



<p>ו עדות   ביהוסף שמו בצאתו על-  אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שְׁפַת לֹא-יִדְעָתִי אֲשַׁמֶּע:  ז הַסִּירוֹתַי מִסָּבֵל שְׁכֻמוֹ כִּפְיוֹ מִדּוֹד  ח תַּעֲבֹרְנָה: ה בַּצָּרָה קָרָאתָ וְאַחֲלִי-  צָדָה אֲעֲנֶה בְּסִתְרֵי רַעַם אֲבַתְּנֶה עַל-מִי  מְרִיבָה סֵלָה: ט וְשָׁמַע עַמִּי וְאַעֲיֶדָה  כָּף יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם-תִּשְׁמַע-לִי: י לֹא-  יִהְיֶה כָּף אֵל זָר וְלֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְאֵל  נִכְרִי: יא אֲנֹכִי   יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ הַמַּעֲלֶךְ  מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הַרְחֹב-פִּיךָ וְאַמְלֵאֲהוּ:  יב וְלֹא-שָׁמַע עַמִּי לְקוֹלִי וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל  לֹא-אָבָה לִי: יג וְאַשְׁלַחְהוּ בַּשְּׂרִירוֹת  לְפָנַי יִלְכוּ בְּמוֹעֲצוֹתַיִהֶם: יד לוֹ עַמִּי  שָׁמַע לִי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּדַרְכֵי יְהוָה: טו  כִּמְעַט אוֹיְבֵיהֶם אֲכַנִּיעַ וְעַל-צָרֵיהֶם  אֲשִׁיב יָדַי: טז מִשְׁנֵאֵי יְהוָה יִכְחָשׁוּ-  לוֹ 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  ספתא דלא חכימית אליפית שמעית:  ז אעדיתי משיעבודא כתפיה אידוי  מן למרמי טינא לקידרא איסתלקון:  ח 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 θεὸς 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 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 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, *לשבחה על כנורא דאתיא מן גת על ידא דאסף*; *81:1 For praise; on the lyre that comes from Gath, composed by Asaph. (EMC)* and the Septuagint states, *εις τὸ τέλος ὑπὲρ τῶν ληνῶν τῷ Ασαφ* *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, *שיר הבא מגת, כלי שיר הגתית*. *על הגתית* 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 לְאָסָף*; *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 עֲזֹנֵנוּ הִרְיֵעוּ לְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: 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, עזונו, הרנינו לאלוקים*, “*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* כי חוק לישראל חגנו, *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 מלכנו ה' מחוקקנו, ה' שופטנו, כי ה' שופטנו, ה' מחוקקנו, ה' מלכנו, “*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 עזונו 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, 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 ἐξελεθεῖν αὐτὸν ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου γλωσσοσαν ἦν οὐκ ἔγνω ἠκούσαν 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, *בצרה קראת ואחלצה אענה בסתר ז הסירותי מסבל שכמו כפיו מדוד תעברנה: ח*

: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 מִמִּצְרַיִם מִצְרַיִם 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 ἀκούσης μου 81:9 οὐκ ἔσται ἐν σοὶ θεὸς πρόσφατος οὐδὲ προσκυνήσεις θεῶ ἄλλοτρίω 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

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 בְּשָׁרִירוֹת לִבָּם יֵלְכוּ בְּמוֹעֲצוֹתֵיהֶם: יד לו עֲמִי שְׁמַע לִי מְשֻׁנְאֵי יְהוָה יִכְחָשׁוּ-לוֹ וַיְהִי עֲתָם יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּדַרְכֵי יְהִלְכוּ: טו כִּמְעֹט אוֹיְבֵיהֶם אֲכַנֶּיַע וְעַל-צָרֵיהֶם אֲשִׁיב יָדַי: טז מִשְׁנְאֵי יְהוָה יִכְחָשׁוּ-לוֹ וַיְהִי עֲתָם: יז וַיֵּצְאֵם לְעוֹלָם: 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) 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 בְּשָׁרִירוֹת 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 אַחֲרַי לְבַבְכֶם וְאַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם 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, יֵלְכוּ 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 אֲחַר עֵינֵי הַלֵּךְ לְפָנַי, “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 ἐξάπεστειλα αὐτοὺς κατὰ τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν πορεύσονται ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασιν αὐτῶν 81:13 εἰ ὁ λαὸς μου ἤκουσέν 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 ἐχόρτασεν 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!

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!

\* \* \* \* \*

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

## Notes