

אלי ציון ועריה *Eli Tziyyon - Anonymous*

About the Piyut.

Eli Tzion is the last piyut in the Ashkenazi collection of *kinot* and is customarily sung in a recitative style by the whole community. In this *kina*, the poet turns to Zion, likening her to a woman who has suffered both destructive and redemptive pain: the pain of a young woman who is widowed, and the pain of a mother who brings new life into the world. Taken as a whole, the poem is a mournful call out to Zion to lament her tragic destruction. Only in the last verses do we come to understand that this *kina* is also a call to God to hear the Jewish people's cry. To conjure this mournful call, the poet opens every stanza with *alei* and ends with *ha*, the the sounds of howling, weeping and sighing.

Lament, Zion and her cities

אֵלֵי צִיּוֹן וְעָרֶיהָ

like a woman in her labor pains

כְּמוֹ אִשָּׁה בְּצִירֶיהָ

like a maiden girt in sackcloth

וְכִבְתוּלָה חֲגוּרַת שֶׁקַּ

for the husband of her youth.

עַל בַּעַל נְעוּרֶיהָ

For the palace now deserted

עָלֵי אַרְמוֹן אֲשֶׁר נָטַשׁ

because of the sin of the sheep of her flocks

בְּאִשְׁמַת צֹאן עֲדָרֶיהָ

and for the intrusion of God's blasphemers

וְעַל בִּיאַת מְחַרְפֵי אֵל

into the chambers of her sanctuary.

בְּתוֹךְ מִקְדָּשׁ חֲדָרֶיהָ

For the exile of God's servants,

עָלֵי גְלוֹת מְשֻׁרְתֵי אֵל

the sweet singers of her songs,

נְעִימֵי שִׁיר זִמְרֶיהָ

and for their blood which has been spilled

וְעַל דָּמָם אֲשֶׁר שִׁפַּךְ

like the waters of her rivers.

כְּמוֹ מֵימֵי יְאוּרֶיהָ

For the lyrics of her dances,

עָלֵי הַגִּיּוֹן מְחוּלָּיהָ

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now silenced in her cities,

and for the council now devastated,

and the abolition of her high courts.

For her daily sacrifices

and the redemption of her first born,

and for the defilement of the Temple's vessels

and the altar of her incense.

For the little children of her kings,

the sons of David, her princes,

and for their beauty which was darkened

when she was divested of her crowns.

For the glory that was dispelled

at the time her shrines were destroyed,

and for the oppressor who tormented

and placed sackcloth around her waist.

For the wounds and many blows

with which her sainted ones were struck,

and for the smashing upon the rock

of her babes, her young ones.

For the joy of her enemy

אֲשֶׁר דָּמַם בְּעָרֶיהָ

וְעַל וְעַד אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַם

וּבטוֹל סִנְהֶדְרֶיהָ

עַלִי זִבְחֵי תְּמִידָהּ

וּפְדִיּוֹנֵי בְּכוֹרֶיהָ

וְעַל חִלּוּל כְּלֵי הַיֵּכָל

וּמִזְבֵּחַ קִטּוֹרֶיהָ

עַלִי טַפֵּי מַלְכֵיהָ

בְּנֵי דָוִד גְּבִירֶיהָ

וְעַל יָפִים אֲשֶׁר חָשַׁךְ

בְּעַת סָרוּ כְּתָרֶיהָ

עַלִי כְבוֹד אֲשֶׁר גָּלָה

בְּעַת חָרְבוּ דְבִירֶיהָ

וְעַל לוֹחֵץ אֲשֶׁר לָחֵץ

וְשָׁם שָׁקִים חֲגוּרֶיהָ

עַלִי מַחֵץ וְרַב מַכּוֹת

אֲשֶׁר הִכּוּ נְזִירֶיהָ

וְעַל נַפּוּץ אֶלֵי סֶלַע

עוֹלֵיָהּ נְעָרֶיהָ

עַלִי שְׂמֵחַת מְשֻׁנְאֶיהָ

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rejoicing over her downfall,

and for the torture of those once free,

her nobleman, her pious ones.

For the sin which diverted her footsteps

from the cleared path

and for her numerous communities,

tarnished and charred.

For the voices of those who mocker her

as her corpses mounted,

and to the scoffing mob

in the very midst of her Temple courtyards.

For your name which is desecrated

in the mouth of those who stand against her,

and for the prayer which they shout to You,

“Hear and heed her words!”

בְּשַׂחֲקָם עַל שְׁבָרֶיהָ

וְעַל עַנְוֵי בְּנֵי חוֹרֵין

נְדִיבֶיהָ טְהוֹרֶיהָ

עַל־י פֶּשַׁע אֲשֶׁר עָוְתָהּ

סְלֹל דֶּרֶךְ אֲשׁוּרֶיהָ

וְעַל צְבָאוֹת קְהָלֶיהָ

שְׁזוּפֶיהָ שְׁחוּרֶיהָ

עַל־י קוֹלוֹת מְחַרְפֵּיהָ

בְּעַת רְבוּ פְּגָרֶיהָ

וְעַל רִגְשַׁת מְגַדְפֵיהָ

בְּתוֹךְ מִשְׁכַּן חֲצָרֶיהָ

עַל־י שִׁמְךָ אֲשֶׁר חָלַל

בְּפִי קָמִי מִצָּרֶיהָ

וְעַל תְּחִן יִצְחוֹ לְךָ

קְשׁוּב וּשְׁמַע אֲמָרֶיהָ