

<p>ו רומה על-שמים אלהים ועל כָּל-הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדָךְ: ז לִמְעַן יִחַל־ צוֹן יְדִידֶיךָ הוֹשִׁיעָה יְמִינָךְ וְעֲנֵנִי: ח אֱלֹהִים דְּבַר כְּקִדְשׁוֹ אֶעֱלֶנָּה אֶחְלֶקֶה שְׁכֶם וְעַמְּךָ סְכוֹת אֶמְדֹּד: ט לִי גִלְעָד לִי מְנַשֶּׁה וְאֶפְרַיִם מְעוֹז רֹאשֵׁי יְהוּדָה מְחַקְקִי: י י מוֹאָב סִיר רַחֲצִי עַל-אֲדוֹם אִשְׁׁר־ לִיךָ נְעֻלֵי עֲלִי-פְלִשְׁתִּי אֶתְרוּעָע: יא יב יִבְלַנִּי עִיר מְבַצֵּר מִי נַחְנִי עַד- אֲדוֹם: יב הֲלֹא-אֱלֹהִים זִנְהָתְנוּ וְלֹא-תִצָּא אֱלֹהִים בְּצַבָּאוֹתֵינוּ: יג יג הֲבֵנָה-לָנוּ עֲזָרָת מִצָּר וְשׂוֹא תִשׁוּׁר־ עַת אֲדָם: יד בְּאֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה-תְּהִלָּה וְהוּא יְבוֹס צָרֵינוּ:</p>	<p>ו אתרומם עלוי שמיא אלהים ועל כל יתבי ארעא איקרד: ז מן בגלל דישתזבון רחיימך פרוק ימינך ועני יתי: ח אלהא ממליל מאתר בית שכנתיה שכינת קודשיה אביע אפ־ ליג ביזתא עם יתבי שכם ועם יתבי מישר סכות אמשח תחומא: ט די לי גלעד דילי מנשה דבית אפ־ רים עושנא דרישי ומדבית יהודה ספרי: י דושישית מואבאי היך דודי שזוגי על מלכות אדום אטלוק סנדלי על מלכות פלשתאי אתייבב: יא וכדון דחבית מן אוביל יתי עד כרכא דרומי רשיעא מן דברני עד קושט נטינא דאדום: יב הלא על דחבנא קדם יהוה שבקנא ולא נפקא שכינתיה בחילותנא: יג הב לן סעדא מן מעיקא דמגן פורקנא דבר נשא: יד באלהא נעביד חילא והוא ידושש מעיקנא:</p>	<p>108:6 ὅπως ἂν ῥυσθῶσιν οἱ ἀγαπητοί σου σῶσον τῆ δεξιᾷ σου καὶ ἐπάκουσόν μου 108:7 ὁ θεὸς ἐλάλησεν ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ αὐτοῦ ὑψωθήσομαι καὶ διαμεριῶ Σικίμα καὶ τὴν κοιλάδα τῶν σκηνοῶν διαμετρήσω 108:8 ἐμός ἐστὶν Γαλααδ καὶ ἐμός ἐστὶν Μανασση καὶ Εφραιμ ἀντίλημψις τῆς κεφαλῆς μου Ἰουδας βασιλεύς μου 108:9 Μωαβ λέβης τῆς ἐλπίδος μου ἐπὶ τὴν Ἰδουμαίαν ἐκτενῶ τὸ ὑπόδημά μου ἐμοὶ ἀλλόφυλοι ὑπετάγησαν 108:10 τίς ἀπάξει με εἰς πόλιν περιοχῆς τίς ὀδηγήσει με ἕως τῆς Ἰδουμαίας 108:11 οὐχὶ σὺ ὁ θεός ὁ ἀπώσαμένους ἡμᾶς καὶ οὐκ ἐξελεύσῃ ὁ θεός ἐν ταῖς δυνάμεσιν ἡμῶν 108:12 δοὺς ἡμῖν βοήθειαν ἐκ θλίψεως καὶ ματαία σωτηρία ἀνθρώπου 108:13 ἐν τῷ θεῷ ποιήσομεν δύναμιν καὶ αὐτὸς ἐξουθενώσῃ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἡμῶν</p>
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<p>Tehillim / Psalms 107 A song. A psalm of David. 108:1 My heart is steadfast, O God; I will sing, I will sing praises, even with my soul. 108:2 Awake, harp and lyre; I will awaken the dawn! 108:3 I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the peoples, And I will sing praises to You among the nations. 108:4 For Your lovingkindness is great above the heavens, And Your truth reaches to the skies. 108:5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, And Your glory above all the earth. 108:6 That Your beloved may be delivered, Save with Your right hand, and answer me! 108:7 God has spoken in His holiness: ‘I will exult, I will portion out Shechem And measure out the valley of Succoth. 108:8 ‘Gilead is Mine, Manasseh is Mine; Ephraim also is the helmet of My head; Judah is My scepter. 108:9 ‘Moab is My washbowl; Over Edom I shall throw My shoe; Over Philistia I will shout aloud.’ 108:10 Who will bring me into the besieged city? Who will lead me to Edom? 108:11 Have not You Yourself, O God, rejected us? And will You not go forth with our armies, O God? 108:12 Oh give us help against the adversary, For deliverance by man is in vain. 108:13 Through God we will do valiantly, And it is He who shall tread down our adversaries. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms 107 108:1 A song and psalm composed by David. 2. My heart is firm, O God; I will praise and sing indeed, my glory. 108:3 Sing praise, O harp and lyre; I will sing praise at dawn. 108:4 I will give thanks in your presence among the peoples, O Lord, and I will sing praise to you among the nations. 108:5 For your goodness is great above the heavens, and your truth reaches to the sky. 108:6 Be exalted above the heavens, O God, and may your glory be on all the inhabitants of the earth. 108:7 So that your beloved ones will be delivered; redeem with your right hand and answer me. 108:8 God speaks from the place of his presence[4]; I will be glad, I will divide spoil with the inhabitants of Shechem; and with the inhabitants of the plain of Succoth I will measure the border. 108:9 Mine is Gilead, mine is Manasseh; those of the house of Ephraim are the strength of my head, and my scribe is from those of the house of Judah. 108:10 I have trampled the Moabites like my washing-pot; I will cast my sandal over the kingdom of Edom; I will shout over the kingdom of the Philistines. 108:11 And now because I sinned, who will lead me to the fortress of wicked Rome? Who led me to Constantinople of Edom? 108:12 Behold, because we have sinned in the presence of the Lord he has forsaken us, and his presence does not go out with our armies. 108:13 Give us help from the oppressor, for vain is the redemption of the son of man. 108:14 In God we shall show might, and he will trample our oppressors. (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 107 Song of a Psalm by David. 108:1 O God, my heart is ready, my heart is ready; I will sing and sing psalms with my glory. 108:2 Awake, psalter and harp; I will awake early. 108:3 I will give thanks to thee, O Lord, among the people; I will sing praise to thee among the Gentiles. 108:4 For thy mercy is great above the heavens, and thy truth reaches to the clouds. 108:5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; and thy glory above all the earth. 108:6 That thy beloved ones may be delivered, save with thy right hand, and hear me. God has spoken in his sanctuary; 108:7 I will be exalted, and will divide Sicima, and will measure out the valley of tents. 108:8 Galaad is mine; and Manasses is mine; and Ephraim is the help of mine head; Judas is my king; 108:9 Moab is the caldron of my hope; over Idumea will I cast my sandal; the Philistines are made subject to me. 108:10 Who will bring me into the fortified city? or who will guide me to Idumea? 108:11 Wilt not thou, O God, who hast rejected us? and wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts? 108:12 Give us help from tribulation: for vain is the help of man. 108:13 Through God we shall do valiantly; and he will bring to nought our enemies. (LXX)</p>
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א שִׁיר מְזֻמֹּר לְדָוִד: ב In this week’s study from *Tehillim / Psalms 108:1-13*, the Psalm opens saying, *א שִׁיר מְזֻמֹּר לְדָוִד: ב* *A song. A psalm of David. 108:1 My heart is steadfast, O God; I will sing, I will sing praises, even with my soul. (NASB)* What does David mean that he will sing praises to the Lord even with his soul? What is it about the soul that makes this so significant? Could David’s words be Midrashic in nature? It is possible to explain this as a So’odic context (Zohar) mysticism in the sense that his desires are not associated with the physical realm. The soul (nefesh) does not have a mouth in the sense that we can hear our own spiritual voice. The nefesh is connected to our physical body, and as a result of the longing for our soul to praise the Lord, the praises of our souls become words which are expressed audibly for all to hear. If we can draw a parallel here to the Torah given by Moshe (Written Torah) to the

Torah that is the interpretation of the written Torah (Oral Torah) then David's desire is related to the Torah of the Heavens (Oral Torah) a possession of the Hakhamim who can apportion "daily bread" (i.e. the Word of God is food for our souls, the Torah) to those who desire spiritual fulfillment in the sense of being able to give unrestrained praises unto the Lord God in heaven.

David's comment that "even my soul" (אֶף-נַפְשִׁי) is written in a particular way, it translates literally as "even my glory" since he uses the root word כבד in reference to his soul. The significance of his words אֶף-נַפְשִׁי is in the reference to "my glory." Note how the glory of a man is in his heart. We glorify ourselves over and above others in our hearts. This is a very easy thing to do and is something the Lord does not want us to do. David states that by his glory, which is translated as "his soul" is that which gives praises unto the Lord. This is important because it is only the one who humbles his soul who is able to give praises unto the Lord by that which would rather set itself up to receive glory. This reminds us of the necessity to live a daily repentant life just as Rambam wrote in his commentary according to his *Mishneh Torah Repentance 3:4*:

Mishneh Torah Repentance 3:4

(4) Even though the blowing of the shofar on Rosh HaShanah is a Biblical decree, it hints at something, i.e., "Wake up, sleepers, from your sleep! And slumberers, arise from your slumber! Search your ways and return in teshuvah and remember your Creator! Those who forget the Truth amidst the futility of the moment and are infatuated all their years with vanity and nothingness that will not help and will not save, examine your souls and improve your ways and your motivations! Let each of you abandon his wicked ways, and his thoughts which are no good." Therefore a person needs to see himself all year long as if he is half innocent and half guilty, and also [see] the whole world - half innocent and half guilty. If he sins one sin - he has tilted herself and the whole world to the side of guilt and caused its destruction. If he does one mitzvah - he has tilted herself and the whole world to the side of innocence and caused redemption and rescue, as it says, the righteous are the foundation of the world (Proverbs 10:25). This refers to a righteousness that has tilted the whole world to innocence and saved it. And for this reason the whole House of Israel has a custom to increase charity and good deeds, and to engage in mitzvot from Rosh HaShanah until Yom Kippur, more than the rest of the year. And everyone has the custom to wake up during the night on these ten days and to pray in the synagogue with words of pleading and words of surrender until daylight. (ד) אף על פי שתקיעת שופר בראש השנה גזרת הפתוב רמז יש בו כלומר עוררו ישנים משנתכם ונרדמים הקיצו מפרדמתכם ונפשו במעשיכם וחרזו בתשובה וזכרו בוראכם. אלו השוכחים את האמת בהכלי הזמן ושוגים כל שנתם בהבל וריק אשר לא יועיל ולא יציל, הביטו לנפשותיכם והיטיבו דרכיכם ומעלליכם ויעזב כל אחד מקם דרכו הרעה ומחשבתו אשר לא טובה. לפיכך צריך כל אדם שיראה עצמו כל השנה כלה כאלו חציו זכאי וחציו חייב. וכן כל העולם חציו זכאי וחציו חייב. חטא חטא אחד הרי הכריע את עצמו ואת כל העולם כלו לכה חובה וגרם לו השחתה. עשה מצוה אחת הרי הכריע את עצמו ואת כל העולם כלו לכה זכות וגרם לו ולהם תשועה והצלה שנאמר (משלי י-כה) "וצדיק יסוד עולם" זה שצדק הכריע את כל העולם לזכות והצילו. ומפני ענין זה נהגו כל בית ישראל להרבות בצדקה ובמעשים טובים ולעסוק במצות מראש השנה ועד יום הכפורים יתר מכל השנה. ונהגו כלם לקום בלילה (בעשרה ימים אלו ולהתפלל בבתי כנסיות בדברי תחנונים ובכבושין עד שיאור היום:

Rambam speaks of the moedim (appointed times, festivals) of God which are meant to lead the child of God to repentance before the Lord. The blowing of the shofar hints at the listener to "Wake up, sleepers, from your sleep! And slumberers, arise from your slumber! Search your ways and return in teshuvah and remember your Creator! Those who forget the Truth amidst the futility of the moment and are infatuated all their years with vanity and nothingness that will not help and will not save, examine your souls and improve your ways and your motivations! Let each of you abandon his wicked ways, and his thoughts which are

no good.” The idea is that the moedim direct us to repentance and to the humbling of our souls as David wrote אף-כְּבוֹדִי “*even my glory.*” Rambam speaks of Teshuvah as abandoning both our wicked ways and our wicked thoughts. In addition, he speaks of the need for us to see ourselves all year long “*as if being half innocent and half guilty.*” The reason he interprets in this way is that though we are guilty, we remain useful to the Lord and do not sink in our misery and because of our misery we do not seek to strive for the righteousness of God. This half-way approach causes to motivate us to continue in our striving for the Lord. His commentary goes on speaking of being on the scales tilting our lives towards destruction when we sin, and towards salvation when we perform a mitzvah in righteousness. We should encourage one another to do righteous deeds for the glory of God. Living a repentant life has the capacity to lead us to giving glory to the Lord God in heaven even by our souls, just as David is claiming.

ג עוֹרָה הַנֶּבֶל וְכִנּוֹר אֶעֱרָה שָׁחַר: ד אֹדֶךָ בְּעַמִּים | יְהִיָּה וְאֲזַמְרָךְ בְּל-אֲמִים: *108:2 Awake, harp and lyre; I will awaken the dawn! 108:3 I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the peoples, And I will sing praises to You among the nations. 108:4 For Your lovingkindness is great above the heavens, And Your truth reaches to the skies. (NASB)* We give thanks unto the Lord and offer praises because of His loving kindness. What does the psalmist mean that the truth of God reaches to the heavens? What is the truth the psalmist is speaking of? The modern theological approach to the “*truth*” of God is to direct us to the Messiah. What was this truth the psalmist speaks of? The term *emunah*, rendered in English as “*faith*” or “*belief*,” occurs for the first time in the Bible in connection with Abraham in the Torah. After obeying God’s command to leave his family and home, Abraham is led to the land of Canaan which the Lord God promises to give to his descendants. The narrative tells us that a famine forces him to sojourn in Egypt, where his wife Sarah’s beauty causes Pharaoh to take her as his wife, when Abraham claims she is his sister. Pharaoh blesses Abraham and sends him and his wife away. Back in the land promised by God, Abraham and his nephew Lot find that they cannot live together in peace, and each goes his own way. Lot is captured by enemies and then freed by Abraham. After these things, the Torah tells us, *Bereshit / Genesis 15:1-6* saying, *15:1 After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, ‘Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.’ 15:2 Abram said, ‘O Lord God, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?’ 15:3 And Abram said, ‘Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.’ 15:4 Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, ‘This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.’ 15:5 And He took him outside and said, ‘Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’ 15:6 Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. (NASB)* Through the life of Abraham, the Lord promised him that he would have a child, and that the land would be given to his descendants. The Lord uses the stars as a way to describe to Abraham that so numerous will be your descendants that you will not be able to count them. What was Abraham’s response to the Lord’s promise? The Torah says *’ 15:6 Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. (NASB)* What was the nature of Abraham’s belief which the Lord God counted as righteousness? Was it simply a list of presuppositions? Was it simply a matter of Abraham accepting the Lord’s statements as true, a sort of intellectual understanding and belief to the truth of a series of propositions such as the following?

- *God exists.*
- *God communicates with individuals and makes promises to them.*
- *God has the power to keep the promises He has made.*
- *God may be relied upon to keep His promises.*

No, the context makes it very clear! Abraham's act of righteousness is the demonstration of his emunah (faith) and trust in God. If you think about this for a moment, there can be no doubt that, had Abraham been asked, he would most assuredly have affirmed the truth of these four propositions listed just above. The Torah, however, gives us no reason for thinking that Abraham ever asked himself these sorts of questions that would bring into question these four propositions. The emunah spoken of here is more than the belief that certain statements about God are true; it is the belief in the Lord God of Israel that is coupled to trust and reliance upon Him, all of which call forth a behavior that is consistent with this stance of trust and reliance upon the Lord. The point is on the meaning of emunah. Emunah is not something new, as can be seen from the text of the Torah. What we need to understand about "the truth" that is taught in God's Word, this truth that reaches to the heavens, is not about an intellectual exercise. This truth is about who the Lord God our Father in heaven is, and the meaning of emunah, to trust and rely upon Him, coupled with the belief and practice of His word in our lives. The Lord God is described as a God of emunah in Parashat Ha'azinu when Moshe writes "The Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of faithfulness [emunah] and without iniquity; just and right is He" (Devarim / Deuteronomy 32: 4). The Lord God is not being described here as agreeing to the truth of certain statements. The verse itself teaches us of God's character which makes it possible to appeal to a "God of faithfulness," where He is faithful, He is upright and just, He is righteous and holy. Notice the difference here, the Hebrew text speaks of a "belief that" He is able as opposed to a "belief in" His ability. Studying the context almost always reaffirms the point being made here about the connotation of emunah according to the Torah. In Devarim / Deuteronomy 9:23 Moses berates the children of Israel saying, וּבִשְׁלֹחַ יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם מִקְדָּשׁ בְּרַנְעֵ לְאֹמֶר עָלַי וּרְשׁוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר : 9:23 And when the LORD sent you on from Kadesh-barnea, saying, "Go up and take possession of the land that I am giving you," you flouted the command of the LORD your God; you did not put your trust in Him and did not obey Him. (NASB) Note how the Hebrew text is written, it says "you believed him not" using the word he'emantem (הֶאֱמַנְתֶּם) saying that they did not listen to His voice, where emunah is faith that leads to what we do, how we live, and how we demonstrate our trust in the Lord God of Israel. The point is that the Torah teaches a believe in God as opposed to having a belief about God. The Scriptures automatically assume the existence of God. Nowhere does the Scriptures say that He exists, or that there is a command to believe that He exists. The Torah teaches clearly that the Lord God is one in the Shema (Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:4), and that He is the creator of the heavens and the earth. There is no question as we see being posed in our modern times. The Torah does not teach or demand that emunah is a belief system, or that only certain statements are true as opposed to trusting in the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which finds its expression in our behavior (living out our faith). Judaism emerged from a the people's struggle with idolatry and the biblical command that demands loyalty to the one true God, creator of the universe. This loyalty is found in obedience to God's will as it is expressed according to His Word. Note that throughout the history of Israel, little attempt was made to inquire closely into the doctrines that one believed in about God. Additionally, no attempt was even made to establish exactly what doctrines one ought to affirm. Furthermore, Judaism developed as a religion that was intimately connected with a distinct community of faithful people. The truth the psalmist speaks of in his psalm is of the Lord seeking a people to live by faith, to trust in Him, and to live righteous, holy, and just lives towards one another.

ו רומה על-שמים אלהים ועל כל-הארץ כבודך: ז למען יתלצון ידידיך הושיי- 108:5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, And Your glory above all the earth. 108:6 That Your beloved may be delivered, Save with Your right hand, and answer me! (NASB) The truth may be related to the faithfulness of God to deliver His people from their enemies. As discussed previously, the Hebrew word translated "faithfulness" (emunah) means "steadfastness, firmness, fidelity" and is not about an intellectual exercise. The opposite of being faithful is to be ever-changing. Tehillim / Psalm 119:89-90 says, לְדָר גְּדוֹר אָמִי־ לְעוֹלָם יְהוָה דְּבָרְךָ נֶצֶב בַּשָּׁמַיִם: Your word stands firm in heaven. נִתְּנָה כּוֹנֵנֶת אֶרֶץ וַתַּעֲמֵד: Your faithfulness is for all generations; You have established the earth, and it stands.

(NASB) The psalmist states essentially that “Your word, Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. Your faithfulness continues through all generations.” Here faithfulness is equated with the Word of God. The Scriptures say that the Lord God of Israel speaks never-ending truth, this truth that ascends even to the highest heavens. The concept behind these statements is that if the Lord spoke something a thousand years ago, it still stands. He is faithful to His Word, because His Word is an expression of who He is (His character). The promises He made still hold true because He does not change (*Malachi 3:6*). These attributes are visible from a human perspective illustrated in the marriage relationship, *i.e. in the husband and wife who are married for eighty years*. When the wife lays upon her deathbed, her husband sits nearby holding her hand. He won’t leave her, even though she no longer recognizes him. He remains faithful to the promises he made to her that is coupled to the great love that he has for her. In the same way, the Lord God of Israel remains faithful to His promises, even though we are often unfaithful to Him (*2 Timothy 2:13*). As we grow and mature in our relationships, we learn to trust the character of a person by getting to know that person, by walking with a person in and through life’s struggles. The same may be said of the Lord our Father in heaven and of Yeshua His Messiah. When we walk in His commands, we learn more about the character of who God is and in our relationship with God we learn to trust the Lord. We learn to trust in the Lord by getting to know His character, and this what it means to walk in His commands, and why Yeshua said in *John 14:21* “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.” (NASB)

Studying the Scriptures, we learn that God never changes and never lies (*Bamidbar / Numbers 23:19 and 1 Samuel 15:29*). We learn through the Scriptures that the Lord God has never failed in the past (see *Isaiah 51:6*). He was and is true to His Word as He worked in the lives of ancient and modern day Israel. When He said He would do something, He did it (see *Bamidbar / Numbers 11:23 and Matthew 24:35*). As we learn about Him according to His word, and apply the truths that He teaches us in His word, we begin to build our trust upon His proven character. We can trust the Lord will be true to Himself. He will never cease being who He is, a loving and endearing Father. He will also never cease being sovereign, holy, and good (*1 Timothy 6:15, 1 Peter 1:16*). If we look back on our lives, we learn that the Lord has never failed us. Throughout the Torah, the Lord tells the people to “Remember” (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:2, Isaiah 46:9*). The remembering is connected to hearing, listening, and obeying His word. When we remember all the Lord has done it is more easy to trust in Him for the future. We need to intentionally remember all the ways the Lord has provided for us and delivered us in the past. Keeping a journal as a record of a sort can help with this, and lead to future generations learning and being encouraged in your faith. When we recall the ways the Lord has answered our prayers, it provides for us a future expectation of His continued love and help causing us to continue asking and expecting answers. When we come to Him in prayer, we know that He always hears us (*1 John 5:14, Tehillim / Psalm 34:15*) if we are not living in unrepentant sin (*Tehillim / Psalms 66:18*). He provides what we need (*Philippians 4:19*), and makes all things work together for our good when we trust in Him (*Romans 8:28*). This is what it means to trust in the Lord with emunah. We have the hopeful expectation in the future faithfulness of the Lord by remembering His past faithfulness to us. The basic conclusion is that we build our trust in the Lord by studying His word and applying His word to our lives, to walk and live in His ways. This is also a foundational component of Teshuvah (repentance) to seek forgiveness from the Lord God our Father in heaven and to turn from our sins to walk in His ways. This is why the Tanach writes according to *Joshua 1:8 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy ways prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.* (ח) לֹא־יָמוּשׁ סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה מִפִּיךָ וְהִגִּיתָ בוֹ יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה לְמַעַן תִּשְׁמָר לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכֹל־הַפְּתוּב בּוֹ כִּי־אָז תִּצְלִיחַ, (KJV) אֶת־דְּרֹכַי וְאָז תִּשְׁכִּיל: (ח) Spiritual maturity takes discipline, and is the point of what is written according to *Midrash Tehillim 119, Part 1*.

Midrash Tehillim 119 Part 1

1. Blessed are the upright in the way, who walk in the Torah of the Lord. King Solomon, may he rest in peace, said, The just man walks in his integrity, his children are blessed after him

(Mishley / Proverbs 20:7). Now, if the children of a just man are blessed because of him, all the more so is the just man himself blessed. The Holy One blessed be He, asked of Abraham only that he be upright, as is said, Walk before Me, and be you upright (Bereshit / Genesis 17:1). So, too, Moshe said to Israel, You will be upright with the Lord your God (Devarim / Deuteronomy 18:13). The verse does not say, Before the Lord your God, but with the Lord your God. That is, If you are upright, you will be with the Lord your God. Wherefore? Because God Himself is upright, as is said, The Rock, His work is perfect, Just, and Upright is He (Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:4). The children of Israel are also upright, and the Torah is upright, as is said, The Torah of the Lord is upright (Tehillim / Psalms 19:8). Hence, it is said, Blessed are they that are upright in the way. The people of the generation of the wilderness were upright and saintly. According to Rabbi Eliezer, they are the saints referred to in the verse, Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice (Tehillim / Psalms 50:5). To receive the Torah, the children of Israel had to walk twelve miles forward for each of the Ten Commandments and twelve miles back. Hence, it is said, Blessed are they that are upright in the way, who walk in the Law of the Lord. And so, purified, the children of Israel received the Torah. God said to them, You will eat no fat, of ox, or sheep, or goat (Vayikra / Leviticus 7:23), and though He did not tell them why not, they took obedience to the command upon themselves. God said to them, And when you will come into the land, and will have planted all manner of trees for food, then you will count the trees thereof as forbidden; there years will it be as forbidden unto you (Vayikra / Leviticus 19:23), and though He did not tell them why it was forbidden, they took obedience to the command upon themselves. And even after they took obedience to these commands upon themselves, they did not ask, what is to be the reward for our doing them? Hence, it is said, Blessed are they that are upright in the way, who walk in the Law of the Lord.

The Rabbis in the Midrash on *Tehillim / Psalms 119* state that those who walk upright are those who walk in the Torah (instruction) of the Lord. (see *Romans 3:31, Romans 7:12*) Solomon said those who walk in integrity, their children will be blessed. The rabbis point out the significance of *Devarim / Deuteronomy 18:13* which speaks of walking “with” the Lord your God, as opposed to walking “before” the Lord your God. The significance of “walking with” is that the Lord is upright, righteous, and holy. In parallel fashion, we too are to do the same. The Lord provided us with a plumb line for our lives, the Torah, which explains to us how to be righteous, holy, and upright, walking in the footsteps of our Father in heaven, and of Yeshua the Messiah, we are walking “with” them as a people who represent and bear the testimonies of God. Those who have done this are those who have entered into a covenant with God in blood through the sacrifice. Today this is accomplished through His Messiah Yeshua. Note how the rabbis speak of the receiving of the Torah, that the people walked ten miles forward for each of the ten commandments, and twelve miles back. The point is that living our lives for the Lord is not an easy task but is paralleled to one who takes steps forward, and then takes steps backward to evaluate where he has traveled, whether what he has done is pleasing to the Lord or not, learning and growing in the Lord. Walking upright before the Lord is to do so according to His will and word, and not according to our own word, which may be the reason the people took twelve steps backward after having taken ten forward. The Midrash concludes saying, “*And even after they took obedience to these commands upon themselves, they did not ask, what is to be the reward for our doing them? Hence, it is said, Blessed are they that are upright in the way, who walk in the Law of the Lord.*” The significance of this is that we live our lives because of our love for the Lord God in heaven and not to receive a reward. True love takes this kind of approach to what we do in our relationship with others. Above all things, the Lord God of Israel loves for us to demonstrate our faith (*Hebrews 11:6*). Faith is trusting in the character of God before we see how He is going to work things out. He has given us His Word, and His promises still stand. As we apply His ways to our lives He brings His promises to fulfillment by our trust in His faithfulness. Just as our trust in other people grows with daily interaction, our trust in the Lord grows in the same way.

The psalm continues saying, ח מיהלֵא | וְשִׁדְקָךְ רָבָד | הַקְלָחָה הַזֹּלְעָה וְשִׁדְקָךְ רָבָד | מִיְהוֹשֻׁעַ | 108:7 *God has spoken in His holiness: 'I will exult, I will portion out Shechem And measure out the valley of Succoth. (NASB)* Why does the Lord mention Shechem and the valley of Succoth? The following Scriptures draws into context the significance of Shechem.

Dwelt in by Abraham and Jacob

Bereshit / Genesis 12:6 - And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite [was] then in the land.

Bereshit / Genesis 33:18 - And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which [is] in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padanaram; and pitched his tent before the city.

Genesis 37:12 - And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

A city of refuge

Joshua 20:7 - And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjatharba, which [is] Hebron, in the mountain of Judah.

A Levitical city

Joshua 21:21 - For they gave them Shechem with her suburbs in mount Ephraim, [to be] a city of refuge for the slayer; and Gezer with her suburbs,

The place where Joseph was buried

Joshua 24:32 - And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

The city of the judge Abimelech

Joshua 9:1 - And it came to pass, when all the kings which [were] on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard [thereof];

A place of assembly for Israel

Joshua 24:1 - And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God.

1 Kings 12:1 - And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king.

Fortified by Jeroboam I

1 Kings 12:25 - Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel.

The first capital of the kingdom of Israel

Hosea 6:9 - And as troops of robbers wait for a man, [so] the company of priests murder in the way by consent: for they commit lewdness.

The valley of Succot is east of the Jordon river and was a link between the Transjordan and the LAnd of

Canaan whose historical boundary passed along the Jordan River. The psalms emphasizes the significance of these two places, the city of refuge as a place of redemption, and the Succot valley as regarding a cultural center for the people. Sukkot is a city east of the Jordan River, that is identified with Tell Deir Alla, a high mound, a mass of debris, in the plain north of the Jabbok and about one mile from it (see *Joshua 13:27*). This is where Jacob, on his return from Padan-aram after his interview with Esau, built a house for himself and made sukkot (booths) for his cattle, (*Bereshit / Genesis 33:17*). In the book of Judges the princes of Sukkot refused to provide help to Gideon and his men when they followed one of the bands of the fugitive Midianites after the great victory at Gilboa. After routing this band, Gideon on his return visited the rulers of the city with severe punishment. “He took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Sukkot” (see *Judges 8:13-16*). Sukkot is also mentioned in relation to the battles of Saul and David (see *1 Samuel 17:1*) and was a the place for the foundries for casting the metal-work for the temple (see *1 Kings 7:46*).

The Psalm continues saying, ח אֱלֹהִים | דָּבַר בְּקִדְשׁוֹ אֶעֱלֶזָה אֶחֱלֶקְהָ שְׁכֶם וְעַמְּךָ סִכּוֹת אֶמְדֹּד: ט לִי גִלְעָד לִי מְנַשֶּׁה וְאֶפְרַיִם מְעוֹז רֹאשֵׁי יְהוּדָה מְחַקְקֵי: י מוֹאָב | סִיר רַחֲצֵי עַל-אֲדָוָם אֶשְׁלִיךְ נַעֲלֵי עָלַי-פְּלִשְׁתִּי אֶתְרוּעֶע: 108:8 ‘Gilead is Mine, Manasseh is Mine; Ephraim also is the helmet of My head; Judah is My scepter. 108:9 ‘Moab is My washbowl; Over Edom I shall throw My shoe; Over Philistia I will shout aloud.’ 108:10 Who will bring me into the besieged city? Who will lead me to Edom? 108:11 Have not You Yourself, O God, rejected us? And will You not go forth with our armies, O God? (NASB) The psalm concludes saying, 108:12 Oh give us help against the adversary, For deliverance by man is in vain. 108:13 Through God we will do valiantly, And it is He who shall tread down our adversaries. (NASB) The Lord is the one in whom we are to place our trust! The psalmist seeks for the Lord’s help, calling upon the peoples need for the salvation of God from their enemies. The Psalm reminds us of the places and tribes of Israel to stir to memory the promises the Lord had made to His people. It is found within the covenant promises the reliance of the psalmist to trust with a hopeful expectation the Lord will go out with the armies of Israel and deliver her enemies into her hands. The Scriptures are given for the purpose of reminding us of who the Lord is and that in the midst of our sins, if we live our lives in repentance, He will most assuredly come to our rescue. Let’s Pray!

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 108* has 2 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1 and 2. Let’s begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 108, Parts 1 and 2*.

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 108, Part 1 and 2

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “A song, a Psalm of David. My heart is prepared, O God; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises (Tehillim / Psalms 108:1-2).”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “Elsewhere, this is what Scripture says, And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications (Daniel 9:3).”
- The משל (mashal) “the parable,” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis speak of the differences between prayer and supplications.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “expansion on the parable” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis continue saying a righteous man prayers with a humble spirit and soul.
- The Concluding phrase says, “David said, Accordingly, behold, I will prepare my heart so that the

Holy One blessed be He, will hear my prayer. Hence it is said, My heart is prepared, O God; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises (Tehillim / Psalms 108:2)."

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying, *"Another interpretation of My heart is prepared, O God. David said, I will prepare my heart as incense. Therefore, it is written, Let my prayer be prepared as incense before You (Tehillim / Psalms 141:2)."*
- The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *"The Holy One blessed be He, answered David, You have prepared for your prayer."*
- The **משל** (mashal) *"the parable,"* goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihta), the rabbis discuss what it means to pray for with the glory given to a man from God.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) *"expansion on the parable"* expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal saying the soul sings praises to the Lord with the lyre and harp.
- The Concluding phrase says, *"Even thus Scripture says, And David comforted BatSheva his wife, and she bore a son, and he sent comfort by the hand of Nathan the prophet, and he called his name Jedidiah (Beloved of the Lord) (2 Samuel 12:24-25)."*

Midrash Tehillim 108, Part 1 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (**דיבור המתחיל**) saying, *"A song, a Psalm of David. My heart is prepared, O God; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises (Tehillim / Psalms 108:1-2)."* The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *"Elsewhere, this is what Scripture says, And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications (Daniel 9:3)."* In the Midrash, the rabbis speak of the differences between prayer and supplications. In the Scriptures, one comes across two types of prayer. According to the Apostle Paul, he said in *Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (NASB)* So what is the difference between prayer and supplication? Most people regard both terms as describing the same thing with no differences between them. However, the Scriptures suggests something different. Supplication is a form of prayer but is considered as kneeling down, bending down in which someone makes a humble petition or an entreaty (*def. an earnest or humble request*) unto the God of our Fathers. Prayer on the other hand, can be defined as sincere thanksgiving made to the Lord. Requests made unto the Lord God are not always made during *"prayer,"* but are always made during *"supplications."* In this type of prayer, one asks for his or her desire or need from God. Prayer may be made without a request where the Lord God is showered with praises.

Prayer vs. Supplication

1. Supplication is a form of prayer in which someone makes a humble petition or an entreaty of the God our Fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Prayer, on the other hand, may be defined as sincere thanksgiving or requests made to God.
2. There is always a request in supplication. In this type of prayer, one asks for or desires something from the Lord. Prayer however may not include requests, but only praises to glorify the Name of God.
3. In prayer, more descriptive phrases are used expressing a quality characteristic of the Lord, whereas these are not used in supplications.
4. In prayer, a person can praise the power and qualities of God. Such praise do not necessarily occur in supplication.

The entire midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק קח סימן א</p> <p>א [שיר] מזמור לדוד נכון לבי אלהים אשירה ואזמרה. זהו שאמר הכתוב ואתנה [את] פני אל ה' האלהים לבקש תפלה ותחנונים (דניאל ט ג), ולא הוא תפלה ולא הוא תחנונים, אלא כך הצדיקים מתחנונים לפני הקב"ה שישמע תפלתם, וכך שנו רבותינו אין עומדין להתפלל אלא מתוך כובד ראש, ולא מתוך שחוק, ולא מתוך קלות ראש, ולא מתוך דברים בטלים, כדי שישמע הקב"ה תפלתם, וכן הוא אומר ויבא המלך דוד וישב לפני ה' (ש"ב שמואל ב' ז יח), וכי יש ישיבה לפני הקב"ה, יש אדם יושב לפני הקב"ה, והלא אין אדם מתפלל אלא מעומד, שנאמר ויעמד פינחס ויפלל (תהלים קו ל), ומהו וישב לפני ה', שישב לבו בתפלה, ואחר כך אומר מי אנכי ה' אלהי ומי ביתי וגו' (ש"ב שם שמואל ב' ז י"ח), אלא שכוון לבו בתפלה, שנאמר תכין לבם תקשיב אזניך (תהלים י יז), אמר ר' שמואל [בר נחמני] אם כוונת לבך בתפלה תהא מבושר שתפלתך נשמעת לפני הקב"ה, שנאמר תכין לבם תקשיב אזניך (שם שם תהלים י'), ושמעת [השמים את] תפלתם (מ"א מלכים א' ח מה) וכן הוא אומר כי עזרא הכין (את לבו) [לבבו] (עזרא ז י) ויתן לו המלך כיד ה' (הטובה) [אלהיו] עליו (שם שם עזרא ז ו), וכן אתה מוצא בחזקיהו, שהתפלל על ישראל, שנאמר כי התפלל [יחזקיהו] עליהם (חזקיה) לאמר ה' הטוב יכפר בעד (דה"ב דברי הימים ב' ל יח), וכשנתפלל כוון לבו, [שנאמר] (בכל) [כל] לבבו הכין (את ה') [לדרוש האלהים ה'] אלהי אבותיו (שם שם דברי הימים ב' ל יט), ובשביל שכוון לבו שמע הקב"ה את תפלתו וירפא את העם (שם שם דברי הימים ב' ל כ), וכן הוא אומר ויקומו הכהנים הלוים [ויברכו] את העם וישמע - (קולם) [בקולם] ותבוא תפלתם למעון קדשו לשמים [שם שם דברי הימים ב' ל כז], אמר דוד הואיל וכן הוא, הריני מכין את לבי כדי שישמע הקב"ה תפלת, שנאמר נכון לבי אלהים אשירה ואזמרה.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 108, Part 1</p> <p>1. <i>A song, a Psalm of David. My heart is prepared, O God; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises (Tehillim / Psalms 108:1-2). Elsewhere, this is what Scripture says, And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications (Daniel 9:3). But is not prayer the same as supplications? The distinction between them is this. Righteous men first incline themselves toward the Holy One blessed be He, so that He will listen to their prayers. And so our Rabbis taught, A man must begin to pray only in a mood of humility, not in a mood of frivolity, nor in a mood of lightness, nor in a mood of banter, so that the Holy One blessed be He will listen to his prayer. For in saying, Then David the king went in, and sat before the Lord (2 Samuel 7:18), does Scripture mean that sitting is permitted in the presence of the Holy One blessed be He? Does not a man pray only in standing position, as it is said, Then stood up Pinchas, and prayed (Tehillim / Psalms 106:30)? How, then, can it be said, Then David sat before the Lord? What the verse implies, however, is not that he sat, but that he had his heart set to pray. Indeed, since he asked at once, Who am I O Lord God, and what is my house? (2 Samuel 7:18), his humility means that he had prepared his heart for prayer, as is said, You will prepare their heart, You will cause Your ear to attend. (Tehillim / Psalms 10:17). Rabbi Samuel son of Nahmani taught, When you prepare your heart for prayer, you may be assured that your prayer will be heard by the Holy One blessed be He, for it is said, You will prepare your heart, You will cause their ear to attend, and again, If the people will pray unto the Lord, You in heaven will hear their prayer (1 Kings 8:45). Scripture also says, For Ezra had prepared his heart (Ezra 7:10) and The king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him (Ezra 7:6). So, too, you find that Hezekiah who prayed for Israel it is said, Hezekiah had prayed for them, saying, The good Lord pardon (2 Chronicles 30:18), but before he prayed, he had prepared his heart, as is said, He prepared his whole heart to seek God, the Lord, the God of his fathers (2 Chronicles 30:19). And because he prepared his heart, the Holy One blessed be He, listened to his prayer, and healed the people (2 Chronicles 30:20). Scripture also says, Then the priests, the Levites, arose and blessed the people; and their voice was heard of the Lord, and their prayer came up to His holy habitation, even unto heaven (2 Chronicles 30:27). David said, Accordingly, behold, I will prepare my heart so that the Holy One blessed be He, will hear my prayer. Hence it is said, My heart is prepared, O God; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises (Tehillim / Psalms 108:2).</i></p>
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The rabbis ask the question, "is not prayer the same as supplications?" The comparison between one and the other (prayer vs. supplication) is made between approaching the Lord humbly as opposed to a mood of frivolity (*def. lack of seriousness; lightheartedness*) or a mood of banter (*def. the playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks*). In addition, a humble heart is said to cause the Lord to hear a prayer. Does humility involve the heart only while we pray? What about how we live our lives? If we are living sinful lives, can we expect to come before the Lord to make supplication from Him? The midrash brings forth the question of whether a man may sit, or should he stand when praying to the Lord? Is there a problem with sitting before the Lord as opposed to standing? The midrash speaks of David going and sitting before the Lord (2 Samuel 7:18 Then David the king went in and sat before the Lord, and he said, 'Who am I, O Lord

God, and what is my house, that You have brought me this far? NASB, וַיֵּבֵא הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד וַיֵּשֶׁב לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר, (מִי אֲנֹכִי אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה וּמִי בֵּיתִי כִּי הֵבִיאַתְנִי עַד-הַלָּם: The significance is that David sat before the Lord and had his mind set to pray. It is also important to note the midrash states, “does Scripture mean that sitting is permitted in the presence of the Holy One blessed be He? Does not a man pray only in standing position, as it is said, Then stood up Pinchas, and prayed (Tehillim / Psalms 106:30)?” In ancient times, did prayer occur primarily in the standing position? According to Luke 22:41, Yeshua knelt and prayed in the moments before his trial and crucifixion. The idea is that based upon 2 Samuel 7:18, David had prepared his heart to pray in humility. The concept of sitting may be related to relaxing, and standing to that of coming to attention before the Lord. In Luke 22:41, the Greek word ἀπεσπάσθη, meaning “He withdrew, or secessit” implies from a literal sense, that he “tore Himself away” implying that Yeshua was acting under strong feeling and had humbly prepared his heart for prayer and supplication. According to the Torah, Moshe “was a very humble man, more humble than any man on the face of the earth” (Bamidbar / Numbers 12:3). Note something about Moshe and his humbleness. He had the ability to stand up to Pharaoh, he had a certain amount of assertiveness in his abilities as a leader. Moshe provides us with the example of the differences in the definition of humility, from the Lord God’s perspective as opposed to mans perspective. Moshe believed the Lord God of Israel was all powerful, and the Creator, while yet he himself was in no way comparable to the infinite holiness and righteousness of God. This idea of the Lord hearing the prayer of a being who is frail and full of shortcomings, is the beginning of what it means to understand humility in prayer. The apostle James said, “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” (James 4:10) Yeshua taught the same principle in Matthew 23:12 saying, “For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” The Lord God honors us when we are humble, in part because we are to open our hearts and our lives to His guidance according to His word. It is only when we humble ourselves that He is able to show us what is right and teach us in His ways (see Tehillim / Psalm 25:9). Yeshua taught, “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29). To be like the Messiah (Christ), we must follow His example of humility. The question then is “how can we learn to walk humbly with our God?” The answer to that is by obeying His Torah. By drawing our lives to be in line with God’s Word, we learn about ourselves, who we are, our shortness, failings, and weaknesses, and recognize the need and help of the Lord God in heaven to overcome the world. In addition, we walk along side of God Himself in the commands, and we get to know the Lord God of Israel and His Messiah Yeshua in a deeper more intimate way. This is why the rabbis say, “When you prepare your heart for prayer, you may be assured that your prayer will be heard by the Holy One blessed be He, for it is said, You will prepare your heart, You will cause their ear to attend, and again, If the people will pray unto the Lord, You in heaven will hear their prayer (1 Kings 8:45).” The preparation of heart begins with the way we prepare our lives living for the Lord in heaven. Two examples were given in the Midrash:

Examples

1. For Ezra had prepared his heart (Ezra 7:10) and The king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him (Ezra 7:6).
2. Hezekiah who prayed for Israel it is said, Hezekiah had prayed for them, saying, The good Lord pardon (2 Chronicles 30:18), but before he prayed, he had prepared his heart, as is said, He prepared his whole heart to seek God, the Lord, the God of his fathers (2 Chronicles 30:19).

The idea is Scriptures provides us with precedent on the need for man to prepare his heart before the Lord to seek the God of Israel all the days of his life. Midrash Tehillim 108, Part 1 concludes saying, “Scripture also says, Then the priests, the Levites, arose and blessed the people; and their voice was heard of the Lord, and their prayer came up to His holy habitation, even unto heaven (2 Chronicles 30:27). David said, Ac-

cordingly, behold, I will prepare my heart so that the Holy One blessed be He, will hear my prayer. Hence it is said, My heart is prepared, O God; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises (Tehillim / Psalms 108:2).” This illustrates for us the importance of preparing our hearts before prayer. In 2 Chronicles 12:14, we read “*And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD*” (וַיַּעַשׂ הָרָע כִּי לֹא הֵכִין לְבוֹ לְדַרוֹשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה). The Tanach states directly that Rehoboam did evil because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord. If you think about it, relatively few people set out determined to do evil. They don’t wake up in the morning asking themselves saying “*today how can I transgress God’s commands to do evil?*” Instead, sin is more subtle than that, a person falls into sin because he or she has not prepared, fixed, or determined his or her heart to seek the Lord. This passage in 2 Chronicles 12:14 speaks of Rehoboam, the king of Israel, who was the grandson of David. He inherited the throne when he was 41 years old, at the death of his father Solomon. In the beginning of his reign, his heart was sensitive to the Lord because we are told that he listened to the Lord at the word of a prophet from God according to 2 Chronicles 11:1-4.

2 Chronicles 11:1-4

11:1 Now when Rehoboam had come to Jerusalem, he assembled the house of Judah and Benjamin, 180, 000 chosen men who were warriors, to fight against Israel to restore the kingdom to Rehoboam. 11:2 But the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, 11:3 ‘Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying, 11:4 ‘Thus says the Lord, ‘You shall not go up or fight against your relatives; return every man to his house, for this thing is from Me.’ ‘So they listened to the words of the Lord and returned from going against Jeroboam. (NASB)

Studying the history of Israel, we learn that Rehoboam’s seeking the Lord God of his fathers only lasted for three of the 17 years of his reign (2 Chronicles 11:17). Does this sound familiar? It certainly does to me. During the time I have been alive, I have known a few people who genuinely loved the Lord at one time and were excited about the things of God, yet they grew cold and, in many cases, completely abandoned the Lord and the things that were once so important to them. How can this be? Could this be because they did not daily prepare their hearts to seek the Lord? The word “*prepare*” means “*make (something) ready for use or consideration*” (synonyms: *make/get ready, put together, draw up, produce, arrange, assemble, construct, compose, formulate*). Notice the definition to prepare means to make something ready for use. When we prepare our hearts, we are making our hearts ready for the Lord to use. This phrase “*to prepare our hearts*” conveys the idea of a deliberate effort on our part over a prolonged period of time. The same Hebrew word that was translated “*prepare*” in 2 Chronicles 12:14 is הֵכִין is from the root word כּוּן meaning “*to be firm, be stable, be established, to fix.*” According to David, we read the following, Tehillim / Psalm 10:17 “*LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart.*” (NASB) The concept here is that the Lord God of Israel is also involved in preparing our hearts. Part of the preparation and seeking the Lord is in trusting in Him and depending upon Him for the strength to make our hearts not subject to change or variation. Note David’s words that say humility is a key part of preparing the heart. The desire of the humble heart is to have a heart that is prepared for seeking the Lord God in heaven. It is only when our hearts are properly prepared does the Lord hear us and we may make our petition before Him. Mishley / Proverbs 16:18 states, “*Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*” (KJV) The basic conclusion may be that when a person falls from their position in the Lord, they have fallen from humbly depending upon the Lord. For such a person, the humble heart was forsaken or neglected and the seeking of the Lord forgotten before the fall. In addition, our imaginations and memory function as an important part of preparing our hearts. David said in 1 Chronicles 29:18, “*O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee.*” (KJV) David believed remembering the Lord was a vital part of the preparation process. In 1 Chronicles 29:4-7, we read of the expense of the construction of the Temple, David prayed that the Lord would use the memory of this event to prepare the people’s hearts. In the Torah,

the Lord warned the children of Israel not to forget the mighty works He had performed for them lest they turn away from following Him (see *Devarim / Deuteronomy* 4:9, 4:23, 6:12, 8:11-14, and 8:19). This was the point of Moshe writing “*eleh HaDevarim*” (אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים, These are the words) in the Book of Deuteronomy, this was a repetition for the people to call back to memory what the Lord had done! Moshe linked our memory to remaining true to the Lord. This is why in the preparation of our hearts is so important to do so by remaining in God’s Word. Once the heart is prepared, as the midrash says, “*Hence it is said, My heart is prepared, O God; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises (Tehillim / Psalms 108:2).*” We prepare our hearts to remember the work of God in our lives, to continue to seek the Lord God in heaven, and to seek Him and His kingdom in our lives for His glory. All of these things coupled together lead us to prepare ourselves for service, and so that He can use our lives to serve in His kingdom. Because of all of these things we too can say “*My heart is prepared, O God; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises!*”

Midrash Tehillim 108, Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “*Another interpretation of My heart is prepared, O God. David said, I will prepare my heart as incense. Therefore, it is written, Let my prayer be prepared as incense before You (Tehillim / Psalms 141:2).*” What does it mean to prepare the heart as incense? The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*The Holy One blessed be He, answered David, You have prepared for your prayer.*” The entire midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק קח סימן ב</p> <p>ב דבר אחר נכון לבי אלהים. אמר דוד אני מכוין את לבי כקטורת לפיכך כתיב תכון תפלתי קטרת לפניך (תהלים קמא ב), אמר הקב"ה כוונת תפלתך, אף אני מכוין את כסאך, שנאמר ונאמן ביתך וממלכתך עד עולם (וכסאך) [לפניך כסאך] יהיה נכון עד עולם (ש"ב שמואל ב' ז טז). אשירה ואזמרה אף כבודי. על הכבוד שנתת לי, שנאמר מי אנכי [ה' אלהים] ומי ביתי כי הביאתני עד הלום (שם שם שמואל ב' ז' יח), זו המלכות, הוי אף כבודי, אף אני לא הייתי ישן, אלא מעורר בנבל וכינור, שנאמר (עורה כבודי) עורה הנבל וכנור אעירה שחר (תהלים ק"ח פסוק ג), אמר דוד לעולם לא בא השחר עלי ומצאני ישן, אלא אני הייתי מעורר את השחר, הוי אעירה שחר, וכן הוא אומר חצות לילה אקום להודות לך (תהלים קיט סב), ואומר קדמתי בנשף ואשועה (שם תה"ל שם קי"ט קמז). אודך בעמים (אלהים) [ה']. על איזה דבר, כי גדול מעל שמים חסדך, הוא החסד שעשית עמי עד לשמים שהייתי ירא ממני ונחמתני ועשית עמי חסד, שכן הוא אומר וינחם דוד את בת שבע אשתו [וגוי] וישלח ביד נתן הנביא ויקרא את שמו ידידיה (ש"ב שמואל ב' יב כד כה).</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 108, Part 2</p> <p>2. <i>Another interpretation of My heart is prepared, O God. David said, I will prepare my heart as incense. Therefore, it is written, Let my prayer be prepared as incense before You (Tehillim / Psalms 141:2). The Holy One blessed be He, answered David, You have prepared for your prayer. Therefore, I will prepare your throne, as is said, And your house and your kingdom will be made sure forever before you; your throne will be prepared forever (2 Samuel 7:16). I will sing, yes, I will sing praises, even with my glory (Tehillim / Psalms 108:2). David said I will sing on account of the glory which You have given me, as is said, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that You have brought me hither (2 Samuel 7:18) that is, brought me to my kingship. Hence, my glory. Therefore, I have not been sleeping, but have awakened the dawn with psaltery and harp, as it is said, Awake, psaltery and harp; I will awake the dawn (Tehillim / Psalms 108:3). David went out, Never has dawn come upon me and found me asleep. For I want to awake the dawn. Hence, he said, I will awake the dawn, and also At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto You (Tehillim / Psalms 119:62), At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto You (Tehillim / Psalms 119:147). I will give thanks unto You, O Lord, among the peoples (Tehillim / Psalms 108:4). For what reason? Because Your mercy is great above the heavens (Tehillim / Psalms 108:5) mercy on my behalf which reaches unto heaven. For I was fearful because of my sin, and You did conform me, and showed me mercy. Even thus Scripture says, And David comforted BatSheva his wife, and she bore a son, and he sent comfort by the hand of Nathan the prophet, and he called his name Jedidiah (Beloved of the Lord) (2 Samuel 12:24-25).</i></p>
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The Torah states according to *Shemot / Exodus 25:1-8* saying,

Shemot / Exodus 25:1-8

25:1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 25:2 'Tell the sons of Israel to raise a contribution for Me; from every man whose heart moves him you shall raise My contribution. 25:3 'This is the contribution which you are to raise from them: gold, silver and bronze, 25:4 blue, purple and scarlet material, fine linen, goat hair, 25:5 rams' skins dyed red, porpoise skins, acacia wood, 25:6 oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, 25:7 onyx stones and setting stones for the ephod and for the breastpiece. 25:8 'Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them. (NASB), (א) וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה, לֵאמֹר: (ב) דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ־לִי תְרוּמָה מֵאֵת כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבַּנּוּ לְבָבוֹ תִקְחוּ אֶת־תְּרוּמַת־יָדָי: (ג) וְזֹאת הַתְּרוּמָה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְחוּ מֵאֵתָם זָהָב וְכֶסֶף וְנְחֹשֶׁת: (ד) וְתַבְרִילֹת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ וְעֵינִים: (ה) וְעֹרֹת אֵילִם מְאֻדָּמִים וְעֹרֹת תְּחָשִׁים וְעֵצֵי שִׁטִּים: (ו) שֵׁמֶן לְמָאֵר בְּשֶׁמֶיִם לְשֵׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וְלִקְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים: (ז) אֲבָנֵי־שֹׁהַם וְאַבְנֵי מִלֻּאִים לְאַפֹּד וְלַחֹשֶׁן: (ח) וְעֵשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשִׁכְנֹתַי בְּתוֹכָם:

Note how the Lord speaks to sons of Israel to raise a Terumah (תְּרוּמָה, contribution) according to how each persons heart moves them. This is an important comment on the concept of what “*David said, I will prepare my heart as incense.*” Note how the rabbinic commentary interprets these verses:

Sefer HaChinuch (16 cent.)

Know, my child, that any commandment that God requires of humankind comes only out of God's desire to benefit us... God's command to build the Tabernacle, for us to offer therein our prayers and sacrifices, comes not out of God's needs to dwell in an earthly dwelling among humankind, but rather [out of God's awareness that we need] train our own selves.

Malbim (19th cent. Eastern Europe)- Commentary on Exodus 25:8

...Each one of us needs to build God a Tabernacle in the recesses of our hearts, by preparing oneself to become a Sanctuary for God and a place for the dwelling of God's glory.

The rabbis say that this commandment of God to construct the Tabernacle is for our benefit. How so? So that we could train ourselves to offer prayers, to bring sacrifices, and to be thankful with the sacrifice of praise before the Lord. In the Targum on *Tehillim / Psalms 50*, David says that the Lord does not take bulls out of their flocks because he owns the cattle on a thousand mountains, He does not require sacrifices because He is hungry (50:8-13) as compared to the rabbis translation into the Aramaic Targum that speaks of the Lord not rebuking his people because they were unable to offer sacrifices due to the sanctuary being laid waste on the Temple Mount. Due to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the rabbis are saying that God does not cause the people to be guilty for their lack of bringing an offering before Him. This describes living in obedience to the word of the Lord with respect to what we are able to do within the context of an absent Temple. These comments go to show that we are called to obedience, and to have a high regard for God's word in our lives as a sacrifice unto the Lord, similar to what Paul wrote in *Romans 12:1-3*, because these things direct us to God's will and plan which was to bring His Messiah Yeshua into this world for the purpose of salvation from sin. The purification of the soul on the inside, the sacrifice of Yeshua purifies us from within, purifies the soul whereas the Temple sacrifices purified the body externally. This is related to spiritually going before the Lord in prayer, as opposed to physically appearing before Him at the temple mount. The significance of this statement is found in the rabbinic translation (Targum) in *Tehillim / Psalms 50:14-15* which speaks of subduing the evil impulse. Note what the Lord God says in the story of Cain and Abel from *Bereshit / Genesis 4:4* Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering; 4:5 but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. 4:6 Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Why are

you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?

4:7 *'If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.'* (NASB) The Lord speaks to Cain about sin and he says, if we do not do well, sin is crouching at the door and its desire is for you. In addition, he says, *"but you must master it."* (וְאַתָּה תִּמְשָׁל־בּוֹ) Notice how the Lord speaks of the mastery over sin in our lives, in the sense that we do not allow sin to be all consuming in our lives. This is what happened to Cain and he killed his brother as a result. The rabbinic translation of *"Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving"* is accomplished by subduing the evil impulse which is a direct parallel to *Bereshit / Genesis 4:4-7*. The Apostle Paul writes we are to put our bodies to death (*Galatians 5:24*) which is called *"crucifying the flesh with its passions and desires."* (see also *Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23, Romans 6:6, Ephesians 4:22, Colossians 3:5*) The act of offering a sacrifice of praise is lived out in our lives as a pleasant aroma before God. This is what it means when the rabbis speak of training ourselves in their commentaries as it is related to the Tabernacle of God. We train ourselves to stay away from sin, and to go before the Lord with the attitude of repentance and seeking His kingdom. *Malbim commentary on Shemot / Exodus 25:8* speaks of the need for each of us to build a Tabernacle in our hearts as a place that is prepared for the Lord to dwell. We literally become a sanctuary for the Lord and become a place for His glory to dwell. Does this not sound very similar to what the Apostle Paul taught in 1 and 2 Corinthians and elsewhere? Our prayer should be *"Oh Lord prepare me to be a sanctuary Pure and holy, tried and true And in thanksgiving, I'll be a living Sanctuary for you."*

Notice how the Midrash states, *"Therefore, I will prepare your throne, as is said, And your house and your kingdom will be made sure forever before you; your throne will be prepared forever (2 Samuel 7:16)."* In regards to the Tabernacle, how can the throne of God remain forever, as an earthly throne is destroyed? Well, the point is the Tabernacle in the heart is eternal, by reason that we will one day dwell with the Lord in the body forever. The midrash continues saying, *"I will sing, yes, I will sing praises, even with my glory (Tehillim / Psalms 108:2). David said I will sing on account of the glory which You have given me, as is said, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that You have brought me hither (2 Samuel 7:18) that is, brought me to my kingship. Hence, my glory. Therefore, I have not been sleeping, but have awakened the dawn with psaltery and harp, as it is said, Awake, psaltery and harp; I will awake the dawn (Tehillim / Psalms 108:3). David went out, Never has dawn come upon me and found me asleep. For I want to awake the dawn."* The idea here is that David opens his day with psalm and praise unto the Lord. According to the Psalms, David writes as a man in turmoil saying that the enemy has pursued his soul (*Tehillim / Psalm 143:3*), his heart is appalled (*Tehillim / Psalm 143:4*). Based upon these verses, it is difficult to believe David woke up each day in mid-morning all warm and cozy. These words describe a battle where his enemy is in motion. The best way to start the day, everyday, is with the prayer. Do you begin your day with the Lord God? If you cannot say *"yes"* to that simple question, then can you really say with confidence that you are *"walking with God?"* We all battle the same things which include laziness, disinterest, and the temptation to skip my time with the Lord in prayer and His word. Remember that Yeshua taught there was a special blessing to those who met with the Lord secretly *"in the closet."* Because of these things, getting started may be difficult, but once started, spending time in the *"Divine Presence"* is greatly fulfilling. Regular devotions and prayer are a must in order to have a proper and healthy spiritual relationship with the Lord.

Midrash Tehillim 108, Part 2 concludes saying, *"Hence, he said, I will awake the dawn, and also At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto You (Tehillim / Psalms 119:62), At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto You (Tehillim / Psalms 119:147). I will give thanks unto You, O Lord, among the peoples (Tehillim / Psalms 108:4). For what reason? Because Your mercy is great above the heavens (Tehillim / Psalms 108:5) mercy on my behalf which reaches unto heaven. For I was fearful because of my sin, and You did conform me, and showed me mercy. Even thus Scripture says, And David comforted BatSheva his wife, and she bore a son, and he sent comfort by the hand of Nathan the prophet, and he called his name Jedidiah (Beloved of the Lord) (2 Samuel 12:24-25)."* The greatest blessing is found in finding the time to spend time with the Lord. God's word works in our hearts to make us better people, and to change us on the inside in the sense that God's word feeds our spirit to make us stronger in our faith. This is why Paul wrote *"faith comes by*

hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). This is an absolute must if we can ever expect to overcome sin in our lives. Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

Lord it is because of Your greatness we seek to serve You all the days of our lives. We recognize the weaknesses in our strength and resolve to serve you and to do what is expected, to be humble and pray and remain in Your word. Lord help us to have the strength to stand for truth and life, to have the desire to seek You in prayer and in Your Word, and to have faith in Yeshua Your Messiah, and to love our neighbor each day. We thank You Lord for Your continued faithfulness to Your promises and to us. 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!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,

“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever

Notes