

ספר תהילים קלד | Tehillim / Psalms 134

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Serving the Lord at Night, Prayer, and Replacement Theology

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 134:1-3*, the psalm opens saying, א שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת הַלַּיְלָה | בְּרָכוּ 134:1 Behold, bless the Lord, all servants of the Lord, Who serve by night in the house of the Lord! (NASB) This is an interesting opening verse to the psalm. The psalmist speaks of a night time service in the house of the Lord. What do you think is the service that was going on during the night in the house of the Lord? Did the Lord prescribe services during the night? If there were no services prescribed for the night time, what do you think is going on here in regard to what the psalmist is speaking about? How important do you think the evening or night time service was for Israel in those days? *Tehillim / Psalms 134* continues to say the following, ב שְׂאוּ-יְדֵיכֶם קֹדֶשׁ וּבְרָכוּ אֶת-יְהוָה: 134:2 Lift up your hands to the sanctuary And bless the Lord. (NASB) When thinking about the sanctuary mentioned here in the psalm, what part of the Tabernacle might this be referring to? The Hebrew text states "raising up the hands in the holy place." How has the etymology of the word sanctuary changed over the years? Do we understand the word sanctuary in the say way that David did during the writing of this Psalm? When we lift our hands, how are we blessing the Lord God in heaven? What does it mean to be a blessing to the Lord? Is this related to the way we live our lives according to His Word? The Psalm concludes saying, ג יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן עָשָׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ: 134:3 May the Lord bless you from Zion, He who made heaven and earth. (NASB) Why does the psalmist focus upon Zion as the place of blessing from the Lord? When we consider the significance of the place the Lord God has established His name, where does Israel fall into the picture as replacement theology has utterly changed our prospective understandings of meeting the Lord God in Jerusalem each year at the three yearly festivals (Shelosh Regalim)?

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
ספר תהלים פרק קלד	ספר טוביה פרק קלד			ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 134	
א שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת הַלַּיְלָה בְּרָכוּ אֶת-יְהוָה כָּל-עַבְדֵי יְהוָה הַעֹמְדִים בְּבֵית-יְהוָה בַּלַּיְלֹת: ב שְׂאוּ-יְדֵיכֶם קֹדֶשׁ וּבְרָכוּ אֶת-יְהוָה: ג יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן עָשָׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ:	א שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת הַלַּיְלָה בְּרָכוּ אֶת-יְהוָה כָּל-עַבְדֵי יְהוָה הַעֹמְדִים בְּבֵית-יְהוָה בַּלַּיְלֹת: ב שְׂאוּ-יְדֵיכֶם קֹדֶשׁ וּבְרָכוּ אֶת-יְהוָה: ג יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן עָשָׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ:	א שִׁירָא דַּתְאֻמַּר עַל מַסְקִיָּין מִסֹּר-קִין דַּתְהוּמַּא הַא בְּרִיכּוּ יַת יְהוּה כַּל עַבְדִּיא דִּיהוּה דְקִיָּיִמִין עַל בֵּית מַטְרַת בֵּית מַקְדַּשׁא דִּיהוּה וּמִשְׁבַּחִין בַּלִּילוּן: ב טוּלוּ יְדִיכּוֹן קוּדְשָׁא כְהַנִּיא עַל דּוֹכַן קוּדְשָׁא וּבְרִיכּוּ יַת יְהוּה: ג יְבִרְכִינַךְ יְהוּה מִצִּיּוֹן דַּעְבַּד שְׁמִיא וְאַרְעָא:	א שִׁירָא דַּתְאֻמַּר עַל מַסְקִיָּין מִסֹּר-קִין דַּתְהוּמַּא הַא בְּרִיכּוּ יַת יְהוּה כַּל עַבְדִּיא דִּיהוּה דְקִיָּיִמִין עַל בֵּית מַטְרַת בֵּית מַקְדַּשׁא דִּיהוּה וּמִשְׁבַּחִין בַּלִּילוּן: ב טוּלוּ יְדִיכּוֹן קוּדְשָׁא כְהַנִּיא עַל דּוֹכַן קוּדְשָׁא וּבְרִיכּוּ יַת יְהוּה: ג יְבִרְכִינַךְ יְהוּה מִצִּיּוֹן דַּעְבַּד שְׁמִיא וְאַרְעָא:	134:1 ὠδὴ τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν ἰδοὺ δὴ εὐλογεῖτε τὸν κύριον πάντες οἱ δοῦλοι κυρίου οἱ ἐστῶτες ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου ἐν αὐλαῖς οἴκου θεοῦ ἡμῶν 134:2 ἐν ταῖς νυξὶν ἐπάρατε τὰς χεῖρας ὑμῶν εἰς τὰ ἅγια καὶ εὐλογεῖτε τὸν κύριον 134:3 εὐλογῆσει σε κύριος ἐκ Σιων ὁ ποιήσας τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν	

<p>Tehillim / Psalms 134 134:1 Behold, bless the Lord, all servants of the Lord, Who serve by night in the house of the Lord! 134:2 Lift up your hands to the sanctuary And bless the Lord. 134:3 May the Lord bless you from Zion, He who made heaven and earth. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms 134 134:1 A song that was uttered on the ascents of the abyss. Behold, bless the Lord, all servants of the Lord who stand on watch in the sanctuary of the Lord and sing praise at night. 134:2 Lift up your hands, O priests, on the holy dais, and bless the Lord. 134:3 The Lord will bless you from Zion, he who made heaven and earth. (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 134 A Song of Degrees. 134:1 Behold now, bless ye the Lord, all the servants of the Lord, who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God. 134:2 Lift up your hands by night in the sanctuaries, and bless the Lord. 134:3 May the Lord, who made heaven and earth, bless thee out of Sion. (LXX)</p>
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In this week’s study from *Tehillim / Psalms 134:1-3*, the psalm opens saying, אֲשִׁיר הַמַּעְלוֹת הַנֵּהָ | בְּרָכוּ 134:1 *Behold, bless the Lord, all servants of the Lord, Who serve by night in the house of the Lord!* (NASB) This is an interesting opening verse to the psalm. The psalmist speaks of a night time service in the house of the Lord. What do you think is the service that was going on during the night in the house of the Lord? Did the Lord prescribe services during the night? If there were no services prescribed for the night time, what do you think is going on here in regard to what the psalmist is speaking about? How important do you think the evening or night time service was for Israel in those days? Reading through the Scriptures, we find the following reference to both a day and night time service before the Lord from the book of Revelation.

Revelation 7:9-17

7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; 7:10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’ 7:11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 7:12 saying, ‘Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.’ 7:13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, ‘These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?’ 7:14 I said to him, ‘My lord, you know.’ And he said to me, ‘These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 7:15 ‘For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. 7:16 ‘They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; 7:17 for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.’ (NASB)

Here we find in the book of the Revelation of God, a people who come out of the tribulation of events that the Lord sends upon the earth in the last days before Yeshua the Messiah’s return. In *Revelation 7:9-17* we read of this people who persevered in their faith through these terrible times were given white robes and proclaimed ‘Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’ These people are those who washed their cloths in the blood of the lamb and stand before the Lord and serve Him “Day and Night” in His Temple. A commonly occurring thing that we see throughout the Scriptures is the word pair, “Day

and Night.” Many word pairs are present in the Scriptures such as, heaven and earth, light and darkness, parent and child, father and son, etc. Day and night are part of man’s normal experience and as a word pair is very instructive. In *Tehillim / Psalm 74*, the psalmist Asaph points out that God is the One who set in order the features of the earth, including the day and the night saying, “*You established the cycle of day and night; you put the sun and moon in place. You set up all the boundaries of the earth; you created the cycle of summer and winter.*” (*Tehillim / Psalm 74:16-17*) One of the most familiar of the Psalms that testify to God as the creator of all things begins by saying, “*The heavens declare the glory of God; the sky displays his handiwork. Day after day it speaks out; night after night it reveals his greatness.*” (*Tehillim / Psalms 19:1-2*) In *Tehillim / Psalms 42* we read of the psalmist’s longing for the Lord and those times when he would walk with others in peace during God’s moedim. In *Tehillim / Psalms 42*, the psalmist finds himself cut off and others are questioning his faith saying, “*All day long they say to me, ‘Where is your God?’*” (*Tehillim / Psalms 42:3*). Despite the psalmist’s circumstances he is certain that he will again be restored to his former place of service and experience the Lord’s abiding presence (*Tehillim / Psalms 42:5-11*). In *Tehillim / Psalms 88:1-2* we also read, “*O LORD God who delivers me! By day I cry out and at night I pray before you. Listen to my prayer! Pay attention to my cry for help!*” Note how the psalmist says by day he cries out and by night he prays. The psalms speaks of the time when one encounters difficulties in life, during the day and the night. The mention of God’s protective presence throughout the day and the night is reported to us in the Torah by the descriptions of the pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. In *Jeremiah 33:20* we read the Lord saying, “*I have made a covenant with the day and with the night that they will always come at their proper times. Only if you people could break that covenant could my covenant with my servant David ever be broken.*” This provides for us a future hope with God, the controller of day and night, that He will remain faithful to His people, we do not have to doubt the faithfulness of God on our behalf. This leads us to seek the Lord and to be reminded to remain faithful ourselves. As the author of all life, the seasons, and the day and night, it is only logical that there would be a service unto the Lord at night time. But what is that service through the night that is spoken of here in *Tehillim / Psalms 134:1*? In *2 Chronicles 7:12* we read “*Then the LORD appeared to Solomon at night and said to him, ‘I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice.’*” Various places throughout the Scriptures speak of people going before the Lord in prayer at night time. It appears as if Solomon was praying through the night concerning the place the Lord God of Israel would establish His Name. This service that was taking place in the Temple during the night was not something that was prescribed according to the Torah. This is something that comes into the heart of God’s people to go before Him during the night time to pray. In *Matthew 6:9-10*, Yeshua taught us to pray saying, “*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*” The coming of God’s kingdom and the doing of his will on earth is by the means of the deeds that we do, the testimony that we bear, and prayer, it is through these things that we glorify His Name. Yeshua is telling us to pray for what we need. Note how this is not “*pray for what you want*” but “*pray for what you need.*” We hallow the name of God, we seek Him to bring his kingdom, and that His will be done. Yeshua also said in *Matthew 24:14*, “*This gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*” Other places in the Apostolic Writings Yeshua says, in *Matthew 9:37*, “*The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.*” These things come to pass by the means of prayer and then taking action. Is this the service that is what was taking place through the night? Prayer is God’s way of winning His victory through each one of us at the heart level. Remember that Yeshua told a parable once about an unrighteous judge. The point of the parable was that we “*ought always to pray and not lose heart*” (*Luke 18:1*). A widow kept coming to the judge and saying, “*Give me justice against my adversary.*” Finally the unrighteous judge does what the woman asks because of her persistence. Yeshua makes this point saying, “*Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.*” (*Luke 18:6-8*) The Lord’s purpose is to give justice to His people and this is accomplished through our prayers to Him, crying out to Him for vindication both day and night.

Tehillim / Psalms 134 continues to say the following, **ב 134:2** *Lift up your hands to the sanctuary And bless the Lord. (NASB)* When thinking about the sanctuary mentioned here in the psalm, what part of the Tabernacle might this be referring to? The Hebrew text states “*raising up the hands in the holy place.*” Is this a general statement referencing the common man (non-priest) entering the sanctuary and lifting his hands before God? Is this a reference to only the priest going before the Lord and lifting his hands before God in the Tabernacle? How has the etymology of the word sanctuary changed over the years? Do we understand the word sanctuary in the say way that David did during the writing of this Psalm? Looking at the Hebrew text, the definition for sanctuary is as follows:

מִקְדָּשׁ

temple, sanctuary, shrine

הַיְכָל

temple, palace, sanctuary

בַּיִת מִקְדָּשׁ

temple, sanctuary

מִשְׁכָּן

house, habitation, repository, haunt, home, sanctuary

מָקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ

sanctum, sanctuary, shrine

קוֹדֵשׁ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים

sanctuary

The word Beyit Mikdash (**בַּיִת מִקְדָּשׁ**) is a reference to the Temple in Jerusalem but also has an alternate translation as sanctuary. The Mishkhan (**מִשְׁכָּן**) is a reference to the Tabernacle, having the alternate translation as sanctuary. The Makom Kadosh (**מָקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ**) the “*holy place*” may be translated as sanctuary, and the Kedosh Kedoshim (**קוֹדֵשׁ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים**) the “*holy of holies*” may also be translated as sanctuary. These words don’t just describe the sanctuary, but the entire temple, the sacred space which is holy and separate unto the Lord God. A meeting place that was meant to go and be in the presence of the Lord. In Parashat Terumah, the Lord God asked the people to offer gifts from the heart for the purpose of creating a place for Him to dwell, “*Let them make for me a sanctuary that I may dwell in their midst*” (*Shemot / Exodus 25:8*). The Hebrew word for sanctuary is Mikdash (**מִקְדָּשׁ**) which is derived from the word Kadash (**קָדַשׁ**) which means to be set apart as sacred. The Mikdash therefore is a “*set apart space*” or a “*holy place*” that represents something treasured and precious. This is a place of worship, a refuge, a place of rest before God. Note how this root word Kadash (**קָדַשׁ**) is shared in the words kedushah (holiness), kiddushin (betrothal), kaddish (sanctification), and kiddush (marking a sacred time), etc. When the Lord God said that He wanted the people to make for Him a Mikdash, a sanctuary, He was inviting the people to make a sacred place within their hearts for His presence to be manifested. This was illustrated in the giving from the heart for the construction of the Mikdash, which is expressed in the free will offerings that was given to God in the wilderness. The purpose of the Mikdash was for the Lord God of Israel to dwell in the midst of the people. Note the placement of the tribes of Israel around the Tabernacle. The Word dwell (**שָׁכַן**) means to sit down together in unity, or to lie down with someone. It is within this context the Mishkhan (**מִשְׁכָּן**) is understood

as a set apart place that was intended for rest and intimacy with God. This is paralleled to God's presence within our hearts allowing us to have communion and fellowship with Him. According to Shney Luchot HaBrit, Terumah, Torah Ohr 66 the sages say that the phrase "*that I may dwell in their midst*" could be translated as "*that I may dwell within them.*"

Shney Luchot HaBrit, Terumah, Torah Ohr 66

When G'd said: "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me and I shall dwell within them," בתוכם, this referred also to the fact that much of the Tabernacle was due to the תוכם, the innermost feelings of the donors. The Tabernacle could not have been completed if the people donating all these materials had not been motivated by a spirit of generosity. The word בתוכם is therefore essentially not much different from the word בתוכו, which we would have expected the Torah to use.

The rabbis suggest the point of the Tabernacle was to bring God within the hearts of His people. We are to create within our hearts a dwelling place for God's Spirit. Yeshua mentioned this that we will experience peace, joy, happiness when we "*abide in Him.*" Note also that the gematria of the word Mishkhan is 401 which is the same as for the word Shema, to hear or listen (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:4*). When we stop and listen, we are acting in obedience to His commands, and in this we will find His glorious and loving presence in our lives.

When we lift our hands, how are we blessing the Lord God in heaven? What does it mean to be a blessing to the Lord? (שְׂאוּ-יְדֵיכֶם קִדְשׁ וּבְרַכּוּ אֶת-יְהוָה:) *134:2 Lift up your hands to the sanctuary And bless the Lord. NASB*) Is this related to the way we live our lives according to His Word? The deepest message of the Tabernacle and the Torah is that of sacrificial love. Not only do we find the concept of sacrifice in the system established to draw us closer to God. We also learn of sacrifice in our submitting to the Word of God in our lives each day. We give our lives to the Lord according to His word because He first loved us. This is illustrated in the innocent animal for the sake of the sinner providing tangible hope for one that the righteous God loves and forgives. This is what we are told in the Apostolic Writings (NT), the idea of sacrifice for others, when the lamb of God is given on behalf of God's people (*Hebrews 8:5, 10:1*). Yeshua was given as the ultimate Korban (Sacrifice) that brings us eternal life and fellowship with God.

The Psalm concludes saying, יְבָרְכֶה יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן עֹשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ: *134:3 May the Lord bless you from Zion, He who made heaven and earth. (NASB)* Why does the psalmist focus upon Zion as the place of blessing from the Lord? When we consider the significance of the place the Lord God has established His name, where does Israel fall into the picture as replacement theology has utterly changed our prospective understandings of meeting the Lord God in Jerusalem each year at the three yearly festivals (Shelosh Regalim)? Antisemitism is on the rise. There is no other nation on earth who was chosen by God, delivered from bondage, entered into a covenant, and seen His glory and His redemption, than the nation of Israel. It is within this context that Yeshua said "*Salvation is of the Jews.*" (*John 4:22*) From since the beginning of Israel's conception, the enemy has tried to destroy her. The birth of Israel was performed in a powerful and deliberate way whose purpose was to bring the knowledge of God and His redemption to the world. Israel was created to be a blessing, and the Lord God promised to give a blessing to all those who would bless her. When studying history, Israel however has received much more cursing than blessing. One of those curses is found in Replacement Theology, which is the root of a long standing antisemitism. Replacement Theology or Supersessionism is a long standing doctrine that is embraced by the Church. The purpose of this doctrine is deeply satanic and evil whose ultimate purpose was established by the Church in an effort to punish and ultimately remove (destroy) Israel. Replacement Theology has been the source for intense hatred for the Jewish people among the nations (including Christians), and is also the seed for many who believe in the destruction and removal of Israel from her native land and covenant promises. Replacement theology denies Israel the grace that is found in Yeshua the Messiah and condemns her with the world. The foundation of Replacement Theology was established by the Catholic Church as a formal doctrine of the Vatican. This

teaching has followed through into Protestantism and the Reformation to varying degrees. The doctrine is a response to the crucifixion of the Messiah teaching that Israel has consequently been cursed by God and removed from His redemptive plan. It is within this context that the Tanach has been rejected as a book full of fables and mythological teachings that teach merely a spiritual truth. Note that this is taught in the Catholic Church. This theology teaches that Israel and the Church are not just incompatible and separate people groups but that the church has become Israel and that each individual has become Jerusalem. This is easily observed in the Catholic Mass and service (the priesthood, the Eucharist, etc). I have heard Protestant preachers make these claims right from the pulpit that “*we are Jerusalem.*” What a fallacious and horrible doctrine. When we consider why the Jewish people today separate themselves from Christians, this belief is validated from a deist perspective of Replacement Theology lacking an understanding behind the purpose of the giving of the Torah to God’s people who ultimately are to bring His Torah to all of the world. The diabolical nature of this theology not only teaches that the Church has replaced Israel, but it also abolishes the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. This theology teaches these covenants are obsolete. As a result of this, the theology separates the Scriptures into the Old and the New covenants as if they are mutually exclusive. In reality the two covenants are entirely interdependent. The Torah and the rest of the Tanach lay the foundation for the covenant in God’s Son Yeshua. Those who held this doctrine of replacement go back very early in history, such as Justin Martyr, Hippolytus, and Tertullian (to name a few) all which lived between 100 and 240 A.D. The Apostle Paul taught extensively on this topic because it was already entering into the early gentile church. He wrote prophetically to the churches in an effort to bring proper theological beliefs among otherwise ignorant Gentile Christians who had no formal training in the Torah, the Law, Old Covenant history, or prophetic teachings. Paul taught that salvation is by faith for all who would believe. Paul, was called to minister to the gentiles, but this did not negate his intense passion for Israel’s salvation. In *Romans 9:1* he makes his heart known, preferring his own damnation to theirs. Both the Jewish and non-Jewish persons today struggle with the purpose of the Torah for our lives today because of this doctrine of Replacement theology. The gospel message is about being faithful and God’s empowering us to remain in our faith as we walk and live before Him each day. This is the simplicity of the Torah for our lives today. As Paul said, to the Jewish people the Gospel is a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks it is foolishness (*1 Corinthians 1:23*).

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 134* has 4 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1, 2, 3, and 4. Let’s begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 134, Part 1, 2, 3, and 4*.

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 134, Part 1, 2, 3, and 4

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*Behold, bless you Lord, all your servants of the Lord which by night stand in the house of the Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 134:1).*”
- The **פְּתִיחָה** (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*What is the intention of the phrase, by night?*”
- The **מִשָּׁל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the **פְּתִיחָה** (Petihta), the rabbis ask the question of the night, what is this service being performed at night time?
- The **נִמְשָׁל** (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the **מִשָּׁל** (mashal), the rabbis speak of prayer and the altar in heaven.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*But Rabbi Johanan maintained, These words refer to the disciples of*

the wise who occupy themselves with the laws of the priest's service, and of whom God says, I will reckon it to them as if, in their days, the house of the Lord were still standing."

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, *"Lift up your hands and bless the Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 134:2)."*
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *"Ten observances are prescribed for the cup that is used during the blessing of Grace after meals, one of them being that a man lift up a cup with both hands."*
- The משל (mashal) *"the parable,"* goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis speak of the passover meal.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) *"expansion on the parable"* expands upon the משל (mashal), the relationship to raising the hands is connected to the blessing of Grace after the meals and the raising of the hands unto the Lord.
- The Concluding phrase says, *"According to Rabbi Hanina son of Papa, it is the verse Lift up your hands and bless the Lord."*

Part 3

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, *"Rabbi Simeon son of Pazzi taught, A priest who has not washed his hands must not lift up his palms to give the priest's blessing"*
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *"for it is said, Wash your hands and bless the Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 134:2)."*
- The משל (mashal) *"the parable,"* goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis speak of lifting the hands to praise the Lord and not having washed the hands first.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) *"expansion on the parable"* expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis describe the importance of washing the hands before the blessing.
- There is no concluding phrase.

Part 4

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, *"There are three occasions that require one action to follow immediately upon another, The slaughtering of the sacrificial animal must come immediately after the rite of laying the hands upon its head, for it is written, And he will lay his hands upon the head of the burnt offering and he will kill the bullock before the Lord (Vayikra / Leviticus 1:4-5)"*
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *"the blessing over the bread must be said immediately after the rite of washing the hands, for it is said, Wash your hands and bless the Lord."*
- The משל (mashal) *"the parable,"* goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis speak of the hands and the sequence of events that follow the service of the Lord.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) *"expansion on the parable"* expands upon the משל (mashal), the conclusion is to have a liturgical method of prayer and service.
- The Concluding phrase says, *"Finally, when a man says the Eighteen Benedictions immediately after the Blessings of Redemption, Satan will bring no accusations against him in the course of the day."*

Midrash Tehillim 134 Part 1 opens with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, *"Behold, bless you Lord, all your servants of the Lord which by night stand in the house of the Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 134:1)."*

The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *"What is the intention of the phrase,*

by night?” The entire midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק קלד סימן א א שיר המעלות הנה ברכו את ה' כל עבדי ה' העומדים בבית ה' בל- לות. מאי בלילות, אמר רבי יוחנן אלו תלמידי חכמים העוסקים בתו- רה בלילה מעלה אני עליהם כאלו עוסקים בעבודה, לעולם זאת על ישראל (דה"ב דברי הימים ב' ב ג), אמר רב גידל אמר רב זה מזבח בנוי ומיכאל השר הגדול עומד ומ- קריב עליו קרבן, ורבי יוחנן אמר אלו תלמידי חכמים העוסקים בהל- כות עבודה, מעלה אני עליהם כאלו נבנה בית המקדש בימיהם.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 134, Part 1 <i>1. Behold, bless you Lord, all your servants of the Lord which by night stand in the house of the Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 134:1). What is the intention of the phrase, by night? It identifies, said Rabi Johanan, the disciples of the wise who occupy themselves with Torah at night, and of whom God says, I will reckon it for them as if they occupied themselves with the priest's service in the house of the Lord. And Solomon sent to Hiram the king of Tyre, saying, Behold I am about to build a house for the name of the Lord my God, to dedicate it to Him, and to burn before Him incense of sweet spices, This is an ordinance forever to Israel (2 Chronicles 2:2-3). Rabbi Giddel said in the name of Rav, The words, This is an ordinance forever allude to the altar built in heaven, beside which Michael the great guardian angel stands and brings an offering. But Rabbi Johanan maintained, These words refer to the disciples of the wise who occupy themselves with the laws of the priest's service, and of whom God says, I will reckon it to them as if, in their days, the house of the Lord were still standing.</i></p>
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The rabbis of the midrash state that the service at night are those who are the disciples of the wise. In rabbinic and philosophical literature the various sciences are termed Chokhmot (חִכְמוֹת) wisdom plural. What the rabbis believe is that understanding comes by the way of the Torah. The service at night time is meant to devote our lives and to forgo sleep to devote our time to the study of the Torah. Chokmah represents the contemplative, synthetic aspects of God's thought. It is the primordial point of creation from which all knowable and reality originates. חִכְמָה is the Biblical Hebrew word rendered as "wisdom" (LXX σοφία sophia). This word occurs 149 times in the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible. The *Talmud Bavli Shabbat 31a* describes knowledge of the Talmudic order of Kodshim as a high level of wisdom, chokmah.

Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 31a

The Gemara continues discussing the conduct of the Sages, citing that Reish Lakish said: What is the meaning of that which is written: "And the faith of your times shall be a strength of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge, the fear of the Lord is his treasure" (Isaiah 33:6)? Faith; that is the order of Zera'im, Seeds, in the Mishna, because a person has faith in God and plants his seeds (Jerusalem Talmud). Your times; that is the order of Moed, Festival, which deals with the various occasions and Festivals that occur throughout the year. Strength; that is the order of Nashim, Women. Salvations; that is the order of Nezikin, Damages, as one who is being pursued is rescued from the hands of his pursuer. Wisdom; that is the order of Kodashim, Consecrated Items. And knowledge; that is the order of Teharot, Purity, which is particularly difficult to master. And even if a person studies and masters all of these, "the fear of the Lord is his treasure," it is preeminent. (ישעיהו) אמר ר' ל"ג, ויהיה אמונת עתיד חוסן ישועות חכמת ודעת וגו' אמונת זה סדר זרעים עתיד זה סדר מועד חוסן זה סדר נשים ישועות זה סדר נזיקין חכמת זה סדר קדשים ודעת זה סדר טהרות ואפ"ה (ישעיהו) עיהו ל"ג, ו) יראת ה' היא אוצרו

The Talmud connects wisdom to purity. The one who is wise will keep himself pure and not establish his days in sin. Connecting wisdom to purity suggests that we will become more intelligent by avoiding sin in our lives. This is an important because the rabbis speak of the wise quoting *Isaiah 33:6* saying, the wise have faith the Lord will cause the seed that is spread to grow. If we are trying to learn something, the Lord

will help us if we are seeking Him, His ways, and purity in our lives.

The faithful man considers the Moedim (Appointed Times) throughout the year, and salvation is paralleled to the one who is rescued from the hands of the enemy. Having knowledge is paralleled to purity which is said to be difficult to master in one's life. The Talmudic conclusion "*even if a person studies and masters all of these, "the fear of the Lord is his treasure," it is preeminent.*" The one who was wise (Solomon) built the house of God where the midrash states, "*And Solomon sent to Hiram the king of Tyre, saying, Behold I am about to build a house for the name of the Lord my God, to dedicate it to Him, and to burn before Him incense of sweet spices, This is an ordinance forever to Israel (2 Chronicles 2:2-3). Rabbi Giddel said in the name of Rav, The words, This is an ordinance forever allude to the altar built in heaven, beside which Michael the great guardian angel stands and brings an offering.*" This suggests there are heavenly counterparts to the earthly copies, and the significance is that Michael the arc angel brings offerings before the Lord on behalf of the people. The Torah command states that during one day of the year, the high priest of Israel was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, the most sacred part of the house of God. He did this in order to bring the blood of the sin offering, that was given to atone for the sins of the nation before the Lord..

Shemot / Exodus 30:10

30:10 Aaron shall make atonement on its horns once a year; he shall make atonement on it with the blood of the sin offering of atonement once a year throughout your generations. It is most holy to YHVH. (NASB)

Vayikra / Leviticus 16:30

16:30 for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you will be clean from all your sins before YHVH. (NASB)

In *Vayikra / Leviticus 16* we see the law of atonement described in detail. To summarize what happened on that day, the high priest would offer a bull as a sin offering for himself. Two male goats without blemish were selected and brought before the doorway of the tent of meeting. The lot was cast by the high priest in order to indicate which goat would be slaughtered as a sin offering and which would be taken into the wilderness as a scapegoat. The high priest was to take the blood of the bull and sprinkle it on the east side and in front of the mercy seat seven times. Then he sprinkled the blood of the goat, the sin offering, on the mercy seat to make atonement for the nation in the same way. We are given clear indication that this was done to make atonement for the sins of the nation. In logical order, we are told the Father in heaven sent Yeshua the Messiah (*Mark 4:20, John 3:11-15*) to function as our high priest. This is why we are told as His disciples to obey the Word of God. Did the life, death and resurrection of Yeshua change anything regarding the Day of Atonement? Yeshua lead a life free of sin, but yet was killed without justification. Because of these things, He paid the price, just like the goat that was selected to be the sin offering for the nation on the day of atonement. He gave His life to atone for us. After three days, He was resurrected and then entered into heaven to sit at the right hand of YHVH.

Mark 16:19

16:19 So then, when the Master Yeshua had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of YHVH.

Yeshua become the One that intercedes for us with the Father as He atoned for us by paying the price for sin. This was the reason behind John's argument to keep the commandments.

1 John 2:1-3

2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus the Messiah the righteous; 2:2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole

world. 2:3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. (NASB)

John said we come to know Him if we keep the commandments. The reason being, we learn about the Lord and His Ways when we determine our hearts to live our lives for Him. We find in the book of Hebrews the reference that states that Yeshua has become our High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 5:8-10

5:8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. 5:9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, 5:10 being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. (NASB)

When we start studying the Apostolic Writings, especially the book of Hebrews, we have to consider the influences of the doctrines and theologies that have brought us to where we are today. There is a lot of false teaching that is based on translation issues that have originated from replacement theology. One of the most frequent conclusions that we hear in relation to the book of Hebrews is that the new covenant has replaced the old covenant because the new covenant is superior. As a result of this teaching, the conclusion at the pulpit is the law of Moses is no longer applicable because it has been replaced by a better covenant. One of the most important points is we have to be very diligent in studying the Scriptures, or we wont see what the writer of Hebrews also says in *Hebrews 10:26-31*:

Hebrews 10:26-31

10:26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 10:27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. 10:28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 10:29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? 10:30 For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.' And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' 10:31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (NASB)

Notice how the author of Hebrews intimately connects the Torah to the covenant in Yeshua the Messiah. He says, *10:28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. (NASB)* He parallels the setting aside of the commandment to the rejection of the son of God. The question is if the teaching of the new covenant replacing the old is wrong, then what is the writer of Hebrews really trying to explain to us? He is explaining the importance of the covenant that we have in the blood of the Messiah. God's mercy extends to the non-Jewish person too and we are to understand the Torah in order to understand who we are in the Messiah! The rabbis in the midrash (Part 2) state the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק קלד סימן ב ב שאו ידיכם קדש וברכו את ה'. עשרה דברים נאמרו בכוס של ברכה (מגביהו מן הקרקע טפח) [נוטלו בשתי ידיו], אמר רבי חנינא בר פפא מאי קרא שאו ידיכם קדש.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 134, Part 2 2. Lift up your hands and bless the Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 134:2). Ten observances are prescribed for the cup that is used during the blessing of Grace after meals, one of them being that a man lift up a cup with both hands. And the proof? According to Rabbi Hanina son of Papa, it is the verse Lift up your hands and bless the Lord.</p>
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The Grace (Mercy) of God after meals reveals to us the enjoyment of God's blessing that He has provided,

and then giving thanks for what He has provided. To raise the hands and bless the Lord is as important today as it was back in the day of the giving of the Torah and the writing of the Psalms. The Lord God Almighty, who He is that is contained within the covenant, His love for us, remains steadfast for us today as it did back in the day of its giving. This is the conclusion the Writer of the book of Hebrews is describing and the point he is making.

Hebrews 7:11-12

7:5 And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham. 7:6 But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises. 7:7 But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater. 7:8 In this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them of whom it is witnessed that he lives on. 7:9 And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, 7:10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. 7:11 Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? 7:12 For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also. 7:13 For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. 7:14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. 7:15 And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, 7:16 who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. 7:17 For it is attested of Him 'You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.' 7:18 For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness 7:19 (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. 7:20 And inasmuch as it was not without an oath 7:21 (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, 'The Lord has sworn And will not change His mind, 'You are a priest forever'); 7:22 so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. 7:23 The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, 7:24 but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. 7:25 Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. (NASB)

Here we see the author of Hebrews making a case for Yeshua as high priest of God that was substantiated by the power of God working in his life and the resurrection from the grave. Hebrews speaks of Yeshua being high priest and of a change in the Law of God. Then he says something very interesting, he says, *7:11 Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? 7:12 For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also. 7:13 For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. (NASB)* He says Yeshua comes from a different Tribe (Judah) and no-one has officiated at the altar from the tribe of Judah. The point of the author of Hebrews is that His position was not to officiate at the altar on earth but to the one in heaven. The author of Hebrews says *7:14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. 7:15 And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, 7:16 who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. (NASB)* Hebrews goes on to say there is the setting aside of

a former command, referencing the priesthood and not the mitzvot regarding how we are to live our lives, and how Yeshua became a guaranter of a better covenant. This covenant includes the giving of God's Holy Spirit and the empowering of our lives for His glory to overcome sin in our lives. The author of Hebrews concludes saying, 7:24 *but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. 7:25 Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.* (NASB) The entire argument being made here is in relation to the Levitical Priesthood changing as it is related to Yeshua being seated at the right hand of God in heaven as our high priest which was substantiated by his resurrection.

The Midrash on the Psalms (Part 3) states:

מדרש תהלים פרק קלד סימן ג	Midrash Tehillim 134, Part 3
ג אמר ר' שמעון בן פזי כל כהן שלא נטל ידיו אסור לישא את כפיו, שנאמר שאו ידיכם קדש וברכו את ה'.	3. <i>Rabbi Simeon son of Pazzi taught, A priest who has not washed his hands must not lift up his palms to give the priest's blessing, for it is said, Wash your hands and bless the Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 134:2).</i>

The rabbis refer to the washing of the hands and then the lifting of the hands to give the priests blessing before raising of the hands to bless the Lord God Almighty. The point of the midrash is to bless the Lord first. Just as we are to live our lives, we bless the Lord by humbling our lives for the glory of God according to His word by obedience to the Torah.

Midrash Tehillim 134 Part 1 concludes saying, *“But Rabbi Johanan maintained, These words refer to the disciples of the wise who occupy themselves with the laws of the priest's service, and of whom God says, I will reckon it to them as if, in their days, the house of the Lord were still standing.”* The rabbis say the wise, those who are disciples of the wise will occupy themselves with the Torah and specifically with the laws of the priest's service. Why is this so? Because we are to consider the hallowing of one's life, and obedience as utmost important in our walk before the Lord as this pertains to the sacrifice of the Messiah Yeshua.

Midrash Tehillim 134 Part 4 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, *“There are three occasions that require one action to follow immediately upon another, The slaughtering of the sacrificial animal must come immediately after the rite of laying the hands upon its head, for it is written, And he will lay his hands upon the head of the burnt offering and he will kill the bullock before the Lord (Vayikra / Leviticus 1:4-5)”* The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *“the blessing over the bread must be said immediately after the rite of washing the hands, for it is said, Wash your hands and bless the Lord.”* The entire midrash states the following:

מדרש תהלים פרק קלד סימן ד
 ד שלש תכיפות הן, תכף לס-
 מיכה שחיטה, וסמך ושחט (ויק-
 רא א ד ה), תכף לנטילת ידים
 ברכה, שנאמר שאו ידיכם קדש,
 תכף לגאולה תפלה יהיו לרצון
 אמרי פי וגוי' (תהלים יט טו), מה
 כתיב בתריה יענך ה' ביום צרה
 (שם תהלים כ ב). אמר רבי יוסי
 בר בון כל מי שתוכף לסמיכה
 שחיטה אין הפיגול נוגע באותו
 קרבן, וכל מי שתוכף לנטילת
 ידים ברכה אין השטן מקטרג
 באותה סעודה, וכל מי שתוכף
 לגאולה תפלה, אין השטן מקט-
 רגו באותו היום.

Midrash Tehillim 134, Part 4

4. *There are three occasions that require one action to follow immediately upon another; The slaughtering of the sacrificial animal must come immediately after the rite of laying the hands upon its head, for it is written, And he will lay his hands upon the head of the burnt offering and he will kill the bullock before the Lord (Vayikra / Leviticus 1:4-5); the blessing over the bread must be said immediately after the rite of washing the hands, for it is said, Wash your hands and bless the Lord. The Eighteen Benedictions must be said immediately after the Blessing of Redemption, for it is said, Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable before You O Lord, my Rock, and my Redeemer (Tehillim / Psalms 19:15); and what does Scripture go on to say? The Lord answer you in the day of trouble (Tehillim / Psalms 20:2). Rabbi Jose son of Bun taught, When a man performing a sacrifice slaughters the animal immediately after the laying on of hands, no fault will mar the sacrifice. When a man pronounces the blessing over the bread immediately after washing of his hands, Satan will bring no accusations against him during the meal. Finally, when a man says the Eighteen Benedictions immediately after the Blessings of Redemption, Satan will bring no accusations against him in the course of the day.*

The rabbis speak of one action directly following another action and describe the sacrifice as the example, slaughtering the animal comes immediately after the laying on of the hands. In parallel fashion, the blessing over the bread is to be said immediately following the rite of the washing of the hands that is based upon the Psalm. Traditionally, orthodox Judaism requires washing the hands and saying a blessing before eating any meal that includes bread or matzah. Hasidic custom is to pour three times on each hand. The blessing following the washing is as follows: *בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֱדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם (Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu al n'tilat yadayim.) Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with Your commandments, and commanded us concerning the washing of the hands.* This tradition is unrelated to personal hygiene and one is still required to perform the ritual prior to eating even if the hands are clean (Talmud Bavli Berekhot 51a). The tradition of netilat yadayim is ancient even being mentioned in the Apostolic Writings.

Matthew 15:2

15:2 'Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.' (NASB)

Mark 7:5

7:5 The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, 'Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?' (NASB)

Luke 11:38

11:38 When the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal. (NASB)

The tradition of netilat yadayim prior to eating bread originated with the rabbis of the Talmud. It is derived from various practices concerning ritual impurity from when the ancient temple stood in Jerusalem. The priests who performed the temple rituals were given gifts of oil, wine and wheat that could be eaten only after the ritual washing. In the passage of time and for various reasons, the ancient rabbis extended this

practice into Judaism before eating meals. This was most likely following the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD and would have been continued so as not to forget the practice that was followed in the Temple ritual. The significance of the ritual washing of the hands is for protection against evil spirits as stated in the following Talmudic references.

Talmud Bavli Taanit 20b

כי הוה ליה מילתא דאסותא הוי מלי כוזא דמיא ותלי ליה בסיפא דביתא ואמר כל דבעי ליתי ולישקול ואיכא דאמרי מילתא דשיבתא הוה גמיר והוה מנח כוזא דמיא ודלי ליה ואמר כל דצריך ליתי וליעול דלא לסתכן

Another custom of Rav Huna was that when he had a new medicine, he would fill a water jug with the medicine and hang it from the doorpost of his house, saying: All who need, let him come and take from this new medicine. And there are those say: He had a remedy against the demon Shivta that he knew by tradition, that one must wash his hands for protection against this evil spirit. And to this end, he would place a water jug and hang it by the door, saying: Anyone who needs, let him come to the house and wash his hands, so that he will not be in danger.

Talmud Bavli Berekhot 51a

א"ר ישמעאל בן אלישע שלשה דברים סח לי סוריאלי שר הפנים אל תטול חלוקך בשחרית מיד השמש ותלבש ואל תטול ידיך ממי שלא נטל ידיו ואל תחזיר כוס אספרגוס אלא למי שנתנו לך מפני שתכספית ואמרי לה אסתלגנית של מלאכי חבלה מצפין לו לאדם ואומרים אימתי יבא אדם לידי אחד מדברים הללו וילכד

Rabbi Yishmael ben Elisha said: Suriel, the heavenly ministering angel of the Divine Presence, told me three things from on high: Do not take your cloak in the morning from the hand of your servant and wear it; do not ritually wash your hands from one who has not ritually washed his own hands; and only return a cup of asparagus to the one who gave it to you. Why is this? Because a band of demons and some say a band of angels of destruction lie in wait for a person and say: When will a person encounter one of these circumstances and be captured?

Other passages in the Talmud indicate that failing to wash hands before a meal is a significant transgression and others say that eating bread without washing is tantamount to having sex with a prostitute, while another says that acting contemptuously toward this ritual causes one to be uprooted from the world. The significance of these statements is the care one should take in going before the Lord in prayer to seek His blessing over the food that we eat. The Midrash states the following:

The Eighteen Benedictions must be said immediately after the Blessing of Redemption, for it is said, Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable before You O Lord, my Rock, and my Redeemer (Tehillim / Psalms 19:15); and what does Scripture go on to say? The Lord answer you in the day of trouble (Tehillim / Psalms 20:2). Rabbi Jose son of Bun taught, When a man performing a sacrifice slaughters the animal immediately after the laying on of hands, no fault will mar the sacrifice. When a man pronounces the blessing over the bread immediately after washing of his hands, Satan will bring no accusations against him during the meal. (Midrash Tehillim 134 Part 4)

The midrash agrees with the Talmudic opinion on the blessing and the washing of the hands, Satan will not bring accusations against a man during the meal. The significance of these statements, considering the context of the sacrifice, redemption, and the meal, the rabbis are paralleling our lives to the life of the high priest. The Talmudic example is "Your table is an altar and you are the high priest." The idea is the plate

of delicious food set before you is from the sacrifice. You consider the one through whom we received this blessing of food, one does the ritual washing of hands, says a blessing on the food, and then digs in. This elevates all of the food to the divine experience and helps us to recognize the Lord is present even during the meal.

Midrash Tehillim 134 Part 4 concludes saying, *“Finally, when a man says the Eighteen Benedictions immediately after the Blessings of Redemption, Satan will bring no accusations against him in the course of the day.”* If we consider the holiness of our lives, we recognize the importance of the commandments which the Lord has given us to sanctify our lives before Him. 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