

## Tehillim / Psalms 114 | ספר תהילים קיד

MATSATI.COM Ministry | <http://www.matsati.com>

### Do not be a People of Strange Language

**א** בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם, *114:1 When Israel went forth from Egypt, The house of Jacob from a people of strange language (NASB)* Israel being taken out of Egypt is described as being taken from a people of strange language. What does it mean that the Egyptian language is strange? The Psalm continues saying, **ב** הִיְתָה, *114:2 Judah became His sanctuary, Israel, His dominion. (NASB)* The Aramaic Targum states, **ב** הוות כנישתא דבית יהודה אחידא, *114:1 When Israel came out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from barbarian peoples 114:2 The company of the house of Judah became property of his Holy One, Israel of his rulers. (EMC)* The strange language is described by the rabbis as being taking from a barbarian people. The psalm continues saying, **ג** הַיָּם רָאָה וַיָּנֹס הַיַּרְדֵּן יֹסֵב לְאַחֹר: **ד** הַהָרִים רָקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים גְּבָעוֹת פְּבַנֵי-צֹאן: **ה** מַה-לָּךְ הַיָּם, *114:3 The sea looked and fled; The Jordan turned back. 114:4 The mountains skipped like rams, The hills, like lambs. 114:5 What ails you, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back? 114:6 O mountains, that you skip like rams? O hills, like lambs? (NASB)* The Aramaic Targum reveals more saying the following, **ג** כד איתגלי מימרא דיי על ימא, *114:3 When the word of the Lord was revealed at the sea, the sea looked and retreated; the Jordan turned around. 114:4 When the Torah was given to his people, the mountains leapt like rams, the hills like offspring of the flock. 114:5 God said, "What is the matter, O sea, for you are retreating? O Jordan, that you are turning around?" 114:6 O mountains, leaping about like rams? O hills, like offspring of the flock? (EMC)* It was the word of the Lord that caused the oceans to divide and the mountains to skip. The Psalm concludes saying, **ז** מִלְפָּנֵי אֲדוֹן חוּלֵי אֶרֶץ מִלְפָּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: **ח** הַהֶפְכִי הַצּוּר אֲגָם-מַיִם הַקְּלִיֵּשׁ לְמַעַיְנוּ-מַיִם: *114:7 Tremble, O earth, before the Lord, Before the God of Jacob, 114:8 Who turned the rock into a pool of water, The flint into a fountain of water. (NASB)* The Lord is capable of doing anything, and therefore He should be feared while realizing He is merciful, holy, righteous, and just.

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
	ספר תהלים פרק קיד		ספר טוביה פרק קיד		ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 114
	א בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם בֵּית יַעֲקֹב מֵעַם לְעֹז: <b>ב</b> הִיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקִדְשׁוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְּשֻׁלֹתָיו: <b>ג</b> הַיָּם רָאָה וַיָּנֹס הַיַּרְדֵּן יֹסֵב לְאַחֹר: <b>ד</b> הַהָרִים רָקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים גְּבָעוֹת פְּבַנֵי-צֹאן:		א במיפק ישראל ממצרים בית יעקב מעמי ברבראי: ב הוות כנישתא דבית יהודה אחידא לק-דישיה לקודשיה ישראל לשלי-טוי: ג כד איתגלי מימרא דיי על ימא אסתכל חמא ואפך יורדנא חזר לאחור: ד במיתן אוריתא לעמיה טוריא טפזו היך דכרין גילמתא היך בנין דען:		114:1 αλληλουια ἐν ἐξόδῳ Ἰσραὴλ ἐξ Αἰγύπτου οἴκου Ἰακωβ ἐκ λαοῦ βαρβάρου 114:2 ἐγενήθη Ἰουδαία ἁγίασμα αὐτοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἐξουσία αὐτοῦ 114:3 ἡ θάλασσα εἶδεν καὶ ἔφυγεν ὁ Ἰορδάνης ἐστράφη εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω 114:4 τὰ ὄρη ἐσκίρτησαν ὡσεὶ κριοὶ καὶ οἱ βουνοὶ ὡς ἀρνία προβάτων

<p>ה מה-לך הים פי תנוס הירדן תסב לאחור: ו הקרים תרקדו כאילים גבעות פכני-צאן: ז מל- פני אדון חולי ארץ מלפני אלוה יעקב: ח ההפכי הצור אגם-מים תלמיש למענינו-מים:</p>	<p>ה אמר אלהא מה לך ימא ארום תא- פיך יורדנא תחזור לאחורא: ו טוריא טפוז מטפזין היך דכרין גילמתא היך בנין דען: ז מן קדם קיריס אתחלחלי ארעא מן קדם אלהא דיעקב: ח דה- פיך טינרא לאריתא דמיא שמיר לעיין לעינון דמיין:</p>	<p>114:5 τί σοί ἐστὶν θάλασσα ὅτι ἔφυγες καὶ σοί Ἰορδάνη ὅτι ἀνεχώρησας εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω 114:6 τὰ ὄρη ὅτι ἐσκιρτήσατε ὡσεὶ κριοὶ καὶ οἱ βουνοὶ ὡς ἀρνία προβάτων 114:7 ἀπὸ προσώπου κυρίου ἐσαλεύθη ἡ γῆ ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ θεοῦ Ἰακωβ 114:8 τοῦ στρέψαντος τὴν πέτραν εἰς λίμνας ὑδάτων καὶ τὴν ἀκρότομον εἰς πηγὰς ὑδάτων</p>
---	--	---

<p><b>Tehillim Psalms 114</b> 114:1 When Israel went forth from Egypt, The house of Jacob from a people of strange language, 114:2 Judah became His sanctuary, Israel, His dominion. 114:3 The sea looked and fled; The Jordan turned back. 114:4 The mountains skipped like rams, The hills, like lambs. 114:5 What ails you, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back? 114:6 O mountains, that you skip like rams? O hills, like lambs? 114:7 Tremble, O earth, before the Lord, Before the God of Jacob, 114:8 Who turned the rock into a pool of water, The flint into a fountain of water. (NASB)</p>	<p><b>Toviyah Psalms 114</b> 114:1 When Israel came out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from barbarian peoples 114:2 The company of the house of Judah became property of his Holy One, Israel of his rulers. 114:3 When the word of the Lord was revealed at the sea, the sea looked and retreated; the Jordan turned around. 114:4 When the Torah was given to his people, the mountains leapt like rams, the hills like offspring of the flock. 114:5 God said, "What is the matter, O sea, for you are retreating? O Jordan, that you are turning around?" 114:6 O mountains, leaping about like rams? O hills, like offspring of the flock? 114:7 In the presence of the lord, dance, O earth, in the presence of the God of Jacob. 114:8 Who turns the flint into a channel of water, the adamant to springs of water. (EMC)</p>	<p><b>Psalmoi Psalms 114</b> Alleluia. 114:1 At the going forth of Israel from Egypt, of the house of Jacob from a barbarous people, 114:2 Judea became his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion. 114:3 The sea saw and fled: Jordan was turned back. 114:4 The mountains skipped like rams, and the hills like lambs. 114:5 What ailed thee, O sea, that thou fleddest? and thou Jordan, that thou wast turned back? 114:6 Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams, and ye hills, like lambs? 114:7 The earth trembled at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob; 114:8 who turned the rock into pools of water, and the flint into fountains of water. (LXX)</p>
--	---	---

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 114:1-8*, the psalm opens saying, אֲבָצְאָת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם, 114:1 *When Israel went forth from Egypt, The house of Jacob from a people of strange language (NASB)* Israel being taken out of Egypt is described as being taken from a people of strange language. What does it mean that the Egyptian language is strange? The earliest known complete written sentence in the Egyptian language has been dated to about 2690 BCE, making it one of the oldest recorded languages known, along with Sumerian. (Allen, James P., 2013-07-11, *The Ancient Egyptian Language: An Historical Study*. Cambridge University Press. p. 2. ISBN 9781107032460) The Egyptian language was spoken until the late seventeenth century in the form of Coptic. The national language of modern Egypt today is Egyptian Arabic, which gradually replaced Coptic as the language of daily life in the centuries after the Muslim conquest of Egypt. The Coptic language is still used as the liturgical language of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria. It has several hundred fluent speakers today.

The concept of a strange and obscure language reminds us of *Ezekiel 3:1-7*.

### **Ezekiel 3:1-7**

*3:1 Then He said to me, 'Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.' 3:2 So I opened my mouth, and He fed me this scroll. 3:3 He said to me, 'Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you.' Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth. 3:4 Then He said to me, 'Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them. 3:5 'For you are not being sent to a people of unintelligible speech or difficult language, but to the house of Israel, 3:6 nor to many peoples of unintelligible speech or difficult language, whose words you cannot understand. But I have sent you to them who should listen to you; 3:7 yet the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, since they are not willing to listen to Me. Surely the whole house of Israel is stubborn and obstinate. (NASB)*

Here in Ezekiel, the Lord instructs Ezekiel to eat a scroll that had been given him. He is then to take the Words of God to the people of Israel. Consuming the scroll suggests that Ezekiel is internalizing God's word and making it a part of his life. The Lord then tells Ezekiel that he is not being sent to a people of obscure or difficult language but to the house of the people of Israel. They will understand Ezekiel's words but they will not listen because they are stubborn and obstinate. The idea is that though they understand what he will say, they will behave as if they do not understand because of their unwillingness to obey God's Word. The context is if Ezekiel had gone to a strange people, they would not listen either because they do not understand the way in which Ezekiel is speaking, which is directly related to walking in the ways of God. In Stephen's Address to the Sanhedrin, he said the following, *Acts 7:5 He gave him no inheritance here, not even a foot of ground. But God promised to give possession of the land to Abraham and his descendants, even though he did not yet have a child. 7:6 God told him that his descendants would be foreigners in a strange land, and they would be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. 7:7 'But I will punish the nation that enslaves them,' God said, 'and afterward they will come forth and worship Me in this place.'* (NASB) Notice how being a foreigner in a strange land is paralleled to being enslaved and mistreated. The idea contained within the Psalm which states, אֲבָצְאָת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם בֵּית יַעֲקֹב מֵעַם לֵעֶזְרָא: 114:1 *When Israel went forth from Egypt, The house of Jacob from a people of strange language (NASB)* is that the people of the foreign land would not know God's ways and consequentially would enslave the people who had originally helped them (i.e. Joseph). *Isaiah 55:7-9* states the following:

### **Isaiah 55:7-9**

*55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. 55:8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. 55:9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways*

ז יַעֲזֹב רָשָׁע דַּרְכּוֹ וְאִישׁ אֶן מִחֻשְׁבֹּתָיו וְיָשֻׁב אֶל-יְהוָה וִירְחַמֵּהוּ וְאֶל-אֱלֹהֵינוּ כִּי-יִרְפָּה לְסִלּוֹחַ: ה כִּי לֹא מִחֻשְׁבֹּתָיו מִחֻשְׁבֹּתֵי תִיכֶם וְלֹא דַרְכֵיכֶם דַּרְכֵי נְאֻם יְהוָה: ט כִּי-גָבְהוּ שְׁמַיִם מֵאָרֶץ כִּן גָּבְהוּ דַרְכֵי מִדְרָכֵיכֶם וּמִחֻשְׁבֹּתֵי (מִמִּחֻשְׁבֹּתֵיכֶם)

The Lord desires for the wicked man to forsake not only his ways but his thoughts also. The concept here is “the wicked is to forsake his ways and the man of sin his thoughts,” and then “return/turn to the Lord,” to perform Teshuvah in repentance for the Lord is merciful (וִירְחַמֵּהוּ). Rambam describes repentance in the following way.

### **Mishneh Torah, Repentance 2:2**

*What is teshuvah? It is when a person abandons the sin that he sinned and removes it from his thoughts and commits in his heart that he will not do it again, as it says, The wicked should abandon his path etc. (Isaiah 55:7). And also that he regrets sinning, as it says, After I returned I regretted (Jeremiah 31:18). And the One Who Knows Hidden Things testifies about him that he will never return to this sin, as it says, And we will no longer call the work of our hands “god” etc. (Hosea 14:4). And he must confess verbally and say these things that he has committed in his heart.*

Notice how Rambam defines Teshuvah as when the person confesses his sin, removes sinful thoughts from his heart, and commits his heart to not sin any further. This is the major premise of what one was to do when bringing a sacrifice before the Lord at the Tabernacle and the laying on of the hands on the head of the animal. According to *Vayikra / Leviticus 1:4-5* we read the following, ד וְסָמַךְ יָדוֹ עַל רֹאשׁ הָעֹלָה וְנִרְצָה לוֹ לְכַפֵּר עָלָיו: ה וְשַׁחַט אֶת-בֶּן הַבָּקָר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְהִקְרִיבוּ בְנֵי אֹהֶלן הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת-הַדָּם וְנָרְקוּ אֶת-הַדָּם עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב : 1:4 *‘He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf. 1:5 ‘He shall slay the young bull before the Lord; and Aaron’s sons the priests shall offer up the blood and sprinkle the blood around on the altar that is at the doorway of the tent of meeting. (NASB)* We receive atonement for sin through blood and we trust in the anointed priest to do this on our behalf. Notice how Rambam states “*And we will no longer call the work of our hands “god” etc. (Hosea 14:4).*” This suggests that sin becomes a god in one’s life. The idea is that the Lord will help to break down the idol that has been established in the heart due to sin. Rambam says “*he must confess verbally and say these things that he has committed in his heart.*” This drives home the point that the Lord wants for us to outwardly show what has taken place on the inside in the deliverance from sin.

### **Mishneh Torah, Repentance 2:3**

*Anyone who confesses verbally and does not commit in his heart to abandon [sin], this is like a person who immerses [in a purity pool] while holding an unclean creature in his hand, so that the bath is not effective until he sends away the unclean creature, and so it says, One who admits and abandons is given mercy (Proverbs 28:13). And he must specify the sin, as it says, This nation has sinned a great sin and made a golden god for themselves (Exodus 32:31).*

Rambam continues in his definition with an analogy to the mikvah. The mikvah, which was later shown to be baptism in the sense that John performed on the people in the Jordan river according to the Gospels, was performed in order to cleanse one of uncleanness. This was performed as a part of the Teshuvah process as Rambam states, “*Anyone who confesses verbally and does not commit in his heart to abandon [sin], this is like a person who immerses [in a purity pool] while holding an unclean creature in his hand, so that the bath is not effective until he sends away the unclean creature.*” The concept here is in the connection of the inward with the outward. This is similar to the spiritual counterparts that are part of the sacrificial ritual,

that one repents, lays his hand upon the head of the animal, confesses his sins, and the animal is slaughtered and the blood is spread around the altar. (*Vayikra / Leviticus 1:4-5*) Rashbam continues in his definition on Repentance (Teshuvah) saying the following:

***Mishneh Torah, Repentance 7:3***

*Do not say that there is only teshuvah for sins that have an action, such as fornication, robbery, and theft; rather, just as a person must do teshuvah for these, so too he must search out his bad character traits, and do teshuvah for anger, hatred, jealousy, laziness, pursuit of money and honor, gluttony, and so on. A person must return in teshuvah from all of these. And these sins are harder than those which have an action, because once a person is immersed in them it is difficult for him to break free from them. Thus the verse says, Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts (Isaiah 55:7).*

Teshuvah involves both the physical sins and those that are involved in the heart. We understand this based upon *Isaiah 55:7*, יַעֲזֹב רָשָׁע דַּרְכּוֹ וְאִישׁ אֶנּוּן מִחֻשְׁבֹתָיו, “the wicked is to forsake his ways and the man of sin his thoughts,” and then he is to יָשֻׁב אֶל-יְהוָה “return/turn to the Lord.” The Gospel Message that is related to the Torah is in regards to our turning from sin, being delivered from the sin in our lives, being transformed from the inside out, being set free from bondage, and the Lord God empowering us to do so by His Spirit, through faith in His Messiah Yeshua.

The Psalm continues saying, ב הַיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקִדְשׁוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְּשֻׁלוֹתָיו: *Judah became His sanctuary, Israel, His dominion. (NASB)* The Aramaic Targum states, א במיפק ישראל ממצרים בית יעקב מעמי, *When Israel came out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from barbarian peoples* 114:1 ברבראי: ב הוות כנישתא דבית יהודה אחידא לקדישיה לקודשיה ישראל לשליטוי: *The company of the house of Judah became property of his Holy One, Israel of his rulers. (EMC)* The strange language is described by the rabbis as being taking from a barbarian people, a people with no rule of law in their lives. The Lord God of Israel knows that for a nation to be prosperous and free, this is only possible when each individual is governed by a rule of law that is coupled with ethics and morality. When this rule is weakened (*i.e. when theologians are developed causing the Torah to become non-applicable to one’s life, etc.*) then society becomes a nation of barbarians which have no use for any rules or laws that they perceive to get in their way. This idea of a barbarian people, is in the sense of not having the Torah, and not conforming our lives to God’s ways, which essentially causes one to develop a fantasy world, and the desire to force one’s imaginary concept of how the world should be upon others (*i.e. LGBT movement*). When the rules of civil society are tossed aside, brutality, plunder, and tyranny enter into the picture, and this was demonstrated very well in the President Trump election 2017 where the “left” went crazy destroying property and violating the law because of what they perceived as an unjust election. Such an outcome is nothing less than the individual doing things the way he pleases having no rule of law in his or her life except what he decides is right or wrong. The Torah causes us to take ownership of our sins and to confess them, to turn from them, and to lead us back to God’s ways and His Messiah (the Anointed One). The moral standards that each individual is given based upon the Torah, each person is then to decide whether he is part of a civil society or a barbarian society. This is the point of individual ethics and why the Torah (the Law of Moses) focuses upon loving God and loving those around us and not on the formal, ceremonial worship service in a physical temple. The Law of God does not solely depend upon “*temple worship*,” and this is why Yeshua did not mention temple worship when asked about the greatest commandment that is found in the Torah. God’s Law is focused on instructing us in how to love our Creator and how to love each other rather than on the worship service at the physical temple which may or may not be available, because our worshiping God in heaven is coupled to our faith, which are also coupled to our actions. This is how the two greatest commandments summarize all of the rest of the commandments. The Torah is all about loving our Creator and loving each other.

The psalm continues saying, ג הַיָּם רָאָה וַיִּנָּס הַיַּרְדֵּן יָסַב לְאַחֹר: ד הַהָרִים רָקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים גְּבַעוֹת פְּבַנִי-צֹאן: *The sea looked* 114:3 *מה-לף הים פי תנוס הירדן תסב לאחור: ו הַהָרִים תִּרְקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים גְּבַעוֹת פְּבַנִי-צֹאן:*

*and fled; The Jordan turned back. 114:4 The mountains skipped like rams, The hills, like lambs. 114:5 What ails you, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back? 114:6 O mountains, that you skip like rams? O hills, like lambs? (NASB)* The Psalm speaks of Parashat Beshalach (*Shemot / Exodus 13:17-17:16*) and the splitting of the Red Sea, and from the book of Joshua when Israel crossed the Jordan river during flood stage (see *Joshua 3*). *Tehillim / Psalms 114:4 and 114:6* speak of the mountains that skip like rams and hills like lambs. Why does the psalmist speak of the mountains and the hills? Is he speaking of the Lord's involvement in an earthquake? According to the Psalm, the mountains and the hills moved so much that they appeared to be skipping about like sheep in the midst of the flock, and this seems to be connected to the Red Sea and the Jordan river splitting. When we consider the Scriptures, have the mountains ever skipped like rams or the hills played like lambs? Searching back into the pages of the Bible, into the history of Israel or even into the sayings and the visions of the prophets, it is not possible to find any event like what is being described here. There is no historical time recorded in the Scriptures when the mountains and the hills "skipped like rams." *Tehillim / Psalms 97* speaks of the mountains in the following way:

### ***Tehillim / Psalms 97:1-9***

*97:1 The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice; Let the many islands be glad. 97:2 Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. 97:3 Fire goes before Him And burns up His adversaries round about. 97:4 His lightnings lit up the world; The earth saw and trembled. 97:5 The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. 97:6 The heavens declare His righteousness, And all the peoples have seen His glory. 97:7 Let all those be ashamed who serve graven images, Who boast themselves of idols; Worship Him, all you gods. 97:8 Zion heard this and was glad, And the daughters of Judah have rejoiced Because of Your judgments, O Lord. 97:9 For You are the Lord Most High over all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods. (NASB)*

*Tehillim / Psalms 97* speaks of the day of the Lord and when Israel stood before the mountain of Sinai being reminded of the *97:2 Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. 97:3 Fire goes before Him And burns up His adversaries round about. (NASB)* which draws in a Torah context to the emphasis being placed upon the Lord, powerful and mighty is He to overcome all things. The Psalm says that in the presence of the Lord the mountains will melt away like wax and speaks of the people who have seen His glory. Ezekiel also speaks of the mountains in the following way:

### ***Ezekiel 38:17-23***

*38:17 'Thus says the Lord God, 'Are you the one of whom I spoke in former days through My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those days for many years that I would bring you against them? 38:18 'It will come about on that day, when Gog comes against the land of Israel,' declares the Lord God, 'that My fury will mount up in My anger. 38:19 'In My zeal and in My blazing wrath I declare that on that day there will surely be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. 38:20 'The fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all the creeping things that creep on the earth, and all the men who are on the face of the earth will shake at My presence; the mountains also will be thrown down, the steep pathways will collapse and every wall will fall to the ground. 38:21 'I will call for a sword against him on all My mountains,' declares the Lord God. 'Every man's sword will be against his brother. 38:22 'With pestilence and with blood I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain on him and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone. 38:23 'I will magnify Myself, sanctify Myself, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations; and they will know that I am the Lord.' (NASB)*

Ezekiel speaks to a people who have been exiled from the Land of Israel and of the Lord who sought His people through the prophets whom they did not listen to. In this message that Ezekiel is giving the people, he speaks of the day when a nation will come against the people of Israel and God's fury will be released, an earthquake will occur, and all creatures, both man and beast will shake at God's presence. Notice how the Lord says that He will call a sword upon all of His mountains where every man's sword will be against his brother (*Ezekiel 38:21*). Note also that from a Torah context, the people are the inheritance of the Lord, and so the mountains are being paralleled to the people of the Lord. Because of the sin of the people, the Lord magnified Himself such that His word is righteous, true, and just, sending His people into a foreign land. The people here are being paralleled to the mountains, a solid foundation that is shaken. This may be why the Targum translates the Psalm in the way that it does. The Aramaic Targum reveals more to us in relation to the interpretation of the psalm which may be taking from our understanding of *Tehillim / Psalms 97* and *Ezekiel 38*, saying the following, *ג כד איתגלי מימרא דיי על ימא ימא אסתכל חמא ואפך יורדנא חזר, לאחזר: ד במיתן אוריתא לעמיה טוריא טפזו היך דכרין גילמתא היך בנין דען: ה אמר אלהא מה לך ימא ארום: 114:3 When the word of the Lord was revealed at the sea, the sea looked and retreated; the Jordan turned around. 114:4 When the Torah was given to his people, the mountains leapt like rams, the hills like offspring of the flock. 114:5 God said, "What is the matter, O sea, for you are retreating? O Jordan, that you are turning around?" 114:6 O mountains, leaping about like rams? O hills, like offspring of the flock? (EMC)* It was the word of the Lord that caused the oceans to divide and the mountains to skip. Note how the word of the Lord (His instruction, His Torah) when given to the people, the people are analogized to having become a great nation, and mighty mountains in the midst of the nations. This is the way the Torah describes the nation that takes hold of God's Law and makes it a part of their lives.

#### ***Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:4-9***

*4:4 'But you who held fast to the Lord your God are alive today, every one of you. 4:5 'See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it. 4:6 'So keep and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' 4:7 'For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the Lord our God whenever we call on Him? 4:8 'Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today? 4:9 'Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons. (NASB)*

#### ***Devarim / Deuteronomy 33:26-29***

*33:26 'There is none like the God of Jeshurun, Who rides the heavens to your help, And through the skies in His majesty. 33:27 'The eternal God is a dwelling place, And underneath are the everlasting arms; And He drove out the enemy from before you, And said, 'Destroy!' 33:28 'So Israel dwells in security, The fountain of Jacob secluded, In a land of grain and new wine; His heavens also drop down dew. 33:29 'Blessed are you, O Israel; Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord, Who is the shield of your help And the sword of your majesty! So your enemies will cringe before you, And you will tread upon their high places.' (NASB)*

Moshe describes those who take hold of the Torah as those who hold fast to the Lord God of Israel, those who do so are still alive. The statutes, judgments, and commandments are call the wisdom of the people in the Land of Israel. The Lord God of Israel will be near and the people will be a great nation in the midst of

the other nations. Moshe warns to listen (take heed) such that we keep our souls to remain faithful to the Lord and to teach our sons and grandsons how important it is to obey the Lord. The Lord is described as mighty and powerful to drive out our enemies and to cause us to live with security

The Psalm concludes saying, **ז מִלְפָּנֵי אֲדוֹן חוּלֵי אֶרֶץ מִלְפָּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: ה הִהְפְּכֵי הַצּוּר אֲגָם-מֵיָם חֲלָמִישׁ** ז מִלְפָּנֵי אֲדוֹן חוּלֵי אֶרֶץ מִלְפָּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: ה הִהְפְּכֵי הַצּוּר אֲגָם-מֵיָם חֲלָמִישׁ 114:7 Tremble, O earth, before the Lord, Before the God of Jacob, 114:8 Who turned the rock into a pool of water, The flint into a fountain of water. (NASB) The Lord is capable of doing anything, and therefore He should be feared while realizing He is merciful, holy, righteous, and just to His people. The destruction of the enemy is a favor to everyone because just as the arrest and punishment of a thief this is having mercy upon society because a thief will rob anyone. With this in mind, a prison is a display of mercy as well as justice to society as a whole. The Lord God does this because of His אמונה, truthfulness, with which He confirms the truth of His promises by His faithfulness to His promises and His צדקה, righteousness. The Lord establishes all of these things because of His great love for us. It is because of this the Aramaic Targum states, **ז מן קדם קיריס אתחלחלי ארעא מן קדם אלהא דיעקב: ה דהפיך טינרא לאריתא** ז מן קדם קיריס אתחלחלי ארעא מן קדם אלהא דיעקב: ה דהפיך טינרא לאריתא 114:7 In the presence of the lord, dance, O earth, in the presence of the God of Jacob. 114:8 Who turns the flint into a channel of water, the adamant to springs of water. (EMC) Truly we are able to rejoice in the presence of the Lord. Let's Pray!

## Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 114* has 9 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 2, 3, 4, and 5. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 114, Parts 2, 3, 4, and 5*.

### Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 114, Part 2, 3, 4, and 5

#### Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “Another comment on Praise you Yah. When Israel went forth out of Egypt, Judah became His sanctuary, Israel His dominion (*Tehillim / Psalms 113:9-114:1*).”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “Elsewhere, another psalm says, Sing (*siru*) unto God, sing praises to His name; extol (*sollu*) Him that rides upon the heavens by His name Yah, and rejoice before Him (*Tehillim / Psalms 68:5*).”
- The **משל** (mashal) “the parable,” goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihta), the rabbis speak of what it means to sing praise to the Lord.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “expansion on the parable” expands upon the **משל** (mashal), with a discussion on the three heavens.
- The Concluding phrase says, *Rabbi Phinehas the Priest son of Hama said, In the heaven called the aravot, the Holy One blessed be He, sows the doings of the righteous, and they bear fruit, as it is said, The will eat the fruit of their doings (Isaiah 3:10).*”

#### Part 3

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “Beyah is His title (*Tehillim / Psalms 68:5*).”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “Rabbi Judah the Prince asked Rabbi Samuel son of Nahman, What does Beyah is His title mean? Rabbi Samuel son of Nahmani (Nahman) replied, You know of no place that does not have a noteworthy man appointed as a magistrate to redress official wrongs.”



- The מַשַּׁל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פְּתִיחָה (Petihta), the rabbis speak of the name of God in a peculiar way.
- The נִמְשַׁל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the מַשַּׁל (mashal), with discussion on the YH the letters upon which the world was created.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*When David saw that the Holy One blessed be He, created two worlds with these two letters, he began to praise God with them saying Praise YH.*”

#### Part 4

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*When Israel came forth out of Egypt. Rabbi Eleazar haKappar taught, For four reasons were the children of Israel did not change their language; they did not reveal their secrets; and they were not wanton.*”
- The פְּתִיחָה (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*They did not change their names, The verses, These are the families of the Reubenites (Bamidbar / Numbers 26:7) and These families of the Shimeonites (Bamidbar / Numbers 26:14) prove that when they came down to Egypt, their names were Reuben and Simeon, and when they came forth out of Egypt, their language, They continued to speak their sacred language, as is said, When the house of Jacob came forth from a people of strange language, Judah kept to his sanctuary (Tehillim / Psalms 114:1-2) that is, kept to his sacred language.*”
- The מַשַּׁל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פְּתִיחָה (Petihta), the rabbis speak of Israel coming forth out of Egypt being wanton.
- The נִמְשַׁל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the מַשַּׁל (mashal), saying that when Israel came out of Egypt they were not wanton but that there were only a few people who were sinners in the midst of congregation.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*That is, He who spoke and the world came into being, He Himself testifies that in Israel there was no other child of wantonness except this one.*”

#### Part 5

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*Another comment on When Israel came forth out of Egypt, Through what merit did the children of Israel come forth out of Egypt?*”
- The פְּתִיחָה (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Rabbi Judah taught, Through the merit of the blood of the Passover Lamb and of the blood of the circumcision, as is said, I said unto you when you were in your blood, live; yes, I said, unto you when you were in your blood, live (Ezekiel 16:6).*”
- The מַשַּׁל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פְּתִיחָה (Petihta), the rabbis speak of merit in relation to the Lord delivering Israel from Egypt.
- The נִמְשַׁל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the מַשַּׁל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal speaking of the merit of the Torah which they were about to receive.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*Rabbi Abba son of Kahana taught, Through the merit of the generation of Isaiah, of which it is said, his children, the work of My hands, in the midst of him (Isaiah 29:23). Now when David saw on account of how many merits the children of Israel came forth out of Egypt, he began to sing in praise of the exodus from Egypt, Praise the Lord. When Israel came forth out of Egypt.*”

Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 2 opens with the דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*Another comment on Praise you Yah. When Israel went forth out of Egypt, Judah became His sanctuary, Israel His dominion (Tehillim / Psalms 113:9-114:1).*” The פְּתִיחָה (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Elsewhere, another psalm says, Sing (siru) unto God, sing praises to His name; extol (sollu) Him that rides*

upon the heavens by His name Yah, and rejoice before Him (Tehillim / Psalms 68:5).” The entire midrash states the following:

<p><b>מדרש תהלים פרק קיד סימן ב</b>  ב דבר אחר [בצאת ישראל ממצרים זהו שאמר הכתוב] שירו (לו) [לא־להים] זמרו שמו סולו לרוכב בערבות (תהלים סח ה), מה שירו, צפו לאלהים, כמו שנאמר לא תשורני עין רואי (איוב ז ח). דבר אחר אמרו לפניו שירים וז־מרים, מהו סולו, ר' יהודה אמר קילסו, ר' נחמיה אמר שפרו לפניו דרכיכם, כענין שנאמר סולו סולו המסלה (יש־עיה סב י). לרוכב בערבות. רבנן אמרו שני רקיעין הם, שנאמר לרוכב בשמי שמי קדם (תהלים סח לד). רבותינו אמרו שלש, שנאמר השמים ושמי השמים (מ"א מלכים א' ח כז), ר' אלעזר אומר שבעה הן, וילון רקיע שחק זבול מעון מכון ערבות, וכבודו של הקב"ה בערבות, אמר ר' חלפתא בן יעקב בשם ר' יהודה בר סימון ראה הקב"ה מע־שיהן של צדיקים, וערב עליו מעשיהם. אמר ר' פנחס הכהן בר חמא הרקיע ששמו ערבות הקב"ה זורע מעשה הצ־דיקים והם עושים פירות, שנאמר כי פרי מעלליהם יאכלו (ישעיה ג י).</p>	<p><b>Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 2</b>  2. Another comment on Praise you Yah. When Israel went forth out of Egypt, Judah became His sanctuary, Israel His dominion (Tehillim / Psalms 113:9-114:1). Elsewhere, another psalm says, Sing (siru) unto God, sing praises to His name; extol (sollu) Him that rides upon the heavens by His name Yah, and rejoice before Him (Tehillim / Psalms 68:5). What can siru mean? It can mean wait for God, as in the verse, The eye of him that would see Me will not wait for Me (tesureni) (Job 7:8). Or it can mean, Sing songs and praises before Him. What can sollu mean? Extol you, said Rabbi Judah. Smooth your way to Him, said Rabbi Nehemiah, as in the verse, Make smooth (sollu), make smooth the highway (Isaiah 62:10). Him that rides upon the heavens (aravot) (Tehillim / Psalms 68:5). The Rabbis taught that there are two heavens, since it is said, To Him that rides upon the heavens, the heavens which are of old (Tehillim / Psalms 68:34). Our Masters taught that there are three heavens, since it is said, Heaven, and the heaven of heaven (1 Kings 8:27). According to Rabbi Eleazar, there are seven heavens, namely, veil, expanse, firmament, habitation, dwelling, residence, aravot. And the glory of the Holy One blessed be He, is in the heaven called aravot. Rabbi Halafta son of Jacob taught in the name of Rabbi Judah son of Simon, The Holy One blessed be He, saw the deeds of the righteous and their deeds pleased ('rb) Him. Rabbi Phinehas the Priest son of Hama said, In the heaven called the aravot, the Holy One blessed be He, sows the doings of the righteous, and they bear fruit, as it is said, They will eat the fruit of their doings (Isaiah 3:10).</p>
---	--

The midrash looks at the end of *Tehillim / Psalms 113* and beginning of *Tehillim / Psalms 114* and speaks of when Israel was taken out of Egypt, Judah became the sanctuary of the Lord. What does it mean that Judah became His sanctuary? The commentary *Daat Zkenim* stats the following regarding the meaning of these verses.

***Daat Zkenim on Numbers 7:12:1***

(יב) ויהי המקריב ביום הראשון. משמע אעפ"י שאינו ראוי להקריב ראשון שאינו גדול שבשבטים שהרי ראובן ושמעון גדולים ממנו אלא שהוא תחלה לכל דבר כדפרי' לעיל א"נ לפי שהיה נשיאו גיסו של אהרן כהן גדול:

(12) and the prince who was the first one to present these offerings, etc.” The Torah underlines the fact that Nachshon was the first of the twelve princes to present this offering, although merely reading the list would have made this clear, as it wanted us to know that although he did not possess the seniority to be the first, he was accorded that honor. Seeing that in the future the tribe of Yehudah would provide the first Royal dynasty with the appointment of King David, this development, as predicted by Yaakov on his deathbed, is hinted at here. Alternately, he was accorded this honor seeing that he was the

The idea of Judah becoming the sanctuary of God is tied to the Torah in the sense that one's life becomes a living sacrifice that is righteous, holy, and willing to serve the Lord. The purpose of the sacrifice, based upon the context of the Torah, was to remind us to have a life that encounters God at every turn. We begin with blood, which consecrates, and symbolizes the life of the sacrifice that makes atonement. This atonement is what draws us nearer to the Lord in Heaven. The notion of being near to the Holy One, blessed be He, connects the idea of prayer with that of the freewill offerings. The reason being, both prayer and the freewill offerings serve as a means to this objective. Regarding the first verses in Vayikra / Leviticus, "When any of you presents an offering to the Lord" (*Vayikra / Leviticus 1:2*) Jewish commentators have asked "Why is it called *korban*, an offering?" The reason is because the person also brings his soul close before his Maker, and Rashi remarks here that this refers to freewill offerings. The idea is that within the sacrifice is the service of the imagination. The laying on of hands on the animal, sensing its life, and then seeing it being killed and having its warm blood smeared on the altar. The significance of this is found in the anointing of the priests, making sacred with the blood, anointing the ear, the thumb, the big toe, is synonymous to making sacred what one hears, what one sees, what one touches, and how we touch the lives of others. In the sense of Aaron and his sons, their lives were given as a gift to both God and the people. This is experienced every time they put their hands on a animal. Note that we are all priests and kings. If we are to consider the sacredness of our lives in the Messiah, how can we anoint what we hear, what we touch, and how we walk in this world so that our lives are a vehicle of awareness of the Lord God in this world? Jeremiah spoke of "obedience but not sacrifices." (*Jeremiah 7:22 'For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. 7:23 'But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you.'* NASB) Jeremiah speaks of what we do, it is not just about externalities (the sacrifices). It goes much deeper than this. In the dialogue between God and man, "God speaks to each man through the life He has given him and in the way in which the Lord upholds him." And, the only way in which man responds to Him is with his whole life "in the way he lives it." The Jewish teaching of the unity and oneness of God corresponds to this teaching of the oneness and all-inclusiveness of life in our relationship with God. The Lord gives man not merely spirit but success and existence in all its parts, from the lowest to the highest. Man's partnership with God cannot be confined or reduced to merely "spiritual" attitudes, or to devout feelings as modern theologies teach saying "No" to the Torah. Our relationship requires all of our lives, in all its aspects and relationships. Man can have no real part in holiness without the sanctification of his every-day life. The history of Judaism discloses that it has always opposed so-called "religion" because it has seen in it the attempt to buy off God, who demands all, with a limited segment of life. This is how the Psalmist can make this statement that "Israel went forth out of Egypt, Judah became his sanctuary, Israel His dominion." The rabbis of the Talmud state the following:

***Talmud Bavli Sotah 36B-37A***

*Rabbi Judah answered Rabbi Meir that in reality, no tribe was willing to be the first to go into the sea. Then Nahshon ben Aminadab stepped forward and went into the sea first, praying in the words of Psalm 69:2-16, "Save me O God, for the waters come into my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing . . . . Let not the water overwhelm me, neither let the deep swallow me up." Moses was then praying, so God prompted Moses, in words parallel those of Exodus 14:15, "My beloved ones are drowning in the sea, and you prolong prayer before Me!" Moses asked God, "Lord of the Universe, what is there in my power to do?" God replied in the words of Exodus 14:15-16, "Speak to the children of Israel, that they go forward. And lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go into the midst of the sea on dry ground." Because of Nahshon's actions, Judah merited becoming the ruling power in Israel, as Psalm 114:2 says, "Judah*

*became His sanctuary, Israel His dominion,” and that happened because, as Psalm 114:3 says, “The sea saw [him], and fled.”*

The Talmud speaks of the Red Sea to provide reason for the Lord taking Judah as his sanctuary. Their discussion is on the order of Nahshon son of Aminadab stepping forward in faith to enter the sea being the first and praying the psalm, Tehillim / Psalm 69:2–16, “*Save me O God, for the waters come into my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing . . . Let not the water overwhelm me, neither let the deep swallow me up.*” His faith was connected to his actions. This is why our faith is not merely spiritual attitudes or simply as devout feelings as modern theologies teach (“*all you have to do is just believe in Jesus, nothing else*”). Our faith is characterized by our faithfulness which is our willingness to obey God’s commands. The rabbis say “*Because of Nahshon’s actions, Judah merited becoming the ruling power in Israel.*” This is not a salvific merit that the rabbis are making, but one of faithfulness and the Lord working in the life of the people of Judah for the sake of His glory.

The midrash continues saying the following:

*The Rabbis taught that there are two heavens, since it is said, To Him that rides upon the heavens, the heavens which are of old (Tehillim / Psalms 68:34). Our Masters taught that there are three heavens, since it is said, Heaven, and the heaven of heaven (1 Kings 8:27). According to Rabbi Eleazar, there are seven heavens, namely, veil, expanse, firmament, habitation, dwelling, residence, and aravot. And the glory of the Holy One blessed be He, is in the heaven called aravot. Rabbi Halafta son of Jacob taught in the name of Rabbi Judah son of Simon, The Holy One blessed be He, saw the deeds of the righteous and their deeds pleased (‘rb) Him. (Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 2)*

This part of the midrash sounds a lot like what the Apostle Paul wrote in a letter to the Corinthian’s, he writes, “*I know a man in the Messiah who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.*” (2 Corinthians 12:2-4) The concept of Heaven is also called shamayi h’shamayim (שמי השמים or “*Heaven of Heavens*”) as mentioned in such passages as Bereshit / Genesis 28:12, Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:14 and 1 Kings 8:27 as the realm of God containing the angels and the Lord God of Israel.

Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 2 concludes saying, “*Rabbi Phinehas the Priest son of Hama said, In the heaven called the aravot, the Holy One blessed be He, sows the doings of the righteous, and they bear fruit, as it is said, They will eat the fruit of their doings (Isaiah 3:10).*” This idea of eating the fruit of their doings is paralleled to what the rabbis are teaching in the Talmud, “*Because of Nahshon’s actions, Judah merited becoming the ruling power in Israel.*” The blessings that are spoken of at the end of the Torah are the result of our choosing to serve the Lord and obey His commands. The blessing and the curses come to God’s children based upon how one lives his or her life before the Lord.

Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 3 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “*Be’yah is His title (Tehillim / Psalms 68:5).*” The פתיחה (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Rabbi Judah the Prince asked Rabbi Samuel son of Nahman, What does Be’yah is His title mean? Rabbi Samuel son of Nahmani (Nahman) replied, You know of no place that does not have a noteworthy man appointed as a magistrate to redress official wrongs.*” The Homiletic introduction has the Lord functioning as judge over all, in and through whom the wrongs that have been committed against us may be judged and corrected.

The entire midrash states the following:

**מדרש תהלים פרק קיד סימן ג**

ג ביה שמו (תהלים סח ה). ר' יהודה הנשיא שאל את ר' שמואל בר נחמן מהו שכ"תוב ביה שמו, אמר ליה ר' שמואל בר נחמני איך לך מקום ומקום שאין אדם גדול ממונה על בייא שלו, ומי ממונה על בייא של עולמו, כביכול הקב"ה, שנאמר ביה שמו, אתמהא אל תהי קורא ביה אלא ביא שמו, אמר ר' יהודה הנשיא לר' שמואל בר נחמני שאילית לחכימיא ואמרין לי חבל על דמובדין ולא משתכחין, שאילת לר' אלעזר ולא אמר לי כן, אלא בשתי אותיות הללו ברא הקב"ה שתי עולמות, שנאמר כי ביה ה' צור עולמים (ישעיה כו ד), ביי"ה בראם, [ואין אנו יודעין אם העור"לם הזה נברא בה"א והעולם הבא ביו"ד, או אם העולם הזה נברא ביו"ד והעולם הבא בה"א, אלא ממה דכתיב בהבראם (בראשית ב ד), בה"א בראם], הוי העור"לם הזה נברא בה"א [והעולם הבא נברא ביו"ד], ומה ה"א פתוחה מלמטה וסתומה מלמעלה, כך העולם הזה כל מה שנברא בו יורד בקבר, ואותה עקיצה שיש בה רמז לתחיית המתים, והעולם הבא נברא ביו"ד, מה עיסקו של יו"ד קומתו כפופה, כך קומתן של רשעים עתידין להיות מכור"כמות וירקרוקות לעולם הבא, שנאמר ושח גבהות האדם [וגו'] (ישע"י ב יז), כיון שראה דוד שבשתי אותיות הללו ברא הקב"ה את שני עולמות התחיל מקלס בהן הללויה.

**Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 3**

3. *Be'yah is His title (Tehillim / Psalms 68:5). Rabbi Judah the Prince asked Rabbi Samuel son of Nahman, What does Be'yah is His title mean? Rabbi Samuel son of Nahmani (Nahman) replied, You know of no place that does not have a noteworthy man appointed as a magistrate to redress official wrongs. And who is appointed to redress such wrongs in the world? It is, if one dare speak thus, the Holy One blessed be He, for Be'yah is His title cannot be understood unless it is read not Be'yah but Bia (the magistrate who redresses official wrongs) is His title. Then Rabbi Judah the Prince said to Rabbi Samuel son of Nahmani, When I asked of the Sages, alas that they are gone and have not been replaced. The meaning of be'yah, how well they answered. For when I asked Rabbi Eleazar, he did not answer as you did, but said, The Holy One blessed be He, created two worlds with two letters, as is said, With YH (be'yah) the Lord created worlds (Isaiah 26:4). That is, created them with the letters yod and he. But we do not know whether this world was created with the he and the world to come with the yod, or whether this world was created with the yod and the world to come with the he. But since Scripture says, These are the generations of the heaven, and of the earth bhbr'm. (Bereshit / Genesis 2:4), that is, b (with), h (the letter he), br'm (He created them), therefore with the letter he God created heaven and earth. And since this world was created with the letter he, the world to come was created with the letter yod. Even as the letter he is open at the bottom and closed on top, so this world and all it contains will go down into the grave; the upward pointing serif at the top of the letter, however, intimates the resurrection of the dead. The world to come was created with the letter yod, and even as the shape of the yod is bent, so in the world to come the pride of the wicked will be brought low, and they will be pale with shame, as is said, And the loftiness of man will be bowed down (Isaiah 2:17). When David saw that the Holy One blessed be He, created two worlds with these two letters, he began to praise God with them saying Praise YH.*

The rabbis open with questions about the judge and magistrate in comparison to the Lord God of Israel. They compare the name of God as a circumlocution (Be'yah, ביה) and speak of the Lord as a righteous judge. The title of the Lord as Be'yah is not well understood except outside of a kabalistic interpretation. The midrash proceeds to the reason for the Lord's name having the Yod (י) and Heh (ה) as He created two words, one with each letter. The two worlds being the Olam Hazeah (עולם הזה, this world) and the Olam Haba (עולם הבא, the world to come). Based upon the Scriptures, the rabbis say,

*But since Scripture says, These are the generations of the heaven, and of the earth bhbr'm (בהבראם). (Bereshit / Genesis 2:4), that is, b (with), h (the letter he), br'm (He created them), therefore with the letter he God created heaven and earth. And since this world was created with the letter he, the world to come was created with the letter yod. Even as the letter he is open at the bottom and closed on top, so this world and all it contains will go down into the*

grave; the upward pointing serif at the top of the letter, however, intimates the resurrection of the dead.

The Hebrew text coupled with the shape of the Hebrew letters causes the rabbis to draw the conclusion that this world was created with the letter Heh (ה) that all men will go down to the grave, and the letter Yod (י) was used to create the world to come because in the world to come the pride of men will be broken. In addition, the letter Heh (ה), the upward pointing serif indicates the resurrection of the dead. It does seem as if a lot of theology is being read into the Midrash based upon the letters from the Hebrew text.

Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 3 concludes saying, *“The world to come was created with the letter yod, and even as the shape of the yod is bent, so in the world to come the pride of the wicked will be brought low, and they will be pale with shame, as is said, And the loftiness of man will be bowed down (Isaiah 2:17). When David saw that the Holy One blessed be He, created two worlds with these two letters, he began to praise God with them saying Praise YH.”* The conclusion is that David recognized these things in the circumlocution of the name of God and by recognizing these things, he praises the name of God using the circumlocution (Yah). Again, the circumlocution was meant to preserve the name, to guard against its defamation.

Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 4 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) (Dibur Hamathil) saying, *“When Israel came forth out of Egypt. Rabbi Eleazar haKappar taught, For four reasons were the children of Israel did not change their language; they did not reveal their secrets; and they were not wanton.”* The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *“They did not change their names, The verses, These are the families of the Reubenites (Bamidbar / Numbers 26:7) and These families of the Shimeonites (Bamidbar / Numbers 26:14) prove that when they came down to Egypt, their names were Reuben and Simeon, and when they came forth out of Egypt, their language, They continued to speak their sacred language...”*

<p><b>מדרש תהלים פרק קיד סימן ד</b> ד בצאת ישראל ממצרים. אמר ר' אלעזר הקפר בזכות ארבעה דברים [נגאלו ישראל ממצרים], שלא שינו את שמם, ולא שינו את לשונם, ולא גילו את מסתורין שלהם, ולא היו פרוצים בעריות. לא שינו את שמם, (לראובן) [אלה] משפחות הראובני (במדבר כו ז), (לשמעון) [אלה] משפחות השמעוני (שם שם במדבר כ"ו יד), כי נחתין ראובן ושמעון, וכי סלקין ראובן ושמעון. ולא שינו את לשונם, שהיו מספרים לשון הקודש, שנאמר בית יעקב מעם לועז היתה יהודה לקדשו (פסוק א וב), ללשון הקודש שלו. ולא גילו מסתורין שלהם, את מוצא שהדיבור היה מופקד אצלם שנים עשר חודש, שאמר להם ושאלה אשה משכנתה (שמות ג כב), ולא היה בהם איש שגילה את הדיבור. ולא היו פרוצין בעריות, אחת היתה בהן והקב"ה פירסמה, דכתיב ויצא בן אשה ישראלית והוא בן איש מצרי [וגו' ושם אמו שלומית בת דברי למטה דן] (ויקרא כד י יא), מי שאמר והיה העולם מעיד שאין בישראל אלא הוא.</p>	<p><b>Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 4</b> 4. When Israel came forth out of Egypt. Rabbi Eleazar haKappar taught, For four reasons were the children of Israel did not change their language; they did not reveal their secrets; and they were not wanton. They did not change their names, The verses, These are the families of the Reubenites (Bamidbar / Numbers 26:7) and These families of the Shimeonites (Bamidbar / Numbers 26:14) prove that when they came down to Egypt, their names were Reuben and Simeon, and when they came forth out of Egypt, their language, They continued to speak their sacred language, as is said, When the house of Jacob came forth from a people of strange language, Judah kept to his sanctuary (Tehillim / Psalms 114:1-2) that is, kept to his sacred language. They did not reveal their secrets, You will find that a divine command was committed to their keeping for twelve months; God told them, Every woman will ask of her neighbor jewels of silver, etc. (Shemot / Exodus 3:22), and there was not one among them who disclosed the divine command. They were not wanton, There was only one loose woman among them, and the Holy One blessed be He, made her name known, as is written, And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, and whose mother's name was Shelomit, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan (Vayikra / Leviticus 24:10-11). That is, He who spoke and the world came into being, He Himself testifies that in Israel there was no other child of wantonness except this one.</p>
---	---

The rabbis in the opening to the midrash state using the example of the Rubenites, that they went in speaking the sacred language and they came out speaking the sacred language. A sacred language, “*holy language*” (in religious context) or liturgical language is a language that is cultivated for religious purposes by people who speak another language in their daily lives. The core of the Tanakh (the Hebrew Bible) is written in Biblical Hebrew, referred to by some as Leshon Ha-Kodesh (לשון הקודש), “*The Holy Language*,” where Hebrew is the Holy Language (and, in the case of a few texts such as the Kaddish, Aramaic) remains the traditional language of Jewish religious services, although its usage today varies. The Orthodox services are almost entirely in Hebrew, Reform services make more use of the national language and only use Hebrew for a few prayers and hymns, and Conservative services usually fall somewhere in-between. Rabbinic Hebrew and Aramaic are used extensively by the Orthodox for writing religious texts, etc. The concept of the Rubenites entering and leaving maintaining their sacred language is synonymous to maintaining their faithfulness to the Lord. The midrash states both the Rubenites and the Simeonites went into and come out of Egypt while maintaining the sacred language. This is paralleled to “*When the house of Jacob came forth from a people of strange language, Judah kept to his sanctuary (Tehillim / Psalms 114:1-2) that is, kept to his sacred language.*” The midrash speaks of Israel not revealing her secrets. What does that mean? The midrash says that “*a divine command was committed to their keeping for twelve months; God told them, Every woman will ask of her neighbor jewels of silver, etc. (Shemot / Exodus 3:22), and there was not one among them who disclosed the divine command.*” So the idea is that the people did not go to their Egyptian neighbor and say “*God commanded that you give me gold and silver.*” If they would have done so, that would have caused a kick back from the Egyptians. This suggests that the way we approach the gentiles with God’s Word is to be seasoned with salt. When sharing the gospel message coupled with the Torah way of life, the midrash speaks to us that we should go to our neighbors and speak to them with conversations about life which may then lead to conversations about the Lord.

Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 4 concludes saying, “*They were not wanton, There was only one loose woman among them, and the Holy One blessed be He, made her name known, as is written, And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, and whose mother’s name was Shelomit, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan (Vayikra / Leviticus 24:10-11). That is, He who spoke and the world came into being, He Himself testifies that in Israel there was no other child of wantonness except this one.*” The midrash concludes with a comment on whether Israel come out of Egypt wanton. The idea of wantonness is paralleled to a loose woman, questioning whether the people had left Egypt wanton for sin and immorality. The midrash states there was only one woman who was in such a state suggesting that there was a marginal group of people that were causing trouble for the rest of the nation of Israel. This illustrates the importance of whom we keep as close friends based upon this Torah context of “*living in the midst of us.*”

Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 5 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “*Another comment on When Israel came forth out of Egypt, Through what merit did the children of Israel come forth out of Egypt?*” This statement draws with it the concept of salvation from slavery in the sense that Israel merited their deliverance. What was the merit that Israel performed that had led to her deliverance? On the topic of salvation, Christianity maintains that all men are doomed to sin, and everyone will go to everlasting hell unless they accept Jesus as their savior. Judaism on the other hand does not hold to that belief. Judaism teaches that we are not doomed or damned at birth meaning that we are not doomed or fated to sin. The Torah says, “*If you do good, won’t there be special privilege? And if you do not do good, sin waits at the door. It lusts after you, but you can dominate it.*” (Bereshit / Genesis 4:7) It was the Lord God Himself that said this to Cain. The basic premise of the Torah text is that you can do good, and if you do, things will be better for you. If you do not do good, sin wants to be partners with you. But you can control sin, you can control your evil desires, and you can do what is right. We all have free will, and that is what Judaism teaches, because that is what the Torah teaches. The Torah does not teach and nowhere in God’s Word does it teach that we are “*born in sin,*” or that we are “*fated to sin.*” This is simply a product of Christian theologies. This is supported by the fact that the Apostle Paul wrote we were created for righteous works (Ephesians 2:10). Paul believes that we have the ability to choose to do what is right. This concept of being born into sin, taught in the theologies of Christianity, has been confused with our own imperfections in the sense that

though we choose to do good, there are times when we fail to do so. This does not cause fault with the Law of God but with ourselves as sinful creatures. Modern theologies would have you believe that the Law has failed and so the Lord had to do something else (new). Paul wrote “*all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23). He did not write that the Law of God has failed. It is mankind that fails, the Law of God according to Paul is righteous, holy, and true (Romans 7). The midrash states in the homiletic introduction, “*Rabbi Judah taught, Through the merit of the blood of the Passover Lamb and of the blood of the circumcision, as is said, I said unto you when you were in your blood, live; yes, I said, unto you when you were in your blood, live (Ezekiel 16:6).*” The idea here is that Israel relied upon something other than good works for their deliverance from bondage, slavery, and sin. It was the blood of the sacrificial lamb that merited their deliverance.

The entire midrash states the following:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>מדרש תהלים פרק קיד סימן ה</b></p> <p>ה דבר אחר בצאת ישראל ממצרים. באיזה זכות יצאו בני ישראל ממצרים, ר' יהודה אומר בזכות דם הפסח ודם המילה, שנאמר ואומר לך בדמך חיי ואומר לך בדמך חיי (יחזקאל יו), ר' נחמיה אומר בזכות התורה שעתידין לקבל, שנאמר וירא אלהים את בני ישראל (שמות ב כה), ובמתן תורה כתיב וכל העם רואים את הקולות (שם שמות כ יח), ויש לך מקום אחר ללמוד ממנו, בהוציאך את העם ממצרים תעבדון את האלהים (בהר) [על ההר] הזה (שם שמות ג יב), ר' יהושע בן לוי אומר בזכות המשכן שעתידין לעשות, שנאמר וירא אלהים את בני ישראל (שם שמות ב כה), ובמשכן כתיב וירא משה את כל המלאכה (שם שמות לט מג), ויש לך מקום אחר ללמוד, אשר הוצאתי אותם מארץ מצרים לשכני בתוכם (שם שמות כט מו), על תנאי לשכני בתוכם. ר' אליעזר בן יעקב אומר בזכות הנגיה מישראל ועזריה, שנאמר וירא אלהים את בני ישראל (שם שמות ב כה), ובהם כתיב כי בראותו ילדיו מעשה ידי בקרב רבו יקדישו שמי [והקדישו את קדוש יעקב] (ישעיה כט כג), מהו כי בראותו ילדיו, ילדים אשר אין בהם כל מום (דניאל א ד), שהקדישו שמי בכבשן האש. ר' אבא בר כהנא אומר בזכות דורו של ישעיה, שנאמר מר מעשה ידי בקרבו, וכיון שראה דוד כן בכמה זכויות ישראל יוצאין, התחיל מקלס על יציאת מצרים, הללויה בצאת ישראל ממצרים.</p>	<p><b>Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 5</b></p> <p>5. Another comment on When Israel came forth out of Egypt, Through what merit did the children of Israel come forth out of Egypt? Rabbi Judah taught, Through the merit of the blood of the Passover Lamb and of the blood of the circumcision, as is said, I said unto you when you were in your blood, live; yes, I said, unto you when you were in your blood, live (Ezekiel 16:6). Rabbi Nehemiah taught, Through the merit of the Torah which they were to receive, for it is said, And God saw the children of Israel (Shemot / Exodus 2:25), and then it is said, And all the people saw the thundering (Shemot / Exodus 20:15) at the giving of the Torah. So too, you may learn from another passage in which Moshe is told When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will serve God upon this mountain (Shemot / Exodus 3:12). Rabbi Joshua son of Levi taught, Through the merit of the Tabernacle, which the children of Israel make, or it is said, And God saw the children of Israel (Shemot / Exodus 2:25), and then it is said, And Moshe saw all the work (Shemot / Exodus 39:43) of the Tabernacle. So too, you may learn from another passage in which God says, I that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them (Shemot / Exodus 29:46) that is, with the stipulation that I dwell among them. Rabbi Eliezer son of Jacob taught, Through the merit of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, for it is said, And God saw the children of Israel (Shemot / Exodus 2:25), and then it is said of Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, When Jacob sees his children, the work of My hands, in the midst of him, that they sanctify My name, yes, they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob (Isaiah 29:23). What children are alluded to in When he sees his children? Those children in whom was no blemish (Daniel 1:4), who sanctified God's name in the fiery furnace. Rabbi Abba son of Kahana taught, Through the merit of the generation of Isaiah, of which it is said, his children, the work of My hands, in the midst of him (Isaiah 29:23). Now when David saw on account of how many merits the children of Israel came forth out of Egypt, he began to sing in praise of the exodus from Egypt, Praise the Lord. When Israel came forth out of Egypt.</p>
---	---



The midrash states, “*Rabbi Judah taught, Through the merit of the blood of the Passover Lamb and of the blood of the circumcision, as is said, I said unto you when you were in your blood, live; yes, I said, unto you when you were in your blood, live (Ezekiel 16:6).*” Rabbi Judah concludes that it was through the merit of the blood of the passover Lamb and the blood of circumcision that merited Israel’s deliverance. It is interesting to point out that Rabbi Judah is providing some tension in the text by coupling circumcision to the passover lamb. It is important to consider and figure out what he is trying to say concerning circumcision because circumcision was not a part of the passover festival. In fact, the Torah describes the people as not being circumcised, as not having circumcised their own children. (*Joshua 5:2*) What is it about circumcision that Rabbi Judah is trying to make in his statements about the merit of the passover lamb? It could be that this is related to having a repentant heart in the sense that without a circumcised heart, the blood of the lamb would not merit anything. According to the midrash, Rabbi Nehemiah taught the following:

*Rabbi Nehemiah taught, Through the merit of the Torah which they were to receive, for it is said, And God saw the children of Israel (Shemot / Exodus 2:25), and then it is said, And all the people saw the thundering (Shemot / Exodus 20:15) at the giving of the Torah. So too, you may learn from another passage in which Moshe is told When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will serve God upon this mountain (Shemot / Exodus 3:12). (Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 5)*

The idea here is that the reason the Lord delivered His people was so that He could give them His Torah (instructions) at the mountain of Sinai. The people were brought to the mountain for the purpose of serving God in the way that He wants to be served by the way that His people live their lives. The reason the Lord delivered the people was due to His mercy, and so His word would be fulfilled (His word would come true). According to the midrash, Rabbi Joshua taught the following:

*Rabbi Joshua son of Levi taught, Through the merit of the Tabernacle, which the children of Israel make, or it is said, And God saw the children of Israel (Shemot / Exodus 2:25), and then it is said, And Moshe saw all the work (Shemot / Exodus 39:43) of the Tabernacle. So too, you may learn from another passage in which God says, I that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them (Shemot / Exodus 29:46) that is, with the stipulation that I dwell among them. (Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 5)*

Rabbi Joshua taught that it was for the reason of the Tabernacle that Israel was brought out of Egypt. This is an interesting comment because it parallels the concept of God’s dwelling in our midst. The Lord delivers His people so that He can dwell in their midst. The Lord gives His people His instructions to live by so that He can dwell in their midst. The stipulation for the Lord delivering His people, was so He could dwell in their midst, not so they could go on to continue in sin. Have you ever thought about that considering anything that may be going on in your life? Do you seek deliverance, healing, or some other mighty work of God in your life? If the Lord would bring this into your life, how would it effect your relationship with the Lord or with others? What about sin that may be in your life? Will it cause you to turn from sin or will you continue in your sin regardless of what the Lord does for you? Remember Yeshua’s words when he said in *John 5:14* Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.” (NIV)

According to the midrash, Rabbi Eliezer taught the following:

*Rabbi Eliezer son of Jacob taught, Through the merit of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, for it is said, And God saw the children of Israel (Shemot / Exodus 2:25), and then it is said of Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, When Jacob sees his children, the work of My hands, in the midst of him, that they sanctify My name, yes, they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob (Isaiah 29:23). What children are alluded to in When he sees his children? Those children in*

*whom was no blemish (Daniel 1:4), who sanctified God's name in the fiery furnace. (Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 5)*

Rabbi Eliezer refers to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, three faithful men who were thrown into a furnace because of their faith in the Lord God of Israel. The Lord delivered them and preserved them in the midst of the fire that was so hot, the guards who threw them into the furnace died due to the heat. This interpretation is also important, because it speaks of deliverance in the context of living a faithful life, just as the midrash states “*When Jacob sees his children, the work of My hands, in the midst of him, that they sanctify My name, yes, they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob (Isaiah 29:23).*” Note how Jacob sees the world of God’s hands in the lives of his children. The Lord helps His people remain faithful.

Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 5 concludes saying, “*Rabbi Abba son of Kahana taught, Through the merit of the generation of Isaiah, of which it is said, his children, the work of My hands, in the midst of him (Isaiah 29:23). Now when David saw on account of how many merits the children of Israel came forth out of Egypt, he began to sing in praise of the exodus from Egypt, Praise the Lord. When Israel came forth out of Egypt.*” Rabbi Abba taught that it was for the merit of a future generation in the time of Isaiah the prophet that Israel was delivered from Egypt. The idea here is that God’s promises are brought to pass for the sake of the past, present, and future generations. Are you able to see the overarching theme that is being drawn out here in Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 5? Having a closer look at the interpretations of the rabbis discloses the fact that Judaism is opposed to the so-called “*religion*” of meriting eternal life. The rabbis teach of the sacredness of the life of the believer in the commands that God has given us. At the center of all these things from a Torah context is the need to seek the Lord God of Israel and His anointed one for atonement before our Father in heaven. The idea provided to us in these Scriptures and the interpretations of the midrash speak about our faith being coupled to our actions. This is illustrated here in the concept of merit, where we are called to actively seek and live our lives for the Lord. The act of seeking and living is not what produces merit. It is the observation of our hearts having the right motivation to live for the Lord in Righteousness, Holiness, Justice, and Truth which demonstrates not only how the Lord is working in our hearts, but also our love for the Lord and what He has done for us. If we say that we have faith in Yeshua, and are not motivated to live for Him according to God’s Word, can we say what Yeshua has done has been subjectively appropriated to us? The only way to receive the benefit of the Messiah’s life, death, and resurrection, is by abiding in Him which means we are putting our trust in him and determining our hearts and lives to seek the Lord on a daily basis. The concept here that is taken from Parashat Vayikra is that our faith is demonstrated by our willingness to obey God’s Word and to turn from sin. Sure we all fall short of doing so. This does not cause fault with the Law of God but with ourselves as sinful creatures. The point is, we were created for righteous works. If our lives demonstrate the lack of trying there is a much a much deeper spiritual problem taking place that may be related to a one believing in a theology as opposed to what is actually being taught in the Scriptures. When it comes to salvation and faith in the Messiah Yeshua, if you do not have a deep desire to live your life to bring glory to His name, this would suggest there is a deadness of the spirit. If you find this happening in your life, get down on your knees and prayer, and ask the Lord to help created in your heart a deep desire to deeply, truly, and honestly seek Him and His ways, and to turn from sin in the Messiah Yeshua. Then, get up and determine your heart to serve the Lord, and do what it takes to turn from sin as best that you can. (Note what the author of Hebrews stays in *Hebrews 12:4 You have not yet resisted to blood, striving against sin. NASB*) Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Your great love. We believe You are able to overcome all things, from saving us from our enemies, to the deliverance from sin, and even to work in our hearts to deeply, truly, and honestly seek you all the days of our lives. We recognize the weaknesses in our strength and resolve to serve You and to do what is expected, to be humble and to pray and to remain in Your word. Lord help us to have the strength

— Tehillim / Psalms 114 | ספר תהילים קיד —

to stand for truth and life, to have the desire to seek You in prayer and in Your Word, to have faith in Yeshua Your Messiah, and to love our neighbor each day. We thank You Lord for Your continued faithfulness to Your promises and to us. Help us to grow in our faith, to walk in the spirit, and apply these truths to our lives. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

In Yeshua's (Jesus') Name we pray! Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

\*\*\*\*\*

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,

“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever

## Notes