

אֲנֻקַּת מְסַלְדֵיךָ/Enkat M'saldekha/The Outcry of Your Praise-ers

A Piyyut of Ne'ilah, drawn from four medieval paytanim, over five centuries...

Attempted by Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW, 2013-23

May the outcry of those who praise You rise up before Your Throne of *Kavod*/Glory;
Fulfill the requests of the people who "One" You;
You, the Hearer of the prayers of those who approach You.

(R. Silano, second half of the 9th century, Venosa, Southern Italy)

Israel, (who You promised would be) saved by HaShem, Salvation endless, eternal;
Also, *this day*, may they be saved by Your word, Dweller on the Heights,
For you are Abundant in Forgivenesses, and the Master of *Rahamim*/Mercy.

(R. Shefatiah ben Amittai, late 9th century, Oria, Southern Italy)

May He conceal us in the Sheltering Shadow of His Hand, beneath the wings of the *Sh'khinah*;
May He act graciously-graciously as He probes the *lev akov*/deceitful heart, to set it upright;
Rise up, please, our God, in strength, give us strength, O my Strength, please;
HaShem -- to our plea give Ear!

(R. Yitzhak ben Shmuel, 12th century, Dampierre, France – great-grandson of Rashi; the "Ri")

May He announce to us 'סִלְחָתִי! /I have forgiven!' – the One Who Sits in Concealment, on High;
By His Right Hand of Salvation may a people, poor and destitute, be saved;
When we cry out to You, with awesome deeds, in righteousness answer us;
HaShem – be a Helper for us!

(R. Shlomo ben Shmuel, 13th century, Falaise/Northern France and Germany)

Here's how I read/hear/experience it:

- I. May the people's outcry, requests, prayers reach You and be fulfilled
(Underscoring our relationship – beseeching, worshipping, coming/showing up!)
Great play on our "One-ing" God (=Sh'ma) and identifying God as *Shome'a T'fillah*
Rhyme based on "Your" – each line ends in "Your"-- all is Yours
- II. May Israel be saved by Your abundant forgiveness and compassion:
In the past and in the future – *how about right now?!*
This is, after all, Your nature, it's Who You are – forgiveness-loaded, the Master of Mercy....
- III. May we be sheltered by the *Shekhinah* and protected by Grace,
even as we are probed and corrected;
Give us strength - and give ear to our plea!
- IV. May the (hidden) Dweller on High respond with "I forgive!"
saving our impoverished people with His right hand of Salvation
– with awesome righteousness respond – *help us!*

We have just a few instances of the word “**אנקת** /*Enkat*”/“The Outcry of...” in the Torah, about the groans or cries of the prisoner/condemned and the poor/needy:

תהילים עט:יא תבוא לפניך אנקת אסיר כגדל זרועך הותר בני תמותה
Psalms 79:11 “Let the groans of the prisoner come before You;
according to the greatness of Your power preserve those who are appointed to die...”

תהילים קב:כא לשמע אנקת אסיר לפתח בני תמותה
Psalms 102:21 “To hear the groans of the prisoner; to set free those who are appointed to die...”

תהילים יב:ו משד עניים מאנקת אביונים עתה אקום יאמר ה אנשית בישע יפיה לו
Psalm 12:6 “For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, said HaShem; I will set him in safety at whom they hiss.”

לד/S-L-D: To recoil from, to be disgusted at **OR** to exult, to praise!

I found *one* use in TaNaKh, in Job, after wishing that God would do him in, finish him off (!)...:

איוב ו:י ויתהי עוד | נחמתי ואסלדה בחילה לא יחמול כי-לא כחדתי אמרי קדוש
Job 6:10 “Then should I yet have comfort; I would even exalt in pain; do not let Him spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.”

Stanza I utilizes this line from Psalm 65: תהילים סה : ג שמע תפלה עדיך כל-בשר יבאו

Psalm 65:3 “O You who hear prayer, to you shall all flesh come...”

*Notice how, in stanza IV, the poem asks this “Hearer of Prayer” to cause us to hear “**סולחתי**/Salahti/” I have forgiven!”

Stanza II’s first line draws on Deuteronomy and Isaiah:

דברים לג: כט אשריך ישראל מי כמוך עם נושע בה
Deuteronomy 33:29 “Happy are you, O Israel; who is like you, O people saved by/in HaShem..”

ישעיה מה:ז : ישראל נושע בה תשועת עולמים
Isaiah 45:17 “But Israel shall be saved in/by HaShem with an everlasting salvation...”

*NOTE: I believe that “*rav s’lihot*,” often translated as “abundantly forgiving”, is parallel to “*ba’al harahamim*,” “Master of Mercy” – and as such could be rendered “Rabbi of Forgivenesses.”

Stanza III, draws on Isaiah 49:2:

ישעיה מט:ב בצל ידו ההביאני
Isaiah 49:2 “...in the shadow of His hand He hid me...”

*We may be struck by the words “*beneath the wings of the Shekhinah*,” as we associate this phrase from the *El Maleh* Memorial Prayer as referring to the repose of the deceased! But this fits this day of Yom Kippur and this moment of Ne’ilah, when we relate to/’taste’ mortality, having not eaten, worn a shroud, not dominated over nature by wearing leather shoes, not procreated, etc. – for one day.

*Wings soar and protect; Hand probes and sets aright: *Hessed* and *Din* (*Avinu Malkenu*)

*The ‘*deceitful heart*’ appears in Jeremiah 17:9: ירמיהו יז:ט עקב הלב מפל ואנש הוא מי ידענו
Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”

*The call to God to rise up and show/use His strength echoes Psalm 68:29:

תהילים סח: כט צנה אלהיך עזך עזזה אלהים זו פעלת לנו
Psalm 68:29 “Your God has commanded Your strength; strengthen, O God, that which You have done for us..”

*...and the stanza’s concluding line draws on Psalm 39: תהילים לט:יג שמעוה-תפלתי | ה ושמעתי | האזינה
Psalm 39:13: “Hear my prayer, HaShem, and give ear to my cry...”

Stanza IV:

*The “the One Who Sits in Concealment, on High” comes, of course, from the opening words of *Psalm 91:1*, but there it refers to those (people!) who trust in God’s protection:

תהילים צא א יֵשֶׁב בְּסֵתֶר עֲלִיוֹן בְּצֵל שְׁדֵי יִתְלוֹן

“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High,
who abides under the shadow of the Almighty.

will say to HaShem, ‘My Refuge and my Fortress, my God, in whom I trust,’

for God will save you from the hidden snare of the fowler, from deadly pestilence...”

It’s as if the poet simultaneously and humbly asserts both that we can’t claim to dwell in that protected place --and wants to acknowledge/highlight *God’s* concealment, mysteriousness, distance....

*God’s Right Hand is the metaphor of His Saving Power:

תהילים כז: עֲתָה יִדְעָתִי כִּי הוֹשִׁיעַ | הַ מְשִׁיחַ | יַעֲנֶהוּ מִשָּׁמַי קִדְשׁוֹ בְּגִבְרוֹת יֵשַׁע יְמִינוֹ

Psalm 20:7 “Now I know that HaShem saves his anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven with the saving strength of His Right Hand.”

*Our “impoverishment” and “lowliness” is, in fact, part of the plan – and triggers our *t’shuvah* and trust:

צַפְנִיה גִּיב יב וְהִשְׁאֲרֵתִי בְּקִרְבָּךְ עִם עֲנִי וְדָל וְחָסוּ בְּשֵׁם הַ

Zephaniah 3:12 “And I will leave in your midst a poor and lowly people, and they shall trust in the name of HaShem.”

*Our poem pluralizes the crying out of the psalmist:

תהילים כח:ב שְׁמַע קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנֵי בְּשׁוּעֵי אֱלֹהֵי בְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי דָבִיר קִדְשֶׁךָ

Psalm 28:2 “Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry to you, when I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary”

*On these *Yamim Nora'im/ נוראים*/Days of **Awe** – we need/ask to be answered with ‘**awesome** things/deeds’; see *Psalm 65* (again, as in Stanza I):

תהילים סה:ו נִרְאוֹת | בְּצִדְקַת תַּעֲנֹנֵנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵנוּ

Psalm 65:6 “By awesome things in righteousness will you answer us, O God of our salvation...”

*Our poem concludes by pluralizing the request to HaShem to be a Helper to us – in words familiar to us from *Psalm 30*, said daily:

תהילים ל:יא שְׁמַע הַ וְסַנְּנִי הַ הָיָה עֲזָר לִי

Psalm 30:11 “Hear, HaShem, and be gracious to me; HaShem, be a Helper to me.”

(Asking for such Help can be a big step for many folks.)

Conversation Across Time and Space

Two people who live in different places,
or even in different generations,
may still converse.

For one may raise a question,
and the other who is far away in time or in space
may make a comment or ask a question that answers it.

So they converse,
but no one knows it save HaShem,
who hears and records
and brings together all the words of people,
as it is written:

“They who serve Adonai speak to one another,
and Adonai attends to and hears them
and records their words in a book of remembrance.”
(*Malachi 3:16*)

Teaching of Reb Nahman of Bratslav (1772-1810)

THREE QUESTIONS FOR POSSIBLE CONSIDERATION:

1. What meanings might you draw from the dual meanings of the root
תל**ו**/**S-L-D**: To recoil from, to be disgusted at **OR** to exult, to praise!
2. Since the piyyut “ends” with the 13th century, if you were to compose three more stanzas to bring the total to seven, what three centuries/events from 1500 on would you want them to focus on/reflect? (Or, can you imagine a poem/poetic prayer that you might borrow from for one of the new stanzas?)
3. What personal meaning can you draw from this piyyut?