

Kinah

Eichah / Lament for the Earth: Tisha B'Av by Rabbi Tamara Cohen

Eichah: Alas, she sits in danger.
Earth, home to multitudes,
like a beloved, deep in distress.
Blue ocean, source of life --
Endangered and imprisoned.
Bitterly she weeps in the night
Her shorelines wet with tears.
Of all her friends, none to comfort her;
All her allies have betrayed her.
Checkerspot butterflies
flee their homes;
Polar bears
can find no rest.
Because our greed has heated Earth.
Whole communities destroyed
To pursue off-shore oil.
Lives and dreams have been narrowed.
Coastlines mourn for families,
lost homes and livelihoods.
Barrier islands lament, desolate.
Wetlands sigh without their song birds.
Estuaries grieve; the sea is embittered.
Earth's children – now her enemies;
Despite destruction, we sleep at ease.
The Breath of Life grieves
our abundant transgressions.
Infants of every species,
captive to our conceit.

*Hashivenu Yah elecha v'nashuva, hadesh yameinu kekedem.
Let us return, help us repent,
You Who Breathe all Life;
Breathe us, Breathe us,
Breathe us into a new path--
Help us, Help us, ,
Help us Turn to a new way of living
Make—new, Make -new,
Our world of life intertwining –
Splendor, beauty, joy in our love for each life-form.*

Gone from Appalachia -
her mountaintop glory;
mined by Massey Energy
without compassion.
Children sick from air and water,
stumble weak before King Coal.
All that was precious in the days of our youth,
Earth recalls in woe and sorrow.
Her creatures die with none to help them,
at the hands of Exxon, now BP.
World leaders shrug
and look on helpless.
We have sinned greatly,
and so are ailing.
Our people who respected life,
have come to defile it.
We have stripped Earth naked,
she shrinks back.
Oily waves slap the sand like a soiled hem;
we were heedless of the cost of our appetite.
We have sunk appallingly, there is no comfort.
See, Breath of Life, this misery; how our avarice jeers!

Greed has laid hands on all dear to us.
Your sanctuary plundered by multinationals
full of contempt for Your holy community.
The Earth's poor cry out as they search for nourishment;
indigenous communities trade resources for food,
to keep themselves alive.

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Look, O Breath of Life, and behold,
what gluttons we have become.
Will we heed this warning, we who live as if unscathed –
Will we truly look and know this agony as ours own?
We are afflicted by angry consequence,
The elements push back against their abuse.
Forest fires reach down and spread like fury,
Sprawl and refuse trap our spirits.
Great storms hurl lives backwards, upside down
survivors are left forlorn, in constant misery.
For these things do we weep
Our eyes flow with tears.
How far from us is any comfort,
the possibility of change that might revive our Earth?
The children are forlorn for their future is bleak
unless we act with speed and wisdom.
Alas, humanity in our reckless living

have brought shame over all.
Can we remember the holiness of your creation,
Your footstool, green and fertile?
We have razed woodlands to the ground,
profaned the Kingdom of Earth and all its creatures.
In arrogance we slashed the mighty Redwoods,
will we cease hiding our power from ourselves and befriend our Earth?
How can we wrestle with God and bring justice to others
If we don't quench the flaming fires,
and turn back from endless consumption?
Egrets and brown pelicans languish in salt marshes
From the depths, corals cry out.
"Where are the fish? Where are the clean waters?"
Languishing battle-wounded in the wetlands,
life runs out in ocean's bosom.

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Lead us, lead us, on a new path to Eden,
Teach us self-restraint in the very midst of abundance.
To "Ayeka/Where are you?"
We will answer Hineni.
We are here to honor boundaries, not to devour all.
Open, open -- Our eyes to see in each creature,
Tree, Ocean , Mountain --
the Presence of the One.