

## Tehillim / Psalms 65 | ספר תהילים סה

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### The Covenant and its importance

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 65:1-13*, the psalm opens saying, א לְמַנְצֵחַ מְזֻמֹּר לְדָוִד שִׁיר: . For the choir director. A Psalm of David. A Song. He writes a song saying, ב לֵךְ דְּמִיָּה תִהְיֶה אֱלֹהִים בְּצִיּוֹן, 65:1 There will be silence before You, and praise in Zion, O God, And to You the vow will be performed. ג שְׁמַע תִּפְלֶה עֲדִיף כָּל-בִּשְׂרָ יְבֹאוּ: . 65:2 O You who hear prayer, To You all men come. (NASB) This indicates that every mouth will be stopped before the Lord. David continues saying, ד דְּבַרֵי עֹנֵת גָּבְרוּ, 65:3 Iniquities prevail against me; As for our transgressions, You forgive them. ה אֲשֶׁרִי | תִבְחַר וּתִקְרַב יִשְׁכַּן חֲצִרֶיךָ נִשְׁפָּעָה בְּטוֹב בֵּיתֶךָ קֹדֶשׁ הַיְכָלֶךָ: . 65:4 How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring near to You To dwell in Your courts. We will be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Your holy temple. (NASB) Notice how David says blessed is the one the Lord chooses to draw near. How much of our of our faith is our choice? He continues saying, ו נִרְאוֹת | בְּצִדְקָתְךָ תַעֲנֵנּוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵנוּ מִבְּטָח, 65:5 By awesome deeds You answer us in righteousness, O God of our salvation, You who are the trust of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest sea; 65:6 Who establishes the mountains by His strength, Being girded with might; 65:7 Who stills the roaring of the seas, The roaring of their waves, And the tumult of the peoples. (NASB) We stand in awe of God's power, ז וַיִּירָאוּ | יִשְׁבִּי קִצְוֹת מְאוֹתֶיךָ מוֹצְאֵי-בֹקֶר וְעֶרֶב תִּרְנִין: . 65:8 They who dwell in the ends of the earth stand in awe of Your signs; You make the dawn and the sunset shout for joy. 65:9 You visit the earth and cause it to overflow; You greatly enrich it; The stream of God is full of water; You prepare their grain, for thus You prepare the earth. (NASB) What is the stream of God? David concludes his psalm saying, יא תִלְמִיָּה רוּחַ נַחַת גְּדוּדֶיהָ בְּרַבִּיבִים תִּמְגַּגְנָה צְמַחָהּ תִּבְרַךְ: . יב עֲטַרְתָּ שָׁנֹת טוֹבָתָהּ וּמַעֲגָלֶיהָ יִרְעֲפוּן דְּשֵׁן: . 65:10 You water its furrows abundantly, You settle its ridges, You soften it with showers, You bless its growth. 65:11 You have crowned the year with Your bounty, And Your paths drip with fatness. 65:12 The pastures of the wilderness drip, And the hills gird themselves with rejoicing. 65:13 The meadows are clothed with flocks And the valleys are covered with grain; They shout for joy, yes, they sing. (NASB)

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
	ספר תהלים פרק סה		ספר טוביה פרק סה		ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 65
	א לְמַנְצֵחַ מְזֻמֹּר לְדָוִד שִׁיר: ב לֵךְ דְּמִיָּה תִהְיֶה אֱלֹהִים בְּצִיּוֹן וּלְךָ יִשְׂ-לִם-נְדָר: ג שְׁמַע תִּפְלֶה עֲדִיף כָּל-בִּשְׂרָ יְבֹאוּ: ד דְּבַרֵי עֹנֵת גָּבְרוּ מִנִּי פִשְׁעֵינוּ אֶתָּה תִכְפֹּרם: ה אֲשֶׁרִי   תִבְחַר וּתִקְרַב יִשְׁכַּן חֲצִרֶיךָ נִשְׁפָּעָה בְּטוֹב בֵּיתֶךָ קֹדֶשׁ הַיְכָלֶךָ:		א לשבחא תושבחתא לדוד שירתא: ב קדמך מתחשבא היך שתיקותא תור שבחתא דמלאכיא אלהא די שכינתיה בציון ולך ישתלמון נדריא: ג מקבל צלותא לותך כל בני ביסרא ייתון: ד פתגמי עויין תקפו מני סורחננא אנת את תכפרינון: טובוי דתבחר דתתרעי ותקרבו ותקרביניה לדחלתך ישרי דרתך יימרון צדיקי נשבע בטוב ביתך קודשא דהיכלך:		65:1 εἰς τὸ τέλος ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαυὶδ ᾠδὴ Ἱερεμίου καὶ Ἰεζεκιηλ ἐκ τοῦ λόγου τῆς παροικίας ὅτε ἔμελλον ἐκπορευέσθαι σοὶ πρέπει ὕμνος ὁ θεὸς ἐν Σιων καὶ σοὶ ἀποδοθήσεται εὐχὴ ἐν Ἱερουσαλημ 65:2 εἰσάκουσον προσευχῆς μου πρὸς σὲ πᾶσα σὰρξ ἤξει 65:3 λόγοι ἀνομιῶν ὑπερεδυνάμωσαν ἡμᾶς καὶ τὰς ἀσεβείας ἡμῶν σὺ ἰλάσῃ

<p>ו נוראות   בצדק תעננו אלהי ישע-  נו מבטח כל-קצוי-ארץ וים רחוקים:  ז מכין הרים בכחו נאזר בגבורה:  ח משפית   שאון ימים שאון גליהם  והמון לאמים: ט וייראו   ישבי  קצות מאותהי מוצאי-בקר וערב  תרנין: י פקדת הארץ   ותשקקה  רבת תעשרנה פלג אלהים מלא מים  תכין דגנם פי-כן תכינה: יא תלמיה  רנה נחת גדודיה ברכיבים תמגנה  צמחה תברך: יב עטרות שנת טוב-  תה ומעגליה ירעפון דשן: יג ירעפו  נאות מדבר וגיל גבעות תהגנה: יד  לכשו כרים   הצאן ועמקים יעטפו-  בר יתרועעו אף-ישירו:</p>	<p>ו דחילן בצדקתא תקביל צלותהון  אלהא פורקנא סברא דכל סיפי  ארעא ונגוות ימא דרחיקין מן יביש-  תא: ז דאתקן מזוניא ליעלי טוריא  בכה גבורתיה מזריז קמור בגבורתא:  ח ממאיך רגוש ימיא ורגוש גליהון  וריכפת אומיא: ט ודחילו יתבי  סיפין סיפי תהומיא מאתוותך מפק-  ני צפר ורמש תסדר שבחא בפומהון  שבחא: י אידכרתה ארעא דדישראל  ואשקיתה סוגי עללתא תעתרינה מן  קובתא דאלהא די בשמיא מליא מיט-  רא דברכתא תתקין עיבוריהון ארום  היכנא תשכללינה: יא תקוף מרביני  צימחהא רווי אשדך גייסהא נצייהא  תברייך ברסיסי תמוגגינה צמחייתה  תברך: יב אכלילתא שנת טוב ברכ-  תך וכיבשי אורחך יבסמון דיהנא: יג  יבסמון תושבחת מדברא ודיצא גלמ-  תא תקמרן להון: יד יעלון דיכריא  עלוי ענא ומישריא יתחפין עיבורא  יתיבון ברם ישבחון:</p>	<p>65:4 μακάριος ὃν ἐξελέξω καὶ  προσελάβου κατασκηνώσει ἐν ταῖς  ἀβυssaῖς σου πλησθησόμεθα ἐν τοῖς  ἀγαθοῖς τοῦ οἴκου σου ἅγιος ὁ ναὸς  σου θαυμαστός ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ 65:5  ἐπάκουσον ἡμῶν ὁ θεὸς ὁ σωτὴρ  ἡμῶν ἢ ἐλπίς πάντων τῶν περάτων  τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐν θαλάσῃ μακρὰν  65:6 ἐτοιμάζων ὄρη ἐν τῇ ἰσχύι  αὐτοῦ περιεζωσμένος ἐν δυναστείᾳ  65:7 ὁ συνταράσσων τὸ κύτος τῆς  θαλάσσης ἤχους κυμάτων αὐτῆς  ταραχθήσονται τὰ ἔθνη 65:8 καὶ  φοβηθήσονται οἱ κατοικοῦντες  τὰ πέρατα ἀπὸ τῶν σημείων σου  ἐξόδους πρωίας καὶ ἐσπέρας τέρψεις  65:9 ἐπεσκέψω τὴν γῆν καὶ ἐμέθυσας  αὐτὴν ἐπλήθυνας τοῦ πλουτίσαι  αὐτὴν ὁ ποταμὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπληρώθη  ὕδατων ἠτοιμάσας τὴν τροφήν αὐτῶν  ὅτι οὕτως ἡ ἐτοιμασία σου 65:10 τοὺς  αὐλακὰς αὐτῆς μέθυσον πλήθυνον  τὰ γενήματα αὐτῆς ἐν ταῖς σταγόσιν  αὐτῆς εὐφρανθήσεται ἀνατέλλουσα  65:11 εὐλογήσεις τὸν στέφανον τοῦ  ἐνιαυτοῦ τῆς χρηστότητός σου καὶ  τὰ πεδία σου πλησθήσονται πιότητος  65:12 πιανθήσονται τὰ ὠραῖα τῆς  ἐρήμου καὶ ἀγαλλίασιν οἱ βουνοὶ  περιζώσονται 65:13 ἐνεδύσαντο οἱ  κριοὶ τῶν προβάτων καὶ αἱ κοιλιάδες  πληθυνούσι σῖτον κεκράζονται καὶ  γὰρ ὑμνήσουσιν</p>
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In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 65:1-13*, the psalm opens saying, א לְמַנצֵחַ מְזֻמֹּר לְדָוִד שִׁיר. *For the choir director. A Psalm of David. A Song.* David was a great warrior and mighty king. He won the love of the people of Israel and of the Lord God in heaven. The Book of Psalms is divided into five parts which may be paralleled to the Five Books of Moshe. In Judaism, the Psalms is further subdivided into seven parts, one for each day of the week, and then into 30 divisions corresponding to each day of the month. Orthodox Judaism makes it a habit to say a portion of the Psalms every day after the morning prayers, thus completing all the Psalms in the course of a week or a month. The reason the Psalms are so important, is because David is considered the link in the continued transmission of the Torah, by reason that he was the successor to the prophet Samuel. Rabbinic tradition has it that David surrounded himself with prophets and scholars and together they studied the Torah. During David's life, he did not consider the comforts of life and the rabbis say, unlike other kings he would rise before the sun to pray and sing psalms of praise to the Lord God in heaven.

The Psalms are hymns of praise to the Lord Almighty, Creator of the Universe. They speak of the Lord's greatness, His goodness and mercy; His power and justice. In addition, we are told in the Psalms that the wicked perish, they dig their own pits, they are destroyed by the words of their mouth, and they spend their lives devising evil deeds, to harm the innocent. David pours out his heart in the Psalms and puts into writing his sincerest and purest trust in the Lord God alone. Many of the Psalms are prayers and supplications to the Lord which David prayed in times of trouble. Other Psalms contain wisdom advising how the righteous

should live. David is essentially telling us that the way of true happiness is found through serving the Lord, performing good deeds, and obeying God’s commandments.

<p><b>Tehillim / Psalms 65</b>                  For the choir director. A Psalm of David. A Song. 65:1 There will be silence before You, and praise in Zion, O God, And to You the vow will be performed. 65:2 O You who hear prayer, To You all men come. 65:3 Iniquities prevail against me; As for our transgressions, You forgive them. 65:4 How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring near to You To dwell in Your courts. We will be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Your holy temple. 65:5 By awesome deeds You answer us in righteousness, O God of our salvation, You who are the trust of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest sea; 65:6 Who establishes the mountains by His strength, Being girded with might; 65:7 Who stills the roaring of the seas, The roaring of their waves, And the tumult of the peoples. 65:8 They who dwell in the ends of the earth stand in awe of Your signs; You make the dawn and the sunset shout for joy. 65:9 You visit the earth and cause it to overflow; You greatly enrich it; The stream of God is full of water; You prepare their grain, for thus You prepare the earth. 65:10 You water its furrows abundantly, You settle its ridges, You soften it with showers, You bless its growth. 65:11 You have crowned the year with Your bounty, And Your paths drip with fatness. 65:12 The pastures of the wilderness drip, And the hills gird themselves with rejoicing. 65:13 The meadows are clothed with flocks And the valleys are covered with grain; They shout for joy, yes, they sing. (NASB)</p>	<p><b>Toviyah / Psalms 65</b>                  65:1 For praise, a psalm of David, a song. 65:2 Before you praise is considered as silence, O God, whose presence is in Zion, and vows will be paid to you. 65:3 O receiver of prayer, unto you all the sons of flesh will come. 65:4 Words of iniquity have overcome me; you will atone for our sins. 65:5 How happy the one you will choose and bring near; he will abide in Your courts. The righteous will say, “We will be satisfied in the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple.” 65:6 Accept our prayer [with] fearful deeds in righteousness, O God our redemption, the hope of all the ends of the earth, and the islands of the sea far from dry land. 65:7 Who established food for the ibexes of the mountains in the strength of his might, who is girded with a belt in might. 65:8 Who quiets the commotion of the seas and the commotion of their waves, and the hubbub of the nations. 65:9 And those who dwell at the borders were afraid at your signs; [at the] extremities of morning and evening you will set praise in their mouth. 65:10 You have remembered the land and watered it; you will enrich it with much produce from the vault of God which is in heaven, full of rain; you will form their grain, for thus you will consummate it. 65:11 He has drenched those raised on its plants; he has given rest to its troops; you will bless its blossoms. 65:12 You have crowned the year with the goodness of your blessings; and the paths of your way will give an odor of richness. 65:13 They will make sweet the psalms of the wilderness, and the hills will gird themselves with joy. 65:14 The rams will copulate with the flock, and the plains will be covered with grain; they will shout, indeed, they will rejoice. (EMC)</p>	<p><b>Psalmoi / Psalms 65</b>                  For the end, a Psalm and Song of David. 65:1 Praise becomes thee, O God, in Sion; and to thee shall the vow be performed. 65:2 Hear my prayer; to thee all flesh shall come. 65:3 The words of transgressors have overpowered us; but do thou pardon our sins. 65:4 Blessed is he whom thou hast chosen and adopted; he shall dwell in thy courts; we shall be filled with the good things of thy house; thy temple is holy. 65:5 Thou art wonderful in righteousness. Harken to us, O God our Saviour; the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are on the sea afar off: 65:6 who dost establish the mountains in thy strength, being girded about with power; 65:7 who troublest the depth of the sea, the sounds of its waves. 65:8 The nations shall be troubled, and they that inhabit the ends of the earth shall be afraid of thy signs; thou wilt cause the outgoings of morning and evening to rejoice. 65:9 Thou hast visited the earth, and saturated it; thou hast abundantly enriched it. The river of God is filled with water; thou hast prepared their food, for thus is the preparation of it. 65:10 Saturate her furrows, multiply her fruits; the crop springing up shall rejoice in its drops. 65:11 Thou wilt bless the crown of the year because of thy goodness; and thy plains shall be filled with fatness. 65:12 The mountains of the wilderness shall be enriched; and the hills shall gird themselves with joy. 65:13 The rams of the flock are clothed with wool, and the valleys shall abound in corn; they shall cry aloud, yea they shall sing hymns. (NASB)</p>
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David begins his psalm saying that his Psalm is a song (שִׁיר) and then he states, בְּלִי דְמִיָּה תִהְיֶה אֱלֹהִים, 65:1 There will be silence before You, and praise in Zion, O God, And to You the vow will be performed. 65:2 O You who hear prayer, To You all men come. (NASB) Reading through the first two verses, he says “there will be silence before You.” (לִי דְמִיָּה תִהְיֶה) reminds us of the Apostle Paul’s words in Romans chapter 3. Paul is speaking about the Torah, and says the



following:

### **Romans 3:11-23**

*3:11 There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; 3:12 All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one. 3:13 'Their throat is an open grave, With their tongues they keep deceiving,' 'The poison of asps is under their lips'; 3:14 'Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness'; 3:15 'Their feet are swift to shed blood, 3:16 Destruction and misery are in their paths, 3:17 And the path of peace they have not known.' 3:18 'There is no fear of God before their eyes.' 3:19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; 3:20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. 3:21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 3:22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (NASB)*

David's words remind us of what Paul said, that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable before God. The Torah instructs us how to live holy and righteous lives. The reason being, we are God's children, and He makes His dwelling place inside of us. Thus, we are to behave in a manner that is suitable for the King of the Universe, the Lord God in heaven and His Messiah Yeshua to dwell. This requires a very high standard of living, and by logic draws us back to a Torah context of God's promises to dwell in our midst. In addition, living as Yeshua did is what pleases the Lord. The Torah functions as our outward expression of our devotion to Him (the Lord). The greatest commandment is "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your soul and with all your mind*" (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:5, Matthew 22:37*). According to the Apostle Paul, God's law has not changed, what he has commanded of us has not changed, we must love Him and by our love for Him, we are also to love one another.

Paul wrote that the Law speaks to those who are "*under the Law.*" Note that his comments state that "*every mouth will be closed (silent)*" and all the world will be accountable to God. Here we find Paul using a Hebrew idiom to express the reason why every mouth will be closed or silent. Idioms are used in every culture and language. In the English language, there are thousands of idioms. Idioms may be developed regionally and individually (e.g. on a family by family basis). The Scriptures are full of idioms, such as in *Matthew 5:3* when Yeshua says blessed are the "*poor in spirit*" which is considered an abbreviation of *Isaiah 66:2* which states "*poor and of a contrite spirit.*" This idiom refers to the one who is at the end of his strength and is in desperation, crying out to the Lord. Such a person acknowledges they have no righteousness of their own, similar to what Paul is saying in Romans, none understands, none seeks God, and none does good, etc. As in the English language, the Hebrew language also has many idioms. There are so many Hebrew idioms in fact that are found in Scripture that we don't always recognize them all. One of those idioms is the phrase "*under the law.*" Take for example Paul's words to the Romans in *Romans 6:14*,

### **Romans 6:14**

*"For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under Law, but under grace."*  
(NASB)

What exactly does the phrase "*under the law*" mean here in this text? This verse has been used by many to say we do not have to obey the Torah. The Torah, the five books of Moshe, the meaning of the Torah is not something that is tangible. What I mean is that it isn't something that we can physically cover our bodies with. Outside of the Torah scroll itself, it is not "*physical.*" The Torah is more of an intangible thing, full of concepts and ideas related to holiness, righteousness, and applications for life. As a result, the Torah is a phrase that needs to be considered in abstract terms. The phrase "*under the Law*" is one of those idioms

that has caused much confusion in the church over the centuries. This idiom has led to theologies that the Law has been done away with, and due to the nature of the misunderstanding, it can cause one to take a stand against a person who wants to observe something that is deemed “*done away with.*” Examples may be taken such as, the Sabbath day, the feast days (Passover), what we eat, how we live (*morality, note this reference is to the hyper-grace movement around the world and with homosexual clergy*), etc. Contained within the rejection of the Torah, one usually maligns their brother for taking part in the Feast or Sabbath day observance saying he or she is lost, or trying to earn their salvation. The difficulty arises when one tries to talk about this subject with somebody who was born into a culture that has misunderstood, and misrepresented the Torah (*God’s instructions for living*) for hundreds of years. One way to understand the meaning of *Romans 6:14*, is to draw an analogy to modern times. Driving down the highway, and being pulled over for speeding. The police officer walks up to your window, asks for your drivers license, and asks “*do you know how fast you were going?*” I had this happen to me once while driving home from the university years ago. The officer took my credentials back to his car, run them through his computer, and then returned. He gave me a written warning and said that he entered my information into the computer, so the next time you are pulled over for speeding, you will receive a ticket. I was guilty according to Ohio state traffic laws and deserved the ticket, a fine, and I was deserving of points added to my record. However, the officer extended to me grace; he showed me unmerited (unearned) favor. I was no longer guilty under the law. However, the grace he extended to me did not abrogate (revoke) the Ohio State traffic laws. Even though I was given a pass, and shown grace (forgiveness), and avoided punishment (*a ticket including a fine and points on my record*), it still remained against the law to speed. The parallel here to *Romans 6:14* is obvious, we sin, and are guilty under the Law. We often miss the mark. However, we have been shown grace by the Lord, through Yeshua the Messiah, we are declared not guilty, and therefore do not receive the punishment or condemnation that our sin deserves. We are under grace (forgiveness). This is the meaning of the idiom “*under the law*” that Paul is dealing with. We are no longer guilty, therefore sin and death no longer reign over us. The unmerited favor however does not abrogate the commandments of God. There are many Scriptures that state His commands are everlasting (*Shemot / Exodus 31:16-17, Matt. 5:17-19*). Therefore, it is still a sin to steal, to serve other gods, to make idols, to harm the weak and innocent, to mistreat the poor, which are all quite simply disobeying God’s commands. It is still sin to murder, to commit adultery (even in our hearts), and even to forsake the Sabbath. These are in fact everlasting commands given by God to His people. Note that in the book of Hebrews, the author states that the one command that remains is the Sabbath rest (*Hebrews 4:9*). Note that he is speaking within the context of the work of Yeshua, the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, and of the Olam Haba. When we come to the God of Israel through the Messiah of Israel, we become a part of the family of God (*Ephesians 2*). The sad part about church teaching today on the commandments, is the thought that some commands are passed away while others are not. The facts are however, the commandments were given to the people of God as part of an everlasting covenant that has been renewed through the blood of the Messiah. We have to understand the covenant we belong to. We are not under the law, we are no longer guilty, but we also do not have a license to walk in Lawlessness, which is to violate God’s Torah. (see *Matthew 7:23*)

### **Matthew 7:23**

“...and then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice ἀνομία (anomia) (Lawlessness or Torahlessness)’” (the Greek word ἀνομία (anomia), means “without law”)

Paul said in *Romans 3:31* “Do we then overthrow the Torah by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the Torah.” Based upon David’s words and Paul’s, every human being is under the law. *Romans 2:15* “They show that the Word of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.” As a result, every mouth will be stopped and the world will be accountable to God. No person will be able to say to the Lord that they have been judged unjustly. The Lord is just and true, and has placed the truth in each of our hearts so that we are held

accountable. He has done this so that on the great day of judgment, when each one of us stands before the throne of God, none of us will be able to accuse the Lord. Not one person will be able to blame their unbelief on the Lord. Everyone's mouths will literally be closed and dumbfounded at the realization of our guilt before the Lord. Our mouths will be stopped with the revelation of how much we have wronged the Lord and others. The most significant point of the commands and these truths is that the Torah places the Lord God on the throne of our lives and not us. The Lord is the one who rules and reigns, and when we sin in disobedience, we are to repent and turn from our sin. One day, every mouth will be stopped before the Lord, and this may be the context when David says, *65:1 There will be silence before You, and praise in Zion, O God, And to You the vow will be performed. (NASB)* David also says in *Tehillim / Psalms 65:2 O You who hear prayer, To You all men come. (NASB)* This speaks of the need for us to seek the Lord sooner (right now) rather than waiting for later.

David continues saying, ד דְּבָרַי עֲוֹנֹת גָּבְרוּ מִנִּי פִשְׁעֵינוּ אַתָּה תְּכַפֵּרֵם: ה אֲשֶׁר־י | תִּבְחַר וּתִקְרַב יִשְׁכֵּן הַצְּרִיף, 65:3 *Iniquities prevail against me; As for our transgressions, You forgive them. 65:4 How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring near to You To dwell in Your courts. We will be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Your holy temple. (NASB)* David uses the words “*avonot*” (עֲוֹנֹת) for iniquity, and “*pashaenu*” (פִּשְׁעֵינוּ) our transgression. *Tehillim / Psalms 65:4 (MT)* shows us that the Hebrew language contains several words for sin beyond the word “*khata*” (חטא). The word “*pasha*” (פשע) refers to sin that is done out of rebelliousness. The word “*avonot*” (עֲוֹנֹת) plural defective spelling meaning “*iniquities*,” is a sin performed out of a moral failing. The word that is most commonly translated as “*sin*” is *khata* (חטא) literally meaning “*to miss the mark*,” or “*to go astray*.” In Judaism, *kalahkah* provides the “*proper way*” (or path) to live, whereas sin involves straying from that path. Turning from God's Torah, from the way of the Lord (*truth, justice, righteousness, and holiness*). Judaism teaches that man is born with free will, and morally neutral, meaning that he is born with both the *Yetzer Ha'tov* (the good inclination) and the *Yetzer Ha'ra* (the evil inclination). This means that one is born with the tendencies to do either good or evil (e.g. selfishness).

The first mention of sin as a noun in the Torah, is when the Lord told Cain that sin is crouching at the door according to *Bereshit / Genesis 4:7*.

***Bereshit/ Genesis 4:6-8***

*4:6 Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 4:7 ‘If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.’ 4:8 Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. (NASB)*

ו וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-קַיִן לָמָּה חָרָה לְךָ וְלָמָּה נָפְלוּ פָנֶיךָ: ז הֲלוֹא אִם-תֵּיטִיב שְׂאֵת וְאִם לֹא תֵיטִיב לִפְתָּח חַטָּאת רֹבֵץ וְאֵלֶיךָ תִּשְׁוָקוּתוֹ וְאַתָּה תִּמְשָׁל-בּוֹ: ח וַיֹּאמֶר קַיִן אֶל-הָבֶל אָחִיו וַיְהִי בִּהְיוֹתָם בַּשָּׂדֶה וַיִּקָּם קַיִן אֶל-הָבֶל אָחִיו וַיַּהַרְגֵהוּ:

The first mention of sin as a verb in the Torah is with Abimelech being prevented from sinning (*khata*) against God in a dream.

***Bereshit / Genesis 20:3-7***

*20:3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, ‘Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married.’ 20:4 Now Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, ‘Lord, will You slay a nation, even though blameless? 20:5 ‘Did he not himself say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’ In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this.’*

20:6 Then God said to him in the dream, 'Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. 20:7 'Now therefore, restore the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours.' (NASB)

ג וַיְבֵא אֱלֹהִים אֶל-אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ בְּחֹלֹם הַלַּיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הֲנֵךְ מֵת-עַל-הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר-לָקַחְתָּ וְהוּא בָעֵלְתָּ בְּעַל: ד וַאֲבִימֶלֶךְ לֹא קָרַב אֵלֶיהָ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי הַגּוֹי גַם-צָדִיק תִּהְיֶה: ה הֲלֹא הוּא אָמַר-לִי אַחֲתִי הוּא וְהִיא-גַם-הוּא אָמְרָה אַחִי הוּא בְּתֵם-לְבָבִי וּבְנִקְיוֹן כְּפִי עָשִׂיתִי זֹאת: ו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הָאֱלֹהִים בְּחֹלֹם גַּם אָנֹכִי יַדְעֹתִי כִּי בְתֵם-לְבָבְךָ עָשִׂיתָ זֹאת וְאַחֲשֹׁךְ גַּם-אָנֹכִי אוֹתְךָ מִחֹטֵא-לִי עַל-כֵּן לֹא-נִתְתִּיבָךְ לְנֹגֵעַ אֵלֶיהָ: ז וְעַתָּה הֲשִׁב אִשְׁתְּ-הָאִישׁ כִּי-נָבִיא הוּא וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל בְּעַדְךָ וַחַיָּה וְאִם-אֵינְךָ מְשִׁיב דָּע כִּי-מוֹת תָּמוּת אִתָּה וְכָל-אַשְׁרֵךְ-לָךְ:

The entire Tanakh contains references to the sins committed by the people of God. This is to teach us that nobody is perfect. We do our best to learn from our mistakes, and we seek the Lord God in heaven and His Messiah Yeshua to help us to turn toward or return to the path of righteousness, truth, and justice.

According to *Bereshit / Genesis 4:7*, the Lord suggests that it is possible to choose good over evil, it is possible to master, or overcome the Yetzer Hara. Judaism uses the term “sin” to include violations of the Torah that does not necessarily involve a lapse in morality. The Jewish Encyclopedia states, “*Man is responsible for sin because he is endowed with free will (“behirah”); yet he is by nature frail, and the tendency of the mind is to evil: “For the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth” (Gen. viii. 21; Yoma 20a; Sanh. 105a). Therefore God in His mercy allowed people to repent and be forgiven.*” Judaism holds that all people sin at certain points in their lives and that the Lord God in heaven tempers His justice with His mercy. We serve a merciful God, and what a joyful thing it is to serve a loving, forgiving, and merciful God.

According to Parshiot Vayikra and Tzav, when the Temple yet stood in Jerusalem, the terms of the covenant called for the Korbanot (sacrifices) to be brought for one’s misdeeds. The atoning aspect of the korbanot is carefully written in the Torah, where we are told that the karbanot only expiate unintentional sins, that is, sins committed because a person who forgot that these things were sin or something that was done in error. In addition, there is no atonement for a malicious, deliberate sin. The karbanot have no expiating effect unless the person making the offering sincerely repents of his or her actions before making the offering, and makes restitution to any person who was harmed by the violation. This is why Yeshua taught in *Matthew 5:23* ‘*Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 5:24 leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.* (NASB) The reason being, what good is the offering if the person bringing the offering is unrepentant in both heart and in deed?

The Rabbis advise, “*Know what is above thee—an eye that sees, an ear that listens, and a record of all thy deeds,*” Rabbi Gamaliel said the following in the *Mishnah, Pirkei Avot 2:2*:

**Pirkei Avot 2:2:**

רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל בְּנוֹ שֶׁל רַבִּי יְהוּדָה הִנָּשִׂיא אוֹמֵר, יִפֶּה תְלִמּוּד תּוֹרָה עִם דְּרָךְ אֶרֶץ, שְׂוִיגֵיעַת שְׁנֵיהֶם מְשַׁכַּחַת עֹזוֹ. וְכָל תּוֹרָה שְׂאִין עִמָּה מְלֹאכָה, סוּפָה בְטִלָּה וּגְוַרְרַת עֹזוֹ. וְכָל הַעֲמִלִּים עִם הַצְּבוּר, יִהְיוּ עֲמִלִּים עִמָּהֶם לְשֵׁם שְׂמִים, שְׂזִכּוֹת אָבוֹתָם מְסִיעֵתוֹ וְצַדִּיקָתָם עוֹמְדַת לְעַד. וְאַתֶּם, מַעֲלָה אֲנִי עֲלִיכֶם שְׂכָר הַרְבֵּה כְּאֵלוֹ עָשִׂיתֶם:

*Rabban Gamliel the son of Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi said: Excellent is the study of the Torah together with a worldly occupation, For the exertion [expended] in both of them causes sin to be forgotten. And all [study of the] Torah in the absence of a worldly occupation comes*



*to nothing in the end and leads to sin. And all who work for the community, let them work for the [sake of the] name of Heaven, For the merit of the [community's] ancestors sustains them, And their [ancestors'] righteousness will endure forever. And as for you [who work for the community], [God says:] I credit you with a great reward, as if you [yourselves] had [actually] done [everything on your own].*

In addition, Rabbi Hanina son of Dosa said, “Whose fear of sin precedes his wisdom, his learning will endure; but where learning precedes the fear of sin, the learning will not endure.” (Mishnah, Pirkei Avot 3:2); “One who controls his passion once and twice will find it easy to control the third time”; “A way is left open for the sinner, and one who is willing to lead a pure life is helped.” He who leads others to do good will be saved from doing evil himself. On the other hand, the one who leads others to do evil will not be given an opportunity to repent. Thus the righteous will meet in Gan ‘Eden those whom he has led to do right, and the sinner will meet in Gehinnom (Hell) those whom he has misled (Talmud Bavli Yoma 87a). The rabbis also say, “Refrain from becoming excited, and thou wilt not sin; refrain from becoming drunk, and thou wilt not sin” (Talmud Bavli Berachot 29b). The best advice for us is from rabbi Gamliel by saying, “the study of the Torah together with a worldly occupation” will lead to one not having time for sin. James said in James 1:15, that sin is first conceived in the heart. Generally, this results from idle hands, or having free time to allow for the heart to wander, and sin to be conceived and given birth into action. (James 1:15)

David says in his Psalm, blessed is the one the Lord chooses to draw near. Based on this text, how much of our faith is our choice? The Lord’s “choosing” to draw near reminds us of the Torah descriptions of not only the seed of Aaron (Vayikra / Leviticus 8:1), or of the seed of Levi (Bamidbar / Numbers 18:21-23), but also of God’s calling and choosing Israel out of all the nations of the earth to be “a special (treasured) people unto himself” (Devarim / Deuteronomy 7:6). The Lord gave Israel a distinct position, He announced to the world there is salvation in Israel, and He draws all of the nations to Himself in and through Israel by the Messiah Yeshua. He caused Israel to draw near, so that man (the nations) may also have the opportunity to dwell in His courts. One of the greatest privileges God has given to man was the approaching of His presence in his holy temple, whereby man has the opportunity to enter “His courts” and worship in His presence. The Scriptures tell us that Israel was commanded Shelosh Regalim, three times a year to draw near to the Lord in the festivals of Pesach, Shavuot, and Succot. By these things, Israel was satisfied with the goodness of His house, and in “the goodness of God’s house” David says that both the delights and blessings come to those who sincerely worship him there. The connection of Yeshua to the Shelosh Regalim is obvious. What is not so obvious is how important it is to draw near to the Lord in the Shelosh Regalim. This is achieved in the concept of knowing the one whom we are walking with, we know the Lord God in heaven, and Yeshua the Messiah if we are walking in His ways. (1 John 2:6)

David continues in His Psalm saying, וְנוֹרְאוֹת | בְּצִדְקַת תַּעֲנִנּוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִבְּטֶחַ כָּל-קְצוּי-אֶרֶץ וַיִּם רְחֻקִים: 65:5 By awesome deeds You answer us in righteousness, O God of our salvation, You who are the trust of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest sea; 65:6 Who establishes the mountains by His strength, Being girded with might; 65:7 Who stills the roaring of the seas, The roaring of their waves, And the tumult of the peoples. (NASB) With our knowledge of Yeshua the Messiah, these words provide us with a messianic expectation of sorts. The Lord calms the seas, He causes the mighty waves to settle down, and the whole surface of the ocean becomes calm and smooth. The storm becomes silent at his command, and the sea is still. The reason these verses become a messianic expectation is because this reminds us of Yeshua when he calmed the sea in Mark 4:39.

### **Mark 4:36-41**

*4:36 Leaving the crowd, they took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him. 4:37 And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. 4:38 Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, ‘Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?’ 4:39 And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, ‘Hush,*



*be still.’ And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. 4:40 And He said to them, ‘Why are you afraid? How is it that you have no faith?’ 4:41 They became very much afraid and said to one another, ‘Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?’ (NASB)*

Yeshua demonstrated great power, to command the wind and the sea to be still. In Yeshua, we find the righteousness of God, He is our Salvation, and all the ends of the earth, from the farthest sea, trust in Him. What an amazing picture of the Messiah. A comparison may also be made to *Tehillim / Psalms 107:29*.

***Tehillim / Psalms 107:24-32***

*107:24 They have seen the works of the Lord, And His wonders in the deep. 107:25 For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind, Which lifted up the waves of the sea. 107:26 They rose up to the heavens, they went down to the depths; Their soul melted away in their misery. 107:27 They reeled and staggered like a drunken man, And were at their wits’ end. 107:28 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, And He brought them out of their distresses. 107:29 He caused the storm to be still, So that the waves of the sea were hushed. 107:30 Then they were glad because they were quiet, So He guided them to their desired haven. 107:31 Let them give thanks to the Lord for His lovingkindness, And for His wonders to the sons of men! 107:32 Let them extol Him also in the congregation of the people, And praise Him at the seat of the elders. (NASB)*

We stagger in this life as we look to our Messiah for direction and guidance. In *John 6:68*, Peter said, *6:68 Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. (NASB)* He answered for all of the disciples saying, Κύριε ... ζωής (Kurie ... Zones), meaning Lord, you are life, the absolute fullness of life, both essential and ethical, real and genuine, and devoted to God (*definition of ζωής from Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*). Peter then gives three reasons why the disciples remain faithful while the others left in *John 6*, (i) πρὸς τίνα ἀπελευσόμεθα; “*To whom shall we go away?*” implying that they must attach themselves to some one as a rabbi or teacher to instruct them. Peter couldn’t imagine that anyone else could be to them what Yeshua has been thus far. (ii) They are bound to Him because He has words of eternal life, ῥήματα ζωῆς αἰωνίου ἔχεις. They have experienced that His words were spirit, truth, and life (*John 6:63*). Yeshua was teaching Torah and how to live a life that was pleasing to the Lord. They recognize the newness of life that is found within Yeshua’s words which proceed from the Father in heaven. Yeshua taught them how to more appropriately keep the Torah (the mitzvot) and how to live life with a love for God and others, even a love for their enemies. They recognized the life that is found within His words. (iii) Peter said καὶ ἡμεῖς (*John 6:69*), “*we for our part,*” no matter what others think, πεπιστεύκαμεν καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν “*have believed and know,*” and *1 John 4:16*, ἡμεῖς ἐγνώκαμεν καὶ πεπιστεύκαμεν, which is the Greek expression of conviction, “*we have believed and we know by experience*” ὅτι σὺ εἶ ... ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ Θεοῦ see *Mark 1:24, Luke 6:34, Acts 3:14, 4:27, 4:30, and Revelation 3:7*. The disciples saw the works of the Messiah, and they stood back in fear and trembling, wondering what manner of man he was. (*Mark 4:41*) The disciples saw and experienced the power of God, and the truth of His holy word, and there was nobody else who could possibly be turned to for guidance besides the Messiah of God (Yeshua).

In a similar manner, we stand in awe of God’s power, ט ויִירָאוּ | יִשְׁבִּי קִצּוֹת מְאוֹת־תִּיּוֹד מוֹצֵא־בִקְרָר וְעֶרֶב, 65:8 *They who dwell in the ends of the earth stand in awe of Your signs; You make the dawn and the sunset shout for joy. 65:9 You visit the earth and cause it to overflow; You greatly enrich it; The stream of God is full of water; You prepare their grain, for thus You prepare the earth. (NASB)* What is the stream of God? The stream is described as full of water. One possibility for the “*Stream of God*” is with regard to a stream of tradition, or halachah. Classical Judaism views God as a personal God. This concept is developed from the Scriptures where we find anthropomorphic statements about God which are understood to be linguistic metaphors that enable us to understand and otherwise would make it impossible for us to talk about our Father in heaven at all. An alternate interpretation on stream of God with regard to the “*stream of tradition*” is given by Mai-



**Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:20-21**

10:20 *'You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him and cling to Him, and you shall swear by His name. 10:21 'He is your praise and He is your God, who has done these great and awesome things for you which your eyes have seen. (NASB)*

We praise the Lord for His mercy, and for His Son Yeshua the Messiah. As David said, *Your paths drip with fatness. 65:12 The pastures of the wilderness drip, And the hills gird themselves with rejoicing. 65:13 The meadows are clothed with flocks And the valleys are covered with grain; They shout for joy, yes, they sing. (NASB)* We too shout for joy in the works of God's hands, and praise Him for keeping us true to His Word. Let's Pray!

## Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 65* has 4 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 65, Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4.*

### Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 65, Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4.

#### Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying *"For the leader: A Psalm. A song of David. For You silence is praise (Tehillim / Psalms 65:1-2)."*
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *"These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, I have long time held My peace, I have been silent, and refrained Myself; now will I cry like a travailing woman (Isaiah 42:14), for, as the children of Israel said, Your holy cities are become a wilderness, Zion is become a wilderness, Jerusalem as desolation."*
- The משל (mashal) *"the parable,"* goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon David's words speaking about the Temple being burned with fire and destroyed, and the sorrow they have as a result.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) *"expansion on the parable"* expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal by saying that God's justice causes Him to remain silent due to the extent of sin Israel had committed.
- The Concluding phrase says, *"They have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as in the day of a solemn assembly (Lamentations 2:7). And what was the noise they made? They said, Our high hand and not the Lord has done all this (Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:27); and they also said, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted? (Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:37) Hence, by the words, For You silence is praise, David meant, You are silent, and I will be silent, as is said Be silent to the Lord, and wait patiently for Him (Tehillim / Psalms 37:7)"*

#### Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying *"O You that hear prayer, unto You does all flesh come (Tehillim / Psalms 65:3)."*
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *"Scripture does not say all men, but all flesh."*
- The משל (mashal) *"the parable,"* goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon David's words making a contrast between the heart of stone and the heart of flesh, that if a man makes his heart pliable, bendable like the flesh, the Lord will then hear his prayer.



- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal by discussing how the eyes and the ears may be filled so that one cannot hear, but the Lord does not have this difficulty.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*Then God asked the children of Israel, Which sins are you praying to Me to forgive, unwitting sins, or willful sins? The children of Israel replied, We pray forgiveness not for unwitting sins alone, not for willful sins alone, nor for unknown sins alone. The tale of iniquities is too heavy for me; our transgressions, do You forgive them (Tehillim / Psalms 65:4).*”

### Part 3

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*Blessed is the man whom You choose and bring near; that he may dwell in Your courts (Tehillim / Psalms 65:5).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Rabbi Hoshai taught in the name of rabbi Samuel son of Shila who taught in the name of Rab, When David said, Master of the universe, Blessed is the man whom You bring near to court, he referred no to the court of the Temple, but to the court on high.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon David’s words beginning with an interpretation on the meaning of David’s words, Blessed is the man whom You bring near to court, that David referred no to the court on high (in heaven).
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal by comparing the court in heaven to God’s mercy, lovingkindness, and grace.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*To this the sons of Korah also referred in saying, For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere (Tehillim / Psalms 84:11). And this is also referred to in the verse Blessed are they that dwell in Your house (Tehillim / Psalms 84:5).*”

### Part 4

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*With wondrous works do You answer us in righteousness, O God of our salvation; You the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of the sea, afar off (Tehillim / Psalms 65:6).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*With regard to this verse, rabbi Hanina son of Papa asked rabbi Samuel son of Nahmani, What is meant by the words You have covered Yourself with a cloud, so that no prayer can pass through (Lamentations 3:44)?*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon David’s words discussing the reasons why prayer may or may not be answered. The concept is described as the gates of prayer, they may be open or shut, it depends. The prayer of repentance however is never shut.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal by saying there are acceptable times for prayer. Another interpretation was that the one who practices lovingkindness and righteousness will be heard.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*And the other said, I do not set aside the words of my Master, but from Scripture I merely add another proof to his comment, for directly after the verse, O God, because of the abundance of Your lovingkindness (Tehillim / Psalms 69:14), there follows, Hear me in the truth of Your salvation (Tehillim / Psalms 69:14).*”

Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 1 opens with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*For the leader. A Psalm. A song of David. For You silence is praise (Tehillim / Psalms 65:1-2).*” (א למנצח מזמור לדוד שיר,) (לך דומיה תהלה אלהים בציון.) The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, I have long time held My peace, I have been silent, and refrained Myself; now will I cry like a travailing woman (Isaiah 42:14), for, as the children of Israel*

said, *Your holy cities are become a wilderness, Zion is become a wilderness, Jerusalem as desolation.*” The rabbis say that the interpretation for “*silence is praise*” refers to what has happened to God’s holy city Jerusalem, and the Temple mount being destroyed. Rashi on *Tehillim / Psalms 65* states the following ([www.chabad.org](http://www.chabad.org)),

## Rashi’s commentary on Tehillim / Psalms 65:2

**Silence is praise to You:** *Silence is praise to You; because there is no end to Your praise, the more one praises, the more one detracts.*

**O God in Zion:** *God, Who dwells in Zion.*

*[I found the following:*

**Make glorious His praise:** *Not effusion, but silence is praise. It appears that דמיה means “praise God with awe,” with the expression “praise Ya-h.” The name consisting of two letters is translated (Exod. 15:2) as, the fear of God, for “My strength and my praise is God (י-ה).” Also (Exod. 17:16), “For a hand is on the throne of God (י-ה).” And the expression (above 2:11): “and rejoice with quaking” resembles this.*

*Shem Ephraim comments: It appears to me that Rashi should read as follows:*

**Make glorious, etc.:** *But silence to God is praise, and its interpretation is: Praise Him with awe, etc. “The intention is that the word דמיה is divided into two words. For it was difficult for him to understand why it should appear that one is to recite any praise of the Holy One, blessed be He. Therefore he says, ” Make glorious His praise, “ but not excessively, for that is equivalent to detracting. Therefore he says, ” To You is silence (דום), “ meaning that silence is fitting, but י-ה is praise, i.e., with the name consisting of two letters. His statement that the expression, ” rejoice with quaking “ resembles this, should read: ” Worship the Lord with awe and rejoice with quaking. “ His intention is that both verses mean that one may worship the Lord with awe; that is, one may worship the Holy One, blessed be He, with the name י-ה. Otherwise, worship with love is superior. It is also possible that the reading, ” and it appears that, etc. “ is a copyist’s error. It should read instead: ” But be silent and praise Him with the name י-ה, in the expression Hallelujah. But this needs study. Later I found (below 68:5) that Rashi writes something similar. There, for him to write that the expression “and rejoice with quaking” resembles this is more appropriate, because there it says: “and rejoice before Him.” Compare. Therefore, it appears to me that this entire statement was erroneously copied here.) The gloss belongs below 66:2.]*

*Another explanation:*

**To You is silence praise, O God, in Zion:** *That You were silent and still concerning Your enemies’ deeds in Zion is praise to You, for You are able to take revenge, yet You are slow to anger.*

Rashi appears to be contrasting the Hebrew word “*domah*” דומה meaning “*like, alike, similar, resembling,*” and “*domiah*” דומיה meaning “*silence, quiet, stillness, hush, silentness.*” He appears to separate the word

דומיה as a composition of two words, דומ-יה, Dom meaning “silent” or דומה “who is like,” and Yah meaning “God.” Rashi translates this as “Praise God with awe.” His proof texts are taken from *Shemot / Exodus 15:2 and 17:16*. He says that silence is a form of giving praise to the Lord. Note how the Torah states that due to Israel’s sin, the land will enjoy its sabbath rests when it lays desolate (*Vayikra / Leviticus 26:34-35, 2 Chronicles 36:21*). The idea is that the silence of the land from sin due to those who live in the land is a form of worship. We to worship the Lord with both awe, rejoicing, quaking, and silence. The silence of the Lord in answering prayer, is also a form of praise to His name by reason that He is slow to anger and also able to take revenge upon the enemy.

The midrash continues saying the following,

*Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised You, is burned with fire. Will You refrain Yourself from these things, O Lord? (Isaiah 64:10-11), God replied, Fury is not in Me (Isaiah 27:4), as if to say, I cannot do anything for you; the measure of justice requires that I do anything for you; the measure of justice requires that I refrain. And God went on, O that I could give the hostile nations over to destruction as briars and thorns in flame. By these words, the Holy One blessed be He, meant, I could do something against them, but the measure of justice makes Me refrain in silence. Therefore, in saying For You silence is praise, David implied, All men give You praise because You could remain silent. For You were silent as what they did to You in Zion, and at the noise that they made in Your holy house, as is said, They have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as in the day of a solemn assembly (Lamentations 2:7). (Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 1)*

The rabbis say “*the measure of justice requires that I do anything for you; the measure of justice requires that I refrain.*” What does this mean? This may be a way of saying God’s mercy allows for a period of time for repentance. God’s silence could be designed to draw men to Him, to pray, and to allow us to solve our own problems of injustice. *Michah 6:8* states, “*He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?*” (הַגִּיד לְךָ : אָדָם מִה־טוֹב וּמִה־יְהוָה דּוֹרֵשׁ מִמֶּךָ כִּי אִם־עֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט וְאַהֲבַת חֶסֶד וְהִצַּנֵּעַ לְכַת עַם־אֱלֹהֶיךָ : Note the Hebrew text says “to love grace/mercy” (אַהֲבַת חֶסֶד). The phrase, “*the measure of justice requires that I refrain,*” could be a parallel to Michah, the Lord remains still, so that man can correct his injustices, be kind towards others, and walk humbly before God, etc. Yeshua said in *Matthew 7:18*,

### **Matthew 7:1-8**

*7:1 ‘Do not judge so that you will not be judged. 7:2 ‘For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. 7:3 ‘Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 7:4 ‘Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye? 7:5 ‘You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye. 7:6 ‘Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces. 7:7 ‘Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 7:8 ‘For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. (NASB)*

The concept here may be that our Father in heaven does not judge in the manner that we do. Yeshua is not telling us to remain silent in the midst of our brother’s sin, but to have mercy toward one another since we have the tendency to judge for selfish reasons, as compared to the Lord who judges righteously. We have loving kindness and mercy towards others because we are guilty of the same or of similar sins. This is why Yeshua said, 7:3 *‘Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that*



*is in your own eye? 7:4 'Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? 7:5 'You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. (NASB)*

Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 1 concludes saying, “*They have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as in the day of a solemn assembly (Lamentations 2:7). And what was the noise they made? They said, Our high hand and not the Lord has done all this (Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:27); and they also said, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted? (Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:37) Hence, by the words, For You silence is praise, David meant, You are silent, and I will be silent, as is said Be silent to the Lord, and wait patiently for Him (Tehillim / Psalms 37:7).*” David instructs in a previous Psalm to be silent, to rest patiently for the Lord, to cease from anger and do not seek wrath against those who do evil to you. Wrath and hatred only leads to evil deeds. Those who are wicked will be cut off soon enough. Those who live in sin will be cut off soon enough. Yeshua’s words in *Matthew 7:1-8* may also be paralleled to our waiting upon the Lord to move in a man’s life to turn from sin. Of course we should warn our brothers and sisters if he or she is found living in sin. Condemnation however is not what we are about, let God’s Word speak as a testimony against those who live their lives in opposition to the Torah. The only true protection in this life is for those who wait patiently upon the Lord God in heaven.

Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*O You that hear prayer, unto You does all flesh come (Tehillim / Psalms 65:3).*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Scripture does not say all men, but all flesh.*” It is interesting how the rabbis describe those who come to the Lord and those whom the Lord hears. The Midrash takes the Scriptures from the Aramaic Targum as compared to the MT which states, *Tehillim / Psalms 65:4 How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring near to You To dwell in Your courts. We will be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Your holy temple. (NASB)* Note the parallel of the goodness of God’s house, His holy temple, to hearing the prayer, and that all flesh come. There might be an inference here, to the body as a holy temple of the Lord.

The rabbis continue saying the following:

*From these words the Sages inferred that unless a man makes his heart as yielding as flesh, his prayer will not be heard. Indeed, in repentance, we have made our hearts like flesh. You hear the prayer of all flesh, will You not hear ours? The Holy One blessed be He, replied, Into you also will the vow be performed (Tehillim / Psalms 65:2). Hence, it is said, O You that hear prayer, and unto You does all flesh come (Tehillim / Psalms 65:3). (Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 2)*

The rabbis suggest that one needs to make his heart yielding. What does it mean to make the heart yielding? It could be a reference to making our hearts gentle and not hard like stone. The idea of all flesh coming to the Lord is found within the context of the softening of the heart, which is again analogous being gentle, showing mercy, having kindness, etc. We cannot come boldly before the throne of God without these things in our hearts.

In *Jeremiah 31:31*, the Lord said, ‘*Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, (NASB)* In *31:32*, the Lord says that this is not the covenant that He cut/made with your Fathers in the day that He delivered them by the hand from eretz Mitzrayim (land of Egypt). This is a new covenant, a different covenant, an eternal covenant a covenant that will cause the Lord to *וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לְאֱלֹהִים וְהָמָּה יְהוָה לִי לְעָם* “*I will be there God and they will be a people to me.*”

### **Jeremiah 31:31-34**

*31:31 'Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 31:32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,' declares the Lord. 31:33*

*'But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,' declares the Lord, 'I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 31:34 'They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,' declares the Lord, 'for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.'* (NASB)

### ספר ירמיה פרק לא פסוק ל-לד

ל הנה ימים באים נאם-יהוה וְכָרַתִּי אֶת-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת-בֵּית יְהוּדָה בְּרִית חֲדָשָׁה: לֹא לֹא כְבָרִית אֲשֶׁר כָּרַתִּי אֶת-אֲבוֹתֵם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא בְּיָדִם לְהוֹצִיאֵם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר-הִמָּה הִפְרוּ אֶת-בְּרִיתִי וְאֲנֹכִי בָעַלְתִּי בָם נְאֻם-יְהוָה: לֹב כִּי זֹאת הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר אֲכַרֵּת אֶת-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל אַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים הָהֵם נְאֻם-יְהוָה נִתְּתִי אֶת-תּוֹרָתִי בְּקִרְבָּם וְעַל-לִבָּם אֲכַתְּבֶנָּה וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לְאֱלֹהִים וְהָמָּה יִהְיוּ-לִי לְעָם: לֹג וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד אִישׁ אֶת-רֵעֵהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶת-אָחִיו לֵאמֹר דַּעוּ אֶת-יְהוָה כִּי-כֹלֵם יִדְעוּ אוֹתִי לְמַקְטִנָּם וְעַד-גְּדוּלָם נְאֻם-יְהוָה כִּי אֶסְלַח לְעוֹנֵם וְלַחַטָּאתָם לֹא אֲזַכֵּר-עוֹד: לֹד פֹּה | אָמַר יְהוָה נִתֵּן שְׁמִשׁ לְאוֹר יוֹמָם חֶקֶת יָרַח וְכֹכָבִים לְאוֹר לַיְלָה:

Not only will the Lord dwell among us He will also write His Torah on our hearts. The point is that the Lord writing his Torah upon our hearts should not cause our hearts to become hard as stone. On the contrary, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell among us, on the inside, and we are transformed, and being conformed unto the likeness of Yeshua the Messiah. In the בְּרִית חֲדָשָׁה (New Covenant) that God made in Yeshua the Messiah we have an intimate relationship between us and our Father in heaven, since the Word of God is written upon our hearts. Ezekiel spoke of this prophetically in *Ezekiel 11:19* saying *“Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh”* (יֵט וְנִתְּתִי לָהֶם לֵב אֶחָד וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבָּכֶם וְהִסְרֹתִי לֵב הָאֶבֶן מִבְּשָׂרְךָם וְנִתְּתִי לָהֶם לֵב בְּשָׂר: ) and *Ezekiel 36:26* *“Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”* (NASB) כֹּו וְנִתְּתִי לָכֶם לֵב חֲדָשׁ וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבָּכֶם) This is also what the apostle Paul was thinking when he wrote in *2 Corinthians 5:17* *ἵνα ὅσταν εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις: τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινὰ: 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.* (NASB) This may be what the rabbis are suggesting in Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 2, when they say, *the Sages inferred that unless a man makes his heart as yielding as flesh, his prayer will not be heard. Indeed, in repentance, we have made our hearts like flesh.* The unchanging Torah of the Lord is written upon our hearts, and because of the mercy God has imparted towards us, our hearts are also to be gentle towards others. The Midrash continues with a parable:

*A mortal king can he give ear to two or three men? He cannot give ear to all of them at once. Not so the Holy One blessed be He, though all men prayed at the same time, He would hear their prayers as if all were one. A mortal his ear can be filled so that he does not hear, and his eye can be filled so that he does not see; but of the Holy One blessed be He, it is said The Eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the Ear filled with hearing (Ecclesiastes 1:8). Hence, it is said, O You that hear prayer. A man coming into a synagogue finds the congregation praying and begins his prayers alongside theirs, and the Holy One blessed be He, hears all of the prayers, his and theirs. Hence it is said, O You that hear prayers, and unto You does all flesh come. Scripture say, Yea, when I cry and call for help, He shuts out my prayer (Lamentations 3:8), and says further; You have covered Yourself with a cloud, so that no prayer can pass through (Lamentations 3:44). (Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 2)*

Again, the Lord is not like us. He can hear all the prayers of men, as opposed to the mortal king who can

only hear one man's petition at a time. Note something here, the midrash speaks of making our hearts like flesh, and repentance. Our prayers are connected to our relationship with the Lord. We need to take our relationship serious. Due to our relationship with the Lord, understand that God is always teaching you. When life is suddenly full of problems or inconveniences, it may be time to stop and ask: *"Why are these things happening to me? or Is the Lord trying to get my attention?"* When the problems in life seem to be larger than minor inconveniences, for example, an auto accident or financial stress, then the Lord may be calling out to you on a different level. There may be something deep within yourself that needs to be rectified, and so your problems most likely have something to do with you. Take for example, if someone else is treating you badly, you may be saying in your heart, well my problems are not my fault, they are because of someone else. The reason another person may be treating you badly is because of what you have done in the past. The Lord may also be trying to work patience and compassion in your heart, something that is missing now, but will be developed through these difficult times. We ultimately do not know the major cause of our problems but we do know that the Lord God our Father in heaven is in control.

Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 2 concludes saying, *"Then God asked the children of Israel, Which sins are you praying to Me to forgive, unwitting sins, or willful sins? The children of Israel replied, We pray forgiveness not for unwitting sins alone, not for willful sins alone, nor for unknown sins alone. The tale of iniquities is too heavy for me; our transgressions, do You forgive them (Tehillim / Psalms 65:4)."* The point here is that when we sin, sometimes they are unwillful, and most times a sin is willful. How do we distinguish between these and the Torah text that states there is only a sacrifice for unwitting sins? (*Vayikra / Leviticus 1-5*) The difference is that one is not planning sin, making plans to sin or to do evil to another person. Our hearts should be directed to doing good, serving God, and loving others. We should not be about the business of planning to sin. That is the interpretation of the Torah text, and *Hebrews 10*, that say there is no sacrifice or atonement for willful sin.

Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 3 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying *"Blessed is the man whom You choose and bring near, that he may dwell in Your courts (Tehillim / Psalms 65:5)."* The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *"Rabbi Hoshaiia taught in the name of rabbi Samuel son of Shila who taught in the name of Rab, When David said, Master of the universe, Blessed is the man whom You bring near to court, he referred not to the court of the Temple, but to the court on high."* The entire midrash states the following:

<p><b>מדרש תהלים פרק סה סימן ג</b>  ג אשרי תבחר ותקרב ישכון הצריך.  אמר רב הושעיא בשם רב שמואל בר  שילא משמיה דרב, אמר דוד רבונו  של עולם אשרי למי שאתה מקרבו  לחצר, ולא בחצר אלא במרום, מה  יקר חסדך אלהים ובני אדם בצל כנ-  פיך יחסיון ירויון מדשן ביתך (תהלים  לו ח ט), גם בני קרח אמרו כי טוב יום  בחצריך (שם תהלים פד יא), וכן הוא  אומר אשרי יושבי ביתך (שם שם  תהלים פ"ד ה).</p>	<p><b>Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 3</b>  3. <i>Blessed is the man whom You choose and bring near, that he may dwell in Your courts (Tehillim / Psalms 65:5). Rabbi Hoshaiia taught in the name of rabbi Samuel son of Shila who taught in the name of Rab, When David said, Master of the universe, Blessed is the man whom You bring near to court, he referred not to the court of the Temple, but to the court on high. This court he also referred to in the words How precious is Your loving kindness, O God. Therefore the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings. They will be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Your house (Tehillim / Psalms 36:9). To this the sons of Korah also referred in saying, For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere (Tehillim / Psalms 84:11). And this is also referred to in the verse Blessed are they that dwell in Your house (Tehillim / Psalms 84:5).</i></p>
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The rabbis say that when David says, *65:5 How happy the one you will choose and bring near; he will abide in Your courts. The righteous will say, "We will be satisfied in the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple."* (EMC) the abiding in Your courts is a reference not to the earthly tabernacle or temple, but to the heavenly court. Studying the Scriptures for descriptions of the courts of God, the Tanach mentions God's throne in the *1 Kings 22:19, Isaiah 6:1-4, Ezekiel 1:24-28, Daniel 7:2-10, and Zechariah 3:1-7.*



### **1 Kings 22:19**

22:19 Micaiah said, "Therefore, hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right and on His left. (NASB)

### **Isaiah 6:1-4**

6:1 In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. 6:2 Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 6:3 And one called out to another and said, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.' 6:4 And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. (NASB)

### **Ezekiel 1:24-28**

1:24 I also heard the sound of their wings like the sound of abundant waters as they went, like the voice of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army camp; whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings. 1:25 And there came a voice from above the expanse that was over their heads; whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings. 1:26 Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, was a figure with the appearance of a man. 1:27 Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and there was a radiance around Him. 1:28 As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking. (NASB)

### **Daniel 7:2-10**

7:2 Daniel said, 'I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. 7:3 'And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another. 7:4 'The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it. 7:5 'And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!' 7:6 'After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. 7:7 'After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. 7:8 'While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts. 7:9 'I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire. 7:10 'A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened. (NASB)

***Zechariah 3:1-7***

*3:1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. 3:2 The Lord said to Satan, ‘The Lord rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?’ 3:3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel. 3:4 He spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, ‘Remove the filthy garments from him.’ Again he said to him, ‘See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes.’ 3:5 Then I said, ‘Let them put a clean turban on his head.’ So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the Lord was standing by. 3:6 And the angel of the Lord admonished Joshua, saying, 3:7 ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘If you will walk in My ways and if you will perform My service, then you will also govern My house and also have charge of My courts, and I will grant you free access among these who are standing here. (NASB)*

In each of these descriptions from the Tanach, we see the Lord sitting upon His throne. In Judaism, some philosophers such as Sa‘adiah Gaon and Maimonides, interpret the mention of a “*throne*” as allegory. This however is not the general interpretation. The heavenly throne room is a description of the location of the heavenly court, the place where Satan debated with the Lord over Job in *Job 1*. Micaiah’s extended prophecy (*1 Kings 22:19*) is the first detailed depiction of a heavenly throne room in Judaism. *Zechariah 3* describes a vision of the heavenly throne room, though the “*throne*” of God is not mentioned. In this vision, Satan and the Angel of the Lord contend over Joshua the High Priest in the time of his grandson Eliashib the High Priest. The Dead Sea Scrolls also has the concept of the heavenly throne. In the Apostolic Writings, the throne of God is discussed in several places. Matthew has Yeshua discussing the topic of the throne of God with regard to making an oath, *Matthew 23:20* ‘Therefore, whoever swears by the altar, swears both by the altar and by everything on it. 23:21 ‘And whoever swears by the temple, swears both by the temple and by Him who dwells within it. 23:22 ‘And whoever swears by heaven, swears both by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it. (NASB) The book of Revelation describes the Seven Spirits of God which surround the throne, and John states before the throne there appears to be a sea of glass clear as crystal. In addition, he says, the throne is surrounded by a lion, an ox, a man, and a flying eagle; each with six wings and covered with eyes, who constantly repeat “*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.*” It is also said that “*out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices.*” (*Revelation 4*) The Apostolic Writings continues the Jewish identification of heaven as the place of the throne of God.

Based upon these Scriptures, the heavenly court is the place for decisions of a spiritual nature, that also pertains to the physical created realm (e.g. men on Earth). The Lord has also given the power or right of deciding Law to man. For example, in a broad sense, the halakhah comprises the practical application of the mitzvot in the Torah, as developed in the Mishnah and subsequent rabbinic literature. Issues with decisions on dubious cases, the interpretation of Scripture, its application, etc, is vested in the Rabbis as its teachers and expositors. In ancient Israel, the Torah and decision making regarding the Torah was chiefly in the hands of the priests and the Levites. Later the king was also to make his own copy of the Torah and to lead the people in God’s ways (e.g. *to help facilitate keeping the people on the straight and narrow path*). The high court of justice in Jerusalem was formed for the purpose of decision making (Sanhedrin) and for ruling on difficult questions. This court was also composed of priests and Levites (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 17:9-18, 31:9, 33:10, Jeremiah 18:18, Malachi 2:7; 2 Chrononicles. 19:8-11 and 31:4*). In the Talmudic times the Scribes (“*Soferim*”), also called “*The Wise*” (“*Hakhamim*”), claimed to have received the true interpretation of the Law as “*the tradition of the Elders or Fathers*” in direct line from Moshe, the Prophets, and the men of the Great Synagogue (*Talmud Bavli Avot 1:1, Josephus, “Ant.” xiii. 10, § 6; 16, § 2; x. 4, § 1, “Contra Ap.” i. 8, and Matthew 15:2*). In addition, Yeshua also suggested this to be true in *Matthew 23* when he said to do all that the Pharisees tell you to do, but do not do as they do because they lived hypocritical lives. The Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, included men to whom was applied the verse in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 17:8-11, “17:8 ‘If any case is too difficult for you to decide, between one kind of homicide or*

*another, between one kind of lawsuit or another, and between one kind of assault or another, being cases of dispute in your courts, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the Lord your God chooses. 17:9 'So you shall come to the Levitical priest or the judge who is in office in those days, and you shall inquire of them and they will declare to you the verdict in the case. 17:10 'You shall do according to the terms of the verdict which they declare to you from that place which the Lord chooses; and you shall be careful to observe according to all that they teach you. 17:11 'According to the terms of the law which they teach you, and according to the verdict which they tell you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside from the word which they declare to you, to the right or the left. 17:12 'The man who acts presumptuously by not listening to the priest who stands there to serve the Lord your God, nor to the judge, that man shall die; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel.' (NASB)*

The power of the Rabbis is threefold: (i) to amplify the Torah either by prohibitory statutes for the prevention of transgressions (“*gezerot*”) or by mandatory statutes for the improvement of the moral or religious life of the people (“*takkanah*”). They also have introduced new rites and customs (“*minhagim*”, מנהג). (ii) to expound the Law according to certain rules of hermeneutics, and thereby evolve new statutes as implied in the letter of the Law; and, (iii) to impart additional instruction based upon tradition.

The midrash states that David was speaking of drawing near to the Lord, to the heavenly court. Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 3 concludes saying, “*To this the sons of Korah also referred in saying, For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere (Tehillim / Psalms 84:11). And this is also referred to in the verse Blessed are they that dwell in Your house (Tehillim / Psalms 84:5).*” The idea is that a man is blessed when the Lord allows him to enter into His courts. We thank Yeshua the Messiah for enabling us to enter into the courts of God and having access to His throne. Blessed indeed is the man to whom the Lord hears his prayers in the name of Yeshua the Messiah, in the name of God’s Salvation!

Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 4 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*With wondrous works do You answer us in righteousness, O God of our salvation; You the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of the sea, afar off (Tehillim / Psalms 65:6).*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*With regard to this verse, rabbi Hanina son of Papa asked rabbi Samuel son of Nahmani, What is meant by the words You have covered Yourself with a cloud, so that no prayer can pass through (Lamentations 3:44)?*” What is meant by the words You have covered Yourself with a cloud so that no prayer can pass through? The rabbis reference *Lamentations 3:44*.

### ***Lamentations 3:40-50***

*3:40 Let us examine and probe our ways, And let us return to the Lord. 3:41 We lift up our heart and hands Toward God in heaven; 3:42 We have transgressed and rebelled, You have not pardoned. 3:43 You have covered Yourself with anger And pursued us; You have slain and have not spared. 3:44 You have covered Yourself with a cloud So that no prayer can pass through. 3:45 You have made us mere offscouring and refuse In the midst of the peoples. 3:46 All our enemies have opened their mouths against us. 3:47 Panic and pitfall have befallen us, Devastation and destruction; 3:48 My eyes run down with streams of water Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people. 3:49 My eyes pour down unceasingly, Without stopping, 3:50 Until the Lord looks down And sees from heaven. (NASB)*

Solomon is speaking of the people seeking the Lord, and because of their sins it appears the Lord does not hear their prayer which is described as the Lord covering Himself with a cloud so that no prayer can pass through. He describes the situation by drawing a parallel to Israel as a dung heap and the cloud as a covering so the Lord does not see or smell the stench of dung. These words of Solomon paint us a picture of what David says in *Tehillim / Psalms 141:2 May my prayer be counted as incense before You; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering. (NASB)* and *Revelation 8:4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel’s hand. (NASB)* Our prayer goes before the Lord as a fragrant and sweet smell before the Lord. If we hold things in our heart, darkness, sin, hatred, etc, these things are considered as dung and produce an awful stench in our prayer life. The reason is we take these things and



pray selfishly for the detriment of others rather than for the help and peace between brothers, enemies, man and God. *Lamentations 3:44* states, :סְכֹתָהּ בְּעָנָן לָךְ מֵעֲבוּר תְּפִלָּהּ: 3:44 *You have covered Yourself with a cloud So that no prayer can pass through. (NASB)* Breaking down the sentence, the idea here is סְכֹתָהּ meaning “to entwine as a screen; by implication, to fence in, cover over, (figuratively) protect or cover, defense, defend, hedge in, join together, set, shut up,” בְּעָנָן meaning “a cloud (as covering the sky), e.g. the nimbus or thunder-cloud or cloud,” מֵעֲבוּר meaning “to cross over; used very widely of any transition (literal or figurative; transitive, intransitive, intensive, causative),” and תְּפִלָּהּ meaning “intercession, supplication; by implication, a hymn, prayer.” The idea here is the Lord covers Himself because of our sins. If our prayers proceed from the heart, we should ask the Lord first according to *Tehillim / Psalms 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. (NASB)* and then please let me bring my petition before You Oh Lord.

The rabbis continue saying the following:

*Rabbi Samuel son of Nahmani answered, There are times when the gates of prayer are open, and times when the gates of prayer are shut, but the gates of repentance are never barred. The words, You the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of the sea, afar off, mean that repentance is like the sea which is never barred, so that whoever desires to bathe in it, bathes in it whenever he desires; whenever a man desires to repent, the Holy One blessed be He, receives him. For prayer, however, there are set times. Rabbi Jose son of Halafta taught, in the words But as for me, let my prayer be unto You, O Lord, in an acceptable time (Tehillim / Psalms 69:14), an acceptable time shows that there are set times for prayer. Rabbi Berechiah, rabbi Helbo, and rabbi Anan son of Azzai and rabbi Akiva differed in their comments. One of them maintained, He who practices lovingkindness may feel assured that his prayer will be heard, for it is said, Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in lovingkindness (Hosea 10:12). And what does the verse go on to say? That is the time to seek the Lord, meaning that when such a man prays to the Holy One blessed be He, he is heard. (Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 4)*

The rabbis believe there are times when the gates of prayer are open and other times when the gates of prayer are shut. This is like the cloud that covers the Lord so He does not hear us by reason of our sin, or the that He does not answer our prayers for some other reason. The midrash states that the gates of repentance however are never closed. The gate analogy offers us an interesting way of viewing repentance. Take for example, the gate as something that would bar entrance to a house or a court. We read of the gates of heaven in *Revelation 21:12*.

#### **Revelation 21:21-27**

*21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. 21:22 I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 21:23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. 21:24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. 21:25 In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; 21:26 and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; 21:27 and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. (NASB)*

The book of Revelation speaks of the gates of heaven and the nations, peoples, and kings walking through these gates, and these gates never closing. When the rabbis speak of the gates of repentance never closing, this includes both that of prayer, and of walking through, righteous deeds, those deeds meet for repentance.



The deeds that are done to show a repentant heart, is what John said in *Matthew 3:7-12*.

### **Matthew 3:7-12**

*3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 3:8 'Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance; 3:9 and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. 3:10 'The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 3:11 'As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 3:12 'His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.'* (NASB)

This is the same reasoning that Yeshua used when he said in *Matthew 5:22* 'But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. 5:23 'Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 5:24 leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. 5:25 'Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. (NASB) The man who was repentant brought a sacrifice in fulfillment of the command to do so according to the requirements of the covenant. Repentance included both a heart felt sorrow, prayer seeking forgiveness, action to make right the wrong, and to turn from sin towards God's ways by ceasing to sin and making right what was wrong. Notice how the rabbis say these same things in the midrash, *the words, You the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of the sea, afar off, mean that repentance is like the sea which is never barred, so that whoever desires to bathe in it, bathes in it whenever he desires; whenever a man desires to repent, the Holy One blessed be He, receives him. For prayer, however, there are set times.* The bathing is a reference to the mikvah and consequently to one returning to fellowship with God, and with the covenant community. The rabbis are making a distinction between repentance and prayer suggesting that repentance, which includes all of these things, a man is never barred from doing. Prayer on the other hand has set times. This concept is expounded upon by *Rabbi Jose son of Halafta who said, in the words But as for me, let my prayer be unto You, O Lord, in an acceptable time (Tehillim / Psalms 69:14), an acceptable time shows that there are set times for prayer.* The question is what is the acceptable time that David is speaking of? The midrash states, *חד מנהון אמר מי שהוא (הושע י יב) גומל חסדים יהא מבושר שתהא תפלתו נשמעת, שנאמר זרעו לכם לצדקה [וגוי'] (הושע י יב) One of them maintained, He who practices lovingkindness (גומל חסדים) may feel assured that his prayer will be heard, for it is said, Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in lovingkindness (Hosea 10:12).* Note how they say, the one who practices chasidim (חסדים), mercies, graces, lovingkindness, may be assured that his prayer will be heard. This follows with John's statements in *Matthew 3*, and Yeshua's statements in *Matthew 5*. The rabbis continue saying *And what does the verse go on to say? That is the time to seek the Lord, meaning that when such a man prays to the Holy One blessed be He, he is heard,* suggesting that a man should seek the Lord in prayer from a repentant heart. This is the manner in which David acted throughout his life, humble and repentant, and stands as an example for us as well to live humble and repentant lives before the Lord.

Midrash Tehillim 65, Part 4 concludes saying, "And the other said, I do not set aside the words of my Master, but from Scripture I merely add another proof to his comment, for directly after the verse, O God, because of the abundance of Your lovingkindness (Tehillim / Psalms 69:14), there follows, Hear me in the truth of Your salvation (Tehillim / Psalms 69:14)." The rabbis conclude saying that the Lord is abundant (יד) and that He hears us (יְהוָה יִשְׁעָךְ):

in the truth (בְּאֱמֻנָה) of His salvation (יְשׁוּעָה). Taking all of these things we have been learning regarding what the rabbis are saying about prayer, heaven, and the courts of God, notice what Yeshua says regarding prayer in *John 14:11-18*.

**John 14:11-18**

*14:11 'Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves. 14:12 'Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. 14:13 'Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14:14 'If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. 14:15 'If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. 14:16 'I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper; that He may be with you forever; 14:17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. 14:18 'I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. (NASB)*

Yeshua speaks of being one with the father, of doing the works that he did, of believing in him and in our Father in heaven, of praying in His name (Yeshua) , of praying in the name of God’s Salvation, and that the Lord will hear our prayers. Does this not sound very similar to this week’s midrash? Yeshua promises to never leave us, that he will come to us, he will send a helper, the Holy Spirit of God, to dwell inside of us, etc. Yeshua provides a great hope and expectation that the Lord will move in our lives. Note also that his statement in *John 14:15* to keep the commandments, corresponds to living a repentant life, and bringing our lives humbly in line with God’s Word. Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

Your works are beyond our capacity to verbally describe. We praise Your Holy Name for the strength and the faith that You have given us. Thank you for keeping us on the path of righteousness and truth. We thank You for Your strength in our lives, for David’s words which reveal to us why we should praise You, and for drawing us nearer to You. Please foster within our lives a deep respect and fear of You Lord, coupled with a desire to draw near to You in a greater way in our lives. Thank You for giving us the faith to believe in Yeshua the King Messiah! Please have mercy on us, forgive us for our sins. We 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!

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

## Notes