

<p>ו הָבִיטוּ אֵלָיו וַנִּהְרֹו וַפְּנִיָהֶם אֶל- יַחְפָּרוּ: ז זֶה עָנִי קָרָא וַיְהִי שָׁמַע וּמְכַל-צָרוֹתָיו הוֹשִׁיעוּ: ח הִנֵּה מִלֵּאָדָּ-יְהוָה סָבִיב לִירְאָיו וַיִּחַלְצֵם: ט טַעַמֹו וְרָאוּ כִי-טוֹב יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר־יִגְבֹּר יַחֲסֶה-בּוֹ: י יִרְאוּ אֶת-יְהוָה קְדָשׁוֹ כִּי אֵין מַחְסוֹר לִירְאָיו: יא כְּפִירִים רָשׁוּ וַרְעִבוּ וְדָרְשׁוּ יְהוָה לֹא-יַחֲסֶרוּ כָּל-טוֹב: יב לְכוּ-בְנִים שְׁמַעוּ-לִי יִרְאֵת יְהוָה אֲלֵמִדְכֶם: יג מִי-הָאִישׁ הֶחְפֵץ חַיִּים אֲהֵב יָמִים לְרֵאוֹת טוֹב: יד נָצַר לְשׁוֹנֵה מִרְעַע וּשְׁפָתָיֶה מִדְבַּר מִרְמָה: טו סוֹר מִרְעַע וְעִשָׂה-טוֹב כַּקֵּשׁ שְׁלוֹם וַרְדֵּפֶהוּ: טז עֵינֵי יְהוָה אֶל-צְדִיקִים וְאֶזְנָיו אֶל-שׁוֹעֲתִם: יז פְּנֵי יְהוָה בְּעִשְׂי רַע לְהַכְרִית מֵאָרֶץ זְכָרָם: יח צַעֲקוּ וַיְהִי שָׁמַע וּמִ- כָּל-צָרוֹתֶם הִצִּילֶם: יט קָרוֹב יְהוָה לְנַשְׁבְּרֵי-לֵב וְאֶת-דְּכָאֵי-רוּחַ יוֹשִׁיעַ: כ רַבּוֹת רַעוֹת צְדִיק וּמְכַלֵּם יַצִּי- לְנוֹ יְהוָה: כא שֹׁמֵר כָּל-עֲצָמוֹתָיו אֶחָת מֵהֵנָּה לֹא נִשְׁבְּרה: כב תְּמוֹת רָשָׁע רַעַה וְשֹׁנְאֵי צְדִיק יִאֲשָׁמוּ: כג פּוֹדֵה יְהוָה נַפְשׁ עֲבָדָיו וְלֹא יִאֲשָׁמוּ כָּל-הַחֹסִים בּוֹ:</p>	<p>ו אסתכלו לותיה ואתנהרו ואפיהון לא עצבו: ז דין עניא צלי קדם יהוה שמיע ומכל עקתוי פרקיה: ח שרי מלאכא דיהוה חזור חזור לדחלין מי- ניה ושיזיב הינון: ט אשתמודעון וחמון ארום טב יהוה טובוי לגבר דאיתרחיץ במימריה: י דחילו מן קדם יהוה קדישוי ארום לית חוסרנא לדחלוי: יא בני אריוא אתמסכנו וכ- פנו ותבעי אולפנא דיהוה לא חסרין כל טובא: יב אזילו בניא קבילו מיני דחלתא דיהוה אליף"אאליף"א#1" יתכון: יג מן גברא דבעי חיי רחים יומיא למחמי טבא: יד טור ליש- נך מביש וסיפוותך מלמלא ניכלא: טו זור מביש ועביד טב בעי שלמא ורדף בתרוהי: טז עינוי דיהוה לות צדיקיא ואודנוי לקבלא צלותהון: יז פרצופא דיהוה רגיזין בעבדי בישא לשיצאה מן ארעא דכרנהון: יח צליין צדיקיא וקדם יהוה שמיע ומכל עקתהון פצינון: יט קריב יהוה לתבירי ליבא וית מכיכי רוחא יפרוק: כ סגיעין בישן מערען לצ- דיקא ומן כולהון פצא ליה יהוה: כא נטיר לכולהון איברוי חדא מנהון לא מתברא: כב מתותא דרשיעא בישא וסנאי צדיקא יתחייבון: כג פרוק יהוה נפשא דעבדוי ולא מתחייבין כל דסברין במימריה:</p>	<p>34:4 ἐξεζητήσα τὸν κύριον καὶ ἐπήκουσέν μου καὶ ἐκ πασῶν τῶν παροικιῶν μου ἔρρυσάτό με 34:5 προσέλαθατε πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ φωτίσθητε καὶ τὰ πρόσωπα ὑμῶν οὐ μὴ καταίσχυνηθῆ 34:6 οὗτος ὁ πτωχὸς ἐκέκραξεν καὶ ὁ κύριος εἰσήκουσεν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ πασῶν τῶν θλίψεων αὐτοῦ ἔσωσεν αὐτόν 34:7 παρεμβαλεῖ ἄγγελος κυρίου κύκλω τῶν φοβουμένων αὐτόν καὶ ῥύσεται αὐτούς 34:8 γεύσασθε καὶ ἴδετε ὅτι χρηστὸς ὁ κύριος μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὃς ἐλπίζει ἐπ’ αὐτόν 34:9 φοβήθητε τὸν κύριον οἱ ἅγιοι αὐτοῦ ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ὑστέρημα τοῖς φοβουμένοις αὐτόν 34:10 πλούσιοι ἐπτώχευσαν καὶ ἐπειάσασαν οἱ δὲ ἐκζητοῦντες τὸν κύριον οὐκ ἐλαττωθήσονται παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ διάγαλμα 34:11 δεῦτε τέκνα ἀκούσατέ μου φόβον κυρίου διδάξω ὑμᾶς 34:12 τίς ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος ὁ θέλων ζωὴν ἀγαπῶν ἡμέρας ἰδεῖν ἀγαθὰς 34:13 παῦσον τὴν γλῶσσάν σου ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ χεῖλη σου τοῦ μὴ λαλήσαι δόλον 34:14 ἔκκλινον ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ ποίησον ἀγαθὸν ζήτησον εἰρήνην καὶ δίωξον αὐτήν 34:15 ὀφθαλμοὶ κυρίου ἐπὶ δικαίους καὶ ὅτα αὐτοῦ εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν 34:16 πρόσωπον δὲ κυρίου ἐπὶ ποιοῦντας κακὰ τοῦ ἐξολεθρεῦσαι ἐκ γῆς τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτῶν 34:17 ἐκέκραξαν οἱ δίκαιοι καὶ ὁ κύριος εἰσήκουσεν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐκ πασῶν τῶν θλίψεων αὐτῶν ἔρρυσάτο αὐτούς 34:18 ἐγγὺς κύριος τοῖς συντετριμμένοις τὴν καρδίαν καὶ τοὺς ταπεινοὺς τῷ πνεύματι σώσει 34:19 πολλὰ αἰ θλίψεις τῶν δικαίων καὶ ἐκ πασῶν αὐτῶν ῥύσεται αὐτούς 34:20 κύριος φυλάσσει πάντα τὰ ὀστᾶ αὐτῶν ἐν ἐξ αὐτῶν οὐ συντριβήσεται 34:21 θάνατος ἁμαρτωλῶν πονηρός καὶ οἱ μισοῦντες τὸν δίκαιον πλημμελήσουσιν 34:22 λυτρώσεται κύριος ψυχὰς δούλων αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐ μὴ πλημμελήσωσιν πάντες οἱ ἐλπίζοντες ἐπ’ αὐτόν</p>
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א לָדוֹד בְּשׁוֹנוֹתָו א This week’s study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 34:1-22*, the opening verses states *Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelek, who drove him away, and he left. (NASB)* providing the context for *Tehillim / Psalms 34*. What just occurred in David’s history was to determine whether Saul was for or against him. In *1 Samuel 20:35-42*, David met with Jonathan in the field and Jonathan (Saul’s son) told him that his father’s heart was set against him to kill him. Jonathan and David wept together, and David left from there and went to the Tabernacle and met with Ahimelech, obtained consecrated bread from the priest for his men to eat and was given the sword of Goliath. The Scriptures say in *1 Samuel 21:7* *Now one of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the Lord; and his name was Doeg the Edomite, the chief of Saul’s shepherds. (NASB)* What does it mean that he was “detained before the Lord?” Doeg reported to Saul what David had done. David lied to the priest that he was under the king’s orders and was on a mission for the king (*1 Samuel 21:8-9*). We then read that David arose up and fled from Saul and went to the Philistines, Achish king of Gath.

<p>Tehillim / Psalms 34 Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelek, who drove him away, and he left. 34:1 I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. 34:2 My soul will make its boast in the Lord; The humble will hear it and rejoice. 34:3 O magnify the Lord with me, And let us exalt His name together. 34:4 I sought the Lord, and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears. 34:5 They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces will never be ashamed. 34:6 This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him And saved him out of all his troubles. 34:7 The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, And rescues them. 34:8 O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! 34:9 O fear the Lord, you His saints; For to those who fear Him there is no want. 34:10 The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the Lord shall not be in want of any good thing. 34:11 Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. 34:12 Who is the man who desires life And loves length of days that he may see good? 34:13 Keep your tongue from evil And your lips from speaking deceit. 34:14 Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it. 34:15 The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous And His ears are open to their cry. 34:16 The face of the Lord is against evildoers, To cut off the memory of them from the earth. 34:17 The righteous cry, and the Lord hears And delivers them out of all their troubles. 34:18 The Lord is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit. 34:19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of them all. 34:20 He keeps all his bones, Not one of them is broken. 34:21 Evil shall slay the wicked, And those who hate the righteous will be condemned. 34:22 The Lord redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 34 34:1 Of David, when he disguised his intelligence before Abimelech, who dismissed him, and he left. 34:2 I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise is always in my mouth. 34:3 My soul makes her boast in the word of the Lord; the humble will hear and rejoice. 34:4 Ascribe greatness in the presence of the Lord with me, and we will exalt his name together. 34:5 I sought instruction from the presence of the Lord and he answered me; and from all my fears he delivered me. 34:6 They looked toward him and received light; and their faces were not dismayed. 34:7 This poor one prayed; in the presence of the Lord it was heard, and he redeemed him from all his troubles. 34:8 The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he saved them. 34:9 Recognize and see that the Lord is good; happy the man who has placed his trust in his word. 34:10 Have fear in the presence of the Lord, O you his holy ones; for there is nothing lacking to those who fear him. 34:11 The sons of the lion became poor and were hungry; but those who seek the instruction of the Lord lack no good thing. 34:12 Come, children, receive [teaching] from me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. 34:13 Who is the man who seeks life, loves days in order to see good? 34:14 Guard your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. 34:15 Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue after it. 34:16 The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous; and his ears, to receive their prayer. 34:17 The face of the Lord is wrathful against evildoers, to expunge their memory from the earth. 34:18 The righteous pray, and it is heard in the presence of the Lord; and from all their trouble he has delivered them. 34:19 The Lord is near to the broken-hearted; and the lowly in spirit he will redeem. 34:20 Many evils encounter the righteous man; and from all of them the Lord delivers him. 34:21 He protects all his limbs; not one of them is broken. 34:22 The death of the wicked is bad, and those who hate the righteous man will be condemned. 34:23 The Lord redeems the soul of his servants; and none who hope in his word are condemned. (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 34 A Psalm of David, when he changed his countenance before Abimelech; and he let him go, and he departed. 34:1 I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall be continually in my mouth. 34:2 My soul shall boast herself in the Lord: let the meek hear, and rejoice. 34:3 Magnify ye the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. 34:4 I sought the Lord diligently, and he hearkened to me, and delivered me from all my sojournings. 34:5 Draw near to him, and be enlightened: and your faces shall not by any means be ashamed. 34:6 This poor man cried, and the Lord hearkened to him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions. 34:7 The angel of the Lord will encamp round about them that fear him, and will deliver them. 34:8 Taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man who hopes in him. 34:9 Fear the Lord, all ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. 34:10 The rich have become poor and hungry: but they that seek the Lord diligently shall not want any good thing. Pause. 34:11 Come, ye children, hear me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord. 34:12 What man is there that desires life, loving to see good days? 34:13 Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. 34:14 Turn away from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. 34:15 The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer: 34:16 but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to destroy their memorial from the earth. The righteous cried, and the Lord hearkened to them, 34:17 and delivered them out of all their afflictions. 34:18 The Lord is near to them that are of a contrite heart; and will save the lowly in spirit. 34:19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but out of them all Lord will deliver them. 34:20 He keeps all their bones: not one of them shall be broken. 34:21 The death of sinners is evil: and they that hate righteousness will go wrong. 34:22 The Lord will redeem the souls of his servants: and none of those that hope in him shall go wrong. (LXX)</p>
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It is interesting that Gath was the biblical city and home of Goliath (*1 Samuel 17:4, 23*). David received the sword of Goliath and took it too the king and city of Goliath. Wouldn't David had been unpopular in the city of Goliath? One would think that would not be the first place to go to when fleeing from Saul. Gath means "wine press," and is one of the five royal cities of the Philistines; (*Joshua 13:3, 1 Samuel 6:17*). According to Smith's Bible Dictionary, a 19th century Bible dictionary named after the editor William Smith (1813-1893), "Gath probably stood upon the hill now called Tell-es-Safieh, upon the side of the plain of Philistia, at the foot of the mountains of Judah; 10 miles east of Ashdod, and about the same distance south by east

of Ekron. It is irregular in form, and about 200 feet high. Gath occupied a strong position, (2 Chronicles 11:8) on the border of Judah and Philistia, (1 Samuel 21:10, 1 Chronicles 18:1) and from its strength and resources forming the key of both countries, it was the scene of frequent struggles, and was often captured and recaptured. (2 Kings 12:17, 2 Chronicles 11:8, 26:6, Amos 6:2). The ravages of war to which Gath was exposed appear to have destroyed it at a comparatively early period, as it is not mentioned among the other royal cities by the later prophets. (Zephaniah 2:4, Zechariah 9:5, 6).” So, David fled to Achish king of Gath according to 1 Samuel 21:10-22:2.

1 Samuel 21:10-22:2

21:10 Then David arose and fled that day from Saul, and went to Achish king of Gath. 21:11 But the servants of Achish said to him, ‘Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of this one as they danced, saying, ‘Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands?’’ 21:12 David took these words to heart and greatly feared Achish king of Gath. 21:13 So he disguised his sanity before them, and acted insanely in their hands, and scribbled on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva run down into his beard. 21:14 Then Achish said to his servants, ‘Behold, you see the man behaving as a madman. Why do you bring him to me? 21:15 ‘Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this one to act the madman in my presence? Shall this one come into my house?’ 22:1 So David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his father’s household heard of it, they went down there to him. 22:2 Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him. (NASB)

וַיֹּאמֶר הַכֹּהֵן חָרָב גְּלִית הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי אֲשֶׁר-הִכִּיתָ | בְּעֵמֶק הָאֵלֶּה הַנֶּה-הִיא לֹוֹטָה בְּשִׁמְלָה אַחֲרֵי הָאֶפֹּד
 אִם-אִתָּה תִּקַּח-לֶךְ קַח כִּי אֵין אַחֲרַת זֹולְתָהּ בְּזֶה וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֵין כְּמוֹהַ תִּנְגְּנָה לִי: יֵא וַיִּקָּם דָּוִד וַיִּבְרַח
 בַּיּוֹם-הַהוּא מִפְּנֵי שָׂאוּל וַיָּבֵא אֶל-אַכִּישׁ מֶלֶךְ גַּת: יב וַיֹּאמְרוּ עֲבָדֵי אַכִּישׁ אֵלָיו הֲלוֹא-זֶה דָּוִד מֶלֶךְ
 הָאָרֶץ הֲלוֹא לְזֶה יַעֲנוּ בְּמַחֲלוֹת לֵאמֹר הֲכֵה שָׂאוּל בְּאֶלְפֹ [בְּאֶלְפִיו] וְדָוִד בְּרַבְבָּתָו [בְּרַבְבָּתָיו]: יג
 וַיֵּשֶׁם דָּוִד אֶת-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּלִבּוֹ וַיֵּרָא מְאֹד מִפְּנֵי אַכִּישׁ מֶלֶךְ-גַּת: יד וַיִּשְׁנוּ אֶת-טַעְמוֹ בְּעֵינָיִהֶם
 וַיִּתְהַלֵּל בִּיְדָם וַיִּתְּנוּ [וַיִּתְּנוּ] עַל-דִּלְתוֹת הַשַּׁעַר וַיִּוָּרְד רִירוֹ אֶל-זַקְנוֹ: טו וַיֹּאמֶר אַכִּישׁ אֶל-עֲבָדָיו הֲנֵה
 תֵּרְאוּ אִישׁ מִשְׁתַּגֵּעַ לְמָה תִּבְיֹאוּ אֹתוֹ אֵלָי: טז חֲסַר מִשְׁגָּעִים אָנִי כִי-הִבַּאתֶם אֶת-זֶה לְהִשְׁתַּגֵּעַ עָלַי
 הֲנֵה יָבוֹא אֶל-בֵּיתִי: א וַיִּלֶּךְ דָּוִד מִשָּׁם וַיִּמְלֹט אֶל-מַעְרַת עַדְלָם וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אַחֲיוֹ וְכָל-בֵּית אָבִיו וַיִּרְדּוּ
 אֵלָיו שָׂמָּה: ב וַיִּתְקַבְּצוּ אֵלָיו כָּל-אִישׁ מִצּוֹק וְכָל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ נֶשֶׂא וְכָל-אִישׁ מֵר-נֶפֶשׁ וַיְהִי עֲלֵיהֶם
 לְשׁוֹר וַיְהִיו עִמּוֹ כְּאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת אִישׁ:

According to the Masoretic text we read that David pretended to be insane (טַעְמוֹ, “taste, flavor, salt, savor”) before Abimelek who drove him away and he left. The Aramaic Targum states that David disguised his intelligence before Abimelek, and the Septuagint states that he changed his countenance before Abimelech.

Masoretic Text

א לְדָוִד בְּשִׁנּוֹתוֹ אֶת-טַעְמוֹ לִפְנֵי אַבִּימֶלֶךְ וַיִּנְגְּרֶשְׁהוּ וַיִּלְךְ:
Tehillim / Psalms 34:1 Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelek, who drove him away, and he left. (NASB)

Aramaic Targum

א לְדָוִד כַּד שְׁנֵי יָת מַדְעִיָּה קָדָם אַבִּימֶלֶךְ וּפְטָרִיָּה וְאִזְל:

ἐν τῷ στόματί μου 34:2 ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ ἐπαινεσθήσεται ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἀκουσάτωσαν πραεῖς καὶ εὐφρανθήτωσαν 34:3μεγαλύνετε τὸν κύριον σὺν ἐμοί καὶ ὑψώσωμεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό

The Aramaic Targum and Septuagint say essentially the same thing, David blesses the Lord always, his praises will be continually in his mouth, his soul boasts in the Lord, he hears and rejoices and magnifies the Lord and His name. It is interesting, studying these three verses, *Tehillim / Psalms 34:3* from the Masoretic text states: בִּיהוָה תִתְהַלֵּל נַפְשִׁי יִשְׁמְעוּ עֲנָוִים וְיִשְׁמְחוּ: ג “in the Lord (the name, HaShem) praise my soul, they listen, the humble, and they rejoice.” The humble listening, praising, and rejoicing reminds us of the Lord speaking to Moshe in Parashat Shemot (*Shemot / Exodus 1:1-6:1*). The verses from *Shemot / Exodus 4:1-8* details the signs Moshe was to perform before Pharaoh and his servants and also before the elders of the Children of Israel, (i) the staff turned into a snake and (ii) his hand being covered with Tzaraat. These signs were given him because Moshe asks the Lord what if the people do not believe him. The Lord gives Moshe these signs, and states in 4:8 saying וְהָיָה אִם-לֹא יֵאֱמִינוּ לָךְ וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ לְקֶלֶךָ הָאֵת הָרִאשׁוֹן וְהֵאֱמִינוּ לְקֶלֶךָ וְהָיָה אִם-לֹא יֵאֱמִינוּ לָךְ וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ לְקֶלֶךָ הָאֵת הָשֵׁנִי that if they do not believe the first one, they will listen on performing the second sign of his hand being covered with Tzaraat. If we think about this for a moment, the power to transform one’s hand to be covered in Tzaraat and then to heal the hand is something only God could do. The magicians who worked for Pharaoh would not have even attempted to cause their hand to be covered in Tzaraat because the next task would be to heal their own hand which is something they would not have been able to do. As a result of this, the rabbis determined that the sign of the Messiah would be that He would come and heal one of Tzaraat, this would be proof positive that the Messiah had come. The Rabbi’s of the Talmud (*Bavli Sanhedrin 98a-b*) ask the question “The Messiah what is his name?” and their response is “The Leprous one, those of the house of Rabbi the sick one as it is said ‘surely he has bore our sicknesses.’” It is also written in *Daf Sanhedrin* “The suffering scholar of Rabbi’s house” (referring to the Leper Scholar) as the name of the Messiah. It is recognized in Rabbinic Judaism that the Messiah must be afflicted and familiar with suffering. The point here is that it was not believed the Messiah would be literally stricken with Tzaraat but that a connection is being made between the healing of Tzaraat and the true Messiah. The healing of a person with Tzaraat was understood as being the sign that the Messiah had come. The Messiah would have compassion on the person who is unclean and then make him or her clean and in right standing before God. This is what we find in the Apostolic Writings, Yeshua is described as having compassion for the Metzora (the person with Tzaraat) and heals them (see *Luke 5:12-14*). According to the Rabbinic literature, the appearance of Tzaraat was the physical effect of sin in one’s life. It was a spiritual disease that was to be kept in check. To avoid Tzaraat we must avoid slander and baseless hatred. Note in the Psalm David is speaking of being humble, having the praises of the Lord upon his lips always, and singing of the great works the Lord has done. These things are opposite of the one who slanders with baseless hatred. The concept was that the spiritual sores that we have on the inside must be immediately treated unless something worse would happen and the spiritual would manifest itself in our physical bodies. We must learn to forgive and let go of judgment and hatred towards others. This understanding is derived from *Bamidbar / Numbers 12:1-2* and the reason Miriam was cursed with Tzaraat וַתִּדְבֹר מִרְיָם וְאַהֲרֹן בְּמִשְׁחָה עַל-אֲדֹת הָאִשָּׁה הַכְּשִׁית אֲשֶׁר לָקַח וַיֹּאמְרוּ הֲרַק אֱ-בְמִשְׁחָה דְבַר יְהוָה הֲלֹא גַם-בָּנוּ דִּבֶּר וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה: א *Bamidbar / Numbers 12:1 Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman); 12:2 and they said, ‘Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?’ And the Lord heard it. (NASB)* The Scriptures continue saying in *Bamidbar / Numbers 12:9-11* וַיִּחַר-אַף יְהוָה בָּם וַיִּלְדָּ: י וְהֶעָנָן סָר מֵעַל הָאֹהֶל וְהָיָה מִרְיָם מְצֻרַעַת כַּשָּׁלֵג וַיִּפֹּן: ט וַיִּחַר אֱ-מִרְיָם וְהָיָה מִרְיָם מְצֻרַעַת: יא וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-מִרְיָם בִּי אֲדֹנָי אֱ-נָא תִשֶׁת עָלֵינוּ חַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר נִוְאָלְנוּ וְאַשֶׁר אֱ-מִרְיָם וְהָיָה מִרְיָם מְצֻרַעַת: יב וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-מִרְיָם בִּי אֲדֹנָי אֱ-נָא תִשֶׁת עָלֵינוּ חַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר נִוְאָלְנוּ וְאַשֶׁר אֱ-מִרְיָם וְהָיָה מִרְיָם מְצֻרַעַת: יג וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-מִרְיָם בִּי אֲדֹנָי אֱ-נָא תִשֶׁת עָלֵינוּ חַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר נִוְאָלְנוּ וְאַשֶׁר אֱ-מִרְיָם וְהָיָה מִרְיָם מְצֻרַעַת: יד וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-מִרְיָם בִּי אֲדֹנָי אֱ-נָא תִשֶׁת עָלֵינוּ חַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר נִוְאָלְנוּ וְאַשֶׁר אֱ-מִרְיָם וְהָיָה מִרְיָם מְצֻרַעַת: טו וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-מִרְיָם בִּי אֲדֹנָי אֱ-נָא תִשֶׁת עָלֵינוּ חַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר נִוְאָלְנוּ וְאַשֶׁר אֱ-מִרְיָם וְהָיָה מִרְיָם מְצֻרַעַת: טז וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-מִרְיָם בִּי אֲדֹנָי אֱ-נָא תִשֶׁת עָלֵינוּ חַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר נִוְאָלְנוּ וְאַשֶׁר 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וְהָיָה מִרְיָם מְצֻרַעַת: לנ וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-מִרְיָם בִּי אֲדֹנָי אֱ-נָא תִשֶׁת עָלֵינוּ חַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר נִוְאָלְנוּ וְאַשֶׁר אֱ-מִרְיָם וְהָיָה מִרְיָם מְצֻרַעַת: לו וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-מִרְיָם בִּי אֲדֹנָי אֱ-נָא תִשֶׁת עָלֵינוּ חַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר נִוְאָלְנוּ וְאַשֶׁר אֱ-מִרְיָם וְהָיָה מִרְיָם מְצֻרַעַת: לז וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-מִרְיָם בִּי אֲדֹנָי אֱ-נָא תִשֶׁת עָלֵינוּ חַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר נִוְאָלְנוּ וְאַשֶׁר אֱ-מִרְיָם וְהָיָה מִרְיָם מְצֻרַעַת: לח וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-מִרְיָם בִּי אֲדֹנָי אֱ-נָא תִשֶׁת עָלֵינוּ חַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר נִוְאָלְנוּ וְאַשֶׁר אֱ-מִרְיָם וְהָיָה מִרְיָם מְצֻרַעַת: לט וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-מִרְיָם בִּי אֲדֹנָי אֱ-נָא תִשֶׁת עָלֵינוּ חַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר נִוְאָלְנוּ וְאַשֶׁר אֱ-מִרְיָם וְהָיָה מִרְיָם מְצֻרַעַת: לך וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-מִרְיָם בִּי אֲדֹנָי אֱ-נָא תִשֶׁת עָלֵינוּ חַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר נִוְאָלְנוּ וְאַשֶׁר אֱ-מִרְיָם וְהָיָה מִרְיָם מְצֻ

compassion,” and כַּבֵּסְנִי from the root word כָּבַס meaning “to wash.” In David’s use of these three words to describe his sin, פָּשְׁעִי is a reference to his external guilt in sin, whereas מַעֲוֹנֵי and וּמַחֲטָאֵתִי are referring to the internal state. He says that in his heart he did not exercise justice (מִשְׁפָּט) and righteousness (צְדָקָה) before God and before others. He committed murder. The greatness of this external and internal uncleanness excluded him from worshiping in God’s presence. Only a complete eradication of his sin will restore him into fellowship with the Lord and to His presence. As a result, David seeks the internal cleansing that is accomplished only by the grace and mercy of God as understood according to the Hebrew text on the use of the words כָּחֲסֹדֶךָ and רַחֲמֶיךָ and then to be cleansed externally by the purifying waters by the phrase “to wash” (כַּבֵּסְנִי) me from my sins. This is emphasized in David’s statement in *Tehillim / Psalms 51:4* in the Hebrew Bible, (note it is *51:2* in the English Bible) כַּבֵּסְנִי מַעֲוֹנֵי וּמַחֲטָאֵתִי טַהַרְנִי [הָרַב] הָרַבָּה by the word טַהַרְנִי meaning “cleanse me” in the sense of ritual purity. David realizes that sinning against Bathsheba and against Uriah is synonymous with sinning against God. He then confirms the Lord’s righteous judgment against sin and God’s desire for righteousness in His people (לְמַעַן עֲשִׂיתִי לְמַעַן) לֵךְ לְבִדְדָה | חֲטָאֵתִי וְהִרַע בְּעֵינָיִךָ עֲשִׂיתִי לְמַעַן) in *Tehillim / Psalms 51:6*. When going before the Lord seeking instruction from His presence, consequently we need to seek forgiveness of sins prior to seeking counsel in His presence. When David said: *34:4 I sought the Lord, and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears. (NASB)* he had obviously sought the Lord for the forgiveness of his sins and the Lord had indeed forgiven him and answered him. He can and does do the same for us today.

David continues saying the Lord encamps around those who fear Him (*Tehillim / Psalms 34:7*, הַ לְחַיִּים הַלְחֵם: (חֲנֹה מִלְאֵה-יְהוָה סָבִיב לִירְאָיו וַיַּחֲלֵצֵם: And says *34:8 O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! 34:9 O fear the Lord, you His saints; For to those who fear Him there is no want. 34:10 The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the Lord shall not be in want of any good thing. 34:11 Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. (NASB)* The Apostle Peter wrote in *1 Peter 2:3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. (NASB)* appearing to draw a parallel to *Tehillim / Psalms 34:8 O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! (NASB)* By experience, David believes our days are numbered by the Lord saying: יִגְמֵי הָאִישׁ הַחַפֵּץ חַיִּים אֲהֵב יָמִים לְרֵאוֹת טוֹב: יֵד נָצַר לְשׁוֹנֵה מָרַע וּשְׁפָתֵיךָ מִדְבַּר מְרָמָה: טו סוּר מִרָע וְעֲשֵׂה-טוֹב בְּקֹשׁ 34:12 Who is the man who desires life And loves length of days that he may see good? 34:13 Keep your tongue from evil And your lips from speaking deceit. 34:14 Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it. 34:15 The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous And His ears are open to their cry. (NASB) whereas: יִזְכְּרוּ יְהוָה בְּעֲשֵׂי רָע לְהַכְרִית מֵאֲרֶץ זָכָרָם: 34:16 The face of the Lord is against evildoers, To cut off the memory of them from the earth. (NASB) The Apostle Peter also wrote the following in His epistle saying, *1 Peter 3:10 For, ‘The one who desires life, to love and see good days, Must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. 3:11 ‘He must turn away from evil and do good; He must seek peace and pursue it. 3:12 ‘For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, And His ears attend to their prayer, But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.’ (NASB)* again drawing a parallel to *Tehillim / Psalms 34:12-16*. It is interesting how David says, that we must keep our tongue from evil and our lips from speaking deceit. We must turn from evil and do good, and seek peace. This is the way our lives should be characterized as the children of God, running from evil and sin, turning our lives around, obeying the Lord, all because He has worked in us a good work in Yeshua the Messiah. Notice how David speaks of the Lord answering him, that He encamps around those who fear Him, to taste and see that the Lord is good, the blessing that are in those who take refuge in Him, to fear the Lord, to seek the Lord not in vain, to listen to the Lord and fear Him and the Lord gives length of days to those who seek peace and the pursuit of peace. He says the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous. This Psalm brings into context an interesting question regarding holiness, righteousness, justice, and sin, especially in light of *Tehillim / Psalms 51* and David’s use of three types of sin, the external verses the internal forms of sin. The context I am thinking of is with regard to ritual purity, which the disciples and Yeshua

draw upon to broaden our understanding of sin, and the importance of ritual purity today. I have spoken to quite a few people regarding ritual purity and for the most part, many people respond saying that contracting ritual impurity was a sin. So the question is according to the Torah, “*Was ritual impurity or ceremonial uncleanness considered a sin?*” The answer to that question is “*that depends on how one becomes ritually impure!*” Studying the Torah, the majority of the purity laws concern the cases, situations, and substances that cause one to become ritually impure affect one’s ability to enter into the temple of God.. Ritual impurity generally involves the direct or indirect contact with an object that is unclean such as having contact with childbirth (*Vayikra / Leviticus 12:1-8*), the disease of Tsaraat (skin disease, *Vayikra / Leviticus 13:1-46, 14:1-32*), a disease of fungus in clothing (*Vayikra / Leviticus 13:47-59*), fungus in a house (*Vayikra / Leviticus 14:33-53*), seminal discharges (*Vayikra / Leviticus 15:1-33*), the dead bodies of certain unclean animals (*Bamidbar / Numbers 11:1-47*), and human dead bodies (*Bamidbar / Numbers 19:1-22*). In addition to these things, ritual impurity may also come by contact with the Olah Korban (Whole burnt offering) while preparing the waters of purification (see *Vayikra / Leviticus 16:28, Bamidbar / Numbers 19:7-8*) from the ashes of the red heifer. Based upon these Biblical sources, studying these Scriptures carefully, these forms of uncleanness do not result from willful acts of disobedience to God’s Word, therefore, it is not sinful to contract these impurities. Notice how contracting impurity in these ways, birth, death, sex, disease, and skin discharge may at one time or another be unavoidable simply because of life and living and interaction with others. This has become a serious misunderstanding in the Christian Church today. Again it is not sinful to contract ritual impurity in the ways listed above. In addition to this, note with regard to becoming unclean by touching a human dead body, if one were to bury the body of a deceased relative, it would not be a sin to do so. However, if a man was the “*high priest,*” he was forbidden from touching dead bodies (*Vayikra / Leviticus 21:1-4*). Therefore, if the High Priest were to bury the body of a deceased relative, it would be a sin, according to the Word of the Lord, because he would be willfully choosing to violate (or disregard) the command of God. In addition to these things, the Scriptures also state that ritual defilement may be a punishment for moral shortcomings.

Studying the topic of “*impurity*” or “*uncleanness*” in the Scriptures, there are two ideologies on the topic of uncleanness in the Hebrew Bible, (i) ritual uncleanness (*as was just discussed*) and (ii) moral uncleanness. The state of ritual uncleanness pertains to the human body, and is unavoidable in some cases, it is temporary and can be cleansed according to the Scriptures. Note also that without the ashes of the Red Heifer and the absence of the Temple in Jerusalem, there is not way to cleanse the physical body from ritual uncleanness today. On the other hand, “*moral uncleanness*” is acquired through behavioral choice and our thought life. In the Torah there are three sins which cause moral uncleanness: (i) murder, (ii) violation of sexual prohibitions, and (iii) heresy which includes willful disobedience to God’s Word.

According to the Torah, there are no purification rites that are able to reverse these types of uncleanness.

Moral impurity, unlike ritual impurity, has severe consequences. According to the Scriptures, by reason of moral uncleanness, the land (eretz Israel) will expel its inhabitants and the violators will be subject to being cut off from their people. They will be given some sort of affliction and die short in life (*living fewer years than what they could have*). Yeshua speaks of moral uncleanness in *Matthew 5-7* (*murderous and lustful thoughts*) and in *Mark 7* (*uncleanness that comes from the heart*).

An example from the gospel of Luke (chapter 8) may be used to illustrate moral impurity. In Luke 8, there was a woman who was living with what the Scriptures call “*an issue (hemorrhage) of blood for twelve years,*” meaning that she found herself constantly in a state of niddah (menstrual uncleanness) due to bleeding. As a result of this she was unable to worship at the Temple in Jerusalem and this would have caused problems with sexual relations and her husband, and coming into contact with anyone who had plans on going to the Temple to worship the Lord. The woman would have needed to be in a constant state of isolation. The issue for this woman was she needed to restrict who she come in contact with since she would be knowingly causing everyone she come into contact with to become ritually unclean. *Luke 8:41-48* says

the following:

Luke 8:41-48

8:41 And there came a man named Jairus, and he was an official of the synagogue; and he fell at Jesus' feet, and began to implore Him to come to his house; 8:42 for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying. But as He went, the crowds were pressing against Him. 8:45 And Jesus said, 'Who is the one who touched Me?' And while they were all denying it, Peter said, 'Master, the people are crowding and pressing in on You.' 8:46 But Jesus said, 'Someone did touch Me, for I was aware that power had gone out of Me.' 8:47 When the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling and fell down before Him, and declared in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched Him, and how she had been immediately healed. 8:48 And He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.' (NASB)

Here Yeshua was going to heal the daughter of Jarius (see *Luke 8:41-42, 49-56*) and this woman with menstrual bleeding come behind and touched his cloths. The Story illustrates the power of God that proceeds from Yeshua to heal her that occurred without the direct verbal appeal being made by the woman for healing. It is an illustration of faith, in the Lord God Almighty and in His Son, the Messiah Yeshua, and the power of God to heal her from her sickness. This woman stepped out in faith and by her actions she was healed. Now, consider what the Torah has to say about this woman's condition.

Vayikra / Leviticus 15:25-27

15:25 'Now if a woman has a discharge of her blood many days, not at the period of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond that period, all the days of her impure discharge she shall continue as though in her menstrual impurity; she is unclean. 15:26 'Any bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her like her bed at menstruation; and every thing on which she sits shall be unclean, like her uncleanness at that time. 15:27 'Likewise, whoever touches them shall be unclean and shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. (NASB)

According to the gospel of Luke, this woman had been ritually unclean for twelve years. Anyone who comes into contact with her or with anything that she has touched contracts the ritual defilement. Notice that the Scriptures do not say the people would run from her because of her uncleanness. Therefore, we can conclude that she had kept this condition hidden from everyone except of course her husband (if she was married). By necessity, when she touches Yeshua's cloths, she passes on the ritual defilement according to the Word of God in *Vayikra / Leviticus 15:27*. It is important to remember that it is not inherently sinful to become ritually defiled in this way, after all, ritual defilement comes on account of the natural menstrual cycle (*Vayikra / Leviticus 15:19-24*), touching the dead (*Bamidbar / Numbers 19:11-16*), and for many other reasons listed previously. In this woman's case she had some kind of bleeding problem that would not cease. The question is, does her willfully touching Yeshua making him ritually impure a form of willful disobedience to God's Word in Leviticus? Ritual defilement was a big deal especially for those involved with the Temple service. This woman would have experienced extreme discrimination because of her illness since many would be afraid of contracting the defilement. It was most likely for this reason that the woman is reluctant to come forward and speak clearly regarding what she has done. In addition to this, her pressing through the crowd to touch Yeshua's clothing, in the process she was making everyone she touched unclean, which is in willful disobedience to God's Word in Leviticus. She most likely was certainly afraid of receiving a rebuke or chastisement for her conduct. Yeshua however was not like the religious leaders of His day. He recognized that this defilement was not by reason of sin and that true defilement (uncleanness) is a matter of the heart and conduct (see *Mark 7:14-23, next chapter*). Yeshua was willing to bear the ritual defilement so that the woman may be cleansed of her disease. The power of God was present to heal the woman and

everyone present was able to witness God's glory and give Him the praise.

The lesson we can take away from this story is critical even to this day. Today, people do not put stock into ritual cleanliness or uncleanness, mostly as a result of the absence of the Temple, but also by reason of Christian commentary throughout the centuries that these things are not important. Because we are not taught to consider the implications of purity in our walk before the Lord each day, our understanding of walking in righteousness and purity before God has been effected. Ritual impurity barred people from joining the congregation in worship in the Tabernacle and the Temple in Jerusalem, however, if one lived in "moral defilement" in their hearts (*thought life*), they were free to go in and out of the Tabernacle or Temple in Jerusalem and nobody would know. This is a profound way of understanding uncleanness with regard to disobedience, rebelliousness to God's Word, disregarding God's Word, and being insensitive to God's Word, etc, the moral impurity are types of defilement before the Lord God Almighty that separates us most importantly from the Lord Himself. We know according to the Apostolic Writings that Yeshua healed those who were ritually defiled (i.e. those with leprosy). He was also willing to eat with tax collectors and sinners (*Matthew 9:10-11*) who from a "morally defiled" perspective were unclean. Yeshua did not shun those whom Jewish society branded as "defiled" and "unclean" either for ritual or moral reasons; instead, He preached repentance and the good news to them. The Torah does not state that a morally defiled person could pass on their defilement to another. Thus, the one who is defiled inwardly, his morally defiled state is directly affecting his relationship with the Lord God Almighty. Yeshua healed these people because, after all, they were sick, and needed help. The interesting point is that these people who were sick were seeking God, seeking truth, and seeking healing. Does the morally defiled person seek God for truth and healing? Is it possible that the stain of moral defilement could cause a person to not realize their own impure state and not seek the Lord for forgiveness, healing, and truth?

The point of the matter is, today there are many people who are openly disobedient to God's Word. The Scriptures say that we will be able to come before the Lord with purified lives and being empowered by God to live obedient to God's Word because the Lord has inscribed His Law on our hearts. The issue is not that foods (clean or unclean) will cause a person to lose their salvation or cause one not to be able to enter heaven. We know that through faith in Yeshua the Messiah, our High Priest, we are a saved and a redeemed people. Yeshua has cleansed us and we can approach the Lord God in prayer and thanksgiving. The real issue at hand is living in willful disobedience to God's Word. Knowing what the Lord commands and yet disregarding God's Word and living in willful disobedience to the Word. Following salvation in Yeshua, if one is unwilling to or does not have the desire to make changes to his or her life, what can be said about such a person? How do your life look with regard to "Moral Uncleanness" today? The Apostle James said in *James 1:21-25*:

James 1:21-25

1:21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. 1:22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. 1:23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 1:24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. 1:25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does. (NASB)

Does the "law of liberty" suggest that we are free to live in willful disobedience to God's Word? The Torah was given to train us in holiness, righteousness, and justice. For example, the dietary requirements found in God's Law is one way to realize the importance of daily living in obedience to God's Word. Similarly, we are not to live in a continual state of "moral uncleanness" by willfully being disobedient to His Word! Note also that it is the Lord God Almighty who is able to cleanse us from moral impurity and the Lord does this in Yeshua the Messiah. In the Messiah, we are made whole and we are empowered by the Holy Spirit

יט קריב יהוה לתבירי ליבא וית מכיכי רוחא יפרוק: כ סגיעין בישן מערען לצדיקא ומן כולהון פצא ליה יהוה: כא נטיר לכולהון איברוי חדא מנהון לא מתברא: כב מתותא דרשיעא בישא וסנאי צדיקא יתחייבון: כג פרוק יהוה

34:18 The righteous pray, and it is heard in the presence of the Lord; and from all their trouble he has delivered them. 34:19 The Lord is near to the broken-hearted; and the lowly in spirit he will redeem. 34:20 Many evils encounter the righteous man; and from all of them the Lord delivers him. 34:21 He protects all his limbs; not one of them is broken. 34:22 The death of the wicked is bad, and those who hate the righteous man will be condemned. 34:23 The Lord redeems the soul of his servants; and none who hope in his word are condemned. (EMC) Notice how the rabbis draw a parallel to David's words "the righteous cry" saying "the righteous pray" in the presence of the Lord and they are delivered from all their troubles. When we cry out to the Lord for help, we do so in prayer. In addition to this, are we always delivered from our troubles like the Scriptures are saying here according to David? Is it possible to hold God hostage to His Word, seeking something and expecting it and then getting angry because we do not get the answer we are looking for? Have you ever heard that said before, "holding God hostage to the Scriptures?" What are your thoughts on this? Many of us have grown up in the church, taught to love God and our savior Yeshua, to obey the Lord and to be involved in the church. Many of us also know the bible from cover to cover, however, is it possible to hold God hostage to our own belief system? Picking and choosing what works best for us at any given moment rather than simply trusting in God's Word, and His will for our lives no matter whether good or bad things happen to us? According to David, *34:17 The righteous cry, and the Lord hears And delivers them out of all their troubles. 34:18 The Lord is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit. 34:19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of them all. 34:20 He keeps all his bones, Not one of them is broken. 34:21 Evil shall slay the wicked, And those who hate the righteous will be condemned. (NASB)* The point is that those who are righteous are those who have a relationship with the Lord, who love Him and seek Him daily. Our salvation is not simply about fire insurance or a way of getting out of hell. Our salvation is the start, the beginning of a wonderful relationship with the Lord God Almighty in His Son Yeshua the Messiah. the Lord does deliver us, he saves us, and yes there are many troubles that come our way like David said "many are the afflictions of the righteous" (34:19). The point is whether we are delivered in this life or not, we are certainly delivered in the world to come (saved for eternity). What we do today, does effect our relationship with the Lord and the question is do we really love God, even in the midst of troubles? That topic of "moral impurity" is closely related to Yeshua's words in *Matthew 7:21-23* regarding the righteous and the unrighteous, those who Yeshua speaks to saying "depart from me you worker of lawlessness." We know how significantly moral impurity affects our relationship with God. The morally impure person is the one who outwardly appears right, but inwardly is full of all kinds of defilements and uncleanness. Let's seek the Lord for cleansing and healing from the impurity of our hearts, only He is able to make us whole in every way. Let's pray!

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 34* has 2 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1 and 2. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 34, Part 1 and 2*.

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 34, Part 1 and 2

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying "A Psalm of David; when he changed his demeanor before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed. I

will bless the Lord at all times (Tehillim / Psalms 34:1-2)."

- The פתיחתא (Petihta) *"the homiletic introduction"* to the Midrash says *"The words I will bless the Lord at all times are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, Everything He has made beautiful in its time (Ecclesiastes 3:11)."*
- The משל (mashal) *"the parable,"* goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss David's behavior before Abimelech.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) *"expansion on the parable"* expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis go on to expand upon how David behaved giving examples as (i) the Lord created and destroyed worlds, (ii) the Lord made everything beautiful in its time paralleling with Adam, Noah, and Abraham, (iii) food was created to be eaten in its time, (iv) everything was made beautiful in its time, and (v) conclude with a discussion on David and Abimelech.
- The Concluding phrase says *"I will bless the Lord in all times; His praise will continually be in my mouth (Tehillim / Psalms 34:1) both in time of reason and in time of madness. Therefore, with good cause at the beginning of Bereshit / Genesis you find, And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good (Bereshit / Genesis 1:31)."*

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying *"The Lord redeems the soul of His servants (Tehillim / Psalms 34:23)."*
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) *"the homiletic introduction"* to the Midrash says *"Rabbi Samuel son of Nahmani said, The Lord redeems the soul from the inclination to evil, for in saying If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink (Mishley / Proverbs 25:21)."*
- The משל (mashal) *"the parable,"* goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss David's words on the Lord redeeming the soul of His servants.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) *"expansion on the parable"* expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis go on to expand upon how the Lord redeems the soul and parallels this with the inclination to evil and the inclination to good that is within the human heart.
- The Concluding phrase says *"Rabbi Isaac son of Menahem taught, Every good man has a world to himself, and will have a Garden of Eden for himself, as is said They are abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Your house; and You make them to drink from the river of Eden (Tehillim / Psalms 36:9)."*

Midrash Tehillim 34, Part 1 opens with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying *"A Psalm of David; when he changed his demeanor before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed. I will bless the Lord at all times (Tehillim / Psalms 34:1-2)."* The homiletic introduction to the Midrash says *"The words I will bless the Lord at all times are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, Everything He has made beautiful in its time (Ecclesiastes 3:11)."* Rabbi Tanhuma expands upon this verse speaking of the worlds that the Lord had created. Note that we had discusses the Lord creating worlds and the human body to some extent in the study on *Tehillim / Psalms 31*. (Go back and reread that for a refresher on the topic.) Let's read a section from Midrash Tehillim 34, Part 1:

<p style="text-align: center;">מדרש תהלים פרק לד סימן א</p> <p>א לדוד בשנותו את טעמו לפני אבימלך וגו'. זהו שאמר הכתוב את הכל עשה יפה בעתו (קהלת ג יא), [אמר ר' תנחומא בעונתו ברא הקב"ה את העולם, מלמד שהיה הקב"ה בורא עולמות והיה מחריבן, שלא היו ראויין להבראות, אלא אמר דין לא הניין לי, ודין הניין לי.]</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 34, Part 1 <i>A Psalm of David; when he changed his demeanor before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed. I will bless the Lord at all times (Tehillim / Psalms 34:1-2). The words I will bless the Lord at all times are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, Everything He has made beautiful in its time (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Rabbi Tanhuma said, The Holy One blessed be He, created the world in its proper time, for the verse teaches that the Holy One blessed be He, already had created worlds and destroyed them because they had proved themselves unworthy of His creation. And He said, Those did not please Me, but this one pleases Me.</i></p>
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In Judaism, the body of literature, extending over a period of 1,000 years (500 BCE.–500 CE), was a collection of writing called halakhah (*the Mishna, tosefta, and the Talmud*) and aggadah (*midrash*) that is based upon the Tanach. It is believed according to tradition (*or set forth in the Mishnah, see Avot 1:1*) that Moshe received not only a Written Law at Sinai but also an Oral Law which was transmitted to leading figures, including the prophets of successive generations. In this body of literature, we read on occasion that the Lord created and destroyed worlds like we are reading here in Midrash Tehillim 34, Part 1. For example, according to the *Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 37a* we read the following:

Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 37a

לפיכך נברא אדם יחידי, ללמדך שכל המאבד נפש אחת מישראל - מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו איבד עולם מלא, וכל המקיים נפש אחת מישראל - מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו קיים עולם מלא.

“For this reason was man created alone, to teach you that whosoever destroys a single soul, Scripture imputes (guilt) to him as though he had destroyed a complete world; and whosoever preserves a single soul, Scripture ascribes (merit) to him as though he had preserved a complete world.”

According to the rabbis in the *Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 37a*, each person (*man, woman, and child*) is considered an entire world. Here the rabbis parallel the creation of “*the World*” with each of us. Rabbi Tanhuma said that God created the world in its proper time. Similarly, each of us have been created in the proper time. What does this mean? This means God has a plan for each one of us and that we were created in the proper time to be used of the Lord and to serve him. The Lord God makes, shapes, and forms us and therefore our world is or should be managed by God, everything we do should be in the name of the Lord. Rabbi Tanhuma said that the Lord destroyed worlds because they proved themselves unworthy of His creation. How does one prove himself worthy in this life? Do the Scriptures speak of our needing to prove ourselves worthy of God? If we continue to walk in darkness now that we are in Yeshua the Messiah, what would happen or what does Scripture say? The rabbis comment on that question in the following part of the midrash saying:

<p style="text-align: center;">מדרש תהלים פרק לד סימן א</p> <p>[דבר אחר את הכל עשה יפה בעתו]. אמר ר' סימון, ראוי היה אברהם אבינו להברא תחלה לאדם הראשון, אלא אמר הקב"ה אם בורא אני את אברהם תחלה, אם יקלקל אין מי שיבא ויתקן, אלא הרי אני בורא אדם הראשון תחלה, שאם יקלקל יבא אברהם ויתקן. דבר אחר את הכל עשה יפה בעתו. שלשה צדיקים היו יסוד עולם, אדם הראשון ונח ואברהם.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 34, Part 1 <i>Another comment on Everything He has made beautiful in its time. Rabbi Simon said, Our father Abraham was worthy of being made in the beginning before Adam. But the Holy One blessed be He said, Should I in the beginning, make Abraham and should become corrupt, there will be no one to come after him and restore order. Therefore, in the beginning I will make Adam and should Adam become corrupt, then Abraham will come to restore order. Another comment, Everything He has made beautiful in the time refers to the three righteous men who are the foundation of the world, Adam, Noah, and Abraham.</i></p>
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Note how rabbi Simon says “Our father Abraham was worthy of being made in the beginning before Adam. But the Holy One blessed be He said, Should I in the beginning, make Abraham and should become corrupt, there will be no one to come after him and restore order.” What is rabbi Simon trying to say here? Is there a connection to the righteous who keep this world from destruction? The rabbis say there are 10 Tzadikim who keep the world from destruction, would this be what he is referring to? The midrash continues on the idea of order and restoring order and that three righteous men are the foundation of the world, Adam, Noah, and Abraham. What can we say about these comments from the midrash? Each of these men, their lives were characterized by “faith.” The rabbis say that the Lord brought one man after the other to “restore order” by their faith and to be examples for us of those who lived by faith. If we walk in darkness now that we are in Yeshua the Messiah, the Lord will bring someone else to take our place and restore order. This seems to be consistent with Yeshua’s words in John 5:14 “... and said to him, “Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you.” (NASB) The midrash continues saying:

<p style="text-align: center;">מדרש תהלים פרק לד סימן א</p> <p>השעש המ לכ. ותעב הפי השע לכה תא רחא רבד המ לכ ה"בקהל דוד רמא, הפי השע ומלועל ה"בקה אזה נכו, לכה נמ הפי המכחהו, תישע הפי תישעש (מילהת) תישע המכחב מלכ ז' דישעמ ובר המ רמוא נמ זוח, [תישע הפי המכחב תישעש המ לכ, (דכ דק מלוע לש ונובר ה"בקה ינפל דוד רמא, הזה תוטשה דלהמ מדאש, וזה תוטשה נמ מלועל שי האנה המ ויקחשמו וירחא ניצר תוקוניתהו, ותוסכ ערקמו קושב התא תוטש לע ה"בקה היל רמא, דינפל האנ הז, וילע זב המלש רמא נכו, הל דרטצתש דייח, רגת ארוק -שמתי אהו, ול לבחי המ, (גי גי ילשמ) ול לבחי רבדל (דכ מירבד) בכרו מיחר לבחי אל רמאנש וינעכ, ול נכ ותאש דע הילע ללפתתו רעטצת ה"בקה ול רמא, (ו אזה נכו, שיכא לצא דלהש דע דוד השע אל, הנממ דל אביו] לואש ינפמ [אווה מויב] חרביו דוד מקיו רמוא (אי אכ יא לאומש א"ש) [תג דלמ שיכא לא</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 34, Part 1</p> <p><i>Another comment on Everything He has made beautiful in its time. All things which the Holy One blessed be He, has made His world He has made beautiful. David said to the Holy One blessed be He, All that You have made, You have made beautiful, yet the most beautiful of all Your works is wisdom. Thus, also, in saying, How manifold are Your works, O Lord. All those which You have made in wisdom (Tehillim / Psalms 104:24), David meant, You have made all in wisdom, and have made well, except for madness. And David said to the Holy One blessed be He, Master of the universe, what profit is there for the world in madness? When a man goes about the market place and rends his garment, and children run after him and mock him, is this beautiful in his eyes? The Holy One blessed be He, answered, raises a cry against madness? By your life, you will have need of it. As Solomon said, Whoso despises a thing will be taken (yekhabel) by it (Mishley / Proverbs 13:13), What does yekhabel signify? That in his hour of need, a man will beg to be from the same stem as yakhabol in the verse No man will take (yakhabol) the nether or the upper millstone to pledge (Devarim / Deuteronomy 24:6). Moreover, said the Holy One blessed be He, you will grieve after and pray for madness before I give you a touch of it. And David did not tarry, but went to Achish as Scripture says, And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath (1 Samuel 21:11).</i></p>
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The midrash states that the most beautiful of all of God’s creation is wisdom, and a contrast is drawn between wisdom and madness. The midrash continues and the a story is told of David going to Achish and Goliath’s brother being the kings body guard. The discussion goes back and forth between Goliath’s brother and the king and how David defeated Goliath on the battle field. Goliath’s brother then said to get off your throne because it belongs to David, and to Saul, and confounded the king and David was afraid and asked the Lord to give him a touch of madness. What is interesting, in *Tehillim / Psalms 34:1-22*, we read in the opening verse: לְדָוִד בְּשִׁנּוֹתָו אֶת-טְעָמוֹ לְפָנַי אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וַיִּגְרָשֵׁהוּ וַיֵּלֶךְ: *Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelek, who drove him away, and he left. (NASB)* Here the verse says Abimelek but wasn’t it Achish the king of Gath that he had gone to see? (1 Samuel 21:10) Why do you think that David wrote Abimelek (אֲבִימֶלֶךְ) rather than Achish? Was David trying to draw a parallel to the Torah and the situation between Abraham and Abimelek? The rabbis say that the reason David called Achish Abimelek was because he was as righteous as Abimelek. When thinking about these things, wisdom, madness, and the use of Abimelek rather than Achish, how important it is to hold on to sound doctrine? In this day, like

in the Apostle Paul's day, we are in an especially dangerous time. Paul warned us about the days we are in saying *2 Timothy 4:3-4 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but {wanting} to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.* Today many people tend to take hold of madness rather than the wisdom of God. For example, how often are people deceived by the winds of doctrine that blow in. People time after time line up to hear the latest thing that's blown in, to be blown away by the latest book, to be blown over by the latest "anointing" where in reality, they're just being tossed about by the latest wind of doctrine. Paul warns to be careful about doctrines calling them "strange doctrines" (*1 Timothy 1:3*). The key to knowing whether something is of the wisdom of God or madness is by knowing the Word of God. Midrash Tehillim 34, Part 1 concludes saying "I will bless the Lord in all times; His praise will continually be in my mouth (Tehillim / Psalms 34:1) both in time of reason and in time of madness. Therefore, with good cause at the beginning of Bereshit / Genesis you find, And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good (Bereshit / Genesis 1:31)." So the rabbis say that God created both wisdom and madness. Whether God created madness or not, we are called to be of sound mind and not blown by every wind of doctrine.

Midrash Tehillim 34, Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying "The Lord redeems the soul of His servants (Tehillim / Psalms 34:23)." The homiletic introduction" to the Midrash states "Rabbi Samuel son of Nakhmani said, The Lord redeems the soul from the inclination to evil, for in saying If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink (Mishley / Proverbs 25:21)." The entire midrash (Part 2) says the following:

ב נמיס דל קרפ מילהת שרדמ Midrash Tehillim 34, Part 2

רבדמ ינמחנ רב לאומש יר רמא. וידבע שפנ י'ה הדופ ב והליכאה דאנוש בער סא רמוא אוה וילע, ערה רציב וריבח סע דלהמ מדא, ערה רצי הז, (אכ הכ ילשמ) סחל ייגו, סדאה סע דלונ ערה רציו, ובהוא השענ תחא העש וירוענמ ער סדאה בל רצי יכ רמאנש, וימי לכ ומע לד ימח נב סיעברא נב וליפהל אצמ סאו, (אכ ה תישארב) רמא, הזמ לודג אנוש דל שי, וליפמ ירה מישש נב מיש והליכאה, ערה רצי דילע דמע סא ינמחנ רב לאומש יר ט ילשמ) ימחלב ומחל וכל רמאנש, הרות לש המחלמ יוה רמאנש, הרות לש המיממ והקשת אמצ סאו. (ה התא מילחג יכ המלו, (א הנ היעשי) מימל וכל אמצ לכ מש) דל מלשי יהו המו, (בכ הכ ילשמ) ושאר לע התוח ימאת יתומצע לכ יוה, דל ונמילשי, (הינ והיעשי מש י הל מילהת) ונממ קזחמ ינע ליצמ דומכ ימ י'ה הנר וויבאו ינעו, ערה רצי נמ בוט רצי ליצמ אחא יר רמא, וזמ הלודג הליזג דל שי, (הייל מילהת מש) ולזוגמ השעו וקדצמ קידצ בושבו רמאנש, קידצה תא איטחמש צו קידצ לכ סחנמ רב קחצי יר רמא. (כ ג לאקזחי) לוע ומצע ינפב דע וג ול שיו, ומצע ינפב סלוע ול שי קיד מילהת) מקשת דינדע לחנו דתיב נשדמ וויורי רמאנש (ט ול).

2. The Lord redeems the soul of His servants (Tehillim / Psalms 34:23). Rabbi Samuel son of Nakhmani said, The Lord redeems the soul from the inclination to evil, for in saying If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink (Mishley / Proverbs 25:21), Scripture means that the inclination to evil is your enemy. A man walking with a companion for a space becomes his friend; but the inclination to evil is born with man and grows up with him, as it is said The evil imagination in man's heart is with him from his youth (Bereshit / Genesis 8:21) and yet if it find occasion to overwhelm a man, whether the man be forty, or fifty, or sixty, it will overwhelm him. Have you a greater enemy than this? Hence, Rabbi Samuel son of Nakhmani concluded, If the inclination to evil rises up within you, make it eat the bread of Torah, for it is said As for him that walks understanding, wisdom says to him, come, eat of my bread (Mishley / Proverbs 9:4-5). If the inclination to evil is thirsty, make it drink the water of Torah, for it is said, Ho, everyone that thirsts, come for water (Isaiah 55:1). Why? Because You will heap coals of fire upon his head (Mishley / Proverbs 25:22). And what is meant by the Lord yesalleme you? It means that the Lord will make the inclination to evil be at peace with you. Then all my bones will say, Lord who is like You, who delivers the poor from him that is too strong for him (Tehillim / Psalms 35:10) that is, according to rabbi Akha, the Lord delivers the inclination to good from the inclination to evil. He delivers the poor and the needy from him that spoils him. Is there a mightier despoiling than that in which the inclination to evil causes a righteous man to commit iniquity of which it is said When a righteous man turns from his righteousness, and commit iniquity he will die (Ezekiel 3:20). Rabbi Isaac son of Menahem taught, Every good man has a world to himself, and will have a Garden of Eden for himself, as is said They are abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Your house; and You make them to drink from the river of Eden (Tehillim / Psalms 36:9).

It is interesting that the rabbis response to the homiletic introduction is “*Scripture means that the inclination to evil is your enemy*” within the context of “*The Lord redeems the soul of His servants (Tehillim / Psalms 34:23)*” and the Lord redeeming the soul from the inclination to evil. How does the Lord redeem the soul from the inclination to evil and what do the rabbis mean that this enemy is the “*inclination to evil*” and that if the enemy is hungry feed him with bread to eat and thirsty give him water to drink? Midrash Tehillim 34, Part 2 may be divided into four sections (i) introduction, (ii) feeding the enemy with bread, (iii) feeding the enemy with water, and (iv) the Lord redeeming the soul.

The rabbis say “*A man walking with a companion for a space becomes his friend; but the inclination to evil is born with man and grows up with him, as it is said The evil imagination in man’s heart is with him from his youth (Bereshit / Genesis 8:21) and yet if it find occasion to overwhelm a man, whether the man be forty, or fifty, or sixty, it will overwhelm him. Have you a greater enemy than this?*” (אדם מהלך) עם חבריו שעה אחת נעשה אוהבו, ויצר הרע נולד עם האדם, וגידל עמו כל ימיו, שנאמר כי יצר לב האדם רע (בראשית ח כא), ואם מצא להפילו בן ארבעים בן חמשים בן ששים הרי מפילו, יש לך שונא גדול מזה (אדם מהלך עם חבריו שעה אחת נעשה אוהבו) it translates as “*A man walks with a friend for a time becomes one he loves,*” whereas, the “*Yetzer Hara*” (ויצר הרע) the man is born with (נולד עם האדם) and that it “*grows, breeds, raises with the man*” (וגידל עמו כל ימיו). The source text from the Torah regarding the “*Yetzer Hara*” is from *Bereshit / Genesis 8:21* that says, *כא וַיִּרַח יְהוָה אֶת-רִיחַ הַנִּיחֹחַ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-לְבוֹ לֹא אֶסֶף לְקַלֵּל עוֹד אֶת-הָאָדָמָה בְּעִבּוֹר, 8:21 The Lord smelled the soothing aroma; and the Lord said to Himself, ‘I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. (NASB) Note that this is exactly what the Lord says, יִצֵּר לֵב הָאָדָם רַע מִנְעֻרָיו “the inclination of the heart of a man is evil from his youth,” and so we find יִצֵּר הָרַע “Yetzer hara” to indicate the “evil inclination” that God Himself said is in a man. It is interesting the parallel that is drawn by the man who walks with a friend for a moment and loves him which is contrasted to the Yetzer hara that he is born with, lived with for a lifetime and hates. The friend one walks with whom one falls in love with and does good to one another, verses the evil inclination that overwhelms a person and defeats him. The rabbis say that though a man be forty, fifty, or sixty years old if the evil inclination finds opportunity he will overwhelm him. “Have you a greater enemy than this?” Think about this for a moment, “How despicable is it in our eyes to beat down an old man?” It appears that no matter one’s age, the yetzer hara will beat one down and defeat him. The yetzer hara has no compassion and kindness, only defeat and destruction. Rabbi Nakhmani concludes saying “*If the inclination to evil rises up within you, make it eat the bread of Torah, for it is said As for him that walks understanding, wisdom says to him, come, eat of my bread (Mishley / Proverbs 9:4-5).*” So when the evil inclination raises up to cause one to do evil, he should feed the yetzer hara with the bread of the Torah. The Mishnah states in *Avot 3:17: Without bread [literally “flour”], there is no Torah; without Torah there is no bread.* According to Parashat Beshalach (*Shemot / Exodus 13:17-17:16*) exactly one month after the Exodus (*Month of Iyyar 15*), the Lord led the children of Israel from the oasis and palm trees at Elim into the deeper part of the desert, to “*midbar Sin*” (מִדְבַּר-סִין), wilderness of Sin), a desolate region that is about midway to Sinai going southeast (see *Shemot / Exodus 16:1*). It was about this time the food provisions the people had brought with them had run out, and they began grumbling against Moshe and Aaron, saying: “*If only we had died by the hand of God in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to our fill, for you have brought us out into this desert to starve to death!*” (*Shemot / Exodus 16:3*) The Lord then told Moshe, “*Look I am going to rain down bread from heaven (לֶחֶם מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם) for you. The people will go out and gather a portion for that day so that I might test whether they will walk in my Torah (תּוֹרָה) or not*” (*Shemot / Exodus 16:4*). According to the Scriptures, each Friday they received a double portion to last them through the Shabbat, and the test centered on whether the people would refrain from seeking manna on God’s appointed day of rest or not. Note also that the Ten Commandments have*

not been given to Israel at this time, so it is likely that the test of manna was meant to prepare them for the command of the Shabbat that would be given at Sinai in the following month (*On Sivan 6, or Shavuot, Pentacost*). As a result of this, Manna was understood as a symbol of God's provision for His people. Eating the bread given from heaven was recognizing God as the Provider for his people, and they were tested to see if they would set apart a special time to have their meal on the Shabbat, the day of rest. Therefore, the bread from heaven reveals the heart's condition. The manna was said to be like *"the bread of angels,"* and that it digested so perfectly that it did not need to be excreted in the usual way. The Torah describes it as tasting like *"honey cakes"* (*Shemot / Exodus 16:31*). Midrash Rabbah says that the taste of manna was a function of a person's sense of gratitude and therefore those who were thankful the manna tasted delicious, but those who murmured it tasted like stale matzah and unsatisfying. We think of what Yeshua said in *Matthew 9:29* *"according to your faith, be it done unto you."* The bread from heaven was also for our healing (*note the parallel of the bread and body of Christ broken for our healing*). The manna teaches us to trust in God's provision. The Lord tested the people with the manna to see whether they would walk in the Torah (*by His way and instruction*) or not. The Lord took the portion gathered on Friday and miraculously doubled it so there was enough for the Shabbat (*Shemot / Exodus 16:5*). Later on in the Torah we read that the Lord *"humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by all that proceeds from (כָּל-מוֹצֵא) from the mouth of the Lord"* (*Devarim / Deutoronomy 8:3*). Yeshua quoted to Satan (the deceiver) in *Matthew 4:4* these words that man does not live by bread alone. The point is that we find spiritual food when we humble ourselves and understand that we are carried by the grace and love of God. Even if the Lord afflicts us with hunger and thirst, His purpose is to reveal to us that He alone is the sustainer of our lives. When the rabbis say that one is to feed the יֵצֶר הרע *"Yetzer hara"* the *"evil inclination"* with the bread of the Torah, this is the manner in which we are to live, to feed our spirits with the word of God and it is only then that the spirit will overcome the flesh. With the help of God's Holy Spirit, we will have success and cease from sinning and from listening to the evil inclination of our hearts.

The rabbis then state *"If the inclination to evil is thirsty, make it drink the water of Torah, for it is said, Ho, everyone that thirsts, come for water (Isaiah 55:1). Why? Because You will heap coals of fire upon his head (Mishley / Proverbs 25:22)."* (שנאמר הוי כל צמא לכו למים (ישעיה נה א), ולמה כי גחלים אתה) It is interesting how the rabbis state that we are to give water to the inclination to evil if he is thirsty and to drink the water of the Torah. They cite *Isaiah 55:1* and *Mishley / Proverbs 25:22* as texts to support the idea of the *"water of Torah."* This is interesting because here we find the idea that the Word of God is life giving waters. Do the Scriptures tell us that the Word of God is like life giving waters? During the time of Ezra, after Nehemiah had rebuilt the walls of the city, we read that the people were returning to the ordinances of the Lord and heard the command in Torah to observe Sukkot. According to the Scriptures, the people were gathered at the *"Water gate"* in celebration of the Feast of Sukkot (see *Nehemiah 8:1,3,12-18*). It is interesting in Parashat Pinchas (*Bamidbar / Numbers 25:10-30:1*), in the last few verses in *Bamidbar / Numbers 29:37-39* we read, *29:37 their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bull, for the ram and for the lambs, by their number according to the ordinance; 29:38 and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering and its grain offering and its drink offering. 29:39 'You shall present these to the Lord at your appointed times, besides your votive offerings and your freewill offerings, for your burnt offerings and for your grain offerings and for your drink offerings and for your peace offerings.'* (NASB) Moshe was telling the Children of Israel what to do in accordance with the command of the Lord. Many sages and rabbis state that the full Torah was given to Moshe on the mountain of Sinai, both what was written and the oral explanation / application (Mishnah), therefore when thinking about the Torah, when Moshe was giving these commands, the people were getting the application of Torah also and the Mishnah was therefore considered a part of the Torah. What does the oral Torah teach regarding the water libation ceremony? Rashi's commentary states that the Torah's only allusion to the water offering appears in its description of the wine offering (see *Rashi's commentary on Bamidbar / Numbers 29:18 and Talmud Bavli Taanit 2b*). Both wine and water were required as offerings to the Lord on Sukkot to be com-

bined and poured onto the altar. Water from the pool of Siloam (*Nehemiah 3:15, Isaiah 8:6*), which is a pool of water located south of the Temple within the Old City walls. The priests would fill a vessel and take the water, enough to last the eight days of Succot, up to the Temple. The celebration was so great that the sages have said, “*He who has not seen the rejoicing at the Simchat Beit Hasho’evah, has never seen rejoicing in his life.*” It is interesting that this may be the basis by which the prophet Isaiah writes, “*Therefore with joy shall you draw water from the wells of salvation.*” (*Isaiah 12:3*) The last day of the Feast, however, was the greatest of all. It was the time of the most celebration, music, and worship, a time of holy convocation unto the Lord. In modern Jewish terminology, this day is called Hoshana Raba, which means “*O Great Salvation.*” These waters that the rabbis may be thinking on with regard to what is given to the evil inclination is obviously connected to the Salvation of God by the statement “*waters of Torah.*”

In the Gospel of John, Yeshua, a Torah-observant Jew, would have made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem every year in honor of the Feasts of the Lord. We read in *John 7:2* that the “*Feast of Booths was at hand*” and in verse 10 the Scriptures say that Yeshua also went up to Jerusalem as was His custom, however, this time He went secretly as He knew there were some waiting and watching out for Him in order to kill Him. According to John’s account, the Scriptures tell us that Yeshua cried out at the Temple during the celebrations on the last great day, and He declared in *John 7:37-38* “*If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me as the Scripture says, from his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.*” What did Yeshua mean by this statement? He said *7:38* “*He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’*” (*NASB*) meaning that from the one who believes in Him would flow forth rivers of living water. What are the “*rivers of living water?*” *Tehillim / Psalm 36:9* states that with the Lord is the fountain of life and *Jeremiah 2:13* states, “*...They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters.*” So the Lord is the fountain of living waters! Yeshua stood and taught in the Temple, He used a visual image with which the people of His day were accustomed. In this ceremony of pouring the living waters out upon the altar, after having heard Yeshua teach and the people seeing the priest pour out the waters, they would have understood that it is only the Lord Almighty who has the ability to quench their spiritual thirst and that He (Yeshua) is the way to quench this spiritual thirst. We now latter understand this but this might not have been well understood prior to the giving of the Holy Spirit.

In *Tehillim / Psalms 34*, David believes our days are numbered by the Lord saying מִי־הָאִישׁ יֵגֵד הַחַפְזֵי חַיִּים אֲהַב יָמִים לְרֵאוֹת טוֹב: יד נָצַר לְשׁוֹנֵה מֵרָע וּשְׁפָתָיָהּ מִדְּבַר מְרָמָה: טו סוּר מֵרָע וְעָשָׂה טוֹב בְּקֶשׁ הַחַפְזֵי חַיִּים אֲהַב יָמִים לְרֵאוֹת טוֹב: יז פָּנָי יְהוָה בְּעֵשִׂי רָע לְהַכְרִית מֵאַרְצָי זְכָרָם: יז 34:12 *Who is the man who desires life And loves length of days that he may see good? 34:13 Keep your tongue from evil And your lips from speaking deceit. 34:14 Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it. 34:15 The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous And His ears are open to their cry. (NASB)* whereas: יז פָּנָי יְהוָה בְּעֵשִׂי רָע לְהַכְרִית מֵאַרְצָי זְכָרָם: יז 34:16 *The face of the Lord is against evildoers, To cut off the memory of them from the earth. (NASB)* In addition to this, the Apostle Peter picked up on David’s words also wrote in His epistle saying, *1 Peter 3:10 For, ‘The one who desires life, to love and see good days, Must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. 3:11 ‘He must turn away from evil and do good; He must seek peace and pursue it. 3:12 ‘For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, And His ears attend to their prayer; But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.’ (NASB)* again drawing a parallel to *Tehillim / Psalms 34:12-16*. These words of David coupled with what the rabbis are saying that we are to give water to the inclination to evil if he is thirsty and to drink from water of Torah with what Yeshua taught in *John 7*, it is the Lord who is able to help us overcome sin in our lives and this “*inclination to evil*” that is in our hearts. Midrash *Tehillim 34, Part 2* concludes saying “*Rabbi Isaac son of Menahem taught, Every good man has a world to himself, and will have a Garden of Eden for himself, as is said They are abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Your house; and You make them to drink from the river of Eden (Tehillim / Psalms 36:9).*” The rabbis say that each man has a world to himself. What does this mean? Each of us has our own world meaning that our lives are considered a world in and of itself. Every man’s life is different. Each of us lives for the Lord and the events of our lives are ordered by God to bring Glory to His Name. In addition to this, our bodies being the Temple of the Holy Spirit, note how the rabbis say each man is satisfied in the fatness of Your house. In

our lives the Lord works to satisfy us in His peace, just like the parallel is made to the “*Garden of Eden*” and our drinking from the river of Eden, the place of true peace. Yeshua, if He is Lord of our lives, and we abide in Him and He abides in us, if His word abides in us, we will have peace and life and joy and happiness, no matter what the circumstance. Halleluia! What an Awesome God we serve! This definitely brings an interesting perspective on who we are in Christ and how He saves us and helps us to overcome sin in our lives! Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

Forgive us of our sins for they are many. You know the dark thoughts and intents of the heart of man, we ask that You would save us from the evil of our thought life. Please forgive us for the uncleanness of our hearts and renew and restore to us the Joy of Your salvation. Help us to live holy and righteous lives but not only on the outside, also on the inside. Help us to have a desire to have a relationship with You and to study Your Word so that we can draw nearer to You. Help us to serve You more and be more focused upon our relationship with You and with others rather than just ourselves. Thank You for sending Your son Yeshua that we may enter into the salvation You have provided and receive the healing you promised. Thank You Lord for paying the covenant price for the forgiveness of our sins. Help us to dedicated our lives to You and fill us with Your presence each day. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

In Yeshua’s (Jesus’) Name I pray! Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

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