

Mizmor 132

To Keep the Promise

Key Concepts

As in many of the previous mizmorim of this series, David speaks for Klal Yisrael in a time when the Jewish people are in Exile. In the mizmor the nation appeals to Hashem to bring the *Geulah* (Redemption) and return the *Shechinah* (Divine presence) to a restored *Bais Hamikdash* (Temple). As an essential part of this *tefillah*, the people ask Hashem to remember David's efforts with kindness and reward his dedication by anointing his descendant to usher in the *Geulah*.

Navigating Tehillim. This is the thirteenth in the series of 15 mizmorim to be sung by the Leviim in the *Beis HaMikdash* while standing on the 15 steps leading up from the women's courtyard to the men's courtyard.

Historical Background

The construction of the *Bais Hamikdash* was closely associated with the royal House of David. David himself had originally hoped to personally direct it, but this privilege was denied him because of his violent past and given to his son Shlomo. Nevertheless, because of his great love for Hashem, David worked tirelessly to find the right location for the building, prepare the plans, and gather the resources.

In fact, he swore an oath (*shevuah*) and made a vow (*neder*) that he would not rest until he found what he was seeking. David mentioned Yaakov Avinu in his *neder* because Yaakov had set a precedent in searching out the location of the future *Bais Hamikdash*. Yaakov was rewarded by being allowed to see that location at the base of the ladder that appeared to him in a dream (*Bereishis* 28:17). Yaakov was also the first to use a vow in making a commitment to Hashem in a time of distress, as it says, "Then Yaakov made a vow" (*ibid.* 28:20).

David's search was rewarded when an angel instructed the prophet Gad to tell David to build a *mizbe'ach* (altar) at the threshing floor of Aravna Hayevusi (*Shmuel* II 24:16). Thereupon David bought the property from Aravna and immediately consecrated it by bringing offerings to Hashem. Hashem responded with a Divine flame that descended on the *mizbe'ach*. This miraculous event brought to an end the

plague that the Jewish people had been suffering at that time. Thereupon David said, "This is the House of Hashem." (*Divrei Hayamim* I 22:1)

The actual construction of the *Bais Hamikdash* was designated for Shlomo, the son of David. Hashem's promise to establish Shlomo on the throne was stated unconditionally through the prophet Nassan. That commitment was directly linked to his role in building the *Bais Hamikdash*, as it says. "He shall build a House for My sake, and I shall establish the throne of his kingdom forever." (See *Shmuel* II 7:12-13.)

This mizmor quotes Hashem's promise to David, a promise that his royal line would never cease. That promise is described as a *shevuah* (oath) because it has the power of Hashem's word. This *shevuah*, recalls the *shevuah* that David made in which he swore to deny himself any comfort until he completed his goal of finding the location of the *Bais Hamikdash*.

However, the portion of Hashem's promise concerning the subsequent descendants of David, was conditional on their observance of the Torah. If they would continue to observe the Torah on their throne, Hashem would remain on His throne in the *Bais Hamikdash*. This is because the Divine throne and the throne of the House of David are linked. However, even if it should happen that the descendant of David in any generation was to be unworthy, the Davidic dynasty would not be permanently broken, but would remain in force for ever and ever, ready to be restored.

Exploring the Mizmor

PART 1. A REMEMBRANCE OF DAVID. The nation asks that David's intense commitment in preparing for the *Bais Hamikdash* be remembered and that his name always be associated with the dwelling place of the *Shechinah*. David worked devotedly to determine the location of Hashem's house. This part of the mizmor includes a portion of the oath by which David swore not to rest until he has fulfilled his mission.

(א) שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת זְכוֹר ה' לְדָוִד אֵת כָּל עֲנוֹתָיו: (ב) אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לָהּ נָדָר לְאַבְרָם יַעֲקֹב:

(1) A song of the steps. "O Hashem, remember for David all his anguish, (2) how he swore to Hashem, and vowed to the Mighty Power of Yaakov:

(ג) אִם אָבֹא בְּאֵהָל בֵּיתִי אִם אֶעֱלֶה עַל עֵרֶשׁ יְצוּעָי: (ד) אִם אֶתֶּן שְׁנַת לַעֲיִנִי

לְעַפְעַפֵּי תְנוּמָה: (ה) עַד אֲמָצָא מְקוֹם לַה' מִשְׁכַּנּוֹת לְאַבִּיר יַעֲקֹב:

(3) I will not enter my sleeping chamber, I will not go up on my cushioned bedding, ... (4) I will not allow restful sleep to my eyes [or] a nap to my eyelids, ... (5) before I find the location for Hashem, the habitations for the Mighty Power of Yaakov.

Navigating Tehillim. It is noteworthy that Yaakov himself had used the term “the Mighty Power of Yaakov” (Bereishis 49:24) in referring to Hashem because Hashem gave him the strength to overcome all the challenges that he faced in life. Hashem had promised to protect Yaakov, saying “Behold, I am with you; I will guard you wherever you go” (Bereishis 28:15) and He kept His promise, as Yaakov later said, “He answered me in my time of distress” (ibid. 35:3). Similarly, in Mizmor 020, where David appeals for Hashem’s help in meeting the challenge of overcoming Avshalom’s army, he invokes the Name of Hashem as “the G-d of Yaakov” (20:2).

PART 2. CELEBRATING A SUCCESSFUL SEARCH. The people joyfully declare that David’s search has been rewarded. They issue a call to all Jews to join in serving Hashem in the new Bais Hamikdash that is now to be built.

(ו) הִנֵּה שָׁמַעְנוּהָ בְּאַפְרָתָה מִצְאָנוּהָ בְּשֵׂדֵי יַעֲרִ: (ז) נְבוֹאָה לְמִשְׁכַּנּוֹתָיו נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לַהֲדָם רַגְלָיו: (ח) קוּמָה ה' לְמִנוּחֶתֶד אַתָּה וְאַרְוֹן עֲדָד: (ט) כְּהַנִּיד יִלְבָּשׁוּ צִדְק וְחִסְדֵיךָ יִרְנְנוּ: (י) בְּעִבּוֹר דָּוִד עֲבַדְךָ אֶל תִּשָּׁב פְּנֵי מְשִׁיחֶךָ:

(6) See now! We [first] heard of it [as being] in Efras. We [then] found it in a forested field. (7) Let us joyfully come to His habitations. Let us prostrate ourselves at His footstool. (8) Arise, Hashem upon Your resting place, You and the Ark of Your strength. (9) Let Your Kohanim be clothed in righteousness. And let Your devout ones, sing joyously. (10) For the sake of David, Your servant, do not reject Your anointed one.

PART 3. HASHEM’S PROMISE. The nation appeals to Hashem to fulfill the promise that He made to preserve the historic relationship between the House of David and the construction of the Bais Hamikdash. Hashem promised that David’s royal line would continue for all time.

(יא) נִשְׁבַּע ה' לְדָוִד אֱמֶת לֹא יִשׁוּב מִמֶּנָּה מִפְּרֵי בִטְנֶךָ אֲשִׁית לְכִסֵּא לְךָ: (יב) אִם יִשְׁמְרוּ בְּנֵיךָ בְּרִיתִי וְעֲדוֹתַי זֹל אֶלְמָדִם גַּם בְּנֵיהֶם עֲדֵי עַד יִשְׁבוּ לְכִסֵּא לְךָ: (יג) כִּי

בָּחַר ה' בְּצִיּוֹן אָוֶה לְמוֹשֵׁב לוֹ: (יד) זֹאת מְנוּחָתִי עַד פֶּה אֲשֹׁב כִּי אוֹתִיָּהּ: (טו)
צִדָּה בָּרָךְ אֲבִיּוֹנֶיהָ אֲשַׁבֵּעַ לָחֵם: (טז) וְכֹהֲנֶיהָ אֲלַבֵּשׁ יִשְׁע וְחֹסֵידֶיהָ רִנּוֹ
יִרְנְנוּ:

(11) Hashem has sworn to David, a truth from which He will never retreat: From the fruit of your loin. I will place [him] on a throne for you. (12) If your sons keep My covenant and this, My testament, which I will teach them, their sons, too, forever and ever, will sit upon your throne. (13) Because Hashem has chosen Tzion; He has desired it for His habitation. (14) [He said:] This is My resting place forever and ever. Here I will dwell, for I have desired it. (15) I will bless its sustenance abundantly. I will give its paupers their fill of food. (16) I will clothe its Kohanim with yeshuah; its devout ones to continue singing joyously.

Hashem also promised that a descendant of David would ultimately be anointed as the Mashiach:

(יז) שָׁם אֲצַמִּיחַ קֶרֶן לְדָוִד עֲרֹכְתִי נֹר לְמִשְׁיחִי: (יח) אוֹיְבָיו אֲלַבֵּשׁ בִּשְׂת וְעַלְיוֹ יִצְיֵץ
נֹר:

(17) There I will cause the horn of strength to flourish for David. I have prepared a lamp for My anointed one. (18) I will clothe [his] enemies in disgrace, but on him, his crown will sparkle.

Learning the Mizmor

PART 1. A REMEMBRANCE OF DAVID.

(א) שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת לְדָוִד

This is the 13th **song of the steps** – שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת. It was composed **by David** – לְדָוִד.

זְכוֹר ה' לְדָוִד
אֵת כָּל עֲנוֹתָו:

Hashem, remember for David – זְכוֹר ה' לְדָוִד all his frustrated anguish –
אֵת כָּל עֲנוֹתָו as he tirelessly worked to determine the precise location of the *Bais Hamikdash* even though he knew that he was to be denied the privilege of actually building it. Hashem, You promised that in return for his devotion, his name would forever be associated with the *Bais Hamikdash* when it is built. May that time come

soon.

(ב) אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לָהּ
נִדְר לְאַבִּיר יַעֲקֹב:

Remember **how he swore** in a *shevuah* (oath) **to Hashem** — 'אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לָהּ', and **uttered a *neder*** (vow) **to the Mighty Power of Yaakov** — נִדְר לְאַבִּיר יַעֲקֹב.

David used both a shevuah and a neder, but the mizmor presents only the shevuah. And even that is expressed in a truncated form.

(ג) אִם אָבָא בְּאֵהָל בֵּיתִי
אִם אָעֵלָה עַל עֶרְשׂ יְצוּעֵי:

David said: I swear that **I will not enter** — אִם אָבָא **my royal sleeping chamber** — בְּאֵהָל בֵּיתִי, **I will not go up** — אִם אָעֵלָה **on my luxuriously cushioned bedding** — עַל עֶרְשׂ יְצוּעֵי, ...

(ד) אִם אָתָּן שְׁנַת לְעֵינַי
לְעַפְעַפֵּי תְנוּמָה:

I will not allow restful sleep to close my eyes — אִם אָתָּן שְׁנַת לְעֵינַי, or even a brief **nap to lightly shut my eyelids** — לְעַפְעַפֵּי תְנוּמָה, ...

(ה) עַד אֲמַצָּא מְקוֹם לָהּ
מִשְׁכָּנוֹת לְאַבִּיר יַעֲקֹב:

... **before I find the location** — עַד אֲמַצָּא מְקוֹם specially designated for public awareness of the Presence of **Hashem** — לָהּ. That is the place which Yaakov saw in his dream as the Gate of Heaven, the place where there would be constructed **the habitations for the Mighty Power of Yaakov** — מִשְׁכָּנוֹת לְאַבִּיר יַעֲקֹב.

PART 2. CELEBRATING A SUCCESSFUL SEARCH.

(ו) הִנֵּה שְׁמַעְנוּהָ בְּאַפְרָתָה
מִצְאָנוּהָ בְּשָׂדֵי יַעַר:

See now — הִנֵּה! **We first heard of it** as being in the general vicinity of **Efras** — שְׁמַעְנוּהָ בְּאַפְרָתָה, the birthplace of David (also known as *Bais Lechem*). But then **we** narrowed it down and **found it** — מִצְאָנוּהָ, **in a forested field** — בְּשָׂדֵי יַעַר, at the threshing floor of Aravna Hayevusi. (*Shmuel* II 24:16)

(ז) נְבוֹאָה לְמִשְׁכְּנוֹתַי
נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְהֶדֶם רַגְלָיו:

May the *Bais Hamikdash* be rebuilt now and **let us** joyfully **come** there **to His habitations** — נְבוֹאָה לְמִשְׁכְּנוֹתַי three times a year. **Let us prostrate ourselves at His footstool** — נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְהֶדֶם רַגְלָיו, the *Bais Hamikdash* that is located at the base of the Heavenly Throne of Glory.

The people joyfully call upon Hashem to symbolically take up residence in the restored Bais Hamikdash:

(ח) קוּמָה ה' לְמִנוּחֶתֶךָ
אַתָּה וְאַרְוֹן עֵדֶךָ:

Arise, Hashem — קוּמָה ה', may Your *Shechinah* descend **upon Your eternal resting place** — לְמִנוּחֶתֶךָ, **You and the Ark of Your strength** — אַתָּה וְאַרְוֹן עֵדֶךָ, which contains the tablets of the Law that guarantee strength to Your nation.

The words of this verse and the next two (8 – 10) are also reflected in the tefillah King Shlomo used when he inaugurated the first Bais Hamikdash (Divrei Hayamim II 41-42). Note that in speaking of "You and the Ark of Your strength" the word You refers to the thick cloud which appeared after the Ark was installed in the Holy of Holies (see I Melachim 8:6-11).

(ט) כְּהִנֵּיךָ יִלְבְּשׁוּ צֶדֶק
וְחִסְדֵיךָ יִרְנְנוּ:

Let Your Kohanim be clothed in righteousness — כְּהִנֵּיךָ יִלְבְּשׁוּ צֶדֶק, as they give guidance to the people and perform the *avodah* (service) in the *Bais Hamikdash*. **And let Your devout ones**, the *Leviim*, **sing joyously** — וְחִסְדֵיךָ יִרְנְנוּ with a full heart to inspire the people.

(י) בְּעִבּוֹר דָּוִד עֲבָדֶךָ
אַל תִּשָּׁב פְּנֵי מְשִׁיחֶךָ:

For the sake of David, Your servant — בְּעִבּוֹר דָּוִד עֲבָדֶךָ, **do not reject Your anointed one** — אַל תִּשָּׁב פְּנֵי מְשִׁיחֶךָ, his descendant. Do it in the *zechus* (merit) of David's devotion in preparing a dwelling for You and the oath that You swore to him.

PART 3. HASHEM'S PROMISE.

(יא) נִשְׁבַּע ה' לְדָוִד
אָמֶת לֹא יָשׁוּב מִמֶּנָּה

Hashem has sworn to David – נִשְׁבַּע ה' לְדָוִד, a truth from which He will never retreat – אָמֶת לֹא יָשׁוּב מִמֶּנָּה.

מִפְּרֵי בִטְנְךָ
אֲשִׁית לְכִסֵּא לְךָ:

You will be succeeded by a son **from the fruit of your loin – מִפְּרֵי בִטְנְךָ. I will firmly place him on a throne for you – אֲשִׁית לְכִסֵּא לְךָ** to establish your royal line.

(יב) אִם יִשְׁמְרוּ בְּנֶיךָ בְּרִיתִי
וְעִדְתִּי זוֹ אֶלְמָדָם
גַּם בְּנֵיהֶם עַדִּי עַד יֵשְׁבוּ לְכִסֵּא לְךָ:

If your sons keep My covenant – אִם יִשְׁמְרוּ בְּנֶיךָ בְּרִיתִי, which includes all the mitzvos of the Torah, and this, My testament – וְעִדְתִּי זוֹ of admonishment to observe the *mitzvos*, which **I will teach them – אֶלְמָדָם** through My *neviim* (prophets), then **their sons, too, forever and ever – גַּם בְּנֵיהֶם עַדִּי עַד, will sit upon your throne – יֵשְׁבוּ לְכִסֵּא לְךָ.**

(יג) כִּי בָחַר ה' בְּצִיּוֹן
אֲנִיהָ לְמוֹשָׁב לוֹ:

This will happen **because Hashem has chosen Tzion – כִּי בָחַר ה' בְּצִיּוֹן**, which is the City of David; **He has desired it for His habitation – אֲנִיהָ לְמוֹשָׁב לוֹ** since the throne of David and the Divine throne are linked to each other by Hashem's promise.

Note that Hashem's choice of the location of the Bais Hamikdash is inextricably linked to His bond with the House of David.

(יד) זֹאת מְנוּחָתִי עַדִּי עַד
פֶּה אֲשֵׁב כִּי אֲוִתִּיהָ:

This is My resting place forever and ever – זֹאת מְנוּחָתִי עַדִּי עַד. I will no longer

move My habitation from location to location as I did since the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) was set up by Moshe. **Here I will dwell, for I have desired it — פֹּה אָשֵׁב כִּי אוֹתִיָּהּ**. It has a special meaning to Me for it is the location of the *Akeidas Yitzchak* (Binding of Yitzchak), where Avraham showed the depth of his devotion to Me.

This verse is Hashem's response to verse 'ח above where the people called to Him in devotion: קוּמָה ה' לְמִנוּחֶיךָ.

(טו) צִידָה בְּרֵךְ אֲבָרֵךְ
אֲבִיוֹנִיָּה אֲשַׁבֵּיעַ לֶחֶם:

Because I have chosen this location, it will be a source of blessing for the entire land. **I will bless its sustenance abundantly — צִידָה בְּרֵךְ אֲבָרֵךְ** and so those who dedicate their efforts to the *avodah* in the *Bais Hamikdash* will not suffer thereby. **I will give even its paupers their fill of food — אֲבִיוֹנִיָּה אֲשַׁבֵּיעַ לֶחֶם.**

(טז) וְכִהְיֶינָה אֶלְבִּישׁ יֵשַׁע
וְחִסְדֵיךָ רַגְלֵי יִרְנְנוּ:

I will clothe its Kohanim with yeshuah (salvation) — **וְכִהְיֶינָה אֶלְבִּישׁ יֵשַׁע**. This means that I will save them from every threat as a reward for serving Me with devotion. And as a reward to **its devout ones — וְחִסְדֵיךָ**, the *Leviim* who sing in praise of My Name, I will grant them long life and artistic talent **to continue singing joyously — רַגְלֵי יִרְנְנוּ**.

This verse is Hashem's response to verse 'ט where the people called to Him in devotion: כִּהְיֶיךָ יִלְבָּשׁוּ צְדָק וְחִסְדֵיךָ יִרְנְנוּ.

(יז) שָׁם אֲצַמִּיחַ קֶרֶן לְדָוִד
עֲרֻכְתִּי נֵר לְמִשְׁיחִי:

There — שָׁם in Tzion, even if the people have sinned and have been driven away from their land, I will bring them back and **I will cause the horn of strength to flourish anew for David — אֲצַמִּיחַ קֶרֶן לְדָוִד**; **I have prepared a lamp for My anointed one — עֲרֻכְתִּי נֵר לְמִשְׁיחִי**. That light of Torah will shine if the Mashiach connects himself to the source of *kedushah* and brings the people to *avodas Hashem*.

(יח) אוֹיְבָיו אֶלְבִּישׁ בְּשֵׁת
וְעָלָיו יִצְיֵץ נֹזֵר:

In contrast to the *Kohanim*, whom I will clothe in *yeshuah*, **I will clothe David's enemies in disgrace** — אוֹיְבָיו אֶלְבִּישׁ בְּשֵׁת, **but on him, his crown will sparkle** — וְעָלָיו יִצְיֵץ נֹזֵר.

Living the Mizmor

Listed below are some of the thoughts you might have in mind when you say the words of the mizmor as a *tefillah* to Hashem.

Lessons for Life - Your Attitude.

[132:1] DAVIDIC REIGN. – זָכוֹר ה' לְדָוִד אֵת כָּל עֲנוּתוֹ – “O Hashem, remember for David all his anguish.” When you say the *tefillah* אֵת צַמַּח דָּוִד in the daily *Shemoneh Esrei*, have in mind that you are helping fulfill David's request and Hashem's promise.

[132:11] – נִשְׁבַּע ה' לְדָוִד אֲמֶת לֹא יָשׁוּב מִמֶּנָּה – “Hashem has sworn to David, a truth from which He will never retreat: From the fruit of your loin. I will place [him] on a throne for you.”

[132:4] COMMITMENT. – אִם אַתָּן שְׁנַת לְעֵינַי לְעַפְעַפִּי תִּנּוּמָה – “I will not allow restful sleep to my eyes [or] a nap to my eyelids.” Follow David's example by dedicating yourself to a worthy goal. If you sacrifice sleep and comfort to pursue it, you are being especially virtuous.

Additional Thoughts

In Mizmor 132, David has provided us with a *tefillah* with which we can ask Hashem to remember David's intense dedication in preparing for the *Bais Hamikdash*. With this *tefillah* we can ask Hashem to preserve the House of David forever. Was David self-conscious about enlisting our support for the glory of his own royal line? Such a *tefillah* could only have been written by someone who has completely overcome selfish pride and arrogance. In fact, that was precisely the theme of Mizmor 131, which serves as an introduction to Mizmor 132.

That is why it is significant that in this *mizmor* we ask Hashem to grant our plea “for the sake of David Your servant” (verse 9). David identified himself as a servant of Hashem, which meant that everything he did was at the direction of his Master

and was intended only to please his Master, without any personal agenda mixed in. It was not a matter of his own glory. He knew it was Hashem's will that the House of David be forever associated with the House of Hashem.

This is a challenge which is faced by everyone in a position of leadership or power over others. He must ensure that his motivations are pure and that if he ascends to a high position, he must focus on doing Hashem's will without thoughts of personal advantage.

Sources

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

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|--|--------------------------------------|
| יא - רד"ק, מלבי"ם, אלשיך | א - שי למורא, רש"י, רד"ק, אבן יחייא, |
| יב - רד"ק, אבן יחייא, מלבי"ם, נר לרגלי, אלשיך | מזמור לתודה |
| יג - אבן עזרא, אבן יחייא | ב - רד"ק |
| יד - רד"ק, ספורנו | ג - רד"ק, ספורנו |
| טו - אבן יחייא, מצודות, מלבי"ם, נר לרגלי | ד - ספורנו, מצודות |
| טז - רד"ק, המאירי, מלבי"ם | ה - אבן עזרא, מלבי"ם |
| יז - רד"ק, אבן יחייא | ו - אבן עזרא, ספורנו, מצודות |
| יח - אבן עזרא | ז - רש"י, רד"ק, המאירי, ספורנו |
| | ח - רד"ק, ספורנו, אבן יחייא |
| | ט - אבן עזרא |
| | י - מלבי"ם, נר לרגלי |

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