

וַיִּקְרָא יְשָׁמְעוּ אֶת-קוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מְתַהַלֵּף בְּגֶן לְרוּחַ הַיּוֹם וַיִּתְחַבֵּא הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים
בְּתוֹךְ עֵץ הַגָּן:

וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶל-הָאָדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת-קוֹלְךָ שָׁמַעְתִּי בְּגֶן וַאֲיָרָא כִּי-עֵירַם אָנֹכִי וְאֶחְבֵּא:
אֵיכָה:

They heard the sound of God moving about in the garden at the breezy time of day; and the Human and his wife hid from God among the trees of the garden. God called out to the Human and said to him, **“Where are you?”**

{ס} איכה | ישׁבה בְּדָד הָעִיר רַבָּתִי עִם הַיְתָה פְּאֶלְמַנְגָה רַבָּתִי בְּגוֹיִם שְׁרֵתִי בְּמַדִּינוֹת הַיְתָה לְמָס:

2. Rashi: WHERE ARE YOU — He knew where he was, but He asked this in order to open up a conversation with him that he should not become confused in his reply, if He were to pronounce punishment against him all of a sudden. Similarly in the case of Cain, He said to him, (4:9) “where is Abel thy brother?” Similarly with Balaam, ([Numbers 22:9](#)) “what men are these with thee?” — to open up a conversation with them; so, also, in the case of Hezekiah with reference to the messengers of Merodach-baladan ([Isaiah 39:3](#)).

לְמַטְרוֹנָה מְשַׁל לְיוֹ רַבִּי אָמַר בְּדָד יִשְׁבֶּה אִיכָה שְׁלִשָּׁה לָהּ וַיְרַמְיָהּ וַיִּשְׁעֶיהָ מִשָּׁה, אִיכָה בְּלִשׁוֹן נִתְנַבְּאוּ שְׁלִשָּׁה, וַיִּשְׁבֶּה אִיכָה
וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֶת רָאֵה מִשָּׁה, כִּי. בְּנֹהֲלָהּ אֹתָהּ רָאֵה וְאָחָד, בְּפַחְזוּתָהּ אֹתָהּ רָאֵה וְאָחָד, בְּשִׁלּוּתָהּ אֹתָהּ רָאֵה אָחָד, שׁוֹשְׁבֵינִי
יִשְׁבֶּה אִיכָה: אָמַר יְרַמְיָהּ. לְזוֹנָה הַיְתָה אִיכָה: (כַּא, א יִשְׁעִיהָ) אָמַר יִשְׁעִיהָ. 'וְגו' לְבַדִּי אֲשָׂא אִיכָה: (יב, א דְּבָרִים) אָמַר מִשָּׁה
רָאֵה יְרַמְיָהּ. לְזוֹנָה הַיְתָה אִיכָה: וְאָמַר, בְּפַחְזוּתָם אֹתָם רָאֵה יִשְׁעִיהָ. טַרְחַכְכֶם לְבַדִּי אֲשָׂא אִיכָה: וְאָמַר וְשִׁלּוּתָם בְּדָד בְּכַבּוּדָם
(ח, ח יְרַמְיָה) אָמַר דָּאֵת מָה הָדָא, תּוֹכְחָה לְשׁוֹן אֶלָּא אִיכָה לְשׁוֹן אִין אֹמַר יְהוּדָה רַבִּי, נְחֻמְיָהּ וְרַבִּי יְהוּדָה בְּנֹהֲלָם רַבִּי אֹתָם
(ג, בְּרַאשִׁית) אָמַר דָּאֵת מָה הָדָא, קִינָה אֶלָּא אִיכָה לְשׁוֹן אִין אֹמַר נְחֻמְיָהּ וְרַבִּי. 'וְגו' אֶתְנֹו 'ה' וְתוֹרַת אֲנַחְנוּ חֻכְמִים תֹּאמְרוּ אִיכָה
יְהוּקִים בִּימֵי אֹמַר יְהוּדָה רַבִּי, קִינֹת מְגַלַּת נְאֻמָּהּ וְאִימְתִי. לְכָה אוֹי, אִיכָה לוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם אֶל אֱלֹהִים 'ה' וַיִּקְרָא: (ט)
יִשְׁבֶּה אִיכָה: פְּתָרוֹנוֹ הָרִי, הַבֵּית חֲרַבֵּן אַחַר נְאֻמָּהּ אִימְתִי אֶלָּא, יְמוֹת שְׁלֵא עַד הַמֵּת עַל בּוֹכִין וְכִי נְחֻמְיָהּ רַבִּי לוֹ אָמַר, נְאֻמָּהּ
בְּדָד.

Eicha Rabba 1:1

“How does the greatly crowded city sit alone? She has become like a widow. Great among the nations, a princess among the states: She has become a vassal” ([Lamentations 1:1](#)).

“How [*eikha*] does...sit [alone].” Three prophesied with the term *eikha*: Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.

Moses said: “How [*eikha*] can I bear alone...” ([Deuteronomy 1:12](#)). Isaiah said: “How [*eikha*] did [the

faithful city] become a harlot?” ([Isaiah 1:21](#)). Jeremiah said: “How [*eikha*] does [the greatly crowded

city] sit alone?” Rabbi Levi said: This is analogous to a noblewoman who had three friends. One saw her

in her tranquility, one saw her in her debauchery, and one saw her in her disgrace. So, Moses saw them in their glory and their tranquility and said: “How [*eikha*] can I bear alone your troubles?” Isaiah saw them in their debauchery and said: “How [*eikha*] did [the faithful city] become a harlot?” Jeremiah saw them in their disgrace and said: “How [*eikha*] does [the greatly crowded city] sit [alone]?”

Rabbi Neḥemya says: The term *eikha* is nothing other than an expression of lamentation. That is what is written: “The Lord God called to the man, and said to him: Where are you [*ayeka*]?” ([Genesis 3:9](#)), woe are you [*oy lekha*]. When was the scroll of Lamentations composed? Rabbi Yehuda says: It was composed in the days of Yehoyakim.⁶*This was before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. This is consistent with Rabbi Yehuda’s view that the term eikha is a term of reproof. In his view, Lamentations, or Eikha, was composed as a warning before the destruction.* Rabbi Neḥemya said to him: ‘Does one weep over the dead before he dies? Rather, when was it composed? After the destruction of the Temple. This is its solution: “How [*eikha*] does...sit solitary?’

God does not really want to be informed about something that is not known. Rather, God wishes to effect something in a person that can only be effected by such a question. The question is intended to penetrate the human heart, but can only do if the person allows the heart to be penetrated. . . . God's question penetrates this game of hide-and-seek. God's question means to stir us up, it means to destroy our hiding places, it means to show us where we went astray, it means to awaken in us a strong will to extricate ourselves.

—Martin Buber, *The Way of Man*