

Women's Institute of Torah  
*Hallel-Happiness, Harmony and Hope*

**1) Talmud Pesachim 117a:**

...והלל זה מי אמרו נביאים שביניהן תקנו להן לישראל שיהו אומרין אותו על כל פרק ופרק ועל כל צרה וצרה שלא תבא עליהן ולכשנגאלין אומרים אותו על גאולתן

...The Gemara asks: **And who said this *hallel*** mentioned in the mishna, [Psalms 113–118](#)? The Gemara answers: The **Prophets among them established this hallel for the Jewish people, that they should recite it on every appropriate occasion; and for every trouble, may it not come upon them,** they recite the supplications included in *hallel*. **When they are redeemed, they recite it over their redemption,** as *hallel* includes expressions of gratitude for the redemption.

תניא היה רבי מאיר אומר כל תושבחות האמורות בספר תהלים כלן דוד אמרן שנאמר כלו תפלות דוד בן ישי אל תיקרי כלו אלא כל אלו

It was taught in a *baraita* that **Rabbi Meir would say: All the praises stated in the book of Psalms were recited by David, as it is stated: “The prayers of David, son of Yishai, are ended [*kalu*]”** ([Psalms 72:20](#)). **Do not read *kalu*; rather, read *kol elu*, all of these,** which indicates that the entire book of Psalms consists of the prayers of King David.

הלל זה מי אמרו רבי יוסי אומר אלעזר בני אומר משה וישראל אמרוהו בשעה שעלו מן הים וחלוקין עליו חביריו לומר שדוד אמרו ונראין דבריו מדבריהן אפשר ישראל שחטו את פסחיהן ונטלו לולביהן ולא אמרו שירה

The Gemara clarifies: According to those who dispute Rabbi Meir's claim that the entire book of Psalms was composed by King David, **who recited this *hallel*? Rabbi Yosei says: My son Elazar says that Moses and the Jewish people recited it when they ascended from the sea. And his colleagues dispute him, saying that it was recited by King David. And the statement of my son, Elazar, appears more accurate than their statement.** The reason is as follows: Is it possible that the Jewish people slaughtered their Paschal lambs and took and waved their *lulavim* all those generations without reciting a song? Rather, the Jews must have recited a song each year. Since it is the custom to sing *hallel* nowadays, it is evidently an ancient institution.

...תנו רבנן הלל זה מי אמרו רבי אליעזר אומר משה וישראל אמרוהו בשעה שעמדו על הים הם אמרו לא לנו ה' לא לנו משיבה רוח הקודש ואמרה להן למעני למעני אעשה רבי יהודה אומר יהושע וישראל אמרוהו בשעה שעמדו עליהן מלכי כנען הם אמרו לא לנו ומשיבה וכו'

The Sages taught: This *hallel*, who initially recited it? **Rabbi Eliezer says: Moses and the Jewish people recited it when they stood by the sea. They said: “Not to us, God, not to us, but to Your name give glory”** ([Psalms 115:1](#)). The Divine Spirit responded and said to them: “For My own sake, for My own sake, will I do it” ([Isaiah 48:11](#)). **Rabbi Yehuda says: Joshua and the Jewish people recited it when they defeated the kings of Canaan who stood against them (see [Joshua 12:7–24](#)). They said: Not to us, and the Divine Spirit responded: For My own sake.**

רבי אלעזר המודעי אומר **דבורה וברק אמרוהו בשעה שעמד עליהם סיסרא** הם אמרו לא לנו ורוח הקודש משיבה ואומרת להם למעני למעני אעשה רבי אלעזר בן עזריה אומר חזקיה וסייעתו אמרוהו בשעה שעמד עליהם סנחריב



delivered my soul from death.” After mentioning death, the psalm describes the resurrection in the lands of the living.

חבלו של משיח דכתיב לא לנו ה' לא לנו ואמר רבי יוחנן לא לנו ה' לא לנו זו שעבוד מלכיות איכא דאמרי אמר רבי יוחנן לא לנו ה' לא לנו זו מלחמת גוג ומגוג

**The pangs of the Messiah, as it is written: “Not to us, God, not to us, but to Your name give glory” (Psalms 115:1). And Rabbi Yoḥanan said:** The verse “Not to us, God, not to us” and the entire psalm, including the verse “Why should the nations say, where now is their God?” (Psalms 115:2), is referring to the era of **the enslavement of the kingdoms** and the redemption of the Jewish people from their dominion. **Some say that Rabbi Yoḥanan said:** The verse “Not to us, God, not to us” is referring to **the war of Gog and Magog**, the catastrophes and wars that will befall the Jewish people in the end of days from which they will be delivered.

#### 4) תהלים קי"ג

1.Hallelujah! Praise, you servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord.

אֶהְלֵלוּ-יְהוָה | הִלְלוּ עַבְדֵי ה' הִלְלוּ אֶת-שֵׁם יְהוָה-ה':

2May the name of the Lord be blessed from now and to eternity.

בְּיְהוָה שֵׁם ה' מְבֹרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד-עוֹלָם:

3From the rising of the sun until its setting, the name of the Lord is praised.

גַּמְמִזְרַח-שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד-מְבֹאֵוּ מְהִלֵּל שֵׁם ה':

4The Lord is high over all nations; upon the heavens is His glory.

דָּרָם עַל-כָּל-גּוֹיִם | ה' עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ:

5Who is like the Lord, our God, Who dwells on high,

הַמִּי כֵה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַמְגִבִּיהַי לְשָׁבֶת:

6Who lowers [His eyes] to look in the heavens and the earth?

וְהַמְשַׁפִּילַי לְרָאוֹת בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ:

7He lifts the pauper up from the dust, from the dungheap He raises up the needy,

זַמְקִימִי מֵעַפְרָה וְגַל מֵאֲשָׁפֶת יְרִים אֶבְיוֹן:

8To seat [him] with princes, with the princes of His people.

חַלְהוֹשִׁיבִי עִם-נְדִיבִים עִם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ:

9He seats the barren woman of the house as a happy mother of children. Hallelujah!

טְמוֹשִׁיבִי | עֵקֶרֶת הַבַּיִת אִם-הַבָּנִים שִׂמְחָה הִלְלוּ-יְהוָה:

✓ This Perek can be divided into three sections. It starts out in the “heavens” and concludes with Hashem’s involvement in the particulars of this earth.

✓ The world consists of time, space, and matter, and Hashem transcends all of it.

#### 5) Peskita D’rav Kahana 20:

He seats the barren woman of the house as a happy mother of children. Hallelujah!” (Psalms 113:9) There are seven barren women: Sarah, Rivka, Rachel and Leah, Manoach’s wife, Chana and Zion...Another explanation. ‘He seats the barren woman’ this refers to Zion. “Sing you barren woman who has not borne...” (Isaiah 54:1) ‘a happy mother of children,’ “And you shall say to yourself, Who begot these for me...” (Isaiah 49:21)

## שמואל א': ב. ה-ה. 6)

שבעים בלחם נשפְּרו וירעבים חָדְלו עד־עֲקֹרָה יִלְדָה שְׂבֵעָה וְרַבַּת בָּנִים אֲמַלְלָה:

Men once sated must hire out for bread; Men once hungry hunger no more. While the barren woman bears seven, The mother of many is forlorn.

ה' מְמִית וּמְחַיֶּה מוֹרִיד שְׂאוֹל וְיַעַל:

The LORD deals death and gives life, Casts down into Sheol and raises up.

ה' מוֹרִישׁ וּמַעֲשִׂיר מְשַׁפֵּיל אֶף־מְרוֹמִים:

The LORD makes poor and makes rich; He casts down, He also lifts high.

מְקִים מַעֲפָר דָּל מֵאֲשַׁפֵּת יָרִים אֲבִיוֹן לְהוֹשִׁיב עִם־נְדִיבִים וְכֹסֵא כְבוֹד יִנְחֲלֵם כִּי לִיהוָה מְצַקִּי אֶרֶץ וְנִישַׁת עֲלֵיהֶם תִּבָּל:

He raises the poor from the dust, Lifts up the needy from the dunghill, Setting them with nobles, Granting them seats of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's; He has set the world upon them.

## 7) תהלים קי"ד

1.When Israel left Egypt, the house of Jacob [left] a people of a strange tongue,

אֲבָצְאֵת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם בַּיַּת יַעֲקֹב מֵעַם לַעֲזָ:

2Judah became His holy nation, Israel His dominion.

בְּהִיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְשֻׁלוֹתָיו:

3The sea saw and fled; the Jordan turned backward.

גַּהֲיִם רָאָה וַיִּגַּס הַיַּרְדֵּן יֹסֵב לְאַחֲזֹר:

4The mountains danced like rams, hills like young sheep.

יְהַרְרִים רְקִדּוֹ כְּאֵילִים גְּבְעוֹת כְּבְנֵי־צֶאֱן:

5What frightens you, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn backward?

הַמַּה־לָּךְ הַיָּם כִּי תִגּוֹס הַיַּרְדֵּן תֹּסֵב לְאַחֲזֹר:

6You mountains, that you dance like rams; you hills, like young sheep?

יְהַרְרִים תִּרְקִדּוֹ כְּאֵילִים גְּבְעוֹת כְּבְנֵי־צֶאֱן:

7From before the Master, Who created the earth, from before the God of Jacob,

זַמְלַפְנֵי אֲדוֹן חוּלֵי אֶרֶץ מְלַפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:

8Who transforms the rock into a pond of water, the flint into a fountain of water.

תַּהֲרֹפְכֵי הַצּוּר אֶגַם־מַיִם חֲלָמִישׁ לְמַעַיְנו־מַיִם:

**Most of the commentaries below are copied from the Artscroll Tanach Series Tehillim:**

## 8)Chasam Sofer, Tehillim 114, 1-2:

The first two verses allude to the three merits the Jewish people had, that made them worthy of redemption. They kept their Jewish names, their Hebrew language, and they guarded themselves from immorality.

## 9)Rashi, Tehillim 114:2

הִיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ שֶׁקִּפֵּץ נַחֲשׁוֹן לְתוֹךְ הַיָּם וְאָמַר אֲנִי אֲרַד תַּחֲלָה וְזֶהוּ שֶׁאָמַר הִיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ

**Yehudah became His holy nation** – Hashem singled out the tribe of Yehudah to be the family of royalty, and He sanctified them for this role when they displayed outstanding leadership at the Sea of Reeds. Led by their prince, Nachshon ben Aminadav, this tribe was the first to jump into the threatening waters.

### **10)Maharal:**

Because of Judah's devotion to Him, G-d entered into an intimate relationship with Israel. This relationship resembled matrimony, with G-d as the bridegroom and Israel as the bride. (The word קדשו, can also be translated as "His marriage partner," for the word קידושין also means betrothal. Since Yehudah is compared to the bride, the feminine form היתה is used.

### **11)Rabbi Jonathan Sacks:**

At the Red Sea the Israelites passed "between the pieces" (the waters, rather than the halves of animals) in a ratification of the covenant with Abraham. They passed from one domain to another, from being slaves – avadim – to Pharaoh to becoming servants — avadim – to G-d.

### **12)Midrash, Tehillim 114:3**

**The sea saw and fled** – What did the sea see that caused it to flee? Midrash Hallel says that it saw the upraised staff of Moshe, which had Hashem's name engraved upon it....According to another opinion, the sea saw Joseph's coffin, which reminded them of how that righteous man had transcended his nature to resist being seduced by Potiphar's wife. The sea concluded that if a frail human being could control his nature and flee from sin, then it, too, could restrain its natural flow and flee for the sake of Israel.

### **13)Rashi, Tehillim 114:3**

**The יי turned backward** – This too refers to the miracle of the splitting of the sea, for all the bodies of water in the world, including the Jordan – miraculously parted at that time.

### **14)Malbim, Tehillim, 114:3**

This describes the miracle that occurred in Joshua's time. The Jordan parted when Joshua led the Jews into Canaan. The splitting of this river differed from the splitting of the sea. The sea was a flat, relatively placid body of water, and G-d sent a wind to push back the water from the two sides; thus the sea seemed to flee in all directions. The Jordan, in contrast, was a flowing river. When G-d held back the current, the water piled up into a wall but only on one side. Therefore, the Psalmist here uses the term יסב, turned backward, to indicate that the current was diverted from its usual path.

### **15)Malbim, Tehillim 114:4**

**The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like young lambs** – mountains are very steep and sharp, and therefore are compared to rams which are large and have pointed horns. Since hills are low and shaped in soft curves and ridges, they are compared to young lambs which are small and tender.

### **16)Radak, Tehillim 114:7**

**Before the Lord's presence, did I, the earth tremble** - The earth, which includes both the mountains and the seas, answers the question posed in the preceding verses: the mountains shook, and the seas split because that was the will of G-d who is the Lord and Master over all.

### **17)Radak, Tehillim 114:8**

**Who turns rock into a pond of water** - This refers to the incident described in Exodus 17:6. When the Jews thirsted for water in the wilderness, G-d instructed Moses, "You shall smite the rock and water shall come out of it, so that the people may drink" (Exodus, 17:6).

### **18)Yalkut Me'am Loez, Tehillim 114:8**

**Who turns into rock a pond of water** – This is a description of Israel crossing the sea. At that time, G-d performed a double miracle. First, He transformed the pool of water into solid rock and dry land so that Israel could walk through the sea. When the Jews became thirsty during the crossing, Hashem instructed them to strike the frozen

walls of water, which resembled stone dikes. Miraculously, the walls which had been like flint, turned into deliciously sweet springs of water.

**19) Artscroll Tanach Series Tehillim, 114:8**

**The flint into a flowing fountain** – This alludes to the future, when “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of Hashem, as water covers the sea” (Isaiah 11:9)

**20) תהלים קט"ו**

**1**Not for us, O Lord, not for us, but for Your name give honor, for Your **kindness** and for Your **truthfulness**.

אַלֹא לָנוּ יְיָ-וְהֵאֱלֹהֵינוּ כִּי לְשִׁמְךָ תָּנֶה  
כְּבוֹד עַל-חֲסִדְךָ עַל-אֱמֻנָתְךָ:

**2**Why should the nations say, "Where is your God now?"

בְּלִמָּה יֹאמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם אֵי-הוּא אֱלֹהֵי-הֵם:

**3**But our God is in heaven; whatever He wishes, He does.

גּוֹאֲלֵה-יְנוּ בַשָּׁמַיִם כֹּל אֲשֶׁר-חָפֵץ עָשָׂה:

**4**Their idols are silver and gold, the handiwork of man.

בַּעֲצֵבֵיהֶם כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב מְעֵשֶׂה יְדֵי אָדָם:

**5**They have a mouth but they do not speak; they have eyes but they do not see.

בִּפְהֵם לֵהֵם וְלֹא יְדַבְּרוּ עֵינֵיהֶם לֵהֵם וְלֹא יִרְאוּ:

**6**They have ears but they do not hear; they have a nose but they do not smell.

וְאָזְנֵיהֶם לֵהֵם וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אֶף לֵהֵם וְלֹא יִרְחִוּ:

**7**Their hands-but they do not feel; their feet-but they do not walk; they do not murmur with their throat.

יְדֵיהֶם | וְלֹא יִמְשֹׁן הַגְּלִיָּהֶם וְלֹא יִהְלְכוּ  
לֹא-יִהְיוּ בְּגִרוֹנָם:

**8**Like them shall be those who make them, all who trust in them.

מַכְמוֹהֶם יִהְיוּ עֹשֵׂיהֶם כֹּל אֲשֶׁר-בָּטְחוּ  
בָהֶם:

**9**Israel, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield.

יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּטַח בְּיְיָ-הוֹי עֲזָרָם וּמִגְדָּנָם  
הוּא:

**10**House of Aaron, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield.

בֵּית אַהֲרֹן בָּטְחוּ בְיְיָ-הוֹי עֲזָרָם וּמִגְדָּנָם  
הוּא:

**11**Those who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield.

יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ-הוֹי בָטְחוּ בְיְיָ-הוֹי עֲזָרָם  
וּמִגְדָּנָם הוּא:

**12**The Lord, Who remembered us, will bless; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron.

יְיָ-הוֹי זָכְרָנוּ יְבָרֵךְ יִבְרַךְ אֶת-בֵּית  
יִשְׂרָאֵל יְבָרֵךְ אֶת-בֵּית אַהֲרֹן:

**13**He will bless those who fear the Lord, the small together with the great.

יְבָרֵךְ יִרְאֵי יְיָ-הוֹי הַקְּטָנִים עִם-  
הַגְּדֹלִים:

**14**May the Lord add upon you, upon you and upon your children.

יַיְסֹף יְיָ-וְהוֹי עֲלֵיכֶם עַל-בְּנֵיכֶם  
וְעַל-בְּנֵיכֶם:

**15**Blessed are you to the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

טַבְרוּכִים אַתֶּם לַיהוָה לַעֲשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם  
וָאָרֶץ:

**16**The heavens are heavens of the Lord, but the earth He gave to the children of men.

טַהֲשָׁמַיִם שָׁמַיִם לַיהוָה וְהָאָרֶץ נָתַן  
לְבְנֵי-אָדָם:

**17**Neither will the dead praise God, nor all those who descend to the grave.

יֵלֵא-הַמֵּתִים יְהַלְלוּ-הָ וְלֹא כָל-יֹרְדֵי  
דוּמָה:

**18**But we shall bless God from now until everlasting, Hallelujah!

יְהַאֲנְחֵנוּ | נְבָרַךְ יְיָ מִעַתָּה וְעַד-עוֹלָם  
הַלְלוּ-הָ:

### **21) Artscroll Tanach Series, Tehillim 115:3**

Why should the nations say “Where now (or, please) is their G-d?” The nations admit that G-d performed miracles for Israel in the past, but they claim that now He has withdrawn into His heavenly abode and abandoned them (Maharam Arma’ah).

*Chasam Sofer* explains that the question concerning G-d’s whereabouts is all too often a rhetorical one, meant to mock us. However, as the nations become disillusioned with their idols, they will earnestly ask us to please tell them about G-d. (Hence, the Psalmist laments that it will be a pity if we cannot explain to them why G-d has hidden His face.)

The repetition of להם, *for them* throughout this sequence would be unnecessary if the word is a reference to the idols. Rather, להם, refers to the men that made these idols. They, (the idol worshippers) are deaf to the truth and to the admonitions to change their ways. They have a nose but cannot smell. The creator fashioned Adam in his own image, and blew the breath of life into his nostrils. With every breath of fresh air he inhales, man reminds himself that G-d is his Creator, and that his life is in G-d’s hands. The idolater has a nose which is identical to the nose of the believer. Yet, the idolater fails to sense the presence and the kindness of the Creator with every breath he takes.

### **22) Rashi, Tehillim 115:11**

Those who fear the Lord: These are the converts.

### **23) Artscroll Tanach Series, Tehillim 115:17**

The people who fail to recognize G-d’s omnipresence and influence over the world and resemble the *dead*, who are insensitive to all external stimuli and who are oblivious to reality (Rabbi Azariah Figo).

### **24) Artscroll Tanach Series, Tehillim 115:18**

**But we will praise Hashem, now and forever** - Beis Avraham comments that a person’s prayers are often disturbed by the memories of the many sins he has committed, causing him to wonder how he can pray to Hashem. Thus does the Evil Inclination seek to depress man’s spirits, for as long as someone is depressed, he cannot raise himself to the higher spiritual levels. Therefore, someone who is beset by thoughts of his deficiencies should resolve to begin anew and to forget his earlier failures. This is the Psalmists call, We will praise Hashem, henceforth and forever; even though we have failed previously, **we are determined to make a fresh start.**