

An Interlude, for the House of Israel in a Time of Darkness and Danger. Betach Bashem.

The musical item I present here was brought to my attention by a posting at the excellent Israeli blog, "Israellycool", made by one of his regular guests, Varda Epstein.

The full posting can be read at this link. Do please click and read.

<http://www.israellycool.com/2015/10/12/israel-trusts-in-god-but-bibi-didnt-get-the-memo/>

The first half of Ms Epstein's article cannot be matched as an introduction to the song, so I reproduce it here.

"There was a blog I posted when I first heard about the Henkin massacre (that is, the Muslim murder of Eitam and Naama Henkin, in Samaria – CM) on which one of my faithful readers commented, "Ve'ein lanu al mi lehisha'en ela al Avinu shebashamaim".

'It's from [the] Midrash Tanchuma, and it means, "We have none else to rely on but our Father in heaven."

'During the subsequent long week of terror (that is: of Jihadi terror attacks – CM) that followed, the words kept coming back to me, interrupting me...at regular intervals, until finally, on Thursday night, I let them fill my head completely.

'Not just these words, but with another verse from Psalm 115:9, that together, complete a tune called Maaminim (Believers).

'Israel, trust in God;

'their help and their shield is He!

'We are believers, children of believers,

'And we have none (else) to rely on but our Father in heaven."

'Yisrael betach ba-shem..."

'Now, if you know anything about me [Varda] you know I hate popular Jewish music. Just hate the entire genre. But I found myself singing bits and pieces of the first verse, at first just loud enough for me to hear it, a bit unsure how it felt, and then, closing the door to my bedroom, I sang it right out loud, and found I didn't want to stop.

'That's when I realized it – the singing, or perhaps the words – was somehow helping me and giving me inspiration. "Wow, I'm really whacked up tonight", I thought to myself, and then looked for a clip of the song on youtube. And then another, and another. My husband came in the room, and I thought, "Oh, boy, I'm in for it now. He's going to say, "What's up with that whining? Quit it."

'But he didn't.

'What he did say, "I've always liked that song."

'So I said, "Well, it's giving me 'chizuk'. Strengthening me. So I figured, what the heck".

'He nodded.'

'Here's a Shlomo Carlebach version of the song, recorded live for Israeli television in 1973....'

Note well that date: 1973. The year of the Yom Kippur war. Was he singing it before, during, or after the war?

Having found the Carlebach version on youtube I – like Varda – went exploring, checking out other versions. And found another rendition of the same song – this time by a group of young IDF soldiers.

May this interlude give to at least some others – in Israel, but perhaps also far beyond Israel – what it gave to Varda – ‘chizuk’, strengthening.