

תהלת ה' ידבר פי (IV) HALLEL

עיון במזמור קט"ז - Analysis of Psalm 116

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I

INTRODUCTION (PART 4)

In the previous essay, we noted that the “skipped Hallel” is said on those days (Rosh Chodesh, remaining days of Pesach) when the Halakhah does not mandate its recital, but common custom dictates some form of praise/song. I suggested, based on the original story (Rav and the skipped Hallel) and the Rambam’s wording that which verses are skipped may be of little consequence; the critical point is that some sections are left out. It may be, on the other hand, that those selections elided on these days are deliberate and specific - in which case, we have to find some rhyme or reason behind the choice of passages to skip.

Since our psalm includes the second (and, in our tradition, final) text that is skipped, we will pose the question at the outset and return to it at the conclusion: Is there anything that binds the two skipped passages together and/or makes their exclusion particularly appropriate?

The previous psalm (#115), which we analyzed in the last shiur, has a clear division along the lines of the excluded text (vv. 1-11) and the verses that are always recited (#12-18). The theme of the first half is *Against the Nations*, whereas the second half is *Blessing and Praise*. If we find a similar or parallel division in our psalm, we may have the keys to unlocking the function of the “skipped Hallel”; and, perhaps, greater appreciation for the Hallel as said in its entirety.

One further question must be posed. The complete list of days on which Hallel is recited (cited at the beginning of Part 3 in this series) leaves out one time: Pesach night (it also omits Pesach day, i.e. during the offering of the Pesach on the afternoon of the fourteenth, but that Hallel belongs to the Avodah of the Mikdash and is not directly a piece with the general Mitzvah of Hallel). Rambam, in הלכות חנוכה, presents the identical list - with the same omission. Why is the Hallel of Seder night excluded from the list? In what way does it differ?

One related question - since we are obligated to recite a B'rakhah before fulfilling every Mitzvah (with a whole host of exceptions; see, inter alia, שו"ת רשב"א י"ח for one approach to the rationale behind the exceptions), why is there no blessing said before reciting Hallel at the Seder? (The blessing at the end - whether it is the end of Birkat haShir [“נשמת”] or the customary ending Berakhah [“יהללך”] is not the issue - a prefacing Berakhah must be said).

We will keep these questions at bay while we analyze psalm 116 and return to them at the conclusion of the shiur.

II THE TEXT

אהבתי כי ישמע ה' את קולי תחנוני
כי הטה אזנו לי ובימי אקרא
אפפוני חבלי מות ומצרי שאול מצאוני צרה ויגון אמצא
ובשם ה' אקרא אנה ה' מלטה נפשי
חנון ה' וצדיק ואלהינו מרחם
שמר פתאים ה' דלותי ולי יהושיע
שובי נפשי למנוחיכי כי ה' גמל עליכי
כי חלצת נפשי ממות את עיני מן דמעה את רגלי מדחי
אתהלך לפני ה' בארצות החיים
האמנתי כי אדבר אני עניתי מאד
אני אמרתי בחפזי כל האדם כזב
מה אשיב לה' כל תגמולוהי עלי
כוס ישועות אשא ובשם ה' אקרא
נדרי לה' אשלם נגדה נא לכל עמו
יקר בעיני ה' המותה לחסידי
אנה ה' כי אני עבדך אני עבדך בן אמתך פתחת למוסרי
לך אזבח זבח תודה ובשם ה' אקרא
נדרי לה' אשלם נגדה נא לכל עמו
בחצרות בית ה' בתוככי ירושלם הללויה

1. I love Hashem, because He has heard my voice and my supplications.
2. Because He has inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live.
3. The cords of death surrounded me, and the pains of Sheol seized me. I found trouble and sorrow.
4. Then I called upon the name of Hashem; Hashem, I beseech You, save my soul.
5. Gracious is Hashem, and righteous; our God is merciful.
6. Hashem preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me.
7. Return to your rest, O my soul; for Hashem has dealt bountifully with you.
8. For You have saved my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.
9. I will walk before Hashem in the land of the living.
10. I kept faith, even when I said, I am greatly afflicted;
11. I said in my haste, All men are false.
12. How shall I repay Hashem for all His benefits toward me?
13. I will raise the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of Hashem.
14. I will pay my vows to Hashem now in the presence of all His people.
15. Precious in the sight of Hashem is the death of His pious ones.
16. O Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant; You have freed my bonds.
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 now in the presence of all His people,
19. In the courts of Hashem's house, in the midst of you, O Yerushalayim. Hallelujah!

III THE STRUCTURE OF THE PSALM

As we did last week, we will assay the text in a “top-down” fashion, first identifying the basic components of the psalm and then doing a verse-by-verse analysis.

The immediate temptation is to see this chapter as two sections, divided along liturgical lines (vv. 1-11; vv. 12-19). Our greater familiarity with this text is from the Siddur, where that breakdown is marked by a new paragraph (which is nowhere in the original T'nakh) and, oft-times, different sized print. In analyzing psalm 115, this method worked - אהבתי is not so simple.

As we will see next week, our psalm may originally have been larger than we think. R. Menahem haMe'iri maintained that our psalm should have 21 verses, including the two verses that (in our versions) make up the next psalm. Some medieval T'nakhim attest to this assignation, that would certainly affect the breakdown of the psalm, as is readily seen.

Even given the 19 verses that our standard text includes, we have reason to consider alternate divisions. While this pursuit may seem pedantic, we can only get to the heart of the psalm and understand the meaning it aims to internalize and the prayer it is designed to evoke if we properly understand its message - which, as with any poetry, is as much a function of its structure as its words.

The Septuagint (the oldest translation of T'nakh, rendered into Greek by the Jewish community in Alexandria during the 3rd - 2nd c. BCE) presents our text as two independent psalms (#114 and #115!), dividing after v. 9, a division which is argued by Barre (*JBL* 109/1 pp. 61-78). It becomes clear that somewhere around the middle of these nineteen verses is the transition to a different theme - and that those middle verses are obscure enough to cause this multiplicity of approaches.

When we arrive at this middle section, we will attempt to understand the rationale behind each argument. In the meantime, we will structure our analysis along traditional lines, arguing in favor of the division after v. 11 and against that found in the Septuagint.

The structure we will propose includes an introduction (vv. 1-2), prayer (3-17) and conclusion (18-19); the middle section will further divide after v. 11. The argument for this division will be made in the analysis.

IV ANALYSIS OF THE PSALM

STANZA I: vv. 1-2

v. 1: אהבתי

The opening word here is quite awkward - the verb אהב always takes an object - the object of that love. Although it seems clear that the object is God (or God's listening to the psalmist's petition), anyway that we render the next word (כי), translation will be difficult.

- a) If כי means “because”, then the omission of the object is glaring.
- b) If כי means “when” (i.e. on those occasions that...), then not only is the missing object a problem, but the religious message is troubling. Does the petitioner only love God when He responds?
- c) If כי means “that” - i.e. I love that God responds, then the word כי is highly unusual, at the very least. If that were the intent, the verb ought to be followed by the prefix -ב, similar to שמחתי באומרים לי (T'hilim 122:1).

The second half of the verse is no less troubling. Are קולי and תחנוני one item or two? If one item, why is there a pronominal suffix after קולי (*my* voice) - it should be קול תחנוני (the voice of my petition). If there are two things being heeded by God, why is there no ואי (conjunction) before the last word?

R. Avraham ibn Ezra quotes those who suggest that the suffix after קול is not pronominal (i.e. “my voice”), but is poetic (akin to

תחנוני before ב"ת is קול, and there is a missing ב"ת before משיבי in ps. 113). He disagrees and believes that the "heard object" is קול, and there is a missing ב"ת before תחנוני. In other words, *He hears my voice in my petitioning*.

Malbim has a novel approach to both problems in this verse and solves them with one stroke of punctuation. He suggests placing parentheses, so to speak, after the first word and before the final word: [כי ישמע ה' את קולי] תחנוני. In other words, the psalmist loves his petitions (i.e. loves the act of petitioning God) because God hears his voice at all times. This innovative take on the first verse, which seems to solve the problems that were raised (although why the psalmist didn't begin with תחנוני and then explain why is hard to fathom), guides the Malbim in his assessment of the next few verses as well; he takes them in a direction that seems forced.

כי הטתה: 2 v.

The opening word here likely means "because"; the psalmist is explaining why he feels the great love expressed in v. 1. The image of God's turning an attentive ear is, in reciprocal fashion, a loving and caring picture.

The second half of the verse presents us with another odd phrase - ובימי אקרא. Malbim, following his earlier explanation, interprets ימי as "my good days"; the entire declaration of these two verses is, in effect, that the psalmist loves to call out to God even "in the good times", as He is so attentive. The Rishonim have varying takes on this phrase, for the most part interpreting ימי as "my whole life".

Tur-Sinai (haLashon v'haSefer, vol. "HaSefer", p. 144 ff.) has an ambitious and attractive explanation for אהבתי - which not only explains the odd phrasing of these two verses but also places the entire psalm into context.

He notes that the psalmist is, first of all, someone who has recovered from near-death (as the next section will recount) and is thanking God for that salvation. It is his intention that this thanksgiving should take place in the Mikdash, as the second half of the psalm makes clear; furthermore, the method of showing gratitude will be through the fulfillment of his Nedarim and a תודה קרבן (thanksgiving offering). Tur-Sinai suggests that the opening אהבתי is a reformulation of the word הבאתי (*I have brought*, referring to the offering).

[This sort of "letter switching" - known as שיכול אותיות - is a perfectly legitimate read of T'nakh text, as כבש-כשב (both meaning "lamb"), שלמה-שמלה (garment) and קהלה-להקה (band) attest.]

The grateful petitioner brings his offering, declaring: *I have brought* and informing that declaration with the love he feels for God to Whom this thanksgiving is being offered. The rest of the first verse details his reason for bringing - and his reason for loving. The second verse continues to elucidate God's attention to him in his hour of need - and he concludes by averring that he called out to God with an oath. Tur-Sinai notes that in Aramaic, as well as other Semitic languages, the root ימא means oath (see, e.g. Targum Onkelos at B'resheet 50:25). ובימי, then, means *by oath* I called out to Him.

The two introductory verses form a chiasmus:

A: *I have brought* (fulfilling my oath)

B: *Because He hears my voice*

B: *Because He attends to my voice*

A: *And I called to Him with an oath*

Although this interpretation of ימי is innovative, it has much to recommend it. First of all, reading ימי as *in my days* is so confusing that every classical commentator renders it differently. Second, this approach emphasizes and underscores the motivation and setting of this declaration. The psalmist is offering a thanksgiving Korban in fulfillment of the oath he took while in trouble (compare with Radak and S'forno at Yonah 2:9).

STANZA II (vv. 3-17)

A: INTRODUCTION (v. 3)

v. 3: אפפוני

This verse is an introduction to the psalmist's prayer. As with ch. 115, the three stichs in the verse (which is therefore called a "tricolon") make it stand out (there are only two other tricola in the psalm, each of which will be noted and commented upon in turn). Furthermore, there is a textual "cue" at the beginning of the next verse that seems to indicate a new beginning; such that this verse, in some sense, stands on its own. Finally, the information in this verse is thematically removed from those following, as we will see.

אפפוני is generally understood to be synonymous with סבבוני (*they have surrounded me*). חבלי מוות is a difficult phrase to master. In order to resolve it, we must look at its parallel in the second stich: מצרי שאול.

- a) Rashi understands the latter term to mean *the borders of Sh'ol* (the deep - i.e. death), in which case the first term, as he renders it, means *a band of enemies* (i.e. agents of death), each of which was trying to snare the psalmist. This meaning for חבל is substantiated, as Rashi cites, by the phrase חבל נביאים (I Sh'mu'el 10:5) - a band of prophets. In Rashi's estimation, the psalmist is recounting how death (and its agents), here personified, was trying to "collect" him at every turn.
- b) Radak reads חבלי as "pains" and מצרי as "enemies"; to wit: *pains of death surrounded me and my enemies - i.e. Sh'ol - found me*.
- c) Amos Hakham (in Da'at Mikra) quotes his father as suggesting that מצרי may be associated with the root צרר - to tie. This, then, works in parallel with חבלי, if we interpret it as "cords". The psalmist tells how the cords - i.e. the web - of death surrounded him.

Note the alliteration in the verse: מצרי שאול מצאוני צרה ויגון אמצא - an alliteration that also alludes to the Exodus via the first word in the string (מצרי - מצרים).

There is another poetic device that strengthens the sense of inevitable doom - the use of the verb מצא. As Radak notes, just as the (agents/cords/borders) of death have found him, he has found them! Not only is death "after him", but when he tries to run, it awaits him at his every turn.

B: RECOUNTING THE PRAYER (vv. 4-11)

v. 4: ובשם

It is odd to begin a verse - all the more so a stanza - with a conjunction. I believe that this is done here in order to form an *inclusio* with the end of his prayer (end of v. 17 - ובשם ה' אקרא) and to mark off the boundaries of the psalmist's retelling.

To clarify, remember that the setting of this psalm is the Mikdash, when the psalmist is bringing a Korban Todah as part of (or in addition to) his vow taken when he was in trouble and called out to God. The first two verses represent his opening declaration, in which he affirms that he is bringing the offering and why (in a general sense). Verses 3-17 represent a recounting of his troubles, his prayer to God during those times and his internal response to salvation.

In v. 3, the psalmist retold of his troubles (in poetic, and somewhat generic form); now he turns to the more significant portion of the retelling. He shares with the assemblage how he called out to God - and the text of that prayer. Once God saved him, he reflected on how he ought to respond - and that reflection makes up the second half of this middle section. When we get to v. 18, we will note why it properly belongs to a conclusion, as opposed to part of the prayer-flashback.

The second half of the verse begins with his first words (said during the crisis) and opens with אנה - please. מלטה is a poetic form of מלט - rescue.

vv. 5-6: חנוך...שומר...

These two verses highlight the psalmist's belief - even when in trouble - that Hashem would save him. The פתאים mentioned in v. 6 are fools who are easily swayed to join sinners (compare Mishlei 1:8-19, 7:7 ff. and 9:4). The word פתי is likely related to the word for seduction (פתה); i.e. someone who is easily corrupted. The psalmist recounts that, in his prayer, he confessed to sinning

as a result of following others - and that was the cause of his undoing. Alternatively, he praised God for saving him - in spite of his predilection for following a “bad crowd” - from sin.

דלות comes from the word דל - impoverished; yet, here, the meaning may be “sick” (cf. T'hillim 41:2,4). If the first hemistich is confessional (that he had sinned), then, then the dalut in the second half is likely the consequent “spiritual poverty”, from which God saved him. If, on the other hand, the first stich is extolling God for keeping him from sin, then the דלות is probably illness. One might even argue that the illness was brought about to keep him from sinning - in which case the final word יהושיע is not a rescuing from דלות but the דלות itself.

v. 7: שובי

The psalmist had turned to himself, calming his fears. Whether he was exhorting his soul to do Teshuvah (Radak) or reassuring his soul that serenity was nigh (ibn Ezra) depends on how we read the second half. גמל may be past tense, in which case the repose is near (and this verse represents the psalmist's words after the salvation); or it may be an inverted future, promising comfort and consolation (and said during the crisis), such that the first half may be read as an exhortation.

Malbim, in his innovative style, has a trailblazing take on the word גמל. Nearly all commentators understand the word to refer to “kindness”, as it usually does in T'nakh (e.g. T'hillim 13:6). Malbim expands the meaning of the word to include any “proper payment”, whether rewards or punishment. He therefore reads the first phrase as self-comforting, because the current tribulation is part of God's just payment and he will be better (and, perhaps, “paid off”) as a result.

The suffixes at מנורחיכי and עליכי are, according to some, the older version of the pronominal suffix ג... (i.e. מנורחתך). While this is true in meaning, we need not ascribe “older forms” to this variation. This psalmist, as poet, builds a rhyming scheme: נפשי למנורחיכי - שובי - and, the parallel word in the second half mirrors this suffix.

vv. 8-9: הצלת... אתהלך...

The psalmist recounts how, in his T'fillah, he turned back to Hashem (after comforting himself) and thanked him for the salvation (if it has already happened) or for past rescues (if it hasn't yet occurred). It is preferable to read this as having been said immediately after the salvation has been realized and he is out of danger; this read helps tie these two verses together. In v. 8, he declares that God has not only saved him from death, He has even dried up his tears of pain. Furthermore, he was even able to walk wherever he wanted. As one of the three tricola in the psalm, this verse stands out. Perhaps the psalmist wants to incrementally increase the sense of salvation by including three steps in one verse. Since the danger recounted seems to be that of grave illness, the steps (pun intended) recounted here as easy to reconstruct. He has risen from his (almost-death) bed, wiped away the tears of pain and fear and can now walk about freely.

The resultant commitment is that he will, indeed, walk before God through his life. The ארצות החיים here simply means *among the living* - an affirmation of his own recovery. The antecedent לפני ה' means that he has the opportunity to praise God, since he has survived (compare 115:17 - לא המתים...).

vv. 10-11: האמנתי... אני אמרתי...

The ever-tricky כי here means “when”, i.e. “When I said X (clarified in the next verse), I really believed it.” The psalmist flashes back to the time of his troubles and recounts how, in his dire straits, he believed - just for a moment- that כל האדם כזב. This odd phrase, usually translated as *all men are deceitful*, makes little sense here. Remember, this phrase is one that he recounts saying - in error - at a time of great panic (בחפזי) and depression. Isn't the sentiment that “people can't be trusted” axiomatic within T'hillim? (see, inter alia, 118:8-9, 146:3-5).

Hakham (Da'at Mikra) explains this phrase in a manner which fits the context - and the message of the psalm - most clearly: האדם כל does not mean “all people”, rather, as in Kohelet 12:13- all of man's existence. The psalmist, in a moment of panic, believed that all human existence was meaningless. It is this errant belief that he is confessing - and correcting.

B: RECOUNTING HIS REACTION (vv. 12-17)

v. 12: מה אשיב

The psalmist recounts his reaction to the salvation - how can he possibly repay Hashem for saving him? The תגמולהי עלי (poetic form of תגמוליו) answers the גמל עליכי of v. 7.

v. 13: כוס ישועות

In his hour of need, the psalmist called out to God - ובשם ה' אקרא. His first response is to continue to call out God's Name - but in celebration. (A dear friend and teacher recounted how, as a paratrooper, all of the "jumpers", regardless of belief, would recite the special תפילת הדרך composed for צנחנים. A colleague reminded him that, when safely reaching terra firma, it is also appropriate to say "תודה"). This is his first commitment - not to relegate his heart-felt relationship with God to times of trouble. The cup of celebration will also be lifted, invoking God's Name and, we would surmise, by retelling the story of his salvation.

v. 14: נדרי

His second response is to commit to fulfilling the vows. A נדר can mean one of two things (see Ramban at Bamidbar 30:3); either a vow of abstinence (which can hardly be "paid" as in our verse) or a Korban. The נדר here must refer to an offering that the psalmist vowed to bring if he was saved from danger.

Part of his commitment is to pay his debt in front of God's people - whereas his troubles were experienced in private (being surrounded by the web/agents/borders of death, as in v. 3, implies that he was isolated in his travail), he will thank God publicly in a manner that will publicize His Name. (Compare the *calling out in God's Name* here with B'resheet 12:8, 21:33). The נא here, as we saw in the previous installment, means "now".

v. 15: יקר

This is probably the hardest verse in the psalm - perhaps in all of Hallel - to decipher. In short, is the death of his righteous ones "dear" (i.e. precious) to God, or is it "grievous"? We would certainly prefer the latter - besides the fact that it accords with the general understanding of God's relationships with His loyalists, it fits the context much better. The psalmist is taking note that God does not wish to see them die - and he includes himself in this group - thus explaining why God spared him.

The suffix ה"ה at the end of המותה may be poetic; Rashi reads it as locative (in place of the למ"ד before the word, the ה"ה may be added at the end): *It is difficult for Hashem to see His loyal ones go towards death*. Death here, as in v. 3, is seen as a place, parallel with Sh'ol.

vv. 16-17: ...אנה...לך

As he brings his offering, the psalmist begs (אנה) Hashem to accept it, as he is one of those faithful mentioned in the previous verse. Not only is he a servant of God (עבדך), furthermore this status is inborn - בן אמתך. The elegant irony of describing himself as God's servant as a result of God loosing his fetters is deliberate and serves to tie this psalm, once again, to the Exodus. God freed us from Egypt, loosing our bondage, and, in turn, we are his loyal servants.

This final tricolon parallels the opening one (v. 3), as it is part of the conclusion of the prayer. In response to the two phrases of "death chasing me", he declares, in two phrases, his absolute loyalty to God (the God of life!). Mirroring the pain which "finds me", he thanks God Who has loosened his bonds.

He concludes his "flashback" by noting that he committed to bring a thanksgiving offering (perhaps independent of the neder), and once again, call out in God's Name.

STANZA III (vv. 18-19)

v. 18: נָדַרְי

This verse is an exact repeat of v. 14 and seems to serve no purpose here - unless we read this psalm as I have suggested: Until v. 17, we were hearing the psalmist's account of his trials, his petition to God and his reaction to God's salvific response. Now, we are brought into "present time", as it were, and these are the words declared by the psalmist in the Mikdash itself as he is bringing the offering. To wit, in v. 14, he had declared his intent to fulfill his commitment. Now, in v. 18, he reiterates that commitment as he is fulfilling it.

v. 19: בַּחצֵרוֹת

There is an additional component here; not only will the grateful servant thank God in public, he will do so in the heart of God's city, in His courtyard. He then utilizes the opportunity afforded him by being saved to publicly thank God, tying His Name to His house.

He concludes his words by adjuring that all assembled give thanks to God - which is, perhaps, the point of the entire recitation. He has told of his salvation and of his commitment to publicly thank God in His house - in order to evoke public response of praise for the redemptive God.

V POSTSCRIPT

In the opening section, we raised several questions, which we are now better equipped to answer.

First of all, we can address the choice of "skipped texts", the omission of which justify the "grassroots Hallel" of Rosh Hodesh and the remaining days of Pesach.

Some have suggested that those passages that remind us of sorrow are left out - but that is hard to fathom. Why would we choose to make Rosh Hodesh a "happier" day than Sukkot, for example?

In order to answer this, we need to address our other question regarding the Hallel at the Seder.

As we have argued in other essays, the Seder experience is not just aimed at retelling an ancient story - and not just at reliving the experience of the Exodus (writ large). The ultimate goal of the evening is שִׂירָה, as can be seen by the pivotal word לְפִיכֶךְ - "therefore (as a result of feeling as if we have just left Egypt), we are obligated to thank, extol...and let us sing a new song, Halleluyah." Seder night, I propose, is the "real Hallel", where the feeling of thanksgiving reaches its apex. As Rav Hai explains, we don't recite a B'rakhah before Hallel at the Seder because it isn't "reciting Hallel" (a formal act which would require a blessing) but "singing Hallel" - straight from the heart. (As to why this obviates the need for a blessing, a full treatment is beyond the scope of this shiur. In brief, the B'rakhah is a statement of purpose, directing the following act in its proper intention. Such a statement is unnecessary when the action itself "bursts forth" as the song of newly redeemed nobility, as we are at that point of the Seder).

The full experience of the Exodus, in order to be felt (at the Seder, and then commemorated on those festivals which are לְפִיאת מִצְרַיִם (זִכָּר), involves a host of components. The selection of Am Yisra'el, the castigation of other belief with the affirmation of our own - these are all national statements which inhere the sense of common history. The dramatic switch to the singular אֶהְיֶה (possibly borrowing a thanksgiving psalm composed for bringing a Korban Todah), allows every member to personalize the experience of the Exodus (the textual hints and allusions, pointed out above, can aid this process greatly). Instead of it happening "to us", it also happened "to me".

This is exactly the order in which we teach on that night - first "if הַקִּבְיָה had not taken us out, we ...would still be enslaved..." By the end of the story, we progress to: "In every generation, a person must view himself as if he came out of Egypt..."

Now we understand why Pesach night is not listed among those occasions where Hallel is "recited". We don't "recite" it - we actually sing it, living the words as we say them.

We now understand we omit those 22 verses on Rosh Hodesh and the rest of Pesach. The national disgrace (*where is your God*) and the personal tribulations (*pain and suffering have found me*) are part and parcel of the Exodus - without them, the Hallel as a template for *יציאת מצרים* is empty. It is like eating Pesach without Maror and Matzah.

Our lips quaver in song as we thank God for giving us a response to the nations that derided us. Our hearts fill with gratitude as we give thanks to the *עולם של רבונו* for saving us from the legions of death that sought to ensnare us and bring us down.

אתה לך לפני ה' בארצות החיים