

Beaten and Bruised

הַכּוֹנֵי פְּצָעוֹנַי נִשְׂאוּ
אֶת־רִדְדֵי מַעְלֵי שְׂמֹרַי הַחֲמוֹת

*Hikuni p'tza'uní nasu
et r'dídi me'alai shomray hachomot*

They beat me, they bruised me
The watchmen of the walls
tore the shawl from my shoulders. (Song of Songs 5:7)

On this path of love, we become more and more vulnerable, which means that we have made a commitment to feel our pain rather than numb ourselves or erect defenses. Those “watchmen of the walls,” are the forces that stand between us and the pain we have tried to avoid. They strip us of our artifice, take away our well-built strategies of fortifications. We stand beaten and bruised by the vicissitudes of Life: by sorrows (named and unnamable), by losses, by suffering that feels both personal and universal.

This practice allows us to feel bruised, beaten and exposed. We do this practice when we are ready, layer by layer for our egoic defenses to be stripped away. When we are ready to feel in the places that have gone numb, then love can find us. And then love emerges from the depths of our being, to permeate, heal and transform the places of trauma and pain we have carried.