

Tehillim / Psalms 41 | ספר תהילים מא

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David's Struggle with His Enemies and Our Salvation in the Lord

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 41:1-13*, אֲשֶׁרִי מְשָׁפִיל אֶל-דָּל, David opens the Psalm saying *For the director of music. A psalm of David. 41:1 How blessed is he who considers the helpless; The Lord will deliver him in a day of trouble. (NASB)* What does it mean to consider the helpless? David says that the person who considers the helpless will be delivered. **ג** יְהוָה | יִשְׁמְרֵהוּ וַיַּחַיֵּהוּ יְאֹשֶׁר [וְאֹשֶׁר] בְּאֶרֶץ וְאֶל-תַּתְּנֵהוּ בְּנַפְשׁ אִיבָיו: **ד** יְהוָה יִסְעָדֵנּוּ עַל-עֲרֹשׁ דָּוִי כָּל-מְשַׁכְּבוֹ 41:2 *The Lord will protect him and keep him alive, And he shall be called blessed upon the earth; And do not give him over to the desire of his enemies. 41:3 The Lord will sustain him upon his sick-bed; In his illness, You restore him to health. (NASB)* The one who considers the helpless, the Hebrew text says the poor (דָּל) the Lord will sustain his life and even heal him when he is laying on his bed sick. David continues saying **ו** אִיבֵי יֹאמְרוּ רַע לִי מָתִי יָמוּת וְאֶבֶד שְׁמוֹ: **ז** וְאִם-בָּא לְרֵאוֹת | שְׁוֹא יִדְבֵר לְבוֹ יִקְבֹּץ-אֲנֹן לוֹ יֵצֵא לַחוּץ יְדַבֵּר: **ח** יַחַד עָלַי יִתְלַחֲשׁוּ כָּל-שׂוֹנְאֵי עָלַי | יִחַשְׁבוּ רָעָה לִּי: **ט** דָּבַר-בְּלִיעַל יִצּוּק בּוֹ וְאֹשֶׁר שָׁכַב לֹא-יִוָּסֵף לְקוֹם: **י** גַּם אִישׁ-שְׁלוֹמִי | אֹשֶׁר-בְּטַחְתִּי בּוֹ אוֹכַל לְחַמֵּי הַגְּדִיל עָלַי 41:4 *As for me, I said, 'O Lord, be gracious to me; Heal my soul, for I have sinned against You.'* 41:5 *My enemies speak evil against me, 'When will he die, and his name perish?'* 41:6 *And when he comes to see me, he speaks falsehood; His heart gathers wickedness to itself; When he goes outside, he tells it.* 41:7 *All who hate me whisper together against me; Against me they devise my hurt, saying,* 41:8 *'A wicked thing is poured out upon him, That when he lies down, he will not rise up again.'* 41:9 *Even my close friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me. (NASB)* David speaks of his enemy, that this enemy speaks evil against him. This is interesting because the enemy that he is referring to is not that of the philistines or of the nations but appears to be someone close to home. David asks the Lord when will this enemy die and his name perish. Do you think it is OK to seek the death of an enemy? David concludes saying **יג** וְאִנִּי יִגַּד וְהָיָה חֲנֻנִי וְהִקְיִמֵנִי וְאֲשַׁלְּמָה לָהֶם: **יב** בְּזֹאת יִדְעֵתִי כִּי-תִפְצֹתַּ בִּי כִּי לֹא-יָרִיעַ אִיבֵי עָלַי: **יד** וְאִנִּי יִגַּד וְהָיָה חֲנֻנִי וְהִקְיִמֵנִי וְאֲשַׁלְּמָה לָהֶם: **יז** בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה | אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִהַעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם אָמֵן | וְאָמֵן: 41:10 *But You, O Lord, be gracious to me and raise me up, That I may repay them.* 41:11 *By this I know that You are pleased with me, Because my enemy does not shout in triumph over me.* 41:12 *As for me, You uphold me in my integrity, And You set me in Your presence forever.* 41:13 *Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, From everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen. (NASB)*

עברית Hebrew	ארמי Aramaic	ελληνικός Greek
<p>ספר תהלים פרק מא</p> <p>א לְמַנְצֵחַ מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד: ב אֲשֶׁרִי מְשָׁפִיל אֶל-דָּל בְּיוֹם רָעָה יִמְלִטְהוּ יְהוָה: ג יְהוָה יִשְׁמְרֵהוּ וַיַּחַיֵּהוּ יְאֹשֶׁר [וְאֹשֶׁר] בְּאֶרֶץ וְאֶל-תַּתְּנֵהוּ בְּנַפְשׁ אִיבָיו: ד יְהוָה יִסְעָדֵנּוּ עַל-עֲרֹשׁ דָּוִי כָּל-מְשַׁכְּבוֹ הַפְּכֶתָּ בְּחַלְוֵי:</p>	<p>ספר טוביה פרק מא</p> <p>א לשבחא תושבחתא לדוד: ב טובוי דמשכיל לעניי מסכינא לרחמותיה ביום בישותא ישזביניה יהוה: ג יהוה ינט ריניה ויחינייה ויוטיביניה בארעא ולא תמסריניה ברעות בעלי דבבוי: ד מירא דיהוה יסיעיניה בחויה ויתגלי ליה על שיווי מרעיה לאחאותיה כל משכ ביה אפכתא בעידן מרעיה ואכסנתיה:</p>	<p>ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 41</p> <p>41:1 εις τὸ τέλος ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαυὶδ μακάριος ὁ συνίων ἐπὶ πτωχὸν καὶ πένητα ἐν ἡμέρᾳ πονηρᾷ ῥύσεται αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος 41:2 κύριος διαφυλάξει αὐτὸν καὶ ζήσει αὐτὸν καὶ μακαρίσει αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ γῆ καὶ μὴ παραδώσει αὐτὸν εἰς χεῖρας ἐχθροῦ αὐτοῦ 41:3 κύριος βοηθήσει αὐτῷ ἐπὶ κλίνης ὀδύνης αὐτοῦ ὅλην τὴν κοίτην αὐτοῦ ἔστρεψας ἐν τῇ ἀρρωστίᾳ αὐτοῦ 41:4 ἐγὼ εἶπα κύριε ἐλέησόν με ἴασαι τὴν ψυχὴν μου ὅτι ἠμαρτόν σοι</p>

<p>ה אָנִי-אֲמַרְתִּי יְהוָה חַנּוּנִי רַפְּאֵה נַפְשִׁי כִּי-חָטָאתִי לָךְ: ו אוֹיְבֵי יֹאמְרוּ רַע לִי מִתִּי יָמוּת וְאָבֵד שְׁמוֹ: ז וְאִם-בָּא לְרֹאוֹת שְׂוֹא יִדְבַּר לְבוֹ יִקְבֹּץ-אֲנִי לֹ יֵצֵא לַחוּץ יִדְבַּר: ח יַחַד עָלַי יִתְלַ- חֲשׂוּ כָל-שֹׁנְאֵי עָלַי יִחְשְׁבוּ רָעָה לִי: ט דְּבַר-בְּלִיעֵל יִצּוֹק בּוֹ וְאֲשֶׁר שָׁכַב לֹא-יוֹסִיף לְקוֹם: י גַּם אִישׁ-שְׁלוֹמִי אֲשֶׁר-בִּטְחָתִי בּוֹ אוֹכֵל לֶחֱמֵי הַגִּדְדִּיל עָלַי עֲקָב: יא וְאַתָּה יְהוָה חַנּוּנִי וְהַקִּי- מִנִּי וְאֲשַׁלְּמָה לָּהֶם: יב בְּזֹאת יִדְעֵתִי כִּי-חָפְצָתָּ בִּי כִּי לֹא-יָרִיעַ אֹיְבֵי עָלַי: יג וְאֲנִי בְתַמִּי תִמְכַּתָּ בִּי וּתְצַיְבֵנִי לְפָנֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם: יד בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִהְעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם אָמֵן וְאָמֵן:</p>	<p>ה אֲנִי אֲמַרְתִּי יְהוָה חוֹס עָלַי אֲסִי נַפְשִׁי מִטּוֹל אַרוֹם דַּחְבִּית קִדְמָךְ: ו בְּעָלַי דַּבְּבִי יִמְרוֹן בִּישׁ עָלַי אִימְתִי יָמוּת וְיִוְבַד יִיבַד שְׁמִיָּה: ז וְאִין"וּכַד אֲתָא לְמַקְבֵּל אֲפִי שְׁקֹרָא יִמְלִיל בְּר- עִיּוּנִיָּה יִכְנוּף עֵילָא לִיָּה יִפּוֹק לְשׁוֹקָא יִמְלִיל: ח כַּחְדָּא עָלַי מִמְלַלִּין בַּחֲשָׁאֵי כָּל סְנַאֵי עָלַי חֲשַׁלִּין בִּישְׁתָּא לִי: ט מִמְלַל טְלוּמָא וְרִשְׁיַע יִתִּיךְ בִּיָּה וְיִימַר דִּין דְּמַרְע לֹא יוֹסִיף לְמִיקָם: י אִוּף גַּבְר דַּתְבַּע שְׁלוּמֵי דְאִיתְרַחֲצִית עֲלוּי מְבַרֵּי סְעוּדַתִּי אִיתְרַבְּרַב עָלַי לְחַכְמָא: יא וְאַנְתָּ וְאַתָּה יְהוָה חוֹס עָלַי וְאַקִּימ- נִי מִמְרַע וְאַפְרַע לְהוֹם: יב בַּהֲדָא יִדְעִית אַרוֹם אִיתְרַעִיית בִּי אַרוֹם לֹא אִיתְגַּבַּר עָלַי בְּעֵיל דַּבְּבִי לְאַבְאָשָׁא: יג וְאַנָּא בְּשַׁלְמוֹתֵי סְעֻדַתָּא בִּי וְאוֹקִי- מִתְנִי קִדְמָךְ לְעַלְמָא: יד בְּרִיךְ שְׁמִיָּה דִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי דִישְׂרָאֵל מִן עַלְמָא הַדִּין וְעַד עַלְמָא דְאַתִּי יִמְרוֹן צְדִיקָא אֲמֵן וְאַמֵּן:</p>	<p>41:5 οἱ ἐχθροί μου εἶπαν κακά μοι πότε ἀποθανεῖται καὶ ἀπολείται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ 41:6 καὶ εἰ εἰσεπορεύετο τοῦ ἰδεῖν μάτην ἐλάλει ἢ καρδία αὐτοῦ συνήγαγεν ἀνομίαν ἑαυτῷ ἐξεπορεύετο ἔξω καὶ ἐλάλει 41:7 ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ κατ' ἔμοῦ ἐψιθύριζον πάντες οἱ ἐχθροί μου κατ' ἔμοῦ ἐλογίζοντο κακά μοι 41:8 λόγον παράνομον κατέθεντο κατ' ἔμοῦ μὴ ὁ κοιμώμενος οὐχὶ προσθήσει τοῦ ἀναστῆναι 41:9 καὶ γὰρ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς εἰρήνης μου ἔφ' ὃν ἤλπισα ὁ ἐσθίων ἄρτους μου ἐμεγάλυνεν ἐπ' ἐμέ πτερισμόν 41:10 σὺ δέ κύριε ἐλέησόν με καὶ ἀνάστησόν με καὶ ἀνταποδώσω αὐτοῖς 41:11 ἐν τούτῳ ἔγνω ὅτι θεθέληκάς με ὅτι οὐ μὴ ἐπιχαρῆ ὁ ἐχθρός μου ἐπ' ἐμέ 41:12 ἐμοῦ δὲ διὰ τὴν ἀκακίαν ἀντελάβου καὶ ἐβεβαίωσάς με ἐνώπιόν σου εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα 41:13 εὐλογητὸς κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραὴλ ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα γένοιτο γένοιτο</p>
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א למְנַצֵּחַ מְזֻמּוֹר לְדָוִד: ב אֲשֶׁרִי מְשָׁכִיל אֶל-דָּל, א This week’s study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 41:1-13*, David opens the Psalm saying *For the director of music. A psalm of David. 41:1 How blessed is he who considers the helpless; The Lord will deliver him in a day of trouble. (NASB)* He opens with the words “*Ashrei Maskil*” (אֲשֶׁרִי מְשָׁכִיל) meaning “*blessed is the educated or learned*” implying “*blessed is he who understands.*” The Aramaic Targum states ב טובוי דמשכיל לעניי מסכינא לרחמותיה ביום בישותא ישזביניה יהוה: 41:2 *Happy the man who is wise to show mercy to the humble and poor on the day of evil; the Lord will deliver him. (EMC)* using the same word “*Maskil*” (משכיל) to reference the one who is “*wise*” that shows mercy to poor. In the Hebrew text David says the one who understands considers the poor (דָּל). The way this is written is by two words “*el-dal*” (אֶל-דָּל) where the word “*el*” is connected to “*dal*” using a maqqef suggesting that these two words are joined together. The word “*el*” is a preposition meaning “*to, toward, at, into, in direction of, onto, unto.*” The use of the maqqef causes the stress to shift from the preceding word and attend to the following word. So David is saying blessed is the one who understands who is “*toward,*” “*unto,*” or is “*in the direction of*” the poor (דָּל). This is translated as the one who considers the helpless or the poor. Studying the use of the Hebrew word “*dal*” in the Masoretic text we find that this word is translated as “*poor*” (43x), “*needy*” (2x), “*weak*” (2x), and “*lean*” (1x). For example, in 2 Samuel 3:1, we read א וַתְּהִי הַמִּלְחָמָה אַרְבָּה בֵּין בֵּית שָׁאוּל וּבֵין בֵּית דָּוִד וַדּוֹד הַלֵּךְ וַחֲזַק וּבֵית שָׁאוּל הִלְכִים 3:1 *Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; and David grew steadily stronger, but the house of Saul grew weaker continually. (NASB)* “*dal*” is written in plural form (וַדְּלִים), it is possible that David is referencing weakness as referring to the sick. The Apostle James in his epistle also made a reference to those who visit the poor in the sight of God (*James 1:27*).

<p>Tehillim / Psalms 41 For the director of music. A psalm of David. 41:1 How blessed is he who considers the helpless; The Lord will deliver him in a day of trouble. 41:2 The Lord will protect him and keep him alive, And he shall be called blessed upon the earth; And do not give him over to the desire of his enemies. 41:3 The Lord will sustain him upon his sickbed; In his illness, You restore him to health. 41:4 As for me, I said, ‘O Lord, be gracious to me; Heal my soul, for I have sinned against You.’ 41:5 My enemies speak evil against me, ‘When will he die, and his name perish?’ 41:6 And when he comes to see me, he speaks falsehood; His heart gathers wickedness to itself; When he goes outside, he tells it. 41:7 All who hate me whisper together against me; Against me they devise my hurt, saying, 41:8 ‘A wicked thing is poured out upon him, That when he lies down, he will not rise up again.’ 41:9 Even my close friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me. 41:10 But You, O Lord, be gracious to me and raise me up, That I may repay them. 41:11 By this I know that You are pleased with me, Because my enemy does not shout in triumph over me. 41:12 As for me, You uphold me in my integrity, And You set me in Your presence forever. 41:13 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, From everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 41 41 For praise; a psalm of David. 41:2 Happy the man who is wise to show mercy to the humble and poor on the day of evil; the Lord will deliver him. 41:3 The Lord will keep him and preserve him and do well to him in the land; and he will not hand him over to the will of his enemies. 41:4 The word of the Lord will aid him in his life, and be revealed to him on the bed of his sickness to preserve him; you have reversed wholly his bed in the time of his sickness and rebuke. 41:5 I said: O Lord, have mercy on me; heal my soul, for I have sinned in your presence. 41:6 My enemies will speak evil about me: “When will he die and his name perish?” 41:7 And if he comes to welcome me, he will speak falsehood; in his mind he will gather iniquity to himself, he will go outside [and] speak. 41:8 All my enemies speak together about me in secret, plotting ruin for me. 41:9 He will pour out on him the speech of an oppressor, and will say, “This one who is sick will not get up again.” 41:10 Even a man who seeks my welfare, in whom I trusted, feeding him my meal – he has cunningly prevailed over me. 41:11 But you, O Lord, have mercy on me, and raise me up from illness; and I will pay them back. 41:12 By this I know that you have favored me, that my enemy has not prevailed over me to cause harm. 41:13 But I, for my blamelessness – you have sustained me; and you made me stand in your presence forever. 41:14 Blessed be the name of the Lord God of Israel, from this world to the world to come; the righteous will say, “Amen and amen.” (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 41 For the end, a Psalm of David. 41:1 Blessed is the man who thinks, on the poor and needy: the Lord shall deliver him in an evil day. 41:2 May the Lord preserve him and keep him alive, and bless him on the earth, and not deliver him into the hands of his enemy. 41:3 May the Lord help him upon the bed of his pain; thou hast made all his bed in his sickness. 41:4 I said, O Lord, have mercy upon me; heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee. 41:5 Mine enemies have spoken evil against me, saying, When shall he die, and his name perish? 41:6 And if he came to see me, his heart spoke vainly; he gathered iniquity to himself; he went forth and spoke in like manner. 41:7 All my enemies whispered against me; against me they devised my hurt. 41:8 They denounced a wicked word against me, saying, Now that he lies, shall he not rise up again? 41:9 For even the man of my peace, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, lifted up his heel against me. 41:10 But thou, O Lord, have compassion upon me, and raise me up, and I shall requite them. 41:11 By this I know that thou hast delighted in me, because mine enemy shall not rejoice over me. 41:12 But thou didst help me because of mine innocence, and hast established me before thee for ever. 41:13 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. So be it, so be it. (LXX)</p>
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James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world. (NASB, ²⁷θρησκεία καθαρὰ καὶ ἀμίαντος παρὰ τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐπισκέπτεσθαι ὀρφανούς καὶ χήρας ἐν τῇ θλίψει αὐτῶν, ἄσπιλον ἑαυτὸν τηρεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ κόσμου.) David says for such a person the Lord will deliver in the day of trouble (בְּיֹם רָצוֹן יִצִּילֵהוּ יְהוָה). It is interesting that the Hebrew text says in the day of evil, the Lord (YHVH) will help him to escape. This is interesting because David saying “in the day of evil” reminds us of an aphorism that goes something like “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” An aphorism is a “concise saying which ex-

חֲקִיו כָּל-הַמַּחֲלָה אֲשֶׁר-שָׁמְתִי בְּמִצְרַיִם לֹא-אֲשִׁים עָלֶיךָ כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה רִפְאֶךָ:

Devarim / Deuteronomy 29:22

29:22 *‘Now the generation to come, your sons who rise up after you and the foreigner who comes from a distant land, when they see the plagues of the land and the diseases with which the Lord has afflicted it, will say, (NASB)*

כֹּא וְאָמַר הַדּוֹר הָעֹתִיד בְּנֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר יָקוּמוּ מֵאַחֲרֵיכֶם וְהַנִּזְכָּרִי אֲשֶׁר יָבֹא מֵאַרְצוֹ רְחוֹקָה וְרָאוּ אֶת-
מִכּוֹת הָאָרֶץ הַהוּא וְאֶת-תַּחֲלָאֵיהָ אֲשֶׁר-חָלָה יְהוָה בָּהּ:

In Parashat Beshalach, the Lord is the one who heals if one will “heed to the voice” of the Lord. It is interesting again that in *Shemot / Exodus 15:26*, we read that the verse says “if you listen to the voice of the Lord your God” (אֲשֶׁר-יִשְׁמָעוּ תְּשָׁמַע לְקוֹל | יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ) and we find the imperfect form of the word shema to indicate that listening is an ongoing process. In Parashat Nitzavim, we read that the plagues are brought upon the land by reason of the people’s sins. The removal of the punishment of sin was the proof of the forgiveness of God. David says the Lord was gracious to him, he seeks forgiveness and healing because he has sinned and he believes the Lord is faithful to forgive him of his sins.

ו אוֹיְבַי יֹאמְרוּ רַע לִי מָתִי יָמוּת וְאָבֵד שְׁמוֹ: ז וְאִם-כָּא לְרֵאוֹת | שָׂוֵא יִדְבֵר לְבוֹ David goes on saying וְאֲשֶׁר יִקְבְּצוּ-אֹנָן לוֹ יֵצֵא לְחוּץ יְדַבֵּר: ח יַחַד עָלַי יִתְלַחֲשׂוּ כָּל-שֹׁנְאֵי עָלַי | יַחֲשֹׁבוּ רָעָה לִּי: ט דְּבַר-כְּלִיעַל יֵצוּק בּוֹ וְאֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב לֹא-יִוָּסֵף לְקוֹם: י גַּם אִישׁ-שָׁלוּמִי | אֲשֶׁר-כָּטְחָתִי בּוֹ אוֹכֵל לְחֵמֵי הַגִּדִיל עָלַי עֵקֵב: 41:5 *My enemies speak evil against me, ‘When will he die, and his name perish?’ 41:6 And when he comes to see me, he speaks falsehood; His heart gathers wickedness to itself; When he goes outside, he tells it. 41:7 All who hate me whisper together against me; Against me they devise my hurt, saying, 41:8 ‘A wicked thing is poured out upon him, That when he lies down, he will not rise up again.’ 41:9 Even my close friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me. (NASB)* Who is this enemy, this close friend that was trusted that lifted his heel against David? His prayer is that if he is faithful he will be preserved and saved from his enemies. The Lord will preserve him, keep him alive, blessing him, etc (*Tehillim / Psalms 41:2 The Lord will protect him and keep him alive, And he shall be called blessed upon the earth; And do not give him over to the desire of his enemies. NASB*) *Tehillim / Psalms 41* appears to be related to the story of David and Absalom where Absalom attempted to usurp control over the throne of David. David and his men fled from Jerusalem and it is recorded that Absalom had stolen the hearts of the men of Israel.

2 Samuel 15:1-6

15:1 *Now it came about after this that Absalom provided for himself a chariot and horses and fifty men as runners before him. 15:2 Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way to the gate; and when any man had a suit to come to the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, ‘From what city are you?’ And he would say, ‘Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel.’ 15:3 Then Absalom would say to him, ‘See, your claims are good and right, but no man listens to you on the part of the king.’ 15:4 Moreover, Absalom would say, ‘Oh that one would appoint me judge in the land, then every man who has any suit or cause could come to me and I would give him justice.’ 15:5 And when a man came near to prostrate himself before him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him. 15:6 In this manner Absalom dealt with all Israel who came to the king for judgment; so Absalom stole away the hearts of the men of Israel. (NASB)*

Absalom had a plan to gain favor in the eyes of the people. Absalom was claimed that he would be a superior advocate before the king. David witnessed Absalom’s conspiracy and he fled as it says in *2 Samuel 15:13-15*.

2 Samuel 15:13-15

15:13 Then a messenger came to David, saying, 'The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom.' 15:14 David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, 'Arise and let us flee, for otherwise none of us will escape from Absalom. Go in haste, or he will overtake us quickly and bring down calamity on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword.' 15:15 Then the king's servants said to the king, 'Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever my lord the king chooses.' (NASB)

Then as David fled his faithful servants turned against him. Mephibosheth, whom David had provided for after Jonathan's death, appears to have turned against him also. Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant met David as he fled according to 2 Samuel 16:3-4.

2 Samuel 16:1-4

16:1 Now when David had passed a little beyond the summit, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him with a couple of saddled donkeys, and on them were two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred clusters of raisins, a hundred summer fruits, and a jug of wine. 16:2 The king said to Ziba, 'Why do you have these?' And Ziba said, 'The donkeys are for the king's household to ride, and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine, for whoever is faint in the wilderness to drink.' 16:3 Then the king said, 'And where is your master's son?' And Ziba said to the king, 'Behold, he is staying in Jerusalem, for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of my father to me.' ' 16:4 So the king said to Ziba, 'Behold, all that belongs to Mephibosheth is yours.' And Ziba said, 'I prostrate myself; let me find favor in your sight, O my lord, the king!' (NASB)

In addition to this, Simei of the house of Benjamin also cursed David and threw stones and dirt at David while he was fleeing from Absalom.

2 Samuel 16:5-8

16:5 When King David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out from there a man of the family of the house of Saul whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he came out cursing continually as he came. 16:6 He threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David; and all the people and all the mighty men were at his right hand and at his left. 16:7 Thus Shimei said when he cursed, 'Get out, get out, you man of bloodshed, and worthless fellow! 16:8 'The Lord has returned upon you all the bloodshed of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the Lord has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. And behold, you are taken in your own evil, for you are a man of bloodshed!' (NASB)

Ahithophel, David's trusted advisor and friend, also turned against David and David prays that the advice that he gives to Absalom would be turned into foolishness, according to 2 Samuel 15:31.

2 Samuel 15:31

15:31 Now someone told David, saying, 'Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.' And David said, 'O Lord, I pray, make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness.' (NASB)

David's prayer was answered and Absalom did not follow his advice. Ahithophel then saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his donkey, and returned home in his city and he put his household in order and then hanged himself and died and was buried in the tomb of his father (2 Samuel 22:17). Here, in *Tehillim / Psalms 41:9* David speaks of "mine own familiar friend." Ahithophel who was his trusted friend, whose advice had been as the oracles of God and who ate "my bread," he had "raised his heel" against David. This

Absalom, led a rebellion with Ahithophel at his side. It is highly likely that Ahithophel is who inspired David in the laments of a trusted friend who betrayed him which are recounted in *Tehillim / Psalm 41:8-9 and 55:12-15*. We are not told why Ahithophel betrayed David, but putting together some of the genealogical records shed light on this. Ahithophel's son was named Eliam (2 *Samuel 23:34*) and Eliam's daughter was Bathsheba (2 *Samuel 11:3*). Bathsheba was Ahithophel's granddaughter. In addition to this, Ahithophel's son, Elaim, and Bathsheba husband, Uriah, were both bodyguards to David, men who were pledged to lay down their lives for David. So Ahithophel's betrayal is understandable. In addition to these things, Christian interpreters often see Ahithophel as an anti-type of Judas Iscariot. Ahithophel's betrayal of David, and subsequent suicide are seen as anticipating Judas' betrayal of Yeshua, and the gospel's account of Judas hanging himself (see *Matthew 27:5*). *Tehillim / Psalm 41:9*, seems to refer to Ahithophel, and is quoted in *John 13:18* because of the parallel of betrayal and that both men hung themselves and died.

In *Tehillim / Psalms 41:5* we read David saying *41:5 My enemies speak evil against me, 'When will he die, and his name perish?' (NASB)* Do you think it is OK to seek the death of our enemies? Depending upon one's motives, praying for God's wrath may be a legitimate cry for justice. We see the cry for justice throughout the psalms of David for example in *Tehillim / Psalms 94:1-2*.

Tehillim / Psalms 94:1-2

94:1 O Lord, God of vengeance, God of vengeance, shine forth! 94:2 Rise up, O Judge of the earth, Render recompense to the proud. (NASB)

א אל-נקמות יהוה אל נקמות הופיע: ב הנשוא שפט הארץ השב גמול על-גאים:

Here again David asks for justice from the Lord. While the desire for God to set things right is a valid request, Yeshua told us that we should take a different attitude toward our enemies. Granted, in desperate times, it is possible to take this approach seeking the Lord for His salvation from a situation and to seek justice against one's enemies. The point is to not live in a continual state of seeking vengeance and justice. Yeshua taught us to pray for our enemies and he did not encourage us to seek the death of our enemies (*Matthew 5:43-45*). For his disciples, I am sure this was revolutionary on the interpretation of the Scriptures. In the Torah (*Shemot / Exodus 21:22-27 and Vayikra / Leviticus 24:18-20*) we read the expression "an eye for an eye" with the reference of compensation regarding a wrong done between two men. The expression "an eye for an eye" or "ayin tachat ayin" (עַיִן תַּחַת עַיִן) is the expression that list situations for which fines are imposed to compensate injury and that each and every injury must be compensated. A similar concept from the rabbis occurs with regard to sowing and reaping on the idea of rewards and that the Lord rewards "measure for measure" (מדה כנגד מדה, middah k'neged middah) even to the smallest detail. The rabbis say that "all measures of punishment and reward taken by the Holy One blessed be He, are in accordance to the principle of 'measure for measure'" (*Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 90a, Sota 8b, Midrash Rabba Genesis 9:11, 94:10, Exodus 1:18, 9:10, 10:6, Numbers 10:1-2, 14:6, and Song of songs 3:6, etc*). The *Talmud Bava Kamma, 83b-84a* explicitly discusses the nature of monetary compensation in tort cases and argues against the reinterpretation by the Sadducees that the Torah verses refer to physical retaliation in kind, using the argument that such an interpretation would be inapplicable to blind or eyeless offenders. Since the Torah requires that penalties be universally applicable, the phrase cannot be interpreted in this manner but must have a practical application, such as losing a hand or foot could be inflicted if the offender did not have any eyes. On the other hand, personal retribution is explicitly forbidden in the Torah in *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:18* ('You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.' *NASB*), therefore, the idea of reciprocal justice is strictly reserved for the social magistrate in the form of regional courts. We are told however by our Master Yeshua the Messiah that true sons of God care about their neighbors and for their enemies as well. Praying for our enemies however does not mean that we are to let them take advantage of us or walk all over us. There are times when we need to take a strong stance to oppose our enemies (*Matthew 21:12-13*). We should also never stop longing and working for justice, it is the Lord who takes vengeance. It is interesting to note that

David is seeking the Lord to take vengeance and he does not take vengeance himself. This can be seen the best in David's dealings with King Saul when he said again and again that he would not lay his hand upon God's anointed one. By both word and deed, Yeshua urges us to seek the Lord in prayer on behalf of our enemies to be reconciled before God and for salvation. The Holy Spirit empowers us to seek peace and reconciliation when possible and to leave everything else up to the Lord. The Lord will mete out revenge in His timing and in His way (*Romans 12:17-21*).

David continues saying **יֵא וְאַתָּה יְהוָה חַנּוּן וְהַקִּימְנִי וְאַשְׁלֶמְהָ לָהֶם: יב בְּזֹאת יִדְעֵתִי כִי-הִפְצַתָּ בִּי כִי לֹא- יִרְיַע אִיבִי עָלַי: 41:10 But You, O Lord, be gracious to me and raise me up, That I may repay them. 41:11 By this I know that You are pleased with me, Because my enemy does not shout in triumph over me.** Here we read David seeking the Lord to be gracious so that he (David) can repay “them.” It is interesting to know he says **יֵא וְאַתָּה יְהוָה חַנּוּן וְהַקִּימְנִי** “and you Lord are gracious to me,” **וְהַקִּימְנִי** “and you establish me / raise me up,” **וְאַשְׁלֶמְהָ לָהֶם** “and I will repay them.” Note he uses the root word שלם for peace, but he is not saying that he will להשלים “make peace” with them. He is saying that he will “repay” (שילם<<) as in “payment” or “reward.” Is David saying that he will take vengeance upon his enemy in this statement? What kind of reward is he referring to? If the Lord is gracious to him, would this also be an example of the need to be gracious to his enemy in a similar manner? There appears to be a principle there that is developing with regard to the mercy of God and forgiving our enemies. Take for example the case of a victim of abuse. Many times we are told to forgive the abuser and coupled with that many people require that the victim be reconciled with the abuser. In the case of abuse, like in the case of David's enemies, forgiveness does not always conclude with reconciliation.

David concludes saying **יג וְאֲנִי בְתַמִּי תִמְכַּתָּ בִּי וּתְצַיְבֵנִי לְפָנָיָהּ לְעוֹלָם: יד בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה | אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל 41:12 As for me, You uphold me in my integrity, And You set me in Your presence forever. 41:13 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, From everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen. (NASB)** In the Apostolic Writings, when Zechariah's son was born he was able to speak and he sung a song of praise to the Lord and he refers to *Tehillim / Psalms 41:13* in *Luke 1:68*.

Luke 1:68-69

1:68 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, 1:69 And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of David His servant (NASB)

The phrase **אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל | בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה** “*Baruch Adonai Elohei Yisrael*,” “*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel*,” may have been a common phrase or saying in the first century, but here in *Luke 1:68-69*, we read Zachariah saying “*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel*” and Luke then mentions the “*horn of salvation*” in the house of David God's servant. What is the meaning of the “*horn of salvation*?” Studying the Torah, in Parashat Terumah (*Shemot / Exodus 25:1-27:19*) we read about the construction of the altar for the Korban Sacrifice. **א וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים חֲמֵשׁ אַמּוֹת אַרְבֵּה וְחֲמֵשׁ אַמּוֹת רַחֵב רְבֹועַ יְהִי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ, 27:1-4** *Shemot / Exodus 27:1-4* **וְשָׁלַשׁ אַמּוֹת קָמָתוֹ: ב וְעָשִׂיתָ קַרְנֹתָיו עַל אַרְבַּע פְּנֵתָיו מִמָּנוֹ תְהִיֵּין קַרְנֹתָיו וְצִפִּיתָ אֹתוֹ נְחֹשֶׁת: ג וְעָשִׂיתָ סִירְתָיו לְדָשָׁנוֹ וְיָעִיו וּמִזְרָקָתָיו וּמִזְלָגָתָיו וּמַחְתָּתָיו לְכֹל-כְּלָיו תַעֲשֶׂה נְחֹשֶׁת: ד וְעָשִׂיתָ לוֹ מִכְבָּר מַעֲשֵׂה רֶשֶׁת נְחֹשֶׁת וְעָשִׂיתָ: 27:1** *‘And you shall make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide; the altar shall be square, and its height shall be three cubits. 27:2 ‘You shall make its horns on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it, and you shall overlay it with bronze. 27:3 ‘You shall make its pails for removing its ashes, and its shovels and its basins and its forks and its firepans; you shall make all its utensils of bronze. 27:4 ‘You shall make for it a grating of network of bronze, and on the net you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners. (NASB)* According to this Torah portion, the altar is constructed with horns on its four corners. In addition to this, the rams horn is used in the Jubilee year which is designed to set the captive / slave free. According to the Torah, Israel rested 1 day in 7 on the Shabbat (Sabbath Day, *Shemot / Exodus 20:8-11*), Israel and the land rested 1 year in 7 called the

Shabbat Year (*Shemot / Exodus 23:10-11 and Vayikra / Leviticus 25:1-7*), Israel and the land rested every 7 X 7 years (*Vayikra / Leviticus 25:8, Daniel 9:24-27*), Israel's economy was founded upon redemption and the Shabbat (*i.e. the kinsman redeemer, see Vayikra / Leviticus 25:25-55, and the book of Ruth*). If a person did not have a wealthy and loving relative to be redeemed by, then God redeemed a person on the Year of Jubilee. All Israelite slaves were freed, all debts were forgiven and every Israeli got their land back (*i.e. they returned to their inheritance*). The year of Jubilee was to be celebrated every 49 years and the year began on the same day as Yom Kippur (*Day of Atonement, Vayikra / Leviticus 25:8-9, 16:29, and Daniel 9:24-27*). When the Ram's horn sounded the people were freed, debts were forgiven and the people returned to their land (*Vayikra / Leviticus 25:13, 23-34, see also Isaiah 58*). Therefore, in the phrase "*the raising up a horn from the house of David,*" the Messiah is being referred to as a "*horn of salvation*" because he is a powerful Savior. Not only does a "*Horn*" denote power, in the sense that a beast uses the horn for defense to push his enemies down, we also understand the horn as a reference to being set free from bondage, being set free from slavery, and the bringing of the Korban before the Lord God Almighty in the Tabernacle. In Yeshua the Messiah, we are told He is the "*horn of our salvation,*" drawing into context the entirety of the Torah, freedom, forgiveness, mercy, and Sacrifice. What a wonderful salvation we have indeed! Let's Pray!

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 41* has 7 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1, 2, 4, and 7. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 41, Part 1, 2, 4, and 7*.

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 41, Part 1, 2, 4, and 7

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying "*Blessed is he that considers the poor (Tehillim / Psalms 41:1-2).*"
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihta) "*the homiletic introduction*" to the Midrash says "*These words are to be read in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere...*"
- The **משל** (mashal) "*the parable,*" goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihta), the rabbis go on to expand upon David's words using a parable regarding a king that attacked a small city and a wise man deliver the city from the hands of the king.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) "*expansion on the parable*" expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis say the parable is referring to the body.
- The Concluding phrase says "*Therefore, David said, because not all people heed the inclination to good, blessed is the man who does heed it. Hence, it is said, blessed is he that considers the poor.*"

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying "*Another comment on blessed is he that considers the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.*"
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihta) "*the homiletic introduction*" to the Midrash says "*These words are to be read in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, He that has pity upon the poor lends unto the Lord (Mishley / Proverbs 19:17).*"
- The **משל** (mashal) "*the parable,*" goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihta), the rabbis go on to explain that this refers to one who visits the sick.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) "*expansion on the parable*" expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis go on to describe what happens when one visits the sick, and there are parallels to the inclination to good

and evil.

- The Concluding phrase states “*As for the comment of the Rabbis, the next verse says, And You will not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.*”

Part 4

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*The Lord will deliver him in the day of evil.*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*A man knows no day of real evil other than the day of his death, the day of the soul’s going hence, on that day the Lord will deliver a man from the punishment of Gehenna.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis go on to describe the day of evil is the day of judgment, and speak of the “*sun of righteousness.*”
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis relate deliverance from the day of evil to one whose poverty forces him to fast and the soul that wants to leave or stay in the body because of affliction.
- The Concluding phrase says “*Hence Scripture reckons it as though you drew out your own soul and gave it to the hungry man.*”

Part 7

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*A wicked matter is poured in him (Tehillim / Psalms 41:9).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*They say of me, David is clever. He knows what he is doing.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss David’s enemies who believe David is keeping a wicked matter in his heart.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis go on to explain that this is not so and draw a parallel to the house of the Lord and what one does when in the presence of the Lord at the Tabernacle and when one leaves the Tabernacle.
- The Concluding phrase says “*David said, I do not take the things they do to heart, for I trust in You.*”

Midrash Tehillim 41, Part 1 opens with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*Blessed is he that considers the poor (Tehillim / Psalms 41:1-2).*” The homiletic introduction (Petihta, פתיחתא) states “*These words are to be read in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere...*” The rabbis go on to describe a parable to relate the blessing on the one who considers the poor.

There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet not all people considered that same poor man (Ecclesiastes 9:14-15). (Midrash Tehillim 41, Part 1)

עיר קטנה ואנשים בה מעט (קהלת ט יד), עיר קטנה, זה האדם, ואנשים בה מעט, אלו איברים.
ובא אליה מלך גדול (שם שם קהלת ט)

The question is how could a little city with few men overcome a great king? How did the poor wise man deliver the city with his wisdom? What does it mean that not all the people considered the same man poor? The answer to these questions, the midrash states that “*the little city is the human being, the few men within it are the organs in the body, and the great king is the yetzer hara*” (יצר הרע, evil inclination). The yetzer hara builds bulwarks against the body and sets great traps against it. The poor man is described as the

“yetzer ha'tov” (יצר טוב, good inclination), were by his wisdom delivered the city from the punishment of Gehenna. The yetzer ha'tov is called poor because few men heed its advice. In Judaism, yetzer hara is a reference to the inclination to do evil by violating the will of God. The term is developed from the phrase “the imagination of the heart of man is evil” which is found twice in the Hebrew Bible, at *Bereshit / Genesis 6:5 and 8:21*.

Bereshit / Genesis 6:5

6:5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (NASB, וַיִּרְא יְהוָה כִּי רַבָּה רָעַת, הַאָדָם בְּאָרְץ וְכָל-יֵצֵר מְחַשְׁבַת לְבוֹ רָק רַע כָּל-הַיּוֹם:

Bereshit / Genesis 8:21

8:21 The Lord smelled the soothing aroma; and the Lord said to Himself, 'I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. (NASB, כֹּא וַיִּרַח יְהוָה אֶת-רִיחַ, הַאָדָם לֵב הַאָדָם רַע הַנִּיחָח וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-לְבוֹ לֹא אֶסַּף לְקַלֵּל עוֹד אֶת-הָאָדָמָה בְּעֵבֹר הַאָדָם כִּי יֵצֵר לֵב הַאָדָם רַע (מִנְעַרְיוֹ וְלֹא-אֶסַּף עוֹד לְהַכּוֹת אֶת-כָּל-חַי בְּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי:

The yetzer hara is not a demonic force and should not be attributed to the demonic forces. It is understood to be man's misuse of the needs of the physical body. For example, the need to “eat” (food) turns into gluttony due to the yetzer hara and the need to “go forth and multiply” (procreation) becomes sexual immorality and abuse, etc. According to Judaism, humans are born with a yetzer hara, the physical needs that are used for selfishness and evil, and one does not acquire a yetzer ha'tov until a later age, the age of accountability which is 12 for girls and 13 for boys (see *Talmud Bavli Avot deRabbi Natan*). A person either indulges in the evil or good inclination, this is a matter of free choice. The distinction between the yetzer hara and the yetzer ha'tov is derived by the midrash to describe warring parties, where the yetzer hara is considered the greater power (a mighty king) as compared to the yetzer ha'tov (the poor wise man). Why is the yetzer hara considered such a great opponent (foe)? The yetzer hara is a very great opponent when one lives with a lack of self control. Take for example sexual sin. Unless a man learns sexual self control before marriage, he will incorrectly love a woman inside of marriage because all he will want to do is use her for his own self satisfaction. The thing about sin is the more you sin, the more you want. This is especially the case for sexual sin. Sexual sin is like a drug, it increases the desire for more while all at the same time being unsatisfying. The solution is to exercise self control and to manage your environment (i.e. *remove those things that lead one to sin sexually*). Regarding the yetzer hara, it is interesting to look at *Ephesians 2:1-5*.

Ephesians 2:1-5

2:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2:2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 2:3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 2:5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), (NASB)

¹Καὶ ὑμᾶς ὄντας νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ὑμῶν, ²ἐν αἷς ποτε περιεπατήσατε κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, κατὰ τὸν ἄρχοντα τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἀέρος, τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ νῦν ἐνεργοῦντος ἐν τοῖς υἱοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας: ³ἐν οἷς καὶ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἀνεστράφημέν ποτε ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῆς σαρκὸς ἡμῶν, ποιοῦντες τὰ θελήματα τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ τῶν διανοιῶν, καὶ ἤμεθα τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποί: ⁴ὁ δὲ θεὸς πλούσιος

ὄν ἐν ἐλέει, διὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἀγάπην αὐτοῦ ἦν ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς, ⁵καὶ ὄντας ἡμᾶς νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν συνεζωοποίησεν τῷ Χριστῷ χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι

Ephesians 2:3 reads *2:3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. (NASB)* The Greek word sarx (σαρκός, sarkos) is translated as “of the flesh” occurs 38 times in the Apostolic Writings according to the Englishman’s Concordance. Here in Ephesians the “lust of the flesh” is described as “indulging the desires of the flesh.” The word “nature” is from the Greek word phusei (φύσει) and is defined as “A mode of feeling and acting which by long habit has become nature” (*Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon*). The people Paul is speaking to at Ephesus were rejecting the knowledge of God’s word by living a morally debased life. Because of this Paul says they were “by nature the children of wrath.” These people were the children of wrath by reason of their wanton lifestyle. Their wanton living was not the result of their “nature.” Paul is illustrating the difference between the yetzer hara and the yetzer ha’tov and the people making the choice to live against the command of the Torah which is synonymous to living in the flesh, as compared to obeying God’s Torah which is synonymous to living according to the Spirit. Again, walking in the flesh is choosing to disobey the Torah, whereas walking in the Spirit is obeying God’s Torah. Midrash Tehillim 41, Part 1 concludes saying “Therefore, David said, because not all people heed the inclination to good, blessed is the man who does heed it. Hence, it is said, blessed is he that considers the poor.” (אמר דוד הואיל ולית עמא .ל .שמעין ליה, טוביה דשמע ליה, לכך נאמר אשרי משכיל אל דל. The midrash states that the yetzer ha’tov is poor because not everyone heeds the inclination to good. At times, the decision to choose between these two things is very difficult and sometimes almost next to impossible. The Scriptures say that the Lord God is rich in mercy because of His great love for us, that even though we were dead in our transgressions, He made us alive together in Christ (*Ephesians 2:4-5*). Because of His mercy, the Lord has given His Holy Spirit to convict us of sin in our lives and to empower us to be capable of overcoming. The issue though is if one neglects studying the Word of God, one is not properly feeding the Spirit and the difficulty in the choice remains and becomes even greater. Yeshua said that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak in *Matthew 26: 41*. In *Matthew 26*, the flesh wanted rest (to sleep) when it was a very important spiritual time (i.e. the nearing betrayal of Yeshua). The flesh is often associated with the natural as opposed to the Spirit. The scriptures make it plain that there is a distinction between the flesh and spirit. Hence, we read of the “desires of the flesh” and “the desires of the mind” (*Ephesians 2:3*). Note that Paul says in *Ephesians 2:2* “... you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.” (*NASB*) The course of this world is to sin. The spirit of the way of evil, the inclination to evil, the continual choice to walk on the path of scorners and wicked men (*Tehillim / Psalms 1:1*) is also paralleled to evil spirits described as the “prince and power of the air” according to Paul. As the children of the Most High God (Our Father in Heaven), we are told to walk in obedience if we love Him (Yeshua, *John 14:15*). There is a certain amount of responsibility on our part which includes making the right decisions in life, to choose life, truth, righteousness, and justice. We also need to choose to study God’s Word in order to feed our Spirit, and to grow closer to the Lord, so that we can enter into the fullness of what the Lord has for us in the Messiah Yeshua.

Midrash Tehillim 41, Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “Another comment on blessed is he that considers the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states “These words are to be read in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, He that has pity upon the poor lends unto the Lord (*Mishley / Proverbs 19:17*).” The rabbis quote from *Mishley / Proverbs 19:17* saying that the man who has pity upon the poor lends to the Lord.

Mishley / Proverbs 19:16-17

19:16 He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, But he who is careless of conduct will die. 19:17 One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, And He will repay him for his good deed. (NASB)

טז שִׁמֵר מִצְוָה שִׁמֵר נִפְשׁוֹ בַּזֵּה דְרָכָיו יִוְמַת [יָמוּת]: יז מִלֹּה יִהְיֶה חוֹנֵן דָּל וְגָמְלוֹ יִשְׁלֶם-לוֹ:

In *Mishley / Proverbs 19:17*, we see the word “dal” (דָּל) is used where previously we noted that this word has been translated as “poor” (43x), “needy” (2x), “weak” (2x), and “lean” (1x). How does one “lend” to the Lord when taking pity upon the needy, poor, or weak? This brings to mind the concept of “lending” and “borrowing” with regard to money. When we consider the poor, how are we lending to the Lord? Why is this considered lending to the Lord? What are we lending? In our world and culture, it is an acceptable practice to lend money and to borrow money. The Scriptures say in Parashat Ki Tetze (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 23:20*) how one is to lend money and where money is to be obtained.

Devarim / Deuteronomy 23:17-22

23:17 'None of the daughters of Israel shall be a cult prostitute, nor shall any of the sons of Israel be a cult prostitute. 23:18 'You shall not bring the hire of a harlot or the wages of a dog into the house of the Lord your God for any votive offering, for both of these are an abomination to the Lord your God. 23:19 'You shall not charge interest to your countrymen: interest on money, food, or anything that may be loaned at interest. 23:20 'You may charge interest to a foreigner; but to your countrymen you shall not charge interest, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all that you undertake in the land which you are about to enter to possess. 23:21 'When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay to pay it, for it would be sin in you, and the Lord your God will surely require it of you. 23:22 'However; if you refrain from vowing, it would not be sin in you. (NASB)

Based on *Devarim / Deuteronomy 23:17-22*, money is not to be taken from the wages of a prostitute, whether from the prostitute that works at the street corner or one who performs their service in a cult temple (*i.e. male shrine prostitutes in Baal worship, etc see 1 Kings 14:24*). When loaning money to a fellow countrymen, one is not to charge interest, however one may charge interest to a foreigner. Now in today's society, we consider debt a normal part of our lives and personal finances. Many people do not realize the Lord actually has had a lot to say about borrowing and lending in the Torah. Take Parashat Ki Tavo for example from *Devarim / Deuteronomy 28:8-14*.

Devarim / Deuteronomy 28:8-14

28:8 'The Lord will command the blessing upon you in your barns and in all that you put your hand to, and He will bless you in the land which the Lord your God gives you. 28:9 'The Lord will establish you as a holy people to Himself, as He swore to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in His ways. 28:10 'So all the peoples of the earth will see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will be afraid of you. 28:11 'The Lord will make you abound in prosperity, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your beast and in the produce of your ground, in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give you. 28:12 'The Lord will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. 28:13 'The Lord will make you the head and not the tail, and you only will be above, and you will not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, which I charge you today, to observe them carefully, 28:14 and do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them. (NASB)

The Lord tells us that we should not borrow, and the Lord tells the people the blessing He will send upon them for obeying His commands will result in their lending to many nations and not borrowing and in this the Lord will make them the head and not the tail. According to King Solomon in *Mishley / Proverbs 22:7*

he says 22:7 *The rich rules over the poor, And the borrower becomes the lender's slave. 22:8 He who sows iniquity will reap vanity, And the rod of his fury will perish. 22:9 He who is generous will be blessed, For he gives some of his food to the poor.* (NASB, ז עֲשִׂיר בְּרָשִׁים יִמְשׁוּל וְעֶבֶד לְזֶה לְאִישׁ מִלְּוֶה: ח זֹרַע עֲוֹלָה יִקְצֹר, (NASB, [יִקְצֹר]) אֲנֹן וְשִׁבֹּט עֲבָרְתוֹ יִכְלֶה: ט טוֹב-עֵינַי הוּא יִבְרָךְ כִּי-נָתַן מִלֶּחְמוֹ לְדָל: The reason the Lord commanded Israel not to borrow money is so they would not be slaves to the one whom they borrowed from. When one takes pity upon the needy, the weak, or the poor, this is a reference to helping the poor in one way or another. The fact that each breath that we take being alive is a gift from God and by helping someone we are giving back a portion of what the Lord has blessed us with. Solomon said in *Mishley / Proverbs 19:17* that 19:17 *One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, And He will repay him for his good deed.* (NASB) The midrash continues saying:

Rabbi Johanan said, He who visits a man in poor health removes 1/6th of his illness; and he who does not visit adds 1/6th to his illness. Rabbi Abin observed, If what Rabbi Johanan says is true, let sixty persons come to visit a man who is in very poor health and so rid him of his illness. According to Rabbi Eleazar, the verse alludes to one who buries the corpse of a poor unknown person. According to Rabbi Abba, the verse alludes to him who sees to it that his inclination to good has thorough knowledge of his inclination to evil. According to Rabbi Asi, the verse alludes to him who is consideration, and gives money to the poor. According to the Rabbis, the verse alludes to him who helps another flee from persecution by the kingdoms. What was Rabbi Abba's reason for saying that the verse alludes to a man who sees to it that his inclination to good has thorough knowledge of his inclination to evil? Because the verse blessed is he that considers the poor shows that a man is able to deliver the inclination to good from the inclination to evil. As for Rabbi Asi's comment, it is explained by the next verse, The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive. As for Rabbi Johanan's comment, the next verse says, The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of illness (Tehillim / Psalms 41:4). As for Rabbi Eleazar's comment, the next verse says, He will be blessed upon the earth (Tehillim / Psalms 41:3). As for the comment of the Rabbis, the next verse says, And You will not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. (Midrash Tehillim 41, Part 2)

רקבמ וניאש ימ לכו, מיששמ דחא וילוחמ ויריבעמ הלוחה תא רקבמ אוהש ימ לכ ונחוי יר רמא ינב ויתיש ערמ ביכש יבגל ווקסי ונחוי ירד הינימכ מא יבא יר רמא. מיששמ דחא וילח לע ויפסומ ישמ אוהש ימב הל רתפ אבא יר. הוצמ תמ רבוק אוהש ימב] הל רתפ רזעלא יר. היל ווקסיו אשנ הל ירתפ ונברו. ינעל הטורפ ותונו ליכשמ אוהש ימב [הל רתפ יסא יר. ערה רצי לע בוט רצי ליכ רמאנש, ערה רצי לע בוט רצי ליכשמ רמאד אבא ירד אמעט יאמ. תויכלמה נמ חירבמ אוהש ימב והיחיו והרמשי יה רמאנש, יסא ירד אמעט יאמו, ערה רצימ בוט רצי טלממש, לד לא ליכשמ ירשא קוספ א"מ מילהת) יוד שרע לע ונדעסי יה רמאנש, ונחוי ירד אמעט יאמו, (ג קוספ א"מ מילהת) רמאנש, ונברד אמעט המו, (ג קוספ א"מ מילהת) קראב רשואי רמאנש, רזעלא ירד אמעט יאמו, (ד א"מ מילהת מש) ויביוא שפנב והנתת לאו.

The midrash states that David's words refer to visiting the sick removes a part of their illness, or to one who buries a corpse of a poor unknown person, and the midrash draws a parallel to the inclination to good being made aware of his inclination to evil. Why do the rabbis say the inclination to good is not aware of the inclination to evil? Rabbi Asi says David's words allude to giving money to the poor, and others say this alludes to one who helps another person flee from persecution by the nations. Midrash Tehillim 41, Part 2 concludes saying "As for the comment of the Rabbis, the next verse says, And You will not deliver him unto the will of his enemies." This still bears the questions, when we consider the poor, how are we lending to the Lord; why is this considered lending to the Lord; and what are we lending? Yeshua said the following regarding lending and our Father in heaven.

Luke 6:30-36

6:30 'Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. 6:31 'Treat others the same way you want them to treat you. 6:32 'If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 6:33 'If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 6:34 'If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount. 6:35 'But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. 6:36 'Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (NASB)

The point that Yeshua makes regarding lending is that lending to the poor one does not expect to receive a return on what was given. In fact, it does not matter who you lend to, we should not expect to receive a return. Yeshua then raises the bar saying to love our enemies, to do good, and to lend not expecting anything and our reward will be great in heaven. Yeshua agrees with the rabbis and with *Mishley / Proverbs 19:17* and states that this is a form of mercy, and we are to be merciful just as our Father in heaven is merciful (*Luke 6:36*).

Midrash Tehillim 41, Part 4 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying "The Lord will deliver him in the day of evil." The homiletic introduction to the Midrash states "A man knows no day of real evil other than the day of his death, the day of the soul's going hence, on that day the Lord will deliver a man from the punishment of Gehenna." Note that in Parashat Nitzavim (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 29:9-30:20*) we read the following:

Devarim / Deuteronomy 30:12-16

30:11 'For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. 30:12 'It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' 30:13 'Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' 30:14 'But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it. 30:15 'See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; 30:16 in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. (NASB)

יא כִּי הַמְצִינָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם לֹא-נִפְלְאת הִוא מִמֶּךָ וְלֹא-רַחֲקָה הִוא: יב לֹא בַשָּׁמַיִם הִוא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲלֶה-לָנוּ הַשָּׁמַיִמָּה וַיִּקְחֶהָ לָנוּ וַיִּשְׁמְעֵנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנַעֲשֶׂנָּה: יג וְלֹא-מֵעֵבֶר לַיָּם הִוא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲבֹר-לָנוּ אֶל-עֵבֶר הַיָּם וַיִּקְחֶהָ לָנוּ וַיִּשְׁמְעֵנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנַעֲשֶׂנָּה: יד כִּי-קָרוֹב אֵלֶיךָ הַדָּבָר מְאֹד בְּפִיךָ וּבִלְבָבְךָ לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ: טו [שְׁבִיעִי וּמִפְטִיר] [רְבִיעִי כְשֶׁהֵן מִחוּבְרִינִן] טו רְאֵה נִתְּתִי לְפָנֶיךָ הַיּוֹם אֶת-הַחַיִּים וְאֶת-הַטּוֹב וְאֶת-הַמָּוֶת וְאֶת-הָרָע: טז אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְלַכֵּת בְּדַרְכָיו וְלִשְׁמֹר מִצְוֹתָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְחַיִּית וּרְבִית וּבִרְכָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-אַתָּה בָּא-שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ:

טו רְאֵה נִתְּתִי לְפָנֶיךָ הַיּוֹם אֶת-הַחַיִּים וְאֶת-הַטּוֹב וְאֶת- הַמָּוֶת וְאֶת-הָרָע: "See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity" where the NASB translates adversity the Hebrew text says "evil" (הָרָע). In the Torah we find a parallel being drawn to life and prosperity and death and evil. This is similar to the midrash that states "A man knows no day of

real evil other than the day of his death...” The midrash continues saying “*Another comment, The day of evil is the day of great judgment, the day of which it is written, behold the day comes, it burns as a furnace (Malachi 3:19). But what verse follows? But unto you that fear My name will the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings (Malachi 3:20). What is alluded to in the words sun of righteousness, and healing? The righteousness which you wrought for the poor will stand up and shine for you on the day of great judgment and give you healing.*” In Midrash Tehillim 41, Part 4, the rabbis are drawing a conclusion that the “righteous deed of considering the poor” is capable of delivering one from Gehenna (Hell). They say the righteous deed itself will stand up on the day of judgment and shine as the sun. It is fascinating according to *Matthew 13* Yeshua says something very similar.

Matthew 13:41-43

13:41 'The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, 13:42 and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 13:43 'Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. (NASB)

Note the context in which Yeshua is speaking, the Son of Man will send for His angels to gather His people and to remove all of those who are stumbling blocks and who commit lawlessness and these angels will throw them into the furnace of fire (Gehenna / Hell). Yeshua continues saying *13:43 'Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. (NASB)* This is a close parallel to the way the rabbis are describing the sun that will shine forth on behalf of the righteous. Is this a righteousness that God gives His people or a righteousness that is the result of doing good? Yeshua also says “*He who has ears, let him hear.*” What is the meaning of this Hebrew idiom? In order to understand the meaning of the phrase “*to have an ear*” we need to study the ancient Jewish education system.

In ancient times, one of the basic duties of the father and mother is to provide for the instruction of their children. At home their children would learn the Hebrew alef-bet and the parents would instruct their children in the prayers and a basic understanding of religious life. All of this is for the purpose of preparing their children (sons) for education in a formal school. The father’s obligation to teach his children is set forth in the first paragraph of “*Shema Yisrael,*” which states “*Take to heart these instructions with which I charge you this day. Impress them upon your children. Recite them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up. Bind them as sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead; inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and your gates.*” (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:6-9*). The book of Deuteronomy contains several references to the duty to provide education, for example in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:7* we read “*Remember the days of old, consider the years of ages past; ask your father, he will inform you, your elders, they will tell you.*” *Mishley / Proverbs* also has many verses that call for obedience and education within the family for example in *Mishley / Proverbs 3:1-2* we read “*My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your mind retain my commandments; For they will bestow on you length of days, years of life and well-being.*” At around the age of 5 or 6 years, compulsory attendance of elementary schools was required by Simeon ben Shetah as early as 75 B.C.E. and by Joshua ben Gamla in 64 C.E. The education of boys and adults occurred in a *beit sefer* and higher education occurred in the *beit ha-midrash* which has its origin in the Second Temple period. The importance of education is repeatedly stressed in the Talmud (see *Pirkei Avot*) “*children are to start school at the age of six,*” which interestingly is in accordance with present-day requirements throughout the world. We are told that “*they are not to be beaten with a stick or cane, but should receive only mild punishment; older students should help out in the education of those who are younger; and children should not be kept away from their lessons by other duties.*” The number of pupils in a class should not exceed 25; larger classes require the engagement of a relief teacher while two teachers have to be appointed if there are over 40 pupils. According to Judah ben Tema, “*At five years the age is reached for studying the Bible, at ten for studying the Mishnah, at thirteen for fulfilling the mitzvot, at fifteen for studying the Talmud.*” (*Mishnah Avot 5:21*).

Mishnah Avot 5:21

“At five years old [one is fit] for the Scripture, at ten years the Mishnah (oral Torah, interpretations) at thirteen for the fulfilling of the commandments, at fifteen the Talmud (making Rabbinic interpretations), at eighteen the bride-chamber, at twenty pursuing a vocation, at thirty for authority (able to teach others). At 5 or six, they go into House of writing (Bet Sefer) were they learn to read and memorize the Torah (first five books). Five years later they enter House of Learning (Bet Talmud) were they learn the oral tradition mostly the material made up in the Mishnah. Then, after coming of age the House of Interpretation (Bet Midrash) were they study and memorize the rest of the Bible and Talmud.”

According to the Mishnah, at five years old [one is fit] for the Scripture, at ten years the Mishnah (oral Torah, interpretations) at thirteen for the fulfilling of the commandments, at fifteen the Talmud (Rabbinic interpretations), at eighteen the bride-chamber, at twenty pursuing a vocation, at thirty one has authority of the able to teach others. Is it surprising Yeshua began his ministry at the age of 30? This process is important to understand, parents would begin the educational process of their children and they would go to the beit Sefer to learn the Torah and to memorize large portions of the Torah. Those who excel in their memorization and knowledge of the Torah would move on to further study. It is interesting to compare Yeshua’s life to this description. The Scriptures provide little information regarding his childhood but we know that he “grew in wisdom” as a boy (Luke 2:52) and that he reached the “fulfilling of the commandments” indicated by ones first Passover at age twelve (Luke 2:41). He then learned a trade because he was a carpenter (see Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3) and spent time with John the Baptist (see Luke 3:21 and John 3:22-26) and began his ministry at thirty years of age (see Luke 3:23). The description of Yeshua’s early life in the gospels closely parallels the description in the *Mishnah Avot 5:21* remarkably close. Schools were associated with the local synagogue. Children began their study at age 5-6 in a Beih Sefer (elementary school). Most scholars believe both boys and girls attended the class in the synagogue. The teaching focused primarily on the Torah, emphasizing both reading and writing Scripture. Large portions were memorized and it is likely that many students knew the entire Torah by memory by the time this level of education was finished. After this most students would remain at home and learn a family trade. It was at this point that a boy could participate in his first Passover in Jerusalem which is a ceremony that forms the background for today’s “bar mitzvah.” Note how Yeshua asked such excellent questions for the teachers in the Temple during this time indicating that he excelled in his Torah studies.

Luke 2:42-49

2:42 And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; 2:43 and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it, 2:44 but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day’s journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. 2:45 When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him. 2:46 Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. 2:47 And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. 2:48 When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, ‘Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You.’ 2:49 And He said to them, ‘Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s house?’ (NASB)

The best students continued their study (*while learning a trade at the same time*) in the Beit Midrash (secondary school) taught by a rabbi of the community. Here they (along with the adults in the town) studied the prophets and the writings (all of the Tanach) in addition to Torah and began to learn the interpretations of the Oral Torah (Mishnah) to learn how to make their own applications and interpretations of the Scriptures.

Memorization continued to be important because most people did not have their own copy of the Scripture so they either had to know it by heart or go to the synagogue to the scroll. In this time the oral Torah was only transmitted by memory. In addition to this, memory was enhanced by reciting aloud the Scriptures. Constant repetition was considered to be an essential element of learning. Remember Philip encounters an Ethiopian eunuch and his retinue. Note also that the book of Acts does not identify the eunuch as either a proselyte, a Gentile convert to Judaism, or a God-fearer, or a Gentile adherent to the Jewish monotheism. He presents him only as pious according to the Jewish faith.

Acts 8:26-40

8:26 But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, 'Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a desert road) 8:27 So he got up and went; and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, 8:28 and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. 8:29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go up and join this chariot.' 8:30 Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' 8:31 And he said, 'Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 8:32 Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: 'He was led as a sheep to slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He does not open His mouth. 8:33 'In humiliation His judgment was taken away; Who will relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth.' 8:34 The eunuch answered Philip and said, 'Please tell me of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?' 8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. 8:36 As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?' 8:37 [And Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'] 8:38 And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. 8:39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing. 8:40 But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities until he came to Caesarea. (NASB)

The interesting point is that this technique of oral recitation for memorization was also being adopted by the non-Jew who was involved in studying the Scriptures and the local schools and / or synagogues.

A few (very few) of the most outstanding Beit Midrash students sought permission to study with a famous rabbi often leaving home to travel with him for a lengthy period of time. These students were called talmidim, translated as disciple. It is important to note that there is more to a talmid than simply being a student. A student today wants to know what the teacher knows for the grade, to complete the class or the degree or even to do so out of respect for the teacher. A talmid on the other hand wants to be like the teacher and even to become what the teacher is. Therefore, the students were passionately devoted to their rabbi and noted everything he did or said. They walked the way He did in every aspect. The rabbi-talmid relationship was a very intense and personal system of education. Note how this is the relationship we are to have with Yeshua the Messiah! As a result of the rabbi-talmid relationship, when a student went to a rabbi and asked to be his talmid (Disciple) the rabbi would test him and ask him a series of questions to test his knowledge and understanding of the Torah and the prophets and the writings, in addition to the Mishnah and the Talmud. The rabbi would quickly discover whether the person was exceptional and worthy to be a talmid. As the rabbi lived and taught his understanding of the Scripture his students (talmidim) listened and watched and imitated him so as to become like him. Eventually they would become teachers passing on a similar lifestyle to their talmidim. In this process of oral testing, the rabbi would ask the student “do you have an ear to hear?” The meaning was “do you have understanding?” Do you know Torah, can you interpret the

Tanach, do you know Mishnah, do you know Talmud (the interpretations of the rabbis)? With this background information, can you imagine what it would have been like for a person who was not exceptional to be invited by a rabbi to follow him? When Yeshua went to each of his disciples, he said to them “follow me” and they immediately got up, left all that they had and followed him. This was an act of great honor to follow after a brilliant rabbi. They were given an opportunity to study at the feet of Yeshua the Messiah.

When Yeshua said in *Matthew 13:43* ‘Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. (NASB) He was speaking from the tradition of the rabbis regarding this interpretation on the righteous shining forth as the sun on the day of judgment like we are reading in Midrash Tehillim 41, Part 4.

“Another comment, The day of evil is the day of great judgment, the day of which it is written, behold the day comes, it burns as a furnace (Malachi 3:19). But what verse follows? But unto you that fear My name will the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings (Malachi 3:20). What is alluded to in the words sun of righteousness, and healing? The righteousness which you wrought for the poor will stand up and shine for you on the day of great judgment and give you healing.” (Midrash Tehillim 41, Part 4)

Note the parallels to Yeshua’s words. In *Matthew 13*, Yeshua speaks of a furnace, he speaks of the righteous, he speaks of the sun shining forth. Note also how in order to recognize these things, one must have the knowledge of Torah, of the Prophets, and of the Midrash (the teachings of the Rabbis) and Yeshua states “He who has ears, let him hear.” Today we hear a lot about the Torah and it’s application for our lives and the arguing between Christians and Messianics over what it means to obey the Torah. The question before us right now is “do you have an ear to hear?” Do you know Torah? Do you know the Prophets and the Writings? Do you know the Apostolic Writings? Do you understand the rabbinic literature or do you simply have “an opinion?” If you have not studied Torah for at least 5-10 years, don’t make the claim that you have the facts. Do you really have an ear to hear, to listen, or to understand? Can you see the significance and the need to study the history, the culture, and the people of the book (the Bible)?

Midrash Tehillim 41, Part 7 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “A wicked matter is poured in him (Tehillim / Psalms 41:9).” The homiletic introduction to the Midrash states “They say of me, David is clever. He knows what he is doing.” The entire Midrash states the following:

מדרש תהלים פרק מא סימן ז	Midrash Tehillim 41, Part 7
<p>ז דבר בליעל יצוק בו [ואשר שכב לא יוסיף לקום]. אומרים עלי פקח הוא דוד, יודע הוא מה שהוא עושה, בפני הבריות נראה כשוכב ואינו יכול לקום, אבל יכול הוא לעמוד על מטתו, לכך נאמר דבר בליעל וגו', אמרו לי מי אמר עליך דבר זה, שמא אדם נכרי הוא, אמרתי להם גם איש שלומי אשר בטחתי בו אוכל לחמי הגדיל עלי עקב, אפילו תלמידיי מגדילים עלי בעקב בסוף, כיצד כשנכנסין לבית המדרש נכנסין סין לפני כגדיים רכים, וכיון שהן יוצאין מלפני, נע- שין כתישים, ומנגחין בקרניהם, ואין לחם אלא דברי תורה, שנאמר לכו לחמו בלחמי (משלי ט ה), אמר דוד אני איני משים דבריהם בלבי, אלא אני בוטח בך.</p>	<p>7. A wicked matter is poured in him (Tehillim / Psalms 41:9). They say of me, David is clever. He knows what he is doing. To others, he pretends to be laid up and unable to rise, but in truth he can leave his bed. And so they say A wicked matter is poured in him. When I was asked, who said such a thing of you? Surely it was a stranger? I replied, indeed, my own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat of my bread, has lifted up his heel against me (Tehillim / Psalms 49:10). Even my disciples turned on me with kicks. How so? When they entered the house of study, they entered my presence gentle as kids; but when they left my presence, they became like goats goring with their horns. But bread, David meant words of Torah, as in the verse Wisdom, says, come and eat of my bread (Mishley / Proverbs 9:5). David said, I do not take the things they do to heart, for I trust in You.</p>

The wicked say that David is clever, he is pretending to be laid up and unable to rise but in truth he can leave his bed. What exactly is the midrash referring to in David’s life? The rabbis are saying that unrighteous men

believe that within David is *“A wicked matter is poured in him.”* The midrash states *“I replied, indeed, my own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat of my bread, has lifted up his heel against me (Tehillim / Psalms 49:10). Even my disciples turned on me with kicks.”* This is a reference to the history of David and Absalom and Ahithophel. In *Tehillim / Psalms 41:9* David speaks of *“mine own familiar friend.”* Ahithophel who was his trusted friend, whose advice had been as the oracles of God and who ate *“my bread,”* he had *“raised his heel”* against David. The rabbis make reference to a disciple (תלמיד) Talmid in the Beit HaMidrash (לביית המדרש) and it is interesting to note therefore that David is ascribed as having progressed to the Beit HaMidrash to having studied and memorized all of Torah, having a good working memory and knowledge of the Prophets. Note also that David and his son (Solomon) wrote the Writings in the Tanach. A talmid of David suggests that David is the rabbi teaching in the Beit HaMidrash. According to the midrash, David continues saying *“When they entered the house of study, they entered my presence gentle as kids; but when they left my presence, they became like goats goring with their horns.”* So his disciples would enter into the house of study gently, and in his presence would behave in kindness, but when leaving they would behave like goats goring with their horns. A drash on the goats may be obtained from Parashat Acharei Mot (*Vayikra / Leviticus 16:1-18:30*) we read about the Azazel (Scapegoat, *Vayikra / Leviticus 16:1-10*), the goat that carries the sins of Israel is lead out into the desert. In the Talmud Bavli Yoma 67b we read how the one who leads the scapegoat is unclean. In the comments on the scapegoat, we also read the rabbis discussing idolatry, immorality, bloodshed, robbery, and blasphemy. These men who entered into the Beit HaMidrash, left as goats goring with their horns suggest that though they studied at the highest level, there was wickedness in their hearts. Midrash Tehillim 41, Part 7 concludes stating *“But bread, David meant words of Torah, as in the verse Wisdom, says, come and eat of my bread (Mishley / Proverbs 9:5). David said, I do not take the things they do to heart, for I trust in You.”* The point of this midrash (Part 7) should cause us to examine our own ways. How much time have you spent studying, learning, or even memorizing Scripture? Has this time been spent for the purpose of drawing near to the Lord or for the pride of knowing things? Has this strengthened your spirit and your relationship with God? Or, has there been an opposite effect? Do you go into synagogue or church humble, meek, with gentleness, and come out as a goat goring with your horns, your loved ones, your neighbor, a stranger? God’s word can have a changing impact upon our lives, however, without truly seeking the Lord in His Messiah Yeshua, and asking for God’s Holy Spirit to make His word effective for that change, we will simply come and go as goats. Yeshua said the spirit is strong but the flesh is weak. Therefore, let’s pray asking the Lord to strengthen the spirit so we do not walk according to the flesh and dishonor God and His word, but ask to be like Yeshua to walk in his ways and to live humble lives! Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for helping us to understand Your word and for Your Salvation in Yeshua the Messiah. We glorify You and give You Praise because You have always kept Your promises! Truly You are worthy to be praised! Lord we ask that you would send the transforming power of Your Spirit into our lives. Help us to take these truths and apply them to our lives. We need Your help to live transformed lives. We need Your help to cause the Word to be effective for washing us from the inside out. We ask that You would empower us by Your Spirit to walk in Your ways and to follow Yeshua the Messiah. Help us to know Your ways in order to live spirit filled lives. Help us to walk and abide in Christ as the Scriptures say we are supposed to do. Thank You Lord for sending Your son Yeshua that we may enter into the salvation You have provided. Thank you Lord for these writings so that we can grow in our faith and know who we are in the Messiah Yeshua. Help us to grow by walking in the spirit and applying these truths to our lives. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

In Yeshua’s (Jesus’) Name we pray! Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever

Notes