

ספר תהילים עו | Tehillim / Psalms 76

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Great is His Name to Keep Us!

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 76:1-12*, the psalm opens: א לְמַנְצֵחַ בְּנִגְיַת מְזֻמֹּר לְאֶסָף שִׁיר: *For the choir director; on stringed instruments. A Psalm of Asaph, a Song. (NASB)* The introduction sounds very reminiscent of David's Psalms that have the similar wording. Asaph begins saying, ב נֹדַע בִּיהוּדָה, אֲלֹהִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל גִּדּוֹל שְׁמוֹ: ג וַיְהִי בְשָׁלֹם סָפוּ וּמְעֻנָּתוֹ בְּצִיּוֹן: *76:1 God is known in Judah; His name is great in Israel. 76:2 His tabernacle is in Salem; His dwelling place also is in Zion. (NASB)* Why does Asaph say the tabernacle is in Salem? The Lords power and victory is described saying, ד שְׁמָהּ שִׁבַּר רִשְׁפֵי-קִשְׁתֵּי מָגֵן, ה נֶאֱוָר אֶתָּה אֲדִיר מֵהַרְרֵי-טָרְף: *76:3 There He broke the flaming arrows, The shield and the sword and the weapons of war. Selah. 76:4 You are resplendent, More majestic than the mountains of prey. 76:5 The stouthearted were plundered, They sank into sleep; And none of the warriors could use his hands. (NASB)* The power of God is described as being greater than the mountains, the mountains of prey. What are the mountains of prey? Why does the enemy sleep after being plundered? Asaph says, ז מִגְעַרְתֶּךָ, אֲלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב נִרְדָּם וְרֹכֵב וְסוּס: *76:6 At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob, Both rider and horse were cast into a dead sleep. (NASB)* Both the horse and rider are cast into a deep sleep, does the Hebrew text appear to be different from what the English translation sates? The psalmist says, ז מִגְעַרְתֶּךָ אֲלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב נִרְדָּם וְרֹכֵב וְסוּס: *76:7 You, even You, are to be feared; And who may stand in Your presence when once You are angry? 76:8 You caused judgment to be heard from heaven; The earth feared and was still (NASB)* When God gave Israel His Torah, it is said that the earth trembled. When the Lord brings His judgment, it is said the earth stands still. The psalm says, ט מִשְׁמַיִם הִשְׁמַעְתָּ דִּין אֶרֶץ יִרְאַהּ, י בָּקוּם-לְמִשְׁפָּט אֲלֹהִים לְהוֹשִׁיעַ כָּל-עַנּוּי-אֶרֶץ סְלָה: *76:9 When God arose to judgment, To save all the humble of the earth. Selah. 76:10 For the wrath of man shall praise You; With a remnant of wrath You will gird Yourself. (NASB)* How does the wrath of man praise the Lord? Could this be a reference to the Lord having a hand in causing the nations to move against Israel due to her sins? The Psalm concludes saying, יא כִּי-תִמַּת אָדָם תִּוְדָךְ שְׂאֵרֵי תִמַת תַּחְגֹּר: יב גִּדְרוּ וְשִׁלְמוּ לַיהוָה אֲלֹהֵיכֶם כָּל-סְבִיבֵי וַיְכִילוּ שֵׁי לְמוֹרָא: יג יְבַצֵּר רוּחַ גִּידִידִים נִרְאָה לְמַלְכֵי-אֶרֶץ: *76:11 Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them; Let all who are around Him bring gifts to Him who is to be feared. 76:12 He will cut off the spirit of princes; He is feared by the kings of the earth. (NASB)* The Lord is to be feared because He is just and true!

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
ספר תהילים פרק עו	ספר תהילים פרק עו	ספר טוביה פרק עו	ספר טוביה פרק עו	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 76	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 76
א לְמַנְצֵחַ בְּנִגְיַת מְזֻמֹּר לְאֶסָף שִׁיר: ב נֹדַע בִּיהוּדָה אֲלֹהִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל גִּדּוֹל שְׁמוֹ: ג וַיְהִי בְשָׁלֹם סָפוּ וּמְעֻנָּתוֹ בְּצִיּוֹן: ד שְׁמָהּ שִׁבַּר רִשְׁפֵי-קִשְׁתֵּי מָגֵן ה נֶאֱוָר אֶתָּה אֲדִיר מֵהַרְרֵי-טָרְף:	א לְמַנְצֵחַ בְּנִגְיַת מְזֻמֹּר לְאֶסָף שִׁיר: ב נֹדַע בִּיהוּדָה אֲלֹהִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל גִּדּוֹל שְׁמוֹ: ג וַיְהִי בְשָׁלֹם סָפוּ וּמְעֻנָּתוֹ בְּצִיּוֹן: ד שְׁמָהּ שִׁבַּר רִשְׁפֵי-קִשְׁתֵּי מָגֵן ה נֶאֱוָר אֶתָּה אֲדִיר מֵהַרְרֵי-טָרְף:	א לשבחה בתושבחתא ותושבחה על ידא דאספ שירא: ב אתידע איתודע בדבית יהודה אלהא בדבית ישראל רב שמיה: ג והוה בירושלם בית מקדשיה ומדור בית שכינת קודשיה בציון: ד כד עבדו בית ישראל רעותיה אשרי שכיי נתיה ביניהון תמן תבר גיררין וקשתין דעמיא דעממיא מגיחי קרבא תריסא וסידרי קרבא בטל לעלמין: ה נהיר דחיל את אנת אלהא משבח מן בית מקדשך יזועון מן קדמך מלכיא דיתבין בכרכי טוריא אתר בית כנישות ביזתהון:	א לשבחה בתושבחתא ותושבחה על ידא דאספ שירא: ב אתידע איתודע בדבית יהודה אלהא בדבית ישראל רב שמיה: ג והוה בירושלם בית מקדשיה ומדור בית שכינת קודשיה בציון: ד כד עבדו בית ישראל רעותיה אשרי שכיי נתיה ביניהון תמן תבר גיררין וקשתין דעמיא דעממיא מגיחי קרבא תריסא וסידרי קרבא בטל לעלמין: ה נהיר דחיל את אנת אלהא משבח מן בית מקדשך יזועון מן קדמך מלכיא דיתבין בכרכי טוריא אתר בית כנישות ביזתהון:	76:1 εις τὸ τέλος ἐν ὕμνοις ψαλμὸς τῷ Ἀσαφ ᾠδὴ πρὸς τὸν Ἀσσύριον γνωστὸς ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ μέγα τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ 76:2 καὶ ἐγενήθη ἐν εἰρήνῃ ὁ τόπος αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ κατοικητήριον αὐτοῦ ἐν Σιών 76:3 ἐκεῖ συνέτριψεν τὰ κράτη τῶν τόξων ὄπλον καὶ ῥομφαίαν καὶ πόλεμον διάψαλμα	76:1 εις τὸ τέλος ἐν ὕμνοις ψαλμὸς τῷ Ἀσαφ ᾠδὴ πρὸς τὸν Ἀσσύριον γνωστὸς ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ μέγα τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ 76:2 καὶ ἐγενήθη ἐν εἰρήνῃ ὁ τόπος αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ κατοικητήριον αὐτοῦ ἐν Σιών 76:3 ἐκεῖ συνέτριψεν τὰ κράτη τῶν τόξων ὄπλον καὶ ῥομφαίαν καὶ πόλεμον διάψαλμα

<p>ו אֲשַׁתּוֹלְלוּ אֲבִירֵי לֵב נָמוּ שְׁנָתָם וְלֹא-מִצָּאוּ כָל-אֲנָשֵׁי-חַיִל יִדְיָהֶם: ז מִגַּעַרְתָּהּ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב נִרְדָּם וְרָכַב וְסוּסֵי: ח אֲתָהּ נִוְרָא אֲתָהּ וּמִי-יַעֲמֵד לְפָנֶיךָ מֵאֵז אֲפָה: ט מְשֻׁמִּים הַשְׁמַעְתָּ דִּין אֶרֶץ יִרְאָה וְשָׁקְטָה: י בָּקוּם- לְמִשְׁפָּט אֱלֹהִים לְהוֹשִׁיעַ כָּל-עַנְיֵי- אֶרֶץ סְלָה: יא כִּי-חָמַת אָדָם תִּוְדָךְ שְׁאֵרִית חֲמַת תִּחְגַּר: יב נִדְרוּ וְשָׁלְמוּ לִיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כָּל-סִבְיָיו יִבִּילוּ שִׁי לְמוֹרָא: יג יִבְצַר רוּחַ נְגִידִים נִוְרָא לְמַלְכֵי-אֶרֶץ:</p>	<p>ו אשלו מעליהון זני קרבא גיברי ליבא איתנממו בשינתהון ולא ספיקו כל גברי גיברי חילא למיחד זינהון בדיהון: ז ממזופיתך אלהא דיעקב דמכון ארתכין ופרשין איתעקרו: ח את אנת דחיל את אנת הוא אלהא ומן יקום קדמך מעידן דיתקוף רוגדך: ט מן שמיא אשמעתא דין ארעא דעממי דחילת ארעא דישראל שדוכת: י אמרין צדיקיא יקום לדינא עם רשיעיא אלהא למפרק מן ידהון כל עינוותני ארעא לעלמין: יא כד אנת רגז על עמך אנת מרחים עליהון והינון יודון לשמך ושאר דריתחיא דאישתיירו לך מן רוגז די רגזתא תורזו לחבלא עמיא עממא: {ת'א} ארום כד יתקוף רוגדך על עמך יתובון ויודון לשמך ואנת תאיב מן רוגז ברם על שאר עמא עממא מני רוגזא תורזו: יב נדרו נדרין ושלימו קדם יהוה אלהכון כל דיתבין חזור חזור למקדשיה יתון קורבניא לבית מוקדש דחיל: יג יזעיר גסות רוחהון דברבניא דחילא על כל מלכי ארעא:</p>	<p>76:4 φωτίζεις σὺ θαυμαστῶς ἀπὸ ὀρέων αἰωνίων 76:5 ἐταράχθησαν πάντες οἱ ἀσύνετοι τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑπνώσαν ὑπνον αὐτῶν καὶ οὐχ εὔρον οὐδὲν πάντες οἱ ἄνδρες τοῦ πλοῦτου ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτῶν 76:6 ἀπὸ ἐπιτιμῆσεώς σου ὁ θεὸς Ἰακωβ ἐνύσταξαν οἱ ἐπιβεβηκότες τοὺς ἵππους 76:7 σὺ φοβερὸς εἶ καὶ τίς ἀντιστήσεται σοι ἀπὸ τότε ἡ ὀργή σου 76:8 ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἠκούτισας κρίσιν γῆ ἐφοβήθη καὶ ἠσύχασεν 76:9 ἐν τῷ ἀναστῆναι εἰς κρίσιν τὸν θεὸν τοῦ σῶσαι πάντας τοὺς πρᾶεῖς τῆς γῆς διάναλμα 76:10 ὅτι ἐνθύμιον ἀνθρώπου ἐξομολογήσεται σοι καὶ ἐγκατάλειμμα ἐνθυμίου ἐορτάσει σοι 76:11 εὐξασθε καὶ ἀπόδοτε κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ ὑμῶν πάντες οἱ κύκλω αὐτοῦ οἴσουσιν δῶρα 76:12 τῷ φοβερῷ καὶ ἀφαιρουμένῳ πνεύματα ἀρχόντων φοβερῷ παρὰ τοῖς βασιλεῦσι τῆς γῆς</p>
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Tehillim / Psalms 76
For the choir director; on stringed instruments. A Psalm of Asaph, a Song. 76:1 God is known in Judah; His name is great in Israel. 76:2 His tabernacle is in Salem; His dwelling place also is in Zion. 76:3 There He broke the flaming arrows, The shield and the sword and the weapons of war. Selah. 76:4 You are resplendent, More majestic than the mountains of prey. 76:5 The stouthearted were plundered, They sank into sleep; And none of the warriors could use his hands. 76:6 At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob, Both rider and horse were cast into a dead sleep. 76:7 You, even You, are to be feared; And who may stand in Your presence when once You are angry? 76:8 You caused judgment to be heard from heaven; The earth feared and was still (NASB)

Toviyah / Psalms 76
76:1 For praise, as a psalm; a psalm composed by Asaph, a song. 76:2 God has become known among those of the house of Judah; his name is great among those of the house of Israel. 76:3 And his sanctuary has come to be in Jerusalem, and the dwelling of the house of his holy presence is in Zion. 76:4 When the house of Israel did his will, he made his presence abide among them; there he broke the arrows and bows of the Gentiles who were making war; he made forever the shields and battle-lines of no account. 76:5 Bright [and] awful are you, O God, acclaimed from your sanctuary; the kings who dwell in the mountain fortresses, the place where their spoil is gathered, will tremble in your presence. 76:6 The mighty in heart have stripped from them the weapons of war; they have slumbered in their sleep; and all the men of might have not been able to grasp their weapons in their hands. 76:7 At your rebuke, O God of Jacob, the chariots have fallen asleep, and the cavalry have been disabled. 76:8 You are awesome, you are God; and who will stand before you from the time your anger becomes strong? (EMC)

Psalmoi / Psalms 76
For the end, among the Hymns, a Psalm for Asaph; a Song for the Assyrian. 76:1 God is known in Judea: his name is great in Israel. 76:2 And his place has been in peace, and his dwelling-place in Zion. 76:3 There he broke the power of the bows, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Pause. 76:4 Thou dost wonderfully shine forth from the everlasting mountains. 76:5 All the simple ones in heart were troubled; all the men of wealth have slept their sleep, and have found nothing in their hands. 76:6 At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, the riders on horses slumbered. 76:7 Thou art terrible; and who shall withstand thee, because of thine anger? 76:8 Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still, 76:9 when God arose to judgment, to save all the meek in heart. Pause. (LXX)

Tehillim / Psalms 76	Toviyah / Psalms 76	Psalmoi / Psalms 76
<p>76:9 When God arose to judgment, To save all the humble of the earth. Selah. 76:10 For the wrath of man shall praise You; With a remnant of wrath You will gird Yourself. 76:11 Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them; Let all who are around Him bring gifts to Him who is to be feared. 76:12 He will cut off the spirit of princes; He is feared by the kings of the earth. (NASB)</p>	<p>76:9 From heaven you proclaimed judgment on the land of the Gentiles; the land of Israel was afraid [and] became silent. 76:10 The righteous say, “Let God arise for judgment with the wicked, to redeem from their hands all the meek of the earth forever.” 76:11 When you are angry at your people, you show mercy to them, and they will give thanks to your name; but the remainder of fury that is left to you, out of the wrath that you showed, you will gird on to destroy the Gentiles. Another Targum: For when your anger grows strong against your people, they will repent and give thanks to your name, and you turn from anger; but against the remnant of the Gentiles you will gird on the instruments of anger. 76:12 Make vows and fulfill [them] in the presence of the Lord your God, all you who dwell around his sanctuary; let them bring offerings to his awesome temple. 76:13 He will diminish the arrogant spirits of the leaders; [he is] dreadful to all the kings of the earth. (EMC)</p>	<p>76:10 For the inward thought of man shall give thanks to thee: and the memorial of his inward thought shall keep a feast to thee. 76:11 Vow, and pay your vows to the Lord our God; all that are round about him shall bring gifts, even to him that is terrible, 76:12 and that takes away the spirits of princes; to him that is terrible among the kings of the earth. (LXX)</p>

In this week’s study from *Tehillim / Psalms 76:1-12*, the psalm opens saying, א לְמַנְצֵחַ בְּנִגְיֹת מְזֻמֹּר *For the choir director; on stringed instruments. A Psalm of Asaph, a Song. (NASB)* The introduction sounds very reminiscent of David’s Psalms that have the similar wording. The Aramaic Targum states, א לשבחה בתושבחה תושבחה על ידא דאסף שירא: *76:1 For praise, as a psalm; a psalm composed by Asaph, a song. (EMC)* Brown, Driver, Briggs Lexicon states that לְמַנְצֵחַ is from the root word נָצַח, a verb “to be pre-eminent, enduring,” in the Piel verbal patten means “to make brilliant” (see *Ecclesiastes 43:5 and 43:13*), “to act as an overseer, superintendent, director, Psalms titles.” As a title for the psalm, לְמַנְצֵחַ is probably a simile meaning, “musical director or choirmaster,” and is the most likely reason for the interpretation of the word לְמַנְצֵחַ to say, “For the choir director.” As we know, Asaph was one of the men assigned to the music ministry in the 1st Temple service (see *1 Chronicles 6:39*). Asaph’s duties are described in detail in *1 Chronicles 16* and according to *2 Chronicles 29:30*, both Asaph and David were skilled singers and poets. Asaph is also mentioned as being a “seer” or prophet.

76:1 ב נודע ביהודה אלהים בישראל גדול שמו: ג ויהי בשלם סכו ומעונתו בציון: *God is known in Judah; His name is great in Israel. 76:2 His tabernacle is in Salem; His dwelling place also is in Zion. (NASB)* Why does Asaph say the tabernacle is in Salem? In the Torah, we learn about the first appearance of a priest of the Lord God Almighty according to *Bereshit / Genesis 14:18* which states, יח ומלכי-צדק מלך שלם הוציא לחם ויין והוא כהן לאל עליון: meaning “And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High.” (NASB) The Hebrew word כהן (Cohen) is

derived from the word כהן *"kahan"* meaning *"to serve as an attendant, or a servant, to mediate, or to officiate."* According to the Scriptures, this is the earliest mention where a man operated in an intermediary role on behalf of the Lord God Almighty, between Abraham and the Lord. In *Bereshit / Genesis 14*, the role of the priest is clearly laid out saying: וְהוּא כֹהֵן לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן: *"and he was a priest of God Most High."* The name Melchizedek (מֶלְכִי-צֶדֶק) means *"king of righteousness,"* and was the one that stood to mediate for Abraham on behalf of the Most High God. The role of priest functions as an intermediary on behalf of someone else and as an intermediary the priest preserves the people in the sense so that the wrath of God does not fall upon the people. This is why the priests were commanded to camp between the people and the Tabernacle following Chet Haegel in Parashat Ki Tisa. It is important to note that this priest was a priest of Shalem (שָׁלֵם), translated as *"Salem"* in English. The idea here may be that if there was a priest in this place (Shalem, Salem, שָׁלֵם) who received Abraham's tithe, there must have been a Tabernacle of some sort, how else would Abraham have known of this place?

This location, this place is known later on to be the place where Jerusalem was built. According to the rabbis, Jerusalem is known by many names. The names of Jerusalem refers to the multiple names by which the city of Jerusalem has been called and the etymology of the name in different languages. According to the Midrashim, *"Jerusalem has 70 names."* (*Midrash Rabbah Bamidbar 14, Part 12, ע' כנגד ע' דבר אחר: כנגד ע' ע' שמות לירושלים*) Today, Jerusalem is called Yerushalayim (יְרוּשָׁלַיִם) which is the transliteration of the Hebrew name. The name Salem refers to Jerusalem indicated according to *Tehillim / Psalms 76:2* which states specifically that *"Salem"* as a parallel for *"Zion,"* the citadel of Jerusalem. Note that the same identification is made by Josephus and the Aramaic translations of the Bible. The Aramaic Targum states, ב אַתִּידַע אִיתוּדַע בְּדַבִּית יְהוּדָה אֱלֹהָא בְּדַבִּית יִשְׂרָאֵל רַב, *76:2 God has become known among those of the house of Judah; his name is great among those of the house of Israel. 76:3 And his sanctuary has come to be in Jerusalem, and the dwelling of the house of his holy presence is in Zion.* (EMC) Here the Aramaic Targum states explicitly the translation and location of Salem is that of Jerusalem, the place of the house of God's holy presence, mount Zion. Mount Zion (הַר צִיּוֹן) was originally the name of the hill where the Jebusite fortress stood (see *2 Samuel 5:6-7*), and the name was later applied to the Temple Mount just to the north of the fortress (also known as Mount Moriah, הַר מוֹרִיָּה). Later, during the 2nd Temple period, the name came to be applied to a hill just to the south-west of the walled city, where this hill is still known as Mount Zion today. Following the Babylonian exile which occurred in approximately the 6th century BCE, Zion has come to be used as a synonym for the city of Jerusalem as a whole. Mount Moriah, which is now known as the Temple mount, was a part of the city Jebus according to *Judges 19:10*, and was the city inhabited by the Jebusites. According to the Scriptures, this land was sold to King David by Ornan the Jebusite, for the full price of purchase (six hundred shekels of gold). *1 Chronicles 21:26* states the purpose was to build an altar in the threshing floor for sacrifice, to stop the plague God had visited upon Israel due to David's sin of numbering the people. King Solomon later built the Temple at this location. The Jebusite stronghold at that time was called Zion which David took by force, and it afterward began to be called *"The City of David."* (*2 Samuel 5:7-10*)

Asaph continues, He describes the Lord's power and victory over the enemy saying, ד אֲשַׁמָּה שְׂפֵר רִשְׁׁ פִּי-קִשְׁתִּים מְגֹן וְחֶרֶב וּמִלְחָמָה סֶלָה: ה נָאוֹר אַתָּה אֲדִיר מִהַרְרֵי-טָרֶף: ו אֲשַׁתּוּלְלוּ | אֲבִירֵי לֵב נִמוּ שְׁנַתֶּם וְלֹא-מִצָּאוּ: *76:3 There He broke the flaming arrows, The shield and the sword and the weapons of war. Selah. 76:4 You are resplendent, More majestic than the mountains of prey. 76:5 The stouthearted were plundered, They sank into sleep; And none of the warriors could use his hands.* (NASB) The power of God is described as being greater than the mountains, the mountains of prey. What are the mountains of prey? Why does the enemy sleep after being plundered? The psalmist states, נָאוֹר אַתָּה אֲדִיר מִהַרְרֵי-טָרֶף, saying that the Lord is more majestic than *"me'harrey taref"* (the mountains of prey, מִהַרְרֵי-טָרֶף). Note the word taref (טָרֶף) is the root word for the Yiddish word Treif (טרייף) the word that describes food that does

not conform with the Jewish dietary laws of kashrut. The word is derived from the Hebrew טְרֵפָה (trēfáh) meaning “torn,” and designated foods that are either inherently forbidden or rendered unacceptable due to an incorrect preparation. The author of the psalm speaks of the mountain that tears, the mountain of prey. The idea that we get here is of non-kosher meat, a type of meat from an animal that has been torn apart in the field by a wild animal. The mountain of treif also provides us with an interpretation of defect, disease, or inflicted wound, non-kosher, something that is consumed which causes one to be unclean. The mountain of which the Lord is greater is described as being the mountain of terefa (טרפה), literally, the mountain “Torn” by a beast of prey. Note the helplessness of the one who is torn by a beast of prey, the Lord is greater than such a thing. The prohibition of eating terefah is derived from the Torah verse which states, וְאַנְשֵׁי קִדְשׁ וְאִתּוֹ תִהְיוּן לִי וּבֶשֶׂר בְּשָׂדֵה טְרֵפָה לֹא תֹאכְלוּ לְכָלֵב תִּשְׁלַכּוּן אֹתוֹ “And you shall be holy people to Me, and flesh torn in the field you shall not eat; you shall throw it to the dogs.” (Shemot / Exodus 22:30) By extension, the Rabbis apply the meaning, interpretation, and application of this verse to any kosher animal which had sustained an injury of any kind. The conclusion is that this verse implies regardless whether a clean (kosher) animal suffered a mortal injury or not, if the animal received an injury from a wild beast or from a fall, the animal would become unfit (non Kosher) for ritual slaughter or human consumption. However, if the injury to the animal is not life-threatening (if the animal will not die within a year of its injury), the animal may be ritually slaughtered. (*Talmud Bavli Chullin 37a*) According to the Talmud, there were originally 8 types of terefah, however, the authors of the Mishnah added 18 more specifics to the list. Maimonides added even more to the list of terefah bringing the conditions to 70. According to the Torah, it is forbidden to eat of any animal which died by itself. (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 14:21*) Such meat is called Nevelah (a carcass). Any animal that dies by any means other than that of the ritual slaughter (shechita) is considered to fall within this class. This may also be the reason Peter up on he roof top declared to the Lord that nothing that has not been ritually slaughtered (*note the Greek text use of the word for ritual slaughter*) when the sheet of animals was let down from heaven. Nevelah differs from Terefah in the sense that Nevelah imparts ritual impurity by touch (*the touching of a dead body or a carcass*), whereas Terefah does not. The 8 types of Terefah that would make an animal unfit for ritual sacrifice according to the Torah are as follows:

Talmudic listing of the 8 types of Terefah

1. Clawing: the clawing of an animal by a wild beast or of a bird by a bird of prey.
2. Perforation: a perforation to the cavity of one of the following 11 organs: the pharynx, the membrane of the brain, the heart and its aorta, the gall bladder, the vena cava inferior, abomasum, rumen, omasum, intestines, the lung and trachea.
3. Deficiency: the absence from birth of one of the lobes of the lung, or one of the feet.
4. Missing: the absence of converging sinews in the thigh, or the liver, or the upper jaw.
5. Severing: the severing of the membrane covering the spinal cord whether the spinal column be broken or not.
6. Falling: the crushing of one of the internal organs of an animal as the result of a fall.

7. Tearing: the tearing of most of the flesh covering the rumen.

8. Fracturing: such as the fracturing of most of its ribs

The damages include, clawing, perforation, deficiency, missing organs, severed organs, falling, tearing, and fracturing. (*Talmud Bavli Chullin 43a*) So the idea is that this mountain of tearing or of prey, has the capability of destroying the man who climbs such a mountain. The Psalm sates that the Lord God is greater than such a mountain, having the capability of both destroying and sustaining. The context (the previous verse) states 76:3 *There He broke the flaming arrows, The shield and the sword and the weapons of war. Selah.* The idea is the one who rejects God's Torah is the one who sends the flaming arrows, the weapons of war which are raised up against God's people. Those who love God's Torah do no such thing, we don't go out to destroy or to make war, etc.

The psalmist continues saying, 76:5 *The stouthearted were plundered, They sank into sleep; And none of the warriors could use his hands. (NASB)* The enemy going to sleep seems to parallel the NT description of those who have died (*1 Corinthians 11:30*) and the description we find in *Daniel 12:2* "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. (NASB) The idea here is that if one has died and is asleep in the dust of the earth, he will have no power to lift up the sword, in fact, he will have no use of his hands because they are turned to dust. The verb אֶשְׁתּוֹלֵלוּ is a Hithpoel Perfect 3rd Com. Plural meaning (Qal) "to draw out" or "to spoil, plunder; take," so the sense that is given as a result of the way the MT is written, the enemy sleeps after being plundered, taking away the enemies wealth, the Lord takes away his ability to oppress the poor and needy because he becomes poor and needy himself. They become quiet as if one is sleeping. In addition, the planning, scheming, plotting to do evil to the righteous, the poor, and the needy is what motivates the unrighteous, and without these things, the wicked have nothing to live for and so they sleep and await the judgment day.

The Aramaic Targum states, ד כד עבדו בית ישראל רעותיה אשרי שכנתיה ביניהון תמן תבר גיררין וקשׁ תין דעמיה דעממיה מגיחיה קרבא תריסא וסידרי קרבא בטל לעלמין: ה נהיר דחיל את אנת אלהא משבח מן בית מקדשך יזועון מן קדמך מלכיה דיתבין בכרכי טוריא אתר בית כנישות ביזתהון: ו אשלהו מעלויהון זיני קרבא 76:4 *When the house of Israel did his will, he made His presence abide among them; there he broke the arrows and bows of the Gentiles who were making war; he made forever the shields and battle-lines of no account. 76:5 Bright [and] awful are you, O God, acclaimed from your sanctuary; the kings who dwell in the mountain fortresses, the place where their spoil is gathered, will tremble in your presence. 76:6 The mighty in heart have stripped from them the weapons of war; they have slumbered in their sleep; and all the men of might have not been able to grasp their weapons in their hands. (EMC)* The Septuagint sates, 76:4 φωτίζεις σὺ θαυμαστῶς ἀπὸ ὀρέων αἰωνίων 76:5 ἐταράχθησαν πάντες οἱ ἀσύνετοι τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑπνωσαν ὑπνον αὐτῶν καὶ οὐχ εὗρον οὐδὲν πάντες οἱ ἄνδρες τοῦ πλοῦτου ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτῶν 76:6 ἀπὸ ἐπιτιμῆσεώς σου ὁ θεὸς Ἰακωβ ἐνύσταξαν οἱ ἐπιβεβηκότες τοὺς ἵππους 76:3 *There he broke the power of the bows, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Pause. 76:4 Thou dost wonderfully shine forth from the everlasting mountains. 76:5 All the simple ones in heart were troubled; all the men of wealth have slept their sleep, and have found nothing in their hands. (LXX)* The rabbis translate the MT saying that the one who does the will of God, who obeys His Torah, the Lord causes His presence to abide in their midst. The Lord breaks the arrows and the bows of the Gentiles who make war against Israel, and the Lord causes the battle lines to be of no account forever. Asaph's words, according to the rabbis, appears to set forth what will happen "if you follow My statutes" as opposed to what will happen "if you do not obey Me, and do not perform all of these commandments." While studying the book of Deuteronomy, and the listings of the blessings and the curses, note how there appears to be a fundamental discrepancy between these concepts, in the question of "Who comes to whom?" In other words, is it man who approaches and enters the boundaries of the Mitzvot, fulfilling and obeying His word, or is it the Lord God Who enters man's boundaries, impacting his life, his will, and his ability to

be obedient to the Mitzvot? The Lord says in Parashat Bekhukotai, *“if you follow My statutes and keep My commandments and do them, then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach to the vintage, and the vintage shall reach to the sowing time, and you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.”* (Vayikra / Leviticus 26:3-5) In Deuteronomy, the Lord describes what will happen *“if you follow My statutes and observe the commandments.”* While studying the Psalms, the Torah, and these Scriptures specifically from Parashat Bekhukotai, is the subject here concerning *“following My statutes,” “observance,” and “performing the commandments,” “man’s obedience or ability,”* is the subject about obeying God? The subject is not about man and what is happening on the inside with regard to his struggle or ability to be obedient. The subject is actually on the *“behavioral statutes and commandments”* upon which man’s existence is based. If a man *“enters the boundaries”* of these rules and behaves in accordance with their truth, then his existence will be firm and stable, and he will enjoy the resulting abundance the Lord God in heaven provides in which the Torah states, *“I will give you rain in due seas, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.” And I will set My Sanctuary among you and My soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be My people. I am the Lord your God Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their bondmen, and I have broken the bars of your yoke, and caused you to walk upright.* (Vayikra / Leviticus 26:11-13) The Scripture continues saying, *“And it shall be, if you obey diligently the voice of the Lord your God, to observe and to perform all His commandments which I command you this day, that the Lord your God will set you on high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God. Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your beasts, the increase of your cattle and the flocks of your sheep. Blessed shall be your basket and your store. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.”* In Parashat Bechukotai, and in the blessings and curses found within the book of Deuteronomy, we find the Scriptures formulated in both the plural and the singular form, which indicates that the Lord is speaking to us both as a nation, and also at the individual level within the nation. The approach that is taken from the Torah, the Lord is addressing us at a more inward level, from both a national perspective, which consists of the individuals who are called to live within the boundaries of God’s commandments. In the book of Deuteronomy, the approach is *“hearing His voice,”* and the Lord God who will *“set you on high above all the nations of the earth.”* (Devarim / Deuteronomy 28:1) These statements are related to an inner status that is relative to all the nations of the world. The condition of the nation that belongs to God is filled with men and women who seek the Lord God in heaven and desire to live according to His commandments because of the great love that He has for His people. From this point of view, of the nation that steps into the boundaries of the commandments, there follows an assortment of blessings, expressing the abundance that can fill a person’s world and the goodness that surrounds him. On the other hand, there are also the curses, the one who does not choose or seek to live according to God’s ways, the curses will fall upon and overtake such a person. From this point on, the subject is the individual and/or the nation and the status or position that they will occupy which is described as, *“Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field...”* (Devarim / Deuteronomy 28:16), *“The Lord shall cause you to be smitten before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them, and shall be a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth”* (Devarim / Deuteronomy 28:25), and the list goes on. Within the context of the Psalm, according to the Aramaic Targum, when the house of Israel chooses to walk in God’s commands, the Lord will break the arrows and bows of the enemy. The purpose of the enemy is to draw the nation, and the individual to repentance and to turn back to the ways of the Lord God in heaven. With the Lord on our side, there is nothing that can stand against us. Even the enemy who dwell in mountain fortresses, the fear of the Lord will cause them to tremble in the presence of God. As a result, the Lord God has stripped the mighty men of war of their weapons, they will not be able to grasp their weapons to make war because it is the Lord God in heaven who enables both the righteous and the unrighteous to do what they do.

Asaph continues saying, מִגְעֶרְתָּהּ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב נִרְדָּם וְרָכַב וְסוּסֵי: 76:6 *At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob,*

Both rider and horse were cast into a dead sleep. (NASB) The Hebrew text states that “from your rebuke” (מִגְעַרְתֶּךָ) God of Jacob (אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב) put to sleep (נִרְדָּם) both the horse and rider (וְרֹכֵב וְסוּס). Why are both the rider and the horse put to sleep? We read in 2 Samuel 8:4 וַיִּלְכֹּד דָּוִד מִמֶּנּוּ אֶלְפֵי וְשִׁבְעֵ-מֵאוֹת פָּרָשִׁים 8:4 David captured from him 1,700 horsemen and 20,000 foot soldiers; and David hamstringed the chariot horses, but reserved enough of them for 100 chariots. (NASB) Why did David hamstring the horses? Note that a horse that cannot walk is put to death. In 2 Samuel 8, King David captured both the horseman and the horse. We are told that he hamstrung the horses, all but 100 of them for chariots (see also 1 Chronicles 18:4). There are two other instances (Bereshit / Genesis 49:6 and Joshua 11:9) where we are told people hamstrung animals.

Bereshit / Genesis 49:5-7

49:5 ‘Simeon and Levi are brothers; Their swords are implements of violence. 49:6 ‘Let my soul not enter into their council; Let not my glory be united with their assembly; Because in their anger they slew men, And in their self-will they lamed oxen. 49:7 ‘Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel. I will disperse them in Jacob, And scatter them in Israel.

(NASB)

Joshua 11:9

11:9 Joshua did to them as the LORD had told him; he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire. (NASB)

In Bereshit / Genesis 49:5-7, Jacob calls his sons, he speaks of Simeon and Levi who put to death the inhabitants of Shechem, and says that in their anger they slew men and they hamstrung oxen as they pleased. The idea here is that innocent animals were made lame by their anger. The parallel appears to be to the inhabitants of the land of Canaan (the city of Shechem), they killed the innocent. In the book of Joshua, he captured horses and chariots and proceeded to hamstring the horses and burn the chariots. What we find here is that Joshua did not trust in horses or in chariots. His trust was in the Lord to overcome and defeat the enemy. The idea here from Asaph’s words, of putting both the horse and the horseman to sleep is that we are not to act with anger and vengeance as Simeon and Levi did to hurt the innocent, and that we are to trust in the Lord for His sustaining power, as opposed to trusting in our own wealth, power, and military strength.

The psalmist says, ז מִגְעַרְתֶּךָ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב נִרְדָּם וְרֹכֵב וְסוּס: ה אַתָּה | נִרְאָה אַתָּה וּמִי-יֵצֵמַד לְפָנֶיךָ מֵאִז אַפְּךָ: 76:7 You, even You, are to be feared; And who may stand in Your presence when once You are angry? 76:8 You caused judgment to be heard from heaven; The earth feared and was still (NASB) Rightly so the people and the nations tremble in the presence of God because He is able to overturn the evil intentions for good. The Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint state the following:

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms 76

76:8 You are awesome, you are God; and who will stand before you from the time your anger becomes strong? 76:9 From heaven you proclaimed judgment on the land of the Gentiles; the land of Israel was afraid [and] became silent. (EMC)

ה את אנת דחיל את אנת הוא אלהא ומן יקום קדמך מעידן דיתקוף רוגזך: ט מן שמיא אשמעתא דין ארעא דעממי דחילת ארעא דישראל שדוכת:

Septuagint

Psalm / Psalms 76

76:8 *Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still,*
76:9 *when God arose to judgment, to save all the meek in heart. Pause. (LXX)*

76:7 *σὺ φοβερὸς εἶ καὶ τίς ἀντιστήσεται σοὶ ἀπὸ τότε ἢ ὀργή σου* 76:8 *ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἠκούτισας κρίσιν γῆ ἔφοβήθη καὶ ἠσύχασεν*

The Septuagint states that the Lord caused His judgment to be made know from heaven. The Targum states, *6:9 From heaven you proclaimed judgment on the land of the Gentiles; the land of Israel was afraid [and] became silent. (EMC)* How does the Lord make his judgment known from heaven? The rabbis say that his judgment was proclaimed upon the land of the Gentiles. In *Joel 3:9-17*, the prophet gives a challenge to the enemies of God's people. He says there is no escaping the judgments of the Lord. Those who have hardened their hearts to hearing the Lord, in the day of wrath they will be cut off from all comfort and joy. Most of the prophets in the Tanach speak of the final victory of the Lord God over all that oppose Him and His people. To the wicked it will be a terrible day, but to the righteous it will be a day of joy and victory.

In addition, we are told when God gave Israel His Torah, it is said that the earth trembled. Midrash Tehillim 75, Part 1 tells us, *“When the Holy One blessed be He, sought to give the Torah to Israel, the earth began to quake and totter out of fear that the children of Israel would not, God have mercy, accept the Torah, and that the earth would turn back to emptiness and chaos. But as soon as the children of Israel said, We will do and obey (Shemot / Exodus 24:7), the earth established itself again on its foundation, as is said, I myself established the pillars of it. Selah.”* The idea here is that the world was created for the purpose of the giving of the Torah to Israel. If Israel had refused, the world would have been destroyed. When the Lord brings His judgment, it is said the earth stands still. According to the *Talmud Bavli, Pirkei Avot 1:2 Shimon the Righteous was of the last of the Great Assembly. He would say: On three things the world stands—on the Torah, on the service, and on acts of kindness. על שְׁמֵעוֹן הַצְדִּיק הָיָה מְשִׁירֵי כְנֻסַת הַגְּדוּלָה. הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, על שְׁלֹשָׁה דְבָרִים הָעוֹלָם עוֹמֵד, על הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל הָעֲבוּדָה וְעַל גְּמִילוּת חַסְדִּים:* The world was created and stands on three things, the Torah, the service, and acts of kindness towards others. In the Song of Deborah we are told, *“The earth trembled, ... the mountains quaked, before the Lord, Him of Sinai” (Judges 5:4-5)*, and similarly in one of the Psalms (68:9). These references are said to allude to the giving of the Torah at the Mountain of Sinai according to Midrash Rabbi Shemot, Parashat Yitro (29 part 9). The earth quakes, the mountains tremble, the enemy stands in fear due to God's righteous judgments, His justice, and His truth.

ט מְשַׁמְּחִים הַשְּׂמֵעַתָּ דִּין אֲרָץ יִרְאָה וְשָׁקֵטָה: י בָּקוּם-לְמַשְׁפָּט אֱלֹהִים לְהוֹשִׁיעַ כָּל-עַנּוּי-אֲרָץ, 76:9 *When God arose to judgment, To save all the humble of the earth. Selah. 76:10 For the wrath of man shall praise You; With a remnant of wrath You will gird Yourself. (NASB)* How does the wrath of man praise the Lord? Based upon the psalm thus far, this very well could be a reference to the Lord having a hand in causing the nations to move against Israel due to her sins.

יא כִּי-חַמַּת אָדָם תּוֹדֶךָ שְׂאֵרֵית חַמַּת תַּחֲגֹר: יב נִדְרֹו וְשָׁלְמוּ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיכֶם, 76:11 *Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them; Let all who are around Him bring gifts to Him who is to be feared. 76:12 He will cut off the spirit of princes; He is feared by the kings of the earth. (NASB)* The Torah states the following about vows to the Lord God in heaven.

Bamidbar / Numbers 30:2

30:2 *When a man makes a vow to the LORD or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said. (NASB)*

Devarim / Deuteronomy 23:21

23:21 *If you make a vow to the LORD your God, do not be slow to pay it, for the LORD your God will certainly demand it of you and you will be guilty of sin. (NASB)*

Ecclesiastes 5:4

5:4 When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! (NASB)

The author of Ecclesiastes gives us a warning concerning the making of vows. The making of vows consisted of a doing something for the sake of the Lord God in heaven. The vow throughout history however became an occasion of much irreverence and profanity. When you make a vow to the Lord God in heaven, do not delay in paying it. This is obviously a reference to *Devarim / Deuteronomy 23:21-23*, where the Lord God will demand, require it of you, if you make a vow, and not fulfilling the vow will cause one to be guilty of sin. Note also that vows are not regarded as absolute duties which every one was obliged to perform. The vow is voluntary, however, when a vow is made, it is to be strictly performed. For example, the vow might consist of a promise to dedicate certain things or persons to God (see *Bereshit / Genesis 38:20, Judges 11:30*), or to abstain from doing certain things, as in the case of the Nazarite vow. The rabbinical injunction quoted by Yeshua in *Matthew 5:33*, “*Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths,*” was most likely spoken against the profane swearing, or by making light of the invoking God’s Name. It is for this the Lord God is to be feared because He is just and true, and this is the reason Asaph sates, *76:11 Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them; Let all who are around Him bring gifts to Him who is to be feared. 76:12 He will cut off the spirit of princes; He is feared by the kings of the earth. (NASB) Let’s Pray!*

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 76* 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 76, Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4.*

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 76, Part 1, 2, 3, and 4

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*For the leader; with stringed music, In Judah is God known; His name is great in Israel (Tehillim / Psalms 76:1-2).*”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*These words are to be considered in the light of the verse After Ephraim became desolate in the day of rebuke, I made known Me integrity among the tribes of Israel (Hosea 5:9).*”
- The **משל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon Asaph’s words, the Lord making known His Name, did so to Judah and Benjamin and did not do so to the northern 10 tribes.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal saying that the nations therefore thought the Lord God plays favorites because He revealed His name to Judah and Benjamin only.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*For Moshe said to God, In that hour You dealt mercifully with the tribe of Judah, it was as if You had dealt mercifully with all Israel, since Israel is also known by the name of Judah.*”

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*Another comment on In Judah is God known; His name is great in Israel.*”

- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Why did the tribe of Judah merit the kingship?*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis alternate interpretation includes the notion that confession is only needed for forgiveness in the case of illicit intercourse.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal and say that the forgiveness that is attributed to Judah is due to their going down to the Red Sea first because of their faith in the Lord God to deliver them from the Egyptians army.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*Because the tribe of Judah was the first to go down into the sea for the hallowing of God, therefore the Land of Israel became Judah’s dominion. And so, In Judah is God known; his name is great in Israel means that the name of Judah is the greatest in Israel.*”

Part 3

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*Even in Salem is set His Tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion (Tehillim / Psalms 76:3).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Rabbi Berechiah taught, at the very beginning of His creation of the earth, the Holy One blessed be He, set a Tabernacle in Jerusalem, within which if one may use a manner of speaking, He prayed, Let it be the will that My children do My will, so that I will not destroy My house and My Temple.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon Asaph’s words to say that the reason the Lord allowed the destruction of the Temple was for the purpose of the people repenting and turning back to the Lord God in heaven.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal paralleling the holy place, Salem, Jerusalem, Zion, etc.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*When You raise up the Tabernacle of which You said, In that day will I raise up the Tabernacle of David that is fallen (Amos 9:11). And so the second verse is to be read, When His Tabernacle will again be in Salem.*”

Part 4

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*There He broke the fiery shafts of the bow (Tehillim / Psalms 76:4), that is, broken the strength of the bow of Edom, even as it is said in Their sword will ever into their own heart, and their bows will be broken (Tehillim / Psalms 37:15).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Whatever is cruel is symbolized by fire, as is said, For a fire is gone out of Heshbon (Bamidbar / Numbers 21:28), and again, Jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which have a most vehement flame (Song 8:6).*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon Asaph’s words saying that it is the Lord who is able to break the bow of Edom and of those nations that would raise up and come against Israel.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal saying the Lord is the One who brings Israel back from exile.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*He is One who is terrible to the kings of the earth. What is meant by ministers? It means restrains, as in the verse, The Lord said, now nothing will be restrained from them (Bereshit / Genesis 11:6).*”

Midrash Tehillim 76, Part 1 opens with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*For the leader; with stringed music, In Judah is God known; His name is great in Israel (Tehillim / Psalms*

76:1-2).” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “These words are to be considered in the light of the verse *After Ephraim became desolate in the day of rebuke, I made known My integrity among the tribes of Israel (Hosea 5:9).*” The rabbis reference *Hosea 5:9* saying that the Lord has made known His integrity. What does it mean when the Lord said that He made known His integrity? Let’s read through *Hosea 5*.

Hosea 5:1-15

5:1 Hear this, O priests! Give heed, O house of Israel! Listen, O house of the king! For the judgment applies to you, For you have been a snare at Mizpah And a net spread out on Tabor. 5:2 The revolters have gone deep in depravity, But I will chastise all of them. 5:3 I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from Me; For now, O Ephraim, you have played the harlot, Israel has defiled itself. 5:4 Their deeds will not allow them To return to their God. For a spirit of harlotry is within them, And they do not know the Lord. 5:5 Moreover, the pride of Israel testifies against him, And Israel and Ephraim stumble in their iniquity; Judah also has stumbled with them. 5:6 They will go with their flocks and herds To seek the Lord, but they will not find Him; He has withdrawn from them. 5:7 They have dealt treacherously against the Lord, For they have borne illegitimate children. Now the new moon will devour them with their land. 5:8 Blow the horn in Gibeah, The trumpet in Ramah. Sound an alarm at Beth-aven: ‘Behind you, Benjamin!’ 5:9 Ephraim will become a desolation in the day of rebuke; Among the tribes of Israel I declare what is sure. (אֶפְרַיִם לְשִׁמָּה תִהְיֶה בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְהוֹכַחְתָּהּ) (בְּשִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הוֹדַעְתִּי נְאֻמָּנָה: 5:10 The princes of Judah have become like those who move a boundary; On them I will pour out My wrath like water. 5:11 Ephraim is oppressed, crushed in judgment, Because he was determined to follow man’s command. 5:12 Therefore I am like a moth to Ephraim And like rottenness to the house of Judah. 5:13 When Ephraim saw his sickness, And Judah his wound, Then Ephraim went to Assyria And sent to King Jareb. But he is unable to heal you, Or to cure you of your wound. 5:14 For I will be like a lion to Ephraim And like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear to pieces and go away, I will carry away, and there will be none to deliver. 5:15 I will go away and return to My place Until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me. (NASB)

Note the Hebrew text, it states that *5:9 Ephraim will become a desolation in the day of rebuke; Among the tribes of Israel I declare what is sure. (אֶפְרַיִם לְשִׁמָּה תִהְיֶה בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְהוֹכַחְתָּהּ בְּשִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הוֹדַעְתִּי נְאֻמָּנָה:)* NASB The Lord says that He made know his faith (נְאֻמָּנָה). What does it mean to make know one’s faith? How does the Lord make known His faith? Within the context of *Hosea 5*, how did the Lord make known His faith to Ephraim or to Judah? The Lord God had made His faith known to the children of Israel (See Parashat Haazinu) according to His Torah, by the desolation that was foretold by Moshe and the prophets, and proclaimed in all the tribes of Israel what would come to pass if an individual and a nation would not walk in His ways. His faithfulness to His promises were made known by His delivering and returning the people to the Promised Land. The people could not plead ignorance or say they had not been given notice of the desolation that was upon them. Due to their sins, the people made a desolation of the word of truth, where true faith and faithfulness is to walk in his ways.

The rabbis continue in the midrash to say the following:

When the ten tribes of Ephraim were being exiled, Judah and Benjamin were not exiled. Hence, the nations of the earth began to say, This can only mean that God is like a man who plays favorites. Because Judah and Benjamin are the keepers of His inn, God did exile them. But once they too were exiled, the Holy One blessed be He, made His integrity known to the world, as is said, I have made known My integrity among the tribes of Israel. Thereupon, In Judah is God known; His name is great in Israel. Rabbi Judah taught in the name of Rabbi

Ilai, When the children of Israel stood at the Red Sea, they stayed there, disputing one with the other. One said, Must I go down first into the sea? The other said, Must I go down first into the sea? Meantime, Nahshon, son of Amminadab, jumped into the waves of the sea, and it came over him. At this, Moshe began to pray, Save me, O God; for the waters are coming in unto my soul, I am come into the deep waters, where the floods overflow me (Tehillim / Psalms 69:2-3).

The rabbis look at the homiletic introduction and discuss the nations who see Ephraim, the northern tribes, and say that the Lord God destroyed Ephraim and not Benjamin and Judah, therefore the Lord is like a man who plays favorites. Then Judah and Benjamin were exiled and in doing this the Lord made known His integrity, his faithfulness to all of the world. In Judah, the Lord God is known, and this is paralleled to the children of Israel at the Red Sea. They disputed over who will go down first into the Sea and the tradition is that Nahshon son of Amminadab jumped into the waves of the sea believing by faith the Lord would deliver Israel through the sea. Nahshon was the brother in law to Aaron (*Shemot / Exodus 6:23, 1 Chronicles 2:4-10*), and Nahshon was appointed by Moshe as a prince of the tribe of Judah. As a result of his being the father of many kings, the rabbis raise up the name of Nahshon as a noble man, and as the one who demonstrated his faith in God by jumping into the Red Sea before the sea began to divide by the power of God. According to *Midrash Rabbah Bamidbar 7, Part 26*, when the princes of the different tribes were required to bring their offerings, each on a separate day, Moses was embarrassed, not knowing who should be the first; but all Israel pointed to Nahshon, saying, “*He sanctified the name of God by springing first into the Red Sea; he is worthy to bring down the Shekinah; therefore he shall be the first to bring the offering.*” By jumping into the water, and the waters being deep and over taking Nahshon, Moshe prayed what we read here in the Psalm, *Save me, O God; for the waters are coming in unto my soul, I am come into the deep waters, where the floods overflow me (Tehillim / Psalms 69:2-3)*. Midrash Tehillim 76, Part 1 concludes saying, “*The Holy One blessed be He, said to Moshe, My beloved are perishing in the sea, and you tarry at prayer. Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward (Shemot / Exodus 14:15). Hence, the verse, In Judah is God known; His name is great in Israel, means that His name became great in all Israel. For Moshe said to God, In that hour You dealt mercifully with the tribe of Judah, it was as if You had dealt mercifully with all Israel, since Israel is also known by the name of Judah.*” The rabbis say that mercy was dealt to Judah, and that all of Israel is known by the name of Judah because of the way in which He sustains Judah in the Land.

Remember back in Parashat Vayechi (*Bereshit / Genesis 47:28-50:26*), Joseph takes his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim and has Jacob bless them (*48:1-2*). Jacob tells Joseph that these two sons (Manasseh and Ephraim) will be his (*48:5*) and declares that Joseph’s descendants after him shall be called after their names (*48:6*). Jacob blesses Joseph’s children placing Ephraim (second born) before Manasseh (first born) saying the younger will be greater than the older (*48:10-20*, וַיִּזְרַעוּ וַיִּגְדְּלֵם מִמָּוְנוֹ וַיִּזְרַעוּ וַיִּגְדְּלֵם וַיִּזְרַעוּ וַיִּגְדְּלֵם). Jacob then proceeds to make statements against his sons on account of what they had done while in the land of Canaan (*49:1-26*). In the midst of his blessing over his sons he speaks of the ruling scepter over Judah וְלֹא יִסּוֹר שַׁבֵּט מִיְהוּדָה וּמִחֻקֵּי מַבְיַן רַגְלָיו עַד כִּי-יָבֹא שִׁילֹה וְלֹא יִקְהַת עַמִּים 49:10 *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.* (NASB) According to the text, the scepter / staff (שַׁבֵּט) will not depart from Judah (מִיְהוּדָה) or from between his feet (מִבְּיַן רַגְלָיו) until Shiloh comes (כִּי-יָבֹא שִׁילֹה) and to him will be the obedience of the people (וְלֹא יִקְהַת עַמִּים). The idea here is that in the ruling scepter description of Judah, the Lord was declaring prophetically that all of Israel would be made known by the name of Judah (*Yehudim, the Jews*, יְהוּדִים).

Midrash Tehillim 76, Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דִּבְרוּר הַמַּתְחִיל) saying “*Another comment on In Judah is God known; His name is great in Israel.*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Why did the tribe of Judah merit the kingship?*” The rabbis continue in the midrash to say the following:

In the shade of a dovecote in Jamnia, the disciples asked this very question of rabbi Tarfon,

Just why did the tribe of Judah merit the kingship? He replied, It was because Judah confessed to his relations with Tamar. The disciples said, It is compensation enough that his confession was accepted as atonement for Illicit intercourse.

The idea is that it is better to confess the truth rather than to lie. In the confession of the truth, one will pay the consequences of one's actions. On the other hand, when lying, not only does one receive the consequences of their actions, he or she will also bear the consequences of lying. The rabbis continue saying the following:

Rabbi Tarfon then replied, It was because Judah said, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? (Bereshit / Genesis 37:26). They said, It is compensation enough that the saving of a life was accepted as atonement for the sale of a brother into slavery. Rabbi Tarfon replied, It was because Judah said, Now, therefore, let your servant, I pray, abide instead of the lad (Bereshit / Genesis 44:33). They said, It is required of a guarantor that he stand by his guarantee. Rabbi Tarfon then asked the disciples, if what you say is true, then by virtue of what good deed did the tribe of Judah merit the kingship? They answered, It was because the tribe of Judah leaped first into the waves of the sea. With all the tribes standing there and not one of them going down into the sea, one tribe saying, Must I go down first? And the other tribe saying, Must I go down first? The tribe of Judah hallowed the name of the Holy One blessed be He, and went down into the sea. Hence the verse, But Judah moreover went down with God (Hosea 12:1), that is, Judah surrendered to the Holy One blessed be He, and hallowed the name of the name of the Holy One blessed be He, and went down into the sea, and by this good deed merited the kingship, as is said, Judah was His hallowing, Israel is His dominion (Tehillim / Psalms 114:2). (Midrash Tehillim 76, Part 2)

The rabbis speak of slaying a brother, concealing his blood, making compensation for saving a life, selling a brother into slavery, and the guarantor. This is obviously a comparison with the life of Joseph. *Mishley / Proverbs 11:15* states, "He who is guarantor for a stranger will surely suffer for it, But he who hates being a guarantor is secure." (NASB) The Septuagint translates differently saying, "A wicked man doeth evil when he mixes with the righteous; he hateth the sound of safety (*ἠ̄χον ἀσφαλείας*)." This perhaps speaks of the fraudulent creditor who deceives the good man who has put up security for him. The good man does not have the security and will bear the consequences of the fraudulent person. Notice how the rabbis draw in the story of Joseph and his brothers (*Bereshit / Genesis 37:26*), and the brothers desire to make a profit over their brother and how this is opposed to the one who confesses and makes atonement for illicit intercourse. Note that this illicit intercourse doesn't appear to be of a sexual nature, it seems to be a description of the guarantor with regard to a child of God (son of Israel) dealing with the nations. Note also there is a context to Judah's relationship with Tamar (*Bereshit / Genesis 38*) and deception that was taking place on behalf of both Judah and Tamar. All of this is in relation to why the tribe of Judah received the kingship, what did Judah do to merit kingship? The proof was that Judah was the first to jump into the Red Sea (e.g. Nahshon), the tribe of Judah hallowed the name of God by acting upon their faith in Him. This is what it means for us to live out our faith, meaning to act upon our faith. This may also be what Paul meant when he said to work out your salvation in fear and trembling. (*Philippians 2:12* *So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.* NASB) Notice Paul is speaking of obedience coupled with the working out of our salvation. By acting upon our faith, we are hallowing the name of God and His Messiah Yeshua, and this is the meaning of obeying His Torah. The rabbis say "Judah moreover went down with God (*Hosea 12:1*), that is, Judah surrendered to the Holy One blessed be He, and hallowed the name of the name of the Holy One blessed be He, and went down into the sea, and by this good deed merited the kingship, as is said, Judah was His hallowing, Israel is His dominion (*Tehillim / Psalms 114:2*)." By surrendering our lives and walking in His ways, we hallow the name of the Lord and it is credited as righteousness on our behalf. Midrash Tehillim 76, Part 2 concludes

saying, “Because the tribe of Judah was the first to go down into the sea for the hallowing of God, therefore the Land of Israel became Judah’s dominion. And so, In Judah is God known; his name is great in Israel means that the name of Judah is the greatest in Israel.” The conclusion is that by hallowing the name of God Judah was given dominion over the Land of Israel. And by this reasoning, the Lord made His name known. This suggests that those who hallow the name of God, obey His commands, and live for Him, the Lord will make His name known in our lives towards others, towards those whom we come in contact with.

Midrash Tehillim 76, Part 3 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “Even in Salem is set His Tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion (Tehillim / Psalms 76:3).” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “Rabbi Berechiah taught, at the very beginning of His creation of the earth, the Holy One blessed be He, set a Tabernacle in Jerusalem, within which if one may use a manner of speaking, He prayed, Let it be the will that My children do My will, so that I will not destroy My house and My Temple.” The idea here expressed by the rabbis in the opening of the midrash, is that the Mikdash (Tabernacle) preceded the creation of the world. In the Talmud, the rabbis make these statements:

Talmud Bavli Pesachim 54a

It was taught: The following seven things were created before the world: The Torah, repentance, the Garden of Eden, Gehinom, the Throne of Glory, the Temple and the name of the Messiah... The Temple, as it is written: “A glorious throne exalted from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary” (Yirmiyahu 17:12).

Midrash Rabbah Bereshit 1, Part 4

Six things preceded the creation of the world. Some were created, some arose in thought to be created: The Torah and the Throne of Glory were created... The patriarchs, Israel, the Temple, and the name of the Messiah arose in thought to be created... The Temple, from where? As it is stated: “A glorious throne exalted from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary” (Yirmiyahu 17:12).

Zohar, Tzav, 34b

Rav Chizkiya sat before Rav Elazar. He said to him: How many lights were created before the world was created? He said to him: Seven, as follows: the light of Torah, the light of Gehinom, the light of the Garden of Eden, the light of the Throne of Glory, the light of the Temple, the light of repentance, and the light of the Messiah.

When the rabbis say that something preceded the creation of the world, they are referring to the thing that stands at the very foundation of the world which is connected to the purpose and objective of this world. This is a similar concept to the thought that precedes one’s actions, or that these things represent the reason God had for creating the world. Note the things that are mentioned in the gemara from the Talmud Bavli Pesachim 54a, the rabbis speak of the Torah, repentance, the Garden of Eden, Gehinom, the Throne of Glory, and the Temple. All of these things that preceded the creation involve the presence of God. This is also true of the Temple, which represents the presence of God in the material world. In addition, the rabbis also connect the creation of the world and the Mikdash to the idea that the Mishkan and the Mikdash was the goal of creation, and it was only with their construction that creation was completed. The idea is that man draws near in the Mishkan, and the Lord desires to dwell in our midst with a people who long to draw near to Him. Note the following references from the Rabbinic Literature.

Pesikta Rabbati, parasha 6

Another explanation: “So was ended all the work” (I Melakhim 7:51; II Divrei Ha-yamim

5:1) – it does not say here “the work,” but rather “all the work:” the work of the six days of creation. “From all His work that God had created and formed (la-asot, lit. ‘to form’)” (Bereishit 2:3) – it does not say here “and formed,” but rather “to form:” there is still another work. When Shlomo came and built the Temple, the Holy One, blessed be He, said: Now the work of heaven and earth is complete – “So was ended all the work.” Therefore he was called Shlomo, for the Holy One, blessed be He, completed (hishlim) the work of the six days of creation through his handiwork.

Midrash Mishlei Parashat 30, Part 4

Another explanation: “Who has established all the ends of the earth” (Mishlei 30:4) – this refers to Moshe, who established the Tent of Meeting, with which the world was established. It does not say “to set up the Mishkan,” but rather “to set up with the Mishkan” (le-hakim et ha-mishkan) (Bamidbar 7:1) – the world was set up with it. For until the Mishkan was erected, the world was unstable; but after it was erected, the world became firm. Therefore it says: “And it came to pass on the day that Moshe had finished setting up (with) the Mishkan.”

Midrash Rabbah Bamidbar 12

“To set up the Mishkan”... There we have learned (Avot 1:2): The world stands on three things – on the Torah, on the Divine service, and on acts of loving-kindness. And Moshe mentioned all three of them in one verse: “You in Your loving-kindness have led forth Your people whom you have redeemed” (Shemot 15:13) – this is loving-kindness; “You have guided them in Your strength” – this is the Torah...; “To Your holy habitation” – this is the service in the Mishkan and in the Mikdash... He guided them by virtue of the Torah which they had received before the erection of the Mishkan. What was the world like at that time? It was like a stool with two legs, which cannot stand and is unstable. When a third leg was made for it, it became firm and it stood. So, too, when the Mishkan was made... immediately, it became firm and stood. For at first the world had only two legs, loving-kindness and the Torah, and it was unstable. When a third leg was made for it, namely, the Mishkan, it immediately stood.

According to the Midrashim, the Mishkan and the Mikdash are a continuation of the creation and its completion. Before they were built, the world was lacking, and the goal of creation had not been attained. Moreover, before the Mikdash was built, the existence of the world was not absolute and stable, for the world was established upon the Divine service, the heart of which is in the Temple.

The rabbis continue in Midrash Tehillim 76, Part 3 saying the following:

But when sin did bring this destruction about, what does Scripture say? And He has stripped His Tabernacle as if it were a garden, He has destroyed His place of meeting (Lamentations 2:6), that is, destroyed the place where He met with Himself in prayer. And now that the Temple is destroyed, God prays, Be it My will that My children repent, so that I may hasten the rebuilding of My house and of My Temple. Hence it is said, Even in Salem is set His Tabernacle. You find that the Tabernacle was called Salem, for it is said And Melchizedek king of Salem was the priest of the Most High God (Bereshit / Genesis 14:18). And Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God, was the same person as Shem, the son of Noah, for in the blessing bestowed upon Shem and Japheth, it is said God will persuade Japheth, but Shem will dwell in My tent (Bereshit / Genesis 9:27) that is, will dwell in the Tabernacle of God. For this it follows that Shem was the servant of God. Indeed, in the Aramaic Targum, he was the priest of the Most High God is rendered, He was servant of the Most High God. Therefore, Melchizedek was Shem. Abraham, however, called the holy Tabernacle yireh, as is said, And Abraham called the name of that place Adonai-yireh (Bereshit / Genesis 22:14). Therefore, the Lord said, If I call the place Salem, as Shem called it, I will be annulling the words of My

loving Abraham who called it yireh; and if I call the place yireh, I will be annulling the words of the righteous Shem who called it Salem. What did the Holy One blessed be He, do? He combined what the two of them called it. Abraham called it Yireh, Shem called it Salem, in the verse Even in Salem is set His Tabernacle, Salem means Jerusalem, which is made up of yireh and Salem. Another comment, The first verse in the Psalm is read as a question, When will You God be known in Judah? (Midrash Tehillim 76, Part 3)

The Midrash is telling us that the Lord created the place where His name would be made known, and where He would meet with His people, and where His people could make their service to Him. The world was created for this purpose. However, if the people sin, desire sin, and do not desire the ways of the Lord, He would destroy the holy place, in the hopes that His people would repent and turn back towards the Lord and rebuild His Temple. Notice how the Tabernacle was called Salem (Peace) because of Melchizedek. Note also that the rabbis say that Melchizedek is Shem the son of Noah. Abraham called the Tabernacle “Yireh” saying that place is *Adonai-yireh* (*Bereshit / Genesis 22:14*) The midrash continues with the rabbis discussing the differences between the names and whether the Lord would contradict Himself by calling the name of the place by one name as opposed to the other. The idea is that the Lord inspired these men to call the place by different names. The Lord decided to call the place by both names.

Midrash Tehillim 76, Part 3 concludes saying, “*And the second verse is read as the answer, When You raise up the Tabernacle of which You said, In that day will I raise up the Tabernacle of David that is fallen (Amos 9:11). And so the second verse is to be read, When His Tabernacle will again be in Salem.*” The Septuagint and the Vulgate translate *Tehillim / Psalms 76:2* as “*his place was in peace,*” and possibly Asaph may be using the word Salem (וּמְעוֹנָתוֹ בְּצִיּוֹן:) with the thought of the Lord’s Succo (סֹכּוֹ) being at peace which was won by God for Judah. The identification of Salem (שָׁלֵם) of *Genesis 14:18* is a likely reference, especially in light of the Targum translation of the MT which states, ג וְהוּא בִירוּשָׁלַם בֵּית, *76:3 And his sanctuary has come to be in Jerusalem, and the dwelling of the house of his holy presence is in Zion. (EMC)*

Midrash Tehillim 76, Part 4 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*There He broke the fiery shafts of the bow (Tehillim / Psalms 76:4), that is, broken the strength of the bow of Edom, even as it is said in Their sword will ever into their own heart, and their bows will be broken (Tehillim / Psalms 37:15).*” The פתיחה (Petihata), the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Whatever is cruel is symbolized by fire, as is said, For a fire is gone out of Heshbon (Bamidbar / Numbers 21:28), and again, Jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which have a most vehement flame (Song 8:6).*” When Israel reached the eastern border of the kingdom of Sihon (*the Amorite kingdom, Bamidbar / Numbers 21:13*), they sent messengers to him, similar to what they had done to the king of Edom, to ask permission to pass peaceably through the territory on the kings road (see *Bamidbar / Numbers 21:22 and 20:17*). Sihon refused their request, just as the king of Edom had done, and marched with all his people against Israel. The Lord had forbidden Israel to make war on Edom their brothers (e.g. Jacob and Esau), however now the Lord God commanded them to make war upon the Amorite king, and take possession of his land (see *Devarim / Deuteronomy 2:24-25*). The Amorites belonged to the Canaanite tribes which were to be given over for judgment due to their 400+ years of sin and rebellion against God (*Bereshit / Genesis 15:16*). Here in the midrash the rabbis parallel the fire that goes out from Heshbon to jealousy and wrath, the fire that goes forth is always described as one that destroys and is cruel.

The rabbis continue saying the following:

Hence it is said, There He broke the fiery shafts of the bow. As for the shield, and the sword, and the battle mentioned at the end of the verse, they are those of every other nation and tongue that will come to make war upon Jerusalem. You are more glorious and powerful than the mountains of prey (Tehillim / Psalms 76:5), the fortresses of powerful kings, which similar verses describes as lions dens mountains of the leopards (Song 4:8). The stout heart-

ed are spoiled, they will sleep their sleep (Tehillim / Psalms 76:6), All the kings of the nations that come to make war upon Jerusalem will be a spoil, and the sleep, the last sleep, will fall upon them. In a different exposition, the verse is read The stout hearted are stripped, stripped having the same sense as in I will go stripped and naked (Micah 1:8), that is, weapons of war will be stripped from them. At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob (Tehillim / Psalms 76:7), all this victory will come to pass.

The fiery shafts representing the jealousy, wrath, and destruction of the enemy, is paralleled to the enemy nations that come against Jerusalem, the mountains of prey, the fortresses of kings, and of lions dens and leopards. All of the nations will come to make war against Jerusalem and the Lord will bring victory for Israel because He is mightier. He will cause the kings of the nations to sleep the final sleep, meaning they will die. The reference to stout-hearted men is to those whose hearts do not faint, they are strong, mighty, and confident in their ability to make war. The Lord God will strip them of their weapons, either in sickness, in their health, or in their inability to make war, to fight, they will not be able to hold their swords in their hands, etc. The midrash says, “*At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob (Tehillim / Psalms 76:7), all this victory will come to pass.*” The midrash continues saying the following:

You did cause law to be heard from heaven (Tehillim / Psalms 76:9) on the day of the giving of the Torah, when the earth feared, and was still. At first it feared that the children of Israel might not accept the Torah, and hence that the earth would turn back to emptiness and chaos, but when they accepted it, at once the earth was still. When God will arise to judgment (Tehillim / Psalms 76:10), on the day of judgment when God pronounces sentence upon the kingdom of wickedness, He will then save all the humble of the earth forever. Surely the wrath of a man will avow You (Tehillim / Psalms 76:11). When You bring Israel to account by exile, it was a disclosure of You, for You was not angry according to the overpowering might of Your divinity, but only a little angry, like a man angry at his son or at his disciple, as is said in the verse His anger endures but a moment (Tehillim / Psalms 30:6). The end of the verse, The remainder of wrath will You gird upon You (Tehillim / Psalms 76:11), means that those powers of wrath which remain with You, them You will gird upon You to punish the nations of the earth on the day of judgment. But as for you, O children of Israel, Promise and pay unto the Lord your God; let all that are round about Him bring presents unto Him that is to be feared (Tehillim / Psalms 76:12) unto the Holy One blessed be He. He ministers the spirit of the princes (Tehillim / Psalms 76:13) of the nations of the earth. He is One who is terrible to the kings of the earth. What is meant by ministers? It means restrains, as in the verse, The Lord said, now nothing will be restrained from them (Bereshit / Genesis 11:6).

The midrash suggests that the earth (this world) was created for the purpose of the giving of the Torah to the people of God. The earth trembled (quaked) due to her fear of Israel not accepting the Torah. On Rosh Chodesh Sivan (*the beginning of new Hebrew month of Sivan*), the first day of the third month after the exodus from Egypt, the children of Israel reached the desert of Sinai and camped near the mountain of Sinai. During the weeks traveling in the desert, the children of Israel saw daily miracles, such as the manna and the birds(meat), the miraculous sweetening of the water, the defeat of Amalek, and the crossing of the Red Sea, to name a few. The people had become more and more conscious of the presence of the Lord in the midst of these miracles. Their faith increased daily, but yet there were still some who did not believe or hold tightly to the Lord. In the Torah narrative, we are told that Moshe ascended the Mountain, and the Lord God spoke to him saying, (*Shemot / Exodus 3-6*) “*So shall you say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel. You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and [how] I bore you on eagles’ wings, and I brought you to Me. And now, if you obey Me and keep My covenant, you shall be to Me a treasure out of all peoples, for Mine is the entire earth. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of princes and a holy nation.*” Notice how observing the command causes one to be of noble birth and holy. Moses descended from Sinai and called

for the elders of the people and spoke these words before them. With one voice (unanimously), the people answered saying, “*Naaseh Venishma*” meaning “*Everything God has said, we will do.*” It was in this way that they accepted the Torah outright. Note how they accepted all its precepts, not even asking for a detailed enumeration of the obligations and duties it involved. After Israel spoke of their desire to receive the Torah, the Lord spoke to Moshe (*Shemot / Exodus 20:17*) saying, “*Go to the people and prepare them today and tomorrow, and they shall wash their garments. And they shall be prepared for the third day, for on the third day, the L-rd will descend before the eyes of all the people upon Mount Sinai. And you shall set boundaries for the people around, saying, Beware of ascending the mountain or touching its edge; whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. No hand shall touch it, for he shall be stoned or cast down; whether man or beast, he shall not live. When the ram’s horn sounds a long, drawn out blast, they may ascend the mountain.*”

The Torah is given to provide us with the knowledge of how to walk in God’s ways. Obedience leads to long life, whereas disobedience leads to troubles. The Midrash states that the Lord brings judgment upon wicked kingdoms. At one point in Israel’s history, she was a very wicked kingdom, and the Lord humbled her by causing her to go into exile. Today, if one is arrogant, prideful, and lives a wicked life, while saying he or she believes in Yeshua the Messiah, all of these curses will fall upon him by reason of his disobedience. Yeshua does not cause punishment to disappear if one is living in an open sinful state. He helps us to overcome sin by the power of the Spirit of God. The midrash states, “*But as for you, O children of Israel, Promise and pay unto the Lord your God; let all that are round about Him bring presents unto Him that is to be feared (Tehillim / Psalms 76:12) unto the Holy One blessed be He.*” What gifts may one bring to the Lord God in heaven? Yeshua said “*store up for yourselves treasures in heaven*” (*Matthew 6:20*) and he linked this statement to the desire of our hearts: “*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*” (*Matthew 6:10-21*). According to the Scriptures, there are rewards that await the believer who serves the Lord faithfully in this world (*Matthew 10:41*). A “*great*” reward is promised to those who are persecuted for Yeshua’s sake. In addition, various crowns are also mentioned (*2 Timothy 4:8*) concerning the deeds that have been done in the body. Yeshua also said that He will bring rewards with Him when He returns (*Revelation 22:12*). The idea is to commit our resources, our time, our money, and our talents, to live humbly before the Lord, to pray, and seek the benefit of others rather than ourselves. All of these things are the gifts that we are able to bring to the Lord God in heaven. The Apostle Paul stated that the Lord God has an eternal reward for those who are motivated to serve the Messiah saying, “*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving*” (*Colossians 3:23–24*). Living a sacrificial life, to serve Him, we store up treasure in heaven. This was the message Yeshua was trying to say in *Matthew 10:42* “*If anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward*” In addition to these things, Paul says in *1 Corinthians 12*, that teaching, singing, or playing a musical instrument might be used to glorify one’s self as opposed to using one’s gifts for the Lord and to bring Him glory. This is a reference to coveting the praises of men rather than seeking God’s glory. Such a person receives their “*payment*” in full here and now. We are told that the Lord will be faithful to reward us for the service we give Him (*Hebrews 6:10*). *1 Corinthians 3:8* states, “*The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor.*” In the gospel account, Yeshua showed how the love of money can take the place of loving God (*Matthew 19:16-30*). Yeshua told the man to sell his possessions and give to the poor, “*and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me*” (*19:21*). The young man left sad, because he was very rich. He chose this world’s treasure and so did not lay up treasure in heaven. We are told that the treasures that await will far outweigh any trouble, inconvenience, or persecution we may face (*Romans 8:18*). We can serve the Lord wholeheartedly, knowing that He will be abundantly gracious, as Paul said in *1 Corinthians 15:58* “*Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.*”

Midrash Tehillim 76, Part 4 concludes saying, “*He is One who is terrible to the kings of the earth. What is meant by ministers? It means restrains, as in the verse, The Lord said, now nothing will be restrained from them (Bereshit / Genesis 11:6).*” The idea is the “*kings of the earth*” are those who seek to destroy

Israel. They use the gifts the Lord God in heaven has given them, to be used for the destruction of others. The Lord will bring His wrath upon the one who lives like that. We are told to abide, to remain in the Messiah. Yeshua gave us the ultimate example of selflessness and what it means to bring a gift unto our Father in heaven. Let's Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We thank you for the mercies You have shown us every day and the way of salvation that You have provided. We ask that You would help us to overcome sin in our lives by the power of Your Spirit and Your Son Yeshua. We ask for help, strength, and the resolve to daily live for you. Especially in our private lives so that we are able to bring glory to Your name, even when nobody sees. We thank You for the promises You have made and Your continued faithfulness. Help us to keep our feet on the path of righteousness and truth according to Your Word, and also to have the desire to walk in Your ways. Thank You for giving us the faith to believe in Yeshua the Messiah and for always calling our hearts back to You Lord! 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