

## Mizmor 095

# The Return of Joy

### Key Concepts

This is the sixth in the series of 11 *mizmorim* that were originally composed by Moshe Rabbeinu and subsequently incorporated into Tehilim by David. Like the previous *mizmorim*, this *mizmor* is addressed to a generation in Galus, such as our own. However, the *mizmor* diverts us from the sad thoughts of suffering in exile by portraying our present experience as a second journey through the Midbar, to which we ourselves can put an end at any time through our own efforts at observing the Torah and mitzvos.

The *mizmor* is presented in three parts. In the first two parts the singer reminds his listeners that they are now entering a time in which there is an opportunity for joy in the service of their Creator. He calls upon them to join him in joyful song and devotion. He ends this call with an unfinished sentence, suggesting that if they would only obey Hashem the Geulah could come this very day: *Even today, if only we would heed His call ...*

In the last part we hear the voice of Hashem reminding the people that their present situation is a reflection of the mistakes made by their ancestors in the Midbar.

Those mistakes carried consequences for that generation, and tragically it appears that our mistakes are following the patterns of the past. But the *mizmor* idraws comfort from the fact that Hashem has not given up on us. He continues to direct His attention to us, looking for us to change our ways. It is an indication that we have a renewed opportunity to bring the Geulah.

### Exploring the Mizmor

**PART 1. INVITATION TO JOY.** The *mizmor* begins with an energetic appeal by the singer for his listeners to overcome their depressed mood and regain their exuberance through contemplating the greatness and goodness of Hashem. He distinguishes between the thinking of Yisrael and that of the rest of the world. We will always have a special relationship and appreciation for Him, based on the historical reality of our Redemption from Mitzrayim. However, we share with the rest of the world an appreciation of His unlimited power, as the Creator and Master

of the heavens and the natural forces of our world.

(א) לְכוּ נְרַנְנָה לַה' נְרִיעָה לְצוּר יִשְׁעֵנוּ: (ב) נִקְדְּמָה פָּנֵינוּ בַּתּוֹדָה בְּזִמְרוֹת נְרִיעָה לוֹ: (ג) כִּי אֵל גָּדוֹל ה' וּמְלֹךְ גָּדוֹל עַל-כָּל-אֱלֹקִים: (ד) אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ מְחַקְרֵי-אָרֶץ וְתוֹעֲפוֹת הַרִים לוֹ: (ה) אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ הַיָּם וְהוּא עָשָׂהוּ וַיְבַשֶּׁת יְדָיו יָצְרוּ:

(1) Come! Let us sing joyously to Hashem; let us cry out to the Rock of our yeshuah. (2) Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving. Let us cry out to Him, with songs of praise. (3) For Hashem is the power of infinite greatness, above all heavenly powers. (4) For under His control are the depths of the earth and the mountain peaks are His. (5) For His is the sea and He perfected it, and His hands formed the dry land.

**PART 2. CALL FOR DEVOTION.** After restoring the positive mood of his listeners, the singer calls upon them to show their devotion and gratitude to Hashem by their acts. He says, it is not too late. The Geulah can come today if we would only heed His call.

(ו) בָּאוּ נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִכְרַעַה נִבְרָכָה לְפָנֵיהֶ' עֵשְׂנוּ: (ז) כִּי הוּא אֱלֹקֵינוּ וְאַנְחֵנוּ עִם מְרַעֲיֵתוֹ וְצֹאן יָדוֹ הַיּוֹם אִם-בָּקְלוּ תִשְׁמָעוּ:

(6) Come! Let us prostrate ourselves and bow; let us kneel before G-d, our Maker. (7) For He is our G-d and we are the nation that He tends [like a shepherd tends his sheep] and we are the flock of His charge. Even today, if only we would heed His call ...

**PART 3. LESSON OF THE PAST.** We now hear the voice of Hashem reminding us that our present problems are the result of sinful behavior. Our forefathers in the Wilderness made this mistake and the entire generation was denied entry into the Land of Yisrael. But it is not too late. *Even today, if only we would heed His call ...*

(ח) אַל-תִּקְשׁוּ לִבְבְּכֶם כְּמֵרִיבָה כַּיּוֹם מַסָּה בְּמִדְבָּר: (ט) אֲשֶׁר נִסּוּנִי אַבוֹתֵיכֶם בְּחַנוּנֵי גַם-רָאוּ פְעָלֵי: (י) אַרְבַּעִים שָׁנָה אָקוּט בְּדוֹר וְאָמַר עִם תִּעֲיֵי לִבָּב הֵם וְהֵם לֹא-יָדְעוּ דְרָכַי: (יא) אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּאֶפֶי אִם-יִבְאוּן אֶל-מְנוּחָתִי:

(8) [The voice of Hashem:] Do not harden your heart as at Merivah, as on the day of Massah in the Wilderness, (9) when Your ancestors put Me to the test; they tried Me, though they had seen what I did. (10) For forty years I quarreled with the generation [of the Midbar]; I said, "They are people of a straying heart." But they still did not recognize My ways. (11) So I swore in

*My wrath that they would not enter My Land of contentment.*

## Learning the Mizmor

### PART 1. INVITATION TO JOY.

(א) לְכוּ נִרְנְנָה לֵה'

נְרִיעָה לְצוֹר יִשְׁעֵנוּ:

**Come!** Even though we are still in Galus, put aside your sad thoughts! **Let us sing joyously to Hashem** – לְכוּ נִרְנְנָה לֵה', **let us cry out** with devotion **to the Rock of our yeshuah** – נְרִיעָה לְצוֹר יִשְׁעֵנוּ, for we are confident that He will save us from this Galus and the Geulah will be rock-solid.

(ב) נִקְדְּמָה פָּנֵינוּ בְּתוֹדָה

בְּזִמְרוֹת נְרִיעַ לוֹ:

**Let us** focus our hearts and minds to **come into His presence with** spoken words of **thanksgiving** – נִקְדְּמָה פָּנֵינוּ בְּתוֹדָה, thanking Him for the specific kindnesses and wonders that we have experienced, and that in spite of our physical suffering in Galus, we are blessed with the spiritual treasures of the Torah and mitzvos. **Let us cry out to Him, with songs of praise** – בְּזִמְרוֹת נְרִיעַ לוֹ.

(ג) כִּי אֵל גְּדוֹל ה'

וּמִלְךָ גְּדוֹל עַל כָּל אֱלֹהִים:

Our appreciation of Hashem is especially based on the historical experience of our people and the wonders He did for us. **But** to the world at large Hashem continues to be the heavenly **Power of infinite greatness** – כִּי אֵל גְּדוֹל ה', **and** in the world in which we live He is seen as **a King of infinite greatness, above all heavenly powers** in his management of nature – וּמִלְךָ גְּדוֹל עַל כָּל אֱלֹהִים.

(ד) אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ מְחֻקְרֵי אָרֶץ

וְתוֹעֲפוֹת הָרִים לוֹ:

**אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ** – **For under His control are the mysterious depths of the earth** – מְחֻקְרֵי אָרֶץ, **and the lofty mountain peaks are His** – וְתוֹעֲפוֹת הָרִים לוֹ. Mankind at large does not realize that Hashem is a Judge and the fate of the world reflects their own behavior.

(ה) אֲשֶׁר לוֹ הַיָּם וְהוּא עָשָׂהוּ  
וַיִּבְשֹׁת יַדָּיו יַצְרוּ:

**For His is the sea and He perfected it – אֲשֶׁר לוֹ הַיָּם וְהוּא עָשָׂהוּ**, causing the waters to gather in one place, leaving dry land elsewhere, **and His hands formed the dry land – וַיִּבְשֹׁת יַדָּיו יַצְרוּ**. He did all this to permit the flourishing of mankind in His image, which was made possible by fostering life on land.

## PART 2. CALL FOR DEVOTION.

(ו) בָּאוּ נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִכְרַעַה  
נִבְרַכָּה לְפָנֵי ה' עֲשֵׂנוּ:

After the final Redemption, one Jew will say to the other: **Come! – בָּאוּ** Because He is the King, let us all unite in in perfect devotion to Him, accepting His authority over us. Without denying His authority over the universe, we recognize His special authority over us because He has enabled our existence as a nation. In every situation, no matter what we are busy with, let us serve Him. **Let us prostrate ourselves and bow – נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִכְרַעַה**, **let us kneel before G-d, our Maker – נִבְרַכָּה לְפָנֵי ה' עֲשֵׂנוּ**.

(ז) כִּי הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ

**For – כִּי** the other nations only know Him as the One Power in control of nature, whereas Yisrael knows Him first and foremost through His special care and guidance. **He is our G-d – הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ**, Who judges us against His high expectations, for He does not allow us to do whatever comes to mind.

וְאֶנְחֵנוּ עִם מְרֻעֵיתוֹ וְצֹאן יְדוֹ

**We are the nation He tends** like His sheep – **וְאֶנְחֵנוּ עִם מְרֻעֵיתוֹ**, and so He monitors our daily behavior. We are **the flock in His charge – וְצֹאן יְדוֹ** which He guides by the movement of His Divine hand rather than by the rod. All of this obligates to continually maintain high moral and ethical standards that are acceptable in His eyes.

הַיּוֹם אִם בִּקְלוֹ תִשְׁמְעוּ:

We would enjoy this relationship **even today, if only we would heed His call – הַיּוֹם אִם בִּקְלוֹ תִשְׁמְעוּ** ! Obedience is the only condition necessary for Redemption.

PART 3. AVOID THE MISTAKES OF THE PAST.

(ח) אֶל תִּקְשׁוּ לִבְבְּכֶם כְּמִרְיָבָה  
כִּיּוֹם מִסָּה בַּמִּדְבָּר:

The voice of Hashem, speaking to Yisrael: My expectation of you is greater than it is of the other nations who did not experience My special attention and My special wonders. As for you, **do not harden your heart as** you did **at Merivah** — אֶל־תִּקְשׁוּ לִבְבְּכֶם כְּמִרְיָבָה when You tested Me by complaining about the lack of water, and **as on the day of testing** when You challenged Me **in the Midbar** — כִּיּוֹם מִסָּה בַּמִּדְבָּר; ...

(ט) אֲשֶׁר נִסּוּנִי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם  
בְּחִנוּנֵי גַם רָאוּ פְעָלִי:

**when Your ancestors put Me to the test** — אֲשֶׁר נִסּוּנִי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם to see whether I could produce water for them. **They** repeatedly **challenged Me, though they had seen what I did** in Mitzrayim — בְּחִנוּנֵי גַם־רָאוּ פְעָלִי. I have no reason to believe that your teshuvah now will be any more resolute than on the previous occasions when I have forgiven you.

(י) אַרְבַּעִים שָׁנָה אָקוּט בְּדוֹר  
וְאָמַר עִם תַּעֲי לִבָּב הֵם  
וְהֵם לֹא יִדְעוּ דְרָכָי:

**For forty years I contended with the generation** of the Midbar — אַרְבַּעִים שָׁנָה וְאָמַר עִם תַּעֲי לִבָּב הֵם, so I hoped they would let themselves be cured of their error and recognize the truth. **But they still did not** come to **recognize My ways** — וְהֵם לֹא־יִדְעוּ דְרָכָי. They ignored all the miracles I performed for them did not trust Me. They were afraid to enter the land of Yisrael "

(יא) אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּאַפִּי  
אִם יִבְאוּ אֶל מְנוּחָתִי:

**So that** My displeasure grew and **I swore in My wrath**:-, — אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּאַפִּי **that they would not** be permitted to **enter My land of contentment** — אִם־יִבְאוּ אֶל־מְנוּחָתִי. My people, don't delay the Redemption any further by

repeating the mistake of your forefathers.

## Sources

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

ז - רש"י, מצודות, מלבי"ם, בן-רמון, רשר"ה,  
נר לרגלי  
ח - אבן עזרא, מלבי"ם  
ט - רד"ק, מצודות, אלשיך, נר לרגלי  
י - רד"ק, אלשיך, רשר"ה  
יא - רש"י, רד"ק, ספורנו, רשר"ה

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