

Tehillim / Psalms 88 | ספר תהילים פח

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The Living God and Obedience Prepares a Place for Him to Dwell

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 88:1-17*, the Psalm opens saying, א שִׁיר מְזֻמֹּר לְבְנֵי קֹרַח, *A Psalm of the sons of Korah. A Song. 88:1 O Lord, the God of my salvation, I have cried out by day and in the night before You. (NASB)* The psalm continues saying, ג תְּבוֹא לְפָנַי תִּפְלְתִי הִטָּה-אֲזַנְךָ לְרִנָּתִי: ד כִּי-שָׁבַעָה בְרַעוֹת, *נִפְשִׁי וְחַיִּי לְשֹׂאֵל הִגִּיעוּ: ה נָחַשְׁבַּתִּי עִם-יֹרְדֵי בֹר הָיִיתִי כַּגֶּבֶר אֵין-אֵיל: ו בַּמַּתִּים תִּפְשִׁי כְמוֹ חַלְלִים | שְׁכַבְי קָבַר אֲשֶׁר לֹא זָכַרְתֶּם עוֹד וְהִמָּה מִיָּדְךָ נִגְזְרוּ: ז שְׁתַּנִּי כְבוֹר תַּחֲתִיּוֹת בְּמַחְשָׁפִים בְּמַצְלוֹת: ח עָלַי סִמְכָה חַמָּתְךָ וְכָל-* *88:2 Let my prayer come before You; Incline Your ear to my cry! 88:3 For my soul has had enough troubles, And my life has drawn near to Sheol. 88:4 I am reckoned among those who go down to the pit; I have become like a man without strength, 88:5 Forsaken among the dead, Like the slain who lie in the grave, Whom You remember no more, And they are cut off from Your hand. 88:6 You have put me in the lowest pit, In dark places, in the depths. 88:7 Your wrath has rested upon me, And You have afflicted me with all Your waves. Selah. (NASB)* It appears the psalmist believes it is the Lord who has brought him down to the pit. The psalmist cries out to the Lord asking the question whether the dead can praise the name of the Lord? *88:8 You have removed my acquaintances far from me; You have made me an object of loathing to them; I am shut up and cannot go out. 88:9 My eye has wasted away because of affliction; I have called upon You every day, O Lord; I have spread out my hands to You. 88:10 Will You perform wonders for the dead? Will the departed spirits rise and praise You? Selah. (NASB)* He asks will God's grace be declared in the grave? *88:11 Will Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave, Your faithfulness in Abaddon? (NASB)* Where does the name Abaddon come from? The Psalm concludes saying, *88:12 Will Your wonders be made known in the darkness? And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? 88:13 But I, O Lord, have cried out to You for help, And in the morning my prayer comes before You. 88:14 O Lord, why do You reject my soul? Why do You hide Your face from me? 88:15 I was afflicted and about to die from my youth on; I suffer Your terrors; I am overcome. 88:16 Your burning anger has passed over me; Your terrors have destroyed me. 88:17 They have surrounded me like water all day long; They have encompassed me altogether. 88:18 You have removed lover and friend far from me; My acquaintances are in darkness.(NASB)* The psalmist ends on a disheartened note in the course of his plea.

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
ספר תהלים פרק פח	ספר תהלים פרק פח	ספר טוביה פרק פח	ספר טוביה פרק פח	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 88	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 88
א שִׁיר מְזֻמֹּר לְבְנֵי קֹרַח לְמִנְצַח עַל-מַחְלַת לְעֵנּוֹת מִשְׁכִּיל לְהִימָן הָאֲזַרְחִי: ב יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יְשׁוּעָתִי יוֹם צָעַקְתִּי בַלַּיְלָה נִגְדָּדָה: ג תְּבוֹא לְפָנַי תִּפְלְתִי הִטָּה-אֲזַנְךָ לְרִנָּתִי: ד כִּי-שָׁבַעָה בְרַעוֹת נִפְשִׁי וְחַיִּי לְשֹׂאֵל הִגִּיעוּ:	א שִׁיר מְזֻמֹּר לְבְנֵי קֹרַח לְמִנְצַח עַל-מַחְלַת לְעֵנּוֹת מִשְׁכִּיל לְהִימָן הָאֲזַרְחִי: ב יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יְשׁוּעָתִי יוֹם צָעַקְתִּי בַלַּיְלָה נִגְדָּדָה: ג תְּבוֹא לְפָנַי תִּפְלְתִי הִטָּה-אֲזַנְךָ לְרִנָּתִי: ד כִּי-שָׁבַעָה בְרַעוֹת נִפְשִׁי וְחַיִּי לְשֹׂאֵל הִגִּיעוּ:	א שִׁירָא וְתוֹשְׁבַחְתָּא עַל יְדִיהוֹן דְּבְנֵי קֹרַח עַל צְלוֹתָא לְשִׁבְחָא שְׁכֵלָא טְבָא עַל יְדוּי דְהִימָן יְצִיבָא: ב יְהוּה אֱלֹהָא פּוֹרְקָנִי יִימָם קְבִילִית בְּלֵילִיא צְלוֹתִי לְקַבְלָךְ: ג תִּיעוֹל קְדַמְךָ צְלוֹתִי אֲצִלִי אֹדְנָךְ לְבַעוֹתִי: {ת"א} יִיתִי קְדַמְךָ צְלוֹתִי עַל עַמְךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהִטְ אֹדְנָךְ לְתוֹשְׁבַחְתִּי דְשִׁבְחִית לִיקְרָךְ: ד אַרוֹם שְׁבַעַת בְּבִישׁוֹן נִפְשִׁי וְחַיִּי לְשִׁיּוֹל מְטוּ:	א שִׁירָא וְתוֹשְׁבַחְתָּא עַל יְדִיהוֹן דְּבְנֵי קֹרַח עַל צְלוֹתָא לְשִׁבְחָא שְׁכֵלָא טְבָא עַל יְדוּי דְהִימָן יְצִיבָא: ב יְהוּה אֱלֹהָא פּוֹרְקָנִי יִימָם קְבִילִית בְּלֵילִיא צְלוֹתִי לְקַבְלָךְ: ג תִּיעוֹל קְדַמְךָ צְלוֹתִי אֲצִלִי אֹדְנָךְ לְבַעוֹתִי: {ת"א} יִיתִי קְדַמְךָ צְלוֹתִי עַל עַמְךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהִטְ אֹדְנָךְ לְתוֹשְׁבַחְתִּי דְשִׁבְחִית לִיקְרָךְ: ד אַרוֹם שְׁבַעַת בְּבִישׁוֹן נִפְשִׁי וְחַיִּי לְשִׁיּוֹל מְטוּ:	88:1 ὡδὴ ψαλμοῦ τοῖς υἱοῖς Κορε εἰς τὸ τέλος ὑπὲρ μαελεθ τοῦ ἀποκριθῆναι συνέσεως Αἰμαν τῷ Ἰσραηλίτῃ κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῆς σωτηρίας μου ἡμέρας ἐκέκραξα καὶ ἐν νυκτὶ ἐναντίον σου 88:2 εἰσελθάτω ἐνώπιόν σου ἡ προσευχή μου κλῖνον τὸ οὖς σου εἰς τὴν δέησίν μου κύριε 88:3 ὅτι ἐπλήσθη κακῶν ἡ ψυχὴ μου καὶ ἡ ζωὴ μου τῷ ἄδῃ ἤγγισεν	88:1 ὡδὴ ψαλμοῦ τοῖς υἱοῖς Κορε εἰς τὸ τέλος ὑπὲρ μαελεθ τοῦ ἀποκριθῆναι συνέσεως Αἰμαν τῷ Ἰσραηλίτῃ κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῆς σωτηρίας μου ἡμέρας ἐκέκραξα καὶ ἐν νυκτὶ ἐναντίον σου 88:2 εἰσελθάτω ἐνώπιόν σου ἡ προσευχή μου κλῖνον τὸ οὖς σου εἰς τὴν δέησίν μου κύριε 88:3 ὅτι ἐπλήσθη κακῶν ἡ ψυχὴ μου καὶ ἡ ζωὴ μου τῷ ἄδῃ ἤγγισεν

<p>ה נחשבת עם-יורדי בור הייתי כגבר אין-איל: ו במתים חפשי כמו חללים שכבי קבר אשר לא זכר-תם עוד והמה מידך נגזרו: ז שתני בבור תחתיות במחשפים במצלות: ח עלי סמכה חמתך וכל-משברך ענית סלה: ט הרחקת מידעי ממני שתני תועבות למו פלא ולא אצא: י עיני דאבה מני עני קראתיך יהנה ככל-יום שטחתי אליך כפי: יא הל-מתים תעשה-פלא אם-רפאים יקו-מו ידוה סלה: יב היספר בקבר חסדך אמונתך באבדון: יג הינדע בחשך פלאך וצדקתך בארץ נשיה: יד ואני אליך יהנה שועתי ובבקר תפלתי תקדמך: טו למה יהנה תזבח נפשי תסתיר פניך ממני: טז עני אני וגוע מצער נשאתי אמיך אפונה: יז עלי עברו חרונך בעותיך צמתותני: יח סבונך כמים כל-היום הקיפו עלי יחד: יט הרחקת ממני אהב ורע מני דעי מחשך:</p>	<p>ה אתחשבת עם נחותי בית אסירי הויתי היך בר נש דלית ליה חילא: ו היך רשיעיא דמיתו ולא תבו יתעבדו בני חורין מן מצותא היך קטילין דח-רבא שכבי בית קבורתא דלא דכרת-נון תוב והינון מאפי שכינתך איתפ-לגון: ז שויתא יתי בגלותא דמתילא לגובא ארעיתא בחשוכיא במצולתא: ח עלי סמכת חימתך וכל גזירן בישן תברו יתי ס{י} גפת לעלמין: ט אר-חיקתא מיודעי מיני שוית יתי ריחור-קין רחיקין להון כלוא בבית אסירי ולא אפוק: י עיני זלגת דמעין מן עניותא קריתך יהוה בכל יומא פר-סית לותך בצלו ידי: יא האפשר די למיתיא תעבד פרישן אין גושמיא דאתמסאו דאיתמסרו בעפרא יקו-מון יודון קדמך קומך לעלמין: יב האפשר דיתחוי בבית קבורתא טובך קושטך בבית אובדנא: יג האפ-שר דיתוודע דאיתודע בחשך גהינם פרישותך וצדקתך בארע צהותא וצדיא: יד ואנא קדמך קומך יהוה צליתי ובצפרא צלותי תקדמינך: טו למה יהוה שבקתא תינשי נפשי תע-לים תטמור אפך ספר אפך מיני דלא אחמי בנהורך צהורא: טז עניא אנא ונגיד מן תליא טליותא סוברית דחילתך טעינא עלי: יז עלי עברו רוגזיך בעתיך בעותיכ שיציאו יתי: אחזרו יתי היך מוי כל יומא אקי-יח פון עלי כחדא: יט ארחיקתא מיני רחימא וחברא וליידעי חשיך אנא בפומהון באפיהון:</p>	<p>88:4 προσελογίσθη μετὰ τῶν καταβαινόντων εἰς λάκκον ἐγενήθη ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἀβοήθητος ἐν νεκροῖς ἐλεύθερος 88:5 ὡσεὶ τραυματῖαι ἐρριμμένοι καθεύδοντες ἐν τάφῳ ὧν οὐκ ἐμνήσθης ἔτι καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς σου ἀπώσθησαν 88:6 ἔθεντό με ἐν λάκκῳ κατωτάτῳ ἐν σκοτεινοῖς καὶ ἐν σκιά θανάτου 88:7 ἐπ' ἐμέ ἐπεστηρίχθη ὁ θυμὸς σου καὶ πάντας τοὺς μετεωρισμούς σου ἐπ' ἐμέ ἐπήγαγες διάψαλμα 88:8 ἐμάκρυνας τοὺς γνωστούς μου ἀπ' ἐμοῦ ἔθεντό με βδέλυγμα ἑαυτοῖς παρεδόθη καὶ οὐκ ἐξεπορευόμην 88:9 οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου ἠσθένησαν ἀπὸ πτωχείας ἐκέκραξα πρὸς σέ κύριε ὄλην τὴν ἡμέραν διεπέτασα πρὸς σέ τὰς χεῖράς μου 88:10 μὴ τοῖς νεκροῖς ποιήσεις θαυμάσια ἢ ἱατροὶ ἀναστήσουσιν καὶ ἐξομολογήσονται σοὶ 88:11 μὴ διηγῆσεται τις ἐν τάφῳ τὸ ἔλεός σου καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειάν σου ἐν τῇ ἀπωλείᾳ 88:12 μὴ γνωσθήσεται ἐν τῷ σκότει τὰ θαυμάσιά σου καὶ ἡ δικαιοσύνη σου ἐν γῆ ἐπιλεησμένη 88:13 κἀγὼ πρὸς σέ κύριε ἐκέκραξα καὶ τὸ πρῶν ἢ προσευχῇ μου προφθάσει σε 88:14 ἵνα τί κύριε ἀπώθεις τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἀποστρέφεις τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἀπ' ἐμοῦ 88:15 πτωχὸς εἰμι ἐγὼ καὶ ἐν κόποις ἐκ νεότητός μου ὑψοθεῖς δὲ ἐταπεινώθη καὶ ἐξηπορήθη 88:16 ἐπ' ἐμέ διήλθον αἱ ὄργαι σου καὶ οἱ φοβερισμοί σου ἐξετάραξάν με 88:17 ἐκύκλωσάν με ὡς ὕδωρ ὄλην τὴν ἡμέραν περιέσχον με ἅμα 88:18 ἐμάκρυνας ἀπ' ἐμοῦ φίλον καὶ πλησίον καὶ τοὺς γνωστούς μου ἀπὸ ταλαιπωρίας</p>
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Tehillim / Psalms 88

A Song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah. For the choir director; according to Mahalath Leannoth. A Maskil of Heman the Ezrahite. 88:1 O Lord, the God of my salvation, I have cried out by day and in the night before You. 88:2 Let my prayer come before You; Incline Your ear to my cry! 88:3 For my soul has had enough troubles, And my life has drawn near to Sheol. 88:4 I am reckoned among those who go down to the pit; I have become like a man without strength, 88:5 Forsaken among the dead, Like the slain who lie in the grave, Whom You remember no more, And they are cut off from Your hand. 88:6 You have put me in the lowest pit, In dark places, in the depths. 88:7 Your wrath has rested upon me, And You have afflicted me with all Your waves. Selah. 88:8 You have removed my acquaintances far from me; You have made me an object of loathing to them; I am shut up and cannot go out. 88:9 My eye has wasted away because of affliction; I have called upon You every day, O Lord; I have spread out my hands to You. 88:10 Will You perform wonders for the dead? Will the departed spirits rise and praise You? Selah. 88:11 Will Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave, Your faithfulness in Abaddon? 88:12 Will Your wonders be made known in the darkness? And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? (NASB)

Toviyah / Psalms 88

88:1 A song and a psalm composed by the sons of Korah, with a prayer; for praise; a good lesson composed by Heman the native. 88:2 O Lord God my redemption, daily I have made complaint; in the night my prayer is before you. 88:3 May my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my plea. Another Targum: Let my prayer for your people, the house of Israel, come before you; and incline your ear to my psalm that I have sung for your glory. 88:4 For my soul has had its fill of evils; and my life has arrived at Sheol. 88:5 I am reckoned with those who go down to the prison-house; I have become like a son of man who has no strength. 88:6 Like the wicked who died and did not return, having been made free from strife; like those slain by the sword, lying in the grave, whom you no longer remember, since they have been separated from the face of your presence. 88:7 You have placed me in exile, which is likened to the lower pit, among the oppressed in the depths. 88:8 Your fury rests on me, and all evil decrees have broken me; you have afflicted me forever. 88:9 You have removed those who know me far from me; you have made me loathsome to them; enclosed in prison, and I may not go out. 88:10 My eye has flowed with tears because of affliction; every day I have called to you, O lord; I have spread my hands to you in prayer. 88:11 Could it be that you would work miracles for the dead? Or will bodies that have decayed in dust arise [and] give thanks in your presence forever? 88:12 Could it be that your goodness will be talked of in the grave? Your truth in the place of perdition? (EMC)

Psalmoi / Psalms 88

A song of a Psalm for the sons of Core for the end, upon Maeleth for responsive strains, of instruction for Aeman the Israelite. 88:1 O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried by day and in the night before thee. 88:2 Let my prayer come in before thee; incline thine ear to my supplication, O Lord. 88:3 For my soul is filled with troubles, and my life has drawn nigh to Hades. 88:4 I have been reckoned with them that go down to the pit; I became as a man without help; 88:5 free among the dead, as the slain ones cast out, who sleep in the tomb; whom thou rememberest no more; and they are rejected from thy hand. 88:6 They laid me in the lowest pit, in dark places, and in the shadow of death. 88:7 Thy wrath has pressed heavily upon me, and thou hast brought upon me all thy billows. Pause. 88:8 Thou hast removed my acquaintance far from me; they have made me an abomination to themselves; I have been delivered up, and have not gone forth. 88:9 Mine eyes are dimmed from poverty; but I cried to thee, O Lord, all the day; I spread forth my hands to thee. 88:10 Wilt thou work wonders for the dead? or shall physicians raise them up, that they shall praise thee? 88:11 Shall any one declare thy mercy in the tomb? and thy truth in destruction? 88:12 Shall thy wonders be known in darkness? and thy righteousness in a forgotten land? (LXX)

Tehillim / Psalms 88	Toviyah / Psalms 88	Psalmoi / Psalms 88
<p>88:13 But I, O Lord, have cried out to You for help, And in the morning my prayer comes before You. 88:14 O Lord, why do You reject my soul? Why do You hide Your face from me? 88:15 I was afflicted and about to die from my youth on; I suffer Your terrors; I am overcome. 88:16 Your burning anger has passed over me; Your terrors have destroyed me. 88:17 They have surrounded me like water all day long; They have encompassed me altogether. 88:18 You have removed lover and friend far from me; My acquaintances are in darkness. (NASB)</p>	<p>88:13 Could it be that your wonders will be known in the darkness of Gehenna? And your generosity in the land of thirst and desolation? 88:14 But I have prayed in your presence, O lord; and in the morning my prayer will come before you. 88:15 Why, O lord, have you forsaken my soul, why will you hide your face from me, that I may not see illumination by your light? 88:16 I am afflicted and frail from childhood; I have borne the fear of you, loaded upon me. 88:17 Your anger has passed over me; your terrors have destroyed me. 88:18 They have surrounded me like water all day; they have encompassed me together. 88:19 You have removed friend and fellow far from me; as for those who know me, I am lowly in their mouth. (EMC)</p>	<p>88:13 But I cried to thee, O Lord; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee. 88:14 Wherefore, O Lord, dost thou reject my prayer, and turn thy face away from me? 88:15 I am poor and in troubles from my youth; and having been exalted, I was brought low and into despair. 88:16 Thy wrath has passed over me; and thy terrors have greatly disquieted me. 88:17 They compassed me like water; all the day they beset me together. 88:18 Thou hast put far from me every friend, and mine acquaintances because of my wretchedness.(LXX)</p>

א שִׁיר מְזֻמָּר לְבְנֵי קֹרַח וְאֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יוֹם צָעַקְתִּי בַלַּיְלָה נִגְדָּדָה: *A Song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah. For the choir director; according to Mahalath Leannoth. A Maskil of Heman the Ezrahite.* 88:1 O Lord, the God of my salvation, I have cried out by day and in the night before You. (NASB)

Who is Heman the Ezrahite? Heman the Ezrahite appears to be the author of *Tehillim / Psalm 88*. It is clear from the title that Heman was from “*the sons of Korah*,” meaning from the family of Korah, and Heman was likely both a songwriter and musician. According to the Scriptures, Heman worked closely with King David and is also named a seer in *1 Chronicles 25:5*. Note that another Heman is mentioned in *1 Chronicles 2:5*, but he is from the tribe of Judah, different from the person mentioned in Psalms. According to the title of the Psalm, Heman is a Levite mentioned with his family line in *1 Chronicles 6:33*: “*From the Kohathites: Heman, the musician, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel.*” Heman was the grandson of Samuel, the final judge of Israel who anointed King Saul and King David. In addition, Heman is listed as one of three main musicians appointed by King David “*for the ministry of prophesying, accompanied by harps, lyres and cymbals*” (*1 Chronicles 25:1*). Heman’s family was well known, mentioned according to *1 Chronicles 25:4–6*, “*As for Heman, from his sons: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shubael and Jerimoth; Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti and Romamti-Ezer; Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir and Mahazioth. All these men were under the supervision of their father for the music of the temple of the Lord, with cymbals, lyres and harps, for the ministry at the house of God.*” Heman and his family were present when the ark of the covenant was brought to Jerusalem, “*All the Levites who were musicians—Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun and their sons and relatives—stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and lyres. They were accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets*” (*2 Chronicles 5:12*). According to the Scriptures, it appears Heman was still serving during the time of King Solomon, son of David. Heman was considered very wise and according to *1 Kings 4:31*, Solomon was compared to Heman, “*For he was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was known in all*

the surrounding nations.” As a musician and sage, Heman served in Israel as a Levite, a seer, a songwriter, a godly father, and a man of influence during the time of David and Solomon.

The Aramaic Targum states, א שירא ותושבחתא על ידיהון דבני קרח על צלותא לשבחה שכלא טבא על ידוי, 88:1 *A song and a psalm composed by the sons of Korah, with a prayer; for praise; a good lesson composed by Heman the native.* 88:2 *O Lord God my redemption, daily I have made complaint; in the night my prayer is before you.* (EMC) The Septuagint states, 88:1 ᾠδὴ ψαλμοῦ τοῖς υἱοῖς Κορε εἰς τὸ τέλος ὑπὲρ μαελεθ τοῦ ἀποκριθῆναι συνέσεως Αἰμαν τῷ Ἰσραηλίτῃ κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῆς σωτηρίας μου ἡμέρας ἐκέκραξα καὶ ἐν νυκτὶ ἐναντίον σου 88:2 εἰσελθάτω ἐνώπιόν σου ἢ προσευχῇ μου κλῖνον τὸ οὖς σου εἰς τὴν δέησίν μου κύριε *A song of a Psalm for the sons of Core for the end, upon Maeleth for responsive strains, of instruction for Aeman the Israelite.* 88:1 *O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried by day and in the night before thee.* (LXX) The sons of Korach compose a psalm where Heman calls out to the Lord believing He is his redemption. Ein Yaakov comments upon the Olam Haba (World to Come) in relation to the God of our redemption, saying the following.

Ein Yaakov (Glick Edition) Sanhedrin 11:132

It was taught : From what age has a minor a share in the world to come? R. Chiya and R. Simon b. Rabbi differ. According to one, immediately after birth, and according to the other, from the time he commences to speak. The former infers it from (Ps. 22:32) Will tell his righteousness to a people just born, and the latter infers it from the foregoing passage, Zera (children) shall serve him; there shall be related of the Lord unto future generations. It was taught: Rabina said : “From the time he is formed” ; and R. Nachman b. Isaac said: “From the time he is circumcised, as it is written (Ps. 88:16) I am inflicted and perishing from my youth up.” There is a Baraitha in the name of R. Mair: “From the time he can answer Amen, as it is said (Is. 26, 2) Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation that keepeth faithfulness (Shomer Emunim) may enter in.” Do not read Emunim (faithfulness) but read it Amen. (Fol. 111) What does Amen mean? It is an abbreviation of El melech N’eman, God, King of Truth.

Ein Yaakov asks, “*at what age has a minor a share in the world to come?*” The response from the rabbis varies, saying a minor has a right at birth, and others say at the time when he is circumcised. The idea is that one remains faithful by keeping faithfulness (Shomer Emunim). Another states, “*Do not read Emunim (faithfulness) but read it Amen. (Fol. 111)*” and then proceeds to give the etymology of the word “Amen” saying, “*It is an abbreviation of El melech N’eman, God, King of Truth.*”

The psalm continues saying, ג תבוא לפניך תפלתי הטה אָזְנְךָ לְרִנָּתִי: ד כִּי־שָׁבַעְתָּ בְרַעוֹת נַפְשִׁי וַחַיִּי לְשֹׁאֵל, הִגִּיעוּ: ה נָחַשְׁבָּתִי עִם־יֹרְדֵי בֹר הָיִתִּי כְּגֹבֶר אֵין־אֵיל: ו בַּמֵּתִים חָפְשִׁי כְּמוֹ חֲלָלִים | שְׁכַבְי קָבֵר אֲשֶׁר לֹא זְכַרְתָּם עוֹד וְהִמָּה מִיָּדְךָ נִגְזְרוּ: ז שְׁתַּנִּי בְּבוֹר תַּחְתִּיּוֹת בְּמַחְשָׁפִים בְּמַצְלוֹת: ח עָלַי סִמְכָה חַמָּתְךָ וְכָל־מִשְׁפָּרֶיךָ עֲנִיתְ סָלָה: 88:2 *Let my prayer come before You; Incline Your ear to my cry!* 88:3 *For my soul has had enough troubles, And my life has drawn near to Sheol.* 88:4 *I am reckoned among those who go down to the pit; I have become like a man without strength,* 88:5 *Forsaken among the dead, Like the slain who lie in the grave, Whom You remember no more, And they are cut off from Your hand.* 88:6 *You have put me in the lowest pit, In dark places, in the depths.* 88:7 *Your wrath has rested upon me, And You have afflicted me with all Your waves. Selah.* (NASB) It appears the psalmist believes it is the Lord who has brought him down to the pit. The reason may be due to his sins. The way the psalmist writes his psalm sounds similar to what Hezekiah said in *Isaiah 38*.

Isaiah 38:1-11

38:1 *In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, ‘Thus says the Lord, ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.’* 38:2 *Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord,* 38:3 *and said, ‘Remember now, O Lord, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and*

with a whole heart, and have done what is good in Your sight.’ And Hezekiah wept bitterly. 38:4 Then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, saying, 38:5 ‘Go and say to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of your father David, ‘I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will add fifteen years to your life. 38:6 ‘I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city.’ 38:7 ‘This shall be the sign to you from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing that He has spoken: 38:8 ‘Behold, I will cause the shadow on the stairway, which has gone down with the sun on the stairway of Ahaz, to go back ten steps.’ So the sun’s shadow went back ten steps on the stairway on which it had gone down. 38:9 A writing of Hezekiah king of Judah after his illness and recovery: 38:10 I said, ‘In the middle of my life I am to enter the gates of Sheol; I am to be deprived of the rest of my years.’ 38:11 I said, ‘I will not see the Lord, The Lord in the land of the living; I will look on man no more among the inhabitants of the world. (NASB)

Hezekiah was about to die, he was on his death bed, and He sought the Lord for help, and wept for the Lord to answer him. Hezekiah the king of Judah learned from the prophet that he was about to die and so he made his appeal directly to the Lord God in heaven. Hezekiah argued that he was righteous, similar to Job, and that he had acted faithfully and performed maasim tovim throughout his life. The Lord answered his prayer by adding 15 years to his life. The Lord performs a great miracle, causing the sun to move back a number of steps as a sign to the answer of his prayers. This event has the effect of stopping the rotation of the earth which is a significant miracle. Hezekiah states, “38:10 I said, ‘In the middle of my life I am to enter the gates of Sheol; I am to be deprived of the rest of my years.’ 38:11 I said, ‘I will not see the Lord, The Lord in the land of the living; I will look on man no more among the inhabitants of the world. (NASB)” The psalmist illustrates this reasoning too. He declares his nearness to death, that his life draws near to Sheol. The Aramaic Targum states, ג תיעול קדמך צלותי אצלי אודנך לבעותי: {ת"א} ייתי קדמך צלותי על עמך בית ישראל והט אודנך לתושבחת דשבחית ליקרך: ד ארום שבעת בבישן נפשי וחי לשייול מטו: ה אתחשבית עם נחותי בית אסירי הויתי היך בר נש דלית ליה חילא: ו היך רשיעיא דמיתו ולא תבו יתעבדו בני חורין מן מצותא היך קטילין דחרבא שכבי בית קבורתא דלא דכרתנון טוב והינון מאפי שכינתך איתפלגון: ז שויתא יתי בגלותא דמתילא לגובא ארעיתא בחשוכיא במצולתא: ח עלי סמכת חימתך וכל גזירן בישן תברו יתי ס{י} גפת לעלמין: 88:3 *May my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my plea. Another Targum: Let my prayer for your people, the house of Israel, come before you; and incline your ear to my psalm that I have sung for your glory. 88:4 For my soul has had its fill of evils; and my life has arrived at Sheol. 88:5 I am reckoned with those who go down to the prison-house; I have become like a son of man who has no strength. 88:6 Like the wicked who died and did not return, having been made free from strife; like those slain by the sword, lying in the grave, whom you no longer remember, since they have been separated from the face of your presence. 88:7 You have placed me in exile, which is likened to the lower pit, among the oppressed in the depths. 88:8 Your fury rests on me, and all evil decrees have broken me; you have afflicted me forever. (EMC)* The Targum translation causes the psalmist to be referring to the people of Israel as opposed to himself. His own soul has been filled with evils and his life has come to Sheol, the grave. Has your soul had its fill of evil like the psalmist states? Is there a habitual sin that has filled you to the top and you are tired of it? Ask the Lord in the name of Yeshua for deliverance and the strength to overcome.

The Psalmist continues saying, ח 88:8 *You have removed my acquaintances far from me; You have made me an object of loathing to them; I am shut up and cannot go out. (NASB)* The NT study reference connects *Tehillim / Psalms 88:8 to Luke 23:49 And all His acquaintances and the women who accompanied Him from Galilee were standing at a distance, seeing these things. (NASB)* Stating the psalmist was writing prophetically concerning Yeshua upon the cross, the iniquities that he bore due to the sins of the world has caused his acquaintances, his friends and his loved ones to stand far off and watch as he lays down his life for the sins of the world.

ט הרהקת מידעי ממני שתני תועבות למו פלא ולא אציא: י עיני דאבה מני עני: 88:9 *My eye has wasted away because of affliction; I have called*

upon You every day, O Lord; I have spread out my hands to You. 88:10 Will You perform wonders for the dead? Will the departed spirits rise and praise You? Selah. (NASB) The psalmist cries out to the Lord asking the question whether the dead can praise the name of the Lord? The psalmist is calling upon doing what is right and just and asks the Lord to save his life because God's praises do not go out from the lips of the dead. The Jewish commentary Ein Yaakov has the following to say concerning these verse from the Psalm and the dead praising the Lord..

Ein Yaakov (Glick Edition), Shabbat 2:10

(Fol. 30a) The following question was asked of R. Tanchum of Noy: "Is it permissible to extinguish the light on the Sabbath for the sake of a sick person?" He began his answer by saying: "O thou King Solomon! Where is thy wisdom and where is thy understanding? Not only do the words contradict your father's words but [they are at variance with] thine own utterances also. Thy father David said (Ps. 116, 17.) Not the dead can praise the Lord, and thou sayest (Ecc. 4, 2.) Thereupon praise I the dead that are already dead, and again thou sayest (Ib. 9., 4.) For a living dog fareth better than a dead lion. But this is not difficult to explain. When David said. Not the dead can praise the Lord, he meant thus: 'A man should always occupy himself with the study of the Torah and meritorious deeds before he dies; for, as soon as he dies, he becomes free from the obligation of [studying] the Torah and [fulfilling] meritorious deeds and the Holy One, praised be He! accepts no praise of him.' This is what R. Jochanan said: 'What is meant by the passage (Ps. 88, 61.) Free among the dead, i.e., as soon as a man dies he is freed from the obligation of [studying] the Torah and [fulfilling] meritorious deeds, And when Solomon says (Ecc. 4. 2.) Thereupon praise I the dead that are already dead, he refers to the time when Israel sinned in the deserts. Moses stood up before the Holy One, praised be He! and offered many prayers and supplications unto Him but was not answered. However, as soon as he said (Ex 32, 13.) Remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel, Thy servants, he was forthwith answered. Now, did not Solomon say properly Thereupon praise I the dead that are already dead." It may be explained in another way also. The usage of the world is that if a mortal prince issue a decree, it is doubtful whether it will be complied with or not; even if it be complied with while the prince lives it may not be complied with when he is dead. But Moses, our teacher, has issued many decrees and established many ordinances and they endure forever and ever. Now did not Solomon say properly (Ecc. 4, 2.) Thereupon praise I the dead that are already dead! The passage, Thereupon praise I the dead, etc., may also be explained in another way, as R. Judah said in the name of Rab; for R. Judah in the name of Rab said: "What is meant by the passage (Ps. 86, 17.) Display on me a sign for good that those who hate me may see it. Thus said David before the Holy One, praised be He! 'Sovereign of the universe, forgive me this sin [of Bath Sheba].' Thou art forgiven.' answered the Lord. David then said to the Lord: 'Show me a sign while I live.' Whereupon He answered, 'During thy life I shall not make it known but during the life of Solomon, thy son, I shall make it known.' When Solomon had built the Temple he desired to place the ark in the holy of holies, but the gates had become fastened to each other [and they could not be opened]. Solomon then offered twenty-four prayer-songs but was not answered. He then began the prayer (Ps. 24, 7.) Raise your heads, O ye gates and be raised wide, ye everlasting gates, and let the king of glory enter. Thereupon the gates ran after him and opened their mouths and wanted to swallow him up, saying: Who is the King of glory? (Ib.) Solomon replied. The Lord, strong and mighty (Ib.). He then repeated Raise your heads, O ye gates, and raise up, ye everlasting doors, and let the King of glory enter. Who is the King of glory, the Lord of Hosts, He is the King of glory, Selah (Ib.). Still he was not answered; but as soon as he said O Lord God turn not away the face of thy anointed, remember the pious deeds of David thy servant, (II Chr. 6, 12), he was immediately answered. At that moment the faces of David's enemies turned black like the bottom of a pot and then it was known to all that the

Holy One, praised be He! had forgiven David that sin. Therefore, did not Solomon properly say. Thereupon, praise I the dead, etc. This is meant by the passage (I Kings 8, 66.) On the eighth day he dismissed the people; they blessed the king and went unto their tents, glad of heart, because of all the good that the Lord had done for David his servant and for Israel his people, i.e.. And they went unto their tents, meaning they found their wives levitically pure. Joyful, because of having enjoyed the Divine Glory; glad of heart, each man's wife had become pregnant with a male child; because of all the good which God had done unto David his servant, that he forgave him that sin; and Israel his people, for they were forgiven their neglect of the observance of the day of Atonement. And when Solomon said (Ecc. 9, 4.) For a living dog fareth better than a dead lion, he meant that which R. Judah said in the name of Rab ; for R. Judah in the name of Rab, said: "What is meant by the passage (Ps. 39, 5.) Let me know, O Lord, my end, and what the measure of my days is, I wish to know when I shall cease to be, i.e., thus said David before the Holy One, praised be He ! 'Sovereign of the universe let me know my end.' Whereupon the Lord answered him : 'It has been decreed by me that the time of the death of mortal man shall not be known; And the measures of my days what are they (Ib.), David again asked. 'It is decreed by me answered the Lord,' that the measure of the days of a man shall not be known.' Again David asked: 'I wish to know when I shall cease to be.' The Lord then said to him : 'Thou wilt die on the Sabbath.' 'Let me die rather on the first day of the week,' begged David. 'The first day of the week is the day on which thy son Solomon shall be king, and one kingdom must not encroach on the other even by so much as a hair's breath.' 'Let me then die on the Sabbath eve,' pleaded David. Whereupon the Lord said Far better is a day in thy courts than a thousand (Ps. 84, 11), i.e., 'I like one day in which thou art studying the Torah better than a thousand burnt offerings which Solomon, thy son, will sacrifice before me upon the altar.' (Ib. b) Each Sabbath day he would sit and study. On that Sabbath when he was to die, the angel of death came and stood before him, but was unable to do anything because David never once ceased studying. [Said the angel to himself] What shall I do? There was an orchard in the back of David's house; the angel of death went there and shook the trees. David [hearing the noise] went out to see [the cause of the noise] ; as he ascended the ladder the angel caused it to break. David fell down and consequently stopped studying; whereupon the angel of death took his life. It so happened that Solomon sent to ask the following questions in the academy: 'My father died and lies in sun; what shall I do? [Am I allowed to remove him from the sun?] And the dogs of my father's house are hungry, what shall I do?' They answered him: 'Cut up a carrion and place the pieces before the dogs. As to thy father, place a loaf of bread or an infant upon his body and then you may carry it away from the sun.' Did not Solomon, therefore, say properly? For a living dog fareth better than a dead lion. And as to the question, which I have been asked in your presence, I say this: a lamp is called Ner and the soul is called Ner; it is better that a human light (lamp) be extinguished than that God's light (life) be extinguished."

It is interesting how the rabbis say that it is obligatory for the living to study Torah and fulfilling meritorious deeds, and that when a man dies, he is freed from the obligation of doing so. The reasoning behind the dead being freed from studying Torah and meritorious deeds, is because when a man dies, the Lord does not receive praise from him. What is important to note is that the Lord God in heaven is the "living" God, and studying Torah (God's Word) and performing maasim tovim are the ways a man brings praise to the Lord God in heaven in this life. We serve the living God and so our focus should be on this life and serving him. I have met many who prefer to focus upon the World to Come and forget what we are called to do and how we are called to live, to love one another and help the poor and widow. The commentary continues with examples for giving praise to the Lord, that the dead do not praise the Lord, whereas the living do, which is connected to obedience to the Torah. The commentary then leads into a discussion on King Solomon and being answered in prayer. The king prays and is not answered, but when he gives praises to the Lord his

prayer is answered. Other rabbis stated that when he prays asking the Lord to remember the merits of the fathers, that the prayer was answered. The concepts being brought out here is related to when we live for the Lord, bring glory to His name by the way we live our lives (according to His words), then our prayers will be answered. The reason being, sin drives the presence of God away as compared to obedience, which causes one to prepare a place for the Lord to dwell. The commentary concludes saying, “*I say this: a lamp is called Ner and the soul is called Ner; it is better that a human light (lamp) be extinguished than that God’s light (life) be extinguished.*” The soul is compared to the ner tamid (נֵר תָּמִיד), which is translated as “*eternal flame*” or “*eternal light*,” is a reference to the lamp hanging or standing in front of the ark in every Jewish synagogue, it is meant to represent the menorah of the Temple in Jerusalem as well as the continuously burning fire on the altar of burnt offerings in front of the Temple. The ner tamid also symbolizes God’s eternal presence and is therefore never extinguished. It is also intended to draw parallels between the Lord God and fire, or light, which is emphasized throughout the Torah. Additionally, it is often used to symbolize the light as a reference to righteousness and maasim tovim. The soul has the capacity to draw near to the Lord as was symbolized by the ner tamid in the Tabernacle.

The psalmist asks will God’s grace be declared in the grave and will your faithfulness be declared in Abaddon? **יב הַיְסוּפֶר בְּקִבְרֵךְ חֶסֶדְךָ אֱמוּנָתְךָ בְּאַבְדּוֹן: 88:11 Will Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave, Your faithfulness in Abaddon? (NASB)** Where does the name Abaddon come from? The Jewish commentary Ein Yaakov has the following to say concerning the grave.

Ein Yaakov (Glick Edition), Eiruvim 2:4

R. Joshua b. Levi said: “Gehenna has seven names ; Grave, Place of Destruction, Dungeon. Horrible Pit, Miry Clay, Shadow of Death, and Subterranean Land. Grave, as it is written (Jonah 2, 3.) Out of the depth of the grave have I cried. Place of Destruction, as it is written (Ps. 88, 12.) Shall thy kindness be related in the grave, and thy righteousness in the place of destruction? Dungeon, as it is written (Ib. 16, 10.) For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to the grave; Thou wilt not suffer thy pious to see dungeon. And Horrible Pit, and Miry Clay, as it is written (Ib. 40, 3.) And he brought me up out of the horrible pit, and of the miry clay. Shadow of Death, as it is written (Ib. 107, 10.) Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; and it is known by tradition under the name of Subterranean Land.” Is there no other name [for Gehenna] ? Behold, there is also Gei Hinom? This means only a valley which is as deep as Gehenna and to which people go to practice lewdness. There still remains the name, Topheth, as it is written (Is. 30, 33.) For already of old is Topheth made ready. This means that whoever is persuaded by his evil impulse, will fall in there. Concerning the locality of Paradise. Resh Lakish said: ‘If it is in Palestine, its gate must be in the city of Beth Shean, [since it yields the best fruits] ; If Paradise is situated in Araby then its gate is in the city of Beth Gerem [the most productive spot]. And if it is between the rivers it must be in Damaskannun.” In Babylon, Abaye would praise the fruit growing on the other side of the Euphrates and Rabba would praise the fruit of the City of Harphania. אמר ריב"ל ז' שמות יש לו לגיהנם) ואלו הן שאול ואבדון ובאר שחת וכור שאון וטיט היון וצלמות וארץ תחתית. שאול דכתיב (יונה ב ג) מבטן שאול שועתי שמעת קולי. אבדון דכתיב (תהלים פח יב) היסופר בקבר חסדך אמונתך באבדון. באר שחת דכתיב (שם טז י) כי לא תעזוב נפשי לשאול לא תתן חסידך לראות שחת. וכור שאון וטיט היון דכתיב (שם מ ג) ויעלני מבור שאון מטיט היון וגו'. צלמות דכתיב (שם קז י) יושבי חושך וצלמות. וארץ תחתית גמרא הוא. ותו ליכא והא איכא גיהנם. גי שעמוקה כגיהנם שהכל יורדין לה על עסקי חנם. והאיכא תפתה דכתיב (ישעיה ל לג) כי ערוך מאתמול תפתת. ההוא שכל המתפתח ביצרו נופל שם. גן עדן אמר ר"ל אם בארץ ישראל הוא בית שאן פתחה ואם בערביא הוא בית גרם פתחה אם בין הנהרות הוא דורמסקנית פתחה. בבבל אביי משתכח בפירי דעבר ימינא. (רבא משתבח בפירי דהר פניא:

There is a great amount of information that may be obtained from the rabbis regarding Hell, Gehenna, the place of eternal suffering, etc. According to the Brown Driver Briggs lexicon, the Hebrew word *abaddon* (אבדון) is derived from the verb stem *abad* (אָבַד) meaning “*perish*” (“*destroy*”), which occurs 184 times in the Hebrew Bible. The Septuagint, an early Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, renders “*abaddon*” as ἀπόλεια (Apollia), where the Greek Apollyon comes from *apollumi* (ἀπόλλυμι) meaning “*to destroy*.” The Greek term Apollyon (Ἀπολλύων, “*the destroyer*”), is the active participle of *apollumi* (ἀπόλλυμι, “*to destroy*”), and is not used as a name in classical Greek texts. The Hebrew term *Abaddon* (אבדון), and its Greek equivalent Apollyon (Ἀπολλύων), both appears in the Scriptures as reference to a place of destruction and to an angel (“*of destruction*”). In the Hebrew Bible, *Abaddon* is used with reference to a bottomless pit, often appearing alongside שאול (Sheol), a place belonging to the realm of the dead. In the Book of Revelation, an angel is called *Abaddon* (*Revelation 9:11*) whose name in Hebrew is “*Abaddon*” (Ἀβαδδὼν), and the equivalent Greek translation means the *Destroyer*” (Ἀπολλύων, Apollyon). In some Jewish legends, *Abaddon* is identified as a realm where the damned lie in fire and snow (see *Legends of the Jews chapter 1*).

Tehillim / Psalms 88 concludes saying, יב היספר בקבר חסדך אמונתך באבדון: יג היודע בחשך פלאך וצדקתך בארץ נשיה: יד ואני | אליה יהוה שועתי ובבקר תפילתי תקדמך: טו למה יהוה תזנח נפשי תסתיר פניך ממני: טז עני אני וגוע מצער נשאתי אמיא אפונה: יז עלי עברו רוגזך בעותיך צמתותני: יח סבובי כמים כל-ממני: טז עני אני וגוע מצער נשאתי אמיא אפונה: יז עלי עברו רוגזך בעותיך צמתותני: יח סבובי כמים כל-ממני: יט הרהקת ממני אהב גרע מדעי מחשך: 88:12 Will Your wonders be made known in the darkness? And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? 88:13 But I, O Lord, have cried out to You for help, And in the morning my prayer comes before You. 88:14 O Lord, why do You reject my soul? Why do You hide Your face from me? 88:15 I was afflicted and about to die from my youth on; I suffer Your terrors; I am overcome. 88:16 Your burning anger has passed over me; Your terrors have destroyed me. 88:17 They have surrounded me like water all day long; They have encompassed me altogether. 88:18 You have removed lover and friend far from me; My acquaintances are in darkness. (NASB) The psalmist ends his psalm acknowledging it is the Lord in heaven who is in control of all things. Yet through he believes the Lord has brought these things upon him, he does not turn from the Lord but diligently seeks the Lord because God is merciful, righteous, and trustworthy. The Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint state the following:

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms 88:13-19

88:13 Could it be that your wonders will be known in the darkness of Gehenna? And your generosity in the land of thirst and desolation? 88:14 But I have prayed in your presence, O lord; and in the morning my prayer will come before you. 88:15 Why, O lord, have you forsaken my soul, why will you hide your face from me, that I may not see illumination by your light? 88:16 I am afflicted and frail from childhood; I have borne the fear of you, loaded upon me. 88:17 Your anger has passed over me; your terrors have destroyed me. 88:18 They have surrounded me like water all day; they have encompassed me together. 88:19 You have removed friend and fellow far from me; as for those who know me, I am lowly in their mouth. (EMC, יג האפשר דיתוודע דאיתודע בחשך גהינם פרישותך וצדקתך בארע צהותא וצדיא: יד ואנא קדמך קומך יהוה צליתי ובצפרא צלותי תקדמינך: טו למה יהוה שבקתא תינשי נפשי תע-לים תטמור אפך ספר אפך מיני דלא אחמי בנהורך צהורא: טז עניא אנא ונגיד מן טליא טליותא סוברית דחילתך טעינא עלי: יז עלי עברו רוגזך בעתיך בעותיך שיציאו יתי: יח אחרו יתי היך מוי כל יומא אקיפון עלי כחדא: יט ארחיקתא מיני רחימא וחברא וליידעי חשיך אנא בפומהון באפיהון:)

Septuagint

Psalmoi / Psalms 88:12-18

88:12 *Shall thy wonders be known in darkness? and thy righteousness in a forgotten land?*
 88:13 *But I cried to thee, O Lord; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.* 88:14
Wherefore, O Lord, dost thou reject my prayer, and turn thy face away from me? 88:15 *I am*
poor and in troubles from my youth; and having been exalted, I was brought low and into
despair. 88:16 *Thy wrath has passed over me; and thy terrors have greatly disquieted me.*
 88:17 *They compassed me like water; all the day they beset me together.* 88:18 *Thou hast put*
far from me every friend, and mine acquaintances because of my wretchedness. (LXX, 88:12
 μη γνωσθήσεται ἐν τῷ σκότει τὰ θαυμάσιά σου καὶ ἡ δικαιοσύνη σου ἐν γῆ ἐπιλελησμένη
 88:13 κἀγὼ πρὸς σέ κύριε ἐκέκραξα καὶ τὸ πρωὶ ἢ προσευχῇ μου προφθάσει σε 88:14 ἵνα
 τί κύριε ἀπωθεῖς τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἀποστρέφεις τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἀπ' ἐμοῦ 88:15 πτωχός εἰμι
 ἐγὼ καὶ ἐν κόποις ἐκ νεότητός μου ὑψωθείς δὲ ἐταπεινώθην καὶ ἐξηπορήθην 88:16 ἐπ' ἐμὲ
 διῆλθον αἱ ὀργαί σου καὶ οἱ φοβερισμοί σου ἐξετάραζάν με 88:17 ἐκύκλωσάν με ὡς ὕδωρ
 ὄλην τὴν ἡμέραν περιέσχον με ἅμα 88:18 ἐμάκρυνας ἀπ' ἐμοῦ φίλον καὶ πλησίον καὶ τοὺς
 γνωστούς μου ἀπὸ τάλαιπωρίας)

Note how the Targum translation speaks of the wonders of the Lord being made known in the darkness of Gehenna, as opposed to the righteousness of God in the land of forgetfulness. The rabbis appear to be drawing a parallel to the exile to a foreign land as being in Gehenna or Abaddon, a place of destruction. The reason being, it is understood from the Torah perspective that these are the things the Lord will bring upon those who refuse to obey the commandments, according to Parashat Bechukotai.

Vayikra / Leviticus 26:3-34

26:3 *If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out,* 26:4
then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees
of the field will bear their fruit. 26:5 *Indeed, your threshing will last for you until grape*
gathering, and grape gathering will last until sowing time. You will thus eat your food to
the full and live securely in your land. 26:6 *I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you*
may lie down with no one making you tremble. I shall also eliminate harmful beasts from the
land, and no sword will pass through your land. 26:7 *But you will chase your enemies and*
they will fall before you by the sword; 26:8 *five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred*
of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword. 26:9 *So I*
will turn toward you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm My covenant
with you. 26:10 *You will eat the old supply and clear out the old because of the new.* 26:11
Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. 26:12 *I will*
also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people. 26:13 *I am the Lord*
your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that you would not be their slaves,
and I broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect. 26:14 *But if you do not obey*
Me and do not carry out all these commandments, 26:15 *if, instead, you reject My statutes,*
and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, and
so break My covenant, 26:16 *I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden*
terror, consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away;
also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up. 26:17 *I will set My*
face against you so that you will be struck down before your enemies; and those who hate you
will rule over you, and you will flee when no one is pursuing you. 26:18 *If also after these*
things you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. 26:19 *I will*
also break down your pride of power; I will also make your sky like iron and your earth like
bronze. 26:20 *Your strength will be spent uselessly, for your land will not yield its produce*

and the trees of the land will not yield their fruit. 26:21 'If then, you act with hostility against Me and are unwilling to obey Me, I will increase the plague on you seven times according to your sins. 26:22 'I will let loose among you the beasts of the field, which will bereave you of your children and destroy your cattle and reduce your number so that your roads lie deserted. 26:23 'And if by these things you are not turned to Me, but act with hostility against Me, 26:24 then I will act with hostility against you; and I, even I, will strike you seven times for your sins. 26:25 'I will also bring upon you a sword which will execute vengeance for the covenant; and when you gather together into your cities, I will send pestilence among you, so that you shall be delivered into enemy hands. 26:26 'When I break your staff of bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and they will bring back your bread in rationed amounts, so that you will eat and not be satisfied. 26:27 'Yet if in spite of this you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me, 26:28 then I will act with wrathful hostility against you, and I, even I, will punish you seven times for your sins. 26:29 'Further, you will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters you will eat. 26:30 'I then will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars, and heap your remains on the remains of your idols, for My soul shall abhor you. 26:31 'I will lay waste your cities as well and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your soothing aromas. 26:32 'I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it will be appalled over it. 26:33 'You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste. 26:34 'Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. (NASB)

The living God is seeking for people who are willing or striving to live according to His ways of righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth. If we live our lives in unrighteousness, rest assured, what is written in the Torah will be a consequence of your sins. This is why it is so important to continue in the Lord and in His Messiah Yeshua, to diligently seek the Lord God in heaven for help to overcome sin and to live our lives in a manner that bears His testimony and His name. We serve a Living God and Obedience is the manner in which we prepare a place for Him to dwell in our lives. Let's Pray!

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 88* has 2 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1, and 2. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 88, Parts 1, and 2*.

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 88, Part 1, and 2

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying, "A song, a psalm of the sons of Korach; for the leader; upon *Makhalat Leannoth* (for singing of praise) (*Tehillim / Psalms 88:1*)."
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihata) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, "What is meant by *Makhalat*?"
- The **משל** (mashal) "the parable," goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihata), the rabbis discuss the concept of praising the Lord God in heaven.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) "expansion on the parable" expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis discuss the way David praised the Lord
- The Concluding phrase says, "The Holy One blessed be He, replied, Because you avow this, I will

save you, O Israel, that are saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation (Isaiah 45:17)."

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, *"For my soul is full of trouble, and my life draws near to the grave."*
- The פתיחה (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *"I am counted with them that go down into the pit; I am as a man that has no strength (Tehillim / Psalms 88:5-6) as a man that has no strong guardian."*
- The משל (mashal) *"the parable,"* goes on to explain the פתיחה (Petihta), the rabbis discuss how the psalmist is connected to the dead, being reckoned as if he was dead.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) *"expansion on the parable"* expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal in the context of those who have gone before him and died.
- The Concluding phrase says, *"But rabbi Phinchas took the words to mean, The angel whose charge is prayer waits until that congregation in Israel which is the latest to assemble concludes its prayers; that he takes all the prayers and out of them he fashions a crown which he places upon the head of the Holy One blessed be He, as is said, Blessings are upon the head of the Righteous (Mishley / Proverbs 10:6), of Him that lives forever. Hence, the verse is read In the morning does my prayer come to meet you."*

Midrash Tehillim 88, Part 1 opens with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, *"A song, a psalm of the sons of Korach; for the leader; upon Makhalat Leannoth (מְחַלֵּת לְעֹנֹת) for singing of praise (Tehillim / Psalms 88:1)."* The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *"What is meant by Makhalat?"* Rabbi Berechiah interprets this in the following way, according to the midrash.

According to Rabbi Berechiah, Makhalat means that the Holy One blessed be He, said to David, Praise Me in any way you desire to praise Me, and I will condone (makhalti) whatever your manner of praising Me, for no man can discover even one of the many kinds of praise which are appropriate for the Holy One blessed be He. As Scripture says, Will it be told Him that I would speak? If a man speak, surely he will be swallowed up (Job 37:20). (Midrash Tehillim 88, Part 1)

The rabbis interpret the opening verse and the word Makhalat to mean that man may praise the Lord in any way he desires. The rabbi continues saying that there are praises that are appropriate for the Lord and that no man is able to discover this. The question is whether there is a right way or a wrong way to worship God? The question for us is *"What is the right way and how do we benefit if we worship the Lord God in the right way?"* Are there consequences to worshiping the Lord the wrong way? We know according to the Scriptures, the Lord God deeply cares for us and wants us to benefit from his loving direction. If we worship him in the right way, we will be happy and will avoid many problems in life. We will also have His blessing and His help. The prophet Isaiah said the following:

Isaiah 48:16-19

48:16 'Come near to Me, listen to this: From the first I have not spoken in secret, From the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord God has sent Me, and His Spirit.' 48:17 Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, 'I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, Who leads you in the way you should go. 48:18 'If only you had paid attention to My commandments! Then your well-being would have been like a river, And your righteousness like the waves of the sea. 48:19 'Your descendants would have been like the sand, And your offspring like its grains; Their name would never be cut off or destroyed from My presence.' (NASB)

Isaiah says if the people had listened and obeyed the commands, *48:19 'Your descendants would have been like the sand, And your offspring like its grains; Their name would never be cut off or destroyed from My presence.'* (NASB) The Lord does not speak in secret and note how he connects paying attention to the commands in regard to the Lord leading His people. There are hundreds of religions that claim to teach the truth about the Lord however, they differ greatly in their teachings about who God is and what he expects of us. Even in Christianity there is a large degree of variation in what God expects of us. According to Yeshua, there are certain things we must do if we want to have God's approval? This is related to the importance in the way we worship the Lord, that we do so in the way that he approves. Many people believe that all religions are pleasing to God, but the Scriptures do not teach that. It is important to remember that it is not enough just to claim to be a believer in Yeshua. Yeshua said, *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter."* To receive the Lord God's approval, we must learn what the Lord requires of us and do it. Yeshua called those who do not do God's will *"workers of lawlessness."* (see *Matthew 7:21-23*) The Lord gives everyone on earth the opportunity to gain everlasting life. Insight into how this works is found in *Mark 6:7 And He summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits; 6:8 and He instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a mere staff no bread, no bag, no money in their belt 6:9 but to wear sandals; and He added 'Do not put on two tunics.'* *6:10 And He said to them, 'Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave town. 6:11 'Any place that does not receive you or listen to you, as you go out from there, shake the dust off the soles of your feet for a testimony against them.'* *6:12 They went out and preached that men should repent.* (NASB) The interesting thing is that worship, serving God, repentance, and everlasting life are all connected. To have eternal life we are told that we must worship God properly and live in a way that is acceptable to him. This is connected to repentance and turning from sin. Notice what the disciples teach as they are sent out two by two into the neighboring towns. Mark says *6:12 They went out and preached that men should repent.* (NASB) This is important because repentance is related to how we live our lives, and how we worship the Lord. We are called to turn from sin, and walk in God's ways according to the Torah. Sadly, many refuse to do so. That is why Yeshua said, *"7:13 'Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 7:14 'For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."* (*Matthew 7:13-14*) Seeking the Lord God in heaven in the Messiah, and striving to live in His ways of righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth leads to everlasting life, and we are empowered by the Spirit of God to do so through faith in Yeshua the Messiah. Remember, Paul wrote in *Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.* (NASB) The way we live our lives is connected to the way in which we worship the Lord God in heaven. Living out lives in any other way leads to destruction. The Lord does not want anybody to be destroyed, and this is why He has made a way for people everywhere to learn about him. (*2 Peter 3:9*) The Apostle Peter speaks of these things in his epistle, commenting on why the Lord seems slow in His promises for His people.

2 Peter 3:9-16

3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 3:11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 3:12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 3:13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth,

in which righteousness dwells. 3:14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, 3:15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, 3:16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. (NASB)

Peter says repentance leads to not perishing, and at a future time the heavens and the earth will perish, but righteousness will prevail. He encourages the people to be diligent to be found in peace, spotless, and blameless, to live in righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth. He goes on to speak of Paul who writes of all these things, and that Paul's letters are difficult to understand, in which the untaught and unstable person distort Paul's words and the rest of Scripture, saying the Torah is passed away. The fact of the matter is the Torah has not passed away and we are called to walk the way Yeshua walked (*1 John 2:3-6*) Truly, the way we worship the Lord God means either life or death for us in regard to our obedience to His Word. The point is that we may not perfectly keep the mitzvot, but we are striving to do so because of our love for the Lord in heaven.

The entire midrash states the following:

<p style="text-align: center;">מדרש תהלים פרק פח סימן א</p> <p>א שיר מזמור לבני קרח [למנצח] על מחלת. מהו על מחלת, אמר ר' ברכיה אמר הקב"ה לדוד קלס אותי היאך שאתה מבקש, ואני מוחל לך בקילור-סך, שאין אדם יכול למצוא אחת מכמה מיני שבחות של הקב"ה, וכן הוא אומר היסופר לו כי אדבר אם אמר איש כי יבולע (איוב לו כ), ולמי ניתן רשות לדוד, שנאמר למנצח על מחלת, שמחל לו הקב"ה עונותיו. [לענות]. זכור ה' לדוד את כל ענותו (תהלים קלב א). ה' אלהי שועתי. אמרה כנסת ישראל לפני הקב"ה אין לי ישועה אלא בך, ואין עיני מייחלות אלא לך, אמר להם הקב"ה הואיל וכך אני מושיעך, יש-ראל נושע בה' תשועת עולמים (יש-עיה מה יז).</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 88, Part 1</p> <p>1. A song, a psalm of the sons of Korach; for the leader; upon Makhalat Leannoth (for singing of praise) (Tehillim / Psalms 88:1). What is meant by Makhalat? According to Rabbi Berechiah, Makhalat means that the Holy One blessed be He, said to David, Praise Me in any way you desire to praise Me, and I will condone (makhalti) whatever your manner of praising Me, for no man can discover even one of the many kinds of praise which are appropriate for the Holy One blessed be He. As Scripture says, Will it be told Him that I would speak? If a man speak, surely he will be swallowed up (Job 37:20). But who was given permission to speak? David, as is said For the leader; upon Makhalat Leannoth (for singing of praise), This phrase may also be taken to mean that the Holy One blessed be He, condoned David's faults in his singing of God's praise, for Leannoth means faults (aivonot), too, as in the verse, Lord remember unto David all his faults (unknot) (Tehillim / Psalms 132:1). O Lord, God of my salvation (Tehillim / Psalms 88:2). The congregation of Israel said to the Holy One blessed be He, I have no salvation except in You, and my eyes wait upon no one except You. The Holy One blessed be He, replied, Because you avow this, I will save you, O Israel, that are saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation (Isaiah 45:17).</p>
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Rabbi Berechiah said "As Scripture says, Will it be told Him that I would speak? If a man speak, surely he will be swallowed up (Job 37:20). (Midrash Tehillim 88, Part 1)" The midrash asks "But who was given permission to speak?" The rabbis answer saying "David, as is said For the leader; upon Makhalat Leannoth (for singing of praise), This phrase may also be taken to mean that the Holy One blessed be He, condoned David's faults in his singing of God's praise, for Leannoth means faults (aivonot), too, as in the verse, Lord remember unto David all his faults (unknot) (Tehillim / Psalms 132:1). O Lord, God of my salvation (Tehillim / Psalms 88:2)." Does the Lord remember our faults? The prophet Isaiah said the following:

Isaiah 43L21-44:8

43:21 *'The people whom I formed for Myself Will declare My praise. 43:22 'Yet you have not called on Me, O Jacob; But you have become weary of Me, O Israel. 43:23 'You have not brought to Me the sheep of your burnt offerings, Nor have you honored Me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with offerings, Nor wearied you with incense. 43:24 'You have bought Me not sweet cane with money, Nor have you filled Me with the fat of your sacrifices; Rather you have burdened Me with your sins, You have wearied Me with your iniquities. 43:25 'I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins. 43:26 'Put Me in remembrance, let us argue our case together; State your cause, that you may be proved right. 43:27 'Your first forefather sinned, And your spokesmen have transgressed against Me. 43:28 'So I will pollute the princes of the sanctuary, And I will consign Jacob to the ban and Israel to revilement. 44:1 'But now listen, O Jacob, My servant, And Israel, whom I have chosen: 44:2 Thus says the Lord who made you And formed you from the womb, who will help you, 'Do not fear, O Jacob My servant; And you Jeshurun whom I have chosen. 44:3 'For I will pour out water on the thirsty land And streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring And My blessing on your descendants; 44:4 And they will spring up among the grass Like poplars by streams of water.' 44:5 'This one will say, 'I am the Lord's'; And that one will call on the name of Jacob; And another will write on his hand, 'Belonging to the Lord,' And will name Israel's name with honor. 44:6 'Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me. 44:7 'Who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it; Yes, let him recount it to Me in order, From the time that I established the ancient nation. And let them declare to them the things that are coming And the events that are going to take place. 44:8 'Do not tremble and do not be afraid; Have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, Or is there any other Rock? I know of none.'* (NASB)

Notice how Isaiah says that the people that God has formed will declare His praises (43:12), but those people have not called upon Him, they have become weary of the Lord. The Lord says that the people have not brought their offerings, and that He has not wearied the people with the burden of offerings. This is an interesting comment since in many Christian circles (dispensationalism churches) teach the great burden of the sacrifices in the Tanach. Isaiah says however the people have burdened the Lord with their sins. The Lord says, 43:25 *'I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins.* (NASB) The Lord declares that He will restore His people. Notice how Isaiah wrote about the Lord, and ask the question *"What does God require of us?"* Simply believing in the Lord God is not enough to please him. After all, the Bible says that even the demons believe that God exists. (James 2:19) The point is though the demons believe in God, they do not do God's will and do not have his approval. In order to be approved of God, not only must we believe in his existence, we must also do his will. The apostle Paul wrote that we must not take part in false worship. He wrote: *Therefore, "Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."* (2 Corinthians 6:17 NIV, Isaiah 52:11 *52:11 Depart, depart, go out from there, Touch nothing unclean; Go out of the midst of her, purify yourselves, You who carry the vessels of the Lord.* NASB) True believers therefore avoid anything that is connected with false worship.

Midrash Tehillim 88, Part 1 concludes saying, *"The congregation of Israel said to the Holy One blessed be He, I have no salvation except in You, and my eyes wait upon no one except You. The Holy One blessed be He, replied, Because you avow this, I will save you, O Israel, that are saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation (Isaiah 45:17)."* All of the works of the Lord show forth His praises. He satisfies the desire of every living thing, except the unreasonable children of men who are satisfied with nothing. The reason being, sin is never satisfied. The conclusion of the midrash shows the necessity of turning toward the Lord, and vowing to follow Him. This is a statement of faith before both God and men. The Lord does good to

all the children of men, but he does even more for those who are His and who diligently seek Him. Do you diligently seek the Lord? How do you diligently seek the Lord today? Would this be through studying His word, prayer, and service? For example, our families, this should be one of the biggest focus in our lives as far as service. Your children look up to both mom and dad. They see what we do. They mimic the way we live our lives. If we are setting bad examples, our children will most likely take some of our traits into their own families. If you want your children to be like Yeshua, we have to live as Yeshua wants us to live. This draws in the context of *Devarim / Deuteronomy 11:18-19* “*You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.*” Another import aspect of our marriages is to love your spouse. Really, love them like tomorrow isn’t going to happen. Listen to their needs. Pray for them and with them. Talk about everything with them and make them feel like they are the only person that you want to grow old with. This is the way the Lord wants us to come to Him, and we can be there for our loved ones to give a listening ear and to help.

Midrash Tehillim 88, Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתהיל) saying, “*For my soul is full of trouble, and my life draws near to the grave.*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*I am counted with them that go down into the pit; I am as a man that has no strength (Tehillim / Psalms 88:5-6) as a man that has no strong guardian.*” The midrash opens with comments on being brought down to the grave and having no strength. This sounds similar to what Jacob said when his sons told him Joseph was dead.

Bereshit / Genesis 37:34-35:

And Jacob rent his garments, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said: ‘Nay, but I will go down to the grave to my son mourning.’ And his father wept for him. (ויקרא עקב יעקב שמתתיו וישם שק במתתיו ויתאבל על-בני ימים רבים: ויקמו) *ויקרא עקב יעקב שמתתיו וישם שק במתתיו ויתאבל על-בני ימים רבים: ויקמו: (כל-בניו וכל-בנותיו לנחמו וימאן להתנחם ויאמר פי-אחד אל-בני אביל שאלה ויבד אתו אביו:*

Jacob mourned Joseph and he said that he will go to the grave in mourning for his son. Rashi said, “וימאן לה- **BUT HE REFUSED TO COMFORT HIMSELF** — *A person does not accept consolation for one living whom he believes to be dead, for with regard to the dead it is decreed that he be forgotten from the heart, but it is not so decreed with regard to the living (Genesis Rabbah 84).* (Rashi on Genesis 37.35, Part 2) When Jacob lost Joseph, it was as if an essential part of him had been lost. The psalmist states, **ד כִּי-שִׁבְעָה בְרָעוֹת**, 88:4 *I am reckoned among those who go down to the pit; I have become like a man without strength. (NASB)* It appears the psalmist believes it is by reason of his sins that he is being brought down to the grave. Do you think Jacob thought similar things with regard to Joseph?

The entire midrash states the following:

מדרש תהלים פרק פה סימן ב

ב נחשבתי עם יורדי בור הייתי כגבר אין (בו) איל. כאינש דלית בהון פט-רון. במתים חפשי כמו חללים (שוכ-ני) [שוכבי] קבר. ר' חלבו אמר (שו-כני) [שוכבי] קבר כמו חללים, אלו דור המבול, אמר ר' אחא אמר הקב"ה הם קראו לעבודה זרה בשמי, אף אנו קורא לאוקיינוס בשמי, והוא פורע להם בשמי, שנאמר הקורא למי הים וישפכם על פני הארץ ה' שמו (עמוס ה ח). דרש ר' אבהו אוקיינוס גבוה מכל העולם, אמר ר' אלעזר בשם ר' מנחם לאו קרא הוא וישפכם על פני הארץ, אין אדם שופך אלא מלמעלה למטה, הוי וישפ-כם על פני הארץ. ואני אליך ה' שועתי ובבקר תפלתי תקדמך. [אמר ר' שמואל בר נחמני המלאך שהוא ממונה על הצד-קה מקדים אותם, שנאמר ובבקר תפלתי תקדמך], ר' פנחס אמר המלאך שהוא ממונה על התפלה ממתין עד שהתפ-ללו כניסה אחרונה של ישראל, ונוטל כל התפלות ועושה אותם עטרה ונות-נם בראשו של הקב"ה, שנאמר ברכות לראש צדיק (משלי י ו), הי העולמים, הוי ובבקר תפלתי תקדמך.

Midrash Tehillim 88, Part 2

2. For my soul is full of trouble, and my life draws near to the grave. I am counted with them that go down into the pit; I am as a man that has no strength (Tehillim / Psalms 88:5-6) as a man that has no strong guardian. Set apart among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave to mean like the generation which perished in the flood. Of this generation, rabbi Akha taught that the Holy One blessed be He, said because its people called my agents by My name, therefore, I will call upon the waters of the ocean in My name, and the waters will punish them in My name, as is said He that calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out upon the face of the earth; the Lord is His name (Amos 5:8). Rabbi Abbahu said, The waters of the ocean stand higher than the face of the earth. Thereupon rabbi Eleazer asked in the name of rabbi Menahem, is not this point fully made in Scripture in the verse He that calls for waters of the sea, and pours them out upon the face of the earth, for it is impossible to pour down except from above. Hence, And pours them upon the face of the earth. But as for me, unto You, O Lord, do I cry (Tehillim / Psalms 88:14). The rest of the verse, and in the mourning does my prayer come to meet you, is according to Rabbi Samuel son of Nakhmani, God's reply, for the angel whose charge is prayer comes to meet the children of Israel, as is said, In the Morning does My prayer come to meet you. But rabbi Phinchas took the words to mean, The angel whose charge is prayer waits until that congregation in Israel which is the latest to assemble concludes its prayers; that he takes all the prayers and out of them he fashions a crown which he places upon the head of the Holy One blessed be He, as is said, Blessings are upon the head of the Righteous (Mishley / Proverbs 10:6), of Him that lives forever. Hence, the verse is read In the morning does my prayer come to meet you.

The midrash comments upon the one who has no strength, is as one who has gone down to the grave, the reason being that if one does not have a strong guardian, the enemy may come and send you to the grave by the sword very quickly.

The midrash continues saying the following:

Set apart among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave to mean like the generation which perished in the flood. Of this generation, rabbi Akha taught that the Holy One blessed be He, said because its people called my agents by My name, therefore, I will call upon the waters of the ocean in My name, and the waters will punish them in My name, as is said He that calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out upon the face of the earth; the Lord is His name (Amos 5:8). Rabbi Abbahu said, The waters of the ocean stand higher than the face of the earth. Thereupon rabbi Eleazer asked in the name of rabbi Menahem, is not this point fully made in Scripture in the verse He that calls for waters of the sea, and pours them out upon the face of the earth, for it is impossible to pour down except from above. Hence, And pours them upon the face of the earth. But as for me, unto You, O Lord, do I cry (Tehillim / Psalms 88:14). (Midrash Tehillim 88, Part 2)

So the one who does not have a strong guardian is paralleled to one who is set apart among the dead, which

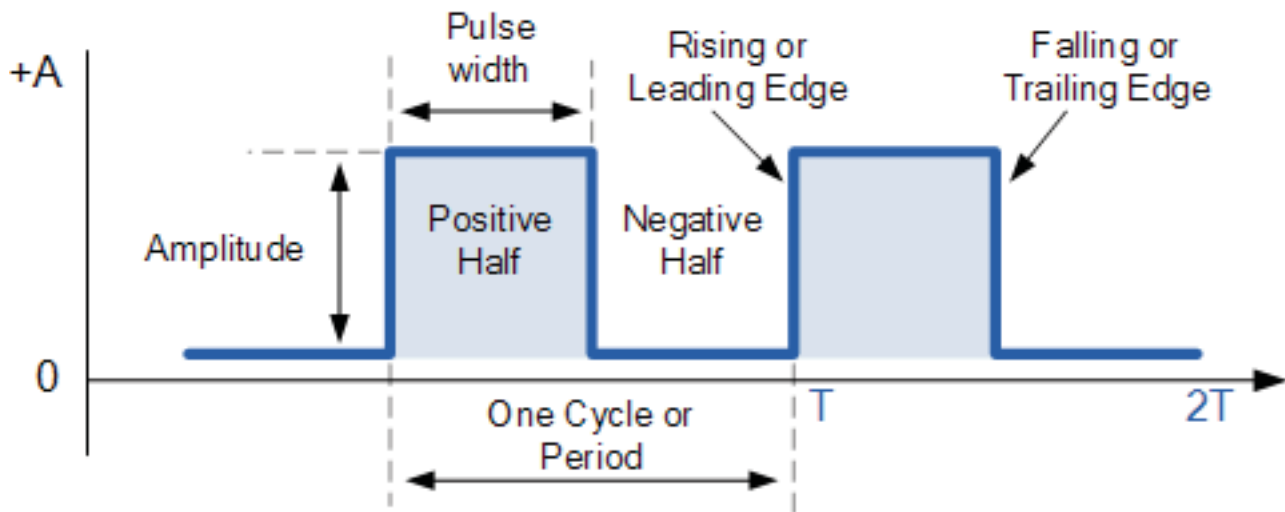
is paralleled to the generation that perished in the flood. The rabbis are saying that the people who sinned during the flood, they preferred sin, and thus they had a weak guardian, as opposed to the Lord God in heaven who is the strong guardian, and who protected the righteous. The commentary *Akeidat Yitzchak 54:84*, provides a little context describing thirteen attributes of God in which the earlier generations knew the Lord from the time of Abraham until the exile in Egypt. *Akeidat Yitzchak 54:94-95* states the following:

Akeidat Yitzchak 54:94-95

94. The sixth attribute is erech apayim, long delayed anger, and refers to G'ds relationship with unrepentant sinners suffering from heavy burdens of sins. If G'd were to treat them according to the principle of justice, their punishment would result in their utter destruction. G'd therefore exacts the punishment only a little at a time, even when He does employ a measure of the attribute of justice. He hopes that in this way, such sinners may eventually repent the sins they have committed. The reason the word apayim appears in the plural, is that it may refer both to tzaddikim and wicked people. (Baba Kama 50) Both have errors to account for. Or, it may refer to both reward and punishment, the former sometimes being parceled out sparingly, so that it may be saved up for the world to come. This attribute was employed in dealing with Pharaoh as well as with Israel, whenever either acted rebelliously in Egypt, at the sea, or in the desert. An expression of G'd using this attribute can be found in His exclamation "how long will this nation refuse to obey My commandments!" (Exodus 16, 28)

95. The seventh attribute is rav chessed, favouring kind deeds, allowing them to be weighty. This concerns the treatment of people whose merits and demerits are in balance, and who require a tipping of the scales in their favour. This can be accomplished by weighing down the merits which would raise the demerit side, or vice versa. (Rosh Hashanah 17) The logic is discussed in Midrash shocheh tov on Psalms 62. Rabbi Nehoray is quoted as saying that since wickedness is sterile by definition, does not produce growth by itself, whereas goodness is dynamic, productive by definition, the latter when in balance with the former, will eventually outweigh the former.

Akeidat Yitzchak states that the Lord delays a long time in returning the reward for an unrepentant sinner. The midrash draws in the context of the generation of the flood and the Lord tarrying before bringing their destruction. Unrepentant sin is a heavy burden, and they say that if the Lord would bring their punishment immediately, they would be utterly destroyed. The rabbis say is the Lord's punishment of sinners is cyclic, meaning that He brings only a little punishment and then provides a period of relief, and then a little punishment, and then a period of relief. The imagery may be analogized to a square wave as shown below. The positive half being the time in which the Lord brings troubles to lead a person to repentance, then a negative half is a moment of reprieve due to the Lord's mercy. The purpose is so the sinner may repent of his sin and turn from his evil ways. The cyclic nature of punishment is meant to wake up the unrepentant person and help them to come to their senses with regard to God's word. Punishment is divided out sparingly upon the unrighteous with the hope that he may be saved in the Olam Haba.



The seventh attribute is Chessed (grace, lovingkindness), and the Lord causes good deeds to be weighty due to His Chessed. The idea is that for those whose maasim tovim and maasim rayim are in balance, the Lord causes the good deeds to outweigh the bad because of His grace.

The midrash continues saying, *“The rest of the verse, and in the mourning does my prayer come to meet you, is according to Rabbi Samuel son of Nakhmani, God’s reply, for the angel whose charge is prayer comes to meet the children of Israel, as is said, In the Morning does My prayer come to meet you.”* The new day brings on the expectation of the Lord working in a powerful way to deliver His children.

Midrash Tehillim 88, Part 2 concludes saying, *“But rabbi Phinchas took the words to mean, The angel whose charge is prayer waits until that congregation in Israel which is the latest to assemble concludes its prayers; that he takes all the prayers and out of them he fashions a crown which he places upon the head of the Holy One blessed be He, as is said, Blessings are upon the head of the Righteous (Mishley / Proverbs 10:6), of Him that lives forever. Hence, the verse is read In the morning does my prayer come to meet you.”* The rabbis say the angel in charge of the prayers of the people, takes the prayers of the people and fashions a crown in which is placed upon the Lord God in heaven. This reminds us of Isaiah’s words in *Isaiah 62:1-4*.

Isaiah 62:1-4

62:1 For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, And for Jerusalem’s sake I will not keep quiet, Until her righteousness goes forth like brightness, And her salvation like a torch that is burning. 62:2 The nations will see your righteousness, And all kings your glory; And you will be called by a new name Which the mouth of the Lord will designate. 62:3 You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, And a royal diadem in the hand of your God. 62:4 It will no longer be said to you, ‘Forsaken,’ Nor to your land will it any longer be said, ‘Desolate’; But you will be called, ‘My delight is in her,’ And your land, ‘Married’; For the Lord delights in you, And to Him your land will be married. (NASB)

Isaiah speaks of Jerusalem and of the salvation of God, and the righteousness of God’s people. The righteousness of the people will be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord. Note that Angel (מַלְאָךְ) means messenger, and the people of God may be compared to the messengers of God, as the ones who serve Him and take His message of salvation and righteousness into all the world. The Land of Israel, the place God’s people live will be married to the Lord, which draws a parallel to the people walking in His ways, taking the message of salvation in the Lord to the nations. Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We Praise Your Holy Name! Thank You Lord for empowering us to live our lives for Your glory. Thank

You for the joy you have placed in our hearts to serve and to live our lives for You. We thank You for the promises You have made and Your continued faithfulness to Your promises and to us. Thank You Lord 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

