
TEHILLIM 116: HOW WILL YOU CALL OUT TO GOD?

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CONGREGATION KINS

פרשת נשא תשפ"ג

(1) TEHILLIM 116

- (1) I love that Hashem should hear my voice and my supplications.
- (2) Because He has inclined His ear to me; therefore I will call upon Him all my days.
- (3) The cords of death surrounded me, and the straits of the nether-world got hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow.
- (4) But I called upon the name of Hashem, "I beseech you, Hashem; deliver my soul."
- (5) Gracious is Hashem, and righteous. Yes, our God is compassionate.
- (6) Hashem preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me.
- (7) Return, O my soul, to Your rest; for Hashem has dealt bountifully with you.
- (8) For you have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from stumbling.
- (9) I shall walk before Hashem in the lands of the living.
- (10) I trusted even when I spoke, "I am greatly afflicted."
- (11) I said in my haste, "All men are liars."
- (12) How can I repay Hashem all His bountiful dealings toward me?
- (13) I will lift up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of Hashem.
- (14) My vows I will pay to Hashem, yes, in the presence of all His people.
- (15) Precious in the sight of Hashem is the death of His pious.
- (16) I beseech You, Hashem, for I am Your servant. I am Your servant, the son of Your handmaid. You have loosed my bands.
- (17) I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of Hashem.
- (18) I will pay my vows to Hashem, yes, in the presence of all His people,
- (19) in the courts of Hashem's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Halleluyah.

- (א) אֶהְבֵּתִי כִּי יִשְׁמַע י"י אֶת קוֹלִי תְחִנּוּנָי.
- (ב) כִּי הִטָּה אָזְנוֹ לִי וּבִימֵי אֶקְרָא.
- (ג) אֶפְפוּנֵי חֲבָלֵי מָוֶת וּמִצָּרֵי שְׂאוּל מִצָּאוּנֵי צָרָה וְגִגוֹן אֶמְצֵא.
- (ד) וּבְשֵׁם י"י אֶקְרָא אֲנִה י"י מִלְטָה נַפְשִׁי.
- (ה) חַנּוּן י"י וְצַדִּיק וְאֱלֹהֵינוּ מְרַחֵם.
- (ו) שְׁמֵר פְּתָאִים י"י דַּלְתֵי וְלִי יְהוֹשִׁיעַ.
- (ז) שׁוּבֵי נַפְשִׁי לְמִנוּחֵיכִי כִּי י"י גָּמַל עָלַיְכִי.
- (ח) כִּי חִלַּצְתָּ נַפְשִׁי מִמָּוֶת אֶת עֵינַי מִן דְּמָעָה אֶת רַגְלֵי מִדְּחִי.
- (ט) אֶתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי י"י בְּאַרְצוֹת הַחַיִּים.
- (י) הֵאֲמַנְתִּי כִּי אֲדַבֵּר אֲנִי עֲנִיתִי מְאֹד.
- (יא) אֲנִי אֶמְרַתִּי בְּחַפְזִי כָּל הָאָדָם כֹּזֵב.
- (יב) מָה אֲשִׁיב לִי"י כָּל תַּגְּמוֹלוֹהֶי עָלַי.
- (יג) כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת אֲשָׂא וּבְשֵׁם י"י אֶקְרָא.
- (יד) נִדְרֵי לִי"י אֲשַׁלֵּם נִגְדָה נָא לְכָל עַמּוֹ.
- (טו) יָקָר בְּעֵינַי י"י הַמְּוֹתָה לְחַסְדֵּיךָ.
- (טז) אֲנִה י"י כִּי אֲנִי עַבְדְּךָ אֲנִי עַבְדְּךָ בְּן אֲמִתְךָ פִּתְחָתָ לְמוֹסְרֵי.
- (יז) לָךְ אֲזַבֵּחַ זֶבַח תּוֹדָה וּבְשֵׁם י"י אֶקְרָא.
- (יח) נִדְרֵי לִי"י אֲשַׁלֵּם נִגְדָה נָא לְכָל עַמּוֹ.
- (יט) בְּחִצְרוֹת בַּיִת י"י בְּתוֹכֵכִי יְרוּשָׁלַם הִלְלוּ יְהוָה.

(2) TAANIT 28B

רב איקלע לכבבל, חזנהו דקא קרו הלילא בריש נרחא, סבר לאפסוקינהו. פיון דחזא דקא מדלגי דלוגי, אמר: שמע מינה מנהג אבותיהם בידיהם.

Rav happened to come to **Babylonia**, where he saw that they were reciting *hallel* on a New Moon. Unfamiliar with this practice, he thought to stop them, as he assumed that they were reciting *hallel* unnecessarily. **Once he saw that they were omitting** portions, he said: I can learn from this that they are maintaining the custom of their forefathers.

COMMENTARY

(3) MEIRI TEHILLIM 116:1

זה המזמור אמרו דוד על צרותיו בברחו הנה והנה מפני יראת שאול והמתנכלים עליו, וכאשר הציל אותו אלקים מכלם, אמר זה המזמור מוסף על שירתו הידועה.

David said this *mizmor* on his pains when he fled here and there because of his fear of Shaul and those who harassed him, and when Hashem saved him from them all, he said this *mizmor* in addition to his song which is well-known.

(4) SHMUEL BET 22:1-7

(א) וַיְדַבֵּר דָּוִד לַיהוָה אֵת דְּבָרֵי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת בַּיּוֹם הַצֵּיל יְיָ אֶתוֹ מִכַּף כָּל אֹיְבָיו וּמִכַּף שְׂאוּל. (ב) וַיֹּאמֶר יְיָ סִלְעִי וּמְצַדְתִּי וּמְפִלְטִי לִי. (ג) אֱלֹהֵי צוּרֵי אַחְסָה בּוֹ מִגְּנֵי וְקָרָן יִשְׁעֵי מִשְׁגָּבֵי וּמִגּוּסֵי מִשְׁעֵי מַחְסֵי תִשְׁעֵנִי. (ד) מְהִלֵּל אֶקְרָא יְיָ וּמְאִיִּבֵי אֲנִשְׁעֵ. (ה) כִּי אֶפְפְּנֵי מִשְׁבָּרֵי מוֹת נַחְלֵי בְּלִיעֵל יִבְעֵתָנִי. (ו) חֲבָלֵי שְׂאוּל סָבְגוּ קַדְמָנִי מִקִּשֵׁי מוֹת. (ז) בְּצַר לִי אֶקְרָא יְיָ וְאֵל אֱלֹהֵי אֶקְרָא וַיִּשְׁמַע מִהִכְלוֹ קוֹלִי וְשׁוֹעַתִּי בְּאָזְנוֹ.

(1) And David spoke to Hashem the words of this song on the day that Hashem delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul. (2) And he said, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer. (3) The God who is my rock, in Him I take refuge. My shield, and my horn of salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my savior; You save me from violence. (4) Praised, I cry, is Hashem; and I am saved from my enemies. (5) For the waves of death encircled me; the floods of wickedness assailed me. (6) The cords of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of death confronted me. (7) In my distress I called upon Hashem; I called to my God. And out of His temple He heard my voice, and my cry entered into His ears.

(5) NETIV BINAH VOL. 3 P. 290

כנסת ישראל יכולה, על ידי הלויים, לשיר את השיר הזה בבית המקדש, לפי שיש כאן צדדים שווים בגורל היחיד, דוד, ובקורות העם הנבחר.

The Congregation of Israel can, through the Levi'im, sing this song in the Beit HaMikdash, because there are commonalities between the fate of the individual, David, and the events of the chosen nation.

(6) MALBIM TEHILLIM 116:1-3

(א) אהבתי גם בעת שהייתי לא בצר, והייתי בריא אולם, גם בעת הזאת אהבתי תחנוני, כי ישמע ה' את קולי – ר"ל אהבתי להתחנן ולהתפלל אל ה', מפני שה' ישמע קולי תמיד, ולא לבד שישמע קולי בעת אקרא

(ב) כי הטא אזנו לי – כמי שמטה אזנו אל בן יחידי אולי ישמיע קולו כי קול ערב לו ורוצה לשמוע תחנוניו,

ובימי אקרא – וע"כ גם בימי אקרא – גם בעת הטובה

“I loved” - even at a time when I wasn’t in trouble and was healthy, yet even in that time I loved my supplications, “for Hashem hears my voice” – meaning that I loved to supplicate and pray to Hashem, because Hashem always hears my voice, and not just when I call

“For He turned His ear to me” – like one who turns his ear to his only son, lest he raise his voice, for his voice is pleasant to him and he wants to hear his supplications

“And in my days I called out” – if so, even “in my days” I call out – meaning, even in a good time.

(7) R' HIRSCH TEHILLIM 116:1

God has already delivered Israel many times in the past and thus Israel is confident that its pleas will always be heard. For this reason even a situation which will cause Israel to appeal to God for help and repeatedly to beg for His favor will fill it with a certain sense of exaltation, because, as it were, Israel senses the bliss of redemption even in advance of actual deliverance... The thought of Verse 1 is... “I have come to love my voice that calls. I love even my repeated pleas for Divine favor, for I know that the Lord will hear me.”

(8) RADAK TEHILLIM 116:3

צרה ויגון אמצא – אמר מצאוני ואמר אמצא... כי המקרים ימצאו האדם, לא יוכל לברוח, וגם הוא ימצאם... כי לא ידע את עתו, ופעמים ילך למצוא טוב וימצא רע.

I found trouble and sorrow – it says “they found me” and it says “I found”... For situations [sometimes] find a person such that he cannot flee them, and sometimes he finds them... for he doesn’t know his time, and sometimes goes to find good and finds bad.

(9) MALBIM TEHILLIM 116:7

שובי נפשי למנוחכי ואל תדאגי, כי ה' גמל עליכי... – ר"ל מה שעשה לך ודכא אותך ביסורים היה מצד הגמול, אם לפי המעשה, אם לפי אהבתו והשגחתו הפרטית.

“Return, my soul, to your rest” and don’t worry, “for Hashem has repaid you”... – meaning that what He did to you and hurt you with afflictions is based on *gemul*, whether because of your actions or because of His love and Providence.

(10) R' HIRSCH TEHILLIM 116:8

The realization “that it was Thou Who hast delivered my soul from death,” that but for Thine intervention I would have perished long ago, “guards my eyes from tears and my foot from stumbling.” This awareness of my deliverance takes all the bitterness from my fate and sustains me, so that, even when I walk through the most grievous trials, my foot will not take a false step.

(11) MEIRI TEHILLIM 116:9

לעולם הבא – כי "ארץ" תאמר לפעמים על עולם הבא... או רומז על ארץ ישראל.

For Olam Haba – for “land” sometimes refers to Olam Haba... alternatively, it refers to Eretz Yisrael.

(12) MALBIM TEHILLIM 116:10-11

(י-יא) האמנתי – ר"ל אני מאמין בכל לב מה שאדבר ואחליט עתה, והוא שאדבר לאמר כי עניתי מאד בעת אשר אני אמרתי בחפזי כל האדם... דהיינו שאין ממש בחיי האדם ובכל עניניו... כן אמרתי אז בחפזי שלא בהשכל, ועתה אדבר ואומר שאז עניתי מאד – שהייתי מעונה ויורד מאד בשפל המדרגה להתיאש כל כך, כי אני רואה עתה שיש תקוה ויש שכר ואין האדם כוזב

“I believed” – I fully believe what I am saying and deciding now, which is that “I was greatly afflicted” when “I said in my haste that ‘all of man is empty’”... meaning that there is nothing to human life and efforts... this I said then hastily, without thinking, and now I say that I was then afflicted and descended to a very low level in order to give up hope so, for I now see that there is hope and there is reward and man is not empty.

(13) RAMBAM TAANIYOT 5:14

וכן גזרו שלא לנגן בכלי שיר כולם, וכל מיני זמר וכל משמיעי קול של שיר אסור לשמוח בהם ואסור לשמען, מפני החורבן. ואפילו שירה בפה על היין אסורה, שנאמר "בשיר לא ישתו יין" (ישעיהו כ"ד:ט). וכבר נהגו כל ישראל לומר דברי תשבחות או שיר של הודאות לאל וכיוצא באלו על היין:

Similarly, they ordained that one should not play melodies with any sort of musical instrument. It is forbidden to celebrate with such instruments or to listen to them being played [as an expression of mourning] for the destruction. Even songs that are recited over wine are forbidden, as [Isaiah 24:9] states: "Do not drink wine with song." It has, however, become accepted custom among the entire Jewish people to recite words of praise, songs of thanksgiving, and the like to God over wine.

(14) SEFORNO TEHILLIM 116:15

הנה המוות הקורה בחיי שעה שהוא דבר בלתי נחשב, הוא דבר 'יקר בעיני ה' כשתקרה 'לחסידיו', שיתענגו בחיי עולם:

Death which happens in our temporal life, which is not considerable, is considered “valuable in the eyes of Hashem” when it happens to “his faithful,” such that they can enjoy eternal life.

(15) R' HIRSCH TEHILLIM 116:15-16

V. 15 – The generation that will be redeemed one day and then start upon the full discharge of its mission is entirely free of any presumptuousness with regard to the generations which have preceded it and died in exile. Instead, it pays high tribute to all that which these generations have achieved even while, for the most part, they remained passive and patiently bore the sufferings of exile... The thought of Verse 15 is that “the

Lord sets great value even on a sad fate such as this, even on 'suffering' such as this, if only it is borne by חסידיי, borne with love and devotion by men who, even within the narrow bounds to which misfortune has confined their lives, still live for the practical fulfillment of their duties."

V. 16 – "O Lord, if I am Thy servant, then I am such only because I am the son of Thy handmaid, I, whose bounds Thou hast now loosed." This means: The generation which has been found sufficiently mature to be redeemed acknowledges that, whatever abilities and qualifications it might possess to meet the demands of their new future, it owes to the generations of the past. These past generations through centuries of trial and tribulation have remained faithful in the service of the Lord as His "handmaid" and thus, by passing on to their descendants all that was true and noble in their lives, have become the "mother" of the new generation of the future. All of past Jewish history is **בן אמתך** and I am **בן אמתך**.

(16) PROF. MARC BRETTLER, "PSALM 116 – IS THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS PRECIOUS IN THE EYES OF YHWH?"

In short, I am suggesting that Ps 115:16 is a question—and would have been recognized as such given similar questions elsewhere in the Psalter. Rendering Psalm 116:15, "Is the death of his loyalists precious in the eyes of YHWH?!" fits this tradition well.