

Tehillim / Psalms 56 | ספר תהילים נו

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Giving Credit where Credit is Due

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 56:1-13*, the psalm opens saying, א למנצח על-יונת אלם For the choir director; according to Jonath elem rehokim. A Mikhtam of David, when the Philistines seized him in Gath. (NASB) David seek's the Lord saying, ב חנני אלהים כי-שאפני אנוש כל-היום לחם ילקחני: ג שאפו שוררי כל-היום פי-רבבים לתמים לי מרום: ד יום אירא 56:1 Be gracious to me, O God, for man has trampled upon me; Fighting all day long he oppresses me. 56:2 My foes have trampled upon me all day long, For they are many who fight proudly against me. 56:3 When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. (NASB) When our enemies come against us, we can trust the One who is able to change the hearts of men. David's trust in the Lord is unwavering, ה באלהים אהלל דברו בטהתי לא אירא מה-יעשה בשור לי: ו כל-היום דברי יעצבו עלי כל- 56:4 In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me? (NASB) The enemy distort David's words, they are committing Lashon Harah for the purpose of taking his life, ז יגורו יצפיונו [יצפוננו] המה עקבי ישמרו כאשר קוו נפשי: ח על-און פלט-למו) 56:5 All day long they distort my words; All their thoughts are against me for evil. 56:6 They attack, they lurk, They watch my steps, As they have waited to take my life. (NASB) David claims that God keeps a bottle of our tears (ט נדי ספרתה אתה שימה דמעתי בנאדה הלא בספרתה: י אז | ישובו אויבי אהור ביום אקרא זה-ידעתי) 56:7 Because of wickedness, cast them forth, In anger put down the peoples, O God! 56:8 You have taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book? NASB) When our enemies turn back, do we give credit where credit is due? David says it is to the credit of the Lord (יא באלהים אהלל דבר ביהנה אהלל דבר: יב באלהים בטהתי לא אירא מה-יעשה אדם לי: יג עלי אלהים נדריה אשלם תודת לך: יד פי הצלת נפשי ממנת הלא רגלי מדחי להתהלך: 56:9 Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call; This I know, that God is for me. NASB) David concludes his psalm saying, 56:10 In God, whose word I praise, In the Lord, whose word I praise, 56:11 In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me? 56:12 Your vows are binding upon me, O God; I will render thank offerings to You. 56:13 For You have delivered my soul from death, Indeed my feet from stumbling, So that I may walk before God In the light of the living. (NASB) If we were to take this perspective, "What can man do to me" by reason that the Lord is who we trust, how would this effect our lives today? David believes the Lord is working to deliver his soul every day.

עברית Hebrew ארמיאם Aramaic ελληνικός Greek

ספר תהלים פרק נו	ספר טוביה פרק נו	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 56
א למנצח על-יונת אלם רחקים לדוד מכתם באחז אתו פלשתים בגת: ב חנני אלהים פי-שאפני אנוש כל- היום לחם ילקחני: ג שאפו שוררי כל-היום פי-רבבים לתמים לי מרום: ד יום אירא אני אליה אבטח:	א לשבחה על כנישתא דישראל דמתי- לא ליונה שתוקא בעידן די מתרחקין מן קירויהון וחזרין ומשבחין למרי עלמא היך דוד מכיך ושלים כד אחדו יתיה פלשתאי בגת: ב חוס עלי יהוה אלהא ארום שפיני תחותי ישבי יתבי גיתאה גבר הייב כל יומא מגיחא ידחקיני:	56:1 εις τὸ τέλος ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ τοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁγίων μεμακρυσμένου τῷ Δαυὶδ εἰς στηλογραφίαν ὅποτε ἐκράτησαν αὐτὸν οἱ ἀλλόφυλοι ἐν Γεθ ἐλέησόν με κύριε ὅτι κατεπάτησέν με ἄνθρωπος ὄλην τὴν ἡμέραν πολεμῶν ἔθλιψέν με 56:2 κατεπάτησάν με οἱ ἐχθροί μου ὄλην τὴν ἡμέραν ὅτι πολλοὶ οἱ πολεμοῦντές με ἀπὸ ὕψους

<p>ה באלהים אהלל דברו באלהים בטחתי לא אירא מה-יעשה בשור לי: ו כל-היום דברי יעצבו עלי כל-מחשבתם לרע: ז יגורו יצפוני [יצפוני] המה עקבי ישמרו כאשר קוו נפשי: ח על-און פלט-למו באף עמים הורד אלהים: ט נדי ספר- תה אטה שימה דמעתי בנאדף הלא בספרתך: י א ישובו אויבי אחר ביום אקרא זה-ידעתי פי-אלהים לי: יא באלהים אהלל דבר ביהנה אהלל דבר: יב באלהים בטחתי לא אירא מה-יעשה אדם לי: יג עלי אלהים נדריך אשלם תודת לך: יד פי הצלת נפשי ממות הלא רגלי מדחי להתהלך לפני אלהים באור החיים:</p>	<p>ג שפיין גרמי מעיקי כל יומא ארום סגיען מעיקין מגיחין לי אלהא עילאה די כורסיה במרומא: ד יומא דאדחל אנא עלך אתרחיץ: ה במידת דינא דאלהא אשבח במימריה באלהא את- רחיץ לא אדחל מה יעבד בסרא לי: ו כל יומא מטולתי טרחן עלי כל מחשבתהון לביש: ז יכנשון וישון כמנא הינון אסתורי יטמרון היכמה דמתינו עבדו לנפשי: ח על שקרא די בידהון רוקן יתהון מנכסיהון ברגז עמיא עממיא תמסכן אלהא: ט יומי טלטולי מניתא אנת"את שוי דמעתי בזיקיך יהוה הלא סכום עול- בני י הבכן יתובון בעלי דבבי מחז- רי קדל קדמי יומא דאצלי דין ידעית ארום אלהא בסעדי: יא במידת דינא דאלהא אשבח במימריה במידת במ- שחתא רחמין דיהוה אשבח במימ- ריה: יב במימרא דאלהא סברית לא אדחל מה יעבד בר נשא לי: יג עלי קבילית אלהא נדרייך אשלם קורבני תודן קדמך: יד ארום פצייתא נפשי מקטול הלא רגלי מן נקופא למהלכא קדם יהוה בניהור חייא: ת"א ארום פצייתא נפשי ממיתותא דמיתין בה חייביא הלא רגלי מליתקלא בחובא מטול דאטייל קדם יי בגנתא דעדן למיחמי בניהור צדיקיא:</p>	<p>56:3 ήμέρας φοβηθήσομαι ἐγώ δὲ ἐπὶ σοὶ ἐλπῶ 56:4 ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἐπαινέσω τοὺς λόγους μου ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ ἤλπισα οὐ φοβηθήσομαι τί ποιήσει μοι σὰρξ 56:5 ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν τοὺς λόγους μου ἐβδελύσσοντο κατ' ἐμοῦ πάντες οἱ διαλογισμοὶ αὐτῶν εἰς κακόν 56:6 παροικήσουσιν καὶ κατακρύψουσιν αὐτοὶ τὴν πτέρναν μου φυλάξουσιν καθάπερ ὑπέμειναν τὴν ψυχὴν μου 56:7 ὑπὲρ τοῦ μηθενὸς σώσεις αὐτοῦς ἐν ὀργῇ λαοὺς κατάξεις ὁ θεός 56:8 τὴν ζωὴν μου ἐξηγγεῖλά σοι ἔθου τὰ δάκρυά μου ἐνώπιόν σου ὡς καὶ ἐν τῇ ἐπαγγελίᾳ σου 56:9 ἐπιστρέψουσιν οἱ ἐχθροί μου εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω ἐν ἧ ἂν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπικαλέσωμαί σε ἰδοὺ ἔγνω ὅτι θεός μου εἶ σύ 56:10 ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ αἰνέσω ῥῆμα ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ αἰνέσω λόγον 56:11 ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ ἤλπισα οὐ φοβηθήσομαι τί ποιήσει μοι ἄνθρωπος 56:12 ἐν ἐμοί ὁ θεός αἰ εὐχαὶ ἅς ἀποδώσω αἰνεσεὼς σοι 56:13 ὅτι ἐρρύσω τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἐκ θανάτου καὶ τοὺς πόδας μου ἐξ ὀλισθήματος τοῦ εὐαρεστῆσαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν φωτὶ ζώντων</p>
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<p>Tehillim / Psalms 56 For the choir director; according to Jonath elem rehokim. A Mikhtam of David, when the Philistines seized him in Gath. 56:1 Be gracious to me, O God, for man has trampled upon me; Fighting all day long he oppresses me. 56:2 My foes have trampled upon me all day long, For they are many who fight proudly against me. 56:3 When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. 56:4 In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me? 56:5 All day long they distort my words; All their thoughts are against me for evil. 56:6 They attack, they lurk, They watch my steps, As they have waited to take my life. 56:7 Because of wickedness, cast them forth, In anger put down the peoples, O God! 56:8 You have taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book? 56:9 Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call; This I know, that God is for me. 56:10 In God, whose word I praise, In the Lord, whose word I praise, 56:11 In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me? 56:12 Your vows are binding upon me, O God; I will render thank offerings to You. 56:13 For You have delivered my soul from death, Indeed my feet from stumbling, So that I may walk before God In the light of the living. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 56 56:1 For praise, concerning the congregation of Israel which is likened to a quiet dove when they are far from their cities, yet they repeatedly praise the Lord of the World, like David, humble and innocent, when the Philistines seized him in Gath. 56:2 Have mercy on me, O Lord God, for a sinful man has crushed me beneath him; all the day the man will overpower me. 56:3 My oppressors crush my bones all the day, for many are the oppressors fighting against me, O God Most High, whose throne is on high. 56:4 In the day that I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. 56:5 I will praise the attribute of the justice of God; in the word of God I will put my trust, I will not be afraid. What will flesh do to me? 56:6 All day on my account they toil; against me all their thoughts are for evil. 56:7 They will gather together and they will conceal a trap, they will watch my tracks; as they have waited, they have done to my soul. 56:8 For the lies in their possession, drain them; for the rage of the peoples, make them poor, O God. 56:9 The days of my wandering you have numbered; place my tears in your bottle, O Lord; is not the sum total of my humiliation in your record? 56:10 Then my enemies will turn, turning around, on the day that I pray. This I know, for God is my help. 56:11 In the attribute of justice of God I will give praise in his word; in the attribute of mercy of the Lord I will give praise in his word. 56:12 In the word of God I have placed my trust, I will not fear what a son of man will do to me. 56:13 I have taken your vows upon myself, O God; I will repay sacrifices of thanksgiving in your presence. 56:14 For you have delivered my soul from being killed, indeed, my feet from bruising, to walk before the Lord in the light of life. Another Targum: For you have delivered my soul from the death that the sinful die, indeed, my feet from stumbling through sin, so that I will walk before the Lord in the Garden of Eden to behold the light of the righteous. (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 56 For the end, concerning the people that were removed from the sanctuary, by David for a memorial, when the Philistines caught him in Geth. 56:1 Have mercy upon me, O God; for man has trodden me down; all the day long he warring has afflicted me. 56:2 Mine enemies have trodden me down all the day from the dawning of the day; for there are many warring against me. 56:3 They shall be afraid, but I will trust in thee. 56:4 In God I will praise my words; all the day have I hoped in God; I will not fear what flesh shall do to me. 56:5 All the day long they have abominated my words; all their devices are against me for evil. 56:6 They will dwell near and hide themselves; they will watch my steps, accordingly as I have waited patiently in my soul. 56:7 Thou wilt on no account save them; thou wilt bring down the people in wrath. 56:8 O God, I have declared my life to thee; thou has set my tears before thee, even according to thy promise. 56:9 Mine enemies shall be turned back, in the day wherein I shall call upon thee; behold, I know that thou art my God. 56:10 In God, will I praise his word; in the Lord will I praise his saying. 56:11 I have hoped in God; I will not be afraid of what man shall do to me. 56:12 The vows of thy praise, O God, which I will pay, are upon me. 56:13 For thou hast delivered my soul from death, and my feet from sliding, that I should be well-pleasing before God in the land of the living. (LXX)</p>
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This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 56:1-13*, the psalm opens saying, א לְמִנְצֵחַ עַל-יוֹנָת אֵלֶם רְהוּקִים, For the choir director; according to Jonath elem rehokim. A Mikhtam of David, when the Philistines seized him in Gath. (NASB) In the opening verse in *Tehillim / Psalms 65:1*, we find three words are transliterated “Jonath elem rehokim” (יוֹנָת אֵלֶם רְהוּקִים). The words “Jonath elem rehokim” may be translated as יוֹנָת (Jonath) means “dove or pigeon,” אֵלֶם (elem) as a masculine noun means “dumbness, muteness, silence, speechlessness,” and רְהוּקִים (rehokim) means “distance, range,

span” from the word רוחק. So the translation appears difficult since David is speaking of a dove being silent and רוחק distance written in the plural form. This is most likely the reason for the transliteration of these words into English. The rabbinic translation found in the Aramaic Targum takes the following form, א לשׁ- בחא על כנישתא דישראל דמתילא ליונה שתוקא בעידן די מתרחקין מן קירויהון וחזרין ומשבחין למרי עלמא היך :גת: 56:1 *For praise, concerning the congregation of Israel which is likened to a quiet dove when they are far from their cities, yet they repeatedly praise the Lord of the World, like David, humble and innocent, when the Philistines seized him in Gath.* (EMC) According to the rabbis, David is composing his psalm to say that “Israel is likened to a quiet dove when they are far from their cities.” This does appear to be consistent with the three words “Jonath elem rehokim” (יונת אֵלֶם רְחֹקִים). The Septuagint states, 56:1 εἰς τὸ τέλος ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ τοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀγίων μεμακρυσμένου τῷ Δαυιδ εἰς στηλογραφίαν ὅποτε ἐκράτησαν αὐτὸν οἱ ἀλλόφυλοι ἐν Γεθ, *For the end, concerning the people that were removed from the sanctuary, by David for a memorial, when the Philistines caught him in Geth* (LXX) The LXX translates the MT to say this is concerning people removed from the sanctuary. Could this be a reference to the Lord removing people, who appear as doves, to be at peace, who become silent because they stand at a distance from His Tabernacle? The wicked are not exactly known for their peacefulness, and the unrighteous are those whom the Lord would remove from His presence. Why do you think David draws a parallel to the dove, for the *Mikhtam* (מִכְתָּם, *phrase, proverb*) of David?

In the dove symbolism, the dove is portrayed as white and gentle, sweet and loving, and is a symbol of hope. Taking the example from Parashat Noah, the dove and the raven are contrasted. Following the great flood, Noah’s ark was resting on the Mountains of Ararat (הַרֵי אֲרָרָט). We read that Noah released both a raven and dove from the ark at different times. The objective in sending these birds was to determine if the flood waters had abated enough for Noah and his family to exit the ark. According to *Bereshit / Genesis 8:6-7* we read, “*At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth.*” The “40 days” here appears to be following the Ark coming to rest or after the tops of the mountains were visible (*Bereshit / Genesis 8:5*). The flood began seven months previously. A raven was released and the scriptures do not say the raven ever returns. In addition to this, no reason is provided regarding why a raven was selected rather than any other bird. It is important to note that raven can eat carrion and could feed off dead animals in the water. The raven may be paralleled to unrighteousness and feeding off of death. A dove, on the other hand, would return to its point of origin if no land was found. So we read in *Bereshit / Genesis 8:8-9*, “*Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him.*” The Scriptures say that dove returned with no indication that a place had been found to rest (land). A week later, in *Bereshit / Genesis 8:10-11*, Noah sent the dove again and we read, “*He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth.*” This verse suggests that things had begun to grow again; the earth was becoming habitable. Another week passed and Noah sends out the dove one more time in *Bereshit / Genesis 8:12*, “*Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.*” The dove had no need to return to the ark, since it had found a home on land. Studying *Bereshit / Genesis 7:11-8:14*, the flood lasted a total of one year and ten days. Both the raven and the dove were released over a period of 21 days after the mountaintops became visible (*Bereshit / Genesis 8:10-12*). The raven served as a first attempt to discover dry land, and the dove became Noah’s way of determining when to leave the ark. As a result of the account of the dove and Noah relying upon the dove for hope and for leaving the Ark, David may be composing his psalm as a parable using the dove and flood imagery. In David’s opening words he says *Tehillim / Psalms 56:1 Be gracious to me, O God, for man has trampled upon me; Fighting all day long he oppresses me.* (NASB) The parallel may be that because of man’s sins the earth was destroyed and the Lord show grace to Noah and his family by saving them from the flood in the Ark. In a similar manner, David looks to the Lord for help and salvation in this time when the

Philistines seized him in Gath.

David seeks the Lord saying, **ב** חַנְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים כִּי־שָׁאֲפְנִי אֲנוּשׁ כָּל־הַיּוֹם לַחֵם יִלְחָצְנִי: **ג** שָׁאֲפוּ שׁוֹרְרֵי כָּל־הַיּוֹם, **ד** יוֹם אִירָא אֲנִי אֶלְיָהּ אֲבָטָח: *56:1 Be gracious to me, O God, for man has trampled upon me; Fighting all day long he oppresses me. 56:2 My foes have trampled upon me all day long, For they are many who fight proudly against me. 56:3 When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. (NASB)* In these verses, David repeats himself saying **כָּל־הַיּוֹם** (all the day) in *Tehillim / Psalms 56:1* and *56:2*. We can organize the first three verses in the Masoretic Text in the following way:

כָּל־הַיּוֹם לַחֵם יִלְחָצְנִי	56:1
כָּל־הַיּוֹם כִּי־רַבִּים לַחֲמִים לִי מְרוֹם	56:2
יוֹם אִירָא	56:3

Notice the repetition of “*all the day long,*” “*all the day long,*” and “*the day of my fear.*” As we know, while studying the Hebrew bible, every word and every letter of the Hebrew Scriptures is significant. David appears to be repeating these phrases as shown in the following exert from the Masoretic Text.

לְמַנְצָהּ | עַל־יּוֹנֵת אֱלֹם רַחֲקִים לְדָוִד מִכַּתָּם נו
 בָּאָהוּ אוֹתוֹ פְּלִשְׁתִּים בְּנֵת:
 2 חַנְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים כִּי־שָׁאֲפְנִי אֲנוּשׁ
 כָּל־הַיּוֹם לַחֵם יִלְחָצְנִי:
 3 שָׁאֲפוּ שׁוֹרְרֵי כָּל־הַיּוֹם
 כִּי־רַבִּים לַחֲמִים לִי מְרוֹם:
 4 יוֹם אִירָא אֲנִי אֶלְיָהּ אֲבָטָח:
 5 בְּאֱלֹהִים אֶהְלֵל דְּבָרוֹ
 בְּאֱלֹהִים בִּטְחֹתִי לֹא אִירָא
 מַה־יַּעֲשֶׂה בְּשֵׁר לִי:
 6 כָּל־הַיּוֹם דְּבַרִּי יַעֲצֹבוּ
 עָלַי כָּל־מַחֲשַׁבְתָּם לְרָע:
 7 יִגְּדוּ וְיַצְפִּינוּ הַמָּה עֵקֶב־י יִשְׁמְרוּ

כאשר

21 v. ס"א ידו וכן ת"ע ות"ר. 22 v. צ"ל מִהִקְאוֹת כֵּן תר' ות"ס. 22 v. כֵּן בַּסְפָּרִים כ"י, ד"ג, ד"ט, ד"ב וד"ד, פ"א וְקָרַב וכן ד"א, ד"ב, ד"ו, ד"י, ד"א וד"ט"ו. 23 v. כ"ס"א יְהִבֵּךְ וּנְמַסֵּר עָלָיו גַּעֲיָא. 24 v. כֵּן בְּרֹב סְפָרִים כ"י, ד"ג, ד"ו, ד"ט, ד"י"ב, ד"י"ד וד"ט"ו וכן ב"א, כ"ג חוּדְרָם. נו. 3 v. כֵּן ב"א, ב"ג ל"י. 7 v. יַצְפִּינוּ כתיב, יַצְפוּנו קרי, ב"א יַצְפוּנו או יַצְפוּנו כתיב וקרי וכן ד"ב וד"ו.

In the Jewish understanding of Scripture, there is no such thing as repetition for its own sake. In other words, if a word or phrase is repeated, there is something the author and our Father in heaven are trying to convey. Repetition is not simply a matter of saying the same thing over again for emphasis which may be eliminated

without losing anything. Each letter and phrase has a specific purpose in the Hebrew bible. As a result of this, the rabbis and Jewish scholars examine repeating elements more closely to discover what is different between the two (or more) repeat cases, and what the Lord is trying to say in each occurrence. There are basic differences in the way the Scriptures are read, interpreted and taught in the Jewish Torah-scholar (rabbinic) community, as compared to the Christian Biblical-scholar (seminary) community. It is important to recognize that the rabbinic interpretations taken out of the Tanach (*Torah, Prophets, Writings*) and recorded in the Midrashim and the Talmud are not necessarily “*mental gymnastics*” or the “*abuse of Scripture.*” To the contrary, the writings of the Sages are designed to teach a spiritual truth and these same methods were used by the Messiah Yeshua and His disciples in the Apostolic Writings. Learning to read the Scriptures as they did tends to unlock previously mystifying verses in the Apostolic Writings. In this particular set of verses (56:1-3), David appears to be laying out his case for the Lord. Man has trampled him all the day long, his foes trample him all the day long, and on the day of fear, He will put his trust in the Lord. “*All the day (56:1), All the day (56:2), in the day of his fear (56:3)*” the repeat emphasis appears to be placed upon David’s enemies being overwhelming and outweighing all else, however, in the day of fear, trusting in the Lord is all we can do. When our enemies come against us, we can trust the One who is able to change the hearts of men.

According to his Psalm, David’s trust in the Lord is unwavering, ה בָּאֱלֹהִים אֶהְלֵל דְּבָרוֹ בְּאֱלֹהִים בְּטַחֲתִי, לא אִירָא מֵה-יַעֲשֶׂה בְּשָׁר לִי: 56:4 *In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me? (NASB)* We hear often the phrase “*Praise God,*” this is a common phrase used in the vernacular in the Christian and Messianic circles, but what does it really mean? David says בָּאֱלֹהִים אֶהְלֵל דְּבָרוֹ “*in God I praise His word,*” therefore the best place to look is in the Scriptures to define the meaning of “*Praise God!*” The book of the Psalms is well known for its focus upon praising God. In this passage (56:4), the Hebrew word for praise is “*halel*” (אֶהְלֵל) which means “*to praise, glorify, laud, commend.*” This word is part of the well know word “*Halleluia*” meaning “*Praise the Lord.*” There are multiple Hebrew words that may be translated as “*praise,*” and it does not necessarily have just one definition. For example, from *Tehillim / Psalm 118:28–29*, the Hebrew word for “*praise*” is yadah, which means to praise, give thanks, or confess. In fact, the word translated “*give thanks*” later on in the passage comes from the same Hebrew word used earlier for “*praise.*” Another example, there are two different Hebrew words for “*praise*” in *Tehillim / Psalm 149:3*: ג יִהְלְלוּ שְׁמוֹ בְּמַחֲוֹל בְּתֹף וּכְנֹר וְזָמְרוּ-לוֹ: “*Let them praise [halal] His name with the dance; Let them sing praises [zamar] to Him with the timbrel and lyre.*” (NASB) Halal means to praise, glorify, boast, commend, and zamar means to make music or sing praises. The significance of giving God praise is to exalt Him and His name. This may be the reason why David quickly follows the declaration of praise with exalting God. He praises the Lord in song, and singing praises to God which was common in his day. The purpose of the Psalms is to give the Lord praise, this is indicated by the numerous songs on praise. We can also praise the Lord in dance, prayer, proclamations, and studying God’s Word, etc. David says לא אִירָא מֵה-יַעֲשֶׂה בְּשָׁר לִי “*I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?*” Here he used the words מֵה-יַעֲשֶׂה בְּשָׁר לִי “*what can flesh do to me?*” where flesh is a reference to man and is translated as such in the NASB. What man or the enemy does is distort David’s words by committing Lashon Harah for the purpose of taking his life.

ו כָּל-הַיּוֹם דְּבָרַי יַעֲצְבוּ עָלַי כָּל-מַחֲשַׁבְתֶּם לְרָע: ז יִגּוּרוּ יַצְפִּינוּ [יַצְפּוּנוּ] הָמָּה עַקְבֵי, 56:5 *All day long they distort my words; All their thoughts are against me for evil. 56:6 They attack, they lurk, They watch my steps, As they have waited to take my life. (NASB)* The tongue is used to attack and to lay in wait for destruction. According to the Psalms, David had a lot to say concerning the tongue, as we have studied earlier from *Tehillim / Psalms 10:7* and *15:1-5*:

Tehillim / Psalm 10:7

10:7 His mouth is filled with [false] oaths, with deception and malice; under his tongue are mischief and iniquity.

Tehillim / Psalm 15:1-5

15:1 A Psalm by David. Lord, who may sojourn in Your Tent? Who may dwell on Your Holy Mountain? 15:2 One who walks in perfect innocence, and does what is right, and speaks the truth from his heart; 15:3 who has no slander on his tongue, who has done his fellow no evil, nor cast disgrace upon his close one; 15:4 in whose eyes a contemptible person is repulsive, but who honors those who fear the Lord; who can swear to his detriment without retracting; 15:5 who lends not his money on interest; and takes not a bribe against the innocent. The doer of these shall not falter forever.

Examining these two passages from the Psalms we can see which individual the Lord God honors and who it is that He says will dwell on His Holy Mountain. It is the one whose lips are clean! Based upon these Scriptures, how seriously does the Lord take the sin of slander? Note that this is not just the act of speaking ill of someone, this also involves gossip, things that you have heard that sound true, but yet they have not been verified and they are passed on to others, also known as “*lashon hara*.” Based upon the Psalms, we need to be very careful about what comes out from our mouths, the reason being our mouths have been compared to the grave.

Tehillim / Psalm 34:14

34:14 Guard your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit.

Tehillim / Psalm 39:2

39:2 I said, I will guard my ways from sinning with my tongue, I will guard my mouth with a muzzle, even while the wicked one stands before me.

David says that he will guard his mouth with a muzzle if necessary. The idea is that he is willing to forcefully restrain his lips from sin. Based upon these Scriptures, the words that can come from our tongues (lips) can bring us to sin. The basis for this is that we usually say what we are thinking and many times what we say is not what we intended. According to David, we must learn to train our thoughts as well as our tongues. The Apostle Peter said in his epistle in *1 Peter 3:10-11*:

1 Peter 3:10-11

3:10 Therefore, he who desires life and loves to see good days should keep his tongue from evil and his lips should not speak guile. 3:11 Let him turn away from evil and let him do good, and let him seek shalom and let him pursue it.

Peter thought *lashon hara* was significant enough to warn the believers he is writing to in his day. Can you see how powerful our tongues are to do destruction? David says, *56:5 All day long they distort my words; All their thoughts are against me for evil. (NASB)* *Lashon hara* does not glorify God even if what is said may be true, the design is to hurt someone or that the words that are spoken may cause hurt to someone, we are to keep silent instead. These things do not glorify the name of the Lord. Note also that gossip and slander do not come forth from the mouth of the Son of God and we are called to imitate Him. Do your words divide the Body of Messiah or bring it together? Has a root of bitterness taken hold of you? Has anyone who is close to you ever spoken words that have hurt you and you have let that resentment take root in your spirit and now it is festering like an open wound? We are called to forgive rather than to hold onto bitterness. Even if the offending party does not forgive you or do not want to speak with you, forgive! It will be like a soothing balm to your spirit once you let go of the root of bitterness. No matter how right you may feel or justified in your anger let it go. The reason being is that ultimately our trust is to be in the Lord, just as David says here in *Tehillim / Psalms 56:4 In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me? (NASB)*

ח על-אָןן פּלֶט-לְמוֹ בָּאָף עֲמִים | הוֹרֵד אֱלֹהִים: ט נְדִי
 : 56:7 *Because of wickedness, cast them forth, In anger put down the peoples, O God!* 56:8 *You have taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book? NASB*) Based upon this passage (56:8) the Lord takes note of our tears, recording them in a book, and David also says that the Lord keeps our tears in a bottle. Both the Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint agree on this translation. In the gospel of John chapter 11, we read that on the death of Lazarus, “*Yeshua wept.*” (*John 11:35*) Yeshua weeps when he learns of the death of Lazarus. When the people saw him weeping, they say “*See how he loved him!*” (*John 11:36*) Did Yeshua weep because Lazarus was dead? Obviously, he knew he was going to raise Lazarus from the dead. Yeshua most likely wept because of the compassion He felt for humanity, and because of the sting of death in this world, similar to our weeping over our own tragedies and losses. Yeshua loves his people so much that it brings him to tears. This is a great illustration of how the Lord God our Father in heaven has love and compassion for us. The idea that the Lord records the events of our lives. We know that Moshe wrote in the Torah in Parashat Ki Tisa, the Lord records our names in His book (the book of life). The idea that the events of our lives are recorded appears to be a doctrine that was also prevalent in the first century according to the Apostle John in *Revelation 20:11-15*.

Revelation 20:11-15

“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

Based upon the Psalm of David, the idea that the events of our lives are recorded is of ancient origin. This concept is within the context that the Lord God knows all things, we cannot hide our iniquity from him. In *Revelation 20*, all individuals in this world past, present, and future will give an account to the Lord for every deed they have ever committed, whether for righteousness or for unrighteousness. Only those who are in the Messiah Yeshua will be forgiven and redeemed. Their deeds, their actions prove their repentance to be genuine through obedience to His commands.

David says the Lord God is keeping our tears in a bottle. This appears to be for the purpose of His record, we know that He sees our struggles, this also may be what led John to write in *Revelation 21:4* and *He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.* (NASB) the Lord is the one who holds our tears and having this power, He will one day wipe away our tears. Note how crying, and death, pain and suffering are all connected to the shedding of tears. One day the Lord will do away with all of these things and even death itself which is the leading factor for our tears. The Lord is the One who will execute vengeance on our behalf, He brings down our enemies, He lifts us up above those who rise against us, all of these concepts may be drawn out of the Psalms of David.

David tells us when our enemies turn back, to give credit where credit is due, that is, give credit to the Lord. David says it is to the credit of the Lord that He is saved. (אָז | יִשׁוּבוּ אוֹיְבֵי אַחֲזֹר בְּיוֹם אֶקְרָא זֶה-). 56:9 *Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call; This I know, that God is for me.* NASB) The Aramaic Targum states, יִהְיוּ יְהוֹבֵן בְּעֵלֵי דְבָבֵי מַחְזְרֵי קַדְלָא קַדְמֵי יוֹמָא דְאַצְלֵי דִּין יְדַעִית, י 56:10 *Then my enemies will turn, turning around, on the day that I pray. This I know, for God is my help.* (EMC) Based upon these Scriptures and others, God’s design is to lift burdens and give joy and make strong, just like what is written in *Nehemiah 8:10*, “*the joy of the Lord is your strength.*” (NASB)

This is why David writes again and again like we find here in *Tehillim / Psalms 107:8-9*:

Tehillim / Psalms 107:8-9

107:8 Let them give thanks to the Lord for His lovingkindness, And for His wonders to the sons of men! 107:9 For He has satisfied the thirsty soul, And the hungry soul He has filled with what is good. (NASB)

In two separate books out of the Apostolic Writings, Paul wrote to give thanks to God our Father in all circumstances (*1 Thessalonians 5:18, Ephesians 5:20*). The will of God is for us to always be filled with thanksgiving. The idea is that we can always see that thankfulness is possible in the midst of sorrow and circumstances. There is always something to be thankful for and Paul concludes the thankfulness that can be found is in Yeshua the Messiah, having obtained mercy in the Messiah, then we are able to give Him thanks.

David concludes his psalm saying, **יֵא בְּאַלְהִים אֲהַלֵּל דְּבָר בִּיהוָה אֲהַלֵּל דְּבָר: יב בְּאַלְהִים בְּטַהַרְתִּי לֹא אִירָא מֵה-יַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם לִי: יג עָלַי אֲלֹהִים נְדָרַי אֲשַׁלֵּם תּוֹדַת לְךָ: יד פִּי הִצַּלְתָּ נַפְשִׁי מִמָּוֶת הֲלֵא רַגְלִי מִדָּחַי לְהִתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי יָהּ: 56:10 In God, whose word I praise, In the Lord, whose word I praise, 56:11 In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me? 56:12 Your vows are binding upon me, O God; I will render thank offerings to You. 56:13 For You have delivered my soul from death, Indeed my feet from stumbling, So that I may walk before God In the light of the living. (NASB)** The Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint state the following:

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 56:11-14

56:11 In the attribute of justice of God I will give praise in his word; in the attribute of mercy of the Lord I will give praise in his word. 56:12 In the word of God I have placed my trust, I will not fear what a son of man will do to me. 56:13 I have taken your vows upon myself, O God; I will repay sacrifices of thanksgiving in your presence. 56:14 For you have delivered my soul from being killed, indeed, my feet from bruising, to walk before the Lord in the light of life. Another Targum: For you have delivered my soul from the death that the sinful die, indeed, my feet from stumbling through sin, so that I will walk before the Lord in the Garden of Eden to behold the light of the righteous. (EMC)

יֵא בְּמִידַת דִּינָא דְאַלְהָא אֲשַׁבַּח בְּמִימְרֵיהּ בְּמִידַת בְּמִשְׁחַתָּא רַחֲמִין דִּיהוּה אֲשַׁבַּח בְּמִימְרֵיהּ: יב בְּמִי־מֵרָא דְאַלְהָא סְבָרִית לֹא אֲדַחַל מַה יַעֲבֹד בַּר נִשְׂא לִי: יג עָלַי קְבִילִית אֲלֵהָא נְדָרַיִךְ אֲשַׁלֵּם קוֹרְבָנֵי תּוֹדָן קְדָמְךָ: יד אַרוֹם פְּצִיתָא נַפְשִׁי מִקְטוֹל הֲלֵא רַגְלִי מִן נְקוּפָא לְמַהֲלַכָא קְדָם יְהוּה בְּנִיהוֹר חַיִּיא: ת"א אַרוֹם פְּצִיתָא נַפְשִׁי מִמִּיתוּתָא דְמִיתִין בַּה חַיִּיבִיא הֲלֵא רַגְלִי מִלִּיתְקֵלָא בְּחֻבָּא מְטוֹל דְאַטִּיִּל קְדָם יְיָ בְּגִנְתָּא דְעָדָן לְמִיחְמֵי בְּנִיהוֹר צְדִיקָיא:

Septuagint

Psalmoi / Psalms 56:10-13

6:10 In God, will I praise his word; in the Lord will I praise his saying. 56:11 I have hoped in God; I will not be afraid of what man shall do to me. 56:12 The vows of thy praise, O God, which I will pay, are upon me. 56:13 For thou hast delivered my soul from death, and my feet from sliding, that I should be well-pleasing before God in the land of the living. (LXX)

56:10 ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ αἰνέσω ῥῆμα ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ αἰνέσω λόγον 56:11 ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ ἤλπισα οὐ φοβηθήσομαι τί ποιήσει μοι ἄνθρωπος 56:12 ἐν ἐμοί ὁ θεός αἰ εὐχαὶ ἅς ἀποδώσω αἰνέσεώς

σοι 56:13 ὅτι ἐρρύσω τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἐκ θανάτου καὶ τοὺς πόδας μου ἐξ ὀλισθήματος τοῦ
εὐαρεστῆσαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν φωτὶ ζώντων

Note the differences between the MT and the Targum translations, the Hebrew text states that it is in God's Word that David will praise. The rabbis say that in the "attribute of justice," and in the "attribute of mercy," that David will give praise. God's mercy and justice are definitely something worthy of praise. The Targum states in "the word of God" (בְּאֵלֵהֵימָּוּת) David has placed his trust. The MT states "in God" (בְּאֵלֵהֵימָּוּת) he has placed his trust. We can trust the Word of the Lord because He is faithful, He keeps His promises. The Lord delivers David's soul from death so that he can walk before the Lord in the light of the living, is paralleled to the Lord keeping David's feet from stumbling into sin, so that he can walk before the Lord in the Garden of Eden to behold the light of the righteous. Here we are given a picture of David's ambition, to dwell with the Lord God, to walk in righteousness before Him, to rejoice in His presence, and to live by His light (righteousness). The rabbis suggest that the righteous give off light, the Septuagint translates this to mean that he "should be well-pleasing before God in the land of the living." To be well pleasing before the Lord is to seek Him and His righteousness in Yeshua the Messiah, where seeking is synonymous to doing according to His commands.

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 56* has 4 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1, 2, 3, and 4. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 56, Part 1, 2, 3, and 4*.

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 56, Part 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying "For the One that triumphed, upon Jonath elem, rehokim. A Psalm of David; Michtam; when the Philistines took him in Gath (Tehillim / Psalms 56:1)."
- The פְּתִיחָה (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, "These words are to be read in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, What god is there in heaven or on earth, that can do according to Your works, and according to Your mighty acts (Devarim / Deuteronomy 3:24)."
- The מִשָּׁל (mashal) "the parable," goes on to explain the פְּתִיחָה (Petihta), the rabbis go on to discuss these opening words of triumph.
- The נִמְשָׁל (Nimshal) "expansion on the parable" expands upon the מִשָּׁל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the opening verse by providing examples of the Lord showing triumph in the life of David and others.
- The Concluding phrase says "Scripture suggests that Saul in relieving himself had arranged his garments about him like a booth (sukkah). David then said, My father, see, you, see (1 Samuel 24:12), See what you did intend for me, you see how I acted towards you."

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying "Be merciful unto me, O God, for a man pants after me (Tehillim / Psalms 56:2)."
- The פְּתִיחָה (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the Midrash says "Pants after plainly connotes oppresses, for the verb in the verse Hear this, O you that pant after the needy (Amos 8:4) is read, that oppress, in the Aramaic Targum."

- The מַשַּׁל (mashal) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*the parable,*” goes on to discuss about the one who pants.
- The נִמְשַׁל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the מַשַּׁל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the one who pants by drawing a parallel to one who oppresses.
- The Concluding phrase says “*Though Great ones fight against me, O Most High, even so, In the day that I am afraid, I will put my trust in You (Tehillim / Psalms 56:4).*”

Part 3

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*In God, I will praise His word (Tehillim / Psalms 5), herein, God is referred to as He who metes out judgment.*”
- The פְּתִיחָה (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the Midrash says “*Nevertheless, David goes on to say, In God do I trust, I will not be afraid; what can flesh do unto me?*”
- The מַשַּׁל (mashal) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*the parable,*” goes on to discuss the opening verse in light of the Lord in whom David trusts.
- The נִמְשַׁל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the מַשַּׁל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the discussion by explaining the meaning on the differences between the usage of God verse Lord in the Psalm.
- The Concluding phrase says “*Accordingly, David said to the Holy One blessed be He, If You mete out judgment against me, I accept You by saying In God, I will praise His word; and if You mete out mercy to me, I accept You by saying In the Lord, I will praise His word.*”

Part 4

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*Your vows are upon me, O God; I will render thank offerings unto You (Tehillim / Psalms 56:13).*”
- The פְּתִיחָה (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the Midrash says “*Rabbi Phinehas taught in the name of rabbi Levi, and rabbi Johanan taught in the name of rabbi Menachem the Galilean, that in the time to come all prayers will cease except the prayer of thanksgiving, and this will never cease.*”
- The מַשַּׁל (mashal) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*the parable,*” goes on to discuss the offerings in the time to come.
- The נִמְשַׁל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the מַשַּׁל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the discussion to describe how the all offerings will cease except one.
- The Concluding phrase says “*For You have delivered my soul from death (Tehillim / Psalms 56:14) that is, I did not die at the hands of Saul from death. Have You not delivered my feet from stumbling? So that I was not doomed through the counsel of Ahithophel, and so that I may walk before God in the light of the living, in the land of Israel. Or, by the light of the living is meant the great light in the Garden of Eden.*”

Midrash Tehillim 56, Part 1 opens with the דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*For the One that triumphed, upon Jonath elem, rehokim. A Psalm of David; Michtam; when the Philistines took him in Gath (Tehillim / Psalms 56:1).*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*These words are to be read in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, What god is there in heaven or on earth, that can do according to Your works, and according to Your mighty acts (Devarim / Deuteronomy 3:24).*” The midrash continues saying the following:

Daniel also said, He delivered and rescued, and He worked signs and wonders in heaven and in earth (Daniel 6:28). According to Rabbi Phinehas, David said this, God did more for me

than for all others. And His triumph was greater than all other triumphs. What did God do for David? When David was waiting upon Achish, Achish's body guard who was a brother of Goliath the Philistine, brought charges against David. But Achish said, Your brother stipulated with David, If he prevails against me, and smites me, etc. And the stipulation was met, so that you have no case whatever against David. And Achish let David go, and did not have him executed. Now was that not a great triumph? Therefore, David said, For the One that triumphed; upon Jonath elem. A speechless dove (Jonath elem), David stood and could not give answer to the body guard until the Holy One blessed be He, put into the mouth of Achish the argument by which David was delivered from the brother of Goliath the Philistine. What is meant by rehokim? It means that David's mighty men were at that time far (rehok) from him. And Michtam? Because of this incident, David became humble (mach) and upright (tam). David said, Now therefore, I pray you, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant, etc. For as much as the Lord delivered you into my hand today (1 Samuel 26:19-23).

The midrash begins by attributing the works of the Lord to the triumph of David. The first act of triumph the rabbis mention is a reference to Daniel, the Lord delivered and rescued, and worked wonders in heaven and in earth. The Aramaic Targum states, א לשבחא על כנישתא דישראל דמתילא ליונה שתוקא בעידן די מתרחקין 56:1 *For praise, concerning the congregation of Israel which is likened to a quiet dove when they are far from their cities, yet they repeatedly praise the Lord of the World, like David, humble and innocent, when the Philistines seized him in Gath. (EMC)* Here the congregation of Israel is paralleled to being quiet as a dove and David being likewise, humble and innocent, when the Philistines seized him in Gath. Daniel, in a similar manner was innocent and humble when he was placed in the lions den and the Lord sent His angel to shut the mouths of the lions. Rabbi Phinehas had a different interpretation, he said that the Lord did a greater triumph for David. It is interesting how David went to Achish, the Philistines who were fighting Israel, the Philistines that he stayed with were intimately connected to David by the Scriptural comment that Achish's body guard was the brother of Goliath, the man David had killed previously. The brother of Goliath brought charges against David for killing Goliath, however, Achish said that Goliath made a wager with David, and it cost him his life. This satisfactorily answered the brother of Goliath so David was not put to death. The idea is act of triumph by the Holy One blessed be He, "put into the mouth of Achish the argument by which David was delivered from the brother of Goliath the Philistine."

Tehillim / Psalms 56 opens saying, א למניצח על-יונת אלם רחקים לדוד מכתם באהז אתו פלשתים בגת: For the choir director; according to Jonath elem rehokim. A Mikhtam of David, when the Philistines seized him in Gath. (NASB) The rabbis pick up on the word רחקים (rehokim) meaning "distance, range, span" from the word רוחק and interpret as meaning David's mighty men were at this time afar off. The word Mikhtam (מכתם) is interpreted to be the composition of two words where "David became humble (mach) and upright / innocent (tam)." The midrash continues saying,

In these words David was alluding to what Moshe had taught, If a thief be found breaking in, and he be struck so he dies, there will be no blood guiltiness for him (Shemot / Exodus 22:1), and thus was saying, You, Saul, are with me in the cave, and your life is forfeit according to Torah, and your blood is forfeit. And David was also alluding to the words You will not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor (Vayikra / Leviticus 19:16). That is, if a man comes at you to slay you, and you overcome him, tarry not and say not, Shall I be guilty of his blood? But taking no counsel of your heart, slay him then and there. As the proverb says, Slay him before he slays you. And thus in saying, And some bade me kill you (1 Samuel 24:11), David means, According to the Torah, it is permitted me to slay you. But it spared you. By this David meant, The modesty in you leads me to spare you. For by the word cover (hasek), Saul went in to cover his feet (1 Samuel 24:4)

The next example that is brought up in the midrash is that of taking someone's life. The midrash says that the opening verse to the psalm is a reference to a thief that breaks in and one needs to defend one's self for life and death. The parallel text is to Moshe's words in *Shemot / Exodus 22:1*, a thief forfeits his life by breaking in to steal. King Saul went into the cave and forfeit his life. The idea is that Saul was seeking to kill David, to steal his life away, he was coming at him to kill him and by doing so, he forfeit his life. Today, if someone is coming at you to kill you, do you have the right to defend yourself? Are there any circumstances under which we would not be obligated to defend ourselves? The rabbis say, "if a man comes at you to slay you, and you overcome him, tarry not and say not, Shall I be guilty of his blood? But taking no counsel of your heart, slay him then and there. As the proverb says, Slay him before he slays you." David's response, according to the rabbis, is very interesting: "And thus in saying, And some bade me kill you (*1 Samuel 24:11*), David means, According to the Torah, it is permitted me to slay you. But it spared you. By this David meant, The modesty in you leads me to spare you. For by the word cover (*hasek*) in Saul went in to cover his feet (*1 Samuel 24:4*)" The concept here is that David had the right to take Saul's life, but he used this as an opportunity to show mercy. In the Torah, there are many instances where we have the opportunity to show mercy and forgiveness towards others. Take an example from *Vayikra / Leviticus 20:10* *If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. (NASB)* According to the command, the one who is caught in adultery is to be put to death. In the gospel of John, we read about certain people who used this commandment to bring a woman caught in adultery to Yeshua according to *John 8:2-11*.

John 8:2-11

8:2 Early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began to teach them. 8:3 The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the center of the court 8:4 they said to Him, 'Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act. 8:5 'Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?' 8:6 They were saying this, testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground. 8:7 But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, 'He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.' 8:8 Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. 8:9 When they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center of the court 8:10 Straightening up, Jesus said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?' 8:11 She said, 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus said, 'I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more.'] (NASB)

Here we find a clear cut case where a woman is caught in adultery, and the Scribes and Pharisees brought her to see what Yeshua would do. They wanted to see if Yeshua would hold to the command on adultery according to *Vayikra / Leviticus 20:10*. Yeshua however used this as an opportunity to show mercy. These people were willing to bring accusation against another person, but were unwilling to shed blood by casting the first stone. Like this verse from *Vayikra / Leviticus 20:10*, there are many other verses where we can use as opportunities to show mercy towards others. As the children of God, we are to be merciful just as the Lord in heaven is merciful to us. David, in a similar manner, showed mercy to king Saul in the cave and did not kill him. Midrash Tehillim 56, Part 1, concludes saying, "Scripture suggests that Saul in relieving himself had arranged his garments about him like a booth (*sukkah*). David then said, My father, see, you, see (*1 Samuel 24:12*), See what you did intend for me, you see how I acted towards you." Saul arranged his cloths around himself like a *sukkah* by reason of modesty. Modesty generally comes to mind to describe "propriety in thought or dress." Saul had murder in his heart on the inside, but was very modest about his outward appearance. David on the other hand lived in the opposite, he was very modest in his heart, which led to preserving Saul's life. These things from Midrash Tehillim 56, Part 1 are a good example of how we should

conduct our lives, to be modest in our hearts like David and Yeshua the Messiah, and not worry so much about our outward appearances.

Midrash Tehillim 56, Part 2, opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “*Be merciful unto me, O God, for a man pants after me (Tehillim / Psalms 56:2).*” The homiletic introduction to the Midrash says “*Pants after plainly connotes oppresses, for the verb in the verse Hear this, O you that pant after the needy (Amos 8:4) is read, that oppress, in the Aramaic Targum.*” The entire midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק נו סימן ב ב חנני (ה') [אלהים] כי שאפני אנוש. אין שאפני אלא לשון דוחק, כמה דאת אמר השואפים אביון (עמוס ח ד), ומ- תרגמינן דדחקין, שאפו שוררי (תהלים נו פסוק ג), דחקין לי מעקיי, שאלמלא דחקני שאול, לא הייתי בורח אל אכיש, לכן רבים לוחמים לי מרום, אפילו הכי יום אירא אני אליך (אקרא ו) אבטח.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 56, Part 2 2. <i>Be merciful unto me, O God, for a man pants after me (Tehillim / Psalms 56:2). Pants after plainly connotes oppresses, for the verb in the verse Hear this, O you that pant after the needy (Amos 8:4) is read, that oppress, in the Aramaic Targum. So, too, pant in They that lie in wait for me pant (Tehillim / Psalms 53:3), is read, oppress in the Aramaic Targum, which says, They that scorn me oppress me. Thus, David was saying, If Saul had not oppressed me, I would not have had to flee to Achish. Though Great ones fight against me, O Most High, even so, In the day that I am afraid, I will put my trust in You (Tehillim / Psalms 56:4).</i></p>
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ב חוס עלי יהוה אלהא ארום שפייני תחותי ישבי יתבי, Tehillim / Psalms 56:2 states, *6:2 Have mercy on me, O Lord God, for a sinful man has crushed me beneath him; all the day the man will overpower me. (EMC)* The midrash is referencing the phrase כל כל דחקין “to press through or oppress.” Here, the rabbis are describing how a man pants to make war or fight against another. Note how this might draw a parallel to Tehillim / Psalm 42:1-2 which states, *ב כְּאַיִל תַּעֲרֹג עַל-אֲפִיקַי- 42:1 As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God. 42:2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God? (NASB)* The psalmist says as the “deer” (אַיִל) “longs for” or “languishes for” (תַּעֲרֹג) for the “bed of water” (עַל-אֲפִיקַי-מַיִם), “yes, so does my soul” (כִּן נִפְשִׁי) “long” or “languish” (תַּעֲרֹג) “unto You God” (אֵלֶיךָ אֱלֹהִים). The word “taarog” (תַּעֲרֹג) is used twice throughout the Tanach to describe both the deer in Tehillim / Psalms 42:1-2 and the author who longs and languishes for the Lord. The word “taarog” (תַּעֲרֹג) is used to express a fervent desire to draw near to the Lord or to enter into His presence that is paralleled with the animal who must quench its thirst for life and death. In Tehillim / Psalms 42, David has a desire to participate in the worship of God by saying that his “soul thirsts in this way for God” (אֵלֶיךָ אֱלֹהִים | לְאֵלֶיךָ אֱלֹהִים) and he longs to appear before the Lord. In the deer-water analogy, water is a necessary essential element for life. The midrash may be paralleling this to the man who pants (השואפים, v. to inhale; aspire) after another man for the purpose of oppression. The wicked pant or aspire for things that feed their wickedness. The aspiration (panting) of the wicked is not done for a life of righteousness, it is done for a life of wickedness. The unrighteous, the wicked pant or oppress the righteous and the innocent. Midrash Tehillim 56, Part 2 concludes saying, “*Though Great ones fight against me, O Most High, even so, In the day that I am afraid, I will put my trust in You (Tehillim / Psalms 56:4).*” The midrash combines Tehillim / Psalms 56:3-4, (אקרא ו) אבטח, *“though many warriors fight against me, O Most High,”* to indicate that the circumstances we find ourselves in, the might of man does not overcome the power of God to save. David said, *56:3 My oppressors crush my bones all the day, for many are the oppressors fighting against me, O God Most High, whose throne is on high. 56:4 In the day that I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. (EMC)* If all else seems helpless, no matter what, remain faithful and trust in the Lord. I know a person who at one point in her life thought all was hopeless and the

moment she felt all was lost, she turned two fingers toward the Lord in Heaven. The point of the midrash and of the psalm is that there are many times when we are in what appears to be a hopeless situation in our lives. David serves as a good example, no matter the circumstance, continue being faithful and place your trust in the Lord. This is what characterizes the life of a righteous person and is the meaning of what Yeshua said to remain or abide in Him and in God’s Word (*John 15:4*).

Midrash Tehillim 56, Part 3 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “*In God, I will praise His word (Tehillim / Psalms 5), herein, God is referred to as He who metes out judgment.*” The homiletic introduction to the Midrash says “*Nevertheless, David goes on to say, In God do I trust, I will not be afraid; what can flesh do unto me?*” The entire midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק נו סימן ג</p> <p>ג באלהים אהלל (דבר) [דברו]. כנגד מדת הדין, אף על פי כן באלהים בטחתי לא (אפחד) [אירא] מה יעשה בשר לי. יגורו יצפונו. כמה דאת אמר (אוגר) [אגרה] בקציר (משלי ו ח). באלהים אהלל דבר בה' אהלל דבר. מהו באלהים, ומה בה', אמר ר' נהוראי במקום שנאמר אלהים, הוא מדת הדין, וכן הוא אומר אלהים לא תקלל (שמות כב כז), עד האלהים יבא (שם שמות כב ח). ה' זו מדת רחמים, וכן הוא אומר ה' ה' אל רחום וחנון (שם שמות לד ו), כך אמר דוד לפני הקב"ה אם במדת הדין אתה דן אני מקבלך [באלהים אהלל דבר], ואם במדת רחמים אתה דן אני מקבלך [בה' אהלל דבר].</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 56, Part 3</p> <p>3. <i>In God, I will praise His word (Tehillim / Psalms 56:5), herein, God is referred to as He who metes out judgment. Nevertheless, David goes on to say, In God do I trust, I will not be afraid; what can flesh do unto me? They gather (yaguru) themselves together, they hid themselves, herein the stem gur is taken as a form of the harvest (Mishley / Proverbs 6:8). In God, I will praise His word, in the Lord, I will praise His word (Tehillim / Psalms 56:11). What is the difference in the meaning between In God and in the Lord? Rabbi Nehorai explained that where God (Elohim) is used, Scripture is speaking of Him as meting out justice, as in the verse, You shall not revile God (Shemot / Exodus 22:27), or, as in the verse, The master of the house will come near unto God (Shemot / Exodus 22:8) in both verses, God is understood to mean judge; but where Lord (YHVH) is used, Scripture is speaking of Him as meting out mercy, as in the verse, The Lord, the Lord merciful and gracious (Shemot / Exodus 34:6). Accordingly, David said to the Holy One blessed be He, If You mete out judgment against me, I accept You by saying In God, I will praise His word; and if You mete out mercy to me, I accept You by saying In the Lord, I will praise His word.</i></p>
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A comparison of the MT and the Aramaic Targum:

Masoretic Text

ה בַּאֱלֹהִים אֶהְלֵל דְּבָרִי בְּאֵימָתִי לֹא אֵירָא מִה-יַעֲשֶׂה בְּשָׂרִי לִי: *In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me? (NASB)*

Aramaic Targum

ה בַּמִּדַּת דִּינָא דֵאלֵהָא אֲשַׁבַּח בְּמִימְרֵיהּ בַּאֲלֵהָא אֲתַרְחִיץ לֹא אֲדַחַל מַה יַעֲבֵד בְּסַרָא לִי: *I will praise the attribute of the justice of God; in the word of God I will put my trust, I will not be afraid. What will flesh do to me? (EMC)*

The midrash takes this verse to say that David’s praising the word (בַּאֱלֹהִים אֶהְלֵל דְּבָרִי) is a reference to the Lord who metes out judgment. This may have been taken from the concept put forward in the Aramaic Targum that David gives praise to the attribute of the justice of God. The justice of God brings about judgment on the enemy and on those people who are disobedient to His commands. An interesting concept

explained in the midrash is that “where God (Elohim) is used, Scripture is speaking of Him as meting out justice” and “where Lord (YHVH) is used, Scripture is speaking of Him as meting out mercy.” The rabbis are drawing a comparison between the words Elohim (אלהים) and the YHVH (יהוה) and the use of these words in the MT. In the Masoretic Text, these two words frequently occur together. The words Adonai and Elohim are translated as “the Lord God,” where Adonai is used as a circumlocution for the YHVH. From a traditional Jewish perspective, the two names refer to one and the same God. (Note: this is not about the rabbis compartmentalizing God, this is about trying to understand His attributes being understood from the Hebrew Scriptures.) Here, in the midrash, the rabbis comment that the names denote the different aspects (attributes) of God. Elohim is the aspect of justice, while Adonai (YHVH) is the aspect of mercy. When the MT wants to emphasize on aspect of God over another, the appropriate designation is used, as in the case of Elohim meting out punishment. An example of this may be taken from *Bereshit / Genesis 1-4*. The repeated names “Lord God” (יהוה אללהים) appear consistently until *Bereshit / Genesis 3:23*, with one exception of the temptation of the serpent found in *Bereshit / Genesis 3:1-5*.

Bereshit / Genesis 3:1-5

3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?’ 3:2 The woman said to the serpent, ‘From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 3:3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’ 3:4 The serpent said to the woman, ‘You surely will not die! 3:5 ‘For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ (NASB)

א וְהַנָּחָשׁ הָיָה עָרוּם מִכָּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-הָאִשָּׁה אַף כִּי-אָמַר אֱלֹהִים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִכָּל עֵץ הַגָּן: ב וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה אֶל-הַנָּחָשׁ מִפְּרִי עֵץ-הַגָּן נֹאכְלִים: ג וּמִפְּרִי הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹךְ-הַגָּן אָמַר אֱלֹהִים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא תִגְעוּ בוֹ פֶּן תָּמּוּתוּן: ד וַיֹּאמֶר הַנָּחָשׁ אֶל-הָאִשָּׁה לֹא-מוֹת תָּמּוּתוּן: ה כִּי יֵדַע אֱלֹהִים כִּי בַיּוֹם אֲכָלְכֶם מִמֶּנּוּ וּנְפַקְחוּ עֵינֵיכֶם וְהִיתֶם כְּאֱלֹהִים יֹדְעֵי טוֹב וָרָע:

Notice how the word “Lord” (יהוה) is dropped as soon as the serpent begins to speak. By the absence of the YHVH, we can conclude that the Serpent does not want to acknowledge the Divine attribute of mercy. The deceiver wants both the man and the woman to fall into disobedience to God’s command and to not seek the Lord for His mercy and forgiveness, which is the very nature of the Lord God. Reading what Eve says in response, She is also taken in indicated by her dropping the name YHVH. The serpent then makes promises that they could be as “gods,” in place of “Elohim.” Notice how using this hermeneutic on the names of God, there is no room for mercy or compassion in the hopeless struggle for power (pride) that is intended by the serpent. Fortunately for Adam and Eve, the Lord God appeared with his attribute of mercy according to *Bereshit / Genesis 3:8*.

Bereshit / Genesis 3:8

3:8 They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. (NASB)

ח וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶת-קוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מְתַהַלֵּךְ בְּגֵן לְרוּחַ הַיּוֹם וַיִּתְחַבְּאוּ הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים בְּתוֹךְ עֵץ הַגָּן:

Note also how they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. The Lord

was making noise by the attributes of justice and mercy while walking through the garden, indicated by His name. This attribute of mercy is connected to the manner in which God walks, His ways are merciful, just, and full of truth. The Lord commands us to do similar, to walk in His ways, to be merciful to others, to walk in justice and truth. When studying the usage of Elohim and YHVH, justice and mercy, in the Torah, in *Bereshit / Genesis 4*, we learn that people were afraid of the concept of justice without mercy, and this is illustrated in the text when Seth's son was born, they felt it was important to begin to call upon the name of the Lord (*Bereshit / Genesis 4:26*).

Bereshit / Genesis 4:26

4:26 To Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord. (NASB)

כו וילשת גם-הוא ילד-בן ויקרא את-שמו אנוש אז הוחל לקרא בשם יהוה:

It seems that those people who were calling upon the name of the Lord were Cain and his descendants who felt a reproach for the murder of Abel. The reason being is that the entire chapter previous to these two verses (*Bereshit / Genesis 4*) is about the story of Cain and Abel. It may be that the Lord brought Seth into the world in place of Abel, as a form of justice, and the birth of Enosh would further remind Cain and his descendants of their reproach before God. As we continue reading the Torah, there are other occasions when men called upon the name of the Lord. For example, the Lord appeared to Abram, without giving any particular name or title. It appears that Abram felt the need to call upon the name of the Lord, hoping that the Lord had come with His attribute of mercy according to *Bereshit / Genesis 12:7-8*.

Bereshit / Genesis 12:7-8

12:7 The Lord appeared to Abram and said, 'To your descendants I will give this land.' So he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him. 12:8 Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord. (NASB)

וירא יהוה אל-אברם ויאמר לזרעה אתן את-הארץ הזאת ויבן שם מזבח ליהוה הנראה אליו:
ח ויעתק משם הרהר מקדם לבית-אל ויט אהלה בית-אל מים והעי מקדם ויבן-שם מזבח ליהוה
ויקרא בשם יהוה:

At a later time, Abram and Sarai went to Egypt, got into trouble with Pharaoh because Abram had lied and claimed that Sarai was his sister and not as his wife. When they returned, Abram felt the need to call on the Lord's mercy, because he knew he had sinned in *Bereshit / Genesis 13:3-4*.

Bereshit / Genesis 13:3-4

13:3 He went on his journeys from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, 13:4 to the place of the altar which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of the Lord. (NASB)

ג וילך למסעיו מנגב ועד-בית-אל עד-המקום אשר-היה שם אהלה בתחלה בין בית-אל ובין העי:
ד אל-מקום המזבח אשר-עשה שם בראשונה ויקרא שם אברם בשם יהוה:

It is possible to continue through the rest of Scripture to find references that show Elohim is His aspect of justice, while Adonai (YHVH) is His aspect of mercy consistent with the narrative. Midrash Tehillim 56, Part 4 concludes saying, "Accordingly, David said to the Holy One blessed be He, If You mete out judgment against

me, I accept You by saying In God, I will praise His word; and if You mete out mercy to me, I accept You by saying In the Lord, I will praise His word.” According to the rabbis, David will praise God’s Word whether the Lord is meting out justice or mercy. God meting out judgment against David would be for his hurt whereas meting out mercy would be for his benefit. Either way, the Lord is to be praised because as David knows and according to the Scriptures, God is merciful. The mercy of God seems to outweigh his punishment due to the Lord tarrying in meting out justice. The Lord offers mankind much opportunity to repent and turn from his wicked ways all because He is a merciful God!

Midrash Tehillim 56, Part 4 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “Your vows are upon me, O God; I will render thank offerings unto You (Tehillim / Psalms 56:13).” The homiletic introduction to the Midrash says “Rabbi Phinehas taught in the name of rabbi Levi, and rabbi Johanan taught in the name of rabbi Menachem the Galilean, that in the time to come all prayers will cease except the prayer of thanksgiving, and this will never cease except the prayer of thanksgiving, and this will never cease.” Why do you think the rabbis are commenting that at one time all prayers will cease except the prayer of thanksgiving? The entire midrash states the following.

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק נו סימן ד</p> <p>ד עלי אלהים נדריך אשלם תודות לך. אמר ר' פנחס בשם ר' לוי ור' יוחנן בשם ר' מנחם גלילאה כל התפלות בטלות לעתיד לבא, והודייה אינה בטלה לעולם, וכל הקרבנות בטלות לעתיד לבא, והתודה אינה בטלה לעולם, והוא שכתוב ותעמדה שתי (תודות בית ה') (התודות בבית האלהים) [נחמיה יב מ], תודת התפלה ותודת הקרבן. כי הצלת נפשי ממות. שלא אמות ביד שאול. הלא רגלי מדחי. שלא אתחייב בעצתו של אחיתופל. להתהלך לפני ה') [אלהים] באור החיים. בארץ ישראל. [דבר אחר] באור החיים. באור הגדול שבגן עדן.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 56, Part 4</p> <p>4. Your vows are upon me, O God; I will render thank offerings unto You (Tehillim / Psalms 56:13). Rabbi Phinehas taught in the name of rabbi Levi, and rabbi Johanan taught in the name of rabbi Menachem the Galilean, that in the time to come all prayers will cease except the prayer of thanksgiving, and this will never cease. And in the time to come, all offerings will cease except the thank offering, and this will never cease. Of this Scripture says, So stood the two companies of them that gave thanks in the house of God (Nehemiah 12:40), the words the two companies of them that give thanks alluding to the prayer of thanksgiving and to the thank offering. For You have delivered my soul from death (Tehillim / Psalms 56:14) that is, I did not die at the hands of Saul from death. Have You not delivered my feet from stumbling? So that I was not doomed through the counsel of Ahithophel, and so that I may walk before God in the light of the living, in the land of Israel. Or, by the light of the living is meant the great light in the Garden of Eden.</p>
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Searching the rabbinic literature, we find the rabbis have taught that “In the Messianic time all sacrifices except the thank-offering will cease” (Talmud Bavli Pesachim 79a, Midrash Rabba Vayikra, Parashat 9, Part 27). Midrash Tehillim 100 says, “Enter His gates with thanksgiving [todah], His courts with acclamation. Give thanks to Him! Bless His name! (Tehillim / Psalms 100:4). In the world to come, all offerings will cease except the thank offering [todah], this will never cease. All prayers will cease except the prayer of thanksgiving, this will never cease.” Here in Midrash Tehillim 56, Part 4, the rabbis teach כל התפלות לבא “in the time to come all prayers will cease except the prayer of thanksgiving,” literally that prayers will be null or void (בטלות). Note how it says “in the time to come” (לעתיד לבא) and not in the world to come (olam haba). Why do the rabbis believe there will come a time when certain prayers will cease? According to the Sages, both the prayer and the sacrifice are eternal, even in the world to come, when there will be no need and no sin. The reason being, we will still want to express our gratitude to God. The eternal aspect of prayer and sacrifice may be found in the references from the rabbinic literature on the ceasing of the sacrifice and prayer. The importance attached to the sacrificial laws is fully realized by the Rabbis as a result of the destruction of the Temple. In order to continue to observe these ordinances (accord-

ing to the Torah), they did not hesitate to declare that God accepts the broken hearted (*Tehillim / Psalms 51, Talmud Bavli Pesachim 158b*). In addition to this, the rabbis look to a future restoration, but make reference to the offerings and prayers being done away with at a future time. The concept they may be putting forward here is looking toward the greater (richer) thing that is to come (*Midrash Rabbah Vayikra 7*). This is taken from the idea that prayer is better than sacrifice being attested in the rabbinic literature (*Talmud Bavli Berekhot 32b, Midrash on 1 Samuel 7*) for example, the lulav and the etrog replace the altar and the offering according to *Talmud Bavli Sukkah 45a*. The reading of the Shema and Tefillah, the wearing of tefillin, are equivalent to building the altar (*Talmud Bavli Berekhot 14a and 15a, Midrash Tehillim 1*). And the students engaged everywhere in the study of the Torah are as dear to God as were they who burned incense on the altar (*Talmud Bavli Menahot 110a*), etc. and the list goes on. Here, in Midrash Tehillim 56, Part 4, the proof text for these things ceasing they say “*So stood the two companies of them that gave thanks in the house of God (Nehemiah 12:40), the words the two companies of them that give thanks alluding to the prayer of thanksgiving and to the thank offering.*” The people gave thanks to the Lord in heaven because of the rebuilt Temple. The exile to Babylon resulted in the loss of the daily sacrifice, and the priestly duties, then having rebuilt the Temple, the people did the only thing they knew to do which was to give thanks unto the Lord God Almighty for the salvation He has provided them, bringing them back to the Land of Israel, and the ability to worship the Lord in His house. This may be why the rabbis taught that the sacrifices and prayers will one day cease, except the prayer of thanksgiving. In addition to this, the expression of the eternity of both prayer and sacrifice in the way in which we serve him and through the prayer of thanks giving. Midrash Tehillim 56, Part 4 concludes saying, “*For You have delivered my soul from death (Tehillim / Psalms 56:14) that is, I did not die at the hands of Saul from death. Have You not delivered my feet from stumbling? So that I was not doomed through the counsel of Ahithophel, and so that I may walk before God in the light of the living, in the land of Israel. Or, by the light of the living is meant the great light in the Garden of Eden.*” The prayer of thanksgiving that David said to the Lord is connected to keeping his feet from stumbling, to not giving an ear to false counsel, and to having the ability to walk in the light of God, the light of His truth. These things appear to be something the Lord does to preserve us which is paralleled to delivering the soul from death. The dead soul is the one who stumbles into sin, gives an ear to false counsel, and does not walk in God’s truth according to His word. David says in *Tehillim / Psalms 116:4*, וַיִּשְׁעֵם-יְהוָה אֶקְרָא אֲנִי יְהוָה, 116:4 *Then I called upon the name of the Lord: ‘O Lord, I beseech You, save my life!’ (NASB)* Remember how Elohim is His aspect of justice, while Adonai (YHVH) is His aspect of mercy. David calls upon the name (YHVH), seeking the Lord for His mercy. Today we have many reasons for loving the Lord, and most importantly because His mercy and grace (lovingkindness) we are able to give him the sacrifice of praise through the prayer of thanksgiving. When a man is awakened to a sense of his condition, being in sin, having listened to false counsel, and having not walked in the light of God, we have much to give praise to the Lord for the salvation He has brought to such a person, a changed heart, and faith in the Messiah Yeshua. Calling upon the Lord in the name of His Son Yeshua the Messiah, one will find truth, justice, and obtain the promises of God. It truly is because of His mercies that we are not consumed. Those who labor and are heavy laden who come to Him, they will find rest in their souls, and will be deemed worthy to walk in His presence. It is by the mercy of God that He holds us by our right hand so that we are not overcome and overthrown by temptation. As the rabbis say, according to Midrash Tehillim 56, Part 4, a time will come when all sacrifices will cease except the thank offering, and all prayers will cease except the prayer of thanksgiving. Truly, today, we are able to offer a prayer of thanks for God’s Messiah Yeshua and the blessing of knowing our Father in heaven in a deeper and more intimate way. Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for Your Word whereby we can live our lives for righteousness and truth. Please have mercy on us for the unrighteous actions we have committed and the unrighteous thoughts of our hearts. Give us the strength to live for you each day and to bring Glory to Your Name! Help us to set out minds on

those things that are wholesome and righteous with a desire to show mercy and love toward one another. We thank You Lord for sending Your son Yeshua that we may enter into the covenant of peace that You have promised to Your people. Help us to grow in our faith, to walk in the spirit, and apply these truths to our lives. 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 we pray! Amen!

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

Notes