

Achot Ketanah (Little Sister)

A Prayer for the New Year

Avraham Hazan Girondi (13th c.)

Translated by Aaron Eby

The little sister¹ arranges her prayers and declares her praises. Please, God, heal her sicknesses!² Let the year and its curses conclude.

Tichleh shanah ve-ki-le-lo-tei-ha.

With pleasant words she calls to you, and with songs and praises, for you are worthy. How long will you close your eyes?³ See how foreigners are devouring her inheritance.⁴ Let the year and its curses conclude.

Tichleh shanah ve-ki-le-lo-tei-ha.

Shepherd your flock that lions have dispersed, and pour out your wrath⁵ on those who say, "Tear down!"⁶ They have broken through and picked clean⁷ the vine of your right hand,⁸ leaving no gleanings⁹ behind. Let the year and its curses conclude.

Tichleh shanah ve-ki-le-lo-tei-ha.

Raise her up from lowliness to royalty, for her soul melts away in the pit of exile. When what is worthless is elevated, she pours out her heart. Her dwelling places are in utter poverty. Let the year and its curses conclude.

Tichleh shanah ve-ki-le-lo-tei-ha.

אָחוֹת קִטְנָה תְּפִלוֹתֶיהָ
עוֹרְכָה וְעוֹנָה תְּהַלּוֹתֶיהָ
אֵל נָא רַפֵּא נָא לְמַחְלוֹתֶיהָ
תִּכְלֶה שָׁנָה וְקִלְלוֹתֶיהָ

בְּנֵעָם מְלִים לָךְ תִּקְרָא
וְשִׁיר וְהַלּוּלִים כִּי לָךְ נֶאֱדָה
עַד מָה תַעֲלִים עֵינֶיךָ וְתִרְאֶה
זָרִים אוֹכְלִים נְחֻלוֹתֶיהָ
תִּכְלֶה שָׁנָה וְקִלְלוֹתֶיהָ

רַעָה אֶת צֹאנֶךָ אֲרִיּוֹת זָרוֹ
וְשִׁפְךָ חֲרוֹנֶךָ בְּאוֹמְרִים עָרוֹ
וְכִנֵּת יְמִינֶךָ פָּרְצוּ וְאָרוֹ
לֹא הִשְׁאִירוּ עוֹלְלוֹתֶיהָ
תִּכְלֶה שָׁנָה וְקִלְלוֹתֶיהָ

הִקֵּם מִשְׁפָּלוֹת לְרֹאשׁ מַמְלַכֶּת
כִּי בְבוֹר גְּלוֹת נִפְשָׁה נִתְכַּת
וְכָרֵם זָלוֹת לְבָה שׁוֹפְכֶת
בְּדִלֵי דָלוֹת מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֶיהָ
תִּכְלֶה שָׁנָה וְקִלְלוֹתֶיהָ

¹ Song of Songs 8:8. (A reference to Israel.)

² Numbers 12:13.

³ Isaiah 1:15.

⁴ Isaiah 1:7.

⁵ Psalm 69:25(24).

⁶ Psalm 137:7.

⁷ Psalm 80:13(12).

⁸ Psalm 80:16(15).

⁹ Wordplay between עולל (little children) and עוללה (gleanings).

When will raise your daughter from the pit and the prison, breaking her yoke? Work wonders as you emerge heroically,¹⁰ to end and eradicate her consuming diseases. Let the year and its curses conclude.

Tichleh shanah ve-ki-le-lo-tei-ha.

The whole nation has robbed her wealth¹¹ and devoured her goodness, each taking plunder for himself. They tore her heart and yet despite all this, her ways did not wander from you.¹² Let the year and its curses conclude.

Tichleh shanah ve-ki-le-lo-tei-ha.

Her song has ceased, yet she will affirm her desire, wanting closeness to her beloved,¹³ so take away and remove the languishing of her soul from her heart, and seek her love as a bride.¹⁴ Let the year and its curses conclude.

Tichleh shanah ve-ki-le-lo-tei-ha.

Guide her with satisfaction to her place of rest. Too long has she been rejected by the beloved she desires! As she budded, her blossoms shot forth, yet her clusters have not ripened.¹⁵ Let the year and its curses conclude.

Tichleh shanah ve-ki-le-lo-tei-ha.

Be strong and rejoice, for the violence is over. Put hope in the Rock; keep his covenant. Ascend to Zion and say, "Pave, pave her highways!"¹⁶ Let the year and its blessings begin.

Tachel shanah u-vir-cho-tei-ha.

מְתִי תַעֲלֶה בְּתַף מְבוֹר
וּמְבִית כְּלָא עָלֶה תִשְׁבֵּר
וְתַפְלִיא פְּלָא בְּצִאתְךָ כְּגִבּוֹר
לְהַתֵּם וְכֹלָה מְכֻלוֹתֶיהָ
תִּכְלֶה שָׁנָה וְקִלְלוֹתֶיהָ

חִילָה קִבְּעוּ הַגּוֹי כֹּלֹ
וְטוֹבָה שִׁבְּעוּ וּבְזָזוּ אִישׁ לֹ
וְלִבָּה קִרְעוּ וּבְכָל זֹאת לֹא
מִמֶּךָ נָעוּ מִעֲגֻלוֹתֶיהָ
תִּכְלֶה שָׁנָה וְקִלְלוֹתֶיהָ

זְמִירָה שָׁבַת וְחֲשֻׁקָה תִגְבִּיר
לְחִפֵּץ קִרְבַּת דּוֹדָה וְתַעֲבִיר
מִלֵּב דְּאָבַת נִפְשָׁה וְתִסִּיר
לְבִקֵּשׁ אֶהְבַּת כְּלוֹלוֹתֶיהָ
תִּכְלֶה שָׁנָה וְקִלְלוֹתֶיהָ

נִחָה בְּנִחַת לְנוֹה רְבֻצָה
רַב נִזְנַחַת מִדּוֹד חִפְצָה
וְהִיא כְּפּוֹרַחַת עֲלֵתָה נִצָּה
לֹא הִבְשִׁילוּ אֲשֶׁכְּלוֹתֶיהָ
תִּכְלֶה שָׁנָה וְקִלְלוֹתֶיהָ

חֲזִקוּ וְגִילוּ כִּי שֵׁד גָּמַר
לְצוֹר הוֹחִילוּ בְּרִיתוֹ שְׁמַר
לְכֶם וְתַעֲלוּ לְצִיּוֹן וְאָמַר
סִלּוּ סִלּוּ מִסְּלוֹתֶיהָ
תַּחֲלֵ שָׁנָה וּבִרְכוֹתֶיהָ



Beth Immanuel

¹⁰ Isaiah 42:13.

¹¹ Malachi 3:9.

¹² Proverbs 5:6.

¹³ Isaiah 58:2.

¹⁴ Jeremiah 2:2.

¹⁵ Genesis 40:10.

¹⁶ Isaiah 62:10.