

## ספר תהילים עז | Tehillim / Psalms 77

MATSATI.COM Ministry | <http://www.matsati.com>

### Remember and the future expectation of the power of God in our lives

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 77:1-21*, the psalm opens saying, א לְמִנְצֵחַ עַל-יְדִיתוֹן [יְדוּר] For the choir director; according to Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph. 77:1 My voice rises to God, and I will cry aloud; My voice rises to God, and He will hear me. (NASB) Asaph seeks the Lord in the day of his trouble (77:2), and he remembers the Lord (77:3) but says that he is disturbed by his memories. He speaks of remembering the days gone past (77:4-5), and he says that the Lord held his eyes open and so he could not speak (77:4) and he asks will the Lord reject forever? (77:6-7). Asaph asks, ט הֲאִפְסָ לְנִצָּחַ חֲסִדוֹ גָּמַר אֲמַר לְדָר וְדָר: י הֲשָׁכַח חַנוּת אֵל אִם-קָפַץ בָּאֵף, 77:8 Has His lovingkindness ceased forever? Has His promise come to an end forever? 77:9 Has God forgotten to be gracious, Or has He in anger withdrawn His compassion? Selah. (NASB) Notice Asaph speaks of remembering the deeds of the Lord and how important it is, יא וְאָמַר חֲלוּתֵי הָיָא שְׁנוֹת, יב אֲזַכִּיר [אֲזַכּוֹר] מֵעַלְלֵי-יְהוָה כִּי-אֲזַכְרָהּ מִקֶּדֶם פְּלֹאֵהָ: יג וְהִגִּיתִי בְכָל-פְּעֻלָּהּ וּבַעֲלִילוֹתֶיהָ אֲשִׁיחָהּ: יד אֱלֹהִים בִּקְדוֹשׁ דְּרָכָהּ מִי-אֵל גָּדוֹל בְּאֱלֹהִים: טו אַתָּה הָאֵל עָשִׂה פְּלֵא הַיּוֹדֵעַת בְּעַמִּים עֲזָהּ: טז גָּאֲלַת בְּזָרוּעַ עֲמָהּ: 77:10 Then I said, 'It is my grief, That the right hand of the Most High has changed.' 77:11 I shall remember the deeds of the Lord; Surely I will remember Your wonders of old. 77:12 I will meditate on all Your work And muse on Your deeds. 77:13 Your way, O God, is holy; What god is great like our God? 77:14 You are the God who works wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples. 77:15 You have by Your power redeemed Your people, The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah. (NASB) Asaph concludes his psalm saying the following, יז רְאוּהָ מַיִם | אֱלֹהִים רְאוּהָ מַיִם יַחֲלִי אֵף יִרְגְּזוּ תְהוֹמוֹת: יח זָרְמוּ מַיִם | עֲבוֹת קוֹל נִתְּנוּ שִׁחֲקִים אֵף-חֲצֹצְרִיָּהּ יִתְהַלְכוּ: יט קוֹל רַעְמָהּ | בִּגְלִגְלַת הָאִירוּ בְּרַקִּים תִּבְּל רְגִזָּה וּתְרַעַשׂ הָאָרֶץ: 77:16 כ בָּיִם דְּרָכָהּ וּשְׁבִילֶיהָ [וּשְׁבִילֶיהָ] בְּמַיִם רַבִּים וְעַקְבוֹתֶיהָ לֹא נִדְעוּ: כא נְחִית כִּצְאוֹ עֲמָהּ בְּיַד-מַלְּשָׁה וְאֶהְרֹן: 77:17 The waters saw You, O God; The waters saw You, they were in anguish; The deeps also trembled. 77:18 The clouds poured out water; The skies gave forth a sound; Your arrows flashed here and there. 77:19 The sound of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; The lightnings lit up the world; The earth trembled and shook. 77:20 Your way was in the sea And Your paths in the mighty waters, And Your footprints may not be known. 77:21 You led Your people like a flock By the hand of Moses and Aaron. (NASB) The idea is the Lord is merciful and forgiving, however, His presence causes the earth and the people to tremble.

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
ספר תהלים פרק עז	ספר תהלים פרק עז	ספר טוביה פרק עז	ספר טוביה פרק עז	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 77	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 77
א לְמִנְצֵחַ עַל-יְדִיתוֹן [יְדוּתוֹן] לְאָסָף מְזִמּוֹר: ב קוֹלִי אֵל-אֱלֹהִים וְאֶצְעָע-קָה קוֹלִי אֵל-אֱלֹהִים וְהִאֲזִין אֵלַי: ג בְּיָוִם צָרְתִי אֲדַנִּי דְרָשְׁתִּי יְדִי   לִילָה נִגְרָה וְלֹא תְפֹוג מֵאֲנָה הַנְּחָם נַפְשִׁי: ד אֲזַכְרָהּ אֱלֹהִים וְאֶהְמִיָּה אֲשִׁיחָהּ   וְתִתְעַטֵּף רוּחִי סֶלָה:	א לְמִנְצֵחַ עַל-יְדִיתוֹן [יְדוּתוֹן] לְאָסָף מְזִמּוֹר: ב קוֹלִי אֵל-אֱלֹהִים וְאֶצְעָע-קָה קוֹלִי אֵל-אֱלֹהִים וְהִאֲזִין אֵלַי: ג בְּיָוִם צָרְתִי אֲדַנִּי דְרָשְׁתִּי יְדִי   לִילָה נִגְרָה וְלֹא תְפֹוג מֵאֲנָה הַנְּחָם נַפְשִׁי: ד אֲזַכְרָהּ אֱלֹהִים וְאֶהְמִיָּה אֲשִׁיחָהּ   וְתִתְעַטֵּף רוּחִי סֶלָה:	א לשבחה על יד ידותון לאספ תוש-בחא: ב קלי ברם קדם יהוה ואקביל קלי קדם אלהא אצית מימרי: ג ביום עקתי אולפן מן קדם יהוה תבעית שרת עלי רוח נבואה בליליא זלגת עיני דמעתא ולא תפוג סריבת לאיתנחמא נפשי: ד אידכר אלהא וארגוש קדם יהוה אמליל ותישתלהי רוחי לעלמינ:	א לשבחה על יד ידותון לאספ תוש-בחא: ב קלי ברם קדם יהוה ואקביל קלי קדם אלהא אצית מימרי: ג ביום עקתי אולפן מן קדם יהוה תבעית שרת עלי רוח נבואה בליליא זלגת עיני דמעתא ולא תפוג סריבת לאיתנחמא נפשי: ד אידכר אלהא וארגוש קדם יהוה אמליל ותישתלהי רוחי לעלמינ:	77:1 εἰς τὸ τέλος ὑπὲρ Ἰδιθουν τῷ Ἀσαφ ψαλμὸς φωνῆ μου πρὸς κύριον ἐκέκραξα φωνῆ μου πρὸς τὸν θεόν καὶ προσέσχεν μοι 77:2 ἐν ἡμέρᾳ θλίψεώς μου τὸν θεὸν ἐξεζήτησα ταῖς χερσίν μου νυκτὸς ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἠπατήθην ἀπηνήνατο παρακληθῆναι ἢ ψυχῆ μου 77:3 ἐμνήσθην τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ εὐφράνθην ἠδολέσχισα καὶ ὀλιγοψύχησεν τὸ πνεῦμά μου διάψαλα	77:1 εἰς τὸ τέλος ὑπὲρ Ἰδιθουν τῷ Ἀσαφ ψαλμὸς φωνῆ μου πρὸς κύριον ἐκέκραξα φωνῆ μου πρὸς τὸν θεόν καὶ προσέσχεν μοι 77:2 ἐν ἡμέρᾳ θλίψεώς μου τὸν θεὸν ἐξεζήτησα ταῖς χερσίν μου νυκτὸς ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἠπατήθην ἀπηνήνατο παρακληθῆναι ἢ ψυχῆ μου 77:3 ἐμνήσθην τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ εὐφράνθην ἠδολέσχισα καὶ ὀλιγοψύχησεν τὸ πνεῦμά μου διάψαλα

<p>ה אַחַזְתָּ שְׁמֵרוֹת עֵינַי נִפְעַמְתִּי וְלֹא אֶדְבֹּר: ו חֲשַׁבְתִּי יָמִים מִקֶּדֶם שָׁנוֹת עוֹלָמִים: ז אֶזְכְּרָה נְגִינָתִי בְלִילָה עִם-לִבִּי אֲשִׁיחָה וַיִּחַפֵּשׂ רוּחִי: ח הֲלֵעוֹלָמִים יִזְנַח   אֲדַנְי וְלֹא-יִסְיָה לְרִצּוֹת עוֹד: ט הָאֶפֶס לְנֹצַח חֶסֶדוֹ גָּמַר אֲמַר לְדֹר וָדֹר: י הֲשָׁכַח חַנוּת אֵל אִם-קִפְצָה בְּאֶף רַחֲמָיו סֵלָה: יא וְאֲמַר חֲלוּתִי הִיא שָׁנוֹת יָמַי עָלְיוֹן: יב אֶזְכְּרִי [אֶזְכְּרִי] מַעֲלֵלֵי-יָהּ כִּי-אֶזְכְּרָה מִקֶּדֶם פְּלִאָה: יג וְהִגִּיתִי בְּכָל-פְּעֻלָּהּ וּבְעֲלִילוֹתֶיהָ אֲשִׁיחָה: יד אֱלֹהִים בִּקְדוֹשׁ דְּרָכָהּ מִי-אֵל גָּדוֹל כְּאֱלֹהִים: טו אֲתָה הָאֵל עֲשֵׂה פְלִאָה הוֹדַעְתָּ בְּעַמִּים עֲזָרָה: טז גָּאֲלֵתָ בְּזָרוּעַ עַמָּה בְּנֵי-יַעֲקֹב וַיֹּסֶף סֵלָה: יז רְאוּהָ מַיִם   אֱלֹהִים רְאוּהָ מַיִם יַחֲלִילוּ אֶף יִרְגְּזוּ תְהַמּוֹת: יח זָרְמוּ מַיִם   עֲבוֹת קוֹל נִתְּנוּ שְׁחָקִים אֶף-תִּצְצֵיחָה יִתְהַלֵּךְ כּוֹן: יט קוֹל רַעֲמָהּ   בְּגִלְגֹּל הָאֵירוּ בְּרָקִים תִּבֵּל רְגֵזָה וַתִּרְעַשׂ הָאָרֶץ: כ בְּיָם דְּרָכָהּ וַשְׁבִּילֶיהָ [וַשְׁבִּילֶיהָ] בְּמַיִם רַבִּים וַעֲקֹבוֹתֶיהָ לֹא נִדְעוּ: כא נִחִיתָ כִּצְאוֹן עַמָּה בְּיַד-מִשְׁהָ וְאֶהְרֹן:</p>	<p>ה אַחַזְתָּ תִּמְרוֹתֵי דַעֲיִנִי אִי־רֵר־פִּית וְלֹא אֶמְלִיל: ו מִנִּיתִי יוֹמַי טְבִין דְּמִן לְקַדְמִין שְׁנֵי טְבִיא דְּמִן עֲלִמִין: ז אִידְכֵר תּוֹשְׁבַחְתִּי בְלִילֵי עִם הִירֵהוּרִי לִבִּי אֶמְלִיל וַיְבַלֵּשׁ נִיִּסֵּי מִנְדַע רוּחִי: ח הָאֶפֶשֶׁר דִּי לְעֲלִמִין יִרְחַק יְהוּה וְלֹא יוֹסִיף לְמִיתְרַעֲיָא תּוֹב: ט הָאֶפֶשֶׁר דִּי פִסְק לְעֲלִמִין טוֹבִיָּה שְׁלִים פִּתְגָם דְּבִישׁ עַל כָּל דֵּר וְדֵר: י הָאֶפֶשֶׁר דִּיאִתְנַשִּׁי לְחַיִּסָּא אֱלֵהָ אִין סִלִּיק בְּרוּגְזִיָּה מִן לְמַכְמֵר רַחֲמוּי לְעֲלִמִין: יא וְאֶמְרִית מַרְעוּתִי הִיא אִישְׁתַּנִּין גְּבוּרַת יָמַי דְּמִן עִילָאָה: {ת} וְאֶמְרִית בְּעוּתִי הִיא שְׁנִין דְּקִץ מִימִין: יב אִדְכֵר עוֹבְדֵי אֱלֵהָ אֲרוּם אִדְכֵר מִן לְקַדְמִין פְּרִישׁוֹתֶיהָ: יג וְרַנְנִית בְּכָל עוֹבְדֵךְ טְבִיא וּבְתַסְקוֹפִי נִיִּי סִיךְ אֶמְלִיל: יד אֱלֵהָ דְקַדְשִׁין אֲוֹרַח־תַּךְ מִן אֱלֵהָ רַבָּא כְּאֱלֵהָ דִּישְׂרָאֵל: טו אֵת הוּא אֱלֵהָ עֲבִיד פְּרִישֵׁן הוֹדַעַת בְּעִי מֵיָא עוֹשְׁנָךְ: טז פִּרְקַתָּא בְּגְבוּרַת אֲד־רַעַךְ עִמָּךְ בְּנֵיָא דְאוֹלִיד יַעֲקֹב וְזִין יוֹסֵף לְעֲלִמִין: יז חֲמוֹן שְׁכִינְתָךְ בְּגוֹ מְגוֹ יֵמָּא אֱלֵהָ חֲמוֹן גְּבוּרַתְךָ עַל יֵמָּא רִתִּיתוֹן עֲמֵיָא עֲמֵיָא לְחוּד יִתְרַגְזוֹן תְּהוּמֵיָא: יח אֲחִיתוֹ מֵיָא עֲנֵי שְׁמֵיָא קִלִּין יְהוּבֵי שְׁחָקִי לְחוּד כִּפִּי גִירְרַךְ אֲזִלִּין וּמִשְׁתַּלְּהִין: יט קֵל אֲכִלְיוּתְךָ בְּגִלְגֹּל אֲשַׁתְּמַע אֲנֵהִירוּ בְּרַקִּין תִּבֵּל רַגְזָתָּ וְאִיתְרַגִּיפַת אֲרַעָא: כ בִּימָא דְסוּף אֲוֹרַחֵךְ וּכְבַשְׁךָ בְּמִין סְגִיעֵיָא וְרוּשְׁמַת וְרוּשְׁמַת פְּסִיעַתְךָ לֹא אִיתִידְעוּ: כא דְּבַרְתָּא הִיךְ עֲנָא עִמָּךְ בִּיד מִשְׁהָ וְאֶהְרֹן:</p>	<p>77:4 προκατελάβοντο φυλακὰς οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου ἐταράχθη καὶ οὐκ ἐλάλησα 77:5 διελογισάμην ἡμέρας ἀρχαίας καὶ ἔτη αἰώνια ἐμνήσθη καὶ ἐμελέτησα 77:6 νυκτὸς μετὰ τῆς καρδίας μου ἠδολέσχουν καὶ ἔσκαλλεν τὸ πνεῦμά μου 77:7 μὴ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας ἀπόσεται κύριος καὶ οὐ προσθήσει τοῦ εὐδοκῆσαι ἔτι 77:8 ἢ εἰς τέλος τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ ἀποκόψει ἀπὸ γενεᾶς εἰς γενεάν 77:9 ἢ ἐπιλήσεται τοῦ οἰκτιρῆσαι ὁ θεὸς ἢ συνέξει ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ αὐτοῦ τοὺς οἰκτιρμοὺς αὐτοῦ διάψαλμα 77:10 καὶ εἶπα νῦν ἠρξάμην αὐτῇ ἡ ἀλλοίωσις τῆς δεξιᾶς τοῦ ὑψίστου 77:11 ἐμνήσθη τῶν ἔργων κυρίου ὅτι μνησθήσομαι ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν θαυμασίων σου 77:12 καὶ μελετήσω ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔργοις σου καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασίν σου ἀδολεσχίσω 77:13 ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ἡ ὁδός σου τίς θεὸς μέγας ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν 77:14 σὺ εἶ ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιῶν θαυμάσια ἐγνώρισας ἐν τοῖς λαοῖς τὴν δύναμίν σου 77:15 ἔλυτρόσω ἐν τῷ βραχίονί σου τὸν λαόν σου τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰακωβ καὶ Ἰωσηφ διάψαλμα 77:16 εἶδοσάν σε ὕδατα ὁ θεὸς εἶδοσάν σε ὕδατα καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν καὶ ἐταράχθησαν ἄβυσσοι πλῆθος ἤχους ὑδάτων 77:17 φωνὴν ἔδωκαν αἱ νεφέλαι καὶ γὰρ τὰ βέλη σου διαπορεύονται 77:18 φωνὴ τῆς βροντῆς σου ἐν τῷ τροχῷ ἔφανα αἱ ἀστραπαὶ σου τῇ οἰκουμένῃ ἐσαλεύθη καὶ ἔντρομος ἐγενήθη ἡ γῆ 77:19 ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ ἡ ὁδός σου καὶ αἱ τρίβοι σου ἐν ὕδασι πολλοῖς καὶ τὰ ἴχνη σου οὐ γνωσθήσονται 77:20 ὠδήγησας ὡς πρόβατα τὸν λαόν σου ἐν χειρὶ Μωσῆ καὶ Ααρων</p>
---	--	--

<p><b>Tehillim / Psalms 77</b>                  For the choir director; according to Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph. 77:1 My voice rises to God, and I will cry aloud; My voice rises to God, and He will hear me. 77:2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; In the night my hand was stretched out without weariness; My soul refused to be comforted. 77:3 When I remember God, then I am disturbed; When I sigh, then my spirit grows faint. Selah. 77:4 You have held my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak. 77:5 I have considered the days of old, The years of long ago. 77:6 I will remember my song in the night; I will meditate with my heart, And my spirit ponders: 77:7 Will the Lord reject forever? And will He never be favorable again? 77:8 Has His lovingkindness ceased forever? Has His promise come to an end forever? 77:9 Has God forgotten to be gracious, Or has He in anger withdrawn His compassion? Selah. 77:10 Then I said, 'It is my grief, That the right hand of the Most High has changed.' (NASB)</p>	<p><b>Toviyah / Psalms 77</b>                  77:1 For praise; composed by Jeduthun for Asaph; a psalm. 77:2 My voice is [raised] in the presence of the Lord, and I will complain; my voice is [raised] in the presence of God; hear my utterance! 77:3 In the day of my distress, I sought instruction from the presence of the Lord; the spirit of prophecy rested on me in the night; my eye ran with tears and will not stop; my soul refused to be comforted. 77:4 I will remember God and I will tremble in the presence of the Lord; I will speak, and my spirit will be weary forever. 77:5 You have shut the lids of my eyes; I am smitten, and I will not speak. 77:6 I have counted up the good days which were at the beginning, the good years of long ago. 77:7 I will remember my psalm in the night; I will speak with the thoughts of my heart, and the mind of my spirit will examine miracles. 77:8 Can the Lord be far off forever, and no longer show favor again? 77:9 Can he have cut off his favor forever? Is the decree of evil complete for all generations? 77:10 Can God have forgotten to have pity? Or has he gotten too angry to sustain his compassion forever? (EMC)</p>	<p><b>Psalmoi / Psalms 77</b>                  For the end, for Idithun, a Psalm of Asaph. 77:1 I cried to the Lord with my voice, yea, my voice was addressed to God; and he gave heed to me. 77:2 In the day of mine affliction I earnestly sought the Lord; even with my hands by night before him, and I was not deceived; my soul refused to be comforted. 77:3 I remembered God, and rejoiced; I poured out my complaint, and my soul fainted. Pause. 77:4 All mine enemies set a watch against me: I was troubled, and spoke not. 77:5 I considered the days of old, and remembered ancient years. 77:6 And I meditated; I communed with my heart by night, and diligently searched my spirit, saying, 77:7 Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be well pleased no more? 77:8 Will he cut off his mercy for ever, even for ever and ever? 77:9 Will God forget to pity? or will he shut up his compassions in his wrath? Pause. 77:10 And I said, Now I have begun; this is the change of the right hand of the Most High. (LXX)</p>
---	--	--

<p><b>Tehillim / Psalms 77</b>  77:11 I shall remember the deeds of the Lord; Surely I will remember Your wonders of old. 77:12 I will meditate on all Your work And muse on Your deeds. 77:13 Your way, O God, is holy; What god is great like our God? 77:14 You are the God who works wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples. 77:15 You have by Your power redeemed Your people, The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah. 77:16 The waters saw You, O God; The waters saw You, they were in anguish; The deeps also trembled. 77:17 The clouds poured out water; The skies gave forth a sound; Your arrows flashed here and there. 77:18 The sound of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; The lightnings lit up the world; The earth trembled and shook. 77:19 Your way was in the sea And Your paths in the mighty waters, And Your footprints may not be known. 77:20 You led Your people like a flock By the hand of Moses and Aaron. (NASB)</p>	<p><b>Toviyah / Psalms 77</b>  77:11 And I said, "It is my sickness; they have forgotten the might of the right hand of the Most High." Another Targum: And I said, "It is my petition, years that he shortened by days." 77:12 I will remember the acts of God, for I will remember your wonders from of old. 77:13 And I meditated on all your good works, and I will speak of the intricacy of your miracles. 77:14 O God, because your ways are holy, what god is great like the God of Israel? 77:15 You are the God who works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples. 77:16 You have redeemed your people with the strength of your arm, the sons that Jacob sired and whom Joseph fed, forever. 77:17 They saw your presence in the midst of the sea, O God; they saw your might by the sea; the Gentiles trembled, even the deeps will be shaken. 77:18 The clouds of heaven made water descend, the heights gave voice; also comes the hail, your arrows, and are ablaze. 77:19 The sound of your outcry was heard in the sphere; lightning lit up the world, the earth rattled and shook. 77:20 In the sea of Suph [was] your path, and your highway in the many waters; and the track of your steps were not discerned. 77:21 You guided your people as a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron. (EMC)</p>	<p><b>Psalmoi / Psalms 77</b>  77:11 I remembered the works of the Lord; for I will remember thy wonders from the beginning. 77:12 And I will meditate on all thy works, and will consider thy doings. 77:13 O God, thy way is in the sanctuary; who is a great God as our God? 77:14 Thou art the God that doest wonders; thou hast made known thy power among the nations. 77:15 Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Pause. 77:16 The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee, and feared; and the depths were troubled. 77:17 There was an abundant sound of waters: the clouds uttered a voice; for thine arrows went abroad. 77:18 The voice of thy thunder was abroad, and around thy lightnings appeared to the world; the earth trembled and quaked. 77:19 Thy way is in the sea, and thy paths in many waters, and thy footsteps cannot be known. 77:20 Thou didst guide thy people as sheep by the hand of Moses and Aaron. (LXX)</p>
---	--	---

א לְמַנְצֵחַ עַל-יְדִיתוֹן [יְדוֹ- א In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 77:1-21*, the psalm opens saying, א : תוֹן] לְאֶסְףָּ מִזְמוֹר: For the choir director; according to Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph. In the opening line of the psalm from the Masoretic text according to Ginsburg, there is a note in the marginal Masorah of a textual variant on both the words עַל-יְדִיתוֹן. Ginsburg notes in his Masoretic text saying, כֵּן ב"א, ב"נ א"ל- I. כֵּן ב"א, ב"נ א"ל- the Maqeph, a horizontal line that joins two words, is written as such according to the traditions of Ben-Asher (בֵּן אֲשֶׁר) and Ben-Naftali (בֵּן נַפְתָּלִי). In Ginsburg's time there were two traditions for copying a MSS according to Ben-Asher (בֵּן אֲשֶׁר) or Ben-Naftali (בֵּן נַפְתָּלִי). Ben-Asher (בֵּן אֲשֶׁר) and Ben-Naftali

(בן נפתלי) are two rival schools of thought and here Ginsburg states that they both agree on the placement for the Maqeph. Ben Naphtali copied an MSS with vowels, accents, and Masorah, wherein he differed in some respects from his contemporary and rival, Aaron ben Moses ben Asher. The original Bible codex has not been preserved, but the differences between these schools of thought, ben Naphtali and Ben Asher, are found in incomplete Masoretic lists located in quotations from David Kimḥi, Norzi, and other medieval writers as well as in MSS such as British Museum MSS. These lists are printed in the rabbinical Bibles, in the texts of Baer-Delitzsch and Ginsburg's Masorah (the one we are using). The differences between ben Naphtali and ben Asher number about 860, of which nine-tenths refer to the placing of the accents "meteg" מֵתֵג and "gaia" גַּעִיא. The remaining ones have reference to "dagesh" דָּגֶשׁ and "rapheh" רַפְּהָה, to vowels, accents, and consonantal spelling. For a simple list of differences between ben Naphtali and ben Asher, see ben Naphtali at the Jewish Encyclopedia.

The differences between these two Masoretes do not represent solely personal opinions; the differences represent rival schools of thought. In "Ginsburg's introduction," we read the statement of E. Levita (p. 144), that the Westerns follow ben Asher, and the Easterns ben Naphtali. The Masoretic lists often do not agree on the precise nature of the differences between the two rival authorities; it is, therefore, impossible to define with exactness their differences in every case; and it is probably due to this fact that the received text does not follow uniformly the system of either ben Asher or ben Naphtali. The issues between the differences are therefore lost and so it is futile to describe a given codex as either Western or Eastern. Ginsburg also notes saying, יִדִּיתוֹן כְּתִיב, יְדוּתוֹן קָרִי, בְּסֵ"א יְדוּתוֹן כְּתִיב וְקָרִי דִ"א. According to Ginsburg's Masorah, there is a Qere and Ketiv on the opening words to *Tehillim / Psalms 77*. The Qere and Ketiv is from the Aramaic qere, קְרִי meaning "what is read," and the ketiv, קְתִיב meaning "what is written." According to Ginsburg there is a variation in the way the word יְדִיתוֹן is written, there is a yod (י) written and a vav (ו) spoken. Ginsburg says that Jedytun is written and Jeduthun is read (יְדִיתוֹן כְּתִיב, יְדוּתוֹן קָרִי), "in one book as compared to another" (בְּסֵ"א) saying that it is read as Jeduthun in the Complutensian Polyglot (דִּי"א). What is the significance of the variation in the written text? The point is that the translation and interpretation of the text is not altered based upon one school of thought versus another. The differences illustrates the careful attention that was ascribed to the copying of the MSS, even the slightest detail, a moved or changed letter, is noted. This is significant for us because it helps us to realize the importance of God's Word in the lives of those who had gone before us. The Masoretic period is represented as occurring between 500-1000 CE, and was the period in which the Hebrew text was "fixed" in pronunciation (cantillation) during the Tanach manuscript copying. The copying process included a complete review of established rules for copying, a deep reverence for the Scriptures, and a systematic renovation of transmission techniques. Copies were made by an official class of scribes who labored under very strict rules. The Masoretes went above and beyond the call of duty in order to make the most accurate copies humanly possible. Out of respect for the Word of God, these copyists took numerous precautions to guarantee a precise duplication. When a scribe completed the laborious task of copying an MSS, the scribe would count the number of verses, words, and letters that should occur in the book. The catalog also listed the word and the letter that should fall in the middle of the book. The system of checks resulted in a very high degree of copying accuracy. In addition, the exacting conditions under which the Masoretes worked, and the lengths to which they went to ensure fidelity in their copies of the Scriptures, could attest to the fact that their goal was to produce accurate copies, even to the point of reproducing errors already present in the much older copies from which they were working, wherein the errors were noted. We can be assured that the copies we have today are of the utmost accuracy. The comparisons to the Dead Sea Scrolls is a testimony to that fact. The Scriptures that we have is the Word of God, and we should have no doubts as to its accuracy!

ב קוֹלִי אֶל-אֱלֹהִים וְאֶזְעָקָה קוֹלִי אֶל-אֱלֹהִים וְהִאָזִין אֵלַי: 77:1 My voice rises to God, and I will cry aloud; My voice rises to God, and He will hear me. (NASB) Asaph calls out to the Lord to answer his prayer, He raises his voice and proclaims that He will hear him. Would there or could there be any circumstances under which the Lord would not hear or answer our prayers? The following list provides some reasons why prayer may go unanswered:

## List of reasons prayer may go unanswered

1. Our Prayers go unanswered when we are not praying according to God's will.
2. Our Prayers may go unanswered when the prayer is designed to fulfill an inner lust, dream, or imagination that is based on the flesh.
3. Our Prayers may go unanswered when we show "No Diligence" to assist God in the answer.
4. Our Prayers may go unanswered by a secret grudge in the heart against another.
5. Our Prayers may go unanswered by not expecting much to come of them.
6. Our Prayers may go unanswered when we ourselves attempt to prescribe how God should answer.

Each of these are good points, and there are a couple that are related to one another. Do you expect your prayers to get God working for you while we sit idly by doing nothing? Depending upon the situation, we need to take "steps of faith," take measures to minimize sin, and to be diligent in striving for the good of others. A secret grudge, or a secret sin will also cause one to lose ground in prayer, because this demonstrates one's desire to give his members to sin as opposed to yielding to righteousness. In addition, prayer may go unanswered if one is not listening to the Lord's call to obedience. What ends up happening is blaspheming God by the rejection of the commandments, in the neglecting of the commandments, which is synonymous to saying "I want no part with God or His ways." Is this what happens to those who say "I only want God's grace" as opposed to being obedient in God's grace which Paul spoke of so often in his letters? (see *Romans 1:5, 1:17, 10:17, 16:26, Philippians 2:12, James 2:17, and 1 Peter 1:22, to list a few...*)

Asaph continues in his psalm saying the following:

### Masoretic Text

#### ***Tehillim / Psalms 77:2-6***

*77:2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; In the night my hand was stretched out without weariness; My soul refused to be comforted. 77:3 When I remember God, then I am disturbed; When I sigh, then my spirit grows faint. Selah. 77:4 You have held my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak. 77:5 I have considered the days of old, The years of long ago. 77:6 I will remember my song in the night; I will meditate with my heart, And my spirit ponders (NASB)*

ג ביום צרתי אֲדַנִּי דְרָשְׁתִּי יְיָ | לַלַּיְלָה נִגְגַרְהָ וְלֹא תִפּוּג מֵאַנְהָה הַנְּחָם נַפְשִׁי: ד אֲזַכְרָה אֱלֹהִים וְאֶהְמִיָּה  
אֲשִׁיחָה | וְתַתְּעִיטָה רוּחִי סָלָה: ה אַחְזַת שְׁמֵרוֹת עֵינַי נִפְעַמְתִּי וְלֹא אֲדַבֵּר: ו חֲשַׁבְתִּי יָמִים מִקֶּדֶם  
שְׁנוֹת עוֹלָמִים: ז אֲזַכְרָה נְגִינָתִי בַלַּיְלָה עִם-לִבִּי אֲשִׁיחָה וַיִּחַפֵּשׂ רוּחִי:

### Aramaic Targum

#### ***Toviyah / Psalms 77***

*77:3 In the day of my distress, I sought instruction from the presence of the Lord; the spirit of prophecy rested on me in the night; my eye ran with tears and will not stop; my soul refused*

*to be comforted. 77:4 I will remember God and I will tremble in the presence of the Lord; I will speak, and my spirit will be weary forever. 77:5 You have shut the lids of my eyes; I am smitten, and I will not speak. 77:6 I have counted up the good days which were at the beginning, the good years of long ago. 77:7 I will remember my psalm in the night; I will speak with the thoughts of my heart, and the mind of my spirit will examine miracles. (EMC)*

ג ביום עקתי אולפן מן קדם יהוה תבעית שרת עלי רוח נבואה בליליא זלגת עיני דמעתיא ולא תפוג סריבת לאיתנחמא נפשי: ד אידכר אלהא וארגוש קדם יהוה אמליל ותישתלהי רוחי לעלמין: ה אחדתא תימורתייא דעיניי איטרפית ולא אמליל: ו מנתי יומין טבין דמן לקדמין שניא טביא דמן עלמין: ז אידכר תושבכתי בליליא עם הירהורי לבבי אמליל ויבלש ניסיא מנדע רוחי:

### ***Psalmoi / Psalms 77***

*77:2 In the day of mine affliction I earnestly sought the Lord; even with my hands by night before him, and I was not deceived; my soul refused to be comforted. 77:3 I remembered God, and rejoiced; I poured out my complaint, and my soul fainted. Pause. 77:4 All mine enemies set a watch against me: I was troubled, and spoke not. 77:5 I considered the days of old, and remembered ancient years. 77:6 And I meditated; I communed with my heart by night, and diligently searched my spirit, saying, (LXX)*

77:2 ἐν ἡμέρᾳ θλίψεώς μου τὸν θεὸν ἐξεζήτησα ταῖς χερσίν μου νυκτὸς ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἠπατήθην ἀπηνήνατο παρακληθῆναι ἡ ψυχὴ μου 77:3 ἐμνήσθην τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ εὐφράνθην ἠδολέσχισα καὶ ὀλιγοψύχησεν τὸ πνεῦμά μου διάψαλμα 77:4 προκατελάβοντο φυλακὰς οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου ἐταράχθην καὶ οὐκ ἐλάλησα 77:5 διελογισάμην ἡμέρας ἀρχαίας καὶ ἔτη αἰώνια ἐμνήσθην καὶ ἐμελέτησα 77:6 νυκτὸς μετὰ τῆς καρδίας μου ἠδολέσχουν καὶ ἔσκαλλεν τὸ πνεῦμά μου

Asaph seeks the Lord in the day of his trouble (77:2), he says that “*the way of his hands*” (דְּרַשְׁתֵּי יָדָי) which is translated as the stretching out of his hands, he is not weary, however his soul refuses to be comforted, to be at peace, or at rest (וְלֹא תִפּוּג מֵאַנְּנָה הַנְּחָם נַפְשִׁי). He is saying that his ways are right before the Lord, but his spirit is not allowing him to be at peace and so he is praying. The Aramaic Targum states, 77:3 *In the day of my distress, I sought instruction from the presence of the Lord; the spirit of prophecy rested on me in the night; my eye ran with tears and will not stop; my soul refused to be comforted. (EMC, ביום עקתי אולפן מן קדם יהוה תבעית שרת עלי רוח נבואה בליליא זלגת עיני דמעתיא ולא תפוג סריבת לאיתנחמא נפשי* The rabbis speaking of Asaph seeking instruction from the presence of the Lord. How does one seek instruction from the presence of God? What does it mean to seek instruction from the presence of God? The Mishnah Pirkei Avot chapter 3, pasuk 2 has the following to say concerning the rabbis comments on the divine presence.

### ***Mishnah Pirkei Avot 3:2***

*Rabbi Chanina, the Deputy High Priest, said: Pray for the welfare of the government, For were it not for the fear of it, One person would eat the other alive. Rabbi Chanania ben Tradyon said: [When] two sit together and there are no words of Torah [spoken] between them, This is a session of scorners, As it is said (in Psalm 1:1): “[Happy is the man who has] not . . . sat in the seat of the scornful.” But [when] two sit together and there are words of Torah [spoken] between them, The Divine Presence rests with them, As it is said (in Malachi 3:16): “Then they who feared the Lord spoke one with another, and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them who feared the Lord and who thought upon His Name.” [The Mishnah asks:] I have no [Scriptural support for the proposition that the Divine Presence rests with them] except [with] two. From where [is there proof that] even [when there is only] one [person studying Torah], The Holy One, Blessed be He, determines a reward for him? As it is said (in Lamentations 3:28): “Though*

רבי חנינא סגן "he sits alone and [meditates] in silence, yet he takes [a reward] to himself." הכהנים אומר, הוי מתפלל בשלומה של מלכות, שאלמלא מוראה, איש את רעהו חיים בלעו. רבי חנינא בן תרדיון אומר, שנים שיושבין ואין ביניהן דברי תורה, הרי זה מושב לצים, שנאמר (תהלים א), ובמושב לצים לא ישב. אבל שנים שיושבין ויש ביניהם דברי תורה, שכינה שרויה ביניהם, שנאמר (מלאכי ג), אז נדברו יראי יי איש אל רעהו ויקשב יי וישמע ויכתב ספר זכרון לפניו ליראי יי ולחשבי שמו. אין לי אלא שנים. מנין שאפלו אחד שיושב ועוסק בתורה, שהקדוש ברוך הוא קובע לו שכר, שנאמר (איכה ג), ישב בדד וידם כי נטל עליו.

The rabbis in *Pirkei Avot 3:2* state that when two people come together to discuss the words of the Torah, the Scriptures, the Presence of God rests upon them. Isn't that awesome? Yeshua taught a similar concept in *Matthew 18:20* "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst." (NASB) Asaph sought the instruction of the Lord, and the Targum states that the spirit of prophecy rested upon him with this understanding that the Lord God, His presence dwells upon the one who meditates upon or remembers His name. The spirit of prophecy is given to help facilitate understanding and knowing God's will for our lives. We know and understand God's will for our lives based upon the written Scriptures. This is what Asaph meant when he said, *77:3 When I remember God, then I am disturbed; When I sigh, then my spirit grows faint. Selah.* (NASB) and the rabbis translated, *77:4 I will remember God and I will tremble in the presence of the Lord; I will speak, and my spirit will be weary forever.* (EMC) He is remembering the great deeds the Lord did in His Torah, to deliver Israel, the fearsome and awesome God that we serve, whereupon no nation or god is able to stand against Him! Asaph remembers, and in the remembering of God's word, he has the hope, and the future expectation of the Lord working in his life to deliver, and to save him. What is interesting is that in the MT, Asaph states the Lord has held his eyes open (אָחַזְתָּ שְׁמֵרוֹתַי), the Hebrew text states that the Lord took hold of (אָחַזְתָּ) and kept (שְׁמֵרוֹתַי) his eyes which is translated as the Lord held his eyes open in the NASB. Asaph does not say פתח "open." He uses the concept of the Lord seizing his hold and keeping his eyes, and then says that he is "thrust or impelled and could not speak" (נִפְעַמְתִּי וְלֹא אֶדְבַּר) The rabbis translate this sentence in the MT to say, *77:5 You have shut the lids of my eyes; I am smitten, and I will not speak.* (EMC, ה) (אחזתא תימורתיא דעיניי איטרפית ולא אמליל:). Why do you think there are differenced here in the interpretation, the NASB translates to hold open the eyes, whereas the rabbis Targum says the Lord shut his eyes? Which is the better translation? The Lord seizing and keeping Asaph's eyes seems to follow from the previous verses that he is remembering the Lord God in heaven, the Mishnah on studying God's Word and His Divine Presence resting upon him, and the Lord being the guiding factor in his life, it seems this would suggest on the one hand, the Lord is leading him so his eyes should be open. On the other hand, based on the rabbis Targum, with the Lord leading him, he does not need to keep his eyes open, the Lord is guiding him and if he is smitten he is smitten, he will not speak against the Lord has all things in his hands. It appears that both translations have their merits. Asaph then states, *77:6 I will remember my song in the night; I will meditate with my heart, And my spirit ponders* (NASB) the Aramaic text states, *77:7 I will remember my psalm in the night; I will speak with the thoughts of my heart, and the mind of my spirit will examine miracles.* (EMC), and the Septuagint states, *77:6 And I meditated; I communed with my heart by night, and diligently searched my spirit ...,* (LXX) This brings us back to the word of God, the Scriptures being the place of meditation upon the Lord, His deeds, and the remembering of his song during the night is a picture of his hope and expectation of God's deliverance. Even in the midst of hope, there are still times when we have our doubts, and Asaph seems to have written a psalm about his doubts with regard to the Lord ceasing his loving-kindness (grace, mercy, חַסְדּוֹ) due to the continued exile of Israel in Babylon.

Asaph asks, *77:8 ט האִפֶּס לְנִצָּחַת חַסְדּוֹ גָּמַר אֲמָר לְדָר וְדָר: י הַשְּׂכַחַת חַנּוּת אֵל אִם-קִפְץ בְּאֵף רַחֲמָיו סָלָה: 77:9* *Has His lovingkindness ceased forever? Has His promise come to an end forever? 77:9 Has God forgotten to be gracious, Or has He in anger withdrawn His compassion? Selah.* (NASB) Notice Asaph speaks of



remembering the deeds of the Lord and how important it is, אָזְכִּיר יְיָ מִיַּם עֲלִיוֹן: יב [אֲזָכֹר] מֵעַלְלֵי-יָהּ כִּי-אֲזַכְרָהּ מִקֶּדֶם פְּלֹאָהּ: יג וְהִגִּיתִי בְכָל-פְּעֻלָּהּ וּבַעֲלִילוֹתֶיהָ אֲשִׁיחָהּ: יד אֱלֹהִים בְּקִדְשׁ דָּרְכָהּ מִי-אֵל גָּדוֹל כְּאֱלֹהִים: טו אַתָּה הָאֵל עָשִׂה פְלֹא הוֹדַעְתָּ בְעַמִּים עֲנָהּ: טז גְּאֻלְתָּ בְזָרוּעַ עֲמָהּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּוְסַף סִלְהָ: 77:10 *Then I said, 'It is my grief, That the right hand of the Most High has changed.'* 77:11 *I shall remember the deeds of the Lord; Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.* 77:12 *I will meditate on all Your work And muse on Your deeds.* 77:13 *Your way, O God, is holy; What god is great like our God?* 77:14 *You are the God who works wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples.* 77:15 *You have by Your power redeemed Your people, The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah. (NASB)* Notice how the MT is written translated literally “naught, nothing” (הָאֵפֶס) “forever” (לְנֶצַח) “His grace” (חֶסֶדוֹ) “finish, end” (גְּמַר) “said” (אָמַר) “from generation to generation” (לְדֹר וָדֹר). The phrases “Ledor Vador” לְדֹר וָדֹר or לְדֹר וָדֹר occur frequently in the Torah. Ledor Vador is the Hebrew phrase which alludes to the legacies we leave and it means literally “From Generation to Generation.” A major component of Judaism is passing traditions ledor vador and to keep them alive. This is significant in light of what Asaph is saying, 77:8 *Has His lovingkindness ceased forever? Has His promise come to an end forever? (NASB)* We are instructed in the Scriptures to remember the promises of God so that we are able to give Him praise, and so that we have hope, joy, and life. Contained within the promises of God are the traditions which are passed on as part of the covenant. For example, the covenant found in *Bereshit / Genesis 12-17* is the basis for the brit milah (the covenant of circumcision) in Judaism. The covenant was for Abraham and his seed, or offspring, both of natural birth and adoption. In *Bereshit / Genesis 12–17* three parts to the covenant can be distinguished. In chapters 12 and 15, the Lord gives Abraham and his descendants the Land of Canaan and does not place any stipulations on the covenant making it an unconditional covenant. In contrast, *Bereshit / Genesis 17* contains the covenant of circumcision which is conditional. The covenant promises may be broken down in the following way:

1. To make of Abraham a great nation and to bless him by making his name great so that he will be a blessing to all peoples. Those who bless him will be blessed, those who curse him will be cursed, and all the peoples on earth would be blessed through Abraham. (*Bereshit / Genesis 12:1-3*)
2. The Lord gave Abraham’s descendants all the land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates. (*Bereshit / Genesis 15:18-21*) Later, this land came to be referred to as the Promised Land, the Land of Israel.
3. The Lord promised to make Abraham the father of many nations and of many descendants and give “*the whole land of Canaan*” to his descendants. (*Bereshit / Genesis 17:2-9*) Circumcision is to be the permanent sign of this everlasting covenant with Abraham and his male descendants. (*brit milah, Bereshit / Gen 17:9-14*) Note the differences between the circumcision of the flesh as opposed to the heart according to the Torah.

Within these verses, the Lord is establishing traditions that are to be passed down from generation to generation. In *Bereshit / Genesis*, Abraham is promised land because he obeyed God and followed his commands. The Abrahamic covenant is part of a tradition of a covenant of sacrifices, the animals that are slaughtered in the covenant in *Bereshit / Genesis 15* are considered a sacrificial offering. In Asaph’s writing “Ledor Vador” לְדֹר וָדֹר, he may be drawing in the Torah context of the everlasting promises the Lord made to Abraham, the promises to give, to keep, and to protect, in relation to the Lord forsaking his people in a foreign land. He asks whether the Lord has caused his loving kindness to cease, come to an end forever? 77:9 *Has God forgotten to be gracious, Or has He in anger withdrawn His compassion? (NASB)* While taking the context of the Torah in this way, we can see how it was because of Abraham’s obedience according to His

faith, that led to the blessings God had given him. In the time of Asaph, it was the disobedience of Israel due to their lack of faith that led to their exile. It appears as if after even a generation or two, the anger of the Lord is still burning hotly against Israel because of her sins. However, He remembers the covenant and returns His people to the Land. The return may have been expedited if the people had returned to faith in the Lord at a sooner time. The return to the faith is synonymous to returning to God's ways, His righteousness, justice, and truth. In the concept of "holiness," we find the traditions which help us to interpret, understand, and apply the Scriptures to our lives. The question is though, did God nullify the covenant when He sent His people into exile? The obvious answer is no, the people were paying for their sinful lifestyles. This happens even today for those who are in the Messiah Yeshua if one continues in his or her sinful lifestyle, and choose to not turn from their sins. Repentance, Teshuvah (תשובה) means "to turn from" and both historically and traditionally means to turn from our sins and turn towards the Lord God, to seek Him and His ways. Repentance is not a mental exercise only, it is the active choice to believe and follow the Messiah who lived as our example. This is what faith is about, by our faith we step out and live for Him, and the Lord then empowers us to do so. Paul said faith comes by hearing and hearing every word of God (*Romans 10:17*). We are being told by Paul the importance of both being taught and remembering the power of God to deliver us from bondage as we read in the book of Exodus, the Lord's mercy and grace to sustain His people during our wilderness journey (*Shemot / Exodus 34, and all of Bamidbar / Numbers*), His ability to fulfill His promises (*Bereshit / Genesis 12, 15, 17*), and His plan for the ultimate redemption of His people (*Bereshit / Genesis 3:15*). It is in the act of hearing and remembering all of these things, the all of Scripture that Paul is speaking of to the Romans in the remembering what God has promised and what He has done in His son Yeshua the Messiah. In Christ we have the future expectation of the power of God in our lives! In addition, Yeshua said to the woman caught in adultery, your sins are forgiven, now go and leave your life of sin (*John 8:11*). That is the most important message on repentance (תשובה), to turn, and to leave behind one's life of sin. A truly repentant heart is the one that lives it. Where is the power of God in your life?

Asaph concludes his psalm saying the following, יז רְאוּהוּ מַיִם | אֱלֹהִים רְאוּהוּ מַיִם יַחִילוּ אֶף יִרְגְּזוּ תְהוֹמוֹתַי | יח זָרְמוּ מַיִם | עֲבוֹת קוֹל נִתְּנוּ שְׁחָקִים אֶף-תִּצְצִיחַ יִתְהַלְכוּ: יט קוֹל רַעְמָה | בְּגִלְגַּל הָאֵירוּ בְּרָקִים תִּבֵּל רְגִזָּה וְתַרְעֵשׂ הָאָרֶץ: כ בַּיָּם דִּרְכָה וּשְׁבִילֶיהָ [וּשְׁבִילֶיהָ] בְּמַיִם רַבִּים וְעִקְבוֹתֶיהָ לֹא נִדְעוּ: כא נְחִיתָ כִּצְאוֹן עֲמָה בְּיַד-מִלְּשָׁה וְאֶהְרֹן: 77:16 *The waters saw You, O God; The waters saw You, they were in anguish; The deeps also trembled.* 77:17 *The clouds poured out water; The skies gave forth a sound; Your arrows flashed here and there.* 77:18 *The sound of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; The lightnings lit up the world; The earth trembled and shook.* 77:19 *Your way was in the sea And Your paths in the mighty waters, And Your footprints may not be known.* 77:20 *You led Your people like a flock By the hand of Moses and Aaron.* (NASB) Asaph speaks of the rain, the lightening (flashing arrows), and the thunder, as being an illustration of God's power and might. Does man have the power to stop the rain or to cause the lightening and thunder to cease? He speaks of the unknowable way of God. This is not as a reference to the commands, but in the sense of why the Lord chooses to deal with His people in the way that He does. The concluding verse, כא נְחִיתָ כִּצְאוֹן עֲמָה בְּיַד-מִלְּשָׁה וְאֶהְרֹן: 77:20 *You led Your people like a flock By the hand of Moses and Aaron.* (NASB) draws with it the idea that the Lord is merciful and forgiving, and willing to lead a sinful people through the wilderness and to bring them to where they belong. Doesn't this sound a lot like us? His presence causes the earth and the people to tremble, yet He is gentle and kind and merciful. What a awesome God we serve! Let's Pray!

## Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 77* has 3 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1, 2, and 3. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 77, Parts 1, 2, and 3*.

## Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 77, Part 1, 2, and 3

### Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*For the leader; for Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph. I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and He gave ear unto me (Tehillim / Psalms 77:1-2).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*These words are to be considered In the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, O Lord, how long will I cry, and You will not hear. I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the fenced place, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and the Lord answered me, and said (Habakkuk 2:2, 2:1-2).*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon Asaph’s words, using examples from the visions of Habakkuk.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal saying that in the visions the people lifted up their voices and the Lord heard them.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*I seek the Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 77:3), In a time of trouble the children of Israel seek the Holy One blessed be He. My soul refuses to be comforted. Why does she refuse to be comforted? Because she does not know when the time of redemption is to come.*”

### Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*I remembered, God, and moaned (Tehillim / Psalms 77:4).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*I remembered the troubles which overwhelmed me, and I moaned. A parable of a man who was about to punish his son.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss remembering God and moaning to the one who is punished by God and being comforted.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal and say the soul is punished and is not comforted.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*For as often as I speak of him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore, My heart is troubled for him (Jeremiah 31:20).*”

### Part 3

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*You hold my eyes waking; I am troubled and cannot speak (Tehillim / Psalms 77:5)...*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*I do not sleep, for all my vigils are at night, troubled as I am, more and more, by the greatness of my pain.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon the psalmist’s words and draw upon the psalm that speaks of pondering of the man from the east, of Abraham, and of years from ancient times.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal speaking of the Lord taking away the promises from the people due to their sins.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*I will make mention of the deeds of the Lord (Tehillim / Palms 77:12), He who took me out of Egypt, He who brought me across the Red Sea, He who led me by the hand of Moshe and Aaron like a flock of sheep in the wilderness.*”

Midrash Tehillim 77, Part 1 opens with the Dibur Hamthil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*For the leader; for Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph. I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and He gave ear unto me (Tehillim / Psalms 77:1-2).*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*These words are to be considered In the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, O Lord, how long will I cry, and You will not*

hear. I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the fenced place, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and the Lord answered me, and said (Habakkuk 2:1-2).” According to Habakkuk, the Lord shows Him the iniquity of the people. The book of Habakkuk opens saying, בַּעֲד־אֲנִי יְהוָה שׁוֹעֵתִי וְלֹא תִשְׁמַע אֲזַעֲקָה, אֲלֵךְ קָמָס וְלֹא תוֹשִׁיעַ: ג לְמָה תִרְאֶנִּי אָנוּן וְעָמַל תִּפְסִיט וְשֵׁד וְקָמָס לְנִגְדֵי וַיְהִי רִיב וּמְדוֹן יִשְׂאָ: ד עַל-כֵּן תִּפּוּג תּוֹרָה אֲלֵךְ קָמָס וְלֹא תוֹשִׁיעַ: 1:2 How long, O Lord, will I call for help, And You will not hear? I cry out to You, ‘Violence!’ Yet You do not save. 1:3 Why do You make me see iniquity, And cause me to look on wickedness? Yes, destruction and violence are before me; Strife exists and contention arises. 1:4 Therefore the law is ignored And justice is never upheld. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore justice comes out perverted. (NASB) Where Habakkuk 1:2 parallels the opening verses of Tehillim / Psalms 77. Habakkuk points out how iniquity is connected to violence, strife, contention, the Torah (תּוֹרָה) is ignored, and justice is not upheld. These things are inherent properties of the wicked who surround the righteous. The Lord tells Habakkuk that He is raising up a nation, the Chaldeans whom the Lord will use to chastise the people for their sins. In Habakkuk 2, we read, אַ עַל-מְשַׁמְרֵתִי אֶעֱמְדָה וְאֶתִּיצְבָּה, בַּ עַל-מְצוּר וְאֶצְפָּה לְרֵאוֹת מֵהַיְדֻבְרֵי בֵי וּמָה אֲשִׁיב עַל-תּוֹכְהֵתִי: ג כִּי עוֹד קוֹרֵא בּוֹ: 2:1 I will stand on my guard post And station myself on the rampart; And I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me, And how I may reply when I am reproved. 2:2 Then the Lord answered me and said, ‘Record the vision And inscribe it on tablets, That the one who reads it may run. 2:3 ‘For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarry, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay. (NASB) One point that may be drawn out of what Habakkuk is saying, from Habakkuk 2:1, is the idea of recognizing our sin and the resulting reproof or chastisement of the Lord due to our sins and most important, our response to the Lord when we recognize what is happening in our lives. The Lord spoke to Habakkuk and said that He was going to speak to him in a vision of an appointed time. Remember in our previous study, the appointed time is the time of God’s choosing in bringing His deliverance. The Lord assures Habakkuk that the appointed time will come and to wait even though it tarry. The waiting for the answer from the Lord requires at times to be patient, and patients builds faith. The rabbis continue in the midrash to say the following.

*What did the prophet Habakkuk do? He drew a figure of a circle and stood in the middle of it, and said to the Holy One blessed be He, Master of the universe, I will not stir from this place unto You declare to me how long You will continue to show forbearance to the wicked in this world? The Holy One blessed be He, replied, You have cried out to Me, but have not doubted Me. As you live, I will answer you and cause you to understand, I show forbearance to the wicked in this world so that they may come back to Me in repentance, and their willful sins will then be reckoned as unwitting sins. Whereupon Scripture goes on with what Habakkuk said, And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that a man may read it swiftly (Habakkuk 2:2). Then Habakkuk said further, Long since I proclaimed the end, but the time set has passed by. Is there another vision for an appointed time? (Habakkuk 2:3). God replied, Even though I proclaimed the end to you and the time set for it has passed by, do not say, The end will not come. You are to wait for it. As the verse concludes, Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come. Even so, when the Holy One blessed be He, lets the righteous envision the trials that are to come upon Israel, the righteous stand up and protest to Him. (Midrash Tehillim 77, Part 1)*

The tarrying of the vision and the appointed time is related to the deliverance of God’s people, in the sense that the Lord is showing forbearance to the wicked in this world. The Lord has not only appointed a time for us in our deliverance, He has also appointed a time for the wicked to perform their acts of unrighteousness and sin towards His people. The rabbis provide a reason for why the Lord shows forbearance to the wicked. They say that the reason for the Lord giving the unrighteous an appointed time is for their repentance. It is

interesting how the rabbis say that in their repentance, “*their willful sins will then be reckoned as unwitting sins.*” Is this how things work spiritually? When we sin are we not sinning willfully? Are we not making the choice to be disobedient? There may be situations when one may have unknowingly sinned, maybe prior to our knowing what God’s word states concerning what is and is not a sin, but regardless of having the knowledge of sin, one has willfully chosen to sin. But when we repent, those willful sins are counted as unwitting sins. Repentance (Teshuvah) is the willful turning from sin. In Teshuvah, we choose to make the right choices, to turn from sin, and to not walk in our own ways, but to walk in the way the Lord has chosen and designed for us, to be righteous, holy, and just. The midrash continues saying the following:

*Hence it is said for Jeduthun, that is, for trials, which the Holy One blessed be He, showed the children of Israel as intended to overwhelm them. The righteous envisioning the trials cry out before the Holy One blessed be He, and lift up their voices, as is said, I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice (Tehillim / Psalms 77:2), asking, Will God really give ear? Yes; when in the day of my trouble I seek the Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 77:3). The verse goes on to, My hand was shut up (niggerah) in the night, and slacked not. That is, because of my great pain, my hand was locked tight and clenched all through the night, and it would not slacken enough to open and relax. How can niggerah be read as other than locked tight, since the Aramaic Targum renders the locks of the earth (Jonah 2:7) as naggerat? When he is in straits, a man clenches his hand in torment. (Midrash Tehillim 77, Part 1)*

It is interesting that יְדֻתָּן (Jeduthun) is translated to mean “*for trials*” which the Lord has shown to the children of Israel. Brown, Driver, and Briggs Lexicon states that Jeduthun maybe derived from the Hebrew word דָּף meaning “*to cast, throw.*” The rabbis say that Jeduthun is for trials, which may be interpreted as the Lord causing these trials by reason of their sins. The Lord showed His people a vision which caused them to cry out to the Lord for help (they lifted up their voices). They ask “*will God really give ear,*” asking whether the Lord will really listen to our cry for help even after the consequences for our sins have come upon us? The answer is “*YES*” the Lord will hear when we seek Him in the day of our trouble. The midrash parallels the trouble of man to the hand locking up and the earth which the Lord the depths of the earth as being locked up (niggerah, *Jonah 2:7*), when a man is in torment, his hand clenches or locks up. The point of the midrash is even though one reaps the consequences of his or her sins, we are to continue to seek the Lord for His deliverance and repent (turn) from our sins. Midrash Tehillim 77, Part 1 concludes saying, “*I seek the Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 77:3), In a time of trouble the children of Israel seek the Holy One blessed be He. My soul refuses to be comforted. Why does she refuse to be comforted? Because she does not know when the time of redemption is to come.*” The rabbis say that even in the day of trouble we are to continue to persevere in our seeking the Lord and for His help. Even though the Lord is the One who brought His chastisement, we are to continue to seek the Lord for His help to overcome and continue through. The rabbis say that the soul is not comforted because the soul does not know the time of redemption. This is purposeful, since having the knowledge of the time of redemption, one would be tempted to sin on up until that point of redemption. On the other hand, not knowing the time of redemption, we must rely and trust in the Lord for His help, deliverance, and redemption, and in the mean time turn from sin. It is designed in this way to increase our faith, to continue in seeking the Lord, and to persevere in our striving for the righteousness of God.

Midrash Tehillim 77, Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*I remembered, God, and moaned (Tehillim / Psalms 77:4).*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*I remembered the troubles which overwhelmed me, and I moaned. A parable of a man who was about to punish his son.*” It is interesting how the Psalm says that “*I remembered God and moaned*” whereas the rabbis say “*I remembered the troubles and moaned.*” Are they saying remembering God is as remembering troubles? The psalmist may be thinking of the Lord, of his infinite power, wisdom, truth, and goodness, which is sweet to the righteous, and causes terror to the unrighteous. When remembering the Lord, do you think of terror or

joy? The rabbis are saying that the remembering follows with the remembering of sorrows and troubles. This may be what happens when we sin, these divine attributes appeared to be engaged against the sinner where the Lord Himself, our only friend, now seems to be very angry, and seemingly to have become mine enemy. The word ehemayah אהמיה, translated as “I was troubled,” illustrates a state of being disturbed. The psalmist found relief in his words to the Lord. The Scriptures say, אָשִׁיחָהּ | וְתַעֲטִיף רוּחִי (asicha vetataph ruchi) meaning “I meditated, and my spirit covered, overwhelmed, or obscured itself,” suggesting that his own reasoning only served to overwhelm him. This is often the case for the one who is in distress due to their sins and the Lord working in one’s life to draw him back. The spirit within convicts through a consciousness of guilt, depravity, and sin. This kind of guilt is paralleled to the man who is about to punish his son. The entire midrash states the following:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>מדרש תהלים פרק עז סימן ב</b></p> <p>ב אזכרה אלהים ואהמיה. אני זכרת הצרות שעברו עלי ומנהמת. משל לאדם שבא להכות את בנו, אמר לו עשר אצב־עות אתה לוקה, הכהו אחת, אמר לו עוד תשע, הכהו שניה אמר לו עוד שמונה, מתנחם והולך, ואימתי אינו מתנחם הבן, בזמן שאינו מודיעו כמה עליו ללקות, כך אמרה כנסת ישראל לפני הקב"ה, מאנה הנחם נפשי לפי שאינה יודעת את הקץ, הודיעני ה' קצי (תהלים לט ה). דבר אחר אזכרה אלהים ואהמיה. כשישראל מז־כירין להקב"ה מתנהמין והומין, שנאמר דודי שלח ידו מן החור ומעי המו עליו (שה"ש שיר השירים ה ד), וכשהקב"ה זוכר לישראל מעין הומין עליהם, שנאמר הבן יקיר לי אפרים אם ילד שעשועים כי מדי דברי בו זכור אזכרנו עוד על כן המו מעי לו (ירמיה לא יט).</p>	<p><b>Midrash Tehillim 77, Part 2</b></p> <p>2. <i>I remembered, God, and moaned (Tehillim / Psalms 77:4). I remembered the troubles which overwhelmed me, and I moaned. A parable of a man who was about to punish his son. He said, You will be stricken with ten strokes of the lash. After he struck him once, he said, Nine more. After he struck him a second time, he said, Eight more. Thus the son was comforted as the punishment went along. But when would the son not have been comforted? When his father would not have told him how many strokes he was yet to receive. So, too, the congregation of Israel said to the Holy One blessed be He, My soul refuses to be comforted (Tehillim / Psalms 77:3) because she does not know the term of her punishment, Lord, make me to know my term (Tehillim / Psalms 39:5). In a different exposition, the verse is read I remembered God and was troubled (Tehillim / Psalms 77:4), when Israel brings God back to remembrance they are agitated and troubled, as is said, My beloved put in His hand by the hole of the door, and my heart was troubled for Him (Song 5:4); and when the Holy One blessed be He, remembers the children of Israel, His heart is troubled for them, as is said, Is Ephraim a darling son unto Me? Is he a child that is dandled? For as often as I speak of him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore, My heart is troubled for him (Jeremiah 31:20).</i></p>
--	---

In the parable of the man about to punish his son, he tells his son how many strokes of the lash he will receive as his punishment. The idea is that the son was comforted due to his knowledge of how long his punishment would be. His son would not have been comforted if he had not been told. In a parallel fashion, “the congregation of Israel said to the Holy One blessed be He, My soul refuses to be comforted (Tehillim / Psalms 77:3) because she does not know the term of her punishment, Lord, make me to know my term (Tehillim / Psalms 39:5).” The Scriptures actually tells us the consequences of punishment for sin. Should we not be comforted due to having knowledge of the length of the punishment? It is not the type of punishment that causes one to be comforted, but the hopeful expectation of the punishment to end, as the rabbis say “to know the term of her punishment.”

The midrash continues speaking of remembering the Lord and being troubled, that remembering the Lord brings back to memory the voice of the prophets who spoke to repent and turn from sin, to return to the ways of the Lord. The Scriptures the rabbis refer to is from Song 5:4 which states, “My beloved put in His hand by the hole of the door, and my heart was troubled for Him,” drawing in the parallel of a loved one, a spouse who is living in sin in an unrepentant state. The Husband is reminded of her sinful deeds, whether

against him, against the family, or against God, or all at the same time, etc. The husband's heart is broken, and he seeks to draw her near again but only if she turns from her sinful ways. The parallel then is to the Lord God in heaven, where the rabbis say, "when the Holy One blessed be He, remembers the children of Israel, His heart is troubled for them, as is said, *Is Ephraim a darling son unto Me? Is he a child that is dandled?*" To dandle a baby or small child is to bounce him on your lap. The Lord remembers His children and longs to be a father to them.

Midrash Tehillim 77, Part 2 concludes saying, "For as often as I speak of him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore, My heart is troubled for him (Jeremiah 31:20)." This gives us the illustration of an unrepentant son and how a father longs to bring his son near. According to *Tehillim / Psalms 7:12* David says *אם-לא ישוב תִּרְבּוּ יְלָטוּשׁ קִשְׁתּוֹ דָּרְךָ וַיִּכְוֶנֶה: 7:12 If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready. (NASB)* In the Psalms it is written *אם-לא ישוב "if he does not repent"* the one who doesn't repent is like the man who puts the finishing touches (יְלָטוּשׁ) on his sword and bow and prepares for war. The unrepentant man prepares himself for war with God and is unable to seek help from the Lord. Our Father in Heaven is seeking and searching for the person who is lost, and for the repentant heart. We are reminded of the parable of the Prodigal Son as Yeshua described in *Luke 15:11-32*. Studying David's words and that of Parashat Tazria, following the healing of the one with Tsaraat, the Cohen gives the order to slay one of the birds over "Mayim Khayim" (מַיִם חַיִּים) "Living Waters." Throughout the Scriptures, the "Living Waters" has many applications. Living waters are also required in the process of Teshuvah (repentance) and the mikvah (baptism). Note that baptism goes all the way back to the Torah, it is not a New Testament only phenomenon. The point of the midrash appears to be of remembering the Lord and groaning due to sin. The key to remembering the Lord is of His mercy and forgiveness, and how the Lord is seeking us to repent and turn from our sinful ways. It is the power of God that works in our lives to do so, as we remain in His Son Yeshua the Messiah!

Midrash Tehillim 77, Part 3 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דִּבְרוֹר הַמַּתְחִיל) saying "You hold my eyes waking; I am troubled and cannot speak (*Tehillim / Psalms 77:5*)..." The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, "I do not sleep, for all my vigils are at night, troubled as I am, more and more, by the greatness of my pain." A "vigil" is a period of wakefulness during the night (particularly for the purpose of watching or guarding); a time of prayer on the eve of a religious holiday. This time of wakefulness and prayer reminds us of Yom Kippur (יּוֹם כִּפּוּרִים, or as the Torah states, *יּוֹם הַכִּיפּוּרִים*), known as the Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year in Judaism. Its central themes are atonement and repentance where the Jewish people traditionally observe this holy day with an approximate 25-hour period of fasting and intensive prayer, and often spending most of the day in synagogue services. According to rabbinic tradition, the Lord God inscribes each person's fate for the coming year into the Book of Life, on Rosh Hashanah, and waits until Yom Kippur to "seal" the verdict. During the Days of Awe, one is supposed to amend his or her behavior and seek forgiveness for the wrongs done against both God and against man. The Yom Kippur prayer service includes several unique aspects, one of which is with regard to the number of prayer services. Unlike a regular day, which has three prayer services (Ma'ariv, the evening prayer; Shacharit, the morning prayer; and Mincha, the afternoon prayer), or a Shabbat or Yom Tov, which have four prayer services (Ma'ariv; Shacharit; Mussaf, the additional prayer, and Mincha), Yom Kippur has five prayer services (Ma'ariv; Shacharit; Musaf; Mincha; and Ne'ilah, the closing prayer). The prayer services also include private and public confessions of sins and a unique prayer dedicated to the special Yom Kippur avodah (service) of the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. The Torah calls the day Yom HaKippurim (יּוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים) and according to *Vayikra / Leviticus 23:27* a decree is given of a strict prohibition of work and affliction of the appetite. Here the word nefesh, נֶפֶשׁ translated as soul means the appetite. Yom Kippur is mentioned in three passages from the Torah.

1. *Vayikra / Leviticus 16:1-34* - the Lord told Moses to tell Aaron that he can only enter the sanctuary in front of the cover that is on the ark when God is present on the cover in a cloud. If Aaron does enter he will die. On the tenth

day of the seventh month, God said that the people must not work in order to cleanse and atone for their sins. The Kohen will lead in the atonement of all the people.

2. **Vayikra / Leviticus 23:26–32** - God said to Moses that the tenth day of the month is the day of atonement and will be holy. The people must give a fire-offering to God and must not work. The Lord told Moses that whoever does work, God will remove that soul from his people. This is a day of complete rest from the evening of the ninth day of the month to the following evening.
3. **Bamidbar / Numbers 29:7–11** - The tenth day of the seventh month is a holy day and one must not work. An elevation offering is to be given, one must sacrifice a young bull, a ram and seven lambs who are a year old, as well as a sin offering which consists of a male goat.

Traditionally, Yom Kippur is considered the date on which Moshe received the second set of Ten Commandments which followed the sin of the people with chet haegel and the completion of the second 40 days of instructions from God. This was a time of prayer and fasting. In the midrash, the psalmist states “*You hold my eyes waking; I am troubled and cannot speak (Tehillim / Psalms 77:5)...*” suggesting that the Lord is taking hold of his eyes and causing him not to be able to sleep. The homiletic introduction “*I do not sleep, for all my vigils are at night, troubled as I am, more and more, by the greatness of my pain,*” suggests for us the importance of seeking the Lord in prayer. Have you ever sought the Lord in prayer all night long for a person, a people, a situation, or a thing? The question is how much effort have you ever put into prayer and seeking the Lord in his presence in prayer regarding anything? The author of the book of Hebrews states the following:

### **Hebrews 12:2-6**

*12:2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 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.’ (NASB)*

The author of Hebrews speaks of resisting sin to the point of shedding blood in the striving against sin. In a parallel interpretation regarding prayer, how far have you gone in striving for God’s presence and in prayer for others? If there is no time spent in prayer for others, how seriously do you take your faith and relationship with the Lord?

Midrash Tehillim 77, Part 3 continues saying the following:

*I have pondered the days of the man from the east, the years of ancient times (Tehillim / Psalms 77:6), that is, pondered the days of Abraham who came from the east, as Scripture refers to him in Whom has raised up a righteous man from the east? (Isaiah 41:2); and also I have pondered the years of ancient times, that is, the years of the fathers of the world pondered, but did not find the answer. I call to remembrance my song in the night (Tehillim / Psalms 77:7), that is, the Sanhedrin’s intonation in their study of Torah that they occupied themselves with at night. Is His mercy clean gone (afes) forever? (Tehillim / Psalms 77:9)*



*What is the literal meaning of afes? It is the Greek word afes, which another Psalm says, The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him (Tehillim / Psalms 103:17), the verse in this Psalm asks, Has God no abandoned the children of Israel completely? (Midrash 77, Part 3)*

The rabbis interpret the man from the east and the years of ancient times (*Tehillim / Psalms 77:6*) as a reference to the man and the days of Abraham. They say that it is Abraham this verse refers to citing *Isaiah 41:2*.

***Isaiah 40:23-41:2***

*40:23 He it is who reduces rulers to nothing, Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. 40:24 Scarcely have they been planted, Scarcely have they been sown, Scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, But He merely blows on them, and they wither; And the storm carries them away like stubble. 40:25 'To whom then will you liken Me That I would be his equal?' says the Holy One. 40:26 Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these stars, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, Not one of them is missing. 40:27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, 'My way is hidden from the Lord, And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God'? 40:28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. 40:29 He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. 40:30 Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, 40:31 Yet those who wait for the Lord Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary. 41:1 'Coastlands, listen to Me in silence, And let the peoples gain new strength; Let them come forward, then let them speak; Let us come together for judgment. 41:2 'Who has aroused one from the east Whom He calls in righteousness to His feet? He delivers up nations before him And subdues kings. He makes them like dust with his sword, As the wind-driven chaff with his bow. (NASB)*

Isaiah speaks of the power of God to overcome unrighteous rulers and judges. The power of God may be observed by looking at the heavens, the stars, the sun and moon, the Lord created them all. We are told that the Lord gives strength to the weary, and increases power for the weak, and that those who wait upon the Lord will gain new strength and not become weary. Isaiah then states, *41:2 'Who has aroused one from the east Whom He calls in righteousness to His feet? He delivers up nations before him And subdues kings. He makes them like dust with his sword, As the wind-driven chaff with his bow. (NASB)* The rabbis consider this man Abraham whom God called from the east. The Lord gave Abraham victories in war, and great wealth. He was a man of prayer and peace towards others.

The midrash states, *"I have pondered the years of ancient times, that is, the years of the fathers of the world pondered, but did not find the answer."* What was the question? Was the question concerning the meaning of life? The author of Ecclesiastes says everything is meaningless, all the things that man does as he toils under the sun is meaning less. I would not go so far as saying that everything is meaningless, there is a lot of meaning that may be found in our actions, and a life that is lived for the glory of God. Asaph stated, *77:6 I will remember my song in the night; I will meditate with my heart, And my spirit ponders (NASB)* the Aramaic text states, *77:7 I will remember my psalm in the night; I will speak with the thoughts of my heart, and the mind of my spirit will examine miracles. (EMC)* This pondering the years of ancient times, as it is related to *Tehillim / Psalms 77:7*, is referred to as the Sanhedrin studying Torah throughout the night. Studying the Torah places us at the moments in time when these events happened, and it is said that we too have witnessed and even participated in the miracles of God by the studying of the Torah. The study of the Torah is not a meaningless effort.

The midrash continues saying, *"Is His mercy clean gone (afes) forever? (Tehillim / Psalms 77:9) What*

is the literal meaning of afes? It is the Greek word afes, which another Psalm says, *The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him (Tehillim / Psalms 103:17).*” This follows through from the previous discussion, those who fear Him are the one’s who live for Him, serve Him, and desire to draw near to the Lord. The Psalmist says that the mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting (יִזְכֹּרְךָ יְיָ: | יְהוָה | מֵעוֹלָם וְעַד-עוֹלָם עַל-יִרְאַיו וְצִדְקָתוֹ לְבָנֵי כְנָעִים:). The word עוֹלָם is a masculine noun having the meaning of “a long duration, or from antiquity.” The context here is the Lord’s grace (חַסְדֵּךָ, mercy, lovingkindness), is everlasting or forever. The Midrash continues saying the following:

*Is His promise come to an end for evermore? (Tehillim / Psalms 77:9). When God said, I have taken away My peace from this people, even mercy and compassion, (Jeremiah 16:5), did He mean that His promise had come to an end? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His compassions? (Tehillim / Psalms 77:10) I say, Yes, He has, because of my infirmity (Tehillim / Psalms 77:11). Mine, mine is the infirmity, as is said, Evil doing is the infirmity (Ecclesiastes 5:12). Because of my infirmity the right hand of the Most High has sharpened (senot) (Tehillim / Psalms 77:11), Because of my infirmity there comes sharp chastisement from the right hand of the Most High, senot having the same sense as in the verse, I sharpen (sannoti) my glittering sword (Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:41). In a different exposition the verse is read Because of my profanation, the right hand of the Most High has changed (Tehillim / Psalms 77:11). Mine, mine the profanation, Because I profaned my holiness, the right hand of the Most High has changed (nistaneh). (Midrash Tehillim 77, Part 3)*

הַ כִּי-כֹה | אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִבֵּית מְרוֹנָה וְאֶל-תְּלָדָה, יֶרֶם יְהוָה אֶת-חַסְדֵּךָ וְאֶת-חַמְּדֵיךָ: 16:5 For thus says the Lord, ‘Do not enter a house of mourning, or go to lament or to console them; for I have withdrawn My peace from this people,’ declares the Lord, ‘My lovingkindness and compassion. (NASB) The Hebrew text states that the Lord withdrew his peace (שְׁלוֹמִי), his grace (חַסְדֵּךָ), and his mercies (חַמְּדֵיךָ), and in the book of Jeremiah, this occurred by reason of Israel’s sin and unrepentance. The withdrawal of God’s peace, grace, and mercy led to the foreign nation overcoming Israel and the destruction of God’s Tabernacle on the Temple mount in Jerusalem. The rabbis agree saying, “*Has He in anger shut up His compassions? (Tehillim / Psalms 77:10) I say, Yes, He has, because of my infirmity (Tehillim / Psalms 77:11). Mine, mine is the infirmity, as is said, Evil doing is the infirmity (Ecclesiastes 5:12). Because of my infirmity the right hand of the Most High has sharpened (senot) (Tehillim / Psalms 77:11), Because of my infirmity there comes sharp chastisement from the right hand of the Most High, senot having the same sense as in the verse, I sharpen (sannoti) my glittering sword (Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:41).*” Infirmity has the meaning, “*the state of being infirm; feebleness; an imperfection or weakness; esp., an unsound, unhealthy, or debilitated state; a disease; a malady; as, infirmity of body or mind,*” and also has the application as a reference to a “*lack of moral strength.*” An infirmity may be a reference to illness or to sin. In the case of the destruction of Israel, the infirmity is a reference to the sins of the people. The psalm states, יָא וְאָמַר חֲלוּתִי הִיא שָׁנוֹת יָמִין עָלְיוֹן: 77:10 Then I said, ‘It is my grief, That the right hand of the Most High has changed.’ 77:11 I shall remember the deeds of the Lord; Surely I will remember Your wonders of old. (NASB) The Aramaic Targum states, יָא וְאִמְרִית מְרֻעוֹתֵי הִיא אִישְׁתַּנְיִן גְּבוּרַת יָמִין דְּמֵן עֵי: 77:11 And I said, “It is my sickness; they have forgotten the might of the right hand of the Most High.” Another Targum: And I said, “It is my petition, years that he shortened by days.” 77:12 I will remember the acts of God, for I will remember your wonders from of old. (NASB) The NASB states “*by his grief*” where the word used in the MT (חֲלוּתִי) is from חָלוּת meaning “*to become sick*” so the author of the psalm is saying that by his sickness, the right hand of God has changed. The Targum translates as by his sickness, they forgot the might of the right hand of God. His sickness as a reference to sin, when one sins, one ignores what he

or she knows about God and His righteous ways. When one sins, one forgets the mighty power to deliver from bondage, and from the very sin one is trapped in repeating. It appears the rabbis are commenting on the meaning of the infirmity which has caused the mercy of God to cease and the king of Babylon to do what he is doing. The rabbinic interpretation is that by one's sin, the Lord sharpens His sword in preparation for the chastening of His people. Notice how the midrash clarifies this interpretation by saying, "*In a different exposition the verse is read Because of my profanation, the right hand of the Most High has changed (Tehillim / Psalms 77:11). Mine, mine the profanation, Because I profaned my holiness, the right hand of the Most High has changed (nistaneh).*" The infirmity, the sickness that is being referenced is to the profanation of the Name of God by reason of one's sins. According to the *Talmud Bavli Pirkei Avot 5:9*, destructions comes by reason of false oaths.

### ***Talmud Bavli Pirkei Avot 5:9***

*Destructive animals come to the world because of false oaths and because of the desecration of God's name. Exile comes to the world because of the worshipers of idols and because of sexual immorality and because of the spilling of blood and because of [the violation] of the resting of the earth. At four periods of time does pestilence become more widespread: in the fourth [year], in the seventh [year], after the seventh [year] and after the holiday (Sukkot) in every single year. In the fourth [year], it is because of [negligence] of the tithe to the poor in the third [year]. In the seventh [year], it is because of [negligence] of the tithe to the poor in the sixth [year]. And after the seventh [year], it is because of [negligence] with the fruits of the seventh [year]. And after the holiday (Sukkot) in every single year, it is because of the theft of gifts to the poor [during the harvest before Sukkot].* חֲזָה רָעָה בָּאָה לְעוֹלָם עַל שְׁבוּעַת, שְׂוֹא, וְעַל חֲלוּל הַשֵּׁם. גְּלוּת בָּאָה לְעוֹלָם עַל עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוּדָה זָרָה, וְעַל גְּלוּי עֲרִיּוֹת, וְעַל שְׁפִיכוֹת דָּמִים, וְעַל הַשְּׂמִטָּה הָאֲרָץ. בְּאֲרֻבְעָה פְּרָקִים הַדְּבָר מְתַרְבֵּה. בְּרַב־יַעֲיָת, וּבְשִׁבְעֵיַת וּבְמוֹצָאֵי שְׁבִיעֵיַת וּבְמוֹצָאֵי הַחֶג שְׁבִיבָל שְׁנָה וְשְׁנָה. בְּרַב־יַעֲיָת, מִפְּנֵי מַעֲשֵׂר עֲנִי שְׁבִשְׁלִישִׁית. בְּשִׁבְעֵיַת, מִפְּנֵי מַעֲשֵׂר עֲנִי שְׁבִשְׁשִׁית. וּבְמוֹצָאֵי שְׁבִיעֵיַת, מִפְּנֵי פְרוֹת שְׁבִיעֵיַת, מִפְּנֵי שְׁבִיבָל שְׁנָה וְשְׁנָה, מִפְּנֵי גְזֵל מִתְּנוּת עֲנִיִּים

The rabbis teach that by reason of false oaths, the Lord sends destructive animals. They also say by reason of idol worship, sexual immorality, and spilling of blood, the Lord sends exile. The Lord sends pestilence in certain years due to sin and notice how they connect this to the shemita year. The idea is that the Lord would give the increase to allow an entire year's rest, however, due to sin and the resulting pestilence, rest is not possible. The Shemita is considered the Sabbatical year, which means "to release." The year following the destruction of the second Temple in Jerusalem was the first year of a seven-year Sabbatical cycle. In the Jewish calendar, counting from Creation, this was the year 3829, 68–69 CE on the secular calendar. By counting sevens from then, we see that the next Shemita year will be the year 5775 after Creation, which runs from Sept. 25, 2014, through Sept. 13, 2015. We have interestingly passed the Shemita year. *Devarim / Deuteronomy 15:1–2* states, "At the end of seven years you will make a release. And this is the manner of the release: to release the hand of every creditor from what he lent his friend; he shall not exact from his friend or his brother, because the time of the release for the Lord has arrived." The Shemittah year waives all outstanding debts between Jewish debtors and creditors. We are told in *Vayikra / Leviticus 25:3–6, 25:3* 'Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, 25:4 but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the Lord; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard. 25:5 'Your harvest's aftergrowth you shall not reap, and your grapes of untrimmed vines you shall not gather; the land shall have a sabbatical year. 25:6 'All of you shall have the sabbath products of the land for food; yourself, and your male and female slaves, and your hired man and your foreign resident, those who live as aliens with you. (NASB) We are told during the shemita year, the residents of the Land of Israel must desist from cultivating their fields and they also relinquish personal ownership of their fields; whatever produce grows on its own is considered communal property, free for

anyone to take. The idea is for the community and the nation to focus in this year upon more spiritual pursuits, seeking the Lord, and trusting in Him to provide. *Vayikra / Leviticus 25:21-22* states, “I, [G-d,] will command My blessing for you in the sixth year, and it will yield produce for three years. And you will sow in the eighth year, while still eating from the old crops. Until the ninth year, until the arrival of its crop, you will eat the old crop!” This is the point of the Talmud, the sending of pestilence during the shemita or just prior to the shemita, one needs to watch his ways, align them with God’s ways, and be careful not to sin. There are many ways in which we are able to take opportunity to place our faith in the Lord. This is the lesson of the shemita, to be spiritually minded in both our daily work, thought, and deed. Midrash Tehillim 77, Part 3 concludes saying, “I will make mention of the deeds of the Lord (Tehillim / Palms 77:12), He who took me out of Egypt, He who brought me across the Red Sea, He who led me by the hand of Moshe and Aaron like a flock of sheep in the wilderness.” The rabbis recognize the importance of remembering the might and power of God to deliver His people. In the way the Lord has worked and delivered us, we need to focus less on material pursuits and more on the spiritual, seeking the Lord God in heaven. More on faith in the Lord God in heaven and His Messiah Yeshua, and less on our own talents and material things. Our talents and material things were given to be used to glorify the Lord. 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. Lord we recognize that the Scriptures were given as a way to remember your great and mighty work in the past, present, and future. You have a plan for the redemption of Your people. We ask for help, strength, and the resolve to live with that expectant hope daily. 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