

## Mizmor 006

# A Plea for Healing

### Key Concepts

The mizmor is a supplication that David composed during a serious illness which he suffered after the incident with Bas Sheva. His life during this difficult period was further embittered by the many enemies who were eager to take advantage of his weakness. Although this *tefillah* reflects David's specific experience, he incorporated it into the *sefer Tehillim* to serve as an inspiration for every Jew who is suffering. Hashem will surely listen to a person's *tefillas* if he prays with sincerity and a broken heart.

### Exploring the Mizmor

In the first part of the mizmor, David pleads with Hashem to ease his suffering and cure his illness. In the second part he describes how much he has been hurt by the hatred of his enemies. But despite his suffering he gradually regains his confidence and anticipates the bitter disappointment of the enemies who have been waiting for him to die.

**PART 1. HEALING.** David pleads for relief from his suffering. The thought that Hashem is angry with him is worse than the physical pain, for it affects his very soul. He pleads for the kindness of Hashem so that he can return to a productive life of serving Him.

(א) לְמִנְצַחַּ בְּנִגְיֹנוֹת עַל הַשְּׁמִינִית מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד: (ב) ה' אֵל בְּאַפִּי תוֹכִיחֵנִי וְאֵל  
 בְּחַמְתְּךָ תִּיַסְרֵנִי: (ג) חֲנִי ה' כִּי אֲמַלֵּל אֲנִי רַפְּאֵנִי ה' כִּי נִבְהַלּוּ עַצְמִי: (ד) וְנַפְשִׁי  
 נִבְהַלָּה מְאֹד וְאַתָּה ה' עַד מָתַי: (ה) שׁוּבָה ה' חַלְצָה נַפְשִׁי הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי לְמַעַן חֲסִדְךָ: (ו)  
 כִּי אֵין בַּמּוֹת זְכָרְךָ בְּשִׂאוֹל מִי יוֹדֵה לָךְ: (ז) יִגְעֹתִי בְּאַנְחָתִי אֲשַׁחָה בְּכָל לַיְלָה מִטָּתִי  
 בְּדַמְעֹתַי עֵרְשִׁי אֲמַסָּה:

(1) For the musician, with musical accompaniment on the sheminis instrument, a mizmor by David. (2) Hashem, don't rebuke me in Your anger. Don't chastise me in Your rage. (3) Grant me Your mercy, Hashem, for I have been cut down. (4) Heal me, Hashem, for my bones shake with terror. My soul is utterly terrified, and You Hashem — How long? (5) Turn back, Hashem, release my soul. Save me as befits Your kindness ... (6) for there

*is no mention of You in death. In the grave who will thank You? (7) I am exhausted from groaning; every night my bed is drenched; with my tears I soil the place where I have lain.*

**PART 2. THE PAIN OF HATRED.** David describes the pain of being hated by those who resent his accession to the throne. But as the mizmor progresses he gains confidence in his eventual recovery. Hashem will surely heal him and his tormentors will be embarrassed at having been so cruel to him. David concludes with the earnest hope that his enemies make peace with him so that he can forgive them.

(ח) עֲשֵׂשָׁה מִכַּעַס עֵינַי עֲתִיקָה בְּכָל צוֹרְרַי: (ט) סוּרוּ מִמֶּנִּי כָּל פְּעֻלֵי אֲוֹן כִּי שָׁמַע ה' קוֹל בְּכִי: (י) שָׁמַע ה' תַּחֲנֻנֹתַי ה' תִּפְלֹתַי יִקַּח: (יא) יִבְשׁוּ וַיִּבְהָלוּ מְאֹד כָּל אֹיְבֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִבְשׁוּ רַגְעַ:

*(8) My eye is dimmed from anger, aged by all my tormentors. (9) Depart from me all wrongdoers, for Hashem has heard the sound of my weeping. (10) Hashem has heard my plea; Hashem will accept my prayer. (11) They will be ashamed and will be utterly astounded. When all my enemies return, they will be ashamed for a while.*

## Learning the Mizmor

### PART 1. HEALING.

(א) לְמַנְצֵחַ בְּנִגִּינוֹת עַל הַשְּׁמִינִית  
מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:

**For the musician** — לְמַנְצֵחַ. This is a mizmor to be performed **with musical accompaniment** — בְּנִגִּינוֹת **on the** eight-stringed **sheminis** instrument — עַל הַשְּׁמִינִית. It is a **mizmor** composed **by David** — מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד.

(ב) ה' אֵל בְּאַפְךָ תוֹכִיחֵנִי

**Hashem, do not rebuke me in Your visible anger** — ה' אֵל בְּאַפְךָ תוֹכִיחֵנִי. I realize that Your intent is to discipline me so that I will be a better person but I beg You to do it calmly and with love. I want to serve You and do Your will, and I know Your rebuke helps me so I humbly accept it.

וְאַל בְּחַמְתְּךָ תִּיַסְרֵנִי:

But please **do not chastise me in Your burning rage** — וְאַל בְּחַמְתְּךָ תִּיַסְרֵנִי, as

though You are so angry at my behavior that You want to hurt me. Hashem, I ask that You discipline me only to the extent necessary to bring me to *teshuvah*. Even if I have failed in the past, I am confident that I will quickly return to the right way.

(ג) חֲנִי ה', כִּי אֶמְלַל אֲנִי

**Grant me Your mercy, Hashem** — חֲנִי ה', even if my *zechusim* (merits) are used up, **for I have been totally cut down** — כִּי אֶמְלַל אֲנִי. My troubles have reached a peak and I don't have the strength to endure anymore.

רְפְּאֵנִי ה', כִּי נִבְהָלוּ עַצְמוֹ:

**Heal me, Hashem,** — רְפְּאֵנִי ה' and restore my strength so that I can return to Your *avodah* (service) **for my very bones shake with terror** — כִּי נִבְהָלוּ עַצְמוֹ and I fear that my very existence is at risk.

(ד) וְנַפְשִׁי נִבְהָלָה מְאֹד

**My soul too, is utterly terrified** — וְנַפְשִׁי נִבְהָלָה מְאֹד out of fear that I must have sinned greatly to deserve such suffering, and if so, I am afraid that I might die from this illness.

וְאַתָּה ה', עַד מָתַי:

**And You, Hashem, how long** — וְאַתָּה ה', עַד מָתַי will You restrain Your quality of mercy and continue to watch me suffer? After all, is not the purpose of punishment to promote obedience? Surely I have already been disciplined and the time has come for me to be healed.

(ה) שׁוּבָה ה' חֲלֹצָה נַפְשִׁי

Therefore **Hashem, turn back** from Your anger — שׁוּבָה ה'. **Release my soul** from this illness — חֲלֹצָה נַפְשִׁי. Even a small lifting of my pain will let my spirit rise because then I will know that I am not disgusting to You. Then I will be able to return to You and serve You with joy out of the depths of my heart.

הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי לְמַעַן חֲסִדְךָ:

**Save me as befits Your kindness** — הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי לְמַעַן חֲסִדְךָ, even if I have not yet suffered to the full extent of my sins. If You save me, Your quality of *chesed* will be revealed to all ...

## (ו) כִּי אֵין בַּמָּוֶת זְכוּרָךְ

... **for there is no mention of You in death** — כִּי אֵין בַּמָּוֶת זְכוּרָךְ. If I die, I will be unable to serve You or learn Your Torah.

## בְּשֵׂאוֹל מִי יוֹדֵה לָךְ:

**In the grave who will thank You** — בְּשֵׂאוֹל מִי יוֹדֵה לָךְ ? The dead cannot sense Your goodness and cannot thank You for it. Therefore spare my life so that the purpose of Creation can be fulfilled through me, so that my flesh and blood can be spiritually elevated.

*After a person's soul has departed, his body is like an inert stone, which goes down into the grave. But his soul rises and continues to thank Hashem and praise Him without interruption. However, the righteous person desires to do the will of Hashem while he is still alive, as this is the purpose of Creation. Furthermore, by fulfilling the will of Hashem in this world, his soul will have a greater reward in the World to Come.*

(ז) יִגְעֵתִי בְּאַנְחָתִי  
אֲשַׁחָה בְּכָל לַיְלָה מְטָתִי  
בְּדַמְעָתִי עֲרִשֵׁי אֲמָסָה:

I want to serve You while I am alive, but my troubles are making it difficult for me because **I am exhausted from groaning** and weeping — יִגְעֵתִי בְּאַנְחָתִי. My suffering gets worse after dark and **every night my bed is drenched** from my weeping — אֲשַׁחָה בְּכָל לַיְלָה מְטָתִי — **With my tears I even soil the place where I have lain** — בְּדַמְעָתִי עֲרִשֵׁי אֲמָסָה.

PART 2. THE PAIN OF HATRED.

(ח) עֵשְׂשָׁה מִכְעַס עֵינַי  
עֲתָקָה בְּכָל צוֹרְרֵי:

**My eye is dimmed from** the pain of seeing the **anger** — עֵשְׂשָׁה מִכְעַס עֵינַי of those who hate me. It is **aged by** the sight of **all my tormentors** — עֲתָקָה בְּכָל צוֹרְרֵי.

(ט) סוּרוּ מִמֶּנִּי כָּל פְּעֻלֵי אֶוֹן  
כִּי שָׁמַע ה' קוֹל בְּכִי:

**"Depart from me, all you wrongdoers** — סוּרוּ מִמֶּנִּי כָּל פְּעֻלֵי אֶוֹן. You will not

succeed against me **for Hashem has heard** — **כִּי שָׁמַע ה'** **the sound of my weeping** — **קוֹל בְּכִי**. He has accepted my prayers."

(י) שָׁמַע ה' תְּחִנָּתִי  
ה' תַּפְלֵתִי יִקַּח:

"**Hashem has heard my plea** — **שָׁמַע ה' תְּחִנָּתִי**; it was not the doctors who healed me and it was not my *zechusim*, but the mercy of Hashem. Hashem responded to the intensity of my supplication and **Hashem will accept my prayer** — **ה' תַּפְלֵתִי יִקַּח** in the future."

(יא) יִבְשׁוּ וַיִּבְהָלוּ מְאֹד  
כָּל אֹיְבֵי יִשְׁבוּ יִבְשׁוּ רָגַע:

Many were hoping for my death. When I recover, **they will be ashamed** — **יִבְשׁוּ** on seeing my good fortune **and will be utterly astounded** — **וַיִּבְהָלוּ מְאֹד**. When **all my enemies return** — **כָּל אֹיְבֵי יִשְׁבוּ** to make peace with me, they will be **ashamed for a while** — **יִבְשׁוּ רָגַע** but will have to swallow their pride. The shame won't last because I will ultimately forgive them for what they did to me.

## 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.

### Lessons for Life - Your Behavior.

[6:2] ANGER. — **ה' אַל בְּאַפְךָ תוֹכִיחַנִּי וְאַל בְּחַמְתְּךָ תִּיְסָרֵנִי** — "*Hashem, do not rebuke me in Your anger. Do not chastise me in Your rage.*" When you admonish a child or student to behave properly in the future you should speak compassionately, and not with open anger. When you rebuke the child or student for past behavior, it is appropriate to show visible anger, but there should never be an element of suppressed bitter anger or hatred.

### Lessons for Life - Your Attitude.

[6:2] INTROSPECTION. — **ה' אַל בְּאַפְךָ תוֹכִיחַנִּי** — "*Hashem, don't rebuke me in Your anger.*" If you are suffering illness or pain, search your heart and ask yourself what sin you might have committed to warrant the anger of

Hashem.

[6:9] OPTIMISM. – שָׁמַע ה' קוֹל בְּכִי – “Hashem has heard the sound of my weeping.” After praying for recovery, be optimistic that Hashem has heard you and your recovery will surely take place in the near future.

[6:11] FORGIVENESS. – כָּל אֹיְבֵי יִשְׁבוּ יִבְשׁוּ רָגַע – “When all my enemies return, they will be ashamed for a while.” Even though you have been wronged, once your adversaries see the error of their ways, be ready to forgive them. Let their shame be only “for a while”.

### **Tefillos for Life - Your Relationship with Hashem.**

[6:3] KINDNESS. – חַנּוּנֵי ה' – “Grant me Your mercy, Hashem.” When you ask Hashem for something, don't frame your request as something you deserve or that He owes you. Rather ask Him to do it as an act of pure kindness. See also Mizmor 004, Tefillos for Life - Your Relationship with Hashem.

### **Tefillos for Life - Your Teshuvah.**

[6:3] ENOUGH. – חַנּוּנֵי ה' כִּי אֶמְלַל אֶנִּי – “Grant me Your mercy, Hashem, for I have been cut down.” Plead with Hashem to call an end to your suffering for its purpose has been served. You have learned a painful lesson and have resolved to change your ways.

### **Tefillos for Life - Your Refuah.**

[6:3] HEALING. – רַפְּאֵנִי ה' – “Heal me, Hashem.” This tefillah is especially appropriate for anyone who needs a *refuah* (recovery) from illness. A person can feel this need for himself, for loved ones, or for the community as a whole.

[6:4] ILLNESS. – וּנְפֹשִׁי נִבְהַלָּה מְאֹד – “My soul is utterly terrified.” If you are suffering illness or pain, ask Hashem to soften the blow so that your life is not placed in jeopardy.

[6:6] LIFE. – כִּי אֵין בַּמּוֹת זְכוּרָךְ בְּשֵׂאוֹל מִי יוֹדָה לָךְ – “For there is no mention of You in death. In the grave who will thank You?” Ask Hashem to grant you life for you will be unable to do *mitzvos* after death.

[6:7] PAIN. – יָנַעַתִּי בְּאַנְחָתִי – “I am exhausted from groaning.” Ask Hashem to ease your pain for then your spirits will rise and you will be better able to

serve Him.

## Sources

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

ז - רש"י, רד"ק, מצודות	א - רש"י, רד"ק, מצודות, מלבי"ם
ח - מצודות	ב - רד"ק, מלבי"ם, נר לרגלי
ט - רד"ק, מצודות	ג - רד"ק, מצודות, נר לרגלי
י - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, מצודות	ד - רש"י, מצודות, נר לרגלי
יא - רד"ק	ה - רש"י, מצודות, נר לרגלי
	ו - רד"ק, מצודות, נר לרגלי

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