

ספר תהילים ע | Tehillim / Psalms 70

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Those who seek instruction from the Lord will be glad and exult in His word!

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 70:1-6*, the psalm opens saying, א לְמַנְצֵחַ לְדָוִד לְהַזְכִּיר: *For the choir director. A Psalm of David; for a memorial. (NASB)* a psalm, a song for remembrance. In Parashat Yitro, *Shemot / Exodus 20:24*, the Lord said "... in every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you." (NASB) Notice how the Scriptures say the altar is to be built in a particular way (without tools) and not to be built in places that are chosen arbitrarily, but at places which the Lord has chosen. David continues by seeking the Lord for help saying, ב אֱלֹהִים לְהַצִּילַנִי יְהוָה לְעֲזָרְתִי חוֹשָׁה: *70:1 O God, hasten to deliver me; O Lord, hasten to my help! (NASB)* similar to *Tehillim / Psalms 38:22*. He defines the kind of help that he is seeking saying, ג יִבְשׂוּ וַיִּחְפְּרוּ מִבְּקָשֵׁי נַפְשִׁי יִסְגּוּ אַחֲזֹר וַיִּכְלְמוּ חַפְצֵי רַעְתִּי: *70:2 Let those be ashamed and humiliated Who seek my life; Let those be turned back and dishonored Who delight in my hurt. 70:3 Let those be turned back because of their shame Who say, 'Aha, aha!'* (NASB) David speaks of shame and humiliation for those who seek his life. The idea is for those who are in the covenant relationship with the Lord, they will also be in fellowship with David and seeking the Lord God in heaven at His Tabernacle. In previous psalms, David describes the peace and safety that is present before the Lord at His Tabernacle. He continues saying, ד יִשׂוּבוּ עַל-עֵקֶב בְּשִׂמְחָה הָאֱמָרִים הָאֵלֶּה | *70:4 Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; And let those who love Your salvation say continually, 'Let God be magnified.'* (NASB) What is the joy of the Lord? The joy of the Lord is the gladness of heart that comes from knowing God, abiding in the Messiah, and being filled with the Holy Spirit. The joy of the Lord is also found within the Salvation of God. According to the Scriptures, Salvation consists of a future expectation (eternal), and a present temporal salvation from one's enemies. The temporal aspect is what David is seeking from the Lord in the psalm saying, ה יִשְׂשׂוּ וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ | *70:5 But I am afflicted and needy; Hasten to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O Lord, do not delay. (NASB)* Here, David says the Lord is his help and deliverer. Elsewhere, we read the Lord is my Light (*John 1:7-9; John 12:35, 36, 46, and 1 John 1:5*). This statement is found in *Tehillim / Psalms 27:1*, and the idea may be found in *Isaiah 60:1, 20, Micah 7:8*, and elsewhere. The light of God is a reference to "His righteousness," and is the beauty of the Name of God. The Lord is my Salvation (*Tehillim / Psalm 18:2, 62:2-6*), whom shall I fear? "If the Lord is for us, who can be against us?" (*Romans 8:31*). Whom shall we fear? (*Tehillim / Psalm 118:6 The LORD is for me; I will not fear; What can man do to me?*).

עברית Hebrew ארמי Aramaic ελληνικός Greek

ספר תהלים פרק ע	ספר טוביה פרק ע	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 70
א לְמַנְצֵחַ לְדָוִד לְהַזְכִּיר: ב אֱלֹהִים לְהַצִּילַנִי יְהוָה לְעֲזָרְתִי חוֹשָׁה: ג יִבְשׂוּ וַיִּחְפְּרוּ מִבְּקָשֵׁי נַפְשִׁי יִסְגּוּ אַחֲזֹר וַיִּכְלְמוּ חַפְצֵי רַעְתִּי: ד יִשׂוּבוּ עַל-עֵקֶב בְּשִׂמְחָה הָאֱמָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הָאֵלֶּה:	א לשבחא על יד דוד למדכר על צריר לבונתא: ב אלהא לפצאה יתנא יהוה לסעידנא למסעדי זריז: ג יבהתון ויתחסדון תבעי נפשי יזרון לאחורא ויכספון דצביין בישתי: ד יתובון לא-חורא מטול די כמנו עלי יתפרעון היך בהתהון דארמין עלי דינא דינא:	70:1 εις το τέλος τῷ Δαυιδ εις ἀνάμνησιν εις το σῶσαί με κύριον ὁ θεός εις την βοήθειάν μου πρόσχεσ 70:2 αισχυνθείσαν και ἐντραπήθησαν οἱ ζητοῦντές μου την ψυχὴν ἀποστραφήθησαν εις τὰ ὀπίσω και καταισχυνθείσαν οἱ βουλόμενοί μοι κακά

<p>ה יִשְׁאוּ וַיִּשְׁמְחוּ בָּךְ כָּל-מְבַקְשֶׁיךָ וַיֹּאמְרוּ תָמִיד יִגְדַל אֱלֹהִים אֱהָבִי יִשׁוּעָתְךָ: וַאֲנִי עֲנֵי וְאֶכְיוֹן אֱלֹהִים חַוְשָׁה-לִּי עֲזָרִי וּמִפְּלֹטֵי אֶתְּהָהּ אֶל-תִּאֲחָר:</p>	<p>ה ייחדון וידוצון במימרך כל תבעי אולפן מינך ויימרון תדירא יסגי יק- ריה דיהוה רחמי פורקנד: ו ואנא עניא וחשוכא אלהא זריז לי סעדי ושזבותי את הוא יהוה לא תחר תוחר:</p>	<p>70:3 ἀποστραφείησαν παρατύκα αἰσχυρόμενοι οἱ λέγοντές μοι εὖγε εὖγε 70:4 ἀγαλλιάσθωσαν καὶ εὐφρανθήτωσαν ἐπὶ σοὶ πάντες οἱ ζητοῦντές σε καὶ λεγέτωσαν διὰ παντός μεγαλυνθήτω ὁ θεός οἱ ἀγαπῶντες τὸ σωτήριόν σου 70:5 ἀγαλλιάσθωσαν καὶ εὐφρανθήτωσαν ἐπὶ σοὶ πάντες οἱ ζητοῦντές σε καὶ λεγέτωσαν διὰ παντός μεγαλυνθήτω ὁ θεός οἱ ἀγαπῶντες τὸ σωτήριόν σου 70:6 ἐγὼ δὲ πτωχὸς καὶ πένης ὁ θεός βοήθησόν μοι βοηθός μου καὶ ῥύστης μου εἴ σύ κύριε μὴ χρονίσης</p>
<p>Tehillim / Psalms 70 For the choir director. A Psalm of David; for a memorial. 70:1 O God, hasten to deliver me; O Lord, hasten to my help! 70:2 Let those be ashamed and humiliat- ed Who seek my life; Let those be turned back and dishonored Who delight in my hurt. 70:3 Let those be turned back because of their shame Who say, ‘Aha, aha!’ 70:4 Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; And let those who love Your salvation say con- tinually, ‘Let God be magnified.’ 70:5 But I am afflicted and needy; Hasten to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O Lord, do not delay. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms 70 70:1 For praise; composed by Da- vid, for remembrance; concerning the handful of incense. 70:2 O God, [hasten] to deliver us, O Lord, hasten to our aid. 70:3 Let those who seek my soul be ashamed and disgraced; let those who desire my ruin draw back and be dishonored. 70:4 Let them turn back, because they lay in wait for me; let those who say about me “We have re- joiced, rejoiced!” be punished as befits their shame. 70:5 Let those who seek instruction from you be glad and exult in your word, and let those who love your redemp- tion always say, “May the glory of the Lord be magnified.” 70:6 But I am poor and lowly, O God; hasten to me, you are my help and salva- tion; O Lord, do not delay. (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 69 For the end, by David for a re- membrance, that the Lord may save me. 70:1 Draw nigh, O God, to my help. 70:2 Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek my soul: let them be turned backward and put to shame, that wish me evil. 70:3 Let them that say to me, Aha, aha, be turned back and put to shame immediat- ely. 70:4 Let all that seek thee exult and be glad in thee: and let those that love thy salvation say con- tinually, Let God be magnified. 70:5 But I am poor and needy; O God, help me: thou art my helper and deliverer, O Lord, delay not. (NASB)</p>

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 70:1-6*, the psalm opens saying, *לְמַנְצֵחַ לְדוֹד לְהַזְכִּיר*: *For the choir director. A Psalm of David; for a memorial. (NASB)* a psalm, a song for remembrance. According to the MT, we are told that this psalm was written by David for a memorial (*לְהַזְכִּיר*, *for remembrance*). This week's psalm is very short, and David appears to be calling out to the Lord so the Lord would remember him and deliver him from his enemies and from those who would cause him hurt. The title of the Psalm is not uncommon as we are reminded in the Neviim (Prophets) section of the Tanach, from *2 Samuel 1:17-27* when David wrote a special song in remembrance of King Saul and his son Jonathan after they died.

2 Samuel 1:17-27

1:17 Then David chanted with this lament over Saul and Jonathan his son, 1:18 and he told them to teach the sons of Judah the song of the bow; behold, it is written in the book of Jashar. 1:19 'Your beauty, O Israel, is slain on your high places! How have the mighty fallen! 1:20 'Tell it not in Gath, Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon, Or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice, The daughters of the uncircumcised will exult. 1:21 'O mountains of Gilboa, Let not dew or rain be on you, nor fields of offerings; For there the shield of the mighty was defiled, The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil. 1:22 'From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, The bow of Jonathan did not turn back, And the sword of Saul did not return empty. 1:23 'Saul and Jonathan, beloved and pleasant in their life, And in their death they were not parted; They were swifter than eagles, They were stronger than lions. 1:24 'O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, Who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet, Who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. 1:25 'How have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan is slain on your high places. 1:26 'I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; You have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was more wonderful Than the love of women. 1:27 'How have the mighty fallen, And the weapons of war perished!' (NASB)

יז וַיִּקְנֶן דָּוִד אֶת-הַקִּינָה הַזֹּאת עַל-שְׂאוּל וְעַל-יְהוֹנָתָן בָּנָיו יח וַיֹּאמֶר לְלַמֵּד בְּנֵי-יְהוּדָה קִשְׁתַּת הַיָּהּ כְּתוּבָה עַל-סֵפֶר הַיִּשָּׁר: יט הַצְּבִי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל-בְּמוֹתֶיךָ חָלַל אִיךָ נָפְלוּ גִבּוֹרִים: כ אֶל-תִּגְדִּדוּ בְּגַת אֶל-תִּבְשְׂרוּ בְּחוּצַת אֲשָׁקְלוֹן פֶּן-תִּשְׂמַחַנָּה בָּנוֹת פְּלִשְׁתִּים פֶּן-תִּעְלַזְנָה בָּנוֹת הָעַרְלִים: כא הָרִי בְּגִלְבָּעַ אֶל-טַל וְאֶל-מָטָר עֲלֵיכֶם וּשְׂדֵי תְרוּמַת כִּי שָׁם נִגְעַל מִגֵּן גִּבּוֹרִים מִגֵּן שְׂאוּל כְּלִי מְשִׁיחַ בְּשֵׁמוֹ: כב מִדָּם חָלָלִים מִחֶלֶב גִּבּוֹרִים קִשְׁתַּת יְהוֹנָתָן לֹא נִשְׁוֹג אַחֲזָר וְחָרַב שְׂאוּל לֹא תָשׁוּב רִיקָם: כג שְׂאוּל וְיְהוֹנָתָן הַנְּאֻהָבִים וְהַנְּעִימִם בְּחַיֵּיהֶם וּבְמוֹתָם לֹא נִפְרְדוּ מִנְּשָׁרִים קָלוּ מֵאֲרִיּוֹת גְּבוּרָה: כד בָּנוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל-שְׂאוּל בְּכִינָה הַמְּלַבֵּשְׁכֶם שָׁנִי עִם-עַדְנָיִם הַמְּעֵלָה עֲדֵי זָהָב עַל לְבוּשְׁכֶן: כה אִיךָ נָפְלוּ גִבּוֹרִים בְּתוֹךְ הַמְּלַחְמָה יְהוֹנָתָן עַל-בְּמוֹתֶיךָ חָלַל: כו צַר-לִי עֲלֶיךָ אַחִי יְהוֹנָתָן נַעֲמַתָּ לִי מְאֹד נִפְלְאַתָּה אֶהְבֶּתָּךְ לִי מֵאֶהְבֵת נָשִׁים: כז אִיךָ נָפְלוּ גִבּוֹרִים וַיֹּאבְדוּ כְּלֵי מִלְחָמָה:

Eventually, death comes to every family and even to those who are faithful in the Lord God Almighty. When David and his men heard that Saul and Jonathan were killed in the battle, they tore their clothes in distress and they took the time to be sad and mourn their deaths. David calls Saul and Jonathan the beauty of Israel. The mighty men (the giborim have fallen, *נָפְלוּ גִבּוֹרִים*), of Gath, Ashkelon, and the Philistines, and the sword of Saul and Jonathan have slain the mighty saying that *the sword of Saul did not return empty (1:22)*. David says that Saul clothed Israel with scarlet and ornaments of gold and glorious apparel. Does this sound like a description that we would normally think of king Saul? David then calls both Saul and Jonathan mighty saying that the mighty have falling in the battle (*גִּבּוֹרִים*, *1:25*). He clearly has a burning indignation against the chief adversaries of Israel, and desires to continue to bring honor and respect to Saul and Jonathan, even though knowing the Lord had brought this to its completion due to the sin of king Saul. The song of David in *2 Samuel 1:17-27* is purposed for remembering the victories and the glory of God's anointed one, and of Jonathan. Thus concept of remembering is very important as we are told according to Parashat Yitro in *Shemot / Exodus 20:24-26*.

Shemot / Exodus 20:24-26

20:24 'You shall make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you. 20:25 'If you make an altar of stone for Me, you shall not build it of cut stones, for if you wield your tool on it, you will profane it. 20:26 'And you shall not go up by steps to My altar, so that your nakedness will not be exposed on it.' (NASB)

פרשת יתרו ספר שמות פרק כ פסוק כא-כג

כא מִזְבַּח אֲדָמָה תַעֲשֶׂה-לִי וְזִבְחֹתַי עָלָיו אֶת-עֹלֹתַי וְאֶת-שְׁלֹמֵיךָ אֶת-צֹאֲנֶךָ וְאֶת-בְּקָרֶךָ בְּכָל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אֲזַכִּיר אֶת-שְׁמִי אָבוֹא אֵלֶיךָ וּבֵרַכְתִּיךָ: כב וְאִם-מִזְבַּח אֲכַנִּים תַעֲשֶׂה-לִי לֹא-תִכְנֶנּוּ אֶתְהֶן גְּזִית כִּי תִרְבֵּד הַנִּפְתָּ עָלֶיךָ וַתַּחֲלֵלְהָ: כג וְלֹא-תַעֲלֶה בְּמַעֲלֹת עַל-מִזְבְּחִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תִגָּלֶה עֲרוֹתְךָ עָלָיו:

Moshe states when making an altar to bring the burnt offering and peace offering, “in every place that my name is remembered, I will come and bless you” (בְּקָרֶךָ בְּכָל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אֲזַכִּיר אֶת-שְׁמִי אָבוֹא אֵלֶיךָ וּבֵרַכְתִּיךָ). In addition to this, the Lord says וְאִם-מִזְבַּח אֲכַנִּים תַעֲשֶׂה-לִי לֹא-תִכְנֶנּוּ אֶתְהֶן גְּזִית כִּי תִרְבֵּד הַנִּפְתָּ עָלֶיךָ וַתַּחֲלֵלְהָ. *‘If you make an altar of stone for Me, you shall not build it of cut stones, for if you wield your tool on it, you will profane it. (NASB)* This command prevents man from remembering the Lord God in the manner of his own opinion as opposed to how the Torah describes who God is. In this command, the Lord God wants an altar built according to His design and not by the imagination of the heart since one’s imagination is quick to profane and change what the Lord has established. The possibility of changing-modifying what God has established for our salvation is also a serious temptation and again the result is profaning (וַתַּחֲלֵלְהָ) the Name of the Lord. Only Lord God can properly atone (כִּפֹּר) for our sins. If we attempt to approach Him by any other means we will be exposed and naked before Him and remain guilty in our sin (20:26).

These final verses in Parashat Yitro are a warning for us to be careful how we relate to the Lord, and that we walk according to His ways and worship him in the way He chooses and not the way we choose. This has serious spiritual implications and directly affects our relationship with our Father in heaven. Today’s verses speak of not only how we relate to the Lord spiritually but also physically, how we should be living, walking, and drawing near to Him (e.g. *the proximity of the 10 commandments provides context*). This imperative of both the spiritual and the physical are related to the covenant relationship that we have with God our Father in the Messiah Yeshua. The Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 1:4 saying, “Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world...” The Scriptures teach us that the Lord redeems us through the Messiah, and by doing so He makes salvation an objective reality. Found within the covenant is the idea of being destined for eternity (in the Olam Haba) and that life here is preparatory for the world to come. The rabbis agree with this perspective according to *Messilat Yesharim on Pirkei Avot 4:21*.

Mishnah Pirkei Avot 4:21

Rabbi Elazar HaKapor says: Envy, lust and honor drive a man from the world. רבי אלעזר, הקפד אומר, הקנאה והתאוה והכבוד מוציאין את האדם מן העולם.

Messilat Yesharim on Pirkei Avot 4:21

To summarize, a man was created not for his station in this world, but for his station in the World to Come. It is only that his station in this world is a means towards his station in the World to Come, which is the ultimate goal. This accounts for numerous statements of our Sages of blessed memory, all in a similar vein, likening this world to the place and time of preparation, and the next world to the place which has been set aside for rest and for the

eating of what has already been prepared. This is their intent in saying (Avoth 4:21), “This world is similar to a corridor ...,” as our Sages of blessed memory have said (Eruvin 22a), “Today for their performance and tomorrow to receive their reward,” “He who exerted himself on Friday will eat on the Sabbath” (Avodah Zarah 3a), “This world is like the shore and the World to Come like the sea ...” (Koheleth Rabbah 1:36), and many other statements along the same lines.

Note how the *Mishnah in Pirkei Avot 4:21* states that envy, lust, and honor drive a man from this world. What does it mean to be driven from this world? Could it be that these things cause our lives to be cut short? Note how *Missilat Yesharim on Pirkei Avot 4:21* states that “*it is only a man’s station in this world, which is a means towards his station in the Olam Haba (The World to Come).*” This suggests that the way we live here on earth is preparatory for life in the World to Come. We practice walking in righteousness, we practice walking in the light, being guided by God’s Word, all in preparation for the World to Come. Do you think your life here on earth is preparatory for life with the Lord in eternity? As the rabbis say, the ultimate goal is to direct our lives with the perspective of the World to Come in mind. This was the purpose of the redemption that Yeshua provides for us in the sense that He has made atonement, sanctified us, and the redemption he provides for us is an objective reality in the sense that it has both eternal and temporal (immediate, today) benefits. Paul wrote in *Galatians 1:4* that the Messiah saves us “*from this present evil world.*” In no uncertain terms, *Galatians 1:4* teaches that there is not only an eternal but also a present day, or temporal, benefit to the redemption of God. The present day salvation from our enemies (the evil world) is influenced by the manner in which one lives, in righteousness as opposed to unrighteousness. The manner in which one lives also effects our relationship with the Lord in heaven, such that He will move in our lives to draw us back to Him and His ways of righteousness and truth if we have fallen away as opposed to His blessing upon us if we obey His commands. This is the point and importance of the teaching in Parashat Yitro on *Shemot / Exodus 20:24*, the Lord said “*... in every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you.*” (NASB) The Scriptures speak of the altar being built in a particular way (without tools) and not to be built in places that are chosen arbitrarily, but at places in which the Lord has chosen. This is very important, because these things are related to hearing from God, and His presence being in our midst and to receive His blessing.

David recognizes the necessity of both remembering and seeking the Lord for help saying, ב אלהים חַסְדֵּךָ: *70:1 O God, hasten to deliver me; O Lord, hasten to my help!* (NASB) similar to *Tehillim / Psalms 38:22*. David says that his hope is in the Lord and his prayer is that his enemies not rejoice over him when his foot slips. The rabbis of the Aramaic Targum state that David prays asking the Lord to accept his prayer. The Septuagint states something very similar, David is seeking the Lord to accept his prayer as the Targum states in *Tehillim / Psalms 38:22-23*, כג לא תשבקיני יהוה אלהי לא תרחיק מיני: *38:22 Do not forsake me, O Lord; my God, do not be far from me. 38:23 Hasten to my aid, O Lord, my redemption.* (EMC) The Aramaic Targum on *Tehillim / Psalms 70* states the following.

Toviyah / Psalms 70

70:1 For praise; composed by David, for remembrance; concerning the handful of incense.

70:2 O God, [hasten] to deliver us, O Lord, hasten to our aid. (EMC)

א לשבחא על יד דוד למדכר על צריר לבונתא: ב אלהא לפצאה יתנא יהוה לסעינדא למסעדי זריז:

Here the rabbis translate David’s words saying that this psalm is for a remembrance concerning the handful of incense. The *ketoret* (קטורת) is the incense described in the Bible for use in the Temple service of the Tabernacle. Its composition and usage is described partially in the Scriptures (see *Shemot / Exodus 30:34-38*) and in greater detail in the midrashim, the Talmud, and subsequent rabbinic literature. The Temple

demonstrated in the act of forming man with His hands from the dust of the earth and breathing heavily into Adam's lungs to give him life. This act of creation reveals the Lord God intended from the very beginning to have a personal and intimate relationship with man. No other creature was personally from the dust of the earth. In fact, according to *Bereshit / Genesis 2:7* ז וַיִּצָר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם עֶפְרָר מִן-הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפַּח אֶת-רוּחַ חַיָּה לְנֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה: the Scriptures say that the Lord formed us from the dust of the earth and He “*Nimshat Khayim*” (נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים) “*breathed heavily life*” into the body of man and woman. All other created creatures were brought into existence by the word of His command. David said in *Tehillim / Psalms 104:30* “*You send forth Your Spirit, and they are created.*” David, having studied the Torah, realized how much the Lord loves him and so he said with confidence הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי בְּחַסְדְּךָ “*save me in your grace.*” This is why he said in *Tehillim / Psalms 34:4-5* *I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. (ESV)* Seeking the Lord God our Father in heaven, to walk in His ways, one would not be ashamed or humiliated due to sin. It is within this Torah perspective that David says in *Tehillim / Psalms 16:11*, David said “*You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.*” (NASB) He says “*You will make me to know the path of life,*” which is the concluding verse in *Tehillim / Psalms 16*, 16:11 יא תוֹדִיעֵנִי אֲרָח חַיִּים שְׂבַע שְׂמָחוֹת אֶת-פְּנֵיךָ נְעֻמוֹת בִּימִינְךָ נֹצֵחַ: (NASB) Midrash Tehillim 16, Part 12 speaks extensively on “*show me the path of life*” in the Mashal (משל) and Nimshal (נמשל) sections of the midrash. The rabbis begin asking the question to show me the path of life, and the Lord God Himself responds. The following is a summary of the Midrash on *Tehillim / Psalms 16:11* on “*show me the path of life.*”

- *David said to the Holy One blessed be He, Master of the universe, show me the path of life. And the Holy One blessed be He, replied, Desirest you life? Look as from a watch tower to fear of the Lord, since The fear of the Lord prolongs days (Mishley / Proverbs 10:26).*
- *According to Rabbi Azariah, David said to the Holy One blessed be He, Show me the path of life, and the Holy One blessed be He, replied, Desire you life? Look as from a watch tower for the meaning of affliction, since Reproofs of affliction are the way of life (Mishley / Proverbs 6:23).*
- *According to Rab, however, the Holy One blessed be He, replied thus, Desire you life? Look as from a watch tower to Torah, since She is a tree of life to them that lay hold of her, and happy is every one that holds her fast (Mishley / Proverbs 3:18).*
- *According to Rabbi Abba, the Holy One blessed be He, asked David, would you eat without working? Keep the commandments, and you will feast, for it is said, Keep the commandments, and you will feast, for it is said Keep my commandments and live (Mishley / Proverbs 4:4).*
- *Two Amoraim differed as to the kind of men standing at the right hand of God. One maintained, They are men in whom is the strength of the Torah, of which it is said At His right hand was a fiery law (Devarim / Deuteronomy 33:2). The other maintained, They are scrupulous copyists and teachers of children who dwell in the shadow of the Holy One blessed be He, for they are spoken of as They that dwell under His shadow (Hosea 14:8); each of them says I have set the Lord always before me; surely He is at my right hand, I will not be moved (Tehillim / Psalms 16:8).*
- *Another comment, You will show me the path of life. Rabbi Abin took this verse to refer to the children of Israel for whom, on New Years Day, God records His decree of life, a decree He seals on the Day of Atonement. In Your presence is fullness (soba) of joy. Do not read soba, fullness, but seba, seven, that is , the seven requirements for the feast of Tabernacles, namely, the citron, the palm, the*

myrtle, the willow, the booth, the sacrifice, and the rejoicing.

Based upon the midrash, a few points may be drawn out according to the rabbis conclusions, (i) fear the Lord because it is the Lord who prolongs days (*Mishley / Proverbs 10:26*). This is true, reading through the Tanach, those kings who sought the Lord and obeyed His commands are described as those who “*did what was right in the eyes of the Lord,*” and both their lives and their reign as king was longer than those who “*did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord.*” (ii) we are told to look to the Torah, because the Torah is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her (*Mishley / Proverbs 3:18*). The idea is that keeping the commands is as one who will feast because keeping the commands one will live. The one who studies Torah is as one who says “*I have set the Lord always before me; surely He is at my right hand, I will not be moved (Tehillim / Psalms 16:8).*” The first steps to knowing the path of life is, according to the rabbis, is to walk in the fear of the Lord. The second step is to look for the meaning of affliction. The reason is when God reproves us because of sin, we know that we are His children and thus we are to seek the answers for afflictions in God’s word to understand the way of life, the way in which we are to be walking before the Him. According to Rab, we are to look to the Torah because the Torah is a tree of life and those who hold fast to her are happy. Rabbi Abba interprets David’s words to say, keep the commandments and you will feast because it is written that we are to keep the commandments and live (*Mishley / Proverbs 4:4 Then he taught me and said to me, ‘Let your heart hold fast my words; Keep my commandments and live NASB*). The rabbis continue with those who are in His presence standing at His right hand. There were two opinions on the kind of men who stand at the right hand of God. One states that they are men in whom is the strength of the Torah, and the other states that they are men who are scrupulous copyists that teach the children of God. Both of these types of men say “*I have set the Lord always before me; surely He is at my right hand, I will not be moved (Tehillim / Psalms 16:8).*” In your life and walk before the Lord, are you able to make that statement, “*I have set the Lord always before me; surely He is at my right hand, I will not be moved?*” The midrash concludes with another comment on “*show me the path of life,*” where Rabbi Abin took this verse to refer to New Year’s Day when God records His decree of life, a decree He seals on the Day of Atonement. Life in the Lord is a celebration of rejoicing in His Salvation and Deliverance. If we seek Yeshua the Messiah and His counsel, if we place Him first in our lives, set Him at our right hand and desire to dwell in His presence, in His Word (see *John 8*) we will be filled with the joy of the Lord and His salvation. The source and center of life is the Lord, and in His presence is the fullness of joy. David describes the peace and safety that is present before the Lord at His Tabernacle, and the rabbis describe these things are found in the fear of the Lord and walking in His ways according to His commands.

ה יְשִׁישׁוּ וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ | בָּהַ כָּל-מְבַקְשֶׁיךָ וַיֹּאמְרוּ תָמִיד יִגְדֹּל ה' 70:4 *Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; And let those who love Your salvation say continually, ‘Let God be magnified.’ (NASB)* The joy of the Lord is the gladness of heart that comes from knowing God, abiding in the Messiah, and being filled with the Holy Spirit. The joy of the Lord is also found within the Salvation of God. According to the Scriptures, Salvation consists of a future expectation (present day and eternal), and a present temporal salvation from one’s enemies, hurt, and trouble. The temporal aspect of salvation is what David is seeking from the Lord in the psalm saying, וַאֲנִי 1 70:5 *But I am afflicted and needy; Hasten to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O Lord, do not delay. (NASB)* Here, David asks the Lord to hurry (חושֶׁה) from the root word חוּשׁ for “*to hurry with excitement or expectation,*” the Lord is his help (עֲזָרָה) and deliverer. The Aramaic Targum states, ה יִיחַדוּן וִידוּצוֹן בְּמִימְרֵךְ כָּל תְּבַעֵי אוֹלְפָן מִינְךָ, וַיִּמְרוֹן תְּדִירָא יִסְגִי יְקָרִיָּה דִּיהוּהּ רַחֲמֵי פּוֹרְקֵנְךָ: 1 וַאֲנָא עֲנִיא וְחִשׁוּכָא אֱלֹהָא זְרִיז לִי סַעֲדִי וְשׁוֹבְתִי אֵת הוּא יְהוּהּ 70:5 *Let those who seek instruction from you be glad and exult in your word, and let those who love your redemption always say, ‘May the glory of the Lord be magnified.’ 70:6 But I am poor and lowly, O God; hasten to me, you are my help and salvation; O Lord, do not delay. (EMC)* The Septuagint states, 70:5 ἀγαλλιάσθωσαν καὶ εὐφρανθήτωσαν ἐπὶ σοὶ πάντες οἱ ζητοῦντές σε καὶ λεγέτωσαν διὰ παντός μεγαλυνθήτω ὁ θεός οἱ ἀγαπῶντες τὸ σωτήριόν σου 70:6 ἐγὼ δὲ πτωχὸς καὶ πένης ὁ θεός βοήθησόν μοι

βοηθός μου και ῥύστης μου εἶ σύ κύριε μὴ χρονίσῃς 70:4 *Let all that seek thee exult and be glad in thee: and let those that love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified. 70:5 But I am poor and needy; O God, help me: thou art my helper and deliverer, O Lord, delay not. (NASB)* The Aramaic Targum say “*Let those who seek instruction from you be glad and exult in your word.*” What does it mean to have a heart that seeks instruction? This is a question that is related to “*Why is seeking God important?*”

In Paul’s letter to the Romans, he made an astonishing statement from the Psalms saying, “*There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God*” (*Romans 3:11 and Tehillim / Psalm 14:1-3*). It is interesting that both Paul and David make this generalized statement about all men. Based upon David and Paul’s assertion that no one seeks God, from since the beginning of creation, the question is whether that is true? Has not even one person really sought after God? Based upon history, and even today, there is no question whether many people (millions and possibly billions) have sought after a god. The difference here may be of whether one seeks after their own understanding of their own gods as opposed to seeking after the one true God. This ties us back to the creation account and Adam and Eve’s sin of disobedience through deception. Based upon the biblical context and history, mankind is only able to perceive bits and pieces of truth concerning the Lord God in heaven, as Paul said in *Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. (NASB)* Our conceptions of God are blurred, and it is only when the Lord chooses to reveal Himself to us that the pieces begin to come together as we begin to perceive the truth. It is only then that truly seeking the Lord God is possible. Yeshua said in *John 17:3, “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”* Here Yeshua is telling us that continuing to seek the Lord God in heaven, desiring to know Him more, and obeying His word, are the essential aspects of true life and eternal life. The most important thoughts our minds can entertain are thoughts that seek Him and His Word, because this is the thing that will determine the quality and direction of life. Seeking the Lord God, then, is an ongoing responsibility and privilege for all Children of God. Based upon David and Paul’s words, this is not an easy thing to do because our minds are filled with misconceptions and deceptions that are reinforced by our culture. These mistaken beliefs are removed through seeking the Lord God and coming to know Him through His word and through living out His commandments. For example, *2 Chronicles 15:2-4* states, “*He [Azariah, the prophet] went out to meet Asa and said to him, ‘Listen to me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you when you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you. For a long time Israel was without the true God, without a priest to teach and without the law. But in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought him, and he was found by them.’*” These instructions are simple, when God’s people sought Him, life went well, but when their desire to seek Him waned and eventually ceased altogether, their world came apart. Sin increased, immorality increased, and contact with the Lord God and hearing from Him ceased. The statement from *2 Chronicles 15* is remarkable, “*If you seek him, he will be found by you.*” This is a very profound principle that it is repeated throughout the Scriptures. The idea is that when we draw near to the Lord, He reveals Himself to us. The Lord does not hide Himself from the seeking heart.

Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:29

4:29 “But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.” (NASB)

Jeremiah 29:13

29:13 “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” (NASB)

Matthew 7:7

7:7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” (NIV)

The Septuagint states something similar on David's words saying, *70:4 Let all that seek thee exult and be glad in thee: and let those that love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified. (LXX)* The concepts put forward here are the Lord has given His word to be a light for our path so that we are able to walk in this present evil age. Elsewhere, we read the Lord Himself is our Light (*John 1:7-9; John 12:35, 36, 46, and 1 John 1:5*) which follows through from the concepts of our rejoicing, exulting, and being glad in Him. This statement is found in *Tehillim / Psalms 27:1*, and the idea may be found in *Isaiah 60:1, 20, Micah 7:8*, and elsewhere. The light of God is a reference to "His righteousness," and is the beauty of the Name of God. The Lord is my Salvation (*Tehillim / Psalm 18:2, 62:2-6*), whom shall I fear? "If the Lord is for us, who can be against us?" (*Romans 8:31*). Whom shall we fear? (*Tehillim / Psalm 118:6 The LORD is for me; I will not fear; What can man do to me?*). The concept of "The joy of the Lord" is the gladness of heart that comes from knowing God, abiding in His Word and in His Messiah Yeshua, and being filled with His Holy Spirit. When Yeshua was born, it was proclaimed from heaven, the angels proclaimed "good tidings of great joy" (*Luke 2:10*). Thus, in a parallel thought, all who know Yeshua, know the joy that He brings. Take note that even before he was born, Yeshua brought great joy, as indicated in *Luke 1:47* and John the Baptist as a baby in the womb at hearing Mary's voice "leaped for joy" in his mother's womb (*Luke 1:44*). Yeshua spoke of Joy in His ministry. His enemies accused Him of being too joyful on occasion (*Luke 7:34*) and he also described himself as the bridegroom enjoying a wedding feast (*Mark 2:18-20*); He "rejoiced in the Holy Spirit" (*Luke 10:21*); He spoke of "my joy" (*John 15:11*) and promised to give His disciples a life filled with joy according to *John 16:24*. Joy is reflected in many parables, including the three stories in *Luke 15*, that speak of the "rejoicing in the presence of the angels" (*Luke 15:10*) and conclude with a joyful shepherd, a joyful woman, and a joyful father. In addition, Nehemiah told those who had returned to the Land and repented, that the joy of the Lord would be their strength (*Nehemiah 8:10*). The early believers (ekklesia) was characterized by gladness and the joy of the Lord (*Acts 2:46, 13:52*), where the "joy in the Holy Spirit" is a distinguishing mark of the kingdom of God (*Romans 14:17*). Joy is also considered a manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit (*Galatians 5:22*). We are also told that it is our duty to rejoice in the Lord (*Philippians 3:1, 4:4, and 1 Thessalonians 5:16*). According to Peter, in the Messiah, the believer is "filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy" (*1 Peter 1:8*). Based upon these Scriptures, the joy of the Lord is also of supernatural origin. The Aramaic Targum version of the Scriptures that states, "Let those who seek instruction from you be glad and exult in your word," suggests that those who seek the Lord, His instruction, according to His word, His Torah (instruction), the Lord will give them joy and they will exult in His Word. By this we know that we are the children of God, and no one can snatch us away from Him (*John 10:28-29*). By this reasoning, we can see how the Lord is the Author and Finisher of our faith. (*Hebrews 12:2*) As a result of these things, the joy of the Lord may be inexplicable to the one who does not possess it and more specifically, to the one who does not know the Lord God Almighty and His Messiah Yeshua. But, for the believer in the Messiah, the joy of the Lord comes as naturally as the Lord works and lives in our hearts. As we abide in the Messiah, the True Vine, we the branches are filled with His strength and vitality, and the fruit we produce includes the joy of the Lord which is in fact His doing (*John 15:5*). Praise the Lord! Let's Pray!

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 70* has 4 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1, 2, 3, and 4. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 70, Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4*.

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 70, Part 1, 2, 3, and 4

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying "For the leader. A Psalm of David; to bring to remembrance. Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O Lord (*Tehillim / Psalms 70:1-2*)."

- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *“The word remembrance is to be read in the light of the verse, And I will sow them among the peoples, and with their children, and return (Zechariah 10:9).”*
- The משל (mashal) *“the parable,”* goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon David’s words speaking about remembering the Lord and asking the question why did the Lord specifically say to *“Remember Me?”*
- The נמשל (Nimshal) *“expansion on the parable”* expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal saying the reason was so the Lord would allow man to dwell in His midst. Note how this is worded slightly different than the Torah text, that states the Lord will dwell in our midst.
- The Concluding phrase says, *“The seed also of His servants will inherit it; and they that love His name will dwell therein (Tehillim / Psalms 36-37), as if to say, Behold, the sheep are gathered. And in this psalm, David the shepherd asks, And I, will I not be brought to remembrance? Hence, A psalm of David; to bring to remembrance.”*

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying *“Woe unto the wicked who in the world to come will die out of envy of what they see, and out of anger, as is said For anger kills the foolish man, and envy slays the silly one (Job 5:2).”*
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *“They will waste away on account of their envy and anger..”*
- The משל (mashal) *“the parable,”* goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon David’s words speaking about the one who seeks his soul to destroy him.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) *“expansion on the parable”* expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal stating that the one who is angry will die and waste away due to their anger speaking as if their anger is all consuming in life.
- The Concluding phrase says, *“Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek my soul; let them be turned backward and put to confusion that delight in my hurt (Tehillim / Psalms 70:3-4).”*

Part 3

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying *“But I am poor and needy; O God, make haste unto me (Tehillim / Psalms 70:6).”*
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *“In a previous psalm, David said But I am poor and needy, may the Lord think of me (Tehillim / Psalms 40:18).”*
- The משל (mashal) *“the parable,”* goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon David’s words saying that David sought the Lord in poverty and need. Do the rabbis see this statement as the ascetic life style being capable of getting the Lord to listen to one’s prayer?
- The נמשל (Nimshal) *“expansion on the parable”* expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal stating that poverty and need will cause the Lord to move quickly to help.
- The Concluding phrase says, *“And what is meant by the words O Lord, tarry not (Tehillim / Psalms 70:6, 40:18)? They mean that it is for You to deliver me, whether today or tomorrow. Hence, You are my help and my deliverer, O Lord, tarry not.”*

Part 4

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying *“Isaiah said, Who is among you that fears the Lord, that has obeyed the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness, and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God (Isaiah 50:10).”*
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *“This is as if God said, Who among you was in trouble and called upon Me, that I did not answer?”*

- The מַשַּׁל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פְּתִיחָתָא (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon David’s words speaking about the Lord who gives light to those who are in darkness. The interpretation is “darkness” is a reference to being in exile, and those who were in exile were actively seeking the Lord in heaven.
- The נִמְשַׁל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the מַשַּׁל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal stating that even the gentiles who are in darkness are given the light, for the purpose of bringing glory to the Name of the Lord.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*And Scripture says, Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord is God, an everlasting Rock (Isaiah 26:4). Hence, David said, surely this is the divine promise, I too will trust in You, do not put me to shame.*”

Midrash Tehillim 70, Part 1 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*For the leader: A Psalm of David; to bring to remembrance. Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 70:1-2).*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*The word remembrance is to be read in the light of the verse, And I will sow them among the peoples, and with their children, and return (Zechariah 10:9).*” The מַשַּׁל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פְּתִיחָתָא (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon David’s words speaking about remembering the Lord and asking the question why did the Lord specifically say to “*Remember Me?*”

And in reward for their remembering Me, I will have them dwell with Me. So, too, Jeremiah said, Go, stand still; remember the Lord from afar (Jeremiah 51:50). Why did the Holy One, blessed be He, say, Remember Me, time and time again? Because, whenever you remember Me, My heart yearns for you, as is said, Ephraim a darling son unto Me for whenever My word is with him, I do earnestly remember him still, therefore My heart yearns for him (Jeremiah 31:19).

ובשכר שהן מזכירין שמי אני מושיבן אצלי, וכן ירמיה אמר (זכרי) [הלכו] אל תעמודו [זכרו מר-
 חוק את ה'] [ירמיה נא נ], למה, אמר הקב"ה הוּוּ מזכירין אותי בכל פעם ופעם, שכל זמן שאתם
 מזכירין אותי מעי הומים עליכם, שנאמר הבן יקיר לי אפרים וגו' כי מדי דברי בו זכור אזכרנו עוד
 על כן המו מעי לו (שם ירמיהו לא יט)

Why does the Lord ask to be remembered? The rabbis say the Lord asks to be remembered (זכרי) because His heart yearns for us. *Jeremiah 31:18-20* states, *31:18 'I have surely heard Ephraim grieving, 'You have chastised me, and I was chastised, Like an untrained calf; Bring me back that I may be restored, For You are the Lord my God. 31:19 'For after I turned back, I repented; And after I was instructed, I smote on my thigh; I was ashamed and also humiliated Because I bore the reproach of my youth.' 31:20 'Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a delightful child? Indeed, as often as I have spoken against him, I certainly still remember him; Therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him,' declares the Lord. (NASB)* The Lord says He has not forgotten Ephraim, and the rabbis add that whenever God’s word is with him, the Lord remembers him. The people in the prophet Micah’s day complained that God was never satisfied. They stated, “*Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil?*” (*Micah 6:7*). This was their way of asking, “*What does the Lord want or expect from us?*” We can see in Jeremiah and in the midrash that the Lord wants us to also yearn for Him. This is the reason the rabbis add that “*for whenever My word is with him, I do earnestly remember him...*” This is why it is taught that the greatest command is to “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength,*” and to “*Love your neighbor as yourself,*” and it is said, “*there is no commandment greater than these*” (*Mark 12:30–32 and Matthew 22:37–39*) because our love for the Lord causes us to always be thinking upon Him. All of our service to the Lord flows from our yearning for Him, our

love for Him, and our love for His righteous ways. *2 Peter 3:9* says, “The Lord ... is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” We are called to repentance, to come to our senses, to turn from our sins, and to believe in the Messiah (*Romans 10:9, John 1:12*). The Lord wants us to “become conformed to the image of His Son” (*Romans 8:29*). The Father wants all of His children to be like the Messiah. Therefore, He brings situations into our lives to refine us and chip away those flawed characteristics that are in the way of our becoming who He desires us to be (see *Hebrews 12:7, James 1:12*). As Yeshua was obedient to the Father in everything, so the goal of every child of God should be to obey our Heavenly Father (*John 8:29*) according to His commands. *1 Peter 1:14–15* states, “As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.” The yearning heart may be paralleled to those who place external action ahead of the heart that yearns for Him. The Love for the Lord and His words is to be our motivation for serving Him. When we humble ourselves and seek His help, the Lord sends the Holy Spirit to empower us to serve Him with a whole heart and from the correct motivation. With the correct motivation, we end up doing what is right, and obeying His commands.

The prophet Micah responded to the people’s complaint that they didn’t know what the Lord wanted from them. The prophet says, “He has told you, O man, 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?” (*Micah 6:8*). The Lord’s desire for us is very simple, to do justice, be kind, be forgiving, and walk humbly before Him. The Lord wants us to love Him with all our hearts such that our obedience stems from a heartfelt desire to be pleasing in His sight. David understood what the Lord God wants when he prayed, “You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise” (*Psalms 51:16–17*).

The midrash continues saying the following,

Also, in the verse, And he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the Ark of the Lord, to bring to remembrance, and to thank (1 Chronicles 16:4), why were the Levites told to bring to remembrance? Because it is said Remember His marvelous works that He has done (1 Chronicles 16:12). That is, Remember His marvelous works which He does for you always. Did He not do them for you? And did He not redeem Israel only that they might bring His marvelous works to remembrance? Hence, David said, Since this is so, I will bring God to remembrance, and He will deliver me, as is said, For the leader. A Psalm of David; to bring to remembrance. Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O Lord. To Whom may David be likened? To the shepherd in the story of the king who had a flock of sheep. When the king became vexed with them, he turned out the flock, tore down the shed, and let the shepherd go. After a time the king gathered the sheep and rebuild the shed, but he did not bring the shepherd to remembrance. The shepherd said, Behold, the sheep are gathered, the shed is rebuilt, and I, I am not brought to remembrance. Just so, in the previous Psalm, David said, God will save Zion, and build the cities of Judah (Tehillim / Psalms 69:39), as if to say, Behold, the shed is rebuilt; and also, They will abide there, and have it in possession.

וכתיב ויתן (לי ארון ברית) [לפני ארון] ה' להזכיר ולהודות (דה"א דברי הימים טז ד), ולמה היו מזכירין, שנאמר זכרו נפלאותיו [אשר עשה] (שם שם דברי הימים א' ט"ז יב), זכרו נפלאותיו [שעושה עמכם בכל עת, ולא עשה עמכם ולא גאל את ישראל, אלא בשביל שיהיו מזכירין נפלאותיו, אמר דוד אם כן אני מזכיר והצילני, שנאמר למנצח לדוד להזכיר אלהים להצילני. ולמה היה דוד דומה, למלך שהיה לו צאן וכעס עליה, סר את הצאן, ומתיר את הדיר, [והוציא את הרועה, אחר זמן כנס את הצאן, ובנה את הדיר], ולרועה לא הזכיר, אמר הרועה הרי הצאן מכונסות, והדיר בנויה, ואני איני נזכר, כך אמר דוד למעלה מן הפרשה, כי אלהים יושיע ציון ויבנה ערי יהודה (תהלים סט לו), הרי הדיר בנויה, וישבו שם וירשוה

The Levites are told during their service before the Lord and before the Ark of the Covenant to bring to remembrance and to thank. The connection to remembering the Name of the Lord and the priesthood is found in Parashat Yitro and *Shemot / Exodus 20:24-26*.

Shemot / Exodus 20:24-26

20:24 'You shall make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you. 20:25 'If you make an altar of stone for Me, you shall not build it of cut stones, for if you wield your tool on it, you will profane it. 20:26 'And you shall not go up by steps to My altar, so that your nakedness will not be exposed on it.' (NASB)

פרשת יתרו ספר שמות פרק כ פסוק כא-כג

כא מִזְבַּח אֲדָמָה תַעֲשֶׂה-לִי וְזִבְחֹתָ עָלָיו אֶת-עֹלֹתֶיךָ וְאֶת-שְׁלֹמֶיךָ אֶת-צֹאנֶךָ וְאֶת-בְּקָרְךָ בְּכֹל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אֲזַכִּיר אֶת-שְׁמִי אָבוֹא אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּבְרַכְתִּיךָ: כב וְאִם-מִזְבַּח אֲבָנִים תַעֲשֶׂה-לִי לֹא-תִבְנֶה אֹתוֹ גִּזִית כִּי חֲרָבָה הַנִּפְתָּ עָלֶיךָ וַתַּחֲלֵלָהּ: כג וְלֹא-תַעֲלֶה בְּמַעֲלֹת עַל-מִזְבְּחִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תִגָּלֶה עָרוֹתַי עָלָיו:

Moshe connects the construction of an altar and bring the burnt offering and peace offering to remembering the name of the Lord saying, *“in every place that my name is remembered, I will come and bless you”* (בְּקָרְךָ בְּכֹל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אֲזַכִּיר אֶת-שְׁמִי אָבוֹא אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּבְרַכְתִּיךָ). The Lord also states, *לִי וְזִבְחֹתָ עָלָיו אֶת-עֹלֹתֶיךָ וְאֶת-שְׁלֹמֶיךָ אֶת-צֹאנֶךָ וְאֶת-בְּקָרְךָ בְּכֹל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אֲזַכִּיר אֶת-שְׁמִי אָבוֹא אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּבְרַכְתִּיךָ* *‘If you make an altar of stone for Me, you shall not build it of cut stones, for if you wield your tool on it, you will profane it. (NASB)* This command prevents man from remembering the Lord God in the manner of his own making as opposed to how the Torah describes who God is. These Scriptures also describes how the remembering process causes the Lord to come in our midst and bless us. Remembering causes us to realize that His deliverance is for the purpose of remembering and bringing glory to His name. The rabbis then draw a parallel to illustrate these concepts saying, *“To Whom may David be likened? To the shepherd in the story of the king who had a flock of sheep. When the king became vexed with them, he turned out the flock, tore down the shed, and let the shepherd go. After a time the king gathered the sheep and rebuild the shed, but he did not bring the shepherd to remembrance. The shepherd said, Behold, the sheep are gathered, the shed is rebuilt, and I, I am not brought to remembrance. Just so, in the previous Psalm, David said, God will save Zion, and build the cities of Judah (Tehillim / Psalms 69:39), as if to say, Behold, the shed is rebuilt; and also, They will abide there, and have it in possession.”* The sheep are a reference to those who are faithful, and those who are not faithful to the truth, The Lord Himself will cause them to scatter. Midrash Tehillim 70, Part 1 concludes saying, *“The seed also of His servants will inherit it; and they that love His name will dwell therein (Tehillim / Psalms 36-37), as if to say, Behold, the sheep are gathered. And in this psalm, David the shepherd asks, And I, will I not be brought to remembrance? Hence, A psalm of David; to bring to remembrance.”* Tehillim / Psalms 70 concludes saying, *70:5 But I am afflicted and needy; Hasten to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O Lord, do not delay. (NASB)* however the midrash states that David is the shepherd and he asks *“will I not be brought to remembrance?”* The rabbis suggest that David’s request for the Lord to move quickly and not delay is synonymous to asking the Lord to remember him. Does the Lord forget us? In *Tehillim / Psalms 13:1*, David said, *13:1 For the choir director. A Psalm of David. How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? (NASB)* The Lord God does not forget, however, man often feels as if he were forgotten of Him (*Tehillim / Psalm 42:9, 44:24, Lamentations 5:20*). David appears to have feared that the Lord had forgotten him as he says *“How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?” (Tehillim / Psalm 30:7, Isaiah 1:15, Ezekiel 39:29)*. The *“light of God’s countenance”* shining on us occurs by our remembering the Lord which correspondingly brings with it His blessing according to Parashat Yitro.

(*Tehillim / Psalm 4:6, 31:18, 44:4, 67:1, 80:3-7*). When we feel the Lord has withdrawn, “*hiding his face,*” we naturally sink into despair. But rest assured, the Lord is seeking to draw us near and therefore we need to be actively seeking Him for help in all situations.

Midrash Tehillim 70, Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*Woe unto the wicked who in the world to come will die out of envy of what they see, and out of anger, as is said For anger kills the foolish man, and envy slays the silly one (Job 5:2).*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*They will waste away on account of their envy and anger...*” The entire midrash states the following:

מדרש תהלים פרק ע סימן ב	Midrash Tehillim 70, Part 2
<p>ב אוי לרשעים שאינן מתים לעולם הבא אלא מן הק- נאה שהן רואין ומן הכעס, שנאמר כי לאויל יהרג כעס ופותה תמית קנאה (איוב ה ב), אחר הקנאה והכעס הן כלים, שנאמר יבושו ויחפרו מבקשי נפשי [וגו'] ויכלמו הפצי רעתי, (יבושו) [ישובו] על עקב בשתם.</p>	<p>2. <i>Woe unto the wicked who in the world to come will die out of envy of what they see, and out of anger, as is said For anger kills the foolish man, and envy slays the silly one (Job 5:2). They will waste away on account of their envy and anger, as is said, Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek my soul; let them be turned backward and put to confusion that delight in my hurt (Tehillim / Psalms 70:3-4).</i></p>

This midrash appears to speak of what will happen to those in the world to come (עולם הבא) saying that the wicked will die in the world to come due to their envy and anger of the righteous. While studying Judaism, the Jewish literature does not have a distinct theology concerning what happens after death. According to the Talmud there are various opinions on what happens to the Spirit of a man after dying. Judaism is actually more focused on one’s actions which are coupled with one’s beliefs, and therefore both the prophets (in the Tanach) and the sages (Talmud, Mishnah, Midrashim) have not spent as much time on speculations about the world to come as opposed to the mitzvot to be performed in this life. That is not to say there is not a large amount of speculation on the world to come in the Midrashim (there is). Both the Torah, the Mishnah, and the Talmud focus on the purpose of earthly life, which is to fulfill one’s duties to God and one’s fellow man. (Living in Righteousness, holiness, and justice.) These concepts are found within the covenant relationship that we have with the Lord as it is related to the *olam hazeh* (this world) as opposed to the *olam haba* (the world to come). Obeying the mitzvot brings reward in this world that corresponds to the blessings of God on our lives, and failing to obey the mitzvot brings punishment for the specific purpose of drawing us to repentance and to turn from sin and towards the way of the Lord. The question of whether rewards and punishments continue after death, according Midrash Tehillim 70, Part 2, is that the wicked will see what God has prepared for the righteous and die out of envy for what they see. Note also that in Judaism, the Hebrew word *Olam Haba* (עולם הבא, “*the world to come*”) is used for both the messianic age and the afterlife. The world to come is important and something to look forward to. Commentary on the *Mishnah Pirkei Avot 4:21* as mentioned earlier states that we were created for the world to come and not for this world. The idea is that the world to come is our true home and this earth is only temporary.

Messilat Yesharim on Pirkei Avot 4:21

To summarize, a man was created not for his station in this world, but for his station in the World to Come. It is only that his station in this world is a means towards his station in the World to Come, which is the ultimate goal. This accounts for numerous statements of our Sages of blessed memory, all in a similar vein, likening this world to the place and time of preparation, and the next world to the place which has been set aside for rest and for the eating of what has already been prepared. This is their intent in saying (Avoth 4:21), “This world is similar to a corridor ...,” as our Sages of blessed memory have said (Eruvin 22a), “Today for their performance and tomorrow to receive their reward,” “He who exerted

himself on Friday will eat on the Sabbath” (Avodah Zarah 3a), “This world is like the shore and the World to Come like the sea ...” (Koheleth Rabbah 1:36), and many other statements along the same lines. כללו של דבר, האדם לא נברא בעבור מצבו בעולם הזה אלא בעבור מצבו בעולם הבא, אלא שמצבו בעולם הזה הוא אמצעי למצבו בעולם הבא שהוא תכליתו. על כן תמצא מאמרי חכמינו ז"ל רבים כולם בסגנון אחד מדמים העולם הזה למקום וזמן ההכנה, והעולם הבא למקום המנוחה ואכילת המוכן כבר, והוא מה שאמרו, העולם הזה דומה לפרוזדור, כמו שאמרו ז"ל: היום לעשותם ומחר לקבל שכרם (ע"ז ב). מי שטרח בערב שבת, יאכל בשבת. העולם הזה דומה ליבשה, והעולם הבא לים וכו' (ק"ר א). וכאלה רבים על זה הדרך.

The rabbis say that this world is preparatory for the world to come, therefore the emphasis is that we have the privilege of doing good works and performing the mitzvot for the purpose of preparation for the world to come. The idea is that if we live on this earth without regard for sin, in the world to come when we are in the presence of the Lord God who is without sin, we will not know how to behave and we will not know what it is like to live a righteous and holy lives. This is why we read in Pirkei Avot, “*Rabbi Yokel also used to say, ‘Better one hour in repentance and good deeds in this world than all the life in the world to come. And better one hour of tranquility of spirit in the world to come than all the life of this world.’*”

The Torah describes the afterlife in vague terms, many of which may simply be figurative ways of speaking about death as it is observed by the living. One example of this is found with regard to the statements of joining one’s ancestors. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and other patriarchs when they died were said to be “*gathered to their people*” after death (*Bereshit / Genesis 25:8, 25:17, 35:29, 49:33, Devarim / Deuteronomy 42:50 and 22:20*). This language implies their rejoining their loved ones who had previously passed away, or, this could simply be a reference to their having been laid down next to the bones of their ancestors in the family burial site. In contrast, the wicked are said to be “*cut off (carry-out) from their people*” (*Bereshit / Genesis 17:14, Shemot / Exodus 31:14*). The Tanach also uses other imagery to describe the finality of death saying that “*the dead are like dust returning to dust*” (*Bereshit / Genesis 3:19-20*) or as “*water poured out on the ground*” (*2 Samuel 14:14*).

Another recurring image of the afterlife that we read David using in his psalms is the shadowy place called Sheol. Sheol is a place of darkness (*Tehillim / Psalm 88:13, Job 10:21-22*) and silence (*Tehillim / Psalm 115:17*), it is located in low places (*Bamidbar / Numbers 16:30, Ezekiel 31:14, Tehillim / Psalm 88:7, Lamentations 3:55; Jonah 2:7, Job 26:5*). According to *1 Samuel 2:6*, the Lord God sends people to Sheol. In *Isaiah 14:9-10*, the departed who are in Sheol will one day rise up to greet the leaders who have now been brought low as they are. The author of *Tehillim / Psalm 88* laments his impending death with the words, “*I am sated with misfortune; I am at the brink of Sheol. I am numbered with those who go down to the Pit; I am a helpless man abandoned among the dead, like bodies lying in the grave of whom You are mindful no more, and who are cut off from Your care. You have put me at the bottom of the Pit, in the darkest places, in the depths.*” (*Tehillim / Psalm 88:4-7*) Taking together the Scripture references with the midrash, these early biblical descriptions of death seem to indicate that the soul continues to exist in some way after death, whereas the midrash indicates that death is also possible by reason of envy and anger. The midrash states “*They will waste away on account of their envy and anger...*” suggesting that death in the world to come will not be a permanent thing, but an ongoing aspect of the wicked who are in envy of what God has prepared for those who love Him. This seems to be consistent with what Daniel wrote in *Daniel 12:2* saying, “*And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to reproaches and everlasting abhorrence.*” The point is that we are destined for the world to come, both the righteous and the wicked cannot escape from standing before the Lord to give an account for one’s actions in this world. If this world is preparatory for the world to come, how much effort should we give to loving the Lord God in heaven, His Messiah Yeshua, obeying His word, and forgiving and loving others? This is what the author of Hebrews is writing about in *Hebrews 12:3-8*.

Hebrews 12:3-8

12:3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. 12:4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; 12:5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, ‘My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprov’d by Him; 12:6 For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives.’ 12:7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 12:8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. (NASB)

This life is about discipline and our being obedient to the word of the Lord. By this we will not be ashamed. On the other hand, the unrighteous, in their sin, they will be ashamed, as David said, “Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek my soul; let them be turned backward and put to confusion that delight in my hurt (Tehillim / Psalms 70:3-4).”

Midrash Tehillim 70, Part 3 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “But I am poor and needy; O God, make haste unto me (Tehillim / Psalms 70:6).” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “In a previous psalm, David said But I am poor and needy, may the Lord think of me (Tehillim / Psalms 40:18).” The entire midrash states the following:

<p style="text-align: center;">מדרש תהלים פרק ע סימן ג</p> <p>ג [ואני עני ואביון] אלהים חושה לי. וכתוב אחד אומר [ואני עני ואביון ה'] יחשב לי (תה-לים מ יח), אלא אמר דוד לפני הקב"ה רבונו של עולם חשוב לי עניותי ואביונתי ואתה חש לגאלני, למה עזרי ומפלטי אתה ה' אל תאחר, בין היום ובין מחר עליך שתגאלני, לכך נאמר אל תאחר.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 70, Part 3</p> <p>3. But I am poor and needy; O God, make haste unto me (Tehillim / Psalms 70:6). In a previous psalm, David said But I am poor and needy, may the Lord think of me (Tehillim / Psalms 40:18). What David was saying, however, in the two verses to the Holy One blessed be He, was, Master of the universe, think of me in my poverty and in my need, and You will then make haste to deliver me, for You are my help and my deliverer. And what is meant by the words O Lord, tarry not (Tehillim / Psalms 70:6, 40:18)? They mean that it is for You to deliver me, whether today or tomorrow. Hence, You are my help and my deliverer, O Lord, tarry not.</p>
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Why does the Lord “think” of a person who is in poverty and in need? According to the Scriptures, those who bless the poor, the Lord God promises to bless them (Tehillim / Psalms 41:1-3, 112, Mishley / Proverbs 14:21, 19:17, 22:9, 14:31, 28:27, Isaiah 58:6-10). The Torah and elsewhere say the Lord will judge those who oppress the poor (Devarim / Deuteronomy 27:19, Mishley / Proverbs 17:5, 21:13, 22:16, 28:2, Isaiah 10:1-4, Ezekel 18:12-13, 16:49). In addition to these things, Yeshua spoke of the “poor in spirit” and pronounced a blessing upon them. In Matthew 5:3 He states, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” The poor in spirit may be those who are despised in this world, and are looked down on by many. They may be those who are humble and contrite. The poor in spirit are blessed because they are small in their own eyes (not proud and arrogant). According to the Scriptures, the Lord resists the proud, and He gives mercy to the humble (James 4:6). The phrase “poor in spirit” is not a reference to those who are not prosperous necessarily, but those who consider others better than themselves. The point of the midrash appears to be with respect to those who are poor financially with the mention of “needing” help from the Lord. The apostle James states the following with regard to the poor.

James 2:1-11

2:1 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. 2:2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed

in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, 2:3 and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, 'You sit here in a good place,' and you say to the poor man, 'You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,' 2:4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? 2:5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 2:6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? 2:7 Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called? 2:8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing well. 2:9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. 2:11 For He who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not commit murder.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. (NASB)

James makes the case that personal favoritism for the wealthy as opposed to the poor is a sin before the Lord God Almighty because it is not done in obedience to the command according to Parashat Kedoshim in *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:18*. Notice how James utilizes a rabbinic method of interpretation of the one who violates this command by drawing a parallel to having transgressed all of the Torah (*James 2:10*), and parallels the mistreatment of the poor to adultery and murder. The significance of the statement James is making is found in Yeshua's words when he said the following, "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least among you, you did not do for me'" (*Matthew 25:41-45*). Yeshua is speaking of the evil deeds of the unrighteous person who neglects to take care of the poor and needy, not giving them food, drink, or cloths. Note also that according to the Prophet Ezekiel, Sodom sinned the sin of not helping the poor as they were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned with the poor and needy (*Ezekiel 16:49* "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy. NASB). We do not want to be caught being categorized as a people who do not help those who are in need. The Tanach describes the Lord God in heaven in a way that emphasize His great love for the poor.

Summary of Tanach descriptions of God's love for the poor and needy

- Defender of the fatherless and widows (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:18, Tehillim / Psalm 10:16-18, 40:17, 68:5, Jeremiah 22:16*)
- Protector of the poor (*Tehillim / Psalm 12:5*)
- Rescuer of the poor (*1 Samuel 2:8, Tehillim / Psalm 35:10, 72:4, 12-14, Isaiah 19:20, Jeremiah 20:13*)
- Provider of the poor (*Tehillim / Psalm 68:10, 146:7, Isaiah 41:17*)
- Savior of the poor (*Tehillim / Psalm 34:6, 109:31*)
- Refuge of the poor (*Tehillim / Psalm 14:6, Isaiah 25:4*).

These descriptions of the Lord being the protector, defender, provider, and savior of the poor and needy provides reasons why the Lord gives provision for the poor in the Torah. Moshe wrote down the guidelines the Lord God gave him for helping the poor. In *Shemot / Exodus 22 and 23* we are told to help the aliens, widows, orphans, and the poor. The Lord God protects their property, warns against showing favoritism, and sets up a system of “gleaning” to help prevent starvation and provide food to help the poor get the proper nutrition (see *Shemot / Exodus 23:10-12*). In addition to this, the Lord establishes the Yovel year (Jubilee, *Vayikra / Leviticus 25:8-43*) for the purpose of eliminating poverty so that each person may return to their ancestral land.

Vayikra / Leviticus 25:17

“...do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God.” (NIV)

Vayikra / Leviticus 25:35-36

“If one of your countrymen becomes poor and is unable to support himself among you, help him as you would an alien or a temporary resident, so he can continue to live among you. Do not take interest of any kind from him, but fear your God, so that your countrymen may continue to live among you...” (NIV)

Vayikra / Leviticus 25:39-40

“If one of your countrymen becomes poor among you and sells himself to you, do not make him work as a slave. He is to be treated as a hired worker or a temporary resident among you; he is to work for you until the Year of Jubilee”. (NIV)

According to *Devarim / Deuteronomy 15*, the Lord’s intention was that His people would have all their debts canceled every seven years. The Lord made provision for His people in this way because debt is also a form of slavery. In Midrash Tehillim 70, Part 3, the rabbis conclude saying, *“What David was saying, however, in the two verses to the Holy One blessed be He, was, Master of the universe, think of me in my poverty and in my need, and You will then make haste to deliver me, for You are my help and my deliverer. And what is meant by the words O Lord, tarry not (Tehillim / Psalms 70:6, 40:18)? They mean that it is for You to deliver me, whether today or tomorrow. Hence, You are my help and my deliverer, O Lord, tarry not.”* The poverty and need that was inflicted upon David was due to his enemies. And so he seeks the Lord’s help to deliver him from those who not only sought his life, but are the ones who have caused his poverty, need, and requests for deliverance. In a similar manner, we too can seek the Lord for help from those who seek our lives and desire to cause us to go into poverty and need.

Midrash Tehillim 70, Part 4 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying *“Isaiah said, Who is among you that fears the Lord, that has obeyed the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness, and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God (Isaiah 50:10).”* The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *“This is as if God said, Who among you was in trouble and called upon Me, that I did not answer?”* The entire midrash states the following:

מדרש תהלים פרק ע סימן ד	Midrash Tehillim 70, Part 4
<p>ד אמר ישעיה מי בכם ירא ה' שומע בקול עבדו אשר הלך חשכים [ואין נוגה לו יבטח בשם ה' וישען באלהיו] (ישעיה נ י), מי בכם בצרה וקראני ולא עניתיו, ומי היה בחשיכה ולא הארתיו, וכן נבוכדנצר אמר בריך אלההון די שדרך מישך ועבד נגו [וגו] די התרחצו עלוהי] [דניאל ג כח], וכן דריוש אמר והוסק דניאל מן גובא (שם דניאל ו כד), ואומר בטחו בה' עדי עד (ישעיה כו ד), אמר דוד אם כן ההבטחה, גם אני אבטח בך, ואל תבישני.</p>	<p>4. <i>Isaiah said, Who is among you that fears the Lord, that has obeyed the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness, and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God (Isaiah 50:10). This is as if God said, Who among you was in trouble and called upon Me, that I did not answer? Who was in darkness, that I did not give light to? So Nebuchadnezzar said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him (Daniel 3:28). And Darius said, Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he had trusted in his God (Daniel 6:24). And Scripture says, Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord is God, an everlasting Rock (Isaiah 26:4). Hence, David said, surely this is the divine promise, I too will trust in You, do not put me to shame.</i></p>

The rabbis speak of the one who fears the Lord, obeys the voice of God, and walks in darkness. The one who fears God and is obedient to His word (the Torah) walks in the light and not in darkness. Such a person trusts in the name of the Lord and is planted deeply with a sure foundation. The midrash asks, “*Who among you was in trouble and called upon Me, that I did not answer? Who was in darkness, that I did not give light to?*” What is the answer the Lord provides and the light that He gives? In *Tehillim / Psalms 19:5-7*, David, in a similar way, draws a parallel between “*light*” and “*speech*.” In the *Talmud Bavli Pesachim 10*, the rabbis say, “*When Rabha commenced to recite the Habdalah prayer he said thus: “Who hath made a distinction between sanctified and ordinary days, between light and darkness, between Israel and other nations, and between the seventh day and the six working days.”*” The rabbis also recognize the difference between light and darkness. According to the Torah, the Lord made a distinction between the ordinary days and the Shabbat, He made a distinction between Israel and the nations, and He made a distinction between the time to work and the time to rest. Based upon the Torah portion, Parashat Beha’alotcha, the light is also a reference to God’s directing our lives according to His Word, and He makes a distinction in our lives, between the light and darkness, between righteousness and unrighteousness in the mitzvot, in the Torah. In addition, the difference between light and darkness may also be understood as a parallel between the knowledge of good and evil. In the light one is able to judge how one walks and to choose the right path to walk in. If the Torah has a one-to-one correspondence here to the light, if we are not studying Torah, how would it be possible to choose the right path (righteousness) to walk in? God’s Holy spirit does not just automatically cause us to live righteous and holy lives. Yeshua said the Holy Spirit will bring to remembrance His word, the Scriptures (*John 14:26*) to convict of sin and to live correctly. Thus, we need to be actively seeking the Lord and to live righteous lives. In addition, darkness is used to hide ones actions (the evil ways), to walk in wickedness without others observing what one is doing. Light has also been used to illustrate the choice between following the commandments of God, in His promises, and seeking to join one’s self to the Lord, and the hope for His eternal rewards, as opposed to darkness having the meaning to follow the enticing of the devil which persuade man to do evil and become captive to sin, wickedness, and being damned to hell which is also described as eternal darkness. All of these concepts are incorporated into the first epistle of John chapter 1. John says that God is Light and in Him is no darkness. The Aramaic Targum on *Tehillim / Psalms 19:4* states, *לית מימר דתורעמתא ולית מילי דשגושא דלא משתמע קלהון: There is no utterance of complaint, and there are no words of confusion, for their voice is not heard. (EMC)* Darkness, sin, unrighteousness, and wickedness are paralleled to the utterance of complaint and words of confusion. The mid-rashic interpretation takes the “*light verses darkness*” concepts and describes the darkness as a reference to those who are in captivity outside of the Land of Israel. Those who are in captivity might be confused

and not understanding their present situation. The answer and the light the Lord provides for them is found within His words, in the Tanach, in the Torah, reasons are given for the present state of exile which is due to disobedience (sin). Even though the children of Israel are in exile, the might and power of God is available to save and deliver. Even the ungodly nations are able to recognize the power of God and give glory to His name as we read in the midrash which says, *“So Nebuchadnezzar said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him (Daniel 3:28). And Darius said, Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he had trusted in his God (Daniel 6:24). And Scripture says, Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord is God, an everlasting Rock (Isaiah 26:4). Hence, David said, surely this is the divine promise, I too will trust in You, do not put me to shame.”* In the sense of shame, David asks the Lord to not only help him to be delivered from his enemies, but also for help to be delivered from sin, and to overcome sin in his life. In a similar manner, we too are to seek the Lord God in heaven, in the name of Yeshua the Messiah, for help to overcome sin, to walk the right path, to be empowered to obey His word, and to be humble, forgiving, and to show love for one another. Seek the Lord for help to walk in the light, in His word, and to walk in righteousness, truth, and justice towards all peoples. Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We humbly seek Your help to deliver us from not only our enemies, but also from our own sins. We desire to hallow Your Name in word, in thought, and in deed, and we know without Your help this is impossible. We praise Your Holy Name for strength and faith in the Messiah Yeshua through whom we have the forgiveness of sins. The very presence of the change in our lives gives testimony to Your Name and the presence of Your Spirit in our midst. We thank You for keeping our feet on the path of righteousness and truth according to Your Word (the Scriptures). Please create in us a deep respect, fear, and love for You Lord, coupled with a desire to dwell in Your presence, to study Your word, to pray, and to lead humble lives. Thank You for giving us the faith to believe in Yeshua the 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!

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

Notes