

ספר תהילים סג | Tehillim / Psalms 63

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Thirsting for the Lord in Heaven

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 63:1-11*, the psalm opens saying, **א** מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד בְּהִיטוֹתוֹ *A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah. (NASB)* What was David doing in the wilderness in Judah? David begins his Psalm with a discussion on the soul that thirsts for the Lord. It could be a reference to the way Israel thirsted during their wilderness journey, they thirsted both for water and for the Lord God Almighty, **ב** אֱלֹהִים | אֵלֵי אַתָּה אֲשַׁחֲרֶךָ צָמְאָה לָּךְ | נַפְשִׁי כְּמָה לָּךְ בְּשָׂרִי בְּאַרְצ־צִיָּה וְעַיִף *O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water. 63:2 Thus I have seen You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. (NASB)* Note how he parallels the flesh that thirsts for water to the soul that thirsts for the glory of God, to see the Lord in His Sanctuary. The Psalm continues saying, **ד** כִּי-טוֹב חֶסֶדְךָ מִחַיִּים שְׂפָתַי יִשְׁבְּחוּנָּךְ *63:3 Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips will praise You. (NASB)* David says God's mercy (chesed, חֶסֶדְךָ) is better than life. What does it mean the mercy of God is better than life? He continues saying, **ה** כִּי-אֶבְרַכְךָ בְּחַיֵּי בְשֹׁמֵךְ אֲשָׂא כִפְיִ: ו *63:4 So I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. 63:5 My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth offers praises with joyful lips. 63:6 When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches, 63:7 For You have been my help, And in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy. 63:8 My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me. (NASB)* He contrasts those who do not seek the Lord, but live to cause destruction and to take life. Those who seek to destroy will be consigned to the depths of the earth. **ו** וְהָמָּה לְשׂוֹאָה *63:9 But those who seek my life to destroy it, Will go into the depths of the earth. 63:10 They will be delivered over to the power of the sword; They will be a prey for foxes. (NASB)* David concludes his Psalm saying, **ז** וְהַמֶּלֶךְ יִשְׂמַח בְּאֱלֹהִים יִתְהַלֵּל *63:11 But the king will rejoice in God; Everyone who swears by Him will glory, For the mouths of those who speak lies will be stopped. (NASB)*

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
ספר תהלים פרק סג	ספר תהלים פרק סג	ספר טוביה פרק סג	ספר טוביה פרק סג	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 63	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 63
<p>א מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד בְּהִיטוֹתוֹ בְּמִדְבָּר יְהוּדָה: ב אֱלֹהִים אֵלֵי אַתָּה אֲשַׁחֲ- רֶךָ צָמְאָה לָּךְ נַפְשִׁי כְּמָה לָּךְ בְּשָׂרִי בְּאַרְצ־צִיָּה וְעַיִף בְּלִי-מַיִם: ג כִּי-טוֹב חֶסֶדְךָ מִחַיִּים שְׂפָתַי יִשְׁבְּחוּנָּךְ: ד כִּי-טוֹב חֶסֶדְךָ מִחַיִּים שְׂפָתַי יִשְׁ- בְּחוּנָּךְ:</p>	<p>א מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד בְּהִיטוֹתוֹ בְּמִדְבָּר יְהוּדָה: ב אֱלֹהִים אֵלֵי אַתָּה אֲשַׁחֲ- רֶךָ צָמְאָה לָּךְ נַפְשִׁי כְּמָה לָּךְ בְּשָׂרִי בְּאַרְצ־צִיָּה וְעַיִף בְּלִי-מַיִם: ג כִּי-טוֹב חֶסֶדְךָ מִחַיִּים שְׂפָתַי יִשְׁבְּחוּנָּךְ: ד כִּי-טוֹב חֶסֶדְךָ מִחַיִּים שְׂפָתַי יִשְׁ- בְּחוּנָּךְ:</p>	<p>א תושבחתא לדוד בעידן מהוי במדברא די בתחום שבט יהודה: ב אלהא תוקפי אנת אקום אקדים בצפרא קדמך צהיית לך לוותך נפשי רגיג מרגג לך לוותך בסרי בארעא צדיא צהיא ומשלהיא מדלית מוי: ג היכנא באתר קודשא חמיתך זכי יתי למחמי עושנך ויקרך: ד ארום טב הוא חסדך דתעבד לצדיקיא לעלמא דאתי מן חיי דיהבתא לרשיעיא בעלמא הדין בגין כן סיפותי ישבחונך:</p>	<p>א תושבחתא לדוד בעידן מהוי במדברא די בתחום שבט יהודה: ב אלהא תוקפי אנת אקום אקדים בצפרא קדמך צהיית לך לוותך נפשי רגיג מרגג לך לוותך בסרי בארעא צדיא צהיא ומשלהיא מדלית מוי: ג היכנא באתר קודשא חמיתך זכי יתי למחמי עושנך ויקרך: ד ארום טב הוא חסדך דתעבד לצדיקיא לעלמא דאתי מן חיי דיהבתא לרשיעיא בעלמא הדין בגין כן סיפותי ישבחונך:</p>	<p>63:1 ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαυὶδ ἐν τῷ εἶναι αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεὸς μου πρὸς σὲ ὀρθρίζω ἐδίψησέν σοι ἢ ψυχῆ μου ποσαπλῶς σοι ἢ σάρξ μου ἐν γῆ ἐρήμῳ καὶ ἀβάτῳ καὶ ἀνύδρῳ 63:2 οὕτως ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ὤφθην σοι τοῦ ἰδεῖν τὴν δύναμίν σου καὶ τὴν δόξαν σου 63:3 ὅτι κρεῖσσον τὸ ἔλεός σου ὑπὲρ ζωάς τὰ χεῖλη μου ἐπαινεσοῦσίν σε 63:4 οὕτως εὐλογῆσω σε ἐν τῇ ζωῇ μου ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ἄρῳ τὰς χεῖράς μου</p>	<p>63:1 ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαυὶδ ἐν τῷ εἶναι αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεὸς μου πρὸς σὲ ὀρθρίζω ἐδίψησέν σοι ἢ ψυχῆ μου ποσαπλῶς σοι ἢ σάρξ μου ἐν γῆ ἐρήμῳ καὶ ἀβάτῳ καὶ ἀνύδρῳ 63:2 οὕτως ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ὤφθην σοι τοῦ ἰδεῖν τὴν δύναμίν σου καὶ τὴν δόξαν σου 63:3 ὅτι κρεῖσσον τὸ ἔλεός σου ὑπὲρ ζωάς τὰ χεῖλη μου ἐπαινεσοῦσίν σε 63:4 οὕτως εὐλογῆσω σε ἐν τῇ ζωῇ μου ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ἄρῳ τὰς χεῖράς μου</p>

<p>ה הַיְכָנָא אַבְרַכִּינְךָ בְּחַיֵּי בַעֲלֵי- ו כְּמוֹ חֶלֶב וְדֹשֶׁן תִּשְׂבַּע נַפְשֵׁי וְשִׁפְתַי רְנָנֹת יִהְיֶה-לִּי זֵ אִם-זִכְרִיתִיךָ עַל- יְצוּעֵי בְּאֲשֻׁמְרוֹת אֶהְגֶּה-בָּךְ: ח כִּי- הָיִיתָ עֲזָרְתָה לִּי וּבְצַל כְּנָפֶיךָ אֲרַגֵּן: ט דְּבַקָּה נַפְשֵׁי אֶתְרִיךָ בִּי תִמְכָּה יְמִינֶךָ: י וְהִמָּה לְשׂוֹאֵה יִבְקָשׁוּ נַפְשֵׁי יְבֹאוּ בְּתַחְתֵּיּוֹת הָאָרֶץ: יא יִגְרֶהוּ עַל-יְדֵי-חֶרֶב מְנַת שְׁעָלִים יִהְיוּ: יב וְהִמְלִיךְ יִשְׁמַח בְּאַלְהֵים יִתְהַלֵּל כָּל- הַנְּשַׁבַּע בּוֹ כִּי יִסְכַּר פִּי דוֹכְרֵי-שְׁקָר:</p>	<p>ה היכנא אברכינך בחיי בעל- מא הדין בשום מימך אפרוס ידי בצלו לעלמא דאתי: ו היך תרב ודהן תסבע נפשי וסיפון דתושבחן ישבח פומי: ז אין אידכרתיך על דרגושי במטרתא ארנן במימרך: ח ארום הויתא סעיד לי ובטלל שכי- נתך אבוע: ט אדבקת נפשי בתר אורייתך בי במימרי סעדת ימינך: י והינן לקבורתא יתבעון נפשי ייעלון בארעית ארעא: יא ידחלוניא מטול מחת סייפא מוהבית תעלייא יהוין: יב ומלכא יחדי במימר אלהא ישבח כל די מקיים במימריה ארום יסרניק יסדמיק פומהון ד<מ>מללי שיקרא:</p>	<p>63:5 ὡσεὶ στέατος καὶ πιότητος ἐμπλησθεῖη ἡ ψυχὴ μου καὶ χεῖλη ἀγαλλιάσεως αἰνέσει τὸ στόμα μου 63:6 εἰ ἐμνημόνευόν σου ἐπὶ τῆς στρωμνῆς μου ἐν τοῖς ὄρθοις ἐμελέτων εἰς σέ 63:7 ὅτι ἐγενήθης βοηθός μου καὶ ἐν τῇ σκέπῃ τῶν περύγων σου ἀγαλλιάσομαι 63:8 ἐκολλήθη ἡ ψυχὴ μου ὀπίσω σου ἐμοῦ ἀντελάβετο ἡ δεξιὰ σου 63:9 αὐτοὶ δὲ εἰς μάτην ἐζήτησαν τὴν ψυχὴν μου εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὰ κατώτατα τῆς γῆς 63:10 παραδοθήσονται εἰς χεῖρας ῥομφαίας μερίδες ἀλωπέκων ἔσσονται 63:11 ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς εὐφρανθήσεται ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ ἐπαινεσθήσεται πᾶς ὁ ὀμνῶν ἐν αὐτῷ ὅτι ἐνεφράγη στόμα λαλούντων ἄδικα</p>
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In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 63:1-11*, the psalm opens saying, א מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד בְּהִיּוֹתוֹ א
: א Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah. (NASB) The Aramaic Targum
states, 63:1 A psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness in the territory of the tribe of Judah. (EMC) The Septuagint states, 63:1 ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαυὶδ ἐν
τῷ εἶναι αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τῆς Ἰουδαίας A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Idumea. (LXX)
What was David doing in the wilderness in Judah? According to *1 Samuel 23*, we are told what David was
doing in the wilderness of Judah.

1 Samuel 23:10-29

23:10 Then David said, 'O Lord God of Israel, Your servant has heard for certain that Saul is seeking to come to Keilah to destroy the city on my account. 23:11 'Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down just as Your servant has heard? O Lord God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant.' And the Lord said, 'He will come down.' 23:12 Then David said, 'Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?' And the Lord said, 'They will surrender you.' 23:13 Then David and his men, about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the pursuit. 23:14 David stayed in the wilderness in the strongholds, and remained in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand. 23:15 Now David became aware that Saul had come out to seek his life while David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. 23:16 And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David at Horesh, and encouraged him in God. 23:17 Thus he said to him, 'Do not be afraid, because the hand of Saul my father will not find you, and you will be king over Israel and I will be next to you; and Saul my father knows that also.' 23:18 So the two of them made a covenant before the Lord; and David stayed at Horesh while Jonathan went to his house. 23:19 Then Ziphites came up to Saul at Gibeah, saying, 'Is David not hiding with us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon?' 23:20 'Now then, O king, come down according to all the desire of your soul to do so; and our part shall be to surrender him into the king's hand.' 23:21 Saul said, 'May you be blessed of the Lord, for you have had compassion on me. 23:22 'Go now, make more sure, and investigate and see his place where his haunt is, and who has seen him there; for I am told that he is very cunning. 23:23 'So look, and learn about all the hiding places where he hides himself and return to me with certainty, and I

will go with you; and if he is in the land, I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah. ' 23:24 Then they arose and went to Ziph before Saul. Now David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah to the south of Jeshimon. 23:25 When Saul and his men went to seek him, they told David, and he came down to the rock and stayed in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard it, he pursued David in the wilderness of Maon. 23:26 Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain; and David was hurrying to get away from Saul, for Saul and his men were surrounding David and his men to seize them. 23:27 But a messenger came to Saul, saying, 'Hurry and come, for the Philistines have made a raid on the land.' 23:28 So Saul returned from pursuing David and went to meet the Philistines; therefore they called that place the Rock of Escape. 23:29 David went up from there and stayed in the strongholds of Engedi.

Tehillim / Psalms 63

A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah. 63:1 O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water. 63:2 Thus I have seen You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. 63:3 Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips will praise You. 63:4 So I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. 63:5 My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth offers praises with joyful lips. 63:6 When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches, 63:7 For You have been my help, And in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy. 63:8 My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me. 63:9 But those who seek my life to destroy it, Will go into the depths of the earth. 63:10 They will be delivered over to the power of the sword; They will be a prey for foxes. 63:11 But the king will rejoice in God; Everyone who swears by Him will glory, For the mouths of those who speak lies will be stopped. (NASB)

Toviyah / Psalms 63

63:1 A psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness in the territory of the tribe of Judah. 63:2 O God, you are my strength; I will arise in the morning in your presence; my soul thirsts for you, my flesh yearns for you, in a barren and weary land, without water. 63:3 Thus I have seen you in the holy place; purify me to see your strength and your glory. 63:4 For better is the favor that you show to the righteous in the age to come than the life you have given to the wicked in this age; therefore my lips will praise you. 63:5 Thus will I bless you in my life in this age; in the name of your word I will spread my hands in prayer in the age to come. 63:6 My soul will be satisfied as with fat and oil, and my mouth shall sing [with] lips of praise. 63:7 If I have remembered you on my bed, in the night-watch I will meditate on your word. 63:8 For you were a helper to me, and in the shade of your presence I will be glad. 63:9 My soul has followed close behind your Torah; your right hand has supported me. 63:10 But they will seek my soul for the grave; they will enter the lowest part of the earth. 63:11 They will fear him on account of the blow of the sword; they will be the portion of jackals. 63:12 And the king will rejoice in the word of God; all who swear by his word will sing praise, for the mouth of those who speak deceit will be stifled. (EMC)

Psalmoi / Psalms 63

A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Idumea. 63:1 O God, my God, I cry to thee early; my soul has thirsted for thee: how often has my flesh longed after thee, in a barren and trackless and dry land! 63:2 Thus have I appeared before thee in the sanctuary, that I might see thy power and thy glory. 63:3 For thy mercy is better than life: my lips shall praise thee. 63:4 Thus will I bless thee during my life: I will lift up my hands in thy name. 63:5 Let my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness; and my joyful lips shall praise thy name. 63:6 Forasmuch as I have remembered thee on my bed: in the early seasons I have meditated on thee. 63:7 For thou hast been my helper, and in the shelter of thy wings will I rejoice. 63:8 My soul has kept very close behind thee: thy right hand has upheld me. 63:9 But they vainly sought after my soul; they shall go into the lowest parts of the earth. 63:10 They shall be delivered up to the power of the sword; they shall be portions for foxes. 63:11 But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that swears by him shall be praised; for the mouth of them that speak unjust things has been stopped. (LXX)

In *1 Samuel 23:10-29*, we learn that David is seeking the counsel of God on whether Saul will come to Keilah to destroy the city on his account, whether the men will turn him over to Saul, and whether Saul will even come. The Lord's response is Yes, he will come. As a result, David and his men leave and traveled to the strongholds in the wilderness, in the mountains of Ziph. We read about the covenant Jonathan made with David, and the Ziphites told Saul where David was and that they would deliver him into Saul's hands. The Scriptures say that the Ziphites went to Saul, after telling him the whereabouts of David, *23:24 Then they arose and went to Ziph before Saul. Now David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah to the south of Jeshimon. (NASB)* Saul went to Maon, and they got as close as Saul being on one side of a mountain whereas David and his men were on the other side. A message came that caused Saul to leave to take care of the Philistines. It is interesting how the Scriptures say, "*but God did not deliver him into his hand*" (*1 Samuel 23:14*). Are these Scriptures speaking of God delivering David into Saul's hands, or Saul into David's hands? David's army of men never come into contact with Saul's army of men. If the Lord would have allowed the two to meet, it would have been a problem for David and his words when he said that he will not lay a hand upon the Lord's anointed. It seems the Lord helped to preserve David's resolve to not cause harm to fall upon Saul, even though Saul sought his life to destroy him. The Lord answered David that Saul was coming to destroy him, and this answer was not used by David as a justification to lay a hand upon Saul. It seems that David has shown Saul a great amount of mercy. This might be paralleled to the mercy the Lord shows us and continues to do for us each day.

David stands as an example for each of us to live our lives showing mercy towards others, because the Lord God our Father in heaven has shown us and almost unlimited amount of mercy too. According to the Apostolic Writings, Yeshua taught his disciples, to obey him by doing acts of kindness and righteousness for his sake and for the sake of others, and not to glorify ourselves but to do these things to glorify God. When we are faithful and serve the least or the weakest, and even the worst of people, we are serving him. Is this not an image and picture of what David did? He was good to Saul, he was good to his enemy. In *Shemot / Exodus 12:3*, we read about Moshe who led the nation of Israel for 40 years in the wilderness, he saw the face of God, and he was a very humble man. He was more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth. Based on this text, both humility and leadership work hand in hand. David acted in humility before Saul, he also did not take the opportunity to kill Saul even though Saul was pursuing him. David was in a wilderness journey fleeing from Saul. The constant pursuit and fleeing from Saul have had to have led to David being thirsty, not just for food and drink, but for the Sanctuary and peace of God.

As a result of these things, David begins his Psalm with a discussion on the soul that thirsts for the Lord. This could be a reference to the way Israel thirsted during their wilderness journey, they thirsted both for water and for the Lord God Almighty, and the wilderness provides that kind of illustrative interpretation for David's opening thoughts in the Psalm, ב אלהים | אלי אפה אשחרך צמאה לה | נפשי כמה לה בשרי בארץ - *63:1 O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water. 63:2 Thus I have seen You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. (NASB)* The Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint state the following:

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms 63:2-3

63:2 O God, you are my strength; I will arise in the morning in your presence; my soul thirsts for you, my flesh yearns for you, in a barren and weary land, without water. 63:3 Thus I have seen you in the holy place; purify me to see your strength and your glory. (EMC)

ב אלהא תוקפי אנת אקום אקדים בצפרא קדמך צהיית לך לוותך נפשי רגיג מרגג לך לוותך בסרי
 בארעא צדיא צהיא ומשלהיא מדלית מוי: ג היכנא באתר קודשא חמיתך זכי יתי למחמי עושנך
 ויקרך:

Septuagint

Psalmoi / Psalms 63

63:1 O God, my God, I cry to thee early; my soul has thirsted for thee: how often has my flesh longed after thee, in a barren and trackless and dry land! 63:2 Thus have I appeared before thee in the sanctuary, that I might see thy power and thy glory. (LXX)

ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεός μου πρὸς σὲ ὀρθρίζω ἐδίψησέν σοι ἡ ψυχὴ μου ποσαπλῶς σοι ἡ σὰρξ μου ἐν γῆ ἐρήμῳ καὶ ἀβάτῳ καὶ ἀνύδρῳ 63:2 οὕτως ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ὠφθην σοι τοῦ ἰδεῖν τὴν δύναμίν σου καὶ τὴν δόξαν σου

The Targum and Septuagint translations agree with the MT, that David says his soul thirsts for the Lord. In all three texts, David also says, “*my flesh yearns for You*” (MT) or “*how often has my flesh longed after thee.*” (LXX) How does the flesh yearn for the Lord? Does the flesh yearn for the Lord? What does yearning for the Lord mean? Generally speaking, the flesh yearns for sin. According to the Apostle Paul, in *Romans 7*, the flesh desires sin, while the inward man, the soul and spirit desire the things of the Lord. The *Talmud Bavli, Yoma 76a* comments on *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:3* saying the following:

And He afflicted you, and suffered you to hunger, and fed you with manna... in order to make you know that man does not live by bread alone (8:3) Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai was asked by his disciples: Why didn't the manna come down for Israel once a year? He replied: I shall give a parable. This thing may be compared to a king of flesh and blood who had an only son, whom he provided with maintenance once a year, so that he would visit his father once a year only. Thereupon he provided for his maintenance every day, so that he called on him every day. The same with Israel. One who had four or five children would worry, saying: Perhaps no manna will come down tomorrow, and all will die of hunger? Thus they were found to turn their attention to their Father in Heaven.

For forty years, the Children of Israel were sustained by “*bread from heaven.*” The purpose was to instill in them the recognition that all things come from God. Regardless of how much a person toils to earn his livelihood, he receives no more, and no less, than what has been allotted him from above. The challenge for Israel then was to retain this recognition of the all sustaining power of God after entering the land and making the transition to “*bread from the earth*” as opposed to the “*bread from heaven.*” Therefore, even when we are nourished by bread which we have worked for by “*the sweat of our brow,*” (see *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:18*) we must remember that, in truth, our sustenance comes from the Lord God in heaven, and that we never receive more or less than what is allotted to us from the Lord above. When David says, “*my flesh yearns for You*” (MT) or “*how often has my flesh longed after thee*” (LXX), he may be thinking of the testimony of God found in the Torah regarding the manna, the bread that come from heaven, his flesh longs for the provision from the Lord. His body is tired of toiling, not toiling in the sense of working for salvation, but for relying upon himself to live, as compared to relying upon the Lord above who truly sustains us in our daily lives, giving us the ability to work in order to provide for our families, for the purpose of confirming the covenant that He had promised to our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:18*) In addition, David may be paralleling the flesh that thirsts for water (in the wilderness illustration) to the soul that thirsts for the glory of God, and to see the Lord in His Sanctuary. These words may be taken to refer to the one who desires to serve the Lord, performing maasim tovim for the glory of God. This is consistent with the Apostle Paul’s words to the Colossians in *Colossians 1:9-10*.

Colossians 1:9-10

1:9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it we have not ceased to pray for you and

to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 1:10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; (NASB)

1:9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 1:10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; (KJV)

Notice how Paul prays for the Colossians, that the Lord would give them knowledge and understanding of His will, he calls this “*spiritual wisdom*” so that they could walk in a manner that was worthy of the Lord, walking in a way that is pleasing to the Lord, to bear good fruit in every good work. Walking in a worthy manner will increase one’s knowledge of God. (see *1 John 2:6*) John said in *1 John 2:6*, that “*He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.*” (NASB) or as the NIV translates, “*Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.*” Living as Yeshua did, performing maasim tovim, producing good fruit, all of these things lead to our understanding the Lord God in heaven in a greater capacity because we live as He lives, in righteousness, holiness, truth, and justice, we are able also to recognize the differences between truth, righteousness, holiness, and justice in our lives and in the lives of others. David’s words in *Tehillim / Psalms 63:1 O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water. 63:2 Thus I have seen You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory.* (NASB) show the connection between the soul that thirsts, the flesh that yearns, and the seeing of the glory and the power of God. If you want to see the glory and power of God working in your life, then begin walking as Yeshua walked, and living as Yeshua lived.

David continues in his Psalm saying, כִּי-טוֹב חַסְדְּךָ מִחַיִּים שְׂפָתַי יִשְׁבְּחוּנָךְ: 63:3 *Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips will praise You.* (NASB) David says God’s mercy (chesed, חַסְדְּךָ) is better than life. What does it mean the mercy of God is better than life? The Aramaic Targum states, ד ארום טב 63:4 הוא חסדך דתעבד לצדיקיא לעלמא דאתי מן חיי דיהבתא לרשיעיא בעלמא הדין בגין כן סיפותי ישבחונך: *For better is the favor that you show to the righteous in the age to come than the life you have given to the wicked in this age; therefore my lips will praise you.* (EMC) The Septuagint states, 63:3 ὅτι κρείττον τὸ ἔλεός σου ὑπὲρ ζωᾶς τὰ χεῖλη μου ἐπαινέσουσίν σε 63:3 *For thy mercy is better than life: my lips shall praise thee.* (LXX) David says that the Lord’s mercy, his grace is better than life. The simple point of what David is saying is that the Lord, His mercy is for man and for life. Life itself is not about simply eating and drinking. Life also isn’t simply about walking, talking, or moving about, to make lots of money, or to just procreate. There is more to this life than those things. Prosperity in the midst of these things cannot satisfy the soul. We are the objects of God’s mercy, so that we can live our lives for Him and for others. The Lord’s mercy is for the forgiveness of sins, for peace, and hope. It is the Lord who satisfies and brings fullness of life in the sense that He is our source of true life, peace, and hope. The Aramaic Targum brings this point forward in the translation saying that better is the mercy (favor) shown to the righteous in the age to come (לעלמא דאתי) than the life that has been given to the wicked in this age. Note the Aramaic Text that states בעלמא הדין “*in this age of judgment*” suggesting that in this age, the righteous are shown mercy, whereas the wicked are shown judgment. Because the Lord forgives and shows mercy, we can praise His holy name! And because we have personally seen the glory and power of God at work in our lives, we can give Him praises. When Moshe desired to see God’s glory, he was granted a revelation of His goodness (*Shemot / Exodus 33:18*). So here we find God’s strength connected to his mercy (*Tehillim / Psalms 63:2-3*), similar to what we read in *Tehillim / Psalms 62:11 Once God has spoken; Twice I have heard this: That power belongs to God; 62:12 And lovingkindness is Yours, O Lord, For You recompense a man according to his work.* (NASB) The mercy of God is everlasting upon those who fear him.

David continues in his Psalm saying, הַן אֲבָרְכֶךָ בְּחַיֵּי בְשִׁמְךָ אֲשֶׁא כָפְי: ו כְּמוֹ חֶלֶב וְדָשֵׁן תִּשְׂבַּע נַפְשִׁי וְשִׂפְתַי רַנְנוֹת יִהְלֵל-פִּי: ז אִם-זִכְרֹתֶיךָ עַל-יְצוּעֵי בְּאֲשֻׁמְרוֹת אֶהְגֶּה-בְּךָ: ח כִּי-הָיִיתָ עֲזָרְתָה לִּי וּבָצַל כְּנַפְיֶךָ אֲרַגֵּן: ט

63:4 So I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. 63:5 My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth offers praises with joyful lips. 63:6 When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches, 63:7 For You have been my help, And in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy. 63:8 My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me. (NASB) The Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint say the following:

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms 63:5-9

63:5 Thus will I bless you in my life in this age; in the name of your word I will spread my hands in prayer in the age to come. 63:6 My soul will be satisfied as with fat and oil, and my mouth shall sing [with] lips of praise. 63:7 If I have remembered you on my bed, in the night-watch I will meditate on your word. 63:8 For you were a helper to me, and in the shade of your presence I will be glad. 63:9 My soul has followed close behind your Torah; your right hand has supported me. (EMC)

ה היכנא אברכינך בחיי בעלמא הדין בשום מימריך אפרוס ידי בצלו לעלמא דאתי: ו היך תרב ודהן תסבע נפשי וסיפון דתושבהן ישבח פומי: ז אין אידכרתוך על דרגושי במטרתא ארנן במימרך: ח ארום הויתא סעיד לי ובטלל שכנינתך אבוע: ט אדבקת נפשי בתר אורייתך בי במימרי סעדת ימינך:

Septuagint

Psalmoi / Psalms 63:4-8

63:4 Thus will I bless thee during my life: I will lift up my hands in thy name. 63:5 Let my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness; and my joyful lips shall praise thy name. 63:6 Forasmuch as I have remembered thee on my bed: in the early seasons I have meditated on thee. 63:7 For thou hast been my helper, and in the shelter of thy wings will I rejoice. 63:8 My soul has kept very close behind thee: thy right hand has upheld me. (LXX)

63:4 οὕτως εὐλογήσω σε ἐν τῇ ζωῇ μου ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ἄρῶ τὰς χεῖράς μου 63:5 ὡσεὶ στέατος καὶ πιότητος ἐμπλησθεῖν ἡ ψυχῇ μου καὶ χεῖλη ἀγαλλιάσεως αἰνέσει τὸ στόμα μου 63:6 εἰ ἐμνημόνευόν σου ἐπὶ τῆς στρωμνῆς μου ἐν τοῖς ὄρθοις ἐμελέτων εἰς σέ 63:7 ὅτι ἐγενήθης βοηθός μου καὶ ἐν τῇ σκέπῃ τῶν πτερυγῶν σου ἀγαλλιάσομαι 63:8 ἐκολλήθη ἡ ψυχῇ μου ὀπίσω σου ἐμοῦ ἀντελάβετο ἡ δεξιὰ σου

It is interesting how the Aramaic Targum translates the text to say “in the name of your word.” This is a very important concept because what we find amongst the topics in the Torah, the commands concerning vows (נְדָרִים) and oaths (שְׁבוּעוֹת) made to the LORD (Bamidbar / Numbers 30:2-3). The sages of blessed memory make a distinction between these by saying that a vow (נְדָר) represents a promise to do something (or to refrain from doing something, vow of the Nazir), whereas an oath (שְׁבוּעָה) represents a sworn testimony that something is true (or false). Among Orthodox, it is customary to say “bli neder” (בְּלִי נְדָר) in order to make the assertion to clarify one is trying to avoid making a vow. Bli neder means, “I’ll do my best to keep my word to you on this, though understand that I am not taking a vow...” For example, before Yom Kippur, the Kol Nidrei service is intended to absolve legal liability for failing to keep personal vows. The Aramaic phrase kol nidrei (כּוֹל נִדְרֵי) means “all my vows.” The Torah command on a vow states that the man who takes a vow or an oath “shall not break his word” (לֹא יַחַל דְּבָרוֹ). Note also the word translated “break” comes from the root chalal (חָלַל) bringing with it the meaning to profane or make unholy. This is the same

root used in the phrase chillul Hashem (חִלּוּל הַשֵּׁם) which means to desecrate or make unholy the Name of the LORD as it says in *Vayikra / Leviticus 22:32* “*And you shall not profane (חִלּוּל) My holy name; but I will be sanctified (קִדְּשׁ) among the children of Israel: I am the Lord who sanctifies you*” Note the difference or contrast between Chillul HaShem to break your word, as opposed to keeping your word is a form of kiddush HaShem (קִדְּוֵשׁ הַשֵּׁם), “*sanctifying the Name of the LORD.*” The Torah links both vows and oaths with the soul (nefesh, נֶפֶשׁ). An oath is considered a “bond” or a binding obligation upon the soul (“*a bond on his soul,*” אֶסֶר עַל-נַפְשׁוֹ). Based on this statement we find a connection between our words and our souls. According to *Bereshit / Genesis 2:7*, the Scriptures describe the creation of man saying, “*Then the LORD God formed (יָצַר) the man of dust from the ground and breathed (נָפַח) into his nostrils the breath of life (נְשַׁמַּת הַיִּי), and the man became a living soul (נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה).*” The word yetzer (formed) refers to something molded, like pottery fashioned by the hand of a potter. In a similar manner, as a potter keeps a shape in his mind (a preconceived shape) while he is forming the clay object, so to the Lord God had the intent of forming man in a particular image. The rabbis use the analogy of a glassblower who creates a glass vessel. Just as a glassblower blows into a tube to form a vessel from molten glass, so is the breath (נְשַׁמָּה) that comes from the LORD functions as spirit (רוּחַ) that forms the human soul (נֶפֶשׁ) (<http://www.aish.com>). The Aramaic Targum states that God breathed into Adam the ability to think and to speak. In other words, thought and speech are two primary characteristics of the image (tzelem) and likeness (demut) of God. Our ability to speak and to use words is directly connected to the “*breath of God*” within us. By this interpretation, if we break our word we deface the image of God. Is this why the rabbis according to the Aramaic Targum translate David’s words to say in *Toviyah / Psalms 63:5* *Thus will I bless you in my life in this age; in the name of your word I will spread my hands in prayer in the age to come. (EMC)?* The interpretation and translation into the Aramaic Targum is that David blesses the Lord “*in the name of your word,*” because in the very words we use and formulate we show forth the image of God.

The LORD God of Israel is faithful and true (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 7:9, Tehillim / Psalm 12:6, Matthew 24:35*). He always keeps His word, this is why it says in the name of your word, because He is faithful and true by His word. Because of these things, He also wants us to be faithful and true as well. Notice how Yeshua Himself is called the Word of God (דְּבַר הָאֱלֹהִים). Based upon the Torah context, Yeshua was an image bearer of our Father in heaven. His words carried deep meaning, sanctity, and Yeshua says in *John 15:3* “*You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.*” (NASB) Just as God’s words are trustworthy, true, and life-giving, so too were Yeshua’s words because He taught God’s Torah and obeyed the Torah to the greatest detail. The sages say that the words we speak, whether good or bad, call for a response in the realm of the spirit. This is hinted at by the Hebrew word for “*thing*” (דְּבַר), which also means “*word.*” Yeshua warned us to abstain from making any kind of vow or oath since our word alone should be enough according to *Matthew 5:33-37*. The words of the heart are the “*things*” (*devarim*) that define the course of one’s life. Our ability to think and to use words, bring with it the image and breath of God according to the Torah. By this perspective, we understand that our “*prayers,*” our words, may be considered an offering unto the Lord. When Yeshua taught, he also spoke of the “*good and evil treasures of the heart*” that produce actions that are expressed in our words (*Luke 6:45*). Our inward motive determines our thinking, which in turn affects the way we act and the way we use our words. As a result, Yeshua warned us saying, “*I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless (ἀργὸν) word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned*” (*Matt. 12:36-37*). Even our salvation is based on the confession of the truth (*Romans 10:9 and Colossians 4:6*). Because of these things, we should focus on using communication as a means of expressing the love and grace of God rather than harm towards others. We need to guard our tongues to stay away from lashon hara (evil speech) by focusing on what is worthy, lovely, and of good report (*Mishley / Proverbs 13:3, Philippians 4:8*). We should take David’s example as he prayed saying, “*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer*” (*Tehillim / Psalms 19:14*). Notice what both the Torah and the Psalms (*specifically, the Aramaic Targum*) is teaching us. The Torah is teaching

us that the human soul came directly from God's innermost being in the same way that a breath issues forth from a person's lungs and chest cavity. The Torah's description of the rest of creation, on the other hand, was created with the word, which is at a lower level as compared to the forming of man and breathing into him. The rest of creation emanates from God's Power, the power of His word, but man was created according to His own image. When the Targum states 63:5 *Thus will I bless you in my life in this age; in the name of your word I will spread my hands in prayer in the age to come.* (EMC) the rabbis are connecting all of these concepts, praising the faithfulness of the Lord, in the name of His word, the promises that He keeps that are found within His word, in His Torah, and the hopeful expectation of being with the Lord in the age to come.

David then contrasts those who do not seek the Lord, but live to cause destruction and to take life. Those who seek to destroy will be consigned to the depths of the earth. י וְהִמָּה לְשׂוֹאָהּ בְּקִשּׁוֹ נַפְשִׁי יָבֹאוּ בְּתֵהוֹתֵיּוֹת. 63:9 *But those who seek my life to destroy it, Will go into the depths of the earth.* 63:10 *They will be delivered over to the power of the sword; They will be a prey for foxes.* (NASB) The concept of “the depths of the earth,” may be taken from Parashat Korach and the company of Datan, Aviram, and Korach going down to the grave alive. They went down to the depths of the earth alive. Those who seek to kill, steal, and destroy, they will go down to the depths by the hand of God, the parallel here may be drawn into a Torah context. They lived by the sword and will die by the sword. The Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint state the following:

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms 63:10-11

63:10 *But they will seek my soul for the grave; they will enter the lowest part of the earth.*

63:11 *They will fear him on account of the blow of the sword; they will be the portion of jackals.* (EMC)

י וְהִינּוֹן לְקִבּוּרְתָא יִתְבַּעוֹן נַפְשִׁי יִיעֲלוֹן בְּאַרְעֵית אַרְעָא: יא יִדְחִלוֹנִיָּה מִטוֹל מַחַת סִיפָא מוֹהֲבִית תְּעֲלִיָּא יְהוּיִן:

Septuagint

Psalmoi / Psalms 63:9-10

63:9 *But they vainly sought after my soul; they shall go into the lowest parts of the earth.*

63:10 *They shall be delivered up to the power of the sword; they shall be portions for foxes.* (LXX)

63:9 αὐτοὶ δὲ εἰς μάτην ἐζήτησαν τὴν ψυχὴν μου εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὰ κατώτατα τῆς γῆς

63:10 παραδοθήσονται εἰς χεῖρας ῥομφαίας μερίδες ἀλωπέκων ἔσονται

The rabbis translate these verses in a similar fashion, they will go down to the grave, described as the lowest part of the earth. There is an interesting rabbinic hermeneutic that is found here on *Tehillim / Psalms 63:9*. In the *Talmud Bavli Niddah, 31*, “the rabbis taught that during the first three months of pregnancy, the child lies in the lower part of the uterus; during the next three it occupies the middle part; and during the last three it is in the upper part; and that when the time of parturition comes, it turns over first, and this causes the birth pains.” The beginning, intermediate, and ending states of the infant in the womb reveals this rabbinic hermeneutic on the significance of “the upper and lower regions.” The lower regions are for the more inferior form, whereas the upper regions are for the superior forms. This may be a kabbalistic concept that comes out of the structure of the Sefirot (סְפִירוֹת), the emanations of God, and interpretation of the world. As we mentioned in the study of the Rabbinic commentary in *Tehillim / Psalms 62*, Kabbalah teaches there

are ten levels which are associated with the four different “Worlds” or planes of existence (from the Zohar). This interpretation, particularly that of the Sephirot (סְפִירוֹת) is designed to link the Infinite Divine Ein Sof (without end) with our finite, physical realm. These concepts that are developed suggest that there are different levels of spiritual growth that allow us to draw nearer to the Lord God in heaven. In the analogy on the child, the concept of lower portion of the womb for the fetus, and the upper region of the womb for the fully developed baby, may be drawn into the context of David’s psalm on those who seek his soul, to kill him, will descend to the lowest part of the earth. The wicked are in a state of fetal growth, they are underdeveloped, they cannot survive if they were birthed at this point in their lives, their inferior in their spiritual state of wickedness and therefore are consigned to the lowest depth of the earth when they die. David is saying that they are given over to the sword, the wicked have nothing and are inferior, worth nothing more than for slaughter by the sword and cast off into an unknown community grave. A place that is consigned for both man and beast. Can you see and understand the rabbinic hermeneutic at work here in the words of David according to the rabbinic literature?

David concludes his Psalm saying, : יב וְהַמֶּלֶךְ יִשְׂמַח בְּאֱלֹהִים יְתְהַלֵּל כָּל-הַנִּשְׁבָּע בּוֹ כִּי יִסְכַּר פִּי דוֹבְרֵי-שָׁקֶר. 63:11 *But the king will rejoice in God; Everyone who swears by Him will glory, For the mouths of those who speak lies will be stopped. (NASB)* The Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint state the following:

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms 63:12

63:12 And the king will rejoice in the word of God; all who swear by his word will sing praise, for the mouth of those who speak deceit will be stifled. (EMC)

יב ומלכא יחדי במימר אלהא ישבח כל די מקיים במימריה ארום יסרניק יסדמיק פומהון ד<מ>מללי
שיקרא:

Septuagint

Psalmoi / Psalms 63:11

63:11 But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that swears by him shall be praised; for the mouth of them that speak unjust things has been stopped. (LXX)

63:11 ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς εὐφρανθήσεται ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ ἐπαινεσθήσεται πᾶς ὁ ὀμνύων ἐν αὐτῷ ὅτι ἐνεφράγη στόμα λαλούντων ἄδικα

David says that everyone who swears by Him will glory. The rabbis say that the king will rejoice in the “word of God.” We who place our faith in Yeshua the Messiah will glory in Him, in His words, in His life, death, and resurrection. In the Messiah, we have been elevated to a greater spiritual state, we have a direct connection to the Father in heaven, through the Son, Yeshua the Messiah. As a result of these things, we are to persevere in our walk before Him, to live with love for others, and constraining our ways to God’s ways, for the Glory of Yeshua, and of the Father in heaven. Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We thank You simply for the fact that You are God and full of mercy. We thank You for revealing Your truth and righteousness to us, and we thank You for David’s words which bring out these important discussion points which help us to look more closely to our lives. Thank You for giving us the faith to believe in

— Tehillim / Psalms 63 | ספר תהילים סג —

Yeshua the King Messiah! 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 bring glory to Your Name. 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