

ספר תהילים נה | Tehillim / Psalms 55

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The Spirit checks what the heart desires

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 55:1-23*, the psalm opens saying, **א לְמַנְצֵחַ בְּנִגְיֹנֹת מְשָׁפִיל לְדָוִד:** *ב האזינה אלהים תפלתי ואל-תתעלם מתחנותי: ג הקשיבה לי וענני אריד בשיתי ואהימה: ד מקול אויב מפני עקת רשע פני-י-ימיטו עלי און ובארף ישטמוני: 55:1 Give ear to my prayer, O God; And do not hide Yourself from my supplication. 55:2 Give heed to me and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and am surely distracted, 55:3 Because of the voice of the enemy, Because of the pressure of the wicked; For they bring down trouble upon me And in anger they bear a grudge against me. (NASB)* He seeks the Lord to hear his prayer because he seeks a speedy answer due to the pressure of the enemy. David says that his heart is in anguish (55:4), he has been put in fear because of the enemy (55:5), he wishes that he had wings to fly away and be at rest (55:6), so that he could go to the wilderness (55:7) to be at rest. He asks the Lord to confuse the tongue of the wicked drawing a parallel to the Torah and Migdal Bavel (55:9). He says that day and night mischief is in their midst (55:10) which might be paralleled to the Lord being in the midst of the righteous. David says that it is not an enemy who reproaches him (55:12), who is it that is causing him such anguish? He appears to be speaking to someone who is an equal to himself (55:13), someone who walked in the house of God with him (55:14). There appears to be a certain level of deceit in this person, David calls for death and the grave (55:15), whereupon he will call upon the Lord God Almighty to save (55:16). David speaks of continually coming before the Lord to make his petition known (55:17) and believes the Lord will redeem his soul (55:18). He says, **כ 55:19 ישמע | אל ויענם וישב קדם סלה אשר אין חליפות למו ולא יראו אלהים:** *God will hear and answer them Even the one who sits enthroned from of old Selah. With whom there is no change, And who do not fear God. (NASB)* David concludes saying, **כא שלח נדיו בשלמיו חלל כריתו: כב חלקו | מחמאת פיו וקר-לבו רפו דבריו משמן והמה פתחות: כג השלף על-יהוה | יהבה והוא ככלף לא-יתן לעולם מוט לצדיק: כד ואתה אלהים | תורדם לבאר שחת אנשי דמים ומרמה לא-יחצו ימיהם ואני אכטח-בה: 55:20 He has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him; He has violated his covenant. 55:21 His speech was smoother than butter; But his heart was war; His words were softer than oil, Yet they were drawn swords. 55:22 Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken. 55:23 But You, O God, will bring them down to the pit of destruction; Men of bloodshed and deceit will not live out half their days. But I will trust in You. (NASB)** David describes a man of deceit, who pretended to be a man of peace but the true intent of his heart is revealed to be full of war and swords. David says the Lord will not allow the righteous to be shaken. I suspect this is pertaining to faith.

עברית Hebrew ארמאית Aramaic ελληνικός Greek

ספר תהלים פרק נה	ספר טוביה פרק נה	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 55
<p>א לְמַנְצֵחַ בְּנִגְיֹנֹת מְשָׁפִיל לְדָוִד: ב האזינה אלהים תפלתי ואל-תתעלם מתחנותי: ג הקשיבה לי וענני אריד בשיתי ואהימה: ד מקול אויב מפני עקת רשע פני-י-ימיטו עלי און ובארף ישטמוני:</p>	<p>א לשבחא על מילי תושבחתא שיכלא טבא על יד דוד: ב אצית אלהא לצלותי ולא תתכסי מן צלותי: ג אצית למימרי וקביל מיני אתרעם במילי וארגוש: ד מקל בעיל דבבא מן קדם עקת רשיעא ארום ארי ייגדון יעדון עלי שקרא וב-רוגזא ינטרן לדבבו לי בבו:</p>	<p>55:1 εις τὸ τέλος ἐν ὕμνοις συνέσεως τῷ Δαυιδ ἐνώτισαι ὁ θεὸς τὴν προσευχὴν μου καὶ μὴ ὑπερίδῃς τὴν δέησίν μου 55:2 πρόσχε μοι καὶ εἰσάκουσόν μου ἐλυπήθην ἐν τῇ ἀδολεσχείᾳ μου καὶ ἐταράχθην 55:3 ἀπὸ φωνῆς ἐχθροῦ καὶ ἀπὸ θλίψεως ἀμαρτωλοῦ ὅτι ἐξέκλιναν ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἀνομίαν καὶ ἐν ὀργῇ ἐνεκότου μοι</p>

<p>ה לְבִי יִחַיֵּל בְּקִרְבִי וְאֵימֹת מָוֶת נָפְלוּ עָלַי: ו יִרְאֶה וְרָעַד יָבֵא בִי וְתִכְסְּנִי פְלָצוֹת: ז וְאָמַר מִי-יִתֵּן-לִי אֶבֶר כַּיְהוֹנָה אֶעֱוֹפָה וְאֶשְׁכַּנָּה: ח הִנֵּה אֶרְחִיק נֶדָד אֶלֵּין בַּמְדָּבָר סְלֵה: ט אֶחְיֶשֶׁה מִפְּלֹט לִי מְרוּחַ סְעָה מִסַּעַר: י בִּלְעָד אֲדֹנָי פִּלַּג לְשׁוֹנָם כִּי-רָאִיתִי חֲמָס וְרִיב בְּעִיר: יא יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה יְסוּבְכֶה עַל-חֹמְתֶיהָ וְאָנוּן וְעַמְל בְּקֶרֶךְ רְבֵה: יב הַיּוֹת בְּקִרְבָּה וְלֹא-יִמְיֵשׁ מִרְחֻבָּה תִּהְיֶה וּמְרָמָה: יג כִּי לֹא-אוֹיֵב יִחְרַפְנִי וְאֶשָּׂא לֹא-מִשְׁנָאִי עָלַי הַגְּדִיל וְאֶסְתַּר מִמְּנוּ: יד וְאַתָּה אָנוּשׁ כְּעֶרֶךְ- כִּי אֶלּוּפִי וּמִיִּדְעִי: טו אֲשֶׁר יִחְדּוּ נַמְ- תִּיק סוּד בְּבֵית אֱלֹהִים נְהַלֵּךְ בְּרַגְשׁ: טז יִשְׁמְעוּ [יִשְׂאֵי מָוֶת] עֲלִימוּ יָרְדוּ שְׂאוֹל חַיִּים כִּי-רַעוֹת בְּמַגּוּרָם בְּקִרְבָּם: יז אֲנִי אֶל-אֱלֹהִים אֶקְרָא וַיִּהְיֶה יוֹשִׁיעֵנִי: יח עֲרַב וּבִקֵּר וְצַהֵר רַיִם אֶשְׁיַחֶה וְאֶקְהַמֶּה וַיִּשְׁמַע קוֹלִי: יט פָּדָה בְּשָׁלוֹם נַפְשִׁי מִקְּרַב-לִי כִּי-בְרַבִּים הָיוּ עֲמָדִי: כ יִשְׁמַע אֵל וַיַּעֲנֵם וַיֵּשֶׁב קֶדֶם סְלֵה אֲשֶׁר אֵין חֲלִיפּוֹת לָמוּ וְלֹא יִרְאוּ אֱלֹהִים: כא שְׁלַח יָדְיוֹ בְּשִׁלְמוֹ חֲלַל בְּרִיתוֹ: כב חֲלָקוּ מִחֲמָאֵת פִּיּוֹ וּקְרַב-לְבָבוֹ כג דְּבָרָיו מִשְׁמָן וְהִמָּה פְתַחוֹת: כד הַשְׁלֵךְ עַל-יְהוָה יִקְבֹּד וְהוּא יְכַלְכֵּל לֵךְ לֹא-יִתֵּן לְעוֹלָם מוֹט לְצַדִּיק: כה וְאַתָּה אֱלֹהִים תוֹרְדֵם לְבָאֵר שַׁחַת אֲנָשֵׁי דָמִים וּמְרָמָה לֹא-יִחְצֹו יְמֵיהֶם וְאֲנִי אֶבְטַח-בָּךְ:</p>	<p>ה לבי ירתית בגווי ודחלתא דמותא נפלו עלי: ו דחלתא ורתיתא אתיין לי וכפי יתי תברא: ז ואמרית מן יתן לי כנפא גדפא היך יונתא אטוס ואשרי: ח הא ארחיק אתר למינדד אבית במ- דברא לעלמין: ט ארחיש שזבותא לי מן זעפא נטלא מעלעולא: י סלעם יהוה עצתהון פלג לישנהון ארום חמית חטוף ומצו בקרתא: יא יימם ולילי יחזרונה עלוי שוראה ולאות וליעות ושקר במצ- עה: יב איתרגושיא במיצעה ולא עדי מן פלטייתה שקר ונכילו: יג ארום לא בעיל דבבא יקל יתי ואסובר לא מסנאי עלוי אתרברב ואטמר מן קדמוי: יד ואנת אחיתופל גברא בר נש דדמי לי רב דאלפת לי ומהודע חוכמתא לי יתי: טו די כחדא נתריץ רזא בבית מקדשא דאלהא נהלך בסרהוביאי: טז יחייבונן דין קטול ויגזור עלהון בישן לדואג ואחי- תופל יחתון לשיוול כד הינון אינון חיון ארום בישן במדוריהון בגופיהון: יז אנא קדם אלהא אצלי ומימרא דיהוה יפרוק יתי: יח ברמשא ובצפרא ובטיהרא אצלי וארגיש ושמע קלי: יט פרק בשלם נפשי דלא למקרב ביש לי לותי ארום בסגיען עקן הוה מימריה בסעדי: כ ישמע יש- תמע קדם אל ויקבל מנהון ויתיב שמיא מלקדמין לעלמין ורשיעי דלא מלקדמין דלא מהשנין אורחתהון בישאי ולא דחלו מן קדם אלהא: כא אושיט ידוי באנשי שלמיה אפס קיימיה: כב שעיען יתיר מן שמן דגובנין מילי פומיה והיך זייני קרבא לביה לבביה רכיכן מילוי יתיר מן משח דפוטמין ואינון והינון מורניין דקטול: כג טלוק דוד על יהוה סיברך והוא יזן יתך לא יתן לעלמא חוסרנא לצדיקיא: כד ואנת אלהא במימרך תוחית יתהון לגהנם עמיקא גברי מרי קטול ונכילו לא יחמון פלגות יומיהון ואנא אתרחיץ במימרך:</p>	<p>55:4 ἡ καρδία μου ἐταράχθη ἐν ἐμοί καὶ δειλία θανάτου ἐπέπεσεν ἐπ' ἐμέ 55:5 φόβος καὶ τρόμος ἦλθεν ἐπ' ἐμέ καὶ ἐκάλυψέν με σκότος 55:6 καὶ εἶπα τίς δώσει μοι πτέρυγας ὥσει περιστερᾶς καὶ πετασθήσομαι καὶ καταπαύσω 55:7 ἰδοὺ ἐμάκρυνα φυγαδεύων καὶ ἠϋλίστην ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ διάναγμα 55:8 προσεδεχόμενην τὸν σφύζοντά με ἀπὸ ὀλιγοψυχίας καὶ καταιγίδος 55:9 καταπόντισσον κύριε καὶ καταδιέλε τὰς γλώσσας αὐτῶν ὅτι εἶδον ἀνομίαν καὶ ἀντιλογίαν ἐν τῇ πόλει 55:10 ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς κυκλώσει αὐτὴν ἐπὶ τὰ τεῖχη αὐτῆς ἀνομία καὶ κόπος ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῆς καὶ ἀδικία 55:11 καὶ οὐκ ἐξέλειπεν ἐκ τῶν πλατειῶν αὐτῆς τόκος καὶ δόλος 55:12 ὅτι εἰ ἐχθρὸς ὠνεῖδισέν με ὑπήνεγκα ἄν καὶ εἰ ὁ μισῶν με ἐπ' ἐμέ ἐμεγαλορρημόνησεν ἐκρύβην ἄν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ 55:13 σὺ δέ ἄνθρωπε ἰσόψυχε ἡγεμών μου καὶ γνωστέ μου 55:14 ὃς ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ μοι ἐγλύκανας ἐδέσματα ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπορεύθημεν ἐν ὁμονοίᾳ 55:15 ἐλθέτω θάνατος ἐπ' αὐτούς καὶ καταβήτωσαν εἰς ᾄδου ζῶντες ὅτι πονηρίαὶ ἐν ταῖς παροικίαις αὐτῶν ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν 55:16 ἐγὼ δὲ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐκέκραξα καὶ ὁ κύριος εἰσήκουσέν μου 55:17 ἐσπέρας καὶ πρωὶ καὶ μεσημβρίας διηγῆσομαι ἀπαγγελῶ καὶ εἰσακούσεται τῆς φωνῆς μου 55:18 λυτρώσεται ἐν εἰρήνῃ τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἀπὸ τῶν ἐγγιζόντων μοι ὅτι ἐν πολλοῖς ἦσαν σὺν ἐμοί 55:19 εἰσακούσεται ὁ θεὸς καὶ ταπεινώσει αὐτούς ὁ ὑπάρχων πρὸ τῶν αἰῶνων διάναγμα οὐ γάρ ἐστιν αὐτοῖς ἀντάλλαγμα καὶ οὐκ ἐφοβήθησαν τὸν θεόν 55:20 ἐξέτεινεν τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ ἀποδιδόναι ἐβεβήλωσαν τὴν διαθήκην αὐτοῦ 55:21 διεμερίσθησαν ἀπὸ ὀργῆς τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ καὶ ἠγγισεν ἡ καρδία αὐτοῦ ἠπαλύνθησαν οἱ λόγοι αὐτοῦ ὑπὲρ ἔλαιον καὶ αὐτοὶ εἰσιν βολίδες 55:22 ἐπίρριψον ἐπὶ κύριον τὴν μέριμνά σου καὶ αὐτὸς σε διαθρέψει οὐ δώσει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα σάλον τῷ δικαίῳ 55:23 σὺ δέ ὁ θεὸς κατάξεις αὐτούς εἰς φρέαρ διαφθορᾶς ἄνδρες αἱμάτων καὶ δολιότητος οὐ μὴ ἡμισεύσωσιν τὰς ἡμέρας αὐτῶν ἐγὼ δὲ ἐλπῶ ἐπὶ σέ κύριε</p>
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<p>Tehillim / Psalms 55 For the choir director; on stringed instruments. A Maskil of David. 55:1 Give ear to my prayer, O God; And do not hide Yourself from my supplication. 55:2 Give heed to me and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and am surely distracted, 55:3 Because of the voice of the enemy, Because of the pressure of the wicked; For they bring down trouble upon me And in anger they bear a grudge against me. 55:4 My heart is in anguish within me, And the terrors of death have fallen upon me. 55:5 Fear and trembling come upon me, And horror has overwhelmed me. 55:6 I said, ‘Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. 55:7 ‘Behold, I would wander far away, I would lodge in the wilderness. Selah. 55:8 ‘I would hasten to my place of refuge From the stormy wind and tempest.’ 55:9 Confuse, O Lord, divide their tongues, For I have seen violence and strife in the city. 55:10 Day and night they go around her upon her walls, And iniquity and mischief are in her midst. 55:11 Destruction is in her midst; Oppression and deceit do not depart from her streets. 55:12 For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, Then I could bear it; Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, Then I could hide myself from him. 55:13 But it is you, a man my equal, My companion and my familiar friend; (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 55 55:1 For praise, with the words of a hymn; good teaching composed by David. 55:2 Hear, O God, my prayer, and do not hide yourself from my prayer. 55:3 Hear my utterance, and accept it from me; I will roar out in my words and be agitated. 55:4 From the voice of the enemy, from the trouble of the wicked, for they extend lies against me, and in anger they will hold a grudge towards me. 55:5 My heart will tremble within me, and the terrors of death have fallen upon me. 55:6 Fear and trembling come to me, and disaster has covered me. 55:7 And I said, “Who will give to me wings like a dove, [that] I may fly and come to rest?” 55:8 Behold, I would go to a far place to wander, I would lodge in the wilderness forever. 55:9 I would make hasten to me rescue from the tempest, shelter from the storm. 55:10 Destroy, O Lord, their counsel, divide their tongue, for I have seen violence and strife in the city. 55:11 Day and night they encircle it, around her walls, and misery and lies are in her midst. 55:12 Tumult is in her midst, and lies and deceit do not depart from her squares. 55:13 For an enemy will not belittle me, else I would bear it; my foe has not vaunted himself against me, else I would hide from his presence. (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 55 For the end, among Hymns of instruction by David. 55:1 Hearken, O God, to my prayer; and disregard not my supplication. 55:2 Attend to me, and hearken to me: I was grieved in my meditation, and troubled; 55:3 because of the voice of the enemy, and because of the oppression of the sinner: for they brought iniquity against me, and were wrathfully angry with me. 55:4 My heart was troubled within me; and the fear of death fell upon me. 55:5 Fear and trembling came upon me, and darkness covered me. 55:6 And I said, O that I had wings as those of a dove! then would I flee away, and be at rest. 55:7 Lo! I have fled afar off, and lodged in the wilderness. Pause. 55:8 I waited for him that should deliver me from distress of spirit and tempest. 55:9 Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues: for I have seen iniquity and gain saying in the city. 55:10 Day and night he shall go round about it upon its walls: iniquity and sorrow and unrighteousness are in the midst of it; 55:11 and usury and craft have not failed from its streets. 55:12 For if an enemy had reproached me, I would have endured it; and if one who hated me had spoken vauntingly against me, I would have hid myself from him. 55:13 But thou, O man like minded, my guide, and my acquaintance, (LXX)</p>
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<p>Tehillim / Psalms 55 55:14 We who had sweet fellowship together Walked in the house of God in the throng. 55:15 Let death come deceitfully upon them; Let them go down alive to Sheol, For evil is in their dwelling, in their midst. 55:16 As for me, I shall call upon God, And the Lord will save me. 55:17 Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur, And He will hear my voice. 55:18 He will redeem my soul in peace from the battle which is against me, For they are many who strive with me. 55:19 God will hear and answer them Even the one who sits enthroned from of old Selah. With whom there is no change, And who do not fear God. 55:20 He has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him; He has violated his covenant. 55:21 His speech was smoother than butter, But his heart was war; His words were softer than oil, Yet they were drawn swords. 55:22 Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken. 55:23 But You, O God, will bring them down to the pit of destruction; Men of bloodshed and deceit will not live out half their days. But I will trust in You. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 55 55:14 But you, O Achitophel, a man who is like me; a leader who taught me, and who tells me wisdom. 55:15 For together we will explain mysteries in the sanctuary of God, we will walk in haste. 55:16 He will condemn them to the judgement of death, and he will decree for them evil things, for Doeg and Achitophel; they will descend to Sheol while alive, for evil things are in their dwellings, in their bodies. 55:17 I will pray in the presence of God, and the word of the Lord will redeem me. 55:18 In the evening, and in the morning, and at noon I will pray, and I will tremble; and he heard my voice. 55:19 He redeemed my soul in peace, so that no evil came near to me, for his word was my help in many troubles. 55:20 God will hear and receive from them [their prayer], and the one who dwells in heaven from of old forever; but the wicked who are not from of old, who do not change their ways, are evil, and are not afraid in the presence of God. 55:21 He stretched out his hands against the men of his peace; he desecrated his covenant. 55:22 Smoother than oil of curds are the words of his mouth; and like weapons of war his heart. Softer are his words than tallow, but they are deadly lances. 55:23 Cast your confidence on the Lord, and he will feed you; he will never allow privation to the righteous. 55:24 But you, O God, by your word will bring them down to deep Gehenna; murderous and deceitful men will not see half of their days; but I will trust in your word. (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 55 55:14 who in companionship with me sweetened our food: we walked in the house of God in concord. 55:15 Let death come upon them, and let them go down alive into Hades, for iniquity is in their dwellings, in the midst of them. 55:16 I cried to God, and the Lord hearkened to me. 55:17 Evening, and morning, and at noon I will declare and make known my wants: and he shall hear my voice. 55:18 He shall deliver my soul in peace from them that draw nigh to me: for they were with me in many cases. 55:19 God shall hear, and bring them low, even he that has existed from eternity. Pause. For they suffer no reverse, and therefore they have not feared God. 55:20 He has reached forth his hand for retribution; they have profaned his covenant. 55:21 They were scattered at the anger of his countenance, and his heart drew nigh them. His words were smoother than oil, yet are they darts. 55:22 Cast thy care upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. 55:23 But thou, O God, shalt bring them down to the pit of destruction; bloody and crafty men shall not live out half their days; but I will hope in thee, O Lord. (LXX)</p>
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This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 55:1-23*, the psalm opens saying, א לְמִנְצֵחַ בְּנִגְיֹת מִשְׁפִּיל וְדָוִד : For the choir director; on stringed instruments. A Maskil of David. (NASB) Here we find the opening verse saying literally, for the choir director, playing music (בְּנִגְיֹת) of the wisdom of David. David opens his psalm saying, הַאֲזִינָה אֱלֹהִים תְּפִלָּתִי וְאַל-תְּהַעֲלֵם מִתְּחִנָּתִי : 55:1 Give ear to my prayer, O God; And do not hide Yourself from my supplication. (NASB) David literally says "the ear of God my prayer" (הַאֲזִינָה אֱלֹהִים תְּפִלָּתִי). Does God literally have ears? If we think about this for a moment, this is a very good question that has application to many doctrines found within the Scriptures that require a "literal translation." One such doctrine is that of the Eucharist and transubstantiation (e.g. *John 6*) in the RCC. Thinking on this topic of whether God has an ear to listen with, this causes us to go back to the Torah, the first few chapters in the To-

rah, the creation account, and the anthropomorphisms that we find which describe the Lord during the creation process. Anthropomorphisms (*from Greek ἄνθρωπος (anthrōpos) = man/human + μορφή (morphē) = form*) are figures of speech which represent God as having human characteristics, form or personality. They are symbolic descriptions, which are designed to help make God's attributes, powers and activities real to us. For example, In *Bereshit / Genesis 1-8* we find the following:

- God speaking (*Bereshit / Genesis 1:3*). Does this mean that God has vocal cords?
- God seeing (*Bereshit / Genesis 1:4*). Does God have eyes with pupils and retinas?
- God walking (*Bereshit / Genesis 3:8*). Does God have legs?
- God making clothes for Adam and Eve (*Bereshit / Genesis 3:21*). Does God have hands?
- God smelling a sweet savor from Noah's sacrifice (*Bereshit / Genesis 8:21*). Does God have a nose and olfactory receptors?

The point is whether we should insist these descriptions are literal or not? Does the fact that God is Spirit, and does not necessarily have body parts undermine the meaning of these Scriptures, as David is asking the Lord to give His ear to listen to his prayer? In order to understand what is taking place, we must first consider the intention of the author. In the Torah, the author is Moshe, and according to the Scriptures Moshe's purpose was to tell us what God did in the creation account in a way that we can understand, while at the same time not making or drawing an image of God so as to violate the command against graven images. Moshe does this, in the examples above, by portraying God's actions in terms of their human counterparts; namely voice, sight, companionship, work and satisfaction. In the example of God speaking the creation into existence (e.g. "And God said, Let there be light," on Day 1, with a similar form of words on each of Days 2 to 6), the Lord was expressing His will that the creation events happened. He chose to do this by way of commands which expressed and illuminated the fact that it was at His Word (at His command) that creation came into being, and not, for example, as the result of random processes. The repeated phrase "and it was so" reveals to us that there was an immediate fulfillment of each creation command. In addition to this, we are also given God's objective assessment, "and God saw that it was good," before each day closed. This speaks contrary to the idea of long-age/progressive creation and theistic evolutionary theories. It is also obviously more emphatic than if the record had merely stated simply, "And it was good." The addition of the words "God saw" suggest a careful assessment by a competent authority, who brings down a reliable verdict. Moshe's intention in describing God's activity in this way is clear. In chapters 2 and 3, the Torah tells us about God's interaction with Adam and then with Eve. The Lord God walks in the garden in the cool of the day, He has personal conversation with Adam, and then has an interview with Adam and Eve following their sin (disobedience) against His command. In the Torah, God gives us a record of events and details which actually occurred. The events described are not allegories, or theological poetry composed many centuries later, but historically true and accurate. Moshe's purpose was to record these historical events and details. In doing this he uses, where appropriate, figures of speech about God, as though He were a man (anthropomorphisms), which help us understand better what he means to convey. It is clear that Moshe's use of anthropomorphisms in Genesis is no obstacle to taking the account to be what the author so obviously intended to convey, a historical account of creation. It is also in this way that David describes the Lord asking Him to "give ear" (הִשְׁמַעֲנִי) and to hear his prayer. He qualifies this clause saying, וְאַל-תִּתְעַלֵּם מִתְּהַלְּתִי And do not hide Yourself from my supplication. (NASB) David is asking the Lord to hear, to listen to his plea for help.

He continues saying, **ג** הקשיבה לי וְעַנֵּנִי אָרִיד בְּשִׁחִי וְאֶהְיֶמָה: ד מְקוֹל אוֹיֵב מִפְּנֵי עֶקֶת רָשָׁע כִּי-יִמְיִטוּ, *55:2 Give heed to me and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and am surely distracted, 55:3 Because of the voice of the enemy, Because of the pressure of the wicked; For they bring down trouble upon me And in anger they bear a grudge against me. (NASB)* He seeks the Lord to hear his prayer because he seeks a speedy answer due to the pressure of the enemy. The Aramaic Targum states, **ג** אצית למימרי וקביל מיני אתרעם במילי וארגוש: ד מקל בעיל דבבא מן קדם עקת רשיעא ארום ארי ייגדון: *55:3 Hear my utterance, and accept it from me; I will roar out in my words and be agitated. 55:4 From the voice of the enemy, from the trouble of the wicked, for they extend lies against me, and in anger they will hold a grudge towards me. (EMC)* The Septuagint states, *55:2 πρόσχες μοι καὶ εἰσάκουσόν μου ἐλυπήθην ἐν τῇ ἀδολεσχίᾳ μου καὶ ἐταράχθην 55:3 ἀπὸ φωνῆς ἐχθροῦ καὶ ἀπὸ θλίψεως ἀμαρτωλοῦ ὅτι ἐξέκλιναν ἐπ’ ἐμὲ ἀνομίαν καὶ ἐν ὀργῇ ἐνεκότουσ μοι 55:2 Attend to me, and hearken to me: I was grieved in my meditation, and troubled; 55:3 because of the voice of the enemy, and because of the oppression of the sinner: for they brought iniquity against me, and were wrathfully angry with me. (LXX)* The Aramaic translation states the voice of the enemy is extending lies against David and holding a grudge against him. The Septuagint states that the enemy brings iniquity and anger against him. David continues saying the following:

Masoretic Text

Tehillim / Psalms 55:4-8

55:4 My heart is in anguish within me, And the terrors of death have fallen upon me. 55:5 Fear and trembling come upon me, And horror has overwhelmed me. 55:6 I said, ‘Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. 55:7 ‘Behold, I would wander far away, I would lodge in the wilderness. Selah. 55:8 ‘I would hasten to my place of refuge From the stormy wind and tempest.’ (NASB)

ה לְבִי יַחֲזִיל בְּקִרְבִּי וְאֵימֹת מָוֶת נָפְלוּ עָלַי: ו יִרְאֶה וְרָעַד יְבֹא בִי וְתַכְסֵּנִי פְלִצוֹת: ז וְאָמַר מִי-יִתֵּן-לִי אֶבֶר כִּי־יִנָּחֵ אֶעֱוֹפָה וְאֶשְׁכֵּנָה: ח הֲיֵנָה אֲרַחֵיק נָדָד אֶלְיוֹן בְּמַדְבַּר סְלָה: ט אֶחֱיִשָּׂה מִפְּלֹט לִי מִרוּחַ סַעָה מִסַּעַר:

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 55:5-9

55:5 My heart will tremble within me, and the terrors of death have fallen upon me. 55:6 Fear and trembling come to me, and disaster has covered me. 55:7 And I said, “Who will give to me wings like a dove, [that] I may fly and come to rest?” 55:8 Behold, I would go to a far place to wander; I would lodge in the wilderness forever. 55:9 I would make hasten to me rescue from the tempest, shelter from the storm. (EMC)

ה לְבִי יִרְתִּית בְּגוּוֹי וְדַחֲלַת דְּמוֹת נִפְלוּ עָלַי: ו דַּחֲלַת וְרַתִּיתָ אֲתִיִּן לִי וְחָפִי יִתִּי תְּבָרָא: ז וְאֲמַרִּית מִן יִתֵּן לִי כִנְפַי גְּדַפָּא הֵיךְ יוֹנָתָא אֲטוֹס וְאֲשֵׁרִי: ח הָא אֲרַחֵיק אֲתָר לְמִינַנְדָּא אֲבִית בְּמַדְבְּרָא לְעַלְמִין: ט אֲרַחֵישׁ שְׁזוּבוֹתָא לִי מִן זַעְפָּא נְטֹלָא מְעַלְעוּלָא:

Septuagint

Psalmoi / Psalms 55:4-8

55:4 My heart was troubled within me; and the fear of death fell upon me. 55:5 Fear and trembling came upon me, and darkness covered me. 55:6 And I said, O that I had wings as those of a dove! then would I flee away, and be at rest. 55:7 Lo! I have fled afar off, and lodged in the wilderness. Pause. 55:8 I waited for him that should deliver me from distress of spirit and tempest. (LXX)

55:4 ἡ καρδία μου ἐταράχθη ἐν ἐμοί καὶ δειλία θανάτου ἐπέπεσεν ἐπ’ ἐμέ 55:5 φόβος καὶ τρόμος ἦλθεν ἐπ’ ἐμέ καὶ ἐκάλυψέν με σκότος 55:6 καὶ εἶπα τίς δώσει μοι πτέρυγας ὥσει περιστερᾶς καὶ πετασθήσομαι καὶ καταπαύσω 55:7 ἰδοὺ ἐμάκρυνα φυγαδεύων καὶ ἠὲ λίσσθην ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ διάψαλμα 55:8 προσεδεχόμεν τὸν σῶζόντά με ἀπὸ ὀλιγοψυχίας καὶ καταϊγίδος

David calls upon the imagery of the dove, that if he had wings like a dove, he would fly to a place where he can find rest. Remember from a previous study that the Babylonian Talmud and Midrash Rabbah liken the hovering of God’s spirit in *Bereshit / Genesis 1:2* to the hovering of a dove. In addition to this, the same “*hovering*” language is used to describe God’s spirit in the Dead Sea Scrolls as well as the Apostolic Writings. These are not the only allusions to a dove in the Hebrew Bible. The best-known example comes from Parashat Noach (*Bereshit / Genesis 6-9*), where in *Bereshit / Genesis 8:8-12*, after the ark has landed on the mountains of Ararat, Noah sends out a dove three times to see how far the flood waters have receded. The first time the dove found nothing and returned to the ark. The second time it brought back an olive leaf, so Noah could see that God’s punishment was over and life had begun again on the earth. Note that the image of a dove holding an olive branch continues to be a symbol of peace to this day. The third time, the dove did not return, and Noah knew that it was safe to leave the ark. The dove imagery is also utilized in several of the prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible. For example, the low, cooing sound of a dove served as mournful imagery to evoke the suffering of the people of Judah (see *Isaiah 38:14, 59:11 and Ezekiel 7:16*). Doves were more than just a soundtrack for a people who had fallen away from God; they were also an instrument of atonement. Several passages of the Torah (especially in *Vayikra / Leviticus*) we find the requirement of the sacrifice of two doves (or young pigeons) either as a guilt offering or to purify oneself after a period of ritual impurity (including the birth of a child). By the time of Yeshua, the dove was already rich with symbolism and many interpretations, such as being a representation of Israel, atoning sacrifice, suffering, a sign from God, fertility and the Holy Spirit of God, etc. All these meanings and more were incorporated into the Christian use of dove iconography that we find today. The most familiar dove imagery from the Apostolic Writings is recounted in all four of the Gospels at the baptism of Yeshua by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. After Yeshua came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit of God came from heaven and descended on him “*like a dove*” (see *Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22, and John 1:32*). The baptism story built upon the pre-existing symbol of the dove as God’s spirit and thus firmly established it as the representation of the Holy Spirit, especially in later artistic depictions of the Trinity. It is also interesting to note that the cross gained prominence in the fourth century as representing the Christian faith. This conclusion comes based on the writings from the second-century Clement of Alexandria urging early Christians to use the dove or a fish as a symbol to identify themselves and each other as followers of Yeshua rather than the cross. Archaeologists have recovered oil lamps and Eucharistic vessels in the shape of doves from Christian churches throughout the Holy Land. When David says, *55:6 I said, ‘Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. (NASB)*, the idea of the dove representing peace may be what David is thinking upon with regard to the enemy and being able to escape by wings like a dove to a place of refuge.

David continues saying, י בלע אֲדָנִי פִלַּג לְשׁוֹנָם כִּי-רְאִיתִי חָמָס וְרִיב בְּעִיר: יא יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה יִסּוּבְּהָ עַל-חֹמֹתֶיהָ וְאָוֶן וְעָמָל בְּקִרְבָּהּ: יב הַיּוֹת בְּקִרְבָּהּ וְלֹא-יִמְיֵשׁ מִרְחֻבָּהּ תָּהּ וּמִרְמָהּ: יג כִּי לֹא-אוֹיֵב יִחַרְפְּנִי וְאֲשָׂא 55:9 Confuse, O Lord, divide their tongues, For I have seen violence and strife in the city. 55:10 Day and night they go around her upon her walls, And iniquity and mischief are in her midst. 55:11 Destruction is in her midst; Oppression and deceit do not depart from her streets. 55:12 For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, Then I could bear it; Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, Then I could hide myself from him. 55:13 But it is you, a man my equal, My companion and my familiar friend; (NASB) It is interesting how David calls upon the dove imagery just prior to *Tehillim / Psalms 55:9* when he seeks the Lord to confuse their tongues (language). This would be consistent with the Torah narrative, following Noah leaving the ark, man did not disperse across the earth but stayed at Migdal Bavel and the Lord confused their language. The interesting point of confusing language was to decrease the amount of sin amongst the people. By the peoples

lost of the ability to communicate, they did not understand each other and the city dispersed. Together as a unified whole they were filled with sin. As individuals, the amount (or greatness) of their sin was significantly decreased. Could it be that David was reading through the Torah portions while writing this psalm? Certainly his request for the Lord to confuse the language of his enemy was for the purpose of decreasing their sins, their violence, and strife in the city (55:9). David says day and night they go around upon their walls, iniquity and mischief are in her midst. Note how a man has the ability to put up walls in his own life for protection. The concept of iniquity and mischief being in the midst is in contrast to those who are in a covenant relationship with the Lord and the Lord Himself is dwelling in our midst. The putting up a wall, going around upon the wall, appears to be related to sin in the sense of keeping sin within, the wall protects and keeps sins inward where by consequence, keeping sin inwardly keeps God outward or away.

י סלעם יהוה עצתהון פלג לישנהון ארום חמית חטוף ומצו בקרתא: יא יימם, The Aramaic Targum states, ולילי יחזרונה עלוי שוראה ולאות וליעות ושקר במצעה: יב איתרגושיא במיצעה ולא עדי מן פלטיותה שקר ונכילו: יג ארום לא בעיל דבבא יקל יתי ואסובר לא מסנאי עלוי אתרברב ואטמר מן קדמוי: יד ואנת אחיתופל 55:10 Destroy, O Lord, their counsel, divide their tongue, for I have seen violence and strife in the city. 55:11 Day and night they encircle it, around her walls, and misery and lies are in her midst. 55:12 Tumult is in her midst, and lies and deceit do not depart from her squares. 55:13 For an enemy will not belittle me, else I would bear it; my foe has not vaunted himself against me, else I would hide from his presence. 55:14 But you, O Achitophel, a man who is like me; a leader who taught me, and who tells me wisdom. (EMC) Notice how the rabbis bring us back to Absalom and Achitophel in the translation from David's words of a man David's equal, a companion and familiar friend. Achitophel espoused the cause of Absalom according to 2 Samuel 15:12. According to the Scriptures, David sent his old friend Hushai back to Absalom, in order that he might counteract the counsel of Achitophel (2 Sam. 15:31-37). Achitophel, seeing that his good advice against David had not been followed due to Hushai's influence, correctly predicted that the revolt would fail. He left the camp of Absalom at once, returned to Giloh, his native place, and after arranging his worldly affairs, hanged himself, and was buried in the sepulcher of his fathers (2 Sam. 17:1-23). The Septuagint parallels the Masoretic text saying, יג כִּי לֹא- 5:13 But thou, O man like minded, my guide, and my acquaintance, (LXX) David mentions that, יג כִּי לֹא- 55:12 For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, Then I could bear it; Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, Then I could hide myself from him. (NASB) He says that his enemy is not one from whom he is able to hide himself. The Masoretic Text states, 55:14 who in companionship with me sweetened our food: we walked in the house of God in concord. (NASB) where David says בְּרִגְשׁ, beragesh, meaning "soulfully" where the English translation renders "in concord." The Septuagint, however, renders it, εν ομονοια, meaning "in concord, consort, or union, or with consent," saying that David walked with this man as one in the house of God (בְּבֵית אֱלֹהִים), 55:14 ὃς ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό μοι ἐγλύκανα εἰς ἐδέσματα ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπορεύθημεν ἐν ὁμονοίᾳ 55:14 who in companionship with me sweetened our food: we walked in the house of God in concord. (LXX)

David continues saying the following in His Psalm:

Masoretic Text

Tehillim / Psalms 55:15-18

55:15 Let death come deceitfully upon them; Let them go down alive to Sheol, For evil is in their dwelling, in their midst. 55:16 As for me, I shall call upon God, And the Lord will save me. 55:17 Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur, And He will hear my voice. 55:18 He will redeem my soul in peace from the battle which is against me, For they are many who strive with me. (NASB)

טז יְשִׁימֹת | [יְשִׂיא מְוֹת] | עֲלִימוּ יִרְדּוּ שְׂאוֹל חַיִּים כִּי-רָעוֹת בְּמַגֹּרֶם בְּקִרְבָּם: יז אֲנִי אֶל-אֲלֹהִים
אֶקְרָא וַיהוָה יִשְׁמָעֵנִי: יח עָרַב וּבִקֵּר וְצָהָרִים אֲשִׁיחָה וְאֶהְמָה וַיִּשְׁמַע קוֹלִי: יט פָּדָה בְּשָׁלוֹם נַפְשִׁי
מִקְרָב-לִי כִי-בְרָבִים הָיוּ עִמָּדִי:

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 55:5-9

55:16 *He will condemn them to the judgment of death, and he will decree for them evil things, for Doeg and Achitophel; they will descend to Sheol while alive, for evil things are in their dwellings, in their bodies. 55:17 I will pray in the presence of God, and the word of the Lord will redeem me. 55:18 In the evening, and in the morning, and at noon I will pray, and I will tremble; and he heard my voice. 55:19 He redeemed my soul in peace, so that no evil came near to me, for his word was my help in many troubles. (EMC)*

טז יחייבנין דין קטול ויגזור עלהון בישן לדואג ואחיתופל יחתון לשיוול כד הינון אינון חיינ ארום
בישן במדוריהון בגופיהון: יז אנא קדם אלהא אצלי ומימרא דיהוה יפרוק יתי: יח ברמשא וב-
צפרא ובטיהרא אצלי וארגיש ושמע קלי: יט פרק בשלם נפשי דלא למקרב ביש לי לותי ארום
בסגיען עקן הוה מימריה בסעדי:

Septuagint

Psalmoi / Psalms 55:15-18

55:15 *Let death come upon them, and let them go down alive into Hades, for iniquity is in their dwellings, in the midst of them. 55:16 I cried to God, and the Lord hearkened to me. 55:17 Evening, and morning, and at noon I will declare and make known my wants: and he shall hear my voice. 55:18 He shall deliver my soul in peace from them that draw nigh to me: for they were with me in many cases. (LXX)*

55:15 ἐλθέτω θάνατος ἐπ' αὐτούς καὶ καταβήτωσαν εἰς ἄδου ζῶντες ὅτι πονηρίαὶ ἐν ταῖς
παροικίαις αὐτῶν ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν 55:16 ἐγὼ δὲ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐκέκραξα καὶ ὁ κύριος
εἰσήκουσέν μου 55:17 ἐσπέρας καὶ πρωὶ καὶ μεσημβρίας διηγῆσομαι ἀπαγγελῶ καὶ
εἰσακούσεται τῆς φωνῆς μου 55:18 λυτρώσεται ἐν εἰρήνῃ τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἀπὸ τῶν ἐγγιζόντων
μοι ὅτι ἐν πολλοῖς ἦσαν σὺν ἐμοί

David seeks justice for God's people, he asks the Lord to allow death to come upon the wicked without their knowledge and to let them go down to the grave alive. This is an obvious reference to Parashat Korach where the house of Korach, Datan, and Aviram all went down to the grave alive because of their sins, the ground opened up and swallowed them alive. The Aramaic Targum translates this as | [יְשִׁימֹת] | [יְשִׂיא מְוֹת] | עֲלִימוּ יִרְדּוּ שְׂאוֹל חַיִּים כִּי-רָעוֹת בְּמַגֹּרֶם בְּקִרְבָּם *He will condemn them to the judgment of death, and he will decree for them evil things, for Doeg and Achitophel; they will descend to Sheol while alive, for evil things are in their dwellings, in their bodies.* The body is described as a dwelling place for evil things. Doeg and Achitophel are described as men whose bodies housed evil and for this reason they will descend to the grave while alive. The descending may not be an immediate process or event, this may be a gradual and life long process, the point is that the unrighteous, the wicked do not recognize their descent to death because their lives are filled with death and sin.

On the other hand, David seeks the Lord to save him, and says that both Evening and morning he will complain and murmur and the Lord will hear his voice. Does the Lord want a complaining heart? Would this be considered a form of disobedience? The Aramaic Targum states 55:18 *In the evening, and in the*

morning, and at noon I will pray, and I will tremble; and he heard my voice. (EMC) translating David's complaint and murmuring as prayer in the presence of God. The Masoretic text uses the verb Qal Imperfect 1st person common singular word אָשִׁיחָה "to put forth, mediate, muse, commune, speak" however the NASB English translation states he "complained." David speaks of continually coming before the Lord to make his petition known (55:17) and believes the Lord will redeem his soul (55:18) David's continually coming before the Lord sounds like a parable Yeshua taught regarding the Widow and the Unjust Judge in Luke 18:1-5.

Luke 18:1-5

Then Yeshua told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'" (NASB)

In this parable, Yeshua taught that we are to continually pray and not give up. The Lord God Almighty Himself is the arbiter of all justice; He is the source of justice and He brings justice to everyone. Yeshua is the mediator between us and God. David believed this saying 55:18 *He will redeem my soul in peace from the battle which is against me, For they are many who strive with me. (NASB)* He says, כ יִשְׁמַע | אֵל וְיַעֲנֵם, 55:19 *God will hear and answer them Even the one who sits enthroned from of old Selah. With whom there is no change, And who do not fear God. (NASB)*

David concludes saying, כ א אוֹשִׁיט יְדוֹ בְּאֲנָשֵׁי שְׁלֵמִיָּה אֶפֶס קִיּוּמִיָּה: כ ב חֲלָקוֹ | מִחֲמָאֵת פִּיּוֹ וּקְרַב-לְבָבוֹ רַכּוֹ דְּבָרָיו, 55:20 *He has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him; He has violated his covenant. 55:21 His speech was smoother than butter, But his heart was war; His words were softer than oil, Yet they were drawn swords. 55:22 Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken. 55:23 But You, O God, will bring them down to the pit of destruction; Men of bloodshed and deceit will not live out half their days.*

But I will trust in You. (NASB) The Aramaic Targum states, כ א אוֹשִׁיט יְדוֹ בְּאֲנָשֵׁי שְׁלֵמִיָּה אֶפֶס קִיּוּמִיָּה: כ ב חֲלָקוֹ | מִחֲמָאֵת פִּיּוֹ וּקְרַב-לְבָבוֹ רַכּוֹ דְּבָרָיו, 55:20 *He has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him; He has violated his covenant. 55:21 His speech was smoother than butter, But his heart was war; His words were softer than oil, Yet they were drawn swords. 55:22 Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken. 55:23 But You, O God, will bring them down to the pit of destruction; Men of bloodshed and deceit will not live out half their days.* *But I will trust in You. (EMC)* According to *Tehillim / Psalms 55:21* a man desecrates the covenant of God by the words of his lips and by what is in his heart. Is it possible to desecrate the covenant of God by what is in our hearts? David describes a man of deceit, who pretended to be a man of peace but the true intent of his heart is revealed to be full of war and swords. According to the Scriptures, the Torah states "if you keep My commandments, I will walk among you and be your God." Joshua instructed the people according to *Joshua 1:8* "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. (NASB) The Scriptures here are instructing us to keep God's Words close to our hearts. The concept here is "we are what we set out minds upon we will do." What is it that you set your mind upon each

day? Consider the following questions.

- Are you critical of others?
- Do you mope because you do not receive the praise you feel you deserve?
- How much time do you spend worrying about this or that?
- How much time do you spend grumbling or complaining or feeling sorry for your self?
- How much time do you spend thinking about the TV shows you watched last night?
- How much time do you re-live the bad things people do to you?
- Do you list out all your misfortunes?
- Do you allow yourself to be angry for long periods of time?
- Do you think about bad things happening to the people you are angry with?
- Do you think about bad things happening to yourself?
- Do you rejoice in the misfortunes of others?
- Do you dwell on lustful and impure thoughts?
- Do you glory in the important position you hold in church?
- Do you review reasons why you are better than others or better suited than others?
- Do you list reasons why others you know are deficient in some way as compared to yourself?

We are what we spend our time thinking about. If we have evil, deceit, and unrighteousness in our hearts, these things will come forth into our lives. This is the meaning of David's words that such a person is deceitful, he has violated the covenant of God because of what he has kept in his heart. The real person is shown by what he does which comes from the heart or what one meditates upon. In addition to that, the things that we allow our hearts to dwell upon today is building what we will be for tomorrow and the day after that, etc. The Lord desires that we set our hearts upon Him and His Word. This is what David meant when he said *55:22 Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken. 55:23 But You, O God, will bring them down to the pit of destruction; Men of bloodshed and deceit will not live out half their days. But I will trust in You. (NASB)* The burden can be any one of those things listed above. Our worries, or the things others have done to hurt us. Many times the reason we dwell upon these things listed above, is because we want justice, but we are seeking to find justice by our own hand and not by the hand of the Lord. Seek the Lord and allow Him to do the rest.

Another example from in the Apostolic Writings, the Pharisees are presented as a case of hypocrisy. The point though was their hypocrisy was not so obvious that they themselves noticed. They spent their time on the minutia of the Law making sure that they obeyed the letter of the Law perfectly. From the outside, it appeared that they were keeping God's word perfectly and were therefore righteous men. In spite of all their work, they were dismissed as being filled with greed, self-indulgence, hypocrisy and wickedness. It could be that they looked down upon others by taking pride in their observance of the Torah. With that kind of perspective, there would always be a little bit of hypocrisy since the heart tends to go back and forth with the Spirit checking the heart continually. The Spirit checks what the heart desires, then it is our choice to be obedient to the Word and the calling of the Spirit to righteousness. What a shock this accusation must have been to the Pharisees. Don't get caught being shocked either. The point of these Scriptures is that we need to become consciously aware of what we spend our time meditating upon. We need to make a detailed account of what we think about and based on biblical principles decide whether it is good or bad. When you catch yourself meditating on something undesirable, renounce it and cast it away. Following that mental action, choose then to replace the thought with a good one, such as a prayer, a memorized scripture or song. Do not be discouraged if you find yourself thinking about the same thing only a minute or two later. Simply recognize sin as sin, turn from it again and choose to replace the thought with something of value. Yeshua

took an extreme view of the fight against sin when he said in *Matthew 5:29-30*, “If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.” Some days you will win and some days you will find failure, the point is not to give up and to continually seek the Lord’s help for deliverance. David says the Lord will not allow the righteous to be shaken. I suspect this is pertaining to faith and perseverance. Let’s Pray!

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 55* has 6 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Let’s begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 55, Part 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6*.

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 55, Part 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*Evening and morning and at noonday, will I pray (Tehillim / Psalms 55:18).*”
- The **פתיחה** (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Rabbi Samuel taught, From this verse we learn that a man is required to pray three times daily.*”
- The **משל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the **פתיחה** (Petihta), the rabbis go on to discuss these words on prayer providing examples from the patriarchs.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the topic of prayer.
- The Concluding phrase says “*David said, Since the Patriarchs instituted the three daily prayers, I too, will meditate evening, morning, and at noonday.*”

Part 3

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*He has delivered my soul in peace so that none came near to me (Tehillim / Psalms 55:10).*”
- The **פתיחה** (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*Rabbi Joshua son of Levi taught, What do the words, He has delivered my soul in peace, etc. mean?*”
- The **משל** (mashal) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*the parable,*” goes on to discuss the one who delivers the soul and what that means.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the one who delivers the soul using examples of angels and demons.
- The Concluding phrase says “*Accordingly, He has delivered my soul in peace, and the words which follow, so that none came near to me mean that David said, None of the demons came near me. And why not? Because in the multitudes they were with me, the multitudes of angels who were charged to keep David, as is said, For He will give His angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways (Tehillim / Psalms 91:11).*”

Part 4

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*Another comment on He has delivered my soul in peace so that none came near me (Tehillim / Psalms 55:19).*”

- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*What is meant by the words so that none came near me?*”
- The משל (mashal) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*the parable,*” goes on to say these words refer to Daniel and his friends who endured the lions den and the fiery furnace.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand on this bringing in a discussion on Jacob, Leah, Rachael, and Esau.
- The Concluding phrase says “*Another comment on He has delivered my soul in peace so that none came near me. The counsel of Ahithophel did not come near me. Why not? Because in multitudes they were with me, the multitudes were the members of the Sanhedrin who put together prayers for me.*”

Part 5

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*Such as have no changes (Tehillim / Psalms 55:20).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*These words allude to Ahithophel and his band in whose hearts the inclination to evil underwent no change.*”
- The משל (mashal) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*the parable,*” goes on to compare these words to those who fear God.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the comparison with a discussion on Ahithophel.
- The Concluding phrase says “*When David saw that every one was with Ahithophel, and that every one heeded him, he was afraid. Accordingly, the Holy One blessed be He, said to David, Be not afraid. Tough every man is with Ahithophel, I am with you.*”

Part 6

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain you (Tehillim / Psalms 55:33).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*A mortal has a patron and goes to him the first time, and the patron receives him;*”
- The משל (mashal) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*the parable,*” goes on to compare these words to a man who goes to another and the man does not receive him.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the comparison saying that the Lord receives when one comes to Him with their burdens.
- The Concluding phrase says “*But You, O God, will bring them down into the nethermost pit (Tehillim / Psalms 55:24), into Gehenna; men of blood and deceit, Ahithophel and his band, will not live out half their days; but I will trust in You.*”

Midrash Tehillim 55, Part 2 opens with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*Evening and morning and at noonday, will I pray (Tehillim / Psalms 55:18).*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Rabbi Samuel taught, From this verse we learn that a man is required to pray three times daily.*” The Where does the concept of praying three times a day come from? The entire midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק נה סימן ב</p> <p>ב ערב ובקר וצהרים אשיחה. אמר ר' שמואל מיכן שאדם צריך להתפלל שלש תפלות ביום, ומי תקן אותם, אבות העולם תיקנום, אברהם תקן תפלת שחרית, שנאמר וישכם אברהם בבקר אל המקום אשר עמד שם את פני ה' (בראשית יט כז), ואין עמידה אלא תפלה, שנאמר ויעמוד פינחס ויפלל (תהלים קו ל). יצחק תקן תפלת מנחה, שנאמר ויצא יצחק לשוח בשדה לפנות ערב (בראשית כד סג), ואין שיחה אלא תפלה, שנאמר תפלה לעני כי יעטוף ולפני ה' ישפוך שיחו (תהלים קב א). יעקב תקן תפלת ערבית, שנאמר ויפגע במקום (בראשית כח יא), ואין פגיעה אלא תפלה, שנאמר ואתה אל תתפלל בעד העם הזה ואל תשא בעדם רנה ותפלה ואל תפגע בי (ירמיה ז טז). אמר דוד הואיל ואבות תקנום, אף אני ערב ובקר וצהרים אשיחה.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 55, Part 2</p> <p>2. Evening and morning and at noonday, will I pray (Tehillim / Psalms 55:18). Rabbi Samuel taught, From this verse we learn that a man is required to pray three times daily. And who instituted the three prayers? The patriarchs instituted them, Abraham instituted the morning prayers, for it is said Abraham got up early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord (Bereshit / Genesis 19:27); here stood clearly alludes to prayer, as in the verse, Then stood up Phinehas, and prayed (Tehillim / Psalms 106:30). Isaac instituted the noonday prayer, for it is said, Isaac went out to mediate in the field at the eventide (Bereshit / Genesis 24:63); here meditate clearly alludes to prayer, as in the verse, A prayer of the afflicted, when he faints, and pours out his meditation before the Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 102:1). Jacob instituted the evening prayer, for it is said, Jacob made intercession at the place, and tarried there all night (Bereshit / Genesis 28:11); and made intercession clearly alludes to prayer, as in the verse, Therefore, pray not you for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me (Jeremiah 7:16). David said, Since the Patriarchs instituted the three daily prayers, I too, will meditate evening, morning, and at noonday.</p>
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The Oral Law (Mishnah) makes it our duty to pray three times daily which consists of (i) the morning, (ii) the afternoon, and (iii) at nightfall. These prayers are called morning prayer (shacharit), afternoon prayer (minchah) and evening prayer (arvit or maariv). Note also that model prayers for the morning, afternoon, and evening maybe found in the Siddur. Based upon the midrash, the Sages tell us that the custom of praying three times a day was originally introduced by the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Abraham introduced prayer in the morning, Isaac in the afternoon, and Jacob added one in the evening. In Judaism, the Chabad has a philosophy regarding the three prayer services (www.chabad.org). Chabad is an acronym for Chochmah, Binah, Da'at (meaning *wisdom, understanding and knowledge*); and is the name of a chasidic movement that is based upon the concept of studying and understanding God and His relationship with the world. The Chabad movement was founded by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi in White Russia (*former Soviet republic in eastern Europe that gained independence in 1991*) in the latter part of the 18th century. This movement is also known as Lubavitch, or Chabad-Lubavitch. The Chabad philosophy on prayer and the three Patriarchs that is particularly interesting is the way in which each of these Patriarchs introduced the prayer service to the Lord. Abraham served the Lord in love; Isaac in awe; and Jacob in mercy. It is important to notice how each Patriarch adds a quality to that the other lacks. For example, Abraham distinguished himself in the quality of kindness (חסד) and love (אהבה), while Isaac excelled in the quality of justice (דין) and reverence or the fear of the Lord (יראה), and Jacob inherited both these qualities, bringing out a new quality which combined the first two into the quality of truth (אמת) and mercy (רחמים). This seems almost like a kabbalistic approach to the development of the prayer service.

As the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we have inherited all these things which the Patriarchs demonstrated for us as our example. In addition to this, the Lord enables us to serve Him, to pray to Him in the name of His Son Yeshua the Messiah, to love Him, and to fear Him in reverence of His name, and to have mercy and forgiveness towards others. In addition to these things, When the Torah was given on the Mountain of Sinai, our way of life before God was established. Torah means “teaching, instruction, guidance,” and it is for this reason that we take God’s Law as a guide for our lives. This is very similar to what the Apostle James wrote in *James 1:25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and*

abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does. (NASB) History tells us that during the first one thousand years, or so, since the time of Moses, there was no set order for prayer. We know according to history, for example from the book titled “*Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim*,” 2 volumes. Moore, George Foote. Hendrickson Publishers. ©1977. 1266p the rabbinic schools did not begin until following the return from exile to Babylon and the rebuilding of the Second Temple. Before this time, each individual was duty-bound to pray to the Lord every day, but the form of prayer and how many times a day to pray was left to the individual. Here in *Tehillim / Psalms 55:17 Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur, And He will hear my voice. (NASB)* we read of David saying that one is to pray morning, noon, and evening. Midrash Tehillim 55, Part 2 concludes saying, “*David said, Since the Patriarchs instituted the three daily prayers, I too, will meditate evening, morning, and at noontide.*” The rabbis teach that David was saying the Patriarchs instituted the three daily prayers. According to the apostle Paul, he said in *1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

5:16 Rejoice always; 5:17 pray without ceasing; 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. (NASB)

There are differences in the types and style of prayer comparing what Paul is saying verses the prayer service according to the midrash. Setting aside time to pray, as we find described in the Psalm and in Judaism, reveals to us the need to pray three times a day. The frequency of prayer that Paul is describing appears to be more of a state of mind. Take for example Nehemiah:

Nehemiah 2:1-4

2:1 And it came about in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, that wine was before him, and I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence. 2:2 So the king said to me, ‘Why is your face sad though you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of heart.’ Then I was very much afraid. 2:3 I said to the king, ‘Let the king live forever. Why should my face not be sad when the city, the place of my fathers’ tombs, lies desolate and its gates have been consumed by fire?’ 2:4 Then the king said to me, ‘What would you request?’ So I prayed to the God of heaven. (NASB)

Nehemiah was standing before the king, and in his mind, he made his request to the God of heaven in prayer. The apostle Paul may be speaking of being joyful and praying without ceasing in this manner. Paul describes a state of continual communication with the Lord in prayer about all things. Whereas, appointing three times in which we can properly prostrate ourselves before God, order our thoughts, and specifically go before the Lord formally is also a very important part of our relationship with the Lord. This practice (approach) to prayer has taken place from antiquity, from ancient of times. With these things in mind, the practice of formally praying three times a day appears to be something we should take seriously. The Patriarchs demonstrated the need to pray, the rabbis derive the minimum amount that one needs to take time out during the day to pray from the Patriarchs. The midrash states “*Rabbi Samuel taught, From this verse we learn that a man is required to pray three times daily.*” What is the difference between the words “*need to*” verses “*required to?*” Does the Lord “*require*” us to pray three times a day? Does the Lord “*Expect*” us to pray three times a day? Is Paul’s approach what the Lord wants from us? If we consider the marriage covenant, and communicating with our spouses, we know there is a time and place for formality, while there is also a place for informal communication.

Midrash Tehillim 55, Part 3 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתהיל) saying “*He has delivered my soul in peace so that none came near to me (Tehillim / Psalms 55:10).*” The homiletic introduction to the Midrash states, “*Rabbi Joshua son of Levi taught, What do the words, He has delivered my soul in peace, etc. mean?*” It is interesting, *Tehillim / Psalms 55:10-11* does not mention the soul being delivered in peace

in either the MT or the Aramaic Targum. What exactly are the rabbis trying to say here? The midrash continues saying the following:

That a company of angels goes before a man, and these heavenly beings cry out saying, Make way for the likeness of the Lord. What need is there for a company of angels? Rabbi Yudan explained in the name of rabbi Levi, in the wide space of the universe there is no place, even one so small that it holds no more than a fourth of a kab of seed, that is without nine kab of demons. (Midrash Tehillim 55, Part 3)

אלא איקונייא מהלכת לפני האדם והבריות מכריזות ואומרות תנו מקום לאיקונין של מקום, למה
אמר ר' יודן בשם ר' לוי אין בית רובע בחללו של עולם שאין בו תשעה קבין של מזיקין

The Lord delivering David's soul in peace so that none come near is paralleled to the angels who go before a man and declare "Make way for the likeness of the Lord." Mankind is given great honor and respect by the angels because the Scriptures say that we are made in the likeness of God, and it is in this way the glory of God is placed upon man. Remember, man is only able to see the glory of God and not God Himself. With this in mind, being made in the likeness of God, we have been given a portion of the glory of God being made in His image and therefore the concept here is that a company of angels go before a man and declare that we have been made in His likeness. Rabbi Yudan says that "in the wide space of the universe there is no place, even one so small that it holds no more than a fourth of a kab of seed, that is without nine kab of demons." Note the Aramaic states *קבין של מזיקי* a "cab of insects" where the insects are translated as demons. A קבין, cab, kab is a measure of capacity of a small quantity. The idea is that seed contains insects, and if man has a company of angels declaring the glory of God, then seed has its company of insects. Demons are paralleled to the insects associated with the seed. Seed has the capacity of producing good fruit, and so does man have the capacity to produce good works. The insects are called Demons in this translation of the midrash to illustrate these concepts.

The midrash continues saying the following:

And blindfolds are fastened over the eyes of each of these demons as over the eyes of millers' asses. Why? That the demons may not injure mortals. But when a man's sins bring it about, the blindfolds are removed from the demon's face, so that as he looks upon the man, he injures him. Hence, the Heavenly beings cry out before a man, Make way, etc. in order that the demons may not injure him. Accordingly, He has delivered my soul in peace, and the words which follow, so that none came near to me mean that David said, None of the demons came near me. And why not? (Midrash Tehillim 55, Part 3)

Here we find the rabbis developing the concept that angels go before a man declaring God's glory for the purpose of dispersing the demons who are bent on injuring the man. Blinders are placed upon the demon so he is unable to injure a man. One's sins cause the blindfolds to come off giving the demon the ability to injure the man. In the Scriptures we learn a lot about demons, for example, foreign gods are called shedim (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:17, Tehillim / Psalms 106:37, 1 Corinthians 10:20*), is translated as "demons" or "devils" in most translations. Based upon the Scriptures, the following list regarding demonology has been developed (<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Judaism/demons.html>):

- **SE'IRIM** ("hairy demons, satyrs") is also applied contemptuously to foreign deities (*Vayikra / Leviticus 17:7, 2 Chronicles 11:15*). These creatures haunt ruins, along with Lilith (*Isaiah 13:21, 34:14*).
- **LILITH** (*Isaiah 34:14, ultimately from Sumerian lil, "air," not Heb. layl(ah), "night"*) was

originally a succubus, believed to cohabit with mortals, but in the Arslan Tash incantation, she is identified with the child-stealing demon, a character she retains in later folklore. The tradition that the name means “*screech-owl*” (in so many translations) reflects a very ancient association of birds, especially owls, with the demonic.

- **MAVET** the ordinary Hebrew word for death, is also the proper name of a Canaanite underworld god (Mot), the enemy of Baal in a Ugaritic epic. The proper name, not the common noun, should probably be understood in *Isaiah 28:15, 18*, “*We have made a covenant with Death,*” and *Jeremiah 9:20 (Eng. 9:21)*, “*For Death is come up into our windows*” (see also *Hosea 13:14, Job 18:13*, “*the firstborn of Death,*” 28:22).
- **RESHEPH** is another major god of the Canaanite religion who becomes a demonic figure in biblical literature. Resheph is known as the god of plague over much of the ancient Near East, in texts and artistic representations spanning more than a millennium from 1850 B.C.E. to 350 B.C.E. In *Habakkuk 3:5*, YHVH on the warpath is said to be preceded and followed by Dever and Resheph, respectively. (*This is similar to the picture of two divine attendants who escort major gods in ancient myths.*) Just as some other names of deities are used as common nouns in biblical Hebrew (Dagon (“grain”); Ashtaroth (“increase” of the flock, a fertility goddess), thus, Resheph has come to mean “*plague*” (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 33:29, Tehillim / Psalms 78:48*), and the fiery darts of the bow (*Tehillim / Psalms 76:3, Song 8:6*), from the common association of plague and arrows.
- **DEVER** (“*Pestilence*”) is the other demonic herald who marches with YHVH to battle (*Habakkuk 3:5*). Dever is also mentioned in *Tehillim / Psalms 91:5–6* “*Thou shalt not be afraid for the Terror (Paḥad) by night; Nor for the Arrow (Hez) that flieth by day; Nor for the Pestilence (Dever) that walketh in the darkness; Nor for the Destruction (Ketev) that wasteth at noonday.*” Not only Dever but also the other words shown above have been plausibly identified as names of demons. The “*Arrow*” is a familiar symbol in folklore, for disease or sudden pain, and Ketev (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:24, Isaiah 28:2, Hosea 13:14*) is in this instance the personification of overpowering noonday heat, known also to Greek and Roman demonology.
- **AZAZEL** occurs in the ritual for the Day of Atonement (see *Vayikra / Leviticus 16:8, 10, 26*). Aaron casts lots over two goats, and the one “*for ‘Az’azel*” is presented alive before the Lord, and then released into the wilderness. The ancient Greek and Latin versions understood ‘Az’azel as “*goat that departs,*” hence “*the scapegoat*” of some English versions. Most of the rabbinic commentators and some moderns take Azazel as the name of the place to which the goat is driven. The great majority of moderns regard Azazel as the personal name of a demon thought to live in the wilderness.

Demons are mentioned extensively in the Inter-testamental Literature such as the Dead Sea Scrolls. During the inter-testamental period, angelology and demonology is developed extensively within Judaism. A dualistic system was developed in which God is opposed by the forces of evil and deceit. For example, Belial is the most common name for the leader of the demons in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and we see the Apostle Paul using this in *2 Corinthians 6:15*. Belial is a Hebrew compound word which etymologically means “*no benefit*” or “*no thriving*” and in liberal usage is often equivalent to “*scoundrel.*” The Scriptures describe the “*streams of Belial*” meaning “*streams of destruction*” (*2 Samuel 22:5 and Tehillim / Psalms 18:5*). In the dead sea scrolls, Belial is “*the spirit of perversion, the angel of darkness, the angel of destruction*” and other spirits are subject to him. The Apostolic Writings in part reflects contemporary popular belief, which turns up also in rabbinic literature, and in part the dualism attested in the sectarian literature from the Qumran

society. Demons are called “*unclean spirits*” or “*evil spirits*,” as in rabbinic literature. They are believed to inhabit waste places. Becoming possessed by demons causes, or is associated with, various sicknesses, especially those in which there is a perversion of the human personality, so that the demon, not the man himself, directs his actions and speech (see *Mark 1:23, 1:26, 9:17–29*). The story of how Yeshua cured the demoniac by sending a legion of unclean spirits into a herd of swine (*Matthew 8:28–34, Mark 5:1–20, Luke 8:26–39*) illustrates vividly the persistence of a very ancient popular belief, as does the parable of *Matthew 12:43–45*, in which the unclean spirit after wandering through the wilderness (arid places) takes seven devils with him and reenters the previous house (the man). In addition to this, in the Apostolic Writings lesser demons have little independent personality or power, but are subject to a prince, or greater power, Beelzebul, the chief of demons, or Satan, and the demon is often presented, not as something occasional and relatively harmless, but as having a part in the role of the greater enemy of God and man (*Ephesians 6:12*).

Here in the midrash, one’s sins enables demons to have the power to injure him. To continue sinning results in demonic activity in one’s life, this echoes Yeshua’s words when he said “*stop sinning or something worse might happen to you!*” (*John 5:14*) Midrash Tehillim 55, Part 3 closes saying, “*Accordingly, He has delivered my soul in peace, and the words which follow, so that none came near to me mean that David said, None of the demons came near me. And why not? Because in the multitudes they were with me, the multitudes of angels who were charged to keep David, as is said, For He will give His angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways (Tehillim / Psalms 91:11).*” The conclusion suggests that David did not sin and the Lord sends multitudes of angels to keep him safe and at peace. The quote from *Tehillim / Psalms 91:11* has David saying that the Lord places his angels over us to keep us in our ways. How much influence do you believe the holy angels have with regard to our lives, and watching over us? Roman Catholicism teaches that each person has a angel that God has placed over them, that one should pray to their angel, communicate with their angel, etc. Do you think this is a biblical concept? Is there any danger in doing that?

Midrash Tehillim 55, Part 4 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*Another comment on He has delivered my soul in peace so that none came near me (Tehillim / Psalms 55:19).*” The homiletic introduction to the Midrash says, “*What is meant by the words so that none came near me?*” Here we find an alternate interpretation on the verse, the midrash states the following:

They mean that David said I beheld Daniel, who is to rise up out of my tribe, and how, though he be cast into a den of lions, they will not touch him. Thereupon, David said, He has delivered my soul in peace so that none came near me, that is, the lions would not come near Daniel. And who brought it about that Daniel was delivered? Those who in multitudes were with me, by which is meant that Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah also put prayers together for Daniel. Hence, David said, God will hear and answer them (Tehillim / Psalms 55:20). (Midrash Tehillim 55, Part 4)

The words “*not come near me*” refer to Daniel in this alternate interpretation. When Daniel was cast into the lions den, the lions did not come near, the Lord had preserved Daniel hearing his prayers and the prayers of his friends. The midrash continues saying:

Another comment. The verse in multitudes, etc. alludes to Rachel. Thus the words so that none came near me (Tehillim / Psalms 55:19) mean that the design of Esau came not near Rachel, though the arrangements were that Jacob was to take Leah and that Esau was to take Rachel. And who brought it about that Rachel was delivered from him? Those who in multitudes were with me, but which is meant that Jacob and Leah also put prayers together for Rachel. Thus we read, And God remembered even the person of Rachel (Bereshit / Genesis 30:22). In this verse the word Rachel by itself implies that God remembered her because of her own merit, and the phrase the person of Rachel, implies that He remembered her also because of the merit of the Patriarchs and the Matriarchs. (Midrash Tehillim 55, Part 4)

The idea here is that “*not coming near me*” refers to Esau not coming near for destruction. Those who were with David refers to Jacob and Leah praying for Rachel to have children. It is interesting to see the interpretive style of Midrash Tehillim 55, Part 4 as compared to Part 3. In Part 4, the rabbis do not use supernatural deliverance by angels. They use references to the Torah and real life events to explain what David is saying. The group of rabbis who hold to this interpretation may not hold to the belief that angels are helping mankind as we find in the previous midrash, and in the inter-testamental texts. The Apostolic Writings though agree with the previous midrash saying in *Hebrews 1:14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation? (NIV)* Midrash Tehillim 55, Part 4 concludes saying, “*Another comment on He has delivered my soul in peace so that none came near me. The counsel of Ahithophel did not come near me. Why not? Because in multitudes they were with me, the multitudes were the members of the Sanhedrin who put together prayers for me.*” Again we see the interpretive style of this midrash is to exclude a supernatural angelic help for David. A fictitious interpretation is given, that the Sanhedrin put together prayers for David.

Midrash Tehillim 55, Part 5 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*Such as have no changes (Tehillim / Psalms 55:20).*” The homiletic introduction to the Midrash states, “*These words allude to Ahithophel and his band in whose hearts the inclination to evil underwent no change.*” In Judaism, yetzer hara (יֵצֶר הָרָע) refers to the inclination to do evil, or the desire to violate the will of God. The underlying principle in Jewish thought states that every man is born with, both, a good inclination and an evil inclination. This, in itself, is not bad, the problem, however, arises when one chooses to willfully disobey God, to “*cross over the line,*” to satisfy his “*evil inclination.*” These concepts are based upon models of right and wrong in the Hebrew Bible. According to this midrash, the rabbis say that his evil inclination underwent no change. The idea is that our lives are to be in the process of undergoing change for the better. The rabbis say that Ahithophel the counselor of David was “*a man, like Balaam, whose great wisdom was not received in humility as a gift from heaven, and so became a stumbling-block to him*” (Midrash Rabbah Numbers 22). The man with great wisdom studies the Torah and consequentially, there is a progression towards righteousness as opposed to the evil inclination (Yetzer Hara). If we remain in the Word of God, our lives should be on a progression towards righteousness with the help of the Lord. The midrash continues saying,

And so the verse goes on to say to them, And they do not fear God. He has put forth his hands against the peaceful ones (Tehillim / Psalms 55:21), Ahithophel and his bands put forth their hands against men that were at peace with them. And so the verse goes on to say of Ahithophel He has broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter (Tehillim / Psalms 55:22). The words of Ahithophel were more slippery than butter. The verse concludes, His words were softer than oil, for they were suave. The words of Ahithophel were so persuasive that every one heeded him. Thus, we read moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, let men now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night; and I will come upon him while he is weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid; and all the people that are with him will flee; and I will smite the king only, and the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel (2 Samuel 17:1-4). (Midrash Tehillim 55, Part 5)

The midrash states about Ahithophel:

- He put forth his hands against men of peace.
- His words were smooth and slippery as butter.
- His words were softer than oil.
- Everyone heeded his words.
- He gave bad advise to Absalom regarding what he should do to David.

This is consistent with the Aramaic Targum which states, כב אֹשִׁיט יְדוּי בְּאֲנָשֵׁי שְׁלָמִיָּה אִפְסֵי קִיּוּמִיָּה: כב שְׁעִיעַן יִתִּיר מִן שֶׁמֶן דְּגוּבְנִין מִיְלֵי פוּמִיָּה וְהִיךְ זַיְנֵי קֶרְבָּא לְבִיָּה לְבִיָּה רְכִיכֵן מִיְלֵי יִתִּיר מִן מִשְׁחָ דְּפוּטְמִין וְאִינוּן שְׁעִיעַן יִתִּיר מִן שֶׁמֶן דְּגוּבְנִין מִיְלֵי פוּמִיָּה וְהִיךְ זַיְנֵי קֶרְבָּא לְבִיָּה לְבִיָּה רְכִיכֵן מִיְלֵי יִתִּיר מִן מִשְׁחָ דְּפוּטְמִין וְאִינוּן: 55:21 *He stretched out his hands against the men of his peace; he desecrated his covenant.* 55:22 *Smoother than oil of curds are the words of his mouth; and like weapons of war his heart. Softer are his words than tallow, but they are deadly lances.* (EMC) Notice how the inclination to evil is connected to Ahithophel's words. The inclination to evil is manifested in one's words by Lashon Hara (לשון הרע), the halakhic term for derogatory (evil) speech about another person. The central prohibition against lashon hara is found in *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:16*, which states "Lo telech rachil b'ameicha" (טז: לא-תלך רכיל בעמך לא תעמד על-דם רעה אני יהוה:) "do not go about as a talebearer among your people." In Rashi's commentary on this verse he discusses the origins of the word rachil (a roving merchant), and a few divergent ideas about the Hebrew language. The verse in *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:16* applies to Rechilut (רכיל) and Lashon Hara. Rechilut means "gossip, slanderer, backbiting" and is often understood as the repeating of Lashon Hara. Although Rechilut seems more obviously derived from the verse, both "rachil/rechilut" and "talebearer" are synonymous since the Torah is prohibiting any type of harmful or negative speech in this commandment. Ahithophel committed lashon hara satisfying his inclination to evil. Midrash Tehillim 55, Part 5 concludes saying, "When David saw that every one was with Ahithophel, and that every one heeded him, he was afraid. Accordingly, the Holy One blessed be He, said to David, Be not afraid. Though every man is with Ahithophel, I am with you." This is consistent with *Tehillim / Psalms 55:22* *Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.* (NASB) We do not need to fear because the Lord is with us. This is in contrast to those who commit lashon hara and perform the works of unrighteousness (55:23 *But You, O God, will bring them down to the pit of destruction; Men of bloodshed and deceit will not live out half their days. But I will trust in You.* NASB)

Midrash Tehillim 55, Part 6 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, "Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain you (*Tehillim / Psalms 55:33*). " The homiletic introduction to the Midrash says, "A mortal has a patron and goes to him the first time, and the patron receives him;" The entire midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק נה סימן ו</p> <p>ו השלך על ה' יהבך והוא יכלכלך. בשר ודם יש לו פטרון והולך אצלו (אוהבו), פעם אחת והוא מקבלו, שנייה והוא מקבלו, שלישית אינו נראה לו, רביעית אינו נפנה לו, אבל הקב"ה אינו כן, כל זמן שאתה מטריח עליו הוא מקבלך, הוי השלך על ה' יהבך והוא יכלכלך, השלך עליו טוענך והוא דרי בהדך. ואתה אלהים תורידם לבאר שחת. לגיהנם. אנשי דמים ומרמה. אלו אחיתופל וסיעתו. לא יחצו ימיהם ואני אבטח בך.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 55, Part 6</p> <p>6. <i>Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain you (Tehillim / Psalms 55:33). A mortal has a patron and goes to him the first time, and the patron receives him; the second time, and he receives him; the third time, he does not personally welcome him; and the fourth time he cannot spare a moment for him. But not so the Holy One blessed be He, Every time you impose yourself upon Him, He receives you. Hence cast what befalls you upon the Lord, and He will sustain you, Cast your burdens upon Him, and He will carry it for you. But You, O God, will bring them down into the nethermost pit (Tehillim / Psalms 55:24), into Gehenna; men of blood and deceit, Ahithophel and his band, will not live out half their days; but I will trust in You.</i></p>
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The midrash is drawing a contrast between men on earth and God in heaven. The rabbis say that a mortal (בשר ודם) one who is of "flesh and blood," goes to a patron (פטרון, supporter; regular customer; sponsor; guardian, legal guardian). Assuming that this patron is also basar u'dam (flesh and blood), the man returns four times to this patron who receives him twice, but on the third time does not see him personally, and the fourth time the patron does not have time for him. However, "the Holy One blessed be He, Every time you impose yourself upon Him, He receives you." We find a similar reference to the Lord who receives

us in the *Jerusalem Talmud Berakhot 9* (http://www.sefaria.org/Jerusalem_Talmud_Berakhot) which states “*However much you bother Him, the Holy One blessed be He, will receive you.*” This concept that the Lord receives us, or hears us is found in a parable that Yeshua taught concerning the widow and the unjust judge in *Luke 18:1-8*.

Luke 18:1-8

18:1 Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, 18:2 saying, ‘In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. 18:3 ‘There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, ‘Give me legal protection from my opponent.’ 18:4 ‘For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, ‘Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, 18:5 yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.’ 18:6 And the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unrighteous judge said; 18:7 now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? 18:8 ‘I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?’ (NASB)

The concept that is put forward here is with regard to prayer and praying to our Father in heaven. Yeshua taught that we should not lose heart in prayer and illustrates this with the widow and the unjust judge. The widow continually went to the judge and at first he would not listen, but having bothered him for so long, he relented and gave her justice. Yeshua concludes saying, *18:6 And the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unrighteous judge said; 18:7 now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? 18:8 ‘I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?’ (NASB)* This is interestingly consistent with the rabbinic teaching on the Holy One blessed be He who will receive us “*every time we impose ourselves upon Him.*” Midrash Tehillim 55, Part 6 concludes saying, “*Hence cast what befalls you upon the Lord, and He will sustain you, Cast your burdens upon Him, and He will carry it for you. But You, O God, will bring them down into the nethermost pit (Tehillim / Psalms 55:24), into Gehenna; men of blood and deceit, Ahithophel and his band, will not live out half their days; but I will trust in You.*” The point of the midrash drawn in parallel to *Luke 18*, demonstrates the need to always pray like that persistent widow, for if even an unjust judge will eventually listen, God is much quicker to do so. Remember also the parable of the “*Friend at Night*” according to *Luke 11:5-8*, a friend comes late at night and the man agrees to help his neighbor due to his persistent demands rather than because they are friends, despite the late hour and the inconvenience of it. The parable found in *Luke 18* comes on the heels of the eschatological tone of *Luke 17* to not fear due to the sign of the times, the distress, and trials that we go through. The Lord hears our prayers and He knows our needs. Our Father in heaven is a God of justice, he helps the weak, and hears the cry of the oppressed, the widow, the orphan, the innocent, the humble, etc.

In 612 BCE, Israel was going through a time of oppression and cruel violence. This is during the time of the prophet Habakkuk. Habakkuk was burdened by what he saw. His heart was broken by what was taking place in his society. In *Habakkuk 1:1-4* he asks the Lord saying, “*O Lord, how long shall I cry, and you will not hear? Even cry out to You, Violence! And you will not save. Why do you show me iniquity, and cause me to see trouble? For plundering and violence are before me; there is strife, and contention arises. Therefore the law is powerless, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore perverse judgment proceeds.*” He wanted to know why the Lord wasn’t intervening on behalf of His people. The prophet was distressed by the wickedness and lack of justice in Israel. The point we can learn from the midrash, from the parable Yeshua taught, and from Habakkuk is that our hope, life, faith, and actions shouldn’t be controlled by the surrounding circumstances. Our circumstances do affect us and have an impact on us, but we shouldn’t allow the temporal affairs of this world to control our thoughts and our actions. We need to consciously choose to do what is right and just. The last few verses of Habakkuk state:

Habakkuk 3:17-19

3:17 Though the fig tree should not blossom And there be no fruit on the vines, Though the yield of the olive should fail And the fields produce no food, Though the flock should be cut off from the fold And there be no cattle in the stalls, 3:18 Yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. 3:19 The Lord God is my strength, And He has made my feet like hinds' feet, And makes me walk on my high places. For the choir director, on my stringed instruments. (NASB)

Habakkuk 3:17-19 encourages us to trust the Lord when all seems lost and we feel weak and powerless. Habakkuk says, “*The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer’s feet, and he will make me walk on my high places,*” this is a parallel thought to David’s words of God’s sustaining power for our lives. He appears to be embracing David’s perspective of the Lord God Almighty, that our Father in heaven is working so that justice will prevail. The Psalm states *55:22 Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken. 55:23 But You, O God, will bring them down to the pit of destruction; Men of bloodshed and deceit will not live out half their days. But I will trust in You. (NASB)* where the midrash adds that the Lord will bring evil men down to Hell (Gehenna). This type of lifestyle, to be men of deceit, satisfying the inclination to evil, committing lashon hara, promoting murders, injustice, and unrighteousness will cause one to not live out half of his days. The Lord God Almighty is the One who extends our lives for His glory and for His purposes. Today the Lord gives us His kingdom and His righteousness in the name of His Deliverer, our Lord and Savior, Yeshua the Messiah. We are to choose to serve God’s purpose, not the purposes that men may choose for themselves. Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for your mercies and the help You provide for us each day. We know that the heart is full of all kinds of evil. Sometimes the daily struggle is overwhelming. Please have mercy on us for the thoughts of our hearts, help us to not break Your covenant like David is describing in His Psalm. We ask Lord that You would help us to set out minds on those things that are wholesome and righteous. Increase our faith, and help us to bring glory to Your name! Thank You Lord for sending Your son Yeshua that we may enter into the covenant of peace that You have promised to Your people. Help us to grow in our faith, to walk in the spirit, and apply these truths to our lives. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

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

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

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

Notes