

Tehillim / Psalms 94 | ספר תהילים צד

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Vengeance belongs to the Lord

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 93:1-5*, the Psalm opens saying, א אל-נְקָמוֹת יְהוָה אֵל נְקָמוֹת הוֹפִיעַ: ב הַנְּשֹׂא שֹׁפֵט הָאָרֶץ הַשֹּׁב גְּמוּל עַל-גְּאִים: *94:1 O Lord, God of vengeance, God of vengeance, shine forth! 94:2 Rise up, O Judge of the earth, Render recompense to the proud. (NASB)* The Lord a God of vengeance, is that how you see the Lord God in heaven? The psalm continues saying, ג עַד-מְתֵי רְשָׁעִים | יְהוָה הַעֲמָה יְהוָה יְדַבְּאוּ וְנִחַלְתָּה יַעֲנֹ: ו אֶלְמָנָה וְגֵר יִהְרְגוּ וְיִתְּמוּמִים יִרְצְחוּ: ז וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא יִרְאֶה-יְהוָה וְלֹא-יִבִין אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: ח בִּינוּ בַעֲרִים בָּעַם וּכְסִילִים מְתֵי תִשְׁפִי־ *94:3 How long shall the wicked, O Lord, How long shall the wicked exult? 94:4 They pour forth words, they speak arrogantly; All who do wickedness vaunt themselves. 94:5 They crush Your people, O Lord, And afflict Your heritage. 94:6 They slay the widow and the stranger And murder the orphans. 94:7 They have said, 'The Lord does not see, Nor does the God of Jacob pay heed.' 94:8 Pay heed, you senseless among the people; And when will you understand, stupid ones? (NASB)* The psalmist's response is to ask about whether the Lord hears saying, *94:9 He who planted the ear, does He not hear? He who formed the eye, does He not see? 94:10 He who chastens the nations, will He not rebuke, Even He who teaches man knowledge? 94:11 The Lord knows the thoughts of man, That they are a mere breath. 94:12 Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord, And whom You teach out of Your law; 94:13 That You may grant him relief from the days of adversity, Until a pit is dug for the wicked. 94:14 For the Lord will not abandon His people, Nor will He forsake His inheritance. (NASB)* The psalmist believes in the righteousness of God and that justice will prevail (*Tehillim / Psalms 94:15-17*). The psalm concludes saying, *94:18 If I should say, 'My foot has slipped,' Your lovingkindness, O Lord, will hold me up. 94:19 When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Your consolations delight my soul. 94:20 Can a throne of destruction be allied with You, One which devises mischief by decree? 94:21 They band themselves together against the life of the righteous And condemn the innocent to death. 94:22 But the Lord has been my stronghold, And my God the rock of my refuge. 94:23 He has brought back their wickedness upon them And will destroy them in their evil; The Lord our God will destroy them. (NASB)* The mercy of God is mighty for those who seek the Lord for the forgiveness of his or her sins.

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
ספר תהלים פרק צד	ספר תהלים פרק צד	ספר טוביה פרק צד	ספר טוביה פרק צד	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 94	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 94
א אל-נְקָמוֹת יְהוָה אֵל נְקָמוֹת הוֹפִיעַ: ב הַנְּשֹׂא שֹׁפֵט הָאָרֶץ הַשֹּׁב גְּמוּל עַל-גְּאִים: ג עַד-מְתֵי רְשָׁעִים יְהוָה הַעֲמָה יְהוָה יְדַבְּאוּ וְנִחַלְתָּה יַעֲנֹ: ו אֶלְמָנָה וְגֵר יִהְרְגוּ וְיִתְּמוּמִים יִרְצְחוּ: ז וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא יִרְאֶה-יְהוָה וְלֹא-יִבִין אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: ח בִּינוּ בַעֲרִים בָּעַם וּכְסִילִים מְתֵי תִשְׁפִי־ <i>94:3 How long shall the wicked, O Lord, How long shall the wicked exult? 94:4 They pour forth words, they speak arrogantly; All who do wickedness vaunt themselves. 94:5 They crush Your people, O Lord, And afflict Your heritage. 94:6 They slay the widow and the stranger And murder the orphans. 94:7 They have said, 'The Lord does not see, Nor does the God of Jacob pay heed.' 94:8 Pay heed, you senseless among the people; And when will you understand, stupid ones? (NASB)</i>	א אלהא מרי פורענותא יהוה ב אלהא מרי פורענותא הופע: ב אתנטל דיין ארעא אתיב גומלא בישא על גיותנייא: ג עד אימתי רשיעיא מצלחין יהוה עד אימתי רשיעיא יתבון בשלותא: ד יבועון וימללון גידופין אמרין מילין דק לנא כל עבדי שקר: ה עמד יהוה ישופון ואחסנתך ימסכנון:	94:1 αλμὸς τῷ Δαυιδ τετράδι σαββάτων ὁ θεὸς ἐκδικήσεων κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἐκδικήσεων ἐπαρρησιάσατο 94:2 ὑψώθητι ὁ κρίνων τὴν γῆν ἀπόδος ἀνταπόδοσιν τοῖς ὑπερηφάνοις 94:3 ἕως πότε ἀμαρτωλοὶ κύριε ἕως πότε ἀμαρτωλοὶ καυχῆσονται 94:4 φθέγγονται καὶ λαλήσουσιν ἀδικίαν λαλήσουσιν πάντες οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι τὴν ἀνομίαν			

ו אֶלְמָנָה וְגַר יִהְיֶה וַיִּתְּנֵם
 יִרְצֹחוּ: ז וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא יִרְאֶה-יָהּ
 וְלֹא-יָבִין אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: ח בֵּינוּ
 בְּעָרִים בְּעַם וּכְסִילִים מִתֵּי תִשְׁפִּי-
 לוֹ: ט הִנֵּטַע אֲנִי הֲלֹא יִשְׁמַע אֱ-
 יָצַר עֵינַי הֲלֹא יָבִיט: י הֲיִסֵּר גּוֹיִם
 הֲלֹא יוֹכִיחַ הַמֶּלֶמֶד אֶדָם דַּעַת: יא
 יְהוָה יִדַּע מִחֲשָׁבוֹת אֶדָם כִּי הֵמָּה
 הִכְלִי: יב אֲשֶׁר־י הַגִּבּוֹר אֲשֶׁר-תָּנִי-
 סָרְנוּ יְהוָה וּמִתּוֹרַתָּה תִלְמָדְנוּ: יג
 לְהִשְׁקִיט לוֹ מִיָּמִי רַע עַד יִפְרָה
 לְרָשָׁע שְׂחַת: יד כִּי | לֹא-יִטָּשׁ
 יְהוָה עַמּוֹ וְנִחַלְתּוֹ לֹא יַעֲזֹב: טו
 כִּי-עַד-צָדֵק יָשׁוּב מִשְׁפָּט וְאֲחָ-
 רָיו כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל: טז מִי-יָקוּם
 לִי עַם-מְרַעִים מִי-יִתִּיצֵב לִי עַם-
 פְּעֻלֵי אֲנִי: יז לוֹלֵי יְהוָה עֲזָרָ-
 תָה לִי כִּמְעַט | שְׁכָנָה דוּמָה נִפְשֵׁי:
 יח אֱ-אֲמַרְתִּי מָטָה רַגְלִי חֲסָדָה
 יְהוָה יִסְעֵדְנִי: יט בָּרַב שְׂרָעֵפִי
 בְּקַרְבֵי תַנְחֻמֶיךָ יִשְׁעִשְׂעוּ נִפְשֵׁי:
 כ הִתְבַּרְךָ כִּסֵּא הַוּוֹת יִצָּר עֲמָל
 עָלֵי-חֵק: כא יְגוֹדוּ עַל-נִפְשׁ צַדִּיק
 וְדָם נָקִי יִרְשִׁיעוּ: כב וַיְהִי יְהוָה
 לִי לְמִשְׁגָּב וְאֱלֹהֵי לְצוּר מִחֲסִי: כג
 וַיָּשָׁב עָלֵיהֶם | אֶת-אוֹנֵם וּבְרָעָתָם
 יַצְמִיתָם יַצְמִיתָם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ:

ו ארמלתא וגיורא יקטלון ויתמי
 ירצחון: ז ואמרו לא יחמי יה ולא
 יתביין אלהא דיעקב: ח איתבור
 ננו דשטיין בעמא וכסיליא אימתי
 תשכילון: ט האפשר דאיתנציבא
 אודנא ולא שמיע אולפנא אין אפשר
 דיברא עיינא ולא אסתכל באוריתא:
 י האפשר דיהב אוריתא לעמיה וכד
 יחובון לא יתוכחון הלא יהוה אליף
 לאדם קדמאי מנדעא: יא קדם יהוה
 ידיעין מחשבת בני נשא ארום הינון
 למא: יב טב לגברא די תכסניניה
 יה ומן אוריתך תאליפיניה: יג לש-
 דכא ליה מן יומי בישא עד דיתברי
 לרשיעא שוחה: יד ארום לא ינטוש
 יהוה עמיה ואחסנתיה לא ישבוק:
 טו ארום עד צדקתא יתוב דינא וב-
 תרוי יתפרקון כל תריצי ליבא: טז
 מן יקום לי לאגחא קרב עם מבאשין
 מן יתעתד לי למינצי עם עבדי שקר:
 יז אילולי יהוה סעיד לי כזעיר שרת
 בשתיקותא נפשי: יח אין אמרית
 איתמוטטה ריגלי טובך יהוה יסעיד
 יתי: יט בסיגעי מחשבתא בגווי
 ניהומותך נחמותך יפרנקון יפנקון
 נפשי: כ האפשר דיתחבר עמך
 כורסי שקרא בריית ליעותא היתע-
 תד עלי קיים: כא יכנשון בישן על
 נפשא דצדיקא ואדמא זכאי יחיבון
 דין קטול מקטול: כב ויהי יהוה
 מימרא דיי ל לסעיד ואלהי לתקוף
 רוחצני: כג ואתיב עליהון ית שק-
 ריהון ובבישתהון יגמרינון יגמרינון
 ימגרינון ימגר יתהון יהוה אלהנא:

94:5 τὸν λαόν σου κύριε ἐταπείνωσαν
 καὶ τὴν κληρονομίαν σου ἐκάκωσαν 94:6
 χήραν καὶ προσήλυτον ἀπέκτειναν καὶ
 ὄρφανούς ἐφόνευσαν 94:7 καὶ εἶπαν οὐκ
 ὄψεται κύριος οὐδὲ συνήσει ὁ θεὸς τοῦ
 Ἰακωβ 94:8 σύνετε δὴ ἄφρονες ἐν τῷ
 λαῷ καὶ μωροὶ ποτὲ φρονήσατε 94:9 ὁ
 φυτεύσας τὸ οὖς οὐχὶ ἀκούει ἢ ὁ πλάσας
 τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν οὐ κατανοεῖ 94:10 ὁ
 παιδεύων ἔθνη οὐχὶ ἐλέγξει ὁ διδάσκων
 ἄνθρωπον γινῶσιν 94:11 κύριος γινώσκει
 τοὺς διαλογισμοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὅτι
 εἰσὶν μάταιοι 94:12 μακάριος ἄνθρωπος
 ὃν ἂν σὺ παιδεύσης κύριε καὶ ἐκ τοῦ
 νόμου σου διδάξης αὐτὸν 94:13 τοῦ
 πραῦναι αὐτῷ ἄφ' ἡμερῶν πονηρῶν
 ἕως οὗ ὄρυγῃ τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ βόθρος
 94:14 ὅτι οὐκ ἀπόσεται κύριος τὸν λαὸν
 αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν κληρονομίαν αὐτοῦ οὐκ
 ἐγκαταλείψει 94:15 ἕως οὗ δικαιοσύνη
 ἐπιστρέψῃ εἰς κρίσιν καὶ ἐχόμενοι
 αὐτῆς πάντες οἱ εὐθεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ
 διάψαλμα 94:16 τίς ἀναστήσεται μοι ἐπὶ
 πονηρευομένους ἢ τίς συμπαραστήσεται
 μοι ἐπὶ ἐργαζομένους τὴν ἀνομίαν 94:17
 εἰ μὴ ὅτι κύριος ἐβοήθησέν μοι παρὰ
 βραχὺ παρώκησεν τῷ ἄδῃ ἡ ψυχὴ μου
 94:18 εἰ ἔλεγον σεσάλευται ὁ πούς μου
 τὸ ἔλεός σου κύριε βοηθεῖ μοι 94:19
 κύριε κατὰ τὸ πληθὸς τῶν ὀδυνῶν μου
 ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ μου αἱ παρακλήσεις σου
 ἠγάπησαν τὴν ψυχὴν μου 94:20 μὴ
 συμπροσέσται σοι θρόνος ἀνομίας ὁ
 πλάσσων κόπον ἐπὶ προστάγματι 94:21
 θηρεύσουσιν ἐπὶ ψυχὴν δικαίου καὶ
 αἷμα ἁθῶν καταδικάζονται 94:22 καὶ
 ἐγένετό μοι κύριος εἰς καταφυγὴν καὶ ὁ
 θεός μου εἰς βοηθὸν ἐλπίδος μου 94:23
 καὶ ἀποδώσει αὐτοῖς τὴν ἀνομίαν αὐτῶν
 καὶ κατὰ τὴν πονηρίαν αὐτῶν ἀφανιεῖ
 αὐτοὺς κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν

<p>Tehillim / Psalms 94 94:1 O Lord, God of vengeance, God of vengeance, shine forth! 94:2 Rise up, O Judge of the earth, Render recompense to the proud. 94:3 How long shall the wicked, O Lord, How long shall the wicked exult? 94:4 They pour forth words, they speak arrogantly; All who do wickedness vaunt themselves. 94:5 They crush Your people, O Lord, And afflict Your heritage. 94:6 They slay the widow and the stranger And murder the orphans. 94:7 They have said, ‘The Lord does not see, Nor does the God of Jacob pay heed.’ 94:8 Pay heed, you senseless among the people; And when will you understand, stupid ones? 94:9 He who planted the ear, does He not hear? He who formed the eye, does He not see? 94:10 He who chastens the nations, will He not rebuke, Even He who teaches man knowledge? 94:11 The Lord knows the thoughts of man, That they are a mere breath. 94:12 Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord, And whom You teach out of Your law; 94:13 That You may grant him relief from the days of adversity, Until a pit is dug for the wicked. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms 94 94:1 The God who takes vengeance is the Lord; the God who takes vengeance has appeared. 94:2 Lift yourself up, O judge of the earth; requite evil to the proud. 94:3 How long will the wicked, O Lord, how long will the wicked dwell in tranquility? 94:4 They will gush and speak blasphemy; all the workers of deceit utter disgraceful words. 94:5 They will crush your people, O Lord, and impoverish your inheritance. 94:6 They will kill the widow and proselyte, and they will murder orphans. 94:7 And they said, “Yah will not see, and the God of Jacob will not comprehend it.” 94:8 Consider, you who are fools among the people; and you unwise – when will you gain insight? 94:9 Could it be that the ear was planted, and hears no instruction? Or could it be that he created the eye, and it has not looked at the Torah? 94:10 Could it be that he gave the Torah to his people, and when they sin, they are not rebuked? Did not the Lord teach knowledge to the first Adam? 94:11 The thoughts of the sons of men are known in the presence of the Lord, for they are nothingness. 94:12 It is well for the man whom you rebuke, O Yah; and you will instruct him out of your Torah. 94:13 To give him quietness from the days of evil until the pit is created for the wicked. (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 94 A Psalm of David for the fourth day of the week. 94:1 The Lord is a God of vengeance; the God of vengeance has declared himself. 94:2 Be thou exalted, thou that judgest the earth: render a reward to the proud. 94:3 How long shall sinners, O Lord, how long shall sinners boast? 94:4 They will utter and speak unrighteousness; all the workers of iniquity will speak so. 94:5 They have afflicted thy people, O Lord, and hurt thine heritage. 94:6 They have slain the widow and fatherless, and murdered the stranger. 94:7 And they said, The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob understand. 94:8 Understand now, ye simple among the people; and ye fools, at length be wise. 94:9 He that planted the ear, does he not hear? or he that formed the eye, does not he perceive? 94:10 He that chastises the heathen, shall not he punish, even he that teaches man knowledge? 11 The Lord knows the thoughts of men, that they are vain. 94:12 Blessed is the man whomsoever thou shalt chasten, O Lord, and shalt teach him out of thy law; 94:13 to give him rest from evil days, until a pit be dug for the sinful one. (LXX)</p>
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Tehillim / Psalms 94	Toviyah / Psalms 94	Psalmoi / Psalms 94
<p>94:14 For the Lord will not abandon His people, Nor will He forsake His inheritance. 94:15 For judgment will again be righteous, And all the upright in heart will follow it. 94:16 Who will stand up for me against evildoers? Who will take his stand for me against those who do wickedness? 94:17 If the Lord had not been my help, My soul would soon have dwelt in the abode of silence. 94:18 If I should say, ‘My foot has slipped,’ Your lovingkindness, O Lord, will hold me up. 94:19 When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Your consolations delight my soul. 94:20 Can a throne of destruction be allied with You, One which devises mischief by decree? 94:21 They band themselves together against the life of the righteous And condemn the innocent to death. 94:22 But the Lord has been my stronghold, And my God the rock of my refuge. 94:23 He has brought back their wickedness upon them And will destroy them in their evil; The Lord our God will destroy them. (NASB)</p>	<p>94:14 For the Lord will not abandon his people, nor will he forsake his inheritance. 94:15 For justice will return to righteousness, and after it all the upright of heart will be redeemed. 94:16 Who will arise for me to do battle with evildoers? Who will stand up for me to dispute with workers of deceit? 94:17 If the Lord were not my helper, my soul would almost have dwelt in silence. 94:18 If I said, “My foot is slipping,” your goodness, O Lord, will aid me. 94:19 In the many thoughts within me, your comforts will delight my soul. 94:20 Could it be that the throne of deceit will be allied with you? Or could the creature of toil stand against the covenant? 94:21 Evil things will gather against the soul of the righteous man; and they will condemn innocent blood to the judgment of death. 94:22 But the Lord will be a helper for me; and my God is the strength of my confidence. 94:23 And he has turned their lies against them, and he will destroy them in their evil; the Lord our God will destroy them. (EMC)</p>	<p>94:14 For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance; 94:15 until righteousness return to judgment, and all the upright in heart shall follow it. Pause. 94:16 Who will rise up for me against the transgressors? or who will stand up with me against the workers of iniquity? 94:17 If the Lord had not helped me, my soul had almost sojourned in Hades. 94:18 If I said, My foot has been moved; 94:19 thy mercy, O Lord, helped me. O Lord, according to the multitude of my griefs within my heart, thy consolation have soothed my soul. 94:20 Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frames mischief by an ordinance? 94:21 They will hunt for the soul of the righteous, and condemn innocent blood. 94:22 But the Lord was my refuge; and my God the helper of my hope. 94:23 And he will recompense to them their iniquity and their wickedness: the Lord our God shall utterly destroy them. (LXX)</p>

In this week’s study from *Tehillim / Psalms 93:1-5*, the Psalm opens saying, אֵל-נִקְמֹת יְהוָה אֵל נִקְמֹת אֵל-נִקְמֹת : א הַנִּשְׂא שֹׁפֵט הָאָרֶץ הַשֶּׁב גָּמוּל עַל-גְּאִים : 94:1 O Lord, God of vengeance, God of vengeance, shine forth! 94:2 Rise up, O Judge of the earth, Render recompense to the proud. (NASB) The Hebrew text states אֵל-נִקְמֹת meaning “God who avenges.” The idea here is it is the Lord God who avenges us. This is similar to what the Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the romans (*Romans 12:19*).

Romans 12:17-21

12:17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 12:18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. 12:19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. 12:20 ‘But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.’ 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (NASB)

Paul speaks of being at peace with men, to not pay back evil for evil, and to allow room for the vengeance of the Lord. We are called to a higher calling, to feed our enemies if they are hungry, to overcome evil with

what is good. This is why the rabbis say what they do in the Talmud Bavli Berekhot 58b.

Talmud Bavli Berakhot 58b, 3

[Who beholds] the houses of idolaters when they are inhabited says, “The Lord will pluck up the house of the proud” (Prov. xv. 25); [but when he sees them] in ruins he says, “O Lord, Thou God, to Whom vengeance belongeth. Thou God to Whom vengeance belongeth, shine forth” (Ps. xciv. 1). (בתי עובדי כוכבים בישובן אומר (משלי טו, כה) בית גאים יסח ה' בחורבנון) (אומר (תהלים צד, א) אל נקמות ה' אל נקמות הופיע

The Lord will pluck up (יִסַּח | יִסַּח) He will יִסַּח meaning “to pull or tear away, (Qal) to tear, away, tear down.” The Lord will tear down the house of the proud because He is the One who takes vengeance. The reason being the Lord is the only One who is able to distribute justice in the most appropriate way. The Aramaic Targum states, א אלהא מרי פורענותא יהוה אלהא מרי פורענותא הופע: ב אתנטל דיין ארעא אתיב: 94:1 The God who takes vengeance is the Lord; the God who takes vengeance has appeared. 94:2 Lift yourself up, O judge of the earth; requite evil to the proud. (EMC) The rabbis say Lord is a God of vengeance and Paul agrees on this matter, the Lord will repay the evil that has been done to His people. Rashbam has the following to say concerning the Lord who is the judge of the earth.

Rashbam on Exodus 15:1, 1

גאה גאה, victory in war is called גאות on several occasions. For instance, Moses says in Psalms 94,2 גמול על גאים השב, “give the victors their just deserts.” We find the expression ‘יסח ה’ in Proverbs 15,25 where it means: “G’d will tear down the house of the victors.” [The author quotes a few more such examples, but I have not been able to find proof in this that the verses speak of “victors in war,” rather than arrogant people in whatever vocation. Ed.] גאה גאה - נצחון מלחמה קורין גאות בכמה מקומות: השב גמול על גאים. בית גאים) (יסח ה’ הגוזלים והחומסים בגאות רשע ידלק עני.

The way in which Rashbam looks at these Scriptures is to the one who has victory (success), he should not boast or take pride, but to give recognition to the one who is the giver of the victory, the Lord God in heaven. The Rashbam states that it is difficult to find the difference between the one who has victory in war as opposed to having victory or success in another vocation. The point is to seek the Lord for help in all that we do, and to give credit to the Lord God in heaven for any and all success that we have in life!

In the Apostolic Writings, we remember the story of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector which speaks of the tax collector who was despised of the people and of a self-righteous Pharisee who went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee proceeded to commend himself before the Lord because of his careful observance of the mitzvot and he looked down with contempt on the sinful tax collector saying, “God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.” (Luke 18:11) Notice in his prayer that his focus is not really on the Lord but on how good he is and how bad others are. This is the definition of pride. The tax collector on the other hand is aware of his sins and verbally acknowledges his unworthiness before God, so much so that he cannot even lift his eyes as he stands in the back pounding his breast in sorrowful contrition over his sins, he can manage only the desperate plea, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner.” (Luke 18:13, ὁ δὲ τελώνης μακρόθεν ἔστῶς οὐκ ἠθέλεν οὐδὲ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐπάραι εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, ἀλλ’ ἔτυπτεν τὸ στήθος αὐτοῦ λέγων, Ὁ θεός, ἰλάσθητί μοι τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ.) In the Greek text, it actually reads “the sinner” (τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ). His focus is on his sins and not the sins of others, and on his need for God’s mercy. In a surprising reversal of expectation, Yeshua says that God answered the tax collector’s prayer and not the Pharisee’s. Then he concludes with his main point saying, “everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” The point is to recognize how we are to approach the Lord, to seek Him with all

ה וְאָהֲבָתָ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ, (Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:5, ובְּכָל-מְאֹדְךָ: our heart, mind, and strength).

ג עַד-מְתֵי רְשָׁעִים | יְהוָה עַד-מְתֵי רְשָׁעִים יַעֲלֶזּוּ: ד יִבְיַעוּ יִדְבְּרוּ עֲתָק יִתְאַמְרוּ כָּל-פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן: ה עֲמָהּ יְהוָה יִדְבְּקֶאוּ וְנִחַלְתָּהּ יַעֲנּוּ: ו אֶלְמָנָה וְגֵר יִהְרֹגוּ וִיתוּמִים יִרְצְחוּ: ז הַיְבֵנּוּ בַעֲרִים בָּעַם וְכַסִּילִים מְתֵי תִשְׁכִּילוּ: 94:3 *How long shall the wicked, O Lord, How long shall the wicked exult?* 94:4 *They pour forth words, they speak arrogantly; All who do wickedness vaunt themselves.* 94:5 *They crush Your people, O Lord, And afflict Your heritage.* 94:6 *They slay the widow and the stranger And murder the orphans.* 94:7 *They have said, 'The Lord does not see, Nor does the God of Jacob pay heed.'* 94:8 *Pay heed, you senseless among the people; And when will you understand, stupid ones?* (NASB) The Psalmist speaks of the unrighteous, the wicked, as exulting and speaking arrogantly. The MT states: ד יִבְיַעוּ יִדְבְּרוּ עֲתָק יִתְאַמְרוּ כָּל-פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן: calling the wicked workers of iniquity (פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן) and that they are Atak (עֲתָק) in their words, meaning “to advance, to more forward boldly or arrogantly.” These descriptions describe the ungodly as those who boast about themselves, they brag about their abilities and do not consider the Lord God in heaven. The Psalmist continues to describe these sorts of people as wanting to oppress God’s people, and even to kill the widow, the orphan, and the stranger. In their boasting they do not believe God exists, and make the claim the Lord doesn’t care. Have you ever heard that or used that claim yourself (“God doesn’t care”)? Rashi explains the meaning of this text (*Tehillim / Psalms 94:4*) in the following way.

Rashi on Deuteronomy 26:17, Part 1

הַאֲמִירָךְ, הַאֲמָרָה, *are words for the meaning of which there is no decisive proof in Scripture. It seems to me, however, that they are expressions denoting “separation” and “selection”:* “You have singled Him out from all strange gods to be unto you as God — and He on His part, has singled you out from the nations on earth to be unto Him a select people”. [As far as this meaning is concerned I have found a parallel (lit., a witness) to it where it bears the meaning “glory”, as in (*Psalms 94:4*): “All wrongdoers glory in themselves”].

Rashi describes the meaning of HaKadashah (הַקְדִּישָׁה, sanctification) meaning separation unto the Lord, or being set apart for Him e.g. “Who has delivered us from the power of darkness.” (*Colossians 1:13*) He says that the words הַאֲמִירָךְ, הַאֲמָרָה denote the separation and selection with the parallel to the Lord God who separated us from among the nations and called us out to be a holy people. The glory belongs to the Lord, however, the wicked glory in themselves (*Tehillim / Psalms 94:4*). The unrighteous choose to live for themselves as opposed to the righteous ones of God who choose to live for the Lord in heaven.

The Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint translations state the following:

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms 94:3-8

94:3 *How long will the wicked, O Lord, how long will the wicked dwell in tranquility?* 94:4 *They will gush and speak blasphemy; all the workers of deceit utter disgraceful words.* 94:5 *They will crush your people, O Lord, and impoverish your inheritance.* 94:6 *They will kill the widow and proselyte, and they will murder orphans.* 94:7 *And they said, “Yah will not see, and the God of Jacob will not comprehend it.”* 94:8 *Consider, you who are fools among the people; and you unwise – when will you gain insight?* (EMC)

ג עד אימתי רשיעיא מצלחין יהוה עד אימתי רשיעיא יתבון בשלותא: ד יבועון וימללון גידופין אמרין מילין דקלנא כל עבדי שקר: ה עמך יהוה ישופון ואחסנתך ימסכנון: ו ארמלתא וגיורא יקטלון ויתמי ירצחון: ז ואמרו לא יחמי יה ולא יתביין אלהא דיעקב: ח איתבוננו דשטיין בעמא

Septuagint

Psalmoi / Psalms 94:3-8

94:3 How long shall sinners, O Lord, how long shall sinners boast? 94:4 They will utter and speak unrighteousness; all the workers of iniquity will speak so. 94:5 They have afflicted thy people, O Lord, and hurt thine heritage. 94:6 They have slain the widow and fatherless, and murdered the stranger. 94:7 And they said, The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob understand. 94:8 Understand now, ye simple among the people; and ye fools, at length be wise. (LXX)

94:3 ἕως πότε ἁμαρτωλοὶ κύριε ἕως πότε ἁμαρτωλοὶ καυχῆσονται 94:4 φθέγγονται καὶ λαλήσουσιν ἀδικίαν λαλήσουσιν πάντες οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι τὴν ἀνομίαν 94:5 τὸν λαόν σου κύριε ἐταπείνωσαν καὶ τὴν κληρονομίαν σου ἐκάκωσαν 94:6 χήραν καὶ προσήλυτον ἀπέκτειναν καὶ ὄρφανούς ἐφόνευσαν 94:7 καὶ εἶπαν οὐκ ὄψεται κύριος οὐδὲ συνήσει ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ἰακώβ 94:8 σύνετε δὴ ἄφρονες ἐν τῷ λαῷ καὶ μωροὶ ποτὲ φρονήσατε

The Targum states *94:4 They will gush and speak blasphemy; all the workers of deceit utter disgraceful words. (EMC)* Much may be said concerning those who are workers of deceit. *Tehillim / Psalms 101:7* states: *לֹא-יֵשֵׁב | בְּקִרְבִּי בֵּיתִי עֹשֶׂה רַמְיָה דְּבַר שְׁקָרִים לֹא-יִכּוֹן לְנֶגְדַי עֵינָי:* “*He who practices deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who speaks falsehood shall not maintain his position before me.*” (NASB) Note that deceit is synonymous to lying, and the one who practices deceit is synonymous to one who lies. The person who makes lying a way of life, the Scriptures state that he will not dwell in the house of the Lord, and cannot maintain his position before God. Solomon and the Apostle Peter had the following things to say concerning deceit and lying.

Mishley / Proverbs 6:16-19

There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers. (ESV)

Solomon said the Lord hates six things and lying/deceit is one of them.

1 Peter 3:10

For “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; (ESV)

Peter claims for the one who seeks a long life, he is to keep his tongue from lying and deceit.

1 Peter 2:1-12

2:1 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2:2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, 2:3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. 2:4 And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 2:6 For this is contained in Scripture: ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone And he

who believes in Him will not be disappointed.’ 2:7 This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, ‘The stone which the builders rejected, This became the very corner stone, 2:8 and, ‘A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense’; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed. 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 2:10 for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. 2:12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation. (NASB)

Peter connects lying and deceit to envy and slander, and clarifies the purpose of keeping ourselves from such things is because the Lord has separated us, HaKadashah (הַקְדֻשָּׁה) sanctified us to be a holy people. He states how Yeshua was rejected and in a similar manner, we too will be rejected due to our obedience to God’s word. Peter says the Lord “called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9) and how we are to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11). Righteous behavior will be ridiculed and slandered amongst the Gentiles, but this is for the glory of God. This is the meaning of being a holy people, separation and selection which finds its purpose in the Lord God who separated us from among the nations and called us out to be a His people.

The psalmist’s response is to ask about whether the Lord hears saying, ט הַנִּטֵּעַ אֵזֶן הֲלֵא יִשְׁמַע אִם- יִצָּר עֵינֵי הֲלֵא יִבִּיט: י הַיֹּסֵר גּוֹיִם הֲלֵא יוֹכִיחַ הַמְּלַמֵּד אָדָם דַּעַת: יא יְהוָה יָדַע מַחְשְׁבוֹת אָדָם כִּי הֵמָּה הֶבְלִ: יב אֲשֶׁרִי הַגָּבֵר אֲשֶׁר-תִּיַסְרֶנּוּ יְהוָה וּמִתּוֹרַתְךָ תִּלְמָדְנוּ: יג הֲלִישְׁקִיט לּוֹ מִיָּמִי רַע עַד יִפְרֶה לְרָשָׁע שְׂחַת: יד כִּי | לֹא-יִטֵּשׁ יְהוָה: 94:9 He who planted the ear, does He not hear? He who formed the eye, does He not see? 94:10 He who chastens the nations, will He not rebuke, Even He who teaches man knowledge? 94:11 The Lord knows the thoughts of man, That they are a mere breath. 94:12 Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord, And whom You teach out of Your law; 94:13 That You may grant him relief from the days of adversity, Until a pit is dug for the wicked. 94:14 For the Lord will not abandon His people, Nor will He forsake His inheritance. (NASB) The Lord God in heaven formed us (the eye and the ear) and He chastens the nations. The psalmist states: יְהוָה יָדַע מַחְשְׁבוֹת אָדָם כִּי הֵמָּה הֶבְלִ: 94:11 The Lord knows the thoughts of man, That they are a mere breath. (NASB) King Solomon and the Apostle Paul wrote of something similar saying the following in 1 Kings 8:38-40 and 1 Corinthians 2:8-13.

1 Kings 8:38-40

8:38 whatever prayer or supplication is made by any man or by all Your people Israel, each knowing the affliction of his own heart, and spreading his hands toward this house; 8:39 then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive and act and render to each according to all his ways, whose heart You know, for You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men, 8:40 that they may fear You all the days that they live in the land which You have given to our fathers. (NASB, לַח כָּל-תְּפִלָּה כָּל-תַּחֲנוּנָה אֲשֶׁר תִּהְיֶה לְכָל-הָאָדָם לְכָל עֲמֻדָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יִדְעוּן אִישׁ, וְנָגַע לְבָבוֹ וּפָרַשׁ כַּפָּיו אֶל-הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה: לט וְאַתָּה תִּשְׁמַע הַשְּׁמַיִם מִכּוֹן שְׁבַתְךָ וְסִלַּחְתָּ וְעָשִׂיתָ וְנָתַתָּ לְאִישׁ כְּכֹל-דִּרְכָיו אֲשֶׁר תִּדְעַת אֶת-לְבָבוֹ כִּי-אַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ לְבַדְּךָ אֶת-לִבְבֵי כָל-בְּנֵי הָאָדָם: מ לְמַעַן יִרְאוּךָ (כָּל-הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר-הֵם חַיִּים עַל-פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה לְאַבְתָּיִנוּ:)

1 Corinthians 2:8-13

2:8 the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; 2:9 but just as it is written, ‘Things

which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him.' 2:10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 2:11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, 2:13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. (NASB)

Solomon speaks of the Temple that he had just built in Jerusalem on the Temple mount, that men will pray towards the Temple in Jerusalem, and the Lord will listen and answer our prayers. He says יִדְעֵ אֶת-לִבּוֹ תִדְעֵ אֶת-לִבְדָּךָ אֶת-לִבְכָּל-בְּנֵי הָאָדָם the Lord knows what is in the heart of all men. The psalmist writes of the wicked and how the Lord God in heaven knows the thoughts of all men, and Solomon is writing of the righteous who spread out their hands towards heaven seeking the Lord God in heaven. Paul speaks of wicked men who crucified Yeshua the Messiah, and how each individual knows only what is inside of himself, his own thoughts, and the Spirit of God discerns the ungodliness that may be found in our hearts. The point is that we receive the Spirit of God through faith in the Messiah, and the Spirit reveals to us our shortcomings, and convicts us leading us to repentance and the desire to turn from our sins. These things are evidence coming from God that the Lord is working in our lives. Human wisdom would excuse sin, but the wisdom that is from above leads us to repentance. This is one of the purposes of the Torah in our lives, to remind us of our sins and to lead us to repentance and to the Messiah Yeshua. The rabbis recognize this aspect of the Torah saying the following according to the Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint.

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms 94:9-14

94:9 Could it be that the ear was planted, and hears no instruction? Or could it be that he created the eye, and it has not looked at the Torah? 94:10 Could it be that he gave the Torah to his people, and when they sin, they are not rebuked? Did not the Lord teach knowledge to the first Adam? 94:11 The thoughts of the sons of men are known in the presence of the Lord, for they are nothingness. 94:12 It is well for the man whom you rebuke, O Yah; and you will instruct him out of your Torah. 94:13 To give him quietness from the days of evil until the pit is created for the wicked. 94:14 For the Lord will not abandon his people, nor will he forsake his inheritance. (EMC)

ט האפשר דאיתנציבא אודנא ולא שמיע אולפנא אין אפשר דיברא עיינא ולא אסתכל באוריתא: י האפשר דיהב אוריתא לעמיה וכד יחובון לא יתוכחון הלא יהוה אליף לאדם קדמאי מנדעא: יא קדם יהוה ידיעין מחשבת בני נשא ארום הינון למא: יב טב לגברא די תכסניניה יה ומן אוריתך תאליפיניה: יג לשדכא ליה מן יומי בישא עד דיתברי לרשיעא שוחה: יד ארום לא ינטוש יהוה עמיה ואחסנתיה לא ישבוק:

Septuagint

Psalmoi / Psalms 94:9-14

94:9 He that planted the ear, does he not hear? or he that formed the eye, does not he perceive? 94:10 He that chastises the heathen, shall not he punish, even he that teaches man knowledge? 11 The Lord knows the thoughts of men, that they are vain. 94:12 Blessed is the man whomsoever thou shalt chasten, O Lord, and shalt teach him out of thy law; 94:13 to

give him rest from evil days, until a pit be dug for the sinful one. 94:14 For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance; (LXX)

94:9 ὁ φυτεύσας τὸ οὖν οὐχὶ ἀκούει ἢ ὁ πλάσας τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν οὐ κατανοεῖ 94:10 ὁ παιδεύων ἔθνη οὐχὶ ἐλέγξει ὁ διδάσκων ἄνθρωπον γινῶσιν 94:11 κύριος γινώσκει τοὺς διαλογισμοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὅτι εἰσὶν μάταιοι 94:12 μακάριος ἄνθρωπος ὃν ἂν σὺ παιδεύσης κύριε καὶ ἐκ τοῦ νόμου σου διδάξης αὐτὸν 94:13 τοῦ πραῦναι αὐτῷ ἀφ' ἡμερῶν πονηρῶν ἕως οὗ ὀρυγῆ τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ βόθρος 94:14 ὅτι οὐκ ἀπόσεται κύριος τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν κληρονομίαν αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐγκαταλείψει

The rabbis suggest the ear was created for hearing the instruction of God. It is interesting how the word Torah (תּוֹרָה) being derived from the word Yarah (יָרָה) means “shot, to hit the mark” whereas Ovven (וּוּן) means “to miss the mark, sin.” Being instructed by God, the Torah is meant to help us to hit the mark, we are given the knowledge of how to live for the Lord God in heaven. The rabbis say the eye was created to look upon the Torah. A contrast is made between the Torah (instruction) of God and the thoughts of men. The thoughts of men lead to nothing, they are worthless, and as everyone knows, all of the thoughts and intentions of the heart are desperately wicked. (Jeremiah 17:9, Mark 7:21-22, James 1:14-15, etc) Yeshua recognized this saying in Matthew 13:15:

Matthew 13:13-17

13:13 ‘Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 13:14 ‘In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, ‘You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; You will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; 13:15 For the heart of this people has become dull, With their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes, Otherwise they would see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I would heal them.’ 13:16 ‘But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. 13:17 ‘For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it (NASB)

We should be careful to guard our hearts, to be consistent in our walk before the Lord, and to seek Him daily so our hearts do not become dull and calloused, being unable to see or hear. The psalm according to the Targum states that 94:12 It is well for the man whom you rebuke, O Yah; and you will instruct him out of your Torah. (EMC) and that 94:14 For the Lord will not abandon his people, nor will he forsake his inheritance. (EMC)

The psalmist believes in the righteousness of God and that justice will prevail saying, טו כִּי-עַד-צָדִק, לְשׁוֹב מִשְׁפָּט וְאֶחָרָיו כָּל-יִשְׂרָי-לָב: טז מִי-יָקוּם לִי עִם-מְרַעִים מִי-יִתְיַצֵּב לִי עִם-פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן: יז לוּלִי יִהְיֶה עֲזָרְתָּהּ: נִפְשֵׁי: 94:15 For judgment will again be righteous, And all the upright in heart will follow it. 94:16 Who will stand up for me against evildoers? Who will take his stand for me against those who do wickedness? 94:17 If the Lord had not been my help, My soul would soon have dwelt in the abode of silence. (NASB) The Aramaic Targum states, טו אַרְוֹם עַד צְדָקְתָּא יִתּוּב דִּינָא וּבִתְרוּי יִתְפָּרְקוּן כָּל תְּרִיצֵי לִיבָּא: טז מִן יָקוּם לִי לְאַגְחָא קָרֵב עִם מְבֹאֲשֵׁין מִן יִתְעַדָּ לִי לְמִינְצֵי עִם עַבְדֵי שְׁקָר: יז אִילוּלִי יִהוּהּ סְעִיד לִי כִזְעִיר שְׂרַת: נִפְשֵׁי: 94:15 For justice will return to righteousness, and after it all the upright of heart will be redeemed. 94:16 Who will arise for me to do battle with evildoers? Who will stand up for me to dispute with workers of deceit? 94:17 If the Lord were not my helper, my soul would almost have dwelt in silence. (EMC) The Septuagint states, 94:15 ἕως οὗ δικαιοσύνη ἐπιστρέψῃ εἰς κρίσιν καὶ ἐχόμενοι αὐτῆς πάντες οἱ εὐθεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ διάψαλμα 94:16 τίς ἀναστήσεται μοι ἐπὶ πονηρευομένους ἢ τίς συμπαραστήσεται μοι ἐπὶ ἐργαζομένους τὴν ἀνομίαν 94:17 εἰ μὴ ὅτι κύριος ἐβοήθησέν μοι παρὰ βραχὺ παρώκησεν τῷ ἄδῃ ἢ ψυχῇ μου 94:15 until righteousness return to judgment, and all the upright in heart shall follow it. Pause. 94:16

Who will rise up for me against the transgressors? or who will stand up with me against the workers of iniquity? 94:17 If the Lord had not helped me, my soul had almost sojourned in Hades. (LXX) In these verses, we are told that ultimately the Lord God in heaven will prevail, and when His word prevails, Justice goes out to all of the people. The Psalm states *לֹאִי הָיְתָה עֲזָרָתָה* “if the Lord had not been my help...” the rabbis recognize this truth, that the Lord is helping us in this life to overcome sin. Are you seeking the Lord God in heaven to help you to overcome sin in your life? The rabbis in the Talmud Berekhot 17a understand this in the following way:

Berakhot 17a:1-3:

In the household above and the household below, and among the students who occupy themselves with Thy Torah, whether they devote themselves thereto for its own sake or not for its own sake; and as for them that devote themselves thereto not for its own sake, may it be Thy will that they do devote themselves thereto for its own sake. R. Alexander used to add at the conclusion of his prayer : May it be Thy will, O Lord our God, to place us in a corner of light and not in a corner of darkness ; and may not our heart grow faint nor our eyes dim. (בפמליא) של מעלה ובפמליא של מטה ובין התלמידים העוסקים בתורתך בין עוסקין לשמה בין עוסקין שלא לשמה וכל העוסקין שלא לשמה יהי רצון שיהו עוסקין לשמה. ר' אלכסנדר בן יצחק צלותיה אמר הכי יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו שתעמידנו בקרן אורה ואל תעמידנו בקרן חשכה ואל ידוה לבנו (ואל יחשכו עינינו)

The rabbis recognize the importance of studying God's word for the sake of the Lord, and not for the sake of one's self. We seek to overcome sin in our lives for the sake of the Lord and not for our own justification. The Spirit the Lord gives us leads us to repentance and to seek the righteousness of God. If you cannot describe your heart in this way, then ask yourself “*why is my life not characterized in the same way as the great men of faith were according to the holy Scriptures?*” There may be a theology that is preventing the truth of God from being lived out in your life. Certain theologies may also tie God's hands and prevent him from operating in our lives by the power of the Spirit (e.g. dispensationalism). The rabbis also recognize the mercy of God to place us in a corner of life, meaning that He (the Lord) will take us to a place to learn the truth, and not hold on to a lie. The Lord will place within our hearts the desire to grow closer to Him, and so our hearts do not grow faint or our eyes tired of doing so.

Tehillim / Psalms 94 concludes saying, 94:18 If I should say, 'My foot has slipped,' Your lovingkindness, O Lord, will hold me up. 94:19 When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Your consolations delight my soul. 94:20 Can a throne of destruction be allied with You, One which devises mischief by decree? 94:21 They band themselves together against the life of the righteous And condemn the innocent to death. 94:22 But the Lord has been my stronghold, And my God the rock of my refuge. 94:23 He has brought back their wickedness upon them And will destroy them in their evil; The Lord our God will destroy them. (NASB) The mercy of God is mighty for those who seek the Lord for the forgiveness of his or her sins. The power of God is available to deliver for those who seek Him in the Messiah Yeshua. Deliverance comes according to the covenant of God in both the spiritual (drawing near) and physical (from our enemies), similar to what Rashi states on his commentary on *Shemot / Exodus 15:6*.

Rashi on Exodus 15:6, Part 2

THY RIGHT HAND, O LORD, IS GLORIOUS IN POWER to deliver Israel, and thy second right hand dashes the enemy in pieces. But it seems to me that if we have to take it in the sense: Thy right hand is glorious to save, thy right hand dashes in pieces etc. the explanation is that the self-same right hand itself dashes the enemy in pieces, something which it is impossible for a human being — to do two actions with one hand. But the literal sense of the text is: “Thy right hand, that is glorious in power — what does it do?” — “Thy right hand, O Lord, dashes the enemy in pieces”. There are many Scriptural verses exactly

in this poetical form, e. g., (Psalms 92:10) “For, behold, thine enemies, O Lord, for behold, thine enemies shall perish” and others similar.

The power of God, His right hand delivers Israel, and dashes the enemy to pieces. The conclusion is that the Lord’s right hand is glorious to save. Note how Yeshua stands at the right hand of our Father in heaven. Because of these things the Lord is worthy to be praised. The Mishnah prescribes the way HaShem is to be praised each day saying the following according to the *Mishnah Tamid 7:4*.

Mishnah Tamid 7:4

[These are] the songs that the Levites would say in the temple: On Sunday they would say, “To Hashem is the world and that which fills it, the inhabited land and its inhabitants.” (Psalms 24) On Monday they would say, “Great is Hashem and very praised, in the city of G-d, His Mountain of Holiness.” (Psalms 48) On Tuesday they would say, “G-d stands in the divine, in the midst of the judges He judges.” (Psalms 82) On Wednesday they would say, “G-d of vengeance, Hashem G-d of vengeance appear.” (Psalms 94) On Thursday they would say, “Sing for joy to G-d our strength, shout out loud to the G-d of Yaakov.” (Psalms 81) On Friday they would say, “Hashem has reigned, he wears his splendor etc.” On Shabbat they would say (Psalms 92), “A Psalm, a Song for the sabbath day.” (Psalms 93) [The latter song] is a psalm for the future, for the day that is completely Shabbat [tranquil] for all eternity.

The psalms are used as a template for giving praises unto the Lord our Father in heaven. All throughout the week the Levites are instructed to give praise to the Lord, This appears to be a form of continual service unto the Lord in the Temple. Likewise, we have much to offer up in praise unto the Lord, not only in the way we live our lives, but also in our hearts because of the great love God had for us sending His son Yeshua for the forgiveness of our sins. Let’s Pray!

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 94* has 6 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Let’s begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 94, Parts 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5*.

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 94, Part 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “O Lord, the power of vengeance, the power of vengeance show forth (*Tehillim / Psalms 94:1*).”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere...”
- The **משל** (mashal) “the parable,” goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihta), the rabbis open with the nations of Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Sabaeans.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “expansion on the parable” expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis speaking on the power of God.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*Rabbi Nathan said, A mortal, him jealousy masters, but the Holy One blessed be He, He masters jealousy, for it is said, The Lord has power over jealousy, and revenges.*”

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*Rabbi Meir taught, The words And you know in your heart, that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you (Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:5)*”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihata) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “... *mean that God said, You and your heart know the deeds which you have done against Me...*”
- The **משל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihata), the rabbis open with a discussion on the goodness of the chastisements of God.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal saying that the way to the Olam Haba is through chastisement.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*Suffering under chastisement is better than offerings in making atonement, for offerings come out of a man’s property, but chastisement fall upon a man’s body, of which it is said, All that a man has will he give for his body (Job 2:4). Accordingly, it is said, Blessed is the man whom You chastise, O Lord, because Thereby You teach him Your Torah (Tehillim / Psalms 94:12).*”

Part 3

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*That You may give him rest from the days of evil, while the pit is dug for the wicked (Tehillim / Psalms 94:13).*”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihata) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Rabbi Levi says that by days of evil are meant the day of judgment and the day of death.*”
- The **משל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihata), the rabbis parallel the days of evil to the new years day and the day of atonement.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the **משל** (mashal), stating obedience causes the Lord to do good things for His people.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*The Rabbis, however, taught, For His people outside the Land of Israel, God acts for the sake of His great name; but for His people within the Land of Israel, God acts for the sake of His people and His inheritance. Hence, For the sake of His people, the Lord will not cast off, nor for the sake of His inheritance will He leave off.*”

Part 4

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*For judgment will return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart will follow it (Tehillim / Psalms 94:15).*”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihata) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Samuel the Little was asked, What is meant by All the upright in heart will follow it?*”
- The **משל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihata), the rabbis discuss the reward for the righteous occurs at one’s death.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the **משל** (mashal), saying that the Lord repays those who despise Him.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*Rabbi Simeon son of Yohai taught, When a man commits a sin, and the angels come and denounce him, saying, O Lord, bow Your heavens, and come down; touch the mountains that they make smoke, shoot out Your arrows and destroy (Tehillim / Psalms 144:5), the Holy One blessed be He, replies, At this moment this man is obdurate, but when he repents I will receive him.*”

Part 5

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*Who will rise up for me against the evil doer?*”

- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “Or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?”
- The משל (mashal) “the parable,” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss the merit of the patriarchs that guards us.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “expansion on the parable” expands upon the משל (mashal), rabbis parallel the merit of the patriarchs to the merit of the Torah.
- The Concluding phrase says, “Rabbi Johanan said, wherever the term except occurs in Scripture, it refers to the guardian merit of the Lord’s name, as it is said, Except the Lord was for us, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up alive (Tehillim / Psalms 124:2-3), and also Except the Lord had been my help, my soul had soon dwelt in silence (Tehillim / Psalms 94:17).”

Midrash Tehillim 94, Part 1 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “O Lord, the power of vengeance, the power of vengeance show forth (Tehillim / Psalms 94:1).” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, זהו שאמר הכתוב כה “These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere...” This is an ancient method of interpretation of the Scripture, where the rabbis direct the student to another relevant section of the Scriptures. This statement highlights the ability of Jewish tradition to change and adapt while at the same time preserving a commitment to the Tanach and its traditional interpretations. The midrash illustrates the creative interpretation and reinterpretation of the Scriptures together with an insistence on the importance of and adherence to tradition within Judaism. This may at times appear puzzling to many people with a background in Catholic or Protestant Christian tradition. The entire midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק צד סימן א</p> <p>א אל נקמות ה' אל נקמות הופיע, זהו שאמר הכתוב כה אמר ה' יגיע מצרים וסחר כוש (וסבא) [וסבאים] אנשי מדה (אליך) [עליך] יעבורו [וגוי] אך בך (ה') [אל] ואין עוד אפס אלהים [אכן אתה אל מסתתר] (ישע"י מה יד טו), מהו אך בך (אלהים) [אל] א"ל (איכן) [אכן] אתה אל מסתתר (איכן) [אכן] יש בך כח ומסתתר, הופיע את גבורתך הוי אל נקמות הופיע. רבי ר' נתן, רבי אומר בשר ודם (הקנאה) [חימה] כובש את אותו, אבל הקב"ה הוא כובש את החימה, שנאמר נוקם ה' ובעל חימה (נחום א ב) [ר' נתן אומר בשר ודם קנאה כובש אותו, אבל הקב"ה כובש את הקנאה, שנאמר אל קנא ונוקם ה' (שם נחום א')].</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 94, Part 1</p> <p>1. O Lord, the power of vengeance, the power of vengeance show forth (Tehillim / Psalms 94:1). These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, Thus says the Lord, The labor of Egypt, and the merchandise of Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans, men of statute, will come over unto you, and they will be yours; they will make supplication unto you. But Israel said, Surely power is in You, and there is none else, there is no other God. But You are power that hides itself (Isaiah 45:14-15). What is the importance of Surely power is in You? This is explained by the verse's going on to say, But you are power that hides itself, that is, There is power in You, but it is unrevealed. Let Your power show forth. Hence, The power of vengeance shows forth. Rabbi and Rabbi Nathan differed in their comments. Rabbi said, A mortal, him fury masters, but the Holy One blessed be He, He masters fury, for it is said, The Lord revenges, but He is master of fury (Nahum 1:2). Rabbi Nathan said, A mortal, him jealousy masters, but the Holy One blessed be He, He masters jealousy, for it is said, The Lord has power over jealousy, and revenges.</p>
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The midrash speaks of the power of God in vengeance, and then compares this to Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Sabeans. The Lord will cause these peoples to come over to Israel and they say these nations or peoples will make supplication to Israel. The phrase “to make supplication” is a reference to tefillah “prayer,” and so the rabbis are saying that these nations and peoples will pray towards Israel. It is only the Lord God in heaven that is able to cause men’s hearts to change in this way. This power of God to work in the hearts of men is said to be hidden, it is not revealed. The Lord does not reveal whether He will work in the hearts

of men or not, this is the reason we are told to always and consistently seek the Lord God in heaven. The reason being, We do not know and therefore are to trust in the Lord God in heaven for all things, even in the midst of our troubles.

Midrash Tehillim 94, Part 1 concludes saying, “*Rabbi and Rabbi Nathan differed in their comments. Rabbi said, A mortal, him fury masters, but the Holy One blessed be He, He masters fury, for it is said, The Lord revenges, but He is master of fury (Nahum 1:2). Rabbi Nathan said, A mortal, him jealousy masters, but the Holy One blessed be He, He masters jealousy, for it is said, The Lord has power over jealousy, and revenges.*” The rabbis say that “*fury*” masters a man, whereas, God masters fury itself and uses it for His purposes, e.g. the Lord avenges. The Lord is able to work in a man’s heart to overcome jealousy and revenge, or to cause other men to become jealous and take revenge. The key point is to be consistent in seeking the Lord God in heaven because it is He who works in the hearts of men to set us at peace with our neighbors. But even in the midst of no peace, Yeshua the Messiah called us to be at peace and to have love for others, because by these things people will know that we are his disciples.

Midrash Tehillim 94, Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “*Rabbi Meir taught, The words And you know in your heart, that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you (Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:5)*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “... means that God said, *You and your heart know the deeds which you have done against Me...*” The rabbis interpret the parallel that is drawn between a man who chastises his son, in a similar manner, the Lord God in heaven chastises his children but the difference is the Lord does not chastise in proportion to our sins. He is much more lenient in his reproving us for our sins, the Lord is merciful. The midrash continues saying the following:

Rabbi Simeon son of Yohai taught, Chastisements are good; because of them three precious gifts came to Israel, gifts that the nations of the earth desired for themselves. Yet only because of chastisements were the gifts, Torah, the world to come, and the Land of Israel, given to Israel. And the proof that the Torah was given? It is said, To know wisdom and chastisement (Mishley / Proverbs 1:2), and also Blessed is the man whom You chasteness, O Lord, for thereby You teach him Your Torah (Tehillim / Psalms 94:12). And the proof that the Land of Israel was given? It is said, As a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you (Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:5) that is, as a man chastens his son with a rod, so the Lord your god chastens you with a rod. And what follows? The Lord your God brings you into a good land (Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:7). And the proof that the world to come was given? The verse, Reproofs by chastisements are the way to life (Mishley / Proverbs 6:23). Here Scripture says, Go forth and see for yourself what way leads to life in the world to come, and you will have to admit that it is chastisement. Rabbi Jose son of Judah taught, Chastisements are precious in the sight of the Holy One blessed be He, for the name of the Holy One blessed be He, comes to rest upon him who is chastised, as it is said, The Lord your God chastens you (Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:5). Blessed is the man who You chasten, O Lord for thereby You teach him Your Torah (Tehillim / Psalms 94:12). At first God chastens you, but then He brings you to possess the Torah, the Land of Israel, and life in the world to come. (Midrash Tehillim 94, Part 2)

The midrash speaks of chastisement and then good gifts that follow (three gifts), (i) the Torah, (ii) the Olam Haba, and (iii) the Land of Israel. When the Lord brings chastening which then has a restraining or moderating effect on the behavior of the people, the idea is the Lord is teaching His people His Torah (instruction), chastening brings wisdom so the next time one thinks about his actions and weighs his deeds whether they are righteous or wicked. Another parallel is drawn between a man who chastens with the rod, so too the Lord chastens us with a rod, and the proof is that He brought His people into the Promised Land. How does the rod cause us to understand the Lord brought His people into the Land? The rabbis use *Mishley / Proverbs 6:23* כִּי נֵר מְצֻוָה וְתוֹרָה אֹר וְדַרְךְ חַיִּים תּוֹכַחֹת מוֹסֵר: 6:23 *For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life. (NASB)* Chastisement brings life in

the world to come because it causes one to walk in righteousness. When we see the righteousness of God, we seek to live for him for the sake of the Lord and not for ourselves, and the Lord then works in our lives enabling us to live for Him.

The Midrash continues saying the following:

Rabbi Nathan son of Jose taught, Chastisements are precious; because of them the covenant was made with the children of Israel, as is said, I will bring you into the crucible of the covenant (Ezekiel 20:37). Rabbi Eliezer son of Jacob taught, Behold, Scripture says, for Whom the Lord loves He chastises, even as a father (ke'av) the son in whom he delights (Mishley / Proverbs 3:12). Read not ke'av, as a father, but ke'ev, suffering under chastisement. What then enables you to make atonement to your Father in heaven? Admit that it is suffering under chastisement. Rabbi Henemiah taught that chastisements are precious, for as offerings make atonement, so chastisements make atonement, of an offering, it is written, It will be accepted for him to make atonement for him (Vayikra / Leviticus 1:4); and of suffering under chastisement, it is written, The son's suffering under chastisement makes atonement for him (Mishley / Proverbs 3:13), and again, The Land will lie forsaken without them, while they will make atonement for their iniquity (Vayikra / Leviticus 26:43). Not only this, but even more. (Midrash Tehillim 94, Part 2)

Why do you think chastisements are precious as the midrash is claiming? It could be by reason of chastisement, we know that we are God's children. If we are not God's children, then destruction would be swift. But because we are His children and the Lord does not seek to destroy us but to draw us back to repentance, and to turn from sin, which the Scriptures describe as life everlasting. The covenant is brought into the context of reproofs, and the parallel of a father who punishes his son for disobeying is again made. Within the covenant context, we find the need for atonement due to one's sins. The rabbis say that atonement will only come when one admits that his suffering is the result of his sins. The rabbis further interpret chastisements as having the capability of making atonement. The reason is when the people were exiled from the Land, they were making atonement by their punishment, in which after the allotted time, the Lord God remembered the covenant and brought the people back to the Land.

Midrash Tehillim 94, Part 2 concludes saying, "*Suffering under chastisement is better than offerings in making atonement, for offerings come out of a man's property, but chastisement fall upon a man's body, of which it is said, All that a man has will he give for his body (Job 2:4). Accordingly, it is said, Blessed is the man whom You chastise, O Lord, because Thereby You teach him Your Torah (Tehillim / Psalms 94:12).*" The reasoning behind sufferings making atonement is found in that which comes upon a man's body and is in the context of "*All that a man has will he give for his body (Job 2:4).*" This is an interesting concept the rabbis are putting forward saying suffering brings atonement, because this leads to the interpretation of what the Messiah Yeshua had done, His suffering in the body, led to our atonement before God. The difference is that Yeshua admitted that his suffering was for our sins and not because of his own. Believing in the Messiah Yeshua, and in the suffering that He did upon the cross, atonement was made on our behalf, and we may stand justified before the Lord God our Father in heaven. Therefore, based upon this midrash, what Yeshua the Messiah did upon the cross outside of the city is a valid method for making atonement before God on our behalf.

Midrash Tehillim 94, Part 3 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, "*That You may give him rest from the days of evil, while the pit is dug for the wicked (Tehillim / Psalms 94:13).*" The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, "*Rabbi Levi says that by days of evil are meant the day of judgment and the day of death.*"

The entire midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק צד סימן ג</p> <p>ג להשקיט לו מימי רע [עד יכרה לרשע שחת], אמר ר' לוי זה יום הדין ויום המיתה, רבנן אמרו זה ראש השנה ויום הכפורים. כי לא יטוש ה' עמו [ונחלתו לא יעזוב. וכתוב אחד אומר כי לא יטוש ה' את עמו בעבור שמו הגדול (ש"א שמואל א' יב כב)], ר' אייבו ור' שמואל בר נחמני אמרו בשעה שישראל עושין רצונו של מקום הוא עושה בשביל עמו ונחלתו, ובשעה שאין להם מעשים טובים עושה למען שמו הגדול, [ורבנן אמרי לאנשי חוץ לארץ הוא עושה בשביל שמו הגדול], ולאנשי ארץ ישראל בעבור עמו ונחלתו, הוי כי לא יטוש ה' עמו.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 94, Part 3</p> <p>3. <i>That You may give him rest from the days of evil, while the pit is dug for the wicked (Tehillim / Psalms 94:13). Rabbi Levi says that by days of evil are meant the day of judgment and the day of death. But the Rabbis say that by days of evil are meant New Year's Day and the Day of Atonement. Our text reads, For the sake of His people, the Lord will not cast off, nor for the sake of His inheritance will He leave off (Tehillim / Psalms 94:14), but another text reads, The Lord will not forsake His people for His great name's sake (1 Samuel 12:22). Rabbi Aibu and Rabbi Samuel son of Nakhmani reconciled the two texts thus, When the children of Israel do the will of the Lord, He acts for the sake of His people and His inheritance; but when the children of Israel do not own good deeds, God acts for the sake of His great name. The Rabbis, however, taught, For His people outside the Land of Israel, God acts for the sake of His great name; but for His people within the Land of Israel, God acts for the sake of His people and His inheritance. Hence, For the sake of His people, the Lord will not cast off, nor for the sake of His inheritance will He leave off.</i></p>
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Rabbi Levi states the days of evil is a reference to the day of judgment and the day of death. In a similar way, in the Apostolic Writings we read that it is appointed unto a man to die once and then the judgment according to the book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 9:22-28

9:22 And according to the Law, one may almost say all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. 9:23 Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 9:24 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 9:25 nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. 9:26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 9:27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, 9:28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him. (NASB)

The book of Hebrews speaks of the Torah and cleansing by blood, and how the Messiah entered into the holy place in heaven to offer his own blood to make atonement for sin. Note how this is consistent with Midrash Tehillim 94, Part 2 on suffering making atonement for sin. *Hebrews 9:27* states that it is appointed unto a man to die once and then the judgment. We are given time in this life to search out and seek the Lord God in heaven. If we do not spend our lives striving for righteousness and to draw near to the Lord, if we spend our days living in sin and enjoying our sins (disobedience) then judgment day will be a day of great grief.

The Midrash continues with the rabbis comparing the days of evil to the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) and to Rosh Hashanah (New Year's Day). Why do you think these two days are singled out as the days of evil? The Midrash continues with references to the Lord not forsaking His people, and this may be similar to what the author of Hebrews is trying to say, in *Hebrews 9:28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him. (NASB)* “The Lord will not forsake His people for His great name's sake (1 Samuel

12:22).” The rabbis say “When the children of Israel do the will of the Lord, He acts for the sake of His people and His inheritance; but when the children of Israel do not own good deeds, God acts for the sake of His great name.” This suggests that the Lord works in the lives of His people to cause them to move towards obedience. Does your life exhibit this kind of fruit? Can you see the Lord working in your life leading you towards obedience to His word?

Midrash Tehillim 94, Part 3 concludes saying, “The Rabbis, however, taught, For His people outside the Land of Israel, God acts for the sake of His great name; but for His people within the Land of Israel, God acts for the sake of His people and His inheritance. Hence, For the sake of His people, the Lord will not cast off, nor for the sake of His inheritance will He leave off.” The people are God’s inheritance, and the Promised Land and the presence of God in their midst is the people’s inheritance. The Lord moves mightily to help His people to be overcomer’s in this life, and this is consistent with what is taught in the Apostolic Writings.

Midrash Tehillim 94, Part 4 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “For judgment will return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart will follow it (Tehillim / Psalms 94:15).” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “Samuel the Little was asked, What is meant by All the upright in heart will follow it?” The Targum states, טו 94:15 ארום עד צדקתא יתוב דינא ובתרוי יתפרקון כל תריצי ליבא: For justice will return to righteousness, and after it all the upright of heart will be redeemed. (EMC) It appears that the righteous will draw near to righteousness when judgment comes upon them when a righteous person sins. This is the earmark of a child of God, in whom the Spirit of God is dwelling. When bad things happen, we do not blame the Lord, we look inward at our lives and ask the question of what the Lord is trying to teach us by these circumstances, etc.

The entire Midrash states the following:

מדרש תהלים פרק צד סימן ד	Midrash Tehillim 94, Part 4
<p>ד כי עד צדק ישוב משפט ואחריו כל ישרי לב. אמרוה לשמואל הקטן מהו ואחריו כל ישרי לב, אמר להם מתן שכרן [של צדיקים נתון באחריהם, שנאמר ואחריו כל ישרי לב, ומתן שכרן] של רשעים נתון לפניו, שנאמר ומשלם לשנאיו (על) [אל] פניו להאבידו (דברים ז י), א"ר שמעון בן יוחאי בשעה שאדם עובר עבירה באין המלאכים ומקטרין גין אותו, ואומרים ה' הט שמיד ותרד גע בה רים ויעשנו (תהלים קמד ה), והקב"ה אומר להם קשה הוא האדם הזה בשעתו שאם יעשה תשובה מקבלו.</p>	<p>4. For judgment will return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart will follow it (Tehillim / Psalms 94:15). Samuel the Little was asked, What is meant by All the upright in heart will follow it? He replied, The reward of the upright follows upon their death, as is said, All the upright will follow it; but the reward of the wicked is paid them here and now, as is said God repays them that hate Him to their face, to destroy them (Devarim / Deuteronomy 7:10). Rabbi Simeon son of Yohai taught, When a man commits a sin, and the angels come and denounce him, saying, O Lord, bow Your heavens, and come down; touch the mountains that they make smoke, shoot out Your arrows and destroy (Tehillim / Psalms 144:5), the Holy One blessed be He, replies, At this moment this man is obdurate, but when he repents I will receive him.</p>

The rabbis interpret the meaning of “All the upright in heart will follow it” as referring to the reward of the righteous in the afterlife. The wicked on the other hand are rewarded in the Olam HaZeh for their deeds. So the best the unrighteous person can expect are the things in this life, as opposed to the righteous who may expected much greater things being given from the Lord God above. So, is there a parallel here to a Christian who believes in Yeshua the Messiah but rejects God’s Torah (Law), and yet receives all kinds of blessings in this life? Blessing does not always confirm one is walking righteously before God.

Midrash Tehillim 94, Part 4 concludes saying, “Rabbi Simeon son of Yohai taught, When a man commits a sin, and the angels come and denounce him, saying, O Lord, bow Your heavens, and come down; touch the mountains that they make smoke, shoot out Your arrows and destroy (Tehillim / Psalms 144:5), the Holy One blessed be He, replies, At this moment this man is obdurate, but when he repents I will receive him.”

To be obdurate is to be unyielding and stubbornly refusing to change one’s opinion or course of action. The Midrash states that this is how we are before God, and the Lord looks for us to repent. Repentance literally means to turn (שוב) according to the Hebrew text, and is the activity of reviewing one’s actions and feeling contrition or regret for past wrongs. It generally involves a commitment to personal change followed by the resolve to live a more responsible life before God according to His commandments. The practice of repentance plays an important role in the doctrine of soteriology where repentance is considered necessary for the attainment of salvation by faith in Yeshua the Messiah. So when someone tells you that you do not need to do anything, just believe in Yeshua, that is not exactly true according to the Scriptures.

Midrash Tehillim 94, Part 5 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “Who will rise up for me against the evil doer?” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “Or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?” The Midrash draws out the point that Scriptures do not speak about the need to tolerate sin. We are not told to be quiet and to allow sin to go unopposed. The Scriptures describe our lives as being in a battle and that our lives will be rough as we stand against sin in our lives and speak out against sin in this world. Looking the other way and letting sin continue is not a battle. If we simply turn our heads away from sin and ignore what is going on, we are not only failing to be the salt of the earth, we must also ask ourselves whether we have the indwelling of God’s Holy Spirit? Here in the Midrash taken from the Psalm, the Lord is asking who will go against the workers of iniquity? The Lord is actually calling us to take a stand against sin and to speak out against it.

The entire Midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק צד סימן ה</p> <p>ה מי יתיצב לי עם מרעים מי יתיצב לי עם פועלי און (לולא) [לולי] ה' עזרתה (לנו) [לי]. אמר ר' יהושע בן לוי כל מקום שנאמר לולי אינו אלא [בזכות] אבות, שנאמר לולי אלהי אבי אלהי אברהם (בראשית לא מב), נענה ר' זבדי בן לוי והא כתיב (לולי) [לולא] התמהמהנו (שם בראשית מג י), אמר ל' אף הוא בזכות אבות, שאם לא היה זכות אבות לא היינו עולין משם. אמר ר' לוי כל מקום שנאמר [לולי בזכות התורה שנאמר] לולי תורתך שעשור עי (תהלים קיט צב), ובזכות האמנה, שנאמר לולא האמנתי לראות בטוב ה' בארץ (החיים) [חיים] (שם תהלים כז יג), אמר ר' יוחנן כל מקום שנאמר לולי בזכות שמו, שנאמר לולי ה' שהיה לנו (שם תהלים קכד ב) וכתיב לולי ה' עזרתה (לנו) [לי] (תהלים צד פסוק יז).</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 94, Part 5</p> <p>5. Who will rise up for me against the evil doer? Or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity? Except the Lord had been my help my soul had soon dwelt in silence (Tehillim / Psalms 94:16-17). Rabbi Joshua son of Levi said, Wherever the term except (lule) occurs in Scripture, it can only refer to the guardian merit of the Patriarchs, for it is said, Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the Fear of Isaac, had been on my side, surely now had you sent me away empty (Bereshit / Genesis 31:42). But Rabbi Zavdi son of Levi retorted, Is it not also written Except we had lingered, surely we had now returned a second time (Bereshit / Genesis 43:10)? Rabbi Joshua answered, Even this verse refers to the guardian merit of the Patriarchs, for had there been no guardian merit of the Patriarchs, we could not have come up thence at all. Rabbi Levi said, Wherever the term except occurs in Scripture, it refers to the guardian merit of Torah, as it is said, Except Your Torah had been my delight, I should then have perished in my affliction (Tehillim / Psalms 119:92); it may also refer to the guardian merit of faith, as it is said I had fainted, except I had believed to look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living (Tehillim / Psalms 27:13). Rabbi Johanan said, wherever the term except occurs in Scripture, it refers to the guardian merit of the Lord’s name, as it is said, Except the Lord was for us, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up alive (Tehillim / Psalms 124:2-3), and also Except the Lord had been my help, my soul had soon dwelt in silence (Tehillim / Psalms 94:17).</p>
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The Midrash opens with the question of the evil doer and who will stand up against the workers of iniquity, and then Rabbi Joshua speaks of the guardian merit of the Patriarchs. What does the guardian merit of the Patriarchs mean? In the history of Israel, the Scriptures describe the merits of the Patriarchs in the sense

of the faith and lives of the Patriarchs. It was because of the promises the Lord made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, coupled with their faith and the way they lived their lives for the Lord, that the Lord remembered His covenant and brought Israel up from slavery. This kind of salvation come by waiting upon and trusting in the Lord God to keep His word. On the mount of olives (*Matthew 6:20*) Yeshua taught that believers should lay up for themselves treasures in heaven. We are told to turn the other cheek, to walk the second mile, and to give away our cloak to those who ask or demand, etc. The motivation for this may have be to build up merits in the treasury of heaven so that the Lord God would reward His people and punish our enemies. Have you ever thought of it in this way before? Paul said in *Romans 12* “*Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, Vengeance is mine. I will repay, says the Lord. No. If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him drink; for by doing so you will heap burning coals upon his head.. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*” Vengeance belongs to the Lord, and therefore, in order to hurt our enemies more is to be good to them so that their sins would be greater and thereby requiring the greater divine punishment. We do these things from a righteous perspective and not for the reason simply to make their punishment worse. In our suffering at the hands of our enemies, the Lord God will see and save us. Our children will then prosper due to our meritorious deeds in the sense that if we lived in sin, the Lord would send us out and into captivity, our children would go with us and be partakers of the punishment of God. It is in this way the merit of the Patriarchs is understood by the rabbis. Peter, in his epistle (*1 Peter 2:21-25*) pointed to the meritorious sufferings of the Messiah, from whose wounds later believers would be healed. We find the parallel again in the Apostolic Writings where suffering and atonement as it is connected to the meritorious deed.

The Midrash continues speaking of the guardian merit of the Patriarchs and how faith may be one way to build up our merit saying, “*Except Your Torah had been my delight, I should then have perished in my affliction (Tehillim / Psalms 119:92); it may also refer to the guardian merit of faith, as it is said I had fainted, except I had believed to look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living (Tehillim / Psalms 27:13).*” Faith is believing in the goodness of God and trusting that He is in control. As a result of our faith we trust in the Lord and our lives then are guided by our faith.

Midrash Tehillim 94, Part 5 concludes saying, “*Rabbi Johanan said, wherever the term except occurs in Scripture, it refers to the guardian merit of the Lord’s name, as it is said, Except the Lord was for us, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up alive (Tehillim / Psalms 124:2-3), and also Except the Lord had been my help, my soul had soon dwelt in silence (Tehillim / Psalms 94:17).*” Based upon this Midrash, the rabbis believe that our good deeds move the Lord God in heaven to work on behalf of His people to save them from their enemies. Reading through the Tanach, through 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles, it becomes obvious that when a man obeys the Lord and has a heart that is devoted to Him, the Lord will cause his enemies to be at peace with him. King Solomon recognized this when he wrote according to *Mishley / Proverbs 16:7*: אִישׁ-גַּם-אוֹיְבָיו יִשְׁלַם אֹתוֹ: *16:7 When a man’s ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. (NASB)* The Scriptures have a lot to say concerning a man’s merit before God in the sense that a man is obedient to God’s Word and seeks the help of the Lord to live his live in a way that is pleasing to Him. Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for Your mercy and seek Your help to live our lives for Your glory, simply for the sake of Your name’s sake. Lord we recognize that You placed within our hearts to seek and to serve you, we ask that you would strengthen that desire by the power of the Holy Spirit that dwells within us. We thank You Lord for Your continued faithfulness to Your promises Your dwelling in our midst. 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,

— Tehillim / Psalms 94 | ספר תהילים צד —
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