

ספר תהילים סא | Tehillim / Psalms 61

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Prayer, Truth, and the King Messiah

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 61:1-8*, the psalm opens saying, א לְמַנְצֵחַ עַל-נְגִינַת לְדָוִד: *For the director of music. With stringed instruments. Of David. (NASB)* David asks the Lord to hear his prayer saying, ב שְׁמַעַה אֱלֹהִים רִנָּתִי הַקְשִׁיבָה תִּפְלְתִי: *61:1 Hear my cry, O God; Give heed to my prayer (NASB)*. What is it about prayer that David asks for the Lord to hear his prayer? Does he think the Lord has not heard his prayer? Are there circumstances in which our prayers would not be heard? What do the Scriptures speak of concerning living a life that is acceptable before God? Notice how David seeks the Lord no matter where he is, ג מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ | אֵלֶיךָ אֶקְרָא בְּעֵטֶף לִבִּי בְּצוּר-יְרוּם מִמְּנֵי תַנְחֲנִי: *61:2 From the end of the earth I call to You when my heart is faint; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. (NASB)* What is this rock that he seeks to be led to? If the Lord God in heaven is our rock (see Parashat Haazinu), why doesn't he request to be led back to the Lord? David continues saying, ד כִּי-הָיִיתָ מַחְסֵה לִּי מִגְדָּל-עֵז מִפְּנֵי אוֹיְבַי: ה אָגוּרָה בְּאֶהְלֵךְ עוֹלָמִים אַחְסֶה בְּסִתְרֵךְ כְּנַפְיֶךָ סְלָה: *61:3 For You have been a refuge for me, A tower of strength against the enemy. 61:4 Let me dwell in Your tent forever; Let me take refuge in the shelter of Your wings. Selah. (NASB)* The tower analogy provides imagery of being lifted up high out of the reach of the enemy. He also asks to dwell in the tent of the Lord forever. What does it mean to dwell forever in God's tent? David believes the Lord has answered him saying, ו כִּי-אַתָּה אֱלֹהִים שְׁמַעְתָּ לְנִדְרֵי נִתְתָּ יְרֻשַׁת יִרְאֵי שְׁמֶךָ: *61:5 For You have heard my vows, O God; You have given me the inheritance of those who fear Your name. (NASB)* What does it mean that the Lord has given David the inheritance of those who fear God's Name? He continues saying, ז יוֹמִים עַל-יְמֵי-מְלֹךְ תוֹסִיף שְׁנוֹתָיו כְּמוֹ-דֶר וְדָר: *61:6 You will prolong the king's life; His years will be as many generations. (NASB)* The Aramaic Targum states, מלכא דאתי יומי מלכא משיחא, *61:7 You will add days to the age to come, the days of the King Messiah; his years are like the generations of this age and the generations of the age to come. (EMC)* The targum interprets this verse as a reference to the Messiah. How is the Messiah understood within this context of the Psalm? The Psalm concludes saying, ח יֵשֵׁב עוֹלָם לְפָנַי אֱלֹהִים חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת מִן יַנְצְרֶהוּ: ט פֶּן אֲזַמְרָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעַד לְשִׁלְמֵי נְדָרֵי יוֹם | יוֹם: *61:7 He will abide before God forever; Appoint lovingkindness and truth that they may preserve him. 61:8 So I will sing praise to Your name forever, That I may pay my vows day by day. (NASB)* David says this king will abide before the Lord forever and appoint lovingkindness (grace) and truth that will preserve. Aren't grace and truth something the Lord provides? How does singing praises enable David to pay his vows day by day?

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
ספר תהילים פרק סא	ספר תהילים פרק סא	ספר טוביה פרק סא	ספר טוביה פרק סא	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 61	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 61
א לְמַנְצֵחַ עַל-נְגִינַת לְדָוִד: ב שְׁמַעַה אֱלֹהִים רִנָּתִי הַקְשִׁיבָה תִּפְלְתִי- תִי: ג מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ אֵלֶיךָ אֶקְרָא בְּעֵטֶף לִבִּי בְּצוּר-יְרוּם מִמְּנֵי תַנְחֲנִי: ד כִּי-הָיִיתָ מַחְסֵה לִּי מִגְדָּל-עֵז מִפְּנֵי אוֹיְבַי: ה אָגוּרָה בְּאֶהְלֵךְ עוֹלָמִים אַחְסֶה בְּסִתְרֵךְ כְּנַפְיֶךָ סְלָה:		א לשבחא על תושבחן לדוד: ב ביל יהוה בעותי אצית צלותי: ג מן סייפי ארעא קדמך לוותך אצלי באישתלהיות לבי בכרך תקיף דמי- תבני על טינר טור רם מיני דבר יתי: ד ארום הויתא רחיץ לי בקוש טקא עישונא עושנא מן קדם בעיל דבבא:		61:1 εις τὸ τέλος ἐν ὕμνοις τῷ Δαυὶδ εἰσακούσον ὁ θεὸς τῆς δεήσεώς μου πρόσχεε τῇ προσευχῇ μου 61:2 ἀπὸ τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς πρὸς σὲ ἐκέκραξα ἐν τῷ ἀκηδιάσαι τὴν καρδίαν μου ἐν πέτρα ὕψωσάς με 61:3 ὠδήγησάς με ὅτι ἐγενήθης ἐλπίς μου πύργος ἰσχύος ἀπὸ προσώπου ἐχθροῦ	

<p>ו כִּי-אַתָּה אֱלֹהִים שָׁמַעְתָּ לְנִדְרֵי נְתִיחַ יְרַשֵׁת יִרְאֵי שְׁמֶךָ: ז יָמִים עַל-יָמֵי- מְלָךְ תּוֹסִיף שְׁנוֹתָיו כְּמוֹ-דֶר וְדָר: ח יֵשֵׁב עוֹלָם לְפָנַי אֱלֹהִים חֶסֶד וְאַמֶּת מִן יִנְצְרֶהוּ: ט בְּן אֲזַמְרָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעַד לְשִׁלְמֵי נְדָרֵי יוֹם יוֹם:</p>	<p>ה אדור במשכנך לעלמאי איתרחיץ בטלל שכינתך לעלמין: ו ארום אנת את יהוה שמעת נדרי יהבתא ירותא לדחלי שמך: ז יומין על עלמא דאתי יומי מלכא משיחא תוסיף שנוי היך דרי עלמא הדין ודרי עלמא דאתי: ח יתיב לעלמין קדם יהוה טיבו וקך שוט מן מרי עלמא ינטרון ליה: ט בכך אשבח שמך לעלמאי כד אשלים נדרי ביומא דפורקנא דישראל וביום דיתרבי מלכא משיחא למהוי מליך:</p>	<p>61:4 παροικήσω ἐν τῷ σκηνώματί σου εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας σκεπασθήσομαι ἐν σκέπη τῶν περύγων σου διάψαλμα 61:5 ὅτι σύ ὁ θεός εἰσήκουσας τῶν εὐχῶν μου ἔδωκας κληρονομίαν τοῖς φοβουμένοις τὸ ὄνομά σου 61:6 ἡμέρας ἐφ’ ἡμέρας βασιλέως προσθήσεις ἔτη αὐτοῦ ἕως ἡμέρας γενεᾶς καὶ γενεᾶς 61:7 διαμενεῖ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἔλεος καὶ ἀλήθειαν αὐτοῦ τίς ἐκζητήσει 61:8 οὕτως ψαλῶ τῷ ὀνόματί σου εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἀποδοῦναί με τὰς εὐχὰς μου ἡμέραν ἐξ ἡμέρας</p>
<p>Tehillim / Psalms 61 For the director of music. With stringed instruments. Of David. 61:1 Hear my cry, O God; Give heed to my prayer. 61:2 From the end of the earth I call to You when my heart is faint; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. 61:3 For You have been a refuge for me, A tower of strength against the enemy. 61:4 Let me dwell in Your tent forever; Let me take refuge in the shelter of Your wings. Selah. 61:5 For You have heard my vows, O God; You have given me the inheritance of those who fear Your name. 61:6 You will prolong the king’s life; His years will be as many generations. 61:7 He will abide be- fore God forever; Appoint lovingk- indness and truth that they may pre- serve him. 61:8 So I will sing praise to Your name forever, That I may pay my vows day by day. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 61 61:1 For praise, with the psalms of Da- vid. 61:2 Accept, O Lord, my petition, hear my prayer. 61:3 From the ends of the earth I will pray in your presence when my heart is weary; lead me to a strong fortress built on a rock that is higher than I. 61:4 For you have been security for me, in truth, a stronghold before the enemy. 61:5 I will dwell in your tent forever, I will be secure in the shade of your presence forever. 61:6 For you, O Lord, have heard my vows; you have given the inheritance to those who fear your name. 61:7 You will add days to the age to come, the days of the King Messiah; his years are like the generations of this age and the generations of the age to come. 61:8 He will dwell forever in the presence of the Lord; goodness and truth from the Lord of the World will guard him. 61:9 Therefore will I praise your name forever, when I pay my vows in the day of the redemption of Israel, and in the day the King Messiah is anointed to be king. (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 61 For the end, among the Hymns of David. 61:1 O God, hearken to my petition; attend to my prayer. 61:2 From the ends of the earth have I cried to thee, when my heart was in trouble: thou liftedst me up on a rock thou didst guide me: 61:3 be- cause thou wert my hope, a tower of strength from the face of the enemy. 61:4 I will dwell in thy tabernacle for ever; I will shelter myself under the shadow of thy wings. Pause. 61:5 For thou, o God, hast heard my prayers; thou hast given an inheritance to them that fear thy name. 61:6 Thou shalt add days to the days of the king; thou shalt lengthen his years to all generations. 61:7 He shall endure for ever before God: which of them will seek out his mercy and truth? 61:8 So will I sing to thy name for ever and ever, that I may daily perform my vows. (LXX)</p>

א לְמַנְצֵחַ עַל-נְגִינַת לְדָוִד: א
For the director of music. With stringed instruments. Of David. (NASB) This psalm is dedicated as a song for the director of music. The Psalms are a collection of lyrical poems, which are identified as a composite work containing multiple authors. Proverbs is another book from the Tanach that also identifies itself as a composite work. For example, some psalms name their author in the first line of the MT. The collection of the psalms of David is titled Tehillim (תְּהִלִּים), which means “praise songs” in Hebrew. The English title of “Psalms” originates from the Septuagint’s Greek title “Psalmoi,” also meaning “songs of praise.” The

Psalms many times consist of laments from the author to express the author's crying out to God in difficult circumstances. The Psalms of praise are also called hymns, and portray the author's offering of the direct admiration to God. There are thanksgiving psalms which also reflect the author's gratitude for a personal deliverance or provision from God. The book of Psalms expresses not only laments, praise, and thanksgiving, but also worship. David in the Psalms encourages his readers to praise God for who He is and what He has done. The Psalms are designed to describe the greatness of our God, affirm His faithfulness to us in times of trouble, and reminds us of the absolute centrality of His Word for our lives as it is found in the Torah. The Psalms present a clear picture of God lovingly guiding His people; the guidance that God provides produces responses of praise and worship which also provide us with a glimpse of the hearts of men who are devoted to seeking the Lord. We also are given examples of how to repent before the Lord and how our lives will change due to having an encounter with God. All of these things establish the importance of the psalms and the reason for our studying these Scriptures.

ב שְׁמָעָה אֱלֹהִים רִנָּתִי הַקְשִׁיבָה תִּפְּ-
:לְתִי 61:1 Hear my cry, O God; Give heed to my prayer (NASB). What is it about prayer that David asks for the Lord to hear his prayer? Does he think the Lord has not heard his prayer? Are there circumstances in which our prayers would not be heard? Did you know that the Scriptures speak of the need for us to live in a worthy manner so as to be approved of God? If we do not live in a worthy manner, our prayers will not be heard. If one does not take his or her faith seriously, can one expect the Lord to work in a miraculous way in his life? What do the Scriptures speak of concerning living a life that is acceptable before God? The Aramaic Targum states, ב ביל יהוה בעותי אצית צלותי: 61:2 Accept, O Lord, my petition, hear my prayer. (EMC) suggesting prayer is something that is either acceptable or unacceptable. Under what circumstances would prayer not be acceptable in God's sight? These questions are related to being counted worthy to dwell in His presence and/or of the calling that we are given. Note that these concepts are found throughout the entire Bible. Parashat Yitro provides us with an example about our calling and our being counted worthy of His presence in our lives. The Scriptures, according to *Shemot / Exodus 19:14-17*, tell us that Moshe went down to the people and consecrated them, they washed their clothing. Contained within this instruction, the Torah tells us that Moshe instructed the people to not go near a woman for the Lord will show Himself on the third day. What was the purpose of this instruction to not go near a woman for three days because the Lord was going to show Himself upon the mountain of Sinai to the people?

Shemot / Exodus 19:14-17

19:14 So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people, and they washed their garments. 19:15 He said to the people, 'Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman.' 19:16 So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. 19:17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. (NASB)

ספר שמות פרק יט

יד וַיֵּרֵד מֹשֶׁה מִן-הַהָר אֶל-הָעָם וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת-הָעָם וַיְכַבְּסוּ שְׂמֹלֹתָם: טו וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-הָעָם הָיוּ נֹכְחִים לְשִׁלְשֵׁת יָמִים אֶל-תְּגַשׁוּ אֶל-אִשָּׁה: טז וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בַּהִיַת הַבְּקָר וַיְהִי קֹלֹת וּבְרָקִים וְעָנָן כָּבֵד עַל-הָהָר וְקֹל שֹׁפָר חֲזָק מְאֹד וַיִּתְרַד כָּל-הָעָם אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּחֲנֶה: יז וַיֹּצֵא מֹשֶׁה אֶת-הָעָם לִקְרֹאת הָאֱלֹהִים מִן-הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיִּתְצַבּוּ בְּתֵהֱתִית הָהָר:

The Lord instructs Moshe to go down and consecrate the people, and in the process, Moshe instruct the people to wash themselves and their cloths and to not go near a woman for three days prior to the Lord revealing Himself on the mountain? When thinking about “not going near,” in relation to a wife (אִשָּׁה), this

reminds us of the mitzvah regarding being intimate with one's spouse during niddah. In addition to this, we are also reminded of the term negiah (נגיעה) meaning literally “touch,” which is a concept in Rabbinical law (Halakha) that forbids or restricts physical contact with a member of the opposite sex (*except for one's spouse, children, siblings, grandchildren, parents, and grandparents*). A person who abides by this halakha is colloquially described as a shomer negiah (“keeper of negiah” or “one observant of negiah”). In the rabbinic literature, earlier sources do not use the word “negiah,” but use the word “k'reiva” (“coming near”) or one of its grammatical variations (See, e.g. *Sefer Mitzvos Gadol 126, Rambam Issurei Biah 21:1*). Note that the word “k'reiva” is from the Hebrew word קרב meaning “to come near” and is the same root word for קרבן (Korban) as a reference to the “Sacrifice or Offering,” where one draws near to God in the Sacrificial system. It is interesting in the biblical text, Moshe says, לְשִׁלֹּשֶׁת יָמִים אַל-תִּגְשׁוּ אֶל-אִשָּׁה “for three days do not approach unto a woman.” The word used here is “Tigshu” (תִּגְשׁוּ) from the root word “nagash” (נָגַשׁ) written in the Qal Imperfect form, meaning as a verb, “to get near to, come close to, approach.” This word is used 19,885 times in the Tanach. What exactly was Moshe trying to say when he said that one is not to draw near to his wife (אִשָּׁה) for three days prior to the Lord revealing Himself to the people?

The prohibition of negiah is derived from two verses in Leviticus, 18:6 “Any man shall not approach (קרב) *qarab*) his close relative to uncover nakedness; I am God,” and 18:19 “You shall not approach a woman in her time of unclean separation, to uncover her nakedness” The laws of negiah are typically followed by the Orthodox with varying levels of observance. Some Orthodox follow the Halakha with strict modesty and take measures to avoid accidental contact, such as avoiding sitting next to a member of the opposite sex on a bus, airplane, or other similar seating situation. Others are more lenient, only avoiding purposeful contact. Adherents to the Conservative and Reform Judaism do not follow the strict observance of this Halakha. The verse from *Vayikra / Leviticus 18:6* is regarding being intimate with a close relative, and *18:19* is with regard to niddah. It is interesting to note how these prohibitions are described by the rabbis. The prohibition against physical contact with arayot (*Forbidden relationships in Judaism*) is codified by the Rishonim (ראשונים) “the first ones” including Maimonides (*Hilchos Issurei Biah 21:1*) and Moses ben Jacob of Coucy (*Sefer Mitzvos Gadol 126*), note that the rabbis take into consideration of whether the contact is done in an affectionate or lustful manner. Maimonides and the Shulchan Aruch formulate this prohibition as “hugging, kissing, or enjoying close physical contact” (*Rambam Hilchos Issurei Biah 21:1, HaEzer 20:1, and Be'er Heitev 2*). Note that the Rishonim were the leading Rabbis who lived during the 11th to 15th centuries, in the era before the writing of the Shulchan Aruch (שולחן ערוך), the code of Jewish law, 1563 CE, and following the Geonim (589-1038 CE). Based upon these texts and the rabbinic interpretations, the rabbis do not indicate that mere touching is forbidden. So one conclusion we could make regarding *Shemot / Exodus 19:15* is not with regard to touching one's wife. The requirement of restricting the men from approaching their wives appears to be on an intimate level as opposed to merely touching as in the case of casual contact, touching a hand, or a kiss, etc.

Understanding the difference here from the perspective of the rabbis is very significant. *Shemot / Exodus 19:15* is a very significant passage especially in light of the rabbinic interpretation on these verses and the concept of “*lustful thoughts*” that is coupled with Moshe's instructions to the people on preparing themselves to see the Lord God on the mountain on the third day. Note that the meeting place of God and man is within the heart. The Holy Spirit comes and takes up residence in our bodies (dwells) where our bodies are called the temple of the Holy Spirit of God. Yeshua taught that from our hearts proceeds our sin because sin is first conceived in the heart and then is manifest by our lips, and our actions. If one keeps lustful thoughts in one's heart, do you think such a person will see the face of God or even the Lord working in his life? The application for us today, men or women who are sinning in pornography, will not be able to see the face of God. This is also related to the Lord working in the man who is living in unrepentant sin. With regard to prayer, David said in *Tehillim / Psalms 66:18*, אָנֹן אִם-רָאִיתִי בְּלִבִּי לֹא יִשְׁמַע | אֲדַבֵּר: 66:18 *If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear (NASB)*. The idea of keeping lustful thoughts in one's heart and the Lord not hear the prayer of such a person is a biblically based concept.

The Rabbis in *Midrash Rabbah Shemot, Parashat 28, Part 3* have the following to say concerning this section of verses from the Torah.

Midrash Rabbah Shemot, Parashat 28, Part 3

And Moshe reported the words of the people unto the Lord (Shemot / Exodus 19:8). God wished at the moment to give them the Torah and to speak with them, but Moshe was still standing and God said, What can I do because of Moshe? Rabbi Levi said, It can be compared to a king who wished to pass acts without consulting the lieutenant governor; when he said to him, do this thing the reply was, It has already been done. The king tried once again, Go and call this counselor that he may come with you, and when he had gone, the king carried out his wish. So when God desired to give the Ten Commandments, Moshe was standing at His side. God thought, When I reveal the heavens to them and say, I am the Lord your God, they will ask, Who is speaking? God or Moshe? Let Moshe therefore descend and then I will proclaim, I am the Lord your God. Hence, when God said to Moshe, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments (Shemot / Exodus 19:10), he said, I have already sanctified them; for it says, For you did charge us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it (Shemot / Exodus 19:23). God then said to him, Go down and you will come up, you and Aaron with you (Shemot / Exodus 19:24); and as Moshe descended, God revealed Himself; for immediately after it says, So Moshe went down unto the people, we are told that God spoke.

מדרש רבה שמות פרשה כח סימן ג

ג וישב משה את דברי העם אל ה', אותה שעה בקש הקב"ה ליתן להם את התורה ולדבר עמהם והיה משה עומד אמר הקב"ה מה אעשה מפני משה, א"ר לוי משל למלך שבקש לעשות אופימשד טאטא חוץ מדעתו של אפרכוס אמר לו עשה דבר פלוני אמר לו כבר נעשית, ושוב א"ל לך קרא לפלוני סינקליטקוס ויבא עמך, עד שהוא הולך עשה המלך מה שביקש, כך ביקש הקב"ה ליתן י" דברות היה משה עומד מצדו אמר הקב"ה אני גולה להם את הרקיע ואומר אנכי ה' אלהיך הם אומרים מי אמר הקב"ה או משה אלא ירד משה ואח"כ אני אומר אנכי ה' אלהיך, כך אמר הקב"ה למשה לך אל העם וקדשתם היום ומחר וכבסו שמלותם א"ל כבר הקדשתים שנאמר כי אתה העד דותה בנו לאמר וגו', א"ל לך רד ועלית אתה ואהרן עמך, עד שמשה יורד נגלה הקב"ה, שנאמר וירד משה אל העם, מיד וידבר אלהים,

In the midrash, the rabbis are discussing Moshe who is up on the mountain of Sinai and the Lord God who is going to speak to the people. The question is if Moshe remained on the mountain, they might be confused between the Lord speaking and Moshe speaking. The idea was that Moshe was a very great man in the eyes of the rabbis. Could it be that the people were so deprived in their thinking (e.g. *Parashat Ki Tisa, idolatry coupled with sexual sin*) that they would have been unable to discern between the Lord God speaking and Moshe speaking? The explanation is that God told Moshe to descend the mountain so the people would not be confused. According to the Scriptures, the Ten Commandments were given from God both orally and in written form. The Lord instructs Moshe to descend the mountain and sanctify the people. The Scriptures say, *וַיֵּרֶד מֹשֶׁה מִן-הַהָר אֶל-הָעָם וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת-הָעָם וַיְכַבְּסוּ שְׂמֹלֹתָם: 19:14 So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people, and they washed their garments. (NASB)* The word sanctify or consecrated comes from the word קדש meaning "holy," or "to set apart." The washing of the garments is another way of saying "get yourselves cleaned up to be presentable before the Lord." Note that getting yourself all cleaned up before coming before the Lord, this is applied to those who already are in a covenant relationship with God in the Messiah Yeshua. If one is coming to faith and believing in the Messiah, the Lord helps to clean up his life following placing one's faith in Him and seeking for His help. The idea is that when coming to faith, just go to the Lord in prayer to receive forgiveness in the Messiah Yeshua,

in His name, and enter into a covenant relationship with the Lord by faith. Seek the Lord to help overcome sin, and to walk in His ways. The instructions Moshe has given are related to seeing God, something that comes following faith and forgiveness. Moshe descends the mountain and does just that, he causes the people to get cleaned up and he adds the instruction to not go near a woman for three days prior to the Lord revealing Himself on the mountain. The sense that Moshe is giving in this instruction, based upon the rabbinic interpretation on these verses regarding “*lustful thoughts*,” is that we are to set out hearts on the things above and not upon pornographic materials or the things of this world. If one wants to see the Lord God on the mountain on the third day, or to dwell in His presence, one needs to clean themselves up and seek the Lord. The point is, this is a daily walk and way of life.

What is interesting in *Shemot / Exodus 19:10-11* the Lord tells the people to sanctify themselves because He is going to visit in three days. We have been discussing what it means to consecrate ourselves (set ourselves apart) and the Torah instructs us that we set in order our lives, to walk in God’s ways, and we set in order our hearts, turning from sin and towards the Lord God in heaven. Notice how the instruction to consecrate yourself is repeated through the Torah over and over again. For example, we read in *Vayikra / Leviticus 20:7* ‘*You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the Lord your God. 20:8* ‘*You shall keep My statutes and practice them; I am the Lord who sanctifies you. (NASB)* Note both the people and the Lord are involved in the sanctification process. Note also, as mentioned previously, the word used for “*consecrate yourselves*” is קִדְּשׁוּ־עַלְמֵיכֶם derived from the root קִדַּשׁ meaning to make holy. Thus, the biblical use of the verb “*consecrate*” is a synonym for “*sanctify*,” meaning “*to make holy*.” This is an important point because in this world we need to be aware that there is a great amount of unholiness and there are many ways for unholiness to enter our lives. As believers, we should not choose to rub shoulders with what is unclean and be defiled. What we look at can defile our hearts. What we listen to can defile our hearts. The company we keep can defile, as Paul suggests by quoting from *Isaiah 52:11* in *2 Corinthians 6:17*. Paul says we are to separate ourselves from everything that defiles and then the Lord will accept us (read *2 Corinthians 6-7*). If we are to expect God to work in your lives, we need to take the necessary steps to sanctify our lives before the Lord. If you are expecting the gifts of the Spirit to be manifest in your life, have you taken the necessary steps to sanctify your mind, body, and soul for that purpose? Note, the sanctification of the soul is a joint process with our desire seeking the Lord for that sanctification in His Messiah Yeshua. Additionally, the concept of setting up an idol in one’s heart (*Ezekiel 14*) is a way of bringing the soul into bondage to the things of this world.

God’s command to be holy is not only in the Torah, it is spoken of throughout all of Scripture (compare *Vayikra / Leviticus 11:44, 19:2, 20:17* with *1 Peter 1:16* and *2 Corinthians 6*). In addition to this, *Revelation 19:7-8* tells us the bride of Christ sanctified herself for the coming of the Lord. Who is the bride of Christ? According to the Scriptures, consecrated people are never lazy people, this is the lesson that is illustrated in the priesthood with Aaron and his sons from *Shemot / Exodus 28:41* “... *consecrate them ... that they may minister unto Me in the priest’s office.*” Take for example, hypothetically, “*if you knew the exact day and time Yeshua would return on the clouds for His people, how would you behave? How would you behave yourself?*” With these things in mind, are you able to put yourself into the shoes of the Children of Israel in *Shemot / Exodus 19:14-17* and understand what Moshe was telling them to Sanctify/Consecrate themselves? Should we not be living consecrated lives daily? If the Lord has not been working in your life, there may be a reason. If you are sick, ill, and dying, there may be a reason. If the gifts of the Spirit are not manifest in your life, there may be a reason. If you feel distant from the Lord and His Messiah Yeshua, there may be a reason. Have you offered your body, mind, soul, and spirit as a living sacrifice unto God? (*Romans 12*) Remember, spiritual sin is related to things that we set up as idols in our hearts, or turning from the Lord. Parashat Yitro provides for us an example of the important aspect of our lives, our faith, and our walk before the Lord God in Heaven. We need to take our faith and walk before the Lord seriously and doing so by the demonstration of our faith in all areas of our lives. This is what David was saying when he sought the Lord to hear his prayer.

Notice how this idea follows through in the Psalm by David’s words saying that he seeks the Lord no matter where he is, אֵלֶיךָ אֶקְרָא בְּעֶטֶף לִבִּי בְּצוּר-יְרוּם מִמְּנֵי תַנְחִינִי | מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ 61:2 *From the end of the*

earth I call to You when my heart is faint; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. (NASB) David says that he will seek the Lord even to the end of the earth. He also requests for the Lord to lead him to the rock that is higher than he is. What is this rock that he seeks to be led to? If the Lord God in heaven is our rock (see *Parashat Haazinu*), why doesn't he request to be led back to the Lord? When David is asking the Lord to lead him to a rock that is higher, this suggests that he seeks for help to go to a place that he is unable to reach on his own effort. In *Tehillim / Psalms 27:5*, the rock denotes an asylum, a place of refuge for safety. Here, David's words appear to be a request to find a place of refuge rather than for God Himself as a Rock of refuge (*Tehillim / Psalm 62:2-7*). David's wanderings may have led to this metaphor (*1 Samuel 24:2, 1 Chronicles 11:15*) where it is believed the rock may be a reference to the cave in which David was hiding from Saul.

1 Samuel 24:1-4

24:1 Now when Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, saying, 'Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi.' 24:2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Rocks of the Wild Goats. 24:3 He came to the sheepfolds on the way, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the inner recesses of the cave. 24:4 The men of David said to him, 'Behold, this is the day of which the Lord said to you, 'Behold; I am about to give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you.' Then David arose and cut off the edge of Saul's robe secretly. (NASB)

1 Chronicles 11:12-16

11:12 After him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who was one of the three mighty men. 11:13 He was with David at Pasdammim when the Philistines were gathered together there to battle, and there was a plot of ground full of barley; and the people fled before the Philistines. 11:14 They took their stand in the midst of the plot and defended it, and struck down the Philistines; and the Lord saved them by a great victory. 11:15 Now three of the thirty chief men went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam, while the army of the Philistines was camping in the valley of Rephaim. 11:16 David was then in the stronghold, while the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. (NASB)

In *1 Chronicles 11:15-16*, it appears that the rock and the cave are a stronghold against the enemy. This is consistent with the Aramaic Targum which states, ג מן סייפי ארעא קדמך לוותך אצלי באישתלהיות לבי בכרך, *61:3 From the ends of the earth I will pray in your presence when my heart is weary; lead me to a strong fortress built on a rock that is higher than I. (EMC)* David continues saying, כִּי-הָיִיתָ מְחֶסֶה לִּי מִגְדָּל-עֵז מִפְּנֵי אוֹיְבֵי: *61:3 For You have been a refuge for me, A tower of strength against the enemy. (NASB)* The tower analogy provides imagery of being lifted up high out of the reach of the enemy. He then says, אֶגְוֹרָה בְּאֶהְלֶךְ עוֹלָמִים אֶחְסֶה בְּסִתְרֵי כְּנָפֶיךָ סְלָה: *61:4 Let me dwell in Your tent forever; Let me take refuge in the shelter of Your wings. Selah. (NASB)* He asks to dwell in the tent of the Lord forever. What does it mean to dwell forever in God's tent? In *Tehillim / Psalm 27:4*, David also says that he seeks to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life. Throughout the Torah the Lord speaks of being our God and us being His people in a covenant relationship. Living in the presence of God means offering our lives (*Romans 12*) for the sake of others and for the sake of God, because He has shown us mercy, we likewise should show mercy to others, etc. We walk in the goodness of God and as a result we are able to stand in His presence, or His presence will be manifest in our lives. Dwelling in the house of the Lord all the days of our lives means living in His presence and His presence dwelling in our midst, no matter where we might be, for where God's people are gathered. With the idea of offering our bodies, minds, soul, and spirit as a living sacrifice unto the Lord, we are reminded of Scripture from the Torah portion, Parashat Bechukotai:

ספר ויקרא פרק כו

א לא-תעשו לְכֶם אֱלִילִים וּפְסֵל וּמִצְבֵּה לֹא-תִקְיִמוּ לְכֶם וְאִבֹן מִשְׁפִּית לֹא תִתְּנוּ בְּאַרְצְכֶם לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת עָלֶיהָ כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: ב אֶת-שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וּמִקְדָּשִׁי תִירָאוּ אֲנִי יְהוָה: פ פ פ [פרשת בחקותי] ג אִם-בְּחֻקֹּתַי תֵּלְכוּ וְאֶת-מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְעִשִּׂיתֶם אֹתָם: ד וְנָתַתִּי גִשְׁמֵיכֶם בְּעֵתָם וְנִתְּנָה הָאָרֶץ יְבוּלָה וְעֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה יִתֵּן פְּרִיֹ: ה וְהִשִּׁיג לְכֶם דִּישׁ אֶת-בְּצִיר וּבְצִיר יִשִּׁיג אֶת-זֶרַע וְאִכְלֹתֶם לְחֶמְקְכֶם לְשִׁבְעַ וַיִּשְׁבְּתֶם לְבֶטַח בְּאַרְצְכֶם:

Vayikra / Leviticus 26:1-5

26:1 'You shall not make for yourselves idols, nor shall you set up for yourselves an image or a sacred pillar; nor shall you place a figured stone in your land to bow down to it; for I am the Lord your God. 26:2 'You shall keep My sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary; I am the Lord. 26:3 'If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, 26:4 then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit. 26:5 'Indeed, your threshing will last for you until grape gathering, and grape gathering will last until sowing time. You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land. (NASB)

The opening verse of Parashat Bechukotai begins with the statement “if you walk in My statutes and keep My commands so as to carry them out...” These Scriptures describe who owns the statutes and the commandments. Ownership of the “statutes” (בְּחֻקֹּתַי) and the “commandments” (מִצְוֹתַי) is the Lord and not man. This is a very important concept with regard to obeying God’s commands and who is to observe the commands. For example, the idea that the Law was given only to the Jew and not to the Gentile presupposes that the Jew has ownership of the Law where the Gentile does not. The point is that the Lord God in heaven gave these Laws (the Torah) to His people (You and I) to live by, for truth, holiness, righteousness, justice, and life. I have been told “oh you want to return to the Law” (Galatians 2:11-21 and 5:1). I have also heard others say “oh he just wants to be a Jew so badly.” These opinions come not only from a misunderstanding of the Scriptures, but also for a deep root of antisemitism that is found within all Christian theologies today. Take for example, Galatians 5:1 and the various translations of this verse:

New International Version

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

New Living Translation

So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.

English Standard Version

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

New American Standard Bible

It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

King James Bible

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

The context does not speak of the Torah being a form of bondage, but the idea that one is able to earn their way or right into heaven (an earned form or righteousness). Yeshua set us free from sin, and showed us that our love for God is demonstrated in our obedience to Him. The way the verse is written in *Vayikra / Leviticus 26:3*, we understand that the statutes and commands in the Torah are give by God to His people, to those who trust, believe, and love Him. This idea is born out of the natural progression of the Torah's narrative, that God delivered a mixed multitude and brought a mixed multitude of people before the mountain of Sinai and gave them His Torah to live by. The “*mixed multitude*” whom God delivered from Egypt provides us with a future expectation of what our Father in Heaven has planned from the beginning, that both Jew and non-Jew (Gentile) are grafted into one family of God (*Galatians 3:28*). The Scriptures state that God sanctifies both the Jew and non-Jew in the same way, He saves us in the Messiah Yeshua by faith in the same way, and the Lord wants us to live and walk before Him in the same way, in the way that brings glory to His name. The rabbis in *Midrash Tehillim Vayikra, Parashat 35, Part 1* (מדרש רבה ויקרא פרשה לה סימן א) point out this fact and the importance of these words in the Torah saying the following.

Midrash Rabbah Vayikra, Parshah 35, Part 1

“If you walk in My statutes (Vayikra / Leviticus 26:3). This bears on the text, I considered my ways, and turned my feet unto Your testimonies (Tehillim / Psalms 119). David said, Sovereign of the Universe. Every day I used to plan and decided that I would go to a particular dwelling house, but my feet always brought me to Synagogues and Houses of Study. Hence it is written, and turned my feet unto Your testimonies...”

א אם בחקותי תלכו הה"ד (תהלים קיט) חשבתי דרכי ואשיבה רגלי אל עדותיך אמר דוד רבש"ע בכל יום ויום הייתי מחשב ואומר למקום פלוני ולבית דירה פלונית אני הולך והיו רגלי מביאות אותי לבתי כנסיות ולבתי מדרשות הה"ד ואשיבה רגלי אל עדותיך

The midrash references *Vayikra / Leviticus 26:3* commenting on “*if you walk in My statutes,*” and draws a parallel to David's words in *Tehillim / Psalms 119*. David says he considered his ways and turned his feet unto the testimonies of God.

Tehillim / Psalms 119:57-66

119:57 The Lord is my portion; I have promised to keep Your words. 119:58 I sought Your favor with all my heart; Be gracious to me according to Your word. 119:59 I considered my ways And turned my feet to Your testimonies. 119:60 I hastened and did not delay To keep Your commandments. 119:61 The cords of the wicked have encircled me, But I have not forgotten Your law. 119:62 At midnight I shall rise to give thanks to You Because of Your righteous ordinances. 119:63 I am a companion of all those who fear You, And of those who keep Your precepts. 119:64 The earth is full of Your lovingkindness, O Lord; Teach me Your statutes. 119:65 You have dealt well with Your servant, O Lord, according to Your word. 119:66 Teach me good discernment and knowledge, For I believe in Your commandments. (NASB)

According to the Psalm, David considered his ways and turned his feet unto the testimonies of God. The Psalm speaking of dwelling in the presence of God mandates that we walk in His ways for the simple reason of having fellowship with God. This conclusion is based on the idea that there is no fellowship with God for those who live their lives in opposition to God's ways. Both the Torah, the Prophets, the Writings, and the Apostolic Writings speak to this truth.

ו כִּי-אַתָּה אֱלֹהִים שָׁמַעְתָּ לְגִדְרֵי נַתַּת יְרֵשֶׁת יִרְאֵי שְׁמֶךָ: *61:5 For You have heard my vows, O God; You have given me the inheritance of those who fear Your name. (NASB)* What does it mean that the Lord has given David the inheritance of those who fear God's Name?

The Aramaic Targum states, : ארום את יהוה שמעת נדרי יהבתא ירותא לדחלי שמך: 61:6 *For you, O Lord, have heard my vows; you have given the inheritance to those who fear your name.* (EMC) The Septuagint states, 61:5 ὅτι σὺ ὁ θεός εἰσήκουσας τῶν ἐυχῶν μου ἔδωκας κληρονομίαν τοῖς φοβουμένοις τὸ ὄνομά σου 61:5 *For thou, o God, hast heard my prayers; thou hast given an inheritance to them that fear thy name.* (LXX) The MT states literally, כִּי-אַתָּה אֱלֹהִים שָׁמַעְתָּ לְנִדְרֵי נִתַּתָּ יְרֵשֶׁת יְרָאֵי שְׁמֶךָ “You God, You hear/listen to my vows, You give inheritance to those who fear your name.” The MT does not say “You have given me the inheritance of those who fear Your name.” Why does the NASB translate the MT in this way? Both the Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint translate this verse as the MT states, the Lord gives an inheritance to those who fear His name. The Lord is not giving David the inheritance of others (those who fear God’s name). Benson Commentary, Matthew Henry’s Commentary, Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, The pulpit Commentary, all translate *Tehillim / Psalms 61:5* to say “You have given me the heritage of those who fear God’s name,” where the word heritage is meant to clarify the meaning of this verse. John Calvin states the following regarding this verse:

Had the letter ל, lamed, been prefixed to the Hebrew word יְרֵשֶׁת יְרָאֵי, which is rendered fearing, there would have been no reason left to doubt that the words which follow were of the nature of a general assertion, to the effect, that God has given the inheritance to those who fear him. As it is, they may be construed to mean, that God had given David the inheritance of those who fear him. Still I prefer attaching the more general sense to the words, and understand them as intimating that God never disappoints his servants, but crowns with everlasting happiness the struggles and the distresses which may have exercised their faith. (John Calvin’s Commentary on Tehillim / Psalms 61:5)

This seems to be the reason why the NASB translation renders the verse as David receiving the inheritance of others. The intent of the verse though seems to be more consistent with the Aramaic Targum translation, 61:6 *For you, O Lord, have heard my vows; you have given the inheritance to those who fear your name.* (EMC) than that of the NASB translation.

David continues saying, : יָמִים עַל-יָמֵי-מְלָךְ תוֹסִיף שְׁנוֹתָיו כְּמוֹ-דֵר וְדָר: 61:6 *You will prolong the king’s life; His years will be as many generations.* (NASB) The MT states יָמִים עַל-יָמֵי-מְלָךְ “days upon days of the king,” and the idea is David asking the Lord to “add days to the days of his life.” The Peshat (פּשֶׁט) explanation given by Rashi on this passage is that David Hamelech is asking HaShem that even if it has been decreed that he die young at the hand of his enemies, HaShem should remove that decree and grant him the full 70 years of every generation. Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch (1808 - 1888 CE) understood David’s words to mean that he is praying that days should be added to him far beyond the limited years of his life on this earth. He wishes that the example he sets through his every day life, a life filled with seeking the Lord God in heaven, to draw near to Him (*Tehillim / Psalms 61:5*) should remain as an inspiration to mankind through all generations, forever. This life style, David’s actions recorded in the Psalms, will live on long after his physical death. This illustrates that our actions have profound consequences that we may not know about in this life, and that our actions may influence generations to come. As students of God’s Torah and of Yeshua, our actions are constantly scrutinized by those around us. Therefore we are to live the life of faith through our actions. In doing so, our example that has been demonstrated to others (e.g. our children) will last forever and influence generations to come for the glory of God!

It is interesting that the Aramaic Targum states, : ז יומין על עלמא דאתי יומי מלכא משיחא תוסיף שנוי היך, 61:7 *You will add days to the age to come, the days of the King Messiah; his years are like the generations of this age and the generations of the age to come.* (EMC) The targum interprets this verse as a reference to the Messiah. How is the Messiah understood within this context of the Psalm?

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 61

61:1 For praise, with the psalms of David. 61:2 Accept, O Lord, my petition, hear my prayer. 61:3 From the ends of the earth I will pray in your presence when my heart is weary; lead me to a strong fortress built on a rock that is higher than I. 61:4 For you have been security for me, in truth, a stronghold before the enemy. 61:5 I will dwell in your tent forever, I will be secure in the shade of your presence forever. 61:6 For you, O Lord, have heard my vows; you have given the inheritance to those who fear your name. 61:7 You will add days to the age to come, the days of the King Messiah; his years are like the generations of this age and the generations of the age to come. 61:8 He will dwell forever in the presence of the Lord; goodness and truth from the Lord of the World will guard him. 61:9 Therefore will I praise your name forever, when I pay my vows in the day of the redemption of Israel, and in the day the King Messiah is anointed to be king. (EMC)

The idea of “*adding days to the days*” are connected to living a life of faith and obedience before the Lord. Living a faithful life will add days in the sense that the days will not be cut short due to wickedness (see *I Corinthians 11*). The King Messiah will live to glorify the Lord in heaven. The rabbis interpret the idea that one’s faithful life will have an influence on generations to come whereas the King Messiah will work such great works, if the performance of “*maasim tovim*” does add days to one’s life, “*the King Messiah; his years are like the generations of this age and the generations of the age to come,*” the rabbis are saying that his deeds will influence men for all eternity. Does this not sound a lot like someone we know? (Yeshua the Messiah) Yeshua lived a perfect life, He obeyed God’s Torah, showed us the way to live a life of faithfulness, and he laid his life down for ours. The Lord God in heaven raised Him up from the grave as a testimony to the work that He had come to accomplish, that is to save us from our sins, and to make atonement before our Father in heaven. His “*maasim tovim*” is eternal and has influenced many generations for the last 2000 years, and will influence many generations to come, and on into eternity (*i.e. the generations of the age to come*). The Apostolic Writings states that He dwells in the presence of the Lord forever, and being in His presence, He acts as an intercessor on our behalf before our Father in heaven. We are able to seek the Lord God our Father in heaven, in the Name of His Son Yeshua the Messiah, and Yeshua will take our prayers to the Lord on our behalf. This is a very rabbinic concept based upon the Aramaic Targum and the Midrashim. What an awesome thing that is and we can say as David said in the concluding verse of the Psalm, *61:9 Therefore will I praise your name forever, when I pay my vows in the day of the redemption of Israel, and in the day the King Messiah is anointed to be king. (EMC)* The MT states, ח יִשָּׁב עוֹלָם לְפָנַי אֱלֹהִים חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת, *61:7 He will abide before God forever; Appoint lovingkindness and truth that they may preserve him. 61:8 So I will sing praise to Your name forever, That I may pay my vows day by day. (NASB)* Yeshua the Messiah paid our debt before the Lord and we are able now to go before Him with praises upon our lips. David says this king will abide before the Lord forever and appoint lovingkindness (grace, חֶסֶד) and truth (אֱמֶת) that will preserve. This is exactly what the King Messiah did, Yeshua has appointed the grace of God, His truth, and life, for the preservation of His people. Praise the Lord, Halleluia, and Amen! Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for bringing strength, faith, and truth into our lives. We thank You for the strength to live our lives to bring glory to Your name, and the faith to believe in Yeshua the King Messiah! We also thank You for the constant reminder to seek You and Your ways O Lord. Please have mercy on us, forgive us for our sins, help us to live righteous lives, and to set our minds on those things that are wholesome and righ-

teous with love toward one another. 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