

# Parashat Massei

## פרשת מסעי

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## Eretz Yisrael, Our Bodies, and Sin

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Numbers 33:1-36:13

הפטרה: Jeremiah 2:4-28, 3:4,4:1-2

הברית: John 20-21

החדשה

*Triennial cycle: Bamidbar / Numbers 33:50-36:13*

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In this week's reading from Parashat Massei (*Bamidbar / Numbers 33:1-36:13*), the final chapters of sefer *Bamidbar*, Moshe is instructing the people on how the land of Canaan is to be divided amongst the people and the priests. In *33:55*, the Lord God gives a warning: *וְאֵם-ל' א תורישו את-יְשֵׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ מִפְּנֵיכֶם וְהָיָה אֲשֶׁר* *וְהָיָה אֲשֶׁר תוֹתִירוּ מֵהֶם לְשֵׁפִים בְּעֵינֵיכֶם וְלְצִנּוֹנִים בְּצַדֵּיכֶם וְצָרְרוּ אֹתְכֶם עַל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם יֹשְׁבִים בָּהּ* saying "if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come about that those whom you let remain of them will become as pricks in your eyes and as thorns in your sides, and they will trouble you in the land in which you live." The Lord is warning the children of Yisrael to remain focused and to remove those things that will distract them. The principle object that distracted Yisrael was bad and sinful people. They are commanded to drive them out or the people will become a thorn in their side *וְלְצִנּוֹנִים בְּצַדֵּיכֶם*. The NASB says that the phrase *לְשֵׁפִים בְּעֵינֵיכֶם* means "pricks in your eyes." It is interesting that the word לשכים is not found in Brown-Driver-Briggs lexicon. Strong's concordance says לשכים is from the word שכך (to appease, placate) in the sense of the word שוך. From what I can understand, the translators looked at לשכים and in an attempt to determine the root and morphology of the word conclude that שכך ← שוך ← לשכים. This morphology for the word לשכים does not seem to fit for its definition as "pricks." לשכים may also be formed by לש.כונה where כונה a feminine noun meaning "intention, purpose, aim, spirit." Regardless of its translation, לשכים suggests that the people of Canaan will affect the "aim," "intent," or "spirit" of the eye. Do these scriptures suggest the people we choose as friends can affect our walk and the intent of our heart before God?

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Context must be considered.

### במדבר 33:55-56

55 וְאֵם-ל' א תוֹרִישוּ אֶת-יְשֵׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ מִפְּנֵיכֶם

וְהָיָה אֲשֶׁר תוֹתִירוּ מֵהֶם לְשֵׁפִים בְּעֵינֵיכֶם וְלְצִנּוֹנִים

בְּצַדֵּיכֶם וְצָרְרוּ אֹתְכֶם עַל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם יֹשְׁבִים

56 בָּהּ: וְהָיָה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּמְיֹתִי לַעֲשׂוֹת לָהֶם אֲעֲשֶׂה

לָכֶם:

#### Bamidbar / Numbers 33:55-56

33:55 'But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come about that those whom you let remain of them will become as pricks in your eyes and as thorns in your sides, and they will trouble you in the land in which you live. 33:56 'And as I plan to do to them, so I will do to you.' (NASB)

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Looking at Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi) commentary on *Bamidbar / Numbers 33:55*, Rashi does not provide much insight saying *ליתדות המנקרות עיניך* meaning “Pegs pecking your eyes.”

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**רש"י במדבר פרק לג**

והיה אשר תותירו מהם. יהיו לכם צ' לרעה: לשכים בעיניכם. ליתדות המנקרות עיניכם, תרגום של יתדות, שיכיא: ולצנינם. פותרים בו הפותרים לשון מסוכת ק קוצים, הסוכת אתכם לסגור ולכלוא אתכם, מאין יוצא ובא: וצררו אתכם. כתרגומו

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The pecking of the eyes is symbolic of the continual mischief that will be done to Yisrael by these idolaters, the people of Canaan. The thorn in the side provides insight that the people will be continually goaded, provoked, and urged on each side. The eye analogy is very symbolic, have you ever gotten something in your eye? What can be more harassing than when one has an irritation in the eye? We

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rub the eye, wash the eye, our mind and body is tormented to the point that until the eye feels better and the speck is removed we cannot rest. The phrase לש' פים בעיניכם provides this kind of interpretation that the people of Canaan are disobedient to God in their idolatry. They have caused and will continue to cause Yisrael to sin. Yisrael will not find rest, unless they obey this command of God.

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If these sinful people are not removed, there will be a constant warring in their members by the eye that becomes obscured in the constant pricking of sin until they are finally persuaded to sin and disobey God.

In this verse from *Bamidbar / Numbers 33:55* we find that the Lord wants to provide a sanctuary for His people. The rest of the Parshah is suggestive of this in the command to have cities of refuge. In *Bamidbar / Numbers 35:29-34*, it is interesting that it is written no ransom (כפר, atonement) can be made for the life of a murderer.

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**במדבר 35:29-34**

29 ארץ אחותו: והיו אלה לכם לחקת משפט לדתים  
 30 בכל מושבתים: כל־מכה־נפש לפי עדים ירצה  
 31 את־הרצח ועד אחד לא־יענה בנפש למות: ולא־  
 תקחו כפר לנפש רצח אשר־הוא רשע למות כי־  
 32 מות יומת: ולא־תקחו כפר לנום אל־עיר מקלטו  
 33 לשוב לשבת בארץ עד־מות הכהן: ולא־תחניפו  
 את־הארץ אשר אתם ביה כי הדם הוא יחניף את־  
 הארץ ולא־רצח לא־יכפר לדם אשר שפך־נפה בראם  
 בדם שפכו: ולא תטמא את־הארץ אשר אתם ישבים  
 ביה אשר אני שכן בתוכה כי אני יהוה שכן בתוך  
 בני ישראל:

**Bamidbar / Numbers 35:29-34**

35:29 'These things shall be for a statutory ordinance to you throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 35:30 'If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death at the evidence of witnesses, but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness. 35:31 'Moreover, you shall not take ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. 35:32 'You shall not take ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to live in the land before the death of the priest. 35:33 'So you shall not pollute the land in which you are; for blood pollutes the land and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. 35:34 'You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the Lord am dwelling in the midst of the sons of Israel.' (NASB)

The reason being, according to *Bamidbar / Numbers 35:33*, the blood that was spilled on the land pollutes the land and that it is impossible to make atonement or expiation for the land itself. The expiation for sin can only be made for people. If we understand the Torah correctly, the Scriptures are telling us that the land is sanctified by the people who live in the land. It is the people living in the land that defile that land. A connection is found here to *Bamidbar / Numbers 33:55* that God commands to remove the sinful people from the land in order to sanctify the land. Thus, to defile the land is as rejecting God's mitzvot (commands) and sanctifying the land is as accepting God's commands. This is why James said that faith without works is dead. We take action based upon what we believe which produce evidence that we truly believe God and His Word. The Children of Yisrael were to take action in believing God and removing the sinful people. Here a parallel is found in our lives, we need to remove intentional sin from our lives and doing so sanctifies our bodies for God. This concept is found throughout the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) to sanctify the Lord in our bodies and in our hearts. In *1 Peter 3:15-16*, Peter says "*kurion de ton theon agiasate en tais kardiais*" meaning "*sanctify the Lord God in your hearts*"

**ΠΕΤΡΟΥ Α΄ 3:15-16**

μη φοβηθητε μηδε ταραχθητε . κυριον δε τον θεον αγιασατε εν 15  
 ταϊς καρδιαϊς υμων ετοιμοι δε αι προς απολογιαν παντι τω  
 αιτουντι υμας λογον περι της εν υμιν ελπιδος μετα πραυτητος  
 και φοβου . συνειδησιν εχοντες αγαθην ινα εν ω καταλαδωσιν 16  
 υμων ως κακοποιων καταισχυθωσιν οι επηρεαζοντες υμων την  
 αγαθην εν χριστω αναστροφην . κρειττον γαρ αγαθοποιουντας 17

It is interesting here we find a variation in the Greek Manuscript, the KJV (Textus Receptus) says "sanctify the Lord God" (kurion theon) and the NIV (Alexandrinus codex) says "sanctify the Lord Christ" (kurion xriston).

15 δε φοβου αυτων μη φοβηθητε , μηδε ταραχθητε . Κυριον δε τον  
 Χριστον αγιασατε εν ταϊς καρδιαϊς υμων . "Ετοιμοι δε προς απο-  
 λογιαν παντι τω απαιτουντι υμας λογον περι της εν υμιν ελπιδος .  
 16 αλλα μετα πραυτητος και φοβου ' συνειδησιν εχοντες αγαθην , ινα  
 εν ω καταλαουσιν υμων ως κακοποιων , καταισχυθωσιν οι επη-  
 17 ρεαζοντες υμων την<sup>1</sup>) αγαθην εν Χριστω αναστροφην . Κρειττον γαρ

Regardless of the variation within the Greek manuscripts, we understand the scriptures to say "יהוה אתו תקדישו בלבבכם את-יהוה" we are to "*sanctify the Lord God in our hearts*" just as the people were to do so by clearing the land (eretz Yisrael) of that which defiles the land, sinful people, the Canaanites.

15 צדקה אשריכם אך את ישראל לא תיראו ולא תעווצו : את-  
 יהוה אלהים אתו תקדישו בלבבכם ובעונה ויראה היו נכנים  
 16 תמיד לתת מענה לכל הדרש מכם מה יסוד תקותכם : וברוח

**1 Peter 3:15-16**  
 3:15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; 3:16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. (NASB)

**1 Peter 3:15-16**  
 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: 3:16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. (KJV)

100 My question for you today, “is the land of your body defiled by the impurity of your heart before God?”

Rav Shaul (the Apostle Paul) wrote in his letter to the Romans, pleading with the members of the body of Christ (based on the Torah) on the importance of offering our bodies as living sacrifices to God. In the Textus Receptus, Paul says “parakalo oun unas” meaning “I exhort you.” The NASB translates as “I urge you” saying in **Romans 12:1** *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (NASB)* Here Paul is admonishing/warning the Romans to realize the importance and motivation behind their obedience to God. According to the text, the “body” is from the Greek word “soma” written as “Somata” meaning our physical bodies are to be presented as living sacrifices. The word “parastehsai” means “*come and stand by*” translated as “present” appears to be a technical term that has a direct connection to the Korbanot (offerings and sacrifices) offered in the Mishkhan (Tabernacle).

## ΠΡΟΣ ΡΩΜΑΙΟΥΣ 12:1-2

παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς ἀδελφοί διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρισμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ **12**  
**παραστήσαι** τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ  
θεῷ τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν . καὶ μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰ- 2  
ῶνι τούτῳ ἀλλὰ μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοῦς ὑμῶν  
εἰς τὸ δοκιμᾶζειν ὑμᾶς τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ  
εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον . λέγω γὰρ διὰ τῆς χάριτος τῆς δοθείσης 3

120 The Hebrew translation of the Textus Receptus says “geviyoteychem cekorban chay” meaning “your bodies as a living Korban” the use of the Hebrew word Korban draws the reader to the imagery of slaying the offerings before the Mishkhan in the Torah.

## אל-הרומים 12:1-2

ועתה אני מתחנן אלכם אחי ברחמי אלהים להקדיש את יב  
גויותיכם בקרבן חי וקדוש לרצון לאלהים כי בואת תשבילו  
לעבד אתו: ואלתהויו דומים לבני העולם הזה כי אסדתנו  
לבכם להתחדש ונהפכתם לענשים אחרים ועיניכם לאלהים  
לבחן מהיהוה רצונו הטוב והנעים והשלם: כי עלפי רוח 3

130 The Greek and Hebrew translations provide us with the importance of presenting all of our members and faculties to the Lord in a similar manner as it is written and described according to the Torah in the temple sacrifices. It is interesting that the very next word to the phrase “*present your bodies as a living sacrifice*” in Greek is “agian” and in Hebrew “kadosh” meaning “holy.” Here Paul is saying the offering of our bodies needs to be performed in a very special way, it is to be done by sanctifying our bodies as holy before God. Here in our Scripture for this

140 week, God commands the people to remove the sinful people from the land essentially sanctifying the land, separating the land from the nations by removing the nations from the land so that the Lord can dwell in their midst and they can dwell at peace with God. Here (*Bamidbar / Numbers 33-35*) the Torah points to the responsibility that we have to sanctify our bodies, separating ourselves wholly for the Lord. Paul's is writing that the offering of our bodies is performed by "the way we live," this is to be done in such a way that our lives reflect or point back to the holiness of God and the authority of the Word of God. The holiness of God needs to be exhibited in our bodies as an offering to God because of His Son Yeshua (Jesus). In addition to this, notice also that in *Romans 12:1*, Paul says that the offering of our bodies is our "*Spiritual service of worship.*" So, the way we live our lives is our spiritual act of worship before God. *Romans 12:2* goes on to say *12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (NASB)* Were the people who were commanded to remove the sinful Canaanites from the land performing a "spiritual act of worship" by removing the people from the land? Here in *Romans 12:2* we find the very nature of holiness, to be separated and sanctified. The transforming of our mind is an important part of our being separated from the world; this is the will of God, to live for Him and in Him based upon God's holy Word. Essentially, by these two verses Paul is telling us that our lives need to affirm God's Word (the Bible) so that we may prove what the will of God is. The will of God is to live by faith, walk by faith, and believe by faith.

155 The believing by faith, walking by faith, and living by faith all speaks of having a relationship with God. We must have an authentic and real relationship with God. If the Children of Yisrael were to have success in the Promised Land (eretz Yisrael) they needed to remove all the things that defiled the land, the sinful people, and the sinful places of worship, etc. This is the understanding that we need while reading what Yeshua taught on the importance of having relationship with God in *Matthew 7:19-24*.

20 καρπὸν καλὸν ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ βάλλεται. ἄραγε ἀπὸ  
 21 τῶν καρπῶν αὐτῶν ἐπιγνώσεσθε αὐτούς. οὐ πᾶς ὁ λέγων μοι  
 κύριε κύριε εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀλλ'  
 22 ὁ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς. πολλοὶ  
 ἐροῦσίν μοι ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ κύριε κύριε οὐ τῷ σῶ ὀνόματι  
 προέφητεύσαμεν καὶ τῷ σῶ ὀνόματι δαιμόνια ἐξεβάλομεν καὶ  
 23 τῷ σῶ ὀνόματι δυνάμεις πολλὰς ἐποιήσαμεν. καὶ τότε ὁμολο-  
γήσω αὐτοῖς ὅτι οὐδέποτε ἔγνων ὑμᾶς ἀποχωρεῖτε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ ὅτι  
 24 ἐργαζόμενοι τὴν ἀνομίαν. πᾶς οὖν ὅστις ἀκούει μου τοὺς λό-  
 γους τούτους καὶ ποιεῖ αὐτούς ὁμοιωσῶ αὐτὸν ἀνδρὶ φρονίμῳ  
 25 ὅστις ὠκοδόμησεν τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν. καὶ κα-

170 Here Yeshua said that "*Not everyone who says to Me Lord Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven but he who does the will of My Father who is in Heaven will enter.*" Yeshua goes on to say without true faith and without a true relationship His response will be "*depart from me I never knew you.*" What is being taught is very pointedly about faith and having a relationship with God. This relationship starts out and begins by faith in Yeshua, and God's Word the Bible. A

**Matthew 7:19-24**

7:19 'Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 7:20 'So then, you will know them by their fruits. 7:21 'Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter 7:22 'Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 7:23 'And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.' 7:24 'Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. (NASB)

175 relationship with God begins in our hearts which then produces fruit as Yeshua is  
saying about those who love Him and obey His commands. The Children of  
Yisrael were also to love and obey God's command and remove sin from the land  
of Canaan. So I ask again, "is the land of your body defiled by the impurity of  
your heart before God?" Let me give an example.

180 I am generally a quiet person; I do not say much when I am around people.  
My dad is a quiet man, and maybe I learned this from him. Also, in my own  
experience, I have learned to remain silent rather than to open my mouth and start  
talking. The reason being, someone else who knows will tell me that I am wrong.  
I learned this quickly in undergraduate and graduate school at the university.

185 *Mishley / Proverbs 17:28* says "*Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered  
wise; When he closes his lips, he is considered prudent.*" (NASB), this is very  
true. Solomon's proverbs are so insightful and I can give many personal  
testimonies on the validity and application of *Mishley / Proverbs* in my life. Now  
the reason I'm telling you this is that this is related to our heart condition.

190 Because of the way that I have trained myself to remain silent, rather than being  
verbal and verbally abusing anyone who makes me angry, I do it mentally. How  
often do you mentally abuse someone in your heart? I catch myself doing that all  
of the time, how about you? This is a horrible thing that I do and when I realize  
what I am doing I repent and ask the Lord to forgive me for sinning in this way in

195 my mind and in my heart. We can do horrible things in our minds to other  
people. In this case, it does not necessarily affect the other person, but it  
definitely affects our relationship with God. That is why I believe Yeshua talked  
so often about the heart condition and producing the right kind of fruit. The  
Scriptures describe fruit as produce in general, whether vegetable or animal. The

200 Hebrews divided the fruits of the land into three categories (i) fruit of the field,  
(ii) fruit of the vine (grapes), and (iii) fruit from orchards (dates, figs, citrons, etc).  
Fruit is also used metaphorically in a variety of forms (see *Tehilim / Psalms*  
*104:13, Mishley / Proverbs 1:31,11:30, 31:16, Yeshaya / Isaiah 3:10, 10:12,*  
*Matthew 3:8, 21:41, 26:29, Ivrit / Hebrews 13:15, and Romans 7:4-5, and 15:28)*

205 and to describe the produce of the one who walks in the Spirit (see *Galatians*  
*5:22-23, Ephesians 5:9, and James 3:17-18*). The fruit Yeshua is speaking about  
in *Matthew 7:19* is the produce of the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) that dwells  
and works in us. We can give testimony of Yeshua with our mouth but does that  
testimony follow through in our lives? According to the scriptures, the Children

210 of Yisrael did not remove all of the sinful people from the land and the result was  
their continued struggle with sin and failure to live for the Lord. The Torah states  
that those who live in the land defile the land. Eventually, with time, as a result of  
the sin in the people of Yisrael, the land literally vomited them out into the other  
nations. The Scriptures draw a parallel between the body and the land of Canaan

215 saying that we defile our bodies by the impure thoughts that we have. Yeshua is  
very clear on the importance of having a correct relationship with God. We need  
God's help to remain pure. In the Tanach, the Scriptures state we are to sanctify  
ourselves and also that God sanctifies us. In the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic  
Writings) we find the same thing, we are to sanctify God in our bodies, and

220 Yeshua also sanctifies us. This is a cooperative relationship; we work together  
with God in our lives. We live jointly, giving heed to God's Ruach HaKodesh in  
our lives and then step out in action, living by faith. If you do not have this kind

Do a word study on  
"sanctify" in the  
Tanach and the  
Ketuvei Shelachim.

225 of relationship with the Lord, the kind of relationship that Yeshua says *Matthew 25:33* "... *Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;*" you need to correct this immediately. Come and say the following prayer with me. If you want to renew your relationship with the Lord and begin living new for the Lord God almighty with Yeshua's help, you can begin by asking for help. Let's pray.

230 Heavenly Father,

I realize that there are places of sin in my life, in my body, that cannot remain if I am to live for you and have a truly meaningful relationship with you. I have sinned many times, and now I find myself trapped and in bondage to sin. I understand and acknowledge that I have sinned before You Lord; I have broken your mitzvot (commandments). I believe that You Lord sent Your Son Yeshua (ישוע) to save me from my sins and make an everlasting covenant with me in His blood. Please have mercy on me Lord; please forgive me of my sins. I believe Yeshua (ישוע) died for my sins and that He is the promised Messiah! Cleanse me from all sin Lord in Yeshua's name (בשם ישוע). Yeshua please come into my heart, help me set my feet on the path of righteousness and walk according to the Spirit by the help of Your Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit). I want to be filled with all of You Lord. I am tired of being filled with wickedness and tired of filling my heart with the wickedness of impure thoughts. Help me to live according to Your will as You have revealed in the Scriptures. I no longer want to defile this body, Your holy place. Sanctify me in Your Word Lord and in Your Son Yeshua. Thank You Lord for everything You have done for me. I give You the glory, the honor, and the praise forever and ever.

250 In Yeshua's Name I pray!

Amen

255 **What to pray:**

- *Ask the Lord to help you to change bad habits and to take a different path, one that does not lead to temptation and sin.*
- *Ask the Lord to help you to set your feet on the path of righteousness, and holiness by the power of His Holy Spirit.*
- *Thank the Lord for lifting this burden of sin and revealing His truth in your heart.*

265 **Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!**

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:  
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,  
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever

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