

Tehillim- Psalms for the Ages - Chapter 31 (Part II)

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1. תהלים פרק לא

א לִמְנַצֵּחַ מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד: ב בֵּן יְהוָה חֲסִיתִי אֶל־אֲבוֹשָׁה לְעוֹלָם בְּצַדִּיקְתָּךְ פְּלִטָנִי: ג הִטָּה אֵלַי | אֲזַנְךָ מִהֲרָה הֶצִּילָנִי הִנֵּה לִי | לְצוֹר־מַעוֹז לְבֵית מְצוּדוֹת לְהוֹשִׁיעֵנִי: ד כִּי־סִלְעִי וּמְצוּדָתִי אַתָּה וּלְמַעַן שְׁמֹךְ תִּנְחַנְנִי וְתִנְהַלְנִי: ה תוֹצִיאֵנִי מִרְשַׁת זֶו טָמְנוּ לִי כִי־אַתָּה מַעוֹזִי: ו בִּידְךָ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי פְדִיתָה אוֹתִי יְהוָה אֵל אֱמֶת: ז שְׁנֵאתִי הַשְׁמָרִים הַבְּלִי־שׁוּא וְאֲנִי אֶל־יְהוָה בְּטַחְתִּי: ח אֲגִילָה וְאֲשַׁמְחָה בְּחֶסֶדְךָ אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתָ אֶת־עַנְיִי יָדַעְתָּ בְּצָרוֹת נַפְשִׁי: ט וְלֹא הִסְגַּרְתָּנִי בְּיַד־אֹיֵב הַעֲמַדְתָּ בְּמִרְחָב רַגְלִי: י חַנּוּנִי יְהוָה כִּי צָר־לִי עָשָׂה בְּכַעַס עֵינַי נַפְשִׁי וּבִטְנִי: יא כִּי כָלוּ בִּגְדֹן חַיִּי וּשְׁנוֹתַי בְּאֵנָחָה כָּשָׁל בְּעוֹנֵי כַחֵי וַעֲצָמִי עָשָׂשׁוּ: יב מִכָּל־צָרָרִי הֵייתִי חֲרָפָה וְלִשְׁכֹּנִי | מֵאֹד וּפָחַד לְמִידְעִי רָאִי בַחוּץ בְּדָרוֹ מִמֶּנִּי: יג נִשְׁפַּחְתִּי כַּמֶּת מִלֵּב הֵייתִי כְּכֹלִי אֶבֶד: יד כִּי שְׁמַעְתִּי | דְּבַת רִבִּים מְגוֹר מִסָּבִיב בְּהוֹסֵסִם יָחַד עָלַי לִקְחַת נַפְשִׁי וְמָמוֹ: טו וְאֲנִי | עָלִיךָ בְּטַחְתִּי יְהוָה אֱמַרְתִּי אֱלֹהֵי אַתָּה: טז בִּידְךָ עֲתַתִּי הֶצִּילָנִי מִיַּד־אֹיְבֵי וּמִרְדָּפִי: יז הֶאֱרִיחַ פָּנֶיךָ עַל־עַבְדְּךָ הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי בְּחֶסֶדְךָ: יח יְהוָה אֶל־אֲבוֹשָׁה כִּי קִרְאתִיךָ יִכְשׁוּ רָשָׁעִים יִדְמוּ לְשֹׁאֵל: יט תִּאֲלַמְנָה שִׁפְתֵי שֹׁקֵר הַדְּבָרוֹת עַל־צִדִּיק עֲתָק בְּגִאוֹה וּבוֹז: כ מִה רַב טוֹבְךָ אֲשֶׁר־צָפַנְתָּ לִירְאֶיךָ פְּעֻלַּת לְחוֹסִים בְּךָ נִגְדַּר בְּנֵי אָדָם: כא תִּסְתַּרְם בְּסֶתֶר פָּנֶיךָ מִרְכָּסִי אִישׁ תִּצְפֹּנֵם בְּסֶפֶה מְרִיב לְשָׁנוֹת: כב בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה כִּי־הִפְלִיא חֶסֶדּוֹ לִי בַעִיר מְצוֹר: כג וְאֲנִי | אֱמַרְתִּי בַחֲפוּזִי נִגְרַזְתִּי מִנֶּגֶד עֵינֶיךָ אֲכֹן שְׁמַעְתָּ קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנִי בְּשׁוּעֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ: כד אֶהְבֵּוּ אֶת־יְהוָה כָּל־חַסִּידָיו אֲמוּנִים נֹצֵר יְהוָה וּמְשַׁלֵּם עַל־יָתֵר עָשָׂה גִאוֹה: כה חֲזָקוֹ וַיֵּאמֶץ לִבְכֶּם כָּל־הַמִּיחִלִּים לִיהוָה:

1. To the conductor, a song of David. 2. I took refuge in You, O Lord; let me not be shamed forever; rescue me with Your righteousness. 3. Incline Your ear to me, quickly rescue me; be a rock of strength to me, a stronghold to save me. 4. For You are my Rock and my Stronghold, and for Your name's sake, You shall lead me and guide me. 5. You shall free me from this net which they have hidden for me, for You are my stronghold. 6. In Your hand I entrust my spirit; You have redeemed me, O Lord, God of truth. 7. I hated those who await worthless vanities, but I hoped for the Lord. 8. I will exult and rejoice in Your kindness, for You have seen my affliction; You have known the troubles of my soul. 9. And you did not deliver me into the hands of an enemy; You have placed my feet in a broad place. 10. Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye is dimmed from anger, my soul and my belly. 11. For my life is spent in grief and my years in sighing; my strength has failed because of my iniquity, and my bones have decayed. 12. From all my tormentors I have become a reproach-and very much so to my neighbors-and fright to my acquaintances; those who see me outside avoid me. 13. I was forgotten like a dead person, out of mind; I was like a lost utensil. 14. For I heard the gossip of many, terror from all sides when they take counsel together against me; they plotted to take my soul. 15. But I trusted in You, O Lord; I said, "You are my God." 16. My times are in Your hands; rescue me from the hands of my enemies and from my pursuers. 17. Cause Your countenance to shine upon Your servant; save me with Your kindness. 18. O Lord, let me not be shamed because I called out to You; let the wicked be shamed, let them be silenced to the grave. 19. Let lying lips become mute, those that speak against a righteous man falsely, with haughtiness and disdain. 20. How great is Your goodness that You have laid away for those who fear You, that You have worked for those who take refuge in You, in the presence of the sons of men! 21. You shall hide them in the secrecy of Your countenance, from bands of men; protect them in a shelter from the strife of tongues. 22. Blessed is the Lord for He has been wondrously kind to me in a besieged city. 23. But I said in my haste, "I have been cut off from before Your eyes," but You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried out to You. 24. Love the Lord, all His pious ones. The Lord guards those who believe [in Him] and He pays with a bowstring him who works with haughtiness. 25. Strengthen yourselves, and He will give your heart courage, all who hope to the Lord.

2. רד"ק תהלים פרק לא פסוק יג

(יג) נשכחתי כמת מלב. כל כך מיוחדים עלי עד שנתיאשו ממני ונשכחתי מלבם כמת שישתכח מלב אוהביו שאין להם תוחלת שישבו אליהם עוד. הייתי ככלי אבד, שמתיאשים הבעלים ממנו, כך נתיאשו בני אבי ממני שלא יקרו שאשוב אליהם עוד:

3. ילקוט אליעזר (ע"א-ע"ב)

נשכחתי כמת מלב הייתי ככלי אבד. שמעתי מפה קדוש הגאון רבי יחזקאל בנעט אב"ד בק"ק נייטרא וצ"ל, אחז"ל ברית כרותה שנשכח המת מלב, אולם בשעת מיתה נרגש ההעדר מאוד ואוהבים וקרובים צועקים ובוכים, רק במשך הזמן נשכח, ובכלי אבד שאין מקפיד עליו שלא הי' יקר ערכו, בשעת אבדה אינה מיצר לו, אולם במשך הזמן כל פעם שהוא צריך אותו דבר ואין בידו מרגיש החסרון ומיצר לו מאוד, ע"כ אמר דהע"ה אצל הי' שתי חסרונות, לענין שכחה הי' כמת שנשכח מכל אוהביו, ומעלה שיש למת בשעת צרה בוכים עליו בענין זה, הייתי לשעבר ככלי אבד, שאין הבעלים מרגישים בשעת אבדה ודוק כי מתוק הוא. וב"ל פי' הם ברשעתם שכחו אותי כאלו אני מת שאין עוד תקוה לשוב, אכן שקר נחלו ואין האמת כן כי איני כמת הבלתי שב להיות חי בדרך הטבע, אבל אני ככלי אובד מסתמא יש בו סימן ואין הבעלים מתייאשים שיחזור עוד לידו.

4. אבן עזרא תהלים פרק לא פסוק יג

(יג) נשכחתי – שאדם לא יזכרני ככלי אין חפץ בו כאשר יאבד לא יבוקש:

5. The Rav: The World of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (vol.2 page 87)

15.03 Sacrifice and Anonymity

Related by the Rav in the Tonya Soloveitchik Memorial Lecture on "The Anonymous Man and the Covenantal Community," Yeshiva University, March 18, 1970.

(A) A courageous life, an existence dedicated to service, creates a heroic life. A heroic life means a life of sacrifice. The highest level of sacrifice for a human being is not when he gives his life for his ideals. The highest form of sacrifice, as viewed by Judaism, is the readiness of man to leave the stage after discharging his role and vanish into anonymity and oblivion. More than a person wants to continue living, he wishes to be remembered. He wants to be recalled by individuals and by society at large. He wants to feel that he has accomplished something with his life.

(B) This quest to be remembered and to not be forgotten is intensely powerful. I remember that many years ago in Boston an old woman would bring me some quarters every week in order to pay for a hundred-dollar memorial tablet in the shul. She would count the money with trembling hands: one quarter and another quarter, a third quarter and a fourth quarter. It was during the dif-

① difficult years of the Depression. I finally asked her: "Tell me, my dear lady. Do you have savings in the bank?"

She answered that she had none.

"So why do you give the money to the shul? You cannot afford to do so," I stated.

She replied: "Rebbe, I want to be remembered. Once I die I know that my children will not think about me. They will never come to shul to say the Yizkor memorial prayer. This way the shul will remember me at Yizkor."

② This is not just the mentality of an unlettered or perhaps a primitive old lady. She was an honest woman who was expressing the mentality of Western man. When [Lyndon] Johnson accepted [John F.] Kennedy's invitation in 1960 to run as his candidate for Vice-President, many felt it was a comedown for Johnson. A journalist asked him: "Why did you accept it? After all, as the majority leader of the [U.S.] Senate you wielded so much more power and influence. You commanded the respect of the White House, and now as the Vice-President you will be little more than an errand boy for the President."

③ Johnson answered the reporter: "Yes, you are right. But history textbooks will accord two more lines to the Vice-President than to the majority leader of the Senate."

To this way of thinking, power in the present means little if the individual will not be remembered in the future. This is in contradistinction to Judaism, where the stress is on anonymity. Let me give you an example.

④ There are many men here who study gemara. Many times in the Mishnah the anonymous opinion of the tanna [mishnaic sage] is quoted. He is known as the tanna kamah [the first tanna]. Who is he? What is his name? Who is the tanna bathra [the last tanna]? They are part of the majority of Jewish scholars who remain anonymous, men without names. In the Talmud we often come across the introductory phrase *tanu rabbanan* ["the rabbis taught"]. Who were these rabbis? What were their names? Why were the sages so tight-lipped about these rabbis? It is not just a coincidence or neglect on the part of the talmudic scholars. The names were purposely not recorded, to teach us that we must remain anonymous. The greatest of all sacrifices that a Jew must bring is his readiness to sink into oblivion and remain in the shadows of anonymity.

⑤ It is very strange, but we know much more about the lives of Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato than we know about the Vilna Gaon. What do I know about my father? Very little. He never spoke about himself and did not write an autobiography. What do I know about the life of my grandfather Reb Chaim? Only isolated episodes. He never confided his private experiences or clandestine emotions to anyone. Whatever happened, happened between them and God.

⑥ God requires of man the greatest of all sacrifices—anonymity. He hates vainglory but loves the actor or the actress who appears on the stage for a short while and humbly discharges his or her role, disappearing afterwards without receiving applause. Man stands in the limelight as long as he consecrates himself to the cov-

enantal community. The very moment he finishes his job, the lights are dimmed or, rather, extinguished, and man steps off the stage.

⑦ What does the Megillah tell us about Mordecai and Esther after the Haman episode? Did she remain the queen of Persia? After all, she was a young girl and must have lived for many more years. Nevertheless, the Megillah does not mention one word about this part of her life. "Then Esther the Queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote down all the acts of power to confirm this second letter of Purim" [Esther 9:29]. The story was finished, and Esther removed herself from the stage.

⑧ What do we know about Mordecai the Jew? "And all the acts of his power and his might and the full account of the greatness of Mordecai, how the king advanced him, are they not written in the Book of Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?" [Esther 10:2]. Go ahead and find this volume! Yes, one episode of their lives, and a short one at that, was recorded. The rest was anonymous. That is exactly what the prophet Micah said: "He has told you, O man, what is good, and what the Lord seeks from you: only the performance of justice, the love of kindness, and walking humbly with your God." I would say: walking anonymously with your God.

6. רד"ק תהלים פרק לא פסוק כה

(כה) חזקו ויאמץ לבבכם כל המיחלים לה'. חזקו כל המיחלים לה', כי הוא יאמץ לבבכם:

7. רש"י תהלים פרק לא פסוק כה

(כה) חזקו ויאמץ לבבכם – כמו שראיתם שעשה לי להושיעני שחולתי לו:

8. The Hirsch Psalms (Chapter 130 Verses 7-8)

Yachel - Therefore, O Israel, do not merely *hope* in the Lord, but *wait* for him, your Master