

Alexander Massey

# Come Down, God

including a call and response *nigun*

Midrash on Psalm 86:1-8

(voice & piano)

Shir Publications

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# Come Down, God

## *Midrash* on Psalm 86:1-8

Although the lyrics for this are based very closely on the first half of Psalm 86, this song was originally written as a *nigun* (wordless melody), inspired by a tune sung to me by my friend David Paskett. As I wrote, I found a musical logic emerging, whereby the last few notes of each phrase or half phrase are repeated as the first few notes of the next, giving the piece its particular feeling of internal echoes. The repetitions suit the insistent message of the words, with the speaker pleading to be heard, and helped; and the internal rhyme schemes match the internal rhymes of the music.

Come down, God, near me.

Hear me;

I'm breaking,

Aching

For You.

Touch my heart; I trust You.

Must You

Hurt me,

Desert me?

God please help me; I cry all day long.

I am not strong.

I need peace,

Release

From my despair.

God, are You there?

Show me that You care,

You share

The strain,

The pain

With me.

Please, will You feel,

Heal

My soul,

This empty hole?

I am begging now; and I wonder, will You  
hear me call?

Don't let me fall.

Only You can do this,

See me through this.

Your love restores.

I am Yours.

Despite the singer's expectation that God will hear, the feeling of the music is that this may not happen. There is a surprise in the music though – when sung wordlessly, the *nigun* can work as a call and answer tune, the listener responding each time with the last few notes they hear of each phrase: God's answer to our call can often come through human relationship, and the answer of the Other.

Suggestions for use:

1. I present this song first as a *nigun*, demonstrating the internal echoes.
2. Then I sing the song itself, so that the words with music can unfold for the listener. The music and words together tend to emphasise yearning and loneliness, and the sense that God may not be responding.
3. Afterwards, the singer can lead others present in the call and response *nigun* version, where those responding sing the echo motifs. The singer can indicate where these are by hand signals on the motifs ending their own phrases (shown by the square brackets above the music), and hand signals to conduct the same motifs that start each response (shown by square brackets below the music). This call-response version can be done in quite free time.

# Come Down, God

## Midrash on Ps 86:1-8

Music & Words: Alexander Massey

Spacious  $\text{♩} = 78$

Piano

*dolce*  
*p*

6

1. Come down, God, near me. Hear

Pno.

*p*

11

me; I'm break-ing ach-ing for You. Touch my heart; I trust You, must

Pno.

*mp*

Come Down, God

15

You hurt me, de - sert me? God have pi - ty I \_\_\_ cry

Pno.

19

all \_\_\_ day long; I am not strong. I need peace, re - lease \_\_\_ from

*no cresc.* *mf*

Pno.

23

my des - pair God, are You there?

Pno.

27

2. Show me that You care, \_\_\_ share \_\_\_ the strain, the pain with me.

*p*

Pno.

Come Down, God

31

Vocal line for measures 31-34. The melody is in G major and 4/4 time. It features a mix of quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, with some rests. The lyrics are: "Please: will You feel, heal my soul, this emp - ty hole? I am

Please: will You feel, heal my soul, this emp - ty hole? I am

Pno.

Piano accompaniment for measures 31-34. The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a steady bass line with quarter notes. The dynamic marking is *mp*.

35

Vocal line for measures 35-38. The melody continues with quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are: "beg - ging now. And I won - der, will You hear me call? Don't let me fall. On - ly

beg - ging now. And I won - der, will You hear me call? Don't let me fall. On - ly

Pno.

Piano accompaniment for measures 35-38. The right hand features a more active melodic line with eighth notes and some slurs. The left hand continues with a steady bass line. The dynamic marking is *mf*, with a *no cresc.* instruction.

39

Vocal line for measures 39-42. The melody is simpler, using quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are: "You can do this, see me through this. Your love re-stores. I am Yours.

You can do this, see me through this. Your love re-stores. I am Yours.

Pno.

Piano accompaniment for measures 39-42. The right hand has a melodic line with some slurs and a *p* dynamic marking. The left hand continues with a steady bass line.

43

Vocal line for measure 43. The melody is a single note held for the duration of the measure.

Pno.

Piano accompaniment for measure 43. The right hand has a melodic line with a *pp* dynamic marking and a *rit.* instruction. The left hand continues with a steady bass line.

# Come Down, God

## Call and Response

Spacious

Music & Words: Alexander Massey

$\text{♩} = 78$




YAI DAI DAI DAI YA\_DA-DAI (ya\_da dai) DAI DA-DA\_DAI (da-da\_dai) DAI-DAI

5



YAI DAI DAI DAI YA\_DA - DAI (ya\_da - dai) YA\_DA-DAI (ya\_da - dai) YA - DA

9



YAI DAI YAI DAI (yai dai) YA-DA-DAI YA\_DA DA\_DA-DAI (ya-da da\_da-dai) YAI

13



DAI DAI YA-DA-DAI (ya-da dai) YA DA-DA DAI (ya - da-da dai)

**Call: in capitals**

**Response: in brackets**