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תשעה באב קינות תשע"ט

1 ישעיהו פרק נו

(ז) וְהִבֵּיאֹתֶימ אֶל-הַר קִדְשִׁי וְשִׂמְחֵתִים בְּבֵית תְּפִלָּתִי עוֹלְתֵיהֶם וְזִבְחֵיהֶם לְרָצוֹן עַל-מִזְבְּחִי כִּי בֵיתִי בֵּית-תְּפִלָּה יִקְרָא לְכָל-הָעַמִּים:

I will bring them to My holy mount, and I will cause them to rejoice in My house of prayer, their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be acceptable upon My altar, for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples

2 מלכים א פרק ח פסוק מא

וְגַם אֶל-הַנֹּכְרִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא-מֵעַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא וְבָא מֵאֶרֶץ רְחוֹקָה לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ

And to the stranger, who (is) not of Your people Israel, but will come from a far country for the sake of Your Name.



Jordan Anchondo (24)



Andre Anchondo (23)



Dave Johnson (63)

PITTSBURGH VICTIMS:

Joyce Fienberg, 75 Richard Gottfried, 65 Rose Mallinger, 97 Jerry Rabinowitz, 66 Cecil Rosenthal, 59 David Rosenthal, 54 Bernice Simon, 84 Sylvan Simon, 86 Daniel Stein, 71 Melvin Wax, 88 Irving Younger, 69

POWAY VICTIM:

Lori Gilbert-Kaye, 60

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סימן ז'

בדין ברכת הגומל לשארית פליטת הרג רב

(„אקציע“ ר"ל)

שאלה: ביום מר ונמהר עברה וזעם ומשלחת מלאכים רעים של הצורך הגרמני ימ"ש, הלא הוא יום י"ג לחודש מרחשון של שנת תש"ב, בעת העברת הפעולה הגדולה „אקציע“ בלע"ז, של הובלת למעלה מעשרת אלפים איש כצאן מבחה לשחיטה ובהם נער וזקן טף ונשים עוללים ויונקים, וכולם הושמדו ונהרגו בכל מיני מיתות, משונות לאחר שעונו ענויי גוף ויסורי נפש על ידי רבי המכחים האכזרים שלא ידעו רחם, ובכל זאת לא הורווה עדיין צמאם של הרוצחים השפלים לדם נקיים וחפים מפשע, דם אחינו ואחיותינו הקדושים שנמסרו בידם לעשות בהם כטוב בעיניהם, ועוד ידם של הרוצחים היתה נטויה וחמתם לא שככה אלא רצו לעשות כליה עם שארית יעקב להכחידו מגוי כדי שלא יזכר שם ישראל עוד.

נשאלתי אז בזמן ההוא מהשרידים האומללים שנשארו בחיים כאודים מוצלים מאש וניצלו מפעולת ההשמדה הגדולה הזאת של ה„אקציע“ הנ"ל, האם מוטלת עליהם החובה לברך ברכת הגומל על החסדים הטובים שגמל אתם האל, להצילם מפעולת השמדה זו, או מכיון שעדיין לא חלפה מעליהם הסכנה ונפשם תלויה להם מנגד מאחר שעדיין לא נחלצה מצרה נפשם ויושבים הם כאסירי עני וברזל סגורים ומסוגרים בתוך חומות הניטו המוקף מלבד זאת בגדר של תיל מחושמל, ואין יוצא ואין בא, כי מלבד כל זאת השכין האויב בכל שערי ומבואי הניטו שומרים מזוינים במכונות יריה לשמור את דרך הניטו וכל הקרב אל גדר התיל מיד היה מוטת בידי השומרים, ואם כן לפי זה דינם של השרידים האומללים הללו הוא כדין יושבי בית האסורים שעדיין לא נושעו ממצוקתם ולא נפדו מרדת שחת.

ולפי זה בודאי שאין מוטלת על הניצולים שום חובה לברך ברכת הגומל כל זמן שהם מסורים עדיין בידי אויבים לעשות בהם כטוב בעיניהם ובכל עת ובכל שעה הם יכולים להתפס ולהמסר למיתה, או דילמא מכיון שסוף כל סוף ניצלו עכשיו ממיתה בעוד שאלפים הוצאו להורג חייבים הם בברכת הגומל אף שעדיין ישועתם האמיתית והצלתם הממשית היא מהם והלאה.

תבנא לדינא מכל הנ"ל דבנידון דידן אין צריכין לברך ברכת הגומל כל אלה שנשארו בחיים מפעולת ההשמדה הגדולה הנ"ל, מאחר שהסכנה לא חלפה מהם עדיין והכורת עדיין מונף על ראשם כי נתונים הם עדיין בידי שונאיהם ומנדיהם הארורים להרוג ולאבד ולמכה ולחרפה וגם עצם הישיבה בתוך חומות הגיטו סכנה כרוכה בה כי מי יודע מה שמתרחש בלבם הרע המלא תועבות ומזימות רצח, כי יתכן מאד שהרוצחים האכזרים כבר חרצו את דינם של כל הנשארים מפעולת ההשמדה הגדולה הנ"ל גם הם למיתה ואבדון ומה שהשאירו אותם לעת עתה לפליטה הוא משום שכך הוא דרכם של הרוצחים המתועבים הללו לעשות את מעשיהם קמעה קמעה כדי לבלבל את היהודים להומם ולאבדם על ידי תקוות שוא ומדחיים להדאיב עוד יותר את נפשם.

כ"י מדי פעם בפעם היו מוליכים שולל את יושבי הגיטו בכל מיני שמועות של ישועה והצלה כדי להכניס בלבם תקוה ובטחון שנאמר למשחית די, וכשהיו טובילים את הכלואים להוציאם להורג היו מפייחים בהם תקוה כי רק מעבירים אותם ממקום למקום כדי שלא יתאמצו למלט את עצמם ולעמוד על נפשם.

ל"ב בודאי אין להורות להם שיברכו ברכת הגומל לאחר פעולת ההשמדה הגדולה הנ"ל, כי על ידי זה שיברכו ברכת הגומל יתחילו השרידים האומללים הללו לדמות בנפשם כי אכן סר מר המות וקרובה היא ישועתם לבוא, ובוה נסייע לרוצחים הארורים במזימתם השפלה ונקל עליהם את המלאכה הנמבזה של השמדת אחינו ואחיותינו ח"ו.

ל"ג פסקתי למעשה שלא לברך ברכת הגומל אפילו בלי שם ומלכות, ואפילו אלה שניצלו מכמה וכמה פעולות השמדה כאלו, מכל מקום כל זמן שעדיין לא נחלצו מן המיצר והם כלואים בתוך חומות הגיטו אף שיש כאן מעין הצלה פורתא מאחר שנשארו בחיים לאחר פעולת „האקציון“ מכל מקום אין זו עדיין הצלה ממשית שיהא מוטל לברך על זה ברכת הגומל כמו שביארנו.

כי כל זמן שבחוף משכלת עדיין חרב ובחדרים שודרת אימה הרי נתונים הם עדיין בסכנת מות ואבדון עד אשר קדוש ישראל ירעים קולו ויאמר למשחית הרף, יחיש פדות לעמו הנתון בצרה ובשביה להוציאם משעבוד לגאולה ומאפלה לאור גדול.



3 איכה רבה (וילנא) פתיחתות

ד רבי אבהו פתח (הושע ו') והמה כאדם עברו ברית, זה אדם הראשון, אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא אדם הראשון הכנסתי אותו לגן עדן וצויתיו ועבר על צווי ודנתי אותו בגירושין ובשילוחין וקוננתי עליו איכה, הכנסתי אותו לגן עדן, שנאמר (בראשית ב') ויקח ה' אלהים את האדם ויניחהו בגן עדן, וצויתיו שנאמר (שם/בראשית ב') ויצא ה' אלהים על האדם לאמר וגו', ועבר על צווי שנאמר (שם/בראשית ג') המן העץ אשר צויתך וגו', ודנתי אותו בגירושין שנאמר (שם/בראשית ג') ויגרש את האדם ודנתי אותו בשילוחין שנאמר (שם/בראשית ג') וישלחהו ה' מגן עדן, וקוננתי עליו איכה, שנאמר (שם/בראשית ג') ויאמר לו איכה, איכה כתיב, אף בניו הכנסתי אותם לא"י שנאמר (ירמיה ב') ואביא אתכם אל ארץ הכרמל, וצויתים שנאמר (ויקרא כ"ד) צו את בני ישראל, ועברו על צווי שנאמר (דניאל ט') וכל ישראל עברו את תורתך, ודנתי אותם בגירושין שנאמר (הושע ט') מביתי אגרשם, ודנתי אותם בשילוחין שנאמר (ירמיה ט"ו) שלח מעל פני ויצאו, וקוננתי עליהם, איכה

4 תלמוד בבלי מסכת מועד קטן דף כו עמוד א

אמר רבי חלבון אמר רב הונא: הרואה ספר תורה שנקרע חייב לקרוע שתי קריעות: אחד על הגויל ואחד על הכתב. שנאמר: אחרי שרף המלך את המגלה ואת הדברים.

Rabbi Chelbo said that Rav Huna said: One who sees a Torah scroll that was torn is obligated to make two rents, one for the parchment that was damaged and one for the writing, as it is stated: "Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, after the king had burned the scroll and the words" (Jeremiah 36:27). This implies that a separate rent must be made for each of them, both the parchment and the writing.

5 מפני הרב (ע' שלז)

מתבאר מכאן שבשעה ששורפים ספר תורה, גם הקלף וגם הכתב נשרפים הם באש. והקשה הגרי"ד סלובייציק מהגמ' בע"ז (יח א) שמצאוהו לר' חנינא בן תרדיון שהיה יושב ועוסק בתורה, מקהיל קהילות רבות, וספר תורה מונח לו בחיקו, הביאוהו וכרכוהו בספר תורה, והקיפוהו בחבילי זמורות והציתו בהן את האור... אמרו לו תלמידיו מה אתה רואה (שהיו שומעין קול האותיות הפורחות, ולא היו יודעין מהו. תוס'), אמר להם, גוילין נשרפין ואותיות פורחות וכו'. הרי מתבאר שבשעה שהנכרים שורפים את התורה רק הקלף בוער באש, ולא האותיות. והרי זה סתירה לדברי הגמ' מו"ק הנ"ל.

ובפשוטו היה נראה לחלק בין תורה שבכתב לבין תורה שבעל פה, דתורה שבכתב שגדרו כתב על גבי קלף, פשיטא שבשעה ששורפים הקלף ישרפו אף האותיות. ובגמ' מו"ק המדובר הוא על שריפת מגילת איכה, ועל הרואה ספר תורה שנשרף, שהם תורה שבכתב. אכן בעובדא דר' חנינא בן תרדיון, אף על פי שהיה ספר תורה מונח לו בחיקו, בודאי היה דורש דרשות של תורה שבעל פה, ועל התורה שבעל פה התכוון התנא באמרו שהאותיות פורחות באויר, שאינו נתפס בחורבן, מפני שאינו דבר גשמי.

6 תלמוד בבלי מסכת עבודה זרה דף יח עמוד א

אמרו: לא היו ימים מועטים עד שנפטר רבי יוסי בן קיסמא, והלכו כל גדולי רומי לקברו והספידוהו הספד גדול, ובחזרתן מצאוהו לרבי חנינא בן תרדיון שהיה יושב ועוסק בתורה ומקהיל קהילות ברבים וס"ת מונח לו בחיקו. הביאוהו וכרכוהו בס"ת, והקיפוהו בחבילי זמורות והציתו בהן את האור, והביאו ספוגין של צמר ושראום במים והניחום על לבו, כדי שלא תצא נשמתו מהרה. אמרה לו בתו: אבא, אראך בכך? אמר לה: אילמלי אני נשרפתי לבדי היה הדבר קשה לי, עכשיו שאני נשרף וס"ת עמי, מי שמבקש עלבונה של ס"ת הוא יבקש עלבוני. אמרו לו תלמידיו: רבי, מה אתה רואה? אמר להן: גליון נשרפין ואותיות פורחות. אף אתה פתח פיך ותכנס [בך] האש! אמר להן: מוטב שיטלנה מי שנתנה ואל יחבל הוא בעצמו. אמר לו קלצטונירי: רבי, אם אני מרבה בשלהבת ונוטל ספוגין של צמר מעל לבך, אתה מביאני לחיי העולם הבא? אמר לו: הן. השבע לי! נשבע לו. מיד הרבה בשלהבת ונטל ספוגין של צמר מעל לבו, יצאה נשמתו במהרה. אף הוא קפץ ונפל לתוך האור. יצאה בת קול ואמרה: רבי חנינא בן תרדיון וקלצטונירי מזומנין הן לחיי העולם הבא. בכה רבי ואמר: יש קונה עולמו בשעה אחת, ויש קונה עולמו בכמה שנים.



Thursday, August 9, 2001, (20th of Av) was a typically hot summer day in the city of Jerusalem. At 2 pm the popular Sbarro pizza restaurant, at the busy intersection of King George Street and Jaffa Road, was crowded with customers, mostly women, teens, and young children. Unnoticed, an Arab terrorist entered the restaurant, his guitar case filled with lethal explosives packed with nails, nuts and bolts. Suddenly Sbarro was ripped apart, shattering the lives of many families.

A witness described the horrific scene:

There was a blast so strong I was sure the world was collapsing, then tons of glass shattered all over. There was screaming and blood, people running and people frozen to the spot. Little kids were crying for their mothers and tons of blood all over the place, it was real chaos. I remember seeing a man covered in blood, a little girl with long hair matted in blood and glass, and the smell of smoke, explosives, and human flesh all mingled together.

Fifteen innocent people were murdered. Among them were Mordechai and Tzira Schijveschuurder, originally from Holland, and three of their children, Ra'aya, 14, Avraham Yitzhak, 4 and Chemda, 2. Two other daughters, Leah, 11, and Chaya, 8, were critically injured.

Chaya recalled her horrific experiences:

The last time I saw my little brother Avraham Yitzhak, he was lying on a stretcher in an ambulance. He had a bandage on his face. He was four years old. After the explosion, I ran out as fast as I could. I didn't look at anything. I just ran out. A medic took me to an ambulance and that is where I saw Avraham Yitzhak for the last time. After that they took me on a stretcher to the hospital, and I had to have an operation to remove the screws that entered my liver and leg. I saw a sign on the door that said 'Operating Room' and started to cry. In my house, they are sitting shiva right now. My brothers came here with their torn shirts. I asked them: "Why are your shirts torn?" but they didn't want to tell me that our parents were dead. My brothers had not been with us in the restaurant. They found me first. After that, they found out that my sister and my little brother were dead. My little sister had always been happy. I remember her so well. She used to laugh all day long. Now our parents are not alive either. But soon Moshiach will come and all the people that have died, and all the people killed in wars and terror attacks, will come back to life.

"What is happening right now in the heavenly host?" I asked in my eulogy. "When Avraham, Hemda, and Ra'aya go up to Heaven? Five members of one family—five cruelly murdered young ones. How old was Moti? How old was Tzira? They were at the beginning of their lives. He was an educator, she taught the disabled, and together they raised a family of eight children of their own. Now more than half of this family has been destroyed."

Two days after the funeral I went to visit the wounded from the Sbarro attack who were in Shaare Zedek Hospital. I tried to speak to a girl of sixteen who was severely wounded. "I was sitting in Sbarro with two friends," she finally said, "and we were eating pizza. Beside us were two tables joined together. A big family sat there, the father, the mother, and the kids. All of a sudden, we heard a terrible boom, and saw frightening flames. In a second, I felt that I was burning. I heard the man sitting with his family at the table next to me say, 'Children, say *Shema Yisrael* out loud with me.' They said it, and then there was a heavy silence . . . and I woke up in the hospital."

That horrifying image stuck in my mind. Moti Schijveschuurder knew that his family was going to die, and he made sure that the last words that

came from the mouths of his young children were *Shema Yisrael*. I recalled my father as he entered the gas chambers in Treblinka along with the Jewish communities of Piotrków and Prešov, the words of *Shema Yisrael* on his lips.



יהי זכרם ברוך



לשבת חזון

חזון ישעיהו בן אמוץ אשר חזה על יהודה וירושלים
בימי עזיהו יותם אחו יחזקיהו מלכי יהודה.

(ישעיהו א, א)

יבין נא למה שבת חזוה נקרא על שם ההפטורה, הן ישנם עוד שבתות |
כשבת נחמו ושבת שובה הנקראים על שם ההפטורות, אבל בטח
בכולם טעם להם שמשונים הם מכל שבתות השנה שאינם נקראים על שם |
ההפטורות.

ואם מפני שהיא בבין המצרים וההפטורה מדברת מן החורבן, הלא גם
ההפטורות של ב' השבתות הקודמות מדברים מנבואת ירמיהו שהיתה שנים |
רבות אחר ישעיהו, והיה ממש בשעת החורבן ומכל מקום לא נקראו השבתות |
על שם ההפטורות.

אמנם איתא (בשיר השירים רבה פרשה ג, פסקא ו) בעשר לשונות נקראת הנבואה,
חזון, נבואה, הטפה, דבור, אמירה, צווי, משא, משל, מליצה, חידה,
אי זה קשה מכולן, רבי אליעזר אומר "חזון" קשה, שנאמר "חזות קשה הוגד
לי" (ישעיהו טא, ב) עיין שם.

בענין נבואה אין לנו השגה אבל פשוט אפשר לפי מצבנו, כי כבר דברנו
איך שעכשיו רואים כמה רחוקים השמיעה והדיבור מצרות ויסורים, מן ראית
הצרות והיסורים ומכל שכן לסבלם רחמנא ליצלן.

כשלמדנו בדברי הנביאים ודברי חכמינו ז"ל מצרות החורבן, חשבנו שיש
לנו איזה השגה בצרות אלו אף בנינו או לפעמים, עכשיו רואים שלשמוע
צרות, כמה רב המרחק, מלראותם ומכל שכן לסבלם רחמנא ליצלן. עד
שכמעט לא מיניה ולא מקצתיה.

לכן הבחינות שדברי הנביאות מצרות ישראל נתגלו להנביאים אם על ידי
הדיבור והקול ששמעו ממרום אם על ידי שאר הבחינות, קשה מכולן היתה
להם כשהראו להם במחזה וראיה ממשית את הצרות והיסורים, "חזות קשה
הוגד לי".

זה שאמר עולא ועוד אמוראים (סנהדרין צח:) על חבלי משיח "ייתי ולא איחמינה" שאף שידעו את הצרות של חבלי משיח, מכל מקום לראות ממש את ישראל בצרות רבות כאלו לא רצו.

ולפי זה אין הכוונה על עצמם בלבד, למנוע את עצמם מצער, רק כמו ששאר תנאים ואמוראים אמרו את גודל הצער בזמן חבלי משיח, הגדילו הם עוד יותר ואמרו כמה שיודעים את וכמה שאומרים בפנינו מן הצרות לא נוכל לתארם כפי שיהיו באמת, כי אינו דומה הידיעה והדיבור מהצרות לראיה, לראותם, ואף שאני יודע מהם מכל מקום איני רוצה לראותם, "ייתי ולא איחמינה".

וזה "ויאמר ד' ראה ראיתי את עני עמי אשר במצרים ואת צעקתם שמעתי מפני נגשיו כי ידעתי את מכאוביו" (שמות ג, יז), שעל פי פשוט למה כתיב "כי ידעתי" מאחר שכבר כתיב "ראה ראיתי".

אבל יש שהאב יודע שטובה גדולה לבנו לעשות לו נתוח, ומכל מקום לא יוכל לעמוד ולראות בשעה שעושים לו הנתוח, כנוצר לעיל שאינו דומה הידיעה מהיסורים, מלראות אותם, ואף שלטובה היא לו מכל מקום לראותם לא יוכל כי אז בטלה הידיעה אשר יודע הוא שלטובתו היא ורק ביסורי בנו הוא מרגיש. והנה גלות מצרים כמו שאר גלויות ויסורים היו לטובת ישראל, וזה שאמר ד' ראה ראיתי וכו' וכיון שראיתי בראיה לכן ידעתי רק את מכאוביו, לא בהטובה ממכאוביו רק במכאוביו שכואב להם, לכן "לכה ואשלחך אל פרעה והוצא את עמי בני ישראל ממצרים" (שם ג, יז).

שבת חזון, חזון ישעיהו, והיא הקשה שבכולן גם לראות את הצרות, לכן קוראין הפטורה זו בשבוע שחל בו ט' באב והשבת נקרא על שמה שבת חזון, אבל כיון שגם במרום כבר רואים את יסורי ישראל, לכן "ידעתי את מכאוביו", בהכאב לא בהטובה מהם, ובזה פועלים הישועה, בחינת "פקח עיניך וראה" (דניאל ט, יח), וההפטורה מתחלת בחזון שקשה מכולן ומסיימת בישועה, "ציון במשפט תפדה ושביה בצדקה" (ישעיהו א, כז).

תשעה באב ק'נות תשצ"ט



Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Lifshitz
1765-1839 (Chemdas Shlomo)



1. שו"ת חתם סופר חלק ו - ליקוטים סימן כג

א. שלום וכל טוב לידידי הרב המופלג המפואר כבוד מ"ה יודא נ"י בראנדיבורג.

ב. על נידן דברת רופאי מומחי' האומרי' היוצא מפתח ביתו אליבא ריקנא ביום התענית דמו בנפשו בעידן ריתחא מגפת קאלרא /כולירע/ ר"ל ומסתפק מה יהי' ביום צומא רבה ה' יסיר חרונו וירפא כל חולי עמו ישראל מהרה.



ג. בתשו' דבר שמואל סי' ק"ז התיר בפשיטות לאשה בריאה מניקת אך בנה הי' מסוכן לחלב אמו ואם תתענה תחלש ולא יהי' לה להניק ויסתכן הולד התיר לה שלא להתענות אע"פ שהיא עצמה בבריאותה כדי להציל מספק פ"נ =פקוח נפש= של הולד ולא הבי' ראוי והוא פשוט דהרי אדם בריא אולם מחלל שבת עבור ספק חולי אעפ"י שהוא בריא ה"נ יאכל הבריא ביה"כ להציל הולד מספק פ"נ מכש"כ שמותר לבריא לאכול מספק סכנת עצמו אעפ"י שהוא כעת בריא אולם רק שהאוויר מעופש ויש לחוש פן תדבקהו הרעה ח"ו.

ד. אמנם לפי לשון השאלה שהרופאים הזהירו מצאת פתח ביתו בתענית משמע כשהם סגורין בביתם אין התענית מזיק להם א"כ יתענו ויהיה סגורים ויתפללו ביחידות ולא יקראו בתורה כי אין זה כדאי לדחות אי' כרת דאורי' אך אם המומחים מסכימים שהתענית עצמו מזיק וכמ"ש מג"א סי' תקע"ו סק"ב אז ישערו הרופאים כמה שיעור לגימה שצריך האדם שיתחזק גופו וינצל מס' סכנה ואותו שיעור קאפע או טע /קפה או תה/ או מרק ישנה פחות פחות מכשיעור מלא לוגמיו וישהה בין שתי' לשתי' כדי אכילת פרס שהוא לכל היותר ט' מינוטין /דקות/ ולכ"הפ ב' מינוט' כאשר ביארנו בבירור במקום אחר [עי"ל סי' ט"ז] וישנה רק הנאת מעיו ולא הנאת גרונו היינו קאפע וטע בלי צוקר /סוכר/ וחלב ומרק בלי מתובל ואם הי' אפשר שלא כדרך אכילתן הי' טפי עדיף וה' הרופא חנם הרופא נאמן יסיר מכם ומכל חולי ישראל כל מיני מחלה ויכתבו ויחתמו לאלתר לחיים טובים ארוכים ומתוקני' הכ"ד א"נ. פ"ב נגהי ליום ב' ט"ז אלול תקצ"ו לפ"ק. משה"ק סופר מפפד"מ.

2. Rabbi Israel Salanter: Religious-Ethical Thinker (Glenn, MG)

Rabbi Israel Lipkin (1810-1883), better known as Rav Yisrael Salanter, was an outstanding religious and ethical leader of the Lithuanian Jewish community at the time. Vilnius, or Vilna as it was known to Jews, the city where he lived and taught, had been hit hard by cholera in the summer of 1848. In the early fall, as the fast-day of Yom Kippur approached, he was concerned that fasting would make the community more vulnerable to the disease. Rabbi Lipkin's reported decision was to publicly advocate the suspension of the fast that year, an ad hoc public health measure that left a long trail of controversy. The following account of the incident is excerpted from "Three Who Ate," a short story published nearly eighty years later in which the episode is dramatized:

It is Atonement Day in the afternoon. The Rabbi stands on the platform in the centre of the Synagogue, tall and venerable . . . [The] people are waiting to hear what the Rabbi will say, and one is afraid to draw one's breath. And the Rabbi begins to speak. His weak voice grows stronger and higher every minute, and at last it is quite loud. He speaks of the sanctity of the Day of Atonement and of the holy Torah; of repentance and of prayer, of the living and of the dead, and of the pestilence that has broken out and that destroys without pity, without rest, without a pause—for how long? for how much longer? . . . and I hear him say: "And when trouble comes to a man, he must look to his deeds, and not only to those which concern him and the Almighty, but to those which concern himself, to his body, to his flesh, to his own health . . . There are times when one must turn aside from the Law, if by so doing a whole community may be saved. With the consent of the All-Present and with the consent of this congregation, we give leave to eat and drink on the Day of Atonement."



Mass grave Warsaw Cemetery



Lodz Ghetto



3. Chaim Mordechai Rumkowski Speech, Lodz Ghetto, September 1942 (Yad Vashem archives)

"A grievous blow has struck the ghetto. They are asking us to give up the best we possess -the children and the elderly. I was unworthy of having a child of my own, so I gave the best years of my life to children. I've lived and breathed with children, I never imagined I would be forced to deliver this sacrifice to the altar with my own hands. In my old age, I must stretch out my hands and beg: Brothers and sisters! Hand them over to me! Fathers and mothers: Give me your children!

I had a suspicion something was going to befall us. I anticipated "something" and was always like a watchman: on guard to prevent it. But I was unsuccessful because I did not know what was threatening us. The taking of the sick from the hospitals caught me completely by surprise. And I give you the best proof there is of this: I had my own nearest and dearest among them and I could do nothing for them!

I thought that would be the end of it, that after that, they'd leave us in peace, the peace for which I long so much, for which I've always worked, which has been my goal. But something else, it turned out, was destined for us. Such is the fate of the Jews: always more suffering and always worse suffering, especially in times of war.

Yesterday afternoon, they gave me the order to send more than 20,000 Jews out of the ghetto, and if not - "We will do it!" So the question became, 'Should we take it upon ourselves, do it ourselves, or leave it to others to do?'. Well, we - that is, I and my closest associates - thought first not about "How many will perish?" but "How many is it possible to save?" And we reached the conclusion that, however hard it would be for us, we should take the implementation of this order into our own hands.

I must perform this difficult and bloody operation - I must cut off limbs in order to save the body itself. I must take children because, if not, others may be taken as well - God forbid.

I have no thought of consoling you today. Nor do I wish to calm you. I must lay bare your full anguish and pain. I come to you like a bandit, to take from you what you treasure most in your hearts! I have tried, using every possible means, to get the order revoked. I tried - when that proved to be impossible - to soften the order. Just yesterday, I ordered a list of children aged 9 - I wanted at least to save this one aged-group: the nine to 10 year olds. But I was not granted this concession. On only one point did I succeed: in saving the 10 year olds and up. Let this be a consolation to our profound grief.

There are, in the ghetto, many patients who can expect to live only a few days more, maybe a few weeks. I don't know if the idea is diabolical or not, but I must say it: "Give me the sick. In their place we can save the healthy."

I know how dear the sick are to any family, and particularly to Jews. However, when cruel demands are made, one has to weigh and measure: who shall, can and may be saved? And common sense dictates that the saved must be those who can be saved and those who have a chance of being rescued, not those who cannot be saved in any case...

We live in the ghetto, mind you. We live with so much restriction that we do not have enough even for the healthy, let alone for the sick. Each of us feeds the sick at the expense of our own health: we give our bread to the sick. We give them our meager ration of sugar, our little piece of meat. And what's the result? Not enough to cure the sick, and we ourselves become ill. Of course, such sacrifices are the most beautiful and noble. But there are times when one has to choose: sacrifice the sick, who haven't the slightest chance of recovery and who also may make others ill, or rescue the healthy.

I could not deliberate over this problem for long; I had to resolve it in favor of the healthy. In this spirit, I gave the appropriate instructions to the doctors, and they will be expected to deliver all incurable patients, so that the healthy, who want and are able to live, will be saved in their place.

I understand you, mothers; I see your tears, alright. I also feel what you feel in your hearts, you fathers who will have to go to work in the morning after your children have been taken from you, when just yesterday you were playing with your dear little ones. All this I know and feel. Since 4 o'clock yesterday, when I first found out about the order, I have been utterly broken. I share your pain. I suffer because of your anguish, and I don't know how I'll survive this - where I'll find the strength to do so.

I must tell you a secret: they requested 24,000 victims, 3000 a day for eight days. I succeeded in reducing the number to 20,000, but only on the condition that these be children under the age of 10. Children 10 and older are safe! Since the children and the aged together equal only some 13,000 souls, the gap will have to be filled with the sick.

I can barely speak. I am exhausted; I only want to tell you what I am asking of you: Help me carry out this action! I am trembling. I am afraid that others, God forbid, will do it themselves. A broken Jew stands before you. Do not envy me. This is the most difficult of all orders I have ever had to carry out at any time. I reach out to you with my broken, trembling hands and beg: Give into my hands the victims! So that we can avoid having further victims, and a population of 100,000 Jews can be preserved! So, they promised me: If we deliver our victims by ourselves, there will be peace!!!

At this point in the speech the crowd begins shouting. Many cry out:

"We will not let the children go alone! We will all go!"

Rumkowski continues:

These are empty phrases!!! I don't have the strength to argue with you! If the authorities were to arrive, none of you would be shouting!

I understand what it means to tear off a part of the body. Yesterday, I begged on my knees, but it did not work. From small villages with Jewish populations of 7000 to 8000, barely 1000 arrived here. So which is better? What do you want? That 80,000 to 90,000 Jews remain, or God forbid, that the whole population be annihilated?

You may judge as you please; my duty is to preserve the Jews who remain. I do not speak to hot-heads! I speak to your reason and conscience. I have done and will continue doing everything possible to keep arms from appearing in the streets and blood from being shed. The order could not be undone; it could only be reduced.

One needs the heart of a bandit to ask from you what I am asking. But put yourself in my place, think logically, and you'll reach the conclusion that I cannot proceed any other way. The part that can be saved is much larger than the part that must be given away!"



Chelmno



Michal Podchlebnik Chelmno Survivor Testimony

Protocol of the Interrogation of the Witness

On June 9 1945 in Kolo

Examining Judge of District Court in Lodz – Wladyslaw Bednarz

Assisted by Recording Clerk

In the presence of the parties Deputy Prosecutor K.K Leszczynski heard a testimony (not under oath) of the witness mentioned below. After the witness had been informed of criminal responsibility for a false testimony and acquainted with the text of article 106 of the Code of Penal Proceedings, he testified the following:



Michal Podchlebnik

Name	Michal Podchlebnik
Age	38
Parents First Names	Jacob and Sosia nee Widawska
Address	Kolo, 4 Krzywa Street
Job	Leatherworker
Religion	Jew
Criminal Record	No criminal record
Relation to the parties	-



4. The Nazi Accomplice in the Circumcision

An account by Rabbi Israel Spira, the Rebbe of Bluzhov

Each morning at dawn, the Germans would lead us out of the camp for a day of hard labor that ended only at nightfall. Each pair of workers was given a huge saw and expected to cut its quota of logs. Because of the horrendous conditions in the camp and the starvation rations on which we were supposed to subsist, most of us could barely stand on our feet. But we sawed away, knowing that our lives depended upon it; anyone collapsing on the job or failing to meet his daily quota was killed on the spot, G-d forbid.

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One day, as I pulled and pushed the heavy saw with my partner, I was approached by a young woman from our work detail. The pallor of her face showed her to be in an extremely weak physical state. "Rebbe," she whispered to me, "do you have a knife?"

I immediately understood her intention and felt the great responsibility that rested upon me. "My daughter," I begged, concentrating all the love and conviction in my heart in the effort to dissuade her from her intended deed. "Do not take your own life. I know that your life is now a living hell, from which death seems a blessed release. But we must never

lose hope. With G-d's help, we will survive this ordeal and see better days."

But the woman seemed oblivious to my words. "A knife," she repeated. "I must have a knife. Now. Before it is too late."

At that moment, one of the German guards noticed our whispered conversation and approached us. "What did she say to you?" He demanded of me.

We both froze. Conversing during work was a grave transgression. Many a camp inmate had been shot on the spot for far lesser crimes.

The woman was first to recover. "I asked him for a knife," she said. To my horror, she then addressed her request to the guard: "Give me a knife!"

The German, too, guessed her intention, and a devilish smile flickered on his lips. Doubtless he had seen the bodies of those who, out of desperation, threw themselves during the night on the electrified fence that surrounded the camp; but this would be a novel sight for him. Still smiling, he reached into his pocket and handed her a small knife.

Taking the knife, she hurried back to her work station and bent over a small bundle of rags that she had placed on a log. Quickly unraveling the bundle, she took out a tiny infant. Before our astonished eyes, she swiftly and skillfully circumcised the week-old boy.

"Blessed are You, G-d our G-d, King of the Universe," she recited in a clear voice, "Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to enter him into the covenant of Abraham our Father."

Cradling the child in her arms, she soothed his cries. Then, she addressed the heavens: "Master of the Universe! Eight days ago you gave me a child. I know that neither I nor he will long survive in this accursed place. But now, when you take him back, you will receive him as a complete Jew."

"Your knife," she said, handing the holy object back to the German. "Thank you."

This story was told by Rabbi Israel Spira, the Rebbe of Bluzhov, who witnessed it in the Janowska Concentration Camp:

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5. OUT OF DEATH, A ZEST FOR LIFE By NADINE BROZAN NOV. 15, 1982

Every time Dr. Gisella Perl enters a delivery room, she stops first to pray: "God, you owe me a life, a living baby." That debt was incurred in Auschwitz in World War II, when the Hungarian gynecologist, who was both inmate and physician at the concentration camp, realized that to save the lives of hundreds of pregnant women, she would have to prevent them from giving birth.

Thirty-seven years and thousands of safe deliveries later, Dr. Perl, 72 years old, is recognized in Israel, where she now lives, and elsewhere by grateful women who fall to their knees and call her "Gisi Doctor." That was the name by which they knew her in the concentration camp. Tomorrow Dr. Perl is to be honored at a luncheon given at the Helmsley Palace by the National Women's Division of the Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem. She now donates her time to the center's gynecological clinics.

But the past is never out of mind. She calls herself the Ambassador of the Six Million and talks of the past incessantly, in private conversation and in the speeches she gives to raise funds for the medical center. "The greatest crime in Auschwitz was to be pregnant," she said in an interview the other day, recalling the edicts of Josef Mengele. The so-called doctor of death of Auschwitz performed savage medical experiments on prisoners, in particular, women, the physically handicapped and twins, and was in charge of deciding who would go to the gas chambers.

The Loss of Two Lives

"Dr. Mengele told me that it was my duty to report every pregnant woman to him," Dr. Perl

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said. "He said that they would go to another camp for better nutrition, even for milk. So women began to run directly to him, telling him, 'I am pregnant.' I learned that they were all taken to the research block to be used as guinea pigs, and then two lives would be thrown into the crematorium. I decided that never again would there be a pregnant woman in Auschwitz."

She interrupted the pregnancies, she said, "in the night, on a dirty floor, using only my dirty hands." "Hundreds of times I had premature deliveries," she said. "No one will ever know what it meant to me to destroy those babies, but if I had not done it, both mother and child would have been cruelly murdered."

But all of medicine was her province in the camp. As one of five doctors and four nurses chosen by Dr. Mengele to operate a hospital ward that had no beds, no bandages, no drugs and no instruments, she tended to every disease wrought by torture, starvation, filth, lice and rats, to every bone broken or head cracked open by beating. She performed surgery, without anesthesia. Dr. Perl had only one palliative: the spoken word. "I treated patients with my voice, telling them beautiful stories, telling them that one day we would have birthdays again, that one day we would sing again. I didn't know when it was Rosh ha-Shanah, but I had a sense of it when the weather turned cool. So I made a party with the bread, margarine and dirty pieces of sausage we received for meals. I said tonight will be the New Year, tomorrow a better year will come."

Dr. Perl was seized by the Gestapo along with her parents and husband in March 1944 and taken by cattle car from her hometown of Sighet (in what is now Rumania) to Auschwitz, in Poland. She was never to see them again, but the memory of her father, Maurice Perl, being led away, clutching a prayer book, remains vivid. The prayer book symbolized a vow she had made years earlier. At age 16, Gisella Perl had graduated first in her secondary-school class, the only woman and the only Jew. She asked her father to send her to medical school, but he refused at first, saying as she remembers it, "I do not want my daughter to lose her faith and break away from Judaism." "A Good, True Jew"

Several months later, she approached him again, this time with a prayer book he had given her, and said, "I swear on this book that wherever life will take me, under whatever circumstances, I shall always remain a good, true Jew." Maurice Perl relented, and she enrolled in medical school. Years later, on the day she was paid a fee by her first patient, she bought another prayer book and had engraved on it her father's name. Again she declared to him, "I swear on this prayer book that wherever life shall take me I will remain an observant Jew." Her father carried that book into the crematorium in Auschwitz. In January 1945, as Russian forces approached, the Germans hastily shut down gas chambers and evacuated the camps. Dr. Perl was moved to a camp near Hamburg, then, two months later, to Bergen-Belsen, a camp in Germany that she described in a book she wrote after the war as "the supreme fulfillment of German sadism

and bestiality." At the precise moment that British troops were moving in to liberate Bergen-Belsen, Dr. Perl was delivering a baby, the first free child born there.

She remained in the camp until the fall, when she wandered throughout Germany by foot searching for her family. After 19 days, she learned that her husband had been beaten to death just before the liberation and her teen-age son, who had been taken from her when she was deported, had died in a gas chamber. It was only then that she succumbed to grief and tried to poison herself. Subsequently she was taken to a convent in France to recuperate.

In March 1947 she came to this country to speak to doctors and other professionals. "I went from one town to another, as an ambassador of the six million," she said. "One day Eleanor Roosevelt came to the dais and invited me to lunch. I remember saying, 'Oh, Mrs. President, I cannot come because I am kosher.' She said, 'You will have a kosher lunch.' " Mrs. Roosevelt told her, " 'Stop torturing yourself; become a doctor again,' " she recalled. "I didn't want to be a doctor; I just wanted to be a witness." As a result of that meeting, Representative Sol Bloom, Democrat of New York, introduced the bill that granted her citizenship, and in 1951 she opened an office in Manhattan, with what she calls "Sol Bloom furniture." "I was the poorest doctor on Park Avenue, but I had the greatest practice; all of Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen were my patients," she said. She also joined the staff of Mount Sinai Hospital and worked for Dr. Alan F. Guttmacher, the family-planning pioneer who was chairman of obstetrics and gynecology. She delivered 3,000 babies in New York and became an expert in treating infertility.

Three years ago, she decided to move to Israel to fulfill another old vow. "After four days in the cattle car that took us to Auschwitz, suddenly the S.S. officers opened the door, and prisoners in striped pajamas threw us out," she recalled. "My father and husband both embraced me, saying, 'Swear we will never go back, we will meet someday in Jerusalem.' " Now she lives in Herzliya with her daughter, Gabriella Krauss Blattman, who was hidden during the war with a non-Jewish family, and has a 32-year-old grandson. Today, even as she expresses fear of a resurgence of anti-Semitism, she says: "It is worthwhile to live. God rewarded me. He rewards me even more now.'

6. I was a Doctor in Auschwitz (Dr. Gisella Perl)

Then we arrived. We strained our tired, weakened eyes to read the name of the station: AUSCHWITZ. When the S.S. guards unsealed the door of our car and ordered us to get out, I ran to my parents, embraced them and begged them to forgive me if I had ever caused them any heartaches. "You were always the best child any parents could have", they comforted me. My sisters and brothers embraced me silently. My husband

drew me close. "Take care of yourself..." he whispered, "take care of your warm, generous heart..." My son just looked at me, with his big, blue eyes "Mother..." they said. "Mother..."

7. I was a Doctor in Auschwitz (Dr. Gisella Perl)

Each camp consisted of endless rows of blocks—dirty, rat-infested wooden barracks—housing about twelve-hundred persons each. Along the inner walls of the barracks, there were three rows of wooden shelves, one above the other, and these shelves were our bedrooms, living-rooms, dining-rooms and studies, all in one. They were divided by vertical planks at regular intervals. Each of these cage-like contraptions served as sleeping-room for thirty to thirty-six persons. Once in a while the shelves would collapse under the weight of the sleepers and the inmates fell on one another in a bloody medley resulting in broken bones, bleeding wounds, loud wailings, and, more often than not, a whipping by the "Blockova", the block superintendent.

A few "washrooms" were scattered over the camp, with one single faucet in each and a big sign above it: "Attention! Polluted water! Not for drinking!" But what did we care! We drank it all the same, we had to drink to cool our burning tongues and stomachs which were constantly on fire from the saltpeter mixed in our food. There was one latrine for thirty to thirty-two

thousand women and we were permitted to use it only at certain hours of the day. We stood in line to get into this tiny building, knee-deep in human excrement. As we all suffered from dysentery, we could rarely wait until our turn came, and soiled our ragged clothes, which never came off our bodies, thus adding to the horror of our existence by the terrible smell which surrounded us like a cloud. The latrine consisted of a deep ditch with planks thrown across it at certain intervals. We squatted on these planks like birds perched on a telegraph wire, so close together that we could not help soiling one another.

No one who had to live without the small comforts of even the poorest kind of life can imagine what it is to have to do, for instance, without paper. There was, of course, no toilet paper in the latrine and we had no way of obtaining paper except when somebody stole some from the store-rooms around the crematories. We got into the habit of tearing tiny squares of material off our shirts, drying our eyes with them first, then using them to clean our rectum. However careful we were, the shirts got shorter and shorter until there was nothing left but the shoulder- straps and a narrow strip around our chests. And then somebody denounced our practices and the S.S. decided to hold a shirt inspection.

One morning, at *Zählappell* (roll call), we had to lift our skirts and hold them up while laughing S.S. men walked through our lines whipping our naked bodies and selecting many among us to die in the flames as a punishment for having damaged "camp property".

8. I was a Doctor in Auschwitz (Dr. Gisella Perl)

DINNER AT AUSCHWITZ

We had always known that hunger existed. We had read Knut Hamsun's book "*Hunger*" and suffered together with his hero, and we had read Fink's *I am hungry* . . . But the great writer who could describe the hunger we had to endure at Auschwitz has yet to be born.

No one who has not experienced the unbearable pain of hunger during the intervals between Auschwitz dinners has any idea as to what hunger really means.

At night, lying on the cold boards of our cage, we tried to pacify our throbbing entrails with the promise of food. Tomorrow we'll get dinner—we said to ourselves. Tomorrow they'll distribute some warm food.

In the morning, when we had to stand roll call under the clouds tinged red by the flames of the crematory, we were trembling with expectancy, hardly able to stand the slow passing of time until dinner. Standing or kneeling, in scorching heat, or driving rain or snow, we had only one thought, one desire carried by our blood-stream into every part of our body: food . . . We were hungry. We wanted food. Warm food . . .

We waited for the food with the same burning impatience, the same excited imagination with which a young girl waits for her lover. Dinner was the most important moment of the day, the only moment worth living for.

The kitchen was far away from the barracks, at the end of the camp, and that was where they prepared our luxurious dinner: the turnip soup. When the soup was done, the prisoners working in the kitchen put out the tremendous pots on the street, thirty to fifty pots in a line. Then, under constant supervision by the S.S. women, these pots were carried to the barracks to be distributed among the inmates.

The block superintendent, the Blockova, chose ten to twelve prisoners to be sent for the soup. "Dinner distribution!" she yelled, and the poor, starved skeletons took their places in their cages to wait for the life-giving liquid. Our tortured stomachs hurt more and more at the thought of food, our salivary glands worked overtime and we could already feel the smell of food in our noses long before it arrived.

Finally it arrived. It was there. The superintendent stood in the middle of the floor beside the steaming pot and distributed the horrible concoction into three-quart containers, which were to serve six prisoners each. The containers were dirty and smelly, having been used the night before for entirely different purposes, but their smell blended beautifully with the indescribable smell of the turnip soup. We didn't care. It was warm and it was food, even if there were

9. I was a Doctor in Auschwitz (Dr. Gisella Perl)

While doing an errand near the crematory one day I went into the stock-room reserved for children's clothes. Old prisoners were working here, separating the boys' clothes from girls' clothes, shoes from stockings, underwear from dresses and the various types of toys from one another, to pack them all in Red Cross packages and send them to Germany to clothe and amuse the children of good Nazis. One of the prisoners working there, an eighteen-year old French girl,

Jeanette, could stand this life no longer and with a piece of glass found on the ground she cut the veins on both arms. She collapsed, bleeding and I hurried to bandage her arms so as to save her life, if possible, although she would probably have been better off dead. To ease her position I grabbed a small girl's coat lying nearby and put it under Jeanette's head. As I turned the coat inside out I saw a white label sewn into its lining: "I AM JULIKA FARKAS, AGE FIVE. MY FATHER IS DESIDER FARKAS FROM MARA-MAROS SZIGET."

The white label of this fine, light-blue coat had a long story to tell. It told me of a blond, blue-eyed little girl, the pride and happiness of her parents, who was one day picked up by cruel Nazi hands and thrown into a cattle car together with her father and mother. During the long trip to Auschwitz little Julika was hungry and thirsty, she cried bitterly in her mother's arms, asking for her soft bed, for her warm milk, for a tender word of comfort and love. But mother had lost her power to comfort her child. She could do nothing but hold her close to her heart, stroke the soft, blond hair and kiss the tear-filled eyes. And even that not for long . . .

After eight days the journey came to an end at the gates of Auschwitz. Julika was torn from her mother's arms, undressed and thrown into a ditch to be burned alive together with hundreds and hundreds of little boys and girls. Her mother was spared the torture of remembering her child's fate. She went straight

to the gas-chambers and found forgetfulness at the merciful hands of death . . . And now this little blue coat waited to be sent to Germany to clothe another blue-eyed child—perhaps the daughter of her Nazi murderer . . .

10. I was a Doctor in Auschwitz (Dr. Gisella Perl)

The same evening, after retiring to our bunks, I began to put my plan into effect. Instead of going to sleep as usual, I began talking in a low voice to the women lying close to me. I told them about my old life in Maramaros Sziget, about my work, my husband, my son, the things we used to do, the books we used to read, the music we used to listen to . . . To my surprise they listened with rapt attention, which proved that their souls, their minds were just as hungry for conversation, for companionship, for self-expression as mine. One after the other, they opened up their hearts, and from then on half our nights were spent in conversation.

Later, as we came to know one another better, we invented games to keep our minds off the sordid present. We recited poetry, told stories of the books we had read and liked, and sang songs, in a low voice, with tears in our eyes, careful that the Blockova shouldn't hear us.

Other evenings we played another game, which spread from block to block until every woman in Auschwitz played it enthusiastically. We called the game "I am a lady . . ."

I am a lady—I said one night—a lady doctor in Hungary. It is morning, a beautiful, sunny morning and I feel too lazy to work. I ring for my assistant and

tell her to send the patients away, for I am not going to my office today . . . What should I do with myself? Go shopping? Go to the hairdresser? Meet my friends at the café? Maybe I'll do some shopping. I haven't had a new dress, a new hat in weeks . . .

And I went shopping and lunching and walking, went to the theatre with my husband and son, had supper afterwards . . . And my fellow prisoners hung on my every word, following me around that little town they had never seen, and when my happy, lovely day was over, they fell asleep with a smile on their faces.

These evenings acted like a stimulant. They reminded us that although the odds were all against us, it was still our duty to fight. We had no longer homes to defend. All we had was our human dignity, which was our home, our pride, our only possession—and the moral strength to defend it with.

11. I was a Doctor in Auschwitz (Dr. Gisella Perl)

The poor, young women who were brought to Auschwitz from the various ghettos of Hungary did not know that they would have to pay with their lives and the lives of their unborn children for that last, tender night spent in the arms of their husbands.

A few days after the arrival of a new transport, one of the S.S. chiefs would address the women, encouraging the pregnant ones to step forward, because they would be taken to another camp where living conditions were better. He also promised them double bread rations so as to be strong and healthy when the hour of delivery came. Group after group of pregnant women left Camp C. Even I was naive enough, at that time, to believe the Germans, until one day I happened to have an errand near the crematories and saw with my own eyes what was done to these women.

They were surrounded by a group of S.S. men and women, who amused themselves by giving these helpless creatures a taste of hell, after which death was a welcome friend. They were beaten with clubs and whips, torn by dogs, dragged around by the hair and kicked in the stomach with heavy German boots. Then, when they collapsed, they were thrown into the crematory—alive.

I stood, rooted to the ground, unable to move, to scream, to run away. But gradually the horror turned into revolt and this revolt shook me out of my lethargy and gave me a new incentive to live. I had to remain alive. It was up to me to save all the pregnant women in Camp C from this infernal fate. It was up to me to save the life of the mothers, if there was no other way, then by destroying the life of their unborn children. I ran back to camp and going from block to block told the women what I had seen. Never again was anyone to betray their condition. It was to be denied to our last breath, hidden from the S.S., the guards and even the Blockova, on whose good will our life depended.

On dark nights, when everyone else was sleeping—in dark corners of the camp, in the toilet, on the floor, without a drop of water, I delivered their babies. First I took the ninth-month pregnancies, I accelerated the birth by the rupture of membranes, and usually within one or two days spontaneous birth took place without further intervention. Or I produced dilatation with my fingers, inverted the embryo and thus brought it to life. In the dark, always hurried, in the midst of filth and dirt. After the child had been delivered, I quickly bandaged the mother's abdomen and sent her back to work. When possible, I placed her in my hospital, which was in reality just a grim joke. She usually went there with the diagnosis of pneumonia, which was a safe diagnosis, not one that would send her to the crematory. I delivered women pregnant in the eighth, seventh, sixth, fifth month, always in a

No one will ever know what it meant to me to destroy these babies. After years and years of medical practice, childbirth was still to me the most beautiful, the greatest miracle of nature. I loved those newborn babies not as a doctor but as a mother and it was again and again my own child whom I killed to save the life of a woman. Every time when kneeling down in the mud, dirt and human excrement which covered the floor of the barracks to perform a delivery without instruments, without water, without the most elementary requirements of hygiene, I prayed to God to help me save the mother or I would never touch a pregnant woman again. And if I had not done it, both mother and child would have been cruelly murdered. God was good to me. By a miracle, which to every doctor must sound like a fairy tale, every one of these women recovered and was able to work, which, at least for a while, saved her life.

12. I was a Doctor in Auschwitz (Dr. Gisella Perl)

The camp was seething with joy, fear, uncertainty, hope, expectancy . . .

April 15, 1945. Young Marusa from Warsaw is about to bring her child into the world. In her super-human pain she tears the filthy rags from her body, her dirty hair sticks wet to her pale forehead and she holds on, feverishly, to my dirty hands. "Help me, Doctor! Help me . . ."

Before having been brought to Belsen Bergen, Marusa was a member of the underground movement, the Partisans in Warsaw. She had done everything a human being could do to fight the Nazis and then, eight months ago, she was caught and condemned to rot alive in Belsen Bergen. The child she carried under her heart grew on the hatred Marusa felt for the Nazis. It grew until April 15, 1945, when it was ready to leave the typhus-infected, lice-ridden, feverish body of its mother.

I did not leave her side even for a moment although the confused sounds coming from the outside came nearer and nearer. Suddenly I heard trumpets and immediately afterwards a tremendous shout of joy coming from thousands of throats shook the entire camp. The British have come! The Liberators have come! We are free . . . free.

Marusa's last scream of pain sounded almost jubilant . . . And a moment later there was between her legs the first free child born in Belsen Bergen. Pale and exhausted, the young mother could hardly

smile, but the words leaving her bloodless lips were like a prayer: "Freedom . . . Freedom . . ."

The first free child of Belsen Bergen was safe. But her mother's blood wouldn't stop flowing. She grew paler, weaker and wide streams of blood came gushing out of her womb. My heart beat wildly. I had to save this Partisan mother! I had to save her! What did I care about freedom, about the British, about anything in the world if I couldn't save this heroic, tortured young mother? I ran out of the barrack and stopped the first British soldier I saw. Water! Get me water and a disinfectant! He didn't understand. I ran on and came face to face with a tall, impressive-looking soldier. With my bloody, dirty hands I grasped his sleeve. "Do you understand French?" He nodded. "Get me water, please, and some disinfectant . . . I have to perform an operation . . . Hurry . . . Hurry . . ."

He looked down on me from his tremendous height, uncomprehending but moved to the core. He must be an officer—I thought—a soldier who is used to the sight of blood . . . And already I was pulling him by the sleeve, pulling him toward Block III. Half an hour later I had the water, the disinfectant, and could wash my hands and perform the operation, not as a helpless prisoner, but as a doctor.

Here, in the first hour of liberty, I saved the lives of the Partisan woman Marusa and of little Marusa, her daughter. Many weeks later, when the young mother succeeded in overcoming the typhus, they both re-

turned to Warsaw to take part in the re-building of her beloved city.

The tall, hardened soldier looked on, with tears rolling down his cheeks. He could understand war, yes, and he was not afraid of death. But what he saw in Belsen Bergen was beyond the limit of his understanding, of his imagination. For weeks he fought, day and night, against sickness, against death, against lice, against starvation. He did much, but in most cases he was too late. Yet, he was a real liberator. All the inmates of Belsen Bergen who survived will forever bless his name. He was Brigadier General Gleen Hughes, head of the Second British Army.

13. I was a Doctor in Auschwitz (Dr. Gisella Perl)

In Room No. 12 there was a dead girl on the bed. Her mother, a young woman of 38, lay in the other bed beside her daughter. She had typhus but it was not only the fever that racked her thin, wasted body. In her delirium she spoke constantly about her daughter, Agnes, about the past, the present and the future—but always in connection with her daughter. For two years this woman had protected her sixteen-year old daughter; they had been at Auschwitz, then in a war factory near Hamburg and finally in Belsen Bergen. She had given her bread, her soup to the child; she had held her close to protect her against the cold,

against blows and brutality; and now, when they were finally free, Agnes died—left her forever.

Abbé Brand sat by her bed for hours at a time. He knew, as we knew, that her case was hopeless. For hours he listened to the screams, the curses, the sacrilegious words of the unfortunate mother, never blaming her, never losing his patience.

One morning she sat up in bed and kept her eyes on the door until Abbé Brand entered the room. Then she began to scream. "I want a tomb stone for my Agnes, Abbé, I want a memorial for her. I won't get out of here until I have the tomb stone for my daughter . . ."

The little priest laid her gently back on her pillow. "I have thought of it myself," he said, "Agnes must have a tomb stone and she shall have it—but you must be patient."

We smiled sadly. A tomb stone in Belsen Bergen, where the mass graves were never big enough, never deep enough to receive the dead, where the British army toiled like slaves to satisfy primary necessities of the camp. But the Abbé had promised. And he had never broken a promise before.

Many days went by. Agnes' mother got better and better. The priest came to see her every day and they sat on the edge of her bed, their heads close together, whispering excitedly as if they had a great secret together. Then, when the poor mother was strong enough to stand on her feet, Abbé Brand came to speak to me.

"Doctor," he said, "tomorrow I want you to come with me, we are going to Agnes' grave."

The next morning the entire hospital waited excitedly for the arrival of the priest. When we finally saw him coming down the road, he looked like a young Moses with the stone tablets in his hands. He carried a grave marker—made of wood, beautifully worked, with big blue letters on it, saying: "Here lies our Agnes, to remain with us forever."

He put the tablet into the hands of the mother, who looked at it with tears in her eyes, tears of gratitude and solace.

Then we set out toward the grave. Abbé Brand went ahead holding Agnes' mother by the arm—the Jewish woman, the Catholic priest. Behind them came people of many nationalities and many religions, united by common suffering, loyalty and love. At the grave, Abbé Brand knelt down on the ground and put the hand-made monument into the soft earth. Then he got up and began to pray, "In nomine Dei . . ."

When he finished his prayer he turned to the mother. "Agnes is happy now . . . She looks down upon her mother and many friends and sends them peace . . . Amen . . ."

Then he led her back to her bed at the hospital, cured in body and in soul. I don't know whether that little tomb stone still stands in Belsen Bergen, but I hope it is there, in memory of a dead child, and in memory of a great heart, Abbé Brand, who will never



14. Out of the Depths (page 19)

In November 1944, Russian airplanes began to circle above our area. As soon as the Germans realized that the Russian army was approaching, they made it their first priority to prevent the rescue of Jews. All around, rumors began to fly that the ghetto would be liquidated. Mother began to prepare for the worst. She made rucksacks to hold our vital possessions. Then the rumors were confirmed; the Germans gave the ghetto Jews a few minutes to gather at the assembly point. Each of us came from his place of work to the train-station platform, where the Germans carried out a “selection.” I clearly recall the shouts of *Schnell! Schnell!* as they packed us onto the platform.

Following orders, the women and children gathered on one side of the platform, and the men gathered on the other side. I was by then seven and a half years old, but I looked as though I were five. Naturally, I walked with Mother and stayed by her side, while Naphtali, who was almost eighteen, went with the men’s group. Being separated on the train-station platform did not bode well for us.

Over the years, I occasionally have asked myself what my most vivid, distinct memories of the Holocaust are, and find myself singling out three things: dogs, boots, and trains. All three were there on the platform in Piotrków. The dogs ran amok, the German soldiers’ boots thundered everywhere, and the trains filled with more and more Jews.

In the air we heard the constant shouts of *Schnell! Schnell!* and the people ran around in a panic, carrying their possessions. We had always known that our stay in the ghetto was only temporary, and that the day would come when they would expel us to an unknown destination. Each of us had an "expulsion package" that was kept ready and waiting for that bitter moment.

Mother had equipped me with a large down pillow on which she had sewn two straps. Because of my small size, this pillow would serve as a blanket that could cover almost my entire body. It was intended to save me from freezing to death. "Lulek, wherever you go, this will be your satchel," my mother said, hiding some food and clothing inside it. I treasured that pillow for a long time, holding on to it with all my might until I had no other choice but to give it up. Naphtali had a small kit bag. In it were his *tefillin*—the phylacteries that Mother had given him—and the sole remaining copy of a book manuscript our father had written.

Mother and I stood on the train platform, which was crowded with terrified Jews and shouting Germans. Before us was a freight car with a tiny hatch at the top, covered with barbed wire, and sliding doors that bolted shut. The Germans opened these doors in order to pack the people inside. Following their usual organized procedure, they directed men to one group of cars and women and children to another group of cars. The *maikah* clubs, the whistles, and the dogs helped them carry out the operation.

Within a few short seconds, my mother realized what this separation meant. In another moment, I would be entering the car with her, so she made an instantaneous decision. With the pillow on my shoulders separating us, she grasped my back with both hands and shoved me in the direction of the men. I didn't understand what was going on. I only heard

her say, "Tulek, take Lulek. Good-bye, Tulek; good-bye, Lulek," and I never saw her again.

Her maternal instinct was honed to its sharpest in those few seconds; she understood that women and children had less of a chance to survive. My guess is that she made this quick calculation based on her experience of the war. At that point, the war had been going on for five years. She must have understood that with the Russians about to invade, the Germans would need working hands for their war machine, and thus they would exploit us until our last breaths. She must have felt that it would be for my own good to go with Naphtali rather than with her, and so she pushed me toward him.

We did not have time for conversation or consultation, much less for saying good-bye. Naphtali caught me as she threw me to him; he grabbed me with both hands and shouted in Mother's direction, "What do I do?" She just waved her hand at us, and the Germans shoved her toward a car with the other women.

The moment was intensely traumatic for me. The Germans forced Naphtali and me into the men's car, and seconds later the doors locked behind us. I clearly recall Naphtali beating on the closing door with his fists and shouting in Polish, "There's been a mistake! There's a child here! You must take him back to his mother!" But no one listened to him. No one heard his plea.

I screamed in terror, and transferred all my rage at the separation to Naphtali, my brother. I beat my small fists against his chest unceasingly. He tried to hug me and calm me down, but I refused to be comforted. I kept hitting him and screaming, "What have you done to me? Why did you take me? I want to be with Mother!"

Several men joined Naphtali in his attempts to console me. Somehow I lay down on the floor of the crowded car and wept bitterly. I remember the biting cold that penetrated my body, the cold of November 1944. The men around me gave me hot black coffee to drink, but I spit it out and continued my cries of longing for Mother until I fell asleep on the floor.

In retrospect, this was clearly the hardest moment I experienced in the six years of the war. Never before and never since did I cry as I did on that day of my separation from Mother. To separate from your mother is inconceivable; it hurts your whole being all the years of your life. It took me a long time to understand that when Mother pushed me toward Naphtali, she saved my life.

Mother went her way, and we ours. We thought her way led her to Bergen-Belsen. Only when the war ended did we learn that on that day Mother was taken to the Ravensbrück concentration camp, where she was murdered. Naphtali and I got off the train at a labor camp in the Polish town of Częstochowa.

15. Out of the Depths (14)

The day he arrived in Treblinka, a strange event occurred that I consider an act of Divine Providence. Another train had arrived there on that day, its cars packed with the Jews of Prešov, Slovakia. Eight years earlier, Father had finished his tenure as rabbi of that town, and Prešov had yet to elect another rabbi in his stead. Those two towns reflected two completely different worlds: the Jews of Prešov spoke German and Hungarian, whereas those of Piotrków spoke Yiddish and Polish. The only thing they had in common was that the last rabbi of Prešov was also the last rabbi of Piotrków—my father. The Jews of Prešov, the Jews of Piotrków, and their chief rabbi all met on the train platform of Treblinka on their way to the gas chambers.

Father addressed them by recounting the last speech of Rabbi Akiva, one of the Ten Martyrs of Israel. When the Romans raked the rabbi's flesh with iron combs, his disciples asked him how he could withstand the tortures. Rabbi Akiva replied by referring to the *Shema*, the declaration of faith, *Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One*. "All my life I have wondered about the verse following the *Shema* prayer, *Love your God . . . with all your soul*," mused Rabbi Akiva. "I understood this as meaning 'Love your God even if He takes your soul.' I asked myself, when will I have the opportunity to fulfill this commandment? Now that I have the opportunity, how can I not fulfill it?" Then Rabbi Akiva recited the *Shema*, prolonging the last word, *One*, as his soul departed.

"Jews!" Father shouted so that all present would hear his concluding words. "Of all the six hundred thirteen *mitzvot*, we have one remaining mitzvah to fulfill: *I should be sanctified among the Children of Israel*—to give up your life for bearing the name of God, for the name of God, *El*, is contained in the name of the People of Israel. Come, my brothers, let us fulfill this commandment in joy. The world is null and void, a boiling rain of hatred and bloodshed. The one mitzvah left for us is to sanctify God's name. Come, brothers, let us fulfill it joyfully. I repeat to you the words of Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Pshischa: 'For in joy you will go out—with the power of joy will we leave behind the troubles, the suffering, and the trials of this world.'" Then Father raised his voice and began to recite the *Vidui* prayer of confession: *For the sins we have sinned before you*. The crowd repeated it after him. The prayer began in a whisper and ended with the shout. "*Shema Yisrael! Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One. God reigns, God has reigned, God will reign for all eternity.*"¹

I never saw Father again after that night at our house in Piotrków. My memories of him are few. In my earliest memory of him, from more distant and innocent days, when war had not yet come to the world, I am a little boy sitting on my father's knees and playing with his curly *peyos*. My next memory is completely different: people are gathered in our house, and my father is discussing the situation, his face furrowed in worry. The feeling of unease that dominated that day dwells inside me always.

My father accompanies me throughout my life, in whatever I do. I study the pictures of him that hang in my home and I think about him often. I miss him at every joyous or sad occasion in my life, at every crossroads I face. According to those who knew him, my father, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Lau, was a gifted speaker. Before every speech I make, I ask myself how he would have formulated it.



HOW A SURVIVOR FEELS

Now I'll tell you how a survivor feels. A survivor is an actor experienced in her art. She puts on nice clothes, matched up with a smile, and tries to recapture the pleasures of life, and becomes keenly aware of her inability to enjoy. A survivor will go on vacation and while watching a show, there will appear in her mind the picture of her mother with her grandson in her arms gasping for breath.

A survivor will read in the paper about a fire, and desperately hope that her brother died from the fumes before the flames reached him.

A survivor will think of her sister with her three dead children and inhale the gas to feel the agonies of their death.

A survivor will go to a party and feel lonesome in the crowd.

A survivor will be very quiet yet scream inside.

A survivor will cry, and pretend to her children it's a mere headache.

A survivor will make large weddings, invite a great many people, but the ones she wants most will never arrive.

A survivor will go to a funeral and not cry for the dead who died but for the ones that were never buried.

A survivor will reach out to you and not let you get close, for you remind her too much of the difference between her and you, remind her too much of what she could have been, yet will never be.

A survivor is only at ease with other survivors, though they never talk about their past.

A survivor is broken and beaten in spirit, she lies even to herself and pretends to be like you.

A survivor is a wife, mother, friend, neighbor yet unknown to all, she is known only to herself.

A survivor is a restless tortured person, the only thing she can really enjoy are her children.

Yet a survivor's child is not easy to be, for she expects" from her child the impossible.

The survivor wants her child to be constantly happy, to do all the things she couldn't do, to learn everything she was denied. In her eagerness she places a burden on the child, for the child must develop her own image, experience and learn from her own mistakes, the child must be allowed to experience even pain, so that she can recognize happiness when it comes her way.

A survivor will awake in a sweat from her nightmares. Unable to sleep again, in vain does she chase the ghosts from her bedside, but they remain her guests for the remainder of the night.

A survivor possesses one thing you do not: a fearlessness of death, for she has faced death so many times, and also because she knows that this is when she will finally find peace.

I exposed myself to you, and removed the mask of the survivor, so you can become aware of the full impact of the Holocaust. To understand, that when they killed the six million, you may as well know what happened to the living. This you cannot study in your textbooks, our pain is not on record. It's important for you to know, since you are at the threshold of your life

Cecile Klein

Survivor, Poet

Kinos 5779

קינות תשע"ט

❖ KINNOSE ❖

6.

- ❖ Everything came to a standstill!^{1*}
 'Turn away² from me!' those who exiled me³ made me hear.
 They made me a filth and refuse⁴
 amidst the flocks of my fellow [nations].⁵
 You have enveloped⁶ Your [heavenly] Tabernacle,
 that it not see my [earthly] Temple.
 You have enveloped Yourself,⁷ so my warriors are overpowered.
 They [my enemies] clapped their hands [in derision]⁸
 and my limbs faltered
 as they trampled all my heroes.⁹
- ע [Jerusalem] has fallen,¹⁰ it remains¹¹ sunk in the watery depths.
 My eye¹² still longs for the vision of [Zechariah]
 the son of Berechiah,*
 but until¹³ [we are shown] miracles [like those] of Gilgal,*
 [that prophecy] has been hidden.¹⁴
 My eye¹⁵ brings forth tears, because we are crippled by quicksand.*
 He [God] caused¹⁶ [the Destruction], then regretted it,
 summoning [Israel] to cry,
 saying, 'Over these things I weep.'¹⁷
- פ On¹⁸ the surface¹⁹ of the Euphrates her pious ones were mutilated;*
 yet she remembered the splitting²⁰ of the Sea of Reeds,
 even while her foundation was being destroyed.²¹

14-stanza *kerovah* (piyut recited at various points during the chazzan's repetition of the *Shemoneh Esrei*) written by R' Elazar HaKalir, and recited by some congregations. That *kerovah* is based on the first 14 verses of *Eichah's* chapters.

לחזון בן ברכיה — For the vision of [Zechariah] the son of Berechiah. Zechariah's prophecies are full of hope and optimism. The Talmud points especially to his proclamation: Thus says HASHEM, Master of Legions, 'Elderly men and women will yet sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with his staff in hand due to old age. And the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls; they will be playing in the streets' (Zechariah 8:4-5; see *Makkos* 24b).

פלאי גלגל — Miracles [like those of] Gilgal. While the Israelites were encamped at Gilgal, they won many battles in miraculous fashion. For example, at Gibeon, God caused the sun to remain in the skies long after it should have set. Thus, Joshua and his forces were able to annihilate the enemy, before they had a chance to retreat under cover of night. Additionally, God caused a heavy hail-

storm to rain upon the five armies allied against Israel so that more had died by the hailstones than had been put to the sword by the Children of Israel (Joshua 10:11).

בינייה נכניה — Crippled by quicksand. The word *בינייה* is derived from *בין*, thick mud (as in *Psalms* 40:3 and 69:3). Thus, the phrase means that we are lost in a quagmire of troubles.

Alternatively, the word is derived from *בין*, Greece, and is an allusion to *תוכמת ינייה*, Greek wisdom, a form of sign-language code instrumental (to a degree) in sowing the seeds that led to the Destruction of the Second Temple (see *Menachos* 64b; see also *Bava Kamma* 83a).

על פני פרת נפצו חסידיה — On the surface of the Euphrates her pious ones were mutilated. The Midrash teaches that when Nebuchadnezzar saw the renowned Levite singers who once sang in the Temple, he demanded that they serenade him as he feasted merrily over his victory. 'Sing for us from Zion's song!' (*Psalms* 137:3). Without any hesitation, the Levites hung their precious musical instruments on the trees and deliberately

❖ קינות ❖

1.

- שבת* סורו¹ מני שמועוני עוברי,²
 קחי ומאוס השימוני³ בעדרי חברי,⁴
 סבותה⁵ משכן מסכות דבירי,
 סבות⁶ והבלגו גבורי,
 ספקו כף⁷ ומעדו אברי,
 בסלה כל אבירי.⁸
- נפלה⁹ עודינו¹⁰ בצול דבונה,
 עיני¹² חפתה לחזון בן ברכיה,*
 עד¹³ פלאי גלגל* חבונה,¹⁴
 עיני¹⁵ מעוללת בינייה נכניה,*
 עשה¹⁶ ונחם ויקרא לבכיה,
 ונם על אלה אני בוכיה.¹⁷
- על¹⁸ פני¹⁹ פרת נפצו חסידיה,*
 פלגיה²⁰ סוף זכרה בערו יסודיה,²¹

(1) *Eichah* 5:15. (2) 4:15. (3) Some editions read עוברי, those who besmirched me.

(4) Cf. *Eichah* 3:45. (5) Cf. *Song of Songs* 1:7. (6) *Eichah* 3:44. (7) Cf. 3:43. (8) 2:15. (9) Cf. 1:15.

(10) 5:16. (11) Cf. 4:17. (12) 3:51. (13) 3:50. (14) Some editions read תבניה, awaited.

(15) *Eichah* 3:49. (16) 2:17. (17) 1:16. (18) 5:17. (19) 4:16. (20) 3:48. (21) Cf. *Psalms* 137:7.

שבת — Everything came to a standstill! R' Elazar HaKalir, one of the earliest *paytanim* (composers of liturgical poems), was a master at weaving seemingly diverse elements into a well-constructed, albeit difficult to understand, whole. In this first *kinnah* of the morning service, he has linked the verses of the respective chapters of *Eichah* into an intricate chain according to the following formula:

(a) each stanza contains six lines that correspond to the six alphabets of *Eichah* (chapters one, two and four contain 22 verses each, and are arranged according to an *aleph-beis* acrostic; chapter three comprises three verses beginning with *א*, three with *ב*, and so on);

(b) the first line of each sextet begins with the opening word or phrase of the corresponding verse in chapter five of *Eichah* (these do not follow an *aleph-beis* format), and is followed by the opening word or phrase of the corresponding verse in chapter four;

(c) the next three lines correspond to the respective triad of verses in chapter three, each set in the reverse order of its appearance in *Eichah*;

(d) the fifth line of each stanza corresponds to the verses in chapter two; and

(e) the final line is taken in its entirety from chapter one, and determines the stanza's rhyme syllable. [All of the words and phrases taken from *Eichah* appear in bold type in the Hebrew text.]

The concluding stanza deviates from the established pattern. Its first five lines contain an acrostic of the author's name אלעזר, Elazar, and it closes with the refrain of the following *kinnah*, thus serving as a connective between the two.

Interestingly, the *kinnah* includes only eight stanzas taken from the last eight verses (or, in chapter three, the last eight triads) of the chapter of *Eichah*. Many commentators therefore regard this *kinnah* as the conclusion of a

The dread¹ of the sins of Shiloh* was swiftly fulfilled
by the conspirators against her.

They jeered,² those wild boars of the forest,³
'Where are her pious ones?'

They uncovered⁴ shameful acts in order to disgrace her.
And Zion spread her hands [in despair].⁵

ז On Mt. Zion⁶ an ambush was laid⁷ by the enemy hordes.

My vicious enemies surged over the heads⁸ of Zion.

My vicious enemies gathered⁹
to stand [against me] at Nob.^{10*}

You preserved [the memory of] ¹¹

that sin in order to incite my foes.

My nation cried out¹² in the days of the son of Dinai,*

'He, HASHEM, is righteous!'¹³

ק You¹⁴ elevated the lowly¹⁵

and they denuded me of my jewelry.

You caused them to close in¹⁶

on me and they devastated me.

I called¹⁷ to the citizens of Gibeon [for help],

but they too drowned me.

I cried out loud¹⁸ [for relief] in Arabia,* but they crushed me.

'Arise!¹⁹ Travel through [safely]!' is how they mocked me.

I called for my lovers,* but they deceived me.²⁰

ר Why²¹ did they anticipate butchering [King Josiah,]²²

the very life breath of our nostrils?²³

You have seen²⁴ how they scorched their skin²⁵ like a furnace.²⁶

You have seen²⁷ how they consummated

offensive and outrageous acts within Your desirous [Temple].

You admonished²⁸ [Israel] through Ezekiel,

warning that Your revenge would match their rebelliousness.

the Tabernacle at Nob were conspiring with David against him, had eighty-five Kohanim slain, along with their wives, children, neighbors and cattle (I Samuel 22:12-19). The Talmud reports that on the day of that slaughter, God ordained that retribution for that act will take place (in a later year) on the ninth of Av (Sanhedrin 95a).

בן דיני — The son of Dinai. Eliezer ben Dinai was an infamous murderer (Sotah 47a; Kesubos 27a). His unsuccessful revolt against Roman domination brought swift retribution and heavy bloodshed (see Shir HaShirim Rabbah 2:7). Josephus (Antiquities XX, 8) describes how he was captured and brought to Rome for trial.

בארבי — In Arabia. When the captive Israelites

were led through the Ishmaelite lands of Arabia, the local populace met them and appeared interested in helping them. The Arabs pretended friendship and sympathy, and offered food and drink. However, the bread they offered had been oversalted in order to cause the Jews great and painful thirst. Then the Ishmaelites proffered leather canteens filled, not with water, but with air. When the captives raised the containers to their mouths, the hot, stagnant air entered their bodies and they died (Tanchuma, Yisro 5).

למאהבי — To my lovers. The prophet compares alliance with foreign nations (rather than a return of God and reliance on His salvation) to an illicit affair with a pseudo-lover.

פְּחָדֵי חֲטָא שִׁילֹה* תִּכְּפ סוּדְיָהּ,

פְּצוּי חֲזִירֵי יַעַר* אִיִּה חֲסִידְיָהּ,

פְּצוּי מַעֲשֵׂה עֲרִיָּה לְנִדְיָהּ,

פְּרָשָׂה צִיּוֹן בְּנִדְיָהּ.⁵

עַל הַר צִיּוֹן* צְרוּי שְׂאוּנֵי מְדִנָּי,

צָפוּ עַל רְאשֵׁי צִיּוֹן וְדוּנֵי,

צָמְתוּ בְּנֹב לְעַמּוּד* וְדוּנֵי,

צוּד* נִצְרַתָּ לְעוֹרֵר מְדִנָּי,

צָעַק* עַמִּי בִימֵי בֶן דִּינִי,*

צָדִיק הוּא יְהוָה.¹³

אַתָּה¹⁴ קָלוּם¹⁵ הִכְבַּדְתָּ וּמַעַרְיֵי עֲרֻמוֹנֵי,

קָרַבְתָּ¹⁶ בָּא אֵלַי וַיַּחֲרִימוּנֵי,

קָרַאתִי¹⁷ לְיוֹשְׁבֵי גִבְעוֹן עוֹד הֵם וְרַמוֹנֵי,

קוֹלִי לְהַשְׁמִיעַ¹⁸ בְּעַרְב* הַגְּרִימוֹנֵי,

קוֹמוּי¹⁹ עֲבוּרֵי בְּהֵתֵל הָעֲרִימוֹנֵי,

קָרַאתִי לְמֵאֵהֲבֵי* הַמָּוָה רַמוֹנֵי.²⁰

לְמָוָה²¹ רוּחַ אַפְּינֵי²² לְטַבַּח שְׁמֵרוֹ,²³

רְאִיתָ²⁴ בִּי כְּתַנּוּר עוֹרֵם²⁵ כְּמָרוֹ,²⁶

רְאִיתָ²⁷ בִּי עֵמֶל וְכַעַס בְּאוּוֹיָךְ גְּמָרוֹ,

רְבַתָּ²⁸ בְּיַד יְחֻזְקָאֵל לְנִקּוּם כְּמוֹ מָרוֹ,

(1) Eichah 3:47. (2) 3:46. (3) Cf. Psalms 80:14. (4) Eichah 2:16. (5) 1:17. (6) 5:18. (7) 4:18. (8) Cf. 3:54. (9) 3:53. (10) See Isaiah 10:32. (11) Eichah 3:52; some editions read צוּד, but that is erroneous since the corresponding verse in Eichah reads צוּד (Beis Levi). (12) 2:18. (13) 1:18. (14) 5:19. (15) 4:19. (16) Cf. 3:57. (17) 3:55. (18) Cf. 3:56. (19) 2:19. (20) 1:19. (21) 5:20. (22) 4:20. (23) See prefatory comments to kinnah 11. (24) Cf. Eichah 3:60. (25) Some editions read עוֹרֵי, my skin; some read עוֹרְנֵי, our skin. (26) Cf. Eichah 5:10. (27) Cf. 3:59. (28) 3:58.

mutilated their fingers, making it impossible for them to play the stringed instruments. Thus they did flatly refuse to play for Nebuchadnezzar but declared, 'How can we sing the song of HASHEM? (ibid. 137:4). We cannot make any more music with these crippled hands!' (Pesikta Rabasi 31).

פְּחָדֵי חֲטָא שִׁילֹה — The dread of the sins of Shiloh. Jeremiah had warned the nation that just as the

Tabernacle at Shiloh had come to destruction because of the sins of the sons of Eli the Kohen Gadol, so would the Beis HaMikdash be destroyed because of the people's sinfulness (see Jeremiah 7:12 and 26:6). And now that his message had been ignored, his dread prophecy came true.

כִּבְּב לְנֹב — To stand [against me] at Nob. King Saul, in his mistaken belief that the Kohanim of

See¹ how [our enemies] have said,
 'Let us obliterate them from nationhood!'²
 Observe, HASHEM, how distressed I am;
 my insides churn!³
 W Bring us back to You;⁴ [and fulfill the threat You made]
 to the nation which exiled us, 'Rejoice [and exult,
 O daughter of Edom. . . to you too will the cup
 (of punishment) pass].'⁵
 [Crush] their dwelling places,⁶
 just as they trampled my courtyards⁷ to crush me.
 They stilled the lips⁸ of the Temple singers,
 and made me miserable.
 You heard⁹ their derisive songs¹⁰
 of how they would sweep me away.
 When they [my nation] rested¹¹ after they had traveled,
 they [my captors] fed me pebbles.^{12a}
 They heard how I sighed.¹³
 N For¹⁴ You engraved the likeness of the perfect one [Jacob]¹⁵
 on the throne of Your angelic Ofanim.
 [Therefore] mete out their punishment¹⁶ as on the day
 [Israel] beheld Your countenance [at the Sea of Reeds];
 chase¹⁷ into the dark shadows of Hell all those who plot¹⁸
 against [Israel,] the ones You shelter;¹⁹
 consign²⁰ into the flame those who smashed
 Your precious gem[s] [like Temples].
 Designate²¹ [a date on which they will be forced] to drink
 the intoxicating cup [of retribution] hidden in Your corners.²²
 Let all their wickedness come before You.²³
 K May [retribution] come upon the tormentor
 who tried to destroy us completely.
 L In fury he led us to the entrance of Hamath.²⁴
 V Unto Halah and Habor he exiled us.²⁵
 ז Old man, youth and maiden — he shackled us [all].²⁶
 ר O Supreme One, please look down,
 for we are all Your nation.²⁷
 Remember, HASHEM, what has befallen us!²⁸

to cope with the rigors of the journey. But the people jeered at him and did not obey. Therefore, the exiles had to knead their

dough in pits dug into the ground and their bread became mixed with grit (Rashi to Eichah 3:16).

רָאה וּנְכַחֲדֵם מְגוּיֵי אָמְרוּ,
 רָאה יְהוָה כִּי צָר לִי מֵעֵי חֲמֻרְמָרוּ.³
 הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ שִׁישׁוֹ שְׁמַע לְגוֹי צָאֲנִי,
 שְׁבַתְּם רְמוּס חֲצֵרִי לְהִדְכִיאֲנִי,
 שְׁפַתֵי מְשׁוֹרְרֵי דְבִיר דְּמָמוּ לְהִדְאִיבָנִי,
 שְׁמַעְתָּ וּמִוֹרוֹת אֶף הִכִּין לְטֹאטְאֲנִי,
 שְׁכָבוֹ וְנָדְרוּ חֲצָץ לְהִבְרִיאֲנִי,^{12*}
 שְׁמַעוּ כִּי נִאֲנַחָה אֲנִי.¹⁵
 כִּי תָם¹⁴ תִּקַּת בְּכֶסֶת אֹפְנֵיהָ,
 תָּשִׁיב לָהֶם גְּמוּלָה כְּאֹז חֲזוֹת פְּנֵיהָ,
 תִּרְדּוּף¹⁷ לְצִלְמוֹן יוֹעֲצֵי¹⁸ עַל צְפוּנֵיהָ,¹⁹
 תִּתֵּן²⁰ לְהִבְהֵב נוֹתְצֵי פְּנֵינֶיהָ,
 תִּקְרָא²¹ לְשֹׁכְרֵם כּוֹס כְּמוֹס בְּפִנֵּיהָ,²²
 תָּבֵא כָּל רַעְתֵּם לְפָנֶיהָ.²³
 תָּבֵא אֶל צָר אֲשֶׁר כָּלְנוּ,
 לְמִבּוֹא חֲמַת²⁴ בְּחַמָּה נִהְלָנוּ,
 עַד לְחֵלַח וְחִבּוֹר הִגְלָנוּ,²⁵
 זָקֵן וּבְחֹר וּבְתוֹלָה כְּבָלְנוּ,²⁶
 רֶם הִבֵּט נָא עִמָּךְ כָּלְנוּ,²⁷
 זְכוֹר יְהוָה מָה הָיָה לָנוּ.²⁸

(1) Eichah 2:20. (2) Psalms 83:5. (3) Eichah 1:20. (4) 5:21. (5) 4:21.

(6) 3:63. (7) Isaiah 1:12. (8) Eichah 3:62. (9) 3:61.

(10) Cf. Ezekiel 8:17; see the commentaries there. (11) Eichah 2:21. (12) Cf. 3:17.

(13) 1:21. (14) 5:22. (15) 4:22; see Rashi to Ezekiel 1:5. (16) Eichah 3:64. (17) 3:66.

(18) Some editions read יוֹעֲצֵי רַע, those who plot evil. (19) Cf. Psalms 83:4.

(20) Eichah 3:65. (21) 2:22. (22) Some editions read בְּפִנֵּיךְ, before You. (23) 1:22.

(24) Cf. Amos 6:14. (25) II Kings 17:6. (26) Cf. Jeremiah 51:22. (27) Isaiah 64:8. (28) Eichah 5:1.

חֲצָץ לְהִבְרִיאֲנִי — They [my captors] fed me pebbles. God had told the prophet (Ezekiel 12:3) to prepare easily portable cooking utensils for use during the trip into exile. The purpose of the command was that others might follow his example and thus be prepared

7.

א How did You rush in Your fury to exterminate
Your faithful ones at the hand of the Edomites,
ב and not recall the Covenant Between the Parts'
by which You selected those whom You tested?

Therefore we have proclaimed,
'Remember, HASHEM, what has befallen us!'²

ג How did You reproach with Your rebuke,
to exile at the hand of the haughty those You had once redeemed,
ד and not recall the contraction of the road
You had shortened for Your flag-bearing tribes?

Therefore we have spoken,
'Remember, HASHEM, what has befallen us!'

ה How did You plan in Your thoughts
to push Your multitudes into the hand of the raucous,
ו and not recall the Assembly Hall, the seasonal stronghold'
You had designated for Your meeting partners?

Therefore, we have lamented,
'Remember, HASHEM, what has befallen us!'

ז How did You abandon Your Temples in Your rage,
to suffer indignity at the hands of aliens,
ח and not recall the betrothal of [Israel to the] Laws of Sinai
that You have carved for the recipients of Your compassion?

Therefore we have related,
'Remember, HASHEM, what has befallen us!'

ט How did You take pains in exerting Yourself* to cause
Your sheep to be torn asunder by the hand of the predators,³
י and not recall the [merit of the] precious/beloved upright [Torah]
that You designated for those who know You?

Therefore we have wailed,
'Remember, HASHEM, what has befallen us!'

יא How did You concentrate in Your anger, to devastate
Your vineyard [Israel] at the hand of the vandalizing villain,
יב and not recall that You taught Your acquired people that
[You would] not abandon [them] forever?⁴

Therefore we have cried,
'Remember, HASHEM, what has befallen us!'

the spiritual stronghold at which all of Israel would assemble during three seasons (Pesach, Shavuot, Succot) each year.

איכה טרחת בטרחה — How did You take pains in exerting Yourself. For eighteen years a heavenly voice resounded through the halls of Nebuchad-

ז.

איכה אצת באפה* לאבד ביד אדומים אמוניה,
ולא זכרת ברית בין הפתרים אשר בררת לבחוניה,
ובכן בטינו, זכור יהוה מה היה לנו?

איכה גערת בגערתה, לגלות ביד גאים גאוליה,
ולא זכרת דליגת דלוג דרה* אשר דלגת לדגליה,
ובכן דברנו, זכור יהוה מה היה לנו.

איכה הגת בהגיונה, להדוף ביד הוללים המונייה,
ולא זכרת ועוד ותק וסת* אשר ועדת לוועדיה,
ובכן וקוננו, זכור יהוה מה היה לנו.

איכה זנחת בזעמך לזלזל ביד זרים זבוליה,
ולא זכרת חתון חקי חורב אשר חקקת לחמוליה,
ובכן חיינו, זכור יהוה מה היה לנו.

איכה טרחת בטרחה* לטרוף ביד טורפים טלאייה,
ולא זכרת יקר ידידות ישר אשר יחדת ליודעייה,
ובכן יללנו, זכור יהוה מה היה לנו.

איכה בונת בכעסה, לבלות ביד בפירים פרמיה,
ולא זכרת לא לזנוח לעולם* אשר למדת ללקוחיה,
ובכן להגנו, זכור יהוה מה היה לנו.

(1) Genesis ch. 15. (2) Eichah 5:1.
(3) Some editions read טמאים, the unclean. (4) Cf. Eichah 3:31.

איכה א... ת בא... לא... פיר א... ים א... יה.
ולא זכרת ב... ב... ב... אשר ב... ת לב... יה.
ובכן ב... נו זכור ה... קה תנת לנו.
איכה ג... ת בג... לה... לב... ביד ג... ים ג... יה.
ולא זכרת ד... ד... ד... אשר ד... ת לד... יה.
ובכן ד... נו זכור ה... מה תנה לנו.

The alphabet is repeated five times for odd-numbered letters (א,ג,ה...ד,ו,ז,ט). This repetition alludes to the Five Books of the Torah and the Six

Orders of the Mishnah. Even the merit of Torah study was ineffective in protecting Israel when its actions became degenerate (Kol BeRamaah).
The contraction of the road. When the Israelites left Sinai, they traveled three days and arrived at Kadosh Barnea — an eleven-day journey under usual circumstances! (See Rashi to Deut. 1:2.) Alternatively, this refers to the four-hundred-year period of slavery prophesied in the Covenant Between the Parts (Genesis 15:13) that was condensed to two hundred and ten years, from Jacob's arrival in Egypt until the Exodus (see Targum to Song of Songs 2:8).
The Assembly Hall, the seasonal stronghold. This alludes to the Beis HaMikdash,

מ How did You speak in Your contempt, to eradicate
at the hand of tormentors those who had exalted You,
נ and not recall the flight on eagle's feathers
when You carried aloft those whom You had exalted?
Therefore we have moaned,
'Remember, HASHEM, what has befallen us!'

ס How did You speak out in Your stormy rage,
to confine Your witnesses by the hand of free thinkers,
ע and not recall the mighty twin Torah-crowns*
with which You crowned Your servants?
Therefore we have cried out,
'Remember HASHEM, what has befallen us!'

פ How did You utter in Your awesomeness,
to murder Your wondrous people by the hand of law breakers,
צ and not recall the joyous song of the desirable righteous*
that You have concealed for Your legions?
Therefore we have shouted,
'Remember HASHEM, what has befallen us!'

ק How did You proclaim in Your proclamation, to give over those
You had once summoned to the hand of those who oppose You,
ר and not recall the assembly [You attended with an] entourage
of [more than] twice ten thousand,*
at which You favored your friends?
Therefore we have protested,
'Remember HASHEM, what has befallen us!'

ש How You aspire with Your aspiration,
to disperse Your perfect ones at the hand of pillagers,
ת and not recall the strength of the Temple Mount's stature
which You prepared for Your wholesome ones?
Therefore we have groaned,
Remember HASHEM, what has befallen us!'

אל We have groaned; pouring out [our hearts] like water,
ע because on this day we were taken captive twice.
ו I recall how I dwelt serenely in Jerusalem.
ז I have complained, but now, I shall raise aloft [my laments]
to the sphere of heaven.

of angels, my Lord is among them, at Sinai in holiness (Psalms 68:18). R' Avudimi of Haifa explained that twenty-two thousand ['twice ten thousand' plus two thousand, the minimum that

can be called 'thousands'] ministering angels accompanied God when He descended upon Mount Sinai to give the Torah to Israel (see Rashi to Psalms 68:18).

איכה מללת במואסה, למחות ביד מונים מנשאיה,
ולא זכרת נשיאת נוצת נשר אשר נשאת לנשאיה,
ובכן נהיננו, זכור יהוה מה היה לנו.

איכה שחת בסערה, לסגר ביד סעפים סהדיה,
ולא זכרת עז עדי עדיים* אשר עטרת לעבדיה,
ובכן ענינו, זכור יהוה מה היה לנו.

איכה פצת בפחה, לפגר ביד פריצים פליאיה,
ולא זכרת צהלת צבי צדיקי אשר צפנת לצבאיה,
ובכן צעקנו, זכור יהוה מה היה לנו.

איכה קראת בקריאתה, לקנות ביד קמים קרואיה,
ולא זכרת רגש רכב רבותים* אשר רצית לרעיה,
ובכן רגננו, זכור יהוה מה היה לנו.

איכה שאפת בשאפה, לשלות ביד שודדים שלמיה,
ולא זכרת תקף תלתלי תאר אשר תכנת לתמימיה,
ובכן תאננו, זכור יהוה מה היה לנו.

תאננו לשפוף דמעות כמים,
על מה ביום זה נשבינו פעמים,
זכרי בהיותי בשלונה יושבת בירושלים,
רגנתי ועתה אאדה עד חוג שמים.

(1) Cf. Ezekiel 16:7. (2) Cf. Isaiah 24:16; some editions read, צהלת צבי ערק, the joyous song of the desirable [land (cf. Ezekiel 20:15) of] righteousness (cf. Isaiah 1:16). (3) Cf. Psalms 68:18.

nezzar's palace. It cried: 'O perpetrator of evil! Go destroy your Master's Temple, for His children do not listen to Him' (Midrash Eichah, intro. 23).

עדי עדיים — Twin Torah-crowns. When Israel was asked to accept the Torah, the nation cried out, נעשה ונשמע, 'We will do and we will hear' (Exodus 24:7), placing נעשה, we will do, before נשמע, we will hear. Thus they undertook to fulfill all of God's commandments, even before they knew what was expected of

them. This devotion was rewarded when 600,000 ministering angels approached Israel and placed two crowns upon each Jew's head — one for נעשה and one for נשמע (Shabbos 88a).

רגש רכב רבותים — The assembly [You attended with an] entourage of [more than] twice ten thousand. The translation and interpolation are based on a midrashic account of God's descent upon Mount Sinai. The psalmist states: The chariot of God is twice ten thousand, thousands

8.

- x *Would that I could soar* to the sphere of heaven;
I would make the heavens lament with me!
I would curse the day on which I was twice destroyed.*
- ח *I would lament, 'Would that my head were [a stream of] water.'*¹
- ב *I would contemplate the crying of that night in the wilderness;²
I would differentiate between night and night*
and between wilderness and wilderness.*
I would inspire all who emerged from the wilderness to cry with me,
w as I would roar, 'Would that I were [once again]
in the Wilderness [of Sinai].'*³
- ג *[I would cry,] 'My limbs are amputated, my fruits are fallen,
like a beaten olive.'
I would provoke the entire household* [to cry] with me;
I would cause the Master of the Household Himself to say,
ר 'Would that I allowed Myself [to tread upon Israel's enemies,
as if they were] thorns and thistles!''⁴*
- ד *I would cause my whole heart to grow faint
as I [would struggle to have Him make Himself available [to me],
Would that I knew the appropriate words
to encourage Him [to forgive me].
I would worry, 'Where is the Shepherd? — but not be able to find Him,
ק I would lament, 'Would that I be permitted to know,
so that I might find him.'*⁵
- ה *I would turn round and round with my words
like an [ever-spinning] wheel,
I would speak with Him face to face to bemoan my woes.
The sun and moon would howl together and refuse to shine upon me,
ז I would shriek, 'Would that my words [of lamentation]
be recorded [for posterity].'*⁶
- ו *The just ways of the pestle-thieves
I would reveal by [contrasting them with] my greed and treachery.
Even the constellations were distraught when
I ripped my [priestly] vestments [at the Temple's destruction],
ח I would scream, 'Would that He give heed to me!''⁷*
- ז *We were exiled when the desirous [Temple]* was ruined,⁸
I would remember that I was once wed [to the holy Torah],
I would shed tears that stream forth as from a mountaintop cistern;⁹
ע I would exclaim, 'Would that I had wings like a dove.'*¹⁰

(1) Jeremiah 8:23, see Targum. (2) Some editions read ליל מקור, the wailing of the wilderness. (3) Jeremiah 9:1. (4) Cf. Isaiah 27:4. (5) Job 23:3. (6) 19:23. (7) Cf. 31:35. (8) Cf. Ecclesiastes 12:5. (9) Cf. Isaiah 7:3. (10) Psalms 55:7.

a mortar where they would press them with their pestle. Therefore, they were given the appellation pestle-thieves because they would steal the hearts, i.e., deceive the sentries with the pretext of the pestle (Taanis 28a).

האבינו — *The desirous (Temple)*. The translation follows Rashi and Ibn Ezra (Ecclesiastes 12:5) who render 'lust for conjugal pleasures.' Some regarded this as a compound word from אב, father or patriarch, and יונה, dove, i.e., Abraham, Isaac

ח.

- אָאָדָה* עַד חוּג שָׁמַיִם,
אֵאלֶה אֶתִּי שָׁמַיִם,
אָאָדָה יוֹם מַחְרִיבֵי פְעָמַיִם,
אֶבְחִין בְּבָכִי לַיִל מְדַבֵּר,¹
אֶבְחִנָּה לַיִל מִלֵּיל* וּמְדַבֵּר מִמְדַבֵּר*,
אֶבְבֶּה אֶתִּי עוֹלַת מְדַבֵּר,
אֶגְדַּע וְאֶנְשֵׁל בְּנִקְף וַיִּתְּ,
אֶגְרָה אֶתִּי כָּל בְּנֵי בַיִת,
אֶגְרוֹם שִׁיאֵמַר בְּעַל הַבַּיִת,
אֶדְוֶה בְּכָל לֵב לְהַמְצִיאָהוּ,
אֶדְעָה מִלִּין בָּם לְאִמְצָהוּ.
אֶדְאָג אִיֶּה רֹעֵה וְלֹא אִמְצָאָהוּ,²
אֶדְפָּכָה וְאֶתְהַפְּכָה כְּאוֹפֵן בְּמַלְי,
אֶדְוֶה פָּנִים בְּפָנִים לְתַנּוֹת עַמְלִי,
אֶהוּ חָרָס וְסִהַר מִלְּהַגִּיָּה לְמוֹלִי,
אֶצְרַח מִי יִתֵּן אִפּוֹא וַיִּכְתְּבוּן מְלִי.³
אוֹרַח מִשְׁפָּטֵי גוֹנְבֵי עָלַי,*
אוֹדִיעַ בְּבַצְעֵי וּמַעְלֵי,
אוּמְלָלוּ מִזִּלּוֹת בְּקָרְעֵי מַעְלֵי,
אֶזְדָּה כְּהוֹפְרָה הָאֲבִיוֹנָה,*⁴
אֶזְפָּרָה כִּי הִיִּתִּי מִחַתְנָה,
אֶזִּיל פְּלָגִים כְּבִרְכָה הָעֲלִיוֹנָה,⁵
אֶעְגּוֹר מִי יִתֵּן לִי אֶבֶר בִּיּוֹנָה.⁶

אָאָדָה — *Would that I could soar*. The translation of this rare word is based on רנה כנשר (Jeremiah 48:40). Behold! It shall fly as an eagle (Jeremiah 48:40). Alternatively the word is related to ירד which Targum (Job 21:30) renders תבירא, destruction, and Ibn Ezra explains as a dark cloud.

אֶבְחִנָּה לַיִל מִלֵּיל — *I would differentiate between night and night*. On that first tragic night of Tishah B'Av in the wilderness, the nation heard the Spies' slanderous reports regarding the Land of Canaan, and they wept. But that was a בְּכִיָּה שֶׁל שָׁלוֹם, an uncalled for (or, needless) weeping. The tragic events that occurred on later Tishah B'Avs, however, were the source of true weeping. Thus we distinguish between tonight's weeping and that first night's weeping.

אֶבְחִנָּה לַיִל מִלֵּיל — *And between wilderness and*

wilderness, i.e., between the Wilderness of Sinai where we ate the heavenly manna, drank from the Well of Miriam and were protected by the Clouds of Glory, and the wilderness of exile where we were starving, thirsty and at the mercy of the elements and both four-legged and two-legged predators.

Once, the foreign overlords of Eretz Yisrael forbade the bringing of bikkurim (first-fruit offerings) to Jerusalem and stationed sentries on the roads to prevent the Jews from doing so. Pious men of that generation arose and placed baskets of bikkurim, covered with dried figs, into large wooden vessels shaped like a pestle, which was used for pressing dried figs into cakes, and carried them on their shoulders to Jerusalem. When the sentries inquired about the contents, the Jews would say that they were taking the dried figs to

- ח Brother [Israel] separated by sinfulness from [Jerusalem] the mighty city¹ and exiled to Tyre; like a meadow without water,² because God withheld [rain] in [His] wrath. He held [Jerusalem] in His grasp like grain standing to be reaped and grapes ready to be harvested;
- ט I would speak, 'Would that I be brought to the fortified city!'³
- ט I would pitch my palatial tents⁴ in the very shadow of death [for life is worthless in exile]; I would fly off and find rest⁵ in Death's Courtyard, [where] I would associate with those who wait for death.*
- ז I would whimper, '[Would that I die, for] which man lives on [through interminable tragedy] and will never see death?'⁶
- ז I seek to witness [the fulfillment of my plea], 'O my Strength [God], come to my assistance!'⁷ My awe-inspiring nation proclaims every year, 'This is the year [of redemption]!' [When that time comes I shall announce to everyone, so that it will be universally known,⁸
- ז that had the hand of God not wrought all this [it could not have happened]!⁹
- ז I shall bow my head to You [in penitence], HASHEM, my source of strength; I shall bend my knee [in supplication] to You, to bandage my exile-wounds. I shall crown You with song, with the melodies of my machalas.* I will concentrate [my prayer] to request, 'Would that You were as a brother to me!'¹⁰
- ז Do not forget the scream of Ariel [the Beis HaMikdash]¹¹ to assemble to him Judah and Israel. The thousands of protective angels¹² whom God designated [to guard Jerusalem], saying, 'Would that out of Zion shall emerge Israel's salvations!'¹³
- א [To this request God responds:] 'From the moment Israel ceased to follow My ways;
- עז they abandoned Me, so I abandoned them and turned My countenance away from them!'
- ר I grumbled and I groaned,* my innards and my heart were spilled out [in grief];
- ו how they have thrown my splendor from my head!

You will have changed [מחלי, my exile-wounds, into dancing, my dancing.

ר נגנתי ונהלתי — I grumbled and I groaned. The speaker here may be God continuing His lament from the previous two lines, i.e. Israel abandoned Me ... and threw My splendor [Divine crowns

from the prayers of the righteous (see Chagigah 13b with Tosafos)] from My head. Alternatively, the lament may revert to Israel's words: From the time God abandoned me ... the enemy nations have thrown my splendor [the Beis HaMikdash] from my head [Jerusalem].

- אח נפשע מקרית עזי אל צור,
אחו בלי מים באף לעצור,
אחו קמות לקצור ועוללות לבצור,
אשיחה מי יובילני עיר מצור.¹
- אטע אהלי אפרני בצלמות,
אטוסה ואשכונה עד חצר מות,
אטפל את המחכים למות.*
- אנהה מי גבר יהיה ולא יראה מות.²
- אילותי לעזרתי תרתי חזות,
אימתי בכל שנה אומרת היא השנה הזאת,
אינדע לכל פי מודעת זאת,³ אם לא פי יד יהודה עשתה זאת.⁴
- אבוף לה ראש יהודה חילי,
אברע לה ברך לחתל מחלי,
אבתיך בשיר משירי מחולי,*⁵
- אבון מי יתנה באח לי.⁶
- אל תשבח צעקת אריאל,⁷
אליו לאגור יהודה וישראל,
אלפי שנאן אשר מסר אל,⁸
- לאמר מי יתן מציון ישועת ישראל.⁹
- ישראל מעת בדרך לא הלכו,
עזבוני ועזבתים ופני מהם נהפכו,
רגנתי והללתי* ומעי ולבי נשפכו,
איכה תפארתי מראשותי השליכו.

(1) Proverbs 18:19; see Nazir 23a. (2) Job 8:11. (3) Psalms 60:11. (4) Cf. Daniel 11:45.

(5) Cf. Psalms 55:7. (6) 89:49. (7) 22:20. (8) Isaiah 12:5. (9) Job 12:9.

(10) Song of Songs 8:1. (11) See commentary to kinnah 37. (12) Psalms 68:18. (13) 53:7.

and Jacob, the Patriarchs of Israel, the nation compared to a dove (see e.g., Song of Songs 2:14). The verse then alludes to the Talmudic teaching, *המנו נכות אבות, the merits of the Patriarchs have ended* (Shabbos 55a), and means that since we no longer had the merits of the אבות to protect us, the Temple was destroyed (Matteh Levi).

Death's Courtyard — חצר מות ... those who wait for death. חצרמקום, Hazar-maveth, was a seventh-generation descendant of Noah. According to the Midrash, he was the progenitor of a tribe of impoverished people who ate animal fodder, dressed in papyrus reed garments, and eagerly anticipated death

(Bereishis Rabbah 37:8). The *paytan* compares the plight of exiled Israel to the lives of those unfortunates.

מחולי — My machalas. *machalas*, is a musical instrument used by the Levite orchestra in the Temple (see Psalms 53:1 and 88:1). The word מחולי [and מחולי] can also be cognate with *sickness*, and refer to Israel's heartache over the Destruction of the two Temples (Rashi to Psalms *ibid.*). Alternatively, the word may be related to *מחול*, a circle dance. Accordingly the stitch is based on the verse, *You have changed for me my lament into dancing ...* (Psalms 30:12), and means that when redemption comes

9.

אֶת־הַיְהוָה *O how they have thrown My splendor from My head,*
when they enthroned an idol [in the Temple that is]
correspondent to [My] Throne of Glory.*
When they [Israel] defiled* the condition My prophets had advised,
and said, 'If you will follow My decrees.'¹
Why² do you all quarrel with Me?³
Your words have come strongly against Me.⁴
From your own hand has this befallen you.⁵*

בִּישׁוֹ *He swallowed up my judges because of their perverted advice;
and He concealed His countenance from them
when He saw their perverseness.
He turned their rain to dust⁶ to frighten them,
instead of [fulfilling the blessing]:
I will give you your rains in their proper season.⁷
He made me as filth and refuse [among the nations].⁸
He annihilated me with His wrath and despised me.⁹
May His comforting swiftly cheer me.¹⁰*

גִּירָה *He cut down the pinnacle of their pride¹¹
and cut short their youth;¹²
with the butchery of the sword he laid siege to their gates.¹³
He caused them to be swollen from starvation
during the [abundant] harvest;
instead of the blessing:
And your threshing shall reach for you, until the vintage.¹⁴*

דִּבְרֵי־רִיב *He bent His bow and cut down completely,
and as with iron He solidified the heavens¹⁵
[to prevent them from giving rain].
He breached me with thirteen breaches,*
instead of [the blessing], And I will make peace in the land.¹⁶*

(1) Leviticus 26:3. (2) Some early editions omit this stanza. (3) Jeremiah 2:29. (4) Malachi 3:13. (5) Cf. 1:9. (6) Cf. Deuteronomy 28:24. (7) Leviticus 26:4. (8) Cf. Eichah 3:45. (9) Cf. Job 16:9. (10) Cf. Psalms 94:19. (11) Cf. Eichah 2:3. (12) Cf. Psalms 89:46. (13) Cf. Ezekiel 21:20. (14) Leviticus 26:5. (15) Cf. 26:19. (16) 26:6.

pagan conquerors of the Second Temple) turned into a sanctuary for idolatry. In other stanzas, Israel ruefully laments its forsaking *תְּפִלַּת מְרָאשׁוֹתַי*, the splendor of my head, i.e., the Torah's laws (see commentary to *בְּחִלְלִים*, below). And in some stanzas the gentile nations taunt Israel in its degradation.

Alternatively, the entire *kinnah* represents the words of one speaker, so distraught in his mourning that he variously refers to himself introspectively in the first person, admonishes himself as an outsider using the second person, and hangs his guilt on a third party, but realizes that he means himself.

וּבְכִנּוּרֵי כִסֵּא הַקְּבוֹד — *Correspondent to [My] Throne of Glory.* The Midrash teaches that the celestial

Throne of Glory rests directly above the *Beis HaMikdash* on earth (Mechilta cited by Rashi to Exodus 15:17; Targum to Jeremiah 17:12).

בְּחִלְלִים — *When they defiled.* This reference to Israel in the third person indicates that God is the speaker. However, some editions read *בְּחִלְלִי*, when I defiled, implying that Israel is the speaker. (See commentary above.)

שְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה פְּרָצִים — *Thirteen breaches.* A lattice-work fence, ten handbreadths high, stood within the walls surrounding the Temple Mount. This fence, called the *סוּרֵיג*, *soreig*, served as a boundary, past which neither a Jew contaminated by contact with a corpse nor a gentile was permitted to enter. When the Greeks conquered the Land

ט

אֵיכָה תִפְאַרְתִּי מִרְאשׁוֹתַי הַשְּׁלִיכוּ,*
וּכְנָגְד כִּסֵּא הַקְּבוֹד* צֶלֶם הַמְּלִיכוּ,
בְּחִלְלִים* תִּנְאִי אֲשֶׁר חוּזֵי נְמַלְכוּ,
וְנָם אִם בְּחֻקְתִּי תִלְכוּ.¹

לְמַדָּה תִרְיִבוּ אֵלַי בְּלַכְּכֶם,² חֲזָקוּ עָלַי דְּבָרֵיכֶם,³
מִיַּדְכֶם הִיָּתָה זֹאת לַכֶּם.⁴

בְּלַע שׁוֹפְטֵי בְמוֹעֵצוֹת עֲזָתְכֶם,
וּפְנִים הַסְתִּיר מִהֶם כְּשֶׁר עֲזָתְכֶם,
וַיֹּמַר לְאַבְק מְטָרִם* לְהִבְעִיתֶם,
חֲלָף וְנִתְתִּי גִשְׁמֵיכֶם בְּעֵתְכֶם.⁵

סְחִי וּמְאוֹס שְׁמֹנִי,⁶ כְּלָה בְּאִפּוֹ וַיִּשְׁטַמְנִי,⁷
נְחוּמִי מִהֲרָה יִשְׁעִשְׁעוּנִי.⁸

גִּדְע רֹוּם קִרְנִים⁹ וְעִלּוּמִם הַקְּצִיר,¹²
וּבְאַבְחַת חֲרִב שְׁעָרֵיהֶם הִצִּיר,¹³
מִזֵּי רָעַב עֵשׂ בְּקִצִּיר,

תָּמוּר וְהַשִּׁיג לַכֶּם דִּישׁ אֶת בְּצִיר.¹⁴

דִּרְךְ קִשְׁתּוֹ וְכִלָּה בְּחָרְץ,

וּכְבָּרוֹל עֲפַל שְׁמֵי עָרְץ,¹⁵

פְּרָצְנֵי שְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה פְּרָצִים,*

תַּחַת וְנִתְתִּי שְׁלוֹם בְּאַרְץ.¹⁶

אֵיכָה תִפְאַרְתִּי מִרְאשׁוֹתַי הַשְּׁלִיכוּ — *O how they have thrown My splendor from My head.* Parashas Bechukosai (Leviticus chapters 26-27) begins with the idyllic blessings that await the Jewish people if they prove themselves worthy of God's esteem. The portion proceeds to the *תּוֹכַחָה*, Admonition, a terrifying prediction of the curses and plagues which will inevitably befall the Jewish people if they betray their solemn covenant with God. This composition [by R' Elazar HaKallir] vividly depicts how Israel did indeed turn away from God and progressively forfeited, one by one, the blessings which God had in store for them and ultimately their evil ways forced God to fulfill the harsh prophecies of the admonition.

Appropriately, the acrostic of this *kinnah* is arranged according to the *ש"ג ב"ד* order of the alphabet. In this arrangement, the first letter of the *aleph-beis* is paired with the last, the second

letter is exchanged for the second to last, and so on. This pattern alludes to Israel who foolishly exchanged the first and best, God, for the last and worst, the idols.

The first word of each quatrain is taken from the respective verse of the second chapter of *Eichah*, thus forming an *aleph-beis* acrostic. The second word begins with the complementary letter in the *ש"ג ב"ד* formation. The last stitch of each stanza is the opening of the corresponding verse in *Leviticus* 26:3-24 and appears in bold type.

Throughout this *kinnah*, the *paytan* shifts back and forth between first, second and third person. This indicates a continuously changing narrator. In some stanzas, God (as it were) mourns His splendor, the *Beis HaMikdash*, that 'they' [a reference to either the wicked king Manasseh (see *II Kings* 21:4-7) during the First Temple era; or the

- ז-ה He had been your Rock, your Fortification and your Stronghold,
but now He has become ruthless and wages war against you.
He Who once watched you closely has set you afar;
He Who once yearned for you has come to despise you.
And where is the pledge: And you shall chase after your enemies?¹
- ט-ו He despoiled [Jerusalem,] the cornerstone [of the world,
that had been] filled with righteousness,
because beneath her mosaic floors
He found every manner of impurity.
Those who had once respected her
disparage her like a woman unclean.²
Thus was perverted [the blessing]:
And five of you shall chase after one hundred [of the enemy].³
- י-ו The Exalted One has rejected the metropolis
of your festival [assemblies],
and brought mourning to the gates of the rampart
upon which you were stationed.
'Who asked you for this [to trample My courtyards]?⁴
cried He, as He sent you into exile,
and He nullified His statement,
'And I will turn [My attention] towards you!'⁵
- יח-ט He made His plans [to show how] He despised the nation
that He had once picked [from among the others]
like a rose [from the thorns],⁶
and [the enemy's soil] was enriched*
with the fat of her [slaughtered] infants.
The smoke from her [burning Temple] canopy
arose as from a furnace,
and the [starving] people asked, 'Where is the grain?' in place of
[the blessing]: And you shall eat your old, well-preserved foods.⁷
- יט-ט They drowned and slaughtered [Kohanim and Leviim]
who once mounted the tiers of my [Temple] platform.*
When, in the valley of Hamath, my priests were murdered.*
Behold, many years have passed since
my Temple's foundation has been laid bare,
and gone from my midst is He Who said:
'I shall make My dwelling place [among you].'⁸
- יז-י They sat down to weep because of the cry of
those dying among you.⁹
He struck down your people with four forms of death:
He destroyed you with the sword, starvation,
wild beast and the plague.¹⁰

(see II Kings 25:18-21).

מנצק מתיכם — Because of the cry of those dying among you [lit., the cry of your dead]. Since the dead cannot cry, the phrase must refer to the cry of those in the throes of death. Alternative-

ly, it means the screams of the relatives of the dead.

הפיל וְרָבַד — And the plague. This indicates that He struck down, refers to God, as germ warfare was unknown at that time.

- הָיָה צוֹרְכֵם וּמַעֲזֵכֵם וּמִשְׁגָּבְכֶם,
הִפָּךְ לְאַכְזָר וּנְלַחֵם בְּכֶם,
הַנוֹצֵרְכֶם רַחֲקֶכֶם, חוֹשֵׁקְכֶם תַּעֲבֹכֶם,
וְאַיִה הַבְּטָחַת וּרְדִפְתֶּם אֶת אוֹיְבֵיכֶם!
וַיַּחְמוֹס פְּנֵת צֶדֶק מְלֵאָה,
כִּי בְּמִשְׁפִּיּוֹתָהּ מִצָּא כָּל טְמֵאָה,
וּמִכְבֹּדֶיהָ הוֹיְלוּהָ כְּדוֹנָה מִטְמֵאָה,²
בְּשֵׁנוֹי וּרְדִפוּ מִכֶּם חֲמוּשָׁה מֵאָה.³
זָנַח עֲלוֹיוֹן קְרִית מוֹעֲדֵיכֶם,
וְהֶאֱבִיל שְׁעָרֵי חֵיל עֲמִידַת רְגְלֵיכֶם,
מִי בִקֵּשׁ וְאֵתִי פֶּץ וְהִגְלֵכֶם,
וְגָמַר אָמַר וּפְנִיתִי אֵלֵיכֶם.⁵
חָשַׁב שְׁנוֹא אוֹם לָקַט בְּשׁוֹשָׁן
וּמִחֶלֶב עוֹלְלִיָּה אוֹתָהּ דָּשָׁן,⁴
קִיטוֹר חֲפֵתָהּ הוֹעֵלָה בְּכַבְּשָׁן,
וְשָׂאֲלוּ אֵיזָה דָּגָן תִּמְוֹר וְאַכְלֵתֶם יֶשֶׁן נוֹשָׁן.⁷
טָבְעוּ נִכְסֵי רוֹבְדֵי דוֹכְנֵי,^{*}
בְּגִיא חֲמַת בְּנִקְטֵל מִכְּהֵנִי,^{*}
הָרִי בַּפֹּה שְׁנַיִם גְּלָה יְסוֹד מְכוּנֵי,
וְסַע מִתּוֹכִי אָמַר וְנָתַתִּי מִשְׁבְּנֵי.⁸
יֵשְׁבוּ מִבְּכֵיִם מִנְּאֻק מִתִּיכֶם,⁹
בְּאַרְבַּע מִיתוֹת הַפִּיל מִתִּיכֶם,
חָרַב וְרָעַב וַחֲזִיהָ וְדָבָר* שַׁחַתְכֶם,¹⁰

(1) Leviticus 26:7. (2) Cf. Eichah 1:8. (3) Leviticus 26:8. (4) Isaiah 1:12. (5) Leviticus 26:9.

(6) Cf. Song of Songs 2:2. (7) Leviticus 26:10. (8) 26:11. (9) Cf. Job 24:12. (10) Cf. Ezekiel 14:21.

during the Second Temple era, they angrily broke through the *soreg* in thirteen places to register their indignation at being denied entrance. In subsequent years, the Hasmonean kings repaired these breaches (see *Middos* 2:3 with *Tos. Yom Tov; Shekalim* 6:8).— And [the enemy's soil] was enriched with the fat of her [slaughtered] infants. The heathen farmers fertilized their vineyards for seven years with the blood of the slaughtered Jews (*Gittin* 57a).

— My [Temple] platform. The Kohanim

would ascend a platform to bless the nation with the Priestly Blessing, and the Levite orchestra to accompany the daily Altar service.

— *When ... my priests were murdered*. This refers to the tragic events following immediately after the destruction of the First Temple. Nebuzaradan, the chief executioner for the Babylonian king, captured Seraiah the Kohen Gadol and his deputy Zefaniah, along with seventy other officials, and transported them to Babylonia. There he delivered them into the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar who executed them at Rivlah in the land of Hamath

And as [God] their protective shadow departed¹

[so did His pledge], 'And I shall walk in your midst.'²

כ-ל In but one moment all of your tents were totally destroyed by pillage,
and your taunters would use you as a curse.^{3*}

The blood of your infants was spilled into your bosom,⁴

because you abominated the utterance, 'I am HASHEM, your God.'⁵

ל-ב To their mothers they cried out, 'The food — where is it?'

But the Rock [God] said to His angels

[when they took up the children's cause], 'Turn away from Me!⁶

For I brought them into a fertile land⁷ where they found all delights,

but they despised the admonition, "If you will not give heed . . ."⁸

ו-י How can I admonish you,* [when because of your obstinacy]

they have trampled both your dignified elders and your cubs?⁹

They would say [to those who rebuked them]*

'We will flee on horseback!'^{*} So they [were caused to] flee

[but never returned].¹⁰

I am utterly exhausted from carrying¹¹ your sins,

for they are a burden [upon Me].

Therefore, I have disciplined you as I said,

'If you will abominate My decrees . . .'¹²

ט-י Your prophets led you astray* with deceit and vain visions.¹³

I sought to forgive you [but you refused to repent] so I cried out,

'How shall I [pardon you] for this?'¹⁴

I tried to persuade them [to repent],

but they answered Me with brazenness.

I was infuriated and declared, 'I will even do this to you . . .'¹⁵

ס-ח My tormentors clapped, gnashed (their teeth) and hissed¹⁶

[as they prepared] to decimate my faithful ones

from inside and out,¹⁷

because the sons of the wanton desecrated my hidden treasures.

To inflict harm and not help, He said, 'I will set My face . . .'¹⁸

פ-ז The wanton ones jeered at us, 'Before Whom do you pray?'

[You are] a nation heavy with iniquity;

He has abandoned you and is wearied [by your sins].

Therefore, wait no longer for sign and wonder.'

He is angered and has departed, saying,

'If despite all this [you refuse to obey].'¹⁹

According to others, the phrase means, *Whom can I bring to testify to you that their suffering equals yours?* (Zohar; Targum; Rashi), for צרת רבים חצי נחמיה, general suffering is half of assuagement, i.e., grieving and troubles are easier to bear when one knows that there are others in the same dire circumstances (Ibn Kaspi).

על סוס נוס — We will flee on horseback! When warned by the prophets that the only way to avert impending disaster is a combination of repentance and quiet confidence in God's salva-

tion, the nation proudly refused to pay heed. Instead they replied, 'We will flee on horseback!' They meant, 'We will ally ourselves with Egypt who will supply us with mighty steeds. Thus shall we escape the threat of annihilation. Then, when the enemy leaves our land, we will return home safe and sound!' For this, God caused them to flee, but did not allow them to return (Isaiah 30:15-16 with Rashi).

לעז — Led you astray [or, strayed]. Since this *kinna* follows an ש"ב"ש pattern (see above), a word beginning with ט (the letter corresponding

בָּקֶר צֶלֶם פִּי וְהִתְלַכְתִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם.²

בָּלוּ לְשׂוֹד כְּרָגַע אֶהְלִיכֶם,

וּבְכֶם גִּשְׁפָּעוּ מְהוֹלְלִיכֶם,³

לְחִיקְכֶם גִּשְׁפָּכוּ נַפְשׁוֹת עוֹלְלִיכֶם,⁴

בְּמֵאֶסְכֶם שִׁיחַ אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.⁵

לְאִמּוֹתֵם בְּלִכּוֹל אֲנָה שְׁעוּ,

וְצוֹר לְמִלְאָכָיו שֶׁחַ מְנִי שְׁעוּ,⁶

אֶרְץ הַכְּרָמַל' הַבְּאִתִּים וְשַׁעֲשַׁעוּ,

וְשָׂאוּ מוֹכִיחַ וְאִם לֹא תִשְׁמַעוּ.⁸

מָה אֶעֱיִדְךָ* יְשִׁישִׁיךָ עִם גּוֹרִיךָ* בּוֹסְסוּ,

אוֹמְרִים עַל סוֹס נְנוּס* עַל בֶּן נָסוּ,¹⁰

נִלְאִיתִי נִשׂוּא" עֲוֹנוֹתֵיכֶם כְּהוֹעֵקְסוּ,

וְאִיֶּסְרְכֶם כְּנִמְתִּי אִם בְּחֻקְתִּי תִמְאָסוּ.¹²

נְבִיאֶיךָ תַעֲוִ* תִּרְמִית שׂוּא חֲזוֹת,¹³

וְאֶדְרוֹשׁ לְסִלּוֹחַ וּפְצַתִּי אֵי לְזֹאת,¹⁴

פְּתִיתִים וּכְנַגְדִּי הִשִּׁיבוּ עֲזוֹת,

וְאֶנְפַּתִּי וְשִׁחַתִּי אֶף אֲנִי אֶעֱשֶׂה זֹאת.¹⁵

סָפְקוּ חֲרָקוּ שָׂרְקוּ מוֹנִי,¹⁶

מִבְּפָנִים וּמִבְּחוּץ לְהַצְמִית אֲמוֹנִי,¹⁷

כִּי בְנֵי יוֹדִים חָלְלוּ צְפוּנִי,

לְרַעַה וְלֹא לְטוֹבָה נָם וְנַתַּתִּי פָנִי.¹⁸

פָּצוּ יוֹדִים לְפָנֵי מִי תַחֲלָה,

עִם כְּבֹד עֵוֹן פִּקְדוֹ וַיִּלְאֶה,

לֹא תַחֲכוּ עוֹד לְמוֹפֶת וּפְלֵא,

אֲנִי וְנִסְעוּ וְנָם וְאִם עַד אֱלֹהִי.¹⁹

(1) Cf. Numbers 14:9. (2) Leviticus 26:12. (3) Cf. Psalms 102:9. (4) Cf. Eichah 2:12.

(5) Leviticus 26:13. (6) Cf. Isaiah 22:4; see Rashi there. (7) Cf. Jeremiah 2:7. (8) Leviticus 26:14.

(9) Cf. II Chronicles 36:16-17. (10) Cf. Isaiah 30:16. (11) I:14. (12) Cf. Leviticus 26:15.

(13) Cf. Eichah 2:14; Micah 3:5-7; Ezekiel 13:8-10. (14) Jeremiah 5:7. (15) Leviticus 26:16.

(16) Cf. Eichah 2:15. (17) Cf. I:20; Deuteronomy 32:25. (18) Leviticus 26:17. (19) 26:18.

to Psalms 12:9).
עוד — How can I admonish you . . .? The word אֶעֱיִדְךָ is derived from the root עוּד which can mean either warn, admonish, or testify. The translation here follows Midrash Eichah (2:13).
עוד — Would use you as a curse. If one of the enemy took an oath and wished to reinforce it, he would say, 'If I am not telling the truth may I be cursed in the worst possible way, in the manner which the conquered Jews suffer!' (Rashi

ע"ו He proceeded to raise the heads of the tempestuous ones,
and He made me drunk on my own blood in the waterless valley;
year after year He added anguish to [my] mourning,
since the moment He was angered and said,
'And I will shatter the pride [of your strength].'¹

צ"ה He cried out, 'Woe! Woe!'
even though He emptied His quiver [against me].
From here and from there He brought pursuers against me.
They mock me for the sake of a breadloaf
and cause the oppressor to gnash his teeth [at me].²
He drained my strength with the statement,
'And [your strength] will be used up in vain.'³

ק"ד Arise and pound [on the gates of heaven],
cry out, 'Do not be silent!'⁴
Set your voice [in prayer] as the [muffled sound of]
necromancy [arising] from the earth,⁵ then remain still.
He silenced me by making me drink bitter waters.
He darkened my path, when He stated,
'But if you will go against Me.'⁶

ר"ג Behold, the lot You had once desired
has been made into rubble heaps,⁷
and I have come to resemble the [wandering] desert bird.
They nickname me 'Exile,' and humiliate me as 'Displaced,'⁸
so I have heard [the fulfillment of],
'And I will send forth wild beasts against you.'⁹

ש"ב They lie in a swoon like a wild ox in a snare with none to release it.¹⁰
[They are] steeped in rebuke, yet no healing has emerged.
Lo, [these] many years has He completely crushed me.
We are pained by the admonition, 'And if despite this ...'¹¹

ת"א Designate a day of doom for the red one [Edom],
as You did [when you afflicted me],
to eradicate him and to slash him seven times more than my pain.
Confound my tormentors when the cry goes forth from my palace,
as I was shocked by the rebuke, 'And I will also go [against you]'¹²
I have also been trapped* in the snare of drunkenness.
[Only after my] joy was confounded
[by the Temple's destruction] did [His] anger subside.
I will sink down to the earth and murmur in my throat,
'O how the Rose of Sharon¹³ sits!'

(1) Leviticus 26:19. (2) Cf. Psalms 35:16. (3) Leviticus 26:20. (4) Cf. Psalms 83:2.

(5) Cf. Isaiah 29:4. (6) Leviticus 26:21. (7) Cf. Psalms 79:1. (8) Cf. Isaiah 49:21.

(9) Leviticus 26:22. (10) Cf. Isaiah 51:20. (11) Leviticus 26:23. (12) 26:24. (13) Song of Songs 2:1.

passage (ibid. 13:9-10). Nevertheless, we have retained the word תעו because in similar passages (e.g., *Michah* 3:5-7) the root תעה is used in Scriptures, and because that is how it appears in virtually all editions.

אף אני לכוד — I have also been trapped. Many a *kinnah* of the series attributed to R' Elazar HaKalir ends with a stanza that links it with the following *kinnah*, i.e., the closing word or stich of one is identical with the opening word or stich of

עשה ויגרם קדקד בני שאון,
נדמי שפירני בגיא צמאון,
ובכל שנה ושנה הוסיף יגון על און,
מעט פעס ונם ושבירתי את גאון!¹

צעק הוי הוי ואשפתו הריק,
מפה ומפה הביא עלי מעריק,
ובלעגי מעוג שני צר ההריק,²
וכלה כחי בנאם ותם לריק.³

קומי דפקי שועי אל דמי,⁴
ותני כאוב מארץ קולך נדמי,
מי רוש השקני והדמי,
וחשך הלוכי בנאם ואם תלכו עמו.⁵

ראה גורל אנית הושם לרועים לעינת,⁷
ולקאת מדבר הייתי דמוית,
גולה פנוית וסורה גנוית,⁸
בשמעי והשלחתי בכם את חיות.⁹

שכבו בעלוף כתוא מכמר ואין דולה,¹⁰
המלאים גער ואין מרפא עולה,
הרי כמה שנים הקמני להתפלה,
אנושים בוכוח ואם באלה.¹¹

תקרא איד עוללת על אדמוני,
לסחפו ולשספו שבעתים באוני,
תהום צרי בצאת קול מארמוני,
בנהממתי בריב והלכתי אף אני.¹²

אף אני לכוד* ביוקש שכרון,
ערכה שמחה והשבית חרון,
לארץ אשב ואהנה בגרון,
איכה ישבה חבצלת השרון.¹³

to 1 in *יש* ב"ש is expected here. Perhaps the proper reading here is *תעו*, caused to err or erred, which is homophonous with *תעו* and similar in meaning. Moreover, the only appearance of the

root *תעה* in Scriptures (*Ezekiel* 13:10) speaks of the 'prophets' whose vain visions lulled the nation into a false sense of security. Indeed, the wording of the *kinnah* seems to be based on that

10.

- ⌘ *O how the Rose of Sharon^{1*} sits* [alone]
and joy has been silenced from the mouths
of those who carried the Ark;*
And the Kohanim, the sons of Aaron
were removed from their watches,
When the Temple was given over to the rebels of Maron.**
- ב *The [people endowed with the] Five Books* wept and wept,
when the priest and prophet [Zechariah] was slain on Yom Kippur,
when in vengeance for his blood,
blossoming children were butchered like goats,
And the Kohanim of Sepphoris* wandered like birds.*
- ג *The bejewelled bride was exiled from her land
because of the iniquity of the tithes and the Sabbatical year.
She was condemned to suffer four types of affliction,*
And the watch of Mifshatah was stripped of her ornaments.*
- ד *The roads to the Sanctuary were silenced
when its wall was breached;
and the [bells on the High Priest's] tunic [were silenced]
when its threads were ripped apart.
[The Temple] was pulled down and lowered from its Mount,
And the Kohen from Aysah-Lo was uprooted from his planting.*

(1) Song of Songs 2:1.

Ark. According to Rambam (*Sefer HaMitzvos, asah* 34 and *shoresh* 3), the Kohanim were the bearers of the Ark throughout the generations. Only during the early years in the Wilderness, when there were very few Kohanim, did the Leviim carry the Ark. Rambam (*ibid.*) disagrees and states that the Leviim were charged with carrying the Ark whenever this would become necessary throughout the generations. Most commentators to *kinno*s follow Rambam's view. Thus, *רון* refers to the joyous song the Levite bearers of the Ark sang on the platform in the Temple courtyard. Indeed, the Talmud relates that the Levite choir was interrupted in mid-verse when the enemy conquered the *Beis HaMikdash* (*Taanis* 29a). However, the translation of *רון* as joy [see *Psalms* 30:6 where *רנן*, synonymous with *רון*, is used as the opposite of *בכי*, weeping], rather than joyous song, allows the *kinnah* to be understood even according to Rambam's view that the Kohanim bore the Ark.

רון במקרהי מרון — *The rebels of Maron.* The town of Maron was situated on a mountain and only could be reached by a narrow road (see *Rosh Hashanah* 18a and *Eruvin* 22b). It was the home of the first *mishmar*, *Jehoiarib*, *Jehoiarib*. The Talmud states that it was during this *mishmar*'s tour of duty that Jerusalem was captured (*Taanis* 29a), and expounds on the name *Jehoiarib*: *יהוה הריב עם בני על שקרו וסרבו בו* *God contended*

with His children because they were rebellious and defiant against Him (Yerushalmi Taanis 4:5).

רון — *The [people endowed with the] Five Books.* This refers either to Israel, the Torah nation (as indicated by the interpolation), or to the Torah itself which metaphorically wept bitterly when Zechariah was assassinated (see *kinnah* 34).

בנהי צפורים — *The Kohanim of Sepphoris.* The city of *קיסרון*, *Kitron* (see *Judges* 1:30), was also called *צפורים* or *צפורי*, *Sepphoris*, because it sat on a mountaintop like a high-soaring bird (*Megillah* 6a). It was the home town of the second watch, *Tedaiah*, *Tedaiah*, whose name the Talmud explains as *ידע ייה*, *God knew, what evil was in the depths of their hearts and so He exiled them* *לצפורים*, *to Sepphoris*, or, in a variant reading, *לצפורים*, *like birds* (*Yerushalmi Taanis* 4:5). The *paytan* merges both readings.

שש — *Four types of affliction:* sword, starvation, wild beast and plague (see *Ezekiel* 14:21; see also *kinnah* 9).

איה — *Aysah-Lo.* This was the city of the fourth watch, *Seorim*, *Seorim*. Perhaps it is identical with *צת*, *Aiath*, the first city taken by Sennacherib when he moved against Jerusalem (*Isaiah* 10:28 with *Rashi*). The *Viina Gaon* identifies that place with *Gilgal*.

איכה ישבה* חבצלת השרון,¹
ודמם רון מפי נושאי ארון,
ונעו ממשמרותם כהנים בני אהרן,
בנמסר הבית במסרבי מרון.*
בכה תבכה מחמשת ספרים,
בנהרג בהן ונביא ביום הכפורים,
ועל דמו נשחטו פרחים בצפורים,
ונרו בצפורים, כהני צפורים.*
גלתה מארצה כלה מקשטה,
בעון מעשרות ושמטה,
ובארבעת שפטים* השפטה,
ומעריה הפשטה, משמרת מפשטה.
דרכי היכל שממו כנפרץ בתלו,
והמעיל כנקרע פתילו,
הורד והשפל מתלו,
ונע משתילו, בהן עיתה לו.*

the next. Such a linking stanza is evident between *kinno*s 7-8, 8-9, 11-12 and 19-20, and such is the nature of this stanza. However, many early editions do not contain this stanza, which leads to the contention that it is not the work of R' Elazar, but was inserted by some later *paytan* in order to connect this and the following *kinnah*. Indeed, *Maharil* argues that *kinnah* 15 was originally juxtaposed with this *kinnah* and he would recite that *kinnah* at this point (see commentary there for his reasoning). If so, this stanza could not have been part of the original *kinnah*, as it would be entirely out of place.

איכה ישבה חבצלת השרון — *O how the Rose of Sharon sits.* The Talmud (*Taanis* 26a-27a) teaches that the early prophets, David and Samuel, established twenty-four *משמרות*, *mishmarot*, *priestly watches*, to scrupulously perform the Temple services. Each *mishmar* (watch) served for one week, on a rotation basis. The names of the watches in the First Temple are enumerated in *Chronicles*, chapter 24. This *kinnah* describes the watches of the Second Temple which were then known under different names. According to many commentators, these new names were the names of each *mishmar*'s home city. This is the

approach followed in the translation and commentary. Some commentators explain the new names as pejoratives and expound on the particular offense by which each *mishmar* earned its nickname. The commentary includes only those pejorative interpretations found in the Talmud.

In composing this *kinnah*, R' Elazar HaKalir used the opening word or phrase of the respective verses in the first chapter of *Eichah* to begin each stanza. Thus, the stanzas contain an alphabetical acrostic. The name of the corresponding *mishmar* appears in the last line. The relevant words appear in bold type.

חבצלת השרון — *The Rose of Sharon.* The *Beis HaMikdash* was affectionately called *חבצלת השרון*, *Rose*. The Midrash teaches that *חבצלת השרון*, *sheltered in the shade*, i.e., in good times God loved Israel and their Temple so much that he hovered over them and provided them with the most intense protection under the shade of His Divine Presence, the *Shechinah* (*Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 2).

ודמם רון מפי נושאי ארון — *And joy has been silenced from the mouths of those who carried the*

- ה They ridiculed those who fought in the battle [for Torah observance],¹ when they ignored [the verse],
 'Shall you not break bread with the hungry?'²
 Thus, they hungered and thirsted for water and for bread,
 when the offering of the two loaves
 was discontinued, from **Bethlehem**.^{*}
- ו Beauty has left the nation once sheltered by the silver[like Torah],³ in its place ashes cover her head.
 The candles have been extinguished
 and the Menorah has been bent [to the ground].
 When they willfully sinned with [their failure
 to give the poor] portions of bread,
 the [fortress] of **Yodpath**⁴ was captured.
- ז Remember the moment when they replied,
 'We shall do and we shall listen!'⁵
 But now [when they are admonished] they do not confirm [their sins].
 They were sated and filled with wormwood and bitter gall;⁶
 The Kohanim of **Aylevu** were shunned and shamed.
- ח She sinned greatly when she addressed the idol
 and said, 'This is God!'
 She mocked and ridiculed God's seers,
 therefore He took revenge through those who infuriated God,
 and [Kohanim from] **Kfar Uziel** had to depart from God's dwelling.
- ט Her contamination has defiled the inhabited world,
 and the Captain of the ship has ascended [to his heavenly dwelling].
 Clouds are on His feet like dust on [the bare feet of the] mourner,
 and there is none among the Kohanim of **Arbel**
 who clads himself in the [priestly] vestments.
- י The enemy spread out his hand against the [Divine] dwelling,
 for I was culpable to extinction like the generation of the Flood.
 The enemy subjected God's throne to mutilation and degradation,
 And the Kohanim of **Cabul**^{7*}
 went out [into exile] chained in leg irons.
- יא Her entire nation chanted a lamentation,
 because they angered the zealous God;
 He took revenge against them through a degenerate nation,
 And the watch of **Elkanah** wandered [into exile] from its nest.

(1) Cf. Proverbs 9:5; Chagigah 14a. (2) Isaiah 58:7. (3) Cf. Psalms 68:14 with Rashi. (4) Some editions read יורקת, Yurfath. (5) Exodus 24:7. (6) Cf. Eichah 3:15. (7) See Joshua 19:27 and I Kings 9:13.

be blessed. But since these were stopped, blessing no longer lies in the bread. Nonetheless, in the future they will be restored (Yalkut Shimoni II:565).

יודפת — Yodpath. A Galilean fortress, mentioned in Arachin (32a) as a city that was walled from the time Joshua entered the land.

קבול — Cabul. In return for supplying many of the materials for the *Beis HaMikdash* and Solomon's Palace, King Hiram of Tyre was presented with twenty cities in the land of Cabul, but he was not satisfied (I Kings 9:10-13). The Talmud explains that the inhabitants of this area of the Galilee were so wealthy that they would attire themselves in silver and gold. If so,

היו אויבים מלעיבים בלוחמי לחם,
 כבטלו הלא פרוס לרעב לחם,²
 והרעבו והצמאו מפנים ומלחם,
 כבטלו שתי הלחם, מבית לחם.^{*}
 ניצא הדר אום בכסף נחפת,³
 ותמורו אפר על ראשה חפת,
 ונרות נכבו ומנורה נכפת,
 כפשעו בלחם ופת, ולכדה יודפת.⁴
 זכרה זמן אשר נעשה ונשמע⁵ השיבו,
 ועתה ענות אמן לא אבו,
 לענה ררוש⁶ שבעו ורוו,
 והקצו והלעבו, כהני עילבו.
 חטא חטאה ואמרה לאליל זה אל,
 והלעיגה ותעתעה בחווי אל,
 עבור פן הקנאה במרגיזי אל,
 ניצא ממעון אל, כפר עזיאל.
 טמאתה החניפה תבל,
 ונעלה רב החובל,
 וענו אבק רגליו כאבל,
 ואין מתפרבל, בכהני ארבל.
 ידו פרש צר בבית זבול,
 כי כליה חיבתי כדור המפול,
 כסאו השית לחבול ונבול,
 ניצא בכבל כבול, כהן כבול.⁷
 כל עמה קוננו קינה,
 כי הכעיסו לאל קנא,
 כגוי נבל אותם קנא,
 ונדדה מקנה, משמרת אלקנה.

מלכיה — Bethlehem. The fifth watch, *Malciyah*, was headquartered in Bethlehem. Additionally, בית לחם, literally, *House of Bread*, alludes to the *Beis HaMikdash*. For as the

Midrash teaches, as long as the Show Bread was placed on the *שולחן*, *Table*, each Sabbath, and the Two Loaves were brought every Shavuot in the Temple, the nation's flour and bread would

- ל Not heavenward did [their] eye peer;
[Their external piety was like] silverplate overlaid on earthenware.
And as [God's] admonition intensified, [their strength] waned.
The Kohanim of **Safed** were knocked down and captured.
- מ From on high He sounded [the cry],
'I am exhausted from carrying [the burden of your sins].'¹
Then He afflicted me with blindness and madness.
He visited upon me the iniquity
of [the massacre] of Nob and Gibeon,²
and the watch from **Beis Ma'on** departed from the Temple.
- א The burden of my iniquities has accumulated and causes me pain.
When I was forced to sit like a mourning daughter,
without [my] Father,
and I was silenced from playing the organ and flute,
the watch of **Jeshebeab*** raised a lament for me.
- ב He has trampled all of my heroes, the teachers of God's Law,
And the [merit of Abraham's] binding [Isaac as an offering]
on Mount Moriah was not recalled on my behalf;
Because of the enormity of my rebellion and insurrection,
the watch of **Maadiah**³ has been put on display, naked and bare.⁴
- ג On my back the plowers plowed, they lengthened the furrow,⁵
they bared sword and spear against me;⁶
so I have increased fasts and afflictions;
and the [watch of] **Yevanis** departed from
the perfectly formed design [of the Temple].⁷
- ד She [Israel] spread [her hands in prayer],
but no [helping hand] was sent.
Because she did not believe [in God's prophets]
who arose early and were sent [to admonish her].⁸
The [sacrificial service's] Covenant of Salt was discontinued,⁹
and the well-blended oil of anointment is no longer
on the head [of the Kohen Gadol] from **Mamlah**.
- ה It is **HASHEM** Who is righteous for His utterance was disobeyed.¹⁰
[Therefore the enemy cried,] 'Destroy! Destroy!
Bare it to its very foundation!' ¹¹
Instead of singing, 'God is my might and my praise,'¹²
laments were engraved for her,
and the watch of **Nitzrath** was scattered to the ends of the earth.

why was Hiram displeased? Because such wealthy people would not serve him properly (*Shabbos* 54a). According to the Talmud, Cabul was destroyed because there was strife among its citizens (*Yerushalmi Taanis* 4:5).

יִשְׁבָּאב — *Jeshebeab*. Although the *paytan* does not refer to any of the other watches by their Scriptural names as recorded in *I Chronicles* (24:7-18), in this case he makes an exception.

According to those who interpret the names used by the *paytan* as geographical locations (see the opening comment to this *kinnah*), it is not unreasonable to assume that this *mishmar* lived in a town that bore its name. Following the opinion that these names are allusions to the sins of the Kohanim (see *ibid.*), *Beis Levi* surmises that this *mishmar* was righteous in all its deeds. Thus, it was not given a pejorative nickname.

לֹא לְמָרוֹם עֵינַי צָפַת,
וְכֶסֶף עַל חֶרֶשׁ חִפַּת,
וּבְחִזּוֹק מוֹסֵר הִרְפַּת,
וְנִהְרַס וְנִלְפַת, כִּהֵן צָפַת.
מִמָּרוֹם הַשָּׁמַיִם נִלְאַתִּי טְעוּנִי,
וְהִכְנִי בְּעִוְרוֹן וּבְשִׁגְעוֹן,
וּפָקֵד עָלַי עוֹן נוֹב וְגִבְעוֹן,¹
וְנָעָה מִמַּעוֹן, מִשְׁמֶרֶת בַּיִת כִּהֵן מַעוֹן.
נִשְׁקֵד עוֹל עוֹן וְנִכְאָב,
כְּהוֹשְׁבֵתִי אֲנוּנָה מִכְּלֵי אָב,
וְנִמְנַעְתִּי מִלְּצַפְצֵף בְּמַנִּים וְעִגָב,
וְנִשְׁאַה עָלַי קִינָה, מִשְׁמֶרֶת יִשְׁבָּאב.*
סֵלָה אֲפִירִי מוֹרֵי הוֹרְיָה,
וְלֹא נִזְכֵּר לִי עֲקֶרֶת מוֹרְיָה,
וּמֵרֵב מְרָד וּמְרָיָה,
הוֹצֵגָה עָרוֹם וְעָרְיָה,³ מִשְׁמֶרֶת מַעֲדִיָּה.³
עַל גְּבִי חֶרְשׁוֹ חוֹרְשִׁים וְהֶאֱרִיכוּ מַעֲנִית,⁵
וְהִרְקִיּוּ עָלַי חֶרֶב וְחַנִּית,⁶
וְהִרְבִּיתִי צוּמוֹת וְתַעֲנִית,
וּמִצּוֹרֵת תִּכְנִית,⁷ יִצְאָה יוֹנִית.
פִּרְשָׁה וְאִין יָד שׁוֹלֵחַ,
כִּי לֹא הֶאֱמִינָה בְּהַשְׁכֵּם וְשָׁלוֹת,⁸
וְהִשְׁבֵּתָה בְּרִית מְלַח,⁹
וְאִין שָׁמֹן מִמְּלַח, בְּרֹאשׁ מִמְּלַח.
צָדִיק הוּא יִהוּהוּ כִּי פִּיהוּ מֵרֵת,¹⁰
וְעָרוּ עָרוּ עַד הַיְסוּד בְּהִי הוֹעֲרֵת,
וְתַמּוֹר עָזִי וְחִמְרֵת,¹²
קִינִים עָלֶיךָ נִחְרַת, וּבְקִצְנֵי אֶרֶץ נִזְרַת נִצְרַת.

(1) Cf. *Isaiah* 1:14. (2) See *I Samuel* 22:19. (3) Some editions read מְעָרְיָה, *Maariah*. (4) Cf. *Hosea* 2:5. (5) Cf. *Psalms* 129:3. (6) Cf. *Ezekiel* 28:7. (7) 43:11. (8) Cf. *Jeremiah* 25:4; 29:19. (9) Cf. *Leviticus* 2:13. (10) Cf. *Eichah* 1:18. (11) Cf. *Psalms* 137:7. (12) *Exodus* 15:2.

- ק I called out to my Rock [of salvation], but my voice was not pleasing.
I lamented in the Arabian forest,
for the Western Lamp [which burnt wondrously
in the Temple] was extinguished,
and the fragrance [of the incense offered in the Temple
by the watch] from **Achalah Arav** was not pleasing.
- ר Behold, I am storm tossed like a [floundering] ship,
moaning and mourning;¹
my congregation resembles a flock of sheep prepared for slaughter,²
[the watch from] **Migdal Nuniyah** was made
to wander from **Chanuyah** [in Jerusalem].
- ש [When] they heard that I went forth into captivity,
the Law captured from heaven^{3*} was burnt.
I was placed in abandonment and chaos,
and [the watch] from **Hoviah** was exiled from [the Temple]
where God's concealed Presence was once hidden.
- ז They heard that I was befouled by the stench [of my sins],
and that [God] had sealed [the gates of prayer] to my supplication,
and bestowed upon me neither compassion nor grace.
So [the watch] from **Kfar Yohanah** was made to wander
from [Jerusalem,] the City of [David's] encampment.⁴
- ח May evil befall those who cut my limbs to pieces,
and desolated my gateways;⁵
[God] has now withdrawn His right hand,⁶
and for the iniquity of idols, [the watch from]
Ginthon-tzalmin was made to wander.
- ט O come and spread soothing balm [on my wounds]
and illuminate my darkness,
and let our [dry] bones blossom forth as verdure.⁷
Accept graciously the fragrance of our pleasing offerings
as in days of yore;
and offer [the] final [watch] from **Hamath-Ariach**
hospitality at your Altar-table.

(And Jeremiah lamented over Josiah.)*

(1) *Eichah* 2:5. (2) Cf. *Jeremiah* 12:3. (3) Cf. *Psalms* 68:19. (4) Cf. *Isaiah* 29:1.
(5) Cf. *Eichah* 1:4. (6) Cf. 2:3. (7) Cf. *Isaiah* 66:14.

God then summoned Moses to counter the arguments of the angels. Moses reasoned with them. 'Angels do not need the Torah. You have no parents to honor, no possibility of conforming to the requirements of *kashrus*, and no Egyptian bondage to remember.'

The holy angels admitted the truth of Moses' words and consented to allow the Torah out of the heavenly domain, for they realized that its precepts apply only to man and to his world (*Shabbos* 88b).

Since the angels sought to keep the Torah captive in the heavens until Moses captured it for mankind by his convincing arguments, the *paytan* describes the Torah as 'captured from heaven.'

ויקראו... יאשיהו — *And Jeremiah lamented over Josiah*. Although this verse is printed at the end of this *kinnah* in many editions, the consensus of the commentators considers it a mistake. It is really the opening verse of the next *kinnah*, and that is how it appears in most early editions.

קראתי לצורי וקולי לא ערב,
וקוננתי ביער בערב,
וכבה נר הדולק במערב,
וריחו לא ערב, מאכלה ערב.
ראה פי הסערתי באגיה,
בתאגיה ואגיה,¹
וקהלי בצאן לטבח; מנויה,
ונצה מחנויה, מגדל נוניה.
שמעו פי נזהמתי בצחנה,
ונשרפה דת מרום שבויה,²
והוישתי לשמה וערבוביה,
ומהסתר חבויה, נדה בית חוביה.
שמעו פי נזהמתי בצחנה,
וסתם מני תחנה,
ולא נתן לי רחמים ורחינה,
ומקרית חנה,³ נצה כפר יוחנה.
תבא רעת שמוני הדמין,
ושתו שערי שוממין,⁴
והשיב אחר ימין,⁵
ובעון פסילים נצה גנתון צלמין.
תבא תמריח, וחסכי פזריח,
וכדשא עצמותינו תפריח,⁶
וריח ניהוחינו כקדם תריח,
ומשלחנה תאריח, שולי חמת אריח.

(ויקראו ירמיהו על יאשיהו.)*

This view is borne out by the Talmud's statement (*Succah* 56b) that Bilgah, the *mishmar* following *Jeshebeab*, would arrive late (or not at all) when it was their week to serve in the Temple. At those times, the *Kohanim* of *Jeshebeab* would dutifully remain at their posts. For this, Bilgah's watch was punished (see *ibid.*) and *Jeshebeab* was rewarded.

ות מרום שבויה — *The Law captured from heaven*. During the forty-day period that Moses was atop

Mount Sinai, he ascended to heaven to receive the Torah to bring it down to Israel. When the ministering angels complained to God that a mortal did not belong among them, He replied, 'He has ascended to take the Torah.'

The angels argued, 'This precious treasure, which was hidden away for the equivalent of 974 generations before the world was created, should not be given to mortal man.'

17.

- א If [it could happen that]* women ate the fruit of their own [womb], the babes of their care —¹ *alas unto me!*
- ב If [it could happen that] compassionate women cooked [their own] children² whom they had so carefully measured handbreadth by handbreadth* — *alas unto me!*
- ג If [it could happen that] the locks of their hair were torn from their heads when they were tied [by their hair] to fleet horses* — *alas unto me!*
- ד If [it could happen that] the tongue of the nursing babe would adhere to its palate⁴ through unmitigated thirst — *alas unto me!*
- ה If [it could happen that] one [mother] cried out to another, 'Come, let us cook our screeching children!' — *alas unto me!*
- ו If [it could happen that after devouring one of their babies,] the two met [and the mother of the eaten child said], 'Give your son!' But he was already cut to pieces and hidden away [for his mother to enjoy alone] —⁵ *alas unto me!*
- ז If [it could happen that] fathers' flesh was waiting for [their] sons* [to eat] in caves and ditches — *alas unto me!*
- ח If [it could happen that] daughters were condemned to die in their mother's bosom, swollen [with hunger] —⁶ *alas unto me!*
- ט If [it could happen that] the spirits of infants soared [heavenward] from their swollen corpses [which were lying] in the city's streets —⁷ *alas unto me!*
- י If [it could happen that] women were weighed down by miscarriage of womb and dryness of breast,⁸ and that mother [lamented] over dying sons — *alas unto me!*
- יא If [it could happen that] eight hundred [young Kohanim who bore decorative gold] shields were trapped; in Arabia [they fell to] foul decay — *alas unto me!*

agreed to their plan, for מִקָּץ is the signet of God (Yoma 69b; Sanhedrin 63a).

The significance of these letters is that they come at the beginning, middle and end of the *aleph-beis*. Thus they allude to the fact that God is the First, the Last and has no equal or partner (Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 1:1). Accordingly, with this scheme, as with the alphabetical arrangement, the *paytan* intimates that the sins of the generation ran the gamut from א to ת.

Handbreadth by handbreadth. The Talmud relates that when Doeg ben Yosef died, his widow was left with a young son. Each year, she would measure his growth by handbreadths and donate an equivalent amount of gold coins to the Temple treasury in honor of her son. But when the siege intensified against Jerusalem, she was caught in the throes of starvation until she slaughtered and ate her precious son (Yoma 38b).

When they were tied — *ותקשרנה לטוטים פורחים*

[by their hair] to fleet horses. The Midrash recounts how, after the Destruction, Miriam bas Baisos, wife of the *Kohen Gadol* Yehoshua ben Gamla, was tied by her hair to the tails of Arabian steeds and was dragged from Jerusalem to Lud (Midrash Eichah 1:47).

Fathers' flesh . . . for [their] sons. When the siege was at its peak and the hunger most intense, one man of a group went out to find a corpse they could scavenge. When he chanced upon his own father's body, he buried it in a shallow grave and made a sign to enable him to recognize the spot. Then he returned empty-handed to his comrades. They sent out a second man to seek food. He returned with a corpse which they proceeded to eat. Later the first scout asked, 'I was unable to find anything to eat. Where did you find this body?' The second described how he had exhumed it from a freshly dug grave which was marked in such and such a manner. And the first screamed, 'Woe is me! For

- אם* תאכלנה נשים פרִים עולִלי טפוחים,¹
אם תבִשְׁלֶנָה נשים רחֲמַנְיֹת ילָדִים²
הַמְדוּדִים טַפְחִים טַפְחִים*³
אם תגִזְנֶנָה פֶּאת רֵאשִׁם וְתִקְשְׁרֶנָה לְטוֹסִים פוֹרְחִים,⁴
אם תִּדְבֵּק לְשׁוֹן יוֹנֵק לְחִידָה⁵ בְּצַמְאוֹן צְחִיחִים,
אם תְּהוֹמִינֶה זֶה לְעַמַּת זֶה
בּוֹאֵי וּנְבַשְׁלֵם אֶת בְּנֵינוּ צוֹרְחִים,
אם תִּזְעַדְנָה זֶה לְזֶה
תְּנִי בְּנֶךָ וְהוּא חֲבוּי מִנְתַּח נְתָחִים,⁶
אם תִּזְמִינֶה בְּשֵׁר אַבּוֹת לְבָנִים* בְּמַעֲרוֹת וְשִׁיחִים,
אם תְּחִיבְנָה בְּנוֹת אֶל חֵיק אִמּוֹתָם נְתַפְחִים,⁷
אם תִּטְסֶנָה רוּחוֹת עוֹלָלִים
בְּרַחוּבוֹת קִרְיָה תְּפוּחִים,⁸
אם תִּיִקְרְנָה בְּשִׁבּוֹל רַחֵם וְצִמוּק שְׁדָיִם,⁹
וְאִם עַל בָּנִים שְׁדָיִם,
אם תִּבְשְׁלֶנָה שְׁמוֹנֶה מֵאוֹת מְגַנִּים בְּעָרֵב אֱלוּחִים,

(1) Eichah 2:20. (2) Job 10:15. (3) Cf. Eichah 4:10. (4) Cf. 4:4; Psalms 137:6. (5) See II Kings 6:28-29. (6) Cf. Eichah 2:12. (7) Cf. 2:11. (8) Cf. Hosea 9:14.

אם — If it could happen that. This *kinnah* describes in horrible detail how the scope of the Destruction was not merely confined to material objects. Rather, this event ripped out the very moral fiber of the people and utterly distorted their essential personality traits. The Talmud teaches that the Jewish nation is identified by three basic qualities, they are *בְּיַשְׁנִים, בְּיַשְׁנִים, בְּיַשְׁנִים*, *compassionate, modest, and performers of kindness* (Yevamos 79a). The intense suffering of the Destruction crazed the Jewish People and stripped them of the most elementary, normal human feelings and emotions, to the point where mothers relished the opportunity to cook the flesh of their own babes in order to still their hunger, and children were not revolted to consume the remains of their dead parents.

Concurrently, the heathen conquerors, already barbaric, were roused to an unprecedented level of cruelty and depravity and perpetrated every form of unspeakable atrocity against their Jewish victims.

In the closing stanza of this *kinnah*, the author, R' Elazar HaKalir, reveals the true reason for this atmosphere of utter inhumanity. It all stemmed from the astonishing crime which the Jewish

nation committed as a whole. Two hundred and fifty years before the destruction of the Temple, in the reign of King Joash, the prophet and priest Zechariah ben Jehoiada admonished the nation in the Temple courtyard on Yom Kippur. So perverted were the people that instead of heeding the rebuke of their spiritual leader, they cold-bloodedly stoned and murdered their holiest leader, on the holiest day of the year, in the holiest location on earth. It was this crime which totally corrupted the Jewish people and distorted their nature and for this God exacted terrible vengeance at the time of the Temple's Destruction.

Each line of the *kinnah* begins with *אם*, if, followed by the third person feminine prefix. The second letters of the second words of each line form the *aleph-beis*. The letters א ט נ א ט spell the word *אמת*, truth or it is true. Perhaps this is an allusion to that which the *paytan* writes in the closing stanza, namely, that God was in full accord with the punishments described in the first twenty-two verses of the *kinnah*. Similarly, we find that when the Sages wished to eradicate the overpowering *yetzer hara* of idolatry from Israel, a note fell from heaven on which was written *מִקָּץ, it is true*. This proved that God

- ב If [it could happen that] their breath was set on fire with a variety of salty foods and [they died while trying to drink from] wineskins [deviously] inflated with [hot, stale] air* —
alas unto me!
- מ If [it could happen that] they were decimated from one thousand to one hundred, from one hundred to ten, until but one [remained]¹ — a source of terrible sorrow —
alas unto me!
- ז If [it could happen that] eighty thousand fledgling priests fled to the sheltering Sanctuary —
alas unto me!
- ח If [it could happen that] all those souls were burned there like dry thorn cuttings —
alas unto me!
- ט If [it could happen that] eighty thousand anointed priests were beheaded over the innocent blood [of Zechariah] — ²
alas unto me!
- י If [it could happen that] the souls [of the starving defenders] were swollen and stricken by the [tantalizing] aroma of the fruits of the field [that they could not attain] — ³
alas unto me!
- יא If [it could happen that] heaped on one stone were nine kab-measures of children's brains —
alas unto me!
- יב If [it could happen that] three hundred suckling babes were hung [to die], stretched out on a single branch —
alas unto me!
- יג If [it could happen that] delicate, pampered women⁴ were seen in iron chains, under the hand of the chief butcher —
alas unto me!
- יד If [it could happen that] the daughters of distinguished royalty took their rest on the open roadsides — ^{5*}
alas unto me!
- טו If [it could happen that] young maidens and young men fainted from the dehydrating thirst —
alas unto me!
- But the Holy Spirit raged back at them:
'Woe unto all my wicked neighbors!
Those [tragedies] which befell them, they publicize,
but that [evil] which they perpetrated, they do not publicize.
If [it happened that] women ate the fruit of their own [womb],
they let it be heard,
but if [it happened that] they murdered a Prophet-Priest
in God's Sanctuary,
they did not let that be heard!'

in the cities they passed on their way to Babylon, but had to sleep out in the open, exposed to the elements. Some interpret that these women were publicly violated when they were made to lie on the roadsides.

Various other interpretations of this phrase are possible: The noble daughters were forced to work as kitchen slaves and had to sleep among

the racks of pots (see *Ibn Ezra to Psalms 68:14*); they were forced to till the soil and sleep between the furrows (see *Rashbam to Genesis 49:14*); they were forced to carry heavy double burdens and collapsed under their weight (see *Sforno ibid.*). None of these views are mutually exclusive, for all of these atrocities may have been perpetrated against the captives.

- אם תִּלְהַטְנָה רוּחָם בְּמִינֵי מְלֻחִים וְנוֹרוֹת נְפוּחִים,* אֶלְלִי לִי.
אם תִּמְעַטְנָה מֵאֶלֶף מֵאָה
וּמִמֵּאָה עֶשְׂרֵה עַד אֶחָד לְמִפְחִים,
אֶלְלִי לִי.
אם תְּנַסְנָה לְמִסְפָּה הַיְכָל שְׁמוּנִים אֶלֶף כְּהֲנִים פְּרָחִים,
אֶלְלִי לִי.
אם תִּשְׁרַפְנָה שָׁם כָּל אוֹתָם הַנְּפָשׁוֹת
בְּקוֹצִים פְּסוּחִים,
אם תִּעַרְפְּנָה עַל דָּם נָקִי
שְׁמוּנִים אֶלֶף כְּהֲנִים מְשׁוּחִים,²
אֶלְלִי לִי.
אם תִּפְחָנָה נְפָשׁוֹת מְדַקְרִים מְרִיחַ תְּנוּבוֹת שִׁיחִים,³
אֶלְלִי לִי.
אם תִּצְרְפְּנָה עַל אֶבֶן אֶחָת
תִּשְׁעָה קַבִּין מוֹחֵי יְלָדִים מְנַחִים,
אם תּוֹקַעְנָה שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת יוֹנָקִים
עַל שׂוֹכָה אֶחָת מִתּוֹחִים,
אם תִּרְאִינָה רְכוֹת וְעַנְגוֹת⁴ כְּבוֹלוֹת
עַל יַד רַב טַבָּחִים,
אם תִּשְׁכַּבְנָה בֵּין שְׁפָתַי* בְּנוֹת נְרִיבִים מְשַׁבְּחִים,
אֶלְלִי לִי.
אם תִּתְעַלְפְּנָה הִבְתּוֹלוֹת וְהַבְּחוּרִים
בְּצַמָּאוֹן צְחִיחִים,
וְרוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְמוֹלֵם מְרַעִים,
הוּי עַל כָּל שְׁכֵנֵי הָרַעִים,
מֵה שֶׁהִקְרָאָם מוֹדִיעִים,
וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ לֹא מוֹדִיעִים,
אם תִּאֲכַלְנָה נְשִׁים פְּרִים מְשִׁמִּיעִים,
וְאֵם יִהְרַג בְּמִקְדָּשׁ יְהוָה כֹּהֵן וְנָבִיא לֹא מְשִׁמִּיעִים.

(1) Cf. Amos 5:3. (2) See *kinnah* 34. (3) Cf. *Eichah* 4:9.

(4) Cf. *Deuteronomy* 28:56. (5) Cf. *Psalms* 68:14; *Genesis* 49:14.

I have eaten my father's flesh! (*Midrash Eichah* 1:45).

Wineskins [deviously] inflated with [hot, stale] air. Various Midrashim describe how, when the captives were led through the lands of Arabia, the Ishmaelites met them on the way and appeared to be friendly and sympathetic. They offered bread and other foods all of which had been oversalted. Soon the Jews asked for something to drink. The Ishmaelites offered them leather canteens that they had filled with

air and left hanging in the sun. Thinking they were full of refreshing liquid, the unfortunate captives — whose hands were tied behind their back — bit off the plugs with their teeth. The hot, stagnant air in the bags filled their lungs and killed them (*Tanchuma Yisro* 5; *Midrash Eichah*; *Yerushalmi Taanis* 4:5).

On the open roadsides [lit., between the borders]. The translation and interpretation follow *Rashi* (*Genesis* 49:14 and *Psalms* 68:14). The captive women were not permitted to sleep

21.

- א Cedars of Lebanon,* giants of Torah,
 ב shield-carriers* of Mishnah and Gemara,
 ג powerful warriors* exerting themselves over it in purity,
 ד their blood was spilt and [their] greatness removed [from us].
 ה Behold, they are the holy Ten Martyrs
 executed by the [Roman] government,
 ו and for these do I weep and my eye overflows.¹
 ז When I remember this I scream in bitterness.
 ח The most desirable in Israel, the holy vessels, crown and tiara,
 ט pure of heart and consecrated, they suffered a harsh death.
 י They cast lots* to determine whom to put to the sword first.
 יא When the lot fell on Rabban Shimon [ben Gamliel],*
 he stretched out his neck and wept as the decree was issued.*
 יב The overlord, with soul steeped in evil,
 turned to slay Rabban Shimon.²
 יג [Rabbi Yishmael, the Kohen Gadol,] the scion of Aaron*
 asked permission to cry over this son of royalty.

(1) Cf. *Eichah* 1:16; 3:49. (2) Some editions read רבני ישמעאל, Rabbi Yishmael.

nassi of Israel and son of Rabban Shimon, the first of the Ten Martyrs. Among those described with this title was Rabbi Chutzpis the Interpreter, ninth of the Martyrs (*Berachos* 27b). They are called shield-carriers either because they metaphorically do battle with each other in debating the fine points of Torah law, or because of their role in enforcing the law as interpreted by the *nassi* and his academy (*Aruch*).

גבורי כח — Powerful warriors. Perhaps this is an even greater accolade than earlier ones, for the psalmist depicts the angels with this term (see *Psalms* 103:20).

ידו גורל — They cast lots. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel and Rabbi Yishmael the *Kohen Gadol* were seized by the Romans at the time of the Temple's destruction. When they were about to be killed, each begged the executioner, 'Please kill me first, so that I will not be forced to witness the death of my beloved colleague!' The executioner was amazed by the pure love for one another and said, 'In that case we will cast lots to decide who should die first!'

רבן שמעון — Rabban Shimon [ben Gamliel], the *Prince*, of Israel, a great grandson of Hillel and a direct descendant of the royal family of King David. He was the first of the Ten Martyrs to die. *Mishnah Berurah* (53:35) quotes *Sefer Chassidim* who relates that when Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel was about to die he asked Rabbi Yishmael, 'My dear brother, why am I being subjected to die such an ignominious death [like a common criminal]?'
 Rabbi Yishmael replied, 'Perhaps when you preached in public before the masses you were filled with too much personal pleasure and you

thereby benefited personally from words of Torah?' Rabban Shimon responded, 'My brother, you have comforted and consoled me!'

וככה כננורה גזרה — And wept as the decree was issued. The much more detailed version in the *piyut* אוקרה (see above) relates that the Roman ruler informed the martyrs that they would be executed as retribution for the sale of Joseph by his brothers. They asked for a three-day period during which they would determine whether their deaths had been decreed by the Heavenly Tribunal. Rabbi Yishmael the *Kohen Gadol* uttered God's secret Name by which miracles can be performed, and ascended to heaven. There he met the angel Gabriel who told him, 'Accept it upon yourselves... for I have heard... that you have been destined for this.'

The *kinnah* informs us that Rabban Shimon wept as he heard Rabbi Yishmael report that their deaths had been decreed in heaven.

מזרע אהרן — The scion of Aaron. Although his name is not mentioned in this *kinnah*, other sources identify him as Rabbi Yishmael ben Elisha the *Kohen Gadol* (see *kinnah* 23). According to those sources, the Roman governor who condemned Rabbi Yishmael to death had a daughter who was impressed with the Rabbi's appearance, for he was as handsome as Joseph in his prime. She begged her father to spare the Rabbi for her personal gratification. Her father replied, 'If it is his face that impresses you, we can preserve it.' In an incredible display of cruelty, the governor gave orders that Rabbi Yishmael be skinned alive and the skin on his face be mounted like a trophy and preserved in fragrant balsam. They flayed the flesh off his face until they reached the top of his head where *tefillin* were

.בא.

אֲרֹזֵי הַלְבָנוֹן* אֲדִירֵי הַתּוֹרָה,
 פְּעֵלֵי תְרִיסוֹי* בְּמִשְׁנָה וּבְגִמְרָא,
 גְּבוּרֵי כַח* עֲמִלְיָהּ בְּטִהָרָה,
 דָּמָם נִשְׁפָּךְ וְנִשְׁתָּה גְבוּרָה,
 הֵנָּם קְדוּשֵׁי הַרוּגֵי מַלְכוּת עֲשָׂרָה,
 וְעַל אֵלֶּה אָנִי בּוֹכֶיָה וְעֵינַי נִגְרָה.
 זֹאת בְּזִכְרֵי אֲזַעֵק בְּמִרְיָהּ,
 חֲמַדַּת יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ נִגְרַע וְעֲטָרָהּ,
 טְהוּרֵי לֵב קְדוּשִׁים מֵתוּ בְּמִיתָה חֲמוּרָה,
 יָדוּ גוֹרֵל* מִי רֵאשׁוֹן לְהִרְבֵּ בְרוּרָה,
 כַּנְפוּל גוֹרֵל עַל רֶכֶן שְׁמֵעוֹן* פָּשַׁט צְנֹארוֹ וּבָקָה כַּנְגּוּרָה גוֹרָה,*
 לְרֶכֶן שְׁמֵעוֹן חֲזוֹר הִהְגִּמוֹן לְהַרְגוֹ בְּנִפְשׁ נְצוּרָה,
 מִזְרַע אֲהָרֹן* שָׁאֵל בְּבִקְשָׁה לְכַפּוֹת עַל פֶּן הַגְּבִירָה,

אֲרֹזֵי הַלְבָנוֹן — Cedars of Lebanon. This *kinnah*, whose author is unknown [although some ascribe it to יחיאל בן מאיר, whose name may appear in the acrostic], is a dramatic highlight of the Tishah B'Av service. It depicts the tragic execution of the *Ten Martyrs*.

Numerous *piyutim*, *kinnos* and *selichos* have been written about the Ten Martyrs, all of which seemingly place them as contemporaneous. It should be noted, however, that while all ten of these righteous men were murdered by the Romans during the Mishnaic period, their executions did not take place at the same time, nor could they have, since two of the ten did not even live in the same generation as the other eight. Namely, Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel and Rabbi Yishmael the *Kohen Gadol* lived before the Destruction of the Second Temple, and were murdered shortly thereafter, while the others were all killed after the Bar Kochba revolt, more than sixty years later. The liturgical accounts of the martyrdom were not meant as historical records, but as dramatic accounts of the story, in order to evoke feelings of loss and repentance on the part of the congregation.

The Talmud teaches: 'The death of the righteous is a tragedy equal to the burning of the Temple of our God' (*Rosh Hashanah* 18a). Thus, it is appropriate to mourn the loss of these righteous sages on Tishah B'Av, the day our Temple was destroyed in fire.

In the *chazzan's* repetition of the *Amidah* during *Mussaf* on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, we read another *piyut* describing the death of the Ten Martyrs titled *אוקרה*. These shall I recall. It is included in the Yom Kippur

service because the Talmud (*Moed Katan* 28a) states: 'The death of the righteous atones for the sins of Israel,' and it is on Yom Kippur that we seek to arouse the merit of the martyrs. The Yom Kippur version of this story is lengthier and explains that the death of the Ten Martyrs was an atonement for the sin of the ten sons of Jacob who were involved in the sale of Joseph into slavery (see *Genesis* ch. 37). That heartless deed sowed the seeds of future dissension and senseless hatred in Israel. But it was not until the Second Temple was destroyed due to *baseless hatred*, that Israel reaped the bitter fruits of that deed (*Yoma* 9b). Then, after the Temple's destruction, God brought about the death of ten holy martyrs who sanctified His Name in atonement for the sin of the ten brothers. For it was the still-present influence of their act that continued to prevent their offspring from living in brotherhood and harmony.

This *kinnah* lists only eight of the Ten Martyrs. In the Yom Kippur liturgy and other sources the other two are given as Rabbi Chanina ben Chachinai, one of Rabbi Akiva's earlier disciples and Rabbi Yehudah (or Elazar) ben Dama. Some versions add the name of Rabbi Yehudah HaNachtom in place of ben Dama.

אֲרֹזֵי הַלְבָנוֹן — Cedars of Lebanon. The righteous are thus described by the psalmist: *A righteous man will flourish like a date palm, in Lebanon he will grow tall* (*Psalms* 92:13).

פְּעֵלֵי תְרִיסוֹן — Shield-carriers [lit., masters of the shields]. The Talmud uses this when referring to the sages in the academy of Rabban Gamliel,

- ג He took [Rabban Shimon's severed] head and placed it on his lap [and lamented], 'O pure Menorah!'
- ס He placed his eyes upon his eyes, and his mouth upon his mouth in absolute love.
- ע He cried out and said, 'O mouth that strengthened itself in Torah, how suddenly a violent and cruel death has been inflicted upon you!'
- ז He [the overlord] ordered them to strip the skin off [Rabbi Yishmael's] head with a sharp razor.
- ח With his skin he fulfilled the prophecy: 'They [the enemy] said to your soul, "Prostrate yourself that we may walk over you!"'
- ט When the wicked one who flayed him reached the place of the tefillin, the brilliant mitzvah, He [Rabbi Yishmael] let out such a scream* that the whole world quaked and the earth crumbled into little pieces. After him they brought forth Rabbi Akiva* who uprooted mountains [of halachic problems] and ground them one against the other by thorough analysis. They combed his flesh with an iron comb in order to break him. His soul departed while he declared, '[God is] One' and a heavenly voice proclaimed, 'Fortunate are you, Rabbi Akiva; your body has been purified with every type of purity!' After him they brought forth Rabbi Yehudah ben Bava,* a man of humble heart, and scrupulous [in avoiding sin], he was killed at age seventy by the hands of the cursed [nation]. He was immersed in fasting; clean and pious, alacritous in his service. Rabbi Chanina² ben Teradyon* came after him, [condemned because] he assembled crowds [to study Torah] within the gates of Zion.

(1) Isaiah 51:23. (2) Some editions read חנניה or חנניא, Chananiah.

privilege of serving God to such a degree. Now that the chance has come to me, shall I not grasp it with joy?

He repeated the first verse of *Shema* — *Hear, O Israel, HASHEM is our God, HASHEM is One* — and as he drew out the word אֶחָד, One, his soul left him.

A heavenly voice was heard saying, 'You are praiseworthy, Rabbi Akiva, for your soul left you as you proclaimed God's Oneness! ... You are praiseworthy, Rabbi Akiva, for you are ready to enter the life of the World to Come' (*Berachos* 61b; *Yerushalmi Berachos* 9:5).

בן בבאי רבי יהודה — Rabbi Yehudah ben Bava. Moses ordained his disciple Joshua, thus investing him with the God-given authority to render halachic judgments and to impose certain fines. The chain of *Semichah* ordination remained unbroken, handed down from teacher to disciple, for almost fifteen centuries until the Romans issued a decree prohibiting Rabbis (under pain of death) from ordaining their students. Rabbi

Yehudah ben Bava was determined to guarantee the perpetuation of the chain of *Semichah*. He secretly ordained five of his greatest disciples near a mountain pass in a secluded area between the cities of Usha and Shefaram. These illustrious students were: Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yehudah bar Illai, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, Rabbi Yossi ben Chalafta and Rabbi Elazar ben Shamua, the tenth martyr (other opinions add a sixth disciple, Rabbi Nechemiah, see *Sanhedrin* 13b-14a).

Unfortunately, the Romans heard about this convocation and sent troops to execute the master and his disciples. Seventy-year-old Rabbi Yehudah ben Bava commanded his students, 'Run away, my sons, and I will stand firm before them like an immovable boulder.' Rabbi Yehudah blocked the narrow mountain path with his body and the Romans could not budge him. Only after they pierced his body with three hundred iron spears and made him like a sieve did he fall dead.

רבי חנינא בן תרדין — Rabbi Chanina ben Teradyon. The Talmud (*Avodah Zarah* 18a)

נטל ראשו ונתנו על ארְכבוֹתָיו מְנוֹרַה הַטְּהוֹרָה,*
שָׁם עֵינָיו עַל עֵינָיו וּפִיו עַל פִּיו בְּאַהֲבָה גְמוּרָה,
עָנָה וְאָמַר פֶּה הַמְתַּגְבֵּר בְּתוֹרָה,
פְּתָאוּם נִקְנְסָה עָלָיו מִיָּתָה מִשְׁנָה וְחַמּוּרָה,
צָנָה לְהַפְשִׁיט אֶת רֵאשׁוֹ בְּתַעַר הַשְּׂכִירָה,
קִים בְּעוֹרוֹ אָמְרוּ לְנַפְשׁוֹ שְׁחִי וְנַעֲבְרָה!
רָשַׁע הַפּוֹשֵׁט עַת הִגִּיעַ לְמָקוֹם תְּפִלִּין מִצּוֹת בְּרָה,
צָעַק צָעָקָה* וְנִדְעָעָה עוֹלָם וְאַרְץ הַתְּפוֹרָרָה.
מֵאַחֲרָיו הִבְיָאוּ אֶת רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא*
עוֹקֵר הָרִים וְטוֹחֵנָן זוּ בְזוּ בִסְבָרָה,
וּסְרָקוּ אֶת בְּשָׂרוֹ בְּמַסְרַק שֶׁל בְּרוֹזֶל לְהַשְׁתַּבֵּרָה,
יָצְתָה נִשְׁמָתוֹ בְּאֶחָד וּבַת קוֹל אָמְרָה,
אֲשֶׁרִיד רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא גּוֹפֵף טְהוֹר בְּכָל מִינֵי טְהוּרָה.
בֵּן בָּבָא רַבִּי יְהוּדָה* אַחֲרָיו, הִבְיָאוּ בְּשִׁבְרוֹן לֵב וְאַזְהָרָה,
נִהְרַג בֵּן שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה בְּיַדֵי אַרְוּרָה,
יּוֹשֵׁב בְּתַעֲנִיט הִיָּה נָקִי וְחָסִיד בְּמִלְאכְתּוֹ לְמַהָרָה.
רַבִּי חֲנִינְאִי* בֵּן תְּרַדְיּוֹן* אַחֲרָיו מְקַהֵיל קְהָלוֹת בְּצִיּוֹן שְׁעָרָה,

positioned. Until that point Rabbi Yishmael bore the excruciating physical pain in silence, but when they stripped him of this precious spiritual possession he let out a terrifying scream.

The Talmud relates that once every seventy years the Romans would reenact the following scene: A healthy man (representing Esau) would ride on the back of a cripple (symbolic of Jacob, who had a temporary limp after doing battle with the angel — see *Genesis* 32:24-32). 'Esau' would be wearing the garments once worn by Adam and later the property of Esau and would hold aloft the preserved head of Rabbi Yishmael. All this, to prove Esau's continued supremacy over Jacob, i.e., Israel (*Avodah Zarah* 11b with *Rashi*). The Talmud relates that once every seventy years the Romans would reenact the following scene: A healthy man (representing Esau) would ride on the back of a cripple (symbolic of Jacob, who had a temporary limp after doing battle with the angel — see *Genesis* 32:24-32). 'Esau' would be wearing the garments once worn by Adam and later the property of Esau and would hold aloft the preserved head of Rabbi Yishmael. All this, to prove Esau's continued supremacy over Jacob, i.e., Israel (*Avodah Zarah* 11b with *Rashi*). Torah scholars are beacons of light that guide people along the paths that lead to heaven. Or, in the words of King Solomon: נֵר מִצְוָה וְתוֹרָה אֹר, א *mitzvah* is a lamp and the Torah is light (*Proverbs* 6:23).

צָעַק צָעָקָה — He ... let such a scream. For some reason the alphabetical acrostic is discontinued after the first twenty letters and omits the letter *v* and *t*. Perhaps some lines of the original composition have been lost or removed by the censors. רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא — Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Akiva's death at the age of one hundred and twenty took place about sixty years after the destruction of the Temple (circa 135 C.E.). After Bar Kochba's

unsuccessful uprising against the Romans, they enacted extremely harsh decrees proscribing the practice of Judaism in general and prohibiting the study and teaching of Torah in particular. Rabbi Akiva believed that without Torah study the Jewish people suffer a demise worse than death, so he ignored the Roman decree and taught Torah at massive public gatherings. The Romans imprisoned him and finally executed him on Yom Kippur.

Rabbi Akiva was tortured to death in this barbaric manner:

It was the time of the morning *Shema* reading when R' Akiva was taken out to be murdered publicly. During his frightful ordeal he accepted God's sovereignty upon himself by reciting the *Shema* joyously, oblivious to the pain. Turnus Rufus, the Roman commander who ordered the barbarous execution, was flabbergasted. 'Have you no feeling of pain that you can laugh in the face of such intense suffering?' he exclaimed. Even R' Akiva's own students wondered, 'Our teacher, even to this extent?'

The dying sage explained, 'All my life I was concerned over a phrase of the Torah. We are taught in the *Shema* to accept God's sovereignty and decrees upon ourselves, בְּכָל נַפְשְׁךָ, with all your soul (*Deuteronomy* 6:5) — this implies that we must serve God even if it means forfeiting our life. I used to wonder if I would ever have the

While he sat with a Torah Scroll and taught,
they surrounded him with bundles of vines.
They set them on fire, and wrapped him in the Torah Scroll
[from which he taught].
They placed tufts of [water-soaked] wool on his heart,
so that he would not die quickly.
The pious one, Rabbi Yeshevaḥ the Scribe,* was killed
by the descendants of [Sodom and] Amoraḥ.
They threw him down and flung him to the dogs,
so he was not buried in a proper grave.
A heavenly voice went forth [and said] that he did not fail
to observe any detail of the Torah of Moses.
And after him on the day of wrath, they [killed] Rabbi Chutzpis,*
[who taught Torah with such fiery zeal that a] bird
flying [above him] would be burnt
by the breath of his mouth as if on the Altar pyre.
The righteous Rabbi Elazar ben Shamua* was the last;
he was killed by stabbing.
It was on a Friday as the day turned to the holy Sabbath,
so he began the Kiddush and recited [the opening passage].
They unsheathed a sword over him,
and did not allow him to live to finish it.
His soul departed with [the words] 'which God created,'¹
[thereby acknowledging Him as] the Creator
Who fashioned every creature's form.
Again and again in this manner, the sons of iniquity
continued to torture [us] with rebuke.
With stoning, burning, beheading and strangling —
who can calculate [the enormity of the tragedy]?
What remained of it, the scattered flock, the lions consumed.²
The breast of the waving and the thigh of the raising-up*
the lion and his daughter tore to pieces.
May HASHEM show [His] benevolence [to us]
and never again make us suffer.⁴
Strengthen the faltering knees,⁵ O You Who are Jacob's portion,⁶
and his savior in times of distress.⁷
For the sake of righteousness He [God] shall reign as king.⁸
He will say [to Israel], 'The days of your mourning have come to
an end!'⁹ Then we shall venture forth and walk in His light!

relates that when Elisha ben Avuyah, a well-known Sage of Mishnaic times, saw Rabbi Chutzpis' tongue being chewed up by a swine in the trash heap, he could not fathom that a just God would allow such 'injustice,' and he turned heretic. The Talmud, however, explains Rabbi Chutzpis' degradation as proof that שכר מצוה reward for mitzvah observance is not forthcoming in this world, but in the World to Come (Kiddushin 39b).

— Rabbi Elazar ben Shamua. One of the five great disciples ordained by Rabbi Yehudah ben Bava (see above), he was the last of the Ten Martyrs. He was killed at the age of one hundred and five.

— The breast of the waving and the thigh of the raising-up. The flesh of these innocent victims was regarded as the choicest and finest of the priestly sacrificial gifts.

יושב ודורש וספר תורה עמו, והקיפוהו בחבלי זמורה,
את האור הציתו בהם וכרכוהו בספר תורה,
ספוגין של צמר הניחו על לבו שלא ימות מהרה.
חסיד רבי יששב הסופר* הרגוהו עם עמורה,
זרקוהו והשליכוהו לכלבים ולא הקבר בקבורה,
יצתה בת קול עליו שלא הניח כלום מתורת משה לשמרה,
ואחריו רבי חוצפית* ביום עברה,
עוף הפורח נשרף בהבל פיו כבמדורה.
צדיק רבי אלעזר בן שמוע* באחרונה נהרג במדקירה,
יום ערב שבת היה זמן קדוש ניקדש וניקרא,
חרב שלפו עליו ולא הניחוהו בחיים לגמרה,
יצתה נשמתו בברא אלהים יוצר וצר צורה,
כהנה וכהנה הוסיפו בני עולה לענות בגערה,
בסקילה שרפה הרג וחנק מי יוכל לשערה,
נותרת ממנה יאכלו אריות שה פוורה,²
חזה התנופה ושוק התרומה* טרפו אריה ונהפירה,
יטיב יהוה ולא יוסיף עוד ליסרה,⁴
אמיץ ברכים בושלות* חלק יעקב* ומושיע בעת צרה,⁷
לצדק ימלה מלה,⁸ יאמר שלמו ימי אבלה,⁹ לאורו נסע ונלה.

(1) Genesis 2:3. (2) Cf. Jeremiah 50:17. (3) Cf. Leviticus 7:34. (4) Cf. 26:18.
(5) Cf. Isaiah 35:3. (6) Jeremiah 10:16. (7) Cf. 14:8. (8) Isaiah 32:1. (9) 60:20.

teaches that the pretext to execute Rabbi Chanina was that he violated the Roman edict against teaching the Torah publicly. The Romans wrapped him in the Torah Scroll that he always kept with him and set it afire. To prolong his agony, they packed his chest with water-soaked wool. To his horrified daughter and student, Rabbi Chanina said, 'The parchment is consumed, but the letters fly up in the air.' The Roman executioner was deeply moved by Rabbi Chanina's holiness and asked, 'If I remove the wool from your heart, will I have a share in the World to Come?' Rabbi Chanina promised that he would, whereupon the Roman removed the wet wool and put more wood on the fire, so that the agony would end quickly. Then, the Roman threw himself into the fire and died. A heavenly voice proclaimed, 'Rabbi Chanina and his executioner are about to enter the World to Come.'

— Rabbi Yeshevaḥ the Scribe. Rabbi Yeshevaḥ was Rabbi Akiva's colleague. It was said of him that he was as great as Moses in every respect other than prophecy. The Romans

murdered him while he was reciting the Shema, as he was reading the portion dealing with the mitzvah of the tzitzis fringes. He died on a high level of purity for he had been fasting all that day, but the Romans were determined to subject his remains to degradation. They refused to allow him to be buried; instead, they had wild dogs drag his pure and holy body through the streets.

— Rabbi Chutzpis. In Talmudic times, a מתורגמן, literally, interpreter, would repeat and explain the lecture of the rosh yeshivah. Rabbi Chutzpis was one day short of his 130th birthday and his last wish was for one more day of life in order to recite the Shema for another evening and morning. But his wish was not granted.

The Romans devised a particularly sadistic barbarism for Rabbi Chutzpis. Since he was renowned for his rhetorical skill and his golden tongue, before they killed him they cut out his tongue and tossed it into the trash heap. This was a particularly disturbing torture, for Rabbi Chutzpis never used his tongue to speak anything other than words of Torah. The Talmud

22.

Be silent and leave me be* so that I may speak out;
let whatever may befall me,¹

I shall scream to You, Who dwells in the Heavens,
over the violence and pillage.²

My spirit presses me and I cannot remain still,
I shall cry like a woman in birth travail, I shall pant and gasp.³

I shall compose a bitter dirge and I shall lament as I moan.

The words of my roars shall roll out like [the waves of] the sea.⁴

I eulogize my community which has been given over to desolation.

I shall lament as I speak and I shall moan,⁵

and I shall raise the sound of lament.

O how joy is halted and gladness darkened;
every face is blackened⁶ and every head is bald,
every beard is clipped⁷ and on every heart a sigh,
ever since the powerful nation aroused itself to seek

[the means to cast us into] the pit,⁸

He trampled my heroes,⁹ those who study
our secure stronghold [the Torah].

My maidens and my youths, he uprooted with devastation;

on every street corner¹⁰ their corpses lay like refuse.¹¹

My infants and my babes were treated like sheep for the slaughter.¹²

About this shall I wail,¹³ my tears on [my] cheek.¹⁴

Gather around me, O suffering lost sheep,
to intensify [your] weeping and to scream even louder.

Howl, O Heaven, and shout out, O Earth.

I shall lament as I speak and I shall moan, and I shall raise the sound of lament.

O Ereliim,* go forth and shout¹⁵ bitterly,
assemble in groups for most bitter eulogy,¹⁶
cry like a woman in travail, with the pain
of one undergoing her first childbirth.¹⁷

Mourn for the flock of scattered sheep,
for the decree was issued against them
with blazing anger, rage and wrath.¹⁸

They gathered themselves in abstinence and purity
to sanctify the Great and Awesome Name,

(1) Cf. Job 13:13. (2) Cf. Habakkuk 1:2-3. (3) Isaiah 42:14. (4) Cf. Job 3:24. (5) Psalms 55:3.
(6) Cf. Joel 2:6. (7) Cf. Jeremiah 48:37; some editions read גרועה, diminished, which is the
word used in Scriptures. (8) Some editions read בורה שוחה, to dig a pit; cf. Jeremiah 18:22.
(9) Cf. Eichah 1:15. (10) 2:19. (11) Cf. Isaiah 5:25. (12) Cf. Psalms 44:23. (13) Cf. Micah 1:8.
(14) Cf. Eichah 1:2. (15) Cf. Isaiah 33:7. (16) Cf. Jeremiah 6:26. (17) Cf. 4:31. (18) Cf. Psalms 78:49.

performed in a spirit of utmost piety and purity
to sanctify the Name of God. Furthermore, it
describes how the greatest Torah scholars were
murdered and how their books and manuscripts
were mercilessly consigned to the flames.

It concludes with a question and a challenge to
God, 'How long will You continue to witness this
indifferently? ... Will You not seek revenge for

the blood spilled like gushing streams?'

The particular tragedy about which this kin-
nah was written is unknown. It very aptly de-
scribes any one of many massacres and pogroms
that have formed a large part of Jewish history.

אֶרְאִלִּים — Ereliim. We lack the vocabulary to
distinguish between the varieties of angels

כב.

הַחֲרִישׁוּ מִמְּנִי* וַיַּעֲבֹר עָלַי מָה,

חֲמַס אֲזַעַק וְשׁוֹדִי לָךְ שׁוֹכֵן שְׁמַיִמָּה,

הַצִּיקְתָּנִי רוּחִי וְלֹא אוֹכַל אֲדַמָּה,

כִּי לֹלְדָה אֶפְעָה אֲשָׂאף וְאֲשָׂמָה,³

מִסְפָּד מֵר אֶעֱשֶׂה וְאֶקוֹנֵן בְּנֵהִימָה,

דִּבְרֵי שְׂאֵגוֹתַי יִתְּכוּ בְּיָמָה,⁴

סִפְרֵי עַל עֲדוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר נִתְּנָה לְשִׂמָּה,

אֲרִיד בְּשִׁיחֵי וְאֶהִימָה,⁵ וְקוֹל נְהִי אֶרְיָמָה.

אִיךְ שִׁבְתָּ מְשׁוֹשׁ וְעַרְבָּה שִׁמְחָה,

כָּל פָּנִים פָּארוּר⁶ וְכָל רֹאשׁ קָרְחָה,

וְכָל זָקֵן גְּדוּעָה⁷ וְעַל כָּל לֵב אֲנָחָה,

מֵאֵז נִתְּעוֹרֵר גּוֹי עַז דּוֹרֵשׁ שׁוֹחָה,⁸

סֵלָה אֲבִירִי⁹ הוֹגֵי עַז מִבְּטָחָה,

בְּתוֹלוֹתַי וּבַחֲוָרֵי נֶסֶח בְּנִסְיָחָה,

בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל חוּצוֹת¹⁰ נִבְלָתָן כְּסוּחָה,¹¹

עוֹלָלֵי וְטַפֵּי נֶחְשָׁבוּ כְּצֹאֵן טְבָחָה,¹²

אֵילִילָה עַל זֹאת¹³ וְדַמְעוֹתַי עַל לָחָה,¹⁴

הָאֶסְפוּ אֵלַי דּוֹוֵי צֹאֵן נִדְחָה.

לְהַרְבוֹת הַבְּכִי וּלְהַרִים צוֹחָה,

הַיִּלִּילוּ שְׁמַיִם וְזַעֲקֵי אֲדָמָה.

אֲרִיד בְּשִׁיחֵי וְאֶהִימָה, וְקוֹל נְהִי אֶרְיָמָה.

אֶרְאִלִּים* צֹאֵן וְזַעֲקוּ¹⁵ מִכָּה,

סִפּוֹד תִּמְרוֹר הָאֲגִדּוּ בְּחִבּוּרָה,¹⁶

קוֹל כְּחוֹלָה צָרָה כְּמִבְּפִירָה,¹⁷

הַתְּאוֹנְנוּ עַל עֲדוֹת שֶׁהַ פּוֹזְרָה,

עֲלִימוּ כִּי נִגְזְרָה גְּזֵרָה, בְּחֲרֵי אֵף וְזַעַם וְעַבְרָה,¹⁸

וְנִתְּעוֹדוּ בְּפִרְשׁוֹת וּבְטָהֲרָה, לְקַדֵּשׁ שֵׁם הַגְּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא.

הַחֲרִישׁוּ מִמְּנִי — Be silent and leave me be. In
vivid prose and sharp detail this kinnah, of
unknown authorship, captures the anguish of a
survivor of an unknown massacred community
whose emotions are still storming and seething

and whose tears are not yet dry. It describes the
untenable tragedy of loving parents forced to
slaughter their cherished children by their own
hand, to save them from excruciating torture and
mutilation at the hand of the enemy. All this was

and each man encouraged the other with succor,¹
[enabling him] to embrace [God] with pure awe,
and not to kneel to strange gods.

Neither a man nor a woman showed weakening pity
for the [children whose] faces were like a splendid tiara.
Instead, they girded themselves with abnormal courage
to smash the head and sever the spine.

Then they addressed them with these words,
'We merited not to raise you in the Torah[*s* ways],
let us then bring you nearer [to God],

like burnt-offering and incense.

May we merit sharing with you the light
that is concealed and hidden from the eyes of all.

I shall lament as I speak and I shall moan, and I shall raise the sound of lament.

Then young and old agreed
to accept lovingly the decision

of the One Who Dwells in the heavens.

The aged who were nevertheless still vigorous and fresh,²
it was they who were judged the first [to be executed].

The insolent [enemy] went forth against them
and slaughtered multitudes upon multitudes,
until there was a [gruesome heap] of

intermingled fats and intestinal wastes.

Then the Fathers who were once compassionate
turned cruel as ostriches,³

and they cast lots over parents and children
and whomever the lot came upon first,
he was slaughtered with blades and knives.

Youths brought up in scarlet clothing⁴
now licked the dust like serpents,⁵

and brides dressed in scarlet

swooned into the arms of their husbands,

[where they were] butchered by sword and spears.

Remember this, assembled congregation of the wise,
and dare not be silenced from abundant lamentations!

Eulogize the pious and proper ones

who sank in the treacherous waters.

At the memory of this, my soul is grieved.

I shall lament as I speak and I shall moan, and I shall raise the sound of lament.

(1) Cf. Isaiah 41:6. (2) Cf. Psalms 92:15. (3) Cf. Eichah 4:3. (4) Cf. 4:5. (5) Cf. Micah 7:17.

Ramban (Yesodei HaTorah 2:7) enumerates ten Seraphim, Malachim, Elohim, Bnei Elohim, levels: Chayos, Ofanim, Erelim, Chashmalim, Cheruvim, and Ishim.

וְאִישׁ אֶת אַחֵיו חִזְקוּ בְעֹזָה,¹
לְהַדְבִּק בִּירְאָה טְהוֹרָה, בְּלִי כְרוּעַ לְעִבּוּדָה זָרָה,
וְלֹא חָסוּ גִבּוֹר וּגְבִינָה,

עַל בְּנִים צְפִירַת תּוֹפְאָרָה,
אֲבָל אֲזָרוּ גְבוּרָה יִתְרָה,

לְהַלּוֹם רֹאשׁ וּלְקַרוֹץ שְׂדֵרָה,
וְאֵלֵינוּ דָּבְרוּ בְאַמִּירָה,

לֹא זָכִינוּ לַגְדִּלְכֶם לַתּוֹרָה,
נִקְרִיבְכֶם כְּעוֹלָה וְהִקְטַרְהָ,

וּנְזַכֶּה עִמָּכֶם לְאוֹרָה, הַצְּפוּנָה מֵעֵין כָּל וְעֵלּוּמָה.

אָרִיד בְּשִׁיחֵי וְאַהֲיָמָה, וְקוֹל גְּהֵי אֲרִימָה.

אִז הִסְכִּימוּ גְדוֹלִים וְקִטְנִים,

לְקַבֵּל בְּאַהֲבָה דִּין שׁוֹכֵן מְעוּנִים,

וּזְקֵנִים דְּשָׁנִים וְרַעֲנָנִים,² הֵם הָיוּ תַחֲלָה נְדוּנִים,

וְיָצְאוּ לְקִרְאָתָם עֵינֵי פָנִים, וְנִהְרְגוּ הַמוֹנִים הַמוֹנִים,

וְנִתְעַרְבוּ פְדָרִים עִם פִּרְשְׁדוּנִים,

וְהָאֲבוֹת אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ רַחֲמָנִים,

נִהְפְּכוּ לְאַכְזָר בְּעֵינֵים,³

וְהִפְּסוּ עַל אֲבוֹת וְעַל בְּנִים,

וּמִי שְׁגוּרָל עָלָה לוֹ רֵאשׁוּנִים,

הוּא נִשְׁחַט בַּחֲלָפוֹת וְסַפִּינִים,

וּבַחֲוָרִים עָלֵי תוֹלַע אַמוּנִים,⁴

הֵם לָחֲכוּ עִפָּר כְּתַנִּינִים,⁵

וְהַכְּלוֹת לְבוֹשׁוֹת שָׁנִים, מְעַלְפוֹת בְּזוּרוֹעוֹת חֲתָנִים,

מִנְתַּחוֹת בַּחֲרֵב וּכִידוּנִים,

זָכְרוּ זֹאת קֹהֵל עֲדַת נְבוּנִים,

וְאַל תִּחְשׂוּ מִהֲרַבּוֹת קִינִים,

וְהִסְפִּידוּ עַל חֲסִידִים וְהַגּוּנִים,

אֲשֶׁר צָלְלוּ בְּמִים הַיָּדוּנִים,

לְזָכֵר זֹאת נִפְשֵׁי עֲגוּמָה.

אָרִיד בְּשִׁיחֵי וְאַהֲיָמָה, וְקוֹל גְּהֵי אֲרִימָה.

Torah, O Torah, gird yourself in sackcloth and roll yourself in ashes, make yourself mourn for your only son; [recite the] most bitter eulogy¹ over those who hold the oars and spread the nets, your sailors and those who man the ropes through the mighty waters² [of the sea of Talmud], [They are the ones] who organize [Torah themes according to] logical arrangements that clarify complicated issues.³ who explain Your hidden [wisdom] and uncover its secrets. Who will [now] cut through the heights, and who will [now] carve through the mountains? Who will [now] clarify the issues, and who will [now] answer the [earth-]shattering [questions]? Who will [now] interpret the [intricacies of] Nazirite vows, and who will [now] arrange [the complex laws of] oaths [and their annulment]? Who will plow through your depths when the farmers have been cut down? And who will wage your battles and return [Israel] to the gates [of the House of Torah Study], [now that] the weapons are lost, and the heroes have fallen?⁴ Fortunate are those wise [martyrs] who are radiant as the firmament,⁵ these upright ones rest in peaceful repositories. Woe and wailing, plunder and devastation; for the survivors, for those miserable of spirit,⁶ travail and torment; for those of failing eyes,⁷ the shadow of death and anarchy. Eveningtime they say, 'O who will make it morning!' And morning they anxiously say, 'O who will remove the daylight [and bring on evening]?'⁸ [This,] because of the [frightful] sights their eyes behold.⁹ Outside the sword cuts down while terror reigns within,¹⁰ O how long will You watch [indifferently], You Who sees everything hidden? Avenge Your Torah, which strangers have burnt; they scorched it, they vandalized it, they ripped it to pieces. They enlarged the pyre [with stacks of Torah volumes] like piles of tangled thornbrush. Shall You restrain Yourself¹¹ over such deeds, O Master of everything created? Seek revenge for the blood spilled like falling waters, for the plundering of the poor, for the cry of the storm-tossed.¹² Upon the people who repent transgression, who are sated with wormwood and bitterness, take pity; do not allow them to be annihilated. Elevate and exalt their honor.

I shall lament as I speak and I shall moan, and I shall raise the sound of lament.

(1) Cf. Jeremiah 6:26. (2) Cf. Ezekiel 27:27-29. (3) Cf. Isaiah 45:2. (4) Cf. II Samuel 1:27. (5) Cf. Daniel 12:3. (6) Cf. Deuteronomy 28:65. (7) Cf. 28:67. (8) Cf. 32: 25. (9) Cf. Isaiah 64:11. (10) Cf. Psalms 12:6.

מקורם... מחוץ — Outside... within [lit. from the chambers]. The translation follows one of the interpretations given by Rashi (Deuteronomy 32:25). According to Rashi's other interpre-

תורה תורה חגרי שק והתפללי באפרים,
אבל יחיד עשי לך ומספד תמרורים,¹
על תופשי משוטף ופורשי מכמורים,
מלחך וחובליך במים אדירים,²
עורכי מערכה, מישרי הדורים,³
מפענחי צפונך ומגלי מסתורים,
מי יקצה בגבעות ומי יסתת בהרים,
ומי יפרק הניות ומי יתרץ שבירים,
מי יפליא נזירות ומי יערוך נדרים,
מי ישדד מעמקיך וחתו אפרים,
ומי ילחום מלחמתך וישוב לשערים,
כלי מלחמה אבדו ונפלו גבורים.⁴
אשריהם משכילים כרקיע זוהרים,⁵
במנוחות שלום נחו ישרים, אוי ואבוי שוד נשבר לנוטרים,
למדיבת נפש⁶ נחבלים וצירים,
לכליון עינים⁷ צלמות ולא סדרים,
ערב אמרים מי יתן צפרים, ובקר מצפים מי יגלה אורים,⁸
ממראה עינימו אשר המה שרים,⁹
מחוץ שפלה חרב ואימה מחדרים,¹⁰
עד מתי תביט רואה כל סתרים,
קנא לתורתך אשר שרפוה זרים,
קלאוה פרעוה קרעוה לגורים,
בסירים סבוכים הגדילו המדורים,
העל אלה תתאפק¹¹ אדון כל יצורים,
תנקום דם הנשפך במים המגרים,
משוד עינים מאנקת סעורים,¹²
עם שבי פשע לעונים ומרורים רחמה,
אותם כל תחרימה, קרנם הגביה והרימה.

אריד בשיחי ואהימה וקול נהי ארימה.

— O who will remove the daylight [and bring on evening]? The root גלה has two diametrically opposite meanings. It can mean to exile, to remove, or to uncover, to reveal. The

translation uses the first meaning. Alternatively, the phrase may be translated according to the second meaning, O who will reveal the nighttime luminaries?

26.

- א Then* when Jeremiah approached* the graves of the Patriarchs and said, 'O cherished bones, how can you lie still?
 ב Your sons have been exiled and their homes destroyed; where is the merit of their ancestors in a parched wasteland?*
- ג They all cried out in lamentations over the loss of their children;
 ד they spoke in a voice of supplication before [God] Who dwells in the high heavens, "Where is the assurance, 'And I shall remember for their sake the covenant of the ancients'?"¹
- ה [God replied,] "They exchanged My honor for utter nothingness,² and they were neither awed nor afraid [of Me].³
- ו Then I averted My eyes from them⁴, yet they did not repent nor did they lament; and how can I restrain [My anger] from the statement, 'He is not [the Lord]?'⁵
- ז Then [Abraham] the father of the multitude⁶ cried out on their behalf and pleaded before God, the Most High,
 ח "For nothing was I tried with ten tests for their sake, for behold, how I must witness their ruination! Where is the assurance 'Fear not, O Abram!'?"⁷
- ט [God responded,] 'They erred by permitting⁸ idolatrous worship.
 י They devised plans to dig [for themselves] cisterns, broken cisterns,⁹ and how can I restrain [My anger] over the nullification of the Ten Commandments?
 יא Then Isaac screamed before [God] Who dwells in heaven,
 יב "Was it for nothing that I was inscribed [in the Torah] as being prepared for slaughter? For behold how my seed is crushed and obliterated. Where is the assurance, 'And I shall fulfill My covenant with Isaac'?"¹⁰
- יג [God responded,] 'They have defied Jeremiah and defiled Mount Moriah.

over her children for they are not here.' Thus says HASHEM, 'Restrain your voice from weeping and hold back your eyes from tears, for your efforts will be rewarded,' says HASHEM, 'and they will return from the land of the enemy. And there is hope for your future,' says HASHEM, 'for your children shall be restored to their own borders!' (Jeremiah 31:14-16).

אז — Then when Jeremiah approached [lit., walked upon]. Since Jeremiah was a Kohen (see Jeremiah 1:1), he was forbidden

from contaminating himself to the dead. Therefore, he could not have entered the Cave of Machpelah (see Rashi to Ezekiel 37:2, where Ezekiel, also a Kohen, was led around a valley filled with bones to prophesy regarding those bones, but was not permitted to enter the valley). Thus, על, upon, has been translated according to its alternate meaning, near (see Targum and Rashi to Numbers 2:20) and the phrase ... קינת על is rendered approached.

— In a parched wasteland, an

כו.

- אז* בהלוך ירמיהו על* קברי אבות,
 וְנָם עֲצָמוֹת חִיבוֹת, מַה אַתֶּם שׁוֹכְבוֹת,
 בְּנִיכֶם גָּלוּ וּבְתֵיהֶם חֲרוּבוֹת,
 וְאֵיה זְכוּת אָבוֹת בְּאַרְץ תְּלֵאוּבוֹת*.
 גָּעוּ כָלֶם בְּקִינִים עַל חֲסְרוֹן בְּנִים,
 דוֹכְבוּ בְקוֹל תַּחֲנוּנִים פְּנֵי שׁוֹכֵן מְעוּנִים,
 וְאֵיה הַבְּטָחַת וְזִכְרֹתֵי לָהֶם בְּרִית רֵאשׁוּנִים.¹
 הֵם הִמִּירוּ כְבוֹדוֹ בְּתֵהוּ,² וְלֹא פָחְדוּ וְלֹא רָהוּ,³
 וְאֵעֲלִים עֵינַי מֵהֶם וְלֹא שָׁבוּ וְלֹא נָהוּ,
 וְאֵיה אֶתְאֶפֶק עַל אֲמִירַת לֹא הוּא.⁴
 זַעַק אַב הַמּוֹן בְּעִבּוּרָם, וְחִנֵּן פְּנֵי אֵל רַם,
 חָנַם נִסְתִּיתִי עֶשֶׂר בַּחֲיוֹנוֹת עִבּוּרָם, וְהֵן חֲזִיתִי שְׁבָרָם,
 וְאֵיה הַבְּטָחַת אֵל תִּירָא אֲבָרָם.⁵
 טָעוּ לְהוֹרוֹת בְּעִבּוּרוֹת זָרוֹת,
 יַעֲצוּ לְחֻצוֹב בְּאֵרוֹת נִשְׁפָּרוֹת,⁶
 וְאֵיה אֶתְאֶפֶק עַל בְּטוּל עֲשָׂרַת הַדְּבָרוֹת.
 כֹּה צָנַח יִצְחָק פְּנֵי שׁוֹכֵן שָׁחַק,
 לְשׁוֹא בִּי טֵבַח הוֹחַק, וְהֵן זָרְעִי נִשְׁחַק וְנִמְחַק,
 וְאֵיה הַבְּטָחַת וְאֵת בְּרִיתִי אֲקִים אֶת יִצְחָק.⁷
 מָרוּ בִּירְמִיָּה, וְטָמְאוּ הַר הַמּוֹרִיָּה,⁸

(1) Leviticus 26:45. (2) Cf. Jeremiah 2:11. (3) Cf. Isaiah 44:8. (4) Cf. 1:15.

(5) Jeremiah 5:12. (6) Cf. Genesis 17:4. (7) 15:1. (8) Some editions read ירמיהו, to become estranged. (9) Cf. Jeremiah 2:13. (10) Genesis 17:21.

אז — Then. In this work, R' Elazar HaKalir retells the Midrashic account (Midrash Eichah intro. 24) of God's reaction to the Destruction. When He saw the ruins of the burnt Sanctuary, God cried to Jeremiah, 'I feel like a father whose only son died on his wedding day! Go, summon Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses from their graves. They know how to weep (and perhaps they will arouse My mercy to return Israel to their land). Jeremiah went to the Cave of Machpelah in Hebron to arouse the Patriarchs and to the banks of the Jordan river to awaken Moses. They all went to visit the ruins of the Temple. As they

passed from gate to desolate gate, they wailed and cried and rent their garments in mourning. Yet, all their tears and pleas failed to arouse God's mercy, that He pledge to guarantee Israel's final redemption and return, for Israel had sinned terribly and God's fury was aroused.

God relented only after the Patriarchs led by Rachel joined in with their impassioned plea and God's response is recorded by the Prophet Jeremiah:

Thus says HASHEM, 'A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel is weeping for her children, she refuses to be comforted

- ג I have become exhausted from bearing¹
the cry that rises from the land of oblivion;
and how can I restrain [My anger from avenging]
the murder of Zechariah?²
- ד [Then Jacob] who was born to learning
spoke with tears flowing [to the ground] like a [slithering] serpent,
- ה 'My babes whom I have dandled [and reared]³
to the point of exhaustion,
how they have been torn from me, to disappear!
How there has been exacted from me, for [Zechariah's] blood,
the blood of so many thousands!'
- ו The faithful shepherd [Moses] burst forth,
while sunk in ashes and sullied in filth,
- ז 'The lambs, who were nursed at my bosom,⁴
O how were they cut off before their time!
Where is the assurance, "It [Israel] shall not be widowed"?'⁵
- ח The sound of Leah's weeping, as she pounds on her heart;⁶
- ט Rachel, her sister, weeping for her sons;⁷
Zilpah slapping her face;
and Bilhah lamenting with her two hands [outstretched].
- י-יא (God responds,) 'Return, O wholesome ones, to your place of rest,
I shall surely fulfill all your requests.
I was sent to Babylon, for your sake.⁸
Behold, I shall return your children from exile!'

נְלֹאֲתִי נְשׂוּאֵי גְעִיָה, עוֹלָה לִי מִנְשִׁיָה,
וְאֵיךְ אֶתְאַפֵּק עַל הַרְיָגַת זְכַרְיָה?²
סַח יֶלֶד בְּתַלְף, דְּמַעוֹת בְּתַנּוּן זוּלָף,
עוֹלְלֵי אֲשֶׁר טַפְחֹתַי בְּעֵלְף,
וְאֵיךְ גָּזוּ מִנֵּי בְחֻלְף
וְאֵיךְ הִפְרַע מִנֵּי דָמִים בְּדָמִים כְּמֵה אֶלְף.
פֶּץ רוּעָה נֶאֱמָן, כְּפּוֹשׁ בְּאֶפֶר וּמְדָמָן,
צֵאן אֲשֶׁר בְּחִיקֵי הָאֱמָן,⁴ אֵיךְ גָּזוּ בְּלֹא זְמָן,
וְאֵיךְ הִבְטַחְתָּ כִּי לֹא אֶלְמָן.⁵
קוֹל בְּכִי לֵאדָה מְתוּפֶפֶת עַל לְבַבֶּיהָ,⁶
רַחֵל אַחוּתָהּ מְבַכָּה עַל בְּנֵיהָ,⁷
וְזִלְפָה מְכָה פְנֵיהָ, בְּלֶחֶה מְקוֹנְנָת בְּשֵׁתֵי יָדֶיהָ.
שׁוּבוּ תְמִימִים לְמְנוּחַתְכֶם,
מֵלֵא אֱמֵלֵא כָּל מִשְׁאֲלוֹתֵיכֶם,
שְׁלַחְתִּי בְּבִלְהָ לְמַעַנְכֶם,⁸
הִנְנִי מְשׁוּבֵב גְלוֹת בְּנֵיכֶם.

(1) Isaiah 1:14. (2) See kinnah 34. (3) Cf. Eichah 2:22. (4) Cf. Numbers 11:12. (5) Jeremiah 51:5.
(6) Cf. Nahum 2:8. (7) Cf. Jeremiah 31:14. (8) See Minchas Shai to Isaiah 43:14.

allusion to the Wilderness of Sinai where their
ancestors accepted the Torah. As the prophet
(Jeremiah 2:2) states: So said HASHEM, 'I shall
remember for your sake the kindness of your
younger days ... how you followed Me in the
Wilderness in an unsown land.'

31.

- κ A fire [of elation] burns within me,*
when I recall in my heart [what happened],
when I went forth from Egypt;
but I shall arouse lamentations,
so that I'll remember [what occurred],
when I went forth from Jerusalem.
- κ Then Moses chose to sing¹ a song not to be forgotten,
when I went forth from Egypt;
but Jeremiah lamented⁴ a doleful lament,²
when I went forth from Jerusalem.
- ב My House [the Tabernacle] was
established, and the cloud rested upon it,³
when I went forth from Egypt;
but God's fury rested like a heavy cloud upon me,
when I went forth from Jerusalem.
- ג The waves of the Sea piled high, and stood up like a wall,⁴
when I went forth from Egypt;
but the wanton enemy drowned me and poured over my head,⁵
when I went forth from Jerusalem.
- ד Heavenly grain and a rock from which flowed water,⁶
when I went forth from Egypt;
wormwood and bitterness and the bitter waters,
when I went forth from Jerusalem.
- ה From dawn to dusk, encircling Mount Horeb,*
when I went forth from Egypt;
but a call to mourning by the rivers of Babylon,⁷
when I went forth from Jerusalem.
- ו And the appearance of the glory of HASHEM
was like a fire consuming⁸ before me,
when I went forth from Egypt;
but abandoned to the slaughter of the sharpened sword,
when I went forth from Jerusalem.
- ז Sacrifices and flour offerings, and the oil of anointment,
when I went forth from Egypt;
but God's treasure was taken like sheep to the slaughter,
when I went forth from Jerusalem.
- ח Festivals and Sabbaths, and miracles and signs,
when I went forth from Egypt;
but fasting and mourning and the pursuit of futility,
when I went forth from Jerusalem.

33:6; I Kings 19:8); and (f) הַר סִינַי, Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:18).

וַיִּקְוֶן יִרְמְיָהּ — But Jeremiah lamented. This refers to the Book of Eichah that Jeremiah

לא.

אֵשׁ תּוֹקֵד בְּקִרְבִּי* בְּהַעֲלוֹתִי עַל לְבִי,
קִינִים אֶעֱיֶרָה, לְמַעַן אֲזַכֵּירָה,
אִזּוֹ נִשְׁרַח מִשְׁהִי שִׁיר לֹא יִנָּשֶׂה,
וַיִּקְוֶן יִרְמְיָהּ* וְנָהָה נָהִי נָהִיה,²
בֵּיתִי הַתְּכוּנִן, וְשָׁכַן הָעֵצָן,³
נִחְמַת אֶל שְׁכֻנָּה, עָלַי כַּעֲנָנָה,
גְּלִי יָם רָמוֹ, וְכַחוּמָה קָמוֹ,⁴
יְדוּגִים שִׁטְפוּ, וְעַל רֹאשֵׁי צְפוּ,⁵
דִּגְן שָׁמַיִם, וּמִצּוֹר יָזוּבוּ מַיִם,⁶
לַעֲנָה וּמְרוֹרִים, וּמַיִם הַמְּרִים,
הַשֶּׁכֶם וְהָעֶרֶב, סְכִיבוֹת הַר חוֹרֵב,*
קוֹרָא אֶל אֶבֶל, עַל נִהְרוֹת בְּבֶל,⁷
וּמְרָאָה כְּבוֹד יְהוָה, כְּאֵשׁ אוֹכֶלֶת לְפָנַי,
וְחֶרֶב לְטוֹשָׁה, וְלִטְבַח נְטוּשָׁה,
זָבַח וּמִנְחָה, וְשִׁמֵן הַמִּשְׁחָה,
סִגְלַת אֶל לְקוֹחָה, כְּצֵאֵן לְטַבְּחָה,
חֲגִים וְשִׁבְתוֹת, וּמוֹפְתִים וְאוֹתוֹת,
תַּעֲנִית וְאַבֶּל, וְרִדּוֹף הַהֶבֶל,

(1) Exodus 15:1. (2) Micah 2:4. (3) See Numbers 9:15,22. (4) Cf. Exodus 15:8.
(5) Cf. Eichah 3:54. (6) Cf. Psalms 78:24,20. (7) 137:1. (8) Exodus 24:17.

אֵשׁ תּוֹקֵד בְּקִרְבִּי — A fire ... burns within me. The Midrash cites numerous examples of the startling contrast between our triumphant Exodus from Egypt and our tragic exit from conquered Jerusalem (Eichah Zuta 19). When Israel left Egypt their hearts were aflame with a fire of love for God and an unquenchable desire to receive the Torah at Sinai. But as the defeated Jews trudged out of Jerusalem's ruins into captivity, their hearts were shrouded in gloom and lamentations were on their lips.

Another tragedy which occurred on Tishah B'Av was the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. At that time the Spanish rabbis allowed orchestras to play before them (even on Tishah B'Av itself), in order to strengthen the spirits of the unfortunate exiles and to thank God for giving them the courage and strength not to

succumb to the pressure to convert. It was also the aim of these rabbis to teach the people that we never weep over departing from a country in exile. No matter how we prospered in that land, we weep only over our forced departure from Jerusalem (see Sefer HaTodaah).

The *kinnah*, of unknown authorship, follows an *aleph-beis* arrangement as the initial letters of the respective stanzas.

הַר חוֹרֵב — Mount Horeb. According to the Midrash (Tanchuma, Bamidbar 7). Scripture records six names for Mount Sinai: (a) הַר הַעֲלֵיִם, the Mountain of Elokim (Exodus 3:1: 18:5; Psalms 68:16); (b) הַר בָּשָׁן, Mount Bashan (Psalms 68:16); (c) הַר גַּבְנוּנִים, Mount Gavnunim (ibid.); (d) הַר הַדְּשֵׁרֶת, the Desired Mountain (ibid. v. 17); (e) הַר חוֹרֵב, Mount Horeb (Exodus 3:1:

- ק Sanctity and prophecy,
and the glory of HASHEM was manifest,¹
when I went forth from Egypt;
but abomination and filth² and impure spirit,
when I went forth from Jerusalem.
- ר Joyous song and salvation, and the [triumphant] trumpet blasts,
when I went forth from Egypt;
but the infant's wailing and the mortally wounded's groaning,
when I went forth from Jerusalem.
- ש [The Tabernacle's] Table³ and Menorah,⁴
burnt offering and incense,
when I went forth from Egypt;
but idol and abomination, graven image and [pagan] stele,
when I went forth from Jerusalem.
- ת Torah and Testimony, and the cherished vessels,
when I went forth from Egypt;
gladness and joy, while anguish and sighing will flee,⁵
when I return to Jerusalem!

(1) Cf. Exodus 16:10. (2) Cf. Zephaniah 3:1. (3) See Exodus 25:23-30.
(4) See 25:31-40. (5) Cf. Isaiah 51:11.

בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם.
בְּצֵאתִי מִירוּשָׁלַיִם.
בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם.
בְּצֵאתִי מִירוּשָׁלַיִם.
בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם.
בְּצֵאתִי מִירוּשָׁלַיִם.
בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם.
בְּשׁוּבִי לִירוּשָׁלַיִם.

קִדְשָׁהּ וְנִבְוָאָהּ, וְכַבּוֹד יְהוָה נִרְאָה;
נִגְאָלָה וּמוֹרָאָה,² וְרוּחַ הַטְּמָאָה,
רִנָּה וִישׁוּעָה, וְחִצּוֹצְרוֹת הַתְּרוּעָה,
וְעֵקֶת עוֹלָל, וְנֶאֱקֶת חֲלָל,
שִׁלְחָן וּמִנְחָה,⁴ וְכִלִּיל וְקִטּוֹרֶה,
אֵלִיל וְתוֹעֵבָה, וּפְסֶל וּמִצְבֵּה,
תּוֹרָה וְתַעֲוִיבָה, וְכִלֵּי הַחֲמֻדָּה,
שֶׁשׁוֹן וְשִׁמְחָה, וְנִס וְגִזּוֹן וְאַנְחָה,⁵

Babylon, and the Second Temple by the Romans, here represented by Hadrian, the emperor who crushed the Bar Kochba revolution some sixty years later.

- ב The incense spoons and ladles have been withdrawn from us — *O woe!*
 And my sons are screaming in a far-off land —
woe, what has befallen us!
- ג The Living One collected His debt, and the [Kohen Gadol's]
 forehead plate of pure [gold] was captured— *O woe!*
 The Western Lamp was snuffed out, as is the joy of the Drawing
 of the Water — *woe, what has befallen us!*
- ד The wanton sons spoiled by luxury overpowered
 the sons [of Israel] too numerous to be counted— *O woe!*
 The majestic priestly robes were given over into their hand
 — *woe, what has befallen us!*
- ה The incense offering has vanished, as have the Ark and its Cover—
O woe!
 [O God] Who measures [the expanse of heaven] with a little finger,¹
 gather the scattered² and be a salvation unto us!

אָוִיָּה.
 אֹי מָה הָיָה לָנוּ.
 אָוִיָּה.
 אֹי מָה הָיָה לָנוּ.
 אָוִיָּה.
 אֹי מָה הָיָה לָנוּ.
 אָוִיָּה.
 יְשׁוּעָה תְהִיָּה לָנוּ.
 בַּפּוֹת וּבְזוֹיכִים, מָנוּ נַפְסָקִים,
 וּבְנֵי נְאֻנְקִים, בְּאַרְץ מְרַחֲקִים,
 חֵי חוּבוֹ גָּבַהּ, וְצִיץ טָהוֹר נִשְׁבָּה,
 נֵר מֵעֶרֶב כָּבֵה, וְשִׁמְחַת בֵּית הַשְּׂאֵבָה,
 זָרִים בְּנֵי עֲרִינָה, עַל בְּנֵי מִי מְנָה,
 פָּאֵר בְּגָדֵי כְהֵנָה, בְּיָדָם נִתְּנָה,
 קְטָרֶת נְעִרְתָּ, וְאֲרוֹן וּכְפָרֶת,
 תִּכּוֹן בְּזֵרְתִּי תִקְבֵץ נְפֹזֶרֶת,²

(1) Cf. Isaiah 40:12. (2) Cf. Jeremiah 50:17.

36.

ציון O Zion, will you not inquire* about the welfare of your imprisoned,
 who seek your welfare,¹ for they are the remnants of your flocks.
 From west and east, from north and south,² carry [in your heart]
 the welfare of the distant and the near,³ from your every side.
 And the welfare of the prisoner who is yet full of hope,⁴
 who gives forth his tears like the dew of [Mount] Hermon,⁵
 and yearns to let them fall upon your hills.
 Weeping over your suffering, I am like a sea monster,⁶
 but when I dream of the return of your captivity,⁷
 I am a harp for your songs.
 My heart [sings] for God's Temple, and before God I long intensely,
 and for the [three] encampments* [of the Divine Presence,
 the Kohanim and Levites, the Israelites],
 and for all who approach your purity.⁸
 For there [in Zion] the Divine Presence resides,
 and [there] your Creator has opened gates for you
 opposite the gates of heaven.⁹
 And only the glory of God was your lamp,¹⁰
 but the moon, sun, and stars were not your luminaries.¹¹
 I would elect for my soul to be poured out¹² [in prayer],
 in the place where the prophetic spirit of God
 was poured out upon your chosen ones.
 You are the royal palace and you are God's Throne of Glory.¹³
 How have slaves sat upon the thrones of your heroes?
 If only I could be set adrift in the places where God
 was revealed to your seers and your emissaries.
 Who shall make me wings¹⁴ so that I might wander far away?¹⁵

(1) Cf. Psalms 122:6. (2) Cf. 107:3. (3) Cf. Isaiah 57:19. (4) Cf. Zechariah 9:12. (5) Psalms 133:3.
 (6) Cf. Micah 1:8. (7) Cf. Psalms 126:1. (8) Some editions read פְּנוּי טְהוּרִיק, the places where your pure
 ones prayed, or where your pure ones met. (9) Cf. Genesis 28:17. (10) Cf. Isaiah 60:1. (11) Cf. 60:19.
 (12) Cf. Joel 3:1. (13) Cf. Jeremiah 3:17. (14) Cf. Proverbs 23:5. (15) Psalms 55:8.

lands of the gentiles and to settle in Eretz Yisrael.

The author of the *Kuzari* took his own words to heart and prepared to make his way to the land for which he had always yearned. Had not Rabbi Yehudah HaLevi himself written, 'My heart is in the east while I am stranded in the farthest end of the west!' Despite many hardships he finally made his way to Damascus. An ancient manuscript states that R' Yehudah HaLevi composed this *kinnah* while journeying towards Eretz Yisrael and recited it when he reached Damascus, facing the direction of Zion. Although many historians believe that R' Yehudah HaLevi only got as far as Egypt (never even reaching Damascus), tradition has it that he finally reached Jerusalem (circa 1145). There he

fell to the ground, in a state of ecstasy to fulfill the verse יָרַצוּ צְבָדֶיךָ אֶחָד אֶבְנֶיהָ וְאֶת עֶפְרָה יִחַנְנוּ. For Your servants had cherished her stones and been gracious to her dust (Psalms 102:15). As he was kissing and embracing the dust near the Temple Mount he was trampled and killed by an Arab horseman.

לְבֵית אֵל וּלְפָנֵי אֵל ... וּלְמַחְנֵימֵי — For God's Temple, and before God ... and for the [three] encampments. Some editions read, לְבֵית אֵל וּלְפָנֵי אֵל, For Bethel and for Peniel, treating these words as place names. If so, מַחְנֵימֵי is also a place name, Mahanaim. Each of these three places was named by the Patriarch Jacob: Bethel, after his dream of angels ascending and descending a ladder (Genesis 28:19); Mahanaim, after his

לו.

ציון הלא תשאלי* לשלום אֶסְרִיָּה.
 דוֹרְשֵׁי שְׁלוֹמָהּ וְהֵם יִתֵּר עֲרֵבֶיָּה.
 מִיָּם וּמִזָּרַח וּמִצְפוֹן וְתִימָן,²
 שְׁלוֹם רְחוֹק וְקָרוֹב,³ שְׂאֵי מִכָּל עֲבָרֶיָּה.
 וְשְׁלוֹם אֶסִיר תִּקְוָה,⁴ נוֹתֵן דְּמַעְיוֹ כְּטַל הַרְמוֹן,⁵
 וְנֹבֵסֵף לְרִדְתָּם עַל הַרְבֵּיָּה.
 לְבַבּוֹת עֲנוּתָהּ אֲנִי תַנִּים,⁶
 וְעַת אֶחְלוֹם שֵׁיבַת שְׁבוּתָהּ,⁷ אֲנִי כְּנוֹר לְשִׁירֶיָּה.
 לְבֵי לְבֵית אֵל וּלְפָנֵי אֵל מְאֹד יִהְיֶה,
 וּלְמַחְנֵימֵי* וְכָל נִגְעֵי טְהוּרֶיָּה,⁸
 שֶׁם הַשְּׂכִינָה שְׁכוּנָה לָּהּ,
 וַיּוֹצֵרָהּ פֶּתַח לְמוֹל שְׁעָרֵי שְׁחָק שְׁעָרֶיָּה,⁹
 וּכְבוֹד יְהוָה לְבַד הִנֵּה מְאוּרָה,¹⁰
 וְאִין סֶהַר וְשִׁמְשׁ וְכוֹכְבִים מְאוּרָה,¹¹
 אֶבְחַר לְנִפְשִׁי לְהַשְׁתַּפֵּה,¹²
 בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים שְׁפוּכָה עַל בְּחִירֶיָּה.
 אֵת בֵּית מְלוּכָה, וְאֵת פֶּסֶא כְּבוֹד אֵל,¹³
 וְאִיךָ יִשְׁבּוּ עֲבָדִים עָלַי כְּסֹאוֹת גְּבִירֶיָּה.
 מִי יִתְּנֵנִי מְשׁוּטָט,
 בְּמָקוֹמוֹת אֲשֶׁר נִגְלוּ אֱלֹהִים לְחֻזְרֶיָּה וְצִירֶיָּה.
 מִי יַעֲשֶׂה לִי כְּנָפַיִם¹⁴ וְאֶרְחִיק נְדוּד,¹⁵

O Zion, will you not inquire. This very well-known *kinnah* was written by one of the greatest *paytanim* of all time, R' Yehudah (ben Shmuel) HaLevi. The beauty and passion of this *kinnah* reflects its author's life-long yearning to flee from the exile and to walk on the sacred soil of the Holy Land.

R' Yehudah HaLevi was born in Toledo, Spain (circa 1080) and received an intensive Torah education at the yeshiva of R' Yitzchak Alfasi (the Rif) in Lucena, Spain. In addition to studying Talmud, R' Yehudah became a master of literary style in Hebrew and Arabic. *Rashba* writes of him (Responsum 418): 'R' Yehudah HaLevi is foremost amongst all poetic singers in distinction and merit.' His greatest contribu-

tion to Torah knowledge was the *Kuzari*, a philosophical work telling of the king of the Khazar tribe who sought to determine the true religion by questioning a Christian, a Moslem and a Jewish scholar. The king was finally convinced of the authenticity of Judaism, which he, together with his entire kingdom, embraced as the true religion. In the course of the disputation, the Khazar king taunts the Jewish teacher that the Jews seem to pay insincere lip service to Zion, their homeland. They pray for the restoration of Zion three times daily, yet in practice they are not willing to leave behind the prosperity and comfort of the exile to live in Eretz Yisrael. Humiliated, the Jewish sage of the *Kuzari* resolves to tear himself away from the

I would cause my shattered heart to wander
amidst your shattered ruins.
I would fall on my face upon your soil
and intensely cherish your stones and favor your dust.¹
Even as I stand by the graves of my Patriarchs,
I behold in sheer wonderment the choicest burial sites in Hebron,
Mount Abarim² and Mount Hor,³ the resting places
of your two great lights [Moses and Aaron],
your beacons and your guides.
A breath of life for [our] souls is the air of your land;⁴
the powder of your dust is finer than flowing myrrh
and your river is like the honeycomb's drippings.
My soul would be pleased walking naked and barefoot⁴
among the desolate ruins, where your Holy of Holies once stood.
In the place of your Ark, which was [later] hidden, and in the place
of your Cherubim, which resided in your innermost chamber.
I will clip and throw away my glorious crown⁵ [of hair in mourning]
and I will curse the time when your nazirim
were defiled in the land of Babylon.⁶
How can food and drink taste pleasant to me, when I witness
the dogs dragging away your leonine youth?⁷
Or how can the light of day be sweet to my eye⁸ when I must see
the flesh of your corpses in the mouth of ravens?⁹
O cup of misery, slow down, give me some respite! For my thoughts
and my soul have already had their fill⁹ of your bitterness.
When I remember Oholah [Shomron]¹⁰ I will drink your wine; and
when I recall Oholibah [Jerusalem] I shall sip it to the very lees.
O Zion, consummation of beauty,¹¹ with love and charm
have you aroused yourself¹² greatly, and the souls
of your dear friends are bound up with you.
It is they who rejoice over your serenity, and who are pained
by your destruction and weep over your devastation.
From the pit of captivity, they yearn for you, and everyone
at his place prostrates himself towards your gates.

(1) Cf. Psalms 102:15. (2) See Deuteronomy 32:49-50. (3) See Numbers 20:24-25. (4) Isaiah 20:2.
(5) Cf. Jeremiah 7:29. (6) This seems to be the censor's emendation; some editions read
בארץ טמאה, in an unclean land. (7) Cf. Jeremiah 15:3. (8) Cf. Ecclesiastes 11:7.
(9) Cf. Psalms 38:8. (10) See commentary to kinnah 4. (11) Eichah 2:15. (12) Some editions
read עוררי מנא, you invigorated yourself; some editions read מנא, you have bound from yore.

— חיי נשמות ארץ ארצה — A breath of life for [our] souls is the air of your land. This stich can be interpreted two ways. It may refer to the souls of the living which receive an extra measure of vitality from the very air of the Holy Land. This is in accordance with the Talmudic dictum: The

air of Eretz Yisrael makes one wise (Bava Basra 158b). Or it may refer to the souls of the dead who are buried in the Land of Israel. They will rise immediately at the time of the Resurrection of the Dead. But those buried outside of the Land will not arise until underground passages

אניד לבתרי לבבי בין בתריה.
אפל לאפי עלי ארצה,
וארצה אבניך למאד ואחונן את עפרך!
אף פי בעמדי עלי קברות אבותי,
ואשתומם עלי חברון, מבחר קבריה.
הר העברים והר ההר,³
אשר שם שני אורים גדולים מאוריה ומוריה.
חיי נשמות ארץ ארצה,⁴
וממר דרור אבקת עפרך, ונפת צוף נהריה.
ינעם לנפשי הלוח ערום וניחף,⁴
עלי חרבות שממה, אשר היה דביריה.
במקום ארונה אשר נגנו ובמקום כרוביה,
אשר שכנו חררי חרקה.
אגוז ואשליה פאר נזרי ואקב זמן,
חלל בארץ בבל⁶ את נזיריה.
איך יערב לי אכול ושתות בעת אחרה,
פי יסחבו הפלבים את פפיריה?⁷
או איך מאור יום יהי מתוק לעיני,⁸
בעוד אראה בפי עורבים פגרי בשקיה?⁷
כוס היגונים לאט, הרפי מעט,
כי כבר מלאו כסלי ונפשי ממרוקיה.
עת אזכרה אהלה¹¹ אשתה חמרה,
ואזכור אהליכה, ואמצה את שמריה.
ציון כלילת יפי,¹¹ אהבה וחסן עוררי למאד,¹²
ובך נקשרו נפשות חבריה.
הם השמחים לשלונתה,
והפאבים על שוממותה, ובוכים על שבקיה.
מבור שבי שואפים נגדה,
ומשתחווים איש ממקומו, עלי נוכח שעריה.

encounter with an encampment of angels as he returned to Canaan from Aram (ibid. 32:3); and

Peniel, after he wrestled with the angel and prevailed (ibid. 32:31).

The flocks of your masses who were exiled and scattered
from mountain to hill,¹ they did not forget your sheepfolds.
Those who cling to your hems and exert themselves to climb
and grasp the branches of your date palm.²
Can Shinar [Babylon] and Pathros [Egypt] compare with you
despite their greatness, and can their worthless deities
be likened to your Urim V'Tumim?³
To whom can your anointed ones be compared?
To whom your prophets?
And to whom your Levites and singers?
All idolatrous kingdoms shall pass on and disappear,³
while your firm power is forever; your leaders [shall endure]
for all generations.⁴
Your God desired you for His residence,⁵
and fortunate is the man who chooses and draws near
and dwells in your courtyards.⁶
Fortunate is he who waits and arrives and witnesses
the rising of your light when your dawn bursts forth over him.⁷
To behold the goodness of your chosen ones,
and exult in your joy when you return
to the youthfulness of early times.

(1) Cf. Jeremiah 50:6. (2) Cf. Song of Songs 7:9. (3) Cf. Isaiah 2:18.
(4) Cf. Proverbs 27:24. (5) Cf. Psalms 132:13. (6) Cf. 65:5. (7) Cf. Isaiah 58:8.

שבטי ישראל, and the phrase שבטי ישראל, tribes of Yeshurun (another name for Israel). This accounted for all twenty-two letters of the aleph-beis.

According to Rashi the Urim V'Tumim was a slip of parchment upon which the שם הקפודש, Ineffable Four-Letter Name of HASHEM, was

written. This was the power that lit up the letters on the breastplate. Ramban (Exodus 28:30) adds that this Name was written by Moses in a manner entrusted by God to him alone; it was considered a heavenly handicraft. Ritva maintains that it was Divinely written and given to Moses.

עֲדְרֵי הַמוֹנֶה, אֲשֶׁר גָּלוּ,
וְנִתְפָּזְרוּ מֵהָרַ לְגִבְעוֹתָיו וְלֹא שָׁכְחוּ גְדֵרְיָךְ.
הַמְחֻזְקִים בְּשׂוּלְיָךְ וּמִתְאַמְצִים לְעֵלּוֹת,
וְלֹא חֲזוּ בְּסִנְסְנֵי תִמְרֵיךָ.²
שֶׁנֶּעַר וּפְתָרוּס, הַיֶּעֲרָכוֹךְ בְּגִדְלֶם,
וְאִם הִבְלֶם יִדְמוּ לְתַמְיָךְ וְאוֹרְיָךְ.*
אֶל מִי יִדְמוּ מְשִׁיחֶיךָ, וְאֶל מִי נְבִיאֶיךָ,
וְאֶל מִי לְוִיָּךְ וְשִׁירֵיךָ.
יִשְׁנֶה וַיִּחְלוֹף כְּלִיל כָּל מַמְלְכוֹת הָאֱלִילִים,³
חֶסֶדְךָ לְעוֹלָם לְדוֹר וְדוֹר נְזִירֶיךָ.⁴
אֵנָּה לְמוֹשֶׁב אֱלֹהֶיךָ,⁵
וְאֲשֶׁרֵי אֲנוֹשׁ יִבְחַר וַיִּקְרַב וַיִּשְׁכּוֹן בְּחֻצְרֶיךָ;⁶
אֲשֶׁרֵי מִחְכָּה וַיִּגְיַע וַיִּרְאֶה עֲלוֹת אוֹרְךָ,
וַיִּבְקְעוּ עָלָיו שְׁחֵרֶיךָ.⁷
לְרֵאוֹת בְּטוֹבַת בְּחִירֶיךָ, לְעֵלּוֹת בְּשִׁמְחַתְךָ,
בְּשׂוֹבֵךְ אֵלַי קְדָמוֹת נְעוֹרֶיךָ.

are prepared for them to roll all the way to Eretz Yisrael, where they will be revived (see Bereishis Rabbah 96:5).

To your Urim V'Tumim. The breastplate, worn by the Kohen Gadol was made of linen; blue, purple and red wools; and gold threads. It was folded over and the Urim V'Tumim (see below) was inserted in the fold.

Twelve precious stones were attached to the front of the breastplate in four rows of three stones each, with each stone inscribed with the name of one of the tribes. When the Urim V'Tumim was consulted, the letters etched on the stones lit up and spelled out a message. Since the letters חסדק do not appear in the names of the tribes, the stones were also engraved with the names of the Patriarchs יצחק יצחק יצחק.

41.

שָׂאֵלֵי O [Torah] by fire consumed, seek* the welfare of your mourners, of those who yearn to lodge in the courtyard of your dwelling.

anger and retribution for the destruction of the works of R' Moshe ben Maimon, known as the Rambam (Maimonides).

There were many great scholars, especially in southern France, who did not agree with many of Rambam's opinions in his *Moreh Nevuchim* (*Guide for the Perplexed*) and his philosophical observations in the first book of his *Yad HaChazakah* (*Sefer HaMada*). Some went so far as to place a ban on studying or even owning these works. A tremendous controversy erupted and the situation got out of control. The hysteria reached its terrible climax when members of the anti-Rambam camp submitted copies of his philosophical writings to the monks of the Dominican Order for the sake of determining whether these works contained heretical ideas.

The Dominicans, of course, swiftly concluded that the Rambam's writings were blasphemous and false. They publicly burned all copies of *Moreh Nevuchim* and *Sefer HaMada* that they could lay their hands on. This was done in Montpellier France in 1234. In the year 1242, fanatical churchmen once again burnt the Rambam's works in the streets of Paris.

In a letter recording these events, R' Hillel of Verona makes the following observations:

God looked down from heaven and avenged the honor of our holy master, Rambam, and his works. He poured His wrath upon the Jewish communities of France. You should not ask in wonderment, 'How did God disregard twelve hundred manuscripts of Talmud and Aggadah and allow them to be burnt as retribution for the *Moreh Nevuchim* and *Sefer HaMada*? Rather, you must bear in mind that R' Moshe ben Maimon was almost second in his generation to Moshe Rabbeinu, and the righteousness of the entire generation depended upon him... If you ask: 'Who can be sure that the Talmud was burned because of the burning of the Rambam's works?' I will answer you. This is the sign and proof. Take note of this: Not even forty days passed between the conflagration of the works of our master and the burning of the Talmud. On the very spot where the Rambam's works were destroyed, the Talmud was later burnt! The ashes of the burnt Talmud mingled with the ashes of the Rambam's volumes, for those ashes still remained in that very place. This served as a clear lesson to one and all, Jew and gentile alike.

The destruction of the Talmud was a crushing blow to the venerable and ancient Jewish community of France. It marked the beginning of its very rapid decline and eventual disintegration.

With the conditions of the Jews in France steadily worsening, R' Yechiel emigrated to Eretz Yisrael in 1260 together with a large group of

French Talmudists. He settled in Acre, where he established the Talmudic academy *Midrash HaGadol d' Paris*. He is believed to have died in 1267.

One of the participants in the great Talmudic debate in Paris, R' Shmuel of Falaise summed up the enormity of the tragedy in the following elegy:

My spirit is gone, my strength is sapped, the light of my eyes has dimmed, because of the tyrant whose hand weighed very heavily upon us, when he seized the core of our soul and the delight of our eyes. Now we have no holy book in which to study and meditate. May the Almighty God avenge His people and may He say to our misery, 'It is enough!' (quoted in *Teshuvos Maharam MiRothenburg* 250).

In 1306, the glorious chapter of Jewish history in medieval France came an abrupt close, when King Philip IV (the Fair) expelled the Jews from all of France. French Jewry, which had enriched our eternal Torah legacy with the magnificent Talmud commentaries of Rashi and Tosafos, was no longer.

The Maharam of Rothenburg

The author of this *kinnah* was R' Meir ben Baruch (1220-1293) better known as the Maharam of Rothenburg, who studied in the Yeshiva of Rabbeinu Yechiel of Paris and is said to have personally witnessed the tragic burning of the Talmud in 1242.

Born in Worms, Germany in the year 1220, Maharam first studied under the greatest Tosafists of that land including R' Yitzchak (author of *Or Zarua*) in Wurtzberg and R' Yehudah ben Moshe HaKohen of Mainz.

Maharam is considered to be one of the last important *Baalei Tosafos*, but his major contribution to Rabbinic literature was his prolific responsa in all areas of Halachah. Approximately one thousand of Maharam's responsa have been published and his rulings have been accepted by all subsequent generations as the opinion of a leading halachic authority.

From the seat of his rabbinate in Rothenburg, Maharam guided German Jewry throughout the second half of the thirteenth century. However, in his final years, he met with tragedy. The terrible burden of persecution was making life intolerable for the Jews of Germany. Taxation, pogroms, blood libels, harsh decrees — all of these spurred Jews to flee from this miserable exile and to make the arduous journey to Eretz Yisrael. Emperor Rudolph I did not wish to lose the Jews from whom he enjoyed extorting so much gold, so, in the year 1286, he declared the Jews to be his personal property — *Servi Camerae*, serfs of the Emperor's Treasury. He prohibited Jews from leaving Germany and confiscated the property of

מא.

שָׂאֵלֵי שְׂרֹפָה בְּאֵשׁ * לְשִׁלּוּם אֲבֵלֵיךָ.
הַמְתַּאֲנִים שְׂכוֹן, בְּחִצְרֵךְ וְבוֹלְיֵךְ.

שָׂאֵלֵי שְׂרֹפָה בְּאֵשׁ * — O [Torah] by fire consumed, seek... Twenty-four cartloads of the Talmud and its commentaries were publicly burned in the streets of Paris, France in the year 1242. The events leading to this tragedy give us a glimpse of the terrible persecution which hounded our ancestors in those dark times.

The French king, Louis IX (1226-1270), was a fanatical religious zealot, so much so, in fact, that he earned himself the title of Saint Louis. His piety, however, did not extend to his Jewish subjects, against whom he enacted many harsh and discriminatory laws. The king's pious zeal manifested itself most clearly in the favor he extended to apostates who abandoned Judaism. To encourage conversion, the king himself would often attend their baptisms.

Nicholas Donin of La Rochelle was an apostate who was especially vicious in his hatred for his former co-religionists, and who caused the forced baptism of the Jews of Anjou and Poitiers. Five hundred Jews from these cities surrendered before the threat of death and were baptized, while the majority of Jews, 3,000 martyrs in all, chose to meet their death while sanctifying God's Name.

Donin realized that the bulwark of firm Jewish faith was the holy Talmud, the repository of our traditions and teachings. He felt that if he could destroy the Talmud he could easily eradicate the Jews. To that end, he went to Pope Gregory IX in Rome, where he presented a formal accusation against the Talmud. He charged that it contained blasphemies against God and against Christianity, and that it alone was the cause of the Jews' steadfast refusal to accept the 'true' faith.

The Pope issued orders for a seizure of all copies of the Talmud and for a thorough examination and evaluation of its contents. The churchmen of France were only too eager to obey this decree, so on March 3, 1240, while the Jews were in their synagogues, all of their sacred tomes were seized and confiscated. On June 12th of that year a public debate was held in Paris between Donin and four of the most eminent rabbinical authorities in France.

The Jewish deputation was led by R' Yechiel ben Yosef (died 1268) who headed the Yeshiva in Paris. Many of the major sages of that period studied under him. These include R' Yitzchok of Corbeil (his son-in-law) and Maharam of Rothenburg.

The other representatives were R' Moshe of Coucy, R' Yehudah ben David of Melun and R' Shmuel ben Shlomo of Falaise.

Although R' Yechiel and his colleagues displayed great scholarship, courage, and dignity in their defense of the Talmud, the official verdict

against them was a foregone conclusion. The Talmud would have been immediately consigned to the flames if not for the lone staunch ally the Jews had amongst the churchmen, the bishop of Sens (Shantz), whose arguments and pleas averted any evil decree for one year. At the year's end, while the good bishop was standing in the presence of King Louis, he suddenly convulsed and died in a most grotesque fashion. The anti-Semitic priests convinced the gullible king that this was actually an act of Divine retribution against the bishop for his heresy in defending the blasphemous Talmud. A tribunal of church elders condemned the Talmud to be burnt. Their agents eagerly searched and confiscated over 1200 manuscripts of the Talmud and commentaries. We must bear in mind that this occurred two centuries before the invention of the printing press. Each one of these volumes was a handwritten manuscript which took months, even years to write, at tremendous effort and expense. Moreover, many of the more recent works such as novellae by the Tosafists of France and their correspondence and halachic decisions were transcribed only in a limited number of copies and would be lost forever.

R' Yechiel recognized that this tragedy threatened the very survival of the French Jewish community. He therefore recorded the proceedings of his disputation in a work called simply *ויכוחו* [Vikuach], *Debate*. In his introduction, paraphrasing the words of Jeremiah (Eichah 4:9), he states, *כי תהא טובים הללי חרב מדיןשבים שוקמים, קלי תוריה*. For those put to death by the sword were better off than those who sat in desolation without Torah.

In 1242, on Friday, the day before the *Shabbos* when *Parashas Chukas* would be read, twenty-four wagonloads of holy *sefarim* were burnt.

R' Tzidkiyah ben Avrohom HaRofoh, who lived at that time, writes:

From Torah scholars who were involved, we heard that the Rabbis inquired of heaven by means of a dream (שְׂאֵלַת הַלָּלוֹת) to discover whether this terrible event had been so decreed by the Almighty. The heavenly reply was given in three words: *בְּרַחֲמֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ*. This is the decree of the Torah, the Aramaic version of the opening words of that week's Torah reading — *וְזאת חֻקֵּי הַתּוֹרָה* — R' Tzidkiyah further notes that, in commemoration of this tragic event, some pious people customarily fast on Erev *Shabbos* of *Parashas Chukas* every year (*Shibbolei HaLeket* 263).

The Ashes of the Rambam's Works

R' Hillel of Verona, Italy was an eyewitness to these tragic events in Paris. He considered the burning of the Talmud as a clear sign of Divine

of those who long [to roll] in the dust of the [Holy] Land;¹
 of those distressed and bewildered by the incineration of your scrolls;²
 of those who walk in the darkness [of exile], deprived of illumination;³
 of those who wait hopefully for the light of day,
 which will shine upon them and upon you.
 [Seek] the welfare of the sighing mortal who cries with a broken heart,
 who constantly laments over the excruciating pains of your suffering;
 who howls like a serpent and ostriches
 and cries out a bitter eulogy on your behalf.
 O how did it come to pass [O Holy Torah] that you who were given
 [by God] the All-Consuming Fire,⁴ should be consumed
 by man-made fires — and yet, those alien intruders
 [who burned you] escaped unscathed from your flaming coals?
 Until when, O pampered [gentile nations],⁵ will you lounge
 in excessive serenity, while the faces of my
 blossoming youths are covered with thistles?⁶
 You sit with overbearing arrogance to judge the children
 of God for every libelous accusation, and you drag us
 before your judges.
 In addition, you issued a decree to burn the fiery Law* and its statutes;
 therefore praiseworthy is he who will repay you
 with the punishment you deserve?
 O my Rock! [Who transmitted the Torah at Sinai] with flame and fire!⁷
 Was it with this in mind that He [God] gave you [the Torah]
 so that in the end the edges of your columns should be set ablaze?
 O Sinai, was it for this reason that God chose you
 while He spurned taller [mountains]* and made His light shine
 within your boundaries?

(1) Cf. Amos 2:7. (2) Some editions read גריליך, your parchments. (3) Cf. Isaiah 50:10.
 (4) Deut. 9:3. (5) Isaiah 47:8. (6) Cf. Proverbs 24:31. (7) Psalms 137:8.

יְשׁוּאָפִים בְּעֶפֶר אֶרֶץ — Of those who long [to roll] in the dust of the [Holy] Land. The Talmud (Kesubos 112a) relates that Rav Chiya bar Ganda would actually roll around in the dust of Eretz Yisrael to fulfill the dictate of the verse, For Your servants had cherished her stones, and been gracious to her dust (Psalms 102:15).

אֵשׁ אוֹכֵלָה — The All-Consuming Fire. Scripture refers to God as אֵשׁ אוֹכֵלָה, an All-Consuming Flame (Deuteronomy 9:3). The Talmud (Yoma 21b) identifies six types of fires which have different properties. The fire of the Shechinah, the Divine Presence, is so powerful that it can overwhelm any other flame — even that of the fiery ministering angels.

אֵשׁ דָּת — The fiery Law. The Torah was given, From His right hand, the fiery Law unto them (Deuteronomy 33:2). Rashi ex-

plains that when the Torah was given, the top of Mount Sinai was engulfed in flames; and the Torah itself (as it appears before God in the highest celestial spheres) is black fire (in the shape of the letters) imposed upon white fire (which serves as the parchment).

אֵשׁ בְּלִפְנֵי [אֵשׁ] — [Who transmitted the Torah at Sinai] with flame and fire! The Torah states: And Mount Sinai was engulfed in smoke, because HASHEM descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke from a furnace and the entire mountain shook greatly (Exodus 19:18). Elsewhere it is stated: And the appearance of the glory of HASHEM was like an All-Consuming Fire at the top of the mountain in the eyes of the Children of Israel (ibid. 24:17).

Sinai ... סיני ... בְּךָ בָּחַר אֱלֹהִים וּפָאָס בְּגֵדוֹלִים — Sinai ... God chose you while He spurned taller (moun-

הַשׁוֹאֲפִים בְּעֶפֶר אֶרֶץ,¹ וְהַכּוֹאֲבִים הַמְשׁוֹתוֹקְמִים,
 עָלֵי מוֹקֵד גְּלִילֵיךָ,²
 הוֹלְכִים חֲשָׁכִים וְאֵין נֹגֵה,³ וְקוֹיִם לְאוֹר יוֹמָם,
 אֲשֶׁר יִזְרַח עֲלֵיהֶם וְעָלֶיךָ.
 וְשָׁלוֹם אָנוּשׁ נֶאֱנַח בּוֹכָה בְּלֵב נִשְׁפָּר,
 תָּמִיד מְקוֹנֵן עָלֵי צִירֵי חֲבָלֶיךָ.
 וַיִּתְאוּנֵן כְּתַנִּיִּים וּבְנוֹת יַעֲנָה,
 וַיִּקְרָא מִסְפָּר מֵר בְּגִלְלֵיךָ.
 אֵיכָה נִתּוֹנָה בְּאֵשׁ אוֹכֵלָה,⁴
 תֵּאֱכַל בְּאֵשׁ בְּשָׂרָה, וְלֹא נִכּוּוּ זְרִים בְּגַחְלֵיךָ.
 עַד אֵן עֲדִינָה⁵ תְּהִי שׁוֹכְנָה בְּרַב הַשְּׁקֵט,
 וּפְנֵי פְרָחֵי הָלֵא כִסּוּ חֲרוּלֵיךָ,⁶
 תֵּשֵׁב בְּרַב גְּאֹנָה, לְשִׁפּוֹט בְּנֵי אֵל בְּכָל הַמְּשֻׁפָּטִים,
 וְתִבְיֵא בְּפִלִיךָ.
 עוֹד תִּגְזוֹר לְשָׂרוֹף דָּת אֵשׁ* וְחֻקִּים,
 וְלָכֵן אֲשֶׁרֵי שִׁישְׁלָם לָךְ גְּמוּלָיִךָ.⁷
 צוּרֵי בְּלִפְדֵי וְאֵשׁ* הַלְבַּעְבוּר וְזֶה נִתְּנָה כִּי בְּאֶחָרִיתֶךָ,
 תִּלְהַט אֵשׁ בְּשׁוּלֵיךָ.
 סִינֵי הָעַל כֹּן בְּךָ בָּחַר אֱלֹהִים,
 וּמֵאֵס בְּגֵדוֹלִים* וְזָרַח בְּגִבּוֹלֵיךָ.

those who did.

Maharam vigorously opposed this decree and together with his family attempted to flee Germany. Unfortunately, when he reached the border with Lombardy, he was recognized by a Jewish apostate who reported him to the royal agents. The Emperor imprisoned Maharam in the Castle of Ensisheim. He demanded an exorbitant ransom from the Jewish community if they were to obtain their leader's release.

German Jewry, led by Maharam's disciple Rabbeinu Asher (the Rosh), began to amass the enormous sum of 23,000 talents of silver to redeem their Rav. However, Maharam refused to permit them to pay such an exorbitant sum, for the Mishnah (Gittin 45a) teaches: 'For the sake of public welfare it is prohibited to redeem Jewish captives for an exorbitant sum' (lest this encourage despots to kidnap other Jews for high ransom in the future).

R' Asher disagreed with his mentor's decision.

He argued that the Mishnah's ruling did not apply to the generation's greatest Torah leader, for whom no amount could be considered exorbitant. Thus, he guaranteed the Emperor that he would personally raise the full ransom. However, Maharam died in prison in the year 1293, before R' Asher was able to raise the full amount. Fearing that he would now be held hostage in Maharam's place, R' Asher fled to Spain where he died in 1327.

Maharam died in prison in the year 1293, but his remains were not released for burial until they were ransomed fourteen years later by a wealthy Jew, Alexander Wimpfen, whose sole request was that he be buried near this great leader.

Maharam's noble act of self-sacrifice achieved its purpose. Never again in Jewish history were great Rabbinic leaders held hostage in order to extort enormous ransom payments from the Jews.

[Did God choose you, Sinai, the lowest mountain] to be an ominous sign for the Torah Law that it would be belittled and forced to descend from its glory? Behold, I will illustrate your condition with appropriate parables! This may be compared to the king who wept at his son's [wedding] feast because he foresaw his son's demise, so too, [O Sinai,] did you foretell your fate in your own words. Therefore, O Sinai, instead of a royal robe, garb yourself in sackcloth, cloak yourself in widow's garb; change your attire! And I will shed tears until they flow like a river¹ that reaches to the gravesites of your two most noble princes. They are Moses and Aaron [who were] on Mount Hor. And I will ask them if there is perhaps a new Torah, therefore your scrolls have been burnt!

[They accepted the Torah during Sivan,] the third month, but [Tammuz] the fourth month revolted [against your Torah], to destroy your delight and your most exquisite beauty.² The Tablets of the Law were shattered [by Moses] and [Tammuz'] folly was repeated by incinerating the Law in fire.³ Is this the payment of your double reward? I wonder to myself, 'How can food ever again be pleasant to my taste after I have seen what your plunderers gathered?' Into the main public square [they heaped our Talmud scrolls] like [the condemned property of] an apostate city;* there men, rejected from entering your congregation, burned exalted spoils. I know not how to find the straight road⁴ [which will lead me to fathom your ways]; has not your straight path become shrouded in mourning? It would be sweeter to my mouth than honey to mix tears into [my] drink, and to have my feet chained in your shackles [so that I might properly commiserate with your sorrow]. It would be pleasant to my eyes to absorb the waters of my tears, until [the tears] would disappear for all those who cling to edges of your robes.⁵ But they would evaporate as they rolled down my cheeks, because my compassion is intense over the wanderings of your Master.

(1) Cf. Eichah 2:18. (2) Cf. 2:15. (3) Cf. Deuteronomy 33:2.

(4) Cf. Jeremiah 18:15. (5) Cf. 1 Samuel 15:27.

idolatry, he is condemned to death by stoning. But if an entire city or a majority of its inhabitants are seduced by some of its citizens to worship idols, then this place is adjudged with the special laws of עיר הנדחת, an apostate city.

The idolaters are executed by the sword, whereas of the city the Torah says: *And you shall gather all of its contents into the middle of the main open place of the city and you shall burn with fire both the entire city and all of its contents, a total*

להיות למופת לדת, כי תתמעט ותרד מִכְבוֹדָהּ. והן אִמְשׁוּל מִשְׁלִיךְ. מִשָּׁל לְמֶלֶךְ, אֲשֶׁר בָּכָה לְמִשְׁתָּה בְּנוֹ, צָפָה אֲשֶׁר יִגְנַע פֶּן אֶת בְּמִלְכִיךָ. תַּחַת מַעֲיֵל, תִּתְכַּסּ סִינֵי לְבוּשֶׁה בְּשֶׁק, תַּעֲטָה לְבוּשׁ אֲלֻמְנוֹת, תַּחֲלִיף שְׂמֻלְיָךְ. אוֹרִיד דְּמָעוֹת, עַדִּי יִהְיוּ כְנַחֲלִי, וְיִגְיַעוּ לְקַבְרוֹת שְׁנֵי שָׂרֵי אֲצִילְיָךְ. מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן בְּהַר הַהָר, וְאַשְׁאֵל הַיֵּשׁ תּוֹרַה חֲדָשָׁה, בְּכֵן נִשְׂרָפוּ גְלִילְיָךְ. חֲדָשׁ שְׁלִישִׁי וְהִקְשֵׁר הַרְבִּיעִי, לְחֻשְׁחִית חֲמֻדְתָּךְ, וְכָל יָפִי כְלִילְיָךְ.² גִּדַע לְלַחֲוֹת, וְעוֹד שְׁנָה בְּאוֹלָתוֹ, לְשָׂרוֹף בְּאֵשׁ דֵּת,³ הִזָּה תִשְׁלוּם כְּפִלְיָךְ. אֲתַמָּה לְנַפְשֵׁי אִיךָ יַעֲרֵב לְחֻבֵי אָכוֹל, אַחֲרֵי רְאוּתִי, אֲשֶׁר אָסַפּוּ שְׁלִילְיָךְ. אֵל תוֹךְ רְחוּבָה כְּנַחֲתָ*, וְשָׂרָפוּ שְׁלָל עֲלוּוֹן, אֲשֶׁר תִּמְאֵס לְבַא קְהֲלִיךָ. לֹא אֲדַע לְמִצּוֹא דְרָךְ סְלוּלָה,⁴ הֲכִי הָיוּ אֲבָלוֹת, נְתִיב יִשְׂרָאֵל מִסְלִיךָ. יִמְתַּק בְּפִי מִדְּבַשׁ, לְמִסוּךָ בְּמִשְׁקָה דְּמָעוֹת, וְלִרְגְלֵי הָיִיתָ כְּבוֹל כְּבִלְיָךְ. יַעֲרֵב לְעֵינַי, שְׂאוּב מִימֵי דְמָעֵי, עַדִּי כָלוּ לְכָל מַחְזִיק בְּכִנְף מַעֲלִילְיָךְ.⁵ אַךְ יַחֲרֵבוּ בְּרִדְתָם עַל לְחַיִּי, עֲבוֹר כִּי נִכְמְרוּ רַחֲמֵי לְנִדּוֹד בְּעִלְיָךְ.

tains). The Talmud (Sotah 5a) teaches that God rejected lofty mountains and summits and rested His Holy Presence upon Sinai because it is the lowest of all peaks. This emphasizes that no quality is more beloved to God than genuine humility. Moreover, even after God designated Sinai for greatness, the mountain remained low and humble (see Megillah 29a).

— *By incinerating the Law in fire.* This refers to the Talmud's statement (Taanis 26b) that on the seventeenth of Tammuz, the gentile general Apostumus committed the terrible sacrilege of burning a Sefer Torah.

— *Like the [condemned property of] an apostate city.* If an individual Jew is guilty of

[God] took His purseful of silver pieces¹

and embarked on a distant journey;² and behold,
when He departed, your sheltering shadows fled.³

And I am left behind like someone bereft of all his children,
utterly forlorn;⁴ so have I been left all alone.

I am like a [stone] flagstaff planted
atop your towering mountain peak.⁵

No longer do I hear the sounds of [your] musicians, male and female,
because the strings of your musical instruments have been torn.

I will clothe and cover myself with sackcloth, because [your martyrs]
are very precious to me, and as powerful

and numerous as the sand are the souls of your corpses.

I am deeply perplexed by the light of day which shines brightly
towards everyone, yet towards you and me it casts only darkness.

○ cry out to the Rock with bitter voice over your ruination
and your debilitation; ○ if only He would remember
the love of Your wedding day.⁶

Gird yourself with garments of sackcloth⁷ over the conflagration
which burst out and tore you to pieces,
and wiped out your towering [Torah scholars].

May the Rock [of salvation] comfort you according to
the days of your affliction,⁸ and may He return the
captivity of the Tribes of Jeshurun⁹ and exalt your degraded ones.

Once again you will adorn yourself¹⁰ with ornaments of scarlet,
and you will take up the tambourine and go out in a circle
dance and rejoice with your dancing.

At that time my heart will be uplifted, when your Rock will be a light
unto you, to brighten your darkness¹¹ and to illuminate your gloom.

(1) Cf. Proverbs 7:20. (2) 7:19. (3) Cf. Song of Songs 2:17.

(4) Cf. Isaiah 49:21. (5) Cf. 30:17. (6) Cf. Jeremiah 2:2. (7) Cf. 6:26.

(8) Cf. Psalms 90:15. (9) Cf. Jeremiah 30:3. (10) 31:3. (11) Cf. II Samuel 22:29.

Moab assured him that he had nothing to fear for the God of the Jews had already abandoned His Temple, as we read: *For the Man is not at home, He has gone on a faraway journey* (Proverbs 7:19). Still Nebuchadnezzar was reluctant. Perhaps there are still righteous men

whose prayers will save the Jews and their Temple? Again Ammon and Moab reassured him, for it is written, *He has taken a bag of silver with Him* (ibid. 7:20), i.e., in anticipation of the Destruction, God has removed the righteous who are as precious as silver coins!

לָקַח צָרוֹר בְּסִפּוֹ,¹ הֵלֵךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ לְמַרְחֹק,²
וְעָמּוֹ הֵלֵא נְסוּ צִלְלֵיהָ.³

וְאֲנִי בְּשֹׂכֵל וְגִלְמוֹד,⁴ נִשְׁאַרְתִּי לְבַד מֵהֶם,
בְּתֶרֶן בְּרֹאשׁ הָרִים⁵ מְגִדּוּלֵיהָ.

לֹא אֲשֻׁמַּע עוֹד לְקוֹל שָׂרִים וְשָׂרוֹת,
עָלֵי כִי נִתְקַן, חֲבָלֵי תַפִּי חֲלִילֵיהָ.

אֶלְבֶּשׂ וְאֶתְכַסּ בְּשֵׂק, כִּי לִי מְאֹד יִקְרוּ,
עֲצָמֹי כְּחוֹל יַרְבֵּיוֹן, נַפְשוֹת חֲלִילֵיהָ.

אֶתְמַה מְאֹד עַל מְאוֹר הַיּוֹם,

אֲשֶׁר יִזְרַח אֵל כָּל אֶבֶל יִחְשִׂיךְ אֵלַי וְאֶלֶיךָ,
וְעַקֵּי בְּקוֹל מַר לְצוֹר, עַל שְׂבִרוֹנֶיהָ וְעַל חֲלִילֶיהָ,

וְלוֹ יִזְכּוֹר אֶהְבֵּת כְּלוּלֵיהָ.⁶

חֲגִרֵי לְבוֹשׁ שֵׁקִי עָלֵי הַהִבְעָרָה,

אֲשֶׁר יִצְתָה לְחַלֵּק וּסְפָתָה אֶת תְּלוּלֵיהָ.

כִּימֵי עֲנוּתֶךָ⁷ יִנְחַמֶךָ צוֹר,

וְיִשִּׁיב שְׁבוֹת שְׂבִטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל,⁸ וְיִרְיֵם אֶת שִׁפְלֵיהָ.

עוֹד תַּעֲרִיטִי בְּעָרֵי שְׁנֵי וְתַף תִּקְחֵי,

תִּלְכִי בְּמַחוּל, וְצַהֲלֵי בְּמַחוּלֵיהָ.

יָרוֹם לְבָבִי בְּעַת צוּרְךָ⁹ לְאוֹר לָהּ,

וְיִגִּיעַ לְחֶשֶׁכָּהּ וְיֵאִירוּ אֶפְלָיֶיהָ.

conflagration for HASHEM, your God (Deuteronomy 13:17). And that is just what happened to the Talmud volumes on that fateful Friday in Paris.

לָקַח צָרוֹר בְּסִפּוֹ — [God] took His purseful of silver pieces. The Talmud (Sanhedrin 96b)

relates that Ammon and Moab are the most malicious enemies of the Jews. They heard that Nebuchadnezzar was apprehensive about destroying the Temple. He was afraid that he would meet with the same ruinous disaster as others had before him when they had attempted to harm God's Holy Sanctuary. So Ammon and

KINNAH IN MEMORY OF THE MARTYRS OF CHURBAN EUROPE

by Rabbi Shlomo Halberstam, shlita, Bobover Rav

זָכְרוּ נָא Remember, please, and lament, O all of Israel,
let your voices be heard on high.

For Germany has destroyed our people, during stormy days of the World War,
with killings, horrible and cruel, with starvation and thirst.

For all generations, do not forget,

until you will merit witnessing the [ultimate] consolation.

[Remember] their screams and their weeping as they were
tightly packed and locked into the train's [cattle] cars.

Like sheep to the slaughter they were led to be
incinerated in the crematorium ovens.

May the sound of their pleading cries be eternally remembered,
by the One Who dwells in the Heavens.

When they proclaimed, 'Shema Yisrael'
they offered up their lives to the Lord of lords.

Roshei Yeshivah and their students, and the
multitudes of Your people were there.

They enslaved them with brutal tortures,
and they slaughtered them with high-handed arrogance.

The blood of tender babes cries out to You from the earth, [saying:]
'Exact vengeance for the children and the women;
let no living soul escape alive!'

For the burning of thousands of study halls and synagogues,
and for myriad of Torah scrolls and their students,
we shall lament with raised and screaming voices.

They set God's sanctuaries aflame, they ignited them,
and our eyes witnessed this.

Let those who lit the fire suffer retribution;
may God judge the corpse-filled nations.

Cry out loud, O heaven and earth, for the thousands of cities, citadels of Torah,
for the countries of Europe and their Jewish communities,

the heirs and trustees of our traditions,
for righteous tzaddikim, elders, pious chassidim,
all those who cleaved unto a faith so pure.

From the day we were exiled from our homeland,
there was never an annihilation as awesome as this.

Be compassionate with our remnant; look down upon us, please, from heaven,
at the [death] camps of the martyrs, ten times as many as those who left Egypt.

Rebuild our holy Temple, and provide us with double consolation,
Exalt us, and bring us back to Zion and Jerusalem.

kinnah to bemoan the tragedy of Churban Europe, and it is recited in many congregations. When the Rav was asked for permission to include his kinnah and its translation in this edition of kinnoh, he graciously conceded. Then he explained why he had written it: 'For years I had wanted to express my grief over my personal loss

and Klal Yisrael's loss, in a special kinnah, but I hesitated. I felt that in order to compose a kinnah one must be on the exalted level of R' Elazar HaKaliel, who wrote with Ruach HaKodesh, Divine inspiration. Moreover, he was a master of Kabbalistic secrets and knew the mystical incarnations of the ministering angels. Still, many

קינה לזכרון הקדושים של חורבן איירופא

מאת הרב שלמה האלבערשטאם שליט"א, האדמו"ר מבאבאב

זָכְרוּ נָא וְקוֹנְנוּ כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, קוֹלְכֶם יִשְׁמַע בְּרָמָה,
כִּי הִשְׁמִידָה גֵרְמָנְיָא אֶת עַמָּנוּ בַּיָּמִי זֶעַם הַמִּלְחָמָה,

בְּמִיתוֹת מְשֻׁנוֹת אֲכֹזְרִיּוֹת, בְּרָעַב וּבְצָמָה,
אֶל תִּשְׁכַּחוּ בְּכָל הַדּוֹרוֹת, עַרְי תִּזְכּוּ לְרֵאוֹת בְּנִחְמָה.

צַעֲקַתְם וּבְכִיּוֹתֵיהֶם, צְפוּפִים וּסְגוּרִים בְּקָרוּנִים,
בְּצִאֵן לְטִבַּח יוּבְלוֹ, לְשַׂרְפָּה בְּכַבְּשׁוֹנִים,

קוֹל שׁוֹעֵם יִזְכַּר תָּמִיד לְפָנַי שׁוֹכֵן מְעוּנִים,
בְּקָרְאֵם שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, מִסְרוּ נַפְשָׁם לְאֲדוֹנֵי הָאֲדוּגִים.

רְאִשֵׁי יְשִׁיבוֹת וְתִלְמִידֵיהֶם, וְהַמוֹנֵי עַמָּךְ שְׁמָה,
הַעֲבִידוּם בְּעִגְיוֹנֵים קָשִׁים, וְהִרְגוּם בְּיַד רָמָה,

דְּמֵי יְלָדִים רַכִּים צוֹעֲקִים אֵלֶיךָ מִן הָאֲדָמָה,
נִקּוּם נִקְמַת טָף וְנָשִׁים, לֹא תִחַיֶּה כָּל נִשְׁמָה.

עַל שְׂרַפַּת אֲלֵפֵי מִדְרָשׁוֹת וּכְתֵי כְּנִסְיוֹת,
רַבּוֹת סִפְרֵי תוֹרָה וְלוֹמְדֵיהֶן, נִקּוּן בְּשֵׁאוֹת,

שִׁלְחוּ בָּאֵשׁ מִקְדָּשֵׁי אֵל, הַצִּיתוּ וְעִינֵינוּ צוֹפִיּוֹת,
יִשְׁלַם הַמַּבְעִיר אֶת הַבְּעֵרָה, יָדִין בְּגוֹיִם מְלֵא גִּוִּיּוֹת.

וְעַקוּ שָׁמַיִם וְאֲדָמָה, עַל אֲלֵפֵי עֲזָרוֹת מְבַצְרֵי תוֹרָה,
אֲרָצוֹת אִירוּפָא וְקַהְלוֹתֵיהֶן, נוֹחֲלֵי וּמְקַיְמֵי מִסוּרָה,

צַדִּיקִים וְקָנִים וְחֹסִידִים, דְּבַקֵּי אֲמוּנָה טְהוֹרָה,
מִיּוֹם גָּלִינוּ מֵאֲרָצְנוּ לֹא הָיָה כְּזֶה כְּלִיּוֹן נוּרָא.

רַחֵם עַל שְׂאֲרֵיתֵנוּ, הַבֵּט נָא מִשְׁמַיִם,
לְמַחְגוֹת הַקְּדוֹשִׁים, פִּי עֶשֶׂר כִּיּוֹצְאֵי מִצְרַיִם,

קוֹמֵם בֵּית קְרָשְׁנוּ, וְנִחְמָנוּ בְּכַפְלָיִם,
רוֹמְמָנוּ, וְהִבְיָאֵנוּ לְצִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם.

זָכְרוּ נָא — Remember, please. The destruction of European Jewry by the Nazis during World War II was the most massive calamity to befall our people since the Destruction of the Second Temple. As explained in the prefatory notes to kinnah 25, which laments the devastation of the Crusades, Torah Jews recognize that all Jewish misfortunes have their roots in the tragic events of Tishah B'Av. Therefore we designate no new days of mourning to commemorate later events, but include them in our Tishah B'Av kinnoh service.

The Bobover Rav, Admor HaRav Shlomo Hal-

berstam, שליט"א, is a scion of Sanz, one of the most illustrious Rabbinic and Chassidic dynasties. The Rav lost everything in the Holocaust — family, friends, followers, disciples and students in the thousands. The Rebbe arrived in America after the war with nothing but the clothes on his back and a burning determination to rebuild what the Nazis destroyed. With the help of Hashem the glory of the House of Bobov has been restored and one will find dozens of Bobover institutions and thousands of Bobover Chassidim in every corner of the globe.

In 1984, the Bobover Rav composed a special

IN MEMORY OF THE MARTYRS OF CHURBAN EUROPE

by Rabbi Shimon Schwab, *shlita*, Rav of K'hal Adas Jeshurun

הַזֹּכֵר *He Who remembers those who remember Him,
Each generation and its holy ones —*

*since the time You have chosen us —
May He remember the gruesome fate of the last generation.
Woe! what has happened to us!*

*Those who were swept away by the flood of blood —
who sacrificed their lives —*

*All who were submerged in valleys of tears,
May God think of them in the lands of eternal life.
May their memory be a blessing for all eternity.*

*Lift up your hands to Him, woe O you Heavens!
Woe over the best of Israel's tribes,
Communities and congregations, cities and districts,
fraternities, foundations, all rendezvous with God.*

*If only streams of water could pour down from eyes
towards waterfalls of the rivers of tears,
for the thousands times thousands of corpses
consumed in the fire of destructions and horrors.*

*For the princes of Torah, the pillars of tradition,
for the young flowers of the priesthood,
for the diligent scholars, the men teachers and women,
and the precious children in school.*

*The trusting daughters, the elderly grandparents, and their offspring,
and the infants whom they bore, everyone —
including the myriads beloved in life, not parted by death.*

*Seek out their blood when You take the count
of all the scattered, rent leaves, of every life perished
in the days of destruction and calamity — six thousand times a thousand.*

*An entire third to be destroyed, by the Blitzkrieg's fury,
of the cherished vineyards You dearly loved.
O Avenger of blood! The memory of their misery,
please do not erase from the book You have written.*

*Remember the moans and tumultuous screams,
when they were herded for slaughter —
May the rivers of their blood and the tears on their faces
not be forgotten forever.*

*Every tremble, every groan, every piercing cry
of those torn asunder by hoards of dogs,
remember and count them, collect them into Your flask,
Till the time the degraded ones' shame is avenged.*

the opportunity to meet with and learn from the foremost *Gedolim* of the time, including the holy Chafetz Chaim of Radin.

In the early 1930's, Rav Schwab was an eyewitness to the rise of Hitler Nazism in Germany and the systematic oppression of the Jews. In 1936, the

persecution of the Nazis forced him to leave his pulpit in Germany. He came to the United States where he assumed a position in the Baltimore Rabbinate.

Rav Schwab relates that in 1959, as Tishah B'Av approached, the late Rav Breuer made a re-

קיננה לזכרון הקדושים של חורבן איירופא

מאת הרב שמעון שוואב שליט"א, רב דקהל עדת ישורון

הַזֹּכֵר * מִזְכִּירֵינוּ, דוֹר דוֹר וּקְדוּשָׁיו, מַעַת אֲשֶׁר אָז בְּחֶרְתָּנוּ,
יִזְכּוֹר דְּרֵאוֹנוּ, שֶׁל דוֹר אַחֲרוֹן, אוֹיְהָ מִהָ הָיָה לָנוּ.

שְׁטוּפֵי מִבּוֹל דָּם, שֶׁמָסְרוּ נַפְשׁוֹתָם, כֹּל שְׁקוּעֵי עַמְקֵי הַבְּכָא,
יִפְקְדֵם אֱלֹהִים, בְּאַרְצוֹת הַחַיִּים, וְעַדִּי עַד וּכְרַם לְבַרְכָּה.

שָׂאוּ אֵלָיו כַּפָּיִם, אָהָה, אֵי שָׁמַיִם, הוּא עַל מִיטֵב שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל,
עֲדוֹת וּקְהָלוֹת, עָרִים וּגְלִילוֹת, חִבּוּרוֹת, מוֹסְדוֹת, כֹּל מוֹעֲדֵי אֵל.

מִי יִתֵּן פְּלִגֵי מַיִם, תִּקְרְנָה עֵינָיִם, אֵל אֲשֶׁדוֹת נַחְלֵי הַדְּמָעוֹת,
עַלִּי אֲלִפֵי אֲלָפִים, גּוֹפִים נִשְׂרָפִים, בְּמֹו אֵשׁ הַחֶרְבָּן וְזוֹעוֹת.

וְעַל שָׂרֵי הַתּוֹרָה, וּמְחֻיָּקֵי מִסוּכָה, וְעַל פְּרִחֵי הַכְּהֻנָּה הַצְּעִירִים,
וְעַל חוֹבְשֵׁי מִדְרָשׁוֹת, וּמוֹרִים וּמוֹרוֹת, תִּינוּקוֹת בֵּית רַבָּן יִקְרִים.

עַל בְּנוֹת בּוֹטְחוֹת, וְסָבִים וְסָבוֹת, וְעַל זֶרַעַם וְטַפָּם שִׁילְדוֹ,
וְגַם לְרֵבּוֹת, רֵבּוֹת נְאֻהָבִים בְּחַיִּים, בְּמוֹתָם לֹא נִפְרְדוּ.

אֵת דָּמָם דְרוֹשׁ, כִּי תִשָּׂא אֵת רֹאשׁ, שֶׁל כֹּל נֶדֶף לְעֵלִים הַטְּרוּפִים.
כֹּל נִפְשׁוֹת מֵת, בִּימֵי שֶׁבֶר וְשֹׂאת, שִׁשָּׁה אֲלִפֵי פְעָמִים אֲלָפִים.

שְׁלִישִׁיהָ לְבָעַר, בְּבֶרֶק וְעַם סוּעַר, מִכַּרְמֵי הַחֲמֹד אֲהַבְתָּ.
גּוֹאֵל הַדָּם, נָא וְזָכֵר צַעֲרָם, אֵל תַּמְחָה מִסַּפֵּר כְּתָבְתָּ.

יִזְכּוֹר הַצְּאֻקוֹת, וְרַעַשׁ צַעֲקוֹת, אִזּוּ יוֹבְלוּ לְרַצָּת,
יִאֻרִי דְמֵיהֶם, וְדַמְעוֹת פְּנֵיהֶם, לֹא תִשְׁכַּחְנָה לְנֶצַח.

כֹּל חוֹל וּגְנִיחָה, וְנִהְי צְרִיחָה, מִשְׁרוּדֵי לְהִקוֹת הַכְּלָבִים,
יִזְכּוֹר וְסַפּוֹר, בְּנֶאֱדָךְ צְרוּר, עַד עַת נָקַם עֲלֵבּוֹן עֲלוֹבִים.

chassidim requested a vehicle to convey their personal sorrow on this bitter day, but I held back, because I felt genuinely unworthy.

Then, one day, I was studying the laws of Tishah B'Av in the book *Seder HaYom* [by R' Moshe ben Yehudah Makir, Rosh Yeshiva in Safed, and a colleague of the *Arizal* and R' Yosef Karo]. He writes as follows:

Whoever can wail on this day should wail, and whoever can recite *kinnos* should recite *kinnos* — either those already recorded in the holy books, or the *kinnos* he himself composed with the intellect God has granted him. It is a *mitzvah* for each and every individual to compose *kinnos* for weeping and moaning and to recite them on this bitter day. One who does this is considered most righteous and is worthy of being described as one of Jerusalem's mourners and one of her holy men. But one who is not capable of composing his

personal *kinnos*, should recite the *kinnos* written by others.

'When I read these words,' the Rav concluded, 'I saw a clear sign from heaven that the time had come to compose a *kinnah* over the last *churban*. For doesn't the *Seder HaYom* say clearly that any person, even the smallest, should express his own feelings in his original *kinnah*?'

הַזֹּכֵר — *He Who remembers*. Rav Shimon Schwab, *shlita*, widely recognized as an eloquent spokesman for Torah Jewry, joined the Rabbinate of Congregation K'hal Adas Jeshurun in the Washington Heights neighborhood of New York in 1958, in association with the late revered Rav Dr. Joseph Breuer, *z"l*.

Rav Schwab was born in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany in 1908, and studied at several well-known Eastern European *yeshivos*, including Telshe and Mir. In those years, Rav Schwab had

45.

The congregation rises and recites the following kinnah responsively with the chazzan.

אֱלֹהֵי צִיּוֹן Wail, O Zion* and her cities,
like a woman suffering from birth travail,
and like a maiden girded in sackcloth,
[lamenting] for the husband of her youth...¹

א ... for the palace that is abandoned because of
the sin of the sheep of her flocks,
ב and for the entrance of the blasphemers of God
into the chambers of her Sanctuary.

Wail, O Zion and her cities, like a woman suffering from birth travail,
and like a maiden girded in sackcloth, [lamenting] for the husband of her youth...

ג ... for the exile of [the Kohanim,] the servants of God
[and the Levites] who sweetly sang the song of her praise,²
ד and for their blood that was spilt like the waters of her canals.

Wail, O Zion and her cities, like a woman suffering from birth travail,
and like a maiden girded in sackcloth, [lamenting] for the husband of her youth...

ה ... for the lyrics of her dances, that have been stilled in her cities,
ו and for the assembly chamber that is abandoned,
with the disbandment of her Sanhedrin.

Wail, O Zion and her cities, like a woman suffering from birth travail,
and like a maiden girded in sackcloth, [lamenting] for the husband of her youth...

ז ... for her daily [Tamid] offerings,
and for the redemption of her firstborn sons,*
ח and for the desecration of the Temple's vessels and her incense Altar.

Wail, O Zion and her cities, like a woman suffering from birth travail,
and like a maiden girded in sackcloth, [lamenting] for the husband of her youth...

ט ... for young children of her kings,
the sons of David, her royal sovereigns,
י and for their beauty which was darkened
when her crowns were taken from her.

Wail, O Zion and her cities, like a woman suffering from birth travail,
and like a maiden girded in sackcloth, [lamenting] for the husband of her youth...

(1) Joel 1:8. (2) Cf. II Samuel 23:1.

... for her daily [Tamid] offerings, and for the redemption of her firstborn sons. This statement is very puzzling. True, the daily Tamid offerings are dependent on the existence of the Temple, but the mitzvah of redeeming the firstborn son is not a function of the Temple. Indeed, it is in full force today and is practiced wherever Jews may live! This question has prodded some commentaries to suggest that the text be emended from פְּרִיּוֹנֵי בְּכוֹרֵיהֶּנּוּ to פְּרִיּוֹנֵי בִּכּוּרֵיהֶּנּוּ, her bikkurim fruits, i.e., the mitzvah of bringing the first fruits to the Kohen in the Tem-

ple is no longer possible.

Others explain that the redemption of the firstborn here alludes to the Levites who served as the original objects by which the firstborn Israelites were redeemed in the Wilderness (see Numbers 3:11-13, 44-51). Thus, the first stich of this line, זָכַחַי תְּמִידֵיהֶּנּוּ, refers to the Kohanim who offered the Tamid, while the second stich speaks of the Leviim.

However, the passage may also be explained in its simplest and most literal reading. Regarding the mitzvah of redeeming the firstborn, the

.מ.ה.

The congregation rises and recites the following kinnah responsively with the chazzan.

אֱלֹהֵי צִיּוֹן* וְעָרֶיהָ, כְּמוֹ אִשָּׁה בְּצִירָתָהּ,
וּכְבַתּוּלָה חֲגֵרַת שָׁק עַל בְּעַל נְעוּרֶיהָ.

עַל־אֲרָמוֹן אֲשֶׁר נָטַשׁ בְּאַשְׁמַת צֶאֱן עֲדָרֶיהָ,
וְעַל בֵּיאת מְחַרְפֵּי אֵל בְּתוֹךְ מִקְדָּשׁ חֲדָרֶיהָ.

אֱלֹהֵי צִיּוֹן וְעָרֶיהָ, כְּמוֹ אִשָּׁה בְּצִירָתָהּ,
וּכְבַתּוּלָה חֲגֵרַת שָׁק עַל בְּעַל נְעוּרֶיהָ.

עַל־גְּלוּת מְשֻׁרְתֵי אֵל, מִנְעִימֵי שִׁיר זְמֶרֶיהָ,²
וְעַל דָּמָם אֲשֶׁר שָׁפַךְ, כְּמוֹ מִימֵי יְאוּרֵיהָ.

אֱלֹהֵי צִיּוֹן וְעָרֶיהָ, כְּמוֹ אִשָּׁה בְּצִירָתָהּ,
וּכְבַתּוּלָה חֲגֵרַת שָׁק עַל בְּעַל נְעוּרֶיהָ.

עַל־הַגִּיּוֹן מְחוּלָּיָהּ, אֲשֶׁר דָּמָם בְּעָרֶיהָ,
וְעַל יַעַר אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַם וּבִטּוּל סִנְהֶדְרֶיהָ.

אֱלֹהֵי צִיּוֹן וְעָרֶיהָ, כְּמוֹ אִשָּׁה בְּצִירָתָהּ,
וּכְבַתּוּלָה חֲגֵרַת שָׁק עַל בְּעַל נְעוּרֶיהָ.

עַל־זָכַחַי תְּמִידֵיהֶּנּוּ, וּפְרִיּוֹנֵי בְּכוֹרֵיהָ,*
וְעַל חִלּוּל כְּלֵי הַיְכָל וּמִזְבֵּחַ קְטוּרֶיהָ.

אֱלֹהֵי צִיּוֹן וְעָרֶיהָ, כְּמוֹ אִשָּׁה בְּצִירָתָהּ,
וּכְבַתּוּלָה חֲגֵרַת שָׁק עַל בְּעַל נְעוּרֶיהָ.

עַל־טְפֵי מַלְכֵיהָ, בְּגִי חוֹד גְּבִירָתָהּ,
וְעַל יַפִּים אֲשֶׁר חִשַּׁף בְּעַת סָרוּ כְּתָרֶיהָ.

אֱלֹהֵי צִיּוֹן וְעָרֶיהָ, כְּמוֹ אִשָּׁה בְּצִירָתָהּ,
וּכְבַתּוּלָה חֲגֵרַת שָׁק עַל בְּעַל נְעוּרֶיהָ.

many other congregations have adopted the custom of reciting it on Tishah B'Av, either at night or by day, as a memorial of our most recent churban.

אֱלֹהֵי צִיּוֹן — Wail, O Zion. This final kinnah is chanted to a traditional heart-rending melody that expresses the full measure of our sorrow. Once again, in this last lament, we list all that we lost at the time of the Destruction, both materially and spiritually. However, the opening line of the kinnah (which is repeated either as a refrain after every second line, or once at the end of the

kinnah) provides a ray of hope: 'Wail, O Zion and her cities, like a woman suffering from birth travail.' Israel's suffering is not in vain, rather the Destruction and Exile should be viewed as a period of embryonic development and gestation leading to the rebirth of our nation. No pain is more excruciating than birth travail, yet the mother accepts it because it heralds the exhilarating joy of birth. Similarly, Israel's suffering has been indescribable but we must accept it as the travail which precedes the glorious rebirth of our people.

- כ ... for the [Divine] glory which was exiled
at the time of the Destruction of her Temples,
ל and for the tyrant who persecuted her
and caused her to gird herself in sackcloth.

Wail, O Zion and her cities, like a woman suffering from birth travail,
and like a maiden girded in sackcloth, [lamenting] for the husband of her youth...

- מ ... for the pounding and the numerous blows¹
with which her aristocrats were beaten,
נ and for the smashing on the rock of her infants² and her youths.

Wail, O Zion and her cities, like a woman suffering from birth travail,
and like a maiden girded in sackcloth, [lamenting] for the husband of her youth...

- ס ... for the joy of her enemies when they made sport of her calamities,
ע and for the tormenting of her free-spirited men,
her noble-minded and pure-hearted people.

Wail, O Zion and her cities, like a woman suffering from birth travail,
and like a maiden girded in sackcloth, [lamenting] for the husband of her youth...

- פ ... for the sin which corrupted her,
and diverted her footsteps from the straight path,
צ and for the legions of her congregations
whose [faces] now are wrinkled and blackened
[by the flames of the Temple's destruction].

Wail, O Zion and her cities, like a woman suffering from birth travail,
and like a maiden girded in sackcloth, [lamenting] for the husband of her youth...

- ק ... for the cries of those who vilified her
when the number of her corpses increased,
ר and for the clamor of those who cursed her,
inside the Courtyards of her Tabernacle.

Wail, O Zion and her cities, like a woman suffering from birth travail,
and like a maiden girded in sackcloth, [lamenting] for the husband of her youth...

- ש ... for Your Name which was profaned by the mouth
of those who arose to torment her,
ת and to the pleaful prayer which they cry out to You,
listen carefully and heed her words.

Wail, O Zion and her cities,
like a woman suffering from birth travail,
and like a maiden girded in sackcloth,
[lamenting] for the husband of her youth...

(1) Cf. Isaiah 30:26. (2) Cf. Psalms 137:9.

Thus, the purpose of the firstborn's redemption is to prepare him for an encounter with God in the Temple so that he will 'belong' to the Temple and be one of her firstborn sons. In this kin-

nah, we lament the fact that today, in the absence of the Temple, the firstborn sons cannot achieve this encounter, the ultimate purpose of their redemption.

עלי כבוד, אשר גלה בעת חרבן דביריה,
ועל לוחץ אשר לחץ, ושם שקים חגוריה.

אלי ציון ועריה, כמו אשה בציריה,
וכבתולה חגרת שק על בעל נעוריה.

עלי מחץ ורב מכותי אשר הכו נזיריה,
ועל נפוץ עלי סלע עולליה ונעריה.

אלי ציון ועריה, כמו אשה בציריה,
וכבתולה חגרת שק על בעל נעוריה.

עלי שמחת אויביה, שחקו על שביריה,
ועל ענוי בני חורין נדיביה טהוריה.

אלי ציון ועריה, כמו אשה בציריה,
וכבתולה חגרת שק על בעל נעוריה.

עלי פשע אשר ענתה סלול דרה אשוריה,
ועל צבאות קהליה שזופיה שחוריה.

אלי ציון ועריה, כמו אשה בציריה,
וכבתולה חגרת שק על בעל נעוריה.

עלי קולות מחרפיה, בעת רבו פגריה,
ועל רגשת מגדפיה, בתוך משפן חצירה.

אלי ציון ועריה, כמו אשה בציריה,
וכבתולה חגרת שק על בעל נעוריה.

עלי שמוך אשר חלל בפי קמי מציריה,
ועל תחן יצחו לה קשוב ושמע אמריה.

אלי ציון ועריה, כמו אשה בציריה,
וכבתולה חגרת שק על בעל נעוריה.

Torah states: כל בכור בניה תפדה ולא יראו עני ריקס Every firstborn of your sons you shall redeem, and none shall appear before Me empty (Exodus 34:20). Rabbeinu Bachya (ibid.) comments: Why did the Torah juxtapose the mitzvah of redeeming the firstborn son with

the mitzvah of appearing before God in the Temple on the festivals? To teach that the firstborn who is redeemed is assured that he will merit the privilege of seeing the construction of the Temple and he will witness God's presence therein.

46.

שומרון *Shomron gives forth [her] voice,*
*'The deserts of my sins have found me!'*¹

My children have gone forth from me² to another land!
*Then Oholivah screams, 'My palaces were burnt down!'*³
*And Zion says, 'HASHEM has abandoned me!'*⁴

ב *[Oholah:] 'It is not right for you, Oholivah,*
to consider your suffering as mine!
Can you compare your sickness to my fracture and sickness?
I, Oholah, [am now] displaced, I have rebelled in my stubbornness,
but now my deceitfulness has risen against me,⁵
and my defiance has testified against me,
and after a short time I paid my debts [for my sins].
[The Assyrian king] Tiglath-pileser⁶ devoured my [womb's] fruits,
he stripped away my precious possessions
and confiscated my jewelry,^{7}*
then [his successor Shalmaneser] carried away my captives
to Halah and Habor.⁸
[Therefore,] Oholivah be silent and weep not as I weep!
Your years [in the Land] were prolonged,
but my years were not prolonged!'^{*}

Then Oholivah screams, 'My palaces were burnt down!'
And Zion says, 'HASHEM has abandoned me!'

ג *Oholivah responds: 'I too deviated,*
and like Oholah, I betrayed [God,] the Mentor of my youth!'
Be still, Oholah, for I remember my agony.
You were exiled but once, while I was exiled repeatedly.
Behold, by the hands of the Chaldeans I was taken twice;
as a miserable captive I descended to Babylon;

(1) Cf. II Kings 7:9. (2) Cf. Jeremiah 10:20. (3) Cf. II Chronicles 36:19. (4) Isaiah 49:14.
(5) Cf. Job 16:8. (6) II Kings 15:29. (7) Cf. Exodus 33:6. (8) See II Kings 17:3-6. (9) Cf. Jeremiah 3:4.

a contraction of תאכל שלי בת, *My Tent is within her*, i.e., the Tent of God, the *Beis HaMikdash*. These names place Judah, in which God's Temple stood, in sharp contrast to Shomron.

The wicked city of Shomron, with the abominations of its citizens, epitomizes all of the evil of the Ten Tribes. That segment of Israel became so corrupted that to this day those tribes are lost in exile and the possibility of their ultimate return remains the subject of considerable Talmudic debate (see *Sanhedrin* 110b and *Ramban, Sefer HaGeulah, shaar* I).

In this *kinnah*, the author compares the tragedies which befell both Judah and Samaria by means of a debate raging between the two. Each capital claims — and vehemently defends

its claim — that it suffered more at the hand of the marauding enemy.

The composer of the *kinnah*, R' Shlomo ibn Gabirol (11th-century Spain), used the letters of his name שלמה to begin the respective stanzas.

חמקתי ... ערתי — *My precious possessions ... my jewelry*. Some commentators understand these expressions as allusions to the two Temples. We have rejected that interpretation because Oholah is the speaker, but the Temples had stood in Oholivah's estate.

שנותיך ארכו ולא ארכו שני — *Your years [in the Land] were prolonged, but my years were not prolonged!* Oholah, the Northern Kingdom of Samaria, was exiled more than one hundred

מו.

שומרון קול תתן מצאוני עוני,
לארץ אחרת יצאוני בני,¹
ואהליבה תועק נשרפו ארמוני,²
ותאמר ציון עובני יהוה.³

לא לך אהליבה חשוב עניך בעני,
התמשילי חליך לשברי ולחלי,
אני אהלה סורה בגדתי בקשוי,
וקם עלי כחשי וענה בי מרי,⁴
ולמקצת הימים שלמתי נשוי,
ותגלת פלאסר⁵ אכל את פרי,
חמקתי פשט והציל את עדי,^{6*}
ולחלח וחבור⁷ נשא את שבי,
דמי אהליבה ואל תבכי כבכי,
שנותיך ארכו ולא ארכו שני.*

ואהליבה תועק נשרפו ארמוני,
ותאמר ציון עובני יהוה.

משיבה אהליבה אני כן נעקשתי,
ובאלוף געורי כאהלה בגדתי,
דמי אהלה פי יגוני וקרתי,
נדרת את אחת ורבות נדרתי,
הנה ביד הכשדים פעמים נלכדתי,
ושביה עניה לבבל ירתי,

שומרון — *Shomron*. This *kinnah* is based on chapter 23 of *Ezekiel*, where God bids the prophet to expose the sins of the Jewish people. Then unfolds the shocking parable of two faithless wives who seek fulfillment of their unnatural lusts through numerous lovers. *Ezekiel* tells of two sisters, *Oholah*, and *Oholivah*, who are both married to the same man. *Oholah* is identified as Shomron [Samaria, capital of the Northern Kingdom, also called the Kingdom of Israel, which comprised ten of the tribes] and *Oholivah* as Jerusalem

[capital of the Southern Kingdom, also called the Kingdom of Judah, which comprised Judah and Benjamin]. Both are 'wed' to one 'husband', God, but both brazenly betray Him.

The names, *Oholah*, and *Oholivah*, are both derived from *אהלה*, a tent or dwelling place. However, *אהלה* is a contraction of *האהלה שלי*, *her tent*, because God had no part in the tabernacles of Shomron. They were 'her own tents' which she had dedicated to the golden calves Jeroboam ben Nevat had erected (see *I Kings* 12:28). On the other hand, *אהליבה* is

and the Sanctuary by which I was honored
was burnt down.

After seventy years in Babylon I was recalled [by God];
I returned once again to Zion
and established the [Second] Temple.

This time, too, I did not last long
before Edom seized me and I was all but annihilated.
Through all the lands were my multitudes dispersed.'

Then Oholivah screams, 'My palaces were burnt down'
And Zion says, 'HASHEM has abandoned me!'

¶ O You Who takes pity on the pauper,
take pity on their poverty.*

See their desolation¹ and the length of their exile.
Do not be overly angered,² rather take note of their degradation.
Do not eternally remember their sins² and their foolishness.
Please heal their wounds³ and assuage their mourning;
for You are their Hope and You are their Strength.

Renew our days as the days of my youth;⁴
as You have said: 'The Builder of Jerusalem is HASHEM,'⁵

Show Zion mercy as You have said, and establish her as You have spoken.
Hasten salvation and speed redemption and return to Jerusalem with abundant compassion.

As it is written by the hand of Your prophet: Therefore, thus says HASHEM,
'I shall return to Jerusalem with compassion, My House shall be rebuilt
within it,' says HASHEM, Master of Legions, 'and a [measuring] string shall be
stretched over Jerusalem.'⁶

And it is said: Call out again, saying, Thus says HASHEM, Master of
Legions, 'My cities shall again overflow with beneficence, and again HASHEM
will assuage Zion and again He will choose Jerusalem.'⁷

And it is said: For HASHEM comforts Zion, He comforts her ruins, and
He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her wastes like a garden of
HASHEM; gladness and joy shall be found there, thanksgiving and the sound
of music.⁸

thirty years before Oholivah, the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

¶ *לילתם* — Their poverty. Until this point, the *kinnah* has been a one-on-one debate between Oholah and Oholivah. Thus, the statements are all in first or second person singular. The

last stanza, however, is the *paytan's* supplication for the restitution of both, and consequently is couched in third person plural. Finally, the last line prays for the reunification of the two Kingdoms with Jerusalem as the focal point as it was in 'the days of my youth.'

ונשרף ההיכל אשר בו נבכרתי,
ולשבעים שנה בכבל נפקדתי,
ושבתי לציון עוד והיכל יסדתי,
גם זאת הפעם מעט לא עמדתי,
עד לקחני אדום וכמעט אבדתי,
ועל כל הארצות נפצו המוני,

ואהליבה תועק נשרפו ארמוני,
והאמר ציון עזבני יהוה.

החומל על כל חמול על דלותם,*
וראה שממותם וארך גלותם,
אל תקצוף עד מאד² וראה שפלותם,
ואל לעד תזכור עונם וסבלותם,
רפא נא את שברם ונחם אבלותם,
כי אתה סברם ואתה אילותם,
חדיש ימינו כימי קדמוני,⁴
בנאמך בונה ירושלים יהוה.⁵

תרחם ציון באשר אמרת, ותכווננה באשר דברת, תמהר
ישועה ותחיש גאלה, ותשוב לירושלים ברחמים רבים.
כפתוב על יד נביאך, לכן כה אמר יהוה, שבת לירושלים
ברחמים, ביתי יבנה בה, נאם יהוה צבאות, וקו ינטה על
ירושלים.⁶

ונאמר, עוד קרא לאמר, כה אמר יהוה צבאות, עוד תפוצנה
ערי משוב, ונחם יהוה עוד את ציון, ובחר עוד בירושלים.⁷
ונאמר, כי נחם יהוה ציון, נחם כל חרבותיה, וישם מדברה
בעדן, וערבתה כגן יהוה, ששון ושמחה ימצא בה, תודה וקול
זמרה.⁸

(1) Cf. Daniel 9:18. (2) Cf. Isaiah 64:8. (3) Cf. Psalms 60:4. (4) Cf. Eichah 5:21.
(5) Psalms 147:2. (6) Zechariah 1:16. (7) 1:17. (8) Isaiah 51:3.