

Mizmor 048

The City of Glory

Key Concepts

The mizmor is set in the time of Mashiach after the enemies of the Jewish people have been defeated in a cataclysmic war known as the War of Gog and Magog. The mizmor describes the grandeur of Yerushalayim, the holy city, which has now been rebuilt. At last this glorious city is fulfilling its destiny as an eternal testimony to the presence of Hashem in our world.

Navigating Tehillim. Another aspect of the celebration following the end of the war of Gog and Magog is given in Mizmor 047 (The Shofar is Calling). That mizmor emphasizes the recognition by the nations of the world of their debt of gratitude to the Jewish people for carrying the torch of devotion to the One G-d throughout the centuries.

Exploring the Mizmor

PART 1. THE HOLY CITY. The singer begins the mizmor with praises to Hashem for having established the focal point of His earthly presence in this beautiful and holy city.

(א) שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר לְבְנֵי קִרַח: (ב) גָּדוֹל ה' וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד, בְּעִיר אֱלֹקֵינוּ הַר קְדֻשׁוֹ: (ג) יִפָּה נוֹף מְשׁוֹשׁ כָּל הָאָרֶץ, הַר צִיּוֹן יִרְכָּתֵי צִפּוֹן קַרְיַת מְלֶךְ רָב: (ד) אֱלֹקִים בְּאַרְמְנוֹתֶיהָ נוֹדַע לְמִשְׁגָּב:

(1) [This] song is a mizmor by the sons of Korach. (2) Great is Hashem and [He is] most acclaimed in the city of our G-d, His holy mountain, (3) beautiful in its setting, the joy of all the land. Har Tzion [is on] the northern side of the City of [David], the great king. (4) G-d is in its citadels. [He is] known as [their] Stronghold.

PART 2. THE ATTACK. The singer celebrates the defeat of the wicked nations that sought to destroy Yerushalayim in the War of Gog and Magog.

(ה) כִּי הִנֵּה הַמְּלָכִים נוֹעְדוּ, עָבְרוּ יַחְדָּו: (ו) הִמָּה רָאוּ בֶן תַּמָּהוּ, נִבְהָלוּ נִחְפְּזוּ: (ז) רָעְדָה אַחֲזַתֶם שָׁם, חֵיל כִּיּוֹלְדָה: (ח) בְּרוּחַ קְדִים תִּשְׁבֵּר אֲנִיּוֹת תִּרְשִׁישׁ: (ט) כַּאֲשֶׁר

שְׁמַעְנוּ כִּן רְאִינוּ, בְּעִיר ה' צְבָאוֹת בְּעִיר אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֱלֹקִים, יְכוֹנְנָה עַד עוֹלָם סְלָה:

(5) *For behold, the enemy kings joined forces and advanced together [against Yerushalayim]. (6) [But when] they saw [it], they were overcome by terror; they fled in panic. (7) Trembling gripped them there, convulsions like a woman giving birth. (8) [It was like the] east wind [with which] You smashed the ships of Tarshish. (9) Just as we heard, so did we see in the city of Hashem, Master of Legions, in the city of our G-d. May He, the G-d of all men, preserve it continually and forever, Selah!*

PART 3. OUR GRATITUDE. Speaking for the Jewish people the singer turns directly to Hashem, declaring our devotion to Him and our gratitude for having defended Yerushalyim.

(י) דַּמִּינוּ אֱלֹקִים חֲסִדְךָ בְּקֶרֶב הַיְכָלְךָ: (יא) כְּשִׁמְךָ אֱלֹקִים כִּן תִּהְלֶתְךָ עַל קִצְיֹי אֶרֶץ, צְדָק מְלֵאָה יְמִינְךָ: (יב) יִשְׁמַח הַר צִיּוֹן, תִּגְלַנָּה בְּנוֹת יְהוּדָה, לְמַעַן מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ:
(10) *We hoped, O G-d, for Your kindness in the midst of Your Sanctuary. (11) Just as Your Name is Elokim, so is Your praise to the ends of the earth. Righteous justice fills Your right hand. (12) Har Tzion rejoices and the 'daughters' of Yehudah (surrounding towns), are delighted because of Your judgments.*

PART 4. THE CITY OF GRANDEUR. The singer concludes the mizmor by calling upon the Jewish people to admire the grandeur of Yerushalayim and to draw from it an affirmation of their eternal bond with Hashem.

(יג) סִבּוּ צִיּוֹן וְהִקִּיפוּהָ, סִפְרוּ מִגְדְּלֶיהָ: (יד) שִׁיתוּ לְבַבְכֶם לְחִילָהּ, פִּסְגוּ אֶרְמֹנוֹתֶיהָ לְמַעַן תִּסְפְּרוּ לְדוֹר אַחֲרוֹן: (טו) כִּי זֶה אֱלֹקִים אֱלֹהֵינוּ עוֹלָם וָעֶד, הוּא יְנַהַגְנוּ עַל מוֹת:

(13) *Walk around Tzion and encircle her. Count her towers. (14) Mark well in your hearts her ramparts. Admire the tops of her towers, that you may recount [her grandeur] to the very last generation. (15) This is G-d, our G-d, forever and ever, He will guide us beyond death.*

Learning the Mizmor

PART 1. THE HOLY CITY.

(א) שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר לְבְנֵי קֹרַח:

This **song is a mizmor** — שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר, which was originally composed **by the sons of Korach** — לְבְנֵי קֹרַח through the power of *nevuah* (prophecy) and subsequently incorporated by David into the Book of Tehillim.

(ב) גָּדוֹל ה' וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד

בְּעִיר אֱלֹקֵינוּ הַר קְדִישׁוֹ:

Yerushalayim is the place where the greatness of Hashem as Master of the universe is most clearly perceived. It is there that the intensity of His presence is most felt and so it is there that **Hashem is** seen as truly **great** — גָּדוֹל ה'. Indeed, **He is most acclaimed** — וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד in the city of our G-d — בְּעִיר אֱלֹקֵינוּ, the location of **His holy mountain** — הַר קְדִישׁוֹ, where the *Bais Hamikdash* stands and where the *Shechinah* resides.

(ג) יִפֶּה נוֹף מְשׁוֹשׁ כָּל הָאָרֶץ

Yerushalayim is perfectly **beautiful in its setting** — יִפֶּה נוֹף, surrounded by scenic mountains. It is the **joy of all the land** — מְשׁוֹשׁ כָּל הָאָרֶץ of Eretz Yisrael because it is the location of the *Beis Hamikdash*, which is the focal point for joyful pilgrimages on the major festivals three times a year.

הַר צִיּוֹן יִרְכָּתֵי צִפּוֹן

קְרִית מֶלֶךְ רַב:

Yerushalayim is the city known by the name of the holy mountain, **Har Zion** — הַר צִיּוֹן on its **northern side** — יִרְכָּתֵי צִפּוֹן, which is where David was anointed as king over the city and the people. Thus, Yerushalayim is also known as **the City of David, the Great King** — קְרִית מֶלֶךְ רַב.

(ד) אֱלֹקִים בְּאַרְמוֹתֶיהָ

נוֹדַע לְמִשְׁגָּב:

Yerushalayim is protected by the presence of **G-d in its citadels** — אֱלֹקִים בְּאַרְמוֹתֶיהָ of Torah and government. Hashem **is known** — נוֹדַע to all its

inhabitants **as** their **Stronghold** — לְמִשְׁגָּב.

PART 2. THE ATTACK.

(ה) כִּי הִנֵּה הַמְּלָכִים נוֹעְדוּ
עָבְרוּ יַחְדָּו:

For behold — כִּי הִנֵּה in the war of Gog and Magog **the enemy kings joined forces** — הַמְּלָכִים נוֹעְדוּ **and advanced together** — עָבְרוּ יַחְדָּו against Yerushalayim.

(ו) הִמָּה רָאוּ בֶן תָּמָהוּ
נִבְהָלוּ נִחְפְּזוּ:

But when **they saw** — הִמָּה רָאוּ the holy city **they were suddenly startled** — בֶּן תָּמָהוּ, **they were overcome by terror** — נִבְהָלוּ and **they fled in panic** — נִחְפְּזוּ.

(ז) רָעָדָה אֲחֻזָּתָם שָׁם
חֵיל בְּיֹלְדָה:

But they were unable to escape **because trembling gripped them there** — רָעָדָה שָׁם אֲחֻזָּתָם; those mighty warriors lost all their strength and were seized with **convulsions like a woman giving birth** — חֵיל בְּיֹלְדָה.

(ח) בְּרוּחַ קָדִים
תִּשְׁבֵּר אֲנִיּוֹת תַּרְשִׁישׁ:

They were stopped as though they had been struck by a catastrophic **east wind** — בְּרוּחַ קָדִים, such as the one with which **You**, Hashem, **smashed** the merchant **ships** from the great shipping port of **Tarshish** — תִּשְׁבֵּר אֲנִיּוֹת תַּרְשִׁישׁ.

Tarshish was an African seaport associated with Tzur (Lebanon). A fleet of Tarshish was destroyed in the time of Yehoshafat. (See I Melachim 22:49.)

(ט) כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְנוּ
בֶּן רָאִינוּ בְּעִיר ה' צָבָאוֹת

Just as we heard — כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְנוּ from our *nevi'im* that the enemy would be destroyed in the war of Gog and Magog, **so did we see** — בֶּן רָאִינוּ it actually happen **in the city of Hashem**, Who is the **Master of all Legions** — בְּעִיר ה'.

צְבָאוֹת. He is not only the Master of the Heavenly legions of angels; He is also the master of all earthly armies. He brought the legions of the enemy to Yerushalayim and vanquished them there.

בְּעִיר אֱלֹקֵינוּ
אֱלֹקִים יְכוֹנְנֶה עַד עוֹלָם סְלָה:

We saw His might displayed as the great Judge, **in the city of our G-d** — בְּעִיר אֱלֹקֵינוּ, **may He, Who is the G-d of all men, preserve it continually and forever, Selah** — אֱלֹקִים יְכוֹנְנֶה עַד עוֹלָם סְלָה !

PART 3. OUR GRATITUDE.

(י) דְּמִינוּ אֱלֹקִים חֲסִידֶךָ
בְּקֶרֶב הַיְכָלֶךָ:

Hashem, when the nations warred against us we did not abandon our trust in You. **We hoped** and trusted, **O G-d** — דְּמִינוּ אֱלֹקִים **that Your kindness** — חֲסִידֶךָ would save us. We continued to hope for the glory that has now appeared **in the midst of Your Sanctuary** — בְּקֶרֶב הַיְכָלֶךָ.

(יא) כְּשֵׁמֶךָ אֱלֹקִים כִּן תְּהִלָּתֶךָ
עַל קְצוֹי אֶרֶץ צְדָק מְלֵאָה יְמִינֶךָ:

Just as Your Name, Elokim — כְּשֵׁמֶךָ אֱלֹקִים, describes the stern justice that you meted out to the enemies of Yerushalayim, **so is Your praise** — כִּן תְּהִלָּתֶךָ on everyone's lips **to the ends of the earth** — עַל קְצוֹי אֶרֶץ, now that the world recognizes that **righteous justice fills Your right hand** — צְדָק מְלֵאָה יְמִינֶךָ.

(יב) יִשְׂמַח הַר צִיּוֹן
תִּגְלַנָּה בְּנוֹת יְהוּדָה לְמַעַן מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ:

The people of **Har Tzion are rejoicing** — יִשְׂמַח הַר צִיּוֹן and the people of the surrounding towns, which are known as **the 'daughters' of Yehudah, are delighted** — תִּגְלַנָּה בְּנוֹת יְהוּדָה, **because of Your judgments** — לְמַעַן מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ that You executed against the wicked.

PART 4. THE CITY OF GRANDEUR.

(יג) סְבוּ צִיּוֹן וְהַקִּיפוּהָ
סִפְרוּ מִגְדָּלֶיהָ:

Walk around the city of **Tzion** — סְבוּ צִיּוֹן **and circle her** — וְהַקִּיפוּהָ. See the beauty of her structures and **count her towers** — סִפְרוּ מִגְדָּלֶיהָ to be impressed by their glory.

(יד) שִׁיתוּ לְבַבְכֶם לְחִילָהּ
פִּסְגוֹת אַרְמֹנֹתֶיהָ
לְמַעַן תִּסְפְּרוּ לְדוֹר אַחֲרוֹן:

Mark well in your hearts the impressive architecture of **her ramparts** — שִׁיתוּ לְבַבְכֶם לְחִילָהּ. **Admire** the view from **the tops of her towers** — פִּסְגוֹת אַרְמֹנֹתֶיהָ, **that you may recount** — לְמַעַן תִּסְפְּרוּ her grandeur and her beauty from generation to generation, down **to the very last generation** — לְדוֹר אַחֲרוֹן. This will inspire future generations to recognize the glory of Hashem and to keep coming back to be inspired by the fabled city of Yerushalayim.

(טו) כִּי זֶה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ עוֹלָם וָעֶד
הוּא יִנְהַגֵּנוּ עַל־מוֹת:

For it is especially in this city that we perceive the presence of Hashem. It is here that we feel **this is G-d, our G-d** — כִּי זֶה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, **forever and ever** — עוֹלָם וָעֶד, **He will guide us** — הוּא יִנְהַגֵּנוּ eternally **beyond death** — עַל־מוֹת.

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 - Contemplation of Hashem.

[48:2] PRAISED. – גָּדוֹל ה' וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד, בְּעִיר אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַר קְדְשׁוֹ – "Great is Hashem and [He is] most acclaimed in the city of our G-d, His holy mountain." Yerushalayim is the place where the greatness of Hashem as Master of the universe is most clearly perceived. It is there that the intensity of His presence is most felt and so it is there that Hashem is seen as truly

great.

[48:3] – יִפֶּה נוֹף מְשׁוֹשׁ כָּל הָאָרֶץ – “[Yerushalayim is] beautiful in its setting, the joy of all the land.”

[48:8] DISPLAY OF POWER. – בְּרוּחַ קָדִים תִּשְׁבֵּר אֲנִיּוֹת תַּרְשִׁישׁ – “[It was like the] east wind [with which] You smashed the ships of Tarshish.” Hashem will stop the attackers of Yerushalayim as though they had been struck by a catastrophic east wind.

[48:9] – כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְנוּ בֵּן רָאִינוּ, בְּעִיר ה' צְבָאוֹת בְּעִיר אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֱלֹהִים –
“Just as we heard, so did we see in the city of Hashem, Master of Legions, in the city of our G-d.”

[48:10] KINDNESS. – דְּמִינוּ אֱלֹהִים חֲסִדְךָ בְּקֶרֶב הַיְכָלְךָ – “We hoped, O G-d, for Your kindness in the midst of Your Sanctuary.” We continue to have bitachon that in Hashem’s kindness He will protect us.

[48:11] STERN JUSTICE. – כְּשֵׁמֶךְ אֱלֹהִים בֵּן תְּהִלָּתְךָ עַל קְצוֵי אָרֶץ – “Just as Your Name is Elokim, so is Your praise to the ends of the earth.” He metes out stern justice to the enemies of Yerushalayim.

[48:11] RIGHTEOUS JUSTICE. – צִדְקַת מְלֶאכָה יְמִינְךָ – “Righteous justice fills Your right hand.” He defends and protects Yerushalayim.

Tehillos for Life - Public Acclaim.

[48:12] JOY. – יִשְׂמַח הַר צִיּוֹן, תִּגְלֶנָּה בָנוֹת יְהוּדָה, לְמַעַן מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ – “Har Tzion rejoices and the ‘daughters’ of Yehudah (surrounding towns), are delighted because of Your judgments.” The people of Yerushalayim express their gratitude.

[48:15] DEVOTION. – כִּי זֶה אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵינוּ עוֹלָם וָעַד, הוּא יְנַהֲגֵנוּ עַל מוֹת –
“This is G-d, our G-d, forever and ever, He will guide us beyond death.” Our devotion to Hashem is felt most intensely in Yerushalayim.

Sources

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

- | | |
|---|---|
| ח - רש"י, אבן עזרא, רד"ק | א - רד"ק, בן־רמוך, המאירי, ספורנו, אבן יחייא, רשר"ה |
| ט - רש"י, רד"ק, בן־רמוך | ב - רש"י, בן־רמוך, אבן יחייא, |
| י - המאירי, אבן יחייא, נר לרגלי, מאיר טוב | ג - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, בן־רמוך, רשר"ה, נר לרגלי |
| יא - רד"ק, מצודות, מלב"ם, | ד - רש"י, אבן עזרא, בן־רמוך, ספורנו |
| יב - רש"י, רד"ק | ה - רד"ק, מצודות, רשר"ה |
| יג - אבן עזרא, מצודות, | ו - אבן עזרא, רשר"ה |
| יד - רש"י, רד"ק, המאירי, בן־רמוך | ז - רד"ק, אבן יחייא, נר לרגלי |
| טו - רש"י, רד"ק, המאירי, בן־רמוך, רשר"ה | |

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