

20 / ב

God responds in times of distress.

לְמַנְצַחַ מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד. בַּ יַעֲנֶה יְהוָה בְּיוֹם

< on the < May HASHEM answer << by David. < a psalm < For the
day you conductor,

צָרָה; * יִשְׁגְּבֶךָ שֵׁם אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב. * יִשְׁלַח

< May He << of Jacob.* < of the God < by the < may you be << of distress;*
dispatch Name made impregnable

עֲזָרָךְ מִקֹּדֶשׁ, * וּמִצִּיּוֹן יִסְעָדְךָ. דַּ יִּזְכֹּר כָּל

< all < May He << support you. < and from Zion << from the < your
remember Sanctuary,* help

מִנְחֹתֶיךָ, * וְעוֹלֹתֶיךָ יִדְשָׁנָה * סֵלָה. הַ יִּתֵּן לָךְ

< you < May He << Selah. << may He accept < and your << your offerings,*
grant with favor* burnt-offerings,

כָּל־בָּבֶךָ, וְכָל עֲצָתְךָ יִמְלֵא. וְנִרְנְנָה

< May we << may He fulfill. < plan of yours < and << as your heart
sing for joy every [desires],

בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ, וּבְשֵׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִדְגַל; יִמְלֵא יְהוָה

< may HASHEM fulfill << raise our < of our God < and in the < at your salvation,
banner; Name

20 / ב

בְּיוֹם צָרָה — *On the day of distress*; before it is too late (*Malbim*).

אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב — *The God of Jacob*. Of all the Patriarchs, Jacob had the hardest life — the threats from Esau, exile under Laban and Pharaoh, the death of Rachel, the kidnapping of Dinah, the loss of Joseph — but God protected him. Therefore, in time of distress we call upon *Jacob's God* (*Kad HaKemach*).

יִשְׁלַח עֲזָרָךְ מִקֹּדֶשׁ — *May He dispatch your help from the Sanctuary*, from the Holy of Holies inside the Temple where the Holy

Ark rests and where God's spirit dwells. From there will go forth Divine aid in battle (*Radak*). We pray that our aid comes from the Sanctuary, based in holiness, and not from unholy sources such as the hands of gentile kings and armies which may fight on our side. It is the holiness of the Jewish people themselves, their sacred deeds and words, that is their main ally in battle.

מִנְחֹתֶיךָ — *Your offerings*, Israel's offerings in the Temple (*Ibn Ezra*); or the prayers offered in time of danger (*Rashi*).

יִדְשָׁנָה — *May He accept with favor*, lit. *burn to ashes* (*Radak*).

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מזמורים כ', פ"ג, קכ"א, ק"ל, קמ"ב

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דְּמִי לָךְ; אֵל תִּחְרַשׁ וְאֵל תִּשְׁקֹט, אֵל.

« O God. < still, < and be not < deaf < be not << hold Yourself silent;

כִּי הִנֵּה אוֹיְבֶיךָ יִהְיֶינָהּ, וּמִשְׁנֵאֵיךָ נִשְׂאוּ

< have < and those who << are in uproar < Your foes < behold, < For raised hate You

רֹאשׁ. הַ עַל עֵמֶךָ יַעֲרִימוּ סוּד, וַיִּתְיַעֲצוּ

< they take << in secret, < they plot < Your < Against << their head. counsel deviously people

עַל צְפוֹנֶיךָ. הַ אָמְרוּ: לָכוּ וְנִכְחָדֵם מִגּוֹי,*

<< from < let us cut them off < Come, < They said, << those sheltered < against nationhood,* by You.

וְלֹא יִזְכָּר שֵׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹד. הַ כִּי נוֹעֲצוּ

< they take < For << any < of Israel < will be < remembered < so that counsel together longer! the name not

לֵב יִחַדּוּ, עָלֶיךָ בְּרִית יִכְרְתוּ.* הַ אֶהְיֶי

< The tents << they strike:* < a covenant < against You << [with a] single mind,

אֲדוּם וַיִּשְׁמָעֵאלִים, מוֹאָב וְהַגְּרִים. הַ גְּבַל

< Gebal << and Hagrites; < Moab << and Ishmaelites; < of Edom

וְעַמּוֹן וְעַמְלֵק, פְּלִשְׁתִּים עִם יִשְׁבֵי צוֹר.

<< of Tyre. < the inhabitants < with < Philistia, << and Amalek; < and Ammon,

גַּם אַשּׁוּר נִלְוָה עִמָּם, הָיוּ זְרוּעַ לְבָנֵי

< of the < the < they << with them, < joined < Assyria < Even sons strong arm became

לוֹט סָלָה. הַ עֲשֵׂה לָהֶם כְּמִדְיָן, כְּסִיסְרָא

< as to Sisera < as to Midian, < to them < Do << Selah. << of Lot,

עָלֶיךָ בְּרִית יִכְרְתוּ — *Against You a covenant* another, the nations unite to oppose God and *they strike*. Though generally hostile to one Israel (R' Hirsch).

כָּל מִשְׁאֲלוֹתֶיךָ. הַ עַתָּה יִדְעֵתִי* כִּי

< that < I know* < Now << your requests. < all

הוֹשִׁיעַ יְהוָה מְשִׁיחוֹ; יַעֲנֵהוּ מִשְׁמַי קִדְשׁוֹ,

< from His < He will << His < HASHEM has saved sacred heaven, answer him Anointed one;

בְּגִבּוֹרוֹת יֵשַׁע יְמִינוֹ. הַ אֵלֶּה בְּרִכְבָּ * וְאֵלֶּה

< and some < with chariots,* < Some << of His < victories < with the right arm. omnipotent

בְּסוּסִים, וְאֲנַחְנוּ בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ

< our God, < of HASHEM, < in the Name < but we, << with horses;

נִזְכָּיר. הַ הֵמָּה * כָּרְעוּ וְנִפְּלוּ, וְאֲנַחְנוּ קָמְנוּ

< arose < but we << and fell, < dropped to < They* << call out. their knees

וַנִּתְעוֹדֵד. הַ יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה, הַמֶּלֶךְ יַעֲנֵנוּ

< answer us < May the King << save! < HASHEM << and were invigorated.

בְּיוֹם קָרָאנוּ.

<< we call. < on the day

פג / 83

The historical enmity of the nations against Israel is an outgrowth of hatred for that which Israel represents: the complete subordination of all human striving to God's will.

א שִׁיר מְזִמּוֹר לְאַסָּף. ב אֱלֹהִים, אֵל

< do not < O God, << by Asaph. < a psalm < A song,

עַתָּה יִדְעֵתִי — *Now I know*. After God grants salvation, I will know that He is the Source of help and triumph (Radak).

אֵלֶּה בְּרִכְבָּ — *Some with chariots*. Some of our foes rely on chariots and others on cavalry, but we trust in God (Rashi).

הֵמָּה — *They*. Our seemingly invincible enemies fell in defeat, but we, who had been losing, arose and overwhelmed them when we called out in God's Name (Radak).

פג / 83

Let us cut them off from nationhood. Jewish nationhood is predicated upon reliance on God rather than reliance upon political, economic, and military dictates. The nations wish to destroy this nationhood because it contradicts their basic premise of the supremacy of human power and independence (R' Hirsch).

עֲדֵי עַד, וַיִּחַפְּרוּ וַיֵּאבְדוּ. * וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי

< that < Then they will know << and they will be doomed.* < then they will be disgraced < forever,

אֲתָהּ שִׁמְךָ יְהוָה לְבַדְּךָ, עָלִיוֹן עַל כָּל

< all < over < Most High << are alone, << is < – Whose << You HASHEM – Name

הָאָרֶץ.

<< the earth.

קבא / 121

A declaration of faith and a prayer for God's constant protection.

שִׁיר לַמַּעְלוֹת; אֲשָׁא עֵינַי אֶל הַהָרִים, *

<< the mountains;* < to < my eyes < I raise << to the ascents. < A song

מֵאֵין יָבֵא עֲזָרִי. בַּעֲזָרִי מֵעַם יְהוָה,

<< HASHEM, < is from < My help << my help? < will come < from whence

עֲשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ. גַּ אֵל יִתֵּן לְמוֹט רַגְלְךָ,

<< of your < the faltering < He will << and earth. < of heaven < Maker << foot; < not allow

אֵל יָנוּם שִׁמְרְךָ. דַּ הִנֵּה לֹא יָנוּם וְלֹא

< nor < slumbers < [He] neither < Behold, << will your Guardian. < not slumber

יִישָׁן, שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל. הַ יְהוָה שִׁמְרְךָ, יְהוָה

< HASHEM << is your Guardian; < HASHEM << of Israel. < the Guardian << sleeps,

וַיֵּאבְדוּ — *And they will be doomed.* God will not accept their repentance (*Metzudos; Malbim*). R' Hirsch, however, renders: *they will sense that they are about to perish.* They will realize that their past has been worthless and that their only hope for the future lies in accepting God's mastery without reservations.

קבא / 121

אֶל הַהָרִים — *To the mountains.* The besieged person climbs to the highest vantage point and scans the distant horizon for signs of any approaching rescuers (*Radak*).

הַ יְהוָה שִׁמְרְךָ מִכָּל רָע — *HASHEM will protect you from every evil,* both physical and spiritual.

כִּיבִין בְּנַחַל קִישׁוֹן. * יֵא נִשְׁמְדוּ בְּעֵין דָּאָר,

<< at Ein-dor; < who were destroyed << at Kishon Brook,* < as to Jabin

הָיוּ דָמֹן לְאֶדְמָה. בַּ שִׁיתָמוּ נְדִיבָמוּ כְּעָרֵב

< like Oreb < their nobles < Make << for the earth. < dung < they became

וְכֹזָאב, וְכֹזָבַח וְכִצְלִמְנָע * כָּל נְסִיכָמוּ.

<< their princes. < all < and Zalmunna* < and like Zebah << and Zeeb;

אֲשֶׁר אָמְרוּ: נִירְשָׁה לָנוּ, אֵת נְאוֹת

< the pleasant < for < We will < said, < Who < habitations < ourselves < conquer

אֱלֹהִים. * יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי, שִׁיתָמוּ כַּגִּלְגָּל, בְּקֶשׁ

< like < like the < make them < O my God, << of God.* < stubble < whirling chaff,

לִפְנֵי רוּחַ. טוּ כְּאֵשׁ תִּבְעַר יַעַר, וְכִלְהָבָה

< and like a flame << the forest, < burning < like a fire << the wind; < before

תִּלְהֹט הָרִים. טז כֵּן תִּרְדְּפֵם בְּסַעֲרָךְ,

< with Your < pursue them < So << mountains. < that < tempest < sets ablaze

וּבְסוּפְתֶךָ תִּבְהִלֵם. יז מִלֵּא פְנֵיהֶם קִלוֹן,

<< with < their faces < Fill << terrify them. < and with < shame, < Your storm

וַיִּבְקְשׁוּ שִׁמְךָ * יְהוָה. יח יִבְשׁוּ וַיִּבְהָלוּ

< and terrified < Let them << HASHEM. < Your Name,* < then they < will seek < be shamed

בְּנַחַל קִישׁוֹן — *At Kishon Brook.* See Judges 4. כְּעָרֵב וְכֹזָאב וְכִצְלִמְנָע — *Like Oreb and Zeeb ... like Zebah and Zalmunna.* These were Midianite rulers defeated by Gideon (see Judges 7:25; 8:12,21).

נְאוֹת אֱלֹהִים — *The pleasant habitations of*

God. The Land of Israel and the Holy Temple (*Meiri*).

וַיִּבְקְשׁוּ שִׁמְךָ — *Then they will seek Your Name.* When God executes this devastating judgment against the nations, they will finally realize the futility of opposing His will.

תִּשְׁמֶר, יְהוָה; * אֲדַנִּי, מִי יַעֲמֵד. הַ כִּי עִמָּךְ

< with You < For << could survive? < who < O Lord, << O God,* < You preserve,

הַסְּלִיחָה, לְמַעַן תִּנָּרָא. הַ קִּוִּיתִי יְהוָה,

<< in HASHEM, < I placed my hope << You may be feared. < so that << is forgiveness,

קִוְיָתָה נִפְשִׁי, * וְלִדְבָרוֹ הוֹחֵלְתִּי. הַ נִפְשִׁי

< My soul << I yearned. < and for His word << did my soul,* < placed hope

לְאֲדָנִי, מִשְׁמָרִים לְבָקָר, * שְׁמָרִים לְבָקָר.

<< for the < those longing << for the < among those << [years] << dawn. < dawn,* < longing < for the Lord,

יִחַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל יְהוָה; כִּי עִם יְהוָה

< HASHEM < with < for << HASHEM, < for < shall Israel < Yearn

הַחֶסֶד, וְהִרְבֵּה עִמּוֹ פְדוּת. הַ וְהוּא יִפְדֶּה

< shall redeem < And He << is redemption. < with Him < and abundant << is kindness,

אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל, מִכָּל עֲוֹנוֹתָיו.

<< its iniquities. < from all < Israel

קמב / 142

Utterly trapped, one places oneself completely at God's mercy. But even when the road ahead seems unobstructed, it is only God who has cleared the way to success and happiness.

אֶת מְשָׁכִיל לְדָוִד, בְּהִיּוֹתוֹ בַּמְּעָרָה * תְּפִלָּה.

<< – a prayer. << in the cave* < when he was << by David, < A maskil

– I placed my hope in HASHEM, placed hope did my soul. My body put confidence in Hashem for physical security in this world, and my soul placed confidence in Him to merit the glory and spiritual bliss of the World to Come (Radak).

– My soul [yearns] for the Lord, among those longing for the dawn. I am among those who constantly look

out for the first signs of the dawn of redemption. The phrase לְבָקָר שְׁמָרִים is repeated for emphasis: I have not been discouraged by hopeful signs which proved to be unfounded. Rather, I persistently watched for the morning, time and time again (Rashi).

קמב / 142

– In the cave. David, hiding in a cave, was virtually trapped by Saul and his army,

צִלָּךְ עַל יַד יְמִינְךָ. הַ יּוֹמָם הַשֶּׁשֶׁשׁ לֹא

< will not < the sun < By day << your right hand. < at < is your protective Shade

יִכְבֶּה, וַיִּרְחַ בַּלַּיְלָה. הַ יְהוָה יִשְׁמָרְךָ מִכָּל

< from < will protect < HASHEM << by night. < nor the << harm you, < every < you < moon

רָע, * יִשְׁמַר אֶת נִפְשֶׁךָ. הַ יְהוָה יִשְׁמַר

< will guard < HASHEM << your soul. < He will guard << evil;* <

צִאתְךָ וּבֹאֲךָ, * מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

<< eternity. < until < from this time < and your arrival,* < your departure

קל / 130

A person in distress prays to God from the depths of his heart.

אֶשִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת; מִמַּעַמְקִים קָרָאתִיךָ,

< I called You, < From the depths << of ascents. < A song

יְהוָה. הַ אֲדַנִּי, שְׁמַעָה בְּקוֹלִי, * תִּהְיֶינָה

<< may they be << my voice;* < hear < O Lord, << HASHEM.

אָזְנוֹיךָ קֹשְׁבוֹת לְקוֹל תַּחֲנוּנָי. הַ אִם עֲוֹנוֹת

< iniquities < If << of my pleas. < to the sound < attentive << – Your ears –

– HASHEM will guard your departure and your arrival. Upon your departure from the House of Torah Study in order to pursue your business affairs, God will guard you; and He will continue to do so until your arrival back in the House of Torah Study (Targum).

Furthermore, Hashem will supervise the departure of Israel from exile and He will assure Israel's arrival in the Holy Land (Radak).

קל / 130

– O Lord, hear my voice.

Although I am extremely distant from You, and I have sunk to the most remote depths, please hear my voice (Ibn Ezra).

When a supplicant has the presence of mind to articulate his requests, he need not shout. But when misery robs him of his equanimity, he cries out in anguish (Pri Tzaddik).

– If iniquities You preserve, O God. We cannot deny that we have sinned abundantly, but if God preserves our sins and refuses to forgive them unless we are totally deserving, we could not survive (Ibn Ezra).

אֶת שְׁמִי; בִּי יִכְתְּרוּ צְדִיקִים, * כִּי תִגְמַל

< You bestow < when << the righteous will < with << Your Name; << kindness crown themselves,* me

עָלַי

<< upon me.

אֶחָיוּנוּ * כֹּל בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל, הַנִּתְּוֹנִים בְּצָרָה וּבְשִׁבְיָה,

<< and < in distress < who are << of Israel, < House < the < Our << captivity, found entire brothers,*

הַעֹמְדִים בֵּין בָּיִם וּבֵין בִּיבְשָׁה, הַמְּקוּם יְרַחֵם עֲלֵיהֶם

<< on < have <—may the Omni- << on land < or < at sea < whether < who are << them mercy present One whether situated

וְיוֹצִיאֵם מִצָּרָה לְרוּחָהּ, וּמֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹרָהּ, וּמִשְׁעָבוֹד לְגִאֲלָהּ,

<< to < from < to light, < from < to relief, < from < and remove << redemption, subjugation darkness distress them

הַשֵּׁתָא בְּעִגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב. וְנֹאמֵר: אָמֵן. (Cong. – אָמֵן.)

<< Amen. << Amen. <<—and let << that comes < and in < speedily, < now, << us say: soon a time

have rescued from overwhelming odds the one who truly places his trust solely in You.

With me the righteous will crown themselves. The righteous, whose lives are predicated upon absolute trust in God, glory in every instance of miraculous

deliverance that vindicates such trust in the eyes of the world.

Our brothers. This brief plea for God's mercy on all suffering Jews is often recited communally when prayers are offered for Jews who are in danger.

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בְּקוֹלִי אֶל יְהוָה אֶזְעַק, * קוֹלִי אֶל יְהוָה

< HASHEM < to < with my voice << I cry out,* < HASHEM < to < With my voice

אֶתְחַנֵּן. * אֶשְׁפֹּךְ לְפָנָיו שִׁיחִי, צָרָתִי

< my distress << my plaint; < before Him < I pour out* << I plead.*

לְפָנָיו אֶגִּיד. בְּהִתְעֵיטֵף עָלַי רוּחִי, וְאַתָּה

< then You << does my spirit, < within me, < When it faints << I declare. < before Him

יָדַעַתְּ נִתִּיבָתִי; בְּאֶרְחַ זֶה אֶהְלֵךְ טִמְנוּ

< they have laid < that I walk < on whatever road << my [perilous] path; < know

פֶּחַ לִי. הַיְבִיט יָמִין וּרְאֵה וְאִין לִי מִכִּיר;

<< friend; < that I have no < and see < to the right < Look << for me. < a snare

אֲבַד מָנוֹס מִמֶּנִּי, אִין דּוֹרֵשׁ לְנַפְשִׁי.

<< [to save] my life. < seeks < no one << to me, < is escape < lost

וְעַקְתִּי אֵלַיךָ יְהוָה; אֶמְרָתִי אַתָּה מַחְסִי,

<< are my refuge, < You << I have said, << HASHEM; < to You, < I have cried out

חֶלְקִי בְּאֶרֶץ הַחַיִּים. * הַקְּשִׁיבָה אֶל רִנָּתִי

< my cry, < to < Attend << of the living.* < in the land < my portion

כִּי דָלוּתִי מְאֹד, הִצִּילָנִי מִרְדְּפֵי כִּי אֲמָצוּ

< they are < for < from my < rescue me << I have been brought < for < stronger pursuers, very low;

מִמֶּנִּי. הַ הוֹצִיאָה מִמִּסְגָּר נַפְשִׁי, לְהוֹדוֹת *
< to acknowledge* << my soul < from confinement < Release << than I.

who hunted him relentlessly.

אֶזְעַק... אֶתְחַנֵּן... אֶשְׁפֹּךְ — I cry out... I plead

... I pour out... There are many forms of

prayer. In extreme moments of crisis, one can

merely cry out, "Please, Hashem, help me!"

After the danger subsides somewhat, a per-

son can compose his thoughts and pray in a

more articulate and meditative manner (*Ibn Yachya*).

חֶלְקִי בְּאֶרֶץ הַחַיִּים — My portion in the land of

the living. Even in this world, it is only in

closeness to God that life has any significance

and meaning.

לְהוֹדוֹת — To acknowledge publicly that You