PSALM 91

The Hidden Hebrew of Spiritual Warfare

AI-ASSISTED BIBLE STUDY

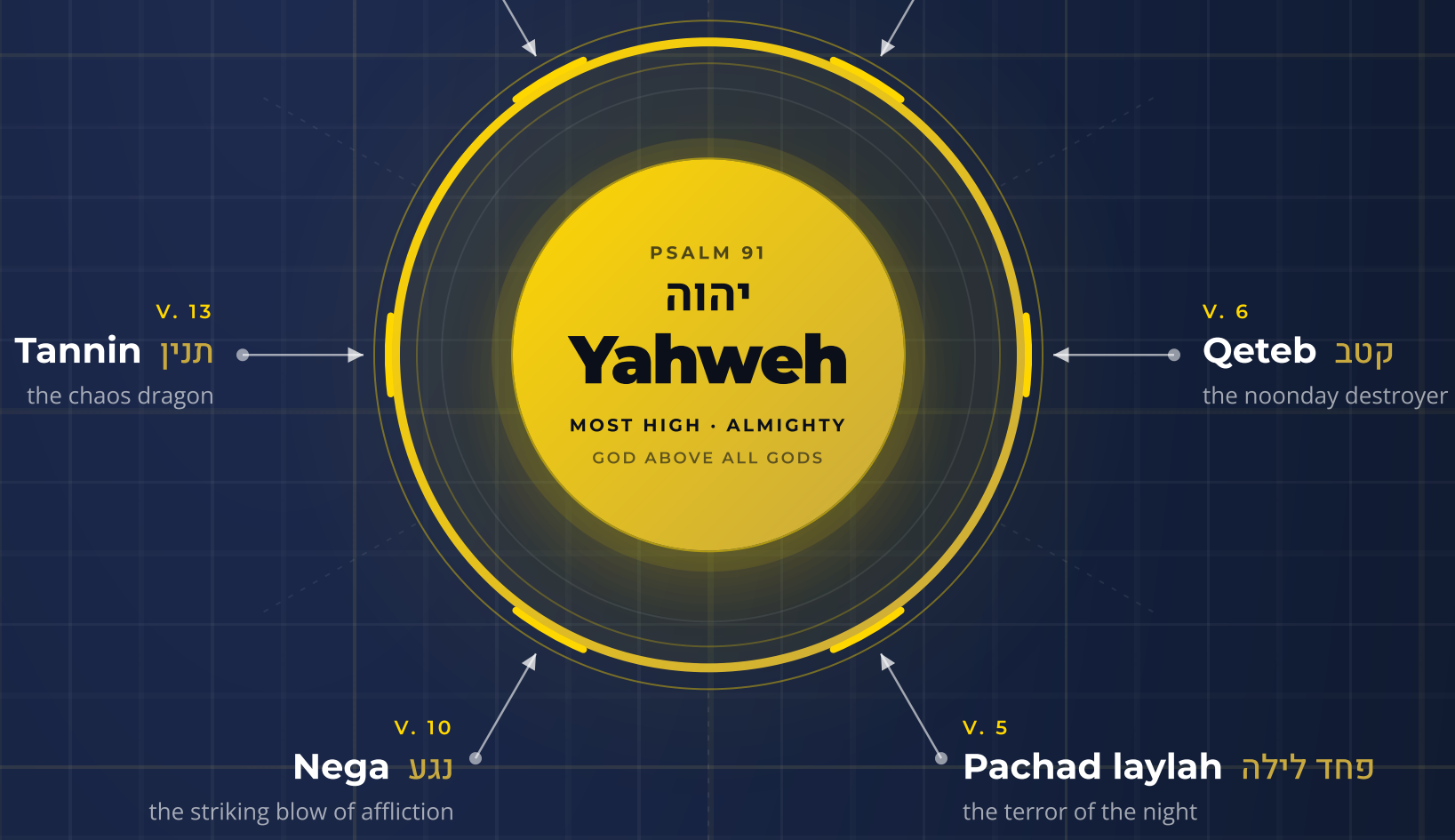
6 TECHNOLOGY LEVERS

Psalm 91 names its enemies. Under the words translated “pestilence,” “terror,” “arrow” and “destruction” sit the names of plague gods and demons that Israel’s neighbors feared.

PSALM 91:4

Shield and buckler

Six powers loose their arrows at the psalm. Every one breaks on the shield of Yahweh God, the God above all Gods.



SIX NAMES

The powers named

Six powers sit behind the psalm’s images. Yahweh God, the God above all Gods, tramples or turns back every one of them.

דבר — VV. 3, 6

Deber
translated “pestilence”

A plague deity, called Dabir in the Ebla texts. Pictured as a destroyer who walks at night.

ELSEWHERE IN SCRIPTURE
Hab 3:5: Deber walks before the LORD like a captured enemy.

רשף — V. 5 (IMAGE)

Resheph
translated “arrow”

The Canaanite plague god, pictured as an archer who shoots disease. Ugaritic texts call him “Resheph of the arrow.”

ELSEWHERE IN SCRIPTURE
Deut 32:24; Hab 3:5 (“burning coals”); Job 5:7 (“sons of Resheph”).

קטב — V. 6

Qeteb
translated “destruction”

The noonday destroyer. In rabbinic lore, Qeteb Meriri is a demon full of scales and eyes, strongest at midday in high summer.

ELSEWHERE IN SCRIPTURE
Deut 32:24 (“bitter destruction”); Isa 28:2.

פחד לילה — V. 5

Terror of the night
Pachad laylah, translated “terror”

Night demons that attack in darkness. Jewish tradition linked this to Lilith, the night creature.

ELSEWHERE IN SCRIPTURE
Isa 34:14 (“screech owl,” Hebrew lilit).

נגע — V. 10

Nega
translated “plague”

The striking blow of affliction. The Talmud named the whole psalm after it.

ELSEWHERE IN SCRIPTURE
Lev 13 (plague of leprosy); 2 Sam 7:14.

תנין — V. 13

Tannin
translated “dragon”

The chaos dragon, related to Leviathan and Rahab. In the ancient world it stood for rebellion against God’s order.

ELSEWHERE IN SCRIPTURE
Isa 27:1; Isa 51:9; Ps 74:13; Rev 12:9.



DAY · V. 5
Chets חץ
the arrow of Resheph

NOON · V. 6
Qeteb קטב
the noonday destroyer

DARKNESS · V. 6
Deber דבר
the pestilence that walks

NIGHT · V. 5
Pachad laylah פחד לילה
the night terror

THE ANCIENT READING

Why Psalm 91 is a warfare psalm

Ancient readers heard the psalm this way.

TALMUD · SHEVUOT 15B
Calls it **Shir shel Pega’im**, “the song against afflictions,” meaning attacks from evil spirits.

DEAD SEA SCROLLS · 11Q11
A short set of exorcism psalms. It ends with Psalm 91.

ARAMAIC TARGUM
An ancient Jewish paraphrase of the Psalms. It reads demons directly into verses 5, 6 and 10.

AMULETS
Jews and early Christians wrote its verses on amulets for protection.

SEPTUAGINT · PS 90 LXX
Translates verse 6 as “the noonday demon.”

SOURCES Primary texts referenced: the Hebrew Masoretic text of Psalm 91; the Greek Septuagint (Ps 90 LXX); the Aramaic Targum of Psalms; Babylonian Talmud, Shevuot 15b; Numbers Rabbah 12:3; Dead Sea Scroll 11Q11; Ugaritic and Ebla texts on Resheph and Dabir. Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.