

# Afterthoughts

- Yocheved Bienenfeld

## NOTEN LECHEM

L'CHOL BASAR KI L'OLAM CHASDO

Who gives food to all flesh, His loving kindness is forever.

I have never been able to clearly understand this penultimate line of T'hilim 136 in terms of how it fits in at this point. Not surprisingly, the psalm begins with the greatness and kindness of Gd from the time of Creation and then jumps to the episode of Egypt and our redemption (this is the same sequence as in the previous psalm, 135). And although the line of NOTEN LECHEM L'CHOL BASAR is certainly a proper addition in terms of praising Gd for all His chessed - not just for us but for the whole world - it seems disconnected to me. But when I focused on my earlier understanding of SHEB'SHIFLENU ZACHAR LANU - Who remembered us in our lowly state, I was able to see a possible connection between all of those final lines. I understood that phrase as underlying the importance and value of humility, meaning that if we want HaShem to "remember" us and show His chessed to us, we need to show SHIFLEINU - our humility. Thus:

V'NATAN ARTZAM NACHALA - And gave their land as a heritage - Gd gave the land of those kings defeated, to the children of Israel. To whom?

NACHALA L'YISRAEL AVDO - A heritage for His servant Israel - to the Jewish people when they behaved as AVDO - when they served Gd properly.

SHEB'SHIFLENU ZACHAR LANU - for when we behaved with humility, He remembered us and...

VAYIFR'KEINU MITZAREINU - And rescued us from our tormentors - saved us from our enemies so that we might retain that land that He gave us.

NOTEN LECHEM L'CHOL BASAR - Who gives food to all flesh - And if the land is truly ours, we will have the Beit HaMikdash which, as we know, is the source of all blessing to the world: "As long as the service in the Holy Temple exists, the world is blessed and rains come in their time (Avot d'Rabi Natan 4:85, al ha'avoda); as well as the words of the Zohar on Parashat T'ruma: Through the Shulchan and the Altar, food comes down to the whole world.

Not such an obvious or strong connection, but maybe...