

Mizmor 031

Rebuilding Bitachon

Key Concepts

In this mizmor David provides us with an extended *tefillah* which reflects many of the moods and thoughts that a person may have in his personal conversation with Hashem.

The broad theme of the *tefillah* is the need to reconcile an individual's *bitachon* in Hashem with the problems he is facing in his life. Even when those problems have not yet been resolved, David teaches us to be confident that the *yeshuah* (salvation) will come.

Along the way David visualizes the joy he will personally feel when Hashem has answered his *tefillos*. He then describes the agony he is currently suffering because the *yeshuah* has not yet appeared. Rebounding from this low point David takes courage and renews his call for help. He then praises Hashem for His goodness and thanks Him for His kindness. David concludes with a stirring call to his fellow Jews to love Hashem and to strengthen themselves in their devotion to Him.

Navigating Tehillim. David's roller-coaster spiritual experience of Mizmor 031 is comparable to that in Mizmor 039 (Crisis of Conscience), where we again find him struggling to understand his place in Hashem's plan.

Exploring the Mizmor

PART 1. DECLARATION OF BITACHON. David declares his *bitachon* in Hashem and appeals for His help.

(א) לְמִנְצַחַּ מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד: (ב) בָּדָה ה' חֲסִיתִי אֶל אֲבוֹשָׁה לְעוֹלָם בְּצַדִּיקְתָּךְ פִּלְטָנִי: (ג) הִטָּה אֵלַי אָזְנוֹךָ מִהֲרָה הֲצִילָנִי הָיָה לִי לְצוֹר מְעוֹז לְבַיִת מְצוּדוֹת לְהוֹשִׁיעֵנִי: (ד) כִּי סִלְעִי וּמְצוּדוֹתַי אָתָּה וּלְמַעַן שְׁמֹךְ תִּנְחַנְחֵנִי וּתְנַהֲלֵנִי: (ה) תוֹצִיאֵנִי מִרְשֶׁת זוֹ טָמְנוּ לִי כִי אָתָּה מְעוֹזִי: (ו) בְּיָדְךָ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי פְּדִיתָה אוֹתִי ה' אֶל־אֲמֹת: (ז) שְׁנֵאתִי הַשְׁמָרִים הַבְּלִי שָׁוָא וְאֲנִי אֶל ה' בְּטַחְתִּי:

(1) For the musician, a mizmor by David. (2) I have sought refuge with You, Hashem. Let me never feel embarrassed. In Your generous goodwill, save me. (3) Incline Your ear to me and quickly rescue me. May [my trust] be for

me a sturdy rock, a built-up fortress to save me. (4) For You have been my towering Rock and You have been my Fortress. For [the honor of] Your Name lead me and guide me. (5) Extricate me from this net [that my enemies] have hidden to [catch] me. For You are my stronghold. (6) I will entrust my living spirit into Your hand for You saved me Hashem, G-d of truth. (7) I have come to hate those who depend on worthless fantasies. As for me, I trust in Hashem!

PART 2. ANTICIPATION OF JOY. David visualizes the joy he will feel when Hashem has answered his *tefillos*:

(ח) אָגִילָה וְאַשְׁמַחָה בְּחִסְדְּךָ אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתָ אֶת עֵינַי יְדַעְתָּ בְּצָרוֹת נַפְשִׁי: (ט) וְלֹא הִסְגַּרְתָּנִי בְּיַד אוֹיֵב הַעֲמַדְתָּ בְּמַרְחָב רַגְלִי:

(8) I will feel exultation. I will rejoice in Your loving kindness that You have seen my affliction, that You have known the troubles of my soul. (9) And You have not turned me over to the clutches of the foe. Instead You have set my feet on a wide-open place.

PART 3. PLEA FOR RELIEF. However, the *yeshuah* has not yet come and David pleads to be granted relief from his current troubles:

(י) חֲנִנֵי ה' כִּי צָר לִי עָשְׂשָׂה בְּכַעַס עֵינַי נַפְשִׁי וּבִטְנִי: (יא) כִּי כָלוּ בְּגִדֵי חַיִּי וּשְׁנוֹתַי בְּאַנְחָה כְּשֶׁל בְּעֹנֵי כַחַי וְעֲצָמַי עָשְׂשׂוּ: (יב) מִכָּל צָרָרִי הֵייתִי חֲרָפָה וְלִשְׁכְּנֵי מְאֹד וּפְחַד לְמִידְעֵי רָאִי בַחוּץ נִדְדוּ מִמֶּנִּי: (יג) נִשְׁפַּחְתִּי כִּמְת מִלֵּב הֵייתִי כְּכֹלִי אֲבִד: (יד) כִּי שָׁמַעְתִּי דְבַת רַבִּים מְגוֹר מִסָּבִיב בְּהִוָּסְדָם יַחַד עָלַי לְקַחַת נַפְשִׁי זָמְמוּ:

(10) Grant me Your favor, Hashem, for I am in distress; My eye is dimmed from the anger [of my enemies]. [I feel it] in my soul and my stomach. (11) For my life is consumed with anguish and my years with sighing. Because of my iniquity my strength has failed and my bones are wasted away. (12) Because of so many tormentors I have become [an object of] derision to my neighbors and fright to my close friends. [People] seeing me on the street move away from me. (13) I have become as forgotten as a dead person, [vanished] from the heart. I have become like a lost vessel. (14) But I hear the conspiracies of many, terrorizing all around.

Navigating Tehillim. In posuk 10 David speaks of the physical and spiritual distress that the ill-will of his enemies has upon him: "My eye is dimmed

from the anger [of my enemies]. [I feel it] in my soul and my stomach." This recalls a similar thought in posuk 8 of Mizmor 006, which is a tefillah to be healed from affliction: "My eye is dimmed from anger, aged by all my tormentors."

PART 4. RENEWAL OF BITACHON. David renews his bitachon in Hashem and pleads for His yeshuah:

(טו) וַאֲנִי עָלִיד בְּטַחַתִּי ה' אָמַרְתִּי אֱלֹהֵי אֲתָהּ: (טז) בְּיָדְךָ עֲתַתִּי הֲצִילֵנִי מִיַּד אוֹיְבֵי וַיִּמְרֹדְפֵי: (יז) הָאִירָה פְּנֶיךָ עַל עַבְדְּךָ הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי בַחֲסֶדְךָ: (יח) ה' אֵל אֲבוֹשָׁה כִּי קָרַאתִיךָ יִבְשׁוּ רַשָׁעִים יָדְמוּ לְשָׂאוֹל: (יט) תִּתְאַלְמְנָה שְׂפֵתַי שֶׁקֶר הַדְּבָרוֹת עַל צְדִיק עֲתַק בְּגִאֲוָה וְבוֹז:

(15) *But as for me, I have trusted in You, Hashem. I said, "You are my G-d."*
 (16) *My times are in Your hand. Rescue me from the hand of my foes and from my pursuers.* (17) *Shine Your face upon Your servant. Save me in Your kindness.* (18) *Hashem, let me not feel disheartened after having called upon You. Let the resha'im be disheartened. Let them [be sent in] silence to the grave* (19) *May lying lips be struck dumb, [lips] that speak harshly against the righteous person with pride and contempt.*

PART 5. PRAISE AND GRATITUDE. Empowered by his new strengthened bitachon, David praises Hashem for His goodness and thanks Him for His kindness:

(כ) מָה רַב טוֹבוֹךָ אֲשֶׁר צִפַּנְתָּ לִירְאֶיךָ פְּעֵלֶת לַחֲסִים בְּךָ נֶגֶד בְּנֵי אָדָם: (כא) תִּסְתַּיְרֵם בְּסִתְרֵךָ פְּנֶיךָ מִרְכְּסֵי אִישׁ תִּצְפְּנֵם בְּסִפָּה מְרִיב לְשָׁנוֹת: (כב) בְּרוּךְ ה' כִּי הִפְלִיא חֲסֶדּוֹ לִי בְעִיר מְצוּר: (כג) וַאֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי בַחֲפְזִי נִגְרַזְתִּי מִנֶּגֶד עֵינֶיךָ אָכֹן שְׁמַעַתָּ קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנֵי בְשׁוּעֵי אֱלֹהִים:

(20) *How abundant is Your goodness that You have hidden away for those who fear You. You have acted for those who seek refuge in You in the presence of [all] men.* (21) *You conceal them in the hiding place of Your Presence, [protected] from the schemes of men. You treasure them in a shelter from the strife of tongues.* (22) *Blessed is Hashem, for He has been wondrously kind to me, [secure as] in a fortified city.* (23) *And I said in my panic, "I am cut off from Your sight!" But in truth, You heard the sound of my pleas when I cried to You.*

PART 6. MESSAGE TO THE NATION. David encourages Klal Yisrael to increase their devotion and trust in Hashem:

(כד) אָהַבּוּ אֶת ה' כָּל חַסִּידָיו אֲמוּנִים נִצַּר ה' וּמְשַׁלֵּם עַל יָתֵר עֲשֵׂה גְאוּנָה: (כה)
חִזְקוּ וַיֵּאמֶץ לְבַבְכֶם כָּל הַמְּיַחֲלִים לָהּ:

(24) Love Hashem, all His devout ones! Hashem protects the faithful, but He repays the one who acts haughtily, for his arrogance. (25) Be strong, and your hearts will take courage, all who wait longingly for Hashem.

Additional Thoughts

In Mizmor 031 we see David experiencing a rollercoaster of emotions and attitudes. He is at times calmly confident, earnestly pleading, joyfully expectant, painfully suffering, humbly supplicating, deeply grateful, agonizingly self-doubting, and enthusiastically inspired. What ties it all together is the key thought in the second posuk: "I have sought refuge with You, Hashem. Let me never feel embarrassed."

A person feels embarrassed when actual events in life are at variance with the self-image that he has created for himself and for the outside world. His state of embarrassment is a sign of his bewilderment, a recognition that the image was a lie.

But if a person places his trust in Hashem, his self-image is that of a frail human being who seeks to do what is right, even if he does not always succeed. He knows that whatever may happen to him is ultimately part of Hashem's plan for him. If he can hold that thought, there is no need for embarrassment or bewilderment.

During the days of *sefirah* preceding *Shavuot*, we are aware of being on a steady progression toward the spiritual goal of *Kabolas Torah*. Each count seems to represent a single, uniform increment in this progression, but in truth our spiritual growth is not steady. Some days we make great leaps forward while on others we lose the momentum and get sidetracked. The important thing is not to be discouraged, but to keep the goal in sight and remember that we are in Hashem's care.

Learning the Mizmor

PART 1. DECLARATION OF BITACHON.

(א) לְמִנְצַחַ מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:

This song has been prepared **for the musician** — לְמִנְצַחַ, who will perform it. It is **a mizmor** composed **by David** — מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד.

(ב) בָּךְ ה' חֲסִיתִי
אֶל אֲבוֹשָׁה לְעוֹלָם

Throughout my life **I have sought refuge** and trusted **in You** alone, **Hashem**, — **בָּךְ ה' חֲסִיתִי**. I have taken shelter under Your wing and have devoted myself to Your *mitzvos*. I humbly ask You to show Your continued care for me. **Let me never feel embarrassed** — **אֶל אֲבוֹשָׁה לְעוֹלָם** when my commitment to You remains unanswered.

בְּצַדִּיקְתֶּךָ פִּלְטֵנִי:

In Your generous goodwill — **בְּצַדִּיקְתֶּךָ** towards me, **save me** — **פִּלְטֵנִי** from my present trouble.

(ג) הִטָּה אֵלַי אָזְנְךָ
מִהֲרָה הֲצִילֵנִי

The threat I am now facing is so imminent that I ask You not to wait. Even if my *tefillah* is not sufficiently worthy to ascend to You, **incline Your ear to me** — **הִטָּה אֵלַי אָזְנְךָ** and hear me. Then come **and quickly rescue me** — **מִהֲרָה הֲצִילֵנִי**.

הֲיִה לִי לְצוּר מְעוֹז
לְבַיִת מְצוּדוֹת לְהוֹשִׁיעֵנִי:

May my trust in You **be for me** like a **sturdy rock** — **הֲיִה לִי לְצוּר מְעוֹז** upon which I can be secure, beyond the reach of my enemies. May it be for me like a **built-up fortress to save me** — **לְבַיִת מְצוּדוֹת לְהוֹשִׁיעֵנִי** behind impenetrable barricades. When the enemy sees my confidence in Your *yeshuah* he will be discouraged from even attempting an attack.

(ד) כִּי סִלְעִי וּמְצוּדָתִי אָתָּה

For in the past **You have been my towering Rock** — **כִּי סִלְעִי** to Whom I could flee when I was beset by harmful forces **and You have been my Fortress** — **וּמְצוּדָתִי אָתָּה**, high up on a cliff to protect me within its walls.

וּלְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ
תִּנְחַנֵּנִי וּתְנַהֲלֵנִי:

And so in the future I ask that **for** the honor of **Your Name** — **וּלְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ** with which Yisrael is identified around the world, You should **lead me** — **תִּנְחַנֵּנִי** to

safety **and guide me** to keep me going even if I stumble on the way — **וּתְנִיחֵנִי**.

(ה) תּוֹצִיאֵנִי מִרְשֶׁת זֶה טָמְנוּ לִי
כִּי אֶתָּה מְעוֹזִי:

Even if I stumble into sin, I look to You to help me and **extricate me from this net** — **תּוֹצִיאֵנִי מִרְשֶׁת זֶה** of immorality that wicked people **have hidden to catch me** — **טָמְנוּ לִי** and lead me astray. **For You are my Stronghold** — **כִּי אֶתָּה** — **מְעוֹזִי**, my foundation of truth.

(ו) בְּיַדְךָ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי
פְּדִיתָה אוֹתִי ה' אֶל אֶמֶת:

I will continue to commit myself to You and will continue to rely upon You to save me from danger. **I will entrust my living spirit into Your hand** — **בְּיַדְךָ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי** for just as **You saved me** — **פְּדִיתָה אוֹתִי** in the past, I am confident that You will save me again and for that I will owe You my devotion. You will surely help me for You are **Hashem** — **ה'**, the G-d of mercy, and You are the **G-d of truth** — **אֶל אֶמֶת**, Who keeps His promises.

(ז) שִׁנֵּאתִי הַשְּׂמֵרִים הַבְּלִי שׂוֹא
וְאֲנִי אֶל ה' בְּטַחְתִּי:

I have come to hate — **שִׁנֵּאתִי** those misguided people **who** chose to **depend on worthless fantasies** — **הַשְּׂמֵרִים הַבְּלִי שׂוֹא**, such as superstitious beliefs or luck. **As for me**, I have chosen to look to **Hashem** and it is to Him that **I trust** — **וְאֲנִי אֶל ה' בְּטַחְתִּי**.

PART 2. ANTICIPATION OF JOY.

(ח) אֲגִילָה וְאֶשְׂמְחָה בְּחֶסֶדְךָ

When You save me I will immediately **feel** a burst of **exultation** — **אֲגִילָה**. My happiness will continue as **I rejoice** — **וְאֶשְׂמְחָה** in the knowledge that what has happened is evidence of **Your loving kindness** — **בְּחֶסֶדְךָ** and Your care for me.

אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתָ אֶת עֲנִי
יִדְעַתָּ בְּצָרוֹת נַפְשִׁי:

I will be grateful **that You have seen** and noticed **my physical affliction** — **אֲשֶׁר** **רָאִיתָ אֶת עֲנִי**. I will be filled with joy **that You have known** and felt individual

concern **for the troubles of my soul** — יַדְעַתָּ בְּצָרוֹת נַפְשִׁי.

(ט) וְלֹא הִסְגַּרְתָּנִי בְּיַד אֹיֵב
הֶעֱמַדְתָּ בְּמִרְחָב רַגְלִי:

And I will be grateful that You have entrusted me with the freedom to choose life. **You have not turned me over to the clutches of the foe** — וְלֹא הִסְגַּרְתָּנִי בְּיַד אֹיֵב where I would be compelled to act. **Instead You have set my feet on a wide-open place** — הֶעֱמַדְתָּ בְּמִרְחָב רַגְלִי, so that I have the freedom to go where I please and do *teshuvah* by my own choice rather than as a reaction to constraint.

PART 3. PLEA FOR RELIEF.

(י) חֲנִינִי ה' כִּי צָר לִי
עֵשָׂשָׁה בְּכַעַס עֵינַי נַפְשִׁי וּבִטְנִי:

Grant me Your favor, Hashem — חֲנִינִי ה', **for I am in distress** — כִּי צָר לִי. **My eye is dimmed from** the pain of facing the **anger** of my enemies — עֵשָׂשָׁה בְּכַעַס. I suffer from the pain that I feel in **my very soul and** the hunger that I feel in **my stomach** — נַפְשִׁי וּבִטְנִי.

(יא) כִּי כָלוּ בְּיָגוֹן חַיִּי וּשְׁנוֹתַי בְּאַנְחָה
כָּשָׁל בְּעוֹנֵי כַחַי וְעֲצָמַי עָשָׂשׁוּ:

For my life is consumed with anguish — כִּי כָלוּ בְּיָגוֹן חַיִּי and **my years** are consumed **with sighing** — וּשְׁנוֹתַי בְּאַנְחָה as I think about my enduring troubles. **Because of my iniquity my strength has failed** — כָּשָׁל בְּעוֹנֵי כַחַי and **my bones are wasted away** — וְעֲצָמַי עָשָׂשׁוּ.

(יב) מִכָּל צָרָרִי הָיִיתִי חֲרָפָה
וְלִשְׁכְּנֵי מֵאֵד וּפְחָד לְמִיֻדְעֵי

Because so many tormentors — מִכָּל צָרָרִי have risen against me, the rest of the world has come to doubt me. **I have become** an object of **derision** — הָיִיתִי חֲרָפָה and people are ashamed of knowing me and of having any dealings with me. Particularly, I am a disgrace **to my neighbors** — וְלִשְׁכְּנֵי מֵאֵד who cannot entirely avoid contact with me. I have become **a source of fright to my close friends** — וּפְחָד לְמִיֻדְעֵי who are afraid of having any dealings with me.

רְאֵי בַחוּץ נִדְדוּ מִמֶּנִּי:

People **who see me on the street** — רְאֵי בַחוּץ — **move away from me** — נִדְדוּ — **מִמֶּנִּי** because the sight of me is distasteful to them.

(יג) נִשְׁכַּחְתִּי כְּמֵת מֵלֵב

I have become as forgotten as a dead person — נִשְׁכַּחְתִּי כְּמֵת — **כְּמֵת** for whom there is no hope of life. I have vanished **from the heart** — **מֵלֵב** of my friends because they no longer expect me to recover from my situation.

הֵיִיתִי כְּכֶלִי אֲבָד:

I have become like a lost object — הֵיִיתִי כְּכֶלִי אֲבָד — which is of little value; its owners don't remember it and don't bother to look for it.

(יד) כִּי שָׁמַעְתִּי דְּבַת רַבִּים

מְגוֹר מְסָבִיב

My friends have given up on me, **but I hear the active conspiracies of my many** — כִּי שָׁמַעְתִּי דְּבַת רַבִּים — enemies. They are on every side and sow **terror all around** — מְגוֹר מְסָבִיב.

בְּהוֹסְדָם יַחַד עָלַי

לְקַחַת נַפְשִׁי זָמְמוּ:

When they conspired together against me — בְּהוֹסְדָם יַחַד עָלַי — **they plotted to take my** very soul — לְקַחַת נַפְשִׁי זָמְמוּ.

PART 4. RENEWAL OF BITACHON.

(טו) וְאַנִּי עָלִידָ בְּטַחְתִּי ה'

אֶמְרֹתִי אֱלֹקֵי אֲתָה:

But as for me — וְאַנִּי, even though my enemies think You have forgotten me, **I have trusted in You, Hashem** — עָלִידָ בְּטַחְתִּי ה'. **I said, "You are my G-d"** — אֶמְרֹתִי אֱלֹקֵי אֲתָה. It is You that controls my life, not they.

(טז) בְּיַדְךָ עֲתֹתִי

הַצִּילֵנִי מִיַּד אֹיְבֵי וּמִרֹדְפָי:

In contrast to the misguided people who think their lives are controlled by chance

or by demonic forces I know that **my times are in Your hand** — בְּיַדְךָ עֵתוֹתַי. Everything that happens to me is determined by You and even the specific times that my enemies have chosen to attack me are actually Yours, not theirs. So I look to You to **rescue me** — הַצִּילֵנִי both **from the hand of my foes** — מִיַּד אוֹיְבָי, who act out of hatred, **and from my pursuers** — וּמֵרֹדְפָי, who act out of greed.

(יז) הָאִירָה פְּנֶיךָ עַל עַבְדְּךָ

Shine Your face of love and goodwill **upon Your servant** — הָאִירָה פְּנֶיךָ עַל עַבְדְּךָ to accept my *tefillah* and relieve the darkness which now surrounds me. By shining Your face openly upon me, the world will see that You reward those who are devoted to You.

הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי בְּחַסְדְּךָ:

Save me in Your kindness — הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי בְּחַסְדְּךָ because although I am as submissive as a servant to You I have no right to count on Your favor.

(יח) ה' אֶל אִבּוֹשָׁה כִּי קָרָאתִיךָ

O Hashem, let me not feel disheartened — ה' אֶל אִבּוֹשָׁה and bewildered by being turned back empty-handed **after having called upon You** — כִּי קָרָאתִיךָ and having committed myself to You!

יִבְשׂוּ רַשְׁעִים

יִדְמּוּ לְשָׂאוֹל:

Let the resha'im who sought my doom **be disheartened** — יִבְשׂוּ רַשְׁעִים by the defeat of their false hopes. **Let them** lose their self-confidence and **be** sent in **silence to the grave** — יִדְמּוּ לְשָׂאוֹל.

(יט) תִּתְאַלְמְנָה שְׂפֵתַי שֶׁקֶר

הַדְּבָרוֹת עַל צְדִיק עֲתָק בְּגִאֲוָה וְבוֹז:

May their lying lips be struck dumb — תִּתְאַלְמְנָה שְׂפֵתַי שֶׁקֶר. Lips that were created for *tefillah* are instead being used for slander and deserve to be silenced. These are lips **that speak** — הַדְּבָרוֹת **harshly against the righteous person** — **עַל צְדִיק עֲתָק** **with pride and contempt** — בְּגִאֲוָה וְבוֹז. They arrogantly think they are happier and better.

PART 5. PRAISE AND GRATITUDE.

(כ) מָה רַב טוֹבָךָ
אֲשֶׁר צִפַּנְתָּ לִירְאֶיךָ

How abundant is Your goodness — מָה רַב טוֹבָךָ that You have hidden away to be truly appreciated only by those who fear You — אֲשֶׁר צִפַּנְתָּ לִירְאֶיךָ.

פָּעַלְתָּ לַחֲסִים בָּךְ
נִגְדָה בְּנֵי אָדָם:

You have acted for the well-being of those who seek refuge in You — פָּעַלְתָּ נִגְדָה בְּנֵי אָדָם and You have done so in the presence of all men — לַחֲסִים בָּךְ, though they walk in ignorance and do not know it.

(כא) תַּסְתִּירֵם בְּסִתְרֵךְ פְּנִיךָ
מִרְכְּסֵי אִישׁ
תַּצְפִּינֵם בְּסִכָּה מִרִיב לְשָׁנוֹת:

You conceal them in the hiding place of Your Presence — תַּסְתִּירֵם בְּסִתְרֵךְ פְּנִיךָ, protecting them from the schemes of arrogant men — מִרְכְּסֵי אִישׁ. You treasure them in Your shelter — תַּצְפִּינֵם בְּסִכָּה and isolate them from the strife of evil tongues — מִרִיב לְשָׁנוֹת.

(כב) בָּרוּךְ הוּא
כִּי הִפְלִיא חֲסָדוֹ לִי בְּעִיר מְצוּרָה:

I too have benefited from Hashem's protection, and I thank Him for that: **Blessed is Hashem — בָּרוּךְ הוּא, for He has been wondrously kind to me — כִּי הִפְלִיא חֲסָדוֹ לִי בְּעִיר מְצוּרָה.** He has made me as secure as **in a fortified city — בְּעִיר מְצוּרָה.**

(כג) וְאֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי בְּחַפְזִי
נִגְרַזְתִּי מִנֶּגֶד עֵינֶיךָ

Even though when fortune went against me I was afraid that my sins were unforgivable **and I said in my panic — וְאֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי בְּחַפְזִי, "I am cut off from Your sight" — נִגְרַזְתִּי מִנֶּגֶד עֵינֶיךָ !**

אָכַן שָׁמַעְתָּ קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנַי בְּשׁוֹעֵי אֵלַיךְ:

But in truth, You heard the sound of my pleas – אָכַן שָׁמַעְתָּ קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנַי when I cried to You – בְּשׁוֹעֵי אֵלַיךְ because You understood that I was sincerely penitent.

PART 6. MESSAGE TO THE NATION.

(כד) אָהָבוּ אֶת ה' כָּל חַסִּידָיו

אֲמוּנִים נֹצֵר ה'

וּמְשַׁלֵּם עַל יִתְר עֲשֵׂה גְאוּה:

Having seen the kindness He has done, you should surely **love Hashem** in your actions, **all** you who are **His devout ones** – אָהָבוּ אֶת ה' כָּל חַסִּידָיו ! You see how **Hashem protects the faithful** – אֲמוּנִים נֹצֵר ה', who depend on Him, **but** as for **the one who acts haughtily, He repays him for his arrogance** – וּמְשַׁלֵּם עַל יִתְר עֲשֵׂה גְאוּה.

(כה) חֲזִקוּ וַיֵּאֲמַץ לְבַבְכֶם

כָּל הַמְּיַחֲלִים לָה':

And to those who are desperately hoping for a *yeshuah*, I say, **be strong** – חֲזִקוּ, **and** you will find that **your hearts will take courage** – וַיֵּאֲמַץ לְבַבְכֶם. **All you who wait longingly for Hashem** – כָּל הַמְּיַחֲלִים לָה' will not be disappointed.

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*, expressing your devotion to Hashem.

Lessons for Life - Your Yeshuah.

[31:2] EMBARRASSMENT. – בָּדָה ה' חֲסִיתִי אֶל אֲבוֹשָׁה לְעוֹלָם בְּצַדִּיקְתָּךְ פְּלִטְנִי –

"I have sought refuge with You, Hashem. Let me never feel embarrassed. In Your generous goodwill, save me." Ask Hashem to protect you and save you for you are depending on no one but Him. Ask that you never be embarrassed at having relied on Hashem.

[31:18] – ה' אֶל אֲבוֹשָׁה כִּי קָרַאתִיךָ – "Hashem, let me not feel

disheartened after having called upon You."

Tefillos for Life - Your Relationship with Hashem.

[31:3] **INCLINE YOUR EAR.** – הִטָּה אֵלַי אָזְנוֹךָ – *"Incline Your ear to me."* Tell Hashem that even if your *tefillah* is not sufficiently worthy to ascend to Him, He should incline His ear to you and hear you.

[31:6] **ENTRUSTING MY LIFE.** – בְּיָדְךָ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי – *"I will entrust my living spirit into Your hand."* Appeal to Hashem to save you because you depend on Him alone.

[31:17] **A SHINING FACE.** – הָאִירָה פָּנֶיךָ עַל עַבְדְּךָ – *"Shine Your face upon Your servant."* Ask Hashem to show you His love and goodwill. By shining His face openly upon you, the world will see that Hashem rewards those who are devoted to Him.

Tehillos for Life - Contemplation of Hashem.

[31:4] **FORTRESS.** – כִּי סִלְעִי וּמְצוּדָתִי אַתָּה – *"For You have been my towering Rock and You have been my Fortress."* Hashem is totally reliable, like the most impenetrable fortress.

[31:20] **GOODNESS.** – מָה רַב טוֹבוֹךָ אֲשֶׁר צִפְנָתָ לִירְאֶיךָ – *"How abundant is Your goodness that You have hidden away for those who fear You."* Hashem's true goodness is reserved for those who appreciate it.

Lessons for Life - Your Attitude.

[31:7] **TIME TO HATE.** – שָׂנְאתִי הַשְּׂמֵרִים הַבְּלִי שׁוֹא – *"I have come to hate those who depend on worthless fantasies."* Hatred of evil is sometimes necessary to avoid being caught up in it.

[31:24] **LOVE AND DEVOTION.** – אֶהְבּוּ אֶת ה' כָּל חַסִּידָיו – *"Love Hashem, all His devout ones!"* Love of Hashem must be based on your complete and faithful devotion to Him alone.

[31:25] **COURAGE.** – חֲזִקוּ וַיֵּאֱמַץ לְבַבְכֶם כָּל הַמַּיְחֲלִים לָהּ – *"Be strong, and your hearts will take courage, all who wait longingly for Hashem."* No matter how difficult things are for you, have confidence that the *yeshuah* will surely come.

Lessons for Life - Your Behavior.

[31:17] A SHINING FACE. – הַאִירָה פְּנִיךָ עַל עַבְדְּךָ – “*Shine Your face upon Your servant.*” Emulate the attributes of Hashem and show goodwill towards all the people in your life. Showing a smile can be a great kindness.

Lessons for Life - Your Gratitude.

[31:8] EMPATHY. – אֶגִּילָה וְאֶשְׂמַחָה בְּחַסְדְּךָ אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתָ אֶת עַנְיִי – “*I will feel exultation. I will rejoice in Your loving kindness that You have seen my affliction.*” Thank Hashem for His sympathetic and understanding care in easing your difficulties. When you realize His personal concern you should feel a burst of exultation.

[31:9] FREE WILL. – הָעֵמֶדֶת בְּמַרְחֵב רַגְלִי – “*You have set my feet on a wide-open place.*” Thank Hashem for giving you the freedom to choose your way in life. Humbly ask for His guidance in making the right choice.

[31:22] SECURITY. – בְּרוּךְ ה' כִּי הִפְלִיא חַסְדּוֹ לִי בְּעִיר מְצוּרָה – “*Blessed is Hashem, for He has been wondrously kind to me, [secure as] in a fortified city.*” Thank Hashem for making you feel secure.

Tefillos for Life - Your Anguish.

[31:11] YEARS OF PAIN. – כִּי כָלוּ בִּיגוֹן חַיִּי וּשְׁנוֹתַי בְּאֲנָחָה – “*For my life is consumed with anguish and my years with sighing.*” By declaring and contemplating your suffering, you are demonstrating that its purpose has been served and your *tefillah* for a *yeshuah* should be answered.

Sources

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

א - רש"ה	יג - רש"י, רד"ק, המאירי, מצודות
ב - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, ספורנו, מצודות, נר לרגלי	יד - רש"י, רד"ק, מלבי"ם
ג - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, המאירי, ספורנו, באר אברהם, נר לרגלי	טו - אבן עזרא, רד"ק
ד - רד"ק, מלבי"ם	טז - רש"י, אבן עזרא, רד"ק, המאירי, מצודות, נר לרגלי
ה - אבן יחייא, מצודות, מהר"י יעבץ, נר לרגלי	יז - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, המאירי, ספורנו, באר אברהם, מלבי"ם, נר לרגלי
ו - אבן עזרא, רש"ה, נר לרגלי	יח - רד"ק, המאירי
ז - רש"י, אבן עזרא, מצודות, באר אברהם, רש"ה	יט - אבן עזרא, ספורנו, נר לרגלי, רש"ה
ח - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, מצודות, מלבי"ם, רש"ה	כ - אבן עזרא, רש"ה
ט - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, נר לרגלי	כא - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, רש"ה
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	כה - רש"י, אבן עזרא, רד"ק,

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