



Traffic Jam of Miracles

By Kobi Oz

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The miracle is stuck in a traffic jam of miracles
 And we are just trying and running away
 Let's pull over, one by one
 And be brothers for a moment
 We're not alone. It's nice
 Together we keep moving
 Lord, who is like unto you among the silent
 ones?
 And we too have already forgotten how to
 pray
 May there be abundant peace from heaven
 and relief and liberation
 Let there be life and plenty and deliverance
 and forgiveness and atonement

1

הַנִּסְתָּ תִּקְוֶעַ בְּפִקֵּק תִּנְוֶעָה שֶׁל נִסִּים
 וְאַנְחֵנוּ רַק נִסִּים וּמִנִּסִּים
 בַּצַּד אֶחָד אֶחָד בּוֹאוּ נַעֲצֹר
 נְהִיָּה פְתָאִים אֶחָיִם
 אֲנַחְנוּ לֹא לְבַד זֶה נִחְמָד
 בְּיַחַד מִמְּשִׁיכִים
 אֱלֹהִים מִי כְמוֹךָ בְּאֱלֹמִים
 וְגַם אֲנַחְנוּ כְּבָר שְׂכַחְנוּ אֵיךְ מִתְפַּלְלִים
 וְרוּחַ יְיָ שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא
 וְהַצֵּלָה
 יְיָה חַיִּים וְשָׁבַע וְשִׁיזְבָּא וְסְלִיחָה
 וְכִפְרָה

2

The miracle is stuck in a traffic jam of miracles
 The pauper and the sick have pockets no
 more
 Even if we are at the end of our strength
 Let's look at the destitute and give alms
 Even if the sign is weak
 Let's not give up and let's give through our
 deeds
 Lord, who is like unto you among the silent
 ones?
 And we too have already forgotten how to
 pray
 May there be abundant peace from heaven
 and relief and liberation
 Let there be life and plenty and deliverance
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הַנִּסְתָּ תִּקְוֶעַ בְּפִקֵּק תִּנְוֶעָה שֶׁל נִסִּים
 לְאֲבִיוֹן וּלְחֹלָה כְּבָר אֵין כִּיִּסִּים
 גַּם אִם כַּחֲנוּ תֵשׁ
 נְבִיט בְּרֶשׁ וּנְדָבוֹת נְשִׁים
 גַּם אִם הָאוֹת חֲלָשׁ
 לֹא נֹאמֵר נוֹאֲשׁ נִתֵּן בְּמַעֲשִׂים
 אֱלֹהִים מִי כְמוֹךָ בְּאֱלֹמִים
 וְגַם אֲנַחְנוּ כְּבָר שְׂכַחְנוּ אֵיךְ מִתְפַּלְלִים
 וְרוּחַ יְיָ שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא
 וְהַצֵּלָה
 יְיָה חַיִּים וְשָׁבַע וְשִׁיזְבָּא וּרְפוּאָה
 וְסְלִיחָה וְכִפְרָה

3

The miracle is stuck in a traffic jam of miracles
 And even death has not stopped imposing
 taxes
 All, all of us are here at Mount Nevo
 Watching from a distance
 All all all of us will come, come, we'll come

הַנִּסְתָּ תִּקְוֶעַ בְּפִקֵּק תִּנְוֶעָה שֶׁל נִסִּים
 וְגַם הַמָּוֹת לֹא חֲדַל לְהִטִּיל מִסִּים
 קוּ קוּ כָּלִם כְּבָר פַּה בְּהַר נְבוֹ
 חוֹזִים לְמִרְחוּק
 קוּ קוּ כָּלְנוּ נְבוֹא בּוֹא נְבוֹא

From courage will sweetness rise
Lord, who is like unto you among the silent
ones?

And we too have already forgotten how to
pray

May there be abundant peace from heaven
and relief and liberation

Let there be life and plenty and deliverance
and forgiveness and atonement

4

מֵעַז יֵצֵא מְתוֹק
אֱלֹהִים מִי כְמוֹן בְּאֱלֹמִים

וְגַם אֲנַחְנוּ כְּבָר שְׂכַחְנוּ אֵיךְ מִתְפַּלְלִים
וְרוּחַ יְהוָה שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא
וְהַצְלָה
יְהוָה חַיִּים וְשָׁבַע וְשִׁיזְבָּא וּרְפוּאָה
וְסִלִּיחָה וְכַפְרָה וְיִשׁוּעָה וְנַחֲמָה וְגִאֲלָה.

1. Babylonian Talmud Gittin 52b. This phrase is an ironic re-working of the praise “Who is like you among the Gods?” When Titus defiled the Holy of Holies in the Temple without any seeming response from the heavens, the house of Rabbi Ishmael changed “elim – gods” to “elmim – mute”. Some interpret this as a critique of divine silence, and others see it as praise of divine restraint.
2. These lines come from the Kaddish recited over the death of a loved one. The Ashkenazi version of this prayer does not include the words forgiveness and atonement. Kobi went with the Sephardi version...
3. Mount Nevo is the place from which Moses looked out over the Promised Land into which he was forbidden to enter.
4. The phrase comes from Samson, Judges Chapter 14, when discovering a honey-combed bee-hive in the carcass of a lion.

There would seem to be a two-way lack of communication in this song: We have forgotten how to pray, and God is mute.

- Is this a fair interpretation of the song?
- Is this divine non-communication a situation that you identify with?

Possibly one of the most tragic images of the Bible is of Moses standing on Mount Nevo, looking at the Promised Land he has worked so hard to reach, knowing that he himself will never arrive. A poignant blend of achievement and failure.

- What do you think Kobi Oz is suggesting when he says that we are all standing at Mount Nevo?
- What are we looking out at?
- Where have we not yet reached?
- If this were a comment on the State of Israel, how would you relate to it?

The song speaks of injustice, of God’s silence, and of poverty. How would you say the music – its rhythm, its harmonies, etc – is commenting on the words?

How does the image of a traffic jam of miracles strike you? Encouraging? Frustrating? Optimistic? Disappointing?