

ספר תהילים צג | Tehillim / Psalms 93

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The Majesty of God and His People

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 93:1-5*, the Psalm opens saying, א יהוה מלך גאות לבש 93:1 *The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The Lord has clothed and girded Himself with strength; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved. (NASB)* What does it mean to be clothed with majesty? How is this related to the children of God and what do the rabbis have to say concerning God's majesty, glory, and His Torah? The psalmist also states the Lord has girded Himself with strength which leads to the firm establishment of the world. How are we to understand this verse? The psalmist continues saying, ב נכון כסאך מאז מעולם אָתָּה: 93:2 *Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting. (NASB)* The throne of God represents His kingship and rule over the earth and all of creation. This is emphasized by saying, ג נשאו נהרות | יהוה נשאו נהרות קולם, 93:3 *The floods have lifted up, O Lord, The floods have lifted up their voice, The floods lift up their pounding waves. 93:4 More than the sounds of many waters, Than the mighty breakers of the sea, The Lord on high is mighty. (NASB)* Why does the psalmist use the natural elements to describe the power of God? Is it because man has no control or power over the wind or the waters of the sea but the Lord does? Note the connection to Yeshua calming the seas at the word of His mouth. The psalm concludes saying, ה עדתיה | נאמנו מאד לביתך נאנה-קדש, 93:5 *Your testimonies are fully confirmed; Holiness befits Your house, O Lord, forevermore. (NASB)* The concluding verse leads to a number of questions. What is the testimony of God? How is the testimony confirmed? What does it mean to bear the testimony of God? How does the testimony effect others? Does it effect our relationship with the Lord in heaven? Is there salvation for the one who has no testimony? Let's explore these questions in this weeks Psalm study!

| עברית | Hebrew | ארמי | Aramaic | ελληνικός | Greek |
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| ספר תהלים פרק צג | ספר טוביה פרק צג | ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 93 | | | |
| א יהוה מלך גאות לבש יהוה עז התאזר אף-תפון תבל בל-תמוט: ב נכון כסאך מאז מעולם אָתָּה: ג נשאו נהרות יהוה נשאו נהרות קולם ישאו נהרות דָּכָּם: ד מקלות מים רבים אדירים משברי-ים אדיר במרום יהוה: ה עדתיה נא- מנו מאד לביתך נאנה-קדש יהוה לארְךָ יָמִים: | א יהוה מליך גיותנותא אלבש אלבש יהוה עושנא ואיזדרו לחוד תקיף תקין תבל דלא תזדעזע: ב מתקן כורסייך מן לקדמין מן עלמא את אלהא: ג זקיפין נהרותא יהוה זקיפין נהרותא קלהון בשירתא יקבלון נהרותא אגר שבחיהון: ד מן קלן דמיין סגיעין ממשבחיא תברי ימא רבא משבחה בשמי מרו- מא יהוה: ה סהידוותך קשיטין לחדא לבית מקדשך יאין יאוון וק- דישין יהוה לאוריכות יומין: | 93:1 εις την ημεραν του προσαββατου οτε κατωκισται η γη αινοσ ωδης τω Δαυιδ ο κυριος εβασιλευσεν ευπρεπειαν ενεδυσατο ενεδυσατο κυριος δυναμιν και περιεζωσατο και γαρ εστερεωσεν την οικουμενην ητις ου σαλευθησεται 93:2 ετοιμος ο θρονος σου απο τότε απο του αιωνος συ ει 93:3 επηραν οι ποταμοι κυριε επηραν οι ποταμοι φωνας αυτων 93:4 απο φωνων υδατων πολλων θαυμαστοι οι μετεωρισμοι της θαλασσης θαυμαστος εν υψηλοις ο κυριος 93:5 τα μαρτυρια σου επιστωθησαν σφοδρα τω οικω σου πρεπει αγιασμα κυριε εις μακροτητα ημερων | | | |

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| <p>Tehillim / Psalms 93 93:1 The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The Lord has clothed and girded Himself with strength; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved. 93:2 Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting. 93:3 The floods have lifted up, O Lord, The floods have lifted up their voice, The floods lift up their pounding waves. 93:4 More than the sounds of many waters, Than the mighty breakers of the sea, The Lord on high is mighty. 93:5 Your testimonies are fully confirmed; Holiness befits Your house, O Lord, forevermore. (NASB)</p> | <p>Toviyah / Psalms 93 93:1 The Lord is king, he has put on greatness; the Lord has put on strength and girded himself; also he made strong[10] the world, so that it will not be shaken. 93:2 Your throne is established from the beginning; from eternity you are God. 93:3 The rivers lift up, O Lord, the rivers lift up their voice in song; the rivers will receive a reward for their praise. 93:4 The Lord is more to be praised in the highest heavens than the sound of many waters, the praiseworthy [waters], the breakers of the great sea! 93:5 Your testimonies are very true, beautiful and holy for your sanctuary, O Lord, for length of days. (EMC)</p> | <p>Psalmoi / Psalms 93 For the day before the Sabbath, when the land was first inhabited, the praise of a Song by David. 93:1 The Lord reigns; he has clothed himself with honour: the Lord has clothed and girded himself with strength; for he has established the world, which shall not be moved. 93:2 Thy throne is prepared of old: thou art from everlasting. 93:3 The rivers have lifted up, O Lord, the rivers have lifted up their voices, 93:4 at the voices of many waters: the billows of the sea are wonderful: the Lord is wonderful in high places. 93:5 Thy testimonies are made very sure: holiness becomes thine house, O Lord, for ever. (LXX)</p> |
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In this week’s study from *Tehillim / Psalms 93:1-5*, the Psalm opens saying, אִי הַיְהוָה מְלִיךָ גְּאוּת לְבָשׁ : 93:1 *The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The Lord has clothed and girded Himself with strength; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved.* (NASB) What does it mean to be clothed with majesty? How is this related to the children of God and what do the rabbis have to say concerning God’s majesty, glory, and His Torah? Rashban on *Bereshit / Genesis 1:1*, Part 4 has the following to say.

Ramban on Genesis 1:1, Part 4

And it stated, Elohim (God), [which means] the master of all the forces, as the root word [here] is el, which is power; and it is a compound word, [made up of] el [and] hem (them), as if ‘power’ were relational (and would be understood as power of them), and ‘them’ refers to all the other powers; meaning ‘the Power over all the powers.’ And a secret will also be elucidated about this [later]. If so, the correct simple meaning of the verses is that its meaning is: At first, “God created the heavens” since he brought forth their material from nothing, “and the earth,” bringing forth its material from nothing. “And the earth” includes the four basic elements, as per (Genesis 2:1), “And the earth and the heavens and all their hosts were completed,” which includes the whole terrestrial globe. And so [too] (Psalms 148:7), “Praise the Lord from the earth, the sea monsters and all the depths,” and besides them, [there] are many other [such references]. And behold, with this creation, which was like a small [and] fine dot, and without substance, were created all of the creations in the heavens and the earth. (והיא מלה) , שהוא כח, והיא מלה) , בעל הכחות כלם, כי המלה עיקרה “אל”, שהוא כח, והיא מלה) , מורכבת, “אל הם”, כאלו “אל” סמוך, “והם” ירמוז לכל שאר הכחות; כלומר, כוח הכחות כולם. ועוד יתבאר סוד בזה. אם כן יהיה פשט הכתובים על נכון, משמעותו, בתחילה “בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם”, כי הוציא חומר שלהם מאין, “וַיֵּאֵר הָאָרֶץ”, שהוציא החומר שלה מאין. “וַיֵּאֵר הָאָרֶץ” תכלול ארבע היסודות כולם, כמו “וַיִּבְּרוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל צְבָאָם” (להלן ב א), שתכלול כל הכדור התחתון. וכן “הִלְלוּ אֶת ה’ מִן הָאָרֶץ תִּזְבְּנִים וְכָל תְּהוֹמוֹת” (תהלים קמח ז), וזולתם רבים. והנה

(בבריאה הזאת, שהיא כנקודה קטנה דקה ואין בה ממש, נבראו כל הנבראים בשמים ובארץ.)

Rashban states that the root meaning of the word Elohim (אֱלֹהִים) means “power;” and is a compound words consisting of the words “el” and “hem” (them) meaning the “power of them.” The word “them” is a reference to all the other powers, of men on earth and/or the spirit world. In this understanding, the Lord is the power over all creation because He is the author and creator. Rashban gives examples on how the Psalmist and others gave praise to the Lord God in heaven because of His power. All things were made to give honor and glory to the Lord in heaven.

The Mishnah Pirkei Avot 6:1 and 6:11 have the following to say:

Mishnah Pirkei Avot 6:1

The Rabbis taught in the language (style) of the Mishnah: Rabbi Meir says: Anyone who involves himself in Torah for its own sake merits many things, and moreover the entire world is worthwhile for his sake; He is called “friend,” “beloved,” “lover of the Omnipresent,” “lover of [all] creatures,” “delighter of the Omnipresent,” “delighter of [all] creatures.” He is clothed in humility and reverence, and it prepares him to be righteous, devout, upright and trustworthy, and it distances him from sin, and draws him near to merit. We enjoy from him counsel and comprehension, understanding and strength, as it is said (Proverbs 8:14): “Mine is counsel and comprehension, I am understanding, mine is strength.” It gives him kingship and dominion, and [the ability to] investigate in judgment, and the secrets of the Torah are revealed to him, and he becomes like an ever-strengthening spring, and like a river that does not stop. He is modest and long-tempered, and forgives insult to him; And it enlarges him and raises him above all [that God] made. (ברוך שנו החכמים בלשון המשנה. ברוך שבוחר בהם ובמשנתם. רבי מאיר אומר כל העוסק בתורה לשמה, זוכה לדברים הרבה. ולא עוד אלא שכל העולם כלו כדאי הוא לו. נקרא רע, אהוב, אוהב את המקום, אוהב את הבריות, משמח את המקום, משמח את הבריות, ומלבשתו ענוה ויראה, ומכשרתו להיות צדיק חסיד ישר ונאמן, ומרחקתו מן החטא, ומקרבתו לידי זכות, ונהנין ממנו עצה ותושיה בינה וגבורה. שנאמר (משלי ח) לי עצה ותושיה אני בינה לי גבורה, ונותנת לו מלכות וממשלה וחקור דין, ומגלין לו רזי תורה, ונעשה כמעין המתגבר וכנהר שאינו פוסק, והוי צנוע וארך רוח, ומוחל על עלבונו, ומגדלתו ומד (רוממתו על כל המעשים).

Mishnah Pirkei Avot 6:11

Everything that the Holy One, Blessed be He, created in this world, He created only for His honor, as it says (Isaiah 43:7): “Every one that is called by My name, and whom I have created for My honor, I have formed him, yes, I have made him.” And it also says (Exodus 15:18), “The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.” (לא בראו, כל מה שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא בעולמו, לא בראו) אלא לכבודו, שנאמר (ישעיה מג, ז), כל הנקרא בשמי ולכבודי בראתיו יצרתיו אף עשיתיו. ואומר (שמות טו, יח), ה' ימלך לעלם ועד.

Rabbi Meir compares the one who studies Torah as to one who is a friend of God, who loves the Lord, and is at peace with the creation of God. The rabbinic interpretation of the one who studies God’s Word is “He is clothed in humility and reverence, and it prepares him to be righteous, devout, upright and trustworthy, and it distances him from sin, and draws him near to merit. We enjoy from him counsel and comprehension, understanding and strength...” Note how the study of Torah gives such a person who devotes himself to doing so “kingship and dominion” and the ability to judge. He is modest, slow to anger, and forgives insult, etc. These things occur as a result of the Lord working and living in the life of the person who draws near to Him in His word. The Lord reigns, and He is clothed with majesty. For the one who draws himself near to know the Lord God in heaven, the glory of God dwells upon such a person, and the Lord endows him with

power to overcome the world. The rabbis say in *Pirkei Avot 6:11* that all things were created for the purpose of bringing glory and honor to the Lord God in heaven. The commentary *Shney Luchot HaBrit, Shmini, Torah Ohr 53* has the following to say:

Shney Luchot HaBrit, Shmini, Torah Ohr 53

Rabbi Meir says in Avot 6:1 that כל העוסק בתורה לשמה זוכה לדברים הרבה “Whosoever studies Torah for its own sake will merit many דברים.” In view of Rabbi Shimon’s statement about the potential problems arising out of דברים הרבה, we seem to have a contradiction between the statements of these two sages. We also wonder what these דברים הרבה can possibly be in view of the long list of benefits listed in that same Mishnah as accruing to people whose preoccupation with Torah is totally altruistic (showing a selfless concern for the well-being of others; unselfish).

The commentary *Shney Luchot HaBrit* states that the benefit of studying Torah is altruism, which is the practice of selfless concern for the well-being of others. Based upon these few references to the rabbis, when the psalmist says, יְהוָה מְלֶךְ. גְּאוֹת לְבַשׁ לְבַשׁ יְהוָה עֹז הַתְּאֵזֶר אֶף-תִּפְּוֹן תִּבְּל בְּל-תִּמּוֹט: 93:1 *The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The Lord has clothed and girded Himself with strength; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved. (NASB)* The Lord places his glory upon the person who draws near to Him in His Word, and the everlasting nature of God, His righteousness and His strength, causes us to not doubt His ability to save us. The majesty of God is His righteousness and holiness, and His strength is found in the power of God to overcome anything, coupled with his mercy and grace.

The psalmist continues saying, נִכּוֹן כְּסֵאֵךְ מֵאֶז מְעוֹלָם אֲתָה: 93:2 *Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting. (NASB)* How are we to understand the meaning of the throne of God being established from old? The rabbis have some to say concerning the ancient establishment of God’s throne. The commentary *Akeidat Yitzchak* has the following to say:

Akeidat Yitzchak 101:3

Concerning Gehinnom it is written (Isaiah 30:33) “For Tophet in the valley of Hinnom has been prepared of old. He made it very deep; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord kindles it like a stream of brimstone.” Of the throne of G’d it is said: (Psalms 93:2) “Your throne is firmly established from time immemorial.” Of the holy Temple it is written in Jeremiah 17:22 “on high from the beginning, the place of Your sanctuary.” Of the name of the Messiah it states (Psalms 72:17) “His name continues since prior to the sun.”

In *Akeidat Yitzchat’s* commentary, he states that Gehinnom (Hell) was prepared from old. Notice how all of these things are brought into the context of the everlasting, Gehinnom, the Throne, the Temple, and the Messiah. The rabbis believe each of these things have been established from the beginning, punishment for sins, the reign and authority of God, His dwelling place, and the name of His Savior.

Ein Yaakov states the following:

Ein Yaakov, Nedarim 4:6

(Fol.39b) R. Simon b. Lakish said: “Where do we find a hint in the Torah that it is a duty to visit a sick person ? From the following passage (Num. 16:29) If these men die the common death of all men, and he visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me.” How does he infer it from this? Said Raba, it means thus: “If these men die as old men die, that they will be sick upon their beds and people will visit them. What will then people say? ‘The Lord has not sent these plagues to them.’” Raba lectured : “What is the meaning of the passage (Ib., ib.) But if the Lord create a new thing [why repeated twice the verb create?] This means: If Gehenna had been created for them, it is all right ; but if not, then the

Lord should create it now for them.” Is this so? Have we not been taught in a Baraita that seven things preceded the creation of the world? They are the Torah, Repentance, Paradise, Gehenna, the Throne of the Divine Majesty, the Temple, the name of Messiah. That the Torah [was created before creation we infer] from the following passage (Pr. 8, 22) The Lord made me the beginning of His way. As for Repentance, it is written (Pr. 90, 2) Before yet the mountains were brought forth, etc., and after it is written Thou turnest man to contrition and sayest, ‘Return ye children of men! As for Paradise, it is written (Gen. 2:3) And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden (Mikedem) to the eastward. As for Gehenna, it is written (Is. 30, 33) For already of old is Topeth made ready. As for the Throne of the Divine Majesty and the Temple, it is written (Jer. 17:12) A Throne of glory, exalted from the beginning of time, is the place of our Sanctuary. And as for the name of Messiah, it’ is written (Ps. 72:17) In the presence of the sun, his name shall flourish. Hence we see from the foregoing that Gehenna was created before creation.] We must therefore say that Moses said thus: “If the opening was created here, good and well ; but if not, then let the Lord create it right here.” But it is written (Ecc. 1:9) There is nothing new under the sun. We must therefore explain it that Moses said: “If the opening is not around here, then let it be moved over there.”

It is interesting to note how Ein Yaakov points out that it is a duty for God’s people to visit the sick and provides a reference to the Torah as a proof text. Studying God’s Word is always associated with producing a change in one’s heart to walk in God’s ways. The idea is that the one who pursues the Torah (God’s instruction) has already set his heart to seek the Lord God in heaven. Ein Yaakov opens with the duty of a man to visit the sick, which is based upon the command of God (*Bamidbar / Numbers 16:29*). This is consistent with Yeshua’s spoke of the importance of taking care of the sick and poor person, and what James said concerning pure and undefiled religion.

Matthew 25:35-37

25:35 For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in, 25:36 I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you visited Me.’ 25:37 Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink?’

James 1:27

Pure and undefiled religion before our God and Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

James 2:15

Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food.

James 2:16

If one of you tells him, “Go in peace; stay warm and well fed,” but does not provide for his physical needs, what good is that?

Yeshua spoke of our taking care of those who are poor, hungry, and thirsty, and our doing so is synonymous to having done so to Yeshua himself. James speaks of one’s faith and taking care of those in need. *James 1:27* parallels the pure and undefiled religion to that of not becoming polluted by the world. The pollution of the world may result in changing one’s heart to not take care of those who are in need. The cares of this world are selfishness, pride, and the search for financial gain, all of which are opposite to what the Lord God wants for our lives. The establishment of God’s throne is also found in the concept of accepting and living with the understanding that the Lord God in heaven has the primacy (authority) in our lives. We who are

His people are defined by who we are in the Messiah Yeshua, as the rabbis said was also established from before the creation of the world.

The establishment of the throne of God is emphasized by the psalmist saying, **ג נָשְׂאוּ נְהָרוֹת | יְהוָה נִשְׂאוּ** 93:3 *The floods have lifted up, O Lord, The floods have lifted up their voice, The floods lift up their pounding waves. 93:4 More than the sounds of many waters, Than the mighty breakers of the sea, The Lord on high is mighty. (NASB)* Why does the psalmist use the natural elements to describe the power of God? Is it because man has no control or power over the wind or the waters of the sea but the Lord does? The commentary Maaseh Nissim on Pesach Haggadah on the ten plagues has the following to say concerning the power of God.

Maaseh Nissim on Pesach Haggadah, Magid, The Ten Plagues 5:1-3:

Background: People often ask why ten plagues? Wasn't God powerful enough to convince the Egyptians with one devastating plague that would force them to free the Israelites from Egypt? Rabbi Lorberbaum answers this question in a novel way by connecting the plagues with the ten utterances with which God created the world. The plagues are the opposite of creation – they represent the ten acts of un-creation. They made Pharaoh aware that just as God could create the world he also had the power to take away the blessings of creation. These ten utterances play an important role in the history of Jewish thought and in Jewish mysticism in particular. They are often associated with the ten Sephirot with which the world is created. These are the ten plagues. Why are there ten plagues? Why were these ten plagues the ones with which the Holy One chose to strike the Egyptians? “The world was created with ten utterances. What does this teach? It teaches us that the punishment of the wicked who destroy the world created by ten utterances is increased while the righteous who preserve the world created by ten utterances are rewarded.” Pirke Avot 5:1. According to the sages the world was created through an act of speech. There were ten utterances by God through which creation came about. These utterances are found in the opening chapter of Genesis. Nine of them begin, “And God said,” and the tenth begins with the word, Bereshit, “in the beginning,” which the Talmud considers to be an “utterance.” If God is all-powerful then certainly He could create the world with a single utterance. So why was it necessary for the Holy One to create the world through a series of such utterances instead? According to Pirke Avot, “The Ethics of the Fathers,” the ten utterances were meant to increase the punishment due to the wicked that destroy the world through their actions. This way instead of just one punishment for a single utterance, they are liable for ten punishments, one for each aspect of creation that they destroy through their actions. Similarly, the increase in utterances increased the reward due to the righteous. Pharaoh denied the existence of God by refusing to free the Israelites. We see this in the beginning of Exodus when he responds to Moses' request by saying, “Who is the Lord that I should heed Him?” (Exodus 5:2) He is not simply a tyrant; Pharaoh is also an atheist who denies God as the creator of everything. The plagues are an attempt to show Pharaoh just how powerful the Holy One really is. Just as God creates and maintains the universe, so God has the power to “un-create” the universe as well. Each plague is related to one of the ten utterances. Just as each utterance expresses the creation of one particular aspect of the universe, so, through each plague, God reverses His creation. In this way Pharaoh saw that, just as God could create the world, so too He had the power to reverse the creation of the world. The plagues were an illustration of the power of God and the powerlessness of the Pharaoh. The Plagues, however, do not follow the chronological order of the utterances of creation and the creation of the world. What logic is there to the order of the plagues, then? The plagues reflect creation in a different fashion. They are listed both sequentially and thematically. The first five plagues reflect creation. The second half reflects on the human being and his basic needs.

The rabbis open with the ten plagues of God asking why the Lord chose ten plagues when He could have performed only one and caused the Children of Israel to leave Egypt. The ten plagues are connected to the ten utterances during the creation. The plagues are the opposite of the creation. The reason the ten plagues are associated to the ten utterances, is because *“It teaches us that the punishment of the wicked who destroy the world created by ten utterances is increased while the righteous who preserve the world created by ten utterances are rewarded.”* The idea is that the ten utterances during the creation illustrates the wicked will receive ten punishments due to their sins. This consequentially increases the reward of the righteous. Pharaoh denied the existence of the Lord God, and so the Lord chose these ten plagues, which paralleled the ten utterances, as proof for Pharaoh. The commentary states, *“The plagues are an attempt to show Pharaoh just how powerful the Holy One really is. Just as God creates and maintains the universe, so God has the power to “un-create” the universe as well. Each plague is related to one of the ten utterances. Just as each utterance expresses the creation of one particular aspect of the universe, so, through each plague, God reverses His creation. In this way Pharaoh saw that, just as God could create the world, so too He had the power to reverse the creation of the world. The plagues were an illustration of the power of God and the powerlessness of the Pharaoh.”* And so the psalmist uses the natural elements to describe the power of God because man has no control over the wind, the water, the sea, or the weather, but the Lord God in heaven does.

When thinking on the power of God, coupled to the creation account and the Lord speaking the world into existence, we are reminded of the power that we have been given in our tongues. Our words are very powerful, we can use them to create, inspire, and build up, or to tear down, destroy, and even cause death. The prophet Isaiah states the following.

Isaiah 58:13

58:13 if you restrain your foot because it is the sabbath; refrain from accomplishing your own needs because it is my holy day; if you proclaim the sabbath a delight and the holy day of Hashem honored. and you honor it by not engaging in your own affairs, from seeking your own needs or discussing the forbidden.

ישעיהו נ"ח:י"ג

(יג) אִם-תִּשְׁבֹּת מִשְׁבֹּת רְגְלֶךָ עֲשׂוֹת תַּפְצִיחַ בַּיּוֹם קִדְשִׁי וְקִרְאתָ לְשִׁבְתִּי עֲנֹג לְקִדּוֹשׁ יְהוָה מִכְכָּד וְכַבֵּ-
דְתוֹ מִעֲשׂוֹת דְּרָכֶיךָ מִמְצֹא תַּפְצִיחַ וְדַבֵּר דְּבָר:

Isaiah speaks of engaging in our own affairs and seeking our own needs. This selfishness is what leads to the sinfulness of Lashon Hara, and causes destruction by the power of the tongue. Ezekiel states the following concerning the power of the tongue.

Ezekiel 22:9

22:9 In thee have been talebearers to shed blood; and in thee they have eaten upon the mountains; in the midst of thee they have committed lewdness.

יהזקאל כ"ב:ט'

(ט) אֲנִישֵׁי רִכְלִי הָיוּ בָךְ לְמַעַן שִׁפְדוּ-דָם וְאֵל-הַהָרִים אָכְלוּ בָךְ זִמָּה עָשׂוּ בְּתוֹכְךָ:

Ezekiel speaks of the one who lies is synonymous to shedding blood. According to the rabbis, there are five categories of Lashon Hara.

Five Categories of Lashon Hara

1. Speech that causes disputes due to *“he said, she said”* conversation which may cause confusion

2. Speech that is harmful or derogatory
3. Speech that is untrue derogatory
4. Speech which causes pain - emotionally, physically, and financially
5. Words that are close to Lashon Hara

In *Talmud Bavli, Ketubot 5b*, the Rabbis explain that the design of our bodies is in such a way as to minimize our speech since man is given two eyes, two ears, and two nostrils, but only one mouth. It is said that the reason man has earlobes is so that they can be used as earplugs when lashon hara is being spoken. In addition, in the same talmudic text, it also included fingers are another way to block out gossip rather than using our earlobes. The rabbis ask the question, “*Why are the fingers tapered like pegs?*” They answer saying, “*So that if one hears anything improper he can insert them in his ears.*”

The significance of the tongue is brought out in the commentary *Shelah Torah Ohr 128* which states the following:

Shelah, Ki Teitzei, Torah Ohr 128

(128) The use man can make of his mouth is what basically distinguishes him from other living creatures. The Torah describes Adam as having become a living creature in Genesis 2,7. Onkelos renders this as “man (Adam) became a talking creature.” From this stems the duty of man to fulfill all the promises he makes with his mouth. The Torah (23,24) specifically commands: מוצא שפתיך תשמור, “You must fulfill what has crossed your lips.”...From this it is clear that such utterances are binding upon us. The formula לאמור ... וידבר which we frequently find in the Torah may be a warning that what is uttered externally, i.e. דבור, should reflect what has been formulated already within us, i.e. אמירה. The ability to formulate thoughts into words is almost divine; this is why we must take great care with everything that crosses our lips.

The rabbis say that a man’s mouth is what sets him apart from the animal kingdom. The rabbinic interpretation of Adam becoming a living creature is based upon the Targum Onkelos (*Bereshit / Genesis 2:7 And the Lord God created Adam from dust of the ground, and breathed upon his face the breath of lives, and it became in Adam a Discoursing Spirit.* וַיִּבְרָא יְיָ אֱלֹהִים יֵת אָדָם עֶפְרָא מִן אֲדָמָתָא וַיִּנְפַח בָּאֲפוּהֵי נְשָׁמָתָא דְחַיִּי. (ריוח מְמַלְלָא) He was given a talking spirit (ריוח מְמַלְלָא). By reason of the Lord giving man the ability to speak and reason, it is required of him to fulfill all the promises he makes with his mouth. The rabbis continue saying the Torah commands that one must fulfill what has crossed your lips. Therefore, it is warned that whatever we utter externally we should carefully reflect upon what we have formulated within before speaking. The ability to formulate thoughts into words is also a gift of God and evidence for the need of our taking great care with what we say with our lips.

A Chasidic tale also vividly illustrates the danger of improper speech. The tale says the following,

A man went about the community telling malicious lies about the rabbi. Later, he realized the wrong he had done, and began to feel remorse. He went to the rabbi and begged his forgiveness, saying he would do anything he could to make amends. The rabbi told the man, “Take a feather pillow, cut it open, and scatter the feathers to the winds.” The man thought this was a strange request, but it was a simple enough task, and he did it gladly. When he returned to tell the rabbi that he had done it, the rabbi said, “Now, go and gather the feathers. Because you can no more make amends for the damage your words have done than you can recollect the feathers.”

The ability to create speech is very significant, because our words are very powerful, we can use them to create, inspire, and build up, or to tear down, destroy, and even cause death (physically, spiritually, emotionally, etc). This may be the emphasis placed by the psalmist when he said, **ג נְשֹׂאֵי נְהָרוֹת | יְהוָה נְשֹׂאֵי נְהָרוֹת קוֹלָם**, *93:3 The floods have lifted up, O Lord, The floods have lifted up their voice, The floods lift up their pounding waves. 93:4 More than the sounds of many waters, Than the mighty breakers of the sea, The Lord on high is mighty. (NASB)* The waters lifting their voice illustrates for us the power of the tongue to make sound, to be boastful and proud, to harm, tear down, destroy, and to cause death. There is definitely a parallel to the force of pounding waves which has these same capabilities of physical destruction. The tongue however also has the power to make well, to inspire, and build up, to encourage, and speak words of love, kindness, and care. It is in this way the Lord calls us to live in the Messiah Yeshua, to offer our words for peace, love, and gentleness towards others. In addition, note the connection to Yeshua calming the seas at the word of His mouth. There are many ways the Scriptures describe the power of our words. In addition, our words are capable of expressing our faith in the Lord God in heaven and in the Messiah, where Paul said in *Romans 10:17*, faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of the Messiah (Christ).

The psalm concludes saying, **ה עֲדֹתַיָּךְ | נְאֻמָּנוּ מְאֹד לְבֵיתֶךָ נְאֻוָּה-קֹדֶשׁ יְהוָה לְאַרְצֶךָ יָמִים**, *93:5 Your testimonies are fully confirmed; Holiness befits Your house, O Lord, forevermore. (NASB)* The concluding verse leads to a number of questions.

1. What is the testimony of God?
2. How is the testimony confirmed?
3. What does it mean to bear the testimony of God? How does the testimony effect others?
4. Does it effect our relationship with the Lord in heaven?
5. Is there salvation for the one who has no testimony?

In the Torah, *Vayikra / Leviticus 26:1-5* begins with the statement “if you walk in My statutes and keep My commands so as to carry them out...” This is related to the testimony of God, since we are told who owns the statutes and the commandments. The ownership of the “statutes” (**בְּחֻקֹתַי**) and the “commandments” (**מִצְוֹתַי**) is the Lord and not man. This statement implies that the statutes and commands in the Torah are give by God to His people. Therefore, those who trust and believe in Him will desire to walk in God’s ways. This concept is born out of the natural progression of the Torah’s narrative, that the Lord God delivered a mixed multitude and brought a mixed multitude of people before the mountain of Sinai and gave them His Torah to live by. The resurrection themes in the midrash on *Tehillim / Psalms 68-71* lend itself to the interpretation of the newness of life, the new man is raised up by God to walk in righteousness, holiness, justice and truth according to His Torah (Instruction). Studying the “mixed multitude” whom God delivered from Egypt provides us with a foreshadowing of what our Father in Heaven had planned from the beginning, that both Jew and non-Jew (Gentile) are grafted into one family of God (*Galatians 3:28*). The Scriptures state that God sanctifies both the Jew and non-Jew in the same way, He saves us in the Messiah Yeshua by faith in the same way, and the Lord wants us to live and walk before Him in the same way, in the way that brings glory to His name.

King David in his last moments of life, spoke to his son Solomon saying, “Be a man” and keep the charge of the Lord your God (**יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ**) to walk in His ways (**וּשְׁמַרְתָּ אֶת-מִשְׁמַרְתּוֹ**) to keep His statutes (**לְשֹׁמְרֵ חֻקֹתָיו**) His commandments (**מִצְוֹתָיו**) His judgments (**וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו**) and His testimonies (**וְעֵי-דְוֹתָיו**) that are written in the Torah of Moshe (**כְּכָתוּב בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה**). The reason was so that he will succeed in all he does. In the Hebrew text, observe the pronominal suffixes. All of the pronominal suffixes indicate

that these ways, statutes, commands, judgments, and testimonies belong to the Lord. How does this relate to the testimony of God? We hear a lot today regarding being a disciple (a talmid) of Yeshua. In order to do this we need to be students (Talmidim) of God's Word and then go and do likewise (e.g, apply God's Word to our lives). It is important to note how there is more to a talmid than simply being a student. A student today wants to know what the teacher knows for the grade, to complete the class or the degree or even to do so out of respect for the teacher. In the biblical contest, a talmid wants to be like the teacher and even to become what the teacher is. Therefore, the student was passionately devoted to his rabbi and noted everything he did or said. He walked in the way He did in every aspect. The rabbi-talmid relationship was a very intense and personal system of education. Note how this is the relationship we are called to have in Yeshua the Messiah! We are told to "abide" in Christ (see *John 15*). The rabbi-talmid relationship was very intense and the rabbis of the first century were looking for the smartest and the brightest of students. As a result, when a student went to a rabbi and asked to be his Talmid (Disciple) the rabbi would test him and ask him a series of questions to test his knowledge and understanding of the Torah and the prophets and the writings, in addition to the Mishnah and Talmud (e.g. or the interpretations of the rabbis). Following a series of questions, the rabbi would quickly discover whether or not the person was exceptional and worthy to be his talmid. As the rabbi lived and taught his understanding of the Scriptures, his students (talmidim) listened and watched and imitated him so as to become like him. Eventually they would become teachers passing on a similar lifestyle and understanding of the Scriptures to their own talmidim. In this process of oral testing, the rabbis would ask the student "do you have an ear to hear?" The meaning was "do you have understanding?" Do you know Torah, can you interpret the Tanach, do you know Mishnah, do you know Talmud (the interpretations of the rabbis) etc? Do you know the purpose for God sending His Messiah according to the Scriptures? Note something Yeshua asked his disciples in *Matthew 15:16*, he asked "Are you still so dull?" Having been with Yeshua for a period of time he expected them to have understanding of the parables he taught. They were walking in his ways and discussing the parable, a colloquial teaching technique of the rabbis in their day. With this background information, can you imagine what it would have been like for a person who was not exceptional to have been invited by a rabbi to follow him? When Yeshua went to each of his disciples, he said to them "follow me," this is why they immediately got up, left all that they had and followed him. Yeshua asking them to follow him was an act of great honor, to be taught by a brilliant rabbi. They were given an opportunity to study at the feet of Yeshua the Messiah. Generally speaking, with regard to the testimony of God, the Lord Himself gives us a testimony that is coupled to our actions as the students of Yeshua the Messiah. To follow in the footsteps of the Messiah, having studied the Torah's statutes and commands, it quickly becomes apparent that in the commands we take on the character of God, to be loving, merciful, kind, long-suffering, and forgiving towards others. It is in this way we can say as the psalmist stated, *93:5 Your testimonies are fully confirmed; Holiness befits Your house, O Lord, forevermore. (NASB)* Living our lives for the Lord, He has provided us with His instructions, and directs our ways to the testimonies of God, which implies doing and observing what God has told us, which testifies of having the purpose of mind that is centered upon the Lord and Yeshua the Messiah. Let's Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for Your mercies and glorify Your Name for all You have done for us. Lord You created in us a newness of life to seek, to serve, and to live our lives for You. We so deeply desire to do so and ask for Your help to run the race and be successful in bring glory and honor to Your Name! We thank You Lord for 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! 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

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