

**Mizmor 051****Beyond Teshuvah****Key Concepts**

Mizmor 051 of Tehillim was composed by King David after being put in a joyful frame of mind as he prepared to do *teshuvah* for his sin in the matter of Bas Sheva and her husband Uriah. He rejoiced when he realized that Hashem wanted him to live. However, David also understood that simple *teshuvah* would not be enough. Even after being forgiven, he would need to remove the stain on his soul that sin had caused. So he had to go beyond *teshuvah* in order to regain his closeness to Hashem. (See *Shmuel II* 11-12.)

David originally thought his actions with regard to Bas Sheva and her husband Uriah could be justified. However, once he realized that he had been making excuses for himself and that he was minimizing the severity of what he had done, he felt bitter remorse and feared that he would never be forgiven. Hashem then showed David the way forward by sending the prophet Nossan to goad him into doing *teshuvah*.

**Exploring the Mizmor**

**PART 1. DOING TESHUVAH.** The knowledge that he was being given the opportunity to do *teshuvah* gave David the positive attitude that ultimately resulted in this mizmor. And so he immediately responded to Nossan, saying, "I have sinned against Hashem." (*Shmuel II*, 12:13). Nossan then told him, "Hashem has removed your sin; you will not die." David then prayed to Hashem, acknowledging his guilt and asking forgiveness:

(א) לְמִנְצַח מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד: (ב) בָּבוֹא אֱלֹהֵי נָתַן הַנְּבִיא פֶּאֶשֶׁר בָּא אֶל בֵּית שָׁבַע: (ג)  
 חָנְנִי אֱלֹקִים כְּחַסְדְּךָ כְּרַב רַחֲמֶיךָ מְחַה פְּשָׁעַי: (ד) [הרבה] הָרַב כְּבִסְנֵי מַעֲוֹנֵי  
 וּמַחְטָאֵתִי טְהַרְנֵי: (ה) כִּי פֶשַׁעִי אֲנִי אֲדַע וְחַטָּאתִי נֶגְדִי תִמְיֵד: (ו) לָךְ לְבַדְּךָ חַטָּאתִי  
 וְהִרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ עֲשִׂיתִי לְמַעַן תִּצְדַּק בְּדַבְּרֶךָ תִּזְכֶּה בְּשִׁפְטֶךָ:

(1) For the musician. A mizmor by David. (2) When Nossan the prophet came to him after he came to Bas Sheva. (3) O G-d, grant me favor as befitting Your kindness. And as befits the abundance of Your compassion, erase my transgressions. (4) Cleanse me thoroughly from my iniquity and

*purify me from my sin. (5) For I have come to recognize my transgressions. And my sin is always before me. (6) I have sinned against You alone. I did what was evil in Your eyes. Therefore, You are just in holding me guilty. You are right in Your judgment.*

(ז) הוּן בְּעוֹן חוֹלְלֵתִי וּבְחַטָּא יִחַמְתָּנִי אֱמִי: (ח) הוּן אָמַת חִפְצָתָּ בְּטַחוֹת וּבִסְתָּם חֲכָמָה תוֹדִיעַנִי:

*(7) Indeed, I was fashioned in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me. (8) Nevertheless, You have wanted truth in my covered parts and in my concealed heart You teach me wisdom.*

David confesses his guilt and humbly asks forgiveness. He acknowledges the physical urges that influenced his behavior, but does not evade responsibility. He knows that Hashem has given him a conscience that is buried deep within himself and that he can develop to control his desires. If he failed, he can blame no one but himself.

## **PART 2. BEYOND TESHUVAH.** David explores the effect that sin has on a person.

When man does sincere *teshuvah* for a sin in which he gives in to his *taavah* (desire), he may be forgiven through the mercy of Hashem. But such a sin ("cheit") has a secondary, insidious effect. By seeing himself as one who is able to sin against his Creator, a man has inadvertently depreciated his sense of the value of *mitzvos* and he has diminished his appreciation of the One who commanded him to perform the *mitzvos*. In effect, this type of iniquity ("avon") leaves a stain on the soul which needs to be removed for the man to be able to fully restore his relationship with G-d. Also, as long as that stain is present, it makes him vulnerable to negative influences and temptation.

So David asks Hashem for help in removing that stain. He asks to be purified and he asks for a new, pure heart. Even though he has been forgiven his sin, his heart has been sullied and he does not feel able to return to the innocent closeness with Hashem that he had before.

(ט) תַּחֲטָאֲנִי בְּאֵזוֹב וְאֶטְהַר וּתְשַׁמְיַעֲנִי שִׁשׁוֹן וְשִׁמְחָה  
תִּגְלָנָה עֲצָמוֹת דְּבִיתָ: (י) הַסִּתֵּר פְּנֵיךָ מִחַטָּאֵי וְכֹל עֲוֹנֹתַי מִחָה: (יא) לֵב טָהוֹר בְּרָא  
לִי אֱלֹקִים וְרוּחַ נְכוֹן חִדָּשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי: (יג) אֵל תִּשְׁלִיכֵנִי מִלִּפְנֵיךָ וְרוּחַ קִדְשְׁךָ אֵל תִּקַּח  
מִמֶּנִּי: (יד) הַשִּׁיבָה לִי שִׁשׁוֹן וְשִׁעָרְךָ וְרוּחַ נְדִיבָה תִּסְמְכֵנִי:

*(9) Purge me of sin with hyssop. Then I shall be pure. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. (10) Make me hear joy and happiness. May gladness*

*return to the bones that You crushed. (11) Hide Your face from my sins and erase all my iniquities. (12) Create a pure heart for me, O G-d, and renew a firm spirit within me. (13) Don't discard me from Your presence. Don't take Your holy spirit from me. (14) Restore to me the joy of Your salvation. And sustain me with the spirit of generous giving.*

**PART 3. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE.** David senses that through his humble *tefillos* his closeness to Hashem is returning. As the "*ruach hakodesh*" (holy spirit) descends upon him, he affirms his intention of using the insight he has gained in teaching others to do *teshuvah* as well.

(טו) אֶלְמִדָּה פִּשְׁעִים דָּרְכֶיךָ וְחַטָּאִים אֲלֶיךָ יָשׁוּבוּ: (טז) הֲצִילֵנִי מִדְּמִים אֱלֹקִים  
אֱלֹקֵי תְּשׁוּעָתִי תִרְנֹן לְשׁוֹנֵי צְדָקָתְךָ: (יז) אֲדַגְּנִי שְׂפָתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי יִגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ: (יח)  
כִּי לֹא תַחֲפֹץ זֶבַח וְאֶתְנָה עֹלָה לֹא תִרְצֶה: (יט) זְבַחֵי אֱלֹקִים רוּחַ נְשֻׁבָּה לֵב נִשְׁבָּר  
וְנִדְּכָה אֱלֹקִים לֹא תִבְזֶה:

*(15) I will teach Your ways to transgressors and sinners will return to You. (16) Rescue me from blood-guilt, O G-d. O G-d of my slavation, my tongue will sing joyously of Your kind justice. (17) O my L-rd, open my lips so that my mouth may declare Your praise. (18) For You don't want a sacrifice; You don't want a burnt-offering. (19) The sacrifices for G-d are a broken spirit. O G-d, You don't spurn a heart that is broken and contrite.*

David asks Hashem's continued help in serving Him sincerely and conscientiously. He resolves to teach people that Hashem is not pleased by unthinking forms of *avodah*. That is what can happen with sacrificial offerings when those making the offerings neglect their true purpose.

**PART 4. CONCLUSION.** Having "*ruach hakodesh*" again, David is able to sense Hashem's plan for the future. The *Bais Hamikdash* (Temple) will be built in Yerushalayim by David's son Shlomo. Hashem will then dwell among His people within the rebuilt walls of Yerushalayim, and will be pleased by the "sacrificial offerings of righteousness", as long the people continue to bring them with humility and sincerity.

(כ) הִיטִיבָה בְּרִצּוֹנְךָ אֶת צִיּוֹן תִּבְנֶה חוֹמוֹת יְרוּשָׁלָּם: (כא) אֲזָ תַחֲפֹץ זְבַחֵי צְדָקָה  
עֹלָה וְכִלְיִל אֲזָ יַעֲלוּ עַל מִזְבִּיחְךָ פָּרִים:

*(20) Establish Tzion at the right time when it pleases You. Build the walls of Yerushalayim. (21) Then You will want the offerings of righteousness,*

*burnt-offering and whole-offering. Then bulls will go up on Your altar.*

## Learning the Mizmor

### PART 1: DOING TESHUVAH.

#### (א) לְמִנְצַחַּ מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:

This song has been prepared **for the musician** — לְמִנְצַחַּ, who will perform it. It is **a mizmor** composed **by David** — מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד, who was put in a joyful frame of mind as he prepared to do *teshuvah* for his serious sin in the matter of Bas Sheva and her husband Uriah. He rejoiced when he realized that despite his transgression Hashem wanted him to live and showed this by sending a prophet to goad him into doing *teshuvah*.

#### (ב) בָּבוֹא אֱלֹוֹ נָתַן הַנְּבִיא

The moral crisis that led David to compose this mizmor occurred **when Nosson the prophet came to him** — בָּבוֹא אֱלֹוֹ נָתַן הַנְּבִיא and rebuked him for his behavior.

#### כְּאֲשֶׁר בָּא אֶל בֵּית שָׁבַע

All of this happened **after** the incident in which **he** inappropriately **came to Bas-sheva** — כְּאֲשֶׁר בָּא אֶל בֵּית שָׁבַע and took her as his wife, as described in *Shmuel II*, chapters 11 and 12.

#### (ג) חֲנִנִי אֱלֹקִים כְּחֶסֶדְךָ

**O G-d of justice** — אֱלֹקִים, because of the severity of My sin I don't deserve Your mercy. And so I beg You to **grant me Your special favor** — חֲנִנִי so that I may be permitted to appeal to You **in accord with Your eternal kindness** — כְּחֶסֶדְךָ. In Your attribute of kindness I ask You to recognize that I meant do the right thing; my judgment was distorted by the weakness of the flesh.

#### כְּרַב רַחֲמֶיךָ מִחַה פְּשָׁעֵי:

**As befits the abundance of Your compassion** — כְּרַב רַחֲמֶיךָ by which You forgive the sins of mankind in general, **erase my transgressions** — מִחַה פְּשָׁעֵי so that I shall not have to pay for them in the Next World. It is not only the specific sin with Bas Sheva and the related sin with the death of Uriah for which I need forgiveness, but the entire self-tolerant frame of mind which made those sins

possible.

(ד) [הרבה] הָרַב כְּבִסְנִי מְעוֹנִי

**Cleanse me thoroughly from my iniquity** — הָרַב כְּבִסְנִי מְעוֹנִי for I know that sin leaves a mark on the soul that is like the stain on a garment. Once a person has sinned, his sensitivity to sin becomes dulled and he finds it easier to sin again. So I ask that You let my anguish cleanse me as soap washes away a stain.

וּמְחַטָּאתֵי טְהַרְנִי:

**And purify me from my sin** — וּמְחַטָּאתֵי טְהַרְנִי so that I may regain the ability to recognize my own sin in the future. By regaining my inner purity I will have the enhanced ability to be receptive and to respond to all that is good.

(ה) כִּי פָשַׁעִי אֲנִי אֲדַע

**For** — כִּי through the guidance of Your prophet Nosson **I have come to recognize my transgressions** — פָּשַׁעִי אֲנִי אֲדַע. I do not pretend innocence as Kayin did when Hashem asked him about his murdered brother Hevel (*Bereishis* 4:9).

וְחַטָּאתֵי נִגְדֵי תַמִּיד:

**And** because I am immersed in continued anguish and regret, **my sin is always before me** — וְחַטָּאתֵי נִגְדֵי תַמִּיד. Therefore, I will surely take every precaution not to sin again, even by mistake. And so, having fulfilled the three essential components of teshuvah (confession, regret, and commitment for the future) I now feel that I can ask for Your forgiveness.

(ו) לָךְ לְבַדְּךָ חַטָּאתֵי

וְהָרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ עָשִׂיתִי

I acknowledge that what I did with Bas Sheva was a sin directed at You. As Your anointed king I had an obligation to behave in a dignified, upright way above suspicion, but I failed You. And so, **I have sinned against You alone** — לָךְ לְבַדְּךָ חַטָּאתֵי. I was destined to marry her but I should have waited for the right time and place. I was influenced by my desire and came to her in an inappropriate way. And so **I did what is evil in Your eyes** — וְהָרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ עָשִׂיתִי. Similarly, although my action with regard to Uriah was *halachically* justified by his having rebelled against me, the way I did it was repugnant to You.

לְמַעַן תִּצְדַּק בְּדַבְרְךָ  
תִּזְכֶּה בְּשִׁפְטֶךָ:

**Accordingly**, I admit that **You are just in Your pronouncement** — לְמַעַן תִּצְדַּק בְּדַבְרְךָ of my guilt. There is no need to chastise me further to make me realize this. **You are right in Your judgement** — תִּזְכֶּה בְּשִׁפְטֶךָ.

(ז) הֵן בְּעוֹן חוֹלְלָתִי

I have asked for Your compassion, considering the human weaknesses which You gave me when You created me and which makes it possible for me to distance myself from You. **Indeed, I was fashioned in** an act that is vulnerable to the **iniquity** — הֵן בְּעוֹן חוֹלְלָתִי of diminished commitment to You. Even though my father surely approached this act of intimacy with the noble intention of doing Your will, that act involves instinctive drives that are so powerful it is not humanly possible to avoid some degree of self-gratification, which interferes with a person's devotion.

וּבְחֶטָא יַחֲמֵתֵנִי אִמִּי:

**And so in** an act of intense emotion that has a potential for **sin did my mother conceive me** — וּבְחֶטָא יַחֲמֵתֵנִי אִמִּי. Without the heat of passion inherent in that act I could not have been born. The possibility of feeling that emotion exists within every human being and presents him with a challenge throughout his life.

(ח) הֵן אֶמֶת חִפְצָת בְּטָחוֹת

**Nevertheless** — הֵן, I realize that **truth** — אֶמֶת is what **You have** always **wanted** — חִפְצָת for me. You have placed the consciousness of right and wrong deep within me **in the covered parts** — בְּטָחוֹת of my being, where they are accessible if I only make the effort.

וּבְסִתְּמֵם חֲכָמָה תוֹדִיעֵנִי:

You know that my sinful actions were influenced by my lower instincts and that it was never my intent to diminish my devotion to You or my respect for Your *mitzvos*. **And in** my heart, which is **concealed** — וּבְסִתְּמֵם within me, is the urgent desire for You to **teach me the wisdom of the Torah** — חֲכָמָה תוֹדִיעֵנִי so that I can maintain control over my physical inclinations.

PART 2: BEYOND TESHUVAH.

## (ט) תְּחַטְּאֵנִי בְּאַזּוֹב וְאַטְהֶר

In deep humility I admit my guilt and ask You to **purge me of sin** — תְּחַטְּאֵנִי, like a spiritually contaminated person undergoes the final stage of his purification by being sprinkled **with a** sprig of **hyssop** — בְּאַזּוֹב (*Vayikra* 14:6). The hyssop plant symbolizes humility because it grows close to the ground. **Then** by ridding myself of the character defect of pride **I shall be pure** — וְאַטְהֶר.

## תְּכַבֵּסֵנִי וּמַשְׁלֵג אֶלְבִּין:

Although I have polluted my soul with my sin, I again humbly ask that You **wash me** — תְּכַבֵּסֵנִי and remove the stain that I brought upon myself. Since I never intended to rebel against You, I beg You to let me be totally pure again, even **whiter than snow** — וּמַשְׁלֵג אֶלְבִּין, because only then will I be able to hope for a restoration of my close relationship with You.

## (י) תִּשְׁמִיעַנִי שְׁשׁוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה

## תְּגַלְּנָה עֲצָמוֹת דְּבִיתִי:

As long as my soul continues to bear the residual stain of my sin, I will be unable to experience true joy. So I beg You to remove that residue and **make me hear** Your word with unalloyed **joy and happiness** — תִּשְׁמִיעַנִי שְׁשׁוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה once again. **May gladness return to the very bones** — תְּגַלְּנָה עֲצָמוֹת that You crushed — דְּבִיתִי by shaking up my self-confidence when the navi Nossan rebuked me.

## (יא) הַסְּתֵר פְּנֵיךָ מִחַטָּאֵי

## וְכָל עֲוֹנֹתַי מִחָה:

Gladness will return to my bones when You **hide Your face from my sins** of human weakness — הַסְּתֵר פְּנֵיךָ מִחַטָּאֵי. I sincerely regret them and resolve not to repeat them, so I ask that You not hold them against me. As for the iniquitous stains in my soul that these sins have brought about, I will again be able to experience joy when You **erase all my iniquities** — וְכָל עֲוֹנֹתַי מִחָה.

## (יב) לֵב טָהוֹר בְּרָא לִי אֱלֹקִים

## וְרוּחַ נְכוֹן חִדַּשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי:

I cannot overcome sin without Your help, so I call upon You to **create a pure heart for me, O G-d** — לֵב טָהוֹר בְּרָא לִי אֱלֹקִים so that I am better able to resist

the human weakness of hot bloodedness which is in my nature and which led me to sin. **And renew a firm and upright spirit within me** — וְרוּחַ נְכוֹן חַדָּשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי — so that I will once more be able to perceive what is good and true, and so that I will be able to come close to You again with *ruach hakodesh* (the holy spirit).

[The heart, being earthly in origin, is relatively impure by nature and therefore David describes its renewal using the language of Creation, asking that it be as new as that of child that has been born. The spirit is of heavenly origin and is therefore inherently pure, so David merely asks that it be renewed because it has been stained by the lingering effects of his sin.]

(יג) אֵל תִּשְׁלִיכֵנִי מִלְּפָנֶיךָ  
וְרוּחַ קִדְשְׁךָ אֵל תִּקַּח מִמֶּנִּי:

**Don't treat me as repugnant to You and discard me from Your Presence** — אֵל תִּשְׁלִיכֵנִי מִלְּפָנֶיךָ like a useless tool that is no longer capable of performing its function. Don't cut me off from the spiritual closeness that I previously enjoyed. **Don't take Your ruach hakodesh from me** — וְרוּחַ קִדְשְׁךָ אֵל תִּקַּח מִמֶּנִּי, the spirit with which I have been able to sing my *mizmorim* to You in the past. Without *ruach hakodesh* I will no longer have the clear knowledge of Your will and I will no longer have the power of *nevuah* (prophecy).

(יד) הַשִּׁיבָה לִּי שְׂשׂוֹן יִשְׁעֶךָ  
וְרוּחַ נְדִיבָה תִּסְמְכֵנִי:

**Restore to me the innocent joy** — הַשִּׁיבָה לִּי שְׂשׂוֹן יִשְׁעֶךָ that I used to have in experiencing **Your yeshuah** — יִשְׁעֶךָ, without being adulterated by the euphoric, self-satisfied feelings that accompany military victories. It was that feeling of pride and sense of entitlement that weakened my ability to withstand temptation. **And sustain me with the spirit of generous giving** — וְרוּחַ נְדִיבָה תִּסְמְכֵנִי that empowers me to freely distribute the spoils of war among the needy and the deserving.

### PART 3: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE.

(טו) אֶלְמֶדָה פִּשְׁעִים דָּרְכֶיךָ  
וְחֲטָאִים אֵלֶיךָ יִשׁוּבוּ:

If You do this kindness for me, **I will** have the ability to **teach** — אֶלְמֶדָה even the worst **transgressors** who acted out of resentment towards You. I will teach them **Your ways** — פִּשְׁעִים דָּרְכֶיךָ of being slow to anger and so I will encourage

them not to give up, but to do *teshuvah*. **And** as for **sinner** — **וְחַטָּאִים**, even though they are confirmed in their ways, since they acted in responses to physical urges rather than ill will, **they will surely return to You** — **אֵלֶיךָ יָשׁוּבוּ** — once they see how You accept the sincere *teshuvah* of much worse offenders.

(טז) הֲצִילֵנִי מִדָּמַיִם אֱלֹקִים  
אֱלֹקֵי תְשׁוּעָתִי תִרְנֶן לְשׁוֹנֵי צְדָקָתְךָ:

**Rescue me from the blood-guilt** — **הֲצִילֵנִי מִדָּמַיִם** that I brought upon myself by contributing to the death of Uriah, **O G-d** — **אֱלֹקִים**. You are the **G-d of my yeshuah** — **אֱלֹקֵי תְשׁוּעָתִי**, for You have saved me so often in the past and so I call upon You to save me from the consequences of this guilt. Then **my tongue will sing joyously of Your kind justice** — **תִרְנֶן לְשׁוֹנֵי צְדָקָתְךָ**.

(יז) אֲדַנֶּי שְׂפָתַי תִּפְתָּח  
וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ:

**My L-rd** — **ה'**, restore my closeness to You and allow me to speak with *ruach hakodesh* in Your presence once more as Your devoted servant. By welcoming me back, You will **open my lips** — **שְׂפָתַי תִּפְתָּח**, **so that my mouth may declare Your praise** — **וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ** to the world.

(יח) כִּי לֹא תַחֲפֹץ זֶבַח  
וְאַתָּנָה עֹלָה לֹא תִרְצֶה:

Why do I humbly ask You to allow me speak before You? **For** — **כִּי** I realize that willful sins such as I have committed cannot be atoned by means of sacrificial offerings. Such offerings were meant to promote humility and to beg forgiveness in the case of unintentional sins. **For You do not want a sacrifice** — **לֹא תַחֲפֹץ זֶבַח** when the sin is intentional. **Otherwise I would surely give it** — **וְאַתָּנָה**. **You do not want a burnt-offering** — **עֹלָה לֹא תִרְצֶה** from me, or even a peace-offering because it is inadequate in my situation.

(יט) זִבְחֵי אֱלֹקִים רוּחַ נְשֻׁבָּה

**The sacrifices that G-d wants** — **זִבְחֵי אֱלֹקִים** are accompanied by a **broken spirit** — **רוּחַ נְשֻׁבָּה**, expressing humility and deep regret for having sinned. G-d disdains sacrifices brought by a person who cannot bring himself to admit his failings.

לֵב נִשְׁבֵּר וְנִדְכָּה אֱלֹקִים לֹא תִבְזֶה:

On the other hand, **O G-d, You don't spurn a heart that is broken and contrite** – לֵב נִשְׁבֵּר וְנִדְכָּה אֱלֹקִים לֹא תִבְזֶה, even when no sacrificial offerings are brought, and even when the sinner is deserving of punishment.

#### PART 4: CONCLUSION.

(כ) הִיטִיבָה בְּרִצּוֹנְךָ אֶת צִיּוֹן  
תִּבְנֶה חוֹמוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם:

Through the power of *ruach hakodesh* that You have now restored to me, I see that the time will come during the reign of my son Shlomo, that You will allow the Jewish people to serve You in the *Bais Hamikdash*. I have worked hard to prepare for that glorious day and so I ask that **You establish Tzion at the right time, when it pleases You** – הִיטִיבָה בְּרִצּוֹנְךָ אֶת צִיּוֹן. Then You will **build the walls of Yerushalayim** – תִּבְנֶה חוֹמוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם to protect Your people and enable them to safely perform the service as You have instructed in the Torah.

(כא) אֲזוּ תַחֲפֹץ זִבְחֵי צְדָק עוֹלָה וְכֹלִיל  
אֲזוּ יַעֲלוּ עַל מִזְבִּיחֶךָ פְּרִים:

**Then You will want the offerings of righteousness** – אֲזוּ תַחֲפֹץ זִבְחֵי צְדָק that the people bring to You. For they will be accompanied by sincere feelings and humble devotion. The purpose of each type of offering will be fulfilled as it should be, whether **burnt-offering or whole offering** – עוֹלָה וְכֹלִיל. **Then** – אֲזוּ even expensive offerings such as **bulls will go up upon Your altar** – יַעֲלוּ עַל מִזְבִּיחֶךָ פְּרִים without the ulterior motives of self-aggrandizement.

### **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.

#### Tefillos for Life - Your Teshuvah.

[51:3] FORGIVENESS. – "O G-d, grant me favor [and forgive my sins] as befitting Your kindness. And as befits the abundance of Your compassion, erase my transgressions." Ask Hashem to forgive your sins out of compassion, even though you feel that

you don't deserve it.

[51:7] – הוּן בְּעוֹן חוֹלְלָתִי – *“Indeed, I was fashioned in iniquity.”* Ask for compassion because the tendency to sin is inherent in the human condition.

[51:4] PURIFICATION. – הָרַב כְּבִסְנִי מַעֲוֵנִי וּמַחְטָאֵי טְהַרְנִי – *“Cleanse me thoroughly from my iniquity and purify me from my sin.”* Ask Hashem to restore your sensitivity to sin so that you will more readily recognize sinful temptations in the future. Let your cleansing be like soap that washes away a stain.

[51:9] HUMILITY. – תְּחַטְּאֵנִי בְּאֵזוֹב וְאֶטְהַר תְּכַבֵּסְנִי וּמַשְׁלֵךְ אֶלְבִּין – *“Purge me of sin with hyssop. Then I shall be pure. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.”* On asking to be purified of sin, express deep humility (symbolized by the hyssop), with a broken heart as your offering to Hashem.

[51:19] – זַבְחֵי אֱלֹקִים רוּחַ נִשְׁבְּרָה לֵב נִשְׁבַּר וְנִדְכָּה אֱלֹקִים לֹא תִבְוֶה – *“The sacrifices for G-d are a broken spirit. O G-d, You don't spurn a heart that is broken and contrite.”*

[51:5] CONFESSION. – כִּי פָשַׁעִי אֲנִי אֲדַע וְחַטָּאתִי נֶגְדִי תָמִיד – *“For I have come to recognize my transgressions. And my sin is always before me.”* Humbly admit that you have sinned and express your deep regret.

[51:6] ACCEPTANCE. – לְמַעַן תְּצַדֵּק בְּדַבְּרֶךָ תִּזְכֶּה בְּשִׁפְטֶךָ – *“Therefore, You are just in holding me guilty. You are right in Your judgment.”* If you are experiencing physical distress or danger, accept the justice of your punishment. If the purpose of your suffering has been served, Hashem will give you relief.

[51:8] RESOLVE. – הוּן אָמַת חִפְצָתָּ בְּטַחוֹת וּבִסְתֵּתִים חִכְמָה תוֹדִיעֵנִי – *“Nevertheless, You have wanted truth in my covered parts and in my concealed heart You teach me wisdom.”* Ask Hashem for help in arousing your conscience and your will to enable you to overcome your human weaknesses in the future.

[51:12] RESOLVE. – לֵב טָהוֹר בְּרָא לִי אֱלֹקִים וְרוּחַ נְכוֹן חֲדָשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי – *“Create a pure heart for me, O G-d, and renew a firm spirit within me.”*

[51:10] JOY. – תִּשְׂמִיעֵנִי שְׂשׂוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה – “*Make me hear joy and happiness.*”  
Ask Hashem to grant you the joy of being free of sin once more.

### **Tefillos for Life - Your Relationship with Hashem.**

[51:6] ACKNOWLEDGEMENT. – לָךְ לְבַדְךָ חָטָאתִי וְהָרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ עָשִׂיתִי – “*I have sinned against You alone. I did what was evil in Your eyes.*” Examine yourself to acknowledge a hidden sin. Even if the world is not aware of it, you have sinned against Hashem and have undermined your relationship with Him.

[51:13] RESTORATION. – אַל תִּשְׁלִיכֵנִי מִלְּפָנֶיךָ – “*Don’t discard me from Your presence.*” Ask Hashem to restore His relationship with you and not to treat you as repugnant to Him.

[51:14] – הַשִּׁיבָה לִי שְׂשׂוֹן יִשְׂעָךְ – “*Restore to me the joy of Your salvation.*”

### **Lessons for Life - Your Behavior.**

[51:15] GUIDANCE. – אֶלְמָדָה פְּשָׁעִים דְּרָכֶיךָ וְחַטָּאִים אֵלֶיךָ יָשׁוּבוּ – “*I will teach Your ways to transgressors and sinners will return to You.*” If you have the opportunity, use the insight you have gained to give guidance to others.

### **Tefillos for Life - Yeshuah.**

[51:16] RESCUE AND PRAISE. – הַצִּילֵנִי מִדְּמַיִם אֱלֹקִים אֱלֹקֵי תְּשׁוּעָתִי תִרְנֶן – לְשׁוֹנֵי צְדָקָתְךָ – “*Rescue me from blood-guilt, O G-d. O G-d of my salvation, my tongue will sing joyously of Your kind justice.*” Ask Hashem in His kindness to accept your *teshuvah* and thereby rescue you from a harsh penalty, for which you might be marked because of your sins.

[51:17]. – אֲדַנִּי שִׁפְתֵי תִפְתָּח וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ – “*O my L-rd, open my lips so that my mouth may declare Your praise.*” Offer Hashem your promise of sincere gratitude and praise which His forgiveness will enable.

### **Tefillos for Life - Geulah.**

[51:20] YERUSHALAYIM. – הִיטִיבָה בְּרִצּוֹנְךָ אֶת צִיּוֹן תִּבְנֶה חוֹמוֹת יְרוּשָׁלָּיִם – “*Establish Tzion at the right time when it pleases You. Build the walls of*

*Yerushalayim.*" Ask Hashem to bring the Geulah and restore Yerushalayim so that sacrificial offerings may once more be brought with the proper devotion and sincerity.

[51:21]. – **אָז תִּחַפֵּץ זִבְחֵי צְדָק עוֹלָה וְכֹלֵל** – "Then You will want the offerings of righteousness, burnt-offering and whole-offering."

## Sources

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

א - אלשיך	י - רש"י, אבן עזרא, המאירי, ריל"ק
ב - רד"ק, המאירי, אלשיך	יא - רד"ק, אבן יחייא, מצודות, מלבי"ם
ג - אבן עזרא, המאירי, בן־רמון, אבן יחייא	יב - רד"ק, בן־רמון, אבן יחייא, אלשיך
ד - אבן עזרא, המאירי, בן־רמון, אבן יחייא, רשר"ה	יג - רש"י, רד"ק, המאירי, ספורנו, רשר"ה
ה - רש"י, רד"ק, ספורנו	יד - אבן יחייא, אלשיך, נר לרגלי
ו - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, המאירי, נר לרגלי	טו - המאירי, אלשיך, רשר"ה, נר לרגלי
ז - רש"י, בן־רמון, אבן יחייא, מלבי"ם, ריל"ק	טז - רש"י, רד"ק, בן־רמון
ח - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, בן־רמון, מצודות, באר אברהם, מלבי"ם, רשר"ה, ריל"ק	יז - רד"ק, בן־רמון, מצודות, רשר"ה
ט - רש"י, אבן עזרא, רד"ק, המאירי, ספורנו, אלשיך, ריל"ק	יח - רש"י, אבן עזרא, בן־רמון, רשר"ה
	יט - רד"ק, ספורנו
	כ - רש"י, בן־רמון, ספורנו
	כא - רד"ק, המאירי, ספורנו, באר אברהם

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