

**"Turn Their Mourning into Joy:"
Three Major Developments in the Evolution of *Tisha B'Av***

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for Ordination**

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Dr. Dvora Weisberg**

**Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion
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Introduction

*"I will turn their mourning to joy, I will comfort them and cheer them in their grief."
-Jeremiah 31:13.*

Why Tisha B'Av? Why This Thesis?

Tisha B'Av presents multiple questions for Jews, especially for Reform Jews, today.

I begin then with six "essential questions"¹ that together help to paint the picture of the key issues and dilemmas surrounding *Tisha B'Av*.

- ◆ How does memory of tragedy and suffering shape Jewish identity?
- ◆ In what ways and to what extent should we mourn both individually and collectively?
- ◆ What are the reasons for having a day completely devoted to loss and memory?
- ◆ Why should we mourn past losses at all when present reality is so different?
- ◆ What causes mourning to stop?
- ◆ If the Temple was the central and unifying symbol of Jewish identity, what is that symbol or image today?

Jews have asked these questions, or similar ones, for centuries. The different layers of *Tisha B'Av*, the major developments of the day that emerge throughout history, reflect different responses to these question that frame my research.

Why did I choose the topic of *Tisha B'Av*? The words *Tisha B'Av*, the Ninth of Av, evoke an array of responses: sadness, grief, confusion, disgust, doubt, hope. *Tisha B'Av* is memories from summer camp² of sad melodies, darkness, candlelight, hunger, quiet, plays, stories, names of places and people. My experiences with *Tisha B'Av* have led me to the understanding that *Tisha B'Av* is about potential. It is about the potential for *shleimut*, for

¹ "Essential questions" is a technical term in curriculum development. Essential questions are "types of questions that cannot be answered satisfactorily in a sentence." They "get at matters of deep and enduring understanding." The "reveal the richness and complexities of a subject....and point to the key inquiries and the core ideas of a discipline." Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *Understanding By Design* (Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1998) 28-32.

² I spent ten summers at Camp Yavneh in Northwood, NH, a Jewish summer camp affiliated with the Hebrew College in Boston, MA.

wholeness, completeness, peace, and perfection. In Jeremiah's words, it is the potential for turning mourning into joy. This potential, though, is inchoate, contained within the yearnings of the day, waiting to break free. The realization of this potential is the undying and eternal hope of *Tisha B'Av*. *Tisha B'Av* reflects many layers of history. The multi-layered nature of a single day and the tension of unrealized potential present a challenge that I find intriguing. It would take a serious investigation into centuries of texts to begin to understand what *Tisha B'Av* is all about. This work encourages such an exploration.

This thesis, though, reflects more than the topic of *Tisha B'Av* itself. *Tisha B'Av* is a lens through which to view the evolution of festival practice. It is an example of continually shifting meaning, demonstrating how a festival could mean something different to different communities at different times. This thesis, therefore, is an exploration of the evolution of a festival and an effort, ultimately, to locate ourselves on the spectrum of its development.

Tisha B'Av, as the essential questions suggest, evokes the broader themes of memory, identity, loss, and renewal. A deeper explanation of the first and last of the essential questions will help to introduce these themes. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi writes in his book, *Zakhor*, "Only in Israel and nowhere else is the injunction to remember felt as a religious imperative to an entire people."³ For Natan Margalit, memory and morality are intricately connected. He writes, "The source of the obligation to remember, I maintain, comes from the effort of radical evil forces to undermine morality itself by, among other means, rewriting the past and controlling collective memory."⁴ Margalit, therefore, understands memory as a form of protest and survival. He raises the particular issue of how we engage painful traumatic memories of the past. He believes, "Even the project of

³ Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982) 9.

⁴ Natan Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002) 83.

remembering the gloomiest of memories is a hopeful project. It ultimately rejects the pessimistic thought that all will be forgotten."⁵ The act of remembering and the process of remembering affirm that hope, the ultimate message of *Tisha B'Av*, will prevail.

Margalit also understands that the community of the Jewish people is necessarily shaped by shared memory. He writes, "Collective existences are webs of relations based on bonds in which shared memories play a crucial role."⁶ Judaism contains a whole set of laws and customs regarding mourning for the individual. *Tisha B'Av* fulfills the communal obligation to remember and provides the means for collective mourning and memory.

Yerushalmi states that, "Memory flowed, above all, through two channels: ritual and recital."⁷ Ritual enables the experience and enactment of past events in the near present. Recital of texts evokes, through the force of their archaic rhythms and images, distant but moving intimations of primal events. *Tisha B'Av* is part of the Jewish enterprise of remembering in that it contains both ritual and recital. Yerushalmi writes that, "what was drawn from the past was not a series of facts to be contemplated at a distance, but a series of situations into which one could somehow be existentially drawn."⁸ *Tisha B'Av* is the existential memory of tragedy and suffering. Each of the chapters in this thesis represents a different way that people were shaped by memory, actively engaged in the process of remembering, and found meaning in their own lives through this process.

Tisha B'Av is about memories of loss and hope for renewal. Specifically, if the Temple served as the central symbol of the Jewish people, then *Tisha B'Av*, as a response to the loss of this symbol, also reflects the ongoing yearning for a unifying symbol. The

⁵ Margalit 82.

⁶ Margalit 95.

⁷ Yerushalmi 11.

⁸ Yerushalmi 44.

different responses to this loss reflect different thoughts on the nature of the central symbol of Jewish identity. In many ways an argument could be made that today the State of Israel fulfills the need for such a symbol. However, some people may also believe that we are still in a state of yearning. The texts under discussion ultimately provide a window into these broader themes of memory, identity, loss, and renewal.

Content and Structure

A description of the content of the ensuing pages will first necessitate an explanation of what this work is not. This is not a study of the events surrounding the destruction of the first and second temples. The study is more about reaction than action; in other words, the texts under analysis represent literary responses to and interpretations of these events. The literary responses include classical texts, liturgies, medieval poetry, and contemporary readings that each reflects a particular ideology and understanding of the time.

I am not beginning this work with the premise that Reform Jews should "reclaim" *Tisha B'Av*. I do not believe that *Tisha B'Av* is something we should do now merely because it was a traditional practice that has been ignored or because it had meaning for Jews in the past. Rather, I seek to look both descriptively and critically at the evolution of *Tisha B'Av* in Jewish memory and to see what lessons can be gleaned from past responses to help shape the ways we might regard *Tisha B'Av* today.

In order to see how *Tisha B'Av* has evolved throughout history, I have selected to focus on three major developments of the festival. Each of these major developments represents a different layer of and view toward *Tisha B'Av*. All together, they span different perspectives on observance, ritual, and theology. The three developments constitute the three major chapters of the thesis. They are:

1. The Jewish Calendar and the Month of Av: Two Cases from *Talmud Taanit*
2. The Liturgy of Lament: *Megillat Eicha* and *Kinot*
3. Reform Judaism: The Influence of David Einhorn

Each of these chapters has a similar structure: an introduction to the material, followed by close reading and analysis of texts, and reflections on lessons learned and connections to contemporary contexts.

The concluding section is less about drawing conclusions and more about revisiting questions and raising new ones. It offers several other contemporary perspectives and a general outline of what a Reform *Tisha B'Av* could look like in two specific contexts: an adult setting in a synagogue and a Jewish summer camp. Given the limitations of time and scope of this work, I chose not to write a comprehensive liturgy for *Tisha B'Av*. I leave it to communities to create and shape such liturgies on their own, if they so choose. However, I do provide suggestions and resources.

The appendix contains several texts that were too long to include in the main body of writing. The bibliography, too, should serve as a resource for anyone seeking to learn more about *Tisha B'Av* or to create a service or liturgy.

A final note on translation and the use of Hebrew. Translations, as indicated, are from the JPS Bible, the Steinsaltz Talmud edition, or are my own. I write *Adonai* as the name for God and try to maintain gender-neutral translations. In most cases, I provide Hebrew, transliteration, and English translation.

Chapter 1

The Jewish Calendar and the Month of Av: Two Cases from *Talmud Taanit*

Introduction to Talmud Taanit

The Babylonian *Talmud* in chapter four of *masechet Taanit* discusses two of the fixed public fast days that were instituted to commemorate certain national calamities. The discussion centers around *Shiva Asar b'Tammuz* (the seventeenth of *Tammuz*), *Tisha B'Av* (the ninth of *Av*), and the period in between known as the three weeks or "*bein hamtzarim*"¹ ("between the fences, or narrow places"). This Talmudic section addresses a series of issues, questions, and tensions surrounding the occurrence and observance of these days. The following is an analysis and exploration of two major subject matters: 1) The identification and selection of the specific dates of the seventeenth of *Tammuz* and the ninth of *Av* as days of commemoration and the location of these days within the Jewish calendar. 2) The ways and the degree to which one should mourn during the month of *Av* in general and on the ninth of *Av* in particular. Both the discussion about the placement of the days in the Jewish calendar and about mourning and observance will demonstrate some of the ways that *Tisha B'Av* evolved during the rabbinic period.

The first subject raises several historical questions and concerns. *Tisha B'Av*, as described in the *Talmud*, commemorates the destruction of both the first and second temples. However, it is historically improbable that these two events actually occurred on the same day in different years. There is disagreement within the biblical text over whether the first destruction occurred on the 9th of *Av*.² The only biblical reference to a

1. This name is derived from Lamentations 1:3.

2. See II Kings 25:8-9 and Jeremiah 52:12-13.

commemorative fast day following the destruction of the first temple is in Zechariah, a prophet who wrote around 520-518 BCE after the Judean exiles had returned from Babylonian captivity and stressed the importance of rebuilding the temple.³ He wrote,

And the word of *Adonai* of Hosts came to me, saying, Thus said *Adonai* of Hosts: The fast of the fourth month, the fast of the fifth month, the fast of the seventh month, and the fast of the tenth month shall become occasions for joy and gladness, happy festivals for the House of Judah; but you must love honestly and integrity.⁴

These dates, presumably, refer to the 17th of *Tammuz*, the 9th of *Av*, *Yom Kippur*, and the 10th of *Tevet*, respectively. It is Zechariah's hope that in the future all these fast days will be turned into days of joy.

It remains unclear, though, whether this commemoration continued during the rebuilding of the temple and during the second temple period. When the temple was rebuilt, would there have been a need to continue to mourn its destruction? According to the Book of Ezra, the House of God in Jerusalem was completed on the third of the month of *Adar* (in 515 BCE).⁵ There is no further mention of any observance of commemorative days. At what point then would the rabbis have reinstituted a commemorative day following the destruction of the second temple? And, what was the motivation behind the layering of multiple calamities onto a single day? For the rabbis, there was tension surrounding the observance of fast days described in the Zechariah verse even after the destruction of the second temple. In *Talmud Rosh HaShanah* it is stated,

The prophet calls these days both days of fasting and days of joy, signifying that when there is peace they shall be for joy and gladness, but if there is not peace they shall be fast days. R. Papa replied, What it means is this: When there is peace they shall be for joy and gladness; if there is persecution they shall be fast days; if there is no persecution but yet no peace, then those who desire may fast and those who desire need not fast. If that is the case, the ninth of *Av* also [should be optional]? R. Papa replied, The ninth of *Av* is a different category, because several misfortunes happened on it....⁶

3. *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, gen. ed. Wayne A. Meeks (London: Harper Collins Publisher, 1989) 1412.

4. Zechariah 8:18-19.

5. Ezra 6:15.

6. *Talmud Rosh Hashanah* 18b.

The construction of these days within the Jewish calendar was a major concern.

In regard to the second subject, the *Talmud* contains discussion about several specific kinds of actions that are considered to be mourning customs or part of the observance of the day - refraining from cutting hair, washing laundry, and eating. Whereas definitive laws regarding these customs are developed and stated in the later legal writings of the codes⁷, evidence of the more open dialectic of the *Talmud* can be seen viewed through these examples. The dialectical nature of the Talmudic discussion is a vehicle for the rabbis to express concern over excessive mourning practices. What emerges from the flow of the argument is that when possible, the rabbinic tradition opts for more lenient views regarding practices for *Tisha B'Av*. The rabbis, too, were concerned about how people would actually observe a day that commemorates such intense sadness and destruction. Through discussions on these subjects, the rabbis demonstrate how they engaged in their own process of meaning-making to understand events of the past in their own time.

Case #1: Tisha B'Av in the Jewish Calendar

The *mishna* of the section that discusses the fast days of the 17th of *Tammuz* and the 9th of *Av* opens as follows:

Five things happened to our ancestors on the Seventeenth of *Tammuz*, and five on the Ninth of *Av*. On the Seventeenth of *Tammuz* the Tablets [of the Covenant] were broken, and the daily sacrifice ceased, and the city was breached, and Apostemos burned the Torah and set up an idol in the Sanctuary. On the Ninth of *Av* it was decreed that our ancestors would not enter the Land [of Israel], and the Temple was destroyed for the first and second time, and Betar was captured, and the city was plowed up.⁸

The *Talmud* proceeds to comment on the five things that happened on the 17th of

7. For comparison of the talmudic discussion to the laws in the *Mishne Torah*, see Appendix 1.

8. *Taanit* 26a-26b. Translation according to *The Talmud*, The Steinsaltz Edition, commentary Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, vol. XIV part II (New York: Random House, 1995).

Tammuz and asks the same question about each event: "מנלן" - "from where do we know this?" - then repeats this question for each of the events that fell on the 9th of *Av*. One may be surprised to see that the first event listed for each day, seemingly, has no connection to the destruction of Jerusalem or the temples. However, this connection of holidays to biblical events is very much in line with other festival observances.

In general, the rabbis seek to connect both feast and fast days with significant biblical events. An early rabbinic work called *Seder Olam Rabbah*⁹, records a kind of midrashic chronology of biblical events. In a contemporary article, Evan M. Zuesse shows how the Jewish calendric cycle of festivals can be conceptualized as conveying a single drama of redemption, focused on the events narrated in the five books of Moses. He writes, "It is crucial to realize that the festival cycle is built on the paradigmatic events of the Mosaic generation, which obviously had shaped the self-understanding of Israel during the later centuries in which the festivals were first elaborated and celebrated."¹⁰ In the rabbinic mind, *Pesach* and *Shavuot*, for example, commemorate the Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the *Torah* at Sinai, with the intermediate period of the *omer* counting upward in the journey toward revelation. The marking of agricultural occasions became transformed into definitive religious moments. The rabbis who fixed the Jewish calendar sought to ground festival observance in biblical roots.

The first task of the *Talmud*, then, is to establish the 17th of *Tammuz* and the 9th of *Av* as biblically based days. The rabbis use the biblical text to show how even in God's mind the 9th of *Av* is a day set apart for tragedy. "On the day the spies returned

9. *Seder Olam: The Rabbinic View of Biblical Chronology*, trans. Heinrich W. Guggenheimer (New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc., 1998).

10. Evan M. Zuesse, "The Jewish Year III: The Spiralling of Time Through the Festival Calendar," *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* VIII, 2 (1994): 164-65.

with their negative report about the land, the people in the wilderness cried out. God, hearing their cry, said, **אתם בכיתם בכיה של חנים ואני קובע לכם בכיה לדורות** "You wept a weeping for no cause, but I will establish for you a weeping for generations."¹¹

The rabbinic discussion reflects the great length that the rabbis go to connect two biblical events, the breaking of the tables following the incident of the golden calf and the decree that the Israelites would not enter the Land of Israel following the incident of the spies, with the two fast days, respectively. The rabbinic calculations of the biblical events is extremely detailed. The following chart summarizes their logic.¹²

Chart I: The tablets were broken on the 17th of *Tammuz*.

Biblical Verse:	Ex. 24:16	Ex. 24:18	Ex. 32:19
Date/Time:	7 Sivan	40 days & 40 nights	17 Tammuz
Event:	Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive the commandments.	Moses on the mountain.	Moses came down, saw the golden calf, and broke the tablets.

Chart II: God decreed on the 9th of *Av* that the people would not enter the Land.

Biblical Verse:	Ex. 40:17	Num. 10:11-12	Num. 10:33, 11:4	Num. 11:18-20	Num. 12:15, 13:2	Num. 13:25	Num. 14:1
Date/Time:	1 Nisan	20 Iyar	23 Iyar	22 Sivan	29 Sivan	8 Av	9 Av (night)
Event:	Moses erected the Tabernacle. (When the cloud covered it they could not travel.)	Cloud was lifted from the Tabernacle.	Israelites traveled 3 days. On that day, they turned from God and wept, "If only we had meat to eat.)	Plague of meat lasted 1 month.	Miriam was outside the camp 7 days (while the people waited.) Immediately after, Moses sent out the spies.	After 40 days, the spies returned from searching the land.	All the cong. wept after hearing the spies' report. God decreed that these people would not see the Land.

As the above charts show, the rabbis engaged in meticulous calculation to connect

11. *Taanit* 29a.

12. *Taanit* 28b.

the biblical events mentioned in our *mishna* to the 17th of *Tammuz* and the 9th of *Av*. Their connection of these historic days to biblical events reveals a larger thematic picture. Zuesse writes, "When, in later ages, the Rabbis associated the destruction of both Temples and various other calamities with the Golden Calf incident, they affirmed by this that there was a timeless, mythic dimension to the events of the Mosaic period, so that these events were forever afterward embodied in the history of Israel."¹³ The incident of the golden calf set in motion the timeless and mythic notions of sin and communal repentance and purification. The rabbis later link the 1st of *Elul* to the beginning of God's forgiveness towards Israel and identify the 10th of *Tishrei*, *Yom Kippur*, as the day on which Moses returns a second time with the tablets. Within the cyclical view of time that the rabbis put forth, the themes of sin and repentance would occur in repetitive cycles each year.

The location of commemorating calamities in Jewish history at this biblical juncture reveals something about the theological meaning the rabbis found in these events. The classical theology that the temples were destroyed as punishments for Israel's sins fits with the theological implications of the golden calf and the sin of the spies. Yet, the possibility for repentance and forgiveness, as evidenced by the "second chance" that God gave Moses and the Israelites with the second tablets, is also an archetypical experience repeated over and over in the Jewish calendar. The 15th of *Av* (*Tu B'Av*) was likewise a day of forgiveness for the generation of the wilderness for the sin of the spies.¹⁴

Zuesse notes that counting forty-two days from the 17th of *Tammuz* brings us to

13. Evan M. Zuesse, "The Jewish Year, II: The Summer Fasts as the Key to the Jewish Calendar," *The Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* Vol VIII, No 1 (1994): 42.

14. Eliyahu Kitov, *The Book of Our Heritage* (Jerusalem: 'A Publishers,' 1968) 307.

the 1st of *Elul*. He writes, "It means that the 51/52 day spring cycle of Passover-Shavuot is joined with the 51/52 day fall cycle of Elul-High Holydays-Sukkot. The so-called minor fasts following Shavuot provide the link through their Mosaic-era meanings."¹⁵ The fast of *Av* is, therefore, about the midway point between *Shavuot* and *Yom Kippur*. One is normally taught that the high holy day season begins with the 1st of *Elul*.¹⁶ However, the intentional and significant location of the summer fasts in the Jewish calendar actually suggests that the high holy day period and process of preparation begins at this lowest point in the calendar, this transitional time when the Jewish people turned from sin and began to repent.

The location of the 17th of *Tammuz* and the 9th of *Av* is not significant only to the spring and fall holidays, though. Their existence is integral to the whole Jewish calendar. Zuesse compares the the summer days of the 17th of *Tammuz* and the 9th of *Av* to the winter holidays of *Chanukah* and *Purim*. He writes, "In *Chanukah* and *Purim*, cold wet darkness may lie all around, but like the pillar of fire by night God's light burns clear and illuminates Israel's way; in the Seventeenth of *Tammuz* and the Ninth of *Av*, however, the chaos and darkness are within, and outside is the scorching sun and summer drought that brings epidemic and dissension."¹⁷ The following is a summary of his comparisons¹⁸:

Winter Feasts

Joyful celebrations
Indulgence, play
Pride, joy
God's protection
Darkness without, light within

Summer Fasts

Mournful mood
Solemnity, lamentation
Humility, guilt
God's withdrawal
Darkness within, light without

15. Zuesse, "The Jewish Year, II" 44.

16. Even this teaching is a stretch. Many liberal Jews enter the synagogue on the high holy days without any kind of spiritual preparation.

17. Zuesse, "The Jewish Year, III" 169.

18. Zuesse, "The Jewish Year, III" 171.

These comparisons also reflect the reality of synagogue life today. The solemnity and darkness within reflects the absence of most liberal Jews from synagogue life during the summer months. The rabbi is also often away and the summer is generally a quiet time for the congregation. In contrast, synagogues are often brimming with families who have come for *latke* parties and *Purim shpiels* and carnivals during the winter months.

Despite the stark contrasts, though, between these seasonal days, Zuesse also notes their complementarity. The different kinds of experiences in each season create a dialectic, with each strengthening each other's meaning. The archetypal patterns of each season encapsulated the total religious worldview of rabbinic Judaism and were each, therefore, a necessary piece of Jewish calendar.

The rabbis' understanding of calendar rhythms, and their desire to root later experience in biblical events and to ascribe these events with mythic qualities, points to one reason why the rabbis affixed multiple calamities to specific time. This understanding works to make us aware of certain rhythms in the Jewish year. Today, *Tisha B'Av* and the summer rhythm often go by unnoticed. The location of *Tisha B'Av* in the overall calendar, though, suggests that without the summer rhythm, a significant link would be missing in the overall cycle. The Jewish calendar reflects the range of human emotions, including the experience of sadness and the desire to move from sadness into more joyous times.

The *Talmud* suggests another reason as well, however, for commemorating multiple sad events in one day. The rabbis go through further calculation and argumentation to ensure that the events surrounding the destructions of both temples occurred on the same days, despite evidence otherwise. The following arguments reveal

a deeper psychological rationale for establishing these events on the same day.

Taanit contains several discussions around the dating of the destruction of the first and second temples and when a commemoration for each should occur. We return to the Talmud's question מנלן - from where do we know that the events listed in the *mishna* occurred on these days? In some cases, the Talmud offers a terse response to this question: גמרא - "g'mara" - [this is] "tradition". That response is offered to these events: (on the 17th of *Tammuz*) the daily sacrifice was suspended, Apostemos burned the *Torah* scroll, and, (on the 9th of *Av*) *Betar*¹⁹ was captured. This response appears acceptable for these events. However, for the others, further explanation is required.

To the *mishna*'s statement that "the city was breached" on the 17th of *Tammuz*, the *Talmud* asks, "was it really on the seventeenth?" The *Talmud* knows the verse from Jeremiah 52:6, which says, "And in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the famine was severe in the city..." The following verse continues, "וַתִּבָּקַע הָעִיר", "and the city was breached..." It would seem, then, that the breach of the walls before the destruction of the first temple occurred on the 9th of *Tammuz* and not on the 17th. Rava responds: לֹא קָשִׁיָּא - "there is no difficulty." כאן בראשונה כאן בשנייה. - Here [in the Jeremiah verse] it refers to the First Temple; here [in the *mishna*] it refers to the Second Temple. A *baraita* supports his view, "In the first, the city was breached on the ninth of *Tammuz*; in the second, on the seventeenth."

Rava's response, however, does not answer the question of why the breaches of the city before each destruction were both commemorated on the seventeenth. The Steinsaltz commentary offers an explanation.²⁰

19. *Betar* was Bar Kokhba's last stronghold in his revolt against Rome.

20. Steinsaltz *Talmud to Taanit* 28b, 201.

Fast-days commemorating the destruction of the Temple were instituted after the destruction of the First Temple, as is explained in Zechariah (8:19). But the specific days of the fasts are not mentioned, only the months in which they fell. These fast-days were rescinded during the Second Temple period, but were reinstituted after the destruction of the Second Temple. Because mourning for the Second Temple was closer in time, the fast-days were determined according to events that occurred at the time of the destruction of that Temple.

According to Steinsaltz, the fast days that commemorated the destruction of the first temple disappeared during the time of the second temple. One could only imagine the disconnect that might have been felt in mourning the loss of the temple while another temple had already been built in its place. Therefore, after the second temple was destroyed and the fast days were reinstituted, there would have been a question regarding when to observe the days. At least according to the biblical accounts, the events of both temples had occurred during the same months, but not on the same day. Steinsaltz explains that the commemoration dates were determined according to the destruction of the second Temple, since mourning for this temple was closer in time. The commemoration of the city's breach for the first time was, therefore, included in the commemoration on the 17th of *Tammuz*.

A similar discussion enfolds regarding the commemoration of both destructions on the 9th of *Av*. Recall that the *mishna* states that the first and second temples were destroyed on the 9th of *Av*. The *Talmud* raises a question in regard to the first temple, contrasting two biblical verses: It is written [II Kings 25:8-9], "And in the fifth month [*Av*], on the seventh day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He burnt the house of *Adonai*..." And, it was written [Jeremiah 52:12-13], "And in the fifth month [*Av*], on the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, who served the king of Babylon, came into Jerusalem.

He burnt the house of *Adonai*..." These two passages are virtually identical, with the exception of the designated day. In addition to the intertextual discrepancy, neither verse mentions the 9th of *Av*.

The *Talmud* tries to explain the difficulty. It asks, *הא כיצד?* - "So, how was it?"

The *Talmud* continues,

On the seventh the heathens entered the Sanctuary, and they ate and fornicated on it [on] the seventh [and the] eighth, and [on] the ninth close to nightfall they ignited the light in it [they set fire to it], and it continued to burn the entire day, as it is said [Lamentations 6:4], Woe unto us, for the day has turned, for the shadows of the evening are lengthening."²¹

Therefore, the verse in Kings refers to Nebuzaradan's entry into the temple, whereas the verse in Jeremiah refers to the total destruction of the temple. There is one more difficulty, though. The discussion continues, "And this is what Rabbi Yochanan said: Had I been in that generation, I would only have established it on the tenth, because most of the Sanctuary was burnt then." The *Talmud* asks, "And the Rabbis [what did they think]?" The response is that, "The beginning of the punishment is preferred [takes precedence]." The rabbis utilize a principle that it is preferable to mark the beginning of the disaster. The "beginning", of course, is the 9th of *Av*, the day already marked for multiple calamities. Rabbi Yochanan's assertions would not have been acceptable in the rabbinic worldview of the calendar events. Indeed, his view is rejected.

Now, the *Talmud* can ask, "And the second [destruction.] *מנלן?*" It responds with a *baraita*: "*מגלגלין זכות ליום זכאי וחובה ליום חייב.*" - "A good thing is assigned to a good day, and a bad thing to a bad day." This rule or principle suggests that the second destruction must also have occurred on the 9th of *Av* because this day had already been marked as a day of calamity. In this case, the *Talmud* had no need to engage in

21. *Taanit* 29a.

calculations regarding the date of the second destruction. The rabbis already knew this teaching and could, therefore, assign the second destruction to the 9th of *Av*.

This principle, though, does raise several additional questions. Did the day itself cause the destructions? In other words, is there something intrinsically bad about the 9th of *Av*? Are there examples of any days where "a good thing is assigned to a good day?" What were the rabbis really trying to teach through their use of this principle?

It is more difficult to find a day of multiple *s'machot*, or joyous occasions in the Jewish calendar. Elsewhere, the *Talmud* even offers a kind of counter-principle - אין שמחה בשמחה ("rejoicing may not be mingled with other rejoicing") as its reason for not permitting weddings during the Intermediate Days of Passover.²² Yet, *Sefirat Ha'Omer*, the time of the counting of the *omer*, is another period of multiple calamities, although to a lesser degree than the 9th of *Av* and the 3 weeks. Some mourning practices are in effect and weddings are not held during the *omer* except on *Lag B'Omer*. The Jewish mourning customs in general offer another example of an inclination towards separating out joyous occasions from sad times. Public mourning practices are not observed on *Shabbat* and a festival cuts off the mourning period and is not counted among the days of mourning.²³ The commandment to rejoice (Deut. 16:14), which applies to festivals, cannot be fulfilled during mourning.²⁴

An extension of the notion embedded in this principle of separating good times and bad can be found only a little later on in the *sugya*. Immediately following the list of five bad things that happened on the 9th of *Av*, the following statement can be found in

22. *Moed Katan* 8b.

23. *Moed Katan* 19a; *Semachot* 7:1.

24. *Moed Katan* 14b.

the *mishna* from *Taanit*: משנכנס אב ממעטין בשמחה - "When *Av* comes in, we reduce rejoicing." The *Talmud* continues, offering a parallel phrase in structure but a reversal in meaning for the month of *Adar*: משנכנס אדר מרבים בשמחה - "Just as when *Av* comes in we reduce rejoicing, so too when *Adar* comes, we increase rejoicing."²⁵ These two statements support and expand upon the earlier principle of assigning good things (increasing joy) to good times and assigning bad things (reducing joy) to bad times.

The principles together reveal a deeper purpose behind the rabbinic construction of the Jewish calendar. It is not that the 9th of *Av*, or the entire month of *Av* for that matter, are intrinsically bad. Rather, one could argue, that the rabbis utilized these principles to purposefully construct an ideology of how events, both good and bad, should shape and be remembered throughout the course of the Jewish year. It seems that their use of these principles was also related to psychological factors concerning how people integrate experience, especially tragic experience, into their lives.

It would be too difficult emotionally to have so many days that commemorate tragic events spread out during the year. There would be more periods when joyous occasions such as weddings would not be able to take place and there would be more frequent transitions from sadness to joy to sadness again. They understood the difficulty of moving between such emotional extremes.²⁶ What the rabbis tried to do was to concentrate negative emotion during a certain period of time.

By concentrating multiple calamities into a specific day or time, they also ensured that mourning would be limited to a specific amount of time. The layering of tragedies

25. *Taanit* 29a.

26. The modern Israeli addition to the calendar of the back to back occurrence of *Yom HaZikaron* and *Yom Ha'atzmaut* differs from this notion.

onto this one period of time creates the feeling that *Av* is truly the lowest point of the year. This construction ensures that people can only move on and up from there. The emotional low of *Av*, therefore, feeds directly into the emotional high of the High Holy Day period, which ends with the greatest time of joy, "*Z'man Simchateinu*," from *Sukkot* to *Simchat Torah*. Although the 17th of *Tammuz*, the period of the 3 weeks, and especially the 9th of *Av* mark a time of intense mourning and sadness, it is their concentrated existence within the larger cycle of the Jewish calendar that enables people to feel joy and happiness during the rest of the year.

Case #2: Mourning Practices in the Month of Av

The focus on imposing limits on mourning continues into the next subject matter - the specifics of how one should behave and mourn during the month of *Av*. This section deals with three specific time periods: the entire month of *Av*, the week in which the 9th of *Av* falls, and the eve and day of the 9th itself. It does not address the period of the 3 weeks (from the 17th of *Tammuz* until the 9th of *Av*) as a distinct unit of time. The 9th of *Av* is of special concern to the rabbis because it is the only day in the calendar, along with *Yom Kippur*, that is a complete 24 hour fast day. *Taanit* 30b also contains comparisons between *Tisha B'Av* and *Yom Kippur*, but that discussion will not be included here.²⁷ For each of the three time periods mentioned above, the *Talmud* attempts to resolve some of the tensions that are raised by differences in opinion regarding more stringent or lenient attitudes toward mourning and observance. The *Talmud* employs three methodologies,

27. Rabbi Lisa Edwards, rabbi of *Beth Chayim Chadashim* has compiled several helpful charts of comparisons between *Tisha B'Av* and *Yom Kippur*. Although the purpose and moods of each are very different, the same things that are forbidden on *Yom Kippur* are also forbidden on *Tisha B'Av*: eating, drinking, bathing, anointing, wearing leather shoes, sexual intercourse.

each of which works to support a more lenient view.

The rabbis' first method of limiting mourning involves citing an exception to a rule. The following mishnaic statement contains a rule followed by an exception:

שבת שחל תשעה באב להיות בתוכה אסור מלספר ומלכבס.
ובחמישי מותרין מפני כבוד השבת.

"The week in which the Ninth of *Av* falls, it is forbidden to cut hair or to wash laundry. But on Thursday that are permitted in honor of *Shabbat*."²⁸

The ruling about laundering is based on the assumption that occupying oneself with ordinary tasks such as laundering would divert attention from the calamities that occurred on the 9th of *Av*. The *mishna* is dealing with the case when *Tisha B'Av* falls on a Friday (*yom shishi*) and it would be impossible to sufficiently prepare for *Shabbat* since one can not launder during the week in which the 9th of *Av* falls.²⁹ The *mishna* suggests that *k'vod ha'Shabbat* - honor of *Shabbat* supercedes *Tisha B'Av*. Indeed, this sentiment is in line with the practice that if the 9th of *Av* falls on *Shabbat* it is deferred until Sunday.

The *Amoraim* comment upon and disagree about the scope of the *mishna*'s ruling and the validity of the exception. Rav Hamnuna raises an objection that seeks to clarify the honor awarded to *Shabbat* by the exception. If the *mishna* means to wash laundry and to wear it - "לכבס וללבוש" - on Thursday, "what honor is there for *Shabbat*," he asks. Rather, the *mishna* means to wash the clothes and to set them aside for *Shabbat*. The *Talmud* continues, "לעולם לכבס וללבוש וכשאינן לו אלא חלוק אחד" - "In fact, [the *mishna* means] to wash laundry and to wear it, and where he has only one shirt." A person who has only one garment may do laundry on the Thursday before *Tisha B'Av*, even though it

28. *Taanit* 26b.

29. Steinsaltz notes that nowadays with a fixed calendar in use, the Ninth of *Av* cannot fall on a Friday.

is ordinarily forbidden to do so, because otherwise the person will have nothing clean to wear on *Shabbat*. To support this interpretation, the *Talmud* brings a statement of Rav Assi in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: "He who has only one shirt is permitted to launder it on the intermediate days of a Festival." *K'vod* for *Shabbat* or a Festival takes precedence. *Shabbat* offers an exception to an otherwise more stringent practice during the week of the 9th of *Av*.

After a detour into a discussion regarding the laundering methods used for different kinds of garments, a disagreement is raised between Rav and Shmuel about the scope of the prohibition during the week of the 9th of *Av*.

אמר רב, לא שנו אלא לפניו אבל לאחריו מותר. ושמואל אמר, אפילו
לאחריו נמי אסור.

"Rav said: They only taught [the prohibition against laundering and cutting hair applies] before it [the 9th of *Av*], but afterwards it is permitted. But Shmuel said: Even afterwards it is forbidden."³⁰

The dispute is about whether the prohibition applies only to the days preceding and including the 9th of *Av* (Rav's view) or to the entire week in which the 9th of *Av* falls (Shmuel's view.) The *Talmud* raises an objection [מיתבי] again the viewpoint of Shmuel. The objection reiterates the mishnaic statement and asks כיצד - How so? [how is Thursday permitted to be an exception]. The *Talmud*'s response provides the refutation of Shmuel.

"If it [the 9th of *Av*] falls on Sunday, it is permitted to wash laundry the entire [preceding] week [since Sunday begins a new week the preceding week is not the week during which the 9th of *Av* falls.] [If the 9th of *Av* falls] On Monday, on Tuesday, on Wednesday, and on Thursday, before it is forbidden, afterwards it is permitted. [If] it falls on Friday, it is permitted to wash laundry on Thursday in honor of *Shabbat*.

The *Talmud* explains that if the 9th of *Av* falls on any day other than Friday, it would still be possible to launder and cut hair before *Shabbat* because these things are actually

30. *Taanit* 29b.

permitted after, just not before, the 9th of *Av*. This is a direct refutation of Shmuel's claim that these things are prohibited during the entire week. This refutation also serves to create a more lenient view towards these two prohibitions. It limits the amount of time that these acts are forbidden to only the days of the week preceding the 9th of *Av*.

The *Talmud* immediately continues with one further degree of leniency. It adds, "If the person did not wash laundry on Thursday, it is permitted for the person to wash laundry on Friday from the time of the afternoon service and onward." If a person did not wash on Thursday in preparation for *Shabbat* that would immediately follow *Tisha B'Av*, then that person could wash laundry on the afternoon of *Tisha B'Av itself*! Although Abaye, and some say it was Rav Acha, cursed those people who acted in this manner, the *Talmud* offers no refutation to this further exception.

This trend towards leniency stands out all the more when compared to later rulings in the codes. In regard to the prohibition of washing laundry before the 9th of *Av*, the *Shulchan Aruch* says,

During the week of the Ninth of *Av*, it is forbidden to cut hair or to wash laundry. Laundry is forbidden that week, even if the person does not intend to wear the clean clothing until after the Ninth of *Av*, and even if he has only one garment. Similarly, it is forbidden to wear freshly washed clothing or to use freshly washed linen, even if they were laundered before the week of the Ninth of *Av*.³¹

Absent from the *Shulchan Aruch* is the exception for *Shabbat* and the exception granted for one who only has one garment. Yosef Caro continues in regard to the permission of these activities after the 9th of *Av*, "After the fast of the Ninth of *Av* is over, cutting one's hair and doing one's laundry are permitted immediately, following Rav."³² *Mishna Berurah* notes, however, that it is customary to refrain from engaging in these activities until midday on the tenth of *Av*. The *halakhah*, therefore, shows a greater degree of

31. *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 551:3.

32. *ibid* 551:4.

discomfort in allowing the practices surrounding *Tisha B'Av* to stop completely on the end of the ninth.

The *Talmud* continues with one other exception to a rule, and in this case, the codes affirm this exception. "It was taught in a *baraita*: If *Tisha B'Av* falls on *Shabbat* [and therefore is observed on Sunday] and similarly if the eve of *Tisha B'Av* falls on *Shabbat* [if *Tisha B'Av* falls on Sunday], a person may eat and drink whatever he needs, and he may serve food on his table like the feast of Solomon in his time." Again, the *Talmud* shows how the observance of *Shabbat* necessitates an exception to the prohibitions, namely in this case, to food and drink. The meal before the fast of *Tisha B'Av* is supposed to be a simple meal, void of meat and wine. When *erev Tisha B'Av* overlaps with *Shabbat*, the restrictions imposed upon the Ninth of *Av* and on the eve of the Ninth of *Av* do not apply on *Shabbat*. The meal should in fact be one appropriate for *Shabbat*, like the feast of Solomon in his time. The *Shulchan Aruch* echoes this sentiment: "If the Ninth of *Av* falls on Sunday or if it falls on *Shabbat* and is deferred until Sunday, one may eat meat and drink wine during the last meal before the fast, and one may even partake of a lavish meal, it being unnecessary to make any changes on account of the impending fast."³³ The "*oneg*" (joyful) element of *Shabbat* as expressed through lavish food takes precedence over the somber tone of *Tisha B'Av* that is expressed through lack of food.

The methodology of the exception to the rule is one way the *Talmud* arrives at a more lenient position. The *Talmud* next employs another kind of methodology that both exposes the tension between differing opinions and also affirms a more lenient viewpoint.

33. *ibid* 552:10.

The method consists of issuing a ruling in accordance with two positions, with respect to the lenient aspect of each position. The *Talmud* employs this method in identical fashion to two questions about time: 1) the length of time of the prohibition against laundering and cutting hair, and, 2) up until what time can one eat before the fast.

In the first debate, three *tannaim* disagree about how long the prohibitions against cutting hair and doing laundry should last.³⁴ They all expound the same verse, each arriving at a different conclusion. The biblical verse they comment on is Hosea 2:13, "And I will bring all her mirth to an end, her feast-days, her months, and her Sabbaths." The rabbis understand this verse as an allusion to the destruction of the temple and a period of mourning that will ensue. The following chart outlines the three positions.

	Position (when laundering and cutting hair are forbidden)	Interpretation of Biblical Verse
Rabbi Meir	"From Rosh Chodesh until the fast" (9th of Av)	"her feast-days"
Rabbi Yehudah	"The entire month" (of Av)	"her months"
Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel ("Rashbag")	"Only in that week alone" (the week in which the 9th falls)	"her Sabbaths"

A *baraita* is then added to support Rabbi Meir; the *baraita* reads, "And he observes mourning from *Rosh Chodesh* until the fast." The *baraita* even extends the argument to mourning in general.

Now, the *Talmud* employs the aforementioned methodology in stating the *halakhah*.

Rava said: The *halakhah* is in accordance with Rashbag. And Rava said: The *halakhah* is in accordance with Rabbi Meir. And both of them are for leniency, and it was necessary [to state both]. ותרוייהו לקולא וצריכה. For if he [Rava] had informed us [that] the *halakhah* is in accordance with Rabbi Meir, I might have said: Even from *Rosh Chodesh*. [Therefore] he informs

34. *Taanit* 29b-30a.

us: The *halakhah* is in accordance with Rashbag. And if he had informed us [that] the *halakhah* is in accordance with Rashbag, I might have said: Even afterwards. [Therefore] he informs us: The *halakhah* is in accordance with Rabbi Meir.

Rabbi Yehudah's position, the most stringent of the three, is rejected. By combining the positions of Meir and Rashbag, Rava arrives at a more lenient view than either alone would have provided. Meir does not mourn after the 9th of *Av*. Rashbag does not mourn more than a week. By combining both, Rava ensures that the mourning period will be less than a week. The period will begin no sooner than the week in which the 9th falls and will end no later than the 9th. Both positions are needed for this leniency. Steinsaltz notes that even though the Babylonian *Talmud* decides that the law is in accordance with the lenient aspects of each view, many communities later adopted some of the stringencies of other tannaitic positions.³⁵

The *Talmud* employs a similar methodology for leniency in regard to the mishnaic statement: ערב תשעה באב לא יאכל אדם שני תבשילין. "[On] the eve of the Ninth of *Av*, a person may not eat two cooked dishes."³⁶ The *Talmud* wants to know at exactly what point one must refrain from eating two cooked dishes; in other words, at what point must one have the last meal before the fast³⁷. In this case, one rabbi offers two positions.

"Rav Yehudah said: They only taught [the *mishna* applies only] from six hours [the 6th hour of the day, i.e. midday] and onward, but from six hours before it is permitted. And Rav Yehudah said: They only taught [this] regarding a meal in which he ceases [eating] [the last meal he eats before the fast], but regarding a meal in which he does not cease [eating] [he does not expect this to be the last meal before the fast], it is permitted."

Once again the *Talmud* continues with this response: ותרוייהו לקולא וצריכה. "And both of them are for leniency, and it was necessary [to state both]. The combining of both of Rav Yehuda's positions ensures that the prohibition will only apply to a meal that is

35. Steinsaltz commentary, 214.

36. *Taanit* 26b.

37. The question of fasting as part of the observance of *Tisha B'Av* was beyond the scope of this section.

One would need to look at Jewish views about fasting in general and in the context of other private and public fast days.

occurring after midday and is considered to be the last meal before the fast. This methodology limits the period in which the prohibition applies and lengthens the time that one can partake of two cooked dishes. Again, the *Talmud* concludes with the most lenient view possible.

The third method the *Talmud* employs for supporting a lenient position is the use of ambiguous language through which to discuss issues of observance. The issue is the eating of meat and the drinking of wine on the eve of *Tisha B'Av*. The *Talmud* seeks to explain an ambiguous term from the *mishna*, "שנה" - "change." The ambiguity ultimately allows for multiple interpretations and resistance to a definitive conclusion. In this case, the leniency of the Talmudic position will also be revealed by contrast with later halakhic writings.

The *mishna* reads: לא יאכל בשר ולא ישתה יין. רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר ישנה. "[On the eve of the Ninth of Av] a person may not eat meat nor drink wine. Rashbag says: One must **change**." What does "change" mean? This term seems broad and open, and begs for interpretation. Not surprisingly, in the *Talmud* Rabbi Yehudah asks: כיצד? "How does he change?" The *Talmud* responds, "If he was accustomed [היה רגיל] to eat two cooked dishes, he should eat one kind, and if he was accustomed to dine with ten people, he should dine with five, if he was accustomed to drink ten cups, he should drink five cups." Steinsaltz, commenting on "אם היה רגיל לאכול"³⁸ says, "If he was accustomed to eat," explains that the quantity of food a person may eat at this meal is not limited, but the way in which it is eaten is emphasized. All the ruling are meant to make the meal as minimally festive as possible. He relies on an opinion by *Rashah* who

38. Steinsaltz Commentary, 217.

suggests that the baraita should read: "If he was accustomed to eat two cooked dishes, he should eat a different kind [מִין אֲחֵר rather than מִין אֶחָד]."

No conclusive *halakhah* is stated in this case. Rather, Rashbag's phrase that "one must make a change" is left open to interpretation. A person should do something out of the ordinary, in both quantity and quality, during the last meal before the fast. The point is to make a distinction and to set the fast day apart from other days. The specifics of how one does that, in regard to food in drink, is flexible, depending on an individual's usual customs. The Talmud's linguistic use of "change," which is open to interpretation, encourages a more lenient practice.

Other than a statement that one should reduce one's intake of meat during the last meal before the fast, the *Talmud* imposes no other restrictions regarding the intake of meat. There is no mention about abstention from meat during the nine days (from *Rosh Chodesh Av*) or during the three weeks. The flexibility and leniency as evidenced in the *Talmud* becomes even more apparent when compared to later halakhic decisions that extend the Talmud's notion of the period of mourning and accord more stringency to the practices. Today, for those who observe the laws and customs of *Tisha B'Av*, meat is not eaten during the nine days. In the words of the *Shulchan Aruch*, "It is customary not to eat meat or drink wine during this week [the week during which *Tisha B'Av* falls]....Some add [the days] from *Rosh Chodesh [Av]*, and some add from the 17th of *Tammuz*."³⁹ How did this custom evolve, given the very different stance in the *Talmud*?

Maasei ha-Geonim, an eleventh century work, tells of a variety of German approaches to this custom.⁴⁰ R. Yakar b. Makhir of Worms (late eleventh century) reports

39. *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 551:9.

40. *Sefer Maasei ha-Geonim*, ed. A. Epstein, sec. 49 (Berlin: 1910), in Shmuel Herzfeld, "Abstention from meat during the nine days: the evolution of the custom," *Le'ela* 51 (2000): 39-47.

that R. Isaac b. Judah, the head of the academy of Mainz, refrained from eating meat from the first of *Av* until the fast of *Tisha B'Av*. R. Yakar does not express bewilderment at this practice. He also reports a conversation with a certain R. Saadiah who preserved another custom. R. Saadiah tells R. Yakar that the actions of Daniel the prophet hint at the custom of not eating meat for three weeks, from the 17th of *Tammuz* until *Tisha B'Av*.⁴¹ Although the Book of Daniel would have been a reaction to the destruction of the first temple, it seems that R. Saadia is attempting to find a text to justify the behavior of certain German Jews who refused to eat meat during this time. The *Tur* and *Beit Yosef* also cite this verse in connection with refraining from eating meat.

Meanwhile, in France, Rashi was unwilling to adopt the more stringent practices of his German counterparts. Rashi retained the teaching of the Babylonian *Talmud* and ignored the customs of Germany.⁴² Twelfth and thirteenth century German Jews made other attempts to ground their practices in texts. Several sources⁴³ cite variations on a passage from the Jerusalem *Talmud*: "Mar says, Our women do not drink wine from the seventeenth of *Tammuz* until the ninth of *Av*. And most of the sages of Lothair have the custom not to eat meat or drink wine from the entrance of *Av* until the ninth...and there are those who hold this custom beginning with the seventeenth day of *Tammuz*."⁴⁴ Can a text that refers to wine, women, and the three weeks really be a proof-text for a German tradition that refers to meat, men, and nine days? While later rabbis (Raviah and R. Nissim Gaon) reject the proof-text, they have no difficulty in declaring that their custom - to refrain from meat for nine days - is without a textual basis. Their source is simply the

41. Daniel 10:2-3.

42. Herzfeld.

43. *Sefer ha-Manhig*, *Sefer ha-Pardes*, *Sefer ha-Orah*, *Machzor Vitry*.

44. Jerusalem Talmud *Taanit* 1:6.

behavior of the nation, "כבר נהגו העם" "the people have already acted."⁴⁵ This is a reason that the rabbis are comfortable with.

Later German scholars codify the custom. R. Meir b. Barukh of Rottenberg (d. 1293) comments in his *Sefer haParnes* that the people do not eat meat for nine days. The *Sefer Minhagim*, by a student of R. Meir states unequivocally that the "custom of all of Israel" is not to eat meat for nine days.⁴⁶ Although the custom did not take hold in France for some time, thirteenth century scholar R. Asher b. Saul in his *Sefer ha-Minhagot* declares that the standard behavior in Provence and Spain (Sefarad) is not to eat meat for nine days.⁴⁷ The figure who normally codifies Franco-German and Spanish teachings, R. Jacob b. Asher (1275-1340), in his *Arbah Turim*, prescribes the following⁴⁸:

...And there are some ascetics who fast from the seventeenth of *Tammuz* and onwards, while some refrain from meat and wine...And some say it relates to the three weeks that Daniel fasted. The custom of Ashkenaz: Some individuals abstain from meat and wine from the seventeenth of *Tammuz* and onwards. And from the New Moon everyone abstains from meat and wine, except for on the Sabbath when eating and drinking occur in the same manner as the whole year...And it is forbidden to change the custom of our ancestors.

The accepted custom, and here custom becomes *halakhah*, is to abstain from eating meat during the nine days, some more pious individuals even abstain for the three weeks.

Only later medieval literature raises the question of possible exceptions to the rule. One exception to the rule is that pregnant women may eat meat until the seventh day of the month.⁴⁹ R. Abraham Klausner (Maharak; Vienna, 14th c.) comments that when one attends a *seudat mitzvah* (a meal for a wedding, *bar mitzvah*, circumcision, or a party celebrating the completion of a Talmudic tractate), it is permissible to eat meat. He warns, however, that those who attend a festive occasion simply as an excuse to gorge

45. *Or Zarua*, Laws of Tisha B'Av, sec. 414.

46. *Sefer Minhagim* of the School of Rabbi Meir ben Baruch of Rothenburg, ed. Israel Elfenbein (New York 1938) 32-4.

47. *Sefer ha-Minhagot*, ed. S. Assaf, in *Sifran shel Rishonim* (Jerusalem: 1935) 175-6.

48. *Orach Chayim* 551.

49. *Leket Yosher*, teachings of R. Israel Isserlein

themselves during the nine days are committing a sin.⁵⁰ The exception of eating meat on certain occasions is still exercised today. As a camper at summer camp I can still recall gathering before dinner to listen to a teacher talk about something he had just studied, then we would all proceed in to the *chader ochel* to eat hamburgers.

Is this exception a "legal fiction" or apologetic so that people would not have to go without meat for nine days? Or, like the rabbis of the *Talmud*, did the later scholars also feel the tension between the intense sadness of the time period and the desire to place limits on the extent of mourning? Like the talmudic exception of laundering before *Shabbat*, could the exception of the *seudat mitzvah* be a move back to a leniency in observance?

Although difficult at times to find, a thread of more lenient thought and observance stretches from the *Talmud* to other places in later times. In medieval times more lenient or flexible views certainly would have been in the minority. Perhaps, then, it is not surprising that we find alternative behavior among a marginalized group of people - women. The description of the following customs demonstrates how women nurtured the more lenient spirit of the *Talmud* by creating new and meaningful approaches to the observance of *Tisha B'Av*.

One custom is described in the section "*Hilchot Tisha B'Av*" in *Chemdat Yamim*.⁵¹ The author describes how every year on the ninth of Av after the noon hour the women would set about the performance of their household duties with utmost vigor, cleaning the beds, removing spider webs, polishing vessels of tin and lead, and scrubbing all the

50. *Sefer ha-Minhagim* le-Rabbenu Avraham Klausner, ed. J.J. Dissin, sec. 133 (Jerusalem: 1978), in Herzfeld.

51. *Chemdat Yamim* Vol. III, 89b, trans. Dudley Weinberg, "A Study of the Seventeenth of Tammuz, the Ninth of Av and the Intervening Period," rabbinic thesis, HUC-JIR, 1941.

rooms. He remarks that the women treat this day as if it were *Purim* or *erev Pesach*. This behavior seemed to the author to be so great a violation of the spirit of the day that he addressed an inquiry to authorities asking whether the women should be restrained from this seemingly inappropriate practice. In the reply to his question he was told that the custom was an old one and was especially current among Ashkenazic women. The authorities stated that the custom was based on the tradition that the Messiah was born on the ninth of *Av* and that the rabbis, out of sympathy for feminine weakness, allowed the women to continue this practice in order that they might not give up the hope for a future redemption.

Similar customs are reported by the author of *B'eir Heitev*⁵² who states that many women would do their laundering on the afternoon of the ninth of *Av* and that they would wash their hair after the time of the *Mincha* service. Here again it is stated that the women were allowed to practice these seemingly inappropriate customs because of their faith in the Messiah.

These customs of the women reflect the change in feeling and tone in the afternoon of Tisha B'Av. Perhaps their actions are related to what would have been the practice of men to put on *tallit* and *tefillin* during the afternoon service after having refrained from doing so during the morning service.⁵³ What the rabbis thought as inappropriate customs were in fact highly creative interpretations and behavior that did indeed reflect the tone of the day.

The examples from all these texts illustrate the lenient spirit present in the *Talmud* and the increasing stringency with which these days came to be observed with the passing

52. *B'eir Heitev*, note 36 to *Orach Chayim* 551:16, in Weinberg.

53. *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chayim* 555:1.

of time. The more lenient Talmudic spirit contains implications for a liberal observance of *Tisha B'Av* today. While an awareness of the days leading up to *Tisha B'Av* could help one to prepare for the experience, the message of concentrating the experience into one day would speak to the reality of most Reform Jewish communities today. The tensions between the desire to enable mourning and memory to occur and the desire to limit excessive mourning are significant for creating a meaningful and relevant Reform experience of *Tisha B'Av*. The message to be learned from this more lenient approach is summarized in the following Talmudic passage from *Bava Batra* 60b⁵⁴.

Our masters taught: When the Temple was destroyed the second time, large numbers in Israel became ascetics, binding themselves neither to eat meat nor to drink wine. R. Joshua got into conversation with them and said, "My sons, why do you eat not meat and drink no wine?" They replied, "Shall we eat meat, which formerly was brought as an offering on the altar, now that the altar has ceased to be? Shall we drink wine, which formerly was poured as a libation on the altar, now that it is poured no longer?" He said to them, "If so, we should eat no bread, because the meal offerings have ceased." They: "Perhaps we will manage with fruit." "We should not eat fruit either, because firstfruits are offered no more." "Perhaps we will manage with other fruits." He: "Well, then, we should not drink water, because the rite of pouring water is no longer observed. [Since they had no answer] they kept silent. So he said to them, "My sons, come and let me advise you. Not to mourn at all is impossible, because the decree that the Temple be destroyed has been executed. But to mourn too much is also impossible, because we may not impose a hardship on the community unless the majority can endure it.".... He who mourns for Jerusalem will merit seeing the renewal of her joy, as it is said, 'Rejoice ye with Jerusalem...join in her jubilation, all ye that have mourned for her' (Isaiah 66:10).

54. Translation from *Sefer Ha'Aggadah*, ed. Hayim Nahman Bialik and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky (New York: Schocken Books, 1992).

Chapter 2

The Liturgy of Lament: *Megillat Eicha* and *Kinot*

Introduction to the Tisha B'Av Liturgy

The guidelines for behavior that were developed by the rabbis of the *Talmud* and later in the medieval codes represent one way of commemorating and mourning the tragic events of the past. Not only were the rabbis engaged in the process of creating halakhic guidelines; they were also engaged in the process of creating liturgical responses to catastrophe. It is through rituals of remembrance that the Jewish people throughout the ages expressed sadness, sorrow, pain, anger, doubt, and hope. These emotions are felt and expressed as much in the liturgies of the day as they are by the aesthetic and ambiance of the whole ritual experience. The *Tisha B'Av* service seeks to follow aspects of Lawrence Hoffman's definition of ritual, that ritual is a conveyer:

like great music or an unarguable set of equations. All three have an aesthetic quality....[ritual] should be the means to a new kind of truth, a multimedia package that shapes ideas even as it delivers them, an emotional and intellectual form of engaging people in their common future.¹

Regarding the *Tisha B'Av* liturgy, the delivery and aesthetic are as powerful as the content. In other words, on *Tisha B'Av* the mood set during the ritual experience is as important as the texts that are recited. The talmudic idea of "assigning bad events to bad days" continues to be reflected as the liturgy moves through multiple layers of texts and history. The liturgy for *Tisha B'Av* consists of four main parts: changes to the regular liturgy and additions of special prayers, special *Torah* and *Haftarah* readings, the chanting of the Book of Lamentations, and the reading of קינות (*Kinot*) – poems of lamentation written during the Middle Ages and beyond.

¹ Lawrence A. Hoffman, "Ritual and the Recovery of Hope: Making Reform Judaism Matter Again," *The Jewish Condition*, ed. Aron Hirt-Manheimer (New York: UAHC, 1995) 396.

The *Ma'ariv* (evening) service for *Tisha B'Av* is basically the same as any weekday service, however the recitation of the prayers is done in a subdued voice and a mournful tone.² The *Parokhet* is removed from the ark as a sign of mourning.³ It is a Sephardic custom to wrap the *Torah* scrolls and the ark with black cloth, as if the *Torah*, too, is mourning.⁴ For this reason, *Tisha B'Av* is also called the "Black Fast." After the *Kaddish*, the Book of Lamentations is chanted, followed by the *kinot* (both will be discussed later.)

Several minor changes in the *Ma'ariv* and *Shacharit* (morning) services serve to reinforce the mood of *Tisha B'Av*. The passage beginning with *תתקבל* - "May [the prayers] be accepted" is omitted from the *Kaddish* for both evening and morning services because Lamentations 3:8 suggests that the gates of prayer are closed and God will not hear any supplications: "And when I cry and plead, God shuts out my prayer" (*שתם תפלתי*). If the line *שעשה לי כל צרכי* - "who provides for all my needs" is omitted from *Birchot HaShachar* (the morning blessings), it is said instead during the *Mincha* (afternoon) service. In the *Shacharit* service of the Sephardic rite, *Shirat Ha'azinu* is substituted rite for *Shirat Hayam* because Moses' song of warning (Deut. 32) is more suited than his song of rejoicing after having crossed the Red Sea.⁵ After the *Amidah*, *Tachanun*, which consists of prayers for grace and pardon, is omitted. *Tallit* and *tefillin* are not worn at *Shacharit*.⁶ After the *Torah* reading, the congregation again recites the *kinot*, until it "has exhausted its ample capacity for mourning and lamentation."⁷

² *Orach Chayim* 554:17.

³ *Orach Chayim* 559:2.

⁴ Abraham Rosenfeld, *The Authorised Kinot for the Ninth of Av* (London: I. Labworth & Co., 1965) xiii.

⁵ A.Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy and Its Development* (New York: Schocken Books, 1960).

⁶ *Orach Chayim* 553:1.

⁷ Abraham Milgram, *Jewish Worship* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1971) 280.

A special prayer, *Aneinu* ("Answer us"), recited on all fast days, is inserted into the *Amidah* of the morning and afternoon services. *Aneinu* is mentioned in the *Talmud* (*Taanit* 13b). It is inserted into the *Shema Koleinu* prayer, the prayer that asks God to "hear our voice" and blesses God who "hears prayer." The prayer asks for the drawing near of God's Presence during times of distress. The prayer reads as follows:

עֲנֵנוּ יְהוָה עֲנֵנוּ, בְּיוֹם צוֹם תַּעֲנִיתֵנוּ, כִּי בְצָרָה גְדוֹלָה אָנֹכֵנוּ. אֵל תִּפְּנֶה אֵל רַשְׁעֵנוּ, וְאַל תִּסְתֵּר
פְּנֶיךָ מִמֶּנּוּ, וְאַל תִּתְעַלֵּם מִתַּחֲנוּנֵנוּ. הִיָּה נָא קְרוֹב לְשׁוֹעֲתֵנוּ, וְהִיָּה נָא חֹסֵד לְנַחֲמֵנוּ, כָּכֶם נִקְרָא
אֱלֹהֵינוּ עֲנֵנוּ, כִּדְבַר שְׁנֵאמַר, וְהִיָּה כָכֶם נִקְרָאנוּ וְנֵאֱמָר, עוֹד הֵם מִדְּבָרִים וְנֵאֱמָר אֲשֶׁמַּע. כִּי
אָתָּה יְהוָה הַעוֹנֶה בְּעֵת צָרָה, פּוֹדֶה וּמַצִּיל בְּכָל עֵת צָרָה וְצוּקָה. בְּרוּךְ אָתָּה יְהוָה, הַעוֹנֶה בְּעֵת צָרָה.

Answer us, *Adonai*, answer us, on this day of our fast, for we are in great distress. Do not pay attention to our wickedness, do not hide Your face from us, and do not ignore our supplication. Please be near to our outcry, please let your kindness comfort us – before we call to you answer us, as it is said: "And it will be that before they call I will answer; they have not yet spoken and I will hear."⁸ For You, *Adonai*, are the one who answers in time of distress, who redeems and rescues in every time of distress and suffering. Blessed are you, *Adonai*, who answers in time of distress.⁹

The tone of the day shifts at the *Mincha* service. Hope and comfort are the central themes of the service, which reflect the name given to the entire month of *Av*, "*Menachem Av*." At *Mincha*, the *tallit* and *tefillin* are put on, and prayers that were omitted in the morning are recited. In the *Amidah*, another prayer, *Nachem* ("Comfort"), is added before the closing blessing of *Boneh Yerushalayim*.¹⁰ This prayer is mentioned in the *Talmud*, and it was a regular part of the *Tisha B'Av* service during the geonic period.¹¹ The prayer reads in part:

⁸ Isaiah 65:24.

⁹ The translation is mainly taken from the ArtScroll *siddur*.

¹⁰ Isaac Klein, *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1979) 250.

¹¹ Milgram 282.

נחם יהוה אלהינו את אבלי ציון, ואת אבלי ירושלים, ואת העיר האבלה בהחרבה והבוזה והשוממה... והיא יושבת וראשה חפוי כאשה עקרה שלא ילדה... על כן ציון במר תבכה, וירושלים תתן קולת. לבי לבי על חלליהם... ברוך אתה יהוה, מנחם ציון ובונה ירושלים.

Comfort, *Adonai* our God, the mourners of Zion, and the mourners of Jerusalem, and the city that is in mourning, destroyed, despised, and desolate....She sits with her head covered like a barren woman who never gave birth....Therefore, Zion weeps bitterly and Jerusalem raises her voice. My heart, my heart – [it aches] for their slain....Blessed are you, *Adonai*, who comforts Zion and rebuilds Jerusalem.¹²

This prayer adds the words, “who comforts Zion” to the regular *chatimah*, the closing, of the prayer for Jerusalem. The framing of this prayer with words of comfort emphasizes its purpose in offering comfort to the distressed. Only during the *Mincha* service, when the tone has shifted from that of distress and mourning to one of rebuilding and redemption, can words of comfort be given and received. Some people recite *Kiddush Levanah* (the Sanctification of the Moon) at the close of *Tisha B'Av*. It is customary to defer this service until after *Tisha B'Av* because of its joyful intention.¹³

There are special *Torah* and *Haftarah* readings for *Tisha B'Av*. The *Talmud* states¹⁴,

It is forbidden to read the *Torah*, the Prophets, and the Writings, and to study the *Mishna*, the *Talmud*, and the *Midrash*, the *Halakhot* and *Aggadot*. But he may read a section that he is not accustomed to read, and he may study a section that he is not accustomed to study. And he may read from Lamentations, Job, and the bad things in Jeremiah.

While this *Talmudic* passage does not specifically speak to the *Torah* reading that is part of the service, it does address what biblical readings would be acceptable. The *Talmud* suggests that study is itself a source of joy and, therefore, it is only permissible to study passages about distressing events. The readings for the day, because they reflect such “bad things” and because they are part of the service, are therefore permissible.¹⁵ *Megillah* 31b contains a discussion regarding which portions should be read on *Tisha B'Av*. The following chart summarizes the Biblical selections:

¹² Translation mainly from Milgram 282.

¹³ ArtScroll *Siddur* 612.

¹⁴ *Taanit* 30a.

¹⁵ *Orach Chayim* 554:1.

	<i>Shacharit</i>	<i>Mincha</i> (same as on other Fast days)
Torah Reading	Deuteronomy 4:25-40	Exodus 32:11-14 and 34:1-10
Haftarah Reading	Jeremiah 8:13-9:23 (chanted the tune of <i>Eicha</i>) ¹⁶	Isaiah 55:6-56:8

Deuteronomy 4:25 is relevant because it contains the warning that Moses gave to the Israelites regarding the consequence of disobeying the word of God. Moses' words contain a reference to exile, but he reassures them that if they return to God, then God will have mercy and redeem them. The *Haftarah* portion reflects Jeremiah's view of the disaster that befell the people with the destruction of the first Temple. Jeremiah mourns, in a very personal way, the destruction of his city and the exile of his people.

Both of the portions for the afternoon offer consolation and hope, as do the insertions in the afternoon liturgy. Exodus 32 deals with Moses' plea to God for mercy for Israel after the incident of the Golden Calf. God accepts the prayer of Moses and grants forgiveness. The Exodus 34 passage contains God's revelation to Moses of the Thirteen Attributes of the merciful God, ending with God's renewal of the covenant with the people. The *Haftarah* contains Isaiah's words of consolation and hope for all who return to God.

Milgram writes, "Comforting as is the *Haftarah* of the Minhah service, it is not enough to offset the scores of dirges read during the fast day and the grim warnings of the prophetic readings on the three Sabbaths before *Tisha B'Av*."¹⁷ The rabbis designated selections from the latter part of the Isaiah as prophetic readings for every *Shabbat* between *Tisha B'Av* and *Rosh HaShanah*. Each of the seven *haftarot* is filled with words of comfort. The first *Shabbat* after *Tisha B'Av* is called *Shabbat Nachamu*, after the *Haftarah* (Isaiah 40:1-26), which begins with the words, נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי - "Comfort, comfort My people."

¹⁶ *Orach Chayim* 559:4

The seven weeks of comfort are meant to revive the hopes of the Jewish people. Rabbi Lisa Edwards observes, that the seven Sabbaths of consolation are a kind of extended *shiva* (seven weeks instead of seven days) that lead right up to *Rosh HaShanah*. If the Ninth of *Av* represents the lowest point on the calendar, *Shabbat Nachamu* begins the ascent into the *Yamin HaNoraim*, the Days of Awe.

Megillat Eicha ~ The Book of Lamentations

The most characteristic element of the *Ma'ariv* service on *Tisha B'Av* is the reading of the Book of Lamentations. During the *Talmudic* period it was read only in private. In the geonic period, however, it became part of the synagogue liturgy.¹⁸ In the following excerpt, Abraham Milgram summarizes the setting for the reading of Lamentations:

The synagogue is stripped of its adornments. Even the curtain of the ark is removed. All bright lights are extinguished. Only enough light is left to permit the worshippers to follow the service. In some synagogues candles are distributed to the worshipers and, and they follow the service by candlelight. The people remove their shoes and sit on the floor or on low stools like mourners, and prayers are recited in subdued voices.¹⁹

The scene described above is a testament to the eternity of the Book of Lamentations. The language and melody of Lamentations can evoke feelings of sadness even today.

Lamentations "eternalizes the catastrophic moment and its aftermath, freezing it in time, probing it from various perspectives, and preserving it forever."²⁰ Lamentations is not only an expression of suffering, it is a memorialization of suffering.

The liturgical setting described above, therefore, complements the content of the Book of Lamentations. *Megillat Eicha*, one of the five scrolls of the Bible, is a lament for what happened to the Jews and their Temple. איכה - the opening word "How?" - is not a

¹⁷ Milgram 282.

¹⁸ Milgram 278.

¹⁹ Milgram 278.

²⁰ Adele Berlin, *Lamentations A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002) 1.

question in search of historical-or even religious-answers so much as it is a question that serves to express the anguish of a bereaved people.²¹ "*Eicha*" is an existential and eternal question. Lamentations contains five poems or chapters that describe the people's response to the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem (589 to 587 BCE), the destruction of the first Temple, and the bitter conditions in the war's aftermath. Three general themes are found in Lamentation, all significant to the *Tisha B'Av* observance.²² The first theme is mourning for the destruction of Jerusalem and the first Temple and despair over exile.²³ The second theme is a hope for relief from punishment for sinful behavior.²⁴ The third theme is a hope for restoration of the Temple, Jerusalem, and Israel's relationship with God.²⁵

A long tradition ascribes the authorship of Lamentations to the prophet Jeremiah. Like the book of Jeremiah, Lamentations uses the lament form to grieve over the loss experienced by the destruction of Jerusalem. Although Lamentations is probably a near contemporary of the prophetic book, most scholars agree that it is unlikely that Jeremiah is the author because the language and spirit is too different.²⁶ Furthermore, Lamentations makes no mention of the prophet Jeremiah, and the Hebrew canon locates Lamentation in *Ketuvim* (Writings), among the five *megillot*. Kathleen O'Connor argues that one or more anonymous authors composed the laments, possibly survivors who recited them at the site of the destruction.²⁷ She concludes that the events described were personal for the author/s.

In order to see how Lamentations functions in the liturgical context, it will help to understand the structure and content of the text itself, although it will not be possible in this

²¹ Theodore Weinberger, "Tish'ah B'Av and the Interpretation of Suffering," *Theodicy* 18 (1997): 57.

²² Jim Kaufman, "Traditional Liturgy: Two Responses," rabbinic thesis, HUC-JIR, 1973, 38.

²³ See Lam. 1:1-3.

²⁴ See Lam. 3:52-56.

²⁵ See Lam. 5:19-22.

²⁶ Kathleen M. O'Connor, "Lamentations," *The Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (London: SPCK, 1992) 178.

²⁷ O'Connor 178.

limited capacity to engage in close textual reading. The Book of Lamentations is constructed around a specific structure and meter. Four poems (chapters 1-4) are alphabetical acrostics. Chapter 3 is an intensification of this acrostic; three verses are devoted to each letter of the alphabet. Although chapter 5 is not an acrostic, it too corresponds to the alphabet because it contains twenty-two lines. The literary structure serves two functions. The other four chapters make a frame around chapter 3, the longest poem and the poem that expresses hope in an explicit way (v. 21-66). The framing serves to emphasize the theological centrality of hope in chapter 3. The overall alphabetical design reveals that the poems are not haphazard, but carefully created. "Their tight structuring creates the effect of confining the experience of overwhelming chaos, thus making the people's tragedy appear survivable."²⁸

Lamentations represents one form of biblical poetry, and the form appears not only in the Book of Lamentations, but also in parts of Jeremiah and Psalms.²⁹ The hallmark of most biblical poetry is parallelism (a structure something like a/b/b/a in lines of similar length.) Lamentations has its own special rhythm called *kinah* meter, which occurs throughout the scroll. *Kinah* meter refers to sets of lines of unequal lengths that produce a rhythm often described as 3:2 in terms of accented syllables.³⁰ This "limping rhythm," three beats followed by two, characterizes the dirge or death wail.³¹ Coupled with the haunting, melancholy trope for the chanting of *Eicha*, the aural experience of Lamentations can be very moving.

²⁸ O'Connor 179.

²⁹ See Psalms 74, 79, and 137.

³⁰ Berlin 2.

³¹ O'Connor 179. See Lamentations 1:1, 2:1, 4:1.

Although the term *kinah* does not appear in the book of Lamentations, rabbinic literature calls the book of Lamentations "*Kinot, megillat Kinot, or sefer Kinot.*"³² The term modern scholars most consistently apply to Lamentations is communal lament.³³ The lament is personal for the poet, but Lamentations deals with suffering on a national and communal scale.

Lamentations makes use of literary techniques such as personification and metaphor that aid in the difficult task of describing pain and suffering with words. Chapters 1, 2, and 4 contain a variety of female images to depict Judah and Jerusalem. Personification allows things, or in this case places, to take on qualities of persons. בת ציון (*Bat Zion*) - "daughter Zion," personifies Jerusalem, and even speaks:

May it never befall you, all who pass along the road – look about and see: Is there any agony like mine?...For these things do I weep, my eyes flow with tears, far from me is any comforter who might revive my spirit; my children are forlorn, for the foe has prevailed.³⁴

Tod Linafelt contrasts the *Bat Zion* of chapter 1 and 2 with the "suffering man" in chapter 3.³⁵ He writes about how *Bat Zion's* expression of suffering is also about protest, in contrast to the "patient suffer" of chapter 3. Lament is a form of protest, as in this passage from chapter 2:

Cry out to *Adonai* from the heart, wall of Daughter Zion. She tears like a torrent, day and night! Give yourself no rest, and do not let your eyes be still. Arise! Wail in the night, at the beginning of every watch. Pour out your heart like water in front of *Adonai*. Lift your hands to him for the lives of your children, who collapse from hunger in the middle of the street.³⁶

Chapter 3, on the other hand, has a broader emphasis on reconciliation with God rather than confrontation. Both views are important and necessary. However, Linafelt offers an alternative perspective on the significance of *Bat Zion*. Rather than see her as the typical

³² B. B. Bat. 14b, y. Shab. 16:15, b. Hag. 8b.

³³ Berlin 24.

³⁴ Lamentations 1:12 and 16; also see 1:12-22, 2:11, 20-22.

³⁵ Tod Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000) 4-7.

³⁶ Lamentations 2:18-19.

female victim, as many scholars do, Linafelt views *Bat Zion* as the vehicle for crying out to a destructive or silent God.

Other more negative female images are used as metaphors for the devastated Jerusalem: widow, adulteress, menstruant woman, and abused woman. The woman as widow is bereaved and alone. One of the classical rabbinic ideas in these texts and in the ideology of *Tisha B'Av*, is the view that persecution and oppression is a result of Israel's sins. Only repentance and return to God will effect God's restoration of the temple and redemption of the Jewish people. The negative female imagery becomes a metaphor for sin and transgression. Menstrual impurity overlaps with adultery (1:8). "תמאתה (her uncleanness) clings to her skirts, she took no thought of her future" (1:9). "Jerusalem has become among them [enemies] לנדה (a menstruant woman) (1:17)." *Bat Zion* describes herself as abused, beaten, and tortured (1:12-27). The metaphor conveys that there is no suffering worse than that of an abused woman. However, as no metaphor is complete, suffering in this book ultimately knows no limits of gender, age, or class.³⁷

The unrelieved portrayal of suffering is interrupted, though, in the middle of Lamentations by an expression of hope and of God's benevolence³⁸, "The kindness of *Adonai* has not ended, God's mercies are not spent. They are renewed every morning - ample is your grace. *Adonai* is my portion, says my soul; therefore will I hope in God." (3:22-24) Yet, the sufferer expresses a degree of doubt. The poet does not talk of hope without any reservation. In 3:29 the poet adds, "אולי יש תקווה" – "there may yet be hope." Restoration is still dependent upon introspection and repentance. The rabbis bring out this hope by changing the end of the Book of Lamentations for its use in the liturgical setting.

³⁷ Berlin 10.

³⁸ Joze Krasovec, "The Source of Hope in the Book of Lamentations," *Vetus Testamentum* XLII, 2 (1992): 230.

The second to last verse is repeated after the last verse; rather than ending with "For truly you have rejected us, bitterly raged against us (5:22), the reading concludes with, "Cause us to return, *Adonai*, to yourself, and we will return; renew our days as of old" (5:21) (הַשִּׁיבֵנו יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנָשׁוּבָה חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם). The melodies that have been written for these Hebrew words serve to emphasize this verse even further.

Theologies of sin, repentance, guilt, suffering, and hope are embedded in the text of Lamentations. The liturgical setting of Lamentations, however, was constructed through the lens of the rabbinic theologies of the geonic period. Rabbinic interpretations of Lamentations, and the classical theologies that developed from and that were read into the text, are mainly collected in the midrashic work *Eicha Rabba* (Lamentations Rabba). The *midrashim* kept Lamentations alive, granting it eternity by embellishing and delving deeper into the metaphors and themes mentioned above, and interpreting the text in the light of their time. For the rabbis, destruction and redemption are theologically linked.

The *midrash* to Lamentations contains no less than fourteen *petichtaot* (proems - introductory comments) devoted to the phrase "How solitary sits the city" and thirteen to the single word *eicha*.³⁹ A major theme the rabbis addressed in the *midrash* was the gap left by the absence of God's voice in the book of Lamentations. In the *midrash*, God, too, is personified. Chapter 24 of the proems in Lamentations Rabba, which we will examine more closely, addresses two central themes: God's role in the suffering of the people and the value of hope and restoration. Although it is beyond the scope of this work to analyze the text in full, two passages will demonstrate the rabbinic understandings of these themes.

³⁹ Linafelt 103.

In the first passage, the rabbis are commenting on a verse from Isaiah, "And on that day did *Adonai*, the God of hosts, call to weeping, and to lamentation" (22:12). The *midrash* offers this interpretation:

At the time when the Holy One, blessed be He, sought to destroy the Temple, God said, 'So long as I am in its midst, the nations of the world will not touch it; but I will close my eyes so as not to see it, and swear that I will not attach myself to it until the time of the end arrives.' Then came the enemy and destroyed it.⁴⁰

This interpretation implicates God in the destruction. God ultimately permitted the destruction to occur by removing God's Presence from the temple. Other *midrashim*⁴¹ take this image farther, using the imagery of divorce to show how God (the husband) deserted and cast out Israel (the wife.) O'Connor observes that if *Bat Zion* is an abused woman, then most disturbing of all is the portrayal of God as the abuser.⁴² Indeed, this metaphor is highly problematic for the modern mind to comprehend. In trying to comprehend the seeming disappearance of God, the rabbinic mind implicated God in the destruction, but then justified God's action based on Israel's guilt and blame.

The passage continues, "At that time the Holy One, blessed be He, wept and said, 'Woe is me! What have I done?'" Although it turns out that God is really more concerned about God's image in front of the nations, the rabbis do imagine a deeply troubled and sorrowful God:

At that time Metatron [an angel] came, fell upon his face, and spoke before the Holy One, blessed be He: 'Sovereign of the Universe, let me weep, but you do not weep.' God replied to him, 'If you do not let me weep now, I will repair to a place which you have no permission to enter, and will weep there,' as it is said, 'But if you will not hear it, my soul will weep in secret for pride (Jer. 13:17).

In the rabbinic mind, God was not absent; God, too, was mourning. God's cry might not have been audible to the human ear because God was in a secret place, but God was weeping along with the people. Other *midrashim*, commenting on the same Isaiah verse,

⁴⁰ Lamentations Rabba 24, Soncino Edition, 41.

⁴¹ See Lamentations Rabba 1:3.

⁴² O'Connor 180.

also picture God lamenting. In *Pesikta deRav Kahana*, God weeps, laments, exclaimed "Eicha," extinguished lights, went barefoot, sat in silence, turned over the couches, and rent a garment.⁴³ God's descent into mourning has gone to the extreme. Lament becomes a source of consolation because God, too, is reciting lamentations.

The *midrash* in Lamentations Rabba moves into the second major theme – the rabbis' question of whether there is any hope for the future. In order to know whether there is hope for restoration and return, the rabbis seek to understand the nature of Israel's suffering, the source of Israel's transgression, and the extent of God's punishment. In the *midrash*, Abraham appears before God to challenge and ask God,

'Sovereign of the Universe, why have you exiled my children and delivered them over to heathen nations....and destroyed the Temple, the place where I offered my son Isaac as a burnt-offering before you?' The Holy One, blessed be He, replied to Abraham, 'Thy children sinned and transgressed the whole of the *Torah* and the twenty-two letters in which it is composed.'Abraham spoke before the Holy One, blessed be He: 'Sovereign of the Universe, who testifies against Israel that they transgressed your law?' God replied to him, 'Let the *Torah* come and testify against Israel.'⁴⁴

The *Torah* will not testify against Israel, therefore, Abraham calls forth the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Abraham convinces each letter of its importance to the children of Israel and they, too, will not testify. Abraham asks God to have compassion on Israel for his sake, since he did not withhold his son Isaac from the altar. Isaac, Jacob, and Moses are then summoned. They each ask God to remember their good deeds and devotion to God and to have mercy on Israel. God does not respond.

At the moment that Moses lifts his voice to confront God's silence, Rachel, the matriarch, of her own volition, appears and bursts into speech before God. Rachel reveals to God her account of her marriage to Jacob. When the time arrived for her to marry, she learned that her father planned to substitute her older sister Leah in her place. Rachel disclosed the plan to Jacob and gave him a sign so that he could distinguish between Rachel

⁴³ *Pesikta deRav Kahana*, Piska 15.

and Leah. However, she then relented and had pity on her sister that she should not be shamed. Rachel showed Leah all the signs that she had arranged with Jacob. More than that, she went beneath the bed upon which they lay and made all the replies in order that Jacob not recognize her sister's voice. Then, Rachel offers this moving plea to God,

I did her a kindness, was not jealous of her, and did not expose her to shame. And if I, a creature of flesh and blood, formed of dust and ashes, was no envious of my rival and did not expose her to shame and contempt, why should you, a King who lives eternally and are merciful, be jealous of idolatry in which there is no reality, and exile my children and let them be slain by the sword, and their enemies have done with them as they wished.⁴⁵

The mercy of God is stirred and God replies,

For your sake, Rachel, I will restore Israel to their place. And so it is written, 'Thus said *Adonai*: A voice is heard in *Ramah*, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are not' (Jer. 31:15). This is followed by, 'Thus said *Adonai*: Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for your work shall be rewarded....and there is hope for your future, said *Adonai*; and your children shall return to their own border' (ib. 16).

Again, this text provides a female voice of protest to God. Rachel's challenge to God is audacious. She presumes that her behavior can provide a model for God's behavior.⁴⁶ In the end, her plea to God elicits a compassionate response. The conclusion of the *midrash*, therefore, affirms the sense of hope that can be found in the Book of Lamentations and extends this hope into later ages. Other rabbinic texts, especially the *midrashim* in *Pesikta deRav Kahana* on the seven *haftarot* of comfort, also seek to encourage the value of hope.⁴⁷

Although the anguish appears to become unbearable, the poet of Lamentations, the rabbis, and God exhibit compassion for the suffering people. Reading the book of Lamentations together with the rabbinic *midrashim*, causes one to see the generality and eternity of the themes within the texts. "The time-bound chronicle of Lamentations was

⁴⁴ Soncino 44.

⁴⁵ *ibid* 48.

⁴⁶ Dvora E. Weisberg, "Men Imagining Women Imagining God: Gender Issues in Classical *Midrash*," *Agendas for the Study of Midrash the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Marc Lee Raphael (Williamsburg: College of William and Mary, 1999) 76.

⁴⁷ See especially *Piska* 16 on "Comfort, comfort my people."

systematically reread as a time-less document of Jewish suffering."⁴⁸ The feature of unspecificity means that the poems lent themselves to use in new contexts; to the destruction of the second Temple and to the long history of the suffering of Jews throughout the ages.⁴⁹ This sense of the eternity of Lamentations continues into the Middle Ages and beyond.

Kinot ~ Medieval Lament Poetry

The poetry of Lamentations took on new forms during the Middle Ages. After the events surrounding the destruction of both temples were incorporated into legend and liturgy, the tragedies that the Jewish people experienced during the Middle Ages lent new meaning to suffering and loss. Linafelt writes, "In the Middle Ages, the interpretive urge to 'pile on' texts seems to have been channeled from midrashic interpretation into the writing of poetry."⁵⁰ Liturgical poems, known as *piyyutim*, were written for services and special occasions and were incorporated into *siddurim*. One of the earliest and well-known writers was Eleazar ben Kallir. The *piyyutim* written for *Tisha B'Av* were referred to as *Kinot* (dirges or laments). Many of these poems in the Hebrew contain alphabetical acrostics, rhyming meter, and repeated refrains.

Most rites, except some of the Sephardic, begin with Kallir's *kinot* and end with the "Zionides," a series of poems that express memories of Jerusalem and hope and for its restoration. These poems continue to portray Zion as a woman. The first of the Zionides is a poem of Judah HaLevi, the Spanish poet and philosopher of the later 11th - early 12th

⁴⁸ David G. Roskies, ed. *The Literature of Destruction Jewish Responses to Catastrophe* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1988) 49.

⁴⁹ Paul M. Joyce, "Sitting Loose to History: Reading the Book of Lamentations Without Primary Reference to its Original Historical Setting," *In Search of True Wisdom*, ed. Edward Ball, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* (1999): 248.

⁵⁰ Linafelt 118.

centuries. The ordering of the *kinot* reflects the *Tisha B'Av* day, which moves from lament and sorrow to hope and joy.

Many of the *kinot* contain biblical and exegetical allusions to events such as the sacrifice of Isaac, the death by fire of Aaron's sons, the Temple sacrifice, the oppressor Haman, and the martyrdom of the rabbis.⁵¹ Yerushalmi writes, "...there is a pronounced tendency to subsume even major new events to familiar archetypes, for even the most terrible events are somehow less terrifying when viewed within old patterns rather than in their bewildering specificity."⁵² Other *kinot* contrast the destruction of Jerusalem with positive biblical references. For example, two of the excerpts below (6 & 7) show how the authors contrast the glory of Israel's departure from Egypt with the degradation of Israel's departure from Jerusalem. They represent "the realization of a structural contrast in Jewish historical experience, built around the dramatic polarity of two great historical departures (Egypt/Jerusalem – Exodus/Exile)...."⁵³ Even in its structure, the seventh excerpt represents a familiar paradigm from the Passover *seder*. To summarize Linafelt, just these qualities – its allusive, exegetical style and its theological audacity – make the *piyyut* of particular interest to the idea of the eternity of Lamentations.⁵⁴

Although many of the *kinot* were written in response to specific historical events, such as the destruction of the Temples, the Crusades, the burning of the *Talmud* in Paris, etc., the repeated themes, memories, and emotions found in the collection of *kinot* serve to create a sense of timelessness. In Yerushalmi's words, we may safely assume that what was "remembered" had little to do with historical knowledge.⁵⁵ The writers of *kinot* were not concerned with dates or years, but with broader paradigms of suffering embedded within the

⁵¹ Roskies 72.

⁵² Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982) 36.

⁵³ Yerushalmi 44.

Jewish cycle of time. The referencing of known events made the *kinot* into representations of collective memory that were sources of evocation and identification.⁵⁶ In many of the *kinot*, the use of the personal "I" and the collective "we" is interchangeable. Yerushalmi writes, "Both the language and gesture are geared to spur, not so much a leap of memory as a fusion of past and present. Memory here is no longer recollection, which still preserves a sense of distance, but reactualization. The *kinot* relive collective memory.

The following excerpts from *kinot* express some of the themes stated above.⁵⁷

Resisting the desire to analyze further, I let the language of lament speak for itself. The last excerpt is from the *Nusach Sefardi* (Sephardi rite.) It had not been translated; therefore, I provide my own English translation.

- 1) By Eleazar ben Kalir (7th C?): *Eich Enachem* - How shall I be comforted?
 How can you offer me empty comfort when my harp is turned to mourning?
 In my allotted heritage the yoke I must bear is burdensome beyond endurance;
 O how shall I be comforted?
 Every year on this day the season of mourning recurs for me,
 And behold, I am saddened and deserted for more than a thousand years;
 O how shall I be comforted?
 The Lion was lured forth from his thicket and crushed the Temple,
 And he exiled from his dwelling those who did offer sacrifices;
 O how shall I be comforted?
 A city once full of cheering crowds, with more than four hundred houses of study, he brought to utter desolation;
 O how shall I be comforted?
 Haman swooped to destroy my precious ones, and ruled over my favorites when I tore my garments in grief;
 O how shall I be comforted?
 Numerous are my sign and mighty are my complaints, great is my moaning;
 And as for thee, O *Adonai*, how long?
 O how shall I be comforted?
 The worshippers of the idols do mock me: "Your replies remain unfaithful."
 (But even yet,) will he who brings down to the grave and brings up again, look down from heaven (upon us).
 And then will I be comforted.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Linafelt 119.

⁵⁵ Yerushalmi 43.

⁵⁶ Yerushalmi 44.

⁵⁷ For the full text of the *kinot*, see Appendix 2.

⁵⁸ Rosenfeld 137-39.

2) By Eleazar ben Kalir: *Em habanim* – The mother of children

The mother of children moan like a dove, She mourns in her heart and complains out loud, She cries bitterly, calls out desperately, She sheds tears, is silent, is stunned....“My dark one, I will never desert you. I shall again reach out my hand to take you. Your complaints have ended, they are no more. My perfect one, I will not forsake you and I will not forget you.”⁵⁹

3) By Judah Halevi (1080-1145)⁶⁰: *Tzion, halo tishali* - O Zion

O Zion, will you not ask after the well-being of your captives?
For they the remainder of your flock inquire after your welfare. Receive peace from every side, from west, east, north and south, from far and near. Receive also the greetings from the prisoners of hope, who shed tears like Mount Hermon's dew, and year to shed them on your hills. When I bewail your humiliations I am a Jackal, but when I dream of the return of your captivity then I am a harp for your songs....I would choose for my soul to be poured out on the very place where the spirit of God was poured out upon your chosen ones....O who will make me wings that I could wend my way afar? I will make my own broken heart find its way amidst your broken ruins....The air of your land is the very life of your souls, and the dust of your earth is as flowing myrrh, and your river is like the drops of honeycomb....O Zion, perfection of beauty, you acquired love and affection from of old, and the souls of your companions are still with you....Happy is the one who waits and will succeed in witnessing the rising of your light, when over him shall break forth your dawn. Then shall one behold the welfare of your chosen ones, and will exult in your rejoicing when you shall return to your youthfulness as of old.⁶¹

4) By Abraham ibn Ezra (1092-1167): *Ad ana* - How much longer?⁶²

How much longer shall there be weeping in Zion and mourning in Jerusalem? O have mercy upon Zion, and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Not only did the tribes of Jacob weep bitterly, but also the very plants shed tear; the standards of Jeshurun covered their heads and the Pleiades and Orion grew dim.

How much longer shall there be weeping in Zion and mourning in Jerusalem?

The Patriarchs entreated, but God did not hearken; the children cried out, but their father did not answer; the voice of the *Torah* was crying bitterly, but the faithful Shepherd inclined not his ear.

How much longer shall there be weeping in Zion and mourning in Jerusalem?

The Holy seed have donned sackcloth, even the heavenly hosts have made sackcloth their covering; the sun became dim and the moon also, and the stars withdrew their brightness.

How much longer shall there be weeping in Zion and mourning in Jerusalem?

The Almighty caused all our virtues to be forgotten, because we, wayward in heart, have forgotten the *Shabbat*; stir thyself for Zion with great zeal, and cause your bright light to shine upon the city that was so populous.

O have mercy upon Zion, and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.⁶³

⁵⁹ Linafelt 145-46.

⁶⁰ His name is written in the Hebrew text (Rosenfeld xxiii).

⁶¹ Rosenfeld 152-53.

⁶² The Hebrew is an alphabetical acrostic.

⁶³ Rosenfeld 38-39.

5) By Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg (1215-1293): O Law, Consumed by Fire⁶⁴

O [Law], consumed by fire, seek the welfare of those who mourn for you, of those who yearn to dwell in the count of your habitation. Of those who yearn for the dust of the earth, who grieve and are horrified over the conflagration of your parchments. They grope in the dark, bereft of light, indeed, they long for the daylight to shine upon them and upon you....How was it that [the *Torah*] given [by God], the Consuming Fire, should be consumed by fire of mortals, and that the heathens were not singed through your burning coals?....O [my Holy Law], was it for this that my creator delivered you with lightning and fire, that at the end fire should blaze upon your skirts?.... O Sinai, instead of putting on a mantle, cover yourself with sackcloth, change your garments and put on widow's clothes. I will shed tears until they swell as a stream, and reach the graves of your two noble chiefs. And I will inquire of Moses and Aaron, [who were] on Mount Hor: "Is there then a new Law, is that why they burnt your scrolls?"....My soul is amazed – How can ever again food be sweet to my palate after beholding what your plunderers have gathered? Men whom you have rejected from entering the assembly, burnt the Law of the Most High in the midst of the market-square, like [the spoils] of a condemned [city]. I can no more find any paved way, for the straight course of your highway is obscured. For tears that shall be mingled with my drink shall be sweeter than honey, indeed would that your shackles be tied on to my own feet. It would be pleasant for my eyes to draw the waters of my tears, for all who clung fast to the hem of your skirt. But they would dry up as they run down my cheeks, for my heart burns over the absence of your Divine Master. God took his treasure with him, and when God went far away did not your protecting shade vanish? And as for me, alone without your great one, I remain bereaved and forlorn, like a sole beacon on top of the mountain. No more do I hear the voice of singing men and singing women, for the strings of your instruments are snapped....O cry to the Rock with a bitter voice, for your catastrophe and your anguish; O that God would remember the love of your betrothal-day. Gird on garments of sackcloth for that devouring fire that burst forth to divide you, and has utterly swept away your heights. May the Creator comfort you according to the days of your affliction, and may God restore the captivity of the tribes of *Yeshurun*, and raise you meek ones. You will adorn yourself with ornaments of scarlet; you will take up timbrel and lead the circling dance, and rejoice in your revels. Then shall my heart be uplifted at that time when your Creator will afford you light, will brighten your darkness and illuminate your gloom.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ A reference to the copies of the *Talmud* and Hebrew manuscripts that were publicly burned in Paris in June, 1242. This *kinah* is particularly interesting because it mourns, above all else, the loss of *Torah* learning.

⁶⁵ Roskies 85-87.

6) Author unknown: *B'tzeiti* - When I departed⁶⁶

A fire [of joy] is kindled within me, as I think [of the time]
 But I will raise lamentations, as I recall
 Than Moses sang, a song unforgettable
 But Jeremiah mourned and wailed with bitter lamentation
 My House was established and the cloud abode
 But the wrath of God lay upon me like a cloud
 The waves of the sea roared and piled themselves up like walls
 But the proud waters overwhelmed and flowed over my head
 Sabbaths and Festival [I enjoyed], signs and wonders
 But fasting, mourning and the pursuit of vanity
 The Jubilee year, the Sabbatical years, and the land was at rest
 But I was sold in perpetuity, cut down and crushed
 The Mercy-seat, the Ark and the stones of Memorial
 But sling stones and destructive weapons
 The Levites, Aaron's and the seventy elders
 But taskmasters, suppressors, and slave dealers
 Moses was our shepherd and Aaron our leader
 But Nevuchadnetzar the Captain, and Hadrian the Emperor
 Sanctification, prophecy and the Glory of *Adonai*
 But pollution, fear and the spirit of defilement
 The singing cry of victory and the fanfare of trumpets
 But wailing of infants and groans of the slain
 The *Torah*, the Testimony and the Order of the Service
 May [I obtain] gladness and joy and
 let sorrow and sighing flee away

When I departed from Egypt.
 When I departed from Jerusalem.
 When I departed from Egypt.
 When I departed from Jerusalem.
 When I departed from Egypt.
 When I departed from Jerusalem.
 When I departed from Egypt.
 When I departed from Jerusalem....
 When I departed from Egypt.
 When I departed from Jerusalem....
 When I departed from Egypt.
 When I departed from Jerusalem.
 When I departed from Egypt.
 When I departed from Jerusalem.
 When I departed from Egypt.
 When I departed from Jerusalem....
 When I departed from Egypt.
 When I departed from Jerusalem.
 When I departed from Egypt.
 When I departed from Jerusalem....
 When I departed from Egypt.

When I return to Jerusalem.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ The Sephardim have marked this as the opening *kinah* (Rosenfeld, xxii). The Hebrew is an alphabetical acrostic. I have altered the translation slightly.

⁶⁷ Rosenfeld 144-45.

7) Author unknown: *Ma nishtana halaila hazeh?* – Why is this night different?⁶⁸

מה נשתנה

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות
בכל הלילות אנו זמרה ורץ פזמוני
אך הלילה הזה לשבנו והרבינו יללות

מה נשתנה

בכל הלילות ענינים טאכל ונסוד שמינים
אך הלילה הזה מתענים אנו ובמחלות

מה נשתנה

כל הלילות נרות לפנינו מאירות
ובביתנו (אור) יקרות הלילה באפלות

מה נשתנה

כל הלילות רגלינו היו במנועלינו
אך הלילה חנונו יחפים במסלות

מה נשתנה

בני חורין היינו ומכל עם נפלינו
אך באשר מרינו שמונו בכבלות

מה נשתנה

לזביל על נשאו למאד רמה קרנונו
הלילה על פשעינו טבענו במצולות

Why is this night different from all other nights?
On all other nights we open our mouths to sing joyful songs;
But on this night we sit and increase our wailing.

On all other nights we eat delicacies saturated with oils;
But on this night we fast and seek forgiveness.

On all other nights candles shine before us and our homes are filled with precious light;
On this night there is darkness.

On all other nights our feet are in shoes;
But on this night they are covered by slippers.

Free people we were and of all peoples favored;
But when we were embittered we were put in chains of bondage.

We were exalted because of our loftiness, our glory raised high;
On this night because of our transgressions, we sink down into the abyss.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Shimon Bernstein, ed. *Al Naharot Sepharad - Kinot* According to the Custom of Sepharad" (Israel: Machbarot Lesifrut Publishing House, 1956) 40.

⁶⁹ My translation.

Historical events continued to spur new growths of lament poetry. As the literature developed, a subtle parody of the lament form even came to be used as one expression of anger.⁷⁰ Violence against Jews and subsequent literary responses continued into the present: from the Crusades of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, expulsion from Spain in 1492, Cossack revolt and Chmielnicki uprising in seventeenth century Poland, wide-scale pogroms in nineteenth century Russia, World War I, to the Holocaust. A frequently cited work, "In the City of Slaughter," was written by Chayyim Nachman Bialik following the Kishinev pogrom in 1903.⁷¹ The literature of lament continued to utilize biblical and rabbinic allusions and to reflect the dialectical themes of destruction and restoration, anger and yearning, sorrow and hope.

This body of literature became absorbed into the liturgy of *Tisha B'Av*. Following the paradigm of layering tragedy upon an already tragic day, many of these historical events were memorialized on *Tisha B'Av*. Although a separate fast day had originally been instituted on the twentieth of *Sivan* to commemorate the mass destruction of the Crusades and was later observed by Jews in Poland after a series of pogroms, these events, too, later came to be commemorated on *Tisha B'Av*.⁷²

The last departure of Jews from Spain in the year 1492 was said to have occurred on the ninth of *Av*.⁷³ Abarbanel, the bible commentator, wrote in his commentary to Jeremiah, "It turned out that the day set for departure of the Jews from Spain was the ninth of *Av*. But the king did not know the character of the day when he issued his edict. It was as if he had

⁷⁰ Roskies 73.

⁷¹ Roskies 160.

⁷² Yerushalmi 50.

⁷³ Eliyahu Kitov, The Book of Our Heritage Vol. III (Jerusalem: 'A' Publishers, 1968) 276.

been led from above to fix this time.”⁷⁴ Eliyahu Kitov described the departure of the Jews according to the following account:

Groups of exiles preceded the great departure on the 9th of *Av*, and left during the three week period between the 17th of *Tammuz* and the 9th of *Av*. And although these days are days of mourning and weeping over the destruction of the Sanctuary and the land of Israel, and music is forbidden during these days, nevertheless the Sages of the generation issued permission to the exiles to march to the music of orchestras. The musicians were to march at the head and were to play on instruments in order to strengthen the spirit of the people, and to infuse hope and trust in God in them....It also was the aim of the Rabbis in permitting the playing of instruments at the time, to teach the people that we never weep over departure from exile; that we weep only over our departure from Jerusalem.⁷⁵

This custom of playing musical instruments certainly put a new twist on the observance of *Tisha B'Av*. This account shows how people may have adapted the observance of *Tisha B'Av* to suit their own times and situation.

In the modern period, the outbreak of World War I and the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto, also occurred on *Tisha B'Av*. Abraham Lewin recorded in his diary from the Warsaw Ghetto, “23 July – *Tisha B'Av*. Disaster after disaster, misfortune after misfortune. The small ghetto has been turned out on to the streets...Rain has been falling all day. Weeping. The Jews are weeping. They are hoping for a miracle. The expulsion is continuing...”⁷⁶ In the writing of his diary, rain becomes the tears of the Jews.

A person once described an experience of being in Jerusalem on *Tisha B'Av*. She was near the *kotel*, the Western Wall, and people were digging into the ground. Someone handed her a shovel and told her to dig. They were digging through the layers of *Tisha B'Av*. The dust of the ground, buried deeply below, represented the layers of tragedy and sorrow of the Jewish people. Yet, the people were also watering and planting. This, too, was a layer of *Tisha B'Av*. The poetry of *kinot* reveals these layers.

⁷⁴ Ibid 285.

⁷⁵ Ibid 288.

⁷⁶ David R. Slavitt, *The Book of Lamentations* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001) 54.

The Loss of Lament?

Lament appears to be a more marginalized art form today. Certainly, though, Jews and all peoples continue to experience pain and loss. With what language should we express such feelings of sadness, suffering, anger, doubt, and hope? Elaine Scarry writes, "the act of verbally expressing pain is a necessary prelude to the collective task of diminishing pain."⁷⁷ The emphasis here is on the collective. David Morris writes on the need for a context of suffering based on community and a plurality of voices, in order to elevate an individual's suffering above isolated experience.⁷⁸ Diminishing pain, through listening, empathy, praying, and helping is a collective task, as Scarry writes. Therefore, a community needs a shared language in which to express pain and loss.

Lament, as the classical illustration of giving voice to pain, can provide this language. As we recall, *Lamentations* seeks to connect the individual voice of suffering with communal experience. The language of lament offers two functions for one who is suffering. The first is to give voice to painful or tragic experience. The speakers in *Lamentations* pour out tales of personal and collective woe. In the *Anchor Bible* commentary, Hillers writes,

Thus *Lamentations* served the survivors of the catastrophe in the first place as an expression of the almost inexpressible horror and grief they felt. Men live on best after calamity, not by utterly repressing their grief and shock, but by facing it, by measuring its dimensions, by finding some form of words to order and articulate their experience. *Lamentations* is so complete and honest and eloquent an expression of grief that even centuries after the events which inspired it, it is still able to provide those in mute despair with words to speak.⁷⁹

Secondly, lament can empower the sufferer. Brueggemann writes that lament,

redresses the redistribution of power between the two parties, so that the petitionary party is taken seriously and the God who is addressed is newly engaged in the crises in a way that puts God at

⁷⁷ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) 9.

⁷⁸ David B. Morris, "About Suffering: Voice, Genre, and Moral Community," *Social Suffering* ed. Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) 24-45.

⁷⁹ Dilbert R. Hillers, *Lamentations, Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1972) xvi.

risk...The basis for the conclusion that the petitioner is taken seriously and legitimately granted power in the relation is that the speech of the petitioner is heard, valued, and transmitted as serious speech.⁸⁰ The verbal expression of grief and loss, and the enactment of mourning that lament allows for, transform the passive sufferer or victim into a person with agency. Rather than dismiss God entirely, through lament a person can confront God and question God. Lament does not let God off the hook.

We must also acknowledge that in some instances it is impossible to articulate the experience or meaning of suffering. At times, silence in the face of grief may also be necessary. Rachel Adler writes, "The beginning is silence. The beginning is the void that is beyond language."⁸¹ She comments that the end is also silence. But in the middle there is language and voice. Because of the unspecificity and eternality of Lamentations, therefore, the *megillah* provides one source for such a language.

The Book of Lamentations has been applied to various contemporary contexts. Using a psychological reading of Lamentations, Paul Joyce writes about how Lamentations can help in the grief process in general. He describes how the themes in Lamentations parallel the stages of the grief process that are outlined by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross.⁸² He states, "Lamentations would serve as a rich field for reflection upon loss in all its aspects."⁸³ Mona West offers a queer reading of Lamentations in the context of AIDS. West writes about the silencing of voices around the AIDS epidemic and the gift of voice and remembrance that Lamentations provides. Lamentations also offers a gift of tears.

All of us who have grieved know that tears are a double-edged sword. They are necessary for release and healing, yet the thought of shedding them threatens to overwhelm us...The poet of Lamentations tells us that shedding tears is an essential part of bearing witness to the atrocity of AIDS, and they are

⁸⁰ Walter Brueggemann, "The Costly Loss of Lament," JSOT 36 (1986): 57-71.

⁸¹ Rachel Adler, "Pour Out Your Heart Like Water – Toward a Jewish Feminist Theology," Humanity at the Limit: The Impact of the Holocaust Experience on Jews and Christians ed. Michael A. Signer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000) 161-171.

⁸² Joyce 309.

⁸³ *ibid* 319.

an essential part of our healing... The poet's testimony is that we will not be overwhelmed by our tears, but somehow renewed through their release."⁸⁴

Here, too, Lamentations is applied to a communal context. For West, Lamentations connects the gay community through shared language and experience. West also brings to life the strong language of hope in Lamentations. Through the language of lament, one is able to feel a sense of renewed hope and energy for reconnection with life.

That the language of lament can so clearly speak to our experience today is reason to retain aspects of the *Tisha B'Av* liturgy. Just as new events and writings were always added to *Tisha B'Av*, the adding of new layers of experience can continue to occur today. The literature of lament can be a source for invoking feelings of personal loss, and, on the national level, for expressing sadness over the ongoing loss of life in Jerusalem, the State of Israel, and the Middle East, and for incidents of terrorism and war world-wide.

The need for hope, and for ways of expressing hope, is as prevalent today as it was in the past. The *Tisha B'Av* liturgy most deeply expresses not only how the world is, but how the world ought to be. The following story illustrates how strong this value of hope can be. Naomi Seidman describes how on one *Tisha B'Av* when she was a child, someone's mother came out to the courtyard of the *shul* to tell this story.

In a certain small town in Poland, right after they broke the fast, the Jews would light an enormous bonfire. They would throw the *Tisha B'Av* liturgy with all its sad poems about the destruction of the Temple into the fire and dance and sing the midsummer night away. You see, they didn't have any use for them anymore, since this was sure to be the year the Messiah would come and take all the Jews off to the Land of Israel and instead of fasting and sitting on the floor there would be juicy portions of the Leviathan all around.⁸⁵

These Jews danced the night away around the bonfire, only to pick up the Book of Lamentations again the following year. Each year, they picked up the Book of

⁸⁴ Mona West, "The Gift of Voice, the Gift of Tears: A Queer Reading of Lamentations in the Context of AIDS," *Queer Commentary and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Ken Stone (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 150.

⁸⁵ Naomi Seidman, "Burning the Book of Lamentations," *Tikkun* 8, 4 (1993): 60.

Lamentations and burned it again, in one, continuous cycle of hope. In engaging in the liturgy of lament, we, too, become part of the continuous cycle of hope.

Chapter 3

Reform Judaism: The Influence of David Einhorn

Introduction to Ideological and Liturgical Change

The *Talmud* and literatures of lament spoke to the ways that *Tisha B'Av* emerged over time and changed according to the needs of different people in different ages. While these texts challenged understandings and created new way of observing *Tisha B'Av*, they did not, however, question the theology behind the actions and understandings. It took the Reform Movement in the Modern Age to call the classical theology of destruction and exile as a result of sin into question. The classical answer as to why the Jew suffered was no longer a relevant response. It is not surprising, then, that a Reform Jew of the Modern age proposed another major shift in the vision of *Tisha B'Av*. David Einhorn, in his prayer book, *Olat Tamid*, wrote a prayer for *Tisha B'Av* that captured his new vision. Einhorn's text, in many ways, represents the culmination of previous years of ideological and liturgical change in the Reform movement, and, served as a building block for subsequent changes and approaches to *Tisha B'Av*. The new approaches which early Reform leaders, especially David Einhorn, took towards *Tisha B'Av* can best be understood within the context of ideological and liturgical change in the Reform Movement.

"The nineteenth century was a time of great liturgical ferment in the life of the Liberal German-Jewish community. Reform Judaism bounded onto the stage of history in the 1810s as a movement of liturgical change, and Hebrew prayer-book creativity..."¹ The early German Reform approaches to *Tisha B'Av* grew out of changing attitudes toward

¹ David Ellenson, "*The Israelitische Gebetbucher of Abraham Geiger and Manuel Joel: A Study in Nineteenth-Century German-Jewish Communal Liturgy and Religion*," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* XLIV (1999): 143.

issues such as the Temple in Jerusalem, classical notions of a Temple rebuilt and a personal Messiah.

These reformers had repudiated in practice as well as in thought the expectation of the restoration of the hereditary Aaronic priesthood as ministers at the altar of a temple to be rebuilt on the site of the erstwhile temple on Moriah's hill at the time of the rehabilitation of the Jewish state under the leadership of a personal Messiah....To the sacrificial system, the Aaronic priesthood, the Palestinian state, the personal Messiah, reform opposed the service of prayer, the priesthood of the whole people, the countries of the world as fatherlands, the Messianic era.²

The reformers expressed these ideological innovations through changes in liturgy and practice. The changes were not always consistent, and they reflected the ambivalence and tension felt by reformers who were pulled between tradition and modernity. For the editors of the 1819 Hamburg temple prayer book, the first comprehensive Reform liturgy, "prayers concerned with the restoration of the sacrificial cult and those expressing a desire for a physical return to Jerusalem and Zion were among those regarded as particularly troublesome, as were prayers that affirmed a belief in a personal messiah and angelology."³

In a similar universalistic and anti-nationalistic vein, the 1841 Hamburg prayer book inserted in the words of Isaiah 2:3, "For from Zion shall go forth *Torah*, and the word of God from Jerusalem," in place of the particularistic traditional Jerusalem prayer in the *Amidah*. In the discussion on liturgy at the Frankfort Conference in 1845, the reformers agreed that the *Musaf* prayers must be eliminated as outdated expressions of the faith and hope of the Jew. The Berlin Reform congregation in 1845, followed by all Reform congregations, removed the pronouncement of the priestly benediction by the reputed descendants of Aaron.

The Berlin Reform Congregation and their leader, Rabbi Samuel Holdheim, were more radical compared to other Reform congregations. The changes introduced by the

² David Philipson, The Reform Movement in Judaism (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907) 352-353.

³ Ellenson 145.

Berlin reformers rested on the basis of one broad principle – the universalistic significance of the Messianic era; the ability for humankind to bring about redemption. This broad principle, and their willingness to carrying it out, held great significance for *Tisha B'Av*. The Berlin congregation gave practical evidence of the universalistic interpretation of Israel's mission by discarding the observance of *Tisha B'Av* in 1847. On the Sunday following the rejection, Holdheim, in his sermon, declared that the destruction of Jerusalem was really the beginning of Israel's larger mission to the world, and had therefore resulted in good.⁴ Rather than mourn the loss of the Temple and lament the exilic Jewish existence, Holdheim declared that there were positive ramifications to the destruction! Utilizing the emerging theologies of the German reformers, he publicly advanced the idea that the destruction enabled Israel to begin its universalistic mission in the world.

Other early reformers, however, took a more conservative approach. Abraham Geiger also lauded the spirit of change. He also articulated the principle of the universal mission assigned to Israel by God. In the preface to his 1854 prayer book, Geiger stated:

The lamentation about the lost national independence of Israel, the plea for the gathering of the dispersed in Palestine and the restoration of the cult and priests – all that is relegated to the background. Jerusalem and Zion are places whence instruction went forth, and to which holy memories are attached. But, on the whole, they are to be celebrated more as a spiritual idea, as the nursery of the Kingdom of God than as a certain geographical locale connected with a special divine providence for all times. Likewise, the hopeful look into the future is directed to the messianic kingdom as a time of the universal reign of the idea of God, of a strengthening of piety and righteousness among all men, but not as a time for the elevation of the People of Israel.⁵

Geiger retained the Hebrew proclamation of Isaiah 2:3, but rendered "*teitzei*" (shall go forth) in German in the past tense, "went forth".⁶ For Geiger, Jerusalem and all that the importance that it represented, was a symbol of the past.

Geiger's prayer book, however, was ultimately marked more by a spirit of compromise and a view of Jewish communal unity than by theological beliefs. He retained

⁴ Philipson 353.

the *Musaf* service and the rite of *duchenen*, the priestly blessing. His prayer book contains daily morning, afternoon, and evening services, as well as Sabbath and *Rosh Chodesh* services. Prayers for *Purim* and *Chanukah*, as well as evening and morning services for *Tisha B'Av* are included.⁷

Ideological and liturgical innovation, though, was not the only reform brought about in nineteenth century Germany. That setting became the bedrock for general changes regarding aesthetics and decorum as well. While Geiger and others maintained the liturgies for *Tisha B'Av*, the aesthetic of the service changed dramatically. One account from the synagogue in the Jewish community of Dresden illustrates this change. The rabbi there was Rabbi Zacharias Frankel, who was later connected with the positivist historical perspective and which was to characterize the Conservative movement in America. The following account describes *Tisha B'Av* in Dresden in 1840.⁸

As congregants arrived on the eve of the fast day, those who chose to remove their shoes as a sign of mourning were required to do so in the entrance hall outside the sanctuary and to put on a presentable foot covering in their place. No one was permitted to bring low benches or to sit on the floor. When they entered, worshippers found the synagogue draped in black and dimly lighted so that the pulpit area remained shrouded in darkness. Only a pale shimmer of light, reflected from a silver Shield of David hanging above the ark, somewhat illuminated its surroundings – as if to symbolize the lone ray of Israel's hope. Instead of the cacophonous wailings which characterize the traditional service on this day, the lamentations were rendered by cantor, choir, and congregation in restrained but sincere manner. The next morning Frankel gave a sermon in which he alluded to the persecution just then being suffered by Jews in Damascus as a result of the ritual murder accusation leveled against them there. The singing by cantor and choir of the medieval poet Judah Halevi's famous Ode to Zion concluded the observance. Even the most venerable elders in the congregation had to concede that this year – even though they had not sat on the ground – they had for the first time experienced truly heartfelt mourning at the grievous loss of the ancient sanctuary.

In this description, aesthetic, if not liturgical, reform, was evident. Mourning was practiced in the context of decorum and restraint. The sermon alluded not to suffering of the past, but to persecution in the present. By contextualizing the sermon and service in this way, the rabbi gave his congregants the message that *Tisha B'Av* was still relevant for their time. In

⁵ Petuchowski, *Prayer book Reform in Europe* 150-152.

⁶ Ellenson 154.

⁷ Ellenson 157.

fact, according to the account, congregants experienced "truly heartfelt mourning" for the first time. The Dresden service, therefore, continued the theme of reform with moderation. It maintained the traditional structure, but contained several modifications, according to the sensibilities of the time.

The ideological and liturgical reforms that had begun in Europe carried over to America as well. In America, reformers echoed the sentiments of their German counterparts. Several principles that expressed these sentiments were outlined at the Conference of Reform Rabbis held in Philadelphia in November 1869:⁹

Article 1. The Messianic goal of Israel is not the restoration of the old Jewish state under a descendant of David, involving a second separation from the nations of the earth, but the union of all men as children of God in the confession of the all embracing unity of God, so as to realize the unity of all rational creatures and their call to moral sanctification.

Article 2. We do not regard the downfall of the second Jewish State as a punishment for Israel's sinfulness, but as a result of the divine purpose, revealed in the promise to Abraham and manifesting itself more and more in the course of world history, to disperse the members of the Jewish race to all parts of the earth in order to redeem their lofty priestly task of leading the nations to true knowledge and reverence of God.

Article 3. The Aaronic priesthood and the Mosaic sacrificial cult were preparatory steps to the real priesthood of the whole people, which began with the dispersion of the Jews, and to the sacrifices of sincere devotion and moral sanctification which alone are pleasing and acceptable to the Most Holy. These institutions, preparatory to higher religiosity, were consigned to the past, once for all, with the destruction of the Second Temple, and only in this sense – as educational influences in the past – are they to be mentioned in our prayers.

The American reformers emphasized key ideas that had already taken root in Europe: a universalistic Messianic era, the rejection of the sacrificial institution in favor of its replacement with prayer and moral sanctification, movement away from classical notions of divine punishment for sin, and a move toward viewing the destruction as fulfillment of the divine purpose to disperse Israel to all corners of the earth in order to lead the universalistic Messianic mission.

Reform approaches to *Tisha B'Av* followed the pattern of other reform approaches to ritual in America. Analogous to the ways Geiger and Holdheim had differed in Germany,

⁸ Michael A. Meyer. *Response to Modernity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988) 106.

⁹ Sefton D. Temkin, *The New World of Reform* (London: Leo Baeck College, 1971) 116.

the different approaches toward reform by the more moderate Isaac Meyer Wise (1819-1900) and the more radical David Einhorn (1809-1879) were played out on American soil. Just as the above-mentioned *siddurim* were "ideal barometers for measuring the moods and attitudes of the variegated religious streams of Judaism in Germany in modern time," so too the *siddurim Minhag Amerika* (1857) and *Olat Tamid* (1858), are representative of Wise and Einhorn, respectively.

Wise's goal above all else was to establish a strong and unified Judaism in America, and he was ready to use whatever organizational means or unifying philosophy could most effectively achieve that end. "Wise was clearly determined from the start to create a transformed Judaism, but he recognized that it could be successful only if built on the still widely accepted foundation of rabbinic authority."¹⁰ Wise's *Minhag Amerika* contains a service for *Tisha B'Av*, entitled "Service for the Ninth Day of Ab."¹¹ It begins with an explanation of the day that focuses on its mournful aspects, and includes an evening and morning service. The explanation essentially recounts the destruction of both Temples on the ninth of *Av*. "These sundry unfortunate occurrences made this day the one of national mourning, mentioned already by the prophet Zechariah, as the fast of the tenth month."¹² *Kinot* are included in the evening service, along with the direction to read Lamentations. "The overall thrust of Wise's understanding of the day is of a piece with traditional Jewish modalities, namely that the holiday exists to mourn the destruction of the Temples, and that the liturgy supports that goal."¹³

David Einhorn, on the other hand, adopted the more radical stance toward *Tisha B'Av*. Einhorn went even further than Holdheim, who had rejected *Tisha B'Av*, to

¹⁰ Meyer 242.

¹¹ Isaac M. Wise, *Minhag Amerika* (Cincinnati: 1857) 99-107. In Philip Cohen, "David Einhorn's Reading for *Tisha B'Av*: Tradition and Transformation," *CCAR Journal* XLI 4 Fall (1994): 55-67.

completely transform its structure, content, and meaning. In his writing, Einhorn responded to a critique that Geiger had expressed toward his colleagues in Germany; not only did Einhorn remove offensive passages and change parts of the liturgy, he also succeeded in articulating the great principles that prompted their change. And, in general, "it was Einhorn's uncompromising radicalism, rather than Wise's accommodating moderation, which by the end of the century would characterize American Reform."¹⁴

Einhorn built upon the emerging Reform ideologies and trends in ritual practice of his time.

No one stressed more than Einhorn the mission of this priestly people to the nations of the world. The destruction of its ancient temple and political institutions became the starting point of a universal and still unfinished task. Hence the events which had evoked mourning for nearly 2,000 years were in fact providential, not a punishment for sin but a necessary condition for universal priestly activity.¹⁵

Einhorn was the first person to comprehensively articulate his theology and advocate an application of his principles. His theology and beliefs are articulated best in his prayer for *Tisha B'Av*.

David Einhorn's Prayer

Einhorn, in *Olat Tamid*, composed a lengthy liturgical reading to be read on *Tisha B'Av*.¹⁶ The reading represents an attempt to reinterpret the meaning of this day for an American Reform Jewish audience. Einhorn's prayer is an eloquent expression of a creative approach to rethinking meaning and practice. Einhorn's style is poetic, weaving classical themes with the sensibilities of his time. I can only imagine what the poetry of the German portrays, but a reading in English will have to suffice. This prayer is really more than a

¹² Wise 99-100.

¹³ Philip Cohen 57.

¹⁴ Meyer 245.

¹⁵ Meyer 247.

prayer. *Olat Tamid* contains instructions for “the minister” to read the piece followed by the congregation’s responses of “*Amen*.” Einhorn combines a sermonic style with lament and prayer language. The piece begins with an historic overview, interspersed with exclamations of emotion, and then turns to more standard prayer form, including the use of Hebrew at the end.

We now turn to a close reading of the text. The title, “for the Anniversary of the Destruction of Jerusalem,” suggests that Jerusalem, more so than the Temples, is the subject of *Tisha B’Av*. The prayer features a chiasmic structure:

- A Sadness over the loss of Jerusalem
 - B Destruction of Temple¹⁷ and its symbols (cherubim, sacrifice, candelabra)
 - C Lament over exile
 - D Reversals (sin into divine love, devouring flames into burning love, darkness into light, humiliation into triumph, mourning into rejoicing, lament into dancing)
 - C Exultation over purpose of exile
- B Reinterpretation of Temple and its symbols (cherubim, sacrifice, candelabra)
- A Joy over the universal Jerusalem rebuilt

The first theme of the prayer is the profound memory of the destruction of Jerusalem, which caused bitter suffering and sorrow for the people of Israel. Einhorn opens, “With profound emotion, O Lord, we remember in this hour the dire day of desolation...”¹⁸ Recalling imagery from Lamentations, he continues, “Then was left disconsolate the populous city, the beauty of all the lands, like a sorrowing widow.” Yet, he also recalls the “pride and crown of Israel, the magnificent temple on Moriah’s proud height.” He acknowledges the fall of “the home of light,” with its ark, Cherubim turned heavenward, altar of sacrifices, and candlestick with the seven flames. The Levites’ song became

¹⁶ For the full version of this text, see Appendix 3.

¹⁷ Einhorn alludes to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans and does not allude to the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians.

¹⁸ References to this prayer are from David Einhorn, *Olat Tamid, Book of Prayers for Jewish Congregations* (1896) 141-147.

laments, wails, and groans. Einhorn's own words become lament, "O, heavy and bitter was the fate which befell the house of Jacob on that day."

Einhorn continues to recall the bitterness of exile, "With bleeding hearts they wandered forth to seek strange lands void of love..." Even though Einhorn will later turn the experience of exile on its head to make it into something positive, here he seeks first to identify and empathize with the suffering of the exilic experience, through the use of the biblical language and imagery of Psalms and Lamentations. He recalls the voices of distress, "Thou hast thrust me into a deep pit, into a dark abyss; I cry unto Thee every day, O God, and stretch my hands towards Thee; why, O Lord, castest Thou off my soul, and hidest Thy face from me?" Einhorn concludes his lament with an acknowledgment of suffering that is beyond words, "Truly, indescribable are the sufferings Israel hath endured in the weary years of his wandering....the eye, once beaming with the light of happiness, was changed into an ever-flowing fountain of tears." The biblical imagery gives voice to the consciousness of suffering and dislocation caused by exile. Einhorn establishes historical and emotional ties that unite modern Jews to the past.

After establishing these connections, Einhorn proceeds to make a break with the past. Echoes of earlier reformers ring forth. In a rejection of classical rabbinic theology, the prayer never suggests that sin was the reason for Jerusalem's destruction and Israel's exile. Nor does it suggest that a return to the physical place of Jerusalem is the highest hope of Jewish existence. Rather, a centrally placed and dominant theme emerges in the prayer. Cohen summarizes,

Exile resulting in a mission for the Jews now becomes the operative notion of the prayer. The belief that exile is not a punishing burden caused by sin but a mission to be fulfilled casts many of the concepts articulated by rabbinic Judaism into a radically different light. This transformation results in nothing less than a redefinition of Judaism, which becomes a definition of Reform Judaism.¹⁹

¹⁹ Cohen 58.

Einhorn does not mention the Romans by name. Instead, God is seen as the agent of the events, acting not in punishment, but in fulfillment of a divine mission:

...in all these sore trials we recognize Thy guiding, fatherly hand, means for the fulfillment of Thy inviolable promises and the glorification of Thy name and Thy law before the eyes of all nations....Israel was no longer to dwell in separation from all the rest of Thy children, who were languishing in darkness and folly; he was to spread abroad the stream of his salvation, and become himself the carrier of the refreshing water of healing powers.

In light of this new interpretation of the exile, Israel had a positive role to fill; Israel was to provide light and healing to the rest of the world.

Other kinds of reversals stem from Einhorn's reinterpretation of the destruction and subsequent exile. "...Thou will bring forth light out of darkness, and wilt also lead Thy people from the deepest depths of humiliation to a most glorious triumph...; it changes our mourning into rejoicing, our lamenting into dancing." He imagines the aftermath of the destruction of Jerusalem, the spreading out of the Israelite people unto the nations, to have fulfilled the words of the prophet Jeremiah, "Then shall maidens dance gaily, young men and old alike. I will turn their mourning to joy, I will comfort them and cheer them in their grief. I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall enjoy my full bounty, declared *Adonai*,"²⁰ and the words of the psalmist, "You turned my lament into dancing, you undid my sackcloth and girded me with joy...."²¹ What was an occasion of mourning became for Einhorn a cause for celebration.

The remainder of his prayer is an expression of exultation. Although Einhorn does not describe what the celebration might look like, he offers numerous causes for rejoicing. He speaks of the new perspective and reality in terms such as glory, purity, and splendor. "The true and real sanctuary, Thy imperishable testimony, remained ours, untouched and undimmed...It was freed from the encircling walls which had shut it in and hidden its glory

²⁰ Jeremiah 31:13-14.

²¹ Psalm 30:12.

from the eyes of the millions of beings created in Thy image." Einhorn states in another context, a sermon, that from this freeing of God's word, "two mighty torrential currents rose, Christianity and Islam." In this sermon he compares Israel to Joseph, who, "bore two sons in exile and was made fruitful by the Lord that he had entered as a slave..."²² The freeing and spreading of the divine mission, for Einhorn, is reason to rejoice.

There is one other reason, suggests Einhorn, to rejoice. Once again picking up on a classical theme, he refers to the belief that the Messiah was born on the day that the Temple was destroyed.²³ "The flames which consumed Zion, lit up the birth-hour of Israel as the suffering Messiah of all mankind." But, once again, Einhorn radically breaks with the classical understanding. It is in regard to the Messiah that Einhorn's theological views become even clearer. Through its suffering Israel was transformed and was to be understood as the Messiah. Cohen understands Einhorn's words to mean, "The entirety of Israel becomes the embodiment of the Messiah."²⁴ Here, Einhorn is making reference to the prophet Isaiah's vision of the suffering servant²⁵. The suffering servant in the Isaiah context was a collective image of suffering for Israel. Not only was Israel acting upon a divine mission, but Israel was also enacting the messianic vision. It is with this understanding that Einhorn can now declare his vision for the day of *Tisha B'Av*:

In this our hope, this day of mourning and of fasting, hath, according to the word of Thy prophet, been turned into a solemn day of rejoicing in view of the glorious destiny of Thy law and our high messianic mission which had its beginnings with the historic events which we recall today.

The belief that the Messiah had arrived would surely be a cause for rejoicing. The transformation of *Tisha B'Av* from mourning to joy, according to Einhorn, was complete.

²² W. Gunther Plaut, The Rise of Reform Judaism (New York: World Union of Progressive Judaism, Ltd., 1963) 202.

²³ *Esther Rabba* 11; Jerusalem *Talmud*, *Berachot* 2:4. In these passages the Messiah is referred to as *Menachem*, "the comforter."

²⁴ Cohen 60.

²⁵ Isaiah 49.

With the transformation of the day, new interpretations of the Temple and its symbols and Jerusalem were necessary. Again we hear echoes of universalistic thinking.

The one temple in Jerusalem sank into the dust, in order that countless temples might arise to Thy honor and glory all over the wide surface of the globe. The old priestly dignity was taken away and the old sacrificial worship ceased, but in their stead the whole community, in accordance with its original distinction, became a priest and was called upon to offer up those sacrifices which are more acceptable in Thy sight than thousands of rivers of oil, the sacrifices of active love to God and man, the sacrifices of pure and pious conduct...

The one Temple becomes many, the priests become the entire community, and the sacrifices become acts of love and good conduct towards people and God. Furthermore, Einhorn prays that God's message of truth and word of righteousness will be like protective *cherubim*, that "spread their wings over the sanctuary of mankind united in and with Thee," and that the brotherhood of man will "shine in seven-fold luster." The sacrificial altar will become one altar of mankind, all offering up their love. Einhorn prays that "all the earth will become one atoning altar." The Temple and its symbols are thereby reinterpreted to properly represent Israel's mission in the world. Again he refers to Isaiah's image of a temple for all peoples, "Their burnt offerings and sacrifices shall be welcome on My altar; For My House shall be called a House of prayer for all peoples."²⁶

One other symbol still remains open to interpretation, and that is Jerusalem. Einhorn sees Jerusalem as a metaphor; no longer is it a physical place. The "new Jerusalem" becomes an idea and an ideal. "The Sinai and Zion of all the world, the new Jerusalem on this earth, rebuilt in righteousness universal, and saved by justice flowing like a stream through all the lands." Jerusalem is a metaphor for righteousness. The new Jerusalem exists beyond time and space. Jerusalem rebuilt is the realization of universal justice.

Einhorn concludes his service "for the Anniversary of the Destruction of Jerusalem" with a prayer that appears in both Hebrew and English. The prayer in one paragraph

²⁶ Isaiah 56:7.

summarizes the previous themes and theologies. In this concluding prayer, the contrast between classical prayer structure and radical content change is even more apparent.

The prayer follows the classical form of *bakashot* – request prayers. First, one praises God, then one asks for his or her request. In similar fashion, Einhorn praises God's revelation to God's holy people, saying, "Thy majestic voice, Thy holy word." Other phrases call to mind classical liturgical language. The opening of his prayer, *אתה נגלית מלפני על הר ציון לעם קדושך*, "Thou, O King, didst reveal Thyself on Mount Zion to Thy Holy people," recalls the structure of the *Shofarot* prayer, the third section on Revelation in the *Shofar* service of *Rosh Hashanah*.

Einhorn then moves to his request, again following classical form: *הרם קרן ישראל עמך*, "Give triumph to Thy people Israel!" This phrase appears in precisely the same form in the *Avinu Malkeinu* prayer, and in a grammatically altered form in the weekday *Amidah*, *וקרנו תרומ בישעתך*, "enhance his triumph through Your salvation." He then asks God to realize another series of reversals: to wrap Israel in beauty and not in ashes, to give them joy for mourning, and courage for despondency. Again the Hebrew language echoes biblical and classical terminology and imagery. The following request, *ותמלוד אתה לבדך על כל הארץ*, "Establish speedily Thy throne; and reign Thou over the whole earth," recalls imagery from the classical *Shabbat Kedusha* prayer. In the *Kedusha* one asks, *בקרוב בימינו לעולם נעד תשכון*, "When will You reign in Zion? Soon, in our days, forever and ever may You dwell there." In a now typical change, Einhorn replaces the idea of God's reign over Zion with the reign of God over all the earth.

The prayer ends in classical prayer form, with a *chatimah*, a concluding blessing, *ברוך אתה ה' בונה חרבות עולם*, "Praised be Thou, O God, who rebuilddest the waste places

of the ages!" The language, too, recalls classical phraseology from the weekday *Amidah*, בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי בּוֹנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, "Blessed are You, *Adonai*, the builder of Jerusalem." But, once again, Einhorn reinterprets the meaning of the words. Rather than asking God to rebuild Jerusalem, he asks God to rebuild the destroyed places, and depending how one translates "*olam*," of all time and space. Einhorn again transforms Jerusalem into a metaphor for universal rebuilding and redemption. The *chatimah* serves as the final example of Einhorn's juxtaposition of classical form with new ideas and interpretations.

Einhorn's Prayer: A Critical Perspective

Einhorn's reading is without doubt a great literary accomplishment. Utilizing the ideological and liturgical precedents of his time, he connects theological concerns to an actual context - *Tisha B'Av*. Cohen writes that for Einhorn, politics and theology are a seamless whole. Einhorn reinterprets *Tisha B'Av* according to a theology that makes sense for his time. Einhorn's overall message, though, can only be understood in the context of its time. Several scholars have offered praises and critiques for Einhorn's writing. An exploration of some of these points will reveal both the potential and the limitations of Einhorn's prayer.

The classical structure of Einhorn's text serves to authenticate his endeavor. His references to biblical imagery and classical liturgy indicate that this is a still Jewish text. These references locate Einhorn and the reader in the Jewish historical context. The classical form serves an emotional purpose as well. Einhorn uses memory as a vehicle for creating empathy for the Jewish people's past suffering. Cohen writes, "For Einhorn, *Tisha B'Av* becomes an occasion to lament the suffering caused to the Jewish people by the

destruction of Jerusalem, as well as the suffering inflicted upon the Jews throughout their exilic wanderings."²⁷ Einhorn does not seek to negate or undermine the suffering of the Jewish people inflicted by years of exile, rather he acknowledges and laments the experience of the past.

For Einhorn, though, suffering is something of the past. He acknowledges past experience and then reinterprets those same experiences. The contrast of classical imagery with new interpretation exemplifies Einhorn's creative approach. Following Cohen's statement above, he writes, "At the same time, the destruction of Jerusalem created several facts: the Jews, stripped of the Temple, spiritualized the essence of their faith and, carrying Judaism into the world, acquired the mission of bringing faith to all of the peoples of the world in the role of the corporate embodiment of the Messiah."²⁸ Reinterpretation of the ancient Temple's symbols and the theological understandings of exile enable Einhorn to take the next practical step: the destruction of Jerusalem becomes a feast day rather than a fast day.

The juxtaposition of remembrance, sadness, and joy is not so far from the actual experience of *Tisha B'Av*. Cohen also points out that Einhorn's reading follows the mood of the traditional observance of *Tisha B'Av*, which begins with a deep sense of tragedy and concludes with a celebration of redemption. Einhorn's combination of lament and hope echoes the spirit of the reading of Lamentations and the liturgy as a whole, and follows the shift in mood from tragedy to redemption during the afternoon of *Tisha B'Av*.

"Undoubtedly Einhorn understood this changing mood of the traditional observance and intended his reading to function in parallel fashion."²⁹

²⁷ Cohen 62.

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ *ibid.*

While so far we have praised the creativity and authenticity of Einhorn's work, there are also three main critiques. The first is regarding Einhorn's vision for the actual day of *Tisha B'Av*. It is unclear how Einhorn would have seen the day unfold. The day itself exists for Einhorn as an anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem. One could imagine that a Jew would have gone to services and listened to the minister read Einhorn's prayer. This person might have thought about the past and the significance of that day. Then what would have happened? Would there be a celebration? Would there be a feast? Would the Jew have returned home with affirmed commitment to perform acts of loving kindness towards God and man? Einhorn's liturgy matches the principles of his ideology. But, the question remains whether Einhorn had in mind any actions through which one could express these principles and visions of the liturgy. What would an act of celebration really have looked like on *Tisha B'Av*? The answers to these questions are missing from Einhorn's prayer.

Einhorn's confidence that *Tisha B'Av* had officially become a day for celebration may also sound astonishing to the contemporary ear. Cohen remarks that it is doubtful any contemporary Jew can share in the optimism of this reading.³⁰ Einhorn's unbounded optimism represents a perspective that reflected his time, but that does not reflect the reality of our day. Two excerpts from his reading illustrate this extreme optimism and hopeful trust in God. He writes, "For they knew that Thou wilt bring forth light out of darkness, and wilt also lead Thy people from the deepest depths of humiliation to a most glorious triumph." And, later, "Our trust remaineth firm in Thy promise..."

Einhorn, of course, could not have known of the Holocaust, the other assaults upon Jews that occurred from the latter decades of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, the arise of the *Intifada* in Israel, the loss of hope for peace in the Middle East, and

³⁰ Cohen 63.

September 11th 2001 in the United States. Einhorn did not experience the disappearance of God, the dangers of assimilation, and the fears of border security. A sense of Israel's mission in the world is now more guarded and the Reform movement has taken a greater focus upon particularistic concerns. Einhorn was a product of modernity, while we have been influenced by post-modernism. A contemporary vision, theology, and practice must necessarily account for the sense of disillusionment with modernist optimism. "Understood properly, postmodernism is a necessary corrective to the heightened expectations that untrammelled faith in modernity could not fulfill, what Eugene B. Borowitz calls 'our generation's disillusionment with the modernists' messianic humanism.'"³¹ The untrammelled faith that had fed Einhorn's religious thought causes today's Jew to pause and reconsider some of the changes made by early reformers.

The matter of "messianic humanism" forms the reason for the third critique. Einhorn's position regarding the Messiah raises several questions and concerns. Even if we read Einhorn as a product of his era, how can we today relate to his belief that the Messiah, in the embodiment of Israel, had arrived? Even if we do not believe in a personal messiah, we can affirm that there is still a lot of work to do towards the fulfillment of the messianic vision. Einhorn's unfailing optimism and confidence that the completion of the messianic vision was near ultimately leaves the postmodern Jew skeptical and in search of a more nuanced approach. Moreover, if we are still awaiting the Messiah, *Tisha B'Av* can not yet be fully a day for rejoicing.

In an article entitled "*Tisha B'Av* in Jerusalem" Jakob J. Petuchowski offers a similar critique. He writes³²,

³¹ Lawrence A. Hoffman, "Ritual and the Recovery of Hope, Making Reform Judaism Matter Again," The Jewish Condition ed. Aron Hirt-Manheimer (New York: UAHC Press, 1995) 385.

³² Jakob J. Petuchowski, "Tisha'ah B'Av In Jerusalem," The Jewish Spectator June (1963): 16.

As I see it, it is good that the Ninth of Av is observed, regardless of the motivation. The official abolition of this day would, in fact, be an indication of pseudo-messianism, of living in 'realized eschatology.' *Shabbati Tzvi* abolished *Tisha B'Av* in the 17th century, arguing that it was his birthday, and, with the messiah come one does not bemoan the Exile! The Reformers of the 19th century likewise had very little use for it. They were under the impression that the 'messianic era' had already dawned. With the retention of the Ninth of Av by the State of Israel, one is at least sure that, in spite of some over-enthusiastic pronouncements to the contrary, the State of Israel does not yet claim to have achieved the complete 'redemption.'

Later in his article, he writes about looking out from the tower of the Y.M.C.A. building and viewing the pre-1976 city of Jerusalem. In the meantime, he says, "the divided city of Jerusalem, perhaps better than anything else, serves as a symbol of *Tisha B'Av*, of that pre-messianic era which is 'Exile' not only for Israel, but also for self-alienated man in an unredeemed world."³³

Cohen also resonates with the critique of the postmodern Jew. "As the result of our own historical perspective, we see a certain naivete permeating the text under study." But, he continues, "to dwell entirely on its naivete is to be anachronistic."³⁴ The postmodern Jew might also benefit from the passionately hopeful outlook of David Einhorn. Lawrence Hoffman, in an article about the recovery of hope in Reform ideology, writes that, "in the wrong hands, the postmodernist critique is used on the left and on the right to support an ideology of despair."³⁵ He calls for a "little fine tuning for the prophetic hope and human self-confidence that were the essence of classical Reform Judaism as our modernist generations were raised to believe in it."³⁶ What Einhorn's prayer has to offer the contemporary Jew is renewed sense of hope and yearning for "justice flowing like a stream though all the lands." Although *Tisha B'Av* is not yet a day of full celebration, Jews today are in the position to focus on the redemptive element in *Tisha B'Av*. Einhorn's

³³ Petuchowski 18.

³⁴ Cohen 63.

³⁵ Hoffman 385.

³⁶ Hoffman 388.

reinterpretation of *Tisha B'Av* can serve as a new model for understanding the classical theme of moving from lament to redemption.

Ideological and Liturgical Change Revisited

Even though Einhorn's *Olat Tamid* went on to strongly influence the development of Reform liturgy, his reading and message for *Tisha B'Av* probably did not reach the majority of Reform Jews. Other than the appearance of a similar rendition of his prayer in the first edition of the Union Prayer Book, Einhorn's *Tisha B'Av* prayer does not appear beyond *Olat Tamid*, and I did not find any evidence to support the observance of *Tisha B'Av* as a celebration. Instead, the responses to *Tisha B'Av* in Reform Judaism generally took two other forms. More moderate voices emerged, suggesting a balance between traditional perspectives and ideological change. The other response was the negation of *Tisha B'Av* altogether. Only after the Holocaust was the question of *Tisha B'Av* raised again. Like the earlier examples, the prayer books and platforms of reform Jews provide a window into some of these changes.

The first edition of the Union Prayer Book in 1895 contains the continuation of Einhorn's theology and vision for *Tisha B'Av*. The reading, which can be found in the miscellaneous section of the *siddur* called "Various Prayers," holds the same title and parallels Einhorn's reading in both content and style. The reading appears as follows³⁷:

for the Anniversary of the Destruction of Jerusalem

We commemorate to-day the saddest event in Jewish history: the time when the glory departed from Judah and Jerusalem was made desolate, when the enemy poured out his wrath upon the holy city, gave over the sanctuary of Zion a prey to devouring flames. Twice was the crown and pride of Israel, the sacred spot on which patriarchs and prophets taught and where the Levites sang their holy hymns, a spoil to strangers. Bitter was the cup which Israel had to drink. He was driven from his home to lands whose people knew not love and had no compassion on the sufferer. Myriads fell by the enemy's sword or were cast to the wild beasts; but harder still was the fate of those who escaped, for they were sold as slaves and doomed to drag out a miserable

³⁷ The Union Prayer Book for Jewish Worship, ed. and published by the Central Conference of American Rabbis (Cincinnati: 1895) 283-285.

existence. But all these hardships and trials were rendered all the harder as our ancestors were led to believe that they were inflicted on them as a punishment for sins their fathers had committed when they dwelt in the land of their inheritance.

And while they hoped and longed to return to their home and to see the temple restored as a sign of God's pardon and favor; alas, the night of the exile grew ever darker and the sufferings and the persecutions increased. Ever louder became their wailing and lamentations and they cried: Why, O Lord, did Thou cast us off? Tears are our meat day and night, while our enemies continually say unto us: Where is thy God? How long, O God, how long? When will Thy anger cease and Thy tender mercies be shown again unto those who have not forgotten Thee?

But the house of Jacob was not cast off nor forsaken by the God whose name was called upon it. Like the thorn-bush on Sinai which burned, but was not consumed, because God's majesty was manifested in it, so was Israel preserved by the very fire that raged about him. It had pleased the Lord to make His servant the wonder of the nations, and a witness to His own imperishable truth; though a bruised reed, he was not broken. He was put to grief and numbered with the transgressors, yet he bore the sin of the nations, and out of his wounds flowed the balm of healing for mankind. A man of sorrows, smitten of God, despised and rejected of men, he was a lamb brought to slaughter and would not open his mouth; yet his death did give life, the darkness of his imprisonment brought light to the Gentiles. The One temple in Jerusalem sank, but thousands of the sanctuaries of the God who once hallowed it, rose in its stead all over the globe where the same God was worshipped and the same truth proclaimed. Thus has the Lord comforted Israel and turned his sackcloth into garments of joy.

Praise be to Him. Amen.

Like Einhorn's reading, the UPB³⁸ moves from sadness to joy, emphasizing the bitterness of destruction and exile, and then the glory of Israel's mission in the world. The UPB states more explicitly the classical theology it is critiquing, when it says our ancestors' hardships were multiplied by their belief that they were being punished for their fathers' sins. This text echoes Einhorn's in its tone of optimism and hope. Absent from the UPB text is mention of the Messiah or the fulfillment of the messianic mission. The conclusion, though, is the same. God has (note the past tense) turned mourning into joy, thereby implying that Ninth of Av should indeed be cause for celebration.

The reading in the UPB is followed by a brief selection in English from the Book of Lamentations. The passage includes Lamentations 1:1, 3:21-26, 31-33, and 38. Other than the first verse of lament, the other verses all pertain to God's compassion and mercy and to hope in God. The editor also offered his own translation for 3:38, one that better reflects Einhorn's theology. The Lamentations verse reads, "*Mipi elyon lo tezte haraot v'hatov*," which JPS translates as, "Is it not at the word of the Most High, that weal and woe befall?"

Compare the JPS translation to that in the UPB, "Out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth not evil unless it worketh for the good." The Lamentations verse suggests that both good and evil come from God, while the UPB translation implies that evil comes from God only when it is intended for good. This translation complies with the theology that the evils of exile were actually intended for good. The UPB concludes the passage with the choir's response of Psalm 30:6 and 13, "For His anger endureth but a moment, in His favor is a life-time. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. O Lord, my God, I will give thanks unto Thee forever." The UPB, like Einhorn, concludes the reading for this day on a note of thanks and praise.

This earlier edition of the UPB, though, contained the last remnant of Einhorn's ideology for *Tisha B'Av*. The more radical approaches towards *Tisha B'Av* by David Einhorn and the first edition of the Union Prayer Book were eventually replaced by more moderate approaches or by nothing at all. The trend toward moderation was mainly a product of European reform. Ludwig Philippson's (1811-1889) stance towards *Tisha B'Av* is representative of his more moderate approach to reform in general. In his short essay, "We Must Mourn on *Tisha B'Av*," he responds to the point of view of Einhorn.

On the ninth of Ab, 660 year apart, the first and second Temple fell under the sword and incendiary torch of the Chaldeans and Romans. While the first fall was followed by the captivity of Babylon and the subsequent return to Palestine, the destruction of the second Temple was followed by complete dispersion of the people across the entire earth, resulting in what is now an already eighteen-centuries-old period of humiliation, exclusion, and persecution which afforded only rarely the hope of tranquility and exaltation, and which only in the last century has seemed to point toward new developments and toward a freer civic position for the Jew. Some take the viewpoint of modern times, that here was a higher reason which removed the Jewish nation from Palestine, so as to be witness to and bearer of the revealed religion of the One and Only amidst all mankind, thus stretching the narrow boundaries of a humble country to encompass the whole world. This viewpoint reflects the teaching that divine providence combines a higher, universal goal with all the events and destinies of men. But even if one accepts this view, the ninth of Ab is and must remain a dismal day of mourning, since it embodies the memory of such formidable ruin, such frightful events, the cessation of worship in the Temple, the loss of independence and that of a visible central point, and the innumerable horrors which from then on bore down upon Judah's dispersed little band. Neither civic emancipation nor the most magnificent successes of intellectual development can minimize the sad character of that day. You may institute a holiday for having attained civic liberties, yet what the

³⁸ I refer to the Union Prayer book as the "UPB."

ninth of Ab contains in utterly sad and touching memories cannot be blotted out by any blessed turn of our destiny. For it is, after all, only a minute fraction of the Jewish race over whom the sun of freedom has risen. Even the European countries, in which the greatest number of our coreligionists live, have at present merely discontinued the practice of persecution and oppression, but not that of exclusion and restrictions of all sorts. Therefore, the synagogue has justifiably appointed this day, which mourns the destruction of the Temple and that of Jerusalem, as the most meanings day of fasting and mourning in the year.³⁹

Philippson's mention of "Some take the viewpoint..." is a reference to Einhorn. For Philippson, even with the realization of new freedoms and changed views of God's role in the events of history, *Tisha B'Av* must remain according to the traditional structure as a day of mourning. He refers not only to the cessation of worship in the Temple, but more importantly to the loss of independence and a "visible central point." Einhorn did not acknowledge the significant symbolic and political loss of the Temple and the role it played as the unifying structure of the community. Philippson suggests instituting a holiday for marking the attainment of civil liberties, but not at the expense of a national day of mourning. He appeals to the power of memory. Finally, he acknowledges that only a fraction of Jews around the earth have really attained freedom. Persecution and oppression still exist. He not only provides a rationale for *Tisha B'Av*, but goes one step further to declare it "the most meaningful day of fasting and mourning in the year."

A supplement to the German Liberal Prayer Book, the German equivalent of the Union Prayer book contained a number of hymns and poems as well as introductory prayers for the various holidays, including an introduction for the eve of *Tisha B'Av*. "It should be noted that the theology which had been current a half century before and which had proclaimed the Reformers' approval of dispersion, now gave way to a more sober assessment of Israel's place in the world."⁴⁰

Heavenly Father, deeply moved Israel turns today its eye backward to a past full of misery and oppression. Our souls are filled with sorrow as we contemplate all the suffering which Thou, O God, didst

³⁹ Plaut 203.

⁴⁰ W. Gunther Plaut, *The Growth of Reform Judaism* (New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, Ltd., 1965) 303. This sentiment can also be found in the Columbus Platform of 1937.

bring upon our fathers. But never did Thy hand lie as heavily upon us as on the ninth of *Av*, on that day of horror on which three times Israel's pride sank into dust and ashes. On the ninth of *Av* Babylon's warlord destroyed Jerusalem, laid the Temple in ashes and drove Israel from its home. A half millennium later, on the ninth of *Av*, the Roman threw his incendiary torch into the new Sanctuary and Israel was cast out amongst all the peoples of the earth. On the ninth of *Av* the day of misfortune rose upon Spain which was once so blessed, where our fathers had found a new and happy home. They were exiled and nowhere since did the Jew enjoy the glory which for centuries was his in that land.

In remembrance of all this misfortune our souls are full of sadness, but the past full of sadness and of woe also contains the comfort which our heart in all the manifold trials of the present needs so dearly. Babylon and ancient Rome are gone, the sun of Spain has set, but Israel and Israel's holy faith still live, for Thou, O Almighty One, wast our light during the night, our shield in our need. Therefore they could torture but not destroy us. O remember Thy people that everywhere where Thy sun is shining the sun of peace and human brotherhood may also warm the hearts of men, so that Israel may be aided and the day of remembrance of the ninth of *Av* may be changed into a day of happiness and joy through Thy grace. Amen.

This reading offers a new perspective on *Tisha B'Av*. The author expresses sorrow not only for the destruction of the two Temples and Jerusalem, but also adds the loss of Spanish Jewry. Like the earlier prayers, this one combines a remembrance of past sadness with a comfort in present hope and faith. After an accounting of historical events, the reading ends in line with its predecessors, with a "*nechemta*" prayer for comfort and hope. Completely removed, though, is a sense that the true hope of *Tisha B'Av* had already been fulfilled, that is, the hope that the day will be turned into a celebration. The final prayer is an expression of yearning that the ninth of *Av* will someday be changed into a day of happiness and joy.

While the preceding texts reflect a recognition of and a struggle with the meaning of *Tisha B'Av*, the Reform approach to *Tisha B'Av*, in America, changed with the emergence of later editions of the Union Prayer Book. Mention of the Ninth of *Av* or any related commemoration is absent from the 1940 UPB edition. The question still remains whether there was any level of observance of *Tisha B'Av* in Reform congregations, institutions, or homes during the first half of the twentieth century. It is difficult to draw one conclusion for all Reform Jews. Did the elite of the movement, the rabbis and other professionals, consider observing *Tisha B'Av*? If the *siddur* serves as a diary of the Jewish people, as referred to previously, then one might conclude that *Tisha B'Av*, at least in America, fell to the wayside during this time.

The scarcity of references to *Tisha B'Av* in Reform liturgy, practice, and scholarship remained the case until after the tragic events of the Holocaust. The events of the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel changed the way Jewish communities, including Reform Jews, approached *Tisha B'Av*. On the one hand, the Holocaust gave new impetus and meaning for a designated day of mourning and sadness. On the other hand, the establishment of the State of Israel called into question the need for a day of mourning the loss of Jerusalem. The religious and political leaders in Israel also raised the question of whether the Holocaust should be incorporated into the observance of *Tisha B'Av*, ultimately deciding that it should stand on its own. Nevertheless, the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel raised new questions regarding *Tisha B'Av*.

One reference to *Tisha B'Av* can be found in the Reform responsa literature of that time. A Guide for Reform Jews, by Frederic A. Doppelt and David Polish, published in 1957, refers to *Tisha B'Av*. "On *Tisha B'Av* (the ninth of the month of Av) weddings should not be held in deference to those who still observe this day of mourning for the destruction of the Temple, even though the State of Israel has been re-established."⁴¹ Their words imply that the reader might not be aware of the name of the holiday and therefore they provide a translation. They suggest a guideline for an observance of the day, i.e. not holding weddings, but their guidance does not grow out of any intrinsic meaning to the day, rather, it is in deference to those other Jews who observe the day. Then, their not so subtle opinion of these observers is revealed; they cannot imagine why Jews would observe *Tisha B'Av*, given the establishment of the State of Israel. Their words suggest that most Reform Jews were not observing *Tisha B'Av*.

⁴¹ Frederic A. Doppelt and David Polish, A Guide for Reform Jews (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1957) 110.

In 1975 the Reform *siddur*, *Gates of Prayer* replaced the 1940 Union Prayer book.

Gates of Prayer was influenced by the UPB and also modeled after *Service of the Heart* (London, 1967), the first comprehensive post-World War II prayer book of Reform Jewry.⁴² "The result is a new prayer book profoundly rooted in Jewish tradition, and that expresses that tradition within the context of Reform Judaism."⁴³

Service of the Heart contains a brief service titled, "In Remembrance of Israel's Suffering."⁴⁴ It is an attempt to bridge the commemoration of *Tisha B'Av* with a Holocaust commemoration. The opening reading lays out the purpose of this remembrance.

Our hearts go out to all who have suffered from the cruelty of their fellow men. But on this day we remember especially the pain and humiliation suffered by the house of Israel: exile and oppression, expulsions and ghettos, pogroms and death camps. When we consider the suffering of the house of Israel, we are tempted to say, with a poet of our people, "To me the whole world is one gallows." And we ask anew the question of the Psalmist: "Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?"

The agony of our people numbs the mind and turns the heart to stone. We can only wonder at the fortitude and courage of our forefather who said, again and again: "Though You slay me, yet I will trust in You." And we can pray that we may be blessed with a measure of the faith which enabled them to remain loyal to God and to his *Torah*, even when he seemed remote from them and indifferent to their woe.

The opening reading lays out the years of suffering, from exile to the death camps, experienced by the house of Israel. The first paragraph expresses sadness and lament while the second paragraph looks ahead, with the reader praying for faith, trust, and hope in God. A series of responsive readings are from Jeremiah, Psalms, and Lamentations. The tone is one of sadness and lament, asking the questions of why and how. The next paragraph concludes with the prayer, "...give us the patience to await the day when all men will labour together for justice and peace, so that the children of Israel, and all mankind, may dwell securely in a nobler and happier world." A second series of responsive readings, from Isaiah and Psalms, are about comfort, hope, strength, and peace.

⁴² Chaim Stern, ed. *Gates of Prayer The New Union Prayer book* (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1975) xii.

⁴³ *Gates of Prayer* xii.

⁴⁴ *Service of the Heart* (London: Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues, 1967) 287-290.

Overall, the service follows the general pattern of moving from suffering to hope. Gone, though, is any explicit expression of joy. The reading acknowledges that the day when justice and peace will be fulfilled is still far away. Yet, hope is still a necessary and cherished value. The brief service does not specifically mention *Tisha B'Av* or the Holocaust. Rather, it attempts to incorporate collective themes of suffering and hope into one liturgy and one day.

Gates of Prayer offers a combined service expressively for *Tisha B'Av* and Yom Hashanah.⁴⁵ Eric L. Friedland, in his article "Tish'ah Be-Av A Modest Proposal," in which he pursues Conservative Judaism's liturgical responses to *Tisha B'Av*, succinctly summarizes the changing attitudes towards the holiday in the Reform Movement. Interestingly, Friedland thinks that Reform liturgy makes more reference to *Tisha B'Av* than does the Conservative Movement's prayer book, *Sim Shalom*. He writes,

Over the last fifty years Reform Judaism has had a gradual but undecided change of heart as regards the Ninth of Av from the time when it unwaveringly viewed the day as the auspicious launching of Israel's mission to the world. In light of calamities that have befallen the Jewish people since, the Reform movement arrived at the sobering realization that the *eschaton* may be taking a bit longer than anticipated. Of course the rebirth of the Jewish state too played its irrevocable part in tempering the movement's *quondam* wholesale universalism. Its *Gates of Prayer* (1975) reflects this turnaround by furnishing a service for *Tish'ah be-Av* interchangeably with *Yom ha-Shoah*, after Reform's doing without such a service for over seventy years. Interestingly, the Reform prayer book now contains both *'anenu* and *nahem* in the context of a modified *Amidah*. In its special *Haftarot* section, *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* (1981), under the imprint of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, offers the traditional prophetic readings for the morning and afternoon of Tish'ah be-Av, and the lectionary at the end of *Gates of the House* (1977), a product of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, cites the *Torah* Readings for those times as well.⁴⁶

Friedland's writing reflects the changes in tone and content of the Gates of Prayer service.

The liturgy reflects a post-modern skepticism about optimism and hope. The service as a whole does not follow the redemptive movement from mourning to joy. Instead, the service is divided into individual readings and prayers, some of which do reflect this movement.

There is no overarching message or vision. Rather, the service is a conglomeration of

⁴⁵ Gates of Prayer 573-589.

readings, meditations, prayers, and songs. The readings and meditations are interspersed around the prayers for an evening or morning service. There is no real place for lament in the service. The readings seek to affirm the good, while acknowledging the reality of evil. They seek to affirm hope in God, belief that God is One, and trust that God's power will provide comfort. The service contains the prayer *Ani Maamin*; there is hope for the Messiah's arrival sometime in the future.

The central message is the power of humankind. If there is an inspirational message to be found here, it is the strength of man to overcome evil. Some passages from the liturgy include: "He inspires us with the hope that we can make ourselves one as He is one." "Help us to build Your Kingdom, one human world united in heart and soul!" "Holiness, an essential attribute of God, can become a quality of our own. The human can become holy." The final meditation is most telling.

Our mission involves other peoples. Jews do not live alone. As a result of what the world has done to, it may find a way to save itself. But now it must admit that we do have in our possession the key to survival. We have not survived centuries of atrocities for nothing.

This is what I think we are trying to prove to ourselves, desperately, because it is desperately needed: in a world of absurdity, we must invent reason; we must create beauty out of nothingness. And because there is murder in this world – and we are the first ones to know it – and we know how hopeless our battle may appear, we have to fight murder and absurdity, and give meaning to the battle, if not to our hope.

This is not a lesson; this is not an answer. It is only a question.

There is a hesitant optimism in the power of humankind to overcome evil. Jews have a special role in this process; we should be the first to strive for beauty and good. Jews should provide a model for fighting evil. This, however, is only a question or a suggestion. The hesitation in the final line leaves the reader wondering whether there are any words that could truly provide hope or meaning. Earlier, another meditation offers only a response of silence, but then goes on to say, "and yet again, there is a song to sing." The reader is left wondering what that song might be.

⁴⁶ Eric L. Friedland, "Tish'ah Be-Av A Modest Proposal," *Conservative Judaism* XLIV, 3 (1992): 57.

Throughout the service, reference is made to the Holocaust. There are names of concentration camps and death marches. Included is the Partisan's Song in both Yiddish and English, "You must not say that you now walk the final way." However, there is no reference to *Tisha B'Av* or to any of the accounts of suffering and destruction that took place on that day, no references to the loss of the temples or Jerusalem. There is no interpretation or reinterpretation of the meaning of that day. The Reform Movement brought back *Tisha B'Av* as a day interpreted and observed in light of the Holocaust. The new meaning of *Tisha B'Av* was the commemoration of the suffering from the Holocaust. It was a day of affirming memory and striving to do good. The liturgy suggests that the Holocaust superceded *Tisha B'Av* in the minds of Reform Jews. The later gender sensitive version of Gates of Prayer contains only a short reading for *Yom HaShoah*, and nothing for *Tisha B'Av*⁴⁷.

Whereas the aforementioned *siddurim* may be found lacking in material for *Tisha B'Av*, the collection called the *Chamesh Megillot*, The Five Scrolls⁴⁸, published by the CCAR Press is the place to go to find the most comprehensive Reform liturgy for *Tisha B'Av*. Excerpts from the introduction to this book illustrate the purpose of a Reform collection of these texts and liturgies.

This presentation of the Five Scrolls, with liturgies for the festivals, is intended as a contribution to the process of the religious renewal of American Jewry...An increasing number of Jews want not to diminish but to amplify the religious content of their lives....This edition of the Five Scrolls is meant to be such *Torah*. It reflects an ardent didactic mission. It is born of a passionate desire to raise the level of Jewish observance, to recover in this particular case that richness of color, motif, sound, and story, the fullness of spiritual sensuality in our festival observance; and thus to strengthen Jewish consciousness, to give greater content to Jewish identity. Out of the liturgical glories of our heritage we hope to provide not only content and meaning, but direction as well in the lives of Jews; in sum, to restore and rebuild the reality of Jewish religious community: *kehila kedosha*. This text is intended as a part of the recovery among liberal Jewry of festival observance. The premise of this edition of the Five Scrolls is that there is a Jewry ready and waiting for this renewal.

⁴⁷ Chaim Stern, ed. *Gates of Prayer for Shabbat and Weekdays* A Gender Sensitive Prayer book (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1994) 184-85.

⁴⁸ *The Five Scrolls*, ed. Rabbi Albert H. Friedlander, Rabbi Herbert Bronstein (New York: CCAR Press, 1984) 253-266.

These sentiments from the introduction reflect changing attitudes toward tradition and observance among contemporary Reform Jews. Each scroll in this edition is embedded in its festival and liturgical context. The "Service for the Reading of the Scroll of Lamentations" shows how the Reform Movement has come full circle with regard to ideological and liturgical change. Contrast Einhorn's reading to this passage, "The world of God is great and holy. Every land is holy, but the holiest of lands is the Land of Israel; the holiest of cities is Jerusalem; and in Jerusalem the holiest place was the Temple."⁴⁹ Contrast the skepticism and doubt found in Gates of Prayer to the clear purpose of the day that is portrayed in this service. The central theme is memory; remembrance of Jewish suffering, but without specific mention of the Holocaust. The service consists of prayers, songs, responsive readings, and stories. Messages of justice and peace prevail. The service includes the classical prayer, "*Nachem*," the prayer for comfort and hope. This text would provide the building blocks for the creation of a *Tisha B'Av* service today.

It should also be noted that the Israeli *siddur*, *Ha'Avodah Shebalev*⁵⁰, which belongs to the Movement for Progressive Judaism in Israel, contains an extensive liturgy for *Tisha B'Av*. The nine-page all Hebrew service consists of prayers, readings, poems, and texts spanning from biblical to medieval to contemporary Israeli sources including Katznelson and *Echad Ha'Am*. The service contains the by now more well known themes from Lamentations, Judah HaLevi, and a contemporary poem called "*Eicha*" about the third *churban* (destruction), which was the Holocaust. It is a mosaic of readings that also reflect a particularly Israeli perspective on the day. The readings speak of the rise of great leaders such as Hess, Hertzfel, and Ben Gurion, who, without the years of exile that preceded them,

⁴⁹ *ibid* 263.

⁵⁰ *Ha'Avodah She'Balev* (Jerusalem: The Movement for Progressive Judaism in Israel, 1982) 225-233.

would not have existed. One reading asks, which of these two things; the destruction of place or the destruction of people, is the greater destruction, and for which of them should we mourn more? The service ends with a prayer for peace, for the consolation and rebuilding of Jerusalem, and for complete redemption. This liturgy is an effort to shape and comprehend *Tisha B'Av* from a contemporary Israeli context and perspective.

It will remain to be seen whether the new Reform *siddur*, expected to be published in 2005, will contain liturgy for *Tisha B'Av*. It would be wise for the Reform Movement to look back on its wide range of views and writings from the past in order to develop new liturgy. The combination of Philippon's appeal for a day devoted to sadness and memory with Einhorn's optimism, sense of glory and pride, and passion for God and universal justice, could make for a powerful *Tisha B'Av* experience.

Conclusions

Old and New Questions

The three major developments of *Tisha B'Av* in the Talmud, in liturgy, and in the Reform Movement, have demonstrated how *Tisha B'Av* has evolved and continues to evolve over time. This evolution is a paradigm for how a festival develops and for how meaning is interpreted and reinterpreted in each age. Two major developments have occurred in modern times that again raise questions about memory, identity, observance, ritual and theology in regard to *Tisha B'Av*. These events are the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel.

Should we, in responding to the Holocaust, follow the pattern of *Tisha B'Av*, of incorporating each generation's sadness into a single day's commemoration? During the early years of the State of Israel, Prime Minister Begin and some Orthodox parties advocated for the inclusion of Holocaust commemoration into *Tisha B'Av*.¹ Indeed, we saw that the Reform Movement merged the commemoration of the Holocaust with *Tisha B'Av*. Yitz Greenberg offers several critiques of this position. He writes that this approach does not do full justice to the Holocaust or to *Tisha B'Av*.² The goal, he argues, is not to "save" *Tisha B'Av* by replacing it with the implications of the Holocaust. A concern is the assimilation of the Holocaust into the classical categories of *Tisha B'Av* of sin and punishment. His other argument is that the Holocaust is a turning point so overwhelming that it must have its own special day and framework. He writes, "It is one of those rare

¹ James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 271.

² Irving Greenberg, "Guide to *Tisha B'Av*," (New York: National Jewish Conference Center, 1978) 13.

reorienting moments of Jewish history and religion when basic conceptions of God, of humanity, and of Jewish destiny shift.”³

There is precedent, though, for tragic events to first have their own day of commemoration (following the Cossack pogroms in Poland in 1648, the council of Polish Jewry took it upon themselves to fast on the twentieth of *Sivan*⁴) and to later become added to the layers of *Tisha B'Av*. Perhaps a psychological factor is involved. When the tragic event is still close in memory, there is a need to set aside distinct time for commemoration and mourning. I cannot predict whether the commemoration of the Holocaust will some day be included in *Tisha B'Av* or whether *Yom HaShoah* will remain a separate day. At the time of this writing, I believe that the Holocaust still necessitates a day of its own. The events of the Holocaust are too close and it is too early to speak of the Holocaust in the language of *Tisha B'Av* - the language of both destruction and redemption.

However, with the birth of the State of Israel, there is no question that the scale has tipped farther from destruction and closer to redemption. Greenberg writes, “*Tisha B'Av* cannot be unaffected by the miracle of Israel and the reunification of Jerusalem.”⁵ He remarks that it is foolish for people today to mourn excessively for Israel. “It seems then that the sorrow in the three week period must be softened and that the mourning of *Tisha B'Av* be tempered with awareness of the unfolding of redemption. Time should be spent on *Tisha B'Av* telling of the redemption begun and of the revival and rebuilding of Jerusalem.”⁶ The reality of the State of Israel raises the question of whether *Tisha B'Av* should be abolished completely. Greenberg asks this question in other words. “What happens to *Tisha B'Av* in an age of fundamental reorientation when the tide of Jewish history turns from

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982) 50.

⁵ Greenberg 12.

exile to rootedness and from sorrow to increased rejoicing? Is there still meaning to days of remembered grief and defeat?⁷

Is *Tisha B'Av* relevant? Following in the pattern of *Tisha B'Av* taking on new layers and new meaning in each generation, I believe we, too, can find meaning in it today. The themes of memory and identity, loss and renewal recur today. Bradley Shavit Artson writes that *Tisha B'Av* is more compelling, "more potent a symbol of the human predicament than anything in contemporary life."⁸ If we recall from chapter three, the language of lament is an eternal language and the communal voice of lament speaks to each of us personally. Much like the talmudic dictum central to the *Passover Haggadah*, "In each generation each person must regard his/herself as if he/she had personally left Egypt,"⁹ the Talmud also says, "Each generation which has not witnessed the rebuilding of the Temple is like the generation in which it was destroyed."¹⁰ Understanding the Temple as a symbol of unity, glory, peace, wholeness, and redemption, the message for today is that we, too, must witness and participate in the process of rebuilding. We, too, live with the yearning for the reversal of mourning into joy, loss into renewal, and destruction into redemption.

Mordechai Gafni writes about the notion of yearning on *Tisha B'Av*. He writes, "An omnipresent motif in Jewish consciousness, the loss of the temple leads us not only to mourn its destruction but also to yearn for its rebuilding. And yet what is it that we yearn for?"¹¹ Gafni describes the experience of *Tisha B'Av* as being in a state of longing. He asserts, however, that we must move beyond the sense of longing, which symbolized the exile, to an experience of fulfillment. He concludes with a parallel to the Song of Songs.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ Bradley Shavit Artson, "*Tisha B'Av*: Our Sufferings and Our Hope," *Jewish Spectator* 57, 1 (1992): 37.

⁹ *Mishna Pesachim* 10:5.

¹⁰ *Jerusalem Talmud, Yoma* 1:1.

¹¹ Mordechai Gafni, "Eros and the Ninth of Av," *Tikkun* 14, 4 (1999): 9.

"Akiva is teaching us that the essence of the temple, the holy of holies, is the Song of Songs; that is, the experience of passion and sensuality as the guiding force in all of our relationships with the world. It is for this that we yearn on the Ninth of Av."¹² For Gafni, the Temple symbolizes passion and fulfillment. In rekindling our yearning, *Tisha B'Av* can help us move from a sense of longing into the experience of its fulfillment.

Today, we also yearn for the repair of relationships, for *klal Yisrael*, peace, wholeness, and fulfillment. Even with the strength of Israel and the Jewish communities in the United States, we would be mimicking the exaggerated optimism that was expressed in Einhorn's reading if we were to say that the messianic age had arrived, our place in the world is secure, and redemption is complete. Especially given the current unrest in the Middle East and acts of terrorism in Israel and worldwide, it is too early to say that *Tisha B'Av* has become a day for rejoicing. We still yearn for a Jerusalem rebuilt in peace. Haskel Lookstein writes that "As long as *Eicha* remains a question there is a reason for *Tisha B'Av*....Today, *Eicha* still has a question mark."¹³ How could it have happened? How can it still be happening? How can it get better?

Another talmudic saying speaks to the idea that we must actively work towards redemption: "*Lo alecha ham'lacha ligmor v'lo ata ven chorin l'hibatel mimena*," "It is not up to you to finish the work, yet you are not free to avoid it."¹⁴ Artson writes,

Our task, simple to articulate and impossible to complete, is to begin the work of rebuilding the Temple – by restoring wholeness to our shattered members, renewing a bond of trust between humanity and its members, repeating the commitment made by our ancestors to nurture our covenant with God, to be a holy people. *Tisha B'Av*, by forcing us to recognize a trail of tragedy and a psychology of division, is the crucial first step toward transformation and transcendence.¹⁵

¹² Gafni 10.

¹³ Haskel Lookstein, "*Tisha B'Av* – Why is it Relevant Today?" Young Israel Cabinet Judaica Series (1983): a/4.

¹⁴ *Pirkei Avot* 2:16

¹⁵ Artson 39.

Tisha B'Av reminds us of our obligation to be active partners in bringing to fulfillment Einhorn's image of justice flowing. *Tisha B'Av* is our rededication and commitment to the process of redemption. *Tisha B'Av*, then, marks the beginning of the High Holy Day period, in that we begin the process of finding our truest selves and rededicating ourselves to our communities and to the Jewish People. The low point is an important part of the calendar rhythm, as it pushes us so move higher.

On *Tisha B'Av*, we allow the past to engulf the present in the conviction that the memory at the end of the day will be "more true, more incisive, and more real."¹⁶ The past informs the present, but the present also informs the past. The hope at the end of the day is that we will better understand our own lives by having seen the experiences of our lives reflected in the mirror of the past. And, as we have learned, the outcome of the day, the meaning that we take with us, may be similar to understandings of the past or it may be radically different.

There is also wisdom in the talmudic notion of placing limits upon such an intense experience of lament and reflection, remembering and longing. The concentration of sad events into one day and the occurrence of one day devoted to such memories, enables us to live out the rest of our days strongly rooted in the present with an eye toward the future. *Tisha B'Av* is mainly about potential for the future. The great paradox of *Tisha B'Av* is the dream of perfection that is holds, and the impossibility of the fulfillment of such a dream. Recall the Jews around the bonfire who believed that they would no longer needed the Book of Lamentations. *Tisha B'Av* is the awareness of imperfection and the rekindling of passion and hope. *Tisha B'Av* is the ability to mourn and to dance.

¹⁶ Artson 38.

Suggested Experiences

The two most likely Reform contexts for an experience of *Tisha B'Av* are Jewish summer camp and a group of adults in a synagogue. The communal context of *Tisha B'Av* is key to the experience. This is the reason that camp is the most organic setting for *Tisha B'Av*. Camp provides an established community; a community that lives together and shares in the rhythms of each other's lives. The synagogue setting presents a greater challenge, not only because of the tendency toward decreased programming in the summertime, but because of the goal to come together in community. It will be necessary to create community by offering experiences that built upon each other from the evening into the next day and by establishing a safe and trusting environment in which adults can experience the range of emotions of the day. *Tisha B'Av* could be a powerful way of summer programming in a congregation as a pivot into the High Holy Days.

The writing of a comprehensive liturgy, an outline of a complete *Tisha B'Av* experience, or a detailed lesson plan for a camp program would have been beyond the scope of this work. I hope someday to be able to write a Reform liturgy for *Tisha B'Av*. In synthesizing the lessons learned from the three major developments in the evolution of *Tisha B'Av*, I do offer the following suggestions for possible *Tisha B'Av* experiences. Because the totality of *Tisha B'Av*, with all its different tones, liturgies, and practices, would be difficult to achieve in one experience alone, I suggest creating a context for *Tisha B'Av* through a series of experiences.

Three experiences for adults in a synagogue

(Keep in mind that most adults are probably not taking off from work. Another possibility, while kids are at camp, is to have an adult retreat over *Tisha B'Av*, to really create context and community.)

- **Erev Tisha B'Av Service:** Set the tone by lighting candles, singing songs, and sitting on the floor or rearranging the chairs, and allowing for silence. Have a *Ma'ariv* service followed by the chanting of Lamentations and reading of selective *Kinot*. Additional readings¹⁷ could reflect the movement from past to present or the location of *Tisha B'Av* in the rhythms of the Jewish year. Ask participants to share in the reading. Using the language and structure of the literature of lament, ask participants to write their own piece. Participants may be asked to share aloud, maybe in smaller groups, but, given the personal nature, it is ok not to share.
- **"Lunch and Learn" (without the lunch):** During the regular lunch hour the next day, ask people to come to a text study and to refrain from eating. Study Job, Lamentations, *Talmud Taanit*, or some of the laws for *Tisha B'Av*.
- **Healing Service:** Hold a healing service near the conclusion of *Tisha B'Av* that focuses on the themes of comfort, renewal, and hope. The service should be in the context of communal healing, but should also leave room for individual reflection. The reading or chanting of Isaiah 40, "*Nachamu, Nachamu, Ami*" – "Comfort, comfort, my people" might be included. Teach about the seven *haftarot* of comfort that lead into the High Holy Days.

¹⁷ Readings should be poetic, taken from biblical, aggadic, and contemporary sources, and could focus on Jewish historical experience, Jerusalem, memory, suffering, sadness, protest, hope, justice, and peace.

Three experiences at camp

- Erev Tisha B'Av: Camp is the perfect setting to create a mood. Have a different kind of meal that night in the *chader ochel*.¹⁸ Ask the question, why is this night different? The *Ma'ariv* service can be a "memorable moment" for kids at camp. Set the mood by having all children sit on the floor in small groups, maybe by cabin, around candles. Teach appropriate songs beforehand and sing these songs as children are walking into the space. Intersperse readings for *Tisha B'Av* that focus on the movement from past to present throughout the *Ma'ariv* service. Ask counselors to read. Chant selections from Lamentations. A counselor or teacher in each circle could tell a story or lead a discussion. Participants could write down their prayers at that moment. Alternatively, create a service that presents a problem in the evening and resolve it at the morning or afternoon service.¹⁹ Conclude with singing and ask campers to return quietly to their cabins. To keep the mood, counselors may choose to keep the lights off.
- Shacharit Service and Study: Include a learning opportunity, facilitated by a rabbi or teacher, into the morning service. Older children could study a text (Lamentations, Job, Jeremiah, *Mishna Taanit*) and younger children could listen to a story and have a discussion. The study session should try to uncover some of the meanings of *Tisha B'Av* and encourage children to articulate their own interpretations and understandings.
- Mincha Service and Tzedakah Project: Hold an afternoon service during which the change in mood on *Tisha B'Av* afternoon is explained²⁰. Review the lessons you have learned, teach about the importance of being partners in redemption and this afternoon being a time to rededicate ourselves to the process. Following the service, organize a camp-wide *tzedakah* project. Relate the *tzedakah* project to Israel or Jerusalem.

¹⁸ In Raymond Zwerin's "*Tisha B'Av* Resource Manual," he suggests having an evening "fast-meal" that weaves in themes and structures from the Passover *seder*. (New York: UAHC Department of Camp and Youth Education).

¹⁹ This idea also from Zwerin, "*Tisha B'Av* Resource Manual".

²⁰ If kids are fasting, after *Mincha* would seem an appropriate time to break the fast.

Appendix 1

Halakhot for Tisha B'Av

Moses Maimonides. *Mishne Torah, Sefer Z'manim* (The Book of Seasons), *Hilkhot Ta'aniot* (Laws Concerning Fast Days), Chapter Five¹

1. There are days which are observed by all Israel as fasts because tragic events happened on them, the object being to stir the hearts to open paths of repentance, and to remind us of our own evil deeds, and of our ancestors' deeds which were like ours, as a consequence of which these tragic afflictions came upon them and upon us. For as we remember these things we ought to repent and do good, as it is said, "And they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their ancestors...." (Leviticus 26:40).
2. These fast days are the following: the 3rd of *Tishrei*, because Gedaliah the son of Achikam was slain on that day, thus extinguishing Israel's last remaining ember, and making her exile complete. The 10th of *Tevet*, because the evil Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, invested Jerusalem on that day, placing it under siege and in sore straits. The 17th of *Tammuz*, on which five things happened: the tablets of the Law were broken, the daily burnt offering ceased just before the destruction of the first Temple, the walls of Jerusalem were breached just before the destruction of the second Temple, the evil Apostomos burned the *Torah* and set up an idol in the Temple.
3. And on the 9th of *Av*, five things happened: the decree was issued in the wilderness that the Israelites were not to enter the Holy Land, the Temple was destroyed both the first time and the second time, a great city named *Betar* was captured - it contained thousands and myriads of Israelites and had a great king whom all Israel, including the greatest scholars, thought to be the King Messiah, but he fell into the hands of the Romans who slew them all, a calamity as great as that of the destruction of the Temple - and finally, on that day destined to misfortune, the evil Turnus Rufus plowed up the Temple site and its surroundings, in fulfillment of the verse, "Zion shall be plowed as a field" (Micah 3:12; Jeremiah 26:18).
4. These four fast days are expressly referred to in the Prophetic Books, which speak of "The fast of the fourth month, and fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth" (Zechariah 8:19). "The fast of the fourth month" is the 17th of *Tammuz*, which is in the fourth month; "the fast of the fifth" is the 9th of *Av*, which is in the fifth month; "the fast of the seventh" is the 3rd of *Tishrei*, which is in the seventh month; and "the fast of the tenth" is the 10th of *Tevet*, which is in the tenth month.
5. It is the custom in all Israel nowadays to fast also on the thirteenth of *Adar*, as a memorial of the fast observed in Haman's time, as it is said, "The matters of the fasting and their cry" (Esther 9:31). If the thirteenth of *Adar* falls on *Shabbat*, the fast is held on the preceding Thursday, the eleventh. But if one of the other four fast days falls on *Shabbat*, it is postponed

¹ Translation mostly according to Solomon Gandz and Hyman Klein, *The Code of Maimonides* Book Three (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961) 447-452. I made several changes to this translation, mainly regarding gender neutral language. For a translation of Jacob ben Asher's *Arba'ah Turim Orach Chayim*, The Laws Concerning the Ninth of *Av* and the Other Fasts, Chapters 549-561 and of Joseph Caro's *Bet Yosef* on these chapters, see Sandra Cohen, "Mourning the Temple's Destruction: The Laws of *Tisha B'Av* and the Other Public Fasts in the *Arba'ah Turim* and the *Bet Yosef*", rabbinic thesis, HUC-JIR, 1995.

until after *Shabbat*. If it falls on a Friday, the fast is held on Friday. On none of these fast days is an alarm to be sounded with trumpets, nor is there an additional service (*Neilah*) at the close of the day. The *Torah*, however, is to be read during both morning and afternoon services, the lesson being the one beginning, "And Moses besought *Adonai*" (Exodus 32:11). On all these fast days, with the exception of the 9th of *Av*, one may eat and drink during the night preceding the fast.

6. When *Av* begins, enjoyment is reduced. During the week of the 9th of *Av* until after the fast, it is forbidden to cut one's hair, wash one's clothes, or put on ironed clothing – even linen clothing. It is forbidden even to wash clothing which is to be put away until after the fast is over. It has long been the custom in Israel also to eat no meat nor go to the bathhouse during this week, until after the fast. In some places it is customary to suspend the ritual slaughter of meat from the first of the month until the fast day.
7. The night preceding the 9th of *Av* and the following fast day are alike in every way. One may eat only during the preceding day, twilight being a forbidden time in this respect, just as it is on *Yom Kippur*. At the final meal before the fast, one may neither eat meat nor drink wine. However, one may drink wine straight from the vat, if it is three days old or less, and eat salt meat if it is three days old or more. One may not eat two cooked dishes at this meal.
8. This rule applies only to a meal eaten after midday on the eve of the ninth of *Av*. At a meal eaten before midday, even if it the final meal before the fast, one may eat whatever one pleases. Again, if the eve of the 9th of *Av* falls on *Shabbat*, one may eat and drink as much as one needs, and even put on the table a meal as bountiful as King Solomon's. Similarly, if the 9th of *Av* itself falls on *Shabbat*, there is no need to forego anything.
9. This rule applies to the general public who cannot bear excessive privation. The practice of the pious men of old, however, was as follows: On the eve of the 9th of *Av*, each man in his solitude would be brought dry bread and salt, and he would dip this in water and eat it while seated between the oven and the stove. He would wash it down with a pitcher of water, drunk in sadness, desolation, and tears, like a person seated before a dead person. This behavior, or one very much like it, is appropriate for scholars. In all my life, I have never eaten cooked food – even lentils – on the eve of the 9th of *Av*, unless the day was *Shabbat*.
10. Pregnant and nursing women must fast all day on the 9th of *Av*. It is forbidden to bathe in either warm or cold water – or even dip a finger in water – to anoint oneself for pleasure, to wear sandals, or to have sexual intercourse, as on *Yom Kippur*. In a place where the custom is to work on that day, work may be done; if the custom is not to work, work is forbidden. Scholars should abstain from work everywhere. The Sages said that the one who works on the 9th of *Av* will never see a sign of blessing in that work.
11. Scholars should not exchange greetings on the 9th of *Av*, but should sit repining and sighing like mourners. If an ignorant person greets them, however, they should return the greeting in a soft voice and with a grave demeanor. On the 9th of *Av* it is forbidden to read from the *Torah*, the Prophets, the Writings, the *Mishna*, the *Halakhot*, the *Gemara*, or the *Aggadot*. Only the Book of Job, the Book of Lamentations, or the calamitous parts of the Book of Jeremiah may be read. School children should be given no lessons on that day; and some scholars do not put *tefillin* upon their heads.

12. After the Temple was destroyed, the Sages of that generation ruled that one should never again paint and decorate a building in the manner of royal edifices. Instead, when plastering and whitewashing the walls of a house, one should leave bare an area a cubit square opposite the door. If, however, one purchases a homestead that is already painted and decorated, it may remain in this state, and one is not obligated to peel the decorations from the walls.
13. A similar regulation by the Sages requires that when arranging a banquet for guests, something be omitted, so that part of the table would be left without the tableware that should normally be there. And, when a woman has a set of silver or gold jewelry made, one of the components usually included should be left out, so that the set would remain incomplete. Also, a bridegroom about to be married should place ashes upon his head at the spot where the *tefillin* is worn. All these were to be reminders of Jerusalem, in accordance with the verse, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand whither. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I set not Jerusalem above my highest joy" (Psalms 137:5-6).
14. Another decree of the Sages forbade the playing of musical instruments, and the enjoyment of melody and song of any kind, on account of the destruction of the Temple. Even vocal singing over wine is forbidden, as it is said, "They drink their wine without song" (Isaiah 24:9). It has long been customary, however, throughout Israel, to recite words of praise and songs of thanksgiving to God, and the like, over wine.
15. The Sages also forbade bridegrooms to wear any crowns whatsoever, or to put anything upon their heads, as it is said, "The miter shall be removed, and the crown taken off" (Ezekiel 21:31). They also forbade brides to wear crowns of silver or gold; garlands of twisted thread, however, are permitted.
16. A person who beholds the ruined cities of Judea should say, "Your holy cities are become a wilderness" (Isaiah 64:9), and should rend one's garment. If one beholds the ruins of Jerusalem, that person should say, "Jerusalem, a desolation" (*ibid.*) and likewise rend one's garment. If one beholds the ruins of the Temple, that person should say, "Our holy and our beautiful house, where our ancestors praised You, is burned with fire" (Isaiah 64:10), and again rend one's garment. At what point on the approach to Jerusalem is one obliged to rend one's garment? When one is past Mount Scopus. Then, when one reaches the Temple, one must rend one's garment again. If, however, one comes upon the Temple first, by approaching from the direction of the wilderness, one should rend one's garment first for the Temple, and then add the rent for Jerusalem.
17. These rending of the garments must in every case be done by hand, and while standing. And, one must rend every garment he is wearing, until his heart is revealed. The rent may never be sewn up with stitching, but may be basted, hemmed, gathered, or sewn with a ladder-stitch.
18. If one visits Jerusalem repeatedly - within thirty days of a previous visit, one need not rend one's garment again; but after thirty days, one must rend them again.
19. All these fast days are destined to be abolished in the time of the Messiah; indeed, they are destined to be turned into festive days, days of rejoicing and gladness, as it is said, "Thus said *Adonai* of Hosts: The fast of the fourth month, and fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall become times of joy and gladness, and cheerful festivals to the house of Judah; therefore, you shall love truth and peace" (Zechariah 8:19).

Appendix 2

Selected *Kinot*

From: The Authorised *Kinot* for the Ninth of Av, translated and annotated by
Abraham Rosenfeld (London: I. Labworth & Co., 1965).

compassion: "Have pity, like a father on his son!" He cried: "Woe to the father that has driven away his son! and also Alas, for the son that appears not at the table of his father!" "Arise, Jeremiah! (said God:) 'Why do you keep silent? Go, call the Patriarchs, Aaron and Moses; let the shepherds come and raise lamentations, for the wolves of the desert have torn the lamb.'" Jeremiah cried aloud, roaring like a lion at the (cave of) Machpelah: "Raise your voice in cry, O Patriarchs of the glorious (Israel);¹ your children have erred, and lo, they are in captivity." "Indeed, if like mankind they have transgressed the covenant (the Patriarchs cried), what is become of the merit of those with whom the covenant was made?" "What shall I do for you, my sons, (God replied)? It is my decree that the Temple is devastated, for none of the children² came to the appointed seasons,³ but made (their feet) to totter (after the idols)."⁴ "O bring them back, (O Lord),⁵ to support and assist (them) as at that time;⁶ have mercy upon Zion, for the appointed time has come."

Reader or Narrator:

How can you offer me empty comfort when my harp is turned to mourning?

In (my) allotted heritage⁷ the yoke I must bear is burdensome beyond endurance;

Every year on this day⁸ the season (of mourning) recurs for me,

And behold, I am saddened and deserted (like a wife by her husband) for more than a thousand years;

(God's) anger prevailed, and the Ark was hidden;
Twice because of the rebellious ones of Maron⁹ did disaster come;

My Dwelling is destroyed, my flock taken captive, and Ohelibah,¹⁰ the Metropolis, became deserted;

The Lion¹¹ was lured forth from his thicket and crushed the Temple,

And he exiled from his dwelling those who did offer sacrifices;¹²

Indeed, he killed multitudes of anointed Priests, (and) eighty thousand [of the flower of the priesthood] who were mustered in the Temple of God's desire;¹³

Congregation:

O how shall I be comforted?

O how shall I be comforted?

O how shall I be comforted?

O how shall I be comforted?

O how shall I be comforted?

O how shall I be comforted?

1) Israel was named יִשְׂרָאֵל, cf. 2 Sam. 1, 19. 2) Lit. Beloved Ones. 3) The three Foot Festivals. 4) They would rather worship idols than go up as pilgrims to the Temple. 5) They pleaded. 6) As in Egypt. 7) i.e. the land of Israel, cf. Deut. 32, 9. 8) The Ninth of Av. 9) The unauthorised priests, v. p. 99, note 4. 10) i.e. Jerusalem, cf. p. 37, note 2. 11) A lion usually lies in the thicket of the trees. viz. Nevuchadnezzar. 12) Lit. and he exiled from his hut his Meal and Drink-offerings. 13) v. p. 121, note 3.

צָעַק מִה־לֵּאב שְׁהֻלָּה בְּנוֹ. וְגַם אוֹי לִבִּי, שֶׁשָּׁשְׁלִטָן אֵב אֵינוֹ:

קוֹם לִךְ יִרְמְיָהּ, לָמָּה תַחֲשֶׁה. לִךְ קָרָא לְאַבוֹת וְאַהֲרֹן וּמֹשֶׁה.

רָעִים יָבֹאוּ קִינָה לְהַנְשֵׂא. כִּי יֵאָבִי עָרֵב טָרְפוֹ אֶת־הַשָּׂה:

שׂוֹאֵג הִנֵּה יִרְמְיָהּ הַנְּבִיא. עַל מַכְפֶּלֶה נָהָם כְּלָבִיא.

תָּנוּ קוֹל בְּבִכֵי אַבוֹת הַצָּבִי. תָּנוּ בְּגִיבָם וְהָגִם בְּשִׁבִי:

וְאִם כְּאָדָם עָבְרוּ בְּרִית. אִיָּה וְכוֹת כְּרוֹתִי בְּרִית: מָה

אֶעֱשֶׂה לָכֶם בְּנֵי. גִּזְרָה הִיא מִלְּפָנַי. שָׁמָּה מִקִּדְשׁ מִבְּלִי בָּאִי מוֹעֵד.

עַל כִּי־יָדִידִים נָתַנוּ לְהַמְעֵד. תְּשִׁיבָם כְּמָאֻז סוֹמֵךְ וְסוֹעֵד.

תִּרְחַם צִיּוֹן, כִּי בָּא מוֹעֵד:

(ל' ע"פ א"ב

ע"י [אלמנור הקליר]

By Kalir (7th cent. ?)

Congregation:

Reader or Narrator

אֵיךְ תִּנְחַמְנוּי הַבֵּל. וְכִנּוּרִי נִהַפֵּךְ לְאַבֵּל.

בְּנִחֻלַת חֵבֶל. כְּבֵד עָלַי עַל סִבֵּל. וְאֵיךְ אֲנַחֵם:

בְּזֹה יוֹם בְּכָל שָׁנָה. עֵדֶן עָלַי שָׁנָה.

וְהִנֵּי עֲגוּמָה וְעֲגוּמָה. יוֹתֵר מֵאַלְף שָׁנָה. וְאֵיךְ אֲנַחֵם:

גִּבּוֹר חֲרוֹן. וְנָעַז אֲרוֹן.

בְּמִשְׁנֵה שִׁבְרוֹן. בְּמִסְרָבִי מְרוֹן. וְאֵיךְ אֲנַחֵם:

דִּירְתִי חֲרָבָה. וְעִדְרִי נִשְׁבָּה.

וְרִבַּת אֶהְלִיבָה. בְּדָד יִשְׁבָּה. וְאֵיךְ אֲנַחֵם:

הוֹעֵל אֲרִיָּה מִסְבָּכוֹ. עַל אֲרִיאֵל וְהַסְבִּיכוֹ.

וְהֻלָּה מִסְכּוֹ. מִנְחָתוֹ וְנִסְכּוֹ. וְאֵיךְ אֲנַחֵם:

וְהִרְגַּ תְּמוּנִים. מִשׁוֹתֵי שְׁמֹנִים.

בְּאֵיזֵי נִמְנִים. וְסִרְחִי כֹהֲנִים. אֵלֶּים שְׁמוֹנִים. וְאֵיךְ אֲנַחֵם:

Reader or Narrator:

Aryoch,¹ like Nevuchadnetsar,² attacked them in the Temple from the rear, and caused the blood (of the young priests) to flow over the blood of the Priests and Prophets³ in the Temple court;

A city (once) full of cheering crowds, with more than four hundred houses of study, he brought⁴ to utter desolation;

Haman⁵ swooped to destroy my precious ones, and ruled over my favourites⁶ when I tore my garments (in grief);

It was a resolved decree to throttle the lusty lion's whelp,⁷ to strangle the old, the aged and the suckling;

More grievous still was the third (enemy)⁸ who with a violent storm (came) upon (Israel), the first⁹ holy (people), to lay waste as fallow ground;

The enemy¹⁰ used all his force to sever Jacob's children from the Creator,¹¹ (when they said:) "No longer have you a portion¹² in the Almighty, who is a devouring fire."

Edom, (the inheritor of) the red lentils,¹³ rebelled and hastened in (his) arrogance to destroy God's Throne and Foot-stool;

Moab and Ammon made a pact with the Edomites to exterminate (Israel, God's) sucklings¹⁴ and devastate the Temple;

They³ trampled all my mighty men and the assembly of my scholars, And my heroes lie confounded¹⁵ in the sight of all passers-by;

My soul faints before the murderers, because of the number of the slain who pant like a hart and let themselves be killed for thy sake;

The host trembled on the day of battle (when) in both the east and west each man's blood mixed with his fellow's;

Congregation:

O how shall I be comforted?

O how shall I be comforted?

O how shall I be comforted?

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O how shall I be comforted?

O how shall I be comforted?

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O how shall I be comforted?

O how shall I be comforted?

¹) Homiletic surname of Nevuchadnetsar, cf. Lam. R. on 5, 5. ²) Lit. young lion. ³) The plural form replaces the singular of the original. ⁴) Lit. the ploughed, viz. Turnus Rufus, a Roman General, sent to Judea by Hadrian, cf. Taan. 29a, v. a. Graetz, p. 421 (1946 Ed.). ⁵) Lit. Media. ⁶) i.e. Haman ruled over Mordecai. ⁷) viz. the once-courageous people; the author tried to compare them to the tribe of Dan, who were so called, v. Deut. 33, 22. ⁸) The first enemy according to the author was Media, the second, Persia and the third the Greeks. ⁹) As the first (fruit) of the field are sacred, so is Israel sacred to God, v. Jer. 2, 3. ¹⁰) Lit. she forced to divide. ¹¹) Lit. the children of the smooth one, and of the distributor, i.e. Jacob was called a smooth man, v. Gen. 27, 11; and God is named Distributor, for he divides the portions of the land among his people. ¹²) cf. Deut. 32, 9. ¹³) A descendant of Esau, (who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage). ¹⁴) Some commentators differ, saying that אֲמֹנִי means wisdom, i.e. the Torah, v. Pu. והכלגו גבורי צא"א. p. 13. ¹⁵) cf. B.Y. on אֲמֹנִי.

Reader or Narrator:

וְנָבִיבִי וְהָדָבִיא. בַּעֲזָרַת הַמִּלְכִּיא.

אֲרִיֹךְ כָּמוֹ לָבִיא. עַל דָּם כֹּהֵן וְנָבִיא.

חָרַשׁ לְמִשְׁוֹאוֹת. עִיר מְלָאָה תְּשׁוּאוֹת.

וּבְתֵי סוֹפְרִים וּמִשְׁנִיּוֹת. יוֹתֵר מֵאֲרָבַע מֵאוֹת.

חֲסֵה מְדִי. לְאַבֵּד חֲמוּדֵי.

וּמִשְׁלָה בְּמִחְמְדֵי. בְּקִרְעֵי מְדִי.

יַעֲצָה לְחֻגָּה. בְּגִי גֹר מִזֻּגָּה.

בְּכֶה אֶחָד לְשֻׁגָּה. יָשִׁישׁ עוֹלָל וְיוֹנָק.

כְּבָדָה שְׁלִישִׁית. עַל קִדְשׁ רִאשִׁית.

בְּשֻׁעָף חֲרִישִׁית. בְּתֶה לְהִשִּׁית.

לְחֻצָה לְחֵלֶק. בְּגִי חֵלֶק וְחוֹלֶק.

שָׁאִין לָכֶם חֵלֶק. בְּשֵׁם אֵל דּוֹלֶק.

מִרְדָּה אֲדוֹם. עֲדוּשֶׁת אֲדוֹם.

וְאֶצֶה בְּדוֹדוֹ. לְאַבֵּד כֶּסֶם וְהָדוֹם.

נוֹעֲדוּ עִם אֲדָמוֹן. מוֹאֵב וְעַמּוֹן.

לְהִשְׁבִּית אֲמוֹן. וּלְהַחֲרִיב אֲרָמוֹן.

סֵלָה כָּל-אֲבִירֵי. וְעֲדָרֵי חֲבָרִי.

וְהִבְלִטוּ גִבּוֹרֵי. לַעֲיִן כָּל-עוֹבְרֵי.

עִיפָה נִפְשֵׁי לְהִרְגִים. לְמַסְפֵּר הַהֲרוּגִים.

כְּאֵיל עוֹרְגִים. וְעֵלִיד נִהַרְגִים.

פִּלְצוּ בְּיוֹם קָרֵב. בְּמִזְרַח וּבְמַעֲרָב.

דָּמָם מַעֲרָב. קָהַל וְעַם רָב.

Congregation:

וְאֵיךְ אֲנַחֵם:

וְאֵיךְ אֲנַחֵם:

וְאֵיךְ אֲנַחֵם:

וְאֵיךְ אֲנַחֵם:

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וְאֵיךְ אֲנַחֵם:

וְאֵיךְ אֲנַחֵם:

וְאֵיךְ אֲנַחֵם:

Reader or Narrator:

Misfortune upon misfortune, each one more deadly than the last,
Great beyond stemming, long-standing and unintermittent;

With shield and spear girded on, (the enemy) gathered their armies and made their long furrows;¹

Numerous are my signs and mighty my complaints, great is my moaning; and as for thee, O Lord, how long?²

Thou didst hear their moaning, how they slandered me with their lips;
Wherever they stand up and wherever they sit down, I am the subject of their taunting songs;

Where is your hope, (asks the enemy), what are you doing here?
He³ kindled his anger (against you), and there is nothing to cure (you);

The worshippers of the idols do mock⁴ me: "Your replies remain unfaithful!"
(But even yet,) will he who brings down to the grave and brings up again, look down from heaven (upon us).

Congregation:

O how shall I be comforted?

O how shall I be comforted?

O how shall I be comforted?

O how shall I be comforted?

O how shall I be comforted?

And then (at last) will I be comforted.

Reader or Narrator: I said, "look away from me, while I will weep bitterly".⁵ I will relieve the bitterness of my soul and spirit with those who are ready to raise their lamentations.⁶ Weep for your own sake, O daughter of my people, with weeping of Jazer⁷ for your sorrow, give yourself no respite, give your eyes no rest. You, who were once crowned with happiness, weep aloud, for you are now (put) to shame; O how did this misfortune come about? O escaped remnant, give (yourself) no rest, raise your voice and cry bitterly, as disaster follows disaster. Behold, O living God,

¹) Referring to the extreme (furrow-like) weals brutally inflicted by the oppressor. v. M.D. on Ps. 129, 3, 2) viz. how long will it last? ³) i.e. God. ⁴) Lit. they have caused me to grieve. ⁵) The author bases this Elegy on Is. 22, 4 where the prophet, overcome by sorrow, refuses to be comforted. ⁶) The "ליתן", being such a large creature (v. B.M. p. 75b), the author may have used it in a symbolic sense "for long and loud wailing". However, the translation of this text is in accordance with Rashi and Ibn Ezra on Job, 3, 8, who regard the final "ל" as the suffix "their", and render their lamentation, v. M.K. 1, 3. a. Sone. P. Ed. ⁷) In the times of Isaiah and Jeremiah Jazer belonged to Moab, and was famous for its wine. v. Is. 16, 9-10. Jer. 49, 39.

Congregation:

Reader or Narrator:

צרות על צרות. זו מזו מצרות.

גדולות ובצורות. ארכות ולא קצרות. ואיך אנחנו:

קשרו צונתם. וחקרו חניתם.

ואיך אנחנו: ואספו מחנותם. והאריכו למעניתם.

רבות אנהותי. ועצומות ישיחותי.

ואיך אנחנו: רבו נהמותי. ואתה יי עד מתי.

שמעת הרפתם. הרפוני בשפתם.

ואיך אנחנו: שבתם וקיתתם. אני מגינתם.

תקנותכם אפוא. מה-לכם פה.

ואיך אנחנו: תרה אפו. ואין עוד לרפוא.

השובותיכם נשארו מעל. הונני עובדי הקעל.

עד ישיקף וירא ממעל. מוריד שאול ויעל. ואז אנחנו:

By Kalonymus

b. Judah (11th cent.)

(לא) ע"ם א"ב

ע"י קלנימוס [בן יהודה] הקטן

Reader or Narrator:

אמרתי שעו מני, בבכי אמרר. מר נפשי ורוחי אקדר. עם

ליתן העתידים לעורר:

בבכי יעור עלי יענף. בת עמי התאפכי בגיגף. אל תתני

פונת לך, אל תדם בת עיגף:

נעי בבכיה מעשרת בעלימות. היית מקדם והנך לבאות. איכה

נהיתה הרעה הזאת:

דמי אל תתני, פלטה הנשארה. הרימי קול ותעקי מרה. כי

שקר על שקר נקרא:

¹) v. v. נעצומות קינותי.

Reader or Narrator: O Zion, will you not ask after the well-being of your captive¹ (sons)? For they the remainder of your flock (constantly) enquire after your welfare. Receive peace from every side, from west, east, north and south, from far and near. (Receive) also the greetings from the prisoners of hope,² who shed tears³ like (mount) Hermon's dew, and yearn to shed them on your hills. When I bewail your humiliations I am (like) a Jackal, but when I dream of the return of your captivity then I am (like) a harp for your songs. My heart longs greatly for Beth-el, (the Temple), for Peniel and for Mahanaim⁴ and all the Meeting-places of your pure ones. It is there⁵ that the Divine Presence dwells in your midst, and your Creator has opened your gates to face⁶ the gates of heaven. Indeed, naught but the glory of the Lord was your light, and no sun nor moon nor stars were (needed as) your luminaries. I would chose for my soul to be poured out (in prayer) on the very place where the spirit of God was poured out upon your chosen ones! You are the Royal House, and you are the throne of the Lord; how then come slaves to sit upon the thrones of your noble ones?⁷ O that I might be a mere wanderer in the places where (the glory of) God was revealed to your prophets and your envoys! O who will make me wings that I could wend my way afar? I will make my own broken heart find its way amidst your broken ruins. I will fall upon my face to the ground, (for) I take much delight in your stones and show favour to your very dust.⁸ Even when I stand at the graves of my ancestors, I behold in astonishment your choicest sepulchres in Hebron; [I would go through your woods and cultivated land, indeed I would stand on your rocky mountains and wonder at your Mount beyond (the Jordan).] (Or at) the mount of Abarim⁹ and mount Hor,¹⁰ where the two great luminaries that were your light and guide (are interred). The air of your land is the very life of your souls, and the dust of your earth is as flowing myrrh, and your river is

1) i.e. Israel, imprisoned in exile. 2) The captives who hope to be delivered, v. Targum on Zech. 9, 12. 3) Lit. *he sheds his tears*. 4) They were all Houses of God, as named by Jacob, v. Gen. 31, 13. 32, 3, a. 31. 5) i.e. in Zion. 6) So that prayers should ascend to heaven, cf. Jacob the Patriarch's statement (v. Gen. 28, 17). 7) i.e. the prophets of old. 8) The desire to come back to Zion was so strong, that even the rubble heaps were affectionately described, cf. M.D. on Ps. 102, 15. 9) Where Moses died, overlooking the north end of the Dead Sea. 10) Where Aaron died (North-East of Kadesh), a day's journey from the Dead

By Judah HaLevi (c. 1080-1145)

[לח עיי' יהודה בר שמואל הלוי]

Reader or Narrator:

צִיּוֹן, הֲלֹא תִשְׁאַלִי לְשִׁלּוֹם אֲסִירֶיךָ. דּוֹרְשֵׁי שְׁלוֹמְךָ, וְהֵם יִתְּרֶךְ עֲדְרֶיךָ: מִיָּם וּמִזֶּרֶחַ וּמִצָּפוֹן וּתְיִמָּן, שְׁלוֹם רָחוֹק וְקָרוֹב, שְׂאֵי מִכָּל-עֲבָרֶיךָ; וְשִׁלּוֹם אֲסִיר יִתְקַנֶּה, נוֹתֵן דְּמָעָיו כְּטֵל-חֶרְמוֹן, וְנִכְסֶף לְרִדְתָּם עַל-הָרְרֶיךָ: לְבָבוֹת עֲנוּתָךְ אֲנִי תָנִים, וְעַתָּה אֲחִלּוֹם שִׁיבֵת שְׁבוּתָךְ, אֲנִי כְּנוֹר לְשִׁירֶיךָ: לְבֵי לְבֵית-אֵל, יִלְפָּנִי אֵל מְאֹד יְהִמָּה וְלִמְחֲנִים, יִכָּל-פִּנְעֵי טְהוֹרֶיךָ: שֶׁם הִשְׁכִּינָה שְׁכֵנָה לָךְ, וְהִיִּצְרָךְ פָּתַח לְמוֹל שְׁעָרֵי-שָׁחַק, שְׁעָרֶיךָ: וּכְבוֹד יְיָ לְבַד הָיָה מְאוֹרֶךְ, וְאֵין שָׁמֶשׁ וְסֶהַר וְכוֹכָבִים מֵאִירֶיךָ: אֲבָחֵר לְנַפְשִׁי לְהִשְׁתַּפֵּף, בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים שְׁפֹכָה, עַל בְּחִירֶיךָ: אֵת בֵּית מְלוֹכָה, וְאֵת כִּסֵּא יְיָ. וְאִידֵךְ יֵשְׁבוּ עֲבָדִים עָלֶיךָ כְּסֹאוֹת וּבִירֶיךָ: מִי-יִתְּנֵי מְשׁוֹסֵט, בְּמָקוֹמוֹת אֲשֶׁר נָגְלוּ אֱלֹהִים לְחוּצֶיךָ וּצִירֶיךָ: מִי-יַעֲשֶׂה-לִּי כִנָּפִים וְאַרְחִיק נִדּוּד, אֲנִיד לְבַתְּרִי לְבֵי בֵין בְּתִרֶיךָ: אֶפּוֹל לְאַפִּי עָלֶיךָ אֶרְצָךְ, וְאַרְצָה אֲבָנֶיךָ מְאֹד, וְאֶחוּגֵן אֶת-עַפְרֶיךָ: אֵף כִּי-בְעַמְדִּי עָלֶיךָ קִבְרוֹת אֲבוֹתִי, וְאֶשְׁתַּוֵּם בְּחֶבְרוֹן עָלֶיךָ מִבְּחַר קִבְרֶיךָ: וְאֶעֱבֹר בְּיַעֲרֶךְ וּבְרִמְלֶךְ, וְאֶעֱמֹד בְּגִלְעָדֶךָ, וְאֶשְׁתַּוֵּמָּה עַל-הַר עֲבָרֶיךָ: הַר הָעֲבָרִים וְהַר הָהָר, אֲשֶׁר-שָׁם שְׁנֵי אוֹרִים גְּדוֹלִים, מֵאִירֶיךָ יוֹמְרֶיךָ: חַי נִשְׁמוֹת יְאוּרֵי אֶרְצָךְ, וּמִמֶּר-דְּרוֹר אֲבָקֶת עֲפָרֶךְ, וְנִפְת צִוָּךְ נְהַרֶיךָ: יִנָּעַם לְנַפְשִׁי, הִלָּךְ

נָנִי טְהוֹרֶיךָ. 3) o.v. יִלְפָּנִי אֵל מְאֹד יְהִמָּה וְלִמְחֲנִים. 2) o.v. תִּפְתָּח. 1) o.v. וְאֵין שָׁמֶשׁ וְסֶהַר וְכוֹכָבִים מֵאִירֶיךָ. 4) o.v. וְאֵין שָׁמֶשׁ וְסֶהַר וְכוֹכָבִים מֵאִירֶיךָ. 5) Sephardi idiom, v. B.Y., p. 96, note 1.

(like) the drops of honeycomb. A rare delight were it for my soul to walk about naked and barefoot in the utterly desolate places where (once stood) your Mercy-seat. In the place where your Ark and your Cherubim¹ lie hidden, where your innermost chambers were established—I will cut off and cast away the glory of my Nazarite's hair,² and will curse the hour³ that dishonoured your consecrated ones in an unclean land. How can food and drink be sweet to me when I must look on while dogs drag your young lions?⁴ Or how can the light of day be pleasing for my eyes when I must see corpses of your eagles⁵ in the mouth of ravens? Desist a little, (and go) gently, O cup of sorrow! For my body and soul are already full of your bitterness. When I recall Oholah,⁶ I drink your foaming wine (of grief), and when I remember Oholibah,⁶ I drain it to the very dregs.⁷ O Zion, perfection of beauty, you acquired love and affection from of old,⁸ and the souls of your companions are (still) with you. They (who) rejoice at your prosperity, are (now) in pain over your desolation, and weep over your ruins. From the pit of captivity they sigh (and gasp) towards you, and each one from his place makes obeisance towards your gates. The flock of your multitudes who were exiled and scattered abroad from mount to hill, have never yet forgotten your folds. They yet strive to ascend and grasp the branches of your palm tree, as they cling fast to your skirt. Can Shinar⁹ and Pathros¹⁰ compare with you for all their greatness, and can their vanity be compared to your Urim and Tumim?¹¹ To whom are your anointed ones to be compared, to whom your prophets, and to whom shall your Levites and choristers (be likened)? May all the kingdoms of idolatry be changed, and utterly pass away, but your power. (O Zion,) be for ever; your crown shall endure throughout the generations. Your God desired you for a dwelling-place, and happy is the man who makes his choice and comes near to dwell in your court. Happy is he that waits,¹² (and happy is he) that will succeed in witnessing the rising of your light, when over him shall break forth your dawn. Then shall he behold the welfare of your chosen ones, and he will exult in your rejoicing when you shall return to your youthfulness as of old.

1) v. p. 91, note 15. 2) A description of ancient mourning practice, cf. Jer. 7, 92, Mic. 1, 16, a. Job 1, 20. 3) Lit. time. 4) i.e. Israel. 5) The eagle is a figure of renovation of youth, cf. Ps. 103, 5. 6) v.p. 37, notes 5-6. 7) i.e. the cup in which is wine of a heady mixture, making those who drink it mentally and physically helpless, cf. M.D. on Ps. 75, 9. 8) cf. Pesik. Beshalach, 80a. 9) i.e. Babylon 10) i.e. Egypt. 11) i.e. the ornaments (Oracles) worn by the High Priest on his breast-plate, v. p. 147, note 4, a. A.S., p. 229, note 2. 12) i.e. those who wait for the Messiah, viz. those who are firm in their faith, despite their bitter trials, cf.

עָרַם וְחָדַף, עָלֵי תַרְבוֹת שְׁמָמָה. אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ דְבִירֶיךָ: בְּמָקוֹם אֲרוֹנְךָ
אֲשֶׁר נָנְוָה, וּבְמָקוֹם כְּרוּבֶיךָ. אֲשֶׁר שָׁכְנוּ חֲדָרֵי תַדְרֶיךָ: אָנֹכִי
וְאֲשֶׁלֶיךָ פֶּאֶר נוֹרִי, וְאֶקֶב וּמִן, חֲלָל בְּאַרְצְךָ טִמְאָה. אֶת-נִזְרֶיךָ:
אֵיךְ יַעֲרֹב לִי אֶכֶל וְשִׁתּוֹת. בָּעֵת אַחְוָה, כִּי יִסְחָבוּ הַכְּלָבִים אֶת-
כַּפֵּי־רֶגְלֶיךָ: אוֹ אֵיךְ מְאוֹר יוֹם, יִהְיֶה מְחוֹק לְעֵינַי. בְּעוֹד אֲרָאָה בְּפִי
עוֹרְכִים, פְּגָרִי וְשָׁרֶיךָ: כּוֹס הַיְיִוִּנִים, לֹאֵט הִרְפִּי מַעַט. כִּי כָבֵד
מְלֹאוֹ כֶסֶלִי וְנִפְשִׁי, מִמְרוֹרֶיךָ: עַת אֲנֹכְרָה אֶהְלֶה, אֲשֶׁתָּה יִחְמָדְךָ,
וְאֲנֹכֶר אֶהְלִיכָה. וְאֶמְצָה אֶת-שְׁמֶרְיֶיךָ: צִיּוֹן כְּלִילַת יָפִי, אֶהְבֶּה
וְחֵן תִּקְשְׁרִי מֵאֵן. וּבֶךְ נִקְשְׁרוּ נַפְשוֹת חֲבֵרֶיךָ: הֵם הַשְׁמַחִים
לְשִׁלְיוֹתֶךָ, וְהַכּוֹאֲבִים עַל-שְׁמִמּוֹתֶךָ, וּבּוֹכִים עַל-שְׁבִרֶיךָ: מִבּוֹר
שְׁבִי שׁוֹאֲפִים נִגְדֶּךָ, וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים אִישׁ מִמָּקוֹמוֹ יֹאֲלִי-נֹכַח שְׁעָרֶיךָ:
עֲדָרֵי הַמִּוֶּנֶה, אֲשֶׁר גָּלוּ יִהְיֶה תַפְנוֹרוֹ מִנֵּהר לְגִבְעָה, וְלֹא שָׁכְחוּ גִדְרֶיךָ:
הַמְחִזְקִים בְּשׁוּלְיֶיךָ, וּמִתְאַמְצִים לַעֲלוֹת וּלְאָחוֹז בְּסִנְסַר־תְּמָרֶיךָ:
שׁוֹנְעֵר וּפְתוֹרוֹס הַיַּעַר כִּי־בְגָדָם, וְאֵם הַכֶּלֶם יִדְמוּ לְתַמִּיד וְאִירֶיךָ:
אֶל-מִי יִדְמוּ מִשִּׁינֶיךָ, וְאֶל-מִי נִבִּיאֶיךָ, וְאֶל-מִי לִהְיוֹת וְשָׁרֶיךָ:
יִשְׁנֶה וְיַחֲלֹף כִּי יֵל, כָּל-מַמְלָכוֹת הָאֵלִיל, חֲסִנָּה לְעוֹלָם. לְדוֹר
וְדוֹר נִגְרֶיךָ: אֲנֹכִי לְמוֹשֵׁב אֶלֶהֶיךָ. וְאֲשֶׁרִי אֲנוֹשׁ, יִבְחַר וְיִקְרַב
וְיִשְׁכֹּן בְּחֻצְרֶיךָ: אֲשֶׁרִי מְחַכֶּה, וְיִגְיַע וְיִרְאֶה עֲלוֹת אוֹרֶךָ, וְיִבְקַעוּ
עָלָיו שְׁחָרֶיךָ: לְרֹאוֹת בְּטוֹבַת בְּחִירֶיךָ יִלְעָלוּ בְּשִׁמְחָתֶךָ. בְּשׁוֹבֶךָ
אֲלִי קִדְמַת גְּעוֹרֶיךָ:

1) o.v. חֲסִנָּה. 2) o.v. לְמַל וְכֹד. 3) o.v. וְהַתְּהַלֵּךְ. 4) o.v. וְיִבְחַר וְיִקְרַב.

Reader & Cong.: ¹How much longer shall there be weeping in Zion and mourning in Jerusalem? O have mercy upon Zion, and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Reader: At that time, the Sanctuary was destroyed because of our sins, and because of our iniquities our Temple was burnt down; the heavenly Sanctuary² which was bound firmly with Jerusalem on earth,³ joined in mourning⁴ and the heavenly hosts raised a lamentation.

Cong.: How much longer shall there be weeping in Zion and mourning in Jerusalem?

Reader: Not only did the tribes of Jacob weep bitterly, but also the very planets⁵ shed tears; the standards of Jeshurun covered their heads (in shame) and the Pleiades and Orion⁶ grew dim.

Cong.: How much longer shall there be weeping in Zion and mourning in Jerusalem?

Reader: The Patriarchs entreated, but God did not hearken; the children cried out, but (their) father did not answer; the voice of the Torah⁷ was crying bitterly, but the faithful Shepherd⁸ inclined not his ear.

Cong.: How much longer shall there be weeping in Zion and mourning in Jerusalem?

Reader: The Holy seed have donned sackcloth, even the heavenly hosts have made sackcloth their covering; the sun became dim and the moon also, and the stars withdrew their brightness.

Cong.: How much longer shall there be weeping in Zion and mourning in Jerusalem?

Reader: Aries⁹ the first (of the planets), wept in bitterness of soul because his lambs¹⁰ were led to the slaughter; Taurus caused wailing to be heard on high, for we were pursued to our very necks.¹¹

Cong.: How much longer shall there be weeping in Zion and mourning in Jerusalem?

Reader: The Constellation of Gemini seemed divided,¹² for the blood of the brothers poured like water;¹³ Cancer¹⁴ sought to fall to the earth, for we fainted out of thirst.

Cong.: How much longer shall there be weeping in Zion and mourning in Jerusalem?

Reader: Heaven was frightened at the voice of Leo,¹⁵ when our prayers went up to heaven; Virgins as well as young men were slain, therefore, did the face of Virgo become dim.

Cong.: How much longer shall there be weeping in Zion and mourning in Jerusalem?

¹) The author based this elegy on the Midrashic interpretation that the planets joined in Israel's grief, v. Lam. Introd. (R. Yoch. 2). ²) v. Ps. 122, 3, a. Lam. 2, 1, cf. a. A.S. p. 4, note 1. ³) Lit. that is compact with the city, the heavenly Jerusalem which conjoined with that of Jerusalem on earth, v. Rashi on Taan. 5a, a. A.S. p. 213, note 3. ⁴) cf. Y. Yoma 1, 38a, a. Lam. R. Introd. (R. Yoch. 1). ⁵) The planets numerically are the same as the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁶) Orion is one of the most conspicuous constellations on the left extremity of Zodiac, Pleiades is one of the two great stars on the southern extremity of Zodiac, v. pp. 129, note 10 154, note 17, a. 167 note 15. ⁷) o.v. The voice of the turtle-dove, i.e. Israel who is compared to the Turtle-dove. ⁸) viz.

By Abraham ibn Ezra
(1092-1167)

ו' ע"ט א"ב
ע"י [אברהם אבן עזרא]

Reader & Cong. עד אנה בכיה בציון, ומספד בירושלים. תרחם ציון, ותבנה חומות ירושלים:

Reader אז בחטאינו חרב מקדש. ובעונותינו נשרף היכל. בעיר שחברה לה קשרה מספד. וצבא השמים משאו קינה:

Cong. עד אנה בכיה בציון, ומספד בירושלים.

Reader גם בכו במקרה שבטי יעקב. ואף מזלות יקלו דמעה. דגלי ישראל תפו ראשם. כימה וכסיל קדרו פניהם:

Cong. עד אנה בכיה בציון, ומספד בירושלים.

Reader העתירו אבות ואל כלא שומע. צעקו בנים ולא ענה אב. ויקול התורה צועק במקרה. ורועה נאמן לא הסה און:

Cong. עד אנה בכיה בציון, ומספד בירושלים.

Reader נרע קדש לבשו שקים. וצבא השמים שק הושט כסותם. חשך השמש וירח קדר. וכוכבים אספו נגהם:

Cong. עד אנה בכיה בציון, ומספד בירושלים.

Reader מלה ראשון צועק במר נפש. על כי כבשיו לטבח והכלו. יללה השמייע שור במרומים. כי על צוארנו נדרפנו כלנו:

Cong. עד אנה בכיה בציון, ומספד בירושלים.

Reader כוכב תאומים ינראה חלוק. כי דם אחים נשפך במים. לארץ בקש לנפול סרטן. כי נתעלפנו מפני צמא:

Cong. עד אנה בכיה בציון, ומספד בירושלים.

Reader מרום נבעת מקול אריה. כי שאגתנו עלתה למרום. נהרגו בתולדות גם בחורים. על בן בתולה קדרה פניה:

Cong. עד אנה בכיה בציון, ומספד בירושלים.

¹) o.v. "וכוכבים ומזלות". ²) o.v. "ויקול התור ושמע במרום".

³) o.v. "כוכב תאומים חלה מקעס". ⁴) על כי בכור שור שחו קרער.

⁵) o.v. "כי שאגתנו לא עלתה למרום". ⁶) o.v. "כי התעלפנו צמי צמא".

according to Rabbinical calendar, is the first of the Hebrew months. ¹⁰) Israel. ¹¹) viz. The enemy pursued us with a yoke on our necks. ¹²) Lit. Twin, viz. it is difficult for twins to part. ¹³) Brothers were separated and their blood flowed like water. ¹⁴) Lit. Crab, viz. the crab developed in the water, and was grieved therefore that people should die from thirst. ¹⁵) Leo.

Reader: Libra interceded¹ and begged mercy, for the scales of death overweighed those of life against us; Scorpio² arrayed (himself with) fear and trembling, for our Rock had judged us with sword and famine.

Cong.: How much longer shall there be weeping in Zion and mourning in Jerusalem?

Reader: They shed tears abundantly like rivers of water, for the sign in Sagittarius was not given us;³ water flowed over our heads, and though Aquarius was full (of water, yet) our own palate was dry.

Cong.: How much longer shall there be weeping in Zion and mourning in Jerusalem?

Reader: We offered a sacrifice and it was not accepted, and (even) Capricornus (was grieved that) our sin-offering of the he-goat⁴ was interrupted; compassionate women seethed their own children, and Pisces shut his eyes.⁵

Cong.: How much longer shall there be weeping in Zion and mourning in Jerusalem?

Reader: The Almighty caused all our virtues to be forgotten, because we, wayward in heart, have forgotten the Shabbat; stir thyself for Zion with great zeal, and cause thy bright light to shine upon the city that was so populous.

Cong. & Reader: O have mercy upon Zion and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

The Congregation rise, and the Reader ascends to his desk and intones the following:

"Have mercy upon Zion!" as thou didst promise,⁶ "And establish her" as thou hast spoken;⁷ hasten salvation, and forward redemption, and return to Jerusalem with great compassion. As it is written by the hand of thy prophet:⁸ "Therefore, thus says the Lord, 'I will return to Jerusalem with compassion, my House shall be rebuilt therein', says the Lord of hosts 'and a measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem.'" And it is said:¹⁰ "Proclaim again, saying: 'Thus says the Lord of hosts! My cities shall again overflow with prosperity, and the Lord will yet comfort Zion and will choose Jerusalem once more.'" And it is said:¹¹ "For the Lord shall comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and he will make her wilderness like Eden,¹² her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song."

¹) Lit. *turned*; the scales of the balance are neutral when guilt and merit are weighed. Nevertheless, at the destruction of the Temple, they interceded for Israel. ²) The Scorpion injects his stings like a sword. ³) The sign of the rainbow did not appear, so as to make them aware of their misconduct. Hence the expression "they shed tears abundantly like rivers of water." ⁴) Atonement was effected in Temple times through sending the he-goat to Azazel, v. Lev. 16.10. ⁵) The planet Pisces was a sign of fruitfulness for Israel, (based on "דג", cf. Gen. 48, 16) and now

we are a minority among the nations of the world. ⁶) v. Ps. 102, 14. ⁷) cf. Is. 62, 7. ⁸) v. Zech. 1, 16. ⁹) Like a builder draws a line, to mark the ground for the intended structure. ¹⁰) v. Zech. 1, 17. ¹¹) v. Is. 51, 3. ¹²) Since its proclamation as an Independent State on May 14th, 1948 c.e.—5th Iyar, 5708, A.M., the Land of Israel is

Reader סָבַב מֵאֲזִיזִים וּבִקֵּשׁ תַּחֲנוּנָה. יְכִי נִכְרַע לָנוּ כַּף מִוֹת מַחֲיִים. עֲקָרָב לְבַשׁ פֶּחַד וִירְעָדָה. כִּי בַחֲרָב וּבִרְעָב שִׁפְטָנוּ צוּקָנוּ;¹

Cong. עַד אָנָּה בִּכְיָה בְּצִיּוֹן, וּמִסְפַּד בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם.

Reader פָּלְגֵי מֵיִם הִרִידוּ דְמָעָה כְּנַחֲלִי. כִּי אוֹת בִּקְשָׁת לֹא נָתַן לָנוּ; צִפּוֹר-מֵיִם עַל רֹאשֵׁנוּ. וּבִדְלִי מָלֵא חֲכָנוּ יִבֶּשׁ:

Cong. עַד אָנָּה בִּכְיָה בְּצִיּוֹן, וּמִסְפַּד בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם.

Reader קָרַבְנוּ קֶרֶבָן וְלֹא נִתְקַבֵּל. וְגִדִי פֶסֶק שְׁעֵיר חֲטָאתָנוּ. רַחֲמָנוּת בָּשְׁלוּ יְלִדֵיהֶן. וּמִזֵּל דָּגִים הָעֲלִים עֵינָיו:

Cong. עַד אָנָּה בִּכְיָה בְּצִיּוֹן, וּמִסְפַּד בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם.

Reader שִׁכַּחְנוּ שִׁכַּת בְּלִבּוֹת שׁוֹכְבִים. שְׂדֵי שִׁכַּח כָּל צִדְקוֹתֵינוּ. תִּקְנָא לְצִיּוֹן קִנְיָה גְדוּלָּה. וְתֹאִיר לְרַבְתִּי עִם מְאֹר נִיגָה:

Cong. & Reader תִּרְחַם צִיּוֹן, וְתִבְנֶה חוֹמוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם:

The Congregation rise, and the Reader ascends to his desk and intones the following

תִּרְחַם צִיּוֹן כְּאֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתָּ. וְתִבְנֶנָּה כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ. תִּמְהֶרָ

יְשׁוּעָה וְתַחֲיֵשׁ גְּאֻלָּה. וְתָשׁוּב לִירוּשָׁלַם בְּרַחֲמִים רַבִּים:

כִּכְתוּב עַל יַד נְבִיאָה: לֵכֵן כֹּה-אָמַר יְיָ, שְׁבִתִּי לִירוּשָׁלַם Zech. 1, 16-17

בְּרַחֲמִים, בֵּיתִי יִבְנֶה בָּהּ, נָאִם יְיָ צְבָאוֹת, וְקוֹי יִשְׁעָה עַל-

יְרוּשָׁלַם: וְנֹאמַר. עוֹד וְקָרָא לֵאמֹר, כֹּה אָמַר יְיָ צְבָאוֹת,

עוֹד תִּפּוּצְנָה עַרְי מְשׁוּב, וְנָחֵם יְיָ עוֹד אֶת-צִיּוֹן, וּבַחֲרָ עוֹד

בִּירוּשָׁלַם: וְנֹאמַר. כִּי-נָחֵם יְיָ צִיּוֹן, נָחֵם כָּל-חֲרָבְתִּיהָ. Is. 51, 3

וַיִּשֶׁם מִדְּבָרָה כְּעֶדְוֹ, וְעַרְבָתָה כְּגִי-יְיָ, שֶׁשָׁח וְשִׁמְחָה יִמְצָא

בָּהּ, תּוֹדָה וְקוֹל וּמְכָה:

¹) o.v. כִּי נִכְרַע לָנוּ מִוֹת מַחֲיִים. cf. Jer. 8, 3.

וְנִיגָה קִיבִיב *... כִּי עֲקָרָבִים יִשְׁרְטוּ צִיְיִר * o.v.

Reader or Narrator: O (Law), that has been consumed by fire,¹ seek the welfare of those who mourn for you, of those who yearn to dwell in the court of your habitation.² Of those who gasp (as they lie) in the dust of the earth, who grieve and are bewildered over the conflagration of your parchments.³ They grope in the dark, bereft of light, indeed, they wait (in longing) for the daylight that will shine upon them and upon you. (Seek too) after the welfare of one who sighs and weeps with a broken heart; who bewails increasingly the pangs of your agony⁴—And who howls like jackals and ostriches, and cries out bitter lamentation for your sake. How was it that (you, O Law,) given (by God), the Consuming Fire, should be consumed by fire of mortals, and that the heathens were not singed through your burning coals?⁵ How long will you lie (resting) in profound tranquillity,⁶ O lover of pleasure, while the faces of my young ones⁷ are covered with nettles?⁸ You sit in arrant haughtiness to judge the sons of God in every cause, and to bring (us) before your tribunal.⁹ Moreover, you (O Law,) even decreed the burning of the edicts and the statutes (which were given) with fire,¹⁰ therefore, blessed be he, who shall requite you. O (my Holy Law,) was it for this that my Creator delivered you with lightning and fire, that at the end fire should blaze upon your skirt?¹¹ O Sinai, is it for this that God, rejecting the loftier (peaks), has chosen you, and (his glory) has shone in your confines?¹² (Was that) to be an omen, that the Law would (one day) be humiliated and descend from its glory?¹³ Behold, I will tell you a parable.¹⁴ The parable is of a king who wept at his son's wedding feast, (for) he foresaw that he would die;¹⁵ such was your fate,¹⁶ foretold in your own words.¹⁷ O Sinai, instead of putting on a (noble) mantle, cover yourself with sackcloth, change your garments (and) put on widow's clothes! I will shed tears until they swell as a stream, and reach the graves of your two noble chiefs. And I will enquire of Moses and Aaron,¹⁸ (who were) on Mount Hor: "Is there then a new Law, is that why they burnt your columns?" In the third month¹⁹ (Israel was exalted) and the fourth turned

¹) A reference to the copies of the Talmud and priceless Hebrew manuscripts that were publicly burnt in Paris, on the 17th June, 1242. ²) viz. where the Torah is studied. ³) i.e. the Talmud and other sacred writings. ⁴) Lit. over the throes of your pains; some say that this refers to the Author himself, who compares his own personal wailing with that of the pangs of birth. ⁵) Metaphorically, God who is like fire consuming fire; how is it that the enemy has escaped punishment for devouring the Scrolls of the Law? v.a. p. 36 (2nd paragraph). ⁶) i.e. the enemy enjoys continuous tranquillity, cf. Is. 47, 8. ⁷) i.e. Israel. ⁸) The enemy molested our people continually, as if they were covering them with stinging nettles. ⁹) i.e. God caused us to be judged by the enemy. ¹⁰) As it is written: "And the mountain was smoking," v. Ex. 19, 18. viz. was this an indication that the Torah should be devoured by fire? ¹¹) viz. why should the fire consume the righteous who are attached to the commandments of the Torah, like a child to his mother's skirt? ¹²) God has chosen Mount Sinai, which was the lowest mountain in that

By Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg (c. 1215–1293)

מג עיי רבי מאיר [בן ברוך]

Reader or Narrator:

שאלו שרופה באש לשלום אבליך. המתאונים שכן
בחר וכולך: השאפים בעפר ארץ, והפאכים המשתוממים
עלי מוקד גילך: הולכים חשכים ואין נגה. וקנים לאור
יומם, עליהם אשר ירח ועליך: ושלום אנוש נאנח, בוכה
בלב נשבר. תמיד מקוץ עלי צירי חבלך: ותאונן כתנים ובנות
יענה, תקרא מספד מר בגילך: איכה נתונה באש אוכלה,
תאכל באש בשר, ולא נכוו זרים בגילך: עד אן עדינה, תהי
שכנה ברב השקט. ופגי פרטי הלא כסו חרלך: תשבי ברב
נאנה, לשפוט בגי אל בכל-המשפטים, ותביא בפלילך: עוד
תגורי, לשרוף דת-אש וחקים. ולכן אשרי ששלם-לך גמולך:
צורי, בלפיד ואש, הלבועבור זה נתנה. כי באחרית תלהט אש
בשולך: סיני. הלקח בך בחר אלהים, ומאס בגדולים ורח
בגבולך: להיות למופת, לדת כיתת-מעט ותד מבורה, והן
אמשל משלך: משל למלך אשר בכה למשחה בנו, צפה אשר
יגע, בן את במלך: תחת מעיל, תתבס סיני לבושך בשק, תעטה
לבש אלקנות, תחליף שמלך: אוריד דמעות עדי יהיו כנחל,
ויגיעו לקברות שגי שרי אצילך: משה ואהרן בחר החר. ואשאל
הש תורה חדשה, בכן נשרפו גילך: חדש שלישי, והקשר

lowest mountain was to signify its humiliation at a latter period (when the Temple was destroyed). ¹⁴) The author based this on the Midrashic saying that Mount Carmel and Tabor pleaded with the Almighty, that, as they were the highest mountains, the Ten Commandments should be given upon them, (v. Midr. on Ps. 68, 17). ¹⁵) viz. the groom would die on the same day. ¹⁶) viz. Mount Sinai, for Israel became betrothed to the Torah on that day. ¹⁷) Lit. through your words, viz. when you uttered "בשעה נשבע". ¹⁸) Through them the Law was given to

conspirator to destroy your objects of delight,¹ and all the perfection of your beauty.² (Titus) mutilated the Tablets of stone and even repeated his folly by burning the Law in fire.³ Is this (the fulfilment of) the double reward?⁴ My soul is amazed—How can ever again food be sweet to my palate after my beholding what your plunderers have gathered? Men whom you have rejected from entering your assembly, burnt the spoil⁵ of the Most High in the midst of the market-square, like (the fabric of) a condemned (city). I can no more find any paved way,⁶ for the path (which led) straight (to the) highway is obscured.⁷ The tears mingled with my drink shall be sweeter than honey, indeed would that your shackles be tied on to my own feet.⁸ Let it be pleasant for my eyes to absorb the waters of my tears,⁹ till (the wise men) who clung fast to your apron strings were gone.¹⁰ But they would dry up (as soon) as they run down my cheeks,¹¹ for my heart yearns over the wanderings of your (Divine) Master.¹² He took his treasure¹³ with him, (and when) he went far away did not your (protecting) shade vanish?¹⁴ And as for me, alone without your great ones, I remain bereaved and forlorn, like a sole beacon on top of the mountain. No more do I hear the voice of singing men and singing women, for the strings of your (wind) instruments are snapped.¹⁵ I will clothe and cover myself with sackcloth, for your slain ones, whose lives were so very dear to me, have multiplied more (numerous) than the sand.¹⁶ I am indeed astonished that the day's luminary shines (bright) in all (directions), but to me and you it grows darkness. O cry to the Rock with a bitter voice, for your catastrophe and your anguish; O that he would remember the love of your betrothal-day! Gird on garments of sackcloth for that devouring (fire) that burst forth to divide you (into many portions), and has utterly swept away your store (of tradition¹⁷). May the Creator comfort you according to the days of your affliction, and may he restore the captivity of the tribes of Yeshurun,¹⁸ and raise your meek ones (from their lowliness). You will again adorn yourself with ornaments of scarlet; you will take up timbrel and lead the circling dance, and rejoice in your revels. Then shall my heart be uplifted at that time when your Creator will afford you light, will brighten your darkness and illuminate your (sorrowing) gloom.

¹) The two tablets of stone were broken on the seventeenth of Tammuz, v. Taan. 26a, v.a. A.S. p. 368, note 8. ²) When Israel accepted the Law, six hundred thousand angels set two crowns upon each man, but when they sinned (through the Golden Calf), twice as many angels removed them, v. Shab. 88a. ³) cf. Taan. 26b, a. 28b, a. A.S. p. 366, note 4. ⁴) v. Is. 61, 7. ⁵) The Holy Books. ⁶) i.e. I have lost all sense of proportion to try and understand God's ways, as to why the wicked always succeed. ⁷) Lit. have become mourners, i.e. I have forgotten all the laws which led to the act of righteousness. ⁸) As it is written, "That God is afflicted in our affliction," v. Is. 63, 9. ⁹) viz. I desire to cry bitterly for the

הרביעי להשחית חמדתך, וכל-יפי כלי-יך: נדע ללוחות, ועוד שנה באולתו, לשרוף באש דת. הנה תשלום כפליך: אתמה לנפשי. ואיך יערב לחכי אכל, אחרי ראותי אשר אספו שלליך: אל תוך רחובה כנודחת, ושרפו שלל עליך, אשר תמאס לבוא קהליך: לא-אדעה למצוא דרך סלוליך, היו אבלות נתיב ישר מסליך: ימתק בפי מדבש, למסוד במשקה דמעות. ולרגלי היות כבול כפליך: יערב לעיני, שאוב מימי דמעי. עדי כלו, לכל מחזיק בכנף מעליך: אך יחרבו בדרךם על לחיי, עבור כי נכמרו רחמי, לנדוד בעליך: לקח צרור בספו, הלך בדרך למרחוק ועמו. הלא נסו צלליך: ואני כשכול וגלמוד, נשארת לבד מהם, כתרן בראש הר מגדליך: לא אשמע עוד לקול שרים ושרות. עלי כי נתקו מיתרי תפי חליליך: אלבש ואתפס בשק, כי לי מאד יקרו. עצמו כחול ירביין נפשות, חלליך: אתמה מאד על-מאור היום, אשר ירח אל-פל. אבל יחשיך אלי ואליך: זעקי בקול מר לצור, על שברונך ועל חליך. ולו יזכור אהבת כלוליך: חגרי לבוש שק, עלי ההבצרה אשר יצאה לחלק, וספתה את-חלוליך: כימות עונתך ינחמך צור. והשיב שבות שבטי ישרון, וירם את-שפליך: עוד תעדי בעדי שני. ותף תקחי, תלכי במחול וצהלי במחוליך: ירום לבבי, יבעת יאיר לך צור. ויגיה לחשכך ויאירו אפליך:

י) בעת צורי לאור לך. o.v.

The author describes the sages who were attached to the Mitsvot of the Torah, like a child to the skirt of his mother's apron. ¹¹) Excessive crying causes the cheeks to become red hot, so when the tears run down, they will dry up quickly. ¹²) As God is the owner of the Torah. ¹³) Lit. he took his bundle of money, i.e. God took the righteous away from us, as by their good deeds they protected the people of Israel. ¹⁴) As since that time the Divine Presence has departed from us. ¹⁵) Lit. the drums of your flutes, viz. all happiness and joy have been taken away from us. ¹⁶) cf. Jer. 15, 8. ¹⁷) i.e. the Halachic rules according to traditional law. ¹⁸) Lit. the upright one, a poetic term applied to Israel, v. M.D., a Song. P. Ed.

Reader or Narrator:

A fire (of joy) is kindled within me, as I think (of the time)

But I will raise (my own) lamentations, as I recall (the time)

Than Moses sang, a song unforgettable,

But Jeremiah mourned and wailed with bitter lamentation,

My House was established and the cloud¹ abode (thereon),

But the wrath of God lay upon me like a (dark) cloud,

The waves of the sea roared and piled themselves up like walls,

But the proud (waters)² overwhelmed and flowed over my head,

Food³ (fell) from heaven and the rock gushed forth water,

But there was wormwood, gall and water of bitterness,

Round about Mount Horeb (I exulted) morning and evening,

But (I) was summoned to mourning at the rivers of Babylon,

The appearance of the Glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire,

But there was a whetted sword drawn for the slaughter,

Sacrifices, Meal-offerings and anointing oil (I offered)

But God's chosen people were taken like sheep to the slaughter,

Sabbaths and Festivals (I enjoyed), signs and wonders (I did witness),

But fasting, mourning and the pursuit of vanity (were my lot),

The fair (pitched) tents (were divided) into four Banners,⁴

But (naught was there) except the camps of the heathens,

(We instituted) the Jubilee year, and Sabbatical years, and the land was at rest,

But I was sold in perpetuity, cut down and crushed,

Congregation:

When I departed from Egypt.

When I departed from Jerusalem.

When I departed from Egypt.

When I departed from Jerusalem.

When I departed from Egypt.

When I departed from Jerusalem.

When I departed from Egypt.

When I departed from Jerusalem.

When I departed from Egypt.

When I departed from Jerusalem.

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When I departed from Egypt.

When I departed from Jerusalem.

When I departed from Egypt.

When I departed from Jerusalem.

When I departed from Egypt.

When I departed from Jerusalem.

When I departed from Egypt.

When I departed from Jerusalem.

Reader or Narrator:

אש תוקד בקרבי. בהעלותי על לבי.

קנים אעירה. למען אנכירה.

או לשיר משה. שיר לא ינשה.

יניקונן ירמיה. ונהה נהי נהה.

ביתי התכונן. ושכן הענן.

וחמת אל שכנה. עלי כעננה.

גלי ים המו. וכחומה קמו.

ידונים שקפו. ועל ראשי צפו.

דגן שמים. וצור יזוב מים.

לענה ותמרורים. ומים המרים.

השכם והערב. סביבות הר חורב.

קורא אל אבל. על נהרות כבל.

ומראה כבוד יי. כאש אוכלת לפני.

וחרב לטושה. לטבח נטושה.

זבח ומנחה. ושמן המשחה.

סגלת אל לקוחה. כצאן לטבחה.

חגים ושבטות. ומופתים ואותות.

תענית ואבל. ורדף ההבל.

טובו אהלים. לארבעה דגלים.

אחלי ישמעאלים. ומחנות ערלים.

יובל ושמשה. וארץ שוקטה.

מכור לצמיתות. וכרות לכריתות.

Congregation:

בצאתי ממצרים:

בצאתי מירושלם:

בצאתי ממצרים:

בצאתי מירושלם:

בצאתי ממצרים:

בצאתי מירושלם:

בצאתי ממצרים:

בצאתי מירושלם:

בצאתי ממצרים:

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בצאתי ממצרים:

בצאתי מירושלם:

בצאתי ממצרים:

בצאתי מירושלם:

בצאתי ממצרים:

בצאתי מירושלם:

בצאתי ממצרים:

בצאתי מירושלם:

¹) viz. the cloud signifying God's presence, v. Num. 9, 15-23. ²) The waters in their swollen state typify the enemy in his haughtiness, v. M.D. on Ps. 124, 5.

³) o.v. ידונים.

Appendix 3

Dr. David Einhorn's *Olat Tamid*: Book of Prayers for Jewish Congregations (1896)

for the Anniversary of the Destruction of Jerusalem.

The Minister.

With profound emotion, O Lord, we remember in this hour the dire day of desolation on which the enemy entered Thy stronghold, giving over Thy sanctuary a prey to devouring flames. Then was left disconsolate the populous city, the beauty of all the lands, like a sorrowing widow. Then was laid low the pride and crown of Israel, the magnificent temple on Moriah's proud height, in which the scions of Abraham used to praise the glory of Thy name at a time when none of the nation's knew Thee; then fell the home of light, with the ark of divine testimony, the Cherubim with wings turned heavenward, the altar of atoning sacrifices, the candlestick with the seven flaming tongues. Then was hushed in silence the lovely song of the Levites which had during so many years risen to heaven in choruses thousand-voiced, only the woeful lament of priests, robbed of their office and ornaments, resounded, and the wails and groans of the homeless children of Thy people awakened a doleful echo. O, heavy and bitter was the fate which befell the house of Jacob on that day. With bleeding hearts they wandered forth to seek strange lands, void of love, like sons disowned by the father, everywhere meeting the fury of hostile nations, everywhere made to drain the cup of suffering, forced to wear the garb and walk the gait of servitude, stricken and stung to death, so that, in their deep distress, they often cried out unto Thee: Thou hast thrust me into a deep pit, into a dark abyss; Thy wrath is upon me, and all Thy waves afflict me; Thou hast driven me from all my friends, and rendered me an abomination unto them; I am imprisoned, and cannot move; my eye is grown dim from weeping; I cry unto Thee every day, O God, and stretch my hands towards Thee; wilt Thou work miracles for the dead? shall shades arise and praise Thee? why, O Lord, castest Thou off my soul, and hidest Thou Thy face from me? Lover and friend Thou hast taken me; and darkness is my sole confidant. Truly, indescribable are the sufferings Israel hath endured in the weary years of his wandering. He, once the bearer of the royal purple, became the pitiful butt of pitiless assault; his eyes once beaming with the light of happiness, was changed into an ever-flowing fountain of tears. Withersoever his fugitive foot carried him, he found but the yoke of oppression, the curse of hatred, the poisoned arrow of calumny; and thousands and thousands of his sons and daughters had to lay down their life and possessions in the combat for Thee and Thy holy law - they were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions, in the fulfillment in Thy sublime will; inseparable, in life and in death, from their loyalty to Thee, O Inscrutable One. For they knew that Thou wilt bring forth light out of darkness, and wilt also lead Thy people from the deepest depths of humiliation to a most glorious triumph. This uplifting thought is also the source of our consolation, the stay of our courage and the wing of our hope. It changeth our mourning into rejoicing, our lamenting into dancing. However deeply and painfully our soul is moved by the recollection of the unutterable grief with which our ancestors went forth from their beloved Zion, their house, to go into

the vast wilderness of heathen nations; doomed to tread the thorny path of martyrdom, - in all these sorts of trials we recognize Thy guiding, fatherly hand, means for the fulfillment of Thy inviolable promises and the glorification of Thy name and Thy law before the eyes of all nations. Verily, not as a disinherited son, Thy first-born went out into strange lands, but as Thy messenger to all the families of man. Israel was no longer to dwell in separation from all the rest of Thy children, who were languishing in darkness and folly; he was to spread abroad the stream of his salvation, and become himself the carrier of the refreshing waters of healing powers. The one temple in Jerusalem sank into the dust, in order that countless temples might arise to Thy honor glory all over the wide surface of the globe. The old priestly dignity was taken away and the old sacrificial worship ceased, but in their stead the whole community, in accordance with its original distinction, became a priest and was called upon to offer up those sacrifices which are more acceptable in Thy sight than thousands of rivers of oil, the sacrifices of active love to God and man, the sacrifices of pure and pious conduct, which, even in extremity and death will not deviate from the path of truth, the sacrifices of an unparalleled allegiance to God with which the centuries have become vocal. The true and real sanctuary, Thy imperishable testimony, remained ours, untouched and undimmed. It assumed a new glory and emerged pure and in increased splendor from the flames. It was freed from the encircling walls which had shut it in and hidden its glory from the eyes of the millions of beings created in Thy image. These to lift up to the recognition of their dignity as men and to bring them into the fold of Thy spiritual people united in love and righteousness, Thy priest, Israel, had to go out among them, and speak before them Thy message of duty and righteousness. The flames which consumed Zion, lit up the birth-hour of Israel as the suffering Messiah of all mankind. Free from the bonds of his childhood, in martyr heroism, Israel had to pilgrim through the whole earth, a man of sorrows, without form or comeliness, despised and rejected of men, to deliver by his very fetters his own tormentors, by his wounds to bring healing to those who inflicted them. When at last his great sacrifice of atonement is completely wrought, he will find his reward in seeing all men gather into one brotherhood, doing God's service in love to man. In this our hope, this day of mourning and of fasting, hath, according to word of Thy prophet, been turned into a solemn day of rejoicing in view of the glorious destiny of Thy law and our high messianic mission which had in its beginning with the historic events which we recall today. Though this sublime mission hath entailed on us bitter sacrifices, and long be the way we still have to traverse - our heart is full of profoundest gratitude for Thine infinite grace which hath found us worthy to be sacrificing priests for all mankind. Our trust remaineth firm in Thy promise that one day all who are endowed with Thy breath will bow down before me. Vouchsafe, O God, that all Israel may recognize this, the goal of its wanderings and pursue it with united strength and cheerful courage. Let his mourning end wherever he is still languishing beneath the oppression of hatred, and to the better thought open the eyes of those who deem Thy messenger still cast out from before Thy countenance, and would have him return to the narrow home where his cradle once stood. Without his true aim as a prince of God and depriving him of his world-blessing duty. O, strengthen us all for Thy service, invigorate us for our mission. Let the times speedily draw near when all the earth will become one atoning altar, from which all hearts and spirits shall flame up to Thee in burning love. Let Thy message of truth and Thy word of righteousness like protecting cherubim, spread their wings over the sanctuary of mankind

united in and with Thee. Let this brotherhood of man, like yon candlestick of pure gold, shine in seven-fold luster in the higher temple, and from the ruins of desolation, rise this new temple wide as the earth - and unvalled as its fresh air, the temple which will be a house of prayer and inspiration to all the nations, - the Sinai and Zion of all the world, the new Jerusalem on this earth, rebuilt in righteousness universal, and saved by justice flowing like a stream through all the lands.

The Congregation: - Amen.

The Minister.

אתה נגלית מלכנו על הר ציון לעם קדשך ותשמיעם את-הוד קולך ודברות
קדשך מלכות אש להודיע בארץ דרךך בכל-גוים ושועתך. הרים קרן ישראל
עמד לתת להם פאר תחת אפר. שמון ששון תחת אבל. מעטה תהלה תחת רוח
כהה. בנה ביתך אשר בית תפלה יקרא לכל-העמים. וכסאך מהרה תבין.
ותמלוד אתה לבדך על-כל-הארץ: ברוך אתה יי בונה חרבות עולם:

The Minister.

Thou, O King, didst reveal Thyself on Mount Zion to Thy holy people; they heard Thy majestic voice, Thy holy word, out of flames of fire; Thou didst appoint them to make known Thy way in the earth and among all nations Thy help. Give triumph to Thy people Israel! Let them be wrapped in beauty and not be garmented in sackcloth and ashes. Give unto them joy for mourning: courage for despondency. Build Thou Thy house - the house of prayer unto all the nations. Establish speedily Thy throne; and reign Thou over the whole earth. Praised be Thou, O God, who rebuildest the waste places of the ages!

The Congregation: - Amen.

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