

## This is the account of the descendants of Adam. (5:1)

*Yalkut Shemoni* 41 relates that the Book of Adam *HaRishon's* descendants was brought before Adam. As he was perusing through the various entries, he chanced upon David *Hamelech's* entry. He saw that David's portion in this world was but three hours. He immediately interceded before Hashem, saying, "This should not be decreed." (He should live much longer.) Adam then asked Hashem, "How many years have been allotted to me?" Hashem replied, "One thousand years." Adam asked, "Can I give some (of my years) as a gift?" Hashem replied in the affirmative. Adam said, "I will give him seventy years to be his fate." Adam brought a contract and wrote in his gift, which Hashem confirmed. Adam added, "Hashem, good looks are his (David's) monarchy, and I have granted him songs of praise in my gift of seventy years of his life; and he will sing before You."

We derive from the *Yalkut* that David *Hamelech's* songs/Psalms, *Sefer Tehillim*, are actually Adam *HaRishon's* gift to Hashem. Adam gifted seventy years of his life to David, who devoted his life to singing the glory of Hashem. The *Ponovezher Rav*, *zl* (quoted by *Horav Aizik Ausband, zl*), wrote that the *madreigah*, spiritual level, achieved by David *Hamelech* to become the *Naim Zemiros Yisrael*, "Sweet Singer of Yisrael," was made possible only through the gift of life bestowed upon him by Adam *HaRishon*. He was the *Yetzir Kapav shel HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, Hashem personally "hand crafted" him. As such, he remains distinct from all subsequent creations.

Reciting *Tehillim* has always been a mainstay of our petitioning Hashem to ameliorate the situation that we are in. Someone is ill; someone is in need of a *yeshuah*, salvation, be it an individual or a community. We immediately turn to Hashem reciting the time-honored *pesukim* of *Sefer Tehillim*. For some, it is an outlet to do something positive, to express their faith and joy in serving Hashem. *Tehillim* is almost a natural reaction to a given situation – both adverse or positive. It is a song. We break out in song and praise Hashem. *Tehillim* accompanies us wherever we go, literally and figuratively. *Sefer Tehillim*, the *Siddur* and the *Chumash* are the most ubiquitous *sefarim*, Torah books, in a Jewish library. We always have it handy, so that whenever the need or opportunity arises, we can immediately take it out and sing to Hashem. We now know the source of its efficacy – Adam *HaRishon*.

We may add that David *Hamelech* lived his entire life riveted with the knowledge that his life was a gift from Adam – who died seventy years prematurely, so that David would live. That is a pretty heavy obligation to carry throughout one's life. David never let up. Thus, *Sefer Tehillim* is the consummate *sefer* of *hakoras hatov*, book of gratitude.

The *Naim Zemiros Yisrael*, Sweet Singer of Yisrael, imbued his Book of Psalms with unusual powers of efficacy. Reciting *Tehillim* catalyzes miracles, because its author's life was a miracle. The following two vignettes have been selected because they demonstrate the far-reaching and miraculous effects of reciting *Tehillim*. *Tehillim* recitation should be an important part of our daily *tefillas*. We never know when they heal or protect.

When *Horav Moshe Aharon Stern, zl*, was born, the doctors told his mother that he was a sick infant and would probably not live more than a few weeks. His mother took upon herself to recite *Tehillim* daily for the health of her child. He continued living. His life came to a sudden end when he was 67 years old. His brother explained, "Two weeks ago, my mother was *niftar*. She had been saying *Tehillim* for *Rav Moshe Aharon* every day since he was born. The *Tehillim* was a *z'chus* for him. When she was no longer able to say *Tehillim*, he was *niftar*."

*Rebbetzin Twersky, AH*, the Milwaukee *Rebbetzin*, came to America together with her illustrious husband, the Milwaukee *Rebbe*, *Horav Yaakov Yisrael Twersky, zl*, in 1921. *Yiddishkeit*, was at a premium, especially in the Midwest. Yet, they planted the seeds that grew into a prestigious family of Torah aristocracy, who reach out and inspire Jews from all facets of the Jewish spectrum. When asked (when she was well into her nineties) to what merit she attributed this outstanding success, she related the following.

"When I was eight years old (in 1890), my family went to visit my grandfather (*Horav Shlomo Halberstam, zl*, first *Bobover Rebbe*) in Bobov, Galicia. (They were living in Cracow, Poland, a three-hour trip by car.) This was our *Chanukah* trip. We all watched as my *Zaide* lit the candles. Everyone then left – except for me. I was fascinated by my *Zaide's Tehillim* recitation following the candle-lighting. I asked him, '*Zaide*, for whom are you saying *Tehillim*?' 'For you, *mine kint*, child.' I left the room and returned a half hour later to see my grandfather still saying *Tehillim*, '*Zaide*, now for whom are you saying *Tehillim*?' 'For your *einiklach*, grandchildren,' he replied. My *Zaide* did not know that I would marry and move to America in 1921. He did know that times were changing and that I would require an extra dose of *shemirah*, protection. I think it was my *Zaide's Tehillim* that protected our family."