

## A Study of Eicha- Lamentations

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dr. Esther Shkop  
Summary by Devora Kaye

Megilat Eicha was written by the prophet Yirmiyahu and is composed of five major lamentations arranged according to the aleph bet. The last chapter has no order but contains 22 verses corresponding to the 22 letters of the *aleph bet*. Megilat Eicha is both an eyewitness account and a prophesy of horrific events that marred our history. It depicts the depths of the agony of our people and deals with major issues of theodicy, namely *tziduk hadin*- trying to make sense of what happened.

Yirmiyahu himself tortures himself with these questions. The first two chapters of the book of Yirmiyahu include not only the words of Hashem but also the words of Yirmiyahu; namely some glimpses of what he thought and felt. Yirmiyahu lived a tragic and lonely life. He was a descendant of a family of *kohanim* that lived near Bet Lechem. They could not own land, so they worked as shepherds. His descriptions are strongly impacted by the imagery one gets overlooking Midbar Yehuda. There's the rolling green pastures on one side and the desolate desert overlooking the Dead Sea on the other side. We don't know how old Yirmiyahu was or if he

ever got married. We know that he was despised even by his own family for the prophecies he transmitted. He was tortured, put in isolation, stoned, spit on, and nearly killed. In the end he was proven correct. He also said that it was Hashem's will that the people be subjugated by the Babylonians and the best they could do would be to submit, and for that he was deemed a traitor and further hated by his people.

When the Jews were ultimately taken to exile, Yirmiyahu wanted to go with them. The *Midrash* tells us that Hashem told him- "Either you go or I go." Yirmiyahu stayed a few more years in Israel along with a small remnant of Jews. They tried to stage a rebellion and ultimately brought down the heavy hand of the Babylonians who wreaked further havoc. Yirmiyahu had no choice but to flee to Egypt and legend has it that he was murdered there.

One of the major motifs of *Megilat Eicha* is that the destruction came because of our sins, mainly murder. If there was actual murder or exploitation of the weak by those in power is to be seen. Yirmiyahu admonishes the people for relying on other nations instead of trusting Hashem. He reproves the *kohanim*, the

leaders, those who thought they owned the *Torah*, for hypocrisy and misleading the people; he also rebukes them for idol worship which remained widespread. At the same time, *Eicha* is full of pleas to Hashem for forgiveness and mercy on the innocent who suffered with those who were guilty. Yirmiyahu demands that those not deserving not be punished together with those who sinned. But his plea remains unanswered. When the ship sinks it goes with everyone. At the same time, he trusts that whatever Hashem does is just and good, although it doesn't stop him from railing against the suffering and crying out to Him.

Yirmiyahu describes Yerushalayim as a woman whose children have been taken from her, whose been ravaged, and left bereft. "How does she sit alone?" No one can identify with the terrible pain she's undergoing.

The horrific beauty of Eicha is the manner in which Yirmiyahu employs imagery while still following the *aleph bet* without any sense of contrivance. It's as if the *aleph bet* comes rushing towards him, flowing with an incredible naturalness, clearly a work of Divine inspiration.

## Hilchot Shabbat: Shehiya

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Shimon Isaacson  
Summary by Devora Kaye

There are three *gezerot d'rabanan* related to bishul. The first is *shehiya*, leaving food on an open fire from before *Shabbat* to be cooked on *Shabbat*. The second is *chazara*, returning cooked food to a fire on *Shabbat*. The third *gezera* is *hatmana*, wrapping or insulating food.

Let's begin with *shehiya*. The Mishna in *Shabbat* and the Gemara describe three different kinds of ovens. A *tanur*- a triangular oven which can get very hot and retains a lot of heat, a *kira* - two open squares that sit by side, and a *kupach*- a box where wood or fuel is added at the bottom and then a pot is placed on top. Modern ovens have a *din* of a *kira*. The Mishna says if you have a *kira* fueled by straw or grass which generates a small fire and dissipates quickly, you can leave food on it over *Shabbat*. But if one is using a real source of heat like wood or

electric as modern ovens have, one can't leave food over *Shabbat* unless there's *garav* -sweeping away the coals or *katam*-putting ashes on the coals.

When can you not leave food on an open fire without *garuf v'katum* (removing or covering the coals with ash)? The Gemara is somewhat vague when it uses the words, "*Lo yiten*." There are two possibilities -either on *Erev Shabbat* or on *Shabbat* itself. Rashi explains that the problem with leaving food on an open fire on *Erev Shabbat* is that one might come to stoke the coals on *Shabbat*, an *issur d'oroyasa* of *havara*. This is the *din* even more so on *Shabbat* itself.

*Chazara* is prohibited because it looks like cooking. In addition, if the food didn't cook to one's liking one might come to stoke the coals. The Gemara discusses a fundamental

disagreement between Rabanan and Chananya. Chananya's view is that *shehiya* is permitted if the food is *machal ben druysa* (partially cooked) and the *issur* of *lo yiten* refers to *chazara*. The more stringent view of Rabanan is that *lo yiten* refers to *shehiya* which is *ossur* on *Erev Shabbat* and *Shabbat* unless there is *garuf v'katum*. If you sweep away the coals, there's no fear you will come to stoke it; or if there's a *heker* it will remind you not to touch the heat source. In our times, people have the practice of using a blech to cover the heat source as a reminder.

The Rishonim discuss this disagreement and there is no clear consensus. Rashi and the *chachmei Ashkenaz* followed the view of Chananya while the Rif, the Rambam, and the *chachmei Sefard* follow Rabanan. The Rif rules that if one transgressed *shehiya* it would be permitted *b'dieved* to eat the food.

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The Rosh writes that there are many views on this matter and since the Jewish people love the *mitzva* of *oneg Shabbat* which includes having hot food on *Shabbat*, if they would be told that *shehiya* is prohibited they wouldn't listen. It seems he would like to rule like Rabanun but decides in favor of Chananya for the people's sake. He writes that the Jewish people have a certain halachic intuition, they are the offspring of prophets and have special

Divine assistance, and so he says, "*Hanach lahem*-Leave them be," and let them continue their custom of enjoying hot food on *Shabbat*.

The Shulchan Aruch rules like the Rif and the Rambam that in order for *shehiya* to be permitted, one must have *garuf v'katum* and even if one follows the view of Chananya the food must be at least *machal ben druyasa*. The Rema says the custom is to be lenient like the *chachmei* Ashkenaz. The Biur Halacha quotes

the Rosh, who although conceding to the view of Chananya, still seems to lean towards Rabanun. Therefore, he writes that it's best to be careful that the food be cooked fully and that the fire be covered. However, if a situation arises where there's no way to cover the fire, as long as the food was already cooked *machal ben druyasa*, *shehiya* would be permitted.

## Travelling Through Life Accompanied by Tehillim Part 9 #3

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn  
Summary by Devora Kaye

David Hamelech writes in chapter 30, verse 2, "I will exalt you Hashem for you have drawn me up (*dilitanu*) and have not let my foes rejoice." The root word of *dilitanu* is daled, lamed, heh, which means to draw water up from a well. David Hamelech praises Hashem for bringing him up from the depths of adversity. In the past, people would draw water from a well by pulling a rope that turned a wheel which then brought up a bucket of water. The bucket was tied at the top so it wouldn't fall back. This is analogous to our relationship with Hashem. There are periods of time where we go through difficult challenges on many levels. But Hashem never lets us fall completely. We will endure because we're bound to Him for eternity. There is no other nation in the world that finds its strength in Hashem as the Jewish people. Our connection to Him is what sustains us. Whatever we have or don't have is dependent on this relationship. If we are lacking, it may be because Hashem wants our closeness and He is compelling us to reach out to Him. It

could also be that we've gone astray and Hashem wants to bring us back. If not for our bond with Hashem, we would never have been able to bear all that we have gone through and remain the chosen nation.

The *Bet Hamikdash* was the place where Hashem's presence was revealed and miracles happened daily. For the last 2000 years, we no longer have the privilege of seeing Hashem in the open. But the same way David Hamelech was able to discern Hashem even while He was hidden, so too can we. And like David Hamelech, we too can develop a yearning for the revelation of Hashem and the building of the *Bet Hamikdash*.

This chapter is recited on Chanuka after *shir shel yom*. The Arizal instituted that it should also be said every day in the opening blessing of *pesukei d'zimra*. The Sefas Emes says that if we yearn for Mashiach now, then we can sense a foretaste of the revelation that will be. David Hamelech's longing for the *Beit Hamikdash* made it a reality in his time. He

could say *Mizmor shir chanukat habayit* because he already felt what it was even before it was built. Likewise, when we mourn for the *Bet Hamikdash* we can get a sense of the holiness and the connection with Hashem that was lost. When a bucket is lowered into the well, it brings up fresh water. So too, says the Sefas Emes, when Hashem brings difficulties upon us it's only for a short while. Sometimes He must bring us to a low point in order to elevate us. This should give us strength. It's analogous to a person turning the wheel of a well that has two buckets, one on either side. When one bucket goes down the other goes up. All of the difficult exiles we faced always ended with renewal. *Galut Mitzrayim* culminated with Matan Torah, the exile of Bavel brought us to Purim, the Greek exile led to *Chanuka*, and *Galut EDOM* will end with *Mashiach*. Exile is a passageway to redemption. Although the road may be long and difficult, the rope tied above us holds us fast and will bring us closer to the long awaited redemption.