

Mizmor 089

Chesed and Emunah

Key Concepts

This mizmor is a *tefillah* which pleads with Hashem to finally bring an end to Jewish suffering. It specifically associates that happy outcome with the appearance of *Mashiach*, a king to be anointed by Hashem to lead the Jewish people in serving Him as David once did.

The mizmor speaks of the covenant that Hashem made with David when David himself was anointed. In that covenant Hashem expressed appreciation for David's devoted service and promised David that the future *Mashiach* would be chosen from among his descendants.

However, the covenant also anticipated the eventuality that some of David's descendants might prove unworthy. This, together with the sins of the Jewish nation would undermine the blessings of Hashem. But even so, the covenant offered Hashem's assurances that the longed-for *Mashiach* would ultimately be anointed and would revive the glory of the royal house of David.

This is the focus of the mizmor, calling upon Hashem to end the *Galus* (exile) and anoint His *Mashiach*.

To achieve this goal the mizmor invokes two critical qualities by which Hashem has managed His relationship with the Jewish people and mankind in general. These are known as *chesed* (kindness) and *emunah* (faithfulness). *Chesed* is an expression of Hashem's innate goodness, a quality of kindness that generates blessings for His creatures. *Emunah* is an expression of Hashem's innate truth, the integrity that assures He will be faithful to His word.

The original covenant with David was a product of Hashem's *chesed*. The anticipated fulfillment of that covenant, even though delayed, will be a product of His *emunah*.

Exploring the Mizmor

Although the plea to end the *Galus* is the focus of this relatively long mizmor, it does not appear until the final verses. The earlier parts of the mizmor are concerned with establishing the context in terms of the covenant with David and its difficult history.

PART 1. THE THEME OF THE MIZMOR. The singer begins by introducing the two concepts that form its theme: *chesed* and *emunah*. *Chesed* is presented as the motivating force of kindness underlying Hashem's creation of the world. *Emunah* is the disciplined force whereby Hashem faithfully maintains His commitment to the world that He created. This commitment is demonstrated in the clock-like precision by which He governs the movements of the heavenly bodies. The singer declares his gratitude for the acts of *chesed* in the past and his trust in the *emunah* by which Hashem will act in the future to fulfill His promises.

(א) מְשַׁפֵּיל לְאֵיתָן הָאֲזָרָחִי: (ב) חֲסִדֵי ה' עוֹלָם אֲשִׁירָה לְדֹר וָדֹר אֲוֹדִיעַ אֱמוּנָתְךָ
בְּפִי: (ג) כִּי אֶמְרֵתִי עוֹלָם חֶסֶד יִבְנֶה שָׁמַיִם תִּכְוֶן אֱמוּנָתְךָ בָּהֶם:

(1) *A song of enlightenment composed by Eitan the Ezrachi. (2) I will forever sing of Hashem's acts of chesed. I will proclaim with my mouth to all generations my trust in Your emunah. (3) For I said, "The world is built on chesed. The heavens, You establish Your emunah in them."*

PART 2. THE PROMISES TO DAVID. The mizmor now recalls the promises Hashem made to David, promises pertaining to the continued survival of the House of David throughout the generations. The singer knows these promises can be relied upon because of Hashem's *emunah*.

(ד) כְּרַתִּי בְרִית לְבַחֲרֵי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְדָוִד עַבְדִּי: (ה) עַד עוֹלָם אֶכִּין זְרַעְךָ וּבְנֵי־יָדְךָ
וְדֹר כְּסָאֲךָ סֶלָה:

(4) *[You once declared] "I have made a covenant with, My chosen one, I have sworn to David, My servant."* (5) *[You promised David] "I will establish your offspring for all eternity. And I will rebuild your throne in every generation."*

PART 3. HASHEM'S HEAVENLY GLORY. The singer looks forward to the time of *Mashiach* when Hashem's *emunah* will have been demonstrated by the fulfillment of His promises to David. This glorious time will surely evoke praises of Hashem by all the heavenly beings.

(ו) וַיִּוְדוּ שָׁמַיִם פְּלִאָאֲךָ ה' אֵף אֱמוּנָתְךָ בְּקֹהֵל קְדוֹשִׁים: (ז) כִּי מִי בִשְׁחַק יַעֲרֹךְ לָהּ
יְדָמָה לָהּ בְּבִנֵי אֱלִים: (ח) אֶל נַעֲרָךְ בְּסוֹד קְדוֹשִׁים רַבָּה וְנוֹרָא עַל כָּל סִבְיָבָיו: (ט)
ה' אֶלְקֵי צְבָאוֹת מִי כְמוֹד חֲסִין יְיָ וְאֱמוּנָתְךָ סִבִּיבוֹתֶיךָ:

(6) *Then [in the time of Mashiach] heaven will acknowledge Your wonders,*

Hashem. Also, Your emunah [will be acknowledged] in the community of holy beings. (7) For who in the heavenly regions of pure spirit can be compared to Hashem; [who can be] likened to Hashem among the heavenly forces? (8) G-d is venerated in the great counsel of the holy [angels]. He stands in awesome grandeur over all the angels which are round about [His throne of glory]. (9) Hashem, G-d of the Heavenly legions, who is like You O G-d of enduring power? Your emunah surrounds You.

PART 4. HASHEM'S EARTHLY GLORY. The grandeur of Hashem's heavenly glory is now juxtaposed to His Divine glory in the earthly regions. The singer first recalls Hashem's unlimited power on water and then on land. His destruction of the armies of Mitzrayim at the Sea of Reeds demonstrated His power on water. His power on land continues to be demonstrated by the geographical extremes of terrain and climate where the unlimited power of Hashem prevails. Finally, the attributes of kindness and truth by which Hashem governs mankind round out the picture of Hashem's earthly glory.

(י) אַתָּה מוֹשֵׁל בְּגֵאוּת הַיָּם בְּשׂוֹא גְלוֹי אֶתָּה תִשְׁבַּחֶם: (יא) אַתָּה דָּכַאתָ כְּחָלָל רֶהַב בְּזָרוּעַ עֲזָדָה פְּזִירַת אוֹיְבֶיךָ: (יב) לָךְ שָׁמַיִם אֶף לָךְ אֶרֶץ תִּבְל וּמְלֵאָה אֶתָּה יִסְדָּתָם: (יג) צָפוֹן וְיָמִין אֶתָּה בְּרֵאתָם תִּבְוֹר וְחֶרְמוֹן בְּשִׁמְךָ יִרְנְנוּ: (יד) לָךְ זְרוּעַ עִם גְּבוּרָה תִעֲלֶז יָדְךָ תִּרְוֹם יְמִינְךָ: (טו) צָדֵק וּמִשְׁפָּט מְכוֹן כְּסֵאֲךָ חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת יִקְדָּמוּ פְּנֶיךָ: (10) You rule the grandeur of the sea; when its waves surge, You calm them. (11) You crushed the arrogant [Mitzrayim] like a corpse. With the arm of Your might You scattered Your enemies. (12) Yours are the heavens, Yours, too, is the earth. You founded them. (13) North and south, You created them. Mount Tavor and Mount Chermon sing joyously in Your Name. Yours is the arm with unlimited power. (14) Your left hand is empowered [to exert discipline]; Your right hand is raised [to lift up the needy]. (15) Caring and justice are the base of Your throne. Kindness and truth go before You.

PART 5. THE GLORY REFLECTED UPON YISRAEL. The singer now turns to the earthly recognition of Hashem's glory by Yisrael. Fortunate indeed is this nation which has been given the opportunity to understand the meaning of the sound of the shofar. The shofar horn signifies the glory of Hashem. The horn is also an instrument of anointment by which Hashem has granted authority to an earthly line of kings, the royal House of David.

(טז) אֲשֶׁר־יִדְעוּ תְרוּעָה ה' בְּאוֹר פְּנִיךָ יִהְלְכוּ: (יז) בְּשִׂמְךָ יִגִּילוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם וּבִצְדִקְתֶּךָ יְרוּמוּ: (יח) כִּי תִפְאֶרֶת עֲזָמוֹ אֶתְּהָ וּבִרְצֹנְךָ תָרוּם קִרְנֶנוּ: (יט) כִּי לֵה' מִגִּנְנוּ וְלִקְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִלְכֵנוּ:

(16) Fortunate are the people who know the sound of the shofar; Hashem, may they walk in the light of Your presence. (17) Then they will rejoice in Your Name all day long, and through Your loving justice they will be uplifted. (18) For You are their strength in which they glory. With Your favor [the anointed kings of Yisrael, who are] our horn [of symbolic strength] will be exalted. (19) For our shield [of royalty] belongs to Hashem and our king belongs to the Holy One of Yisrael.

PART 6. THE COVENANT WITH DAVID. The singer presents an elaborate declaration that Hashem made to David at the time of David's being anointed. In that declaration, Hashem spoke of the special qualities that caused David to be chosen from among the people. Hashem then gave David a promise of victory over his enemies and an eternal covenant of love. This covenant would preserve Hashem's protection to David's descendants for all time.

(כ) אַז דִּבַּרְתָּ בְּחִזּוֹן לְחַסִּידֶיךָ וַתֹּאמֶר שׁוֹיִתִּי עֵזֶר עַל גְּבוּרַת הַרִימוֹתַי בְּחוֹר מַעַם:
 (כא) מִצִּאתִי יְדוּד עַבְדִּי בְשִׁמּוֹן קִדְשִׁי מִשְׁחַתִּיו: (כב) אֲשֶׁר יָדִי תִכּוֹן עִמּוֹ אֶף זְרוּעֵי תִאֲמָצְנוּ: (כג) לֹא יֵשֵׂא אוֹיֵב בּוֹ וּבֶן עֹוֹלָה לֹא יַעֲנֶנּוּ: (כד) וְכִתּוֹתַי מִפְּנֵי צָרָיו וּמִשְׁנֵאָיו אֶגּוֹף: (כה) וַאֲמוֹנֹתַי וְחַסְדֵי עִמּוֹ וּבִשְׂמֵי תָרוּם קִרְנֵנוּ: (כו) וְשִׂמְתִּי בְיָם יְדוּ וּבִנְהָרוֹת יִמִּינוּ: (כז) הוּא יִקְרָאֵנִי אָבִי אֶתְּהָ אֵלַי וְצוּר יִשׁוּעַתִּי: (כח) אֶף אֲנִי בְכוֹר אֶתְּנָהוּ עָלָיו לְמַלְכֵי אֶרֶץ: (כט) לְעוֹלָם אֲשַׁמֵּר לוֹ חַסְדֵי וּבְרִיתִי נֶאֱמַנְתָּ לוֹ: (ל) וְשִׂמְתִּי לְעַד זֶרְעוֹ וְכִסְאוֹ כִּימֵי שָׁמַיִם:

(20) Then [at the time of David's coronation] You spoke in a vision to Your devout [prophets], and said, "I have conferred [Divine authority] upon a man of courage; I have raised up an individual chosen from among the people. (21) I have found David, My servant. I have anointed him with My holy oil. (22) Thus, My hand will be ready with him and My arm will strengthen him. (23) No enemy will exact tribute from him, nor will any violent person diminish him. (24) I will crush his tormentors from before him and strike those who hate him. (25) My emunah and My chesed are with him. And through My Name his horn [of strength and stature] will be raised. (26) I will set his [left] hand over the sea and his right hand over the rivers. (27) He will call to Me, [saying] 'You are my Father, my G-d and the Rock of my

yeshuah. (28) I too will grant him [the status of] firstborn, the most exalted of the earth's kings. (29) I will forever preserve My chesed and My covenant with him will endure. (30) I will establish his line forever and his throne [will endure] as long as the heavens exist."

PART 7. THE POSTSCRIPT. The covenant's basic declaration as described above did not reflect the possibility that some of David's descendants might prove unworthy. It was therefore followed with a postscript in which Hashem spoke of what might happen if the nation and its kings failed to keep their part of the agreement. In the postscript Hashem presented serious consequences. However, He provided a critical assurance that even if the worst were to happen, His promise regarding the ultimate fate of the royal House of David would hold.

לֹא אִם יַעֲזֹבוּ בְנָיו תּוֹרָתִי וּבְמִשְׁפָּטֵי לֹא יֵלְכוּ: (לב) אִם חִקֹּתַי יַחַלְלוּ וּמִצְוֹתַי לֹא יִשְׁמְרוּ: (לג) וּפְקֻדֹתַי בְּשֶׁבֶט פִּשְׁעִים וּבִנְגָעִים עֲוֹנִים: (לד) וְחֻסְדֵי לֹא אֶפִּיר מֵעַמּוֹ וְלֹא אֲשַׁקֵּר בְּאַמוּנָתִי: (לה) לֹא אַחַלֵּל בְּרִיתִי וּמוֹצֵא שְׂפָתַי לֹא אֲשַׁנֶּה: (לו) אַחַת נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּקֻדְשֵׁי אִם לְדוֹד אֶכְזָב: (לז) זָרְעוֹ לְעוֹלָם יִהְיֶה וְכִסְאוֹ כְּשֶׁמֶשׁ נִגְדִי: (לח) כִּי־רַח יִפּוֹן עוֹלָם וְעַד בְּשַׁחֵק נֶאֱמָן סֵלָה:

(31) "If his children forsake My Torah and do not walk in [the path of] My laws. (32) and if they desecrate My statutes and do not observe My mitzvos, (33) then I will punish their offense with the rod [of Exile] and their heresy with physical afflictions. (34) But [even then] I will not cancel My chesed from him and I will not betray My emunah. (35) I will not void My covenant nor will I change [one iota from] that which My lips have uttered. (36) Once and for all time I have sworn by My holiness that I would surely not be false to David. (37) His offspring will endure forever and his throne will be like the sun before Me. (38) Like the moon, it will be established forever, a faithful witness in the sky, Selah."

PART 8. A TRAGIC DEVELOPMENT. Having cited Hashem's declaration to David, the singer now turns to the tragic present day in which he finds a situation far different from what was initially anticipated in the covenant with David. Apparently, the sins of David's descendants and the people were even worse than was contemplated in the postscript. Tragically, it appears to the singer as though Hashem has completely abandoned any expectation of preserving the covenant with David. But as bad as the situation is, the singer then demonstrates in the next part of the mizmor that there is still hope and that things are not as bad as they appear.

(לט) ואתה זנחת ותמאס התעברת עם משיחך: (מ) נארתה ברית עבדך חללת לארץ נזרו: (מא) פרצת כל גדרתי שמת מבצרי מחתה: (מב) שטהו כל עברי דרך הנה חרפה לשכני: (מג) הרימות ימין צרי השמחת כל אויבי: (מד) אף תשיב צור חרבו ולא הקימותו במלחמה: (מה) השבת מטהרו וכסאו לארץ מגרתה: (מו) הקצרת ימי עלומי העטית עליו בושה סלה:

(39) But [now] You have abandoned and rejected [us]; You have shown anger towards Your anointed one. (40) You have repudiated the covenant with Your servant; You have revoked his crown [and cast its honor] to the ground. (41) You have breached all his defences; You have shattered his strongholds. (42) All who pass by [take the opportunity to] plunder him; he has become an object of derision to his neighbors. (43) You have exalted the right hand of his tormentors; You have made all his enemies rejoice. (44) You have even turned back the edge of his sword and You have not supported him in battle. (45) You brought his splendor to an end and You have hurled his throne to the ground. (46) You have cut short the days of his youth; You have covered him with shame, Selah.

PART 9. A PLEA FOR MERCY. The singer now makes a desperate appeal to Hashem to bring His time of anger to an end. The suffering of the nation has made it seem almost as if life itself is futile. Surely, the degradation that the people have endured is enough of a catastrophe to warrant re-invoking the kindnesses of old.

(מז) עד מה ה' תסתיר לנצח תבער כמו אש חמתך: (מח) זכר אני מה חלד על מה שוא בראת כל בני אדם: (מט) מי גבר יחיה ולא יראה מות ימלט נפשו מיד שאול סלה: (נ) אינה חסדיך הראשנים אדני נשבעת לדוד באמונתך: (נא) זכר אדני חרפת עבדיך שאתי בחיקי כל רבים עמים: (נב) אשר חרפו אויביך ה' אשר חרפו עקבות משיחך:

(47) How long, Hashem? Will You hide Yourself forever, to burn like fire? (48) I am mindful of how short is my lifetime; for what futility have You created mankind? (49) What man lives and does not see death, to save his soul from the grasp of the grave? Selah. (50) What has become of Your kindnesses of old, Hashem, which You pledged to David in Your emunah ? (51) Hashem, remember the degradation of Your servants, [that] I, [Yisrael] have borne in my bosom from all the many nations. (52) [Remember] how Your enemies have reviled me, O Hashem, how they have reviled the

delayed footstep of Your Mashiach.

PART 10. A FINAL BLESSING. The singer concludes the mizmor with a blessing, which also serves as the conclusion to the entire third *sefer* of Tehillim.

(נג) בְּרוּךְ ה' לְעוֹלָם אָמֵן וְאָמֵן:

(53) Blessed is Hashem forever, Amen and Amen.

Learning the Mizmor

PART 1. THE THEME OF THE MIZMOR

(א) מְשֻׁכֵּיל לְאִיתָן הָאֶזְרָחִי:

This mizmor is a **song of enlightenment** – מְשֻׁכֵּיל composed by Eitan the Ezrachi – לְאִיתָן הָאֶזְרָחִי.

(ב) חֲסֵדֵי ה' עוֹלָם אֲשִׁירָה

I will forever sing of the acts of loving kindness (*chesed*) **that Hashem** has performed for us – חֲסֵדֵי ה' עוֹלָם אֲשִׁירָה.

לְדָר וְדָר אֲוֹדִיעַ אֱמוּנָתְךָ בְּפִי:

Hashem, You carried out many of these acts of *chesed* in faithful fulfillment of Your promises. And so, **I will publicly proclaim with my mouth to all future generations** my trust in **Your faithfulness** (*emunah*) – לְדָר וְדָר אֲוֹדִיעַ אֱמוּנָתְךָ בְּפִי. They may all confidently rely on Your word as we have done in the past.

(ג) כִּי אָמַרְתִּי

עוֹלָם חֲסֵד יִבְנֶה

שָׁמַיִם תִּכְוֶן אֱמוּנָתְךָ בְּהֵם:

For I said – כִּי אָמַרְתִּי, “**The world is built on** Your faithful acts of *chesed* – עוֹלָם חֲסֵד יִבְנֶה and could not exist without them. As for **the heavens, You establish Your *emunah* in them** – שָׁמַיִם תִּכְוֶן אֱמוּנָתְךָ בְּהֵם through the eternal reliability of the heavenly bodies.”

Your kindness was subsequently revealed in Your granting the kingship to David and his descendants. And Your faithfulness was reflected in Your commitment to

preserve the Davidic royal line without interruption.

PART 2. THE PROMISES TO DAVID

(ד) כָּרַתִּי בְרִית לְבַחֲרִי
נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְדָוִד עַבְדִּי:

As You declared to the prophet Nassan, "**I have made a covenant with David, My chosen one** — כָּרַתִּי בְרִית לְבַחֲרִי in a cosmic act of *chesed*, reflecting a love based on My purpose. It was a love initiated by what I saw in him, and reflecting his devotion to Me and his potential. I followed this with a divine commitment of *emunah*, faithful reward for his devoted service, which **I have sworn to David, My servant** — נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְדָוִד עַבְדִּי."

(ה) עַד עוֹלָם אֶכִּין זְרַעֲךָ
וּבְנֵי־תִי לְדָר וָדוֹר כְּסֶאֶד סֻלָּה:

You promised David: "**I will establish your offspring** to exist **for all eternity**, regardless of circumstances — עַד עוֹלָם אֶכִּין זְרַעֲךָ. I will never cease to prepare your descendants to be ready and able to fulfill their mission. **And** that mission will always be reserved for them when they are ready for it because even though Davidic kingdom will be suspended during the periods of Galus, **I will rebuild your throne in every generation** — וּבְנֵי־תִי לְדָר וָדוֹר כְּסֶאֶד," so that when *Mashiach* arrives the throne will be there for him to occupy, and they will do so **forever** — סֻלָּה."

PART 3. HASHEM'S HEAVENLY GLORY

(ו) וַיִּזְדוּ שָׁמַיִם פְּלִאָה ה'
אֶף אֱמוּנָתְךָ בְּקֶהֱל קְדָשִׁים:

Then just as I am duty-bound to acknowledge Your *chesed* and *emunah* here on earth, when You keep Your promise in the time of *Mashiach*: the holy angels in the higher spheres will do the same. Those holy beings of **heaven will acknowledge** the *chesed* of **Your wonders**, even the laws of nature by which You manage the constellations, **Hashem** — וַיִּזְדוּ שָׁמַיִם פְּלִאָה ה', for everything in the universe is a mark of the divine *chesed* of Creation. **Also**, because You kept Your word they will acknowledge **Your emunah** — אֶף אֱמוּנָתְךָ, in that **community of holy beings** —

בְּקֵהל קִדְשִׁים.

(ז) כִּי מִי בְּשַׁחַק יַעֲרֹךְ לֵה'
יִדְמָה לֵה' בְּבִנְי אֱלִים:

For who in the heavenly regions of pure spirit can be compared to Hashem — כִּי מִי בְּשַׁחַק יַעֲרֹךְ לֵה' — **Who can be likened to Hashem among the heavenly forces** — **יִדְמָה לֵה' בְּבִנְי אֱלִים?** Nothing that is endowed with power either in heaven above or on earth below bears even any similarity to Hashem, Who is the one and only absolute, free will. Thus nothing can stand in the way of the fulfillment of His will.

(ח) אֵל נִעְרָץ בְּסוּד קִדְשִׁים רַבָּה
וְנוֹרָא עַל כָּל סְבִיבֵיו:

The overwhelming majesty of **G-d is venerated in the great counsel of the holy angels** — **אֵל נִעְרָץ בְּסוּד קִדְשִׁים רַבָּה**. **He stands in awesome grandeur over all the angels which are round about** His throne of glory — **וְנוֹרָא עַל כָּל סְבִיבֵיו**. Those very ones who are most worthy of His nearness sense that He is exalted infinitely above them, and it is only with dread and awe that they dare look up to Him.

(ט) ה' אֱלֹקֵי צְבָאוֹת מִי כְמוֹד חֲסִין יָהּ
וְאַמוֹנֶתֶךָ סְבִיבוֹתֶיךָ:

Hashem, G-d who rules over all the legions of heavenly bodies and spiritual beings, — **ה' אֱלֹקֵי צְבָאוֹת, who is like You O G-d of enduring power** in all regions of existence, spiritual and material — **מִי כְמוֹד חֲסִין יָהּ? Your emunah surrounds You** — **וְאַמוֹנֶתֶךָ סְבִיבוֹתֶיךָ**. All the universe, which is at Your beck and call, stands as the guarantee for Your faithfulness. It is the guarantee that ultimately Your promise to David will indeed come true, because all the universe is prepared to do Your will in fulfillment of Your word.

PART 4. HASHEM'S EARTHLY GLORY

(י) אַתָּה מוֹשֵׁל בְּגֵאוֹת הַיָּם
בְּשׂוֹא גְלוֹי אַתָּה תִשְׁבַּחֵם:

The dominion that You exert over the angels and the stars is far beyond the

comprehension of ordinary human beings. But any person who visits the seashore is witness to Your power here on earth. **You rule the grandeur of the sea** — **בְּשׂוּא גָלוּי** — **אַתָּה מוֹשֵׁל בְּגִאוֹת הַיָּם**; **when its waves surge, You calm them** — **אַתָּה תְּשַׁבְּחֵם**. The waves are a model for all the powers that exist in the created world. They arise only when you authorize them to do so, but when each wave reaches its crest, You bring it down.

(יא) אַתָּה דָּכַאתָ כְּחֹלֶל רֶהֱב

בְּזֵרוּעַ עֵזְדָּה פְּזֵרְתָּ אוֹיְבֶיךָ:

At the Sea of Reeds **You .crushed** the **arrogant** army of Mitzrayim. Although they were at the peak of their power You crushed them **like a corpse** — **אַתָּה דָּכַאתָ בְּזֵרוּעַ**. **With the arm of Your might You scattered Your enemies** — **כְּחֹלֶל רֶהֱב**. **עֵזְדָּה פְּזֵרְתָּ אוֹיְבֶיךָ**. The sea immediately ejected them and the bodies were laid out on the shore so that all could witness the miracle.

(יב) לְךָ שָׁמַיִם אֶף לְךָ אֶרֶץ

תִּבְּל וּמִלְאָה אַתָּה יִסְדֹּתָם:

Yours are the heavens, the constellations and all the spiritual realms. But Your domain is not limited to the upper regions. **Yours, too, is the earth** — **לְךָ שָׁמַיִם** **אֶף לְךָ אֶרֶץ**, the inhabited world and all its creatures. **You founded them** all — **תִּבְּל וּמִלְאָה אַתָּה יִסְדֹּתָם** and therefore it is within Your power to change their behavior temporarily or permanently to suit Your purposes.

(יג) צָפוֹן וְיָמִין אַתָּה בְּרָאתָם

Hashem, You are One. Even though the world is filled with opposites, You alone created them all and control them all. **North and south** — **צָפוֹן וְיָמִין**, **You created them** — **אַתָּה בְּרָאתָם**. In the north of Eretz Yisrael one finds frozen wastes and in the distant south one finds hot, dry regions of parched desert. [South is referred to as *yemin* (right) because it is the direction of the right hand when a person is facing east toward the rising sun.]

תְּבוֹר וְחֶרְמוֹן בְּשִׁמְדָּה יִרְנְנוּ:

The extremes of the world are also symbolized by two towering mountains in northern Eretz Yisrael. Mount Tavor is in a fertile region, blessed with a mild climate. Mount Chermon is a barren peak, covered by eternal snow. But both

mountains pay homage to the same Creator. Mount **Tavor** and Mount **Chermon** **sing joyously in Your Name** – תְּבוֹר וְחֶרְמוֹן בְּשִׂמְךָ יִרְנְנוּ –

(יד) לְךָ זְרוּעַ עִם גְּבוּרָה
תַּעֲזוּ יְדָךְ תַּרְוִים יְמִינְךָ:

Yours is the arm of primeval force, endowed **with** unlimited **power** – לְךָ זְרוּעַ עִם – **גְּבוּרָה** to sustain and drive all of existence. **Your left hand** of controlled judgment **is empowered** to gently exert discipline upon mankind – תַּעֲזוּ יְדָךְ – so that the offender is given time to change his ways. **Your right hand is raised** – תַּרְוִים – **יְמִינְךָ** to lift up the needy.

(טו) צְדָק וּמִשְׁפָּט מְכוֹן כְּסֻאָךְ
חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת יִקְדָּמוּ פְּנֶיךָ:

Although Your might is unlimited it is exercised with **caring and justice** – צְדָק – **מְכוֹן** – **ומשפט**. Figuratively, these primary virtues **are the base of Your throne** – **כְּסֻאָךְ**, which is the symbolic representation of Your administration of the world. **Kindness and truth go before You** – חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת יִקְדָּמוּ פְּנֶיךָ – heralding Your coming and preceding any action. These are Your ultimate virtues that You have envisioned for mankind. *Chesed* (kindness) denotes the outpouring of love, and *emes* (truth) is the alignment of every creature into its own specific destiny, so that each creature shall be all that it should be.

PART 5. THE GLORY REFLECTED UPON YISRAEL

(טז) אֲשֶׁרֵי הָעַם יוֹדְעֵי תְרוּעָה
ה' בְּאוֹר פְּנֶיךָ יִהְלֹכוּ:

Fortunate are the people who know the sound of the shofar – אֲשֶׁרֵי הָעַם – **יוֹדְעֵי תְרוּעָה**. Through the sound the shofar they proclaim Your rule over mankind. In addition the sound of the shofar is a public call to prayer, a declaration of loyalty and love, and a stirring charge to each person to submit to Your will. **Hashem, may they flourish** as Your devoted subjects and **walk in the light of Your presence** – ה' בְּאוֹר פְּנֶיךָ יִהְלֹכוּ –

(יז) בְּשִׂמְךָ יִגִּילוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם

וּבְצִדְקַתְךָ יְרוּמוּ:

Then they will publicly rejoice all day long, witnessing again and again the virtues embodied in **Your Name** – בְּשִׂמְךָ יִגִּילוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם. They will openly acknowledge that the imprint of Your Name is upon all their acts and upon all their fate. **And through Your loving justice** with which You gently guide them toward their goal **they will be uplifted** – וּבְצִדְקַתְךָ יְרוּמוּ – as they seek to emulate Your virtues.

(יח) כִּי תִפְאֶרֶת עֲזָמוּ אֶתָּה

וּבְרָצֹנְךָ תִּרְוִים קִרְיָנוּ:

For You are their strength in which they glory – כִּי תִפְאֶרֶת עֲזָמוּ אֶתָּה, rather than their own strength. **And with Your favor** the anointed kings of Yisrael, who are **our horn** of symbolic strength **will be exalted** – וּבְרָצֹנְךָ תִּרְוִים קִרְיָנוּ.

(יט) כִּי לַה' מְגִינֵנוּ

וְלִקְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִלְּכָנוּ:

For our shield of royalty represented by King David **belongs to Hashem** – כִּי לַה' מְגִינֵנוּ, **and our king belongs to the Holy One of Yisrael** – וְלִקְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל – מִלְּכָנוּ. David has always been subservient and devoted to Hashem, and he serves as the model for his descendants.

PART 6. THE COVENANT WITH DAVID

(כ) אָז דִּבַּרְתָּ בְּחִזּוֹן לַחֲסִידֶיךָ וַתֹּאמֶר

שׁוֹיֵתִי עֵזֶר עַל גְּבוּרַת הַרְיִמוֹתַי בְּחֹרֵר מֵעַם:

Then at the time of David's coronation **You spoke in a vision to Your devout prophets, and said** – אָז דִּבַּרְתָּ בְּחִזּוֹן לַחֲסִידֶיךָ וַתֹּאמֶר – "I have conferred Divine authority upon a man of courage – שׁוֹיֵתִי עֵזֶר עַל גְּבוּרַת הַרְיִמוֹתַי בְּחֹרֵר מֵעַם; I have raised up an individual chosen from among the people – הַרְיִמוֹתַי בְּחֹרֵר מֵעַם."

(כא) מָצָאתִי דָוִד עֶבְדִּי

בְּשִׂמּוֹן קָדְשִׁי מִנְשַׁחְתָּיו:

"I have found David, whom I know to be **My servant** for he is truly committed to Me, – מָצָאתִי דָוִד עֶבְדִּי. David is a "find", that is, a unique individual. Through the

prophet Shmuel **I have anointed David with My holy oil** – **בְּשֶׁמֶן קֹדֶשׁי מִשְׁחָתִיו**, the same oil which had been prepared by Moshe and with which the Mikdash and its ceremonial objects had been consecrated for their purpose. Even while Shaul was king, You had already appointed David to be his successor."

(כב) אֲשֶׁר יָדִי תִכּוֹן עִמּוֹ

אֵף זְרוּעֵי תְּאֲמִצְנוּ:

"**Thus, My hand will be ready with him** – **אֲשֶׁר יָדִי תִכּוֹן עִמּוֹ**. It will be as though My hand and his hand are working together. **My** ruling **arm** that extends over all of mankind, confers rulership upon him and **will** thereby **also strengthen him** – **אֵף זְרוּעֵי תְּאֲמִצְנוּ**."

(כג) לֹא יִשָּׂא אוֹיֵב בּוֹ

וּבֶן עֶזְלָה לֹא יַעֲנֶנּוּ:

"**No enemy will exact** tribute from him – **לֹא יִשָּׂא אוֹיֵב בּוֹ** to diminish his economic power, **nor will any violent person weaken him** physically – **וּבֶן עֶזְלָה לֹא יַעֲנֶנּוּ**."

(כד) וּכְתוּתֵי מִפְּנֵי צָרָיו

וּמִשְׂנֵאָיו אֶגּוֹף:

"**I will crush his** active tormentors from before him – **וּכְתוּתֵי מִפְּנֵי צָרָיו**, and **strike those who** secretly **hate him** – **וּמִשְׂנֵאָיו אֶגּוֹף** before they can take action against him."

(כה) וְאֶמוּנָתִי וְחֶסֶדִי עִמּוֹ

וּבִשְׁמִי תָרוּם קַרְנוֹ:

"**My emunah** in guaranteeing my promises **and My chesed** in choosing David to be king despite any faults that he may have **are** always **with him** – **וְאֶמוּנָתִי וְחֶסֶדִי עִמּוֹ**. **And through My Name his** symbolic **horn** of strength and stature **will be raised** – **וּבִשְׁמִי תָרוּם קַרְנוֹ** so that he will always be able to invoke my Name in prayer."

(כו) וְשִׁמְתִי בְּיָם יָדוֹ

וּבִנְהָרוֹת יְמִינוֹ:

"I will set his left hand over those who dwell by the sea – וְשִׁמְתִי בְיָם יָדוֹ – and his right hand over those who dwell beside the rivers – וּבִנְהָרוֹת יְמִינוֹ."

(כז) הוּא יִקְרָאֵנִי

אָבִי אֶתָּה אֱ-לֹהֵי וְצוֹר יְשׁוּעָתִי:

"He will call to Me, saying – הוּא יִקְרָאֵנִי, 'You are my Father – אָבִי אֶתָּה . I cling to You and depend upon You as a son depends on his father to guide and provide for his needs. You are my G-d and the Rock of my yeshuah – אֱ-לֹהֵי וְצוֹר יְשׁוּעָתִי, Who will surely protect me for my enemies!' "

(כח) אָף אֲנִי בְּכוֹר אֶתְנָהוּ

עֲלִיוֹן לְמַלְכֵי אֶרֶץ:

"As he has recognized My supremacy, I too will grant him the status of firstborn – אָף אֲנִי בְּכוֹר אֶתְנָהוּ – with respect to the breadth of his spiritual influence. He will be the most exalted of the earth's kings – עֲלִיוֹן לְמַלְכֵי אֶרֶץ."

(כט) לְעוֹלָם אֲשַׁמֵּר לוֹ חֶסֶדִי

וּבְרִיתִי נֶאֱמָנֶת לוֹ:

"I will forever preserve My *chesed* of granting him the kingship – לְעוֹלָם אֲשַׁמֵּר לוֹ חֶסֶדִי, and My covenant with him will forever endure – וּבְרִיתִי נֶאֱמָנֶת לוֹ – even when there has been an interruption in the basis that led to the granting of kingship."

(ל) וְשִׁמְתִי לְעַד זָרְעוֹ

וְכִסְאוֹ כִּימֵי שָׁמַיִם:

"I will establish his line on earth forever – וְשִׁמְתִי לְעַד זָרְעוֹ, and his throne will endure forever as long as the heavens exist – וְכִסְאוֹ כִּימֵי שָׁמַיִם. Even if members of his line should sin, the royal lineage will survive because David's offspring will do *teshuvah*."

PART 7. THE POSTSCRIPT

(לא) אִם יַעֲזֹבוּ בְנֵי תוֹרָתִי
וּבְמִשְׁפָּטֵי לֹא יֵלְכוּ:

But **if his children forsake** the study of **My Torah** – אִם יַעֲזֹבוּ בְנֵי תוֹרָתִי **and if they do not walk in** the path of obedience to **My civil laws** – וּבְמִשְׁפָּטֵי לֹא יֵלְכוּ for which the details and the purpose is evident;

(לב) אִם חֲקֵתִי יַחֲלִלוּ
וּמִצְוֹתַי לֹא יִשְׁמְרוּ:

if they desecrate My statutes – אִם חֲקֵתִי יַחֲלִלוּ , for which the details and the purpose are not evident, **and if they do not observe My mitzvos** – וּמִצְוֹתַי לֹא יִשְׁמְרוּ, commandments for which the purpose is evident but the details are not evident,

(לג) וּפְקֻדָּתִי בְּשֵׁבֶט פְּשָׁעִים
וּבִנְגָעִים עֹנֵם:

then I will punish their traitorous **offense with the rod** – וּפְקֻדָּתִי בְּשֵׁבֶט פְּשָׁעִים **–** wielded by their oppressors in a time of Exile, **and I will punish their sinful heresy with physical afflictions** – וּבִנְגָעִים עֹנֵם;

(לד) וְחֶסְדִּי לֹא אֶפִּיר מֵעַמּוֹ
וְלֹא אֶשְׁקֵר בְּאַמוּנָתִי:

but even then I will not cancel the kindness of **My chesed from him** – וְחֶסְדִּי **–** לא אֶפִּיר מֵעַמּוֹ. Even while executing judgment, the discipline I impose will prepare the House of David for its future role. Furthermore, **I will not betray** the faithfulness of **My emunah** – וְלֹא אֶשְׁקֵר בְּאַמוּנָתִי **–** towards him. Even if David's descendants do not keep their half of the covenant, I will keep My part, so that the throne will always belong to one of Davidic descent

(לה) לֹא אַחֲלִיל בְּרִיתִי
וּמוֹצֵא שְׁפָתַי לֹא אֶשְׁנֶה:

Even when the people fail Me, **I will not void My covenant** – לֹא אַחֲלִיל בְּרִיתִי **–**

nor will I change one iota from **that** promise **which My lips have uttered** –
וּמוֹצֵא שִׁפְתַי לֹא אֲשַׁנֶּה.

(לו) אַחַת נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּקֹדְשִׁי
אִם לְדָוִד אֶכְזָב:

Once and for all time I have sworn by My holiness – אַחַת נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּקֹדְשִׁי, of which the House of David is an integral part, **that I would surely not be false to David** – אִם לְדָוִד אֶכְזָב.

(לז) זָרְעוֹ לְעוֹלָם יִהְיֶה
וְכִסְאוֹ כַּשֶּׁמֶשׁ נִגְדִי:

His offspring will endure forever – זָרְעוֹ לְעוֹלָם יִהְיֶה, even if they don't always rule. **And his throne** symbolizing his royal authority **will be like the sun** that is hidden at night from mankind but is always shining **before Me** – וְכִסְאוֹ כַּשֶּׁמֶשׁ נִגְדִי.

(לח) כְּיָרֵחַ יִכּוֹן עוֹלָם
וְיָעֵד בַּשָּׁמַיִם נְאֻמַּן סֵלָה:

Like the moon, it will be established forever – כְּיָרֵחַ יִכּוֹן עוֹלָם a faithful witness in the sky, **Selah** – וְיָעֵד בַּשָּׁמַיִם נְאֻמַּן סֵלָה, which always returns after its period of darkness.

PART 8. A TRAGIC DEVELOPMENT

(לט) וְאַתָּה זָנַחְתָּ וְתַמָּאָס
הִתְעַבְרְתָּ עִם מְשִׁיחֶךָ:

But now there has come a time when, because of their sins **You have abandoned and rejected** the House of David together with his nation – וְאַתָּה זָנַחְתָּ וְתַמָּאָס; **You have shown anger towards Your anointed one** – הִתְעַבְרְתָּ עִם מְשִׁיחֶךָ.

(מ) נִאֲרַתָּה בְּרִית עֲבָדֶיךָ
חִלַּלְתָּ לְאָרֶץ נְזִרוֹ:

You have repudiated the covenant that You made **with Your servant** –

נִאַרְתָּה בְּרִית עֲבָדָךְ; **You have revoked** the honor of **his crown** and cast it **to the ground** – חִלַּלְתָּ לְאָרֶץ נֹרוֹ.

(מא) פָּרַצְתָּ כָּל גְּדֵרְתָיו
שִׁמְתָּ מִבְּצָרָיו מְחַתָּה:

You have breached all his defences – פָּרַצְתָּ כָּל גְּדֵרְתָיו around his walled cities;
You have shattered his strongholds – שִׁמְתָּ מִבְּצָרָיו מְחַתָּה to provide access for invaders.

(מב) שִׁסְהוּ כָּל עֹבְרֵי דָרֶךְ
הָיָה חֲרָפָה לְשֹׁכְנָיו:

Since he has no defences, **all who pass by** take the opportunity to **plunder him** – שִׁסְהוּ כָּל עֹבְרֵי דָרֶךְ, even though they had no plans to invade. **He has become an object of derision to his neighbors** – הָיָה חֲרָפָה לְשֹׁכְנָיו, whereas they once accepted his mastery.

(מג) הִרִימוּתָּ יְמִין צָרָיו
הִשְׁמַחְתָּ כָּל אוֹיְבָיו:

You have exalted the right hand of his tormentors – הִרִימוּתָּ יְמִין צָרָיו, replacing the fear of Yisrael that they had before. **You have made all his enemies rejoice** – הִשְׁמַחְתָּ כָּל אוֹיְבָיו, convincing them that their path rather than that of the Jewish People, is correct.

(מד) אַף תִּשְׁיב צוּר חֲרָבוֹ
וְלֹא הִקִּימְתוֹ בַּמִּלְחָמָה:

You have even turned back the edge of his sword – אַף תִּשְׁיב צוּר חֲרָבוֹ, which had been sharpened to attack his enemy, but which you now prevented him from wielding effectively. **And You have not supported him** to keep from falling to the blows of the enemy **in battle** – וְלֹא הִקִּימְתוֹ בַּמִּלְחָמָה.

(מה) הִשְׁבַּתָּ מְטָהְרוֹ
וְכִסְאוֹ לְאָרֶץ מְגִרְתָּה:

You brought his splendor to an end – הִשְׁבַּתָּ מְטָהְרוֹ, and **You have hurled**

his throne to the ground – וְכִסְאוֹ לָאָרֶץ מִגִּרְתָּהּ – so that he now sits on the ground among the common people.

(מו) הַקְצַרְתָּ יָמַי עָלּוּמַי

You have cut short the days of his youth – הַקְצַרְתָּ יָמַי עָלּוּמַי, that is, the years of continuous rule by the kings of the House of David. Youth is the prime of life, after which a decline normally sets in. For the House of David, the period of youth with the reign of Tzidkiyahu.

הֶעֱטִיתָ עָלָיו בּוֹשָׁה סֵלָה:

You have covered him with shame, – הֶעֱטִיתָ עָלָיו בּוֹשָׁה for he has no response to those who say that he will never regain Hashem's favor. **Selah** – סֵלָה.

PART 9. A PLEA FOR MERCY

(מז) עַד מָה ה' תִּסְתַּר לְנֶצַח

תִּבְעַר כְּמוֹ אֵשׁ חֲמָתְךָ:

How long, Hashem – עַד מָה ה' before the descendants of David rule again?

Will You hide Yourself forever – תִּסְתַּר לְנֶצַח, refusing to look upon the misfortune that has befallen Your anointed one and refusing to show him mercy?

How long will Your wrath continue **to burn like** an all-consuming **fire** – תִּבְעַר כְּמוֹ אֵשׁ חֲמָתְךָ ?

(מח) זָכַר אֲנִי מָה חָלָד

עַל מָה שָׂוֵא בְרָאתָ כָּל בְּנֵי אָדָם:

I am mindful of how short is my lifetime – זָכַר אֲנִי מָה חָלָד and how long the *Galus* has been. Will I live to see the redemption? If mankind must meet the demands of strict justice, then I fear that generations will continue to pass without seeing Your forgiveness. If so, **for what futility have You created mankind** – עַל מָה שָׂוֵא בְרָאתָ כָּל בְּנֵי אָדָם ?

(מט) מִי גִבֵּר יַחֲיֶה וְלֹא יִרְאֶה מָוֶת

יִמְלִט נַפְשׁוֹ מִיַּד שְׂאוֹל סֵלָה:

What man lives and does not see death — מי גבר יחיה ולא יראה מות. Man was fated to die because of his sin in the Garden of Eden. What man will be able **to save his soul from the grasp of the grave?** — **ימלט נפשו מיד שאול**? Therefore no man can ever fulfill all of his potential during a short human lifetime. **Selah — סלה**.

(ג) אֵיךְ הָרַחֵם אֶתְּךָ הָרַחֵם אֶתְּךָ
נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְדָוִד בְּאַמוּנָתְךָ:

What has become of Your kindnesses of old, Hashem — אֵיךְ הָרַחֵם אֶתְּךָ הָרַחֵם אֶתְּךָ, the promises of redemption **which You pledged to David in Your emunah** — **נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְדָוִד בְּאַמוּנָתְךָ**? What help are those promises to us now while we wait during much of this endless Galus.

(נא) זָכֹר אֶתְּךָ חֲרַפְתָּ עַבְדֶּיךָ
שָׂאתִי בְּחִיקֵי כָּל רַבִּים עַמִּים:

Even if our deeds do not warrant Your mercy, **Hashem, remember the degradation of Your servants** — **זָכֹר אֶתְּךָ חֲרַפְתָּ עַבְדֶּיךָ**, that **I, Yisrael, have borne in my bosom from all the many nations** — **שָׂאתִי בְּחִיקֵי כָּל רַבִּים עַמִּים**, who imposed suffering upon me and said, each in its own way, that there never be a *yeshuah* for me."

(נב) אֲשֶׁר חָרְפוּ אוֹיְבֶיךָ ה'
אֲשֶׁר חָרְפוּ עֲקֻבוֹת מְשִׁיחֶךָ:

Remember **how Your enemies have reviled me, O Hashem** — **אֲשֶׁר חָרְפוּ אוֹיְבֶיךָ ה'**. Remember **how they have reviled the delayed footstep of Your Mashiach** — **אֲשֶׁר חָרְפוּ עֲקֻבוֹת מְשִׁיחֶךָ**, declaring that he would never come, even though he will be Your anointed descendant of David.

PART 10. A FINAL BLESSING

(נג) בָּרוּךְ ה' לְעוֹלָם אָמֵן וְאָמֵן:

Blessed is Hashem — **בָּרוּךְ ה'**, Who has enabled me to complete this third *sefer* of Tehillim. May His blessings flow **forever** — **לְעוֹלָם**, to all our days. I now affirm this

as true by saying **Amen** — אָמֵן **and** I invite everyone who hears my words to say **Amen** — אָמֵן with me!

Sources

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

א - מלבי"ם	כו - רד"ק, נר לרגלי
ב - רש"י, רד"ק, מצודות, מלבי"ם, בן רמוך, המאירי, נר לרגלי	כז - בן רמוך, אבן יחיאל, אלשיך, דעת סופרים
ג - רד"ק, מצודות, מלבי"ם, רשר"ה	כט - רד"ק, מצודות, מלבי"ם
ד - מצודות, מלבי"ם, רשר"ה	ל - מלבי"ם, אבן יחיאל
ה - מצודות, מלבי"ם, בן־רמוך, רשר"ה	לא - מצודות, אבן יחיאל
ו - רש"י, אבן עזרא, מצודות, מלבי"ם, אבן יחיאל	לב - אבן יחיאל
ז - מלבי"ם, רשר"ה,	לג - רד"ק, מלבי"ם, בן רמוך
ח - רש"י, מצודות, המאירי, רשר"ה	לד - רד"ק,
ט - רד"ק, מלבי"ם, באר אברהם	לה - אבן יחיאל
י - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, נר לרגל	לו - רד"ק
יא - רש"י, רד"ק, נר לרגל	לז - מצודות
יב - רד"ק, מצודות, ספורנו, נר לרגלי	לח - רד"ק, מלבי"ם, המאירי
יג - רד"ק, מצודות, בן רמוך, אלשיך,	לט - מצודות
יד - רד"ק, מלבי"ם, בן רמוך, נר לרגלי,	מ - מלבי"ם
טו - מלבי"ם, רשר"ה, אלשיך, דעת סופרים	מא - מצודות, המאירי, בן רמוך
טז - רש"י, המאירי, בן רמוך	מב - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, נר לרגלי
יז - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, רשר"ה, נר לרגלי	מג - רד"ק
יח - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, המאירי	מד - רש"י, מצודות, בן רמוך
יט - רד"ק, נר לרגלי	מה - נר לרגלי
כ - רש"י, מצודות, המאירי	מו - רד"ק, המאירי, נר לרגלי
כא - רד"ק, ספורנו, אלשיך	מז - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, מצודות, ספורנו
כב - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, מלבי"ם	מח - רד"ק, מצודות, בן רמוך, אלשיך, נר לרגלי
כג - רש"י, רשר"ה	מט - מלבי"ם, דעת סופרים,
כד - מצודות, אלשיך	נ - אבן עזרא, המאירי, בן רמוך
כה - רד"ק, מלבי"ם	נא - רד"ק, ספורנו, בן רמוך
כו - רד"ק	נב - אבן עזרא, רד"ק
	נג - רד"ק

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