**Discussion Texts for Tisha Ba’Av 2023**

1.

Part of what’s so hard about living right now is that we’re sitting on a hoarded treasure of life as it has been.

We really don’t want this to change, and we want to be able to live exactly as we’ve been living.

What the smoke-filled sky is telling us is that the world isn’t as it was and may never fully be as it was.

Being able to mourn that and be with ourselves in that mourning is really valuable.

*Rabbi Ora Nitkin-Kaner*

2.

One who walks along in his world without contemplating whether his ways are good or evil is similar to a blind man walking on the bank of a river. His danger is certainly very great and his calamity is more likely than his escape.

For negligence in guarding oneself from danger due to natural blindness and negligence due to willful blindness, namely shutting one's eyes by choice and desire, is one and the same.

*Mesilat Yesharim 2:4*

3.

When the Blessed Holy One created the first human, He took him and led him round all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to him: “Look at My works, how beautiful and praiseworthy they are! And all that I have created, it was for you that I created it. Pay attention that you do not corrupt and destroy My world: if you corrupt it, there is no one to repair it after you.

*Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13*

4.

When Noah came out of the ark, he opened his eyes and saw the whole world completely destroyed. He began crying for the world and said, “God, how could you have done this?” ...

God replied, “Oh Noah, how different you are from the way Abraham ... will be. He will argue with me on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah when I tell him that I plan their destruction.... But you, Noah, when I told you I would destroy the entire world, I lingered and delayed, so that you would speak on behalf of the world. But when you knew you would be safe in the ark, the evil of the world did not touch you. You thought of no one but your family. And now you complain?”

*Midrash Tanchuma on Noah*

*5.*

If we were to walk in the woods and a spring appeared just when we became thirsty, we would call it a miracle. And if on a second walk, if we became thirsty at just that point again, and again the spring appeared, we would remark on the coincidence. But if that spring were there always, we would take it for granted and cease to notice it. Yet is that not more miraculous still?

*Baal Shem Tov (1698-1760), founder of Hasidism*

*6.*

The earth withers, sears  
The world languishes and sears;  
Even the powerful people languish miserably.

The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants;

For they have transgressed laws,  
Violated the statutes,  
Broken the ancient covenant.

That is why a curse consumes the earth,  
And its inhabitants pay the penalty…

*Isaiah 24:4-6*

7.

Is it not enough for you to graze on choice grazing ground, but you must also trample with your feet what is left from your grazing? And is it not enough for you to drink clear water, but you must also muddy with your feet what is left? And must My flock graze on what your feet have trampled and drink what your feet have muddied?

*Ezekiel 34:18-19*

8.

Our fathers sinned and are no more; And we must bear their guilt.

*Lamentations 5:7*

9. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai taught [in a parable]: People were in a boat, and one of them took a drill and began to drill a hole beneath himself. His companions said to him: Why are you doing this? He replied: What concern is it of yours? Am I not drilling under myself? They replied: But you will flood the boat for us all.

*Leviticus Rabbah 4:6*