

ספר תהילים כג | Tehillim / Psalms 23

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

Thy Rod and Thy Staff, a Sign of Your Great Covenant!

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 23:1-6*, and is one of the most well known Psalms that David composed with regard to his relationship with the Lord God Almighty. The Psalm is introduced saying: *23:1 A Psalm of David. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. (NASB)* How does the Lord who "Shepherds" (רָעִי) David cause him not to have want or need for anything? David says that the Lord causes him to lie down in green pastures (בְּבָאוֹת דְּשָׂא יִרְבִּיצֵנִי עַל-מִי מְנַחֹת) *23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. NASB*) and to lay beside quiet waters. The Scriptures state: *23:3 He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. (NASB)* the Lord restores our soul and guides us in righteousness all for the reason of His Name. How are these connected, the restoration of the soul, the righteous way/path of the Lord, and the Name of the Lord God Almighty? David states that *23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. (NASB)* He says that no matter where we go, the Lord is with us and we are not to fear. How does the rod and staff of God comfort us? David says: *23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. (NASB)* The Lord prepares a table before his enemies, this is significant since when being pursued by our enemies one does not desire food to eat. As a result of the Lord being with David, he says *23:6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (NASB)*

עברית Hebrew

ארמי Aramaic

ελληνικός Greek

עברית Hebrew	ארמי Aramaic	ελληνικός Greek
<p style="text-align: center;">ספר תהלים פרק כג</p> <p>א מְזֻמֹּר לְדָוִד יְהוָה רָעִי לֹא אֶחְסָר: ב בְּבָאוֹת דְּשָׂא יִרְבִּיצֵנִי עַל-מִי מְנַחֹת גְּנֵה־לִנְיָ: ג נַפְשִׁי יִשׁוּבָב יִנְחֲנֵנִי בְּמַעְגְּלֵי- צִדְקָה לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ: ד גַּם כִּי-אֵלֶּה בְּגֵיאַ צְלֻמֹּת לֹא-אִירָא רַע כִּי-אַתָּה עִמָּדִי שְׂבָטָה וּמִשְׁעֲנִתָּה הִמָּה יִנְחַמְנִי: ה תַּעְרֹף לִפְנֵי שְׁלֹחַן נִגְדַּ צַּרְרֵי דְשִׁנְתָּ בְשֶׁמֶן רֹאשִׁי כּוֹסֵי רוֹיָה: ו אֵף טוֹב וְחֶסֶד יִרְדְּפוּנִי כָּל-יְמֵי חַיִּי וְשִׁבְתִּי בְּבֵית-יְהוָה לְאָרְךָ יָמִים:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ספר טוביה פרק כג</p> <p>א תושבחתא לדוד יהוה דזן ית עמיה לעמיה במדברא לא חסרו כולא: ב באתר ציחתא צהוותא בהניית דיתאין ישרינני על מי ניחיא מוי דניח דברני: ג נפשי ייתב במנא ופסיונין דברני בהלכות צדקא צדיקי מטול גבורת שמיה: ד ברם לחוד כד אזל בגלותא במישר טולא דמותא לא אדחל מבישאתא מטול דמימרך בסעדי תיגדאך תריצא ואוריתך הינון ינחמונני: ה סדרת קדמי פתור מנא זקיף קבל מעיקיי דהינתא בעופיא פטימא גושמיה ובמשח רבותא ריש כהנני כלידי רווחא: ו ברם טבתא טיבותא וחסדא ירדפונני כל יומי חיי כד אתיב בבית מקדשא דיהוה נגדא דיומנא דיומא:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 23</p> <p>23:1 ψαλμὸς τῷ δαυὶδ κύριος ποιμαίνει με καὶ οὐδὲν με ὑστερήσει 23:2 εἰς τόπον χλόης ἐκεῖ με κατεσκήνωσεν ἐπὶ ὕδατος ἀναπαύσεως ἐξέθρεψέν με 23:3 τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἐπέστρεψεν ὠδήγησέν με ἐπὶ τρίβους δικαιοσύνης ἕνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ 23:4 ἐὰν γὰρ καὶ πορευθῶ ἐν μέσῳ σκιάς θανάτου οὐ φοβηθήσομαι κακὰ ὅτι σὺ μετ' ἐμοῦ εἶ ἡ ῥάβδος σου καὶ ἡ βακτηρία σου αὐταὶ με παρεκάλεσαν 23:5 ἠτοίμασας ἐνώπιόν μου τράπεζαν ἐξ ἐναντίας τῶν θλιβόντων με ἐλίπανα ἐν ἐλαίῳ τὴν κεφαλὴν μου καὶ τὸ ποτήριόν σου μεθύσκον ὡς κράτιστον 23:6 καὶ τὸ ἔλεός σου καταδιώξεται με πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ζωῆς μου καὶ τὸ κατοικεῖν με ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου εἰς μακρότητα ἡμερῶν</p>

<p>Tehillim / Psalms 23 A Psalm of David. 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. 23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. 23:3 He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. 23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. 23:6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 23 23:1 A psalm of David. It is the Lord who fed his people in the wilderness; they did not lack anything. 23:2 In a place of thirst he will settle me in pleasant grass; he led me to the waters of rest. 23:3 He will restore my soul with manna; he led me in the paths of righteousness for the sake of his name. 23:4 Indeed, when I go into exile by the plain of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for your word is my help, your straight staff and your Torah, they will comfort me. 23:5 You have set before me a high table of manna in front of my oppressors; you have fattened my body with stuffed fowl, and with anointing oil [you have fattened] the heads of my priests; my goblet is wide. 23:6 Indeed grace and favor will follow me all the days of my life, while I sit in the sanctuary of the Lord for length of days. (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 23 A Psalm of David. 23:1 The Lord tends me as a shepherd, and I shall want nothing. 23:2 In a place of green grass, there he has made me dwell: he has nourished me by the water of rest. 23:3 He has restored my soul: he has guided me into the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake. 23:4 Yea, even if I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will not be afraid of evils: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, these have comforted me. 23:5 Thou has prepared a table before me in presence of them that afflict me: thou hast thoroughly anointed my head with oil; and thy cup cheers me like the best wine. 23:6 Thy mercy also shall follow me all the days of my life: and my dwelling shall be in the house of the Lord for a very long time. (LXX)</p>
---	---	--

Tehillim / Psalms 23:1-6, and is one of the most well known Psalms that David composed with regard to his relationship with the Lord God Almighty. We do not know when David wrote *Tehillim / Psalms 23*. Perhaps it was when he fled his son Absalom when Absalom tried to usurp David as king of Israel? When David fled from Absalom, he run to the Jordan River at the ford known as Jabbok and entered the land known as Gilead. In Gilead, David met a man named Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim, he was 80 years old at the time of Absalom's revolt. Barzillai was distinguished for his loyalty for David and He provided for the king's followers (*2 Samuel 17:27*). David remembered his kindness on his death bed and commended Barzillai's children to the care of Solomon (*1 Kings 2:7*). According to the Scriptures, Barzillai was a shepherd. It may be at this time that David composed this Psalm saying א מְזֹמֹר לְדָוִד יְהוָה רָעִי לֹא אֶחְסֵר: 23:1 *A Psalm of David. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. (NASB)* The word David uses here אֶחְסֵר in the first person singular from the root חָסַר meaning when used as an adjective “absent, missing; lacking, incomplete, minus, wanting, deficient, devoid, short” and as a verb “to subtract; give less; deprive; miss.” David says that because God is His Shepherd, nothing is lacking, missing, or deficient, he has not been deprived of anything. How does the Lord who “Shepherds” (רָעִי) David cause him not to have want or need for anything? According to the rabbis in the Aramaic Targum, we read א תושבחתא לדוד יהוה דון ית עמיה 23:1 *A psalm of David. It is the Lord who fed his people in the wilderness; they did not lack anything. (EMC)* The rabbis say that David was thinking of the people in the wilderness having a lack of nothing because the Lord provided all they needed, when he composed this Psalm. What kinds of needs were met for the Children of Israel in the wilderness according to the Torah? According to Parashat Beshlach, *Shemot / Exodus 14:13*, Moshe said יג וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-הָעָם אֶל-תִּירְאוּ הַתִּיַצְבוּ וַיֵּרְאוּ אֶת- 14:13 *But יְשׁוּעַת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי אֲשַׁר רְאִיתֶם אֶת-מִצְרַיִם הַיּוֹם לֹא תִסְפוּ לִרְאֹתָם עוֹד עַד-עוֹלָם:*

Moses said to the people, 'Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. (NASB)

The Lord God Almighty was in the process of delivering Israel from bondage in Egypt and according to the Torah He would go on to sustain a vast number of people in a desolate and dangerous desert. During their forty year wilderness journey, the Children of Israel were rarely in an oasis of comfort; however, during all those years in the Desert, God provided for His children and protected them. According to Parashat Ki Tavo, we read in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 29:4-6*, וְאִלֶּיךָ אֶתְּכֶם אֲרַבְעִים שָׁנָה בְּמִדְבָּר לֹא-בָלוּ שְׁלֹמֹתֵיכֶם, מֵעַלְיֵיכֶם וְנִעְלָה לֹא-בָלְתָה מֵעַל רַגְלֵךָ: ה' לָחֶם לֹא אָכַלְתֶּם וַיַּיֵּן וְשִׁכָר לֹא שָׁתִיתֶם לְמַעַן תִּדְעוּ כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: 29:5 [מפטיר] וַתָּבֹאוּ אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וַיֵּצֵא סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ-הַשְּׁבוּן וְעוּג מֶלֶךְ-הַבְּשָׁן לְקָרְאתָנוּ לְמִלְחָמָה וַנִּצֵּחֶם: 29:6 'You have not eaten bread, nor have you drunk wine or strong drink, in order that you might know that I am the Lord your God. 29:7 'When you reached this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon and Og the king of Bashan came out to meet us for battle, but we defeated them; (NASB) Like David the children of Israel were לֹא אֶחָסֵר (lo echsar) the Lord God Almighty was their Shepherd, and they were not lacking, missing, deficient, or deprived of anything. According to the Torah, the following list can be made regarding the provisions God made for Israel so that they were לֹא אֶחָסֵר ("without need."

1. Nobody needed a doctor if they obeyed the Lord (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 7:15*)
2. Nobody needed shoes (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 29:4-6*)
3. Nobody needed new clothing (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:4, 29:4-6*)
4. Nobody ate bread and they lived well (*Shemot / Exodus 16:15, Devarim / Deuteronomy 29:6*)
5. Nobody had wine or beer but they did not lack for something to drink (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 29:6*).
6. Nobody doubted the love and care of God who protected them during their wilderness journey.
7. Nobody understood what God was doing until they had a changed heart.
The purpose of the wilderness journey was to weed out the unfaithful and to train the children of God in His Torah so they would know that He is God (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 29:6*).

It is interesting to note that the key to the children of Israel being free from disease is found in Parashat Ekev, *Devarim / Deuteronomy 7:16*.

Devarim / Deuteronomy 7:14-16

7:14 'You shall be blessed above all peoples; there will be no male or female barren among you or among your cattle. 7:15 'The Lord will remove from you all sickness; and He will not put on you any of the harmful diseases of Egypt which you have known, but He will lay them on all who hate you. 7:16 'You shall consume all the peoples whom the Lord your God will deliver to you; your eye shall not pity them, nor shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you. (NASB)

יִדְבָּר וְתִהְיֶה מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים לֹא-יִהְיֶה בְּךָ עֶקֶר וְעֶקְרָה וּבְבִקְרָתְךָ: טו וְהִסִּיר יְהוָה מִמֶּךָ כָּל-חֲלִי וְכָל-מַדְוֵי מִצָּרִים הָרְעִים אֲשֶׁר יִדְעָתָ לֹא יִשְׁיִמָּם בְּךָ וְנִתְּנָם בְּכָל-שְׁנָאֵיךָ: טז וְאָכַלְתָּ אֶת-כָּל-הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ לֹא-תַחֲוֶם עֵינֶיךָ עָלֵיהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹד אֶת-אֱלֹהֵיהֶם כִּי-מוֹקֵשׁ הוּא לְךָ:

And according to the Apostolic Writings, the Apostle Paul said in *1 Corinthians 10:1-12*:

1 Corinthians 10:1-12

10:1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; 10:2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 10:3 and all ate the same spiritual food; 10:4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. 10:5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. 10:6 Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. 10:7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play.' 10:8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. 10:9 Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. 10:10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 10:11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. (NASB)

¹Οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν πάντες ὑπὸ τὴν νεφέλην ἦσαν καὶ πάντες διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης διῆλθον, ²καὶ πάντες εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν ἐβαπτίσθησαν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσσει, ³καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν βρῶμα ἔφαγον, ⁴καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν ἕπιον πόμα: ἔπιον γὰρ ἐκ πνευματικῆς ἀκολουθούσης πέτρας: ἡ πέτρα δὲ ἦν ὁ Χριστός. ⁵ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν τοῖς πλείοσιν αὐτῶν εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεός, κατεστρώθησαν γὰρ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ. ⁶ταῦτα δὲ τύποι ἡμῶν ἐγενήθησαν, εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἐπιθυμητὰς κακῶν, καθὼς κάκεῖνοι ἐπεθύμησαν. ⁷μηδὲ εἰδωλολάτραι γίνεσθε, καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν: ὡσπερ γέγραπται, Ἐκάθισεν ὁ λαὸς φαγεῖν καὶ πεῖν, καὶ ἀνέστησαν παίζειν. ⁸μηδὲ πορνεύωμεν, καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπόρνευσαν, καὶ ἔπεσαν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ εἴκοσι τρεῖς χιλιάδες. ⁹μηδὲ ἐκπειράζωμεν τὸν Χριστόν, καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν ἐπείρασαν, καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ὄφρων ἀπάλλυντο. ¹⁰μηδὲ γογγύζετε, καθάπερ τινὲς αὐτῶν ἐγόγγυσαν, καὶ ἀπόλλυντο ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀλοθρευτοῦ. ¹¹ταῦτα δὲ τυπικῶς συνέβαιναν ἐκείνοις, ἐγράφη δὲ πρὸς νουθεσίαν ἡμῶν, εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰῶνων κατήντηκεν. ¹²ὥστε ὁ δοκῶν ἐστάναι βλεπέτω μὴ πέσει.

Paul continues in *1 Corinthians 11:29-31* saying *11:29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. 11:30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. 11:31 But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. (NASB)* (²⁹ὁ γὰρ ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων κρίμα ἑαυτοῦ ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα. ³⁰διὰ τοῦτο ἐν ὑμῖν πολλοὶ ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἄρρωστοὶ καὶ κοιμῶνται ἱκανοί. ³¹εἰ δὲ ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν, οὐκ ἂν ἐκρινόμεθα:.) In the context of the Lord's table and commemorating the sacrifice of the Messiah, his body and blood (*unleavened bread and wine*) the people involved at that time appear to not be judging themselves and their actions. As a result of this Paul says many are weak, sick, and are dead (διὰ τοῦτο ἐν ὑμῖν πολλοὶ ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἄρρωστοὶ καὶ κοιμῶνται ἱκανοί). In the Torah (Parashat Ekev), the people were to **אֶתְכַלְכְּלוּ אֶת־כָּל־בְּרִית־הַיְהוָה לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ** “consume all the people” the Lord is giving into their hands (7:16 ‘You shall consume all the peoples whom the Lord your God will deliver to you; your eye shall not pity them, nor shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you. NASB) and the reason was so they do not desire, crave, covet, or lust after evil and carnal things. This is the example that Paul speaks of in *1 Corinthians 10:1-12* saying “these are given as examples so that we do not sin.” We are not to crave, covet or lust after the things of this world. It is interesting how much we can get out of the very first verse of *Tehillim / Psalms 23* on what David is saying **אֶתְכַלְכְּלוּ אֶת־כָּל־בְּרִית־הַיְהוָה לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ** אֶתְכַלְכְּלוּ אֶת־כָּל־בְּרִית־הַיְהוָה לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ: *23:1 A Psalm of David. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. (NASB)* David did not have need, want, or desire for anything (אֶתְכַלְכְּלוּ אֶת־כָּל־בְּרִית־הַיְהוָה לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ); he was not lacking, missing, or deficient, he has not been deprived of anything because he has kept the way of the Lord. According to David in *Tehillim / Psalms 19*, the Torah of the Lord is perfect, restores the soul, the Torah is the testimony of the Lord, and it is given to make one wise, the ordinances of the Lord are right and the commandment enlightens the eyes. In the study on

Tehillim / Psalms 19:5-7, a parallel is drawn between “light” and “speech.” The difference between light and darkness can be understood as a parallel between the knowledge of good and evil. In the light one is able to judge how others are walking and to choose the right path to walk in. Darkness is used to hide ones evil ways, to walk in wickedness without others observing what you are doing. Light has also been used to illustrate the choice of whether to follow the commandments of God, and hope for His eternal rewards, and darkness to follow the enticings of the evil one which persuade man to do evil and become captive and damned to hell in eternal darkness. David walked in the light of God’s holiness and applied the Torah to his life to keep and observe the statutes of the Lord. As a result of this the Lord shepherds him and gives him provisions so that he is not in want or need of anything.

As a result of David’s remaining obedient to the Lord, He says that the Lord causes him to lie down in green pastures (ב, בְּנֵאוֹת דְּשָׁא יִרְבִּיצֵנִי עַל-מֵי מְנַחֹת יְנַהֲלֵנִי: *23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. NASB*) and to lay beside quiet waters. David also says ג נִפְשִׁי יְשׁוּבָב יְנַהֲנֵי *23:3 He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake. (NASB)* It is interesting here on the choice of words that are being used in *Tehillim / Psalms 23:2*. The Hebrew text states נִפְשִׁי יְשׁוּבָב (nafshi yeshovev) meaning the Lord “causes gladness and joy to my soul.” NASB translates the “He restores my soul.” The Aramaic Targum states ג נפשי ייחייב במנא ופסיונין דברני *23:3 He will restore my soul with manna; he led me in the paths of righteousness for the sake of his name. (EMC)* The rabbis say the Lord restores David’s soul with manna. The Septuagint says τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἐπέστρεψεν ὠδήγησέν με ἐπὶ τρίβους δικαιοσύνης ἕνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ *23:3 He has restored my soul: he has guided me into the paths of righteousness, for his name’s sake. (LXX)* The Literal Greek states “my life He returned” (ψυχὴν μου ἐπέστρεψεν) and “He guided me (ὠδήγησέν) upon roads (τρίβους) of righteousness (δικαιοσύνης) because of His name.” The rabbis of the LXX translate that God has restored or returned David’s life to him and in the Aramaic Targum it was the bread from heaven that restores the soul. According to Parashat Ekev, Moshe taught the people saying that man does not live by bread alone but on “all that goes out” (על-כל-מוצא) or proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. The rabbis pick up on Moshe’s words that our life depends upon God’s Word. According to the Torah, bread was generally made from wheat (*Shemot / Exodus 29:2 and Judges 6:19*), though sometimes bread was made from other grains too (*Bereshit / Genesis 14:18 and Judges 7:13*). Unleavened bread was used for Passover (*Shemot / Exodus 12:15-20, Devarim / Deuteronomy 16:3*), the bread of the presence was provided fresh every Shabbat and were to be eaten in the Tabernacle by the Priests (*Shemot / Exodus 25:30, Vayikra / Leviticus 24:8, 1 Samuel 21:1-6, and Matthew 12:4*). The word “bread” (לחם) is also used figuratively in the Tanakh as the bread of sorrows in *Tehillim / Psalms 127:2*, the bread of tears in *Tehillim / Psalms 80:5*, the bread of wickedness in *Mishley / Proverbs 4:17*, and the bread of deceit in *Mishley / Proverbs 20:17*. The Psalms and Proverbs suggest to us that bread is used to illustrate the works of the flesh. This is how and why Yeshua used unleavened bread symbolically to refer to his body. In Parashat Ekev and in Parashat Beshalach Lecha (*Shemot / Exodus 16*) Manna is introduced as bread that God has given to the people from Heaven. On seeing the manna on the ground each man said to his brother in Hebrew “Ma Hu” (אִישׁ אֶל-) which means “What/who is He.” The pronoun “hu” (הוא) may be used in the Hebrew language to refer to a person, place, or thing. The personal pronoun may also refer to a plurality (of Israel) according its usage in Parashat Balak (see *Bamidbar / Numbers 22:12, וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-בְּלָעָם לֹא תִלְדָּה עִמָּהֶם, (לֹא תֹאֵר אֶת-הָעַם כִּי בְרוּךְ הוּא וְחָזוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַאֲמָרוּ גִבֹר לְאַחֲוֵיהִי מִנְּאָה הוּא אֲרִי לֹא יִדְעוּ מָה הוּא וַאֲמָר מִשָּׁה לְהוֹן הוּא לְחִמָּא דִּיהָב) indicated by the Aramaic word אַרִי meaning to be uncertain in the sense of seeing like in a vision according to Brown, Driver, and Briggs Lexicon. Studying the Apostolic Writings, in *John 6:31-32*, Yeshua*

the Messiah uses the people's statement "Man Hu" (מָה הוּא) in a midrashic sense to indicate what the people did not know then, he is explaining to them now. He (הוּא) is the one these scriptures are referring too. The true bread that comes from heaven is the Word of the Living God (*John 6:31-32*) and affirms what is written in the Torah of Him in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:1-3*. The interesting concept found here in the Scriptures is how the rabbis translate *Tehillim / Psalms 23:3* in the Aramaic Targum ג נפשי ייתיב במנא ופסיונין דברני *23:3 He will restore my soul with manna; he led me in the paths of righteousness for the sake of his name. (EMC)* The rabbis say David's belief is in the Lord who restores his soul will do so giving him manna (מנא). The very next thought is that the Lord will guide (MSS, LXX) or lead (EMC), David in paths of righteousness. This is achieved in the Word of God, according to the Torah. The rabbis have made the connection between Manna and the Word of the Lord. This is the same connection that Yeshua has made in *John 6:31-32*, man does not live by bread alone but by the Word of God, and Yeshua the living Word (*John 1:1-14*), we cannot live without Him in our lives. The Scriptures (David) say the Lord restores our souls and guides us in righteousness all for the reason of His Name. It is because of His name sake that He restores our souls in His Word, in and according to His righteous ways, and in His Son Yeshua the living Word.

ד גם כִּי-אֵלֶּיךָ בָּגִיָּא צִלְמוֹת לֹא-אִירָא רַע כִּי-אִתָּהּ עִמָּדֵי שִׁבְטֶךָ וּמִשְׁעַנְתֶּךָ הִמָּנִי: *23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. (NASB)* He says that no matter where we go, the Lord is with us and we are not to fear. How does the rod and staff of God comfort us? Interestingly two words are used here in the Psalm. The word שִׁבְטֶךָ from the root שבט meaning as a noun "rod, stick, or tribe, clan," and the word וּמִשְׁעַנְתֶּךָ from the root שען meaning as a verb "to lean" and as a noun "to support, rest, prop; assistance, welfare." Researching the use of these words, it is interesting according to the Masoretic Text, when Moshe refers to a "staff or rod," he uses the word מַטֵּה, whereas when he refers to "tribe" in the Torah he uses the word שבט. So, what is David trying to say here in *Tehillim / Psalms 23:4* using the words שִׁבְטֶךָ וּמִשְׁעַנְתֶּךָ (shivtecha umishantecha)? Thinking on the meaning of a shepherds staff throughout the Scriptures, we think of protection against our enemies, to discipline, to guide, and to rescue. In addition to this, a royal scepter was also known as a rod and a rod is frequently mentioned as a weapon. The staff or rod was also symbolic of authority, as for example the scepter that stands between the king's feet. Was this the imagery that David is trying to portray using the words שִׁבְטֶךָ וּמִשְׁעַנְתֶּךָ (shivtecha umishantecha)? David begins this verse saying גם כִּי-אֵלֶּיךָ בָּגִיָּא צִלְמוֹת לֹא-אִירָא רַע כִּי-אִתָּהּ עִמָּדֵי "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me" the Lord is with David and this is only made possible within the covenant relationship David has with the Lord. David uses the word שבט which has the meaning "tribe or clan," by reason that a person who is among the tribes of Israel is living in the covenant relationship with God. Whether one is native born or a ger (stranger) living in the midst of the people. For example, the man who belongs to a tribe is living according to the Torah, honoring their parents and living with love honor and respect for others, and honoring the Lord God Almighty. In addition to this, paying particular attention to the NASB translation, the translators translated שִׁבְטֶךָ וּמִשְׁעַנְתֶּךָ (shivtecha umishantecha) as "Your rod and Your staff;" the words שִׁבְטֶךָ וּמִשְׁעַנְתֶּךָ are not so much expressive of the "rod and staff" imagery as much as it is expressing emphasis upon the Covenant of God with His people, the tribes of Israel, and the one upon whom we are to lean (i.e. וּמִשְׁעַנְתֶּךָ from the root שען meaning "verb: to lean"). Being in the covenant relationship with the Lord, we are comforted in His presence. This leads to our understanding that He cares for us, protects us, guides us in His word (by His staff), etc. He is Lord and King over our community, relationships, lives, and all that we are. It is interesting to read, based on this understanding, how the rabbis interpret this verse. The Aramaic Targum states ד ברם לחוד כד אזל בגלותא *23:4 Indeed, when I go into exile by the plain of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for your word is my help, your straight staff and your Torah, they will comfort me. (EMC)* The rabbis translate *Tehillim / Psalms 23:4*

to say “*your straight staff and your Torah, they will comfort me.*” They have come to the same conclusion that David is speaking within the context of the covenant relationship, that we have no fear and the Lord will guide us with his “*straight staff*” in His ways according to the Torah. The rabbis of the Septuagint say 23:4 ἐὰν γὰρ καὶ πορευθῶ ἐν μέσῳ σκιᾶς θανάτου οὐ φοβηθήσομαι κακὰ ὅτι σὺ μετ’ ἐμοῦ εἶ ἡ ῥάβδος σου καὶ ἡ βακτηρία σου αὐταὶ με παρεκάλεσαν 23:4 *Yea, even if I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will not be afraid of evils: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, these have comforted me. (LXX)* This follows very close to the NASB translation and suggests that the NASB translators may have made use of the LXX in their translation of the Masoretic Text into English.

The word שֵׁבֶט from the root שבט is most often translated as tribe in the Torah rather than “*staff or rod.*” So the task is trying to understand how a staff is related to a tribe? The word מַטֵּה (matteh) as a masculine noun has the meaning “*branch*” and similarly, so does the word Shevat (שבט). Looking at the Torah text, the word Shevat (שבט) is found in Parashat Vayechi in *Bereshit / Genesis 49:10, 16, and 28.*

י לא-יסור שֵׁבֶט מִיהוּדָה וּמַחְקֵק מִבֵּין רַגְלָיו עַד כִּי-יבֹא שִׁילָה וְלוֹ יִקְהֶת עַמִּים:
49:10 *‘The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. (NASB)*

טז דָן יִדִין עַמוֹ כְּאַחַד שֵׁבֶטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
49:16 *‘Dan shall judge his people, As one of the tribes of Israel. (NASB)*

כח כָּל-אֵלֶּה שֵׁבֶטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נְשָׂנִים עָשָׂר וְזֹאת אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר לָהֶם אַבְיָהֶם וַיְבָרֶךְ אוֹתָם אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר
כְּבָרְכָתוֹ בְּרַךְ אֹתָם:
49:28 *All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them. He blessed them, every one with the blessing appropriate to him. (NASB)*

Here we see the dual usage of the word Shevat (שבט) as both a staff (scepter) and tribe. According to the usage of these words in the Torah, the Shevat (שבט) is used as a reference to a “*ruling rod*” whereas the word מַטֵּה (matteh) is used as a “*supporting staff.*” The word מַטֵּה (matteh) is a branch that bends away from a tree and has been smoothed and sized. A Shevat (שבט) or tribe is a descendant of a particular person. Take the example of Jacob and his twelve sons, like branches of the tree, the twelve sons bend away from their father as they grow and the Lord God Almighty gives his Torah (instruction) to these sons in order that they might be smoothed and sized according to God’s word. Notice how the staff, rod, scepter, and tribe are all interconnected. There is a deep spiritual meaning here that David is bringing out in his Psalm.

- Abraham was the shepherd of Israel (lived 175 years)
- Isaac was the shepherd of Israel (lived 180 years)
- Jacob was a shepherd of Israel (lived 147 years)
- Joseph was a shepherd of Israel (lived 110 years)

ו שְׁמַעְנוּ | אֲדֹנָי 23:6 *23:6 נְשִׂיא אֱלֹהִים אַתָּה בְּתוֹכֵנוּ בְּמִבְחָר קְבַרֵּנוּ קָבַר אֶת-מֵתָה אִישׁ מִמֶּנּוּ אֶת-קְבָרוֹ לֹא-יִכְלֶה מִמֶּךָ מִקְבַּר מֵתָה:
‘Hear us, my lord, you are a mighty prince among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our graves; none of us will refuse you his grave for burying your dead.’ (NASB)* It followed then that the people of Canaan regarded Abraham as prince and this was passed on to Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Considering this we find they had both a shepherd and a princely rule. Both roles were as leaders (shepherd and prince) and so when Abraham died, this role was passed on to Isaac, and then Jacob, and then Joseph, etc. In Parashat Shemot, this is why when Joseph died the Scriptures say that “*A new king came into power over Egypt who did not*
Copyright © 2013 MATSATI.COM Ministry

know Joseph” (*Shemot / Exodus 1:8*). This new king did not know Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and therefore he did not recognize the authority of Joseph or the role he had in saving all of Egypt. The staff or rod that Joseph carried, in the role as shepherd and ruler disappeared. It is not until *Shemot / Exodus 3:16-4:5* that we read of the rod Moshe carried.

Shemot / Exodus 3:16-4:5

3:16 ‘Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, ‘I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt. 3:17 ‘So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey.’ 3:18 ‘They will pay heed to what you say; and you with the elders of Israel will come to the king of Egypt and you will say to him, ‘The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So now, please, let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.’ 3:19 ‘But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go, except under compulsion. 3:20 ‘So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go. 3:21 ‘I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be that when you go, you will not go empty-handed. 3:22 ‘But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you will plunder the Egyptians.’ 4:1 Then Moses said, ‘What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, ‘The Lord has not appeared to you.’’ 4:2 The Lord said to him, ‘What is that in your hand?’ And he said, ‘A staff.’ 4:3 Then He said, ‘Throw it on the ground.’ So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. 4:4 But the Lord said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand and grasp it by its tail’ so he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand 4:5 ‘that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.’ (NASB)

טז לך ואספת את זקני ישראל ואמרת אליהם יהוה אלהי אבותיכם נראה אלי אלהי אברהם יצחק ויעקב לאמר פקד פקדתי אתכם ואת העשוי לכם במצרים: יז ואמר אעלה אתכם מעני מצרים אל ארץ הפנימי והחתי והאמרי והפריזי והחוי והיבוי אל ארץ זבת חלב ודבש: יח ושמעו לקולך ובאת אתה וזקני ישראל אל מלך מצרים ואמרתם אליו יהוה אלהי העבריים נקרה עלינו ועתה נלכה נא דרך שלשת ימים במדבר ונזכרה ליהוה אלהינו: יט ואני ידעתי כי לא יתן אתכם מלך מצרים להלך ולא ביד חזקה: כ ושלחתי את ידך והכיתי את מצרים בכל נפלאתי אשר אעשה בקרבן ואחרי כן ישלח אתכם: כא ונתתי את חן העם הזה בעיני מצרים והיה כי תלכו לא תלכו ריקם: כב ושאלה אשה משכנתה ומגרת ביתה כלי כסף וכלי זהב ושמלת ושמתם על בניכם ועל בנותיכם ונצלתם את מצרים: א ויען משה ויאמר והן לא יאמינו לי ולא ישמעו בקולי כי יאמרו לא נראה אליך יהוה: ב ויאמר אליו יהוה מזה [מה-זה] בידך ויאמר מטה: ג ויאמר השליכהו ארצה וישלכהו ארצה ויהי לנחש ויגס משה מפניו: ד ויאמר יהוה אל משה שלח ידך ואחז בזנבו וישלח ידו ויחזק בו ויהי למטה בכפו: ה למען יאמינו כי נראה אליך יהוה אלהי אבותם אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב:

Notice the Torah describes the word מטה (matteh, rod) that Moshe is carrying and God asks מה-זה בידך “Ma Zeh Beyadcha” meaning “what is that in your hand?” It is interesting in the Targum Pseudo Jonathan we read:

א ואתיב משה ואמר והא לא יהימנון לי ולא יקבלון מיני ארום ימרון לא איתגלי יי ב ואמר
ליה יי מה דין בידך ואמר חוטרא ג ואמר טלוק יתיה לארעא וטלקיה לארעא והוה לחויה
וערק משה מן קדמוי ד ואמר יי למשה אושיט ידך ואיחוד בקוטניה ואושיט ידיה ואתקיף ביה
והוה לחוטרא בידיה ה מן בגלל דיהמנון ארום אתגלי לך יי אלקא דאבהתכון אלקיה דאברהם
אלקיה דיצחק ואלקיה דייעקב

*4:1 And Moshe answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken to me; for they will say, The Lord has not appeared to you. 4:2 And the Lord said to him, What is that in your hand? And he said, **The rod.** 4:3 And He said, Cast it on the ground; and he cast it to the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moshe fled from before it. [And He said, Cast it on the ground; and he cast it on the ground.] 4:4 And the Lord said to Moshe, Stretch forth your hand and seize (it) by its tail. [And grasp the place of its tail.] And he stretched forth his hand and grasped it, and it became the **rod** in his hand. 4:5 In order that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has revealed Himself to you. (TARGUM)*

Note here how the Aramaic Targum says **ואמר חוטרא** where God is asking Moshe “*what is in your hand*” and Moshe replies saying a “*stick, staff.*” Note how this is an instrument that is an important part of being both a shepherd and ruler. In *Shemot / Exodus 4:20* we read *4:20 So Moses took his wife and his sons, mounted them upon the donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt, and Moses took the staff of God in his hand. (NASB)* and the Aramaic Targum states *4:20 And Moshe took his wife and his sons, and made them ride on the ass, and returned to the land of Egypt. And Moshe took the rod which he had brought away from the chamber of his father-in-law; and it was from the sapphire Throne of glory, in weight forty sein; and upon it was engraved and set forth the Great and Glorious Name by which the signs should be wrought before the LORD by his hand. (TARGUM)* where the Targum expands upon the text and emphasizes that it was Moshe’s hand that would perform the miracle using the rod. Note also that the miracle was produced by Moshe’s hand and not by the rod according to the Scripture. This is understood from *Shemot / Exodus 4:21* that states *4:21 The Lord said to Moses, “When you go to return to Egypt, see all the signs that I have placed in your hand and perform them before Pharaoh, but I will strengthen his heart, and he will not send out the people. (NASB)* Interestingly, Rashi states “*that I have placed in your hand He did not say this in reference to the three aforementioned signs, for He had not commanded that he [Moses] do them before Pharaoh but before Israel, in order that they would believe him, and we do not find that he performed them before him [Pharaoh]. But [regarding] signs that I am destined to put into your hand in Egypt, such as: “When Pharaoh speaks to you [i.e., asking for you to perform signs], etc.” (Exodus 7:9), do not wonder that it is written: “that I have placed,” [i.e., implying the past tense,] because this is what it means: “When you speak to him, I will have already placed them into your hand.”* (כא) בלכתך לשוב מצרימה וגו'. דע, שעל) מנת כן תלך, שתהא גבור בשליחותי לעשות כל מופתי לפני פרעה ולא תירא ממנו: אשר שמתי בידך. לא על שלשה אותות האמורות למעלה, שהרי לא לפני פרעה צוה לעשותם אלא לפני ישראל שיאמינו לו, ולא מציינו שעשאם לפניו, אלא מופתים שאני עתיד לשום בידך במצרים, כמו כי ידבר אליכם פרעה וגו', (שמות ז, ט.) ואל תתמה על (אשר כתיב אשר שמתי, שכן משמעו, כשתדבר עמו כבר שִׁמְתִים בידך: Note that six of the ten plagues that God brought upon Egypt were performed with the staff of Moshe. The important point to take away from all of this is the reason or purpose David chose to write his Psalm using the words **וּמִשְׁעֲנֵתְךָ וּשְׁבִטְךָ** (shivtecha umishantecha) is found within the imagery that is given in the “*rod and staff*” is connected to the Covenant of God with His people, the tribes of Israel, and the one upon whom we are to lean, the Lord God Almighty. Being in the covenant relationship with the Lord, we are comforted in His presence. There is power to be delivered in His presence. Truly the Lord cares for us, protects us, and guides us in His word (*by His staff*). The Aramaic Targum states **ד ברם לחוד כד אזל בגלותא במישר טולא דמותא לא אדחל מבישתא מטול דמימרך** *23:4 Indeed, when I go into exile by the plain of the shadow of* Copyright © 2013 MATSATI.COM Ministry

death, I will fear no evil; for your word is my help, your straight staff and your Torah, they will comfort me. (EMC) This is indeed consistent with the covenant protection of God in Tehillim / Psalms 23:4 to say “your straight staff and your Torah, they will comfort me.”

David says הַתְּעַרְוּ לִפְנֵי ה' 23:5 תַּעְרֹךְ לְפָנַי | שְׁלַחְוּ נֶגֶד צָרָרִי דְשִׁנְתָּ בְשֶׁמֶן רֵאשִׁי כּוֹסֵי רְוִיָה: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. (NASB) Why would God prepare a table in front of or before our enemies? What is the table? How is the table prepared? What does this mean to us today? The Masoretic Text says תַּעְרֹךְ לְפָנַי using the word תַּעְרֹךְ from the root word עָרַךְ meaning “arrange, set in order.” There is no textual variant in the marginal Masorah of Ginsburg’s Masoretic Text, on this word. The meaning of this word (תַּעְרֹךְ) indicates that God is arranging or setting in order, He is setting things in an orderly way. This implies that God has a plan and that His preparation is done intentionally, everything is under His control because He is actively setting things up for each of us. According to the text, it says שְׁלַחְוּ לְפָנַי | תַּעְרֹךְ לְפָנַי “*taaroch lefaney shulkhan*” the Lord is preparing a table. The root word for “*Shulkhan*” (שְׁלַחְוּ) is שָׁלַח meaning “to send” or “sent.” This word שָׁלַח << שְׁלַחְוּ has the meaning to “shoot froth, spread out, stretch forth” and it is an interesting way of describing the table as something that is spread out, or stretched out where food is laid out to eat. This is a description of God’s provision, His sustenance is being provided for David and for us in a very special way. He is ordering, setting things out in a very orderly way. In David’s case, the Lord sets a table before his enemies, so the Lord is providing comfort, rest, friendship, heart felt peace, food, love, hope, and mercy in the midst of whatever it is that David is going through. The Lord prepares a table before our enemies, is significant since when one is being pursued by an enemy one does not desire food to eat. In addition to this, the Scriptures say כּוֹסֵי רְוִיָה בְשֶׁמֶן רֵאשִׁי “*You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows.*” This brings into context what David is saying, that the Lord God is providing a blessing, provision, food, mercy, and hope. Note something here in the Hebrew text, the NASB says “*You have anointed my head*” but the text itself says simply “*in oil my head.*” Obviously the translators felt David was meaning that the Lord is anointing his head with oil. The holy anointing oil (שֶׁמֶן הַמְּשָׁחָה) according to the Torah was an integral part of the ordination of the priesthood and the high priest as well as having a part in the consecration of the articles of the tabernacle (see *Shemot / Exodus 30:26*) and the subsequent temples in Jerusalem. The primary purpose of anointing with oil was to cause the anointed persons or objects to become most holy (*Shemot / Exodus 30:29*). Originally, according to the Torah, oil was used exclusively for the priests and the Tabernacle articles but was later extended to include prophets and kings (*1 Samuel 10:1*). In addition to this, it was forbidden to be used on an outsider (*Shemot / Exodus 30:33*) or to be used on the body of a common person (*Shemot / Exodus 30:32*) and the Israelites were forbidden to duplicate any like it for themselves (*Shemot / Exodus 30:32*). The reason was this oil was mixed with incense that was for use specifically and exclusively for the Temple only. Thus, even in the midst of his enemies, the Lord is providing for David, it is as if the Lord has anointed him and his cup overflows. As a result of the Lord being with David, he says וְיָמֵינוּ יִמְצָא טוֹב וְיִהְיֶה עִמָּנוּ יְרֵדָה לְפָנֵינוּ כָּל-יְמֵי חַיֵּינוּ וְשָׁבַתִּי בְּבֵית-יְהוָה לְאַרְבֵּי יָמִים: 23:6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (NASB) Goodness and mercy will follow all of the days of our lives if we seek the Lord too. The Lord sets a table before us today even in the presence of our enemies. He has provided comfort, rest, friendship, heart felt peace, food, love, hope, and mercy in His Son Yeshua the Messiah so that no matter what we are going through or how difficult something may be, we can know that the Lord God Almighty is with us. What an Awesome God we serve. Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for Your rod and staff, for these help us to realize the covenant relationship that You have established is the surety of our life and hope in the Messiah Yeshua. Help us Lord to seek the True

— Tehillim / Psalms 23 | ספר תהילים כג —

Messiah, the One who is able to bring us into a covenant relationship with You. Lord forgive us for all of our sins and keep each of us so that our sins do not rule in our lives. We thank you Lord for sending us Your Son Yeshua who paid the covenant price for the forgiveness of our sins. We believe that in Your Son Yeshua, we have the hope of eternal life. Help us to trust in You Lord as we wait patiently for You and Your presence each day. Help us to dedicated our lives to You each day, fill us with Your presence Lord and thank You for revealing these truths to our hearts. 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 I 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