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מדרש תהלים

שוחר טוב

MIDRASH TEHILLIM

WITH INTRALINEAR TRANSLATION, ELUCIDATION
AND CLASSICAL COMMENTARIES ON BOOK OF PSALMS
ILLUMINATED BY CHASSIDIC INSIGHTS

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המברכים ומתברכים,

אריה וזוגתו **לאה** שיחיו

ניסקי

Psalm 42

The exiled soul's thirst for Hashem: the cry of distress, the memory of sin and of the festival pilgrimages, and Knesses Yisrael's protest that her redemption is delayed

Summary

The midrash on Psalm 42 gives voice to Knesses Yisrael in exile. She longs for the Presence of Hashem and argues that her redemption is overdue. It opens with a brief pesicha on the word *maskil*, drawn from *Mishlei* 15:24 and abbreviated by reference to the fuller treatment in psalm 32.

It then turns to the governing image of the hart crying out for streams of water. Because the verb is feminine, the midrash reads it as the hind. In the agony of labor she cries out to the Holy One and is answered. So too the sons of Korach cried out from their distress, and Esther cried out *eyaluti*, "my strength," in her hour of danger. The soul's thirst is not for food but for seeing the face of God. "My tears were my bread" teaches that grief itself satisfies, like Chanah, who wept and would not eat.

"These I remember" works on two levels. It recalls "these are your gods," the golden calf, as the root of the exile. It also recalls "these you shall offer at your festivals," the lost pilgrimage offerings. The midrash paints a vivid scene of the festival pilgrims: covered wagons roofed like a sukkah, slow and stately processions, and crowds flowing as ceaselessly as a water channel. In those days the nations fell silent before the Jewish people. Now the roles are reversed.

Knesses Yisrael then complains that Hashem seems untouched by her suffering. She recalls the miracle of the Jordan that followed the sin at Shittim and wonders aloud whether His power has waned. Hashem answers through the prophet: His hand is not shortened. Their sins alone delay the salvation.

Hermon is read as Sinai, and the "small mountain" as the Temple, held only briefly. An added passage expounds "deep calls to deep" as the meeting of upper and lower waters in rainfall.

The chapter closes with a pointed argument. A single mitzvah, the Pesach offering, sufficed to redeem the Jewish people from Mitzrayim. She now keeps every festival, yet hears year after year, "this Tishrei you will be redeemed." Why, then, has God forgotten her? The homiletical point is that the cry of distress, sincerely raised, is itself the path to being answered.

א "For the conductor, a maskil, of the sons of Korach": the hart's cry

לַמְנַצֵּחַ מַשְׂכִּיל לִבְנֵי קֹרַח. זֶהוּ שֶׁאָמַר הַכָּתוּב אוֹרַח חַיִּים לְמַעְלָה לַמַּשְׂכִּיל (משלי טו כד), וכו' בְּמִזְמוֹר ל"ב. "For the conductor, a maskil, of the sons of Korach" (*Tehillim* 42:1). **This is what Scripture says: "A path of life above for the wise man" (Mishlei 15:24), etc., as in psalm 32.** The midrash opens with a *pesicha*, an introductory exposition drawn from another verse. The link is the word *maskil*, "wise man," which also appears in the heading of our psalm. The copyist did not write out the whole exposition. He referred the reader to its full form at the opening of psalm 32.[1] **כְּאַיָּל תַּעֲרוֹג עַל אֲפִיקֵי מָיִם. מַהוּ כְּאַיָּל תַּעֲרוֹג, כְּאַיֶּלֶת אֵינוֹ אוֹמֵר, אֶלָּא כְּאַיָּל תַּעֲרוֹג, זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה, "As a hart cries out over the water-courses"** (*Tehillim* 42:2). **What is "as a hart cries out"? It does not say "as a hind" but "as a hart cries out," male and female.** The noun *ayal* ("hart") is masculine, but the verb *ta'arog* ("cries out") is feminine. Scripture should have said either "as a hind (*ayeles*) cries out" or "as a hart cries out" with a masculine verb. Mixing the two shows that the verse speaks of male and female

[1] R' Shlomo Buber, *Haaros veTikkunim*. The passage is cited in *Yalkut Shimoni* on *Tehillim* in the name of the midrash. R' Buber explains that in the first printing the number "32" dropped out. This made it seem as if "in the psalm" introduced the next words, "as a hart cries out." In fact, "as a hart cries out" begins a new statement. He rejects a commentator's proposed emendation to "the psalm of *ayeles hashachar*" (psalm 22), since nothing relevant is found there. The *Yalkut* reads "psalm 31," perhaps because its numbering counted two psalms as one.

together, and so it can refer to the female in particular.[2] **מַה הָאַיָּלָה הַזוֹ כְּשֶׁהִיא יוֹשֶׁבֶת עַל הַמַּשְׁבֵּר הִיא מצטערה וְעוֹרֶגֶת לְהקב"ה, וְהוּא עוֹנֶה אֵלֶיהָ, Just as this hind, when she sits on the birthstool, is in pain and cries out to the Holy One, and He answers her,**[3] **כָּךְ קָרְאוּ בְּנֵי קֹרַח מִצָּרָה לְהקב"ה, וְהוּא עוֹנֶה אוֹתָם, לְכָךְ נֶאֱמַר כְּאַיָּל תַּעֲרוֹג. so the sons of Korach called out from distress to the Holy One, and He answered them. That is why it says, "as a hart cries out."** **עַל אֲפִיקֵי מָיִם. מַהוּ עַל אֲפִיקֵי מָיִם, הָאַיָּלָה הַזוֹ חֲסִידָה שֶׁבַּחַיּוֹת, בִּזְמַן שֶׁהַחַיּוֹת צְמֵאוֹת הֵן מִתְכַּנְּסוֹת אֵצֶל הָאַיָּלָה, וכו' לְמַעְלָה. "Over the water-courses." What is "over the water-courses"? This hind is the most pious of the animals. When the animals are thirsty, they gather around the hind, etc., as above.** The rest of this exposition already appeared in psalm 22, and the midrash refers the reader there.[4] **דָּבָר אַחֵר כְּאַיָּל תַּעֲרוֹג. כְּשֵׁם שֶׁהָאַיֶּלֶת עוֹרֶגֶת לְהקב"ה, כָּךְ אֶסְתֵּר אוֹמֶרֶת אֱיָלוּתִי לְעֶזְרָתִי חוּשָׁה (תהלים כב כ). Another explanation of "as a hart cries out": Just as the hind cries out to the Holy One, so Esther says, "My strength, hasten to my aid" (Tehillim 22:20).** In its plain sense, *eyaluti* means "my strength." The midrash hears in it the word *ayeles*, "hind," and links Esther's plea in psalm 22 with the hind's cry in our verse.

ב "My soul thirsts for God"

צָמְאָה נַפְשִׁי לֵאלֹהִים. מִמָּה אַתְּ צְמֵאָה, אָמְרָה לָהֶם אֵינִי צְמֵאָה "My soul thirsts for God" (*Tehillim* 42:3). **לֹא לֶאֱכוֹל וְלֹא לִשְׁתּוֹת, אֲנִי צְמֵאָה לִרְאוֹת פָּנֶיךָ, "For what do you thirst?" She answered them: "I do not thirst to eat or to drink. I thirst to see Your face,"** The soul, spoken of in the feminine, is asked what her thirst is for. She answers that it is not a bodily thirst. It is a longing for the Divine presence, which the next verse calls "appearing before God."

CHASSIDIC SPARK

Seeing the Face Within — The Tzemach Tzedek reads the soul's thirst "to see Your face" as the inner work of prayer. There the soul longs, with fiery thirst, to rise and cleave to its source in the living God, but the physical body holds it back. In the *Shemoneh Esrei*, which corresponds to the morning offering, a person offers up his animal soul. The Divine soul can then truly ascend and be absorbed in its root. That is "I will see the face of God": an actual seeing, because the soul is included in the *inner* dimension of Godliness. He compares this to a small candle placed beside a great torch, whose light merges into the torch's flame. He also notes the midrash's attention to the Divine name *Elokim* in this verse. It teaches that this revelation comes only through the eradication of evil, which is accomplished through that name.[5]

לְךָ אָמַר לִבִּי בַּקְּשׁוּ פָנַי אֶת פָּנֶיךָ ה' אֲבַקֵּשׁ (שם כז ח), "On Your behalf my heart says, 'Seek My presence'; Your presence, Hashem, I will seek" (Tehillim 27:8). לְכָךְ נֶאֱמַר צָמְאָה נַפְשִׁי לֵאלֹהִים לְאֵל חָי. **That is why it says, "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God."**[6]

ג "My tears were my bread": distress satisfies

הָיְתָה לִּי דִמְעָתִי לֶחֶם. מיכן אַתָּה לָמֵד שֶׁהַצָּרָה משבעה אֶת הָאָדָם "My tears were my bread" (*Tehillim* 42:4). **וְאֵינוֹ מְבַקֵּשׁ לֶאֱכוֹל, From here you learn that distress satisfies a person, so that he does not seek to eat.** Tears are called "bread" because they fill a person the way food does. Someone deep in grief has no desire to eat. **וְכֵן אֶלְקָנָה אָמַר חַנָּה לָמָּה תִבְכִּי וְלָמָּה לֹא תֹאכְלִי (ש"א א ח), And so Elkanah said,**

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2 *Haaros veTikkunim*, citing Rashi on *Tehillim* 42:2. The first printing reads "male and not female." R' Buber notes that "not" is superfluous and is absent from all his manuscripts.

3 Rashi on *Tehillim* 42:2 cites an Aggadah that goes further. When the hind crouches to give birth, her womb is narrow and she cries out. The Holy One has mercy and sends her a snake that bites her at the womb, and the womb opens. *Yalkut Shimoni* brings the same addition in the name of this midrash. R' Buber notes that it is not found in his manuscripts (*Haaros veTikkunim*).

4 Psalm 22, §14. All manuscripts read "etc., above"; the first printing changed it to "etc., in psalm 22" (*Haaros veTikkunim*).

5 The Tzemach Tzedek, *Or HaTorah*, *Bamidbar* vol. 4, Matos, on the discourse *Vayedaber Moshe el roshei hamatos*.

6 *Yalkut Shimoni* on *Tehillim* cites this passage. Its printed label "*Pesikta Rabbasi*" has slipped out of place. That label belongs to a different statement, which appears in *Pesikta Rabbasi* §1 but not in our text (*Haaros veTikkunim*).

"Chanah, why do you weep, and why do you not eat?" (I Shmuel 1:8). מיכן שֶׁהַבְּכִיָּה מַשְׁבִּיעַ, לְכָךְ נֶאֱמַר הָיְתָה לִי דִמְעָתִי לֶחֶם. From here we see that weeping satisfies. That is why it says, "My tears were my bread."[7]

ד "These I remember": the calf, the festivals, and the pilgrims' throng

אֵלֶּה אֶזְכְּרָה וְאֶשְׁפְּכָה עָלַי נַפְשִׁי. "These things I remember, and my soul pours out within me" (*Tehillim* 42:5). **נִזְכֶּרֶת אֲנִי מַה שֶּׁעָשִׂיתָ לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר, וְאָמְרוּ אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל (שמות לב ד), וַאֲנִי נִזְכֶּרֶת וְנִשְׁפֶּכֶת נַפְשִׁי. I remember what You did for our ancestors in the wilderness, and yet they said, "These are your gods, O Yisrael" (Shemos 32:4). I remember, and my soul pours out.** The midrash asks which "these" (*eleh*) the verse means. It answers with the "these" of the golden calf. When the people recall that sin, their soul pours out in anguish.[8] **דָּבָר אַחֵר נִזְכֶּרֶת אֲנִי מַה שֶּׁאָמַר מֹשֶׁה, אֵלֶּה תַּעֲשׂוּ לַה' בְּמוֹעֲדֵיכֶם (במדבר כט לט). Another explanation: I remember what Moshe said, "These you shall offer to Hashem on your festivals" (Bamidbar 29:39).** This is a second "these": the festival offerings. The soul pours out at the memory of the sacrifices, which our sins have brought to an end, leaving no pilgrims to come to the festivals. The midrash goes on to describe exactly this.[9] **כִּי אֶעֱבֹר בְּסָךְ אֲדַדֵּם עַד בֵּית אֱלֹהִים. "As I passed on with the throng, going slowly with them up to the house of God." מַהוּ בַּסָּךְ, כְּשֶׁעוֹלִים לְרֶגֶל לִרְאוֹת פְּנֵיךָ בְּסִקְפַּסְטָאוֹת כְּמִין סוּכָּה, What is basach? When they went up for the festivals to see Your presence, in covered wagons shaped like a sukkah.** The midrash connects *sach* with *sechach*, the covering of a sukkah. The pilgrims traveled in covered wagons that looked like little booths. The midrash calls them *skafsta'os*, a Greek word for a covered wagon. The words "shaped like a sukkah" seem to be a copyist's explanation of that foreign term.[10] **וְהָיִינוּ בָּאִין אָנוּ וּבָנֵינוּ בְּחַיִל גָּדוֹל, וְהָאוּמּוֹת דּוֹמְמוֹת בְּפָנֵינוּ, We would come, we and our children, in a great host, and the nations stood silent before us.**[11] **לָכֵךְ נֶאֱמַר כִּי אֶעֱבֹר בְּסָךְ אֲדַדֵּם עַד בֵּית אֱלֹהִים, That is why it says, "As I passed on with the throng, edadem up to the house of God." כְּשֶׁהָיָה בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ קַיָּם הָיוּ דוֹמְמִים מִלְּפָנַי, וְעַכְשָׁיו אֲנִי דוֹמֶמֶת לִפְנֵיהֶם, לָכֵן אֲדַדֵּם עַד בֵּית אֱלֹהִים. When the Beis HaMikdash stood, they were silent before me. Now I am silent before them. Therefore it says, "edadem up to the house of God."** The midrash takes *edadem* from *dmamah*, "silence." In the past the nations fell silent before the Jewish people. Now that the Beis HaMikdash is gone, the Jewish people fall silent before the nations.[12] **בְּקוֹל רִנָּה וְתוֹדָה. כְּשֶׁהָיִיתִי עוֹבֶרֶת בַּמֶּה הָיִיתִי עוֹבֶרֶת, בְּקוֹל רִנָּה וְתוֹדָה וְשִׁיר וּצְלָצְלִים וּתְרוּעָה, לָכֵךְ נֶאֱמַר בְּקוֹל רִנָּה. "With the sound of song and thanksgiving." When I passed along, how did I pass? With the sound of joyous song and thanksgiving, with music, cymbals, and trumpet blasts. That is why it says, "with the sound of song." הָמוֹן חוֹגֵג. מַהוּ הָמוֹן חוֹגֵג, לְשׁוֹן יְוָנִי חֲגוּגִין שֶׁל מַיִם, "A festive throng." What is "a festive throng"? It is a Greek term: chogegin of water.** The midrash does not read *chogeg* as "celebrating." It takes it as a Greek-derived word for

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7 Cited in *Yalkut Shimoni* on *Tehillim* and on *Shmuel*, and alluded to by Rashi on *Tehillim* 42:4. A parallel in *Eichah Rabbah* 1:22 states that whoever weeps does not eat, as it says, "she wept and did not eat" (*Haaros veTikkunim*).

8 *Haaros veTikkunim*. The *Yalkut* adds: "That 'these' I remember, and my soul pours out." The second explanation, about the festival offerings, works the same way.

9 Mahari Kohen.

10 *Haaros veTikkunim*. In *Yalkut Shimoni* the words "like a sukkah" appear as a marginal gloss. Rashi on *Tehillim* 42:5 writes: "*Sach* is related to *sechach* and sukkah, that is, covered wagons roofed like a sukkah, called in Aggadic language *skafsta'os*." Mahari Kohen, following the *Aruch*, explains the word as "covered and modest."

11 Rashi on *Tehillim* 42:5 draws on this: "I remember, and my soul pours out, when I recall the festival pilgrimages, when I passed among the companies of people and walked slowly with them to the house of God" (cited in *Haaros veTikkunim*).

12 Rashi on the verse cites Donash, who explains *edadem* as a term of silence: "I will be mute and still" (*Haaros veTikkunim*).

pools, reservoirs, or streams of water.[13] כְּשֵׁם שֶׁלֹּא הָיָה לָהֶם לַחֲגוּגִין שֶׁל מַיִם שִׁיעוּר, כָּךְ לֹא הָיָה לָהֶם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל שִׁיעוּר כְּשֶׁעוֹלִין לָרְגָלִים, לָכֵךְ נֶאֱמַר הָמוֹן חוֹגֵג. **Just as the reservoirs of water have no measure, so the Jewish people had no measure when they went up for the festivals. That is why it says, "a festive throng."** The festival crowds were as countless as water that flows without end.

ה "Why are you bowed down, my soul?": the Jordan, Sinai, the deeps, and the one mitzvah of Pesach

מַה תִּשְׁתּוֹחֲחִי נַפְשִׁי וַתֶּהֱמִי עָלַי הוֹחִילִי לֵאלֹהִים כִּי עוֹד אוֹדֶנּוּ יְשׁוּעוֹת פָּנָיו. "Why are you bowed down, my soul, and why do you moan within me? Hope in God, for I will yet thank Him for the salvations of His presence" (*Tehillim* 42:6). **שֶׁלֹּא אוֹדֶנּוּ כבראשונה שֶׁעָשָׂה לָהֶם נִסִּים, עַכְשָׁיו אוֹדֶנּוּ שְׁנִיָּה כְּשֶׁיּוֹשִׁיעֵנִי שְׁנִיָּה מִן הָאוּמוֹת, לָכֵךְ נֶאֱמַר כִּי עוֹד אוֹדֶנּוּ. I will not thank Him only as at first, when He performed miracles for them. Now I will thank Him a second time, when He saves me a second time from the nations. That is why it says, "for I will yet thank Him."** The word "yet" points to a further thanksgiving, for a future redemption from the nations like the first one from Mitzrayim.[14] **אֱלֹהַי עָלַי אָמְרָה כְּנֶסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי מִתְקַנְּאָה וְאֶשְׁתּוֹחֲחָה שֶׁאֲנִי רוֹאָה וְכוֹעֶסֶת, נַפְשִׁי תִּשְׁתּוֹחָח. "My God, my soul is bowed down within me"** (*Tehillim* 42:7). **Knesses Yisrael said: I am stirred with jealousy and bowed down, for I see and am vexed.[15] "But You, what do You care? 'You, Hashem, are enthroned forever; Your throne endures from generation to generation'** (Eichah 5:19). **הוֹד וְהָדָר לְפָנָיו עוֹז וְחֶדְוָה בִּמְקוֹמוֹ** (דה"א יו כז), **'Majesty and splendor are before Him; strength and joy are in His place'** (I Divrei HaYamim 16:27). **מַה אִיכְפַּת לְךָ, אֲנִי הוּא עָלַי נַפְשִׁי תִּשְׁתּוֹחָח, What do You care? It is I — 'my soul is bowed down within me.'"** The emphasis falls on "within me" (*alai*). The Holy One sits enthroned in majesty and joy, untouched by the exile. The suffering rests on the Jewish people alone. **עַל כֵּן אֶזְכָּרְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ יַרְדֵּן, נִזְכֶּרֶת אֲנִי כְּשֶׁעָבַרְתִּי אֶת הַיַּרְדֵּן מַה שָּׁעָשִׂיתָ לִי, אֲפִילּוּ כְּשֶׁהִכְעַסְנוּךָ בַּשִּׁטִּים עָשִׂיתָ לָנוּ נִסִּים כְּשֶׁעָבַרְתָּ לָנוּ אֶת הַיַּרְדֵּן, "Therefore I remember You from the land of the Jordan." I remember what You did for me when I crossed the Jordan. Even when we had angered You at Shittim, You performed miracles for us when You brought us across the Jordan.** **וְכֵן הוּא אוֹמֵר וַיַּשְׁכֵּם יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּסְעוּ מֵהַשִּׁטִּים וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד הַיַּרְדֵּן** (יהושע ג א), **And so it says, "Yehoshua rose early in the morning, and they set out from Shittim and came to the Jordan"** (Yehoshua 3:1). This verse shows that the crossing came directly after Shittim. The miracle followed right after the people had angered Him there. **נִזְכֶּרֶת אֲנִי הַצָּרוֹת וְהַנִּסִּים וְחוֹשֶׁבֶת אֲנִי עָלֶיךָ דְּבָרִים אֲחֵרִים, כְּמָה דְאַתְּ אָמַר מִבְּלִתִּי יְכוֹלֶת ה' (במדבר יד טז), I remember the troubles and the miracles, and I think other thoughts about You, as it says, "Because Hashem was unable"** (Bamidbar 14:16). When the Jewish people compare the miracles of the past with the suffering of the present, they are tempted to doubt. Perhaps He is no longer able to save, as the nations would claim. **אָנָּה הוּא הָרוּחַ וְאָנָּה הוּא הַכֹּחַ, דִּכְתִיב הֶאָמוּר בֵּית יַעֲקֹב הֻקַּצַר רוּחַ ה' (מיכה ב ז), Where is the spirit, and where is the strength? As it is written, "Should it be said, O House of Yaakov, that the spirit of Hashem has grown short?"** (Michah 2:7). **וְאוֹמֵר חַלּוֹתִי הִיא שְׁנוֹת יְמִין עֶלְיוֹן** (תהלים עז יא), **And it says, "And I said, 'This is my sickness: the right hand of the Most High has changed"'** (Tehillim 77:11). **מָהוּ חֲלוֹתִי, וְכִי יֵשׁ חוֹלִי לְמַעְלָה, אֶלָּא שְׁנִשְׁתַּנִּית יָמִין שֶׁל עֶלְיוֹן, What is "my sickness"? Is there sickness on High? Rather, the right hand of the One on High has changed.** "Sickness" here cannot mean literal weakness in Heaven. The second half of the verse explains it: "the right

[13] Mahari Kohen: "pits and streams of water." Rashi on the verse: "in Greek a pool of water is called *chogegin*." R' Buber identifies the word with a Greek term for a cistern or water channel. He suggests that *Eichah Rabbah* 1 relies on the same idea when it expounds this verse. There R' Levi compares the throng to a water channel "that does not stop by day or by night," flowing without interruption (*Haaros veTikkunim*).

[14] Some manuscripts and the printed editions read: "Not as the first and the second times, after which we were enslaved again. Rather, when He saves us from the nations with a salvation that is not followed by any subjugation" (*Haaros veTikkunim*).

[15] Cited in *Yalkut Shimoni* on *Tehillim* (*Haaros veTikkunim*).

hand of the Most High has changed." His saving power seems no longer to act as it once did.[16] **אָמַר לָהֶם הקב"ה הֵן לֹא קָצְרָה יַד ה' מֵהוֹשִׁיעַ (יְשַׁעְיָה נט א), The Holy One said to them: "Indeed, the hand of Hashem is not too short to save" (Yeshayahu 59:1). אֶלָּא מָהוּ, כִּי אִם עֲוֹנוֹתֵיכֶם הָיוּ מַבְדִּילִים בֵּינֵיכֶם לְבֵין אֱלֹהֵיכֶם (שָׁם שָׁם ב), "Rather, what is it? 'Only your iniquities have separated you from your God' (Yeshayahu 59:2)."** The Holy One answers the doubt. His power has not lessened. The delay in salvation comes from the people's sins. **הוּי עַל כֵּן אֶזְכָּרְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ יַרְדֵּן וְחֶרְמוֹנִים מֵהַר מִצְעָר. This is the meaning of "Therefore I remember You from the land of the Jordan and the peaks of Hermon, from the small mountain." וְחֶרְמוֹנִים מֵהַר מִצְעָר. חֶרְמוֹן זֶה סִינַי, שֶׁמִּשָּׁם נֶחֶרְמוּ כָּל הָאוּמוֹת, לְפִי שֶׁלֹּא קִיבְּלוּ אֶת הַתּוֹרָה, "And the peaks of Hermon, from the small mountain." Hermon is Sinai, for from there all the nations were banned (nechermu), because they did not accept the Torah.** The midrash links *Chermon* with *cherem*, a ban.[17] **מֵהַר מִצְעָר, זֶה בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר לְמִצְעָר יָרְשׁוּ עַם קָדְשֶׁךָ (שָׁם סג יח). "From the small mountain" is the Beis HaMikdash, as it says, "For a little while (lamitz'ar) Your holy people possessed it" (Yeshayahu 63:18).** The word *mitz'ar*, "small," recalls *lamitz'ar*, "for a little while." The Temple mount is the place the Jewish people held only briefly before their enemies trampled the Sanctuary. **[תְּהוֹם אֶל תְּהוֹם קוֹרֵא לְקוֹל צִנּוֹרֶיךָ, "Deep calls to deep at the roar of Your channels"** (*Tehillim* 42:8).[18] **הַמַּיִם הָעֶלְיוֹנִים אוֹמְרִים אָנוּ זְכָרִים, וְהַתַּחְתּוֹנִים אוֹמְרִים אָנוּ נְקֵבוֹת, The upper waters say, "We are male," and the lower waters say, "We are female." כְּשֶׁיּוֹרְדִים אוֹמְרִים אֵלּוּ לָאֵלּוּ, אַתֶּם בְּרִיּוֹתָיו שֶׁל הקב"ה וַאֲנַחְנוּ שְׁלוּחָיו, קַבֵּל אוֹתָנוּ בְּסֵבֶר פָּנִים יָפוֹת, When the upper waters descend, they say to the lower ones, "You are the creatures of the Holy One, and we are His messengers. Receive us with a pleasant countenance."** This is how the midrash reads "deep calls to deep." The rain from above calls to the waters of the earth. The two join like male and female, and their union makes the earth fruitful. **הָדָא הוּא דִכְתִיב תִּפְתַּח אֶרֶץ וְיִפְרוּ יֶשַׁע (שָׁם מה ח), This is what is written, "Let the earth open, and let them bear salvation" (Yeshayahu 45:8). תִּפְתַּח אֶרֶץ זוֹ יְרִידַת גְּשָׁמִים, וְיִפְרוּ יֶשַׁע, שֶׁהֵם פֵּרִים וְרָבִים וּמְבִיאִין יְשׁוּעָה, וְצֶדָקָה תַּצְמִיחַ יַחַד (שָׁם שָׁם)]. "Let the earth open" refers to the descent of rain. "And let them bear salvation" means that they are fruitful and multiply and bring salvation. "And let it cause righteousness to sprout together" (Yeshayahu 45:8).**[19] **לֹא עָשִׂיתָ לָּנוּ נִסִּים כְּשֵׁם שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ לָהֶם, וּמָה עָשִׂיתָ לָּנוּ, כָּל מִשְׁבָּרֶיךָ וְגַלֶּיךָ עָלַי עָבָרוּ, You have not performed miracles for us as You did for them. And what have You done for us? "All Your breakers and waves have passed over me."** Knesses Yisrael returns to her complaint. Earlier generations crossed the Jordan dry-shod. Her own generation is swept over by the waves of exile. **וְאִם תֹּאמַר בִּשְׁבִיל שֶׁאֵין בִּי זְכוּת, וַהֲלֹא אַתֶּם צִוִּיתֶם שֶׁיִּשְׁחֲטוּ אֶת הַפֶּסַח, מִצְוָה אַחַת עָשׂוּ, וְשָׁחֲטוּ אֶת הַפֶּסַח בַּלַּיְלָה יָצְאוּ מִמְּצְרַיִם, And if You say it is because I have no merit — did You not command them to slaughter the Pesach offering? They performed one mitzvah: they slaughtered the Pesach offering, and that night they went out of Mitzrayim. וְכֵן הוּא אוֹמֵר יוֹמָם יְצַוֶּה ה' חַסְדּוֹ וּבַלַּיְלָה שִׁירָה עִמִּי. And so it says, "By day Hashem commands His kindness, and at night His song is with me"** (*Tehillim* 42:9). In its plain sense, the verse prays that Hashem's kindness will come by day and His song accompany the psalmist at night. The midrash reads "commands" as the commandment of the Pesach offering, which was slaughtered by day. "At night" is the night on which they went free and sang. One mitzvah was enough to bring the redemption of Mitzrayim.[20]

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16 Mahari Kohen.

17 The clause "for from there all the nations were banned, because they did not accept the Torah" is missing from the Paris manuscript and the printed editions (*Haaros veTikkunim*).

18 The bracketed passage, from "Deep calls to deep" to "cause righteousness to sprout together," was added by R' Buber from some of his manuscripts. It is absent from others and from all printed editions (*Haaros veTikkunim*).

19 Compare *Yerushalmi Berachos* 9:2 and *Taanis* 1:3. There R' Shimon ben Elazar teaches that for every handbreadth of rain that falls from above, the earth sends up two handbreadths to meet it, as it says, "Deep calls to deep at the roar of Your channels."

20 Rashi on *Tehillim* 42:9 alludes to this passage in the name of a midrash Aggadah (*Haaros veTikkunim*).

ו "I say to God, my Rock: Why have You forgotten me?"

אוֹמְרָה לְאֵל סַלְעִי לָמָּה שְׁכַחְתָּנִי. **"I say to God, my Rock: Why have You forgotten me?"** (*Tehillim* 42:10).[21] **אוֹתָן שֶׁהָיוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם לֹא עָשׂוּ אֶלָּא מִצְוָה אַחַת וְיָצְאוּ בַּלַּיְלָה, אֲנִי שֶׁכָּל מִצְוֹת שֶׁנִּצְטַוֵּיתִי אֲנִי עוֹשֶׂה,** **Those who were in Mitzrayim performed only one mitzvah, and they went out that night. I perform every mitzvah I have been commanded.** This continues the argument of the previous paragraph. If one mitzvah was enough to redeem them, surely so many mitzvos should be enough to redeem us. **שָׁמוֹר אֶת חֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב (דְּבָרִים יו א), וַאֲנִי עוֹשֶׂה בּוֹ אֶת הֶחָג, וּמְשַׁמֶּרֶת בּוֹ אֶת הַפֶּסַח,** **"Keep the month of spring" (Devarim 16:1): I celebrate the festival in it, and I observe the Pesach in it.** **וְעָשִׂיתָ חַג שָׁבוּעוֹת (שָׁם שָׁם י), חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת (שָׁם שָׁם יב),** **"You shall celebrate the festival of Shavuos" (Devarim 16:10); "the festival of Sukkos" (Devarim 16:13).** **וּבֶעָשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה (בְּמִדְבַּר כט ז), וַאֲנִי עוֹשֶׂה,** **"And on the tenth day of this seventh month" (Bamidbar 29:7): I keep it as well.** **מָהוּ לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה, וְכִי יֵשׁ חוֹדֶשׁ שְׁבִיעִי אַחֵר, אֶלָּא שֶׁאַתָּה אוֹמֵר לִי בְּכָל שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה (אוֹמְרִים) בְּתִשְׁרֵי זֶה שֶׁיָּבֹא אֲנִי גוֹאֲלֶךָ,** **What is "of this seventh month"? Is there some other seventh month? Rather, You tell me every year: "In this coming Tishrei I will redeem you."** The word "this" seems superfluous. The midrash reads it as a promise renewed every year: redemption will come in *this* Tishrei. **זֶה בָּא וְגַם אַחֵר וְלֹא גְאַלְתַּנִי, חֲזִי אוֹמְרָה לְאֵל סַלְעִי לָמָּה שְׁכַחְתָּנִי.** **This one came, and another as well, and You have not redeemed me. This is the meaning of "I say to God, my Rock: Why have You forgotten me?"**

[21] In R' Buber's manuscript, this passage carries the heading "psalm 43." He notes that it belongs to psalm 42 and moved the start of psalm 43 to "For You are the God of my strength." The passage is cited in *Yalkut Shimoni* on *Tehillim* in the name of the midrash (*Haaros veTikkunim*).

Psalm 43

Knesses Yisrael in exile pleads for two redeemers, Eliyahu and Mashiach ben Dovid, modeled on Moshe and Aharon, to lead her to Hashem's holy mountain

Summary

The midrash on Psalm 43 hears the psalm as the voice of Knesses Yisrael in exile, the community of the Jewish people speaking across the long night of dispersion. Its single extended passage is governed by the verse "Send Your light and Your truth, they will guide me; they will bring me to Your holy mountain and to Your dwellings" (*Tehillim* 43:3). The midrash reads this verse as a petition for the final redemption, and builds the petition on a pattern taken from the Exodus.

The exposition opens by contrasting two moments of praise. At the Sea, the Jewish people declared "Hashem is my strength" (*Shemos* 15:2) only after they had been saved. In exile, Knesses Yisrael says "You are the God of my strength" (*Tehillim* 43:2) while still unredeemed, in the spirit of "Hashem, my strength and my stronghold" (*Yirmeyahu* 16:19). Her faith comes before her deliverance, and from that position she asks why He has forsaken her.

The psalm's phrase "the oppression of the foe" (*lachatz*) is linked to the "oppression" with which Mitzrayim afflicted the Jewish people (*Shemos* 3:9). Because the two afflictions share a name, the midrash reasons that their remedies should correspond. Hashem redeemed the Jewish people from Mitzrayim through two messengers, Moshe and Aharon (*Tehillim* 105:26), and so Knesses Yisrael asks Him to send two once more:

- **"Your light"** is Eliyahu the prophet, a descendant of Aharon, who kindled the lamps of the menorah (*Bamidbar* 8:2). Eliyahu's role as herald of redemption is stated in *Malachi* 3:23. - **"Your truth"** is Mashiach ben Dovid, heir to the oath that Hashem swore to Dovid "in truth" (*Tehillim* 132:11). He is also identified with the chosen servant of *Yeshayahu* 42:1.

The parallel with the Exodus extends to the journey's end. The first redemption culminated at Hashem's mountain, "You will bring them and plant them on the mount of Your inheritance" (*Shemos* 15:17). The future redemption will likewise lead the Jewish people to "Your holy mountain." There, as the next verse promises, they will come "to the altar of God" (*Tehillim* 43:4) with offerings, as in "I will come into Your house with burnt offerings" (*Tehillim* 66:13). Above all, they will come with thanksgiving that never ends, echoing Asaf's pledge, "we will give thanks to You forever" (*Tehillim* 79:13).

The homiletical point is that the future redemption will mirror the Exodus, in its paired messengers, its destination, and its song. Its distinction lies in the people's faith: Knesses Yisrael proclaims Hashem as her strength before salvation arrives. Her reward will be a praise that, unlike the song at the Sea, will be everlasting.

א "Send Your light and Your truth": two redeemers for the final redemption

שָׁפְטֵנִי אֱלֹהִים וְגוֹ' כִּי אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵי מָעוּזִּי. "Judge me, O God, etc.... For You, O God, are my strength" (Tehillim 43:1–2). The midrash goes straight to verse 2. The speaker, as the feminine verbs below show, is *Knesses Yisrael*, the Jewish people personified as one figure. She calls Hashem her strength while she is still in exile, before any salvation has come. **עָזִּי וְזִמְרָת יָהּ (שמות טו ב), אֲנִי אֵינִי כֵן, אֶלָּא עַד שֶׁלֹּא גְאַלְתַּנִי אֲנִי נוֹתֶנֶת לְךָ עוֹז, הֲרֵי כִּי אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵי מָעוּזִּי. "My strength and song is Hashem" (Shemos 15:2). I am not like that. Rather, even before You have redeemed me, I ascribe strength to You. That is why it says, "For You, O God, are my strength."** At the Sea, the Jewish people praised Hashem's strength only after they had been saved. Here *Knesses Yisrael* says her praise comes first. While she is still in exile she declares Hashem her strength, trusting the redemption that has not yet arrived. **לָמָּה זְנַחְתָּנִי. וְלֹא זוֹ בִּלְבַד, אֶלָּא ה' עָזִּי וּמָעוּזִּי (ירמיה טז יט). "Why should You forsake me?" And not only this, but "Hashem, my strength and my stronghold" (Yirmeyahu 16:19).** She does

more than call Hashem "my strength" (*ma'uzi*). Like the prophet, she calls Him by both words, "my strength" (*uzi*) and "my stronghold" (*ma'uzi*). If she gives Him such complete praise before her redemption, why has He forsaken her? **לָמָּה קוֹדֵר אֶתְהַלֵּךְ בְּלַחַץ אוֹיֵב. "Why should I walk in darkness in the oppression of the foe?"** Silverstein renders *lachatz* as "toils." The midrash reads the word as "oppression," because the next line links it to the *lachatz* of Mitzrayim. **כַּמָּה גָּאַלְתָּ אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם מִן הַלַּחַץ שֶׁהָיוּ לוֹחֲצִין אוֹתָן, וְכֵן הוּא אוֹמֵר וְגַם רָאִיתִי אֶת הַלַּחַץ (שמות ג ט), וְגַם אֲנִי אֵין לִי אֶלָּא לַחַץ אוֹיֵב, וְלָמָּה קוֹדֵר אֶתְהַלֵּךְ, Just as You redeemed our fathers from Mitzrayim, from the oppression with which they were oppressing them, as it says, "And I have also seen the oppression" (Shemos 3:9), so I too have nothing but the oppression of the foe. Why, then, should I walk in darkness?** Hashem told Moshe that He had seen the Egyptians' *lachatz* and would redeem the Jewish people. The psalmist uses the same word, *lachatz*. The suffering is the same, so *Knesses Yisrael* asks for the same response: redemption. **וְלֹא שָׁלַחְתָּ הַגְּאוּלָּה לְדוֹר הַהוּא, אֶלָּא עַל יְדֵי שְׁנַיִם גּוֹאֲלִים, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר שָׁלַח מֹשֶׁה עַבְדּוֹ אַהֲרֹן אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בּוֹ (תהלים קה כו), וְגַם לְדוֹר הַזֶּה שָׁלַח שְׁנַיִם כְּנֶגְדָּן. And You sent redemption to that generation only through two redeemers, as it says, "He sent Moshe His servant, Aharon whom He had chosen" (Tehillim 105:26). So to this generation as well, send two corresponding to them.**[1] The word "send" in the psalm is linked to "He sent" in the verse about Mitzrayim. The first redemption came through a pair of messengers, so the psalmist asks for a pair now: "Your light *and* Your truth." **שְׁלַח אוֹרְךָ וַאֲמִתְּךָ, אוֹרְךָ זֶה אֵלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא מִבֵּית אַהֲרֹן, דִּכְתִיב בֵּיהּ אֶל מוּל פְּנֵי הַמְּנוֹרָה יָאִירוּ שִׁבְעַת הַנֵּרוֹת (במדבר ח ב), "Send Your light and Your truth" (Tehillim 43:3). "Your light": this is Eliyahu the prophet, from the house of Aharon, about whom it is written, "The seven lamps shall cast their light toward the face of the menorah" (Bamidbar 8:2).** Light belongs to Aharon, because he was commanded to kindle the menorah. Eliyahu is identified as Aharon's descendant, so he is "Your light," the counterpart of Aharon. **וַאֲמִתְּךָ זֶה מָשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד, דִּכְתִיב נִשְׁבַּע ה' לְדָוִד אֱמֶת לֹא יָשׁוּב (תהלים קלב יא), "And Your truth": this is Mashiach ben Dovid, as it is written, "Hashem swore to Dovid in truth; He will not turn back from it" (Tehillim 132:11).** "Truth" is tied to the oath Hashem swore to Dovid to keep his line on the throne. Mashiach, Dovid's descendant, fulfills that oath, and he is the counterpart of Moshe. The midrash's pairing differs from that of the commentary reflected in the Silverstein gloss, which makes the light Mashiach and the truth Eliyahu. **וְכֵן הוּא אוֹמֵר הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי שֹׁלֵחַ לָכֶם אֵת אֵלִיָּה הַנָּבִיא (מלאכי ג כג), חֲדֵי אֶחָד, וְהַשֵּׁנִי הֵן עַבְדִּי אֶתְמָךְ בּוֹ (ישעיה מב א), And so it says, "Here, I am sending you Eliyahu the prophet" (Malachi 3:23). That is one. And the second: "Here is My servant, whom I uphold" (Yeshayahu 42:1).** The prophets confirm that the future redemption will come through two figures. Eliyahu is explicitly "sent," and "My servant" refers to the Mashiach, just as Moshe was called "His servant." **לָכֵן נֶאֱמַר שְׁלַח אוֹרְךָ וַאֲמִתְּךָ הֵמָּה יַנְחוּנִי יְבִיאוּנִי אֶל הַר קָדְשְׁךָ וְאֶל מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֶיךָ, Therefore it says, "Send Your light and Your truth; let them lead me. Let them bring me to Your holy mountain and to Your dwellings."** **כְּשֵׁם שֶׁכָּתוּב לְהַלָּן בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם תְּבִיאֵמוֹ וְתִטָּעֵמוֹ בְּהַר נַחֲלָתְךָ (שמות טו יז), כָּךְ לֶעָתִיד לָבֹא יָבוֹאוּ עַל הַר קָדְשְׁךָ וְאֶל מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֶיךָ, Just as it is written elsewhere about the Exodus from Mitzrayim, "You will bring them and plant them on the mountain of Your inheritance" (Shemos 15:17), so in the future they will come to Your holy mountain and to Your dwellings.** The parallel with the Exodus continues. The first redemption ended with the people brought to Hashem's mountain, and the final redemption will end the same way: "let them bring me to Your holy mountain." **שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וַאֲבוֹאָה אֶל מִזְבַּח אֱלֹהִים, בַּמָּה אָבוֹא בֵיתֶךָ, בְּעוֹלוֹת אֲשַׁלֵּם לְךָ נְדָרָי (תהלים סו יג), As it says, "And I will come to the altar of God" (Tehillim 43:4). With what shall I come? "I will come into Your house with burnt offerings; I will pay You my vows" (Tehillim 66:13).** Once *Knesses Yisrael* has been brought back, she asks how she will approach the altar. Another psalm answers that she will come with offerings, fulfilling the vows she made

[1] R' Shlomo Buber, *Haaros veTikkunim*, notes that this passage is cited in the *Yalkut* at the end of *Malachi* in the name of *Shocher Tov*.

in her distress. **מַה יֵּשׁ לִי לַעֲשׂוֹת, לָתֵת לְךָ הוֹדָיוֹת, וְכֵן אָסָף אָמַר וַאֲנַחְנוּ עַמְּךָ וְצֹאן מַרְעִיתֶךָ נוֹדֶה לְךָ לְעוֹלָם לְדוֹר וָדוֹר נְסַפֵּר תְּהִלָּתֶךָ (שם עט יג). What is there for me to do? To give You thanksgivings. And so Asaf said, "And we, Your people and the flock of Your pasture, will give thanks to You forever; for all generations we will tell Your praise" (ibid. 79:13).** This expounds the end of verse 4, "and I will praise You with the harp, O God, my God." What the redeemed people will offer is thanksgiving. The proof lies in the second half of Asaf's verse, "we will give thanks to You," which comes right after "the flock of Your pasture."[2] It also resolves the opening contrast. *Knesses Yisrael* gave Hashem strength before her redemption, and after it she will give Him thanks forever.

[2] Mahari Kohen.