Praying against Enemies
Source Sheet by Larry Magarik

Psalms 104

(35) May sinners disappear from the earth, and the wicked be no more. Bless the LORD, O my soul. Hallelujah.

Psalms 109

(1) For the leader. Of David. A psalm. O God of my praise, do not keep aloof, (2) for the wicked and the deceitful open their mouth against me; they speak to me with lying tongue. (3) They encircle me with words of hate; they attack me without cause. (4) They answer my love with accusation (5) They repay me with evil for good, with hatred for my love. (6) Appoint a wicked man over him; may an accuser stand at his right side; (7) may he be tried and convicted; may he be judged and found guilty. (8) May his days be few; may another take over his position. (9) May his children be orphans, his wife a widow. (10) May his children wander from their hovels, begging in search of [bread]. (11) May his creditor seize all his possessions; may strangers plunder his wealth. (12) May no one show him mercy; may none pity his orphans; (13) may his posterity be cut off; may their names be blotted out in the next generation.
The Gemara further relates: Imma Shalom, the wife of Rabbi Eliezer, was the sister of Rabban Gamliel. From that incident forward, she would not allow Rabbi Eliezer to lower his head and recite the tahanun prayer, which includes supplication and entreaties. She feared that were her husband to bemoan his fate and pray at that moment, her brother would be punished. A certain day was around the day of the New Moon, and she inadvertently substituted a full thirty-day month for a deficient twenty-nine-day month, i.e., she thought that it was the New Moon, when one does not lower his head in supplication, but it was not. Some say that a pauper came and stood at the door, and she took bread out to him. The result was that she left her husband momentarily unsupervised. When she returned, she found him and saw that he had lowered his head in prayer. She said to him: Arise, you already killed my brother. Meanwhile, the sound of a shofar emerged from the house of Rabban Gamliel to announce that the Nasi had died. Rabbi Eliezer said to her: From where did you know that your brother would die? She said to him: This is the tradition that I received from the house of the father of my father: All the gates of Heaven are apt to be locked, except for the gates of prayer for victims of verbal mistreatment.
With regard to the statement of Rabbi Yehuda, son of Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi, that David did not say *Halleluya* until he saw the downfall of the wicked, the Gemara relates: There were these hooligans in Rabbi Meir's neighborhood who caused him a great deal of anguish. Rabbi Meir prayed for God to have mercy on them, that they should die. Rabbi Meir's wife, Berurya, said to him: What is your thinking? On what basis do you pray for the death of these hooligans? Do you base yourself on the verse, as it is written: “Let sins cease from the land” (Psalms 104:35), which you interpret to mean that the world would be better if the wicked were destroyed? But is it written, let sinners cease? Let sins cease, is written. One should pray for an end to their transgressions, not for the demise of the transgressors themselves. Moreover, go to the end of the verse, where it says: “And the wicked will be no more.” If, as you suggest, transgressions shall cease refers to the demise of the evil doers, how is it possible that the wicked will be no more, i.e., that they will no longer be evil? Rather, pray for God to have mercy on them, that they should repent, as if they repent, then the wicked will be no more, as they will have repented. Rabbi Meir saw that Berurya was correct and he prayed for God to have mercy on them, and they repented.
In light of the previous mention of the blessing against the heretics, the Gemara explains how this blessing was instituted: 

The Sages taught: Shimon HaPakuli arranged the eighteen blessings, already extant during the period of the Great Assembly, before Rabban Gamliel, the Nasi of the Sanhedrin, in order in Yavne. Due to prevailing circumstances, there was a need to institute a new blessing directed against the heretics. Rabban Gamliel said to the Sages: Is there any person who knows to institute the blessing of the heretics, a blessing directed against the Sadducees? Shmuel HaKatan, who was one of the most pious men of that generation, stood and instituted it.

Siddur Ashkenaz, Weekday, Shacharit, Amidah, Against Enemies

(1) And for slanderers may there be no hope; and may all wickedness be destroyed instantly and may all Your enemies be cut down quickly. Quickly uproot, smash, and cast down the arrogant sinners and humble them quickly in our days. Blessed are You, O Lord, Who breaks enemies and humbles arrogant sinners.
(19) Shmuel Hakatan said: “If your enemy falls, do not exult; if he trips, let your heart not rejoice, lest the Lord see it and be displeased, and avert his wrath from you” (Proverbs 24:17).

Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Hayom Yom, Tevet 26 (1943):
In the b’racha V’lamalshinim (p. 55, "Let thee..." in English), pause slightly between ut’mageir ("crush") and v’tachnia ("and subdue"), in consonance with the kavana (1) that t’akeir ut’shabeir ut’mageir ("uproot, break, crush") refer to the three kelipot (2) that must be completely eradicated. V’tachnia ("subdue") refers to kelipat noga (3) that must be subdued, but can be purified.

FOOTNOTES
1."Inner meaning" of the word.
2. "Shells of evil." See Tanya, Ch. 6 (end).
3."Shell of brightness."
Vlim'kal'lay

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More info »

Siddur Ashkenaz, Weekday, Shacharit, Amidah, Concluding Passage

To those who curse me, let my life remain silent and my life be like dust to all.

Berakhot 17a

When Mar, son of Ravina, would conclude his prayer, he said the following: My God, guard my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceit. To those who curse me let my soul be silent and may my soul be like dust to all.

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V'li'm'kal'lay Nafshi (Capo III)

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Private Meditation after Amidah of Mar ben Ravina (B. Ber. 17a)  Larry Magarik

"To those who curse me, may my soul be unresponsive, like dust to all."

Classical Guitar

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- dom. V' naf-shi ke-a-a-far la-kol ti-hi-i-yeh

V' naf-shi ke-a-a-far la-kol ti-hi-i-yeh.