

feet, whilst the hands are clapped, and is engaged in specially *as a sign of triumph and rejoicing*.

But it should be observed that the hands are often clapped in the presence of another, purposely to indicate scorn and contempt, in a somewhat different fashion. This practice may be witnessed more especially amongst the Sephardeem, the Eastern, Spanish-speaking Jews. The action in such case is the striking the tip of the fingers of the right hand on the hinder part of the left, whilst the scorner, at the same time, gives utterance to some sarcastic or vengeful sentiment. Job may be referring to this when he says—

“Men clap their hands at him,
And hiss him out of his place.”¹

It was probably the charge of scorning that Elihu brought against the much-tried patriarch, when he said—

“He claps [his hands] amongst us,
And multiplies his words against God.”²

The Most High Himself is represented as thus exhibiting a holy indignation and righteous scorn against Jerusalem, “the bloody city,” for its abominable wickedness. After a fearful catalogue of its crimes, He declares, “Behold, therefore, I have *smitten My hand* at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee. . . . And I will scatter thee among the heathen-nations, and disperse thee in the countries, and I will consume thy filthiness out of thee.”³

There is another form of clapping the hands, which must be carefully distinguished from the mirthful practice I have described as accompanying music, singing, and dancing, namely, the smiting of the hands together for grief or anger. When the “mourning women,” and “such as are skilful of lamentation,” assemble round a corpse,⁴ amongst other signs of great sorrow, which it is their business to simulate, may constantly be seen the smiting together of the hands. This action is distinctly different from that of clapping the hands for joy.

¹ Job xxvii. 23.

² Job xxxiv. 37.

³ Ezek. xxii. 13, 15.

⁴ Jer. ix. 17; Amos v. 16; Micah ii. 4; Acts viii. 2.