

## Mizmor 024

# Receiving the King

### Key Concepts

David composed this majestic mizmor to be performed at the inauguration of the *Bais Hamikdash*, which would be built under the reign of his son Shlomo. The mizmor was to be sung as the Ark of the Covenant was carried into the Holy of Holies.

The *Bais Hamikdash* symbolized Hashem's active involvement in the world that He created. Hashem wanted this noble edifice to be seen as His dwelling place on earth even though His presence pervades the entire universe. It was for this reason that David begins the mizmor by affirming that everything in the world is Hashem's.

The dramatic high point of the mizmor is a ceremonial dialogue to accompany the entrance of the Ark into the Holy of Holies. The ceremony visualizes the Ark as being accompanied by the *Shechinah*, and thus the dialog is designed to give honor to the King of Glory as He takes up residence in His earthly abode. As the King of Glory makes His entrance, the gates of the *Bais Hamikdash* are directed to rise up in reverence.

### Exploring the Mizmor

**PART 1. THE WORLD.** The world is a Creation of Hashem and His presence pervades the entire universe.

(א) לְדוֹד מִזְמוֹר לַה' הָאֶרֶץ וּמְלוֹאָתָהּ תִּבְּל וְיֹשְׁבֵי בָהּ: (ב) כִּי הוּא עַל יָמִים יִסְדָּהּ וְעַל נְהָרוֹת יְכוֹנְנָהּ:

(1) A mizmor by David. The earth and all it contains belong to Hashem, the world and those who dwell in it. (2) He consolidated the land above seas and founded the land with rivers.

**PART 2. THE BAIS HAMIKDASH.** The *Bais Hamikdash* is a focus for mankind to come closer to Hashem. Hashem's presence fills the world. However, He has chosen a special location (the *Bais Hamikdash* on Mount Moriah) for His most intense presence, the *Shechinah*. It is His wish that all of mankind should be drawn to that location to achieve a greater closeness to Him. But only those who are especially worthy may be permitted to fulfill that desire.

The singer now asks how a human being can aspire to be granted access to serve Hashem in the *Bais Hamikdash*. The singer replies in Hashem's Name by stating the fundamental principles of (1) clean hands, (2) a pure heart, and (3) restrained speech. He concludes with a blessing upon this worthy individual.

(ג) מִי יַעֲלֶה בְּהַר ה' וְיָמִי יָקוּם בְּמִקְוֵם קִדְּשׁוֹ: (ד) נְקִי כַפַּיִם וְיֵבֶר לִבָּב אֲשֶׁר לֹא נִשְׁאַ לְשׁוּא נַפְשִׁי וְלֹא נִשְׁבַּע לְמַרְמָה: (ה) יִשְׂא בִּרְכָה מֵאֵת ה' וְצִדְקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעוֹ: (ו) זֶה דֹּר דֹּרְשָׁיו מִבְּקָשֵׁי פִנְיֶךָ יַעֲקֹב סֶלָה:

(3) "Who may go up to the mountain of Hashem and who may stand up in the place of His sanctity?" (4) "The clean of hands and pure of heart, who has not sworn in vain by My Name and has not sworn deceitfully. (5) He will receive a berachah (blessing) from Hashem, a just reward from the G-d of his yeshuah (deliverance). (6) Such is the generation of those who sincerely seek [Hashem] and appeal to Your Presence, [the children of] Yaakov, Selah."

**PART 3. ENTRANCE OF THE ARK.** David presents a ceremonial dialogue to accompany the entrance of the Ark into the *Bais Hamikdash*. The ceremony visualizes the Ark as being accompanied by the *Shechinah*, and thus, the dialogue is designed to give honor to the King of Glory as He takes up residence in His earthly abode.

The dialogue is an exercise in protocol such as might be appropriate when the city gates are opened for admittance of a powerful flesh and blood king. Since no human being is worthy of acting as the gatekeeper for Hashem, the gates of the *Bais Hamikdash* themselves are directed to rise up in awe of the King of Glory. The request is repeated for emphasis.

At each repetition the gates are given the opportunity to ask the singer for the identification of the King who is about to make His grand entrance. The singer first replies by speaking of Hashem in military terms since up to this point the Ark was associated with the battles that Yisrael waged against its enemies. But in the second stage of the ceremony the singer emphasizes that Hashem's power is far in excess of what human beings can imagine. He can only be described in terms of the panoply of Heavenly angels of which He is the Master, now and for all time.

(ז) שָׂאוּ שְׁעָרִים רָאשֵׁיכֶם וְהִנֵּשְׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם וַיָּבֹא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד: (ח) מִי זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד ה' עֲזֹז וְגִבּוֹר ה' גִּבּוֹר מְלַחְמָה: (ט) שָׂאוּ שְׁעָרִים רָאשֵׁיכֶם וּשְׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם וַיָּבֹא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד: (י) מִי הוּא זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד ה' צְבָאוֹת הוּא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד סֶלָה:  
(7) "Raise up your heads, O gates, and be raised you everlasting portals.

*Let the King of Glory enter.” (8) [The gates ask for identification] “Who is this, the King of Glory?” [The singer replies] “Hashem, the mighty and strong, Hashem, strong in battle.” (9) “Raise up your heads, O gates, and be raised you everlasting portals. Let the King of Glory enter.” (10) [The gates repeat their request:] Who is He, the King of Glory.” [The singer replies more forcefully:] Hashem, Master of Legions, He is the King of Glory, Selah.”*

## Additional Thoughts

Whereas Mizmor 023 was oriented as a look-back at the *kedushah* of Shabbos in preparation for the coming week, Mizmor 024 speaks of the recognition that we must give our Creator as the new week begins. Thus, Mizmor 024 serves as the *Shir Shel Yom* (Song of the Day) for the first day of the week. On this day we welcome Hashem into our lives and into our homes, just as the *Shechinah* was welcomed into the Bais Hamikdash.

The *Shechinah* accompanied the Ark of the Covenant, which served as the physical indication of Hashem's presence. The Torah, which was housed in the Ark, is the bond with which we are connected to Him. Thus, Mizmor 024 is also recited in *shul* as the Torah is returned to the *Aron Hakodesh* after *Krias Hatorah* on weekdays. The presence of the Torah in the Aron symbolizes the presence of Hashem in our midst.

Mizmor 024 is the first mizmor in Tehillim that starts with the phrase “*ledovid mizmor*”, as opposed to “*mizmor ledovid*”, which is much more common. The Gemara (*Pesachim* 117a) says that when the word “*mizmor*” comes first, it is an indication that the spirit of the *Shechinah* came to him only after he had begun to express his feelings of devotion to Hashem and sing the mizmor. But when “*ledovid*” comes first it is an indication that David was imbued with the spirit of the *Shechinah* before beginning to sing the mizmor. That may be especially significant for Mizmor 024, which was written to be performed at a specific future occasion. David desperately wanted to do as much as possible in preparation for the inauguration of the *Bais Hamikdash* and in reward for his devotion Hashem granted him the inspiration to write this mizmor.

## Learning the Mizmor

### PART 1. THE WORLD.

(א) לְדוֹד מִזְמוֹר

This song is **a mizmor** composed **by David**.

לֵה' הָאָרֶץ וּמְלוּאָהָ  
תִּבֵּל וַיֵּשְׁבִי בָהּ:

**The entire earth and all it contains belong to Hashem — לֵה' הָאָרֶץ וּמְלוּאָהָ.** This includes **the** inhabited parts of the **world** — תִּבֵּל **and** [all of the creatures] **who dwell in it** — וַיֵּשְׁבִי בָהּ. Even though the creatures of the world appear to function autonomously they owe their very existence to Hashem and are obliged to serve Him. The vastness of our world and its wondrous design are clear evidence of the One Who is its Master.

(ב) כִּי הוּא עַל יַמִּים יִסְדָּהָ  
וְעַל נְהָרוֹת יְכוֹנְנָהּ:

It is clear that Hashem formed the earth as a place for mankind to live, **for He consolidated** the land to rise **above** the **seas** — כִּי הוּא עַל יַמִּים יִסְדָּהָ. In this way people could inhabit the mountains and plains, and they could travel great distances on the seas. **And** since human habitation depends on fresh water, [Hashem] **founded the land with** free-flowing **rivers** — וְעַל נְהָרוֹת יְכוֹנְנָהּ. He designed the elaborate cycle of vapor rising from the sea to form clouds which descend as rain that waters the land and feeds the rivers.

### PART 2. THE BAIS HAMIKDASH.

(ג) מִי יַעֲלֶה בְּהַר ה'  
וּמִי יָקוּם בְּמִקְוֹם קִדְשׁוֹ:

[The singer asks:] **Who** is sufficiently worthy to be among the small number of people who are permitted to **go up to the mountain of Hashem** — מִי יַעֲלֶה בְּהַר ה' ? **And who** is especially worthy to be among that even smaller number who **may stay in the place of His sanctity** for any length of time — וּמִי יָקוּם בְּמִקְוֹם קִדְשׁוֹ ?

## (ד) נְקִי כַפַּיִם וְיָבֵר לֵבָב

[Hashem speaks:] A person who aspires to be worthy must strive for purity in his actions, his thoughts, and his speech. He must have **clean hands** — נְקִי כַפַּיִם, not having taken that which is not his. **And** he must have **a pure heart** — וְיָבֵר לֵבָב, so that his actions are motivated by fear of Hashem rather than concern with the opinion of man.

אֲשֶׁר לֹא נִשָּׂא לִשְׂוֹא נִפְשִׁי  
וְלֹא נִשְׁבַּע לְמַרְמָה:

He must not abuse his power of speech. That means he is one **who has not sworn in vain by My Name** — אֲשֶׁר לֹא נִשָּׂא לִשְׂוֹא נִפְשִׁי. It also means that **he has not sworn deceitfully** — וְלֹא נִשְׁבַּע לְמַרְמָה, tricking people into thinking the commitment he is making is greater than it really is.

(ה) יִשָּׂא בְרָכָה מֵאֵת ה'  
וְצִדְקָה מֵאֱלֹקֵי יִשְׁעוֹ:

If a person sincerely strives to be worthy, he **will receive a berachah** (blessing) **from Hashem** — יִשָּׂא בְרָכָה מֵאֵת ה' to help him reach the higher stages of piety. He will receive a **just reward from the G-d of his yeshuah** (deliverance) — וְצִדְקָה מֵאֱלֹקֵי יִשְׁעוֹ, in excess of what he has earned by his efforts.

## (ו) זֶה דֹּר דֹּרְשֵׁי

**Such is the generation of those who sincerely seek** — זֶה דֹּר דֹּרְשֵׁי to approach the dwelling place of Hashem and have been found worthy.

מִבְקְשֵׁי פָנֶיךָ  
יַעֲקֹב סֵלָה:

They have striven to ascend the ladder of spiritual growth **and** now **appeal** in *tefillah* for access **to Your Presence** — מִבְקְשֵׁי פָנֶיךָ. That is the nation that follows the virtuous example of their forefather **Yaakov** — יַעֲקֹב, who was granted the vision of the ladder reaching from earth to the gates of Heaven. **Selah** — סֵלָה.

**PART 3. ENTRANCE OF THE ARK.**

(ז) שֶׁאוּ שְׁעָרִים רָאשֵׁיכֶם  
וְהִנֵּשְׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם  
וַיָּבֹא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד:

[The singer calls out:] **Raise up your heads, O gates — שֶׁאוּ שְׁעָרִים רָאשֵׁיכֶם, and prepare to be raised, you everlasting portals — וְהִנֵּשְׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם, so that the King of Glory may come forward — וַיָּבֹא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד.**

(ח) מִי זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד

[The gates ask for identification:] **Who is this, King of Glory — מִי זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד?** What power does He have that we gates must be raised even against our will?

ה' עֲזִיז וְגִבּוֹר  
ה' גִּבּוֹר מִלְחָמָה:

[The singer replies:] He is **Hashem, mighty and strong — ה' עֲזִיז וְגִבּוֹר**, for the Ark has been accompanying the Jewish people in battle and has protected them from their enemies. He is **Hashem**, Who has shown Himself to be **strong in battle — ה' גִּבּוֹר מִלְחָמָה** in support of His nation Yisrael.

(ט) שֶׁאוּ שְׁעָרִים רָאשֵׁיכֶם  
וַיָּשְׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם  
וַיָּבֹא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד:

[The singer again calls out to the gates:] **שֶׁאוּ — Raise up your heads, O gates — שֶׁאוּ שְׁעָרִים רָאשֵׁיכֶם, and rise spontaneously in awe of the majesty of Hashem, you everlasting portals — וַיָּשְׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם, so that the King of Glory may come forward — וַיָּבֹא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד.**

(י) מִי הוּא זֶה  
מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד

[But the gates again ask for identification:] **Who is He — מִי הוּא זֶה**, and why do we owe Him unlimited honor as **the King of Glory — מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד** so that we should spontaneously rise up in awe? Is He like a mortal king whose glory depends on those who honor him?

## ה' צְבָאוֹת הוא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד סֵלָה:

[The singer again replies, but with more force:] No! He is **Hashem**, and He is the **Master of** all the **Legions** — ה' צְבָאוֹת הוא of holy beings that exist in the world above and the world below. Since the Ark will no longer go out in battle, Hashem is now to be identified by those legions of holy *malachim* (angels) that surround Him, but He does not depend on them. And just as **He is** now **the King of Glory** — מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד, so will He be forever! **Selah** — סֵלָה.

### 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 devotion to Hashem.

#### Tehillos for Life - Contemplation of Hashem.

[24:1] CREATION. – לַה' הָאָרֶץ וּמְלוֹאָהּ תִּבֵּל וְיֹשְׁבֵי בָהּ – “The earth and all it contains belong to Hashem, the world and those who dwell in it.” Hashem assumed possession of the world by creating it. As part of that Creation we are obliged to serve Him.

#### Lessons for Life - Your Behavior.

[24:3] QUALIFICATIONS. – מִי יַעֲלֶה בְּהַר ה' וּמִי יָקוּם בְּמָקוֹם קֹדֶשׁ – “Who may go up to the mountain of Hashem and who may stand up in the place of His sanctity?” You need to work on elevating your behavior to be justified to approaching Hashem in the place of His sanctity.

[24:4] – נְקִי כַפַּיִם וְיָדַיִם לֵב אֲשֶׁר לֹא נִשְׁאָ לִשְׁוֹא נֶפֶשׁ וְלֹא נִשְׁבַּע לְמַרְמָה –  
– “The clean of hands and pure of heart, who has not sworn in vain by My Name and has not sworn deceitfully.”

[24:7] GLORY. – שִׁאוּ שַׁעְרֵיכֶם וְהִנֵּשְׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם וַיָּבֹא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד –  
“Raise up your heads, O gates, and be raised you everlasting portals. Let the King of Glory enter.” The honor given to an earthly king is only a hint of the honor that is due to the Creator. You should be especially respectful in the place which He has chosen for His *Shechinah* to dwell (e.g. the *Bais Hamikdash* or a *Bais Hamidrash*).

**Lessons for Life - Your Attitude.**

[24:6] SEEKING. – **זֶה דּוֹר דֹּרְשֵׁיו מִבְקָשִׁי פָּנִיךָ יַעֲקֹב סֵלָה** – *"Such is the generation of those who sincerely seek [Hashem] and appeal to Your Presence, [the children of] Yaakov, Selah."* You should desire to be among those who are seekers of Hashem, which means you want to be closer to your Creator and you earnestly seek His favor.

**Sources**

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

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|--|---|
| ו – אבן עזרא, רד"ק, ספורנו, מלבי"ם             | א – רד"ק, באר אברהם, מלבי"ם, נר לרגלי                       |
| ז – רד"ק                                       | ב – רד"ק, ספורנו, אבן יחייא, מצודות, נר לרגלי               |
| ח – רד"ק, מצודות                               | ג – רש"י, רד"ק, המאירי, ספורנו, באר אברהם, מצודות, נר לרגלי |
| ט – באר אברהם, מלבי"ם                          | ד – אבן עזרא, רד"ק, המאירי, ספורנו, מצודות                  |
| י – רד"ק, ספורנו, אבן יחייא, באר אברהם, מלבי"ם | ה – המאירי, ספורנו, מלבי"ם,                                 |

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