

## Mizmor 028

# Differentiation

### Key Concepts

In this mizmor David offers a *tefillah* to Hashem to grant a *yeshuah* to Yisrael and to himself, their anointed king. He asks Hashem to make a clear distinction between the destiny of Yisrael and that of the *resha'im* (wicked), who are doomed to destruction.

**Navigating Tehillim (1)**. Previously in Mizmor 005 we have also seen that David asked to be differentiated from wicked men. In that case David was focused on saving himself from Shaul and his supporters, who were pursuing him and threatening his life. Now he extends those sentiments to the entire nation, now and forever.

**Navigating Tehillim (2)**. Mizmor 028 completes a cycle of three mizmorim addressing the phenomenon of *resha'im* in the world. In Mizmor 026 David examines his conscience and resolves to avoid the company of *resha'im* because of their insidious influence. In Mizmor 027 he appeals to Hashem to protect him from the physical threat posed by the wicked nations of the world. And now in Mizmor 028 he asks Hashem to keep him from being placed in situations where an association with *resha'im* will lead him to share their ultimate destruction.

### Exploring the Mizmor

**PART 1. A PLEA TO BE HEARD**. David begins by asking Hashem to pay attention to his *tefillah*. He pleads with Hashem to hear him (not to be deaf to his call) and then to answer in a positive way (not to be mute).

(א) לָדוֹד, אֱלֹהֶיךָ ה' אֶקְרָא צוּרֵי אֵל תִּחַרֵּשׁ מִמֶּנִּי פֶן תִּחַשֶׁה מִמֶּנִּי וְנִמְשַׁלְתִּי עִם יוֹרְדֵי בּוֹר: (ב) שְׁמַע קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנַי בְּשׁוֹעֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּנִשְׂאֵי יָדַי אֶל דְּבִיר קִדְשֶׁךָ:

(1) *By David. I call to You Hashem, my Rock, don't be deaf to me, lest You [then] be mute to me. I would become like those who descend to the grave.*

(2) *Hear the sound of my supplications when I cry out to You, as I lift my hands towards Your Holy Sanctuary.*

**PART 2. A TEFILLAH FOR DIFFERENTIATION.** The actual *tefillah* now begins. David asks that his fate not be bound up with that of the *resha'im* and that those people be treated as they deserve.

(ג) אֵל תִּמְשְׁכֵנִי עִם רְשָׁעִים וְעִם פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן דְּבָרֵי שְׁלוֹם עִם רַעֲיָהֶם וְרָעָה בְּלִבָּבָם:  
 (ד) תֵּן לָהֶם כְּפַעֲלָם וּכְרָע מַעֲלָלֵיהֶם כְּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם תֵּן לָהֶם הַשֵּׁב גְּמוּלָם לָהֶם:  
 (ה) כִּי לֹא יִבְיִנוּ אֶל פְּעֻלַת ה' וְאֶל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו יִהְרָסוּ וְלֹא יִבְנִים:

*(3) Don't draw me along with resha'im, nor with wrongdoers. They speak goodwill with their fellows while malice is in their hearts. (4) Pay them according to their acts and according to the maliciousness of their schemes. (5) For they do not give thought to the deeds of Hashem and His handiwork. May He destroy them and never rebuild them.*

**PART 3. ANTICIPATED GRATITUDE.** Confident that the *tefillah* will be answered, David thanks Hashem and praises Him, not only for himself, but for all of Yisrael.

(ו) בָּרוּךְ ה' כִּי שָׁמַע קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנָי: (ז) ה' עָזַי וּמִגְּנִי בּוֹ בָטַח לִבִּי וְנִעְזַרְתִּי וַיַּעֲלֵז לִבִּי  
 וּמְשִׁירֵי אֲהוֹדָנוּ: (ח) ה' עֲזָ לָמוֹ וּמָעוֹז יְשׁוּעוֹת מְשִׁיחוֹ הוּא:

*(6) Blessed is Hashem for He has heard the sound of my supplications. (7) Hashem is my strength and my shield. My heart trusted in Him and I was helped. My heart exults and I will praise Him with my song: (8) "Hashem is their strength and He is the stronghold of yeshuah for His anointed."*

**PART 4. CONCLUSION.** In the concluding posuk, David asks Hashem to grant a *yeshuah* to all of Yisrael.

(ט) הוֹשִׁיעָה אֶת עַמֶּךָ וּבְרַךְ אֶת נַחֲלָתְךָ וְרַעַם וְנִשְׂאֵם עַד הָעוֹלָם:  
 (9) *Save Your people and bless Your claimed possession. Tend them and elevate them forever.*

**Navigating Tehillim.** David confidently ends the Mizmor with an appeal to Hashem to save our nation. That posuk then serves as an appropriate introduction to Mizmor 029 which celebrates the renewed power of the voice of Hashem, in contrast to the opening of Mizmor 028 where David was concerned that that voice of Hashem might be muted.

## Learning the Mizmor

### PART 1. A PLEA TO BE HEARD.

(א) לְדוֹד:

This mizmor was composed **by David** – לְדוֹד.

אֵלֶיךָ ה' אֶקְרָא

**I call to You, Hashem,** – אֵלֶיךָ ה' אֶקְרָא for I trust in no other power.

צוּרִי אֵל תַּחֲרֹשׁ מִמֶּנִּי

פֶּן תִּחָשֶׁה מִמֶּנִּי

וְנִמְשַׁלְתִּי עִם יוֹרְדֵי בּוֹר:

You are **My Rock** – צוּרִי and I depend on You, so **do not** turn a **deaf ear to me** – אֵל תַּחֲרֹשׁ מִמֶּנִּי but respond to my *tefillah*. **For if You were to remain mute** and indifferent **to me** – פֶּן תִּחָשֶׁה מִמֶּנִּי, **I would** perish and **become like** – וְנִמְשַׁלְתִּי עִם **those** *resha'im* (wicked) **who** are being punished for their sins. Distinguish me from those who **descend** permanently **to** the silence of **the grave** – יוֹרְדֵי בּוֹר, unable to call upon You further.

(ב) שְׁמַע קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנֵי בְּשׂוּעֵי אֵלֶיךָ

בְּנִשְׂאֵי יָדַי אֶל דְּבִיר קִדְשֶׁךָ:

**Hear the sound of my supplications** – שְׁמַע קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנֵי when I cry out to **You** – בְּשׂוּעֵי אֵלֶיךָ in pain. But don't even wait for that tortured outcry. Hear my *tefillah* now **as I lift my hands** – בְּנִשְׂאֵי יָדַי **toward Your Holy Sanctuary** – אֶל דְּבִיר קִדְשֶׁךָ; I reach out with my hands to You to answer me.

### PART 2. A TEFILLAH FOR DIFFERENTIATION.

(ג) אֵל תִּמְשַׁכְּנֵי עִם רְשָׁעִים וְעִם פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן

**Don't draw me** along with *resha'im* – אֵל תִּמְשַׁכְּנֵי עִם רְשָׁעִים, who lack principles, **nor with wrongdoers** – וְעִם פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן, who claim the best of intentions. I don't want my fate to become bound up with such people and I don't want my success in this world to be dependent on my relationship with them.

דְּבָרֵי שְׁלוֹם עִם רֵעֵיהֶם  
וְרָעָה בְּלִבָּבָם:

Their friendship is deceptive and dangerous for **they speak goodwill with their fellows** — דְּבָרֵי שְׁלוֹם עִם רֵעֵיהֶם — while malice is in their hearts — וְרָעָה בְּלִבָּבָם.

(ד) תֵּן לָהֶם כְּפַעְלָם וּכְרָע מֵעַלְלֵיהֶם

**Pay them according to the nature of their acts** — תֵּן לָהֶם כְּפַעְלָם — and according to the maliciousness of their schemes — וּכְרָע מֵעַלְלֵיהֶם.

כְּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם תֵּן לָהֶם  
הַשֵּׁב גְּמוּלָם לָהֶם:

In either case, **pay them** measure for measure **in accordance with** the total effect of **their handiwork** — כְּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם תֵּן לָהֶם; **give them what they have earned** — הַשֵּׁב גְּמוּלָם לָהֶם — by their behavior and their evil intentions.

(ה) כִּי לֹא יִבְיִנוּ אֶל פְּעֻלַּת ה'  
וְאֶל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו  
יִהְרָסוּ וְלֹא יִבְנִים:

That is what they deserve **for they do not give thought to the wondrous deeds of Hashem** — כִּי לֹא יִבְיִנוּ אֶל פְּעֻלַּת ה' — in bringing about their very existence. **And** they disregard **His handiwork** — וְאֶל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו — in designing a world to function with order and justice. **May He destroy** them — יִהְרָסוּ — and their misbegotten schemes **and may He never rebuild them** — וְלֹא יִבְנִים.

### PART 3. ANTICIPATED GRATITUDE.

(ו) בָּרוּךְ ה'  
כִּי שָׁמַע קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנָי:

**Blessed is Hashem** — בָּרוּךְ ה' — **for He has heard the sound of my supplications** — כִּי שָׁמַע קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנָי. I am now sure He will answer me.

(ז) ה' עָזַי וּמִגְנִי  
 בּוֹ בָטַח לְבִי וְנִעְזַרְתִּי  
 וַיַּעֲלֵז לְבִי  
 וּמְשִׁירֵי אֲהוֹדֵנוּ:

The *kedushah* (holiness) of **Hashem** is the source of **my strength and my shield** — ה' עָזַי וּמִגְנִי — to protect me from my enemies. **My heart trusted in Him** — בּוֹ בָטַח לְבִי; it was not just my mind — I felt trust in my entire being. My *bitachon* was not misplaced **and I was helped** — וְנִעְזַרְתִּי — from a direction that I had not even anticipated. I recognize the *hashgachah* (Divine Providence) of Hashem in this **and now my heart exults** — וַיַּעֲלֵז לְבִי. I am not like those who forget the one who helped them once the danger has passed. **And so I will praise Him** and honor Him **with my meaningful song** — וּמְשִׁירֵי אֲהוֹדֵנוּ, singing the language of the heart, as follows:

(ח) ה' עֹז לְמוֹ  
 וּמַעֲוֹז יְשׁוּעוֹת מְשִׁיחוֹ הוּא:

"The *kedushah* of **Hashem** is the source of **strength** — ה' עֹז, not only to me, but **to them** — לְמוֹ, to all of His people who depend on Him **and** it is in their *zechus* that **He is the stronghold of yeshuah** for me, **His anointed** — וּמַעֲוֹז יְשׁוּעוֹת — מְשִׁיחוֹ הוּא."

#### PART 4. CONCLUSION.

(ט) הוֹשִׁיעָה אֶת עַמֶּךָ  
 וּבְרַךְ אֶת נַחֲלָתְךָ  
 וְרַעַם וְנִשְׂאֵם עַד הָעוֹלָם:

**Save Your people** — הוֹשִׁיעָה אֶת עַמֶּךָ — from their enemies **and bless** them for they are **Your claimed possession** — וּבְרַךְ אֶת נַחֲלָתְךָ — bless their efforts so that they will find success. **Tend them** to provide for their needs **and elevate them** over those who would threaten them, not only during my lifetime, but **forever** — וְרַעַם וְנִשְׂאֵם עַד הָעוֹלָם.

## 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.

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

[28:1] ONLY ONE. – אֱלֹהֵי ה' אֶקְרָא – “I call to You Hashem.” You are declaring your personal bond to Hashem. You are calling to Him because you trust in no other power.

[28:1] DIALOG. – אַל תִּחְרַשׁ מִמֶּנִּי פֶן תִּחְשֶׁה מִמֶּנִּי – “Don’t be deaf to me, lest You [then] be mute to me.” Beg Hashem not to ignore you, but to interact with you, listening to what you have to say and responding to you. Watch for His response in His actions toward you and in the thoughts that come in to your mind.

[28:2] – שָׁמַע קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנֵי בְּשׁוּעֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ – “Hear the sound of my supplications when I cry out to You.”

### Tefillos for Life - Your Yeshuah.

[28:3] DIFFERENTIATION. – אַל תִּמְשְׁכֵנִי עִם רְשָׁעִים וְעִם פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן – “Don’t draw me along with resha’im, nor with wrongdoers.” Ask Hashem to keep you apart from wicked people, not to let you be influenced by them and not to let you be absorbed into their calamitous destiny.

[28:9] YESHUAH. – הוֹשִׁיעָה אֶת עַמְּךָ – “Save Your people.” Ask Hashem to grant a *yeshuah*, not only for yourself, but for all of Yisrael.

### Tefillos for Life - Your Attitude.

[28:5] GIVING THOUGHT. – כִּי לֹא יִבְיִנוּ אֶל פְּעֻלַּת ה' וְאֶל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו – “For they do not give thought to the deeds of Hashem and His handiwork.” Pay attention to the wonders of the world that Hashem created.

### Lessons for Life - Your Gratitude.

[28:2] SHOW OF HANDS. – בְּנִשְׂאֵי יָדַי אֶל דְּבֵיר קֹדֶשְׁךָ – “I lift my hands towards Your Holy Sanctuary.” Express emotion in *tefillah* by raising your

hands in your ardor.

[28:6] ANTICIPATION. – בְּרוּךְ ה' כִּי שָׁמַע קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנָי – “Blessed is Hashem for He has heard the sound of my supplications.” Thank Hashem even before you have evidence that He has heard you.

[28:7] – בָּטַח לִבִּי וְנִעְזַרְתִּי – “My heart trusted in Him and I was helped.”

**Tehillos for Life - Public Acclaim.**

[28:7] SONGS OF PRAISE. – וַיִּעְלֶז לִבִּי וּמְשִׁירֵי אֶהוֹדֶנּוּ – “My heart exults and I will praise Him with my song:” Sing out your expressions of praise and gratitude to Hashem so that others will be inspired to follow suit.

**Sources**

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

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

© COPYRIGHT NOTICE  
 All rights to this document are reserved by the author. For further information contact Isaac Kirzner at [isaac@kirzner.com](mailto:isaac@kirzner.com)