

Tehilim Perek 88

Welcome to NachDaily, covering the entire TANACH one perek at a time. I'm Rabbi Shaya Sussman, and today we'll be discussing Tehilim, Chapter 88.

This perek was written about the Jewish nation in exile, maintaining a somber tone throughout. One who feels ridden with suffering might find comfort here.

The perek opens with the words "Maskil for Heymon Ha'eizrachi." The Meforshim debate to whom "Heymon Ha'eizrachi" refers. Rashi and Radak explain that he was one of the 5 children of Zerach Ben Yehudah.

[Keep this in mind for the next perek, which states that it was written by Eitan Ha'eizrachi, who was possibly Heymon's brother. Perhaps these chapters are paired together for this reason.]

Alternatively, some Meforshim learn that Heymon Ha'eizrachi was the great grandson of Shmuel Hanavi, but are unsure as to why he's called Eizrachi. Nevertheless, it is said that he composed this prayer and handed it down to the sons of Korach to be sung at the Beis Hamikdash.

The Ramad Walli explains that eizrachi comes from the word zoreach, which implies shining like a ray of light. The author was given glimpses into the national suffering of Am Yisrael throughout its exile.

In the first part of the chapter, the author articulates his suffering, asking God to listen to his prayer. He feels like a corpse deserted in the grave, in a deep dark pit. Constantly being inflicted with pain, he tries to reach out his hand to Hashem for help.

Keep in mind that this can be also understood as a prayer for Am Yisrael in exile, because outside of its homeland it is like a sitting duck waiting for death.

In verse 11, the author asks Hashem what will be gained from his death. Can a dead person recognize You, sing Your praises?

From verse 14 until the end, the prayer continues in a serious tone. Every morning I greet You with tefilah and yet I still feel far from You! Why should I suffer? the author wonders.

So many people feel this way. After all the davening, learning, keeping Shabbosim, halachos, and trying to strengthen our emunah, some still feel far from Hashem. They still feel the pain of their suffering, wanting to taste even just a little bit of God's light. This way at least they would the consolation that Hashem hasn't left them.

The last passuk comes back to the main theme:

הִרְחַקְתָּ מִמֶּנִּי אֶהָב וְרַע מִיָּדַעִי מִחֲשֹׁךְ:

You have put friend and neighbor far from me, and my companions have hidden in darkness.

It is explained that the *friend* is referring to Mashiach, who has been very far from Am Yisrael. And *my companions have hidden in darkness*. This is sadly true. Throughout the long bitter galus, our friends have left us. We can only rely on Hashem.

We are seeing this now, as the nations of the world continue to hound Yisrael as the culprits creating divisiveness and descension.

To end on a positive note, however, baruch Hashem the exile is winding down. Hashem has not forgotten about His nation. He has begun to return us from all four corners of the earth to resettle and rebuild the ancient ruins of old.

May we merit seeing the final Redemption when Mashiach Ben Dovid will reveal himself to the entire world, when Am Yisrael will no longer be left in the dark.