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**Triennial Cycle (Triennial Torah Cycle) / Septennial Cycle (Septennial Torah Cycle)**

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| **Three and 1/2 year Lectionary Readings** | **Fourth Year of the Reading Cycle** |
| **Tammuz 24, 5779 – July 19/20 2019** | **Fourth Year of the Shmita Cycle** |

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**For their regular and sacrificial giving, providing the best oil for the lamps, we pray that G-d’s richest blessings be upon their lives and those of their loved ones, together with all Yisrael and her Torah Scholars, amen ve amen!**

**Also a great thank you and great blessings be upon all who send comments to the list about the contents and commentary of the weekly Torah Seder and allied topics**.

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| **Shabbat** |
| ַיִּסַּע מִשָּׁם |
| **“Yesah Meshah”** |
| **“and I’ll** (Abraham) **Journey”** |
| B’resheet (Gen.) Gen. 20:1-21:5 |
|  |
| Ashlamatah: Is. 65:22 – 66:5 + 10-11 |
| Psalm 17:1-15 |
| N.C.: Mk 7:24-30; |
| Acts 10:1-23 |
|  |

**Blessings Before Torah Study**

**Blessed are You, Ha-Shem our G-d, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us through Your commandments, and commanded us to actively study Torah. Amen!**

**Please Ha-Shem, our G-d, sweeten the words of Your Torah in our mouths and in the mouths of all Your people Israel. May we and our offspring, and our offspring's offspring, and all the offspring of Your people, the House of Israel, may we all, together, know Your Name and study Your Torah for the sake of fulfilling Your desire. Blessed are You, Ha-Shem, Who teaches Torah to His people Israel. Amen!**

**Blessed are You, Ha-Shem our G-d, King of the universe, Who chose us from all the nations, and gave us the Torah. Blessed are You, Ha-Shem, Giver of the Torah. Amen!**

**Ha-Shem spoke to Moses, explaining a Commandment. "Speak to Aaron and his sons, and teach them the following Commandment: This is how you should bless the Children of Israel. Say to the Children of Israel:**

**May Ha-Shem bless you and keep watch over you; - Amen!**

**May Ha-Shem make His Presence enlighten you, and may He be kind to you; - Amen!**

**May Ha-Shem bestow favor on you, and grant you peace. – Amen!**

**This way, the priests will link My Name with the Israelites, and I will bless them."**

**These are the Laws for which the Torah did not mandate specific amounts: How much growing produce must be left in the corner of the field for the poor; how much of the first fruits must be offered at the Holy Temple; how much one must bring as an offering when one visits the Holy Temple three times a year; how much one must do when doing acts of kindness; and there is no maximum amount of Torah that a person must study.**

**These are the Laws whose benefits a person can often enjoy even in this world, even though the primary reward is in the Next World: They are: Honouring one's father and mother; doing acts of kindness; early attendance at the place of Torah study -- morning and night; showing hospitality to guests; visiting the sick; providing for the financial needs of a bride; escorting the dead; being very engrossed in prayer; bringing peace between two people, and between husband and wife; but the study of Torah is as great as all of them together. Amen!**

**Contents of the Torah Seder**

* **Abimelech**
* **Isaac – Laughter**

**Reading Assignment:**

**The Torah Anthology: Yalkut Me’Am Lo’Ez -**

By: Rabbi Yaaqov Culi, Translated by: Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan

Published by: Moznaim Publishing Corp. (New York, 1979)

Vol. 2 Patriarchs pp. 261-282.

**Rashi & Targum Pseudo Jonathan**

**for: B’resheet 20.1-21.5**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. And Abraham traveled from there to the land of the south, and he dwelt between Kadesh and between Shur, and he sojourned in Gerar. | 1. And Abraham went on from thence to the land of the south, and dwelt between Rekam and Chagra, and had his habitation in Gerar.  |
| 2. And Abraham said about Sarah his wife, "She is my sister," and Abimelech the king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.  | 2. And Abraham said concerning Sarah his wife, She is my sister. And Abimelek, king of Gerar, sent and took Sarah.JERUSALEM: King of Arad.  |
| 3. And God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and He said to him, "Behold you are going to die because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a married woman." | 3. And a word came from before the LORD unto Abimelek, in a dream of the night, and said to him, Behold, you die, because of the woman whom you have carried away, and she is a man's wife. |
| 4. And Abimelech had not come near to her, and he said, "O Lord, will You kill even a righteous nation? | 4. But Abimelek had not come near to defile her; and he said, LORD, will the son of a people who have not sinned, and whom it is right to absolve in the judgment, be killed? |
| 5. Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she, even she said, 'He is my brother.' With the innocence of my heart and with the purity of my hands have I done this." | 5. Did he not tell me, She is my sister? And did not she also say, He is my brother? In the truthfulness of my heart and the innocence of my hands have I done this. |
| 6. And God said to him in a dream, "I too know that you did this with the innocence of your heart, and I too have withheld you from sinning to Me; therefore, I did not let you touch her.  | 6. And the Word of the LORD said to him in a dream, Before Me also it is manifest that in the truthfulness of your heart you did this, and so I restrained you from sinning before Me; therefore I would not permit you to come near her. |
| 7. And now, return the man's wife, because he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and [you will] live; but if you do not return [her], know that you will surely die, you and all that is yours." | 7. And now let the wife of the man return; for he is a prophet; he will pray for you, and you will live: but if you will not let her return, know that dying you will die, you and all who are yours. |
| 8. And Abimelech arose early in the morning, and he summoned all his servants, and he spoke all these words in their ears; and the men were very frightened. | 8. And Abimelek arose in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these words before them; and the men feared greatly.  |
| 9. And Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us, and what have I sinned against you, that you have brought upon me and upon my kingdom a great sin? Deeds that are not done, you have done to me." | 9. And Abimelek called Abraham, and said, What have you done to us? And in what have I sinned against you? For you have brought upon me and upon my kingdom a great sin. You have wrought with me works that are not right. |
| 10. And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you see, that you did this thing?" | 10. And Abimelek said to Abraham, What have you seen, that you did this thing? |
| 11. And Abraham said, "For I said, 'Surely, there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife. | 11. And Abraham said, Because I said in my heart, The fear of the LORD is not in this place, and they will kill me for the sake of my wife. |
| 12. And also, indeed, she is my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. | 12. But in truth she is my sister, the daughter of my father's brother, but not of the kindred of my mother; and she became my wife.  |
| 13. And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her: This is your kindness, which you shall do with me: whither we come, say about me, 'He is my brother.'" | 13. And it was when they sought to turn me aside to the worship of idols, and I went forth from my father's house, that I said to her, This is the kindness you will do me: in every place to which we come, say concerning me, He is my brother. |
| 21.1. And the Lord remembered Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did to Sarah as He had spoken.  | 1. And the LORD remembered Sarah according to that which He had said to her; **and the LORD wrought a miracle for Sarah like to that for which Abraham had spoken in prayer for Abimelek.**JERUSALEM: And the Lord wrought miracles for Sarah, as He had spoken. |
| 2. And Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him.  | 2. And she conceived, and Sarah bare to Abraham a son, **who was like to himself in his age**, at the time of which the LORD had spoken to him. |
| 3. And Abraham named his son who had been born to him, whom Sarah had borne to him, Isaac. | 3. And Abraham called the name of his son whom Sarah had borne him Izhak. |
| 4. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. | 4. And Abraham circumcised Izhak his son, when he was the son of eight days, as the Lord had commanded him. |
| 5. And Abraham was a hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born to him. | 5. And Abraham was the son of an hundred years when Izhak his son was born to him. |

**Welcome to the World of P’shat Exegesis**

In order to understand the finished work of the P’shat mode of interpretation of the Torah, one needs to take into account that the P’shat is intended to produce a catechetical output, whereby a question/s is/are raised and an answer/a is/are given using the seven Hermeneutic Laws of R. Hillel and as well as the laws of Hebrew Grammar and Hebrew expression.

The Seven Hermeneutic Laws of R. Hillel are as follows

**[cf.** [**http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=472&letter=R**](http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=472&letter=R)**]:**

**1. Ḳal va-ḥomer:** "Argumentum a minori ad majus" or "a majori ad minus"; corresponding to the scholastic proof a fortiori.

**2. Gezerah shavah:** Argument from analogy. Biblical passages containing synonyms or homonyms are subject, however much they differ in other respects, to identical definitions and applications.

**3. Binyan ab mi-katub eḥad:** Application of a provision found in one passage only to passages which are related to the first in content but do not contain the provision in question.

**4. Binyan ab mi-shene ketubim:** The same as the preceding, except that the provision is generalized from two Biblical passages.

**5. Kelal u-Peraṭ and Peraṭ u-kelal:** Definition of the general by the particular, and of the particular by the general.

**6. Ka-yoẓe bo mi-maḳom aḥer:** Similarity in content to another Scriptural passage.

**7. Dabar ha-lamed me-'inyano:** Interpretation deduced from the context.

**Chapter 20**

**1 Abraham traveled from there** When he saw that the cities had been destroyed and that travelers had ceased to pass by, he migrated from there. Another explanation: To distance himself from Lot, who had acquired a bad reputation, because he had been intimate with his daughters.-[from Gen. Rabbah 52:3, 4]

**2 And Abraham said** Here he did not ask her permission, but [said that she was his sister] forcibly, against her will, because she had already been taken to Pharaoh’s house on account of this.--[from Gen. Rabbah ad loc.]

**about Sarah his wife** [ אֶל means] “about” Sarah his wife, and similarly (I Sam. 4:21): “concerning (אֶל) the taking of the Ark, and concerning (אֶל) [the death of] her father-in-law.” Both expressions (of אֶל ) have the meaning of עַל : ”concerning.”-[from Targum Onkelos, Targum Jonathan; Ibn Ezra]

**4 And Abimelech had not come near to her** The angel stopped him, as it is said: ”I did not let you touch her.”-[from Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 26]

**will You kill even a righteous nation** Even if he is righteous, will You kill him? Is that Your way, to destroy the nations for nought? You did so to the Generation of the Flood and to the Generation of the Dispersion. I too will say that You destroyed them for no reason, just as You threaten (lit. say) to kill me.-[from Gen. Rabbah 52:2]

**5 even she** --This is to include her servants, camel drivers, and donkey drivers.”I asked them all, and they said: He is her brother.”--[from Gen. Rabbah 52:6]

**With the innocence of my heart** I did not intend to sin.-

**and with the purity of my hands** I am pure of sin, for I did not touch her.-

**6 I know that, etc.,** with the innocence of your heart It is true that you did not intend at first to sin, but you cannot claim purity of hands [because...]-[from Gen. Rabbah 52:6; Tan. Buber, Vayera 25]

**I did not let you** It was not due to you that you did not touch her, but I prevented you from sinning, for I did not give you strength, and so (below 31: 7): “and God did not let him (וְלֽא נְתָנוֹ) ”; and so (Jud. 15:1): “but her father did not allow him (וְלֽא נְתָנוֹ) to come.”- [from Gen. Rabbah 52:7]

**7 return the man’s wife** And do not think that perhaps she will be repugnant to him, and he will not accept her, or that he will hate you and not pray for you. (Abimelech said to Him,”Who will let him know that I did not touch her?” He replied,)

**because he is a prophet** And he knows that you did not touch her; therefore,”he will pray for you.”-[from Tan. Buber, Vayera 25]

**9 Deeds that are not done** A plague that was not accustomed to come upon any creature has come upon us because of you: the closing up of all bodily orifices: those of semen, of urine, of excrement, and of the ears and nose.-[based on B.K. 93a; Tan. Buber, Vayera 36]

**11 Surely, there is no fear of God** A guest who comes to a city-do we ask him about eating and drinking, or do we ask him about his wife-” Is she your wife or is she your sister?”-[from B.K. 93a, Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer ch. 26]

**12 my sister, the daughter of my father** **And the daughter of one’s father is permitted to a Noahide [for marriage], for a gentile has no father (i.e., his lineage is not traced from his father).** And in order to justify his words, he answered him in this way. Now if you ask: Was she not the daughter of his brother? [The answer is that]: grandchildren are considered like children (Tosefta. Yev. 8:8, Talmud Bavli, Yev. 62b); therefore, she was (considered as) Terah’s daughter. And so did he say to Lot,”For we are kinsmen” (אֲנָשִׁים אַחִים) [lit. men, brothers], (although, in fact, Lot was his brother Haran’s son). -[from Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 36]

**but not the daughter of my mother** Haran was [born] of a different mother [than Abraham].-

**13 And it came to pass, when [God] caused me to wander, etc.** Onkelos rendered as he rendered: [And it came to pass, when the peoples went astray after the work of their hands, that God brought me near to His fear from my father’s house.] However, it can also be interpreted in a more appropriate manner, according to its structure [as follows:] When the Holy One, blessed be He, took me out of my father’s house to be a wanderer, roaming from place to place, I knew that I would pass through places where there are wicked people, and [therefore]: ”I said to her: This is your kindness, etc.”-.

**When God caused me to wander** [The verb הִתְעוּ is] in the plural. But do not wonder at this because in many places, words denoting Godliness and words denoting authority are expressed in the plural, (e.g.), (II Sam. 7:23): “whom God went (הָלְכוּ) (to redeem)”; (Deut. 5: 23): “the living (חַייִם) God”; (Josh. 24:19): “a holy (קְדֽשִים) God.” And all references to Godliness or to authority are in the plural, as for example (below 39:20): “And Joseph’s master (אֲדוֹנֵי) took”; (Deut. 10:17): “the Lord of (אֲדוֹנֵי) lords”; (below 42:33): “the lord of (אֲדוֹנֵי) the land,” and so (Exod. 22:14); “if its master (בְּעָלָיו) is with it”; (ibid 21:29): “and if its master was warned (בִּבְעָלָיו) .” Now if you ask, why is the expression הִתְעוּ used here? [The answer is that] anyone who is exiled from his place and is not settled is תּוֹעֶה , as in (below 21:14): “and she walked and she wandered” (וַתֵּתַע) ; (Ps. 119:176): “I wandered (תָּעִיתִי) like a lost sheep”; (Job 38:41): “they wander (יִתְעוּ) for lack of food,” meaning that they go forth and wander to seek their food.-

**say about me** [The meaning of לִי is] about me. Similarly (below 26:7): “And the people of the place asked לְאִשְׁתּוֹ meaning “about his wife.” Similarly (Exod. 14:3): “And Pharaoh said לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל meaning”about the Children of Israel”; (Jud. 9:54): “Lest they say of me (לִי) : a woman killed him.”

**14 and he gave [them] to Abraham** in order to appease him so that he would pray for him.

**15 Here is my land before you** But Pharaoh said to him (above 12:19): “And now, here is your wife; take [her] and go,” because he was afraid, because the Egyptians were immersed in lewdness.

**16 And to Sarah he said** Abimelech [said] in her honor in order to appease her, “Behold I have bestowed upon you this honor; I have given money to your brother, about whom you said, He is my brother. Behold this money and this honor are to you a covering of the eyes.”

**for all who are with you** They will cover their eyes, so that they will not denigrate you, for had I returned you empty-handed, they could say, “After he violated her, he returned her.” Now that I had to spend much money and to appease you, they will know that against my will I returned you, and through a miracle.-

**and with all** And with all the people in the world.-

**you shall contend** You shall have the opportunity to contend and to show these evident facts. Wherever the word הוֹכָחָה appears, it refers to the clarification of matters, and in Old French, esprover, to prove, clarify. (That is aprover below 31:37, to clarify, decide, define.) Onkelos translated it in a different manner, and the language of the verse fits in with the Targum in the following manner: “Behold it will be for you a covering of honor on account of my eyes, which gazed upon you and upon all who are with you.” Therefore, he translated it: “And I saw you and all who are with you.” There is a Midrashic interpretation, but I have explained what fits the language of the verse.

**17 and they gave birth** As the Targum renders: and they were relieved. Their orifices were opened, and they expelled that which needed to be expelled, and that is their birth.

**18 every womb** Every [bodily] opening.-

**because of Sarah** Heb. עַל דְבַר lit. by the word of Sarah. Through the words of Sarah.-[from Gen. Rabbah 52:13]

**B’resheet (Genesis) ‎21:1-5**

**1 And the Lord remembered Sarah, etc.** -(B.K 92a) This section was placed next to [the preceding section] to teach you that whoever begs for mercy for his friend, when he needs the same thing, he is answered first, for it is said (verse 17) “And Abraham prayed, etc.,” and immediately following it, “And the Lord remembered Sarah,” i.e., He had already remembered her before He healed Abimelech.-

**remembered Sarah** as He had said Concerning [the promise of] conception. -

**as He had spoken** Concerning [the promise of] birth. Now where is [the expression] “saying” and where is [the expression] “speaking”? “Saying” (אֲמִירה) is mentioned (above 17:19): “And God said (וַיֽאמֶר) : Indeed, your wife Sarah, etc...” “Speaking” (דִבוּר) [is mentioned] (above 15:1): “The word of (דְבַר) the Lord came to Abram,” in the Covenant Between the Parts, where it is stated (ibid. 4): “This one [Eliezer] will not inherit you, etc.” and He brought forth the heir from Sarah.

**and the Lord did to Sarah as He had spoken** to Abraham.

**2 at the time of which [He] had spoken** Rabbi Yudan and Rabbi Chama dispute. Rabbi Yudan says: This teaches us that he was born after nine months, so that it should not be said that he was [conceived] in Abimelech’s household, and Rabbi Chama says: After seven months.-[from Gen. Rabbah 53:6]

**at the time of which God had spoken** Heb. אֽתוֹ . [Onkelos and Jonathan render:] דְמַלֵיל יָתֵי , i.e., the time that He had spoken and fixed, when he [the angel] said to him (18:14): “At the appointed time, I will return to you.” He made a scratch on the wall, and said to him, “When the sun reaches this scratch next year, she will give birth.”-[from Tan. Buber, Vayera 36]

**in his old age** - לִזְקֻנָיו means **that his [Isaac’s] facial features were like his**.-[from Gen. Rabbah 53:6]

**Ketubim: Tehillim (Psalms) 17:1-15**

| **Rashi’s Translation** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. A prayer of David; Hearken, O Lord, to righteousness/generosity, listen to my cry, lend an ear to my prayer, [which is] without deceitful lips. | 1. A prayer of David. Accept, O LORD, my entreaty; in righteousness/generosity hear my praise; You will incline Your ear to my prayer, since my lips are without guile.  |
| 2. May my judgment come forth from before You; may Your eyes see [my] upright acts. | 2. From Your presence my judgment will come forth; your eyes will behold honesty. |
| 3. You have tried my heart; You have visited [upon me] at night. You have refined me and not found; If I think, let it not pass my mouth. | 3. You have tested my heart; You have visited me at night; You have purified me and not found corruption. If I thought of evil, it has not passed my mouth. |
| 4. As for man's deeds, because of the word of Your lips, I kept [myself] from the ways of the profligate. | 4. Truly **You have rebuked the deeds of the sons of men by the word of Your lips;** I have kept myself from the ways of audacity. |
| 5. To support my feet in Your paths, lest my feet falter. | 5. Support my steps in Your path, lest my feet be shaken. |
| 6. I called to You because You shall answer me, O God. Bend Your ear to me; hearken to my saying. | 6. I have called You because You will receive my prayer, O God; incline Your ear, receive my prayer. |
| 7. Distinguish Your kind acts to save, with Your right hand, those who take refuge [in You] from those who rise up [against them]. | 7. Display Your goodness, O redeemer of those who hope; from those who rise up against them by Your right hand. |
| 8. Guard me as the apple of the eye; in the shadow of Your wings You shall hide me. | 8. Guard me like the circle that is in the middle of the eye; in the shadow of Your presence You will hide me. |
| 9. Because of the wicked who have robbed me; my mortal enemies who encompass me. | 9. From the presence of the wicked, those who harm me; my enemies, in the desire of their soul, surround me. |
| 10. [With] their fat, they closed themselves up; their mouths spoke with haughtiness. | 10. Their wealth has increased, their fat covers them, their mouth has spoken arrogantly. |
| 11. [By] our footsteps they surround us now, they set their eyes roaming over the land. | 11. Our steps now have surrounded us; their eyes are fixed to extend throughout the land. |
| 12. His likeness is like a lion, which yearns for prey, and as a young lion, which lurks in hidden places. | 12. He resembles a lion who yearns to tear, or a jungle-cat that dwells in secret places. |
| 13. Arise, O Lord, confront him; bring him down to his knees; rescue my soul from the wicked, Your sword | 13. Arise, O LORD, forestall him, strike him down; deliver my soul from the wicked man who deserves death by Your sword. |
| 14. **Of those who die by Your hand, O Lord, of those who die of old age**, whose share is in life, and whose belly You will fill with Your hidden treasure, who have children in plenty and leave their abundance to their babes. | 14. **And the righteous/generous who hand over their souls on Your account, O LORD, to death in the land,** their portion is in eternal life, and their bellies will be filled with your good store; children will be satisfied, and they will leave their surplus to their children. |
| 15. I will see Your face with righteousness; I will be satisfied with Your image upon the awakening. | 15. I in truth will see Your countenance, I will be satisfied at the time that I awake, from the glory of Your face. |
|  |  |

**Rashi’s Commentary on Psalm ‎17:1-15**

**2 May my judgment come forth from before You** May the sins for which I deserve to be judged with torments, go forth from before You and not come before You in judgment.

**may Your eyes see [my] upright acts** If I have merits, may Your eyes see the upright acts.

**3 You have tried my heart, etc.** I know that I am guilty of a transgression, and, if the judgment of its punishment comes before You, I will not be declared innocent in the judgment, for You have already tried my heart.

**You have visited [upon me] at night** at eventide for the iniquity of Bathsheba, concerning which it is stated (in II Sam. 11:2) “And it came to pass at the time of evening, that David arose, etc.” You have refined me You have tested me.

**and not found** You have not found in me Your desire.

**If I think, let it not pass my mouth** If it enters my thoughts again to be tried before You, let it not pass my mouth to say again, “Try me, O Lord, and test me,” as I have already said, as is written (26:2) “ Try me, O Lord, and test me,” for David asked the Holy One, blessed be He, “Why do they say, ‘the God of Abraham,’ yet they do not say, ‘the God of David’?” He replied, “I tested him with ten tests, and he was found perfect.” He [David] said, “Try me and test me,” as appears in tractate Shabbath (?).

**4 As for man’s deeds, because of the word of Your lips, etc.** To support my feet, etc. From then on, for every deed of man that I came to perform, I watched myself because of the word of Your lips; [I watched] the ways of the profligate, to turn away from them, so that I should not walk in them, but [would] support my feet constantly in Your paths, that my feet should not falter from them. Another explanation:

**For the deeds of man according to the word of Your lips, etc.** Since a person must use his deeds according to the uprightness (decre - early editions) of the word of Your lips, as You said, “You shall not commit adultery,”I kept myself from the ways of the profligate although I behaved unseemly according to the good You have done.

**5 To support my feet** From then on, for every deed of man that I did improperly, may Your eyes see the upright deeds, but my judgment shall go forth from before you.

**6 because You shall answer me, O God** Because I am confident that You will answer me.

**7 Distinguish Your kind acts** Heb. הפלה , esevre in Old French, to separate, as (in Exod. 33:16): “and I and my people will be distinguished (ונפלינו) .” With Your right hand You save those who take refuge in You from those who rise up against them. (This does not appear in manuscripts or in most early editions.) [The literal meaning is:] Distinguish Your kind acts, You Who save those who take refuge, etc. This is a transposed verse, meaning: Distinguish Your kind acts to save with Your right hand those who take refuge, etc.

**8 as the apple** Heb. (כאישון) . That is the pupil (lit. the black) of the eye, on which the vision depends. Because it is black, it is called אישון , an expression of darkness, and the Holy One, blessed be He, prepared a guard for it, viz. the eyelids, which constantly cover it.

**9 who have robbed me** Because of this: my enemies, who encompass me to take my life, rob me.

**10 [With] their fat, they closed themselves up** With their fat, they closed their heart and their eyes from looking at Your deeds, in fear of You.

**11 [By] our footsteps they surround us now** By our footsteps, the enemies surround us now, and they set their eyes roaming over the land, to raid the land. It appears to me that David prayed this prayer after the incident of Uriah and Joab had happened to him, and the Israelites were in the land of the children of Ammon besieging Rabbah (II Sam. 11), and David feared that they would be defeated there because of the sin that he had committed, and the Philistines, Moab, Edom, and all the evil neighbors of Eretz Israel, who looked forward to the day of their misfortune, would hear and march against them.

**12 which yearns** Heb. יכסף , yearns, as (in Gen. 31:30): “for you yearned (נכסף נכספתי) .”

**13 confront him** The enemy.

**bring him down to his knees** Beat his legs, and he will kneel and fall.

**rescue my soul from every wicked man who is** Your sword, for You give him the power to rule, to requite those who are bound to You.

**14 Of those who die by Your hand** I choose to be one of those who die by Your hand on their bed.

**of those who die of old age** Heb. מחלד . Of those who die of old age, after they have “rusted” (חלודה) , rodijjl in Old French, [rouille in Modern French] rust, and of the righteous, whose share is in life.

**and whose belly You will fill with Your hidden treasure** And of those whose innards You will fill with Your good, which You have hidden for those who fear You.

**their abundance** Their property that they leave over when they die.

**15 I will see Your face with righteousness** in the future (Mid. Ps. 17:13), or

**I will see Your face with righteousness** Take my judgment away from before You and grasp the righteous deeds that I have performed, and through them I will see Your face. In other editions, this is one interpretation:

**I will see Your face with righteousness** In the future, take my judgment away from before You and grasp the righteous deeds that I have performed, and through them I will see Your face.

**I will be satisfied with Your image upon the awakening** I will be satisfied with the vision of Your image when the dead awaken from their sleep. In many editions, the following appears at this point: Another explanation: I will be satisfied from seeing Your face when the dead awaken from their sleep, for they are in the likeness of Your image, for so it is stated (in Gen. 9:6): “For in the image of God, He made man.”

**Meditation from the Psalms**

**Psalms ‎‎17:1-15**

**By: H.Em. Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David**

**Bereshit (Genesis) 20:1 - 21:5**

**Tehillim (Psalms) 17:1-15**

**Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 65:22 – 66:5 + 10-11**

Mk 2:3-5, Lk 5:17-20, Acts 10:1-23

King David composed this psalm after commanding Yoab, the commander of his army, to bring about the death of Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba.[[1]](#footnote-1) This took place while King David’s army was in the land of Ammon, besieging the capital, Rabbat.[[2]](#footnote-2)

At this moment, when Israel’s military security hung in the balance, David, the humble penitent feared that the army might be struck by catastrophe because of his personal sins. In the event of such a calamity, David knew that the evil neighbors of Israel - the Philistines, Moab, and Edom, all would swiftly seize the opportunity to pounce on the crippled nation, and so he prayed fervently.

Mahari Yaavetz HaDoresh explains the connection between this Psalm and the preceding one. In Psalm 16, David speaks in ecstasy of his assured portion in the World to Come and he looks forward to the delights of ‘the fullness of joys in G-d’s presence’ and the ‘delights at G-d’s right hand forever’.[[3]](#footnote-3) But after he sinned, doubts about his spiritual hereafter started to crop up in his mind. In this Psalm which he composed after he repented his sin, David pleads for a return to full grace and affection before HaShem. He ends with great confidence that his intimacy with G-d has been restored and his hereafter is secure: ‘In righteousness I shall behold Your face, upon awakening I will be made satisfied by Your form’.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Since this psalm was composed after the sin of Bathsheba, an inquiring mind would want to know: What was David’s sin? Did he murder Uriah? Did he commit adultery with Bathsheba?

To understand the answer to this profound question will require a bit of background. In II Samuel chapters 11 and 12, we find the story I wish to examine.

In this story, *many folks* see King David lusting after Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. Uriah is a soldier in King David’s army. He is fighting the King’s battle when King David takes his wife in an ’adulterous’ relationship. After she becomes pregnant, King David has Uriah recalled from the battle and orders him to sleep with his wife, in order to cover up his sin. Afterwards, when Uriah refuses to sleep with Bathsheba, King David Has Uriah killed in battle. After Uriah’s death, King David marries Bathsheba.

Most folks understand that King David committed adultery and murder. These are the sins that they see King David committing.

*Nothing could be farther from the truth.*

In fact, Chazal say:

***Shabbat 56a*** *Anyone who says that David sinned is mistaken.*

This does ***not*** mean that King David was completely blameless, but it means that, technically, he did not commit any transgressions; he did not breach the Torah’s laws in any way. The reason he was punished so severely is that HaShem judges the righteous very strictly, and David’s actions were not proper for someone of his spiritual stature.

If we apply the principle of ‘midda keneged midda’, measure for measure, we get an entirely different picture. Further, if we examine the Sages, we see that there is more to this story than first meets the eye.

Was King David committing adultery? The Tanach says no.

Did King David commit murder? The Tanach says no. How can this be?

If we apply the principle of “midda keneged midda”, measure for measure, we get an entirely different picture. Further, if we examine the Sages, we see that there is more to this story than first meets the eye.

The Sages record that King David required that all of his soldiers were required to give their wives a “get”, a divorce, before they went off to battle. This was done so that if the soldier failed to return from the battle, and his body was not found, then the wife would not become an “aguna”,[[5]](#footnote-5) a woman who could not remarry. If she was legally divorced, then she could remarry if her husband did not return after a reasonable amount of time.[[6]](#footnote-6)

***Kethuboth 9b*** *Everyone who goes out into the war of the House of David writes for his wife a deed of divorce[[7]](#footnote-7), for it is written, And to thy brethren shalt thou bring greetings, and take their pledge[[8]](#footnote-8). What [is the meaning of], ‘and take their pledge’? R. Joseph learnt: Things which are pledged between him and her[[9]](#footnote-9).*

Therefore, we know that Uriah[[10]](#footnote-10) had given his wife a “get” and was legally divorced. Therefore, we know that King David did not commit adultery. We know that King David did not commit adultery because the Torah prescribes that the one who commits adultery is to be stoned to death:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 20:10****And the man that committeth adultery with [another] man’s wife,  [even he] that committeth adultery with his neighbour’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.*

Since HaShem did not cause this to happen, we know that King David did not commit adultery.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Did King David lust, sexually, after Batsheba?[[12]](#footnote-12) No! King David did NOT lust after Batsheba. He had entirely conquered that evil inclination. The story makes it sound like Batsheba was taking a bath on her roof without any covering. No woman, today, would ever do that – if there was the slightest possibility that she could be seen, how much more so a towering spiritual giant like Batsheba. *Nothing could be further from the truth*. Batsheba was coming out from the mikveh, the ritual immersion that women must perform every month. As she exited the mikveh house, her exalted spiritual state attracted King David.[[13]](#footnote-13) He prophetically saw that he was to father Solomon with this woman.[[14]](#footnote-14) That is why he took her.

***Soncino Zohar, Bereshit, Section 1, Page 73b****R. Simeon further discoursed, beginning with the verse: For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me (Ps. LI, 5). He said: ‘How much must a man be on his guard against sinning before the Holy One, blessed be He, for each sin committed by man is recorded on high, and is not blotted out save by much repentance, as it is said, “For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me” (Jer. II, 22). For when a man commits a sin once before G-d, it leaves a mark, and when he repeats the same sin that mark is deepened, and after a third time it becomes a stain spreading from one side to the other, as expressed in the words, “thine iniquity is become a stain before me” (Ibid.). When David committed his great sin in taking Bath-Sheba, he thought that it would leave its mark forever, but the message came to him, “The Lord also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die” (II Sam. XII, 13); i.e. the stain has been removed.’ R. Abba put this question to R. Simeon: ‘Since we have been taught that Bath-Sheba was destined for King David from the day of the creation, how comes it that the Holy One, blessed be He, first gave her to Uriah the Hittite?’ R. Simeon replied: ‘Such is the way of the Holy One, blessed be He; although a woman is destined for a certain man, He first allows her to be the wife of another man until his time arrives. As soon as that time arrives, he departs from the world to make way for the other, although the Holy One, blessed be He, is loth to remove him from the world to make way for the other man before his time arrives. This is the inner reason why Bath-Sheba was given to Uriah first. Now reflect and you will find the reason for the Holy Land having been given to Canaan before Israel came there. You will find that the inner reason underlying the two is the same. Observe, further, that David, although he confessed his sin and repented, could not obliterate from his heart and mind the memory of the sins that he had committed, especially of that concerning Bath-Sheba, and was always apprehensive lest one of them would prove a stumbling-block to him in the hour of danger. Hence he never removed them from his thoughts. According to another interpretation, the words “For I know my transgressions” indicate his knowledge of the diverse grades to which the various sins of men are to be referred, while the words “and my sin” (hatathi=my failing) refer to the defect of the moon, which did not emerge from her impurity until the time of Solomon, when her light once more became whole, so that the world became firmly established and Israel dwelt secure, as it is written: “And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree” (I Kings V, 5). Nevertheless, as David said, “My deficiency is ever before me”, and that will not be obliterated from the world until the Messiah will come, as it is said: “And the unclean spirit I will cause to pass out from the earth” (Zech. XIII, 2).’*

In fact, the Sages teach that King David had asked HaShem for a test in this area because he had completely conquered this inclination.

***Sanhedrin 107a*** *Rab Judah said in Rab’s name: One should never [intentionally] bring himself to the test, since David king of Israel did so, and fell. He said unto Him, ‘Sovereign of the Universe! Why do we say [in prayer] “The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” but not the God of David?’ He replied, ‘They were tried by me, but thou wast not.’ Then, replied he, ‘Sovereign of the Universe, examine and try me’ — as it is written, Examine me, O Lord, and try me. He answered ‘I will test thee, and yet grant thee a special privilege; for I did not inform them [of the nature of their trial beforehand], yet, I inform thee that I will try thee in a matter of adultery.’ Straightway, And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed etc. R. Johanan said: He changed his night couch to a day couch, but he forgot the halachah: there is a small organ in man which satisfies him in his hunger but makes him hunger when satisfied. And he walked upon the roof of the king’s house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. Now Bath Sheba was cleansing her hair behind a screen, when Satan came to him, appearing in the shape of a bird. He shot an arrow at him, which broke the screen, thus she stood revealed, and he saw her. Immediately, And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bath Sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her, and she came unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanliness: and she returned unto her house. Thus it is written, Thou host proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou host tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. He said thus: ‘Would that a bridle had fallen into the mouth of mine enemy [i.e., himself], that I had not spoken thus.’[[15]](#footnote-15)*

Did David cause the murder of Uriah the Hittite? The Tanach says no. How can this be? To understand this part, we must look carefully at the text to understand what is going on:

***2 Shmuel (Samuel) 11:8-9****And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king’s house, and there followed him a mess [of meat] from the king. But Uriah slept[[16]](#footnote-16) at the door of the king’s house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.[[17]](#footnote-17)*

Notice that Uriah disobeyed a DIRECT ORDER of the King.[[18]](#footnote-18) So, King David gives him a second chance:

***2 Shmuel (Samuel) 11:10-12****And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from [thy] journey? why [then] didst thou not go down unto thine house? And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab,[[19]](#footnote-19) and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? [as] thou livest, and [as] thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing. And David said to Uriah, Tarry here today also, and tomorrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow. And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.*

At this point King David has no choice. Uriah has twice disobeyed a direct order of the king. The penalty for this offense is death.[[20]](#footnote-20)

***2 Shmuel (Samuel) 11:14-17****And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent [it] by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men [were]. And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell [some] of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.*

Uriah committed treason against David.[[21]](#footnote-21)

***Shabbat 56a*** *That which is written:****”Uriah the Hittite you have smitten with the sword,”****means****that you could have judged him before the Sanhedrin****as one guilty of treason against the throne,****and you did not judge****him in that manner. Instead, you had him executed in a manner that deviated from the generally accepted principles of judgment.*

King David knows that Uriah has an evil heart,[[22]](#footnote-22) never the less, one MUST obey the King no matter what. Not wishing to publicly shame Uriah, King David has him killed in battle in an honorable manner.[[23]](#footnote-23) Undeniably, the law gave David the right to bring Uriah before the Sanhedrin and demand his execution. Nevertheless, David worried (for good reason) that the people would question the integrity of a king who ordered a man’s death and immediately married his widow, and David sought to avoid the public appearance of conspiracy and impropriety when he married Bathsheba.[[24]](#footnote-24)

Notice that Joab does not protest in the least. Joab knew that the order of the King, as the chief justice, must be obeyed.

Ok, so now we know that King David did NOT commit adultery with Bathsheba[[25]](#footnote-25) and that he did not cause Uriah to be murdered.[[26]](#footnote-26) What we need to know is: What was King David’s sin?[[27]](#footnote-27)

HaShem’s punishments are always just. To determine the sin, we should look at the punishment:

***2 Shmuel (Samuel) 11:26****And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased HaShem. And HaShem sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich [man] had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor [man] had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man’s lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David’s anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, [As] HaShem liveth, the man that hath done this [thing] shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.*

King David was also the chief Hakham, the chief Judge. Nathan the prophet naturally came to the King for a judgment. David, being a great Torah scholar and Sage, renders a judgment in keeping with Torah. HaShem agreed to this judgment, EXCEPT for the death penalty:

***2 Shmuel (Samuel) 12:13****And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against HaShem. And Nathan said unto David, HaShem also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.*

The bottom line is this: **HaShem has accused King David of stealing an ewe, a female sheep**.[[28]](#footnote-28) The penalty is, therefore, in keeping with the sin:

***Shemot (Exodus) 22:1****If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.*

Therefore, King David’s sin was: Theft of a sheep. There will be a penalty for this sin.

***II Shmuel (Samuel) 12:7-13*** *And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith HaShem G-d of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; 8 And I gave thee thy master’s house, and thy master’s wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. 9 Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of HaShem, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. 10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. 11 Thus saith HaShem, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. 12 For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. 13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against HaShem. And Nathan said unto David, HaShem also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.[[29]](#footnote-29)*

And:

***1 Melachim (Kings) 15:4-5****Nevertheless for David’s sake did HaShem his G-d give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem: Because David did [that which was] right in the eyes of HaShem, and turned not aside from any [thing] that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.*

**Never the less, King David did sin grievously for a man in his exalted position with his exalted spiritual status.** Although innocent of adultery and murder, sins against *man,* David had nevertheless sinned against HaShem when he failed to uphold the divine will by manipulating the intent behind the law.[[30]](#footnote-30) Thus David repented of his sin of theft and is forgiven. There will still be consequences, but he is forgiven. It is at this point that he composes our psalm.

Now that we have seen the picture, we can begin to understand why HaShem said that David was a man after His own heart:

***II Luqas (Acts) 13:22****And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the [son] of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will.*

HaShem would never say this about an adulterous murderer. Further, we must understand that Uriah was an evil man:

***Shabbath 56a****R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in R. Jonathan’s name: Whoever says that David sinned is merely erring, for it is said, And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways: and the Lord was with him. Is it possible that sin came to his hand, yet the Divine Presence was with him? Then how do I interpret, Wherefore hast thou despised the word of the Lord, to do that which is evil in his sight? He wished to do [evil], but did not. Rab observed: Rabbi, who is descended from David, seeks to defend him, and expounds [the verse] in David’s favor. [Thus:] The ‘evil’ [mentioned] here is unlike every other ‘evil’ [mentioned] elsewhere in the Torah. For of every other evil [mentioned] in the Torah it is written, ‘and he did,’ whereas here it is written, ‘to do’: [this means] that he desired to do, but did not. Thou hast smitten Uriah the Hittite[[31]](#footnote-31) with the sword: thou shouldst have had him tried by the Sanhedrin, but didst not. And hast taken his wife to be thy wife: thou hast marriage rights in her. For R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in R. Jonathan’s name: Everyone who went out in the wars of the house of David wrote a bill of divorcement for his wife, for it is said, and bring these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge [‘arubatham]. What is meant by ‘arubatham? R. Joseph learned: The things which pledge man and woman [to one another]. And thou hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon: just as thou art not [to be] punished for the sword of the Ammonites, so art thou not [to be] punished for [the death of] Uriah the Hittite. What is the reason? He was rebellious against royal authority, saying to him, and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open field [etc.].*

***Yoma 22b****R. Huna said: How little does he whom the Lord supports need to grieve or trouble himself! Saul sinned once and it brought [calamity] upon him, David sinned twice and it did not bring evil upon him — What was the one sin of Saul? The affair with Agag. But there was also the matter with Nob, the city of the priests? — [Still] it was because of what happened with Agag that Scripture says: It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king. What were the two sins of David? — The sin against Uriah and that [of counting the people to which] he was enticed. But there was also the matter of Bathsheba? — For that he was punished, as it is written, And he shall restore the lamb fourfold: the child, Amnon, Tamar and Absalom. But for the other sin he was also punished as it is written: So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed? — There his own body was not punished — But in the former case, too, his own body was not punished either? Not indeed? He was punished on his own body, for Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: For six months David was smitten with leprosy, the Sanhedrin removed from him, and the Shechinah departed from him, as it is written: Let those that fear Thee return unto me, and they that know Thy testimonies, and it is also written: Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation. But Rab said that David also listened to evil talk? — We hold like Samuel [who says] that David did not do so. And even according to Rab, who says that David listened to calumny, was he not punished for it? For Rab Judah said in the name of Rab. At the time when David said to Mephibosheth: I say: Thou and Ziba divide the land, a heavenly voice came forth to say to him: Rehoboam and Jeroboam will divide the Kingdom.*

We must be very careful not to read into the scriptures more than what should be there.

It is also instructive to note that the union of King David with Bathsheba produced Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived.

***2 Shmuel (Samuel) 12:24****And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and HaShem loved him.*

It is apparent that King David was destined to marry Batsheba. It seems that his timing was off a bit.

The following is an edited excerpt from “Dawn To Destiny”, by Rabbi Yonason Goldson.

*So what was David’s crime? Some say David erred by arranging Uriah’s death himself and circumventing the formal process of indictment and sentencing. Although David had the authority to invoke the death penalty, he should have gone to the Sanhedrin and confirmed that Uriah’s actions constituted moreid b’malchut before executing justice. According to this, it was David’s desire to avoid the appearance of wrongdoing that, ironically, resulted in his real transgression. But this is only a partial answer, since it fails to address the underlying reason why David embarked upon his whole adventure with Batsheba to begin with.*

*The Sages teach us that before Adam was cast out of Gan Eden, HaShem showed him all the generations that would descend from him. When he saw David, he exclaimed, “Such a beautiful neshamah!” HaShem told him that David was destined to survive only three hours, whereupon Adam offered seventy years of his life[[32]](#footnote-32) so that David might live.*

*The Talmud records that the union of David and Batsheba had been predestined from the six days of Creation,[[33]](#footnote-33) and that David sinned not because he took what was forbidden to him but because he took “unripe fruit.” From here, some understand that David was a gilgul,[[34]](#footnote-34) a reincarnation, of Adam, and infer further that Batsheba was a gilgul of Chavah.*

*Both Adam and David faced similar tests: HaShem placed Adam in a perfect world and commanded him to keep it perfect, whereas David was presented with the opportunity to restore the world to perfection by establishing the dynasty that would produce Mashiach. It seems plausible that, just as HaShem had revealed to Yehudah the messianic destiny he shared with Tamar, so too did HaShem open David’s eyes to the messianic potential he shared with Batsheba. Just as Adam erred by trying to accelerate his own self-perfection by taking evil inside himself and conquering it from within, similarly did David err by attempting to accelerate the establishment of the messianic line; rather than actively taking Batsheba for himself, he should have waited for HaShem to arrange the proper time and manner of their union.*

*So why does Scripture leave David’s innocence so concealed and elusive? Let us recall that the stories recounted in Tanach often magnify the sins of great people so that later generations can appreciate the severity of their transgressions. For a spiritual giant such as David, his indiscretions with Batsheba and Uriah were indeed comparable to adultery and murder. However, to believe that David actually committed either adultery or murder is to miss both the greatness of David and the real lessons of the biblical record.*

*Despite his failure, David came through his test better than Adam did in two respects. First, whereas Adam violated the letter of the law in an attempt to fulfill the spirit of the law, David compromised the spirit of the law but never transgressed the letter of the law.*

*Second, and most important, whereas Adam tried to shift the blame onto others when confronted with his sin, David immediately accepted responsibility for his actions with the words, “I have sinned against HaShem”.[[35]](#footnote-35) Although innocent of adultery and murder — sins against man — David had nevertheless sinned against HaShem when he failed to uphold the Divine will by manipulating the intent behind the law.*

OK, so let’s assume that you have read this far and still think that King David committed adultery and murder, consider the following: Why did the Prophet, Nathan, say that David stole a sheep? What was the point of the Prophet’s story?

Now, because of David’s greatness, his crime is dealt with in a VERY severe way. It is dealt with as though he committed a murder. In the same way, Moses lost entry to the Promised Land simply by hitting a rock.

Also note that the PROPER punishment for murder, is death. David must die IF he committed murder. The Torah is quite clear. Why didn’t David die? After all, the PROPER punishment for committing adultery is DEATH too. Why wasn’t David stoned?

Watch the punishment to see the sin.

Now that we have some understanding of David’s sin, let’s turn our attention to our Torah Portion and examine how it is connected to our psalm.

In our Torah portion, Abimelech takes Avraham’s wife, Sarah, as his wife. Because Sarah was married to Avraham, she was not permitted to Abimelech. Our psalm was written because David took a wife for himself, who was not yet permitted. Thus we see that both portions concern the illicit taking of a wife.

**Ashlamatah: Is. 65:22 – 66:5 + 10-11**

**Ashlamatah: Yeshayahu (Isaiah) ‎65:22 – 66:2, 4-5, 10-11‎‎**

| **Rashi** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 13. ¶ Therefore, so said the Lord God, "Behold, My servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; behold, My servants shall drink, but you shall thirst; behold, My servants shall rejoice, but you shall be ashamed.  | 13. Therefore thus says the LORD God: "Behold, My servants, the righteous/generous, shall eat, but you, the wicked/Lawless, shall be hungry; behold, My servants, the righteous/generous, shall drink, but you, the wicked/ Lawless, shall be thirsty; behold, My servants, the righteous/generous, shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame; |
| 14. Behold, My servants shall sing from joy of heart, but you shall cry out from sorrow of heart, and from a broken spirit you shall wail. | 14. behold, My servants, the righteous/generous, shall sing from goodness of heart, but you shall cry from pain of heart, and shall wail from breaking of spirit. |
| 15. And you shall leave your name for an oath for My elect, "And the Lord God shall slay you," but to His servants He shall call another name. | 15. You shall leave your name to my chosen for an oath, and the LORD God will slay you with the second death; but His servants, the righteous/generous, He will call by a different name. |
| 16. For whoever himself on the earth shall bless himself by the true God, and whoever swears on the earth shall swear by the true God, for the first troubles have been forgotten and they have been hidden from My eyes. | 16. He who blesses in the land shall bless by the living God, and he who takes an oath in the land shall swear by the living God; because the former troubles shall be forgotten and hid from before Me. |
| 17. For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the first ones shall not be remembered, neither shall they come into mind. | 17. For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or be brought into mind. |
| 18. But rejoice and exult forever [in] what I create, for behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and its people an exultation. | 18. But they will be glad in the age of the ages which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem gladness, and her people rejoicing. |
| 19. And I will rejoice with Jerusalem, and I will exult with My people, and a sound of weeping or a sound of crying shall no longer be heard therein. | 19. I will be glad in Jerusalem and My people will rejoice in her; the sound of those who weep and the sound of those who cry shall not be heard in her.  |
| 20. There shall no longer be from there a youth or an old man who will not fill his days, for the youth who is one hundred years old shall die, and the sinner who is one hundred years old shall be cursed. | 20. No more shall there be a suckling that lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for a youth who sins shall be dying a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be expelled. |
| 21. And they shall build houses and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. | 21. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. |
| 22. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat, for like the days of the tree are the days of My people, and My elect shall outlive their handiwork. | 22. They shall not build and others inhabit; they shall not plant and others eat; for like the days of the tree of life shall the days of My people be, and My chosen shall wear out the work of their hands. |
| 23. They shall not toil in vain, neither shall they bear for terror, for they are seed blessed by the Lord, and their offspring shall be with them. | 23. They shall not be weary in vain, or bring up children for death; for they shall be the seed which the LORD blessed, and their sons' sons with them. |
| 24. And it shall be, when they have not yet called, that I will respond; when they are still speaking, that I will hearken | 24. Before they pray before Me I will accept their prayer, and before they beseech before Me I will do their request. |
| 25. A wolf and a lamb shall graze together, and a lion, like cattle, shall eat straw, and a serpent-dust shall be his food; they shall neither harm nor destroy on all My holy mount," says the Lord. **{S}** | 25. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like an ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy **in all My holy mountain**, says the LORD." |
|  |  |
| 1. So says the Lord, "The heavens are My throne, and the earth is My footstool; which is the house that you will build for Me, and which is the place of My rest?  | **1. Thus says the LORD: "The heavens are the throne of My glory and the earth is a highway before Me; what is the house which you would build before Me, and what is the place of the dwelling of my Shekhinah?**  |
| 2. And all these My hand made, and all these have become," says the Lord. "But to this one will I look, to one poor and of crushed spirit, who hastens to do My bidding. | **2. All these things My might has made, did not all these things come to be, says the LORD? But in this man there is pleasure before Me to regard him, he that is poor and humble in spirit, and trembles at My Word.**  |
| 3. Whoever slaughters an ox has slain a man; he who slaughters a lamb is as though he beheads a dog; he who offers up a meal-offering is [like] swine blood; he who burns frankincense brings a gift of violence; they, too, chose their ways, and their soul desired their abominations. | 3. He who slaughters an ox is like him who kills a man; he who sacrifices a lamb, like him who bludgeons a dog: he who presents an offering, [like him who offers] swine’s blood; their offering of gifts is a gift of oppression. They have taken pleasure in their own ways, and their soul takes pleasure in their abominations. |
| 4. I, too, will choose their mockeries, and their fears I will bring to them, since I called and no one answered, I spoke and they did not hearken, and they did what was evil in My eyes, and what I did not wish they chose. **{S}** | 4. Even I will wish breaking for them, and from what they dreaded they will not be delivered; because, when I sent my prophets, they did not repent, when they prophesied they did not attend; but they did what is evil before Me, and took pleasure in that which I did not wish. |
| 5. Hearken to the Word of the Lord, who quake at His Word, "Your brethren who hate you, who cast you out, said, "For the sake of my name, the Lord shall be glorified," but we will see your joy, and they shall be ashamed. | 5. Listen to the Word of the LORD, you righteous/ generous who tremble at the words of His pleasure: "Your brethren, your adversaries who despise you for my name's sake say, 'Let the glory of the LORD increase, that we may see your joy'; but it is they who shall be put to shame. |
| 6. There is a sound of stirring from the city, a sound from the Temple, the voice of the Lord, recompensing His enemies. | 6. A sound of tumult from the city oj Jerusalem! A voice from the temple! The voice oj the Memra of the LORD, rendering recompense to His enemies. |
| 7. When she has not yet travailed, she has given birth; when the pang has not yet come to her, she has been delivered of a male child. | 7. Before distress comes to her she shall be delivered; and before shaking will come upon her, as pains upon a woman in travail, her king will be revealed. |
| 8. Who heard [anything] like this? Who saw [anything] like these? Is a land born in one day? Is a nation born at once, that Zion both experienced birth pangs and bore her children? | 8. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Is it possible that a land shall be made in one day? Shall its people be created in one moment? For Zion is about to be comforted and to be filled with the people oj her exiles. |
| 9. "Will I bring to the birth stool and not cause to give birth?" says the Lord. "Am I not He who causes to give birth, now should I shut the womb?" says your God. **{S}** | 9. I, God, created the world from creation, says the LORD; I created every man; I scattered them among the peoples; I am also about to gather your exiles, says your God. |
| 10. Rejoice with Jerusalem and exult in her all those who love her: rejoice with her a rejoicing, all who mourn over her. | 10. Rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who were mourning over her, |
| 11. In order that you suck and become sated from the breast of her consolations in order that you drink deeply and delight from her approaching glory. **{S}** | 11. that you may be indulged and be satisfied with the plunder of her consolations; that you may drink and be drunk with the wine of her glory." |
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**NAZAREAN TALMUD**

**Sidra Of B’resheet (Gen.) 20:1-21.5**

יִּסַּע מִשָּׁם

**“Yesah Meshah” - “and I’ll** (Abraham) **Journey”**

**By: H. Em. Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham**

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| **HAKHAM SHAUL’S SCHOOL OF TOSEFTA****(Luke 5:17-20)****And now it happened on one of the days, while he** (Yeshua) **was teaching** Oral Torah – the Mesorah, **the P’rushim and Torah teachers were sitting** (with him), **who had come out of every village of the Galil and as far as Yehudah and Yerushalayim. And the power of the Lord was in him** (Yeshua), **for the healing of them. And behold, [four] men were carrying, a man on a cot, who was paralyzed. And they wanted to bring him in and to lay him before him** (Yeshua); **but finding no way to bring him in through the multitude, they went up on the housetop, and let him down through the tiles with his cot into the midst, before Yeshua. And seeing their faithful obedience, he announced to him, “Man your sins are forgiven.”**  | **Hakham Tsefet’S School of PESHAT****(Mark 2:3-5)****And immediately many were assembled** (gathered together), **so that there was not any room even in front of the door,[[36]](#footnote-36) and he was speaking (**teaching**) the Word** (i.e. the Oral Torah to them). **And they came[[37]](#footnote-37) to him, bringing a paralytic, carried** (taken up) **by four** (men)**, And not being able to come near to him** (Yeshua) **because of the multitude** blocking the door**, they unearthed[[38]](#footnote-38) the roof[[39]](#footnote-39) where he was, and, having dug through it, they lowered the cot which the paralytic was lying on, And Yeshua having seen their faithful obedience, announced to the paralytic, “Son,[[40]](#footnote-40) your sins have been forgiven[[41]](#footnote-41)** now – at this moment**.**  |
| **School of Hakham Shaul****Remes****(2 Luqas – Acts 10:1-23)** |
| **Acts 10:1-8****And a certain man named Cornelius was in Caesarea, a centurion of the Italian cohort, a** man **of piety and a G-d fearer, with all his household, both doing many acts of tsedaqah for the** Jewish[[42]](#footnote-42) **people, and praying to God continually. About the ninth hour of the day** (three o’clock, the time for the afternoon prayer)**, he saw plainly in a vision a messenger (**angel) **from G-d coming to him and saying to him, “Cornelius!” And as he was staring at the messenger, becoming terrified, he said, “What is it, lord?” And he said to him, “Your prayers and acts of tsedaqah for the** Jewish **people have come up as a memorial before God. And now send men to Yafo and call for Shim’on, who is called Tsefet. This man** (Hakham Tsefet) **is being entertained as a guest in the presence** (near)[[43]](#footnote-43) **of a certain Shim’on the tanner, whose house is by the seaside. He will tell you what you must do.” And when the messenger who spoke to Cornelius departed, he called two of his household servants[[44]](#footnote-44) and a soldier of piety from his** (military) **staff under his** authority **continually. And explaining all things to them, he sent them to Yafo.****Acts 10:9-16****On the next day, as these went on the road, and drawing near the city, Hakham Tsefet went up on the housetop to pray, about midday[[45]](#footnote-45). And he became very hungry and desired to eat. But while they made** (food) **ready, he entered a prophetic trance.[[46]](#footnote-46) And he saw the heavens opened and a certain vessel like a sheet coming down to him, being bound at the four corners and let down to the earth; in which were all the four-footed animals of the earth, and the reptiles, and the birds of the heavens.[[47]](#footnote-47) And a Bat Kol** (a daughter of a voice)[[48]](#footnote-48) **came to him, saying, Rise, Tsefet! Kill and eat! But Hakham Tsefet said, not so, my Master, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the Bat Kol** (a daughter of a voice) **spoke to him again the second time, What G-d has made clean, you do not call common** (referring to Gentiles)**. This happened three times, and the vessel was received up again into the heavens.****Acts 10:17-33****And while Hakham Tsefet reflecting within himself on the meaning of the vision which he had seen,** and **behold, the men who were sent from Cornelius had asked for Shim’on's house and stood at the gate.[[49]](#footnote-49) And they called and asked if Shim’on whose name is Tsefet was staying there. And while Hakham Tsefet was still going over the vision in his mind, the Ruach[[50]](#footnote-50)** (spirit of prophecy)[[51]](#footnote-51) **said to him, “Behold, three men are looking for you. Therefore, arise and go down and go with them without discrimination[[52]](#footnote-52)** towards Gentiles**, for I** (God) **have sent them.” And going down to the men, those sent to him from Cornelius, Hakham Tsefet said, Behold, I am the one you are looking for. For what reason have you come? And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a man of piety and a God fearer, and one of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was commanded[[53]](#footnote-53) from God by a holy messenger to send for you to come to his house and to hear the Oral Torah[[54]](#footnote-54) from you. Then he** (Hakham Tsefet) **invited[[55]](#footnote-55) them in and gave them lodging.** |

**Nazarean Codicil to be read in conjunction with the following Torah Sedarim,**

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| 016 – Gen. 20:1 - 21:5 | Psa 17:1-15 | Is. 65:22 – 66:5 + 10-11 | Mk 2:3-5 | Lk 5:17-20 | Acts 10:1-23 |

**Commentary to Hakham Tsefet’s School of Peshat**

**Does Messiah forgive sin?**

The grave question is – does Messiah[[56]](#footnote-56) forgive sin?

Firstly, we must realize that Messiah is merely and agent of G-d. Thus, he does not have his own personal agenda to accomplish. His occupation and duties as G-d’s agent consume his life. His mission is to be the guardian and counsellor for the B’ne Yisrael.

**Shemot 23:23** “When my messenger goes before you and brings you to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, and I blot them out …

**Midrash Rabbah – Shemot 3**

“The Holy One, blessed be He, told Israel: 'Take heed of the messenger, for he cannot retract aught of My mission; BE NOT REBELLIOUS AGAINST HIM (ibid.), for he represents strict justice (the messenger, unlike the sender, cannot make allowances, but must faithfully fulfil his errand, therefore if he is sent to punish he cannot forgive). Heretofore one could say, You have been rebellious against the LORD (Deut. ix, 24), yet I could accept [penitence] from you, but now BE NOT REBELLIOUS AGAINST HIM, FOR HE WILL NOT PARDON YOUR TRANSGRESSION.' Another interpretation of BE NOT REBELLIOUS (TAMMER) AGAINST HIM. Do not exchange (temirani) Me for him, nor treat Me as his substitute (by ranking him as His substitute). Do not say: 'Since he is our guardian angel, we will worship him and he will forgive our sins,' FOR HE WILL NOT PARDON YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS. He is not like Me, of whom it is written, That pardons the iniquity/lawlessness, and passes by the transgression, etc. (Micah vii, 18), FOR HE WILL NOT PARDON YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS. Moreover, you will be the cause of My Name being removed from within him, for it says, FOR MY NAME IS IN HIM (xxiii, 21) [for his greatness and glory lie in the fact that he is My Messenger, but if you worship him, you desecrate My Name and thereby deprive him of his true glory]. Another interpretation of FOR MY NAME IS IN HIM. The angels are sustained only by the splendour of the Shechinah (that is, their only source of existence), as it says, And You preserve them all, and the host of heaven worshipped You (Neh. ix, 6). Why is this expression used? Because, said R. Haggai, 'You are their means of sustenance.' Moreover, he will ever be held guilty on their account (for not only is the worshipper punished, but even the thing worshipped is held guilty – Sanh. 93a). BUT IF YOU WILL INDEED HEARKEN UNTO HIS VOICE, AND DO ALL THAT I SPEAK (xxiii, 22). It does not say 'that he speaks', but THAT I SPEAK, implying that if you receive his words it will be like listening to Me. If you will do this, THEN I WILL BE AN ENEMY UNTO YOUR ENEMIES (ibid.). Hence, BEHOLD, I SEND AN ANGEL.”[[57]](#footnote-57)

The Midrash lays out the argument before us. However, it lays out the argument in a way to make us know that we must not fall into the sin of the nations being expelled. And what sin would that be? Most succinctly “idolatry.” Idolatry in short is an attempt to circumvent the authority of G-d. Therefore, we see in the Midrash what is the typical path of the idolater. When the idolater wants to circumvent the authority of G-d he always seeks to solicit His agent. What will eventually unfold in the life of the idolater is a “service” to many gods. This was the greatest evil that Hakham Shaul faced in dealing with Gentile congregations.

Setting aside all foreign doctrine which believes that Messiah must be divine, we note that the “Messenger” Plenipotentiary agent of G-d in Shemot 23.23 is set to drive out the foreigners or the idol worshiping hoards that have dwelt in Eretz Yisrael. The fact is that the Land is Holy and cannot tolerate the idol worshipers. It will vomit out all who do not follow the Torah as a way of life. Not only is the land determined to hold a level of holiness it is also associated with the people of holiness. It will not bear those who have the same ideals as the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites. However, we should not see the list of nations as a list of sinners who G-d must expel. We should read and research the qualities of these people to determine what displeases G-d. Its not the people that G-d detests but ungodly behaviour. The occupation of Messiah is devoted primarily with the B’ne Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael. Thus, Messiah and the Midrash show us that he is a guardian against idolatry which must be expunged from the land.

This angel – messenger is an ever-present guardian for the B’ne Yisrael as he was for the Patriarchs.

“BEHOLD, I SEND AN ANGEL. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moses: ‘He who guarded the patriarchs will also guard the children’; for so you find in the case of Abraham that when he blessed his son Isaac, he said: The LORD, the God of heaven ... He will send His angel before you (Gen. xxiv, 7). And what did Jacob say to his children? ‘The angel who has redeemed me from all evil, etc. (ibid. xlviii, 16). He has redeemed me from the hand of Esau, from Laban, and he it was who fed and sustained me during the years of famine’ (referring all this to an angel – one sent by God for that particular purpose). God said to Moses: ‘Now also, He who guarded the fathers will protect the children,’ as it says, BEHOLD, I SEND AN ANGEL. Wherever the angel appeared, the Shechinah appeared, as it says, And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in aflame of fire. (Ex. iii, 2), and immediately after, it says, God called unto him (ibid., 4). Moreover, salvation comes to Israel wherever they cry unto Him (whenever Israel cries unto God and the angel appears, he is a herald of salvation); at the thorn-bush – Behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto Me (ibid. V. 9); in the case of Gideon – And the angel of the LORD came ... and the angel of the LORD appeared … and the LORD … said: Go in this your might, and save Israel (Judg. vi, 11-14). In the millennium, likewise, when he (the angel; he will be the herald announcing the coming of the LORD and of true salvation) will reveal himself, salvation will come to Israel, as it says, Behold, I send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me (Mal. iii, i).”[[58]](#footnote-58)

Now we can see the occupation of Messiah more clearly. However, we often fail to realize that a “guardian” in Hebrew is not just someone who protects us form car wrecks etc. The Hebrew word for “guard” is “shomer.” In Jewish thought shomer means to be meticulous in being Sabbath observant. One who is Shomer Shabbat is meticulous about following all the rules for keeping Shabbat. However, we also see the “Shomer Shabbat” (Guardian of Shabbat) as one who also is meticulous in life to follow the laws and rules of the Torah. This the “Guardian” Messiah is not only one how protects but one who directs and guides us towards a pure life.

**Ezekiel and the Holiness of Israel in foreign lands**

Ezekiel gives us a picture of Messiah as a Prophet of Yisrael. His purpose is like that of Messiah. We could say in certain terms that he was a living example of Messiah. Or, to take things to a deeper level we see that he was a personification of Messiah. He bore the “Soul of Messiah.” Again, those who bear the soul of Messiah are driven only by the will of G-d. They have no personal agenda to accomplish. They cannot resist the advances of G-d’s spirit, Shekinah.

**Fundamentals of Messiah**

1. Repentance (from dead works – inactivity)
2. Faithfulness to G-d
3. Immersion (s)
4. Ordinations
5. Resurrection of the Dead
6. Eternal Judgment

The list of six fundamentals in the work of Messiah is found in Hakham Shaul’s letter to the Bereans (Hebrews). These fundamentals are places where we must guard (shomer) our behaviour. In one sense we can see these things as elemental or as Hakham Shaul puts it “Fundamentals of Messiah.” These “fundamentals” are what is expected of the students of Messiah. And we can see that this is also the role of Messiah in guarding G-d’s people. He we say guarding in the sense of trying to produce these qualities in G-ds elected people as Kings and Priests. Every appearance of the Messianic Soul was devoted to these fundamentals. While this list is only “Fundamental” we do not see on this list any role in “forgiving sin.” As a matter of fact, we see “Judgment” and Repentance as key roles in Messiah’s occupation.

Thus, Yeshua does not say “I forgive you of your sin,” but rather your sins are or have been forgiven. Thus, Yeshua only makes an announcement that sin has been forgiven. G-d forgives the sin, or the repentant sinner and His Messenger announces its reality.

**“Son, your sins have been forgiven** now – at this moment**.** What is the magic of these words? If we state them a bit differently perhaps, we see their power. Your sins are forgiven, and you have a good standing in G-d’s eyes. What lover of G-d does not want to hear those words? For whatever reason Yeshua announces the forgiveness of sin to this troubled soul. Why? Who knows? Regardless it brought peace (Shalom – wholeness) to this weary soul. He was healed completely.

Yeshua like Ezekiel and every appearance of Messiah (the Messianic Soul) through the Torah and Tanakh brings us close to G-d wherein we can experience true fellowship with the Divine. As talmidim of Messiah, as agents, and as his courtiers our occupation is to bring souls close to G-d.

**Remes Commentary to Hakham Shaul**

At issue in the Nazarean Talmud’s Remes portion this Torah Seder is acts of Tsedaqah.

**Acts of Tsedaqah – Jewish or**

Here the appropriate question should be what role does alms giving, performing acts of tsedaqah have in the life of a Gentile?

The role of Tsedaqah by and large is the sustenance of the less fortunate. This means that Tsedaqah is a Mitzvah. The Rambam’s seventh book is Zera'im *(Seeds): agricultural laws.* ***Aniyim: Laws of obligatory gifts to the poor.*** And, we must also know that Tsedaqah is giving to the poor of Yisrael (Israel). We see

Mishneh Torah 7. *Zera'im* (Seeds)

1. *Kilayim*: laws of forbidden mixtures

2. ***Aniyim*: laws of obligatory gifts to the poor**

3. *Terumot*: laws of obligatory gifts to the priests

4. *Maaser*: laws of tithes

5. *Sheini*: laws of secondary tithes

6. *Bikurim*: laws of first fruit offerings

7. *Shemittah*: laws of the sabbatical year

Hakham Shaul understands his occupation and particularly this tsedaqah as a fulfillment of G-d’s promises. Through this giving the Gentiles are journeying to Yerushalayim to worship the God of Israel allegorically speaking and in so doing offering themselves as proof that Yeshua’s talmidim both Jews and Gentile are required to give Tsedaqah to the poor of Yisrael.

**Acts 11.29-30** **So the talmidim determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Y’hudah. And they did so, sending it to the Zeqanim by the hand of Bar-Nechamah and Paqid Shaul**.

Hakham Shaul also notes that he follows this same practice, i.e. giving to the poor in Yerushalayim.[[59]](#footnote-59)

**Acts 15:19-21**

**Therefore, my judgment[[60]](#footnote-60) is that we should not cause difficulty for those from among the Gentiles who turn to God, but we should write a letter to them to abstain from the pollution of idols and from sexual immorality and from what has been strangled and from blood. For [**the rest you have] **Moshe who has those proclaiming him in every city from ancient generations,** because he**is read aloud in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”**

This obligation is required of talmidim the Messiah regardless of nationality etc. When a Gentile turns towards G-d he becomes obligated to follow the mitzvah of Tsedaqah. Giving Tsedaqah brings wealth to those who do so. This not a ploy for wealth. Rather is it’s a mitzvah to do the right thing.

**Salvation and Messiah**

Are you saved because you put your faith in Messiah? The question should be, are you saved because you are faithful to Messiah?

Firstly, its is a Christian dogma that G-d cannot hear the prayer of those who are NOT “saved.” That dogma suggests that all prayer, without first being “saved” is of no effect, G-d cannot hear the sinner. From the Nazarean Talmud at hand we see that Cornelius’ prayers and acts of tsedaqah for the Jewish people came up as a memorial before G-d. Was Cornelius already “saved?”

According to Christian doctrine, G-d could not hear the prayers of Cornelius until he put his “faith” in Messiah. However, as you can well see his prayers and alms have come up before G-d and he doesn’t even know anything about Messiah yet. Thus, we see the that Christian doctrine is incorrect. Cornelius did what he learned by attending the Esnoga (Synagogue), he prayed. It is my learned opinion that he followed the Siddur. Just how much of a siddur was used at the time of the first century is a matter of some debate. Regardless, Cornelius followed what he learned by attending the Esnoga. This may or may not open to door to salvation. But the Christian dogma is incorrect, G-d hears the prayers of those who give Tsedaqah. Giving Tsedaqah gains the attention of G-d immediately. Whether Cornelius knows this or not is irrelevant.

So, what brings “salvation?” And what is salvation?

אמן ואמן סלה

**Coming Fast**

**Fast of the 9th of Ab**

**Sunset August 2019 – Sunset August 11, 2019**

**Forth further info. Please see:**

[**http://www.betemunah.org/mourning.html**](http://www.betemunah.org/mourning.html)

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Shabbat Shalom!

Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai

Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David

Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham

1. Radak [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See II Samuel chapter 11. Rabbat is understood to be the modern city of Amman in Jordan. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. verse 11 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. verse 15. This introduction was excerpted and edited from: The ArtScroll Tanach Series, Tehillim, A new translation with a commentary anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic, and rabbinic sources. Commentary by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer, Translation by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer in collaboration with Rabbi Nosson Scherman. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Aguna = chained [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Rashi on v 4; Talmud Kethuboth 9b; Rambam, Laws of Divorce ch 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [So that in case he falls in battle his wife should be free to marry without the necessity of chalitzah. The Get would in that case take effect retrospectively from the date of its writing (Rashi). Tosafot.: He writes a Get without any conditions to take effect immediately] [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. I Shmuel (Samuel) 17:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. I.e., the betrothals, these thou shalt take from them by a deed of divorce (Rashi). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Uriah and Bathsheba had never consummated their marriage, indicating some severe dysfunction in their relationship. (Zohar 1:8b) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. According to halacha, an adulteress is forbidden to marry a man with whom she committed adultery, even after divorce or the death of her husband. Any descendant from such a union would be a mamzer, i.e., illegitimate, and would thus be disqualified both from reigning as king and from marrying into the general community of permitted Jewish women. Because David remained married to Batsheba after the incident without reprimand, and because their son Shlomo was allowed to rule and perpetuate the messianic line, we have no choice but to conclude that David, whatever his sin may have been concerning Batsheba, did not commit adultery. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Being a prophet, David knew that his heir and successor would be the son that would be born to him and Bathsheba, a woman of renown, famous for her excellence of character, no less than for her unsurpassed beauty. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The sages say that Batsheba was meant to be with David from the six days of creation, but that he took her prematurely. In fact, the Torah’s first word, “In the “beginning”, (בֵראשית) equals “Batsheba to King David”, (בת שבע לָדִוד המֶלך). The Torah’s first word is related in all other places in the Tanach to kingdom and sovereignty. So there is a distinct connection here between Batsheba and the kingdom and between David and Batsheba. In spite of all the evil inclination involved in this act, David sensed their predestination and so did Batsheba. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Mashiach comes from the union between David and Batsheba and not any other of David’s wives. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Compare this with our psalm: v.**3** Thou hast tried my heart, Thou hast visited it in the night; Thou hast tested me, and Thou findest not that I had a thought which should not pass my mouth. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. When Uriah, a soldier in David’s army, did not return home from the war, the *get*he had given to his wife, Bathsheba, rendered her technically divorced from before the time of David’s first involvement with her. (Kethuboth 9b) Although this would not by any means justify adultery, it does suggest a motive—other than Uriah’s stated reason of empathy for his fellow soldiers—for Uriah’s refusal to comply with David’s order to return home to his wife. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See Malbim ad loc. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Our Hakhamim teach that Uriah was indeed guilty of a capital offense in refusing to carry out David’s order to go into Batsheba. This made him “a traitor to the kingship”, the penalty for which is death. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. When Uriah was called before David, he made reference to his general as “my master, Joab” (2 Shmuel 11:11). Although this form of address would have been proper in the presence of his commanding officer, referring to anyone other than the king as *master* in the presence of the king himself constituted an act of rebellion punishable by death. (Shabbat 56a) [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Yehoshua (Joshua) 1:18, Sanhedrin 49a - Where David sinned was in contriving for Uriah to be killed in such a way as to make it seem that he was merely a war casualty, whereas in fact David should have taken Uriah before the Sanhedrin and had him publicly condemned to death (Shabbat 56a). However David did not want to do this as it would have drawn public attention to the questionable circumstances of his relations with Batsheba. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. When Uriah was called before David, he made reference to his general as “my master, Yoav” (II Shmuel 11:11). Although this form of address would have been proper in the presence of his commanding officer, referring to anyone other than the king as *master* in the presence of the king himself constituted an act of rebellion punishable by death. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. The understanding is that he was fomenting a rebellion.  Uriah placed himself in the category of*moreid b’malchut*, a rebel against the king. As such, Uriah forfeited his life immediately since the extralegal powers of the monarch include the authority to invoke the death penalty upon rebels without the due process of law. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Maimonides, Laws of Kings 3:8–10 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Malbim on 2 Samuel 11:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Note that Batsheba did have some culpability in this affair because her son died because of it. Thus she too received a portion of David’s punishment. According to Jewish law, an adulteress is forbidden to marry a man with whom she committed adultery, even after divorce or the death of her husband. (Sotah 25a) Any descendant from such a union would be a mamzer, i.e., illegitimate, and would thus be disqualified both from reigning as king and from marrying into the general community of permitted Jewish women. Because David remained married to Bathsheba after the incident without reprimand, and because their son, Solomon, was allowed to rule and perpetuate the messianic line, we have no choice but to conclude that David, whatever his sin may have been concerning Bathsheba, did not commit adultery. (Malbim on 2 Shmuel 11) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. It is clear, therefore, that David was neither an adulterer nor a murderer. Indeed, when the prophet Nathan presented David with the parable of the rich man who stole the poor man’s sheep, he alluded to theft but to neither murder nor adultery. Had David been truly guilty of murdering Uriah, what possible explanation could there have been for the prophet to employ a parable that implied theft but not murder? [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. So why does scripture leave David’s innocence so concealed and elusive? Let us recall that the stories recounted in the Bible often magnify the sins of great people so that later generations can appreciate the severity of their transgressions. For a spiritual giant such as David, his indiscretions with Bathsheba and Uriah were indeed comparable to adultery and murder. However, to believe that David actually committed either adultery or murder is to miss both the greatness of David and the real lessons of the biblical record. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. The real meaning of Nathan’s reproof for David personally is not even our business. The average individual cannot expect to grasp the exact nature of David’s sin. The prophet’s reproof to the saintly David is directed at US, the average readers, who are to learn from it how to recognize our own sins and how to repent in order to rectify them. From verse 4, which successively refers to the rich man’s visitor as a HEILECH (“passer-by”), then an ORE’AH (“visitor”) and finally an ISH (“man of stature”), our Hakhamim learned out that the nature of the evil inclination is first to drop in casually as a passer-by, then to install himself within us as a long-term guest, until he finally takes over the entire house and acts as the BAAL HABAYIS (“owner of the house”; Succah 52b). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Nathan the prophet used the parable of the rich man’s taking the poor man’s lamb in order to prompt David to see for himself where his sin lay and how he should be punished. Had Nathan simply asked David to consider his behavior and ask himself if he had done anything wrong, the king may have tried to rationalize away his actions. Instead, Nathan told David a graphic story about somebody else’s gross behavior and asked him to give a quite impartial evaluation of this kind of behavior that would not be colored by the need to justify himself. Rabbi Nachman (Likutei Moharan I, 113) teaches that this is the method whereby G-d consults sinners about how they should be punished. If He were to ask them directly about their own behavior, they would never give an impartial reply and would always judge themselves too leniently. He therefore shows them someone else’s behavior which is parallel to their own and then asks them how they judge it. According to their evaluation of the other person’s deeds and how they should be penalized, so G-d judges and penalizes their own, and this is the meaning of the rabbinic statement that “a person is punished with his knowledge yet without his knowledge” (Avot 3:16). We should be very careful when looking at and judging the behavior of others in case we are unknowingly being invited to decide our own fate. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Some say that the sin of David was that he did not put him to death, but let him be killed by the sword of the Ammonites (II Sam. 12:9) which was an abomination (Zohar Ex. 107a). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Uriah was not a Hittite; the name merely indicates that he dwelt among them (Kiddushin 76b). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Zohar, parashat Vayishlach [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Zohar: Bereshit (Genesis) 63 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Gilgul Ha Neshamot describes a Kabbalistic concept of reincarnation. In Hebrew, the word gilgul means “cycle” or “wheel” and neshamot is the plural for “souls”. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. II Shmuel (Samuel) 12:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Thematic connection B’resheet 19:1 Lot sat at the **gate** to the city. Note the similarity between the Torah Seder where the men of Sodom surround Lot’s house and the people the Ashlamatah Judges 19:22 connecting with all of the Galil surround the house where Yeshua was staying. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. The impersonal plural reads “the come.” Therefore, we have translated so that the wording reads easier in English. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. ἐξορύσσω 1 aor. ἐξώρυξα (s. ὀρύσσω; Hdt. et al.; PHal 1, 100 and 109 [III B.C.];LXX, Philo, Joseph.) **to extract something out of an area by force.** Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000). *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*. "Based on Walter Bauer's Griechisch-deutsches Wr̲terbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frhchristlichen [sic] Literatur, sixth edition, ed. Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, with Viktor Reichmann and on previous English editions by W.F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich, and F.W. Danker." (3rd ed.) (351). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Verbal connection to B’resheet 19:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Thematic connection to B’resheet 19:2 the word “son” here can be a reference to a “servant” or talmid. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. **ἀφέωνται, ἀφίημι –** *aphiemi* carries the idea of release rather than atonement. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Joseph Fitzmyer also supports this insertion of “Jewish.” See Fitzmyer, J. A. (1998). *The Acts of the Apostles, A New Translation w Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Yale Bible ed., Vol. 31). New Haven : The Anchor Yale Bible. p. 447 [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Parsons and Cully suggest that Hakham Tsefet is not dwelling “in the house of Shim’on the tanner,” but translate the clause as “this man (Hakham Tsefet) is being entertained as a guest in the presence (near) of a certain Shim’on the tanner.” Culy, M. M., Parsons, M. C., & Stigal, J. J. (2010). *Acts, A handbook on the Greek Text.* Waco, TX: Baylor University Press. p. 194 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Verbal connection to B’resheet 43:16, 19 & 44:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. The sixth hour, showing Hakham Tsefet’s immediacy and devotion. This could have been late morning or early afternoon prayers. We suggest that this is early afternoon prayers because Hakham Tsefet becomes hungry. Again, this shows his piety and devotion. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. **ἔκστασις** – *ekstasis* here connects us thematically with the Marqan secret – Sod. **ἔκστασις** – *ekstasis* here sets the normal mental state in a mode of suspension. This does NOT mean that he was “out of his mind.” It means that he was in a heightened state of spiritual awareness, Sod whereby he was able to access higher levels of spiritual information. I.e. Hohkmah, which in the present revelation of Sod is very important because the vision extends the “Kingdom/Governance of G-d” to the Gentiles. This universalistic idea was purported by the Prophets such as Amos, Yesha’yahu and Zechari’yah. Neusner purports the notion that Judaism always had these universalistic notions. And that the “Governance of G-d “through the Hakhamim was in fact the mechanism for the final tikun and return to Eden. Cf. Neusner, J. (2001). *Recovering Judaism, The Universal Dimension of Judaism.* Fortress Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Reminiscent of B’resheet (Gen) 6:20 making it clear (now after the fact) that the vision is a reference to the Gentiles (B’ne Noach) who will no longer simply be “B’ne Noach but become full converts, Ger Tsaddiq and B’ne Yeshua “King of the Jews.” Mashiach ben Yosef – Messiah to the Gentiles as well as Jews. By being Messiah to the Gentiles, Messiah brings redemption and Tikun to the Jews as well. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. And a [daughter of a] voice (bat kol) The concept of a “voice from heaven” exists in Judaism in the Bat Kol (or "Bath Kol"), meaning "daughter of a voice" (i.e., Mark 1:9-11). Its feminine attribution is similar to that of the Shekinah (“Divine Presence”) and Ruach HaKodesh ("Holy Spirit"). This is a voice of Prophecy lesser in force than Sinai. I.e. Daughter of the “Voice”(Kol) (G-d's Voice) at Har Sinai. **Kol**. It is the eighth attribute of the thirteen attributes. See Ramban Exodus 34:6. ‎The thirteen Midot (attributes) according to the Ramban are as follows: (1) HaShem; (2) HaShem; (3) G-d; (4) Merciful; (5) Gracious; (6) Longsuffering; (7) Abounding in goodness; (8) Abounding in truth; (9) Keeping mercy unto the thousandth generation; (10) Forgiving iniquity; (11) Forgiving transgression; (12) Forgiving sin; (13) That will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. The allegory here shows the attempt of the Shammaite School to hold the Gentiles at a distance. They “Stood at the Gate” is an allegorical statement, which interpreted means that the “Prayed at the Gate.” Or, they could only come to the position of being a “Ger Sha’ar.” [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. The Ruach – Voice of Prophecy can be none other than G-d. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. The ambiguity of the vision disappears with the voice of Prophecy heard internally by Hakham Tsefet. This means that Hakham Tsefet through the “spirit of prophecy” learned the true meaning of the vision. Not only did he learn the true meaning of the vision, he understood (Binah) all the possibilities and intimate details of this vision. In this vision was the “secret – So’od” of the Malchut Shamayim, governance **of G-d** through the Hakhamim and Bate Din as opposed to human kings. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. διακρίνω - *diakrinō* contains the notion of discrimination and separation. While there are places where the Jewish people and Gentiles must be separated, we cannot discriminate against them. It also contains the idea of hesitation. Therefore, Hakham Tsefet is sent immediately, without hesitation and without making a distinction between Jew and Gentile as far as superficial interaction. This excludes ideas of table fellowship etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Verbal connection to B’resheet (Gen) 45:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. **ῥήματα** can only be the Oral Torah. While λόγος can be either written or oral, **ῥῆμα** can only be words spoken orally. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. The use of εἰσκαλεσάμενος is found only here in the Nazarean Codicil and sparingly in Greek writings. Here we note that it is not problematic to have the Gentile invited in. While under the supervision of the Jewish host, the Jewish house is not deemed unfit. However, the problem occurs when the reverse is the case, as we will see. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Here my intention is not only to see what practices Yeshua follows but to look at the bigger picture of Messiah as a whole and determine what practices he follows as an agent of G-d. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Lehrman, Rabbi Dr. S. M. (1983) Midrash Rabbah: Vol. III: Exodus. London: The Soncino Press., Vol. 3, pp. 408-9) [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Ibid Vol. 3, pp. 412-13 [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Cf. Gal 2.10 [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Verbal connection to Shemot 21:1. This is the “judgment” (שֶׁ֫פֶט) of Hakham Ya’aqob or his expression of desire to the Bet Din - noun first person singular, in **"my judgment,"** this cannot be a legal halakhic decision. This is because a single Judge (Hakham) cannot make a halakhic ruling. Judgments are the result of a Bet Din [i.e.. multiple judges (Sages full of wisdom i.e. Chokhmah)]. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)