

## Tehillim / Psalms 7 | ספר תהילים ז

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### A Shiggayon of David

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 7:1-18*. The Psalm begins by stating א שגיון לדוד אשר- עַל-דְּבָרַי-כּוֹשׁ בֶּן-יְמִינִי: the “*Shiggayon of David, which he sang to the Lord concerning Cush, a Benjamite.*” David states ב יהנה אלהי בך חסיתי הושיעני מכל-רדפי וְהַצִּילֵנִי: *O Lord my God, in You I have taken refuge; Save me from all those who pursue me, and deliver me, (NASB)* and then states to the Lord if He does not save him, his pursuers “*will tear my soul like a lion, Dragging me away, while there is none to deliver.*” David then turns and questions whether it is because of injustice or iniquity that occurred at his own hand saying ד יהנה אלהי אם-עשיתי זאת אם-יש-עול בכפי: *O Lord my God, if I have done this, If there is injustice in my hands,* ה אם-גמלתי שולמי רע וְאֶחְלָצָה צוֹרְרֵי רֵיקָם: *If I have rewarded evil to my friend, Or have plundered him who without cause was my adversary,* ו ירדף אויב | נפשי וישג וירמס, *Let the enemy pursue my soul and overtake it; And let him trample my life down to the ground And lay my glory in the dust. Selah. (NASB)* David then asks the Lord to rise up in His anger against his enemies and not him. David declares the Lord to be a judge of the peoples (יהנה יגמר-נא רע | רשעים ותכונן צדיק ובחן לבות אלהים שופט צדיק) and then says וְכִלְיוֹת אֱלֹהִים צַדִּיק: *O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous; For the righteous God tries the hearts and minds.* According to these Scriptures, God tests the hearts of men for righteousness. To what extent is righteousness or wickedness in your heart? (*Matthew 5*) David believes that our righteous deeds flow forth from our hearts, and David says “*Vindicate me, O Lord, according to my righteousness and my integrity that is in me*” believing He is free from unrighteousness in his own life. Like *Psalms 5 (5:12)* he says “*My shield is with God, Who saves the upright in heart.*” David concludes in praising the Lord saying יח אודה יהנה כצדקו וְאֶזְמְרָה שֵׁם-יְהוָה עֲלִיוֹן: *I will give thanks to the Lord according to His righteousness And will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High. (NASB)*

עברית Hebrew	ארמי Aramaic	ελληνικός Greek
<p><b>ספר תהלים פרק ז</b></p> <p>א שגיון לדוד אשר- עַל-דְּבָרַי-כּוֹשׁ בֶּן-יְמִינִי: ב יהנה אלהי בך חסיתי הושיעני מכל-רדפי וְהַצִּילֵנִי: ג פן-יטרף פאריה נפשי פִּרְק וְאִין מַצִּיל: ד יהנה אלהי אם-עשיתי זאת אם-יש-עול בכפי: ה אם-גמלתי שולמי רע וְאֶחְלָצָה צוֹרְרֵי רֵיקָם: ו ירדף אויב   נפשי וישג וירמס לְאֶרְצִי חַיִּי וּכְבוֹדִי   לְעַפְרֵי יִשְׁכֹּן סְלָה:</p>	<p><b>ספר טוביה פרק ז</b></p> <p>א תירגמא דאודיתא [דאוריתא] לדוד די שבח קדם יהוה מטול די אמר שירתא על תברא דשאול בר קיש דמן שבט בנימן: ב יהוה אלהי במימרך סברית פרוק יתי מכל רודפי ופצא יתי: ג דילמא יתבר היך אריווא כאריא נפשי יפשח ולית דיפצי: ד יהוה אלהי אין עבדית דא שירתא הדא בכונתא בישא אין אית טלומא בידי: ה אין פרעית לבעיל שלמי ביש ודחקית מעיקי מגן:</p>	<p><b>ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 7</b></p> <p>7:1 ψαλμός τῷ δαυιδ ὃν ἤσεν τῷ κυρίῳ ὑπὲρ τῶν λόγων χουσι υἱοῦ ἰεμενι κύριε ὁ θεός μου ἐπὶ σοὶ ἤλπισα σῶσόν με ἐκ πάντων τῶν διωκόντων με καὶ ῥύσαι με 7:2 μήποτε ἀρπάσῃ ὡς λέων τὴν ψυχὴν μου μὴ ὄντος λυτρομένου μηδὲ σῶζοντος 7:3 κύριε ὁ θεός μου εἰ ἐποίησα τοῦτο εἰ ἔστιν ἀδικία ἐν χερσίν μου 7:4 εἰ ἀνταπέδωκα τοῖς ἀνταποδιδούσιν μοι κακά ἀποπέσοι ἄρα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν μου κενός</p>

<p>ז קוֹמָה יְהוָה   בְּאַפָּה הַנְּשָׂא  בְּעֵבְרוֹת צוֹרְרֵי וְעוֹרְהָ אֱלִי מְשֹׁפֵט  צוֹיֵת: ח וַעֲדַת לְאֻמִּים תְּסוּבְּכֶךָ  וְעֲלֶיהָ לְמָרוֹם שׁוֹבָה: ט יְהוָה יִדִּין  עַמִּים וְשֹׁפְטֵנִי יְהוָה כְּצַדִּיק וּכְתָמִי  עָלֵי: י יִגְמַר-נָא רַע   רְשָׁעִים  וּתְכוּנֵן צַדִּיק וּבְחֹן לְבוֹת וּכְלִיֹּת  אֱלֹהִים צַדִּיק: יא מְגַנִּי עַל-אֱלֹהִים  מוֹשִׁיעַ יִשְׁרֵי-לֵב: יב אֱלֹהִים שׁוֹפֵט  צַדִּיק וְאֵל זֶעַם כָּכֶל-יוֹם: יג אִם-  לֹא יָשׁוּב חֲרָבוֹ יִלְטוֹשׁ קִשְׁתּוֹ דְּרָף  וַיְכוּנְנֶה: יד וְלוֹ הִכִּין כְּלֵי-מָוֶת  חֲצִיֹּ לְדֹלְקִים יִפְעֹל: טו הִנֵּה  יַחְבֵּל-אֲנִי וְהָרָה עֶמְל וְיִלְד שִׁקָּר:  טז בּוֹר כְּרָה וַיַּחְפְּרֵהוּ וַיִּפֹּל בְּשַׁחַת  יִפְעֹל: יז יָשׁוּב עֶמְלוֹ בְּרָאשׁוֹ וְעַל-  קַדְקָדוֹ חִמְסוֹ יֵרֵד: יח אוֹדָה יְהוָה  כְּצַדִּיקוֹ וְאַזְמַרְהָ שֵׁם-יְהוָה עָלֵינוּ:</p>	<p>ו יהי רדיף בעיל דבבא נפשי וידבק  ויכבוש לארעא חיי ואיקרי ויקרי לע-  פרא ישרי לעלמין: ז קום יהוה בתו-  קפך איתנטל התנטל ברוגזא על מעיקי  וסרהיב לי דינא די פקידת: ח וכנשת  וכנישת אומיא תחזרינך ואמטולתה  [אמטולתהא] לבי שכינתך תוב: ט  מימרא דיהוה ידין [ידון] עממיא דון  יתי יהוה בזכותי ובשלימותי פרע עלי  [לי]: י ישתצי כען בישא דרשיעי  וישתכללון צדיקי ובחין לבבי [ליבא]  וכליין אלהא זכאה: יא תריסי על  אלהא פריק תריצי ליבא: יב אלהא  דיינא זכאה ובתקוף רגיו על רשיעי  כל יומא: יג אם לא יתוב [תאיב]  לדחלתיה סיפיה שחיו קשתיה מתיחא  וסדירא: יד ומטולתיה [ואמטול-  תיה] תקין [אתקין] זיני מותא גירוי  [גיררוהי] לדלקי צדיקיא יעביד: טו  הא יצטער לשקר ויעדי עמלא ויליד  שקרא: טז שוח חפר וגמציה ונפל  בשוחתא די עבד: יז יתוב ליעותיה  ברישיה ועל מוקריה [מוחיה] חטופיה  ייחות [יחית]: יח אהודיה [אשבת]  יהוה כצדקתיה ואשבח שום אלהא  עילאה:</p>	<p>7:5 καταδιώξαι ἄρα ὁ ἐχθρὸς τὴν ψυχὴν  μου καὶ καταλάβοι καὶ καταπατήσῃ εἰς  γῆν τὴν ζωὴν μου καὶ τὴν δόξαν μου  εἰς χοῦν κατασκηνώσῃ διάψαλμα 7:6  ἀνάστηθι κύριε ἐν ὄργῃ σου ὑψώθητι ἐν  τοῖς πέρασιν τῶν ἐχθρῶν μου ἐξεγέρθητι  κύριε ὁ θεὸς μου ἐν προσταγμάτι ᾧ  ἐνετείλω 7:7 καὶ συναγωγὴ λαῶν  κυκλώσει σε καὶ ὑπὲρ ταύτης εἰς ὕψος  ἐπίστρεψον 7:8 κύριος κρινεῖ λαοὺς  κρίνον με κύριε κατὰ τὴν δικαιοσύνην  μου καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἀκακίαν μου ἐπ' ἐμοί 7:9  συντελεσθήτω δὴ πονηρία ἀμαρτωλῶν  καὶ κατευθυνεῖς δίκαιον ἐτάζων καρδίας  καὶ νεφροὺς ὁ θεὸς 7:10 δικαία ἡ βοήθειά  μου παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ σφύζοντος τοὺς  εὐθεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ 7:11 ὁ θεὸς κριτῆς  δίκαιος καὶ ἰσχυρὸς καὶ μακρόθυμος μὴ  ὀργὴν ἐπάγων καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν 7:12  ἐὰν μὴ ἐπιστραφήτε τὴν ῥομφαίαν αὐτοῦ  στιλβῶσει τὸ τόξον αὐτοῦ ἐνέτεινεν  καὶ ἠτοίμασεν αὐτὸ 7:13 καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ  ἠτοίμασεν σκεύη θανάτου τὰ βέλη αὐτοῦ  τοῖς καιομένοις ἐξεργάσατο 7:14 ἰδοὺ  ὠδίνησεν ἀδικίαν συνέλαβεν πόνον καὶ  ἔτεκεν ἀνομίαν 7:15 λάκκον ὠρυξεν  καὶ ἀνέσκαψεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐμπεσεῖται εἰς  βόθρον ὃν εἰργάσατο 7:16 ἐπιστρέψει  ὁ πόνος αὐτοῦ εἰς κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ  ἐπὶ κορυφὴν αὐτοῦ ἡ ἀδικία αὐτοῦ  καταβήσεται 7:17 ἐξομολογήσομαι  κυρίῳ κατὰ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ καὶ  ψαλῷ τῷ ὀνόματι κυρίου τοῦ ὑψίστου  (LXX)</p>
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א שְׁגִיּוֹן לְדוֹד אֶשֶׁר-נֶשֶׁר לִיהוָה עַל-דְּבָרֵי-כוֹשׁ א The opening verse in *Tehillim / Psalms* begins stating כּוֹשׁ אֶשֶׁר-נֶשֶׁר לִיהוָה עַל-דְּבָרֵי-כוֹשׁ א the “*Shiggayon of David, which he sang to the Lord concerning Cush, a Benjamite.*” Studying the Hebrew text for this introduction verse reveals a few interesting points. First is the transliteration of the word שְׁגִיּוֹן “Shiggayon” into English. As we learned in *Psalms 5*, when words are transliterated into English (i.e. *Tehillim / Psalms 5:1* : לְדוֹד אֶשֶׁר-נֶשֶׁר לִיהוָה עַל-דְּבָרֵי-כוֹשׁ א “*To the chief Musician upon Nehiloth, A Psalm of David.*”) the reason is there is some difficulty in the translation of the word as it is used in the verse (see *Excursus I on transliteration of Hebrew Words found within “Bible translations and doctrinal position of the Bible translators”*). The Psalm states that David is singing this song to the Lord concerning כּוֹשׁ “Cush.” Cush is the Hebrew name for Ethiopia. Cush was the eldest son of Ham (one of the three sons of Noah) and the father of Nimrod (*Bereshit / Genesis 10:8 and 1 Chronicles 1:10*). It is from Cush the land of Cush seems to have derived its name in the Bible. The question on the precise location of the land of Cush has given rise to a little controversy. According to the Scriptures, the second river of the Garden of Eden surrounded the whole land of Cush (*Bereshit / Genesis 2:13*). The term Cush in the Tanach (OT) is generally applied to the countries south of the Israel. According to *Ezekiel 29:10*, it was the southern limit of Egypt and this is generally the meaning in *Tehillim / Psalms 68:31, Isaiah 18:1, and Jeremiah 46:9*).

<p><b>Tehillim / Psalms 7</b>                  Shiggayon of David, which he sang to the Lord concerning Cush, a Benjamite. 7:1 O Lord my God, in You I have taken refuge; Save me from all those who pursue me, and deliver me, 7:2 Or he will tear my soul like a lion, Dragging me away, while there is none to deliver. 7:3 O Lord my God, if I have done this, If there is injustice in my hands, 7:4 If I have rewarded evil to my friend, Or have plundered him who without cause was my adversary, 7:5 Let the enemy pursue my soul and overtake it; And let him trample my life down to the ground And lay my glory in the dust. Selah. 7:6 Arise, O Lord, in Your anger; Lift up Yourself against the rage of my adversaries, And arouse Yourself for me; You have appointed judgment. 7:7 Let the assembly of the peoples encompass You, And over them return on high. 7:8 The Lord judges the peoples; Vindicate me, O Lord, according to my righteousness and my integrity that is in me. 7:9 O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous; For the righteous God tries the hearts and minds. 7:10 My shield is with God, Who saves the upright in heart. 7:11 God is a righteous judge, And a God who has indignation every day. 7:12 If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready. 7:13 He has also prepared for Himself deadly weapons; He makes His arrows fiery shafts. 7:14 Behold, he travails with wickedness, And he conceives mischief and brings forth falsehood. 7:15 He has dug a pit and hollowed it out, And has fallen into the hole which he made. 7:16 His mischief will return upon his own head, And his violence will descend upon his own pate. 7:17 I will give thanks to the Lord according to His righteousness And will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High. (NASB)</p>	<p><b>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 7</b>                  7:1 A rendition of the thanksgiving of David, who gave praise to the Lord; for he spoke a song about the ruin of Saul son of Kish, from the tribe of Benjamin. 7:2 O Lord my God, I have trusted in your word; deliver me from all my persecutors and save me. 7:3 Lest he crush my soul like a lion; he will tear and there is no one who will deliver me. 7:4 O Lord my God, if I have made this song with evil intent, if there is oppression in my hand, 7:5 If I have repaid my ally with evil, or thrust away my oppressor for nothing, 7:6 May the enemy pursue my soul, and may he overtake and trample my life to the ground, and may my honor rest in the dust forever. 7:7 Arise, O Lord, in your might; be lifted up in anger against my oppressors; and bring hastily to me the justice that you commanded. 7:8 The gathering of the nations will surround you; because of it return to the place of your presence. 7:9 The word of the Lord will judge the Gentiles; judge me, O Lord, by my merit, and for my innocence recompense me. 7:10 Now may the evil of the wicked perish; and let the righteous be firmly established; and the righteous God examines hearts and minds. 7:11 My shield is on God, redeemer of the upright of heart. 7:12 God is the righteous judge, and in might is angry at the wicked every day. 7:13 If one does not repent and reverence him, his sword is whetted, his bow drawn and ready. 7:14 On his account, he has prepared the weapons of death; he will make his arrows for those who pursue the righteous. 7:15 Behold, he will be in pains with falsehood, and will conceive trouble, and give birth to falsehood. 7:16 He has dug a pit and deepened it; and he fell in the pit he made. 7:17 His misery will return on his head; and on his pate his rapacity will descend. 7:18 I will thank the Lord according to his righteousness; and I will praise the name of God Most High. (EMC)</p>	<p><b>Tehillim / Psalms Chapter 7</b>                  A Psalm of David, which he sang to the Lord because of the words of Chusi the Benjamite. 7:1 O Lord my God, in thee have I trusted: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me. 7:2 Lest at any time the enemy seize my soul as a lion, while there is none to ransom, nor to save. 7:3 O Lord my God, if I have done this; (if there is unrighteousness in my hands;) 7:4 if I have requited with evil those who requited me with good; may I then perish empty by means of my enemies. 7:5 Let the enemy persecute my soul, an take it; and let him trample my life on the ground, and lay my glory in the dust. Pause. 7:6 Arise, O Lord, in thy wrath; be exalted in the utmost boundaries of mine enemies: awake, O Lord my God, according to the decree which thou didst command. 7:7 And the congregation of the nations shall compass thee: and for this cause do thou return on high. 7:8 The Lord shall judge the nations: judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to my innocence that is in me. 7:9 Oh let the wickedness of sinners come to an end; and then thou shalt direct the righteous, O God that searchest the hearts and reins. 7:10 My help is righteous, coming from God who saves the upright in heart. 7:11 God is a righteous judge, and strong, and patient, not inflicting vengeance every day. 7:12 If ye will not repent, he will furbish his sword; he has bent his bow, and made it ready. 7:13 And on it he has fitted the instruments of death; he has completed his arrows for the raging ones. 7:14 Behold, he has travailed with unrighteousness, he has conceived trouble, and brought forth iniquity. 7:15 He has opened a pit, and dug it up, and he shall fall into the ditch which he has made. 7:16 His trouble shall return on his own head, and his unrighteousness shall come down on his own crown. 7:17 I will give thanks to the Lord according to his righteousness; I will sing to the name of the Lord most high. (LXX)</p>
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In addition to this כּוּשׁ “Cush” is associated with Elam (*Isaiah 11:11*), with Persia (*Ezekiel 38:5*), and with the Sabeans (*Isaiah 45:14*). Based upon these Scriptures, it has been inferred that Cush included Arabia and the country on the west coast of the Red Sea. Ezekiel says according to *29:10* and *30:4-6* that כּוּשׁ “Cush” lays south of Egypt. In ancient Egyptian inscriptions Ethiopia is termed Kesh. (*Easton’s Dictionary*)

According to the Psalm, David is singing a song to the Lord concerning Cush, a Benjamite. The



Hebrew text states על-דְבָרֵי-כוּשׁ בֶן-יְמִינִי which means literally “upon the words of Cush” (על-דְבָרֵי-כוּשׁ) the words על-דְבָרֵי is translated “concerning,” and בֶן-יְמִינִי translates literally as “son of my right hand” which is translated as Benjamite in the English bible. (Was David really calling this person a “Benjamite?”) Easton’s dictionary states that this Benjamite “Cush” was probably a follower of Saul, the head of his tribe, and had sought the friendship of David for the purpose of “rewarding evil to him” from someone who was at peace with him. According to *Tehillim / Psalms 7*, this man Cush was from the tribe of Benjamin. Benjamin (בְּנֵימִינִי) was born in *Bereshit / Genesis 35:18*, and was the last-born of Jacob’s twelve sons, and the second and last son of Rachel Jacob’s second wife. Benjamin was the founder of the Israelite Tribe of Benjamin. In the Biblical account, unlike Rachel’s first son Joseph, Benjamin was born in Eretz Canaan. In the Samaritan Pentateuch, the name is consistently written as בן ימים, with a terminal mem, making it “Benjamim,” and would literally translate as (the juxtaposition of two words) “son of days.” Some classical rabbinical literature argues that this was the original form of the name and was a reference to the advanced age of Jacob when Benjamin was born (*Jewish Encyclopedia*).

Now the word שְׁגִיּוֹן “Shiggayon” is difficult to translate in *Tehillim / Psalms 7:1* אֲשֶׁר לְדָוִד אֲשֶׁר- אֶשְׁגִּיּוֹן לַיהוָה עַל-דְבָרֵי-כוּשׁ בֶן-יְמִינִי: the “*Shiggayon of David, which he sang to the Lord concerning Cush, a Benjamite.*” A modern Hebrew Lexicon states that שְׁגִיּוֹן means “*hobby; fixed idea, fad, fancy, hobbyhorse, kink, quirk*” used as a noun. The word שְׁגִיּוֹן occurs only once in all of the Tanach, and Brown, Driver, and Briggs Lexicon states that the meaning of the word is “doubtful” meaning that they do not really know. It may be derived from the root word שָׁגָה meaning “*to go astray or reel.*” Was David composing this Psalm concerning a man who was like a son to Him, a son of His right hand, who had gone astray? As a result of the difficulty in translating the meaning of the word, the bible translators chose to transliterate this word. Better to err or the safe side. When we see a word or phrase of words that are transliterated from the Hebrew text, it is always a good idea to become a little more critical and ask what are the reasons these words or verses are being transliterated from the Hebrew language? This may reveal a doctrinal position of the bible translators.

## Excursus I - Bible translations and the doctrinal position of the translators

A good example on why it is important to pay careful attention to the biblical text when the Scriptures are transliterated from the Hebrew bible may be taken from *Isaiah 9:6*.

<p><b>ספר ישעיה פרק ט פסוקים ה-ו</b>  ה כִּי-יֵלֵד יֵלֵד-לָנוּ בֶן נָתַן-  לָנוּ וְנִתְּהִי הַמְּשָׁרָה עַל-שְׁכָמוֹ  וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ פֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ אֵל גִּבּוֹר  אֲבִי-עַד שֵׁר-שְׁלוֹם: ו לְמַרְבֵּה  [לְמַרְבֵּה] הַמְּשָׁרָה וּלְשִׁלוֹם  אִיוֹן-קֶץ עַל-כִּפְסֵי דָוִד וְעַל-  מַמְלַכְתּוֹ לְהַכִּיֵּן אֶתְּהָ וּלְסַעֲדָהּ  בְּמִשְׁפָּט וּבְצַדִּיקָה מִעַתָּה  וְעַד-עוֹלָם קִנְיַת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  תַּעֲשֶׂה-זֹאת:</p>	<p><b>Isaiah 9:5-6</b>  9:5 For a child is born unto us, a son is given unto us; and the government is upon his shoulder; and his name is called <b>Pele-joez-el-gibbor-Abi-ad-sar-shalom</b>; 9:6 That the government may be increased, and of peace there be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it through justice and through righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of HaShem of hosts doth perform this. (JPS)</p>	<p><b>Isaiah 9:6</b>  9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called <b>Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace</b>. 9:7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this. (NASB)</p>
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Looking at the Jewish Publication Society and the new American standard bible, which English translation is the best? It is interesting to note that the JPS transliterates the Hebrew text (אֵל גִּבּוֹר אָבִי-עַד שָׁר-שְׁלוֹם), *el-gibbor-Abi-ad-sar-shalom*). The Transliterated portion of Scripture literally says “*Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*” The JPS seems to transliterate this scripture because of the difficulty of who the “son” is that is being called “Mighty God.” The Jewish Publication Society (JPS) has a difficulty with the Messianic use of these Scriptures referring to Yeshua the Messiah. Therefore the Scriptures are transliterated making its meaning more obscured than taking the English translation and meaning of the words (note that this verse is not difficult to translate). Looking at the sentence structure as a whole, the object of the sentence is the child that is born, the verb “given” directs our attention back to this child. In addition to this, the pronominal suffixes also direct our attention to this child that is born and given these attributes or names. Both Christian and Rabbinic sources view these Scriptures as prophetic and messianic in nature. But the question remains, how is this Son to be called the “Mighty God?” Obviously the Son is not the Father and the Father is not the Son, that would cause a problem of identity, how can the Son and the Father be the same? The answer is given in the way in which God provided or brought His Messiah into this world. The Messiah, according to prophecy in Daniel, is the “*Son of Man*” who comes upon the clouds at the “right hand” of the Power (See *Daniel 7:13-14*). In the Scriptures, the “right hand” is a description of power. In our lives what we do, the power to move, create, help, and destroy is found in our “right hand” according to the Bible. We place our right hand upon the sacrifice before it was slaughtered, we offer our right hand in peace, we swear with our right hand raised before God in a court of law, etc. There are many examples that can be given on the use of the “*right hand*” in both Scripture and in life today. According to the Scriptures, Yeshua ascended into heaven and took His place at the right hand of God. The One in Daniel’s prophecy comes upon the clouds at the right hand of the power. The right hand of God is the way in which God influences the world. Scripture says that God sent His Word into the World, and this Word of God, proceeds from the Father (*John 8:42*) and *John 1:1* states that the Word is God, and the Word become flesh (*John 1:14*). Rabbinic tradition has the understanding of the Memrah (Word) of God in the Aramaic translations of the bible (i.e. Targum Onkelos). The Memrah (Word) of God in many instances in the Scriptures is synonymous with God, the covenant is made between Abraham and the Memrah in the Aramaic translation (*Genesis 15-17*), in the Hebrew bible it is between Abraham and God. From the Aramaic language, we learn that the Memrah (Word) of God has all of the attributes of the Lord God Almighty, it is by the Word of God everything was created. It is within this biblical context, that *Isaiah 9:5-9* is speaking of this Son who will be born, whose throne will be forever established. This Son that will be Born, He will have the authority of God Himself. Just like in the earthly family, the Son has the authority of the Father, so too the Son of God, this Son that is born, will have the Authority of the “Mighty God.” So, the Name of this Son is God’s Salvation, Yeshua the Messiah, the living Word of God! Yeshua seated at the right hand of the Father has all of the authority, and power. Throughout the Tanach, we read over and over again, God our righteousness (*Tehillim / Psalms 4, Jeremiah 23*, etc), the Lord our righteousness, etc. We have no intrinsic righteousness in our selves, but it is the Lord God Almighty who is our righteousness! This is how Yeshua is our righteousness, in the finished work that He completed while here on earth. He is our righteousness, He makes us clean, we are healed in Him, etc, because He is the Word of the Living God and has all the authority and power of the Father that is in Heaven. As a result of the doctrine developed surrounding the Messiah on *Isaiah*

6:9, the JPS society chose to transliterate this phrase from the Hebrew bible to keep this text shrouded in mystery from its readers. Therefore, when seeing the English translation transliterate the Hebrew bible, the first question we should ask ourselves is “why?”

Regarding our text for this week in *Tehillim / Psalms 7:1* אַשְׁרֵי לַדָּוִד אֲשֶׁר-נָשַׁר לַיהוָה עַל-דְּבָרֵי-כּוּשׁ בֶּן-יְמִינִי: the “*Shiggayon of David, which he sang to the Lord concerning Cush, a Benjamite.*” The transliteration of the word “Shiggayon” is a mystery and may well be derived from the word שגה meaning “to go astray or reel” based upon what David says in the remainder of the Psalm concerning this person Cush the Benjamite who was rewarding evil to him rather than good, it may very well refer to “the going astray of a very close friend” that was sung as a song unto the Lord concerning Cush, a Benjamite. Now, it is interesting that the Targum Pseudo Jonathan states א תירגמא דאודיתא [דאוריתא] לדוד די שבה קדם יהוה מטול די אמר שירתא א: *7:1 A rendition of the thanksgiving of David, who gave praise to the Lord; for he spoke a song about the ruin of Saul son of Kish, from the tribe of Benjamin.* (EMC) In the rabbinic commentary, the rabbis speak extensively on the idea that David is speaking of Saul the son of Kish (1 Samuel 14:51). King Saul lived from 1079 – 1007 BC and was the first king of the united Kingdom of Israel. To summarize Saul’s life, he was anointed by the prophet Samuel and reigned from Gibeah. He was jealous of David and pursued David for many years during his reign as king over Israel. The end of his life, he fell on his sword to avoid capture in the battle against the Philistines at Mount Gilboa, during which three of his sons were also killed. The succession to his throne was David and this was contested by Ish-bosheth, Saul’s only surviving son, and his son-in-law David, who eventually prevailed. The main account of Saul’s life and reign is found in the Books of Samuel. The Aramaic translation of *Tehillim / Psalms 7* reveals to us the belief of the rabbis that David had conducted this Psalm to the Lord concerning the ruin of Saul son of Kish. The Septuagint (LXX) Greek translation is synonymous with the Hebrew text 7:1 ψαλμὸς τῷ δαυὶδ ὃν ἤσεν τῷ κυρίῳ ὑπὲρ τῶν λόγων χουσι υἱοῦ ἰεμενι, but leaves out the transliteration of the “*Shiggayon of David*” and says “*The Psalm of David ...*” It is interesting that the Greek translation states David composed this Psalm because of the “words” (λόγων) of Cush (χουσι) the son of Benjamin (ἰεμενι). Was this Psalm composed as a result of what this son of Benjamin said as apposed to what he did? The remainder of the Psalm indicates that the actions of sin requires the judgment of God. The words of Cush were acted out by his actions. This sounds similar to what Yeshua said concerning the Judgment day in *Matthew 12:26* “*But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.*” (NASB) These careless and sinful words that Cush had made required David to seek the Lord for salvation and deliverance from his enemies as we read in the Psalm following this introduction to the Psalm of David (*Tehillim / Psalm 7*).

Following the introduction, the Psalm begins with David asking the Lord אֵלֹהֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה בְּךָ חָסִיתִי ב: *7:1 O Lord my God, in You I have taken refuge; Save me from all those who pursue me, and deliver me,* (NASB) David states that literally “*YHVH God in You I to take refuge/shelter/seek protection*” (אֵלֹהֵי יְהוָה בְּךָ חָסִיתִי). Taking refuge and seeking protection in the Lord God Almighty, David illustrates for us that it is in the Lord that we are able to find true peace, salvation (הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי), and deliverance (וְהַצִּילֵנִי) from our enemies. David says that if the Lord does not save and deliver him from his enemies that his enemies will tear his soul and drag him away like a lion (אֵין מְצִיל: *7:2 Or he will tear my soul like a lion, Dragging me away, while there is none to deliver.*). The kind of tearing and dragging away is done so in such a way as it is in the helplessness of not having one to deliver (אֵין מְצִיל) from such a desperate situation. His asking the Lord for deliverance and salvation is drawn in parallel to the lion that is capable of tearing apart the body. As a lion tears apart a body, the hopelessness of the animal that he is eating, so would David’s soul being consumed by his enemies if the Lord does not help to deliver him in this instance. Within this Psalm we can hear the desperate cry of David for deliverance by the Lord

from his enemies. Rather than turning to his mighty men, his military strength, David turns to God for his deliverance. David sets the example for how we should live our lives, relying upon the Lord and His mercy for everything in life.

David then looks within himself to see whether he has not walked in righteousness and justice before the Lord. He does so asking whether he has rewarded evil to a friend or plundered an enemy.

<p>ד יהוה אלהי אם-עשיתי זאת אם-יש-עול בכפי: ה  אם-גמלתי שולמי רע ונאחלצה צוררי ריקם: ו ירדף  אויב   נפשי וישג וירמס לארץ חיי וכבודי   לעפר  ישכן סלה: ז קומה יהוה   באפה הנשא בעברות  צוררי ועורה אלי משפט צוית: ח ועדת לאמים  תסובבך ועליה למרום שובה:</p>	<p>7:3 O Lord my God, if I have done this, If there is injustice in my hands, 7:4 If I have rewarded evil to my friend, Or have plundered him who without cause was my adversary, 7:5 Let the enemy pursue my soul and overtake it; And let him trample my life down to the ground And lay my glory in the dust. Selah. 7:6 Arise, O Lord, in Your anger; Lift up Yourself against the rage of my adversaries, And arouse Yourself for me; You have appointed judgment. 7:7 Let the assembly of the peoples encompass You, And over them return on high. (NASB)</p>
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His question is particularly interesting in *Tehillim / Psalms 7:3*. David says -אם-עשיתי זאת אם- יהוה אלהי אם-עשיתי זאת אם- *“O Lord my God, if I have done this, If there is injustice in my hands,”* look how he words this question to the Lord in the Hebrew text. David uses these two words (עול <<עוול) meaning “*wrong, injustice, evil, grievance, iniquity, libel*” and בכפי meaning “*in my mouth*” or “*upon my lips*.” The English translation says “*if there is injustice in my hands*” but the Hebrew translation states אם-עשיתי זאת אם-עול בכפי “*if there is injustice/evil in my lips or upon my mouth.*” He draws a parallel to evil, iniquity, and injustice upon his lips with the things that he has done (אם-עשיתי, “*if I have done*”). The Aramaic translation literally states 7:4 O Lord my God, if I have made this song with evil intent, if there is oppression in my hand, (EMC) and concludes that this sin is in the form of “*oppression*” (טלומא) in his hand (ביד). This indicates that the rabbis took the Hebrew phrase -אם-עשיתי to mean this injustice/evil that is committed by the hand is synonymous with evil and injustice that is upon ones lips/mouth (Lashon Hara, evil speech, gossip). This is in agreement with the LXX on the “*words of Cush*” (λόγων χουσι) in the introduction of the Psalm. Notice the example that David gives to clarify what he means by injustice that might have been upon his lips or on his hands. He says ה אם-גמלתי 7:4 If I have rewarded evil to my friend, Or have plundered him who without cause was my adversary, (NASB) He asks whether he has rewarded a friend with evil, literally asking if he has rewarded (אם-גמלתי) or exchanged his “*peace*” with “*evil*” or “*wickedness*” (שולמי רע) and plundered his enemy (צוררי) emptily (ריקם) or without reason. The translators of the Hebrew text tend to take a little translator license in rendering the Hebrew text into Aramaic and English. David then asks the Lord ז קומה 7:6 Arise, O Lord, in Your anger; Lift up Yourself against the rage of my adversaries, And arouse Yourself for me; You have appointed judgment. (NASB) Here we find David using a Hebrew idiom stating באפה הנשא יהוה | באפה הנשא which means “*raise up Lord your nose high and lofty*” which is translated in English “*Arise O Lord in Your anger.*” In the Hebrew language, in the Scriptures, when describing that God is angry the word for “*nose*” (אף) is used along with a verb to describe the condition of the “*nose*,” in this case, the lifting up of the nose to lofty places or causing the nose to burn is a description of “*anger*.” In Parashat Ki Tisa (*Shemot / Exodus 30:11-34:35*) when the Lord passed before Moshe in the cloud upon the Mountain of Sinai the Lord declared of Himself אפים ארוך ורחון ארך “*and merciful long nose*” that is translated as “*merciful long suffering.*” David is asking the Lord to lift up His anger towards his enemies (צוררי) and asks that the Lord raise Himself up on his behalf because he has



appointed judgment (מִשְׁפָּט צְוִיָּת) which literally states “you have commanded judgment.” He then states :  
 :וְעַד־תָּבוֹאוּ לְפָנַי וְעַל־הַיָּבֵשׁ תִּסְבְּבוּ וְעַל־הַיָּבֵשׁ תִּסְבְּבוּ וְעַל־הַיָּבֵשׁ תִּסְבְּבוּ וְעַל־הַיָּבֵשׁ תִּסְבְּבוּ :  
 7:7 Let the assembly of the peoples encompass You, And over them return on high. (NASB) This draws the imagery of the congregation of Israel encamped surrounding the Lord in the wilderness (Bamidbar / Numbers 2). The Scriptures indicate that the congregation of people surround (תִּסְבְּבוּ) the Lord and the Lord will return on high (or to Heaven, לְמַרוֹם). This suggests that when the Lord helps he descends from Heaven and His presence is manifested in the midst of the people. This was the very thing that happened in the Lord manifesting Himself as a pillar of cloud during the day and fire at night. David concluded that “judgment was commanded” by God. He continues saying that the Lord judges the peoples.

<p>ט יהנה ידיו עמים שפטיני יהנה כצדקי וכתמי עלי: י          יגמר-נא רע   רשעים ותכונן צדיק ובהן לבות וכליות          אלהים צדיק: יא מגני על-אלהים מושיע ישרי-לב:          יב אלהים שופט צדיק ואל זעם בכל-יום:</p>	<p>7:8 The Lord judges the peoples; Vindicate me, O Lord, according to my righteousness and my integrity that is in me.          7:9 O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous; For the righteous God tries the hearts and minds.          7:10 My shield is with God, Who saves the upright in heart.          7:11 God is a righteous judge, And a God who has indignation every day.</p>
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It is interesting while reading through *Tehillim / Psalms 7* verses 8 and 11, there are two words used to refer to judgment, דין and שפט. The word דין when used as an adverb means “enough, sufficient, adequate; fairly” whereas when used as a noun means “judgment, sentence, verdict, law, jus (right or law), legi (rule or law), rule, custom, dispute.” The word שפט means “to judge” (לשפוט) or to “be judged” (להישפט). In verse 9, God is described as judging the people (יהנה ידיו עמים) and then David asked the Lord to Judge him (שפטיני יהנה כצדקי) according to his righteousness. The use of the word דין provides the description of the judgement of a king that sits in judgement whereas David is asking to be judged (שפטיני), this is a reference to the judge Himself. Accordingly, in *Tehillim / Psalms 7:12 (Hebrew bible, verse 11 in English)* the attribute of righteousness (צדיק) is given to the judge (שופט) who is the Lord God Almighty (אלהים). The word דין (din) refers to the judgment seat of Moshe (יהנה ידיו עמים) whereas שפט refers to the one who judges in righteousness who is the Lord (אלהים שופט צדיק). What is the “seat of Moshe” and how might have this been understood according to the Scriptures? Yeshua spoke of the seat of Moshe in *Matthew 23*.

**Matthew 23:1-12**

23:1 Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, 23:2 saying: ‘The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; 23:3 therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them. 23:4 ‘They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger. 23:5 ‘But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. 23:6 ‘They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, 23:7 and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men. 23:8 ‘But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. 23:9 ‘Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 23:10 ‘Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. 23:11 ‘But the greatest among you shall be your servant. 23:12 ‘Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted. (NASB)

Here Yeshua says λέγων, Ἐπὶ τῆς Μωϋσέως καθέδρας ἐκάθισαν οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι. 23:2 saying:



*‘The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; (NASB)* and uses the Greek word καθέδρας meaning “chair or seat.” This word is used of the exalted seat occupied by men of eminent rank or influence, as teachers and judges. Yeshua says that the Pharisees have placed themselves in the judgement seat of Moshe. The phrase “seat of Moshe” has the idea of leadership over Israel as Moshe was leader over Israel. The Pharisees were public teachers that had the office of explaining the Torah and it was the custom to sit while they expounded the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings (Tanach) to the people (*Matthew 5:1 and Luke 4:20-22*). By the phrase “seat of Moshe” it meant that they had the authority to teach the Torah to the people. Yeshua tells the people and us that we should do an observe all that they tell us according to the Scriptures, but do not do according to their deeds, they say one thing and do not do what they are saying (“for they say and do not do”). Yeshua goes on to say that the leadership tied up heavy burdens upon men’s shoulders but they themselves were unwilling to move even so much as one finger. That they do their deeds to be noticed of men broadening their phylacteries and lengthening their tzitzit on their garments because they loved the honor of men and being called Rabbi by men. The Pharisees observed the tradition of men and made void the command of God that is given in the Torah. The “*Seat of Moshe*” represents the authority of those who speak from it. Essentially, Yeshua’s point is that those who sit “in the seat of Moshe” give forth the words of Moshe along with halachic instructions on how one should obey these words. This is indicated by the following sentences of *Matthew 23:2*, that state “*they say and do not do.*” What is at variance is the manner in which these teachers failed to follow their own instructions. Yeshua was teaching on the hypocrisy of the teachers of His day, not against their instructions specifically. Note how Yeshua points out the hypocrisy of the teachers who love the praise of men and the lengthening and broadening of the tzitzit and phylacteries. There is no indication that Yeshua disagrees with tzitzit or phylacteries and their instructions on such, He is simply warning of the hypocritical manner in which they themselves have failed to live out the purpose and meaning of these commandments. In the reading from *Tehillim / Psalms 7*, David uses two words to drive forward the distinction that is made between the judgement seat (position of authority) and the judge. The use of the word דין (din) reveals to us that the Lord God Almighty has the position of authority as God and Creator to judge the people of this Earth (יְהוָה דִּין עַמִּים) whereas שפט refers to the one who judges in righteousness who is the Lord (אֱלֹהִים שׁוֹפֵט צְדִיק). The Lord is righteous and He will judge righteously when He gives His judgment between sin and righteousness, even in the case of judging the world (the unsaved peoples) for their sins.

יג אִם-לֹא יָשׁוּב חֲרָבוֹ יִלְטוּשׁ קִשְׁתּוֹ דְרָךְ After declaring that God is the righteous judge, David states יג אִם-לֹא יָשׁוּב חֲרָבוֹ יִלְטוּשׁ קִשְׁתּוֹ דְרָךְ *7:12 If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready. (NASB)* Here it is written אִם-לֹא יָשׁוּב “if he does not repent” the one who doesn’t repent is like the man who puts the finishing touches (יִלְטוּשׁ) on his sword and bow and prepares for war. Does this mean that the unrepentant man has prepared himself for war against God? Without repentance there can be no peace with the Lord in our hearts. David continues saying: יד וְלוֹ הֵכִין כְּלֵי-מָוֶת חֲצָיו לְדֹלָקִים יִפְעֹל׃ *7:13 He has also prepared for Himself deadly weapons; He makes His arrows fiery shafts. (NASB)* The unrepentant man makes for himself deadly weapons and fiery arrows. This unrepentant man טו הִנֵּה יִתְכַּל-אֶן וְהָרָה *7:14 Behold, he travails with wickedness, And he conceives mischief and brings forth falsehood. (NASB)* The Scripture literally says that the unrepentant man becomes “pregnant” (וְהָרָה) “working or laboring” (עָמַל) in sin. He gives birth (וְיָלַד) to “lies, untruth, falsehood” (שָׁקֵר). Note that this draws a parallel to *James 1:15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. (NASB)* Unrepentance by its very nature is rooted in untruth and lies. Notice how the English translation translates וְיָלַד to mean “and brings forth;” this word יָלַד means “child” and so the nature of the untruth or lies is that which comes forth from us as the fruit of our seed that is from within. This child of sin then acts and does the things we do not want to do, sin has a mind of its own. This sounds a lot like

what the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans chapter 7. Can you think of any New Testament parallels on the words “bearing fruit, and sin?” If we sin and do not repent there is a reason for that, the reason is that the very nature of the one who refuses to repent is rooted in lies, untruths, and falsehood. Such a person cannot stand before a Holy God. David concludes that such people have: *טז בור כרה ויחפרהו ויפל בשחת יפעל: 7:15 He has dug a pit and hollowed it out, And has fallen into the hole which he made. 7:16 His mischief will return upon his own head, And his violence will descend upon his own pate. (NASB)* The person who is unrepentant, he has trapped himself, he has dug a pit and has fallen himself into the hole that he has made. Unrighteousness, pride, sin, iniquity, transgressions, lies, untruths, falsehoods, all of these one day will return to the person who “works or labors” (עמל) in sin. His violence, his plot and plan for harm, will return back upon him by the instruments which he uses (i.e. His deadly weapons of war, the sword and the bow).

David concludes saying: *יח 7:17 I will give thanks to the Lord according to His righteousness And will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High. (NASB)* It is in the righteousness of God (יהנה כצדקו) that he will give thanks (אודה) and sing (ואזמרה) praise unto the Name of God Almighty (שם-יהנה עליון).

*Tehillim / Psalms 7* reveals to us that the actions of sin requires the judgment of God. “The words of Cush” (LXX) of this man were acted out by his actions. David first looks within himself as to whether he himself had walked in unrighteousness and injustice before the Lord. He does so asking whether he has rewarded evil to a friend or plundered an enemy, *Tehillim / Psalms 7:3* David says *יהנה אלהי אם-עשיתי זאת אם-יש-עול בכפי 7:4 O Lord my God, if I have made this song with evil intent, if there is oppression in my hand, (EMC)* and concludes that the kind of sin he is worried that he has committed would be in the form of “oppression” (טלומא) at his hand (בידי). This sin he says is of the type: *אם-גמלתי שולמי רע ואחלצה צוררי ריקם: 7:4 If I have rewarded evil to my friend, Or have plundered him who without cause was my adversary, (NASB)* He asks whether he has rewarded a friend with evil, literally asking if he has rewarded (אם-גמלתי) or exchanged his “peace” with “evil” or “wickedness” (שולמי רע) and plundered his enemy (צוררי) emptily (ריקם) or without reason. These questions are asked understanding that God is the righteous judge, *יג אם-לא ישוב חרביו ילטוש קשתו, 7:12 If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready. (NASB)* David believes *אם-לא ישוב* “if he does not repent” the one who doesn’t repent is like the man who puts the finishing touches (ילטוש) on his sword and bow and prepares for war against God. The unrepentant are preparing themselves for war against God. Without repentance there can be no peace with the Lord in our hearts. According to the Psalm, the unrepentant prepare deadly weapons and fiery arrows: *יד 7:13 He has also prepared for Himself deadly weapons; He makes His arrows fiery shafts. (NASB)* The unrepentant man: *טו 7:14 Behold, he travails with wickedness, And he conceives mischief and brings forth falsehood. (NASB)* literally the unrepentant become “pregnant” (והרה) “working or laboring” (עמל) in sin. He gives birth (וילד) to “lies, untruth, falsehood” (שקר). Unrepentance by its very nature is rooted in untruth and lies, these things are the very essence of the man or woman who refuse to repent before the Lord. Yeshua said in *John 15:*

**John 15:1-9**

*15:1 ‘I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 15:2 ‘Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. 15:3 ‘You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken*

to you. 15:4 'Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 15:5 'I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 15:6 'If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 15:7 'If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 15:8 'My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. 15:9 'Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. (NASB)

Yeshua said “15:1 'I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser” our Father is the vinedresser, He goes on speaking of the branches that bear fruit, our Father in heaven prunes so that we bear more fruit. The branch that bears fruit is pruned off and cast into the fire. David realizes that our Father in Heaven is the righteous judge and that if there is any unrighteousness in him that the Lord would seek it out and judge him accordingly. The careless and sinful words of Cush made David compose this Psalm to seek the Lord's Salvation and deliverance from his enemies. Are there careless and sinful words in your heart today? Do you live in Lashon Hara? Do you have enemies who have surrounded you seeking your destruction? Is there sin in your life that is a hidden sin from others? The Lord knows and desires for you to repent, turn from your sin and believe upon His Messiah, the Anointed one, Yeshua, Savior, King, and Lord. Come let's pray together and ask the Lord to forgive our sins and lead us in His righteous ways.

### Christian Commentary

*Tehillim / Psalms 7* is known as a prayer for deliverance from a personal enemy. First, a petition for salvation from David's pursuer, with a curse of death upon himself if he had done any of the evil deeds he has been charged with (7:2-6). Second, he expresses confidence that the Lord God was preparing weapons against his enemy, and that his mischief and treachery would receive righteous retribution (7:13-17) The commentary (*International Critical Commentary on the Psalms (ICCP), Driver, Plummer, and Briggs, 2005*) states that “subsequent editors inserted a plea for the judgment of the nations in an ultimate world judgment” (7:7-8), “a judgment between the righteous and wicked in Israel” (7:9-12), and a “liturgical couplet of praise” (7:18) suggesting scribal tradition was not authoritative in the transmission of the Scriptures. By these statements it is suggested that significant editing of the Psalm has taken place over time which appears to fly in the face of divine inspiration of the Psalm of David. One support for the belief by scholars that this is not a Psalm of David is in the opening verse אֲשִׁיּוֹן לְדָוִד אֲשֶׁר-לְיִהוָה עַל-דְּבָרֵי-כּוּשׁ אֶן-יְמִינֵי: the “*Shiggayon of David, which he sang to the Lord concerning Cush, a Benjamite,*” there is no mention of such a person in the history and the times of David. The editors of the ICCP commentary say that “there is a striking inconsistency between the plea for interposition against an individual enemy (7:2-6 and 7:13-17) and the judgement of the nations (7:7-9).” They say that this inconsistency may only be explained by a later insertion of these into the text for the purpose of giving the Psalm more of a general reference for congregational use under later circumstances. (i.e. *Verses 7:2-6, 7:13-17 are trimeters whereas 7:7-12 are pentameters*) There is a difference between YHVH's judgment (7:7-8) and Elohim's judgment (7:10-12); might this statement suggests the scholars argue these are different gods under differing times? This kind of opinion would come from research out of the Ugaritic texts of the people of Eretz Canaan. The commentary states that there is an “original” Psalm and the one that we currently have is not original. It is believed that this Psalm, as in the other Psalms the YHVH gloss belong to the Persian period and the Elohim gloss belong to the Greek period. A “gloss” means to “add an explanatory note (in the margins of a text, etc.), comment, polish, add a shiny finish to, cover up, give a deceptively appealing appearance to.”



Verses 7:2-3 are believed to be a trimeter tetrastich (a group of four lines of verse) where “*My God, in Thee do I seek refuge*” followed by the petition “*save me from him that pursues me and deliver me.*” The poet was pursued by a personal enemy and seeks refuge in YHVH for deliverance and possibly at the sanctuary itself. The synthetic couplet gives the reason for the plea to the Lord “*lest, like a lion, he tear me.*” The pursuer will tear him, as a lion and there is “none to deliver” him. The pursuer seems to have some pretext for this pursuit, he charges the poet with violation of the covenant and personal injury. The modern commentary continually refers to “the poet” rather than “David” the author of the Psalm because of the presupposition that this is a later Psalm.

The poet repents before the Lord and brings implication upon himself if the condition which he denies is true (7:4-5) saying “*if there is iniquity in my hands.*” The iniquity in his hands may be referring to a bribe? “*If I did to him that was at peace with me with evil*” indicates that in a covenant of peace between friends, both parties in the covenant agreement looks for peace from the other. If a reward of evil is given, this would be a serious breach of friendship and covenant which justly exacts the penalty of pursuit and death as is described here in the Psalm. He recognizes the rightfulness of the pursuit if his statement is false (7:6). The commentators then state that verses 7:7-2 are a series of glosses that separate the text in the original Psalm. The reason is that these verses take a wider view than the rescue of an individual from personal enemy, the psalmist writes of judgment of the nations and of the wicked adversaries of the righteous of Israel. The author appeals to the Lord to raise up, lift up, rouse Yourself O Lord my God on high. It is a call of the congregation of Israel to their national God to intervene on their behalf, to sit on His throne and judge all parties involved at His judgment seat. It is assumed by the psalmist that the decision will be in favor of His people and that judgment has already been commanded. Verse 7:9 “YHVH judges the peoples” is said to be entirely apart from previous or subsequent context stating a fact in the midst of earnest calls for judgment. Verse 7:9 is a marginal gloss. Verses 7:9-12 are different, a series of pentameters, the Psalm changes from the individual to that between YHVH and the nations, and then to the righteous and the wicked in Israel itself. The conclusion is that this Psalm is of a much later date. This gloss is not earlier than the Greek period referring to *Tehillim / Psalm 1*. The author represents the righteous of Israel in the lines that say “according to my righteousness” (7:9), “the righteousness and the righteous God” (7:10), the “upright in mind” (7:11), and the “righteous judge” (7:12). The Lord is described as the shield bearer of His people. As a result of the judgment of God, the final verses speak of the pursuer and not the pursued “He will fall into the hole he is making” and “his mischief will return on his own head,” “upon his own pate” will “his violence come down.” Seeking refuge in the Lord, the poet sees God pursuing his pursuer, and bringing upon him the retribution that is commanded in judgment for the wrong which he has done. The poet closes stating a generalized form of praise to the Lord one that is adapted for public worship. The praise verses (7:18) is three part (trimeter) “I will praise YHVH,” “I will make melody,” and “to the name of YHVH Elyon.” The commentators state that the second “YHVH” name of God was inserted at a later time from the original. Modern scholarship’s opinion on the “original” and “later” editions of the Psalm seems to weaken and place doubt in the authority and inspiration of Scripture. This kind of interpretation casting doubt on the text itself weakens the faith and our belief in the Bible as God’s inspired truth. A critical commentary should be more of a word-by-word commentary on the Scriptures to help us understand the meaning of the text, how and what David was thinking, and how these scriptures relate to our lives. This is the fundamental and central idea on studying the Bible, the divine inspiration and interpretation of Scripture. The departing from the basics of biblical interpretation to that of assuming we have a modified version with many later editions lends itself to question the very meaning of Scripture and whether God is indeed speaking to us in His holy Word (the Bible) or that we are simply reading an agglomeration of wise sayings that have been passed down through the centuries? We need to be careful not to disregard the crucial and proper interpretation of Scripture that is God has spoken to us and reveals to us in His Word, His truth, this much is for certain, we should not doubt the inspired Word of God!

## Rabbinic Commentary

The Midrash on *Tehillim / Psalms 7* has 18 parts. Reading through this week's Midrash we will be looking at Parts 3, 8, and 10. Let's begin by outlining Midrash Tehillim Chapter 7 Parts 3, 8, and 10.

### Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 6, Parts 1 and 3

#### Part 3:

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) “Another comment on Shiggayon of David” (*Tehillim / Psalms 7:1*).
- The פתיחה (Petihta) “the homiletic introduction” to the Midrash says “This phrase is to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, With Him is strength and wisdom, the deceived and the deceiver are His” (*Job 12:16*).
- The משל (mashal) “the parable,” is that “strength” is the Torah.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “expansion on the parable” expands upon the משל (mashal) to explain the meaning of how the Torah is referred to as “strength.”
- The Concluding statements says “If Saul's fate, or if your fate had been his fate, how many Davids would I have caused to perish for his sake?”

#### Part 8:

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) “O Lord, minister judgment to the peoples” (*Tehillim / Psalms 7:9*).
- The פתיחה (Petihta) “the homiletic introduction” to the Midrash says “Turn the severity of Your judgment against the peoples of the earth. But pronounced sentence upon me not according to my wickedness but according to me righteousness, not according to my perversity but to that integrity within me. Lord remove wickedness and the wicked” (*Job 7:10*).
- The משל (mashal) “the parable,” speaks of God establishing His kingdom and the righteous.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “expansion on the parable” expands upon the משל (mashal) to explain the meaning of how the righteous are established, by our souls being restored to us each morning because of the good that a man does.
- The Concluding statements says “As for the man who does good but whose impulses are evil, and the man who does evil but whose impulses are good, one is neither better nor worse than the other.”

#### Part 10:

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) “He the wicked has prepared for him the instruments of death” (*Tehillim / Psalms 7:14*).
- The פתיחה (Petihta) “the homiletic introduction” to the Midrash says “Who then are those who burn, referred to in the verses conclusion, arrows against those who burn doth he provide?”
- The משל (mashal) “the parable,” is that the wicked burn with their lust all their lives.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “expansion on the parable” expands upon the משל (mashal) the persecutors are those who persecute the children of Israel.
- The Concluding statements says “Our pursuers chased us upon the mountains, they lay wait for us in the wilderness” (*Lamentations 4:19*).

*Midrash Tehillim, Chapter 7, Parts 3, 8, and 10* contain a few interesting points concerning the *דיבור המתחיל* (Dibur Hamathil) “*the beginning word*,” on the Scripture *אֲשֶׁר-לְדָוִד אֲשֶׁר-לַיהוָה* “*Shiggayon of David, which he sang to the Lord concerning Cush, a Benjamite.*” (*Tehillim / Psalms 7:1*). A significant portion of the Midrash on *Tehillim / Psalms 7* is devoted to an attempt to understand what is meant by the word “Shiggayon.” Part 3 speaks of additional comments concerning this word, the *פתיחתא* (Petihata) “*the homiletic introduction*” quotes *Job 12:16* to direct our attention to the “strength and wisdom” that belongs to the Lord and both the deceived and deceiver are in God’s hands. The *משל* (mashal) “*parable*” of Part 3 states that “Strength” is a reference to the Torah. Judgement comes by the judge who is the Lord God Almighty Himself. This is consistent with Part 8 that states in the *פתיחתא* (Petihata) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*Turn the severity of Your judgment against the peoples of the earth. But pronounced sentence upon me not according to my wickedness but according to my righteousness, not according to my perversity but to that integrity within me. Lord remove wickedness and the wicked*” (*Job 7:10*). The *נמשל* (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the *משל* (mashal) to explain the meaning of how the righteous are established. The righteous are established by obeying God (*מעשה הצדקים*) according to the Torah (the strength of God) and those who do not obey the Lord are the wicked. The wicked burn in their lusts all of their lives. There is no good deed and the concluding statement that says in Part 8 “*As for the man who does good but whose impulses are evil, and the man who does evil but whose impulses are good, one is neither better nor worse than the other*” indicates our righteousness must be through and through, from the inside out, what we do and our impulses need to be good. Today, this may only be accomplished by the help of the Lord God Almighty in and through His Messiah Yeshua, by the power of His *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit).

How do we determine the nature of our impulses? The “impulse” according to Oxford’s Concise English Dictionary is “a sudden strong and unreflective urge to act.” This is a very important thing to consider in our lives, when something happens, the first thought of action is it “good” or “evil” is the question? Now, regarding our thoughts, this brings to memory Parashat Beha’alotcha (*בהעלתך*) from *Bamidbar / Numbers 8:1-9:14*. Let’s summarize Parashat Beha’alotcha.

### Summary of Parashat Beha’alotcha

First, God commands Moshe on the construction of the Menorah and that the seven lamps are to give their light from the front of the lampstand (*Bamidbar / Numbers 8:1-3*). The Lord then instructs Moshe to take the Leviim from among the Sons of Yisrael and cleanse them. The purification process includes the sprinkling of water, using a razor to remove all of their hair, and to wash their bodies and clothing (*Bamidbar / Devarim 8:6-7*). The Cohanim (Priests) are then purified for service in the Mishkhan (Tabernacle) along with an offering that is made by the blood of a bull for a Chatat Korban (*לְחַטָּאת*, Sin Offering) and a Mincha Korban (*מִנְחָת*, Grain Offering) mixed with oil (*Bamidbar / Numbers 8:8*). The Cohanim are presented before God and before the people (*Bamidbar / Numbers 8:9*) as a wave offering and it is at this point that they are qualified to begin their duties of service before the Lord (*Bamidbar / Numbers 8:11*). During these Korbanot (Sacrifices), there are two animals presented before the Lord, one is to be made as a Chatat Korban and the other as an Olah Korban (*עֹלָה*, Whole burnt offering) (*Bamidbar / Numbers 8:12*). Scripture goes on to say that the Lord will take the Leviim instead of every first born of Yisrael drawing a parallel with the Passover and the first born dying (*Bamidbar / Numbers 8:16*). The Leviim are instructed to



perform the service of work in the Tabernacle between the ages of twenty five and fifty years (*Bamidbar / Numbers 8:24-25*). The Lord then spoke to Moshe instructing the Children of Yisrael to observe the Pesach (Passover) festival saying that the Pesach festival is important even a person who has touched a dead person and become unclean must observe the festival (*Bamidbar / Numbers 9:9*). It is written in *Bamidbar / Numbers 9:18* יח על-פי יהוה יסעו 9:18 *At the command of the Lord the sons of Israel would set out, and at the command of the Lord they would camp; as long as the cloud settled over the tabernacle, they remained camped. (NASB)* according to the lips/mouth of the Lord (על-פי יהוה) the people would set out or encamp. During the wilderness journey, the people were led by the Lord (YHVH) to move or to stay indicated by the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. The command for the blowing of the trumpets is given in *Bamidbar / Numbers 10:1-10*. The sound of the trumpet was given to indicate gathering before the Ohel Moed (אהל מועד, Tent of Meeting), when moving the camp, when going to war and during war, and to indicate the beginning of the Moedim (ובמועדיכם, Appointed times). *Bamidbar / Numbers 10:11-36* tell us the Children of Yisrael set out from the wilderness of Sinai moving out for the first time and the Scriptures describe the deconstruction of the Mishkhan and the order of the tribes as they moved out. The Scriptures say א ויהי העם כמתאננים רע באזני יהוה וישמע יהוה ויחר אפו ותבער-בם אש יהוה ותאכל בקצה ויהי העם כמתאננים רע באזני יהוה וישמע יהוה ויחר אפו ותבער-בם אש יהוה ותאכל בקצה: 11:1 *Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of the Lord; and when the Lord heard it, His anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp. (NASB)* The people complained of the Manna, the bread from Heaven that God provided and longed for the fish, cucumbers, melons and leeks that were available in the land of Egypt. Moshe then pleads for the people before the Lord (*Bamidbar / Numbers 11:10-11*). The Lord instructs Moshe to take seventy of the elders to present themselves before Him and the spirit that is given upon Moshe will be given to them as well (*Bamidbar / Numbers 11:17* מן-הרוח אשר עליך ושמתי, 17:17) and the Scripture says the reason 70 elders were chosen was so they will ונשאו אתך ונשאו אתך ונשאו אתך ונשאו אתך carry, lift, bear, endure, suffer with you so that you will not bear the people alone. The Lord then provides meat for the people, so much meat that they become sick (loathsome) of the meat. While Moshe was speaking with the Lord, the Lord said כג ויאמר יהוה אל-משה הניד יהוה תקצר עתה תראה הֲיִקְרָה דְבָרִי אִם-לֹא: 11:23 *The Lord said to Moses, 'Is the Lord's power limited? Now you shall see whether My word will come true for you or not.'* (NASB) The Lord asks the question “Is the hand of the Lord short” (הֲיִדּוּ יְהוָה תִּקְצָר)? All that Moshe had witnessed of the Lord delivering Yisrael from Egypt, did he doubt the Lord was able to provide meat for the people? When the Spirit of the Lord come upon the seventy elders they prophesied and here we find an interesting comment from Moshe in response to Joshua’s comments כט ויאמר לוֹ מִשָּׁה הַמְקַנָּא אֶתָּה לִי וּמִי יִתֵּן כָּל-עַם 11:29 *But Moses said to him, 'Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!'* (NASB) Moshe speaks of all the people receiving the Ruach (Spirit) of God, this could be a source text of God revealing in the Torah the giving of the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) to believers in the Messiah Yeshua. At the end of the Parashah, *Bamidbar / Numbers 12:1-15* describe Aharon and Miriam speaking against Moshe because of the Cushite woman he took for a wife. The cloud of the Lord descended and spoke to Moshe, Aharon and Miriam. When the cloud departed, Miriam was white with Tzaraat (Leprosy). These Scriptures

describe how Lashon Hara (evil speech and gossip) is a sin before the Lord.

It is interesting here in the context of the Midrashic literature, and the opening words of David in the Psalm, a significant amount of commentary is devoted to the Shiggayon of David concerning Cush the Benjamite. The Rabbinic commentary states that “Shiggayon” is the “impulsive speech” and in Parashat Beha’alotcha, Moshe’s sister, Miriam proclaimed “impulsive speech” against the Cushite woman, judging Moshe for the woman he married. It appears that the rabbis obtained their interpretation of “Shiggayon” from this text here from the Torah in *Bamidbar / Numbers 8:1-9:14*.

Studying *Tehillim / Psalms 7* along with the rabbinic commentary (Midrash on *Tehillim / Psalms 7*), the major theme through the Psalm and the Midrash is related to that of the words of our lips, what we say, our impulsive words that are tied to our actions. In the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings, NT), Yeshua taught saying in *Mark 11:25* “*And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.*” (<sup>25</sup>καὶ ὅταν στήκετε προσευχόμενοι, ἀφίετε εἴ τι ἔχετε κατὰ τινος, ἵνα καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ἀφῆ ὑμῖν τὰ παραπτώματα ὑμῶν.) and in *Luke 6:37* “*Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.*” (<sup>37</sup>Καὶ μὴ κρίνετε, καὶ οὐ μὴ κριθῆτε: καὶ μὴ καταδικάζετε, καὶ οὐ μὴ καταδικασθῆτε. ἀπολύετε, καὶ ἀπολυθήσεσθε.) In addition to this, the Apostle James wrote in his epistle saying *James 4:11* *Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. 4:12* *There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?* (<sup>11</sup>Μὴ καταλαλεῖτε ἀλλήλων, ἀδελφοί: ὁ καταλαλῶν ἀδελφοῦ ἢ κρίνων τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ καταλαλεῖ νόμου καὶ κρίνει νόμον: εἰ δὲ νόμον κρίνεις, οὐκ εἶ ποιητὴς νόμου ἀλλὰ κριτὴς. <sup>12</sup>εἷς ἐστὶν [ὁ] νομοθέτης καὶ κριτὴς, ὁ δυνάμενος σῶσαι καὶ ἀπολέσαι: σὺ δὲ τίς εἶ, ὁ κρίνων τὸν πλησίον;) If we have something against our brother, go first and make it right by our actions, and then come and offer the sacrifice before the Lord, the reason is that our actions directly effect our relationship with God. Our relationships with others also effect our relationship with God. Based upon the study in *Psalms 7*, the Midrashic commentary, and the Apostolic commentary, how do we understand these verses on the idea of not to judge, not to condemn, not to speak against our brother to judge? The idea here was to avoid slander and baseless hatred towards others. We need to make right with our brother in forgiveness and in doing so correcting the spiritual condition of Tzaraat (leprosy) in our own hearts that have lead us to be so judgmental of another person. In addition to this, if there is a basis for anger towards someone else because of their beliefs, this is not a reason to continue in hatred/anger towards those whose beliefs differ from our own, rather, we need to pray for those who are lost to know the truth of the Son of God, Yeshua the Messiah. Can you pray for someone you hate? This is the very definition of Lashon Hara (לִשׁוֹן הָרַע). The prohibition in Jewish Law of telling gossip, known as “Lashon Hara,” also includes the concept of defamation in that evil speech might also arise when one speaks the truth about someone for the wrong purpose. It appears that *Tehillim / Psalms 7* is devoted to the issue of Lashon Hara, let’s look a little closer at the various ways in which Lashon Hara may occur. How significant are the consequences of neglecting the issue of Lashon Hara?

## The Prohibition of Communicating Lashon Hara

1. Definition: Lashon Hara - Negative Words regardless of whether True or False
2. The Biblical Source for the Prohibition of Lashon Hara
3. Habitual Speakers of Lashon Hara
4. The Consequences of Speaking Lashon Hara
5. Being Forced to Speak Lashon Hara

6. Speaking Lashon Hara to Avoid Financial Loss
7. Speaking Lashon Hara to Avoid Personal Dishonor
8. Various Methods of Conveying Lashon Hara

### 1. Definition: Lashon Hara - Negative Words regardless of whether True or False

א שְׁגִיּוֹן לְדָוִד אֲשֶׁר-נֶשְׂר לַיהוָה עַל-דָּבָרֵי-כּוּשׁ בֶּן-יְמִינִי: According to *Tehillim / Psalms 7*, David states the “*Shiggayon of David, which he sang to the Lord concerning Cush, a Benjamite.*” The Greek translation states David composed this Psalm because of the “words” (λόγων) of Cushi (χουσι) the son of Benjamin (εμενι). Based upon this Psalm, it is forbidden to speak disparagingly of one’s friend. Regardless of whether the information is entirely truthful, it is known as Lashon Hara (לשון הרע). If the information also contains any fabrication, it is also called hotzaat shem ra (הצאת שם רע, lit. Spreading a evil name). The speaker of Lashon Hara violates the prohibition of *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:16* לֹא-תִלְוֶה רֵכִיל בְּעַמֶּיךָ לֹא 19:16 תַעֲמֹד עַל-דָּם רַעַף אָנֹכִי יְהוָה: *‘You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the Lord. (NASB)*

### 2. The Biblical Source for the Prohibition of Lashon Hara

לֹא-תִלְוֶה רֵכִיל בְּעַמֶּיךָ לֹא תַעֲמֹד עַל-דָּם רַעַף אָנֹכִי יְהוָה: 19:16 *‘You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the Lord. (NASB)* This Scripture explicitly states רֵכִיל “*nm. gossip, slanderer, backbiting*” that which incites hatred and resentment. There are quite a few commandments coupled with the Ketuvim (Writings) and Neviim (Prophets) that speak upon Lashon Hara, like what is discussed here in *Tehillim / Psalms 7*.

### 3. Habitual Speakers of Lashon Hara

The concept of speaking “Lashon Hara” is related to the person who speaks something inappropriate during a conversation about someone else. Those who make it a habit of speaking badly of others go about it saying “Did you hear ...” and “Do you know so and so said ...” This kind of habitual sin is known as Baal Lashon Hara (בעל לשון הרע, Lord/Master of Lashon Hara). This kind of speech has become an integral part of a person, their transgression is very great and follows along the narrative of David’s Psalm because of the “words” (λόγων) of Cushi (χουσι) the son of Benjamin (εμενι) (LXX). This kind of person desecrates the Name of God *Vayikra / Leviticus 22:32* הֲנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָנֹכִי יְהוָה: לֹב וְלֹא תַחֲלִלוּ אֶת-שֵׁם קִדְשִׁי וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָנֹכִי יְהוָה: 22:32 *‘You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be sanctified among the sons of Israel; I am the Lord who sanctifies you, (NASB)* we are called by His Name, we are called His people, and if we live to desecrate the name of others, we are also desecrating the Name of God Himself because we are called by His Name!

### 4. The Consequences of Speaking Lashon Hara

Those who desecrate the Name of God, who intentionally sin by the practice of “Baal Lashon Hara” (בעל לשון הרע) who are “Lords/Masters of Lashon Hara,” they will be cut off from the Olam Habah (עולם) Copyright © 2012 MATSATI.COM Ministry



הבא, the World to Come). The Sages say in the *Talmud Bavli Erchin 15b* that for three transgressions one forfeits his portion in the olam habah: murder, adultery, and idol worship, and that lashon hara is equivalent to all three, the sin of Lashon Hara is a very great sin (הזה חטאה גדולה). Isn't it interesting the comparison of Lashon Hara to that of murder. This sounds a lot like the words of Yeshua and John the Apostle in *Matthew 5:21* 'You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' 5:22 'But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. 5:23 'Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, (NASB) (21) ὁ πατήρ ἐγείρει τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ ζῶσσοι, οὕτως καὶ ὁ υἱὸς οὗς θέλει ζῶσσοι. 22 οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ κρίνει οὐδένα, ἀλλὰ τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ, 23 ἵνα πάντες τιμῶσι τὸν υἱὸν καθὼς τιμῶσι τὸν πατέρα. ὁ μὴ τιμῶν τὸν υἱὸν οὐ τιμᾷ τὸν πατέρα τὸν πέμψαντα αὐτόν.), and *1 John 3:15* Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. (NASB) (15) πᾶς ὁ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἐστίν, καὶ οἴδατε ὅτι πᾶς ἀνθρωποκτόνος οὐκ ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἐν αὐτῷ μένουσαν.) The idea that Lashon Hara leads to death is a very well known concept in Scripture and in the Rabbinic literature. Note that Sin as it is defined just by the Ten Commandments damages the physical world and relationships here on earth. Similarly, Lashon Hara afflicts the emotional and spiritual aspects of a person being harmed and this is directly connected to our relationship with God and that persons relationship with God! If we do not love our brothers and sisters, how is it possible to love God whom our eyes have not seen?

### תלמוד בבלי ערכין דף טו.ב

אמר רבי חמא בר' חנינא: מה תקנתו של מספרי לשון הרע? אם תלמיד חכם הוא יעסוק בתורה, שנאמר: (משלי טו) מרפא לשון עץ חיים, ואין לשון אלא לשון הרע, שנאמר: חץ שחוט לשונם, ואין עץ אלא תורה, שנאמר: (משלי ג) עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה ואם עם הארץ הוא ישפיל דעתו, שנאמר: (משלי ט"ו) וסלף בה שבר רוח. רבי אחא ברבי חנינא אומר: סיפר אין לו תקנה, שכבר כרתו דוד ברוח הקדש, שנאמר: (תהילים יב) יכרת ה' כל שפתי חלקות לשון מדברת גדולות, אלא מה תקנתו שלא יבא לידי לשון הרע? אם תלמיד חכם הוא יעסוק בתורה, ואם ע"ה הוא ישפיל דעתו, שנאמר: וסלף בה שבר רוח. תנא דבי רבי ישמעאל: כל המספר לשון הרע - מגדיל עונות כנגד שלש עבירות, עבודת כוכבים וגילוי עריות ושפיכות דמים, כתיב הכא: לשון מדברת גדולות, וכתוב בעבודת כוכבים: (שמות לב) אנה חטא העם הזה חטאה גדולה, בגילוי עריות כתיב:

## 5. Being Forced to Speak Lashon Hara

The concept of being forced to speak badly about someone else, there is no difference when speaking Lashon Hara because someone encourages (or pressures) you to do so. Even if a person's teacher (rabbi) or parent in whom we are to honor (*Shemot / Exodus 20:12*, יב כַּבֵּד אֶת-אֲבִיךָ וְאֶת-אִמְךָ לְמַעַן יִאָּרְכּוֹן, 20:12 'Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you. NASB) requests that he tell about an incident, if the relating of the information would result in Lashon Hara we are not to say it. It is interesting that in the United States of America, there is something known as "spousal privilege" which is a form of privileged communication that protects the contents of confidential communications between spouses during their marriage from testimonial disclosure. (The privilege applies in civil and criminal cases.) Did the law books obtain the idea of "spousal privilege" from the concept of Lashon Hara in the Bible? The point is regarding being forced to speak Lashon Hara, whether someone encourages or nags us to speak evil against someone else, we are still fully responsible for our actions. Social pressure for gossip may also be a way one is forced into speaking evil concerning someone else.

## 6. Speaking Lashon Hara to Avoid Financial Loss

How about speaking Lashon Hara in order to prevent financial loss? It is believed that even when subject to great financial loss, one is not permitted to speak Lashon Hara. According to the world this is foolishness, however, we are commanded to even forgo our income if it means speaking evil against another person. The source text for this is found in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:4-5*, | שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה | *6:4 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! 6:5 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (NASB) the phrase "and with all your might" (וּבְכָל-מְאֹדָה) a reference to all of our possessions, all that we are capable of doing, all of our wealth, all of who we are.*

## 7. Speaking Lashon Hara to Avoid Personal Dishonor

What about speaking Lashon Hara in order to save our honor? If a person faces the possibility of losing personal honor by not speaking Lashon Hara, he must sustain the loss and remain silent. Wise words may be taken from the Mishnah concerning Lashon Hara and avoidance of personal dishonor: *"Better to be considered a fool in the eyes of man throughout one's lifetime than as a wicked person in the eyes of G-d for one hour"* (*Mishnah Eduyot 5:6*, ולא לעשות שעה אחת רשע לפני, מוטב לי להקרא שוטה כל ימי. *literal: "I'd rather be called a fool all the days. Then to do evil one hour before the place (God)."*),

## 8. Various Methods of Conveying Lashon Hara

Lashon Hara may come in many forms, as spoken words, in writing, or hinted at using gestures. One example may be taken from Rashi's commentary on *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:16*, שכן דרך כל הולכי רכיל, לקרוץ בעיניהם ולרמוז דברי רכילותן שלא יבינו שאר השומעים: לא תעמוד על דם רעך. לראות במיתתו, ואתה יכול להצילו, כגון טובע בנהר, וחיה או לסטים באים עליו which says *"Because through all the gossips wink at them..."* Rashi describes "winking" (לקרוץ) as the behavior of the one who slanders and gossips. All forms of communication that lead to Lashon Hara is prohibited. This also applies if you weren't the writer of an article disparaging someone (i.e. a news paper article, or on television show, etc). There are a lot of "reality" television shows and gossip television shows, do you think these programs have a place in our lives being the children of God who are called by His Name? Would watching such television shows be considered a form of Lashon Hara? The importance of staying away from Lashon Hara is very significant for our lives and our relationship with the Lord. Consider the Scriptures concerning Lashon Hara from *Jude 1:7-11* and *Revelation 12:7-11*.

### **Jude 1:7-11**

*1:7 just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. 1:8 Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. 1:9 But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!' 1:10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know*

*by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. 1:11 Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. (NASB)*

### **Revelation 12:7-11**

*12:7 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, 12:8 and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. 12:9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. 12:11 'And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. (NASB)*

Notice in *Jude 1:9*, Michael the archangel, when disputing with Satan arguing over the location of the body of Moshe, he did not bring judgment against him but said instead “*The Lord rebuke you.*” The context of the verses describe the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities surrounding them, the great sin of the men of those cities who rejected authority, went after strange flesh (homosexuality) and defiling the flesh, and even criticizing (revile) angels (i.e. the two angels God had sent to see the sin of these cities). This kind of person who practices Lashon Hara criticizes things he/she does not understand and behave like unreasoning animals (*Jude 1:10*). Such a person goes in the “way of Cain” and into the “error of Balaam,” and perishes like the “rebellion of Korach” whereby in his rebellion, Korach and his family went down to the grave alive screaming as the ground opened up and consumed them (*Bamidbar / Numbers 16:1-17:15*). *Revelation 12*, describes a war in heaven and the Angels of God fighting with Satan (the Devil). Satan is called the “*accuser of our brethren*” that was cast down because he “*accuses them before our God day and night.*” Satan is the accuser who criticizes us before God daily. This Torah command to not pronounce Lashon Hara is given so that we do not behave like Satan, the accuser and deceiver. When Peter said to Yeshua that he should not go to the cross, Yeshua rebuked him saying get you behind me Satan (*Matthew 16:23*). What Peter said, was this Lashon Hara? Was this the reason Yeshua called him a deceiver (Satan) and told him to get out of his way (get behind me)? In this week’s Psalm, the entire Psalm appears to be written concerning evil speech. According to *Tehillim / Psalm 7*, David composed a song to the Lord concerning Cush, a Benjamite. The Hebrew text states עַל-דְּבָרַי-כּוּשׁ בֶן-יְמִינִי which says literally “*upon the words of Cush*” (עַל-דְּבָרַי-כּוּשׁ). According to this Psalm, and the commentaries, the nature of this Benjamite was that of an accuser, and a deceiver. We are told in the Apostolic Commentary by Jude and John, that the Devil is the deceiver and speaks Lashon Hara constantly before the Lord God Almighty against us the people of God. How important do you believe it is for us to refrain from judging our brothers and sisters in the Messiah (Christ)? Wouldn’t you rather be called a fool before the world than to be do evil before God for one hour or even one minute? Let’s Pray!



Heavenly Father,

We thank You for your mercy and grace. Help us Lord to take hold of our tongues, to use our tongues only for Your glory. Lord we ask that you would have mercy upon us because each one of us at one time or another have committed Lashon Hara. We ask that You would establish us in Your Holy word. Raise us up as a people of God in the covenant that You have made in Your Son Yeshua the Messiah. Thank You Lord for the words of this Psalm from David's life that help us to know You better and to root out sin in our lives. We praise Your holy Name Lord and thank You for all that You have done and are continuing to do in our lives. Thank You Lord for Your love and Your provision each day. Help us to walk in righteousness, and help us to walk in freedom from sin. Fill us with Your presence Lord. Thank you for revealing these truths to our hearts. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

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

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

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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