

Mizmor 047

The Shofar is Calling

Key Concepts

The mizmor was composed as a song of praise to Hashem in anticipation of the final *Geulah* (Redemption). It foresees the time when the nations of the world will recognize their debt of gratitude to the Jewish people for carrying the torch of devotion to the One G-d throughout the centuries. If it were not for our nation the world would have long since been destroyed because of mankind's sins.

This mizmor of celebration after a time of cataclysmic war (known as the War of Gog and Magog) will be forever associated with the sound of the *shofar* which signals universal peace and the enthronement of the only universal King.

Each year on *Rosh Hashanah* we recite this mizmor with great intensity as we prepare to sound the shofar in our communities throughout the world. We remind ourselves that the *shofar* represents the transformation of G-d's harsh judgment to mercy. It is only because of that mercy that the world continues to exist.

Navigating Tehillim (1). The mizmor celebrates the enthronement of G-d with the piercing sound of the *shofar* accompanying the rising up of the long-hidden Holy Ark. This recalls Mizmor 024 (Receiving the King) which celebrates the inauguration of the *Bais Hamikdash* with the entrance of the Ark into the Holy of Holies.

Navigating Tehillim (2). For a historical background on the sons of Korach who composed this mizmor, see Mizmor 042 (Yearning for Redemption).

Exploring the Mizmor

PART 1. THE END OF WAR. The singer begins by calling upon the nations of the world to celebrate the end of war and universal recognition of the One G-d.

(א) לְמַנְצֵחַ לְבַנֵּי קִרַח מִזְמוֹר: (ב) כָּל הָעַמִּים תִּקְעוּ כֶף הָרִיעוּ לְאֱלֹקִים בְּקוֹל רִנָּה:
(ג) כִּי ה' עֲלִיוֹן נוֹרָא מְלֶכֶד גְּדוֹל עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ:

(1) For the musician, by the sons of Korach. (2) All nations, clap your hands! Sing out to G-d with a joyful cry! (3) Hashem is the Most High. [His power is] awesome. [He is the] great King over all the earth.

PART 2. AN ETERNAL INHERITANCE. The singer now turns to his fellow Jews and assures them that Hashem will not forget their central role in the new world order. In fact, the Land of their forefathers will be confirmed as the eternal inheritance of Yisrael and Hashem will rebuild the *Bais Hamikdash* in Yerushalayim, as it was in ancient times.

(ד) יַדְבֵּר עַמִּים תַּחְתֵּינוּ וּלְאֻמִּים תַּחַת רַגְלֵינוּ: (ה) יִבְחַר לָנוּ אֶת נַחֲלָתֵנוּ אֶת גְּאוֹן יַעֲקֹב אֲשֶׁר אָהַב סֵלָה:

(4) He will gather the nations below us, and governments below our feet. (5) He will choose for us our heritage, the pride of Yaakov, [the city] which He has [always] loved, Selah.

PART 3. THE SOUND OF THE SHOFAR. As we visualize the climactic scene in which the long-hidden Holy Ark rises up again, the singer speaks of the penetrating sound of the *shofar* telling us that the glory of Hashem is ascending.

(ו) עָלָה אֱלֹקִים בְּתִרְוָעָה ה' בְּקוֹל שׁוֹפָר:

(6) G-d [Elokim] ascended with the teruah blast, [the Name of] Hashem, with the sound of the shofar.

PART 4. CALL TO MANKIND. The singer turns again to the nations of the world and calls upon all mankind to honor the Creator in song.

(ז) זָמְרוּ אֱלֹקִים זָמְרוּ לְמִלְכֵנוּ זָמְרוּ: (ח) כִּי מֶלֶךְ כָּל הָאָרֶץ אֱלֹקִים זָמְרוּ מִשְׁכִּיל: (ט) מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹקִים עַל גּוֹיִם אֱלֹקִים יָשֵׁב עַל כִּסֵּא קִדְשׁוֹ:

(7) Sing to G-d with music, sing! Sing to our King, sing! (8) For G-d is King of all the world. Sing, with meaning! (9) He reigns over all the peoples. He sits upon the throne of His sanctity.

PART 5. CONCLUSION. The singer concludes with a vision of universal peace and harmony in exaltation of Hashem.

(י) נְדִיבֵי עַמִּים נֶאֱסָפוּ עִם אֱלֹקֵי אַבְרָהָם כִּי לְאֵלִים מְגִינֵי אֶרֶץ מִאֵד נִעְלָה:

(10) The virtuous nobles among the nations have gathered [to acknowledge] the people of Avraham's G-d. For [in their devotion] to G-d, [the Jewish people have been] the "shields of the earth." He will be exceedingly exalted.

Learning the Mizmor

PART 1. THE END OF WAR.

(א) לְמַנְצַחַת לְבְנֵי קִרַח מִזְמוֹר:

This mizmor — **מִזְמוֹר** was prepared **by the sons of Korach for the musician** — **לְמַנְצַחַת לְבְנֵי קִרַח** who will perform it.

(ב) כָּל הָעַמִּים תִּקְעוּ כָף
הֲרִיעוּ לְאֱלֹקִים בְּקוֹל רִנָּה:

Rejoice with us, **all** you **nations** — **כָּל הָעַמִּים** of the world; let us celebrate the end of war. **Clap** your **hands** in joy — **תִּקְעוּ כָף** as you join us in acknowledging Hashem as King over mankind! **Sing out to G-d** in unison — **הֲרִיעוּ לְאֱלֹקִים** with **a joyful cry** — **בְּקוֹל רִנָּה** !

(ג) כִּי ה' עֲלִיוֹן נוֹרָא

I call upon you to joyfully acknowledge Him **for** you now have seen that **Hashem is the Most High** — **כִּי ה' עֲלִיוֹן**. His power is **awesome** — **נוֹרָא** and so He is to be greatly feared. But at the same time He generously lavishes love, life and blessings upon all His creatures.

מֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ:

He is the **great King** who reigns **over all the** nations of the **earth** — **מֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ**, for none can escape His control and there is nothing that happens without His knowledge.

PART 2. AN ETERNAL INHERITANCE.

(ד) יַדְבֵּר עַמִּים תַּחְתֵּינוּ

In their arrogance the nations of the world have looked down upon us in the past and Hashem has tolerated their persecution of the Jewish people. But now **He will gather** the **nations** — **יַדְבֵּר עַמִּים** to take their place **below us** — **תַּחְתֵּינוּ** in the ranking of spiritual leadership. For they will join together to follow our example in recognizing the One G-d.

וּלְאֲמִים תַּחַת רַגְלֵינוּ:

And He will gather the emissaries of their **governments** — **וּלְאֲמִים** to pay their respects to Hashem **below our feet** — **תַּחַת רַגְלֵינוּ** in our own Land, which

Hashem has given us as our inheritance.

(ה) יבחר לנו את נחלתנו

Inspired by our example, each nation will happily submit to the authority of Hashem within its own land. And as for our Land, the nations will see that **He will choose for us** — יבחר לנו — to take permanent possession of **our own heritage** — את נחלתנו, the Land which was originally our land in former times. Now He will return us to it. When we were driven from the Land because of our sins He continued to watch over it and never allowed another nation to take permanent possession of it.

את גאון יעקב אשר אהב סלה:

That Land is **the pride** and glory of **Yaakov** — את גאון יעקב, because the *Beis Hamikdash* will be rebuilt there. Its location was first shown to Yaakov in his dream of the heavenly ladder. Yaakov was the third of the Avos (Patriarchs) and the third *Beis Hamikdash* will forever be associated with his name.

The majesty of G-d will continue to dwell in Yerushalayim, the city where His greatness is recognized by all the nations. It is the city **which** Hashem **has** always **loved** — אשר אהב — and which He will forever — סלה — treasure.

PART 3. THE SOUND OF THE SHOFAR.

(ו) עלה אלקים בתרועה ה' בקול שופר:

The Holy Ark is rising! With it the *shofar* is being sounded and G-d's Name is being exalted! In His Name we see how the harshness of Divine judgment (*middas hadin*) is being transformed into mercy (*middas harachamim*)!

Initially, **Elokim**, His Name of Judgment, **ascended** — עלה אלקים — with the broken *teruah* **blast** — בתרועה. But now **Hashem**, His Name of loving mercy, is ascending **with the** steady, calming *tekiah* **sound of the shofar** — ה' בקול שופר.

PART 4. CALL TO MANKIND.

(ז) זמרו אלקים זמרו

I call upon all peoples: **Sing with music** in praise to **G-d**, **sing** with joyful enthusiasm! — זמרו אלקים זמרו — Show your appreciation of the wonderful world that He has created for mankind.

זָמְרוּ לַמֶּלֶךְנוּ זִמְרוּ:

And especially to all who have come to recognize His glory in our midst, **sing to our King, sing!** — זָמְרוּ לַמֶּלֶךְנוּ זִמְרוּ For He governs the world and we owe Him our devotion as His loyal subjects.

(ח) כִּי מֶלֶךְ כָּל הָאָרֶץ אֱלֹקִים
זָמְרוּ מִשְׁכִּיל:

Sing His praises **for G-d is King of all the world** — כִּי מֶלֶךְ כָּל הָאָרֶץ אֱלֹקִים. Think about your relationship with Him and let your song reflect your thoughts. **Sing, with meaning** — זָמְרוּ מִשְׁכִּיל to inspire others to appreciate that He alone is King!

(ט) מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹקִים עַל גּוֹיִם
אֱלֹקִים יֹשֵׁב עַל כִּסֵּא קֹדֶשׁ:

Until now, G-d only ruled over Yisrael because the other nations did not know Him, but now **He reigns over all the peoples** — מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹקִים עַל גּוֹיִם. And even though He is recognized by all mankind, **He sits upon the throne of His sanctity** — אֱלֹקִים יֹשֵׁב עַל כִּסֵּא קֹדֶשׁ in Yerushalayim, which He has chosen as the resting place of the *Shechinah* on earth.

PART 5. CONCLUSION.

(י) נְדִיבֵי עַמִּים נֶאֱסָפוּ
עִם אֱלֹקֵי אַבְרָהָם

I can foresee the time when there will be universal recognition of the essential benefit that Yisrael has brought to the world. In this vision I see **the virtuous nobles among the nations** — נְדִיבֵי עַמִּים. **They have gathered** — נֶאֱסָפוּ to acknowledge **the people of Avraham's G-d** — עִם אֱלֹקֵי אַבְרָהָם.

כִּי לְאֱלֹקִים מְגִינֵי אָרֶץ
מְאֹד נִעְלָה:

For in their devotion **to G-d** — כִּי לְאֱלֹקִים the Jewish people have been **the shields of the earth** — מְגִינֵי אָרֶץ. And so through universal fellowship in honor of G-d, **He will be known as exceedingly exalted** — מְאֹד נִעְלָה.

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.

Tehillos for Life - Public Acclaim.

[47:2] ACKNOWLEDGING THE KING. – כָּל הָעַמִּים תִּקְעוּ כַף הָרִיעוּ לְאֱלֹקִים – בְּקוֹל רִנָּה – “All nations, clap your hands! Sing out to G-d with a joyful cry!” Let all nations join us in acknowledging Hashem as King over mankind.

[47:3] – כִּי ה' עֲלִיוֹן נוֹרָא מֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ – “Hashem is the Most High. [His power is] awesome. [He is the] great King over all the earth.”

[47:7] APPRECIATION. – זַמְרוּ אֱלֹקִים זַמְרוּ זַמְרוּ לְמַלְכֵנוּ זַמְרוּ – “Sing to G-d with music, sing! Sing to our King, sing!” Let all nations join us in loyal devotion and enthusiastic appreciation of Hashem’s kindness to His creatures.

[47:8] – כִּי מֶלֶךְ כָּל הָאָרֶץ אֱלֹקִים זַמְרוּ מִשְׁכִּיל – “For G-d is King of all the world. Sing, with meaning!”

[47:10] RECOGNITION. – נְדִיבֵי עַמִּים נֶאֱסָפוּ עִם אֱלֹקֵי אַבְרָהָם – “The virtuous nobles among the nations have gathered [to acknowledge] the people of Avraham’s G-d.” There will be universal recognition of the essential benefit that Yisrael has brought to the world.

Tehillos for Life - Contemplation of Hashem.

[47:6] THE SHOFAR. – עָלָה אֱלֹקִים בְּתִרְוָעָה ה' בְּקוֹל שׁוֹפָר – “G-d [Elokim] ascended with the teruah blast, [the Name of] Hashem, with the sound of the shofar.” Hashem’s Name of loving mercy is ascending with the steady, calming *tekiah* sound of the *shofar*.

Sources

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

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

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