

ספר תהילים קמא | Tehillim / Psalms 141

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Calling upon the Name of the Lord according to the Scriptures

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 141:1-10*, the psalm opens saying, *141:1 O Lord, I call upon You; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to You! 141:2 May my prayer be counted as incense before You; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering. 141:3 Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips. (NASB)* The psalmist seeks the Lord for help in his behavior. He continues saying, *141:4 Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, To practice deeds of wickedness With men who do iniquity; And do not let me eat of their delicacies. (NASB)* Note how eating is synonymous to doing what the wicked do. The psalmist says, *141:5 Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me; It is oil upon the head; Do not let my head refuse it, For still my prayer is against their wicked deeds. 141:6 Their judges are thrown down by the sides of the rock, And they hear my words, for they are pleasant. 141:7 As when one plows and breaks open the earth, Our bones have been scattered at the mouth of Sheol. (NASB)* The psalmist concludes saying, *141:8 For my eyes are toward You, O God, the Lord; In You I take refuge; do not leave me defenseless. 141:9 Keep me from the jaws of the trap which they have set for me, And from the snares of those who do iniquity. 141:10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets, While I pass by safely. (NASB)* David asks the Lord to give to the wicked their just rewards.

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
ספר תהילים פרק קמא	ספר טוביה פרק קמא	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 141			
א מְזֹמֵר לְדָוֹד יְהוָה קָרָאתִיךָ חוֹשֶׁה לִּי הָאֲזִינָה קוֹלִי בְּקִרְאִי-לְךָ: ב תִּפְּוֹן תְּפִלְתִּי קְטָרֶת לִפְנֵיךָ מִשְׁאֵת פְּפִי מִנְחַת-עֶרְבִי: ג שִׁיתָה יְהוָה שְׁמֶרְךָ לִפְנֵי נִצְרָה עַל-דֵּל שְׁפָתַי: ד אֶל-תֵּט לִפְנֵי דְבָרְךָ רַע לְהִתְעוֹלֵל עַל-לוֹת בְּרָשַׁע אֶת-אִישִׁים פְּעֻלֵי-אֲנֹן וּבֶל-אֶלְחָם בְּמִ-נַעֲמִיָהֶם: ה יְהִלְמֵנִי-צַדִּיק חֶסֶד יוֹכִיחֵנִי שְׁמֹן רֹאשׁ אֶל-יְגִי רֹאשִׁי כִּי עוֹד וּתְפִלְתִּי בְּרַעוֹתֵיהֶם: ו נִ-שְׁמָטוּ בִידֵי-סֹלַע שִׁפְטֵיהֶם וְשָׁמְעוּ אֶמְרֵי כִּי נַעֲמֹ: ז כְּמוֹ פֶלֶח וּבִקְעָ בְּאֶרֶץ נִפְזָרוּ עֲצָמֵינוּ לִפְנֵי שְׂאוֹל: ח כִּי אֵלֶיךָ יְהוָה אֲדַנִּי עֵינַי בְּכַה חֲסִיתִי אֶל-תִּעַר נִפְשִׁי: ט שְׁמֶרְנִי מִיַּד־פַּח יִקְשׁוּ לִי וּמִקְשׁוֹת פְּעֻלֵי אֲנֹן: י יִפְלוּ בְּמִכְמָרֵי רְשָׁעִים יַחַד אֲנָכִי עַד-אֶעְבּוֹר:	א תושבחתא לדוד יהוה קריתך חיש חש-חיש לי אצית קלי במקרי לך: ב תתכוון צלותי היך קטורת בוסמין קדמך זקפות ידי בצלו היך דורון בסיים דמתקרב ברמש: ג שווי יהוה מטרא לפומי נטר על זקוף סיפ-וותי: ד לא תצלי לבי לפתגם ביש למחשב למחשל מחשבון בישן ברשעא לאיתחברא עם גברי עבדי שקר ולא אסעוד בזמר בית משתיהון: ה יטפחיני צדיקא מטול חסדא ויכסיני כהן דמרבי משה רבות קור דשא ברם כליל מלכותא לא יבטל מן רישי ארום עד כדון צלותי מסתדרא בבישתהון: ו אישתמיטו מבית מדרשא על ידי תקוף דיניהון תייבין ושמעין מימרי ארום בסי-די כמת גבר דפלה ומבזע במרדיא מו: ז בעושניה בארעא הכדין אתבדרו איברנא על פום קבורתא: ח מטול היכנא ארום לותך אלהים יהוה עייני מודיקן במימרא סברית לא תרוקן נפשי: ט נטור יתי מן אידי פחא קולא דאתקילו דכמנו לי ותיקלן עבדי שקר: י יפלון במצודתוי רשיעי כחדא אנא עד זמן די אעיבר:	141:1 ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαυὶδ κύριε ἐκέκραξα πρὸς σέ εισάκουσόν μου πρόσχεῖς τῇ φωνῇ τῆς δεήσεώς μου ἐν τῷ κεκραγένοι με πρὸς σέ 141:2 κατευθυνθήτω ἡ προσευχή μου ὡς θυμίαμα ἐνώπιόν σου ἔπαρσις τῶν χειρῶν μου θυσία ἐσπερινή 141:3 θοῦ κύριε φυλακὴν τῷ στόματί μου καὶ θύραν περιοχῆς περὶ τὰ χεῖλη μου 141:4 μὴ ἐκκλίνης τὴν καρδίαν μου εἰς λόγους πονηρίας τοῦ προφασίζεσθαι προφάσεις ἐν ἀμαρτίαις σὺν ἀνθρώποις ἐργαζομένοις ἀνομίαν καὶ οὐ μὴ συνδυσάσω μετὰ τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν αὐτῶν 141:5 παιδεύσει με δίκαιος ἐν ἑλέει καὶ ἐλέγξει με ἔλαιον δὲ ἀμαρτωλοῦ μὴ λιπανάτω τὴν κεφαλὴν μου ὅτι ἔτι καὶ ἡ προσευχή μου ἐν ταῖς εὐδοκίαις αὐτῶν 141:6 κατεπόθησαν ἐχόμενα πέτρας οἱ κριταὶ αὐτῶν ἀκούσονται τὰ ῥήματά μου ὅτι ἠδύνθησαν 141:7 ὡσεὶ πάχος γῆς διερράγη ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς διεσκορπίσθη τὰ ὀστά ἡμῶν παρὰ τὸν ἄδην 141:8 ὅτι πρὸς σέ κύριε κύριε οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου ἐπὶ σέ ἤλπισα μὴ ἀντανέλης τὴν ψυχὴν μου 141:9 φύλαξόν με ἀπὸ παγίδος ἧς συνεστήσαντό μοι καὶ ἀπὸ σκανδάλων τῶν ἐργαζομένων τὴν ἀνομίαν 141:10 πεσοῦνται ἐν ἀμφιβλήστρῳ αὐτοῦ ἀμαρτωλοὶ κατὰ μόνας εἰμι ἐγὼ ἕως οὗ ἂν παρέλθω			

<p>Tehillim / Psalms 141 141:1 O Lord, I call upon You; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to You! 141:2 May my prayer be counted as incense before You; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering. 141:3 Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips. 141:4 Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, To practice deeds of wickedness With men who do iniquity; And do not let me eat of their delicacies. 141:5 Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me; It is oil upon the head; Do not let my head refuse it, For still my prayer is against their wicked deeds. 141:6 Their judges are thrown down by the sides of the rock, And they hear my words, for they are pleasant. 141:7 As when one plows and breaks open the earth, Our bones have been scattered at the mouth of Sheol. 141:8 For my eyes are toward You, O God, the Lord; In You I take refuge; do not leave me defenseless. 141:9 Keep me from the jaws of the trap which they have set for me, And from the snares of those who do iniquity. 141:10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets, While I pass by safely. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms 141 141:1 A psalm of David. O Lord, I have called you; be concerned for me, hear my voice when I call to you. 141:2 Let my prayer be directed before you like incense of spices, the upraising of my hands in prayer like a fragrant gift offered at evening. 141:3 Place, O Lord, a guard on my mouth, a keeper on the portal of my lips. 141:4 Do not incline my heart to anything evil, to think thoughts in wickedness to join with men who practice deceit, and I will not dine at the revels of their banquets. 141:5 The righteous man will strike me because of kindness, and rebuke me; the oil of holy anointing will not cease from my head, for still my prayer is marshaled against their evil. 141:6 They have withdrawn from the academy because of their harsh judgments; they turn and hear my words, for they are pleasant. 141:7 For like a man who labors and cleaves when plowing the earth, so are our limbs scattered on the mouth of the grave. 141:8 Therefore unto you, God, the Lord, do my eyes look; I have hoped in your word, do not empty out my soul. 141:9 Protect me from the power of the trap they have hidden for me, and the snares of those who practice deceit. 141:10 May the wicked men fall into his nets together, until the time that I pass by. (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 141 A Psalm of David. 141:1 O Lord, I have cried to thee; hear me: attend to the voice of my supplication, when I cry to thee. 141:2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice. 141:3 Set a watch, O Lord, on my mouth, and a strong door about by lips. 141:4 Incline not my heart to evil things, to employ pretexts for sins, with me who work iniquity: and let me not unite with their choice ones. 141:5 The righteous shall chasten me with mercy, and reprove me: but let not the oil of the sinner anoint my head: for yet shall my prayer also be in their pleasures. 141:6 Their mighty ones have been swallowed up near the rock: they shall hear my words, for they are sweet. 141:7 As a lump of earth is crushed upon the ground, our bones have been scattered by the mouth of the grave. 141:8 For mine eyes are to thee, O Lord God: I have hoped in thee; take not away my life. 141:9 Keep me from the snare which they have set for me, and from the stumbling blocks of them that work iniquity. 141:10 Sinners shall fall by their own net: I am alone until I shall escape. (LXX)</p>
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In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 141:1-10*, the psalm opens saying, א מְזֹמֹר לְדָוִד יְהוָה קָרָא, תִּידָ חוֹשָׁה לִי הָאֲזִינָה קוֹלִי בְקָרְאִי-לָךְ: ב תִּפּוֹן תְּפִלְתִּי קְטָרֶת לְפָנֶיךָ מִשָּׂאֵת כְּפִי מִנְחַת-עֶרֶב: ג שִׁיתָה יְהוָה שְׁמִרָה לִּי: 141:1 O Lord, I call upon You; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to You! 141:2 May my prayer be counted as incense before You; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering. 141:3 Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips. (NASB) The psalmist begins with calling upon the name of the Lord. The Aramaic Targum states, א תושבחתא לדוד יהוה קריתך, חיש חשהיש לי אצית קלי במקרי לך: ב תתכוון צלותי היך קטורת בוסמין קדמך זקפות ידי בצלו היך דורון בסים: ג שווי יהוה מטרא לפומי נטר על זקוף סיפוותי: 141:1 A psalm of David. O Lord, I have called you; be concerned for me, hear my voice when I call to you. 141:2 Let my prayer be directed before you like incense of spices, the upraising of my hands in prayer like a fragrant gift offered at evening. 141:3 Place, O Lord, a guard on my mouth, a keeper on the portal of my lips. (EMC) This is how the Apostle Paul understood these verses, *Romans 10:13 Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. (RSV)* Many people today are teaching within Christianity that an individual can be saved merely by professing a belief in Jesus. Both Paul and Peter stated “Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” (*Acts 2:21, Romans 10:13, Joel 2:32*) However, Yeshua pointed out saying, “Not everyone who says to me “Lord Lord” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.” (*Matthew 7:21 and Luke 6:46*) Many today equate “calling on the name of the Lord” with the idea of saying “Lord save me.” The question is how can one say they are saved simply by “calling out to Christ” when the Messiah Himself said that the mere calling upon the name will not save a person? The key to understanding the meaning behind what Peter and Paul are saying, “calling on the name of the Lord,” is to recognize that more is involved in this action of calling upon the Lord. This is not merely a petition directed toward God. This is part of the process of Teshuvah (Repentance), seeking the Lord, and turning from sin. Even in modern times, when one calls upon someone, it generally means he is doing more than simply making a request. For example, when a medical doctor goes in to meet his patients, he does not merely walk into the room, announce he is there, ask the patient how he is doing, and then hopes the best for him and turns and leaves. On the contrary, he examines the patient, listens to him, gives instructions for what to do, how to live, what to eat, exercise (physical therapy), and recovery information, which includes the prescription of medication. All of these things are understood under the context of calling upon someone, in this case calling upon a patient or a doctor. When a person takes the time to study this expression in both ancient and modern times, we learn that it is used to mean much more than simply the making of a request. This phrase has a much deeper meaning, “calling upon God” is to make and appeal which involves both parties, the one making the appeal and the Lord God Himself, where both take action. Take for example what Paul said when he was talking to Festus in regards to his incarceration.

Acts 25:9-12

25:9 But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, ‘Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me on these charges ‘ 25:10 But Paul said, ‘I am standing before Caesar’s tribunal, where I ought to be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you also very well know. 25:11 ‘If, then, I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die; but if none of those things is true of which these men accuse me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar.’ 25:12 Then when Festus had conferred with his council, he answered, ‘You have appealed to Caesar, to Caesar you shall go.’ (NASB)

Paul said “I appeal unto Caesar” using the word epikaloumai (see also *Acts 2:21 and Romans 10:13*), here Paul was not simply calling on Caesar to save him. Paul claimed the right of a Roman citizen to be heard by Caesar. Notice how he has rights as a Roman citizen. We also have rights as the children of God. Paul asked that his case be transferred to Caesar’s court and have his case judged by Ceasar. This means that he was submitting to whatever was necessary in order for his case to be brought before Caesar. In doing so,

Paul was submitting his life to the formal procedures that were required in order for him to come before Caesar and his court for judgment. This involved obedience. This was not a mere verbal recognition of Caesar. Similarly, in the case of “*calling upon the name of the Lord*” we are not merely making a verbal recognition, or a verbal petition only. We are declaring our intentions that involve obedience. Note how God’s people are described as a people “*who call on Your Name*” where we are not a people who only pray to God, but a people who are serve the Lord, and who, by obedience, are submitting our lives to His authority (see *Matthew 28:18*). Are you doing this in your life today? Or, have you bought into the modern theology that all one has to do is say something in word, and not worry about the deed?

The prophet Zephaniah states, 3:9 *For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one accord.* (KJV, כִּי־אָז אֶהְפֹּךְ אֶל־עַמִּים שְׁפָה בְרוּרָה, (לְקָרָא כָּלֶם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה לְעַבְדּוֹ שְׁכֶם אֶחָד: Notice how Zephaniah connects calling upon the name to the will of God, he is described as “*calling on the Lord.*” Looking at *Acts 2:21* and *Romans 10:9* and *10:13*:

Acts 2:21

2:21 *‘And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ (NASB)*

Romans 10:9-16

10:9 *that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10:10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. 10:11 For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.’ 10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; 10:13 for ‘Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ 10:14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? 10:15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!’ 10:16 However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our report?’ (NASB)*

What is described here as “*calling on the Lord*” in *Acts 2:21* and *Romans 10:9* and *10:13* do not contradict *Matthew 7:21*. Paul explains this saying, *10:10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.* (NASB) Note how he says, with the heart a person believes resulting in righteousness. The phrase, “*that which leads to righteousness,*” this refers to the one who submits his life to the Lord according to His Word. To “*call on the Lord*” entails more than just pleading for salvation; it involves submitting to God’s will. According to *Colossians 3:17*, every single thing that is done (in word or deed) is to be carried out in the Messiah. In order to obtain salvation, a person must submit to the Lord’s authority in his or her life. This is what is being taught in passages like *Acts 2:21* and *Romans 10:9-16*. This is why Paul wrote, *10:15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!’ 10:16 However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our report?’ (NASB)* He says “*however they did not heed the good news...*” To heed is to obey. What is it about the “*good news*” that is to be obeyed as Paul is explaining here? Modern theology would have us believe this is just asking for salvation in Jesus name. The bible however speaks of the good news in the context of living our lives for the Lord, and the Lord God in heaven giving us His Spirit to empower us to overcome sin in our lives (obey Torah).

Peter’s statements during Shavuot (Pentacost) led to the people asking “*what shall we do?*” Peter responded to them telling them what they must do. To petition the Lord God in heaven in the name of Yeshua the Messiah, and then to repent and be baptized (see *Acts 2:38*). It is important to understand that baptism was the ancient mikvah ritual that is described in the Torah. The mikvah is synonymous to performing Teshuvah, turning from sin, and symbolizing this by washing the body with mayim khayim (living waters). I

have heard it claimed that one does not need to be baptized over and over again. However, baptism is connected to the mikvah and repentance. We are to live daily repentant lives before the Lord. This process of repentance (Teshuvah) and turning from sin is a life long process. One in which we do continually because of our imperfections. In Christian theology today the knowledge of these things is missing and/or ignored. The calling upon the name of the Lord includes obedience to the gospel message (*Hebrews 3-4*), worshiping the Lord God in heaven, and being a faithful servant of the Lord determining our hearts to serve and live for Him according to His Words. This is the race that Paul spoke of we are all running, as he says in *Acts 20*:

Acts 20:19-27

20:19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; 20:20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, 20:21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. 20:22 'And now, behold, bound in spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, 20:23 except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. 20:24 'But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God. 20:25 'And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face. 20:26 'Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 20:27 'For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. (NASB)

Paul speaks of being told by God's Holy Spirit of what was coming, he would lay down his life for Yeshua's name. He speaks of this in the way of finishing the course and ministry that he had received from the Lord. Paul understood what was required of him, that he would be called to lay down his life for the kingdom of God. These things show how the children of God who call upon the name of the Lord are to be obedient to the gospel, worship the Lord God in heaven, and be faithful to serve.

The Psalmist continues saying the following, אֶל-תֵּט לְבִי לְדָבָר | רַע לְהִתְעוֹלֵל עַל-לוֹת | בְּרִשְׁע אֶת- :ד 141:4 *Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, To practice deeds of wickedness With men who do iniquity; And do not let me eat of their delicacies. (NASB)* Note how eating is synonymous to doing what the wicked do. We are promised in God's Word that he is faithful and will protect us (*2 Thessalonians 3:3*). The Lord promised in His Word that "I can seek You and find You when I search for You with all my heart!" (*Jeremiah 29:13*) We can cry out to the Lord to save us. The Psalmist not only cries out to the Lord with his whole heart for help, he also asks the Lord to keep his heart from evil. Yeshua taught us to pray saying, "And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil ... (NASB) or - the evil one. (NIV)" (*Matthew 6:13*) Here we find Yeshua teaching his disciples to pray and asking the Lord not to lead us into temptation. This is consistent with the Psalm where the psalmist asks the Lord not to incline his heart to any evil thing. The Rabbis state the following in the Talmud Bavli.

Talmud Bavli Berakhot 17a Part 4

מר בריה דרבינא כי הוה מסיים צלותיה אמר הכי אלהי נצור לשוני מרע ושפתותי מדבר מרמה ולמקללי נפשי תדום ונפשי כעפר לכל תהיה פתח לבי בתורתך ובמצותיך תרדוף נפשי ותציי לני מפגע רע מיצר הרע ומאשה רעה ומכל רעות המתרגשות לבא בעולם וכל החושבים עלי רעה מהרה הפר עצתם וקלקל מחשבותם יהיו לרצון אמרי פי והגיון לבי לפניך ה' צורי וגואלי.
Mar b. Kabina used to add at the conclusion of his prayer : O my God ! (Guard my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking guile ; and to such as curse me let my soul be dumb, yea, let my soul be unto all as the dust. Open my heart to Thy Torah, and let my soul pursue Thy commandments. And do Thou deliver me from mishap, from the evil impulse, and from an evil woman and all evil which breaks forth to come upon the world. If any design evil against

me, speedily make their counsel of none effect, and frustrate their designs. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable before Thee, O Lord my Rock and Redeemer.

The prayer listed here states, “*deliver me from mishap, from the evil impulse, and from an evil woman and all evil which breaks forth to come upon the world.*” Note how evil is used here in the petition to ask the Lord to deliver us from harm, but also from sin and the company of those who would cause a person to sin as well, and all sin that breaks forth upon the earth. We seek the Lord God in heaven to keep us from these things, and to live for Him each day. We do not want these things to come to us from the Lord due to the greatness of our wickedness in our lives. Note what happened in the case of Jeroboam, the Lord said that He had put into his heart to do these things, that is to lead Israel away from Rehoboam, king Solomon’s son. Jeroboam however increased his wickedness and led Israel astray from the Lord God in heaven. Also consider what the Lord said to Rehoboam, that He had put in his heart to be harsh to the people and to reject the counsel of the elders. These are a warning to us to guard our hearts and to stay away from evil. The rabbinic prayers also speak of the Lord delivering us in the sense of not having bad dreams, being at peace, and living according to God’s Torah.

Talmud Bavli Berakhot 60b Part 3

הנכנס לישן על מטתו אומר משמע ישראל עד והיה אם שמוע ואומר ברוך המפיל חבלי שינה על עיני ותנומה על עפעפי ומאיר לאישון בת עין יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהי שתשכיב-ני לשלום ותן חלקי בתורתך ותרגילני לידי מצוה ואל תרגילני לידי עבירה ואל תביאני לידי חטא ולא לידי עון ולא לידי נסיון ולא לידי בזיון וישלוט בי יצר טוב ואל ישלוט בי יצר הרע ותצילני מפגע רע ומחלאים רעים ואל יבהלוני חלומות רעים והרהורים רעים ותהא מטתי שלמה לפניך והאר עיני פן אישן המות ברוך אתה ה' המאיר לעולם כולו בכבודו *Who goes in to sleep upon his bed says from “Hear, O Israel” to “And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently” ; then he says : “Blessed... Who makest the bands of sleep to fall upon mine eyes, and slumber upon mine eyelids, and givest light to the apple of the eye. May it be Thy will, O Lord my God, to suffer me to lie down in peace and place my portion in Thy Torah ; and do Thou accustom me to the performance of the commandments and not to transgression ; and bring me not into the power of sin, iniquity, temptation or contempt ; and let the good impulse have dominion over me but not the evil impulse ; and do Thou deliver me from evil occurrence and sore diseases ; and let not evil dreams and lustful thoughts trouble me; and let my bed be perfect before Thee, and give light to mine eyes lest I sleep the sleep of death. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Who givest light to the whole world in Thy glory.”*

The idea of “*not inclining our hearts*” is similar to “*do not lead us into*” evil, and is a Jewish way of asking the Lord to keep us from succumbing to our own evil ways (the yetzer hara). Just as the rabbis ask the Lord to cause us to know his mitzvot (commandments) as opposed to becoming accustomed to sin and transgression and the evil impulse. This is an all-encompassing plea for the Lord God to protect us not just from what is on the outside, but also what is on the inside as well.

The psalmist continues saying, ה' יְהַלְמֵנִי-צַדִּיק | חֶסֶד וְיִוְכַחֲנִי שְׁמֹן רֹאשׁ אֶל-יְנִי רֹאשִׁי כִּי עוֹד וּתְפַלְתֵּי בְרָךְ- עוֹתִיהֶם: וְנִשְׁמְטוּ בִידֵי-סֹלַע שְׁפִטֵיהֶם וְשָׁמְעוּ אֲמָרֵי כִּי נַעֲמֹ: ז' כָּמוֹ פֶּלֶחַ וּבִקְעָ בְּאֲרֶץ נִפְזָרוּ עֲצָמֵינוּ לְפִי נִשְׂאוֹל: 141:5 *Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me; It is oil upon the head; Do not let my head refuse it, For still my prayer is against their wicked deeds. 141:6 Their judges are thrown down by the sides of the rock, And they hear my words, for they are pleasant. 141:7 As when one plows and breaks open the earth, Our bones have been scattered at the mouth of Sheol. (NASB)* A number of things are being brought together here by the psalmist. The righteous send forth reproof (correction) but do so in kindness and truth. Asking the Lord to help us to receive, accept, and apply the reproof from the righteous. Seeking help in this way to avoid the ways of the wicked, to not do their deeds, and to avoid the judges who uphold the ways

of the wicked. David is asking the Lord for whatever he has done wrong, to reprove him, to correct his ways, and to deliver him from impudent people. Similar to what the Rabbis are saying in the Talmud Bavli Shabbat 30b Part 8.

Talmud Bavli Shabbat 30b Part 8

כי הא דההוא דאתא לקמיה דרבי אמר ליה אשתך אשתי ובניך בני אמר ליה רצונך שתשתה כוס של יין שתה ופקע ההוא דאתא לקמיה דרבי חייא אמר ליה אמך אשתי ואתה בני אמר ליה רצונך שתשתה כוס של יין שתה ופקע אמר רבי חייא אהניא ליה צלותיה לרבי דלא לשווייה בני ממזירי דרבי כי הוה מצלי אמר יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו שתצילני היום מעזי. פנים ומעזות פנים

The Gemara relates how Sages conducted themselves in both of those circumstances. As in the case of that man who came before Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi and said to him: Your wife is my wife and your children are my children, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi said to him: Would you like to drink a cup of wine? He drank and burst and died. Similarly, the Gemara relates: There was that man who came before Rabbi Hiyya and said to him: Your mother is my wife, and you are my son. He said to him: Would you like to drink a cup of wine? He drank and burst and died. Rabbi Hiyya said with regard to the incident involving Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi: Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi's prayer that his children will not be rendered mamzerim, children of illicit relations, was effective for him. As when Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi would pray, he said after his prayer: May it be Your will, O Lord, my God, that You will deliver me today from impudent people and from insolence. Insolence, in this case, refers to mamzerut. It was due to his prayer that that man burst and was unsuccessful in disparaging Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi's children.

The rabbis speak of a man who comes and claims the rabbi's mother is his wife and he is his son. These repeated statements seem to go against what the rabbi was told in relation to the dad and mom that raised him. This man who made this claim, once having drunk the wine burst and died indicating that what he said was not true. Note how the drinking of the wine parallels the libations that were a part of ancient Judaism mentioned in the Bible. For example, in *Bereshit / Genesis 35:14* *And Jacob set up a Pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a Pillar of Stone; and he poured out a drink offering on it, and poured oil on it. (NASB)* We also read of Isaiah using the libation as a metaphor when describing the end of the Suffering Servant who “poured out his life unto death.” (*Isaiah 53:12*) The drink offering was a form of libation forming one of the sacrifices and offerings in the Torah. The drink offering is defined from the Hebrew noun *nesekh* which is formed from the Qal form of the verb *nasakh* (נָסַךְ), “to pour,” and so the “thing that is poured.” The verb and the noun frequently come together, such as *nasakh nesekh*, literally “pour [on it] a poured thing” as in the use described in Jacob’s libation at a pillar in *Bereshit / Genesis 35:14*. The etymology “poured thing” explains the existence of the rarer secondary use of the verb *nasakh* for to “cast” (an idol), and the noun *nesekh* for a “thing poured” as referring also to an idol. (Brown Driver Briggs) In the Torah, the drink offering accompanied various sacrifices and offerings on various feast days. Usually the offering was of wine, but in one instance also of “strong drink” (*Bamidbar / Numbers 28:7*). Jacob Neusner in his book “A history of the Mishnaic law of holy things” 1978 p77 states “Meir’s view is that the blood of the sacrifices permits the drink-offering to the altar (B. Zeb. 44a). Sages point out that the drink-offering may come later (= Meir, G.)” The point is in the Talmud, the connection to drinking the wine and the man bursting out and dying is related to the covenant relationship that we have with the Lord, to lie or to have your children rendered as *mamzerim* indicates the intent of one’s heart to disobey God’s Word, to have illicit relations that leads to one’s seed becoming unworthy, etc. In other words, planting a future generation in wickedness as opposed to righteousness being raised in God’s Ways of truth, life, and holiness. The Psalmists approach is to seek the Lord’s help to not be led to do these things, to not let our mind, heart, and actions reject God’s reproof on our sinful ways. This is consistent with what is written in the Talmud Bavli *Berekhhot 60a*.

Talmud Bavli Berakhot 60a Part 23

ת"ר הנכנס לבית המרחץ אומר יהי רצון מלפניך יי' אלהי שתצילני מזה ומכיוצא בו ואל יארע בי דבר קלקלה ועון ואם יארע בי דבר קלקלה ועון תהא מיתתי כפרה לכל עונותי
Our Rabbis have taught : Who enters a bath-house says, "May it be Thy will, O Lord my God, to deliver me from this and anything similar; and may no disgrace or iniquity befall me; but should any disgrace or iniquity befall me, may my death be an atonement for all my sins."

Part 24

אמר אבבי לא לימא אינש הכי דלא לפתח פומיה לשטן דאמר ר"ל וכן תנא משמיה דר' יוסי לעולם אל יפתח אדם פיו לשטן
Abbai said : Let not a man speak thus, so as not to open his mouth to Satan. For said R. Simeon b. Lakish, and it has been similarly taught in the name of R. Jose : A man should never open his mouth to Satan.

Part 25

אמר רב יוסף מאי קראה דכתיב (ישעיהו א, ט) כמעט כסדום היינו לעמורה דמינו מאי אהדר להו נביא שמעו דבר יי' קציני סדום וגו'
Rab Joseph said: What is the Scriptural authority? For it is written, "We should have been as Sodom, we should have been like unto Gomorrah" (Is, i. 9). What did the prophet answer them? "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom" (ibid. v. 10).

The idea here is in seeking the Lord to not fall into disgrace and iniquity. This is paralleled to one who opens his mouth to Satan. The opening of the mouth to Satan seems to be synonymous to entertaining sin in our hearts, and the example of Sodom and Gomorrah leads us to this understanding, to hear the word of the Lord and to heed what is commanded for our lives, to draw our lives along side of God's instruction where these things, being careful about our own ways are synonymous to walking in the ways of the Messiah Yeshua.

ח כִּי אֶלֶיךָ | הֲלוֹהָ אֲדֹנָי עֵינַי בְּכָה חֲסִיתִי אֶל-תִּעַר נַפְשִׁי: ט שְׁמֶרְנִי מִיַּד-פֶּחַח
: 141:8 *For my eyes are toward You, O God, the Lord; In You I take refuge; do not leave me defenseless. 141:9 Keep me from the jaws of the trap which they have set for me, And from the snares of those who do iniquity. 141:10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets, While I pass by safely. (NASB)* David asks the Lord to give to the wicked their just rewards. When one sins and does not repent, he is not seeking the righteous ways of God. The Psalmists words of the trap, the snare, and iniquity remind us to keep a pure heart and to love one another which is the undefined ways of God. These things must be coupled to our faith, or the Lord will not hear our prayers. This is how David understood the meaning of "calling upon the Name of the Lord" is not just about our words, but about all of who we are and are called to be as God's people! Let's Pray!

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 141* has 2 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1 and 2. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 141, Part 1 and 2*.

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 141, Part 1 and 2

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, "A Psalm of David. Lord, I have called You; make hast unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I call unto You

(*Tehillim / Psalms 141:2*).”

- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Solomon said, The Lord is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous. The light of the eyes rejoice the heart; and a good report makes the bones fat (Mishley / Proverbs 15:29-30).*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the midrash describes David calling upon the Lord to hear his prayer, and parallel this to Solomon saying the Lord is far from the wicked.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), describing the wicked and the righteous and being numbered among those who will be with the Lord.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*In like manner David called, One man puts his trust in the decorous and upright acts he has performed. Another puts his trust in the acts of his fathers. But I put my trust in You. Even though I have no righteous acts, answer me because I have called unto You. Hence, David said, Lord, I have called You; make haste unto me.*”

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*Let my prayer be set forth before You as the incense; and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice (Tehillim / Psalms 141:2).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*What did David mean by the words Let my prayer be set forth as incense?*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis ask the question of incense and prayer.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis compare types of prayer and fasting.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*So Daniel said, While I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning being caused to fly swiftly, approached close to me about the time of the evening offering (Daniel 9:20-21). And at what moment did Gabriel approach? At the moment of the evening offering.*”

Midrash Tehillim 141 Part 1 opens with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*A Psalm of David. Lord, I have called You; make hast unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I call unto You (Tehillim / Psalms 141:2).*” The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Solomon said, The Lord is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous. The light of the eyes rejoice the heart; and a good report makes the bones fat (Mishley / Proverbs 15:29-30).*” The rabbis parallel Solomon’s words to the psalmist.

Mishley / Proverbs 15:29-16:3

15:29 The Lord is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous. 15:30 Bright eyes gladden the heart; Good news puts fat on the bones. 15:31 He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof Will dwell among the wise. 15:32 He who neglects discipline despises himself, But he who listens to reproof acquires understanding. 15:33 The fear of the Lord is the instruction for wisdom, And before honor comes humility. 16:1 The plans of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the Lord. 16:2 All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the Lord weighs the motives. 16:3 Commit your works to the Lord And your plans will be established. (NASB, לְשׂוּמְרֵי יְהוָה מִן הַפִּלְתָּיִם יִשְׁמָע: לַאֲזֵן שֹׁמְעַת תּוֹכַחַת חַיִּים בִּקְרֹב חֲכָמִים תְּלִין: מְאוּר-עֵינַיִם יִשְׂמַח-לֵב שְׂמוּעָה טוֹבָה תְּדַשֵּׁן-עַצְמוֹ: לֹא אֲזֵן שֹׁמְעַת תּוֹכַחַת חַיִּים בִּקְרֹב חֲכָמִים תְּלִין: לֵב פּוֹרֵעַ מוֹסֵר מוֹאֵס נִפְשׁוֹ וְשׂוּמְעַת תּוֹכַחַת קוֹנָה לֵב: לֵב יִרְאֵת יְהוָה מוֹסֵר חֲכָמָה וְלִפְנֵי כְבוֹד עֲנָה:

א לְאָדָם מֵעַרְכֵי-לֵב וּמִיְהִיָּה מַעֲנֶה לְשׁוֹן: ב כָּל-דַּרְכֵי-אִישׁ יֵדָבַר בְּעֵינָיו וְתִכְנֶן רוּחוֹת יְהוָה: ג גַּל
(אֶל-יְהוָה מַעֲשֵׂיךָ וַיִּכְנֹנוּ מִחֻשְׁבְּתֶיךָ:

Here Solomon speaks of the foolish, the wicked, and the wise man. The wise man lives because he listens to God's Word and applies God's Word to his life. This parallel speaks to what David is saying in the Psalm asking the Lord to give ear to his prayer. The Lord does not hear the wicked. He only hears those who seek Him and His ways, who long for His presence in their lives in peace, love, and life.

The entire midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק קמא סימן א א מזמור לדוד ה' קראתיך חושה לי. אמר שלמה מאור עינים ישמה לב שמור עה טובה תדשן עצם (משלי טו ל), האיר הקב"ה עיניהם של צדיקים שמח את לבן דשן עצמותם כשבשרן בשור רות טובות, ומה היא הבשורה שבש רן, מה שכתוב למעלה מן הפרשה, אך צדיקים יודו לשמך ישבו ישרים את פניך (תהלים קמ"א פסוק יד), אמר דוד בבקשה ממך אהיה מאותן שרואין פניך - ה'. קראתיך חושה לי. מהו חושה לי, חשתי לעשות דברך, אף אתה חושה לי, למה היה דומה למי שהיה לו דין לפני השלטון, ראה שיש לכל סניגורין לדבר עליהם, קרא אל השלטון ואמר לו בבקשה ממך הכל צריכין הם לס ניגוריהם, אני אין לי סניגור, אין לי מי שידבר עלי, אתה הדיין ואתה הוא הסניגור, כך אמר דוד יש שהוא בוטח על מעשים נאים ונכוחים שיש לו, ויש שבוטח על מעשה אבותיו, ואני בוטח בך, אע"פ שאין בי מעשים טובים, אלא על שקראתיך ענני, לכך נאמר קראתיך חושה לי.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 141, Part 1 <i>1. A Psalm of David. Lord, I have called You; make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I call unto You (Tehillim / Psalms 141:2). Solomon said, The Lord is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous. The light of the eyes rejoice the heart; and a good report makes the bones fat (Mishley / Proverbs 15:29-30). The Holy One blessed be He, made the eyes of the righteous shine, made their hearts rejoice, made their bones fat, in that He gave them good tidings. And what were the good tidings He gave them? That which is written at the end of the preceding Psalm, The violent and evil man will be hunted with thrust upon thrust. I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the poor, and the right of the needy. Surely the righteous will give thanks unto Your name; the upright will dwell in Your presence. (Tehillim / Psalm 140:12-14) Accordingly, David prayed, I beseech You, let me be in the number of those that will behold Your presence, O Lord. Lord I have called You; make haste unto me. What is meant by the words Make haste unto me? It is meant that David said, Even as I made haste to call You, do You make haste unto me. What parable fits here? That of the man who had a law suit before the ruler. When the man saw that all the other litigants had advocates to plead for them, he called to the ruler and said, I beseech you, all litigants must have their advocates. But I, I have no advocate. I have no one to plead for me. Be you my judge and be you my advocate. In like manner David called, One man puts his trust in the decorous and upright acts he has performed. Another puts his trust in the acts of his fathers. But I put my trust in You. Even though I have no righteous acts, answer me because I have called unto You. Hence, David said, Lord, I have called You; make haste unto me.</i></p>
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Solomon said, *15:30 Bright eyes gladden the heart; Good news puts fat on the bones. (NASB)* The statement light (מְאוֹר) of the eyes (עֵינַיִם) is a reference to the righteousness of God according to His Word. When one takes the time to study and apply God's Word to his or her life, the light of God, His righteousness shines and becomes a light in our eyes, that rejoices the heart and brings gladness and blessing to our bones. The rabbis say, "The Holy One blessed be He, made the eyes of the righteous shine, made their hearts rejoice, made their bones fat, in that He gave them good tidings. And what were the good tidings He gave them? That which is written at the end of the preceding Psalm, The violent and evil man will be hunted with thrust upon thrust. I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the poor, and the right of the needy. Surely the righteous will give thanks unto Your name; the upright will dwell in Your presence. (Tehillim / Psalm 140:12-14)" Note how Judaism has a passionate dedication to the

ideal of justice and truth. The moral imperatives of justice, ethics, and morality are taught in the Torah and emphasized by the Prophets throughout the history of Israel. These have become the ideals and obligations for God's people as opposed to just recommendations for good behavior. We are obligated to take care of the poor (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 15:7-8*), the widow, orphan and stranger (*Shemot / Exodus 22:20-21*), the Priesthood who did not receive an inheritance, the Levites (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 12:17-19*) and those who have no land or are in need. The Lord God Almighty warns us against corruption, bribery, misuse of power, and the mistreatment of workers. The Torah provides rights for women and other groups. The Torah teaches the ideal of justice for the benefit of society and the moral guidance of the individual, also for the benefit of society and the land in which we live. It is important to note how these references are also mixed in with other topics relating to justice, holiness, and righteousness, drawing in the context of these things to make the instruction of God complete as a whole for His people. We are instructed to be responsible persons who live together in a community of believers. We are obligated to help someone who is in need (*Vayikra / Leviticus 19:16, Shemot / Exodus 23:5*); and to be a person who does not take responsibility (a bystander or just an observer) in such a case is a Torah-violation. Jewish Tradition states that every person should exhibit the characteristic of *chesed* (grace, *חסד*), meaning taking action to go beyond the requirement of the law to help others. Notice how this is something Yeshua taught, we are to go beyond our calling, taking the extra step or going the extra mile. The Talmud states that mercy and kindness should be among the defining traits of every Jew (*Talmud Bavli Yevamot 79a*). Here the rabbis emphasize the necessity for people to help each other for the purpose of survival. All peoples need to practice mutual aid towards one another. This is why Yeshua taught us to love our enemies, and to do good to those who hate us. Rabbi Akiva qualifies that the initial duty of every person is to him/herself in order that he/she then be able to care for others. In other words, the Lord wants us to take care of ourselves, our bodies, our finances, everything, so that we have the opportunity to help and care for others. Compassion, humility, a charitable spirit, forgiveness and good manners are the qualities for God's people in personal relationships. The Sages detailed these attributes which are expected of us in Jewish ethics. Ethical business practices are essential in Judaism, for example, paying workers on time (*Vayikra / Leviticus 19:13*), keeping honest weights and measures (*Vayikra / Leviticus 19:36*), and repaying damages (*Shemot / Exodus 22:4-5*). Our forefathers were the earliest examples of this kind of carefulness, which has permeated the Torah and the teaching of the Sages. (i.e. *Bereshit / Genesis 31, and Rashi on Bereshit / Genesis 24:10*) The instructions in the Torah cause us to be sensitive to the world around us and to take care in what we do. For example, the laws of *shemitah*, by which the land must lie fallow every 7X7 year (see *Vayikra / Leviticus 25*) which are designed to care for those who are in debt (to be set free) and to preserve the earth and maintain its fertility. This demonstrates for us mercy and kindness towards others. The Torah teaches us that it is the responsibility of all societies to create just and fair legal systems. In terms of righteousness, this is achieved through our actions, to do good simply for the sake of doing good. However, we do not do good things just for the sake of doing good, but because the Torah commands it, in order that we should imitate the ways of God (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:6*).

Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:1-14

8:1 'All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your forefathers. 8:2 'You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. 8:3 'He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. 8:4 'Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. 8:5 'Thus you are to know in your heart that the Lord your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. 8:6 'Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. 8:7 'For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of

fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; 8:8 a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; 8:9 a land where you will eat food without scarcity, in which you will not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. 8:10 'When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you. 8:11 'Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; 8:12 otherwise, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived in them, 8:13 and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies, 8:14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. (NASB)

The Lord God warns us to be careful to remember His ways in the midst of our prosperity that is the result of the Lord's blessing upon our lives. We are not to forget who it is that gives us all things. The Lord God Almighty, the merciful One who loves us and multiplies all that we have as a blessing for us and for others.

The midrash continues saying the following:

Accordingly, David prayed, I beseech You, let me be in the number of those that will behold Your presence, O Lord. Lord I have called You; make haste unto me. What is meant by the words Make haste unto me? It is meant that David said, Even as I made haste to call You, do You make haste unto me. What parable fits here? That of the man who had a law suit before the ruler. When the man saw that all the other litigants had advocates to plead for them, he called to the ruler and said, I beseech you, all litigants must have their advocates. But I, I have no advocate. I have no one to plead for me. Be you my judge and be you my advocate. (Midrash Tehillim 141 Part 1)

David sought the Lord to cause him to be numbered among those who would behold God's presence. In *Revelation 7:9*, John said, "After this I beheld, and, see, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, ..." David believed the people of God are numbered, those who He calls by name, and those who seek the Lord and His righteousness. The gift of God's presence in our lives means the Lord is on our side, he will litigate as an advocate on our behalf before the wicked. Midrash Tehillim 141 Part 1 concludes saying, "In like manner David called, One man puts his trust in the decorous and upright acts he has performed. Another puts his trust in the acts of his fathers. But I put my trust in You. Even though I have no righteous acts, answer me because I have called unto You. Hence, David said, Lord, I have called You; make haste unto me." The Lord God of Israel desires to be with his people. He chases after us, pursues us, redeems us, and renews us in order to be with us. We think what matters most to the Lord is to be in His presence. This is why He redeems us from sin and death and we enter into a relationship with Him. He dwells among us so that we may delight in Him. This is the greatest gift of all to be at peace in His presence. (*Shemot / Exodus 33:14-15*, And God said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." And he said to him, "if your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.")

Midrash Tehillim 141 Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתהיל) saying, "Let my prayer be set forth before You as the incense; and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice (Tehillim / Psalms 141:2)." The פתיחה (Petihata) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, "What did David mean by the words Let my prayer be set forth as incense?" When thinking on the words of David, we remember what is written in *Revelation 8:4* And the smoke of the incense went up before God, with the prayers of the saints, out of the hand of the angel. (NASB) These descriptions are of prayer going before the Lord as a sweet fragrance. The entire midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק קמא סימן ב</p> <p>ב תכון תפלתי קטרת לפניך משאת כפי מנחת ערב. מהו תכון תפלתי, כך אמר דוד רבוני כשהיה בית המקדש קיים, היינו מקטירים לפניך קטורת, עכשו אין לנו לא מזבח ולא כהן גדול, תקבל תפלתי ותקרע הרקיע ותכנס תפלתי, לכך נאמר תכון תפלתי וגוי מנחת ערב, וכה"א ואלי יאספו כל חרד בדברי אלהי ישראל וגוי למנחת הערב, ובמנחת הערב קמתי מתעניי-תי ובקרעי בגדי ומעילי וגוי (עזרא ט ד ה). ולמה במנחה, אלא עכשו כל היום טובה נפשי בעולם שלא נצט-ער, ובמנחה מתה עלי ומעי מתחלפין, לפיכך צריך אדם להתודות חטאתו, ולהתחנן בתפלת המנחה, לכך נאמר משאת כפי מנחת ערב, וכן דניאל אומר ועוד אני מדבר בתפלה והאיש גבריאל אשר ראיתי בחזון וגוי [נוגע אלי כעת מנחת ערב] (דניאל ט כא) אימתי בעת מנחת ערב.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 141, Part 2</p> <p>2. <i>Let my prayer be set forth before You as the incense; and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice (Tehillim / Psalms 141:2). What did David mean by the words Let my prayer be set forth as incense? It is as though David said My Lord, as long as the Temple was standing, we set forth incense before You. But now that we have neither altar, nor high priest, accept You my prayer; let the firmament open so that my prayer can come before You. Hence, David said, Let my prayer be set forth before You as the incense; and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice. In connection with these words, one may read in Scripture, At the evening offering, I arose up from my fasting, even with my garment and my mantle rent; and I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God; and I said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to You, my God (Ezra 9:5-6). Why did Ezra arise from his fasting at the evening offering? As though to say, All day, until this moment, my strength held up, and I felt no distress; but at the moment of the evening offering, my strength ebbed away from me, and my bowels were gripped with hunger. Hence, at the early evening prayer, a man should confess his sin and beseech God, as is said, And let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice. So Daniel said, While I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning being caused to fly swiftly, approached close to me about the time of the evening offering (Daniel 9:20-21). And at what moment did Gabriel approach? At the moment of the evening offering.</i></p>
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The rabbis speak of when David speaks of his prayer being set forth as incense. When Moshe went up upon the mountain of Sinai, the Lord God Almighty began to reveal to him the image and pattern of the Tabernacle and the relationship God wanted for his people. He showed Moshe things about life in a community of faithful people here on earth, and who He really is, a loving and merciful creator (*Shemot / Exodus 34*). The Lord also told Moshe when he went down the mountain he was to build a tabernacle in the pattern that was shown him (*Shemot / Exodus 25:40*) This is very significant because we too must learn to build our lives according to the pattern the Lord has established. It is very easy to develop habitual patterns for our lives that the Lord did not give. In fact, it is possible to have strong delusions about God Himself, certain ideas that we have invented, and then to turn and build entire theologies around our ideas. The end result is the worship of a god of our own invention. This leads to disappointment when prayer is not answer. One gets frustrated, hardness of heart, and then giving up. This is a form of idol worship in which one fails to worship the One True God, in exchange for the one of our own making. If your prayer is not being answered, it very well could be this is what has happened. This can happen if we are not building our lives according to the Word of God. The Word of God can revolutionize lives only if we trust in the Lord, and lean upon His understanding as we build our lives according to God's pattern. The Midrash states, "David said, *Let my prayer be set forth before You as the incense; and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice.*" The rabbis parallel this to Ezra saying the following, "In connection with these words, one may read in Scripture, *At the evening offering, I arose up from my fasting, even with my garment and my mantle rent; and I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God; and I said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to You, my God (Ezra 9:5-6). Why did Ezra arise from his fasting at the evening offering? As though to say, All day, until this moment, my strength held up, and I felt no distress; but at the moment of the evening offering, my strength ebbed away from me, and my bowels were gripped with hunger. Hence, at the early evening prayer, a man should confess his sin and beseech God, as*

is said, And let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice.” The idea being put forward here is taking our lives and conforming our lives in the pattern the Lord has laid out. This was the point and purpose of the reformulation of the synagogue service in light of the destruction of the Temple as the midrash states, “Hence, David said, Let my prayer be set forth before You as the incense; and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice.” This is also why the book of Hebrews was written following the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD. Here the rabbis describe David patterning his life after the service of God as in the offering of a fragrant incense in His holy presence. If our lives are not based upon the Word of God, if His Word is not planted in our hearts we will simply be going about after our own ways and not God’s Holy Ways. This is not the inheritance the Messiah died to secure for us. The Messiah died to empower us to overcome sin, to be made new from the inside out. He is not in the process of leading us to aimless wandering and self deception. There was a pattern revealed in the Tabernacle that Moshe was shown on the mountain that is a revelation of how we should live, how we should organize our lives and how we should fellowship with God. The Lord God commanded Moshe to tell the people that they are able to approach Him in only one specific way. In addition, the priests were also told they were to dress and minister in a particular way. These things function as lessons to us today; these things reveal to us the Lord has made our lives in the Messiah in a very specific way. The reason this and the Torah are so important is because if we do not determine our hearts to following the Lord God Almighty and His Messiah in the Torah, we will be walking after our own imaginations rather than approaching God the way He commanded.

The Lord God made it clear, the sacrifice, His means for atonement, was to be made in faith and faithfulness, in order to draw near to Him. This occurred upon the Brazen Altar in the Mishkhan (Tabernacle) upon which the blood was spilled, and in the Kedosh Kedoshim (Holy of Holies) upon the kaporet. Obedience to God’s Word in our lives is the fruit of the work that He has done in our lives, putting in our hearts a desire to serve Him and to order our lives according to His word. It is through faith that we please God (*Hebrews 11:6*) and it is our faithfulness (good works) that is the fruit of our faith (*James 2:17-18*). If we are seeking the Lord God in heaven, and walking along side of His Messiah Yeshua, faithfulness (fruit) will be born out of our lives. This speaks of having passion for the things of God as we choose to walk in His ways. Yeshua said the Holy Spirit would be sent to help us to overcome sin in our lives. This is a very important statement as we are to examine our lives to see whether these things are true.

Now in regard to what David was saying about his prayers being a sweet fragrant incense. In the Torah, the incense was placed upon the Altar in the Holy Place and this pattern of the altar of incense can provide tremendous insights into prayer in our lives. The book of *Revelation 8:3-4* speaks of the prayers of God’s people going before the Lord as a fragrant incense. For example, as was mentioned earlier, if we draw near to the Lord with an improper understanding it is as if we are seeking the Lord by our own means. Doing so in this way will cause our prayers to go to no avail. The model that is given us helps us to pray more effectively. Notice in the Tabernacle how the fire from the Altar of incense was taken from the Brazen Altar of sacrifice. Note how death comes to those who do differently, as in the case with Dadav and Avihu (*Vayikra / Leviticus 10*). The Torah tells us that these two men took “*strange fire*” for the altar of incense. The point was that no other fire was to be allowed. False fire leads to death indicating that we are not to walk after our own methodologies or our own ideologies. Note also how the first fire came from God to ignite the first burnt offering (see *Vayikra / Leviticus 9:24*), where this same fire ignited the incense from that time on. We know this to be true because the priests kept the altar fire going day after day. The fire that was used to offer up incense was taken from the source of life, fire from heaven, where this is the original pattern set forth by God. When the incense was lit, the Tabernacle filled with the sweet aroma that represented the presence of God. The Lord is looking for this type of thing in our lives, to be set on fire by the Spirit of God, to fill our lives, and this fire was taken from the Altar. The parallels to the Messiah who laid his life down for ours is tremendous. Taking from the pattern that is laid down here, our prayers going before the Lord in heaven, the incense, and the Altar of sacrifice and atonement, the Lord answering our prayers in astounding and miraculous ways is because of His presence in the Messiah when we pray in His name. (The Name of Yeshua). Note also how the Messiah leads us in righteousness and truth and teaches us to walk according to God’s Torah (instruction). We always go back to the pattern that was revealed on the mountain, because

in this way we can more properly understand what we have been taught in the Apostolic Writings (NT). David’s words to cause his prayers to become incense, illustrates for us why we pray in the Name of the Messiah Yeshua. Yeshua laid his life down for ours as an atoning sacrifice before God. He is upon the altar, and it is these coals that are taken and used to light the fragrant incense before our Father in heaven. This is the pattern the Lord has laid out in His Torah. The Lord God Almighty sent His Messiah to lead the way in righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth, and it is in His sacrifice that sets our lives on fire for the Lord enabling our prayers to be heard before God.

Midrash Tehillim 141 Part 2 concludes saying, “So Daniel said, While I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning being caused to fly swiftly, approached close to me about the time of the evening offering (Daniel 9:20-21). And at what moment did Gabriel approach? At the moment of the evening offering.” Notice how Daniel says “While I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin...” According to the pattern that is laid out in the Torah, when a man comes before God at His Tabernacle, we find the definition of the service of God, speaking, confessing our sins, atonement, and prayer (incense). For our prayers to be heard and to become a fragrant incense, we must go before the Lord with confession of sins seeking His forgiveness in His atoning sacrifice, Yeshua the Messiah. 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