

<p>ו הַבְּאִישׁוֹ נִמְקוּ חֲבוּרָתִי מִפְּנֵי אִוְלָתִי: ז נַעֲוִיתִי שְׁחָתִי עַד-מָאֵד כָּל-הַיּוֹם קָדַר הַלְכָתִי: ח פִּי-כֶסֶלִי מְלֹאוֹ נִקְלָה וְאִין מָתָם בְּבִשְׂרִי: ט נִפְוַגְתִּי וְנִדְפִיתִי עַד- מָאֵד שְׂאֲגָתִי מִנְהַמַּת לְבִי: י אֲדַנִּי נִגְדָּה כָּל-תְּאֻוֹתַי וְאֲנַחְתִּי מִמָּהָר לֹא-נִסְתָּרָה: יא לְבִי סָחַרְחַר עֲזָבַנִי כַחֵי וְאוֹר עֵינָי גַּם- הֵם אִין אֶתִּי: יב אֶהְבִּי וְרַעִי מִנְגֵד נִגְעִי יַעֲמְדוּ וְקָרֹבִי מִרְחַק עֲמָדוּ: יג וַיִּנְקְשׁוּ מִבְּקָשֵׁי נַפְשִׁי וְדַרְשֵׁי רַעְתִּי דָּבְרוּ הַיּוֹת וּמְרָמוֹת כָּל-הַיּוֹם יְהִי: יד וְאֲנִי כִחְרַשׁ לֹא אֲשַׁמְעַ וּכְאֶלֶם לֹא יִפְתַּח-פִּי: טו וְאֶהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר לֹא-שָׁמַע וְאִין כְּפִיו תּוֹכַחֹת: טז פִּי-לֹהֵךְ יִהְיֶה הַחֹתְלָתִי אֲתָהּ תַעֲנֶה אֲדַנִּי אֱלֹהֵי: יז פִּי-אֶמְרָתִי כֹן- יִשְׁמְחוּ-לִי כְמוֹט רִגְלֵי עָלֵי הַהֲדִילוּ: יח פִּי-אֲנִי לְצֹלַע נִכּוֹן וּמְכֹאֲבֵי נִגְדֵי תָמִיד: יט פִּי-עֹנֵי אֲגִיד אֲדַאֵג מִחֲטָאֵתִי: כ וְאִיבֵי חַיִּים עֲצָמוּ וְרַבּוּ שְׁנֵאֵי שְׁקָר: כא וּמְשַׁלְּמֵי רַעַה תַּחַת טוֹבָה יִשְׁטַנּוּנֵי תַחַת רְדוּפֵי [רְדָפֵי] -טוֹב: כב אֶל-תַּעֲזָבֵנִי יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֵי אֶל-תִּרְחַק מִמֶּנִּי: כג חוֹשָׁה לְעִזְרָתִי אֲדַנִּי תִשׁוּעָתִי:</p>	<p>ה ארום חובבי עברו רישי היך מטול יקיר יקרו מיני: ו סריאו מאיסו הת- מסיאו הלבשושי מן קדם טפשותי: ז עקימית שחיית עד לחדא כל יומא ח חכיר הליכית: ח ארום כסלי אתמליין קדיחתא קלילותא ולית אסו בגושמי: ט פגיית ואתמכיית עד לחדא רגישית מנהמותא דלבי: י יהוה לקיבלך כל רגיגתי רגוגיתי ותינחתי מינדך לא מט- מרא אטמריית: יא לבבי לבי צמרמר שבקני חילי וניהור עיני ברם הינון אינון ליתיהון עמי: יב רחמי וחב- רי מקביל מכתשי קמו וקריבי מרחיק קיימין: יג ועבדו פחין תבעי נפשי ובעי בישותי מלילו שקרא וניכלא כל יומא מרנין ממללין: יד ואנא היך חרשא לא אשמע והיך אילמנא דלא פתח פומיה: טו והוייתי כגבר דלא שמע מעלמא ולא אית בפומיה מכסנייתא אכסניתא: טז ארום קדמך יהוה צליתי אנת את תקבל יהוה אלהי: יז ארום אמרית דילמא יחזון עלי באזדעזעות ריגלי עלי אית- רברבו: יח ארום אנא לתברא מעתד וכיבי לקיבלי תדירא: יט ארום חובי אתני אתייצף מן חטאי: כ ובעלי דבבי חיי עלימו וסגי אין וסגון סנאי על שי- קרא: כא ופרעין בישתא חלף חילופי טבתא מסטנן לי חלופי דרדפית טב: כב לא תשבקינני יהוה אלהי לא תרחיק מיני: כג זריז לסיועי יהוה פורקני:</p>	<p>38:5 προσώζεσαν και ἐσάπησαν οἱ μώλωπές μου ἀπὸ προσώπου τῆς ἀφροσύνης μου 38:6 ἔταλαιπώρησα και κατεκάμφθην ἕως τέλους ὄλην τὴν ἡμέραν σκυθρωπάζων ἐπορευόμενην 38:7 ὅτι αἱ ψῦαι μου ἐπλήσθησαν ἐμπαιγμῶν και οὐκ ἔστιν ἴασις ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου 38:8 ἐκακώθην και ἐταπεινώθην ἕως σφόδρα ὠρυσμένη ἀπὸ στεναγμοῦ τῆς καρδίας μου 38:9 κύριε ἐναντίον σου πᾶσα ἡ ἐπιθυμία μου και ὁ στεναγμός μου ἀπὸ σοῦ οὐκ ἐκρύβη 38:10 ἡ καρδία μου ἐταράχθη ἐγκατέλιπέν με ἡ ἰσχὺς μου και τὸ φῶς τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν μου και αὐτὸ οὐκ ἔστιν μετ' ἐμοῦ 38:11 οἱ φίλοι μου και οἱ πλησίον μου ἐξ ἐναντίας μου ἤγγισαν και ἔστησαν και οἱ ἐγγιστά μου ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἔστησαν 38:12 και ἐξεβιάσαντο οἱ ζητοῦντες τὴν ψυχὴν μου και οἱ ζητοῦντες τὰ κακά μοι ἐλάλησαν ματαιότητας και δολιότητας ὄλην τὴν ἡμέραν ἐμελέτησαν 38:13 ἐγὼ δὲ ὡσεὶ κωφὸς οὐκ ἤκουον και ὡσεὶ ἄλαλος οὐκ ἀνοίγων τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ 38:14 και ἐγενόμην ὡσεὶ ἄνθρωπος οὐκ ἀκούων και οὐκ ἔχων ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ ἔλεγμούς 38:15 ὅτι ἐπὶ σοί κύριε ἤλπισα σὺ εἰσακούση κύριε ὁ θεὸς μου 38:16 ὅτι εἶπα μήποτε ἐπιχαρῶσίν μοι οἱ ἐχθροί μου και ἐν τῷ σαλευθῆναι πόδας μου ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἐμεγαλορρημόνησαν 38:17 ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰς μάλιστα εἶτομος και ἡ ἀληθῶν μου ἐνώπιόν μου διὰ παντός 38:18 ὅτι τὴν ἀνομίαν μου ἐγὼ ἀναγγελάω και μεριμνήσω ὑπὲρ τῆς ἁμαρτίας μου 38:19 οἱ δὲ ἐχθροί μου ζῶσιν και κεκραταίωνται ὑπὲρ ἐμέ και ἐπληθύνθησαν οἱ μισοῦντές με ἀδίκως 38:20 οἱ ἀνταποδιδόντες κακὰ ἀντὶ ἀγαθῶν ἐνδιέβαλλον με ἐπεὶ κατεδίωκον δικαιοσύνην και ἀπέρριψάν με τὸν ἀγαπητὸν ὡσεὶ νεκρὸν ἐβδελυγμένον 38:21 μὴ ἐγκαταλίπης με κύριε ὁ θεὸς μου μὴ ἀποστής ἀπ' ἐμοῦ 38:22 πρόσχες εἰς τὴν βοήθειάν μου κύριε τῆς σωτηρίας μου</p>
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<p>Tehillim / Psalms 38 A Psalm of David, for a memorial. 38:1 O Lord, rebuke me not in Your wrath, And chasten me not in Your burning anger. 38:2 For Your arrows have sunk deep into me, And Your hand has pressed down on me. 38:3 There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation; There is no health in my bones because of my sin. 38:4 For my iniquities are gone over my head; As a heavy burden they weigh too much for me. 38:5 My wounds grow foul and fester Because of my folly. 38:6 I am bent over and greatly bowed down; I go mourning all day long. 38:7 For my loins are filled with burning, And there is no soundness in my flesh. 38:8 I am benumbed and badly crushed; I groan because of the agitation of my heart. 38:9 Lord, all my desire is before You; And my sighing is not hidden from You. 38:10 My heart throbs, my strength fails me; And the light of my eyes, even that has gone from me. 38:11 My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague; And my kinsmen stand afar off. 38:12 Those who seek my life lay snares for me; And those who seek to injure me have threatened destruction, And they devise treachery all day long. 38:13 But I, like a deaf man, do not hear; And I am like a mute man who does not open his mouth. 38:14 Yes, I am like a man who does not hear, And in whose mouth are no arguments. 38:15 For I hope in You, O Lord; You will answer, O Lord my God. 38:16 For I said, ‘May they not rejoice over me, Who, when my foot slips, would magnify themselves against me.’ 38:17 For I am ready to fall, And my sorrow is continually before me. 38:18 For I confess my iniquity; I am full of anxiety because of my sin. 38:19 But my enemies are vigorous and strong, And many are those who hate me wrongfully. 38:20 And those who repay evil for good, They oppose me, because I follow what is good. 38:21 Do not forsake me, O Lord; O my God, do not be far from me! 38:22 Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation! (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 38 38:1 A psalm of David. A handful of incense, a good memorial for Israel. 38:2 O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger, and do not punish me in your wrath. 38:3 For your arrows have descended on me, and the blow of your hand rests upon me. 38:4 here is no healing in my body because of your anger, no health in my limbs because of my sin. 38:5 For my sins have mounted past my head; like a heavy burden, they were too heavy for me. 38:6 My wounds stank, they decayed, because of my foolishness. 38:7 I am bent over, I am greatly bowed down; all the day I have gone about in gloom. 38:8 For my loins are filled with burning, and there is no healing in my body. 38:9 I have become faint and I have been humbled greatly; I moaned because of the groaning of my heart. 38:10 O Lord, before you is all my desire; and my sighing is not hid from you. 38:11 My heart has become hot; my strength has left me, and the light of my eyes – even they are not with me. 38:12 My friends and companions stood away from the sight of my plague; and my relatives stand far off. 38:13 And those who seek my life have made traps; and those who seek my ruin have uttered lies, and they murmur deceit all the day. 38:14 But I am like a deaf man, I will not hear, like a mute who does not open his mouth. 38:15 And I have become like a man who has never heard, and there is no rebuke in his mouth. 38:16 For in your presence, O Lord, have I prayed; you will accept [my prayer], O Lord my God. 38:17 For I said, “Lest they rejoice over me.” When my foot stumbled, they vaunted themselves over me. 38:18 For I am prepared for disaster, and my pain is before me always. 38:19 For my sin I will relate, I will be troubled by my sin. 38:20 But my enemies, alive, have grown strong; those who hate me through deceit are numerous. 38:21 And those who repay evil for good oppose me, because I have pursued good. 38:22 Do not forsake me, O Lord; my God, do not be far from me. 38:23 Hasten to my aid, O Lord, my redemption. (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 38 A Psalm of David for remembrance concerning the Sabbath-day. 38:1 O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath, neither chasten me in thine anger. 38:2 For thy weapons are fixed in me, and thou hast pressed thy hand heavily upon me. 38:3 For there is no health in my flesh because of thine anger; there is no peace to my bones because of my sins. 38:4 For my transgressions have gone over mine head: they have pressed heavily upon me like a weighty burden. 38:5 My bruises have become noisome and corrupt, because of my foolishness. 38:6 I have been wretched and bowed down continually: I went with a mourning countenance all the day. 38:7 For my soul is filled with mockings; and there is no health in my flesh. 38:8 I have been afflicted and brought down exceedingly: I have roared for the groaning of my heart. 38:9 But all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hidden from thee. 38:10 My heart is troubled, my strength has failed me; and the light of mine eyes is not with me. 38:11 My friends and my neighbors drew near before me, and stood still; and my nearest of kin stood afar off. 38:12 While they pressed hard upon me that sought my soul: and they that sought my hurt spoke vanities, and devised deceits all the day. 38:13 But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and was as a dumb man not opening his mouth. 38:14 And I was as a man that hears not, and who has no reproofs in his mouth. 38:15 For I hoped in thee, O Lord: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God. 38:16 For I said, Lest mine enemies rejoice against me: for when my feet were moved, they spoke boastingly against me. 38:17 For I am ready for plagues, and my grief is continually before me. 38:18 For I will declare mine iniquity, and be distressed for my sin. 38:19 But mine enemies live, and are mightier than I: and they that hate me unjustly are multiplied. 38:20 They that reward evil for good slandered me; because I followed righteousness. 38:21 Forsake me not, O Lord my God: depart not from me. 38:22 Draw nigh to my help, O Lord of my salvation. (LXX)</p>
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In this week’s study from *Tehillim / Psalms 38:1-22*, the Psalm is introduced with the phrase **אֶמְזַכֵּר לְהַזְכִּיר** *A Psalm of David, for a memorial*. The translators choose to translate the word **לְהַזְכִּיר** (le hazkir) a verb that is in the Hiphil Infinitive Construct form meaning “to remember; recall, call to mind” as “*A Psalm of David, for a memorial*.” A “*memorial*” is defined as an adjective “*commemorative; of or pertaining to the memory*” and as a noun “*ceremony or place designed to preserve the memory of people or individuals who have died; monument built in honor of a deceased person or past event*.” Does this Psalm present itself as a memorial, a memory of people or individuals who have died? The Aramaic translation

states: *38:1 A psalm of David. A handful of incense, a good memorial for Israel. (EMC)* The Aramaic translation literally says “*A Psalm, hymn of praise, of David, a handful of frankincense as a good memory unto Israel.*” Why do the rabbis say that the Psalm is an incense offering of remembrance before the Lord? According to the Torah, is there a remembrance offering in the Mishkhan (Tabernacle)? We read the following in Parshiot Vayikra and Tzav (*Vayikra / Leviticus 1:1-8:36*):

Vayikra / Leviticus 2:1-3

2:1 'Now when anyone presents a grain offering as an offering to the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour, and he shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it. 2:2 'He shall then bring it to Aaron's sons the priests; and shall take from it his handful of its fine flour and of its oil with all of its frankincense. And the priest shall offer it up in smoke as its memorial portion on the altar, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the Lord. 2:3 'The remainder of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons: a thing most holy, of the offerings to the Lord by fire. (NASB)

א וּנְפֹשׁ כִּי-תִקְרִיב קֶרְבַּן מִנְחָה לַיהוָה סֹלֶת יִהְיֶה קֶרְבָּנוּ וַיִּצַק עָלֶיהָ שֶׁמֶן וַנִּתֵּן עָלֶיהָ לֶבְנֵהּ: ב
וְהִבִּיאָהּ אֶל-בְּנֵי אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֲנִים וְקִמֵּץ מִשָּׁם מְלֵא קִמְצוֹ מִסֹּלֶתָהּ וּמִשְׁמֶנָּה עַל כָּל-לֶבְנֵתָהּ וְהִקְטִיר הַכֹּהֵן
אֶת-אֲזְכָּרְתָּהּ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אִשָּׁה רִיחַ נִיחַח לַיהוָה: ג וְהַנּוֹתֵרֶת מִן-הַמִּנְחָה לְאֶהֱרֹן וּלְבָנָיו קֹדֶשׁ קֹדָשִׁים
מֵאִשֵּׁי יְהוָה:

Vayikra / Leviticus 6:14-16

6:14 'Now this is the law of the grain offering: the sons of Aaron shall present it before the Lord in front of the altar. 6:15 'Then one of them shall lift up from it a handful of the fine flour of the grain offering, with its oil and all the incense that is on the grain offering, and he shall offer it up in smoke on the altar, a soothing aroma, as its memorial offering to the Lord. 6:16 'what is left of it Aaron and his sons are to eat. It shall be eaten as unleavened cakes in a holy place; they are to eat it in the court of the tent of meeting. (NASB)

ז וְזֹאת תֹּוֹרַת הַמִּנְחָה הַקֶּרֶב אֶתָּה בְּנֵי-אֶהֱרֹן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֶל-פְּנֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: ח וְהָרִים מִמֶּנּוּ בְּקִמְצוֹ
מִסֹּלֶת הַמִּנְחָה וּמִשְׁמֶנָּה וְאֵת כָּל-הַלֶּבֶנָּה אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַמִּנְחָה וְהִקְטִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ רִיחַ נִיחַח אֲזְכָּרְתָּהּ לַיהוָה:
ט וְהַנּוֹתֵרֶת מִמֶּנָּה יֵאָכְלוּ אֶהֱרֹן וּבָנָיו מִצֹּוֹת תֹּאכִל בְּמָקוֹם קֹדֶשׁ בְּחֹצֵר אֹהֶל-מוֹעֵד יֵאָכְלוּהָ:

In the Hebrew bible, we find the word אֲזְכָּרְתָּהּ (azkarah, Strong's # 234) in *Vayikra / Leviticus 2:2, 2:9, 2:16, 5:12, 6:15, 24:7, and Bamidbar / Numbers 5:26*. Brown Driver, and Briggs defines azkarah as a feminine noun meaning a “*memorial offering.*” In *Vayikra / Leviticus 24:7* it is used as a reference to the frankincense burned for the bread of the presence. According to the Aramaic translation, the rabbis are most likely making the connection to *Vayikra / Leviticus 2:2* when they state that the Psalm of David is in reference to frankincense as a good memory of Israel. According to the Torah, is the azkarah offering something that is done with a favorable memory? (In memory of good things or of bad?) With regard to what the rabbis are saying in the opening verse of the Aramaic Targum, what are they implying about David's words in the Psalm?

The Septuagint states *ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαυιδ εἰς ἀνάμνησιν περὶ σαββάτου A Psalm of David for remembrance concerning the Sabbath-day. (LXX)* Why do the rabbis who translated the Septuagint state that this Psalm is in remembrance concerning the Shabbat? Looking again at the word אֲזְכָּרְתָּהּ (azkarah), we read the following in Parashat Emor (*Vayikra / Leviticus 21:1-24:23*)

Vayikra / Leviticus 24:5-8

24:5 'Then you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it; two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake. 24:6 'you shall set them in two rows, six to a row, on the pure gold table before the Lord. 24:7 'You shall put pure frankincense on each row that it may be a **memorial** portion for the bread, even an offering by fire to the Lord. 24:8 'Every sabbath day he shall set it in order before the Lord continually; it is an everlasting covenant for the sons of Israel. (NASB)

ה וְלִקְחֶתָּ סֹלֶת וְאַפִּיתָ אֹתָהּ שִׁתִּים עֲשֶׂרָה חֲלוֹת שְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרֹנִים יִהְיֶה הַחֲלֵה הָאֶחָת: ו וְשִׁמְתָּ אֹתָם שִׁתִּים מֵעֲרֻכּוֹת יָשׁ הַמְעַרְכֶּת עַל הַשְּׁלֶחָן הַטָּהוֹר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: ז וְנָתַתָּ עַל-הַמְעַרְכֶּת לְבִנְהָ זֶבֶח וְהִיתָה לְלֶחֶם לְאֻזְכָּרָה אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה: ח בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת יַעֲרֻכְנוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה תָּמִיד מֵאֵת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִית עוֹלָם:

According to Parashat Emor, the offering of the memorial portion, with the pure frankincense, is from the portion of the bread that is laid out every Shabbat. The rabbis who translated the Septuagint appear to be thinking upon *Vayikra / Leviticus 24:7*. It is interesting to read in the Apostolic Writings, in *Acts 10* and the Lord speaking to Cornelius saying that his prayers and charity to the poor went up as a “*memorial offering*” before God.

Acts 10:1-4

10:1 Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, 10:2 a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually. 10:3 About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in and said to him, ‘Cornelius!’ 10:4 And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed, he said, ‘What is it, Lord?’ And he said to him, ‘Your prayers and alms have ascended as a **memorial** before God. (NASB)

Here the angel spoke to him of a memorial offering that was acceptable, that his charity to the poor and his prayers ere pleasing to the Lord. The Greek text for *Acts 10:4* states the following:

ὁ δὲ ἀτενίσας αὐτῷ καὶ ἔμφοβος γενόμενος εἶπεν, Τί ἐστίν, κύριε; εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ, Αἱ προσευχαί σου καὶ αἱ ἐλεημοσύναι σου ἀνέβησαν εἰς **μνημόσυνον** ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ.

Literal Translation

“And gazing upon him, and thrown into fear become, he said, What is it, O Lord? And he said to him, Your prayers and your charity ascended for a memorial before God.”

Is the angel referring to the Torah and the memorial offering? What is the significance of the “*memorial offering*?” Is it that God remembers the person who has brought the offering or does God remember the reason for the bringing of the offering? The Greek word in *Acts 10:4* μνημόσυνον mnēmosunon ‘memorial,’ is a reference to something that enables someone to remember. Therefore, as the memorial goes up in smoke before God, then this becomes something that God remembers about the one who gives the memorial offering. Note that this word is used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew **אזכרה** azkārâh, the “*memorial portion*” of the grain offering in *Vayikra / Leviticus 2:2, 2:9, 2:16, 5:12; 6:15, and Bamidbar / Numbers 5:26*. The mnemosunon (memorial offering) is the sign whereby the worshiper is reminded or bringing to memory what the Lord has done for Israel. The focus of the remembering is also placed upon the worshiper, not just upon the Lord God. Note also that the references from the Torah reveals to us that this is only a portion of the mincha (grain) offering. The significance of *Acts 10:4* in the “*memorial offering*” that is being

referenced is that there is a portion of Cornelius' life that God was pleased to accept and remember him. In *Acts 10* it is apparent that Cornelius and his household function as representatives of the Gentiles. Just as the prayers of Cornelius and his charity to the poor arose as the “*memorial portion*” of an offering before God, Peter recognizes through the grace given to the one man Cornelius that God “*accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.*” *Acts 10:4* draws our attention to the piety of Cornelius as the “*memorial portion*” of a worship offering to God. The rabbis in both the Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint make the connection of the memorial portion and the life of David. David always did what was right, showing charity to the poor, active in prayer, and walking in justice (*mishpat*) and righteousness (*tzedaka*) and with a pure or innocent heart. David says in *Tehillim / Psalms 38:15-18*:

Tehillim / Psalms 38:15-18

38:15 For I hope in You, O Lord; You will answer, O Lord my God. 38:16 For I said, ‘May they not rejoice over me, Who, when my foot slips, would magnify themselves against me.’ 38:17 For I am ready to fall, And my sorrow is continually before me. 38:18 For I confess my iniquity; I am full of anxiety because of my sin. (NASB)

David goes before the Lord transparently and without deception. Thus, this Psalm can rightly be said, as the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Septuagint translations state, “*A Psalm of David, for a memorial.*”

David opens the Psalm saying בַּיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי בְרִיָּה וְיִשְׁפָּטֵנִי וְיִסְרֹנֵנִי ג כִּי-הֶצִּיף גְּחֹתוֹ-בִּי וַתִּגָּחַת 38:1 O Lord, rebuke me not in Your wrath, And chasten me not in Your burning anger. 38:2 For Your arrows have sunk deep into me, And Your hand has pressed down on me. 38:3 There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation; There is no health in my bones because of my sin. (NASB) David first seeks the Lord to not chasten him in His wrath and states that God's arrows have hit their target and he recognizes this. It is interesting to note the distinction David makes between sin that goes down to his bones, and the lack of soundness of his flesh because the Lord is indignant towards him. David says אֵין-שְׁלוֹם בְּעַצְמֵי מִפְּנֵי הַטְּאֵתִי “*there is no peace in his bones from/at the face/presence of his sin.*” Here David uses the word עֶצֶם to describe sins effect on his body. The Hebrew word עֶצֶם (*etsam*) means, literally, “*bone.*” In Biblical Hebrew, the word עֶצְמֵי (*atsmei*) that David is saying means “*my bone*” or “*my bones.*” It is used figuratively in the expression עֶצְמֵי וּבֶשָׂרִי (*otsmei u'besari*) literally, “*my bone and my flesh*” (*Bereshit / Genesis 29:14, 2 Samuel 19:13-14*) which is equivalent the expression in English, “*my flesh and blood*” making a reference to a relative. In ancient times, the word עֶצְמֵי (*atsmei*) was understood to be a reference to “*myself.*” This same concept is found in modern Hebrew were עצם is the common word used to express the concept of self or essence. The Talmud, for instance states the rule: אָדָם קָרוֹב אֶצְלוֹ (adam karov etsel atsmo) meaning “*a person is close to him/herself,*” meaning that a person cannot be held trustworthy in court to testify on his own behalf, since he may be too concerned about protecting himself to speak truthfully. Modern Hebrew however does not use the word אֶצְלוֹ in conjunction with עצם, rather, modern Hebrew uses אֵת the direct object identifier. For example, אָדָם צָרִיךְ לְאַהֲבֹת אֵת עַצְמוֹ (adam tsarich le'ehov et atsmo) meaning “*a person must love him/herself.*” Other declensions of עצם meaning self are, עֶצְמָהּ - herself, עֶצְמְךָ - yourself (m.s), עֶצְמְךָ - yourself (f.s.), עֶצְמְכֶם - yourselves, and עֶצְמָם - themselves. So David is saying that there is no soundness in his flesh and no health in himself because of his sin. The bones describes our core being, the foundation of who we are, our essence, and this sin that David is speaking of sickens his body all the way down to his core.

David feels this way because his iniquity is heavy (*38:4-8*), his sin causes the wounds of his skin to fester and become foul, which may be a possible reference to Parashat Tazria (*Vayikra / Leviticus 12:1-13:59*) and the disease of Tsaraat according to *Tehillim / Psalms 38:4-8*. Let's look at the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts:

Tehillim / Psalms 38:4-8

38:4 For my iniquities are gone over my head; As a heavy burden they weigh too much for me. 38:5 My wounds grow foul and fester Because of my folly. 38:6 I am bent over and greatly bowed down; I go mourning all day long. 38:7 For my loins are filled with burning, And there is no soundness in my flesh. 38:8 I am benumbed and badly crushed; I groan because of the agitation of my heart. (NASB)

ה כִּי-עֲוֹנֹתַי עָבְרוּ רֵאשִׁי כְּמִשְׂא כְבֵד יִכְבְּדוּ מִמֶּנִּי: ו הִבְאִישׁוּ נַמְקוּ חִבּוּרְתִי מִפְּנֵי אֲוִלְתִּי: ז נַעֲוִיתִי שְׁחַתִּי עַד-מְאֹד כָּל-הַיּוֹם קִדְר הִלְקַתִּי: ח כִּי-כִסְלִי מָלְאוּ נִקְלָה וְאִין מָתַם בְּבִשְׂרִי: ט נְפוּגַתִי וְנִדְפִיתִי עַד-מְאֹד שְׂאֲגַתִּי מִנְהַמַּת לִבִּי:

Aramaic Targum

Tehillim / Psalms 38:5-9

38:5 For my sins have mounted past my head; like a heavy burden, they were too heavy for me. 38:6 My wounds stank, they decayed, because of my foolishness. 38:7 I am bent over, I am greatly bowed down; all the day I have gone about in gloom. 38:8 For my loins are filled with burning, and there is no healing in my body. 38:9 I have become faint and I have been humbled greatly; I moaned because of the groaning of my heart. (EMC)

ה אַרוֹם חוֹבֵי עִבְרוּ רֵישִׁי הֵיךְ מִטּוֹל יִקִּיר יִקְרוּ מִינִי: ו סְרִיאוּ מֵאִיסוֹ הַתְּמַסִּיאוּ הַלְּבוּשִׁי מִן קִדְמָתִי טַפְשׁוֹתַי: ז עֲקִימִית שְׁחִיית עַד לַחְדָּא כָּל יוֹמָא חֲכִיר הַלִּיכִית: ח אַרוֹם כִּסְלֵי אַתְּמַלִּיין קִדְיַחְתָּא קַלִּלוּתָא וְלִית אֶסוּ בְּגוֹשְׁמִי: ט פְּגִיית וְאַתְּמַכִּיית עַד לַחְדָּא רְגִישִׁית מִנְהַמּוֹתָא דְלִבִּי:

Septuagint

Tehillim / Psalms 38:4-8

38:4 For my transgressions have gone over mine head: they have pressed heavily upon me like a weighty burden. 38:5 My bruises have become noisome and corrupt, because of my foolishness. 38:6 I have been wretched and bowed down continually: I went with a mourning countenance all the day. 38:7 For my soul is filled with mockings; and there is no health in my flesh. 38:8 I have been afflicted and brought down exceedingly: I have roared for the groaning of my heart. (LXX)

38:4 ὅτι αἱ ἀνομίαι μου ὑπερῆραν τὴν κεφαλὴν μου ὡσεὶ φορτίον βαρὺ ἐβαρύνθησαν ἐπ' ἐμέ
38:5 προσώζεσαν καὶ ἐσάπησαν οἱ μώλωπές μου ἀπὸ προσώπου τῆς ἀφροσύνης μου 38:6
ἐταλαιπώρησα καὶ κατεκάμφθην ἕως τέλους ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν σκυθρωπάζων ἐπορευόμην
38:7 ὅτι αἱ ψυαὶ μου ἐπλήσθησαν ἐμπαιγμῶν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἴασις ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου 38:8
ἐκακώθην καὶ ἐταπεινώθην ἕως σφόδρα ὠρυόμην ἀπὸ στεναγμοῦ τῆς καρδίας μου

David's iniquity (עֲוֹנֹתַי) has caused him to be wounded and he is attributing this to the Lord chastening him because of his sins. David says 38:5 My wounds grow foul and fester Because of my folly. 38:6 I am bent over and greatly bowed down; I go mourning all day long. 38:7 For my loins are filled with burning, And there is no soundness in my flesh. (NASB) The Aramaic Targum states 38:6 My wounds stank, they decayed, because of my foolishness. 38:7 I am bent over, I am greatly bowed down; all the day I have gone about in gloom. 38:8 For my loins are filled with burning, and there is no healing in my body. (EMC) and the Septuagint states 38:5 My bruises have become noisome and corrupt, because of my foolishness. 38:6 I have been wretched and bowed down continually: I went with a mourning countenance all the day. (LXX) The Sep-

tuagint says προσώξεναι καὶ ἐσάπησαν “give out an odor and fester,” and the Targum states סריאו מאיסו התמסיו הלבשושי “My wounds stank, they decayed.” David says in the Hebrew text his “wounds grow foul and fester,” these words appear to be drawing a parallel to the disease of Tsaraat. Parashat Tazria contain the mitzvot (Commandments) on the law of Tsaraat (leprosy). The translation for the word Leprosy comes from the Greek word “Lepra” (λέπρα) and is a contagious bacterial disease characterized by ulcerations of the skin, a loss of sensation (nerve damage) and sever deformities. Interestingly, Leprosy can cause a sort of burning sensation as a result of the nerve loss occurring due to the disease. The regulation connected to the commandment is found in *Vayikra / Leviticus 13 and 14*, and *Bamidbar / Numbers 12*. In the Scriptures’, this disease was regarded as a direct infliction by God (see *2 Kings 5:7 and 2 Chronicles 26:20*) and the disease was regarded as an awful punishment from the Lord. The disease eats the inward parts, the bones, swelling of the skin, sores, the whole body is rotting and in Yeshua’s day this was considered a slow lingering death sentence. The one stricken with Tsaraat was to rend his own cloths in lamentation of his own approaching death and cry out “Tamei Tamei” (“Unclean! Unclean!”) when passers-by came near to keep them away. According to the Torah only God is able to heal the leper. When Yeshua healed ten lepers, he was declaring in the act of healing that God was present a clear indication that the one spoken of in the Torah as the prophet that would follow Moshe (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 18*) had come “The Messiah has come!” Since the person with Tsaraat was not allowed inside of the city, he or she needed help to bring word to the Cohen (Priest) to come out. Another role of the Cohen was to go outside of the city (מְחוּץ לַמִּחֲנֶה) looking for those who were healed of the Lord? Note that the Messiah is looking for those who are lost. Our Father in Heaven is also seeking and searching for the person who is lost. There may also be a connection to the parable of the Prodigal Son as Yeshua described in *Luke 15:11-32*. Studying David’s words and that of Parashat Tazria, following the healing of the one with Tsaraat, the Cohen gives the order to slay one of the birds over “Mayim Khayim” (מַיִם חַיִּים) “Living Waters.” Throughout the Scriptures, the “Living Waters” has many applications. Living waters are required in the process of Teshuvah (repentance) and the mikvah (baptism). Note that baptism goes all the way back to the Torah, it is not a New Testament phenomenon. According to the Scriptures, God Himself is described as “the spring of living water” according to *Jeremiah 2:13 and 17:13*. כִּי-נְשִׁיתִים רְעוּת עֲשָׂה עִמִּי אֲתִי עֲזָבוּ מְקוֹר | מַיִם חַיִּים לְחַצְב לָהֶם בְּאֲרוֹת בְּאֲרוֹת נְשָׁפְרִים) אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָכְלוּ הַמַּיִם; יוֹיג מְקוֹה יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה כָּל-עֲזָבָה יִבְשׁוּ יְסוּרֵי [וְסוּרֵי] בְּאֲרָז יִכְתְּבוּ כִּי עֲזָבוּ מְקוֹר מַיִם-מַיִם חַיִּים אֶת-יְהוָה: Note also in the Apostolic Writings, Yeshua describes himself as the source of מַיִם חַיִּים “Living Waters” in *John chapter 7*. The living bird, the scarlet string, cedar wood, and hyssop were dipped into the blood of the slain bird (הַצִּפֹּר הַשְּׁחֻטָּה), the bird that was slain over הַמַּיִם הַחַיִּים the living waters. The blood is sprinkled seven times and he is pronounced clean. Following these things, the person who has been healed washes his cloths and shaves his entire body and then washes his body in הַמַּיִם הַחַיִּים “the living waters” and they are clean. Following this cleansing procedure the person is allowed to enter into the city, however, he or she must dwell/remain outside of his tent for seven more days (וַיֵּשֶׁב מְחוּץ לְאֹהֶלוֹ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים). On the eighth day the person who is cleansed is to take two male lambs and a one year old ewe lamb, three tenths of and ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for a Mincha offering, and one log of oil. These lambs are used to make the Olah Korban (Whole burnt offering), Chatat Korban (Sin offering), and Asham Korban (Guilt offering) before the Lord. Note also, in the number of days, a parallel to the woman who has given birth at the beginning of Parashat Tazria needing to wait seven days and the child is circumcised, and then the woman needs to way a certain number of days regarding the blood of her purification (thirty days for a baby boy, sixty days for a baby girl). This is a description of being born new via repentance, the sacrifices, and the work of God to produce the healing. David words saying his “wounds grow foul and fester,” the Septuagint saying his wounds προσώξεναι καὶ ἐσάπησαν “give out an odor and fester,” and the Targum states סריאו מאיסו התמסיו הלבשושי “My wounds stank, they decayed,” is an obvious parallel to the disease of Tsaraat whose healing is the result of the direct appeal to the Lord for divine healing. David realizes that his iniquity is that which separates him from fellowship with the Lord and is seeking forgiveness and healing.

י אֲדֹנָי נִגְדָה כָּל-תַּאֲוֹתַי וְאִנְחָתִי מִמָּהָ לֹא-נִסְתָּרָה: יא לְבִי סִחֲרָחַר עֲזָבָנִי כִחֵי וְאוֹר
 38:9 Lord, all my desire is before You; And my sighing is not hidden from You. 38:10 My heart throbs, my strength fails me; And the light of my eyes, even that has gone from me. 38:11 My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague; And my kinsmen stand afar off. (NASB) Tehillim / Psalms 38:11 suggests that David is in fact speaking of the disease of Tsaraat and Parashat Tazria saying: יב אֶהְבֵּי | וְרַעִי מִנְּגֵד נִגְעֵי יַעֲמָדוּ וְקִרְוֵי מִרְחֹק עֲמָדוּ:
 38:11 My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague; And my kinsmen stand afar off. (NASB) The Aramaic Targum states 38:12 My friends and companions stood away from the sight of my plague; and my relatives stand far off. (EMC) and the Septuagint states 8:11 My friends and my neighbors drew near before me, and stood still; and my nearest of kin stood afar off. (LXX) The rabbis say in the Septuagint that David's friends and neighbors draw near but his nearest kin stood afar off. Why do you think this is? David says that his friends and companions stand away from the sight of his plague (his sin), whereas his closest relatives (his kin) stand far off. Are David's closest relatives the one's whom he is referring to? Even though David brought unity to the twelve tribes of Israel, his own family was in ruin and was afflicted by murder, rape, and conflict which is the result of David's own sins. David's trouble begins having taken eight wives whose names we know: Ahinoam, Abigail, Maacah, Haggith, Abital, and Eglah, and later Michal and Bathsheba. The Biblical text suggests he had other wives as well, upon settling in Jerusalem. From his wives he had 19 sons. David commits first degree murder having Uriah the Hittite killed and taking his wife Bathsheba. This act was rooted in lust and fear (his iniquity). David's family falls into sexual sin, his oldest son Amnon grew desirous of his half sister (Tamar) and raped her. David was weak in his response to the rape and according to the Scriptures we read in 2 Samuel 13:21 "And when king David heard of these things he was exceedingly grieved: but he would not afflict the spirit of his son Amnon, for he loved him, because he was his firstborn." This was a problem and a mistaken understanding of love. The love of a Father for his son must include discipline, and insistence on what is right. Amnon had seriously sinned and owed restitution. David remained quiet when he should have spoke and acted. As a result of this David's other sons grew resentful. The full brother of Tamar, Absalom, grew furious at what was done to his sister. He thus plotted, and eventually killed Amnon, and then fled to the Land of Geshur. David now had lost two sons and had a daughter who had been raped. King David seemed aware of his role in Absalom's rebellion and demise. He had said earlier, when one of Absalom's followers came cursing him: *If he is cursing because the Lord said to him, 'Curse David,' who can ask, 'Why do you do this?'*" David then said to Abishai and all his officials, *"My son, who is of my own flesh, is trying to take my life. How much more, then, this Benjamite! Leave him alone; let him curse, for the Lord has told him to. It may be that the Lord will see my distress and repay me with good for the cursing I am receiving today."* (see 2 Samuel 16:10-12) Absalom had grown bitter against David and raised an effective rebellion against him. In the war that ensued, Absalom and his rebellion were put down, and Absalom was killed. Upon Absalom's death David cried: *"O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!"* (2 Samuel 18:33). Note how the sin of David resulted in the eventual demise of the union of Israel. David brought together the twelve tribes and because of his sins them come unraveled and fragmented (split) into the northern ten tribes and in the south Judah. The struggle continues on up to David's death, his wife Bathsheba promoted her son Solomon as king, letting loose a power struggle between Adonijah and Solomon. In the end Solomon prevailed over Adonijah, and, after David's death Solomon had his half-brother (Adonijah) killed. Similarly to his father David, God blessed Solomon and Israel to become a great king and nation. Solomon however ended with having 1000 wives and as Scripture says of him: *"King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women... As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been. He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not follow the Lord completely, as David his father had done."* (see 1 Kings 11:4-6). So sinful did Solomon become, and so disconcerting were his family and foreign intrigues, that shortly after his death, during the reign of his son, Rehoboam, Israel again broke away into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah never to be reunited again. As the Scriptures bear out, because of their sin, the

Lord eventually destroyed the ten northern tribes of Israel, however the Lord remembered the covenant He had made to David and preserved the remainder of His people.

David continues speaking of those who seek his life (38:12) and that he behaves as a deaf and mute man saying יד וְאֲנִי כְחֵרֵשׁ לֹא אֶשְׁמָע וּכְאֵלִים לֹא יִפְתָּה-פִּי: טו וְאֶהְיֶה כְּאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-שָׁמַע וְאִין בְּפִיו תּוֹכָחוֹת: 38:13 *But I, like a deaf man, do not hear; And I am like a mute man who does not open his mouth. 38:14 Yes, I am like a man who does not hear, And in whose mouth are no arguments. (NASB)* Is this a parallel to Yeshua before the Sanhedrin during his trial? What are the differences between David's silence before his accusers and Yeshua's silence before the Sanhedrin?

Matthew 26:62-63

26:62 *The high priest stood up and said to Him, 'Do You not answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?'* 26:63 *But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, 'I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.'* (NASB)

A contrast is being drawn here, Yeshua was innocent, David is guilty. Yeshua held his peace, he was silent, he knew that the evidence did not measure up and the high priest was aware of this. In Yeshua's case, the Sanhedrin was attempting to draw something from him on which they could condemn him. In this instance Yeshua was laying his life down on our behalf, his silence ensured the false testimony would continue on and he would go to the cross. On the other hand, David said “*But I (וְאֲנִי), like a deaf man (כְּחֵרֵשׁ), do not hear (לֹא אֶשְׁמָע)*” and “*And I am like a mute man (וּכְאֵלִים) who does not open his mouth (לֹא יִפְתָּה-פִּי).*” David's guilt is obvious, his silence is because the accusations are true. In contrast, Yeshua kept silent even though the testimony against him was false. David continues saying יד וְאֲנִי כְחֵרֵשׁ לֹא אֶשְׁמָע וּכְאֵלִים לֹא יִפְתָּה-פִּי: טו וְאֶהְיֶה כְּאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-שָׁמַע וְאִין בְּפִיו תּוֹכָחוֹת: 38:14 *Yes, I am like a man who does not hear, And in whose mouth are no arguments. (NASB)* Why does he say that he is like a man who does not hear? The Aramaic Targum states יד וְאֲנִי הֵיךְ חֵרֵשׁ לֹא אֶשְׁמָע וְהֵיךְ 38:14 *But I am like a deaf man, I will not hear, like a mute who does not open his mouth. 38:15 And I have become like a man who has never heard, and there is no rebuke in his mouth. (EMC)* The rabbis translate saying that he is as a man who has never heard, it is as if there is no rebuke in his mouth. The Septuagint states something very similar saying 38:13 ἐγὼ δὲ ὡσεὶ κωφὸς οὐκ ἤκουον καὶ ὡσεὶ ἄλαλος οὐκ ἀνοίγων τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ 38:14 καὶ ἐγενόμην ὡσεὶ ἄνθρωπος οὐκ ἀκούων καὶ οὐκ ἔχων ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ ἐλεγμούς 38:13 *But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and was as a dumb man not opening his mouth. 38:14 And I was as a man that hears not, and who has no reproofs in his mouth. (LXX)* Again this goes back to the idea that David is guilty of his sin and does not have a word to give in response. Note that his saying יד וְאֲנִי כְחֵרֵשׁ לֹא אֶשְׁמָע וּכְאֵלִים לֹא יִפְתָּה-פִּי: “*there is no reproofs in his lips*” the word תּוֹכָחוֹת means “*arguments or vindications*” and is a term used of a man who is accused in open court and he is unable to make a defense. The wicked hate goodness and righteousness even when they benefit by it. David, states that his enemies have a goal to drive us from the Lord, however, he keeps silent and seeks the Lord God for help and salvation. The hope that he has is in the Lord.

David says that opposition comes because he chooses to do good rather than evil, and trusts in the Lord for His salvation.

Tehillim / Psalms 38:15-22

38:15 *For I hope in You, O Lord; You will answer, O Lord my God. 38:16 For I said, 'May they not rejoice over me, Who, when my foot slips, would magnify themselves against me.'* 38:17 *For I am ready to fall, And my sorrow is continually before me. 38:18 For I confess my iniquity; I am full of anxiety because of my sin. (NASB)* 38:19 *But my enemies are vigorous and strong, And many are those who hate me wrongfully. 38:20 And those who repay evil for good, They oppose me, because I follow what is good. 38:21 Do not forsake me, O Lord; O*

my God, do not be far from me! 38:22 Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation! (NASB)

טז כִּי-לֹדֶה יְהוָה הוֹחֵלְתִּי אֶתְּהָ תַעֲנֶנָּה אֲדַנִּי אֱלֹהֵי: יז כִּי-אֶמְרָתִי פֶן-יִשְׁמְחוּ-לִי בְמוֹט רַגְלִי עָלַי הֲגֵד־
דִּילֹ: יח כִּי-אֲנִי לְצַלַּע נָכוֹן וּמְכַאוֹבֵי נִגְדֵי תְמִיד: יט כִּי-עֲוֹנֵי אֲגִיד אֲדַאֵג מִחַטָּאתַי: כ וְאִיבֵי חַיִּים
עֲצָמוּ וְרָבוּ שְׁנְאֵי שָׁקֵר: כא וּמְשַׁלְּמֵי רָעָה תַחַת טוֹבָה יִשְׁטַנּוּנֵי תַחַת רְדוּפֵי [רְדוּפֵי] -טוֹב: כב אֶל-
תַּעֲזֹבֵנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֶל-תִּרְחַק מִמֶּנִּי: כג חוֹשָׁה לְעֲזָרְתִּי אֲדַנִּי תִשׁוּעָתִי:

Aramaic Targum

Tehillim / Psalms 38:16-23

38:16 For in your presence, O Lord, have I prayed; you will accept [my prayer], O Lord my God. 38:17 For I said, “Lest they rejoice over me.” When my foot stumbled, they vaunted themselves over me. 38:18 For I am prepared for disaster, and my pain is before me always. 38:19 For my sin I will relate, I will be troubled by my sin. 38:20 But my enemies, alive, have grown strong; those who hate me through deceit are numerous. 38:21 And those who repay evil for good oppose me, because I have pursued good. 38:22 Do not forsake me, O Lord; my God, do not be far from me. 38:23 Hasten to my aid, O Lord, my redemption. (EMC)

טז ארום קדמך יהוה צליתי אנת את תקבל יהוה אלהי: יז ארום אמרית דילמא יחדון עלי באזד-
עזעות ריגלי עלי איתרברבו: יח ארום אנא לתברא מעתד וכיבי לקיבלי תדירא: יט ארום חובי
אתני אתייצף מן חטאי: כ ובעלי דבבי חיי עלימו וסגיאין וסגון סנאי על שיקרא: כא ופרעין
בישתא חלף חילופי טבתא מסטנן לי חלופי דרדפית טב: כב לא תשבקינני יהוה אלהי לא תרחיק
מיני: כג זריז לסיועי יהוה פורקני:

Septuagint

Tehillim / Psalms 38:15-22

38:15 For I hoped in thee, O Lord: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God. 38:16 For I said, Lest mine enemies rejoice against me: for when my feet were moved, they spoke boastfully against me. 38:17 For I am ready for plagues, and my grief is continually before me. 38:18 For I will declare mine iniquity, and be distressed for my sin. 38:19 But mine enemies live, and are mightier than I: and they that hate me unjustly are multiplied. 38:20 They that reward evil for good slandered me; because I followed righteousness. 38:21 Forsake me not, O Lord my God: depart not from me. 38:22 Draw nigh to my help, O Lord of my salvation. (LXX)

38:15 ὅτι ἐπὶ σοί κύριε ἤλπισα σὺ εἰσακούσῃ κύριε ὁ θεός μου 38:16 ὅτι εἶπα μήποτε ἐπιχαρῶσίν μοι οἱ ἐχθροί μου καὶ ἐν τῷ σαλευθῆναι πόδας μου ἐπ’ ἐμέ ἐμεγαλορρημόνησαν 38:17 ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰς μάλιστα ἔτοιμος καὶ ἡ ἀλγηδὼν μου ἐνώπιόν μου διὰ παντός 38:18 ὅτι τὴν ἀνομίαν μου ἐγὼ ἀναγγεῶ καὶ μεριμνήσω ὑπὲρ τῆς ἁμαρτίας μου 38:19 οἱ δὲ ἐχθροί μου ζῶσιν καὶ κεκραταίωονται ὑπὲρ ἐμέ καὶ ἐπληθύνθησαν οἱ μισοῦντές με ἀδίκως 38:20 οἱ ἀνταποδιδόντες κακὰ ἀντὶ ἀγαθῶν ἐνδιέβαλλον με ἐπεὶ κατεδίωκον δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἀπέρριψάν με τὸν ἀγαπητὸν ὡσεὶ νεκρὸν ἐβδελυγμένον 38:21 μὴ ἐγκαταλίπῃς με κύριε ὁ θεός μου μὴ ἀποστῆς ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ 38:22 πρόσχευς εἰς τὴν βοήθειάν μου κύριε τῆς σωτηρίας μου

David says that his hope is in the Lord and his prayer is that his enemies not rejoice over him when his foot slips. The rabbis of the Aramaic Targum state that David prays asking the Lord to accept his prayer. The Septuagint states something very similar, David is seeking the Lord to accept his prayer. How can we be

certain that we are praying according to the will of God? This seems to be what David is attempting to do, to pray within the will of God so that the Lord will hear his prayers and answer them. The purpose of the Lord creating man was to bring glory to the Lord. Our aim in prayer should begin with bringing glory to the Lord (see *1 Corinthians 10:31*), and this includes praying according to His will. Ask for wisdom as the Scriptures state in *James 1:5* “*If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*” In wisdom we learn to trust in the Lord that He is gracious and willing to answer prayer. The Apostle James (Yaakov) continues saying *James 1:6* “*But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt*” (see also *Mark 11:24*). Seeking wisdom in prayer, we seek to know the will of God and to ask in faith, trusting in the will of God. Yeshua and the Apostles taught us to pray for our enemies (*Matthew 5:44*); for the Lord to send missionaries (*Luke 10:2*); that we do not enter into temptation (*Matthew 26:41*); for ministers of the Word (*Colossians 4:3* and *2 Thessalonians 3:1*); for government authorities (*1 Timothy 2:1-3*); for relief from affliction (*James 5:13*); and for the healing of fellow believers (*James 5:16*). We are told to pray for these things, and in doing so, we can seek the Lord in prayer with confidence that we are praying according to His will. In addition to this, we can take the example of those who pray found in Scripture. Paul prayed for the salvation of Israel (*Romans 10:1*); David prayed for mercy and forgiveness when he sinned (*Psalms 51:1-2*); and the first century believers prayed for boldness to witness (*Acts 4:29*). How often do we do that today? We should always be seeking the Lord in prayer for the salvation of others. We should also pray as David prayed to always be aware of our sin and bringing it before the Lord seeking forgiveness before it hinders our relationship with Him. We are to pray with the correct motivation. Selfish motives will not be blessed by God. Note what the Apostle James said, “*When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*” (*James 4:3*) Prayer should not be done with lofty words in order to be seen by others as “*spiritual*,” we are to pray with modesty and also in private and in secret, so that our heavenly Father will hear and reward us openly (*Matthew 6:5-6*). According to *Tehillim / Psalms 38*, David states that He is silent in the presence of his accusers which suggests that he is praying with a spirit of forgiveness toward others (*Mark 11:25*). Note in the Psalm he does not appear to have a spirit of bitterness, anger, revenge or hatred toward his enemies. This would prevent our hearts from praying in total submission to the Lord. This is the very same thing that Yeshua taught us in *Matthew 5:23-24*, that we are not to bring an offering before the Lord if there is conflict between ourselves and others. Note also that our prayers go before God as a sweet fragrance (*Revelation 8:4*). We need to do reconciliation before going before God in prayer. We are to pray with thanksgiving (*Colossians 4:2* and *Philippians 4:6-7*), there is always something to be thankful for. Rely upon the Spirit of God in prayer as what Paul writes to the Romans in *Romans 8:26-27* “*We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.*” If we walk in the Spirit and do what is right, we can be assured that the Lord hears our prayers and we can rest in the knowledge that He is working all things together for good (*Romans 8:28*) David says *38:18 For I confess my iniquity; I am full of anxiety because of my sin. (NASB) 38:19 But my enemies are vigorous and strong, And many are those who hate me wrongfully. 38:20 And those who repay evil for good, They oppose me, because I follow what is good. 38:21 Do not forsake me, O Lord; O my God, do not be far from me! 38:22 Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation! (NASB)* He is quick to confess his sins. Note that he says that he is anxious because of his sin. The Aramaic Targum states *38:19 For my sin I will relate, I will be troubled by my sin. (EMC)* and the Septuagint states *38:18 For I will declare mine iniquity, and be distressed for my sin. (LXX)* Notice how the rabbis translate David’s words about being anxious because of his sins. They say that he is to be troubled by his sin and to be distressed by his sin. This suggests that we are to be troubled with sin in general. This is what draws us to the Lord in prayer, to seek forgiveness and renewed fellowship with Him. The enemy on the other hand is vigorous, active, energetic and strong, and seeks to draw us away from the Lord. The enemy’s tactic is to pay evil for good for the purpose of keeping us bound up in hate towards others, something that will bind us up, blind us, and hinder our prayer life and we would become ineffective. David reminds us that we are to choose what is good no matter the circumstance. These are the things the Lord desires of us.

Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:12-21

10:12 'Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 10:13 and to keep the Lord's commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good? 10:14 'Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. 10:15 'Yet on your fathers did the Lord set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day. 10:16 'So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer. 10:17 'For the Lord your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. 10:18 'He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. 10:19 'So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. 10:20 'You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him and cling to Him, and you shall swear by His name. 10:21 'He is your praise and He is your God, who has done these great and awesome things for you which your eyes have seen. (NASB)

In doing these things, the Lord will not forsake us, and our hope will be in the salvation that He has provided, Yeshua the Messiah!

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 38* has 2 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1 and 2. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 38, Part 1 and 2*.

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 38, Part 1 and 2

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*A Psalm of David to bring suffering to remembrance. O Lord, rebuke me not in Your wrath, neither chasten me in Your hot displeasure (Tehillim / Psalms 38:1-2).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, O Lord, chasten me only in measure; not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing (Jeremiah 10:24).*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis go on to expand upon the Lord not chastening in his anger.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis speak about the Lord rebuking in His wrath. Subdue us little by little and not all at once.
- The Concluding phrase says “*Thus Scripture says, What are these wounds between your hands? And he will answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friend (Zechariah 13:6). That is, if one be asked What are these wounds between your hands? He will answer, They are the result of being befriended by the Holy One blessed be He.*”

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your anger for my iniquities are gone over my head; as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me (Tehillim / Psalms 38:4-5).*”

- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “the homiletic introduction” to the Midrash says “The children of Israel used to say, Our iniquities are increased over our head (Ezra 9:6).”
- The משל (mashal) “the parable,” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss what it means to have a burden upon one’s head.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “expansion on the parable” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis go on to expand upon the burden upon the head and relate it to one’s iniquities.
- The Concluding phrase states that Abraham saw four things, the Torah, the yoke of the kingdom, Gehenna, and offerings.

Midrash Tehillim 38, Part 1 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “A Psalm of David to bring suffering to remembrance. O Lord, rebuke me not in Your wrath, neither chasten me in Your hot displeasure (Tehillim / Psalms 38:1-2).” The homiletic introduction to the Midrash says “These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, O Lord, chasten me only in measure; not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing (Jeremiah 10:24).” It is important to note that when the rabbis quote a portion of Scripture, such as half the verse from *Jeremiah 10:24*, they are going under the assumption that the listener understands and knows the section of Scripture that is being referred to, For example, all of *Jeremiah* chapter 10. Therefore, the reference to David’s words regarding seeking the Lord to not rebuke in his displeasure the rabbis are saying is within the context of *Jeremiah 10:24*. *Jeremiah 10:23-25* states כג ידעתי יהוה כי לא לאדם דרכו לא-לאיש הלך והכין את-צעדו: כד יסרני יהוה אה-במשפט אל-באפה פן-תמעטני: כה נשפה חמתך על-הגוים אשר לא-ידעוך ועל משפחות אשר בשמך לא קראו כי-אכלו את-יעקב ואכלהו: 10:23 I know, O Lord, that a man’s way is not in himself, Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps. 10:24 Correct me, O Lord, but with justice; Not with Your anger, or You will bring me to nothing. 10:25 Pour out Your wrath on the nations that do not know You And on the families that do not call Your name; For they have devoured Jacob; They have devoured him and consumed him And have laid waste his habitation. (NASB) The point being made in *Jeremiah 10* is regarding idolatry and the sin of the people. *Jeremiah 10:23* states that man’s ways are not in himself, neither is it in a man who walks to direct his steps. What does this mean? A Man’s ways are to sin, whereas the Spirit of God leads a man to the way of righteousness. This reminds us of the creation account in *Bereshit / Genesis 1-2*, God creates within us a “Nefesh Chai” (a Living soul) and he does so in both the animals and in man. What is the significance of the biblical text that God created a Nefesh Chai in both animals and man? What are the differences between man and the animals? (i.e. man left to himself will behave sinfully, like an animal, immorality, note the book of *Jude*.) Because of this David is asking the Lord to have mercy because it is not within himself to walk in His ways (in the Torah). The choices we make are at times more for sin than for the way of God. We have been changed and made new on the inside, but because of the struggle between the flesh and the spirit and because of this we need His mercy, compassion, and His Holy Spirit to guide and direct us, to draw us to Him, and to empower us to walk in His ways. The Midrash continues saying:

It is not written here O Lord, chasten me in measure, but O Lord, chasten me only in measure that is, (Mishley / Proverbs 19:18) O Lord chasten me only with moderate punishments. So, too, it is written Chasten him, but not unto death. Take care that in chastening you do not destroy him, only do not set your heart on his destruction. (Mishley / Proverbs 10:4) (Midrash Tehillim 38, Part 1)

במשפט אין כתיב כאן, אלא אך במשפט, יסרני ביסורים טובים, וכן הוא אומר יסר בנך כי יש תקוה (משלי י"ח), ייסרהו אבל לא למות, הזהר אל תמיתהו, ואל המיתו אל תשא נפשך (שם משלי י"ט)

The rabbis speak about the anger of the Lord and the Lord chastising only in measure and not in His anger,

the purpose for the request is so that we are not brought down to dust (to nothing). They continue requesting that the Lord chasten in measure and only in measure and with moderate punishments for our sins. In the midrash they reference *Mishley / Proverbs 19:18*: אֶל-תִּשָּׂא נַפְשְׁךָ: *Discipline your son while there is hope, And do not desire his death. (NASB)* So the idea is the request one is to make of the Lord to bring His chastening in its proper timing. According to *Mishley / Proverbs 19:18*, Solomon says to bring discipline while there is hope. How does this apply to us today? While there is hope suggests that we seek the Lord to discipline is in order to draw us back to Him and turn from sin. What does it mean to be drawn back? Teshuva (repentance) is from the root word “Shuv” meaning to turn. What are we turning to? The Torah? To God’s ways? To righteousness from unrighteousness, from a lie to the truth, etc? There is the possibility that after one sins repeatedly for a very long time, there is no turning back or that there may be the chance that one will walk away from the Lord, from the Scriptures, and even from Yeshua the Messiah. *Mishley / Proverbs 10:9* states: הוֹלֵךְ בַּתָּמִים יִלְוֶה בָטָח וּמַעֲקֹשׁ דְּרָכָיו יוֹדֵעַ: י קָרַץ עֵינָיו יִתָּן: *10:9 He who walks in integrity walks securely, But he who perverts his ways will be found out. (NASB)* The rabbis reference *Mishley / Proverbs 10:9* discussing the difference between the man who walks in integrity, and the one who perverts his ways. The fact that man does not have it within himself to walk upright, suggests our need to seek the Lord for His help and His Spirit to work in our lives daily. A part of this action is the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and even chastisement for the one who does not heed the calling of the Spirit of God on his or her life to do what is right. Are there any references in the Torah regarding chastisement? One reference that comes to mind is from Parashat Ki Tetze (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19*).

Devarim / Deuteronomy 21:15-21

*21:15 ‘If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other unloved, and both the loved and the unloved have borne him sons, if the firstborn son belongs to the unloved, 21:16 then it shall be in the day he wills what he has to his sons, he cannot make the son of the loved the firstborn before the son of the unloved, who is the firstborn. 21:17 ‘But he shall acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the unloved, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; to him belongs the right of the firstborn. 21:18 ‘If any man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or his mother, and when they **chastise** him, he will not even listen to them, 21:19 then his father and mother shall seize him, and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gateway of his home town. 21:20 ‘They shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey us, he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ 21:21 ‘Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death; so you shall remove the evil from your midst, and all Israel will hear of it and fear. (NASB)*

יה כִּי-יִהְיֶה לְאִישׁ בֵּן סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרָה אֵינָנו שְׁמִיעַ בְּקוֹל אָבִיו וּבְקוֹל אִמּוֹ: *21:18 ‘If any man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or his mother, and when they **chastise** him, he will not even listen to them (NASB)* and the Hebrew word used here is וַיִּסְרוּ from the root word יָסַר used as a Verb in the Piel Perfect 3rd person plural form. The root word יָסַר means “to be tormented, to chasten, to admonish” and in the Piel verb form “to discipline or correct.” The Torah command states that the stubborn, rebellious, gluttonous, and drunken son is to be stoned to death. While reading through Parashat Ki Tetze, the first question that comes to mind is has this law ever been observed in Israel? Has a father and mother ever taken their son to be executed because of the violation of this command? The Scriptures do not describe anyone who after having a rebellious son would take him for execution. The absence of this in the Scriptures suggests the love a father has for his son no matter the circumstance (i.e. David and Absalom as an example). This law, severe as it may seem, obviously acted as a powerful preventive measure. Take for example if such a law were in force today? How many deaths of disobedient and promiscuous children would there be today? The point is, in the midrash, the rabbis ask the Lord to chasten only in measure and not to chasten unto death. Our Father in heaven who

is more merciful than our earthly fathers, would most certainly use moderation in punishing (chastising) his children. Similarly, when parents chasten their children, don't they do so in measure and not unto death. It is also interesting to note that the author of the book of Hebrews wrote the following:

Hebrews 12:3-7

12:3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. 12:4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; 12:5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, 'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; 12:6 For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives.' 12:7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? (NASB)

Hebrews is speaking of sin that brings chastisement from our Father in Heaven, similarly to the midrash on *Tehillim / Psalms 38*. The author of Hebrews makes the argument and asks the question of whether we have resisted to the point of the shedding of blood in our striving against sin? We are being addressed as sons and are not to take lightly the discipline of the Lord. We are not to despise His chastening. The New Testament text parallels the thought of the rabbis here of seeking the Lord's chastisement and recognizing that the Lord will do so in the appropriate manner which is for our own good. The choices we are to make is to turn from sin and seek the Lord's help. He will send His Holy Spirit to guide and direct us and to convict us of sin. We simply must heed the calling of the Spirit of God on his or her life to do what is right. King David said in *Tehillim / Psalms 94*:

Tehillim / Psalms 94:11-15

94:11 The Lord knows the thoughts of man, That they are a mere breath. 94:12 Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord, And whom You teach out of Your law; 94:13 That You may grant him relief from the days of adversity, Until a pit is dug for the wicked. 94:14 For the Lord will not abandon His people, Nor will He forsake His inheritance. 94:15 For judgment will again be righteous, And all the upright in heart will follow it. (NASB)

יָא יְהוָה יָדַע מַחְשְׁבוֹת אָדָם כִּי הֵמָּה הֶבְלִ: יב אֲשֶׁר־י הַגִּבֹּר אֲשֶׁר-תִּיַסְרֶנּוּ יְהוָה וּמִתּוֹרַתְךָ תִּלְמָדְנּוּ: יג לְהַשְׁקִיט לוֹ מִיָּמִי רַע עַד יִכְרֶה לְרֹשָׁע שָׁחַת: יד כִּי | לֹא-יִטַּשׁ יְהוָה עִמּוֹ וְנִחַלְתּוּ לֹא יַעֲזֹב: טו כִּי- עַד-צָדֵק יָשׁוּב מִשִּׁפְט וְאַחֲרָיו כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל: לז

Note how David says *94:12 Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord, And whom You teach out of Your Torah (law) (NASB)* Who is this man that David is referring to? Note in the Hebrew text he says אֲשֶׁר־י הַגִּבֹּר “blessed is the strongman” the mighty man who is chastened. The mighty man (strongman), which might be a parallel to *Bereshit / Genesis 6*, who is unruly and unrighteous, He is the one whom God has taken in hand, to lead him, to direct his paths, to show mercy too, this is a reference to a child of the Most High, and our Father in Heaven is the heavenly parent. This man is in a permanent position as a child of God, and with that position comes the responsibility of developing a lifestyle that honors God. We are to seek the Lord to draw near to Him, this means with regard to our spiritual growth we are not to simply stand still. The chastening of the Lord is meant to facilitate our discipline and discipleship. He inflicts upon us adversity because we are to a certain extent unwilling to let Him correct us. And by His chastisement, we grow and learn valuable lessons in life and develop the kind of fruit He wants us to produce.

According to the Midrash, David asks the Lord not to rebuke him in His wrath and continues saying:

A rebuke is good, it is said he whom the Lord loves, He rebukes (Mishley / Proverbs 3:12) but only when the rebuke is not given in wrath. Therefore, David said, O Lord, do not rebuke me

in Your wrath. He also said, Chastisement, O Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 94:12) but we cannot long suffer it. Therefore, David said to the Holy One blessed be He, Master of the universe, we have sinned, and You are angry, and so we are not saved, as it is said Behold You are angry, for we have sinned, in them have we been of long time; and will we be saved? (Isaiah 64:4). Subdue us little by little, as it is written He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us as He subdues our iniquities (Micah 7:19). Hence, it is said O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your wrath; neither chasten me in Your hot displeasure. (Midrash Tehillim 38, Part 1)

טובה היא התוכחה, וכן הוא אומר כי את אשר יאהב ה' יוכיח (שם משלי ג יב), אבל לא בקצף, לכך נאמר אל בקצפך תוכיחני. טובים הן היסורים, וכן אומר אשרי הגבר אשר תיסרנו יה (תהילים צד יב), אבל אנו קצרי רוח, אמר דוד להקב"ה רבון העולמים אנו חוטאים ואתה קוצף, ומתוך כך אין אנו נגאלין, שנאמר הן אתה קצפת ונחטא בהם עולם ונושע (ישעיה סד ד), אלא כבוש לנו אחת אחת, וכן הוא אומר ישוב ירחמנו יכבוש עונותינו (מיכה ז יט), לכך נאמר ה' אל בקצפך תוכיחני

The rabbis say *“subdue us little by little.”* The word used here is **כבוש** when used as an adjective means *“conquered, occupied, subjugated”* and as a noun *“pressing, expressing (oil)”* suggests that the Lord’s chastening little by little is a form of battle and progression with regard to our physical and spiritual growth. The midrash ends with a parable regarding the chastisement of the Lord saying:

And what profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? (Tehillim / Psalms 30:10). He who is not skilled in giving lashes, after binding a man, strikes him upon the head or between the eyes with a stick; but he who is skilled is giving lashes, after binding a man, strikes him upon the back, not upon the head or between the eyes; in order not to blind the man’s eyes, he strikes him upon a part of the body where there is no danger. Thus Scripture says, What are these wounds between your hands? And he will answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friend (Zechariah 13:6). That is, if one be asked What are these wounds between your hands? He will answer, They are the result of being befriended by the Holy One blessed be He. (Midrash Tehillim 38, Part 1)

The midrash speaks of a man who is skilled at giving lashes. The one who is unskilled, strikes a man upon the head or between the eyes severely injuring the man. The purpose of the lashes are not for injury but for discipline. The skilled man strikes him upon the part of the body where there is no danger. The midrash references *Zechariah 13* which is a description of the Lord moving upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem because of their sin and impurity, the Lord will cut off the names of the idols from the land and they will no longer be remembered. Those who prophesy falsely will also be chastised and become ashamed. The point is that the Lord God Almighty is exact in His strikes and will chastise us in the appropriate manner. The point of the midrash on the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) *“A Psalm of David to bring suffering to remembrance. O Lord, rebuke me not in Your wrath, neither chasten me in Your hot displeasure (Tehillim / Psalms 38:1-2)”* is that David was not asking the Lord simply not chastise him, he knew that his sins have consequences. Mercy does not mean the avoidance of the Lord’s chastisement. The Lord will cause consequences to follow for the purpose of our growing spiritually and to learn valuable lessons. David simply was asking the Lord to show mercy and not destroy him because of his sins.

Midrash Tehillim 38, Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying *“There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your anger for my iniquities are gone over my head; as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me (Tehillim / Psalms 38:4-5).”* The homiletic introduction (פתיחתא, Petihta) to the Midrash says *“The children of Israel used to say, Our iniquities are increased over our head (Ezra 9:6).”* In the opening phrase in the midrash, the rabbis combine *Tehillim / Psalms 38 verses 3 and 4*, and the homiletic introduction references *Ezra 9:6*.

Masoretic Text: 38:3 *There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation; There is no health in my bones because of my sin. 38:4 For my iniquities are gone over my head; As a heavy burden they weigh too much for me. (NASB)*

Aramaic Text: 38:4 *There is no healing in my body because of your anger, no health in my limbs because of my sin. 38:5 For my sins have mounted past my head; like a heavy burden, they were too heavy for me.*

LXX: 38:3 *For there is no health in my flesh because of thine anger; there is no peace to my bones because of my sins. 38:4 For my transgressions have gone over mine head: they have pressed heavily upon me like a weighty burden.*

Ezra chapter 9 opens stating that the people of Israel and the priests have not separated themselves from the people of the land and continue to participate in the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, and Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. The people have not separated themselves and are mingling with these people and Ezra states this is unfaithfulness to the Lord. Upon hearing these things, Ezra was appalled and he tore his robes and remained silent all day until the evening sacrifice. He then got up and went before the Lord on his knees stretching out his hands to the Lord and he said “O my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to You, my God, for our iniquities have risen above our heads and our guilt has grown even to the heavens. Since the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt, and on account of our iniquities we, our kings and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity and to plunder and to open shame, as it is this day.” (Ezra 9:6-7) It is interesting that Ezra was ashamed before God because of the people. In addition to this, he includes himself as a part of those who have committed iniquity before God saying “and on account of our iniquities.” With this in mind, the midrash leads into a parable.

Rabbi Isaac told a parable of a man with a burden on his head who was crossing a river, his feet sinking deep in the water. He was told, put the burden away from you, and you will be able to lift up your feet. Likewise the Holy One blessed be He, asked Israel, wherefore do you say, for my iniquities are gone over my head; as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me (Tehillim / Psalms 38:5)? Let the wicked forsake his way (Isaiah 55:7), that is, put away your evil deeds, and I will have mercy upon you; as Scripture says, Let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him. (Midrash Tehillim 38, Part 2)

אמר ר' יצחק משל לאדם שהיה עובר בנהר, והיו רגליו שוקעות במים, והמשאוי על ראשו, אמרו לו העבר המשאוי מעליך ואתה שולף את רגליך, כך אמר הקב"ה לישראל מפני מה אמרתם כי עונותי עברו ראשי כמשא כבד יכבדו ממני (תהלים לח ה), יעזוב רשע דרכו (ישעיה נה ז), הניחו מעשיכם הרעים ואני מרחם אתכם, שנאמר וישוב אל ה' וירחמהו (שם שם ישעיהו נ"ה)

ב הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי אֱלֹהִים כִּי בָאוּ מִים עַד-נַפְשִׁי: ג טִבַּעְתִּי בִּיּוֹן מְצוּלָה וְאִין מַעֲמָד בְּאֶתִי בְּמַעֲמְקֵי-מַיִם וְשִׁבְלַת שְׁטָפְתָנִי: ד יִגְעַתִּי בְּקִרְאֵי נַחַר גְּרוּנֵי כָלוּ עֵינַי מִנַּחַל לְאֵלֹהֵי: ה רַבּוּ | מִשְׁעָרוֹת רֵאשִׁי שִׁנְאֵי חֲנָם עֲצָמוֹ מִצְמִיתֵי אֵיבֵי שְׁקָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא-גִזְלֹתִי אֶז אֲשִׁיב: 69:1 *Save me, O God, For the waters have threatened my life. 69:2 I have sunk in deep mire, and there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and a flood overflows me. 69:3 I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched; My eyes fail while I wait for my God. 69:4 Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; Those who would destroy me are powerful, being wrongfully my enemies; What I did not steal, I then have to restore. (NASB)* David says “I sink in deep mire” in Hebrew it says “the mire of the depth.” This may indicate that this is something is the kind of deep that one is not able to free himself,

like that found in at the bottom of a pit. The Aramaic Targum states 38:5 *For my sins have mounted past my head; like a heavy burden, they were too heavy for me.* 38:6 *My wounds stank, they decayed, because of my foolishness.* 38:7 *I am bent over, I am greatly bowed down; all the day I have gone about in gloom.* 38:8 *For my loins are filled with burning, and there is no healing in my body.* 38:9 *I have become faint and I have been humbled greatly; I moaned because of the groaning of my heart.* (EMC) Note that Tehillim / Psalms 38:9 states that David is humbled as a result of these things and he groans in his heart because of his sins. The rabbis are obviously thinking on the topic of the righteous who is convicted of sin as compared to wicked who love their sin. The man who places a burden upon his head is to forsake his ways which have caused his burden. The ungodly man has placed a burden upon his head, which is the way of his own choosing in which he delights and not in the way of God. The midrash states “*Let the wicked forsake his way (Isaiah 55:7), that is, put away your evil deeds, and I will have mercy upon you; as Scripture says, Let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him.*” The midrash quotes from Isaiah 55:7 זִיעֹזֵב וְיֵעָזֵב: 55:7 *Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the Lord, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.* (NASB) Do you think the Lord hears the one who continues in his sin? As mentioned earlier, the Scriptures speak of repentance (Teshuvah, תשובה) which comes from the root word שׁוּב meaning “to return, come back” to turn from sin and return to the Lord. Gill’s exposition on Isaiah 55:7 states the following:

Gill’s Exposition on Isaiah 55:7

Some are notoriously wicked, and all men are wicked in the account of God, though they may think otherwise themselves; and they become so their own apprehensions, when they are thoroughly awakened and convinced of sin, and of the evil of their ways, and are enabled to forsake them: though this may also be understood of “his own way” of saving himself, which is by works of righteousness he has done, in opposition to God’s way of saving men by Jesus Christ; which way of his own must be relinquished, and Christ alone must be applied unto, and laid hold on, for salvation

Gill speaks of the wicked being awakened to sin and convinced of sin and of their evil ways being unable to forsake them. What is interesting is that Gill says “his own way” is that of “saving himself” which is by “works of righteousness” that he has done as compared to God’s way of salvation in Yeshua the Messiah. This is interesting because Gill equates a man who is trying to live righteously to the wicked and the belief that by his own righteous deeds the man believes he will be saved. Is this really what Isaiah is trying to say and what the midrash is saying on Tehillim / Psalms 38? In the midrashim we read frequently the rabbis saying that deeds of righteousness will enable one to have a place in the Olam Habah (the world to come). Is this a reference to a salvific work of righteousness? It is important to realize that according to the Scriptures (the bible) salvation is found within the covenant relationship with the Lord. The earning of one’s place in the world to come is not about salvation in Judaism. The works of righteousness are about receiving rewards in heaven. Note something here that Christianity also teaches salvation is a matter of the covenant and is not the same as reward. We serve an equitable and fair King, who loves us and is also just and holy. The grace of God in the covenant relationship we have with the Lord in Yeshua the Messiah is what brings us into the kingdom. When going before the Lord seeking His face, His presence, and to know His will, can one go as the parable states with a burden upon our heads (sin in our hearts) and unrepentant? Are we not to actively seek to turn from our sins? The act of forsaking our sins is a work of righteousness. The midrash states “*for my iniquities are gone over my head; as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me*” which suggests when seeking the Lord, the act of repentance leads us to seek the Lord’s help to remove the burden. David said in Tehillim / Psalms 38:15 *For I hope in You, O Lord; You will answer, O Lord my God.* (NASB) whereas the Aramaic Targum states 38:16 *For in your presence, O Lord, have I prayed; you will*

accept [my prayer], O Lord my God. (EMC) We can see the humility of David in the Targum where he seeks the favor of God in prayer and for the Lord to accept his prayer.

The midrash continues saying the following:

<p>ר' חנינא בר פפא אמר (כל) [רבות עשית אתה ה' אלהי] נפלאותיך ומחשבותיך אלינו (תהלים מ ו), [כל נפלאות ומחשבות] שחשבת [כדי] שיברור לו אברהם את המלכות, אלינו [בש-בילנו כדי] שנעמוד בעולם. אמר ר' שמעון בר אבא בשם ר' יוחנן [ארבעה דברים] הראה לו הקב"ה לאברהם, תורה ומלכות וגיהנם וקרבת, תורה דכתיב ולפיד אש (בראשית טו יז), וכתיב הלוא כה דברי כאש (ירמיה כג כט), ולפיד זו תורה, דכתיב וכל העם רואים את הקור לות ואת הלפידים (שמות כ יח). [גיהנם דכתיב] תנור עשן (בראשית שם ט"ו), זו גיהנם, דכתיב הנה (יום) [היום] בא בוער כתנור (מלאכי ג יט), קרבת שנתאמר קחה לי עגלה משולשת ועז משולשת ואיל משולש (בראשית טו ט), מלכות דכתיב והנה אימה חשכה גדולה נופלת עליו (שם שם בראשית ט"ו יב).</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 38, Part 2 <i>Rabbi Khinena son of Papa said, Many, O Lord my God, are the wonderful works which You have done, and Your thoughts which are towards us (Tehillim / Psalms 40:6), many were all the wondrous works and thoughts which You did conceive to make Abraham choose the yoke of the kingdom for himself; the words towards us show that he did so for our sake, that we might endure in this world. Rabbi Simeon son of Abba taught in the name of Rabbi Johanan, that the Holy One blessed be He, let Abraham see four things, Torah, the yoke of the kingdom, Gehenna, and offerings. Of Torah, it is written a torch of fire (Bereshit / Genesis 15:17), and elsewhere is not My word like a fire? (Jeremiah 23:29); torch means Torah, as in the words, all the people perceived the thundering and the torches (Shemot / Exodus 20:15). Of Gehenna it is written behold a smoking furnace (Bereshit / Genesis 15:17), by which is meant Gehenna, as in the words, behold, the day comes, it burns as a furnace (Malachi 3:10). Of offerings, it is said, Take me a heifer of three years old, and a goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old (Bereshit / Genesis 15:9). Of the yoke of the kingdoms, it is written, Lo, a dread, even a great darkness fell upon him (Bereshit / Genesis 15:12).</i></p>
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The remainder of the midrash speaks of the works of the Lord and of Abraham. The rabbis say that a wondrous work of God was to make Abraham receive the yoke of the kingdom, not for himself but for the sake of his children. What does it mean to choose the “yoke of the kingdom?” The Jewish Encyclopedia (<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/>, Access Date: Mar. 29, 2014) makes a few interesting points regarding the “yoke of the kingdom.”

Jewish Encyclopedia

- *Malkut Shaddai (Kingdom of God, Targum to Zech. xiv. 9 and Ob. 21)*
- *Malkut Shamayim (Kingdom of Heaven, Targum to Zech. xiv. 9 and Ob. 21)*
- *The Kingdom of God, however, in order to be established on earth, requires recognition by man; that is, to use the Hasidæan phrase borrowed from Babylonia or Persia, man must “take upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of God” (“’Ol Malkut Shamayim”; “Heaven” is a synonym of “God”; see Heaven) This the Israelites do daily when reciting the Shema’ (Ber. ii. 2); so do the angels when singing their “Thrice Holy” (Hekalot)*
- *In the future “all men shall take upon themselves the yoke of the Kingdom of God when casting away their idols” (Mek., Beshallah, ‘Amalek, 2)*
- *Upon the Red Sea, Israel first sang the praise of God’s Kingdom (Ex. R. and Targ. Yer. to Ex. xv. 19)*

- *At Mount Sinai they accepted the yoke of God's Kingdom (Sifra, Kedoshim, xi.)*
- *Abraham accepted the yoke of the kingdom (Book of Jubilees, xii. 19) making Him King upon earth (Sifre, Deut. 313)*
- *Each proselyte, in joining Judaism, "takes upon himself the yoke of God's Kingdom (Tan., Lek Leka, ed. Buber, p. 6)*
- *The Hebrew slave who declares his wish to be a slave for life has his ear pierced, because "he casts off the yoke of God's Kingdom to bend to the yoke of another sovereignty" (Tosef., B. K. vii. 5; Yer. Kid. 59b)*
- *The yoke of God's Kingdom—the yoke of the Torah—grants freedom from other yokes (Abot iii. 4)*
- *The principle of one party of the Hasidæans, the Zealots, not to recognize as king any one except God (Josephus, "Ant." xviii. 1, § 1, 6; comp. Philo, "Quod Omnis Probus Liber," §§ 12-13, and the prayer Abinu Malkenu—"Our Father, our King, we have no King except Thee!")*

In Midrash Tehillim 38, Part 2, the rabbis say that God performed a wonderful work in making Abraham choose the yoke of the kingdom for himself. They say that He did so for our sake so that we might endure the world. They go on to describe four things that God showed to Abraham, (i) the Torah, (ii) the yoke of the kingdom, (iii) Gehenna, and (iv) Offerings. The Jewish Encyclopedia provides a summary on Judaism's understanding of the "yoke of the kingdom." The kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are synonymous. The establishment of a kingdom on earth requires the recognition by man whereby *man must "take upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of God."* Therefore, the taking on the yoke of the kingdom is to become a part of the kingdom of God. Judaism teaches that this is done daily when reciting the Shema. The taking on the yoke of the kingdom is also synonymous with man casting away his idols. This is interesting because an idol can be more than a wooden, stone, or metal object. According to *Ezekiel 14*, men construct idols in their hearts which can be anything that is more desirable than that which takes one away from seek after God (i.e. sports, pride, covetousness, etc). Therefore, this suggests that taking the "yoke of the kingdom" changes a person on the inside. At the red sea Israel sang praises of God's Kingdom and Abraham accepted the yoke of the kingdom making him king of the earth which is consistent with what we are reading here in the midrash. Each proselyte who joins Judaism takes upon himself the yoke of God's Kingdom. A reference to Parashat Mishpatim (*Shemot / Exodus 21:1-24:18*) is given with regard to the Hebrew slave who has his ear pierced casts off the yoke of God's kingdom to bend to the yoke of another sovereignty. This is interesting because the Torah describes God's desire for us to be free from slavery but yet provides the option to willingly become a life long slave. Note that the person is brought before the Lord God at His Temple (or Tabernacle) and to the door or door post of the new master, using an awl to put a ring in his ear to indicate that he has dedicated his life to his master as a "bond-servant" for the remainder of his life. Note how the Hebrew text is written: וְהִגִּישׁוּ אֹרְלֵהֶם וְהִגִּישׁוּ אֹרְלֵהֶם אוֹ אֶל-הַמְּזוּזָה וְרָצַע אֶדְנָיו אֶת-אָזְנוֹ בַּמַּרְצֵעַ וַעֲבָדוּ לְעֹלָם: 21:6 then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently. (NASB) Moshe writes saying וְהִגִּישׁוּ "and he brought him near" unto God, and he brought him near to "the door" (הַמְּזוּזָה) or to "the mezuzah" (הַמְּזוּזָה, door post). This is interesting because the mezuzah that is hung on the door post also contains a small Torah scroll. This is to fulfill the commandment to write these words of the Torah upon your door-

posts (mezuzot) found in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:9*. The master, who himself is Torah observant, would force an awe on the servants ear fixing a hole in the ear against the mezuzah, against the Torah, against the Word of God, and blood is shed. This typifies making a covenant before God. The parallel here is phenomenal, the taking on of the yoke of the kingdom is synonymous to becoming a bond-servant, a willful choice to become a life long slave to the Lord God Almighty. The Jewish Encyclopedia also says that the taking on the yoke of the God's Kingdom is synonymous to the yoke of the Torah. The yoke of God, the yoke of the Torah grants freedom from other yokes. Have you ever been taught that the yoke of the Torah is a bad thing? In addition to this, historically the Zealots did not recognize as king any one except God; this may be found in Josephus and Philo, and the proof is in the prayer Avinu u'Malkenu, "*Our Father and our King, we have no King except Thee!*" Having this understanding, Yeshua said to his disciples in *Matthew 11:27-30*:

Matthew 11:27-30

11:27 'All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. 11:28 'Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 11:29 '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. 11:30 'For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.' (NASB)

Yeshua said to all who are weary and heavy-laden, he will give rest. Notice how Yeshua says "*Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me.*" The taking of His yoke is synonymous to learning His ways, to be gentle, humble, and at peace. This suggests that the taking of the yoke of Yeshua is submitting our lives to Him in all things and walking in the way that He walks. The yoke constrains us to walk in his ways and in his direction. When we think of the yoke, what comes to mind is a yoke as a plowing instrument where two come together to share the burden making the burden lighter. When Yeshua said to come and take His yoke, He is saying that He will help to carry our burdens to give us rest. Webster's Dictionary defines a burden as something that is carried with much difficulty. Our burdens may be a broken relationship, problems at home or the death of a loved one, addiction, illness, problems at work, etc to name a few. Yeshua says to take His yoke, meaning to be yoked together with Yeshua, He will help us to bear the burden and give us peace. It is interesting with regard to the "*yoke of the Kingdom,*" by yoking ourselves, taking up God's yoke (i.e. the yoke of the Torah) we are joining ourselves to the Lord. This is why it says in Judaism that each proselyte takes upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of God. We find a very similar theme in the Apostolic Writings regarding these things, taking on the yoke of the kingdom by faith in the Messiah, our lives change. Taking on the yoke of the Torah is synonymous to that of the Kingdom of God, walking and living in righteousness and justice, truth and innocence. Note that the tzitzit are a reminder of these things. Keeping all of these things in mind, let's read through *Acts 15* where we find this "yoke" terminology that has caused so much confusion in our modern day. These verses are a much debated portion of Scriptures regarding a yoke that is burdensome verses one that is light with regard to the gentiles who are entering into the faith.

Acts 15:1-21

15:1 Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.' 15:2 And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue. 15:3 Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren. 15:4 When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. 15:5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, 'It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses.'

15:6 The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter. 15:7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, 'Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. 15:8 'And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; 15:9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. 15:10 'Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? 15:11 'But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.' 15:12 All the people kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. 15:13 After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, 'Brethren, listen to me. 15:14 'Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. 15:15 'With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, 15:16 'After these things I will return, And I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen, And I will rebuild its ruins, And I will restore it, 15:17 So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,' 15:18 Says the Lord, who makes these things known from long ago. 15:19 'Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, 15:20 but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. 15:21 'For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.' (NASB)

Acts 15 opens with men from Judea who are teaching the brethren (the gentiles) that one must be circumcised in the flesh in order to be saved. The men from Judea are essentially asking the gentiles to convert to Judaism. Studying the Torah we know that God's Word speaks of circumcision both on the outside and on the inside. It is interesting reading through the book of Joshua, that physical circumcision did not prevent the people from entering the promised land (*i.e. crossing the Jordan river*). In fact, the Scriptures say that Joshua had the people circumcised after having entered the promised land because they had not been observing this during the forty year wilderness journey. In addition to this, it is interesting that *Acts 15:1* states that this was a "*custom of Moshe.*" Notice how the argument does not proceed by saying "*this is a command of God*" but rather this was a "*custom of Moshe.*" For the men from Judea, it was more important for the brethren to have an outward sign of the cutting of the flesh and to leave their nationality and become Jews. The apostles on the other hand realized that the Torah teaches it was more important that the people had circumcised hearts, because without the circumcised heart one would not have been able to enter the "*Promised Land.*" Note that this is what kept the older generation who had died wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. The Apostle Paul and Barnabas (*Acts 15:2-5*) recognized the importance of heart circumcision and took this matter to the counsel at Jerusalem. The Apostles and the elders come together and discussed this matter giving examples of God moving upon the gentile believers by the giving of the Holy Spirit (*Acts 15:7-9*) and say that the Lord made no distinction between the Jew and the non-Jew. Then Peter says *15:10* '*Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? 15:11 'But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.'* What is the "yoke" that is being referred to by Peter? Is he referring to becoming a proselyte to Judaism? It is important to note that in *Acts 15:5*, the Pharisees said that '*It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses.*' Based on this phrase, was circumcision something apart from obeying the Law of Moshe? There seems to be a kind of distinction being made between circumcision and the Torah. The reason is the reference to circumcision is a common term in Judaism for becoming a proselyte to Judaism. Therefore, the yoke that Peter is referring to is that of becoming a proselyte to Judaism and taking upon themselves all of the teachings, sayings, and instructions of the rabbis, including the fence laws and the minutia of the rabbinic observance of the Torah, a yoke that

is very burdensome. The Apostle James states the following in *Acts 15:13-18*:

Acts 15:13-18

15:13 After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, 'Brethren, listen to me. 15:14 'Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. 15:15 'With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, 15:16 'After these things I will return, And I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen, And I will rebuild its ruins, And I will restore it, 15:17 So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,' 15:18 Says the Lord, who makes these things known from long ago.

James quotes from *Amos 9:11-12* saying that the Lord will restore the tabernacle of David, rebuild its ruins and restore it, and the purpose is so that “*all of mankind*” may seek the Lord and all the Gentiles who are called by My name. The point that is being made, James who is led by the Holy Spirit, is speaking from the prophets of the Jew and non-Jew seeking the Lord at His tabernacle. This in and of itself brings with it the requirements of the Torah. How does one seek God at His temple without the Torah? James continues saying *15:19 'Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, 15:20 but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. (NASB)* Interestingly, James calls for the non-Jew to have certain dietary restrictions and to live in separation (holiness) from idols and fornication for the purpose of drawing near to the Lord. Note also that these things are “works of righteousness” which Christian commentary has stated are not of God (*i.e. Gill's Exposition on Isaiah 55:7*). This is also the way James is requiring of the non-Jew to take on the yoke of the Torah. James's comments on the yoke of the Torah are brought into context by saying *15:21 'For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.'* (NASB) As the Gentiles were coming to faith in the Messiah Yeshua, they would go to the only place they knew to hear the word of the Lord taught, and that is the local synagogues. Having attended the synagogue services on each Shabbat, they would begin the process of learning God's Torah.

In Midrash Tehillim 38, Part 2, the rabbis say that God had performed a wondrous work, that is to make Abraham receive the yoke of the kingdom, not for himself but for the sake of his children. In fact, the rabbis conclude that Abraham took on four things, the Torah, the yoke of the kingdom, Gehenna, and offerings. The Torah describes the life that is aligned with the way of God (*Derech Hashem*). The yoke of the kingdom describes one who willingly gives his life as a bond-servant in a covenant relationship with the Lord God Almighty. Gehenna describes a life of suffering for the Lord. As it is described in the Psalms (*Tehillim / Psalms 38*) the wicked (unrighteous, ungodly men) bring affliction upon the righteous and the innocent. The offerings may be described as what we have in the New Covenant in Yeshua the Messiah, atonement and the forgiveness of sins according to the Torah of God. Let's Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We glorify You and give You Praise! Truly You are worthy to be praised! Lord help us to do what is right in the midst of receiving evil for good from this world. Empower us by Your Spirit to do what is right, to pray for our leaders, or bothers and sisters, and to have wisdom for the purpose of seeking and growing nearer to you O Lord. Help us to have a spirit of forgiveness towards others so that You will hear our prayers and also so we can treat even our enemies with justice and righteousness. Lord, we desire to live holy and righteous lives because You have separated us as holy unto Yourself. You have shown us how to do this by Your commandments and demonstrated this in Your Son Yeshua the Messiah. Help us to walk and abide in Christ as the Scriptures say we are supposed to do. Thank You Lord for sending Your son Yeshua that we may enter into the salvation You have provided. Thank you Lord for these writings so that we can grow in

— Tehillim / Psalms 38 | ספר תהילים לח —

our faith and know who we are in the Messiah Yeshua. Help us to grow by walking in the spirit and applying 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