

Mizmor 044

Triumph and Tragedy

Key Concepts

This mizmor is a *tefillah* in which the Jewish people express the mixed emotions that we have felt during times of Exile. On the one hand there is a sense of great joy and gratitude for the miraculous events of times past when *Hashem* freed us from oppression and gave us our Land. But on the other hand there is a bitter lamentation for our current tragic situation. The situation has become so bad that we fear we may not be able to survive if Hashem does not come to our aid immediately. Therefore, the mizmor concludes with a heartfelt plea for Hashem to grant us a *yeshuah* now, even if we don't deserve it.

Exploring the Mizmor

The mizmor is written as though being sung by the assembled Jewish people, sometimes speaking as a single national entity and sometimes speaking in the plural form as a collection of individuals. (Possibly it was intended to be performed alternately by a lead singer and a choir.)

PART 1. TRIUMPHS IN TIMES PAST. The people look back fondly on the triumphant days of times past when Hashem performed great wonders for them, bringing them from the slavery of Mitzrayim (Egypt) and the travails of the Midbar (Wilderness) to a great kingdom in the Land of Canaan.

(א) לַמְנַצֵּחַ לְבָנֵי קִרְחַ מְשֻׁכִּיל: (ב) אֲלֵקִים בְּאַזְנוֹנוּ שָׁמַעְנוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ סִפְרוּ לָנוּ פִּעֵל
פִּעֵלְתָּ בְיָמֵיהֶם בְּיָמֵי קֶדֶם: (ג) אַתָּה יְדָד גּוֹיִם הוֹרַשְׁתָּ וַתִּטְעַם תָּרַע לְאֲמִים
וַתִּשְׁלַח־ם: (ד) כִּי לֹא בַחֲרָבָם יָרְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ וְזָרוּעָם לֹא הוֹשִׁיעָה לָמוּ כִּי יְמִינָדָּ וְזָרוּעָדָּ
וְאוֹר פָּנֶיךָ כִּי רָצִיתָם:

(1) For the musician, a song of enlightenment by the sons of Korach. (2) G-d, we have heard with our [own] ears. Our forefathers, have related to us the deeds that You performed, in their days, in the days of old. (3) You, [with] Your own hand, drove out [seven sinful] nations and planted [our forefathers in the Land of Canaan]. You smashed the [sinful] peoples and

dismissed them. (4) For not by their sword did [our forefathers] possess the land, nor did their arm save them. Rather [what saved them were] Your right hand, Your arm and the light of Your Countenance because You showed favor to them.

PART 2. A PLEA FOR HELP. The people are now in Exile and ask Hashem to grant *yeshuos* for the present day generation. They admit they may not be worthy of His direct intervention, so they ask that at the least He send His *malachim* (ministering angels) to come to their aid.

(ה) אַתָּה הוּא מַלְכֵי אֱלֹקִים צִוֵּה יְשׁוּעוֹת יַעֲקֹב: (ו) בְּךָ צָרִינוּ נִנְגַח בְּשִׁמְךָ נְבוֹסִים קָמִינוּ: (ז) כִּי לֹא בְקִשְׁתִּי אֲבֹטַח וְחַרְבִּי לֹא תוֹשִׁיעֵנִי: (ח) כִּי הוֹשַׁעְתָּנוּ מִצָּרֵינוּ וּמִשְׂנְאֵינוּ הִבִּישׁוֹת:

(5) You have been my King, O G-d, command [Your malachim to carry out] yeshuos for Yaakov. (6) With [Your help] we will stand up and attack our foes. Through Your Name we will run down those who rise up against us. (7) For I will not trust in my bow, and my sword will not save me. (8) For You have saved us [in the past] from our tormentors and You shamed those who hate us.

PART 3. GLORY AND GRATITUDE. Even if they are not fully worthy now, the people recall that historically they have always thanked Hashem for coming to their aid. In recognition of that consistent practice of gratitude they hope He will save them again.

(ט) בְּאֱלֹקִים הִלְלָנוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם וְשִׁמְךָ לְעוֹלָם נוֹדֶה סֵלָה:

(9) G-d has given us a sense of glory all the days, and we have always thanked Your Name, Selah.

PART 4. THE TRAGEDY OF THE PRESENT. The people bitterly bemoan their current tragic situation, which is much worse than they first suggested. Because of the critical situation they feel they can no longer wait for a *yeshuah*. They know that they have sinned but they also know that the judgment of Hashem is the instrument of their suffering.

(י) אֵף זָנַחַת וּתְכַלִּימֵנוּ וְלֹא תִצָּא בְּצַבָּאוֹתֵינוּ: (יא) תִּשְׁיִבֵנוּ אַחֲוֹר מִנִּי צָר וּמִשְׂנְאֵינוּ שָׁסוּ לָמוֹ: (יב) תִּתְּנֵנוּ כְּצֹאן מֵאֲכָל וּבְגוֹיִם זָרִיתָנוּ: (יג) תִּמְכֹּר עֲמֶךָ בְּלֹא הוֹן וְלֹא רֵבִית בְּמַחִירֵיהֶם: (יד) תִּשְׁיִמֵנוּ חֶרֶף לְשִׁכְנֵינוּ לַעֲג וְקִלְס לְסִבִּיבוֹתֵינוּ: (טו) תִּשְׁיִמֵנוּ מְשָׁל בְּגוֹיִם מְנוּד רֹאשׁ בֵּל אֲמִים: (טז) כָּל הַיּוֹם כָּלְמָתִי נִגְדִי וּבִשְׁתׁ פָּנַי כִּסְתָנִי: (יז) מִקּוֹל מְחַרְרֵי וּמִגִּדְף מִפְּנֵי אוֹיֵב וּמִתְנַקֵּם:

(10) [But now] You have also cast us off and humiliated us; You don't go forth with our armies. (11) You have turned us back [in retreat] from the tormentor. Those who hate us have plundered [our valuables] for themselves. (12) You handed us [over], like sheep to be eaten and You scattered us among the nations. (13). You sell Your nation without [even asking for] something worthwhile. You do not raise their price. (14) You have made us an object of ridicule to our neighbors. [We have become] the mockery and scorn of those around us. (15) You made us a [tragic] symbol among the nations, [a reason] among the peoples [for] shaking [their] head. (16) My disgrace is before me every day. My face is covered in shame ... (17) ... at the loud voice [of the blasphemer who] defies and denies. [I suffer humiliation] before the enemy the avenger.

PART 5. LOYALTY IN TORMENT. The people strengthen their argument for *yeshuah*: In addition to gratitude for past wonders in triumphal times, they have remained loyal to Hashem despite the torment of tragic times. They hope their faithfulness will count against the reckoning of their sins.

(יח) כָּל זֹאת בָּאֵתָנוּ וְלֹא שָׁכַחְנוּךָ וְלֹא שָׁקַרְנוּ בְּבְרִיתֶךָ: (יט) לֹא נִסּוּג אַחֲרֵי לִבֵּנוּ וְנִתַּט אֲשֶׁרִינוּ מִנִּי אֶרְחֶךָ: (כ) כִּי דָבַרְתָּנוּ בְּמִקְוֹם תַּנִּים וְנִתְכַּס עָלֵינוּ בְּצַלְמֹת: (כא) אִם שָׁכַחְנוּ שֵׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנִפְרַשׁ כַּפֵּינוּ לְאֵל זָר: (כב) הֲלֹא אֱלֹקִים יַחְקֵר זֹאת כִּי הוּא יִדַּע תַּעֲלָמוֹת לֵב: (כג) כִּי עָלִידָה הִרְגָנוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם נֶחֱשַׁבְנוּ כְּצֹאן טְבָחָה:

(18) All this has come upon us but we have not forgotten You. We have not betrayed Your covenant. (19) Our heart has not retreated, nor have our footsteps deviated from Your path. (20) Even when You crushed us in the territory of [nations cruel as] serpents and enveloped us in the dark shadow [of the Exile]. (21) Have we forgotten the Name of our G-d? Have we extended our hands [in prayer] to an alien god? (22) Would not G-d have detected this, for He knows the secrets of the heart? (23) For we have [willingly allowed ourselves] to be killed at all times for Your Name. We have been counted as sheep for slaughter.

PART 6. THE TIME IS NOW. The people desperately plead for an immediate *yeshuah*, justified by the kindness of Hashem, if nothing else.

(כד) עוֹרָה לָמָּה תִישָׁן אֲדֹנָי הַקִּיצָה אֵל תִּזְנַח לְנִצָּח: (כה) לָמָּה פָּנִידָה תִסְתִּיר וְתִשָּׁכַח עֵינֵינוּ וְלִחְצָנוּ: (כו) כִּי שָׁחָה לְעַפְרָר נַפְשֵׁנוּ דְבִקָּה לְאַרְצָ בְּטַנְנוּ: (כז) קוּמָה עֲזַרְתָּה לָנוּ וּפִדְנוּ לְמַעַן חֲסִדֶךָ:

(24) Awake! Why [do You wish to] appear asleep, Hashem? bring about an awakening. Don't forsake [us] forever! (25) Why do You hide Your face? Why do You [appear to] forget our suffering and distress? (26) For our soul

has bowed towards the dust, our belly clings to the ground. (27) Arise to Help us! Redeem us because of Your kindness.

Learning the Mizmor

PART 1. TRIUMPHS IN TIMES PAST.

(א) לְמַנְצֵחַ לְבַנֵּי קֶרַח מְשֻׁכֵּיל:

For the musician — לְמַנְצֵחַ who will perform it, this is a **maskil** (song of enlightenment) composed **by the sons of Korach** — לְבַנֵּי קֶרַח מְשֻׁכֵּיל through the power of *nevuah* (prophecy).

(ב) אֲלֵקִים בְּאָזְנוֹנוּ שָׁמַעְנוּ
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ סִפְרוּ לָנוּ

G-d, with our own ears we have heard — אֲלֵקִים בְּאָזְנוֹנוּ שָׁמַעְנוּ of the miraculous events which occurred when the Jewish people were liberated from Mitzrayim and traveled through the Midbar to enter Eretz Yisrael. **Our forefathers**, who were eminently trustworthy, **have related** these events **to us** — אֲבוֹתֵינוּ סִפְרוּ לָנוּ through a chain of faithful tradition that goes back many generations.

פָּעַל פְּעֻלָּתְךָ בְּיָמֵיהֶם
בְּיָמֵי קֶדֶם:

Each generation passed on to their children the description of **the historic deeds that You performed** — פָּעַל פְּעֻלָּתְךָ, as witnessed originally by our forefathers **in their days** — בְּיָמֵיהֶם. Although that was **in days of old** — בְּיָמֵי קֶדֶם, the chain of tradition that links us to them is so strong that it is as though we heard the testimony ourselves from the original witnesses.

(ג) אֶתְּךָ יָדְךָ גּוֹיִם הוֹרַשְׁתָּ

You, with Your own hand — אֶתְּךָ יָדְךָ of judgment, **drove out** seven sinful **nations** — גּוֹיִם הוֹרַשְׁתָּ from the land of Canaan. It was You that executed Your judgment against them. Even though Your action was also for the benefit of our forefathers, they did not find it necessary to do battle against those idol-worshipping nations.

וַתִּטְעַם תְּרַע לְאֲמִים וַתִּשְׁלַח־ם:

And You planted our forefathers — **וַתִּטְעַם** in the Land like a healthy young tree, so that they would flourish there. As for those who previously occupied Canaan, **You smashed** the **peoples** because of their sins **and dismissed them** — **תְּרַע** **לְאֲמִים וַתִּשְׁלַח־ם** from the arena of history.

(ד) כִּי לֹא בַחֲרָבָם יִרְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ
וַיִּזְרְעוּם לֹא הוֹשִׁיעָה לָמוֹ

For not by their sword — **כִּי לֹא בַחֲרָבָם** **did** our forefathers **possess the land** — **וַיִּזְרְעוּם לֹא** **וַיִּרְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ**, **nor did** the might and skill of **their arm save them** — **וַיִּזְרְעוּם לֹא** **הוֹשִׁיעָה לָמוֹ**. In any case this would have been inadequate for they were not a trained military force.

כִּי יְמִינְךָ וַיִּזְרְעֶךָ וְאוֹר פְּנִיךָ

Rather — **כִּי** what saved them, Hashem, were the following three things: (1) the power of **Your right hand** — **יְמִינְךָ**, (2) the weapons of battle wielded by **Your arm** — **וַיִּזְרְעֶךָ**, and (3) **the light** that came to them from **Your countenance** — **וְאוֹר פְּנִיךָ**. That light was the light of the Torah and the *Shechinah* (Your presence), which accompanied them.

כִּי רָצִיתָם:

You did all this for their benefit **because** — **כִּי** they dedicated themselves to Your will. And so **You showed favor to them** — **רָצִיתָם** even though they were not yet worthy of miracles being done in their own *zechus* (merit).

PART 2. A PLEA FOR HELP.

(ה) אַתָּה הוּא מַלְכִי אֱלֹקִים
צִוֵּה יְשׁוּעוֹת יַעֲקֹב:

You have been my King, O G-d — **אַתָּה הוּא מַלְכִי אֱלֹקִים** and performed all these *yeshuos* in the past without an intermediary. Now continue to be my King and come to my aid. If I am not worthy of Your direct help, at least **command** Your *malachim* to carry out **yeshuos for** the children of **Yaakov** — **צִוֵּה יְשׁוּעוֹת יַעֲקֹב**. Even if I don't have the title Yisrael and I am only Yaakov, a lowly nation ground under the heels of the other nations, I ask that You keep the promise You made to me and don't let me be destroyed by them.

(ו) בָּךְ צָרִינוּ נִגְנַח
בְּשִׁמְךָ נְבוֹס קִמִּינוּ:

Even though we are still in exile and cannot count on Your direct intervention, give us Your blessing. Then, **with Your help we will stand up and attack our foes** — בָּךְ צָרִינוּ נִגְנַח like a goring ram that scatters its adversaries. **Through** the power of **Your Name we will run down those who rise up against us** — בְּשִׁמְךָ נְבוֹס seeking to destroy us.

(ז) כִּי לֹא בְקִשְׁתִּי אֶבְטַח
וְחַרְבִּי לֹא תוֹשִׁיעֵנִי:

But my *yeshuah* will be Your doing, **for I will not trust in the arrows from my bow** — כִּי לֹא בְקִשְׁתִּי אֶבְטַח to keep the enemy away, **and** should the enemy break through my defenses, **my sword will not save me** — וְחַרְבִּי לֹא תוֹשִׁיעֵנִי. The power that I have comes only from Your Name with which You have blessed me.

(ח) כִּי הוֹשַׁעְתָּנוּ מִצָּרֵינוּ
וּמִשְׂנְאֵינוּ הִבִּישׁוֹת:

We count on Your *yeshuah* **for You have saved us** in the past **from our tormentors** — כִּי הוֹשַׁעְתָּנוּ מִצָּרֵינוּ **and You shamed those who hate us** — וּמִשְׂנְאֵינוּ הִבִּישׁוֹת. There were many times when their hatred made them want to destroy us, but You shamed them by demonstrating that their plans were futile. Our victory was not our doing, but Yours.

PART 3. GLORY AND GRATITUDE.

(ט) בְּאֱלֹקִים הִלְלָנוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם
וְשִׁמְךָ לְעוֹלָם נוֹדָה סֵלָה:

When You saved us in the past we always acknowledged our debt to You and we gratefully thanked You. In that *zechus* (merit) we appeal to You to save us again. The fact of Your being our **G-d** — בְּאֱלֹקִים **has given us a sense of glory** — הִלְלָנוּ **all the days** — כָּל הַיּוֹם, **and we have always thanked Your Name, Selah** — וְשִׁמְךָ לְעוֹלָם נוֹדָה סֵלָה.

PART 4. THE TRAGEDY OF THE PRESENT.

(י) אַף זָנַחְתָּ וַתְּכַלִּימֵנוּ
וְלֹא תֵצֵא בְּצַבָּאוֹתֵינוּ:

Yet, just as You saved us in the past so now **You have also cast us off and humiliated us** — אַף זָנַחְתָּ וַתְּכַלִּימֵנוּ by showing us up before our enemies. We told them You would save us, but instead You have rejected us. We said You would be at the forefront of our battles **but You do not go forth with our armies** — וְלֹא תֵצֵא בְּצַבָּאוֹתֵינוּ.

(יא) תִּשְׁיִבֵנוּ אַחֲוֹר מִנִּי צָר
וּמִשְׁנֵאֵינוּ שָׁסוּ לָמוֹ:

We know that we are powerless without You and so we shrink back when an enemy approaches. By not going forth with our armies **You have effectively turned us back** in retreat **from the tormentor** — תִּשְׁיִבֵנוּ אַחֲוֹר מִנִּי צָר even more than we had succeeded in turning our enemies back in better times. And when we were in retreat **those who hate us** — וּמִשְׁנֵאֵינוּ **plundered** our valuables **for themselves** — שָׁסוּ לָמוֹ.

(יב) תִּתְּנֵנוּ כְּצֹאן מֵאֶכֶל
וּבְגוֹיִם זָרִיתָנוּ:

You handed us over to our vicious enemies, **like sheep** that are **to be** slaughtered and **eaten** — תִּתְּנֵנוּ כְּצֹאן מֵאֶכֶל but not like those that are kept for breeding and wool. To murder a Jew seemed to them no more wicked than to slaughter a sheep. **And You scattered us among the nations** — וּבְגוֹיִם זָרִיתָנוּ so that we were worse off than sheep, which are at least kept together and watched over by a shepherd.

(יג) תִּמְכַּר עַמְּךָ בְּלֹא הוֹן
וְלֹא רִבִּית בְּמַחֲרִיָּהֶם:

The Jewish people have been Your devoted servants, but the Exile has lasted so long that it is as if You have sold them away to cruel taskmasters. **You sell Your nation** — תִּמְכַּר עַמְּךָ **without** even asking for **something worthwhile** — בְּלֹא הוֹן in return so that the buyer will want to protect his investment. It seems that whatever You get for Your people is not important to You and so **You do not** try to

raise their price — ולא רבית במחיריהם

(יד) תשימנו חרפה לשכנינו
לעג וקלס לסביבותינו:

After scattering us among the nations, **You have made us an object of ridicule to our neighbors** — תשימנו חרפה לשכנינו. We have fallen to such a low level that they don't want us in their vicinity, even in separate ghettos. We have become **the mockery and scorn of those around us** — לעג וקלס לסביבותינו. Furthermore, it is not only we who are disrespected, but the laws and the *mitzvos* that we observe.

(טו) תשימנו משל בגוים
מנוד ראש בלאמים:

You made us a tragic symbol among the nations — תשימנו משל בגוים because we were once so high and have sunk so low. We have become a reason **among the peoples** — בלאמים for **shaking** their **head** — מנוד ראש in amazement at how such a thing could have happened.

(טז) כל היום כלמתי נגדי
ובשת פני כסתני:

There is no letup in my feeling of humiliation, knowing that I have been rejected by my Creator. **Every day** — כל היום and all day long **my disgrace is before me** — כלמתי נגדי, and so I cannot show my face. In fact, **my face is covered in shame** — ובשת פני כסתני.

(יז) מקול מחרף ומגדף
מפני אויב ומתנקם:

I suffer public shame **at the loud voice** — מקול of the blasphemer who **defies** G-d — מחרף and **denies** — ומגדף the authority of the Torah. I suffer humiliation **before the enemy** — מפני אויב who seeks my degradation because he resents my devotion to G-d. **And** I suffer humiliation before **the avenger** — ומתנקם who acts angrily towards me as though I have harmed him and now deserve to be punished.

PART 5. LOYALTY IN TORMENT.

(יח) כָּל זֹאת בָּאֵתָנוּ
וְלֹא שָׁכַחְנוּךָ

All this — כָּל זֹאת endless hardship that **has come upon us** — בָּאֵתָנוּ would make it seem as if You had forgotten us and broken Your covenant with us. And yet despite our being exposed to the blasphemers that continue to defy You, **we have not forgotten You** — וְלֹא שָׁכַחְנוּךָ.

וְלֹא שָׁקַרְנוּ בְּבְרִיתְךָ:

Despite our being continually humiliated by those who deny the authority of the Torah, **we** have remained faithful and **have not betrayed Your covenant** — וְלֹא שָׁקַרְנוּ בְּבְרִיתְךָ. We surely have not sought to blame You for our troubles, and have not looked for an excuse to evade our commitment to You. We have readily acknowledged our sins.

(יט) לֹא נָסוּג אַחֲזֹר לִבֵּנוּ
וַתֵּט אַשְׁרֵינוּ מִנִּי אֶרְחֹךָ:

Despite the prosperity of our enemies, **our heart has not retreated** — לֹא נָסוּג אַחֲזֹר לִבֵּנוּ from our *emunah*. We have not betrayed You in our thoughts. **Nor have** we betrayed You in our actions. **Our footsteps** have not **deviated from** following **Your path** — וַתֵּט אַשְׁרֵינוּ מִנִּי אֶרְחֹךָ of Torah and *mitzvos*, even though You have been exacting in Your demands that we adhere to the commitment we have taken upon ourselves.

(כ) כִּי דָבִיתָנוּ בְּמִקּוֹם תַּנִּים
וַתִּכַּס עָלֵינוּ בְּצִלְמוֹת:

We remained faithful to You **even when You crushed us** and humbled us **in the territory** of nations who are cruel as **serpents** — כִּי דָבִיתָנוּ בְּמִקּוֹם תַּנִּים and even when You **enveloped us in the dark shadow** — וַתִּכַּס עָלֵינוּ בְּצִלְמוֹת of the exile where we suffered in continuing anguish and fear of death.

(כא) אִם שָׁכַחְנוּ שֵׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וַנִּפְרָשׁ כִּפִּינוּ לְאֵל זָר:

Have we become frustrated with our situation and given up on our prayers to

Hashem? **Have we forgotten the Name of our G-d** — אִם שָׁכַחְנוּ שֵׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ — **Have we** become influenced by the prosperity of those around us and **extended our hands** in prayer **to an alien god** — וַנִּפְרֹשׁ כַּפֵּינוּ לְאֵל זָר ?

(כב) הֲלֹא אֱלֹהִים יַחְקֹר זֹאת
כִּי הוּא יֵדַע תַּעֲלָמוֹת לֵב:

If we had been attracted to a false god, even at the subconscious level, would not G-d **have detected this** — הֲלֹא אֱלֹהִים יַחְקֹר זֹאת, **for He knows the secrets of the heart** — כִּי הוּא יֵדַע תַּעֲלָמוֹת לֵב ?

(כג) כִּי עָלִיד הֲרַגְנוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם
נֶחְשָׁבְנוּ כְּצֹאן טְבָחָה:

The depth of our loyalty has been demonstrated by events, **because we have** willingly allowed ourselves **to be killed at all times for** the honor of **Your Name** — כִּי עָלִיד הֲרַגְנוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם — **We have been counted as sheep** that are held **for slaughter** — נֶחְשָׁבְנוּ כְּצֹאן טְבָחָה and yet we have remained faithful to You, which could never have been if our *emunah* was not authentic.

PART 6. THE TIME IS NOW.

(כד) עוֹרָה לָמָּה תִישָׁן אֲדֹנָי

Show the world that You are **awake** — עוֹרָה ! **Why** do You wish to appear **asleep**, **Hashem** — לָמָּה תִישָׁן אֲדֹנָי ? You can see that we want to do Your will.

הַקִּיצָה אֵל תִּזְנַח לְנִצָּח:

Therefore, now is the time to **bring about an awakening** — הַקִּיצָה. As time passes it becomes more and more difficult for us to be worthy of You. If You do not save us now we may never be able to come back to You. **Don't forsake us forever** — אֵל תִּזְנַח לְנִצָּח !

(כה) לָמָּה פָּנֶיךָ תִסְתִּיר
תִשְׁכַּח עֵינֵינוּ וְלִחְצֵנוּ:

Why do You hide Your face — לָמָּה פָּנֶיךָ תִסְתִּיר ? You make it seem as though You don't want to have to see our pain. We have not forgotten You, so **why do You** appear to **forget our suffering and distress** — תִשְׁכַּח עֵינֵינוּ וְלִחְצֵנוּ ? Shouldn't the history of our torment be sufficient to compensate for our sins?

(כו) כִּי שָׁחָה לְעֶפְרָר נַפְשֵׁנוּ
 דָּבְקָה לְאַרְץ בְּטִינָנוּ:

For we have sunk to such a low level that we are near death in this spiritual Exile. **Our soul has bowed towards the dust** — כִּי שָׁחָה לְעֶפְרָר נַפְשֵׁנוּ of the grave. In this physical exile, **our belly clings to the ground** — דָּבְקָה לְאַרְץ בְּטִינָנוּ because our arms are no longer able to support it. Our only possibility of rising again is for You to help us now.

(כז) קוּמָה עֲזַרְתָּה לָנוּ
 וּפִדְנוּ לְמַעַן חַסְדֶּךָ:

Arise to help us — קוּמָה עֲזַרְתָּה לָנוּ ! Our deeds are insufficient to warrant Your favorable judgment, but we are desperate and so we ask that You **redeem us** from this exile anyway, if only **because of Your kindness** — וּפִדְנוּ לְמַעַן חַסְדֶּךָ !

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.

[44:2] TRADITION. – אֱלֹקִים בְּאָזְנוֹנוּ שָׁמַעְנוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ סִפְרוּ לָנוּ – “G-d, we have heard with our [own] ears. Our forefathers, have related to us.” Strengthen Your *emunah* (faith) by recalling that the events of the past did not occur in a vacuum. Their history was passed down to from father to son, from generation to generation.

[44:3] DIVINE ACTION. – אַתָּה יָדָד גּוֹיִם הוֹרַשְׁתָּ וַתִּטְעַם תִּרְעַע לְאֻמִּים וַתִּשְׁלַח־ם – “You, [with] Your own hand, drove out [seven sinful] nations and planted [our forefathers in the Land of Canaan.” Renew your conviction that we committed no offense in taking possession of Eretz Canaan. It was Hashem who replaced the Canaanim because of their corrupt ways.

Tefillos for Life - Your Plea for Yeshuah.

[44:5] STRENGTH. – אַתָּה הוּא מַלְכִי אֱלֹקִים צִוֵּה יְשׁוּעוֹת יַעֲקֹב – “You have been my King, O G-d, command [Your malachim to carry out] yeshuos for

Yaakov." Ask Hashem to invoke His traditional bond with the Jewish people and save them from their enemies, even if that *yeshuah* is carried out by intermediaries rather than the direct hand of G-d.

[44:8] - כִּי הוֹשַׁעְתָּנוּ מִצָּרֵינוּ וּמִשְׂנְאֵינוּ הִבִּישׁוּתָּ - "For You have saved us [in the past] from our tormentors and You shamed those who hate us."

[44:27] URGENCY. - קוּמָה עֲזֹרְתָהּ לָנוּ וּפְדֵנוּ לְמַעַן חַסְדֶּךָ - "Arise to Help us! Redeem us because of Your kindness." Ask Hashem not to wait any longer, but to bring the *yeshuah* now. It is urgently needed.

Tefillos for Life - Your Gratitude.

[44:9] THANKING FOR PAST GLORIES. - בְּאֵלֵקִים הִלְלָנוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם וְשִׁמְךָ לְעוֹלָם - נוֹדָה סֶלָה - "G-d has given us a sense of glory all the days, and we have always thanked Your Name, Selah." Continue to thank Hashem for the past glories of our nation.

Tefillos for Life - Your Relationship with Hashem.

[44:10] ABANDONMENT. - אַף זָנַחְתָּ וַתְּכַלִּימֵנוּ - "[But now] You have also cast us off and humiliated us." Ask Hashem to restore His closeness to you.

[44:11]. - תִּשְׁיבֵנוּ אַחֲוֹר מִנִּי צָר - "You have turned us back [in retreat] from the tormentor."

Tefillos for Life - Your Anguish.

[44:15] ABANDONMENT. - תִּשְׁימֵנוּ מִשָּׁל בְּגוֹיִם מִנֹּד רֵאשׁ בְּלֵאמִים - "You made us a [tragic] symbol among the nations, [a reason] among the peoples [for] shaking [their] head." Our humiliation is all the worse because it was imposed through the actions of Hashem and therefore symbolizes how He has distanced Himself from us.

Sources

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

א - מלבי"ם	יד - בן־רמוך, מלבי"ם
ב - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, המאירי, בן־רמוך, ספורנו	טו - רד"ק, נר לרגלי
ג - רש"י, רד"ק, ספורנו, רשר"ה	טז - בן־רמוך, נר לרגלי
ד - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, המאירי, בן־רמוך, ספורנו, רשר"ה	יז - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, בן־רמוך
ה - רד"ק, מלבי"ם	יח - רד"ק, בן־רמוך, ספורנו, רשר"ה, נר לרגלי
ו - רש"י, אבן עזרא, רד"ק, בן־רמוך, מלבי"ם	יט - בן־רמוך, אבן יחייא, נר לרגלי, מאיר טוב
ז - רד"ק, נר לרגלי	כ - המאירי, בן־רמוך, אבן יחייא, מלבי"ם
ח - רד"ק, מצודות, מלבי"ם, מאיר טוב	כא - רד"ק, בן־רמוך
ט - מאיר טוב	כב - רד"ק, ספורנו, נר לרגלי
י - רד"ק, בן־רמוך, אלשיך	כג - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, מאיר טוב
יא - רש"י, רד"ק, המאירי, בן־רמוך, רשר"ה	כד - רד"ק, נר לרגלי
יב - רד"ק, רשר"ה	כה - רד"ק, בן־רמוך, מאיר טוב
יג - רד"ק, המאירי, מלבי"ם	כו - רד"ק, בן־רמוך, מלבי"ם, מאיר טוב
	כז - רש"י, אבן עזרא,

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