

## ספר תהילים קכ | Tehillim / Psalms 120

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### There is always the opportunity for Repentance

א שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת אֶל-יְהוָה בְּצָרָתָהּ לִי In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 120:1-7*, the psalm opens *120:1 In my trouble I cried to the Lord, And He answered me. (NASB)* How often have you prayed and you know without a doubt that the Lord had answered your prayer? The prayer David ask of the Lord is the following, *120:2 Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, From a deceitful tongue. (NASB)* The deceitful tongue is synonymous to the deceitful heart, the evil inclination (Lashon Hara). David asks also saying, *120:3 What shall be given to you, and what more shall be done to you, You deceitful tongue? (NASB)* Is David speaking of the punishment that is due the deceitful tongue? Has deception become second nature to you to the extent that it is what goes through the narratives of the heart on a daily basis, seeking how to deceive? Have you ever sought to be cleansed of sin in the sense that one day we will stand before our Father in heaven, and you do not want to look around with deception, lust, covetousness, or some other sin remaining in the heart? David speaks of these things in the following way, *120:4 Sharp arrows of the warrior, With the burning coals of the broom tree. (NASB)* The deceitfulness of sin is paralleled to the arrows of the enemy, and the burning of the broom tree. Studying the concept of the broom tree, long burning coals may be manufactured from the broom bush, and this may be paralleled to the effects of sin on our lives. David concludes saying the following, *120:5 Woe is me, for I sojourn in Meshech, For I dwell among the tents of Kedar! 120:6 Too long has my soul had its dwelling With those who hate peace. 120:7 I am for peace, but when I speak, They are for war. (NASB)* Sin in our lives functions in a way that is constantly at war with the spirit, whereas, the spirit the Lord gives to a man is that of peace and joy.

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
<b>ספר תהלים פרק קכ</b>	<b>ספר טוביה פרק קכ</b>	<b>ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 120</b>			
א שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת אֶל-יְהוָה בְּצָרָתָהּ לִי קָרָאתִי וַיַּעֲנֵנִי: ב יְהוָה הֲצִילָהּ נַפְשִׁי מִשְׁפַּת-שָׁקָר מִלְשׁוֹן רַמְיָהּ: ג מַה-יֵתֵן לָהּ וּמַה-יִסְיֵף לָהּ לְשׁוֹן רַמְיָהּ: ד חֲצִי גִבּוֹר שְׁנוֹנִים עִם גִּחְלֵי רַתְּמִים: ה אוֹיֵהּ לִי כִי-גִרְתִּי מִשֶּׁה שְׁכַנְתִּי עִם-אֲהָלֵי קְדָר: ו רַבַּת שְׁכַנְהָ-לָהּ אֲנִי-שְׁלוֹם וְכִי אֲדַבֵּר הַמָּה לְמַלְחָמָה:	א שִׁירָא דִּאתָאמַר עַל מִסּוּקִיִּן דִּתְהוּמָא קִדָּם יְהוּה כִּד עֵיק לִי צִלִּיתִי וּקְבַל צִלוֹתִי: ב יְהוּה פְּצִי נַפְשִׁי מִסְפּוּוֹתָא דְשַׁקְרָא מִן לִישְׁנָא נְכִילְתָא: ג מַא יְהִיב לָךְ מִלְשִׁנָא וּמַא יוֹסִיף לָךְ אֲכִיל קוֹרְצִי לִישְׁנָא נְכִילְתָא: ד גִּירְרִין דְּגִבְרָא דְגִיִּי בְרִין שְׁנִינִין הִיךְ בְּרַקִּין מִלְעִיל עִם גּוֹמְרֵי רִיתְמִין דְּדַלְקִין בְּגַהִינַם מִלְרַע: ה וּוִי לִי אַרוּם אִיתוֹתְבִית עִם אוֹ נְסָאֵי שְׁרִית עִם מִשְׁכְּנֵיהוֹן דְּעִרְבָאֵי: ו יִתִּיר מִנְהוֹן שְׁרַת נַפְשִׁי עִם אַדוּם סְנֵי שְׁלָם: ז אֲנָא שְׁלָם אַרוּם אֲצִלִּי הִינּוֹן לְקִרְבָּא:	120:1 ὄδη τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν πρὸς κύριον ἐν τῷ θλίβεσθαί με ἐκέκραξα καὶ εἰσήκουσέν μου 120:2 κύριε ῥῦσαι τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἀπὸ χειλέων ἀδίκων καὶ ἀπὸ γλώσσης δολίας 120:3 τί δοθείῃ σοι καὶ τί προστεθείῃ σοι πρὸς γλώσσαν δολίαν 120:4 τὰ βέλη τοῦ δυνατοῦ ἠκονημένα σὺν τοῖς ἀνθραξίν τοῖς ἐρημικοῖς 120:5 οἴμμοι ὅτι ἡ παροικία μου ἐμακρύνθη κατεσκήνωσα μετὰ τῶν σκηνωμάτων Κηδαρ 120:6 πολλὰ παρώκησεν ἡ ψυχὴ μου 120:7 μετὰ τῶν μισούντων τὴν εἰρήνην ἤμην εἰρηνικός ὅταν ἐλάλουν αὐτοῖς ἐπολέμουν με δωρεάν			

<b>Tehillim Psalms 120</b>	<b>Toviyah Psalms 120</b>	<b>Psalmoi Psalms 120</b>
<p>120:1 In my trouble I cried to the Lord, And He answered me. 120:2 Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, From a deceitful tongue. 120:3 What shall be given to you, and what more shall be done to you, You deceitful tongue? 120:4 Sharp arrows of the warrior, With the burning coals of the broom tree. 120:5 Woe is me, for I sojourn in Meshech, For I dwell among the tents of Kedar! 120:6 Too long has my soul had its dwelling With those who hate peace. 120:7 I am for peace, but when I speak, They are for war. (NASB)</p>	<p>120:1 A song that was uttered on the ascents of the abyss. In the presence of the Lord, when I was in distress, I prayed, and he received my prayer. 120:2 O Lord, deliver my soul from lips of deceit, from a deceptive tongue. 120:3 What does he give to you, O slanderer? And what does he add to you, O defamer, deceptive tongue? 120:4 The arrows of a warrior, sharp as lightning from above, with coals of broom that burn in Gehenna below. 120:5 Woe is me, for I have settled down with the oasis-dwellers; I have dwelt with the tents of the Arabs. 120:6 More than these, my soul abides with Edom, the hater of peace. 120:7 I am peaceful, for I will pray; [but] they are for war. (EMC)</p>	<p>A Song of Degrees. 120:1 In mine affliction I cried to the Lord, and he hearkened to me. 120:2 Deliver my soul, O Lord, from unjust lips, and from a deceitful tongue. 120:3 What should be given to thee, and what should be added to thee, for thy crafty tongue? 120:4 Sharp-ened weapons of the mighty, with coals of the desert. 120:5 Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged; I have tabernacled among the tents of Kedar. 120:6 My soul has long been a sojourner; 120:7 I was peaceable among them that hated peace; when I spoke to them, they warred against me without a cause. (LXX)</p>

In *Tehillim / Psalms 120:1-7*, the psalm opens אֶל-יְהוָה בְּצָרָתָהּ לִי קָרָאתִי וַיַּעֲנֵנִי: *In my trouble I cried to the Lord, And He answered me. (NASB)* How often have you prayed and you know without a doubt that the Lord had answered your prayer? Prayer is a great blessing, and we are promised that our Heavenly Father is always listening, but often it takes some work to recognize His answers. If we consider the two ends on this discussion, (i) either God hears you or (ii) He doesn't. If the Lord does not hear our prayers, then of course there is no point in praying. But if He does (and He does!), we have to figure out how to recognize His answers, and faithfully move forward. Regardless of whether we feel the Lord hears our prayers or not, we are to continue to move forward in the way of righteousness, holiness, and truth. When we feel He is not listening, maybe we need to experience some personal growth. A few good questions to ask ourselves when this situation occurs are, "Am I pure in my intentions during prayer?" "Are my motives worthy?" And, "Am I willing to do what He asks of me?" If the answer to each of these is yes, you can trust that the Lord hears your prayers. Remember also the Lord of the universe isn't under obligation to say "yes" to every prayer. That is a good thing, considering some of the things we request! In addition, sometimes answers come in subtle or unexpected ways.

According to the Scriptures, Job led a righteous life and he maintained the correct motivations for what he did, yet disaster came his way. While Job was trying to understand what was happening to him and why, he prayed the following prayer.

**Job 30:20-31:23**

*30:20 'I cry out to You for help, but You do not answer me; I stand up, and You turn Your attention against me. 30:21 'You have become cruel to me; With the might of Your hand You persecute me. 30:22 'You lift me up to the wind and cause me to ride; And You dissolve me in a storm. 30:23 'For I know that You will bring me to death And to the house of meeting for all living. 30:24 'Yet does not one in a heap of ruins stretch out his hand, Or in his disaster therefore cry out for help? 30:25 'Have I not wept for the one whose life is hard? Was not my soul grieved for the needy? 30:26 'When I expected good, then evil came; When I waited for light, then darkness came. 30:27 'I am seething within and cannot relax; Days of affliction confront me. 30:28 'I go about mourning without comfort; I stand up in the assembly and*

*cry out for help. 30:29 'I have become a brother to jackals And a companion of ostriches. 30:30 'My skin turns black on me, And my bones burn with fever. 30:31 'Therefore my harp is turned to mourning, And my flute to the sound of those who weep. 31:1 'I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin? 31:2 'And what is the portion of God from above Or the heritage of the Almighty from on high? 31:3 'Is it not calamity to the unjust And disaster to those who work iniquity? 31:4 'Does He not see my ways And number all my steps? 31:5 'If I have walked with falsehood, And my foot has hastened after deceit, 31:6 Let Him weigh me with accurate scales, And let God know my integrity. 31:7 'If my step has turned from the way, Or my heart followed my eyes, Or if any spot has stuck to my hands, 31:8 Let me sow and another eat, And let my crops be uprooted. 31:9 'If my heart has been enticed by a woman, Or I have lurked at my neighbor's doorway, 31:10 May my wife grind for another; And let others kneel down over her. 31:11 'For that would be a lustful crime; Moreover, it would be an iniquity punishable by judges. 31:12 'For it would be fire that consumes to Abaddon, And would uproot all my increase. 31:13 'If I have despised the claim of my male or female slaves When they filed a complaint against me, 31:14 What then could I do when God arises? And when He calls me to account, what will I answer Him? 31:15 'Did not He who made me in the womb make him, And the same one fashion us in the womb? 31:16 'If I have kept the poor from their desire, Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, 31:17 Or have eaten my morsel alone, And the orphan has not shared it 31:18 (But from my youth he grew up with me as with a father, And from infancy I guided her), 31:19 If I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, Or that the needy had no covering, 31:20 If his loins have not thanked me, And if he has not been warmed with the fleece of my sheep, 31:21 If I have lifted up my hand against the orphan, Because I saw I had support in the gate, 31:22 Let my shoulder fall from the socket, And my arm be broken off at the elbow. 31:23 'For calamity from God is a terror to me, And because of His majesty I can do nothing. (NASB)*

It is interesting how Job also felt as if the Lord did not or would not answer his prayers. Job couples the concept of sexual sin (see 31:6-12) to hearing from the Lord. The idea is the desire of the eyes in combination with the heart leads to actions, and those actions are what Job's friends are claiming have led to his calamity. Job speaks of having taken care of the widow and the poor person (31:16) and clothed those who are in need of clothing (31:19), and yet while doing all of these things in service to the Lord, the God of Israel brought calamity against not only him but his family as well, his children had died. This is a difficult thing to accept by some due to the modern theology that God is love, and He would not cause hardship or pain to come upon a person. Job said that he was innocent, and based upon the narrative of the book of Job, he was indeed innocent and a righteous man, and for both of these things, the Lord used him as an example of righteousness, that in the midst of his hardship, pain, and calamity, he did not blaspheme the Lord, and he maintained his faith. The point is, no matter what the circumstances, we are called to persevere in our faith, meaning we are to remain faithful to the Lord. This is why Yeshua did not place a condition upon what he said in regards to prayer, that we are to continue to seek the Lord in the midst of our troubles and believe we will receive what we ask for.

**Mark 11:24** *Therefore I say unto you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you. (NASB)*

**Mark 11:24** *Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. (KJV)*

Yeshua states that ALL believing prayer WILL receive the believed result. This Scripture also implies that unbelieving prayer MAY NOT receive. There is always hope in God's mercy.

The prayer David asks of the Lord is the following, ב יהוה הצילה נפשי משפת-שקר מלשון רמיה: .



120:2 *Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, From a deceitful tongue. (NASB)* The deceitful tongue is synonymous to the deceitful heart, the evil inclination (Lashon Hara). David asks also saying, *גַּם מִה-יִתֵּן לְךָ וּמִה-יִסִּיף לְךָ לְשׁוֹן רְמִיָּה:* 120:3 *What shall be given to you, and what more shall be done to you, You deceitful tongue? (NASB)* Is David speaking of the punishment that is due the deceitful tongue? Has deception become second nature to you to the extent that it is what goes through the narratives of the heart on a daily basis, seeking how to deceive? Have you ever sought to be cleansed of sin in the sense that one day we will stand before our Father in heaven, and you do not want to look around with deception, lust, covetousness, or some other sin remaining in the heart? According to the Scriptures, deceiving others is strictly forbidden: *“The Holy One, blessed be He, hates a person which says one thing with his mouth and another in his heart.” (Talmud Bavli Pesachim 113b)* We are not to be double minded. Defrauding by the seller overcharging or the buyer underpaying is also condemned, this is the example of having unjust scales, where the Mishnah (Bava Metzia 4:10) states: *“As there is wronging in buying and selling, there is wronging with words. A man must not ask: ‘How much is this thing?’ if he has no intention of buying it.”* Note how there is something about the person asking for a price when he is not really interested in buying that is related to having unjust scales. Yeshua said in *Matthew 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged. 7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. 7:3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? (KJV)* Here Yeshua suggests that the concept of unjust scales may also be applied to the one who is judging someone else due to their sins. This is consistent with the Lord wanting justice and truth for our lives, the very thing David is seeking the Lord for deliverance from in *Tehillim / Psalms 120:2*. An often quoted rabbinic saying (*Talmud Bavli Shabbat 55a*) states, *“Truth is the seal of the Holy One, blessed be He.”* In Rashi’s explanation, he describes this saying as referring to the Hebrew word for truth, *emet*, which is formed from the first letter of the alphabet, *alef*, the middle letter, *mem*, and the final letter, *tav*. He says the God of truth is found wherever there is truth and His absence is felt wherever there is falsehood. Jeremiah the prophet similarly says, *“The Lord God is truth” (Jeremiah 10:10)* and the Psalmist declares, *“Thy Torah is truth” (Tehillim / Psalms 119:142)*. David also states, *“And speaketh the truth in his heart” (Tehillim / Psalms 15:2)*, one explanation by the Jewish commentators is the God-fearing man should keep his promise even if he only made it in his heart, even if it was no more than a promise he had kept to himself without revealing it to the one to whom he made it.

David writes of something similar in *Tehillim / Psalms 10:1-12*.

### ***Tehillim / Psalms 10:1-12***

*10:1 Why do You stand afar off, O Lord? Why do You hide Yourself in times of trouble? 10:2 In pride the wicked hotly pursue the afflicted; Let them be caught in the plots which they have devised. 10:3 For the wicked boasts of his heart’s desire, And the greedy man curses and spurns the Lord. 10:4 The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek Him. All his thoughts are, ‘There is no God.’ 10:5 His ways prosper at all times; Your judgments are on high, out of his sight; As for all his adversaries, he snorts at them. 10:6 He says to himself, ‘I will not be moved; Throughout all generations I will not be in adversity.’ 10:7 His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is mischief and wickedness. 10:8 He sits in the lurking places of the villages; In the hiding places he kills the innocent; His eyes stealthily watch for the unfortunate. 10:9 He lurks in a hiding place as a lion in his lair; He lurks to catch the afflicted; He catches the afflicted when he draws him into his net. 10:10 He crouches, he bows down, And the unfortunate fall by his mighty ones. 10:11 He says to himself, ‘God has forgotten; He has hidden His face; He will never see it.’ 10:12 Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up Your hand. Do not forget the afflicted. (NASB)*

David seeks this same question of whether the Lord hears his prayer or not, asking why the Lord seems to stand afar off in times of trouble. The unrighteous man boasts in his wicked and unrighteous heart saying there is no God who brings justice. This type of wickedness is what Radak describes in his commentary on

**Radak on Tehillim / Psalms 10:8 Part 1**

*He sitteth in the places of ambush of the villages: - The villages are the open towns which are upon the highways : as “her towns (lit. her daughters) and her villages” (Jos. 15:45) ; “the villages that Kedar doth inhabit” (Is. 42:11). Similarly we find (Zech. 2:8) “Jerusalem shall dwell as open regions.”*

**Part 2**

*In the secret places doth he murder the innocent : - for usually the wicked does not do his wicked work openly, but he sits in ambushes and secret places that he may beware of the sons of men so that they may not see him. But he cannot beware of the All-seeing God !*

**Part 3**

*His eyes lie in wait for the hapless : - לחלכה is equivalent to חלך with the addition of he ; and its interpretation : “for the poor.” He says : that the eyes of the wicked are on the look out for the poor, to take him. And יצפנו (lie in wait for) is an intransitive verb, as if he meant “ he sets his eyes in a hidden place (צפון), and from thence looks out over the roads.”*

Radak speaks of the unrighteous as hiding in secret places for the purpose to leap out and murder the innocent. Murder may come in many forms. One way to bring down the innocent is by the way of charging interest, this increases the burden to pay back a debt. If interest is too high and payments go beyond the means of the one who is in debt, it is impossible to become debt free. This may lead to slavery, as in the case of the one who is in debt selling himself in order to pay off his debt, or in the sense that one spends all of his means to pay off his debt not having enough even for food to feed his family. Radak says the eyes of the wicked are on the poor to take him down, and he lays in wait to do so, even by the means of an indirect method of bringing him down in any way that he is able.

In *Devarim / Deuteronomy 7:12-8:10*, Moshe told the Children of Israel that if they obeyed the Lord God of Israel, He would remain faithful to the covenant, He would bless them with fertility and agricultural productivity, and would ward off sickness. Moshe directed the people to destroy all of the seven nations in the Land of Canaan, those whom the Lord has delivered to them, and to utterly destroy their places of worship not serving their gods. Moshe tells the people not to fear these nations because they were numerous, but to recall what the Lord God did to Pharaoh and the Egyptians and the wonders by which the Lord has liberated them. The God of Israel would do the same to the peoples whom they feared, and would send a plague against them. The Torah states the Lord Himself would dislodge those peoples little by little, so that the wild beasts would not take over the land. Moshe directed the people to burn the images of their gods, not to covet nor keep the silver and gold on them, nor to bring an abhorrent thing into their houses. In *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:1-9:3*, Moshe warned the Israelites not to forget the Lord God, not to violate His commandments, and not to grow haughty and believe that it was by their own power that had won their wealth, but to remember the Lord had given them the power to prosper. (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:18*) Moshe warns that if they forgot the Lord and followed other gods, then they would certainly perish like the nations that are being driven out and displaced from the land. Moses warned the Israelites that they were to dispossess nations greater than they, but God would go before them as a devouring fire to drive out the land's inhabitants. This blessing the Lord gives to His people speaks of the importance of our having the correct motivation to walk in God's Ways, according to His commandments (i.e. to follow in the footsteps of the Messiah.) In doing so our Father in heaven will recognize us as His children, and do the things that He says He will do for us. The enemy will be dispossessed, and the Lord Himself will be involved in doing so.

David speaks of these things in the following way, *דָּ חֲצֵי גִבּוֹר שְׁנוּנִים עִם גְּחָלֵי רְתָמִים: 120:4 Sharp arrows of the warrior; With the burning coals of the broom tree. (NASB)* The deceitfulness of sin is paralleled

to the arrows of the enemy, and the burning of the broom tree. Studying the broom tree and fire reveals long burning coals may be manufactured from the broom bush. We read of the broom bush in *1 Kings 19:4-5*.

### ***1 Kings 19:4-5***

*19:4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom-tree; and he requested for himself that he might die; and said: "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." 19:5 And he lay down and slept under a broom-tree; and, behold, an angel touched him, and said unto him: "Arise and eat." (JPS)*

Elijah had run because all of the prophets of the Lord were being killed and his life was in danger. We are told that he sat down beneath a broom tree and requested that his life would end. Why the choice of a broom tree to lay under? Was this the predominant species of tree in the region he had fled to? Is there a deeper meaning behind the broom tree under which he slept? Was it believed the broom tree was the bush the Lord spoke to Moshe through? Was the broom tree the burning bush mentioned in the Torah? Did Elijah sit under the broom tree for the purpose of hearing from the Lord? Regardless of the meaning of the broom tree, David in his psalm and the Rabbis in the Talmud describe the broom tree as having a special kind of wood that is long burning.

### ***Talmud Bavli Shabbat 37b***

אמר רבה בר בר חנה אמר רבי יוחנן קטמה והובערה משהין עליה חמין שהוחמו כל צורכן ותב- שיל שבישל כל צורכו ואפי' גחלים של רותם ש"מ מצטמק ויפה לו מותר שאני הכא דקטמה אי *Rabba bar bar Hana said that Rabbi Yohanan said: With regard to a stove that he swept out or covered with ashes before Shabbat and subsequently reignited on Shabbat, one may leave hot water that was already completely heated and cooked food that was already completely cooked upon it, even if the coals were from the wood of a broom tree, which are very hot and long-burning. If so, conclude from this that even if food shrivels and improves while on the stove, it is permitted. The Gemara rejects this: Here, in this case, it is different because he covered it with ashes. Therefore, it is permitted to leave it on the stove. The Gemara asks: If so, what was the purpose of saying this halakha? The Gemara answers: Mention of the case where he covered it with ashes and it reignited on Shabbat was necessary. The Gemara challenges that explanation: This case is identical to the previous one. Why did Rabbi Yohanan find it necessary to repeat what was already said? The Gemara responds that there is a novel element in his statement. It was necessary to teach the case of coals from the wood of a broom tree. Even in a case of especially hot coals it is permitted.*

The rabbis are speaking of cooking food on the Shabbat and the broom tree that produces coals that may remain lit on into the Shabbat. This idea is coupled to obeying God's word, keeping His command of the Sabbath rest. The Rabbis in the Talmud go on to use the broom bush in an example of keeping Torah or not keeping Torah according to the *Talmud Bavli Chagigah 12b*.

### ***Talmud Bavli Chagigah 12b***

אמר ר"ל כל העוסק בתורה בלילה הקב"ה מושך עליו חוט של חסד ביום שנאמר יומם יצוה ה' חסדו ומה טעם יומם יצוה ה' חסדו משום ובלילה שירה עמי ואיכא דאמרי אמר ר"ל כל העוסק בתורה בעוה"ז שהוא דומה ללילה הקב"ה מושך עליו חוט של חסד לעוה"ב שהוא דומה ליום *With regard to the aforementioned verse, Reish Lakish said: Whoever occupies himself with Torah at night, the Holy One, Blessed be He, extends a thread of kindness over him by day, as it is stated: "By day, the Lord will command*

*His kindness,” and what is the reason that “by day, the Lord will command His kindness”? Because “and in the night His song,” i.e., the song of Torah, “is with me.” And some say that Reish Lakish said: Whoever occupies himself with Torah in this world, which is comparable to night, the Holy One, Blessed be He, extends a thread of kindness over him in the World-to-Come, which is comparable to day, as it is stated: “By day, the Lord will command His kindness, and in the night His song is with me.” א”ר לוי כל הפוסק מדברי תורה ועוסק בדברי שיחה מאכילין אותו גחלי רתמים שנאמר (איוב ל, ד) הקוטפים מלוח עלי שיח ושרש רתמים With regard to the same matter, Rabbi Levi said: Anyone who pauses from words of Torah to occupy himself with mundane conversation will be fed with the coals of the broom tree, as it is stated: “They pluck saltwort [maluah] with wormwood [alei siah], and the roots of the broom tree [retamim] are their food” (Job 30:4). The exposition is as follows: Those who pluck, i.e., pause, from learning Torah, which was given upon two tablets, luhot, which sounds similar to maluah, for the purpose of siah, idle chatter, are punished by having to eat coals made from “the roots of the broom tree.” And from where do we derive that Ma’on is called heaven? As it is stated: “Look forth from Your holy Ma’on, from heaven” (Deuteronomy 26:15).*

In Chaggigah 12b, the rabbis speak of the importance of studying the Torah and say the one who occupies himself with Torah during the night, the Lord extends kindness over him by day. The night, the darkness, is paralleled in the Scriptures to unrighteousness. The idea here may be that for the one who applies himself to studying the Torah rather than choosing unrighteousness, this illustrates one’s devotion to the Lord and His Word. The Talmud states, “by day, the Lord will command His kindness,” where the light is paralleled to righteousness. Naturally the righteousness of God is commanded during the light of day. This world (night) is full of sin, and the world to come (day) is full of righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth. The point is we are to take time (pause) to consider, and to contemplate the words of the Torah. If one chooses to occupy himself with mundane conversation will be fed the coals of the broom tree. Note the lingering nature of the coal, its ability to produce coals that remain for a long time. This implies suffering going to those who do not take the time to draw near to the Lord in His Word. These things may be paralleled to the effects of sin on our lives. The disregard for the God’s Word will lead to great suffering as a result of the sin in one’s life.

David concludes saying the following, ה אֹיְבָה לִי כִּי-גִרְתִּי מְשַׁךְ שְׁכֵנֹתַי עִם-אֶהְלִי קֶדְרָה: ו רַבַּת שְׁכֵנָה-לָּהּ, אֲנִי-שְׁלוֹם: ז אֲנִי-שְׁלוֹם וְכִי אֲדַבֵּר הַמָּה לְמִלְחָמָה: 120:5 Woe is me, for I sojourn in Meshech, For I dwell among the tents of Kedar! 120:6 Too long has my soul had its dwelling With those who hate peace. 120:7 I am for peace, but when I speak, They are for war. (NASB) Sin in our lives functions in a way that is constantly at war with the spirit, whereas, the spirit the Lord gives to a man is that of peace and joy. Meshech (מֶשֶׁךְ) is named as a son of Japheth in *Bereshit / Genesis 10:2* and *1 Chronicles 1:5*. Another Meshech is named as a son of Aram in *1 Chronicles 1:17*. Aram is located east of Israel, and were the enemy of Israel, this is illustrated by David’s words saying that he sojourned in Meshech and dwelled in Kedar, and that his soul was too long with those who hate peace. Aram was the Hebrew designation for the nation of Syria, therefore the Arameans is a reference to Syrians. Note the English translations of *2 Kings 7:6* (biblehub.org) where the translators substituted the word Syrian for the Hebrew word Aramean. The borders of Aram encompassed a broad region immediately to the northeast of Israel, extending to the Euphrates River and including Mesopotamia. Among the major cities inhabited by ancient Arameans were Damascus (*Bereshit / Genesis 14:15*) and Hamath (*Bamidbar / Numbers 13:21*). Much later, Syrian Antioch was built and is mentioned in the Apostolic Writings (*Acts 11:19 and 13:1*). Note also when Abraham sought a wife for his son Isaac, he sent a servant to the land of Aram to find Rebekah (see *Bereshit / Genesis 24:10 and 25:20*). Laban, Jacob’s father-in-law, was called an Aramean in *Bereshit / Genesis 31:10*. Jacob himself was also called “a wandering Aramean” in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 26:5*, since both his mother and his grandfather were from Mesopotamia and therefore considered Arameans.

During the reign of King David, the Arameans of Damascus came to the help of another group of Syr-



ians. David defeated them, and the Arameans were forced to pay tribute (see *2 Samuel 8:5-6*). Later, the Arameans joined forces with the Ammonites in war against Israel (*2 Samuel 10*). The Israelites defeated Aram again and kept them in subjugation which is described during the reign of King Solomon (see *1 Kings 4:21*). Following the death of Solomon, the Arameans were a thorn in Israel's side. They fought against Israel during King Ahab's time, and Israel won (see *1 Kings 20*). Another battle with the Arameans however, led to the death of Ahab (*2 Chronicles 18:34*). The Arameans raided Israel (*2 Kings 6:8*) and later laid siege to the capital, Samaria (*2 Kings 6:24*). Elisha prophesied the atrocities that the Arameans would commit (*2 Kings 8:12*). The Arameans fought King Joram of Israel and wounded him (*2 Kings 8:28*), and they fought King Joash of Judah and wounded him (*2 Chronicles 24:23-25*). In addition, the eventual fall of Jerusalem at the hands of Babylon was aided by the Arameans (see *2 Kings 24:2*). The history of Israel reveals the Arameans were at war with Israel for a very long time, and David says these peoples do not love peace but war. Something to note, David says, *120:7 I am for peace, but when I speak, They are for war. (NASB)* Though these people chose war over peace, there were some Syrian's who sought the God of Israel. In *2 Kings 5*, we are told of Naaman the Syrian who had leprosy. Naaman, was a commander of the army of the king of Aram, he was an enemy of Israel, however he humbled himself enough to seek the help of the God of Israel. Naaman learned that the God of Israel is merciful to all those who call upon Him, even those who determined in their hearts to make war against God's people, there is always the opportunity to repent, to turn from their sins, and to seek the God of Israel. This is a wonderful demonstration of God's mercy and His power to forgive. Let's Pray!

Heavenly Father,

Thank You Lord for Your mercy and the great work that you are doing in our lives. We believe You are able to overcome all things, from saving us from our enemies, to the deliverance from sin, and even to work in our hearts to deeply, truly, and honestly seek 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 to pray and to 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, 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!

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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