

# Good, Evil, God's Role and a Psalm for Shabbat

ספר תהילים פרק צב

Psalm 92

א מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר לְיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת: ב טוֹב לְהַדוֹת לַיהוָה וּלְזַמֵּר לְשִׁמְךָ עֲלִינוּ: ג לְהַגִּיד בַּבֹּקֶר חַסְדֶּךָ וְיִאֱמוּנֶךָ  
בְּלַיְלוֹת: ד עֲלִי-עֲשׂוֹר וְעֲלִי-נָבֵל עָלֵי הַגִּיּוֹן בְּכָנּוֹר: ה כִּי שָׁמַחְתָּנִי יְהוָה בְּפַעֲלֶךָ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יְדֶיךָ אֲרָנְךָ: ו מִהַגְדֹּלוֹ  
מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יְהוָה מֵאֵד עֲמָקוֹ מִחֻשְׁבֹּתֶיךָ: ז אִישׁ בְּעַר לֹא יָדַע וְכַסִּיל לֹא-יָבִין אֶת-זֹאת: ח בְּפֶרֶחַ רְשָׁעִים | כְּמוֹ  
עֵשֶׂב וְנִצְצוּ כָל-פְּעָלֵי אֱוֹן לְהַשְׁמָדָם עַד-יַעַד: ט וְאַתָּה מְרוֹם לַעֲלָם יְהוָה: י כִּי הִנֵּה אֵיבֶיךָ | יְהוָה כִּי-הִנֵּה  
אֵיבֶיךָ יֵאָבְדוּ וְתִפְרְדוּ כָל-פְּעָלֵי אֱוֹן: יא וְתָרַם כְּרָאִים קַרְנֵי בַלְתֵּי בְשֵׁמֶן רְעֵנּוּ: יב וְתַבֵּט עֵינֵי בְשׁוּרֵי בַקְמִים  
עָלֵי מְרַעִים תִּשְׁמַעְנָה אֲזָנַי: יג צְדִיק פֶּתַח יִפְרַח כְּאֶרֶז בְּלִבְנוֹן יִשְׁגָּה: יד שְׁתוּלִים בְּבַיִת יְהוָה בְּחֻצְרוֹת  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִפְרִיחוּ: טו עוֹד יִנּוּבּוֹן בְּשִׁיבָה דְשָׁנִים וְרַעֲנָנִים יְהִי: טז לְהַגִּיד כִּי-יֵשֶׁר יְהוָה צוּרֵי וְלֹא-עֲלָתָה  
[עוֹלָתָה] בּוֹ:

1. A psalm, a song for Shabbat day.
2. It is good to give thanks to God, and to sing to your name, Most High!
3. To tell over your kindness in the morning, and your faithfulness in the night.
4. On an instrument of ten strings, and on the harp, to the melody of the lyre.
5. Because you, God, has made me happy through your actions; I will triumph through the works of your hands.
6. How great is your work, God! Very deep are your intentions!
7. A stupid man does not know, a fool does not understand this.
8. When wicked people bloom like grass, and all the workers of evil flourish; it is in order to destroy them forever.
9. And You, God, are most high forever.
10. For, behold, your enemies, God, for, behold, Your enemies will perish, all the workers of evil will be scattered.
11. But you will raise my horn like the horn of a wild ox; I will be annointed with fresh oil.
12. My eye has seen the downfall of my enemies , and my ears have heard the doom of the wicked who rise up against me.
13. The righteous person blooms like a palm tree, he grows like a cedar in Lebanon.
14. Those that are planted in the house of God, in the courtyards of God they shall bloom.
15. They still grow fruit in old age; they are fat and flourishing.
16. To declare that God is upright, He is my rock and there is no imperfection in Him.

## Your Psalm Navigator

1. How does Psalm 92 deal with "the problem of evil" (why good things happen to bad people, and why bad things happen to good people)? What are some difficulties that come out of this approach? Does the author hint at, or attempt to deal with these

difficulties? What does the Psalm tell us about the author's understanding of, and relationship with, God?

2. Can you find any thematic connection between this Psalm and Shabbat? Why do you think that this is called a "psalm for Shabbat?"

Rashi, Psalms 92:1

רשי תהילים צ.ב.א

**ליום השבת** - שאומרים אותו בשבתות והוא מדבר בענין העולם הבא שכולו שבת.

*For the Shabbat day*- They say this on the Shabbat. And it speaks about the World to Come (afterlife) which is wholly Shabbat.

Malbim, Psalms 92:1

מלבים תהילים צ.ב.א

**מזמור שיר ליום השבת** - שיר הזה ידבר מהשגחת ה' בעולמו, שהגם שנראה שהכל נוהג על פי הטבע מ"מ עין משכיל יראה בו השגחת ה', ויביט עונשי הרשעים וגמול הצדיקים, הגם שהיה הסתיר השגחתו מעין ההמון למען יהיה מקום לבחירה, ויען שיום השבת הוא עדות על ההנהגה ההשגחית ושהעולם לא נמסר אל הטבע והמקרה, כמו שבראתי במקומו, לכן נתיסד שיר זה ליום השבת.

*A psalm, a song for the Shabbat day*- This song speaks about the providence (active role) of God in his world. While it seems that everything happens naturally, the eye of the learned individual will see in it the providence (active role) of God, and he will recognize the punishments of the wicked and the reward of the righteous. Also, His providence (active role) is hidden from the eyes of the masses in order to leave room for free will. And he (God?) answered that the day of Shabbat is testimony on the method of providence, and that the world is not given over to nature and chance, as I have created in its place. Therefore, this song was established for the day of Shabbat.

### Your Commentary Navigator

1. How do Rashi and the Malbim explain the psalm's connection to Shabbat? Would the psalm read differently in light of both of their statements?
2. What does the Malbim's explanation tell us about the nature of Shabbat? Why would Shabbat "testify" for God's active role in the world? Do you think this is an important aspect of Shabbat?