

Tehillim / Psalms 125 | ספר תהילים קכה

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

Do You have a Deep Desire to Pursue God?

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 125:1-5*, the psalm opens saying, א שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת הַבְּטְחִים, *A Song of Ascents. 125:1 Those who trust in the Lord Are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved but abides forever. (NASB)* It is very interesting how the psalmist declares, those who trust in the Lord are Mount Zion which cannot be moved but abides forever. What does it mean Zion abides forever? The psalmist continues saying, ב רְוַשְׁלָם הָרִים סָבִיב לָהּ וַיְהִי לָהּ וַיְהִי סָבִיב לְעַמּוֹ מִצְדָּתָהּ וְעַד—, *125:2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem, So the Lord surrounds His people From this time forth and forever. 125:3 For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest upon the land of the righteous, So that the righteous will not put forth their hands to do wrong. (NASB)* The mountains are understood as being solid and as a wall of protection to the people, with the Lord God in heaven being paralleled to its strength. The psalmist believes in the importance of doing what is right according to God's Torah has having benefits for the child of God. The benefit is in the Lord working in the life of the unrighteous person to protect the righteous from harm. This is further illustrated by what the psalmist states, ד הֵיטִיבָה יְהוָה לְטוֹבִים וְלִישָׁרִים בְּלִבּוֹתָם: *125:4 Do good, O Lord, to those who are good And to those who are upright in their hearts. (NASB)* The point is to be righteous in all of areas in our lives. We are to be innocent in our hearts in all that we do. The Psalm concludes saying, ה וְהַמַּטִּים עַקְלָקְלוֹתָם יוֹלִיכֵם יְהוָה אֶת-פְּעָלֵי הָאָוֶן שְׁלוֹם עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל: *125:5 But as for those who turn aside to their crooked ways, The Lord will lead them away with the doers of iniquity. Peace be upon Israel. (NASB)* Notice how the psalm speaks of turning aside to one's works of iniquity (crooked ways). The psalmist states that for such a person, the Lord will lead them away with the doers of iniquity. This suggests that we are not given a "get our of jail" tick for free. We have a certain responsibility as the people of God to walk in God's Ways! This means we do not pursue wickedness, unrighteousness. We are called to be a people of Teshuvah (Repentance). The point is we should have within our hearts the desire to pursue the Lord God and His Messiah Yeshua.

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
ספר תהלים פרק קכה	ספר תהלים פרק קכה	ספר טוביה פרק קכה	ספר טוביה פרק קכה	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 125	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 125
א שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת הַבְּטְחִים בִּיהוָה כָּהֲר־צִיּוֹן לֹא-יִמוּט לְעוֹלָם יֵשֵׁב: ב רְוַשְׁלָם הָרִים סָבִיב לָהּ וַיְהִי לָהּ וַיְהִי סָבִיב לְעַמּוֹ מִצְדָּתָהּ וְעַד-עוֹלָם: ג כִּי לֹא יִגּוּחַ שִׁבְט הַרְשָׁע עַל גּוֹרֵל הַצַּדִּיקִים לְמַעַן לֹא-יִשְׁלְחוּ הַצַּדִּיקִים בְּעוֹלָתָהּ יְדִיקָם: ד הֵיטִיבָה יְהוָה לְטוֹבִים וְלִישָׁרִים בְּלִבּוֹתָם: ה וְהַמַּטִּים עַקְלָקְלוֹתָם יוֹלִיכֵם יְהוָה אֶת-פְּעָלֵי הָאָוֶן שְׁלוֹם עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל:	א שירא דאיתאמר על מסקיין מסוקין דתהומא צדיקיא דמתרחצין במימרא דיהוה היך תורא דציון לא יזדעזע לעלם יתיבת: ב ירושלם תוריא חזור חזור דילה ומימרא ושכינתא דיהוה חזור חזור לעמיה מן השתא ועד עלמא: ג ארום לא ינוח שבט רישעא שבטא דעשו רשיעא על פיצתא דצדיקיא מן בגלל דלא יושיטון צדיקיא בשקרא אידהון: ד אוטיב יהוה לטבין ולתריצין בלבבהון: ה ודסטיין בתר עוקמנותהון יולכינן ייי בגנהם חולקהון עם עבדי שקר שלמא על ישראל:	125:1 ὠδῆ τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν οἱ πεποιθότες ἐπὶ κύριον ὡς ὄρος Σιών οὐ σαλευθήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ὁ κατοικῶν Ἱερουσαλὴμ 125:2 ὄρη κύκλω αὐτῆς καὶ κύριος κύκλω τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν καὶ ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος 125:3 ὅτι οὐκ ἀφήσει τὴν ῥάβδον τῶν ἀμαρτωλῶν ἐπὶ τὸν κληῖρον τῶν δικαίων ὅπως ἂν μὴ ἐκτείνωσιν οἱ δίκαιοι ἐν ἀνομίᾳ χεῖρας αὐτῶν 125:4 ἀγάθυνον κύριε τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ τοῖς εὐθέσι τῇ καρδίᾳ 125:5 τοὺς δὲ ἐκκλίνοντας εἰς τὰς στραγγαλιὰς ἀπάξει κύριος μετὰ τῶν ἐργαζομένων τὴν ἀνομίαν εἰρήνη ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ			

<p>Tehillim Psalms 124 A Song of Ascents. 125:1 Those who trust in the Lord Are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved but abides forever. 125:2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem, So the Lord surrounds His people From this time forth and forever. 125:3 For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest upon the land of the righteous, So that the righteous will not put forth their hands to do wrong. 125:4 Do good, O Lord, to those who are good And to those who are upright in their hearts. 125:5 But as for those who turn aside to their crooked ways, The Lord will lead them away with the doers of iniquity. Peace be upon Israel. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah Psalms 124 125:1 A song that was uttered on the ascents of the abyss. The righteous who trust in the word of the Lord are like Mount Zion; it will not totter, it is inhabited forever. 125:2 Mountains are round about Jerusalem, and the word of the Lord is round about his people from this time and forever. 125:3 For the scepter of wickedness will not rest on the lot of the righteous, so that the righteous will not stretch out their hand to deceit. 125:4 Be good, O Lord, to the good, and to those upright in their heart. 125:5 But those who go astray following their perversity – the Lord will make them go to Gehenna; their portion is with the workers of deceit. Peace be upon Israel! (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi Psalms 124 A Song of Degrees. 125:1 They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Sion: he that dwells in Jerusalem shall never be moved. 125:2 The mountains are round about her, and so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth and even for ever. 125:3 For the Lord will not allow the rod of sinners to be upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous should stretch forth their hands to iniquity. 125:4 Do good, O Lord, to them that are good, and to them that are upright in heart. 125:5 But them that turn aside to crooked ways the Lord will lead away with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel. (LXX)</p>
---	--	--

In this week’s study from *Tehillim / Psalms 125:1-5*, the psalm opens saying, אֲשִׁיר הַמַּעְלֹת הַבְּטָחִים יְשׁוּבָה: *A Song of Ascents. 125:1 Those who trust in the Lord Are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved but abides forever. (NASB)* It is very interesting how the psalmist declares, those who trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion which cannot be moved but abides forever. What does it mean Zion abides forever? When we consider life itself, everything around us changes. From moment to moment loved ones get older, babies are born and grow, plants and trees grow and show change, we see changes in the seasons, and in our lives, and even theories come and go. We see inventions come go and are replaced with something else or something better. If we consider all of these things, we can count on change, getting older, our bodies break down, we die, these things are a fact of life. When we consider the psalmist’s comments on Mount Zion, we find the everlasting foundation and unchanging nature of God and His Messiah. In *Tehillim / Psalm 87:2-3* we read, “*The Lord loves the gates of Zion / more than all the other dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are said of you, city of God.*” According to this verse, Zion is synonymous with the city of God, and it is a place that the God of Israel loves. Zion is a reference to Jerusalem. Mount Zion is the high hill on which David built a city. It is on the southeast side of the city of Jerusalem. In the Scriptures, the word Zion occurs over 150 times. Based upon the biblical descriptions of Zion, it essentially means “*fortification*” as something that has been “*raised up.*” The Scriptures describe Zion as both the city of David and the city of God. As we read through the Tanach, we find a progression on the interpretation of Zion taking upon it a spiritual meaning. The first mention of Zion in the Tanach is *2 Samuel 5:7* saying, “*David captured the fortress of Zion—which is the City of David.*” Based upon what we read here, Zion was originally an ancient Jebusite fortress in the city of Jerusalem. After David’s conquest of the fortress, Jerusalem became a possession of Israel. The royal palace was built there, and Zion/Jerusalem became the seat of power in Israel’s kingdom. When King Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem, the meaning of Zion expanded further to include the temple area (see *Tehillim / Psalm 2:6, 48:2, 11–12, 132:13*). We understand this based upon *Jeremiah 31:6*, “*Come, let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God.*” In the Tanach, Zion

is used as a name for the city of Jerusalem (*Isaiah 40:9*), the land of Judah (*Jeremiah 31:12*), and the nation of Israel as a whole (*Zechariah 9:13*). In the Apostolic Writings, Zion refers to God's spiritual kingdom. The author of the book of Hebrews says, we have come "to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (*Hebrews 12:22*). Note also that Peter, quoted *Isaiah 28:16*, saying the Messiah is the Cornerstone of Zion. "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." (*1 Peter 2:6*)

The rabbis have the following to say concerning our psalm and Zion in the *Talmud Bavli Berekhot 58b*.

Talmud Bavli Berekhot 58b Part 4

אמר ליה הכי אמר ר' יוחנן מיום שחרב בית המקדש נגזרה גזירה על בתיהן של צדיקים שיחרבו שנאמר (ישעיהו ה, ט) באזני ה' צבאות אם לא בתים רבים לשמה יהיו גדולים וטובים מאין יושב ואמר ר' יוחנן עתיד הקדוש ברוך הוא להחזירן לישובן שנאמר (תהלים קכה, א) שיר המעלות לדוד הבוטחים ביי' כהר ציון מה הר ציון עתיד הקדוש ברוך הוא להחזירו לישובו אף בתיהן של צדיקים עתיד הקב"ה להחזירן לישובן חזייה דלא מיישב דעתיה א"ל דיו לעבד שיהא כרבו *Ulla said to Rav Hisda: You have nothing about which to sigh, as Rabbi Yohanan said as follows: From the day that the Temple was destroyed a decree was issued upon the houses of the righteous that they would be destroyed, as it is stated: "In mine ears said the Lord of hosts: Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant" (Isaiah 5:9). And Rabbi Yohanan said: In the future, in the end of days, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will restore them to their original locations and their inhabited state, as it is stated: "A Song of Ascents of David. They who trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved but abides forever" (Psalms 125:1). From this verse one may infer that just as in the future the Holy One, Blessed be He, will restore Mount Zion to its inhabited state, so too, in the future the Holy One, Blessed be He, will restore the houses of the righteous to their inhabited state, so you have no reason to sigh. Seeing that he was still not satisfied, Ulla said to him: It is enough for a servant to be like his master. Since God leaves His home, the Holy Temple, in ruins, one should not be distraught over the destruction of the houses of the righteous.*

The Talmud speaks of the unmovable nature of Mount Zion and of the Lord at a future time restoring this place to His people. They say this restoration will go to the righteous. The righteous will be like the master, our Father in heaven who is righteous and holy and just. Note also the Apostolic Writings teach us that those who remain in the Messiah Yeshua will abide forever. The Holy Temple remains in ruins because of the lack of these things in the hearts and lives of God's people. The hope and expectation however is of the Lord working in our lives and of the restoration of His people to that sacred place.

The commentary *Kol HaTor 2:37* states the following:

Kol HaTor 2:37

לז) הר ציון לא ימוט, לעולם ישב (תהלים ק"ה) – וכן צדיק לעולם בל ימוט (משלי י"א) וכמובא (Ps. 125:1) "Mount Zion never falters, but abides forever" -- Likewise, a righteous person never falters (Prov.12:6). As brought in the Midrash: whatever occurred to Yosef, occurred to Zion.

The commentary speaks of Mount Zion never failing and abiding forever, just as the righteous endure through all things with the help of God. Mount Zion as a geographical area is currently the center of much dispute. The Scriptures and the Rabbinic Literature are clear that, one day, Zion is the sole possession of the Lord God of Israel, and that he will one day restore Zion to the nation of Israel. We read the following in Scripture, "the children of your oppressors will come bowing before you; all who despise you will bow down at your feet, and will call you the City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel" (*Isaiah 60:14*) and "Awake, awake, Clothe yourself in your strength, O Zion; Clothe yourself in your beautiful garments,

O Jerusalem, the holy city; For the uncircumcised and the unclean, Will no longer come into you” (Isaiah 52:1). Isaiah says the enemy will recognize the place the Lord has established His name and do so by paying homage to the people of God. The Aramaic Targum states, א שירא דאיתאמר על מסקיין מסוקין דתהומא 125:1 A song that was uttered on the ascents of the abyss. The righteous who trust in the word of the Lord are like Mount Zion; it will not totter; it is inhabited forever. (EMC) The establishment of God’s name in His people is illustrated by His people bearing the testimony of God. This is synonymous to trusting in the word of the Lord, and applying God’s Word to our lives.

ב ירושלים הרים סביב לה ויהנה סביב לעמו מעתה ועד-עולם: ג פי לא: The psalmist continues saying, *125:2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem, So the Lord surrounds His people From this time forth and forever. 125:3 For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest upon the land of the righteous, So that the righteous will not put forth their hands to do wrong. (NASB) The Aramaic Targum states the following, ב ירושלם טוריא חזור חזור דילה ומימרא ושכינתא דיהוה חזור חזור לעמיה מן השתא ועד עלמא: ג ארום לא ינוח שבט רישעא שבטא דעשו רשיעא על 125:2 Mountains are round about Jerusalem, and the word of the Lord is round about his people from this time and forever. 125:3 For the scepter of wickedness will not rest on the lot of the righteous, so that the righteous will not stretch out their hand to deceit. (EMC) The mountains are understood as being solid and as a wall of protection to the people, with the Lord God in heaven being paralleled to its strength. The psalmist believes in the importance of doing what is right according to God’s Torah as having benefits for the child of God. The benefit is in the Lord working in the life of the unrighteous person to protect the righteous from harm. The prophets Isaiah, Amos, Hosea, and Micah, all prophesied at about the same time, telling the people of Israel that if they considered themselves God’s special people living under His protection, then they should live according to His ways, being obedient to His Torah. The problem was they were not doing according to God’s Torah. Each of these prophets spoke of a future expectation of the ‘last days,’ a time when the people would obey God, trust in Him, and when He would take control in power and sovereign authority in men’s lives. Hosea 2:5 states, “the time will come when the sons of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king, and in the end they will come in awe to the Lord and his goodness.” Amos 9:13-15 says, “The days are coming, the Lord declares, when the ploughman will overtake the reaper, and he who treads the grapes will overtake the sower; when the mountains are wet with new wine, and the hills grow soft with it. That will be when I bring back the exiles of my people Israel, to rebuild deserted cities and live in them, to plant vineyards and drink their wine, to make gardens and eat their fruit. And I will plant them in their own land. Never again shall they be uprooted from the land which I gave to them. The Lord, your God, has spoken.” In addition, Isaiah 2:1-4 at the beginning of his prophecies, speaks of what he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem saying, “In the last days the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established as chief among the mountains, raised above the hills, and all nations will stream into it. Many peoples will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths’. The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations, settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more.” This vision is of the greatness and majesty of Zion, the place in which the Lord has established His Name. Isaiah speaks of his own nation, of what would be the situation when the Lord God acted and God’s people behaved as they should obeying His Torah from the correct motivation of heart. This vision includes all the families of earth being blessed. The response which Isaiah urged upon the people was “Come O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord.” When we consider the meaning of light and darkness in the Scriptures, to walk in God’s light is to walk according to His mitzvot (commandments) which was counter to the way they were currently behaving. He had a vision of a future state, something the Lord God would eventually do and the people were to live in obedient response. Micah 4:1-4 states, “Every man shall sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid for the Lord Almighty has*

spoken.” Micah states that God’s rule is not just the politics of who is in authority, but results in simple blessings for ordinary people. His response is different from Isaiah’s, which is opposite to “*Let us walk,*” an exhortation, but says instead, “*We will walk,*” which is indicative of a promise as he says, “*All the nations may walk in the name of their gods, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.*” In a world of many nations and many religions (gods), this is a pledge of loyalty to the Lord our God. Note again how walking in the name of the Lord our God is to do so according to His Torah! The giving of God’s Torah to His people is the ultimate triumph of God’s grace towards Israel! Mount Zion symbolizes the unique authority and relationship with God throughout the Scriptures. This is not only connected to His people, but also to the Gentiles who will come to worship the Lord God in heaven (*Isaiah 2*). The Gentiles will come to the mountain of the Lord to be taught by the Lord concerning His salvation and truth that leads to a life that serves and pleases God! This points to men being at peace with God and with one another, since the Torah mandates these things upon the lives of the people.

These things are further illustrated by what the psalmist states, **ד הִיטִיבָה יְהוָה לְטוֹבִים וְלִישָׁרִים כְּלְבוֹתָם: 125:4** *Do good, O Lord, to those who are good And to those who are upright in their hearts. (NASB)* Notice how the psalmist asks the Lord to be good to those who are good and who are upright in heart, indicating our faith is a matter of how we live our lives for the Lord. Doing good and being upright in our hearts! The Aramaic Targum states, **ד 125:4 אוטיב יהוה לטבין ולתריצין בלבבהון:** *Be good, O Lord, to the good, and to those upright in their heart. (EMC)* The point is we are called to be righteous in all of areas in our lives. We are to be innocent in our hearts in all that we do. The Apostle Paul wrote to us the following:

2 Timothy 3:1-17

3:1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 3:2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3:3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 3:4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 3:5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. 3:6 For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, 3:7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 3:8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith. 3:9 But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes’ and Jambres’ folly was also. 3:10 Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, 3:11 persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! 3:12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. 3:13 But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 3:14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them 3:15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 3:17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (NASB)

Paul used the Torah to describe to us the last days (*2 Timothy 3:1*) that as we start approaching the end times, the love of many will grow cold and lawlessness and immorality will abound. He also says that men will become lovers of self and money, along with becoming unholy, blasphemers, unloving, unthankful, disobedient to parents, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, traitors, headstrong and lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. This sounds like a very serious decline in the moral state of the world. This is exactly what we are seeing today in this world, in our country, and in our local communities. The point is, as bad as the moral state of man is right now, it is going to get a lot worse in the coming years according to

the words of Paul. Paul wrote, *3:10 Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, 3:11 persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! 3:12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. (NASB)* Those who choose to live for the Lord will be persecuted.

In the Apostolic Writings, Yeshua says, “Neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship God, but in spirit and in truth.” (*John 4:21-23*) speaking of worshiping the Lord not in Samaria but in spirit; and not in Jerusalem but in truth. He also said, “This people honors me with their lips but their heart is far from me.” (*Matthew 15:8*). Our service and worship of the Lord is found within the motivation of our hearts. The Lord does look at our hearts, He also looks at our actions since our actions are the product of what is in our hearts.

These words Yeshua spoke, speak of presenting our bodies to God as a living and holy sacrifice. Paul wrote of this in the following way:

Romans 11:29-12:3

11:29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 11:30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, 11:31 so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. 11:32 For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all. 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 11:34 For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? 11:35 Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? 11:36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen. 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. 12:3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. (NASB)

Notice how Paul speaks of the gifts, calling, and mercy of God that is connected to our presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice before God. Now what is this referring to and how might this be accomplished? Paul is speaking of the application of the Torah to our lives. The reason we know this is because Paul wrote of being a “living” sacrifice, since sacrifices usually resulted in the death of the animal. The Torah descriptions of the sacrifice was to lay on the altar the parts of the animal and the priest was to eat a portion of the sacrifice to bear the iniquity of the people. In *Romans 6* (verses 13, 16, 19) Paul speaks of presenting our bodies, our members, to God like this, and in every case it is so that our members (*our arms, legs, tongues, eyes, ears, and sexual organs*) would become instruments of righteousness. So the sacrifice is not only living, it is moving about and doing things in this world. This is the definition of applying God’s words to our lives. The sacrificial portion of obeying God’s Torah is to humble our lives before God according to His Word. Note how Paul writes, “Present your bodies . . . holy and acceptable to God.” He defines this saying, “use your renewed mind to prove what is the will of God, what is good, acceptable and perfect.” So there is a connection between offering your body to God as an acceptable sacrifice to God, and doing the acceptable will of God. We know what the will of God is. His will is laid out in the Scriptures, in the Torah, where all of the scriptures are a commentary upon the Torah! Note in these Scriptures (*Romans 12:1*) there is a negative and positive command. The negative command is not to be conformed to this world. The positive command is to be transformed by the renewing of your mind. The renewing of the mind is achieved by studying God’s Word, placing His word upon our hearts. To not be conformed but being transformed is devoting our lives to the Lord, to His Word, and to being changed. Most people of faith tend to “coast along” in their relationship with God and spiritual growth. We are called to be transformed, which is an on-going

growth process, which involves Teshuvah and seeking the Lord daily. The occurrence of change in our lives is on a moral and ethical basis. Ethics and morality hold the highest place in Judaism. Therefore, when we seek to do the will of God, to live our lives for Him, we look at what the World is doing, and 9 times out of 10, it is related to moral and ethical living. Paul says, “*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*” The focus is upon being cleansed on the inside (Teshuvah) and being transformed, our hearts motivating us to be transformed on the outside for all to see as a testimony to the Lord God in heaven.

It is the renewed mind that enables us to “*prove what the will of God is.*” The key word is “*prove.*” Note how a proof text is a rabbinic way of thinking (see the rabbis in the Midrashim). The proof speaks to us of testing and proving something at the intellectual and the textual levels. By examining our ways and our heart, we are able to access and approve the value of something when we see it. (*Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. NASB*) The point is about conforming our minds to right thinking. To treasure the Word of God, to always be thinking upon what is right, and to love one another. Note that this renewal process is not a logic lesson, but about the transformation which enables us to recognize what the Scriptures say and be able to reasonably apply God’s word in our lives.

The Psalm concludes saying, הַמְטִים עֲקֻלְקֻלֹתָם יוֹלִיכֶם יְהוָה אֶת-פְּעֻלֵי הָאָוֶן שְׁלוֹם עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל: 125:5 *But as for those who turn aside to their crooked ways, The Lord will lead them away with the doers of iniquity. Peace be upon Israel. (NASB)* Notice how the psalm speaks of turning aside to one’s works of iniquity (פְּעֻלֵי הָאָוֶן) (crooked ways). The psalmist states that for such a person, the Lord will lead them away with the doers of iniquity. This suggests that we are not given a “*get our of jail*” tick for free. We have a responsibility as the people of God to seek the Lord, to forgive others, and walk in God’s Ways! This means we do not pursue wickedness, unrighteousness, immorality, or evil. There are many scriptures which speak of the wicked perishing, and of God’s people having the capability to turn from righteousness and be condemned. Isaiah said there is no prosperity for the wicked (*Isaiah 48:22*), and that if their sins had not turned them away, their peace would have been always flowing and abundant. Sin has the ability to lead us away. Yeshua spoke of this in the following way:

John 15:5-24

15:5 *‘I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 15:6 ‘If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 15:7 ‘If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 15:8 ‘My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. 15:9 ‘Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 15:10 ‘If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. 15:11 ‘These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. 15:12 ‘This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 15:13 ‘Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. 15:14 ‘You are My friends if you do what I command you. 15:15 ‘No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. 15:16 ‘You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. 15:17 ‘This I command you, that you love one another. 15:18 ‘If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 15:19 ‘If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. 15:20 ‘Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 15:21 ‘But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know*

the One who sent Me. 15:22 'If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. 15:23 'He who hates Me hates My Father also. 15:24 'If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. (NASB)

The basic premise is, no one born of God makes a practice of sinning. This is the danger of practicing sin, the heart being hardened to the point of no return. Many people tend to drift away from the Lord because of their sins. This is the danger and the reason for the warning given to us in the Torah about sin, because the sin in one's life can cause us to feel guilty and lead us away from the Lord. In Parashat Haazinu, the song of Moshe in *Devarim / Deuteronomy* 32, Moshe calls heaven and earth as witnesses, Moses exhorts the people saying, זִכֹּר יָמוֹת עוֹלָם בֵּינוּ שָׁנוֹת דֶּר וְדֶר שָׁאֵל אָבִיךָ וַיְגַדֶּךָ וְזִמְנֶיךָ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְךָ: הַ בְּהַנְחִיל עָלֵינוּ גּוֹיִם בְּהַפְרִידוֹ, וַיִּשְׁמַן יִשְׂרָאֵל: "Remember the days of old, to Consider the years of the previous generations, and to ask your fathers and they will recount it to you and they will tell you how the Lord God was with them in the desert, made them a people, chose them as His own, and promised them a land filled with milk and honey." (32:7-8) The song also warns against the deception of wealth saying טו וַיִּשְׂמֵן יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּבְעֹט וַיִּבְעֹט שְׂמֵנָה עֲבִית כְּשִׂית וַיִּטֵּשׂ אֱלֹהֵי עֲשָׂהוּ וַיִּנְבֵּל צוּר יִשְׁעָתוֹ: "Jeshurun grew fat and kicked, he has grown fat, thick, and round, he forsook God who made him and spurned the Rock of his salvation." (32:15) Moshe warns of the terrible calamities that would result due to disobedience which is juxtaposed to the blessings and the curses we had read in the previous Torah portions. Moshe describes what will happen when turning from God towards sin, the Lord will hide His face and look only for our repentance. The nations will come against the abstinent people, and after the people have come to their senses, the Lord God will avenge the blood of His servants, and be reconciled to His people and the Land. The Torah portion concludes with the Lord instructing Moshe to ascend Mount Nebo to view the Promised Land before dying on the mountain saying, "For you shall see the land opposite you; but you shall not go there, into the land which I give to the children of Israel." (32:52) The reason being, Moshe did not sanctify the Lord by his actions and in his heart before the people. We are called to be a people of Teshuvah (Repentance). We are also called to be a people who sanctify the Lord by our actions and in our hearts before God and the world! This is what it means by our having within our hearts the desire to pursue the Lord God and His Messiah Yeshua. Do you have this deep desire to pursue God and His ways? Let's Pray!

Heavenly Father,

Thank You Lord for Your mercy and the great work that you are doing in our lives. We believe You are able to overcome all things, from saving us from our enemies, to the deliverance from sin, and even to work in our hearts to deeply, truly, and honestly seek you all the days of our lives. We recognize the weaknesses in our strength and resolve to serve You and to do what is expected, to be humble and to pray and to remain in Your word. Lord help us to have the strength to stand for truth and life, to have the desire to seek You in prayer and in Your Word, to have faith in Yeshua Your Messiah, and to love our neighbor each day. We thank You Lord for Your continued faithfulness to Your promises and to us. Help us to grow in our faith, to walk in the spirit, and apply these truths to our lives. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

In Yeshua's (Jesus') Name we pray! Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever

Notes