

Al Naharot Bavel (By the Waters)

Music: William Billings, c. 1780

Text: Psalm 137:1

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

עַל נְהַרֹת בָּבֶל שָׁם יִשְׁבְּנוּ גַם־בְּכִינֵנוּ בְּזָכְרֵנוּ אֶת־צִיּוֹן:

Eicha 1:1-4

Alas!
Lonely sits the city
Once great with people!
She that was great among nations
Is become like a widow;
The princess among states
Is become a thrall.

Bitterly she weeps in the night,
Her cheek wet with tears.
There is none to comfort her
Of all her friends.
All her allies have betrayed her;
They have become her foes.

Judah has gone into exile
Because of misery and harsh oppression;
When she settled among the nations,
She found no rest;
All her pursuers overtook her
In the narrow places.

Zion's roads are in mourning,
Empty of festival pilgrims;
All her gates are deserted.
Her priests sigh,
Her maidens are unhappy—
She is utterly disconsolate!

איכה | ישבה בְּדוֹד הָעִיר רַבָּתִי עִם הַיְתָה כְּאַלְמָנָה רַבָּתִי בְּגוֹיִם שְׁרֵתִי בְּמַדִּינֹת
הַיְתָה לְמָס:

כְּלוּ תִבְכֶּה בְּלֵילָה וְדַמְעָתָהּ עַל לְחִיָּה אֵין־לָהּ מִנְחָם מִכָּל־אַהֲבֵיהָ כָּל־רַעֲיָהּ בְּגָדוּ
כִּי הָיָה לָהּ לְאִיכָּיִים:

גָּלְתָה יְהוּדָה מֵעִנִי וּמְרִיב עֲבֹדָה הִיא יִשְׁבָּה בְּגוֹיִם לֹא מִצָּאָה מְנוּחַם כָּל־רֹדְפֶיהָ
הַשִּׁיגוּהָ בֵּין הַמְצָרִים:

דַּרְכֵי צִיּוֹן אֲבֵלוֹת מְבֵלִי בָּאֵי מוֹעֵד כָּל־שְׁעָרֶיהָ שׁוֹמְמִין כַּהֲנִיָּה נִצְּנָתִים בְּתוֹלְתֶיהָ
בּוֹגֹת וְהִיא מֵרָלָה:

We Are All Mourners

By Rabbi Elie Kaufner

On Tisha B'Av, we are all mourners, and we all join together in the recitation of communal laments.

In fact, Eicha, the biblical book we read in synagogue on the holiday, was originally called Sefer Kinot, a fact that is reflected in its English name: the Book of Lamentations.

The purpose of reciting Eicha was to “arouse one’s heart to mourn,” according to one rabbinic teaching. But apparently Eicha wasn’t enough. Toward the end of the talmudic period, poets began writing special pieces for Tisha B’Av.

The scholar E. Daniel Goldschmidt claims that originally the poems were added into the middle of the Amidah prayer, in the blessing about rebuilding Jerusalem. Sometime later, the poems shifted to later in the service, after the special Torah reading for Tisha B’Av.

That spot in the service was expansive, and the number of poems grew. It is not uncommon for some communities to recite 40 or more kinot during the Tish’a B’av morning service. Later still, the kinot’s effectiveness and popularity led them to be included in the evening service for Tisha B’Av as well, following the reading of Eicha.

Eli Tziyon

Unknown

Mourn Zion and her cities, like a woman in her birth pains,
And like a maiden wrapped in sack-cloth for the spouse of
her youth

Mourn the palace that was abandoned in the sheep's
negligence
of its flock, and for the coming of the revulsion of God
within the Temple's rooms.

For the exile of the servants of God, who sing her songs,
and for their blood that was spilled like the waters of her
rivers.

For Your name which was desecrated in the mouths of those
who stood up against her distressed ones,
and for the supplication they will cry out to you,
give attention and hear her speech.

אֵלֵי צִיּוֹן וְעָרֶיהָ, כְּמוֹ אִשָּׁה בְּצִיּוֹרָהּ,
וְכַבְתּוּלָהּ חֲגוּרֵת־שָׁק, עַל בְּעַל נְעוּרֶיהָ

עַל־ אַרְמוֹן אֲשֶׁר נָטַשׁ, בְּאַשְׁמַת צֶאֱן עֲדָרֶיהָ,
וְעַל בֵּיאת מְחַרְפֵי אֵל, בְּתוֹךְ מִקְדָּשׁ חֲדָרֶיהָ.
עַל־ גְּלוֹת מְשַׁרְתֵי אֵל, נְעִימֵי שִׁיר זְמֶרֶהָ,
וְעַל דָּמָם אֲשֶׁר שִׁפְּךָ כְּמוֹ מִימֵי זְאוּרֶיהָ.

עַל־ שִׁמְךָ אֲשֶׁר חָלַל בְּפִי קָמִי מִצָּרֶיהָ,
וְעַל תְּסֻחַת צִוּחֵי לֶךְ קָשׁוּב וְשִׁמְעֵ אֲמָרֶיהָ.

Eicha 2:1-5

Alas!

Adonai in God's wrath
Has shamed Fair Zion,
Has cast down from heaven to earth
The majesty of Israel.
He did not remember His Footstool
On His day of wrath.

Adonai has laid waste without pity
All the habitations of Jacob;
He has razed in His anger
Fair Judah's strongholds.
He has brought low in dishonor
The kingdom and its leaders.

In blazing anger He has cut down
All the might of Israel;
Adonai has withdrawn His right hand
In the presence of the foe;
Adonai has ravaged Jacob like flaming fire,
Consuming on all sides.

Adonai bent His bow like an enemy,
Poised His right hand like a foe;
He slew all who delighted the eye.
He poured out His wrath like fire
In the Tent of Fair Zion.

Adonai has acted like a foe,
Adonai has laid waste Israel,
Laid waste all her citadels,
Destroyed her strongholds.
Adonai has increased within Fair Judah
Mourning and moaning.

בלע אֲדֹנָי (לא) [ולא] חָמַל אֶת כָּל־נְאוֹת יַעֲקֹב הִרְס בְּעִבְרָתוֹ מִבְּצֻרֵי בֵּית־יְהוּדָה
הִגִּיעַ לְאָרֶץ חָלָל מִמְּלָכָה וְשָׂרֵיהָ:

גָּדַע בְּחִירֵי־אֵף כָּל קָרוֹן יִשְׂרָאֵל הִשְׁיֵב אֶחָדָר יְמִינוֹ מִפְּנֵי אוֹיֵב וַיִּבְעַר בְּיַעֲקֹב כְּאֵשׁ
לְהִבֶּה אֶכְלָה סָבִיב:

דָּרַךְ קִשְׁמוֹ כְּאוֹיֵב נֶאֱבָב יְמִינוֹ כְּצֹר וַיִּהְיֶה כָּל מַחֲמַדֵּי־עֵינָיו בְּאֵהָל בֵּית־צִיּוֹן שָׁפַךְ כְּאֵשׁ
חֲמָתוֹ:

הִלָּה אֲדֹנָי | כְּאוֹיֵב בָּלַע יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּלַע כָּל־אֲרָמְנוֹתֶיהָ שָׁחַת מִבְּצֻרָיו וַיִּרְבַּ כְּבַת־
יְהוּדָה תִּאֲנֶה וְאֲנִיהָ:

Yerushalaim

From Psalm 137

Music by Ramond Smolover

If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither;

אם-אֶשְׁכַּח יְרוּשָׁלַיִם תִּשְׁכַּח יְמִינִי:

We Are People of the Desert

Cantor Lizzie Weiss

We are people of the desert
Vulnerable
Wandering amidst the dunes

We are people of the desert
Walking through our holy land

Ben Gurion told us to seize the expanse of openness
But it left us vulnerable, even at our best...

Running from the Nova
Or from our beds

Raging Chariots of Hamas
This time bulldozing our fences instead

Nothing to stop them but the fruits of our land

Taking advantage of the peaceniks
Trusting humanity at hand

So Where is our Splitting of the sea?

Who will be the hero that we need to set us free?
When will it be our turn to ask God how a miracle occurred?

How can we be sure that our cries will be heard?
Will the world stop and listen and not just “hear?”

Or will we just be complicit in our own stratosphere

Dizzy with questions
No conclusions are clear

We can't stop asking why and how
our sorrows will disappear.

But we stop in the midst of the desert breeze
We find our hearts connected, pumping our Jewish blood
with ease

We are people of the desert, wandering through one
obstacle at a time...

Waiting for the next hill, we're ready to climb

Eicha 3:1-5

I am the man who has known affliction
Under the rod of Adonai's wrath;

Me Adonai drove on and on
In unrelieved darkness;

On none but me Adonai brings down Adonai's hand
Again and again, without cease.

Adonai has worn away my flesh and skin;
Adonai has shattered my bones.

All around me Adonai has built
Misery and hardship;

אָנִי הַגִּבֹּר רָאָה עָנִי בְּשִׁבְט עֲבָרָתוֹ:

אוֹתִי נָתַג וַיִּלְךְ תְּנִשָּׂה וְלֹא־אֹר:

אֶדְ בִּי יִשֵׁב יִהְיֶה קֶדֶם כָּל־הַיּוֹם:

בְּלֵה בְּשָׂרִי וְעוֹרִי שִׁבַּר עֲצָמוֹתַי:

בָּנָה עָלַי וַיִּקַּף רֹאשׁ וַתִּלְאַחַ:

Tears, Too Close: A Prayer of Consolation

By Alden Solovy

These tears are too close to my eyes
Ready to burst forth
For the sorrow that surrounds us.

These tears are too close to my heart
Ready to burst forth
For the pain that surrounds us.

These tears are too close to my soul
Ready to burst forth
For the heartbreak that surrounds us.

Comfort, oh comfort My people,
says your God. (Isaiah 40:1)
For God will comfort Zion. (Isaiah 50:3)

Well of compassion,
Comfort of generations,
Let us cry together
For all that has been lost,
For all that might have been.

It is I, it is I who comforts you, (Isaiah 51:12)
And great shall be your children's peace. (Isaiah 54:13)

Yearning,
Still yearning,
For solace and consolation,
Yearning,
Still yearning,
With hope and faith,
Yearning,
Still yearning,
For healing to flow more freely
Than these ripened tears.

Arise, shine, for your light has dawned, (Isaiah 60:1)
For mountains may move and hills be shaken
But My kindness shall not be removed from you. (Isaiah
54:10)
And the angel of God delivered them,
In love and mercy God redeemed them. (Isaiah 63:9)

Eyli, Eyli

Words by Hannah Senesh

Music by Cantor Rachelle Nelson & Rebecca Nelson Saunders

Eli, Eli

Shelo yigamer l'olam

Eli, Eli,

Shelo yigamer l'olam

The sand and the sea

The rush of the waters

The crash of the heavens

The prayer of the heart.

Eicha 4:1-6

Alas!
The gold is dulled,
Debased the finest gold!
The sacred gems are spilled
At every street corner.

The precious children of Zion;
Once valued as gold—

Alas, they are accounted as earthen pots,
Work of a potter's hands!

Even jackals offer the breast
And suckle their young;

But my poor people has turned cruel,
Like ostriches of the desert.
The tongue of the suckling cleaves
To its palate for thirst.

Little children beg for bread;
None gives them a morsel.
Those who feasted on dainties
Lie famished in the streets;
Those who were reared in purple
Have embraced refuse heaps.

The guilt of my poor people
Exceeded the iniquity of Sodom,
Which was overthrown in a moment,
Without a hand striking it.

איכה יועם זקב ישנא הכתם הטוב תשמתפכנה אבני־קדש בראש כל־חוצות:

בגוי ציון הנקורים המסלאים בפני איכה נחשבו לנבל־חרש מעשה ידי יוצר:

גם־[תנים] (תנין) תלצו שד היניקו גוריהן בת־עמי לאכזר (כי ענים) [כיעינים]
במדבר:

דבק לשון יונק אל־חכו בצמא עוללים שאלו להם פרש אין להם:

האכלים למעדנים נשמו בחוצות האמנים עלי תולע חבקו אשפתות:

ויגדל עון בת־עמי מחטאת סלם ההפוכה כמו־רגע ולא־תלו בה ידים:

Nachamu

Music and English text by Elana Arian

Lyrics from Isaiah 40:1-3

Nachamu, nachamu ami, yomar Eloheichem

Comfort us, comfort us in our wilderness

Comfort us, as we struggle to take care of one another

Comfort us, comfort us in our wilderness

Comfort us as we struggle with this world

For Weeks I've Been Bleeding Poems

By Iris Eliya Cohen

I name the file "sorrow"
I delete Name it
"October" Change it to "7"
Replace it with "chasm"
Change: "chasms"
Name it "hell-like"
I name it "hope"
Command the computer to remember
It responds, "saving hope."

אני קוראת לקבץ "יגון"
מוחקת
קוראת לו "אוקטובר"
משנה ל"שבועה"
מחליפה ל"תהום"
משנה: "תהומות"
קוראת לו "כשאול"
קוראת לו "תקנה"
מורה למחשב שישכח
הוא עונה לי "שומר את תקנה"

Revenge

By Taha Muhammad Ali

At times ... I wish
I could meet in a duel
the man who killed my father
and razed our home,
expelling me
into a narrow country.
And if he killed me,
I'd rest at last,
and if I were ready—
I would take my revenge!

But if it came to light,
when my rival appeared,
that he had a mother
waiting for him,
or a father who'd put
his right hand over
the heart's place in his chest
whenever his son was late
even by just a quarter-hour
for a meeting they'd set—
then I would not kill him,
even if I could.

Likewise ... I
would not murder him
if it were soon made clear
that he had a brother or sisters

Or if he had a wife to greet him
and children who
couldn't bear his absence
and whom his gifts would thrill.
Or if he had
friends or companions,
neighbors he knew
or allies from prison
or a hospital room,
or classmates from his school ...
asking about him
and sending him regards.

But if he turned
out to be on his own—
cut off like a branch from a tree—
without a mother or father,
with neither a brother nor sister,
wifeless, without a child,
and without kin or neighbors or friends,
colleagues or companions,
then I'd add not a thing to his pain
within that aloneness—
not the torment of death,
and not the sorrow of passing away.
Instead I'd be content
to ignore him when I passed him by
on the street—as I

who loved him and constantly longed to see him.

convinced myself
that paying him no attention
in itself was a kind of revenge.

Shomer Yisrael

Music by Shlomo Carlebach

Text from the Liturgy

Shomer Yisrael.
Sh'mor Shearit Yisrael.
V'al Yovad Yisrael.
Haomrim Shma Yisrael.

O Guardian of Israel, guard the remnant of Israel, and suffer not
Israel to perish, who say, Hear, O Israel.

שומר ישראל.
שמור שארית ישראל.
ואל יאבד ישראל.
האומרים "שמע ישראל."

Eicha 5:16-22

The crown has fallen from our head;
Woe to us that we have sinned!
Because of this our hearts are sick,
Because of these our eyes are dimmed:

Because of Mount Zion, which lies desolate;
Jackals prowl over it.

But You, Adonai, are enthroned forever,
Your throne endures through the ages.

Why have You forgotten us utterly,
Forsaken us for all time?

Take us back, Adonai, to Yourself,
And let us come back;

Renew our days as of old!

For truly, You have rejected us,
Bitterly raged against us.

Take us back, Adonai, to Yourself,
And let us come back;

גְּפִלָּה עָטְרַת רֹאשֵׁנוּ אֲוִי־נָא לָנוּ כִּי חָטָאנוּ:

עַל־זֶה הִנֵּה הָרָה לִבְנוּ עַל־אֵלֶּה חֲשָׁכוּ עֵינֵינוּ:

עַל הַר־צִיּוֹן שְׁשָׁמִם שׁוֹעָלִים הִלְכוּ־בוֹ:

אַתָּה יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם תִּשָּׁב בְּסֵאֶף לְדוֹר וָדוֹר:

לְמָה לְנִצָּחַת תִּשְׁפָּחֲנוּ תַעֲזֹבְנוּ לְאַרְף־יָמִים:

הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה וְ אֱלֹהֶיךָ (וּנְשׁוּבָה) [וְנִשְׁוֶבָה] תַּדְּגֵשׁ יָמֵינוּ בְּקִדְמוֹת:

כִּי אִם־מָאָס מְאֹסְתָנוּ קִצְפָּתָ עָלֵינוּ עַד־מְאֹד:

הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה וְ אֱלֹהֶיךָ (וּנְשׁוּבָה) [וְנִשְׁוֶבָה] תַּדְּגֵשׁ יָמֵינוּ בְּקִדְמוֹת:

Hashiveinu

Eicha 5:21

Music by Micah Shapiro & Aaren Alpert

Turn us back, turn us back, Divine Presence to You
and we will turn, and we will turn
renew, renew our days as before

הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנִשׁוּבָה חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקִדְמָם:

OPTIONAL READINGS BELOW:

Hymn for the Hurting

by Amanda Gorman

Everything hurts,
Our hearts shadowed and strange,
Minds made muddied and mute.
We carry tragedy, terrifying and true.
And yet none of it is new;
We knew it as home,
As horror,
As heritage.
Even our children
Cannot be children,
Cannot be.

Everything hurts.
It's a hard time to be alive,
And even harder to stay that way.
We're burdened to live out these days,
While at the same time, blessed to outlive them.

This alarm is how we know
We must be altered —
That we must differ or die,
That we must triumph or try.
Thus while hate cannot be terminated,
It can be transformed
Into a love that lets us live.

May we not just grieve, but give:
May we not just ache, but act;
May our signed right to bear arms
Never blind our sight from shared harm;
May we choose our children over chaos.
May another innocent never be lost.

Tiher Rabbi Yishmael

Text from the Liturgy

Music by Zavel Kwartin

Rabbi Yishmael purified himself and mentioned God's secret name. He went up to heaven and asked the angel dressed in white [what he should make of the decree]. The angel answered: "Accept it upon yourselves, righteous and beloved, because I heard from 'behind the curtain' that you were selected for this."

[Rabbi Yishmael] went down and told his friend what God's secret name had said.

The tyrant commanded that they be killed with force. Two men were taken out first because they were the greatest of the Jewish People: Rabbi Yishmael, the high priest, and Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel, the President of the Sanhedrin - the assembly of rabbis appointed to sit as a tribunal in every city in the ancient Land of Israel.

טַהַר רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל עֲצֻמוֹ, וְהִזְכִּיר אֶת הַשֵּׁם - בְּסֻלּוֹדִים,
וְעָלָה לְמָרוֹם - וְשָׁאַל מֵאֵת הָאֵישׁ לְבוּשׁ הַבְּדִים.
וְנָם לוֹ: קִבְּלוּ עָלֵיכֶם צְדִיקִים וְיָדִידִים,
כִּי שָׁמַעְתִּי מֵאַחֲרֵי הַפְּרָגוֹד: כִּי בָזַאת אַתֶּם נִלְפָדִים!
יָרַד וְהִגִּיד לְחַבְרָיו מֵאֲמַר אֵל,
וְצִנָּה בְּלִיעַל לְהַרְגֶם בְּכַח - וְלֵאמֹר!
וְשָׁנִים מִקֵּדָם הוֹצִיאוּ תְּחִלָּה - שְׁהֵם גְּדוּלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל פֶּהוּ גְּדוּל, וְרַבִּן שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל [נָשִׂיא יִשְׂרָאֵל].

Boreh Ad Anah / בורא עד אנה

Unknown

Creator! How long shall thy dove remain
in the toils of the fowler's snare?
She is afflicted and humbled, and lonely sitting,
deprived of her children,
she calleth to thee, O my father!

The dove driven from her nest now wandered about,
exposed day and night to frost and heat.
she dreaded the destroying sword,
and the lioness' teeth!

When thou didst surrender her into the hands of the spoiler
he devoured her, as it were to the neck without mercy.
many years have since then passed, yet summer and winter
I bear the yoke of my enemy.

בורא עד אנה יונתך במצודה
תוף פח המוקש עניה ומרודה
ובלי בניה יושבת גלמודה
צועקת אבי

נעה גם נדה מקנה היונה
ולקרח וחרב יום ולילה חונה
היא מתסרדת מחרב היונה
משני לביא

זה עת עזבת אותה ביד טורף
אכל הצואר ומלק הערף
עברו השנים גם קיץ גם חרף
אשא על אויבי