

## NVHC Juneteenth Tikkun Vigil Service of Lament

### **Lamentations 1**

Alas! Lonely sits the city Once great with people! She that was great among nations Is become like a widow; The princess among states is become a slave. Bitterly she weeps in the night, Her cheek wet with tears. There is none to comfort her of all her friends. All her allies have betrayed her; They have become her foes. 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 in the narrow places. 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! Her enemies are now the masters, Her foes are at ease, Because the Eternal One has afflicted her for her many transgressions; Her infants have gone into captivity before the enemy. . . . Jerusalem has greatly sinned, Therefore she is become a mockery. All who admired her despise her, For they have seen her disgraced; And she can only sigh And shrink back. . . . With none to comfort her.— See, O Eternal One, my misery; How the enemy jeers!

### **Psalms 137**

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat, sat and wept, as we thought of Zion. There on the poplars we hung up our lyres, for our captors asked us there for songs, our tormentors, for amusement, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion.” How can we sing a song of the LORD on alien soil? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither; let my tongue stick to my palate if I cease to think of you, if I do not keep Jerusalem in memory even at my happiest hour. Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites the day of Jerusalem's fall; how they cried, “Strip her, strip her to her very foundations!” Fair Babylon, you predator, a blessing on him who repays you in kind what you have inflicted on us; a blessing on him who seizes your babies and dashes them against the rocks!

### **W.E.B. Dubois, “Double Consciousness”**

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, — a world which yields him no self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One feels his two-ness, — an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish to Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa; he does not wish to bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white Americanism, for he believes—foolishly, perhaps, but fervently—that Negro blood has yet a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without losing the opportunity of self-development.

### **Talmud Baba Batra 60b**

The Sages taught: When the Temple was destroyed a second time, there was an increase in the number of ascetics among the Jews, who would not eat meat or drink wine. Rabbi Joshua joined them in conversation. He said to them, “My children, for what reason do you not eat meat and do you not drink wine? They said to him: Shall we eat meat, from which offerings were sacrificed upon the altar, now that the altar has ceased to exist? Shall we drink wine, which is poured as a libation upon the altar, now that the altar has ceased to exist?”

Rabbi Joshua said to them, “If so, we will not eat bread, since meal-offerings have ceased.” They replied, “it is possible to subsist on produce.” He said, “We will not eat produce either since the bringing of first fruits have ceased.” They replied, “It is possible to subsist with other produce.” He said, “We will not drink water, since the water libation has ceased.” They were silent.

Rabbi Joshua said to them, “My children, come and I will tell you how we will act. To not mourn at all is impossible, as [God’s] decree was already issued. But to mourn excessively is also impossible as we do not issue a decree upon the public unless the majority can abide by it.

Rather, this is what the Sages said: A person may plaster his house with plaster, but he must leave a small amount in it without plaster. And how much? Rav Yosef said: one cubit by one cubit. Rav Hisda said, “put it near the entrance.”

Rabbi Joshua said, “A woman may wear make-up, but she must leave out a small matter.” What is it? Rav said: She must leave a hair on her forehead, as it is stated, “If I forget you, Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth” (Ps 137:5-6).