

## A Study of Eicha- Lamentations

### Part II

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

Eicha Rabbati is a collection of *Midrashim* on Megilat Eicha written after the destruction of the first *Bet Hamikdash* in 586 BCE. The second *Bet Hamikdash* was destroyed in 70AD, also on *Tisha B'av*. In between there was not much written. It's almost as if the events of the destruction of *Bayit Rishon* were so cataclysmic that there was nothing left to say. Much later after the destruction of the second *Bet Hamikdash*, the sages went back to *Megilat Eicha* with the perspective of several centuries and wrote a compilation of *Midrashim*. They saw in the book of *Eicha* a timeless book setting forth an eternal paradigm of Jewish suffering.

*Chazal* describe the *Shechina*, Hashem's presence, as *kivyachal* like a devastated widow, bereft of her people and betrayed by her lovers. *Eicha* is a lament of the past and a prophetic warning for the future. The loss of the *Bet Hamikdash* signified the loss of the sacred center of *Am Yisrael* and the universe, the place where heaven and earth kissed. The miracles that occurred there were a visible symbol of Hashem's love and constant presence and that is what she cries over. The first chapter is arranged in such a way that the lamenter cries for the widow. But suddenly a voice interrupts speaking for *Am Yisrael*, Hashem, and *Yerushalayim*. There are vivid descriptions of hunger and horrific degradation; people raised on the finest food scroung-

ing for something to eat in the trash and women who were once well-off stooping to cannibalism. "*Tumata b'shuleha*-Her impurity is visible at her hem. Dignified women were reduced to wearing clothing stained with blood. The repeating mantra is, "There's no one to comfort her."

Then *Yirmiyahu* refers back to third person. "Her people groan asking for bread..." They gave away their jewelry, all the things they once cherished, for a piece of bread. Then it switches to first person- "Is there a pain like my pain?" *Yerushalayim* became like a *niddah* amongst the nations, disgusted and ostracized by the people. They took my young men and women captive... my priests and my elders are starving in the city, begging for food to revive their souls... Even after lamenting and railing against all the suffering, *Yirmiyahu* justifies Hashem's actions, "*Tzadik hu Hashem*...- Hashem is righteous, for I rebelled against his word."

The third chapter of *Eicha* is different in tone and structure. *Yirmiyahu* changes roles. No longer is he the admonisher or the bemoaner. Instead, he speaks for himself and his people. "I am the man who has seen this oppression with the staff of His rage (Hashem's rage). *Yirmiyahu* himself was tortured, whipped, placed in solitary confinement and mocked at by his people. Just when he reaches the

lowest level, there's a turning point and *Yirmiyahu* says-"Remember Hashem my suffering..." If I have to go through all of this, it's still worthwhile if Hashem is my portion. "Hashem is good to those who hope for Him... He will not abandon us forever. If He decrees suffering, He will also have mercy. From the mouth of Hashem, will not come evil or good." Hashem created us with free will, allowing us to choose between good and evil. Evil is the natural outgrowth of sin. If the absurdity of this world is of our own making, what complaints can we possibly have? And if we sinned, let us examine our ways and repent and lift our hearts up to Hashem.

"Rivers of tears pour forth from my eyes when I see the daughter of my nation so broken..." The *Midrash* says the *Shechina* is saying this. Hashem, *kivyachal*, is sobbing seeing what has happened to the Jewish people. The last chapter of *Eicha* is written after the destruction. "Hashem, remember what happened to us... see our humiliation, our land has been given over to strangers, our homes are occupied by aliens... our crown has fallen, woe to us that we have sinned..." Why have you left us ... take us back Hashem, renew our covenant." We end *Megilat Eicha* on a note of hope with a plea for Hashem to accept our *teshuvah* and bring the ultimate redemption.

## Hilchot Shabbat: Shehiya

### Part II

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

If you have an empty pot and you put another pot on top of it, it creates a distance from the source of heat and is considered *katum*-concealing the fire. Covering the fire with a *blech* (heavy metal sheet) is discussed in the *Mordechai* and quoted in the *Shulchan Aruch* as a way to do *katum*. The *Chazon Ish* didn't sanction using a *blech* as the *Gemara's* suggestion of *garuf v'katum* is to reduce the level of heat which a *blech* won't accomplish. However most *poskim* and the custom among *Klal Yisrael* is to use a *blech*. Rav Moshe was asked, why it is necessary to cover the fire. The purpose of *shehiya* is to prevent the

stoking of the coals on *Shabbat* and since we don't have coals today, the equivalent would be turning the stove knob and raising the fire. Perhaps it would be enough to just cover the knobs as a *heker* not to raise the flame? Rav Moshe's answer was that we don't make these kind of distinctions. If *chazal* instituted a *takana* to cover the flame, we leave that in place, although one can still also cover the knobs.

What is the *din* of a hot plate where the heat source is not visible and where there's no options to raise or lower the temperature? The consensus of most *poskim* including Rav Moshe Feinstein and Rav Shlomo Zalman

*Auerbach* is that in such a case you don't have to worry about *garuf v'katum*. Rav *Elyashiv* ruled stringently that one should still have a *heker* such as covering the hotplate with a thick piece of foil in keeping with the *takana* made by *chazal*.

Can you leave food in an electric oven on *Shabbat*, if it's not possible to do *garuf v'katum*? If one could use an oven insert, which creates a separation between the food and the heat source, that might be a solution. Otherwise, Rav *Feinstein* did not sanction leaving food in such an oven.

## Travelling Through Life Accompanied by Tehillim Part 10

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

Chapter 137 in *Tehilim*, Al Naharot Bavel, is primarily said before *birchat hamazon*. Hundreds of years before the exile of Bavel, *David Hamelech* foresaw with divine inspiration the destruction of the first *Bet Hamikdash* and what would happen to the Jewish people when they reached Bavel. It was a terrible time. The difference between life with the *Bet Hamikdash* and without was traumatic and difficult. Life with the *Bet Hamikdash* meant that the Divine Presence was in their midst. The Jewish people experienced daily miracles and open revelation. The presence of Hashem was so intense and the spiritual experience they had were so incredible and elevating that when the *Bet Hamikdash* was destroyed it was a disastrous calamity. In *Megilat Eicha*, *Yirmiyahu* states that nobody could believe that the *Bet Hamikdash* were the Divine Presence was so palpable, could be destroyed and when it did happen it was a terrible shock.

The Babylonian exile took place in stages. The first group that went into exile several years before the destruction were *Torah* scholars among them *Yechezkel Hanavi*. This was an act of Divine Providence so that they could prepare the spiritual infrastructure for the rest of the rest of the Jewish people who would come after them. In *Yechezkel*, Chapter 20, we read how a few elderly people came to *Yechezkel* on *Tisha B'av*, the day the *Bet Hamikdash* was destroyed. *Chazal* say they were *Chananya*, *Mishael*, and *Azarya*. *Rashi*

explains that they came to seek Hashem. They asked *Yechezkel*, "If we come to seek Him and He's not interested in us.... *Rashi* brings an analogy of a woman whose husband divorced her. Can she come with demands to him? The relationship is over. These righteous elders of Israel were afraid that Hashem wasn't interested in them anymore. The destruction and the shock was so overwhelming, that they thought that Hashem had divorced them and no longer wanted anything to do with them.

Chapter 137 in *Tehilim* takes place a few days after the destruction. "On the rivers of Babylon there we sat, we also wept, when we remembered *Zion*. The words *sham* (there) and *gam* (also) seem unnecessary. The commentaries explain that all along the way from *Yerushalayim* till Bavel, the Babylonians didn't allow the Jews to sit down. They were afraid that if the Jews would begin to contemplate what happened, they would return to Hashem. And since Hashem is merciful He would undo everything they accomplished, bring the Jews back to Israel, and rebuild the *Bet Hamikdash*. So, when they finally reached Bavel and were permitted to sit down, the enormity of what they had lost hit them and they began to cry.

The *Midrash Shocher Tov* says, *Nevuchadnezzar* and his ministers were in a boat celebrating their victory, when *Nevuchadnezzar* lifted up his eyes and saw the princes of *Yehuda* bound in chains, without clothing, walking

proud and upright near the river. He asked his servants to put sacks filled with sand and books onto them until their shoulders sagged under the heavy load. The Jewish people then began to weep, and their cries rose to heaven. When Hashem heard their weeping, He wanted to destroy the world and the angels came to try prevent it and console Him. Hashem told them not to comfort Him but to go down and take the heavy loads off His children's shoulders. Immediately, the angels descended but it wasn't only they who came down to lift up the burden of the Jews, but Hashem too. The Jewish people thought Hashem had divorced them. They were devastated that perhaps they no longer mattered to Him. But in *Yechezkel*, Chapter 20, Hashem reassures them- "You will never be divorced from me, nor will I ever sell you."

The commentaries explain that the book of *Yechezkel* starts in an unusual way. Usually, a book of prophets will begin by introducing the prophet, his roots, the era in which he lived... But the very first chapter of *Yechezkel* starts with *Yechezkel* experiencing a divine revelation in Bavel that he had to give over to the Jewish people. The *Bet Hamikdash* was destroyed, the Jews were exiled to Bavel, but whatever Hashem does is for our benefit, He is still our father who loves us and will remain with us always. The *Midrash* says that this was the consolation that *Yechezkel* gave the Jewish people.