

## Mizmor 061

# To Dwell In Your Tent

### Key Concepts

David composed this mizmor at a time when he was far from Yerushalayim, facing his foes on the field of battle. The struggle was fierce and David desperately sought Hashem's help. He dreamed of the day when he would be free of the necessity of facing a remorseless enemy and would be able to devote himself to serving Hashem and learning His Torah. In this *tefillah*, David asked that he be able to live out his years in Yerushalayim, the place of Hashem's intense presence, and that there he would be able fulfill his mission as king.

David's destiny was not to build the *Bais Hamikdash*, the House of Hashem, but in this mizmor he prayed that he would at least be able to dwell in Hashem's tent, represented by the *Mishkan*, the interim abode of Hashem's holiness. He dedicated himself to employ His poetic gifts to inspire generations to come. And so it was to be. His words would be sung by generations of his people while in exile, far from the Land to which they aspired.

**Navigating Tehillim.** A common feature of many mizmorim is the emphasis on developing a closeness with Hashem, described as dwelling in His house or His tent. In Mizmor 015 (15:1) David examines himself and asks, "Who is worthy of being in Your tent?" In Mizmor 026 the desire to dwell in Hashem's house became part of David's spiritual development as he said, "I love the shelter of Your House" (26:8). In Mizmor 027 he incorporates that desire into his *tefillah* when he says, "there is one thing I have asked of Hashem, and it is this that I will seek, that I dwell in the House of Hashem all the days of my life" (27:4).

### Exploring the Mizmor

**PART 1. SEEKING REFUGE.** David calls upon Hashem to hear the words of his spoken prayer, as well as the silent words that are deep within his heart. He asks Hashem to give him refuge and let him dwell in His tent for the rest of his days.

(א) לְמִנְצַחַ עַל נְגִינַת לְדָוִד: (ב) שְׁמָעָה אֱלֹקִים רִנָּתִי הַקְּשִׁיבָה תִּפְלְתִי: (ג) מִקְצָה  
הָאָרֶץ אֵלַיךְ אֶקְרָא בְּעֵטֶף לִבִּי בְּצוּר יְרוּם מִמֵּנִי תִנְחַנְנִי: (ד) כִּי הֵייתָ מְחֹסָה לִי מִגִּדְל  
עַז מִפְּנֵי אוֹיֵב: (ה) אֶגּוֹרָה בְּאֶהְלֶךְ עוֹלָמִים אֶחְסֶה בְּסִתְרֵךְ כִּנְפֶיךָ שָׁלָה:

(1) For the musician, on the neginas instrument. A mizmor by David. (2) Hear, O G-d, my song of praise and supplication. Listen to my [silent] prayer. (3) From the end of the land, I call to You. When my heart grows faint, You lead me to a rock that soars above me. (4) For You have [always] been a refuge for me, a tower of strength in the face of the enemy. (5) Let me dwell in Your tent forever. Let me take refuge in the shelter of Your wings, Selah.

**PART 2. LET ME LIVE OUT MY YEARS.** David acknowledges having reached the stage in his life where he is king over a united people who fear Hashem. But there are still many challenges ahead, especially from foreign nations who hate the Jewish people. He asks for the privilege of living out his full allotment of 70 years, so that he can fulfill his mission in life. In conclusion, he promises to transform that mission into the form of poetic song which will inspire generations to come.

(ו) כִּי אַתָּה אֱלֹקִים שָׁמַעְתָּ לְנַדְרֵי נְתַתָּ יְרֵשֶׁת יִרְאֵי שְׁמֶךָ: (ז) יָמִים עַל יָמֵי מֶלֶךְ: תְּוַסִּיף שְׁנוֹתַי כְּמוֹ דֹר וָדֹר: (ח) יֵשֶׁב עוֹלָם לִפְנֵי אֱלֹקִים חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת מִן יַנְצִרְהוּ: (ט) כִּן אֲזַמְרָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעַד לְשִׁלְמֵי נְדָרֵי יוֹם יוֹם:

(6) For You, O G-d, have [always] heard my vows. You have granted [Eretz Yisrael as] the inheritance of those who fear Your Name. (7) May You add days onto the days of the king. May his years be like all generations. (8) May he sit forever before G-d. Designate kindness and truth to guard him. (9) So will I sing Your Name forever to fulfill my vows day after day.

## Learning the Mizmor

### PART 1. SEEKING REFUGE.

(א) לְמַנְצֶחַ עַל נְגִינת לְדָוִד:

A song **for the musician** — לְמַנְצֶחַ, to be performed **on the neginas** instrument — עַל נְגִינת. It is a mizmor composed **by David** — לְדָוִד.

(ב) שְׁמַעָה אֱלֹקִים רְנָתִי

הַקְּשִׁיבָה תִּפְלָתִי:

**Hear, O G-d, my song of praise and supplication** — שְׁמַעָה אֱלֹקִים רְנָתִי, accompanied by emotional music. At the same time, **listen to my silent prayer** — הַקְּשִׁיבָה תִּפְלָתִי, which is expressed deep within my heart.

(ג) מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ אֶלֶיךָ אֶקְרָא  
 בְּעֵטֹף לִבִּי  
 בְּצוּר יְרוּם מִמֶּנִּי תִנְחַנֵּי:

**From the end of the land**, far from Your Sanctuary **I call to You** – מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ אֶקְרָא and You hear me. **When my heart grows faint** – בְּעֵטֹף לִבִּי from desperation, **You lead me to a rock that soars above me** – בְּצוּר יְרוּם מִמֶּנִּי תִנְחַנֵּי, where I can find safety from my enemies and where I can see in which direction I should go.

(ד) כִּי הָיִיתָ מְחֹסָה לִּי  
 מִגִּדְל עַז מִפְּנֵי אוֹיֵב:

**For You have always been a refuge for me** – כִּי הָיִיתָ מְחֹסָה לִּי, which I sought by doing Your will. You have been **a tower of strength in the face of the enemy** – מִגִּדְל עַז מִפְּנֵי אוֹיֵב and so I was able to fight them with confidence that You would support me.

(ה) אֶגוֹרָה בְּאֶהְלֶךְ עוֹלָמִים  
 אֶחֱסֶה בְּסִתֶּר כְּנִפְיֶךָ סֵלָה:

**Let me dwell in Your tent forever** – אֶגוֹרָה בְּאֶהְלֶךְ עוֹלָמִים, that is, for many years, serving You and studying Your Torah. And when the time comes for me to leave this world, **let me take refuge in the shelter of Your wings**, – אֶחֱסֶה בְּסִתֶּר כְּנִפְיֶךָ for eternity, in the World to Come, **Selah** – סֵלָה.

## PART 2. FULFILLING MY MISSION.

(ו) כִּי אֶתָּה אֶלְקִים שָׁמַעְתָּ לְנַדְרֵי  
 נְתַתָּ יְרֵשֶׁת יִרְאֵי שְׁמֶךָ:

**For You, O G-d, have always listened to my vows** – כִּי אֶתָּה אֶלְקִים שָׁמַעְתָּ לְנַדְרֵי and supplications when I was in trouble. **You have granted Eretz Yisrael as the inheritance of those who fear Your Name** – נְתַתָּ יְרֵשֶׁת יִרְאֵי שְׁמֶךָ.

(ז) יָמִים עַל יָמֵי מֶלֶךְ תוֹסִיף  
 שְׁנוֹתָיו כְּמוֹ דֹר וָדָר:

In my role as a king I am afraid that I may misjudge a situation for which I am responsible. Let me not suffer a shortened life as a result of such errors. **May You**

**add days onto** my days, that is, **the days of the king** – יָמִים עַל יָמֵי מֶלֶךְ תּוֹסִיף – **May his years be** the full allotment of 70, **like all generations** – שְׁנוֹתָיו כְּמוֹ דָּר – **וְדָר**.

(ח) יֵשֵׁב עוֹלָם לְפָנַי אֱלֹקִים  
חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת מִן יִנְצְרֶהוּ:

**May he sit forever**, that is, for all of his life, in devotion **before G-d** – יֵשֵׁב עוֹלָם לְפָנַי אֱלֹקִים, without having to venture again into the field of battle. **Designate kindness and truth to guard him** – חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת מִן יִנְצְרֶהוּ. Your kindness will give him life and Your truth will keep Your promise to protect him from danger.

(ט) כִּן אֶזְמַרְהָ שְׁמִךְ לְעַד  
לְשִׁלְמֵי נְדָרַי יוֹם יוֹם:

In the same way that I sing in praise of You when I am victorious in battle, **so will I sing of Your Name forever** – כִּן אֶזְמַרְהָ שְׁמִךְ לְעַד, with praises that are valid for all time and all generations to come. I will do this as I live my day-to-day life **to fulfill my vows day after day** – לְשִׁלְמֵי נְדָרַי יוֹם יוֹם, so that every day of my life will leave a legacy for the future.

## 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 Relationship with Hashem.

[61:2] TO HEAR. – שְׁמַעָה אֱלֹקִים רִנָּתִי הַקְּשִׁיבָה תִּפְלְתִי – “Hear, O G-d, my song of praise and supplication. Listen to my [silent] prayer.” Ask Hashem to take note of your tefillos in whatever form they may be.

[61:3] FROM AFAR. – מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ אֶלֶיךָ אֶקְרָא – “From the end of the land, I call to You.” Call to Hashem in prayer no matter where you are, for He is everywhere.

[61:3] SHELTER. – בְּעֵטֶף לִבִּי בְּצוּר יְרוּם מִמֶּנִּי תִנְחַנֵּי – “When my heart grows faint, You lead me to a rock that soars above me.” Call to Hashem no matter what your circumstances, for He will give you shelter.

[61:4] - **כִּי הָיִיתָ מְחֻסָּה לִי מִגְדֹּל עֵז מִפְּנֵי אוֹיֵב** - "For You have [always] been a refuge for me, a tower of strength in the face of the enemy."

[61:5] **SANCTUARY. - אָגוּרָה בְּאֶהְלֶךְ עוֹלָמִים** - "Let me dwell in Your tent forever." Ask Hashem to enable you to live in an environment where you can be close to Him.

[61:8] - **יֵשֵׁב עוֹלָם לְפָנַי אֱלֹקִים** - "May he sit forever before G-d."

### **Tefillos for Life - Your Berachah.**

[61:7] **LIFE. - יָמִים עַל יָמֵי מֶלֶךְ תוֹסִיף שְׁנוֹתָיו כָּמוֹ דָּר וְדָר** - *May You add days onto the days of the king (i.e. David). May his years be like all generations.* Ask Hashem to let you live out your years in good health so that you can serve Him and complete your life's mission.

### **Tehillos for Life - Contemplation of Hashem.**

[61:9] **HIS NAME. - כִּן אֲזַמְרָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעַד** - *So will I sing Your Name forever.* Reflect upon the wondrous attributes of Hashem, as represented by His Name.

[61:8] - **חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת מִן יִנְצְרֶהוּ** - "Designate [Hashem's] kindness and truth to guard him (i.e. David)."

## **Sources**

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

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