ה’ אלהי האלהים, Adonai Elohē Ha’elohim  
 בקשה לאמרו בזמן המגפה, A petition to say during a time of plague

**Introduction**

This prayer was written by Simḥa Yitsḥaḳ Lutski, on the occasion of some unidentified epidemic during the eighteenth century; perhaps further research will determine exactly what epidemic. The author prays in the merit of the thirteen attributes of mercy of Exodus 33:6–7, a common element of petitionary liturgy among both Karaites and Rabbanites. He also references two biblical stories of plagues, one in the aftermath of Korah’s rebellion and one at the time of King David, both of which ended when God finally became reconciled with the people. The genre of long petitionary prayers in prose goes back at least to ninth-century Iraq, and the additional feature of rhyme goes back at least to Solomon ibn Gabirol in eleventh-century Spain.

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 בקשה לאמרו בזמן המגפה, A petition to say during a time of plague

**Category:** Liturgy

**Sub-Category:** Prayers in rhymed prose

**Genre:** Prayer for a time of plague

**Composer:** Simḥa Yitsḥaḳ Lutski

**Date of Author:** 1716-1761

**Location:** Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; Crimea

**Liturgical Slot:** Unknown

**Source:** Gözleve Siddur (1836), Volume 1 part 1, folio 79a–b. (The Psalms that follow the prayer start on the bottom of 79b, and continue through 80b); Vilna Volume (1891), volume 1, p 440.

**Note:** Certain changes in the vocalization, to accord with consistent grammar and to assist the reader. Specifically, the original was inconsistent about inclusion of dagesh, and this has been made consistent here; the original used ḳamets (intended as ḳamets ḳatan) in certain monosyllables, and they have been changed here to ḥolem.

**Heading in Vilna:** A beautiful petition, one of the compositions of Rabbi Simḥa Yitsḥaḳ, the great sage, the teacher, the great divine [=philosophical/kabbalistic] author, known as “the Young Universe”, to recite at times of plague and terrible illnesses, God forbid.

בקשה נאה מחבורי כמה"ר שמחה יצחק החכם המובהק המלמד המחבר הגדול האלהי המכנה עולם צעיר לאמרו בזמן המגפה וחלאים רעים ב"מ

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| יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וַאֲדֹנֵי הָאֲדֹנִים,  מֹשֵׁל בָּעֶלְיוֹנִים וְשַׁלִּיט בַּתַּחְתּוֹנִים,  הַנֹּתֵן לַיָּעֵף כֹּחַ וְעָצְמָה לְאֵין אֹנִים,  זְכוֹר לָנוּ הַיּוֹם וּבְכָל יוֹם וָיוֹם בְּרִית אֲבֹתֵינוּ הַקַּדְמֹנִים,  וּבְרִית שְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה מִדּוֹת רַחֲמִים וְתַחֲנוּנִים,  הַכְּתוּבִים בְּתוֹרָתֶךָ עַל יְדֵי צִיר אֱמוּנִים. | Adonai elohē ha’elohim va’adonē ha’adonim  Moshel ba‘elyonim veshallit battaḥtonim  Hannoten layya‘ef kowaḥ ve‘otsma le’en onim  Zechor lanu hayyom uvchol yom vayom berit avotenu haḳḳadmonim  Uvrit shelosh ‘esre middot raḥamim vetaḥanunim  Hakketuvim betoratecha ‘al yedē tsir emunim. |
| O Adonai, God of gods and Lord of lords,  Who rules over the high heavens, and has dominion down below,  Who gives strength to the weary, and might to the powerless,  Remember for us, today and every day, the covenant of our ancient ancestors,  And the covenant of the thirteen attributes of mercy and of supplication,  Which are written in your Torah, by [Moses] the faithful messenger. | |
| יְהֹוָ֣ה ׀ יְהֹוָ֔ה אֵ֥ל רַח֖וּם וְחַנּ֑וּן אֶ֥רֶךְ אַפַּ֖יִם וְרַב־חֶ֥סֶד וֶאֱמֶֽת׃ נֹצֵ֥ר‏ חֶ֙סֶד֙ לָאֲלָפִ֔ים נֹשֵׂ֥א עָוֺ֛ן וָפֶ֖שַׁע וְחַטָּאָ֑ה  וְנַקֵּה֙ לֹ֣א יְנַקֶּ֔ה פֹּקֵ֣ד ׀ עֲוֺ֣ן אָב֗וֹת עַל־בָּנִים֙ וְעַל־בְּנֵ֣י בָנִ֔ים עַל־שִׁלֵּשִׁ֖ים וְעַל־רִבֵּעִֽים׃ (שמות לג:ו-ז) | Adonai adonai el raḥum veḥannun,  erech appayim verav ḥesed ve’emet.  Notser ḥesed la’alafim nosē ‘avon vafesha‘ veḥatta’a,  venaḳḳē lo yenaḳḳē, poḳed ‘avon avot ‘al banim ve‘al benē vanim ‘al shilleshim ve‘al ribbe‘im. |
| Adonai, Adonai, God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy unto the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and unto the fourth generation. (Exodus 33:6–7) | |
| הָאֵל הַנֶּאֱמָן,  הָאָב הָרַחֲמָן,  הָרֹפֵא לְכָל תַּחֲלוּאֵי עֲבָדָיו,  וּמְחַבֵּשׁ לְמַכְאוֹבוֹת יְדִידָיו,  הַגֹּאֵל מִשַּׁחַת חַיַּת חֲסִידָיו,  וּמַצִּיל מִמָּוֶת נֶפֶשׁ מְרוּדָיו. | Ha’el hanne’eman  Ha’av haraḥaman  Harofē lechol taḥalu’ē ‘avadav  Umḥabbesh lemach’ovot yedidav  Haggo’el mish-shaḥat ḥayyat ḥasidav  Umats-tsil mimmavet nefesh merudav. |
| Faithful God,  Merciful father,  Who heals all the sicknesses of his servants,  And bandages the pains of those he loves,  Who redeems from the grave the life of his pious people,  And rescues from death the life of his impoverished people. | |
| רִבּוֹן הָעוֹלָמִים,  אַב הָרַחֲמִים,  הִנֵּה אֲנַחְנוּ עֲבָדֶיךָ,  בְּנֵי שְׁלֹשֶׁת יְדִידֶיךָ,  בָּאנוּ בִתְפִלָּה וַעֲתִירָה נֶגְדֶּךָ,  לְבַקֵּשׁ רַחֲמִים וַחֲנִינָה מִלִּפְנֵי כִסֵּא כְבוֹדֶךָ,  שֶׁיִּגֹּלוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ עַל פִּי מִדּוֹתֶיךָ,  וְתִתְנַהֵג עִמָּנוּ בְּמִדַּת הַחֶסֶד וְהָרַחֲמִים כְּפִי חֹק אֱלָהוּתֶךָ,  וְהָסֵר מֵעָלֵינוּ מִדַּת הַדִּין הַמְתוּחָה עָלֵינוּ בַּעֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ, וְתַעְצֹר הַדֶּבֶר וְהַמַּגֵּפָה מֵעָלֵינוּ וּמֵעַל בָּתֵּינוּ.  אָמֵן כֵּן יְהִי רָצוֹן. | Ribbon ha‘olamim  Av haraḥamim  Hinnē anaḥnu ‘avadecha  Benē sheloshet yedidecha  Banu bitfilla va‘atira neḡdecha  Levaḳḳesh raḥamim vaḥanina millifnē chissē chevodecha  Sheyyiggolu raḥamecha ‘al pi middotecha  Vetitnaheḡ ‘immanu bemiddat haḥesed veharaḥamim kefi ḥoḳ elahutecha  Vehaser me‘alenu middat haddin hametuḥa ‘alenu ba‘avonotenu  Veta‘tsor haddever vehammaggefa me‘alenu ume‘al battenu.  Amen ken yehi ratson. |
| Master of worlds,  Father of mercy,  Behold, we are your servants,  Children of your three beloved [patriarchs].  We come in prayer and supplication to you,  To beg for mercy and kindness in front of the throne of your Glory –  That your mercy should prevail over your other qualities,  And that you behave toward us using the quality of kindness and mercy, in accordance with the regular practice of your godliness.  And remove from us the quality of stern judgment, which is stretched out over us, due to our sins,  And stop the pestilence and plague from us and from our households!  Amen. Thus may it be your will. | |
| מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים חָנֵּנוּ וְרַחֲמֵנוּ  כַּאֲשֶׁר רִחַמְתָּ עַל אֲבֹתֵינוּ  בִּזְמַן מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּינוּ עָלָיו הַשָּׁלוֹם כַּאֲשֶׁר יָצָא הַקֶּצֶף מִלְּפָנֶיךָ  וְצִוִּיתָ לְאַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן לְהַקְטִיר קְטֹרֶת וּלְכַפֵּר בַּעֲדָם  כַּאֲשֶׁר כָּתוּב בְּתוֹרָתֶךָ. | Melech malchē hammelachim ḥonnenu veraḥamenu  Ka’asher riḥamta ‘al avotenu  Bizman moshē rabbenu ‘alav hash-shalom ka’asher yatsa haḳḳetsef millefanecha  Vetsivvita le’aharon hakkohen lehaḳtir ḳetoret ulchapper ba‘adam  Ka’asher katuv betoratecha |
| O king who reigns over kings, show us kindness and mercy,  Just as you showed mercy to our ancestors  At the time of Moses our Teacher, peace be upon him, when rage issued from you,  And you commanded Aaron the Priest to burn incense and atone for them,  As written in your Torah: | |
| וַיֹּ֨אמֶר מֹשֶׁ֜ה אֶֽל־אַהֲרֹ֗ן קַ֣ח אֶת־הַ֠מַּחְתָּה וְתֶן־עָלֶ֨יהָ אֵ֜שׁ מֵעַ֤ל הַמִּזְבֵּ֨חַ֙ וְשִׂ֣ים קְטֹ֔רֶת וְהוֹלֵ֧ךְ מְהֵרָ֛ה אֶל־הָֽעֵדָ֖ה וְכַפֵּ֣ר עֲלֵיהֶ֑ם כִּֽי־יָצָ֥א הַקֶּ֛צֶף מִלִּפְנֵ֥י יְהֹוָ֖ה הֵחֵ֥ל הַנָּֽגֶף׃ וַיִּקַּ֨ח אַֽהֲרֹ֜ן כַּֽאֲשֶׁ֣ר ׀ דִּבֶּ֣ר מֹשֶׁ֗ה וַיָּ֨רָץ֙ אֶל־תּ֣וֹךְ הַקָּהָ֔ל וְהִנֵּ֛ה הֵחֵ֥ל הַנֶּ֖גֶף בָּעָ֑ם וַיִּתֵּן֙ אֶֽת־הַקְּטֹ֔רֶת וַיְכַפֵּ֖ר עַל־הָעָֽם׃ וַיַּֽעֲמֹ֥ד בֵּֽין־הַמֵּתִ֖ים וּבֵ֣ין הַֽחַיִּ֑ים וַתֵּֽעָצַ֖ר הַמַּגֵּפָֽה׃ (במדבר טז:יא-יג) | Vayyomer moshē el aharon ḳaḥ et hammaḥta veten ‘aleha esh me‘al hammizbeyaḥ vesim ḳetoret veholech mehera el ha‘eda vechapper ‘alehem, ki yatsa haḳḳetsef millifnē adonai heḥel hannaḡef. Vayyiḳḳaḥ aharon ka’asher dibber moshē vayyarots el toch haḳḳahal vehinnē heḥel hanneḡef ba‘am, vayyitten et haḳḳetoret vaichapper ‘al ha‘am.Vayya‘amod ben hammetim uven haḥayyim, vatte‘atsar hammaggefa. |
| And Moses said unto Aaron: “Take your fire-pan, and put fire in it from the altar, and lay incense on it, and carry it quickly to the congregation, and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone forth from Adonai: the plague has begun.” And Aaron took as Moses spoke, and he ran into the midst of the assembly; and, behold, the plague had begun among the people; and he put on the incense, and made atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed. (Numbers 16:11-13) | |
| מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים תִּכּוֹן תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ קְטֹרֶת לְפָנֶיךָ, וְהָשֵׁךְ מִמֶּנּוּ קִצְפְּךָ וַחֲרוֹנֶךָ.  שׁוּב מֵחֲרוֹן אַפֶּךָ וְהִנָּחֵם עַל הָרָעָה לְעַמֶּךָ.  שׁוּב לְמַעַן עֲבָדֶיךָ שִׁבְטֵי נַחֲלָתֶךָ.  הֲשִׁיבֵנוּ יְהֹוָה אֵלֶיךָ וְנָשׁוּבָה חַדֵּשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם.  וְסָלַחְתָּ לַעֲוֹנֵנוּ וּלְחַטָּאתֵנוּ וּנְחַלְתָּנוּ. | Melech malchē hammelachim tikkon tefillatenu ḳetoret lefanecha,  Vehashech mimmennu ḳitspecha vaḥaronecha.  Shuv meḥaron appecha vehinnaḥem ‘al hara‘a le‘ammecha.  Shuv lema‘an ‘avadecha shivtē naḥalatecha.  Hashivenu adonai elecha venashuva, ḥaddesh yamenu keḳedem.  Vesalaḥta la‘avonenu ulḥattatenu unḥaltanu. |
| O king who reigns over kings, let our prayer be set forth before you as incense,  And calm down your anger and rage, away from us.  Turn from your fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against your people.  Turn for your servants’ sake, the tribes of your inheritance.  Turn us unto your, O Adonai, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old.  And pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance. | |
| מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים חוּסָה וַחֲמוֹל עָלֵינוּ,  כַּאֲשֶׁר חַסְתָּ וְחָמַלְתָּ עַל אֲבֹתֵינוּ  בִּזְמַן דָּוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ עָלָיו הַשָּׁלוֹם כְּשֶׁהָיָה הַדֶּבֶר בָּהֶם וְנִחַמְתָּ עַל הָרָעָה  כַּאֲשֶׁר כָּתוּב בְּדִבְרֵי נְבִיאֶיךָ: | Melech malchē hammelachim ḥusa vaḥamol ‘alenu,  Ka’asher ḥasta veḥamalta ‘al avotenu  Bizman david hammelech ‘alav hash-shalom keshehaya haddever bahem veniḥamta ‘al hara‘a  Ka’asher katuv bedivrē nevi’echa. |
| O king who reigns over kings, have pity and compassion for us,  Just as you had pity and compassion for our ancestors  At the time of King David, peace be upon him, when they were suffering pestilence;  You were sorry for the evil,  As is written in the words of your prophet: | |
| וַיִּשְׁלַח֩ הָֽאֱלֹהִ֨ים ׀ מַלְאָ֥ךְ ׀ לִֽירוּשָׁלִַם֮ לְהַשְׁחִיתָהּ֒ וּכְהַשְׁחִ֗ית רָאָ֤ה יְהֹוָה֙ וַיִּנָּ֣חֶם עַל־הָֽרָעָ֔ה וַיֹּ֨אמֶר לַמַּלְאָ֤ךְ הַמַּשְׁחִית֙ רַ֔ב עַתָּ֖ה הֶ֣רֶף יָדֶ֑ךָ וּמַלְאַ֤ךְ יְהֹוָה֙ עֹמֵ֔ד עִם־גֹּ֖רֶן אָרְנָ֥ן הַיְבוּסִֽי׃ (דברי הימים א כא:טו) וַיִּבֶן֩ שָׁ֨ם דָּוִ֤יד מִזְבֵּ֨חַ֙ לַֽיהֹוָ֔ה וַיַּ֥עַל עֹל֖וֹת וּשְׁלָמִ֑ים וַיִּקְרָא֙ אֶל־יְהֹוָ֔ה וַֽיַּעֲנֵ֤הוּ בָאֵשׁ֙ מִן־הַשָּׁמַ֔יִם עַ֖ל מִזְבַּ֥ח הָֽעֹלָֽה׃ וַיֹּ֤אמֶר יְהֹוָה֙ לַמַּלְאָ֔ךְ וַיָּ֥שֶׁב חַרְבּ֖וֹ אֶל־נְדָנָֽהּ׃ (דברי הימים א כא:כו-כז) | Vayyishlaḥ ha’elohim mal’ach lirushalayim lehash’ḥitah, uch’hash’ḥit ra’a adonai vayyinnaḥem ‘al hara‘a vayyomer lammal’ach hammash’ḥit, rav, ‘atta heref yadecha, umal’ach adonai ‘omed ‘im goren ornan haivusi. Vayyiven sham david mizbeyaḥ vayya‘al ‘olot ushlamim, vayyiḳra el adonai vayya‘anehu va’esh min hash-shamayim ‘al mizbaḥ ha‘ola. Vayyomer adonai lammal’ach vayyashev ḥarbo el nedanah. |
| And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it; and as he was about to destroy, Adonai beheld, and he was sorry for the evil, and said to the destroying angel: ‘It is enough; now stay your hand.’ And Adonai’s angel was standing by the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. (I Chronicles 21:15) And David built there an altar unto Adonai, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and called upon Adonai; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt-offering. And Adonai commanded the angel; and he put up his sword back into the sheath thereof. (I Chronicles 21:25-26) | |
| מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים תִּפֹּל נָא לְפָנֶיךָ תְּחִנָּתֵנוּ,  וְאַל תְּשִׁיבֵנוּ בֹשִׁים וְנִכְלָמִים מִשְּׁאֵלָתֵנוּ,  וּלְמַעַן שִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל וְהַקָּדוֹשׁ רְצֵנוּ וְחָנֵּנוּ וַעֲנֵנוּ,  כִּי עָלֶיךָ תְּלוּיוֹת עֵינֵינוּ,  וּבָיָֽדְךָ הִפְקַדְנוּ אֶת רוּחֵנוּ,  וּפְדֵה אֹתָנוּ יְהֹוָה אֱלהֵינוּ מִצָּרָתֵנוּ,  וְתַעְצֹר הַדֶּבֶר וְהַמַּגֵּפָה וְהַמַּשְׁחִית מֵעָלֵינוּ וּמֵעַל בָּתֵּינוּ,  חָנֵּנוּ יְהֹוָה חָנֵּנוּ,  עֲנֵנוּ יְהֹוָה עֲנֵנוּ,  רְפָאֵנוּ יְהֹוָה וְנֵרָפֵא הוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ וְנִוָּשֵׁעָה כִּי תְהִלָּתֵנוּ אָתָּה. | Melech malche hammelachim tippol na lefanecha teḥinnatenu,  Ve’al teshivenu voshim venichlamim mish-she’elatenu,  Ulma‘an shimcha haggadol vehaḳḳadosh retsenu veḥonnenu va‘anenu,  Ki ‘alecha teluyot ‘enenu,  Uvyadecha hifḳadnu et ruḥenu,  Ufdē otanu adonai elohenu mits-tsaratenu,  Veta‘tsor haddever vehammaggefa vehammashḥit me‘alenu ume‘al battenu,  Ḥonnenu adonai ḥonnenu,  ‘Anenu adonai ‘anenu,  Refa’enu adonai venerafē hoshi‘enu venivvashe‘a ki tehillatenu atta. |
| O king who reigns over kings, may our supplication reach your presence.  Do not send us back from our petition in shame and embarrassment.  For the sake of your great, holy name, show us favor, show us kindness, and answer us,  Since our eyes are lifted up to you.  Redeem us, O Adonai our God, from our trouble,  And stop the pestilence, the plague, and the destruction, from us and from our houses.  Show us kindness, Adonai, show us kindness!  Answer us, Adonai, answer us!  Heal us, O Adonai, and we shall be healed; rescue us, and we shall be rescue; for you are our praise. | |
| מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים קַיֵּם עָלֵינוּ מִקְרָאוֹת הַכְּתוּבוֹת בְּתוֹרָתֶךָ.  וַיֹּאמֶר֩ אִם־שָׁמ֨וֹעַ תִּשְׁמַ֜ע לְק֣וֹל ׀ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֗יךָ וְהַיָּשָׁ֤ר בְּעֵינָיו֙ תַּֽעֲשֶׂ֔ה וְהַֽאֲזַנְתָּ֙ לְמִצְוֺתָ֔יו וְשָֽׁמַרְתָּ֖ כָּל־חֻקָּ֑יו כָּֽל־הַמַּחֲלָ֞ה אֲשֶׁר־שַׂ֤מְתִּי בְמִצְרַ֨יִם֙ לֹֽא־אָשִׂ֣ים עָלֶ֔יךָ כִּ֛י אֲנִ֥י יְהֹוָ֖ה רֹֽפְאֶֽךָ׃ (שמות טו:כו)  וְהֵסִ֧יר יְהֹוָ֛ה מִמְּךָ֖ כָּל־חֹ֑לִי וְכָל־מַדְוֵי֩ מִצְרַ֨יִם הָֽרָעִ֜ים אֲשֶׁ֣ר יָדַ֗עְתָּ לֹ֤א יְשִׂימָם֙ בָּ֔ךְ וּנְתָנָ֖ם בְּכָל־שֹֽׂנְאֶֽיךָ׃ (דברים ז:טו)  אֵל נָא רְפָא נָא לָנוּ. אֵל נָא רְפָא נָא לָנוּ. אֵל נָא רְפָא נָא לָנוּ. | Melech malchē hammelachim ḳayyem ‘alenu miḳra’ot hakketuvot betoratecha.  Vayyomer im shamowa‘ tishma‘ leḳol adonai elohecha vehayyashar be‘enav ta‘asē veha’azanta lemitsvotav veshamarta kol ḥuḳḳav, kol hammaḥala asher samti vemitsrayim lo asim ‘alecha ki ani adonai rofe’echa.  Vehesir adonai mimmecha kol ḥoli, vechol madvē mitsrayim hara‘im asher yada‘ta lo yesimam bach untanam bechol sone’echa.  El na refa na lanu. El na refa na lanu. El na refa na lanu. |
| O king who reigns over kings, fulfill for us the verses written in your Torah:  And he said: “If you will diligently hearken to the voice of Adonai your God, and you will do that which is right in his eyes, and you will give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon you, which I have put upon the Egyptians; for I am Adonai who heals you.” (Exodus 15:26)  And Adonai will take away from you all sickness; and he will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which you know, upon you, but will lay them upon all them that hate you. (Deuteronomy 7:15)  Please, God, heal us, please! Please, God, heal us, please! Please, God, heal us, please! | |

This prayer is followed by the following Psalms: 6, 13, 38 (followed by 37:39-40), 85, 88, 91, 121, 20. And finally, a concluding verse:

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| Baruch adonai le‘olam, amen ve’amen. | בָּר֖וּךְ יְהֹוָ֥ה לְ֝עוֹלָ֗ם אָ֘מֵ֥ן ׀ וְאָמֵֽן׃ |
| Blessed be Adonai forever. Amen and Amen. | |