YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

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***TEHILLIM* (SERIES II)**

**Rav Elchanan Samet**

**Shiur #11: Psalm 142 - "You Are My Refuge and My Portion**

**in the Land of the Living"**

**The Soul's Escape from the Prison of Loneliness (continuation)**

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| 1. A Maskil of David; A prayer when he was in the cave. | |
| I 2. With my voice I will cry to the Lord; | |
| With my voice I will entreat the Lord. | |
| II 3. I will pour out my complaint before Him; | |
| I will declare my trouble before Him. | |
| 4. When my spirit faints within me, | |
| III then You know my path. | IV 5 Look on my right hand, and behold, |
| In the way wherein I walk | but there is no man who knows me: |
| they have hidden a snare for me. | I have nowhere to flee; |
|  | No man cares for my soul. |
| V 6. I cry to You, O Lord: | |
| I say, You are my refuge | |
| and my portion in the land of the living. | |
| VI 7. Listen to my cry; | VIII 8. Bring my soul out of prison, |
| For I am brought very low: | that I may give thanks to Your name; |
| VII 8. Deliver me from my persecutors; | IX 9. For me the righteous shall make circles, |
| for they are stronger than I. | 10. When You shall deal bountifully with me. |

### IV. THe central axis (Stanza V): The implementation of the declaration in the introduction: "With my voice I will cry to the Lord"

The psalmist's desperate loneliness, described in the first half of the psalm (stanzas III-IV), brings him in stanza V to cry out to God:

I cry **to you,** O Lord!

In this way he implements what he had announced that he would do in stanza I in the introduction to the psalm: "With my voice I will cry to the Lord."

A cry to God in the Bible often expresses the depth of the crier's distress, and also the fact that he has no other address to direct his cry other than God. In fact, the cry of the wronged and afflicted frequently leads to a change in his situation.[[1]](#footnote-1)

In our psalm as well, in the continuation of stanza V, the petitioner's cry effects a dramatic change. This change, however, does not come from outside of him, nor is it the result of some Divine intervention that changes his objective situation. The change in our psalm takes place in the petitioner himself, and it is a subjective change. His crying out to God brings him to a new understanding, which relieves the distress of his loneliness brought on by his predicament:

I say, **You** are my refuge,

and my portion in the land of the living!

Indeed he has someone who is ready to help and redeem him – "**You** are my refuge" – and he has someone who cares for his soul – **"You** are my portion in the land of the living."[[2]](#footnote-2) Thus, the petitioner is not alone and abandoned as he had felt up until now, and it is similarly not true that he has nowhere to flee.

It is precisely the cry, which in many cases expresses deep despair, that takes the petitioner in our psalm out of his despair and plants within him the consoling recognition that he is not alone in the world and that God is with him.

In our transcription of the psalm at the beginning of this study, we set stanza V as a short section standing on its own. What we meant by that is that this stanza serves as a "central axis" situated between the two halves of the body of the psalm. (Stanzas I-II function as an introduction to the psalm and they are not part of the two halves that are divided by the central axis.)

As we have shown in many places (primarily in our analysis of the Biblical story), the role of a central axis set between the two halves out of which a literary unit is constructed is to "mediate" between the two halves, to transfer the reader from the subject of the first half to the subject of the second half. Sometimes, the central axis includes a clear shift in the course of the literary unit, and it is this shift that forms the transition from half to half.

This is the case also in our psalm. The petitioner's very cry to God and the content of that cry constitute an emotional climax in the course of the psalm. But this climax contains also a shift in the crier's consciousness. This shift reverses the sense of desperate loneliness that had overcome him in the first half, and thus it paves the way for expressing prayer and hope in the second half. In the next section, which will be dedicated to the second half of the psalm, we will note the positive change in the petitioner's mental state in that half, thanks to the reversal that he experienced in the central axis.

We will complete our discussion of the central axis (stanza V) by examining the literary fashioning of this stanza, which is different from that of the stanzas that surround it – that is to say, in comparison to the two halves in between which it is located.

The clauses that open the stanzas of both the first and the second halves of the psalm are built with the same format. They open **with a verb directed to God,** usually in the imperative, which expresses a request of God that He perform an action **that has some connection to the petitioner** or to something connected to him:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **The opening clause** | **The verb directed at God** | **The object of the action connected to the petitioner** |
| Stanza III | You know | my path |
| Stanza IV | Look… and behold | there is no man that helps me |
| Stanza VI | Listen | to my cry |
| Stanza VII | Deliver me | from my persecutors |
| Stanza VIII | Bring out | my soul |
| Stanza IX | You shall deal bountifully | with me[[3]](#footnote-3) |

It is just the opposite in stanza V, the central axis. Here the verb that opens the first clause, as well as the verb that opens the second clause, are verbs in the first person that relate to the petitioner, and the object of the action is God:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | I cried | to You, O Lord |
|  | I said | You |

In this way, stanza V is similar to stanzas I-II at the beginning of the psalm:[[4]](#footnote-4)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Stanza I | I will cry | to the Lord |
|  | I will entreat | the Lord |
| Stanza II | I will pour out | before Him |
|  | I will declare | before Him |

What is the significance of this difference between stanza V and the stanzas immediately preceding and following it?

One who comes to pray to God approaches Him with a certain expectation. He generally expects of God that He will listen to him and act to alter his situation. Such a mental state brings the petitioner to open his prayer with an address directed to God and with a specification of the actions that will be necessary to change his situation ("look," "listen to," "deliver"). Indeed, stanzas III-IX, with the exception of stanza V, are built according to this format, in which the petitioner turns to God in the imperative, so that He should act to improve his situation.

In stanza V, however, it becomes clear to the psalmist himself, as well as to us, his readers, that it is the petitioner's very turning to God in prayer that is changing his mental state. His prayer itself is improving his situation, releasing him from his distressful loneliness in a world in which he is being persecuted by his enemies, and where no man is ready to help him. Stanza V therefore opens with human action ("I cried," "I said"), and it is that action that stands at its center. God is not (yet) asked to take action; rather, He serves as the object of man's prayer ("to You, O Lord," "You are my refuge").[[5]](#footnote-5)

### V. THe second half of the Psalm (stanzas VI-IX): the prayer for rescue

The second half of the psalm is comprised of four stanzas (VI-IX). It is true that this is twice as many stanzas as in the first half, but they are all short stanzas, two lines each, and with respect to the number of words the two halves are almost identical in length: 21 words in the first half and 23 words in the second.

At the end of the previous section, we noted the common denominator between the stanzas in the first half and those in the second half. They all open with an appeal to God that He should take an action connected to the petitioner's situation.

However, in the framework of the similarity between the two halves, which creates a certain parallelism between them, there is a profound difference between the prayer offered by the psalmist in the first half and his prayer in the second half. This difference is, of course, due to the reversal experienced by the petitioner in stanza V – in the central axis.

The prayer in the first half (stanzas III-IV) is filled with a difficult sense of desperate loneliness and hopelessness. The imperatives relating to God at the beginning of each of the two stanzas III and IV are: "You know"; "look and behold." With these verbs the petitioner asks that God recognize his situation and see the severity of his loneliness.

When, however, the petitioner recognizes in stanza V that he is not alone in the world, but rather God is his portion in the land of the living, hope springs up within him that his situation will indeed improve, thanks to the actions that God will take on his behalf. In the second half of the psalm, the petitioner concretizes this new consciousness with a series of appeals to God that He act to help him in a real way and improve his situation. The atmosphere in this half is therefore optimistic.

The first appeal to God in this half is:

Listen to my cry;

For I am brought very low.[[6]](#footnote-6)

This appeal – "listen to my cry" – seems to complement the appeal in stanza IV in the first half: "Look… and behold," for seeing and hearing are complementary activities. In truth, however, these two appeals are fundamentally different from each other. Looking and beholding are actions through which one can **be convinced of the facts** (and they are a continuation of the words, "You know," in stanza III). The appeal, "Listen," on the other hand, reflects an expectation on the part of the petitioner that God listen to the cry that he sounded in stanza V, and that He identify with the distress that he expressed in stanzas III-IV. Therefore, this request serves as an introduction to the petitioner's practical requests of God that He act on his behalf, requests that appear later in the second half.

The first practical request is found in stanza VII:

Deliver me from my persecutors;

For they are stronger than I.

In stanzas VI-VII, a request of God appears in the first clause ("listen…," "deliver me…"), and a rationale for the request appears in the second clause ("for…"). And just as there is progress from the first general request, "listen," to the second, practical request, "deliver me," so too there is progress between the rationales. The rationale in stanza VI, "**for** I am brought very low," expresses the psalmist's personal weakness and echoes his mental state in the first half. The rationale in stanza VII, "**for** they [my persecutors] are stronger than me," alludes to an objective, factual plight, from which the psalmist asks God to save him.

In stanza VIII, the psalmist continues with his request for deliverance:

Bring my soul out of prison,

That I may thank Your name.

The word *masger* (not in the sense of a metal craftsman) appears only two more times in all of Scripture in the book of *Yeshaya*, and there it refers to a place of imprisonment.[[7]](#footnote-7) In this precise sense, it is difficult to understand the petitioner's request in our psalm. Even if *masger* is a metaphor, this metaphor does not seem to accord with the previous metaphors in the psalm. In stanza III, the petitioner is not imprisoned, but rather walking in the path in which his enemies hid a snare for him. Also in stanza IV he seems to be describing his loneliness as he walks down this path by himself.[[8]](#footnote-8) In stanza VII, his enemies are once again described, this time when they are persecuting him. From where, then, did the psalmist derive this metaphor, by way of which he likens himself in stanza VIII to one who is in a *masger*, a prison?

It may be suggested that all of these metaphors belong to a single field of meaning – methods of hunting wild animals. Hunters have a variety of such methods available to them.

First, they locate the fixed path that the animal takes while it is free: "in the way wherein I walk." On this path, the hunters hide a "snare," into which the animal will fall as it is walking innocently in its path: "they have hidden a snare for me."

Another way to catch an animal while it is proceeding along its usual course is to conduct an extended chase after it. Such a chase tires the animal out, so that it is easily caught by the hunters when it reaches its point of exhaustion. "For I am brought very low; deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I" – my strength has left me, my persecutors are stronger than I am, and I am about to be caught.

Another strategy that hunters use to catch their prey is to prepare in advance a barrier in the animal's escape path. The animal innocently enters an area that is closed off on all sides so that it cannot flee, and thus it is caught by those in its pursuit. Our psalm appears to be referring to such a barrier when it speaks of a "prison": "bring my soul out of prison."

According to the interpretation proposed here, stanza VIII continues the previous metaphors relating to an animal that is about to be caught by those hunting it, and it even brings them to a climax of severity. The animal might be saved from the "snare" that was hidden for it in stanza III, if it does not fall into it or if it manages to escape,[[9]](#footnote-9) and it might also be saved from those pursuing after it, if they give up the chase, so that the animal remains free. But at the end of its escape route, a "prison" awaits it, and once it finds its way inside, it will no longer have a way to get out.

"Bring my soul out of prison," pleads the psalmist. O You who cares for my soul, You who are "my portion in the land of the living," take me out of this prison, and let this be a total rescue from my enemies who chase after me. When the prison walls are breached and my path opens up before me, my persecutors will despair from chasing after me and cease their pursuit. At that point, I will be able "to give thanks to Your name."

The last line of stanza VIII – "to give thanks to Your name" – transfers us all at once to what will happen after the rescue. As in other psalms of supplication in the book of *Tehillim*, the petitioner undertakes to thank God for saving him from his predicament, and even more importantly, he sees thanking God as the whole purpose of his rescue. From his imprisonment he will go out to thank God for his deliverance.[[10]](#footnote-10)

This line is the transitional link to stanza IX, which is entirely the petitioner's description of what will happen in the future, after God brings him out from the prison into which his enemies have been pressing him.

### VI. Stanza IX – when the rescue comes

For me the righteous shall make circles,

When (*ki*) You shall deal bountifully with me.

The petitioner's tone of vigorous supplication that God should save Him from his predicament, which can be heard in the series of requests in stanzas VI-VIII ("listen"… "deliver"… "bring out"), is replaced in the last stanza of the psalm with an optimistic expression of confidence in his rescue: "when you shall deal bountifully with me."[[11]](#footnote-11) It seems that the word "*ki*" should be understood here in the sense of "when." When you deal bountifully with me, then "for me the righteous shall make circles."[[12]](#footnote-12)

From the perspective of its content, stanza VIII continues what was stated at the end of stanza VII and expands upon it. There the petitioner said that his rescue from prison will bring him "to thank Your name," and now the response to his deliverance expands from the petitioner himself to "the righteous." But what is the meaning of their response: "For me they shall make circles" (*bi yakhtiru*)?

We will start with the verb *yakhtiru*. The early commentaries understand the term *yakhtiru* in the sense of a royal crown: "They will put a crown on their heads" (Radak: "The righteous will glory in me and make me into a crown for their heads"). Alternatively: "They will give a crown to God" (Rashi: "On account of me, the righteous will crown You and thank Your name"). It seems, however, that the verb *le-hakhtir* that is derived from the noun *keter* ("crown"), in the sense of "to put a crown on the head," does not exist in Biblical Hebrew (but see note 13a). The noun "*keter*" appears in the Bible only in the book of *Esther* (three times); in the books that predate the book of *Esther* the word "*keter*" does not appear at all, and in its place we find the words "*nezer*" and "*atara*."

There are only a few instances in the Bible of a verb derived from the root *k-t-r*, and in each instance the term must be understood in the sense dictated by the context.[[13]](#footnote-13) In three places the verb appears in the sense of "encompass from all sides":[[14]](#footnote-14)

*Shoftim* 20:43: Then **they enclosed** (*kitru*) Binyamin round about, and chased them.

*Chabakuk* 1:4: Therefore Torah is slackened, and justice does not go out triumphantly: for the wicked man **besets** (*makhtir*) the righteous, so that justice goes out perverted.[[15]](#footnote-15)

*Tehillim* 22:13: Many bulls have compassed me; strong bulls of Bashan **have beset me** **round** (*kitruni*).

Based on this sense of encompassing, several modern commentaries have suggested that in our case as well *yakhtiru* means "surround, encircle."[[16]](#footnote-16) Amos Chakham, who interprets the word in this sense, writes:

"For me the righteous will make circles" – In my name the righteous will march in circles of joy and thanksgiving for the salvation that You have brought me. The psalmist is alluding to the custom of circling the altar, or Zion, to the accompaniment of prayers of praise and thanksgiving, as it is stated (*Tehillim* 26:6-7): "And I will march round Your altar, O Lord, that I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all Your wondrous works"; and (*Tehillim* 48:13): "Walk around Zion, and encircle her."

It is not clear from his words whether the righteous in our psalm as well will encircle the altar in the Temple, or perhaps "they will march in circles of joy and thanksgiving" even without an altar, and the matter of the altar is merely an example brought by the commentator for such encirclements. It seems from his commentary that the verse means to say that the righteous will dance in a circle. The word *bi* he understands to mean "in my name."

Either way, the question may be raised: Who or what will the righteous encompass? In the verses cited above, in which the verb derived from the root *k-t-r* denotes encompassing from all sides, mention is always made of the object that is encompassed: In the book of *Shofetim*: "Then they enclosed Binyamin round about"; in *Tehillim* 22: "They have beset me round" – the bulls have beset the psalmist himself"; and in the book of *Chabakuk*: "The wicked man besets the righteous." In our case, on the other hand, according to Chakham's explanation, it does not say who or what the righteous will encircle.

It therefore seems that we should understand that the righteous **will encircle the petitioner**who was saved by God, and he will stand in the center. According to this, the word *bi* means "me." Since the petitioner is the cause for the dance, the righteous will circle around him and together with him thank God for dealing bountifully with him.[[17]](#footnote-17)

This explanation brings us back, by way of contrast and repair, to two earlier places in the psalm where the petitioner described his trouble.

First, in the previous stanza, stanza VIII, it was stated: "Bring my soul **out of prison (*masger*)**." We already explained in the previous section that this "prison" is the place reached by a hunted animal fleeing those chasing after it, where it finds itself closed in from every side. Owing to God's lovingkindness toward him, the petitioner emerges from the "prison" arranged for him by his enemies, and finds himself surrounded by the opposite type of *masger*: the righteous who surround him from all sides, their objective being "to give thanks to Your name… when you shall deal bountifully with me."

Second, in the first half, and especially in stanza IV, the petitioner described his distressful loneliness when he was persecuted on his path:

Look on my right hand, and behold,

But there is no man who knows me:

I have nowhere to flee;

No man cares for my soul.

In this central axis, in stanza V, the petitioner's cry to God brings him to the realization that he is not alone, that God is with him, and that He will act to save him. And now in the last stanza it becomes clear, after the petitioner has been delivered, that he is not alone even on the human plane. He belongs to a company of righteous men who rejoice in his salvation, and they surround him in a circle of joyous dancing, in order to give thanks to God together with him.

### VII. SUmmary: The course and uniqueness of the psalm based on its structure

In the introductory section to this study, we cited an assessment that our psalm is "one of the usual poems in our book, of someone in trouble…," and that "almost all of its phrases are found in other places."

Over the course of our analysis of the psalm based on its structure, we have succeeded in revealed its uniqueness. The predicament that underlies the psalmist's prayer is not unique, and from his account it is difficult to paint a real picture of his plight. His enemies have hidden a snare for him along his usual path, they are chasing after him with strength greater than his own, and they are about to lead him into a "prison" where they will be able to overtake and capture him.

What is unique about our psalm is the account of the inner mental anguish accompanying the petitioner's external troubles. He is alone in the world, and there is no man who knows him and wishes to help him in his real predicament. The sense of loneliness and the indifference of those surrounding him finds clear expression in his words in stanza IV, where he turns to God and asks Him to behold and see the intensity of his loneliness.

But in stanza V, the central axis of the psalm, the psalmist's cry to the Lord bursts forth, and while crying out his error becomes clear. He is not alone, for God is with Him; he has not lost a place to flee, for God is his refuge; and there is some One who cares for his soul, as the Lord is his portion in the land of the living.

The psalmist's revised consciousness allows him to turn to God with a series of requests for salvation in the second half of the psalm, based on the confidence that God will listen to the voice of his supplications and answer his petitions, since God is his portion in the land of the living.

The psalmist's request of God toward the end of the second half of that psalm that he should bring him out from his prison, takes him out into a cognitive expanse full of hope, and he describes how God's answering his prayers will return him to the bosom of human society – "the righteous will circle around me." In this way, a solution will be found to the distressful loneliness out of which the psalm grew, not only through his profound religious recognition that God is his portion in the world, but also through the human dimension, from his need for companionship in the land of the living.

(Translated by David Strauss)

1. Thus, for example, the cry of the people of Israel in Egypt: "And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry rose up to God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant…" (*Shemot* 2:23-25). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. "'The land of the living' – this world" (*Metzudot*). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. In stanza IX which closes the psalm, the verb that relates to God and his influence on the petitioner does not appear in the stanza's opening clause, but rather in the closing clause, and thus it emphasizes the conclusion. See note 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The manifest connection between stanza V and stanza I was already discussed in our study. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This is also the reason that stanzas I-II are built in the same format as stanza V: In stanzas I-II the psalmist does not yet pray for a change in his situation, but merely prepares himself to do so, as we explained these stanzas in section II above. We explained the need for such preparation (or for this declaration) at the end of that section. The psalmist does not find himself in a particular danger that necessitates immediate and urgent prayer. In stanzas I-II, he comes to the recognition that when his spirit faints within him, it would be good for him to cry out to God and lay out his trouble before Him. Therefore, stanzas I-II focus on the act of prayer itself that the petitioner is preparing to offer to God. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The noun *rina* appears 33 times in the Bible in two different contexts. In the minority of instances, it means "prayer" – also prayer of praise and exaltation (II *Divrei Ha-Yamim* 20:22), but primarily prayer of supplication, as is the case in our verse. But in the majority of instances (in about 20 places in the Bible), the word *rina* denotes a responsive sound that is not a prayer, and in these cases it is specifically a happy response. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *Yeshayahu* 24:22: "And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison (*masger*)"; *Yeshayahu* 42:7: "To bring out the prisoners from the prison (*mi-masger*), and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See our remarks regarding stanza IV in section III. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See *Tehillim* 124:7: "Our soul is escaped like a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escaped." [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See, for example, in the first book of *Tehillim*, the conclusions of the psalms of supplication 3, 7, 13, 22, 26, 28, 30, 35, 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. *Tigmol alai* = *tigmol li*. The form "*gamal al*"appears seven times in Scripture, whereas "*gamal le-*" is found only three times (and many more times "*gamal et*"). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. In accordance with what is found in the previous stanzas, the order of the clauses in stanza VIII should have been: "When you shall deal bountifully with me, the righteous shall make circles for me." But the order was changed in chiastic manner in order to emphasize the concluding clause. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. We will bring two instances of the root that are not connected to our psalm.

    a. *Mishlei* 14:18: "The simple inherit folly; but the prudent **are crowned with** (*yakhtiru*) knowledge." The commentators, from R. Saadya Gaon to A. Horowitz (in the *Mikra Le-Yisrael* series), understood the word *yakhtiru* in the sense of crown, like the explanations offered by the early commentators to the verse under discussion in *Tehillim*. In other words, the prudent will set knowledge as a crown on their heads. It seems, however, that Ben Yehuda was correct in his dictionary (*keter* 3, volume 5, p. 2561, note 1) when he wrote regarding the verse in *Mishlei*: "Most early and modern commentators explained it in the sense of crown, but this does not fit into the context… According to the traditional reading, the more convincing explanation is in accordance with the Arabic root *k-t-r*, in the sense of 'many.'" According to Ben-Yehuda's proposal, the verse in *Mishlei* is unconnected to the verse in *Tehillim*.

    b. *Iyov* 36:2: "**Suffer** (*katar*) me a little, and I will show you."The word *katar* here means "wait," and it appears to be an Aramaic word (and it is found in the Aramaic translations of Scripture), like other words in the same verse: "*ze'er*," and "*va-achavekha*." Among the modern commentaries, it has been suggested to explain our verse in *Tehillim* in this sense: "The righteous will wait for me, when You deal bountifully with me." This explanation appears forced for several reasons. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. It is possible that even the words *keter* (in the book of *Esther*) and the word *koteret* (of a pillar, in several Biblical books) are derived from this sense of the root, as they encircle the head or the pillar. However, among the modern commentators, there are those who suggest that the word *keter* in the book of *Esther* is derived from the Persian. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Thus writes Ben Yehuda (ibid.), *keter* 2, note 2, on this verse: "The early commentators explained this *hif'il* like *kiter*… in the sense of encircle, but this is not strong enough here. Rather, it seems that this is a separate root, similar to *ch-t-r* in the Arabic, in the sence of deceit, fraud, and cruelty." Ben Yehuda's critique of the commonly accepted explanation of this verse is not persuasive, in contrast to his critique of the explanation of the verse in *Mishlei* (see note 13a). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Ben Yehuda (ibid.), *keter* 4, cites our verse as reflecting a separate meaning of the verb *hikhtir* – "*hikhtir be-davar* – gloried in it." In note 3 he explains what he means: "This *yakhtiru* as well [in our verse in *Tehillim*] was explained by the early commentators in the sense of … crown” [as in the verse in *Mishlei*; see the previous note], but this is very forced. Some of the moderns explained it in the sense of encompassing, but this explanation as well fails to give the text any natural meaning. Now the most correct explanation in accordance with the context is that of the Radak, who said that this means that the righteous will glory in him, and so too *Metzudot* *David*, only that they explain the verb *yakhtiru* in the sense of "crown," but this is forced. We must therefore assume that there was a separate root *hikhtir*, in the sense of glory, even though it has no parallel in any of the other Semitic languages." This assumption seems speculative to us, and it is preferable to stick to one of the proven meanings of the root *k-t-r* in Scripture. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. a. At the end of his commentary, in note 10a, Amos Chakham proposes this explanation as well: "The righteous will encircle me to give thanks with me for my salvation."

    b. Regarding the possibility to explain the word *bi* in the sense of *oti*, it should be noted that in connection with several verbs in the Bible, we find a variety of ways to indicate the object – sometimes with the prepositional letter *bet* and sometimes without it – with no difference in meaning. See, for example, *Shemot* 23:3: "And make no mention of the name (***ve-shem***)of other gods," as opposed to *Yehoshua* 23:7: "And you shall not make mention of the name (***u-be-shem***)of their gods"; II *Shemuel* 6:6: "Uza put out his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it (***bo***)," as opposed to I *Divrei Ha-Yamim* 13:9: "And Uza put out his hand to hold the ark (***et ha-aron***);" and others. As a rule, alternative prepositions are not rare in Biblical Hebrew (noted by Ariel Shaveh). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)