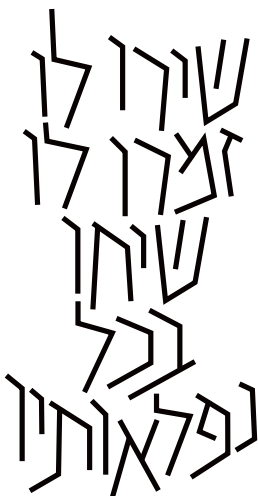


THE ROHR FAMILY EDITION

ספר תהלים • מהדורת קורן

THE KOREN TEHILLIM



WITH TRANSLATION BY

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WITH INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY BY

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INTRODUCTION

It has been said that the Five Books of the Torah are meant to be studied, the Prophets are meant to be heard, the Ketuvim such as Job or the Book of Esther are meant to be read. But Tehillim, Psalms, are meant to be said.

Traditionally, Tehillim are recited, unlike any of the other books of the Bible. In Yiddish, one says, "*Tehillim, menn sagt Tehillim.*"

It is for this reason that Tehillim have become so personally relevant to the religious person, Jew or gentile. People have historically turned to Tehillim in times of woe as well as in times of joy. They have discovered in the recitation of Tehillim a vehicle to express the entire range of human thoughts and emotions.

Thus, Tehillim have become the key to spirituality for all mankind. For the Jew especially, Tehillim are literally indispensable to the religious experience, to his relationship with God.

The importance of Tehillim for the inner life of the religious person necessitates that they be available to him in a manner that he can understand intellectually and integrate emotionally. Tehillim speak to both the heart and the mind.

This edition strives to make Tehillim conceptually meaningful and emotionally accessible.

Each individual psalm is preceded by a very brief meditation, written in the first person. This meditation attempts to capture the predominant mood of the psalm, the mood in which the person who turns to this psalm finds himself. The reader will be able to approach the psalm from his subjective feelings, and will be enabled to link the words of the psalm to those feelings.

These meditations are designed to evoke the array of feelings which are common to all humanity, and which are subjects of study for the existentialist philosopher and for the depth psychologist. Those feelings will include dread, hope, despair, courage, doubt, confidence, triumph, frustration, shame and pride, joie de vivre and fear of death, and more.

But psalms are not only designed to be read. They are also to be studied. And so, each psalm will be followed by a brief essay expounding upon one or two of its central teachings. Special attention will be given to those

teachings which reflect the issues which the reader is likely to confront in his personal life in this day and age.

A meditation will precede, and a meaningful message will follow, each *kapitel*, Yiddish for chapter, of Tehillim. That is the design for this commentary.

But perusing the commentary will not suffice. The words must be recited; ideally, first in Hebrew, and then in the exquisite and inspiring translation of Rabbi Eli Cashdan, to whom I am personally indebted for his rich and suggestive rendition of these timeless words.

Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb
Suffern, New York, and Jerusalem, Israel
5775 (2014)

PRAYER BEFORE THE READING OF PSALMS

Supplication to be said before reading Psalms:

יְהוָה יְרַצֵּן! May it be Your will, LORD our God, God of our ancestors, who chooses His servant David, and his descendants after him; who chooses song and praise – that You turn, in Your compassion, towards my reading of these Psalms, as if King David, peace be upon him, were reading them himself; and may the merit of the verses of the Psalms, the merit of their words and letters, their vowels and their notes, and of the names found in them, formed of the first letters and last letters of their words, all stand up for us, to bring us atonement for our rebellions and transgressions and sins; to cut down tyrants, to harvest all the thorns and thistles surrounding the heavenly lily, and to join the Bride of His youth with the Beloved, in friendship and in brotherhood and love – and from that place may plenty be drawn down to us, to soul and spirit and higher soul, to purify us of our iniquities and to forgive our sins and atone our transgressions, just as You forgave David, who first spoke these songs before You, as it is said: “And the LORD has passed over your sin, and you shall not die.” *11 Sam. 12* And do not take us from this world before our time, not before our seventy years are complete; let us live such that we may be able to put right all that we have damaged. And may the merit of King David, peace be upon him, defend us, that You may withhold Your wrath until we return to You in complete repentance. Grace us with gifts undeserved from Your treasury, as it is said, “I shall be gracious to whom I shall be gracious; I shall be merciful to whom I shall be merciful.” *Ex. 33* And just as we sing songs in this world, so may we have the merit to sing before You, LORD our God, God of our ancestors, song and praise in the world to come. And through our speaking these Psalms, may the Rose of Sharon be awakened to sing with a lovely voice, rejoicing and song, for the glory of Lebanon is given to her. Glory and splendor in the house of our God, speedily *Is. 35* in our days: Amen, Selah!

Before reading Psalms it is customary to recite these verses:

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD, let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation. *Ps. 95*

Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving,
and acclaim Him with songs of praise.

For the LORD is a great God, a great King above all gods.

תפילה לפני אמירת תהלים

Supplication to be said before reading Psalms:

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, הַבּוֹחֵר בְּדוֹד עֲבָדוֹ וּבִזְרָעוֹ
 אַחֲרָיו, וְהַבּוֹחֵר בְּשִׁירוֹת וּתְשׁוּבָחוֹת, שֶׁתִּפְּנֶן בְּרַחֲמִים אֶל קְרִיאַת מִזְמוֹרֵי
 תְּהִלִּים שְׂאֵקְרָא כְּאִלוֹ אִמְרָם דְּדוֹד הַמֶּלֶךְ עָלָיו הַשְּׁלוֹם בְּעַצְמוֹ, זְכוּתוֹ
 תִּגַּן עָלֵינוּ, וְתַעֲמֵד לָנוּ זְכוּת פְּסוּקֵי תְּהִלִּים וְזְכוּת תְּבוּתֵיהֶם וְאוֹתוּתֵיהֶם
 וּנְקֻדּוֹתֵיהֶם וְטַעֲמֵיהֶם וְהַשְּׂמוּת הַיּוֹצֵאִים מֵהֶם מֵרָאשֵׁי תְּבוּת וּמִסּוֹפֵי
 תְּבוּת לְכַפֵּר פְּשָׁעֵינוּ וְעוֹנוֹתֵינוּ וְחַטָּאתֵינוּ, וּלְזַמֵּר עֲרִיצִים וְלַהֲכַרִּית כָּל
 הַחוֹחִים וְהַקּוֹצִים הַסּוֹבְבִים אֶת הַשׁוֹשְׁנָה הָעֲלִיוֹנָה וּלְחַבֵּר אֶשֶׁת נְעוּרִים
 עִם דּוֹדָהּ בְּאַהֲבָה וְאַחוּהָ וְרַעוּת, וּמִשָּׁם יִמְשֹׁךְ לָנוּ שֶׁפַע לְנַפְשׁ רִיחַ וּנְשִׁמָּה
 לְטַהֲרֵנוּ מֵעוֹנוֹתֵינוּ וּלְסַלֵּחַ חַטָּאתֵינוּ וּלְכַפֵּר פְּשָׁעֵינוּ, כְּמוֹ שֶׁפְּסָלְחַת לְדוֹד
 שְׂאֵמֵר מִזְמוֹרִים אֵלָיו לְפָנֶיךָ, כְּמוֹ שְׂנֵאֲמֵר, גַּם־יְהוָה הָעֵבִיר חַטָּאתְךָ לֹא
 תָמוּת: וְאֵל תִּקְחֵנוּ מִהָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה קֹדֶם זְמַנְנוּ עַד מְלֹאת שְׁנוֹתֵינוּ בְּהֶם
 שְׁבַעִים שָׁנָה, בְּאוֹפֵן שְׁנוֹכַל לְתַקֵּן אֶת אֲשֶׁר שַׁחַתְנוּ, וְזְכוּת דְּוֹד הַמֶּלֶךְ
 עָלָיו הַשְּׁלוֹם תִּגַּן עָלֵינוּ וּבַעֲדֵנוּ, שֶׁתֵּאֲרִיךְ אִפְּךָ עַד שׁוֹבְבֵנו אֵלֶיךָ בְּתִשׁוּבָה
 שְׁלֵמָה לְפָנֶיךָ, וּמֵאוֹצֵר מִתְּנַת חֲנֹם חֲנֹנִי, כְּדַכְּתִיב, וְחִנֵּיתִי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אֲחֹן
 וְרַחֲמֵתִי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אֲרַחֵם: וּכְשֶׁם שְׂאֵנוֹ אוֹמְרִים לְפָנֶיךָ שִׁירָה בְּעוֹלָם
 הַזֶּה, כִּךְ נִזְכָּה לִזְמֹר לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ שִׁיר וּשְׁבַחָה לְעוֹלָם הַבֹּא. וְעַל
 יְדֵי אֲמִירַת תְּהִלִּים, תִּתְעוֹרֵר חֲבֻצַּלַת הַשָּׁרוֹן וּלְשִׁיר בְּקוֹל נְעִים בְּגִילַת
 וְרִנָּה, כְּבוֹד הַלְּבָנוֹן נִתְּנָלָה: הוֹד וְהָדָר בְּבֵית אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ,
 אָמֵן סְלָה.

שמואל ב' יב

שמות לג

ישעיהו לה

Before reading Psalms it is customary to recite these verses:

תהלים צה

לְכוּ נִרְנְנָה לַיהוָה, נְרִיעָה לְצוֹר יִשְׁעֵנוּ:
 נִקְדָּמָה פָּנֵינוּ בְּתוֹדָהּ, בְּזִמְרוֹת נְרִיעֵ לֹ:
 כִּי אֵל גָּדוֹל יְהוָה, וּמֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל עַל־כָּל־אֱלֹהִים:

PSALM 1

1. Happy is the man
who never follows the advice of the wicked,
nor lingers in the path of the sinners,
nor sits in the company of scoffers;
2. but finds his delight in the Torah of the LORD,
and meditates in His Torah day and night.
3. He is like a tree planted beside streams of water,
that yields fruit in season, and whose leaf never withers.
He succeeds in everything he does.
4. Not so is it with the wicked.
They are like chaff which the wind blows away.
5. Therefore, when judgment comes the wicked shall not stand firm,
nor sinners in the company of the righteous.
6. For the LORD cares for the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked is doomed.

*First day of
the month
Sunday*

person who performs the good *never withers*, and the time eventually comes when *judgment comes for the wicked*. There is a fundamental question, however, and that is the ability to know what is Good and what is Evil. The choice between right and wrong is often a very ambiguous one. It is for this reason that this psalm speaks of the Torah and the need to *meditate in it day and night*.

There are guidelines for discriminating right from wrong, no matter how ambiguous the choice may seem. The Torah is exactly this: a set of guidelines to assist in making choices, particularly when things are fuzzy and unclear.

But the Torah's guidelines are often themselves ambiguous, and alone, one can never be certain that he has interpreted them correctly. This psalm provides two suggestions for rendering the Torah more relevant to one's choices.

One suggestion is in meditating in Torah *day and night*. Diligence and constant study is necessary. One needs to be preoccupied with Torah for it to offer its answers definitively.

Another suggestion is to *find delight* in the Torah, to cherish it. The Torah is best understood not so much by the person who studies it as if it was a book of law, but rather by the one who enjoys it and sings it as a delightful song.

מזמור א

I face a difficult choice. Good versus Evil. How can I choose? Will I not regret my choice of the former, when the latter has such obvious advantages?

א לחודש
ליום ראשון

א אֲשֶׁר־יֵהְיֶה אֵישׁ א
אֲשֶׁר | לֹא הִלֵּךְ בְּעֵצַת רְשָׁעִים
וּבְדַרְךְ חֲטָאִים לֹא עָמַד
וּבְמוֹשֵׁב לִצְעִים לֹא יִשָּׁב:
ב כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה חִפְצוֹ ב
וּבְתוֹרַתוֹ יִהְיֶה יוֹמָם וּלְיָלֵה:
ג וְהִיָּה כְּעֵץ שֶׁתּוֹל עַל־פְּלָגֵי מַיִם ג
אֲשֶׁר פָּרִיו | יִתֵּן בְּעֵתוֹ
וְעֲלֵהוּ לֹא־יִבּוֹל
וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה יִצְלִיחַ:
ד לֹא־כֵן הַרְשָׁעִים ד
כִּי אִם־כְּמוֹן אֲשֶׁר־הִתְדַפְּנּוּ רוּחַ:
ה עַל־כֵּן | ה
לֹא־יִקְמוּ רְשָׁעִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט
יַחֲטָאִים בְּעֵדַת צְדִיקִים:
ו כִּי־יִוְדַע יְהוָה דֶּרֶךְ צְדִיקִים ו
וּדְרֹךְ רְשָׁעִים תֵּאבֵד:

מזמור א *Psalm 1*: There is indeed Evil in the world, and it has its temptations. Its opposite, Good, is not nearly as tempting. This is especially true in the short term. Immediate gratification is what we all seek, and postponing gratification is very difficult. This is particularly true if the immediate gratification is certain, and there is no guarantee that the postponed gratification will ever be achieved.

We all need some kind of assurance that forgoing the temptations of the moment will pay off in the long run. This psalm gives that assurance. The