

ספר תהילים פ | Tehillim / Psalms 80

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The concept of the Lord's face shining upon us

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 80:1-19*, the psalm opens saying, **א לְמַנְצֵחַ אֶל-שֹׁשְׁנִים יְעֹדוֹת**, *For the choir director; set to El Shoshannim; Eduth. A Psalm of Asaph. 80:1 Oh, give ear, Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who are enthroned above the cherubim, shine forth! (NASB)* Why does Asaph speak of leading Joseph? The Psalm continues saying, **ג לְפָנֵי אֲפְרַיִם | וּבְנֵימָן וּמְנַשֶּׁה עוֹרְרָה אֶת-גְּבוּרָתָהּ וּלְכָה לִישַׁעְתָּהּ לָנוּ:** *80:2 Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up Your power And come to save us! 80:3 O God, restore us And cause Your face to shine upon us, and we will be saved. 80:4 O Lord God of hosts, How long will You be angry with the prayer of Your people? (NASB)* He speaks of the Lord feeding the people with the “bread of tears” (80:5), and made Israel to be an object of contention with her neighbors (80:6), and he asks the Lord to cause his face to shine upon them (80:7). Asaph speaks a parable about the Lord taking a vine from Egypt (80:8), and planted in the fertile ground of Israel (80:9), and the vine grew and covered the mountains (80:10), and the growth was so massive that the branches began to spread to the sea and the river. Asaph continues saying, **יג לָמָּה פָּרַצְתָּ גְּדְרֶיהָ וְאָרוּהָ כָּל-עֲבָרֵי דָרְךָ: יד** *80:12 Why have You broken down its hedges, So that all who pass that way pick its fruit? 80:13 A boar from the forest eats it away And whatever moves in the field feeds on it. 80:14 O God of hosts, turn again now, we beseech You; Look down from heaven and see, and take care of this vine, (NASB)* The Psalm concludes saying, **טז וְכִנְיָ אֲשֶׁר-נִטְעָהּ יְמִינְךָ וְעַל-בֶּן אֲמַצְתָּהּ לְךָ: יז שְׁרָפָהּ בְּאֵשׁ כְּסוּחָהּ מִגְּעַרְתָּ פְּנֵיךָ יֹאבְדוּ: יח תְּהִי-יָדְךָ עַל-אִישׁ יְמִינְךָ עַל-בֶּן-אָדָם אֲמַצְתָּ לְךָ: יט וְלֹא-נִסּוּג מִמֶּךָ תַחֲיִינוּ וּבִשְׂמָחָה נִקְרָא: כ יְהוֹה אֱלֹהִים צָבָאוֹת הִשְׁיבֵנו הָאֵר פְּנֵיךָ וּנְגַשְׁעָה:** *80:15 Even the shoot which Your right hand has planted, And on the son whom You have strengthened for Yourself. 80:16 It is burned with fire, it is cut down; They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance. 80:17 Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself. 80:18 Then we shall not turn back from You; Revive us, and we will call upon Your name. 80:19 O Lord God of hosts, restore us; Cause Your face to shine upon us, and we will be saved. (NASB)* Asaph believes that the Lord shining His face to the people will save them. How does the shining of the face of God bring salvation to Israel?

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
ספר תהלים פרק פ	ספר טוביה פרק פ			ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 80	
<p>א לְמַנְצֵחַ אֶל-שֹׁשְׁנִים יְעֹדוֹת לְאָסָף מְזֹמֹר: ב רַעֲהָ יִשְׂרָאֵל הֲאֲזִינָה נְהַג פְּצֹאן יוֹסֵף יֵשֵׁב הַכְּרוּבִים הוֹפִיעָה: ג לְפָנֵי אֲפְרַיִם וּבְנֵימָן וּמְנַשֶּׁה עוֹרְרָה אֶת-גְּבוּרָתָהּ וּלְכָה לִישַׁעְתָּהּ לָנוּ: ד אֱלֹהִים הִשְׁיבֵנו וְהָאֵר פְּנֵיךָ וּנְגַשְׁעָה:</p>	<p>א לשבחה על יתבי סנהדרין די מתעסקין בסהדות אוריתא על ידוי דאסף תושבחה תא שירתא: ב פרנסא דישראל אצית דמדבר היך ענא ארונא דיוסף דשכינתיה שריא ביני כרוביא הופע: ג קדם אפי רים ובנימן ומנשה עורר ית כח גבורתך עלנא ועלך מן דינא למפרוק לנא יתנא: ד אלהא אתיב יתנא מגלותנא ואנהר זיו סבר אפך עלנא וניתפריק:</p>			<p>80:1 εἰς τὸ τέλος ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀλλοιωθησομένων μαρτύριον τῷ Ἀσαφ ψαλμὸς ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἀσσυρίου ὁ ποιμαίνων τὸν Ἰσραὴλ πρόσχεος ὁ ὀδηγῶν ὡσεὶ πρόβατα τὸν Ἰωσηφ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῶν χερουβιν ἐμφάνηθι 80:2 ἐναντίον Ἐφραϊμ καὶ Βενιαμὴν καὶ Μανασσῆ ἐξέγειρον τὴν δυναστείαν σου καὶ ἔλθε εἰς τὸ σῶσαι ἡμᾶς</p>	

<p>ה יהוה אלהים צבאות עד-מתי עשנת בתפלת עמך: ו האכלתם לחם דמעה ותשקמו בדמעות שלישי: ז תשימנו מדון לשכנינו ואיבי- נו ילעגו-למו: ח אלהים צבאות השיבנו והאר פניו ונגשעה: ט גפן ממצרים תסיע תגרש גוים ותטעה: י פנית לפניו ותשרש שרשיה ות- מלא-ארגץ: יא כסו הרים צלה וע- נפיה ארזי-אל: יב תשלח קצירה עד-ים ואל-נהר יונקותיה: יג למה פרצת גזריה וארויה כל-עברי דר: יד יכרסמנה חזיר מיצר וזי שדי ירענה: טו אלהים צבאות שוב-נא הבט משמים וראה ופקד גפן זאת: טז וכנה אשר-נטעה ימינה ועל-בן אמצתה לך: יז שרפה באש כסוהה מגצרת פניה יאבדו: יח תהי-ינדך על-איש ימינה על-בן-אדם אמצת לך: יט ולא-נסוג ממך תחינו ובר- שמה נקרא: כ יהוה אלהים צבאות השיבנו האר פניו ונגשעה:</p>	<p>ה יהוה אלהים צבאות עד אימתי לא קבילתא צלותא דעמך: ו אוכלתא להון לחם טמיש בדמעותא ואשקיתן חמר דמעא תלתי: ז שויתנא למד- נא למדינא לשיבנא ובעלי דבנא יתלעבון להון: ח אלהים צבאות אתיב יתנא מגלותנא ואנהר זיו סבר אפך עלנא ונתפריק: ט בית ישראל דמתילין לגופנא ממצרים אטילתא תריכתא עמיא עממיא מארעא די- ראל ונציבתינון: י פניתא מן קד- מיהון כנענאי ושרשתא שורשיהון ומלאת ארעא: יא חפיין טוריא די- רושלם טול בית מקדשא ובתי מד- רשיא רבנין אמרין אלימין דמתילין לארזין תקיפין: יב שבישת שבשין שדרת תלמידהא עד ימא רבא ולנהר פרת יניקהא: יג למה תקיפתא גור- דהא גודדהא ומכסחין יתה כל עברי אורחא: יד {נו} תברינה חזיר דמן חורשא ותרנגול ברא יתפרנס מינה: טו אלהים צבאות טוב כדון אסתכר אסתכל מן שמיא וחמי ואדכר ברחמי גופנא הדא: טז ועוברא די נציבת ימינך ועל מלכא משיחא דחיילתא לך: יז מתוקדא בנורא ומופרכא ממזופיתא דמן קדמך ייבדון: יח תהי אידך על גבר דקיימתא ליה ביד ימינך על בר נש דחיילתא לך: יט לא נזור מבתר דחלתך תקיימינא ובשמך נקרי: כ יהוה אלהים צבאות אתיב יתנא מגלותא אנהר זיו סבר אפך עלנא ונתפריק:</p>	<p>80:3 ó θεός ἐπίστρεψον ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπίφανον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου καὶ σωθησόμεθα 80:4 κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων ἕως πότε ὀργίξει ἐπὶ τὴν προσευχὴν τοῦ δούλου σου 80:5 ψωμιεῖς ἡμᾶς ἄρτον δακρύων καὶ ποτιεῖς ἡμᾶς ἐν δάκρυσιν ἐν μέτρῳ 80:6 ἔθου ἡμᾶς εἰς ἀντιλογία τῶν γείτοσιν ἡμῶν καὶ οἱ ἐχθροὶ ἡμῶν ἐμυκτήρισαν ἡμᾶς 80:7 κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων ἐπίστρεψον ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπίφανον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου καὶ σωθησόμεθα διάψαλμα 80:8 ἄμπελον ἐξ Αἰγύπτου μετήρας ἐξέβαλες ἔθνη καὶ κατεφύτευσας αὐτήν 80:9 ὠδοποίησας ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῆς καὶ κατεφύτευσας τὰς ρίζας αὐτῆς καὶ ἐπλήσθη ἡ γῆ 80:10 ἐκάλυψεν ὄρη ἡ σκιά αὐτῆς καὶ αἱ ἀναδενδράδες αὐτῆς τὰς κέδρους τοῦ θεοῦ 80:11 ἐξέτεινεν τὰ κλήματα αὐτῆς ἕως θαλάσσης καὶ ἕως ποταμοῦ τὰς παραφύδας αὐτῆς 80:12 ἵνα τί καθεῖλες τὸν φραγμὸν αὐτῆς καὶ τρυγῶσιν αὐτήν πάντες οἱ παραπορευόμενοι τὴν ὁδὸν 80:13 ἐλυμήνατο αὐτήν σὺς ἐκ δρυμοῦ καὶ μονιὸς ἄγριος κατενεμήσατο αὐτήν 80:14 ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων ἐπίστρεψον δὴ ἐπίβλεψον ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἰδὲ καὶ ἐπίσκεψαι τὴν ἄμπελον ταύτην 80:15 καὶ κατάρτισαι αὐτήν ἦν ἐφύτευσεν ἡ δεξιὰ σου καὶ ἐπὶ υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου ὃν ἐκραταίωσας σεαυτῷ 80:16 ἐμπεπυρισμένη κυρὶ καὶ ἀνεσκαμμένη ἀπὸ ἐπιτιμῆσεως τοῦ προσώπου σου ἀπολοῦνται 80:17 γενηθήτω ἡ χεὶρ σου ἐπ' ἄνδρα δεξιᾶς σου καὶ ἐπὶ υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου ὃν ἐκραταίωσας σεαυτῷ 80:18 καὶ οὐ μὴ ἀποστῶμεν ἀπὸ σοῦ ζωώσεις ἡμᾶς καὶ τὸ ὄνομά σου ἐπικαλεσόμεθα 80:19 κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων ἐπίστρεψον ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπίφανον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου καὶ σωθησόμεθα</p>
<p>Tehillim / Psalms 80 For the choir director; set to El Shoshannim; Eduth. A Psalm of Asaph. 80:1 Oh, give ear, Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who are enthroned above the cheru- bim, shine forth! 80:2 Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up Your power And come to save us!</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms 80 80:1 For praise; concerning those who sit in the Sanhedrin who occupy them- selves with the testimony of the Torah; composed by Asaph; a psalm. 80:2 Care- taker of Israel, hear; you who guide the coffin of Joseph like a flock; you whose presence abides between the cherubim, shine forth.</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 80 For the end, for alternate strains, a testimony for Asaph, a Psalm con- cerning the Assyrian. 80:1 Attend, O Shepherd of Israel, who guidest Joseph like a flock; thou who sittest upon the cherubs, manifest thyself;</p>

80:1 *For praise; concerning those who sit in the Sanhedrin who occupy themselves with the testimony of the Torah; composed by Asaph; a psalm. (EMC)* The rabbis state the introductory phrase may be interpreted as those who are leaders of the people who occupy themselves with the testimony of the Torah. The Torah is considered a lily of the testimony, since the lily is sweet and fragrant and good to the one to whom it is given. The rabbis have further comments on the Torah and the testimony (עֲדוּת) according to *Shelah, Shoftim, Torah Ohr 100, 101, and 102*.

Shelah, Shoftim, Torah Ohr 100:

Torah is called “day,” as we know from Exodus 19,1 where Israel’s arrival at Sinai- the source of Torah- is described as occurring ביום הזה, “On ‘this’ day they arrived in the desert of Sinai.” Rashi comments that the reason the Torah employs the words ביום הזה, “on this day,” instead of the more appropriate ביום ההוא, “on that day,” is to urge us to love the words of Torah as dearly to-day as on the day they were first received thousands of years ago.

Shelah, Shoftim, Torah Ohr 101:

We know that עבודה is called “day” because the Torah (Leviticus 7,38) writes in connection with the service in the Temple: ביום צוותו, from which we derive that the service has to be performed by day.

Shelah, Shoftim, Torah Ohr 102:

The connection between the pillar גמילות חסדים and “day” is found in Psalms 42,9: יומם הסדו, “May G’d command His kindness by day.” Our sages (Chagigah 12) say that anyone who is preoccupied with Torah study at night will have a thread of G’d’s kindness extended across to him from the day.

Shelah Torah Ohr 100 states that Torah is called “day” by reason of *Shemot / Exodus 19:1* and the words ביום הזה. Rashi makes a comparison to the manner in which the Hebrew text is written, ביום הזה “on this day,” as opposed to ביום ההוא “on that day,” saying that God’s Word is to be loved and cherished as dearly today as it was when it was first received thousands of years ago. How do we think of the Scriptures from that perspective today? *Shelah Torah Ohr 101* states that the word עבודה (service, work) is also called “day,” the interpretation is connected to the Temple service having to be performed by day and the testimony also being a function of one’s service before God, if you are called to do something, do not delay, do what God has called you to do immediately. *Shelah Torah Ohr 102* speaks of studying Torah at night time as well as during the day time. When one studies during the night, God extends His Grace, Lovingkindness (חסדו) from the day on into the night. In this sense the study of God’s Word merits mercy from God, and in relation to the testimony, when we give effort to studying God’s Word, believing that the Word is so important for our lives that we integrate it into our daily schedule, we are bearing the testimony to those around us on the importance of Scripture and the power of God and His love for us. Just as the Rabbis interpreted the Aramaic Targum, that El Shoshannim Eduth (אֵל-שֹׁשַׁנִּים עֲדוּת) as יתבי סנהדרין די מתע- 80:1 *For praise; concerning those who sit in the Sanhedrin (סנהדרין) who occupy themselves (מתעסקין) with the testimony (בסדהות) of the Torah (אורייתא)*. The leaders of the people occupy themselves in the Scriptures and then express the truths of God to the people, God’s Word is as relevant today as it was thousands of years ago.

ב רעה ישראל | האזינה נהג פצאן יוסף ישב הפרובים הופיעה: 80:1 *Oh, give ear, Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who are enthroned above the cherubim, shine forth! (NASB)* Asaph opens by addressing the Lord God in heaven as the רעה ישראל

(Shepherd of Israel). This reminds us of *Tehillim / Psalms 23* that states, “*the Lord is my Shepherd.*” In the Apostolic Writings, we are told that the Lord is our shepherd in two ways, (i) as the good shepherd, He laid down his life for His sheep (*John 10:11*), and (ii) His sheep know His voice and follow Him. (*John 10:14*) In *Tehillim / Psalms 23*, the Scriptures use the comparison of the sheep since by their nature, sheep tend to wander off and get lost. As the children of God, we tend to do the same, as Isaiah said in *Isaiah 53:6* “*We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way*” (NASB) Examples of sheep wandering off are given within the context of being attacked, or of killing themselves by drowning or falling off cliffs. Similarly, the parallel is to our lives on the tendency to go astray (*Romans 7:5 and 8:8*), following the lust of the flesh and of the eyes, or by pursuing the pride of life (*1 John 2:16*). The various activities in our lives (busyness) cause us to drift away (*Hebrews 2:1*) and to break God’s commandments. Sheep are helpless creatures and rightly so the Lord God is described as the shepherd here by Asaph in *Tehillim / Psalms 80*. Sheep are dumb animals, they do not learn well, and are difficult to train, they will not drink from fast flowing streams, they do not have good eye sight and do not hear well, they are slow, do not have claws or sharp hooves or powerful jaws. They are also easily frightened and become confused easily. As a result, the shepherd places his own life in danger to protect the flock due to the helplessness of these animals. David for example put his life in danger to save the flock many times according to *1 Samuel 17:34-35*.

Yeshua the Messiah said that He was our shepherd and demonstrated this truth in his own life saying, “*The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many*” (*Matthew 20:28*). In His actions as the good shepherd, Yeshua “*laid down*” His life for His sheep (*John 10:15-18*). Yeshua also warns those who do not believe and listen to Him saying, “*I did tell you, but you do not believe ... you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand*” (*John 10:25-28*). Note how we are told in *Tehillim / Psalm 23:2* of the shepherd leading the sheep “*beside the quiet [stilled] waters,*” and *Tehillim / Psalm 23:3*, the Scriptures speaks of “*paths*” or “*well-worn paths or ruts.*” In other words, this may be a subtle reference to the Torah of God, of the shepherd who leads the sheep in God’s Torah, along the well-worn paths, the ancient paths as Jeremiah said in *Jeremiah 6:16* *Thus says the Lord, ‘Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.* (NASB) We are being warned to be careful to not be carried away by strange teachings, or those teachings that are contrary to God’s Word.

Asaph says, רַעֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל | הָאֲזִינָה נִהְגַּ כְּצֹאֵן יוֹסֵף יֹשֵׁב הַכְּרֻבִּים הוֹפִיעָה: 80:1 *Oh, give ear, Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who are enthroned above the cherubim, shine forth!* (NASB) Why does Asaph speak of the Lord leading Joseph rather than Jacob? The people are referred to as “*Joseph.*” This might be a reference to the Torah in regard to the son who kept the people alive in Egypt, upon which the people might have been known to the Egyptians by the name “*the family of Joseph.*” This is suggested at according to *Shemot / Exodus 1:8* *Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.* (NASB) A new king arose who did not know Joseph or his family. Asaph’s reference to Joseph may also be a reference to Manasseh who was the head of the ten northern tribes of Israel. Asaph refers to the One who sits enthroned above the cherubim, having faith in the way the Lord has worked in the past, and as a hopeful expectation of the Lord working in the present and the future in the same manner in which He had worked in the past. This one verse draws in the imagery of the Lord God in heaven who guided the people through the wilderness (*Tehillim / Psalm 77:20 and 78:52*), and the Lord who is enthroned upon the Cherubim, that the King of the Universe is enthroned in heaven and yet dwelling in the midst of His people (*1 Samuel 4:4, 2 Samuel 6:2, 2 Kings 19:15*). The Lord’s presence and dwelling in the midst of His people is manifested in the miracles performed in the wilderness in the presence of the Ark of the Covenant (*Shemot / Exodus 25:22*). Israel is the nation as a whole being referred to as Joseph may represent the Northern Kingdom which is closer to Babylon than that of the Southern Kingdom (Judah).

Asaph continues in His Psalm saying, וּבְנִימָן וּמְנַשֶּׁה עוֹרְרָה אֶת-גְּבוּרַתְךָ וּלְכָה לִישַׁעֲתָה, גּ לְפָנַי אֶפְרַיִם | וּבְנִימָן וּמְנַשֶּׁה עוֹרְרָה אֶת-גְּבוּרַתְךָ וּלְכָה לִישַׁעֲתָה, 80:2 *Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up Your power And come to save us!* (NASB) It is obvious here as Asaph continues that he purposefully chose to refer to Israel as “*Joseph*” asking the

Lord to come and save the people before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh stir up His wrath. It is believed the continuing sins of the Northern Kingdom are being visited upon all of Israel. This is not without good reason since Judah had also been involved in adultery, idolatry, and the other numerous sins detailed in the book of Jeremiah in relation to the Lord sending the nation to Babylon for 70 years.

Asaph continues saying, *וְהָיָה אֱלֹהִים הַשִּׁבְנוּ וְהָאֵר פְּנֵיהֶם וְנִשְׁעָה: ה' יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת עַד-מָתִי עֲשֵׂנָת בָּתָּהּ, 80:3 O God, restore us And cause Your face to shine upon us, and we will be saved. 80:4 O Lord God of hosts, How long will You be angry with the prayer of Your people? (NASB) How does causing the Lord's face to shine upon the people bring their salvation? The psalmist writes in a very compact fashion, saying "God (אֱלֹהִים) return us (הַשִּׁבְנוּ) and the light of your face (וְהָאֵר פְּנֵיהֶם) and be saved (וְנִשְׁעָה)." The Aramaic Targum states, 80:4 O God, bring us back from our exile, and shine the splendor of your countenance upon us, and we will be redeemed. (EMC) The light of the face sound as if Asaph has the Aaronic Blessing (*Bamidbar / Numbers 6:22-27*) in mind when he speaks of the face of God shining and saving the people.*

Bamidbar / Numbers 6:22-27

6:22 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 6:23 'Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them: 6:24 The Lord bless you, and keep you; 6:25 The Lord make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; 6:26 The Lord lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.' 6:27 'So they shall invoke My name on the sons of Israel, and I then will bless them.' (NASB)

כַּב וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: כַּג דְּבַר אֶל-אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל-בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר כַּה תְּבָרְכוּ אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֲמֹר לָהֶם: ס כַּד יְבָרְכֶה יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמְרֶה: ס כַּה יָאֵר יְהוָה | פְּנֵיהֶם אֵלֶיהָ וַיִּחַנְּהָ: ס כּו יִשָּׂא
יְהוָה | פְּנֵיהֶם אֵלֶיהָ וַיִּשֶׂם לָהּ שְׁלוֹם: ס כּז וַשְּׂמוּ אֶת-שְׁמִי עַל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֶם:

Breaking down the Aaronic blessing (כּו יִשָּׂא יְהוָה: ס כּו יִשָּׂא יְהוָה | פְּנֵיהֶם אֵלֶיהָ וַיִּחַנְּהָ: ס כּו יִשָּׂא יְהוָה: ס כּז וַשְּׂמוּ אֶת-שְׁמִי עַל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֶם:), the Hebrew verb בָּרַךְ (Barakh) means “to kneel,” which is the definition based upon its use in *Bereshit / Genesis 24:11*. In the Aaronic Blessing, בָּרַךְ (Barakh) is written in the piel verbal form, and thus it means to show respect or as it is typically translated as “to bless.” In addition, the word בִּרְכָה (berakhah) means “gift or present.” Thus, another way of looking at a blessing is to be a blessing by bringing a gift and kneeling, where humbleness and respect are also involved. Based on this word, the Lord God brings blessings upon us by providing for our needs. The next word וַיִּשְׁמְרֶה is from the root verb שָׁמַר (shamar), which means “to guard or to protect,” thus saying the Lord God will be a protection for His people. Note that the blessing states to make his face shine upon the people. In a persons face, many times it is possible to discern the mood, emotion, and thoughts of the person by simply looking at one’s face. The word פְּנִיִם (paniyim), means “face,” is generally written in the plural form, but here we find the word written as פְּנֵיהֶם a type two third person, singular, masculine possessive pronominal suffix referring to “His face,” the Lord’s face. This word can also be a reference to the “presence” or the “wholeness of being” of an individual, and this is the meaning of its use in *Bamidbar / Numbers 6:26*. Note that the word פְּנֵיהֶם is used twice in the Aaronic Blessing, first (6:25) to describe the Lord’s face shining, and second (6:26) to describing his presence (countenance). The face of God shining is a reference to His looking with approval and to His presence in the midst of His people. We are told “may His face shine upon you” where the word אֹר (or), as a noun means “light” and as a verb, as it is used here, means to “give light” or to “show forth / shine” and is equated with bringing about order, as a division between the light and dark (*Bereshit / Genesis 1*), the separation of the righteous from the unrighteous, and something that illuminates or reveals what has been dark. The next word is “and be gracious to you” (וַיִּחַנְּהָ) where the text does not use the word khshed (חסד). Most theologians will define “grace” as “unmerited favor,” but notice the abstractness of these words. The

Hebrew verb translated as gracious in the Aaronic blessing is the verb **חנן** (khanan) and is often paralleled with the meaning “*healing, help, being lifted up, finding refuge, strength and rescue.*” Finally, we are told the Lord will give (set down for us) peace (**וַיִּשָׂם לָךְ שְׁלוֹם**). The root word for שְׁלוֹם is שָׁלַם (shalam) has been used (*Bereshit / Genesis 33:18*) as a reference to arriving in safety or in the context of making restitution (*Shemot / Exodus 21:36*). In the context of the meaning of these words, we are being told in the Aaronic Blessing the Lord God will kneel, bless, and illuminate with His presence, He will guard and protect us, and place before us all that we need to be whole and complete in safety. It may be within this context that Asaph understood to whom it is He is praying, saying, **ד אֱלֹהִים הַשִּׁיבֵנו וְהָאָר פְּנֵיהָ וְנִשְׁעָה: ה הַהוּא אֱלֹהִים, 80:3 O God, restore us And cause Your face to shine upon us, and we will be saved. 80:4 O Lord God of hosts, How long will You be angry with the prayer of Your people? (NASB)**
In contrast to this, Asaph says the following,

Masoretic Text

Tehillim / Psalms 80:5-10

80:5 You have fed them with the bread of tears, And You have made them to drink tears in large measure. 80:6 You make us an object of contention to our neighbors, And our enemies laugh among themselves. 80:7 O God of hosts, restore us And cause Your face to shine upon us, and we will be saved. 80:8 You removed a vine from Egypt; You drove out the nations and planted it. 80:9 You cleared the ground before it, And it took deep root and filled the land. 80:10 The mountains were covered with its shadow, And the cedars of God with its boughs. (NASB)

ו הָאֲכַלְתֶּם לֶחֶם דָּמְעָה וּתְשַׁקְמוּ בְּדַמְעוֹת שְׁלִישׁ: ז תְּשִׂימֵנו מְדוֹן לְשִׁכְנֵינוּ וְאֲבִינּוּ יִלְעָגוּ-לָמוּ:
ח אֱלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת הַשִּׁיבֵנו וְהָאָר פְּנֵיהָ וְנִשְׁעָה: ט גָּפֹן מִמְצָרִים תְּסִיעַ תִּגְרָשׁ גּוֹיִם וּתְטַעְהָ: י פְּנִית
לְפָנֶיהָ וּתְשַׁרְשֵׁהָ וּתְמַלְא-אֲרָץ: יא כֶּסֶף הַרִים צְלָה וְעַנְפֵיהָ אֲרָזִי-אֵל:

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms 80:6-11

80:6 You fed them bread soaked in tears, and you made them drink the wine of tears in triple measure. 80:7 You made us a source of contention for our neighbors, and our enemies will jeer at them. 80:8 God Sabaoth, bring us back from our exile, and shine the splendor of your countenance upon us, and we will be redeemed. 80:9 The house of Israel, which is likened to a vine, you brought out of Egypt; you chased away the Gentiles from the land of Israel and planted them. 80:10 You cleared out the Canaanites before them, and you uprooted their roots and filled the land. 80:11 The mountains of Jerusalem cover the shadow of the temple, and the academies, say the scholars, are strong, which are likened to mighty cedars. (EMC)

ו אוכלתא להון לחם טמיש בדמעותא ואשקיתן חמר דמעא תלתי: ז שויתנא למדנא למדיינא
לשיבנא ובעלי דבנא יתלעבון להון: ח אלהים צבאות אתיב יתנא מגלותנא ואנהר זיו סבר אפך
עלנא ונתפריק: ט בית ישראל דמתילין לגופנא ממצרים אטילתא תריכתא עמיא עממיא מארעא
דישראל ונציבתינן: י פניתא מן קדמיהון כנענאי ושרשתא שורשיהון ומלאת ארעא: יא חפיין
טוריא דירושלם טול בית מקדשא ובתי מדרשיא רבנין אמרינן אלימין דמתילין לארוזין תקיפיין:

Septuagint

Psalmoi / Psalms 80:5-10

80:5 Thou wilt feed us with bread of tears; and wilt cause us to drink tears by measure. 80:6 Thou has made us a strife to our neighbors; and our enemies have mocked at us. 80:7 Turn us, O Lord God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved. Pause. 80:8 Thou hast transplanted a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. 80:9 Thou maddest a way before it, and didst cause its roots to strike, and the land was filled with it. 80:10 Its shadow covered the mountains, and its shoots equaled the goodly cedars. (LXX)

80:5 ψωμιεῖς ἡμᾶς ἄρτον δακρύων καὶ ποτιεῖς ἡμᾶς ἐν δάκρυσιν ἐν μέτρῳ 80:6 ἔθου ἡμᾶς εἰς ἀντιλογίαν τοῖς γείτοσιν ἡμῶν καὶ οἱ ἐχθροὶ ἡμῶν ἐμυκτήρισαν ἡμᾶς 80:7 κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων ἐπίστρεψον ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπίφανον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου καὶ σωθησόμεθα διάψαλμα 80:8 ἄμπελον ἐξ Αἰγύπτου μετήρας ἐξέβαλες ἔθνη καὶ κατεφύτευσας αὐτήν 80:9 ὠδοποίησας ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῆς καὶ κατεφύτευσας τὰς ρίζας αὐτῆς καὶ ἐπλήσθη ἡ γῆ 80:10 ἐκάλυψεν ὄρη ἡ σκιά αὐτῆς καὶ αἱ ἀναδενδράδες αὐτῆς τὰς κέδρους τοῦ θεοῦ

He speaks of the Lord feeding the people with the “*bread of tears*” (80:5), and made Israel to be an object of contention with her neighbors (80:6). Each of these things are in direct contrast to what is described according to the Aaronic Blessing. He repeats asking the Lord to make his face to shine upon the people saying, *אֲלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת הַשִּׁיבֵנו יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנִשְׁעָה׃* 80:7 *O God of hosts, restore us And cause Your face to shine upon us, and we will be saved. (NASB)* The words *אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנִשְׁעָה׃* are all connected, the light of his face shining, and salvation. Light is used in the Scriptures as God’s way of describing bringing about order, His ability in the creation to distinguish and divide between the light and dark (*Bereshit / Genesis 1*), the separation of the righteous from the unrighteous. Asaph’s connection to salvation with the light of His presence, is in regard to his understanding their present disaster is due to their sins, and the Lord dividing between the righteous and the unrighteous, it may be that Asaph is calling for the Lord to have mercy for the sake of the righteous as Abraham did in Parashat Vayera.

Asaph speaks of the Lord taking a vine from Egypt (80:8), reminding Him of what He has done, and then of His planting His people in the fertile ground of Israel (80:9), and the vine grew and covered the mountains (80:10), and the growth was so massive that the branches began to spread to the sea and the river. Here we find the vine and the vineyard type of analogy with regard to the Lord bringing Israel into the Land and Israel was planted in what it appears as a well cultivated garden. The result is her vines grew and produced the fruitful works of righteousness that spread to all places in the land, even to the rivers and the sea.

Asaph continues saying the following,

Masoretic Text

Tehillim / Psalms 80:12-14

80:12 Why have You broken down its hedges, So that all who pass that way pick its fruit? 80:13 A boar from the forest eats it away And whatever moves in the field feeds on it. 80:14 O God of hosts, turn again now, we beseech You; Look down from heaven and see, and take care of this vine, (NASB)

יֵג לְמָה פָּרְצָתָ גְדָרֶיהָ וְאָרוּהָ כָּל-עֲבָרֵי דָרְךָ׃ יָד׃ יְכַרְסֶמְנָה הַזִּיר מִיַּעַר וְזִיר שְׂדֵי יִרְעָנָה׃ טו׃ אֲלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת שׁוּב-נָא הִבֵּט מִשָּׁמַיִם וּרְאֵה וּפְקֹד גִּןן זֹאת׃

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms 80:13-15

80:13 Why have you attacked her walls? and [now] all those who pass on the way are pruning her. 80:14 The boar from the forest will root her up, and the wild cock will be sustained by her. 80:15 God Sabaoth, turn now, look from heaven, and see, and remember this vine in mercy. (EMC)

יג למה תקיפתא גודהא וגודדהא ומכסחין יתה כל עברי אורחא: יד {נו} תברינה חזיר דמן חורשא ותרנגול ברא יתפרנס מינה: טו אלהים צבאות טוב כדון אסתכר אסתכל מן שמיא וחמי ואדכר ברחמי גופנא הדא:

Septuagint

Psalmoi / Psalms 80:12-14

80:12 Wherefore hast thou broken down its hedge, while all that pass by the way pluck it? 80:13 The boar out of the wood has laid it waste, and the wild beast has devoured it. 80:14 O God of hosts, turn, we pray thee: look on us from heaven, and behold and visit this vine; (LXX)

80:12 ἵνα τί καθεῖλες τὸν φραγμὸν αὐτῆς καὶ τρυγῶσιν αὐτήν πάντες οἱ παραπορευόμενοι τὴν ὁδόν
80:13 ἔλυμήνατο αὐτήν σὺς ἐκ δρυμοῦ καὶ μονιὸς ἄγριος κατενεμήσατο αὐτήν 80:14 ὁ θεὸς τῶν
δυνάμεων ἐπίστρεψον δὴ ἐπίβλεψον ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἰδὲ καὶ ἐπίσκεψαι τὴν ἄμπελον ταύτην

Asaph asks why the Lord has broken down the wall (גְּדַרְיָהּ) so that וְאָרְוָהּ “to pluck, gather” all, everyone (כָּל-עֲבָרֵי) who pass the path/way (דַּרְבָּי). Notice how he is saying all or every person who come this way will pluck from the vine. The nations are now taking of the good things from Israel, as opposed to only the people of Israel partaking in the good things. The Aramaic Targum states that those who pass on the way are pruning her, suggesting that the pruning process is different from simply the picking of the fruit. Note again how Asaph equates these people with the boar (pig), and the idea that the boar roots around in the dirt and uproots everything. The boar eats the roots, the vine dies. The roots are foundational with regard to the vine which produces fruit. The vine is unable to produce fruit if the root is destroyed, the entire plant dies. The way Asaph describes the nations is very important which is connected to Parashat Toldot, Jacob and Esau. In Parashat Toldot, we are told that Esau is out hunting and he is very hungry. He returns home and sees Jacob fixing a pot of soup and the Torah tells us what Esau said to Jacob saying, וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל-יַעֲקֹב, לֵאמֹר: 25:30 and Esau said to Jacob, ‘Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, for I am famished.’ Therefore his name was called Edom. (NASB) It is interesting how Esau describes the food that Jacob is making, he says, הֲלֵעִיטְנִי מִן-הָאֲדָם הַזֶּה, “I want to swallow / consume this red stuff.” Esau uses a Hiphil Imperative verb הֲלֵעִיטְנִי meaning “to swallow or greedily devour,” this red stuff (הָאֲדָם הַזֶּה). It is important to note what he calls the food הָאֲדָם from the root אָדָמָה meaning “earth, ground, soil.” The significance of Esau’s choice of words are explained in *Shelah, Shmini, Torah Ohr 19*.

Shelah, Shmini, Torah Ohr 19

Edom, on the other hand, is impure, his food habits are worse than those of other nations, as had already been demonstrated by their patriarch Esau when he wanted the lentils Jacob had cooked (Genesis 25:30). He said to Jacob: וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל-יַעֲקֹב, “Please pour some of this red, red (food) down my throat.” The exile the Jewish people suffer under the

dominion of Edom is by far the worst. The Torah uses the pig as a symbol of the abominable manner in which this animal pretends to be pure, displaying its cleft hooves as proof, while refusing to chew the cud, symbol of paying homage to G'd. The mystical dimension of all this is described in Deut. 33:2 ומל ריעשמ חרוז ... ויגרב וכתהו וידיב וישודק לכ ... When food descends in a beneficial manner and is sacred in nature it is described as: "G'd You open Your hand" (Psalms 145:16).

Shelah, Shmini, Torah Ohr 19, draws a parallel to Edom and impure foods. The commentary states that the interpretation of Esau and future Edom is found in his carelessness in the manner in which he describes the food. It was most likely obvious what Jacob was cooking, based upon smell. It would have been all right to ask his brother for a bowl and to ask the contents of the soup, but instead he commanded אַן יִנְטִיעֵל "I want to swallow / consume this red stuff." It almost sounds as if Jacob and Esau did not get along together. The imagery we get here is his having part in the family of God (a child of Isaac), he walked the walk, his father Isaac loved him greatly, however, he was a deceiver and he had a disregard for this birthright and the covenant of God. The commentary describes him with the symbolism of the pig, that the animal pretends to be pure by the outward display in his cleft hoof, but refuses to do what is right internally (chewing the cud), which is symbolic of paying homage or respect to God, he did not do what was right in his heart. We on the other hand are called to do what is right on both the inside and the out. Note that those who behave as the wild boar do not take care to be obedient to God's commands. This is what Asaph may be trying to describe, the walls have been broken down, this is the work of the Lord, the nations come in like wild animals, they are deceptive as the boar, they take and eat, uproot, and destroy everything. They are careless and they disregard the Word of the Lord.

The Psalm concludes saying, טז וְכִנֹּה אֶשֶׁר-נִטְעָה יְמִינְךָ וְעַל-בֶּן אֲמֻצָּתָה לְךָ: יז שְׂרֵפָה בְּאֵשׁ כְּסוּחָה מִגֵּזַע עֵרַת פְּנִיָּךָ יֵאבְדוּ: יח תִּהְיֶה-יָדְךָ עַל-אִישׁ יְמִינְךָ עַל-בֶּן-אֲדָם אֲמֻצָּת לְךָ: יט וְלֹא-נִסּוּג מִמֶּךָ תִּחְיֶנּוּ וּבְשִׁמְךָ נִקְרָא: כ יְהוֹה אֱלֹהִים צָבָאוֹת הֲשִׁיבֵנו הָאֵר פְּנִיָּךָ וְנִנְשָׁעָה: 80:15 Even the shoot which Your right hand has planted, And on the son whom You have strengthened for Yourself. 80:16 It is burned with fire, it is cut down; They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance. 80:17 Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself. 80:18 Then we shall not turn back from You; Revive us, and we will call upon Your name. 80:19 O Lord God of hosts, restore us; Cause Your face to shine upon us, and we will be saved. (NASB) The Aramaic Targum states, טז ועוברא די נציבת ימינך ועל מלכא משיחא, דחיילתא לך: יז מתוקדא בנורא ומופרכא ממזופיתא דמן קדמך ייבדון: יח תהי אידך על גבר דקיימתא ליה ביד ימינך על בר נש דחיילתא לך: יט לא נזור מבתר דחלתך תקיימיננא ובשמך נקרי: כ יהוה אלהים צבאות אתיב: 80:16 And the branch that your right hand planted, and the King Messiah whom you made mighty for yourself. 80:17 [It is] being burned by fire and crushed; they will perish because of the rebuke that [comes] from your presence. 80:18 Let your hand be on the man to whom you have sworn with your right hand, on the son of man whom you made mighty for yourself. 80:19 We will not turn away from the fear of you; you will sustain us and we will call on your name. 80:20 O Lord God Sabaoth, bring us back from exile; shine the splendor of your countenance upon us and we will be redeemed. (EMC) The Septuagint states, 80:15 καὶ κατάρτισαι αὐτήν ἣν ἐφύτευσεν ἡ δεξιὰ σου καὶ ἐπὶ υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου ὃν ἐκραταίωσας σεαυτῷ 80:16 ἐμπεπυρισμένη πυρὶ καὶ ἀνεσκαμμένη ἀπὸ ἐπιτιμήσεως τοῦ προσώπου σου ἀπολοῦνται 80:17 γεννηθήτω ἡ χεὶρ σου ἐπ' ἄνδρα δεξιᾶς σου καὶ ἐπὶ υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου ὃν ἐκραταίωσας σεαυτῷ 80:18 καὶ οὐ μὴ ἀποστῶμεν ἀπὸ σοῦ ζώσεις ἡμᾶς καὶ τὸ ὄνομά σου ἐπικαλεσόμεθα 80:19 κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων ἐπίστρεψον ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπίφανον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου καὶ σωθησόμεθα 80:15 and restore that which thy right hand has planted: and look on the son of man whom thou didst strengthen for thyself. 80:16 It is burnt with fire and dug up: they shall perish at the rebuke of thy presence. 80:17 Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, and upon the son of man whom thou didst strengthen for thyself. 80:18 So will we not depart from thee: thou shalt quicken us, and we will call upon thy name. 80:19 Turn us, O Lord God of hosts, and make thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.(LXX) Asaph describes the son whom the

Lord has strengthened (planted), and how he is burned with fire. He seeks the Lord God in heaven to restore and strengthen His people, and that they will not depart from the Lord. In His seeking the Lord, he believes the Lord's restoration will cause the people to call upon the Name. An in doing this, He will cause His face to shine upon them and they will be saved. This is very similar to what is described in *Hebrews 1:1-3* which states the following:

Hebrews 1:1-3

1:1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 1:2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 1:3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, (NASB)

The idea of “*the radiance of His glory*” coupled with “*the exact representation of His nature*” draws in the imagery that Asaph is laying out here in his Psalm with regard to the Lord shining His face upon the people will save them. This is very similar to what the rabbis say in the Targum, *80:20 O Lord God Sabaoth, bring us back from exile; shine the splendor of your countenance upon us and we will be redeemed. (EMC)* There seems to be a parallel concept here to the Messiah Yeshua. The Lord God brought the Messiah, he brought us back from exile, He forgave our sins, and the Messiah has made the purification of sins (*Hebrews 1:3*) on our behalf. This was done yet while we were still in our sins. Asaph seems to call for the salvation of Israel even in the midst of her sins. The radiance and shining forth of the glory of God describes the Lord God blessing and illuminating with His presence in the Messiah. Coupled with these things, (e.g. the Aaronic Blessing) He will guard and protect us, and place before us all that we need to be whole and complete in safety. It is within this context that Asaph understood to whom it is He is praying, and it is within this same context that we understand the Messiah Yeshua and what He has provided for us. Let's Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We thank you for the mercies you show us every day. Lord we recognize that the Scriptures were given as a way to remember your great and mighty work in our lives. Thank You for sustaining and keeping us so that we are able to look back on our lives and see how You have been working. We ask for help, strength, and the resolve to live with the expectant hope that you are present in our lives. 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