

## Tehillim / Psalms 81 | ספר תהילים פא

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### Is it enough to merely ask the Lord God to save us?

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 81:1-16*, the psalm opens saying, א לְמַנְצֵחַ | עַל-הַגִּתִּית לְאַסָּף: *For the director of music. According to gittith. Of Asaph. (NASB)* Asaph states, ב הֲרִינֵנוּ לְאֱלֹהִים עוֹזְנֵנוּ הֲרִיעוּ לְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: ג שְׁאוּ-זִמְרָה וּתְנוּ-תֶף כְּנֹר נְעִים עִם-נְבֻלָּ: ד תִּקְעוּ בַחֲדָשׁ שׁוֹפָר בִּפְסָה לְיוֹם חַגְנוּ: ה פִּי חָק הֲרִיעוּ לְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: ג שְׁאוּ-זִמְרָה וּתְנוּ-תֶף כְּנֹר נְעִים עִם-נְבֻלָּ: ד תִּקְעוּ בַחֲדָשׁ שׁוֹפָר בִּפְסָה לְיוֹם חַגְנוּ: ה פִּי חָק הֲרִיעוּ לְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: *81:1 Sing for joy to God our strength; Shout joyfully to the God of Jacob. 81:2 Raise a song, strike the timbrel, The sweet sounding lyre with the harp. 81:3 Blow the trumpet at the new moon, At the full moon, on our feast day. 81:4 For it is a statute for Israel, An ordinance of the God of Jacob. (NASB)* What is the significance of blowing the Shofar (trumpet)? He continues saying, ו יְעוּדוֹת | אֲשֶׁמַּע: *81:5 He established it for a testimony in Joseph When he went throughout the land of Egypt. I heard a language that I did not know: (NASB)* Is Asaph referring to the Shofar as being a testimony? He says, ז הִסִּירוֹתַי מִסִּבְּלָיִךְ שְׁכֹמוֹ כְּפִי מְדוּד תַּעֲבֹרְנָה: ח בְּצַרָּה, *81:6 'I relieved his shoulder of the burden, His hands were freed from the basket. 81:7 'You called in trouble and I rescued you; I answered you in the hiding place of thunder; I proved you at the waters of Meribah. Selah. (NASB)* How did the Lord prove the people at Mirabah? Asaph speaks for the Lord saying, ט שְׁמַע עַמִּי וְאֶעֱיֶדְהָ בְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם-תִּשְׁמַע-לִי: י לֹא-יִהְיֶה בְּךָ, *אל זר ולא תשתחווה לאל נכר: יא אֲנֹכִי | יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ הַמַּעֲלֶדְךָ מֵאַרְצֵי מִצְרַיִם הַרְחֹב-פִּיךָ וְאַמְלֵאֵהוּ: יב וְלֹא-שְׁמַע לִי: יג וְאֶשְׁלַחְהוּ בְּשָׁרֵירוֹת לִבָּם יִלְכוּ בְּמוֹעֲצוֹתֵיהֶם: יד לוֹ עַמִּי שְׁמַע לִי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּדַרְכֵי יְהוָה: טו כְּמַעַט אוֹיְבֵיהֶם אֲכַנִּיעַ וְעַל-צָרֵיהֶם אָשִׁיב יָדַי: טז מִשְׁנָאֵי יְהוָה יִכְחָשׁוּ-לוֹ וַיְהִי עֲתָם לְעוֹלָם: יז וַיִּאֲכִלְהוּ מִחֶלֶב חֹטֵה וּמִצֹּר דָּבַשׁ: יח וְאֶשְׁבִּיעֶנּוּ: *81:8 'Hear, O My people, and I will admonish you; O Israel, if you would listen to Me! 81:9 'Let there be no strange god among you; Nor shall you worship any foreign god. 81:10 'I, the Lord, am your God, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide and I will fill it. 81:11 'But My people did not listen to My voice, And Israel did not obey Me. (NASB)* He concludes saying, יט וְאֶשְׁלַחְהוּ בְּשָׁרֵירוֹת לִבָּם יִלְכוּ בְּמוֹעֲצוֹתֵיהֶם: יד לוֹ עַמִּי שְׁמַע לִי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּדַרְכֵי יְהוָה: טו כְּמַעַט אוֹיְבֵיהֶם אֲכַנִּיעַ וְעַל-צָרֵיהֶם אָשִׁיב יָדַי: טז מִשְׁנָאֵי יְהוָה יִכְחָשׁוּ-לוֹ וַיְהִי עֲתָם לְעוֹלָם: יז וַיִּאֲכִלְהוּ מִחֶלֶב חֹטֵה וּמִצֹּר דָּבַשׁ: יח וְאֶשְׁבִּיעֶנּוּ: *81:12 'So I gave them over to the stubbornness of their heart, To walk in their own devices. 81:13 'Oh that My people would listen to Me, That Israel would walk in My ways! 81:14 'I would quickly subdue their enemies And turn My hand against their adversaries. 81:15 'Those who hate the Lord would pretend obedience to Him, And their time of punishment would be forever. 81:16 'But I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, And with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.' (NASB)**

עברית      Hebrew      ארמי      Aramaic      ελληνικός      Greek

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
<b>ספר תהלים פרק פא</b>	<b>ספר טוביה פרק פא</b>	<b>ספר טוביה פרק פא</b>	<b>ספר טוביה פרק פא</b>	<b>ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 81</b>	<b>ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 81</b>
א לְמַנְצֵחַ   עַל-הַגִּתִּית לְאַסָּף: ב הֲרִינֵנוּ לְאֱלֹהִים עוֹזְנֵנוּ הֲרִיעוּ לְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: ג שְׁאוּ-זִמְרָה וּתְנוּ-תֶף כְּנֹר נְעִים עִם-נְבֻלָּ: ד תִּקְעוּ בַחֲדָשׁ שׁוֹפָר בִּפְסָה לְיוֹם חַגְנוּ: ה פִּי חָק הֲרִיעוּ לְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: הוּא מְשַׁפֵּט לְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:	א לשבחא על כנורא דאתיא מן גת על ידא דאסף: ב שבחו קדם אלהים עושנא יבבו קדם אלהא דיעקב: ג ארימו קלא בתושבחתא וסדרו ופקדו תופיא כנורא דקליה בסים עם נבלין: ד תקעו בירחא דתשרי שופרא ביי רחא דמתכסי יומא דחגיא דילנא: ה ארום קיים גזר לישראל הוא הלכת דינא לאלהא דיעקב:	א לשבחא על כנורא דאתיא מן גת על ידא דאסף: ב שבחו קדם אלהים עושנא יבבו קדם אלהא דיעקב: ג ארימו קלא בתושבחתא וסדרו ופקדו תופיא כנורא דקליה בסים עם נבלין: ד תקעו בירחא דתשרי שופרא ביי רחא דמתכסי יומא דחגיא דילנא: ה ארום קיים גזר לישראל הוא הלכת דינא לאלהא דיעקב:	א לשבחא על כנורא דאתיא מן גת על ידא דאסף: ב שבחו קדם אלהים עושנא יבבו קדם אלהא דיעקב: ג ארימו קלא בתושבחתא וסדרו ופקדו תופיא כנורא דקליה בסים עם נבלין: ד תקעו בירחא דתשרי שופרא ביי רחא דמתכסי יומא דחגיא דילנא: ה ארום קיים גזר לישראל הוא הלכת דינא לאלהא דיעקב:	81:1 εἰς τὸ τέλος ὑπὲρ τῶν ληνῶν τῷ Ασαφ ψαλμὸς ἀγαλλιᾶσθε τῷ θεῷ τῷ βοηθῷ ἡμῶν ἀλαλάξατε τῷ θεῷ Ἰακωβ 81:2 λάβετε ψαλμὸν καὶ δότε τύπανον ψαλτήριον καὶ δότε τέρπνον μετὰ κιθάρας 81:3 σαλπίζατε ἐν νεομηνία σάλπιγγι ἐν εὐσήμεν ἡμέρα ἑορτῆς ἡμῶν 81:4 ὅτι πρόσταγμα τῷ Ἰσραὴλ ἐστὶν καὶ κρίμα τῷ θεῷ Ἰακωβ	81:1 εἰς τὸ τέλος ὑπὲρ τῶν ληνῶν τῷ Ασαφ ψαλμὸς ἀγαλλιᾶσθε τῷ θεῷ τῷ βοηθῷ ἡμῶν ἀλαλάξατε τῷ θεῷ Ἰακωβ 81:2 λάβετε ψαλμὸν καὶ δότε τύπανον ψαλτήριον καὶ δότε τέρπνον μετὰ κιθάρας 81:3 σαλπίζατε ἐν νεομηνία σάλπιγγι ἐν εὐσήμεν ἡμέρα ἑορτῆς ἡμῶν 81:4 ὅτι πρόσταγμα τῷ Ἰσραὴλ ἐστὶν καὶ κρίμα τῷ θεῷ Ἰακωβ

<p>ו עדות   ביהוסף שמו בצאתו על-  אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שְׁפַת לֹא-יִדְעָתִי אֲשַׁמֶּע:  ז הַסִּירוֹתַי מִסָּבֵל שְׁכֵמוּ כִפְיוּ מִדּוֹד  ח תַּעֲבֹרְנָה: ה בַּצָּרָה קָרָאתָ וְאָחֳלִי-  צָדָה אֲעֲנֶה בְּסֹתֵר רַעַם אֲבַתְּנֶה עַל-מִי  ט מְרִיבָה סֶלָה: ט שְׁמַע עַמִּי וְאֲעִידָה  י בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אִם-תִּשְׁמַע-לִי: י לֹא-  יִהְיֶה כָּךְ אֵל זָר וְלֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְאֵל  יֵאָכֵר: יֵאָכֵר   יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַמַּעֲלֶה  מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הַרְחֹב-פִּיךָ וְאֲמַלְאָהוּ:  יב וְלֹא-שְׁמַע עַמִּי לְקוֹלִי וַיִּשְׁרָאֵל  יג וְאֲשַׁלַּחֵהוּ בְּשַׁרְיֹת  יד לְפָנָם יִלְכוּ בְּמוֹעֲצוֹתֵיהֶם: יד לו עַמִּי  טו שְׁמַע לִי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּדַרְכֵי יְהוָה: טו  טז פְּמַעַט אוֹיְבֵיהֶם אֲכַנֶּיעַ וְעַל-צָרֵיהֶם  טז אֲשִׁיב יָדַי: טז מְשַׁנְּאֵי יְהוָה יִכְחָשׁוּ-  יז לו וַיְהִי עֲתָם לְעוֹלָם: יז וַיִּאֲכִלְהוּ  מִחֶלֶב חֶטֶה וּמִצֹּר דָּבַשׁ אֲשַׁפִּיעָה:</p>	<p>ו סהדותא על יהוסף שויה דלא קריב  לאתת ריבוניה ביה ביומא נפיק מבית  אסירי ושליט בכל ארעא דמצרים  ז ספתא דלא חכימית אליפית שמעית:  ח אעדיתי משיעבודא כתפיה אידוי  ט מן למרמי טינא לקידרא איסתלקון:  י בעידן עקתא דמצרים קרית ופ-  צית יתך צמית ענית יתך באתר טמור  בית שכנתי דאכלין קדמוי גלגלין די  נור בחנתך על מי מצותא לעלמין: ט  שמעו עמי ואסהיד בכון ישראל אם  אין תקביל למימרי: י לא יהי בינ-  כון פלחי טעותא נוכראה ולא תסגדון  לטעות חילוני: יא אנא יהוה אלהך  דאסיקית יתכון מארעא דמצרים  אפתי פומך בפתגמי אוריתא ואמ-  לי יתה מכל טבתא: יב ולא קבילו  עמי לקלי וישראל לא צבו למימרי:  יג ותריכתי בהירהורי לבהון אזלו  במלכת רישעהון: יד הלואי עמי  שמע לי ישראל באורחתי יהלכון:  טו כזעיר בעלי דבביהון אמאיך  ועל בעלי דבביהון אתיב מחת גבור-  תי: טז סנאי יהוה יכדבון ליה ויהי  תוקפהון לעלם: יח ויאכיליניה מן  טוב לחים חיטין ומן טינרא דובשא  אשבעינך:</p>	<p>81:5 μαρτύριον ἐν τῷ Ἰωσηφ ἔθετο  αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ἐξελθεῖν αὐτὸν ἐκ γῆς  Αἰγύπτου γλώσσαν ἦν οὐκ ἔγνω  ἤκουσεν 81:6 ἀπέστησεν ἀπὸ ἄρσεων  τὸν νῶτον αὐτοῦ αἱ χεῖρες αὐτοῦ  ἐν τῷ κοφίνῳ ἐδούλευσαν 81:7 ἐν  θλίψει ἐπεκαλέσω με καὶ ἐρρυσάμην  σε ἐπήκουσά σου ἐν ἀποκρύφῳ  καταιγίδος ἐδοκίμασά σε ἐπὶ ὕδατος  ἀντιλογίας διάψαλμα 81:8 ἄκουσον  λαός μου καὶ διαμαρτύρομαί σοι  Ἰσραὴλ ἐὰν ἀκούσης μου 81:9 οὐκ  ἔσται ἐν σοὶ θεὸς πρόσφατος οὐδὲ  προσκυνήσεις θεῷ ἄλλοτρίῳ 81:10  ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι κύριος ὁ θεός σου  ὁ ἀναγαγὼν σε ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου  πλάτυνον τὸ στόμα σου καὶ πληρώσω  αὐτό 81:11 καὶ οὐκ ἤκουσεν ὁ λαός  μου τῆς φωνῆς μου καὶ Ἰσραὴλ οὐ  προσέσχεν μοι 81:12 καὶ ἐξαπέστειλα  αὐτοὺς κατὰ τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα τῶν  καρδιῶν αὐτῶν πορεύσοντα ἐν τοῖς  ἐπιτηδεύμασιν αὐτῶν 81:13 εἰ ὁ λαός  μου ἤκουσέν μου Ἰσραὴλ ταῖς ὁδοῖς  μου εἰ ἐπορεύθη 81:14 ἐν τῷ μηδενὶ  ἄν τοὺς ἐχθροὺς αὐτῶν ἑταπείνωσα  καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς θλίβοντας αὐτοὺς  ἐπέβαλον τὴν χεῖρά μου 81:15 οἱ  ἐχθροὶ κυρίου ἐψεύσαντο αὐτῷ  καὶ ἔσται ὁ καιρὸς αὐτῶν εἰς τὸν  αἰῶνα 81:16 καὶ ἐψώμισεν αὐτοὺς  ἐκ στέατος πυροῦ καὶ ἐκ πέτρας μέλι  ἐχώρτασεν αὐτοὺς</p>
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<p><b>Tehillim / Psalms 81</b>                  For the director of music. According to gittith. Of Asaph. 81:1 Sing for joy to God our strength; Shout joyfully to the God of Jacob. 81:2 Raise a song, strike the timbrel, The sweet sounding lyre with the harp. 81:3 Blow the trumpet at the new moon, At the full moon, on our feast day. 81:4 For it is a statute for Israel, An ordinance of the God of Jacob. 81:5 He established it for a testimony in Joseph When he went throughout the land of Egypt. I heard a language that I did not know: 81:6 ‘I relieved his shoulder of the burden, His hands were freed from the basket. 81:7 ‘You called in trouble and I rescued you; I answered you in the hiding place of thunder; I proved you at the waters of Meribah. Selah. 81:8 ‘Hear, O My people, and I will admonish you; O Israel, if you would listen to Me! 81:9 ‘Let there be no strange god among you; Nor shall you worship any foreign god. 81:10 ‘I, the Lord, am your God, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide and I will fill it. 81:11 ‘But My people did not listen to My voice, And Israel did not obey Me. 81:12 ‘So I gave them over to the stubbornness of their heart, To walk in their own devices. 81:13 ‘Oh that My people would listen to Me, That Israel would walk in My ways! 81:14 ‘I would quickly subdue their enemies And turn My hand against their adversaries. 81:15 ‘Those who hate the Lord would pretend obedience to Him, And their time of punishment would be forever. 81:16 ‘But I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, And with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.’ (NASB)</p>	<p><b>Toviyah / Psalms 81</b>                  81:1 For praise; on the lyre that comes from Gath, composed by Asaph. 81:2 Give praise in the presence of God, our strength; shout in the presence of the God of Jacob. 81:3 Lift up the voice in praise, and set out timbrels, the lyre whose sound is sweet with harps. 81:4 Blow the horn in the month of Tishri, in the month in which the day of our festivals is concealed. 81:5 For he made a covenant for Israel; it is a legal ruling of the God of Jacob. 81:6 He made it a testimony for Joseph, who did not go near the wife of his master; on that day he went out of the prison and ruled over all the land of Egypt. The tongue I did not know I have taught [and] heard. 81:7 I have removed his shoulder from servitude; his hands were taken away from casting clay into a pot. 81:8 In the time of the distress of Egypt, you called and I delivered you; I made you fast in the secret place where my presence is, where wheels of fire call out before him; I tested you by the waters of Dispute forever. 81:9 Hear, O my people, and I will bear witness for you, O Israel, if you will accept my word. 81:10 There shall not be among you worshipers of a foreign idol, and you shall not bow down to a profane idol. 81:11 I am the Lord your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt; open wide your mouth with the words of Torah, and I will fill it with all good things. 81:12 But my people did not receive my voice; and Israel did not want my word. 81:13 And I expelled them for the thoughts of their heart, they went away in their wicked counsel. 81:14 Would that my people had listened to me – that Israel would walk in my ways! 81:15 In a little while I will humble their enemies, and I will turn my strong blow against their enemies. 81:16 The enemies of the Lord will be false to him; and their harshness will last forever. 81:17 But he will feed him with the best of wheat bread; and I will satisfy you with honey from the rock. (EMC)</p>	<p><b>Psalmoi / Psalms 81</b>                  For the end, a Psalm for Asaph, concerning the wine-presses. 81:1 Rejoice ye in God our helper; shout aloud to the God of Jacob. 81:2 Take a psalm, and produce the timbrel, the pleasant psaltery with the harp. 81:3 Blow the trumpet at the new moon, in the glorious day of your feast. 81:4 For this is an ordinance for Israel, and a statute of the God of Jacob. 81:5 He made it to be a testimony in Joseph, when he came forth out of the land of Egypt: he heard a language which he understood not. 81:6 He removed his back from burdens: his hands slaved in making the baskets. 81:7 Thou didst call upon me in trouble, and I delivered thee; I heard thee in the secret place of the storm: I proved thee at the water of Strife. Pause. 81:8 Hear, my people, and I will speak to thee, O Israel; and I will testify to thee: if thou wilt hearken to me; 81:9 there shall be no new god in thee; neither shalt thou worship a strange god. 81:10 For I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. 81:11 But my people hearkened not to my voice; and Israel gave no heed to me. 81:12 So I let them go after the ways of their own hearts: they will go on in their own ways. 81:13 If my people had hearkened to me, if Israel had walked in my ways, 81:14 I should have put down their enemies very quickly, and should have laid my hand upon those that afflicted them. 81:15 The Lord’s enemies should have lied to him: but their time shall be for ever. 81:16 And he fed them with the fat of wheat; and satisfied them with honey out of the rock. (LXX)</p>
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In this week’s study from *Tehillim / Psalms 81:1-16*, the psalm opens saying, א לְמַנְצֵחַ | עַל-הַגִּתִּית לְאַסָּף. For the director of music. According to gittith. Of Asaph. (NASB) Here we find the Hebrew text transliterated into English. When the Hebrew is transliterated into Hebrew, it is always good to ask the question why? Generally transliteration occurs when a word or phrase is difficult to translate. What does it mean according to Gittith? The Hebrew text states, עַל-הַגִּתִּית לְאַסָּף “upon / according to gittit, for Asaph.” Brown-Driver-Briggs’ Lexicon states that Gittith means “a wine-press.” This word is used in three verses in the Tanach.

### ***Tehillim / Psalms 8:1***

*To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of David. O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.*

### ***Tehillim / Psalms 81:1***

*To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of Asaph. Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.*

### ***Tehillim / Psalms 84:1***

*To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm for the sons of Korah. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!*

The Aramaic Targum states, לְשִׁבְחָא עַל כְּנֹרָא דִּאֲתִיָּא מִן גַּת עַל יְדֵי דִּאֲסָפִי; 81:1 *For praise; on the lyre that comes from Gath, composed by Asaph. (EMC)* and the Septuagint states, εἰς τὸ τέλος ὑπὲρ τῶν ληνῶν τῷ Ἀσαφ *For the end, a Psalm for Asaph, concerning the wine-presses. (LXX)* The rabbis of the Targum translation say that this is a praise psalm that comes from Gath, and the Septuagint states this is a psalm of Asaph concerning the wine-presses. The translations are all over the place regarding the meaning of the word gittith (הַגִּתִּית). The opening phrase does not provide much insights into why Asaph composed this psalm. Rashi states, כְּלֵי שִׁיר הַבַּיִת מִגַּת, that the phrase “upon gittith” is a song that comes from Gath. Radak on *Tehillim / Psalms 8:1* states “*For the Chief Musician: set to the Gittith. A Psalm of David. - We have expounded already above (Ps. iv. i) that Gittith is a kind of music. And there are those who say that David composed and recited (the Psalm) when he was in Gath ; while others say (Ibn Ezra) that he gave it to the sons of Obed Edom the Gittite. This Psalm also is a hymn and rendering of praise and thanks to God, and a recounting of His acts of power.*” The Jewish Encyclopedia states the following,

*“A musical instrument mentioned in Ps. viii. 1, lxxxi. 1, lxxxiv. 1. The word is explained by Gesenius (“Thesaurus,” s. v. ) as meaning “striking instrument,” but it is now generally held to denote a zither. Rashi, following the Targum, derives the name from “Gath”; it would then mean “fabricated by the people of Gath.” He also quotes a Talmudic saying that “Gittith” is an allusion to Edom, which will be trodden down like a wine press (; compare Isa. lxiii. 3), and combats this view by arguing that the context of the chapter has nothing to do with Edom. Ibn Ezra explains the name “Gittith” as referring to the fact that the above-mentioned psalms were composed for the sake of the descendants of Obed-edom the Gittite, who was a Levite. The interpretation (also found in the Septuagint) that “Gittith” means “to be sung to the tune of the wine-presses” is ridiculed by Ibn Ezra.” (Gittith, Jewish Encyclopedia)*

The large degree of variation in the meaning of the words, לְמַנְצֵחַ | עַל-הַגִּתִּית לְאָסָפִי; *For the director of music. According to gittith. Of Asaph. (NASB)* is a good reason why the Hebrew text was transliterated into English in the NASB translation. Ibn Ezra comments that *Tehillim / Psalms 8* was composed by David on behalf of the sons of Ebed Edom. *Tehillim / Psalms 81* however was composed by Asaph. David praises the Lord in *Tehillim / Psalms 8* on the manner in which he made man, a little lower than the angels (8:5), and crowned him with honor and glory. The Lord has given man dominion over God’s Creation. It may be that Asaph is drawing context from *Tehillim / Psalms 8* and the significance of man’s position given by God according to David’s words. This provides the necessary context for *Tehillim / Psalms 81*, man the crown of God’s creation, and the reason why God gave him His Torah, coupled with Asaph’s words saying, *Tehillim / Psalms 81:8 ‘Hear, O My people, and I will admonish you; O Israel, if you would listen to Me! 81:9 ‘Let there be no strange god among you; Nor shall you worship any foreign god. 81:10 ‘I, the Lord, am your God, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide and I will fill it. (NASB)* Man is special and called to be obedient to God’s word, and to be careful to diligently listen and take care

concerning our faith. The Lord loves us so much, that He will admonish us for the purpose of drawing us to Teshuvah (Repentance) and to turn our lives to His ways for the glory of His Name!

Asaph opens his psalm saying, ב הַרְנִינוּ לֵאלֹהִים עֲזֹנָנוּ הִרְיֵעוּ לְאֱלֹהֵי יִעֲקֹב: ג שְׂאוּ-זַמְרָה וּתְנוּ-תֶרֶף כְּנֹר, 81:1 Sing for joy to God our strength; Shout joyfully to the God of Jacob. 81:2 Raise a song, strike the timbrel, The sweet sounding lyre with the harp. 81:3 Blow the trumpet at the new moon, At the full moon, on our feast day. 81:4 For it is a statute for Israel, An ordinance of the God of Jacob. (NASB) What is the significance of blowing the Shofar (trumpet)? The rabbis have discussed this question. Sforno has the following to say concerning the Shofar.

### ***Sforno on Leviticus 23:24, 1***

זכרון תרועה, *a remembrance of the Royal t'ruah. When jubilating toward one's king, one employs these blasts on the trumpets or shofars to demonstrate such regard for one's king. Compare Psalms 81,2 הרנינו עוזנו, הרנינו לאלוקים עוזנו, הרנינו*, “*stir up jubilation to G'd, our strength, raise a shout!*” The expression זכרון, *is an allusion to the fact that on this date G'd sits on the throne of Justice remembering the deeds of each one of His subjects and evaluating them as a judge. This is why the Talmud in Rosh Hashanah 8 calls on us to recite verse 4 in the above mentioned chapter of Psalms which reads* לִישְׂרָאֵל כִּי חוֹק לַיּוֹם חָגָנוּ, *הוא משפט לאלוקי יעקב*, “*blow the horn on the new moon on the day the moon is veiled, on our feast day, for it is a statute for Israel a ruling of the G'd of Yaakov.*” On such days we have additional reason to rejoice in the fact that He is our King, who inclines toward leniency, and is likely to find us as possessing sufficient merit to pass this examination of the way we led our lives in the year just concluded. Isaiah expresses these sentiments in referring to G'd as מַלְכֵנוּ ה' מְחַקְקֵנוּ, ה' שׁוֹפְטֵנוּ, ה' כִּי ה' שׁוֹפְטֵנוּ, ה' מְחַקְקֵנוּ, ה' מַלְכֵנוּ, *“for the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our King” (Isaiah 33,22)* זכרון תרועה זכרון תרועת מלך בה יגילו במלכם כאמרו) הרנינו לאלהים עוזנו הריעו וזה מפני היותו יושב אז על כסא דין כמו שבא בקבלה כאמרו תקעו בחדש שופר בכסה ליום חגנו כי חק לישראל הוא משפט לאלהי יעקב וראוי לנו לשמוח אז יותר על שהוא מלכנו שיטה כלפי חסד ויזכה אותנו בשפטו אותנו כאמרו כי ה' שופטנו ה' מחוקקנו ה' (מלכנו הוא יושיענו):

Sforno states that the sounding of the Shofar is done so for the purpose of demonstrating high regard for one's king. To stir up jubilation, and to raise a shout, and that this alludes to the fact that God sits on the throne of justice, sitting as the judge who remembers the deeds of His subjects and evaluates man's deeds. It is for this reason the rabbis conclude according to the *Talmud Bavli Rosh Hashanah 8* to recite this Psalm to blow the shofar. The blowing of the Shofar is performed for the purpose of glorifying God because he is Merciful and tends towards leniency and considers our desire to live for Him examining the way in which we lived our lives in the previous year. “*For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our King” (Isaiah 33,22)*

*Tehillim / Psalms 8:1-3 states, 8:1 O Lord, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens! 8:2 From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established strength Because of Your adversaries, To make the enemy and the revengeful cease. 8:3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained;* (NASB) David describes the majesty of God in the sense of His ability to create the heavens and the earth, and as the one who is able to strengthen the baby who is born to nurse and to survive. If a baby is not able to nurse, there is nothing man is able to do, the baby will die, however the Lord is able to do all things, and He is able to overcome and succeed where man is not able. The idea of God strengthening the babe by reason of His adversaries, is the way David describes the Lord causing His people to prosper. The rabbis comment on this psalm according to *Shelah, Bereshit, Torah Ohr 98*, saying the following:

**Shelah, Bereshit, Torah Ohr 98:**

*The angels themselves admitted this when they are quoted as saying in Psalms 8,2: “O Lord, our G’d, How majestic is Your name throughout the earth, You who have covered the heavens with Your splendor!” [according to the interpretation of the Talmud Shabbat 88 this was said by the ministering angels. Ed.] The same thought is expressed in Psalms 115,16: “The heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth He gave over to man.” The “earth” referred to in that verse is the Earth of a higher world in which the כנסת ישראל is rooted, since the name of G’d א-ד-נ-י, is the root of Israel; I have explained elsewhere, that the emanation מלכות is the uppermost level of the physical world, beyond which there is only a world of thought. Before creating man G’d took “dust” [raw material Ed.] from all the various worlds including parts which to us are known as “heaven,” i.e. Torah, and “earth” i.e. Israel. If we look at this in this vein, both the school of Hillel, the school of Shammai and the other scholars are quite correct, each group having used the words “heaven” and “earth” in different contexts. My commentary is very similar to that of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero in his treatise on the מיעוט הירח, chapter 3 (chapter 18 of the פרדס רמונים).*

The rabbis say the glory of God that covered the earth was His ministering angels (*Talmud Bavli Shabbat* 88). It is important to note that angel (מלאך) is a reference to a messenger which may also refer to a man going forth and speaking the Word of the Living God. It is interesting then that the one who goes out as a minister for the Lord may be compared to the majestic name of God spreading throughout the earth and His splendor covering the heavens and the earth. A parallel thought then may be to Sforino’s comments on the sounding of the Shofar for the purpose of demonstrating high regard for one’s king, where the minister goes forth and speaks of the majesty of the Name because of his high regard for the Lord. The purpose is to speak of His greatness, his love and mercy, to stir up jubilation, and to raise a shout by the speaking of His holy word.

Asaph continues saying, **עֲדוּת | בִּיהוֹסֵף שָׁמוּ בְּצֵאתוֹ עַל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שְׁפַת לֹא-יָדַעְתִּי אֲשַׁמְעֵ:** *81:5 He established it for a testimony in Joseph When he went throughout the land of Egypt. I heard a language that I did not know: (NASB)* Is Asaph referring to the Shofar as being a testimony? We read in *1 John 5:11, 11καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία, ὅτι ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεός, καὶ αὕτη ἡ ζωὴ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ ἐστίν. 5:11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. (NASB)* John says this is the record, *ἡ μαρτυρία*, the testimony; the sum of God’s testimony is found within the Son. The Rabbis interpret the psalm saying according to the Aramaic Targum, **ו סהדותא על יהוסף שויה דלא קריב לאתת ריבו,** *81:6 He made it a testimony for Joseph, who did not go near the wife of his master; on that day he went out of the prison and ruled over all the land of Egypt. The tongue I did not know I have taught [and] heard. (EMC)* Joseph did not sin by laying with his master’s wife. The testimony God gave Joseph, He kept him from sinning, and he learned a previously unknown language upon which he became proficient and taught others. The Septuagint states, *81:5 μαρτύριον ἐν τῷ Ἰωσήφ ἔθετο αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ἐξέλθειν αὐτὸν ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου γλῶσσαν ἣν οὐκ ἔγνω ἠκούσεν 81:5 He made it to be a testimony in Joseph, when he came forth out of the land of Egypt: he heard a language which he understood not. (LXX)* The Septuagint interprets the testimony as being given when he (Joseph) came forth out of Egypt. The idea is that he was given the testimony of God, the power of His right hand to deliver the people from bondage. In a similar manner, He provides us with the testimony of His Son Yeshua the Messiah. Notice how John says that this testimony is “*eternal life*,” though we have not yet attained eternal life, it is a future expectation or hope. Our faith is in the word of the Lord and in Yeshua the Messiah for eternal life. The testimony is in the power of God that changes our lives to live for Him, to obey His commands, and to love one another.

Asaph continues saying, **ו הַסִּירוֹתַי מִסִּבְּלָךְ שְׁכַמוֹ כִּפְיוֹ מִדּוֹד תַּעֲבֹרְנָה: ח בְּצִרְיָה קִרְאָתָ וְאַחֲלִצְךָ אֶעֱנֶה בְּסִתְּרָךְ**

:סְלָהּ: 81:6 רַעַם אֶבְחָנָהּ עַל-מִי מְרִיבָה סְלָהּ: 81:7 ‘You called in trouble and I rescued you; I answered you in the hiding place of thunder; I proved (tested) you at the waters of Meribah. Selah. (NASB) The relieving one’s shoulder from the burden is directly related to God delivering Israel from the land of Bondage. We read in *Bamidbar / Numbers 20:15* *These were the waters of Meribah, where the Israelites quarreled with the LORD and where he was proved holy among them. (NASB)* How did the Lord prove the people at Meribah? The water of Meribah means “of strife.” (See *Shemot / Exodus 17:7*, and *Bamidbar / Numbers 27:14*, where the words “in Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin.”) In *Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:51*, the waters are spoken of as those of “Meribah of Kadesh,” where the Lord God revealed His holiness and power, and put to silence their evil murmurings against him. As a result, He was sanctified in them all the more, and this by reason that Moses and Aaron both failed to sanctify him in the eyes of the people; but what they failed to do he brought to pass without their help. The testing of both faith and obedience at Meribah (Strife) is a reminder of repeated unbelief and ingratitude (see *Shemot / Exodus 17:7*, *Bamidbar / Numbers 20:13*, and *Tehillim / Psalm 78:20*) This is to be understood to mean that we are to be careful not to live in unbelief and with ingratitude as the people of God. The Lord rescues us when we call upon Him, of this we can be assured.

The waters of Meribah (*Bamidbar / Numbers 20*) are found within the context of traveling in the wilderness, the people of Israel arrive in Kadesh in the Zin Desert, on the border of the Holy Land where there was no water, the people are thirsty, and as usual, they complain to Moshe about the situation. The people are far from humble and comment, “If only we had died,” they angrily respond saying, “when our brethren died before G-d! Why have you brought the congregation of G-d to this desert, to die there, we and our cattle? Why have you taken us out of Egypt only to bring us to this evil place..., etc?” Moshe calls on the Lord God who instructs him to “take the staff, and gather the people, you and Aaron your brother. You shall speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will give its water.” When all are assembled before the rock, Moshe addresses the people saying, “Listen, rebellious ones! Shall we bring forth water for you from this rock?” Moshe raises his hand and strikes the rock twice with his staff and water gushes forth, and the people and their cattle drink. As a result of their actions, God speaks to Moshe and Aaron saying, “Because you did not believe in Me, to sanctify Me before the eyes of the Children of Israel, therefore you will not bring this congregation into the land I have given them.” Rashi points out that the Lord God instructed Moshe to speak to the rock, while Moshe struck it. Rashi’s conclusion is that he failed to “sanctify Me before the eyes of the Children of Israel,” where only speaking to the rock would have been a greater miracle than striking the rock. Maimonides provides a different explanation saying that Moshe’s failure was that he got angry and spoke harshly to the people (“Listen, you troublemakers!”). Nachmanides on the other hand says, Moshe made the mistake by saying to the people, “Shall we then bring forth water for you from this rock?” These words of Moshe imply that they extracted the water from the rock rather than the Lord. As leaders, they were assuming the identity of accomplishment and attributing the water to themselves rather than to the Lord God in heaven. How often does this happen today in the circumstances that occur in our lives? Nachmanides supports his argument by citing the opening words where the Lord states saying, “Because you did not believe in Me...” which implies that this was a failure of faith rather than a lapse of obedience or a mere surrender to anger.

ט שָׁמַע עַמִּי וְאָעִידָהּ בְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם-תִּשְׁמַע-לִי: י לֹא-יִהְיֶה בְּךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְלֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְאֵל גֵּר: יא אֲנֹכִי | יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הַמַּעֲלֶהךָ מִצְרָיִם מִצְרָיִם הַרְחֹב-פִּיךָ וְאִמְלֵאֲהוּ: יב וְלֹא-שָׁמַע עַמִּי לְקוֹלִי 81:8 ‘Hear, O My people, and I will admonish you; O Israel, if you would listen to Me! 81:9 ‘Let there be no strange god among you; Nor shall you worship any foreign god. 81:10 ‘I, the Lord, am your God, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide and I will fill it. 81:11 ‘But My people did not listen to My voice, And Israel did not obey Me. (NASB) Listening is synonymous to the Lord admonishing His people. What does it mean to be admonished of God? The Aramaic Targum and Septuagint translate the MT to say the following.

## Aramaic Targum

### *Toviyah / Psalms 81:8-11*

81:8 In the time of the distress of Egypt, you called and I delivered you; I made you fast in the secret place where my presence is, where wheels of fire call out before him; I tested you by the waters of Dispute forever. 81:9 Hear, O my people, and I will bear witness for you, O Israel, if you will accept my word. 81:10 There shall not be among you worshipers of a foreign idol, and you shall not bow down to a profane idol. 81:11 I am the Lord your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt; open wide your mouth with the words of Torah, and I will fill it with all good things. (EMC)

ח בעידן עקתא דמצרים קרית ופצית יתך צמית ענית יתך באתר טמור בית שכנתי דאכלין קדמוי גלגלין די נור בחנתך על מי מצותא לעלמין: ט שמעו עמי ואסהיד בכון ישראל אם אין תקביל למימרי: י לא יהי בינכון פלחי טעותא נוכראה ולא תסגדון לטעות חילוני: יא אנא יהוה אלהך דאסיקית יתכון מארעא דמצרים אפתי פומך בפתגמי אורייתא ואמלי יתה מכל טבתא:

## Septuagint

### *Psalmoi / Psalms 81:8-11*

81:8 Hear, my people, and I will speak to thee, O Israel; and I will testify to thee: if thou wilt hearken to me; 81:9 there shall be no new god in thee; neither shalt thou worship a strange god. 81:10 For I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. 81:11 But my people hearkened not to my voice; and Israel gave no heed to me. (LXX)

81:8 ἄκουσον λαός μου καὶ διαμαρτύρομαί σοι Ἰσραὴλ ἐὰν ἀκούσῃς μου 81:9 οὐκ ἔσται ἐν σοὶ θεὸς πρόσφατος οὐδὲ προσκυνήσεις θεῷ ἄλλοτρίῳ 81:10 ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι κύριος ὁ θεὸς σου ὁ ἀναγαγὼν σε ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου πλάτυνον τὸ στόμα σου καὶ πληρώσω αὐτὸ 81:11 καὶ οὐκ ἤκουσεν ὁ λαός μου τῆς φωνῆς μου καὶ Ἰσραὴλ οὐ προσέσχεν μοι

The admonishment comes in the manner of repeating *Devarim / Deuteronomy 12*, not serving foreign gods or serving the Lord God in the way in which the nations serve their gods. This is brought into the context of the Lord God who delivered the people out of Egypt, and who would have filled their mouths if they would have had unwavering faith. Note how the rabbis translate the MT saying that God made Israel fast in the secret place, in His presence. The Lord Himself is described as the one who bears witness on behalf of the people, and the only stipulation is that they believe and remain faithful. They reiterate the command to not have foreign gods in their midst, and to keep the words of the Torah in their mouths, upon which the Lord will fill their mouths with all good things (ואמלי יתה מכל טבתא) What are the good things the Lord fills us with if we keep the Words of the Torah on our lips? The Psalms are about glorifying God in His Word. Notice how often the scriptures refer to God's revelation of Torah through Moshe. The Torah is referred to throughout all of Scripture in the Prophets, the Writings, and the Apostolic Writings. The idea then is if we want to see wonderful things in our lives according to the Scriptures, it is not enough for us merely to ask the Lord God to open our eyes that we might see them. We must also walk in His ways in the same way in which Yeshua the Messiah walked in God's ways according to the Torah! (1 John 2:6) Note what Ezekiel states in *Ezekiel 8:9-12*.

### *Ezekiel 8:9-12*

8:9 And He said to me, 'Go in and see the wicked abominations that they are committing here.' 8:10 So I entered and looked, and behold, every form of creeping things and beasts



*and detestable things, with all the idols of the house of Israel, were carved on the wall all around. 8:11 Standing in front of them were seventy elders of the house of Israel, with Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan standing among them, each man with his censer in his hand and the fragrance of the cloud of incense rising. 8:12 Then He said to me, ‘Son of man, do you see what the elders of the house of Israel are committing in the dark, each man in the room of his carved images? For they say, ‘The Lord does not see us; the Lord has forsaken the land.’ (NASB)*

Ezekiel sees all sorts of detestable things occurring in the inner sanctuary of a man’s heart, the idols that have been erected and the things man bows down to. This is why it is so important for man to walk according to God’s ways, and why the Lord determined it to be the way in which we are to live in His Messiah Yeshua.

Asaph concludes his psalm saying, יג וְאֲשַׁלְחֵהוּ בְשָׁרִירוֹת לִבָּם יֵלְכוּ בְמוֹעֲצוֹתֵיהֶם: יד לו עֲמִי שְׁמַע לִי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּדַרְכֵי יְהוָה: טו כְּמַעַט אוֹיְבֵיהֶם אֲכַנֶּיֶע וְעַל-צָרֵיהֶם אֲשִׁיב יָדַי: טז מִשְׁנֵאֵי יְהוָה יִכְחָשׁוּ-לוֹ וַיְהִי עֲתָם: 81:12 לְעוֹלָם: יז וַיֵּאֲכִילֵהוּ מִחֶלֶב הַטָּהוּר וּמִצֹּר דָּבֵשׁ אֲשַׁבֵּיעָה: 81:13 ‘Oh that My people would listen to Me, That Israel would walk in My ways! 81:14 ‘I would quickly subdue their enemies And turn My hand against their adversaries. 81:15 ‘Those who hate the Lord would pretend obedience to Him, And their time of punishment would be forever. 81:16 ‘But I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, And with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.’ (NASB) The Lord says that He gave them over to the stubbornness of their own heart to walk in their own devices. Notice how this is something the Lord does to a person. The Lord has control over whether a person is given to his stubbornness to walk in his own ways as opposed to God’s ways. It appears that since the people do not listen to God’s Word (His voice), the Lord gives them what they want. On the other hand, there is a difference between the man who struggles with sin, and seeks the Lord for help to overcome sin. Think about the moedim as another example, those who reject the idea that God wants us to obey His word and celebrate the moedim as opposed to the traditions of the world. The Lord will give you over to the stubbornness of the heart and not being able to see the truth for as long as you are unwilling to listen to the voice of God. The Hebrew text is written in the following way saying, וְאֲשַׁלְחֵהוּ בְשָׁרִירוֹת לִבָּם יֵלְכוּ, “I will send them in the authority / rule (שָׁרְרָה) of their heart, to walk in the counsel of themselves.” Bamidbar / Numbers 15:39 states, “You will not go (roam) אַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם וְאַחֲרֵי לִבְבְּכֶם אַחֲרֵי לִבְבְּכֶם אַחֲרֵי לִבְבְּכֶם אַחֲרֵי לִבְבְּכֶם after your own heart, and after your eyes.” It is also interesting to compare the phrase שָׁרִירוֹת לֵב, which is commonly translated as “the imagination of the heart,” where the deeper meaning is found in the “authority / rule” of the heart, meaning that this is one’s choices, to do as one pleases. In many ways un-scriptural traditions are idols because tradition is designed to make one feel good, and take note of how unwilling you may be to give up a tradition. This is synonymous to Devarim / Deuteronomy 29:18 and Tehillim / Psalms 71:13, יֵלְךָ בְּמוֹעֲצוֹתֵיהֶם “walking in their own counsels,” (e.g. Jeremiah 9:13, etc.) Job 31:7 states, for “the heart that follows the eye” is among the grievous sins, being regarded as the head or the guiding force of sin, אַחֲרֵי אֵינִי אֲחֵר, “if my heart hath gone after mine eyes,” which describes the will or the conscience to make choices to sin. This is the very meaning of “Walk in the way of thine heart;” which is synonymous to a man following after his own pleasure. The Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint translate these verses to say the following:

## Aramaic Targum

### **Toviyah / Psalms 81:12-17**

*81:12 But my people did not receive my voice; and Israel did not want my word. 81:13 And I expelled them for the thoughts of their heart, they went away in their wicked counsel. 81:14 Would that my people had listened to me – that Israel would walk in my ways! 81:15 In a little while I will humble their enemies, and I will turn my strong blow against their enemies. 81:16*

*The enemies of the Lord will be false to him; and their harshness will last forever. 81:17 But he will feed him with the best of wheat bread; and I will satisfy you with honey from the rock. (EMC)*

יב ולא קבילו עמי לקלי וישראל לא צבו למימרי: יג ותריכתיה בהירהורי לבהון אזלו במלכת רישעהון: יד הלואי עמי שמע לי ישראל באורחתי יהלכון: טו כזעיר בעלי דבביהון אמאיך ועל בעלי דבביהון אתיב מחת גבורתי: טז סנאי יהוה יכדבון ליה ויהי תוקפהון לעלם: יח ויאכיליני מן טוב לחים חיטין ומן טינרא דובשא אשבעינך:

## Septuagint

### ***Psalmoi / Psalms 81:12-16***

*81:12 So I let them go after the ways of their own hearts: they will go on in their own ways. 81:13 If my people had hearkened to me, if Israel had walked in my ways, 81:14 I should have put down their enemies very quickly, and should have laid my hand upon those that afflicted them. 81:15 The Lord's enemies should have lied to him: but their time shall be for ever. 81:16 And he fed them with the fat of wheat; and satisfied them with honey out of the rock. (LXX)*

81:12 καὶ ἐξαπέστειλα αὐτοὺς κατὰ τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν πορεύσονται ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασιν αὐτῶν 81:13 εἰ ὁ λαὸς μου ἠκουσέν μου Ἰσραὴλ ταῖς ὁδοῖς μου εἰ ἐπορεύθη 81:14 ἐν τῷ μηδενὶ ἂν τοὺς ἐχθροὺς αὐτῶν ἐταπείνωσα καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς θλίβοντας αὐτοὺς ἐπέβαλον τὴν χεῖρά μου 81:15 οἱ ἐχθροὶ κυρίου ἐψεύσαντο αὐτῷ καὶ ἔσται ὁ καιρὸς αὐτῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα 81:16 καὶ ἐψώμισεν αὐτοὺς ἐκ στέατος πυροῦ καὶ ἐκ πέτρας μέλι ἐχώρτασεν αὐτούς

It is interesting how the rabbis render the MT, they say that Israel did not listen to God's voice (81:12), and that if they had the Lord would have removed these thoughts from their hearts so that they would have walked away from wicked counsels (8:13). Notice how the Lord desires for us to walk in His ways, to walk in His footsteps and He longs to help us in doing so. This is consistent with Paul's words in *Ephesians 2:10* *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. (NASB)* We are God's ποίημα (thing made), therefore, our Messianic salvation is not something of our own acquiring, but a gift of God. We are created in the Messiah unto good works. Asaph and the rabbis understand this to mean that the Lord works in us as a ποίημα (a thing made) which refers to His ethical and moral creation or that of the new spiritual state of life which causes us to have the desire to draw near to the Lord God in heaven and to His Messiah Yeshua. The concluding verse to *Tehillim / Psalms 81* states, 81:16 *'But I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, And with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.'* (NASB) This is what God has provided us in the Messiah, but we have to want it and walk (live) accordingly. It is not merely enough for us to ask the Lord God to save us, we are called to walk as a people who are saved and delivered from bondage. Yeshua wants us to walk in God's ways in the same way he did. (1 John 2:6) Let's Pray!

## Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 81* has 7 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 81, Parts 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7.*

## Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 81, Part 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7

### Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*For the leader; upon the Gittith. A Psalm of Asaph. Sing aloud unto God our strength; shout unto the God of Jacob (Tehillim / Psalms 81:1-2).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, None that behold iniquity in Jacob (Bamidbar / Numbers 23:21).*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis make the statement about there being no iniquity in Jacob, and then ask the question why Bilam does not mention Abraham and Isaac, but only Jacob?
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the conclusion is that there was iniquity in the other patriarchs, but not in Jacob.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*So, too, Asaph said, Seeing that there was some base metal in all the Patriarchs except Jacob, in whom there was no base metal at all, I, too, will mention only Jacob. Hence, Shout unto the God of Jacob.*”

### Part 3

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*Take up the melody, and sound the timbrel, the sweet harp with the psaltery (Tehillim / Psalms 81:3).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Rabbi Hiyya son of Abba taught, The psaltery and the harp were the same.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss melody by arguing over the harp and the psaltery being differing instruments.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal speaking of the King Messiah.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*And in the time to come, the psaltery will be made with ten strings, as is said Upon an instrument of ten strings, upon the psaltery (Tehillim / Psalms 92:4).*”

### Part 4

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full moon (Tehillim / Psalms 81:4).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, Blessed is the people that knew the trumpet sound; they walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance (Tehillim / Psalms 89:16).*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon the appointed times and knowing the correct appointed time.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal speaking of walking in the light of the countenance of God.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*But blessed is the people that know the trumpet sound refers to Israel, the people who know how to propitiate their Creator with their shouts of joy and with the voice of the trumpet, as when The walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance in the ten days between New Year’s Day and the Day of Atonement.*”

### Part 6

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*When it is a*

*statute for Israel, it is an ordinance of the God of Jacob (Tehillim / Psalms 81:5)...”*

- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*therefore, what is not a statute for Israel, is not if one be permitted to speak thus, an ordinance of the God of Jacob.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon the psalmist’s words speaking of the witnesses of the new moon.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal describing the angels who raise up the dais and the court of law.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*Rabbi Phinehas and rabbi Hilkiyah taught in the name of rabbi Simon, When all the ministering angels gather before the Holy One blessed be He, and say, Master of the universe, what day is New Year’s Day? He replies, Are you asking Me? Let us, You and I, ask the court on earth. And the proof? When it is a decree for Israel, it is an ordinance of the God of Jacob.*”

## Part 7

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*In the verse He appointed it (samo) in Jehoseph for a testimony (Tehillim / Psalms 81:6), read not samo, but semo, His name.*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Jeh, that is, the name of the Holy One blessed be He, in Jehoseph, testified for Joseph, that he had not touched Potiphar’s wife.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis contrast the psalmist’s words to that of Joseph and servitude in Egypt.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal speaking of the flesh pots the people sat before in Egypt.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*Hence it is said of Joseph, I removed his shoulder from under the burden (Tehillim / Psalms 81:7).*”

Midrash Tehillim 81, Part 1 opens with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*For the leader; upon the Gittith. A Psalm of Asah. Sing aloud unto God our strength; shout unto the God of Jacob (Tehillim / Psalms 81:1-2).*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, None that behold iniquity in Jacob (Bamidbar / Numbers 23:21).*” The פתיחתא (Petihta) states that singing and giving praise to the Lord is to be interpreted based upon the statement in the Torah that no iniquity has been observed in Jacob.

### ***Bamidbar / Numbers 23:21***

*23:21 says, “He has not observed iniquity in Jacob, Nor has He seen wickedness in Israel. The Lord his God is with him,” (NASB)*

כא לא-הביט און בַּיַעֲקֹב וְלֹא-רָאָה עֲמָל בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֶלְהֵיו עֲמוֹ וּתְרוּעַת מְלֶךְ בּוֹ:

Not only does the Torah state, in Parashat Balak (by Bilam), that iniquity is not observed, he also states that there is no weakness seen in Israel. How can this be said about Israel, after all the times they rebelled against God? The MT states that “*none have beheld iniquity (און) in Jacob (בַּיַעֲקֹב) and have not seen perverseness, mischief (עֲמָל) in Israel.*” The word *perverseness, mischief* (עֲמָל) may be translated as calamity, and thus because God remains on the side of Israel, there is not found any gross injustice (iniquity) in Israel. Although Israel may have sinned and may have been disobedient to God’s word, because there was justice and the people did not indulge in immorality, the Lord God remained on their side. This is the basic premise that falls out of the Torah, the Prophets, the Writings, and the Apostolic Writings. The rabbis have the following comments concerning *Bamidbar / Numbers 23:21* in Parashat Balak.

***Shney Luchot HaBrit, Vayeshev, Miketz, Vayigash, Torah Ohr 289***

*Berachot 7 discusses the brief span of G'd's anger based on Bileam's comment in Numbers 23:8 that he, the expert at timing G'd's "moods," had been unable (because of G'd's anger at the time) to find the opening to make a curse effective. Tossaphot ask what good it would have done Bileam to pinpoint that anger, seeing it only lasts a רגע, moment (the length of time it takes to utter the word רגע); they answer that all Bileam had to say was "כלם," "destroy them!" By reversing that word כלם into מלך, king, the curse was converted into a blessing. This is the secret of the expression ותרועת מלך בו (Numbers 23:21), of which Bileam speaks.*

***Shney Luchot HaBrit, Vayeshev, Miketz, Vayigash, Torah Ohr 290***

*David also alludes to the repentance which we will perform when we experience persecution. According to the Arizal, the letters in the word תשובה, repentance, are the first letters of the words: תענית, שק, ואפר, בכיה, הספד. One can recognize a person's penitence by observing these five manifestations of remorse. In our Psalm the same idea is alluded to by the words: היודך עפר, הפכת מספדי, פתחת שקי, בערב ילין בכי. The תענית is alluded to by the words: "You girded me with joy," parallel to Kohelet 9:7 לחמך בשמחה, "Eat your bread [reversal of fasting. Ed.] joyfully."*

The *Talmud Bavli Berechot 7a* discusses the briefness of God's anger, and point to Bilam's words on the length of time God is angry with His people. The rabbinic commentary states that repentance is observable as five manifestations that demonstrate remorse which then leads to God's forgiveness and cessation of his wrath. The Rambam (Maimonides) in his book "*Guide for the perplexed*," has the following to say:

***Guide for the Perplexed on Bamidbar / Numbers 23:21***

*In the same manner the Hebrew hibbit signifies "he viewed with the eye; comp. "Look (tabbit) not behind thee" (Gen. 19:17); "But his wife looked (va-tabbet) back from him" (Gen. 19:26); "And if one look (ve-nibbat) unto the land" (Isa. 5:30); and figuratively, "to view and observe" with the intellect, "to contemplate" a thing till it be understood. In this sense the verb is used in passages like the following: "He hath not beheld (hibbit) iniquity in Jacob" (Num. 23:21); for "iniquity" cannot be seen with the eye. The words, "And they looked (ve-hibbitu) after Moses" (Exod. 33:8)--in addition to the literal understanding of the phrase--were explained by our Sages in a figurative sense. According to them, these words mean that the Israelites examined and criticized the actions and sayings of Moses. Compare also "Contemplate (habbet), I pray thee, the heaven" (Gen. 15:5); for this took place in a prophetic vision. This verb, when applied to God, is employed in this figurative sense; e.g., "to look (me-habbit) upon God" (Exod. 3:6) "And the similitude of the Lord shall he behold" (yabbit) (Num. 12:8); And thou canst not look (habbet) on iniquity" (Hab. 1:13).*

Rambam states that the stain of sin cannot be seen with the eye, and that the explanation is in agreement with Rashbam and Rashi that the phrase ותרועת מלך בו stems from the word for friendship or companionship, as opposed to the literal translation of horn or trumpet of the king in him. The idea is of God forgiving Israel's sin follows nicely with the explanation of God being Israel's friend or companion. The alternate interpretation from Rashbam, is that the Lord God hasn't seen Israel sin since the last time Bilam tried to curse Israel. This leads back to the understanding on the limits of God's anger and the greatness of his mercy and grace. Being blessed the last time, since nothing has happened from since then, there is nothing for the Lord to allow a curse to come upon them. The explanation from Rashbam is simple and direct.

The entire midrash states the following:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>מדרש תהלים פרק פא סימן א</b></p> <p>א למנצח על הגתית לאספ הרנינו לאלהים  עוזנו [הריעו לאלהי יעקב]. זהו שאמר הכ"ו  תוב לא הביט און ביעקב (במדבר כג כא), מה  ראה בלעם להזכיר ליעקב ולא לאברהם ולא  ליצחק אלא ליעקב בלבד, אלא צפה שיצא  מאברהם פסולת ישמעאל וכל בני קטורה, וכן  צפה שיצא מיצחק עשו ואלופיו, אבל יעקב  כולה קדושה, שנאמר כל אלה שבטי ישראל  שנים עשר (בראשית מט כח), הדא הוא דכ"ו  תיב כולך יפה רעיתי ומום אין בכך (שה"ש  שיר השירים ד ז), לפיכך לא הזכיר האבות  אלא ליעקב בלבד, הוי לא הביט און ביעקב,  אמר אספ הואיל וכל האבות יש בהם פסולת,  ויעקב אין בו פסולת, איני מזכיר אלא לו, הוי  הריעו לאלהי יעקב</p>	<p><b>Midrash Tehillim 81, Part 1</b></p> <p><i>1. For the leader; upon the Gittith. A Psalm of Asaph. Sing aloud unto God our strength; shout unto the God of Jacob (Tehillim / Psalms 81:1-2). These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, None that behold iniquity in Jacob (Bamidbar / Numbers 23:21). Why did Balaam choose to mention Jacob, not Abraham and not Isaac, only Jacob? Because Balaam saw that out of Abraham had come base metal, Ishmael and all the children of Keturah; and he also saw that out of Isaac there had come Esau and his princes. But Jacob was all holiness, for to his sons, All these are the twelve tribes of Israel (Bereshit / Genesis 49:28), Scripture says, You are all fair, my love (Song 4:7). Hence, Balaam mentioned no Patriarchs other than Jacob when he said None has beheld iniquity in Jacob. So, too, Asaph said, Seeing that there was some base metal in all the Patriarchs except Jacob, in whom there was no base metal at all, I, too, will mention only Jacob. Hence, Shout unto the God of Jacob.</i></p>
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The rabbis compare Isaac to base metal, but the children of Isaac (Jacob and Esau) was the product of two types, one pure (holiness) and the other dross (full of iniquity). It is for this reason the midrash concludes saying, “So, too, Asaph said, Seeing that there was some base metal in all the Patriarchs except Jacob, in whom there was no base metal at all, I, too, will mention only Jacob. Hence, Shout unto the God of Jacob.” The reason Jacob is mentioned is because in him were all twelve tribes of Israel. The Lord loves all of His people, and this is why Asaph wrote, according to the rabbis, “Hence, shout unto the God of Jacob.”

Midrash Tehillim 81, Part 3 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “Take up the melody, and sound the timbrel, the sweet harp with the psaltery (Tehillim / Psalms 81:3).” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “Rabbi Hiyya son of Abba taught, The psaltery and the harp were the same.” The rabbis argue that the psaltery is different from the harp (ג 81:2 *Raise a song, strike the timbrel, The sweet sounding lyre with the harp. NASB*). The psaltery of Ancient Greece is a harp like instrument. The etymology of the word “psaltery” is taken from Ancient Greek ψαλτήριον (psaltērion) meaning “stringed instrument, psaltery, harp” from the verb ψάλλω (psállō) meaning “to touch sharply, to pluck, pull, twitch” and in the case of the strings of musical instruments, “to play a stringed instrument with the fingers, and not with the plectrum.” (Greek-English Lexicon) The psaltērion was originally related to ψάλλω (psallo) “to touch sharply, to pluck, to pull, to twitch.” Psallo came to mean making music in general (with any instrument or to sing with or without their accompaniment). The Psaltery branched off and became an instrument in its own right, belonging to the family of stringed instruments. The psaltery was originally made from wood, and relied on natural acoustics for sound production. In the King James Version, “psaltery” and its plural, “psalteries,” are used to translate several words in the MT- keli (כלי) in Tehillim / Psalm 71:22 and 1 Chronicles 16:5; nabel (נבל) in 1 Samuel 10:5, 2 Samuel 6:5, 1 Kings 10:12, 1 Chronicles 13:8, 15:16, 20, 28, 25:1, 25:6, 2 Chronicles 5:12, 9:11, 20:28, 29:25, Nehemiah 12:27, Tehillim / Psalms 33:2, 57:6, 81:2, 92:3, 108:2, 144:9, and 150:3, and the Aramaic pesanterin (פסנתרין) in Daniel 3:5, 3:7, 3:10, and 3:15. Why do you think the rabbis take the time to point out the differences between the psaltery and the harp?

The entire midrash states the following:

<p><b>מדרש תהלים פרק פא סימן ג</b></p> <p>ג שאו זמרה ותנו תוף כנור נעים עם נבל. [ר' חייא בר אבא אמר] הוא נבל הוא כנור, ר' שמעון אומר נבל לעצמו וכנור לעצמו, נימין ויתירות בין זה לזה, [אמר ר' הונא בשם ר' אסי על ידי עור שאינו עבוד ועל ידי נימין ויתירות], ולמה נקרא שמו נבל, שהוא מנבל כל מיני זמר, אמר ר' יהודה בר' אלעאי וכמה נימין יש בכנור שבע, שנאמר שבע ביום הללתיך (תהלים קיט קסד), ולימות המשיח שמונה, שנאמר למנצח על השמינית (שם תהלים יב א), ולעתיד לבא נעשית של עשר, שנאמר עלי עשור ועלי נבל (שם תהלים צב ד).</p>	<p><b>Midrash Tehillim 81, Part 3</b></p> <p>3. Take up the melody, and sound the timbrel, the sweet harp with the psaltery (Tehillim / Psalms 81:3). Rabbi Hiyya son of Abba taught, The psaltery and the harp were the same. Rabbi Simeon taught, the psaltery was one thing, the harp was another; they differed one from the other in the number of their bass and treble strings. Rabbi Huna said in the name of Rabbi Asi, Nor did they differ only in the number of their bass and treble strings, for the skin of the sounding board of one of them was not dressed. And why was the psaltery called nebel? Because it put to shame (menabbel) every other kind of musical instrument. Rabbi Judah said in the name of rabbi Ilai, how many strings will there to the psaltery? Seven, as is said, With seven a day do I praise You (Tehillim / Psalms 119:164). In the days of the Messiah, however, there will be eight strings to the psaltery, for it is said, For the leader; on the Sheminith (eight strings) (Tehillim / Psalms 12:1). And in the time to come, the psaltery will be made with ten strings, as is said Upon an instrument of ten strings, upon the psaltery (Tehillim / Psalms 92:4).</p>
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The midrash points out specifically that the differences between the psaltery and the harp is in the number of their bass and treble stings. Rabbi Huna said that they also differed in the skin of the sounding board where one of the instruments was not dressed. The reason nabel (נבל) in *1 Samuel 10:5* was translated as psaltery was because this instrument put to shame (נבל) all other instruments. The number of strings is said to be seven, because, “With seven a day do I praise You (Tehillim / Psalms 119:164).” They then comment that “In the days of the Messiah, however, there will be eight strings to the psaltery, for it is said, For the leader; on the Sheminith (eight strings) (Tehillim / Psalms 12:1).” Why do the rabbis say that in the days of the Messiah there will be eight strings to the psaltery? This may be the theoretical ground work by the rabbis to suggest the prophetic nature of the psalter, in which he discusses the higher order of prophecy, that of the Neviim, and the utterance of the Holy spirit, as manifest in the Ketuvim. Both sections of the Tanach foretell the future, but with different characteristics. In addition, the number eight is actually a uniquely Jewish concept that describes man as having the ability to transcend his nature. The number seven symbolizes the complete purpose of human existence, combining the spiritual level of the Sabbath with the physical effort of the week. As we go beyond seven, the number eight symbolizes man’s ability to transcend the limitations of physical existence. Therefore, the gematria of eight, ח, represents that which is on a plane above nature, for example, the metaphysical Divine. Our praying to the Lord God in heaven and hearing His voice, etc. The rabbis believe the study of the Torah and the practice of its commandments are the ways by which Israel can strive to exalt human spirituality towards the realm above the natural. This emphasis is highlighted in *Midrash Rabbah Vayikra Parashat 10, Part 6*.

**Midrash Rabbah Vayikra Parashat 10, Part 6**

AND THE GARMENTS (VIII, 2). R. Simon said: Even as the sacrifices have an atoning power, so too have the [priestly] garments atoning power, as we have learned in the Mishnah (Yoma VII, 8): The High Priest officiated in eight garments, and an ordinary priest in four, namely in a tunic, breeches, a mitre, and a girdle. The High Priest wore, in addition, a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, and a head-plate; the tunic to atone for those who wear a mixture of wool and linen, (Prohibited in Deut. XXII, 11) as it is said, And he made him a coat [tunic] of many colours (Gen. XXXVII, 3); the breeches atoned for unchastity [lit. the uncovering of nakedness], since it is said, And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover the flesh of nakedness (Ex. XXVIII, 42); the mitre atoned for arrogance, since it is said, And thou shalt set the

*mitre on his head (ib. XXIX, 6); the girdle was to atone, some say, for the crooked in heart, and others say for thieves. R. Levi said the girdle was thirty-two cubits, and he [the priest] wound it towards the front and towards the back; this is the ground for stating that it was to atone for the crooked in heart. (Since the numerical value of לב (heart) is thirty-two) The one who said [the girdle was to atone] for thieves [thought that] inasmuch as the girdle was hollow it bore resemblance to thieves, who do their work in secret; the breastplate atoned for those who pervert justice, as it is said, And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment (ib. XXVIII, 30); the ephod was to atone for idol-worshippers, since it is said, And without Ephod or teraphim (Hoshea (Hosea) III, 4). As for the robe, R. Simon, in the name of R. Nathan, said: For two things [i.e. sins] there is no atonement, yet did the Torah provide atonement for them, namely, unintentional manslaying, (V. Num. XXXV, 9 ff.) and evil speech, and the Torah provided means of atonement. How is it atoned for?--By the bells of the robe, since it is written, A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the skirts of the robe round about. And it shall be upon Aaron to minister, and the sound thereof shall be heard (Ex. XXVIII, 34 f.): the implication is, let this sound come and make atonement for the other sound. There is no atonement for one who unintentionally slays a human being, but the Torah provides a means of atonement. How does he obtain atonement?--By the death of the High Priest, as it is said, But after the death of the High Priest the manslayer may return unto the land of his possession (Num. XXXV, 28). The forehead-plate was to atone, some say, for the shameless, others say for blasphemers. He who said for the shameless deduced it from the daughters of Zion: it is written here [of the forehead-plate], And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead (Ex. XXVIII, 38), while there it is written, Thou hadst a harlot's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed (Jer. III, 3). He who said [the forehead-plate was to atone] for blasphemers [derived it] from [the case of] Goliath. (Who blasphemed, V. I Sam. XVII, 45) Here it is written, And it shall be always upon his forehead (Ex. XXXVIII, 38), there [in the case of Goliath] it is written, And the stone sank into his forehead (I Sam. XVII, 48).*

The idea put forward here in the midrash is that the High Priest had eight vestments that were made especially for him. The regular Kohen however only wore the first four vestments when he did the service in the Mishkan, the shirt, pants, sash and a hat. The eight vestments enabled the Kohen Hagadol to enter into the holy of holies, and so the number eight symbolizes man's ability to transcend the limitations of physical existence by entering into המקום "the place," the throne room of God our Father in heaven. The uniqueness of the eight vestments emphasized the Kohen mission as representative of the nation. The garments are said to have also served as atonement for specific sins that the nation had transgressed collectively as a group. The rabbis conclusion saying that in the days of the Messiah there will be eight strings to the psaltery suggests when the Messiah is here, the world will be lifted to a greater spiritual state, being closer to God our Father. There is a very close parallel to what we have today in Yeshua the Messiah as a result of the presence of the Messiah in our lives and His continual ministry in heaven before God.

Midrash Tehillim 81, Part 3 concludes saying, "And in the time to come, the psaltery will be made with ten strings, as is said Upon an instrument of ten strings, upon the psaltery (Tehillim / Psalms 92:4)." If we follow along under this line of thinking, we can conclude that in the world to come (Olam Habah, or the time to come, ולעתיד לבא) there would be ten strings, where we move beyond eight and nine strings to ten. This may be representative of being in the presence of God.

Midrash Tehillim 81, Part 4 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתהיל) saying, "Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full moon (Tehillim / Psalms 81:4)." The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, "These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, Blessed is the people that knew the trumpet sound; they walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance (Tehillim / Psalms 89:16)." Here the command on the blowing of the trumpet is paralleled to knowing God and walking in the light of God's countenance. This idea comes out of the Torah text based on the following comments from the rabbis



according to the Midrash.

*Blessed is the people that knew the trumpet sound, The generation of the wilderness knew by the sounding of the trumpet when to pitch camp and when to journey forward, as is said, Make two trumpets of silver, and you will use them for the calling of the congregation, and for the journeying of the camps (Bamidbar / Numbers 10:2). Accordingly, the end of the verse, They walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance, is to be read in the light of the words, And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light (Shemot / Exodus 13:21).*

The idea here is the trumpet sound was meant as a guiding sound that led the people in the wilderness. The generation of people, the Children of Israel who were delivered from Egypt were led by the hand by God Himself. The trumpet represents the movement of the Lord (the pillar raising up or setting down) which indicated the Lord God leading the people in the wilderness. Another interpretation according to the midrash is as follows.

*Another comment, The words blessed is the people that know the trumpets sound refer to the people who intercalate the year and designate the day that is the proper day for the sounding of the trumpet; and the words, They walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance, means, according to Rabbi Abbahu, that the Holy One blessed be He, conforms to the calendar of the children of Israel.*

The concept set forth here is that the trumpet sound is designed to order the days, the seasons, and the moed-im. A faithful person will order his or her days for the purpose of drawing near, walking in righteousness, living in holiness (separating one's self from the worldly activities), and doing justice, and helping the poor and the widows. A further interpretation according to the Midrash is as follows:

*In a different interpretation, the words are read Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound, that is, blessed are the members of the Sanhedrin who know the joyful sound of the give and take of Torah study. They walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance, The Holy One blessed be He, conforms to their decisions and makes their faces shine with the radiance of the Law. Rabbi Jose son of Jacob taught in the name of Rabbi Idi who taught it in the name of Rabbi Aha, the verse Naphtali is a hind let loose, he gives words of a horn (Bereshit / Genesis 49:21) means that when the children of Naphtali were on a mission of Torah, they were as swift as the hind. And words of a horn refers to the fact that the words of Torah were given to Israel with shouts of joy and with the voice of the horn, as is said, And all the people perceived the thundering, and the lightening. The voice of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking (Shemot / Exodus 20:15). Hence, it is said, Blow the trumpet at the new moon.*

The sounding of the Shofar brings to memory the giving and taking of Torah study, as this is connected to walking in the light of the countenance of God. Note how the midrash states the light of the countenance of God conforms to the decisions of men and makes their faces to shine with the radiance of the Torah. The rabbis are saying studying the Torah is connected to the decisions we make, and the blowing of the shofar with regard to remembering the glory of God, standing before the mountain of Sinai, receiving the Torah, and living for the Lord God in heaven. The concept here is on the importance of studying God's Word helps us to remember and to live by it. Notice what Yeshua said in *John 15:6-11*, 15:6 'If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 15:7 'If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 15:8 'My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. 15:9 'Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 15:10 'If you keep

*My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 15:11 'These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. (NASB)* The midrash states that Naphtali was on a mission of Torah. Notice the parallel here in Yeshua's words, remaining in the word, doing the Father's will, abiding in the love of God, and keeping the commandments, this sounds like a mission of Torah. Obeying the commandments leads to both Yeshua's and our joy being made full.

Midrash Tehillim 81, Part 4 concludes saying, *"In a different exposition of Blessed is the people that know the trumpet sound, Rabbi Josiah said, But the nations of the earth, have they not many trumpets too? Have they not many bugles? Have they not many horns? But blessed is the people that know the trumpet sound refers to Israel, the people who know how to propitiate their Creator with their shouts of joy and with the voice of the trumpet, as when The walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance in the ten days between New Year's Day and the Day of Atonement."* The Shofar is connected to remembering the Moedim which embody the power and might of God. Observing the Moedim is connected to remembering the power of God to deliver, and thus we shout with joy at the voice of the trumpet because this is accompanied with our remembering the Lord God in heaven, His mercy, and His power to save us from all things.

Midrash Tehillim 81, Part 6 opens with the Dibur Hamatil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, *"When it is a statute for Israel, it is an ordinance of the God of Jacob (Tehillim / Psalms 81:5)..."* The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *"therefore, what is not a statute for Israel, is not if one be permitted to speak thus, an ordinance of the God of Jacob."* The entire midrash states the following:

<p><b>מדרש תהלים פרק פא סימן ו</b></p> <p>ו כי חק לישראל הוא [משפט לאלהי יעקב]. אם אינו חק לישראל כביכול אינו משפט לאלהי יעקב, דתני ר' הושעיא גזרו בית דין למטה ואמרו היום ראש השנה, הקב"ה אומר למלאכי השרת העמידו בימה, העמידו סניגורין, העמידו שפיקטורין, שגזרו בית דין דלמטה ואמרו היום ראש השנה, נשתהו העדים מלבוא או שנמלכו בית דין לעבר השנה והעבירוהו למחר, הקב"ה אומר למלאכי השרת העבירו בימה, העבירו סניגורין, העבירו שפיקטורין, שגזרו בית דין שלמטה ואמרו למחר ראש השנה, ומה טעם כי חק לישראל הוא משפט לאלהי יעקב. ר' פנחס ור' חל' קיה בשם ר' סימון אמרין מתכנסין כל מלאכי השרת אצל הקב"ה ואמרין רבוננו של עולם אימתי הוא ראש השנה, והוא אומר להם אלי אתם שואלים, אני ואתם נשאל לבית דין של מטה, מה טעם כי חק לישראל הוא משפט לאלהי יעקב.</p>	<p><b>Midrash Tehillim 81, Part 6</b></p> <p>6. <i>When it is a statute for Israel, it is an ordinance of the God of Jacob (Tehillim / Psalms 81:5), therefore, what is not a statute for Israel, is not if one be permitted to speak thus, an ordinance of the God of Jacob. And so, Rabbi Hoshai taught, When an earthly court decrees, saying, Today is new Year's Day, the Holy One blessed be He, tells the ministering angels, Raise up the bimah. Summon the advocates. Summon the clerks. For the court on earth has decreed and said that today is New Year's Day. If however, the witness of the new moon are delayed in coming, or if the court has decided to intercalate the year, and to advance New Year's Day to the next day, the Holy One blessed be He, tells the ministering angels, Remove the bimah, dismiss the advocates, and dismiss the clerks, since the court on earth has decreed and said, Tomorrow is New Year's Day. And the proof? When it is a decree for Israel, it is an ordinance of the God of Jacob. Rabbi Phinehas and rabbi Hilkiyah taught in the name of rabbi Simon, When all the ministering angels gather before the Holy One blessed be He, and say, Master of the universe, what day is New Year's Day? He replies, Are you asking Me? Let us, You and I, ask the court on earth. And the proof? When it is a decree for Israel, it is an ordinance of the God of Jacob.</i></p>
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These introductory words are compared to the earthly court that decrees today is the new year (ואמרו היום), that the Lord God in heaven speaks to the angles (הקב"ה אומר למלאכי), (ראש השנה), to raise up the dais (בִּימָה). The bimah is the podium located in the center of the sanctuary. The Torah is read from the bimah, and some of the prayers are led from there as well. The podium is covered with a special covering to give honor to the Torah that will be read on it. During the High Holiday season, the bimah cover, the covers

of the Torah scrolls, the cloth covering the cantor’s podium, and the curtain for the Ark are all traditionally exchanged for one of a white fabric. White represents purity, forgiveness and a “clean” slate, which are all central High Holiday themes. The midrash states to call out the witnesses, and the sky is observed to see if the moon was cited to decide whether the new year is beginning. On the other hand, if the new moon is not sighted, we are told that God tells the angels to remove the bimah. The point of the midrash is that there are some rulings that God has established for men to decide upon, such as the exact day beginning the new year. This is suggested at in the conclusion, “*Rabbi Phinehas and rabbi Hilkiyah taught in the name of rabbi Simon, When all the ministering angels gather before the Holy One blessed be He, and say, Master of the universe, what day is New Year’s Day? He replies, Are you asking Me? Let us, You and I, ask the court on earth. And the proof? When it is a decree for Israel, it is an ordinance of the God of Jacob.*”

Midrash Tehillim 81, Part 7 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “*In the verse He appointed it (samo) in Jehoseph for a testimony (Tehillim / Psalms 81:6), read not samo, but semo, His name.*” The homiletic introduction states, “*Jeh, that is, the name of the Holy One blessed be He, in Jehoseph, testified for Joseph, that he had not touched Potiphar’s wife.*” The entire midrash states the following:

<p><b>מדרש תהלים פרק פא סימן ז</b></p> <p>ז עדות ביהוסף שמו. אל תקרי שמו אלא שמו, יה שמו של הקב"ה מעיד על יוסף שלא נגע באשת פוטיפר. בצאתו על ארץ מצרים. שנו רבותינו בראש השנה יצא יוסף מבית האסורין, שנאמר מר הסירותי מסבל שכמו, מהו כפיו מדוד תעבורנה, מהיות משרת לשר הטבחים, כמה דאת אמר והכה [בכיור או] בדוד (ש"א שמואל א' ב יד), ורבנן אמרי מדוד משעבוד מצרים, ללמדך שלא נשתעבדו בניו של יוסף במצרים, כמה דאת אמר בכור שורו הדר לו (דברים לג יז), מה בכור שור אין עושין בו עבודה, שנאמר לא תעבוד בבכור שורך (שם דברים טו יט), אף זרעו של יוסף לא נשתעבדו במצרים, ואין דוד אלא שעבוד מצרים, שנאמר בשבתנו על סיר הבשר (שמות יו ג), ומתרגמינן על דודא דבשרא, מלמד שכשנפטרינן לילך לבתיהם היו בוזזים על שוקי מצרים, שנאמר זכרנו את הדגה אשר נאכל במצרים חנם (במדבר יא ה), וכתוב בשבתנו על סיר הבשר (שמות יו ג), ובני יוסף לא משתעבדינן ולא יושבין על סיר הבשר, אלא היו בעלי תריסין ובעלי מלחמות, וכן הוא אומר בני אפרים נרשקו רומי קשת (תהלים עח ט), לפיכך נאמר הסירותי מסבל שכמו.</p>	<p><b>Midrash Tehillim 81, Part 7</b></p> <p>7. <i>In the verse He appointed it (samo) in Jehoseph for a testimony (Tehillim / Psalms 81:6), read not samo, but semo, His name. Jeh, that is, the name of the Holy One blessed be He, in Joseph, testified for Joseph, that he had not touched Potiphar’s wife. The end of the verse, When he went out through the land of Egypt, implies, so our Masters taught, that pardoned on New Year’s Day, Joseph went out from his prison, for the next verse reads, I removed his shoulder from under the burden of sin (Tehillim / Psalms 81:7). What is meant at the end of this verse by the words his hands were delivered from the pots (dud)? They mean that he was delivered from being a servant to the chief of the cooks, for dud is read as in the verse, And he struck it unto the pan of pot (dud) (1 Samuel 2:14). The rabbis quote the phrase delivered from the pots as meaning delivered from the servitude in Egypt, to prove that Joseph’s children were not enslaved in Egypt. For the verse His firstling bullock, majesty is his (Devarim / Deuteronomy 33:17) means that like the firstling bullock with which no work is done, as it is said, You will do no work with the firstling of your bullock (Devarim / Deuteronomy 15:19), so the children of Joseph were not enslaved in Egypt. That the pots (dud) clearly refers to the servitude in Egypt is indicated by the verse in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots (Shemot / Exodus 16:3), a word rendered duda in the Aramaic Targum. Incidentally, the proof that the children of Israel, when dismissed from work to go to their houses, used to pilfer food from the marts of Egypt, comes from the verse Remember the fish, which we were wont to eat in Egypt, for nought (Bamidbar / Numbers 11:5). On the other hand, the verse When we sat by the flesh-pots (Shemot / Exodus 16:3) does not apply to the children of Joseph, They were not enslaved and they sat not by the flesh pots, for they were shield bearers and warriors, as another verse says of them The children of Ephraim being armed and carrying bows (Tehillim / Psalms 78:9). Hence it is said of Joseph, I removed his shoulder from under the burden (Tehillim / Psalms 81:7).</i></p>
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Note how the midrash opens עֲדוֹת בִּיהוֹסֵף שְׁמוֹ saying that the Lord set “*His name or appointed it as a testimony in Joseph.*” Joseph’s name is spelled with a ה suggesting how the midrash is to be interpreted, the testimony is in the name ה (circumlocution) the Lord places with Joseph. The rabbis take note that it is not “*He appointed (placed)*” but instead “*His name*” is set as a testimony in Joseph. The proof text is that of the story of Joseph and Potiphar’s wife, Joseph did not touch another man’s wife. This is connected to what we read earlier, the study of the Torah is connected to the decisions we make, and remembering the glory of God, standing before the mountain of Sinai, receiving the Torah, and living for the Lord God in heaven, etc. The rest of the midrash speaks of proof texts regarding Joseph and his children not being slaves in Egypt. The parallels here are to obey the Torah and being set free, not being slaves in Egypt. Egypt represents sin, idolatry, adultery, and all the rest of the sins of mankind. In the Apostolic Writings, we are told that Yeshua gives us the gift of the mercy of God (grace) to facilitate the overcoming of sin in our lives (to not be in bondage). The mercy (grace) that we have in Yeshua removes the guilt, stain and penalties for our past sins, and with a clear conscience and a clean spiritual slate before the Lord. As a result, in Yeshua, the past baggage of sin does not weigh us down, and so we are able to move forward under the power of God’s Spirit and to walk in accordance with his Torah. An illustration of this is to that of a runner who trains wearing a backpack filled with rocks (sin). Once the weight (sin) is removed from his back, his legs feel as if he were flying through the air. In a similar manner, our faith in, love for, and continuing abiding in Yeshua is the key to receiving the empowerment to walk a life that mirrors Yeshua’s life (*1 John 2:6*). The Apostle Paul invites us to imitate Yeshua as he himself imitated Yeshua (see *1 Corinthians 11:1*). By following in the foot steps of Yeshua (abiding in him, *John 15:4-5*), in his word, and in the commands of God, these things cause our decisions to change and to be in line with what the Lord would want for our lives. When we abide in God’s Word and in Yeshua, we will naturally produce good fruit where love is the first and foremost fruit out of which all the other fruits subdivide. And so the question is “*how do we walk in love toward God and love toward our neighbor?*” The answer is simple, “*by keeping his Torah commandment, which show us how to love both God and our neighbor.*” Paul said it very concisely, “*Love is the fulfilling of the Torah-law*” (see *Romans 13:8-10*). This seems to be the point of the midrash, where Midrash Tehillim 81, Part 7 concludes saying, “*Hence it is said of Joseph, I removed his shoulder from under the burden (Tehillim / Psalms 81:7).*” When we believe in the Messiah Yeshua, in the Lord God in heaven, and seek to live according to the commands, the Lord removes the burden of sin from our lives, He sets us free and empowers us to live for the Lord God in heaven. Praise the Lord! Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for all the works of Your hands, including the work You are performing in our lives today. We glorify Your Holy Name. We ask for help, strength, and the resolve to live for You with the confidence to know that You are present in our lives. We thank You for the promises You have made and Your continued faithfulness. Help us to keep our feet on the path of righteousness and truth according to Your Word, and also to have the desire to walk in Your ways. Thank You for giving us the faith to believe in Yeshua the Messiah and for always calling our hearts back to You Lord! Please have mercy on us, forgive us for our sins. We thank You Lord for sending Your son Yeshua that we may enter into the covenant of peace that You have promised to Your people. Help us to grow in our faith, to walk in the spirit, and apply these truths to our lives. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

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

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:  
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,  
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever

## Notes