

Gates of Justice

Hebrew: [Psalm 118:19](#)

English: Chana Rothman

Psalm 118, part of the Hallel service for Rosh Chodesh and festivals, is a triumphant exclamation of G!D's protection and love for the author. He need not fear his enemies, for the Holy One is with him. But in the middle of praises and platitudes, there is a request:

פִּתְחוּ לִי שַׁעֲרֵי צֶדֶק אָבֹא בָם אוֹדֶה יְהוָה:

Open for me the gates of justice, I will enter them and praise Yah.

Within the context of the psalm, it can be read as more triumphalism, especially if “tzedeek” is translated as “victory,” which it often is. However, if read as “justice,” it becomes a demand to G!D and a promise made by the self. If G!D opens the gates of justice, then I will enter and praise Yah. Yah, the Hebrew letters yud and hey, are the first two letters of G!D's complete name, Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey. Using “yah” might be an admission of incompleteness, that G!D's name cannot be whole without human beings fighting for justice.

How can we demand justice? From those in power? From ourselves? From G!D?

Well there's a long list of things gone wrong

Too many to fit in one song

The list goes on and on and on and on...

It's enough to make you constantly stressed

Can't see a way out of this mess

Enough to make you walk away

But something inside's just got to say

We don't have to beg or plead or even wring our hands

We can organize, mobilize, make demands

The world we want is ours to create

So let's do it now, no time to waste!

Pitchu Li - Open Open up

Sha'arey Tzedek - The Gates of Justice

Avo Vam - I will enter

Odeh Ya - I will praise Your Name

You see we don't have to finish it all
Every little bit matters, no matter how small
We don't need to run away or build a wall
When we rise up together, we all stand tall

We don't have to beg or plead or even wring our hands
We can organize, mobilize, make demands
The world we want is ours to create
So let's do it now, no time to waste!

Pitchu Li - Open Open up
Sha'arey Tzedek - The Gates of Justice
Avo Vam - I will enter
Odeh Ya - I will praise Your Name