

Tehilim Perek 90

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 90.

This is the first chapter in the 4th book of Tehilim. From this perek through the next ten, all are attributed to Moshe Rabbenu. They were passed down orally from generation to generation until Dovid compiled them in Sefer Tehilim.

Interestingly, the Radak notes that Dovid actually found them in a manuscript attributed to Moshe.

The Medrash Socher Tov asks that if these chapters were composed prophetically by Moshe Rabbenu, why weren't they included in the Torah? He answers that the Torah is in a distinct category because it's the direct Word of God. Tehilim is considered on a lower level, written with Ruach Hakodesh, Divine inspiration.

This chapter has several themes. It speaks about galus, exile, man's frailty, and the shortness of our days. We tend to waste most of our time and fail to recognize the purpose of our lives.

It was very sobering for me to learn this perek. Like the blink of an eye, life is over. We get a sense of how futile most of the things we chase after are. Most of what we want has little value in the grand scheme of life. We also get a sense of the value of time, our most precious commodity.

The perek begins by relating the temporary nature of this world. God's existence predates creation. It is He who causes us to suffer, seems to turn us away, yet at the same time wants us to do teshuva and return to Him. A thousand years are like one day in His eyes. This world is like a dream...and poof, it's gone! The average person lives 70 to 80 years.

From verse 13 until the end, the tone of the prayer changes.

“How much longer?” Moshe asks Hashem. He asks Hashem to show us His lovingkindness, to end this game of hide and seek. May His light be upon us, and may the works of our hands be established forever and ever.

Verses 3 and 4 say:

תִּשְׁבּ אָנוּשׁ עַד־דָּכָא וְתֹאמַר שׁוּבוּ בְנֵי־אָדָם: כִּי אֶלֶף שָׁנִים בְּעֵינֶיךָ כְּיוֹם אֶתְמוּל כִּי יַעֲבֹר
וְאַשְׁמוּרָה בַּלַּיְלָה:

You reduce man to a pulp and You say ‘Repent, sons of man.’ For even a thousand years in Your eyes are like yesterday that has passed, like the watch of the night.

The Meforshim explain that Hashem causes a person to suffer in order to teach him to do Teshuva and draw him close again.

Reb Nosson says that Moshe wrote this prayer to encourage us by teaching that even one completely entrenched and covered with aveiros, sins, can come close to Hashem. No matter what we have done in our lives, even the worst deeds can be turned around. We can do teshuva.

The way to accomplish this is by going l’ma’alah min haz’man – above and beyond time. This perek teaches that we can always start over again. Even a thousand years are considered like nothing—it’s as if the past never happened! We can be l’ma’alah min haz’man, beyond time, with sincere teshuva.

May we merit surpassing time by not carrying the weight of the past.

Thank you for listening, and have a wonderful day.

