

To walk with my bare feet, in tatters,  
 Upon the ruins of your Sanctuaries,  
 In which, before it was removed from us,  
 The Holy Ark stood guarded by its Cherubs  
 Posted at the innermost of chambers –  
 And then, all worldly pomp cast off, I'd curse  
 The fate that did defile your peerless pilgrims.  
 How could I eat or drink, seeing the dogs  
 Make off with the remains of your proud lions?  
 How find the daylight sweet when my two eyes  
 Were forced to witness crows feast on your eagles?  
 Enough, desist from me, O cup of sorrows,  
 Drained to the dregs of all its bitterness!  
 Zion! God's love, combined with Beauty's grace,  
 Has bound to you the souls of all Your friends,  
 So that they joy when you're at peace  
 And weep when you're all wounds and wilderness.  
 Imprisoned, they yearn for you, each from his place  
 Turning to bow in prayer to your gates --  
 Your many flocks, dispersed to distant hills  
 Yet ever mindful of their vows  
 To re-ascend to you and reach your heights,

Facing the portals of the highest heavens,  
 Stand opened by your Maker. You He illumines  
 Not with the sun, or moon, or stars, but with the rays  
 Of His own glory. Gladly I would choose  
 To pour my soul out where your chosen ones  
 Stood in a downpour of God's effluence.  
 You are the throne of the Lord, His royal house –  
 How then are slaves enthroned in your lords' houses?  
 If only I could wander past the way points  
 Where God appeared to your appointed and your seers,  
 And, flying to you with a bird's wings,  
 Shake woe! head, remembering the throes  
 Of your dismemberment, my face  
 Pressed to your earth, cherishing its soil and stones –  
 Yes, even so, the graves of of patriarchs.  
 Wondrous in Hebron at your choicest tombs,  
 I would cross Gilead, and Carmel's woods,  
 And stop to marvel at your lofty peaks  
 Across the Jordan, on which, illustrious,  
 Lie buried the two greatest of your teachers.  
 Your very air's alive with souls;  
 Your earth breathes incense and your rivers  
 Run with balm. I would rejoice

As the palm tree, rising above all else,  
 Is scaled by the bold climber. Who compares  
 To you? Not ancient Babylon, nor Greece:  
 What are all their empty oracles  
 Beside your Prophets and the breastplates of your priests?  
 The heathen kingdoms lapse, collapse, and pass,  
 But you remain forever, crowned for the ages.  
 God makes His home in you: Blesséd are those  
 Who dwell with Him, residing in your courts.  
 Blesséd is he who comes, and waits, and sees  
 The rising sun illuminate your dawns,  
 In which your steadfast share the happiness  
 Of your lost Youth, restored as it once was.

# ZION, DO YOU WONDER?

YEHUDA HALEVI

Zion! Do you wonder how and where your captives  
 Are now, and if they think of you, the far-flocked remnants?  
 From north and south, east, west, and all directions,  
 Near and far, they send their greetings  
 As I send mine, captured by my longings  
 To weep like Hermon's dew upon your mountains.  
 Mourning your lowliness, I am the wail of jackals;  
 Dreaming your sons' return, the song of lute strings.  
 My heart stirs for Peniel, and for Bethel, and all those places  
 With their pure traces of God's presence, where your gates,