

ספר תהילים צא | Tehillim / Psalms 91

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The Significance of both the Spiritual and Physical Realms

א יֵשֶׁב בְּסֹתֵר עֲלִיּוֹן בְּצֵל שְׁדֵי יְתִי־ לונן: 91:1 *He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. (NASB)* What does it mean to dwell in the shelter and abiding in the shadow? The psalmist continues saying, ב אמר ליהוה מחסי ומצודתי אלהי אבטח-בו: ג כי הוא יצילך מפח יקוש מדבר הוות: ד באבטחך | יסוף לך ותמת יצילך אלהי אבטח-בו: ג כי הוא יצילך מפח יקוש מדבר הוות: ד באבטחך | יסוף לך ותמת: 91:2 *I will say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!'* 91:3 *For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper And from the deadly pestilence.* 91:4 *He will cover you with His pinions, And under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. (NASB)* We trust in the Lord because of His faithfulness to us. The psalm continues saying, ה לא-תירא מפחד לילה מחץ יעוף יומם: ו מדבר באפל יהלך מקטב ישוד צהרם: ז יפל מצדך | אלהי ורכבה ה לא-תירא מפחד לילה מחץ יעוף יומם: ו מדבר באפל יהלך מקטב ישוד צהרם: ז יפל מצדך | אלהי ורכבה: 91:5 *You will not be afraid of the terror by night, Or of the arrow that flies by day;* 91:6 *Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, Or of the destruction that lays waste at noon.* 91:7 *A thousand may fall at your side And ten thousand at your right hand, But it shall not approach you.* 91:8 *You will only look on with your eyes And see the recompense of the wicked. (NASB)* The reason we can look on upon a thousand and not be harmed is due to the Lord who sustains us and empowers us. He is able to change men's hearts, to raise up and cast down. David continues his Psalm saying, ט כי-אתה יהוה מחסי עליון שמת מעונה: י לא-תאנה אליך רעה ונגע לא-יקרב באהלה: יא כי מלאכיו יצוה-לך לשמרה בכל-דרכיה: יב על-כפיים ישאונו פן-תגוף באבן רגלך: 91:9 *For you have made the Lord, my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place.* 91:10 *No evil will befall you, Nor will any plague come near your tent.* 91:11 *For He will give His angels charge concerning you, To guard you in all your ways.* 91:12 *They will bear you up in their hands, That you do not strike your foot against a stone.* 91:13 *You will tread upon the lion and cobra, The young lion and the serpent you will trample down. (NASB)* The psalm concludes saying, יג על-שחל ופתן תדרך תרמס כפיר ותנין: יד כי בי חשק ואפלטוהו אשגבהו כי-ידע שמי: טו יג על-שחל ופתן תדרך תרמס כפיר ותנין: יד כי בי חשק ואפלטוהו אשגבהו כי-ידע שמי: טו יצוה-לך לשמרה בכל-דרכיה: יב על-כפיים ישאונו פן-תגוף באבן רגלך: 91:14 *'Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name.* 91:15 *'He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him.* 91:16 *'With a long life I will satisfy him And let him see My salvation.'* (NASB)

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
ספר תהלים פרק צא	ספר תהלים פרק צא	ספר טוביה פרק צא	ספר טוביה פרק צא	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 91	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 91
א יֵשֶׁב בְּסֹתֵר עֲלִיּוֹן בְּצֵל שְׁדֵי יְתִי־ לונן: ב אמר ליהוה מחסי ומצודתי אלהי אבטח-בו: ג כי הוא יצילך מפח יקוש מדבר הוות: ד באבטחך יסוף לך ותמת: ה לא-תירא מפחד לילה מחץ יעוף יומם:	א יֵשֶׁב בְּסֹתֵר עֲלִיּוֹן בְּצֵל שְׁדֵי יְתִי־ לונן: ב אמר ליהוה מחסי ומצודתי אלהי אבטח-בו: ג כי הוא יצילך מפח יקוש מדבר הוות: ד באבטחך יסוף לך ותמת: ה לא-תירא מפחד לילה מחץ יעוף יומם:	א דאשרי שכנתיה ברזא עילאה בטלל ענני יקרא דשדי ירבית: ב אמר דוד אימר ליהוה רוחצני וכרך תוקפי אלהי אכלי אתרחץ במימריה: ג ארום הוא יפצינג שלמה ברי מפחא ותיקלא ממותא ואיתרגישתא: ד בטלל שכינתיה יטלל עלך ותחות טלל יקריה תתרחיץ תריסא ועגילא ואגילא הימנותיה:	א דאשרי שכנתיה ברזא עילאה בטלל ענני יקרא דשדי ירבית: ב אמר דוד אימר ליהוה רוחצני וכרך תוקפי אלהי אכלי אתרחץ במימריה: ג ארום הוא יפצינג שלמה ברי מפחא ותיקלא ממותא ואיתרגישתא: ד בטלל שכינתיה יטלל עלך ותחות טלל יקריה תתרחיץ תריסא ועגילא ואגילא הימנותיה:	91:1 αἶνος ᾠδῆς τῷ Δαυιδ ὁ κατοικῶν ἐν βοηθείᾳ τοῦ ὑψίστου ἐν σκέπη τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ αὐλισθήσεται 91:2 ἐρεῖ τῷ κυρίῳ ἀντιλήπτωρ μου εἶ καὶ καταφυγή μου ὁ θεός μου ἐλπιδὴ ἐπ' αὐτόν 91:3 ὅτι αὐτὸς ῥύσεται με ἐκ παγίδος θηρευτῶν καὶ ἀπὸ λόγου παραχώδους	91:1 αἶνος ᾠδῆς τῷ Δαυιδ ὁ κατοικῶν ἐν βοηθείᾳ τοῦ ὑψίστου ἐν σκέπη τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ αὐλισθήσεται 91:2 ἐρεῖ τῷ κυρίῳ ἀντιλήπτωρ μου εἶ καὶ καταφυγή μου ὁ θεός μου ἐλπιδὴ ἐπ' αὐτόν 91:3 ὅτι αὐτὸς ῥύσεται με ἐκ παγίδος θηρευτῶν καὶ ἀπὸ λόγου παραχώδους

<p>ו מְדַבֵּר בְּאֶפְלַי יְהִלֵּךְ מִקְטֹב יְשׁוּד צְהַרְרִים: ז יִפֹּל מִצְדָּךְ אֶלְךָ וּרְבִבָה מִימִינֶךָ אֲלִיךָ לֹא יִגָּשׁ: ח רַק בְּעֵינַיִךְ תִּבְיֹט וְשְׁלֵמַת רְשָׁעִים תִּרְאֶה: ט כִּי- אַתָּה יְהוָה מַחְסֵי עֲלִיּוֹן שְׁמַת מְעוֹנֶךָ: י לֹא-תֶאֱנֶה אֲלִיךָ רָעָה וְנָגַע לֹא-יִקְרַב בְּאַהֲלֶךָ: יא כִּי מִלֵּאכְוִי יִצְנֶה-לְךָ לְשֹׁמְרֶךָ בְּכָל-דְּרָכֶיךָ: יב עַל-כִּפְּיִם יִשְׂאוּנֶךָ פֶּן-תִּגָּף בְּאָבֹן רִגְלֶךָ: יג עַל- שְׁחַל וְנִפְתָּן תִּדְרֹךְ תִּרְמָס כְּפִיר וְתִנְיֹן: יד כִּי בִי חֶשֶׁק וְאַפְלֹטָהוּ אֲשַׁגְבֶּהוּ כִּי-יִדְּעַ שְׁמִי: טו יִקְרָאנִי וְאֶעֱנֶהוּ עִמּוֹ אֲנֹכִי בְּצָרָה אֲחַלְצֶהוּ וְאֶכְבְּדֶהוּ: טז אֲרֹךְ יָמִים אֲשַׁבִּיעֶהוּ וְאֶרְאֶהוּ בִּישׁוּעָתִי:</p>	<p>ה לא תדחל מן דלוחא דמזיקי דאז- לין בליליא מן גיררא דמלאך מותא דשרי ביממא: ו מן מותא די בקי- בלא מהלך מסיעת שידין דמחבלין בטיהרא: ז תדכר שמא דקודשא קדישא יפלון מן סטר שמאלך אלפא ורייבותא מן ימינך לותך לא יקרבו למנזק: ח לחוד בעינך תהי מסת- כל תסתכלל והיך מיתגמרין רשיעי תחמי: ט עני שלמה וכן אמר ארום אנת הוא יהוה רוחצני במדור עילאה שויתא בית שכינתך: י אתיב מרי עלמא וכן אמר לא תארע לך בשתא ומכתשא ומזיקיא לא יקרבוך במש- כנייך: יא ארום מלאכוי יפקד עלך למטרינך לנטורך בכל אורחתך: יב על תוקפיהון יטלונך דילמא תיתקל ביצרא בישא דמתיל לאבני ריגלך: יג על גור בר אריון ופיתנא תיבעוץ תבעיט תרמוס אריא וחורמנא: יד מטול די במימרי איתרעי ואשיזבי- ניה אשגביניה מטול דידע שמי: טו יצלי קדמי ואנא עני יתיה עימיה אנא בעקתא אפציניה ואיקריניה ואשגבי- ניה: טז אוריות יומין אסבעיניה ואחמיניה בפורקני:</p>	<p>91:4 ἐν τοῖς μεταφρένοις αὐτοῦ ἐπισκιάσει σοὶ καὶ ὑπὸ τὰς πτέρυγας αὐτοῦ ἐλπιδίς ὄπλων κυκλώσει σε ἢ ἀλήθεια αὐτοῦ 91:5 οὐ φοβηθήσῃ ἀπὸ φόβου νυκτερινοῦ ἀπὸ βέλους πετομένου ἡμέρας 91:6 ἀπὸ πράγματος διαπορευομένου ἐν σκότει ἀπὸ συμπτώματος καὶ δαιμονίου μεσημβρινοῦ 91:7 πεσεῖται ἐκ τοῦ κλίτους σου χιλιάς καὶ μυριάς ἐκ δεξιῶν σου πρὸς σὲ δὲ οὐκ ἐγγιεῖ 91:8 πλὴν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς σου κατανοήσεις καὶ ἀνταπόδοσιν ἀμαρτωλῶν ὄψῃ 91:9 ὅτι σύ κύριε ἢ ἐλπίς μου τὸν ὑψιστον ἔθου καταφυγὴν σου 91:10 οὐ προσελεύσεται πρὸς σὲ κακά καὶ μᾶστιξ οὐκ ἐγγιεῖ τῷ σκηνώματί σου 91:11 ὅτι τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ ἐντελεῖται περὶ σοῦ τοῦ διαφυλάξαι σε ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς σου 91:12 ἐπὶ χειρῶν ἀρουσίν σε μήποτε προσκόψῃς πρὸς λίθον τὸν πόδα σου 91:13 ἐπ’ ἀσπίδα καὶ βασιλίσκον ἐπιβήσῃ καὶ καταπατήσεις λέοντα καὶ δράκοντα 91:14 ὅτι ἐπ’ ἐμέ ἤλπισεν καὶ ῥύσομαι αὐτόν σκεπάσω αὐτόν ὅτι ἔγνω τὸ ὄνομά μου 91:15 ἐπικαλέσεται με καὶ εἰσακούσομαι αὐτοῦ μετ’ αὐτοῦ εἶμι ἐν θλίψει καὶ ἐξελοῦμαι καὶ δοξάσω αὐτόν 91:16 μακρότητα ἡμερῶν ἐμπλήσω αὐτόν καὶ δεῖξω αὐτῷ τὸ σωτήριόν μου</p>
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<p>Tehillim / Psalms 91 91:1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. 91:2 I will say to the Lord, ‘My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!’ 91:3 For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper And from the deadly pestilence. 91:4 He will cover you with His pinions, And under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. 91:5 You will not be afraid of the terror by night, Or of the arrow that flies by day; 91:6 Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, Or of the destruction that lays waste at noon. 91:7 A thousand may fall at your side And ten thousand at your right hand, But it shall not approach you. 91:8 You will only look on with your eyes And see the recompense of the wicked. 91:9 For you have made the Lord, my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place. 91:10 No evil will befall you, Nor will any plague come near your tent. 91:11 For He will give His angels charge concerning you, To guard you in all your ways. 91:12 They will bear you up in their hands, That you do not strike your foot against a stone. 91:13 You will tread upon the lion and cobra, The young lion and the serpent you will trample down. 91:14 ‘Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name. 91:15 ‘He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. 91:16 ‘With a long life I will satisfy him And let him see My salvation.’ (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms 91 91:1 He who makes his presence abide in secret is the Most High; he will lodge in the shadow of the clouds of the glory of Shaddai. 91:2 David said: “I will say to the Lord, ‘My confidence and my strong fortress’; my God, I will trust in his word.” 91:3 For he will deliver you, Solomon my son, from the snare and the obstacle, from death and confusion. 91:4 With the shelter of his presence he will shelter you, and you will be confident under the shelter of his glory; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler. 91:5 Be not afraid of the terror of demons who walk at night, of the arrow of the angel of death that he looses during the day; 91:6 Of the death that walks in darkness, of the band of demons that attacks at noon. 91:7 You will invoke the holy name; a thousand will fall at your left side, and ten thousand at your right; they will not come near you to do harm. 91:8 Only with your eyes you will watch, and you will see the wicked as they are destroyed. 91:9 Solomon answered and said: “For you are my confidence, O Lord; in the highest dwelling place you have placed the house of your presence.” 91:10 The lord of the world responded and thus he said: “No harm shall happen to you; and no plague or demon shall come near to your tents.” 91:11 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. 91:12 They will lift you up by their strength, lest you stumble on the evil impulse, which is likened to the stones at your feet. 91:13 You will trample on the lions’ whelp and the adder; you will tread down the lion and the viper. 91:14 Because he has taken pleasure in my word, and I will deliver him; I will exalt him because he knows my name. 91:15 He will pray in my presence and I will answer him; I am with him in distress, I will save him and glorify him. 91:16 I will satisfy him with length of days; I will show him my redemption. (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 91 91:1 He that dwells in the help of the Highest, shall sojourn under the shelter of the God of heaven. 91:2 He shall say to the Lord, Thou art my helper and my refuge: my God; I will hope in him. 91:3 For he shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunters, from every troublesome matter. 91:4 He shall overshadow thee with his shoulders, and thou shalt trust under his wings: his truth shall cover thee with a shield. 91:5 Thou shalt not be afraid of terror by night; nor of the arrow flying by day; 6 nor of the evil thing that walks in darkness; nor of calamity, and the evil spirit at noon-day. 91:7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. 91:8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou observe and see the reward of sinners. 91:9 For thou, O Lord, art my hope: thou, my soul, hast made the Most High thy refuge. 91:10 No evils shall come upon thee, and no scourge shall draw nigh to thy dwelling. 91:11 For he shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. 12 They shall bear thee up on their hands, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 91:13 Thou shalt tread on the asp and basilisk: and thou shalt trample on the lion and dragon. 91:14 For he has hoped in me, and I will deliver him: I will protect him, because he has known my name. 91:15 He shall call upon me, and I will hearken to him: I am with him in affliction; and I will deliver him, and glorify him. 91:16 I will satisfy him with length of days, and shew him my salvation. (LXX)</p>
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א יֵשֵׁב בְּסִתְרֵי עֲלִיּוֹן בְּצֵל אֱלֹהִים
91:1 *He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.* (NASB) Is it possible to dwell in the shelter of the Most High? What does it mean to dwell in the shelter and abiding in the shadow? It seems as if the psalmist is saying whoever takes refuge with God will find himself under the protection of the Almighty. Another way of putting it, he who has his thoughts always on the Lord God is said to “ *dwell in him,*” to “*make his abode with him,*” or to “*sit down in his secret place.*” Note the concepts of dwelling, the home, and sitting, taking counsel in the Lord are connected here in the Psalm. The Aramaic Targum states, א דאשרי שכנתיה ברזא עילאה בטלל ענני יקרא דשדי ירבית: *91:1 He who makes his*

presence abide in secret is the Most High; he will lodge in the shadow of the clouds of the glory of Shaddai. (EMC) The rabbis describe the psalmists words as referring to the Lord God Almighty, He is the one who causes his presence to abide in secret and resides in the clouds of glory. The one who dwells in the shelter of the Most High reminds us of Parashat Ki Tisa and Joshua according to *Shemot / Exodus 33:8-14*.

Shemot / Exodus 33:8-14

33:8 And it came about, whenever Moses went out to the tent, that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the tent. 33:9 Whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the Lord would speak with Moses. 33:10 When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and worship, each at the entrance of his tent. 33:11 Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent. 33:12 Then Moses said to the Lord, 'See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people!' But You Yourself have not let me know whom You will send with me. Moreover, You have said, 'I have known you by name, and you have also found favor in My sight.' 33:13 'Now therefore, I pray You, if I have found favor in Your sight, let me know Your ways that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your sight. Consider too, that this nation is Your people.' 33:14 And He said, 'My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.' (NASB, ח וְהָיָה כִּצְאֵת מִשָּׁה אֶל-הָאֱהָל יְקוּמוּ כָּל-הָעָם וַיִּנָּצְבוּ אִישׁ פֶּתַח אֲהָלוֹ, וְהָבִיטוּ אַחֲרֵי מִשָּׁה עַד-בָּאוֹ הָאֱהָלָה: ט וְהָיָה כִּבְאֵר מִשָּׁה הָאֱהָלָה יֵרֵד עִמּוֹד הָעֲנָן וְעָמַד פֶּתַח הָאֱהָל וַיִּדְבֹּר עִם-מִשָּׁה: י וְרָאָה כָּל-הָעָם אֶת-עִמּוֹד הָעֲנָן עֹמֵד פֶּתַח הָאֱהָל וְקָם כָּל-הָעָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ אִישׁ פֶּתַח אֲהָלוֹ: יא וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל-מִשָּׁה פְּנִים אֶל-פְּנִים כַּאֲשֶׁר יִדְבֹּר אִישׁ אֶל-רֵעֵהוּ וְשָׁב אֶל-הַמִּחֲנֶה וּמִשְׁרָתוֹ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן-נוּן נָעַר לֹא יָמִישׁ מִתּוֹךְ הָאֱהָל: פ [שלישי] יב וַיֹּאמֶר מִשָּׁה אֶל-יְהוָה רְאֵה אֶתָּה אָמַר אֵלַי הֲעַל אֶת-הָעָם הַזֶּה וְאַתָּה לֹא הוֹדַעְתָּנִי אֶת אֲשֶׁר-תִּשְׁלַח עִמִּי וְאַתָּה אָמַרְתָּ יִדְעִיתִּי בְּשֵׁם וְגַם-מִצְאָתָהּ חֵן בְּעֵינָי: יג וְעַתָּה אִם-נָא מִצְאָתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ הוֹדַעְנִי נָא אֶת-דַּרְכְּךָ וְאִדְעָה לְמַעַן אֶמְצָא-חֵן (בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְרָאָה כִּי עִמָּךְ הִגּוּי הַזֶּה: יד וַיֹּאמֶר פָּנִי יִלְכוּ וְהִנַּחְתִּי לְךָ:

Here we are told that Moshe would come and go from the Ohel Moed, but Joshua would not depart. The people rose and worshiped at the entrance to their tents, and we are told that Moshe sought the Lord to know His ways and that His presence would go with the people. Based upon Parashat Ki Tisa, dwelling in the presence and knowing God's ways are connected. The Jewish commentary Shney Lichot HaBrit states the following:

Shney Luchot HaBrit, Shmini, Torah Ohr 42

Joshua entered the orchard and returned from it unharmed. This is alluded to in Exodus 33:11 when the Torah describes Joshua as never departing from the "tent," i.e. the Tent of Testimony (home of Torah). Our sages described the face of Moses as like that of the sun, whereas the face of Joshua, by comparison, is described as like that of the moon. The former radiates its own light, whereas the latter only reflects light received from another source. The author of the Mishnah therefore described Moses as קבל תורה, receiving the mysteries of the Torah as it were in a container, a covered box. The word בית קבול, suggests that the contents of the container are hidden. Anyone who merely looks at the container does not automatically see what's in it. The term מסירה, handing something over, which the Mishnah uses in connection with the way Moses transferred the oral Torah to Joshua implies that it is transferred from hand to hand, in a visible manner.

The Ohel Moed is described as the "home of Torah," a place of which Joshua never departed. The com-

mentary goes on to describe Moshe's face that shown as the sun due to the radiance of God, and Joshua's face also glowed but in a lesser form, his face was like the moon which reflected the sun. The rabbis say the "*Mishnah therefore described Moses as קבל תורה*" meaning the tradition of Torah, which is the Jewish oral traditions known as the Mishnah or "*Oral Torah.*" The idea is that Moshe passed on the oral Torah to Joshua. The commentary continues saying that "*The word בית קבול,*" the house of tradition, does not convey the contents, but that the contents must be conveyed personally from hand to hand. This invalidates the latter Christian interpretation of the spiritualization of the Torah. This is very important because of the Psalm which says, *91:1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty (NASB)* is not a reference simply to the way one thinks in his head, meaning that all one has to do is simply put his thoughts upon the Lord God in heaven. Ordering our thoughts also includes ordering our ways, what we do and how we live for the Lord in heaven, and how we serve Him.

The psalmist continues saying, *ב אמר ליהנה מחסי ומצודתי אלהי אבטח-בו: ג פי הוא יצילך מפח יקוש* *91:2 I will say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!'* *91:3 For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper And from the deadly pestilence. 91:4 He will cover you with His pinions, And under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. (NASB)* In Tehillim / Psalms 91:2, we read ליהנה מחסי ומצודתי "*for the Lord is my refuge and my strength...*" The word חס is both a Hebrew and Aramaic word which means mercy, or to spare something. For instance, in the Tosefta, we read שחס המקום עליו, speaking of the mercy of the place God has established His name. Or in the Talmud Yerushalmi, חס הוא אדם על, כבוד אלמנתו. Jastrow lists the word as both Hebrew and Chaldean (Aramaic). A example from the Tanach is found in *Jeremiah 13:14, -לא-אחמול ולא-*, *"I will not spare and I will not have mercy."* Here in the Psalm the word for mercy or to spare something is translated as taking refuge in the Lord. Our refuge is found in the Lord only because He so sparingly has mercy upon us. In addition, we trust in the Lord because of His faithfulness to us. And because of his faithfulness to the covenant that He swore, He delivers us from the evil one and from our enemies. The psalmist says the Lord covers us with His wings and that His faithfulness is like a shield to us. The Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael has the following to say concerning the Psalmists words and the Lord who is our refuge and fortress.

Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 15:3, Part 1

(Exodus, Ibid. 3) "The L rd is a man of war; the L rd is His name." R. Yehudah says: This is a verse rich from (what is written) in many places. We are hereby apprised that He revealed Himself to them in the implements of war. He revealed Himself to them as a warrior girded with a sword, viz. (Psalms 45:4) "Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Hero. He revealed Himself to them as a rider, viz. (Ibid. 18:11) "And He mounted a cherub and flew, etc." He revealed Himself to them in mail and helmet, viz. (Isaiah 59:17) "He donned righteousness as mail, and a helmet of salvation on His head." He revealed Himself to them with a spear, viz. (Habakkuk 3:11) "by the light of the flash of Your spear," and (Psalms 35:3) "and draw spear and (don) buckler, etc." He revealed Himself to them with bow and arrows, viz. (Habakkuk 3:9) "The nakedness of Your bow will be revealed," and (II Samuel 22:15) "And He sent forth arrows, etc." He revealed Himself to them with shield and buckler, viz. (Psalms 91:4) "Shield and buckler is His Your truth, and (Ibid. 35:2) "Take up buckler and shield." I might think that He (actually) required one of all these appurtenances. It is, therefore, written "The L rd is a man of war; the L rd is His name. It is with His name that He wars, and not with any of these appurtenances. Why, then, need each of them be singled out? For if Israel requires it, He makes war for them. And woe to the nations what they hear with their ears, that He who spoke and brought the world into being is destined to make war with them! "the

L rd is a man of war': What is the intent of this? Because He revealed Himself at the sea as a hero waging war — “The L rd is a man of war” — and He revealed Himself at Sinai as an elder full of mercy, viz. (Exodus 24:10) “And they saw the G d of Israel ... and under His feet as the work of a sapphire brick and as the appearance of the heavens in brightness” [[see Rashi], and (Daniel 7:9) “I watched as thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days sat ... (10) A stream of fire was flowing forth from before Him, etc.” — So as not to give a pretext to the peoples of the world to say that there are two (i.e., numerous) deities, (it is written) “The L rd is a man of war — the L rd is His name. It was He upon the sea, He in Egypt, He in the past, He in the future, He in time to come, He in this world, He in the world to come. As it is written (Devarim 32:39) “See, now, that it is I, I, and there is no god with Me, etc.”...

The Mekhilta describes the Lord as having revealed Himself as a warrior with a sword. Note how the first place the rabbis say the Lord revealed Himself in this way is at the Red Sea in Parashat Beshalach (*Shemot / Exodus 14*). It is interesting the rabbis do not choose the plagues of Egypt as the Lord revealing Himself as a warrior. The Lord revealed Himself as a warrior at the Sea and at the mountain of Sinai He revealed himself as full of mercy. This is how the psalmist understands the meaning of his words as **ב אָמַר לַיהוָה מִחֶסֶד וּמִצְדִּיקוֹתַי אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹטָה-בּוֹ: ג כִּי הוּא יִצִּילֵךְ מִפֶּחַח יָקוּשׁ מִדְּבַר הַיּוֹת: ד בְּאַבְרָתוֹ | יְסֹד לְךָ וְתַחַת כְּנָפָיו תִּתְחַסֶּה: 91:2 I will say to the Lord, ‘My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!’ 91:3 For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper And from the deadly pestilence. 91:4 He will cover you with His pinions, And under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. (NASB)**

The Aramaic Targum states, **ב אָמַר דּוּד אִימַר לִיהוּה רּוּחַצְנִי וּכְרַךְ תּוּקְפֵי אֱלֹהֵי אַכְלֵי אַתְרַחֲץ בְּמִימְרֵיהּ: ג אַרוּם הוּא יַפְצִינְךָ שְׁלֵמָה בְּרִי מִפְחָא וּתִיקְלָא מְמוּתָא וְאִיתְרַגִּישְׁתָּא: ד בְּטַלְל שְׁכִינְתֵּיהּ יְטַלְל עַלְךָ וְתַחֲוֹת טַלְל יִקְרִיהּ: 91:2 David said: “I will say to the Lord, ‘My confidence and my strong fortress’; my God, I will trust in his word.” 91:3 For he will deliver you, Solomon my son, from the snare and the obstacle, from death and confusion. 91:4 With the shelter of his presence he will shelter you, and you will be confident under the shelter of his glory; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler. (EMC)** The Targum translates the Psalm as David speaking to his son Solomon. David is advising his son in the same way according to the Targum, the presence of God will be a shelter and our confidence is in His faithfulness because we are sheltered in His presence and glory. Remember, the rabbis believe the glory and presence of God descends upon those who study God’s word and apply it to their lives.

The psalm continues saying, **ה לֹא-תִירָא מִפֶּחַח לַיְלָה מִחֶץ יַעֲוֹף יוֹמָם: 91:5 You will not be afraid of the terror by night, Or of the arrow that flies by day; (NASB)** The terror by night seems to be an allusion to the enemy coming under the cover of dark. The arrow by day is during times of war. The Aruch Hashulchan has the following to say concerning this verse. (*Aruch Hashulchan, ערוך השולחן is a chapter-by-chapter restatement of the Shulchan Aruch [the latter being the most influential codification of halakhah in the post-Talmudic era]. Compiled and written by Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein (1829–1908), the work attempts to be a clear, organized summary of the sources for each chapter of the Shulchan Aruch and its commentaries, with special emphasis on the positions of the Jerusalem Talmud and Maimonides.*)

Aruch HaShulchan 1:3, Part 1

It is written, “His angels will be commanded to you, to watch over you on all of your travels”. On Shabbos (Meseches (Tractate) Shabbos) 119b we say, “two angles escort a person”. In Chagigah 16a it comes to say, “ the two angles that escort this person testify on his behalf”. Therefore, the Sages commanded (Brachos 60b) that when one needs to enter the bathhouse, he should say before he enters “be honored, respected and holy ones, the rulers of above! Watch over me! Watch over me! Help me! Help me! Wait for me until I enter and come out, since this is the way of man!”. Its explanation: This person is mentioning that the angels are too holy to enter into the bathhouse and therefore, they should wait for him to exit

onymous to the presence of God. In addition, they speak of the Lord sending the number of angels based upon the number of mitzvot one keeps. When one is shomer mitzvah with more than two, it is said the Lord gives the person protecting angels numbering half the camp. Why do you think the rabbis equate the maasei Tovim with the Lord sending His angel? The interpretation may be according to the interpretation of Daat Zkenim in the following way:

Daat Zkenim on Exodus 33:12, Part 1

, ואתה לא הודעתני, *“and You have not informed me;” Moses means that not only did G'd not inform me of details about the angel which He had said that He would send to walk ahead of the Jewish people (Exodus 32, 34) ; it is not only that You Yourself will not walk in front of us, but You did not even name the angel You have assigned for this task. We are now no better off than any human being on earth, each one of whom has an angel walking in front of him. (Compare Psalms 91,11) where David refers to this with the words: כי מלאכיו יצוה לך* , לשמר לך בכל דרכיך *“for He will order His angels to guard you wherever you go.” Seeing that this is so, how do I benefit from Your having told me that I have found favour in Your eyes? Even Avraham's servant, Eliezer, had been assured of the same kind of angel, without having been told by G'd that he had found favour in His eyes? (Compare Genesis 24,7, ואתה לא הודעתני. פי' אתה אמרת הנה מלאכי ילך לפניך ולא די שאין דעתך לילך עמנו אלא אפי' אותו מלאך שאמרת שילך עמי לא הודעתני אלא סתמא ואין לך אדם בעולם שאין לו מלאך שהולך עמו כד"א כי מלאכיו יצוה לך ואפי' לאליעזר עבד אברהם שלח מלאך כדכתיב הוא ישלח מלאכו לפניך (ואתה אמרת וגו' ומה טובה תעשה לי על כי מצאתי חן בעיניך:*

Note how the commentary references *Tehillim / Psalms 91:11 For He will give His angels charge concerning you, To guard you in all your ways. (NASB)* and so the rabbis conclude that the Lord has assigned an angel to each man. The idea here is that if the Lord's angel is leading (going ahead of you) then your ways are being ordered according to God's Word, meaning that we are not walking and living in sin. The phrase as it is used in the Torah provides us with this context.

Bereshit / Genesis 24:7

24:7 The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house, and from the land of my nativity, and who spoke unto me, and who swore unto me, saying: Unto thy seed will I give this land; He will send His angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife for my son from thence. ז יהוה | אלהי השמים אשר לקחני מבית אבי ומארץ מולדתי ואשר דבר-לי ואשר (נשבע-לי לאמר לנרעה אתן את-הארץ הזאת הוא ישלח מלאכו לפניך ולקחת אשה לבני משם:

Shemot / Exodus 32:34

32:34 And now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee; behold, Mine angel shall go before thee; nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them. לד ועתה לך | נחה את-העם אל אשר-דברתי לך הנה מלאכי ילך לפניך וביום פקדתי (ופקדתי עליהם חטאתם:

Shemot / Exodus33:12

33:12 And Moses said unto the LORD: 'See, Thou sayest unto me: Bring up this people; and Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me. Yet Thou hast said: I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in My sight. יב ויאמר משה אל-יהוה ראה אתה אמרת יב אלי העל את-העם הזה ואתה לא הודעתני את אשר-תשלח עמי ואתה אמרת ודעתיה בשם וגם- (מצאתי חן בעיני:

Abraham speaks of the Lord taking him from his father's house and leading him to a new land, a new place, and a new way of life, and this is described as the Lord sending His angel before him. This is found in the context of Abraham instructing his servant to find a wife for his son Isaac. In Exodus, the angel going before the people is leading them to the place God has given, a new land, and a new way of life. The one with whom the Lord will send (His angel) is synonymous to His presence going with the people, as is the context of *Shemot / Exodus 33*.

David continues his Psalm saying, **ט כִּי-אַתָּה יְהוָה מַחְסֵי עַלְיוֹן שְׁמֹתָ מְעוֹנָה: י לֹא-תֵאָנֶה אֵלֶיךָ רָעָה וְנֹגַע**, **91:9 לֹא-יִקְרַב בְּאֶהְלֶךָ: יא כִּי מִלְאָכָיו יִצְוֶה-לְךָ לְשֹׁמְרֶיךָ בְּכָל-דְּרָכֶיךָ: יב עַל-כַּפַּיִם יִשְׁאוּנֶהָ פֶן-תִּגַּף בְּאֶבֶן רִגְלֶךָ:** *For you have made the Lord, my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place. 91:10 No evil will befall you, Nor will any plague come near your tent. 91:11 For He will give His angels charge concerning you, To guard you in all your ways. 91:12 They will bear you up in their hands, That you do not strike your foot against a stone. 91:13 You will tread upon the lion and cobra, The young lion and the serpent you will trample down. (NASB)* Notice how making the Lord our refuge causes these things. How do we make the Lord our refuge? What does it mean to make the Lord our refuge? Dwelling in the holy place, the place the Lord has established His name, His sanctuary, this is possible only by following God's Word to Moshe. We are told in the Apostolic Writings that the Lord our Father in heaven makes His dwelling place in our lives by filling us with His Holy Spirit when we place our faith in His Son Yeshua the Messiah. Having faith in the Messiah is synonymous to walking with him, being in agreement with him, and living our lives according to the Word of God.

It is interesting that these verses were used by the evil one to tempt Yeshua to sin by tempting the Lord God our Father in heaven, according to *Matthew 4:5-7*.

Matthew 4:5-7

4:5 Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, 4:6 and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning You'; and 'On their hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.' 4:7 Jesus said to him, 'On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.' (NASB)

The evil one brought Yeshua to Jerusalem and to the Temple, and made the claim "If you are the Son of God..." then prove it and cast yourself off; the Lord will command His angels to lift you up. The psalm states: **91:11 כִּי מִלְאָכָיו יִצְוֶה-לְךָ לְשֹׁמְרֶיךָ בְּכָל-דְּרָכֶיךָ: יא** *91:11 For He will give His angels charge concerning you, To guard you in all your ways. (NASB)* Notice the context, if we make the Lord our dwelling place, which is synonymous to trusting in the Lord, and walking in His ways, then the Lord will command his angles to guard you in all your ways. Part of living for the Lord is not doing stupid things such as putting ourselves into danger for no particular reason, or for the reason of pride as the evil one was trying to tempt Yeshua to do. On YouTube.com there are a lot of extreme videos of people who are doing jumping or climbing stunts for the sake of the thrill or arrogance, and it is amazing what they are able to do what nobody else has done except them. Some of the videos shows them falling to their deaths. The point is that the Lord gives us some mental sense to not place ourselves in harms way and to not tempt the Lord God to protect us when we are doing something we shouldn't.

The commentary Daat Zkenim and Rashbam says the following:

Daat Zkenim on Exodus 33:12, Part 1

וְאַתָּה לֹא הוֹדַעְתָּנִי, "and You have not informed me;" *Moses means that not only did G'd not inform me of details about the angel which He had said that He would send to walk ahead of the Jewish people (Exodus 32:34) ; it is not only that You Yourself will not walk in front of us, but You did not even name the angel You have assigned for this task. We are now no better*

off than any human being on earth, each one of whom has an angel walking in front of him. (Compare Psalms 91:11) where David refers to this with the words: כי מלאכיו יצוה לך לשמר, “for He will order His angels to guard you wherever you go.” Seeing that this is so, how do I benefit from Your having told me that I have found favour in Your eyes? Even Avraham’s servant, Eliezer, had been assured of the same kind of angel, without having been told by G’d that he had found favour in His eyes? (Compare Genesis 24:7)

Rashbam on Genesis 28:15, Part 2

עד אשר עשיתי את אשר דברתי עליך. to bring you back to this part of the earth, for while you are journeying, traveling, you are in need of special protection of My angels, as we know from Psalms 91:11 כי מלאכיו יצוה לך לשמרך בכל דרכיך, “for He will command His angels to protect you on all your travels.”

The rabbis speak of the Lord Himself not going before the people, but that He would send His angel, and the name of the angel was not given. They cite that each man has been given an angel to go before him. Remember the rabbinic understanding of the Angel of the Lord. This may be a reference to the glory of God going before the people, or before each individual. This begs the question of the type of angel given to the wicked? An evil spirit or shame going before those who live their lives for sin? The angel that goes before us is said to lead us in the direction we should go by the statement “To guard you in all your ways.” Rashbam speaks of special protection by the angels of God. The Lord certainly does protect us in the midst of the ignorant things that we do.

יג על-שחל וּפְתוֹן תְּדַרְךָ תִּרְמָס כְּפִיר וְתִגְזֹן: יד כִּי בִי חֶשֶׁק וְאַפְלִטָהוּ אֲשַׁגְּבֵהוּ, כִּי-יִדַע שְׁמִי: טו יִקְרָאֵנִי | וְאַעֲנֶהוּ עִמּוֹ אֲנֹכִי בְצָרָה אֲחַלְצֶהוּ וְאֶכְבְּדֵהוּ: טז אֲרֹךְ יָמִים אֲשַׁבֵּיעֵהוּ וְאַרְאֶהוּ בְיִשׁוּעָתִי: 91:14 ‘Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name. 91:15 ‘He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. 91:16 ‘With a long life I will satisfy him And let him see My salvation.’ (NASB) The psalmist speaks of the Lord delivering the one that loves Him. For those who love Him, God’s people love His Word, they love walking in His ways, and they have a daily desire to live a repentant life. The commentary Shney Luchot HaBrit says the following concerning repentance.

Shney Luchot HaBrit, Vaera, Torah Ohr 72

The expression והשבות אל לבבך is an allusion to repentance. Having firm knowledge of the power demonstrated by G’d on behalf of Israel establishes a close link between the individual Jew and his G’d, and acts as a powerful inducement to do תשובה. Moses is on record in Psalm 91:14 that when G’d sent him as a messenger to deliver the Israelites this was a sign of His fondness of him. The reason cited for G’d being fond of Moses is כי ידע שמי, “Because he knew My name.” The sinner does the reverse; he distances himself from G’d. We are told in Isaiah 59:2 כי עוונותיכם הבדילו ביני וביניכם, “For your iniquities have created a barrier between Me and you.” If one had put distance between oneself and G’d and wants to re-approach Him one needs do repentance. Repentance is the act of returning and re-establishing one’s bond with G’d. This return has to originate in the heart, and that is why the Torah in Deut. 4:39 used the expression: והשבות אל לבבך.

The phrase והשבות אל לבבך “turning of your heart” is said to be an allusion to repentance. Seeing the power of God work in the lives of His people is the motivation to repentance (תשובה). The reason the Lord sent his messenger (angel) before the people in the wilderness was said to be because Moshe כי ידע שמי, “he knew My name.” The rabbis say the sinner does the reverse by distancing himself from God. Note how drawing near, obedience, and faith are synonymous to knowing the name of God, as opposed to the sinner

who draws away and distances himself from the Lord through disobedience and sin. Isaiah the prophet said, *Isaiah 59:2* כי עוונותיכם הבדילו ביני וביניכם “For your iniquities have created a barrier between Me and you.” In order to approach the Lord again following having sinned, one needs to do repentance. The rabbis say, “Repentance is the act of returning and re-establishing one’s bond with G’d. This return has to originate in the heart, and that is why the Torah in Deuteronomy 4:39 used the expression: והשבות אל לבבך.” (ט) וַיִּדְעַתְּ הַיּוֹם וְהַשַּׁבָּת אֵל-לִבְבְּךָ כִּי יְהוָה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים בְּשֵׁמִים מִמַּעַל וְעַל-הָאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת אֵין עוֹד: (:) The psalmist states that the Lord will set on high the one who knows His name. The one who knows the name of the Lord will call upon Him, and the Lord promises to be with His people when they are in trouble, and the Lord will rescue and honor His people. This mode of thought is brought to its point in the book of Revelation when we are told Yeshua will seat us with him on his throne. (see *Revelation 3:21*) And finally, the Lord will give a long life and salvation to the one who loves Him. It is an important point to note the things that are required of us for life and salvation in the Lord. Our faith in the Messiah involves love and obedience. We enter into the covenant of God by faith. We live according to the covenant we have made with the Lord God and the Messiah Yeshua by our faith. The promises the Lord made are in the context of the covenant relationship. Being in a covenant relationship with God in the Messiah Yeshua, now what is required of us? What do you think considering what we have studied thus far? Let’s Pray!

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 91* has 8 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7. Let’s begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 91, Parts 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7.*

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 91, Part 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*Will the Most High dwell in the secret place? Yes, the Almighty will abide in the shadow (Tehillim / Psalms 91:1)*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, But will God in truth dwell on the earth?*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis open with a tale of David and a Reem.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis discuss how a man may give atonement for his soul.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*As Moshe was going up to heaven, he recited the Psalm against evil spirits which begins with He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High, will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.*”

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge (Tehillim / Psalms 91:2), that is, my shield; and my stronghold, that is, my fortress.*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*He is my God in whom I trust, for in His name I hunt the wicked and cast them down into Gehenna.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis speak of saving his people from the snare.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand

upon the mashal speaking of the Torah as a way of being saved from the snare of sin and death.

- The Concluding phrase says, “*Rabbi Simeon son of Yokhai also said, The coat of armor which the Holy One blessed be He, gave to Israel on Sinai, has the Ineffable Name written upon it.*”

Part 4

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*A thousand will fall on your left side, and ten thousand at your right hand (Tehillim / Psalms 91:7).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Rabbi Isaac said, To the left hand, which is empowered to perform the commandment of Tefillin, are assigned a thousand angels to preserve a man from demons; but of the right hand, which is empowered to perform many commandments*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis speak of the one thousand angels the Lord gives to a man who is obedient to Torah .
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), by paralleling the idea that one thousand demons come against a man.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*Yes, with your eyes will you look on (Tehillim / Psalms 91:8), that is, look on with satisfaction while the wicked perish, for the verse ends by saying, And see the recompense of the wicked.*”

Part 5

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*For You, O Lord, who are my refuge, have made Your habitation on high (Tehillim / Psalms 91:9).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Rabbi Hanina taught, The saying has it that we notice life only as we are losing it, as we notice the eye only when it becomes inflamed.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss Israel complaining against God.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis speak of demons, sin, and the plague.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*Is it not written The Lord bless you, and keep you (Bamidbar / Numbers 6:24), that is, Keep you from the demons, and is not this verse immediately followed by And it came to pass on the day that Moshe had made an end of setting up the Tabernacle (Bamidbar / Numbers 7:1)?*”

Part 7

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*Another version, The Rabbis maintained that there were two stones, two being the least number of the plural.*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*When Jacob arose early in the morning, he found that the stones had become one stone, and he fell into a great fear, saying, The house of the Holy One blessed be He, is in this place and I was not aware of His presence, as is said, And he was afraid, and said, How full of awe is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven (Bereshit / Genesis 28:17).*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss the idea of praying towards Jerusalem when one prays.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), with Jacob being lifted up by the angels and being carried and cared for.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*The herdsmen looked and were astonished that Jacob had rolled the stone away by himself since all of them together could not roll away the stone, for the herdsmen used*

to say, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and they roll the stone from the well's mouth, But when Jacob went near, he rolled the stone from the well's mouth (Bereshit / Genesis 29:8-10)."

Midrash Tehillim 91, Part 1 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (ליחתמה רוביד) saying, "Will the Most High dwell in the secret place? Yes, the Almighty will abide in the shadow (Tehillim / Psalms 91:1)" The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, "These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, But will God in truth dwell on the earth?" The proof for the question of whether the Lord God will dwell on earth is from 1 Kings 8:27 'But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built! (NASB) The midrash then proceeds into the story of David and the Reem from "Legends of the Jews," and discuss how David made a vow to the Lord that he would build the height of the Temple to be in comparison to that of the Reem.

The midrash continues with the argument on who composed this psalm, Solomon, David, or Moshe, and that Solomon built the Holy of Holies twice the size Moshe did in the Tabernacle. Rabbi Judah taught, "Moshe heard three commandments from the Divine Power ..."

(i) When God commanded, Then will they give every man a ransom for his soul (Shemot / Exodus 30:12), Moshe said, Can his riches be the ransom of a man's soul? (Mishley / Proverbs 13:8) Can man give any Ransom for his soul? Thereupon, according to Rabbi Meir, the holy One blessed be He, let Moshe see a coin of fire, and said, This they will give (Shemot / Exodus 30:13), as if to say, They need give only as much as this.

(ii) Afterwards, when God said to Moshe, Command unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, My food which is presented unto Me for offerings made by fire, you will observe to offer unto Me in its due season (Bamidbar / Numbers 28:2), Moshe replied, Since Lebanon is not sufficient fuel, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for burnt offerings (Isaiah 40:16), can man provide enough rams for the offerings? The Holy One blessed be He, said, upon you life, it is not as you think. I require of you nothing other than that The one lamb you will offer in the morning, and the other lamb you will offer at dusk (Bamidbar / Numbers 28:4).

(iii) And in like manner, when the Holy One blessed be He, said to Moshe, And let them make Me a sanctuary (Shemot / Exodus 25:8), Moshe said, Can man make a holy place for the Divine Presence to dwell within? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You (1 Kings 8:27). The Holy One blessed be He, said to him, When I so desire, not even the whole world can contain My glory, nor even the glory of one of My attendants.

In the first command, note what the midrash states regarding what the Lord told Moshe, that man is to give a ransom, that the sacrifices were not sufficient, and that the Lord asked for a sanctuary. In the giving of a ransom for the soul, this is related to the command concerning taking a census (numbering the people) found in *Shemot / Exodus 30* (Parashat Ki Tisa).

Shemot / Exodus 30:12-14

30:12 'When you take a census of the sons of Israel to number them, then each one of them shall give a ransom for himself to the Lord, when you number them, so that there will be no plague among them when you number them. 30:13 'This is what everyone who is numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as a contribution to the Lord. 30:14 'Everyone who is numbered, from twenty years old and over, shall give the contribution to the Lord. (NASB)

יב פי תשא את-ראש בני-ישראל לפקדיהם ונתנו איש כפר נפשו ליהוה בפקד אתם ולא-יהיה בהם

נָגַף בְּפָקֶד אֲתָם: יג זָה | יִתְּנוּ כָּל-הָעֶבֶר עַל-הַפְּקָדִים מִתְּצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ עֲשָׂרִים גֵּרָה הַשֶּׁקֶל
מִתְּצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה: יד כָּל הָעֶבֶר עַל-הַפְּקָדִים מִבְּנֵי עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמֵעֵלָה יִתְּנוּ תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה:

The point of giving a ransom in the event of taking a census, is related to numbering the people, where a king might take pride in the statistics of the number of fighting men, and trusting less in the Lord God in heaven. The half shekel is meant to remind the people who we are to trust in for life and death. This is illustrated in the events that follow a plague breaking out among the people when they are numbered. The plague begins to decrease the number of people who are ready for war, so the Lord is the One whom we trust in as opposed to trusting in numbers. The rabbis explain this in the Midrash saying the Lord did something special, showing Moshe a coin made of fire that is to be given as a ransom.

The second command is related to the sacrifice not being enough to make atonement. (*Isaiah 40:16 Even Lebanon is not enough to burn, Nor its beasts enough for a burnt offering. NASB*) This is evident elsewhere in Scripture where the Lord makes it clear that obedience is more important than sacrifice as we read according to *1 Samuel 15:22-23*.

1 Samuel 15:22-23

15:22 Samuel said, 'Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 15:23 'For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king.' (NASB)

Note how Samuel draws disobedience into the context of divination, iniquity, and idolatry. The rabbis draw upon the Torah from *Bamidbar / Numbers 28:4* on the daily sacrifice, stating that each day the sacrifice opened with a lamb, and closed with a lamb, and all of the other sacrifices are laid upon the burning ashes of the lamb upon the altar. In fact, it is interesting how the rabbis say the Lord requires nothing but the lamb and obedience to His commands. The point is within the covenant context, our relationship with God according to the covenant, one is to bring a sacrifice in its prescribed way based upon whether a man has sinned or not (see *Vayikra / Leviticus 1-6*). A man was not earning his salvation by bringing a sacrifice.

The third command the rabbis say Moshe was to construct a sanctuary. It is questioned whether one is able to construct a house for the Lord to dwell, and God says that not even the earth or all of heaven is able to contain Him, or even one of His attendants. The midrash concludes on the Lord dwelling in the Tabernacle in the following way:

But of you I require nothing other than twenty cubits in the north, twenty cubits in the south, and eight cubits in the west. Hence, will the Most High dwell in a secret place? Yes, the Almighty will abide in the shadow, for God abode in the shadow of the sanctuary built by Moshe. Another comment. Who composed this Psalm? He that dwelt in the secret place of the Most High and abode in the shadow of the Almighty. What man abode in the shadow of God? What man sat in the secret place of the world? Moshe, who sat in the secret place of the Most High and also abode in the shadow of the Almighty. Another explanation, He will abide in the shadow of the Almighty, that is, in the shadow of Bezalel. Rabbi Prozdok son of Nakhsha taught in the name of Rabbi Judah son of Rabbi Simon, The Most High dwells in a secret place means that God sees all that is done in the world, but He Himself cannot be seen; and The Almighty will abide under the shadow means that the Almighty will abide under the shadow means that the Almighty abode under the shadow which Bezalel made.

The conclusion, in the Tabernacle, in the Holy of Holies, there is no light. The menorah stands outside in the holy place, and the ark of the covenant remains in darkness behind the curtain. The Lord is said to dwell above the kapporet (*Shemot / Exodus 25:22*) in the dark place behind the curtain. This is why the midrash

states the Lord dwells in the shadow. This is interpreted as the Lord dwelling in the secret place, He sees all and yet He himself is not observed.

Midrash Tehillim 91, Part 1 concludes saying, “As Moshe was going up to heaven, he recited the Psalm against evil spirits which begins with He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High, will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.” The one who seeks the Lord in the Sanctuary is paralleled to the children of men who take refuge in the shadow of Thy wings. These men are abundantly Blessed by the abiding presence of God. This is expressed in Midrash Rabbah Bereshit 1, Part 1.

Midrash Rabbah Bereishit 1, Part 1

The great Rabbi Hoshaya opened [with the verse (Mishlei 8:30),] “I [the Torah] was an amon to Him and I was a plaything to Him every day.” Amon means “pedagogue” (i.e. nanny). Amon means “covered.” Amon means “hidden.” And there is one who says amon means “great.” Amon means “nanny,” as in (Bamidbar 11:12) “As a nanny (omein) carries the suckling child.” Amon means “covered,” as in (Eichah 4:5) “Those who were covered (emunim) in scarlet have embraced refuse heaps.” Amon means “hidden,” as in (Esther 2:7) “He hid away (omein) Hadassah.” Amon means “great,” as in (Nahum 3:8) “Are you better than No-amon [which dwells in the rivers]?” which the Targum renders as, “Are you better than Alexandria the Great (amon), which dwells between the rivers?” Alternatively, amon means “artisan.” The Torah is saying, “I was the artisan’s tool of Hashem.” In the way of the world, a king of flesh and blood who builds a castle does not do so from his own knowledge, but rather from the knowledge of an architect, and the architect does not build it from his own knowledge, but rather he has scrolls and books in order to know how to make rooms and doorways. So too Hashem gazed into the Torah and created the world. Similarly the Torah says, “Through the reishis Hashem created [the heavens and the earth],” and reishis means Torah, as in “Hashem made me [the Torah] the beginning (reishis) of His way” (Mishlei 8:22).

The rabbis look at the word amon (אֲמוֹן) meaning “trust,” and provide various other meanings to the word, pedagogue, covered, hidden, nanny, great, etc. The Torah is described as an amon (אֲמוֹן). The Torah is said to have been the tool by which the Lord created the world, which describes the beginning of God’s ways. We are told to study the Torah and to teach it to our children, read it when we raise up and when we lay down, all the day long, etc. The purpose is to learn God’s ways and to live by them. When we hide away our lives in God’s word, we are approaching Him in the secret place, as the midrash on Tehillim is saying, “He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High, will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.” We are called to abide in God’s shadow, under His wings, and in doing so we are brought under His protection and care.

Midrash Tehillim 91, Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתהיל) saying, “I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge (Tehillim / Psalms 91:2), that is, my shield; and my stronghold, that is, my fortress.” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “He is my God in whom I trust, for in His name I hunt the wicked and cast them down into Gehenna.” It is interesting how the rabbis view the Lord in the context of this psalm according to the midrash. They say the psalmist trusts in the Lord, and in His name he hunts down the wicked and cast him into Gehenna (Hell). This seems to be a psalm of one who is a warrior protecting the people of Israel from her enemies. Though the midrash speaks of the one who defeats the enemy and sends them to Gehenna, the midrash should be taken only as applying to times of war or if the enemy comes to attack one’s family, we do have a right to defend ourselves.

The entire Midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק צא סימן ב</p> <p>ב אומר לה' מחסי, אגנתי. ומצודתי. קס- טרא דידי. אלהי אבטח בו. שבשמו אני צר את הרשעים ומורידן לגיהנם, כי הוא יצילך מפח יקוש. מצודתא דציידא. מדבר הוות. מדבר שהוא מביא הוות לעולם. בא- ברתו יסך לך [וגו' צנה וסוחרה אמתו]. אמר ר' שמעון בן לקיש זיין אני עושה לכל מי שהוא עוסק באמיתה של תורה, ר' שמעון בן יוחי אמר זיין הוא אמיתה של תורה. אמר ר' שמעון בן יוחי זיין שנתן הקב"ה לישראל בסיני, שם המפורש כתוב עליו.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 91, Part 2</p> <p>2. <i>I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge (Tehillim / Psalms 91:2), that is, my shield; and my stronghold, that is, my fortress. He is my God in whom I trust, for in His name I hunt the wicked and cast them down into Gehenna. Surely, He will deliver you from the snare of the bait-layer (Tehillim / Psalms 91:3) that is, from the hunter's net; and from the noisome pestilence, that is, from the pestilence which brings destruction to the world. His truth is a shield and a buckler (Tehillim / Psalms 91:4). Rabbi Simeon son of Lakish taught that God said, I provoke armor for any man who gives himself to the truth of Torah. Rabbi Simeon son of Yokhai said, The truth of Torah is itself a coat of armor. Rabbi Simeon son of Yokhai also said, The coat of armor which the Holy One blessed be He, gave to Israel on Sinai, has the Ineffable Name written upon it.</i></p>
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The psalm speaks of the one who lays a snare and a bait-layer. The way this is written, it appears as if the enemy is looking for ways to catch a person in order to destroy them. The Lord protects His people from both the person and the pestilence that brings destruction to the world. In *Ezekiel 14:21* the prophet said *12:21 For thus says the Lord GOD, "How much more when I send My four severe judgments against Jerusalem: sword, famine, wild beasts and plague to cut off man and beast from it! (NASB)* In *Ezekiel 14:12-23*, we learn that national sins bring national judgment from the Lord. Even though it may happen that the unrighteous one may escape judgment, we are told another judgment is waiting for them. When God's people live in a state of continual violation of the covenant, they may expect all his judgments to come upon them as is stated according to the Torah. One example from the Torah is in the faith, obedience, and prayers of Noah, the Scriptures say that he was a righteous man in his time and he prevailed in saving his house, but not the old world. Another example, Daniel through prayer and the righteousness of doing what was right and striving daily in his striving for the Lord prevailed in the saving of his companions and the wise men of Babylon. But a people that are filled with the measure of their sins, is not to expect escape for the sake of a righteous men living among them. A continued lifestyle that stands in opposition to the covenant will not be accepted even in the case of one who believes in the sufferings and righteousness of the Messiah Yeshua, if he does not seek to turn from his ways and repent, there is no justification on his behalf. This is the meaning of the midrash when the rabbis say, "*Rabbi Simeon son of Lakish taught that God said, I provoke armor for any man who gives himself to the truth of Torah. Rabbi Simeon son of Yokhai said, The truth of Torah is itself a coat of armor.*" Similarly, Midrash Tehillim 91, Part 2 concludes saying, "*Rabbi Simeon son of Yokhai also said, The coat of armor which the Holy One blessed be He, gave to Israel on Sinai, has the Ineffable Name written upon it.*" The rabbi speak of giving one's self to Torah, which is synonymous to giving one's self to righteousness and truth. The Torah is the manner in which one walks in the newness of life. For the person who says He believes in Yeshua as the Messiah of God, his ways should be characterized by newness of life. This is what is meant by "*the children of God ought to walk in a manner that is suitable and worthy of God, whose children they are.*" (see *Ephesians 4:1*) With a thorough and Scriptural understanding of the Torah we realize that our death to sin in the Messiah enables us to walk according to Torah in newness of life. The Lord empowers us by His Spirit which He gives by our faith in the Messiah for this purpose, newness of life.

Midrash Tehillim 91, Part 4 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, "*A thousand will fall on your left side, and ten thousand at your right hand (Tehillim / Psalms 91:7).*" It is interesting to observe how the psalms invokes greater power to the right hand as opposed to the left. This illustrates for us the place of authority and power for the one who stands at the right hand of the king and is a consistent theme throughout the Bible. The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, "*Rabbi Isaac said, To the left hand, which is empowered to perform the commandment of Tefillin, are assigned a thousand angels to preserve a*

man from demons; but of the right hand, which is empowered to perform many commandments” The rabbis open with an interpretation that the left hand is given to prayer, and the right hand is to be given to maasim tovim. The left hand is spiritual, the right hand is physical. This illustrates for us how we are both spiritual and physical creatures and our relationship with the Lord God in heaven is both spiritual and physical (we are called to walk worthy of our calling, *Ephesians 4:1*). The entire midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק צא סימן ד</p> <p>ד יפול מצדך אלף. ר' יצחק אמר היד שהיא שולטת על מצות תפלין, נמסרו לה אלף מלאכים לשומרו מן המזיקין, והימין ששולטת במצות הרבה, ורובה מימין, ריבוא של מלאכים נמסרו לו לשומרו מן המזיקין, אמר ר' חנינא בר אבהו אינו אומר ימסרו לך אלא יפול, שאם באים אלף מזיקין לפני היד, הן נופלין לפניה, לפי שהיא שולטת (במצות הרבה) [על מצוה אחת], ולפני הימין רובה [הן נור-פלין לפניה, לפי שהיא שולטת במצות הרבה]. בנוהג שבעולם נמסר לאדם אלף איש עליו לזון אותם, לפי שהן מסורין לטובתו לשומרו, אבל הקב"ה מוסר לאדם אלף מלאכים משמאלו וריבוא מימינו לטובתו לשומרו, ואף על פי כן אליך לא יגש [שתזון אותם], רק בעיניך תביט, שתראה כאשר יתמו הרשעים, שנאמר ושלומת רשעים תראה.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 91, Part 4</p> <p>4. <i>A thousand will fall on your left side, and ten thousand at your right hand (Tehillim / Psalms 91:7). Rabbi Isaac said, To the left hand, which is empowered to perform the commandment of Tefillin, are assigned a thousand angels to preserve a man from demons; but of the right hand, which is empowered to perform many commandments, it is written, Ten thousand to your right, that is, ten thousand angels are assigned to it to save a man from demons. Rabbi Hanina son of Abbahu taught, Scripture does not say, will be assigned to you, but says, will fall, and this implies that if a thousand demons should come against a man's left, they will fall before it, because it is empowered to perform a single command, but that even if ten thousand demons should come against the right, they will fall before it, because the right is empowered to perform many commandments. Ordinarily, when a thousand men are assigned to one man, he is obligated to feed them, seeing that they are assigned to him for his well being, to preserve him. But the Holy One blessed be He, assigns a thousand angels to the left of a man, and ten thousand to his right for the man's well being, to preserve him, and yet declares that the angels will not come near you, for you to feed them. Yes, with your eyes will you look on (Tehillim / Psalms 91:8), that is, look on with satisfaction while the wicked perish, for the verse ends by saying, And see the recompense of the wicked.</i></p>
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Based upon the rabbinic interpretation, the left hand is set for prayer and the Lord providing His angels for a man to fight against demonic attack. This seems to illustrate the significance of the spiritual warfare we are involved within this world (left hand) which is coupled to the obedience to the Torah (right hand). The Midrash states, *“Rabbi Hanina son of Abbahu taught, Scripture does not say, will be assigned to you, but says, will fall, and this implies that if a thousand demons should come against a man's left, they will fall before it, because it is empowered to perform a single command, but that even if ten thousand demons should come against the right, they will fall before it, because the right is empowered to perform many commandments.”* The rabbis speak of the power of God's command to overcome the spiritual forces. The connection here is to the nature of sin in relation to the commandments. Sin by definition occurs due to disobedience to the command of God. When one violates the commands, when one sins, one gives himself to the evil desires (evil thoughts) and to idolatry. The rabbinic mindset draws all of these concepts together based upon our study of the rabbinic literature. It is interesting also how the Apostle Paul's words to the Corinthians provides some insight to the Midrash according to *2 Corinthians 10:1-7*.

2 Corinthians 10:1-7

10:1 Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent! 10:2 I ask that when I am present I need not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous against some, who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh. 10:3 For though we walk in the

flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, 10:4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. 10:5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, 10:6 and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete. 10:7 You are looking at things as they are outwardly. If anyone is confident in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again within himself, that just as he is Christ's, so also are we. (NASB)

Note how Paul explains that though we walk in the flesh we do not war according to the flesh saying, *10:4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. 10:5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. (NASB)* Paul is using this rabbinic understanding of who we are in the Messiah, that we are to live our lives according to God's word and not give ourselves over to the evil desires, evil thoughts, or to idolatry. He speaks of the lofty imagination or thought which raises itself up above the knowledge of God, and to taking our thoughts captive to the obedience of the Messiah. Note how the obedience of the Messiah (Christ) is synonymous to being obedient to God's commands as we are told to walk as Yeshua walked by the Apostle John (*1 John 2:4-6*). In addition, the taking captive every thought may also be paralleled to the rabbinic imperative of studying Torah. The midrash continues saying the following:

Ordinarily, when a thousand men are assigned to one man, he is obligated to feed them, seeing that they are assigned to him for his well being, to preserve him. But the Holy One blessed be He, assigns a thousand angels to the left of a man, and ten thousand to his right for the man's well being, to preserve him, and yet declares that the angels will not come near you, for you to feed them.

The rabbis contrast soldiers being assigned to a man for the purpose of safety, and the man is obligated to feed them, whereas, the Lord God in heaven provides His angels for a man's safety and it is for the purpose of saving him and the angels do not come near because the man is not able to feed them. In addition, the rabbis say that the Lord provides one thousand angels for the left, and ten thousand angels on the right, and connects this to the left being capable of performing one command (prayer), and the right being capable of performing many commands (the mitzvot). The power of the left and right, of the spiritual and the physical, and the Lord providing His angels illustrates for us how the Lord is working in our lives to save us and to protect us both spiritually and physically, and the Lord does this out of His grace and mercy on our behalf. The reason being we always fall short of the Torah command, but the important point is that we are striving for the righteousness of God in our lives and seeking His help to overcome sin and disobedience, and to produce truth, justice, and love in our lives towards others.

Midrash Tehillim 91, Part 4 concludes saying, *"Yes, with your eyes will you look on (Tehillim / Psalms 91:8), that is, look on with satisfaction while the wicked perish, for the verse ends by saying, And see the recompense of the wicked."* The Midrash speaks of looking with satisfaction upon the wicked while they perish. The satisfaction should not be found in the destruction of the wicked, but on how the Lord is and has provided His salvation to sustain us and to lead us to repentance daily. The Lord God works in our hearts to consistently draw us to Himself and to His Messiah Yeshua, and for that, we can be greatly satisfied, even in the midst of the destruction of the wicked, which is a sad thing to behold.

Midrash Tehillim 91, Part 5 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, *"For You, O Lord, who are my refuge, have made Your habitation on high (Tehillim / Psalms 91:9)."* The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *"Rabbi Hanina taught, The saying has it that we notice life only as we are losing it, as we notice the eye only when it becomes inflamed."* This is a very significant point the rabbis are making with regard to our relationship with the Lord. We tend to take life for granted, and even the eye, until these things start to fail and then we seek with much strength to get them back. The same could be said of

our relationship with the Lord. This is a great example for us today to not take our relationship with the Lord for granted. The entire Midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק צא סימן ה</p> <p>ה כי אתה ה' מחסי. אמר ר' חנינא נפשי מן דכלתא ועיינא לי מן קרח-תא, נתת את התורה בתחתונים אצ-לינו, ועליון שמת מעונך. לא תאונה אליך רעה. אמר ר' יוחנן עד שלא הוקם המשכן היו המזיקין מתגרין לבריות, משהוקם המשכן ונגע לא יקרב באהלך, אמר ר' שמעון בן לקיש ולמה נלמד מספר תילים, והא כתיב יברכך ה' וישמרך (במדבר ו כד), מן המזיקין, וסמך ליה ויהי ביום כלות משה להקים את המשכן (שם במדבר ז א).</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 91, Part 5</p> <p>5. <i>For You, O Lord, who are my refuge, have made Your habitation on high (Tehillim / Psalms 91:9). Rabbi Hanina taught, The saying has it that we notice life only as we are losing it, as we notice the eye only when it becomes inflamed. This refers to the argument above in which Israel complained to God, You have put upon us the task of keeping the Torah here below, but Your dwelling place You have put on high. There will not evil befall you (Tehillim / Psalms 91:10). Rabbi Johanan taught, Before the Tabernacle was erected, demons used to throw themselves upon the morals, but after it was erected, no plague came near your Tabernacle. Rabbi Simeon son of Lakish asked Rabbi Johanan, But to improve this, why go to the Book of Psalms? Is it not written The Lord bless you, and keep you (Bamidbar / Numbers 6:24), that is, Keep you from the demons, and is not this verse immediately followed by And it came to pass on the day that Moshe had made an end of setting up the Tabernacle (Bamidbar / Numbers 7:1)?</i></p>
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The rabbis interpret this to mean that Israel complained to the Lord about having put them to the task of Shomer Mitzvah. Does this sound familiar today in the church? The contrast is the rabbis are placing the opinion of the people in the wilderness, that the command is low, and the dwelling place of God (Tabernacle) is high. This seems to be a minimization of the command as opposed to the things of the spirit (prayer, etc). In the book of Joshua, when the people crossed over, we are told the former people were abstinent and rebelled against God's commands, they were not obedient, and all of the people needed to be circumcised illustrating that point, they had minimized the command. The idea is what we do here on earth is to be marginalized, and that the spirit realm is to be maximized. The point of the matter, something which the people in the wilderness missed, as the command is the physical (e.g. how we live for the Lord), the mitzvot are as significant as the spiritual and there is a close connection to both as we saw in Midrash Tehillim 91, Part 4. Rabbi Johanan taught that demons threw themselves upon the morals before the Tabernacle was built. But after the Tabernacle was established, no plague came near. How do we interpret what the rabbis are trying to say here? Can we say the rabbis blame demons for immorality? Certainly not! Earlier we read of the power of the left and right hand, the performing of the commands, disobedience (sin), and demonic attack. The demonic attack was paralleled to sin and disobedience. Therefore, sin and disobedience are connected to one's morals, and the Tabernacle being a physical sign and reminder of God in the midst of the people produced a greater level of obedience and morality, than prior to its construction. However this was not always the case, as we know according to Parashat Pinchas, and Israel's interaction with the daughters of Midian. The point is that we are responsible for our actions, and we cannot blame the evil forces that are at work for our sins. This is why the Apostle Paul warned us so sternly in *2 Corinthians 10:1-7* of the weapons we war with and the taking each thought captive to the obedience of Christ. The war against sin begins in the mind. This is also why the rabbis are so adamant about studying Torah and all of God's Word. Studying God's Word leads to the renewing of our minds, and this then is further facilitated by the power of God in the Messiah, and the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit.

Midrash Tehillim 91, Part 5 concludes saying, "*Is it not written The Lord bless you, and keep you (Bamidbar / Numbers 6:24), that is, Keep you from the demons, and is not this verse immediately followed by And it came to pass on the day that Moshe had made an end of setting up the Tabernacle (Bamidbar / Numbers 7:1)?*" The Midrash illustrates for us the significance of the spiritual and the physical realms, and how the commandments (repenting and turning from sin) are as significant as the things of the spirit.

Midrash Tehillim 91, Part 7 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “Another version, *The Rabbis maintained that there were two stones, two being the least number of the plural.*” The פתיחה (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*When Jacob arose early in the morning, he found that the stones had become one stone, and he fell into a great fear, saying, The house of the Holy One blessed be He, is in this place and I was not aware of His presence, as is said, And he was afraid, and said, How full of awe is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven (Bereshit / Genesis 28:17).*” In order to understand the meaning of the opening verse from the Midrash, we have to go back and look at Midrash Tehillim 91, Part 6.

Rabbi Judah maintained, At the time when Jacob was meditating in doubt, he asked Will I be the father of twelve tribes? What did he do? He took twelve stones and placed them under his head, and said, If all the stones are made into one stone, I will know that I am to beget twelve tribes. So thinking, he directed his heart to his Creator, and He took of the stones of the place (Bereshit / Genesis 28:11), and they were made one stone. Rabbi Nehemiah maintained, There were three stones. And Jacob said, If the Holy One blessed be He, is to confer His name upon me, as He conferred it on my fathers Abraham and Isaac, the stones will all be made into one stone. And, as it is said, He took of the stones of the place, and when he arose, he found all of them made into one stone. And the proof that all of them were made into one stone? Because it is then said And Jacob took the stone (Bereshit / Genesis 28:18). The rabbis maintained, Jacob took two stones, two being the least number of the plural. (Midrash Tehillim 91, Part 6)

The midrash states that Jacob when he was fleeing from Esau placed twelve stones under his head and in the morning they became one stone. And the reason the rabbis conclude on two stones, is because of the original interpretation of twelve stones which became one, twelve being plural, and so two is the least number of stones that is a plural. Midrash Tehillim 91, Part 7 follows with an alternate interpretation on the two stones and that by reason of the twelve stones that became one, Jacob was in awe of the presence and power of God. The twelve stones is a reference to Jacob’s children who became the tribes of Israel, and these twelve tribes became one, may be paralleled to the Lord delivering Israel, all twelve tribes as one from bondage, from Mitzrayim (Egypt).

The midrash continues saying that “*when a man prays in Jerusalem, it is as though he prays before the throne of glory, for the gate of heaven is in Jerusalem, and a door is always open for the hearing of prayer, as is said, This is the gate of heaven.*” The place that Jacob lay down was Bethel, and it may be the Midrash is speaking of the place being Jerusalem indicated by the comments on prayer and Jerusalem. The Midrash continues with the twelve stones that became one and the setting up the pillar and the oath Jacob made before the Lord in that place.

What did the Holy One blessed be He do? Like a man setting in the place the central pole of a tent, He raised His right foot and drove the stone down into the very bottom of the deeps and made it the pillar of the earth. Therefore, it is called the spindle stone, for it is the very navel of the earth, from which the whole earth is stretched out. And upon the stone is the house of the Lord, as is said, And this stone which I have set up for a pillar shall be God’s house (Bereshit / Genesis 28:22). And Jacob prostrated himself on the earth before the spindle stone and prayed to the Holy One blessed be He, saying, Master of the universe, if You will bring me back to this place in peace, I will then sacrifice thank offerings and burnt offerings to You, as is said, And Jacob vowed saying, This stone will be God’s house (Bereshit / Genesis 28:20,22). (Midrash Tehillim 91, Part 7)

The Midrash then speaks of the Lord God driving the pillar, and the twelve stones that became one into the earth and it became the spindle stone of the earth, the foundation stone the earth is set upon and the stone

upon which the Lord's house will be built. The Midrash continues saying, *“And as he vowed, so he performed. And then, leaving behind him the well, the well that had traveled before him, he took one step and in the wink of an eye was in Haran, as is said, And Jacob lifted up his feet, and came into the land of the people of the east (Bereshit / Genesis 29:1), and as it is also said, And Jacob went from the Well of Sheba, and came to Haran (Bereshit / Genesis 28:10).”* It is interesting how the rabbis speak of the well that went before Jacob. This is similar to what is written of Israel in Midrash Rabbah Bamidbar, Parashat 1, Part 2.

Midrash Rabbah Bamidbar, Parshah 1, Part 2

“In the exposition of the text, And the Lord spoke unto Moshe in the wilderness of Sinai (Bamidbar / Numbers 1:1) ... And there was no water for the congregation (Bamidbar / Numbers 20:2). How was the well constructed? It was rock-shaped like a kind of bee-hive, and wherever they journeyed it rolled along and came with them. When the standards under which the tribes of journeyed halted and the tabernacle was setup, that same rock would come and settle down in the court of the Tent of Meeting and the princes would come and stand upon it and say, Rise up, O well (Bamidbar / Numbers 21:17), and it would rise.” (שם במדבר כ') ולא היהמים לעדה, והיאך היתה הבאר עשויה סלע כמין כוורת היתה ומתגלגלת ובאת עמהם במסעות וכיון שהיו הדגלים חוגנים והמשכן עומד היה אותו הסלע בא ויושב לו בחצר אהל מועד והנשיאים באים ועומדים על גביו ואומרים עלי באר והיתה עולה, ואח"כ הבאתי לכם שלמים, המדבר הייתי לישראל שמא כמדבר נהגתי (עמכם אלא אם ארץ מאפליה לא אני בידי הייתי מאיר לכם שנהא' שמות יג)

According to the midrash, the rabbis say that when the children of Israel needed water, the Lord constructed for them a well that was shaped like a bee-hive that gave forth water and this rock followed them wherever they journeyed in the wilderness. In addition to this, the rock that gave life giving water settled down in the Ohel Moed (Tent of Meeting) and the princes of the tribes of Israel would come and stand upon it and say *“Rise up O well.”* The rock tabernacled with His people. In the rabbinic literature, there are other references to this same life giving rock, the children of Israel, and the wilderness. In the Targum Jonathan (Aramaic Translation) the rabbis expand upon *Bamidbar / Numbers 21:19* to describe the rock or “well” that *“followed”* them (the children of Israel):

“From the time that the well in Mattanah was given them, it was made again to them brooks that were overflowing and violent; and again it went up unto the tops of the mountains, and went down with them into the valleys...”

ומן דאתיהבת להון למתנא חזרת למיסוק עימהון לטווריית רמיית ומטווריית רמיית נחתא עימהון לגלימתא מחזרא לכל משיריתא דישראל ומשקיא יתהון כל חד וחד בתרע משכניה

The Aramaic translation uses a parable to say these waters that proceeded from the rock followed Israel and gave them life giving waters. According to the Tosefta, this tradition of the rock is related in the following way:

“It was likewise with the well that was with the children of Israel in the wilderness, it [the well] was like a rock that was full of holes like a sieve from which water trickled and arose as from the opening of a flask. It [the rock-well] ascended with them to the top of the hills and descended with them into the valleys; wherever Israel tarried there it tarried over against the entrance to the tabernacle”

Based upon these rabbinic references, there appears to be a Midrashic tradition that was captured in the translation of the Targums and of the Talmud. The idea of a rock that gave forth life giving waters, that followed Israel in the wilderness. There also seems to be this same concept of the rock that provides life

giving waters in the context of Jacob on his journey to Haran, as is understood by the rabbis comments of the well that went before him. While studying the Apostolic Writings, the Apostle Paul utilizes the rabbinic midrash while speaking to the Corinthians in *1 Corinthians 10:1-4*. Because of this midrashic explanation of the book of Numbers, the first Century people would have been very familiar with the parable of the rock that followed Israel giving them life.

1 Corinthians 10:1-4

10:1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; 10:2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 10:3 and all ate the same spiritual food; 10:4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. (NASB)

¹ Οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν πάντες ὑπὸ τὴν νεφέλην ἦσαν καὶ πάντες διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης διήλθον, ² καὶ πάντες εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν ἐβαπτίσθησαν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσσει, ³ καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν βρῶμα ἔφαγον, ⁴ καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν ἔπιον πόμα: ἔπιον γὰρ ἐκ πνευματικῆς ἀκολουθούσης πέτρας: ἡ πέτρα δὲ ἦν ὁ Χριστός.

Here, the Apostle Paul is drawing upon the rabbinic tradition to illustrate what Yeshua the Messiah has done for God's people. It also seems that the rabbinic midrash regarding the "rock that followed Israel in the wilderness" is not problematic with "the rock as Christ (Messiah)." The Apostle Paul ascribes the deity of Yeshua as the "Rock" that is also a term that was reserved for the Lord God Almighty only (i.e. *Parashat Ha'azinu*). David says the Lord is his "rock of strength" (לְצוּר-מַעוֹז) and "You are my rock and my fortress" (כִּי-לְעֵס-וַיִּצְרֶנּוּ יְהוָה) seems to suggest that he (David) understood the Lord as a source of strength and life just like Paul is saying in *1 Corinthians 10* with the help of the rabbinic midrash for both Jacob and the people of Israel. The phrase, "...that followed them," in the Apostolic Writings, comes from the Greek word, ἀκολουθούσης "akolouthouoses," which means "to follow one who precedes, join him as his attendant, or accompany him." The Apostle Paul is explaining to the Corinthians that the "rock" at Meribah was spiritually patterned after Yeshua the Messiah. Using this example, Paul is saying that Yeshua comes along side of us and walks with us in life and therefore he uses this parable to direct our attention to the Messiah. The Rock, who is God, was a figure or shadow, of the Messiah in a similar way that the Pesach lamb prefigured Yeshua. In addition to this, in the wilderness, the Rock was struck with the rod for the sake of Israel. Can you see the parallel here in the biblical text, with the parable of the rabbis and the things that Yeshua did for us? Yeshua suffered for our sakes (*1 Peter 2:24*) and he is the life giving waters (*John 4:10, 7:37-39, and Revelation 22:17*). What an awesome picture we see of Christ in the rabbinic literature and the words of the Apostle Paul in *1 Corinthians 10:1-4*.

It is important to note that in Midrash Rabbah Bamidbar, the rabbis speak of the well that followed Israel. Paul also used the phrase "the well that followed them." Here however we find the rabbis saying the well that preceded or led Jacob. Here we find the Lord God providing both His sustaining power and also leading Jacob to where He is to go, under the covenant that He made with Jacob. This is illustrated in the Midrash which says, "The angels bore up Jacob, as is said Angels will bear you up in their hands (*Tehillim / Psalms 91:11-12*). And the steps of Jacob were not shortened and his strength was not subdued, and mighty man that he was, he rolled the stone away from the well's mouth, and the well gushed up, the water brimming over." Again, this is an illustration of God's sustaining power over Jacob (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:18*).

Midrash Tehillim 91, Part 7 concludes saying, "The herdsmen looked and were astonished that Jacob had rolled the stone away by himself since all of them together could not roll away the stone, for the herdsmen used to say, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and they roll the stone from the well's mouth, But when Jacob went near, he rolled the stone from the well's mouth (*Bereshit / Genesis 29:8-10*)." The Midrash concludes with the Lord giving Jacob strength to roll the stone from the mouth of the well in

order to water the flocks. It is important to note how the Lord provided the water, He also provides the food for the flocks, but we are called to act upon our faith to use what the Lord has given us. One of the most overlooked miracles of God is His sustaining power in our lives, to give us breath, and to help us daily for everything. Let's Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We Praise Your Holy Name and thank You for the promises you have made in the covenant that you have established for us. Lord we ask that You would have mercy upon us, we seek Your mercy, and for Your help to overcome sin in our lives. Lord You placed in our hearts to serve and to live our lives for You and we so deeply desire to do so and ask that You would set us free from sin in our lives in the Name of Yeshua the Messiah! We thank You for the promises You have made and for Your continued faithfulness to Your promises and to us. Thank You Lord 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