

<p>ה לְבִי יִחַיֵּל בְּקִרְבִּי וְאִימֹת מִנֹּת נִפְלוּ עָלַי: ו יִרְאֶה וְרַעַד יָבֵא בִי וְתִכְסְּנִי פְלָצוֹת: ז וְאָמַר מִי-יִתֵּן-לִי אֶבֶר כַּיְהוֹנָה אֶעֱוֹפָה וְאֶשְׁכַּנָּה: ח הִנֵּה אֶרְחִיק נֶדָד אֶלַיִן בַּמְדַּבֵּר סֵלָה: ט אֶחְיֶשֶׁה מִפְּלֹט לִי מְרוּחַ סֶעָה מִסְעֵר: י בִּלְעָ אֲדֹנָי פִּלְג 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 אֲלוֹפִי וּמִיִּדְעִי: טו אֲשֶׁר יִחַדּוּ נַמֵּךְ תִּיק סוֹד בְּבֵית אֱלֹהִים נְהַלֵּךְ בְּרַגְשׁ: טז יִשְׁשִׁימֹת [יִשְׂאֵי מִנֹּת] עֲלִימו יָרְדוּ שְׂאוֹל חַיִּים כִּי-רַעוֹת בְּמַגּוּרָם בְּקִרְבָּם: יז אֲנִי אֶל-אֱלֹהִים אֶקְרָא וַיִּהְיֶה יוֹשִׁיעֵנִי: יח עֲרַב וּבִקֵּר וְצַהֵר רַיִם אֶשְׁיָחָה וְאֶקְהָמָה וַיִּשְׁמַע קוֹלִי: יט פָּדָה בְּשָׁלוֹם נַפְשִׁי מִקְּרַב-לִי כִּי-בְרַבִּים הָיוּ עֲמָדִי: כ יִשְׁמַע אֵל וַיַּעֲנֵם וַיֵּשֶׁב קֶדֶם סֵלָה אֲשֶׁר אֵין חֲלִיפוֹת לָמוֹ וְלֹא יִרְאוּ אֱלֹהִים: כא שָׁלַח יָדָיו בְּשַׁלְמִי חֲלַל בְּרִיתוֹ: כב חֲלָקוּ מִחֲמָאֵת פִּי וּקְרַב-לְבָבוֹ כָּפוּ דְבָרָיו מִשְׁמֹן וְהִמָּה פְתַחוֹת: כג הִשְׁלַךְ עַל-יְהוָה יִקְבֹּד וְהוּא יְכַלְכֵּל לָךְ לֹא-יִתֵּן לְעוֹלָם מוֹט לְצַדִּיק: כד וְאַתָּה אֱלֹהִים תוֹרְדֵם לְבָאֵר שַׁחַת אֲנָשֵׁי דָמִים וּמְרָמָה לֹא-יִחַצּוּ 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 ἠϋλίσθη ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ διάναγμα 55:8 προσεδεχόμεν 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 δὲ ἄνθρωπε ἰσόψυχε ἡγεμών μου καὶ γνωστὲ 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 ἤσαν 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 δὲ ὁ θεὸς κατὰξεις 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 וְאֵלֶּיךָ לְדָוִד : 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, הֲאִזְיִנָּה אֱלֹהִים תְּפִלָּתִי וְאֵל-תִּתְעַלֶּם 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" (הֲאִזְיִנָּה 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" (הִאֲזִינָה) and to hear his prayer. He qualifies this clause saying, וְאַל-תִּתְעַלֵּם, וְאַל-תִּתְהַלֵּץ מִתְּהִלָּתִי 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 אֲרִיד בְּשִׁחִי וְאֶהְיֶמָה: ד מְקוֹל אוֹיֵב מִפְּנֵי עֲקַת 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 ἔλυπήθην 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 יְבֵא בִי וְתַכְסֵּנִי פְלִצוֹת: ז וְאָמַר מִי-יִתֵּן-לִי אֶבֶר כִּי־יִנָּחֵ אֶעֱוֹפָה וְאֶשְׁכְּנָה: ח הֲיֵנָה אֲרַחֵיק נָדָד אֶלְיוֹן בְּמַדְבַּר סְלָה: ט אֶחְיֶשָׁה 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 כְנָפַא גְּדַפָּא הֵיךְ יוֹנָתָא אֲטוֹס וְאֲשֵׁרִי: ח הָא אֲרַחֵיק אֲתָר לְמִינַנְדָּא אֲבִית בְּמַדְבְּרָא לְעַלְמִין: ט אֲרַחֵישׁ שְׁזוּבוֹתָא לִי מִן זַעְפָּא נְטִלָא 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 אדני פלג לשונם כי-ראיתי חמס וריב בעיר: יא יומם ולילה יסובבה על-חומתיה ואון ועמל בקרבה: יב היות בקרבה ולא-ימיש מרחבה תה ומרמה: יג כי לא-אויב יקרפני ואשא 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-רְעוֹת בְּמַגֹּרֶם בְּקִרְבָּם: יז אֲנִי אֶל-אֲלֹהִים
אֶקְרָא וַיהוָה יִשְׁמָעֵנִי: יח עָרַב וּבָקָר וְצִהָרִים 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-רְעוֹת 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-לְבָּו 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-לְבָּו 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!

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