



A Few  
**KEY NOTES**  
On  
**KINNOS**

**ECLECTIC TORAH COMPILATIONS**

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— TALMUDIC BOOKS —

ECLECTIC TORAH COMPILATIONS

PRESENTS

**A FEW  
KEY NOTES  
ON  
KINNOSES**

**Primarily Based on  
Dr. Daniel Goldschmidt's  
Seder HaKinnos L'Tisha B'Av  
Jerusalem 5728**

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# KEY NOTES ON KINNOS

SELECTED IDEAS GLEANED FROM THE ELEGIES OF TISHA B'AV

**Introduction:** It is interesting to note that although on one hand there are numerous references to the fact that the Destruction of the Temples were decreed before the Creation and was part of the Divine Plan, there are many other references to the fact that it was still the result of our sins. What gives? One may argue that although G-d has planned and knows all of history already, it is for us to play it out and we can delay or speed up events depending on our sins or righteousness. Maybe the Destructions could have been staved off indefinitely or even canceled had we behaved in accordance to His will? We failed, so the planned and threatened events had to play themselves out as designed.

**Short History of the Kinnos (Tisha B'Av Elegies):** Hundreds of Kinnos were written from Talmudic times through the times of the Rishonim. (In recent years, there have been several attempts to write Kinnos in response to the tragic European Holocaust, but none have as yet achieved universal acceptance.) The "Western" Ashkenazi Minhag accepted 60 Kinnos while the "Eastern" Ashkenazi Minhag (Minhag Polin) has 46 of which 38 are the same. Historically, every congregation chose those Kinnos it wished to recite based on tradition or some other criteria, presumably with local rabbinic guidance. The advent of the printing press made for more uniform recitations among communities and reduced the number of known Kinnos to the more popular ones. Many ancient Kinnos have survived only in manuscript form.

**Authors:** The most prolific author of our Kinnos was R' Elazar ben Kalir known as Hakaliri or Kaliri (7<sup>th</sup> century). He may have written over 50 Kinnos, 21 of which were accepted in the old Ashkenazi Minhag and 20 are still said today. As well, he composed many of the Krovos inserts for holidays, special Sabbaths and Tisha B'Av, some of which tie in with his Kinnos. Kaliri's Kinnos were not at all accepted in Spain and his "Kinnos of Consolation" were not accepted in Ashkenazi countries although they did enter the Roman and Romanian Machzorim. Kaliri's primary sources for his Kinnos were Lam. Rabbah, the Pesiktos, Midrash Psalms and the Talmud Yerushalmi. Other authors include Solomon

Ibn Gvirol, Yehuda HaLevi, Solomon ben Isaac Gerondi, Menachem ben Jacob of Worms, Boruch ben Shmuel of Mayence, Menachem ben Makir of Regensburg, Klonymos ben Yehuda, Yoel bar Isaac HaLevi, Maharam ben Boruch of Rottenburg, Abraham HaChozeh, Elazar ben Moses of Wurtzburg, Asher HaCohen, Meir ben Elazar of Lombard, Yosef ben Chaim HaCohen, two authors only known as Yeziel and Jacob, and a whole host of anonymous authors.

**Themes:** The Kinnos deal with many subjects which reflect much of the tragedy of Jewish history: Failure of the people to listen to the prophets, the people's iniquities and sins which led to the Destruction, a listing of G-d's graces, destruction of both Temples, cancellation of the priestly watches and Service, the sacking of the Temple vessels, abasing the Sanctuary by the enemy, travels of the exiles, and their final disappearance in Babylonia and Rome. There is recounting of the tragic murder of Zecharia ben Yehoyoda, and the revenge of his blood by Nevuzardan, and the death of King of Yoshiyaoh at Megiddo. Other themes include: latter day persecutions, particularly the Crusades, the burning of the Talmud in 1254 in Paris, contrasting the Exodus from Egypt with the Exile from Eretz Yisroel, the story of the "ten martyrs", and the story of R' Ishmael's children who were taken captive and sold. A series of Kinnos are called "Zionides", beginning with the word Zion ("odes to Zion" - EJP) which contrast our past glory and honor with the current disgrace of Zion, and conclude with a request to "return of its crown as before".

**Concluding Notes:** The Nusach for the Kinnos herein is in accordance with Dr. Goldschmidt's version. Short translations at the beginning of each Kinnoh are from EJP. Finally, it should be noted that there is no apparent order to the Kinnos, neither in theme nor chronology. Besides that, the texts we have in our printed editions are undoubtedly corrupted from the originals. We have to make due with what we have.

EJP = The Encyclopedia of Jewish Prayer by Macy Nulman, 1993.



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## KINNOS RECITED IN THE EVENING

### א זכור ה' מה היה לנו

*“Woe. Oh what has befallen us”.*

This Kinnoh is based on Lamentations Chapter 5.

#### כי שנאת חנם רדפנו

The Second Temple was destroyed because of “Sinat Chinom”, baseless hatred. This one sin is equivalent to the three cardinal sins: idolatry, illicit sexual relations and bloodshed which were the causes for the destruction of the First Temple (Yoma 9b)

### ב איך מפי בן ובת

Written by an unknown author, this Kinnoh is recited only on Motzoei Shabbos as a substitute for the prayer ויהי נועם which is omitted tonight. It is inappropriate to recite ויהי נועם tonight since this prayer was composed in honor of the completion of the Mishkan, and the First Temple was destroyed on the eve of the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, a Saturday night (EJP).

#### צמצום שכן חיבת

The Shechina (the Divine Presence) constricts Itself in order to be among Israel because of G-d's love and esteem for His people (Levit. Rabbah 29:4).

### ג אוי נא לנו כי חטאנו

Most congregations omit this Kinnoh.



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## ד בליל זה יבכיון וילילו בני

*“On this night my children weep and wail.”*

### הגלגל סיבב החובה

When orbiting the Earth, the constellations spin our sins up to Heaven.

### בכי חנם בכו ונקבע לדורות

The entire congregation raised its voice and cried on that night (Num. 14:1). Rabbah says in the name of R' Yochanan that this was the night of Tisha B'Av. G-d said to Israel, “Since you have cried without cause, I shall establish this night to be one of weeping for all generations” (Sanhedrin 104b). The Midrash states that at that moment it was decreed that both Temples would be destroyed on that date, and that Israel would be exiled among the Nations of the world.

### בליל זה ארעו בו חמש מאורעות

It was decreed on the 9th of Av that our forefathers who left Egypt would not enter the Land, both Temples would be destroyed, and the city of Beitar would be captured and ploughed under.

## ה שומרון קול תתן מצאוני עוני

This Kinnoh, in part, refers to the eradication of the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Shomron).

## ו עד אנה בכיה בציון

This Kinnoh, in part, refers to the destruction of Jerusalem.

# KEY NOTES ON KINNOS

SELECTED IDEAS GLEANED FROM THE ELEGIES OF TISHA B'AV

## KINNOS RECITED DURING THE DAY

### ז שבת סורו מני שמעוני עוכרי

#### סכותה משכן מסכות דבירי

The Heavens were concealed so that G-d's Sanctuary could not be gazed upon (Sifri Num. 99).

#### עיני מעוללת

My eyes harm my soul (Lam. Rabbah 3:51). "One thousand children were in father's house (R' Shimon ben Gamliel). Five hundred learned G-d's Torah and five hundred learned the wisdom of the Greeks. None survived but me" (Baba Kama 83a).

#### נופוצו

= Broke. The Midrash says that more Jews died in Babylon from drinking the water from the Euphrates River than were killed by the evil Nevuchadnetzer. For while in Eretz Yisroel, they only drank rainwater, dripping water and well water. This is why it says, "They wept on the rivers of Babylon..." (Midrash Psalms 137:3).

#### פצו מעשה ערוה לנדיה

There are several interesting explanations as to the meaning of this phrase.

- In an attempt to disgrace us, the Amorites and the Moabites removed the Cherubs (from on top of the Ark) and brought them out to the courtyards of Jerusalem implying that we, too, are idol-worshippers. The author calls this an act of (sexual) immorality since they were cleaving to one another when they did this.
- Others believe that the author here is referring to the time when the Emperor Vespasian loaded three ships with the important men and women of Jerusalem with the intent of shaming them by parading them through Rome.
- The Arugos Habosem (p. 258) seems to lean to a simpler explanation saying that this phrase refers to the shaming of us Jews who are without a homeland and wander נע ונד.

### ח איכה אצת באפך

#### אדומים

This refers to the Romans.



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## ט אאדה עד חוג שמים

### אבחין בכחי ליל מדבר

See ד. בכי חיים above.

## י איכה תפארתי מראשותי השליכו

### קיטור חופתה הועלה ככבשן

So bad was the conflagration at the time of the Destruction that the smoke of the burning land rose like the smoke of a furnace.

חופתה = The Temple.

## יא איכה ישבה חבצלת השרון

### כנהרג כהן ונביא ביום הכיפורים

This refers to the murder of Zechariah ben Yahoyadoh the Kohen at the command of King Yoash (Yerushalmi, Taanis 4:5). Israel committed seven sins that day: they killed a Kohen, prophet and judge, defiled the Temple courtyard with his blood, and it was a Shabbos Yom Kippur.

### ועל דמו נשחטו פרחים כציפירים

R' Yochanan says that Nevuzadran killed 80,000 young Kohanim to avenge the death of Zechariah (Yerushalmi Taanis 4:5).

### בעון מעשרות ושמיטה

Exile is a result of Israel's failing to leave the Land fallow during the Sabbatical year (Avos 5:9). Moses said to G-d, "Why has Israel been sold to the Gentiles?" during the days of the prophet Jeremiah. G-d responds, "Because they desecrated the Seventh year" (Midrash Tanchuma, Behar 1). Midrash Psalms 57:2 says that Israel was exiled because they voided the Mitzvah of tithing.

### לוחמי לחם

This refers to those engaged in Torah (Prov. 9:5). Our sages say that the scheduled destruction of Jerusalem was deferred until the Torah scholars were first disgraced (Shabbos 119b).



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## ועתה ענות אמן לא אבו

“You stood before Me at Har Sinai and you said, “All that G-d says we shall do and we shall hear...”. R' Dostai ben Yehudai said, “Don’t read that they had no אמון (trust), but that they did not answer אמן (Amen)” to the prophets when they blessed them, as it says in Jeremiah 11:5; until Jeremiah himself said Amen (Sifri, Deut.).

## יב איכה אלי קוננו מאליו

### אביגדור

Moses was also called Avigdor (Levit. Rabbah 1, 3) because he was אבי גדור, the father of all decrees for Israel, i.e. the supreme lawgiver.

### תלה עשרים ושנים מהרוס שתות

G-d delayed the Destruction for twenty-two years after Yoshiyohu’s death corresponding with the twenty-two initial letters in Lam. Chapter 4 with which he was appropriately eulogized.

## יג אהלי אשר תאבת

### אהלי אשר תאבת עד לא בראשית עם כסא כבוד לצרפו

Six things preceded the Creation of the world of which some were actually created and some were merely contemplated. The Torah and the Holy Throne were created, while the Temple was only contemplated (Gen. Rabbah 1:4) although G-d would have preferred to join the Temple with the Holy Throne and create the former before Creation, too.

## יד אי כה אמר כרת לאב בפצח

This Piyut is based on Lam. Rabbah 1:1. Many promises were made by G-d with the word כה (e.g. with Abraham, Moses). What has become of these promises (אי כה)?

### חלקם אכל חדש

The month of Av with all its tragedies has consumed [destroyed] some of the people.



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## לששים גבורים דומות

This refers to the sixty letters which comprise the priestly blessing (Songs Rabbah 3:7). They act like courageous guardians.

## פץ לקוב וברך

Refers to Balaam whose curses turned to blessings.

## טו איכה את אשר כבר עשוהו

This Kinnoh corresponds with Lam. Chapter 2 and has references to a number of colorful Midrashim, several of which are brought here:

## את אשר כבר עשוהו

The Destruction was decreed even before the Creation (Eccl. Rabbah 2:12), i.e. it was inevitable!

## בשלי רמז והארץ היתה תוהו

The world and the Temples have been and will be built and destroyed many times.

“In the beginning G-d created” is a building.

“And the land was in chaos” is a destruction.

“And G-d said, “There shall be light”” a building which will be perfected in the future.

“And it was evening and it was morning” refers to the destruction of the Temple and the [final] Redemption (Gen. Rabbah 2:5).

## ומחובי קלקלתו החרית

The Destruction was a result of our sins.

## גדע גובה קומה יציר צר

Adam, the first man, filled the world, that is, he extended from the earth to the sky. However, when he sinned, G-d laid His hands upon him and made him smaller (Gen. Rabbah 24:2, Chagigoh 12a).

## ויקנון עליו איכה באיכה

Just as Adam’s exile from Gan Eden was a punishment of his violating his commandment, so too will his descendants be exiled from Eretz Yisroel for violating their commandments (Gen. Rabbah 19:9).

## ולעקודו סוד זה פיענח

This refers to Isaac. Abraham saw that the goat was becoming increasingly entangled in the thickets. G-d says to him that this portends of his children who will become increasingly entangled with the nations of the world. Abraham, apparently, does not reveal this point to Isaac (Gen. Rabbah 56:9).

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## כי לא האמין בנואם זה

G-d reveals that the guardian angels of Babylonian, Persian (Mede), Greek and Edomite empires would rise and fall in succession. G-d inquires of Jacob, "Why are you not ascending, too?" Jacob becomes frightened and says that just as these will rise and fall, so will I! G-d assures Jacob that Israel will ascend, but not descend. Jacob does not believe G-d, and does not ascend. G-d says, "Had you ascended and believed, you would never have descended" (Midrash Tanchuma Veyetzei).

## ויקנון אין זה

G-d revealed that the Temple would go through three stages: it will be built, destroyed and rebuilt. "What's so bad about that? In the end it will be rebuilt!" "True, but it is now in a state of destruction, and for this we grieve" (Gen. Rabbah 69:7).

## ומסמרות נעלימו בקרקעיתו קבעו

When the Gentiles entered the Temple, they put their hands behind the backs of their necks, faced Heaven, taunted and insulted. The spikes on their army boots made impressions in the ground when they pounded their feet on the floor of the Temple.

## טבעו טורדים לידע זמן

Jacob's sons wanted to know when Exile would end and bothered their father to reveal this information. **כי לגלות קץ אב זמן** Jacob was prepared to reveal the date to them but it became concealed from him (Gen. Rabbah 98:2)

## מה מצאת עולתה בי

G-d says to Israel, "Your forefathers in the desert did not think I was a burden to them, why do you?" (Jeremiah 2:5).

## השבעתי אתכם שמעו

G-d made Israel swear not to rebel against the nations of the world and not to press (forward) the date of the final redemption...(Songs Rabbah 2:7).

## ונמאס באשר בו נעשה

Why was Shiloh destroyed? Because of the Holy sacrifices which were desecrated there (Tosefta Menochos 13:22).

## להמיר לשון איכה בלשון אי כה

**איכה** becomes **אי כה**, that is, "Where is G-d's promise which begins with **כה?**" This Kinnoh connects with the previous Kinnoh **אי כה אמר** which was originally said here (D. Goldschmidt).



# KEY NOTES ON KINNOS

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## טז איכה אשפתו פתוח כקבר

This Kinnoh corresponds with Lam. Chapters 3 and 5.

### ונם כי ינטו צללי ערב

Based on Jeremiah 6:4. Either this refers to the Destruction of the Temple (Seder Olam Rabbah 27) or it is a reference to the sin of the Golden Calf which Bnei Yisroel made in the desert and which was not atoned for until the Temple was destroyed.

### והצית להבו ובתכלית ששה מאורי כיבו

G-d instructed the angel to pick up two coals from upon the Altar. For six years these coals were dimming in the palms of Gabriel who believed that Israel was repenting. When he realized that they were not, he wanted to throw the coals at them and mutilate them (Midrash Levit. Rabbah 26:8, Lam. Rabbah 1:13).

## יז זכור את אשר עשה צר בפנים

*“Remember!”*

This Kinnoh corresponds with Lam. Chapter 5 and describes the misdeeds of Amalek.

### שלף חרבו ובא לפני ולפנים

Titus entered the Holy of Holies with his sword drawn and passed through both the inner curtains (Levit. Rabbah 22:3).

### אבותינו זרה כהכניסו

Refers to the “foreign fire” which Nodov and Avihu brought into the Sanctuary (Levit. 10:1).

### זזה צועה הכניס

Titus spread out a Sefer Torah upon the Altar and sinned there with two prostitutes (Levit. Rabbah 22:3).

### בהוציא כלי שרת ושמים באני שייט

Titus gathered up the Holy vessels from the Temple, put them in a net, and absconded with them by ship (Levit. Rabbah 22:3).

# KEY NOTES ON KINNOS

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## כי יוזק בששים רבוא מזיקים

Jerusalem was defended by 600,000 Evil Spirits who stood at the threshold of the Sanctuary. They were prepared to harm the hated attackers. When, however, the Spirits saw that the Divine Presence was watching and yet kept silent, so did they (Deut. Rabbah 1:17).

## שבת סוטן

This refers to Nevuchadnetzer who destroyed the first Temple.

## ויבא אדמון

This refers to Titus who destroyed the second Temple. He was a descendent of Edom.

## כיד ארבע ראשי מפרסיו

This refers to Vespasian who was in Jerusalem for three and half years. Titus divided the four walls of Jerusalem... At that time, Heaven decreed that the Western Wall would never be destroyed (Lam. Rabbah 1:5).

## ושלחום לארץ עוץ בשלש ספינות

(As we saw above, Vespasian assembled three shiploads of the most important Jews, men and women, from Jerusalem to be paraded about in disgrace and humiliation in Rome). If we understand this correctly, the story is as follows: When they set sail, they said "Is it not enough that we angered G-d regarding the Temple? Now we shall anger him outside the Land of Israel! If we drown ourselves in the sea, won't we have a share in the World to Come?" G-d encouraged them with the verse, "I will bring (you) back from the depths of the sea" (Psalms 68:23). Still, they were distraught by what they had done and tossed themselves into the sea, one boat after the other. The Holy Spirit shrieked and said, "Of these I cry" (Lam. 1:16).

## יח אם תאכלנה נשים

### המדודים טפחים טפחים

Doeg ben Yosef died leaving a widow and a small son. She would measure the child in handbreadths and donate his weight in gold to Heaven. When Jerusalem was under siege, she slaughtered and ate him (Lam. Rabbah 2:20).

### אם תגוזנה פאת ראשם ותקשרנה לסוסים פורחים

...they bound Martha bas Baisus' hair to the tails of horses and ran them off... (Lam. Rabbah 1:17).

### אם תזמנה בשר אבות לבנים

This refers to one who ate the corpse of his father (Lam. Rabbah 1:15).



# KEY NOTES ON KINNOS

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**אם תצברנה על אבן אחת תשעה קבין מוחי ילדים מונחים**

The brains of three hundred babies were found on one rock (Lam. Rabbah 2:2)

## יט אתה אמרת היטב איטב עמך

**ואריה גורותיו מחנק**

This refers to Nevuchadnetzer.

## כ לך ה' הצדקה

**בארבע עשר מושיעים**

This refers to the fourteen judges who ruled from Joshua to Samuel.

**בקימת שילה ונוב וגבעון ובית עולמים**

This refers to various places where the Divine Presence “settled”.

## כא הטה אלקי אונך

**כהעלו על מזבחך חזירים**

Possibly refers to Antiochus who may have put pigs on the Altar (Lam. Rabbah).

**זדים מזרקים למולך מילות קדושים**

What did Amalek do? They would cut off the foreskins of Israel and toss them to Heaven saying mockingly, “Here is what You chose!” (Tanchumah, Ki Teitzei 10).

## כב ארזי הלבנון אדירי התורה

Recounts the stories of the famous “Ten Martyrs”.

## כג החרישו ממני ואדברה

**ולא אוכל אדומה**

How can I remain silent with all that is happening to us?



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## כד ואת נוי חטאתי השמימה

Based on the Gemara in Gittin 58a. R' Yishmoel ben Elisha's son and daughter were taken into slavery by two different slavemasters who once met by chance. Each boasted that their slave and maidservant were of incomparable beauty. They agreed to have them mate and they would share in their offspring. It was arranged one night that the son and daughter would be sequestered in a room alone. Each sat in a different corner. The son said, "I am a Kohen, the son of High Priests. I should mate with a maidservant?" The daughter said, "I am the daughter of a Kohen, the daughter of High Priests. I should mate with a slave?" They both cried all night long. At dawn, they recognized each other and cried and wailed until their souls departed. Of them the prophet Jeremiah had lamented, "For these my eyes tear... (Lam. 1:16).

## כה על חרבן בית המקדש

### לאים תרשישים מרון

Thrice did G-d prevent the administering angels from singing: At the time of the Great Flood, at the time of the splitting of the Sea, and at the time of the Destruction of the Temple (Lam. Rabbah 24).

### ראשי הבדים כנגנזו מבית הפרכות

The Holy Ark was hidden, but then carried off to Babylonia. When it had rested in the Holy of Holies, the ends of its two carrying poles protruded through the curtains as would a woman's breasts (Yoma 54a).

### וארבע גחלים בדביר מהלכות

Dr. Goldschmidt says this phrase is based on an Aggadah which is no longer extant: Four coals descended from Heaven and burned the Temple.

### ועשרה כיורות... והנם שבורות

Also based on a non-extant Aggadah: When the washing lavers arrived in Babylonia, they were all broken.

### והנה מיכאל מהלך לפניו

This refers to Nevuchadnetzer who destroyed the first Temple. He was afraid to enter the building until the angel Michael descended and led him and his horse into the Holy of Holies (Tanchuma Vaiyeishev 15).



# KEY NOTES ON KINNOS

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## כו מי יתן ראשי מים

This Kinnoh deals with the 11th century Crusader decrees, particularly of the pogroms in the famous medieval Ashkenazi communities of Speyer, Worms and Mayence (Mainz) in western Germany.

## כז אז בהלוך ירמיהו אל קברי אבות

This is actually a continuation of the next Kinnoh **אז במלאת ספק** (Lam. Rabbah). G-d tells Jeremiah that He feels like a man whose only son died under his wedding canopy. “This hurts you? Do you not feel the pain of me and my son? Go summon Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses from their graves – they know how to cry!”

### מה אעשה לכם בני

G-d responds, “What can I do to you? I warned you, but you did not repent” (Lam. Rabbah).

### אל תירא אברם

“Why did you exile my son and hand him to the Gentiles? And he was killed in all sorts of unusual ways!” G-d tells Abraham, “Because your son sinned.”

### כי לא אלמן

Moses asks G-d, “Was I not the faithful shepherd of Israel for forty years? And yet, when it came time for entering the Land, you decreed that my bones would fall in the desert” (Midrash Jeremiah 51:5).

### רחל אחותה מבכה על בניה

It was our Matriarch Rachel who cried for her children. Immediately, G-d’s mercy was stirred and He said, “For the sake of Rachel, I return Israel home” (Jeremiah 31:14).

### שולחתי בבלה למענכם

The Divine Presence, as it were, exiles itself to wherever Israel is in exile, whether in Babylonia or elsewhere. When we will return, so too will the Divine Presence, as it says, “And G-d...will return with you” (Deut. 30:3) (Isaiah 43:14, Mechiltoh Bo 14 on Ex. 12:41).



# KEY NOTES ON KINNOS

SELECTED IDEAS GLEANED FROM THE ELEGIES OF TISHA B'AV

## כח אז במלאת ספק

The Gemara (Berochos 3a) says, “Woe to the father whose sons are in exile, and woe to those sons who are exiled from their father’s table.”

## כט איך תנחמוני הבל

### במסרבי מרון

Refers to Yehoyariv during whose watch both Temples were destroyed.

### בתי סופרים ומשנאות יותר מארבע מאות

There were four hundred and eighty synagogues in Jerusalem. Each had its own school for learning Chumash (the Written Torah) and a Beis Talmud for learning Mishnah (the Oral Torah). The Emperor Vespasian destroyed them all (Lam. Rabbah 2:2).

### אין לכם חלק בשם אל דולק

Darkness refers to Greece who darkened the eyes of Israel with their evil decrees. They instructed us to take a bull’s horn and write upon it that we have no part in the G-d of Israel (Gen. Rabbah 2:4).

## ל אמרתי שעו מני

### יהיה טוב ליראי האלקים

G-d will reward the righteous in the Next World (Eccl. 8:12).

### השלים עונותם לשערה

G-d is emphatically most demanding of those who are closest to Him, even with a hair (Baba Kama 50a, Yevomos 121b).

### בפורפורך היות

G-d wears red clothing on Judgment Day. Dr. Seligmann Baer (author of the classic Siddur Avodas Yisroel, Rodelheim, 1868) in his commentary on Kinnos cites a Midrash: “In the future (Judgment Day) G-d will enwrap Himself in a Tallis adorned with the images of those Holy Martyrs who died sanctifying His Name”. Dr. Goldschmidt writes that he was unable to locate this Midrash.



# KEY NOTES ON KINNOS

SELECTED IDEAS GLEANED FROM THE ELEGIES OF TISHA B'AV

## לא מעוניי שמים

### בכנפי צעצועים

This refers to the wings of the Cherubs on the Ark (Baba Basra 99a).

## לב אש תוקד בקרבי

This Kinnoh is based on Midrash Lam. Zuta 19. It is also found in Yalkut Shimoni 2:1026.

“The author contrasts the Exodus from Egypt with the exit from Jerusalem. The former, which recounts elation, is set against the latter, which describes the unfavorable situation that existed when exiting Jerusalem.” (EJP)

## לג אצבעותי שפלו

### ומפתחות זרקו בשורם כי לקו

When the Kohanim saw the impending tragedy, they tossed the keys of the Temple toward Heaven (Taanis 29a) as if to say, “Here. We give up. We failed. You take them. Keep them in safekeeping until we straighten ourselves out”.

### נר מערב כבה

The western-most lamp of the Menorah was not lit (or maybe “would not stay lit”) for the forty years prior to the Destruction (Yoma 39b). According to the Yerushalmi (Yoma 6:3), the lamp stayed lit as long as Shimon HaTzadik was alive. After his death, it sometimes stayed lit and sometimes did not. Regardless, we lament that it is now not lit.

## לד אבל אעורר

### זמן שנת תתנ"ו

This is the year 1096 C.E.

### ואותות הקישו

Refers to the crosses on the Crusaders clothing.



# KEY NOTES ON KINNOS

SELECTED IDEAS GLEANED FROM THE ELEGIES OF TISHA B'AV

## לה יום אכפי הכבדתי

This Kinnoh recounts the deaths of the thousands of Jews killed by Nevuzardan avenging the murder of Zechariah ben Yehoyada (Gittin 57b, Sanhedrin 96b; c.f. Kinnoh יב above).

## לו שכרת ולא מיין

We beseech G-d to no longer be angry with us.

## לו ציון הלא תשאלי

“Attributed to the Spanish poet-philosopher Judah Halevi, this elegy expresses his love and longing to return to the Holy Land. It is told that Judah Halevi went up from Spain to Eretz Yisrael when he was fifty years old. When he reached the gates of Jerusalem, he fell to the ground and composed this Piyyut, ‘O Zion, will you not inquire after the well-being of your captive [sons]?’ As he was the ground an Arab horseman trampled him.” (EJP)

### חיי נשמות אויר ארצך

This refers to the soul-revitalizing air of Eretz Yisroel (similar to Baba Basra 158b).

## לח ציון קחי כל צרי

*“O Zion, were you take all the balm of Gilead”*

“This poem speaks of the superiority of Eretz Yisroel over all the other lands.” (EJP)

### עם הפתנים ברית כרתו מתוך

Your people made a covenant with the snakes (serpents) not to cause harm, as it says in the Mishna (Avos 5:5), “Neither snake nor scorpion ever caused injury in Jerusalem”.

### חכמו

The air of Eretz Yisroel wisens (Baba Basra 158b) so much so that even R' Pinchos ben Yair's donkey knew not to eat untithed produce (Chulin 7a, b).



# KEY NOTES ON KINNOS

SELECTED IDEAS GLEANED FROM THE ELEGIES OF TISHA B'AV

## לט ציון עטרת צבי

“O Zion, most desirable crown.”

### עדי עיר התמרים

The sweet fragrance of the burning incense in the Temple drifted as far as Jerico. Women there were in no need of perfume (Yoma 39b).

### בני מעמד

The early prophets established twenty-four sets of watches comprising watches of Kohanim, watches of Levites and watches of ordinary Israelites. They served on a rotational basis in the Temple or, in the case of the Israelites, prayed on their behalf (Taanis 4:2).

## מ ציון תקונני עלי ביתך

“O Zion, lament for your house that is burnt”

### גפניך

Israel is compared to G-d's vineyard.

## מא ציון ידידות ידיך

“Zion, the most beloved”

### ציון ידידות ידיך

As it says in Psalms 84:2, “How lovely is your dwelling, Lord of hosts” (Menochos 53b). The Temple was in Benjamin's portion. He was called G-d's friend (Yedid-ya).

### צעיר לשריך

Benjamin was the youngest of the tribes.

### חדר מטות

Refers to the Temple, in accordance with II Kings 11:2.

### מזקני צוענים

Refers to the wise men of Egypt, from where the Gypsies originated.

### בך ברוחה אנוש לן

“No one ever said that it is crowded; I have no place to sleep in Jerusalem” (Avos 5:5).



# KEY NOTES ON KINNOS

SELECTED IDEAS GLEANED FROM THE ELEGIES OF TISHA B'AV

## יבוס

The Canaanite name for Jerusalem (Joshua 18:28).

## על שם שני כהנים

Abraham called the city “Yira” (Gen. 22:14) while Shem had called her “Shalem” (Gen. 14:18). G-d said, “If I call her by Abraham’s name, the righteous Shem will rage and if I call her by Shem’s name, the righteous Abraham will rage. Thus, I shall call her Yerushalem” (Gen. Rabbah 56:10).

## יחנך שם בשם אביו אשר קדמו

Whoever wants to perform a Mitzvah but, due to compelling circumstances, is unable to do so, nevertheless, will receive credit as if he had done the deed. Thus we see that the Temple is called after David (Mizmor Shir Chanukas Habais L'Dovid) who wanted to build it, but couldn't (Midrash Psalms 30:2); he only dug its foundation. The Gemara (Shabbos 32a) says that the gates of the Sanctuary would not open until Solomon mentioned David's graciousness (Chron. 6:42).

## ירד בעתו מטר ארצך זמן לילה

During Herod's reign, rain fell benevolently only at night (Sifra Bechukosai 1:1, in accordance with the Gra's text.).

## מב שאלי שרופה באש

*“O [Law] that has been consumed by fire”*

## שאלי שרופה באש לשלום אבליך

Refers to those who mourn the burning of the Talmud, that is the Torah.

## תאכל באש בשר

How can it be that the Torah, which was given with a Heavenly fire would/could be burned by a human fire?

## סיני בך בחר/ומאס בגדולים

G-d chose Mount Sinai over all the other mountains and hills for where He would set down His Divine Presence. Yet Sinai did not grow (in pride) and become lofty.

## להיות למופת לדת כי תתמעט

Did G-d purposefully select a low mountain to indicate that, in the end, there would be a lowering of the Torah?



# KEY NOTES ON KINNOS

SELECTED IDEAS GLEANED FROM THE ELEGIES OF TISHA B'AV

## מג ציון צפירת פאר

*“O Zion, diadem of beauty”*

### אל הבנויה לבקש

Cry out to the Heavenly Jerusalem to come to assist the destroyed, earthly Jerusalem (Taanis 5a, Psalms 122:3).

### זמן בידו פתח ארבע נעולים

G-d retains for Himself three keys and does not give them to any of his emissaries: the key to rain, the key to life and the key to the resurrection. It was said in Eretz Yisroel that G-d also kept the key to sustenance (Taanis 2a).

## מד ציון במשפט לכי לך

*“O Zion, betake yourself in judgment”*

### פתח לבנון שעריך

“Open your doors for the Destruction”. Levanon refers to the Temple (Zechariah 11:1). The Gemara in Yoma 39b says that until forty years before the Destruction, the doors of the Sanctuary would open on their own. R' Yochanan ben Zakkai would rebuke them and say “Heichal! Heichal! (Sanctuary! Sanctuary!) Why do you frighten yourself? I know in the end you will be destroyed. Zechariah ben Ido has already prophesized and said that you will open your doors and fire will consume your wood.” R' Isaac ben Tavlai said, “Why is it called Levanon (white)? Because it bleaches clean Israel's sins.”

## מה ציון גברת לממלכות מציריך

*“Zion! Queen of kingdoms”*

### חזו נביאים בשוא דבר בשם עיר קדוש יעקב שלום

The prophets calmed the people, but they did not awaken to repent.



# KEY NOTES ON KINNOS

SELECTED IDEAS GLEANED FROM THE ELEGIES OF TISHA B'AV

## מו אלי ציון ועריה

*“Wail, Zion and her cities, like a woman in pangs of birth, and like a young woman girded with sackcloth to mourn for the husband of her youth.”*

“The elegy lists all the miseries suffered during the destruction of the Second Temple.” (EJP) “Like all the Zionides that have a common note of hope, so does this latter Kinnoh, complying with the instruction (Hagahos Maymoni in Shulchon Aruch, Oruch Chayim 559:5) that the Kinnos must [actually, ‘it is customary to’] be concluded with verses of consolation.” (EJP)

## ופדיוני בכוריה

When the Temple will be rebuilt, this Mitzvah (redeeming the first-born), among the many related to the Temple service and Priesthood, will once again become a reality.