

ALAS!

Widow does not imply guilt
never described as unfaithful
woman or whore

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

² Bitterly she weeps in the night,
Her cheeks wet with tears.
There is none to comfort her
Of all her friends.
All her allies have betrayed her;
They have become her foes.

³ Judah has gone into exile
Because of misery and harsh oppression;
When she settled among the nations,
She found no rest;

All her pursuers overtook her
^b In the narrow places.^b

⁴ Zion's roads are in mourning,
Empty of festival pilgrims;
All her gates are deserted.
Her priests sigh,
Her maidens are unhappy—
She is utterly disconsolate!

⁵ Her enemies are now the masters,
Her foes are at ease,
Because the LORD has afflicted her
For her many transgressions;
Her infants have gone into captivity
Before the enemy.

⁶ Gone from Fair Zion are all
That were her glory;
Her leaders were like stags
That found no pasture;
They could only walk feebly
Before the pursuer.

^a Chapter 1-4 are alphabetical acrostics, i.e., the verses begin with the successive letters of the Heb alphabet. Chapter 3 is a triple acrostic. In chapters 2-4 the letter *pe* precedes the 'ayin

^b Meaning of Heb uncertain

איכה LAMENTATIONS

¹ איכה | ישבה בדר העיר
רבותי עם / היתה באלקמה
רבותי בנוים / שרה במדינות
היתה למם:

² רבו חכמה / בלילה ודמעתה
על לחיה / אי-לה מנחם
מכל - אהביה / כל - רעייה
בגדו בה / היו לה לאויבים:

³ גלתה יהודה / מעלי ומרב
עבדה / היא ישבה בנוים / לא
מצאה מנוח / כל-דרךיה
השיגות בין המצורים:

⁴ דרכי ציון אבילות מבלי באי
מועד כל-שעריה שוממין
בהעם נאנחים בהוללותיה
נמזות ותיה מר-לה:

⁵ היו צריה לראש / איבה שלו
בידונה / הונה על-רב
פשעה / עולליה הלכו שבי
לפני צר:

⁶ נצא מן-בת-ציון כל-
הדרה היו שריה באילים
לא-מצאו מרעה מלכו
כל-אדם לפני דרכה:

blame but themselves and must seek to better their ways and bespeak the Lord's inexhaustible grace (Lam. 3.22-41). This was, or became, the view of the great majority of the people, and thanks to it Judaism not only survived but was purged by the Exile and actually attracted converts in the Exile who later migrated to Judah (Isa. 56:6-7; Ezra 2.59-60; 6.21).

We do well to recite Lamentations on the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem (Tish'ah be'Ab, the ninth of Ab), in order to recall not only the grief of the national catastrophe but the source from which our people drew the strength to recover from it.

play on vs. 1

treaty

fulfillment of covenant

fulfillment of covenant curse
Deut 28:44

- 13 From above He sent a fire
Down into my bones.
He spread a net for my feet,
He hurled me backward;
He has left me forlorn,
In constant misery.
- 14 ^aThe yoke of my offenses is bound fast,
Lashed tight by His hand;
Imposed upon my neck,
It saps my strength;
The Lord has delivered me into the
hands
Of those I cannot withstand.
- 15 The Lord in my midst has rejected
All my heroes;
He has proclaimed a set time against me
To crush my young men.
As in a press the Lord has trodden
Fair Maiden Judah.
- 16 For these things do I weep,
My eyes flow with tears:
Far from me is any comforter
Who might revive my spirit;
My children are forlorn,
For the foe has prevailed.
- 17 Zion spreads out her hands,
She has no one to comfort her;
The LORD has summoned against Jacob
His enemies all about him;
Jerusalem has become among them
A thing unclean.

- 18 The LORD is in the right,
For I have disobeyed Him.
Hear, all you peoples,
And behold my agony:
My maidens and my youths
Have gone into captivity!

^a Meaning of parts of vv. 14 and 15 uncertain

איכד LAMENTATIONS 1.13

- מ 18 מקורם שלח-אש בעצמותי
ורדנה/ קרש השם לרגלי/
הש-בני אהול וחנני שממה
כל-היום דנה:
נ 14 נשקל על פשע/ בידו ישהרני
עלי על-צוארי/ הקשיל כחי
וחנני ארני ביד/ לא-אובל
קום:
ד 15 סלה כל-אבירי ארני
בקרבי/ קרא עלי מועד
לשבור בחור/ גת דבר ארני
לבחולת בתי-יהודה:
ע 16 על-אלה אני בוכה/ עיני
עיני נרדה מים/ כי-רחק
ממני מנחם/ משיב נפש/ חני
בני שוממים כי נבר אויב:
פ 17 פרשה ציון בגדיה אין מנחם
לחצנה ידנה לעקם סביביו
צרי/ הדנה ירושלם לנדה
ביניהם:
צ 18 צדיק הוא יהנה כי-פיהו
מרייתו שמעו-נא כל-עמים
וראו מקבא/ בחולת/ ובחור
הלכי בשבי:

I have violated His word

איכד LAMENTATIONS 1.7

- 7 All the precious things she had
In the days of old
Jerusalem recalled
In her days of woe and sorrow,
When her people fell by enemy hands
With none to help her;
When enemies looked on and gloated
Over her downfall.
- 8 Jerusalem has greatly sinned,
Therefore she is an outcast. = נצר
All who admired her despise her,
For they have seen her disgraced;
And she can only sigh
And shrink back.
- 9 Her uncleanness clings to her skirts.
She gave no thought to her future;
She has sunk appallingly,
With none to comfort her.—
See, O LORD, my misery;
How the enemy jeers!
- 10 The foe has laid hands
On everything dear to her.
She has seen her Sanctuary
Invaded by nations
Which You have denied admission
Into Your community. Deut 23:7
All her inhabitants sigh
As they search for bread; ^{children?}
They have bartered their treasures for food,
To keep themselves alive.—
See, O LORD, and behold,
"How abject" I have become!
- 12 ^bMay it never befall you,^b
All who pass along the road!
Look about and see:
Is there any agony like mine,
Which was dealt out to me,
When the LORD afflicted me
* On His day of wrath?

- 7 זכרה ירושלם/ ימי עניה
ומרייתה/ כל מחמדיה אשר
היו מימי/ בדם/ בנפל עמה
בידה-צרה ואין עוזר לה/ ראתה
צרים שחקו על-משבתה:
ח חטא חטאה ירושלם על-כן
תצרה הנחה/ כל-מבקריה
הדליתה/ כי-ראו ערומה גם-
היא נאנחה וקשב אהור:
ט טמאתה בשוליה/ לא זכרה
אחרייתה/ ונתרד פלאים/ אין
מנחם לה/ ראה יהנה את-
עלי כי הנדיל אויב:
י יודו פרש צר על כל-
מחמדיה/ כי-ראתה נזם באו
מקדשה/ אשר צדיקה לא-
יבאו בקהל לה:
י1 כל-עמה נאנחים מבקשים
לחם נחני מחמדיהם באכל
להשיב נפש ראה יהנה
והביטה כי היתה ווללה:
י2 נוא אליכם כל-עברי דרך
הביטו וראו אם-יש מכאוב
ממכאבי אשר עולל לי אשר
הונה יהנה ביום חרו אפי:

What exactly was their sin?

^a Or (ironically) "What a glutton"; cf. Prov. 23:20-21
^{b-b} Meaning of Heb uncertain

- 3 In blazing anger He has cut down
All the might of Israel;
He has withdrawn His right hand
In the presence of the foe;
He has ravaged Jacob like flaming fire,
Consuming on all sides.
- 4 He bent His bow like an enemy,
Poised His right hand like a foe;
He slew all who delighted the eye.
He poured out His wrath like fire
In the Tent of Fair Zion.
- 5 The Lord has acted like a foe,
He has laid waste Israel,
Laid waste all her citadels,
Destroyed her strongholds.
He has increased within Fair Judah
Mourning and moaning.
- 6 He has stripped His Booth^a like a garden,
He has destroyed His Tabernacle^b;
The LORD has ended in Zion
Festival and sabbath;
In His raging anger He has spurned
King and priest.
- 7 The Lord has rejected His altar,
Disdained His Sanctuary.
He has handed over to the foe
The walls of its citadels;
They raised a shout in the House of the
LORD
As on a festival day.
- 8 The LORD resolved to destroy
The wall of Fair Zion;
He measured with a line, refrained not
From bringing destruction.
He has made wall and rampart to mourn,
Together they languish.

^a I.e. the Temple
^b Lit. "(Tent of) Meeting"

אִידוֹ LAMENTATIONS 2.3

ג וַיִּרָא בְחַרְרֵי אַף בָּלַל כְּרוֹ
יִשְׂרָאֵל הַשֵּׁב אֶחָד וּמִיָּנוּ
מִפְּנֵי אֹיֵב נִבְעַר בְּעֵקֶל
כָּאֵשׁ לְהַבֵּה אֶת־כָּל סָבִיב:
ד וַיִּדָּךְ קִשְׁלוֹ כְּאֹיֵב נֹצֵב וּמִיָּנוּ
בָּצָר וַתְּהִי לָכֵן חֲמֹנֵי עֵינָיו
בְּאֶהֱלָ בֵּת-צִיּוֹן שָׁפַד כָּאֵשׁ
חֲמֹנוֹ:
ה הָיָה אֲדֹנָי כְּאֹיֵב בָּלַע
יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּלַע כָּל-אַרְמוֹתֶיהָ
שָׁחַת מִבְצָרֶיהָ וַיִּרָב בְּבֵת-
יְהוָה תְּאֵנִיָּה וְאֵנִיָּה:
ו וַיִּחַמַס בְּנוֹ שָׁחַת מִעֲדָו
שָׁכַח יְהוָה בְּצִיּוֹן מוֹעֵד
וַשְׁכַּח וַיִּנָּאֵץ בְּעֵינֵם-אֲפֻ מְלָכָהּ
וַיִּבְקָנוּ:
ז וַיִּחַ אֲדֹנָי מִזִּבְחוֹ נֶאֱרָ מִקִּדְשׁוֹ
הִסְגִּיר בְּיָד-אֹיֵב חוֹמָתָהּ
אֶת־מִנוּחֶיהָ כֹּל נִתְּנָה בְּבֵית-
יְהוָה כִּיּוֹם מוֹעֵד:
ח הָשֵׁב יְהוָה לְהַשְׁחִיחַ חוֹמָתָהּ
בֵּת-צִיּוֹן נִשְׁחָה כִּי לֹא-הָשִׁיב
דָּו מִבְּלַע וַיִּנָּאֵץ כָּל-חֲלָ וְחִוּמָהּ
וַיִּתְּרוּ אֶת־לָלוּ:

אִידוֹ LAMENTATIONS 1.19

- 19 I cried out to my friends,
But they played me false.
My priests and my elders
Have perished in the city
As they searched for food
To keep themselves alive.
- 20 See, O LORD, the distress I am in!
My heart is in anguish,
"I know how wrong I was"
To disobey.
Outside the sword deals death;
Indoors, the plague.
- 21 When they heard how I was sighing,
There was none to comfort me;
All my foes heard of my plight and exulted.
For it is Your doing:
You have brought on the day that You
threatened.
Oh, let them become like me!'¹
- 22 Let all their wrongdoing come before You,
And deal with them
As You have dealt with me
For all my transgressions.
For my sighs are many,
And my heart is sick.
- 2 Alas!
The Lord in His wrath
Has shamed^a Fair Zion,
Has cast down from heaven to earth
The majesty of Israel.
He did not remember His Footstool^b
On His day of wrath.
- 2 The Lord has laid waste without pity
All the habitations of Jacob;
He has razed in His anger
Fair Judah's strongholds.
He has brought low in dishonor
The kingdom and its leaders.

^a Lit. "My heart has turned over within me"; cf. Ex. 14:5;
Hos. 11:8

^b Emendation yields: "Oh, bring on them what befell me,
And let them become like me!"

^c Meaning of Heb uncertain

ק יִקְרָא חֲבֵרָיו לְמִתְחַבְּלֵי הַמָּה רְמוּעֵי
כְּהֵנִי וְזִקְנֵי/בְעִיר וְנִעַם/כִּי-
בִקְשׁוּ אֶכְלָ לֶמַח/וַיִּשְׁכְּבוּ אֶת-
נַפְשָׁם:
ר רָאָה יְהוָה כִּי-צָר-לִי/מֵעֵי
חֲמֹמְרוֹ וְהִפִּיד לִבִּי בְּקִרְבִּי
כִּי מָרוּ מִרְיָחוֹתַי שְׂקֵלָה-
חֲרִיב/בְּבֵית חֲמֹנוֹת:
ש שָׁמְעוּ כִּי נִאֲנַחָה אֲנִי/אִין
מִנְחָם לִי/כָל-אֹיֵב שָׁמְעוּ
הַעֲשִׂי שָׁשׂו/כִּי אֶתָּה עָשִׂיתָ
הַבָּאָה יוֹם-הַקָּרָאָה וַיִּהְיוּ
כְּמִנִּי:
ת הִבָּא כָל-רָעָתָם לִפְנֵיךָ
וְעוֹלָל לִמּוֹ כָּאֲשֶׁר עוֹלָלָה לִי
עַל כָּל-פִּשְׁעֵי כִי-רַבּוֹת
אֶתְחִי וּלְכִי דָוִי:
א אֶכְרֹעַ עֵיב בְּאֶפְסִי/וְאֲדֹנָי אֶת-
בֵּת-צִיּוֹן הַשְׁלִיךְ מִשָּׁמַיִם
אֲדֹנָי חִפְּצָתָהּ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא-
זָכַר הָדָם-רִנְתָּלִי כִיּוֹם אֲפֻ:
ב בָּלַע אֲדֹנָי לֹא-חֲמַל אֶת-כָּל-
נַאֲוֹת יַעֲקֹב הִקֵּס בְּעִבְרָתוֹ
מִבְצָרָהּ בֵּת-יְהוָה הִנֵּעַ
לְאֶרֶץ חָלָל מִמְּלָכָהּ וּשְׂרָרָהּ:

¹ God so wretched - Gen 21

Cooper see 2:1-8 in core
Bring God's wrath to an end by
calling His attention to the people's
wretched state

- 15 All who pass your way
Clap their hands at you;
They hiss and wag their head
At Fair Jerusalem:^a

"Is this the city that was called
Perfect in Beauty,
Joy of All the Earth?"

- 16 All your enemies
Jeer at you;
They hiss and gnash their teeth,
And cry: "We've ruined her!
Ah, this is the day we hoped for;
We have lived to see it!"^b

- 17 The LORD has done what He purposed,
Has carried out the decree
That He ordained long ago;
He has torn down without pity.
He has let the foe rejoice over you,
Has exalted the might of your enemies.
18 ^aTheir heart cried out ^bto the Lord.

O wall of Fair Zion,
Shed tears like a torrent
Day and night!
Give yourself no respite,
Your eyes no rest.

- 19 Arise, cry out in the night
At the beginning of the watches,
Pour out your heart like water
In the presence of the Lord!
Lift up your hands to Him
For the life of your infants,
Who faint for hunger
At every street corner,

- 20 See, O LORD, and behold,
To whom You have done this!
Alas, women eat their own fruit,
Their new-born¹ babes!
Alas, priest and prophet are slain
In the Sanctuary of the Lord!

Covenant was described as
reality; cf 4:10

Deut. 28:57

¹ These gestures were intended to ward off the calamity
from the viewer; cf. e.g. Jer. 9.8; 49.17; Job 27.23

^a Lit. "We have attained, we have seen" ^b Emendation yields "Cry aloud"

course of her humiliation
15-17 reviews admissions of her humiliated condition

אִידוֹ LAMENTATIONS

2.15

15 ד פסקו עליה ביום כל-עבר
דוד שרקו ונענו ראשם על-

בת ירושלים הונח העיר
שאימרו כלילת יפי משוש
לכל הארץ:

16 פ פצו עליה פיהם כל-אויב
שרקו ונחמקו-שן אמרו
בגלגנו אף זה היום שקוינהו
מזאנו ראינו:

17 ע עשה יהוה אשר זמם בצע
אמרתו אשר צנה מימי-קדם
הקם ולא חמל נשמה עליה
אויב הרים קרן צריח:

18 ז צעק להם אל-אויב חומת
בת-ציון הורירי כנחל
דמעה וימם ולילה אל-תתני
פונת לך אל-הרים בת-

19 פ קומי! לוי בליק' לראש
אשמות שפך במים לבד
נבח פני אדני שני אליו כפיד
על-נפש עוללית (העשופים
ברעב בראש כל-חוצות)

20 ר ראה יהוה תפישת למי
עוללת בזה אם-תאכלנה
נשים פרים (עללי) טפחים
אם-יהרג במקדש אדני בתו
ונביא:

deignity of self-representation
this is it.

אִידוֹ LAMENTATIONS

2.9

- 9 Her gates have sunk into the ground,
He has smashed her bars to bits;
Her king and her leaders are ^a"in exile,"^a
Instruction^a is no more;
Her prophets too, receive
No vision from the LORD.

- 10 Silent sit on the ground
The elders of Fair Zion;
They have strewn dust on their heads
And girt themselves with sackcloth;
The maidens of Jerusalem have bowed
Their heads to the ground.

- 11 ^{specificity} My eyes are spent with tears,
My heart is in tumult,
My being melts away^a
Over the ruin of my ^a"poor people,"^a
As babes and sucklings languish ^[from hunger]
In the squares of the city.

- 12 They keep asking their mothers,
"Where is bread and wine?"
As they languish like battle-wounded
In the squares of the town,
As their life runs out
In their mothers' bosoms.

- 13 ^{find the right image} What can I ^atake as witness^a or liken
To you, O Fair Jerusalem?
What can I match with you to console
you,
O Fair Maiden Zion?

- For your ruin is vast as the sea:
Who can heal you?

- 14 Your seers prophesied to you
Delusion and folly.
They did not expose your iniquity
So as to restore your fortunes,
But prophesied to you oracles
Of delusion and deception.

9 נבדו בארץ שעריה אבד
ושבר בריחה מלכה ושכיה
ביום אין חודה גם-נביאיה
לא-מצאו חזון מוהלה:

10 ישובו לארץ ידמו זקני בת-
ציון השלו עפל על-ראשם
הגרו שקים הורירו לארץ
ראשו בתולה ירושלים:

11 כלו ברמעות עיני חמקרו
מעי נשפה לארץ כבדי על-
שבר בת-עמי בעטף עולל
וינוק ברחבות קרנה:

12 לאמחם ואמרו איה גנו וגו'
בנהשטפם כחלל ברחבות
עיר בהשטפם נפשם אל-
חיק אמחם:

13 מה-אעידה מה אדמה-לך
הבול ירושלים מה אשנה-לך
נאחמך בתולת בת-ציון
כי-נרול בים שברך מי
ירפא-לך:

14 נביאוד חזו לך שוא וחפל
ולא-נלו על-עונה להשב
שבינה ויחזו לך משאות שוא
ומדחום:

12/14 vindicates the
true prophets

^a Lit. "among the nations"

^a Heb *torah*, here priestly instruction; cf. Jer. 18.18; Hag. 2.11; Mal. 2.6

^a Lit. "My liver spills on the ground"

^a Lit. "the daughter of my people"; so elsewhere in poetry

^a Emendation yields "compare"

א. י. ז. זכור. 13. אשיר ק' 14. שחור ק'

- 13 He has shot into my vitals
The shafts of His quiver.
14 I have become a laughingstock to all
people,
The butt of their jibes all day long.
15 He has filled me with bitterness,
Sated me with wormwood.
Suffering - no repair
16 He has broken my teeth on gravel,
Has ground me into the dust.
17 My life was bereft of peace,
I had forgotten what happiness was.
18 I thought my strength and hope
Had perished before the LORD. *no hope*
19 To recall my distress and my misery
Was wormwood and poison;
20 Whenever I thought of them,
I was bowed low.

21-30 possibility of hope

- 21 But this do I call to mind,
Therefore I have hope:
22 The kindness of the LORD has not ended,
His mercies are not spent.
23 They are renewed every morning—
Ample is Your grace!
24 "The LORD is my portion," I say with
full heart;
Therefore will I hope in Him.
25 The LORD is good to those who trust in
Him,
To the one who seeks Him;
26 It is good to wait in silence
Till rescue comes from the LORD.
27 It is good for a man, when young,
To bear a yoke;
28 Let him sit alone and be patient,
When He has laid it upon him.
29 Let him put his mouth to the dust—
There may yet be hope.
30 Let him offer his cheek to the smiter;
Let him be surfeited with mockery.

איכה LAMENTATIONS

3-13

- 13 **ח** כִּיָּא בְּלִיָּי בְּנֵי אֲשָׁפוּחִי:
14 דִּינִי שָׁחַל לְכָל-עַמִּי וַיִּנָּתֶם
כָּל-הַיּוֹם:
15 הִשְׁבִּיעֵנִי בַּמְרוֹרִים הָרוּנִי
לַעֲנָה:
16 וַיִּגְרַם בְּחִצָּיו שְׁנֵי הַכְּפִישָׁי
בְּאֶפְרַיִם:
17 וַתִּזְנֶנּוּ מִשְׁלוֹם נַפְשִׁי נְשִׁיתִי
טוֹבָה:
18 וַיֹּאמֶר אֶבְרָהָם נִצְחִי וְהוֹחֵלְתִּי
(מִדִּינָה):
19 וְכִרְ-עֵינִי וּמְרוֹדִי לַעֲנָה
וְרָאשׁ:
20 וְכֹרֶר תִּפְזֹר וְתִשִּׁים עָלַי
נַפְשִׁי:
21 וְאַתָּה אֲשֵׁב אֶל-לִבִּי עַל-כֵּן
אוֹחִיל:
22 חֲסֵדָה יְהוָה כִּי לֹא-תִקְנֶנּוּ כִּי
לֹא-כָלוּ רַחֲמָיו:
23 תִּרְשִׁים לְבָבָיִם רַבָּה
אֲמִינָתָה:
24 חֲלָמִי יְהוָה אֲמַרְהָ נַפְשִׁי עַל-
כֵּן אוֹחִיל לוֹ:
25 טוֹב יְהוָה לִקְנוֹ לְנַפְשִׁי
תִּדְרֹשְׁנִי:
26 טוֹב וְחִיל וְרוּחָם לְהִשְׁמָעַת
יְהוָה:
27 טוֹב לְבָרֶךְ כִּי-יִשָּׂא עַל
בְּנֵי עֲרִוִי:
28 יֵשֶׁב בְּדֶל וַיִּיטֵם כִּי נָטַל עָלָיו:
29 וַיִּטֹּם בְּעַפְרֵי פִיהוּ אוֹרֵלִי יֵשׁ
הַקְּנָה:
30 וַיִּטֹּם לְמַבְרֹה לְחִי יִשָּׁעַת
בְּחֶרֶף:

- 21 Prostrate in the streets lie
Both young and old.
My maidens and youths
Are fallen by the sword;
You slew them on Your day of wrath,
You slaughtered without pity.
22 You summoned, as on a festival,
My neighbors from round about.
On the day of the wrath of the LORD,
None survived or escaped;
Those whom I bore^a and reared
My foe has consumed.
reversal of Ps. 23, Exodus
3 I am the man^a who has known affliction
Under^a the rod of His wrath;
2 Me He drove on and on
In unrelieved darkness;
3 On none but me He brings down His hand
Again and again, without cease.
4 He has worn away my flesh and skin;
He has shattered my bones.
5 All around me He has built
Misery^b and hardship;
6 He has made me dwell in darkness,
Like those long dead.
7 He has walled me in and I cannot break out;
He has weighed me down with chains.
8 And when I cry and plead,
He shuts out my prayer;
9 He has walled in my ways with hewn
blocks,
He has made my paths a maze.
10 He is a lurking bear to me,
A lion in hiding;
11 He has forced me off my way^c and
mangled me,
He has left me numb.
12 He has bent His bow and made me
The target of His arrows:

^a The root has this meaning in Arabic. Others "dandled"
^{a-a} Emendation yields "whom the Lord has shepherd with"
^b Taking rosh as equivalent to resh
^{c-c} Meaning of Heb uncertain

איכה LAMENTATIONS

2-21

- 21 **ש** שָׁכַבְתִּי לְאַרְצָא חֲצוֹתָי נִעַר חֲלוֹן
בְּחִילִי וּבְחֹזֶק־נַפְלִי בְּחֶרֶב
תִּרְגַּם בְּיוֹם אֶפְרַיִם שִׁבְחָתָהּ לֹא
חֲמִלָה:
22 **ת** תִּקְרָא בְּיוֹם מוֹעֵד מְנוּרָה
מִסְכִּיב וְלֹא הָיָה בְּיוֹם אֶחָד-
יְהוָה פָּלִיט וְשָׁרִיד אֲשֶׁר-
טִפַּחְתִּי וְרָבִיתִי אֵיבֵי כָלָם:
א 1 אֲנִי הִנְכַּר רִצָּה עָלַי בְּשִׁבְטִי
עֲבַרְתִּי:
2 אֲחִירִי נִתַּן יָלֶדֶת חֲשֹׁךְ וְלֹא-
אוֹר:
3 אֲדָה כִּי יִשָּׁב יְהֹפֹךְ יְדֵי כָל-
הַיּוֹם:
4 בְּלֵה בִּשְׂרִי וְעוֹלֵי שִׁבְרִי
עֲצֻמוֹתִי:
5 בִּגְדִי עָלַי יִבְשָׁה רֹאשׁ וְחִלָּה:
6 בְּמַחְשָׁבִים הוֹשִׁיבֵנִי בְּמַתִּי
עוֹלָם:
7 וְכֹרֶר בַּעֲרִי וְלֹא אֶצֵּא הַכְּבִיד
וְחִשְׁתִּי:
8 גַּם כִּי אֲשַׁל נְאֻשָׁנִי שִׁחָם
חֲפִלָּתִי:
9 וְכֹרֶר דְּרָכֵי בְּנוֹתֵי נְחִיבָתִי
עָנָה:
10 דָּב אֲרַב הוּא לִי אֲרִיָּה
בְּמַסְתָּרִים:
11 דְּרָכֵי סוֹבֵר מִפְּשָׁעֵי שִׁמְנִי
שׁוּמָם:
12 דִּכְבֹּד מִשְׁתִּי וַיִּצְבֵּנִי כַּמִּטָּה
לְחִצִּי:

49 My eyes shall flow without cease,
Without respite,

50 'Until the LORD looks down
And beholds from heaven.

51 My eyes have brought me grief-
Over all the maidens of my city.

52 My foes have snared me like a bird,
Without any cause.

53 They have ended my life in a pit
And cast stones at me.

54 Waters flowed over my head;
I said: I am lost!

De Profundis

55 I have called on Your name, O LORD,
From the depths of the Pit.

56 Hear my plea;
Do not shut Your ear
To my groan, to my cry!

57 You have ever drawn nigh when I called You;
You have said, "Do not fear!"

58 You championed my cause, O Lord,
You have redeemed my life.

59 You have seen, O LORD, the wrong done me;
Oh, vindicate my right!

60 You have seen all their malice,
All their designs against me;

61 You have heard, O LORD, their taunts,
All their designs against me,

62 The mouthings and pratings of my adver-
saries

Against me all day long.

63 See how, at their ease or at work,
I am the butt of their jibes.

64 Give them, O LORD, their deserts
According to their deeds.

65 Give them anguish^o of heart;
Your curse be upon them!

66 Oh, pursue them in anger and destroy them
From under the heavens of the LORD!

plea for vindication

Emendation yields,
50 "Until the LORD looks down from heaven
And beholds

51 my affliction.
The LORD has brought me grief!"

*Cry for revenge not contingent
on self-examination
God: redirect thy wrath*

ענין תפלה

איכה LAMENTATIONS 3.49

ע עיני נארה ולא חסמה מאין
תפלות:

50 עד-ישיבה לרא יהוה
משמים:

51 עיני עוללה לנפשי מקל בנות
עירי:

52 צור צדוני בצפור איבי חננים
צ צמתי כבוד חיי נדדתי-אבן

53 כי:
54 צפור-מים על-ראשי אצמתי
נצורתי:

55 קראתי שמך יהוה מקבור
תתקוח:

56 קולי שמע אל-תשעלם
אזנה לרחמי לשמתי:

57 מלבם ביום אקראה אצמתי
אל-תירא:

58 רבתי אלה ריבי נפשי נאלם
חיי:

59 ראיתי יהוה ענותי שפטה
משפטי:

60 ראיתי כל-נקמתם כל-
מושבכם לי:

61 שמעתי חרפכם יהוה כל-
מושבכם עלי:

62 שפתי קמי ותגיונם עלי כל-
היום:

63 שבתם וקמתם הבישה אני
מנגנתם:

64 תשוב להם נמול יהוה
במשפחה ידיתם:

65 תפן להם מנחת-לב תאלחתי
להם:

66 תרדף באלות שמידם מתחת
שמי יהוה:

*covenant
theology*

31-39 Justness of God's actions
31 For the Lord does not
Reject forever,
32 But first afflicts, then pardons
In His abundant kindness.
33 For He does not wilfully bring grief
Or affliction to man,
34 Crushing under His feet
All the prisoners of the earth.
35 To deny a man his rights
In the presence of the Most High,
36 To wrong a man in his cause—
This the Lord does not choose.
37 Whose decree was ever fulfilled,
Unless the Lord willed it?
38 Is it not at the word of the Most High,
That weal and woe befall?
39 Of what shall a living man complain?
Only of his own sin!

debut of communal we

40 Let us search and examine our ways,
And turn back to the LORD;
41 Let us lift up our hearts ^{and not} ~~with~~ our hands
To God in heaven:

42 We have transgressed and rebelled,
And You have not forgiven.

43 You have clothed Yourself in anger and
pursued us,
You have slain without pity.

44 You have screened Yourself off with a
cloud,
That no prayer may pass through.

45 You have made us filth and refuse
In the midst of the peoples.

46 All our enemies loudly
Rail against us.

47 Panic and pitfall are our lot,
Death and destruction.

48 My eyes shed streams of water
Over the ruin of my poor^o people.

*speaker provoked not by his own tears but
by the plight of the people = empathetic
advocate role*

^d Lit. "to"; emendation yields "rather than"; cf. Joel 2.13
^e Lit. "the daughter of my"; so frequently in poetry

איכה LAMENTATIONS 3.31

31 כי לא ינחם לעולם אדני:
32 כי אם-יהוה ורחם בלב
חסדו:

33 כי לא ענה מלבו נענה בנ-
איש:

34 לרבא תחת רגליו כל אצירי
אצרי:

35 להטות משפט-אבן נהר פנ
עליו:

36 לפנה אדם קריבו אדני לא
רעה:

37 מי זה אמר נסחי אדני לא
צנה:

38 מפי עליון לא תצא הרעות
והטוב:

39 מה-יחאונן אדם נדבך על-
חטאו:

40 ותפשה רגליו ונחמרה
ותשובה עד-יהוה:

41 נשא לבבנו אל-כפים* אל-
אל בשמים:

42 נחנו פשענו וקרינו אתה לא
סלחת:

43 סבותה באה ותרדפנו הקנה
לא חמלת:

44 סבתה בענו לך מעבור
הפלה:

45 סחי ומאוס תשימו בקרב
העמים:

46 פצו עלינו פיהם כל-אויבנו:
47 פחר ופחת היה לנו השאח
והשבר:

48 פלוי-מים סגר עיני על-
שבר בתי-עמי.

49 פלוי-מים סגר עיני על-
שבר בתי-עמי.

50 פלוי-מים סגר עיני על-
שבר בתי-עמי.

51 פלוי-מים סגר עיני על-
שבר בתי-עמי.

52 פלוי-מים סגר עיני על-
שבר בתי-עמי.

53 פלוי-מים סגר עיני על-
שבר בתי-עמי.

- 10 With their own hands, tender-hearted women
Have cooked their children;
Such became their fare,
In the disaster of my poor^a people.

- 11 The LORD vented all His fury,
Poured out His blazing wrath;
He kindled a fire in Zion
Which consumed its foundations.
12 The kings of the earth did not believe,
Nor any of the inhabitants of the world,
That foe or adversary could enter
The gates of Jerusalem.
13 It was for the sins of her prophets,
The iniquities of her priests,
Who had shed in her midst
The blood of the just.
14 They wandered blindly through the streets,
Defiled with blood,
So that no one was able
To touch their garments.
15 "Away! Unclean!" people shouted at them,
"Away! Away! Touch not!"
So they wandered and wandered again;
For the nations had resolved:
"They shall stay here no longer."
16 *The LORD's presence has departed from them,
He will accept them no more;
He shows no regard for priests,
No favor to elders.
17 Even now our eyes pine away
In vain for deliverance.
As we waited, still we wait
For a nation that cannot help.

See note at 3.48

Meaning of line uncertain

Lit. "It," referring to "The LORD's presence" in first line of verse

איכה LAMENTATIONS

4.10

- 10 יָדֵי נָשִׁים רַחֲמָנִיּוֹת בָּשְׁלוּ
לְדֹתָיו הָיוּ לְבָרוֹת לָמוֹת
בְּשֶׁכֶר בְּתַעֲמִי:
11 בָּלָה יְהוָה אֶת-חֲמָתוֹ שָׂפָד
חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ נִצָּת-אֵשׁ בְּצִיּוֹן
וְהָאֵבֶל יִסְדִּיתִּיהָ:
12 לֹא הָאֱמֻנִים מִלְכֵי-אֶרֶץ וְכָל
יֹשְׁבֵי חָבֶל כִּי יָבֹא צָר וְאֵיִב
בְּשַׁעֲרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם:
13 מִחַטָּאת וּבִיאוֹתָ עֲוֹנוֹת בְּהִנֵּה
הַשֹּׁפְכִים בְּקִרְבָּהָ קִם
צְדִיקִים:
14 נָעַו עֲרֻרִים בְּחוֹצוֹת וְנָאֲלוּ
בָהֶם בָּלָא וְכָלְוּ יָנְעוּ
בִלְבָּשָׁהֶם:
15 סִירוּ טָמֵא קִרְאוּ לָמוֹ סִירוּ
סִירוּ אֶל-תָּנֻעוּ כִּי נָצוּ נָם-
נָעוּ אֲמָרוּ בְּנֵי־לֹא יוֹסִפוּ
לָנוּר:
16 פָּנֵי יְהוָה חָלַקֵם לֹא יוֹסִיף
לְהַבִּישָׁם פָּנֵי כְהֵנִים לֹא נִשְׂאוּ
זָמִינִם לֹא חֲנֻנוּ:
17 עוֹדִינָה תִּכְלִיתָ עֵינֵינוּ אֶל-
עוֹדֵנוּ הִבֵּל בְּצַפְיָתָנוּ צָפִינוּ
אֶל-נֵי לֹא יוֹשֵׁעַ:

12. v. 12. 'כל' 10. v. 10. 'קנים' 17. v. 17. 'עודנו' ק

4 Alas!

- metaphoric The gold is dulled,^a
frame Debased the finest gold!
The sacred^b gems are spilled
At every street corner.
2 The precious children of Zion;
Once valued as gold—
Alas, they accounted as earthen pots,
Work of a potter's hands!
3 Even jackals offer the breast
And suckle their young;
But my poor people has turned cruel,
Like ostriches of the desert.
4 The tongue of the suckling cleaves
To its palate for thirst.
Little children beg for bread;
None gives them a morsel.
5 Those who feasted on dainties
Lie famished in the streets;
Those who were reared in purple
Have embraced refuse heaps.
6 The guilt^c of my poor^d people
Exceeded the iniquity^e of Sodom,
Which was overthrown in a moment,
Without a hand striking it.*
7 Her elect were purer than snow
Whiter than milk;
Their limbs were ruddier than coral,
Their bodies^f were like sapphire.
8 Now their faces are blacker than soot,
They are not recognized in the streets;
Their skin has shriveled on their bones,
It has become dry as wood.
9 Better off were the slain of the sword
Than those slain by famine,
^aWho pined away, [as though] wounded,
For lack of^g the fruits of the field.

* no human hands descended upon her - unlike Jerusalem, Sodom was destroyed directly by God without human intervention

^a Meaning of Heb uncertain

^b Emendation yields "precious"

^c I.e. its punishment

^d See note at 3.48

איכה LAMENTATIONS

4.1

- 1 אֵיכָה יִנְעַם זָנוֹב יִשְׁנֵא הַקְּהָל
הַטּוֹב הַשֹּׁפְכֵי-דָם אֲבוֹתֵי-קִרְבִּי
בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל-חוֹצוֹת:
2 בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן הַיְקָרִים הַמְּסֻלָּאִים
בְּפִי אֵיכָה נִחְשְׁבוּ לִנְבִלִי-
לִרְשׁ מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי יוֹצֵר:
3 גַּם-תִּנּוֹן תִּלְצֵנוּ שֶׁר הַיְנִיקוּ
וְיִרְתֵּנוּ בְּתַעֲמִי לְאֲכֹר
כִּי עֵינִים בְּמִדְבָּר:
4 דְּבֵק לִשׁוֹן יוֹנֵק אֶל-חֶבֶן
בְּצִמָּא עוֹלָלִים שְׂאֵלוּ לָהֶם
פֶּרֶשׁ אֵין לָהֶם:
5 הָאֲבָלִים לְמַעֲרִים נִשְׁמוּ
בְּחוֹצוֹת הָאֱמֻנִים עַל־חוֹלֵעַ
חֲבָקוּ אֲשַׁתּוֹחַ:
6 וַיִּגְדֵּל עָוֹן בְּתַעֲמִי מִחַטָּאת
סִלָּם הַהִפּוּכָה כְּמוֹ-רָנֵעַ
וְלֹא-חָלוּ כִּה נָדִים:
7 זָכוּ וְיִירֶה מִשְׁלֵן צָחוּ מִחֶלֶב
אֲדָמוּ עֲצָם מִכְּנִיִּים סָפִיר
וְנִרְהָם:
8 חֲשֵׁה מִשְׁחֹר הָאָרֶץ לֹא נִכְרוּ
בְּחוֹצוֹת צָפָד עוֹרֶם עַל-
עֲצָמֵם יָבֵשׁ הָיָה כְּעֵץ:
9 טוֹבִים הָיוּ חֲלָלֵי-חֶרֶב
מִחֲלָלֵי רֶעִב שֶׁהֶם יָזְבוּ
מִדְּקָרִים מִתְּנוּבוֹת שָׂרִי:

2. v. 2. 'טנים' ק

- 9 We get our bread at the peril of our lives,
Because of the sword of the wilderness.^b
10 Our skin glows like an oven,
With the fever of famine.
11 They^c have ravished women in Zion,
Maidens in the towns of Judah.
12 Princes have been hanged by them;^e
No respect has been shown to elders.
13 Young men must carry millstones,
And youths stagger under loads of wood.
14 The old men are gone from the gate,
The young men from their music.
15 Gone is the joy of our hearts;
Our dancing is turned into mourning.
16 The crown has fallen from our head;
Woe to us that we have sinned!

- 17 Because of this our hearts are sick,
Because of these our eyes are dimmed:
18 Because of Mount Zion, which lies
desolate;
Jackals prowl over it.

- 19 But You, O LORD, are enthroned forever,
Your throne endures through the ages.
20 Why have You forgotten us utterly,
Forsaken us this long time?
21 Take us back, O LORD, to Yourself,
And let us come back:
Renew our days as of old!
22 For truly, you have rejected us,
Bitterly raged against us.

Take us back, O LORD, to Yourself,
And let us come back;
Renew our days as of old!

Formulaic

ironic
Juxtaposition

only words of praise!

You have shown us your
anger exceedingly

i.e. excessive, irrational
God's wrath has gone too far,
has crossed the line!

Cooper on 5:21 If God waits "so" to return
He will have to take the initiative
Has God, perhaps, abandoned Israel forever?

^b Or "heat (cf. Deut. 28.22) of the wilderness"; meaning of
Heb uncertain

^c I.e. the slaves of v. 8

איכה LAMENTATIONS

5.9

- 9 בְּנִשְׁלֵנוּ וְנָבִיא לְחַמְנוּ מִפְּנֵי
הָרֵב הַמִּדְבָּר:
10 עֲזָרְנוּ בְּחַיִּי וְנִכְמְרוּ מִפְּנֵי
זֶלְעָפוֹת רָעָב:
11 נָשִׁים בָּצִינוּ עִוֵּי בַחֲלֵית בַּעֲרֵי
הַיְּדֵה:
12 שָׂרִים בָּיָדָם נָחֲלוּ פִנֵּי זִמְנוֹת
לֹא נִהְדָּרוּ:
13 בַּחֲדָרִים מְתוּן נִשְׁאוּ וְנִשְׁעִירִים
בַּעֲצֵי כָשָׁל:
14 וְנָקִים מִשְׁעַר שְׂכָתוֹ בַּחֲדָרִים
מִנְּיָנָם:
15 שִׁבְתָּ מְשׁוֹשׁ לִפְנֵי הַפֶּה לְאֶבֶל
מִחֻלּוֹתָ:
16 נִפְלִיָה עֲסָרָה רִאשֹׁנוּ אִוִּי-
נָא לָנוּ כִּי חָטָאנוּ:
17 עַל-יְהוָה הִנֵּה דִנְהָ לִפְנֵי עַל-
אֱלֹהִים חֲשָׁבוּ עֵינֵינוּ:
18 עַל הַר-צִיּוֹן שְׁשָׁמָם שׁוֹעֲלִים
הַלְכֵיבוֹ:
19 אֲתָה יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם תִּשָּׁב
בִּסְאָה לְדוֹר וָדוֹר:
20 לִמָּה לִנְצֹחַ תִּשְׁכַּחֲנוּ תַעֲזֹבֵנוּ
לְאֶדְרֵךְ יָמִים:
21 תִּשְׁכַּחֲנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנִשְׁכַּח
חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ בְּקִדְמָה:
22 בִּי אִם-מָאָס מֵאִסְתָּנוּ כִּצְפַת
עֵינֵינוּ עַד-מָאָד:

הַשִּׁבְתָּנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנִשְׁכַּח חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ בְּקִדְמָה:

- climax: flight from the city*
18 Our steps were checked,
We could not walk in our squares.^a
Our doom is near, our days are done—
Alas, our doom has come!
19 Our pursuers were swifter
Than the eagles in the sky;
They chased us in the mountains,
Lay in wait for us in the wilderness.
20 The breath of our life, the LORD's
anointed,
Was captured in their pits—
He in whose shade we had thought
To live among the nations.
21 Rejoice and exult, Fair Edom,
Who dwell in the land of Uz!
To you, too, the cup shall pass,
You shall get drunk and expose your
nakedness.
22 Your iniquity, Fair Zion, is expiated;
He will exile you no longer.
Your iniquity, Fair Edom, He will note;
He will uncover your sins.

- 5 Remember, O LORD, what has befallen us;
Behold, and see our disgrace!
2 Our heritage has passed to aliens,
Our homes to strangers.
3 We have become orphans, fatherless;
Our mothers are like widows.
4 We must pay to drink our own water,
Obtain our own kindling at a price.
5 We are hotly^a pursued;
Exhausted, we are given no rest.
6 We hold out a hand to Egypt;
To Assyria, for our fill of bread.
7 Our fathers sinned and are no more;
And we must bear their guilt.
8 Slaves are ruling over us,
With none to free us from them.

^a Or "With long strides"

^a Lit. "on our neck"; meaning of Heb uncertain

איכה LAMENTATIONS

4.18

- 18 צָרָה צָעֲרֵינוּ מְלָכָה
בְּרַחֲבֵינוּ קָרֵב קָצְנוּ מָלְאָנוּ
יָמֵינוּ כִּי-רָא קָצְנוּ:
19 מְלָכִים הָיוּ רִדְפֵינוּ מִנְּשָׁרֵי
שָׁמַיִם עַל-הַהָרִים דָּלְגָנוּ
בְּמִדְבָּר אָרְבוּ לָנוּ:
20 רֵיחַ אִפְּנוּ מִשִּׁיחַ יְהוָה נִלְכַּד
בְּשִׁמְיוֹתָם אֲשֶׁר אִמְרָנוּ
בְּצִלּוֹ נִחַיָּה בְּנוֹתָם:
21 שִׂשִׁי וְשִׁמְחֵנוּ בַּח-אֲדוֹם
יִשְׁכַּחֲנוּ בְּעֶזְרֵי עֻז גַּם-עַל-יָדָיו
תִּשְׁכַּחֲנוּ כֹּס תִּשְׁכַּחֲנוּ
וְהִתְעַדְנוּ:
22 תִּסְמַחֲנוּ בַּח-צִיּוֹן לֹא-יִסְיָה
לְהַגְלֹתָהּ פֶּקֶד עֲוֹנוֹת בַּח-
אֲדוֹם נִלְאָה עַל-חַטָּאתֶיהָ:
1 וְזָכַר יְהוָה מַה-הָיָה לָנוּ
הַבֵּיט וּרְאֵה אֶת-הַחֲרָפָתָנוּ:
2 הִתְלַחֲנוּ וְנִהְפַּכְהָ לְזָרִים בְּיָמֵינוּ
לְנִכְרִים:
3 וְיָתוּמִים הָיִינוּ אֵין אָב אֲמִתֵּינוּ
בְּאֵל מָנוֹת:
4 מִיָּמֵינוּ בִּבְסָף שִׁתֵּינוּ עֲצֵינוּ
בְּמִחְרֵי וְכָאוּ:
5 עַל צָנְאוֹתֵנוּ נִרְדַּפְנוּ וְנִקְעֵנוּ לֹא
הִוָּח-לָנוּ:
6 מִדָּרִים נִתְּנוּ יָד אֲשׁוּר לְשִׁכְעַ
לְחָם:
7 אֲבֹתֵינוּ חָטְאוּ אֲנִינֵנוּ
עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ קָבְלָנוּ:
8 עֲבָדִים מִשְׁלּוֹ בָנוּ פָּרַק אֵין
מִיָּדָם:

21. ו. חֲסִידֵי י. ו. וְיִסְיָה ק. ו. וְיִסְיָה ק. ו. וְיִסְיָה ק. ו. וְיִסְיָה ק.