

צדק צדק תרדף

IN SEARCH OF THE MEANING OF צדק IN RABBINIC LITERATURE

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DIGEST

The Hebrew root צדק occurs numerous times in the Bible and in rabbinic literature. There has been a significant amount of scholarly work accomplished with respect to the root צדק as it appears in the Bible; however, only limited research has been undertaken regarding צדק as it is used by the Rabbis of the Talmud and Midrash. This thesis presents a survey of צדק as a Jewish moral concept, and elucidates the central role צדק has played in Jewish thought and practice. Throughout this analysis, there is a particular concentration on the contrast between the meaning of צדק in the Bible and the meaning of צדק in the rabbinic stratum.

In order to achieve a complete understanding of צדק as it used by the Rabbis, Chapter One explores the usage of צדק in the Bible. The term צדק is defined in numerous ways in the Bible depending upon the circumstances and historical settings of the verses quoted. A full exploration of the various meanings and connotations of צדק in the Bible is therefore the intent of Chapter One.

Whereas the first chapter tends to be a linguistic analysis of צדק as it occurs in the Bible, the remaining chapters focus on the poetry and brilliance of the Rabbis as they attempt to define צדק in the Talmud and Midrash. Chapter Two accentuates צדקת ה' - God's Righteousness. The Rabbis considered God's righteous actions on behalf of Israel, and on behalf of the entire world, as a paradigm for their own ethical behavior. Since the concept of צדק for the Rabbis involves moral and ethical considerations, it is appropriate to begin our study of rabbinical literature with the source of ethical and moral behavior - God.

Chapter Three reflects upon **צדקת אבות** - The **צדק** of the Biblical Patriarchs. Our biblical ancestors are viewed throughout the rabbinic stratum as promulgators of the most fundamental and praised values in the Jewish tradition. Just as we find **צדק** at the foundation of God's work, we can also learn about **צדק** by studying the deeds of our ancestors who carried out God's commands and lived according to God's decrees.

Finally, Chapter Four discusses **צדקת אדם** - The Righteousness of Humanity. The Rabbis go to great length to demonstrate that human beings are frequently challenged to behave with a sense of **צדק**. It is here, in these writings of our sages, that the foundation of **צדק** truly becomes defined as love as opposed to mere righteousness or justice. The righteous person, like the righteous God or the righteous patriarch, exhibits love as the fundamental principle of his or her **צדק**.

The object of this thesis is to present the reader with a survey of the various modes, definitions, and qualities of the concept of **צדק**, as created and enumerated by the Rabbis. It is hoped that the reader will not only gain an appreciation for rabbinic commentary, but will be motivated and inspired by the comments concerning this central concept and vital principle of the Jewish religion.

INTRODUCTION

In his publication entitled Organic Thinking, Max Kadushin discusses the connotations of the word צדק in rabbinic literature. Kadushin points out that "it is not very helpful to go back to the derivation of the word צדק or its usage in the Bible, a procedure not apt to give reliable results with respect to any rabbinic concept."¹ Our examination of the verb צדק in the first chapter of this thesis will be valuable. We will have a full assessment of the etymology of צדק and an understanding of the use of צדק by the biblical writers. This information will be essential as we continue our work in rabbinic literature. However, as Kadushin confirms, the meaning of צדק in the Bible will not lead us to the meaning of צדק in rabbinic literature. For it is very evident that צדק evolves in meaning and connotation in the hands of the Rabbis. "...the term צדק pops up there (in Mishnaic, Talmudic, and Gaonic literature) with great frequency and assumes a new set of meanings in accordance with the then prevalent Jewish views on life, death, duty, religion, and God."²

As an illustration for this premise, Kadushin writes about the evolution that occurred in the meaning of the word צדקה. He remarks that "since צדקה in the Bible means righteousness, Jewish tradition has looked upon the giving of charity as restoring justice to the poor. But the Rabbis

¹ Max Kadushin, Organic Thinking: A Study in Rabbinic Thought, (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1938), p. 132.

² J. Abelson "Righteousness," Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, 1919 ed. p. 807.

never use the word צדקה in the sense of righteousness even when it occurs in the biblical verse they quote."³

Kadushin's theories are not without their critics, and these critics do represent the prevalent views on צדקה in rabbinic literature: "The use of this word (צדקה) to denote monetary help to the poor is interesting and explains the attitude taken up by the sages towards this form of charity. Its proper meaning is 'righteousness...'" and later "...the alteration of the significance of the term couldn't have been accidental in that assisting the poor is not an act of grace (love) on the part of the donor, but a duty. By giving alms he is merely practicing righteousness, performing a deed of justice."⁴ That is, Kadushin's critics see a very strong connection between the meaning of the word צדקה in the Bible and its later rabbinic connotation.

However, those who side with Kadushin are much more convincing than his critics. In my opinion, it is Professor Samuel Cohon who best explained the meaning of צדקה in rabbinic literature, and who best supports Kadushin's theory. In the following statement, Cohon illustrates the undeniable change in the meaning of the word צדקה over the centuries: "To avoid a misunderstanding, it might be advisable to point out that the Jewish doctrine of love is not dissociated from righteousness. In the 13 attributes, in prophetic teaching, and in the Haggadah, righteousness is inseparable from love in the full vision of God's relation to man. When the two fall apart, the moral order collapses. Hillel's stress on retribution points in that direction. Without such conception, the Halacha loses its foundation."⁵ Thus, Cohon

³ Kadushin p. 32

⁴ A. Cohen, Everyman's Talmud, (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1949), p. 219.

⁵ Letter from Samuel S. Cohon to Louis Finkelstein, July 23, 1952, Samuel S. Cohon Papers, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio, Manuscript Collection #276, Box 7 Folder 5.

maintained that the true meaning of צדק in rabbinic literature is more closely associated with love than with pure righteousness as it is understood in the Bible.

Emil G. Hirsch goes even further than Cohon when he states: "As human righteousness is a reflection of God's, it includes necessarily love for others. This consideration has so strongly influenced the Jewish mind that the word צדקה (righteousness) has assumed the meaning of "charity." ⁶

Based on my research, I would tend to disagree with those who teach that the concept of צדק or צדקה has little to do with love and everything to do with restoring justice to the poor. I would tend to agree with Hirsch and Cohon that צדק, as seen through the eyes of the Rabbis, takes on a meaning broader than conformity to an existing standard, righteous action, right relationship to others, appropriateness, or just rewards. צדק, in and of itself, in the rabbinic stratum, is not used to connote mere righteousness or justice. Throughout this investigation we will see that the Rabbis view love as the true meaning of צדק, and that צדק is used over and over throughout the literature to indicate loving relationships and loving actions.

Based on my investigation of passages containing the term צדק in various collections of aggadic and halachic material, and with the aid of concordances, indices, and cross-references, I will attempt to prove the following: The sages understood and used the word צדק differently than those who composed the Bible, that the concept of צדק changed in its use as a function of the historical and sociological circumstances, and that the proof texts used by the Rabbis involving the word צדק only make sense if צדק is given a broader, perhaps different meaning than it holds in the Bible.

⁶ Emil G Hirsch, "Right and Righteousness," The Jewish Encyclopedia, 1925 ed, p. 423.

CHAPTER ONE

צדק In The Bible

We know from linguistic research that it is impossible to define root meanings and ideas in a vacuum. In order to understand **צדק** as it employed by the Rabbis, I will first examine the term **צדק** as it is used by the biblical writers. I have accomplished this research through the use of secondary readings, concordances, indices, and cross-references. In this chapter, I will discuss the etymology of the word **צדק**, and the way it is used in the Bible.

During the course of Jewish history, the root **צדק** has expanded and developed in meaning and function. The root **צדק**, however, occurs in several Semitic languages. While Gesenius holds the original root-meaning to be "straight" and Ryssel maintains the translation "hard", more recent biblical scholars disagree with these two interpretations. While those earlier scholars traced **צדק** from the Arabic sidq (meaning firmness, truth, or sincerity), other biblical scholars¹ cite examples from Epigraphic South Arabian where the term sdq means "that which is proper" or "that which one deserves." The South Arabian evidence confirms what can be surmised from examination of biblical usage. The concepts of "appropriateness" and "just rewards" constitute the most frequent connotation of the term **צדק** by the biblical writers.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the term **צדק** implies a number of concepts and meanings which appear to be related to "appropriateness" and "just

¹ Roy A. Rosenberg, "The God Sedeq," in HUCA, Vol XXXVI, (1965), p. 161-177.

rewards". It is my belief that the meaning of the root צדק also goes beyond the most commonly used translations "justice" or "righteousness." צדק is used to express the basic laws of cultural interchange, the foundations of God's law, and the most fundamental principles of human beings relating to one another. What is important to keep in mind is that צדק implies "spheres of activity and not only abstract concepts."²

One sphere of activity revolves around God. In fact, צדק may be used to express one of the many attributes of God in the Hebrew Scriptures. We can trace this development back to the early Canaanite religious traditions. According to Roy Rosenberg, "to the Canaanites of Jerusalem, צדק was the beneficent manifestation of the sun god, the 'judge' of all lands, who brought hidden crimes to light and righted the wrongs of the innocent."³

תְּרַחֵם לְכֶם יְרֵאִי שְׁמִי שֶׁמֶשׁ צִדְקָה וּמִרְפָּא בְּכַנְפֶּיהָ
וַיֵּצְאתֶם וּפְשָׁתֶם כְּעֹגְלֵי מִרְבָּק:

But for you who revere my name, שֶׁמֶשׁ צִדְקָה shall rise with healing in her wings. You shall go forth and stamp like stall-fed calves. (Malachi 3²⁰)

Rosenberg emphasizes that "once Jerusalem had become the center of the cult of Yahweh, it was only natural that the deities indigenous to the city should be merged into his person."⁴ Indeed, even Kings of Jerusalem such as מֶלֶךְ-צִדְק ("my king is צדק") of Genesis 14, and אֲדֹנֵי-צִדְק ("my master is צדק") of Joshua 10¹, reflect in their names the Jerusalem sun cult. Rosenberg cites as examples the following verses where צדק appears in association with Yahweh:

² Klaus Koch, *The Prophets*, Vol 1, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), p. 56.

³ Rosenberg p. 164

⁴ Rosenberg p. 170

שְׁמַעַה יְהוָה | צְדָק הַקְשִׁיכָה רַחֲמֵי
תַּאֲזִינָה תַּפְלִיתִי בְּלֹא שַׁפְתִּי מִרְמָה:

Hear, O Lord, צְדָק; heed my cry, give ear to my prayer,
uttered without guile. (Psalm 17¹)

שְׁמַעוּ אֵלֵי רַחֲמֵי צְדָק מִבְקְשֵׁי יְהוָה
הַבִּיטוּ אֶל-צוּר תַּצְבֵּתָם וְאֶל-מִקְבַּת בּוֹר נִקְרְתָם:

Listen to me, you who pursue צְדָק, you who seek the Lord:
Look to the rock you were hewn from,
To the quarry you were dug from. (Isaiah 51¹)

While Rosenberg, on the basis of strong evidence, concludes that the deity Sydyk and his counterpart Misor are to be identified with Sedeq and Misor of the Hebrew Scriptures,⁵ his theories and his conclusions require further study and are too numerous to mention here. Yet even if we cannot find sufficient evidence to identify צְדָק as a separate deity in the ancient Hebrew pantheon, we can surmise that the god צְדָק of the Canaanite people influenced the early writers of the Bible.

Many researchers have observed that צְדָק and its derivatives rarely occur in the older documents of the Bible, but the root is common in the literary prophets and frequent in the wisdom literature and Psalms. According to W. Addis, the meaning of צְדָק becomes gradually broader through time and actually takes on a strictly ethical and religious significance.⁶ One reason for this phenomenon has been suggested by Gerhard Von Rad: "The references to human righteousness in relationship

⁵ Rosenberg p. 163

⁶ W. Addis, "Right, Righteousness," in Encyclopedia Biblica, Vol. IV, (1903), col. 4102.

to God increase in the later literature, because it was only in the later writings that the individual got a chance to speak out for himself."⁷ From this phenomenon we learn that as history progresses, the individual is less bound up in the life of the community, and more conscious of himself and his relationship to God.

It is this ethical relationship to God that comes across very clearly in the literary prophets. This development can be explained due to two important factors revealed in the prophetic literature.⁸ During the 8th Century BCE, there was a parting of the rich and the poor. Due to military success, the rich became richer, thus widening the gulf with the poor. The rich used their wealth to hurt the poor and the result was moral chaos (Isaiah 31⁴, 5⁸, Amos 2⁶, 51², 8⁵).

With the ensuing moral chaos, and the disappearance of tribal justice as his background, Amos summoned his listeners to a different kind of righteousness. With the destruction of the Temple, there was no longer any need for sacrifice or offering, but there was a need for "a living essence of social ethics, embracing honesty in business, fair weights and balances, and standard wages."⁹ God, according to Amos, now demands righteousness through social ethics, not via ritual worship. Klaus Koch appropriately articulates that פִּדְיָה in Amos becomes "the productive powers which a person needs in order to live."¹⁰

What is apparent in Amos takes place in each of the prophetic books where פִּדְיָה appears. The root פִּדְיָה undergoes an evolution in meaning. In

⁷ Gerhard Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol 1, (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), p. 380.

⁸ A. Gordon, "Righteousness," in *Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. X, (1919), p. 780.

⁹ Gordon p. 780

¹⁰ Koch p. 56

Hosea, for example, love, not mechanical justice alone, is an element of צדק. It is what Hirsch calls "another step in the evolution of צדק, righteousness potentialized by נחם"¹¹ "As God has betrothed himself to Israel in righteousness, justice, love, and compassion, God expects them to be actuated by the same spirit toward one another."¹² For Hosea, love and justice were mutually necessary, not mutually exclusive.

For Deutero-Isaiah, צדק is synonymous with salvation and it represents as well the rule by which God governs the world. "God's righteousness was not the norm, but God's actions, and it was these acts which bestow salvation."¹³ For both Isaiah and Jeremiah, justice and righteousness equalled solicitude for the weak and helpless, and the belief that God's justice will bring salvation to the remnant of Israel.¹⁴

Thus, throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, we find attributes of God, social ethics, love, and salvation, being expressed by the term צדק. We can recognize the following four major categories of צדק in the Hebrew Scriptures as a whole: conformity to an existing standard, righteous action, right relationship to others, and the righteousness of God. These various usages were not only dependent on their situational occurrences, but were also specific to a certain time period as well. I will now examine each usage in detail and give relevant examples from the Hebrew Scriptures.

In its earliest application, a righteous act or a righteous person is one that cleaves solidly to the ethical and religious traditions of the people. W. Addis, in an article in Encyclopedia Biblica, recognizes the difficulty in

¹¹ Emil G Hirsch, "Right and Righteousness," in The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. X, (1925), p. 421.

¹² Gordon p. 782

¹³ Von Rad p. 373

¹⁴ Hirsch col. 421

precisely fixing the early meaning of the root, but goes ahead to cite what he feels is the most primitive meaning of צדק, that is, "conformity to a recognized norm or standard."¹⁵ Emil G. Hirsch explains further that the term צדק is used to convey "a thing, man, or even God, is what it, or he, should be, that is, normal, fit."¹⁶ Unequivocally, "to justify" means to restore to a "normal" condition.

Hirsch cites a number of passages to enhance his definition, and among them are the following: Measures and weights must be "normal" or "fit" thereby conforming to a standard:

אֲבֵן שְׁלֵמָה וְצֶדֶק יִהְיֶה לָּךְ אִיפֹה שְׁלֵמָה וְצֶדֶק יִהְיֶה לָּךְ
לְמַעַן יֵאָרִיכוּ יָמֶיךָ עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָּךְ:

You must have completely fit weights and completely fit measures, if you are to endure long on the soil that the Lord your God is giving you. (Leviticus 19³⁶)(Deut. 25¹⁵)

Speech as well must be "normal" or "fit":

אֲהַבֶּתָּ רָע מִטוֹב שֹׁקֵר | מִדְּבַר צֶדֶק סָלָה:

You prefer evil to good, the lie to speaking truthfully. (Psalm 52⁵)

Sacrificial Offerings must be "normal" or "fit":

וּבָחֲרוּ צֶדֶק וּבִטְחוּ אֶל־יְיָ:

Offer normal sacrifices and trust in the Lord (Psalm 4⁶)

And paths must be "normal" or "fit":

נַפְשִׁי יִשׁוּבָב

¹⁵ Addis col. 4103

¹⁶ Hirsch col. 419

יִתְּנִי בַּמַּעֲלֵי צֶדֶק לַמַּעַן שְׁמוֹ:

He renews my life, He guides me on fit paths
for the sake of His name. (Psalm 23³)

Johannes Pedersen agrees with Hirsch and states that "צֶדֶק" always denotes the healthy and normal, that which is in entire accord with its being. צֶדֶק is that which is whole."¹⁷ "In order to be able to develop in full harmony, the soul must be healthy; this healthiness the Israelite calls righteousness."¹⁸

צֶדֶק also refers to those who are "fit" taking care of those who are less "fit". צֶדֶק is frequently the claim on the stronger; therefore, it is the stronger who receives the weaker into his will and maintenance.¹⁹ This can be seen in the example of the king. The king is the "guarantor and protector of everything in the land providing for faithfulness in community relationships."²⁰ It is the king who orders the life of the community.

אֱלֹהִים מְשַׁפֵּט לַמֶּלֶךְ תָּנוּ וְצִדְקָתְךָ לְבֶן־מֶלֶךְ:
יְדִין עַמֶּךָ בְּצֶדֶק וְעֲנִיֶיךָ בַּמִּשְׁפָּט:

O God, endow the king with Your judgements,
the king's son with your righteousness
that he may judge Your people rightly,
Your lowly ones, justly. (Psalm 72¹⁻²)

¹⁷Johannes Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture*, Vol. 1, (Copenhagen: Oxford University Press, 1926), p. 338.

¹⁸ Pedersen p. 336

¹⁹ Pedersen p. 344

²⁰ Von Rad p. 375

צדק is at times equated with the notion of truth (אמת).²¹ This is not truth in the moral sense, but rather the idea of legitimacy.

כִּי־עֲשִׂיתָ מִשְׁפָּטִי דִינִי יִשְׁבֹּתָ לְכַסֵּא שׁוֹפֵט צֶדֶק:

For you uphold my right and claim
enthroned as a true judge. (Psalm 95)

בִּקְרָאִי עֲנֵנִי | אֱלֹהֵי צֶדֶק
בְּצָר הִרְתַּבְתָּ לִּי חֲנִי וְשָׁמַעַתְּ תַּפְלִתִּי:

Answer me when I call, my true God! You freed me from distress;
have mercy on me and hear my prayer. (Psalm 42)

צדק occurs when sacrifices are as they should be, when paths lead one to a right goal, and when a king is a king who throughout his rule agrees with the being of a king.

In its later usage, as the concept of צדק grew and developed; it encompassed the whole of Israelite life. It expressed more than conformity to a norm; it expressed ethical responsibility and moral standard. "In its use among Hebrews the term "righteousness" seems to have had a moral intention."²²

צֶדֶק צֶדֶק תִּרְדֹּף לְמַעַן תַּחְיֶה
וְיָרִשְׁתָּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ:

Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may thrive and occupy the land the
Lord your God is giving you. (Deuteronomy 16²⁰)

צדק is often used to denote right ethical action. According to Koch,
"The Israelite did not possess צדק, he was in צדק, and צדק means the

²¹ See J Weingreen, "The Title Moreh Sedek" in Journal of Semitic Studies, Vol. 6, (Autumn 1961), p. 162-174.

²² Hirsch col. 419

spontaneous act in favor of משפט.²³ צדק differs from משפט in that משפט indicates a process, and צדק indicates an attribute. צדק is "an inherent quality, not depending on the decision of a judge, but at the most demanding recognition by him."²⁴

In Genesis, צדק attests to the honesty of a patriarch:

וְעֵתָהּ בִּי צְדָקָתִי
בְּיוֹם מַחֲרָ כִּי־תָבוֹא עַל־שֹׁכְרִי לִפְנֵיךָ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־אֵינִי נֶקֶד וְטָלֹוא
בְּעֵזִים וְחוּם בְּכֶשֶׁבִים גָּנוֹב הוּא אֲחִי:

In the future when you go over my wages, let my honesty toward you testify for me: If there are among my goats any that are not speckled or spotted or any sheep that are not dark colored, they got there by theft. (Genesis 30³³)

In first Samuel, David is said to have acted with צדק because "he did not touch Saul when Saul was delivered defenseless into his hands."²⁵

וַיְהִיָּה יוֹשִׁיב לְאִישׁ אֶחָד־צִדְקָתוֹ וְאֶת־אַמְנָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן
יְהוָה | הַיּוֹם בְּיָד וְלֹא אָבִיתִי לְשַׁלַּח יָדִי בַּמְשִׁיחַ יְהוָה:

And the Lord will requite every man for his right conduct and loyalty - for this day the Lord delivered you into my hands and I would not raise a hand against the Lord's anointed. (I Samuel 26²³)

As we have discussed previously, the trend of using צדק to express moral virtue continues in the Books of the Prophets. This tendency is especially evident in Jeremiah, where צדק becomes one's endeavor to secure the rights of the ailing, the destitute, and the indigent. "It (צדק) consists

²³ Koch p. 58

²⁴ J. Skinner, "Righteousness in the Old Testament," in Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. IV (1902), p. 273. This distinction between attribute and function also is bolstered by Mesopotamian parallels. צדק is the abstract quality required for just rule, and משפט is the actual administration of justice.

²⁵ Von Rad p. 373

negatively in abstinence from murder and oppression of widows and orphans, positively in securing justice for those who were powerless to help themselves."²⁶ It is not only refraining from wrongdoing, but also establishing right. Man's righteousness is "not merely abstention from evil, but the constant pursuit of justice and the performance of positive deeds."²⁷

While the root **צדק** can, as we have seen, express conformity to an existing standard, and righteous action, **צדק** is also widely used to express right relationship between two parties. "Every relationship brings with it certain claims upon conduct, and the satisfaction of these claims, which issue from the relationship, and in which alone the relationship can persist, is described by the term **צדק**."²⁸ For the ancient Hebrew, "Righteousness (**צדק**) consists in doing what is just and right in all relationships"²⁹

וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶחָד
שְׁפִטִּים בְּעַת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר שָׁמַע בֵּין אֲחֵיכֶם וּשְׁפִטָתָם צֶדֶק בֵּין
אִישׁ וּבֵין אֲחִיו וּבֵין גֵּר:

I further charged your magistrates as follows: Hear out your fellow men, and decide justly between any man and a fellow Israelite or stranger.
(Deuteronomy 1¹⁶)

The righteous man was a successful litigant who won his case against another in court. The **צדיק** acquires the legal status of the innocent party. "The term (**צדק**) becomes forensic in function and refers to one party being in the right, legal status established by a public judgement in one's favor, or a

²⁶ Addis col. 4104

²⁷ Louis Jacobs, "Righteousness," in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. XIV, col. 180.

²⁸ Von Rad p. 370.

²⁹ Jacobs col. 180

quality expected of a judge in the exercise of his office."³⁰ From this definition of the term, the notion of צדק as "victory" is derived.

צדיק is a technical term denoting the victorious party in a lawsuit.

The righteous man is proclaimed innocent and the wicked man condemned:

כִּי־יִחַד רִיב בֵּין אָנָשִׁים וַנֵּגֶשׁוּ אֶל־דֹּמְשָׁפֶט וְשֹׁפֵטִים וְהַצְדִּיקוּ
אֶת־הַצְדִּיק וְהִרְשִׁיעוּ אֶת־הָרָשָׁע:

"When there is a dispute between men and they go to law, and a decision is rendered declaring one in the right and the other in the wrong,"
(Deuteronomy 25¹)

מִצְדִּיקוֹ רָשָׁע עֶקֶב שָׁחַד וְצַדִּיק צְדִיקִים יִסְרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ:

Who vindicate him who is in the wrong, in return for a bribe,
And withhold vindication from him who is right. (Isaiah 52³)

הֲוֹאֵת חֲשֹׁבָה לְמִשְׁפָּט אֲמַרְתָּ צַדִּיקִי מֵאֵל:

Do you think it just to say, "I am right against God"? (Job 35:2)

The צדיק is the winner of the suit, the man found innocent, is by the verdict proved to be righteous in the sight of God. It is of interest to note that the term צדיק in the Bible does not denote a virtuous character, but merely innocence from the charge brought before the court. Addis suggests that the reason that there is no feminine form of צדיק is due to the above definition. Namely, since women held few legal rights in ancient times, they could not be "right in law", therefore, there was no usage of a feminine form of the verb צדק.³¹

צדק can also refer to the judge who was, in ancient times, at the same time prosecutor and magistrate, "whose righteousness consists mainly in

³⁰ J. Skinner, p. 273

³¹ Addis, cols. 4103-4104

rising superior to bad influences, and deciding each case with absolute impartiality of merits."³² Judicial righteousness amounts to deliverance or protection.

לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה עוֹל בַּמִּשְׁפָּט לֹא־תֵשָׂא פָנֶיךָ וְלֹא
תִּהְיֶה פָנֶי גֵדוֹל בְּצִדֵּק תִּשְׁפֹּט עִמִּיתְךָ:

You shall not render an unfair decision:
Do not favor the poor or show deference to the rich;
Judge your kinsmen fairly. (Leviticus 19¹⁵)

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְשָׁלוֹם מִי־יִשְׁמְנִי
שֹׁפֵט בָּאָרֶץ וְעָלַי יָבוֹא כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִהְיֶה־לּוֹ רִיב וּמִשְׁפָּט
וְהִצַּדַּקְתִּיו:

And Absalom went on "If only I were appointed judge in the land and everyone with a legal dispute came before me, I would see that he got his rights." (2nd Samuel 15⁴)

צדק can also be used to express legitimate familial relationship or rightful lineage. We know from studies of other ancient cultures, צדק was often used to indicate genuine kinship or rightful lineage. In the Ras Shamra Tablets of the Canaanite people an 'att sdqh is a 'rightful wife', and in Phoenician inscriptions we find the expressions smh sdq (rightful offspring) and mlk sdq (righteous king).³³

צדק, according to Swetnam,³⁴ can also take on the meaning of legitimate relationship between a king and his heir or a father and his son. He bases his work on ancient inscriptions and texts; however, I find his conclusions to be partially faulty. In one example, Swetnam draws attention

³² Skinner p. 274

³³ Rosenberg p. 162

³⁴ James Swetnam, "Some Observations on the background of צדק in Jeremias 23^{5a}," in *Biblica* Vol XLVI, 1965, p. 29-40.

to the numerous times where an ancient king is referred to as kmlk sdqh whose days were prolonged because he was צדק. It would seem that his days were prolonged not merely because he was a legitimate king, in other words, the true heir of the throne, but because he was a "good" king. He was righteous in his relationships with other people, and rightful in his legitimacy to the throne; therefore, he was rewarded with long life. While the meaning "legitimate" may be a good translation of צדק, it would seem likely that one's legitimacy and one's reward depend upon one's righteousness as well.

In conclusion, righteousness rests fundamentally on the Divine character and will:

אֶל־תִּירָא כִּי עִמָּךְ־אֲנִי אֶל־תִּשְׁתָּע כִּי־אֲנִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ
אִמְצִיךָ אֶפְעֶזְרֶיךָ אֶפְתַּח־לְךָ־בִּמְיוֹן צֶדֶק:

Fear not for I am with you,
Be not frightened for I am your God;
I strengthen you and I help you,
I uphold you with My victorious (righteous) right hand. (Isaiah 41¹⁰)

צדק is often equated with God's right arm or right hand. Rosenberg suggests that the "definition of צדק as the right hand of Yahweh is paralleled by the concept of Kittu as the "minister of the right hand" of Samas the sun god." Whatever the reason, it remains true that the Israelite, "never tires of laying stress upon the righteousness of his God"³⁵

יְהוָה צָדִיק בְּקִרְבָּהּ לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה עוֹלָה
בְּבֹקֶר בְּבֹקֶר מִשְׁפָּטוֹ יִתֵּן לְאֹרֶךְ לֹא יַעֲדֶה וְלֹא־יִדְעַע עוֹל בִּשְׁת:

But the Lord in her midst is righteous, He does no wrong;

³⁵ Pedersen p.338

He issues judgement every morning, as unfailing as the light.
The wrongdoer knows no shame. (Zephaniah 3⁵)

"Yahweh dispensed justice by means of צדק. Hence, for example, the
"just" or "proper" rain was the rain of צדק:"³⁶

וְעַתָּה לְדַרוֹשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה
עַד־יָבוֹא וַיֵּרֶחַ צֶדֶק לָכֶם:

If it is time, inquire of Yahweh, until He comes and (by means of His
attribute) צדק, sends down the early rain to you." (Hosea 10^{12b})

And as we have discussed previously, for Isaiah the rain of צדק was
equivalent to salvation and victory:

הֲרַעֲפוּ שָׁמַיִם מַמְעַל וּשְׁחַקִּים יִלְדוּ צֶדֶק
תִּפְתַּח אֲרֶץ וַיִּפְרֹי־שֶׁעַ
וְצֶדֶקָה תִצְמַח יַחַד אֲנִי יְהוָה בְּרֹאשִׁי:

Pour down, O skies, from above!
Let the clouds distill (the rain of) צדק;
Let the earth open, and triumph sprout, yes, let vindication spring up.
I the Lord have created it! (Isaiah 45⁸)

Many times throughout the Bible, we are told of God's saving acts
known as צדקות יהוה. These acts demonstrate God's righteousness and
God's love for Israel and all humankind. "Israel celebrated Yahweh as the
one who bestowed on his people the all embracing gift of His righteousness,
and that gift is always a saving gift."³⁷

וְעַתָּה הִתְיַצְבוּ וְאַשְׁפֹּטָה אֹתְכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֵת כָּל־
צִדְקוֹת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה אֹתְכֶם וְאֶת־אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם:

³⁶ Rosenberg p. 153

³⁷ Von Rad p. 382

Come, stand before the Lord while I cite against you all the kindness
that the Lord has done to you and your fathers. (I Samuel 12⁷)

עֲמִי זָכְרָנָא מִהֲיָעֵץ בָּלָק מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב וּמִהֲעָנָה אֹתוֹ בִּלְעָם בֶּן־בְּעוֹר
מִן־הַשִּׁטִּים עַד־הַגִּלְגָּל לִמְעַן יָדַעַת צְדָקוֹת יְיָ:

My people, remember what Balak king of Moab plotted against you,
And how Balaam son of Beor responded to him. [recall your passage] from
Shittim to Gilgal and you will recognize the gracious acts of the Lord.
(Micah 6⁵)

כְּשִׁמְךָ אֱלֹהִים כֵּן תְּהִלָּתְךָ עַל־קְצוֹי־אֶרֶץ
צְדָק מְלֵאָה יְמִינְךָ:

The praise of You, God,
Like Your name
Reaches to the ends of the earth
Your right hand is filled with benevolence. (Psalm 48¹¹)

When I began my study of צדק in the Bible, I had hoped to gain a
clearer understanding of the etymology of the word צדק, and the application
of צדק by the biblical writers. Even though צדק has numerous shades of
meaning and numerous occurrences, it is possible to suggest some
conclusions about the use of this root in the Bible.

As I stated in the beginning, "צדק is not an abstract thing; it is right
conduct in particular relations."³⁸ The concept of conformity to a defined,
right standard seems to best express the overall meaning of the root in the
Bible. This suggests that צדק must include both correct conduct and
righteous action. The right conduct may be established by God or by
humankind, but it is the one who does not conform, who does not act with
צדק, who ends up without צדק. It is not the idea of a standard that is

³⁸ A.B. Davidson, The Theology of the Old Testament, (New York: Scribner's Sons,
1904) P. 132

primary, but the idea of a right standard. For צדק can imply righteous action, right relationship to others, and the righteousness of God, but each of these are in some way judged according to a "right standard"

There are laws that define how people should behave toward one another, laws of inheritance, and laws concerning judgement that establish the standards of relationship. It is the one who obeys these customs, the one who seeks them out, whom our scriptures call צדיק. "צדק is a condition, and happiness is the reward."³⁹ It is the one who acts appropriately in each and every situation, and the one who is awarded with his "just rewards" by the true judge of all צדק, the one and true God, who truly receives Divine blessing.

³⁹ Ibid. p. 133

CHAPTER TWO

צדקת ה' -- God's Righteousness

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ
כְּדִמוּתֵנוּ וְיִרְדּוּ בִדְגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־הָאָרֶץ
וּבְכָל־הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׁ עַל־הָאָרֶץ: 27 וַיְבָרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם
בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם:

(Genesis 1:26-27)

AND GOD SAID, "LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, AFTER OUR LIKENESS. THEY SHALL RULE THE FISH OF THE SEA, THE BIRDS OF THE SKY, THE CATTLE, THE WHOLE EARTH, AND ALL THE CREEPING THINGS THAT CREEP ON THE EARTH." AND GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS IMAGE, IN THE IMAGE OF GOD HE CREATED HIM: MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM.

Our sages accepted the notion that we are made in God's image; moreover, they believed that our ethical behavior ought to mirror God's examples of righteous action. Therefore, it is fitting for us to begin our study of rabbinic literature, with the rabbinic understanding of **צדקת ה'**. The Rabbis looked at God's righteous actions on behalf of Israel, and on behalf of the entire world, as a paradigm for their own ethical behavior. "The source and ideal of all morality is God, in whose ways man is to work. As God is merciful and gracious so man should be... The motive of moral action should be pure love of God or fear of God, and not desire for recompense."¹

¹ Kaufman Kohler, "Ethics," The Jewish Encyclopedia, 1925 ed. p. 248.

It is important to note that God's moral standard is seen as the paramount prototype one may follow. Let me emphasize that while one may strive to be as righteous as the Creator of all things, it is not advisable to try and be more righteous than God.

אַל־תְּהִי צַדִּיק הַרְבֵּה וְאַל־תִּתְחַכֵּם יוֹתֵר לְפָנֶי הַשּׁוֹמֵם *Be not righteous overmuch; neither make thyself overwise.* (Eccl. 7¹⁶) Be not more righteous than your Creator, as in the case of Saul of whom it is written, *And Saul came to the city of Amalek,* (1 Sam. 15⁵). R. Huna and R. Benaiyah say: He began to cavil at his Creator, arguing, 'Thus has the Holy One, blessed be He, ordered you, *Now go, and smite Amalek...slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.* If the men sinned, now have the women and children, the cattle, ox and ass, sinned!' A Bat Kol went forth and said, *Be not righteous overmuch, more than thy Creator!*²

Thus, with an interesting and firm warning, we learn that man's צדק, unlike God's צדק, should have its limits. Even though we are admonished not to go beyond the limits of our own צדק, we can rest assured that the Rabbis viewed God's decrees in every circumstance as limitless in their צדק:

R. Isaac commenced with, *רֵאשִׁי־דְבָרְךָ אֱמֶת וְלִעוֹלָם כָּל־מִשְׁפָּט צִדְקָךְ* *Truth is the essence of your word; Your just rules are eternal* (Ps. 119¹⁶⁰) Said R. Isaac: From the very commencement of the world's creation, *Truth is the essence of your word*. Thus, *In the beginning God created* [corroborates the statement,] *But the Lord God is a true God* (Jer. 10¹⁰). Therefore *Your just rules are eternal*. For in regard to every single decree which You did promulgate concerning Your creatures, they affirm the righteousness of Your judgement and accept it on faith.³

קהלת רבה ז"א²
בראשית רבה א"ז³

"When God sees that the world cannot stand on rigid justice, then, and only then, He tempers it with love."⁴ God's love, in the next passage, is represented by God's willingness to overlook our transgressions and accentuate our positive actions.

A man searches among his accounts, and on finding that people owe him money, he produces the bills, and then claims of them the amount due; but if he finds he owes people money, he hides the bill and does not produce it. With God, however, this is not so; when He finds that we are indebted to Him, He suppresses it, as it says, *He will again have compassion upon us: He will suppress our iniquities* (Micah 7¹⁹), but if He discovers something in our favor, He at once produces it, as it says, *The Lord has brought forth our righteousness* (צדקתינו) (Jer. 51¹⁰).⁵

Thus, we are presented with a God who, in each and every situation, is viewed as totally righteous, and is presumed to act with complete righteousness. But the Rabbis surmise a tremendous distance between God's love for humankind, and God's decrees of justice.

When R. Joshua b. Levi went to Rome he saw there marble columns which were covered with tapestries so that they might not crack during the heat and that they might not congeal during the cold. He saw there a poor man who had a reed mat under him and a reed mat over him. To the columns he applied the text, *Thy righteousness is like the mighty mountains*, for where Thou givest Thou givest generously, while to the poor man he applied the text, *Thy judgements are like the great deep*, for where Thou smitest, Thou art exacting.⁶

⁴ Kaufman Kohler, "Love," The Jewish Encyclopedia, 1925 ed.

⁵ שמות רבה כה"ו

⁶ יקרא רבה כז"א

Thus, in the previous text, the separation between justice and righteousness is clear. However, we are reminded of the balance that exists between God's judgements, God's justice, and God's צדק.

Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains; Your judgements are like the great deep. (Ps. 36⁷). Transpose the text and expound it thus: 'Your righteousness over Your judgements are like the mighty mountains over the great deep.' For as the mountains keep the deep in check, so as to prevent it from flooding the world, so does Your righteousness keep divine punishment in check so that it shall not come upon the world.⁷

There is no doubt, however, that God's love is extended at all times, especially when it is needed most by humankind.

A Psalm; a song of dedication of the House of David. R. Tanhuma bar R. Abba began his discourse as follows: Holy men exult in glory; they sing for joy upon their beds (Ps. 149⁵). On account of what glory will men who are holy presume to exult? On account of the glory which the Holy One, blessed be He, bestows upon them at the time of their departure from the world. Customarily, when a man dies, his sons, if he has sons, attend him. But the Holy One, blessed be He, would not have it only thus, for as R. Isaac said: The Holy One Himself, blessed be He, attends the holy. And the proof? Thy righteous one shall go before thee (Isa. 58⁸), that is, the righteous One of the world, for the verse goes on to say the glory of the Lord shall gather thee up.⁸

In any case, as we are about to see, God is viewed as completely righteous. In the following fascinating text, God is said to reward us from his own "reserve" of righteousness when ours has been depleted:

וְיִקְרָא רַבָּה כֹּהֲנָן⁷

⁸ Pesikta Rabbati, Piska 2:3

R. Judah the Levite bar Shallum taught: Who is the only one that can be called righteous? The Holy One, Blessed Be He, of whom it is said, (Ps. 117) **כִּי־צַדִּיק יְהוָה צִדְקוֹת אֱהָב יֵשֶׁר יַחֲוֶה פָנָיו** *For the Lord is righteous; He loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold His face.* Accordingly, God rewards us with what is ours if we have merit and if we have accumulated good works. But if we have not, God bestows righteousness and mercy upon us with what is His. Is there a righteous one greater than God?⁹

Our Rabbis contend that not only is God completely righteous, but in the following text, we can see God's **צדק** extends to all of humanity. God's love for all humankind can be seen in a number of rabbinic texts:

R. Joshua b. R. Bun quoted: *The heavens declare His righteousness* **וַיְגִידוּ שָׁמַיִם צִדְקָן כִּי־אֱלֹהִים | שֹׁפֵט הוּא** (Ps. 50⁶): In the future the heavens will declare the **צדקה** which the Lord did for His world in not setting them in the first raki'a, for had He set them in the first raki'a, no creature could have endured, on account of the burning heat of the day.¹⁰

As Pharaoh is afflicted with the series of plagues in the Exodus narrative, he realizes God's righteousness in not allowing the plagues to go beyond Egypt's boundaries where they may burden the surrounding nations:

So also God brought plagues upon the Egyptians, but Pharaoh felt them not; but as soon as his own body was smitten, he began to feel the pain and to cry: **יְהוָה הַצַּדִּיק וְאֲנִי וְעַמִּי הָרָשָׁעִים** *The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.* (Exodus 9²⁷) Why did he say: *The Lord is righteous?* Because when the plagues came, they only came upon Egypt, and even when the plague entered Egypt with only the size of an almond, it soon filled the whole land without touching any other field. Concerning

⁹ Midrash on Psalms 72¹

¹⁰ **בראשית רבה** ו'י

this does it say: *For when Your judgements are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness* (Isa. 26⁹).¹¹

Not only did the plagues stay within the boundaries of Egypt, not harming other nations, but the following Midrash attests to God's צדק in taking extra care not to harm the Israelites who lived among the Egyptians. We must note that God executed judgement (משפט) upon the Egyptians, while at the same time, God executed צדק (love) upon Israel.

Another interpretation of *And it came to pass at midnight..* It is written: חצות-לילה אקום להודות לך על משפטי צדקך *At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto You, because of the judgements of Your righteousness* (Ps. 119⁶²). *At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto You* - for the judgements You have performed in Egypt, while unto us hast Thou done righteousness. When was this? When Moses said: *I will smite all the firstborn* (Es. 12¹²), some [Egyptians] were afraid and some not; those who were afraid brought their firstborn to an Israelite and said: 'Do please allow him to pass with you this night.'

When midnight struck, God smote all the firstborn; as for those who took asylum in the houses of the Israelites, God passed between the Israelites and the Egyptians, depriving the latter of life while leaving the Israelites alive. When the Jews awoke at midnight, they found the Egyptians dead among their surviving firstborn; as it says: *I shall pass over you, and there shall no plague be upon you*. Then did Israel begin to say: *At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto You*, and for this reason does it say: *Because of the judgements of Your righteousness*.¹²

As soon as the Israelites were released from Egypt, Miriam led them in song at the shores of the sea. Our Rabbis teach that humankind's obligation to God for all of the צדק that God performs for us is only to ascribe praise to

שמות רבה ט"י 11

שמות רבה י"ב 12

our creator and protector, for all that God gives to us is praiseworthy. In the following passage, God's love for us is made clear by the actions God takes on our behalf.

I will make my opinions known from afar, and to my maker I will ascribe praise. (Job 36³). R. Hanina b. Papa said: This means: We accord primacy to the Holy One, blessed be He, from whom we were far, and who brought us near to himself...R. Levi said three things: It is only natural that if a man had given into another's keeping an ounce of silver in private, and the latter returns to him a pound of gold in public, the former will surely be grateful to the latter; even so it is with the Holy One, blessed be He. Human beings entrust to Him a drop of fluid in privacy, and the Holy One, blessed be He, openly returns to them completed and perfected human individuals. Is this not a matter for praise? This then is the meaning of *I will make my opinions known from afar, and to my Maker I will ascribe praise.*

R. Levi said one more thing: It is natural that, if a man is confined to prison with no one giving him attention, and someone comes and kindles a light for him there, the former should feel gratitude to the latter. So too is it with the Holy One, blessed be He. When the embryo is in its mother's womb, He causes a light to shine for it there, as Job said, *...In the earliest months... When His light shined above my head* (Job 29²) R. Levi said yet another thing: it is only natural that when a man is confined in prison with no one paying any attention to him, and someone comes and releases him and takes him out, the former should feel gratitude to the latter. Even so when the embryo is in its mother's womb, the Holy One, blessed be He, comes and releases it and brings it forth thence.¹³

It is clear that God's צדק extends to the entire human world, but we are told that God's צדק also extends to the animal world.

¹³ יקרא רבה ד"ב

Rab Judah said, the shalak is the bird that catches fish out of the sea; the dukfaith is so called because its crown appears double. There is also [a Baraitha] taught to this effect: The dukfaith is so called because its crown appears double, and it was this bird that brought the shamir ¹⁴ to the Temple. Whenever R. Johanan used to see the shalak he would exclaim, *Thy judgements are like the great deep*, and whenever he used to see an ant he would exclaim, *Thy righteousness is like the mighty mountains*.¹⁵

Rashi explains that "God's צדק extends to the tiny ant so that its food is always ready and constant as the mighty mountains; whereas God's judgements reach the shalak so that it must search for its food out of the depths of the sea."

The Rabbis' most compelling statements surrounding their understanding of צדקת ה', however, rest on the צדק that God bestows on God's beloved Israel. Love is shown toward Israel not because of her deeds, but due to God's pure and simple affinity for the people Israel. The following incredible prooftext clearly sets צדק apart from mere justice and righteousness.

וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶת־שְׁפָטֶיךָ בְּעַת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר
שָׁמַע בֵּין־אֲחֵיכֶם וּשְׁפָטָתָם צֶדֶק בֵּין־אִישׁ וּבֵין־אָחִיו וּבֵין־גֵּרִי:

I further charge your magistrates as follows, "hear out your fellow men and decide justly between any man and a fellow Israelite or stranger. (Deut.

116) R. Levi said: This can be compared to a king who has many sons, of whom he loved the youngest more than all of them. He also had a garden which he loved more than anything else he possessed. The king said: "I will give the garden which I love more than anything I possess to my youngest son whom I love more than all my sons." So God too said: Of all the nations whom I have created I love only Israel, as it is said, *When Israel*

¹⁴ A small worm which tradition relates could cut through the hardest stone.

¹⁵ חולין סג.

was a child, then I loved him (Hos 11¹); of all that I have created I love only justice (דִּין) as it is said, *for I the Lord love justice* (משפט) (Isa. 61⁸). Said the Holy One, blessed be He, I will give what I love to the people whom I love. God said, "My children, by your life, as a result of your respecting justice, I am exalted, and because you exalt Me through justice I too will act with צדק (love) and will cause My holiness to dwell amongst you. Whence this? As it is said, *And God, the Holy One is sanctified through צדק*. (Isa. 51⁶).¹⁶

It is not unusual for one who studies rabbinic material to contend that the Rabbis saw a love relationship occurring between Israel and their Creator. What is unusual, however, is the Rabbis' choice of the term צדק to express that love, and how the sages use rabbinical literature to emphasize their definition of צדק as being closer to what we call love and compassion than justice or righteousness. Throughout the literature, we can find צדקה being equated with God's חסד. "God loves Israel even more than the angels, Israel's prayer is more acceptable to God than the song of the angels, and the righteous in Israel are in closer contact with the deity than the angels..."¹⁷ God's love for Israel, and God's special relationship with Israel are made clear by our sources through the use of the term צדק.

Deliver me in Your righteousness and rescue me. (Ps. 71:2) The congregation of Israel said to the Holy One, blessed be He: When You deliver us, You will deliver us not because of our צדק, nor because of the good works which we have accumulated, but You will deliver us - whether today or tomorrow - on account of Your צדק as it is said: *And He saw there was no man, He gazed long, but no one intervened. Then His own*

¹⁶ דברים רבה ה'ז

¹⁷ Schechter, S, Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology, (New York: Behrman House, 1936), p. 49.

arm won Him triumph, His victorious right hand supported Him. (Isa. 59¹⁶) Hence it is said, *Deliver me in Your righteousness and rescue me.* ¹⁸

He leads me in the paths of פֶּתַח (Ps. 23³) - that is, to manna, to quail, to waters of the well, to clouds of glory; and these are given to me not because I have merit, but for "*the sake of His name.*" ¹⁹

God's love for Israel is demonstrated in a number of ways in rabbinic literature, and on numerous occasions, פֶּתַח is used as either a prooftext or in the course of the illustration. The concepts of love, righteousness, justice, and compassion are even fused into one "crown of Torah" in the following parable:

Another explanation: *That the Lord your God shall keep for you the covenant and the mercy.* R. Simeon b. Halafta said: This may be compared to a king who married a noble lady, who brought with her into the house two gems, and the king too had two corresponding gems set for her. The lady lost her gems, whereupon the king took away his. After some time she arose and set herself right with him by bringing back the two gems. Thereupon the king too restored his. The king decreed that a crown should be made of both sets of gems and that it should be placed on the head of the noble lady. So you find that Abraham gave his children two gems to guard, as it is said, *For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him... to do **righteousness and justice*** (Gen. 18¹⁹). God too set up corresponding to the two gems, namely, **lovingkindness and mercy**, as it is said, *God shall keep for thee the covenant and the mercy. And He will give thee mercy and have compassion upon thee* (Deut. 13¹⁸). Israel lost theirs, as it is said, *That ye have turned justice into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood* (Amos 6¹²). God thereupon took away His, as it is said, *For I have taken away My peace from this people, saith the Lord, even mercy and compassion* (Jer.

¹⁸ Midrash on Psalms 71²

¹⁹ Midrash on Psalms 23⁵

16⁵). Israel then arose and set themselves right and restored the two gems. Whence do we know this? For so it is written, *Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and they that return of her with righteousness* (Isa. 1²⁷). God too restored His. Whence this? For so it is written, *For the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall my covenant of peace be removed, says the Lord that has compassion on thee* (Isa. 54¹⁰). And after Israel have restored theirs and God has given back His, God will say, let both pairs be made into a crown and be placed on the head of Israel, as it is said, *And I will betroth thee unto Me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness and in justice, and in lovingkindness and in compassion. And I will betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord* (Hos. 2²¹).²⁰

צדקת ה' extends to the people of Israel as well as to the individual in Israel. We are told of God's compassion for the leper in the following passage:

MISHNAH NO SIGNS OF LEPROSY ARE SHUT UP LESS THAN ONE WEEK AND NONE MORE THAN TWO WEEKS. **GEMARA** No less than one week refers to leprosy of houses. R. Papa said: *Your righteousness* (צדקתך) *is like the mighty mountains.* (Ps. 36⁷) refers to human leprosy. *Your judgements are like the great deep,* refers to the leprosy of houses. What is the simple meaning of the scriptural verse? - Were it not for Your righteousness as great as the mighty mountains, who could stand before Your judgements as profound as the great deep! Rabbah said: *Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,* because, *Your judgements are like the great deep.* Wherein are they conflicting? - In the dispute of R. Eleazar and R. Jose b. Hanina, for it was reported that R. Eleazar says: He suppresses; R. Jose b. Hanina says: He forgives; Rabbah agrees with the view of R. Eleazar, whilst Rab Judah concurs with that of R. Jose b. Hanina.²¹

²⁰ דברים רבה ג"ז

²¹ ערכין ח :

The previous passage contains two examples of how the psalms verse containing the word צדק is used to express God's love for the individual. In the first case of the leper, Rashi explains the following: "Leviticus 13 distinguishes between leprosy which the priest, at his first inspection, may be able to declare as either clean or unclean, and doubtful cases. In the case of doubt, the priest must shut up the expected leper for at least one week. In the case of leprosy of the house, which has remained unchanged or has spread at the end of the second week, the priest must shut up the house for another, the third week." Here, the word צדק is a mark of divine love in prescribing one week's shutting in for a man in cases of doubt. God is lenient, and the priest must give the benefit of the doubt to the suspect individual.

In the ensuing discussion, R. Eleazar replies that the Lord ignores man's sins, so that his good deeds may save him as he stands before the throne of judgement, while R. Hanina replies that the Lord is so forgiving, He wipes away the sins completely, or in the case of repentance, changes the sins to virtues. Rabbah sees God's צדק in that He keeps His judgement of man's sins invisible on the day of judgement, whereas Rab Judah suggests that man could not stand the divine judgement but for the God's צדק which forgives iniquity.²²

As with the individual Israelite, so too with the Israelite family. The sages, in the following passage, recognize that one reality of Israelite life was the growing problem of "illegitimate elements" or mamzerim in the Israelite heritage. And yet, the following talmudic passage proves that the problem of mamzerut was not insurmountable. God's צדקה to Israel, as explained by the Rabbis, is not so much that He purifies the mamzer, but rather, that He

²² Interpretation: The Babylonian Talmud, Ed. Isidore Epstein, Vol ערכין (London: Soncino Press, 1960).

allows a family containing a mamzer to remain within the household of Israel, and allows the mamzer to make offerings to Him.

And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver; and they shall offer unto the Lord, offerings (בִּצְדָקָה). R. Joshua b. Levi said: money purifies mamzerim, [by means of their wealth they intermarry with Israel, and having thus mingled, they will not be separated in the future] for it is said And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. [those who married by means of their silver, He will purify by retaining them in Israel] - What is meant by, and they shall offer unto the Lord, offerings בִּצְדָקָה? Said R. Isaac: The Holy One, blessed be He, showed צְדָקָה to Israel, in that a family once mixed up remains so [in the household of Israel].²³

And finally, we turn to the people Israel. For the Rabbis, the concept of God's love of the people Israel grows out of God's deeds for Israel, and many of God's deeds revolve around the concept of צְדָקָה.

What is meant by: *that you may know the righteousness of the Lord*. (Micah 6⁵). The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel: Know now how many acts of (צְדָקָה) I performed for you in that I did not become angry all that time, in the days of Balaam the wicked; for had I waxed angry all that time, none would have remained or have been spared of Israel's enemies.²⁴

If Balaam's curse had occurred at the very moment of God's anger, the curse would have taken effect and Israel would not have survived. And Israel's survival, when severely threatened, is made safe by God:

R. Oshaia said: What is meant by the verse.

23. קְדוּשִׁין עַא (Brackets are mine).

24: סְנוּדְרִין קָה

מקול מחצצים בין משאבים שם יתנו צדקות יהוה
צדקה פרחנו בישראל אז ירדו לשערים עם-יהוה:

Even the righteous acts of His Ruler in Israel? (Judg. 5¹¹) The Holy One, blessed be He, showed צדקה unto Israel by scattering them among the nations. And this is what a certain sectarian said to R. Hanina, 'We are better than you. Of you it is written, *For Joab and all Israel remained there six months, until he had cut off every male in Edom*, (I Kings 11¹⁶) whereas you have been with us many years, yet we have not done anything to you!' Said he to him, 'If you agree, a disciple will debate it with you.' R. Oshaia debated it with him, and he said to him, 'because you do not know how to act. If you would destroy all, they are not among you. Should you destroy those who are among you, then you will be called a murderous kingdom!' Said he to him, 'By the Roman Eagle! With this care we lie down and with this care we get up. R. Hiyya taught: What is meant by the verse, *God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof?* (Job 28²³) The Holy One, blessed be He, knows that Israel are unable to endure the cruel decrees of Edom, therefore He exiled them to Babylonia.²⁵

R. Hisda said in Mar Ukba's name - others state, R. Hisda quoted from a lecture of Mari b. Mar: What is meant by the verse, *And so the Lord has hastened the evil and brought it upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous?* (Dan 9¹⁴) Because God is righteous He hastened with the evil and brought it upon us! - Even so: the Holy One, blessed be He, did a righteous thing unto Israel in that He anticipated the exile of Zedekiah while the exile of Jochoniah was yet in being, for it is written with reference to the latter, *And the craftsman [he-harash] and the smiths [masger], a thousand*. (II Kings 24¹⁶) *harash*, implies as soon as they opened a learned discussion, all the others became as though deaf(overwhelmed). *masger* when they closed a discussion of a halacha, it was not reopened. And how many were they? - A thousand.²⁶

25: פסחים פז:

26: סנהדרין לח.

God behaved with צדק in the previous passage by ensuring that the great scholars who were exiled with Jechoniah were still alive to transmit their traditional teachings to their posterity. Thus, we learn that even the diaspora that exists today may be viewed by the Rabbis as an example of God's love for the people Israel. Without God's love, the people could not have stood against the evil decrees of their oppressors, and surely would have perished.

In conclusion, we have seen that the Rabbis view God's love as the true meaning of צדקת ה', and that צדק is used over and over throughout the literature to indicate God's loving relationship and loving action toward humankind generally, and Israel specifically. In the upcoming chapters, we will see that our sages viewed the biblical characters, and their examples of צדק as an example for us to model. We will also study our Rabbis' prescriptions for the type of צדק that should exist between people.

CHAPTER THREE

צדקה אבות – The צדק of the Biblical Patriarchs

Our Rabbis taught: It is related of King Monobaz that he dissipated all his hoards and the hoards of his fathers in years of scarcity. His brothers and his father's household came in a deputation to him and said to him, 'Your fathers saved money and added to the treasures of their fathers, and you are squandering them.' He replied: 'My fathers stored up below and I am storing above, as it says, *Truth springs out of the earth and righteousness looks down from heaven* (Ps. 85¹²). My fathers stored in a place which can be tampered with, but I have stored in a place which cannot be tampered with, as it says, *Righteousness and judgement are the foundation of His throne* (Ps. 97²). My fathers stored something which produces no fruits, but I have stored something which does produce fruits, as it is written, *Say ye of the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings* (Isa. 3¹⁰). My fathers gathered treasures of money but I have gathered treasures of souls, as it is written, *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that is wise wins souls* (Prov. 11³⁰). My fathers gathered for others and I have gathered for myself, as it says, *And for thee it shall be righteousness.* (Deut. 24¹³). My fathers gathered for this world, and I have gathered for the future world, as it says, *Thy righteousness shall go before thee and the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward* (Isa. 58⁸).¹

As King Monobaz learned the true meaning of righteousness from his ancestors, so he taught righteousness to his family. We too learn צדק from our ancestors, and we are obligated to teach our families about righteousness. According to the Rabbis, parents were obligated to teach their children what it

בבא בתרא י"א. 1.

means to live a righteous life, a life completely imbued with צדק. Generally, as in the above passage, we learn from our sages the importance of promulgating righteousness from generation to generation. Our Mishna as well teaches us:

Whoever causes the many to be righteous, sin occurs not through him; and whoever causes the many to sin, they do not afford him the faculty to repent.²

The Rabbis considered it vital for one to act with some sense of צדק throughout the entirety of one's life. God looks approvingly on those who practice צדק because, as our Rabbis teach us, God appreciates people who value righteousness.

For the righteous Lord loves a man of righteousness (Ps. 117). R. Judah, the son of R. Simon said: Every craftsman hates the rivals in his crafts. Not so with the Holy One, blessed be He: *the righteous Lord loves a man of righteousness.*³

More specifically, however, we can judge whether an action is deemed under the realm of the rabbinic concept of צדק by looking at the Rabbis' descriptions of our biblical patriarchs. For they, in a sense, were parents, and they were therefore obliged to teach future generations about righteous conduct. Our biblical ancestors are viewed throughout the rabbinic stratum as promulgators of the highest and most praised values in the Jewish tradition. It seems abundantly clear that among their numerous attributes, "the

² משנה אבות ד ב

³ מדרש תהלים יא ו

Patriarchs and the great heroes of biblical days are considered to have been perfectly righteous."⁴

The rabbinic literature also compels us to follow our ancestors' examples of righteousness and loving behavior, with an imperative to pattern our lives after their righteous conduct. Indeed, the behavior of the patriarchs served as an example for our Rabbis as they considered what it meant to be an **אִישׁ צַדִּיק**.

But how was the **אִישׁ צַדִּיק** defined by the Rabbis in light of the actions of the patriarchs? We will see in later chapters that **צַדִּיק** is most often defined as "natural conformity to Torah". The **צַדִּיק** practiced between people, as directed by the Rabbis, many times differs from the specific examples laid down by the biblical characters. One who is called **צַדִּיק** by the Rabbis, may be called so because of his strictness with respect to Jewish observances and Jewish law. If we are to take the point of view, however, that Torah does not exist with Israel until after the time of these patriarchs, then by what standards do we judge the actions of the patriarchs as acts of **צַדִּיק**? How do the Rabbis define **צַדִּיק** in reference to the biblical patriarchs who had little if any group of laws to follow?

I suggest that we examine the conduct of our patriarchs, as seen through the eyes of the Rabbis, in order to discover what the sages felt constituted a person who behaves with **צַדִּיק**. What are that person's attributes, and how do they conduct their lives with **צַדִּיק**? In the words of Solomon Schechter: "The patriarchs (as models and propagators of

⁴ Emil G Hirsch, "Right and Righteousness," The Jewish Encyclopedia, 1925 ed, p. 422.

righteousness) became the very throne of God, His kingdom being based on mankind's knowledge of Him, and their realization of His nearness."⁵

There is a great deal to be said concerning the emphasis our sages put on the merits of our ancestors. The imagery can be extremely powerful and persuasive as we see in the following text:

Raban Gamliel the son of R. Judah the Prince said: Excellent is the study of the Law in combination with some worldly pursuit, for the exertion entailed by them both makes thoughts of sin to be forgotten. All the study of the Law without toil must eventually prove futile and bring iniquity in its train. And let all that labour with the interest of the congregation labour with them from heavenly motives, for then the merit of the fathers supports them, and their צדק endures forever.⁶

In this chapter we will examine, one by one, some of the biblical characters that our Rabbis suggest were exemplars of צדק and try to discover the qualities that make them a standard for future generations to emulate. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Aaron, and David will be highlighted as true examples of righteousness whose words and deeds teach us about צדק.

In the Talmud tractate Sanhedrin, during the course of a discussion about marriage between family members, an interesting question is raised: Why, if we assume the fact that Eve's offense should have been followed by her death, could Adam not marry his daughter in order to fulfill the commandment of propagation? Why was it necessary for Eve to remain alive if Adam had the option of marriage with his daughter? Our sages tell

⁵ Schechter, S, Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology, (New York: Behrman House, 1936), p. 84.

⁶ משנה אבות ב ב

us that Adam did not have that option, and that marriage to his daughter would not be righteous. Adam must, however, decide for himself:

Come and hear! Why did not Adam marry his daughter? So that Cain should marry his sister, as it is written, *For I said, the world shall be built up by grace* חסד (Ps. 89³). But otherwise [if Adam had married her], she would have been forbidden to Cain...⁷

We have discovered in previous chapters a strong connection between חסד and צדק. In the eyes of the Rabbis, Adam acted with righteousness by abstaining from marrying his daughter. Adam and his son could not have shared Adam's daughter, that would not be righteous. Adam bowed out and allowed his son to help populate the earth. In a larger context, the world was "built up" or populated by the marriage of Cain to his sister.

Not many generations after Adam, another biblical personage appears on the scene. Of all the biblical characters, only one, Noah, is referred to as a צדיק by the biblical authors. Noah was איש צדיק תמים הוה בדורתי, a *righteous man in his generation*. However, considering the merit -- or lack thereof -- of his generation, Noah's righteousness has come into question by the Rabbis of the Talmud and Midrash. We recall from Chapter One that one called a צדיק acquires the legal status of the innocent party, but is not always considered completely righteous. Based on this definition, then, perhaps we could amend the text and conclude that Noah was "innocent" in his generation. Perhaps innocent is how the sages view Noah in the following passage:

סנהדרין מח: 7

R. Judah and R. Nehemiah differed. R. Judah said: Only in his generation was he a righteous man [by comparison]; had he flourished in the generation of Moses or Samuel, he would not have been called righteous; in the street of the totally blind, the one-eyed man is called clear-sighted, and the infant is called a scholar. It is as if a man who had a wine vault opened one barrel and found it vinegar, another and found it vinegar; the third, however, he found turning sour. 'It is turning,' the people said to him. 'Is there any better here?' he retorted. Similarly, *In his generations* he was a righteous man. R. Nehemiah said: If he was righteous even in **his** generation, how much the more so had he lived in the age of Moses. He might be compared to a tightly closed vial of perfume lying in a graveyard, which nevertheless gave forth a fragrant odor; how much more then if it were outside the graveyard.⁸

Although R. Nehemiah comes to the defense of Noah, it is fairly well accepted among the sages that Noah would not have been so righteous were it not for the fact that he lived among the wicked! What does it mean to be more righteous than a wicked generation? What are the attributes of a truly righteous man in the eyes of the Rabbis? Why was Noah the only one in the Bible called righteous, if, in other generations, he would not be so recognized? The Rabbis answer these questions in an interesting way:

These are the offspring of Noah: Noah ... Surely Scripture should have written, 'These are the offspring of Noah: Shem..., ' etc.? It teaches, however, that he was a comfort to himself and a comfort to the world, a comfort to his fathers and a comfort to his children, a comfort to celestial beings and to mortals; [a comfort] in this world and the world to come.⁹

פראשית רבה ל ט
פראשית רבה ל ה⁹

We can see the Rabbis connect Noah's name with the verb nahem, to comfort, but we can also view their comment on the verse as indicative of their feelings concerning the role of the righteous. It is incumbent upon the righteous to "rise above" the every day commotion of our world. It is up to the righteous to take care of the world and the people of the world too. And not only was Noah a comfort to his world, but he risked his life and his livelihood in order to warn his generation concerning their approaching doom.

*Noah was in his generations a man, righteous and whole hearted. Whenever a man occurs, it indicates a righteous man אִישׁ צַדִּיק who warned his generation. For one hundred and twenty years Noah planted cedars and cut them down. On being asked, 'Why are you doing this?' he replied: 'The Lord of the universe has informed me that He will bring a flood upon the world.'*¹⁰

Because of his actions, his world, and his צַדִּיק, God loved Noah. Noah was rewarded for his actions by being given the honor of being called one who 'walked with God'. As we shall soon discover, "walking with God" is a common reward for the righteous. Our Rabbis teach us that God's love for Noah was manifest when the ark rested on the mountains.

AND GOD REMEMBERED NOAH, AND EVERY LIVING THING, AND ALL THE CATTLE (Genesis 8¹). *Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; Your judgements are like the great deep; man and beast You preserve, O Lord* (Ps. 36⁷). R. Ishmael interpreted: To the righteous, who accepted the Torah which was revealed on the mountains of God, You show righteousness [i.e. love] reaching unto the mountains of God; but as for the wicked, who did not accept the Torah which was

¹⁰ בראשית רבה ל ז

revealed on the mountains of God, You deal strictly with them, even to the great deep...

R. Judah b. R. Simon referred the verse to Noah. The Holy One, blessed be He, said: 'The righteousness [love] which I showed to Noah in the ark I showed him nowhere save on the mighty mountains:' as it is written, *And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat* (Gen. 8⁸)... And when I remembered him, not him alone did I remember, but him and all that were with him in the Ark, as it is written, *God remembered Noah, and every living thing*.¹¹

Noah took care of his own needs as well as the needs of his extended family; he was a comfort to his world and will be charged to take care of the new world he is now a part of, and Noah was loved by God. He was deserving, in the eyes of the Rabbis, of the title **אִישׁ צַדִּיק**.

Noah was indeed the only person referred to by the biblical authors as **צַדִּיק**, but our study of the biblical patriarchs cannot end with Noah. Out of all of the biblical characters, even Noah who was called **צַדִּיק**, the patriarch most closely associated with the concept of **צֶדֶק**, according to the Rabbis, is Abraham.

You have loved righteousness צֶדֶק (Ps. 45⁸). Thus did God speak to Abraham. For the Holy One, blessed be He, saw all the generations that worshipped idols, saw Abraham rise up and separate himself from the generations because he would not be like them; saw that while they worshipped idols, Abraham rose up and learned wisdom by himself so that he came to worship the Holy One, blessed be He. Because God saw the righteousness of Abraham, He described him as '*the Hebrew*', so setting it down in Scripture: *And told Abram the Hebrew* (Gen. 14¹³).

בְּרֵאשִׁית רַבָּה לֵן א' 11

What is meant by *the Hebrew*? That he brooded upon God.¹² For the entire world was on one side and he was on the other side, but he so loved the Holy One, blessed be He, that he would worship Him and no other. Hence, the Holy One, blessed be He, called him **העברי**, and also called *Hebrew* the seed of Abraham who loved him. For, said the Holy One, blessed be He: *You have loved righteousness* and commanded your children that they also do righteousness - *that they may keep the way of the Lord to do righteousness and justice.* (Gen. 18¹⁹)¹³

Although Abraham was not called **צדיק** like Noah, Abraham's name, **העברי**, was just as meaningful for the Rabbis. However, we find that the Rabbis try on numerous occasions to equate Abraham with the word **צדק** in the biblical text. Many of the associations between Abraham and the word **צדק** in rabbinic literature stem from the rabbinic interpretations of Isaiah 41:2: *Who has roused צדק from the East, summoned him to his service?* This verse has prompted numerous commentaries. The Rabbis focus on the meaning of the word **צדק** in the context of the verse.

We find, in tractate *Shabbat*, reference to the planet Jupiter that alludes to Abraham. During a discussion concerning the relationship between the planets' position in the skies at one's birth hour, and the prediction of one's future success or failure, we find an interesting conversation between Abraham and God. Concerning one, like Abraham, who is born at the hour when Jupiter dominates the sky, it is said:

¹² In the Hebrew text, the word play centers around the root **עבר** which can be translated as 'one who goes against' or 'one who goes beyond'. Abraham rejected, against the wishes of his neighbors, the gods and the beliefs of his world and accepted the one true God. Like Noah, Abraham is seen as one who 'rose above' his generation.

¹³ **פסיקתא רבתי לג**

He who is born under Zedek [Jupiter] will be a right-doing man [zadkan]. R. Nahman b. Isaac observed: Right-doing in good deeds.¹⁴

Rab, however, maintains that Israel is immune from planetary influence, and he uses Abraham's discussion with God in Genesis 15 as the proof for his argument.

Rab Judah said in Rab's name: How do we know that Israel is immune to planetary influence? Because it is stated (Gen 15⁵) *and He brought him forth abroad*. Abraham pleaded with the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Sovereign of the Universe! *since You have granted me no offspring, my steward shall be my heir*' (Ibid. vs. 3). 'Not so,' He replied, *none but your very own issue shall be your heir* (Ibid. vs. 4). 'Sovereign of the Universe!' cried he, 'I have looked at my constellation [Jupiter] and find that I am not fated to beget child.' 'Go forth from your planet gazing, for Israel is free from planetary influence. What is your calculation? Because Zedek [Jupiter] (which is Abraham's constellation or birth sign) stands in the West? (which is an unpropitious combination for begetting children) I will turn it back and place it in the East' and thus it is written *Who has roused קדש from the East, summoned him (Abraham) to His service?*¹⁵

In the following Midrash, as in the previous Midrash, קדש, the largest planet in the solar system, is summoned to help Abraham on his way.

Tithe, and then you will again tithe (Deut. 14²²). Abraham was the first man to set aside a tithe from a heap of crops, which [up to this time] had been used entirely for secular purposes. In fact, he set aside the tithe from the middle, [the best part], of the heap. Therefore, the Holy One, blessed be He, plucked him away from the domain of idols as well as from things used for secular purposes and raised him up into the firmament, as is

¹⁴ שבת קנ"ו

¹⁵ שבת קנ"ו

said, *He is the One that raised up the man of the East and summoned צדק to light his way* (Isa. 41:2).¹⁶

Due to Abraham's righteousness, defined by the Rabbis as his extra effort in worshipping God by setting aside not an ordinary tithe, but the best tithe, he became elevated even above the planets themselves. God brought Abraham out of the secular sphere, and elevated him above the planets, so that Jupiter was no more than a lamp for his feet. If we translate צדק as righteousness in the previous Midrash, then we could say that Abraham will always walk in the ways of righteousness because God has placed righteousness at his command.

In the previous text, Abraham is viewed as the object of Isaiah 41 because he literally came from the East. Normally, the word צדק in Isaiah 41 would be translated as the proper name of the Planet Jupiter. However, in the talmudic and midrashic literature, Abraham is sometimes considered the subject of the verse.

During a discussion about the authorship of the Bible, another text tells us that just as צדק in the verse came from the East, so too did Abraham come from Ur, a city to the East. Therefore, the text is speaking about Abraham.

It (the Book) was completed by Gad the seer and Nathan the prophet. You say that David wrote the Psalms, including work of the ten elders. Why is not Ethan the Ezrahite also reckoned with? - Ethan the Ezrahite is Abraham. [The proof is that] it is written in the Psalms, *Ethan the Ezrahite*, and it is written elsewhere, *Who has roused צדק from the East*.¹⁷

¹⁶ פסיקתא דרב כהנא - Suppliment 4:3

¹⁷ . בבא בתרא טו

Rashi explains that the word 'ezrahi' is also taken to mean 'eastern', while 'Ethan' (strong) is regarded as equivalent to righteous. Abraham is equated with the righteous one in Isaiah 41 who comes from the East.

Abraham's greatest attribute, according to our sages, is his ability to deal effectively (with פְּצָא) with people. We are aware of the famous midrashim and biblical accounts concerning Abraham's hospitality to strangers, and the construction of his tent being such that it enabled him to greet guests from the four corners of the Earth. We can conclude that like Noah, Abraham had a special way with people. However, Abraham was not only able to comfort them, as Noah did, Abraham was able to love them as well. Abraham went beyond the requirements for one who is considered merely hospitable.

"Abraham was the first great missionary in the world, the friend of God, who makes Him beloved by His creatures, and wins souls for Him, bidding them, even as he bade his children, to keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and judgement."¹⁸

And after this, Abraham buried Sarah (Gen. 23¹⁹). Thus it is written, He that follows after righteousness and love finds life, prosperity, and honor (Prov. 21²¹). He that follows after righteousness alludes to Abraham, as it says, That they may keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice (Gen 18¹⁹); And love - for he acted lovingly towards Sarah. Finds life, as it says, And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, a hundred three score and fifteen years (Gen 25⁷). Prosperity and honor: R. Samuel b. Isaac said: The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: 'It is my function to dispense love; since thou

¹⁸ Schechter, p. 84, quoting Sifre 73a and parallels

hast embraced My function, come and don My raiment': Hence, *And Abraham was old, well advanced in age* (24¹).¹⁹

Abraham was recognized by God as being able to fulfill a part of God's role in the Universe. That is, Abraham dispensed love and was therefore called righteous by our sages! The Rabbis, in the previous text, tell us that the צדיק dispenses love! And not only was Abraham considered to be righteous, but his descendants were considered righteous as well. In the following passage concerning the person who possesses the quality of mercy, it can be said of him that he acts in the spirit of the fathers, in the spirit of Abraham.

The rich men of Babylon will go down to Gehenna; for once Shabthai b. Marinus came to Babylon and entreated them to provide him with facilities for trading and they refused this to him; neither did they give him any food. He said: These are the descendants of the '*mixed multitude*' (Ex. 12³⁸) for it is written, *And He will give thee (the spirit of) mercy and have compassion upon thee, as He promised your fathers an oath* (Deut. 13¹⁸) teaching that whoever is merciful to his fellow-men is certainly of the children of our father Abraham, and whosoever is not merciful to his fellow-men is certainly not of the children of our father Abraham.²⁰

Of all the righteous acts that Abraham performed, perhaps the most compelling was his argument with God concerning the fate of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Like Noah, Abraham risks his life and reputation with God in order to commit a righteous act. And like Noah, Abraham is rewarded for his actions by being given permission to 'walk with God'.

¹⁹ בראשית רבה נח ט

²⁰ ביצה לב :

R. Azariah commenced in R. Aha's name thus: *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness, etc* (Ps. 45⁸). R. Azariah in R. Aha's name referred the verse to our father Abraham. When Abraham our father stood to plead for mercy for the Sodomites, what is written there? *That be far from You to do after this manner* (Gen. 18²⁵). R. Aha explained this: You have sworn not to bring a deluge upon the world. Would You evade Your oath! Not a deluge of water will You bring but a deluge of fire? Then You have not been true to Your oath. R. Levi commented: *Shalt not the judge of all the earth do justly?* If You desire the world to endure, there can be no absolute justice, while if You desire absolute justice the world cannot endure, yet You would hold the rope by both ends, desiring both the world and absolute justice. Unless You forgo a little, the world cannot endure. Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to Abraham: *from Noah until you were ten generations, and out of all of them I spoke with you alone*; hence, *Now the Lord said to Abraham*.²¹

Following Abraham, our sages comment very little on the righteousness of his children. Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph are not mentioned in connection with biblical passages which contain the word צדק. The Rabbis next select Moses as their exemplar of righteousness. Moses, like Abraham and Noah, executed the righteous ideas of God. Unlike Abraham and Noah, however, Moses not only acted righteously, but he spent most of his time teaching others what it meant to be a righteous person. Moses was responsible for educating the Israelites about living a life filled with צדק.

Yet the righteous holds on his way, and he that has clean hands enhances strength (Job 17⁹). *the righteous holds on his way* applies to

²¹ ויקרא רבה י א - ברשית רבה לט ו
פסיקתא רבתי כט ד

Moses, of whom it is said "*He persisted in executing the righteousness of the Lord, and His ordinances with Israel* (Deut. 33²¹).²²

Like those before him, Abraham at Sodom and Noah at the time of the flood, Moses is credited with saving Israel as well. Moses consistently risks his life in order to save others. The Rabbis recognize this quality in Moses as they had previously recognized it in Abraham and Noah.

R. Azariah, citing R. Judah bar Simon, said: Whenever righteous men do the Holy One's will, they enhance the strength of the Almighty. [This is to say that Moses' doing of God's will gave God the strength to hold back from destroying Israel]. Hence Moses' plea, *And now I pray Thee, let the strength of the Lord be enhanced* (Numbers 14¹⁷), was answered.²³

Perhaps of all the actions that Moses undertook, the most prized by the Rabbis, and possibly the most prized by God, was the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness. According to the Rabbis, Moses actually risked his life in order to keep God's commands and carry out God's will. As we have seen before, risking one's life for a good cause seems to be a common theme among those whom our Rabbis call צדיק.

Because the making of the Tabernacle was one of three things for which Moses all but gave his life. So the Holy One, blessed be He, linked in Scripture each of the three - the maintenance of צדק, the Torah, and the Tabernacle - with the name of Moses. The linking of his name with Torah? *Remember the Torah of Moses My servant* (Mal. 3²²). And the linking of his name with the maintenance of צדק? *Moses the lawgiver... maintained*

²² פסיקתא דרב כהנא כה

²³ פסיקתא דרב כהנא כה

the righteous judgements of the Lord, and his ordinances among Israel (Deut. 33²¹). What is the proof that Moses all but gave his life for the tabernacle? It is well-known, of course, as R. Hiyya the son of Joseph used to say, that on each of the seven days of the Priests' investiture, Moses would take the tabernacle apart twice each day and set it up again; indeed, according to the elder R. Hanina, Moses used to take it apart and set it up again three times each day. Lest you suppose that one of the Tribe of Levi gave him a hand, our masters taught: He used to take it apart by himself, and not a single one in Israel would or could help him. Yes, but is the proof of this from Scripture? That which we read in the lesson: *And it came to pass on the day that Moses' strength had all but given out because of the setting up of the tabernacle* (Num. 7¹).²⁴

And perhaps Moses did accomplish his task, for not only did he handle the building of the tabernacle with care, but also, in doing so, he taught others close to him the meaning of righteousness. Aaron was one such example. Even though Aaron was held responsible for the building of the Golden Calf, he is described by the Rabbis as not only one who loved righteousness, but as one who "walked with God". Aaron, like his brother Moses, was seen as not only a doer of righteousness, but as a teacher of righteousness as well.

Thou hast loved righteousness and hated wickedness (Ps. 48⁸). Here *Thou* is taken as applying to Aaron who kept hold of the truth, as it is said *Proper rulings were in his mouth, and nothing perverse was on his lips; he served Me with complete loyalty, and held the many back from iniquity* (Mal. 2⁶).²⁵

As was noted in Chapter One, the majority of biblical verses containing the word צדק occur in the book of Psalms. The Rabbis ascribed authorship of

²⁴ פסיקתא רבתי ה ב

²⁵ פסיקתא רבתי לג ג

the book to King David. If we accept the idea that David had an influence on the writing of the book of Psalms, then it is important for us to understand how the Rabbis perceived David's צדק in light of his writings. We recall Rosenberg's article about the sun cult that flourished in Jerusalem at the time of David. Whether it was the Canaanite God Tzedek, or David's knowledge of the God of Israel, it is clear that the concept of צדק greatly influenced David's writing and his system of belief.

In the following passage, the Rabbis consider David a righteous person, because like Moses, Abraham, and Noah, he too goes above and beyond the normal expectations of human behavior. It would have been enough for David to judge with righteousness, but David goes beyond mere adjudication in the eyes of the Rabbis.

What is the meaning of *Justice and righteousness unto all His people*? Rab Judah and R. Nahman each has his own explanation of this. The one says: David executed justice, he acquitted the innocent and condemned the guilty; if, however, the guilty party had not the means to pay the sum adjudged, he would pay it himself. This is the force of, *Justice and righteousness*. Said R. Nahman to him: If so, he would have encouraged Israel to practice deception. And what then is the meaning of, *Justice and righteousness*? He judged justly, acquitting the innocent and condemning the guilty. This is the force of *Justice and righteousness*, that he made him give up the thing he had robbed. God said: 'My children, seeing that justice is so beloved before Me, be mindful of it.'²⁶

As we can see from the previous text, it is also in the book of Psalms that a great deal of confusion, on the part of the commentators, emerges surrounding the meaning of the terms righteousness (צדק) and judgement

²⁶ דברים רבה ה ג

(משפט). As we discovered in Chapter One, צדק differs from משפט in the Bible in that משפט refers to a process, and צדק highlights an attribute. The question is often asked, especially in rabbinic literature, whether the two can coexist in one context, or if they are, in fact, two separate ideas. In the following passage, the commentator finds the notions of judgement and righteousness falling together inconsistent, and the phrase an enigma. He translates the text as follows:

At midnight I will rise to thank thee because of Your judgements, because of Your righteousness (Ps. 119⁶²). What did David mean by because of Your judgements, because of Your righteousness? He meant: Because of the judgements You did bring upon the wicked Pharaoh and because of the righteousness you showed my grandmother Sarah, as it is said And the Lord plagued Pharaoh ... with great plagues because of Sarai... (Gen. 12¹⁷). Or, because of Your judgements, because of Your righteousness, David meant: Because of the judgements that You brought against certain nations of the Earth; and because of the צדק which You showed to my grandfather Boaz and to my grandmother Ruth. Had Boaz permitted himself to slip into her as she lay at his feet, whence would I have had my origin? Instead You put a blessing into his heart.²⁷

David's greatest wish, however, according to the Rabbis, was to build the Temple in Jerusalem. He was not permitted this honor, nor did he pursue it during his later years. But as we shall see in the following passage, David had a greater gift according to the Rabbis .

R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: When God said to Nathan: *Go and tell David My servant: Thus said the Lord: Thou shalt not build me a house to dwell in; for I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up*

²⁷ פסיקתא דרב כהנא ז ד

Israel, unto this day: but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another. (I Chron. 17^{4f}). One who sought to curse David would say to him: 'It would be a good thing for the House to be built.' Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to him, 'By your life, I will not shorten your life even by one hour...' God added: 'The righteousness and justice which you do are more beloved to Me than the Temple.' Whence this? For it is said, *And David executed justice and righteousness unto all his people* (II Sam. 8¹⁵).²⁸

Each of the patriarchs we have studied has contributed, in his own way, to our definition of צדק. What does it mean to behave with צדק? For Noah, it meant being a comfort and a warning for his generation; for Abraham, born under the sign of a "right-doing man," it meant the extra effort of welcoming and bringing others into צדק; for Moses, it meant teaching the meaning of צדק, so that others would follow a righteous path; and for David, it meant making his practice of צדק greater than the institution of the Temple itself.

Each of our patriarchs, in some way, risked their lives in order to teach and maintain צדק for themselves and for their followers. Each of our patriarchs, because of their deeds, received the ultimate reward of the righteous, they "walked with God." Indeed, as we view them through the eyes of our sages, we have worthy examples to follow, and worthy deeds to emulate. In the fourth chapter of this thesis, we will look at how the Rabbis combine their ideas of God's righteousness, and the righteousness of the Patriarchs, in order to discover how we can live righteous lives – lives imbued with צדק, lives imbued with love.

²⁸ דברים רבה ה' נ

CHAPTER FOUR

צדקת אדם -- Humankind's Righteousness

Come and look at two men beginning a lawsuit. One tries to silence his opponent, saying: "Let me be first to speak." But the other will not let him, saying: "I will speak first!" When the Holy one, blessed be He, said to Israel: *Let us go to law together* (Isa. 43²⁶), Israel asked: Who will speak first? God answered: You speak first: *You speak, that you may be justified* (Ibid.), for if I win out over you in the lawsuit, I will be the one who loses. But if you win out over Me, then I will win. I won out over the generation of the the flood and lost. So also I won out over the generation which saw the dispersion of the races of humankind, and also over the Sodomites. Yet did I not lose? I won out over Jeremiah, but did I not lose in destroying My House and exiling My children? On the other hand, at the making of the golden calf, Moses won out over Me, and thus I won. Hence it is My wish that you win out over Me. As Scripture says, *The Lord delights in pronouncing Israel righteous* (צדק) (Isa. 42²¹).¹

Humankind is challenged throughout all of rabbinic literature to conduct our lives in a righteous manner. As we shall see, the Rabbis are both prescriptive and descriptive as they discuss the attributes of a righteous person. We learn from the following passage that while the concept of צדק is important as it relates to man, there is a great deal of confusion surrounding its meaning and connotation.

R. Isaac said, What is the meaning of the verse, *Indeed in silence speak righteousness; judge uprightly the sons of men* (Ps. 58²)? What

should be a man's pursuit² in this world? He should be silent? Perhaps he should be so with regard to the words of the Torah? It says therefore, *Speak righteousness*, Perhaps then he is to become arrogant? It says therefore, *Judge uprightly*³ *the sons of men*.⁴

The concept of צדק, as defined by our Rabbis, and as we have seen in previous chapters, clearly embodies the attributes of love, mercy, and generosity. We have seen our Rabbis use God as well as the patriarchs as exemplars of these specific qualities of צדק for humankind to emulate. As we review the literature containing texts with the word צדק, we wonder by what ultimate yardstick do our Rabbis measure the צדק of the common individual? How are we, ordinary human beings, in light of rabbinic commentary, to define the righteous woman or man?

I suggest that we examine the writings of our Rabbis in order to discover what they believed constituted a person who behaves with צדק. What are those people's attributes, and how do they conduct their lives with צדק? We might conclude from previous chapters that a person is to follow God's numerous examples and behave with love, mercy, and generosity toward his dependants; and also follow the patriarchs' examples and behave with love, mercy, and generosity toward his neighbors. However, which of these attributes provides the foundation for one to one human relationships, relationships that the Rabbis call צדק?

It has been suggested that for the Rabbis of the Talmud, the ideas of love, mercy, and generosity are rooted in the general concept of justice. As

² האמנם 'indeed', is homiletically associated with אומנות 'pursuit'.

³ מישורים 'uprightly' is associated with מישור 'evenness'.

⁴ הולין פס.

Moses Mielziner points out: "Prof. Steinthal in his work on General Ethics, remarks, that among the cardinal virtues of the ancient philosophers, we look in vain for the idea of love and charity, whereas in the teachings of the Bible, we generally find the ideas of love, mercy, and charity closely connected with that of justice. And we may add as in the Bible so also in the Talmud..."⁵

Even though we have equated the concept of צדק with the ideas of love, mercy, and generosity, we may be surprised to find that the concept of justice is actually not the primary meaning of צדק in the eyes of the Rabbis. "Justice regards only the nature of the deed, and judges the doer by it."⁶ That is to say, צדק, as used in the Bible, was closely tied to the concept of justice. However, צדק clearly evolves in meaning in the hands of the Rabbis. While justice may be a part of the concept of צדק, as we have seen in previous chapters, צדק ultimately becomes equated with love in rabbinic literature.

It is because of one's quality of love, as opposed to one's quality of justice, that one attains the title צדיק. "Love considers first the character of the doer at the moment of the deed, and judges the deed in light of the circumstances."⁷ That is to say, צדק, as used in rabbinic literature, was closely tied to the concept of love. It is, according to our Rabbis, because of love for one's neighbor, not restoration or equalization of justice, that one ultimately performs acts of צדקה. The righteous person, like the righteous God or the righteous patriarch, exhibits love, which our Rabbis call throughout their

⁵ Steinthal, *Allgemeine Ethik*, p.108, as quoted in Moses Mielziner, *Introduction to the Talmud*, (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1968), p. 274.

⁶ Ahad Haam as quoted by Samuel Cohon, "Our Moral Foundations - A Jewish View," January, 1955, Samuel S. Cohon Papers, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio, Manuscript Collection #276, Box 23, Folder 4.

⁷ Ibid.

writings צדק. Whether it is love of Torah, love of God, or love of one's neighbor, the righteous person imbued with צדק exhibits the quality of love over the qualities of justice, mercy, or even charity. The righteous person loves Torah, loves God, and it is through one's love of Torah and one's love of God, that one learns to love his neighbor.

For the Jew, צדק was an achievement to which one aspired. The Jew was not, in the eyes of the Rabbis, granted צדק upon his birth; rather, it came with certain requirements. As we see in the following passage, these requirements made the Jew separate from the 'heathen'.

Rabban Johanan B. Zakkai said to his disciples: My sons, what is the meaning of the verse, *Righteousness exalts a nation, but the kindness of the peoples is sin* (Prov. 14³⁴)? R. Eliezer answered and said: *Righteousness צדק exalts a nation*, this refers to Israel of whom it is written, *Who is like thy people Israel one nation in the earth* (II Sam. 7²³). But the *kindness חסד of the peoples is sin*: all the charity צדקה and kindness חסד done by the heathen is counted to them as sin, because they only do it to magnify themselves, as it says, *That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savour unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and of his sons* (Ezra 6¹⁰). But is not an act of this kind 'charity' in the full sense of the word, seeing that it has been taught: If a man says, I give this sela for charity in order that my sons may live and that I may be found worthy of the future world, he may all the same be a righteous man in the full sense of the word? - There is no contradiction; in the one case we speak of an Israelite, in the other of a heathen.⁸

"Righteousness was a high peak which the Jew must, during his whole lifetime, patiently and painfully climb." "Those who attained it, or were

⁸ : ' כבא בתרא The assumption is that the Israelite, regardless of what he may say, will give charity out of love for his children and love for God.

called it, were the exception rather than the rule."⁹ It is believed throughout rabbinic literature that with the attainment of **צדקה**, miracles were possible, and even salvation from an evil death!

A man has three friends in his lifetime, and they are: his sons and his household; his money, and his good deeds. At the hour of a man's departure from the world he gathers his sons and his household, and he says to them: I beg of you to come and save me from the judgement of this evil death. They answer him saying to him: Hast thou not heard that there is no one who can prevail over the day of death? And is it not written, *None of them can by any means redeem his brother for the redemption of their soul is costly* (Ps. 49⁷⁻⁸)? And he has his money fetched, and says to it: I beseech thee, save me from the judgement of this evil death. It answers him saying: Hast thou not heard, *Riches profit not in the day of wrath* (Prov. 11⁴)? He then has his good deeds fetched, and he says to them: I beseech you come and save me from the judgement of this evil death. They answer him, saying to him: Before thou goest, verily, we will go in advance of thee, as it is said, *And charity delivers from death* (Ibid). Does then charity deliver from death? This refers to an evil death only. Another Scripture says, *And your צדקה will go before you, the glory of the Lord will be your reward* (Isa. 58⁸).¹⁰

While the Rabbis, in the previous passage, do not go so far as to pronounce that righteous action saves one from death, there is the understanding that charity will cancel an evil death. In the following passage, the one who engages in **צדקה** is unlimited in his potential and worthy of receiving God's favor and presence. We have seen that the reward of the

⁹ J. Abelson "Righteousness," Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, 1919 ed. p. 808.

¹⁰ Pirke De Rabbi Eliezer: The Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer, Trans. Gerald Friedlander, (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1981), p 256 - 257.

patriarch was the opportunity to 'walk with God'. The reward of the righteous, perhaps, is to be called 'worthy' to appear before God.

R. Dosthai son of R. Jannai preached as follows: Observe the ways of God are not like the ways of flesh and blood. How does flesh and blood act? If a man brings a present to a king, it may be accepted or it may not be accepted; and even if it is accepted, it is still doubtful whether he will be admitted to the presence of the king or not. Not so God. If a man gives but a farthing to a beggar, he is deemed worthy to receive the Divine Presence, as it is written, *I shall behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness...* (Ps. 17¹⁵)¹¹

The Rabbis, in fact, ascribe limitless power to the righteous, and unending power to the doer of righteous deeds. In the following text, the question is raised as to why certain people succeed, and by what means they become successful. The question implicit in the text is clear: Is it on account of the **צדק** of others, or is it on account of the prayers of others that one succeeds?

And he said: Blessed be of the Lord, daughter! Your latest deed of loyalty is greater than the first, in that you have not turned to younger men, whether poor or rich (Ruth 3¹⁰). R. Johanan and Resh Lakish and the Rabbis commented on this verse. R. Johanan said: One should never hold back from going to an elder to be blessed. Boaz was eighty years of age, and had not been granted children. But when that righteous woman prayed for him, he was immediately vouchsafed, as it is said, *And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law: Blessed be he of the Lord* (Ruth 2²⁰). Resh Lakish said: Ruth was forty years of age and had not been given children as long as she was married to Mahlon. But as soon as that righteous man prayed for her, she was vouchsafed, as it is said, *Blessed be of the Lord, daughter!*

11. כבא בתרא י' .

The Rabbis, however, say: Both of them were given children only as a result of the blessings of righteous people, as it is said, *And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said: We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman...like Rachel and Leah* (ib. 4²).¹²

In the previous text, the righteous person not only prayed for the other, but loved the other; furthermore, the righteous community loved the righteous couple. Whatever the reason -- love or prayer -- we can recognize that one who was called a צדיק had certain powers and definite responsibilities.

There were not only specific requirements, as in the case above, there were certain personal sacrifices as well. "Righteousness was not a privilege of the Jew; it was rather an obligation. Righteousness is a duty which brings no privileges."¹³ In the following passage, the qualities of the righteous person are debated. In fact, it is the righteous man who puts prayer above all else, even above social and business obligations.

Rab said: If one gives greeting to his fellow before he recites the tefillah, it is as if he made him a high place, as it says, *Cease you from man in whose nostrils is a breath, for how little is he to be accounted!* (Isa. 2²²). Read not bammeh [how little], but bammah [if he is esteemed he becomes a high place]. Samuel interpreted: How come you to esteem this man and not God? R. Shesheth raised an objection; In the breaks he gives greeting out of respect and returns it! - R. Abba explains the dictum to refer to one who rises warmly to visit another. R. Jonah said in the name of R. Zera: If a man does his own business before he says his prayers, it is as if he had built a high place. He said to him: A high place do you say? No, he

¹² רות רבה ו ב

¹³ Emil G Hirsch, "Right and Righteousness," The Jewish Encyclopedia, 1925 ed, p. 424.

replied; I only mean that it is forbidden [but it is not so bad as idolatry]. R. Idi b. Abin said in the name of R. Issac b. Ashian: It is forbidden to a man to do his own business before he says his prayers, as it says,
Righteousness shall go before him and then he shall set his steps on his own way (Ps. 85¹⁴).¹⁴

How, then, if its attainment was so difficult and costly, was צדק to be gained by the ordinary individual? And what is the foundation for the Rabbis' judgement as to who is righteous and who is not? We begin with a brief look at the requirements for righteousness beginning with the days of the Temple in Jerusalem. The historical perspective is valuable for our study, for it is Jewish history that provides the connection between the צדק of the Bible -- the צדק of justice, and the צדק of the Rabbis -- the צדק of love.

In the days when the Temple stood in Jerusalem, one's צדק was defined by the sacrifice that one placed upon the altar. Indeed, regular sacrifice served to expiate for one's sins, and thus placed one into the category of צדיק. Sacrifice showed both love of God and repentance for one's actions. We find, in Pesikta De Rab Kahana, a mention of how important the constant sacrifice which took place in the city of Jerusalem was to the general atmosphere of justice which normally existed in a community. Pesikta De Rab Kahana is a classical Amoraic Midrash of the early period and evolved between the years 500 and 640. It reflects an accurate portrait of the concept of צדק during this period of development and codification. We also find earlier parallels of this particular text in the Talmud dating back to the days of the second Temple in Jerusalem. Perhaps these parallels accurately reflect the

14. ברכות יד.

belief that sacrifice was the way to righteousness both for the individual and for the Jewish community.

[Because of the daily offerings of the lambs brought by a community daily repenting its misdeeds], said R. Yudan in the name of R. Simon, no man who lodged in Jerusalem for a full day could stay possessed of his sin. How so? The morning offering made expiation for transgressions done in the nighttime; and the offering at dusk made expiation for transgressions done in the daytime. No matter what, no man who lodged in Jerusalem for a full day could stay in possession of his sin. And the proof from Scripture? *Righteousness* (צדק) *lodged in her* (Isa. 1:21) - that is, he who lodged in Jerusalem was made righteous.¹⁵

With the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE, and the end of animal sacrifice, the Rabbis were immediately challenged to define a new mode of צדק. As we have seen previously with Amos after the destruction of the first Temple in 570 BCE, the survivors aimed to establish "a living essence of social ethics, embracing honesty in business, fair weights and balances, and standard wages."¹⁶ We note in the following passage an attempt to minimize the role of sacrifice while at the same time a tendency to glorify a new mode of righteousness; a mode of righteousness closely associated with what once happened to the community of Amos. Deuteronomy Rabbah is a Midrash of the middle period and was written between the years 640 and 900.

"Sacrifices were only offered within the sanctuary, but righteousness and justice apply both within it and without. Sacrifices only atoned for one who sinned in error, but righteousness and justice atone for

פסיקתא דרב כהנא ה' י"ז - parallel in פסיקתא רבתי 15:24 and 16:1 and in Talmud Bavli - Sanhedrin 35a.

¹⁶ A. Gordon, "Righteousness," in Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. X, (1919), p. 780.

him who sins whether in error or intentionally. Sacrifices are only offered by human beings, but righteousness and justice must be practiced by human beings and the celestial beings. Sacrifices are only offered in this world, but righteousness and justice must be done in this world and in the world to come. The Holy One, blessed be He, declares the righteousness and justice you perform are dearer to me than the Temple"¹⁷

In addition to the change in the behavior of צדק in the previous text, there is also a clear differentiation made by the Rabbis between righteousness (צדק) and justice (משפט). Both ideals are necessary, but they carry different meanings for our Rabbis than they did for the writers of the Bible. This new mode of צדק described above indicated observance and practice rather than restoration of justice; it included honesty in the courts and charity for the poor rather than cold and uncaring litigation.

It is written, *And the knowledgeable will be radiant like the bright expanse of the sky* (Dan. 12³); this applies to a judge who gives a true verdict on true evidence. *And those who lead the many to צדק will be like the stars for ever and ever* (Ibid); these are the collectors for charity. In a Baraita it was taught, *And the knowledgeable will be radiant like the bright expanse of the sky*; this applies to a judge who gives a true verdict on true evidence and to the collectors of charity. *And those who lead the many to צדק will be like the stars for ever and ever*; this applies to the teachers¹⁸ of young children.¹⁹

צדק was still defined by what one brought to the altar, only now the altar had moved out of the Temple and into the heart. "With the adoption of

¹⁷ דברים רבה ה ג

¹⁸ Because they also turn their pupils to צדק.

¹⁹ בבא בתרא ח :

the Torah²⁰ as the foundation of Jewish life, righteousness came to be regarded as strict observance of the Torah's laws and ordinances. Whoever offends against righteousness, offends not only against man but also against God. This is the heart of the social doctrine of Judaism." ²¹

Happy are they that keep justice, that do righteousness at all times (Ps. 106³). Is it possible to do righteousness at all times? - This, explained our Rabbis of Jabneh, refers to a man who maintains his sons and daughters²² while they are young. R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: This refers to a man who brings up an orphan boy or orphan girl in his house and enables them to marry.²³

From an alternate rendering of the above text, we begin to understand how the observance of ordinance became unified with the concept of charity for the less fortunate.

Happy are they that keep justice, that do righteousness at all times (Ps. 106³). They took a vote in the upper chamber of R. Tarfon on the question, who is he *that does righteousness at all times*? Can it be those who teach children Bible and Mishnah? Do they not eat and drink and sleep?²⁴ Can it be those who write out phylacteries and mezuzahs? Do they not eat and drink and sleep?²⁵ Who is it then *that does righteousness at all times*? You must say that it is he who brings up an orphan in his house.²⁶ But would you say that he does not lie naked in the night? Said they: We still need the Modean. When R. Eleazar the Modean came, he

²⁰ I understand here both the Written and Oral Torah.

²¹ Samuel Cohon 23/4 p. 16

²² This is considered an act of צדק since legally they have no claim upon him for maintenance. It is his moral duty rather than his legal obligation. See Kethuboth 49 a for a more complete explanation.

²³ . כחובות נ

²⁴ They do not do good all of the time.

²⁵ They do not do good all of the time.

²⁶ The orphan is always wearing clothes provided by his benefactor.

taught: The Torah applied these words to him because of the meal²⁷ which the orphan eats in his house.²⁸

The **צדק** of the common person now may be defined as one's practice with regard to the religious and ethical **מצוות**. What becomes important is the teaching and learning of Torah and the practice of Torah through ritual and Halachic observance. "Throughout the whole vast realm of the rabbinical literature the righteous man, the **צדיק**, is judged by one invariable norm - conformity to the Torah. Righteousness is obedience of the **מצוות**."²⁹ In the following passage, we see the rabbinical laws of decency as they become fused with the definition of the righteous person.

R. Johanan said in the name of R. Bana'ah: Joint owners of a courtyard can stop one another from using the courtyard for any purpose save that of washing clothes, since it is not fitting that the daughters of Israel should expose themselves to the public gaze while washing clothes. It is written: *The righteous one is he that shuts his eyes from looking upon evil* (Isa. 33¹⁵), and commenting on this R. Hiyya b. Abba said: This refers to a man who does not look at the women when they are washing clothes. How are we to understand this? If there is another road, then if he does not take it he is wicked. If there is no other road, how can he help himself? - We suppose that there is no other road, and even so it is incumbent on him to hide his eyes from them.³⁰

Not only must one strictly obey the Mitzvot, as in the above passage, but one must also obey them according to the Rabbis' definition of them. Just

²⁷ The effects of which last until the next meal. Note that the same could possibly be said of the teacher and his lesson.

²⁸ **אסתר רבה ו א**

²⁹ J. Abelson p. 807.

³⁰ **בבא בתרא נ :**

as one's sacrifice had to be 'fit' in the days of the Temple in Jerusalem, one's actions must follow a certain set of guidelines as established by the Rabbis.

Rabba bar Chana had a litigation with carriers who broke (during their work) a cask of wine. He then took away their clothes; whereupon they brought to Rab a complaint against him. Rab said to him, "Give them back their clothes." Rabba then asked, "Is this the law?" He said, "Yes (as it is said, 'Thou may walk in the way of the Good' [Prov. 2²⁰])." He gave them back their clothes. The carriers then said, "We are poor men and labored the whole day, and now we are hungry and have nothing to eat." Rab then said, "Pay them their wages." Whereupon Rabba again asked, "Is this the law?" He said, "Yes (as it is said), *And keep the path of the righteous.*"³¹

One must follow the letter of the law; and moreover, one must follow it with enthusiasm and passion. One's motivation becomes a central focus in one's desire to act with צדק. Here, in the following two texts, it becomes apparent that a person's intent is as important as his deed:

"Two men feasted upon the Passover lamb. The one ate it for the sake of the מצוה, the other devoured it in the manner of a glutton. To the former they apply the scriptural words, *The righteous shall walk in them*; to the latter, *The transgressor shall fall therein* (Hosea 14¹⁰)."³²

Another comment: *The wicked borroweth and payeth not* (Psalms 37²¹). By 'wicked' are meant those nations of the earth who eat and drink but say no blessing over the food. By the words *But the righteous when dealt with graciously gives* (ibid) are meant Israel who eat and give thanks to God in the Grace after Meals.³³

³¹ בבא מציעא פג' .

³² מיר כג' .

³³ פסיקתא דרב כהנא כח ב

"To the minds of the Rabbis, the loftiest type of righteousness is that evinced by what they called the צדיק גמור. The world was actually called into being through the instrumentality of the Torah, and should the Jew ever reach so low a pitch as to lay aside the Torah, then will the cosmos be broken up and revert again to its primeval state of chaos."³⁴

Our Rabbis taught: *And judge righteously between a man and his brother, and the proselyte that is with him* (Deut 1¹⁶). From this text did R. Judah deduce that a man who becomes a proselyte in the presence of a Beth din is deemed to be a proper proselyte; but he who does so privately is no proselyte.³⁵

Our Rabbis taught: *In צדק shalt thou judge thy neighbor* (Lev 19¹⁵). That one should not sit, and the other stand: You must not let one litigant speak as much as he wants, and say to the other, 'shorten thy speech.' Another interpretation: *In צדק shalt thou judge thy neighbor*: judge thy neighbor in the scale of merit.³⁶ R. Joseph learnt: *In צדק shalt thou judge thy neighbor*: he who is with thee³⁷ in Torah and precepts - endeavor to judge him favorably.³⁸

While observance of the Law is seen as one way to reach צדק, ultimately, "The Law is thus a means of strengthening the mutual relations of love between God and His people."³⁹ "Judaism, while upholding the objective standard of right, concerns itself also with the lives of men, with

³⁴ Abelson, p. 807

³⁵ יבמות מז.

³⁶ When you see a person do something wrong - instead of applying strict justice, one should look for the mitigating circumstances, or at least give the benefit of the doubt.

³⁷ Taking עם אהך as עמיתך

³⁸ שבעות ל.

³⁹ Schechter pg 167.

their weaknesses and their needs. As a body of law, the Torah may be considered a system of justice; but as an expression of religion, it draws its life-breath from the atmosphere of love. God's love for man serves as the inspiration for man to manifest love for his fellowman."⁴⁰

It has been taught: R. Eleazar son of R. Jose said: All the צדק (ṣḏq) and deeds of kindness which Israel performs in this world, help to promote peace and good understanding between them and their Father in heaven, as it says, *Thus saith the Lord, Enter not into the house of mourning, neither go to lament, neither bemoan them, for I have taken away my peace from this people...even lovingkindness and tender mercies* (Jer. 16⁵), where lovingkindness refers to acts of kindness, and tender mercies to צדק (ṣḏq).⁴¹

The Law has never been seen by our Rabbis as an end in itself, there was a greater purpose destined for one who followed the law. Just as the reward of the patriarch was a chance to 'walk with God', "By צדק (ṣḏq) is meant the conduct and character regarded as satisfying God's requirements and making one acceptable to him." ⁴²

Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure olive oil (Lev. 24²). This bears on the text, *Thy righteousness also, O God, which reaches unto the high heaven* (Ps. 71¹⁹). R. Ammi addressed a query to R. Samuel b. Nahman. He said to him: Seeing that I have heard said of you that you are a master of Haggadah, tell me; What is the implication of the expression, *Thy righteousness also, O God, which reaches unto the high heaven* ? He answered him: Just as the denizens of

⁴⁰ Cohon 23/4 p. 18

⁴¹ . י בנא בתרא

⁴² E.G. Hoff, "The Meaning of Righteousness in First Century Judaism," Diss. (University of Chicago 1928), Intro.

the terrestrial regions need each other's רצון, so do the denizens of the celestial regions need each other's רצון.⁴³

The Law was also not meant to punish; instead, it was designed to edify the individual and bring him closer to God. The closer one became to God, the more one attained the quality of רצון. "In the Babylonian Talmud one of the most frequent appellations of God is 'the merciful one,' and it is worth noticing, that this term is mostly used in Halachic or casuistic discussions, which proves, by the way, how little in the mind of the Rabbis the Law was connected with hardness and chastisement. To them, the Law was an effluence of God's mercy and goodness."⁴⁴

Resh Lakish said: You find that after the Holy One gives to a righteous man what he had sought of Him, He then returns and of His own will graciously gives him even more. Hence it is written *But the righteous dealeth graciously, and giveth* (PS. 37²), meaning that the Righteous One of the world deals graciously by giving more.⁴⁵

We see in the previous passage how our Rabbis encouraged one to follow the ways of God regarding the giving of charity. In the following example, the righteous tax distributor, following God's example, gives his own money to the poor when he can no longer give from the community's money.

It has been taught: The following incident is related of Benjamin the Righteous who was a supervisor of the charity fund. One day a woman

⁴³ ויקרא רבה לא א

⁴⁴ Schechter, S, Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology, (New York: Behrman House, 1936), p. 34.

⁴⁵ פסיקתא דרב כהנא כח ב

came to him in a year of scarcity, and said to him: 'Sir, assist me.' He replied, 'I swear, there is not a penny in the charity fund.' She said, 'Sir, if you do not assist me, a woman and her seven children will perish.' He accordingly assisted her out of his own pocket. Some time afterwards he became dangerously ill. The angels addressed the Holy One, blessed be He, saying: 'Sovereign of the Universe, You have said that he who preserves one soul of Israel is considered as if he had preserved the whole world; shall then Benjamin the Righteous who has preserved a woman and her seven children, die at so early an age?' Straightway his sentence was torn up. It has been taught that twenty-two years were added to his life.⁴⁶

Perhaps the practice of charity can save one from an evil death. If this is not the case, then perhaps we can say that one's practice of charity is closely related to how one is viewed by the Rabbis, and ultimately, by God. The Law was meant to help people not only to draw nearer to God, but to become closer to their fellow human beings as well.

The laws and rules of the giving of **צדקה** have been well researched and documented⁴⁷ and it is not my task to enumerate these laws in this thesis. However, as Jews, we usually define the concept of **צדקה** as 'restoring justice to the poor.' A Jew performs **צדקה** in order to promote a sense of balance in the world. As I have stated, however, **צדקה** seems not to convey the connotation of justice; rather, the concept of love.

צדקה, then, is not the practice of restoring 'justice' to the poor and deprived; instead, it is a means for one person to demonstrate love toward another. In the above quotation, Benjamin the Righteous saw little justice in the woman's situation. He did not think about restoring a sense of balance to

⁴⁶ **בבא בתרא יא . 46**

⁴⁷ See Moshe Ulmer. "The Rabbinic Concept of Tsedakah," Rabbinic thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, 1988.

the world. How could his intellect move him to the actions he took? He simply did what was in his heart and showed the woman and her children his attribute of love. We learn from our Rabbis that the true sense of צדקה depends on the amount of love it contains.

R. Eliezar further stated, The reward of charity (צדקה) depends entirely upon the extent of the kindness (חסד) in it, for it is said, *Sow according to your charity, and reap according to your kindness* (Hos 10¹²).⁴⁸

"The whole rabbinical system of ethics is based upon humanitarian laws of righteousness."⁴⁹ "The rabbis were not satisfied with feeding the poor. Not only did they make the authorities of every community responsible for the poor, and would even stigmatize them as murderers if their negligence should lead to starvation and death; but their great ideal was not to allow man to be poor, not to allow him to come down into the depths of poverty."⁵⁰ This belief is a true representation of the concept of צדקה.

We have learnt elsewhere: If a man lends another money on a pledge or if he hands his bonds to the Beth din, the debts are not cancelled by the seventh year. That this should be so in the latter case we understand, because it is the Beth din which seizes the debtor's property.⁵¹ But why should it be so in the case of a loan given on a pledge? - Raba replied: Because the lender is already in possession of it.⁵² Said Abaye to him: If that is so, suppose a man lends another money,⁵³ and lives in his courtyard,

⁴⁸ Sukkah 49b

⁴⁹ Kaufman Kohler, "Ethics," The Jewish Encyclopedia, 1925 ed. p. 248

⁵⁰ Schechter, p. 112.

⁵¹ And the Beth din have power to expropriate, and therefore the creditor is not guilty of 'exaction' in recovering after the seventh year.

⁵² And the lender does not 'exact' anything from the debtor.

⁵³ On the security of his courtyard.

in which case he is also in possession, is the debt in this case too not cancelled? - He replied: A pledge (Rashi - 'of movable property') is different, because the holder becomes also its owner, according to the dictum of R. Issac, who said, How do we know the creditor becomes the owner of a pledge [given for a debt]? Because it says. *If he is a needy man, you shall not go to sleep in his pledge; you must return the pledge to him at sundown, that he may sleep in his cloth and bless you; and it will be to your merit (קדש) before the Lord your God.* ⁵⁴ (Deut. 24¹²⁻¹³). If he is not the owner, what righteousness is there in restoring the pledge? Hence we learn that the creditor becomes the owner of a pledge.⁵⁵

The creditor is responsible for the debtor, and is made so through the concept of קדש. It is a righteous act for the lender to have pity, to have mercy, to show love towards the object of his charity. Finally, the one who embodies קדש is the one who gives his neighbor the benefit of the doubt. He not only gives his neighbor what he owes him, but as we have seen throughout this study, he gives him a little more. For me, the expression of קדש in the following text, reflects the true meaning of the concept of קדש in rabbinic literature. קדש is that extra measure – that additional human consideration - that one gives to another in order to love that other person.

MISHNAH. A WHOLESALE DEALER MUST CLEAN HIS MEASURES ONCE IN THIRTY DAYS, AND A PRODUCER ONCE IN TWELVE MONTHS. R. SIMEON B. GAMALIEL SAYS: THE STATEMENT IS TO BE REVERSED. A SHOPKEEPER MUST CLEAN HIS MEASURES TWICE A WEEK, WIPE HIS WEIGHTS ONCE A WEEK, AND CLEANSE THE SCALES AFTER EVERY WEIGHING. R. SIMEON B. GAMALIEL SAID: THESE LAWS APPLY ONLY TO MOIST COMMODITIES, BUT IN THE CASE OF DRY ONES, THERE IS NO NEED FOR CLEANING. AND A SHOPKEEPER MUST ALLOW THE SCALE TO

⁵⁴ The קדש is in restoring the pledge to the man at sunset.

⁵⁵ גיטין לו.

SINK A HANDBREATH [LOWER THAN THE SCALE OF THE WEIGHTS].

Gemara. Whence is this law⁵⁶ to be inferred? - Resh Lakish said:

Scripture says: *A perfect and righteous measure shalt thou have.* (Deut. 25¹⁵). This means make your weights **קדץ** by giving of your own.⁵⁷

"There was no need for Scripture to say *righteous*, when *perfect* had already been mentioned. But it teaches that perfection alone is not enough. One must also show **קדץ** by adding to the perfect weight and, similarly, to the measure."⁵⁸ **קדץ** becomes, for the Rabbis, the extra, not the equal; the love, as opposed to the justification. To give someone what is due to him may be what the text calls perfection, and it may be enough to keep one away from the Lord's wrath; however, we learn that **קדץ** involves giving something more.

Our Rabbis taught: Whence may it be inferred that the measure must not be levelled where the practice is to heap it up, and that it must not be heaped up where the practice is to level it? - For it has been definitely stated, *A perfect weight.* And whence may it be inferred that we are not to listen to one who says, 'I will level where the practice is to heap up, and reduce the price, I will heap up where they level, and raise the price?' - For it has been definitely stated, *A perfect and righteous measure thou shalt have.*⁵⁹

By deviating from the usual practice, the buyer, or the seller, may be defrauding or misleading others.⁶⁰ **קדץ** involves a number of qualifications

⁵⁶ From the Mishna - And a shopkeeper must allow the scale to sink a handbreath [lower than the scale of the weights]

⁵⁷ : **כבא בתרא פח**

⁵⁸ *The Talmud*, Ed. Isidore Epstein, Baba Bathra, (London: Soncino Press, 1936-1952), p. 88b, note 7.

⁵⁹ : **כבא בתרא פח**

⁶⁰ *The Talmud*, Ed. Isidore Epstein, Baba Bathra, p. 89a, note 4.

and an array of connotations. But, as we have seen, its basis is love and its reward is the chance to be called worthy in God's presence.

CONCLUSION

During this study of rabbinic literature, I have discovered that one should not ask "what is צדק?" insinuating that צדק (or צדקה) is a concrete thing (a coin, a pledge, a token), but "when is צדק?" When does this important Jewish moral concept truly exist, how can we recognize it, and how can we recognize its occurrence in our daily lives and in the memories and tales of our ancestors? It is the belief of this author that צדק, as it appears in the Bible and in rabbinic literature, is not a thing; rather, it is best described as a relationship. צדק is a way of feeling and behaving that can be found anywhere. However, I am certain that the main attributes of צדק, (mercy, justice, charity, prayer, etc.) must be present in order for צדק to exist.¹

I have presented the reader of this thesis with a survey of the various modes, definitions, and qualities of the concept of צדק. It is hoped that the reader has gained an appreciation for rabbinic commentary, and will be motivated and inspired by the comments concerning this central concept and vital principle of the Jewish religion. I have shown how the Rabbis understood and used the word צדק differently than it is commonly used in the Bible. As I stated in the introductory sections of this thesis, the definition 'conformity to a defined, right standard' seems to best express the overall meaning of the root in the Bible.

¹ This line of argument is similar to Rabbi Kushner's thoughts concerning God found in: Kushner, Harold S. When Children Ask About God. New York: Schocken, 1989, pg 54.

The usage of צדק changed as a function of the historical and sociological circumstances our people encountered. In biblical times, justice was seen as its paramount meaning; as its foundation or standard. But for the Rabbis of the Talmud and Midrash, justice alone was no longer a logical foundation. With the end of daily sacrifice, the beginnings of a large scale diaspora, and the proliferation of Christianity and other religious groups, the Rabbis deemed it a matter of fundamental Jewish survival to alter the foundation of this vital principal.

Of course, the biblical notions of 'appropriateness' and 'just rewards' do play a part in the overall usage of צדק in the Talmud and Midrash. The Rabbis certainly build on the basis of the mores of צדק in the Bible. The Rabbis hardly ignore the fact that צדק is used to express laws concerning God, cultural interchange, and human interaction. It is also apparent that, in both the Bible and in rabbinic literature, צדק involves correct conduct, righteous action and Divine reward.

Where the Rabbis differ in their notion of צדק centers on the basis of its foundation. In the Bible, it is not the idea of any standard being appropriate, but the idea of a standard founded on the concept of justice. For צדק can imply righteous action, right relationship to others, and the righteousness of God, but each of these are, in some way, judged according to a 'just standard'. Unlike the biblical writers, the Rabbis of the Talmud and Midrash name the standard of love, as opposed to justice, as more important to the proper usage of צדק in their times.

Throughout this study, we have seen how the prooftexts used by the Rabbis involving צדק, only make sense if צדק is given a broader meaning than it holds in the Bible. We find at the base of almost every prooftext our Rabbis have created using צדק, loving relationships and loving actions.

Throughout this study, I have equated the concept of צדק with the ideas of justice, mercy, and generosity, and I have proven that צדק ultimately becomes equated with love at the hands of our Rabbis. Whether it is love of Torah, love of God, or love of one's neighbor, the righteous God, the righteous patriarch, or the righteous person exhibits the quality of love over the qualities of justice, mercy, or even charity.

And I have also found love at the basis of the discussions concerning the צדיק. In the writings of our sages, it is the one who obeys proper customs, the one who seeks to rise above, love, and help his or her generation, whom our scriptures call צדיק. These צדיקים love Torah, love God, and love their neighbor. It is the one who acts appropriately in each and every situation, and the one who is awarded with his "just rewards" by the true judge of all צדק.

It is also evident that the true judge, God, is seen by the Rabbis as totally righteous and is presumed to act with total righteousness. I uncovered a number of texts where a division occurred between what the Rabbis understood to be God's justice and what they understood to be God's צדק. The Rabbis commonly use צדק to express that quality of love that exists between God and Israel. God's צדק extends to the people of Israel, the Israelite family, as well as to the individual in Israel. Surprisingly, even the diaspora that exists today may be viewed by the Rabbis as an example of God's love for the people Israel. Without God's love, the people could not have withstood the evil decrees of their oppressors, and surely the Jewish community would have perished. The Rabbis view God's love as the true meaning of צדקה, and צדק is used over and over throughout the literature to indicate God's loving relationship and loving action toward humankind generally, and Israel specifically.

And Israel, both in word and deed, recognized the importance of promulgating **פדצ** from generation to generation. They studied the examples of the patriarchs in order to bolster this notion. Each of the patriarchs was shown to rise above his world, to take care of his people, and to risk his life for what he deemed at that moment as **פדצ**. Abraham even takes over what our Rabbis call God's function, dispensing love. The patriarchs I studied have contributed, in their own way, to our definition of **פדצ**. Our patriarchs, because of their deeds, received the ultimate reward of the righteous, they "walked with God." Indeed, as we view them through the eyes of our sages, we have worthy examples to follow, and worthy deeds to emulate.

Finally, it is apparent throughout the literature that humankind is truly challenged by the thoughts and words of our sages. **פדצ** is that 'high peak' that the Jew must climb in order to rise above his or her generation. Through **פדצ**, the Jew becomes limitless in power and worthy to appear before God. The Jew gives to his neighbor, to his family, to his God not because he is trying to restore some sense of balance in his life or in his world, but because he loves his world, and he wants to care for it. The motivation behind what we do, in order for it to be considered an act of **פדצ**, and in order for it to appear worthy before others, must be done out of love, out of caring for our world, for our God, and for each other. In this way, as we attempt to follow the paths of **פדצ**, humankind will strengthen the love that exists between God and man, man and man, and ultimately, the world will be improved.

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