

ספר תהילים פב | Tehillim / Psalms 82

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A discussion on “ye are gods”

In this week’s study from *Tehillim / Psalms 82:1-8*, the Psalm opens saying, א מִזְמוֹר לְאַסָּף אֱלֹהִים נֹצֵב, *A psalm of Asaph. 82:1 God takes His stand in His own congregation; He judges in the midst of the rulers. (NASB)* Asaph states that the Lord God takes a stand in His own congregation. What does it mean that He is taking a stand? He says that the Lord judges in the midst of judges (יִשְׁפֹּט). The Apostle Peter said in *1 Peter 4:17 For it is the time for the judgment to have begun from the house of God; and if from us first, what will be the outcome of those disobeying the gospel of God? (NASB)* Note the Judgment is based upon obedience. Asaph continues saying, ב עַד־מְתֵי תִשְׁפֹּטוּ-עוֹל וּפְגִי רְשָׁעִים, *תִּשְׁאוּ-סֵלָה: ג שְׁפֹטוּ-תְל וַיְתוֹם עֲנִי גֵר־שׁ הַצְּדִיקוּ: ד פְּלִטוּ-תְל וְאַבְיוֹן מִיַּד רְשָׁעִים הַצְּלִלוּ: ה לֹא יִדְעוּ וְלֹא יָבִינוּ מוֹסְדֵי אֶרֶץ: ו אַנְי־אַמְרֵתִי אֱלֹהִים אַתֶּם וּבְנֵי עֲלִיוֹן כְּלִכֶּם: ז אַכֹּן כָּאֲדָם תְּמוּתוּן וְכֹאחַד הַשָּׁרִים תְּפִלוּ: ח קוּמָה אֱלֹהִים שְׁפֹטָה הָאָרֶץ, תְּנַחֵל בְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם: ט* *82:2 How long will you judge unjustly And show partiality to the wicked? Selah. 82:3 Vindicate the weak and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and destitute. 82:4 Rescue the weak and needy; Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked. 82:5 They do not know nor do they understand; They walk about in darkness; All the foundations of the earth are shaken. (NASB)* Notice how judgment is connected to showing partiality to the wicked, to justice, righteousness, and having just scales, weights and measures, and to being called gods (*the term Elohim is a homonym, and denotes God, angels, judges*). The Psalm continues saying, ו אַנְי־אַמְרֵתִי אֱלֹהִים אַתֶּם וּבְנֵי עֲלִיוֹן כְּלִכֶּם: ז אַכֹּן כָּאֲדָם תְּמוּתוּן וְכֹאחַד הַשָּׁרִים תְּפִלוּ: ח קוּמָה אֱלֹהִים שְׁפֹטָה הָאָרֶץ, *82:6 I said, ‘You are gods, And all of you are sons of the Most High. 82:7 Nevertheless you will die like men And fall like any one of the princes. (NASB)* The Psalm concludes saying, ח קוּמָה אֱלֹהִים שְׁפֹטָה הָאָרֶץ, *82:8 Arise, O God, judge the earth! For it is You who possesses all the nations. (NASB)* What is Asaph trying to say when he calls out to the Lord God in heaven to raise up, to judge the earth, and declares that He is the one who possesses all the nations?

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
ספר תהלים פרק פב	ספר תהלים פרק פב	סמר טוביה פרק פב	סמר טוביה פרק פב	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 82	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 82
א מִזְמוֹר לְאַסָּף אֱלֹהִים נֹצֵב בְּעֵדֶת־ אֵל בְּקִרְבַּ אֱלֹהִים יִשְׁפֹּט: ב עַד־מְתֵי תִשְׁפֹּטוּ-עוֹל וּפְגִי רְשָׁעִים תִּשְׁאוּ- סֵלָה: ג שְׁפֹטוּ-תְל וַיְתוֹם עֲנִי גֵר־שׁ הַצְּדִיקוּ: ד פְּלִטוּ-תְל וְאַבְיוֹן מִיַּד רְשָׁעִים הַצְּלִלוּ: ה לֹא יִדְעוּ וְלֹא יָבִינוּ בְּחִשְׁבָּה יִתְהַלְכוּ יָמוּטוּ כָּל־ מוֹסְדֵי אֶרֶץ: ו אַנְי־אַמְרֵתִי אֱלֹהִים אַתֶּם וּבְנֵי עֲלִיוֹן כְּלִכֶּם: ז אַכֹּן כָּאֲדָם תְּמוּתוּן וְכֹאחַד הַשָּׁרִים תְּפִלוּ: ח קוּמָה אֱלֹהִים שְׁפֹטָה הָאָרֶץ כִּי־אַתָּה תְּנַחֵל בְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם:		א תושבחתא על ידא דאסף אלהים שכי נתיה שריא בכינשת צדיקין דתקיפין באוריתא במצע דינין דקשוט ידן: ב עד אימתי רשיעיא תדונן שקר ואפי רשיעיא תסבון לעלמין: ג דונו מסכינא ויתמא ענייא ומסכינא אצדיקו: ד שזיבו מסכן וחשוכא מן ידיהון דרשיעיא פצו יתהון: ה לא חכימו לאוטבא ולא איתביינו באוריתא בחשוכא מהלכין מטול היכנא מתמוטטין ריגליהון די בססי ארעא: ו אנא אמרית היך כמלאכיא אתון חשיבין והיך אנגלי מרומא כולכון: ז ברם בקושטא היך בני נשא תמותון והיך חד מן רברבניא תפלון: ח קום יהוה דון ית כל יתבי ארעא ארום את תחסין חסין בכל עממיא:		82:1 ψαλμὸς τῷ Ἀσαφ ὁ θεὸς ἔσθη ἐν συναγωγῇ θεῶν ἐν μέσῳ δὲ θεοὺς διακρίνει 82:2 ἕως πότε κρίνετε ἀδικίαν καὶ πρόσωπα ἁμαρτωλῶν λαμβάνετε διάψαλμα 82:3 κρίνατε ὄρφανόν καὶ πτωχόν ταπεινόν καὶ πένητα δικαιοῦσατε 82:4 ἐξέλεσθε πένητα καὶ πτωχόν ἐκ χειρὸς ἁμαρτωλοῦ ῥύσασθε 82:5 οὐκ ἔγνωσαν οὐδὲ συνῆκαν ἐν σκοτει διαπορεύονται σαλευθήσονται πάντα τὰ θεμέλια τῆς γῆς 82:6 ἐγὼ εἶπα θεοί ἐστε καὶ υἱοὶ ὑψίστου πάντες 82:7 ὑμεῖς δὲ ὡς ἄνθρωποι ἀποθνήσκετε καὶ ὡς εἷς τῶν ἀρχόντων πίπτετε 82:8 ἀνάστα ὁ θεὸς κρίνον τὴν γῆν ὅτι σὺ κατακληρονομῆσεις ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν	

<p>Tehillim / Psalms 82 A psalm of Asaph. 82:1 God takes His stand in His own congregation; He judges in the midst of the rulers. 82:2 How long will you judge unjustly And show partiality to the wicked? Selah. 82:3 Vindicate the weak and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and destitute. 82:4 Rescue the weak and needy; Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked. 82:5 They do not know nor do they understand; They walk about in darkness; All the foundations of the earth are shaken. 82:6 I said, ‘You are gods, And all of you are sons of the Most High. 82:7 Nevertheless you will die like men And fall like any one of the princes. 82:8 Arise, O God, judge the earth! For it is You who possesses all the nations. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms 82 82:1 A hymn composed by Asaph. God, his presence abides in the assembly of the righteous who are strong in Torah; he will give judgment in the midst of the righteous judges. 82:2 How long, O wicked, will you judge falsely, and lift up the faces of the wicked forever? 82:3 Judge the poor and the orphan; acquit the needy and the poor. 82:4 Save the poor and needy, from the hands of the wicked deliver them. 82:5 They do not know how to do good, and they do not understand the Torah, they walk in darkness; because of this, the pillars of the earth’s foundations shake. 82:6 I said, “You are reckoned as angels, and all of you are like angels of the height.” 82:7 But truly you will die like the sons of men; and like one of the leaders you will fall. 82:8 Arise, O Lord, judge all the inhabitants of the earth; for you will possess all the Gentiles.(EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 82 A Psalm for Asaph. 82:1 God stands in the assembly of gods; and in the midst of them will judge gods. 82:2 How long will ye judge unrighteously, and accept the persons of sinners? Pause. 82:3 Judge the orphan and poor: do justice to the low and needy. 82:4 Rescue the needy, and deliver the poor out of the hand of the sinner. 82:5 They know not, nor understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth shall be shaken. 82:6 I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you children of the Most High. 82:7 But ye die as men, and fall as one of the princes. 82:8 Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations. (LXX)</p>
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Devarim / Deuteronomy 29:9-15 (Nitzavim)

29:10 ‘You stand today, all of you, before the Lord your God: your chiefs, your tribes, your elders and your officers, even all the men of Israel, 29:11 your little ones, your wives, and the alien who is within your camps, from the one who chops your wood to the one who draws your water, 29:12 that you may enter into the covenant with the Lord your God, and into His oath which the Lord your God is making with you today, 29:13 in order that He may establish you today as His people and that He may be your God, just as He spoke to you and as He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 29:14 ‘Now not with you alone am I making this covenant and this oath, 29:15 but both with those who stand here with us today in the presence of the Lord our God and with those who are not with us here today (NASB)

ט אָתָּם נִצְבִים הַיּוֹם כָּלְכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם רְאִשֵׁיכֶם שְׁבִטֵיכֶם זְקֵנֵיכֶם וְשֹׁטְרֵיכֶם כָּל אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל י טַפְּכֶם נְשֵׁיכֶם וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּךָ מִחֲנִיף מִחֲטִיב עֵצֶיךָ עַד שְׂאֵב מִיַּמֶּיךָ: יא לְעַבְרְךָ בְּבְרִית

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּבָאֱלֹהֶיךָ יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֶיךָ פֶּרֶת עֲמָךְ הַיּוֹם: [שנני] יב לְמַעַן הַקִּים-אֶתֶּךָ הַיּוֹם | לֹא לְעַם
וְהוּא יִהְיֶה-לְךָ לְאֱלֹהִים כַּאֲשֶׁר דָּבַר-לְךָ וּכְאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב: יג וְלֹא
אֶתְכֶם לְבַדְכֶם אֲנֹכִי פֶּרֶת אֶת-הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת וְאֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים הַזֹּאת: יד כִּי אֶת-אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁנוּ פֹה עֲמָנוּ עִמָּד
הַיּוֹם לְפָנַי יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר אֵינָנוּ פֹה עֲמָנוּ הַיּוֹם:

The Torah portion for *Devarim / Deuteronomy 29* is titled “*Nitzavim*,” meaning “*Those taking a stand.*” This word is different from what is usually used as a verb to take a stand (לְעִמּוֹד) This word (*Nitzavim*) conveys the idea of taking a moral stand, both publicly and in private. In Parashat Nitzavim, we are reminded that this covenant is made not only with those who are present at Sinai, but also to all those who are not with them in that day, which is a reference to each of us. The Lord God reminds the nation of Israel, that the covenant they made with the Lord in Horeb at Mount Sinai, was also made with us. Therefore, just prior to entering into the Promised Land it is important to reaffirm that covenant. In *Devarim / Deuteronomy*, Moshe’s dominant theme was for Israel to stand in obedience to the Lord with their whole heart, soul and strength. Moshe also reminds the people that they were not to be naive concerning idolatry. Their ancestors had fallen into idolatry, not only in Egypt, but also on their way to the Promised Land, even there at the foot of Sinai according to Parashat Ki Tisa. They had seen for themselves the detestable idols of the pagan nations surrounding them and are warned not to inquire of their detestable practices (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 12*). The people understood that the Lord God takes a stand in the midst of the congregation. Note the MT on *Tehillim / Psalms 82* is written, אֱלֹהִים נִצָּב בְּעֵדֹת, using the same root word נִצָּב meaning to take a stand, a word that conveys the meaning of morality, justice, righteousness, and truth. The people understood that judgment would fall, and not only on the one who brought sin into the camp, but also upon the whole nation because they allowed themselves to be enticed and then swept away by sin and false worship. The Torah describes destruction upon the one who sins and does not perform Teshuvah (repent). The Torah description says that this devastation would be so complete that other nations would wonder and ask why the God of Israel had become so angry and let this happen. The point is that in their false worship (idolatry and immorality) would prove the truth of God’s Word, by reason of the curses in the Torah would come upon them just as the Lord God had promised. The people of Israel were warned to be vigilant when they entered the land of Canaan they were to avoid idolatry at all cost. By the manner in which Parashat Nitzavim and *Tehillim / Psalms 82* are written, it is important to note that the moral imperatives, and the mitzvot against idolatry are also binding upon us who are in Yeshua the Messiah. The MT says, א מִזְמוֹר לְאַסָּף אֱלֹהִים נִצָּב בְּעֵדֹת־אֵל, *A psalm of Asaph. 82:1 God takes His stand in His own congregation; He judges in the midst of the rulers. (NASB)* The Lord God takes a stand in the midst (בְּקִרְבֵּן) of the congregation, implies what He expects of us as His people. We do not simply place our faith in Him and in His Messiah Yeshua, and then go on to live our lives as we please. We are in a covenant relationship with the Lord God in heaven, and the Lord is in our midst to raise us up, to help us to stand, and to live for Him by the power of His Spirit in our lives.

Asaph also says that the Lord judges in the midst of rulers (יִשְׁפֹּט), where the word for ruler is to pass judgment. Notice something here, judging belongs to those to whom the law has been given. *James 4:12* states “*There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who are you that judge another?*” The Torah has been given by God, and James is recognizing the origin (source) of the Torah (Him who has given the law), and is suggesting that when we judge someone else, we are functioning as a lawgiver. The point is that our duty is to obey the Torah, and to encourage and build up our brothers and sisters to do the same. The Lord God judges the rulers (those who pass judgment) and the reason being when we pass judgment, we are setting ourselves up as an example, and therefore we are held to a greater standard. The following references from the Tanach and the Apostolic Writings discuss the Lord God in heaven who is both the law-giver and the judge.

foundations of the earth are shaken. (NASB) Note the context of the opening verse, the Lord standing in the midst of the people and His judging the rulers. The Lord requires of us to live with justice, to show mercy, and to help others, not only in their time of need, but also in their walk with the Lord. To share how the Lord has been working in our lives, and to encourage others to be faithful to the Lord God in heaven. Note how Asaph describes the wicked as 82:5 *They do not know nor do they understand; They walk about in darkness; All the foundations of the earth are shaken. (NASB)* The rabbis translate the MT to say the following:

Toviyah / Psalms 82:1-5

82:1 *A hymn composed by Asaph. God, his presence abides in the assembly of the righteous who are strong in Torah; he will give judgment in the midst of the righteous judges. 82:2 How long, O wicked, will you judge falsely, and lift up the faces of the wicked forever? 82:3 Judge the poor and the orphan; acquit the needy and the poor. 82:4 Save the poor and needy, from the hands of the wicked deliver them. 82:5 They do not know how to do good, and they do not understand the Torah, they walk in darkness; because of this, the pillars of the earth's foundations shake. (EMC)*

א תושבחתא על ידא דאסף אלהים שכינתיה שריא בכינשת צדיקין דתקיפין באוריתא במצע דינין דקשוט ידין: ב עד אימתי רשיעיא תדונון שקר ואפי רשיעיא תסבון לעלמין: ג דונו מסכינא ויתד מא ענייא ומסכינא אצדיקו: ד שזיבו מסכן וחשוכא מן ידיהון דרשיעיא פצו יתהון: ה לא חכימו לאוטבא ולא איתביינו באוריתא בחשוכא מהלכין מטול היכנא מתמוטטין ריגליהון די בססי ארעא:

The rabbis say that the presence of God abides in the assemble of the righteous who are strong in the Torah, and that He will give judgment in the midst of the righteous judges. The Targum continues asking and speaking to the wicked with questions on why do you judge falsely and raise up those who are unrighteous? The Targum then repeats *Tehillim / Psalms 82:5* saying, 82:5 *They do not know how to do good, and they do not understand the Torah, they walk in darkness; because of this, the pillars of the earth's foundations shake. (EMC)* They add that the wicked who do not know to do good, do not understand Torah and so they walk in darkness. Note how knowing how to do good, and the way one walks are connected to studying Torah, and obedience to the mitzvot. Additional insights on the importance of Torah study is found in Midrash Rabbah Bereshit Parashat 1, Part 1.

Midrash Rabbah Bereshit Parashat 1, Part 1

The great Rabbi Hoshaya opened [with the verse (Mishlei 8:30),] "I [the Torah] was an amon to Him and I was a plaything to Him every day." Amon means "pedagogue" (i.e. nanny). Amon means "covered." Amon means "hidden." And there is one who says amon means "great." Amon means "nanny," as in (Bamidbar 11:12) "As a nanny (omein) carries the suckling child." Amon means "covered," as in (Eichah 4:5) "Those who were covered (emunim) in scarlet have embraced refuse heaps." Amon means "hidden," as in (Esther 2:7) "He hid away (omein) Hadassah." Amon means "great," as in (Nahum 3:8) "Are you better than No-amon [which dwells in the rivers]?" which the Targum renders as, "Are you better than Alexandria the Great (amon), which dwells between the rivers?" Alternatively, amon means "artisan." The Torah is saying, "I was the artisan's tool of Hashem." In the way of the world, a king of flesh and blood who builds a castle does not do so from his own knowledge, but rather from the knowledge of an architect, and the architect does not build it from his own knowledge, but rather he has scrolls and books in order to know how to make rooms and doorways. So too Hashem gazed into the Torah and created the world. Similarly the Torah says, "Through the reishis Hashem created [the heavens and the earth]," and reishis means Torah, as in "Hashem made me [the Torah] the beginning (reishis) of His way" (Mishlei 8:22). (משלי ח, ל): "וְאֶהְיֶה אֶצְלוֹ אֲמוֹן וְאֶהְיֶה שֶׁעֲשֵׂים יוֹם)

יום וגו'". "אָמוֹן", פְּדָגוּג, "אָמוֹן", מְכוּסָה, "אָמוֹן", מוֹצְנֵעַ. וְאֵית דְּאָמַר: "אָמוֹן", רַבְתָּא. "אָמוֹן", פְּדָגוּג – הֵיךְ מָה דְאֵת אָמַר (במדבר יא, יב): "כַּאֲשֶׁר יִשָּׂא הָאָמֶן אֶת הַיֶּקֶק". "אָמוֹן" מְכוּסָה – הֵיךְ מָה דְאֵת אָמַר (איכה ד, ה): "הָאָמְנִים עָלַי תּוֹלַע חֲבָקוּ אֲשַׁפְּתוֹת". "אָמוֹן", מוֹצְנֵעַ – הֵיךְ מָה דְאֵת אָמַר (אסתר ב, ז): "וַיְהִי אִמֶן אֶת הַדְּסָה". אמוֹן, רבתא – כמה דתימא: (נחום ג, ח): "הִתִּיטְבִי מִנְּאָמוֹן", ומתרגמינן: "האֵת טבא מאלכסנדריא רבתא דיתבא בין נהרותא?" דבר אחר: אמוֹן – אומן. התורה אומרת: אני הייתי כלי אומנותו של הקב"ה. בנוהג שבעולם, מלך בשר ודם בונה פלטין, אינו בונה אותה מדעת עצמו אלא מדעת אומן, והאומן אינו בונה אותה מדעת עצמו, אלא דיפתראות, ופינקסאות יש לו, לדעת היאך הוא עושה חדרים, היאך הוא עושה פשפושין, כך היה הקב"ה מביט בתורה, ובורא את העולם, והתורה אמרה בראשית ברא אלהים, ואין ראשית אלא (תורה, היאך מה דאת אמר (משלי ח, כב): "ה' קָנְנִי רֵאשִׁית דְּרַפּוֹ".

In the comments on the opening verse in Parashat Bereshit according to Midrash Rabbah, the rabbis say that the Torah was an amon (אָמוֹן), a word derived from the word אָמֶן meaning "truth" or "faith." They go on to describe amon (אָמוֹן) as a "pedagogue" (a nanny), and then provide multiple definitions on the word, as "covered," "hidden," "great," and "artisan." It is interesting to note Brown Driver Briggs Lexicon definition of the word amon (אָמוֹן).

Brown Driver Briggs Lexicon

*I. אָמוֹן proper name Amon, an Egyptian god Nahum 3:8; Jeremiah 46:25, compare by Greeks with Zeus (Herod.ii. 42; Diodi.13), Ἄμμων. He was originally the local deity of Thebes (= נֹא, called נֹא אָמוֹן Nahum 3:8, compare א' מְנֹא Jeremiah 46:25 **Spiegelb Randglossen, 43 ff. reads נֹא אָמוֹן (as Nahum 3:8) for אָמוֹן, and finds in both a Thebes in the Delta.), but subsequently became the supreme god of the Egyptian Pantheon, the successor of the sun-god Ra and so-called Amon Ra. He was the secret god, who hid himself and was difficult to find (Amon = concealment, hidden); see Rawl.Hist, Anc. Egypt, i. 322 Ebers RiHWB. (II. III. אָמוֹן.)*

Notice how the word amon (אָמוֹן) may also be a reference to the Egyptian god Amon Ra. Amon Ra is known as the secret god of the Egyptians because he would hide himself. The rabbis may possibly be drawing in this concept, the Torah as a pedagogue in the beginning did not function in secret, rather, the wisdom of the Torah functioned openly, it was not hidden, and was full of truth and faith. The wisdom of the Torah was with God in the beginning. This is as opposed to man's understanding of amon (אָמוֹן), a secret or hidden thing, or as the wicked live hiding their sins, reveling at night time, etc. Note what the rabbis say in Midrash Rabbah Bereshit Parashat 1, Part 6.

Midrash Rabbah Bereshit Parashat 1, Part 6

Rabbi Yehudah Bar Simon opened with (Daniel 2:22): "He reveals the deep and secret. He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him." "He reveals the deep"--this is Hell, as it says (Proverbs 9:18): "He does not know there are spirits there," and it says (Isaiah 30:33): "deep and large". "And secret"--this is Paradise, as it says (Isaiah 4:6): "for a cover and refuge from storm and rain," and it says (Psalms 31:21): "You hide them in the cover of Your presence." Alternatively, "he reveals the deep and secret"--these are the acts of the wicked, as it says (Isaiah 29:15): "Woe to the ones who seek deep from God to make their counsel secret." "And secret"--these are the acts of the wicked, as the verse states. "He knows what is in the dark"--these are the acts of the wicked, as it says in Isaiah: "Their acts are in the dark." "The light dwells with Him"--these are the acts of the righteous, as it is written (Proverbs 4:18): "The path of the righteous is like the light at dawn,"

and it says (Psalms 97:11): “Light is sown for the righteous.” Rabbi Abba Srungia said: “The light dwells with Him”--this is the Messiah, as it says (Isaiah 60:1): “Arise, shine, for your light has come.” Rabbi Yehudah Bar Simon said: From the beginning of the creation of the world, “he revealed the dark and secret”. “In the beginning God created the heavens,” but it is not explained. Where is it explained? Here (Isaiah 40:22): “He stretches out the heavens like a curtain.” “And the land,” but it is not explained. Where is it explained? Here (Job 37:6): “For He says to the snow: ‘Fall on the earth.’” and (Job 38:38) “When the dust runs into a mass, and the clods cleave together.” “And God said: ‘Let there be light,’” and it is not explained. Where is it explained? (Psalms 104:2) “You cover Yourself with light like a garment.”

The Lord God reveals the deep and secret, He does not hide them. Note also in the midrash and remember the light verses darkness parallels, to righteousness and unrighteousness. The hidden things are described as the way of the wicked, the Lord God reveals the way of the wicked, the deep and secret things, the acts of the unrighteous. The Lord God in heaven however reveals His ways, He does not hide them. (*Note that this is different from “the reasons why” the Lord does things.*) In addition, the light (righteousness) dwells with the Lord God, and he reveals the acts of the righteous, saying that the path of the righteous is like the light at dawn. In addition, they quote from *Isaiah 60*, and say that “*The light dwells with Him*”--*this is the Messiah, as it says (Isaiah 60:1)*. The Messiah walks in the righteous ways of God according to the Torah. This is the meaning behind the rabbis words in the Targum that say the presence of God abides in the assembly of the righteous who are strong in the Torah, and that He will give judgment in the midst of the righteous judges. As opposed to the wicked who do not know to do good, do not understand Torah, and so they walk in darkness.

Notice also how judgment is connected to showing partiality to the wicked, to justice, righteousness, and having just scales, weights and measures, and to being called gods (elohim, אלוהים). Note also that according to the use in the MT, the term Elohim is a homonym, and denotes God, angels, or judges. This may be a very difficult concept to understand on the use of the word “Elohim” as a reference to man, judges, angels, etc. Radak has the following to say concerning the word Elohim (אלוהים).

Radak on Genesis 30:8:2:

אלוהים. *The use of the word אלוהים is symbolic of the fierceness of the sisters’ competition, When we want to emphasise something as being extraordinary, we sometimes use the word “elohim” to do this, as for instance in the description of the size of the city of Nineveh in Jonah 3,3 where it is described as עיר גדולה לאלוהים גדולה. A similar expression in Psalms 36,7 כהררי אל describes towering mountains by using the word elohim as the appropriate adjective to describe this. Psalms 80,11 Jeremiah 2,31, and Song of Songs 8,6 are some more examples of the use of the word el or elohim as such an adjective.* (ואמרה אלהים להגדיל) הנפתולים, כי כל דבר שרוצה להגדיל סומך אותו לשם יתברך, כמו עיר גדולה לאלהים (יונה ג) : (כהררי אל (תהלים פ”ב ב ל”ו) ארזי אל:

Radak states that the word is used in a symbolic manner to describe the weightiness of something. An example is given from *Jonah 3:3 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city, of three days’ journey.* (וַיִּקְרָא יוֹנָה וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־נִינְוָה כְּדִבְרֵי יְהוָה וַיְהִי נִינְוָה עִיר גְּדוֹלָה וַיִּגְדֹּל לְאֱלֹהִים מִהֶלֶךְ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים: 1 אֲנִי־אֱמַרְתִּי אֱלֹהִים אַתֶּם, וְכָל־אַחַד מֵכֶם בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים: 2 וְכָל־אֶחָד מֵכֶם כְּבָנֵי־אֱלֹהִים: 82:6 I said, ‘You are gods, And all of you are sons of the Most High. 82:7 Nevertheless you will die like men And fall like any one of the princes. (NASB) Was he using this word to emphasize a certain aspect of man in the creation of God? Notice the way in which Yeshua uses these words from the Psalm in his discussion with the religious leaders.

John 10:24-38

10:24 The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, 'How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.' 10:25 Jesus answered them, 'I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. 10:26 'But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. 10:27 'My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 10:28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 10:29 'My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 10:30 'I and the Father are one.' 10:31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. 10:32 Jesus answered them, 'I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?' 10:33 The Jews answered Him, 'For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.' 10:34 Jesus answered them, 'Has it not been written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? 10:35 'If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), 10:36 do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? 10:37 'If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 10:38 but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.' (NASB)

Yeshua was speaking to those around him, and he said that the works he performed testify of who he is. He goes on to speak of those who believe in him are his sheep, and that he gives eternal life to those who are his. Yeshua says, *10:30 'I and the Father are one.'* (NASB) and the people pick up stones to stone him, and he uses this verse from *Tehillim / Psalms 82:6* to make his case, *John 10:34 Jesus answered them, 'Has it not been written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? 10:35 'If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), 10:36 do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? (NASB)* Note what Yeshua focuses upon here in his use of *Tehillim / Psalms 82:6*. He speaks of those who receive the Word of God (the Scriptures) and those whom the Father has sanctified. Now let's look at what the rabbis have to say concerning this Scripture.

Daat Zkenim on Exodus 25:2:1

:ויקחו לי תרומה: "they shall take for Me a contribution;" this portion had been told to Moses during the forty days that Moses was on Mount Sinai, immediately after the revelation at that Mountain, [In other words, before the smashing of the Tablets, and the golden calf episode. Ed.] G'd, at that time, had already told Moses where to erect the Tabernacle, and that it would house the Holy Ark, inside the Holy of Holies, symbolising G'd's presence on earth. He told him that it would contain the Tablets, and that the Israelites would be encamped around the Tabernacle. This is what is meant in verse eight of our verse where G'd described Himself as residing in the midst of the people, i.e. as if surrounded by angels as He had been in heaven. Concerning this state of affairs, David had said in Psalms 82:6 אמרתי אלוהים אתם ובני עליון כולכם "I had said: 'you are the children of G'd all of you children of the Supreme Being.'" [David bemoans the demotion of the Jewish people that followed the golden calf episode in the verse following. Ed.]

According to Daat Zkenim, this verse is within the context of the Mishkhan (*the presence of God on earth*), the Terumah, the sin of the people at Chet HaEgel (Parashat Ki Tisa), and the destruction of the 10 commandments. The idea is that the people were elevated to a different status due to these things, being raised up such that the Lord God would dwell in their midst. Remember in previous Midrash on Tehillim, the

rabbis say that God resurrected the people at Sinai (see *Tehillim / Psalms 72 part 1 and 2, and Bits of Torah Truths, Parshiot Mattot and Massei*). The connection here is to being gods, the word Elohim is used to place emphasis upon the Word of God being given to the people (Torah) and the Lord God sanctifying the people (*saving the people*). This is exactly how Yeshua is using *Tehillim / Psalms 82:6*.

Mekhilta 20:16:2

(Devarim 5:26) “Would that this heart of theirs (were in them to fear Me and to keep all of My mitzvot all of the days so that it be good for them and for their children forever.”) If it were possible to remove the angel of death from them, I would do so — but the decree has already gone forth. R. Yossi says: On this condition did they stand on Mount Sinai, that the angel of death not prevail over them, as it is written (Psalms 82:6) “I said (when I gave you the Torah): You are angels and all heavenly creatures. But, as Adam you will die, (having perfected your ways as he did), and as one of the (first) princes will you fall.”

The Mekhilta speaks of the connection of man’s heart being in the state of fearing God and keeping His mitzvot, and the removal of the angel of death. Again there is a connection to the giving of Torah, to living in God’s ways, walking in His foot steps, and to angels (heavenly creatures). However, due to man’s sins, he will die, just as the lower earthly creatures.

Akeidat Yitzchak on Tehillim / Psalms 82:6

Since the people who now perpetrate all these evils are descended from a superior branch of mankind, their relapses are far less excusable. What could G’d expect from them in the future then? Therefore, G’d gave them a time limit of 120 years. This is the meaning of Psalm 82:6 “I had said that you are G’d like, but you will die like earth bound beings.” The timing of the deluge was arranged so that the good people who, though not worth saving, were not as guilty as the others, would have died due to normal circumstances.

Akeidat Yitzchak 9:5

When Israel sinned, due to the advice of the spies, G’d said to them “you have destroyed all My intentions. I had said you should live indefinitely like Myself, but you have shown a desire for death.” This is the meaning of Psalms 82:6 “I have said you are divine, of superior descent, but alas you are like Adam, whom I commanded one commandment in order that he should merit eternal life.” This is proven by the statement in the Torah “here man has become like one of Us.” - Yet man corrupted his actions and nullified My decision, ate from the tree so that I said to him “you are dust and to dust you shall return.”

Akeidat Yitzchak states emphasizes the sin of the people, who were created as the crown of God’s creation, who were created for good works (*Ephesians 2:10*), however great evils are perpetrated by the ones whom the Lord had designed to walk according to God’s ways (*e.g. ye are gods, angels, the crown of God’s creation, etc*) and so the Lord limited the life span of man to 120 years. He goes on to describe sin as “*the desire for death.*” When we sin, it is as if one desires to have God’s wrath to abide upon him. This is why in the new covenant, the Lord creates in us a new heart, one that is wholly devoted to the Lord God in heaven.

Rabbeinu Chananel on Genesis 6:2:1

ויראו בני האלוהים את בנות האדם כי טובות הנה, ויקחו להם נשים מכל אשר בחרו: We have already explained that the noun אלוהים is a noun which is sometimes applied to G’d, and sometimes to certain people, and sometimes to phenomena which some people worship even though they have nothing divine about them, In Genesis 1:1 בראשית ברא אלוקים, it is clearly a reference to G’d. In Genesis 20:3 ויבא אלוהים אל אבימלך, it is a reference to an angel,

seeing that he carried out a mission on behalf of G'd. In Exodus 22:8 עד האלוהים יבא דבר שניהם, it is a reference to a judge, a human being. The term is also applied to select human beings of a spiritually high level, such as when David quotes G'd in Psalms 82:6 אני אמרתי אתם אלהים, I used to say that you (man) are "divine," (until you sinned). In our verse here, the Torah in speaking of בני האלוהים, refers to the elite of the human species at the time. In our verse it is a reference to the male elite, the judges.

Rabbeinu Chananel speaks of the word Elohim (אלוהים) as applying only to a certain person or people even though there is nothing divine about them. The word is also a reference to an angel by reason that an angel is a messenger carrying out a mission on behalf of the Lord. He concludes saying that the word refers to a special person, to the elite, the judges.

Shelah, Chukat, Torah Ohr 100

We can now understand the comments of the Talmud in Avodah Zarah 5 concerning the role of the red heifer in purification rites required after incurring impurity through contact with a dead body. Rabbi Yossi says there that the only reason the Jewish people received the Torah was to overcome the sovereignty of the angel of death, of other nations or tongues. We know this from Psalms 82:6/7: אמרתי אלוקים אתם ובני עליון כולכם, אכן כאדם תמותו וכאחד השרים, תפולו, "I had considered you divine beings, sons of the Most High, all of you; but you shall die as men do, fall like any prince."

Shelah, Vaera, Torah Ohr 15

Now G'd had refined the Jewish people in the "crucible" of the Egyptian bondage experience to the point where He chose them to be His "army" in lieu of His Celestial Army. This is the meaning of the words in 6,26: הוציאו את בני ישראל מארץ מצרים על צבאותם, "Take the children of Israel out of Egypt in their armies." Rashi comments that the words: צבאותם mean "every army according to their tribes." Had not these people participated in the sin of the golden calf afterwards, they would have remained on that lofty level indefinitely, just as they will be in the Messianic future of which the Torah says in Leviticus 26:12 והתהלכתי בתוכם, "I shall be walking amongst you." What has happened instead is best described by Assaph in Psalms 82:6 "I had taken you for divine beings, sons of the Most High, all of you; but you shall die as men do, fall like any prince."

Shelah Torah Ohr comments upon the Talmud Bavli Avodah Zarah 5 on the role of the red heifer. Note this brings us back to the concept of sanctification, similar to Yeshua's use in John 10:36, and to the receiving of the Torah, again similar to what Yeshua said in John 10:35. The commentary continues saying that the Lord delivered His Celestial Army from Egypt suggesting that the word Elohim (אלוהים) is a reference to the nation of Israel. Rashi says this is a reference to those who did not participate in Chet HaEgel. The connection here is to the giving of God's Torah to His people and walking according to His ways.

The Psalm concludes saying, קוּמָה אֱלֹהִים שִׁפְטָה הָאָרֶץ בְּיַמֶּיךָ תִּבְנֶה לְכָל־הַגּוֹיִם: 82:8 Arise, O God, judge the earth! For it is You who possesses all the nations. (NASB) What is Asaph trying to say when he calls out to the Lord God in heaven to raise up, to judge the earth, and declares that He is the one who possesses all the nations? I believe he is calling for justice, that the Lord God would not tarry but would move mightily for His people to save them from their enemies. We know, no matter life's circumstances, the Lord God in heaven is at work in our lives. He demonstrated this in the Messiah Yeshua, and in the manner in which our lives are changed for His glory. And so we are called to live in justice, to show mercy, and to love one another, because in doing so, God's judgment would not come upon us since this is the manner in which He walks, this is how Yeshua demonstrated for us the Father in heaven, and likewise, as His Children, we

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 82* has 3 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1, 2, and 3. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 82, Parts 1, 2, and 3*.

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 82, Part 1, 2, and 3

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*A Psalm of Asaph. God stands in the congregation of the mighty, He is a Judge among judges (Elohim) (Tehillim / Psalms 82:1).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*These words are to be considered in the light of Moshe's charge to the judges in Israel, You will not respect persons in judgment for the judgment is God's (Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:17).*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss the meaning of gods (Elohim) in relation to judges.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the conclusion is that sits in the midst of the judges, therefore one is not to say that he alone is the judge.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*What can Elohim signify except judges, as in the verse, The cause of both will come before the judges (Elohim) (Shemot / Exodus 22:8)?*”

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*How long will you judge unjustly? (Tehillim / Psalms 82:2).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*For you respect the wicked; as the end of the verse says, You always respect the persons of the wicked.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss what it means to judge unjustly.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal contrasting what it means to judge with justice, to take care of the poor and the less fortunate, and the widows.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*All the earth is Mine, and I meant the rich man to have his riches. Yet you would take away what is his.*”

Part 3

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*They know not, neither do they understand (Tehillim / Psalms 82:5),*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Because men know not how to make precise judgment, the world is shaken, for the verse ends by saying, They go about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis comment having no understanding in regard to judgment.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand

upon the mashal speaking of Adam, God gave him one command and he failed due to not understanding.

- The Concluding phrase says, “*Arise, O God, judge the earth (Tehillim / Psalms 82:8), Remove these mortal judges, and You along be King and Judge, as is said, The Lord will be enthroned forever, He has established His throne for judgment (Tehillim / Psalms 9:8).*”

Midrash Tehillim 82, Part 1 opens with the Dibur Hamatil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “*A Psalm of Asaph. God stands in the congregation of the mighty, He is a Judge among judges (Elohim) (Tehillim / Psalms 82:1).*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*These words are to be considered in the light of Moshe’s charge to the judges in Israel, You will not respect persons in judgment for the judgment is God’s (Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:17).*” The rabbis cite *Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:17*, יז לֹא-תִפְּרֹו פָּנִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט, בְּקוֹטֵן כְּגֹדֶל תִּשְׁמָעוּן לֹא תִגְוְרוּ מִפְּנֵי-אִישׁ כִּי הַמִּשְׁפָּט לְאֱלֹהִים הוּא וְהַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר יִקְשֶׁה מִכֶּם תִּקְרְבוּן אֵלַי וְשָׁמַעְתִּיו: 1:17 ‘*You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God’s. The case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.*’ (NASB) This is connected to what Moshe wrote in *Shemot / Exodus 22:8-9*.

Shemot / Exodus 22:8-9

22:8 ‘*If the thief is not caught, then the owner of the house shall appear before the judges, to determine whether he laid his hands on his neighbor’s property.* 22:9 ‘*For every breach of trust, whether it is for ox, for donkey, for sheep, for clothing, or for any lost thing about which one says, ‘This is it,’ the case of both parties shall come before the judges; he whom the judges condemn shall pay double to his neighbor.* (NASB, ז אִם-לֹא יִמָּצָא הַגָּנֵב וְנִקְרַב, בְּעַל-הַבַּיִת אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים אִם-לֹא שָׁלַח יָדוֹ בְּמִלְאֲכַת רֵעֵהוּ: ח עַל-כָּל-דָּבָר-פֶּשַׁע עַל-שׂוֹר עַל-חֲמוֹר עַל-שֶׂה עַל-שְׁלָמָה עַל-כָּל-אַבְדָּה אֲשֶׁר יֵאמַר כִּי-הוּא זֶה עַד הָאֱלֹהִים יָבֵא דָבָר-שְׁנִיָּהֶם אֲשֶׁר יִרְשִׁיעַן (אֱלֹהִים יִשְׁלַם שְׁנַיִם לְרֵעֵהוּ:)

Notice how we are told that if a thief is caught, the owner of the house is to appear before God (Elohim) and this is within the context of going before men to receive judgment. It is by God’s appointment that men have been given divine authority to execute judgment in His (God’s) name. These Scriptures indicate that each judge is a representative of the Lord God in heaven, bearing both the name and the character of the authority of God. This means that the judge is to bear the name and the image of the Father in heaven. The psalmist reminds us that though we bear the image of God, we are still mortal and will die and give account of our lives before the Most High God in heaven. What is being emphasized here is that judgment is being meted out in justice and that the sinner will die at the hands of justice, if a person persists in wickedness. What is interesting is Yeshua used these words in *John 10:34*, when the people accused him of blasphemy because he claimed to be one with the Father in heaven. Yeshua’s claim to be at one with the Father, is connected to his walking according to the Torah, and being set upon the path God has established for him, as a representative of the Father in heaven, and to lay his life down for ours. The parallel he was using is within the Torah context, and not something new. Yeshua draws the Torah into context based upon *Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:17* and *Shemot / Exodus 22:8-9*, to say that from ancient times, the judges were called gods and sons of the Most High, in spite of their unworthiness for such a position. Yeshua’s question then, was it blasphemy to say that he was one with the Father in heaven, if he is walking and living according to the Torah? In addition, was it blasphemy for one who had received a special commission as God’s representative, one whose life and work bore witness to the glory of God to then call Himself the Son of God? *Rabbi Chananel on Bereshit / Genesis 6:2* says the following:

Rabbeinu Chananel on Bereshit / Genesis 6:2:1

We have ויראו בני האלוהים את בנות האדם כי טובות הנה, ויקחו להם נשים מכל אשר בחרו.

already explained that the noun אֱלֹהִים is a noun which is sometimes applied to G'd, and sometimes to certain people, and sometimes to phenomena which some people worship even though they have nothing divine about them, In Genesis 1:1 בראשית ברא אֱלֹהִים, it is clearly a reference to G'd. In Genesis 20:3 ויבא אֱלֹהִים אל אבימלך, it is a reference to an angel, seeing that he carried out a mission on behalf of G'd. In Exodus 22:8 עד האֱלֹהִים יבא דבר, it is a reference to a judge, a human being. The term is also applied to select human beings of a spiritually high level, such as when David quotes G'd in Psalms 82:6 אני אמרתי אֱלֹהִים, I used to say that you (man) are “divine,” (until you sinned). In our verse here, the Torah in speaking of בני האֱלֹהִים, refers to the elite of the human species at the time. In our verse it is a reference to the male elite, the judges.

The interpretation is that Elohim (אֱלֹהִים) is a reference to one who has been sent to carry out a mission on behalf of the Lord God in heaven. This is within the context of the one who is obedient to the calling of God walking in holiness and righteousness and not living a life of sin. This is why Rabbeinu Chananel states “In our verse here, the Torah in speaking of בני האֱלֹהִים, refers to the elite of the human species at the time. In our verse it is a reference to the male elite, the judges.” The word Elohim (אֱלֹהִים) translated as “judges” in Shemot / Exodus 22:8-9, is to indicate that these judges are above reproach, and do not live hypocritical lives.

The rabbis in Midrash Tehillim 80, Part 1 continue saying the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק פב סימן א א מזמור לאסף אלהים נצב בעדת אל בקרב אלהים ישפוט. זהו שאמר הכתוב לא תכירו פנים במשפט (דברים א יז), וכן יהושפט, ויאמר אל השופטים ראו מה אתם עושים כי לא לאדם תשפטו כי לה' ועמכם בדבר משפט (דה"ב דברי הימים ב' יט ו), וכתוב כי המשפט לאלהים הוא (דברים א יז), שלא יאמרו הדיינים אנו יושבים לעצמנו בדין, אלא אמר הקב"ה לדיינים הווי יודעין כי עמכם אני יושב, שנאמר אני ה' אוהב משפט (ישעיה סא ח), ואם הטיתם את הדין אותי אתם מטים, שנאמר וקרבתני אליכם למשפט (מלאכי ג ה), הוי בקרב אלהים ישפוט, באמצע הדיינים, ישפוט, ומאן אלהים דיינא, שנאמר עד האלהים יבא דבר שניהם (שמות כב ח).</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 82, Part 1 1. A Psalm of Asaph. God stands in the congregation of the mighty, He is a Judge among judges (Elohim) (Tehillim / Psalms 82:1). These words are to be considered in the light of Moshe's charge to the judges in Israel, You will not respect persons in judgment for the judgment is God's (Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:17). And when Jehoshaphat set up judges in the land, he also said to them, Consider what you do; for you judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment (2 Chronicles 19:6). The judgment is God's (Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:17) means that the judges should never say, We sit along in judgment, for the Holy One blessed be He, says to the judges, know that I sit among you, as is said, For I the Lord love judgment (Isaiah 61:18). If you push aside the right judgment, you push Me aside, for I said, And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against those that defraud the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not Me (Malachi 3:5). Hence the verse He is a Judge among Elohim is to be read, He is a Judge among judges. What can Elohim signify except judges, as in the verse, The cause of both will come before the judges (Elohim) (Shemot / Exodus 22:8)?</p>
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The midrash compares the psalm to Parashat Devarim and to Jehoshaphat setting up judges in the land of Israel and says “for you judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment (2 Chronicles 19:6).” Justice belongs to the Lord God in heaven, and a judge is meant for the purpose of bringing about justice when a wrong has occurred. Rabbi Eliezer said “when justice is done on earth, heaven suspends judgment and does not exact punishment; but when there is no justice, heaven sits in judgment and sends

down punishment...” The world is in a perilous state today because all the nations disregard God’s command to pursue justice and truth, especially for the poor and the widows. In Parashat Shoftim, we read in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 16:20*, צֶדֶק צְדָק תִּרְדּוּף לְמַעַן תִּחְיֶה וְיִרְשֶׁת אֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ: 16:20 ‘Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you. (NASB) The Hebrew word tzedek means “righteousness” or “justice” and is something that the Lord God our Father in heaven is called by “the Lord our Righteousness,” “the Righteous God,” “the Righteous Judge,” etc. According to Parashat Bereshit, we were created in God’s image, and therefore we are created to exercise righteousness in our daily lives. Therefore, an act of tzedakah (charity) is regarded as an moral obligation. Isaiah said, וְהָיָה מַעֲשֵׂה הַצְּדָקָה שְׁלוֹם וְעִבְדוֹת הַצְּדָקָה הַשְׁקֵט וּבִטָּח עַד-עוֹלָם: 32:17 *And the work of righteousness will be peace, And the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever. (NASB)* The exercise of justice in our lives inevitably involves judging ourselves and others. The reason being, justice and righteousness requires us to discern what is morally true, and we are created to be moral and ethical creatures. The Lord God in heaven gave us His standard, and using His example, judgment is always tempered with grace and love. The Lord God cares about our practice of righteousness and holds us accountable for the way we live our lives. This is why the rabbis say in the midrash “for you judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment (2 Chronicles 19:6).” The midrash continues saying:

The judgment is God’s (Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:17) means that the judges should never say, We sit along in judgment, for the Holy One blessed be He, says to the judges, know that I sit among you, as is said, For I the Lord love judgment (Isaiah 61:18). If you push aside the right judgment, you push Me aside, for I said, And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against those that defraud the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not Me (Malachi 3:5).

The Scriptures testify that the Lord God loves justice, and likewise we should to. The conclusion is that if we push justice aside, we push the Lord God aside. The reason being, God comes near when we make a judgment. This is why it is so important to show mercy, towards others in judgment because the Lord God is merciful. Having justice is synonymous to the presence of God, and this may be the reason Asaph puts all of these together in his psalm saying, ד פִּלְטוּ-גַדְל וְאַבְגָּוֹן מִיַּד רְשָׁעִים הַצִּילוּ: ה לֹא יָדְעוּ א וְלֹא יָבִינּוּ בַחֲשֵׁקָה: 82:4 *Rescue the weak and needy; Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked. 82:5 They do not know nor do they understand; They walk about in darkness; All the foundations of the earth are shaken. 82:6 I said, ‘You are gods, And all of you are sons of the Most High. (NASB)* The Lord says that He has defined justice, and He will be a witness against those who are corrupt and defraud, who do not take care to act with justice and truth. Those who do not do so also do not fear the Lord or His judgment. We are warned to be careful to live in righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth, because we were created for such things, and because we are called “gods” in the sense of being the messengers of justice in this world.

Midrash Tehillim 82, Part 1 concludes saying, “Hence the verse He is a Judge among Elohim is to be read, He is a Judge among judges. What can Elohim signify except judges, as in the verse, The cause of both will come before the judges (Elohim) (Shemot / Exodus 22:8)?” The rabbis emphasize this aspect of the meaning of the Torah in *Shemot / Exodus 22:8*, and Moshe writing using the word Elohim (אֱלֹהִים) is a reference to one who has been sent to carry out a mission on behalf of the Lord God in heaven.

Midrash Tehillim 82, Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “How long will you judge unjustly? (Tehillim / Psalms 82:2).” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “For you respect the wicked; as the end of the verse says, You always respect the persons of the wicked.” The midrash opens on the comments towards the unrighteous who respect the wicked, perform injustices, and approve of those who do so. Showing respect towards those who do such things as corruption and defrauding the poor.

The entire midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק פב סימן ב</p> <p>ב עד מתי תשפטו עול. אתם נושאים פנים לרשעים, שנאמר לפני רשעים תשאו סלה, (רצוני) [רצונכם] לעשות דין, שפטו דל ויתום עני ורש הצדיקו, תרחמו אין כתיב כאן אלא הצדיקו, הצדיקו עליו את הדין, לא בשביל שהוא יתום או עני לומר ליתן לו משל עשיר, לה' הארץ ומלוואה (תהלים כד א), ואם תקחו מן העשיר בדין ותתנו לעני, לי אתם גוזלים, ושלי אתם נותנים לו, שכל העולם שלי הוא, ואני אמרתי להעשירו, ואתם נוטלים את שלו.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 82, Part 2</p> <p>2. <i>How long will you judge unjustly? (Tehillim / Psalms 82:2). For you respect the wicked; as the end of the verse says, You always respect the persons of the wicked. Do you really want to give right judgment? Then Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy, that is, Make just your judgment of him. Say not, because the poor man is fatherless of afflicted, Let what belongs to the right man be given to him. For the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof (Tehillim / Psalms 24:1) and therefore, in giving judgment, if you unjustly take anything away from a rich man and give it to a poor man, you rob Me, for you give to the poor man what belongs to Me. All the earth is Mine, and I meant the rich man to have his riches. Yet you would take away what is his.</i></p>
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This midrash reminds us of what is written in the *Mishnah Pirkei Avot 5:10* which states the following:

Mishnah Pirkei Avot 5:10:

There are four kinds of people: the one who says “what is mine is mine, and what is yours is yours” -- that’s a “beinonit” (intermediate-level person). There are some who say that is the kind of people that were in Sodom. [A second type is one who says] “what is mine is yours, and what is yours is mine” -- [that’s an] “am ha’aretz” (uneducated or low-level Jewish person). [A third type is one who says] “what is mine is yours, and what is yours is yours” -- [that’s a] “chasisd” (righteous person). [A final type is one who says] “what is yours is mine, and what is mine is mine” -- [that’s a] “rasha” (wicked person). (הַאוֹמֵר. הָאֶדָם. בְּאַדָּם. אַרְבַּע מִדּוֹת בְּאָדָם. שְׁלִי שְׁלִי וְשְׁלָהּ שְׁלָהּ, זוּ מִדָּה בִּינּוֹנִית. וַיֵּשׁ אוֹמְרִים, זוּ מִדָּת סְדוֹם. שְׁלִי שְׁלִי וְשְׁלָהּ שְׁלָהּ, עִם הָאֶרֶץ. שְׁלִי שְׁלִי וְשְׁלָהּ שְׁלָהּ, חֲסִיד. שְׁלִי שְׁלִי וְשְׁלָהּ שְׁלָהּ, רָשָׁע.)

The Midrash speaks of wicked persons who respect people who act unrighteously, they do not defend the poor or the fatherless, and make unjust judgments. The Mishnah speaks of four kinds of people, the selfish person who does not want to share what he has. The second type sounds like socialism “*what is mine is yours, and what is yours is mine.*” The third type is a chasisd, offering what he has to others and not taking anything in return. And the fourth is the one who says, “*what is yours is mine, and what is mine is mine,*” a reference to a wicked person. The justice of God requires what the midrash describes saying, “*Say not, because the poor man is fatherless of afflicted, Let what belongs to the right man be given to him. For the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof (Tehillim / Psalms 24:1)*” What appears to be going on in the midrash is the idea that the unjust judge takes away from the rich to give to the poor. The rabbis say “*if you unjustly take anything away from a rich man and give it to a poor man, you rob Me, for you give to the poor man what belongs to Me.*” What appears to be going on is the tithes were given to the Levites who then in turn distributed the tithe according to the need of the person. There are many rulings concerning the poor in the Mishnah, as can be observed according to *Mishnah Peah 8*. Let’s read through this section of the Mishnah parts 1-6.

Mishnah Peah 8:1:

From when is everyone permitted in [taking] Leket [individual stalks that fall during harvest, which must be left for the poor to glean]? When the weakest of the poor have [come and] gone. And when for Peret [fallen grapes given to the poor] and Olelot [individual grapes which fall during the grape-harvest which must be left for the poor to collect]? From when the poor have [come and] gone and come [again]. And when for olive trees? When the sec-

and rain has come; Rabbi Yehudah said: Are there not those who do not harvest their olive trees until after the second rain? Rather, when the poor go out [to glean amongst the olives], and do not bring back [an amount of olives worth] four Issarot [specific unit of money]. מאימתי כל אדם מתרים בלקט? משילכו הנמושות. בפרט ובעוללות, משילכו העניים בכרם ויבאו. ובזיתים, משתרד רביעה שניה. אמר רבי יהודה, והלא יש שאינם מוסקין את זיתיהם אלא לאחר (רביעה שניה. אלא כדי שיהא העני יוצא ולא יהא מביא בארבעה אסרות.

Mishnah Peah 8:2:

[Poor] people [selling produce] are trusted regarding Leket, Shikcha, and Peah [corner of the field which, while harvesting, must be left for the poor] in their time [i.e., during the harvest], and regarding Ma'aser Ani [a second tithe given to the poor in the the third and sixth years of the Sabbatical cycle] all year long. A Levite is trusted at all times. And we do not trust them [i.e., the poor] except regarding things that people are accustomed to [give them]. נאמנים על הלקט ועל השכחה ועל הפאה בשעתן, ועל מעשר עני בכל שנתו. ובן לוי נאמן לעולם. (ואינן נאמנים אלא על דבר שבני אדם נוהגין כן.

Mishnah Peah 8:5-6:

One must not give less [Ma'aser Ani] to the poor from the threshing floor [than the following measures]: half a Kav [specific unit of volume] of wheat and a Kav of barley - Rabbi Meir says: half a Kav; a Kav and a half of kasha; a Kav of dried figs or a Maneh [specific unit of volume] of figs - Rabbi Akiva says: a Pras [half a Maneh]; half a Log [one fourth of a Kav] of wine - Rabbi Akiva says: a quarter; a quarter of a Log of oil - Rabbi Akiva says: An eighth [of that]. As for the rest of the produce, Abba Shmuel said: Enough that he can sell it and buy food for two meals. This measure applies to priests and Levites and Israelites. If one wants to save some [e.g., for poor relatives], he may retain half and give half. If he has a small amount [less per poor person present than the amounts indicated], he places it before them, and they divide it between themselves. אין פוחתין לעניים בגרן מחצי קב חטים וקב שעורים. רבי מאיר אומר, חצי קב. קב וחצי כסמין, וקב גרוגרות, או מנה דבלה. רבי עקיבא אומר, פרס. חצי לג יין. רבי עקיבא אומר, רביעית. רביעית שמן. רבי עקיבא אומר, שמינית. ושאר כל הפרות, אמר אבא שאול, כדי שימכרם ויקח בהם מזון שתי סעודות. מדה זו אמורה בכהנים ובלוים וביש-ראלים. היה מציל, נוטל מחצה ונותן מחצה. היה לו דבר מעט, נותן לפניהם, והן מחלקין ביניהם.

Mishnah Peah 8 begins with some rulings on the Torah mitzvah to leave some of the harvest for the poor to glean (8:1-2), and the idea is that the poor will take the produce from the corners of the fields, some to live by and others to sell and earn a living. The mishnah continues with not giving more than a certain amount of food from the threshing floor. The point is that they are to earn their living by the work of their own hands, as opposed to being given a free ride on the back of someone else. This may be what is being emphasized in the midrash, where Midrash Tehillim 82, Part 2 concludes saying, "All the earth is Mine, and I meant the rich man to have his riches. Yet you would take away what is his." The point is the Lord God is providing for the poor, however, the poor man was to go out and work, to get his food and to earn a living. The Scriptures do not support the idea of the redistribution of wealth (socialism). Each person is supposed to go out and make a living in the way they are able to and by the gifts God has given them.

Midrash Tehillim 82, Part 3 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, "They know not, neither do they understand (Tehillim / Psalms 82:5)," The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, "Because men know not how to make precise judgment, the world is shaken, for the verse ends by saying, They go about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken." The psalm states that men are without understanding, and that this is the reason injustice occurs across the face of the earth. There are several places in scripture where the Lord God makes a contrast between His ways and wisdom as it is compared to man's

ways and wisdom.

Isaiah 55:8-11

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 higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.* 55:10 *'For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;* 55:11 *So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it. (NASB)*

Isaiah says that the Lord's ways are not man's ways, and that His word goes forth and does not return void, as opposed to man's words that wither and have no power. The Apostle Paul states the following:

1 Corinthians 1:19-20, 19:25-27

1:19 *For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And the cleverness of the clever I will set aside.'* 1:20 *Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ...* 1:25 *Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.* 1:26 *For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;* 1:27 *but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, (NASB)*

Paul states that the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. The reason being, the Lord has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are strong. The putting to shame is synonymous to men who stand before the most High God and are ashamed because of their sins. Paul also said in *1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (NASB)* Many things are spiritually discerned, where the Scriptures compare the "flesh" and the "spirit," where the flesh desires sin, and the spirit desires the righteousness of God and His Torah (*Romans 7*).

In the following Scripture verse, the words "flesh", "carnally minded", and "carnal mind" are all translated from the same Greek word.

Romans 8:5-8

8:5 *For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.* 8:6 *For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,* 8:7 *because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so* 8:8 *and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (NASB)*

Galatians 5:17

5:16 *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.* 5:17 *For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. Many people believe that these scriptures are only referring to the sinful nature of the flesh verses the holy nature of the Spirit. My teaching isn't about sin, disobedience, but rather about obedience; being led by the Holy Spirit, scripture, and the knowledge of God's ways, which are usually always contrary to man's carnal mind. The carnal mind is ruled by carnal logic, carnal rational, carnal wisdom, carnal intelligence; the "earthly nature of man apart from divine in-*

fluence” and therefore, subject to sin - disobedience, because it cannot understand the ways of God which seem foolish to the rational mind. (NASB)

Man’s wisdom, logic, rational, would say giving something away is an act of subtraction because you would end up with less. However, the Lord God says that if you give, more will be given to you.

Proverbs 11:24-25

11:24 *There is one who scatters, and yet increases all the more, And there is one who withholds what is justly due, and yet it results only in want. 11:25 The generous man will be prosperous, And he who waters will himself be watered.* (NASB)

Luke 6:37-38

6:37 *‘Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. 6:38 ‘Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.’* (NASB)

In these Scriptures, notice how these things seem counter intuitive, which is the very thing that is stated in the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “*They know not, neither do they understand (Tehillim / Psalms 82:5).*” Living by faith will not leave you in poverty because the Lord God is the one who causes the increase, and He works in justice and in truth.

The entire midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק פב סימן ג ג לא ידעו ולא יבינו. לפי שאינן יודעין לכוין את הדין לפיכך העולם מתמוטט, שנאמר בחשכה יתהלכו ימוטו כל מוסדי ארץ. אני אמרתי אלהים אתם ובני עליון כולכם. מצוה אחת צויתי לאדם הראשון ולא עמד בה, וגרשתיו מגן עדן, וקנסתי עליו מיתה, שנאמר אכן כאדם תמותון וכאחד השרים תפולו, אלו שרים של מעלה, שנאמר יפקוד ה' על צבא (מרום) [המרום] במרום (ישעיה כד כא). קומה (ה') [אלהים] שפטה הארץ. העבר את אלו ותהא בעצמך מלך ושופט, שנאמר וה' לעולם ישב כונן למשפט כסאו (תהד לים ט ה).</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 82, Part 3 3. <i>They know not, neither do they understand (Tehillim / Psalms 82:5), Because men know not how to make precise judgment, the world is shaken, for the verse ends by saying, They go about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. Though I said, You are godlike beings, and all of you are sons of the Most High (Tehillim / Psalms 82:6), yet the one and only precept I gave Adam, he did not abide by. So I drove him out of the Garden of Eden, and I imposed the decree of death upon him, as is said in the next verse, Nevertheless you will die like Adam, and fall like one of the princes (Tehillim / Psalms 82:7). Here, princes refers to the heavenly princes of whom it is said, And it will come to pass in that day that the Lord will punish the host of the high ones that are on high (Isaiah 24:21). Arise, O God, judge the earth (Tehillim / Psalms 82:8), Remove these mortal judges, and You along be King and Judge, as is said, The Lord will be enthroned forever, He has established His throne for judgment (Tehillim / Psalms 9:8).</i></p>
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Notice how the rabbis translate *Tehillim / Psalms 82:6* saying, “*Though I said, You are godlike beings, and all of you are sons of the Most High.*” (אני אמרתי אלהים אתם ובני עליון כולכם) Why do the rabbis say we are godlike beings? The reason being was that man was made in His image, we are called to emulate Him, to walk in His ways, to do justice, and in doing so we are godlike, living godly, righteous, and holy lives. Though we are called to live in this way, we fall short, and the midrash continues saying, “*yet the one and only precept I gave Adam, he did not abide by. So I drove him out of the Garden of Eden, and I imposed the decree of death upon him, as is said in the next verse, Nevertheless you will die like Adam, and fall like one of the princes (Tehillim / Psalms 82:7).*” Sin brings death, and man is unable to escape death, which is

imposed upon him by God, by reason of his sins. The rabbis refer to Adam as a prince, though he sinned, he holds a special title, and in a similar manner, though man sins, as judge, he is called Elohim (אֱלֹהִים) because he remains sent to carry out a mission on behalf of the Lord God in heaven, to do justice, and to show mercy.

The midrashic interpretation of princes, the rabbis state, “Here, princes refers to the heavenly princes of whom it is said, And it will come to pass in that day that the Lord will punish the host of the high ones that are on high (Isaiah 24:21).” The idea is that though we have been given a high title, and called to walk in holiness, righteousness, justice, and truth, if we live in sin the Lord will bring the consequences. Man’s title of position does not exempt him from the consequences of sin.

Midrash Tehillim 82, Part 3 concludes saying, “Arise, O God, judge the earth (Tehillim / Psalms 82:8), Remove these mortal judges, and You along be King and Judge, as is said, The Lord will be enthroned forever; He has established His throne for judgment (Tehillim / Psalms 9:8).” We read the following from the rabbinic literature.

Radak on Psalms 9:8:1-2

But the Lord sitteth enthroned for ever : - These every one may perish ; but the Lord sitteth enthroned for ever, and judges these every one. And this is what he means when he says : He hath prepared His throne for judgment, - as it says (Ps. cii. 27), “they shall perish, but Thou remainest.” And the significance of sitteth enthroned (יָשַׁב) is that of enduring and stability ; and so (in the passage) “The Lord sat enthroned at the flood” (Ps. xxix. 10).

Talmud Bavli Berakhot 17a

It was a favorite saying of Raba : The goal of wisdom is repentance and good works; so that a man shall not read [Torah] and study [Mishnah] and then contradict his father or mother or teacher or anybody greater than he in knowledge and number [of years]; as it is said, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, a good understanding have all that do thereafter” (Ps. cxii. 10). “All that learn” is not said here, but “all that do thereafter,” i.e. they that practice Torah for its own sake, but not they that practice Torah not for its own sake. As for him who does not fulfill the Torah for its own sake, it were better had he never been created. It was a favorite saying of Rab : Not like this world is the world to come. In the world to come there is neither eating nor drinking; no procreation of children or business transactions; no envy or hatred or rivalry ; but the righteous sit enthroned, their crowns on their heads, and enjoy the lustre of the Shekinah; as it is said, “And they beheld God, and did eat and drink” (Exod. xxiv. 11).

In the *Talmud Bavli Berakhot 17a*, the rabbis say, “Fortunate is the man whose toil is in Torah and gives pleasure to his Creator.” The underlying idea is that it is not known which of the mitzvot are binding on all of Israel and to what extent one is bound by them. However, the one who truly loves the Creator may His Name be blessed, will not endeavor and intend to fulfill his obligations by means of the duty which is acknowledged by all of Israel in general, but will react in very much the same manner as a son who loves his father, who, even if his father gives only a slight indication of desiring something, undertakes to fulfill this desire as completely as he can. This is the description of who we are in the Messiah. Because of the love that we have for the Lord God in heaven, we obey His commands. An this brings great joy into our lives, to live for the Lord, and take pleasure in doing what is right, holy, and just. Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We glorify Your Holy Name! We thank You for your great love, and the mercies You show us each day. Thank You for the joy you have placed in our hearts to serve you and to live our lives for you. Help us to have the confidence to know that we are in the Messiah Yeshua when we walk according to Your commands.

The Scriptures say that we can know that You are present in our lives. We thank You for the promises You have made and Your continued faithfulness to Your promises and to us. Thank You Lord for giving us the faith to believe in Yeshua the Messiah and for always calling our hearts back to You Lord! Please have mercy on us, forgive us for our sins. We thank You Lord for sending Your son Yeshua that we may enter into the covenant of peace that You have promised to Your people. 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