

## Psalm 121

Rashi says the title here is "a song *for* ascents," rather than "*of* ascents"

[The Psalmist] alludes, in the second psalm, to the steps that ascend for the righteous in the future from beneath the Tree of Life to the Throne of Glory, as we learned in Sifrei (Ekev 47): "It does not say here, 'A song of ascents' but, 'A song for ascents'; a song for the One Who is destined to make ascents for the righteous in the future."

**Psalm 121:1-2** - "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. From whence cometh my help? My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth."

or "Shall I lift up mine eyes (in prayer and expectation) to the hills? From where does my help come?"

The high places in Canaan were located on hills, and represent the first place we seek for help in the flesh - to our idols, groves and pillars, the natural things we value and think will provide defense or nourishment. But they all fail. Now we walk "not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

Now our help comes from God, who unlike the powerless idols, "made heaven and earth."

- **Jeremiah 10:11** - "Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens."

**Psalm 121:3-4** - "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."

Not like the idols - see Elijah's mocking of Baal: " Perhaps he sleepeth, and must be awakened." (**1 Kings 18:27**)

- **Psalm 62:2** - "He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved."

- **Isaiah 27:3** - "In that day: "Sing about a fruitful vineyard. I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."

**Psalm 121:5-6** - "The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night."

Targum: "The Word of the Lord is thy keeper..."

"Shade" - **Psalm 91:1** - "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

Protecting the right hand, because the right side is usually unshielded in battle.

Protected from the sun - from burning heat; and from the moon - from the damp and cold. Like the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night in the wilderness.

Targum: "in the day, when the sun rules, the morning spirits shall not smite thee; nor the nocturnal ones in the night, when the moon rules."

**Psalm 121:7-8** - "The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore."

Targum: "The Word of the Lord shall preserve thee..."

"preserve" = *shamar* - keep

This is the main theme of this psalm, and this word is repeated five times.

"from all evil" meaning mainly from the dominating power of sin. We may still experience affliction and tribulation, but nothing will reach us except what He designs for good.

- **John 17:12** - "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."

- **Romans 8:28** - "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

"Thy going out and thy coming in" - a picture of sheep being led to pasture and then returning to the sheepfold.

Targum: "the Lord will keep thy going out to business, and thy coming in to study in the law."

Meir Arama, c 1590, in his commentary on the Psalms, interprets this of a man's "going out into the air of this world, and of his entrance into the world to come. "

Jesus is the Door that allows us to go "in and out": prayer and worship in Spirit and truth.

- **John 10:9** - "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

- **Deuteronomy 28:6** - "Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out."

- **1 Samuel 2:30** - "Therefore the Lord, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your

house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,' but now the Lord declares: 'Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed."