

Tehilim Perek 51

Welcome to NachDaily, covering the entire TANACH one perek at a time. I'm Rabbi Shaya Sussman, and today we'll be discussing Tehilim, Chapter 51.

This perek corresponds to Shmuel Beis, chapters eleven and twelve. Listen to the NachDaily archives on these perakim for further information.

Dovid wrote this immediately after being rebuked by Nosson Hanavi for his sin with Bas Sheva. Nosson Hanavi left, and Dovid was misboded, had a personal conversation with God.

[This is also a good perek to say when feeling entrenched in aveiros.]

Dovid Hamelech didn't become defensive and attempt to justify himself, but took full responsibility for his actions and behavior. Time after time we see that he didn't transfer blame or make excuses for himself. This is what made him great. He acknowledged his mistakes and called out to Hashem.

The chapter opens with Dovid pleading with God for mercy to cleanse him from his sin. Dovid acknowledges that since he sinned against God, only He can forgive him.

In verse 7, Dovid relates that he was brought into the world through sensual desires, and was therefore overcome with desire for Bas Sheva. Dovid asks Hashem to "clean me until I'm whiter than snow."

Dovid doesn't only ask God for forgiveness, but also pleads with Him to proactively draw him close and sustain him. He can thus teach others how to do teshuva and grow from their mistakes.

Verse 19 tells us:

זָבַחַי אֱלֹהִים רוּחַ נִשְׁבָּרָה לִב־נִשְׁבָּר וְנִדְּכָה אֱלֹהִים לֹא תִבְזֶה:

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. O God a broken, humble heart You don't despise."

Notice how our passuk uses the words “lev nishbar, a broken heart,” and not the term “atzvus, sad or depressed.”

In Sichos Haran number 41, Rebbe Nachman explains that a broken heart is something completely different than feeling sad. A broken heart is precious to Hashem, and He doesn't turn away from it.

A word of caution - a broken heart can easily turn into feelings of sadness and depression. It is therefore advisable to daily relegate a certain amount of time to “break your heart” to Hashem. After that you can be happy and more carefree for the rest of the day.

Reb Nosson explains in Hilchos Shabbos that Baalei Teshuva should constantly cry out and break their hearts before God. At the same time, however, they should not be so hard on themselves that they feel too far to return. Of course one who does teshuva will experience embarrassment and hardships. That is part of the process, but by judging yourself too strictly you can lose all hope of ever returning.

When we see the oneness of our experiences in life, it becomes easier to come close to God even in the lowest moments, because both they and the highest experiences come from Him. The illusion is that in the darkest of emotions we may feel far from God, but nothing can be further from the truth. It's all one.

We create our own duality by assessing and judging our experiences. Life happens on a neutral plain, and we are the interpreters and judges of our experiences. Without that judgment we would see the oneness of the world, with God behind it all.

The perek ends in verses 20 and 21 with Dovid prophetically asking God to restore Tziyon and the walls of Yerushalayim. Although the Beis Hamikdash hadn't yet been built, he foresaw its destruction.



May we merit to coming close to God with true broken hearts, to admit our shortcomings and put Him back into the center of our lives, realizing that we never left Him in the first place.

Thank you for listening, and have a wonderful day.