“Awaiting the Good Hour”:
Hope in the Bible as a Resource for Religious Life

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Dr. Kalmanofsky’s first book, Terror All Around: The Rhetoric of Horror in the Book of Jeremiah (T&T Clark, 2008) uses horror theory to argue that the biblical prophets constructed monsters and crafted language that worked to terrify their audience. Her book The Dangerous Sisters of the Hebrew Bible (Fortress Press, 2014) explores the biblical portrayal of sisters and sisterhoods and argues that both play a vital role in the Bible’s narrative. Her book Gender-Play in the Hebrew Bible (Routledge, 2017) examines the ways in which the Bible defies and challenges its gender norms. Her book The Power of Equivocation: Complex Readers and Readings of the Hebrew Bible (Fortress, 2022) addresses the Bible’s inherent complexity, as well as the complexity of those who seek to read the Bible critically, generously, and honestly.

Dr. Kalmanofsky also has written numerous articles examining the biblical representation of women and the roles women play in the Bible, as well as articles that consider the biblical rhetoric of violence. She serves on two editorial boards: The Journal of the Feminist Studies in Religion and the Biblical Interpretation Series.
(15) Thus said GOD: A cry is heard in Ramahi Or “on a height.” —
   Wailing, bitter weeping—
   Rachel weeping for her children.
   She refuses to be comforted
   For her children, who are gone.
(16) Thus said GOD:
   Restrain your voice from weeping,
   Your eyes from shedding tears;
   For there is a reward for your labor
   —declares GOD:
   They shall return from the enemy’s land.
(17) And there is hope for your future
   —declares GOD:
   Your children shall return to their country.
Isaiah 49:14-21

(14) Zion says,
"GOD has forsaken me,
My Sovereign has forgotten me."

(15) Can a woman forget her baby,
Or disown the child of her womb?
Though she might forget,
I never could forget you.

(16) See, I have engraved you
On the palms of My hands,
Your walls are ever before Me.

(17) Swiftly your children are coming;
Those who ravaged and ruined you shall leave you.

(18) Look up all around you and see:
They are all assembled, are come to you!
As I live
—declares GOD —
You shall don them all like jewels,
Deck yourself with them like a bride. (19) As for your ruins and desolate places
And your land laid waste—
You shall soon be crowded with settlers,
While destroyers stay far from you. (20) The children
you thought you had lost Lit. "of your bereavement."
Shall yet say in your hearing,  
“The place is too crowded for me;  
Make room for me to settle.”  
(21) And you will say to yourself,  
“Who bore these for me  
When I was bereaved and barren,  
Exiled and disdained Meaning of Heb. uncertain. —  
By whom, then, were these reared?  
I was left all alone—  
And where have these been?”

Isaiah 54:1-10

(1) Shout, O infertile one,  
You who bore no child!  
Shout aloud for joy,  
You who did not travail!  
For the children of the wife forlorn  
—said GOD.  
(2) Enlarge the site of your tent,  
Extend the size of your dwelling,  
Lit. “Let the cloths of your dwelling extend.”  
Do not stint!  
Lengthen the ropes, and drive the pegs firm.  
(3) For you shall spread out to the right and the left;  
Your offspring shall dispossess nations i.e., the foreigners
who had occupied regions from which Israelites had been exiled; cf. 2 Kings 17.24.  
And shall people the desolate towns. (4) Fear not, you shall not be shamed;  
Do not cringe, you shall not be disgraced.  
For you shall forget  
The reproach of your youth,  
And remember no more  
The shame of your widowhood. (5) For the One who made you—whose name is "GOD of Hosts"—  
Will espouse you.  
The Holy One of Israel—who is called "God of all the Earth"—  
Will redeem you. (6) GOD has called you back  
As a wife forlorn and forsaken.  
Can one cast off the wife of his youth?  
—said your God. (7) For a little while I forsook you,  
But with vast love I will bring you back. (8) In slight anger, for a moment,  
I hid My face from you;  
But with kindness everlasting  
I will take you back in love  
—said GOD your Redeemer. (9) For this to Me is like the waters Other Heb. mss. and the ancient versions read "days." of Noah:  
As I swore that the waters of Noah  
Nevermore would flood the earth,
So I swear that I will not
Be angry with you or rebuke you. (10) For the mountains
may move
And the hills be shaken,
But my loyalty shall never move from you,
Nor My covenant of friendship be shaken
—said GOD, who takes you back in love.

Isaiah 66:7-14

(7) Before she labored, she was delivered;
Before her pangs came, she bore a son.
Who would assure the household’s continuity.
(8) Who ever heard the like?
Who ever witnessed such events?
Can a land pass through travail
In a single day?
Or is a nation born
All at once?
Yet Zion travailed
And at once bore her children! (9) Shall I who
bring on labor not bring about birth?
—says GOD.
Shall I who cause birth shut the womb?
—said your God. (10) Rejoice with Jerusalem
and be glad for her,
All you who love her!
Join in her jubilation,
All you who mourned over her— (11) That you
may suck from her breast
Consolation to the full,
That you may draw from her bosom
Cf. Akkadian zīzu, Arabic zīzat, “udder.”
Glory to your delight. (12) For thus said GOD:
I will extend to her
Prosperity like a stream,
The wealth of nations
Like a wadi in flood;
And you shall drink of it.
You shall be carried on shoulders
And dandled upon knees (13) Like one whom a
mother comforts.
So I will comfort you:
You shall find comfort in Jerusalem. (14) You
shall see and your heart shall rejoice,
Your limbs shall flourish like grass.
GOD’s power shall be revealed
On behalf of those who render service;
But [God] shall rage against all foes.

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