

Mizmor 005

Surrounded by Enemies

Key Concepts

This mizmor was composed when David was contending with the antagonists who had betrayed him to Shaul Hamelech in the past and were now seeking his destruction. David prays to Hashem to distinguish him from his enemies by comparing their deception and treachery with his personal devotion to the path of righteousness. They are not only David's enemies, but the enemies of Hashem, Who is revolted by their wicked behavior. David concludes with an expression of the joy and gratitude he will feel when the enemies are defeated and are no longer able to harm him.

Exploring the Mizmor

The mizmor has four parts beginning with a plea to be heard and ending with an expression of anticipated joy. In its two central parts David asks to be differentiated from his wicked enemies. He asks Hashem to defeat them and pledges himself to be eternally devoted to the cause of righteousness and the service of Hashem.

PART 1. A PLEA TO BE HEARD. David cries out to Hashem asking for His deep understanding in this time of distress. He commits himself to continue appealing to Hashem in prayer.

(א) לְמִנְצַח אֶל הַנְּחִילוֹת מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד: (ב) אֲמַרִי הַאֲזִינָה ה' בִּינָה הַגִּיגִי: (ג)
הַקְשִׁיבָה לְקוֹל שׁוֹעִי מֶלְכִי וְאֵלֶּקִי כִּי אֶלֶּיךָ אֶתְפַּלֵּל: (ד) ה' בִּקְרָה תִשְׁמַע קוֹלִי בִּקְרָה
אֶעֱרָךְ לָךְ וְאֶצְפָּה:

(1) For the musician, on the nechilos instrument. A mizmor by David. (2) Hashem, listen to my words, understand my thoughts. (3) Give Your attention to the sound of my outcry, my King and my G-d, for to You do I pray. (4) Hashem, You will hear my voice in the morning, in the morning I arrange [my tefillos] to You and I look with hope.

PART 2. TO BE DIFFERENTIATED FROM THE WICKED. David prays to Hashem to distinguish him from the enemies he has been facing. He emphasizes that they are not only his enemies, but Hashem's enemies. David compares their deception and

treachery with his personal devotion to the path of righteousness.

(ה) כִּי לֹא אֵל חַפֵּץ רָשָׁע אַתָּה לֹא יִגְרָךְ רָע: (ו) לֹא יִתְיַצְבוּ הוֹלְלִים לְנֶגְדְּ עֵינֶיךָ שְׂנֵאתָ כָּל פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן: (ז) תִּאֲבֹד דְּבָרֵי כָזָב אִישׁ דְּמִים וּמְרָמָה יִתְעַב ה': (ח) וְאַנִּי בְּרַב חֶסֶדְךָ אָבוֹא בֵּיתְךָ אֲשַׁתְּחִוֶּה אֶל הַיְכָל קִדְשֶׁךָ בִּירְאָתְךָ:

(5) For You are not a G-d Who favors wickedness; evil cannot sojourn with You. (6) The debauched cannot stand before Your eyes; You hate all wrongdoers. (7) You will doom speakers of falsehood, Hashem abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man. (8) As for me, through Your great kindness, I enter Your house. I prostrate myself toward Your Holy Sanctuary in awe of You.

PART 3. HELP AGAINST ENEMIES. David asks Hashem to guide him on the path of continued devotion while the enemies he has been facing are defeated by their own wickedness.

(ט) ה' נַחֲנֵי בְּצִדְקָתְךָ לְמַעַן שׁוֹרְרֵי הַיָּשָׁר לִפְנֵי דְרָכֶךָ: (י) כִּי אֵין בְּפִיהוּ נְכוֹנָה קִרְבָּם הוֹוֹת קֶבֶר פְּתוּחַ גְּרוֹנָם לְשׁוֹנָם יַחְלִיקוּן: (יא) הַאֲשִׁימָם אֱלֹקִים יִפְּלוּ מִמַּעֲצוֹתֵיהֶם בְּרַב פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם הַדִּיחֵמוּ כִּי מָרוּ בְּךָ:

(9) Hashem, guide me in Your righteous [ways] because of my watchful enemies. [Let me see] Your way straight before me. (10) For there is no sincerity in their mouth. Their inner [thought] is malice; their throat is an open grave and they sicken their tongue. (11) Condemn them O G-d. Let them fall by their own designs. Push them [from calamity to calamity] for their many sins, because they have rebelled against You.

PART 4. ANTICIPATION OF JOY. David concludes with an expression of the joy and gratitude he will feel when the enemies of Hashem are defeated and he is protected from the distractions that interfere with his devotion.

(יב) וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ כָּל חוֹסֵי בְּךָ לְעוֹלָם יִרְנְנוּ וְתִסַּף עָלֵינוּ וַיַּעֲלֵצוּ בְּךָ אֱהָבֵי שְׁמֶךָ: (יג) כִּי אַתָּה תִּבְרַךְ צְדִיק ה' כַּצְּנֵה רְצוֹן תַּעֲטֹרְנוּ:

(12) But all who take refuge in You will rejoice; they will sing joyously forever for You will shelter them and those who love Your Name will exult in You. (13) For You, Hashem, will bless the righteous man, enveloping him with reassurance like a shield.

Learning the Mizmor

PART 1. A PLEA TO BE HEARD.

(א) לְמַנְצֵחַ אֶל הַנְּחִילוֹת מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:

For the musician — לְמַנְצֵחַ. This is a song to be performed **on the *nechilos*** instrument — אֶל הַנְּחִילוֹת. It is a **mizmor** composed **by David** — מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד.

The nechilos instrument most likely had a distinctive sound like the buzzing or droning of bees. This was reminiscent of the swarms of enemies with which David had to contend.

(ב) אֲמַרִי הַאֲזִינָה ה'

בִּינָה הַגִּיגִי:

Hashem, I ask that You **listen to my words** — אֲמַרִי הַאֲזִינָה ה', as long as I am able to put my requests to You in verbal form. However, there may come a time when I will be so overwhelmed with troubles that I will not be able to formulate my *tefillah* in words. I then ask that You **understand** the depths of despair hidden in **my thoughts** — בִּינָה הַגִּיגִי and help me.

(ג) הַקְּשִׁיבָה לְקוֹל שְׁוֹעֵי מַלְכִי וְאֵלֶיךָ

כִּי אֵלֶיךָ אֶתְפַּלֵּל:

Give Your attention to the sound of my outcry — הַקְּשִׁיבָה לְקוֹל שְׁוֹעֵי, **my King and my G-d** — מַלְכִי וְאֵלֶיךָ, **for to You alone do I pray** — כִּי אֵלֶיךָ אֶתְפַּלֵּל.

I am Your servant who trusts and depends upon You alone so it is only right that You give consideration to my plea. As You are my King, I appeal to You as one appeals to a flesh and blood King who carries out judgment. As You are my G-d, You are my eternal Judge and so I appeal to You to judge me favorably and rescue me from those who want to harm me.

(ד) ה' בִּקֵּר תִּשְׁמַע קוֹלִי

בִּקֵּר אֶעֱרָךְ לָךְ וְאַצְפָּה:

Hashem, You will hear my voice in the **morning** — ה' בִּקֵּר תִּשְׁמַע קוֹלִי for it is in the early **morning** that **I arrange my tefillos to You** — בִּקֵּר אֶעֱרָךְ לָךְ. Since I have no personal interests that come before my *tefillas* to You, **I look with hope** — וְאַצְפָּה for You to hear my voice.

PART 2. TO BE DIFFERENTIATED FROM THE WICKED.

(ה) כִּי לֹא אֱלֹהִים חֹפֵץ רָשָׁע אֶתָּה
לֹא יִגְרֹף רָע:

I look to You because I know that You will not support the wicked who are tormenting me **for You are not a G-d who favors wickedness** — כִּי לֹא אֱלֹהִים חֹפֵץ רָשָׁע אֶתָּה; **evil cannot sojourn with You** — לֹא יִגְרֹף רָע because You hate it.

(ו) לֹא יִתְיַצְּבוּ הוֹלְלִים לְנֶגְדְךָ עֵינֶיךָ
שָׂנֵאתָ כָּל פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן:

I know that **the debauched cannot stand firm before Your eyes** — לֹא יִתְיַצְּבוּ הוֹלְלִים לְנֶגְדְךָ עֵינֶיךָ; **You hate all wrongdoers** — שָׂנֵאתָ כָּל פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן.

(ז) תִּאבֵּד דְּבָרֵי כָזָב
אִישׁ דְּמִים וּמְרָמָה יִתְעַב ה':

Surely **You will doom the speakers of falsehood** — תִּאבֵּד דְּבָרֵי כָזָב who slander me, for **Hashem abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man** — אִישׁ דְּמִים וּמְרָמָה יִתְעַב ה' who secretly plans to harm his fellow while appearing to befriend him.

(ח) וְאֲנִי בְּרַב חֶסֶדְךָ אָבוֹא בֵּיתְךָ
אֲשַׁתְּחֶה אֶל הַיְכָל קֹדֶשְׁךָ בִּירְאָתְךָ:

As for me — וְאֲנִי, **through Your great kindness** — בְּרַב חֶסֶדְךָ to me, **I hope** to be able to stand firm before You and **enter the courtyard of Your house** — אֲשַׁתְּחֶה אֶל הַיְכָל קֹדֶשְׁךָ בִּירְאָתְךָ, the *Mikdash*, in prayer. There **I will prostrate myself** — אֲשַׁתְּחֶה **toward Your Holy Sanctuary** — אֶל הַיְכָל קֹדֶשְׁךָ where the *aron* is kept. I will do this **in awe of You** — בִּירְאָתְךָ and not to ennoble myself before people.

PART 3. HELP AGAINST ENEMIES.

(ט) ה' נַחֲנִי בְּצַדִּיקְתֶּךָ לְמַעַן שׁוֹרְרֵי
הַיָּשָׁר לְפָנַי דְּרָכְךָ:

This is my prayer to You: **Hashem, guide me in Your righteous ways** — ה' נַחֲנִי בְּצַדִּיקְתֶּךָ so that I do not stumble. Inspire me to follow Your path. I ask this **because of my watchful enemies** — לְמַעַן שׁוֹרְרֵי who are eagerly waiting for

my downfall. Let them not feel superior and let them not be cheered to see me stumble. Instead, inspire me to see **Your way straight before me** — הַיֵּשֶׁר לְפָנַי — דַּרְכְּךָ so that I will not stumble on it. Then my enemies will surely be unable to succeed against me.

(י) כִּי אֵין בְּפִיהוּ נְכוֹנָה
 קֶרֶבֶם הוֹת
 קֶבֶר פְּתוּחַ גְּרוֹנִם
 לְשׁוֹנִם יַחְלִיקוּן:

For there is no sincerity in their mouth — כִּי אֵין בְּפִיהוּ נְכוֹנָה. They present themselves as friends but are really enemies. **Their inner** thought **is malice** — קֶרֶבֶם הוֹת; **their throat is an open grave** — קֶבֶר פְּתוּחַ גְּרוֹנִם to swallow me like the grave swallows the corpse. With **their tongue they make smooth** talk — לְשׁוֹנִם יַחְלִיקוּן which is superficially pleasing but does not represent their true feelings.

(יא) הָאֲשִׁימִם אֱלֹקִים
 יִפְּלוּ מִמַּעֲצוֹתֵיהֶם
 בְּרַב פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם הִדְיַחְמוּ
 כִּי מָרוּ בְּךָ:

Condemn them O G-d — הָאֲשִׁימִם אֱלֹקִים. **Let them fall by** the inadequacy of **their own designs** — יִפְּלוּ מִמַּעֲצוֹתֵיהֶם against me. **For their many sins push them** — בְּרַב פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם הִדְיַחְמוּ from calamity to calamity. They deserve this fate **for they have rebelled against You** — כִּי מָרוּ בְּךָ. After all, it was You Who commanded them to serve me as king of Yisrael and they rebelled against Your word.

PART 4. ANTICIPATION OF JOY.

(יב) וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ כָּל חוֹסֵי בְּךָ
 לְעוֹלָם יִרְנְנוּ וַתִּסְדֵּךְ עָלֵינוּ
 וַיַּעֲלֵצוּ בְּךָ אֲהַבֵּי שְׁמֶךָ:

But all who take refuge in You will rejoice — וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ כָּל חוֹסֵי בְּךָ; **they will sing joyously forever** — לְעוֹלָם יִרְנְנוּ **for You will shelter them** — וַתִּסְדֵּךְ עָלֵינוּ **from evil and those who love Your Name will exult in You** — וַיַּעֲלֵצוּ בְּךָ אֲהַבֵּי

שְׁמַךְ when they see that You bless those who love You.

(יג) כִּי אֶתָּה תְּבַרֵךְ צַדִּיק ה'
כַּצֵּנָה רְצוֹן תַּעֲטֹרֶנּוּ:

For You, Hashem, will bless the righteous man – כִּי אֶתָּה תְּבַרֵךְ צַדִּיק ה', enveloping him with reassurance like a battle shield – כַּצֵּנָה רְצוֹן תַּעֲטֹרֶנּוּ, which surrounds the soldier on three sides.

Living the Mizmor

Listed below are some of the lessons that you can draw from this mizmor, as well as some of the thoughts you might have in mind when you say the words of the mizmor as a *tefillah* asking for your needs, or expressing your gratitude and devotion to Hashem.

Tefillos for Life - Your Relationship with Hashem .

[5:2] **OPEN UP.** – אֲמַרִי הָאֲזִינָה ה' בִּינָה הַגִּיגִי – “*Hashem, listen to my words, understand my thoughts.*” Ask Hashem to look into your thoughts. See also Mizmor 001, *Lessons for Life - Your Attitude.*

[5:3] **ONE TO ONE.** – מַלְכִי וְאֱלֹהֵי – “*My King and my G-d.*” Even though Hashem has a relationship with every being that He created, His relationship with each one is unique. So appeal to Him as a unique individual – “my King” and “my G-d”. At the same time have in mind that you are counting on Him alone: “*for to You do I pray.*” There is no other being that can help you. Any other intermediary is acting under His direction.

[5:9] **GUIDANCE.** – ה' נְחַנֵּי בְּצַדִּיקְתֶּךָ – “*Hashem, guide me in Your righteous [ways].*” Ask Hashem to give you guidance so that you will not err in doing His will.

[5:12] **NAME OF HASHEM.** – וַיִּעֲלֶצוּ בְךָ אֱהָבֵי שְׁמֶךָ – “*Those who love Your Name will exult in You.*” Pay special attention when you speak of His Name. Through His Name you are being connected to eternity, the infinite past and the infinite future.

Lessons for Life - Your Behavior.

[5:4] **MORNING.** – ה' בִּקְרָתְךָ תִּשְׁמַע קוֹלִי – “*Hashem, You will hear my voice in the morning.*” Let your first *tefillos* of the day be as early in the morning as

possible. In this way you are demonstrating your priorities in life.

[5:8] **ABODE OF HASHEM.** – וְאֲנִי בְרַב חֶסֶדְךָ אָבוֹא בֵיתְךָ – “As for me, through Your great kindness, I enter Your house.” Seek to spend as much time as you can in the place where Hashem’s presence is most intense, the place that has been identified as His abode, e.g. a place of Torah learning and/or communal tefillah. When you enter His abode, have in mind that it is a great privilege, which you are being granted through Hashem’s “great kindness.”

Lessons for Life - Your Attitude.

[5:9] **EVIL EYE.** – ה' נְחַנֵּי בְצַדִּיקְתֶּךָ לְמַעַן שׁוֹרְרֵי – “Hashem, guide me in Your righteous [ways] because of my watchful enemies.” Be aware that you may be the target of “watchful enemies,” that is, people who look at you with envy and resentment. Protect yourself by making sure to have a good attitude towards the blessings that Hashem showers on others.

[5:10] **DEFAMATION.** – קֶבֶר פֶּתוּחַ גְּרוֹנָם – “Their throat is an open grave.” When someone opens his mouth to spread gossip or slander, visualize that mouth as an open grave.

[5:13] **WORRY.** – כִּי אַתָּה תְּבַרֵךְ צַדִּיק ה' כַּצֶּנֶה רָצוֹן תַּעֲטֹרֵנוּ – “For You, Hashem, will bless the righteous man, enveloping him with reassurance like a shield.” Don’t give in to fear and worry of what misfortune might happen to you. If you are a servant of Hashem, He will envelope you with protection like a shield that surrounds you.

Tefillos for Life - Your Yeshuah .

[5:11] **SELF-DESTRUCTION.** – הַאֲשִׁימָם אֱלֹקִים יִפְּלוּ מִמַּעֲצוֹתֵיהֶם – “Let them fall by their own designs.” Ask that people who want to harm you should be disabled through their own actions, without the need for your active involvement.

Sources

The primary sources used in the interpretation of the verses of this mizmor are listed below.

ח - רד"ק	א - רש"י, מצודות, רד"ק
ט - מצודות, רד"ק	ב - רש"י, מצודות, רד"ק
י - מצודות, רד"ק	ג - מצודות, רד"ק
יא - רד"ק, מצודות	ד - מצודות, רד"ק
יב - רש"י, מצודות, רד"ק	ה - רד"ק
יג - רש"י, מצודות, רד"ק	ו - רש"י, מצודות, רד"ק
	ז - מצודות

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