

מי שרוצה לזכות לתשובה, יהיה רגיל באמירת

Tehillim Opens the Gates of Teshuvah

THE TEACHING

“מי שרוצה לזכות לתשובה, יהיה רגיל באמירת תהלים” (תשובה): whoever wants to merit teshuvah should make a habit of saying Tehillim (תהלים), for it is a segulah (מסגל) for teshuvah.

There are fifty gates of teshuvah (נון שערי תשובה). Tehillim awakens the heart, brings a person to his own gate and opens it. King David said it with ruach hakodesh (רוח הקדש), so that everyone can find himself in it.

MAIN POINTS

- Forty-nine gates are open to every person, one for each of the 49 letters in the names of the twelve tribes (שנים-עשר שבטים). The fiftieth is Hashem's own return to us: “שובו אלי ואשובה אליכם” (מלאכי ג:ז), “return to Me, and I will return to you.”
- Why does not everyone return? One feels no awakening (התעוררות) at all; one cannot reach his own gate; one reaches it and finds it closed. Tehillim helps with all three.
- “שהקים עליה של תשובה”, Chazal say “נאם הגבר הוקם על”, he raised up the yoke of teshuvah, through “נעים זמרות ישראל”, the sweet songs of Israel, the Book of Tehillim he founded.
- “לא היה דוד ראוי לאותו מעשה, אלא כדי להורות תשובה ליחיד”, David came to teach teshuvah to every individual, and his teshuvah is Tehillim, said with such feeling that each can find himself in it.
- The tribes were refined in Egypt, the narrow place; then we counted the 49 days of the Omer, one for each gate, and on the fiftieth, “וירד ה' על הר סיני” (שמות יט:כ): Hashem's own return.
- The final letters of “ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה את יעקב איש וביתו” (שמות א:א) spell תהלים and תשובה. So in Elul and the Ten Days of Teshuvah all Israel say Tehillim; “אשרי שיאחז בו”, fortunate is one who holds on to it.

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

Keep a few chapters of Tehillim every day, not only in Elul. Look for yourself in the words. And remember: the fiftieth gate is Hashem returning to you.

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