

## ספר תהילים כ | Tehillim / Psalms 20

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### We are able to call out to Him!

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 19:1-15*, the Psalm begins saying לְמַנְצֵחַ מְזֻמֹּר לְדָוִד "For the director of music, A psalm of David." David says ב יַעֲנֶה יְהוָה בְּיוֹם צָרָה יִשְׁגָּבֶה שֵׁם | אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: 20:1 *May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob set you securely on high!* (NASB) Based on a previous Psalm, David states having an upright heart is the prerequisite for the Lord hearing our prayers. A later Psalm states "if I had not confessed the sin in my heart" or "If I had regarded iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not hear." (Tehillim / Psalms 66:18) David continues saying ג יִשְׁלַח-עֲזָרָה מִקְדָּשׁ וּמִצִּיּוֹן יִסְעָדֶךָ: 20:2 *May He send you help from the sanctuary And support you from Zion!* (NASB) The sanctuary is a safe place for meeting with the Lord, and it is from His holy mountain that he sends his help. David states that it is because of the sacrifices that the Lord remembers ד יִזְכֹּר כָּל-מִנְחֹתֶךָ) וְעוֹלֹתֶיךָ יִדְשָׁנָה סְלֵה: 20:3 *May He remember all your meal offerings And find your burnt offering acceptable! Selah.*) These Scriptures suggest a condition, that the offering be acceptable. What makes an offering unacceptable and /or acceptable that results in his granting our hearts desire? ה יִתֵּן-לְךָ כָּל-בְּרָכָה וְכָל-עֲצָתֶךָ יִמְלֵא: 20:4 *May He grant you your heart's desire And fulfill all your counsel!* (NASB) Because of the Lord's deliverance, he says ו נִרְנְנָה | בִּישׁוּעָתֶךָ וּבְשֵׁם-אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִדְגַל יְמֵלָא יְהוָה כָּל-מִשְׁאָלוֹתֶיךָ: 20:5 *We will sing for joy over your victory, And in the name of our God we will set up our banners. May the Lord fulfill all your petitions.* (NASB) David says in Your Salvation (בִּישׁוּעָתֶךָ), the Lord saves His anointed and answers from His holy heaven with the saving strength of His right hand (יְהוָה מְשִׁיחוֹ יַעֲנֶהוּ מִשְׁמֵי) ז עֲתָה יִדְעָתִי כִי הוֹשִׁיעַ | יְהוָה מְשִׁיחוֹ יַעֲנֶהוּ מִשְׁמֵי) ח אֱלֹהֵי בְרָכָה וְאֱלֹהֵי בְּסוּסִים (קָדְשׁוֹ בְּגִבּוֹרֹת יֵשַׁע יְמִינוֹ: וְאֲנַחְנוּ | בְּשֵׁם-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִזְכִּיר: ט הִמָּה כָּרְעוּ וַנִּפְלֹי וְאֲנַחְנוּ קָמְנוּ וַנִּתְעוֹדֵד: י יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה הַמֶּלֶךְ יַעֲנֵנוּ בְּיוֹם-יְהוָה: 20:7 *Some boast in chariots and some in horses, But we will boast in the name of the Lord, our God. 20:8 They have bowed down and fallen, But we have risen and stood upright. 20:9 Save, O Lord; May the King answer us in the day we call.* (NASB) Trusting in chariots and horses is trusting in man rather than in the Lord God Almighty, ultimately it is in His Salvation we are saved and for this we boast in His name.

| עברית Hebrew  | ארמי Aramaic  | ελληνικός Greek  |
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| <b>ספר תהלים פרק כ</b><br>א לְמַנְצֵחַ מְזֻמֹּר לְדָוִד: ב יַעֲנֶה יְהוָה בְּיוֹם צָרָה יִשְׁגָּבֶה שֵׁם   אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: ג יִשְׁלַח-עֲזָרָה מִקְדָּשׁ וּמִצִּיּוֹן יִסְעָדֶךָ: ד יִזְכֹּר כָּל-מִנְחֹתֶךָ וְעוֹלֹתֶיךָ יִדְשָׁנָה סְלֵה: ה יִתֵּן-לְךָ כָּל-בְּרָכָה וְכָל-עֲצָתֶךָ יִמְלֵא: | <b>ספר טוביה פרק כ</b><br>א לשבחה תושבחתא לדוד: ב יקביל צלותך יהוה ביומא דעקא ישגבינך יתקפינך שמא אלהא דיעקב: ג ישדר סעדך מן בית מוקדשיה ומציון יסייעינך: ד ידכר כולהון דורוגייתך ועלותך ידהנאן לעלמינן: ה יתן לך כרעיונך וכל מילכונתך ישלים: | <b>ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 20</b><br>20:1 εις τὸ τέλος ψαλμὸς τῷ δαυιδ ἐπακούσαι σου κύριος ἐν ἡμέρᾳ θλίψεως ὑπερασπίσαι σου τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ ιακωβ 20:2 ἐξαποστείλαι σοι βοήθειαν ἐξ ἁγίου καὶ ἐκ σιων ἀντιλάβοιτό σου 20:3 μνησθεὶ πάσης θυσίας σου καὶ τὸ ὄλοκαυτωμά σου πιανάτω διάψαλμα 20:4 δῶη σοι κατὰ τὴν καρδίαν σου καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν βουλήν σου πληρώσαι |

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| <p>ו גְּרַנְנָה   בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ וּבְשֵׁם-אֱלֹהֵינוּ<br/> נִדְגַל יְמִלָּא יְהוָה כָּל-מְשָׁאֲלוֹתֶיךָ: ז<br/> עֲתָה יִדְעָתִי כִּי הוֹשִׁיעַ   יְהוָה מְשִׁיחַ<br/> יַעֲנֵהוּ מְשָׁמִי קִדְשׁוֹ בְּגִבְרוֹת יֵשַׁע<br/> יְמִינוֹ: ה אֱלֹהֵי בְּרִכְבּ וְאֱלֹהֵי בְּסוּסִים<br/> וְאֲנַחְנוּ   בְּשֵׁם-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִזְכִּיר:<br/> ט הִמָּה פָּרְעוֹ וּנְפְלוּ וְאֲנַחְנוּ קָמְנוּ<br/> וּנְתַעֲוֹדָ: י יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה הַמְלִיךְ<br/> יַעֲנֵנוּ בְּיוֹם-קִרְאָנוּ:</p>  | <p>ו יימרון עמך בית ישראל נשבחא<br/> בפורקנך ובשום אלהנא ניטקס<br/> ישלים יהוה כולהון שילתך: ז<br/> השתא ידעית ארום פריק יהוה<br/> משיחיה קביל צלותיה ממותביה<br/> דשמיא קדישיה בגבורן פורקן<br/> ימיניה: ח אילין ברתיכין ואילין<br/> בסוסון ואנחנא בשום יהוה אלהנא<br/> נדכר: ט הינון גחנו ונפלו ואנחנא<br/> אזדקפנא ואתחילנן ואתאמיד לנא<br/> מימרא דיי: י יהוה פרוק לן מליך<br/> תקיף קביל צלותן ביום מקרינן:</p>   | <p>20:5 ἀγαλλιασόμεθα ἐν τῷ σωτηρίῳ σου καὶ ἐν ὀνόματι θεοῦ ἡμῶν μεγαλυνθησόμεθα πληρῶσαι κύριος πάντα τὰ αἰτήματά σου 20:6 νῦν ἔγνων ὅτι ἔσωσεν κύριος τὸν χριστὸν αὐτοῦ ἑπακούσεται αὐτοῦ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἁγίου αὐτοῦ ἐν δυναστείαις ἡ σωτηρία τῆς δεξιᾶς αὐτοῦ 20:7 οὗτοι ἐν ἄρμασιν καὶ οὗτοι ἐν ἵπποις ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου θεοῦ ἡμῶν μεγαλυνθησόμεθα 20:8 αὐτοὶ συνεποδίσθησαν καὶ ἔπεσαν ἡμεῖς δὲ ἀνέστημεν καὶ ἀνωρθώθημεν 20:9 κύριε σῶσον τὸν βασιλέα σου καὶ ἐπάκουσον ἡμῶν ἐν ἡ ἂν ἡμέρα ἐπικαλεσώμεθά σε</p>   |
| <p><b>Tehillim / Psalms 20</b><br/> For the choir director. A Psalm of David. 20:1 May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob set you securely on high! 20:2 May He send you help from the sanctuary And support you from Zion! 20:3 May He remember all your meal offerings And find your burnt offering acceptable! Selah. 20:4 May He grant you your heart's desire And fulfill all your counsel! 20:5 We will sing for joy over your victory, And in the name of our God we will set up our banners. May the Lord fulfill all your petitions. 20:6 Now I know that the Lord saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven With the saving strength of His right hand. 20:7 Some boast in chariots and some in horses, But we will boast in the name of the Lord, our God. 20:8 They have bowed down and fallen, But we have risen and stood upright. 20:9 Save, O Lord; May the King answer us in the day we call. (NASB)</p> | <p><b>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 20</b><br/> 20:1 For praise; a psalm of David. 20:2 May the Lord receive your prayer in the day of trouble, may the name of the God of Jacob lift you up. 20:3 May he send your help from his sanctuary, and from Zion give you aid. 20:4 May he remember all your offerings, and may your whole-offerings drip with fat forever. 20:5 May he give you according to your desires, and may he fulfill all your counsel. 20:6 Your people will say, "Let us give praise for your redemption, and in the name of our God we will be mustered; may the Lord fulfill all your requests." 20:7 Now I know that the Lord has redeemed his anointed; he has accepted his prayer from his holy dwelling in the heavens; in might is the redemption of his right hand. 20:8 Some by chariots, and some by horses, but we will swear by the name of the Lord our God. 20:9 They have stooped and fallen, but we have remained upright and become strong. 20:10 O Lord, redeem us, mighty king, accept our prayer in the day we call out. (EMC)</p> | <p><b>Psalmoi / Psalms 20</b><br/> 20:1 The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee. 20:2 Send thee help from the sanctuary, and aid thee out of Zion. 20:3 Remember all thy sacrifice, and enrich thy whole-burnt-offering. Pause. 20:4 Grant thee according to thy heart, and fulfill all thy desire. 20:5 We will exult in thy salvation, and in the name of our God shall we be magnified: the Lord fulfil all thy petitions. 20:6 Now I know that the Lord has saved his Christ: he shall hear him from his holy heaven: the salvation of his right hand is mighty. 20:7 Some glory in chariots, and some in horses: but we will glory in the name of the Lord our God. 20:8 They are overthrown and fallen: but we are risen, and have been set upright. 20:9 O Lord, save the king: and hear us in whatever day we call upon thee. (LXX)</p> |

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 19:1-15*, the Psalm begins saying לְמִנְצֵחַ מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד "For the director of music, A psalm of David." Many of the psalms, as we see here, have superscriptions, providing a description of the contents, their author, and, it is generally assumed, in some cases, the melodies to which they were sung in the Temple in Jerusalem. In the modern translations of the Psalms, these superscriptions are excluded as verses. Most modern translations included them as superscriptions, however, some, such as the New English Bible translation omits the superscriptions altogether the reason of which is unknown and is an extremely odd procedure. Even if the superscriptions are later additions (glosses as scholars suggest), they became part of the book at a very early period, and one would have thought the

aim of any translation should be to convey the book as it has been passed down through history. Many of the psalms are liturgical compositions, i.e. the Levites sang a psalm for each day of the week and on the shabbat and the moedim, the psalm was accompanied with instrumental music. Based upon the content of the Psalms and the superscriptions of other psalms, it can be said that 78 psalms were written by David and the other 73 of the 150 are by different authors. 72 Psalms are directly ascribed to David, where *Tehillim / Psalms 2 and 95* are specifically mentioned in the Apostolic Writings as being composed by David. Scholars have suggested that the first Psalm appears to be an introduction to the book as a whole, and *Tehillim / Psalm 150* appears to be an epilogue. There is a concluding note at the end of *Tehillim / Psalms 41, 72, 89, and 106*, which suggests that the book is in five separate sections where Ginsburg's Masoretic Text has *Tehillim / Psalms* divided into 5 books. In Midrash Tehillim, the rabbinic commentary from the period of the rabbis of the Mishnah and the Talmud, a rabbinic commentary on the Psalms, we learn that the rabbis believe David composed his Psalms in five books, just as Moses wrote the five books of the Torah. It may be that the Psalms were composed and organized into 5 books to parallel the five books of the Torah. Very frequently in Midrash Tehillim, and in other Rabbinic literature, David is assumed to be the author of the entire book of the Psalms. In the *Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 14b*, it is written on the authorship of the biblical books, it is said that David included in his book of the psalms some psalms that were written by others who preceded him. The superscription to *Tehillim / Psalm 90*, for instance, is "A prayer of Moses, the man of God." In fact, while seventy-two of the psalms are attributed to David, this one is attributed to Moshe, and some to other authors. Some of the psalms are attributed to no particular author and are known, in the tradition, as "orphan psalms." Nevertheless, Jewish tradition holds that David is the author of the book of the psalms, although he is said to have included the works of others in his final composition. In *2 Samuel 23:1* David is described as "the sweet psalmist in Israel" (א וְאֵלֶּה דָּבָרֵי דָּוִד הָאֲחֻרָּנִים נֶאֱמַר דָּוִד בֶּן-יִשַׁי וְנֶאֱמַר) א וְאֵלֶּה דָּבָרֵי דָּוִד הָאֲחֻרָּנִים נֶאֱמַר דָּוִד בֶּן-יִשַׁי וְנֶאֱמַר: 23:1 Now these are the last words of David. David the son of Jesse declares, The man who was raised on high declares, The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet psalmist of Israel.)

David opens in his psalm saying, ב יַעֲנֶנּוּ יְהוָה בְּיוֹם צָרָה יִשְׁגָּבֶדְךָ שֵׁם | אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: 20:1 May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob set you securely on high! (NASB) David uses the title "the God of Jacob" to describe the Lord God Almighty in Heaven. It is interesting that this title, "the God of Jacob" is found at least fourteen times in the Tanach, and three times we find it written as "the mighty God of Jacob." The repetition of this title suggests a deep significance with regard to the name of the Lord God Almighty. Take for example, we do not read of the God of Moses, the God of Joshua, or the God of Solomon. Why then does God identify Himself with Jacob? What is there in the Lord's dealings with this man (Jacob) which suggest to us the importance of this title that David is using here in *Tehillim / Psalms 20*? What is the significance of this expression which occurs and recurs through the Psalms? In the life and story of Jacob, the Lord God Almighty provides us with the illustration of His sovereign choice, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to be the fathers of the nation of Israel. In the birth of two sons, the God of Jacob chose one and passed by the other (i.e. Jacob and Esau). The interesting point is that the Lord chose Jacob even though he was the youngest, selfish, scheming, deceitful, treacherous, untruthful, and did not have a very loving character. From all appearances, Jacob did not appear to have qualities that would attract the love of God. Carefully studying the life of Jacob, we learn that the God of Jacob is a God of transforming power. Remember at the end of Parashat Vayetze, Laban leaves and the angels of the Lord meet Jacob (see *Bereshit / Genesis 32*). The Hebrew text states וַיַּעֲקֹב הֵלֵךְ לְדֶרֶפוֹ וַיִּפְגְּעוּ-בּוֹ מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹהִים: ג וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב 32:1 Now as Jacob went on his way, the angels of God met him. 32:2 Jacob said when he saw them, 'This is God's camp.' So he named that place Mahanaim (NASB). Rashi's commentary states (ב) וּפְגַעוּ בּוֹ מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹהִים. מַלְאֲכֵי שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא מַחְנֵיִם (ג) מַחְנֵיִם. שְׁתֵּי מַחְנוֹת, ל שֵׁל חוּצָה לְאָרֶץ שְׁבָאוֹ עָמוּ עַד כֹּאן. וְשֵׁל אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁבָאוֹ לְקִרְאָתוֹ saying לאֶרֶץ: (ג) מַחְנֵיִם.

these are the angels of the land and they are here to guide Jacob to the land of Canaan. The Hebrew text does not give us the reason for the meeting of the angels of God and nothing more is said to explain the encounter. There seems to be a parallel here with the opening verses from Parashat Vayera on God appearing to Abraham along with the angels of God. Here Jacob sees the angles of God (מְלָאכֵי אֱלֹהִים) and then during the night he wrestles with a man until daybreak (וַיִּאָבֵק אִישׁ עִמּוֹ עַד עֲלוֹת הַשָּׁחַר). While wrestling with this man, Jacob prevails and the text says that the man touched his hip and dislocated the socket (וַיִּרְאֵהוּ וַיִּשְׁמַר עֹד שְׂמֵרָה כִּי אִם-יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי-שָׁרִיתָ עִם-אֱלֹהִים וְעַם-אֲנָשִׁים וַתּוֹכַל) and the Scriptures say “because he had struggled with God and with men and prevailed.” The person Jacob wrestled with had the authority to change his name to Israel. After the man changes Jacob’s name to Israel, Jacob requests that he know what his name is (וַיִּשְׂאֵל יַעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר הַגִּידָה-נָא שְׂמֵךְ וַיֹּאמֶר לָמָּה זֶה תִּשְׂאֵל לְשִׁמִּי) however, the man refuses. Immediately following these events, Jacob believes that he has seen God face to face (כִּי-רָאִיתִי אֱלֹהִים פָּנִים אֶל-פָּנִים וַתִּנְצַל נַפְשִׁי) and calls the place Peniel (פְּנִיאֵל) meaning “face of God.” He names the place Peniel because he saw God and lived. The Septuagint (LXX), the Targum Onkelos, and the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan provide for us additional insight. The Septuagint (LXX) on *Bereshit / Genesis 32:30-32*, the Hebrew name for Peniel (פְּנִיאֵל) is substituted for the phrase “Εἶδος τοῦ θεοῦ” meaning “Appearance of God.” The Targum Onkelos uses the Hebrew word Peniel (פְּנִיאֵל) from the Masoretic text וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב שְׂמָא דְאַתְרָא פְּנִיאֵל אַרִי חֲזִיתִי מְלָאֲאָ דִּי אַפִּין בְּאַפִּין וְאַשְׁתִּיבַת נַפְשִׁי The Targum Onkelos however adds an interesting perspective on the Hebrew text. The Masoretic text writes וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב שְׂמָא דְאַתְרָא פְּנִיאֵל אַרִי חֲזִיתִי מְלָאֲאָ דִּי אַפִּין בְּאַפִּין וְאַשְׁתִּיבַת נַפְשִׁי whereas the Targum Onkelos writes וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב שְׂמָא דְאַתְרָא פְּנִיאֵל אַרִי חֲזִיתִי מְלָאֲאָ דִּי אַפִּין בְּאַפִּין וְאַשְׁתִּיבַת נַפְשִׁי. Notice how the Aramaic translation is written. Jacob explains his reason for calling the place Peniel (פְּנִיאֵל) translated from the Aramaic to say “I have seen the Angel of Adonai.” The Aramaic translation substitutes מְלָאֲאָ דִּי “Angel of Adonai” for the Hebrew word אֱלֹהִים (Elohim, God) in the Masoretic text. The Aramaic translator inserts the term “angel” indicating to us that this man is a supernatural manifestation of God. Note also that the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan states וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב שְׂמָא דְאַתְרָא פְּנִיאֵל אַרִי חֲזִיתִי מְלָאֲאָ דִּי אַפִּין בְּאַפִּין וְאַשְׁתִּיבַת נַפְשִׁי using the same substitution, writing מְלָאֲאָ דִּי “the angel of Adonai” in the same way Targum Onkelos does substituting the Hebrew word אֱלֹהִים (Elohim, God). Note there are differences in the Aramaic language due to the differences in time frame in which the Torah was translated. This is simply related to Aramaic morphology where words vary in the number of morphemes (*the form, shape, structure of a word*) with time (*signs of the language changing with time*). According to the Aramaic targums, the one whom Jacob wrestled with was a celestial being (Angel); therefore the person who he wrestled with was more than just a man which is also indicated by the dislocation of his hip. The Hebrew text suggests that God manifest as a man to illustrate how Jacob wrestled with both “God and man” and yet prevailed. It is also interesting to note that Rashi neglects to comment on these verses where Jacob names the place as a result of seeing God face to face and remaining alive. In the Torah (*Bereshit / Genesis 32:30-32*) the person Jacob wrestles with is identified both as a “man” and as “God” (אֱלֹהִים, Elohim). This is very similar to Parashat Vayera where God chooses to reveal Himself in human form to Abraham. Reading through Parashat Vayishlach (*Bereshit / Genesis 35:9-15*) the sequence of events is quite interesting. There’s something deeply symbolic in these passages. *Bereshit / Genesis 35:9* begins by saying וַיִּרְאֵהוּ אֱלֹהִים אֶל-יַעֲקֹב God reveals/shows Himself to Jacob like He did to Avraham in Parashat Vayera (compare *Bereshit / Genesis 18:1*). In *Bereshit / Genesis 32*, we read of Jacob’s name change (וַיִּשְׂמֵךְ יַעֲקֹב לְאֵל-יִשְׂרָאֵל עֹד יַעֲקֹב כִּי אִם-)

נְאֻת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְאַבְרָהָם וְלְיִצְחָק לְךָ) (יְשׁוּרָאֵל), the continuing promise of the blessing of Jacob’s seed (אֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲתֵן אֶתְּךָ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ) paralleling the blessing to Abraham and Isaac. In addition to this Jacob sets up another pillar in the place he meets God calling the place Bethel (בֵּית-אֵל) because God had shown himself and spoken to him there like he did in Parashat Vayetze. In each of the various places that Jacob traveled in Eretz Canaan where he encounters the Lord, he names these places to signify their importance and deep spiritual meaning. The changing of Jacob’s name to Israel because of having wrestled with both “*God and man*,” identifies for us that Jacob is taking a new direction in his life with God being center place. In Jewish life a person is called by his or her given name as the son or daughter of the parent. The name change of Jacob to Israel is very significant. God specifically chose the name Israel because he (Jacob) struggled with God and man. Jacob’s name change signified a turning point in His life where the Hebrew text says 32:31 *Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Penuel, and he was limping on his thigh. (NASB)* Jacob’s encounter with God causes him to walk differently. David’s use of the phrase “*the God of Jacob*” is illustrating how one needs to be living and walking a changed life. This is paralleled with the Lord who will answer in the time that we call out to Him. In Jacob’s name God establishes him as the father of a nation and identifies the name of the children of Israel. The name reflects a change in God’s perception of Jacob drawing a parallel with the change of a name on being reborn. Does our relationship with God and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit cause us to think, speak, and walk differently today? Based on a previous Psalm, David states having an upright heart is the prerequisite for the Lord hearing our prayers. A later Psalm states “*if I had not confessed the sin in my heart*” or “*If I had regarded iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not hear.*” (Tehillim /Psalms 66:18) Having an upright heart and not regarding iniquity in our hearts is related to the God of Jacob who is the one who is changing our lives by the power of the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son, Yeshua the Messiah and by the power of His Holy Spirit. When we seek the Lord in the way that He wants to be sought after, then He will answer us, and as David says, 20:1 *May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob set you securely on high! (NASB)* the Lord will indeed answer our cry for help!

David continues saying 20:2 *May He send you help from the sanctuary And support you from Zion! (NASB)* The sanctuary is a safe place for meeting with the Lord, and it is from His holy mountain that he sends his help. David states that it is because of the sacrifices the Lord remembers (20:3 *May He remember all your meal offerings And find your burnt offering acceptable! Selah.*) These Scriptures suggests there is a condition for making the offering be acceptable before God. What makes an offering unacceptable and /or acceptable that results in his granting our hearts desire? 20:4 *May He grant you your heart’s desire And fulfill all your counsel! (NASB)* This is a very important factor even today. The source of this question, and most likely what David was thinking when he wrote this Psalm is from the Torah, from Parashat Emor (Vayikra / Leviticus 21:1-24:23) specifically from Vayikra / Leviticus 22:29-33.

**Vayikra / Leviticus 22:29-32**

22 29 “When you sacrifice a thank offering to the Lord, sacrifice it in such a way that it will be accepted on your behalf. 22:30 It must be eaten that same day; leave none of it till morning. I am the Lord. 22:31 “Keep my commands and follow them. I am the Lord. 22:32 Do not profane my holy name, for I must be acknowledged as holy by the Israelites. I am the Lord, who made you holy 22:33 and who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the Lord.” (NIV)

כט וכי-תזבחו זבח-תודה ליהוה לרצונכם תזבחו: ל ביום ההוא יאכל לא-תותרו ממנו עד-בקר

אָנִי יְהוָה: לֹא וַיִּשְׁמְרֶתֶם מִצְוֹתַי וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם אֲנִי יְהוָה: לֵב וְלֹא תִחַלְלוּ אֶת-שְׁמִי קְדוֹשִׁי וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי  
 בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי יְהוָה מְקַדְּשְׁכֶם: לֵג הַמּוֹצִיא אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְהֵיוֹת לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים אֲנִי  
 יְהוָה:

As can be seen from the Torah, when a person brings a thank offering to the Lord, we read that it is to be sacrificed in such a way so as to be acceptable. The Torah does not list the details on how to perform the sacrifice so that it is acceptable. But the follow up verse is that it must be eaten the same day and none left over till morning. It was important to eat all of the sacrifice the same day of the sacrifice. Throughout the Scriptures, God has shown His approval with those who follow His will and His displeasure and wrath with those who refuse to worship Him the way He has directed. One example of acceptable and unacceptable worship in the Tanach is that of Cain and Abel. Cain and Abel both worshiped the Lord. Abel did as God directed and offered a burnt offering before the Lord; on the other hand, Cain tried to worship God with the produce from the land (fruits and vegetables) and this was unacceptable. We read in *Bereshit / Genesis 4:3-5*, “*And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of fruit of the ground to the Lord. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering.*” Why did the Lord have respect for Abel’s offering and why did He reject Cain’s offering? *Hebrews 11:4* tells us, “*By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.*” Notice how Abel offered his sacrifice “*by faith*” and the Scriptures say Cain did not. *Romans 10:17* says, “*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” Therefore, faith comes by the word of God; Abel offered his sacrifice by faith or according to the Word of God that was passed down from his father and mother (Adam and Chavah). If we worship God by faith, we are to worship as the word of God directs us. Is this what David meant when he said: זָכֹר כָּל-מִנְחֹתָי וְעוֹלֹתַי יְדֻשְׁנָה סֶלָה: 20:3 *May He remember all your meal offerings And find your burnt offering acceptable! Selah. (NASB)* and הַיְתֵן-לִּי יְיָ: 20:4 *May He grant you your heart’s desire And fulfill all your counsel! (NASB)*? Abel offered the firstborn of his flock “*by faith*” and it was accepted because his worship was according to the instructions of the Lord God Almighty. The Lord gave instruction to Adam and Chavah (Eve) following their sin and the Lord providing cloths to cover their bodies. Cain chose to ignore God’s instructions and sacrificed an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord, the fruit from the ground that was cursed because of sin. Cain did not offer his sacrifice according to God’s instructions, so God rejected his sacrifice and worship, since it was not done “*by faith.*” The Apostle Paul also wrote in *Romans 14:23*, “*For whatever is not from faith is sin.*” Therefore, if our worship is not “*by faith,*” that is it is not “*by the word of God,*” then it “*is sin*” because it is being done in an improper way. The biblical account describes Abel as offering the first of his flock and the fat. Fat is described in the bible as being the choicest part of the animal to be offered upon the altar for the Asham (guilt) offering before the lord, according to the verses found in *Shemot / Exodus chapters 23 and 29, Vayikra / Leviticus chapters 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, and 17, Bamidbar / Numbers chapter 18, Devarim / Deuteronomy chapter 32*. These verses point out specifically that the fat is the portion of the animal sacrifices that are essential and are to be burned upon the altar before God. There are also verses from the Neviim (Prophets) that attest to the fat of the sacrifices, see *Judges 3:22, 1 Samuel 2:15-16, and 15:22, 1 Kings 8:64, Isaiah 1:11, 34:6, 43:24, and 34:6, and Ezekiel 34:3, 44:7, and 44:15, 1 Chronicles 7:7, 29:35, and 35:14*. According to the scriptures, whether literally or figuratively, khelev (חֶלֶב, fat) is a reference to the richest or choice part of the animal. In the Story of Cain and Abel, Abel brought the best of his flock and of their “*fat*” portions and it was pleasing to the Lord and the scriptures say that God “*had regard*” for Abel using the imperfect third person masculine singular form of “*yasa*” (וַיַּשֵּׂעַ) meaning deliverance. The imperfect form expresses an ongoing action. So because of Abel’s actions bringing the first of his flock and offering the “*fat portions*” the choicest parts, God saved him.

**פרשת בראשית ספר בראשית פרק ד פסוק ד**

ד וְהֵבֵל הֵבִיא גַם-הוּא מִבְּכֹרוֹת צֹאנוֹ וּמִחֻלְבֵּהוּן וַיִּשַׁע יְהוָה אֶל-הֶבֶל וְאֶל-מִנְחָתוֹ:

**Bereshit / Genesis 4:4**

4:4 Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering; (NASB)

Fat is also used in the Hebrew Bible as an illustration of the finest, richest, and choicest part found in the use of the word “*khelev*” (חֶלֶב) to refer to the choicest land of Egypt, in *Bereshit / Genesis 45:18*.

**פרשת ויגש ספר בראשית פרק מה פסוק יח**

יח וּקְחוּ אֶת-אֲבִיכֶם וְאֶת-בְּתִיכֶם וּבֹאוּ אֵלַי וְאֶתְנַה לְכֶם אֶת-טוֹב אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְאֶכְלוּ אֶת-חֶלֶב הָאָרֶץ:

**Bereshit / Genesis 45:18**

45:18 and take your father and your households and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you will eat the fat of the land.’ (NASB)

The verse states “and you will eat the fat of the land” (וְאֶכְלוּ אֶת-חֶלֶב הָאָרֶץ) so the use of word “fat” (חֶלֶב) here indicates that God will provide the choicest part of Egypt for the children of Israel when they are in Egypt. In *Tehillim / Psalms 141:2* that *141:2*, David wrote “may my prayer be counted as incense before You; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.” (NASB) Here the psalmist is saying may his prayer be counted as a sweet fragrance before God and the lifting of the hands as in the Evening “*Mincha*.” The *Mincha* is known as the afternoon prayer service in Judaism. Searching the Torah, the word spelled as מִנְחָה occurs 23 times. Looking at the very first occurrence of the word *Mincha* in the Scriptures, we find that it is written with regard to Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Chavah (Eve). *Sefer Bereshit / Genesis 4:3* says וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ יָמִים וַיָּבֵא קַיִן מִפְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה מִנְחָה לַיהוָה the son of Adam and Chavah brought a *Mincha* to the Lord. Cain was bringing a offering from the fruit of the land as a thank offering to the Lord and this was not acceptable, he needed to bring a offering in blood to make atonement. In other places in the Torah, in *Vayikra / Leviticus*, the *Mincha* is known as the “*Korban Mincha*” as the grain offering. Based on the first use of the word *Mincha* in *Bereshit / Genesis 4:3*, Cain brought from the fruit of the land as a *Mincha* offering. The *Mincha* means “*present, gift, or offering*” according to the standard Hebrew Lexicons. David said his prayer is intended to be pleasant and sweet fragrance. The lifting of the hands is a form of praise and worship to the Lord. Based on these scriptures, David is saying, prayer was not intended to manipulate God into giving us our own way, but a way to draw near to the Lord and to be pleasing as an evening sacrifice. We seek the Lord God in faith, and look to live out our faith in the things that we do.

In *Revelation chapter 8*, we read <sup>1</sup>Καὶ ὅταν ἤνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν ἑβδόμην, ἐγένετο σιγή ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ὡς ἡμῴριον. <sup>2</sup>καὶ εἶδον τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλους οἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστήκασιν, καὶ ἐδόθησαν αὐτοῖς ἑπτὰ σάλπιγγες. <sup>3</sup>Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἦλθεν καὶ ἐστάθη ἐπὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου ἔχων λιβανωτὸν χρυσοῦν, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ θυμιάματα πολλὰ ἵνα δώσει ταῖς προσευχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων πάντων ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον τὸ χρυσοῦν τὸ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου. <sup>4</sup>καὶ ἀνέβη ὁ καπνὸς τῶν θυμιαμάτων ταῖς προσευχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων ἐκ χειρὸς τοῦ ἀγγέλου ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. 8:1 When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. 8:2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. 8:3 Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. 8:4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel’s hand.



worthlessness of sacrifices without justice, and he portrays sacrifice as having a role complementary with prayer (*Isaiah 56:1; 6-7*), this is exactly what we read David saying א לְמִנְצַחַת מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד: ב יַעֲנֶה יְהוָה בְּיָוֶם צָרָה יִשְׁגָּבֶה שֵׁם | אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: ג יִשְׁלַח-עֲזָרָה מִקֹּדֶשׁ וּמִצִּיּוֹן יִסְעָדֶךָ: ד יִזְכֹּר כָּל-מִנְחֹתֶיךָ וְעוֹלֹתֶיךָ יְדֻשְׁנָה סֶלָה: בְּיָוֶם צָרָה יִשְׁגָּבֶה שֵׁם | אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: ג יִשְׁלַח-עֲזָרָה מִקֹּדֶשׁ וּמִצִּיּוֹן יִסְעָדֶךָ: ד יִזְכֹּר כָּל-מִנְחֹתֶיךָ וְעוֹלֹתֶיךָ יְדֻשְׁנָה סֶלָה: For the choir director. A Psalm of David. 20:1 May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob set you securely on high! 20:2 May He send you help from the sanctuary And support you from Zion! 20:3 May He remember all your meal offerings And find your burnt offering acceptable! Selah. 20:4 May He grant you your heart's desire And fulfill all your counsel! (NASB) David is drawing together the necessity of prayer and sacrifice, justice, righteousness, and faith. It is in this way that the korban has both a physical and spiritual meaning. In keeping with the root of the word korban (קָרַב), meaning to draw close, and to the common usage as the sacrifice of an animal, so too can the worshiper sacrifice something of this world in order to become closer to God. Yeshua rebuked some of the Pharisees for their inappropriate position on Korban according to Mark Chapter 7, a parallel to Matthew Chapter 15. In these passages, Yeshua condemned the Pharisees for "...making void the word of God by your tradition..." (*Mark 7:9*) by violating the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment to honor your father and mother, when following their "traditions." In the Gospel narrative, the Pharisees were keeping people obligated to their vow once something was set aside as a Korban (Sacrifice), prohibiting them to use it even in order to attend to the needs of their parents. Many modern translations render *Matthew 15:6* as if putting aside as a Korban exempts people from their son/daughter duty to their parents. Thus, the tradition taught that it relieves people of any further responsibility to support their parents, since their gift was turned over to the Temple treasury. David's comments on prayer, sacrifice, and receiving the our heart's desire are very tightly coupled with living righteously and having the correct heart before the Lord.

In David's words, he is writing about receiving his heart's desire and to make full his counsel meaning to fulfill it (וְכָל-עֲצָתֶיךָ יַמְלֵא). Whose counsel is David referring to? The counsel of King David reminds us of one of the most tragic stories in the Scriptures concerning the revolt of King David's third son, Absalom. His mother was Maacah, the daughter of King Talmai of Geshur (*2 Samuel 3:3*). He was tall, handsome and had a large head of hair (*2 Samuel 14:25-26*). The scriptures record how Absalom stirred up rebellion against his father King David, by promising to do justice for everyone who came to him, stealing the hearts of the men of Israel (*2 Samuel 15:1-6*). Absalom sent for Ahithophel, David's counselor from his city. The conspiracy was strong, for the people increased their support continually with Absalom according to *2 Samuel 15:12*. Ahithophel also became one of the people who conspired against David (*2 Samuel 15:31*). Ahithophel had been King David's faithful counselor for many years, giving David the benefit of his counsel. Scripture says in *2 Samuel 16:23 The advice of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if one inquired of the word of God; so was all the advice of Ahithophel regarded by both David and Absalom.* (NASB) The advise of Ahithophel was so good that it was as if a man had inquired of the Word of God. When David learned his trusted friend had betrayed him, he was so afraid, he prayed, "O Lord I pray You, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness" (*2 Samuel 15:31*). That is exactly what the Lord did to Ahithophel's advise. The question through arises, why did Ahithophel, one of King David's most trusted advisors, betray him after so many years of faithful service, and why would he ask Absalom to allow him to personally lead the army of rebels to attack and kill King David before the king could escape? (see *2 Samuel 17:1-2*). In addition to this, why would Ahithophel advise Absalom to have sexual relations with his father's concubines on the roof of the palace, for all to see? 'Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give your counsel. What shall we do?" The Scriptures say in *2 Samuel 16:20-22, 16:20 Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give your advice. What shall we do?" 16:21 Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself odious to your father. The hands of all who are with you will also be strengthened." 16:22 So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.* (NASB) The Scriptures do not openly record the motivation for this incredible betrayal of King David, however, the an-





הַקִּדְּשׁ וּמִשְׁחָתָּה אֹתוֹ וְקִדְּשָׁתָּה אֹתוֹ וְכָהֵן לִי:

### 3. Kings were anointed:

- *1 Samuel 16:3 and 16:13 states, “Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate...13So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah,”* ג וְקָרָאתָ לְיִשַׁי בְּנֵיכִי וְאֵנְכִי אֹדִיעֶנּוּ אֶת אִשְׁרֵי-תַעֲשֶׂה וּמִשְׁחָתָּה לִּי אֶת אִשְׁרֵי-אֲמַר אֵלֶיךָ: ... יג וַיִּקַּח שְׁמוּאֵל אֶת-קֶרֶן הַשֶּׁמֶן וַיִּמְשַׁח אֹתוֹ בְּקֶרֶב אָחָיו וַתִּצְלַח רוּחַ-יְהוָה אֶל-דָּוִד מֵהַיּוֹם הַהוּא וּמִמְעַלָּה וַיִּקַּם שְׁמוּאֵל וַיֵּלֶךְ הַרְמָתָה:

### 4. The sick were anointed:

- *Mark 6:13 “They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them”* <sup>13</sup>καὶ δαιμόνια πολλὰ ἐξέβαλλον, καὶ ἤλειφον ἐλαίῳ πολλοὺς ἀρρώστους καὶ ἐθεράπευον.

### 5. Objects were anointed:

- *Vayikra / Leviticus 8:10 “Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and everything in it, and so consecrated them,”* י וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת-שֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה הַזֶּה וַיִּמְשַׁח אֶת-הַמִּשְׁחָה וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ וַיִּקְדֹּשׁ אֹתָם:

In each of these examples taken from the Scriptures, in each case the word מִשַׁח is used meaning “anointed” or “to anoint” (למשוח) or “to be anointed” (להימשח). According to the Scriptures, Prophets were anointed to be able to proclaim God’s word, Priests were anointed to carry out their duties of worship and sacrifice, Kings were anointed so they could rule, people were anointed for healing, and even objects were anointed so they could be set aside for holy use. When David said in Your Salvation (בְּיִשׁוּעָתֶךָ), the Lord saves His anointed and answers from His holy heaven with the saving strength of His right hand (ז עֲתָה יִדְעָתִי כִּי יְהוָה מְשִׁיחוֹ יַעֲנֵהוּ מִשְׁמַי קִדְּשׁוֹ בְּגִבְרוֹת יֵשַׁע יְמִינוֹ: (הוֹשִׁיעַ | יְהוָה מְשִׁיחוֹ יַעֲנֵהוּ מִשְׁמַי קִדְּשׁוֹ בְּגִבְרוֹת יֵשַׁע יְמִינוֹ: David was most likely referring to himself. David functioned as an anointed prophet, priest, and king, and foreshadowed the coming Messiah. Thus, the Messiah is interpreted to occupy each of the offices as prophet, priest, and king.

ה אֵלֶּה בְּרִכְבָּ וְאֵלֶּה בְּסוּסִים וְאֵנְחָנוּ | בְּשֵׁם-יְהוָה אֲלֵהֵינוּ נִזְכִּיר: ט הִמָּה כָּרְעוּ וְנִפְּלוּ וְאֵנְחָנוּ וְנִתְעוֹדַד: י יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה הַמְּלִיךְ יַעֲנֵנוּ בְּיוֹם-קִרְאָנוּ: *20:7 Some boast in chariots and some in horses, But we will boast in the name of the Lord, our God. 20:8 They have bowed down and fallen, But we have risen and stood upright. 20:9 Save, O Lord; May the King answer us in the day we call. (NASB)* David waited upon the Lord and did not trust in chariots and horses. Waiting for the Lord means to first seek the Lord, consulting or seeking his will before human aid is pursued. The purpose of waiting draws us to pray and to seek the Lord before we act. *Tehillim / Psalm 106:12-13 says 106:12 Then they believed His words; They sang His praise. 106:13 They quickly forgot His works; They did not wait for His counsel, (NASB)* The first act of waiting is to seek God’s counsel in prayer and in His Word before we attempt to solve the problem ourselves. We believe and we are not to quickly forget the work of the Lord. When we wait for God’s counsel, we are actively being submissive and open to the leading of His Spirit. We are not telling him what He must do; we are seeking His help and His leading. In *Isaiah 30:15* the Lord says *30:15 For thus the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, has said, ‘In repentance and rest you will be saved, In quietness and trust is your strength.’ But you were not willing, 30:16 And you said, ‘No, for we will flee on horses,’ Therefore you shall flee! ‘And we will ride on swift horses, Therefore those who pursue you shall*

*be swift. 30:17 One thousand will flee at the threat of one man; You will flee at the threat of five, Until you are left as a flag on a mountain top And as a signal on a hill. 30:18 Therefore the Lord longs to be gracious to you, And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the Lord is a God of justice; How blessed are all those who long for Him. (NASB)* God's will is for Salvation at His hand and that we allow Him to save us in quietness and rest. However, they preferred to escape their own way, and God did not work for them, according to *Isaiah 30*. Therefore, when we pray for God's counsel, we must be prepared to hear him say what Moses said at the Red Sea becomes real in our lives, "*Fear not, stand firm, and behold the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today ... The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be still.*" (*Shemot / Exodus 14*). What a wonderful God we serve, we stand firm and behold His salvation, the salvation that He has provided in His Son Yeshua the Messiah and the work that He is doing in our lives each day. Let's Pray!

## Rabbinic Commentary

The rabbinic commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 20* has 10 parts. Reading through this week's Midrash we will be looking at Parts 1, 3, 8, and 10. Let's begin by outlining Midrash *Tehillim Chapter 19 Parts 1, 3, 8, and 10*.

### Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 20, Parts 1, 3, 8, and 10

#### Part 1:

- The Midrash opens with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) "*For the leader. A Psalm of David. The Lord answer you in the day of anguish (Tehillim / Psalms 20:1-2).*"
- The פתיחה (Petihta) "*the homiletic introduction*" to the Midrash says "*Elsewhere Scripture says this, He will call upon Me, I will answer him, I will be with him in anguish (Tehillim / Psalms 91:15).*"
- The משל (mashal) "*the parable,*" goes on to explain the פתיחה (Petihta), the rabbis go on to discuss the ways in which the Lord God is in anguish with His people.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) "*expansion on the parable*" expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis provide various parables in the Nimshal that illustrate the way in which God is in anguish with His people.
- The Concluding phrase says "*God replied, Is not my Temple destroyed, are not My children thrown in chains, and should I not therefore be in anguish? Is it not written I will be with him in anguish (Tehillim / Psalms 91:1)? It is also written Now, therefore what do I here? Says the Lord My people is taken away The that rule over them make them to howl And My name continually all day is blasphemed (Isaiah 52:5).*"

#### Part 3:

- The Midrash opens with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) "*Another comment. The Lord answer for you in the day of trouble.*"
- The פתיחה (Petihta) "*the homiletic introduction*" to the Midrash says "*What day of trouble? The day which all acknowledge is a day of trouble above and below, a day which even the ministering angels fear.*"
- The משל (mashal) "*the parable,*" goes on to explain the פתיחה (Petihta), the rabbis go on to discuss the day of trouble where the people and even the angels fear.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) "*expansion on the parable*" expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis provide various Scripture and parables to illustrate the way God delivers His people from the day of trouble.

- The Concluding phrase says “*Rabbi Levi said, Through the merit of circumcision. For the verse of this comment says that At that time your people will be delivered, and in another place it is written At that time The Lord said unto Joshua, Make knives of flint, and circumcise the children of Israel (Joshua 5:2).*”

#### Part 8:

- The Midrash opens with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) “*Remember all your meal offerings (Tehillim / Psalms 20:4).*”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*Rabbi Khama said, All offerings you season with salt (Vayikra / Leviticus 2:13), in order that God will be like one who says, Yes I remember well that portion which was salted.*”
- The **משל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihta), the rabbis go on to discuss the remembering of the Korbanot (Sacrifices).
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis speak of the salt of the covenant of God and the remembering of the Korbanot.
- The Concluding phrase says “*And consider Your burnt sacrifice as if reduced to ashes (Tehillim / Psalms 20:4), there is an allusion to Isaac who, like a burnt sacrifice, was bound to an altar.*”

#### Part 10:

- The Midrash opens with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) “*We will shout for joy in Your victory, and in the name of our God we will set up standards (Tehillim / Psalms 20:6).*”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*In this world, each man recognizes his own standard by its special device, as is said The standard of the camp of Reuben (Bamidbar / Numbers 2:10).*”
- The **משל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihta), the rabbis go on to discuss the way in which one recognizes the house of God.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis draw a parallel to this present world and the world to come.
- The Concluding phrase says “*In The Lord answer you in the day of trouble, the Psalm begins with prayer pleading for immediate answer; and in Let the King answer us in the day that we call, the Psalm ends with a prayer pleading for immediate answer.*”

*Midrash Tehillim 20, Part 1,* opens in the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*For the leader. A Psalm of David. The Lord answer you in the day of anguish (Tehillim / Psalms 20:1-2).*” The rabbis make a reference to the Scriptures saying in the homiletic introduction “*Elsewhere Scripture says this, He will call upon Me, I will answer him, I will be with him in anguish (Tehillim / Psalms 91:15)*” (זהו שאמר הכתוב) (יקראני ואענהו עמו אנכי בצרה (תהלים צא טו)). The rabbis speak of three ways in which the Lord is in anguish with His people (i) they speak of a parable of the pregnant woman and her mother, (ii) they speak of the destruction of the Temple and the sound of weeping and wailing, and (iii) they speak of how the children of God are in chains and how the Lord is in anguish over it. In each of these examples from the Midrash, we read people going through difficult times. In the case of the destroyed Temple and the people being in bondage, one may be tempted to feel that God has forsaken us. *Tehillim / Psalms 102* is a psalm of an afflicted man and reading through the psalm we find much anguish in the lament of the psalmist.

#### ***Tehillim / Psalms 102:1-28***

*A prayer of an afflicted man. When he is faint and pours out his lament before the LORD.*

102:1 Hear my prayer, O Lord! And let my cry for help come to You. 102:2 Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my distress; Incline Your ear to me; In the day when I call answer me quickly. 102:3 For my days have been consumed in smoke, And my bones have been scorched like a hearth. 102:4 My heart has been smitten like grass and has withered away, Indeed, I forget to eat my bread. 102:5 Because of the loudness of my groaning My bones cling to my flesh. 102:6 I resemble a pelican of the wilderness; I have become like an owl of the waste places. 102:7 I lie awake, I have become like a lonely bird on a housetop. 102:8 My enemies have reproached me all day long; Those who deride me have used my name as a curse. 102:9 For I have eaten ashes like bread And mingled my drink with weeping 102:10 Because of Your indignation and Your wrath, For You have lifted me up and cast me away. 102:11 My days are like a lengthened shadow, And I wither away like grass. 102:12 But You, O Lord, abide forever; And Your name to all generations. 102:13 You will arise and have compassion on Zion; For it is time to be gracious to her, For the appointed time has come. 102:14 Surely Your servants find pleasure in her stones And feel pity for her dust. 102:15 So the nations will fear the name of the Lord And all the kings of the earth Your glory. 102:16 For the Lord has built up Zion; He has appeared in His glory. 102:17 He has regarded the prayer of the destitute And has not despised their prayer. 102:18 This will be written for the generation to come, That a people yet to be created may praise the Lord. 102:19 For He looked down from His holy height; From heaven the Lord gazed upon the earth, 102:20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner; To set free those who were doomed to death, 102:21 That men may tell of the name of the Lord in Zion And His praise in Jerusalem, 102:22 When the peoples are gathered together; And the kingdoms, to serve the Lord. 102:23 He has weakened my strength in the way; He has shortened my days. 102:24 I say, 'O my God, do not take me away in the midst of my days, Your years are throughout all generations. 102:25 'Of old You founded the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. 102:26 'Even they will perish, but You endure; And all of them will wear out like a garment; Like clothing You will change them and they will be changed. 102:27 'But You are the same, And Your years will not come to an end. 102:28 'The children of Your servants will continue, And their descendants will be established before You.' (NASB)

א תפלה לעני כי-יעטף ולפני יהנה ישפף שיחו: ב יהנה שמעה תפלתו ושועתי אליה תבוא: ג אל-תסתר פניך | ממני ביום צר לי הטה-אלי אונך ביום אקרא מהר עני: ד כי-כלו בעשן ימי ועצמותי כמוקד נחרו: ה הופה-כעשב ויבש לבי פי-שכחתי מאכל לחמי: ו מקול אנתתי דבקה עצמי לבשרי: ז דמיתי לקאת מדבר הייתי ככוס חרבות: ח שקדתי ואהיה כצפור בודד על-גג: ט כל-היום חרפוני אויבי מהוללי בי נשבעו: י כי אפר פלחם אכלתי ושקני בבכי מסכתי: יא מפני-זעמך וקצפה כי נשאתני ותשליכני: יב ימי כצל נטוי ואני כעשב איבש: יג ואתה יהנה לעולם תלשב וזכרה לדר ודר: יד אתה תקום תרחם ציון כי עת לחננה כי בא מועד: טו פי-רצו עבדיך את-אבניה ואת-עפרה יחננו: טז וייראו גוים את-שם יהנה וכל-מלכי הארץ את-כבודך: יז פי-בנה יהנה ציון נראה בכבודו: יח פנה אל-תפלת הערער ולא-בנה את-תפלתם: יט תכתב זאת לדור אחרון ועם נברא יהל-יה: כ פי-השקיף ממרום קדשו יהנה משמים | אל-ארץ הביט: כא לשמע אנקת אסיר לפתח בני תמותה: כב לספר בציון שם יהנה ותהלתו בירושלם: כג בהקבץ עמים יחדו וממלכות לעבד את-יהנה: כד ענה בדרכך כחו [פחי] קצר ימי: כה אמר אלי אל-תעלני בחצי ימי בדור דורים שנותיך: כו לפניך הארץ יסדת ומעשה ידיך שמים: כז המה | יאבדו ואתה תעמד וכלם כפגד יבלו פלבוש תחליפם ויחלפו: כח ואתה-הוא ושנותיך לא יתמו: כט בני-עבדי ישכנו וזרעם לפניך יכון:

While studying the Psalms, almost half of the psalms are written in distress and are a desperate cry in anguish during tragedy. *Tehillim / Psalms 102* reveals to us the psalmists anguish as it builds up (102:3-9), his bones are scorched, his heart is smitten and he forgets to even eat because of his anguish, he cannot sleep and his food is ashes and drink is mingled with weeping. According to the Scriptures, the psalmist is communicating his anguish in a Hebraic way. Take for example *Mishley / Proverbs 9:4-1*.

**Mishley / Proverbs 9:1-5**

9:1 Wisdom has built her house, She has hewn out her seven pillars; 9:2 She has prepared her food, she has mixed her wine; She has also set her table; 9:3 She has sent out her maidens, she calls From the tops of the heights of the city: 9:4 'Whoever is naive, let him turn in here!' To him who lacks understanding she says, 9:5 'Come, eat of my food And drink of the wine I have mixed. (NASB)

א חכמות בנתה ביתה הצבה עמודיה שבעה: ב טבחה טבחה מסכה יינה אף ערכה שלחנה: ג  
 שלחה נערתייה תקרא על-גפי מרמי קרת: ד מי-פתי יטר הנה חסר-לב אמרה לו: ה לכו לחמו  
 בלחמי ושתי בנין מסכתי:

King Solomon says that the eating and drinking of food and wine, according to *Mishley / Proverbs 9:5*, is synonymous with internalizing wisdom and its teachings making it a part of who we are. Similarly, Yeshua said in *John 6:54* “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day,” Yeshua’s description of consuming his body and blood is a Hebraic way of saying that if one internalizes His teachings and places their faith in Him, He will raise him up on the last day. The consumption of wisdom’s food and drink suggests that wisdom will nourish the soul and change a person from the inside out, this is exactly what happens when we place our faith in God and His Messiah Yeshua. In addition to this, wisdom’s food and drink is a parallel with Yeshua’s words that we do not live on bread alone but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of our Father in Heaven according to *Matthew 4:4*. According to *Tehillim / Psalms 102*, the psalmist is consuming ash and his drink is mixed with weeping. This is a description that the inward parts are being fed without nutrition, all is burned up (ashes). The psalmist’s anguish is verbalized, internalized, and made legitimate because of the circumstances he is going through. According to *Tehillim 102:10*, the psalmist recognizes that what is happening is the result of God’s wrath (102:10 *Because of Your indignation and Your wrath, For You have lifted me up and cast me away. NASB*). It is interesting however that confession of sin is not included in this Psalm. The psalmist affirms his faith in the Lord and seeks God’s compassion (102:13 *You will arise and have compassion on Zion; For it is time to be gracious to her, For the appointed time has come. NASB*). When the Lord acts in compassion to His people, not only will he be honored by his people but the nations will also recognize his actions. (102:21-22). According to this Psalm, personal suffering and anguish are put in the context of God’s glory among the nations. The concern is God’s vindication who makes all things right. The Lord God Almighty will “sit enthroned for ever,” and from heaven he will “hear the groans of the prisoners” (102:12 and 102:20), so he can be called upon to act in present personal distress. We see this throughout the Scriptures in the lives of Job, David, the Apostle Paul, to name a few, and even Yeshua Himself. The rabbis discuss the ways in which the Lord God is in anguish with His people that is based upon the Tanakh. This is consistent with the Apostolic Writings, that we serve a loving God who sent His Son to suffer for the purpose of being able to sympathize with our weaknesses (*Hebrews 4:15*).

**Hebrews 2:12-16**

4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and

*piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 4:13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 4:16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (NASB)*

<sup>12</sup>Ζῶν γὰρ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐνεργῆς καὶ τομώτερος ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν μάχαιραν δίστομον καὶ διϊκνούμενος ἄχρι μερισμοῦ ψυχῆς καὶ πνεύματος, ἀρμῶν τε καὶ μυελῶν, καὶ κριτικὸς ἐνθυμήσεων καὶ ἐννοιῶν καρδίας: <sup>13</sup>καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν κτίσις ἀφανῆς ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, πάντα δὲ γυμνά καὶ τετραχλησιμένα τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ, πρὸς δὲ ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος. <sup>14</sup>Ἐχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα μέγαν διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, Ἰησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας: <sup>15</sup>οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα μὴ δυνάμενον συμπαθῆσαι ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν, πεπειρασμένον δὲ κατὰ πάντα καθ' ὁμοιότητα χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας. <sup>16</sup>προσερχώμεθα οὖν μετὰ παρησίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος, ἵνα λάβωμεν ἔλεος καὶ χάριν εὐρωμεν εἰς εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν.

The conclusion of Midrash Tehillim 20, Part 1 states “*God replied, Is not my Temple destroyed, are not My children thrown in chains, and should I not therefore be in anguish? Is it not written I will be with him in anguish (Tehillim / Psalms 91:1)? It is also written Now, therefore what do I here? Says the Lord My people is taken away The that rule over them make them to howl And My name continually all day is blasphemed (Isaiah 52:5).*” The rabbis believe God is in fact in anguish with His people during their difficult times and trials and Scripture says in the *Tehillim / Psalms*: וְיִקְרָאֵנִי | וְאֶעֱנֶהוּ עִמּוֹ אֲנֹכִי בְצָרָה אֶחְלֹצֶהוּ וְאֶצַּבְדֶּהוּ: 91:15 ‘He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. (NASB) The Psalm literally says that the Lord will be with us during our trouble. When the Lord is with us in our troubles, He too will be in anguish with us. According to the Apostolic Writings, in similar manner, Yeshua the Messiah came down from Heaven and dwelled among men (*John 1:1-14*) for the purpose of saving us and fulfilling the merciful and loving character of God, that He will be in anguish with us, He knows our weakness, and He can sympathize with our troubles. This is in stark contrast to the gods of the nations (*i.e. study roman mythology*).

*Midrash Tehillim 20, Part 3* opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*Another comment. The Lord answer for you in the day of trouble.*” The homiletic introduction (פתיחתא, Petihta) to the Midrash states “*What day of trouble? The day which all acknowledge is a day of trouble above and below, a day which even the ministering angels fear.*” Why would the rabbis say or believe that the ministering angels would fear anything? The rabbis continue the dialog on the day of trouble. What is the day of trouble? According to Job, the life of man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble (*Job 14:1* ‘Man, who is born of woman, Is short-lived and full of turmoil. NASB). Trouble appears to be the offspring of life, of being born into this world and because of sin. David said *Tehillim / Psalms 73*, אַ מְזִמּוֹר לְאַסָּף אֶהְיֶה טוֹב לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהִים לְבָרִי לְבָב: ב וְאֲנִי כְמַעַט נָטוּי [נָטוּי] רַגְלִי כְּאִין שִׁפְכָה [שִׁפְכָה] אֲשַׁרְי: ג כִּי-קִנְאַתִּי בַהוֹלְלִים: 73:1 Surely God is good to Israel, To those who are pure in heart! 73:2 But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling, My steps had almost slipped. 73:3 For I was envious of the arrogant As I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 73:4 For there are no pains in their death, And their body is fat. 73:5 They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like mankind. The wicked do not appear to be in trouble like other men, they prosper, they do not stumble, are arrogant, and have no pain in their bodies or even in death and they are fat. Troubles have varying effects on different

people in this world. Troubles effect the minds of men in this world differently than what they have on the minds of God's people. The Apostle Paul wrote that *"the sorrow of the world works death."* (2 Corinthians 7:10) As a result of this, troubles and calamities, some have given up on life and taken their own lives in suicide. The children of God on the other hand pursue God even in the midst of troubles like David did when he wrote in *Tehillim / Psalms 130:6-8* - יַחַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל- ה' וְהוּא יִפְדֶּה אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל עֲוֹנוֹתָיו: 130:6 *My soul waits for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning. 130:7 Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. 130:8 And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. (NASB)* and in *Tehillim / Psalms 51:12* saying *"Restore unto me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your free spirit."* The Scriptures say let Israel hope in the Lord for with the Lord there is mercy and redemption. The Salvation of the Lord may appear to be afar off, but as we patiently wait upon the Lord He comforts our souls in our time of need.

The rabbis on the other hand in *Midrash Tehillim 20, Part 3*, look at the *"day of trouble"* in an alternative manner. Let's read a portion of the text from *Midrash Tehillim 20, Part 3*. The rabbinic commentary suggests that God has set guardian angels over the nations of this earth. The children of Israel also have a guardian angel, and the rabbis say he is Michael. *Midrash Tehillim 20, Part 3*, states that the day of trouble is during judgment day when the Lord God asks the guardian angels who have witnessed the lives of the nations to bring accusation against the children of Israel. It is interesting that the rabbis state that when someone brings up accusations against the children of Israel, that He will defend His people giving them strength and strong defenses (*Tehillim / Psalms 68:36*). The nations then speak of partiality, whether God shows partiality to the children of Israel since Israel also committed incest and shed innocent blood? The nations then ask why does the Lord then send some down to Gehenna and the children of Israel are not sent down? The rabbis then refer to Michael who is the guardian angel over Israel. Michael however is unable to respond why the nations are sent to Gehenna and Israel is not. The rabbis say that the Lord will answer *"I will speak of their righteousness and save them, as is said I that speak of righteousness, am mighty to save (Isaiah 63:1). Of what particular act of righteousness? Rabbi Phinehas, Rabbi Eleazar, and Rabbi Jokhanan gave different answers. One maintained, God will say, Of that righteousness which you did Me when you accepted the Torah at Sinai. Had you not taken the Torah at Sinai, I would have destroyed you."* The rabbis say that righteousness is imparted to Israel because they accepted the Torah at Sinai and some how this righteousness continues on up until this present generation. How is righteousness imparted to all of the children of Israel up until this present time? The answer is given in the Midrash when the rabbis state that *"Had you not accepted it, I would have destroyed the world and reduced it to waste and desolation, as is said If My covenant was not I would not have appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth (Jeremiah 33:25). At that time your people will be delivered (Daniel 12:1). Through whose merit? Through the merit of Joseph. For what will the Holy One blessed be He, do? He will look among all the tribes finding none like Joseph among them; for behold, Joseph harkened not to his master's wife, as is said He harkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her (Bereshit / Genesis 39:10). And the proof that the children of Israel are called by the name of Joseph? The verse It may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph (Amos 5:15)."* The Midrash concludes saying *"Rabbi Levi said, Through the merit of circumcision. For the verse of this comment says that At that time your people will be delivered, and in another place it is written At that time The Lord said unto Joshua, Make knives of flint, and circumcise the children of Israel (Joshua 5:2)."* It is interesting that the rabbis believe by faith that the merit of their fathers and Maasei HaTorah (*"works of the Torah"*) ( i.e. circumcision, deeds of loving kindness, etc) they will have merit that is sufficient for righteousness to be kept from going down to Gehenna.

כא מִזְבֵּחַ אֲדָמָה תַעֲשֶׂה-לִי וְזִבְחֶתָּ (עֲלֵיו אֶת-עֹלֹתֶיךָ וְאֶת-שְׁלֵמֶיךָ אֶת-צִאֲנֶנְךָ וְאֶת-בְּקָרֶךָ בְּכָל-הַמְּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אֲזַכִּיר אֶת-שְׁמִי אָבוּא אֵלֶיךָ וּבִרְכָתֶיךָ: and alludes to the role of the Priests and any place that one builds an altar to Worship the Lord where atonement

by sacrifice is made. The rabbinic interpretation for atonement in the absence of the Beit HaMikdash (Temple in Jerusalem) has significantly affected Judaism's teachings on atonement and the forgiveness of sins and is related to the questions "how does God save" and "how does God have a relationship with His people today?" The Talmudic reasoning behind the process of repentance and atonement has been strongly influenced by the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem and as a result repentance became the means for the expiation of sins when the sacrifices could no longer be offered.

**Midrash Tehillim 20, Part 3**

On this day, the Holy One blessed be He, will say to the guardian angels of the nations of the earth, Come and show your cause against My children, the children of Israel, Produce your cause says the Lord (Isaiah 41:21). And when these reply, Master of the universe, who will make up the pleas for Israel? God will say, if one may speak thus of Him, I, as is said The God of Israel is He who will give His people strength and strong defenses (Tehillim / Psalms 68:36). Thereupon, the nations of the earth will ask, Does this mean that in divine judgment there is partiality? These committed incest, and those committed incest; these shed blood and those shed blood. Why, then are these made to go down to Gehenna, and why are those not made to go down? Hereupon the angelic defender of the children of Israel will find himself unable to answer, as is said Then will Michael stand still, the great prince who stands for the children of your people; and there will be a time of trouble, such as never was (Daniel 12:1). What can stand still mean here except inability to answer, as in the words The stand still and answer no more (Job 32:16). And because Michael will be unable to answer, the Holy One blessed be He, will say, Michael, you are unable to answer and unable to speak in defense of My children, and so I will speak of their righteousness and save them, as is said I that speak of righteousness, am mighty to save (Isaiah 63:1). Of what particular act of righteousness? Rabbi Phinehas, Rabbi Eleazar, and Rabbi Jokhanan gave different answers. One maintained, God will say, Of that righteousness which you did Me when you accepted the Torah at Sinai. Had you not taken the Torah at Sinai, I would have destroyed you. Another maintained, God will say Of that righteousness which you did Me when you accepted the Torah. Had you not accepted it, where would My kingdom be? Another maintained, God will say, Yours the reward for accepting the Torah. Had you not accepted it, I would have destroyed the world and reduced it to waste and desolation, as is said If My covenant was not I would not have appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth (Jeremiah 33:25). At that time your people will be delivered (Daniel 12:1). Through whose merit? Through the merit of Joseph. For what will the Holy One blessed be He, do? He will look among all the tribes finding none like Joseph among them; for behold, Joseph hearkened not to his master's wife, as is said He hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her (Bereshit / Genesis 39:10). And the proof that the children of Israel are called by the name of Joseph? The verse It may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph (Amos 5:15). Rabbi Samuel son of Nakhmani said, Through the merit of their lineage, for it is said Bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the end of the earth, every one that is called by My name (Isaiah 43:6-7). Rabbi Levi said, Through the merit of circumcision. For the verse of this comment says that At that time your people will be delivered, and in another place it is written At that time The Lord said unto Joshua, Make knives of flint, and circumcise the children of Israel (Joshua 5:2).

**מדרש תהלים פרק כ סימן ג**

והקב"ה אומר לאומות העולם בואו ודונו עם בני בני ישראל, שנאמר קרבו ריבכם יאמר ה' [הגישו עצמותיכם יאמר מלך יעקב] (ישעיה מא כא), והן אומרים רבוננו של עולם מי יבא בדין עם ישראל קוזמוטמוריסין, והוא אומר אני כביכול, שנאמר אל ישראל הוא נותן עוז ותעצומות לעם (תהלים סח לו), ואומות העולם אומרים וכי משוא פנים יש בדבר, אלו מגלי עריות ואלו מגלי עריות, אלו שופכי דמים ואלו שופכי דמים, מפני מה הללו יורדין לגיהנם, ואלו אין יורדין, באותה שעה נמצא סנגרון של ישראל משתתק, שנאמר ובעת ההיא יעמוד מיכאל השר [הגדול העומד על בני עמך והיתה עת צרה אשר לא נהיתה וגו'] (דניאל יב א), מהו העומד על בני עמך, שהוא עומד ללמד סניגוריא על ישראל והוא שותק, ואין עמידה זו אלא שתיקה, שנאמר עמדו (ולא) [לא] ענו עוד (איוב לב טז), וכיון שהוא נשתתק, אמר לו הקב"ה מיכאל נשתתקת, ואין אתה מלמד זכות וסניגוריא על בני [שאני מדבר עליהם צדקה ומושיעם, שנאמר] אני מדבר בצדקה רב להושיע (ישעיה סג א), באיזה צדקה, ר' פנחס ור' אלעזר ורבי יוחנן, חד אמר בצדקה שעשיתם עמי, שקבלתם את התורה בסיני, שאלמלא לא קבלתם את התורה בסיני הייתי מכלה אתכם, וחד אמר בצדקה שעשיתם עמי, שקבלתם את התורה, שאם לא קבלתם היכן מלכותי, וחד אמר בשכר שקבלתם את התורה, שאלמלא לא קבלתם, הייתי מחריב את כל העולם, [ומחזירו לתהו ובהו], שנאמר אם לא בריתי יומם ולילה חקות שמים וארץ לא שמתי (ירמיה לג כה). ובעת ההיא ימלט עמך (דניאל יב א), בזכות מי, בזכות יוסף, מה הקב"ה עושה, הוא מביט בכל השבטים, ואין בהן כיוסף, שהרי יוסף לא שמע לאדונתו, שנאמר ולא שמע אליה (בראשית לט י), ומנין שנקראו ישראל על שם יוסף, שנאמר אולי יחנן ה' אלהי צבאות שארית יוסף (עמוס ה טו). ר' שמואל בר נחמני אמר בשביל ייחסיהו, שנאמר כל הנקרא בשמי [וגו'] (ישעיה מג ז). ר' לוי אמר בזכות המילה, כתיב הכא ובעת ההיא ימלט עמך, וכתיב התם בעת ההיא אמר ה' אל יהושע (יהושע ה ב).

The Rabbis of the Talmud say the people need reminded of hope for atonement and so it is stated *“Whence is it derived that if one repents, it is imputed to him as if he had gone up to Jerusalem, built the Beit HaMikdash, erected an altar and offered upon it all the sacrifices enumerated in the Torah?”* (Everyman’s Talmud: The Major Teachings of the Rabbinic Sages, by Abraham Cohen, Schocken, 1995, p.464) Clearly repentance is a very important factor in the process of forgiveness from God but is repentance the only thing one must do in order to be saved? Is it correct to interpret repentance and forgiveness in this way? To answer this question, the Talmud directs the listener to a story, supposing if one were to ask this question of the Tanakh.

*From the Ketuvim (Wisdom literature) (i.e. the Hagiographa), the answer was “Evil pursueth sinners” (Mishley / Proverbs 13:21). From the Neviim (Prophets) the answer was “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4). From the Torah, the answer was “Let him bring a trespass-offering and he will be forgiven for it says ‘And it shall be accepted of him to make atonement for him.’” (Vayikra / Leviticus 1:4) And when the question was asked of God, He replied, let him repent and he will be forgiven for it is written “Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will He teach sinners in the way.” (Tehilim / Psalms 25:8).*

By the use of these scriptures from Mishley / Proverbs, Ezekiel, Vayikra / Leviticus, and Tehillim / Psalms, the Rabbis conclude Teshuvah (repentance) is the mechanism whereby expiation is achieved even though there is a disharmony between the answers given from God within the different sections of the Tanakh (Torah, Neviim, and Cetuvim). In the Talmud Bavli the place of atonement by sacrifices was a thing of the past and the *“synagogue ritual”* of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) became a way for purification from sin. So what we find is that the ritual (*going through the motions in prayer and in the synagogue service*) replaces the physical atonement in blood by the bull or lamb upon the altar for the forgiveness of sins. This can be observed studying the Siddur Kol Yaakov (Scherman, R.N. and R.M. Zlotowitz, Siddur Kol Yaakov. 2004, New York: Mesorah Publications, LTD. 1043) on the rabbinical teaching of atonement and prayer. According to the Siddur, the offering of our lips (of praise) is sufficient as a sacrifice for forgiveness of sins before God (Hosea 14:3). According to the Siddur, prayers may be offered as *“let our lips compensate for the bulls”* and further prayers asking the Lord God to rebuild the Temple so the former things would be restored. The prayer concerning the *“bulls of our lips”* is located in the Shacharis / Morning Service in the Korbanot section:

*“Master of the worlds, you commanded us to bring the continual offering at its set time, and that the Kohanim be at their assigned service, the Levites on their platform, and the Israelites at their station. But now, through our sins, the Holy Temple is destroyed, the continual offering is discontinued, and we have neither Kohen at his service, nor Levite on his platform, nor Israelite at his station. But You said: ‘Let our lips compensate for the Bulls’ – Therefore may it be Your will, Hashem, our God and the God of our forefathers, that the prayer of our lips be worthy, acceptable and favorable before you, as if we had brought the continual offering at its set time and we had stood at its station.”*

A similar rabbinical teaching is also found in the Talmud (Schottenstein Edition, Talmud Bavli. 1997, New York: Mesorah Publications, LTD) concerning the offerings and sacrifices. When Abraham was asking God how Israel would achieve forgiveness if the temple was destroyed, the rabbis say *“God replied, When Israel recites the Scriptural order of the offerings, I will consider it as if they had brought the sacrifices and I will forgive their sins.”* (Megillah 31a; Taanis 27b, Schottenstein Edition, Talmud Bavli) Another reference

deals with the Study of Torah where Rav Yitzchak said “*The Torah writes זאת תורה החטאת, this is the Torah of the sin-offering (Leviticus 6:18) to imply that whoever involves himself in the study of the sin-offering is regarded as if he had actually brought a sin-offering.*” (Menachos 110a, Schottenstein Edition, Talmud Bavli) This may be contrasted with The Rabbis’ Kaddish in the Shacharis/Morning prayers:

*“May it be Your will, Hashem, our God and the God of our forefathers, that the Holy Temple be rebuilt, speedily in our days, and grant us our share in Your Torah, and may we server You with reverence as in the days of old and in former years.”*

Studying these various references, there is an underlying question on the “*sacrifice of our lips*” versus praying for the “*rebuilding of the Holy Temple*” to reestablish the continual sacrifice. If the sacrifice of our lips is sufficient for the forgiveness of our sins, why does the Holy Temple need rebuilding? The Process of T’shuvah (Repentance), according to the Scriptures, the Lord God Almighty has stated that rivers of sacrifice are useless without a repentant heart; this is true even of Yeshua’s offering of atonement in His blood. According to the Scriptures, prayer, action, and sacrifice go hand in hand and each is needed for proper T’shuvah.

### Steps for T’shuvah

1. Recognize or acknowledge our Sin.
2. Confess our Sins.
3. Repent of our Sins.
4. Correct any wrong caused by the Sin.
5. Perform a mikvah to for ritual purity.
6. Make a sacrifice of atonement the Sin.

Rabbinical teaching on the other hand states that it is possible to overlook the last step in the T’shuvah process according to verses from the book of Hosea and elsewhere:

*Hosea 6:6 For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. (KJV)* ו כִּי חֶסֶד חָפְצָתִי וְלֹא-זֶבַח וְנִדְעַת אֱלֹהִים מַעֲלֹת:

*Hosea 14:2 Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. (KJV)* ג קָחוּ עִמָּכֶם דְּבָרִים וְשׁוּבוּ אֶל-יְהוָה אֱמָרוּ אֵלָיו כָּל-תִּשְׁאָע עֵוֹן וְקַח-טוֹב וְנִשְׁלַמָּה כָּרִים שְׁפָתֵינוּ:

Is it possible for a few verses from the Tanach to cancel the five books of the Torah and the korbanot regarding atonement? Within Parashat Acharei Mot on the mitzvah (Commandment) concerning the consumption of blood (*Vayikra / Leviticus 17:11*), the Lord told Moshe it is “*blood that makes atonement for the soul.*” The rabbinic teaching according to Yochanan BenZachai, is that G’millut HaSadim (*deeds of loving kindness*) may substitute for the blood atonement or that while reading the commandments on atonement it is as if one has performed them. These interpretations resulted following the destruction of the second Temple, and while understandable, is in direct contradiction to Moshe and the five books of the Torah! *Isaiah 8:20* states “*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*” If one teaches that the Torah is no longer in effect, its requirements and its statutes are no longer valid then one is not speaking according to God’s word. Blood atonement is required for the forgiveness of sins according to Parashat Acharei Mot (*Vayikra / Leviticus 16:14-16*). It is interesting that the Lord God

Almighty says in His word that Scripture does not change and therefore His requirements for sin atonement also do not change.

*Tehillim / Psalms 89:34 My covenant will I not break, NOR ALTER THE THING THAT HAS GONE OUT OF MY LIPS.* לה לא-אֶחָלֵל בְּרִיתִי וּמוֹצָא שְׁפָתַי לֹא אֲשַׁנֶּה:

*Isaiah 9:16 For The leaders of this people cause them to error; and they that are led of them are destroyed.* טו וַיְהִיו מְאֹשְׁרֵי הָעַם-הַזֶּה מִתְעִים וּמְאֹשְׁרֵיו מִבְּלָעִים:

*Jeremiah 5:30-31 A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; 31 The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?* ל שָׁמָּה וְשִׁעְרוּרָה נְהִיטָה בְּאֶרֶץ: לֹא הִנְבִּיאִים נִבְאוּ- וְלֹא שֹׁמְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה נִשְׁמְרוּ: וְעַמִּי אֶהְבּוּ כֵן וּמִה-תַּעֲשׂוּ לְאַחֲרֵי־תָהּ: בְּשִׁקָּר וְהִפְתָּנִים יִרְדּוּ עַל-יְדֵיהֶם וְעַמִּי אֶהְבּוּ כֵן וּמִה-תַּעֲשׂוּ לְאַחֲרֵי־תָהּ:

The Lord has continually warned us of false teachers and bad doctrine. We are called to be students of the Word of God in order to be able to discern the difference between right and wrong. Thus, being led astray by false teachers is not excusable before the Lord God Almighty.

The rabbinic interpretation for atonement in the absence of the Beit HaMikdash (Temple in Jerusalem) has significantly affected Judaism's understanding of atonement and the forgiveness of sins in relation to "how God saves" and "how God maintains His relationship with His people today." It is interesting that there is one parallel within the rabbinic teaching that falls along side of the Apostolic Writings. The Talmudic reasoning behind the process of repentance and atonement is to rely upon the merit of the fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). Though the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem has effected Judaism's understanding of repentance, the means of expiation of sin is coupled to reliance upon how one lives and believing in the merit of the fathers. Today we believe that the merit of Yeshua made atonement for our sins. Believing in Yeshua, His blood atonement, His death, burial, and bodily resurrection, and our lives changing for righteousness, the Lord God Almighty will save and deliver us from our sins. The rabbis seek the merit of the fathers, we seek the merit of Yeshua, the living Word of God, and as the scriptures say it is accounted to us as righteousness. (*Romans 4:24 for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. NIV, ἀλλὰ καὶ δι' ἡμᾶς οἷς μέλλει λογιῆσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν ἐγγείραντα Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἐκ νεκρῶν*)

*Midrash Tehillim 20, Part 8* opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל) saying "Remember all your meal offerings (*Tehillim / Psalms 20:4*)." The homiletic introduction to the midrash (פְּתִיחָה, Petihta) states "Rabbi Khama said, All offerings you season with salt (*Vayikra / Leviticus 2:13*), in order that God will be like one who says, Yes I remember well that portion which was salted." The rabbis then go on to discuss the remembering of the Korbanot (Sacrifices). The remembering of the portion of the sacrifice that is salted reminds us of Parashat Vayikra (*Vayikra / Leviticus 1:1-5:26*). In Parashat Vayikra, the Lord calls to Moshe from the Ohel Moed (Tent of Meeting, אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד) saying דְּבַר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם אָדָם כִּי-יָקָרִיב מִכֶּם קָרְבָן לַיהוָה מִן-הַבְּהֵמָה מִן-הַבְּקָר וּמִן-הַצֹּאן תִּקְרִיבוּ אֶת-קָרְבַּנְכֶם: ג אִם-עֹלָה קָרְבָּנוּ מִן-הַבְּקָר זָכָר לַיהוָה: 1:2 'Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, When any man of you brings an offering to the Lord, you shall bring your offering of animals from the herd or the flock. 1:3 'If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer it, a male without defect; he shall offer it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the Lord. (NASB) The Lord instructs Moshe on the burnt offering (1:3) the man bringing the offering he is to lay his hand upon the head of the burnt offering that it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf (לֵעֹדֵי דְמַטָּי 7):. The blood is taken by the priest to make atonement on the altar. The animal is



13:5, Job 6:6, 2 Kings 2:20, Ezra 6:9, Matthew 5:13, Mark 9:49-50, and Luke 14:34-35.

1. Bereshit / Genesis 19:26 וַתִּבֶּט אִשְׁתּוֹ מֵאַחֲרָיו וַתִּהְיֶי נְצִיב מֶלַח: 19:26 *But his wife, from behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. (NASB)*
2. Vayikra / Leviticus 2:13 וְכָל-קָרְבָּן מִגְּדֻלְתְּךָ בְּמֶלַח תִּמְלַח וְלֹא תִשָּׁבֵית מֶלַח בְּרִית אֱלֹהֶיךָ מֵעַל מִגְּדֻלְתְּךָ עַל 2:13 *‘Every grain offering of yours, moreover, you shall season with salt, so that the salt of the covenant of your God shall not be lacking from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt. (NASB)*
3. 2 Chronicles 13:5 הֲלֹא לְכֶם לְדַעַת כִּי יְהוָה | אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נָתַן מִמְלָכָה לְדָוִד עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעוֹלָם לֹ 13:5 *‘Do you not know that the Lord God of Israel gave the rule over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt? (NASB)*
4. Job 6:6 הֲיֵאָכֵל תְּפִל מִבְּלִי-מֶלַח אִם-יִשְׁטַעַם בְּרִיר חֲלָמוֹת: 6:6 *‘Can something tasteless be eaten without salt, Or is there any taste in the white of an egg? (NASB)*
5. 2 Kings 2:20-21 כַּ וַיֹּאמֶר קָחוּ-לִי צִלְחִית הַדְּשָׁה וְשִׂימוּ שָׁם מֶלַח וַיִּקְחוּ אֵלָיו: כֹּא וַיֵּצֵא אֶל-מוֹצָא הַמַּיִם 2:20 *He said, ‘Bring me a new jar, and put salt in it.’ So they brought it to him. 2:21 He went out to the spring of water and threw salt in it and said, ‘Thus says the Lord, ‘I have purified these waters; there shall not be from there death or unfruitfulness any longer.’ (NASB)*
6. Ezra 6:9 וּמָה חֲשָׁחוֹן וּבְנֵי תוֹרִין וְדַכְרִין וְאַמְרִין | לְעֵלְוֹן | לְאַלְהָ שְׁמַיָּא חֲנֻטִין מֶלַח | חֲמַר וּמִשַׁח כְּמֹאמֶר 6:9 *‘Whatever is needed, both young bulls, rams, and lambs for a burnt offering to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine and anointing oil, as the priests in Jerusalem request, it is to be given to them daily without fail, (NASB)*
7. Matthew 5:13 Ὑμεῖς ἐστε τὸ ἅλας τῆς γῆς: ἐὰν δὲ τὸ ἅλας μωρανθῆ, ἐν τίνι ἀλισθησεται; εἰς οὐδὲν ἰσχύει ἔτι εἰ μὴ βληθὲν ἔξω καταπατεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων. 5:13 *‘You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. (NASB)*
8. Mark 9:49-50 πᾶς γὰρ πυρὶ ἀλισθησεται. Καλὸν τὸ ἅλας: ἐὰν δὲ τὸ ἅλας ἀναλον γένηται, ἐν τίνι αὐτὸ ἀρτύσετε; ἔχετε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἅλα, καὶ εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἀλλήλοις. 9:49 *‘For everyone will be salted with fire. 9:50 ‘Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.’ (NASB)*
9. Luke 14:34-35 Καλὸν οὖν τὸ ἅλας: ἐὰν δὲ καὶ τὸ ἅλας μωρανθῆ, ἐν τίνι ἀρτυθήσεται; οὔτε εἰς γῆν οὔτε εἰς κοπρίαν εὐθετόν ἐστιν: ἔξω βάλλουσιν αὐτό. ὁ ἔχων ὦτα ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω. 14:34 *‘Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? 14:35 ‘It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.’ (NASB)*

Salt (מֶלַח) is mentioned quite frequently in the Tanakh, using the Judaic classics software, salt מֶלַח occurs 18 times and is most frequently associated with the sacrificial system. To be seasoned with salt is a picture of

preservation. Especially in the first century time-frame when refrigeration was not available. Salt, in those days, was not only valued for seasoning food but was necessary for preserving food from spoiling. The preservation of food leads to our understanding that salt is symbolic for the preservation of life itself. Thus, it can be said that salt was a picture of preservation, preserving life, and interestingly according to the Torah, preservation of the covenant of God. In the Ketuvim (Writings) section of the Tanakh (OT), it is written in *2 Chronicles 13:5* that the Lord God of Israel gave rule to David as king over Israel by a covenant of salt.

### ספר דברי הימים ב פרק יג פסוק ה

ה הלא לכם לדעת כי יהוה | אלהי ישראל נתן ממלכה לדוד על-ישראל לעולם לו ולבניו ברית מלח

In *2 Chronicles 13*, Abijah stood up and said על-ישראל לעולם לו ולבניו ברית מלח | אלהי ישראל נתן ממלכה לדוד על-ישראל לעולם לו ולבניו ברית מלח “13:5 ‘Do you not know that the Lord God of Israel gave the rule over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt,’” writing “*berit melakh*” (ברית מלח) meaning “*covenant of salt*.” According to the scriptures, salt is used for seasoning food (*Vayikra / Leviticus 2:13, Job 6:6*), used as a part of the offering (*Vayikra / Leviticus 2:13, Ezra 43:24*) used in purifying waters (*2 Kings 2:20-21*), and was strewn upon the site of a destroyed or sinful city to indicate a place that is not capable of sustaining life (*Zephaniah 2:9*). In addition to this, Lot’s wife was turned into a pillar of salt (*Bereshit / Genesis 19:26*) as a result of her disobeying God. The references found in *Bereshit / Genesis* and *Zephaniah* indicate that the preserving characteristic of salt is used to prevent wickedness to continue, in the sense that a life was destroyed (pillar of salt) because of disobedience, and a land is incapable of sustaining life (Sodom and Gomorrah) because of the greatness of sin of the people inhabiting the land.

In the Apostolic Writings, Yeshua told his disciples that they were the “*salt (ἅλας) of the earth*.” The use of “*salt*” (ἅλας) in this context suggests that as salt season’s food, so too must we season the earth by living in accordance with God’s Way of life, in righteousness and justice. The Scriptures indicate that by obeying the Lord God, we preserve the earth by slowing the decay of morals in the society around us.

Ἔμεῖς ἐστε τὸ ἅλας τῆς γῆς: ἐὰν δὲ τὸ ἅλας μωρανθῆ, ἐν τίνι ἀλισθήσεται; εἰς οὐδὲν ἰσχύει ἔτι εἰ μὴ βληθὲν ἔξω καταπατεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

Here the Greek word “*alas*” (ἅλας) meaning “*salt*” is used to describe us as believers. Yeshua makes the statement that if salt “*lost its savor*” (ἅλας μωρανθῆ, *alas moranthe*) the Greek word μωρανθῆ literally means “*to be foolish, to act foolishly, to make foolish, to prove a person or a thing foolish, to make flat and tasteless, or of salt that has lost its strength and flavor*” or becomes “*insipid*” how is it to be salted again or how shall it become salty again? Today we know that NaCl (sodium chloride) is the chemical composition of normal table salt. In reality we do not really know how salt would taste if it lost its saltiness. The only reasonable conclusion would be that for salt to lose its saltiness there would need to be a change in its chemical composition. Sodium Chloride will always taste salty as long as it remains chemically unchanged or “*pure*” as sodium chloride (NaCl). In similar fashion, we too must remain pure in order to remain salty and be a blessing to the earth, to mankind, and most importantly a blessing to God. If we are mixed with other substances, living with lawlessness in our hearts, we cease to be usable as salt. When we mix the clear instruction of the Scriptures on the way God wants to be worshiped with the traditions of men, the result is a vain attempt to please him as Yeshua said in *Mark 7:7-9* saying ἡμάτην δὲ σέβονται με, διδάσκοντες διδασκαλίας ἐντάλματα ἀνθρώπων. Ἰαφέντες τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ θεοῦ κρατεῖτε τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Ἐκαὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς, Καλῶς ἀθετεῖτε τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα τὴν παράδοσιν ὑμῶν στήσητε. 7:7 ‘*But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.*’ 7:8 ‘*Neglecting the commandment of*

God, you hold to the tradition of men.’ 7:9 He was also saying to them, ‘You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. (NASB)

Examining the Hebrew Scriptures carefully, we see God working in our lives to confirm the covenant that He has made. According to Parashat Ekev in Sefer *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:18* the Lord is essentially seasoning us like salt, preserving, and enabling us to live and work so that He can establish His covenant in us.

### פרשת עקב ספר דברים פרק ח פסוק יח

יח וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי הוּא הֵנִיחַ לְךָ כַּח לַעֲשׂוֹת חָיִל לְמַעַן הִקִּים אֶת-בְּרִיתוֹ אִשָּׁר-נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם בְּיוֹם הַזֶּה:

This scripture translates literally to say “*You remember the covenant of the Lord Your God, He is giving you the ability/power to make wealth, for the purpose of rising up His covenant which he swore to your fathers, this day.*” The NASB translation of this verse is *8:18 ‘But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. (NASB)* The Lord God preserves us by giving us the power to live and to earn a living? The message goes even deeper when studying the book of Revelation we read something very interesting. *Revelation 12:11* says καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐνίκησαν αὐτὸν διὰ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ ἀρνίου καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν, καὶ οὐκ ἠγάπησαν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτῶν ἄχρι θανάτου. (והם נצחהו למען דם השה ולמען דבר) *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)* The Apostle John said that the people of God, overcame the deceiver (the dragon, HaSatan) by the “*blood of the lamb*” (αἷμα τοῦ ἀρνίου, למען דם השה) by the reason of the blood of the covenant that God has made in the lamb of God (Yeshua the Messiah) and by the “*word of their testimony*” (διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας, ולמען דבר עדותם). By the “*Word of their Testimony,*” what is it about our testimony that is so important? What do we say when we give our testimony before men? We speak of how God has worked in our lives, how He has changed and transformed our hearts, how He has changed the way we think and what we do, and how we interact with others. We begin walking in righteousness, holiness, and justice. The Lord God Almighty is working in our lives! The “*Word of their Testimony*” reveals the power of God that gives each of us the ability to live for the Lord like it says in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:18* כִּי הוּא הֵנִיחַ לְךָ כַּח לַעֲשׂוֹת חָיִל לְמַעַן הִקִּים אֶת-בְּרִיתוֹ He gives us the ability to work for the very purpose of “*Establishing His covenant*” (לְמַעַן הִקִּים אֶת-בְּרִיתוֹ). So when the Scriptures say “*they overcome by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony,*” we literally overcome by God working in our lives each and every day! In the “*Word of their Testimony*” God is glorified. In the “*Blood of the Lamb*” God is glorified. In all things, God is glorified! What an awesome God we serve!

So what was the purpose of salting the meat that was brought before God in the animal sacrifices? I believe one reason was to draw out all of the blood from the meat. Another reason was so bugs, flies, insects, etc would not be swarming the altar at any point during the daily sacrifice. The altar of God was not a detestable place. The meat was sufficiently salted and the result insects were prevented from laying their eggs. Most importantly, salt represents God preserving us in the blood of the covenant. The imagery here also shows us that the altar is holy, and salting preserves the altar of God keeping detestable things away from that which is holy. In a similar way, God salting (ἅλας) us will keep the detestable things, the wickedness and sin away from that which God has now made holy in Yeshua the Messiah. The command to salt (ἅλας, מֶלַח) the Minchah (Meal) offering was not meant to preserve the grain. The salting of the meal offering was designed to show us that God is preserving us each day as He is preserving His covenant throughout history with His people. He has made a covenant of salt with us to preserve us and keep us during the



the word דגל has the meaning “flag, banner, ensign, standard, pendant, pennant, gonfalon.” In the Olam Hazei (this world), the children of Israel recognized the camp of their family (taking the example from the Torah and the children of Israel encamped around the Tabernacle) by the flag or banner that is flown in the midst of the camp. The rabbis say however that in the Olam Habbah (The world to come), we will set up flags, banners, a standard in the name of our God. The Concluding phrase of *Midrash Tehillim 20, Part 10*, says “*The Lord answer you in the day of trouble, the Psalm begins with prayer pleading for immediate answer; and in Let the King answer us in the day that we call, the Psalm ends with a prayer pleading for immediate answer.*” Something the rabbis pick up on is the beginning and ending verses, David is seeking the Lord asking for help in his time of need. The fundamental question is why should we seek the Lord for things that are important to us? The reason is, according to Parashat Va’etchanan (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11*), the Lord commands us to. Let’s read a section of Parashat Va’etchanan.

**Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:26-40**

*4:26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will surely perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You shall not live long on it, but will be utterly destroyed. 4:27 ‘The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord drives you. 4:28 ‘There you will serve gods, the work of man’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. 4:29 ‘But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul. 4:30 ‘When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days you will return to the Lord your God and listen to His voice. 4:31 ‘For the Lord your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them. 4:32 ‘Indeed, ask now concerning the former days which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and inquire from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything been done like this great thing, or has anything been heard like it? 4:33 ‘Has any people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard it, and survived? 4:34 ‘Or has a god tried to go to take for himself a nation from within another nation by trials, by signs and wonders and by war and by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm and by great terrors, as the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? 4:35 ‘To you it was shown that you might know that the Lord, He is God; there is no other besides Him. 4:36 ‘Out of the heavens He let you hear His voice to discipline you; and on earth He let you see His great fire, and you heard His words from the midst of the fire. 4:37 ‘Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power, 4:38 driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in and to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is today. 4:39 ‘Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the Lord, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other. 4:40 ‘So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time.’ (NASB)*

כּו הַעִידֹתִי בְכֶם הַיּוֹם אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ כִּי-אֲבֹד תֵּאבְדוּן מִהֵר מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲתֶם עֹבְרִים אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ לֹא-תֵאָרִיכוּ יָמִים עָלֶיהָ כִּי הַשָּׁמַיִם תִּשְׁמְדוּן: כז וְהַפִּיץ יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם בְּעַמִּים וְנִשְׁאַרְתֶּם מִתֵּי מִסְפָּר בְּגוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר יִנְהַג יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה: כח וְעִבַדְתֶּם-שָׂם אֱלֹהִים מֵעֵשָׂה יְדֵי אָדָם עֵץ וְאֶבֶן אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִרְאוּן וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּן וְלֹא יֵאָכְלוּן וְלֹא יִרְיִחוּן: כט וּבִקְשַׁתֶּם מִשָּׁם אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ וּמִצֵּאתָ כִּי תִדְרָשׁוּנוּ בְּכָל-לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ: ל בִּצְרָ לָךְ וּמִצֵּאוֹךָ כָּל הַדְּבָרִים



30:9 וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ: [ששי] יֵאָמֵר כִּי הַמַּצְוָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אֶנְכִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם לֹא-נִפְלְאָת הִוא מִמֶּךָ וְלֹא-רְחִיקָה הִוא:  
*'Then the Lord your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the Lord will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers; 30:10 if you obey the Lord your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and soul. 30:11 'For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. (NASB)*

3. The Lord Prepares us: “*The Lord prepares our heart through prayer.*” The Lord produces preparation by delaying to grant our request at the moment of our asking. We are held in the truth of His presence until we are brought into spiritual understanding of the will of God for our lives. Whether there is sin in our lives that is resulting in calamities or simply for the increasing of patience and love for others.
4. Cooperation with God: “We are called to be fellow laborers together with God.” Scripture says that the exalted Saviour ever lives to make intercession; and to His redeemed people He says, *Matthew 26:38 Then He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.'* (NASB). According to the Scriptures and based on our own lives, there is a great work to be done in the hearts of Men. Battles in spiritual wickedness, the casting down of idols, the casting out of demons, the works of the flesh, the works of the evil one, etc. It is by prayer above all other means that we seek the Lord’s help to overcome and find victory.

Dependence, communion, preparation, and cooperation with God is illustrated in Parashat Ki Tisa and the sin of the children of Israel making a golden calf at the foot of the mountain of Sinai. Specifically, we learn from Parashat Ki Tisa that God is willing to suffer with us, to suffer our sins in order to make atonement for our sins.

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| <p><b>פִּרְשַׁת וַאֲתַחֲנֶנּוּ סֵפֶר שְׁמוֹת פָּרָק לֵב פְּסוּק ל-לֵג</b><br/>         ל וַיְהִי מִמָּחָרָת וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-הָעָם אַתֶּם חָטֵאתֶם<br/>         חָטֵאתֶם גְּדוֹלָה וַעֲתָה אֵעָלֶה אֶל-יְהוָה אוּלַי אֲכַפְרֶה בְּעַד<br/>         חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם: לֹא וַיָּשָׁב מֹשֶׁה אֶל-יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי חָטָא<br/>         הָעָם הַזֶּה חָטֵאתֶם גְּדוֹלָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם אֱלֹהִי זָהָב: לֵב<br/>         וַעֲתָה אִם-תִּשָּׂא חַטֹּאתֵם וְאִם-אֵין מַחְנִי נָא מִסִּפְרֶךָ אֲשֶׁר<br/>         כָּתַבְתָּ: לֵג וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה מִי אֲשֶׁר חָטָא-לִי<br/>         אֶמְחִנּוּ מִסִּפְרִי:</p> | <p><b>Shemot / Exodus 32:30-33</b><br/>         32:30 On the next day Moses said to the people, ‘You yourselves have committed a great sin; and now I am going up to the Lord, perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.’ 32:31 Then Moses returned to the Lord, and said, ‘Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. 32:32 ‘But now, if You will, forgive their sin and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!’ 32:33 The Lord said to Moses, ‘Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book. (NASB)</p> |
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Moshe says *“if you will carry, lift, bear, endure, or suffer”* אִם תִּישָׂא חַטֹּאתֵם וְאִם-אֵין מַחְנִי נָא מִסִּפְרֶךָ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ *“their sin.”* Based on the Hebrew text Moshe is asking God to forgive the peoples sin in a very unusual way. The NASB translates this to mean *“if You will forgive their sin.”* Interestingly, Moshe is asking God *“to carry, bear, endure, and suffer”* the sins of the people for them in a way that results in the forgiveness of their sins. Does Moshe understand something about the nature or character of God in making this statement asking to forgive the people? This is the reason we pray and seek the Lord God Almighty for help, He is willing to bear our iniquities and forgive us of our sins. Moshe qualifies his statement by saying *“and if not”* וְאִם-אֵין מַחְנִי נָא מִסִּפְרֶךָ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ *“erase/destroy me from your book that you have written.”* Moshe asks if God will not forgive their sin; blot his name out of the

book of the living. The Lord responds saying *וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה מִי אֲשֶׁר חָטָא-לִי אֶמְחָנוּ מִסֵּפֶרִי* “*the one who sins I will erase/destroy from my book.*” In these verses from *Shemot / Exodus 32:30-33*, we see the Savior role of the Lord God Almighty and Moshe who prefigures the Messiah, to intercede and make atonement for the people, to be selfless and self sacrificing on behalf of the people. Moshe stood between the people to speak to them the “*Word*” of the Lord. Isn’t it interesting that the Messiah would be none other than the “*Living Word of God*” as the Apostle John says in *John 1:1-14*. In the Targum Onkelos (תרגום הַאֲנָא הַגִּיטִי קָאָם בֵּין־מִמָּרְאָה) on *Devarim / Deuteronomy 5:5* we read in Aramaic *וַיִּבְיָנוּךְ* that Moshe stood between the “*Word of the Lord*” and You (the congregation of people). The Aramaic translation reveals to us that as an advocate for the people, Moshe stood between the Word of the Lord in order to deliver the Word of God unto the people. Emphasis is placed in the Aramaic translation on Moshe standing between the “*Word of the Lord*” and the people and that he speaks the Word of the Lord to the people. A parallel is found here in Yeshua, the Word of God became flesh (*John 1:14*) so that Yeshua could deliver God’s Words to us, God’s people (*Remember the references in the Apostolic Writings when Yeshua says “my words” Matthew 24:35, John 8:31, 14:23, 15:7*). Note also the reason we are instructed to seek the Lord in prayer. It is in this way, the Word of God (becoming flesh) is able to provide atonement on our behalf, and fulfill what was written of the Lord, and of the Messiah in the Torah where Moshe wrote

*וְעַתָּה אִם-תִּשָּׂא חַטָּאתָם* saying *אִם תִּשָּׂא* “*if you will carry, lift, bear, endure, or suffer*” *חַטָּאתָם* “*their sin.*” Midrash Tehillim 20, Part 10 concludes saying “*In The Lord answer you in the day of trouble, the Psalm begins with prayer pleading for immediate answer; and in Let the King answer us in the day that we call, the Psalm ends with a prayer pleading for immediate answer.*” Dependence, communion, preparation, and cooperation with God is the ultimate goal of prayer and for the Lord’s tarrying. The rabbis use the method of “question and response” in an attempt to understand why God works the way he does. The Concluding phrase of *Midrash Tehillim 20, Part 10*, says “*The Lord answer you in the day of trouble, the Psalm begins with prayer pleading for immediate answer; and in Let the King answer us in the day that we call, the Psalm ends with a prayer pleading for immediate answer.*” Tehillim / Psalms 20 reminds us that in the beginning and in the end we are to seek the Lord God Almighty and His Son Yeshua the Messiah. David is seeks the Lord asking for help in his time of need and for salvation. We too are to seek the Lord God for help and for salvation according to His word in His Son Yeshua the Messiah. Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for helping us to realize that we can call out to You for help. Help us Lord to seek you first and to walk with an upright heart and life. We realize that it is only by Your Great Mercy we are able to stand before you! David concludes saying *20:9 Save, O Lord; May the King answer us in the day we call. (NASB)* today we are calling out to You, to hear our prayer, to help us and to change us for good according to Your will and word. Lord, let the words of our mouths and the mediation of our hearts be acceptable in Your sight. Lord forgive us for all of our sins and keep each of us so that our sins do not rule over us. We thank you Lord for sending us Your Son Yeshua who paid the covenant price for the forgiveness of our sins. We believe that in Your Son Yeshua, You have made a sure foundation, You are our Rock, Redeemer, and

Savior. In Yeshua we have the hope of eternal life. Help us to trust in You Lord as we wait patiently for You and Your presence each day. We believe in the Righteous work Yeshua did in His life and upon the cross to make atonement for our sins. Help us to live and dedicated our lives to You, fill us with Your presence Lord and 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

## Notes

