

|4| And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for several yamim, and did a tzom, and davened before Elohei HaShomayim,  
 |5| And said, O Hashem Elohei HaShomayim, HaEl HaGadol vHaNora, that is shomer habrit vachesed for them that love Him and are shomer mitzvot over His commandments,  
 |6| Let Thine ear now be attentive, and Thine eyes open, that Thou mayest hear the tefillah of Thy eved, which I am davening before Thee now, yomam valailah, for the Bnei Yisroel Thy avadim, and mitvaddeh al chattot (confess the sins) of the Bnei Yisroel, which we have sinned against Thee. Both I and the Bais Avi have sinned.  
 |7| We have dealt very corruptly against Thee, and have not been shomer mitzvot, neither over the chukkim, nor the mishpatim, which Thou commandedst Moshe Thy eved.  
 |8| Remember, the word that Thou commandedst Moshe Thy eved, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations,  
 |9| But if ye make teshuvah and turn unto Me, and are shomer over My mitzvot, and do them; though there were of you those exiled unto the uttermost part of HaShomayim, yet will I gather them from there, and will bring them unto the place [*i.e.*, *Yerushalayim*] that I have chosen to make dwell Shmi (My Name) there.  
 |10| Now these are Thy Avadim and Thy Am, whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy ko'ach hagadol, and by Thy Yad HaChazakah.  
 |11| O Adonoi, let now Thine ear be attentive to the tefillah of Thy eved, and to the tefillah

of Thy Avadim, who desire to fear Thy Shem; and give success to Thy eved today, and grant him rachamim in the sight of this man. For I was the Mashkeh L'Melech.

**2** And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artachshasta HaMelech, that yayin was before him; and I took up the yayin, and gave it unto HaMelech. Now I had not been previously sad in his presence.

|2| Wherefore HaMelech said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not choleh (sick)? This is nothing else but ro'ah lev. Then I was very much afraid,

|3| And said unto HaMelech, HaMelech l'olam yicheyeh.

Why should not my countenance look sad, when HaIr, the Bais Kivrot Avotai, lieth in ruins, and the gates thereof are consumed with eish?

|4| Then HaMelech said unto me, For what dost Thou make request? So I davened to Elohei HaShomayim.

|5| And I said unto HaMelech, If it please HaMelech, and if thy eved have found favor in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Yehudah, unto the Ir Kivrot Avotai, that I may rebuild her.

|6| And HaMelech said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be, and when wilt thou return? So it pleased HaMelech to send me; and I set for him a zman.

|7| Moreover I said unto HaMelech, If it please HaMelech, let iggrot be given me to the governors Beyond the River, that they may provide me safe conduct till I come into Yehudah;

|8| And an iggeret unto Asaph the Shomer of the forest of HaMelech, that

he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress by the Beis, and for the Chomat HaIr, and for the bais that I shall occupy. And HaMelech granted me, according to the Yad Elohai Hatovah upon me.

|9| Then I came to the governors Beyond the River [*Euphrates*], and gave them the Iggrot HaMelech. Now HaMelech had sent captains of the army and parashim (a troop of horsemen) with me.

|10| When Sanvalat the Choroni, and Toviyah the eved (official), the Ammoni, heard of it, it grieved them with a ra'ah gedolah that there was come an adam to seek the welfare of the Bnei Yisroel.

|11| So I came to Yerushalayim; was there 3 yamim.

|12| And I arose in the lailah, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what Elohai had put in my lev to do for Yerushalayim; neither was there any mount with me, save the mount that I rode upon.

|13| And I went out by lailah by the Valley Gate, even before the Dragon's Spring, and to the Dung Gate [*3:13*], and made inspection of the Chomat Yerushalayim, which had been broken down, and the gates thereof that were consumed with eish.

|14| Then I went on to the Fountain Gate, and to the King's Pool [*Pool of Shiloah*], but there was no place for the mount that was under me to pass.

|15| Then went I up in the lailah by way of the valley, and viewed the Chomah (Wall), and turned back, and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned.

|16| And the officials knew not where I went, or what I did; neither as yet to the Yehudim, nor to the Kohanim,