמָמָה

אָבוּי אַתָּם, מוֹגֵי הַלֶּכֶב,
הַיּוֹשְׁבִים בְּכִסְאוֹתֵיכֶם,
עַל עֲצָמוֹת הַמוֹשָׁב,
אֲמוּנִים עַל חַיֵּי יִקְרִירִים
תְּטוּפִים
עַתָּה אֲמָהוּת וְאַבוֹת
בְּאַבְלָם עֲטוּפִים.

(continued...)

Lament for a Beloved Land

We will yet return and rebuild you,
the soil of our homeland
We will yet return and sing in your fields
a joyous song
Your sons will yet return
to love and forgive
Your daughters will yet return
to complete the thankful song
For neighbors and fellows who had
become our enemies,
When our eyes will behold
peace between us.

And we will cast a prayer together
for borders of tranquility,
For becoming good neighbors,
for leaders with humility
That we will respect each other,
sisters and brethren
When O land, you will sprout
grain and wheat, again

“Hasbaritis” 8/25/2024

by David Seidenberg

A man grieving, from Hevron,
aka al-Khalil, “the friend”, grieving his
brothers and sisters in Gaza:
20,000 children dead, he says, and
who knows how many more dead
under the rubble. “If you go to one
jinaza,” he struggles for the English
word, “one fu-, fu-, funeral every day,
you will go to funeral for 54 years.”

In my head I calculate, “20,000
children – that’s almost certainly an
exaggeration. Maybe it’s only
7,500 children.
That’s only 20 years of funerals.”
Only

(continued)

עוֹד נָשׁוּב וְנִבְנֶה אֶדְמַת מוֹלָדָת,
עוֹד נָשׁוּב וְנִבְנֶה בְּשְׂדוֹתֶיךָ
שִׁיר מְזֻמּוֹר
עוֹד יָשׁוּבוּ בְּנֶיךָ
לְאַהֵב וּלְסַלֵּחַ,
עוֹד תִּשְׁכְּנֶה בְּנוֹתֶיךָ הֶלֶל לְגִמְרָה
עַל שְׂכָנִים, עַל רְעִים,
שֶׁהָיוּ לְאוֹיְבֵינוּ,
כְּאִשֶּׁר תִּתְּחַזֵּינָה עֵינֵינוּ
בְּשָׁלוֹם בֵּינֵינוּ.

וְתִפְלֶה נֶשֶׂא יַחַד
לְגִבּוּלוֹת שָׁל שְׁלֹוה,
לְשִׁכְנוֹת טוֹבָה,
לְמִנְהִיגִים עִם עֲנוּה
שֶׁנִּכְבֵּד אִישׁ אֶחָיו, אִשָּׁה אַחֹתָה,
עַתָּה תִצְמִיחֵי שׁוֹב,
אֶרֶץ, דָּגָן וַחֲטָה.

*My daughter people –so cruel,
like ostriches in the wilderness
~ Laments 4:3*