

“You, God, Who Live Next Door:” Learning the *Mahzor* Through Poetry

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1. Rainer Maria Rilke (1875 – 1926), *Book of Hours* I.6

Translation by Joanna Macy and Anita Barrows

You, God, who live next door—
If at times, through the long night, I trouble you
with my urgent knocking—
this is why: I hear you breathe so seldom.
I know you're all alone in that room.
If you should be thirsty, there's no one
to get you a glass of water.
I wait listening, always. Just give me a sign!
I'm right here.

As it happens, the wall between us
is very thin. Why wouldn't a cry
from one of us
break it down? It would crumble
easily,

it would barely make a sound...

2. “Listen to our Voice,” High Holiday and Penitential Liturgy (*Selihot*)

Listen to our voice, Lord our God,
Spare us and have compassion on us and in
compassion and favor, accept our prayer.
Turn us back, oh Lord, to You, and we will
return.
Renew our days as of old.
Do not cast us away from You,
and do not take Your holy spirit from us.

2. "שמע קולנו", סדר סליחות

שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ
חַוֵּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ
וְקַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרָצוֹן
אֶת תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ:
הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנִשׁוּבָה
חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם:
אֵל תִּשְׁלִיכֵנוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ
וְרוּחַ קִדְשְׁךָ אֵל תִּקַּח מִמֶּנּוּ:

Do not cast us away in old age;
when our strength is gone, do not desert us.
Do not desert us, Lord, our God,
do not be distant from us.
Give us a sign of good things,
and those who hate us shall see it and be
ashamed,
for You, Lord, will help us and console us.
Hear our speech, Lord, consider our thoughts.
May the words of our mouths and the
meditations of our hearts find favor before
You, Lord, our Rock and Redeemer.
For it is You, Lord, that we have longed for;
You shall answer us, Lord our God.

אל תשליכנו לעת זקנה
כְּכֹלוֹת כֹּחֵנוּ אל תַּעֲזֹבֵנוּ:
אל תַּעֲזֹבֵנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ.
אל תִּרְחַק מִמֶּנּוּ:
עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ אוֹת לְטוֹבָה
וְיֵרְאוּ שׂוֹנְאֵינוּ
וַיִּבְשׁוּ
כִּי אַתָּה ה' עֲזָרְתָנוּ וְנִחַמְתָּנוּ:
אֲמַרְיֵנוּ הַאֲזִינָה ה' בִּינָה הִגִּיגֵנוּ:
יְהִי לְרָצוֹן אֲמַרֵי פִינוּ
וְהִגִּיֹן לִבֵּנוּ לִפְנֶיךָ
ה' צוּרֵנוּ וְגֹאֲלֵנוּ:
כִּי לָךְ ה' הוֹסַלְנוּ
אַתָּה תַּעֲנֶה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ:

3. Ashkenazi Siddur, Weekday Amidah, "Hear our Prayer"

Hear our voice, Lord our God, pity us and
have mercy on us and receive in mercy and
favor our prayer,
For You are a God Who hears prayer and
supplication. From Your Face, our King, do
not turn us away empty handed,
for You hear the prayers of Your people
Israel in mercy.
Blessed are You, O Lord, Who hears prayer.

3. סידור אשכנז, ימי חול, עמידה, שומע תפילה

שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ. ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ.
וְקַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרָצוֹן
אֶת תַּפִּלָּתֵנוּ.
כִּי אֵל שׁוֹמֵעַ תַּפִּלוֹת וְתַחֲנוּגִים אַתָּה.
וּמִלִּפְנֶיךָ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ רִיקָם אֵל תִּשְׁיָבֵנוּ:
כִּי אַתָּה שׁוֹמֵעַ תַּפִּלַּת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּרַחֲמִים.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', שׁוֹמֵעַ תַּפִּלָּה:

4. Song of Songs 5:2

I was asleep, But my heart was wakeful. Hark, my
beloved knocks! "Let me in, my own, My darling,
my faultless dove! For my head is drenched with
dew, My locks with the damp of night."

4. שיר השירים ה:ב

אֲנִי יָשְׁנָה וְלִבִּי עָרָקוֹל | דֹּדִי דוֹפֵק
פֶּתַח־לִי אַחֲתִי רַעֲיָתִי יוֹנָתִי תַמָּתִי
שְׂרָאשִׁי נִמְלֵא-טֵל קִנְצוֹתֵי רִסְסֵי
לֵילָה: