

Special Pre-publication  
Excerpts from

# Yearning for Redemption

The Psalms of King David  
The Once and Future King

Dedicated to  
Mashiach ben Yoseph  
and Mashiach ben David

Original Translation: The Heart of the Psalms  
Commentary: The Mind of the Psalms  
In-depth Essays: The Soul of the Psalms

Through the Psalms we understand the true Jewish concept of God. We understand His plan for creation. We understand what it means to be Yisrael. Yisrael does not only fight against evil men, but against the mistaken and distorted ideas that make men evil. We pray for the physical safety and well-being of our soldiers, our people, and all good people. We pray for nothing less than the complete transformation of consciousness on Planet Earth with the dawn of the Messianic Age.

Avraham Sutton

Be'ezrat Hashem  
Full multi-volume edition to be published soon by  
Mosaica Press  
<https://mosaicapress.com>  
[info@mosaicapress.com](mailto:info@mosaicapress.com)

Copyright © 2023 Avraham Sutton  
Jerusalem, Israel  
<https://www.RabbiSutton.com>  
[avraham.sutton@icloud.com](mailto:avraham.sutton@icloud.com)  
+972-525-640-249

## *Imagine...*

Imagine discovering the Book of Psalms as if it were a buried scroll unearthed for the first time in thousands of years.

How uncanny that it speaks to the psychological and spiritual condition of our age. How uncanny that it depicts the geopolitical unrest of our age. How uncanny.

\*

Discover the philosophical elegance of the Psalms. It was always there but could never before have been translated into English as it has been now, as Israel returns to its ancient homeland and again becomes conscious—ever so slowly—of its historical mission.

\*

Now, the truth can be told in the ancient words of the psalmist, words that reverberate through the ages, words that resonate in the heart, mind, and soul. Words that empower the individual, the nation, mankind. Words that illuminate the darkest abysses of human existence that we are facing as we traverse the 21st Century.

\*

## **Psalms of King David – Songs of the Soul of Israel**

In view of the fact that our life—individually and collectively—has become more intense and trying as we come closer to the Messianic Age and the Great *Shabbat*, the reading of psalms is more important than ever.

Psalms are meant to be read *slowly*—preferably in Hebrew and then, for greater understanding, with this translation—with the intention of directing our emotions, focusing our thoughts, and binding our soul, with utmost outpouring, to Hashem, the only One who can do anything to transform the deepest darkness into light.

There are times when it is appropriate to say many psalms, one after the other, or even the entire Book of Psalms. This is praiseworthy and a very powerful thing to do. Still, quantity should never take precedence over quality. Each psalm is a whole world in itself. Thus, it is possible to meditate on one psalm, or even on one verse, saying it slowly over and over again, or even stopping in the middle and speaking to Hashem in your own words, or even maintaining complete silence for an extended period while in the middle of one psalm.

Saying psalms in any or all the above ways puts you in a special place that is beyond words, a sacred space in which you know, without a shadow of a doubt, that Hashem, the Infinite One who created us, is truly here.

In the wake of terrorist attacks or any other form of human evil or natural disaster, pray for the soul elevation of all those who have died. Pray that Hashem comfort and console their families and loved ones. Pray for the physical, emotional, and psychological healing of the wounded and the maimed. Pray that heavenly justice and lightning judgment be visited on the perpetrators of these acts. Pray that mankind awakens from its amnesia, from the illusion of separateness, from the illusion that prevents us from seeing and knowing that nothing exists separate from the light and power of the Infinite One who made us all. Pray that evil be exposed in all its ugliness so that mankind will finally know the truth.

Remember, when David speaks of himself, he speaks for all Israel. The psalms of David are our way of connecting to the collective soul of Israel, and through that to the collective soul of all mankind. True change and transformation will only begin on the inner soul level of creation. From that deep place, it will spread outwards until the world will be transformed.

***Adonai oz le'amo yiten, Adonai yevarekh et amo ba'shalom.***

*Hashem*, please give strength to Your people [to endure and overcome all hardship]; *Hashem*, please bless Your people with true everlasting peace [in a world transformed], *amen*.

Special Pre-publication Excerpts from  
**Yearning for Redemption**

*Table of Contents*

Psalm 1 / 1

Inside Psalm 1 / 4

Psalm 2 / 12

Inside Psalm 2 / 14

Psalm 20 / 18

Inside Psalm 20 / 19

Psalm 21 / 25

Inside Psalm 21 / 28

Psalm 23 / 36

Inside Psalm 23 / 37

Psalm 29 / 47

Psalm 44 / 50

Inside Psalm 44 / 52

Psalm 67 / 69

Inside Psalm 67 / 70

Psalm 74 / 85

Psalm 110 / 92

Inside Psalm 110 / 95

Psalm 140 / 104

Psalm 144 / 107



Psalm 1  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

## Psalm 1

The first two psalms, *Ashrei ha'ish* (happy is the man) and *Lamah rag'shu goyim* (why are the nations in a commotion), are essentially one psalm (*Berakhot* 9b-10a). As a unit, they provide the key to the entire Book of Psalms. In the first psalm, David, King of Israel, speaks to the individual, and in the second psalm he speaks to the nations of the world. In both he challenges us with the same ultimate choice, thus teaching us that neither the individual nor the collective can be seen in isolation from one another. A single individual can affect the entire world and change the course of history.

The ultimate choice is thus: Will you wake up and see the truth or forever sleep your life away? Even now—in the midst of the seemingly absolute darkness of human history, in the midst of an almost total self-centered materialism—will you begin to perceive Hashem's hand guiding history toward the Great *Shabbat* of the World to Come? If you acquiesce, Hashem Himself will teach you His Torah; He will reveal to you the deeper significance of your life, who you are as a soul and your mission. The gates of the spiritual dimension will open up for you right now; you will be blessed; you will attain an incredible closeness with your soul and with your Creator. Conversely, you may create your own hell, and you will perish from the face of the earth.

(1) Happy is the man who sees through the façade of this world;<sup>1</sup> who has not been seduced into following after the advice of wicked men;<sup>2</sup> who, even when he stumbles, has not stood to linger on the path of immoral men, and who has not sat or made his permanent dwelling with scoffers.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Ashrei* means happy or fortunate, but also shares the same root as the word *shur*, to see, to perceive. *Ashrei* thus signifies the sense of happiness that comes from being able to see through the superficial, temporal aspects of our life and touch eternity. Compare this with “*ashurenu ve'lo karav—I perceive it, but not in the near future?*” (*Numbers* 24:17).

<sup>2</sup> What is the definition of *rasha* (*resha'im*, plural; *rasha*, singular), usually translated as an evil or wicked man? Look at the letter structure of the word *rasha: resh-shin-ayin*. The first and last letters, *resh* and *ayin*, spell *ra* (evil). The *shin* in the center can be seen as an abbreviation of the word *ish* (man). The *shin* in *rasha* is the *ish* who is caught in *ra*. In this sense, the English term *wicked* is perfect for it carries the connotation of twistedness, as in the twisted *wick* of a candle. A wicked person is really someone who has become twisted and enmeshed in being wicked; i.e., he not only perpetrates wicked acts but has become twisted and wicked himself. Evil is also an interesting word. It contains the same letters as the word *veil*. The nature of evil is to veil itself and make people think that it is just another face of good. See below *Inside Psalm 1*, “The Way of the Rasha.”

<sup>3</sup> Rashi points to the descending order in which the verbs appear: *halakib* (walking or following after) can lead to *amad* (standing or lingering), which in turn can lead to *yashav* (sitting or dwelling). Happy is the person who has not gotten caught in this downward spiral. Rashi's source in the Midrash: Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi said, “If he hadn't walked/followed, how could he stand/linger? And if he hadn't stood/lingered, how could he sit/dwell? And finally, if he hadn't sat/dwelted, how could he scoff? It comes to teach you that if he walks/follows, he will eventually stand/linger; and if he stands/lingers, he will eventually sit/dwell; and if he sits/dwells, he will eventually scoff... The sages summed it up with the following, ‘One *mitzvah* brings another in its wake; one sin brings another in its wake’” (*Midrash Tehillim* 1:7, quoting *Pirkey Avot* 4:2).

According to Rabbi Moshe Almosnino, *reshaim* (wicked men), *chata'im* (immoral men), and *letzim* (scoffers) correspond to the three levels of thought, action, and speech, respectively: “Not following after the advice of *reshaim* implies guarding ourselves from evil thoughts; not lingering on the path of *chata'im* implies guarding ourselves from evil actions; not dwelling with *letzim* implies not speaking evil” (*Maamatz Koach*, cited in *Mikdash Me'at*). Seforno: “*Derech chata'im* means literally path of sins, but refers here to the path of men who commit sins of immorality.

Psalm 1  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

- (2) His desire is rather in the mysteries of *Hashem's* Torah;<sup>4</sup> in His Torah he meditates day and night, thus acquiring it as his own for all eternity.<sup>5</sup>
- (3) The Torah comes alive within him like a Tree of Life planted by tranquil streams of water, giving forth its ripe fruit in its season, its leaves

---

<sup>4</sup> The divine name YKVK embodies Hashem's attribute of unconditional love and overriding mercy (See *Nine Gates to the Psalms*, Gate Three, "Divine Names"). *Torat YKVK* (Hashem's Torah) is the Godly Plan, the Supernal Torah or Blueprint, not only of the entire physical cosmos, but of all the dimensions of our inter-dimensional universe, seen and unseen, physical and spiritual. This is implied in the expression *Torat YKVK* wherein each letter of the Four-Letter Name embodies another level or universe. Although this Supernal Torah is known only to God, He has revealed parts of it in divine inspiration to His chosen ones from Adam to our day. The totality of this Torah will be revealed in the Messianic Age.

<sup>5</sup> Here we use smaller letters to catch the double meaning of the word *Torato*. *Torato* can be read as "His" Torah (referring to Hashem's Supernal Torah) or "his" Torah (the Torah one acquires for oneself by internalizing the Supernal Torah). By meditating deeply in His Torah, we internalize it and make it our own (Rashi, *ibid.*; *Kiddushin* 32b top). We thus read in the Midrash: Rabbi Abba says, "If you truly place your desire in the Torah, then, in the end, the Torah you learned will surely be called in your name." Rabbi Yudin explained, "It is not written 'in Hashem's Torah he meditates day and night,' but rather 'in His/his Torah.' This teaches that if you expend every effort to acquire it as your own, it will be called in your name, as for example, in the case of Rabbi Chiya, Rabbi Hoshayah, Bar Kapparah, and others like them. Why is a tradition given in their name [when it is clear that it originates before them, and they are only transmitters]? It is because they expended every effort to make it theirs. And to show you that this is the case, behold, you know that the Torah belongs to the Holy One, as it is written, 'The Torah of Hashem is perfect' (Psalm 19:8). Nevertheless, when Moshe ascended to the spiritual realm, he remained there for forty days and forty nights, and he gave his soul to acquire Torah. It is therefore called in his name, as it is written, 'Remember the Torah of Moshe, My servant'" (Malakhi 3:22) (*Midrash Tehillim* 1:7).

"*Torat YKVK*" parallels *Etz Chayim* (the Tree of Life), the original Divine Torah that Hashem taught to Adam in the Garden of Eden (*giluy*-revelation from above to below), while "his Torah" parallels *Etz Daat Tov vaRa* (the Tree of Knowing/Joining Good and Evil), with the emphasis not on the sin of partaking from that tree, but on the work of *birur* (refinement) that we do to elevate the world back up to its original level (*birur*-refinement from below to above) (see more on this in *Inside Psalm 21*).

"*Torat YKVK*" also refers to the Five Books of Moses, and "his Torah" to the five books of the Psalms of David. The purpose of the psalms is to teach us how to draw down the Supernal Torah into our earthly existence, how to internalize the light of consciousness in our thinking, speech, feelings, and actions. The work begins with overcoming the "advice of the wicked," the voice within which tries to convince us that only what we see with our physical eyes is real. We must know that our world is only a tiny bubble within an immense system of universes, and that our ability to connect to the higher dimensions depends on the degree of purity we achieve in our mind and heart. Working to achieve inner purity is the basis of returning to Self, reclaiming our higher destiny, and reconnecting to the Source. This reconnection empowers us to not only overcome but transmute our lower energies (the desire to linger with those who have become trapped into following their lower instincts along the path of immorality) into a powerful desire to serve Hashem in everything we do. In this way, we elevate not only ourselves, but elevate and reunite this entire lower world with the higher dimensions above. We also participate in reuniting the *Shekhinah* (the indwelling presence of godliness in the world) with her Beloved (Hashem in His transcendence) in an eternal covenant of love. Finally, this culminates in drawing down and embodying—even now—the Supernal Torah that will be fully revealed with the advent of the Messianic Age.



Psalm 1  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

never withering, granting him success in all his endeavors.<sup>6</sup>

(4) Not so those who become trapped in their own wickedness; they are likened rather to chaff blown and scattered by the wind.<sup>7</sup>

(5) Therefore, because they have sold themselves to evil, the wicked will not survive in the face of God's judgment; immoral men will not abide in the company of the righteous.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> “*V’e’hayah ke’etz shtul...*” Based on Targum Yerushalmi, we have translated this verse to state that the Torah becomes a Tree of Life for the person who meditates in Hashem’s Torah, day and night. Daat Sofrim sees man himself as a tree: “A fruit tree represents something that lives long and gives fruit for many years. David thus speaks here of a fruit tree which is planted and cared for, not one that simply grows wild. This alludes to the fact that Torah learning requires a living teacher who can guide us in understanding the depths of the Torah. For it is impossible to truly understand the Torah without a living transmission. From such a teacher, we then learn how to develop our own ability to understand. ‘Planted by streams of running water.’ Not just by one stream or spring, but by many. One who learns Torah day and night finds in it many different types of ideas that enliven him. In addition, he is drawn after many different types of teachers. Each one is like a new stream of living waters for his soul. ‘Giving forth its ripe fruit in its season.’ A fruit tree gives forth its fruits in its season to the best of its abilities. A person too must always strive to produce his best according to his nature. ‘Its leaves never withering.’ The sages refer to the casual speech of Torah scholars as leaves (based on their resemblance to lips) (*Succah* 21a). When a person truly strives for perfection, even his leaves—everyday speech patterns—will never become dry and lifeless. ‘[Granting him] success in all his endeavors.’ Although David began by emphasizing the importance of learning Torah and meditating in it, here he alludes to the importance of taking one’s learning into every aspect of life. Still, success is not a direct outcome of man’s actions. There is no guarantee that we will see fruits in our pursuits. Neither is it easy to determine if we have attained true success or merely something transient and passing. Here, David speaks of true success, success which is eternal.”

<sup>7</sup> Whereas a *tzadik* (one who embodies righteousness) is compared to a living tree, a *rasha* (wicked man, a man who has become enmeshed in his own wickedness) is likened to dead chaff. “*Tzadikim*, even in their death, are called alive...but *reshaim* [those who become completely enmeshed in their own wickedness], even while alive, are considered dead” (*Berakbot* 18b).

<sup>8</sup> King David has likened the *tzadik* to a tree of life whose fruit and leaves are all luxuriant and fresh, while the *rasha* is like chaff that is blown by the wind. One represents life, the other represents death. One is enduring, the other is transient and doomed to perish. This explains why the *rasha* cannot survive the penetrating light of Hashem’s judgment.

Picture the *rasha* standing before the Heavenly Tribunal. Imagine him standing naked—not of clothes, but rather of all his false bravado and defense mechanisms. Imagine the most powerful lights shining on him and blinding him, such that he is unable to see the faces of the judges of this Tribunal. He hears them speaking (they know everything). He hears them, but he sees only blinding lights. Standing there, he realizes how empty his life was/is, and that he has nothing of substance. His own self-hatred will be so great at that moment that he will want to shrivel up and die. But the judges of this Heavenly Tribunal (the *tzadikim* of the previous generation) are merciful. Yes, it is painful to be confronted with his own nothingness, but they are merely asking him to realize his mistakes, and come back to his real Self.

“Immoral men [will not abide] in the company of the *tzadikim*.” How does the *rasha* see himself in relation to the *tzadik*? The *rasha* spends his life consumed with hatred. He directs this hatred outward, but it is really self-hatred and self-contempt. He thinks he hates the *tzadik*, but it isn’t true. He is jealous. He is jealous that the *tzadik* isn’t consumed by hatred as he is. That is why he cannot stand being in the company of the righteous. In addition, as a result of becoming

Psalm 1  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

(6) For *Hashem* knows and loves the way of the righteous, while the way of the wicked is doomed to end in ruin.<sup>9</sup>

## Inside Psalm 1

“For *Hashem* knows [and loves] the way of the *tzadikim* (righteous), while the way of the *reshaim* (wicked) is doomed to end in ruin” (Psalm 1:6). The Midrash identifies the *tzadikim* and *reshaim* in this psalm:<sup>10</sup>

“Happy is the man...” This refers to *Adam HaRishon*. *Adam HaRishon* said, “Fortunate am I that I didn’t follow the advice of the *nachash* (serpent, primordial snake)...Fortunate am I that I didn’t stand/linger in the path of the *nachash*...Fortunate am I that I didn’t sit/dwell in the company of the *nachash*, the archetypal scoffer. “For Hashem knows the way of the *tzadikim*”—these are Adam and Chavah; “while the way of the *reshaim* is doomed”—this is the *nachash*, for all creatures will be healed in the future except the *nachash*.”

Note that the Midrash calls Adam and Chavah *tzadikim* despite their having sinned by eating of the fruit of the *Eitz HaDaat Tov vaRa* (Tree of Knowing/Joining Good and Evil) at the instigation of the *nachash*. But this is precisely the point. Yes, they had fallen for the *nachash*’s deception, but realizing their mistake, they eventually returned in *teshuvah*.<sup>11</sup>

The Midrash continues, showing how the entire psalm could be a description of the life of Noah:<sup>12</sup>

“Happy is the man...For Hashem knows the way of the *tzadikim*.” These

---

an agent of evil, he feels unworthy of God’s mercies. He is filled with so much guilt and self-hatred that he cannot tolerate anyone, including himself, standing in God’s presence. Nevertheless, if he will only come back to himself, he will be able to stand again in the company of the righteous. This is the greatness of the *baal teshuvah*. This is the deep message of this psalm.

<sup>9</sup> See the Zohar: “What is the meaning of ‘Hashem knows the way of the *tzadikim*’? It is for the benefit of the *tzadikim* that the Holy One knows their every movement and watches over them to guard and protect them... This is not the case with the *reshaim*. For ‘the way of the *reshaim* is doomed’—they are doomed to perish on their own [they bring about their own destruction]. For the Holy One disregards their ways, and removes His providence from them [thus abandoning them to their own miserable fate]” (*Zohar Kedoshim*, 3:87b).

<sup>10</sup> *Midrash Tehillim* 1:9-10.

<sup>11</sup> See *Inside Psalm 92*, where we cite the tradition that Adam learned the transformative power of *teshuvah* from Kayin (Cain) (*Bereshit Rabbah* 22:13). See Rabbi Shlomo Elyashiv, that Adam was able to rectify only the *lower, individual* level to which he descended after the *chet*, not the *higher, collective* level on which he had originally existed before the *chet* (*Leshem Shvo VeAchlamah, Drnshey Olam HaYahu, Chelek Beit*, 4:19:5, p. 159; 4:24:1, p. 200).

<sup>12</sup> *Midrash Tehillim* 1:12.

Psalm 1  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

verses speak of Noah, as the Torah itself attests, “Noah was a righteous man (*ish tzadik*)” (Genesis 6:9), for he refused to follow in the footsteps of three evil generations—the generation of Enosh, the generation of the Flood, and the generation of the Tower of Babel. This follows Rabbi Yehudah’s opinion that “*atzat reshaim*—the advice of wicked men” refers to the generation of Enosh [for they began to worship idols]. “*Derekh chata’im*—the path of immoral men” refers to the generation of the Flood [for they stole from one another]. “*Moshav leitzim*—the dwelling of scoffers” refers to the generation of the Tower of Babel [for they mocked and rebelled against God’s authority]. “Hashem knows the way of the *tzadikim*” thus refers to Noah and his sons, while “the way of the *reshaim* is doomed” refers to those of his generation that drowned in the Flood.

The Midrash continues applying the same verses to Avraham:<sup>13</sup>

“Happy is the man”—this refers to Avraham. “*Atzat reshaim*—the advice of wicked men” refers to the generation of the Tower of Babel, about whom it is written, “Let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top shall reach the sky” (Genesis 11:4). “*Derekh chata’im*—the path of immoral men” refers to the people of Sodom, about whom it is written, “The people of Sodom were extremely wicked in their sinning against God” (Genesis 13:13). “*Moshav leitzim*—the dwelling of scoffers/con artists” refers to Avimelekh [who talked big and did little] for he promised Avraham, “My whole land is before you; settle wherever you see fit” (Genesis 20:15), but had no intention of keeping his word.

“His desire is rather in Hashem’s Torah”—this refers to Avraham, about whom it is written, “I [Hashem] have known him [i.e., given him a special blessing] so that he should command his children and his household after him to safeguard/keep *derekh Hashem* (the way of God), to actively pursue/practice *tzedakah* (righteousness as a duty) and *mishpat* (justice), so that I, Hashem, may bring about for Avraham all that I have spoken” (Genesis 18:19).

“In His Torah, he meditates day and night.” Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani asked, “Seeing that Avraham had neither a father nor a rabbi to teach him Torah, from whom did he learn?” Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai taught, “The Holy One made his two kidneys like two rabbis, whereupon they exuded wisdom and taught him Torah throughout the night. “He will be like a tree planted by streams of running water.” The Holy One took Avraham and planted him in Eretz Yisrael; alternatively, the Holy One took him and

---

<sup>13</sup> *Midrash Tehillim* 1:13.

Psalm 1  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

planted him in *Gan Eden*. “Giving forth its ripe fruit in its season”—this is Yitzchak. “Its leaves never withering”—this is Yishmael. “Granting him success in all his endeavors”—these are the children of Keturah (Hagar) [to whom Avraham gave gifts and sent away to the East]. “Therefore, the wicked will not survive judgment”—this refers to Nimrod and his contemporaries.

### **The Way of the Rasha**

The *tzadik* and the *rasha* in this psalm and in subsequent psalms can be seen as two types of human beings, two stages in the life of the individual, or two archetypes within each and every one of us. These levels of interpretation are all true and they all involve making a crucial choice.

We offer the following insights in order to better understand the critical choice that has been placed before us, and to assist us not only in forsaking the way of the *rasha* and embracing the way of the *tzadik*, but in transforming the *rasha*—in society and within us—into a *tzadik*. In order to do this, we must enter deeply into the psychology of the *rasha* and understand his inner makeup. We will then be ready to understand the awesome transformative power of *teshuvah*.

As noted, the first and last letters of the word *rasha* (*resh* and *ayin*), spell *ra* (evil). The *shin* in the middle is an abbreviation of the word *ish* (man). The *shin* in *rasha* is the *ish* (man) who is caught in *ra* (evil), twisted and enmeshed in being wicked. Any way we look at it, becoming wicked or evil is very serious and has significant consequences for a person’s soul. That is why Jewish law is careful not to label people or nations evil unless they have reached the point of no return, or—when the term *rasha* is used in a relative sense—in order to warn them of the consequences of what they are doing before they go too far and become so irretrievably caught up in their own wickedness that they cannot get out.

Labeling people or societies makes it even harder for them to change their ways. It is one thing to have done something wrong or to have perpetrated an evil act once, twice, or even many times. For this, one must be brought to justice. It is something else to be labeled evil, a menace to society. The implication is that rehabilitation is impossible. The process has gone beyond the point of return.

The truth is that according to God’s law, this is never the case. No criminal is beyond hope. Even when a duly ordained court of law considers a man unredeemable, there is still a chance. But this is only when he is made to understand the seriousness of the evil he has perpetrated and is willing to do

Psalm 1  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

whatever is necessary to atone for his sins. All this has tremendous implications for parents, educators, and courts. It is also the principle that lies behind the Torah's prohibition against *lashon hara* (slander). This is brought out most forcefully in the Zohar's statement, "Whoever [wrongfully] labels his fellow 'wicked' will himself be brought down to *Gebinom*."<sup>14</sup> Since the Torah views each human being as having been created "in the image of God," i.e., with infinite potential to do good, we must be very careful to distinguish between (1) who and what a person is and (2) what he or she has done or is doing.

At any rate, this entire process—from making a mistake, doing wrong, going off track, tasting the sweet taste of sin, getting trapped in wickedness, and actually becoming wicked—doesn't happen overnight. A person who does wrong does not automatically become wicked. There are stages, and the process can be reversed at any point along the way. This is important to know. It is also important to point out that when the Bible labels a person, it applies on a number of levels. That is, even among *reshaim* there are levels. Even the worst human being—one bent on pursuing and doing evil, on rebelling against all that is good and decent—is ultimately just a vehicle for what we call the force of evil. In other words, the voice of evil that whispers from beneath the threshold of consciousness into such a person's mind is not really his own voice. Such a person needs to be apprised of this so he can begin to reclaim his own selfhood. There is no reason for him to be continuously undermined within by hearing, "You're no good. You have no chance. Try as you may, there's no hope for you" This, of course, is the infamous voice of the shadow, the *Satan* (heavenly accuser), the *yetzer hara* (inner adversary), the force of evil.

In folklore, we read of such a force in Stephen Vincent Benet's "The Devil and Daniel Webster"<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> *Zohar Mishpatim*, 2:122a.

<sup>15</sup> In "The Devil and Daniel Webster," Jabez Stone makes a deal with the devil: "He'd been plowing that morning and he'd just broke the plowshare on a rock that he could have sworn hadn't been there yesterday. And, as he stood looking at the plowshare, the off horse began to cough—that ropy kind of cough that means sickness and horse doctors. There were two children down with the measles, his wife was ailing, and he had a whitlow on his thumb. It was about the last straw for Jabez Stone. 'I vow,' he said, and he looked around him kind of desperate—'I vow it's enough to make a man want to sell his soul to the devil! And I would, too, for two cents!' ... The next day, about supper time, a soft-spoken, dark-dressed stranger drove up in a handsome buggy and asked for Jabez Stone. Well, Jabez told his family it was a lawyer, come to see him about a legacy. But he knew who it was. He didn't like the looks of the stranger, nor the way he smiled with his teeth... Jabez Stone had to *prick his finger* to sign, and the stranger lent him a silver pin. The wound healed clean, but it left a little white scar." For six years Jabez Stone prospers, but as the seventh-year approaches, he begins to realize what he's done. Not knowing what to do, he begs the stranger to give him another three years. Finally, as the tenth-year approaches, he seeks legal assistance from Daniel Webster, the greatest lawyer in New Hampshire. Daniel agrees to defend Jabez, is almost taken in by the devil, but at the last moment saves the day (Stephen Vincent Benet,

Psalm 1  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

and Goethe's "Faust."<sup>16</sup>

The force of evil usually comes to people who are weak-willed. Evil promises them great power if they will only "sign their soul over to the devil." Blinded by the desire for power, they sign, not realizing the implications until it is too late. For consigning their soul to evil, they may attain temporal power, but they stand to be destroyed with evil in the end.

Here, we must distinguish between those who become agents of evil to fool others in contrast to those who are fooled. [A] To the extent that one is aware of and accepts the fact that he is serving evil, he is more culpable. [B] Less culpable, although just as despicable, are those who think they are doing good by serving evil. [C] Even less culpable are those who are not aware of the evil intentions of their masters. When the time comes and evil is exposed for what it really is and always has been—an empty, parasitic force with no life of its own, and certainly no power—this latter group [C] will be the first to mutiny and rebel. Next, [B] those who thought they were doing good by serving evil will rebel. Finally, [A] those who thought they understood what they were doing will wake up and want to throw off the yoke of evil. They will see for themselves that evil has no life or power of its own. It made them think that it was all-powerful, but it really had and has nothing of its own. Evil literally lives off the energy people give it. Their problem is that when they finally wake up and decide that they want to throw off the yoke of their evil master, it might be too late to save themselves.

In one sense, we are told that it is never too late to be saved. Sincere regret, a regret that wells up from the depths of our being, can save us at the last minute and give us the superhuman strength we need to slay our opponent with the last breath of our life, even when all seems lost. Indeed, in extreme cases, it may be too late for someone who became an agent of evil to save himself. He can, however, make the ultimate sacrifice—which is to give up his own life and to be destroyed with the very power of evil that he empowered, in order to save others. When such an individual finally does rebel against evil, he will do more harm to evil than the *tzadikim* who were not taken in by the ruse.

The fact that evil is allowed to exist and operate with such brazenness is part

---

1898-1943).

<sup>16</sup> Faust sits in his study in deep despair. Mephistopheles (the devil) comes to him and promises him the world. Here, too, a *pin prick* to draw blood (representing the soul) is all that is needed to close the deal (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1749-1832).

Psalm 1  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

of God's deep plan for our world.<sup>17</sup> We will have more to say about this.<sup>18</sup> For the moment, it is necessary to repeat that God gives evil the ability to entice human beings into becoming its agents. As above, few are aware that this is actually evil. Most are deceived into thinking that they are working for the good. Still others are completely unaware of the source of the "authority" to whom they pledge loyalty. As the end gets closer, however, and evil becomes revealed for what it really is, more and more souls will rebel against this force. They will tell others. The deception that evil perpetrated will be increasingly exposed. Those more entrenched will find it more difficult to pry themselves away. Evil will convince them—as it always tries to convince its victims—that they will never gain forgiveness for the evil that they have already done, so they might as well resign themselves to their fate.

Some will balk at this. "No!" they will say, "it can't be." They will do everything they can, not only to free themselves and others, but they will also understand that they are being called upon to destroy the force of evil itself. They may die doing so, but it will be their salvation. Those who stay with evil until the end and actually fight loyally for it will be pitied the most. Only the Eternal Creator Himself is big enough to have pity on these despicable souls.

In the meantime, we call attention to the fact that most of our actions lie somewhere in the middle between ultimate good and ultimate evil. Because we are placed in a world in which God is so hidden, it is almost certain that most of us will do things that are wrong at one time or another. Shlomo HaMelekh spoke about this when he declared, "There is no man on earth who is so completely righteous that he does only good and never errs" (Ecclesiastes 7:20). But, as we have said, having done something wrong is a far cry from being or becoming an evil person. There are many stages, and the downward process can be reversed at any point along the way. What we do after we have done something wrong is the key. What happens to a person who becomes aware that he did something wrong? What goes on inside? What leads a person or a

---

<sup>17</sup> According to the Zohar, this is the secret of the verse, "*Et asher shalat ha'adam be'adam le'ra lo*—there is a time when the [evil] Man subjugates the [good] Man, to do him evil/harm" (Ecclesiastes 8:9). In addition to its literal meaning (to do him evil/harm), the key phrase at the conclusion of the verse, *le'ra lo*, also means, "to his own undoing" or "to his own detriment." That is, the harm that the evil man wishes to inflict on the good man will ultimately rebound back against the evil man, and will be shown in the end to have been "to his own undoing/detriment" (*Zohar Mishpatim*, 2:95b). According to the Ari, the evil man of this verse is none other than the system of evil which was given power to dominate and subjugate the souls of human beings in the wake of Adam's sin (*Shaar HaGigulim, Hakdamah* 38; see my translation of the entire text in *Well of Living Waters*). By rereading this verse in this way, the Zohar and the Ari are alluding to Hashem's profound plan to use evil to bring the historical drama to its climactic end with the advent of the Messianic Age.

<sup>18</sup> See *Inside Psalm 143*, "The Drama of the Souls," and *Inside Psalm 66*, "Nora Alilah."

Psalm 1  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

nation into getting enmeshed in evil to the point of becoming its agent—of becoming an embodiment of evil? And if a person or a nation falls so low, is there any chance of getting back on track again?

### **Teshuvah—The Road Back**

One of the most powerful concepts in the Torah is the concept of *teshuvah*. *Teshuvah* means return. It is often translated as repentance, for it includes a profound sense of remorse, sorrow, and genuine regret that a person feels after realizing that he has done wrong and wants to make amends. *Teshuvah* thus involves a conscious decision to dissociate from those things which brought us low and precipitated our making errors and losing our way. It involves a desire to retrieve and reclaim the basic dignity of a free-willed human being not driven by baser compulsions. Through *teshuvah* we return to our self. We also return to our higher self, to potentials within us that we didn't know existed. Indeed, through sincere *teshuvah* we attain a higher level of closeness to Hashem than we had before we sinned.

This is not usually attained in one step, certainly not by most of us. The Talmud therefore makes a distinction between two types or levels of *teshuvah*: *teshuvah* from fear and *teshuvah* from love. According to the Talmud, *teshuvah* from fear of punishment neutralizes one's intentional transgressions and turns them into unwitting mistakes.<sup>19</sup> But this is just the beginning. It is like a reprieve to allow us to get back on our feet. Once we have begun to reestablish our original closeness with our Creator, we are to refine ourselves even more, not only by dissociating from that which is wrong, but by being positively involved with the performance of *mitzvot* and good deeds. This is the next stage of *teshuvah* from love. The Talmud thus continues that *teshuvah* from love transforms intentional transgressions into meritorious acts.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> *Yoma* 86b.

<sup>20</sup> The text of the Talmud itself reads: Resh Lakish said, "Great is *teshuvah*, for one's intentional transgressions are counted for him as unwitting mistakes (*zedonot naasot lo k'shegagot*), as per (Hoshea 14:2), '*Shuvah Yisrael*—return, Israel, to Hashem your God, for you have stumbled in your *avon* (transgression).'" The Talmud asks: Doesn't *avon* always indicate intentional transgression? How then can Hoshea call it stumbling? [Rather, it must be as Resh Lakish said, that *teshuvah* transforms intentional transgressions into unwitting mistakes.] But wait, we have found that Resh Lakish himself said something even more radical: "Great is *teshuvah*, for one's intentional transgressions are counted for him as meritorious acts (*zedonot naasot lo k'zekhuyot*), as per (Ezekiel 33:19), '*U'be'shu'v rasha*—when the wicked man returns from his wicked way, dedicating himself to doing what is just and right, *aleihem hu yichyeh*—through them he shall live'" [i.e., through the righteous deeds that he will now do, the wicked deeds he did in the past will be considered meritorious acts]. The Talmud concludes: There is no contradiction between these two statements by Resh Lakish. In the latter case, when one returns out of love, his intentional transgressions become like merits. In the former case, when one returns out of fear, his intentional transgressions are counted as unwitting mistakes (*Yoma* 86b).



Psalm 1  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

*Teshuvah* from love is much more powerful because it involves a complete paradigm shift in our relationship with Hashem. We no longer whine and complain about all the bad things that have happened to us and our bitter lot in life, but sincerely thank and praise Hashem for the privilege of being alive, and of becoming aware of Him as the source of our life. Such *teshuvah* has the ability to transform all the things we did wrong into merits because they [our wrong actions] are now seen as having actually prepared the way for our coming closer to Hashem than if we had never erred. That such a transformation is even possible is one of the greatest gifts Hashem gives us.

For what is love but the desire to bond with the one we love? Bonding itself involves dissolving whatever boundaries exist between the lover and the loved one. Bonding in love means becoming one with the beloved. This is alluded to in the shared *gematria* (numerical value) of the words for love (*ahavah*) and oneness (*echad*). *Ahavah* and *echad* both equal thirteen. Love is also the desire to do something, anything, for the beloved, even give one's life. This is consistent with the two-letter root of the word *ahavah*, which is *beh-vav, hav* (giving). When the deep power of love that lies dormant in the human heart is focused on God, the most natural reaction is to want to *give* back to Him that which is most precious to us.

When love for the One who made us is allowed to well forth from the depths of our being, we become transformed. Our heart opens to embrace life in its fullness. We begin to extract the deeper lessons of our life because we now accept who we are as well as who we were, both of which are preparatory for moving toward whom we are capable of being. We accept and embrace the totality of who we are. Love not only binds us to the beloved but allows us to love ourself. We reclaim the parts of ourself that we hated, the *rasba*, the *choteb*, and the *letz*. They can no longer operate independently to undermine us. They are embraced and transformed. We learn from our mistakes. We even grow from our mistakes. We grow so much that in heaven it is considered as if our former misdeeds actually led to true refinement and closeness to Hashem. This is the power of *teshuvah* from love.

Similar to being in school, our life here on earth will be seen as moving from lower grades to higher grades in which mistakes were part of the learning process, and, because we initially lacked understanding, we will not be held accountable for having done wrong. But this is only when we truly repent from the depths of our heart, from true love and not merely from fear of reprisal and punishment.

Part 2  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

## Psalm 2

David addresses the nations with the same choice: “Now beware, you kings; take heed, you judges of the earth...lest He become angry and you perish on the way [like so many other nations who rose up and then vanished from the stage of history].” The choice is yours. Choose before it is too late, or suffer the consequences. Will you join Israel in its mission to increase the awareness of God among humankind? If you do, you will rise to true heights of greatness. You will become the new Israel of the future, while Israel will become the *cobanim* (priests) of an enlightened humanity (Rashi, Isaiah 44:5; Radak, Isaiah 61:6; see note to Psalm 10:16). If not, know that you will perish. You may rise to the pinnacle of temporal glory and power, but in doing so you will sow the seeds of your own ruination. As above, it is a choice to either “be happy” or “perish.” Yet, as if to foreshadow a positive ending to the historical drama, the last verse in Psalm 2 does indeed say, “Happy are those who take refuge in Him!” But will the nations of the world get the message?

“Why are the nations in a commotion...set themselves...against Hashem and against His anointed?” Although David himself was anointed by Shmuel, he refers here to his descendent, *Mashiach ben David*, as Hashem’s *Mashiach* (Anointed Redeemer). He also refers to the idea of the *meshichui*, the messiahship and the messianic mission. It is this idea, together with the revelation of Hashem’s oneness which it expresses, that the power of evil, embodied by Gog, King of Magog, opposes. In speaking to collective mankind, this psalm thus jumps ahead to the ultimate confrontation between good and evil that will take place as the historical drama draws to its ultimate finale. This psalm was composed to strengthen Israel’s faith when, just prior to the final Redemption, everything will hang in the balance and it may seem that the divine plan has been aborted.

- (1) Why are the nations in a commotion, and why do governments contrive futile plans?  
(2) Why do the kings of the earth set themselves in array, and rulers gather together secretly to take counsel against *Hashem* and against His anointed?<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> “*Lamah ragshu goyim*—why are the nations in a commotion, *u’leumim yebegu veek*—and [why do] governments contrive futile plans? *Yit’yatzevu malkhei erez*—why do the kings of the earth set themselves [in array], *ve’rozenim nossdu yachad*—and rulers gather together [secretly] to take counsel against Hashem and against His anointed?” Note the oscillation of verb tenses in these first two verses: *ragshu* is past tense, *yebegu* is future; *yit’yatzevu* is future, *nossdu* is past. As we show in *Nine Gates to the Psalms*, Gate Eight, on the one hand we can view the prophet as being catapulted out of the present into the future, seeing all history from that vantage point as having happened already. On the other hand, we can view him as being elevated above space-time altogether. One way or the other, what was future from the point of view of the present becomes past from the point of view of the future.

According to this, the oscillation in tense in these two verses simultaneously indicates two complementary ideas. First, in a prophetic state of consciousness David literally sees the ultimate battle of the future between *Mashiach* and *Gog* taking place before his eyes. Moreover, once he knows that it is going to happen in the ultimate future, he understands that all history is based on the same struggle, and therefore sees his own life as a reflection of that ultimate battle. This explains how the Rashi and Ibn Ezra apply these verses to the messianic future, and then, in the same breath, to battles that David fought in his own lifetime. Isn’t it clear that it is not either/or, but, rather, both? David didn’t see his own life in isolation from the history of his people.

With David’s help we can do the same: The Messianic Era is not just a special period of time that lies up ahead at the end of the historical drama. It is the crux of the historical drama. Every moment of history not only moves us inexorably closer to that time, but, rather, each event

Part 2  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

- (3) They say, “Let us sunder their bands of morality and cast off their cords of duty.”
- (4) But He who sits/dwells in the heavens will laugh. *Adonai* will mock them for thinking that they can defy Him.<sup>2</sup>
- (5) For the time is coming when He will speak to them in His ire, and terrify them with His burning indignation:
- (6) “It is I who have anointed David My king, on Tziyon, the mountain of My holiness.”
- (7) David affirms: I hereby declare it as an immutable law. As *Hashem* has said to me, so, too, He says to each and every one of you, “You are My child whom I have begotten today!”<sup>3</sup>
- (8) Hashem declares to David: “Ask of Me and I will make nations your inheritance; your dominion will extend to the ends of the earth.
- (9) “You will break them [your enemies] with an iron rod, and shatter them to pieces as a potter’s vessels.”
- (10) David speaks: Now beware, you kings; take heed, you judges of the earth.<sup>4</sup>

---

in our life embodies that time in its own unique way. The entire Book of Psalms—and all Judaism—necessarily requires us to constantly jump out of time, reach beyond time, and keep returning with more eternity to enhance our consciousness of Hashem within time. In this way we overcome the illusion that time is linear, and begin to understand that all time is actually happening simultaneously. Thus, we translate *ragshu*, *yebegu*, *yit'yatzevu*, and *nossdu* in the present tense.

“Against Hashem and against His *Mashiach*.” Seforno and Malbim: “Their intention is to come together in counsel against Hashem—to prevent people from serving Him; and against His *Mashiach*—to prevent him from reigning.”

<sup>2</sup> Man sees only what is before his eyes. He is fooled by what he sees. Without the objective perspective provided by the Torah, he can never hope to see his way out the maze which he himself has created. God sees history from Above.

<sup>3</sup> Meiri: “*Beni atab, ani ba'yom yelid'tikha*—you are My child whom I have begotten today.” David says, ‘In my estimation, this honor that You are according me is like a *shok*, a royal edict which must be obeyed whether one understands it or not.’ David said this in all humility, for he did not consider himself worthy of being king over Israel. However, Hashem corrected him saying, ‘Just as I have chosen Israel and call them My children, so, too, I have chosen you, David’” (See Deuteronomy 14:1, “*Banim atem*—you are children of *Havayah Elokeikhem*...”).

This verse has a hidden universal message. On the surface, it is about King David, the individual. Ultimately, it is about every Israelite, and every human being. See further in *Inside Psalm 2*, “Embodying Higher Levels of Soul.”

<sup>4</sup> Hirsch: “David says, ‘Since this is God’s design which has been irrevocably proclaimed, therefore *haskilu*, comprehend this, bring it to your understanding; *binasseru*, submit on your own initiative to instruction and discipline; submit yourselves to God’s moral law (*musar*)...Acknowledge the divinely revealed moral law as the one absolute that stands supreme over you and over all others. Make this law your standard and the guiding principle of your lives and of the lives of the nations that are to be shaped by you.’”

Part 2  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

(11) Serve *Hashem* with awe, and rejoice before Him with trembling.<sup>5</sup>  
(12) Gird yourselves with purity of heart, lest He arouse His ire and you perish on the way like so many other nations who rose up and then vanished from the stage of history; for His wrath might be kindled soon. Happy are those who take refuge in Him!

## Inside Psalm 2

“Why are the nations in a commotion, and why do governments contrive futile plans? Why do the kings of the earth set themselves in array, and rulers gather together secretly to take counsel against Hashem and against His *Mashiach*?” (Psalm 2:1-2).

The Midrash draws an incredibly deep lesson from this psalm by placing it in meta-historical perspective:<sup>6</sup>

“Why are the nations in a commotion...?” Just as the waves offshore rise up as if they are about to inundate the entire world, and then suddenly subside and bow down at the foot of the shore, so also the nations of the world. It is a rule of history: Any nation that ever came against the people of Israel to harm/destroy them, ultimately fell before them. Nimrod (alias Amraphel) and his colleagues [the four kings of Genesis 14] waged war against Avraham by taking Lot, Avraham’s nephew, captive, but they fell before him.<sup>7</sup> Avimelekh fell before Yitzchak. Esav and Lavan fell before Yaacov. Pharaoh and Egypt fell before Israel. The same is true of many others [Amalek, Sichon, and Og fell before Moshe; the thirty-one kings fell before Yehoshua;

---

<sup>5</sup> Hirsch: “Consecrate yourselves to the service of the Lord. Serve God with your labors as the princes and rulers of the nations. Let the fulfillment of His will, the realization of His purposes, the bringing about of His kingdom on earth, be the goal of your strivings. *Be’yirub*—with awe.’ In constant realization of His greatness and of the supremacy of His will against which whatever contrary opinions or desires you may harbor shall be bent and shriveled to complete insignificance.”

“*V’egilu biradab*—rejoice [before Him] with trembling.” Joy/love and awe/fear are like the two wings of the soul. With the wing of joy/love, we seek oneness with the Beloved; with the wing of awe/fear, we maintain a respectful distance and never take His love for granted. “Rejoice with trembling,” thus represents the perfect balance between loving Hashem (feeling His closeness to us) and yet revering Him (realizing our own insignificance and how far we are from Him).

In this vein, the Baal Shem Tov taught: “We must have both love and awe of God. If man had only love for Hashem, he would become accustomed to being constantly with Him. This love would then become so natural to him that he would fail to appreciate its value. However, when awe accompanies love, man is careful not to come too close and certainly does not want to do anything to displease the Beloved” (*Tzavaat HaRivash*, cited in *Baal Shem Tov al HaTorah*, Ekeiv 24).

<sup>6</sup> *Midrash Tehillim* 2:2.

<sup>7</sup> See *Inside Psalm 110*.

Part 2  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

Sancheriv fell before Chizkiyahu; Haman fell before Mordekhai]. In the future, Gog of Magog will fall before Israel. David foresaw all this and cried out, “Why are the nations in a commotion?” Why do they keep making the same mistake?

Next, the Midrash reveals the evil intentions of those who wish to harm Israel:<sup>8</sup>

Rabbi Berakhiah said: O cursed are the *reshaim* (wicked) who gather together to take counsel against Israel. Each one brags that his scheme [to destroy Israel] will succeed where the others failed. Esav said, “Cain was a fool for he murdered his brother Abel while their father was still alive. Didn’t he realize that his father would have more children, namely, Seth? I will do otherwise. This is the meaning of ‘days of mourning for my father are at hand; I will then slay my brother Yaacov’ (Genesis 27:41) and inherit his portion.”

Pharaoh said, “Esav was a fool for merely waiting for their father to die. Didn’t he realize his brother would have children during their father’s lifetime? Rather, I will wipe out the children of Israel while they are still infants. This is the meaning of ‘let us deal wisely with them...’ (Exodus 1:10), to wit, let us be wiser than those who came before us.” Thus, immediately after this we read, “Pharaoh issued orders to his entire nation, ‘Cast every male-child that is born into the Nile, but every girl shall be allowed to live’” (Exodus 1:22).

Haman said, “Pharaoh was a fool for saving the girls. Didn’t he realize that they would marry and have children? I won’t make the same mistake.” Thus his order was “to destroy, kill, and exterminate all the *Yehudim*, young and old, children and women alike” (Esther 3:13).

Gog of Magog, too, will say, “All my predecessors were fools, for they tried to come directly against Israel. They didn’t take into account that they have a Protector in heaven. Instead of making the same foolish mistake, I will therefore make war against their Protector [by inculcating atheism, denying and belittling the existence of God], and then, when the coast is clear, I will return to take care of Israel.” This is the meaning of “Kings of the earth set themselves [in array], and rulers gather together [secretly] to take counsel against Hashem and against His anointed.”

The Holy One, however, says to Gog and his legions, “*Reshaim*, O wicked ones, do you really think you can come against Me? Don’t you know how many legions I have to serve Me? Don’t you know how many angel-hosts I

---

<sup>8</sup> *Midrash Tehillim* 2:4.

Part 2  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

have before Me? Indeed, they shall go out to battle against you, and I will be among them.” This is the meaning of “Hashem will go forth like a warrior” (Isaiah 42:13) and “Hashem will go forth against those nations” (Zekhariah 14:3), after which it is written, “Hashem will be [recognized] as king over the entire world” (Zekhariah 14:9).

What is the answer to David’s cry above, “Why do they keep making the same mistake?” In a sense, they can’t help it. It is not that they can’t tolerate Israel. It is deeper than that. They can’t bear what Israel stands for. They cannot accept Hashem and His *Mashiach*.<sup>9</sup>

### Embodying Higher Levels of Soul

“*Asapra el chok, Hashem amar elai, beni atab, Ani ha’yom yelid’tikba*—I hereby declare it as an immutable law. As Hashem has said to me [so, too, He says to each and every one of you], ‘You are My child whom I have begotten today’” (Psalm 2:7).

This verse has a hidden universal message. On the surface, it is about King David, the individual. As we dig deeper, we will see that it is about every single Israelite, and ultimately, about every single human being. Let us begin with King David, the individual.

The statement, “*beni atab, Ani ha’yom yelid’tikba*—you are My child whom I have begotten today” might refer to the day that Shmuel anointed David as king of Israel.<sup>10</sup> At that moment, *ruach ha’kodesh* (a spirit of holiness) began to stir within David [as if he had become a new person], as the verse attests, “*V’a’titzlach ruach Hashem el David me’bayom habu va’maalab*—Hashem’s spirit rested/descended upon David from that day onward” (I Samuel 16:13, according to Targum Yonatan).

According to the Zohar, Hashem’s statement to David, “*Ani ha’yom yelid’tikba*,” refers to the day of his *bar mitzvah*, when he became thirteen years old. At that moment he received the soul-level of *nefesh d’Atzilut*.<sup>11</sup> If so, the verses describing his anointing by Shmuel HaNavi when David was twenty-seven years old would refer to his receiving either *ruach d’Atzilut* or perhaps *neshamah*

---

<sup>9</sup> See a continuation of this line of thought in *Inside Psalm 14* and *Inside Psalm 21*.

<sup>10</sup> “Hashem said, ‘Rise! Anoint him, for this is the one!’ Shmuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers” (I Samuel 16:12). See *Inside Psalm 69*, “Wonder Upon Wonder.”

<sup>11</sup> *Zohar Mishpatim*, 2:98a. See *Nine Gates to the Psalms*, Gate Six, and *Inside Psalm 103*, “The soul is the indwelling presence of godliness within man,” where we speak more of the five basic levels of the soul.

Part 2  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

*d'Atzilut*.<sup>12</sup>

In another passage in the Zohar, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai takes this farther. Since King David wrote the Psalms for every Israelite, this *chok*, this divine decree that defies human understanding, applies to any individual who accepts the yoke of Hashem's *malkhut* (sovereignty) upon himself without reservation. He immediately inherits the exalted soul-level of *neshamah*, and automatically becomes a child of the Holy One and the *Shekhinah*.<sup>13</sup> We learn from this that we were born in order to embody the highest levels of godliness in every thought, word, and action.

This is David's message to us. As the once and future king of Israel, he embodies the divine attribute of *malkhut* (kingship). As such, it is his task to revive each and every one of us by shining the light of faith and hope into the darkest reaches of the human soul. David is thus the pipeline—in Hebrew, *ba'tzinor*, which shares the same letters as *Har Tziyon*, Mount Zion, in verse 6—through which spiritual light and sustenance flow to the world. This is the deeper meaning of *asapera el chok*. *Asapera* (from *safir*, the root of sapphire) means “I will shine and illuminate.” *El chok* (similar to a physical *chok*, an immutable law of nature) means “into the *chok*,” into the very nature of each and every soul. Through David, Hashem's light shines into each and every one of us, declaring, “You are My child. Today, you, too, can be reborn to your true mission in life.”

---

<sup>12</sup> This progression is based on the following advanced text in the Zohar: “Come see. When a person is born, he is initially given the soul-level of *nefesh*, corresponding to the *ophanim* of *Asiyah*. If he refines himself, he becomes worthy of receiving *ruach*, corresponding to the *chayot* of *Yetzirah*. If he refines himself further, he becomes worthy of receiving *neshamah*, corresponding to the *seraphim* who surround the divine throne in *Beriah*. If he refines himself further, he becomes worthy of receiving [*nefesh d'Atzilut*], the soul-level associated with the Daughter of the King [*Malkhut d'Atzilut*, corresponding to the final *Heb* of *Havayah*]...If he refines himself further, he becomes worthy of receiving [*ruach d'Atzilut*], the soul-level associated with the Central Column [*Tijeret d'Atzilut*, corresponding to the *Vav* of *Havayah*]. He is then called a child of the blessed Holy One and the *Shekhinah*, as the verse states (Deuteronomy 14:1), ‘*Banim atem*—you are children of *Havayah* [*Tijeret*] *Elokekbem* [*Malkhut*]...’” (*Zohar Mishpatim*, 2:94b). For a complete translation and explanation of the above passage from the Zohar, see *Temple of Prayer*, “Rungs of the Soul.”

<sup>13</sup> *Zohar Terumah*, 2:158b.

Psalm 20  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

## Psalm 20

Psalm 20 contains nine verses, corresponding to the nine months of pregnancy. It also contains seventy words, which are said to correspond to the seventy cries of the mother deer (the *Shekbinah*, the mother of the souls of Israel) in her birth travail. In other words, the *Shekbinah* is seen as giving birth. To whom? To the *Mashiach*, that one individual in that one generation who will usher in a new world. Also, on a more practical level, this psalm is to be said over and over again when a woman is having contractions before giving birth. For one who understands, the two levels are really one.

(1) *LaMenatzeiyach* – Dedicated to the Master Symphony Conductor of Creation who grants victory to the *Shekbinah* and Israel.  
*Mizmor LeDavid* – A cutting psalm by David.

(2) May *Hashem* answer you on the day of your birth travail.<sup>1</sup> May the name of the God of Yaacov that is called upon you elevate you and empower you.<sup>2</sup>

(3) May He send your help from His holy Sanctuary, and support you from Tziyon.

(4) May He remember all your meal offerings [all the times you offered up your soul], and may the ashes of your burnt offering [your constant upward striving] be accepted with favor, *selah*.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> “*Be’yom tzarab*—on the day of [your birth] travail,” as in “*Tzirim achazuni ke’tzirei yoledab*—contractions grip/seize me like the birthpangs of a woman in labor” (Isaiah 21:3). See *Inside Psalm 20*.

<sup>2</sup> “*Yesagenkha shem Elokei Yaacov*—may the name of the God of Yaacov [that is called upon you] elevate you [and empower you].” The root *sgv* (*sin-gimel-beit*) has two complementary meanings. On the one hand *sgv* denotes strength, might, and protection. An example of this is “*Hashem Tzervaot imanu misgav lanu Elohei Yaacov selah*—Hashem is with us; the God of Yaacov is our stronghold forever” (Psalm 46:8, 46:12). On the other hand, *sgv* means elevated, lofty, exalted, and conceptually incomprehensible. An example of this is “*Va’yisagev ehyon mi’oni*—He will raise the needy from affliction” (Psalm 107:41) and “Such knowledge [that You know everything about me] is too wondrous for me; *nisgevah*—exceedingly exalted [at a height my mind cannot reach]; I cannot comprehend it” (Psalm 139:6). Radak thus writes, “Divine assistance is likened to a tower of strength through which a man ascends above his enemies, as in (Proverbs 18:10), ‘*Migdal oz shem Hashem bo tzadik yarutz ve’nisgav*—Hashem’s name is like a tower/fortress of strength through which the *tzadik* runs and ascends [from one spiritual rung to another].”

<sup>3</sup> “*Yizkor kol minchotekha*—may He remember all your meal-offerings [all the times you offered up your soul], *ve’olat’kha yedashneb*—and the ashes of your burnt offering [your constant upward striving] be accepted with favor, *selah*.” The idea that a *minchab* (meal-offering) includes “all the times you offered up your soul” is based on the teaching of our sages on the verse, “*V’e’nefesh ki takrin korban minchab laShem*—and when an individual (literally, a *nefesh*-soul) brings a *minchab* (meal-offering) to Hashem...” (Leviticus 2:1). In the Talmud, they ask, “What is different about a *minchab*-offering, that it is the only offering regarding which the Torah says ‘when a *nefesh*-soul brings...?’ Thus says the Holy One, ‘What kind of individual normally brings a meal-offering? A poor man [who has so little that he cannot afford anything else but a little bit of grain]. But precisely for this reason, I credit him as if he brought and offered his own soul before Me’” (*Menachot* 104b; see Psalm 141:2).



Psalm 20  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

(5) May He grant you all that you need in accordance with your heart [your heart's desires], and bring all your plans to fruition.

(6) We will sing for joy for your salvation; we will raise our banner high in the name of *Elohem*; may *Hashem* fulfill all your wishes.

(7) Now I know that it is *Hashem* alone who delivers His anointed *Mashiach*; may He always answer him from His heavenly Sanctuary with the mighty salvation of His loving right hand.

(8) Some nations rely on the power of iron chariots; others rely on a multitude of horses; we, however, speak in the name of *Hashem Elohem*.

(9) They all bowed down to false gods, false powers, and false beliefs and fell into oblivion; we, however, have always stood up again and risen to greater heights.

(10) *Hashem*, merciful God, continue to save us. O King, answer us on the day we call.

## Inside Psalm 20

### Birthpangs of Messianic Redemption

“*Yaankba Hashem be’yom tzarab*—may Hashem answer you on the day of [your birth] travail” (Psalm 20:2).

In our tradition, *geulah* (redemption) is likened to birth at the end of pregnancy and to dawn at the end of night. As every mother knows, labor can be lightning fast or exhaustingly slow. Some women give birth in the ambulance or the car on the way to the hospital. The baby just slips out. Some women endure long labors and have to work very hard to give that last push. So it is with regard to the redemption. It seems pretty clear that we are in an advanced stage of labor.

---

Rashi: “*Yedashneb selah* indicates satiation, as in ‘*Ve’akhal ve’sava ve’dashen*—he will eat, be satisfied, and filled to satiation’ (Deuteronomy 31:21). Here, in our psalm, *yedashneb* is a request: ‘May your prayers always be accepted favorably like *olot* (burnt offerings) on the altar.’” Metzudot similarly explains, “May your *olot* (burnt offerings) be accepted favorably forever, the sign for which is that the fire of the altar shall consume them completely until they turn into *deshen* (ashes).”

Our addition, “May your constant upward striving be accepted with favor,” is based on Hirsch’s understanding of *olab* as an elevation offering. See Hirsch’s commentary on Leviticus 1:3, “If we compare the names given to all the other offerings—*chatat*, *asham*, *shelamim*, *todab*—we find that they all refer to the inducement for the offering and the object of it. None are taken from any special procedure of that particular offering. And so, we believe that *olab* (literally, elevation) is the name given to an offering which is brought on account of the necessity for, and the aspiration to, strive to rise higher.” Hence, here in our psalm, Rabbi Hirsch translates, “May the remembrance of all your offerings and of your *constant upward striving* toward the Lord remain ever before Him” (See comments on Psalm 51:21 and Psalm 141:2).

Psalm 20  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

The question is, how long will the labor go on until the child is born? How much more do we have to endure? How much more *can* we endure? We will not know the exact answers to these questions until the long-awaited moment when the *Mashiach*-baby will finally emerge from the narrow straits of the birth canal of history.

The above notwithstanding, I wish to share the following sources with you, in the hopes that they will give all of us hope. As Hashem Himself says, “For as surely as Zion has labored, she will soon bring forth her children. ‘Shall I bring on labor [the tribulations of exile] and not cause [the baby, *Mashiach*] to be delivered?’ says Hashem. ‘Shall I bring to delivery [redemption] and then close the womb [i.e., prevent the birth]?’” (Isaiah 66:8-9).

In the Zohar, we read, “At that time [during the preparatory period of the pre-Messianic era], *Mashiach* [and his generation] will experience contractions and birthpangs like a woman in labor. Concerning that time, it is written (Psalm 20:2), ‘*Yaankha Hashem be’yom tzarab*—may Hashem answer you on the day of [your birth] travail.’”<sup>4</sup>

All ancient and modern kabbalistic sources point out that Psalm 20 consists of a total of seventy words. In addition, the body of the psalm contains nine verses (following the initial superscription that introduces the psalm). Its nine verses clearly parallel the nine months of pregnancy. Its seventy words correspond to the seventy cries of the great mother-deer in the midst of giving birth. This mother-deer is none other than the *Shekbinah*, the mother of the souls of Israel. And the baby she bears is none other than the *Mashiach*, that single individual and generation who will participate in ushering in the final redemption.<sup>5</sup>

The concept of the *Shekbinah* giving birth to *Mashiach* is alluded to here in the psalm in the word *tzarab*, “birth travail” (verse 2). This is based on the root meaning of the word *tzarab*, usually translated trouble, affliction, distress, crisis, etc. *Tzarab* literally means “constriction” or “contraction.” This is seen in the Hebrew *tzir leidab* (birth contraction).

The concept of “delivering” the *Mashiach* is related to this. The word for delivery here is *boshia*. When King David says, “*Atah yadaati ki boshia Hashem meshicho*—now I know that it is Hashem alone who delivers His anointed *Mashiach*” (verse 7), he is expressing his confidence in God’s promise that He will save him (King David and his descendant, *Mashiach ben David*). In a very real sense, God will *save* His

---

<sup>4</sup> *Zohar Chadash, Parashat Balak*, p. 56c.

<sup>5</sup> See *Zohar* 2:119b, 3:249b; Ari, *Shaar HaKavanot, Inyan Mizmor Yaankha*; Gra, *Siddur Isbey Yisrael ad. loc.*; Even *Shelemab* 11:5, note *dalet*; Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Torah Obr, Shemot*; Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, *Likutey Halakhot, Orach Chayim, Tefillin* 5:32-33.

Psalm 20  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

anointed *Mashiach* from all the powers that wish to prevent him from fulfilling his mission. God will *save* His anointed *Mashiach* even when he is exiled and caught in the whirlpool of historical events, when it seems that the messianic drama has aborted. God will *save* history, ensure that it is brought to its positive climax, that the *Mashiach* who is presently in exile be redeemed and delivered from all danger, that nothing be allowed to prevent His plan from coming to fruition.

When seen in this context, there is a remarkable association between *delivery* from danger and birth *delivery*. This association is embodied in the double usage of the word *delivery* in English. Although it is not present on the linguistic level in the Hebrew *hoshia*, it is nevertheless justified conceptually. Messiah, the English term for *Mashiach*, is related phonetically to *hoshia* (save, deliver). This is actually a strange twist of fate, however, since *Mashiach* comes from *mashuach* (anointed), and includes the idea of salvation and deliverance only by extension.

As surely as the *Shekbinah* and Israel labor to give birth to that single individual who will redeem and deliver that destined generation which will participate in ushering in the final redemption, Hashem Himself is the doctor who works to *deliver* that baby. He will *deliver* the *Mashiach* from all danger, and He will also *deliver* him (the consciousness of *Mashiach*) like a baby. The two are inextricably bound together.

### **Twin Metaphors—Birth and Dawn**

In *Yabel Ohr*, his commentary to the Zohar, the Gra writes that the entire exile is likened to pregnancy, while the redemption is likened to birth. The seventy words of Psalm 20 correspond to the seventy final and most difficult years that precede redemption (birth) during which the pain of exile becomes almost unbearable. As the moment of birth approaches, the birthpangs/contractions of *Mashiach* also become unbearable.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, in his commentary to the *Sifra d'Tzenuta*, the Gra writes:<sup>7</sup>

And so will it come to pass at the dawn of the Messianic Era. *Ibur* (pregnancy)—the long, drawn-out exile which parallels the nine months of pregnancy—will be followed by *leidab* (birth). This process is thus called *chenley Mashiach* (birthpangs of the *Mashiach*), for it is accompanied by the seventy cries [of the mother-deer, the *Shekbinah*], as we noted in our commentary to *Zohar Mishpatim* and *Pinchas*, and as the prophet has already foretold, “For as surely as Zion has labored, she will soon bring forth her children” (Isaiah 66:8). Following this difficult period, “I [Hashem] will pour

---

<sup>6</sup> *Yabel Ohr*, p. 34a, on *Heikhalot Pekudey*, *Zohar Pekudey*, 2:255b, commenting on *Zohar Mishpatim*, 2:119b.

<sup>7</sup> *Sifra d'Tzenuta*, commentary to Chapter One, end, p. 17d old editions.

Psalm 20  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

forth My spirit on all flesh” (Joel 3:1) and “The earth shall be filled with the consciousness of Hashem as the waters fill the sea” (Isaiah 11:9). At that time, the prophecy will be fulfilled, “On that day, the oneness of Hashem and the oneness of His name will be revealed to all mankind” (Zekhariah 14:9).

We find the source for the idea that *geulah* (redemption) is likened to birth at the end of pregnancy and to dawn at the end of night in the Zohar:<sup>8</sup>

The *Shekbinah* [like a mother-deer in birth] gives forth seventy cries for her children whenever the darkness of exile closes in on them. However, this is but a preparation for the *shachrut ha’shachar* of the final seventy years of exile [the period immediately preceding the light of dawn-redemption when it will be darker than at any other time during the entire exile]. At that time, the prophecy regarding Israel will be fulfilled, ‘*Kemo harab takriv la’ledet tachil tiz’ak ba’chavaleha, ken hayinu mipanekeha Hashem*—as the contractions of a woman in labor intensify the closer she gets to giving birth, and she is gripped with fear and cries out from the pain of her labor, so have we been before You, Hashem” (Isaiah 26:17).

Commenting on the expression *shachrut ha’shachar*, the Gra writes:<sup>9</sup>

Nighttime is likened to exile, while dawn is likened to redemption. Thus, before the final redemption the exile is going to weigh heavier than at any other time. This is exactly what happened when Moshe came to his people in Egypt to announce the redemption, in reaction to which Pharaoh ordered, “Make the workload heavier...” (Exodus 5:9). *Shachrut ha’shachar* thus refers to the period immediately preceding the light of dawn-redemption when it will be darker than at any other time during the entire exile. It is for this reason that it is called *shachar* [i.e., even though the word *shachar* is usually translated morning, nevertheless, it really means dark, as in *shachor* (the color black)].

Developing on the metaphor of birth and delivery, we can add the following: Similar to a woman in childbirth, the *Shekbinah* is quite faint after so many hours/years of contractions. She feels alone and unable to cope with these birthpangs. Her one hope is that, as they become stronger, the doctors and midwives, the righteous *tzadikim* and wise *talmidei chakhamim*, assure her that the baby’s head—intellectual recognition of Hashem’s presence in the world—is beginning to emerge. To this effect, the doctors may also have to induce birth

---

<sup>8</sup> *Zohar Mishpatim*, 2:119b.

<sup>9</sup> *Yabel Ohr*, p. 12a, on *Zohar Mishpatim*, 2:119b.

Psalm 20  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

by administering a *zizun* (artificial acceleration of the birth process).

Why does the *Shekbinah* feel alone? Can't she perceive her Husband standing at her side? The answer again is that just as a Jewish man may not touch his wife once the birth process has begun, Hashem cannot openly reveal His presence to Israel as the redemption process gains momentum. Concealment is of paramount importance at this time so that the delicate balance of free will can be maintained. However, as the process reaches higher and higher crescendos, the façade of concealment is harder and harder to maintain. There are moments when Hashem's hand in human affairs seems completely obvious. Still, for the majority of mankind, all the changes that are taking place in the mother's body are incomprehensible. Only the great doctors and midwives of mankind are able to perceive the wondrous miracle that is taking place as the consciousness of *Mashiach* is being born.

The question naturally arises: "Since this birth process will take so long and entail so much suffering, what guarantee do we have that Israel—and the *Shekbinah* that accompanies Israel in exile—will make it in one piece?" In answer to this, the great sages placed *Una leTziyon* (Isaiah 59:20) immediately after Psalm 20 in *Shachrit*. Here we are reminded of Hashem's covenant-promise—through the prophet Isaiah—that the messianic redemption will come in the merit of the *tzadikim* (righteous individuals) and *talmidei chakhamim* (sages) who guarded and transmitted the Torah and its prophetic message throughout the long bitter exile.

Again this is alluded to in the prophetic verses that we say immediately following Psalm 20 in *Shachrit*, beginning "*Una leTziyon goel*—a redeemer will come to Zion" (Isaiah 59:20). [The word *Tziyon*—pronounced *tzee-yon*—means, literally, distinguished, and therefore represents in this verse the righteous and wise sages who live among the Jewish people and inspire them to better their ways.] These will be accompanied by those Jews who will awaken to the deeper meaning of their life and begin to return to their heritage as the historical process reaches its culmination. This is the meaning of the continuation of the above verse, "*U'leshaneh feshah b'Yaacov*—and to those in Yaacov who return from rebellion" (*ibid.*). Rabbi Nachman of Breslov illuminates this profound subject:<sup>10</sup>

One has to suffer the pangs of birth quite literally...especially at the outset, and cry, scream, heave, and sigh, again and again, until one is able to give birth to the holiness of his own soul and redeem her from her exile.<sup>11</sup> This is how we will attain the final complete collective redemption as well, and merit the fulfillment of the prophecies, "Sing, O barren one [*Shekbinah*, Zion,

---

<sup>10</sup> *Likutey Halakhot, Tefillin* 5:32-33.

<sup>11</sup> See *Likutey Moharan* II, 4:2.

Psalm 20  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

Israel], you who did not bear” (Isaiah 54:1) and “For as surely as Zion has labored, she will soon bring forth her children. ‘Shall I bring on labor [exile] and not cause [the baby, *Mashiach*] to be delivered?’ says Hashem. ‘Shall I bring to delivery [redemption] and then close the womb [i.e., prevent the birth]?’” (Isaiah 66:8-9).

This is why “*Uva leTziyon goel*—a redeemer will come to Zion” follows immediately after “*Yaankha Hashem beyom tzarah*—may Hashem answer you on the day of your birth travail” (Psalm 20:1) in the morning prayers. It is explained in the writings of the Ari that the reason for reciting Psalm 20 is to draw down and give birth to the most enlightened consciousness of *Mashiach*.<sup>12</sup> It is for this reason that this psalm contains seventy words, corresponding to the seventy cries a woman [the *Shekbinah*] in labor who moans and wails before giving birth. For the final redemption will be like a birth that follows after many contractions, namely, the *chevley Mashiach* (literally, birth contractions of Messiah)...

Similarly, on the individual level, the essence of being born anew is the birth of new levels of consciousness. For waking up from sleep to start a new day and serve God anew is the exact counterpart [on a daily basis] of being born after having been in a state of gestation in the womb. The seventy cries thus also correspond to the seventy facets of the Torah that constitute the totality of the enlightened consciousness to which a person must give birth and draw down in order to awaken from his own deep sleep and spiritual descent. In this way, he restores to himself all seventy facets of the Torah that he has lost, and is able to begin anew. This is the essence of the redemption on the individual level as well as on the collective level.

Again, this is why “*Uva leTziyon goel uleshaveh fesha b’Yaacov*—a redeemer will come to Zion and to those in Yaacov who return from rebellion” follows this psalm which speaks of the pangs of labor and birth. Those who return from rebellion are the *baaley teshuvah* (penitents), who renew and remake the days they spent in darkness. This renewal can only take place after laboring to give birth.

---

<sup>12</sup> Ari, *Sbaar HaKavanot, Inyan Mizmor Yaankha*, p. 49c, Attieh-Jerusalem edition.

## Psalm 21

Based on the idea that King David is the archetype of the once and future king, the sages of the Midrash identify the king in this psalm as King David's illustrious descendant, *Mashiach ben David*. They thus connect our verse 2, "*Hashem, be'ozkha yismach melekh*—Hashem, the king rejoices in Your invincibility" with Yeshaya's prophecy, "A shoot will spring forth from the stock of Yishai, and a branch will sprout from his roots. Hashem's spirit will rest upon him—a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and might, a spirit of divine knowledge and the awe of Hashem... It shall therefore come to pass on that day that the root of Yishai shall be raised high and stand as a banner around whom many peoples will gather. Nations shall seek him out [in order to inquire of him and heed his counsel], and the respite [peace] he brings shall be with great honor" (Isaiah 11:1-3, 10).

(1) *LaMenatzeyach* – Dedicated to the Master Symphony Conductor of Creation who grants victory. *Mizmor LeDavid* – A cutting psalm by David.

(2) *Hashem*, the king [David himself, and his descendant, *Mashiach ben David*] rejoices in Your invincibility [not his own]; how greatly he exults in Your deliverance because he credits all his victories to You.<sup>1</sup>

(3) You have consistently granted him the desire of his heart; You have never denied him the heartfelt request of his lips, *selah*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "*Be'ozkha yismach melekh*—the king rejoices in Your invincibility." Rashi: "Although our sages interpreted this entire psalm as referring to *Melekh HaMashiach* (the Messiah King), it can also refer directly to King David himself." We thus read in the Midrash, "The king rejoices in Your invincibility.' This is the meaning of the verse, 'On that day, the shoot of Yishai will stand as a banner to the peoples; nations will seek him [seek his advice and accept his authority], and his respite [the relief/alleviation he brings from all war] will be glorious [to the extent that all nations will honor and serve him]' (Isaiah 11:10). What is the meaning of '*va'haitab menuchato kavod*—his respite will be glorious? The Holy One Himself will confer His own supernal *kavod* (glory, honor) upon King *Mashiach*. This then is the meaning of, 'the king rejoices in Your invincibility.'"<sup>1</sup> Metzudot's comment seems to build on this Midrash, "*Be'ozkha' Melekh HaMashiach* will rejoice greatly in the strength that You, Hashem, confer upon him."

Daat Sofrim: "'*Uvi'yeshvat'kha mah yagel meod' Yeshuah* (deliverance, salvation) is much greater than *ezra* (assistance) or *saad* (support), as it bears the unmistakable signature of direct heavenly intervention. '*Mah yagel meod' Gil* describes an emotional state of soul exaltation and joyous fulfillment whose impression remains in the heart long after the happy circumstances that gave birth to it."

<sup>2</sup> "*Taavat libo natatab lo...*" This verse can be translated in the past tense or future tense depending on whether we apply it to King David himself or to *Mashiach ben David*. In other words, although '*natatab lo*—You have granted him' and '*bal manaata*—You have not denied him' seem clearly to be past tense, the Hebrew language allows for a certain malleability in this regard (see our comment above on Psalm 3:5). Meiri, Metzudot, and Radak thus place it in the future.

Metzudot writes, "David is expressing his hope that Hashem grant him [*Mashiach ben David*] the desire of his heart even before he is able to fully articulate it. [The strange thing is that] he expresses his request for the future in the past tense, '*taavat libo natatab lo*—You have consistently granted him the desire of his heart.' As in many instances in which something is written in a state of *neviah* (prophetic inspiration or prophetic vision), the prophet experiences the future as if it has already come to pass. '*V'a'aresbet sefatav bal manaata selah*.' David is all the more certain that Hashem will not refrain from fulfilling the spoken requests that he [*Mashiach ben David*] will be able to

Psalm 21  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

(4) Indeed, You preceded him with blessings of goodness, the likes of which he never would have anticipated; You placed a golden crown upon his head.<sup>3</sup>

(5) Life he requested from You. You granted him long days, a destiny that would endure forever.<sup>4</sup>

(6) His honor has grown great through Your constant deliverance in the thick of battle; You endowed him with majesty and splendor.

(7) Indeed, You appoint blessings for him far into the distant future; You make him joyously happy with the revelation of Your countenance.<sup>5</sup>

---

articulate.” Radak says essentially the same thing: “*Natab lo* means ‘*titen lo*—will grant him.’ The same is true of ‘*bal manaata*.’ Here, it means ‘You will not deny him.’ As we explained above in our comment to Psalm 3:5, it is common in prophecy to describe the future as having already come to pass.”

The above notwithstanding, for those commentators who see David as the king of this verse, there is no need to talk about tense changes. Rather, similar to Psalm 19:15, the main distinction is between *taavat libo* (the desire of David’s heart) and *areshet sefatar* (the utterance of his lips). Rabbi Hirsch thus writes, “*Taavat libo* denotes all the vague yearnings and desires which David bore in his heart. *Areshet sefatar* is a specific personal wish that David has dared utter with his lips. David tells us here that Hashem has always granted him his heart’s desire, and He has also never denied him the request of his lips, if David dared put it into words.”

<sup>3</sup> Rashi: “‘You preceded him with blessings of goodness.’ David says: Before I requested it of You, You brought me good news of Your blessing through Natan HaNavi (II Samuel 7:8-13), ‘Now, say this to My servant David: Thus says Hashem *Tzevaot*: I have taken you from the sheepfold, from following the flocks, to become ruler over My people, over Israel...I will also establish an eternal dynasty for you, so that when your days are completed...I shall raise up your offspring after you...He will build a House for Me, and I shall establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”

<sup>4</sup> Rashi: “‘*Chayim shaal mimkha*—life, he [the king] requested from You.’ In the sense that David is referring to himself as king, he says: When I was chased as a fugitive by Shaul and forced to leave Eretz Yisrael, I prayed to You, ‘Let me return to walk before Hashem in the lands of the living’ (Psalm 116:9). ‘*Natab lo*—You granted him [the king].’ You brought me back to Eretz Yisrael. ‘*Orekh yamim olam va’ed*,’ length of days [for my kingdom] forever, as Hashem promised Shlomo (I Kings 9:5), ‘I shall establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised your father David.’”

According to Metzudot, David refers here to *Mashiach ben David*: “‘*Chayim shaal mimkha*—life, he requested from You.’ Our sages have taught, ‘When *Mashiach ben David* will be shown a vision of *Mashiach ben Yoseph* being killed, he will ask for life for himself, and Hashem will grant him life’” ( *Succah* 52a). See *Inside Psalm 21*.

<sup>5</sup> Although all of Rabbi Hirsch’s comments on this psalm center on the character of David himself, it is here that he sees an allusion to David’s illustrious descendant: “‘*Chayim shaal mimkha*—life, he requested from You.’ This wish voiced by David did not exceed the goal set for any other individual, pure human life, and God granted his request. ‘*Orekh yamim olam va’ed*—a future destiny forever and ever.’ But, in addition to this, the Lord gave David a calling which reached far beyond his individual life into the distant future to the goal toward which all human development is directed. The fact that this goal may still be veiled (*olam*) makes it no less certain (*va’ed*).”

This is exactly what Rabbi Hirsch writes on the phrase that we whisper after declaring



(8) For the king trusts in *Hashem*; he trusts in the love of the Most High, for with *Hashem*'s help he will never falter.

(9) *Hashem*, Your hand will seize all Your enemies; Your right hand will overtake those who hate You [the wicked who choose a life of evil].

(10) It is they [the wicked] whom You use as a fiery oven to punish the righteous in times of wrath, *Hashem*. But after the righteous have been cleansed through suffering, You will swallow them [You will cause the wicked to perish] in Your anger; the fire of their own evil will devour them.<sup>6</sup>

(11) You will cause their fruit/offspring to perish from the earth plane, and their seed to disappear from among the children of men.

(12) For they intended evil against You; they devised a plan to destroy Israel—but they will not succeed in bringing it to fruition.

(13) O that You would cause them to join together with Your people; bring them to their senses by aiming Your bow strings at their faces [let them feel the threat to their existence that will bring them to their senses].<sup>7</sup>

Hashem's oneness in the *Shma*, "*Barukh shem kevod malkbuto le'olam va'ed*." His translation of this phrase in the *Hirsch Siddur* is, "Blessed [revealed] be the name of the glory of His kingdom *le'olam va'ed*—to all the future which, though veiled, is certain." In addition to the fact that *olam* means "world," *elem* or *he'elem* also means "hidden/veiled." *Va'ed* means "forevermore," but it also contains the word *ed* (witness, testimony, and by extension, certainty). According to Rabbi Hirsch, the difficulty of blessing or revealing Hashem's name in a world (*olam*) which veils (*elem*) that very name is solved by the certainty (*va'ed*) of His oneness.

<sup>6</sup> Hirsch: "'*Ke'tanur esh*.' In Genesis 15:17, in Avraham's foreboding vision of his children's future, the Egyptian exile is described as *tanur ashan* (a smoking furnace). So, too, we read in Isaiah 31:9 that the Lord has prepared a fire and a furnace in Jerusalem in which the power of Assyria shall burn. In Malakhi 3:19, the prophet describes the future day of judgment in terms of fire, 'For behold, a day is coming, *bo'er ke'tanur*—it burns as a furnace, and all malevolent criminals and all who perpetrate evil shall be stubble.' In this psalm, we are told that God uses the wicked as *tanur esh* (a fiery oven), as instruments for inflicting scathing, yet cleansing, pain upon the righteous at the time of His wrath. Once the time of suffering has ended, however, the Lord as Hashem (YKV/K) will bring man a new and happier future. The wicked, with their excesses, shall have helped in preparing the righteous for that day by purifying and cleansing them through suffering. After God has dealt with the righteous, He will turn His wrath at last upon the wicked themselves, and the fire for which they have served as a furnace will be turned against them."

<sup>7</sup> Daat Sofrim: "'*Ki teshitemo shekhem*.' This is an expression of hope that all who presently stand in opposition to David and his mission will eventually join together [with Israel to serve Hashem] *shekhem echad* (in unity, with singular purpose), at which point the danger they presently pose will automatically be removed [as per 'I will then transform the languages of the nations to a pure/evolved language, so that they may all call out in the name of Hashem and serve Him together *shekhem echad*—in unity, with singular purpose' (Zephaniah 3:9, Radak)]. '*Be'meitarekha tekhnenu al pnei'hem*.' The literal translation is that Hashem will aim His *meitarim*-strings at their faces. According to Rashi and Ibn Ezra, these are the *meitarim* of a bow that shoots arrows. According to Targum Yonatan, these are the *meitarim* of the harps of the *Mishkan-Mikdash*. Although seemingly contradictory, the idea in both instances is to bring these people to their senses. Aiming an arrow at someone's face sends a clear message to him to cease and desist before it is too late. Aiming the

Psalm 21  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

(14) High above are You, *Hashem*, in Your invincibility; we will therefore proclaim Your omnipotence in song and chant.<sup>8</sup>

## Inside Psalm 21

### Mashiach ben Yoseph

“Life, he requested from You. You granted him long days, [a destiny that would endure] forever” (Psalm 21:5).

The Talmud (*Succah* 52a) juxtaposes two verses, one from Psalm 2 and one from our psalm, Psalm 21: “Ask of Me and I will make nations your inheritance; your dominion will extend to the ends of the earth” (Psalm 2:8) and “Life, he requested from You. You granted him long days, [a destiny that would endure] forever” (Psalm 21:5). Before we see what the Talmud says about these two verses we must enter into the next stage of our journey into Psalms. Although we spoke about the two Messiahs (*Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*) in *Inside Psalm 6*, we must return now to their very roots in Adam HaRishon. Why are there two Messiahs?

The necessity for this began in the Garden of Eden. When Adam was placed in the garden, he was to have earned his own perfection and attained the Messiah-ship. If he had succeeded, he could have become *Mashiach ben David*. As a result of his sin, Adam fell from his level and ipso facto the effort required to earn perfection doubled—creating the necessity of two Messiahs. The first *Mashiach*, *Mashiach ben Yoseph*, must bring the world back to the state in which it existed before the first sin. Only then can *Mashiach ben David* elevate the world from that state to its destined level of perfection. Ramchal (Rabbi Moshe

---

strings of the harps of the *Mishkan* at him sends the same message but with the extra added possibility of awakening the good in him: Wake up and fix your ways before it is too late!” (Daat Sofrim, Psalm 21:13).

<sup>8</sup> Daat Sofrim reads this somewhat differently: “David’s call, ‘*Rumab!* Rise, Hashem!’ is similar to ‘*Kumab*, Hashem!’ (Psalms 3:8, 7:7, 9:20, 10:12, 17:13; see Psalm 10:12). The intention in both is that Hashem reduce the extent of His concealment by lifting the curtain that currently obscures the light of His sovereignty. *Rumab* and *kumab* are requests for nothing less than revealed divine intervention. David is not telling Hashem how to run His world. His prayer is rather an attempt, a means through which he hopes to connect with the highest source of divine providence from below [from within the constricted consciousness of this world]. It resembles our heartfelt prayer on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, ‘Reign supreme over the entire world in the fullness of Your glory. Reveal Your exaltedness over the entire earth with Your honor. Reveal Yourself in the majestic greatness of Your power over all the inhabitants of Your world. [Reveal Yourself] so that every creature will know that You are its Creator, every life form will comprehend that You are its Former, and every sentient being with the soul breath of life in its nostrils will proclaim: Hashem, God of Israel, You alone are King, and Your sovereign rule is manifest within every detail of creation.’”

Psalm 21  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

Chayim Luzzatto, 1707-1747) explains:<sup>9</sup>

If Adam had not sinned...his soul would have refined his body [and by extension, all reality] step by step, until he reached the level required to attain everlasting bliss. When Adam sinned, however, a drastic change ensued. Until then, a certain minimum degree of deficiency [i.e., potential for evil] had been built into creation, just enough to assure that man would be in a perfect balance, allowing him to attain perfection through his own efforts. When he sinned, he caused deficiency to increase [bringing it from potential to full-blown existence], both in himself and in all creation. As a result, the *tikun* (rectification) that he was to accomplish became much more difficult...The effort required to attain perfection was now *doubled*. Man must first bring both himself and the world back to the state in which they existed before the first sin. Only then can he raise himself from that state to his destined level of perfection.

In very simplified terms, Adam had been placed in a *translucent* world in which godliness was visible similar to the way the sun is visible through a pair of tinted sunglasses. His task was to bring the world and himself to the level of complete *transparency*. Instead, he brought everything down to a level of total *opacity* in which the light of godliness is almost completely undetectable. As Ramchal put it, Adam thereby *doubled* the effort required to bring the world to total transparent perfection.

The relationship between what the Zohar calls the *trein Mesheechen* (two *Mashiachs*) is thus similar to the distinction we noted in our note to Psalm 1 between “*Torat Hashem*,” the *giluy* (revelation from above to below) of *Etz Chayim* (the Tree of Life), paralleling *Mashiach ben David*, vs. “his Torah,” the *birur* (refinement process from below to above) of *Etz Daat Tov vaRa* (the Tree of Knowing/Joining Good and Evil), paralleling *Mashiach ben Yoseph*. *Mashiach ben David* represents the revelation of God’s oneness from above; *Mashiach ben Yoseph* represents that same revelation, but through man’s efforts.<sup>10</sup>

Let us now examine the text of the Talmud that speaks about the two *Mashiachs*. In commenting upon the prophetic verse, “And the land shall mourn, every family by itself...” (Zekhariah 12:12), the Talmud asks: What is the cause of the mourning? The Talmud answers, it is the slaying of *Mashiach ben Yoseph*, as it is written, “And they [Israel] will look upon Me because they [the nations] have thrust him [the *Mashiach*] through, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for his only son” (Zekhariah 12:10). As we shall see, the slaying of a

---

<sup>9</sup> *Derekh Hashem* 1:3:7-8; see also *Daat Tevunot, siman* 126.

<sup>10</sup> See *Nine Gates to the Psalms*, Gate One; see also Psalm 1:2; *Inside Psalm 81*.

Psalm 21  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

*Mashiach* alludes not only to the tragic death of a man but to mortally endangering the *mission* he embodies. Such a death would be a tragedy of untold proportions. The Talmud continues with a spiritual conversation about this between Hashem and *Mashiach ben David*:<sup>11</sup>

The Holy One says to *Mashiach ben David*, “Ask anything of Me, and I will grant it to you,” as it is written, “Ask of Me and I will make nations your inheritance; your dominion will extend to the ends of the earth” (Psalm 2:8). However, when *Mashiach ben David* is shown a vision of *Mashiach ben Yoseph* being slain, he pleads, “Master of the universe, I ask only for life!” The Holy One says to him, “Life? Even before you stated this request, your ancestor David already prophesied about you [regarding this very matter], as it is written (Psalm 21:5), ‘Life, he requested from You. You granted him long days, [a destiny that would endure] forever.’”

There are two crucial issues here: (1) Regarding the slaying of *Mashiach ben Yoseph*, Rashi comments, “The prophet Zekhariah foresaw that in the future the Jews would mourn the death of *Mashiach ben Yoseph* who would be slain in the battle of *Gog u'Magog*.” (2) Regarding whom and on whose behalf did David or *Mashiach ben David* pray?

As we are about to see, the two questions are interrelated. For instance, according to Maharsha (Rabbi Shmuel Eidels, 1555-1631), “When shown a vision of *Mashiach ben Yoseph* being slain, *Mashiach ben David* asks for life, meaning, he prays that he himself will not have to suffer the same fate.” He is saying, in other words, “If it has already been decreed that *Mashiach ben Yoseph* must die, please at least save me, *Mashiach ben David*, from having to die as well.” Like Rashi, Maharsha takes it for granted that *Mashiach ben Yoseph* will be slain, in which case, *Mashiach ben David*’s prayer is for himself. Moreover, between the Talmud, which was published in 505 C.E., and Rashi (1040-1105), we have both Rabbi Saadiah Gaon (892-942) and Rabbi Hai Gaon (939-1038) citing this same oral tradition that *Mashiach ben Yoseph* may have to die in battle. Rabbi Saadiah Gaon wrote:<sup>12</sup>

A descendent of Yoseph will rise up in the mountains of the Galilee. Remnants of the nation will gather around him, and he will turn his attention to [rebuilding] the Holy Temple after the children of Edom/Esav have taken it over. He will actually take hold of it [the Temple Mount] for a short time, but a man by the name of Armilus [otherwise known as Gog, the spiritual leader of Magog, Ezekiel 38-39] will battle

---

<sup>11</sup> *Succah* 52a.

<sup>12</sup> *Eminot VeDeyot* 8:5.

Psalm 21  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

against him. Armilus will fight them [*Mashiach ben Yoseph* and his men]. Eventually Armilus will conquer the city, killing, capturing, and destroying. The man from the seed of Yoseph will be among those killed. The nation will then suffer tremendous anguish.

The name *Gog* is related to the word *gaag*, Hebrew for “roof.” What is a roof? And why is the *Beit HaMikdash* (Holy Temple) called *succat David*, the *succah* of David? First, what is a *succah*? The defining element of a *succah* is the roofing, the *skhabb*. *Skhabb* may consist of palm branches, bamboo, or any other appropriate vegetation that grows in the ground but is no longer attached to the ground. Most important for our discussion here, there must be enough *skhabb* to ensure that there is more shade than sun during the day, but that it is not so dense or thick that you cannot see the stars at night. As distinct from the roof of a house, the *skhabb*, the roof of the *succah*, must be semipermeable. It must allow not only sun and rain to enter the *succah*; it must allow heaven to shine into earth. The *Beit HaMikdash* embodies this same meeting of heaven and earth, the same *interpenetration* of the heavenly into the earthly.

Gog wants to put a *gaag* (a hermetically sealed roof) on mankind, to seal out the light of heaven, to deny and belittle the existence of God. In order to do this, Gog devises the perfect plan. First, atheism, the idea that God is a fiction. Second, Gog creates a religion that distorts the true God idea. His intention is to prevent people from serving and emulating the TRUE INFINITE ONE. Again, he does this by either mocking or distorting beyond recognition the idea of a supreme Divine Being.

Returning to the oral tradition that *Mashiach ben David* may be killed by Armilus/Gog, Rav Hai Gaon adds quite a few details to this picture, and he also changes a few. What is most significant is that he brings numerous verses from the prophets to substantiate the version of the messianic drama that he has received:<sup>13</sup>

Upon learning that *Mashiach ben Yoseph* is living in Yerushalayim with his people, Armilus the wicked will seek to mislead them with magic and enticements. He will defeat *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and his men, killing many and dividing the spoils, as it is written, “I will gather all the nations against Yerushalayim to war...” (Zekhariah 14:2). Even *Mashiach ben Yoseph* will be slain, and the Jewish people will suffer greatly, as it is written, “And they will look upon Me because they have thrust him [the *Mashiach*] through, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for his only son... That day,

---

<sup>13</sup> Rav Hai Gaon, *Teshuvah “Al Inyan HaYeshuah,”* printed in Eisenstein, *Otzar HaMidrashim*, volume 2, p. 387.

Psalm 21  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

mourning shall be great in Yerushalayim” (Zekhariah 12:10-11).

To counter this and literally turn it on its head, the Zohar states clearly that Moshe willingly endured afflictions so that *Mashiach ben Yoseph* will not have to die.<sup>14</sup> Ramchal reiterates, “By the power of the afflictions that Moshe endures, we are assured that this *chilul* (profanation) will not take place.”<sup>15</sup> Even stronger, the Tikuney Zohar states emphatically that *Mashiach ben Yoseph* will absolutely not die.<sup>16</sup>

We will see shortly that this is seconded by the Gra, but in the meantime, to make things more mysterious, we find the following significant teaching in *Sbaar HaKavanot* that Rabbi Chayim Vital was told by his master the Ari (1535-1572) to *pray* that *Mashiach ben Yoseph* not die. The Ari also makes it clear that David and his descendant *Mashiach ben David* prayed not for themselves but for *Mashiach ben Yoseph*. Rabbi Chayim Vital thus quotes the Ari, saying:<sup>17</sup>

Pray to Hashem regarding *Mashiach ben Yoseph*, that he live, and not die by the hand of Armilus the wicked. This is what our sages mean [in *Succah* 52a] in their explanation of the verse, “Life, he requested from You. You granted him long days, [a destiny that would endure] forever” (Psalm 21:5) [namely, that *Mashiach ben Yoseph*’s life be spared].

In another place, he adds the following:<sup>18</sup>

He cautioned us again to intend in every *Amidah*, on the words, “*V’e’kisey David avdekha*—the *throne* of David Your servant,” that *Mashiach ben Yoseph* should live and not die by the hand of Armilus the wicked. For he [*Mashiach ben Yoseph*] is called *kisey David avdekha*—the *throne* of David Your servant [because he prepares the way for *Mashiach ben David*]. This is the deeper meaning of [King David’s prayer], “Life, he requested from You. You granted him long days, [a destiny that would endure] forever” (Psalm 21:5; *Succah* 52a) [again, that *Mashiach ben Yoseph*’s life be spared].

Rabbi Chayim Vital and the other disciples understood only too late what the Ari had meant. In his subtle way, the Ari was referring to himself and to his mission as the *Mashiach ben Yoseph* of his generation, to prepare and pave the way for *Mashiach ben David*. We cannot imagine the depth of their anguish when they finally realized what the Ari had meant. For shortly afterward, the Ari died

---

<sup>14</sup> *Raya Mehemna, Ki Tetze*, 3:276b.

<sup>15</sup> *Kinat Hashem Tzavaot*, p. 105.

<sup>16</sup> *Tikuney Zohar, tikun #7*, printed at end of *Tikunim*, p. 168a in Gra edition.

<sup>17</sup> *Sbaar HaKavanot, Sbaar HaAmidah, Drush Vav, Tishkon*.

<sup>18</sup> *Pri Etz Chayim, Sbaar HaAmidah*, Chapter 19, *Tishkon*.

Psalm 21  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

in a plague.

After a masterful discourse on the concept of the *Trein Mesheebchen*, *Ohr HaChayim* (Rabbi Chayim ben Attar, 1696-1743) reiterates the Ari's admonition: "The *Gedolei Yisrael* (Great Masters of Israel, namely Rabbi Chayim Vital in the name of the Ari) have instructed us to plead mercy for *Mashiach ben Ephraim*—that he not be killed in battle."<sup>19</sup>

Based on the Ari, the Gra (1720-1798) also understood the above passage in *Succah* 52a in the same way. In *Kol HaTor*, Rabbi Hillel Rivlin, second cousin and close disciple of the Gra, wrote:<sup>20</sup>

"Life, he requested from You. You granted him long days, [a destiny that would endure] forever" (Psalm 21:5). This is one of the prayers contained in the Book of Psalms in which King David prays for the life of *Mashiach ben Yoseph*.

Again, according to the Ari and the Gra, David did not pray that *Mashiach ben David* should not be slain and his mission endangered. Rather, he prayed that *Mashiach ben Yoseph* not die. Indeed, the Gra is most emphatic: *Mashiach ben Yoseph* will not die. As we saw above in *Inside Psalm 6*, Rabbi Hillel Rivlin writes in the name of his master:<sup>21</sup>

"Od *Yoseph Chai*—Yoseph lives on" (Genesis 45:26). Our master based his entire doctrine on the underlying principle of "Yoseph lives on," i.e., *Mashiach ben Yoseph* is not only alive, but will continue to live, and the decree that he is to be slain by Armilus/Gog the wicked [the spiritual

---

<sup>19</sup> *Ohr HaChayim*, Numbers 24:17. Regarding the title *Mashiach ben Ephraim*, Ephraim was the most important tribe descended from Yoseph, as seen in Yaacov Avinu's insistence on blessing Ephraim before Menashe: "Yisrael reached out with his right hand and placed it on Ephraim's head, even though he was the youngest..." (Genesis 48:14).

Both Yirmiyahu and Yechezkel refer to the nation of Israel as Ephraim: "Ephraim, a precious son he is to Me, a precocious child; whenever I speak of him, remembering, I remember him all the more. As a result, My innards churn/yearn for him, to have compassion and take pity on him, says Hashem" (Jeremiah 31:19) and "And Hashem's word came to me, saying: Son of man, take one branch and write upon it, FOR YEHUDAH [the source of the Davidic line] and his brothers; then take another branch and write upon it FOR YOSEPH, the branch of Ephraim and the whole house of Israel with him. Then bring them close to yourself, [joining them] *echad*-one to *echad*-one, as one *etz*-branch; until they become unified in your hand. When your people ask you: Tell us what these mean to you, say to them: Thus says Hashem: Behold I am taking the branch of Yoseph which is in Ephraim's hand, and the tribes of Israel with him, and placing the branch of Yehudah upon it. I will then make them *etz echad* (one branch), and they shall become *echad*-one in My hand" (Ezekiel 37:15-19). See my book, *Dedicated to Mashiach ben Yoseph and Mashiach ben David*.

<sup>20</sup> *Kol HaTor*, Chapter 2a, "The 156 Aspects of *Mashiach ben Yoseph*" (#46 and #48)

<sup>21</sup> *Kol HaTor*, Chapter 1, paragraph 6.

Psalm 21  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

leader of Magog] has been nullified...

The decree has been nullified in the sense that it has been broken up into numerous smaller parts. This is the meaning of the analogy in the Midrash: “It is comparable to a king who became angry at his son and swore that he would hurl a massive stone at him. Later, he regretted this and had compassion on the boy. In order to fulfill his oath, however, he had the stone broken up into small pebbles. These were thrown at the boy, one by one.”<sup>22</sup>

In the same way, *Mashiach ben Yoseph* will not be subjected to the death penalty, although he must still suffer the pain of the smaller rocks. These are the *chevley Mashiach* that come little by little, together with the 999 *ikvot Meshicha*, thus indicating that the decree has also been broken up into 999 smaller segments. Corresponding to these segments, the side of salvation will also be present, as hinted in the verse, “*Ve’et tzarab hi leYaacov*—it will be a time of distress for Yaacov; *u’mimena yivashe’a*—but from it [and through it] he shall be delivered” (Jeremiah 30:7). The *gematria* of “*ve’et tzarab hi leYaacov*” is 999.

According to the Gra, the entire history of the world is one unified process which leads inevitably toward redemption. The *Trein Mesbecheen* are two interlocking and complementary aspects of this ONE SINGLE UNIFIED PROCESS. And although *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David* are both single individuals, they are also many men and women, embodiments of the spiritual principles of the *Trein Mesbecheen*. Finally, just as we know that “*Od Yoseph chai*—Yoseph is alive” means that *Mashiach ben Yoseph* is alive and will continue to live, and his mission will be successful, so, too, we know that “*David Melekh Yisrael chai ve’kayam*—David, king of Israel, is alive and will exist forever” means that *Mashiach ben David* is alive and well, and his mission—the original mission of Adam in *Gan Eden*, to bring the world to its highest perfection—will be successful.

Again, the fact that the historical process is leading up to and will culminate in the advent of such a new world is perhaps one of the most important messages of the Torah for our generation. It is a message that is pregnant with meaning and which begs to be seriously understood and acted upon in a mature and thoughtful manner. Our tradition is permeated with this message, and our prayer directed to God, filled with yearning and hope, must be not only for the fulfillment of this message, but for the privilege of consciously participating in its realization. We thus pray every day in the fourteenth blessing of the *Amidah*,

---

<sup>22</sup> *Midrash Tehillim* 6:3; *Yalkut Shimoni* 2:635.



Psalm 21  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

“O [return and] dwell again within Yerushalayim Your city as You promised. And speedily re-establish *the throne of David* Your servant in its midst. Rebuild it as an eternal edifice, speedily, in our days. Blessed are You, Hashem, builder of Yerushalayim.”

## Psalm 23

### Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

#### Psalm 23

King David is fleeing from King Shaul. Without food or drink, he comes to a dry sun-scorched forest where he faints from hunger and thirst (I Samuel 22:5). In his sleep, David's soul leaves his body. For all intents and purposes, he is dead. As his body lies there lifeless, his soul ascends and enters the heavenly *Gan Eden*. There, he is shown a prophetic vision of his entire life. He is shown the reasons behind all his tribulations. He is shown all the trials of the Jewish people throughout their long and torturous history. He is shown Hashem's unfathomable care and providence for all creation. He is projected into the future and shown a vision of the Messianic Age and the Great *Shabbat* when this providence will no longer be concealed in the garments (laws) of nature and history.

After all this, he is told that he must return to his earthly body. He is assured that he will be protected from Shaul, that his kingdom will be established, and that someday, a descendent of his will be the final Redeemer of the Jewish people and mankind. Finally, he is given a taste of the Heavenly Dew with which Hashem will revive the dead in the ultimate Future. He awakens to find the entire forest moistened with this same Dew of Resurrection. As the fresh foliage protects him from the burning sun, he drinks from the dew and his soul revives into his body. To commemorate the miracle of having died and come back to life, David composed Psalm 23 (see *Inside Psalm 23*).

Knowing King David's life is a microcosm of our own, we sing *Mizmor LeDavid* at least three times on *Shabbat*. Before *Kiddush* on Friday night, we sing it to remind ourselves that Hashem has been there with us even as we have walked through all the deep valleys and dark alleys of our lives. We thank Him that He has allowed us to reach the safe haven of *Shabbat*. Before *Kiddush* on *Shabbat* Morning, we sing it to ascend to the heights of prophetic vision in order to glimpse our lives from the perspective of eternity. During the third meal, we sing it to muster strength to face the coming week(s)—knowing with complete certainty that Hashem's providence is never inoperative, and that the more we perceive His hand in history, the more He will empower us to play our part in His plan to guide mankind to the ultimate redemption and the Great *Shabbat*.

(1) *Mizmor LeDavid* – A chant psalm to cut through the concealment of this world by David: *Hashem* is my Shepherd. I shall never lack for I know now that He is with me in all my trials.<sup>1</sup>

(2) He has laid me down in luxuriant meadows, shepherded me along restful streams.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> In his early years, David had been a shepherd. Because of his tender care for his flocks, Hashem chose him to be “a shepherd of His people.” But like his great ancestors, David was now being propelled to the next level of his mission through intense trial and tribulation. Let us not forget that Hashem had tested Avraham ten times. Yitzchak was almost sacrificed on the altar. Yaacov's entire life was a series of trials. Yoseph was sold by his own brothers and taken down to Egypt as a slave. Even after an initial period of success in Potiphara's palace, he was placed in a dungeon for twelve years. Moshe suffered tremendous setbacks in his career as Hashem's prophet. There were times when he did not know if he could go on living. Now, it was David's turn. He had been anointed by Shmuel, killed Goliath, married the king's daughter, and fought and won battles for his people and his God. As he was being chased, he couldn't help feeling that Hashem's graces had been turned away. Now, however, after his vision, he realized just how much Hashem had been shepherding him. If he experienced privation and lack, it was his own inability to see Hashem's guiding hand in his life.

<sup>2</sup> On a literal level, “green meadows” and “refreshing streams” refer to David's experience of lying down peacefully in that dry forest after it had been moistened by the *tal techiyah* (dew of resurrection of the World to Come). On the spiritual level, “green meadows” alludes to his experience of the Garden of Eden, and “refreshing streams” alludes to the river that flows through that garden.

Psalm 23  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

(3) Time and again, He has revived my soul and drawn me close to Him.<sup>3</sup> He has guided me along paths of justice and righteousness so that I could thereby proclaim His Name and His care of all creatures to the whole world.

(4) Now, even if I must walk through a deep valley overshadowed by suffering and death, I will fear no evil, for You [Your presence and Your great loving-kindness] accompany me; both Your rod [the suffering that cleanses me] and Your staff [the Torah that guides me] comfort me and assure me that You have not abandoned my life to chance.<sup>4</sup>

(5) O God, prepare my royal table over and against my adversaries; You have anointed my head with oil [wisdom]; my cup [heart] overflows with thanks to You for all You have given me.

(6) May only goodness and kindness pursue me [let me continue to perceive Your goodness and kindness in all that comes upon me] all the days and even the dark nights of my life;<sup>5</sup> and may I merit to dwell in the House of *Hashem* throughout my entire life and beyond into eternity. [May the world truly become *Beit Hashem*, and mankind know Your presence everywhere, forever.]

## Inside Psalm 23

### David's Childhood

"Time and again, He has revived my soul..." (Psalm 23:3).

The First Book of Samuel describes the life and times of King David. As a youth, David is actually estranged from his own family. He is treated unjustly,

---

<sup>3</sup> Hashem restored David's soul by lifting him above his troubles and affording him an awesome vision. He also literally restored his soul to his body. More than this, however, David now realizes how Hashem has "revived" his soul countless times throughout his life. He also understands that this will continue—for him and his people—forever. He thus says, *nafshi yeshonev*, not simply *beshev* (a single past action) or *yashiv* (a single future action), but a continuous action without termination or end.

<sup>4</sup> "Now, even if I must walk through a deep valley overshadowed by suffering and death, I will fear no evil..." And what is the greatest evil? A world devoid of God. A world in which God's presence is so eclipsed that people no longer even know that He is hiding. It is to such a world that David now proclaims loudly and clearly: "You are with me!" See *Inside Psalm 23*, "He and You."

<sup>5</sup> "*Akh tov va'chessed yirdefuni kol yemei chayai*." Regarding this verse, the Ari teaches: "When saying *Mizmor LeDavid* before *Kiddush* on Friday night and *Shabbat* morning, intend that the *gematria* of the initials of the words *akh tov va'chessed yirdefuni* (*aleph, tet, vav, yod*; 1 + 9 + 6 + 10) equals 26, the *gematria* of *YKVK*. The same is true of the *gematria* of the final letters of *akh tov va'chessed* (*kaf, beit, dalet*; 20 + 2 + 4 = 26).<sup>25</sup> It is certainly not by chance that the same is true of the initials of the words, *gam ki elekb be'gai* (*gimel, kaf, aleph, beit*; 3 + 20 + 1 + 2 = 26). Truly Hashem is with us even and especially when we walk through the valleys of pain, suffering, and death.

Psalm 23  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

not considered one of them, blamed for things he has not done, mocked, banished from family gatherings, and generally made to feel that he is the lowest creature on earth. As we shall see in *Inside Psalm 51* and *Inside Psalm 69*, David describes the anguish he endured in being considered a stranger among his own people: “Save me, O just God, for the floodwaters have reached my very soul...Those who hate me needlessly are more numerous than the hairs on my head...I have been made to return what I have not stolen...I am like a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother’s children...The disgraces of those who disgrace You have fallen upon me...Those who sit in the gate of the city have nothing better to do than talk about me; drunkards make up songs about me...” (Psalm 69:2-13).

In order to protect himself from the barbed attacks of those who consider themselves more righteous than he, David chooses to spend most of his time in the fields and forests, grazing his family’s flocks. It is here that he composes psalms in which he cries out to Hashem when he is pained and rejoices in His closeness when he is uplifted.

One day, David is suddenly called in from the fields to attend a special occasion. Shmuel HaNavi has arrived. Hashem has told Shmuel that Shaul will not long remain king. Instead, Shmuel must go to Beit Lechem to anoint the next king of Israel. When David arrives, Shmuel is immediately told to stand and anoint David. “And Shmuel took the flask of oil and anointed David in the presence of his brothers; and Hashem’s spirit rested/descended upon David from that day onward” (I Samuel 16:13; see *Inside Psalm 51*).

Soon after this, David kills Goliath. He marries King Shaul’s daughter and becomes Shaul’s personal attendant. The fact that he is the true king is kept secret but it soon becomes clear that his life is in danger. One day, David is playing his harp to soothe the old king’s nerves. Unable to stand the pain of knowing that he will shortly be replaced by another—but not knowing consciously that it is David himself who will replace him—Shaul is overcome with a fit of rage. Taking it out on the nearest target, he throws his javelin at David, and just misses the latter’s head by a hairsbreadth. David barely escapes with his life.

David goes to Shmuel to take refuge and gather strength. Due to the seriousness of the situation, Shmuel decides that it is time for David to be initiated into the discipline of prophecy. Meanwhile, Shaul sends groups of soldiers to take custody of David, but each group is overcome with a spirit of prophecy as they approach Shmuel’s inner circle. Against their will, they find themselves saying, “David is king, David is king!” Finally, Shaul himself goes, but he, too, is overcome with a spirit of prophecy. In this heightened state of consciousness, he actually casts off his royal robe, as if to say “I know that I am no longer king. Truly, David is king, David is

Psalm 23  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

king.” Finally, he falls down at Shmuel’s feet in a prophetic trance. Shmuel stands and Shmuel’s disciples (including David) sit, while Shaul is sprawled out at Shmuel’s feet completely overwhelmed by the spirit of prophecy (I Samuel 19:24). Knowing, however, that Shaul’s spirit is tormented and that he will continue to hunt him, David again flees.

According to the commentaries, there are three ways to understand the fact that Shaul removes his robe as he approaches Shmuel’s inner circle. One is that he removed his royal garments, indicating that he understood that he was no longer king. Another is that he removed all his garments, for one who is struck by the spirit of prophecy is so overwhelmed that he loses all normal cognition. And the third is that his soul divested itself from his body, due to the power of the prophetic influx. This last possibility is based on the fact that the body is considered a garment relative to the soul itself.

The three positions—standing, sitting, and lying down—are also instructive. According to kabbalistic tradition, Shmuel HaNavi attained an extremely high level of prophecy, close to that of Moshe and Aharon.<sup>6</sup> This is embodied in the fact that he was able to remain standing and fully awake while in a state of prophecy. Shmuel’s disciples were able to remain sitting upright while in prophecy, while King Shaul fell at Shmuel’s feet, completely overwhelmed by the spirit of prophecy.

We see an additional example of the overwhelming power of prophecy in the Book of Daniel. Daniel had been exiled to Babylon with his friends. One day, they were all walking and talking together on the banks of the Hiddekel River. Suddenly, Daniel sees an angel of God whose appearance is like lightning. Only Daniel sees the angel. His friends do not. Still, they know something is happening. They start trembling and run for cover—from what, they are not sure. An overwhelming vision materializes before Daniel’s eyes: “I remained alone. I saw this great vision and I became powerless. My cognitive functions were destroyed and my strength deserted me. At the sound of His words, I fell to the ground in a trance” (Daniel 10:8). The angel continues speaking and tells Daniel that he has been sent from heaven to reveal to him “what will befall your people in the end of days” (10:14). Still, as the angel speaks, Daniel “placed his face on the ground and he became dumb” (10:15). His prophetic experience makes him feel as if he is about to die.

Seeing Daniel’s inability to withstand the vision, the angel assumes a human form in order to make his presence less overwhelming (beginning of verse 16).

---

<sup>6</sup> Ari, *Shaar Ruach HaKodesh, drush aleph*, p. 2a, quoting the verse, “Moshe and Aharon among His *Cobanim*, and Shmuel among those who declared His name; they called upon Hashem and He answered them” (Psalm 99:6).

Psalm 23  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

He touches Daniel's lips to give him strength to talk. Daniel then tries to explain to the angel that, "because of the vision, my pangs overcame me and I had no physical strength left. Even now, I, your servant, can barely continue talking with you, my master. For I have no strength left to stand and I have no soul left within me [i.e., soon my soul will not remain within my body]" (Daniel 10:16-17).

### **Yaar Charet**

Returning to David, now begins a period of intense trial during which he is chased like a fugitive, constantly on the run for fear of his life. He has reached the lowest point in his life. As we see in Psalm 34, David sought refuge with Akhish (aka Avimelekh), the king of Gat (the main Philistine city in Azza, present day Gaza), in order to escape Shaul's men. Although it means leaving the official boundaries of Eretz Yisrael and entering enemy territory, David is certain that he will be able to convince Akhish that, as a rebel fugitive, he can give him a tremendous advantage over Shaul. When he crosses the border, he is seized by Akhish's men and taken to the royal palace. While there, Goliath's brothers, who are among Akhish's counselors, recognize him and try to convince the king to let them take revenge on David for having slain their brother.

It is then that David prays Psalm 56, pleading with Hashem to have mercy and deliver him from all his enemies. In response, Hashem brings a spirit of insanity into Akhish's wife and daughter. Their screams literally drive Akhish crazy. In a moment's blazing inspiration, David knows what he must do. He proceeds to play one of the most masterful parts of his life, namely, he feigns insanity. He writes strange messages on the walls as spit drips down his chin. Akhish's reaction, "You're telling me that this is the man who killed Goliath? This is the mighty warrior of Israel? I don't believe it. Get this madman out of here; do I lack crazy people that you bring another one into my house!" (I Samuel 21:11-16). Upon being delivered, David composes Psalm 54.

From Gat David flees to a cave in Adullam. Here, in addition to being joined by an army of four hundred fighting men—which quickly grows to six hundred—his parents and brothers join him as well. Concerned lest Shaul take revenge against the entire family out of his hatred of David (Radak, I Samuel 22:1), David brings his parents and brothers to Mitzpeh Moav, to the king of Moav, to request asylum for them. Moav is east of the Dead Sea, in what is now modern Jordan. He does this thinking that the Moavim will have mercy on him, since his great-grandmother Ruth was from Moav. David departs to set up camp not far from Moav, in a stronghold called Metzudah, until Gad the prophet shows up to tell David that he must keep running for his life. "Go to Eretz Yehudah" (I Samuel 22:5). Gad is telling David to cross back over to the Eretz Yisrael side of the Dead Sea, to return to what we call the Judean Desert. The

Psalm 23  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

same verse concludes, “So, David departed and came to *Yaar Charet*” (I Samuel 22:5). David is all alone now. We can imagine how he feels. Wherever he goes, either he suspects those whom he meets or they suspect him. He has no peace of mind. He feels that Hashem has turned His face away.

In the meantime, the moment he departs Moav, the king of Moav cruelly slaughters David’s entire family, save for one brother. This brother flees to the King of Amon for refuge. The King of Moav sends a message to the King of Amon, demanding the return of the brother. To his credit, the King of Amon refuses.<sup>7</sup>

Now, on the verse, “*Bi’neot deshe yarbitzteni, al mei menuchot yenhaleni*—He has laid me down in luxuriant meadows, shepherded me along restful streams” (Psalm 23:2), Rashi brings the Midrash, “This verse speaks about the time when David was still running from Shaul, specifically when ‘David departed and came to Yaar Charet’ (I Samuel 22:5). Why is it called *Yaar Charet* (dry, sun-scorched forest)? It was dry as a shard of baked clay, but the Holy One moistened it with the goodness of *Olam Haba* (the eternal future world). This is the meaning of the verse (Psalm 63:6), ‘*Kemo chelev va’deshen tisba nafshi*—You have satiated my soul as with bounty and abundance.’”<sup>8</sup>

Based on the above plus several other sources, I think it is possible to elaborate as follows: David is following Gad’s instructions and heading for Eretz Yehudah. For some reason, David is now alone. Where are his men? We do not know. For reasons which he himself may not have understood until later, he was temporarily cut off from them. In addition, he has no supplies. Arriving in Yaar Charet—somewhere in the Judean Desert—he is so exhausted that he faints, as much from mental and emotional fatigue as from hunger and thirst. In his sleep, David’s soul leaves his body. For all intents and purposes, he is dead. As his body lies there lifeless, his soul ascends and enters paradise, the heavenly Garden of Eden. In paradise, he meets his martyred parents and brothers. He is shown a prophetic vision of his entire life. He is shown the reasons behind all his tribulations. He is shown the trials of the Jewish people throughout their long and torturous history. Now he sees the same prophetic plan that Adam saw, that Avraham, Yaacov, Moshe, and all the great prophets before and after him were shown. He is shown Hashem’s unfathomable care and providence for all creation. He is projected into the future and shown a vision of the Messianic Age and the Great Sabbath when this providence will no longer be concealed in the garments (laws) of nature and history.

---

<sup>7</sup> *Bamidbar Rabbah* 14:1; Rashi, I Samuel 22:4; see II Samuel 10:1-2.

<sup>8</sup> *Yalkut Shimoni* 2:694; Rashi, Psalm 23:2.

Psalm 23  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

After all this, he is told that he must return to his earthly body. He is assured that he will be protected from Shaul, that his kingdom will be established, and that someday a descendent of his will be the final redeemer of the Jewish people and mankind. Finally, he is given a taste of the heavenly dew with which Hashem will revive the dead in *Olam Haba*, the eternal future world that will follow our present epoch. He awakens to find the entire forest moistened with this same *tal techiyah* (dew of resurrection). As the fresh foliage protects him from the burning sun, he drinks from the dew and his soul re-vives into his body.<sup>9</sup>

### He and You

David begins by speaking *about* God (third-person *nistar*): “Hashem is my shepherd...*He* has laid me down...*He* has shepherded me...*He* has restored my soul...*He* has guided me.” Then, suddenly, “*Gam ki elekb be’gei tzalmavet lo ira ra ki Atah imadi*—now, even if I must walk through a deep valley overshadowed by [suffering and] death, I will fear no evil, for *You* [Your presence and Your great loving-kindness] accompany me” (Psalm 23:4). Precisely when he encounters the evil of death and suffering, he switches to speaking directly to God (second-person *nohach*). For what is the greatest evil? A world devoid of God. A world in which God’s presence is so eclipsed that people no longer even know that He is hiding. It is regarding such a world that David now proclaims loudly and clearly to Hashem: “*You* are with me! Now in the depths of hell, I call out to *You* and to *You* alone, for *You* are with me! Even when I was not aware of it, *You* never abandoned me. I didn’t know what to think, I became confused, I lost hope in *You* and in my own worthiness to stand in *Your* presence. Now, I know that there is no other reality but *You*. I am now certain that nothing just happens by itself; all is from *You*. I am thus assured that *Your* mercies will be aroused for me. Finally, I know that even the pain I have suffered will be for the ultimate good.”

This abrupt change in person from He to You indicates a radical change in David’s own perception. This change involves an important lesson about how we can get closer to both Hashem and ourselves. Under ordinary circumstances, we are usually satisfied with an *indirect* relationship with Hashem. We get on with our life, which is what we are supposed to do, but in the process, our relationship with Hashem gets pushed into the background. At a certain point, in order to awaken us from our slumber, troubles come. Now we must call upon hidden resources to which we usually have no direct access. Now we require a direct line to the very ground and source of our existence.

This is the meaning of calling directly upon Hashem when we walk through the deep and winding valleys of our own pain and the pain of others. Once we understand this, it becomes very clear that Hashem does not want us to wait for

---

<sup>9</sup> See *Midrash Tehillim* 23:6; Alshikh, Ecclesiastes 5:10-11, citing *Beresbit Rabbah* 62:2.



Psalm 23  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

hard times before calling Him. We must nurture an inner space within, a holy of holies, set apart from all that goes on around us, where no one may enter except us and Hashem. In this holy of holies, we must not only think *about* Hashem (in the third person), but speak, whisper, cry to and directly call upon Him.

“May only goodness and kindness pursue me all the days of my life, and may I dwell in the House of Hashem throughout my entire life [and beyond into eternity].” In this final verse of Psalm 23, David returns to speaking about Hashem in the third person, but with one major difference. Here, the use of the third person is in recognition of God’s infiniteness above and beyond anything we can know or experience directly. See *Nine Gates to the Psalms*, Gate Six, “Oscillations in Time and Person.”

**Psalm 23 Commemorates David’s Near-Death Experience**

“He has laid me down in luxuriant meadows; shepherded me along *mei menuchot* (restful streams)” (Psalm 23:2). The Ari explains that *mei menuchot* (restful streams) allude to the waters of *Gan Eden*. David prayed that the waters of *Gan Eden*—the exalted revelation of godliness that David had tasted—flow down into this world in order to give life to the *Shekhinah* (Divine Presence) in exile.<sup>10</sup> The *Shekhinah* is said to be in exile when mankind descends to such a low state of constricted consciousness that God’s presence seems completely absent. David is asking that his own experience not be solely for himself, but for the sake of the complete revelation of God’s presence to all mankind.

“Time and again, He has revived my soul and drawn me close to Him. He has guided me along paths of justice and righteousness so that I could thereby proclaim His name [and His care of all creatures to the whole world]” (Psalm 23:3). David had questioned—as we all do at times—whether he deserved such rough treatment. After all, he had been anointed king. Why was he suffering so? Why was he being struck by such tragedies one after the other? How could he stand to see his own family killed? “O God in heaven, how can I bear this pain? Have You indeed cast Your servant away?”

Now, as a result of his near-death experience, David was a different person. He began to acknowledge the profundity of Hashem’s righteousness. Now, he understood why everything was happening to him. It was so that he could proclaim Hashem’s name, that even in the midst of the darkest night of pain and suffering, Hashem does not abandon us. It is just that in this world we humans are not allowed to know the ultimate why of things, and thus, we suffer. But David had been catapulted above and beyond this world. Again, it is highly probable that

---

<sup>10</sup> *Sbaar Hal Likutim, Ketvim, Tebillim 23.*

Psalm 23  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

he reunited with the exalted souls of his martyred father, mother, and brothers in heaven. With their blessings, he now returned stronger than ever.

“Your rod [the suffering that cleanses me] and Your staff [the Torah that guides me] comfort me [and assure me that You have not abandoned my life to chance]” (Psalm 23:4). David is saying, “Now, because of Your staff—the Torah You have taught me, the vision You have shown me, the soul You have restored to me—I can finally make peace with the harshness and bitterness of Your rod. Only by knowing that they both come from You, do they now comfort me. They are such a powerful comfort that I no longer experience my pain as a sign of Your absence. Your attribute of justice (Your rod with which You chastise me) and Your attribute of mercy (the staff with which You support me) have become joined. What I experienced as two contradictory modes have become one within me. Now I perceive Your hand behind all that comes upon me.”

### **The Anointed Mashiach**

“[O God] prepare my royal table over and against my adversaries; You have anointed my head with oil [wisdom]; my cup [heart] overflows with thanks to You for everything You have given me” (Psalm 23:5). David is saying, “But I ask that You reveal Your hand in my life in the presence of all those who wish to see my downfall. Let them know that Shmuel anointed me at Your behest. You anointed me! Now that I begin to grasp what You have done for me, my heart (cup) overflows with thanks to You.”

It is important to point out that David’s life parallels the life of his descendant, *Mashiach ben David*. According to tradition, *Mashiach ben David* will be anointed and crowned with a very exalted soul level called *yechidah* (unity). As Ramchal writes, it is the *yechidah* that existed from before creation that is destined to be the crown of the redeemer, with which he will redeem Israel.<sup>11</sup> At the level of *yechidah*, the soul is still one with Hashem, bound up in the divine unity. The anointing of which David speaks here is thus not only the anointing done by Shmuel, but the heavenly illumination that has completely transformed him. He now realizes that his whole life is a paradigm of the future redeemer and of the history of his people until that redeemer is revealed. David, the once and future king, the “sweet singer of Israel,” is the soul of Israel. Adam donated seventy years of his life to David,<sup>12</sup> as did Avraham, Yaacov, and Yoseph,<sup>13</sup> for

---

<sup>11</sup> Ramchal, *Kinat Hashem Tzavaot*; Friedlander edition, p. 94.

<sup>12</sup> *Zohar Bereshit*, 1:55a-b; *Zohar Lekh Lekha*, 1:91b; *Yalkut Shimoni* 1:41.

<sup>13</sup> *Zohar Vayishlach*, 1:168a-b; Alshikh, Psalm 16:1-3, 139:17. The Zohar explains that Avraham donated 5 years to David, for he lived only 175 years, 5 years less than his son Yitzchak. Yitzchak did not donate any years to David. Yaacov donated 28 years to David, for he lived only 147 years, 28 years less than his grandfather Avraham. Yoseph donated 37 years to David, for he

Psalm 23  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

David really had no life of his own.<sup>14</sup> Now he has attained the level of *yechidab*, the complete connection of his soul with his people and with his godly mission. This is the soul that has been restored to David. It is none other than the soul of *Mashiach*. Through his suffering, which he accepted with love, David became worthy of bringing this soul into the world.<sup>15</sup>

Each of us also has or can have our own *yechidab*. But this level can be attained only by consciously connecting to our holy ancestors who struggled to come close to God, to His Torah, to the prophetic teachings He has given us—to the Psalms of David. Ultimately, it can be attained only in the Land of Israel when the majority of our people will return to the land; when all the scattered sparks of holiness will have been returned to their source; when Jews the world over will awaken and begin to seek Hashem in Zion.

In order to attain the collective *yechidab*, the exalted level with which *Mashiach ben David* will be crowned, we must all join together. This cannot be achieved without a battle. What is the battle? Prayer. Avraham and Sarah, Yitzchak and Rivkah, Yaacov and Rachel and Leah, Moshe, David—all of them prayed. Their most powerful secret weapon was turning Torah into prayer. And it was David who became an embodiment of this. As we explain in Gate One of *Nine Gates to the Psalms*, the Five Books of the Psalms parallel the Five Books of the Torah. David received the Torah into himself and *prayed* that very Torah back to the One who gave it. The more Torah he learned, the more he understood what God wants. He then cried out from the depths of his soul, from the depths of the human condition, up to and beyond the highest heavens, to the Master of the universe, saying, “We want what You want!” Through prayer, he was worthy of ascending into the spiritual realm. When he came back, he brought us more Torah, more illumination from Hashem’s Divine Torah. Through praying the Torah that our ancestors transmitted to us, we complete the connection by showing that we want exactly what God wants.

This is the purpose of the prayers of *Am Yisrael*. When we join together and pray from the depths of our heart, the gates of heaven can open, to uplift us as a nation to realize who we are and why we are here, now, at this crucial time. When *Mashiach ben David* arrives, all the great souls of our ancestors will

---

lived only 110 years, 37 years less than his father Yaacov. All totaled, Avraham, Yaacov, and Yoseph donated 70 years to David. Of course, the question is why. Why did they donate 70 years to David if Adam had already done so? As Alshikh explains, when Adam sinned, he tarnished the 70 years that he originally donated to David. It was only when he later reincarnated in the *Avot* and rectified his mistake that he donated those same 70 years to David, but now rectified and restored to their pristine beauty.

<sup>14</sup> *Zohar Pinchas*, 3:216a; *Zohar Ki Tetzeg*, 3:279a. See note to Psalm 139:16.

<sup>15</sup> See *Inside Psalm 69*, “Afflictions of Love” and “An Eighth Son to Yishai,” where we quote Kitov, *Book of Our Heritage*, “Sivan—Ruth and David,” pp. 143-145, 150.

Psalm 23  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

accompany him.<sup>16</sup> When he receives the crown of *yechidah*, we will all experience a profound change. We will awaken and realize who we are, why we have come and what we must do. As the prophet said, “A man will no longer teach his friend and his brother, saying: Know God! For all of them will know Me [God] on their own, from the greatest to the smallest” (Jeremiah 31:33). Believing in and looking forward to that day is part of Judaism.

“And may I dwell in the House of Hashem throughout my entire life and beyond into eternity” (Psalm 23:6). David is asking that the powerful change that has occurred to him as a result of his prophetic experience remain with him. He knows that hard times lie ahead. Even after he is proclaimed king in Hebron, he waits there seven years before ascending to Yerushalayim to reign for another thirty-three years. Still, he is asking that he be allowed to dwell in Hashem’s proximity for the rest of his life in this world and in the World to Come. He is asking this not only for himself but for his people and the world. He is asking that the world become known as Hashem’s House, the Sanctuary of God, for all eternity.

The message of this psalm for us is hope, hope in the midst of pain, hope in the midst of loss and sorrow. Never give up hope. On the contrary, know what to hope for. Know who and what preceded us. Know that hidden in the words of the Torah and all the sacred writings are messages for each and every one of us, for our people, and for mankind as a whole. The message of this psalm is that out of the deepest pain, the most precious light will shine forth.

---

<sup>16</sup> *Tikuney Zohar, tikun 13*, p. 29b.

## Psalm 29

### Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

#### Psalm 29

*Mizmor LeDavid* (Psalm 29) speaks of the different times when Hashem revealed Himself in history, and of the powerful impact this had and will continue to have until the advent of the Messianic Era and the Great Sabbath. It is thus sung universally before *Lekha Dodi* every Friday night, as a preparation for the welcoming of the Sabbath Queen. The reason for this is that every seven-day weekly cycle embodies in miniature an entire seven-thousand-year cycle. Thus, just as we bring to mind the powerful effect of *kol Hashem al ha'mayim* (Hashem's voice on the forces of history) on a weekly basis, so, too, and perhaps even more so, should it be on the millennial scale. This psalm therefore alludes to the social upheaval that will prevail during the final throes of history before the advent of the Messianic Era and the seventh millennium. The key to the psalm is in King David's use of nature imagery (oceans, trees, mountains, animals) to describe both powerful natural forces and powerful historical forces. That is, he prophetically foresaw that the world of nature would literally undergo dramatic changes as the Messianic Era was about to dawn; he also saw metaphorically that the nations of the world, which are likened to the forces of nature, would experience a complete breakdown until they aligned themselves with Israel in bringing about Hashem's plan.

(1) *Mizmor LeDavid* – A cutting psalm to penetrate to the essence of Israel's mission by David: Ascribe greatness to *Hashem*, O Israel, you children of mighty ancestors. Ascribe to *Hashem* all glory and might.

(2) Ascribe to *Hashem* the honor due His Name; bow to *Hashem* and place yourselves entirely in His service with trembling in the splendor of His holy Sanctuary.<sup>1</sup>

(3) *Hashem's* voice was heard over the waters of the Red Sea;<sup>2</sup> the omnipotent God of glory thundered over the Egyptians. *Hashem* continues to rule over many waters [the conflicting forces of history].

(4) *Hashem's* voice resounded with might on Mount Sinai; *Hashem's* voice

---

<sup>1</sup> Metzudot: “*Be'hadrat kodesh*,’ in the place that has the highest sanctity, which is none other than the Sanctuary of the *Beit HaMikdash*.” In the Talmud, the sages understand *bishtachavu laShem be'hadrat kodesh* as “bow to Hashem in the beauty of holiness,” that is, that one should adorn oneself in one's finest garments in order to stand before Hashem in prayer. They also reread *hadrat kodesh* as *charedat kodesh* (holy trembling), meaning that one should pray with a sense of awe in the face of Hashem's utter transcendent holiness (*Berukhot* 30b).

<sup>2</sup> Hashem's name (YKVK/*Havayah*) mentioned in Psalm 29 eighteen times was the basis for establishing the original Eighteen Blessings of the weekday *Amidah* (Standing Prayer).<sup>3</sup> Since seven of these eighteen refer specifically to *Kol YKVK* (the voice of Hashem), this became the basis for establishing seven blessings in each *Amidah* of *Shabbat*. In all kabbalistic siddurim, these seven *Havayahs* are given special vowels corresponding to the seven *sefirot*, *Chesed-segol*, *Gevurah-shva*, *Tiferet-cholam*, *Netzach-chirik*, *Hod-kubutz*, *Yesod-shuruk*, and *Malkhut-tzevaot*.

Rabbi Alexander Ziskind writes, “These eighteen *Havayot* contain 72 letters, paralleling the expansion of *A"V* (72) (*Yod-nav-dalet*, *Heb-yod*, *Vav-yod-nav*, *Heb-yod*) which shares the same *gematria* as *chesed* (love). Additionally, the eleven verses in this psalm correspond to the final two letters of the blessed *Havayah*, *Vav* (6) and *Heb* (5). Finally, the 91 words in this psalm equal the combined *gematria* of *YKVK* (26) and *ADNY* (65)” (*Yesod VeShoresh HaAvodah*, *Inyan Kabbalat Nefesh-Ruach-Neshamah Yeterub b'Shabbat Kodesh*, *Shaar Shemini*, *Shaar HaElyon*, *Perek Sheni*, *Kabbalat Shabbat*).

Psalm 29  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

continues to resound with majesty in the Torah He gave to His people.

(5) *Hashem's* voice shatters mighty cedars [the kingdoms that resist His power]; *Hashem* will shatter the mighty cedars of Lebanon [the foreign powers that dominate Israel].

(6) He will cause them [world powers that once seemed stable] to dance about like young calves; Lebanon and Siryon (Syria) will skip like antelopes.

(7) *Hashem's* voice will hew away darkness like laser beams of fire.

(8) *Hashem's* voice will make a barren world experience birth travail; *Hashem* will cause a barren world to go into labor when He begins to reveal His holiness.<sup>3</sup>

(9) *Hashem's* voice will cause the children of Israel who are likened to female deer to go into labor; but first He will expose the nations who are likened to forests, until all that remains within His Sanctuary bespeaks His glory.<sup>4</sup>

(10) As during the Flood, *Hashem* remains unchanged throughout history, and *Hashem* will continue to reign unchanged throughout eternity.

(11) Nothing can alter His will: *Hashem* will grant His people the inner strength to be victorious over all evil; *Hashem* will bless His people with peace and the ability to bring the world to its ultimate perfection.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> “*Kol Hashem yachil midbar*—Hashem’s voice will make a barren world experience birth travail; *yachil Hashem midbar kadesb*—Hashem will cause a barren world to go into labor [when He begins to reveal] His holiness.” Rashi: “The meaning of *yachil* is as in *chil ka’yoledab* (birth pangs like a woman in childbirth) (Jeremiah 6:24). *Midbar Kadesb* is *Midbar Sinai* (the Sinai desert). It is called *Kadesb* (Holy) because it was there that Israel became holy, wholly sanctified to Hashem.” Hirsch: “*Chil* is labor, the act of giving birth; *yachil* is a *hiphil* form (causative). Thus, even today, the voice of Hashem which speaks to us through His Torah still transforms any state of *midbar* (barrenness, wilderness, deprivation, isolation, danger) into the birth pangs of a better and truer life.”

<sup>4</sup> “Until all that remains within His Sanctuary bespeaks His glory.” Hirsch: “All that is Hashem’s—every product of His creation and of His sovereignty—serves to proclaim His greatness and declare His glory. All that is His bespeaks *kavod* (glory); proclaiming His presence and declaring His glory in the physical world.” King David knows that the whole world is Hashem’s Sanctuary, and that everything bespeaks His glory. *Mashiach ben David* will be the lightning rod through whom this consciousness will be poured out on all mankind.

<sup>5</sup> Alternatively, as a prayer, “Hashem, please give strength to Your people [to endure and overcome all hardship]; Hashem, please bless Your people with true everlasting peace [in a world transformed], *amen*.” In line with the fact that the eighteen mentions of *Shem Havayab* in this psalm are the source for the original eighteen blessings of the *Amidah*, the concluding word *shalom* here is the source for the concluding blessing, “*Barukh...Ha’mevarekh et amo ba’shalom*—blessed...who blesses His people Israel with ultimate peace.” Furthermore, in the repetition of the *Amidah*, this concluding blessing follows immediately after *Birkat Cohanim* (the priestly blessing), which also culminates with *shalom*, “*Yissa Hashem panav elekha veyasem lekha shalom*—may Hashem

Psalm 29  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

---

turn His face to you and establish peace for you” (Numbers 6:26).

Immediately after this concluding blessing we take three steps back and say, “May He who makes *shalom* in His highest heavens also in His compassion bring *shalom* upon us and upon His entire people Israel, and say *amen*.” The simple meaning of “*shalom* in the heavens” is that the word *shamayim* (heaven) is a combination of *esh-mayim* (fire-water). Just as Hashem makes peace between spiritual opposites, may He assist us in harmonizing all the contradictory facets of our lives, to integrate and use them all together to serve Him *ba’shalom*, at peace within ourselves, between each other, and with Him. *Shalom* is thus a harmonious peace, a peace that allows us to be *shalem* (complete and whole). *Shalem* as completion and wholeness then allows us to achieve *shelemut* (perfection). In Song of Songs, in addition to the name Shlomo (Solomon) referring to its author King Shlomo, the name itself refers to Hashem “the King to whom all *shalom* (peace) and *shelemut* (perfection) belong.” In Chapter 7 of Song of Songs, Israel is also called *Shulamit*, the young maiden who is *shalem* (perfect, wholehearted) in her faith. As the final Mishnah in the entire *Shus* (Six Orders of Mishnah) ends, “In His desire to bless Israel, the Holy One did not find a *keli* (vessel, container) as perfect as *shalom* to contain blessing, as the verse says, ‘Hashem will give His people strength [to endure and overcome all hardship]; Hashem will bless His people with *shalom*.’”<sup>5</sup> As Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai says in the Midrash, “*Shalom* is the ultimate blessing that includes all blessings.”<sup>5</sup> There is no greater blessing than *shalom*.

### Psalm 44

(1) *LaMenatzeyach* – Dedicated to the Master Symphony Conductor of Creation who grants victory over evil. By the descendants of Korach. *Maskil*— A wisdom psalm.

(2) *Elohim*, with our ears we have heard; our ancestors told us [they made sure to leave a record that would be passed down throughout the generations] about the great deeds You performed for them in their days, in days of old.

(3) With Your powerful hand, You dispossessed nations from the land of Israel, and in their stead You *planted* them [our ancestors]; You broke the power of those nations and You sent them forth from the land to make room for Your people.<sup>1</sup>

(4) For not by their own sword did they [our ancestors] inherit the land, nor were they saved by their might alone, but, rather, by Your right hand and power, and by the light of Your countenance, because You favored them.

(5) You alone are my King, *Elohim!* Order [direct/reveal Your] salvations now, too, for Yaacov as You did long ago!

(6) With You [with Your help] we shall gore those who oppress us; with the power of Your Name, we shall obliterate those who rise against us to destroy us.

(7) For it is not in my bow that I place my trust; my sword will not deliver me.

(8) Only You can deliver us from those who afflict us; only You can shame those who hate us.

(9) We therefore will never stop praising You, *Elohim*; we shall give thanks to Your Name forever, *selah*.

(10) Even when, to our shame, You seem to desert us, and You do not go forth with our armies—we, Israel, continue to hope in You;

(11) Even when You cause us to retreat before our adversary, and allow our foes to plunder and loot for themselves;

(12) Even when You give us over like sheep to be consumed [slaughtered], and scatter us among the nations;

(13) Even when You *sell* Your people for *free* and their *price* brings You

---

<sup>1</sup> This is one of five sets of verses in the book of Psalms (44:3-4, 105:44, 111:6, 135:11-12, 136:21-22) revolving around the relationship of *Am Yisrael* (the people of Israel) to *Eretz Yisrael* (the land of Israel). See below, *Inside Psalm 44* for an in-depth exploration of this relationship.



Psalm 44  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

no gain;

(14) Even when You make us a disgrace in the eyes of our neighbors; a scorn and a derision to those who surround us;

(15) Even when You make us an object of ridicule among the nations, and a shaking of the head among the peoples—we, Israel, continue to believe in You;

(16) Even when my embarrassment is always before me, and my face is covered with humiliation;

(17) Even when I suffer from the taunting voice of the one who insults me and blasphemes You; even in the face of a hostile enemy who hates me with a vengeance—I, Israel, continue to cling to You.

(18) All this has come upon us, yet we have not forgotten You, nor have we been false to Your covenant [we have not broken faith with Your covenant].

(19) Our heart has not turned back from believing in You, nor have our steps turned aside from Your path.<sup>2</sup>

(20) We believed in You even when You crushed us and humiliated us and brought us down to the place of the viper, and shrouded us under the shadow of death.

(21) Behold, did we forget the Name of *Elohim* our God? Did we spread our hands out to a strange god?

(22) Behold, if we did forget, *Elohim* would search and discover it, for He knows the secrets of the heart.

(23) You know that it was for Your sake that we gave our lives up, day after day; for Your sake we were considered as sheep for the slaughter.

(24) Awaken and come to our rescue! Why do You act as though You are sleeping, *Adonai*? Arouse Yourself! Do not forsake us forever!

(25) Why do You hide Your face? Why do You act as though You have forgotten our affliction and our oppression?

(26) For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our stomach hugs the earth.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Alternatively, “Our heart has not turned back [from believing in You], *even when* we have gone astray from Your path.”

<sup>3</sup> “*Ki shachab le'afar nafshenu*—for our soul is bowed down to the dust.” Let us see what the Gra (Rabbi Eliyahu, the Gaon of Vilna) wrote regarding this verse. The Gra masterfully compares the stages of death (the departure of the soul, the burial of the body in the grave, the decomposition of the flesh and bones, and finally the resurrection of the dead) with the stages

Psalm 44  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

(27) Arise, therefore, and come to our aid. If for no other reason, redeem us for the sake of Your loving compassion!<sup>4</sup>

## Inside Psalm 44

### Inheriting the Land of Israel

“With Your [powerful] hand, You dispossessed nations [from the land of Israel], and [in their stead] You *planted* them [our ancestors]; You broke [the power of those nations] and You sent them forth [from the land to make room for Your people]” (Psalm 44:3).

This is one of five sets of verses in the book of Psalms revolving around the relationship of *Am Yisrael* (the people of Israel) to *Eretz Yisrael* (the land of Israel).

---

involved in Israel’s exile (the destruction of the Temple, departing the land, exile among the nations, and the ultimate resurrection of the nation):

“Just as when a person dies and his body is lowered into the grave, so it is with us in exile. Scattered all over the world, we are like the dry bones of Ezekiel 37, regarding which Hashem told the prophet, ‘Prophecy over these bones. Say to them: O dry bones, hear Hashem’s word! Hashem Elokim says to these bones: I will cause a *ruach* (spirit) to enter you and you will live again’ (Ezekiel 37:4-5). In the meantime, everything has continued to descend and diminish...such that, since the time of the destruction of the Temple, our very *ruach* departed and ascended heavenward. We were thus left bereft, a body without a soul. When we were then exiled from our land, the lands of the nations became our grave. The nations ate away at our flesh. Still, we had some conclaves and great *yeshivot* [where we were able to maintain our Torah life]. That lasted until our flesh rotted, and our bones were scattered, one dispersion after another. At least the bones were still intact; we still had prodigious Torah giants among us; they gave us the ability to remain standing. But then our bones rotted, and there is left now only a scoop of dust. We have become dust, thus fulfilling the verse, ‘*Ki shachab le’afar nafshenu*—for our soul is bowed down to the **dust**’ (Psalm 44:26). But precisely now we anticipate the resurrection of the dead, as per, ‘Wake up! Rise up from the **dust**, become settled, O Jerusalem! Remove the bonds of captivity from your neck, O daughter of Zion!’ (Isaiah 52:2). O may He soon pour forth His *ruach* upon us from above!” (*Likutey HaGra*, appendix to the Gra’s commentary to *Sifra d’Tzenniuta*).

The source verse for the Gra’s concluding prayer is, “*Ad ye’areb alenu ruach mi’marom*—until He pours forth His *ruach* (spirit) upon us from above” (Isaiah 32:15). Regarding the actual resurrection of the body, Isaiah also wrote, “Awake and sing, O you who dwell in the dust! For your dew [the dew of resurrection with which Hashem will resurrect the dead] is a dew of lights, and the earth shall cast forth its dead” (Isaiah 26:19). In the Midrash and Zohar, we find that the bodies of the dead will remain in the earth until all that is left of them is *tarvad shel rakav* (a scoop of dust). In the grave, this final decay product of the body becomes mixed with the dust of the earth, awaiting the moment when Hashem will resurrect the dead by adding *tal ha’techiyab* (the dew of resurrection) to it, similar to adding a sourdough starter to flour (*Pirkey d’Rabbi Eliezer* 34; *Zohar V’ayera*, *Midrash HaNeelam*, 1:113a). This follows Rabbi Elazar in another place in the Zohar where he talks about the indestructible luz bone instead of the *tarvad shel rakav*. In order to soften this bone and allow it to germinate in the earth, it must first be dissolved in and activated by the *tal techiyab*. Until then, it lies completely dormant

<sup>4</sup> Rashi: “We do not turn to You to save us relying solely on the strength of our deeds but rather on the power of Your great love.”

Psalm 44  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

1. “With Your [powerful] hand, You dispossessed nations [from the land of Israel], and [in their stead] You *planted* them [our ancestors]; You broke [the power of those nations] and You sent them forth [from the land to make room for Your people]. For not by their own sword did they [our ancestors] inherit the land, nor were they saved by their might alone, but, rather, by Your right hand and power, and by the light of Your countenance, because You favored them” (Psalm 44:3-4).
2. “He is ever mindful of His covenant...which He made as a treaty with Avraham, and swore as His vow to Yis’chak. He confirmed it with Yaacov as a decree, with Yisrael as an everlasting covenant...declaring, ‘To you, I bequeath the land of Canaan, the portion of your inheritance.’ He said this when they were but few in number, a minority of strangers sojourning in it. Thus, they were forced to wander about in the land from one tiny tribal nation to the next, from one kingship to another...[until much later,] He gave them the lands of the nations, and bequeathed to them the toil of [many] peoples” (Psalm 105:8-13, 44).
3. “He has therefore informed His people of the creative power of His works, to bequeath to them the heritage of the nations [Eretz Yisrael]” (Psalm 111:6).
4. “He overcame Sichon, king of the Emori, Og, king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan. And He gave their land as an inheritance to Yisrael, His people” (Psalm 135:11-12).
5. “He gave us their land as an inheritance—for His love is eternal and everlasting. An inheritance for Israel, His servant—for His love is eternal and everlasting” (Psalm 136:21-22).

Each of the above verses indicates that the land that eventually became known as Eretz Yisrael (the land of Israel, the land of the people of Israel) was inhabited first by the Canaanite nations (descendants of Canaan, the fourth and youngest son of Cham, the son of Noah). This is consistent with Genesis 10 in which the Torah describes the distribution of the world’s land mass to Noah’s three sons (Yeffet, Cham, and Shem) after the great flood. We thus read in the Torah regarding the descendants of Cham, specifically through Canaan: “Canaan fathered Tzidon, his firstborn, and Chet (father of *baChiti*), as well as *baYevusi*, *baEmori*, and *baGirgashi*; *baChivi*, *baArki*, and *baSini*; *baArvadi*, *baTzemari*, and *baChamati*...The borders of *baCanaani* extended from Tzidon [Levanon on the north Mediterranean coast] toward Gerar and Azah

Psalm 44  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

[southward], then [eastward, inland] to Sdom, Amorah, Admah, and Tzevoyim until Lasha [on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea]” (Genesis 10:15-19).

The Torah continues listing the descendants of Shem. In contrast to the descendants of Canaan, the settlements of the descendants of Shem “extended from Mesha toward Sefarah, in the area of Har HaKedem” (Genesis 10:30). In his notes to these verses, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan writes that Mesha is either Mecca or Al Mikha in Yemen, or Mesene, where the Tigris River flows into the Persian Gulf. Sefarah could be Medina, and Har HaKedem is the eastern mountain, probably Alakdar, in eastern Arabia, on the Indian Ocean.<sup>5</sup> All these locations were far to the east of Eretz Yisrael in the Arabian Peninsula.

Ramban comments, “Know that the entire land of Canaan was fit [meant, designated] for Israel to inherit, once it would become a nation. In the meantime, at the time of the dispersion of the nations, the Holy One gave it to Canaan to safeguard it for Israel. This is similar to a man who deposits the belongings of his master’s son with his servant for safekeeping until such time as the son will grow up and acquire the belongings that are rightfully his.”<sup>6</sup> Again, the fact that Eretz Yisrael was initially given to the Canaani nations is consistent with the Torah in Genesis 10, and with the above-mentioned five verses in Psalms. Ramban informs us of the limitation imposed on this gift, namely, that Eretz Yisrael was given to the Canaani only temporarily, for safekeeping. When the time would come, in the time of Yehoshua, ownership would revert to Am Yisrael, the true heirs of Eretz Yisrael.

We see further substantiation of this in an ancient oral tradition in the Sifra. In the book of Leviticus, Hashem warns Israel, “Do not follow the customs of the nation that I am driving out before you. Because they engaged in these [above-mentioned perversions], I have become disgusted with them. I therefore say to you, ‘Take over their land; I am giving it to you, to inherit it—a land flowing with milk and honey’” (Leviticus 20:23-24). The Sifra quotes this verse and comments, “‘I am giving it to you, to inherit it.’ In the future, I am giving it to you as an eternal inheritance. You might ask Me, ‘How can You give it to us seeing that it belongs to others?’ The truth, however, is that you are its true heirs. It is the portion that was designated for Shem, and you are his descendants. This is not the case with the children of Cham (Noach’s son, Canaan’s father). They are not fit to dwell in it. Their presence here was merely that of guardians, awaiting your arrival.”<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Kaplan, *The Living Torah*, Genesis 10; see Plate 4, p. 42.

<sup>6</sup> Ramban, Genesis 10:15.

<sup>7</sup> *Sifra*, *Parashat Kedoshim* 20:126.

Psalm 44  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

The Sifra's statement, "it is the portion that was designated for Shem" might seem to contradict what we saw above, that the land was originally given to the Canaanite nations. In truth, however, this is exactly what Ramban said above: "The entire land of Canaan was fit [meant, designated] for Israel to inherit, once it would become a nation. In the meantime... the Holy One gave it to Canaan to safeguard it for Israel."

Ramban himself corroborates this line of thought in a later comment. Ramban begins by quoting Rashi and refuting him, after which he states his position:<sup>8</sup>

On the verse, "Avram traveled throughout the land as far as the area of Shekhem... *vehaCanaani az ba'aretz*—and the Canaanites were then in the land" (Genesis 12:6), Rashi wrote, "The descendants of Canaan were conquering Eretz Yisrael at that time from the descendants of Shem. When Noah apportioned the earth to his sons, this was Shem's portion, as alluded to in the fact that Malki-Tzedek, Shem, was the king of Shalem (the ancient name of Yerushalayim). It is precisely for this reason that Hashem said to Avram, 'I will grant this land to your offspring,' that is to say, 'Although the Canaanites are presently conquering the land, a time is coming when I will restore the land to your children, as they are the true seed of Shem.'"

[Ramban's refutation:] This is not correct because, as the Torah states, "The borders of *haCanaani* extended from Tzidon [Levanon on the north Mediterranean coast] toward Gerar and Azah [southward], then [eastward, inland] to Sdom, Amarah, Admah, and Tzevoyim until Lasha [on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea]" (Genesis 10:15-19), which includes the entirety of Eretz Yisrael. The border of the descendants of Shem, on the other hand, "extended from Mesha toward Sefarah, in the area of Har HaKedem [far to the east of Eretz Yisrael in the Arabian Peninsula]" (Genesis 10:30). If, as Rashi claims, Noah actually apportioned the world among his sons, it is possible that he designated Eretz Yisrael for Shem, *but only verbally*. This can be likened to case of a dying man who verbally divides his property among his heirs.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, the Canaanite settled there until such time that Hashem would bequeath it fully to Avraham's descendants [in the time of Yehoshua], as I have already mentioned [above on Genesis 10:15, regarding a man who deposits the belongings of his master's son with his servant for safekeeping until such time as the son will grow up and acquire the belongings that are rightfully his].

---

<sup>8</sup> Ramban, Genesis 14:18.

<sup>9</sup> See *Mishnah Baba Batra* 9:7; *Gemara Baba Batra* 156a.

Psalm 44  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

In the end, all agree that the Canaanites were never more than safekeepers and guardians.

**Hashem's Promise to the Avot**

Whatever minor disagreements there are regarding the period preceding the *Avot*, all agree that something changed the moment Hashem explicitly told Avraham to migrate to the land of Israel when he was 75 years old: “Hashem said to Avram, “*Lekh lekha*—go to yourself; [depart] from your land, from your father’s home, from your birthplace, [and go] *to the land I will show you*. I will make you into a great nation; I will bless you, and make you great; you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, but he who curses you I will curse; all the families of the earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:1-3).

Shortly afterward, Hashem promised Avraham, “I, Hashem, took/saved you from Ur Kasdim precisely in order to give this land to you as an inheritance” (Genesis 15:7).<sup>10</sup> He later reinforced this promise to Yitzchak, “Remain in this land, and I will be with you and bless you, for I hereby bequeath all these lands to you and your descendants; I shall thus keep the oath that I made to your father, Avraham” (Genesis 26:3).

Hashem reiterated this promise to Yaacov in the vision of the ladder, “I am Hashem, God of Avraham, your father, and God of Yitzchak. To you and your descendants I give the land upon which you are lying. Your descendants will be [plentiful] as the dust of the earth. [Through them,] you will spread out to the west, to the east, to the north, and to the south. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants” (Genesis 28:13-14). Upon his return to the land after having spent twenty years in the east, Hashem appeared to Yaacov in prophetic vision and said, “Your name is Yaacov, but your name will not be only Yaacov; your name will also be Yisrael (Yashar El)...” and Hashem immediately added the following blessing, “I hereby bequeath to you the land that I gave/promised to Avraham and Yitzchak; I will also give the land to your descendants after you” (Genesis 35:10, 12). Before his passing, Yaacov repeated to Yoseph Hashem’s words to him, “El Shadai appeared to me in Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me. He said to me, ‘Behold I will make you fruitful and numerous; I will make you a community of nations. I will also give this land to your descendants after you as an eternal possession’” (Genesis 48:3-4).

Hashem later reiterated this promise numerous times to Moshe and *bnei Yisrael*:

---

<sup>10</sup> Ur Kasdim is ancient Mesopotamia, Iraq. Specifically, *ur* means fire, and is a reference to the fiery furnace into which Nimrod had cast Avraham.

Psalm 44  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

1. At the burning bush, Hashem told Moshe: “I have indeed seen the suffering of My people in Mitzrayim...I have therefore come down to rescue them from Mitzrayim, to bring them out of that land to a good, spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of *haCanaani*, *haChiti*, *haEmori*, *haPerizi*, *haChivi*, and *haYevusi*” (Exodus 3:8).
2. “I declare that I will bring you out of the wretchedness of Mitzrayim, to the land of *haCanaani*, *haChiti*, *haEmori*, *haPerizi*, *haChivi*, and *haYevusi*—to a land flowing with milk and honey” (Exodus 3:17).
3. “A time will come when Hashem will bring you to the land of *haCanaani*, *haChiti*, *haEmori*, *haChivi*, and *haYevusi*, which He swore to your ancestors to give to you; a land flowing with milk and honey; there, too, you shall perform this service in this month” (Exodus 13:5).
4. “Hear, Israel, and be careful to guard and do [all that I command you] for your own benefit, so that you may multiply exponentially, as Hashem, God of your forefathers, promised you, [when He brings you to] the land flowing with milk and honey” (Deuteronomy 6:3).
5. “You must safeguard and actively fulfill the entire mandate that I am prescribing to you today, so that you may live and flourish, and come to inherit the land that Hashem swore to your forefathers” (Deuteronomy 8:1).
6. “Safeguard the entire mandate that I am prescribing to you today, so that you will be strong and come to inherit the land which you are crossing over to inherit. You will then prolong your days on the land that Hashem swore to your forefathers, to bequeath to them and their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey” (Deuteronomy 11:8-9).
7. “When you come to the land that Hashem your God is giving to you as an inheritance, and you possess it and dwell in it, you shall take the first of all [seven designated] fruits of the earth produced by the land that Hashem your God is giving you...to the place that Hashem will choose...” (Deuteronomy 26:1-2).
8. “...In this way you shall come to the land that Hashem your God is giving you, the land flowing with milk and honey that Hashem, God of your forefathers, promised you” (Deuteronomy 27:3).

Psalm 44  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

9. “Moshe ascended from the plains of Moav to Mount Nebo—to its highest peak that overlooks Yericho. Hashem showed him the entire land...Hashem then said to Moshe, “This is the land regarding which I made an oath to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaacov, saying: I will bequeath it to your descendants. I have let you see it with your eyes [Moshe], but you will not cross over to inherit it” (Deuteronomy 32:1, 4).
10. “Ascend to Transition Mountain, Mount Nebo, in the land of Moav, overlooking Yericho, and see [from there] the land of Canaan that I am giving to the children of Israel as an inheritance” (Deuteronomy 32:49).

These verses inform us in no uncertain terms that Hashem promised Eretz Yisrael as a *yerushah* (inheritance) to the *Avot* (Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaacov) and their descendants. Accordingly, when *bonei Yisrael* entered Eretz Yisrael with Yehoshua and began to reclaim it from the Canaanite nations, this was a fulfillment of that original promise.

### **Inheriting the Land and Bearing Children**

Retracing our steps to Hashem’s original promise to Avraham, it is important to discern two interwoven elements: (1) the inheritance of the land, and (2) the descendants to inherit it. We thus read in Genesis 15, “Avram said, ‘You have not given me seed [I am childless]’” (Genesis 15:3), to which Rashi adds, “What benefit is there in anything You will give me [if I have no heir]?” Hashem’s answer, “Only one born of your loins will inherit you...Your descendants will be as numerous as the stars” (Genesis 15:4-5). The Torah immediately informs us, “He [Avram] believed in Hashem” (15:6), i.e., Avraham believed Hashem’s promise to him that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars. Regarding the second promise that Avraham’s descendants would indeed inherit the land, Hashem now added, “I, Hashem, took/saved you from Ur Kasdim precisely in order to give this land to you as an inheritance” (Genesis 15:7).

Hashem then revealed to Avraham the sad news that this would *not* take place immediately. Rather, “Know with certainty that your descendants will initially be foreigners in a land that is not theirs where they will be enslaved and oppressed...Only the fourth generation will return here [to Eretz Yisrael], since the iniquity of the Emori (descendants of Canaan, youngest son of Cham ben Noah; one of the seven Canaanite nations) will not have reached its full measure until then” (Genesis 15:13, 16).

Incidentally, we learn from here that one of the reasons behind the decree that



Psalm 44  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

*bnei Yisrael* were to spend forty years in the wilderness (in addition to the fact that this was their punishment for the sin of the spies, the sin of not believing that Hashem would fulfill His promise of bringing us into the land) was because the measure of the iniquity of the Emori (embodying here all seven Canaanite nations occupying Eretz Yisrael at that time) was not yet full. As Rashi explains on Genesis 15:16, Hashem does not rush to destroy any nation for its sins, but, rather, waits for the measure of its iniquities to reach its maximum, at which point punishment is swift and thorough. [This is the Torah version of the reason behind the rise and fall of civilizations.] Hashem's decree that *bnei Yisrael* wander in the desert for forty years thus coincided with the divine calculation that the Emori/Canaanite nations would reach their full measure of iniquity by that time as well. It was then that the original promise to Avraham to bequeath the Holy Land to his descendants kicked in.

For a slightly different perspective, see the commentary of Rabbi Chayim ben Attar on Genesis 15:16, "Only the fourth generation will return here, since the iniquity of the Emori will not have reached its full measure until then." He shows conclusively that *bnei Yisrael* would have been able to enter the land immediately after receiving the Torah at Sinai, even if the Emori's measure of iniquity had *not* reached its maximum. It was the sin of the spies that changed that. In the wake of the people accepting the spies' evil report about the land, Hashem sentenced us to wander in the desert for forty years. This then *happened* to coincide with the Emori reaching their full measure of iniquity: "If *bnei Yisrael* would have maintained the high level of righteousness expected of them, nothing would have prevented them from entering the land immediately."<sup>11</sup>

### **The Seven or Ten Canaanite Nations of Antiquity**

In one place, ten Canaanite nations are mentioned: "On that day, Hashem made a covenant with Avram, saying, 'I will give this land to your offspring, from the Egyptian river to the Great River, the Euphrates. [This will include:] *baKeni*, *baKenizi*, and *baKadmoni*; *baChiti*, *baPerizi*, and *baRepbaim*; *baEmori*, *baCanaani*, *baGirgashi*, and *baYevusi*'" (Genesis 15:18-21). In all other places, we see either seven nations mentioned, or six, or even five:

7: "When Hashem your God brings you to the land that you are about to conquer, He will drive out many nations from before you, *baChiti*, *baGirgashi*, *baEmori*, *baCanaani*, *baPerizi*, *baChivi*, and *baYevusi*, seven nations that are more multitudinous and mightier than you" (Deuteronomy 7:1).

---

<sup>11</sup> *Ohr HaChayim* on Genesis 15:16.

Psalm 44  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

7: “You crossed the Yarden and came to Yericho; the men of Yericho and *baEmori*, *baPerizj*, *baCanaani*, *baChiti*, *baGirgasbi*, *baChivi*, and *baYevusi* fought you, but I delivered them into your hands” (Joshua 24:11).

6: “I will bring them out of that land to a good, spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, the territory of *baCanaani*, *baChiti*, *baEmori*, *baPerizj*, *baChivi*, and *baYevusi*” (Exodus 3:8).

6: “I declare that I will bring you out of the wretchedness of Mitzrayim, to the land of *baCanaani*, *baChiti*, *baEmori*, *baPerizj*, *baChivi*, and *baYevusi*—to a land flowing with milk and honey” (Exodus 3:17).

6: “My angel will go before you and will bring you to [the land of] *baEmori*, *baChiti*, *baPerizj*, *baCanaani*, *baChivi*, and *baYevusi*...” (Exodus 23:23).

6: “I will send My angel before you, and I will expel/dispossess *baCanaani*, *baEmori*, *baChiti*, *baPerizj*, *baChivi*, and *baYevusi*” (Exodus 33:2).

6: “Behold, I hereby expel from before you *baEmori*, *baCanaani*, *baChiti*, *baPerizj*, *baChivi*, and *baYevusi*” (Exodus 34:11).

6: “You shall utterly destroy *baChiti*, *baEmori*, *baCanaani*, *baPerizj*, *baChivi*, and *baYevusi*, as Hashem your God has commanded you” (Deuteronomy 20:17).

6: “He will expel *baCanaani*, *baChiti*, *baChivi*, *baPerizj*, *baGirgasbi*, *baEmori*, and *baYevusi* before you” (Joshua 3:10).

6: “*HaCanaani* to the east and west; *baEmori*, *baChiti*, *baPerizj*, *baYevusi* in the hill country; and *baChivi* below the Hermon in the land of Mitzpah” (Joshua 11:3).

6: “The children of Israel lived among *baCanaani*, *baChiti*, *baEmori*, *baPerizj*, *baChivi*, and *baYevusi*” (Judges 3:5).

6: “You established the covenant with him [Avraham] to give the land of *baCanaani*, *baChiti*, *baEmori*, *baPerizj*, *baYevusi*, and *baGirgasbi* to his descendants” (Nehemiah 9:8).

5: “I declare that I will bring you out of the wretchedness of Mitzrayim, to the land of *baCanaani*, *baChiti*, *baEmori*, *baPerizj*, *baChivi*, and *baYevusi*—to a land flowing with milk and honey” (Exodus 3:17).

Psalm 44  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

5: “A time will come when Hashem will bring you to the land of *baCanaani*, *baChiti*, *baEmori*, *baChivi*, and *baYevusi*, which He swore to your ancestors to give to you; a land flowing with milk and honey; there, too, you shall perform this service in this month” (Exodus 13:5).

5: “I will send My angel before you, and I will expel *baCanaani*, *baEmori*, *baChiti*, *baChivi*, and *baYevusi*” (Exodus 33:2).

It is noteworthy that the main seven are not always mentioned; at least one is omitted in the majority of cases. It is also significant that the seven, six, or five that are mentioned almost always appear in a different order. Finally, it is also significant that the name *Eretz Yisrael* (land of Israel) occurs only three times in the entire *Tanakh* (I Samuel 13:19, Ezekiel 40:2, 47:18), compared to some variation of *Eretz Canaan* (land of Canaan) or *Eretz baCanaani* (land of the Canaanites), which appears over seventy times. *Eretz Canaan* is mentioned even in as significant a place as Hashem’s command to Moshe before he passed away, “Ascend to Transition Mountain, Mount Nebo, in the land of Moav, overlooking Yericho, and see [from there] the land of Canaan that I am giving to the children of Israel as an inheritance” (Deuteronomy 32:49). What could be the reason behind this?

In the following sources, we will see that the ten Canaani nations mentioned in Genesis 15:18-21 (seven of whom match the seven nations mentioned in all the other places) correspond to the ten *sefirot* which are always divided into an upper three and lower seven. This might sound surprising at first. The *sefirot* are holy, whereas these nations were involved in some of the most abominable acts imaginable (child sacrifice, idolatry, etc.). How can God allow the holy energy of the *sefirot* to become the life-force of that which is antithetical to godliness?

Kabbalah answers that Hashem made the world in such a way that the divine energy of the *sefirot*—which is *the* fundamental energy of all creation—becomes more clothed and obscured as it descends into and through each succeeding universe or dimension. This process of the *devolution* of holy energy continues through many stages, to the point that this same holy energy actually dresses up in—and becomes the life-force of—the system of evil.

This answers another more fundamental question: From where does evil receive its life-force? To answer with a question: Where, indeed, would evil receive its life-force if not from God? Judaism is, after all, a monotheistic tradition. It goes without saying that there is only ONE ENERGY behind all. One of the many powerful verses that expresses this is, “*Atah Hu Hanayah levadekha*—You alone are *Hanayah*, Eternal Being; You made the heavens, the heavens of the heavens and all their hosts, the earth and everything upon it, the

Psalm 44  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

seas, and all they contain; *ve'atab mechayeh et kulam*—and You constantly give [existence and] life to them all; the heavenly hosts therefore bow down [acknowledge and nullify themselves] before You” (Nechemiah 9:6).

According to the kabbalistic reading of this verse, there are several key points here. First, although Hashem alone is Infinite-Eternal Being, and all is subsumed in His infinite oneness, nevertheless, He willed a multileveled universal system into existence (heavens, heavens of heavens) which He continually enlivens and constantly renews. Angels (heavenly hosts) play an important role in this. They serve as transmitters of heavenly life-force from each higher dimension to the dimension(s) below them. This is the meaning of the angels' bowing before Hashem. As each angel bows to the level above it to receive the exact “voltage” of life-force that it requires for its own existence, it simultaneously transmits and bestows a lower voltage of that same life-force to the level(s) beneath it.<sup>12</sup>

Second, the word *mehchayeh* has a double meaning. Do not read only “*ve'Atab mechayeh et kulam*—You constantly give *life* to them all,” but on a deeper level, “*ve'Atab mehchayeh et kulam*—You constantly give *existence* to them all.”<sup>13</sup> Third, the words “*et kulam—to them all*” allude to the fact that Hashem gives existence not only to the forces of goodness and holiness, but also to the forces of darkness and evil, in the mystery of *Galut HaShekhinah* (the Exile of the Divine Presence). On a revealed level, there can be no greater contradiction to Hashem's complete and absolute sovereignty than this. However, concealed behind this *chilul* (profanation of the power of holiness) is Hashem's plan to elevate creation to an infinitely higher level than if there had never been any evil.<sup>14</sup>

There is only one fundamental energy behind everything. It has many names, which are none other than the various different frequencies and modalities through which it manifests. Behind all of them, there is only THE ONE. “*Atah Hu Havayah levadekha*—You alone are *Havayah*, Eternal Being” (Nechemiah 9:6). You are the one who is hiding behind everything. Your plan was to create not only a system of filters, but a system of camouflages, so that it would be up to us to discover You. In doing so, we automatically redeem the sparks of

---

<sup>12</sup> See *Tzemach Tzedek* (Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, 1789-1866), “Although bowing represents a complete nullification and surrender of self to the blessed One, nevertheless, it comes about that, precisely because of this nullification, a flow of sustenance is drawn down from above...” (*Derech Mitzvotekha, Mitzvat Milah*, pp. 5a-b).

<sup>13</sup> *Parades Rimonim* 6:8; *Reshit Chokhmah, Shaar HaKedushah* 7; *Shnei Luchot HaBrit, Toldot Adam, Beit HaBechirah*, p. 44a; *Tanya, Shaar HaYichud Ve'haEmunah* 2, p. 77b.

<sup>14</sup> *Leshem Shro Ve'Achlalmah, Hakdamot Ve'Shearim* 7:6, p. 110; *Leshem, Drushey Olam HaTohu, Chelek Beit*, 4:12:4, p. 108; *ibid.* 4:14:2, p. 126, quoting *Zohar Vayechi*, 1:217b.

Psalm 44  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

holiness which heretofore sustained evil and allowed it to operate freely—in the world and within the human psyche. In doing so, we expose the lie that anything has any existence other than from You. As always in Judaism, it is not God against the devil, but man against evil. God creates and sustains even evil, for when we overcome it, we participate in the great work of *giluy ha'yibud*, the *realization* within—and the *revelation* without (in the totality of creation)—of Hashem's absolute oneness.

### The Husk Precedes the Fruit

Our sages have transmitted to us an important principle. In tens of places in the *Kivvey HaAri* alone we read, “*Ha'klipah kadmah la'pri*—the husk always precedes the fruit.”<sup>15</sup> In one place, this is taken to mean that although Hashem's primary thought is for the fruit (the revelation of the good), still, the initial reality that presents itself in terms of our actual experience is the husk (the difficulties we encounter that prevent us from attaining the good).<sup>16</sup> Based on his deep insight into this, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan taught:<sup>17</sup>

The purpose of evil is to allow free choice to exist and thereby bring about the *primary* purpose of creation, which is man's attaching himself to God and ultimately restoring the world to good. The fact that evil exists and that it sustains itself from good is a result of the *secondary* elements in creation. By way of analogy, evil is like the peel of a fruit or the shell of a nut. In themselves, they are useless, but they serve the secondary purpose of preserving the fruit until it is ready to be eaten.<sup>18</sup> The same is true of evil. It does not serve God's primary purpose of bestowing good, but it does fulfill the secondary purpose of making it possible. In fact, the destiny of evil is to be transformed ultimately into good [by purifying it].<sup>19</sup> Slowly but surely, the world must reach the level of perfection planned by God.

It is not by chance that one of the great Chasidic masters, Rabbi Shlomo Rabinowitz of Radomsk (1801-1866) connects this idea specifically to the relationship between Eretz Canaan and Eretz Yisrael:<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> *Sefer HaLikutim, Vayetzge*, Chapter 36; *ibid. Mishle*, Chapter 30; *Likutey Torah* (Ari), *Beresbit, Lekh Lekha, Vayislach*; *Sefer Adam Yashar, Drush BeInyan HaAkudim, Sefer Arba Meot Shekel Kesef*, p. 205; *Sbaar HaYechudim*, Chapter 5; *Machberet HaKodesh, Shaar Sefirat HaOmer*. See the primary source in *Zohar Balak*, 3:185a-b.

<sup>16</sup> See Rabbi Yonatan Eybeschutz, *Tiferet Yonatan* on Genesis 1:1.

<sup>17</sup> Kaplan, *Innerspace*, p. 71.

<sup>18</sup> Rabbenu Tam, 1100-1171, *Sefer HaYashar*, Chapter 1, *ot gimel*.

<sup>19</sup> Ramchal, *Kalach Pit'chey Chokhmah* 2.

<sup>20</sup> *Tiferet Shlomo al HaTorah, Parashat Acharey Mot*.

Psalm 44  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

It is known from our holy books in the mystery of the creation of the world [i.e., in the mystery of the shattering of the vessels that preceded the creation of the world], that in all matters concerning *kedushah* (holiness), the *klipah* (husk), which is the *sitra achra* (the system of evil), parasitically attaches itself to the *kedushah* and envelops it in order to suck its life-force from it. This is the meaning of the verse, “*Saviv resbaim yit’halakhun—surrounding, the wicked walk about*” (Psalm 12:9). Indeed, the more *kadosh* something is, the more powerfully the *klipah* tries to overwhelm it, as the Zohar says regarding the *orlah* (foreskin) that surrounds the *brit kodesh*, holy covenant of circumcision,<sup>21</sup> and as is known from the fact that “*ba’klipah kadmah la’pri—the husk always precedes the fruit.*” Indeed, this explains the power that the accursed Canaani had over the Holy Land.

This is what we meant above when we said that the divine energy of the *sefirot*—which is the fundamental energy of all creation—becomes more clothed and obscured as it descends into and through each succeeding universe or dimension. This process of *devolution* continues to the point that this same divine energy actually dresses up in—and becomes the life-force of—the system of evil. In terms of Eretz Yisrael, these nations *are* the *klipah* that surrounded and preceded the fruit. When Israel was/is not worthy, the *klipah* claims full ownership of the land—and the entire world supports that claim. When Israel is worthy, the *klipah* falls away of its own, and the true holiness of the land is revealed for all to see.

In addition, as an extra bonus, the fruit of the land blossoms in all its splendor. This is the meaning of Ezekiel’s prophecy regarding the re-flourishing of the land in preparation for the return of *Am Yisrael* to their land, “But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and bear your fruit for My people, when their return is close at hand” (Ezekiel 36:8), regarding which the Talmud says, “*Ein lekha ketz megulah mizab—there is no clearer sign that the end is imminent than this.*”<sup>22</sup> Rashi explains, “When the land of Israel will yield its produce in superabundance, this will signal the approach of the end of the exile. There is no clearer sign of the end than this.”

This prophecy takes on its real significance when we look back to the Torah’s own statements concerning the inherent goodness (i.e., fertility) of the land of Israel when—and only when—the Jewish people maintain the high moral standards that Hashem expects of them. It is thus written, “For Hashem your God is bringing you into a good land—a land with flowing streams and underground springs gushing forth in valley and mountain. It is a land of wheat,

---

<sup>21</sup> *Zohar Balak*, 3:185a-b.

<sup>22</sup> *Sanhedrin* 98a.

Psalm 44  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

barley, figs, and pomegranates—a land of oil-olives and honey-dates. It is a land where you shall not eat your bread in rations, and you will not lack anything—a land whose stones are iron and from whose mountains you will quarry copper. When you eat and are satisfied, you must therefore bless Hashem your God for the good land that He has given you” (Deuteronomy 8:7-10). This is immediately followed by, “Be careful lest you forget Hashem your God, not keeping His commandments, decrees, and laws...” (Deuteronomy 8:11).

### Psychological Canaanites

With Hashem’s help, we shall now explore the deeper psycho-spiritual meaning behind the above. Rabbi Chayim Vital writes in the name of the Ari:<sup>23</sup>

“On that day, Hashem made a covenant with Avram, saying, ‘I will give this land to your offspring, from the Egyptian river to the Great River, the Euphrates. [This will include:] *baKeni*, *baKenizi*, and *baKadmoni*; *baChiti*, *baPerizi*, and *baRephaim*; *baEmori*, *baCanaani*, *baGirgashi*, and *baYevusi*” (Genesis 15:18-21). Behold, the ten nations named here correspond to the ten *midot* of *kedushah* (qualities of holiness, i.e., the *sefirot*). These ten nations are their counterpart in the *klipah* [i.e., this is what the *sefirot* are called when their holy energy is trapped in the *klipah*].

The Torah subsequently mentions only seven of these nations because Israel was given the wherewithal to conquer those seven only. They were not able to conquer the three nations that correspond to the three subtler *klipot*, corresponding respectively to the three highest *sefirot*, *Keter*, *Chokhmah*, and *Binah*. From the bottom up, these three nations are *baKeni*, *baKenizi*, and *baKadmoni*. *Keni* (*gematria* 160) parallels *Binah* (and the divine name *Ekeveh* spelled with yods: *Aleph-lamed-peh*, *Heb-yod*, *Yod-vav-dalet*, *Heb-yod*, whose *gematria* is 161). *Kenizi* (which is made up of the same letters as *zaken*-elder) parallels *Chokhmah*, as alluded to in the phrase “*Ein zaken ela mi sh’kanah chokhmah*—there is no true *zaken*-elder except one who has acquired wisdom.”<sup>24</sup> Its *klipah* counterpart is called *kenizi*. *Kadmoni* parallels *Keter* of the *klipah*.<sup>25</sup>

Rabbi Yaacov Yitzchak, the Seer of Lublin (1745-1815), is credited in a few places for identifying the sefirotic correspondences to the seven nations: “*Canaani* parallels *Chesed*. *Chiti* parallels *Gevurah*. *Emori* parallels *Tiferet*. *Perizi*

---

<sup>23</sup> Ari, *Likutey Torah*, *Lekh Lekha*.

<sup>24</sup> *Kiddushin* 32b.

<sup>25</sup> See also *Ohr HaChayim* on Genesis 15:18.

Psalm 44  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

parallels *Netzach*. *Chivi* parallels *Hod*. *Yevusi* parallels *Yesod*. *Girgashi* parallels *Malkhut*.<sup>26</sup>

*Sefer Zot Zikaron* quotes the Baal Shem Tov on the direct connection between these seven nations and the seven *sefirot* enumerated at the beginning of *Vaybarekh David*:<sup>27</sup>

I heard in the name of Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov that a person must rectify and straighten his *midot* (character traits), paralleling the seven *midot* of holiness alluded to in the verse, “Yours, Hashem, is the *gedulah*, and the *gevurah*, the *tiferet*, and the *netzach*, and the *hod*, for all (*kei kol, gematria yesod*) that is in heaven and earth is Yours, Hashem, the *mamlakbah* (*malkhut*) and the absolute sovereignty over all” (I Chronicles 29:11). [He now lists numerous examples of perversions of the abovementioned qualities, and then their proper and holy use, and finally concludes:] *Zeh leumat zeh bem shoresh shiva amamin*—these [holy qualities] are the exact counterpart and root of the seven nations that will cease to exist when Hashem bequeaths the totality of Eretz Yisrael to Israel. I heard this from the Baal Shem Tov of blessed memory that *Canaani* parallels *chesed*, etc.

In *Tzavaat HaRivash* (the Last Will and Testament of the Baal Shem Tov), we read:<sup>28</sup>

If, heaven forbid, you are unexpectedly overcome by a powerful negative trait [whether to the side of *chesed* (love), like lust; or to the side of *gevurah* (strength), like anger], enumerate the seven Canaani nations with all your might, with awe and with love, and the negativity will depart. In addition, in doing this, you will not only nullify this trait, but you will elevate and bind [the inner spark of holiness in] this trait to Hashem. For instance, if you lust for something, turn your love and your entire being to Hashem. Or if you feel anger, which is a negative form of fear that stems from the quality of *gevurah*, concentrate on fearing Hashem and in this way transform this anger into a *merkavah* (vehicle) for serving Him.

In his *Tzettel Katan* (literally, Small Notebook), Rabbi Elimelekh of Lizensk repeats this admonition and explains:<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> *Kehilat Yaacov, erekh gimel-resh*, by Rabbi Yaacov Tzvi Yaalish, a close disciple of the Seer of Lublin; *Baal Shem Tov al HaTorah, Shemot* 11-13, and *Makor Chayim* there, notes #12-13; *Bnei Yissasskhar, Chodshei Kislev-Tevet, Maamar Dalet*, #31; *Igra d’Kallab, Lekh Lekha*, #19-21.

<sup>27</sup> *Sefer Zot Zikaron, Parashat Shlach Lekha; Baal Shem Tov al HaTorah, Shemot* 12.

<sup>28</sup> *Tzavaat HaRivash*, 1:14 or 1:28.

<sup>29</sup> *Tzettel Katan, siman beh*.



Psalm 44  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

You may have evil traits such as stubbornness, false modesty that stems from pride, laziness, or idleness that leads to dullness. When such an evil trait begins to arouse itself in you, heaven forbid, immediately say the following words with all your might: “*HaCanaani, haChiti, haEmori, haPerizi, haChivi, haYevusi, vebaGirgashi.*” You will then be saved.

We clearly do not have *Canaanis* or *Chivis* or any of these other nations any more in their ancient form. We do, however, have psychological *Canaanis* and *Chivis*. Indeed, it can be said that *Canaani, Chiti, Emori, Perizi, Chivi, Yevusi, and Girgashi*—in all the possible combinations—are the raw materials of our personality that we have been given to rectify and transform into holiness. Of course, our first reaction to hearing such a thing is that it is not fair. We do not choose to have any particular compulsion, any particular neurosis, any particular psychological issue or dysfunctionality. But the answer is that we did choose it, or more correctly, heaven chose it for us, and we agreed. So, the lesson is, don’t throw anything away. Rather, transform! Let each of us use what we’ve been given to become the true, eternal me that is far better than if we had been given perfection on a silver platter.

In sum, we have been given all these negative traits that we find in ourselves—if we are willing to admit that we have them—or that we see in others because it is easier to project—so that we can transform them by turning darkness into light, bitter into sweet, ugly into beautiful. This is the underlying theme of Rabbi Nachman’s *Azamra* teaching in *Likutey Moharan* I, 282 regarding the sparks of holiness and points of goodness and godliness that exist in all of us, but which are sunken in and shrouded over by *klipah* forces that do their very best to suck their energy from them.<sup>30</sup> Our task—a superhuman task that can only be done with Hashem’s help—is to reclaim and redeem these sparks.

We return now to the suggestion put forth by the Baal Shem Tov and seconded by Rabbi Elimelekh, to enumerate the names of the seven nations. Although saying these names with all our might in this way might be construed as empowering these very negative traits, it appears that both these great masters think otherwise. Indeed, precisely by calling them by name we neutralize them and deprive them of their energy. For these *klipah* forces are like shadows; they usually work insidiously from behind and below the threshold of consciousness. They whisper in our mind, and we think it’s us. But here, by calling them by name, we are bringing them out of hiding, into the light of day, exposing them to the full light of consciousness.

---

<sup>30</sup> See *Inside Psalm 37*, “Judging our Fellow Favorably.”

Psalm 44  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

This same idea of redeeming elevating fallen traits is seen throughout the teachings of the Baal Shem and his disciples. The Maggid of Mezritch thus taught:<sup>31</sup>

The way of heaven is to test a person to see whether he is worthy of ascending and advancing spiritually to the next higher level of closeness to Hashem. At times, heaven sends a negatively charged thought to him. If he is wise, he can use that thought itself to bind himself to Hashem all the more. The reason for this is that this thought consists of letters that are actually part of the Divine Essence, but which fell as a result of the primordial shattering of the vessels. In the process of falling, they became re-arranged, and as a result, they are now intermingled with the evil *kelipot*...

When a person understands the reason for any of these negative thoughts, he can elevate them. If it involves desire and lust, it has fallen from the world of *ahavah* (love); if it involves a debilitating phobia, it has fallen from the world of *yirah* (fear); if it involves pride, it has fallen from the world of *tiferet* (splendor). The same is true of all other such negative thoughts, for they are literally the fallen aspects of the seven *sefirot* that are called “the seven days of creation.” By binding these negative thoughts to Hashem through love and awe, one is able to restore them to their original holiness. Each thought can be elevated to the holy *sefirah* from which it fell. By doing so, he elevates it from being imprisoned in the *kelipot* and restores its letters to their proper arrangement.

What about *haKeni*, *haKenizi*, and *haKadmoni*, the three nations promised to Avraham, corresponding respectively to the three highest *sefirot*, *Binah*, *Chokhmah*, and *Keter*? Clearly they allude to the complete transformation of consciousness that will take place in the Messianic Era. May it be soon in our days.

---

<sup>31</sup> *Maggid Devarav LeYaacov* 53.

Psalm 67  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

## Psalm 67

Psalm 67 is called the *Menorah* Psalm because it is symmetrical and fits perfectly into the form of a seven-branched *Menorah*. After its four-word superscription (verse 1), whose twenty letters serve as the “flames” of the *Menorah*, the psalm contains seven verses with a total of forty-nine words. The first and last verses (the outer “branches” of the *Menorah*) contain seven words respectively ( $7 + 7 = 14$ ). The second and second-to-last verses/branches contain six words each ( $6 + 6 = 12$ ). The third and third-to-last verses/branches not only contain six words each, but are identical ( $6 + 6 = 12$ ). The fourth verse/branch is exactly midway between the two extremities. It contains eleven words, bringing the total number of words in verses 2-8 to forty-nine. This middle verse also happens to contain forty-nine letters. When the entire psalm is drawn in the form of a seven-branched *Menorah*, this verse is the middle shaft or spine of the *Menorah*, while the verses that surround it are its branches. See *Inside Psalm 67*.

Content-wise, too, this psalm is perfectly symmetrical. It is also one of the most perfect expressions of the Universal God-idea behind all Jewish teachings. In addition, according to a tradition recorded by the Chida (Rabbi Chayim Yoseph David Azulai) in his *Midbar Kedemot*, this psalm originated when Hashem showed it prophetically to Moshe Rabbenu. Later, while in a state of *ruach ha'kodesh*, King David envisioned it engraved on a sheet of gold in the form of a *Menorah*. He then engraved the *Menorah* Psalm on his own golden shield. Whenever he would go out to war, he would contemplate its mystery. His enemies would then miraculously fall before him.

The *Menorah* Psalm thus has a special power to confer success. According to tradition, anyone who contemplates the *Menorah* Psalm each day, and concentrates on its mystery, is considered as if he had “kindled” the heavenly *Menorah*. He may then be assured that he is a *ben Olam Haba* (a child of the Next World—even while alive in this world).

The fact that this psalm is about universal peace and perfection, and yet at the same time, was used as a war psalm, seems contradictory, to say the least. In truth, however, it is not, for it is nothing less than a prayer for the amplification of consciousness on Planet Earth to the point where war will no longer be possible. In other words, in expressing the Ultimate God-Idea, it spells out the secret of how to end all war.

(1) *LaMenatzeyach BiNeginot* – Dedicated to the Master Symphony Conductor of Creation who grants victory through melodies.  
*Mizmor Shir* – A chant song to cut away the obstacles that prevent us from appreciating His blessings.

(2) *Elohim*—may He be gracious to us and bless us; may He shine the light of His face/presence upon us and accompany us forever, *selah*.

(3) May Your way become known on earth, the power of Your deliverance acknowledged among all nations, for precisely by revealing Your special providence over Israel, Your way—the way You run the world—will become known on earth, and the power of Your deliverance acknowledged among all nations.

(4) O how we await the day when nations will acknowledge You, *Elohim*, when all nations will acknowledge You together.

(5) Nations will rejoice and sing for joy, for You will judge all peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth to their perfection forever, *selah*.

(6) Nations will acknowledge You, *Elohim*, all nations together will

Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
 The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
 Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

acknowledge You.

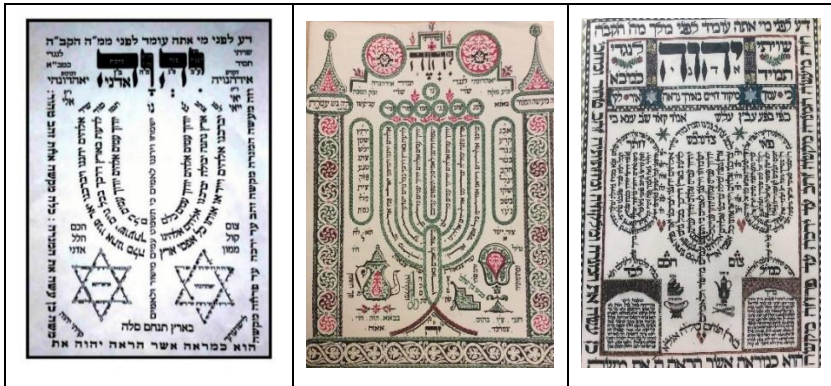
(7) Then earth existence will have yielded its produce [fulfilled its intended purpose, the complete actualization of God-consciousness]. *Elohim Elohenu* (our God) will bless us.

(8) *Elohim* will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will be in awe of Him.

## Inside Psalm 67

### The Menorah Psalm

In our introductory note, we mentioned some of the mathematical symmetry embedded in Psalm 67. This mathematical symmetry is only the outer frame of the actual content of this psalm. The mystery of the seven-branched *Menorah* is complete only when we pay attention to the divine name that appears above it—*YKVK*, and the divine name that appears in it—*Elokim*. Look well at these *Shivitis*:



This form of Jewish art is called *Shviti* because of the phrase, **שְׂוִיתִי הָיְוָה לְנֶגְדִי תָמִיד**—*Shviti Havayah lenegdi tamid*, one of the meanings of which is “I place the four-letter name of *Havayah* before me at all times” (Psalm 16:8).<sup>1</sup>

The name *Havayah*-*YKVK* above the *Menorah* Psalm indicates that we want the light of *Havayah*, which embodies Hashem’s *chesed* (love), as well as His transcendence over creation, to shine into, interpenetrate, and irradiate all of creation. This is accomplished through the name *Elokim*, which embodies Hashem’s *gevurah* (restraint or concealment of the full power of His light, love, and mercy), as well as His directorship over all the phenomena of creation. This

<sup>1</sup> See above, *Inside Psalm 16*, “In God’s Presence.”

Psalm 67  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

dynamic is embodied in the fact that the four-letter ineffable name of *Havayah* is suspended over the *Menorah* Psalm and shines down into our lives through its seven supernal branches. Again, the relationship between the *Havayah* and the *Menorah* Psalm is that of *chesed* (love) to *gevurah* (judgment)—that is, the perfect combination of love and justice.

On a more detailed level, it is also embodied in the fact that the Hebrew initials of verses 2-8 are *aleph* (1), *lamed* (30), *yod* (10), *yod* (10), *yod* (10), *aleph* (1), *yod* (10). The total *gematria* of these letters is 72, the *gematria* of the word *chesed* (love). The final letters of verses 2-8 are *heb* (5), *khaf* (20), *mem* (40), *heb* (5), *mem* (40), *vav* (6), *tzadi* (90). Together with the initial *yod* (10) of verse 4, the total *gematria* of these letters is 216, the same as the words *yirah* (awe) and *gevurah* (strength/restraint). In addition, the total number of letters in verses 2-8 is 216. Surely, it is not by chance that the *gematria* of both *yirah* (awe) and *gevurah* (strength/restraint) is three times *chesed* ( $72 \times 3 = 216$ ). This makes this psalm parallel to the three consecutive verses in the book of Exodus that contain exactly 72 letters each (*chesed*), and therefore total 216 letters in all (*yirah/gevurah*).<sup>2</sup>

In addition, the *Havayah* represents the level of *ness* (miracle) that stands over and above the world of *ha'teva* (nature, *gematria* 86) embodied in the name *Elokim* (*gematria* 86). It also corresponds to the level of eight ( $7 + 1$ ) and fifty ( $7 \times 7 + 1$ ) that stands over and above the seven main verses of Psalm 67 with its forty-nine words and forty-nine letters of its central branch. In Jewish numerology, eight and fifty transcend the laws of this world.<sup>3</sup>

We also mentioned the fact that this psalm is about universal peace and perfection, and yet, at the same time, was used as a war psalm. We claimed that this is not a contradiction because this psalm is nothing less than a prayer for the amplification of consciousness on Planet Earth to the point where war will no longer be possible. In other words, in expressing the Ultimate God Idea, it spells out the secret of how to end all war. How does it do this?

The first verse begins with the prayer “*Elohim yechonenu vi'barekhenenu yaer panav itanu*—may *Elokim* grace us, bless us, and shine [the light of] His face/presence upon us [reveal His special providence in our life], *selah*.” First grace, then blessing, then special providential care.

The word *itanu* catches our attention. It should say *yaer panav alenu* (shine His

---

<sup>2</sup> See *Inside Psalm 145*, “The Name of 72 Triads,” regarding the three verses in Exodus 14:19-21.

<sup>3</sup> See *Inside Psalm 6*, “Symbolic Numbers” and “Sacred Numbers—Seven and Eight.” See also *Inside Psalm 19*, “Maharal on the Power of Eight.”

Psalm 67  
 Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
 The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
 Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

face upon us) or *yaer panav elenu* (shine His face toward us). The word *itanu* is strange in this context. *Itanu*, of course, comes from the word *et*, which can be translated as “with.” In modern Hebrew as well, we would say *hu ba itanu* about someone who will be “arriving with us,” because he or she is “accompanying us.” In our opinion, this is exactly what it means here in terms of God’s face, i.e., His providence. We are asking Him to accompany us, to shine the light of His presence into every nook and cranny of our life; to shine the light of eight into the seven branches of our menorahs.<sup>4</sup>

The initials of the words *yaer panav itanu* are *yod* (י) *peh* (פ) *aleph* (א). This same combination appears twice in *Birkat Cohanim* (the Priestly Blessing): “[*Yaer*] *YKVK panav elekha*—may Hashem shine His face toward you,” and “[*Yissa*] *YKVK panav elekha*—may Hashem lift His face toward you” (Numbers 6:25-26). It forms the initials of the words “*padita oti YKVK*—redeem me, Hashem” (Psalm 31:6), the initials of, “[*yeshvu*] *yesharim et panekha*—the upright will dwell forever in Your presence” (Psalm 140:14), and the initials of, “*poteyach et yadekha*—You open Your hands [to satisfy the desire of all that is alive]” (Psalm 145:16).<sup>5</sup>

May He shine [the light of] His face upon us ( <i>yod-peh-aleph</i> )	יָאֵר פָּנָיו אֶתְנוּ (יפ"א)	Psalm 67:2
May Hashem shine His face toward you ( <i>yod-peh-aleph</i> )	יָאֵר [יְהוָה] פָּנָיו אֵלַיְךָ (יפ"א)	Numbers 6:25
May Hashem lift/turn His face toward you ( <i>yod-peh-aleph</i> )	יִשָּׂא [יְהוָה] פָּנָיו אֵלַיְךָ (יפ"א)	Numbers 6:26
Redeem me, Hashem ( <i>peh-aleph-yod</i> )	פְּדֵית אֹתִי יְהוָה (פא"י)	Psalm 31:6
The upright will dwell forever in Your presence ( <i>yod-aleph-peh</i> )	יְשֻׁבוּ [יְשָׂרִים] אֶת פָּנֶיךָ (יא"פ)	Psalm 140:14
You open Your hands ( <i>peh-aleph-yod</i> )	פּוֹתַח אֶת יָדֶךָ (פא"י)	Psalm 145:16

Perhaps, the most important mystery about this triad is that its combined numerical value is ninety-one. It thus conceals within itself a *yichud* (unification) of the two divine names, *YKVK* (26) and *ADNY* (65), which embody, respectively, Hashem’s attribute of unconditional mercy and His attribute of justice. The attribute of justice, as we have seen, refers to the mode of

---

<sup>4</sup> See below, “Becoming a Menorah,” where we put forth the idea that we not only light a *menorah* that is external to us (or recite the words of a psalm that is depicted in the form of a *menorah*), but we become a *menorah*.

<sup>5</sup> We will delve deeply into the deeper meaning of “*poteyach et yadekha*” in *Inside Psalm 145*, “The Name of 72 Triads” and “The Ari on Poteyach Et Yadekha.”

Psalm 67  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

providence that Hashem uses to judge man according to his actions. The attribute of mercy refers to the mode of providence that Hashem uses when He overrides man's actions in favor of His own plan. "Justice" means that man is responsible for his actions. "Mercy" means that Hashem's plan will ultimately prevail. The combination of these two names thus represents the ultimate unity, harmony, and balance that transcends the either/or of mercy or justice.

In verse 3 of our psalm, this unity is called "Your way." It is called God's way because it transcends all dichotomies. For God, there is no contradiction between the two. In His infiniteness, He transcends and embodies all seeming dichotomies in a perfect unity. According to this teaching, man is 100% responsible for the consequences of his actions. At the same time, everything that happens is completely 100% in Hashem's loving hands. When you see both sides of the equation, there is simply no more contradiction. This is expressed countless times in countless ways throughout the psalms. In Psalm 97:2, for instance, this is expressed as, "The foundation upon which His throne rests is [a perfect combination of] charity and strict justice."

In Gate Eight of *Nine Gates to the Psalms* and *Inside Psalm 145*, we speak about the fact that many of our prayers switch back and forth between second person *nokhabch* (present, direct address) and third person *nistar* (hidden, indirect). Note, here, in our psalm, the change in person from verse 2 to verse 3: "*Elokim*—may *He* be gracious to us and bless us. May *He* shine [the light of] *His* presence upon us [and accompany us forever], *selah*. May *Your* way become known on earth, [the power of] *Your* deliverance [acknowledged] among all nations."

In verse 2, we speak about God in third person. In verse 3, we speak directly to Him in second person. This switch to second person indicates, here, that Hashem's providence (which is normally completely hidden because it transcends human conception) will become totally obvious in the messianic future. This is the meaning of the emphatic "*la'daat ba'aretz darkekha*—may Your way become known on the earth," as in "The earth shall be filled with the consciousness of Hashem as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9). The switch to second person is thus the grammatical equivalent to what the words actually say.

What is "*Your* deliverance"? It is the deliverance and salvation that Hashem will bring about for Israel, and for the nations of the world as well. It is also God's own salvation. Remember Psalm 3:9, "*laShem ba'yeshua, al amekha birkhatekha selah*—[the secret of ultimate] salvation is Yours, Hashem; may Your blessing therefore rest upon Your people forever, *selah!*" As we saw, Rashi interprets the phrase *al amekha birkhatekha* not as a request that Hashem's blessing rest upon His people, but as a charge that devolves upon Israel to bless Him (*al amekha*

Psalm 67  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

*birkhatekha* = it is *on* or *for* Your people to bless You): “Hashem, while it is You alone who can bring salvation, it is for Your people to bless You forever, *selah!*” This seems to imply that even when life is dark and salvation seems far away, Israel should nevertheless bless Hashem. In this way, we play our part in fashioning (and becoming) the vessel through which ultimate redemption will manifest.

One way or the other, the secret or key to ultimate salvation and redemption is in God’s hands. Yes, man is charged with the responsibility of bringing the world to the point at which redemption becomes possible. Ultimate redemption itself, however, the crowning of man’s efforts, is in God’s hands alone.

This same dynamic is mirrored in numerous other places. It is built into the system of Torah. In one place, it is written, “*U’maltem et orlat levavkem*—you shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart” (Deuteronomy 10:16), and later in another place, “*U’mal Hashem Elobekha et levavkha*—Hashem will circumcise your heart” (Deuteronomy 30:6). In one place, it is written, “*Ve’shanta ad Hashem Elobekha*—you shall return to Hashem your God” (Deuteronomy 30:2), and immediately afterward, it is written, “*Ve’shav Hashem Elobekha et shevutkha*—Hashem will restore/return your captivity” (Deuteronomy 30:3).

Man is charged with “awakening in *teshuvah* from below” (justice), as a preparation for God’s “awakening His mercies from above” (mercy). We are to work for six days of the week retrieving sparks of holiness that are trapped in the external layers of reality, in order to receive the inner light of the *Shabbat* on the seventh day. We are to work the land and enjoy the fruits of our labor for six years in order to give up all ownership rights in the seventh (*Shmittah*) year. We are to struggle through six thousand years of history in order to deserve the privilege of entering the Great Sabbath of the seventh millennium. Moving to a multiple of seven, we count forty-nine days from *Pesach* (Passover) in order to receive the Torah on *Shavuot*, the fiftieth day, the day which is beyond our counting (although without having counted forty-nine days, we could never receive what God wants to give us on the fiftieth). We also count forty-nine years (seven *Shmittah* cycles) in preparation for the fiftieth (*Yovel*-Jubilee) year.

Whether it is the relationship between six-and-seven, or seven-and-eight, or forty-nine-and-fifty, the idea is the same. In each instance, the reward at the end is of a different magnitude than the work done to earn it. Without working for it within a lower dimension of space-time, we cannot possibly receive the gift of Eternity that He wants to give us. Essentially, He placed us (our souls) down here in space-time to give us the opportunity to actively participate in



Psalm 67  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

bringing the world to its perfection. This is His greatest gift. As Ramchal put it, “The purpose of all that was created was to bring into existence a creature who could derive pleasure from God’s own good...God’s wisdom decreed, however, that for such good to be perfect, the one enjoying it must be its master. He must be one who has earned it for himself, and not one associated with it accidentally...”<sup>6</sup>

Additionally, the Zohar learns that, not only Israel and mankind, not only nature and the cosmos, are presently in a state of exile from the Divine and require redemption. *Shekbinah* (the indwelling presence of *Ein Sof* within creation) is also in exile with Israel. This is thus the alternate meaning of “*laShem ha’yeshuah*—redemption will [also] be for God Himself.”<sup>7</sup> According to this, our verse, too, could be referring to God’s own salvation. When the nations see God’s way revealed, they will also understand that all of history was a messianic process of redemption. They will understand that Israel’s salvation is none other than their own salvation, and that all our salvations are nothing less than God’s own salvation.

Verse 4 thus follows with, “*Yodukha amim, Elokim; yodukha amim kulam*—nations will thank and acknowledge You, i.e., Your justice, *Elokim*, all of them together will thank and acknowledge You.” That is, when this Way—the perfect combination of justice (man’s work) and mercy (God’s love)—will become known on earth, and the power of His deliverance will be acknowledged among all nations, then all nations will finally fully acknowledge God as the author and director of history. With this recognition, there will be no more war. On the contrary, as verse 5 states, “Nations will rejoice and sing for joy, for [they will realize that] You judge all peoples justly, and that You not only have been guiding the nations of the earth to their perfection from time immemorial, but that You will continue to do so forever.”

In verse 6, the symmetry of the psalm now requires that the nations recognize God again, this time after having woken up from the dream of history (i.e., after having seen through the illusion of separation that this world perpetrates) to taste its ultimate sweetness. The recognition of verse 6 thus takes place at an even higher level than in verse 4. This final recognition is described in verse 7 as “earth existence will finally have yielded its produce [thereby fulfilling its intended purpose, the complete actualization of God-consciousness].”

Verse 7 sees Israel re-enter the picture after having been vindicated. It is also a return on a higher level to verse 1 in which we asked that *Elokim* be gracious

---

<sup>6</sup> Ramchal, *Derekh Hashem* 1:2:1-2.

<sup>7</sup> *Zohar Emor*, 3:90b on Psalm 3:9.

Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
 The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
 Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

toward us and bless us. Now, although the same verb form is used, it can be translated not only as a request, but as a certainty: “*Elokim Elokenu* (our God) will bless us.”

Verse 8 then culminates with all Israel proclaiming, “*Elokim* will bless us, and all the ends of the earth be in awe of Him.” The ends of the earth represent those aspects of physical reality that hide the godly presence most opaquely. Those dark spots will now yield to the light. *Ve’yirru oto kol afsei aretz* means not only that they will fear God, but that they will stand in *yirah* (awe) that emerges from a higher *re’iyah* (awareness). This is based on the fact that *yirah* (awe) contains the same consonants as *re’iyah* (seeing), and that the *yod-resh-aleph* of both these words becomes the basis for the letters *a-w-r* of the English “awareness.”

**Deciphering the SHIVITI**

The top line of the above *Shiviti* (immediately above the ineffable name *Havayah*) reads: “*Da lifnei mi atah omed, lifnei Melekh malkhey ha’melakchim HaKadosh barukh Hu*—know before whom you stand, before the Supreme King, the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.” This is followed by the four-letter ineffable name embedded in the verse, “*Shiviti Havayah le’negdi tamid*—I place the four-letter name of *Havayah* before me at all times” (Psalm 16:8). The four initials—*khaf, mem, beit, aleph*—beneath the word *le’negdi* are an acronym for the four concluding words of this verse, “*Ki mimini bal emot*—with You at my right hand, I shall never stumble.” Beneath the name, Psalm 67 is arrayed in the form of a seven-branched *menorah*. Together, the name and this psalm make up the centerpiece of the *Shiviti*.



As above, the essential point of envisioning the ineffable name at the top of the *Shiviti* is this: Relative to the main seven verses of the psalm, the name embodies the level of “eight,” the level of miracles that shines down into and permeates the “seven” of nature. Two additional levels of information are contained in the letters of the name *YKVK* itself. First, directly alongside the top of the *Yod* of the name, see the word *Keter*. *Keter* (crown) is the highest of the ten *sefirot*, corresponding to the apex of the *Yod*.

Psalm 67  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

Then, in the body of the *Yod* itself, see its corresponding *sefirah*, *Chokhmah* (wisdom). In the roof of the initial *Heb*, see its corresponding *sefirah*, *Binah* (understanding). In the head of the *Vav*, see the acronym *ChaGaT NaHY*, representing the six *sefirot* corresponding to it: *Chesed* (love), *Gevurah* (strength/restraint/discipline), *Tiferet* (beauty/ harmony), *Netzach* (dominance), *Hod* (empathy/majesty), and *Yesod* (foundation channel). In the roof of the final *Heb*, see its corresponding *sefirah*, *Malkhut* (kingdom/sovereignty).

Second, immediately beneath the *Yod*, see the letters ע"ב (*A''B*), whose numerical value is 72, *YKVK* expanded with four *yods*: י"ד ה"י ו"י ה"י. Beneath the roof of the initial *Heb*, see the letters ס"ג (*S''G*), whose numerical value is 63, *YKVK* expanded with three *yods* and one *aleph*: ה"י ו"א ו"י ה"י. Below the head of the *Vav*, see the letters מ"ה (*M''H*), whose numerical value is 45, *YKVK* expanded with three *alephs*: י"ד ה"א ו"א ו"י ה"א. Beneath the roof of the final *Heb*, see the letters ב"ן (*B''N*), whose numerical value is 52, *YKVK* expanded thus: י"ד ה"ה ו"ו ה"ה. All these divine names—expansions of the Ineffable Name *YKVK*—are spelled out in full in the six-pointed Jewish star below and to the right of the *Menorah*.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, note that there are two *yichudim* (unifications of divine names), one on each side of the *YKVK*. The *yichud* on the left consists of the letters of *YKVK* and *ADNY* interspersed with one another thus: *YAHDVNHY*. Above this *yichud* see the word *d'berakbot*. The *yichud* on the right consists of the letters of *ADNY* and *YKVK* interspersed with one another thus: *AYDHNVYH*. Above this *yichud* see the word *d'kadish*.

What do these words mean? First, like the name *YKVK* itself, these *yichudim* are not to be pronounced, but, rather, contemplated.<sup>9</sup> The main point here seems to be that the *gematria* of these two names combined is 91, the same as the all-important word, *amen*.<sup>10</sup>

In general, there are two primary *kavanot* (intentions) for *amen* in our prayers. The first is called *amen d'berakbot* (*amen* to a blessing), and the second, *amen d'kadishin* (*amen* of sanctification). *Amen d'berakbot* embodies heaven's *itaruta d'le'ela* (awakening from above). *Amen d'kadishin* embodies our *itaruta d'letata* (awakening from below). As we have seen, heaven's awakening from above is usually conditional on our awakening from below. Even the slightest acknowledgement on our part of Hashem's hidden presence in our life can be

---

<sup>8</sup> See *Inside Psalm 145*, "The Four Expansions of the Name."

<sup>9</sup> See *Nine Gates to the Psalms*, Gate Four, especially subsection, "YKVK ADNY."

<sup>10</sup> See *Nine Gates to the Psalms*, Gate Seven, "The Kabbalah of Amen and Selah."

Psalm 67  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

enough to elicit His mercy and cause the outpouring of heavenly light and blessing that we so desire and need.<sup>11</sup>

Surrounding the *Menorah* Psalm are two verses from the Torah: “*V’e’zeh maaseh ha’menorah: mikshab zhabav; ad yerekbah ad pircbah, mikshab hi; ke’mareh asher ber’ab Hashem et Moshe, ken asah et ha’menorah*—this is how the *menorah* was made: it consisted of a single piece of beaten gold; from its base to its [uppermost] blossom, it was one single piece; exactly like the vision that Hashem showed to Moshe; this is how he made the *menorah*” (Numbers 8:4), and “*Kulah mik’shab achat zhabav tabor*—it is to be made entirely out of one single piece of pure gold” (Exodus 37:22).

These verses beautifully sum up the message of the *menorah*, which may be expressed as the unity of spirit/soul and matter/body, or the interpenetration of heaven (eight) in earth (seven). First, our translation of *mikshab zhabav* (a single piece of beaten gold) is from Rashi on the verse, “*V’e’asita menorat zhabav tabor mikshab te’aseh ha’menorah*—make a pure gold *menorah*; the *menorah* shall be formed by hammering it out [from a single piece]” (Exodus 25:31). Based on the Sifri, Rashi writes, “It shall not be made of separate pieces soldered/welded together. Rather, it is to be made in its entirety of a single mass of gold, beaten with a hammer, causing its branches to spread out...”<sup>12</sup> Why does the Torah emphasize that the *Menorah* must be made from a single slab of gold? According to Rabbi Yitzchak Izik Yehudah Safrin of Kamarna, the *Menorah* embodies the concept of the unity of *klal u’prat*, the unity of the whole with its constituent parts.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> See *Tanya, Sbaa HaYichud VebaEmunah* 7 (p. 82a) that the *shiluv* (interspersing) of YAHDVNHY (in which the name YKVK predominates) corresponds to the *yichud ila’ab* of *Shma Yisrael*, whereas the *shiluv* of AYDHNVYH (wherein the name ADNY predominates) corresponds to the *yichud tata’ab* (lower unification) of *Barukh shem kevod malkhuto le’olam va’ed*. See there (notes #14, 16, pp. 82a-b in the Hebrew-English *Tanya*), “In the *shiluv* (interspersing) of the letters of the name *Adanui* into the letters of the name *Havayah*, the *yod* of *Havayah* is the first letter, and therefore this name predominates. This indicates that time and space are nullified in relation to Him. This is *yichud ila’ab* (the upper unification). It is this unity that is affirmed in the recital of *Shma Yisrael...ehad*, i.e., one and alone, for there is nothing apart from Him” (note #14). Conversely, “In the *shiluv* (interspersing) of the letters of the name *Havayah* into the letters of the name *Adanui*, the *aleph* of *Adanui* is first, and therefore this name prevails. This indicates that time and space exist but are permeated with *Havayah*, the Infinite. Therefore, the *Zohar* states that *Barukh shem kevod malkhuto* is the expression of *yichud tata’ab*. *Malkhuto* points to finite, material existence yet filled with His essence” (note #16).

<sup>12</sup> Rashi says basically the same thing regarding the *keruvim* atop the *kaporet* (ark-cover), which were to be hammered out of a single piece of gold (Exodus 25:18-19).

<sup>13</sup> *Sefer Zohar Chai, Beresbit*, p. 43a, s.v. *ke’maaseh ha’menorah ad yerekbah*. Rabbi Natan Sternharts similarly wrote in the name of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, “This is the meaning of the *Menorah* being ‘*kulah mikshab*—one single piece.’ That is, the entire structure, from head to foot, with all its details (flowers, blossoms, etc.) is all one piece” (*Likutey Halakhot, Hilkehot Kriat Shma* 5:19).

Psalm 67  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

There is a specific YKVK for every world, for every chamber, and for every *sefirab*. Still, every detail is unified with the undifferentiated light of *Ein Sof*. This concept of the unity of *klal u'prat* (the whole and its parts) is embodied in the *Menorab*. *Ad yerekhab* (from its base), this is the bottommost level, *Malkhut*. *Ad pircbab* (to its uppermost blossom), this is *Keter Elyon*. *Mikshab achat*. The entire *Menorab* with all its parts is one simple unity. “*Ke'mareb asher ber'ab YKVK et Moshe*—exactly like the vision that Hashem showed to Moshe.” Hashem showed Moshe that the divine name YKVK dwells in each detail, and at the same time, the entire system is one great YKVK. All is one simple unity.

Moshe was not only shown the *Menorab*. When Moshe was taken up into the spiritual dimension, he was shown *tavnit ha'Mishkan*, the spiritual pattern or blueprint of the entire Tabernacle and all its parts. Moshe was then charged with constructing the *Mishkan* as a physical counterpart to what he was shown in heaven:

*Ve'assu li Mikdash*—they [Israel] shall make Me a Temple, *ve'shakhbanti betokham*—so that I may dwell within them. *Ke'khol ani mareb ot'kha*—according to all that I am showing you [Moshe], *et tavnit ha'Mishkan v'et tavnit kol kelav*—the design/blueprint of the Tabernacle and the design of all its furnishings, *ken taassu*—thus shall you do (Exodus 25:8-9).

According to tradition, the phrase “*ke'khol ani mareb ot'kha*—according to all that I am showing you,” alludes to the fact that Hashem showed Moshe the spiritual *tavnit* (design, pattern, blueprint) of the universe. Only thus would he be able to build the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) as a miniature or microcosm of the entire creation.<sup>14</sup>

Malbim adds:<sup>15</sup>

It is known that all the supernal universes constitute one single unity. The totality of reality is therefore called *HaAdam HaGadol* (the Great Man). This is similar to the human body in which each and every unique limb or organ is a complementary detail in a totally unified organism...

The same principle applies to the reality of countless universes which God created. They are arranged as a single “man” in which all parts are

---

<sup>14</sup> *Tikuney Zohar*, first introduction, p. 13a; *Menachot* 29a; *Tanchuma Pekudey* 2; Rabbenu Bachya on Exodus 25:9. See also *Tanchuma Naso* 11; *Pirkey d'Rabbi Eliezer* 3.

<sup>15</sup> Malbim, *Rimzey HaMishkan, Parashat Terumah*. See also Gra, *Aderet Eliyahu, Parashat Terumah*, according to the explanation of *Be'er Yitzchak ad loc.*, p. 76; *Nejesh HaChayim* 2:5.

Psalm 67  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

interconnected... Just as the world in its entirety is called a “great man,” man himself is called an *olam katan* (miniature universe)...

Indeed, this was the intention in building the *Mishkan* in the desert as well as the *Mikdash* in Yerushalayim... Because both the human body and the *Mishkan* are patterned after the blueprint of the supernal universes the details of the *Mishkan* paralleled all the details of the human body.

Rabbi Chayim of Volozhin takes this one giant step further:<sup>16</sup>

The essence of the *Mishkan*/*Mikdash* is the indwelling of the *Shekhinah* in the heart of the Jewish people and by extension in the heart of all humanity. If the people of Israel sanctify themselves by performing the *mitzvoth*, all of which are rooted above, then Hashem will not only dwell in the *Mikdash*, but within them, as per the verse, “They [the people] are the *beikhal* (sanctuary) of Hashem’s presence” (Jeremiah 7:4), and as per the verse, “They [Israel] shall make Me a *Mikdash*, *ve’shakhanti betokham*—that I may dwell within them” (Exodus 25:8). As our sages point out, “*betokho lo neemar*—the verse does not say ‘so that I may dwell within it,’ *ela betokham*—but rather ‘so that I may dwell within them...’”<sup>17</sup> In addition, the next verse continues, “According to all that I am showing you [Moshe]—the *tavnit* (pattern, blueprint) of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) and the *tavnit* of all its furnishings—thus shall you do” (Exodus 25:9), strengthens this. The message: Do not think that the purpose of My commanding you to make a *Mikdash* is to build the external façade of a building. Know! My intention is that you should make yourselves a *mikdash* for My presence. You must all be *kodesh*, so that you will be worthy of My *Shekhinah* dwelling in your midst.

The Torah does not merely command us to make a *Mishkan* or a *Menorah*. The Torah commands us nothing less than to make ourselves into a *Mishkan* and a *Menorah*.

### **Becoming a Menorah**

As an experiment, stand in front of a mirror, holding your hands up on both sides of your head, level to your ears, with fingers extended. Close your eyes and imagine that you are a seven-branched *menorah*, ready to receive the light of

---

<sup>16</sup> *Nefesh HaChayim* 1:4, *bagab kei ha'mishkan*.

<sup>17</sup> *Zohar Chayey Sarah*, *Midrash Neelam*, 1:129a; *Zohar Terumah*, *Sitrey Torah*, 2:146a. For the exact expression used here (“*betokho lo neemar ela betokham*”), see Alshikh on Exodus 31:13 (“*Akeh et Shabtotai tishmornu*—you must keep My Sabbaths”), citing Exodus 25:8; *Shnei Luchot HaBrit*, *Shaar HaOtiot*, *ot lamed*, *lev tor*, p. 111b (in volume one of 3-volume set).

Psalm 67  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

*neshamah* (your higher soul), which is nothing less than Hashem's transcendent light.<sup>18</sup>

There are several sources for this. The Tikuney Zohar correlates the different components of the *Mishkan* and *Mikdash* with the human body. According to the model set out there, the *Menorah* (in its totality, as a single concept) corresponds to the head or intellect, while its seven individual lamps correspond to the seven apertures of the head and their corresponding organs: two ears, two eyes, two nostrils, and mouth.<sup>19</sup> Rabbi Mordekhai Cohen (I'zfat, c. 1570) writes, "The middle shaft of the *Menorah* alludes to man, while the three branches on each side allude to the hands, each of which has three major types of bones (carpals, metacarpals, phalanges) [1+3+3=7]. In addition, as per the Tikuney Zohar, the seven lamps of the *Menorah* correspond to the seven apertures of the head: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, and the mouth."<sup>20</sup> Rabbi Yeshaya Horowitz (1560-1630) writes, "The human body is in the form of a *Menorah*. The middle shaft corresponds to the head and torso, while the three longest and lowermost shafts that branch off on each side correspond to the legs, the middle shafts correspond to the hands, and the shortest and uppermost shafts correspond to the ears."<sup>21</sup>

In *Likutey Moharan* I, 21, Rabbi Nachman of Breslov builds on the Zohar's model of the brain and the seven apertures of the head in his discussion of *obr penimi* (internalized light; immanent intellect, corresponding to the number seven) and *obr makif* (surrounding light; transcendent intellect, corresponding to the number eight). He explains that the *obr makif* corresponds to *ruach ha'kodesh* (divine inspiration), a level of expanded consciousness that transcends the *obr penimi*, our present, limited level of understanding. In other words, as opposed to being able to wrap our mind around it, the *obr makif* envelops and wraps itself around our mind. As a result of this disparity between the *obr penimi* and *obr makif*, there are several profound paradoxes and conundrums that we find difficult to resolve. One of these is the paradox of *yediah* (divine foreknowledge) and *bechirah* (human free will).<sup>22</sup> We cannot readily understand

---

<sup>18</sup> As above in *Inside Psalm 6*, the term *neshamah* (divine soul) consists of the same letters as *shemoneh* (eight).

<sup>19</sup> *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction, p. 13b.

<sup>20</sup> *Siftei Cohen*, Exodus 25:31.

<sup>21</sup> *Shnei Luchot HaBrit, Parashat Behaalotkha, ot aleph*. In *Nine Gates to the Psalms*, Gate Four, "The Vertical Array," we bring a similar teaching that the letters of *YKVK* correlate to the body as a whole (our head is a *yod*, our shoulders and arms are a *heh*, our torso is a *vav*, and our pelvis and legs are a *heh*), at the same time that they correlate on a smaller scale to the head alone (our eyes are *yods*, our ears are *hehs*, our nose is a *vav*, and our mouth is a *heh*).

<sup>22</sup> Briefly stated, it is a fundamental belief of Judaism that God has absolute knowledge of the future, and we cannot ascribe any ignorance to Him. At the same time, it is also a basic belief that man has absolute free will, and God in no way determines whether he will do good or evil. As

Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms

Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

how both can be true. However, precisely because of our limited understanding, free will is maintained, in the sense that a person can freely choose between good and evil.<sup>23</sup>

According to our tradition, this is a necessary but temporary state of affairs. A time is coming when this greater *makif* (transcendent level of intellect which heretofore surrounded the intellect) will enter and become *penimi* (internalized).<sup>24</sup> When that happens, human consciousness will grow and mature beyond its present level, free will as we know it will cease, and higher and higher levels of consciousness will become accessible. In the meantime, the terms *makif* and *penimi* should not be taken as fixed absolutes, but, rather, relative terms that operate on a sliding scale. Similar to the expression, “one man’s ceiling is another man’s floor,” we can also say, “one man’s *makif* is another man’s *penimi*,” even the same man from one day to the next, and from one moment to the next.<sup>25</sup>

Rambam expresses it, “If we say that God knows that a person will be good, then it is impossible for that person to be otherwise. If, on the other hand, we say that God knows that this person will be good, and yet it is still possible for him to be evil, we must say that God’s knowledge is not absolute” (*Moreh Nevukhim* 3:20; *Shemonah Perakim* 8).

<sup>23</sup> Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan wrote, “The principle that man has free will, with absolute freedom to choose between good and evil, is a foundation of our faith. God therefore tells us in His Torah, ‘I call heaven and earth to bear witness this day, for I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore, choose life, that you and your children may live’ (Deuteronomy 30:19). Judaism teaches that every man can choose his own path in life, whether it be good or evil. Each individual has the ability to achieve the highest human perfection, or, on the other hand, to sink to the lowest levels of evil and degradation. If man fails to heed the call of righteousness and chooses evil, then he has no cause to complain, for the decision is only his own...” (“Free Will and the Purpose of Creation,” in *The Aryeh Kaplan Reader*, p. 151).

<sup>24</sup> This is based on Rabbi Nachman’s close reading of the following oral tradition: “In the future, there will be no jealousy, hatred or strife, no procreation, no business dealings, no jealousy, no hatred, no competition. Rather, the righteous will sit *ve’ataroteihem be’rasheihem*—with their crowns in their heads, delighting in the radiance of the *Shekbinah*” (*Berakhot* 17a). Rabbi Nachman writes, “Such crowns would normally be described as *‘al rasheihem*—on their heads.’ Rather, the sages purposely said *‘be’rasheihem*—in their heads,’ to inform us that the *makejim* will be internalized, at which point, all the profound paradoxes that presently transcend human understanding will be fully comprehended” (*Likutey Moharan* I, 21:4).

<sup>25</sup> Rabbi Nachman says this himself in another context: “One should constantly hold on to the quality of *teshuvah*. . . That is, even if he knows that he has done complete *teshuvah*, he must nevertheless do *teshuvah* today on yesterday’s *teshuvah*. [Although surprising at first, this is obvious when you think about it.] When he first did *teshuvah*, it was with the level of *basagab* (understanding, clarity) that he had at the time. However, the very next day or even the very next moment, he can be granted a *basagab* (grasp) of Hashem’s exaltedness that is inconceivably greater. As such, he understands retroactively that relative to the *basagab* he has been granted today, yesterday’s *basagab* is *megusham* (crude, rudimentary, insignificant). He must therefore do *teshuvah* today for having underestimated Hashem’s exaltedness yesterday” (*Likutey Moharan* I, 6:3). Rabbi Natan adds, “For every moment opens up the possibility of internalizing new *mochin* (levels of consciousness), new levels of *basagab* of Hashem’s greatness, new levels of life itself. . .” (*Likutey Halakhot, Hilkebot Tefillin* 5:26).



Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
 The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
 Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

Returning, now, to the Zohar’s model that the *Menorah*, Rabbi Nachman teaches that the brain and the seven apertures have a mutually reciprocal relationship with each other. When we sanctify our thoughts, this has a positive influence on these organs, to see, hear, breathe, and speak (and generally embody) the divine teachings of the Torah. Correspondingly, when we sanctify our seven lamps (the seven apertures of the head and their corresponding organs), we not only purify our *obr penimi* (corresponding to the number seven), but we become worthy of receiving higher and higher levels of *obr makif* (corresponding to the number eight). Sanctifying the senses is thus the necessary arousal from below that is needed for them to become conduits for a corresponding arousal from above.

Again, the Torah’s command to construct a complex structure like the *Mishkan*—or any parts thereof—is the physical counterpart of a complete inner, psychological, and spiritual experience of the same thing. Exactly as the *Mishkan* and the *Menorah* embody the unity of heaven and earth, we, too, must embody the unity of spirit and matter, and the interpenetration of the higher consciousness of the soul into every organ and cell of our body.

**Psalm 67 and Ana BeKoach—Meditative Instructions**

	אֲנִי בְּכַח גְּדוּלַת יְמִינְךָ. תִּתִּיר צְרוּרָה:
	קַבֵּל רִנַּת עַמְּךָ. שְׁגַבְנוּ טְהַרְנוּ נוֹרָא:
	נָא גְבוּר. דּוֹרְשֵׁי יְחוּדְךָ. כְּבַבַּת שְׁמֶרֶם:
	בְּרַכְּם טְהַרְם. רַחֲמֵי צִדְקַתְךָ. תַּמִּיד גְּמִלִם:
	חֲסִין קָדוֹשׁ. בְּרוּב טוֹבְךָ. נִהַל עֲדַתְךָ:
	יְחִיד גָּאֹה. לְעַמְּךָ פָּנֵה. זוֹכְרֵי קִדְשְׁתְּךָ:
	שׁוֹעֲתֵנוּ קַבֵּל. וּשְׁמַע צַעֲקֹתֵנוּ. יוֹדַע תַּעֲלוּמוֹת:
	בְּרוּךְ, שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ, לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

1. We have a tradition that saying Psalm 67 seven times a day with *Ana BeKoach* amplifies the revelation of the Divine Presence in the world.
2. Start by saying the complete psalm once, followed immediately by the first line of *Ana BeKoach*. Continuing saying the complete psalm six more times,

Psalm 67  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

- each time immediately followed by one line of *Ana BeKoach*. After the seventh time, conclude by saying *Barukh Shem* in a whisper.
3. Following this, say it one more time (the eighth time), but this time interspersing the verses of Psalm 67 with those of *Ana BeKoach*. Start by saying verses 1-2 of the psalm, followed by the first line of *Ana BeKoach*. Now say verse 3 of the psalm followed by the second line of *Ana BeKoach* (*Kabel*); then verse 4 with the third line of *Ana BeKoach* (*Na*); then verse 5 with the fourth line of *Ana BeKoach* (*Barekhem*); then verse 6 with the fifth line of *Ana BeKoach* (*Chasin*); then verse 7 with the sixth line of *Ana BeKoach* (*Yachid*); then verse 8 with the seventh line of *Ana BeKoach* (*Shav'atenu*). Conclude by saying *Barukh Shem* in a whisper.
  4. Gaze intently at the *Havayah* above the *Menorah*, envisioning its *Ein-Sof* light flowing down and around each branch. Become a *Menorah*.

Psalm 74  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

## Psalm 74

According to tradition, Asaph was shown frightening visions of the destruction of the Temple. In response, he calls out to Hashem to have mercy on His people.

(1) *Maskil LeAsaph* – Wise instruction by Asaph [when a spirit of prophecy rested on him].<sup>1</sup> Why, O *Elohim*, O just God, why have You cast us off as if forever? Why does Your anger continue to smoke against the flock of Your pasture?<sup>2</sup>

(2) Remember Your congregation that You acquired long ago, the tribe of Your inheritance that You redeemed, and Mount Zion where You made Your abode.

(3) Lift up [remove] Your devastating blows against Your people and bring eternal desolation upon the enemy for every evil thing he did in the *Kodesh* (the Sanctuary of the Temple).<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Maskil LeAsaph*. According to all traditional commentaries, Asaph composed this psalm in a state of *nevuah* (prophecy) and *haskalah* (enlightened consciousness). This is indicated in the word *maskil* (from *seichel*, intellect, consciousness) which indicates that *ruach ha'kodesh* (divine inspiration) descended upon him. See *Inside Psalm 74* for a general discussion regarding how prophetic foreknowledge works.

<sup>2</sup> Meiri, *Me'am Loez*: “Asaph peered into the future and foresaw what would befall the people of Israel in their long and torturous exile. Seeing that they would be scattered among the nations for such a long time, he cried out in the bitterness of his heart, ‘Why, *Elohim*, O just God, have You cast us out forever? Why does Your anger smoke against Your flock?’ In this way, Asaph protested both the length of the exile and the harsh decrees that Israel endures.” Metzudot: “Why have You forsaken Israel for so long that it appears as though You have forsaken them forever?” Hirsch: “*Lamab*, for what purpose would You forsake us forever? What aim of Your plan would be served if You were to cast us off for all time? *Ye'esban* pictures a fire from which smoke continues to rise even after the flames have gone out. As our Shepherd, why would Your wrath (smoke) continue to smolder even after You have demonstrated Your indignation to us so amply by causing us to lose the happiness of nationhood?” Midrash: “Why do You hide Your face from me like a man who hides his face from smoke?” (*Midrash Tehillim* 74:1). Rashi: “When a person is angry, it is as if smoke issues forth from the two nostrils” (see our note on Psalm 18:9 where we bring Rashi’s full explanation of the use of such anthropomorphisms).

<sup>3</sup> *Harimab pe'amekha*. Rashi associates *pe'amekha* with *pa'amon* (bell, gong), *po'em* (beat, pulse, reverberate), and “*vati'pa'em rucho*—his [Pharaoh’s] spirit was agitated, troubled by his dream” (Genesis 41:8). Asaph is thus saying to Hashem, “Lift up [remove] Your devastating blows against Your people and transfer them to the enemy as punishment for having destroyed Your Temple” (Rashi; Tehillim Mevuar).

Other commentators interpret *pe'amekha* as referring to Hashem’s feet and footsteps, as in “*Mah yafu pe'amayik eb be'ne'alim bat nadiv*—how beautiful your footsteps in pilgrims’ sandals, O daughter of the Generous One” (Song of Songs 7:2). As evidenced by the destruction of the Temple, Hashem is seen as having distanced Himself from us. Accordingly, Asaph is saying to Hashem, “Lift up Your feet and return to the site of the Temple which has become an eternal ruin ever since You deserted it” (Metzudot; Daat Mikra). Malbim suggests that this is the cry of the enemy to the God of the Jews, “Lift Your feet up from here, get out of here so that this place will remain a desolate ruin forever after!” Finally, Rabbi Hirsch suggests something a little softer, “Lift

Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
 The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
 Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

(4) Asaph now describes his vision: Your adversaries shouted triumphantly in the midst of Your *Mo'ed* (Meeting Place); they placed their signs there as a sign of conquest [they set up their idols in the Temple].<sup>4</sup>

(5) May it [the destruction the enemy wreaked] be considered as one who wields axes on high in a thicket of trees.<sup>5</sup>

up Thy steps to return to the site of hopes buried forever, for the enemy has wrought total havoc in the Sanctuary.”

The Midrash associates *pe'amekha* with the Torah's command, “*Shalosh pe'amim ba'shanah*—three times a year all your males shall appear before Hashem your God in the place that He will choose, on the festival of *Matzot*, on the festival of *Shavuot*, and on the festival on *Succot*” (Deuteronomy 16:16). Here the word *pe'amim* is associated with time (which is an extension of the idea of a beat and a pulse that creates a pattern in time). As above, *pe'am* is associated with footsteps and stepping, as in “*Mah yafu pe'amayikh be'ne'alim bat nadv*—how beautiful your footsteps in pilgrims' sandals, O daughter of the Generous One” (Song of Songs 7:2), which is exactly why the three pilgrimage festivals are called *regalim* (literally feet) as in, “*Shalosh regalim tachog li ba'shanah*—you shall celebrate three *regalim* (pilgrimage festivals) for Me annually” (Exodus 23:14). According to this, Asaph is saying to Hashem, “You commanded us to appear before You in the Temple three times a year, but this is impossible now due to its having been destroyed. We therefore request, *barimah pe'amekha*, lift up and restore Your *pe'amim*, Your *regalim*, Your pilgrimage festivals, to their former glory” (*Midrash Tebillim* 74:2).

<sup>4</sup> *Mo'adekha*. In verse 3, Asaph referred to the Temple as *Kodesh*; here he refers to it as *Mo'adekha* (Your Meeting Place). This is connected to the fact that the original *Mishkan* in the desert is referred to as *Ohel Mo'ed* (Tent of Meeting), as in “You shall place the incense on the golden altar in the *Ohel Mo'ed asher ira'ed lekha shamah*—in the Tent of Meeting where I meet/commune with You” (Exodus 30:6). Note that *ira'ed* (*aleph-vav-ayin-dalet*, meet/commune) is the verb form of *mo'ed* (*mem-vav-ayin-dalet*, meeting place), *na'ad* (meeting of people), *ya'ad* (destination), *yi'ud* (destiny), *ad*, *adey ad*, *va'ed* (forever). This, in turn, is connected to the fact that the three pilgrimage festivals are called *mo'adim*, from *mo'ed* (set time). Similar to *ha'olam* (world, universe) and *le'olam* (forever), we see another example of how space and time (*mo'ed*, set place, and *mo'ed*, set time) are closely related in ancient Hebrew.

*Samu ototam otot*. We have found two principal explanations and incorporated both into our translation. First, it is recorded in the Mishnah, “Five calamities occurred to our ancestors on the seventeenth of Tamuz: the first tablets that Moshe brought down were broken, the daily *tamid*-offering was discontinued when Nevuchadnezzar sieged Yerushalayim, the walls of Yerushalayim were breached by Nevuchadnezzar, a Torah scroll was burnt, an idol was erected in the Temple” (*Mishnah Taanit* 4:6). Second, Rashi, Radak, Metzudot, and others understand *samu ototam otot* based on the Midrash that Nevuchadnezzar shot arrows to determine whether to march against Yerushalayim and destroy the Temple: “From the north, he had his archers aim to the north, but the arrows fell to the south toward Yerushalayim; they aimed to the east and the west, but the arrows again fell to the south. Nevuchadnezzar took this as a sign that he would capture Yerushalayim, as it is written, ‘The king of Babylon stood at the crossroads to divine divinations; he shot arrows, inquired of the *terafim*, and dissected the liver of an animal’ (Ezekiel 21:26). Every sign he used indicated success. This is the meaning of *samu ototam otot*, namely, they took all these signs as indications of guaranteed success” (*Midrash Tebillim* 74:2).

<sup>5</sup> “*Le'maalab*—on high.” The verse is difficult to translate but the general sense becomes clear when we understand the key word *le'maalab*. Based on the Midrash, we read in *Me'am Loez*, “If the intention of those who destroyed the Temple had been to demolish what they considered a military stronghold, lest it be used in the war against them, this would not have been regarded as such a terrible evil on their part. However, they entered with a roar of trumpets, knowing full well that the Temple below was not a military installation but a counterpart of the Temple on high

(6) Now, they pound its entrances [the gates of the Temple Mount] with axes and hammers together.<sup>6</sup>

(7) They set Your *Mikdash* (Temple) on fire, desecrating and razing the sanctuary of Your Name to the ground.

(8) They [together with their king] said in their heart, “Let us destroy altogether.” They thus set out to burn all *mo’adey El* (sacred meeting places) in the land.”<sup>7</sup>

(*le’maalab*). Accordingly, Asaph accuses them, ‘May the destruction they wreaked be considered as wielding axes on high in a thicket of trees,’ meaning, they are to be punished for having cut down, as with a real axe, the Temple on high. Although the enemy only ‘desecrated the sanctuary of Your name’ on earth, still, at the destruction, ‘they said in their heart, let us destroy altogether,’ the Temple below and the Temple on high. ‘They thus set out to burn all *mo’adey El* (sacred meeting places) in the land.’ In destroying the Temple, their intention was to banish *El*, the presence of God, from the world” (*Me’am Loez*). As the Midrash itself puts it, “The enemy knew that Hashem dwells in the heavens above as well as on earth below. Unable to use their power against Hashem’s dwelling above, they destroyed whatever they could below” (*Midrash Tehillim* 74:3).

<sup>6</sup> The Talmud describes the role of Nevuzaradan, Nevuchadnezzar’s general, in the destruction of the First Temple: Nevuchadnezzar sent to Nevuzaradan three hundred mules laden with axes that could cut through iron. Every one of them broke in the attempt to breach one gate of Yerushalayim. This is the meaning of the verse, “Now, they pound its entrances [unsuccessfully] with axes and hammers together” (Psalm 74:6). Seeing this, Nevuzaradan wanted to give up and return to Babylon. He heard a *bat kol* (divine voice), “Leaper [Nevuzaradan], son of a leaper [Sancheriv], take the leap, as the time has arrived for the Temple to be destroyed and the Sanctuary to burn.” One axe remained. He struck the gate with the dull end of the axe and it opened. This is the meaning of, “He is considered as one who wields axes on high, cutting down a thicket of trees” (Psalm 74:5), meaning, the gate was breached as though the axe were cutting down trees. He entered and began slaying until he reached the Sanctuary and set it on fire. The Sanctuary rose, seeking to enter Heaven so that it would not burn. The angels trod upon it from above and returned it to its place. This is the meaning of, “Hashem has trodden the virgin, the daughter of Yehudah, as in a winepress” (Lamentations 1:15). Nevuzaradan became haughty, taking pride in his conquest. A *bat kol* emerged and said, “Your haughtiness is unwarranted, as you killed a nation that was already dead, you burned a Sanctuary that was already burned, and you ground flour that was already ground.” This is the meaning of, “Take millstones and grind flour” (Isaiah 47:2). The verse does not say grind wheat, but grind flour, indicating that all the destruction had already been wrought by God, and the role played by the enemy was insignificant (*Sanbedrin* 96b). See the continuation of this line of thought in our note to Psalm 79:7.

<sup>7</sup> Rashi: “Their rulers are interested in one thing and one thing only, to attack Israel’s Protector. This is why they burned down all *Mo’adey El* in the land, all the sacred places where He met and communed with His people. The Philistim destroyed the *Mishkan* in Shiloh, Nevuchadnezzar destroyed the First Temple, and Titus destroyed the Second Temple.” Stated slightly differently, those who wish to harm Israel know that the only way to do this is to disrupt Israel’s intimate relationship with Hashem, our Protector. We see this with Goliath. For a period of forty days, Goliath strutted out onto the battlefield alone and boasted, “I have disgraced *maarakhot Yisrael* (the battalions of Israel) this day, saying, ‘Let a man come forth and let us battle together!’” (I Samuel 17:10). Sadly, Shaul and his men were utterly terrified and unable to respond (verse 11).

On the verse, “The Philisti would approach [the Israelite camp] early each morning and evening, taking his stand [in the middle of the battlefield] for forty days” (I Samuel 17:16), Rashi cites the tradition that Goliath’s morning and evening taunts coincided exactly with our

Psalm 74

Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

(9) Asaph now cries out on behalf of the last generation: Our signs [the signs of Your presence in our midst that You promised through Your prophets] we have not seen in the long years that we have been in exile; there is no longer any prophet to restore our spirit; neither is there among us anyone who knows how long this exile will go on.

(10) How long, *Elohim*, will the adversary continue to malign? How long will the enemy scorn Your Name, forever?

(11) Why do You withdraw not only Your hand [the left hand of justice, from striking the enemy] but even Your right hand of mercy for Israel as well? Draw it forth from within Your bosom to vanquish Your enemies and redeem Your people.

(12) And yet, despite Your sternness with me as *Elohim*, You have been my King from days of old, and You are the one who continues to work wondrous salvations hidden within/behind earthly events.

(13) You parted the sea with Your invincible might; You shattered the heads of the *Taninim* (Egyptians) upon the water.<sup>8</sup>

---

twice-daily recitation of *Kriat Shma* [See *Sotah* 42b, “Rabbi Yochanan taught: Why ‘morning and evening’? To disrupt their concentration while reciting the *Shma* every morning and evening. Why ‘forty days’? To nullify the power of the Torah that was given to Moshe over a forty-day period”]. In the first verse of *Kriat Shma*, we not only proclaim Hashem’s oneness, but we merge with that oneness: “*Shma Yisrael* (hear, O Israel), *Havayab* (the infinite-eternal all-encompassing oneness in whom there is no separation or differentiation) *Elobenu* (is our God, the Creator and Director of all, who grants us individual existence because He wants us to know Him in and through the events of the dramas of our life); *Havayab ehad* (He is the oneness behind all existence that beckons us to return and merge with His infinite essence—and, yet, still maintain conscious, individual existence)” (Deuteronomy 6:4). This is a deep meditation that requires prolonged, focused concentration. Whether Goliath understood what he was doing or not, Hashem arranged it that his booming voice disrupted our concentration, thus preventing us from connecting deeply with Hashem’s oneness, and hence our ability to stand up against him.

It was not until David arrived on the fortieth day that everyone understood how deeply asleep we had been. Hearing Goliath’s taunts, he circulated among the troops asking the same question numerous times: “What shall be given to the man who slays this Philishti and removes this disgrace from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philishti, that he dares to curse *maarakhot Elohim Chayim*—the battalions of the Living God?” (I Samuel 17:26). David reframed the entire situation. Goliath was not simply mocking our armed forces. He was mocking Hashem. When David finally went out to the battlefield with his shepherd’s staff, his sling, and five smooth stones, these were his words: “You come against me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come against you with the name *Yod-Keb-Vav-Keb Tzavaot, Elohei maarakhot Yisrael*—God of the battalions of Israel, whom you have blasphemed. Today, Hashem is delivering you into my hand. I shall strike you and I shall remove your head...and the whole world will know that Hashem is Israel’s power...” (I Samuel 17:45-47). **See immediately below from Psalm 118:10-12.**

<sup>8</sup> According to Rashi, *rashai taninim* (literally, heads of the serpents, leaders of the serpents) refers here to the Egyptians whom Hashem drown in the Red Sea. We see this clearly in the prophet Yechezkel: “Hashem’s word came to me saying, Son of man, direct your face toward

Psalm 74  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

(14) You crushed *Leviathan's* heads (Pharaoh's captains), thus overthrowing the might of Egypt and delivering it up as prey to the nation that wandered in the desert.<sup>9</sup>

(15) You split open a fountain and a stream, causing water to gush forth for Israel in the Sinai; later, You dried up the Jordan's mighty waters when Israel crossed over into Eretz Yisrael with Yehoshua.

(16) Day [loving-kindness, redemption] belongs to You, also the night [strict justice, atonement for sins, exile]; similarly, You determine the constantly revolving motions of the luminary [the moon] and the sun.<sup>10</sup>

(17) You established all of earth's natural boundaries [seas, mountains, and rivers]; summer in one hemisphere and winter in another, You alone are their Designer.<sup>11</sup>

---

Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and prophesy concerning him and all of Egypt: Thus says *Hashem Elohim*, behold I am against you, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, *ha'tanim ha'gadol* (the great sea serpent) that crouches in his rivers and says, 'the Nile is mine for I myself have made it' (Ezekiel 29:1-3).

<sup>9</sup> Rashi: "*Rashei Leviathan*, this, too, refers to Pharaoh, as per Isaiah 27:1, 'On that day, Hashem, with His great and terrible sword, will overcome *Leviathan nachash beriyach* (Leviathan the straight serpent) and *Leviathan nachash aklaton* (Leviathan the coiled serpent); He will slay the *tannin* that dwells in the depths of the sea.'" See Targum Yonatan and Rashi on the above verse, where the straight serpent refers to Pharaoh and the coiled serpent refers to Sanheriv of Assyria. Similarly, Rabbi Hirsch writes, "*Leviathan* is the simile for a power in human society founded upon cunning and violence. Here, too, the ancient Egyptian empire is called *rashei Leviathan*, as the most ancient example of a despotic tyranny founded upon cunning and force." The most obvious source for associating Pharaoh with *Leviathan* and *tannin/tannim* is Yechezkel 29, where Hashem addresses the Egyptian monarchy that ruled during Yechezkel's lifetime, "Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh, King of Mitzrayim, the great *tannim* that crouches in his Nile, who has declared himself a god, saying, 'the Nile is mine, I have made it'" (Ezekiel 29:3, 29:9).

In contrast to the above use of nature symbolism to describe geopolitical realities, Rabbi Hirsch renders *Leviathan* in Psalm 104:26 as "the multitude of life forms in the seas." This is closer to the dictionary definition of *Leviathan* as whale or some other enormous sea creature, and the dictionary definition of *tannin* as crocodile. However, in general, our sages were not overly interested in the actual, aquatic identity of *Leviathan* and *tannin/tannim*. They rather spoke about them as embodiments of profound spiritual principles. See more on this in *Well of Living Waters* (Day Five of Creation) and *Dedicated to Mashiach ben Yoseph and Mashiach ben David* (Excerpts from *Kol HaTor*).

<sup>10</sup> *Me'am Loez*: "Having mentioned miracles of opposing natures that Hashem brought about at different times on Israel's behalf—transforming dry rock into flowing fountain (Miriam's well in the desert) vs. drying up the waters of the Jordan—Asaph goes on to speak of three other corresponding sets of opposites—day and night, moon and sun, summer and winter. In doing so, he is presenting his case to Hashem: 'Although we ask that *midat ha'din* (the attribute of justice) be directed to our enemies, and *midat ha'chesed* (the attribute of loving-kindness) directed to us, this request is not difficult for You to grant. For behold, You are constantly transforming one thing to another'" (*Me'am Loez*, based on Radak).

<sup>11</sup> Hirsch: "Asaph refers here to the natural boundaries between countries, such as seas, mountains, and rivers. The term *gevulot* (boundaries) also denotes climatic differences. These are the boundaries and the divisions which have caused the differences in the paths of development

Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
 The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
 Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

(18) Consider this, how the enemy insulted You, *Hashem*, and the people of a vile nation scorned Your Name.

(19) Do not deliver the soul of Your turtledove to the wild beast; do not disregard the soul life of Your poor ones forever.

(20) Look upon the covenant [Your promise to our forefathers to bring redemption], for the land/world has become filled with darkness; formerly pleasant places have become habitations of *chamas* (violence).<sup>12</sup>

(21) Do not turn the crushed one away in shame; give the poor and defenseless cause to proclaim the praise of Your Name.

(22) Rise up, O beloved *Elohim*, not only for our sake, but to wage battle for Your own honor. Consider, it is You whom the *naval* (vile, contemptible man) insults throughout the day.

(23) Do not forget the triumphant shout of Your adversaries when they entered Your Temple to destroy any memory of Your presence among men; the roaring of those who stand against You which continues to ascend to this day.

### Psalm 118:10-12

(10) I remember when all the surrounding nations encircled me, yet with one mention of *Hashem's* Name, I was able to stand against them and cut them down.

(11) They surrounded me, they continue to surround me; yet with one mention of *Hashem's* Name, I am able to stand against them and cut them down.

---

taken by the various civilizations” (see note, Psalm 24:2).

<sup>12</sup> Metzudot: “*Habet la'brit*. Look upon the covenant that You made with our forefathers to redeem them. *Machashakey eretz* are the pleasant places our forefathers inhabited, but which, in the wake of destruction, have become filled with darkness and violence.” Daat Sofrim: “*Neot chamas*. *Navah* or *naveh* describes a dwelling that is pleasant, beautiful, comely, and desirable; a place where nature blooms, flourishes, and thrives. But now, precisely these places are filled with *chamas* (violence).” Rabbi Hirsch senses a trace of irony and sarcasm in the phrase *neot chamas*: “*Machashakim* are dark dungeons. *Neot* are bright, pleasant pastures. ‘Violence dwells in pleasant, bright pastures, while its victims languish in dark dungeons.’ Or ‘The dark places of earth are filled with *joyous* habitations of violence. Darkness and misery reign supreme everywhere; only the habitations of violence are *joyous*.” Finally, Radak: “*Machashakey eretz* are those dark and gloomy places where *bnei Yisrael* dwell in exile; where they endure *chamas* (violence, unfair treatment) at the hands of oppressive regimes.”



Psalm 74  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

(12) They swarm around me like bees, but they are consumed as a fire consumes thorns, for with one mention of *Hashem's* Name, I am able to stand against them and cut them down.

“*Be'shem Hashem ki amilam.*” Our translation is based on the triple meaning of the root letters of the word *amilam*, *mem-lamed*: (1) *Milab* is a word. The name *YKVK* is the most powerful “word” in human speech, for it embodies the divine formula/plan with which God not only made the world but with which He will bring the world to its highest level of perfection through man. (2) The word *mul* indicates the ability to take a stand, to stand face to face, to stand in direct, head-on confrontation with whatever threatens us, without fear. (3) *Mul* is also a conjugation of the word *milab* meaning to cut (see Rashi and Siftei Chakhamim, Numbers 22:5), as in *brit milab* (covenant of circumcision). Here in our verse, *be'shem Hashem ki amilam* embodies the ability to stand against and, if necessary, cut down, cut away, or cut through any force that opposes the godly will by amplifying our awareness of the reality of Hashem's hand in our life.

As above in Psalm 74:8, this is exactly how David faced Goliath: “You come against me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come against you with the name *Yod-Keh-Vav-Keh Tzvaot, Elohei maarakbot Yisrael*—God of the battalions of Israel, whom you have blasphemed. Today, Hashem is delivering you into my hand. I shall strike you and I shall remove your head...and the whole world will know that Hashem is Israel's power...” (I Samuel 17:45-47).

How are we to overcome our enemies? With the name of Hashem: *YOD, KEH, VAV, KEH*, the most powerful word in human language. For it is much more than a word; it is a formula, the formula behind all existence; the formula that the Creator of the world used to bring the world into existence; the formula that He uses to bring the world to its ultimate perfection. We conquer our enemies with the name of Hashem because this name spells the END OF ALL WAR. It makes all war obsolete, for it lifts man up out of his egocentricity, and allows him to see and admit—if he is courageous enough—how blind he has been.

This is exactly how *Mashiach ben David* will face his enemies:

And a shoot will spring forth from the stock of Yishai, and a branch will sprout from his roots. Hashem's spirit will rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the awe of Hashem. He shall ‘smell’ with the awe of Hashem, rather than judging with the sight of his eyes or chastising with the hearing of his ears. With righteousness, he shall judge the poor, and decide with fairness/equity for the meek of the earth. He shall strike a land [nation, state] with the [moral] rod of his mouth, and slay a wicked individual with the breath of his lips. Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faith the girdle of his loins (Isaiah 11:1-6).

Psalm 110  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

## Psalm 110

This short psalm (7 verses) defies simple translation. Its enigmatic phrases led some to think that it is about Avraham, others to think that it is about David, and others to think that it is about *Mashiach ben David*, the final redeemer. When seen as complementary and inclusive rather than exclusive interpretations, the result is a psalm that spans history from Avraham to David to *Mashiach*. And the thread that binds them is the great principle of *tzedek* (justice, righteousness, ethical and moral right) championed and embodied first by Avraham, then by David, and finally by *Mashiach*.

(1) *LeDavid Mizmor*.<sup>1</sup> *Hashem* promised my master,<sup>2</sup> “Sit/wait at My right hand [wait for the salvation that will come from My right hand],<sup>3</sup> until the time in the future when I make your enemies a stool at your feet.”<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *LeDavid Mizmor*. *LeDavid* can mean either “by David,” in which case this *mizmor* is by David about Avraham Avinu (Rashi, Metzudot), or it can mean “in honor of David,” in which case it is by one of the Leviim about David (Ibn Ezra, Malbim, Hirsch, Daat Mikra). See Ibn Ezra: “It is more proper in my opinion to interpret this psalm as referring to David. Accordingly, the superscript *LeDavid Mizmor* would not mean ‘a psalm composed by David,’ but rather a psalm composed by one of the Leviim *le’David*, in honor of David.” See *Inside Psalm 110*.

<sup>2</sup> Daat Mikra: “The psalmist refers here to the prophetic promise that was made to David [perhaps Hashem’s prophetic promise through Natan HaNavi: ‘I, Hashem, hereby inform you that...I shall raise up your offspring after you...and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever’ (II Samuel 7:11-12), which itself was based on Yaacov Avinu’s ancient prophecy regarding the tribe of Yehudah, ‘The scepter of kingship shall not depart from Yehudah’ (Genesis 49:10)]. *Neum Hashem*. *neum* is the word used for a prophetic declaration (see II Samuel 23:1). *Adoni*: We find that Natan and Bathsheva both addressed David thus, ‘*Adoni ha’melech*—my lord-master the king...’ (I Kings 1:24), ‘*Yechi adoni ha’melech David le’olam*—long live my lord-master the king, David’ (I Kings 1:31).”

<sup>3</sup> “*Shev le’yemini*, wait at My right.” Right and left embody respectively *chesed* (unconditional love and loving-kindness, magnanimity and benevolence) and *din/genurah* (conditional or restrained love, severity or justice that is meted out measure for measure). Waiting at the right or waiting for the salvation that will come from the right means that it is not conditional on one’s worthiness as embodied in the left hand, but on the power of divine love as embodied in the right hand.

<sup>4</sup> Again, if the *mizmor* is by David, the word *l’adoni* (my master) refers to Avraham. If it is by a Levi, *l’adonai* refers to David himself and/or *Mashiach ben David*. Interestingly, Meiri suggests that David himself authored this psalm about himself. He referred to himself as *adoni* so that the Leviim could sing it about him. At the conclusion of his commentary, Meiri shows how the psalm lends itself to all three levels of interpretation (Avraham, David, and *Mashiach*). In toto, Hashem’s messianic promise is that, through Avraham—and through David and *Mashiach ben David* embodying, continuing, and completing the work that Avraham began—all mankind will come to practice and benefit from the great principles of *tzedek* and *tzedakah* (see *Inside Psalm 110*).

Rabbi Hirsch maintains the position that the psalm was “not written by David but addressed to David by some other author. It portrays David in all the splendor of his God-oriented role and of the significance of his life for both the present and the future.” He writes further, “Psalm 110 views two aspects of David’s kingly calling. First, his task to subdue enemy nations by the might of the sword, and secondly, his spiritual mission, namely, to win the hearts of men for God, by the power of his word, his songs, his hymns, his teachings. It is this latter aspect of David’s task that the psalm regards as the more significant, and as the basic reason for the importance of David’s place in history for all men and for all times. Actually, the task of the genuine and complete subjugation of the nations, whose spirits run counter to the intent of David’s mission, is one that God has reserved for Himself. [Thus, when the author of our psalm addresses David in Hashem’s

Psalm 110  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

(2) *Hashem* will send forth the rod of your invincibility from the divine sanctuary in Tziyon.<sup>5</sup> With the power invested in you from Tziyon, your task now is to achieve dominion over the inner life of your enemies.<sup>6</sup>

(3) Based on your dedication to the principles embodied in the sanctuary in Tziyon, **YOUR** people willingly volunteer on the day you gather your army to wage war. Beyond this, however, bedecked in the adornments of the sanctuary, from the womb of life's morning, the dew of your youth [the young of your people] are yours already.<sup>7</sup>

---

name, saying,] 'Wait for [the salvation of] My right hand, until I make your enemies a stool at your feet,' the thought seems to be that David had now devoted sufficient effort to the discharge of his duty as conquering soldier. Henceforth, he is to leave to God the complete [physical] subjugation of the hostile nations and, instead, dedicate all his own future endeavors to the *spiritual* aspect of his calling."

<sup>5</sup> As we explain in our note on Psalm 76:4, Tziyon is none other than the *Beit HaMikdash*, the place from which the light of Torah shines to the whole world, as in "For out of Tziyon [the powerful light of] Torah shall go forth, in such a way that Hashem's word [shall spread throughout the entire world] from Yerushalayim" (Isaiah 2:3, Micah 4:2).

<sup>6</sup> Hirsch: "*Mi'Tziyon*. David's fame as a conqueror was not acquired by the sharp edge of his sword. It is from out of Tziyon, from David's relationship to the divine sanctuary in Tziyon, and through the significance of the sanctuary for the future salvation of all mankind that God hands David his rod of invincible strength. *Be'kerev oiveikha*, literally 'in the midst of your enemies,' is to be understood here as in '*ve'kerev ish ve'lev amok*—within a man, hidden deeply within his heart' (Psalm 64:7) and '*be'kerev libi*—within my own heart' (Psalm 36:2). *Be'kerev oiveikha* thus means 'in the inner thoughts or inner heart of your enemies.' David is being told, 'With the power that is invested in you from the divine sanctuary in Tziyon, it is your task to attain dominion over the inner life of those men who, at present, are still hostile to your mission.'"

<sup>7</sup> The eleven words of this complex verse break up into four enigmatic phrases: (1) *Amekha nedavat be'yom chelekha*; (2) *be'hadrei kodesh*; (3) *me'rechem mi'sh'char*; (4) *lekha tal yaldutekha*. Daat Mikra brings a number of different possibilities or attempts to understand these four phrases and their interconnectedness. For example, "Your youthful soldiers who willingly volunteer to fight under your command (*amekha nedavat be'yom chelekha*) are arrayed/adorned in holiness (*be'hadrei kodesh*) [as is fitting the armies of Israel, as per Deut. 23:15, 'Hashem's presence dwells in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and grant you victory over your enemy; your camp must therefore be holy']; each soldier in this army is beloved from birth (*me'rechem mi'sh'char*) [as per Isaiah 46:3, 'listen to Me, remnant of the house of Israel, borne by Me from birth, carried from the womb']; may you, O king, be filled with the same *tal* (dew, freshness) in your old age as in your youth (*yaldutekha*)." Or "Upon you, or upon your army, the splendor of holiness rests (*be'hadrei kodesh*), like the light that breaks forth from the womb of the morning dawn (*me'rechem mi'sh'char*)."

As above, in verses 1-2, our translation follows that of Rabbi Hirsch for the most part. In his comments on this verse, he thus writes, "David is told, 'It is because of the nature of your spiritual relationship to Tziyon that *amekha* (your people) rally round your banner willingly and with enthusiasm, *be'yom chelekha*, when you prepare to wage a campaign. But this link with Tziyon has accomplished even more than that. Your endeavors on behalf of Tziyon—your songs, your hymns, your teachings—have already caused even the children, the youths of your people who are not clothed in the adornments of battle, but, rather, in the majestic holiness of the sanctuary (*be'hadrei kodesh*), to become yours. It is your spirit that fills their souls, that wins both their hearts and minds for Hashem and His sanctuary, and that adorns them with nobility of mind and spirit. The spiritual dew (*tal*) which saturates the youth of your people (*yaldutekha*) is yours (*lekha*).' The use of the word

Psalm 110  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

(4) *Hashem* has thus sworn and will not recant/retract: “You shall be a *cohen*-priest forever. Not in accord with man-made legislation, but according to My word, you are the king who embodies *tzedek* (justice and righteousness).”<sup>8</sup>

(5) *Adonai* [Hashem’s unwavering providence over you] will remain at your right, striking/defeating kings on the day of His wrath.<sup>9</sup>

---

*tal* (dew) to denote the spiritual aspect of the education of the young is all the more appropriate here, since youth is pictured as life’s morning (*mi’rechem mi’sb’char*), and *tal*, of course, saturates the meadows only in the early morning hours.”

See also Meiri: “When it comes time to gather your people to go out to war, they willingly come to join you (*amekha nedavot be’yom chelekeha*). In contrast to most kings who desire only self-aggrandizement and thus misuse the power invested in them, you, David, through your dedication to *yosher* (uprightness, integrity, equity, righteousness)—always fighting for what is morally right—have achieved an exalted level of majestic holiness (*be’hadrei kodesh*), and in this way have become a beloved leader of your people, ruling not only over their communal affairs but in their hearts and souls (*mashakh lev ba’am ad sh’malakh bi’levavot, lo be’yufot levad*)! It is for this reason that from the very beginning of your reign (*me’rechem mi’sb’char*), it is said about you that you remained the same David as in the dew of your youth, humble and trustworthy, such that you are as pure today as when you were born (*lecha tal yaldutekha*).”

Further in his commentary to verse 4, Meiri adds, “David’s great success in ruling over his people was due to his being a righteous leader who fought for justice, as per ‘David reigned over all Israel, and David actively pursued/practiced *mishpat* (justice) and *tzedakah* (righteous charity) for his entire people’ (II Samuel 8:15),” regarding which the Talmud says, “David administered *mishpat* (justice) for one litigant by restoring his money to him, and *tzedakah* (righteous charity) for the other litigant by reimbursing him from his [David’s] own money” (*Sanhedrin* 6b; see above Psalm 101:1). In this, David was the true heir to the great mission of Avraham regarding whom Hashem said, “Avraham is going to become a great and mighty nation, and through him all the nations of the earth will be blessed. For I [Hashem] know him; [I know] that he will command his children and his household after him to safeguard/keep *derekh Hashem* (the way of God), to actively pursue/practice *tzedakah* (righteous charity) and *mishpat* (justice), so that I, Hashem, may bring about for Avraham all that I have spoken” (Genesis 18:18-19).

<sup>8</sup> Hirsch: “The active priestly functions of the descendants of Aharon may be temporarily discontinued, but the spiritual mission of the priesthood of David, to lead the hearts of men to God through the power of his songs, endures forever. David is the true *malki-tzedek* (king of justice and righteousness), not on the basis of man-made legislation, but in accordance with the divine Torah as revealed by Hashem Himself. Even in the days of Avraham, Shalem—later known as Yerushalem-Yerushalayim—was already the city of the One God whom men must worship by leading a life of *tzedek*, and for this reason the king of that city was called Malki-tzedek (see note to Psalm 76:3). Thus, David’s mission consisted in the priestly character of his teaching and in his model reign of justice in accordance with the word of Hashem.” In his commentary on Genesis, in the context of the verses about Malki-tzedek, king of Shalem, Rabbi Hirsch adds, “In Psalm 110:4, God says to David, ‘You shall return one day as the true, long-awaited king of righteousness for all mankind...who rules according to the righteousness revealed by My word (*al divrat malki-tzedek*)’” (Hirsch, Genesis 14:18).

<sup>9</sup> Hirsch: “From now on, David’s sword may rest in its sheath. For the Lord, whom David acknowledges as *Adonai* (my Lord-Master), and whom he serves with every ounce of his being, stands at his right hand. Whenever the excesses of rulers have provoked divine wrath in the past, He has cleft/smashed the skulls of kings, and the day is surely coming when He will go forth to execute final judgment among the nations.”

Psalm 110  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

(6) He will execute judgment upon the corpse-filled nations, after He will have smashed the head/ruler whose command extends over *eretẓ rabbab* (a great land; a world-conquering power);<sup>10</sup>

(7) Who, because he effortlessly drinks from the river of earth's wealth that flows along the way, arrogantly lifts his head with false bravado.<sup>11</sup>

## Inside Psalm 110

### Avraham, David, and Mashiach

“*LeDavid Mizmor. Neum Hashem l’adoni, shev li’yemini...*” (Psalm 110:1). As noted, *l’adoni* (my master, pronounced *ladoni*) can be seen as referring to Avraham, “Hashem said to my lord-master [Avraham], sit/wait at My right [wait for the salvation that will come from My right hand].” *L’adoni* can also be seen as referring to David, and by extension, to *Mashiach ben David*, “Hashem said concerning my master, wait for the salvation that will come from My right hand.”

### Reading Psalm 110 as about Avraham

“Hashem said to my lord-master [Avraham], wait at My right.” The Talmud and Midrash take us back to the Book of Genesis. Avram (Avraham) challenges Nimrod king of Shinar (Sumer, Mesopotamia, modern Iraq), and is sentenced to death by burning. After miraculously being saved from Nimrod’s furnace, Avram departs his birthplace and comes with his wife Sarai (Sarah) to the land

---

<sup>10</sup> Hirsch continues: “*Malei gevivot* refers to the people who will be the first target of God’s judgment. This is a people whose wealth was built up through murder, whose riches stem from cadavers and therefore consist of corpses, as it were. It is such a nation that will be judged by God before all others when He will judge the nations of the world. But first, *machatẓ rosh*, His decree will strike the head/ruler who rules *al eretẓ rabbab*, over a great, wealthy, and powerful nation. All these adjectives are implicit in *rabbab*. It may also be that ‘*machatẓ rosh al eretẓ rabbab*—He will have smashed the head/ruler whose command extends over *eretẓ rabbab*’ denotes, in this instance, not the ruler of a single great and wealthy nation, but the ruler of the great earth as a whole. In Psalm 93:4, too, the last remaining power of the future to which God will demonstrate His overwhelming might is mentioned as one power—built up by the absorption of all the other nations—that is to rule all the earth prior to the advent of the kingdom of God.”

See Rabbi Hirsch’s prophetic words quoted above in our note to Psalm 93:4, “Throughout history, we have instances of powers bent on world conquest, depriving all other peoples of their independence, and degrading them to the status of vassals so that they, the conquering nations, might become mightier yet. So, too, the final phase of history *preceding* the advent of the kingdom of God to which Psalm 93 looks will culminate with the rise of a single world-conquering power which will [attempt to] swallow up and subjugate all nations under its rule. Ezekiel calls this power Gog (see Ezekiel, Chapters 38-39). But there is still One who is mightier than this conqueror nation—Hashem alone, mighty on high.”

<sup>11</sup> Hirsch: “This ruler has not built up his position of power by his own strength; he has merely availed himself of the favorable opportunities which God has sent his way, ‘the river flowed upon his path, and he drew water from it.’ And yet, ‘he lifts his head in triumph,’ for this good fortune thus obtained has made him arrogant.”

Psalm 110  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

of Canaan, accompanied by his nephew Lot (Genesis 12:4-5). In Shkhem (near present-day Nablus), Hashem appears to Avram in a vision and says, “I am giving this land to your offspring” (12:7). Avram immediately builds a small altar there to mark this life-changing experience. He then continues moving south, setting up an altar wherever he goes for the purpose of gathering people to pray together to the One God,<sup>12</sup> and teaching in His name.<sup>13</sup>

Precisely at this time, however, there is a drought in the land of Canaan. Faced with the prospect of total famine, Avram decides to travel further south to Egypt with Sarai and Lot (12:10). After returning from Egypt laden with gifts (livestock and herdsmen) in the merit of being connected to Avram (13:5), Lot makes it known to his herdsmen that he considers himself Avram’s sole heir.<sup>14</sup> In response to Lot’s greed and haughtiness (the opposite of Avram’s humility), Avram tells Lot to separate from him and to go his own way (Genesis 13:8-9). Lot chooses to go to Sodom, this being the ultimate slap in the face, a statement that he has abandoned Avram and his God.<sup>15</sup>

Shortly afterward, five kings (the king of Sodom among them) rebel against Amraphel (aka Nimrod who had cast Avram into the furnace). Amraphel and three other kings with their armies attack the five kings, and in the process take Lot captive from Sodom (Genesis 14:12). After being informed about this, Avraham takes Eliezer and 318 men (or perhaps just Eliezer, the *gematria* of whose name is 318), chases after Amraphel and his armies, and saves Lot (14:16).

We shall return shortly to explain why Avram went to such lengths to save Lot. In the meantime, returning from the battle, Avraham passes through Shalem (the ancient name of Yerushalayim), where he is greeted by Malki-tzedek (an official title meaning, “righteous king”). Above, in Psalm 76:3, we saw that Malki-tzedek was none other than Shem, the son of Noach.<sup>16</sup> Shem was the eleventh generation from Adam; he lived 600 years, from 1558-2158. Avraham was the twentieth generation from Adam; he lived 175 years, from 1948-2123. Shem was thus Avraham’s great-great-great-great-great-great grandfather.

The Torah describes Avraham’s meeting with Malki-tzedek in the wake of his [Avraham’s] victory against Amraphel/Nimrod and his allies who had taken Lot captive: “Malki-tzedek, king of Shalem, *Cohen*-priest of God Most High, brought forth bread and wine. He blessed Avram, saying, ‘*Barukh Avram le’El Elyon*

---

<sup>12</sup> Genesis 12:7-9; Onkelos *ad loc.*

<sup>13</sup> *Sotah* 10a-b.

<sup>14</sup> *Beresheet Rabbah* 41:5 on Genesis 13:7.

<sup>15</sup> Rashi, Genesis 13:11, *s.v. mi’kedem*.

<sup>16</sup> Targum Yonatan, Genesis 14:18; *Nedarim* 32b.

Psalm 110  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

*Koneh shamayim va'aretz*—blessed/elevated be Avram to God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth. *U'barukh El Elyon asher migen tzarekha be'yadekha*—and blessed/revealed be God Most High who delivered your enemies into your hand...” (Genesis 14:18-20). According to Talmudic tradition, Malki-tzedek erred in blessing Avraham first, and only then blessing Hashem. As a result, the priesthood was taken from Shem and his offspring and transferred/limited to Avraham and his offspring.<sup>17</sup> According to the Kabbalah, on the other hand, there was no error here. On the contrary, Shem taught Avram the secret of how to channel blessing from above. One begins from below-to-above by recognizing and thanking Hashem for all that one has (*barukh Avram le'El Elyon*). This then opens the supernal faucets of *shefa* (divine illumination and blessing) to flow down from above-to-below (*Barukh El Elyon*).<sup>18</sup>

**Lot is the Connecting Link between Avraham, David, and Mashiach**

We return now to look more deeply into Avraham’s relationship with Lot. We asked, “Why did Avram go to such lengths to save Lot?” Above (*Inside Psalm 40*), we quoted the Midrash, “Two *metziyot* (objects of great value) were hidden and waiting to be found in Lot’s two daughters, Ruth HaMoavia and Naamah HaAmonit. This is the meaning of ‘I have found David My servant’ (Psalm 89:21). Where was he hidden that he had to be found? In Lot’s two daughters who were born in Sodom.”<sup>19</sup>

As we saw in *Inside Psalm 40*, Rabbi Yehoshua Bachrach explained, “It becomes clear that even the rescue of Lot and his daughters from the overthrow of Sodom was part of an overall design [i.e., part of the messianic plan of the Creator to redeem mankind from its fallen state].”<sup>20</sup> Rabbi Kitov clarified further, “This light [the light of *Mashiach*] was first revealed through Avraham...After Avraham, this light was divided in two. One half was hidden in the depths of the earth, in the seed of Amon and Moav. The other half remained revealed and passed to Yitzchak, and from him to Yaacov...”<sup>21</sup>

Based on all that we have seen here regarding Avraham’s relationship with Lot, we are now ready to understand the connection between Lot and the messianic plan. In the process we will understand why Amraphel/Nimrod and his allies waged war against the king of Sodom and his allies. We will understand the

---

<sup>17</sup> *Nedarim* 32b.

<sup>18</sup> *Zohar Lekh Lekha*, 1:86b; Ramchal, *Otzrot Ramchal, Tebillim* 110:5, s.v. *Adonai al yeminkha*, p. 167; see also Rabbi Yeshaya Horowitz, *Shnei Luhot HaBrit*, Volume III, *Torah Sh'bikb'tav, Lekh Lekha, Torah Obr*, p. 24a, *bagab s.v. ve'rabotenu z'I be'eshimo*.

<sup>19</sup> *Bereshit Rabbah* 41:4, 50:10.

<sup>20</sup> *Mother of Royalty*, p. 47.

<sup>21</sup> *Book of Our Heritage*, Volume III, p. 136.

Psalm 110  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

significance of the fact that they took Lot captive, and why Avraham pursued them to save Lot. After all, hadn't Avraham told Lot to separate from him? Hadn't Lot then chosen to live in Sodom, the inhabitants of which were known to be the vilest people on the planet at the time? (see Genesis 13:13). Why then would Avraham endanger his life by rushing off to save Lot?

We read in the Torah that the five kings of the five cities (Sodom, Amarah, Admah, Tzevoyim, and Bela/Tzoar) had paid tribute to Amraphel and his allies for twelve years, but rebelled in the thirteenth year. In response, Amraphel and his allies declared war on their former vassals. When they arrived near what is now the area of the Dead Sea, the five kings came out to meet them. Overwhelmed by Amraphel's forces, however, the five kings fled. In the ensuing mayhem, Amraphel and his allies not only "seized all the wealth of Sodom and Amarah, and all the food, and they departed. They also took Avram's nephew Lot and his belongings, and they departed, for he too had been living in Sodom...When Avram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he called out all his three hundred and eighteen men...pursuing them [Amraphel and his allies] as far as Chovah...Avram brought back all the wealth. He also brought back his kinsman Lot and all his wealth..." (Genesis 14:11-16).

Commenting on this, Rabbi Bachrach writes, "The account of the king of Sodom and his allies warring against Amraphel/Nimrod and his allies, and of Avraham's energetic pursuit to save Lot, is impressive enough in itself. It portrays the kindness and the faithfulness of Avraham our forefather. This significance is not, however, lost or diminished if we also discover that Avraham saved not only Lot, but the ancestry of the *Mashiach* that was destined to come from Lot as well."<sup>22</sup> He then quotes the Shlah, "By taking Lot, they [Amraphel/Nimrod and his allies, embodying the four empires who were destined to rule the world] wished to blot out Israel and their Messiah, heaven forbid, which is why Avraham our forefather rushed to the rescue to save Lot."<sup>23</sup>

The Zohar finds a deeper reason behind the whole episode—not only why Amraphel took Lot, but why he came against the king of Sodom and his allies in the first place: "Come see. The four kings united in order to wage war against Avraham [in other words, yes, they came against the five kings for having rebelled, but there was another, deeper reason behind that]. They took counsel and agreed among themselves that there was no alternative but to eliminate Avraham from the world. It is for this reason that, having captured Lot,

---

<sup>22</sup> *Mother of Royalty*, p. 49.

<sup>23</sup> Shlah, Volume III, *Torah Sh'b'ikh'tav, Lekh Lekha, Torah Ohr*, p. 25a.



Psalm 110  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

Avraham's nephew, they immediately departed and did not continue fighting. Why? [What is the connection between eliminating Avraham and taking Lot captive?] Rather, we have a tradition that Lot's facial features resembled those of Avraham.<sup>24</sup> Thinking that they had captured Avraham, they immediately departed! [In other words, since the purpose of the entire operation was to capture Avraham, now that they thought they had him, there was no longer any reason to continue fighting.] [The Zohar now asks further:] Why? Why did they want so much to eliminate Avraham from the world? Avraham was dangerous. He was teaching people about the ONE TRUE GOD, and thereby liberating them from their slavery to *avodah zarah* (idol worship).<sup>25</sup>

Avraham was dangerous because he exposed the lie behind all *avodah zarah*, especially Nimrod's ludicrous claim that he was a divine being. Avraham taught that there is no power in the world other than the ONE GOD, and the only way to serve Him is to return and live according to the original laws and ordinances that were given to Adam.

We now understand why Avraham rushed to save Lot. Yes, by choosing Sodom, Lot himself had severed himself from Avraham and all that Avraham had taught him. But there was something hidden in Lot, a spark of the messianic light that would eventually be rejoined with Avraham's offspring through Ruth the Moavia, through her grandson David, and eventually through *Mashiach ben David*, the final redeemer who will return and reunite the entire world with Hashem.

**Alternate Translation of Psalm 110—Adoni as Avraham**

- (1) *LeDavid Mizmor*—a Psalm that David composed in honor of Avraham. Everywhere Avraham went, he was recognized as *Adoni*, the one whom Hashem had chosen to reverse and rectify the fallen state of the world, for Avraham proclaimed and made known to all men that Hashem is *Adonai*, the Lord and Master of all creation. When the four kings attacked the five kings (which was the equivalent then of a world-war, a war for the control of the world), Hashem said to Avraham, “Wait for the salvation of My right hand, until the time in the future when I will make your enemies a stool at your feet.” This refers directly to the battle against Amraphel/Nimrod and his allies, and indirectly to the battle that will take place in the distant future with the arrival of *Mashiach ben David*.
- (2) David addresses Avraham, “When you returned from the battle, and your men were tired/weary, Hashem sent you Malki-tzedek, king of Shalem, to bring forth bread and wine. This was a sign that you had achieved complete

---

<sup>24</sup> See *Bereshit Rabbah* 41:6; Rashi, Genesis 13:8.

<sup>25</sup> *Zohar Lekh Lekha*, 1:86b.

Psalm 110  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

- victory not only over your physical enemies, but that the mantle of spiritual leadership was being transferred to you and your future seed, to spread the consciousness of *tzedek* to all mankind.”
- (3) “On the day you were victorious over your enemies, you became renowned for your generosity of heart. You divided the spoils of battle in Yerushalayim, the site of the majesty of holiness, the Temple dedicated to *Adonai*. And this, in the merit of the majestic beauty of your own holiness which you achieved early on when you recognized Him as Lord and Master in your youth. Indeed, from the moment you emerged from your mother’s womb until now, you have retained the same dew of youth.
  - (4) “As a result of all the above (your natural disposition to do good as well as your choice to fight for what is right), Hashem has transferred to you the high priesthood for the spreading of *tzedek*. You are now the *cohen*-priest of *tzedek*, the man chosen to take the ancient law of *tzedek* to a whole new level.
  - (5) “When you heard that Amraphel/Nimrod had taken Lot captive, without hesitating a moment you immediately went forth to save him and the aspect of the messianic light that was hidden within him. Hashem was thus at your right side, fighting for you, striking them down with fury on the day of His wrath.
  - (6) “And thus will He do in the future as well, when He executes judgment upon the leaders of the nations who lived off the blood of their people; especially against Gog, the final leader who desires nothing less than complete control over the entire world.
  - (7) “For a while Hashem will give him dominion, all the power he wants, but this will cause him to mistakenly think that he has finally succeeded in conquering God Himself. He [Gog] will then come forth out of the shadows, lifting his head with false bravado, to declare himself God, but precisely at that moment, Hashem will step in and declare, “Game’s over.”

### **The Fundamental Principle of Tzedek**

Rabbi Philip Biberfeld writes in Volume II of his monumental work, *Universal Jewish History*:

The prophet Isaiah characterized the mission of Avraham in one word when he said, “*Tzedek yikra’ehu le’raglo*—he called out *tzedek* wherever he went” (Isaiah 41:2). The Hebrew *tzedek* is far more comprehensive than the English term righteousness. It refers to the divine order and harmony into which the Creator has placed His handiwork and which must also rule all aspects of human life. The meaning of *tzedek* is thus: harmony, order, righteousness, justice, negation of all that is unjust.

*Tzedek* is said to be one of the foundations of God’s throne (Psalms 89:15,

Psalm 110  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

97:2). With *tzedek*, He judges the world (Psalms 9:9, 72:2, 96:13, 98:9). *Tzedek* is the mission of the Jewish people as it was the mission of Avraham (Isaiah 42:6), and in the end will be established on earth (Psalm 94:15). The *Mashiach* is to bring *tzedek* (Isaiah 11:4-5, 26:9-10). Yerushalayim and Tziyon embody this goal (Isaiah 1:21, 1:26). *Tzedek* is symbolized by the sanctuary which links heaven and earth (Psalm 85:10, Jeremiah 31:23). It is the fundamental principle that must dominate social life (Deut. 16:20; Isaiah 51:1; Psalms 15:2, 23:3). All the statutes of the Torah are based upon it (Psalms 119:64, 119:172), particularly the laws of social conduct (Deuteronomy 1:16, 16:18, Isaiah 58:2). These laws lead to the establishment of universal harmony (Psalm 19:10). *Tzedek*, finally, is the opposite of all iniquity. See Leviticus 19:36 and Deuteronomy 25:15 (measures and weights), and Psalms 52:5, 58:2 (truth vs. falsehood).

On this fundamental principle was based the law of the Creation which according to the tradition was revealed to the first human beings and was handed down by them to later generations. It was this *tzedek* principle for which Noach lived and for which he was called “*ish tzadik, tamim hayah be’dorotav, et HaElokim hit’halekh Noach*—a righteous and blameless man in his generations, walking with God” (Genesis 6:9).<sup>26</sup>

### **Avraham’s Part in the Spiritual Evolution of Mankind**

With Avraham, a new phase began in the moral and spiritual evolution of mankind. According to tradition, the creation of the world was only the achievement of the first part of its goal. Now the physical world existed in a state fit to serve its purpose. Spiritually and morally, however, creation had not ended; it was just beginning. The end of the physical creation was the starting point of the struggle between the forces that tend to uphold creation (*tzedek* embodied by *tzadikim*) and those that tend to destroy it (*resha*, lawlessness, embodied by *reshaim*)...

This struggle forms the essence of human history. The forces that will prevail in the end are those who attain freedom from the animal instincts inherent in human nature. In this respect, the first human beings, were submitted to a *test*. Abstention from the fruit of the forbidden tree which strongly appealed to their instincts, would have proven their determination to control desire and would have led the way to human freedom. After the failure of Adam and Eve, the cause of human freedom waited twenty generations for a bearer of its torch, as we read in *Avot*: “Ten generations passed from Adam to Noach—to make known Hashem’s patience. For all those generations repeatedly provoked Him, but He was patient and

---

<sup>26</sup> Biberfeld, *Universal Jewish History*, Volume II, p. 96; note #2, page 114.

Psalm 110  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

waited until the tenth generation to bring the great Flood. Ten generations passed from Noach until Avraham—to make known Hashem’s patience. For all those generations continued to provoke Him, but He was patient and waited ten generations until Avraham came and received the reward for all of them [there had been righteous men but without Avraham their influence would have been totally lost]” (*Avot* 5:2-3).

Even Noach, though a *tzadik* (righteous man), did not bring about a decisive turn. In spite of the overwhelming experience of the Flood, he did not achieve the stature needed to exert a permanent influence on future generations. This seems to be the meaning of “*ish tzadik, tamim hayah be’dorotav, et HaElokim bit’halekh Noach*—a righteous and blameless man in his generations, walking with God” (Genesis 6:9), implying that his significance did not extend beyond his own time. His descendants Shem and Evver were for centuries the towering guardians of the ancient traditions, but they did not impart to their time powerful impulses for the future. The endeavors of these intermediate generations were not lasting and their great traditions would have become meaningless had not Avraham turned them into the cornerstones of the future by becoming a rallying point in the scheme of spiritual evolution.

Even Avraham had to prove his fitness: “Our forefather Avraham was tested with ten trials, and he stood through them all—to show how great our forefather Avraham’s love [for God] was” (*Avot* 5:4). Throughout his life, Hashem confronted him with serious crises. Only when he passed the last and supreme test, the offer of his son, was his fitness as bearer of the banner of moral and spiritual evolution established for all time [as indeed Hashem promised him in the wake of the *Akedah*, “All the nations of the world shall be blessed through your descendants because you obeyed My voice” (Genesis 22:16)], and he became the bearer of light for all mankind.

Lecomte du Nouy arrives at essentially the same conclusions. According to him, the first chapter of evolution ended when the bodily state had reached its relative perfection and fitness. Then the story of evolution was continued on a spiritual plane with human liberty as the final goal. Biologically an animal, man had to free himself by overcoming his animal instincts.<sup>27</sup> The trials and tests that had been instrumental in man’s physical evolution were transformed into tests on the psychological plane in order to determine the morally fittest (p. 111). The author calls his hypothesis “Telefinalism,” explaining that the very facts of evolution lead to the recognition of a goal, an end that has been willed from the beginning, the

---

<sup>27</sup> Lecomte du Nouy, *Human Destiny*, NY/London, 1947, pp. 111-112.

Psalm 110  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

realization of a morally perfect being liberated from bestiality (p. 223). [This idea is embodied in the statement, “*Sof maaseh be’machshavah techilah*—the final deed was already conceived in the first thought.”]

Du Nouy is especially struck by the mention of a test in the story of the first human beings (p. 112, 116). Of particular interest is his description of those rare human beings who, well in advance of their time, attain a higher state of evolution and exert a decisive influence on the whole course of human history. Mankind, he points out, is in search of such leaders. The history of humanity thus evokes the image of a climbing vine. The plant creeps along the ground seeking a support to raise itself above the weeds. As soon as it finds a support, it clings to it and climbs further, in an untiring effort, toward the light (pp. 110-111). This illustrates the terse words of the tradition already quoted: “There were ten generations from Adam to Noah... There were ten generations from Noah until Avraham... He was patient and waited ten generations until Avraham came and received the reward for all of them.”<sup>28</sup>

The essence of Avraham’s mission is encapsulated in the following verses: “Avraham is going to become a great and mighty nation, and through him all the nations of the earth will be blessed. For I [Hashem] know him; [I know] that he will command his children and his household after him to safeguard/keep *derekh Hashem* (the way of God), to actively pursue/practice *tzedakah* (righteousness as a duty) and *mishpat* (justice), so that I, Hashem, may bring about for Avraham all that I have spoken” (Genesis 18:18-19). Human beings can build their lives on *tzedakah* and *mishpat* only when they recognize that these are *derekh Hashem*, the way of God. The teachings of Avraham were thus centered around the concept of *tzedek*, the divine order the Creator had bestowed upon His work, which had been the original tradition of mankind. Avraham reaffirmed the divine foundation which had lost its original vigor and strength among the nations and stressed the basic principle that without recognition of God, justice and kindness cannot persist in human life. Clearly, Avraham was not the founder of a new belief or a new religion. Rather, he revived the ancient traditions that had come down from Adam which were in danger of abandonment. He possessed the divine spark needed to rekindle the fire so near extinction. He was a *navi*, a man inspired by a personal divine revelation; a man called by God for a special mission for which he is directly inspired.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> *Avot* 5:2-3.

<sup>29</sup> Biberfeld, *Universal Jewish History*, Volume II, pp. 191-192.

Psalm 140  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

**Psalm 140**

(1) *LaMenatzeyach* – Dedicated to the Master Symphony Conductor of Creation who grants victory over evil. *Mizmor LeDavid* – A cutting psalm by David.

(2) Rescue me, *Hashem*, from the machinations of the evil man; safeguard me from the man who commits *chamasim* (acts of violence, cruelty, crime, robbery, immorality).<sup>1</sup>

(3) They [the evil man and his elite friends] devise evil plans in their heart; each day they gather together to stir up war [to create conflict between nations in order to maintain control].

(4) They sharpen their tongue like a serpent; the venom of a viper [*lashon bara*, slander, and defamation] hides beneath/behind their smooth-talking lips, *selah*.

(5) Protect me, *Hashem*, from the power of the evil man who schemes behind closed doors; safeguard me from the man who commits *chamasim*; they [both of them] scheme to push my steps [to cause me to slip up, to cause my downfall].

(6) These haughty ones hide snares for me, and ropes to trap me; they spread nets by the wayside; they set traps for me, *selah*.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Malbim: “*Adam ra* is one who is intellectually superior but uses his intellect to infect his heart with evil machinations. *Ish chamasim* is one whose lower instincts easily overcome his weak intellect” (Malbim, *Biur HaMilim*). The elites use the unconscious masses to do their dirty work.

*Adam ra, ish chamasim*. David asks to be saved from two types of evil people. First, we have *adam ra*. This is an individual who is brought up to consider himself part of an intellectual elite. Such people do not only consider themselves above the law. They are the law, and any naïve, idealistic upstart who thinks he can overcome them is promptly either bought off, unjustly persecuted, or mysteriously killed. Next, we have *ish chamasim*. This is the lowlife who is ready to commit any number of crimes to do the dirty work of the elites, for a price. The first type is called *adam ra*, an evil man. Similar to what we saw above in Psalm 1:1, an *adam ra* is either the same as or worse than a *rasha*. Whereas a *rasha* is a basically good *ish* (man, person) who has gotten caught in doing *ra* (evil), an *adam ra* has gone one step further. He has become *ra*. Whatever the case, it is a slippery slope. *Ish chamasim*. In the Torah, the sin of Noah’s generation is described as, “The world became corrupted, before God, and the earth was filled with *chamas* (coercion, violence, cruelty, crime, robbery, kidnapping, immorality)” (Genesis 6:11, Targum Yonatan, Targum Yerushalmi). Above, David prayed, “Behold how my enemies have multiplied; behold the *sinat chamas* (unjustified, irrational hatred) with which they hate me” (Psalm 25:19).

<sup>2</sup> Hirsch: “In verse 5, David describes how he was a special target of evil men. He therefore calls upon Hashem to give him extra-ordinary protection against them. Their acts of violence are directed against him, devised especially to bring about his moral downfall. In verse 6, David describes their tactics. *Tannu ge'im pach li. A pach* (snare) is a cavity which opens and closes. Open, it seems quite innocent, but the moment one enters it, either unawares or after being lured into it, it closes and there is no escape. David thus says, ‘They carefully seek to concoct for me such situations. They attempt to lure me into such a position so that, once I stray into their hands

Psalm 140  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

- (7) But in the face of all these attempts to destroy me, I have said to *Hashem*, “You alone are my God! [without Your assistance I do not have the power to overcome them]. *Hashem*, hear the call of my soul in the words of my supplications!”
- (8) O *Elohim Adonai* (You who show mercy even as You mete out justice; You who clothe mercy in justice and justice in mercy), You alone are the power of my salvation. Only You provide shelter for my head on the day of armed battle.<sup>3</sup>
- (9) O *Hashem*, do not grant the desire of the wicked one! Do not allow his evil scheme to come to fruition, lest they [he and his cohorts] boast, *selah*.
- (10) As for the head/leader of those who surround me, may the lying of their lips [the slander that he and his cohorts spread about me] cover them [what they seek to do to me should rebound against them and bring about their downfall].
- (11) May fiery coals descend upon them. May it [the slander they circulate about me] cast them down into fire, into deep pits from which they

---

unaware, I would find myself caught in their snare. They have already prepared *chavolim* (ropes), so that once they have captured me, they may tie me down with such obligations to them that I will lose my independence and will be forced to obey their will. This is the arrogant plot which they, in their haughty pride, have devised, and which they think they will succeed in carrying out.’ David then continues, ‘*Parsu reshet*, they spread nets to catch me, which I cannot avoid coming near, because the path of my own duty leads me into their vicinity. Hence, I must muster all my prudence and self-discipline if I am to keep clear of them.’ *Mokshim* (traps) is the term employed commonly to denote arrangements of any kind made for the destruction of another. In other words, all the attempts to bring about David’s moral downfall are directed solely at one purpose, and that is none other than to bring about his ruination and destruction.” This is a warning to all leaders (presidents, prime ministers, and government officials). Beware, lest you be taken in and then completely controlled by these haughty elites who consider themselves above the law.

<sup>3</sup> This is the second of three verses where we find *Havayab Adonai* pronounced *Elohim Adonai* (Psalms 109:21, 140:8, 141:8), that is, where the divine name YKVK is punctuated with the vowels of *Elokim* and therefore pronounced as such.

Hirsch: “*Elohim Adonai oz yeshuati*. David says, ‘Herein is rooted the power which nothing can defeat, which has always granted me *yeshuati* (my salvation; renewed, vigorous life).’ This is, indeed, the true connotation of *yeshuab*. *Yeshuab* is the result of the ways of God’s love as expressed in the name YKVK—divine love which is ready at all times to grant new life to man. But this same love is no less present when YKVK is punctuated with the vowels of *Elokim* and therefore pronounced as such. In this way, we understand that even the most solemn decree of *Elokim*—any suffering ordained by His justice—is simply another demonstration of His unwavering love. We also understand that *Elokim*, who thus shows man His love by testing him with trouble and sorrow, is *Adonai*, our personal Lord, to whose service we belong with every fiber of our being. David thus says, ‘By teaching me to keep this ever before me, *sakota le’rosbi be’yom nasbek*, You have given my head protection through every situation which would ordinarily lead me to *nesbek* (to take up arms, to arm for battle). While others search for physical weapons to equip themselves for the struggles which they must undergo, I find my protection and armor in my awareness of and relationship with YKVK *Elokim Adonai*.’”

Psalm 140  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

may never rise again.

(12) May *ish lashon* (the master of evil speech, slanderer) never succeed in establishing himself on earth. As for *ish chamas* (the man who commits atrocities), may his own evil trap him and thrust him down.

(13) For I know that *Hashem* will uphold the cause of the poor man, the right of the defenseless.

(14) In contrast to those who sell themselves to *ra* and *chamas*, only those who dedicate themselves to *tzedek* (righteousness, justice, and charity) will forever gratefully acknowledge the sovereignty of Your Name; together with the upright, they will find permanent dwelling in Your presence in this world and for all eternity.



Psalm 144  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

**Psalm 144**

(1) By David [dedicated to Israel's victory against all inner and outer enemies]. Blessed is *Hashem*, my stronghold and the source of all my power. He alone grants victory; He trains my hands for close combat; He guides the arrows that leave my fingers in war.<sup>1</sup>

(2) I feel His presence in the kindness He does for me; He is my fortress; He lifts me up above the din and constantly rescues me from imminent danger. He is my shield, and I seek refuge in Him alone; It is He who makes my people submit to me.

(3) O *Hashem*, what is man that You are mindful of him? What is a mere mortal that You consider him at all?<sup>2</sup>

(4) Man is like a mist; his days disappear like the passing shadow of a bird in flight.

(5) O *Hashem*, incline Your heavens and descend to reveal Your providence in our lives; touch mountains [kings and nations that revolt against You] and make them evaporate like smoke.

(6) Send one bolt of Your light like lightning to disperse them [the evil ones among the nations]; send forth Your punishments like arrows to confound them.

---

<sup>1</sup> Paraphrasing Hirsch: This psalm gives us a glimpse into David's heart. David knows full well that he has shown great bravery in battle. He views his skill in warfare as a gift from Hashem, to be used solely in His service and for His purposes... However, David does not glory in his fame as a man of war. To him, the sword is *cherev raab*, something evil that wreaks havoc (verse 10), and he deplores the necessity of its use. He longs for a time when he will be permitted to sing a new song to Hashem, a song of his deliverance from the necessary evil of wielding the sword in battle (verse 9). He prays that the ideal of a peaceful national life with prosperity and growth under the protection of Hashem and with His blessing may become a living reality for his people (verses 11-15).

<sup>2</sup> “*Mah adam va'teda'eihu ben enosh va'te'chash'veihu.*” David asks the same question in Psalm 8:3, but switches the order here from the order there. Here he asks regarding *adam* first and then *ben enosh*. There, he asks regarding *enosh* first and then *ben adam*: “Hashem, what is *enosh* (mortal man) that You are mindful of him? What is *ben adam* (the son of man, the finest human) that You consider him at all” (Psalm 8:5). See below for Rabbi Hirsch's explanation of the difference between these two terms in Psalm 90:3. Here in our psalm, he writes, “In view of the basically degenerate character of the enemy nations, their defeat by human hands is still not sufficient to bring more than temporary peace. This explains the reference to the insignificance and frailty of all men (both *adam* and *ben enosh*), and to David's own weakness (verses 3-4). ‘What is *adam* (man), even if the pure humanity within him were still untainted, that You should give him Your special attention for the fulfillment of Your purposes? And even more so, what is *ben enosh*, a member of mankind, which has sunk so low and must itself work upon the betterment of its own character, that You should take him into account for Your purposes? *Adam la'bevel damab*, man is like a mist; *yamav ke'tzel over*, and the fact that his life must be of brief duration defeats every prospect of lasting success.”

Psalm 144  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

(7) Stretch forth Your hands to assist me from above; deliver me, rescue me from the overwhelming currents of history, from the hand of cruel strangers;

(8) Whose mouths speak deceit, and even their right hand with which they offer peace is a right hand of deception.<sup>3</sup>

(9) *Elohim*, O just God, I will sing a new song to You. With a ten-stringed lyre, I will chant and thereby cut away the illusory powers that prevent me from drawing near to You.<sup>4</sup>

(10) I will praise the One who gives victory to kings, who rescues His servant David from the evil sword that wreaks havoc.

(11) Rescue me and deliver me from the hand of cruel strangers, whose mouths speak deceit, and whose right hand is a right hand of deception.

(12) So that our sons may be as saplings, cultivated from youth to maintain a high level of purity; our daughters modest like carved nooks which uphold and reinforce the design of the divine palace.<sup>5</sup>

(13) So that our storehouses may overflow with produce from harvest to harvest; our flocks multiply by the thousands and the

---

<sup>3</sup> Rabbi Hirsch continues: “Thus, in verses 5-8, David now prays for direct divine intervention against Israel’s enemies, divine intervention which is not dependent on human action and therefore not tied to the lifespan of any one man. For the enemy is perfidious, and only his utter destruction can bring about a state of peace that is truly permanent. On the other hand, all that is needed is one single act of intervention on God’s part. *Ga be’harim ve’ye’shanu*, only one touch of the finger of His might and all the mountains (earthly empires) will vanish as vapor. *Berok barak u’tefitzem*, only one flash of lightning from Him from on high, and they will scatter. *Sblach chitzekha ute’humem*, one thrust from His arrows, and confounded, they will abandon their plans. David thus says in the name of his people, ‘*Sblach yadekha*. Only though Your rule and Your intervention can I become free forever from the influences of the nations in whose midst I find myself, and from the powers of paganism with whom it is impossible to make a dependable treaty of peace. *Asher pihem diber shav*, for their word is deception, *u’minam yemin shaker*, and their very handclasp is falsehood.”

<sup>4</sup> As Rabbi Hirsch writes in his commentary to Psalm 33:3, *shir Chadash* (a new song) is always employed with reference to the ultimate redemption of the world, the goal of the historical drama. Similarly, as above in Psalm 92:4, *nevel asor*, the ten-stringed harp symbolizes the highest level of human perfection that will be achieved in *Olam Haba*, the World to Come, the Great *Shabbat* that will follow the Messianic Age.

<sup>5</sup> Rashi quotes the Talmud: “What is the meaning of ‘their sons are as saplings, cultivated from youth’? These are the young men of Israel who guard themselves from sinning. ‘Daughters like carved nooks,’ these are the young maidens of Israel who seal their openings until they marry” (*Pesachim* 87a). This is also one of the meanings of Hashem’s praise of Israel, “You are an enclosed garden, My sister, My bride; you are an enclosed spring, a sealed fountain” (Song of Songs 4:12), regarding which Rashi writes, “This refers specifically to the modesty and chastity of the daughters of Israel.”

Psalm 144  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---

ten-thousands in our open fields.

(14) So that our leaders like oxen carry the weight of the entire generation, and there will be no breach in our sons' morals; no evil gossip spread about our daughters, and no scream of violence in our city streets.<sup>6</sup>

(15) Happy is the people for whom this is so! Happy is the people whose God is the Eternal One, Hashem.

### Psalm 90:3

(3) When they have fallen and forfeited their status as men, You bring men low to the point of contrition; You then extend a hand to help them begin again, saying, “Return to Me, O children of Adam!”<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Paraphrasing Hirsch: Verses 12-14 describe the state of prosperity, undisturbed by war or unrest, under the protection and guidance of Hashem, which will then be evident in the flourishing of families (upright sons and daughters), agriculture (overflowing storehouses), and livestock (healthy flocks), and in a prosperous, vigorous communal life (dedicated leaders who do not feed off the strength of the nation, but, rather, bear its burdens).

<sup>7</sup> *Tshev enosh ad daka va'tomer shvu bnei Adam.* Rabbi Hirsch directs us back to Genesis where we read that Adam's third son Shet (Seth) gave birth to his first son Enosh. As the Torah explains, “*V'ayikra et shemo Enosh*—he [Shet] named him Enosh, *az buchal likero be'shem Hashem*—[because] it was then that men began to profane the name of Hashem” (Genesis 4:26). Hirsch: “Enosh designates a troubled stage of mankind in contrast to the pure state of Adam. As a verb, it describes the hopeless stage of an illness or suffering, the condition of complete debility. It describes not the effect of the illness but the cause of it. In its active form, *enosh* designates a man who no longer conducts himself like an Adam—as a governor working in the service of God, and as such leads the world toward a healthy future—but, rather, one who misuses the position which God has given him only to domineering, selfish, capricious tyranny, making the world sick and ill (*choleh anush*). Adam is the health and welfare bringer of the world; Enosh is the reverse. The verse thus informs us that ‘*az buchal likero be'shem Hashem*—it was then that the invoking or proclaiming of the name of God was profaned/desecrated.’ Mankind had become *enosh*, had become the cause of the illness of the world. The descendants of Shet...degenerated because the consciousness of the godly calling of mankind which the name YKVK keeps awake in the human mind became lost, through which they sank from *adam* to *enosh*” (Hirsch on Genesis 4:26).

Rabbi Hirsch continues the same line of thought in his comments on our psalm: “You cause/allow *enosh* (amoral man) to sink until he is crushed, and You say: Return O children of Adam.’ *Enosh* is that human being who has cut his bonds with God, and makes the world morally corrupt and sick with his violence and arrogance. *Adam*, on the other hand, denotes the pure man, in his likeness to God as he labors in His cause. As already indicated in verse 2, spiritual and moral rebirth can be attained only through the birth travail of suffering. When mankind descends to the level of *enosh*, and God says ‘return O children of Adam,’ calling on them to become pure sons of Adam again, He gives practical expression to His summons to moral regeneration by causing the *enosh* who has stooped to violence and tyranny to sink lower and lower until he becomes truly aware of his impotence and nothingness. Therefore, what seems outwardly to be a painful downfall of mankind that has degenerated to the status of *enosh*, is actually man's upward struggle—accompanied by the birth travail of suffering—to attain once more the character of *Adam*.”

Consistent with all his other comments on this psalm, Rabbi Hirsch puts a positive spin on the fact that Hashem crushes *enosh* (mankind in its degenerate state) and brings him to his knees. It is for the positive purpose of summoning man to moral regeneration.

Psalm 144  
Yearning for Redemption—The Psalms of King David  
The Heart, Mind, and Soul of the Psalms  
Dedicated to *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben David*

---



