

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTY-FIVE

by Rabbi Yitzchok Rubin

For a writer, the worst sight is a blank page. You stare at it, wondering how you are going to start. I have started this chapter several times, only to stop and start over again.

Is this the famously named illness called writer's block? Have I finally lost all of my talents (few they may be) at this juncture just as we reach the last six chapters of Tehillim?

In truth, the problem is that this kapitel is so full of vital aspects that it is difficult to focus on any single one. My mind is roaming all over the page, seeing visions of Yidden saying these words with devotion. The Talmud says that one who says this psalm three times a day will be found worthy of his portion in the World to Come. It is when saying these words that Yidden throughout the world gently kiss their tefillin while asking for Hashem's continuous bounty.

If you count the words in this psalm, you will find that there are 150, representing all 150 chapters of Tehillim. The Eish Das points this out and explains that King David distilled the entire essence of his work into this chapter, and it is here that every nuance of the Psalms can be found. This is a powerful message, enough to turn me into a wordless wordsmith. But then I stop and think for a moment and again start to type.

Perhaps before delving into the passages of this psalm, we should sit back and think about the wonder of it. Jews throughout the world say its words three times a day. They say it in shul, on trains, at home, on planes, and even, chas v'shalom, on sickbeds in hospitals. No matter where Hashem leads us, we stop and murmur its message. This is astounding; it is beyond mere words. In fact, it is worthy of an empty page that speaks where words fail.

I have seen Yidden who know nearly nothing close their eyes at the words Posei'ach es yadecha... (You open Your hand...) and fervently reach their hands out to Heaven. Others kiss their tefillin; all connect for that moment with Hashem. This is a miracle. It is beyond all reasoning. Yidden believe; they trust in Hashem. It doesn't matter how sophisticated they think they are or how much schooling they have had they know in their hearts that Yidden are connected and can only hope that Hashem will help them.

Let's look at some of the words of this awesome psalm.

They will speak of the power of Your awesome deeds; but I will tell of [the essence of] Your greatness. The Belzer Rebbe, zy" a, explained that by recounting the greatness of Hashem, we

influence others to praise Him as well.

Today we must speak of Hashem's greatness, because nothing can be left to chance. There were times when everyone knew and believed in Hashem. Today the poison of the secular world is so venomous that it is possible to find youngsters in our homes who aren't sure what it is they are meant to believe. We live on automatic pilot, not defining what it is to be a Yid. This passage is telling us that before anything else, one must undertake to articulate one's feelings and speak of the goodness Hashem has shown him.

They will give expression to the signs of Your multiple goodness, and they will sing of Your righteousness. The Rebbe of Lizhensk taught that by telling of Hashem's goodness we cause even more goodness to come forth. We utter stories of Hashem's kindness, and this brings us reason to see and understand even more.

I have seen Yidden who had no idea what they were meant to believe say these words every day, and slowly they came to understand. We say so much Tehillim throughout our lives, and three times a day we say the words of this particular psalm. Why? It is so that with every recitation we can become clearer about what is the truth.

You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of all living beings. It is only through Hashem's opening of His vaults of goodness that we can find true satisfaction. Gutte Yidden explain that people are unhappy because they don't have true faith in Hashem. They seek to become independent from His will and find fulfillment on their own terms. This leads to a void in their hearts, and depression follows. All our desires can be fulfilled by holding on to Hashem's hand. When we are connected with Hashem's will, we realize that the only desires that are real are those that Hashem instills within us. To be truly living is to desire that which is holy.

Hashem is righteous in all His ways and pious in all His deeds. In this passage we call Hashem a tzaddik and then a chassid. Rashi comments that "He is at first a tzaddik, in an impartial administration of justice. But then He turns from the law to perform acts of mercy and becomes a chassid." Rashi is telling us of a wonderful secret here: Hashem turns away from that which we deserve and shows us His mercy instead.

Yidden, we say this kapitel three times a day, 356 days a year. Considering our allotted time on earth, we are talking of an awesome mountain of words said, tefillin kissed, and hands held up in pleading. It is amazing and awe-inspiring. Yidden believe, and they say so constantly.

My Rebbes taught me that all Yidden are heilig, holy. If you doubt this for a moment, go to Shacharis sometime and watch how Yiddelach say this kapitel.

Text Copyright © 2011 by Torah.org. You can contact the author at Rabbi@theinformalproject.com.