

Mizmor 037

A Tapestry of Enlightenment

Key Concepts

The mizmor is effectively a continuation of mizmor 036 in which David contrasted the righteous servant of Hashem with the evildoer. Now he begins mizmor 037 with specific guidance to help those listening to his song to avoid being influenced by the bad people around them. This is a matter of special concern when the evildoers are enjoying power and prosperity. David assures his listeners that the success of the evildoers is only temporary. It is only the righteous who will be blessed with true and lasting happiness.

Exploring the Mizmor

The mizmor is structured as an elaborate song of enlightenment. The pesukim of the mizmor follow an alphabetical arrangement, generally based on every second posuk. To appreciate this mizmor it is helpful to realize that the mizmor is based on two principle themes. These are: (1) avoiding the influence of evil men and (2) living with bitachon.

Furthermore, each of these two principle concepts depends upon a supporting concept: (1) The evildoers and their prosperity won't last. (2) Your future and that of your descendants will be blessed.

These four themes are interwoven throughout the rest of the mizmor like the threads of a tapestry. Each time David picks up a thread he brings it to the fore and relates it to the other threads in a different way, so as to create a meaningful and integrated whole.

The mizmor has ten major parts which are identified here. The alphabetical key letters associated with each part are highlighted in the Learning the Mizmor section below.

PART 1. RESIST EVIL. Don't be influenced by the prosperity of evildoers; they and their prosperity won't last.

(א) לְדוֹד אֶל תִּתְחַר בְּמַרְעִים אֶל תִּקְנֵא בְעֹשֵׂי עוֹלָה; (ב) כִּי כַחֲצִיר מִהֲרָה יִמְלוּ
וּכְיִרְק דָּשָׁא יְבוֹלוּ:

(1) *By David. Don't be disturbed by bad people. Don't be envious of wrongdoers. (2) For like grass they will be quickly cut down. Like vegetation they will wither.*

PART 2. TRUST IN HASHEM. Maintain your trust in Hashem despite difficulties; you will be rewarded with security and happiness. Turn your burdens over to Hashem and don't agonize over whatever difficulties you encounter in life. You can be sure that He will do whatever is right for the situation you are in. Don't let the difficulties you encounter make you impatient. Especially, don't let yourself be disturbed by the prosperity of the evildoer.

(ג) בָּטַח בַּה' וַעֲשֵׂה טוֹב שְׂכֹן אֶרֶץ וְרַעַה אֲמוֹנָה: (ד) וְהִתְעַנְּג עַל ה' וַיִּתֵּן לָךְ מִשְׂאֵלֶת לִבְךָ: (ה) גּוֹל עַל ה' דִּרְכֶּךָ וּבִטַח עָלָיו וְהוּא יַעֲשֶׂה: (ו) וְהוֹצִיא כְּאוֹר צִדְקָךָ וּמִשְׁפָּטְךָ כַּצְּהָרִים: (ז) דָּוָם לַה' וְהִתְחוּלַל לוֹ אֵל תִּתְחַר בְּמַצְלִיחַ דִּרְכּוֹ בְּאִישׁ עֹשֶׂה מִזְמוֹת:

(3) *Trust in Hashem and do good. Dwell in the land and nourish [your] faith. (4) Delight in Hashem. He will grant you the desires of your heart. (5) Turn over to Hashem [the burdens] of your road [in life]. Rely on Him for He will act. (6) He will bring to the fore your righteousness as light and the opinion of [men] as the noonday sun. (7) Wait patiently for Hashem and entrust yourself to him. Don't let yourself be disturbed at a man who prospers, a man who develops devious schemes.*

PART 3. OVERCOME RESENTMENT. Throw away your feelings of resentment at your own misfortune and the prosperity of others. You will only harm yourself. After all, the prosperity of the evildoers is only temporary. Hold on just a little bit longer. The evildoers will soon be gone. Then the humble will inherit the earth.

(ח) הִתְרַף מֵאַף וְעִזָּב חֲמָה אֵל תִּתְחַר אֶדְ לְהָרַע: (ט) כִּי מִרְעִים יִפְרֹתוּן וּקְוִי ה' הַמָּה יִירָשׁוּ אֶרֶץ: (י) וְעוֹד מְעַט וְאִין רָשָׁע וְהִתְבּוֹנְנֵת עַל מְקוֹמוֹ וְאִינְנוּ: (יא) וְעַנּוּיִם יִירָשׁוּ אֶרֶץ וְהִתְעַנְּגוּ עַל רֵב שְׁלוֹם:

(8) *Let go of anger and forsake resentment. Don't let yourself be disturbed, for [such feelings] bring only harm. (9) For the evildoers will be cut off, but those who place their hope with Hashem will inherit the earth. (10) Just a little longer, and there will be no evildoer [left]. You will look at his place and he will not be there. (11) The humble will inherit the earth. They will*

delight in abundant peace.

PART 4. EVILDOERS HAVE NO FUTURE. The evildoers cannot prevail because they are victims of their own scheming. The weapons with which the evildoers hope to harm the innocent will be turned against the perpetrators. Don't be fooled by the apparent prosperity of the evildoers. It is of less value than the little which the righteous possess.

(יב) אִמֵּם רָשָׁע לְצַדִּיק וְחָרַק עָלָיו שָׁנָיו: (יג) אֶדְדֹּנִי יִשְׁחַק לוֹ כִּי רָאָה כִּי יָבֵא יוֹמוֹ:
 (יד) תִּרְבַּב פְּתָחוֹ רְשָׁעִים וְדָרְכוֹ קִשְׁתָּם לְהַפִּיל עָנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן לְטְבוּחַ יִשְׂרָיִל דָּרָךְ: (טו)
 חֲרָבִים תָּבוֹא בְלָבָם וְקִשְׁתוֹתֵם תִּשְׁבְּרָנָה: (טז) טוֹב מְעַט לְצַדִּיק מִהֶמוֹן רְשָׁעִים
 רַבִּים: (יז) כִּי זְרוּעוֹת רְשָׁעִים תִּשְׁבְּרָנָה וְסוּמְךָ צַדִּיקִים ה':

(12) The evildoer concocts schemes against the righteous person and [confidently] gnashes his teeth at him. (13) Hashem laughs at [the evildoer] for Hashem sees that the day of his downfall is coming. (14) The evildoers draw their sword and bend their bows to bring down the poor and the destitute, to slaughter those whose way is straight. (15) Their sword will pierce their own heart, and their bows will be broken. (16) The little [possessed by] the righteous is better than the great abundance of the evildoers. (17) For the arms of the evildoers will be broken but Hashem supports the righteous.

PART 5. A STARK CONTRAST. Hashem welcomes the devotion of the righteous and will provide for their well-being. But in contrast to the future well-being of the righteous, the evildoers will vanish like smoke. They will fail because they seek only to take from the world. In contrast, the righteous will succeed because their nature is to give to the world.

(יח) יָדַעַתְּ ה' יְמֵי תְמִימִם וְנִחַלְתָּם לְעוֹלָם תִּהְיֶה: (יט) לֹא יִבְשׁוּ בְּעֵת רָעָה וּבִימֵי
 רָעָבוֹן יִשְׂבְּעוּ: (כ) כִּי רְשָׁעִים יֵאָבְדוּ וְאֵיבֵי ה' כִּיקַר כְּרִים כָּלוּ בְּעֶשֶׂן כָּלוּ: (כא) לֹהֵט
 רָשָׁע וְלֹא יִשְׁלַם וְצַדִּיק חוֹנֵן וְנוֹתֵן: (כב) כִּי מִבְּרָכָיו יִירָשׁוּ אֶרֶץ וּמִקְלָלָיו יִכְרַתוּ:

(18) Hashem knows the days of the people who are wholly committed. Their inheritance will be for eternity. (19) They will not be shamed in time of calamity. And in time of famine they will have their fill. (20) But the evildoers will perish and the enemies of Hashem will be utterly consumed like the fat of [sacrificial] lambs. Gone up in smoke! (21) The evildoer borrows but does not repay, but the righteous person is a benefactor and a giver. (22) For [Hashem's] blessed ones will inherit the earth, while His

as He wants us to.

PART 8. PROTECTION FROM EVIL. The good life of the righteous man will not be marred by his enemies because Hashem protects the righteous man from the harm that the evildoer plots against him.

(לב) צוֹפֵה רָשָׁע לְצַדִּיק וּמִבְקֵשׁ לְהַמִּיתוֹ: (לג) ה' לֹא יַעֲזֹבֵנוּ בַיָּדוֹ וְלֹא יִרְשָׁעֵנוּ בְּהַשְׁפָּטוֹ:

(32) The evildoer watches for the righteous and he seeks to have him put to death. (33) Hashem will not abandon him under [the evildoer's] hand. Nor will He let [the righteous man] be [unjustly] condemned when he is judged.

PART 9. DESTINY. Take to heart everything that I have said. I myself have seen the downfall of a noteworthy evildoer. You, dear listener, will also have the opportunity to observe how the righteous are rewarded, whereas the future of the evildoers has already been cut off.

(לד) קוֹה אֶל ה' וְשָׁמַר דְּרָכָיו וַיְרוּמְמֵד לְרֵשֶׁת אָרֶץ בְּהַכְרַת רָשָׁעִים וַתִּרְאֶה: (לה) רָאִיתִי רָשָׁע עָרִץ וּמִתְעַרֵּר כְּאֶזְרַח רַעְנָן: (לו) וַיַּעֲבֹר וְהִנֵּה אֵינְנוּ וְאֲבִקְשָׁהוּ וְלֹא נִמְצָא: (לז) שֹׁמֵר תָּם וַיִּרְאֶה יֵשׁר כִּי אַחֲרִית לְאִישׁ שָׁלוֹם: (לח) וּפְשָׁעִים נִשְׁמְדוּ יַחַדוֹ אַחֲרִית רָשָׁעִים נִכְרְתָה:

(34) Hope to Hashem and keep to His way. For He will raise you high to inherit the earth and you will witness the destruction of the evildoers. (35) I saw a powerful, wealthy evildoer solidly rooted in his community like an ancient flourishing tree. (36) But he passed on, and when I looked—he was no more! I searched for him, but he could no longer be found. (37) Observe the man of moral purity and watch the upright man. There is a [bright] destiny for the man of peace. (38) But, the transgressors have been destroyed together. The future of the evildoers has already been cut off.

PART 10. CONCLUSION. You can be assured that Hashem will grant a *yeshuah* to those who put their trust in Him.

(לט) וַתִּשְׁוַעַת צְדִיקִים מִה' מְעוֹזָם בְּעֵת צָרָה: (מ) וַיַּעֲזֶרֶם ה' וַיִּפְלְטֵם וַיִּפְלְטֵם מִרְשָׁעִים וַיּוֹשִׁיעֵם כִּי חָסוּ בוֹ:

(39) The *yeshuah* of the righteous is from Hashem, their stronghold in time

of distress. (40) Hashem helped them and He freed them. He will free them from the threat of harm by the evildoers. And He will grant them a life of yeshuah for they have put their trust in Him.

Learning the Mizmor

PART 1. RESIST EVIL

(א) לָדוּד

אַל תִּתְחַר בַּמַּרְעִים
אַל תִּקְנֵא בְעֹשֵׂי עוֹלָה:

This is a mizmor **by David** — לָדוּד. **Don't be disturbed by** the seeming good fortune **of bad people** — אַל תִּתְחַר בַּמַּרְעִים. Don't let yourself be tempted to associate with them and emulate them. **Don't be envious** — אַל תִּקְנֵא **of** the successes of **wrongdoers** — בְעֹשֵׂי עוֹלָה, thinking that you might want to be like them.

(ב) כִּי כַחֲצִיר מְהֵרָה יִמָּלוּ
וּכְיֶרֶק דָּשָׂא יִבּוֹלוּ:

Don't let them affect you **for** — כִּי they and their successes will soon come to an end. They are **like** meadow **grass** — כַּחֲצִיר on which animals feed. It grows quickly but **will** just as **quickly be cut down** — מְהֵרָה יִמָּלוּ. Whatever remains is **like vegetation** — וּכְיֶרֶק דָּשָׂא that is used to feed people. It grows more slowly but in the end **they will wither** — יִבּוֹלוּ and rot away of their own accord.

(ג) בְּטַח בַּה' וַעֲשֵׂה טוֹב
שָׁכֵן אֶרֶץ וַיְרַעַה אֱמוּנָה:

Instead of aping the wrongdoers who foolishly trust in their material wealth, you should **trust in Hashem** to take care of you **and** you should **do good** — 'בְּטַח בַּה' — **וַעֲשֵׂה טוֹב** by serving Him. As a result, you will be able to comfortably **dwelt in the land** — שָׁכֵן אֶרֶץ in security. You will have the peace of mind that comes from knowing your success is well-deserved and that it will continue. **And** you will be able to **feed** — וַיְרַעַה your family in reward for your **loyalty** — אֱמוּנָה to Hashem.

(ד) וְהִתְעַנַּג עַל ה'
וַיִּתֵּן לָךְ מְשָׁאֵלֶת לִבְךָ:

Instead of seeking empty pleasures in the company of wrongdoers, find your true **delight in serving Hashem** — 'וְהִתְעַנַּג עַל ה''. That means you should seek only those pleasures of which you need not be ashamed in G-d's presence. These pleasures will give you joy because they have come to you through His bounty and they find favor in His eyes. Even amidst joys and pleasures you remain with your G-d. If you do this, **He will surely grant you fulfillment of the desires of your heart** — וַיִּתֵּן לָךְ מְשָׁאֵלֶת לִבְךָ.

PART 2. TRUST IN HASHEM

(ה) גֹּזֵל עַל ה' דִּרְכֶּךָ
וּבִטַח עָלָיו וְהוּא יַעֲשֶׂה:

Turn over to Hashem — 'גֹּזֵל עַל ה'' the burdens you encounter on **your road** — דִּרְכֶּךָ in life. For the achievement of every goal is controlled by Him, even the road to get there. Of course, you should do as much as you can, but then **rely on Him** — וּבִטַח עָלָיו and no other. You know that **He will do** — וְהוּא יַעֲשֶׂה what is needed, so you can dwell serenely in the land.

(ו) וְהוֹצִיא כְּאוֹר צִדְקֶךָ
וּמִשְׁפָּטֶךָ כְּצַהֲרִים:

Trust in Hashem and don't be upset about people who intentionally misjudge or slander your motives. **He will bring forth your righteousness** so that your intent will be clear and visible **as the light** — וְהוֹצִיא כְּאוֹר צִדְקֶךָ of day. **And the opinion** of your fellow man — וּמִשְׁפָּטֶךָ will be as plain to you **as the noonday sun** — כְּצַהֲרִים.

(ז) דְּוֹם לָהּ וְהִתְחוּלַל לּוֹ

Even if you are still experiencing difficulties, **wait patiently for the yeshuah of Hashem** — 'דְּוֹם לָהּ' and **entrust yourself to Him** — וְהִתְחוּלַל לּוֹ and His plan for you. The challenges you are now facing are necessary for you to develop into the person He wants you to be.

אַל תִּתְחַר בְּמִצְלִיחַ דִּרְכּוֹ

בְּאִישׁ עֹשֶׂה מְזֻמוֹת:

Don't let yourself be disturbed — אַל תִּתְחַר — **at seeing a man who prospers** — בְּמַצְלִיחַ דְּרָכּוֹ — **בְּאִישׁ עֹשֶׂה מְזֻמוֹת** — **a man who develops devious schemes** — to take advantage of people who trust him.

PART 3. OVERCOME RESENTMENT.

(ח) הִרְרָף מֵאַף וְעִזַּב חֲמָה

אַל תִּתְחַר אֶדְ לְהִרְעֶ:

Let go your feelings of righteous **anger** — הִרְרָף מֵאַף — against those who have turned away from Hashem. **And forsake** inner **resentment** — וְעִזַּב חֲמָה — at your being subject to misfortune. **Don't let yourself be disturbed** — אַל תִּתְחַר — by the prosperity of evil people. All such feelings do nothing **but bring harm** — אֶדְ לְהִרְעֶ to you.

(ט) כִּי מִרְעִים יִכָּרְתוּן

וְקוֹי ה' הִמָּה יִירְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ:

Don't be confused by the prosperity of undeserving people, **for the evildoers** — כִּי מִרְעִים — that you now see as successful **will be cut off** — יִכָּרְתוּן. They won't last. **But** on the other hand, **those who place their hope** and destiny **with Hashem** — וְקוֹי ה', **they** alone — הִמָּה — **will inherit the earth** — יִירְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ — and live out their days on it.

(י) וְעוֹד מְעַט וְאִין רָשָׁע

וְהִתְבוֹנְנֶתָ עַל מְקוֹמוֹ וְאִינְנוּ:

The many evildoers of the world may be such a problem for you that you feel you cannot take any more. But if you will have the patience to wait **just a little longer**, you will see that they will be gone and **there** will be **no evildoer** left — וְעוֹד מְעַט — **וְאִין רָשָׁע**. **You will look at his place** where you saw him last **and he will not be there** — וְהִתְבוֹנְנֶתָ עַל מְקוֹמוֹ וְאִינְנוּ. People will not even remember that he existed for he left no trace of himself.

(יא) וְעַנּוּיִם יִירְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ

וְהִתְעַנְגּוּ עַל רֵב שְׁלוֹם:

Once the evildoers are gone, the virtuous people who were exploited and abused will be the only ones left. Then these **humble people will inherit the earth** — **עַל רֹב וְהִתְעַנְּנוּ** **They will delight** — **וְעַנְוִים יִירְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ שְׁלוֹם** because there will be enough for everyone and their rights to the land will not be contested.

PART 4. EVILDOERS HAVE NO FUTURE

(יב) זִמָּם רָשָׁע לִצְדִיק

וְחָרַק עָלָיו שִׁנָּיו:

Hashem will cut short the life of the evildoer who is unable to coexist peacefully with righteous people. The evildoer sees the very existence of a righteous person as a reproach to his way of life. And so **the evildoer is busy concocting elaborate schemes against the righteous person** — **זִמָּם רָשָׁע לִצְדִיק** and when he is confident of achieving his purpose, **he gnashes his teeth at him** — **וְחָרַק עָלָיו שִׁנָּיו** to express his hatred and contempt.

(יג) אֶדְנִי יִשְׁחַק לוֹ

כִּי רָאָה כִּי יָבֵא יוֹמוֹ:

But **Hashem laughs at him** — **ה' יִשְׁחַק לוֹ** and his foolish schemes. **For Hashem sees** — **כִּי רָאָה** that the **day** of the evildoer's downfall **is coming** — **כִּי יָבֵא יוֹמוֹ** and he will never have the opportunity to carry out his plans.

(יד) חָרַב פָּתְחוּ רְשָׁעִים וְדָרְכוּ קִשְׁתָּם

לְהַפִּיל עָנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן לְטָבוֹחַ יִשְׂרָי דָרְדָּ:

Hashem laughs when He sees that **the evildoers draw their sword** — **חָרַב פָּתְחוּ** and **bend their bows** — **וְדָרְכוּ קִשְׁתָּם**, to bring down the poor and the destitute — **לְהַפִּיל עָנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן**, to slaughter those whose way is straight — **לְטָבוֹחַ יִשְׂרָי דָרְדָּ**. Hashem laughs because He knows that the evildoers are driven by selfishness and they will end up fighting among themselves. So despite their wicked intentions they will fail in the end.

(טו) חָרַבִּם תִּבּוֹא בְלִבָּם

וְקִשְׁתוֹתָם תִּשְׁבְּרָנָה:

Hashem knows that in the end **their sword will pierce their own heart** — **חָרַבִּם**

תבוא בלבם, and when they try to bend their weapons to shoot arrows, **their bows will be broken** — **וקשתותם תשבִּרנה** — as a result of internal rivalries and squabbles.

(טז) טוב מעט לצדיק

מהמון רשעים רבים:

Even when the evildoers appear to be prosperous, don't be resentful. One cannot judge the true extent of a person's fortune by outward appearances. Even when the wealth of the evildoer appears great, it may be short-lived. **The little that the righteous** — **מעט לצדיק** — man has is effectively **better** — **טוב** — **than the great abundance of the evildoers** — **מהמון רשעים רבים**.

(יז) כי זרועות רשעים תשבִּרנה

וסומך צדיקים ה'

For the war-making arms of the evildoers will soon be broken — **כי זרועות רשעים תשבִּרנה** — and they will be unable to bend the bow that they plan to use against the righteous. In any case, **Hashem supports the righteous** — **וסומך צדיקים ה'**, even when they are still physically weaker than the evildoers.

PART 5. A STARK CONTRAST

(יח) יודע ה' ימי תמימם

ונחלתם לעולם תהיה:

Hashem knows — **יודע ה'** — and appreciates the faithful devotion shown in all **the days** — **ימי** — **of the people who are wholly committed** — **תמימם** — to His service. **Their inheritance** — **ונחלתם**, which they will receive from Him, **will be for eternity** — **לעולם תהיה**, in this world and the next.

(יט) לא יבשו בעת רעה

ובימי רעבון ישבעו:

They will be secure in their inheritance and so **they will not be shamed** by having to seek help from other nations **in time of global calamity** — **לא יבשו בעת רעה** — such as plague or war. **And even in time of world-wide famine** — **ובימי רעבון** — **they will have their fill** — **ישבעו** — of the harvest.

(כ) כִּי רְשָׁעִים יֵאָבְדוּ
וְאֹיְבֵי ה' בִּיקָר כָּרִים כָּלוּ
בְּעָשָׁן כָּלוּ:

But the evildoers will perish — כִּי רְשָׁעִים יֵאָבְדוּ, and the enemies of Hashem will be utterly consumed like the fat of sacrificial lambs — וְאֹיְבֵי ה' בִּיקָר כָּרִים כָּלוּ, which is vaporized in fire. The wealth which they have slowly and carefully amassed will not help them at the time of their destruction. All will be gone! **Gone up in smoke!** — בְּעָשָׁן כָּלוּ.

(כא) לֹוֹה רְשָׁע וְלֹא יִשְׁלֵם

The evildoer will not last because his life is organized around what he can get out of the world instead of what value he can give. In the end, his self-serving schemes will do him in. The **evildoer continues to borrow — לֹוֹה רְשָׁע** from the world **but does not** even **repay — וְלֹא יִשְׁלֵם** what he has taken. His indebtedness continues to mount and ultimately there will be an accounting.

וְצַדִּיק חוֹנֵן וְנוֹתֵן:

In contrast, **the righteous person is a benefactor and a giver — וְצַדִּיק חוֹנֵן וְנוֹתֵן** to the world, without regard for what is due him. He lives in this world as a net creditor and Hashem will see to it that he ultimately gets what is due him — his eternal inheritance.

(כב) כִּי מְבֹרָכֵי יִירָשׁוּ אֶרֶץ
וּמְקַלְלֵי יִכְרְתוּ:

For His blessed ones will inherit the earth — כִּי מְבֹרָכֵי יִירָשׁוּ אֶרֶץ, while His accursed ones, the evildoers, will be cut off — וּמְקַלְלֵי יִכְרְתוּ.

PART 6. THE BLESSING OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

(כג) מִה' מְצַעֲדֵי גֵבֶר כּוֹנְנוֹ
וְדַרְכּוֹ יַחְפֵּץ:

Even though the righteous man may seem to be at a disadvantage in this world, Hashem loves him and supports him every step of his way through life. Thus, it is

by a blessing **from Hashem** — **מֵה'** that the righteous **man's footsteps** — **מַצְעָדֵי גִבּוֹר** **are made firm** — **כּוֹנְנֵנוּ**. **And** because **Hashem is pleased with** that man's **way** — **וַדְרָכּוֹ יִחְפָּץ** He continues to help him and guide him.

(כד) כִּי יִפֹּל לֹא יוֹטֵל

כִּי ה' סוֹמֵךְ יָדוֹ:

If it is Hashem's will that **he** should **fall** into misfortune, **he will not be completely brought down** — **כִּי יִפֹּל לֹא יוֹטֵל**. **For Hashem** is there with him and **supports his hand** — **כִּי ה' סוֹמֵךְ יָדוֹ**. Thus, he will always have an opportunity to raise himself. In contrast the evildoer will never recover when things go against him.

(כה) נַעַר הָיִיתִי גַם זָקֵנְתִי

וְלֹא רָאִיתִי צָדִיק נֶעְזֵב

וְזָרְעוֹ מִבְּקֵשׁ לֶחֶם:

I can attest to what I have been saying because I have seen much in my own eventful life. **I was** once a **young fellow** — **נַעַר הָיִיתִי** eager to learn and do the right thing but there were times when I thought I would never make it to old age. Over the years I survived many threats to my life and **I have even grown old** — **גַם זָקֵנְתִי** in experience if not in years. **Yet** in all my life **I have never seen a righteous man abandoned** by society and unable to buy minimal food and clothing — **וְלֹא רָאִיתִי צָדִיק נֶעְזֵב**. **Nor**, after his death, **have I seen his offspring** on the streets **begging for bread** — **וְזָרְעוֹ מִבְּקֵשׁ לֶחֶם**.

(כו) כָּל הַיּוֹם חוֹנֵן וּמְלוֹה

וְזָרְעוֹ לְבָרְכָה:

Don't expect the righteous person to be wealthy, for his purpose in life is not to grow rich. In fact, **every day he is generous** — **כָּל הַיּוֹם חוֹנֵן** in providing sustenance to the needy. **And** when it is appropriate he **lends** — **וּמְלוֹה** what he can to help them establish their livelihood. He continues to act with kindness even when he is experiencing financial difficulties of his own. **And** as a result, **his children** — **וְזָרְעוֹ**, who are influenced by the example of their father, **are a blessing** — **לְבָרְכָה** to him and others.

PART 7. THE RIGHT WAY.

(כז) סֹר מִרַע וְעֲשֵׂה טוֹב

וְשָׁכֵן לְעוֹלָם:

Therefore, don't be misled by current conditions such as the success of the evildoer. Hold fast to your principles. Consistently **turn away from evil and do good** — **סֹר מִרַע וְעֲשֵׂה טוֹב**. **You will then live** in peace and security **all your life** — **וְשָׁכֵן לְעוֹלָם** under the protection of Hashem.

(כח) כִּי ה' אֹהֵב מִשְׁפָּט

וְלֹא יַעֲזֹב אֶת חֲסִידָיו

As I said, "I have never seen a righteous man abandoned" (verse 25). Why is that? **For Hashem loves justice** — **כִּי ה' אֹהֵב מִשְׁפָּט** and so He loves the man of integrity who is careful never to take what is not his by right. **And He will surely not forsake His devout ones** — **וְלֹא יַעֲזֹב אֶת חֲסִידָיו**, who go beyond the letter of the law. They prefer to yield on their own rights to avoid the risk of infringing upon those of another.

לְעוֹלָם נִשְׁמְרוּ

וְזֶרַע רְשָׁעִים נִכְרָת:

They and their offspring **will always be protected** — **לְעוֹלָם נִשְׁמְרוּ**, **but the offspring of the evildoers**, who trample on the rights of others, **will be cut off** — **וְזֶרַע רְשָׁעִים נִכְרָת**. For when the evildoers are done away with, their offspring will be cut off with them.

(כט) צְדִיקִים יִירְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ

וְיִשְׁכְּנוּ לְעַד עַלְיָהּ:

Not only will the righteous be protected from harm, they will be rewarded for their steadfastness. Since the evildoers will be no more, **the righteous will inherit the earth** — **צְדִיקִים יִירְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ** and **dwell forever upon it** — **וְיִשְׁכְּנוּ לְעַד עַלְיָהּ** in peace and security.

(ל) פִּי צַדִּיק יְהַגֵּה חֲכָמָה

וּלְשׁוֹנוֹ תִּדְבֵר מִשְׁפָּט:

The righteous are worthy of inheriting the earth because their goal in life is not the gathering of riches but in serving Hashem. They do so by helping others (posuk 26) and teaching them the wisdom of the Torah. Thus, **the mouth of the righteous man utters wisdom** — פִּי צַדִּיק יְהַגֵּה חֲכָמָה **and his tongue speaks justice** — וּלְשׁוֹנוֹ תִּדְבֵר מִשְׁפָּט. But only the righteous man is able to do so. His true understanding of what is right is directly dependent upon the life he leads.

(לא) תּוֹרַת אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּלִבּוֹ

לֹא תִמְעַד אֲשֶׁרָיו:

The righteous man lives a consistent life. Thus, **the Torah of his G-d is in his heart** — תּוֹרַת אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּלִבּוֹ as well as in his actions. **His footsteps do not slide away** — לֹא תִמְעַד אֲשֶׁרָיו from the Torah that is in his heart. He does not look for ways to minimize the obligations that the Torah places on him.

PART 8. PROTECTION FROM EVIL.

(לב) צוֹפֵה רָשָׁע לְצַדִּיק

וּמִבְקֵשׁ לְהַמִּיתוֹ:

The happiness that the righteous man finds in serving Hashem is highly disturbing to the evildoer because it stands as a silent accusation to his way of life. So **the evildoer** eagerly **watches** and waits **for the righteous** — צוֹפֵה רָשָׁע לְצַדִּיק to suffer some misfortune **and** if that doesn't happen, **he seeks to have him put to death** — וּמִבְקֵשׁ לְהַמִּיתוֹ by informing on him to the authorities.

(לג) ה' לֹא יַעֲזֹבֵנוּ בְיָדוֹ

וְלֹא יִרְשִׁיעֵנוּ בְּהַשְׁפָּטוֹ:

But **Hashem will not abandon him** — ה' לֹא יַעֲזֹבֵנוּ and leave him defenseless **under** the evildoer's **hand** — בְּיָדוֹ. **Nor will Hashem let** that righteous man **be unjustly condemned when he is judged** — וְלֹא יִרְשִׁיעֵנוּ בְּהַשְׁפָּטוֹ.

PART 9. DESTINY

(לד) קִוְּהָ אֶל ה' וּשְׁמֹר דְרָכָו

וּירוֹמְמֶךָ לְרֶשֶׁת אֶרֶץ

בְּהִכָּרַת רְשָׁעִים תִּרְאֶה:

Now that you have seen how Hashem helps the righteous man who is faithful to Him, even if the evildoer makes life difficult for you, I urge you to place your **hope in Hashem** — קִוְּהָ אֶל ה' and continue to trust Him. Remain faithful to Him and **keep to His way** — וּשְׁמֹר דְרָכָו, which is the way of patience and long-suffering. **For He will** surely save you from the evildoers and **raise you high to inherit the earth** — וּירוֹמְמֶךָ לְרֶשֶׁת אֶרֶץ. He will fight your battle and **you will witness the destruction of the evildoers** — בְּהִכָּרַת רְשָׁעִים תִּרְאֶה even though they appear to be successful at the moment.

(לה) רָאִיתִי רָשָׁע עָרִיץ

וּמִתְעָרָה כְּאֶזְרַח רֵעֵנִי:

With my own eyes **I saw a powerful, wealthy evildoer** — רָאִיתִי רָשָׁע עָרִיץ, who was in the prime of life **and solidly rooted in his community like an ancient flourishing tree** — וּמִתְעָרָה כְּאֶזְרַח רֵעֵנִי.

(לו) וַיַּעֲבֹר וְהִנֵּה אֵינְנִי

וְאֶבְקַשְׁהוּ וְלֹא נִמְצָא:

But then he passed on — וַיַּעֲבֹר, **and when I looked** — וְהִנֵּה **he was no more** — וְאֶבְקַשְׁהוּ וְלֹא נִמְצָא! **I searched for him, but he could no longer be found** — וְאֶבְקַשְׁהוּ וְלֹא נִמְצָא. His entire wealth and even his extensive family had vanished. The many people who had been dependent on him denied that he had ever existed.

(לז) שִׁמְרֵ תָם וּרְאֵה יוֹשֵׁר

כִּי אַחֲרִית לְאִישׁ שָׁלוֹם:

Observe — שִׁמְרֵ how different is the fate of the **man of moral purity** — תָם, who is devoted to his duty. **And watch** — וּרְאֵה what happens to **the upright man** — יוֹשֵׁר. You will see that **there is a bright destiny** — כִּי אַחֲרִית לְאִישׁ שָׁלוֹם **for the man of peace** — לְאִישׁ שָׁלוֹם, whose life in This World is in harmony with his

Creator and with his future in the World to Come.

(לח) וּפְשָׁעִים נִשְׁמְדוּ יַחְדָּו
אַחֲרֵית רְשָׁעִים נִכְרְתָה:

But effectively, **the transgressors — וּפְשָׁעִים** have already **been destroyed** all **together — נִשְׁמְדוּ יַחְדָּו** and that is because they share a common sin — defiance of their Creator. If they seem to be prospering, it doesn't mean anything because they have no future. **The future of the evildoers has already been cut off — אַחֲרֵית רְשָׁעִים נִכְרְתָה.**

PART 10. CONCLUSION.

(לט) וְתִשׁוּעַת צְדִיקִים מִה' מְעוֹזִים בְּעַת צָרָה:

In contrast to the fate of the evildoers, the future of the righteous is assured. This is because the **yeshuah of the righteous** is a certain promise **from Hashem — וְתִשׁוּעַת צְדִיקִים מִה'**. He is **their Stronghold in time of distress — מְעוֹזִים בְּעַת צָרָה** when they feel defenseless.

(מ) וַיַּעֲזֶרְםָה' וַיַּפְּלֵם
יַפְּלֵם מִרְשָׁעִים
וַיִּוְשִׁיעֵם כִּי חָסוּ בוֹ:

In the past **Hashem helped them — וַיַּעֲזֶרְםָה'** in their effort to become morally elevated. **And He freed them — וַיַּפְּלֵם** from all the threats of physical annihilation. **He will surely free them from the** threat of harm by the current group of **evildoers — יַפְּלֵם מִרְשָׁעִים**. **And He will grant them an eternal life of yeshuah — וַיִּוְשִׁיעֵם**, which is their just reward **for they have put their trust in Him — כִּי חָסוּ בוֹ.**

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 Attitude.

[37:1] ENVY. – אַל תִּתְחַר בַּמַּרְעִים אֶל תִּקְנָא בְּעֹשֵׂי עוֹלָה – “Don't be

disturbed by bad people. Don't be envious of wrongdoers." Don't let yourself be tempted to associate with wrongdoers and emulate them because of their apparent good fortune. It won't last.

[37:2] – כִּי כְחֻצֵיר מִהֶרֶה יִמְלוּ וְכִי־קָדְשָׁא יִבּוֹלוּן – *"For like grass they will be quickly cut down. Like vegetation they will wither."*

[37:3] BITACHON. – בְּטַח בַּה' וַעֲשֵׂה טוֹב שְׁכֵן אֶרֶץ וְרַעַה אֱמוּנָה – *"Trust in Hashem and do good. Dwell in the land and nourish [your] faith."* Maintain your trust in Hashem despite difficulties; you will be rewarded with security and happiness.

[37:4] DELIGHT – וְהִתְעַנַּג עַל ה' וַיִּתֵּן לְךָ מִשְׁאֵלֶת לִבְךָ – *"Delight in Hashem. He will grant you the desires of your heart."* Serve Hashem with joy in your heart, for you are pleasing Him.

[37:8] RESENTMENT – הֲרַף מֵאַף וְעִזַּב חֲמָה אַל תִּתְחַר אֶדְ לְהַרְעֵ – *"Let go of anger and forsake resentment. Don't let yourself be disturbed, for [such feelings] bring only harm."* You will only harm yourself if you indulge in anger and resentment. If you focus on what is good in your life, your attitude will be its own reward.

[37:27] THE FUTURE. – סוּר מִרַע וַעֲשֵׂה טוֹב וְשָׁכֵן לְעוֹלָם – *"Turn away from evil and do good. You will then live [in peace] all your life."* Hold fast to your principles in spite of difficulties and you will be able to look ahead to a fulfilled life.

Lessons for Life - Your Behavior.

[37:21] INTEGRITY. – לֹא רָשַׁע וְלֹא יִשְׁלֵם – *"The evildoer borrows but does not repay."* Don't borrow unless you really need to; if you have borrowed, treat your debt as a holy obligation.

[37:21] GENEROSITY. – וְצַדִּיק חוֹיֵן וְנוֹתֵן – *"but the righteous person is a benefactor and a giver."* Be generous and helpful to others, without undue concern about being reimbursed.

Tehillos for Life - Contemplation of Hashem.

[37:23] LOVE OF THE RIGHTEOUS. – מֵה' מִצְעָדֵי גֵבֶר כּוֹנְנֵוּ וְדַרְכּוֹ יִחְפָּץ – *"From Hashem the righteous man's footsteps are made firm and Hashem is*

pleased with his way." Even though the righteous man may seem to be at a disadvantage in this world, Hashem loves him and supports him every step of his way through life.

[37:39] YESHUAH. – ותְּשׁוּעַת צְדִיקִים מֵה' מְעוֹז בְּעֵת צָרָה – *"The yeshuah of the righteous is from Hashem, their stronghold in time of distress."* The future of the righteous is assured because their *yeshuah* is a certain promise from Him.

Sources

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

כ – רד"ק, המאירי, אבן יחיאל, מלבי"ם, רשר"ה	א – רש"י, רד"ק, המאירי, בן־רמון, אבן יחיאל, מלבי"ם, רשר"ה
כא – באר אברהם, רשר"ה	ב – רש"י, בן־רמון, אבן יחיאל, מצודות, באר אברהם, רשר"ה
כב – רד"ק	ג – רש"י, אבן עזרא, בן־רמון, מצודות, מלבי"ם
כג – רש"י, אבן עזרא, המאירי, אבן יחיאל, מצודות, מלבי"ם, נר לרגלי	ד – רד"ק, המאירי, בן־רמון, מלבי"ם, רשר"ה
כד – רש"י, רד"ק, המאירי, רשר"ה	ה – רש"י, רד"ק, המאירי, בן־רמון, מלבי"ם, רשר"ה
כה – אבן עזרא, רד"ק, בן־רמון, אבן יחיאל	ו – רד"ק, בן־רמון, רשר"ה
כו – רש"י, רד"ק, רשר"ה	ז – רש"י, רד"ק, בן־רמון, רשר"ה
כז – אבן עזרא, רד"ק, מלבי"ם, רשר"ה	ח – רד"ק, המאירי, באר אברהם, רשר"ה
כח – אבן עזרא, רד"ק, נר לרגלי	ט – רש"י, רד"ק, המאירי, בן־רמון,
כט – רד"ק, אבן יחיאל	י – רש"י, רד"ק, בן־רמון, רשר"ה, נר לרגלי
ל – אבן עזרא, רד"ק, בן־רמון	יא – אבן עזרא, רד"ק, רשר"ה
לא – אבן עזרא, המאירי, רשר"ה	יב – רד"ק, המאירי, בן־רמון, רשר"ה
לב – בן־רמון, רשר"ה, נר לרגלי	יג – רד"ק, בן־רמון
לג – רד"ק, מצודות	יד – בן־רמון
לד – רד"ק, המאירי, בן־רמון	טו – רד"ק
לה – רש"י, אבן עזרא, אבן יחיאל	טז – אבן עזרא, המאירי, רשר"ה
לו – אבן עזרא, רד"ק, אבן יחיאל, נר לרגלי	יז – אבן עזרא, בן־רמון, אבן יחיאל, מלבי"ם
לז – רש"י, אבן עזרא, רד"ק, המאירי, רשר"ה	יח – רש"י, באר אברהם, רשר"ה
לח – רשר"ה, נר לרגלי	יט – אבן עזרא, בן־רמון, ספורנו, אבן יחיאל
לט – מצודות, רשר"ה	
מ – רשר"ה	

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