

# 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)  
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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).

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כְּהִנִּיָּה נֶאֱנָחִים  
 בְּתוֹלְתֶיהָ נוֹגֹת  
 וְהִיא מֵרָלָה:  
 הָ הָיוּ צָרֶיהָ לְרֹאשׁ  
 אִיְבֵיהָ שָׁלוֹ  
 כִּי־יְהוָה הוֹגָה  
 עַל־רִב־פְּשָׁעֶיהָ  
 עוֹלָלֶיהָ הִלְכוּ שְׁבִי  
 לִפְנֵי־צָר:  
 וַיֵּצֵא מִן־בֵּת־צִיּוֹן  
 כָּל־הַדָּרָה  
 הָיוּ שָׂרֶיהָ כְּאֵילִים  
 לֹא־מָצְאוּ מְרֻעָה  
 וַיִּלְכוּ בְּלֹא־כֹחַ  
 לִפְנֵי רוֹדְף:  
 זַ וַיִּזְכֹּר יְרוּשָׁלַם  
 יְמֵי עֲנִיָּה  
 וּמְרוֹדֶיהָ  
 כָּל־מַחֲמָדֶיהָ  
 אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ מִיָּמֵי קָדֶם  
 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 וּמִרַב עֲבֹדָה  
 הִיא יֹשְׁבָה בְּגוֹיִם  
 לֹא מָצְאָה מְנוּחַ  
 כָּל־רֹדְפֶיהָ הִשִּׁיגוּהָ  
 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-אַשׁ  
 בַּעֲצַמֹתַי וַיִּרְדָּנָה  
 פֶּרֶשׁ רֶשֶׁת לְרַגְלִי  
 הִשְׁבִּינֵנִי אֲחֹרֶר  
 נִתְּנֵנִי שְׁמֵמָה  
 כָּל-הַיּוֹם דָּוָה:  
 יד נִשְׁקַד לֵעַל פִּשְׁעֵי  
 בִידּוֹ יִשְׁתַּרְגְּנוּ  
 עָלוּ עַל-צִוְּאָרַי  
 הִכְשִׁיל כַּחֲוִי  
 נִתְּנֵנִי אֲדֹנָי בְּיָדִי  
 לֹא-אוּכָל קוּם:  
 טו סֵלָה  
 כָּל-אַבְיָרִי | אֲדֹנָי בְּקֶרְבִי  
 קָרָא עָלַי מוֹעֵד  
 לִשְׂבֹּר בַּחֲוָרִי  
 גַּת דֶּבֶר אֲדֹנָי  
 לְבָתוּלַת בֵּת-יְהוּדָה:  
 טז עַל-אַלְהָה | אֲנִי בּוֹכֶיהָ

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-מַכְבִּידָהּ הִזְלִוּהָ  
 כִּי-רָאוּ עֲרוּתָהּ  
 גַּם-הִיא נֹאנָחָה  
 וַתִּשָּׁב אֲחֹרֶר:  
 ט טִמְאָתָהּ בְּשׂוּלֶיהָ  
 לֹא זָכְרָה אַחֲרִיתָהּ  
 וַתִּרְדּוּ פְּלָאִים  
 אֵין מְנַחֵם לָהּ  
 רֹאֶה יְהוָה אֶת-עֲנִיִּי  
 כִּי הִגְדִּיל אוֹיֵב:  
 י יָדוֹ פָּרַשׁ צָר  
 עַל כָּל-מַחֲמָדֶיהָ  
 כִּי-רָאָתָהּ גּוֹיִם  
 בָּאוּ מִקִּדְשָׁהּ  
 אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָהּ  
 לֹא-יָבֹאוּ  
 בְּקִהְלָהּ לָךְ:  
 יא כָּל-עַמָּה נֹאנָחִים  
 מִבִּקְשִׁים לֶחֶם  
 נָתְנוּ מִחֲמוּדֵיהֶם  
 בְּאֹכֶל לְהַשִּׁיב נַפְשׁ  
 רֹאֶה יְהוָה  
 וְהִבִּיטָהּ כִּי הֵיטִי זוּלָלָהּ:  
 יב לֹא אֶלֶיכֶם

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

נִהְפָּךְ לִבִּי בְּקִרְבִּי  
כִּי מָרוּ מְרִיתִי  
מִחוּץ שְׂכָל־הַחֶרֶב  
בַּבַּיִת כַּמּוֹת:

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

שָׁשׂוּ כִּי אַתָּה עָשִׂיתָ  
הִבֵּאתָ יוֹם־קִרְאָתָהּ  
וַיִּהְיוּ כַּמוֹנִי:

כָּב תָּבֵא כָּל־רַעְתֶּם לִפְנֵיךָ  
וְעוֹלָל לָמוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר  
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 |

אֲדַנִּי אֶת־בֵּת־צִיּוֹן

הַשָּׁלֵךְ 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 גִבֹּר אוֹיֵב:

יֵן פִּרְשָׁה צִיּוֹן בְּיָדֶיהָ

אֵין מְנַחֵם לָהּ

צִוָּה יְהוָה לְיַעֲקֹב

סָבִיבֵי צָרָיו

הִיטָה יְרוּשָׁלַם

לְנִדָּה בֵּינֵיהֶם:

יֵחַ צִדִּיק הוּא יְהוָה

כִּי פִּיהוּ מְרִיתִי

שָׁמְעוּ־נָא כָּל־הָעַמִּים

וְרָאוּ מַכְאֲבִי

בְּתוֹלָתִי וּבַחוּרֵי

הָלְכוּ 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  
 וַיִּרְבֵּל בְּבֵת־יְהוּדָה  
 תִּפְאַנֶּיהָ וְאַנְיָהּ׃  
 וַיִּחַמַּס כַּגֹּן שֹׁכֵה  
 שֶׁחַת מוֹעֵדוֹ  
 שָׁפַח יְהוָה | בְּצִיּוֹן  
 מוֹעֵד וְשֹׁבֵת  
 וַיִּנְאַץ בְּזַעַם־אָפוֹ  
 מֶלֶךְ וְכוֹהֵן׃  
 ז וַנֹּחַ אֲדֹנָי | מִזִּבְחוֹ  
 נֹאֵר מִקִּדְשׁוֹ  
 הִסְגִּיר בְּיַד־אֹיֵב  
 חוֹמַת אֲרָמְנוֹתֶיהָ  
 קוֹל נִתְּנוֹ בְּבֵית־יְהוָה  
 כִּיּוֹם מוֹעֵד׃  
 ח חָשֵׁב יְהוָה | לְהַשְׁחִית  
 חוֹמַת בֵּת־צִיּוֹן נִטָּה לָּו  
 לֹא־הָשִׁיב יָדוֹ  
 מִבִּלְעַד  
 וַיִּאֲבֹל־חֵל וְחוֹמָה  
 יִחָדְדוּ אִמְלָלוּ׃  
 ט טָבְעוּ בָאֶרֶץ שְׂעָרֶיהָ  
 אֶבֶד 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 אָפוֹ׃  
 ב בִּלְעַד אֲדֹנָי לֹא חָמַל  
 אֶת כָּל־נְאוֹת יַעֲקֹב  
 הָרַס בְּעִבְרָתוֹ  
 מִבְצָרֵי בֵת־יְהוּדָה  
 הִגִּיעַ לָאָרֶץ  
 חָלַל מַמְלָכָה וְשָׂרֶיהָ׃  
 ג גִּבַּע בַּחֲרִי־אֶף  
 כָּל קַרְנוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 הָשִׁיב אֲחוֹר יָמִינוֹ  
 מִפְּנֵי אוֹיֵב  
 וַיִּבְעַר בִּיעָקֹב כָּאֵשׁ  
 לָהֲבָה אֲכָלָה סָבִיב׃  
 ד דָּרַךְ קִשְׁתּוֹ כְּאוֹיֵב  
 נָצַב יָמִינוֹ  
 כְּצֹר  
 וַיַּהַלֵּךְ כָּל  
 מִחְמַד־יָעִין  
 בְּאַהֲלֵ בֵת־צִיּוֹן  
 שָׁפַךְ כָּאֵשׁ חֲמָתוֹ׃  
 ה הָיָה אֲדֹנָי | כְּאוֹיֵב  
 בִּלְעַד יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 בִּלְעַד 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  
 שׁוֹא וְתַפֵּל  
 וְלֹא-גָלוּ עַל-עוֹנֶךָ  
 לְהָשִׁיב שְׁבוּתָךְ  
 וַיַּחֲזוּ לָךְ  
 מַשְׁאוֹת שׁוֹא וּמַדּוּחִים:  
 טו סָפְקוּ עָלֶיךָ כַּפִּים  
 כָּל-עַבְרֵי דָרְךָ  
 שָׁרְקוּ וַיִּנְעוּ רֹאשָׁם  
 עַל-בֵּת יְרוּשָׁלַם  
 הִנָּאת הָעִיר שִׁיאֲמְרוּ  
 כָּלִילַת יָפִי  
 מְשׁוֹשׁ לְכָל-הָאָרֶץ:  
 טז פָּצוּ עֲלֶיךָ פִּיהֶם  
 כָּל-אוֹיְבֶיךָ  
 שָׁרְקוּ וַיַּחֲרִקוּ-שֵׁן  
 אָמְרוּ בְּלָעֵנוּ  
 אַךְ זֶה הַיּוֹם שִׁקְוֵינָהוּ  
 מַצָּאנוּ רָאִינוּ:  
 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 מִיְּהוָה:  
 י יֵשְׁבוּ לָאָרֶץ  
 יָדְמוּ וְזָנְי בֵּת-צִיּוֹן  
 הָעָלוּ עָפָר עַל-רֹאשָׁם  
 חָגְרוּ שָׁקִים  
 הוֹרִידוּ לָאָרֶץ רֹאשָׁן  
 בְּתוּלַת יְרוּשָׁלַם:  
 יא כָּלוּ בְּדַמְעוֹת עֵינַי  
 חֲמַרְמְרוּ מִעֵי  
 נִשְׁפָּךְ לָאָרֶץ כְּבֹדִי  
 עַל-שִׁבְרִי  
 בֵּת-עַמִּי  
 בַּעֲטָף עוֹלִל וְיוֹזֵק  
 בְּרַחֲבוֹת קִרְיָה:  
 יב לְאַמְתָּם יֹאמְרוּ  
 אֵיךְ דָּגָן וַיֵּין  
 בְּהִתְעַטְפָם  
 כְּחָלָל בְּרַחֲבוֹת עִיר  
 בְּהִשְׁתַּפֵּךְ נַפְשָׁם  
 אֶל-חֵיק אֲמָתָם:  
 יג מֶה-אֶעֱיִיד  
 מֶה אֲדַמֶּה-לָךְ  
 הַבֵּת יְרוּשָׁלַם  
 מֶה 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 בְּתוֹלְתֵי וּבְחוּרֵי  
נָפְלוּ בַּחֶרֶב  
הִרְגֵתָּ בַּיּוֹם אֶפְרָיִם  
טָבַחְתָּ לֹא חֶמְלָתָּ:  
כִּי תִקְרָא כַּיּוֹם מוֹעֵד  
מִגּוּרֵי מִסְכֵּיב  
וְלֹא הָיָה בַּיּוֹם אֶחָד־יְהוָה  
פָּלִיט וְשָׁרִיד  
אֲשֶׁר־טִפַּחְתִּי וְרַבִּיתִי  
אֵיבֵי 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 רָאֵה עֲנִי  
בְּשֵׁבֶט עֲבָרְתּוֹ:  
בְּאוֹתֵי נְהַג וּלְלֹךְ  
חֹשֶׁךְ וְלֹא־אוֹר:  
גִּם אֶת־בִּי יֵשֶׁב  
יִהְיֶה יָדוֹ כָּל־הַיּוֹם:  
דְּבַלָּה בְּשָׂרִי וְעוֹרִי  
שִׁבְרָה עֲצָמוֹתַי:  
הִבְנֵה 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 צָרִיף:  
יח צָעַק לָבָם אֶל־אֲדֹנָי  
חוֹמַת בֵּת־צִיּוֹן  
הוֹרִידִי כִנְחָל דִּמְעָה  
יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה  
אֶל־תַּתְנִי פּוּגַת לֶךְ  
אֶל־תִּדְרֹם בֵּת־עֵינֶךָ:  
יט קוּמִי | רִנֵּי בַלִּילָה  
לְרֹאשׁ אֲשִׁמְרוֹת  
שִׁפְכִי כַּמִּים לַבֹּר  
גִּבַּח פָּנַי אֲדֹנָי  
שָׂאִי אֵלָיו כַּפַּיִךְ  
עַל־נֶפֶשׁ עוֹלְלֶיךָ  
הַעֲטוּפִים בָּרָעַב  
בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל־חוּצוֹת:  
כ רֹאֵה יְהוָה וְהִבִּיטָה  
לְמִי עוֹלְלֹת בָּה  
אִם־תֹּאכְלֶנָּה נָשִׁים פְּרִיָם  
עָלְלֵי טַפָּחִים  
אִם־יִהְיֶה בְּמִקְדָּשׁ אֲדֹנָי  
כִּהְיָ וְנִבְיָא:

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 וַיִּגְרַם 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  
וַתִּשָּׁחַח 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 יֵצֵא  
הַכְּבִיד נִחַשְׁתִּי:  
ח גַּם כִּי אֶזְעַק וְאֶשׁוּעַ  
שְׁתֵּם תִּפְלֹתִי:  
ט גָּדַר דְּרָכִי  
בְּגִזִּית נְתִיבֹתַי עֲוֹה:  
י נָלַב אֲרֵב הוּא לִי  
אֲרִי בַּמְסֻתָּרִים:  
יא דְּרָכִי 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  
הָרוֹנִי 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 וַיַּחֲלֵל יְדוּמָם	26 Good – and he should wait and
אֲדֹנָי לֹא צִוָּה:	– didn't <i>Adonai</i> so command?	לְתַשׁוּעַת 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 בְּנֵעוּרָיו:	that he carry a yoke in his youth.
לֹט מִהָ־יִתְאוּנוּ אָדָם חַי	39 How could a living person complain,		
גֹּבֵר עַל־חַטָּאִיו:	a man, (if punished) for his sins?		
מִנְחַפְשָׁה דְרֹכֵינוּ וַנִּחְלְרָה	40 Let us search our ways and dig deep,	כֹּחַ יֵשֵׁב בְּדָד וַיִּדָּם	28 Let him sit alone and be silent,
וְנָשׁוּבָה עַד־יְהוָה:	and let us return until <i>YHWH</i> ,	כִּי נָטַל עָלָיו:	since He laid (it) on him;
מֵאֵל נִשָּׂא לִבֵּנוּ	41 Let us lift our hearts	כֹּט יִתֵּן בְּעַפְרֹ פִּיהוּ	29 he should put his mouth in the dust –
אֶל־כַּפָּיִם	up to our hands (stretching them)	אוֹלֵי יֵשׁ תִּקְוָה:	maybe there is hope;
אֶל־אֵל בְּשָׁמַיִם:	toward God in the heavens.	לֵא יִתֵּן לְמַכְחוֹ לְחַי	30 Put out his cheek for the one who
מִבְּנַחֲנוּ פָשַׁעְנוּ וּמָרִינוּ	42 Us, we sinned and rebelled.	יִשְׂבַּע בְּחִרְפָּה:	strikes, be satiated with shame.
אַתָּה לֹא סָלַחְתָּ:	You – You did not pardon.		
מִגְּסִיתָ בְּאַף	43 You took shelter in such anger,	לֹא כִי לֹא יִזְנֶה	31 For <i>Adonai</i> would not
וַתִּדְרֹשְׁנוּ	and You would pursue us,	לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנָי:	spurn forever;
הָרָגְתָּ לֹא חֲמִלְתָּ:	You murdered without pitying;	לֵב כִּי אִם־הוֹלָה וְרַחֵם	32 for if He aggrieved and showed mercy,
מִדְּסִכּוּתָהּ בָּעֵנָן לָךְ	44 You sheltered Yourself within a	בְּרַב חֲסָדָיו:	it is according to His love's abundance;
מִעֲבוּר תִּפְלָה:	cloud, far beyond prayer;	לֵב כִּי לֹא עָנָה מִלְּבוֹ	33 for He did not afflict from His heart
מִהָ־סָחִי וּמֵאֹס	45 Scum and refuse	וַיִּגָּה בְּנִי־אִישׁ:	and aggrieve human beings.
תַּשְׁמִינֵנוּ	You would make us		
בְּקֶרֶב הָעַמִּים:	in the midst of the peoples.		
		לֹד לְדַכָּא תַחַת רַגְלָיו	34 To crush under His feet
		כָּל אֲסִירֵי אֶרֶץ:	all imprisoned of the land,
		לֵה לְהַטּוֹת מִשְׁפַּט־גֹּבֵר	35 to make bent a man's judgment,
		וַיַּגֵּד פָּנָיו עָלִיוֹן:	right to the face of the Highest,
		לֹא לְעוֹת אָדָם בְּרִיבּוֹ	36 to twist / wrong a person in his

אל-תַּעֲלֵם אָזְנוֹךָ  
לְרוֹחֲתִי לְשׁוּעָתִי:  
נָו קָרַבְתָּ בַּיּוֹם אֶקְרָאָךְ  
אֲמַרְתָּ אֶל-תִּירָא:

נַח רַבָּת 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:  
סָב שָׁפְטֵנִי קָמִי  
וְהִגִּינוּם עָלַי כָּל-הַיּוֹם:  
סָג שָׁבַתָם וְקִיַּמְתָּם  
הַבִּיטָה אֲנִי מִגִּינָתָם

סֵד תִּשְׁלֵיב 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-אִיְבָנֵינוּ:  
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 וְכֹו נְזִירֶיהָ מִשְׁלָג  
 צָחוּ מִחֶלֶב  
 אֲדָמוּ עֲצָם מִפְּנִינִים  
 סָפִיר גִּזְרָתָם:  
 ח חֲשֹׁךְ מִשְׁחֹר  
 תִּאָּרֵם  
 לֹא נִכְרוּ בַּחוּצוֹת  
 צֶפֶד עוֹרֶם עַל-עֲצָמָם  
 יָבֵשׁ הָיָה כַּעֲץ:  
 ט טוֹבִים הָיוּ חֲלָלֵי-חֶרֶב  
 מִחֲלָלֵי רָעֵב  
 שָׁהָם יוֹבֹו מִדְּקָרִים  
 מִתְּנוּבַת שְׂדֵי:  
 י יָדֵי נָשִׁים רַחֲמָנִיוֹת  
 בִּשְׁלוּ יִלְדֵיהֶן  
 הָיוּ לְבָרוֹת לָמוֹ  
 בְּשֹׁבֵר בֵּת-עַמִּי:  
 יא כָלָה יְהוָה אֶת-חֲמָתוֹ  
 שָׁפַךְ חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ  
 וַיִּצֵּת-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 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 אֵיכָה  
 יוֹעַם זָהָב  
 יִשְׁנָא הַכֶּתֶם הַטּוֹב  
 תִּשְׁתַּפְּכֶנָּה אַבְנֵי-קֹדֶשׁ  
 בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל-חוּצוֹת:  
 ב בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן הַיְקָרִים  
 הִמְסָלָאִים בַּפֹּז  
 אֵיכָה נִחְשְׁבוּ  
 לְנִבְלֵי-חָרָשׁ  
 מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי יוֹצֵר:  
 ג גַּם-תַּנִּינִים חָלְצוּ שָׂדֶה  
 הַיְנִיקוּ גּוֹרֵיהֶן  
 בֵּת-עַמִּי לְאֶכְזָר  
 כִּיעֲנִים בַּמִּדְבָּר:  
 ד דָּבֶק לְשׁוֹן יוֹנֵק  
 אֶל-חִכּוֹ בְּצִמָּא  
 עוֹלָלִים שָׁאֲלוּ לֶחֶם  
 פָּרֵשׁ אֵין לָהֶם:  
 ה הָאֶכְלִים 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 צַעְדֵינוּ  
 מַלְכֶת בְּרַחֲבֵינוּ  
 קָרַב קִצֵּינוּ מִלְאוּ יְמֵינוּ  
 כִּי־בָא קִצֵּינוּ:  
 יט קָלִים הָיוּ רֹדְפֵינוּ  
 מִנְּשָׁרֵי שָׁמַיִם  
 עַל־הַהָרִים דָּלְקָנוּ  
 בַּמִּדְבָּר אָרְבוּ לָנוּ:  
 כ רוּחַ אֶפְיָנוּ מְשִׁיחַ יְהוָה  
 נִלְכַּד בְּשַׁחֲתוֹתָם  
 אֲשֶׁר אָמְרָנוּ בְּצִלּוֹ  
 נִחִיָּה בְּגוֹיִם:  
 כא שִׂישִׁי וְשִׂמְחִי בַת־אֲדוֹם  
 יוֹשֶׁבֶת בְּאַרְצָךְ עוֹץ  
 גַּם־עֲלֶיךָ תַּעֲבֹר־כּוֹס  
 תִּשְׁכַּרְי וְתִתְעָרִי:  
 כב תִּם־עוֹנֶיךָ  
 בַּת־צִיּוֹן  
 לֹא יוֹסִיף לְהִגְלוֹתְךָ  
 פֶּקֶד עוֹנֶיךָ  
 בַּת־אֲדוֹם  
 גְּלָה עַל־חַטֹּאתֶיךָ:

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.

מַלְכֵי־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  
 יִגְעוּ בְּלִבְשֵׁיהֶם:  
 טו סוּרוּ טִמְאָה  
 קְרָאוּ לָמוֹ  
 סוּרוּ סוּרוּ אֶל־תִּגְעוּ  
 כִּי נָצוּ גַם־נָעוּ  
 אָמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם  
 לֹא יוֹסִיפוּ לָגוֹר:  
 טז פָּנֵי יְהוָה  
 חִלְקָם לֹא יוֹסִיף  
 לְהִבְטֵם  
 פָּנֵי כְהֲנִים לֹא נִשְׂאוּ  
 וַיִּקְנִים לֹא חָנְנוּ:  
 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 שָׁבֵת מְשׁוֹשׁ לִבָּנוּ  
 נִהְפָּךְ לְאֵבֶל מִחֲלָנוּ:  
 טז נִפְלָה עֲטֶרֶת רֹאשֵׁנוּ  
 אִוִּי-נָא לָנוּ כִּי חָטֵאנוּ:  
 יז עַל-זֶה הָיָה דָּוָה לִבָּנוּ  
 עַל-אַלֶּה חֲשָׁכוּ עֵינֵינוּ:  
 יח עַל הַר-צִיּוֹן שָׁשְׂמָם  
 שׁוֹעֲלִים הִלְכוּ-בּוּ:  
 יט אַתָּה יְהוָה  
 לְעוֹלָם תֵּשֵׁב  
 כִּסְאֶךָ לְדָר וָדוֹר:  
 כ לָמָּה לִנְצַח תִּשְׁכַּחֲנוּ  
 תַּעֲזֹבֵנוּ לְאֶדֶךָ יָמִים:  
 כא תִּשְׁיִבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ  
 וְנִשׁוּבָה  
 חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כִּקְדָּם:  
 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, *YHWH*  
 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, *YHWH*, 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 נִהְפָּכָה לְזָרִים  
 בְּתֵינוּ לְנֹכְרִים:  
 ג יְתוּמִים הָיִינוּ וְאֵין אָב  
 אִמֵּיתֵינוּ כְּאִלְמָנוֹת:  
 ד מִיָּמֵינוּ בְּכֶסֶף שָׁתִינוּ  
 עֵצֵינוּ בְּמִחְרֵי יָבֹאוּ:  
 ה עַל צַוְאֲרֵנוּ נִרְדָּפְנוּ  
 יִגְעֵנוּ וְלֹא הוֹנַח-לָנוּ:  
 ו מִצְרַיִם נָתַנוּ יָד  
 אֲשׁוּר לְשַׁבֵּעַ לָחֶם:  
 ז אֲבֹתֵינוּ חָטְאוּ וְאֵינָם  
 וְאִנְחָנוּ עֲוֹנֹתֵיהֶם סָבְלָנוּ:  
 ח עֲבָדִים מִשְׁלּוֹ כָּנוּ  
 פָּרַק אֵין מִיָּדָם:  
 ט בִּנְפְשֵׁנוּ נָבִיא לַחַיִּנוּ  
 מִפְּנֵי חֶרֶב הַמִּדְבָּר:  
 י עוֹרֵנוּ כִּתְנוֹר נִכְמְרוּ  
 מִפְּנֵי זִלְעָפוֹת רָעֵב:  
 יא נָשִׁים בְּצִיּוֹן עָנוּ  
 בְּתִלָּת בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה:

1 *YHWH*, 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*.

***Al eleh anu bokhim, anu bokhim, For these we weep***

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 bokhot*

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

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



*Eli Tsiyon, selected verses*

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