

תִּשְׁמֹר, יְהוָה; * אֲדַנִּי, מִי יַעֲמֵד. הַ כִּי עִמָּךְ.
 < with You < For << could survive? < who < O Lord, << O God,* < You preserve,
 הַסְּלִיחָה, לְמַעַן תִּנָּרָא. הַ קְוִיתִי יְהוָה,
 << in HASHEM, < I placed my hope << You may be feared. < so that << is forgiveness,
 קִנְיָתָה נִפְשִׁי, * וְלִדְבָרוֹ הוֹחֵלְתִּי. הַ נִפְשִׁי
 < My soul << I yearned. < and for His word << did my soul,* < placed hope
 לְאֲדַנִּי, מִשְׁמָרִים לְבַקֵּר, * שְׁמָרִים לְבַקֵּר.
 << for the < those longing << for the < among those << [years] << longing << for the Lord,
 dawn. dawn,* long for the Lord,
 יַחַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל יְהוָה; כִּי עִם יְהוָה
 < HASHEM < with < for << HASHEM, < for < shall Israel < Yearn
 הַחֲסֹד, וְהַרְבֵּה עִמּוֹ פְדוּת. הַ וְהוּא יַפְדֶּה
 < shall redeem < And He << is redemption. < with Him < and abundant << is kindness,
 אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל, מִכָּל עֲוֹנוֹתָיו.
 << its iniquities. < from all < Israel

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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.

מִשְׁכִּיל לְדָוִד, בְּהִיּוֹתוֹ בַּמְעָרָה * 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 שְׁמָרִים לְבַקֵּר 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).

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

צִלָּךְ עַל יַד יְמִינְךָ. הַ יּוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא
 < will not < the sun < By day << your right hand. < at < is your protective Shade
 יִבְכָּה, וַיִּרְחַ בְּלַיְלָה. הַ יְהוָה יִשְׁמָרְךָ מִכָּל
 < from < will protect < HASHEM << by night. < nor the << harm you, every you moon
 רָע, * יִשְׁמֹר אֶת נִפְשְׁךָ. הַ יְהוָה יִשְׁמֹר
 < will guard < HASHEM << your soul. < He will guard << evil;*
 צֵאתְךָ וּבּוֹאֶךָ, * מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.
 << eternity. < until < from this time < and your arrival,* < your departure

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

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת; מִמַּעַמְקִים קָרָאתִיךָ,
 < I called You, < From the depths << of ascents. < A song
 יְהוָה. בַּ אֲדַנִּי, שְׁמַעַה בְּקוֹלִי, * תִּהְיֶינָה
 << may they be << my voice;* < hear < O Lord, << HASHEM.
 אֲזַנֶּיךָ קִשְׁבוּת לְקוֹל תַּחֲנוּנֵי. 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).

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– 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).