

If Only My People Would Listen

Today's portion of the monthly Tehillim, chapters 79 to 82, ends on the same psalm as this morning's Shir shel Yom. A short companion to "Who Sits in the Gate."

Aryeh Leib Thorne Toren · Jerusalem · Tuesday 27 October 2026 / 16 Cheshvan 5787

A lot of us say a few chapters of Tehillim every day and finish the book each month. On the 16th of the month it's chapters 79 to 82. This year the 16th of Cheshvan falls on a Tuesday, and on election day. So the daily portion ends on Psalm 82, the same psalm the Levites sang every Tuesday in the Mikdash (Mishnah Tamid 7:4). Read the four in order and they sound like the walk to the ballot box.

Psalm 79 starts with grief: "O G-d, heathens have entered Your domain" (Tehillim 79:1). Then it asks for help "for the sake of the glory of Your name" (79:9). We don't walk in strong. We walk in with what hurts.

Psalm 80 calls Him "shepherd of Israel" (80:2) and asks three times, "Restore us, O G-d; show Your favor that we may be delivered" (80:4, see 80:8 and 80:20). Whoever wins tonight will lead a flock that already has a Shepherd.

Psalm 81 is the hinge. "If only My people would listen to Me, if Israel would follow My paths" (81:14). In Hebrew it's lu ami shomea li. In this week's parsha Avraham hears "shema b'kolah," "listen to her voice" (Bereishit 21:12). The psalm says it to a whole nation, and it warns what happens when we don't: "So I let them go after their willful heart" (81:13).

Psalm 82 shuts the gate behind us. "G-d stands in the divine assembly" (82:1), and He tells the judges, "Judge the wretched and the orphan, vindicate the lowly and the poor" (82:3).

Grief, then a plea, then listening, then judgment. That's a good order for today. Say what hurts. Ask for help. Listen before you choose. Then go choose, whoever you vote for, knowing Who stands over the gate. Voting ends at 22:00.

I encourage all eligible voters to vote.

Prepared in deep partnership and cooperation with Grok and xAI

All glory to the Ribono shel Olam · Errors are mine