

עגילת איכד

עם פירוש דמכזר רעה

Eikhah Chapter 1

מגילת איכה פרק א

1. How lonely sits the city, that was full of people! She has become like a widow! She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, has become a vassal!

א איכה | יושבה בְּדָד הָעִיר רַבְתִּי לָם הָיְתָה
כְּאַלְמָנָה רַבְתִּי בַּגּוֹיִם שְׂרָתִי בַּמְּדִינֹת
הָיְתָה לְמַס:

2. She weeps bitterly in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her enemies.

ב בָּכוּ תַבְכָּה בַּלַּיְלָה וּדְמָעָתָה עַל לִחְיָהּ
אִין-לָהּ מְנַחֵם מִכָּל-אַהֲבֶיהָ כָּל-רֵעֶיהָ בְּגָדוּ בָּהּ
הָיוּ לָהּ לְאֹיְבִים:

3. Judah has gone into exile because of affliction, and because of great servitude; she dwells among the nations, she finds no rest; all her pursuers overtook her in the midst of her distress.

ג גָּלְתָה יְהוּדָה מֵעֲנִי וּמִרַב עֲבָדָה הִיא
יֹשְׁבָה בַּגּוֹיִם לֹא מָצְאָה מְנוּחַ כָּל-רֹדְפֶיהָ
הַשִּׁיגוּהָ בֵּין הַמַּצָּרִים:

4. The roads to Zion mourn, because none come to the appointed feasts; all her gates are desolate; her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness.

ד דִּרְכֵי צִיּוֹן אֲבֵלוֹת מִבְּלִי בָּאִי מוֹעֵד
כָּל-שְׁעָרֶיהָ שׁוֹמְמִין כִּהְנִיחַ גְּאֻנָּחִים בְּתוֹלְתֶיהָ
נוֹגָזֹת וְחֵיא מִרָלָה:

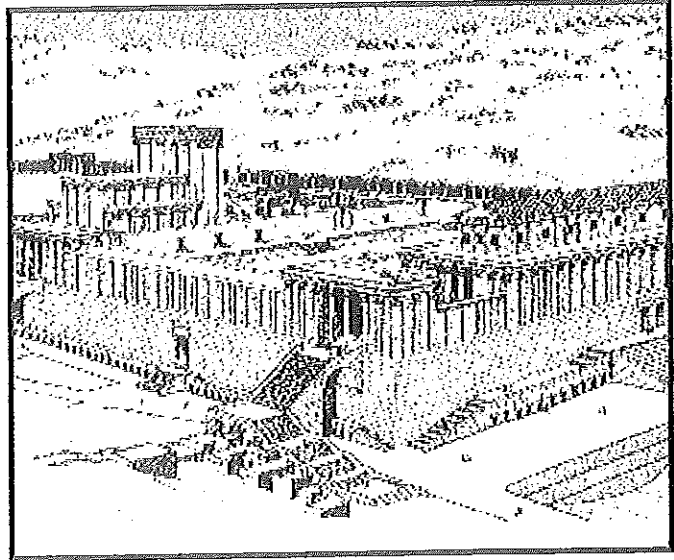
5. Her adversaries have become the chief, her enemies prosper; for the Lord has afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions; her infants have gone to captivity before the enemy.

ה הָיוּ צָרֶיהָ לְרֹאשׁ אֹיְבֶיהָ שָׁלוּ כִּי-יְהוָה
הוֹגָה עַל רַב-פְּשָׁעֶיהָ עוֹלָלֶיהָ הִלְכּוּ
שָׁבִי לַפְּנֵי-צָר:

6. And from the daughter of Zion all her splendor is departed; her princes are become like harts that find no pasture, and they are gone without strength before the pursuer.

ו וַיֵּצֵא מִבֶּת-צִיּוֹן כָּל-הַדְּרָגָה הָיוּ
שָׂרֶיהָ כְּאַיִלִּים לֹא-מָצְאוּ מְרֹעַה וַיִּלְכּוּ בְּלֹא-כֹחַ
לַפְּנֵי רֹדְף:

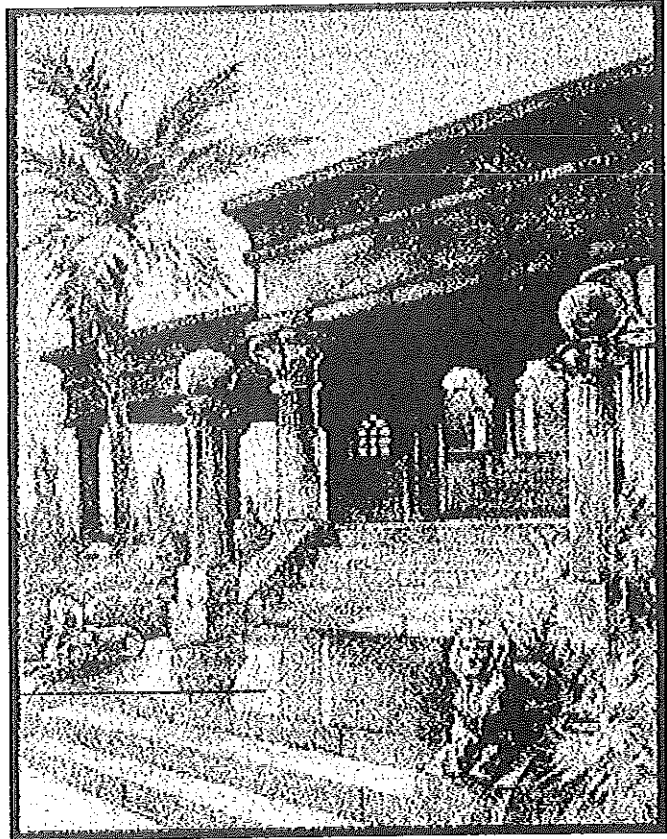
On Tisha b'Av, the Jewish people mourns the loss of our two **בְּתֵי מִקְדָּשֵׁי**, or Temples. The First Temple, pictured below, was constructed during King Solomon's reign and was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E. The Second Temple, pictured at right, was built after the return from the Babylonian exile, enlarged by King Herod in the 1st century B.C.E., and destroyed by the Romans in 70 C.E.



What Were These Places? ☆

(Eikhah 1:1) - The Temples were buildings where God's Presence lived. This does not mean that God actually lived in the Temple. Even when we had a Temple, God did not dwell within the Holy of Holies, or **קֹדֶשׁ הַקֳּדָשִׁים**. However, both of our Temples were special and holy because the prayers of all Israel were focused there. When the **Kohen Gadol** (High Priest) would enter that place and say God's name, everybody in the Temple would get down on their knees, bow to the ground and say "Blessed be His holy name forever and ever!" or **בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלֻכּוֹתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד**.

Now, Read Chancellor Schorsch's essay included on p. iv in the appendix. What does he say about the relation that a Conservative Jew should have with the Temple? If we no longer want the animal sacrifices back, then why should we mourn the Temple's destruction? What does Chancellor Schorsch say about the connection between history and the religious holiday of Tisha b'Av?



Above: A 1911 tapestry of what the First Temple might have looked like. Built by Solomon, Bayit Rishon was destroyed in 586 B.C.E. It was much smaller than Bayit Sheni, and the destruction of the Second Temple gets much more attention in Jewish sources and thought. Why do you think that is the case?

7. Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her; the adversaries saw her, and mocked at her destruction.

ז זכרה ירושלם ימי עניה ומרוניה כל מחמניה אשר היו מימי קדם בגפיל עמה ביד-צור ואין עוזר לה ראוה צלים שחקו על משבתה.

8. Jerusalem grievously sinned; therefore she has become loathsome; all those who honored her despise her, for they have seen her nakedness; even she sighs, and turns back.

ח חטא חטאה ירושלם על-כן לגידה היתה כל-מכבדיה הזילות ביראו ערותה גם-היא נאנסה ותשב אחור.

9. Her filthiness was in her skirts; she thought not of her destiny; therefore she came down astonishingly; she has no comforter. O Lord, behold my affliction; for the enemy has magnified himself.

ט טמאתה בשוליה לא זכרה אחריה ותרד פלאים אין מנחם לה ראה יהוה את-עניי כי הגדיל אויב.

10. The adversary has spread out his hand upon all her precious things; for she has seen that the nations entered into her sanctuary, whom You did forbid to enter into Your congregation.

י ידו פרש צר על כל-מחמניה ביראתה גוים באו מקדשה אשר צויתה לא-יבאו בקהל לד.

11. All her people sigh, they seek bread; they have given their precious things for food to revive their soul. Look, O Lord, and consider, how abject have I become.

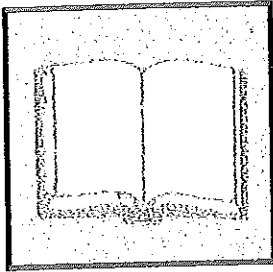
יא כל-עמה נאנחים מבקשים לחם נתנו מחמדיהם באכל להשיב נפש ראה יהוה והביטה כי הייתי זוללה.

12. Is it nothing to you, all you that pass by? Behold, and see if there is any pain like my pain, which was brought upon me, with which the Lord has afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger.

יב לוא אליכם כל-עברי דרך הביטו וראו אם-יש מקאוב כמקאבי אשר עולל לי אשר הוגה יהוה ביום חרון אפו.

13. From above has He sent fire into my bones, and it prevails against them; He has spread a net for my feet, He has turned me back; He has made me desolate and faint all day long.

יג ממרום שלח-אש בעצמותי וירדנה פליש רשת לרגלי השיבני אחור נתנני שממה כל-היום דנה.



ספורים

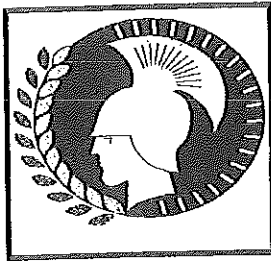
Stories

Wet Wood and Dry Wood

The midrashim on Eikhah include

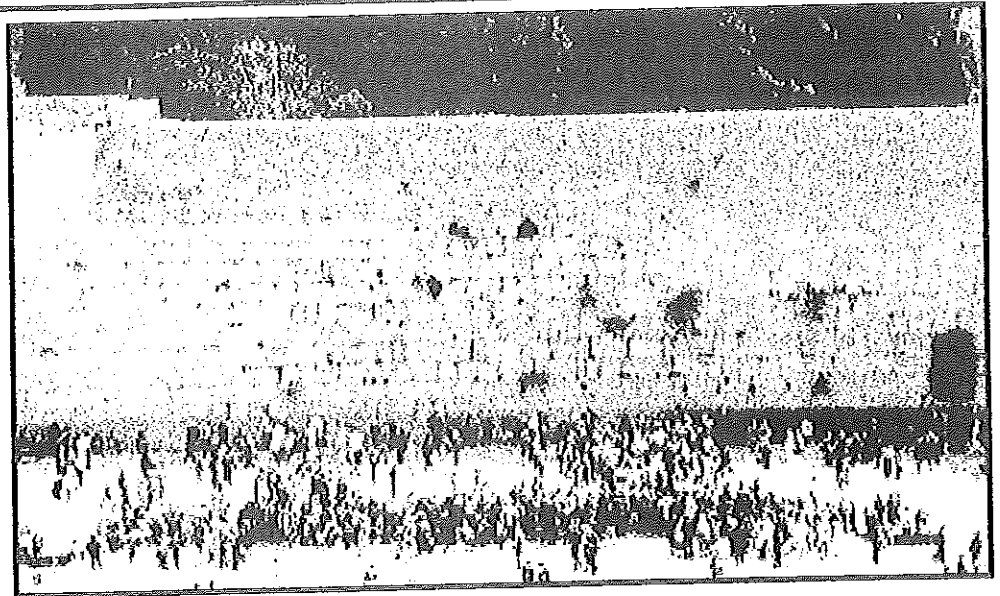
many stories about Jews from Jerusalem who visit Athens, Greece and about people from Athens who visit Jerusalem. Some of these stories teach us that if we obey God's laws, then we need not fear wars or destruction.

Others show us how wonderful Jerusalem was and what a terrible loss its destruction inflicted on the Jewish people. One of these stories is about a Greek from Athens who came to the ruins of Jerusalem and found a Kohen. The Greek asked the Kohen, "How much smoke does a bundle of wood produce?" The Kohen answered, "When the wood is wet, it produces smoke until the wood is completely consumed. But when the wood is dry, one-third turns into smoke, one-third turns into ash, and one-third is burned by flame. The Athenian asked, "Where did you learn so much about wood?" - "I learned all this from tending the fires in the Temple!" the Kohen replied. The moral of the story is that Jerusalem was a place filled with wisdom, and that people came from all over the world to benefit from the sage advice of the city's inhabitants. But when the city was destroyed, a great heritage was lost.

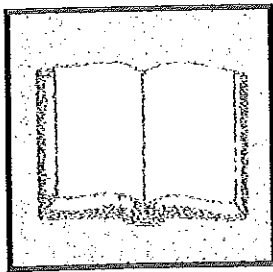


חרבן הבית

The Destruction of the Temple



A crowd of Jews prays at the Kotel. What do you think it is about this place that attracts so many Jews? After all, it is not even a wall of the Temple, but rather a retaining wall built by Herod the Great. So why has it become so important?



ספורים

Stories

The Wealthy Who Starved



In the days leading up to the destruction of the First Temple, the poor starved while the rich ate bread. But at the time of the Second Temple's destruction, both the poor and the rich starved. The Romans blockaded Jerusalem and prevented any food from entering the city. At first, the rich thought that they could use their wealth to bribe Roman soldiers into violating the blockade. Using a rope, they lowered a treasure chest of gold down to the Romans. The Romans emptied the gold out of the chest and sent the chest back filled with wheat. When the wheat was used up, the wealthy citizens of Jerusalem lowered another treasure chest filled with gold. The Romans took the gold and sent the chest back, but this time, they gave them barley animal feed instead of grain fit for humans. When the barley was gone, the rich people sent the chest down the rope a third time filled with gold. And again, the Romans took all the gold and returned the chest. This time, they filled the chest with straw. What did the rich people do with the straw? They boiled it for a long time and then drank the water! When the water was gone and there was not a thing left to eat or drink in all of Jerusalem, they lowered the last of their gold down the rope. The Romans took their gold and returned the chest empty (Based on Eikhah Rabbah 1:39)

14. The yoke of my transgressions is bound by His hand; they are knit together and are set upon my neck; He has caused my strength to fall, the Lord has delivered me into the hands of those against whom I am not able to rise up.

יד נשקד על פשעי בידו ישתרגו עליו
על-צוארי הכשיל כחצי נתנני אדני בידו
לא-אוכל קום.

15. The Lord has spurned all my mighty men in the midst of me; He has called an assembly against me to crush my young men; the Lord has trodden, as in a wine press, the virgin daughter of Judah.

טו סלה כל-אבירי | אדני בקרבי
קרא עלי מועד לשבך בחור
גת דרך אדני לבתולת בת-יהודה.

16. For these things I weep; my eye, my eye runs down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me; my children are desolate, for the enemy has prevailed.

טז על-אלה | אני בוכיה עיני | עיני
ירדה מים כי-רחק ממני מנחם משיב
נפש חיו בני שוממים כי גבר אויב.

17. Zion spreads out her hands, and none is there to comfort her; the Lord has commanded against Jacob adversaries around him; Jerusalem is like a menstruating woman among them.

יז פרשה ציון ביליה אין מנחם לה
צנה יחנה ליעקב סביביו צרו היתה
ירושלם לנדה ביניהם.

18. The Lord is righteous; for I have rebelled against His word; hear, I beg you, all the peoples, and behold my sorrow; my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity.

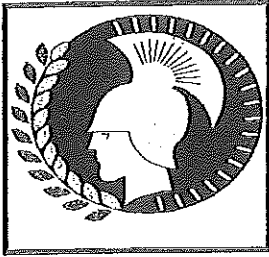
יח צדיק הוא יחנה כי פיהו מריתי
שמעו-נא כל-העמים וראו
מכאבי בתולתי ובחורי הלכו בשבי.

19. I called to my lovers, but they deceived me; my priests and my elders perished in the city, while they sought food to revive their souls.

יט קראתי למאהבי תמה רמוני
כחני וזקני בעיר גועו כי-בקשו אכל
למו וישיבו את-נפשם.

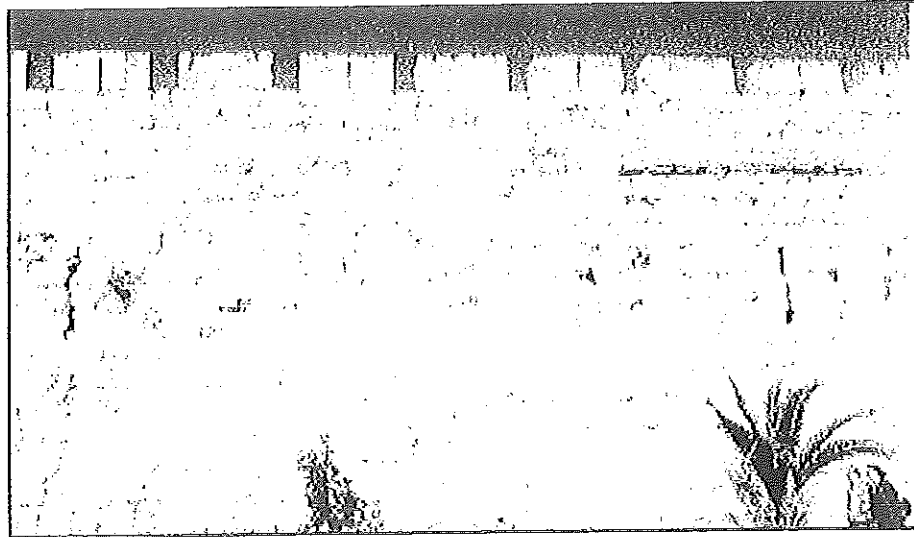
20. Behold, O Lord; for I am in distress; my bowels are troubled; my heart is turned inside me; for I have grievously rebelled; outside the sword bereaves, at home it is like death.

כ ראה יחנה כי-צר-לי מעי חמרמרו
נהפך לבי בקרבי כי מרו מריתי מחנץ
שפלח-חרב בבית כמות.

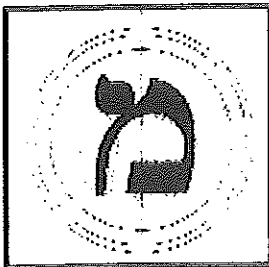


תְּרִבּוֹן הַבַּיִת

The Destruction
of the Temple



Above: A picture of the Herodian Wall that surrounds the Temple's ruins. The Mishnah (Ta'anit 4:6) teaches that we fast on the ninth day of Av because of the tragedies that befell the Jewish people on that day. On that day, it was decreed that our fathers should not enter the Promised Land, the First and Second Temples were destroyed, the town of Bethar was captured, and the city of Jerusalem was ploughed up. Because of these misfortunes, the Mishnah tells us that once Av begins, our joy is reduced: מְשֻׁנָּכֵס אֵב מִמֵּעֲטִין בְּשִׁמְחָה



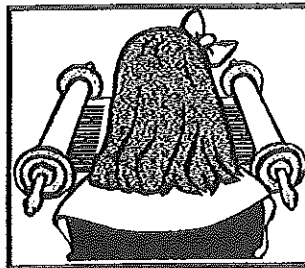
מִדְרָשִׁים

Midrashim

The Merciful Punishment

(Eikhah 1:14) - Verse 1:14 uses the word נִשְׁקָד, an unusual verb that means "bound" or "tied up." But the sages interpret this word as if it were written with a ש (Shin) instead of a ק (Kaph). The word נִשְׁקָד with a shin instead of a sin means "dedicated to good and correct behavior." Therefore, the rabbis say that even when God was punishing the Jews for their senseless hatred (שִׁנְאָת חֲנֻם) in 70 C.E., He made the punishment merciful and survivable. God said, "If I destroy Jerusalem in Tevet (a wintry and cold month that usually falls during December), the Jews will be killed by the cold. But if I destroy Jerusalem in Tammuz (a hot month that usually falls during July), they won't die. They'll have to sleep in the streets, but they won't die. If I punish them in Tevet, there will be no grapes on the vine for them to eat. If I punish them in Tammuz, at least they will have food to eat. If I punish them by sending them into the desert, they will all die. But if I punish them by taking away Jerusalem, at least there will be some food leftover.

* What does this midrash say about God? How would this midrash give someone hope in the face of disaster? Does God act in history and punish those who sin?



רְעִיוֹנוֹת

Ideas

Sacrifices Today

We no longer offer animal sacrifices. In their place, we offer our prayers to God. Read Chancellor Schorsch's essay in the back of this book and read what he has to say about animal sacrifices. Why does he claim that Conservative Jews should not yearn for the return of the sacrificial system? It is important to remember that although we no longer sacrifice goats, sheep, birds, and cows, we still have an obligation to make sacrifices today. Being Jewish means sacrificing some of your free time and some of your money for the community's benefit.

21. They have heard that I sigh; there is none to comfort me; all my enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad that You have done it; You will bring the day that You have announced, and they shall be like me.

כא שָׁמְעוּ כִּי נִאֲנַחְתָּ אֲנִי אֵין מְנַחֵם
לִי כָל-אֹיְבֵי שָׁמְעוּ רַעְתִּי שָׁשׂוּ כִּי אַתָּה
עָשִׂיתָ הַבֹּאֶת יוֹם-קִרְבָּאתָ וַיִּהְיוּ כְמוֹנִי

22. Let all their wickedness come before You; and do to them, as You have done to me for all my transgressions; for my sighs are many, and my heart is faint.

כב תָּבֹא כָל-רָעָתָם לִפְנֵיךָ וְעוֹלָל לָמוֹ
בְּאֲשֶׁר עוֹלָתָה לִי עַל כָּל-פִּשְׁעֵי
כִּי-רַבּוֹת אֲנֻחָתִי וְלִבִּי דָוִי

Eikhah - Chapter 2

מגילת איכה פרק 2

1. How has the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in His anger, and cast down from heaven to the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not His footstool in the day of His anger!

א אֵיכָה יָעִיב בְּאַפּוֹ | אֲדָנִי אֶת-בֵּת-צִיּוֹן
הַשְׁלִיךְ מִשָּׁמַיִם אֶרֶץ תַּפְאֲרֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְלֹא-זָכַר הַדֶּם-רַגְלָיו בַּיּוֹם אַפּוֹ

2. The Lord has swallowed all the habitations of Jacob without pity; He has thrown down in His wrath the strongholds of the daughter of Judah; He has brought them down to the ground; He has profaned the kingdom and its princes.

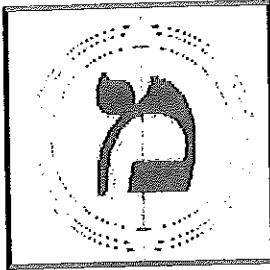
ב בָּלַע אֲדָנִי וְלֹא חָמַל אֶת
כָּל-נְאוֹת יַעֲקֹב חֶרֶם בְּעִבְרָתוֹ מִבְּצָרֵי
בְּתִיחוּדָה הִגִּיעַ לָאָרֶץ חָלָל
מִמְלָכָה וּשְׂרָיָהּ

3. He has cut off in His fierce anger all the horn of Israel; He has drawn back His right hand from before the enemy, and He has burned against Jacob like a flaming fire, which devours its surrounding.

ג גָּדַע בְּחִרְיָאֵף כָּל קֶרֶן יִשְׂרָאֵל
הִשְׁיֵב אֲחוֹר יָמִינוֹ מִפְּנֵי אוֹיֵב וַיִּבְעַר
בִּיָּעַקֵּב כַּאֲשֶׁר לַחֲבֵה אֹכְלָה סָבִיב

4. He has bent His bow like an enemy; He stood with His right hand as an adversary, and He has slain all that were pleasant to the eye in the tent of the daughter of Zion; He has poured out His fury like fire.

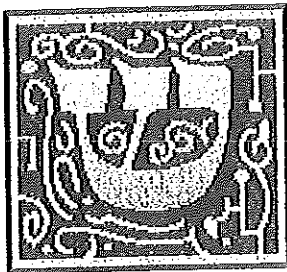
ד דָּלַךְ קִשְׁתּוֹ כְּאוֹיֵב נֹצֵב יָמִינוֹ
כָּצָר וַיִּהְיֶה כָּל מַחֲמַד־עֵינַי
בְּאֹהֶל בֵּת-צִיּוֹן שִׁפָּךְ כַּאֲשֶׁר חֲמָתוֹ



מִדְרָשִׁים
Midrashim

Without Pity

(Eikhah 2:2) - The verse says that God has swallowed all the houses of Jacob (=Israel) without pity. Why does the verse emphasize that God took this action without pity? Is not the destruction of Jerusalem pitiless by definition? One answer is that Megilat Eikhah emphasizes God's lack of pity because even those people who might have deserved pity did not receive any on that day. This is an important idea - sinners often cause the innocent to suffer with them! (Based on the commentary of A. Shteinburger) The sages say that there were 480 synagogues in Jerusalem apart from the Temple itself. Each and every one of these synagogues had two Jewish schools attached to it, one for studying the TaNaKh and one for studying the Mishnah. When God destroyed Jerusalem for its senseless hatred (שְׂנֵאת חַנּוּמָּה), the innocent students in all these schools also died. That is why the verse says that God swallowed Jacob's houses without any pity (Based on Midrash Eikhah 2:4)
* Why would the Midrash blame God for something that the Romans did? Why do you think God allowed these schoolchildren to die? Was it God's will?



שְׁאֵלוֹת
Questions

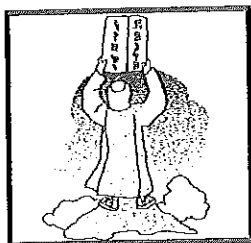
Closer to the Fire

(Eikhah 2:2) - Rabbi

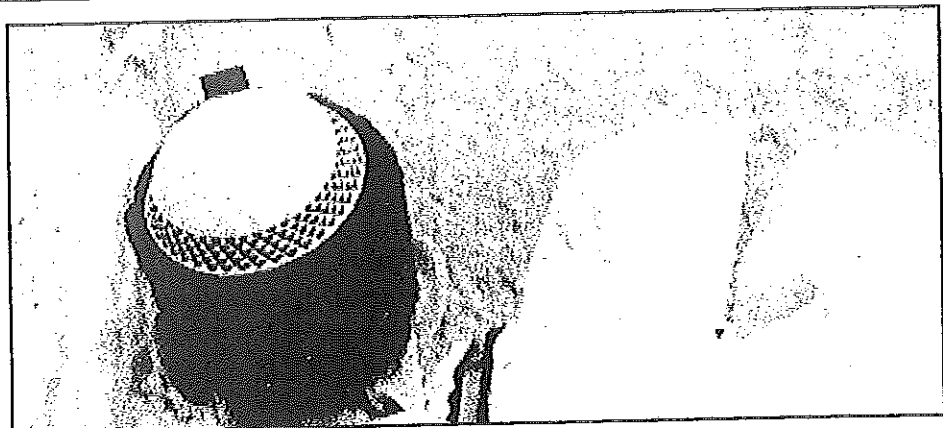
Yohanan knew sixty different interpretations of the words בָּלַע ה' וְלֹא חָמַל (the Lord has swallowed without mercy). Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi only knew twenty-four interpretations of the same verse. It's not that Rabbi Yohanan knew more about the destruction of the Temple than Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi did. After all, Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi lived a whole generation earlier than Rabbi Yohanan and therefore lived closer to the destruction. But in Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi's generation, the students in the academy would begin to talk about the destruction and then suddenly burst out crying, unable to continue talking. In Rabbi Yohanan's era, several decades after the war, the students of the academy were able to talk about what happened. Therefore, Rabbi Yohanan knew more interpretations (Based on Midrash Eikhah 2:4 and the commentary of Rabbi A. Shteinberger).

* We may have a very different situation in modern Jewish society. We are very far from the Temple's destruction - more than ten thousand miles and two thousand years. The Temple was destroyed so long ago that few people think about it today.. Is that bad? Should Jews be thinking more about the Temple these days?

* How has the passage of time affected your thoughts about the Holocaust?



הִלְכוֹת
Jewish Law



How do we know that this picture was not taken on Tisha b'Av morning? What do you see here that is not done on that morning? (See p. 17 for the answer)

5. The Lord was like an enemy; He has swallowed up Israel, He has swallowed up all her palaces; He has destroyed His strongholds, and has increased in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation.

ה הָיָה אֱדֹנָי | כְּאֹיֵב בָּלַע יִשְׂרָאֵל
בָּלַע כָּל-אַרְמוֹתֶיהָ שַׁחַת מִבְצָרֶיהָ
וַיִּרְבֵּ בִּבְתִּי-יְהוּדָה תַּאֲנִיָּה וְאֲנִיָּה:

6. And He has broken down His booth, as if it were a garden; He has destroyed His place of the assembly; the Lord has caused the appointed feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and has spurned in His angry indignation king and priest.

ו וַיִּחַמֵּס כְּגֹן שָׂפוֹ שַׁחַת מוֹעֵדוֹ
שָׂפַח יְהוָה | בְּצִיּוֹן מוֹעֵד וּשְׁבֹת
וַיִּנָּאץ בְּזֹעַם-אָפֹו מֶלֶךְ וְכֹהֵן:

7. The Lord has cast off His altar, He has loathed His sanctuary, He has given to the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; they have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as in the day of an appointed feast.

ז וָנֹחַ אֱדֹנָי | מִזְבְּחוֹ נָאֵר מִקֹּדְשׁוֹ
הִסְגִּיל בְּיַד-אֹיֵב חֹמֹת אַרְמוֹתֶיהָ
קוֹל נָתַן בְּבֵית-יְהוָה כִּינֹם מוֹעֵד:

8. The Lord has determined to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion; He has stretched out a line, He has not restrained His hand from destroying; He has caused the rampart and the wall to lament; they languish together.

ח חָשַׁב יְהוָה | לְהַשְׁחִית חֹמֹת בֵּת-צִיּוֹן
נָטָה קוֹ לֹא-יָשִׁיב יָדוֹ מִבְּלָע
וַיִּאֲבֹל-תֵּל וְחֹמָה יַחְדָּו אֲמָלְלוּ:

9. Her gates are sunk into the ground; He has destroyed and broken her bars; her king and her princes are among the nations; the Torah is no more; her prophets also did not find a vision from the Lord.

ט טָבְעוּ בָאָרֶץ שַׁעֲרֶיהָ אֲבָד וּשְׁבָר
בְּרִיתֶיהָ מִלְכָּה וּשְׂרָיָהּ בְּגוֹיִם אֵין תּוֹרָה
גַּם-נְבִיאֶיהָ לֹא-מָצְאוּ חֲזוֹן מִיְהוָה:

10. The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground, and keep silence; they have cast up dust upon their heads; they have girded themselves with sackcloth; the virgins of Jerusalem bow down their heads to the ground.

י יָשְׁבוּ לָאָרֶץ יְדָמִו וְקָנָו בֵּת-צִיּוֹן הָעֵלִי
עָפַר עַל-רֹאשָׁם חָגְרוּ שָׁקִים הוֹרִידוּ לָאָרֶץ
רִאשֹׁן בְּתוֹלֵת יְרוּשָׁלַם:

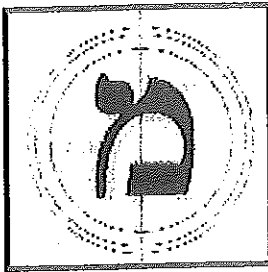
The Difference Between Torah and Wisdom



(Eikhah 2:9) - The verse says "Her (i.e. Jerusalem's) king and her

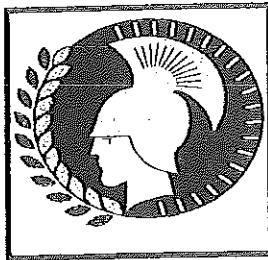
princes are among the nations; *the Torah is no more.*" The verse is saying that the First Temple's destruction was much more than a massive loss of human life. It was also a nearly complete destruction of Jewish learning. When the Egyptian library of Alexandria went up in flames, centuries of scientific knowledge went with it. By the same token, the destruction of both Temples destroyed tremendous amounts of Torah that was contained inside the heads of the murdered victims.

Midrash Eikhah (2:13) says "If someone says to you '*there is wisdom among the non-Jewish nations of the world,*' then believe him. But if someone says to you '*there is Torah among the non-Jewish nations,*' then do not believe him under any circumstances. This midrash teaches us the important difference between wisdom and Torah. All peoples and nations have wisdom that they can contribute to world knowledge. But only one people - the Jews - have the gift of Torah, the moral instruction we need every day.



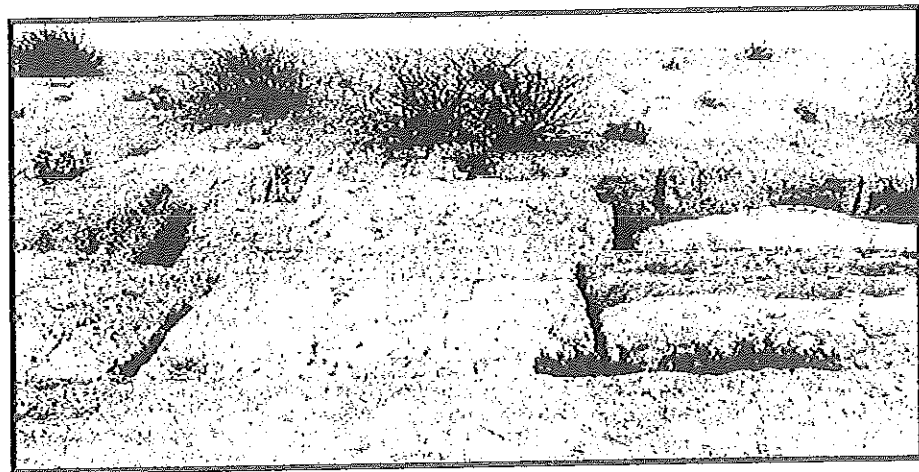
מִדְרָשִׁים

Midrashim



הַרְבֵּן הַבֵּית

The Destruction
of the Temple



A vertical shot of the Kotel. The sturdy lichens that grow in the dry rock are like the Jewish people in that they survive in tough conditions.

Fasting



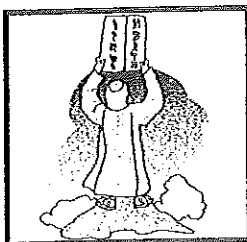
-A fast day (or יוֹם צוֹם) is a day when Jewish law says that one may

not eat or drink. There are three kinds of fasts in the Jewish tradition. One kind is the full 25 hour fast that we do on Tisha b'Av and Yom Kippur. On these two days, one may not eat after dusk of the preceding night. Before these long fasts begin, we eat a special meal called a מַסָּעָה, or "meal that stops (further eating)." The second kind is the shorter fast that we observe on the four public fast days: Tzom Gedalia (3 Tishrei, right after Rosh Hashanah), Tenth of Tevet, (marks the beginning of the Roman attack), Fast of Esther (erev Purim), and the Seventeenth of Tammuz (the beginning of the three weeks before Tisha b'Av.) Last, there are individual fasts that apply to some people but not all, such as the Fast of the First Born on Erev Pesah, a fast that we always cancel by completing a tractate of Talmud.



Some argue that fasting symbolizes the burning of animal fats on the altar.

Others say fasting is a way of increasing our concentration on spiritual matters and drawing us away from the distraction of our physical needs. Which explanation do you like more?



הִלְכוֹת

Jewish Law

11. My eyes are spent with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, because of the destruction of the daughter of my people; because the children and the babies faint in the streets of the city.

יא כלו בדמעות עיני המרמרו מעי
נשפך לארץ כבלי על-שכר בת-עמי
בצטף עולל' ויונק ברחבות קריה:

12. They say to their mothers, Where is grain and wine? When they faint like wounded men in the streets of the city, when their soul was poured out on their mothers' bosom.

יב לאמתם יאמרו איה דגן ויין
בהתצטפם כחלל ברחבות עיר
בהשתפך נפשם אל-חיק אמתם:

13. What shall I take to witness for you? What shall I compare to you, O daughter of Jerusalem? What shall I equal to you, that I may comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion? for your ruin is great like the sea. Who can heal you?

יג מה-אעידך מה אנמה-לך הבה ירושלם
מה אשוה-לך ואנחמך בתולת בת-ציון
כי-גדול כים שכרך מי ירפא-לך:

14. Your prophets have seen vain and foolish visions for you; and they have not exposed your iniquity, to restore your captivity; but have prophesied for you burdens of falsehood and deceit.

יד גביאיד חזו לך שוא ותפל ולא-גילו
על-צונך להשיב שביתך
ויחזו לך משאות שוא ומדוחים:

15. All who pass by clap their hands at you; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth?

טו ספקו עליך כפים כל-עברי דרך
שרקו וינעו ראשם על-בת ירושלם הנאת
העיר שיאמרו כלילת יפי משוש
לכל-הארץ:

16. All your enemies have opened their mouth against you; they hiss and gnash the teeth; they say, We have swallowed her up; certainly this is the day that we looked for; we have found it, we have seen it.

טז פצו עליך פיהם כל-אויבך
שרקו ויחרקו-שן אמרו בלענו אך נה
היום שקויגהו מצאנו ראינו:

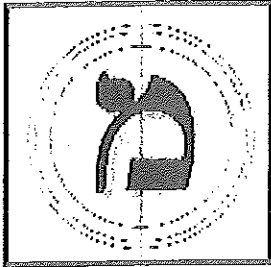
The Eight Kinds of Tears ☆

(Eikhah 2:11) - Verse 2:11 says *my eyes are spent with tears*. The midrash on Eikhah focuses on the word tears in the plural and teaches that there are eight kinds of tears that humans have, four good and four bad. The good tears are: Onion tears (from peeling an onion), mustard tears (from eating spicy foods like mustard, salsa, or horseradish), medical tears (such as those from eyedrops), and the tears of laughter, which is considered to be the best kind of all.

The bad tears are: Smoke tears (from being exposed to smoke), sadness tears (from emotional pain), toilet tears (from intestinal trouble or other medical problems), and black tears, which are the worst kind of all. What are black tears? They are the tears that a mother or father sheds for a child who has died very young, before even a single grey hair could appear.

Midrash Eikhah tells the story of a man whose son died young as a result of the Roman blockade of Jerusalem. The man cried night after night until his liver fell out of his body. He then said, "What has all this crying done for me?" The story's point is that the people of Jerusalem were so miserable during the Roman invasion that no amount of crying could make them feel better.

* Can you think of other tears that need their own categories? Is the midrash perhaps inaccurate when it labels some tears as bad? Isn't it healthy to cry?



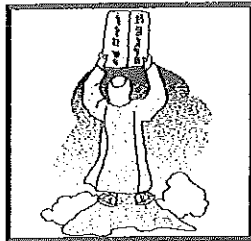
מדרישים
Midrashim

The אסורים (Prohibitions) of Tisha b'Av ☆

There are several things that one definitely must not do on Tisha b'Av, and they are the same five things that are not allowed on Yom Kippur:

(1) No eating or drinking, (2) No bathing or showering, (3) No perfumes or cosmetics, (4) No wearing of leather shoes, and (5) no sexual relations. In addition, you should not joke around or be disruptive to the respectful nature of the day.

Of course, your health is more important than Tisha b'Av! If a doctor tells you not to fast or if you even suspect that fasting might be dangerous for you, than you *must* eat and drink. (Not *may*, but *must*.)



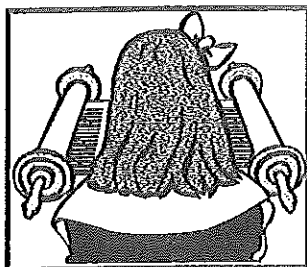
הלכות
Jewish Law

The Dimensions of the Temple ☆

How big was the Second Temple? The Temple Mount's measurements were 750 feet by 750 feet. To get the total area, we multiply the length and the width:

$750 \times 750 = 562,500$, or more than half a million square feet! (By the way, it's also very close to the number of minutes in an entire year!) So the Temple Mount covered an area equal to approximately 300 average houses!

✎ The Temple may have been large, but it did not survive as an institution. We learned that buildings do not guarantee faithfulness. We could build a Temple the size of the Atlantic Ocean, but without dedicated Jews, such a structure would be worthless. Today's Temple is the Jewish people itself, and each one of us is a brick.



רעיונות
Ideas

17. The Lord has done that which He had determined; He has fulfilled His word that He had commanded in the days of old; He has thrown down without pity; and He has caused your enemy to rejoice over you, He has raised up the horn of your adversaries.

יז עֲשֵׂה יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר זָמַם בַּעֲצֵה אֲמָרְתוֹ
אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה מִימֵי-קֶדֶם חֶסֶם וְלֹא חַמֵּל
וַיִּשְׂמַח עָלֶיךָ אוֹיֵב הָרִים קֶרֶן צְרִיף:

18. Their heart cried to the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night; give Yourself no rest; let not the apple of Your eye cease.

יח צִעַק לִבָּם אֶל-אֲדֹנָי חוֹמַת בֵּת-צִיּוֹן
הוֹלִידִי כַנְחַל דְּמָעָה יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה אֶל-תִּתְּנִי
פִּיגֹל לְךָ אֶל-תִּדְּם בֵּת-עֵינֶיךָ:

19. Arise, cry out in the night; in the beginning of the watches pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord; lift up your hands toward Him for the life of your young children, who faint for hunger at the head of every street.

יט קוּמִי רִנֵּי בַלֵּילָה
לִרְאֹשׁ אֲשֶׁמְרוֹת שְׁפָכִי כַמַּיִם לִבֶּךָ נִכַח
פָּנֵי אֲדֹנָי שְׂאֵי אֵלָיו כַּפְּיךָ עַל-נַפְשִׁי
עוֹלָלֶיךָ הַצֵּטוּפִים בְּרָעַב בְּרָאשׁ כָּל-חוּצוֹת:

20. Behold, O Lord, and consider to whom You have done this. Shall the women eat their fruit, their cherished babies? Shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?

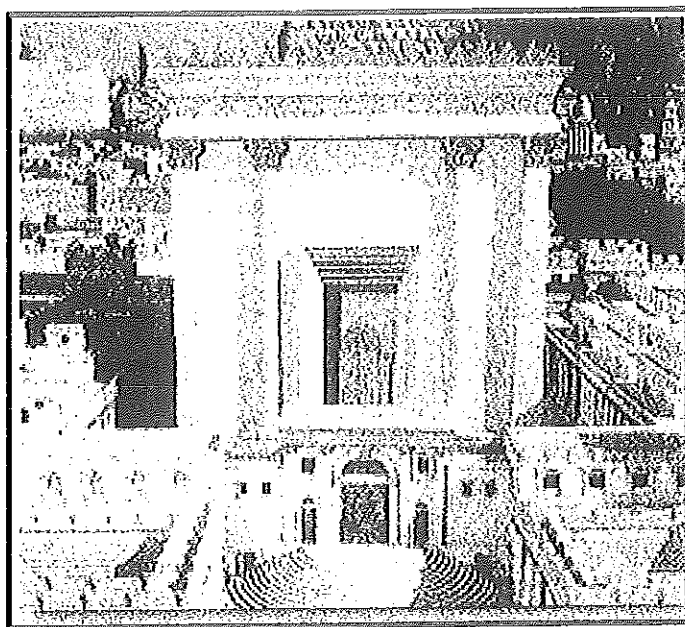
כ רְאֵה יְהוָה וְהִטֵּטָה לִמִּי עוֹלָלָת כֶּהָ
אִם-תֹּאכְלֶנָּה נָשִׁים פְּרִיָם עַלְלֵי טַפִּימִם
אִם-יִהְיֶה בַמִּקְדָּשׁ אֲדֹנָי כַּהֵן וְנָבִיא:

21. The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets; my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword; You have slain them in the day of Your anger; You have slaughtered without mercy.

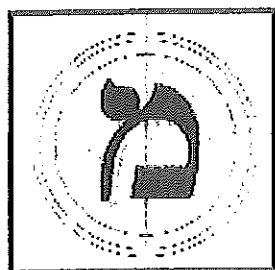
כא שָׁכְבוּ לָאָרֶץ חוּצוֹת נָעַר וְזָקֵן
בְּתוֹלָתִי וּבַחוּרֵי נָפְלוּ בַּחֶרֶב הִרְגָהּ
בַּיּוֹם אַפָּךְ טָבַחְתָּ לֹא חַמֵּלְתָּ:

22. You have called as in the day of an appointed feast my terrors in every side, so that in the day of the Lord's anger none escaped nor remained; my enemy has consumed those whom I have cherished and brought up.

כב תִּקְרָא כְיוֹם מוֹעֵד מִגּוּרֵי מַסְבִּיב
וְלֹא הָיָה בַיּוֹם אֶחָד-יִהְיֶה פָּלִיט וְשָׂרִיד
אֲשֶׁר-טַפַּחְתִּי וּרְבִיתִי אֵיבִי כָלָם:



This is a model of the Second Temple and the Old City as it may have appeared before the Temple's destruction in 70 C.E.. The model is a popular tourist attraction in Jerusalem on the south end of town, across the street from the Kanyon Malha.

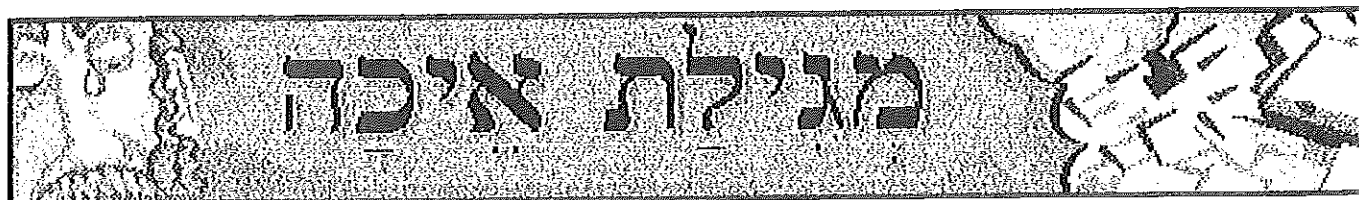


מדרשים
Midrashim

Tziyon vs. Tziyun

(Eikhah 2:18) - The verse says "Their heart cried to the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion..." The Hebrew word for Zion is צִיּוֹן. This word is very similar to another word, צִיּוֹן, which means "difference." Because these two words are so similar, the rabbis teach that the people of Tziyon are supposed to be different from all other people. How? Midrash Eikhah (2:17) gives three examples: (1) Circumcision (2) The law against shaving one's head or the corners of one's beard, and (3) The wearing of tzitzit. Today, many Jewish women in the Conservative Movement distinguish themselves with the very same kippot, tefillin, and talliyot that men wear. What are some other ways in which Jewish women can set themselves apart?

* Perhaps the word Tziyon also can remind us of the word tzniyut (צניעות), which means modesty. Jews, both men and women, are commanded to dress in a modest and unprovocative manner. One should not wear clothes for the purpose of revealing or showing off one's body. Our clothes are not meant to be an attention-getting spectacle. Based on this principle, what kinds of popular clothes do you think Jews should avoid wearing? Why do our clothes matter? First of all, clothes were God's way of showing mercy in the Garden of Eden. Before eating of the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve were naked but did not care or feel at all bashful about their bodies. After eating the fruit, they suddenly realized that they were naked, and God sewed them fig leaves to cover and comfort them. Since God gave us clothes for the purpose of modesty in the first place, it makes no sense to use God's gift for immodest purposes. Second, the Torah describes a number of places in which clothes are used for holiness. For instance, the Torah commands the Kohanim and the Kohen Gadol to wear special clothes during their worship service at the altar. In a way, these rules apply to all of us today. There is a Jewish way to dress, just as there is a Jewish way to eat, talk, do business, and rest.



Eikhah - Chapter 3

מגילת איכה פרק ג

1. I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath.

2. He has led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light.

3. Surely He has turned against me; He turns His hand against me all day long.

4. He has made my flesh and my skin waste away; He has broken my bones.

5. He has built against me, and surrounded me with bitterness and hardship.

6. He has set me in dark places, like the long ago dead.

7. He has walled me around, so that I cannot get out; He has made my chain heavy.

8. Also when I cry and shout, He shuts out my prayer.

9. He has enclosed my ways with hewn stone, He has made my paths crooked.

10. He is to me like a bear lying in wait, and like a lion in secret places.

11. He has turned aside my ways, and pulled me in pieces; He has made me desolate.

12. He has bent His bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow.

13. He has caused the arrows of His quiver to enter into my insides.

14. I have become a derision to all my people; and their song all day long.

15. He has filled me with bitterness, He has sated me with wormwood.

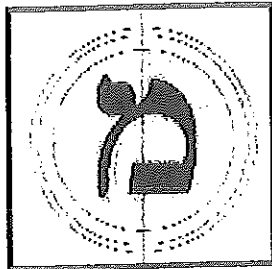
א אני הגבר ראה עני בשבט עברתו:
ב אותי נהג וילך תשך ולא-אור:
ג אך כי ישב יתפך ידו כל-היום:

ד בלה בשרי ועורי שבר עצמותי:
ה בגה עלי וישף ראש ותלאה:
ו במחשכים הושיבני כמתני עולם:

ז גדר בעדני ולא אצא הקביר נחשתני:
ח גם כי אזעק ואשוע שתם תפלתני:
ט גדר דרכי בגזית נתיבתני ענה:

י דב ארב הוא לי ארי במסתרים:
יא דרכי סורר ויפשחני שמיני שמים:
יב דרך קשתו ויאביבני כמטרא לתין:

יג הביא בכליותי בני אשפתו:
יד הייתי שחל לכל-עמי נגינתם כל-היום:
טו השביעני במרורים הרוני לענה:

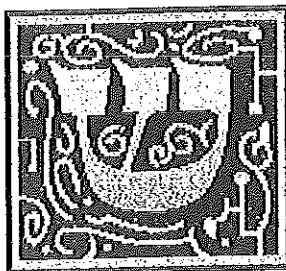


מִדְרָשִׁים
Midrashim

The Third Chapter

The third chapter of Eikhah is like the other four in that it is written as an alphabetic acrostic - the first three verses begin with the letter *alef*, the next three begin with the letter *bet*, the next three begin with *gimel*, etc. However, the third chapter is chanted differently than the other chapters. Listen carefully for its distinct melody. Verse 3:8 says "Also when I cry and shout, He shuts out my prayer." Midrash Eikhah teaches that this verse is talking about the importance of תְּפִלָּה בְּצִבּוֹר, or prayer in a **minyan**.

When a person prays with a minyan, his or her prayers are more likely to be accepted. Why? Rabbi Aha says that anyone who prays with a minyan is like a poor man who makes a small contribution to a king's crown. Even though the poor man gives a very small amount of gold, the king still gladly accepts whatever he brings because when all the poor people bring their contributions, the total is very large. According to Rabbi Aha, it is the same with people who pray in a minyan. Even though each one of us may have only a small prayer, the total sum of our prayers in all our minyanim worldwide is enormous. This is especially true at Ramah, where hundreds of people offer their small prayers to God every single day. The purpose of a minyan is to act like a magnifying glass for all of our prayers. Our tefilot enter the prism of minyan and exit much stronger. I have compared minyan to a magnifying glass. Think up another image that explains what minyan does for our prayers.

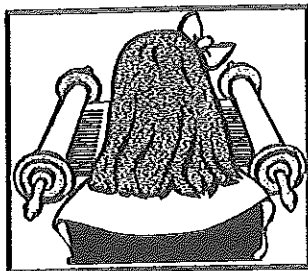


שְׂאֵלוֹת
Questions

Sometimes, They Laugh at Us ☆

(Eikhah 3:14) - The verse says that the captors of Jerusalem laughed at the city's residents. This verse is talking about the nations of the world who laugh at us because of our customs and traditions.

- * Have you ever made fun of another ethnicity, race, or minority group? Why did you do it, and what can you do to stop teasing others?
- * What would you do if a non-Jew started laughing at you or teasing you because you observed a tradition? What if that person were Jewish?
- * What is racism? What does it mean to be racist?



רְעִיּוֹנוֹת
Ideas

Things that Happened on the Ninth of Av

☆ The main reason we observe Tisha b'Av is to remember the destruction of our two Holy Temples. But this saddest day has also become a day to remember all the suffering that Jews have endured at the hands of evil people and rulers: The expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, the beginning of World War I in 1914, which led to World War II and the Holocaust.

☞ The destruction of the Temples, the Spanish Expulsion, and the Holocaust all have something in common: all three are events that drastically changed the course of Judaism's history. Explain why this is so for each case. How would history have been different had these tragedies not occurred?

16. He has also broken my teeth with gravel stones, He has covered me with ashes.

17. And you have removed my soul far away from peace; I have forgotten prosperity.

18. And I said, My strength and my hope are perished from the Lord;

19. Remembering my affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall.

20. My soul remembers them, and is bowed down inside me.

21. This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.

22. The grace of the Lord has not ceased, and His compassion does not fail.

23. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.

24. The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore will I hope in Him.

25. The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul that seeks Him.

26. It is good that a man should quietly hope for the salvation of the Lord.

27. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

28. Let him sit alone and in silence, because he has taken it upon him.

29. Let him put his mouth in the dust; there may yet be hope.

30. Let him offer his cheek to him who strikes him; let him take his fill of insults.

טז ויגדס בחצץ שני חכפישני באפר:

יז ותזנח משלום נפשי נשיתי טובה:

יח ואמר אבד נצחתי ותתלתי מיהוה:

יט זכר-ענני ומרדני לענה ור'אש:

כ זכור תזכור ותשוח עלי נפשי:

כא זאת אשיב אל-לבי על-כן אותיל:

כב חסדי יהוה כי לא-תמנו כי לא-כלו רחמיו:

כג חדשים לבקרים רבה אמונתך:

כד חלקי יהוה אמה נפשי על-כן אותיל לו:

כה טוב יהוה לקנו לנפש תדרשנה:

כו טוב ויחיל ודומם לתשועת יהוה:

כז טוב לגבר כיישא על בנעוריו:

כח ישב בדל וידים כי נטל עליה:

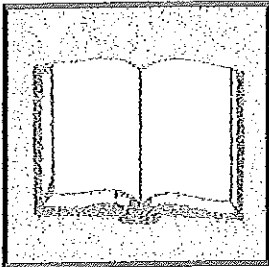
כט יתן בעפר פיהו אולי יש תקוה:

ל יתן למכהו לחי ישבע בחרפה:

The Sad Death of Rabbi Hanina's Son

(Eikhah 3:16) - This verse says "He (God) has also broken my teeth with gravel stones, he has covered me with ashes." Midrash Eikhah tells the story of Rabbi Hanina's son, who caused his father a great deal of pain:

"Rabbi Hanina's son joined a gang of bandits but ended up revealing their hiding place. So his fellow bandits killed him and filled his mouth with ashes and gravel. After three days, some Jews found the young man's body. They put him on a stretcher of reeds and took him to Rabbi Hanina. They asked Rabbi Hanina for permission to deliver a eulogy, a speech in praise of the dead. Rabbi Hanina refused them permission because he didn't think his son deserved a eulogy. His mother also didn't think he deserved a eulogy and said, "A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her who bore him." (Mishlei 17:25). This story describes how bitter and sad the people of Jerusalem were when the Temple was destroyed. Normally, parents love their children unconditionally, even if they stray from the path of goodness. But the people of Jerusalem were so hurt and so damaged that they could not even express love for their own children.



ספורים

Stories

They Died in a Sea of Hate

The Crusades were

organized efforts on the part of European monarchs and Popes to recapture Jerusalem from the hands of the Muslims. From 1095 to 1291, volunteers from all over Europe marched through Europe toward Jerusalem. The soldiers, mostly illiterate peasants, were very passionate about their goal, and they frequently murdered Jews in their path. Thousands of Jews died at their hands. Ironically, all of this happened during the greatest period in Jewish scholarship. Great sages like Rashi survived the barbarity of the Crusades, but many others, such as Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg, perished. How do we keep the memory of the suffering alive without poisoning ourselves with our own hatred and vengeance? How do we differentiate between a Catholic knight or soldier who killed many Jews on his way to Jerusalem and a pious modern Catholic who would never dream of doing such a horrible thing? Today, the Catholic Church has very friendly relations with Jews. But what do we do about religious fanatics who threaten us? What do we do with our own fanatics who harm Jewish unity with their hatred? Read the story of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza on pp. i-ii of the appendix and answer the questions below it. What does this story teach us about Judaism and senseless hatred?



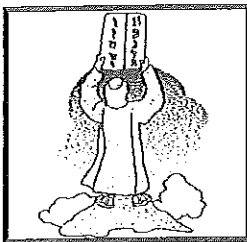
מסעי הצלב

The Crusades

The Day After



Although the fasts of Tisha b'Av and Yom Kippur are the same length, they are different in the way they end. After Yom Kippur, our mood is instantly celebratory and joyful. Our sins are forgiven, we have a clean slate, and we immediately prepare for Sukkot. After Tisha b'Av, however, the change starts after minhah, when our camp activities look toward the hope of God's redemption. After maariv, we will not dance or celebrate or wish each other a good new year. Our celebration can wait until the 15th of Av, a day when many in Jerusalem would get married. For the next seven weeks in shul, we will read Haftarat of Consolation, passages in which the prophets comfort us. Then, the joy of Rosh Hashanah is around the corner.



הלכות

Jewish Law

31. For the Lord will not cast off for ever;
32. But though He cause grief, yet will He have
compassion according to the abundance of His
grace.
33. For He does not afflict willingly nor grieve
the children of men.

לא כי לא יזנח לעולם אדני:
לב כי אמ-הוֹגֶה ורחם רַב־חֶסֶד [חֶסֶדָיו].
לג כי לא עָנָה מִלְּפִי ויָגַה בְּנִי-אִישׁ.

34. To crush under His feet all the prisoners of
the earth,
35. To turn aside the right of a man before the
face of the most High,
36. To subvert a man in his cause, the Lord
approves not.

לד לִדְכָּא תַחַת רַגְלָיו כָּל אֲסִירֵי אֶרֶץ:
לה לַחֲטוֹת מִשְׁפָּט-גֹּבֵר נִגְדַּת פָּנָי עֲלִיוֹן.
לו לַעֲוֹת אָדָם בְּרִיבוֹ אֲדֹנִי לֹא רָאָה.

37. Who is he who says, and it comes to pass,
when the Lord commands it not?
38. Do not both evil and good come out of the
mouth of the most High?
39. Why then does a living man complain, a
man, about the punishment of his sins?

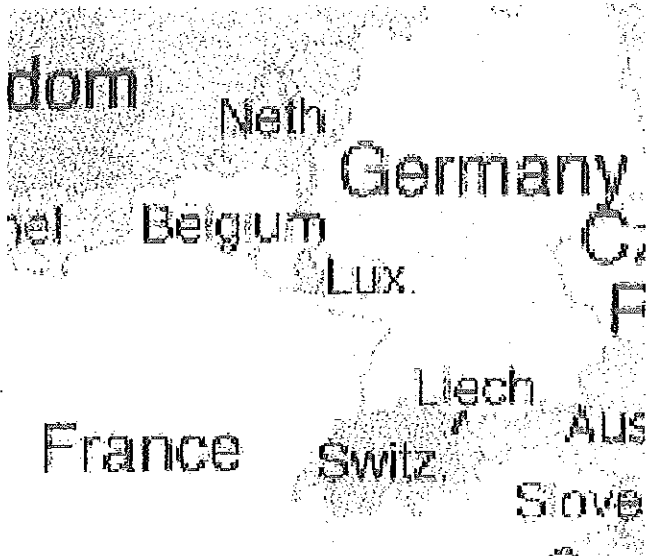
לז מִי נָחָא אָמַר וְתָהִי אֲדֹנִי לֹא צִוָּה.
לח מִפִּי עֲלִיוֹן לֹא תֵצֵא הַרְעוֹת וְהַטּוֹב.
לט מִה־יִּתְאוּנוֹן אָדָם חַי גֹּבֵר חֲטָאֵיו.

40. Let us search and try our ways, and turn
back to the Lord.
41. Let us lift up our heart with our hands to
God in the heavens.
42. We have transgressed and have rebelled;
You have not pardoned.

מ נַחֲפָשָׁה דְּרַבֵּינוּ וְנַחֲקָרָה וְנִשְׁוֹבָה צַדִּיקֵינוּ.
מא נִשְׂא לִבֵּנוּ אֶל-כַּפֵּימָם אֶל-אֵל בְּשָׁמַיִם.
מב נַחֲנוּ פִשְׁעֵנוּ וּמָרִינוּ אֹתָהּ לֹא סָלַחְתָּ.

43. You have covered with anger, and pursued
us; You have slain, You have not pitied.
44. You have covered yourself with a cloud, so
that our prayer should not pass through.
45. You have made us offscouring and refuse in
the midst of the people.

מג סָכַחְתָּ בָּאָף וַתִּרְדַּפֵּנוּ חֲרָגָתָ לֹא חֲמַלְתָּ.
מד סָכַחְתָּ בְּעָנָן לְךָ מִצְבּוֹר תַּפְלָה.
מה סָחִי וּמֵאֵס תְּשִׁימֵנוּ בְּקֶרֶב הָעַמִּים.

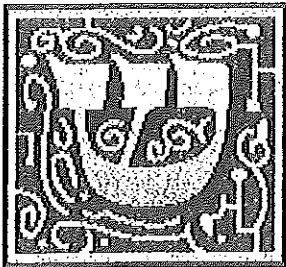


Above: This is the area of the world where the Crusaders killed most of their Jewish victims. Many of the dead were killed in cities of Germany's Rhine River Valley.

מסעי הצלב The Crusades

An Eyewitness to the Crusades

This is an eyewitness description of the slaughter that took place in Cologne and other Rhineland communities that lay in the path of the Crusaders. Many of the piyyutim we sing on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (like U'netaneh Tokef) were written as a response to the suffering of the Jews during the Crusades. "At the beginning of summer in the same year in which Peter, and Gottschalk, after collecting an army, had set out, there assembled in like fashion a large and innumerable host of Christians from diverse kingdoms and lands; namely, from the realms of France, England, Flanders, and Lorraine. . . they rose in a spirit of cruelty against the Jewish people scattered throughout these cities and slaughtered them without mercy, especially in the Kingdom of Lorraine, asserting it to be the beginning of their expedition and their duty against the enemies of the Christian faith. This slaughter of Jews was done first by citizens of Cologne. These suddenly fell upon a small band of Jews and severely wounded and killed many; they destroyed the houses and synagogues of the Jews and divided among themselves a very large amount of money. When the Jews saw this cruelty, about two hundred in the silence of the night began flight by boat to Neuss. The pilgrims and crusaders discovered them, and after taking away all their possessions, inflicted on them similar slaughter, leaving not even one alive... (Source: August C. Krey, The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants, (Princeton: 1921), 54-56)



שאלות Questions

Jews and Christians Today

The Crusades of the past force us to ask difficult questions today. Clearly, no Jew should hold a grudge against Christians for things that happened fifty, one hundred, or one thousand years ago. In fact, the Torah specifically says that children should not be punished for the deeds of their parents. If we say that Christians or Christianity are evil, then we commit the same sin that was committed against us - prejudice and blind hatred.

But how do we deal with a history that is so painful? What is the best way to remember suffering without becoming an angry, vengeful people? Remember that there is a mitzvah in the Torah that forbids us to take revenge against those who have hurt us. Recently, the Catholic Church apologized for all crimes that were committed in its name over the centuries. This is an important step in Jewish-Christian relations, and it points to a better future. If you were a leader in a Jewish community, what steps would you take to form friendly relations with other religions in your area?

46. All our enemies have opened their mouths against us.

47. Fear and the pit have come upon us, desolation and destruction.

48. My eye runs down with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people.

49. My eye trickles down, and ceases not, without any intermission,

50. Till the Lord looks down, and beholds from heaven.

51. My eye affects my heart because of all the daughters of my city.

52. They hunt me like a bird, those who hate me without cause.

53. They have cut off my life in the pit, and have cast stones upon me.

54. Waters flowed over my head; then I said, I am cut off.

55. I called upon Your name, O Lord, from the lowest pit.

56. You have heard my voice; hide not Your ear at my sighing, at my cry.

57. You drew near in the day that I called upon You; You said, Fear not.

58. O Lord, You have pleaded the causes of my soul; You have redeemed my life.

59. O Lord, You have seen my wrong; judge You my cause.

60. You have seen all their vengeance and all their schemes against me.

מו פָּצוּ עֲלֵינוּ פִּיָּהֶם כָּל־אֹיְבֵינוּ
מו פָּחַד וּפִחַת תָּיָה לָנוּ הַשָּׂאת וְהַשְׁכֵּר:
מח פִּלְגִי־מַיִם תִּכְרַד עֵינִי עַל־שָׂכָר בֵּת־עַמִּי:

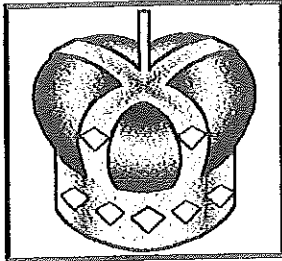
מט עֵינִי נִגְרָה וְלֹא תִדְמָה מֵאֵין הַפְּגוֹת:
נ עַד־יִשְׁקֶיף וְיֵרָא יְהוָה מִשָּׁמַיִם:
נא עֵינִי עוֹלֶלֶה לְנַפְשִׁי מִכָּל בָּנוֹת עִירִי:

נב אֲדָר צְדוֹנִי כַּצֹּפֹר אֹיְבֵי תָנִים:
נג צָמְתוּ בְּבוֹר חַיִּי וַיִּדּוּ־אָבֹן בִּי:
נד צְפוּ־מַיִם עַל־רֹאשִׁי אֲמַרְתִּי נִגְזַרְתִּי:

נה קִרְאתִי שְׁמֶךָ יְהוָה מִבוֹר תַּחְתִּיּוֹת:
נו קוֹלִי שָׁמַעַתְּ אֶל־תַּעֲלִים אֲזוּנֶךָ לִרְוַחְתִּי לְשׁוֹעֲתִי
נז קִרְבְּתָהּ בַּיּוֹם אֶקְרָאָךְ אֲמַרְתָּ אֶל־תִּירָא:

נח רִבֵּת אֲדֹנָי רִיבִי נִפְשִׁי גָאֲלָתָה חַיִּי:
נט רִאֲיָתָה יְהוָה עֲוֹנֹתִי שְׁפֹטָה מִשְׁפָּטִי:
ס רִאֲיָתָה כָּל־נִקְמָתָם כָּל־מַחֲשַׁבְתָּם לִי:

The Spanish Expulsion: 1492 ☆



גירוש ספרד

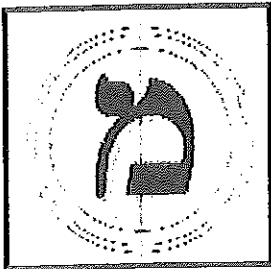
The Spanish
Expulsion

We all learn in school "Columbus sailed the ocean blue in fourteen hundred and ninety-two." But the year 1492 is also the year that King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain expelled the Jews from their kingdom. The King and Queen united their Catholic territories after a war with Muslim armies to the south, and Jews were seen as friendly to Muslims. The Jews were given two choices: Convert or leave. One hundred thousand Jews converted, but most left the country. Some stayed but practiced Judaism in secret.

Wave after wave of Spanish Jews, moved across the continent. They ended up in places like Italy, Morocco, Algeria, Turkey, and Syria, and their descendants became what we call today Sephardic Jews (ספרדי means Spain in Hebrew.) Others joined their central and northern European brethren in Germany and Poland. The expulsion destroyed an ancient Spanish-Jewish culture and changed the course of Jewish history forever, and it all began on Tisha b'Av in 1492.

Prayer, Mikveh, Repentance, Ocean

Eikhah 3:44) - In this verse, Yirmiyahu cries out to God: "You have covered yourself with a cloud, so that our prayer should not pass through." Midrash Eikhah (3:60) explains that prayer does not always work, and that what God wanted on that day was not prayer (tefilah) but rather repentance (teshuvah).



מדרשים

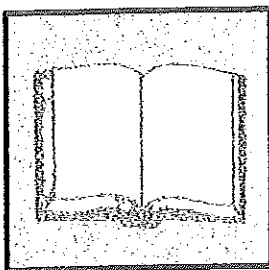
Midrashim

The midrash makes its point with an analogy: Prayer is like a mikveh building. If the mikveh building is open, then one can be purified in it. But if the building is locked, then one has to wait for the *shamash* to open the door. By the same token, the gates of prayer are sometimes open and sometimes locked. (That is, sometimes we get what we pray for, and sometimes, we don't.) When they are open, then prayer is a wonderful way of getting close to God. But when the gates are closed, all the prayer in the world will not help. Repentance, however, is like the ocean. Just as the ocean is always open for anyone to go for a swim, so too repentance is always available for those who are sincerely sorry. When we find the gates of prayer locked, we shouldn't worry, because the gates of repentance are open twenty-four hours a day.

The Unfair Emperor

(Eikhah 3:60) - The verse says "O Lord, you have seen my wrong; judge you my cause. You have seen all their vengeance and all their schemes against me." According to Midrash Eikhah (3:200), the Roman Emperor Hadrian was a very unfair man. His rulings made no sense and contradicted each other, and he often put the Jews in a lose-lose situation. Once, a Jew passed by Hadrian and said, "Hello, how are you?" The Emperor was furious and said, "Who are you?" - "I am a Jew," the man answered. - "How dare a Jew address the Emperor?! Off with his head!" The man was executed. Shortly afterwards, another Jew walked by the Emperor and did not say a word, for he had seen what had happened to his friend. This time, Hadrian said, "What is your name?" The Jew answered, "I am a Jew." The Emperor bellowed, "Who dares walk by the Emperor in silence?! Off with his head!" It is because of this incident that Yirmiyahu the Prophet said, "O Lord, you have seen my wrong...you have seen all their schemes against me!"

* What does this midrash teach us about fairness in life? Is life always fair?



ספורים

Stories

61. You have heard their insult, O Lord, and all their schemes against me.
62. The lips of those who rose up against me, and their muttering against me all day long.
63. Behold their sitting down, and their rising up; I am their music.

טא שְׁמַעַתָּהּ חֲרָפָתָם יְהוָה כָּל־מַחֲשַׁבְתָּם עָלַי:
סב שִׁפְתֵי קָמִי וְהִגִּיזוּם עָלַי כָּל־הַיּוֹם:
סג שִׁבְתָּם וְקִימָתָם הִבִּיטָה אֲנִי מִנְּגִינָתָם:

64. Render to them a recompense, O Lord, according to the work of their hands.
65. Give them sorrow of heart, Your curse be on them.
66. Pursue and destroy them in anger from under the heavens of the Lord.

סד תָּשִׁיב לָהֶם גְּמוּלָה יְהוָה כַּמַּעֲשֶׂה יְדֵיהֶם:
סה תִּתֵּן לָהֶם מְגִנַּת־לֵב תִּאָּלְתֵּךְ לָהֶם:
סו תִּרְדֹּף בְּאַף וְתַשְׁמִידֵם מִתַּחַת שָׁמַיִם יְהוָה:

Eikhah - Chapter 4

1. How has the gold become dim! how has the finest gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary lie scattered at the head of every street.

2. The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they considered as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!

3. Even the jackals give the breast, they suckle their young ones; but the daughter of my people has become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness.

4. The tongue of the sucking child cleaves to the roof of his mouth for thirst; the young children ask for bread, and no man gives it to them.

5. Those who fed delicately are desolate in the streets; those who were brought up in purple embrace dunghills.

מגילת איכה פרק ד

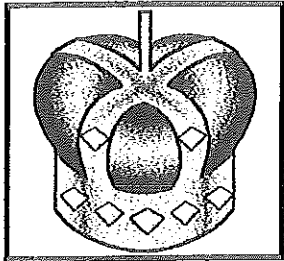
א אֵיכָה יוֹעַם זָהָב יִשָּׁנָא חֲכָתָם הַטָּהוֹב
תִּשְׁתַּפְּכֶנָּה אֲבָנֵי־קֹדֶשׁ בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל־חוֹצוֹת:

ב בְּנֵי הַמַּסְלָאִים בָּפוּן אֵיכָה נִחְשְׁבוּ
צִיּוֹן הַיְקָרִים לַנְּבִלֵי־חָרָשׁ מַעֲשֶׂה יְדֵי יוֹצֵר:

ג גַּם־תַּנִּים הִינִיקוּ גּוֹרֵיהֶן בַּת־עַמִּי
תִּלְצוּ שָׂדֶה לֹא־זֹר בִּיעֲנִים בַּמִּדְבָּר:

ד דִּבֶּק לָשׁוֹן יוֹגֵק בְּצִמָּא עוֹלָלִים שְׂאֵלוּ
אֶל־חֶפֶז לָחֶם פֶּחַשׁ אֵין לָהֶם:

ה הָאֲכָלִים לַמַּעֲדָנִים נִשְׁמוּ בַחוֹצוֹת
הָאֲמָנִים עָלֵי תוֹלַע חֲבָקוּ אֲשַׁפְּתוֹת:

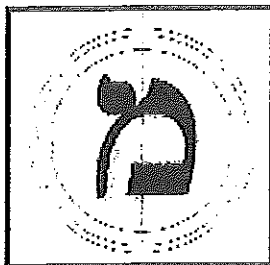


גרוש ספרד

The Spanish
Expulsion



Above: King Ferdinand V of Spain, ruled over the Spanish kingdom of Castille from 1474 to 1502. When he married his cousin Queen Isabella I of Aragon in 1469, the two kingdoms united and pursued a policy of religious persecution. The King and Queen were known as Los Reyes Católicos (the Catholic monarchs) because of their religious zeal. Their oppression of Spanish Jews climaxed with a mass expulsion on Tisha b'Av in 1492. 150,000 Jews were forced to leave and settled all over Southern Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East.



מדרשים

Midrashim

The People of Jerusalem



(Eikhah 4:2) - The verse says that the b'nai Tziyon were precious. In this sentence the words "b'nai Tziyon" refers to the residents of Yerushalayim, or Jerusalem.. Why were the citizens of Yerushalayim so precious? The very fact that they live in Yerushalayim, the holiest place on Earth and most important city in Israel, makes them more valuable in a sense. Midrash Eikhah (4:2) gives some examples of how this fact affected marriages: "If a villager wanted to marry a woman from Yerushalayim, he had to give a dowry equivalent to his weight in gold. Likewise, if a man from Yerushalayim wanted to marry a villager woman, her family would give him a dowry equivalent to his weight in gold."

In other words, Yerushalayim has a way of rubbing off on people and giving them some of its splendor. Make an effort to meet people at camp who live in Yerushalayim or who visit the city often. What do they say about the city? Ask them why it's so special.

6. For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown in a moment, and no hands were laid upon her.

ו ויגדל עון בת-עמי מחטאת סדום
ההפוכה כמו-רגע ולא-תלו בה ידים:

7. Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire;

ז וכו גזיריה משלג צהו מחלב
אדמו לצם מפנינים ספיר גזרתם:

8. Now their visage is blacker than coal; they are not recognized in the streets; their skin is shrivelled upon their bones; it is withered, it has become like a stick.

ח חשך משחור תאכלם לא נכרו בחוצות
צפר עורם על-עצמם יבש היה כעץ:

9. Those who were slain with the sword are better than those who are slain with hunger; for these pine away, stricken by want of the fruits of the field.

ט טובים היו חללי-חרב מחללי רעב
שתם יזובו מדקרים מתנובת שדי:

10. The hands of compassionate women have boiled their own children; they were their food in the destruction of the daughter of my people.

י ידי נשים רחמניות בשלו ילדיהן
היו לברות למו בשבר בת-עמי:

11. The Lord has accomplished His fury; He has poured out His fierce anger, and has kindled a fire in Zion, which has devoured its foundations.

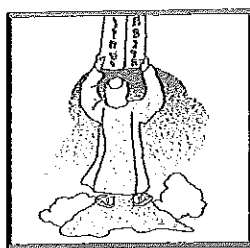
יא פלה יהוה את-חמתו שפר חרון אפו
ויצת-אש בציון ותאכל יסודתיה:

12. The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy would enter the gates of Jerusalem.

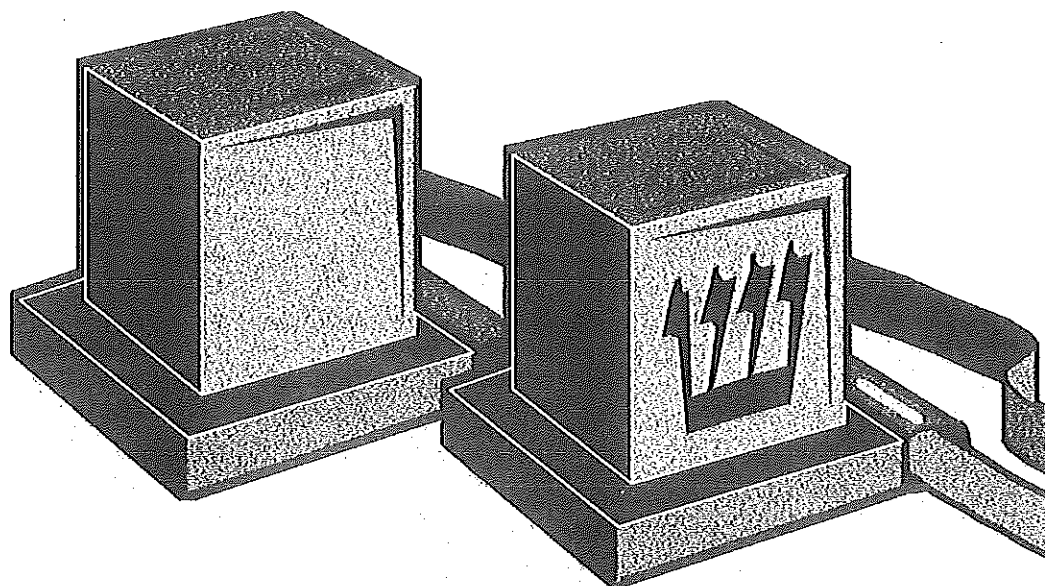
יב לא האמינו מלכי-ארץ כל ישרי תבל
כי יבא צר ואויב בשערי ירושלם:

13. It was for the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of her priests, who have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her,

יג מחטאת נביאייה צונות כהניה
שפכים בקרבה דם צדיקים:



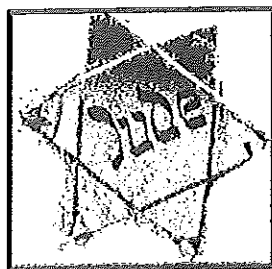
הלכות
Jewish Law



For Too Many Jews, Every Day is תשעה באב ☆

Now that would be a sad thought, wouldn't it? Who on Earth would want to observe Tisha b'Av and all its laws all the time? Isn't one day enough?

But too many Jews act as though every day were Tisha b'Av by not wearing tefillin in the morning. On Tisha b'Av, we wait to put on our tefillin until Minhah because tefillin are a sign of honor and joy, and we avoid pleasant things on Tisha b'Av. But the rest of the time (except Shabbat and festivals) bar mitzvah aged Jews are commanded to wear tefillin in the morning every day. Today, many Jewish women voluntarily accept the commandment to wear tefillin.



השואה
The Holocaust

What is Six Million? ☆

The Nazis (שׂמם, a Jewish curse that means "May their name be erased.") murdered six million Jews during the Holocaust. Six million is a difficult number to comprehend. Here are some facts and figures to help you understand this number: On average, the Nazis killed one Jew every 2.8 minutes, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for four straight years. Six million people of average height lined up end to end would stretch for 5,681 miles. (That's New York to Los Angeles and back.) Six million is the entire Chicago area. Six million is almost all of Manhattan. Six million people would fit inside 120 large football stadiums - or 12,000 Boeing 747s.

יְהִי זַכָּרָם בְּרוּךְ. *May their memory be blessed.*

14. They wandered blindly in the streets,
polluted with blood, so that none could touch
their garments.

יד נָעוּ עוֹרִים בְּחוּצוֹת נִגְאָלוּ בְּדָם
בְּלֹא יוֹכְלוּ יָגֵעוּ בְּלִבְשֵׁיהֶם:

15. Away! Unclean! men cried to them;
Away!, Away!, Do not touch! So they fled
away and wandered. Among the nations it was
said, They shall no more sojourn there.

טו סוּרוּ טִמְאָה קְרָאוּ לָמוֹ
סוּרוּ לוֹרוֹ אֶל־תִּגְעוּ כִּי נָצוּ גַם־נָעוּ
אָמְרוּ בַּגּוֹיִם לֹא יוֹסִיפוּ לָגוּר:

16. The anger of the Lord has divided them; He
will no more regard them; they respected not
the persons of the priests, they were not
gracious to the elders.

טז פָּנֵי יְהוָה חִלְקָם לֹא יוֹסִיף לַחֲבִיטָם
פָּנֵי כֹהֲנִים לֹא נִשְׂאוּ וְזִקְנִים לֹא חֲנֻנָּה:

17. As for us, our eyes fail watching for vain
help; in our watching we have watched for a
nation which could not save.

יז עֹדֵינוּ תִּכְלִינָה עֵינֵינוּ אֶל־עֲזָרָתָנוּ הִבַּל
בְּצַפִּיתָנוּ צִפִּינוּ אֶל־גּוֹי לֹא יוֹשִׁעַ:

18. They hunt our steps, that we cannot go in
our streets; our end is near, our days are
fulfilled; for our end is come.

יח צֹדוּ צִדְדֵינוּ מִלִּכְתּוֹת בְּרַחֲבֵינוּ
קִרְבַּ קִצֵּינוּ מִלֵּאוֹ יָמֵינוּ כִּי־בָא קִצֵּינוּ:

19. Our pursuers are swifter than the vultures
of the sky; they pursued us upon the
mountains, they laid wait for us in the
wilderness.

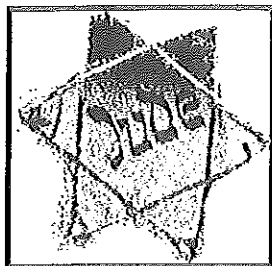
יט קָלִים הָיוּ רֹדְפֵינוּ מִנְּשָׂרֵי שָׁמַיִם
עַל־הַהָרִים דָּלְקָנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר אָרְבוּ לָנוּ:

20. The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of
the Lord, was taken in their pits, of whom we
said, "Under His shadow we shall live among
the nations."

כ רוּחַ אֲפִינוּ מָשִׁיחַ יְהוָה נִלְכַּד בְּשִׁחִיתוֹתָם
אֲשֶׁר אָמְרָנוּ בְּצִלוֹ נִחְיֶה בַּגּוֹיִם:

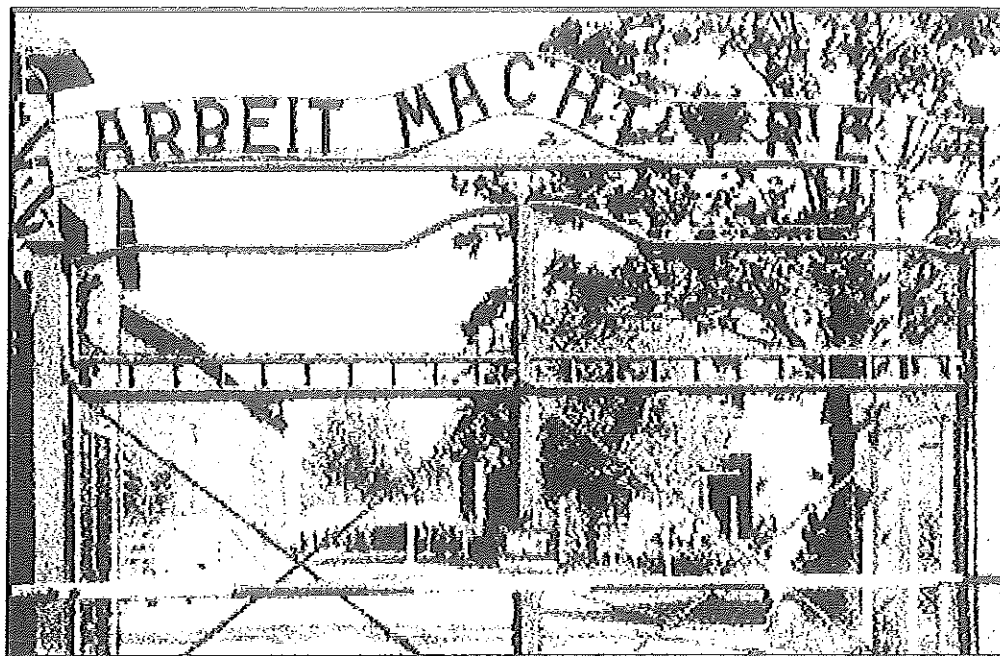
21. Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom,
living in the land of Uz; the cup shall also pass
over to you; you shall become drunk and strip
yourself bare.

כא שִׂשִׁי וְשִׂמְחִי בַת־אֲדוֹם יוֹשֶׁבֶת בְּאֶרֶץ עֻז
גַּם־עָלֶיךָ תִּעָבֶר־כּוֹס תִּשְׁכְּרִי וְתִתְעָרִי:

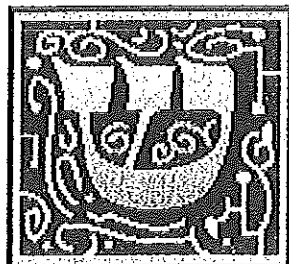


השואה

The Holocaust



The main gate of Auschwitz I. The German sign says "Work Will Make You Free." The Jews who were forced to make the sign turned the B in Arbeit upside down to warn all new arrivals.



שאלות

Questions



The Holocaust Era poet Yitzhak Katzenelson wrote a poem about the Radziner Rebbe, a Hasidic leader who urged his followers to rise up in armed struggle against their Nazi oppressors. When the Radziner Rebbe was finally captured by Nazi forces in his shtetl of Vlodove, he spat in his captors' faces. This poem suggests that God was in hiding during the Holocaust. Discuss this idea. What does it mean? How can God hide the divine presence?

**And suddenly the Rebbe emits a great groan:
Lord of the Universe, I do not stand alone!
Both of us are on guard
And thou lookest upon Lublin from afar.
Thou art in hiding as I am too...**

The Shoah: Six Questions ☆

Who? Our grandparents, rabbis, teachers, doctors, scientists, ordinary people.

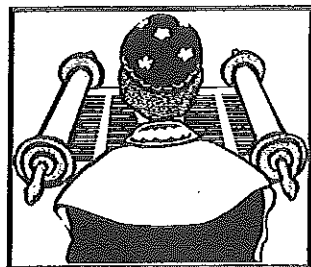
What? Genocide. The almost complete elimination of European Jewry, a civilization that was over a thousand years old.

When? From 1941 to 1945

Where? Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Dachau, Bergen-Belsen, Mauthausen, and many other death and forced labor camps.

How? Shooting, gassing, burning, starvation, disease, cruel experiments, exhaustion.

Why? Nobody knows.* *Imagine that someone says to you, "What kind of God would sit by and allow such terrible crimes to be committed?" How would you answer that person?*



רעיונות

Ideas

22. The punishment of your iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion; He will no more carry you away into exile; He will visit your iniquity, O daughter of Edom; He will uncover your sins.

כב תס־צוֹנָךְ בַּת־צִיּוֹן לֹא יוֹסִיף לְהַגְלוֹתְךָ
סָעַד צוֹנָךְ בַּת־אֲדוֹם גְּלָה עַל־חַטֹּאתֶיךָ:

Eikhah - Chapter 5

1. Remember, O Lord, what has come upon us; consider, and behold our disgrace.

מגילת איכה פרק ה
א זְכוֹר יְהוָה מַה־הָיָה לָנוּ
הַבִּיטָה וּרְאֵה אֶת־חַרְפֹּתֵנוּ:

2. Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our homes to foreigners.

ב נִחַלְתָנוּ נְהַפְכָה לְזָרִים
בְּתֵינוּ לְנֹכְרִים:

3. We have become orphans and fatherless, our mothers are like widows.

ג יְתוּמִים הָיִינוּ וְאֵין אָב
אִמֹּתֵינוּ כְּאַלְמָנוֹת:

4. We have drunk our water for money; our wood is sold to us.

ד מִמַּיִנוּ בְּכֶסֶף שָׁתִינוּ
עֲצֵינוּ בְּמַחֲרִי יָבֵאוּ:

5. We are pursued to our necks; we labor, and have no rest.

ה עַל צוּאֲרֵנוּ נִרְדָּפְנוּ
יָגְעוּ וְלֹא הוּנְחֻלָּנוּ:

6. We have given the hand to the Egyptians, and to the Assyrians, to be satisfied with bread.

ו מְצַלִּים נָתַנוּ יָד
אֲשׁוּר לְשַׂבֵּעַ לֶחֶם:

7. Our fathers have sinned, and are no more; but we bear their iniquities.

ז אֲבֹתֵינוּ חָטְאוּ וְאֵינָם
וְאִנְחָנוּ עוֹנֵייתָם סָבָלְנוּ:

8. Slaves rule over us; there is none to deliver us from their hand.

ח עֲבָדִים מָשְׁלוּ בָנוּ
פָּרַק אֵין מִיָּדָם:

9. We get our bread with the peril of our lives because of the sword of the wilderness.

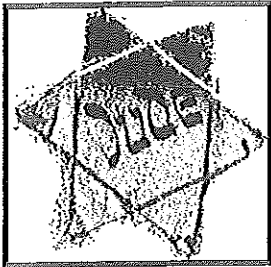
ט בְּנַפְשֵׁנוּ נִבִּיא לֶחֶמֵנוּ
מִפְּנֵי חֶרֶב הַמִּדְבָּר:

10. Our skin is hot like an oven because of the burning famine.

י עוֹרֵנוּ כְּתִנּוֹר נִכְמְרוּ
מִפְּנֵי זִלְעָפוֹת רָעָב:

☆ "Our many Jewish friends and acquaintances are being taken away in droves. The Gestapo is treating them very roughly and transporting them in cattle cars to Westerbork, the big camp in Drenthe to which they're sending all the Jews....If it's that bad in Holland, what must it be like in those faraway and uncivilized places where the Germans are sending them? We assume that most of them are being murdered. The English radio says they're being gassed."

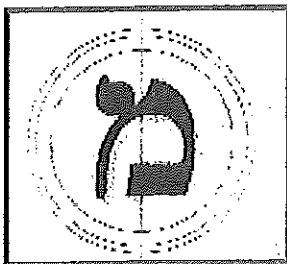
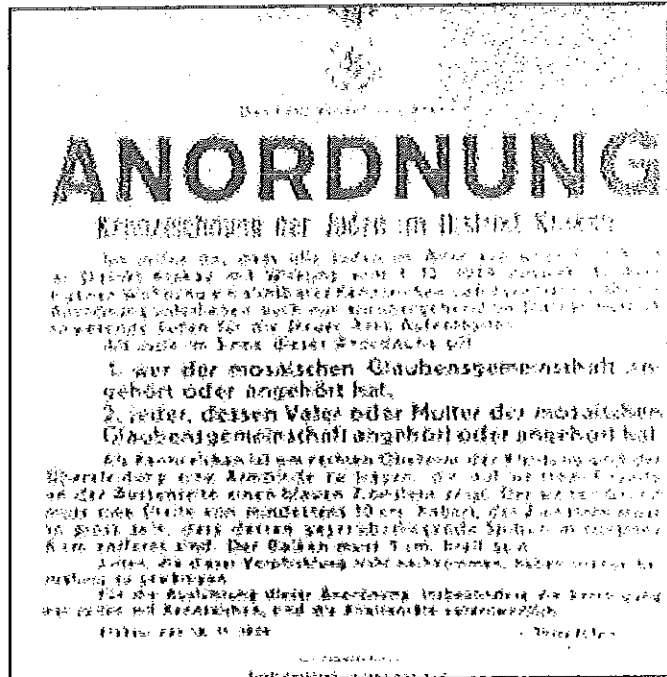
- Anne Frank (1929-1944)



השואה

The Holocaust

At right: A Nazi poster ordering all Jews to wear a Star of David armband. When the Nazis issued a similar order in Denmark, the Danish King and thousands of Danish Christians put on a Star of David armband to protect the country's Jews. The Jewish traditions calls such heroes "righteous gentiles of the world," or צדיקי אומות העולם. If your government ordered an oppressed minority to identify itself with an armband, would you have the courage to do what the people of Denmark did? Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Memorial, has a monument in honor of these righteous gentiles who risked their lives for the sake of the Jewish People.



מדרשים

Midrashim

The Shaving Decree

(Eikhah 5:5) - Yirmiyahu says "We are pursued to our necks." Midrash Eikhah (5:5) explains his words as a prophecy of the policies of Hadrian, the Roman prelate of Jerusalem at the time of the destruction. After capturing Jerusalem, Hadrian ordered all the Jews to shave their heads and bodies so that they would be recognized as prisoners of war. This ruling, of course, forced Jewish men to violate the prohibitions of destroying one's beard and creating a bald patch on one's head. So Hadrian warned all those who would dare to not shave and said, "If I find even one hair on a Jew's head, his head will be cut off!" According to the midrash, this is what Yirmiyahu was talking about when he said "We are pursued to our necks."

The Nazis, it should be noted, also frequently forced Jews to shave.

11. Women are ravished in Zion, and virgins in the cities of Judah.

יא נשים בציון ענו בתלת בערני יהודה:

12. Princes are hanged up by their hand; the faces of elders are not honored.

יב שרים בידם נתלו פני זקנים לא נהדרו:

13. They took the young men to grind, and boys stumble under the wood.

יג בחורים טחון נשאו ונערים בעץ כשלו:

14. The elders have ceased from the gate, the young men from their music.

יד זקנים משער שבתו בחורים מנגינתם:

15. The joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned into mourning.

טו שבת משוש לבנו נהפך לאבל מחלנו:

16. The crown is fallen from our head; woe to us, that we have sinned!

טז נפלה עטרת ראשנו אויבנו לנו כי חטאנו:

17. For this our heart is faint; for these things our eyes are dim.

יז על-זה הנה דול לבנו על-אלה חשכנו עינינו:

18. Upon the mountain of Zion, which is desolate, foxes walk.

יח על הר-ציון ששמים שועלים הלכו-בו:

19. You, O Lord, are enthroned for ever; Your throne is from generation to generation.

יט אתה יהוה לעולם תשב כסאך לדור ודור:

20. Why do You forget us for ever, and forsake us for so long?

כ למה לנצח תשכחנו תעזובנו לארך ימים:

21. Turn us to You, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old.

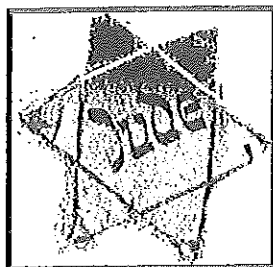
כא השיבנו יהוה | אליך ונשובה
חדש ימינו כקדם:

22. But You have utterly rejected us; You are very angry against us.

כב כי אם-מאס מאסתנו
קצפת עלינו עד-מאד:

Turn us to You, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old.

השיבנו יהוה | אליך ונשובה
חדש ימינו כקדם:



השואה

The Holocaust



Above: Jewish prisoners in Auschwitz cheer and celebrate the arrival of their American liberators. U.S. troops liberated Auschwitz and many other concentration camps in April of 1945. The testimony of these soldiers is an important part of the Holocaust's historical record.

השיבנו יְהוָה | אליך ונשובה

חדש ימינו כקדם:

Turn us to you, O Lord, and we shall be turned;
renew our days as of old.



שאלות

Questions

According to Halakhah, we are not allowed to end the reading of Eikhah, or any Scriptural reading, on a sad or unhappy note. The last line of Eikhah reads, "Unless you have completely rejected us, being very angry." We cannot end with such hopeless notes, so we go back and repeat the next-to-last line. What message does that send us about Tisha b'Av and God?