

ספר תהלים

The Book of Psalms

**featuring new translation
and explanations
based on**

Rashi's Commentary

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to the loving memory of**

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Eli and Ruchie Abbott

Yoni and Hadassah Abbott

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and by all her greatgrandchildren שיחיו

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Preface

Over two and a half thousand years ago, a collection of exquisite poetry gained widespread popularity in the Kingdom of Israel. Although the poems were composed by a number of different authors, the majority are attributed to King David, and the collection has become identified with his name – King David’s Book of Psalms.

From the beginning, the Book of Psalms was embraced with love by the Jewish people. It was incorporated into the Torah as part of the Kethuvim, but that alone does not explain its amazing popularity, which far surpasses that of any other book in the Torah. In fact, it has become one of the great classics of world literature, touching the hearts of untold millions of people of all faiths and creeds as no other book has ever been able to do. How do we explain this literary phenomenon?

Before we consider the extraordinary power of the Psalms, however, let us first consider their extraordinary author. King David was a man of immense complexity and sophistication – ferocious warrior, tenacious scholar, talented singer, musician and composer, deeply religious, regal yet supremely humble, passionate in all his endeavors. He defeated Israel’s ancestral foes on all sides and established a regional empire that stretched from northern Syria to Egypt. His descendants, in an unbroken patrilineal chain, occupied the Davidic throne for centuries until the kingdom was dissolved and its inhabitants were led off into captivity in Babylon. His forty-year reign was characterized by incessant war, sedition and dynastic struggles. One of his own sons drove him from Jerusalem and temporarily usurped his throne. His life was a peculiar blend of triumph and tragedy, of joy and pain, of exultation and heartbreak.

By all accounts, this ancient monarch could easily have become a figure

of legend and myth, like Nebuchadnezzar or Alexander, but he did not. King David comes down to us as a figure of profound humanity, a person with whom we can sympathize and, perhaps more important, identify. For this we must thank the Psalms in which he throws open the deepest chambers of his heart and soul. We see him in moments of delirious joy. We see him depressed by the perfidy of his supposed friends. We see him angry and bent on righteous vengeance. We see him seeking solace in his faith and keeping hope alive when there seems to be no end to the darkness.

In short, we see this great warrior king as a passionate human being struggling with dilemmas and problems all too familiar to us. We weep with him in his sorrow and laugh with him in his triumph, and we are comforted. And thus the Book of Psalms emerges as a work of transcendent genius, as the ultimate literary expression of pure humanity.

For all its grandeur and appeal, however, the Book of Psalms is nonetheless a work of ancient literature, written in a particularly difficult literary form of Biblical Hebrew, which is as different from modern Hebrew as Old English is from modern English. Moreover, many words in the Psalms do not appear elsewhere in Scripture, certainly not in the same form, and their meanings can only be determined from context or by oral tradition.

Occasionally, the text makes use of words or word forms derived from the Aramaic, an ancient Semitic language closely related to Hebrew and Arabic. Words are often strung together in cryptic sequences, leaving it to the imagination of the reader to discern the intent of the author. Clearly then, we can only gain access to this work through translations based on painstaking textual scholarship.

The earliest translation of the Psalms was the Targum translation into Aramaic composed by Yonathan ben Uziel in the first century of the common era. This was followed by numerous elucidations of the meaning of the Psalms in the Talmud and Midrash, followed by centuries of linguistic scholarship, especially during the so-called Golden Age of

Spanish Jewry.

Linguistic and grammatical studies, as well as many other fields of Hebrew scholarship, flourished under the patronage of the Umayyad caliphate of Spain during the eight and ninth centuries. Outstanding grammarians, such as Menachem of Tortosa and Dunash Ibn Labrat, analyzed the ancient texts to derive formal rules of grammar, something which had never been done before. Scholars used Talmudic citations from the Psalms to shed light on the exact meaning of the ancient texts. Naturally, there were still numerous points of disagreement among the scholars with regard to the interpretation of the Psalms, but it was disagreement based on a wealth of information rather than a lack of it.

The linguistic and grammatical works of the early Spanish schools eventually led to the next phase of scholarship, when many linear elucidations were composed in Spain and France during the eleventh and twelfth centuries by scholars such as Rashi, Nachmanides, Ibn Ezra, Radak and Gershonides. These works are not all in agreement, reflecting the different schools of thought in the earlier period.

I have based my translation on the works of Rashi, whose full name was Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, the preeminent Biblical commentator of the Middle Ages. Rashi's commentaries on the Bible and the Talmud, which appear as glosses in most editions, are so authoritative that they have become an integral part of the text. No serious Biblical or Talmudic scholar would analyze any subject without first giving serious consideration to Rashi's views. In his Biblical commentaries, Rashi regularly cites the works of the earlier grammarians and, of all the commentators, is most consistent with the Targum, the first-century Aramaic translation.

In my translation, therefore, I have faithfully followed Rashi's interpretations as I understood them. Where Rashi offers no comment, I have followed the Targum translation. Where Targum, which is a somewhat free translation, also sheds no light on a particular turn of phrase, I have relied on the reference works and used my own judgment.

I have, of course, not followed the Hebrew syntax, nor have I transported Hebrew idiom into the English language. For instance, the word *kelayot*, kidneys, is a common metaphor for conscience or inner thoughts. I have, therefore, translated them as such, and the metaphor is unfortunately lost in the translation.

Stylistically, the Psalmist does not feel constrained by iambic pentameter or any other formal pattern. He uses metric cadences that are quite similar to those of modern poetry, and the result is magnificent, searing, soaring poetry. I have labored to retain that poetic flavor and spirit in my translation without losing the clarity of the thoughts. I have avoided arcane language and obscure references to the best of my ability. This has been a very serious scholarly undertaking for me, but I have never lost sight of the lay reader.

More than anything else, I have tried to provide pleasure and inspiration to all modern readers, to present the Psalms in language that will convey the passion and poetry with which the Psalmist writes. I have also added small paragraphs before each section and psalm. These are not summaries of the psalm or commentaries on them. Often borrowing from the poet's language, they are introductions meant to give the reader a taste of what is to come and a sense of the poet's mood.

Because of the innumerable differences, both major and minor, between my new translation and the old ones, the reader may sometimes find unfamiliar phraseology. For instance, in the last line of the well-known Psalm 23, the Psalmist states, "*Veshavti beveith Hashem le'orech yamim.*" This is commonly translated as, "I will dwell in the House of God forever." *Le'orech yamim*, however, does not mean forever. The words for forever are *le'olam* or *la'ad* or *lanetzach* or *selah* (according to Rashi and Targum), but not *le'orech yamim*. The literal translation is "for a length of days," and I have rendered it as "for a very long time," which I believe to be the exact intention of the Psalmist. The Psalmist is clearly referring to his physical existence in this finite world rather than the eternal world of souls,

expressing a desire to dwell in the House of God in this temporal world, where no one lives forever but some live for a very long time. We find a similar usage in 27:4, “*Shivti beveith Hashem kol yemei chayai,*” which is translated as “to dwell in the House of God all my living days.” The same usage, the same idea. I beg the indulgence of readers who are disconcerted by these changes, but I am convinced that their understanding and appreciation of the ancient texts will be enriched by the new perspectives of this translation.

In any rendition of the Psalms, the reader will find that the Psalmist often shifts between tenses or between the second and third person. There are no indications in the text that the Psalmist is making these shifts other than the context of his words. This can be disconcerting if we do not understand why the Psalmist, brilliant poet that he is, occasionally writes in such a choppy way.

Perhaps it can be explained by the original purpose of the Psalms. They were written for the Levites to sing in the Holy Temple of Jerusalem. Many Psalms begin with instructions for their performance, such as the instruments for which they were written. It is quite possible, therefore, that different choir groups of Levites sang different parts of the Psalms, that there were choruses and harmonies. The unexplained shifts in the text might therefore follow shifts in choral roles, where one group may address God in the second person and the chorus comes in with a verse in the third person. It must have been exceedingly beautiful and dramatic in that form.

The Rashi Tehillim

A Prayer before Reading from the Psalms

May it be Your will, O God our Lord, the Lord of our fathers, who chose His servant David and his descendant successors, who chose songs and praises, that You should mercifully consider the reading of the songs of the Book of Psalms I am about to read, as if none other than King David, may he rest in peace, may his merit shield us, had uttered them.

May the merit of the verses of Psalms stand in our favor, as well as the merit of their words, letters, vowels, cantillation marks and the Names that emerge from the initial letters of the words and the final letters, so that You will wipe away our guilt, our sins and our transgressions; that You will weed out the tyrants and uproot the thorns and brambles that surround the Heavenly Rose; and that You will unite the First Wife with her Beloved in love, closeness and friendship.

May there flow down from that place to us abundant blessings for the spirit, breath and soul to purify us from our sins, to forgive our transgressions and wipe away our guilt, just as you forgave David who performed these songs for You, as it is written, “God has also removed your transgressions; you shall not die.”

Do not remove us from this world before our time. Let us live out our years in a manner that enables us to repair all that we have destroyed. Let the merit of King David, may he rest in peace, shield and defend us so that You will be slow to anger until we return to You with complete repentance. Grant us beneficence from Your storehouse of unearned gifts, as it is written, “I will be merciful to those I favor and kind to those I desire.”

Just as we say these poems to You in this world, may we also earn the right, O God, our Lord, to say poems and praises before You in the next. And by the saying of the Psalms, let the Rose of Sharon be awakened to sing with a beautiful voice with jubilation and exultation. The glory of the Lebanon is given to her. Let there be grace and glory in the House of our

Lord speedily in our time. Amen Selah.

Come, let us sing hymns to God,
let us greet the Rock, our Redeemer, with fanfare,
let us welcome Him with thanksgiving,
let us ring out melodies to Him,
for God is a great Lord,
a King greater than all archangels.

Introduction

Ten Expressions of Song

Rashi, in his introduction to the first psalm, points out that the Psalmist employs ten expressions of song. The first psalm opens with one of these expressions, *ashrei*, “the fortunes.” How are “the fortunes” an expression of song?

Let us first consider a few fundamental questions about the Book of Psalms. What is its theme? What is the common denominator of its one hundred and fifty chapters? How do we account for its phenomenal popularity for thousands of years?

The answers lie in the musical nature of the Psalms. Music is the language of the emotions. When a mother hums to her child she expresses nuanced feelings for which no verbal expressions exist. Music plucks at the emotional chords of the heart and gives expression to these feelings. Different styles and instruments pluck at different emotional chords; the violin and the drum obviously do not evoke the same emotions.

This is the universal theme of the Book of Psalms. We are not limited to the intellectual medium in our encounters with God. We can also communicate on a purely emotional level. If we only knew how to pluck at the chords of our hearts, our emotions would speak directly to Him. The Book of Psalms helps us direct our emotions to God; it is the prayer book of the emotions. The ten expressions of song and the instruments it identifies pluck at different chords of our hearts and allow us to speak to God with a vocabulary of emotions.

In this light, we can understand Rashi’s comments to the first verse of the first psalm. Of all the emotions – joy, satisfaction, gratitude – one emotion is the most desired. All people yearn to feel fortunate, but they differ in their concepts of what produces that state. The Book of Psalms begins with the emotion of feeling fortunate. We can sing to God with this

transcendent emotion, but how do we acquire it? The first psalm provides the answer.

The First Day

(1-29)

The poet struggles with the dilemmas of those who try to live a moral life. He knows he must disassociate himself from villains and sinners, but experience has shown him that they are likely to respond with slander and scorn. They even threaten his very life. The poet takes comfort in the knowledge that God will protect him and take vengeance on his tormentors. But he is overcome by self-doubt; perhaps he is not so pure and deserving. In desperation, he pleads with God to answer his prayers. He declares his passionate loyalty to God and sings of God's wondrous deeds and inexhaustible mercy.

Psalm 1

The poet praises the good fortune of those who avoid even casual contact with bad company. They will be like flourishing trees whose fruits ripen in time. They will be successful in their endeavors. But villains are like chaff scattered by the wind.

1. These are the fortunes of man,
that he did not walk by the guidance of villains,
nor did he stop along the way of sinners,
nor did he sit in the council of mockers.¹
2. For he desires only God's Torah,
day and night, he is absorbed in his Torah.²
3. He is like a tree flourishing near flowing waters
whose fruits ripen in time, whose leaves never spoil,
and all he undertakes succeeds.³

¹ The downfall of a person usually does not come all at once. Rather, it is gradual. At first, his association with villains is only casual. He seeks their advice on commonplace matters, but he does not socialize with them. Eventually, however, he will stop and chat with them when they meet each other even when he is not seeking their advice. The association is still casual, but a bond is developing. Finally, he will join them at the table and take part in their conversations and mockery. At that point, he will have become one of them. If he does not want to fall to that level, he should avoid even casual associations.

² The avoidance of sitting in councils of mockers brings a person closer to the Torah. At his first encounter with Torah, it is still considered "God's Torah," since he has not yet developed a bond with it, but when he exerts himself the study of the Torah, it will become "his Torah." From this we see, says Rashi, that sitting in councils of mockers leads to neglect of Torah study. Casual association with villains, such as seeking their advice or stopping to chat with them, does not immediately lead to neglect of Torah study. It does, however, lead to permanent association, which does lead to the neglect of Torah study.

³ The righteous person who devotes himself to the study of the Torah is considered like a tree flourishing alongside the water that produces delicious fruit. The tree also produces leaves, but they are not its fruit. They are just there to help in the production of the fruit. The leaves with their green chlorophyll act as catalysts to combine the carbon dioxide they draw from the air with the water the roots draw from the ground and thereby produce the

4. Not so the villains, theirs is like chaff scattered by the wind.⁴
5. This is why villains do not survive judgment,

starches and sugars that nourish the tree and its fruit. Having served their purpose, the old leaves fall to the ground with the changing of the seasons, and they decompose. New leaves arrive in the springtime to continue the process. The old leaves are no longer relevant.

The righteous person, however, is better than a tree. The Torah topics he studies are the delicious fruits that nourish him and the people with whom he comes into contact. His daily interaction with other people regarding his personal needs are his leaves in the sense that they facilitate his study of the Torah. But unlike the leaves of a tree which decompose and return to the soil after they have done their work, the “leaves” of righteous people continue to have value long after they have fulfilled their purpose. Their every action, their every movement, every word they utter are studied intensely to discover the proper manner in which people should conduct themselves.

The final comment of the Psalmist in this verse is that everything the righteous person does is successful. What does this mean? Most commentators understand this success as the promise of worthy descendants who will follow in his footsteps. Rashi, however, does not comment on this statement, which indicates that he does not agree with the commentators; if he did agree, he would have commented. Clearly, Rashi saw this statement to be self-explanatory without any need for comment. How then did Rashi understand this statement?

According to Rashi, it would seem, the last phrase in the verse is a summary. The person who exert his efforts in the study of the Torah is assured of success, because everything he learns is a permanent accomplishment, as the Rambam explains in *A Guide for the Perplexed*. Part II, Chapter 52. The righteous person is continually enriched, and his acquisitions remain his forever, in this world and in the next.

⁴ Not so are those that turn away from the Torah and spend their lives pursuing other goals. They seek wealth, fame and pleasure, thinking that these important acquisitions. But they are sadly mistaken. Such acquisitions never become a permanent part of the person who acquires them. They are as flimsy as chaff. A simple gust of wind can scatter them, and their former possessors are left penniless and insignificant. All they undertake can bring transitory benefit, but they cannot be considered successes.

nor sinners in the company of the righteous.⁵

6. Because God knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of villains is lost.⁶

⁵ This begins a new statement, with the result given before the reason is stated. Villains do not survive judgment for the following reason. Because God knows the way of the righteous, but the way of villains is lost.

⁶ The commentators have various explanations of this verse. Rashi explains that God knows the way of the righteous, because He always keeps it before Him. The way of the villains, however, is despicable to Him, and He removes it from His presence. Therefore, the villains will not have a leg to stand upon when they arrive at the Day of Judgment.

Rashi surely does not mean that God is unaware of the deeds of the villains, since nothing escapes His attention. Metzudas David explains that God does not attend to villains with constant providence. Rather, He abandons them to the vicissitudes of randomness. This is clearly what Rashi is also saying. God guides the righteous at every step of the way, but He allows villains to fend for themselves. God is, of course, aware of everything they do, but for the most part, He chooses not to intervene.

Consequently, circumstance continually places obstacles, challenges and difficult moral choices in the path of the villains, and more often than not, they will not be able to justify their choices on the Day of Judgment. The righteous, however, are under the constant supervision of divine providence. Chance does not present them with moral challenges. If they do find themselves in challenging situation, it is because God specifically chose to test them, and more often than not, their righteousness will point them in the right direction.

Psalm 2

The poet mocks the enemies who conspire against those to whom God has granted good fortune and success. They mobilize and scheme, but God laughs at them with scorn. Just a simple prayer will deliver the righteous and confound even their most powerful enemies.

1. Why do nations mobilize?
why do peoples scheme in vain?
2. Earthly kings balk, warlords conspire
against God and His anointed, saying,⁷
3. “Let us tear apart their ropes,
let us cast off their chains from us.”
4. The One enthroned in Heaven laughs,
the Master scorns them.
5. Then He speaks to them in His anger,
He confounds them in His fury,
6. “But it was I who elected My king
over Zion, My holy mountain.”⁸
7. I am obliged to tell this, God said to me,
“You are My son, on this day I adopted you.”⁹
8. Ask Me, and I will make nations your estate,
your domain will reach the ends of the earth.¹⁰

⁷ The poet speaks of the enemies of God’s anointed who mobilize against him. According to the Sages, the reference is to the future Messiah who will deliver the Jewish people and bring knowledge of God to the entire world. According to the simple meaning of the verse, however, the reference is to David, who was anointed king of the Jewish people.

⁸ Why do you mobilize and conspire against David, God declares, when I was I who appointed him as king?

⁹ God informed David of his appointment as king through the prophets Samuel, Gad and Nathan. All the kings of Israel whom God favored were considered His sons because of their faithful stewardship of the Jewish people. Therefore, on the day David was appointed king, he gained the favored status of God’s son.

¹⁰ God invited David to pray to Him when he waged war against the enemies of Israel.

9. Crush them with an iron rod,
shatter them like a potter's jar.”
10. And now, O kings, be wise,
be chastened, O earthly judges.¹¹
11. If you serve God in fear,
you will be jubilant amidst the terror.¹²
12. Embrace purity before He is incensed
and you perish on the way,
for His anger is nearly ignited,
O the fortunes of all who seek refuge in Him.¹³

¹¹ David, speaking in his role as a Jewish prophet, issues a warning to the enemy kings who conspire against Israel. He is confident that God will deliver Israel from her enemies and give her a resounding victory. He could easily have allowed the enemies to go to their destruction without warning them of the peril they faced. The prophets of Israel, however, were compassionate people. They rebuked their enemies for their evil ways and assured them that God's hand is outstretched to all those who repent and turn away from evil, regardless of the level of depravity to which they have sunk.

¹² Turn away from war and villainy, he warns them. If you fear God and serve him by living righteously, you will rejoice while calamities strike fear into the hearts of sinners.

¹³ Seize purity (*var*), he warns them. Cleanse your societies and your lives of all the depravity that permeates them, because at any moment, God's rage can erupt, so to speak. The wicked will perish, but those who have embraced purity over corruption, who have thereby placed themselves under God's protection, will recognize how fortunate they truly are. The word *var* appears later in the Psalms (24:4) in the phrase *var levav*, which means “pure of heart.”

Psalm 3

The poet is opposed by many people of great stature and social standing, but he is not dispirited. His heart pounds with anxiety, but his profound faith fortifies him against his foes. He knows that his salvation will come from God, and he will be forever grateful.

1. A melody by David,
when he fled from Absalom, his son.¹⁴
2. O God, how numerous are my oppressors,

¹⁴ David's son Absalom almost brought down his kingdom. Absalom revolted against his father and seized the throne. David fled the capital and lived as a fugitive for four years until he was able to muster an army, defeat Absalom on the battlefield and reclaim his throne. This was an exceedingly dark time in David's life. One might have expected the psalm he composed while in flight to be a dirge, a lamentation. Instead, it was a song, a melody, an expression of joy. Why did he feel joyous in such dire circumstances? The Sages offered a number of explanations.

In a shameful episode that took place years earlier, David had been drawn to the beautiful Batsheva, the wife of Uriah. He sent Uriah to die on the battlefield and took Batsheva as his wife. The prophet Nathan, speaking in the Name of God, chastised him for what he had done, "Behold, I will raise up against you evil from within your household . . ."

David knew his retribution was deserved and inevitable, but he was deeply concerned about the meaning of "evil from within your household." His heart was in turmoil. Would the punishment come at the hands of ruthless rebels among his palace staff or government, or would it perhaps be administered by merciless people of questionable birth at the fringes of society? When David realized, however, that his own son Absalom was the agent of his retribution, he was relieved. He knew that his son would not want to cause him gratuitous suffering and pain. Even if he wanted to kill him, he would not seek to torment him. This realization was the source of his joy.

The Sages also offered a different reason for his joy. He rejoiced when he saw that his closest associates – the Sanhedrin, Shuvi ben Nachash, Machir ben Ammiel, Barzilai Hagiladi and others – remained loyal to him and joined him in his flight. Although he was a fugitive, the core structure of his regime had not disintegrated.

:

great ones rise against me.¹⁵

3. The great ones say about me,
“He will never be saved by the Lord.”¹⁶

4. But You, O God, are a shield for me,
my honor, the One who lifts up my head.

5. My voice calls out to God, He answers me
from the mountain of His eternal holiness.

6. I lay down and sank into gloom,
but I awoke, for God supports me.¹⁷

7. I do not fear the multitudes of people
that snarl at me all around.

8. Arise, O God, save me, my Lord,
for You slapped all my foes in the face,
You broke the teeth of the villains.¹⁸

9. Salvation is for God,
Your people must bless You for eternity.¹⁹

¹⁵ I have been persecuted by all manner of great people, great Torah scholars, people of great wisdom, exceedingly wealthy people, such as Doeg and Achitophel, and people of great physical stature. Such as Shaul and Goliath.

¹⁶ They say I do not deserve to be saved, because I committed adultery with Batsheva.

¹⁷ Anxiety and fear filled my heart, but I overcame my troubled state when I placed my trust in God’s deliverance.

¹⁸ You slapped my foes in the face, meaning You humiliated them, and You broke their teeth, meaning You rendered them powerless.

¹⁹ It is incumbent on God to save His servants and His people, and it is incumbent on them to bless Him and express their gratitude.

Psalm 4

Although his antagonists persecute him, the poet trusts that God will come to his defense. He feels no need to plead for material things; he is confident that if God blessed others He will bless Him as well. His yearning is for peace. If only he could live in harmony, he would feel secure.

1. For the performer of songs,
a melody by David.²⁰
2. You answered my call, O my Righteous Lord,
when I was constrained You relieved me,
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.²¹
3. Sons of the mighty, how long will you besmirch
my honor, love emptiness, seek lies endlessly?²²
4. Beware, God had selected His pious one,
God listens when I call out to Him.
5. Be terrified, then you will not sin,
say it in your hearts when you are in your beds,
then be forever silent.²³

²⁰ The word *menatzeyach* is commonly translated as the conductor. According to Rashi, it signifies someone who puts great effort into his singing. It becomes more than a song. It is a performance, and it is translated here as the performer.

²¹ This psalm continues the theme of the previous psalm. David is fleeing for his life before his son Absalom, who has usurped his throne. You saved me in the past, he says to God, when I was fleeing before King Saul. Save me again in my new hour of need.

²² You are descendants of the might patriarchs, he admonishes his tormentors. Why do you humiliate me? King Saul repeatedly refused to use my name, calling me the son of Jesse. This is demeaning. Don't I have a name? I was betrayed again and again by people I thought I could trust. I hid among the Ziphites, but they revealed my hiding place to King Saul who sought to kill me (I Samuel 26:1).

²³ Be terrified of God, and you will not come to sin. During the day, you are swept up in the passions of your daily pursuits that lead you astray, but when you lie in your beds in the stillness of the night, you can contemplate your deeds and behavior with more clarity. Consider that God sees everything you do and that He holds your life in his hands, and then, you will desist from your duplicitous behavior and be silent forever.

6. Bring righteous sacrifices,
and place your trust in God.²⁴
7. Many say, “Who will show us good things?”
let the light of Your face be our beacon, O God.²⁵
8. But in my own heart You instilled joy
when the grain and wine of others grew plentiful.²⁶
9. If there were harmony, I could lie down and sleep,
for with You, O God, I can be unguarded yet secure.²⁷

²⁴ Do not perform acts of treachery against me in the hope of being rewarded, David says to those who betray him to his enemies. Let your deeds be righteous, and they will be considered as sacrifices brought to God. Do not sin against God. Trust in Him, and He will provide you with the bounty you were expecting from my enemies. The path of righteousness can also lead to prosperity.

²⁵ Many people are confused, David says to God. They are envious of the gentiles who enjoy peace, prosperity and the material pleasures of life. Let the light of Your face be a beacon to them to lead them in the right direction.

²⁶ As for me, says David, the sight of the bountiful crops and ephemeral prosperity of the gentiles only brings joy into my heart. If those that anger You enjoy such prosperity, I who am loyal to You will certainly receive vastly greater and genuine reward in the next world.

²⁷ If only there were harmony, David says wistfully, if only all of Israel would be at peace with me, I could sleep without fear of attack. I would not need to post guards in the night.

Psalm 5

The poet asks God to discern his inner yearnings even if he is unable to articulate them adequately. He prays for deliverance from his deceitful, crafty, smooth-tongued enemies. He calls on God to destroy them because of their own villainy, which God, in His truthfulness, despises.

1. For the performer, about hordes,
a melody by David.²⁸
2. Hear my words, O God,
discern my inner thoughts.²⁹
3. Heed the sound of my outcry,
O my King, my Lord, for it is to You I pray.
4. O God, hear my voice in the morning,
I shall petition You mornings, and I shall hope.³⁰
5. For You, O Lord, do not favor villainy,
nor does evil dwell beside You.³¹
6. Buffoons have no place before Your eyes,
You despise all deceitmongers.³²
7. You destroy the speakers of lies,

²⁸ According to some commentators, the word *nechilos* refers to a particular type of ancient instrument for which this psalm was composed. Rashi, however, understands it to be a reference to the hordes of invaders who attack Israel. In this psalm, he speaks for all of Israel.

²⁹ Listen to my prayers when I have the strength to articulate them, but when I am too exhausted to formulate my tumultuous thoughts into words, pay heed to the turmoil and the yearning in my heart.

³⁰ I pray to You mornings when villains are judged, hoping You will bring them to justice.

³¹ I pray not only for my safety and protection, O God, but also for Your honor. You do not tolerate villains and evildoers. Punishing them will cleanse the world of their corruption and make it a more fitting place for your presence.

³² Alternatively, the verse refers to hypocrites rather than to buffoons.

God loathes a bloodstained, crafty man.³³

8. But I enter Your House to proclaim Your great mercy,
I bow to Your holy Palace, in awe of You.

9. O God, lead me by Your righteousness,
thwart my detractors, lead me toward You on a straight path.³⁴

10. For their mouths have no integrity, they are deceitful within,
their throats are gaping graves, their tongues ever smooth.³⁵

11. Condemn them, O Lord, topple them from their councils
cast them aside for their great guilt,
for they defied You.

12. Then those who take refuge in You will rejoice,
they will sing forever, You will shelter them,
those who love Your Name will revel in You.

13. For You bless the righteous, O God,
You enfold him in benevolence like armor.³⁶

³³ This refers to Esau and his descendants, among was Doeg the Edomite. Doeg, a descendent of Esau, convinced King Saul that David was a rebel who craved Saul's throne, thereby forcing David to become a hunted fugitive.

³⁴ The detractors hoped that in his dire straits David would rebel against God and that God would therefore abandon him.

³⁵ His enemies represented themselves to David outwardly as his friends, but they were really his enemies. Their inner thoughts were treacherous.

³⁶ They will revel in God when they see that He protects Jacob's righteous descendants.

Psalm 6

The poet pleads with God to protect him from his illness and his oppressors. He is exhausted and bewildered; his very bones are rattled. In desperation and anguish, soaked with his own tears, he prays for deliverance, but he never falters in his faith that God will heed his prayer and deliver him.

1. For the performer of songs,
on the eight-stringed lyre, a melody by David.
2. O God, do not chastise me in Your anger,
do not afflict me in Your rage.
3. Have mercy on me, O God, for I am exhausted,
heal me, O God, for my bones are rattled.
4. My soul is exceedingly bewildered,
I ask You, O God, until when will it be?³⁷
5. Turn away, O God, deliver my soul,
save me for the sake of Your kindness.³⁸
6. For no one remembers You in death,
who thanks You from the abyss?
7. I am worn out by my groans,
every night I befoul my bed with tears,
I dissolve my resting place with my tears.
8. My eyes are dimmed by anger,
enfeebled by all my oppression.
9. Get away from me, all you deceitmongers,
for God has heard the sound of my weeping.
10. God has heard my plea,
God will accept my prayer.

³⁷ After David's encounter with Batsheva, God afflicted him with a severe illness. While he struggled with his illness, his enemies took advantage of his debility to attack him. In the first part of this psalm, David pleads with God to heal him. In the second part, he prays for deliverance from his enemies.

³⁸ Turn away from Your anger and deliver me from my illness.

11. All my foes will be disgraced, utterly dazed,
they will turn around and be instantly disgraced.³⁹

³⁹ The oppressors are doubly disgraced. They are disgraced, and then they turn around and are disgraced again. The Sages offer two explanations.

According to the first opinion, on the future day of judgment, God will judge the nations that persecuted the Jewish people and condemn them to Hell. They will be disgraced, but they will protest their innocence, claiming that they had acted without malicious intent. God will bring them back into the heavenly courtroom. He will show them their own internal documents in which their evil designs are revealed, He will return them to Hell. They will have been doubly disgraced.

According to the other opinion, in the future, all the pagan nations facing calamity will cry out to their respective gods to save them from their disgrace, but their cry will go unanswered. In their disgrace, they will turn to God and cry out to Him, but He will reject their plea. "Had you called out to me from the first," he will tell them, "I would have responded to you. But since you chose to turn first to your idols and to Me only as a substitute, I will not help you." They will thus be doubly rejected and disgraced.

Psalm 7

The poet is remorseful over his past decisions. Beset by relentless pursuers, he pleads with God to recognize his righteousness and reward his innocence by ensnaring his oppressors in their own traps.

1. A song of remorse by David, that he sang to God about Kush the Benjaminite.⁴⁰
2. O God, my Lord, I seek refuge in You, save me from all my pursuers, rescue me,

⁴⁰ According to some grammarians, the word used here, *shigayon*, refers to an ancient musical instrument. According to the Sages, however, the word is derived from the word *mishgeh*, mistake. David composed this song as an expression of remorse over a past mistake. Rashi identifies this mistake as the choice reported in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 95a) when God presented David with a choice of punishments for a misdeed that had serious repercussions.

While David was fleeing from King Saul, he entered the priestly city of Nob as a solitary fugitive. Unaware of the discord between Saul and David, Ahimelech, the chief priest of Nob, wondered why David was traveling by himself. David told him that he was on a secret mission for the king and that he needed supplies. Ahimelech provided food and weapons, and David went on his way.

When Doeg the Edomite, Saul's chief minister, discovered that the priests of Nob had provided assistance to David, he reported their supposed perfidy to Saul, who ordered that they all be executed. Doeg eventually also perished because he slandered the priests of Nob, and Saul and his sons died on the battlefield because the blood of the priests was on his hands. David, by misrepresenting himself, had caused the deaths of the priests, Doeg and Saul.

As a punishment God offered him a choice. Either he would fall into the enemy hands or his lineage would come to an end. David chose to be taken captive. As a result of his choice, Goliath's brother Yishbi Benov lured into Philistia, captured him and was about to kill him. At the last moment, Avishai ben Zeruya rescued him and admonished him for the choice he had made. David was "the light of Israel," and he had no right to sacrifice himself out of concern for his future descendants.

"Pray to God," Avishai told David, "that He allow you to reconsider your choice." God accepted David's prayer, and he survived. He composed this song to acknowledge the serious mistake he had made.

3. before they wrench out my soul like a lion,
tear me apart, with no one to rescue me.

4. O God, my Lord, if I have done this thing,
if there is guilt on my hands,

5. if I have rewarded my benefactor with evil,
unclothed my oppressor, laid him bare,⁴¹

6. let my foes pursue and overtake me,
let them trample my life to the ground,
let my honor be consigned to dust forever.

7. Arise in Your anger, O God,
revel in wrath against my oppressors,
empower me to execute Your orders.⁴²

8. Though numerous peoples beleaguer You,
spurn them from High Heaven.⁴³

9. O God, punish the peoples,
but judge me, O God, by my righteousness,
reward me for my innocence.⁴⁴

⁴¹ David is referring to the time he crept up behind Saul in the cave and slashed off part of his garment. He insists that he did not do this maliciously with the intent of exposing and humiliating. Rather, he wanted to demonstrate to Saul that he was not an enemy, because he had the opportunity to kill Saul and did not.

⁴² He pleads for protection against Yishbi and his other Philistine foes and asks God to wreak wrathful vengeance against his oppressors and allow him to execute God's command to (2:9) "crush his enemies with an iron rod."

⁴³ David asks God to withdraw to the upper realms of Heaven and pay no heed to other nations who beleaguer Him with pleas to spare his enemies, to erect a barrier, so to speak, that will not allow their prayers to reach Him. In another interpretation, he is saying, "Though numerous peoples beleaguer You, show them that Your hand is supreme," that the punishment You are administering cannot be mitigated by their entreaties.

⁴⁴ David pleads with God on behalf of the Jewish people who have sinned but also have many good deeds to their credit. He asks God to forgo the conduct of strict justice and use it instead to judge their enemies and punish them. As for His people, He should treat them with kindness because of their good deeds.

10. O that You would eradicate the evil of villains,
and firmly establish the righteous,
for You, O Righteous Lord, know hearts and minds.⁴⁵

11. My protection depends on the Lord,
who saves the sincere of heart.

12. The Lord is a Righteous Judge,
yet the Lord is infuriated every day.⁴⁶

13. If a person does not repent,
He whets His sword,
He draws His bow and points it.⁴⁷

14. He has prepared deadly weapons against him,
He directs His shafts against pursuers.⁴⁸

15. Behold, he breeds fabrications,
he spawns and labors, but fathers only delusion.⁴⁹

16. He digs a pit and excavates it,
but he stumbles into the wreckage he wrought.⁵⁰

17. His efforts will recoil upon his own head,
his larceny will come down upon his own skull.

18. I will acclaim God for His righteousness,

⁴⁵ God investigates the inner thoughts of a person and determines who is evil and who is righteous.

⁴⁶ The Lord is infuriated every day when He sees the evil deeds of the villains. According to the Talmud (Berachos 7a), there is a moment of fury every day, which passes instantaneously. This is a moment when strict justice prevails completely, and this is when the deeds of villains are judged.

⁴⁷ If the villains do not repent, God will point His sword and direct His bow against them.

⁴⁸ He directs His shafts against the villains who pursue the righteous.

⁴⁹ All the machinations the villains labor to produce ultimately betray them. As the saying goes, all that falsehood produces results in collapse.

⁵⁰ He starts digging a pit by breaking ground, and then he continues to excavate until the hole is deep.

and sing praises to the Name of the Supreme God.⁵¹

⁵¹ David promises to acclaim God in public when His righteous judgments are carried out and the villains suffer the consequences of their villainy.

Psalm 8

The poet is in awe of God's might and grace, which should be emblazoned across the heavens. But God appointed people, who are no better than suckling infants, to proclaim His greatness. He elevated them to be almost like angels, and He crowned them with honor and glory.

1. For the performer,
on the Gathian instrument, a melody by David.
2. O God, our Master, how mighty
is Your Name over all the earth,
You should situate Your grace in the heavens.⁵²
3. Yet You instituted that suckling infants
proclaim Your power because of Your enemies,
to expunge the slurs of foes and avengers.⁵³

⁵² The resting place of the Divine Presence is in the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctum of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Psalmist remarks that the resting place of the Divine Presence would be more appropriately situated in the spiritual world of the heavens, which is superior to the material world. There would of course still be a Holy Temple in Jerusalem, a place that would serve as the gateway to the heavens, where people could come to be close to God, to worship and serve Him, to pray to Him. The actual resting place of the Divine Presence should be close to a certain point in the material world, but it should not be within the material world.

⁵³ Nonetheless, God has chosen to establish the resting place of the Divine Presence in the material world. He has also chosen that the proclamations of His power and glory should be delivered by the Kohanim and the Levites, mere mortals who originate from a state of infancy during which they soil themselves and suckle at their mothers' breasts.

Why would He do such a thing? Why would He compromise the honor of the Divine Presence to make its resting place in a material world populated by mere mortals?

The Psalmist recognizes that it was to counteract the slurs of the foes and oppressors who express disdain for the Jewish people, who insist that, despite the Jewish claims of a special covenant with God, there is in actuality nothing special about them. God has, therefore, placed the Divine Presence among the Jewish people. Even though they are mere mortals, God has singled them out for exemplary honor and privilege.

4. When I see the heavens, worked by Your fingers,
the moon and the stars You affixed, I wonder,
5. What is a man that You should remember him?
a mere mortal that You should keep him in mind?⁵⁴
6. You made him hardly less than an angel,
You crowned him with honor and glory.⁵⁵
7. You empowered him over Your handiwork,
You placed everything under his feet.⁵⁶
8. All the sheep and the cattle,
and the beasts of the fields as well.⁵⁷
9. The birds of the skies, the maritime fishes
that traverse the thoroughfares of the seas.⁵⁸
10. O God, our Master, how mighty

⁵⁴ But why would God go to such great lengths, the Psalmist wonders, to defend the honor of mere mortals, albeit mortals privileged with a special covenant with Him? If we consider the magnificence and permanence of the planets and galaxies, shouldn't it become clear that people are just infinitesimal, ephemeral specks in the grand scheme of the universe?

⁵⁵ The answer, the Psalmist realizes, is that people are more than just intelligent mortals. They actually have enormous potential. God gave Joshua the power to stop the sun in its orbit and dry the waters of the Jordan River. He also gave Moses the power to split the sea and Elijah the power to bring the dead back to life. These feats rise almost to the power of the angels who direct the forces of nature.

Of course, these few chosen people had such immense power only because God gave it to them, but why would He invest such power in creatures that are little more than intelligent animals with minimal spirituality?

Clearly, the potential for almost unlimited spirituality resides in every single human being. Therefore, even though only a select few achieve the fulfillment of this potential, all people are exceedingly worthy, no less than the planets and the galaxies.

⁵⁶ That is why God remembers them, keeps them in mind and made them the masters of the natural world.

⁵⁷ That is why He lets people domesticate livestock and hunt wild animals.

⁵⁸ That is why He lets people capture birds, catch fish and consume their flesh.

is Your Name over all the earth.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ In the final verse of this psalm, the Psalmist returns to his first verse but repeats only the first part. He acknowledges that God has chosen to rest the Divine Presence in the material world among mere mortals, but he no longer wonders why He did not place it in the heavens. People are not mere mortals. They possess the potential to reach the very heavens.

Psalm 9

The poet prays for the ultimate redemption, when the people will be cleansed of their childishness and their righteousness will come into sharp relief. At that time, their enemies will drown in the wreckage they wrought, and the downtrodden will be rescued and restored.

1. For the performer, on removing foolishness,
a melody by David.⁶⁰
2. I will thank God with all my heart,
I will speak of Your multitudinous wonders.⁶¹
3. I will rejoice and revel in You,
I will sing to Your Name, O Supreme One.
4. When my foes retreat, let them stumble,
let them be destroyed before You.
5. For You have issued my judgment, my verdict,
You sat on Your throne, O Righteous Judge.⁶²
6. You condemned nations, destroyed villains,
obliterated their names forever and ever.⁶³
7. The enemies are no more, nor their ubiquitous swords,

⁶⁰ The cryptic words *al-mus labein* are translated here as “on refining rashness.” Rashi cites several other interpretations and disagrees with all of them for one reason or another. In his interpretation, *al-mus* is read as one word and *us* understood as youthfulness. The psalmist is addressing messianic times when the Jewish people’s immature foolhardiness, *almus*, and the spiritual grime of their exile experience will be cleansed away, *labein*, and the beauty of their inner righteousness will shine through. They will then be redeemed, and the progeny of Esau, their sworn enemies, will be obliterated.

⁶¹ At that time, the psalmist will thank God wholeheartedly and speak of the wonderful miracles that will characterize the final ultimate redemption, wonders that will equal all the wonders of the past combined.

⁶² Judgments and verdicts are essentially the same. The repetition is for poetic purposes.

⁶³ The nation referenced here is Amalek, who is called “the first among the nations” (Numbers 24, 20). The villains include all the descendants of Esau.

nor the cities You razed, their hallmarks are effaced.⁶⁴

8. But God endures forever,
He prepares His throne for justice.⁶⁵

9. He considers the world with righteousness,
He judges nations in fairness.⁶⁶

10. Then God will be a fortress for the sufferer,
a fortress in times of distress.⁶⁷

11. Those who know Your Name will trust in You,
for You did not forsake Your seekers, O God.

12. Sing to God, O dwellers in Zion,
proclaim His feats among the peoples.⁶⁸

13. For the Avenger of spilled blood remembers it,
He has not forgotten the outcry of the meek.⁶⁹

14. Have mercy on me, O God,
see how I suffer from my foes,
lift me away from the gates of death

15. so that I may recount all Your praises
in the gates of the assembly of Zion,

⁶⁴ This again refers to the descendants of Esau whose swords are always drawn against the Jewish people. Their cities will be razed, their memories obliterated.

⁶⁵ At that time, God's throne will be complete. As long as Amalek survives, however, God's name and His throne are, so to speak, incomplete (as implied in Exodus 17:16).

⁶⁶ In God's kindness, He judges people when they are in a state of fairness, such as when they are sleeping at night. Although they are sinful people even then, their sinfulness is temporarily dormant, unlike during the day when their sinfulness flares up and they are consumed by their passions.

⁶⁷ He will be a fortress for the Jewish people. Regardless of the varied individual experiences, the Jewish people as a nation have endured thousands of years of uninterrupted suffering in exile.

⁶⁸ The psalmist composes a paean for the people to sing to God when He returns to Zion and the people will dwell there.

⁶⁹ He prefaces his paean with the assurance that God will avenge the spilled Jewish blood.

I will rejoice in Your salvation.⁷⁰

16. Nations drown in the wreckage they wrought,
their own feet are caught in the traps they laid.⁷¹

17. God is known to deal justly with His handiwork,
the villain is defeated, contemplate this forever.⁷²

18. The villains will return to the abyss,
all the nations that disregard the Lord.⁷³

19. For the downtrodden shall not be ignored forever,
nor the hope of the oppressed forever lost.⁷⁴

20. Rise up, O God, do not let human power endure,
let nations be judged before You.⁷⁵

21. Take control of them, O God, let nations know
that they are but people forevermore.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ And he prays to God to save him from the dangers he faces so that he may survive and sing God's praises.

⁷¹ Here the paean begins.

⁷² The paean continues. God becomes known to the denizens of the earth when He dominates His enemies and brings them to justice.

⁷³ The word for abyss is *sheol*. The word used here for "to the abyss" is *lischeolah*. Both the prefix and the suffix indicate direction. The use of both is redundant. According to the Midrash (Genesis 50:3), this means that the villains will be consigned immediately to the nethermost reaches of Hell. They will then be summoned from Hell to stand trial, and when they are convicted, they will "return" to the place from which they came.

⁷⁴ The downtrodden Jewish people shall not be forever ignored.

⁷⁵ Having completed the paean he composed for messianic times, David prays to God to bring that day speedily. Let the nations that oppressed and enslaved them be judged and punished. Let not the dominance of Esau's descendants endure for a long time. Let them be judged for the travesty they will commit in the Holy Temple, when the Roman emperor Titus blasphemed and provoked Your anger.

⁷⁶ Let them know that they are mere mortals, not gods with irresistible powers.

Psalm 10

The poet cries out to God not to look away in times of distress, for the villains assume that God is no longer paying attention. They lurk in their lairs like lions waiting to pounce on the helpless. But it is God's hand that enables the villains, and God's hand will smash their power.

1. Why, O God, do You stand in the distance?
why do You look away in times of distress
2. when villains arrogantly pursue the oppressed,
who are caught in the schemes they concoct?
3. For the villain takes pride in his own desires,
the profiteer celebrates and blasphemes God.⁷⁷
4. The villain, his nose in the air, disdains scrutiny,
“There is no Lord,” all his schemes insist.⁷⁸
5. His designs always succeed,
as Your justice stands ever aloof from him
he blows away all his foes.⁷⁹
6. He says in his heart, “I cannot be ruined,
I am free of misfortune for generations.”
7. Oaths fill his mouth, as do deceit and conspiracy,
intrigue and fabrication lie under his tongue.
8. He lurks in ambush in courtyards,

⁷⁷ The villainous Esau is proud that he can achieve all his desires. The robber congratulates himself for having defied God successfully without suffering any consequences.

⁷⁸ In his arrogance, the villain raises his face so that his nose is in the air. He is confident that he will not be brought to justice, because “there is no Lord.” The word used here is Elohim, which refers to a judge and is also used in reference to God in His role as the divine Judge. The villain may acknowledge the existence of God, but he is convinced that there is no divine Judge and no divine justice.

⁷⁹ He is seemingly immune to suffering and retribution. God's justice seems to have been withdrawn from him, and with a puff of his breath he blows away all his foes.

he kills the innocent in concealment,
his eyes probe for Your legions.⁸⁰

9. He lurks in concealment like a lion in his lair,
he lies in wait to pounce on the oppressed,
he ensnares the oppressed with a sweep of his net.

10. He camouflages himself, he crouches down,
and multitudinous derelicts fall into his clutches.⁸¹

11. He says in his heart, “The Lord has forgotten,
He has hidden His face and will see nevermore.”

12. Rise up, O God, lift up Your hand, O Lord,
do not forget the humble.

13. Why does the villain defy the Lord?
because he says in his heart, “You will not avenge.”

14. But You do see, for You monitor intrigue and hostility,
Your Hand enables them, Your legions leave reprisal
to You, You have been the champion of orphans.⁸²

15. Smash the arm of the villain,
if You then examine the imitators of evil,
You shall no longer find villainy among them.⁸³

⁸⁰ The eyes of Esau’s descendants are always watching the Jewish people, probing for weaknesses, for the opportunities to pounce and destroy.

⁸¹ Predators crouch while approaching their prey in order to appear small, insignificant, almost invisible.

⁸² God observes the transgressions of villains, but He does not respond immediately. He enables them to be successful in their villainy before their ultimate downfall. The Jewish people recognize Your ways and remain faithful to you, trusting that You will punish the villains when You decide that the time is right, just as You have championed the cause of orphans in the past..

⁸³ The illusion of unaccountability, however, can have negative consequences. The weaker among the Jewish people, mistaking the villain’s transitory success for immunity, may seek to emulate him. The poet pleads with God to punish villains sooner rather than later, so that there will be no traces of villainy among the Jewish people.

16. God will be King forever and ever
when the nations are expelled from His land.⁸⁴
17. You heard the desires of the humble, O God,
condition their hearts, let Your ear listen
18. to provide justice for orphans and sufferers,
no longer shall they uproot people from the land.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ When the nations are expelled from His land His kingdom will be complete.

⁸⁵ You will provide justice for the Jewish people, who are comparable to orphans and sufferers. No longer will their enemies crush and shatter the forgotten (*enushim*) and the frail (*cholim*). The word for people in this verse is *enosh*, which is a noun and usually indicates greatness. In the context of the oppressed and the victimized, however, greatness does not seem appropriate. Rashi, therefore, interprets it as an adjective, *enushim*, as a term of weakness. This word does not appear anywhere in Scripture as an adjective. It seems to be an Aramaic word meaning forgotten. See Deuteronomy 8:19, “If you will forget (*im shako’ach tishkach*),” which Onkelos translates as *im minsha’ah sinshei*. Psalms occasionally uses Aramaic words, such as *var* in 2:12, which Rashi interprets as the Hebrew word for purity and Radak interprets as the Aramaic word for son.

Psalm 11

The poet decries the treachery of the villains who have driven him from the safety and security of his home. But he comforts himself that his troubles are only a test. God is his refuge. He sees all, and He will rain down fire and brimstone on the villains and fill their cups with a firestorm.

- 1 For the performer, by David, I seek refuge in God,
how can you tell me, “Flee your mountain, O bird”?⁸⁶
2. For behold, the villains plant their bows,
they draw their arrows against the bowstrings
to shoot in the gloom at the sincere of heart.⁸⁷
3. When the foundations have been destroyed,

⁸⁶ The title of this psalm is “I Seek Refuge in God.” The psalm begins on the second line and arrives at the theme in the later verses. David flees for his life, with King Saul and his minister Doeg in hot pursuit. David runs from place to place until he can find no more refuge in the land of Israel, and he is forced to flee the “mountain” and seek refuge in the land of the Philistines. This verse also describes the historical condition of the Jewish people who suffer the relentless persecution of the nations among whom they live.

⁸⁷ David describes the intense hostility towards him of Doeg and his other foes who consistently sow discord between him and King Saul. They metaphorically plant their bows; the word used here in more literally translated as “they step on their bows.” Powerful bows are made from stout wood that is not easily bent to hold the bowstrings. It is necessary, therefore, to place a foot on one end of the bow and pull hard at the other end until it bends to receive the bowstring. The resistance of the wood causes the bowstring to be extremely taut so that it will shoot its arrows with great force.

David’s enemies arm themselves with the most powerful bows, and they shoot their arrows through the gloom of treachery and subterfuge at the sincere of heart. Who are the sincere of heart? While fleeing from his pursuers David arrived in Nob, the city of priests, where he was given food and provisions. In retaliation, Doeg had all the priests executed, and then he continued his pursuit of David. The priests of Nob and David are the sincere of heart who are the victims of these arrows.

why hold the righteous one responsible?⁸⁸

4. God is in His holy palace,

God's throne is in the heavens,

yet His eyes see, His pupils probe humanity.⁸⁹

5. God tests the righteous, but He loathes

villains and lovers of larceny.⁹⁰

6. He will rain down on the villains fiery embers

and brimstone, a firestorm will fill their cups.⁹¹

7. For God is righteous, He loves righteousness,

⁸⁸ David decries the hypocrisy of Doeg and his other enemies. They destroyed God's priests, who are the very foundations of the world. They then put the blame for the deaths of the priests on David's innocent shoulders when they are in fact the guilty ones.

⁸⁹ Although God's throne is in the heavens, far removed from the mundane world, He takes a close interest in what goes on below. He sees everything, and He probes the inner thoughts that motivate the actions of people. The word *afapaim* is usually translated as eyelids, but in this context it is better translated as pupils, according to the explanation of Metzudas Tzion. Eyelids do not enhance vision. They prevent it. We can also justify the translation as eyelids. The metaphor of eyes indicates that He takes note of the actions that are visible to the human eye. The metaphor of eyelids indicates that He takes note of the inner thoughts that human eyes are prevented from seeing.

⁹⁰ David suffers indignities, disruptions and perils as he is forced to flee from his enemies, but that does not mean, he proclaims, that God has abandoned him. God tests the righteous by exposing them to suffering, because the righteous grow from the experience. The textile manufacturer takes beats raw flax until it become fine linen fabric, but he is careful not to beat it so much that the fabric is damaged.

The suffering of the righteous is, therefore, not a sign of God's disfavor. Neither is the success of villains a sign of God's favor. God withholds their retribution until the afterlife. According to the Talmud (Taanith 11a), villains are rewarded in this world for any merit they earn, and they are punished in the next world for even the slightest infraction. They arrive in the next world devoid of all merit and receive the full measure of the retribution they have earned. The righteous, on the other hand, are punished in this world for the slightest infraction so that they arrive in the next world in a state of purity and receive the full measure of the rewards they have earned.

⁹¹ Fiery embers are a metaphor for the retribution that awaits villains in the spiritual world of the afterlife. The nature of this punishment is beyond our conception.

the virtuous will behold His face.⁹²

Psalm 12

The poet cries out to God to protect him from his deceitful enemies who lie and cheat to gain advantage over other people. They believe their glib tongues will make them strong. But God will bring about the ultimate justice by elevating the downtrodden to positions of greatness.

1 For the performer, on the eight-stringed lyre,
a melody by David.

2. Send salvation, O God, for the pious one is undone,
for there is none left to be trusted among humanity.⁹³

3. They speak falsely to each other, with guileful lips,
they speak with two different hearts.⁹⁴

4. Let God eradicate all guileful lips,
the tongues that speak boastfully,

5. that say, “Our tongues make us strong,
we have our lips, who can rule over us?”

6. For the plundered meek, the plaintive downtrodden,
“Now I will rise up,” says God,

⁹² God loves the righteous, and they will ultimately be rewarded by seeing His face, so to speak. Otherwise, God loves those whose faces point in the right direction.

⁹³ David offers up a desperate plea for God’s salvation, because he feels completely defeated. He is aware that God tests the righteous in this world and rewards them in the next, as he stated in the previous psalm (11:5). But he is at his wit’s end and sees no way forward without divine intervention. He trusts no one.

⁹⁴ He is fleeing for his life, with King Saul and his men in hot pursuit. Everyone he trusted has betrayed him. They presented themselves as friends, but there was treachery in their hearts. They sought out his hiding places and ran off to reveal them to his pursuers, forcing him to flee again.

“I will bring salvation,” He declares.⁹⁵

7. God’s promises are pure promises, purified silver,
clear to the earth, sevenfold refined.⁹⁶

8. You, O God, keep them protected, hold them
steadfast forever against this generation.⁹⁷

9. Villains prowl on all sides,
for the simplest among people has been exalted.⁹⁸

Psalm 13

The poet feels as if God has concealed His face and abandoned him. He feels as if he has been left to his own devices and is therefore helpless against his foes. But he reinforces his trust in God and reassures himself that God will save him.

1 For the performer,
a melody by David.

2. How long will you utterly forget me?

⁹⁵ David addresses his enemies and assures them that God will punish them for what they have done to him and his men and to the priests of Nob. Their arrogant declaration that they can do whatever they wish without accountability will cause their downfall.

⁹⁶ God’s promises are pure, completely reliable, because He has the ability to fulfill them. A person’s promises, however, are not reliable, because he may die before he can fulfill them. God has promised David salvation and the crown, and He has kept His word.

⁹⁷ David pleads with God to protect the victims of the villains of the generation.

In the previous verse, silver sevenfold refined, a metallic gleam that can be seen from far away, is a metaphor for the utmost purity of God’s promises. The Midrash, however, sees in these words an allusion to the young schoolchildren of David’s times who could explicate the Torah in seven times seven ways. Accordingly, David prays to God that He protect the purity of their hearts so that they remain faithful and righteous. He knows that as they grow up they will witness the successes of the perfidious villains, and He prays that they will not seek to emulate the ways of the villains.

⁹⁸ As for himself, David laments, he is surrounded by prowling enemies who lay traps for him wherever he turns, all because they cannot accept that a simple shepherd has been elevated to the throne.

how long will You conceal Your face from me?
3. how long must I seek my own counsel
for the daily torment of my heart?
how long will my foes dominate me?⁹⁹
4. Take heed, respond to me, O God, my Lord,
illumine my eyes, lest I fall into a deathly slumber,¹⁰⁰
5. lest my foes say, “I have overcome him,”
lest my oppressors rejoice when I am ruined.
6. But I trust in Your kindness,
my heart rejoices in Your salvation,
I sing to God, for He favored me.¹⁰¹

Psalm 14

The poet is saddened by the widespread corruption, by the people who disregard the presence of God and deceitfully exploit the meek. But God is their refuge, and He will bring them salvation. He will bring the captives back to their homeland, and they will rejoice.

1. For the performer, by David.
The blackguard said in his heart, “There is no Lord.”
their deeds are corrupt, loathsome, none does good.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ When David laments four times over the duration of his suffering at the hands of his enemies, he is speaking prophetically in the voice of the Jewish people who will suffer exile in the future under four consecutive imperial powers – Babylon, Medea-Persia, Greece and Edom-Rome.

¹⁰⁰ Death and sleep are related. Since David is speaking in the voice of the Jewish people, he cannot mean that he fears actual death, because God has promised they would never be destroyed. They might, however, fall to a state close to death.

¹⁰¹ According to the Midrash, these four phrases of salvation correspond to the four imperial power to whom he alluded in the second verse.

¹⁰² This exact verse is repeated as the opening for Psalm 53. Both verses prophesy times in the future when evil invaders will violate the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar in 420 b.c.e. and Titus in 68 c.e. This verse refers to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon who

2. God looked down at humanity from the heavens
to see if there exists an intelligent man,
a man who seeks the Lord.
3. But they have all turned away, together contaminated,
none does good, not even one.
4. They should have known, all the deceitmongers,
consumers of my people who eat bread
but do not consider God,
5. that terror will grip them right there,
for the Lord is with the righteous generation.¹⁰³
6. You ridicule the ways of the meek
who see God is their refuge.¹⁰⁴
7. O that Israel's salvation would emerge from Zion,
with God bringing back the captives of His people,
then Jacob would be jubilant, Israel would rejoice.

Psalm 15

The poet describes the standards of behavior that God expects from people.
They must act with scrupulous integrity. They must give honor where it is

entered the Sanctuary, blasphemed and destroyed it. This was an incredibly egregious affront to the Divine Presence, and yet, it never occurred to any of his soldiers to protest, not even in the safety of his own thoughts.

¹⁰³ Those who devour the Jewish people with the same gusto that they eat their food should have known that a terrifying retribution awaits them. Indeed, Nebuchadnezzar's heir Belshazzar was gripped by a terrible fear so that his knees knocked against each other uncontrollably. The Babylonians should have thought long and hard before they feasted in celebration of their victory and profaned the holy vessels of the Temple. The retribution came during the time of Jechoniah, the exiled king of Judah, who rebuilt a righteous Jewish generation in Babylon in the period after the destruction of Jerusalem.

¹⁰⁴ You ridicule the ways of the Jewish people who put their faith in God, but our salvation will one day emerge from Zion. When God gathers in the exiles, the faith of the Jewish people will be vindicated, and there will be joy in Israel.

rightfully due and never cause harm to other people. Only then will they be worthy of dwelling on God's holy mountain.

1. A melody by David.

O God, who can reside in Your abode?

who can dwell on Your holy mountain?

2. One who behaves faultlessly, acts righteously,
who speaks the truth in his heart.¹⁰⁵

3. One who has no slander on his tongue,
who causes no harm to his fellow man,
who brings no shame to his kin.¹⁰⁶

4. One who disdains the contemptible,
who gives honor to those who fear God,
who does not violate his oaths, even to his detriment.¹⁰⁷

5. One who does not lend his money usuriously,
who takes no bribes against the innocent,

¹⁰⁵ When he speaks, the words he utters truthfully express what is in his heart.

¹⁰⁶ He does not seek to uncover and slanderously reveal other people's secrets. He does not harm others. He does not seek to protect himself by revealing the shame of his relatives. Should a relative commit a sin, he is satisfied that the courts will administer the proper punishment and leave it at that. He will not publicize his relative's shortcomings in order to avoid any accusations of covering up for him.

Rashi states that this entire psalm describes *midath chassiduth*, pious behavior. This is puzzling, since those who go beyond the letter of the law are the ones considered pious. All the qualities described in this psalm, however, are required by the letter of the law. Perhaps Rashi is saying that people are fallible, and even a person with the best intentions can sometimes transgress. Nonetheless, a person who fulfills his obligations completely in these areas also deserves to be considered pious.

¹⁰⁷ He does not associate with villains who commit contemptible acts. He keeps his word even when doing so will cause him a loss. If at the time he gave his word keeping it would cause him no harm and then the situation changed, he still keeps his word.

whoever does these things will never be ruined.¹⁰⁸

Psalm 16

The poet knows he cannot ask for blessings in his own merit, only in the merit of his holy ancestors, the mighty and holy people of earlier generations. He declares his loyalty and gratitude to God and his utter rejection of pagan deities and their blood libations.

1. A lyric poem by David.

Protect me, O Lord, for I seek refuge in You.¹⁰⁹

2. You will say to God, “You are the Master,
You are not obliged to give me good things.¹¹⁰

3. It is but for the holy ones who are laid to earth,
the mighty, because of them all my needs are filled.¹¹¹

4. More sorrow to those who run after other gods,
as for me, I would not pour their blood libations,

¹⁰⁸ He takes no bribes to exonerate the innocent, and he certainly takes no bribes to exonerate the guilty. These are the people who are worthy of residing in God’s abode. Even if they face challenges and reversals in their lives, they will always recover and succeed.

¹⁰⁹ The Hebrew word used here is *michtam*, an uncommon word whose definition is unclear. According to some Sages, it is a composite of two words meaning humble and flawless. Otherwise, the combination indicated one who is untouched by a wound, meaning that he was born circumcised.

According to these translations, the word would be an adjective, which would fit with its usage in a later psalm (56:1). In this verse, however, it seems to be used as a noun. It should therefore be understood as an unidentified type of ancient musical style, which is rendered here as a lyrical poem. Otherwise, this word may have been used here to indicate a crown, as if to say that David wore his faith in God’s protection as a constant adornment.

¹¹⁰ The word say appears in the second person singular feminine form, which indicates that David is addressing the collective congregation of Israel regarding how to approach God. You must first acknowledge that God has no obligation to give you the bounty you request.

¹¹¹ You should ask only in the merit of the Patriarchs who served Him in perfect faith. We are not worthy to ask in our own merit, but we can ask in the merit of our holy ancestors.

nor would I bear their names upon my lips.¹¹²
5. God is my allotted share and my cup,
You directed me to grasp my destiny.¹¹³
6. I was awarded the most pleasant portions,
my heritage became truly beautiful to me.”¹¹⁴
7. I bless God for giving me good counsel,
even in the nights, my thoughts spur me on.¹¹⁵
8. I have established God before me always,
for when He is to my right, I cannot falter.¹¹⁶
9. For this my heart rejoices, my honor is jubilant,
even my flesh dwells secure.¹¹⁷
10. For You would not abandon me to the abyss,
You would not let Your pious one face destruction.¹¹⁸

¹¹² But although you are not asking in your own merits, you should still declare that, regardless of any shortcomings you may have, you have completely rejected the ways of the idolators. You have not worshipped the pagan gods or invoked their names. Otherwise, you have no right to plead with Him in the merit of your holy ancestors.

¹¹³ Declare to Him that He is the only source of all your bounty, that He has placed your destiny within your grasp.

¹¹⁴ Declare to Him that your destiny has led you to become God’s subject and that this heritage is the most beautiful of all.

¹¹⁵ From this point in the psalm, David no longer addresses the collective congregation of the Jewish people, advising them on how to pray to God. He now speaks only for himself. He blesses God for guiding him in the right direction, to choose a spiritual life and to emulate God’s ways. Even at night, his thoughts are full of love for God, and he acknowledges God’s guidance for this as well.

¹¹⁶ At every moment of the day, no matter what he is doing, he is fully aware of God’s holy Presence and is awestruck by it. God is always at his side with encouragement and advice so that he never falters from this exalted state.

¹¹⁷ David rejoices in the knowledge that God is always at his side. It gives him great security, as he goes on to explain.

¹¹⁸ He recalls that he sinned gravely with Bathsheba, and nonetheless, after having expressed his profound remorse, the prophet Nathan assured him, “God has removed your

11. You shall let me know the way of life,
boundless joy in Your presence,
pleasantness by Your right hand forevermore.¹¹⁹

Psalm 17

The poet confesses his own imperfections and failings; he does not have the audacity to claim otherwise. But he asks God to disregard his shortcomings and accept his prayers because he is sincere in his yearning for God and honorable in his dealings with people.

1. A prayer by David.

Hear righteousness, O God,
listen to my hymn, heed my prayer,
they do not come from deceitful lips.

2. Let my liabilities be dismissed before You,
let Your eyes behold only my virtues.¹²⁰

3. You examined my heart, You recalled the night
when You put me to the test and found me wanting,
such audacity will never again cross my mouth.¹²¹

sin.” Certainly now, he says, You will help me remain in my exalted state. You will not leave me to my own devices so that I might stray from You.

¹¹⁹ The joy of being in God’s presence is boundless.

¹²⁰ David asks God to dismiss his sins, especially with Bathsheba, so that they will not be considered when he is judged.

At the end of the previous psalm, he already expressed his gratitude to God for removing his sin, the forgiveness having been conveyed to him by the prophet Nathan. Why then does he now ask again for this sin to be dismissed?

In general, a court’s perception of an accused person is colored by his history, even he has already been punished and paid his debt. Perhaps David is asking to have his sin completely expunged, as if it had never happened, so that his prior history would not affect the judgment on his current shortcomings. Let only his virtues be visible.

¹²¹ David had asked God why the Jewish people will always refer to Him as the Lord of Abraham, the Lord of Isaac and the Lord of Jacob. Why would they not also refer to Him as the Lord of David? God replied that the Patriarchs had all been tested and found worthy.

4. In routine activity, by the word of Your lips,
I have avoided rash ways.
5. Support my strides along your thoroughfares,
do not let my footsteps falter.¹²²
6. I called out to You, for You would answer me, O Lord,
incline Your ear to me, listen to my words.
7. Muster Your kindness, save the seekers of refuge
from their assailants with Your right hand.
8. Protect me like the pupil of the eye,
conceal me in the shadow of Your wings
9. from the villains who would plunder me,
my deadly foes who stalk me on all sides.¹²³
10. Their blubber stupefies them,
their mouths speak arrogantly.¹²⁴
11. They now surround our footfalls,
their eyes reach out to seize the land.
12. He appears like a lion eager to pounce,
like a young lion crouching in concealment.
13. Arise, O God, confront him, bring him to his knees,

Put me to the test, David said. David now acknowledges that he has sinned. He admits that his offer to be challenged was brash and audacious, and he promises to practice humility henceforth and never again to be so audacious.

¹²² He has learned his lesson. He no longer trusts himself as he did before. In his dealings with people, he is exceedingly circumspect. He makes every effort to avoid any behavior that may be tinged with tyrannical tendencies and to conduct himself always according to God's will.

¹²³ The pupil of the eye is the portal through which a person perceives the world around him, and because of its importance, God has provided it with eyelids for special protection. David prays for the same kind of special protection because he is beset by enemies on all sides.

¹²⁴ Their material appetites and ambitions prevent them from recognizing truth and holiness. They think there are no limits to their capabilities. They do not recognize that the world is entirely in God's control, and therefore, they do not stand before him in awe.

deliver me from the villain, who is but Your sword.¹²⁵

14. O to be among those who die by Your hand, O God,
who expire from infirmity, who share in eternal life,
whose bellies You fill from Your hoard,
who are replete with children,
who leave their wealth to posterity.¹²⁶

15. I shall behold Your face in righteousness,

¹²⁵ The villains are the instruments of divine retribution. God has empowered them to inflict suffering on the people who deserve it.

¹²⁶ David prays for the privilege of being among those who live into old age and die peacefully by God's hand. He also prays that he be allowed to die from infirmity. The word in the verse is *me'cheled*, from rust, which is translated here as infirmity. He prefers to go through a period of decline into decrepitude before he dies.

Why would he want this? Wouldn't it be better to be fully vigorous in his old age until the day of his death?

Perhaps Rashi's comments on Numbers 20:26 will shed some light. On the last day of Aaron's life, Moses led him up to a cave in the mountains. There was a bed in the cave. A candle was burning. "Lie down," Moses said, and Aaron lay down. "Lay your arms on the bed," and Aaron complied. "Close your mouth," and Aaron complied. "Shut your eyes," Moses said. Aaron complied, and then he passed away. "This is the kind of death," Moses said, "that I would like for myself."

What was so extraordinary and so desirable about this death?

The Sages tell us (Berachoth 8a) that when righteous people pass away their souls separate from their bodies as easily as hairs being drawn from a glass of milk. Since they are predominantly spiritual people, their souls do not become entangled with their material selves, and when the time comes for them to separate from their bodies, the separation is simple and painless to the soul. Prior to his death, Aaron was already a righteous and spiritual person, and when he died, his physical systems and senses shut down one by one so that there was practically no connection between his soul and his body. The separation was completely painless.

David was saying that the ideal death was in his own bed by the hand of God after a long life and a gradual process of progressive infirmity so that at the time of death there would be hardly any connection between body and soul.

feast on Your image in the time of awakening.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ According to one interpretation, this verse refers to God's righteousness, which will allow David to come into God's presence and see His face, so to speak. Otherwise, it can refer to David's own righteous acts that will grant him the privilege of coming before God.

David concludes with a fervent hope that he would see God's image after the awakening, which refers to the Resurrection of the Dead. This will take place in the very distant future when all the souls that have gone on to Heaven will return to this world to take on human form once again.

The Talmud in Taanith 28a points out that a righteous person is compared in the Torah to both a palm tree and a cedar. Why both? The Talmud explain that if he had been compared only to a palm tree, one might have thought that just as a palm tree does not regenerate if it is cut off so does a righteous person not regenerate after he is cut off. Therefore, he is also compared to a cedar which does regenerate.

Rashi understands this to mean that one might think that a righteous person does not return to the living during the Resurrection of the Dead. Apparently, physical resurrection is not a great privilege for a person who has earned a place of honor in Heaven. It is a reward promised to the commonfolk who yearn to be reunited with their departed loved ones, a reward that the righteous person would rather forgo. Nonetheless, the credibility of the promise would be undermined if the righteous people did not come as well, and therefore, even they must return.

If so, why would David yearn to return from Heaven at the time of awakening?

Rashi seems to provide the answer. In the last part of the verse, when David speaks about feasting on the image of God, he explains that this refers to the images of the resurrected dead who were formed in the image of the Lord. In effect, David is saying that during his sojourn on this earth he has never seen a person who exhibits the unadulterated image of the Lord as it is meant to be. It is always polluted to at least some degree by the shortcomings of the human condition. The resurrected dead, however, will be free of all sin and corruption. They will exhibit the image of the Lord in its ideal form, and David looks forward to this spectacular sight.

Psalm 18

The poet recalls the liberation of his people from bondage and seeks the extension of that salvation in his own life. He praises God who illuminates the darkness for setting his feet true and swift like deer and for conditioning him to do battle and defeat his enemies.

1. For the performer, by the servant of God, by David,
who spoke to God with the words of this song
on the day God rescued him from the hands
of all his enemies, and from Saul.¹²⁸

2. And he said, I love You,
O God, You are my fortitude.

3. God is my Rescuer from ruinous stones,
my Fortress, my Deliverer, my Lord,
my Rock under which I find refuge,
my Shield, the Fount of my salvation, my Bastion.¹²⁹

4. With praises, I call out to God
even as from my foes I am being saved.¹³⁰

5. Murderous gangs surrounded me,
malicious torrents terrorized me.

6. Hellish gangs encircled me,
I was confronted by deathtraps.

¹²⁸ David singles out Saul for special mention, because his pursuit, although the first, was the most relentless. Now that David has been delivered from all his pursuers, he expresses his gratitude to God, especially for his deliverance from Saul.

¹²⁹ The voice shifts from second person to third person, indicating a shift of singers or a musical interlude. When David was trapped between stones contention, with Saul looming on one side and his people on the other, God came to his assistance and rescued him.

¹³⁰ Whenever David finds himself in danger, he sings God's praises even while the danger still looms, because he is confident God will save him from his foes.

7. In my distress, I called out to God,
I cried out to my Lord,
He heard my voice from His palace,
my outcry came before Him, into His very ears.

8. The earth quaked and quivered,
foundations of mountains trembled,
they quaked when He was angered.¹³¹

9. Smoke rose from His nostrils,
fire from His mouth to destroy them,
coals were ignited from it.¹³²

10. He tilted down the heavens and descended,
with a cloudbank under His feet.¹³³

11. He mounted a cherub and took flight,
He soared on the wings of the wind.

12. He made darkness His hideaway, enfolding sanctum,
darkling water in the thickness of the clouds.

13. But from the radiant core before Him,
hailstones and fiery coals crossed the thickness.¹³⁴

14. God thundered in the heavens, the Supreme One

¹³¹ The topic shifts, indicating a shift in singers or a musical interlude. This verse is not a continuation of David's struggles with his enemies. Rather, it refers back to the time of the Jewish captivity on Egypt. God was enraged at the Egyptians, and the earth quaked and quivered.

¹³² The description of smoke rising from his nostrils is meant to reinforce the metaphors of His anger.

¹³³ He tilted down the heavens over Egypt, so to speak, so that His manifestation spread across the land.

¹³⁴ The darkness that God makes his metaphorical hideaway is only in the outer manifestations. The core withing is always radiant. The hailstones that emerged into the enveloping darkness rained down on the Egyptians who had pursued the Jewish people to the shores of the Sea of Reeds.

sent forth hailstones and fiery coals with His voice.

15. He hurled His arrows to disperse them,
and a lightning barrage to unnerve them.

16. Channels appeared in the water,
the bedrock was exposed by Your reproof, O God,
by a gust of the breath of Your nostrils.

17. He sent from the Upper World and gathered me in,
He pulled me from the multitudinous waters.¹³⁵

18. He rescued me from my powerful foes,
from my enemies who overpowered me.

19. They sought me out when I was adrift,
but God was a bulwark for me.¹³⁶

20. He brought me forth into wide open spaces,
He rescued me, for He favors me.

21. God favored me for my righteousness,
He rewarded me for my immaculate hands.¹³⁷

22. Because I observed the ways of God,
because I was not villainous before my Lord,¹³⁸

23. because I kept His laws before me always,
because I did not turn aside His decrees from me,

¹³⁵ He sent angels from Heaven to save the Jewish people from the Egyptians and lead them through the channels amidst the waters of the sea.

¹³⁶ Amalek took advantage of itinerant state of the Jewish people and attacked them in the desert before they had arrived in their homeland, but God came to their rescue.

¹³⁷ David, speaking in the voice of the Jewish people, declares that God saved them because of their righteousness in that they followed Him faithfully into the barren desert.

¹³⁸ The topic shifts to David's personal life. This verse and the following two verses are directed toward verse 25. After concluding the previous segment by saying that God performed miracles for the Jewish people in the desert because of their righteousness, David now draws a parallel to himself in his personal life. Because he was righteous and faithful, God rewarded him with salvation.

24. because I dealt faultlessly with Him,
because I guarded myself from sin,
25. God rewarded me for my righteousness,
for my immaculate hands before His eyes.

26. With the pious You were pious,
with the faultless man You were faultless.¹³⁹

27. With the faithful You were faithful,
but with the crooked You were devious.

28. For You will save the oppressed people,
You will bring down the haughty-eyed.

29. For You will light up my lamp,
You, O God, will illuminate my darkness.¹⁴⁰

30. For with You I would assault an army,
with my Lord I would leap over ramparts.¹⁴¹

31. The Lord's way is faultless, God's word is refined,
He is a shield for all who seek refuge in Him.¹⁴²

32. For who is a deity other than God?
who is a Rock besides our Lord?

¹³⁹ The topic shifts back to deep antiquity, to the Patriarchs and Pharaoh. God deals with people measure for measure. He was pious with Abraham, because Abraham was pious. He was faultless with Abraham, because Isaac was pious. He was faithful to Jacob, because Jacob was faithful to Him. Pharaoh, on the other hand, was a crooked man, and God dealt with him in a devious manner.

¹⁴⁰ The topic shifts back to David's life. He acknowledges that God illuminates his life, figuratively and also literally. When he fought the Amalekites who had plundered his encampment in Ziklag, the battle raged from nightfall until the following evening until he had destroyed all the marauders.

¹⁴¹ When he conquered the Yevus fortress in Jerusalem, he climbed up on the walls, and God lowered them for him so that he could leap over them.

¹⁴² He keeps His promises.

33. The Lord who fortified me with strength,
He made my ways faultless.¹⁴³

34. He set my feet true and swift like does,
He stood me on my high places.¹⁴⁴

35. He conditioned my hands to do battle,
my arms to draw back a brass bow.¹⁴⁵

36. You granted me Your shield of salvation,
Your right hand sustained me,
You extended Your humility for me.¹⁴⁶

37. You widened my stance under me
so that my ankles would not stumble.¹⁴⁷

38. I shall pursue my foes and overtake them,
I shall not desist until they are annihilated.

39. I will maim and cripple them,
I will trample them underfoot.

¹⁴³ He removed all obstacles and impediments in my way until I became whole and well-preserved vigorous

¹⁴⁴ The poet compares his feet to those of female deer, because those are better aligned than the feet of stags.

¹⁴⁵ It takes much more of physical strength to draw a metal bow than to draw a wooden bow, even if it is made from the hardest wood. David has brass bows adorning the walls of his palace. Visiting monarchs would see the bows and remark to each other that it was unlikely that David had the strength to draw them. He was probably displaying them to give the false impression that he was immensely strong and thereby intimidate them. When David heard them, he would draw the bows in their presence as they looked on in amazement.

¹⁴⁶ The singer shifts from third person to second person after a musical interlude or a different singer takes over.

The term humility when it refers to God refers to His concern for vulnerable and the destitute as much as for the great and prominent. David is being exceedingly humble when he states that God's concern for him required even greater humility on God's part.

¹⁴⁷ A widened stance provides more stability.

40. You fortified me with the strength to do battle,
You brought my assailants to their knees before me.
41. You made my foes turn and take flight,
I shall destroy my archenemies.¹⁴⁸
42. They may scream, but no one comes to their rescue,
they turn to God, but He does not answer them.¹⁴⁹
43. I shall pulverize them like dust before the wind,
I shall sweep them away like mud in the streets.
44. Save me from the disputes of my own people,
make me the master of other nations,
let me be served by a people I do not know,¹⁵⁰
45. who will hear my commands and instantly obey,
alien people who will make excuses to me,¹⁵¹
46. foreigners who will become wearied,
who will be frightened by incarceration.
47. God lives eternally, blessed is my Maker,
may the Lord of my salvation be uplifted,
48. the Lord who enabled me to take vengeance,

¹⁴⁸ The literal translation of this idiom is, You gave me napes. This means, You caused my enemies to flee and show me the backs of their heads.

¹⁴⁹ They scream to their gods, but they are unable to help. Then they turn to God, but He ignores them.

¹⁵⁰ David is concerned causing harm to his own people. He begs God to help him avoid miscarriages of justice when he hear their disputes. He is also concerned about how much service he can demand of them without crossing the line into despotism. He would rather exercise his power and authority over other nations, whom he would also treat fairly but with less trepidation about causing inadvertent harm.

¹⁵¹ He would rather be served by people who are more subservient, people who would hurry to do his bidding as soon as they become aware of his intentions, even before the actual instructions reach them, people who, out of fear, lie to protect themselves when they encounter failure.

who decimated peoples in my stead,¹⁵²
49. who liberated me from my foes,
who also lifted me over my assailants,
who rescued me from larcenous men.
50. And so I shall thank You among the nations,
O God, and I shall sing to Your Name,
51. “He brings ever greater salvation to His king,
He does acts of kindness for His anointed,
for David and for his offspring forevermore.”

Psalm 19

The poet sees the gleaming wonders of the natural world God created as a metaphor for the radiance and perfection of the Torah. He declares his loyalty to the Torah, and although he may sometime stray, he begs God to absolve him of his undiscovered sins.

1. For the performer,
a melody, by David.
2. The heavens bespeak the glory of the Lord,
His handiworks tell it from the firmament.¹⁵³

¹⁵² According to the prophet Isaiah, God sometimes vents His anger against other people when the Jewish people are the ones who deserve punishment (Isaiah 47:3-4). It cannot be said that God vents His anger unjustly on innocent people and that somehow this will absolve the guilty. It seems that He does so only when those others are also somehow involved in the Jewish transgression. Although God may sometimes refrain from administering punishment, He nonetheless manifest His displeasure by punishing people who may be culpable only for peripheral involvement in the Jewish transgression. For instance, the Jewish people in Egyptian captivity largely abandoned God. They sank to sordid paganism and deserved to be punished, God, however, chose to kill the firstborn of the Egyptians in their stead.

¹⁵³ The heavens do not actually speak, as the poet himself explains in verse 4. The illumination they provide for the world inspires people to praise the Lord who created them.

3. Each passing day inspires words of wonder,
each passing night expressions of insight.¹⁵⁴

4. They do not speak, they have no words,
their voices are never heard.

5. Yet they are projected over all the earth,
they are discussed to the very ends of civilization,
He established a home among them for the sun,¹⁵⁵

6. which emerges like a groom from his bridal canopy,
exhilarated like a warrior charging along the road.

7. It emerges from the end of the heavens,
and its orbit stretches to the far end,
nothing escapes its heat.¹⁵⁶

8. God's Teaching is faultless, it refreshes the spirit,
God's testament is faithful, it enlightens even fools.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ The sun sets every evening, and its emergence in the morning with renewed splendor, inspiring people to praise the creator again.

¹⁵⁵ Literally, "He put the sun in a tent." This indicates that the sun is contained in a vessel of some sort that protects the creatures on earth from the intensity of its rays, as will be explained in verse 7. Perhaps this refers to the atmosphere.

¹⁵⁶ The sun is situated in a level of the heavens called *rakia*, above the lowest level, called *vilon*, in which no heavenly bodies are situated. Had the sun been situated in the lowest level it would be impossible for the earthly creature to withstand the intensity of its rays.

¹⁵⁷ The poet sees the sun as a metaphor for the holy Torah. Just as the sun illuminates the material world, so does the Torah illuminate the intellectual and spiritual worlds. In an alternate interpretation, the inescapable heat of the sun is a metaphor for the fiery judgment in before the heavenly court. The holy Torah, however, protects those who study it by directing them to a proper life in this world so that they arrive safely in the next.

The six clauses in verses 8-10 represent the Six Order of the Mishnah, the repository of the Oral Law. Each of these clauses, in the original Hebrew, is composed of five words, representing the Five Books of the Torah, the repository of the Written Law. In effect, there is one reference to each Order of the Mishnah, but there are a total of six references to all five Books of the Torah. Perhaps a reference to the Written Law is required with each respective Order of the Mishnah to indicate that each part of the Oral Law is rooted in the entire Written Law.

9. God's commands are fair, they gladden the heart,
 God's commandment is clear, it illuminates the eyes.
10. God's awesomeness is pure, it endures forever,
 God's laws are true, they are consistently just.¹⁵⁸
11. More precious than gold, than multitudinous rare gems,
 sweeter than honey, than droplets from the honeycomb.¹⁵⁹
12. Your servant has indeed been mindful of them,
 safeguarding them for the great reward in store.
13. But who can account for blunders?
 absolve me of my undiscovered sins.
14. Pardon Your servant even for the conscious acts,
 let them not dominate me, then I shall be faultless,
 then I shall be absolved of great guilt.
15. May the words of my mouth, the musings of my heart
 be pleasing to You, O God, my Rock and Redeemer.

Psalm 20

The poet prays for the safety of those who battle to defend the people. He knows that victory will not derive from superior weaponry. Only those who trust in God and call out His Name will bring our enemies to their knees and deliver them into our hands.

1. For the performer,
 a melody, by David.
2. May God respond to you in troubled times,
 may the Name of the Lord of Jacob fortify you.
3. May He send your help from the Sanctuary,
 may He sustain you from Zion.
4. May He recall all your gift offerings,

¹⁵⁸ They are forged by truth and mercy into a unified whole.

¹⁵⁹ The word *paz* is translated here as precious gems according to Rashi, A.Z. 11b, as well as several other prominent commentators.

may your burnt offerings be lucrative forever.

5. May He give you what your heart desires,
may He bring success to all your endeavors.

6. We will sing hymns when your salvation comes,
we will rally in the Name of our Lord,
may God grant all your entreaties.

7. Now I know that God saved His anointed,
He responded to him from His holy heavens
with the strength of His right hand's salvation.

8. Some trust in chariots, some in steeds,
but we invoke the Name of God, our Lord.

9. They were brought to their knees, and they fell,
but we remained standing, we overcame them.

10. O God, send salvation,
may the King respond to us
on the very day we call out.

Psalm 21

The poet expresses his gratitude to God for granting him success in his mission as leader of his people. He tingles with joy when he contemplates his blessings, and he implores God to consume his foes with His fiery anger and obliterate them from the earth.

1. For the performer,
a melody, by David.

2. O God, the king rejoices in Your power,
how very jubilant he is in Your salvation.

3. You have given him his heart's desire,
You never denied any murmur of his lips.

4. For You awaited him with fine blessings,
You placed a golden crown upon his head.

5. He asked You for life, You gave it to him,
long life forever and ever.
6. His honor is raised through Your salvation,
You bestow grace and glory upon him.
7. When You grant him eternal blessings,
You make him tingle with joy before You.
8. For the king trusts in God,
that by the kindness of the Supreme One
he will not falter.
9. Let Your hand seek out all Your foes,
let Your right hand seek out Your enemies.
10. Render them like a fiery furnace
in Your time of anger, O God,
let Him devour them in His anger,
let them be consumed by fire.
11. Let their fruit be obliterated from the earth,
their offspring from among mankind.
12. For they proposed evil against You,
they devised schemes they could not carry out.
13. For You will reduce them to mere booty,
You will point Your bowstrings at their faces.
14. Rise high, O God, in Your power,
we shall sing songs and melodies to Your strength.

Psalm 22

The poet pleads for his people who will one day be driven into exile. He depicts their despair as they struggle to survive among their enemies who surround them like voracious beasts. But even in the worst of times, salvation comes to those who rely on God.

1. For the performer on the morningstar,

a melody, by David.

2. O my Lord, my Lord, why have You forsaken me,
far from my salvation, from the words of my outcry?

3. O my Lord, I call out by day, but You do not respond,
and also by night, but there is nothing to placate me.

4. But You are the Holy One
who presides over the psalms of Israel.

5. It was in You that our ancestors trusted,
they trusted, and You liberated them.

6. They cried out to You, and they were delivered,
they trusted in You, they were not left in disgrace.

7. But I am a worm, not a man,
mocked by mankind, disdained by people.

8. All who see me ridicule me,
they purse their lips and shake their heads.

9. But should a person rely on God, He will liberate him.
He will rescue him, for He desires him.

10. For You drew me from the belly,
reassured me at my mother's breasts.

11. I depended on You from the womb,
from my mother's belly You were my Lord.

12. Do not distance Yourself from me,
for misfortune is near, no one can help.

13. Great bulls surrounded me,
the mighty beasts of Bashan encircled me.

14. They opened gaping mouths against me,
like a lion that ravages and roars.

15. I was dumped like water, all my bones rattled,
my heart was like wax, melting in my bowels.

16. My strength was wasted like a shard,
my tongue clung to my gums,

You relegated me to dusty death.
17. For dogs surrounded me,
a band of rogues beset me,
like a lion clutching my hands and feet.
18. As I count all my aching bones,
they look on, they gawk at me.
19. They deal out my clothing among them,
they cast lots for my garments.
20. But You, O God, do not distance Yourself,
O my Strength, hurry to my assistance.
21. Rescue my soul from the sword,
my very life from the grasp of dogs.
22. Save me from the mouth of the lion,
as You relieved me from the buffalo's horns.
23. I will tell my brothers about Your Name,
I will praise You amidst the congregation.
24. "O those who fear God, give praise to Him,
all the offspring of Jacob, pay homage to Him,
tremble before Him, all the offspring of Israel.
25. For He did not disdain nor did He reject
the outcry of the oppressed,
He did not conceal His face from him,
and when he cried out to Him, He heard.
26. You inspired my psalms in the great congregation,
I will fulfill my vows before those who fear Him.
27. The humble will eat, and they will be satisfied,
those who seek Him will praise Him,
may your hearts be inspired forever."
28. Then they will reconsider and return to God,
those in all the ends of the earth,
all the clans of the nations will bow before You.

29. For the kingdom belongs to God,
He reigns over the nations.
30. As the humble eat the fat of the land and bow,
all those consigned to dust will kneel before Him,
but their souls will not be granted life.
31. Future generations will pay tribute to the Master
over the offspring who consistently serve Him.
32. They will come and tell of His righteousness
to the people yet to be born, for He has done it.

Psalm 23

The poet expresses his complete trust in God, just as a lamb trusts completely in its shepherd. God will provide for his needs. Even in hard times, he is comforted by the thought that it is for his own benefit and that he will eventually reap the rewards.

1. A melody by David.
God is my Shepherd, I lack nothing.
2. He brings me to rest in beautiful meadows,
He guides me alongside tranquil waters.
3. He soothes my soul,
He leads me along secure roads
for the sake of His Name.
4. Even as I walk in a valley of deathly shadows,
I fear no evil, for You are with me,
Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
5. You prepare a table for me before my oppressors,
You made my head sleek with oil, my cup overflows.
6. May only good and kindness pursue me
all my living days, and I shall dwell in God's House
for a very long time.

Psalm 24

The poet sings of the holiness of the land of Israel. Only those whose hands are clean and whose hearts are pure are worthy of treading on God's sanctified places. Only in their merit will the great portals swing open to usher the Divine Presence into this world.

1. By David, a melody.

The earth and all it contains belong to God,
as do civilization and its inhabitants.

2. For He established it alongside the seas,
He founded it alongside the rivers.

3. Who can go up onto God's mountain?
who can stand upon His holy place?

4. The one with clean hands and a pure heart
who did not mention Me in vain,
nor did he swear falsely.

5. He will receive blessings from God,
righteousness from the Lord of his salvation.

6. Such is the generation of those who seek Him,
Jacob's offspring who always seek Your Presence.

7. O gates, lift your heads,
let the timeless portals be uplifted,
and let the Honored King enter.

8. Who is this Honored King?
it is God, potent and strong, God, mighty in battle.

9. O gates, lift your heads,
lift the timeless portals,
and let the Honored King enter.

10. Who is this Honored King?
it is the God of Hosts,

He is the Honored King forever.

Psalm 25

The poet prays to God to protect the righteous from their foes who rob and plunder until nothing is left. He pleads that those who yearn for Him be granted forgiveness and guided along His illuminated pathways and that the offspring of the righteous shall inherit the earth.

1. By David.

To You, O God, I lift my soul.

2. O my Lord, I trusted in You,

do not let me be disgraced,

do not let my foes frolic over me.

3. And let not all who yearn for You be disgraced,

let those who plunder be disgraced till nothing is left.

4. Let me know Your ways, O God,

teach me Your pathways.

5. Guide me by Your truth, teach me,

for You are the Lord of my salvation,

for You I yearn every day.

6. Remember Your mercy, O God, and Your kindness,

for they date back to the earliest times.

7. Do not recall my youthful lapses and sins,

remember only things deserving of Your kindness,

for the sake of Your goodness, O God.

8. God is good and fair,

and so He guides sinners to safety.

9. He guides the humble with justice,

He teaches the humble His ways.

10. All the pathways of God are kindness and truth

for the guardians of His covenant and testaments.

11. For the sake of Your Name, O God,
forgive my sin, for it is great.
12. The man that fears God, no matter who,
He will show him the way to choose.
13. Then his soul shall be laid to rest in comfort,
and his offspring shall inherit the earth.
14. God's secret is revealed to those who fear Him,
His covenant is made known to them.
15. My eyes are always directed to God,
for He releases my feet from the trap.
16. Turn to me, grant me favor,
for I am alone and oppressed.
17. The afflictions of my heart have grown,
deliver me from my struggles.
18. See my oppression and my travails,
and pardon all my sins.
19. Take note that my foes are numerous,
they despise me with a larcenous hatred.
20. Protect my soul, rescue me,
do not let me be disgraced,
for I sought refuge in You.
21. Let innocence and fairness safeguard me,
for I placed my hope in You.
22. O Lord, deliver Israel
from all its troubles.

Psalm 26

The poet expresses confidence in his righteousness. He asks God to judge him and take note that he is loyal and devoted and that he shuns the company of rogues and villains. His hope and prayer is to walk on the straight path and be worthy of entry to the divine Abode.

1. By David.
Judge me, O God, for I walk in innocence,
as I trust in God, I do not stumble.
2. Examine me, O God, and test me,
investigate my mind and heart.
3. For Your kindness is before my eyes,
and I walk by Your truth.
4. I do not associate with charlatans,
nor do I consort with hypocrites.
5. I despise the company of rogues,
I do not sit down with villains.
6. I wash my hands until they are clean,
and then I circle Your altar, O God,
7. to raise my voice in thanksgiving,
to tell about all Your wonders.
8. O God, I love the ambiance of Your House,
the dwelling place of Your honor.
9. Do not snuff out my soul through sinners,
my life through bloodstained men
10. whose hands devise schemes,
whose right hands are filled with bribes.
11. But I walk on in my innocence,
deliver me and grant me favor.
12. My feet stand on the straight path,
I will bless God in the congregations.

Psalm 27

The poet acknowledges God as the force of his life, the source of his light and salvation. He also knows that divine protection is extended to those who dwell in His House. And so he beseeches God to allow him to dwell in God's House

all his life and behold His splendor.

1. By David.

God is my light, my salvation, whom need I fear?

God is the force of my life, whom need I dread?

2. When rogues converge upon me to devour my flesh,
oppressors and foes of mine, they stumble and fall.

3. If an army should besiege me, my heart would not fear,
if a war should loom over me, in this I am secure.

4. One thing I ask of God, this is all I seek,
to dwell in the House of God all my living days,
to behold the splendor of God, to abide in His Palace.

5. For He will conceal me in His shelter on sinister days,
hide me away in His Abode, lift me high onto a rock.

6. Let me but prevail over my foes all around me,
then I will offer jubilant sacrifices in His Abode,
I will sing songs and melodies to God.

7. Hear, O God, my voice calls out,
grant me favor and answer me.

8. On Your behalf, my heart said, "Seek My Presence."
I do indeed, O God, seek out Your Presence.

9. Do not conceal Your face from me,
do not turn Your servant aside in anger,
You were My help, do not forsake me,
do not abandon me, O Lord of my salvation.

10. When my father and mother abandon me,
God still gathers me in.

11. Teach me Your ways, O God,
lead me along the straight path, frustrate my detractors.

12. Do not deliver me to the passions of my oppressors,
for false witnesses and slanderers would overcome me

13. if I did not expect to see the goodness of God
in the land of the living.

14. Hope to God, strengthen and fortify your heart,
and continue to hope to God.

Psalms 28

The poet is beset by villains and deceitmongers who seek his destruction. He calls out to God, the rock of his life, to heed his prayers and come to his rescue. He has faith that God is his strength and his shield, and he expresses his gratitude in song.

1. By David.

I call out to you, O God, my rock,
do not turn a deaf ear to me, if You ignore me
I would become like those headed for the grave.

2. Hear the sound of my pleas when I cry out to You,
when I lift up my hands toward Your holy shrine.

3. Do not involve me with villains, with deceitmongers
who speak kindly to others but are malicious at heart.

4. Repay them for their actions, for the evil of their wiles,
repay them for their deeds, treat them as they deserve.

5. For they do not contemplate God's works and deeds,
He will demolish them, and never rebuild them.

6. Blessed is God,
for He heard the sound of my pleas.

7. God is my strength, my shield,
my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped,
my heart celebrates, I thank Him with my songs.

8. God is a source of strength to all,
He is the force of salvation for His anointed.

9. Save Your people, bless Your subjects,

shepherd them, carry them forward forever.

Psalm 29

The poet hears the voice of God emerge over the multitudinous waters. He hears it shatter forests of cedar and send the trees staggering. He hears it reverberate through the sands of the desert. And he prays that God's power provide peace for His people.

1. A melody by David.

Prepare for God, O children of the mighty,
prepare to praise God's honor and power.

2. Prepare for God, praise the honor of His Name,
bow down to God in the glorious sanctuary.

3. The voice of God emerges over the water,
the Honored Lord thunders,
God emerges over the multitudinous waters.

4. The voice of God emerges in controlled power,
the voice of God emerges in glory.

5. The voice of God shatters cedars,
God shatters the cedars of Lebanon.

6. He sends them staggering like calves,
Lebanon and Sirion like young buffaloes.

7. The voice of God impresses deeply,
flaming tongues of fire.

8. The voice of God sets the desert atremble,
God makes the Kadesh Desert tremble.

9. The voice of God terrifies deer, defoliates forests,
and in His palace all will declare His honor.

10. God presided even during the Flood,
God presides as King forever.

11. God gives power to His people,

God blesses His people with peace.

Prayer after Reading from the Psalms

(Full version appears on p. xxx.)

May it be Your will, O God our Lord, the Lord of our fathers, in the merit of the psalms we have read before You, in the merit of their songs, in the merit of their verses, in the merit of their words and in the merit of Your holy and pure Names that derive from them, that You wipe away all our misdeeds, forgive all our sins and absolve us of all our guilt, for we have transgressed, sinned and been guilty before You. Bring us back in a total return to You, guide us to Your service and open our hearts to the study of Your Torah.

Second Day

(30-50)

The poet is beleaguered by ferocious foes and former friends. He knows his only hope is to trust in God, but he feels unworthy of God's favor. He confesses his sins and rejoices as he feels God's kindness enfold him. Contemplating the grandeur of God's works, he is inspired to sing hymns. He calls on the younger generation to fear God and glorify His Name. If they speak without malice, spurn evil and pursue harmony, God will illuminate their lives and deliver them from distress. They will drink from the fountainhead of life.

Psalm 30

The poet sings a song of thanksgiving to God who lifted him up. When times were good, he resolved never to falter in his faith. When troubles came, his faith was rewarded. After the ominous darkness of the night, he greets the dawn with joyous hymns.

1. A melody, a song for the Temple dedication,
by David.
2. I will exalt You, O God, for You lifted me up,
You did not allow my foes to gloat over me.
3. O God, my Lord, I cried out to You,
and You healed me.
4. O God, You raised my soul from the abyss,
You spared my life from descent into the grave.
5. Sing melodies to God, O His pious ones,
give thanks at the mention of His Name.
6. For His anger lasts a moment, His favor a lifetime,
retire weeping at night, greet the dawn with hymns.
7. In my tranquil times, I said,
“I shall never falter.”
8. O God, when You showed favor
You projected power to my mountaintops,
when You concealed Your face I was confounded.
9. I call out to You, O God,
I plead with the Master.
10. What is to be gained by shedding my blood,
by sending me down to destruction?
does dust thank You? does it declare Your truth?
11. Hear, O God, grant me favor,
O God, be a helper for me.
12. You transformed my laments into dancing for me,

You undid my sackcloth and fortified me with joy
13. so that the elite will sing to you and not fall silent,
O God, my Lord, I will thank You forever.

Psalm 31

The poet recalls his desperation when his enemies and tormentors plotted against him to destroy him and even take his life. He feels unworthy of divine protection because of his sins and shortcomings. But he trusts in God and places his fate in His hands, and in the end, his faith is rewarded.

1. For the performer,
a melody by David.
2. In You, O God, I seek refuge, I am never disgraced,
liberate me through Your righteousness.
3. Incline Your ear to me quickly, rescue me,
be my stalwart crag, a citadel to save me.
4. For You are my rock and my fortress,
guide me, lead me for the sake of Your Name.
5. Extricate me from this net they laid for me,
for You are my strength.
6. Into Your hand I entrust my spirit,
You have redeemed me, O God, Lord of Truth.
7. I scorn the adherents of silly nonsense,
but as for me, I trust in God.
8. I delight and rejoice in Your Kindness,
that You have seen my distress,
You discerned the torment of my soul.
9. You did not turn me over to foes,
You planted my feet on solid ground.
10. Grant me favor, O God, for I am in distress,

anger enfeebles my eyes, my soul, my belly.

11. For my life expires with agony, my years with sighs,
my sins sap my strength, my bones grow feeble.

12. I am shamed by all my oppressors,
mortified before my neighbors,
I frighten those who know me,
those who see me in the street turn away from me.

13. I am lost from memory, like a dead person,
I have become like a piece of refuse.

14. For I heard widespread plots, a ring of terror,
conspiring against me, plotting to take my life.

15. But I trusted in You, O God,
I said, "You are my Lord."

16. My fate is in Your hands,
rescue me from my foes and pursuers.

17. Let Your face shine upon Your servant,
save me through Your kindness.

18. O God, do not let me be disgraced,
for I have called out to You,
let villains be disgraced and go silent to the grave.

19. Let them be dumbstruck, lying lips
spreading rumors against the righteous
with arrogance and disdain.

20. How great is Your good that You have stored away
for those who fear You, that You have performed
for those who seek refuge in You, in front of mankind.

21. You conceal them with the cloak of Your presence
from the intrigues of men, You hide them in a shelter
from the onslaught of tongues.

22. Blessed is God, for He performed
wondrous kindness for me in a fortified city.

23. And I had thought in my haste
that I was expelled from before Your eyes,
but You heard my pleading voice cry out to You.

24. Love God, all His pious ones,
God safeguards the faithful,
and repays the highhanded in full measure.

25. Strengthen and fortify your hearts,
all those who hope to God.

Psalm 32

Seeking divine favor, the poet understands that he can only be forgiven if he bares his soul to God and confesses his sins. Difficult as it may be, he confesses his transgressions and does not attempt to conceal his lapses. He rejoices as he feels God's kindness enfold him.

1. By David, an insight.

Fortunate are the forgiven,
those whose transgressions are submerged.

2. Fortunate is the person for whom God records no sins,
and whose intentions are without deceit.

3. When I fell silent, my bones wasted away,
as I had screamed all through the day.

4. For Your hand weighed heavily on me day and night,
my tissues withered like an endless summer drought.

5. I tell You my transgressions, I do not conceal my sins,
I said, "Let me confess my guilt to God,"
and You always forgave my sinful lapse.

6. For this every pious person prays to You
when he finds You in times of favor,
that even great torrents of water will not touch him.

7. You are my hideaway from distress, You safeguard me,

You enfold me forever with hymns of deliverance.

8. Let me enlighten you, show you the path to follow,
let me send you signals with my eyes.

9. Do not be like a horse, a mule without sense,
even while being groomed, bridle and reins muzzle him
so that he will not attack you.

10. The villain suffers many ailments,
but kindness enfolds whoever trusts in God.

11. Rejoice in God, be jubilant, O righteous ones,
and sing hymns, all the sincere of heart.

Psalm 33

The poet contemplates God's enormous power and is inspired to honor Him with joyous music and hymns. God brought the world into being with just His command. He oversees the actions of all, and He keeps a watchful eye on the people He has chosen as His own.

1. Sing hymns before God, O righteous ones,
it is fitting for the virtuous to sing psalms.

2. Give thanks to God with the harp,
play melodies to Him on the ten-stringed lyre.

3. Sing a new song to Him,
play grand tunes on the trumpet.

4. For the words of God are fair,
and all His deeds are in good faith.

5. He loves righteousness and justice,
God's kindness permeates the earth.

6. The heavens were formed by God's word,
all their hosts by the breath of His mouth.

7. He sweeps the ocean waters into a towering crest,
and deposits them in underground watersheds.

8. Let all the earth fear God,
let the civilized world tremble before Him.

9. For He spoke, and it came to be,
He commanded, and it endured.

10. God nullified the plans of nations,
He thwarted the intent of peoples.

11. God's plan endures forever,
the thoughts of His heart for all generations.

12. Fortunate is the nation whose Lord is God,
the people He chose as His own subjects.

13. God peered down from the heavens,
He saw all of mankind.

14. From His dwelling place He observed
all the inhabitants of the earth.

15. He is the One who formed their hearts at one time,
the One who understands all their deeds.

16. Kings are not saved by great armies,
nor are heroes rescued by their great prowess.

17. The horse is a false promise of salvation,
nor will its great power help them escape.

18. Behold, God keeps an eye on those who fear Him,
on those who hope for His kindness,

19. to deliver them from death,
to keep them alive during famines.

20. Our souls pine for God,
He is our help and our shield.

21. For it is in Him that our hearts rejoice,
for we trust in His holy Name.

22. Let Your kindness be upon us, O God,
as we look hopefully to You.

Psalm 34

The poet advises the young generation that the path to good fortune is the fear of God and the glorification of His Name. Speak without malice or deceit. Spurn evil, and do good. Pursue harmony, and God will illuminate your life and deliver you from distress.

1. By David,
when feigning madness before Abimelech,
who banished him, and he went away.
2. I bless God at all times,
His praises are ever in my mouth.
3. My soul takes pride in God,
let the humble hear and rejoice.
4. Join me to tell the greatness of God,
let us glorify His Name together.
5. I sought God, and He answered me,
He rescued me from all my terrors.
6. Those who looked to Him were illumined,
their faces no longer crestfallen.
7. This needy person called, and God heard,
He saved him from all his distress.
8. The angel of God encamps
near those who fear Him, and delivers them.
9. Savor it and see that God is good,
fortunate is the man who seeks refuge in Him.
10. Fear God, O His holy ones,
for those who fear Him lack for nothing
11. Young lions are impoverished and hungry,
but seekers of God do not lack any good.
12. Come, children, listen to me,
let me teach you about fear of God.

13. Which is the man who desires life,
who loves times of good experience?
14. Restrain your tongue from evil,
your lips from speaking falsehood.
15. Turn away from evil and do good,
seek out peace and pursue it.
16. God's eyes are upon the righteous,
His ears are attuned to their outcries.
17. God's face glowers at evildoers,
to obliterate their memory from the earth.
18. The righteous cry out, and God hears,
He rescues them from all their distress.
19. God is close to the brokenhearted,
He saves those whose spirits are crushed.
20. Many evils assail the righteous,
but God rescues him from them all.
21. He safeguards all his bones,
not a single one of them is broken.
22. The villain's own evil puts him to death,
the enemies of the righteous are condemned.
23. God delivers the lives of His servants,
those who seek refuge in Him have no regrets.

Psalm 35

The poet feels betrayed by those very people he has treated with goodness and devotion. When they were in distress, he wore sackcloth and prayed for them.

Now they turn against him with false accusations. He cries out to God to plunge them into their own traps.

1. By David.

Contend, O God, with my adversaries,

do battle with my attackers.

2. Take hold of shield and armor,
and come to my assistance.

3. Unsheathe Your spear, hold back my pursuers,
tell me, "I am your salvation."

4. Let my assailants be disgraced and humiliated,
let those who wish me harm retreat crestfallen.

5. Let them be like chaff before the wind,
propelled by the angel of God.

6. Let their ways be dark and slippery,
pursued by the angel of God.

7. For needlessly did they lay secret traps for me,
needlessly did they dig pitfalls for me.

8. Let utter darkness come upon them unawares,
let their own camouflaged net ensnare them,
let them tumble into it under cover of the darkness.

9. Then my soul will rejoice in God,
it will delight in His salvation.

10. All my bones will declare, "O God, who is like You,
rescuing the oppressed from those who overpower him,
the oppressed and downtrodden from their exploiters?"

11. Corrupt witnesses come forward,
they accuse me of things of which I know nothing,

12. They repay my goodness with evil,
they want to deprive me of my life.

13. Yet it was I who wore sackcloth when they fell ill,
who tormented myself with fasting,
offering prayers I would wish upon myself.

14. I conducted myself as with my friends, my brothers,
as with motherly grief, I sank into blackness.

15. Yet when I am troubled, they gather and gloat,

cripples that I do not know converge upon me,
I am so drained I would not bleed if they tore at me.

16. Obsequiously, they trade mockery for food,
they gnash their teeth against me.

17. O the Master, how much will You tolerate?
release my soul from their darkness,
my very life from the young lions.

18. I will thank You in the great congregation,
I will praise You before a mighty people.

19. Do not let my libelous foes gloat at me,
nor my unwarranted enemies squint their eyes.

20. For they do not speak kindly, they invent trickery
against the wretched of the earth.

21. They open their mouths wide against me, they say,
“Hurrah! Hurrah! O what our eyes have seen!”

22. You saw this, O God, do not be silent,
O the Master, do not distance Yourself from me.

23. Arise, awake for my trial,
O my Lord and Master, for my conflict.

24. O God my Lord, judge me by Your righteousness,
do not let them gloat over me.

25. Let them not say in their hearts, “Our souls cheer,”
let them not say, “We have devoured him.”

26. In one fell swoop, let those who gloat at my woes
be disgraced, crestfallen, let those who lord over me
be covered with disgrace and humiliation.

27. Let those who seek justice for me sing and rejoice,
let them always say, “May God be exalted,
the One who desires peace for His servant.”

28. And my own tongue will tell Your righteousness,
Your praises all through the day.

Psalm 36

The poet recognizes that villains fall prey to the evil inclination, which lures them into a false sense of security. They lie and cheat and turn away from the pursuit of goodness. Only the sincere and humble who trust in God drink from the fountainhead of life.

1. For the performer,
by the servant of God, by David.
2. I know in my heart that Temptation tells the villain
to have no fear of the Lord before his eyes,
3. that he signals to him, shifty-eyed,
so his sins will be found out, and he will be despised.
4. The words of his mouth are deceit and falsehood,
he refuses to seek words of insight and betterment.
5. He plans deceit at his leisure,
he chooses a way devoid of goodness,
he does not reject evil.
6. O God, Your kindness is in the heavens,
Your faithfulness far off in the skies.
7. Your righteousness is like a towering mountain,
Your judgments are a vast abyss,
God saves people who are humble as beasts.
8. How precious is Your kindness, O Lord,
people seek refuge in the shelter of Your wings.
9. They thrive in the opulence of Your House,
You give them to drink from a stream of Your Eden.
10. For the fountainhead of life lies with You,
in Your light we behold illumination.
11. Extend Your kindness to those who know You,
Your righteousness to the sincere of heart.

12. Do not let arrogant legs approach me,
nor villainous hands push me away.
13. Deceitmongers have their downfall there,
they are toppled, unable to rise.

Psalm 37

The poet warns the righteous not to envy the successful evildoers or compete against them using their own sinister methods. God protects the righteous and destroys the evildoers. Despite their temporary successes, they will ultimately vanish like the morning mist from the fields.

1. By David.
Do not compete with rogues,
do not envy evildoers.
2. For like grass they wither quickly,
like green plants they rot away.
3. Trust in God and do good,
dwell on earth and enjoy faith's rewards.
4. Take pleasure in God, He will give you
the desires of your heart.
5. Point your ways toward God,
trust in Him and He will do it.
6. He will bring forth your righteousness like a light,
your judgments like the high noon.
7. Wait patiently for God, place your hope in Him,
do not compete with those who are successful,
with a man who does conniving things.
8. Shy away from anger, abandon rage,
do not compete by turning to evil.
9. For rogues will be cut down,
and those who hope to God will inherit the earth.

10. Wait just a instant and the villain will be gone,
you will stare at his place, but he will not be there.
11. The humble shall inherit the earth,
and take pleasure in widespread peace.
12. The villain schemes against the righteous,
he gnashes his teeth against him.
13. The Master laughs at him,
for He sees his day of reckoning approach.
14. Villains wielded swords, drew their bows
to bring down the oppressed and downtrodden,
to slaughter those who are fair in their ways.
15. Let their swords penetrate their own hearts,
let their bows be shattered.
16. Better are the few that aid the righteous
than a horde of great villains.
17. For the arms of the villains shall be broken,
while God supports the righteous.
18. God appreciates the lives of the faultless,
their heritage endures forever.
19. They shall not be disgraced in troubled times,
they shall eat their fill during periods of famine.
20. For the villains shall be destroyed,
the foes of God, like morning mist in the fields,
will be obliterated, they will go up in smoke.
21. The villain borrows but does not repay,
but the Righteous One mercifully replaces it.
22. For His blessed ones shall inherit the earth,
but His accursed ones shall be cut down.
23. The footsteps of a man are directed by God,
He desires his ways.
24. Should he fall, he will not be sent sprawling,

for God supports his hand.

25. I was once a youth, I have since grown old,
but never have I seen the righteous abandoned,
nor his children begging for bread.

26. All through the day he is merciful and lends,
and his investments are blessed.

27. Turn away from evil and do good,
then you can live on forever.

28. For God loves justice,
He does not abandon His pious ones,
they are safeguarded forever,
but the offspring of villains are cut down.

29. The righteous shall inherit the earth,
they will dwell upon it always.

30. The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom,
his tongue speaks of justice.

31. The Lord's Teaching is in his heart,
his footsteps never waver.

32. The villain lies in wait for the righteous,
seeking to put him to death.

33. But God does not leave him in his hands,
He does not condemn him when he is on trial.

34. Put your hope in God, safeguard His ways,
then He will uplift you to inherit the earth,
you will watch as the villains are cut down.

35. I have seen a hardened villain
take root like a prosperous citizen.

36. Then he passed away, and behold, he was gone,
I searched for him, but he could not be found.

37. Watch the innocent, observe the fair,
for there is a future for a man of peace.

38. But the guilty are together destroyed,
the future of villains is to be cut down.
39. The salvation of the righteous is from God,
He is their strength in troubled times.
40. God helped them and liberated them,
He liberated them from villains and saved them,
for they sought refuge in Him.

Psalm 38

Realizing he has become the object of divine wrath, the poet confesses the heavy burden of sin he bears and understands that he has brought his calamities upon himself. He writhes in his agony and calls out to God in repentance, prayer and faith.

1. A melody by David,
a call to remembrance.
2. O God, do not rebuke me in Your wrath,
do not punish me in Your rage.
3. For Your shafts were launched at me,
You laid Your hand upon me.
4. No flesh of mine remains intact before Your rage,
my bones are agitated by my transgression.
5. For I am over my head in sins,
like a heavy burden, too much for me to bear.
6. My wounds are putrid, they fester,
because of my foolishness.
7. I am convulsed, I have sunk so very low,
all through the day, I walk about aggrieved.
8. For my loins are full of self-doubt,
no flesh of mine remains intact.
9. I am beside myself, so very devastated,

I scream from the torment of my heart.

10. O Master, all my wants are in front of You,
my sighs are not concealed from You.

11. My heart is in anguish, my strength has left me,
the light of my eyes is also no longer with me.

12. My friends and mates stand aside when I am stricken,
my kinfolk stand off in the distance.

13. Those who threaten my life lay traps for me,
my detractors speak treacherously,
they invent deceptions all through the day.

14. But I act like a deaf man that does not hear,
like a mute that does not open his mouth.

15. I have become like a man that does not hear,
who has no responses in his mouth.

16. For I set my hopes on You,
You will respond, O Master, my Lord.

17. For I said, "They might gloat over me,
they feel triumphant when my footsteps falter."

18. For I am accustomed to trouble,
my aches are always with me.

19. For I acknowledge my sins,
my transgression worries me.

20. My foes are secure in their lives,
my enemies flourish through falsehood.

21. Those who repay good with evil
denounce me for pursuing goodness.

22. Do not abandon me, O God,
O my Lord, do not distance Yourself from me.

23. Hurry to my assistance,
O Master, my salvation.

Psalm 39

The poet suffers in silence. When he can bear it no longer, he cries out to God in frustration. He reflects on the folly of the world. Realizing that he is an intruder in God's realm, a sojourner like all his ancestors, he asks God for deliverance.

1. For the performer, for Jeduthun,
a melody, by David.
2. I said, "I will try not to sin with my tongue,
I will guard my mouth as with a muzzle
as long as there are villains before me."
3. I fell mute, utterly still,
I kept silent, not speaking even good,
while my ache grew ever deeper.
4. But my heart broiled within me,
fire raged in my thoughts,
and I spoke out with my tongue,
5. "Let me know, O God, when this will end for me,
and what the measure of these days of mine will be,
then I will know when my troubles will cease."
6. Behold, You gave me tiny measures of life,
my infirm existence is like nothing before You,
all is indeed folly, the perpetual state of all mankind.
7. Yet man still walks in darkness, seeking only folly,
he gathers without knowing who will reap the harvest.
8. And now, for what do I yearn, O Master?
my yearning is for You.
9. Rescue me from all my guilt,
do not expose me to the derision of blackguards.
10. I fell mute, I could not open my mouth,
for You have done this thing.
11. Remove Your plagues from me,

I am undone by dread of Your hand.

12. With rebukes against sin, You made man suffer,
so that his cherished flesh rotted as though moth-eaten,
all mankind is indeed folly forever.

13. Hear my prayer, O God, heed my outcry,
do not ignore my tears,
for I am an intruder in Your realm,
a sojourner like all my ancestors.

14. Relieve me so that I may recuperate,
before I turn around and am gone.

Psalm 40

Speaking in the voice of his people, the poet recalls the great salvations of the past, followed by joyous songs of redemption, declarations of God's glory to the world and deep commitments of loyalty. Salvation is urgently needed again, and the people beg God for mercy.

1. For the performer,
a melody, by David.

2. I yearned mightily to God,
He turned to me and heard my outcry.

3. He lifted me from the infernal pit, the slimy muck,
He set my feet on solid rock, aligned my footsteps.

4. He put a new song in my mouth, a psalm to our Lord,
many saw and were afraid, and they had faith in God.

5. Fortunate is the man who makes God his assurance,
who turns not to the arrogant, to seekers of falsehood.

6. You have done great things, You, O God, my Lord,
Your wondrous deeds and designs were for our sake,
no one measures up to You,
were I to speak and tell of them,

they are too vast to recount.

7. You did not seek offerings and gifts,

You opened my ears,

You did not demand burnt offerings or sin offerings.

8. At that time I declared, "Behold, I have come."

the scroll of the Book records what I have done.

9. To do Your will, O my Lord, is my desire,

Your Teaching governs even my very innards.

10. I brought righteous tidings to the great multitudes,

my lips were unrestrained, O God, You know it.

11. I did not conceal Your righteousness within my heart,

I declared Your faith and salvation,

nor did I hide Your kindness

and truth from the great multitudes.

12. O You, God, do not withhold Your mercy from me,

let Your kindness and truth always hold me fast.

13. For countless evils are surrounding me,

my sins overtake me, I am unable to see,

they outnumber the hairs on my head,

even my heart is abandoning me.

14. Consent, O God, to rescue me,

O God, hurry to my assistance.

15. Let them be disgraced and crestfallen, all together,

those who seek to bring an end to my existence,

let them lag behind and be humiliated,

those who wish me harm.

16. Let their disgrace be returned to them step for step,

those who say to me, "Hurrah! Hurrah!"

17. Let all Your seekers delight and exult in You,

let those who love Your salvation always say,

"May God be exalted."

18. But I am oppressed and downtrodden, O Master,
think of me, You are my help, my deliverance,
O my Lord, do not delay.

Psalm 41

Because of his sins, the poet is surrounded by enemies who seek his utter destruction; even his trusted friends turn against him. But he is comforted by the knowledge that God will take note of his kindness to the wretched and rescue him from the most dire straits.

1. For the performer,
a melody, by David.
2. Fortunate is he who is sensitive to the wretched,
God will rescue him on the day of reckoning.
3. God will guard and sustain him,
he will be among the most fortunate on earth,
You will not surrender him to the designs of his foes.
4. God will bolster him on the sickbed,
though he is entirely overcome by his illness.
5. I said, "O God, grant me favor,
heal me, for I have sinned against You."
6. My foes say wicked things about me,
"When will he die already and his name be forgotten?"
7. Should they come see me, they present false fronts,
while in their hearts they compile fabrications,
and as soon as they leave they begin to speak.
8. My enemies all whisper together against me,
they set their minds against me, wishing me ill,
9. "Let his despicable deeds besplatter him,
now that he is down, may he never rise again."
10. Even my trusted friend, who shares my bread,

has tried to bring me under heel.

11. But You, O God, grant me favor and raise me up,
so that I may retaliate against them.

12. Thus will I know that You desire me,
when my foes no longer gloat about me.

13. But in my innocence I had Your support,
You established me before You forever.

14. Blessed is God, the Lord of Israel,
from this world to the next. Amen and Amen.

Psalm 42

The poet compares his deep yearning for God to the wail of an animal thirsting for water. Though he suffers persecution, he recalls the happy times when he sang hymns with the multitudinous pilgrims. He nurtures hope in his heart that God will deliver him and illuminate his life.

1. For the performer, an insight,
by the sons of Korach.

2. Like a deer keening for watery streams,
so does my soul keen to You, O Lord.

3. My soul thirsts for the Lord, for the Living Lord,
O when can I come and appear before the Lord?

4. My tears have been my bread day and night,
when all day they said to me, “Where is your Lord?”

5. These things I remember, my soul pours out within me,
how I traveled with the crowd,
moving with them towards the House of the Lord
with the sound of hymns and thanksgiving,
such a festive multitude.

6. Why do you crumble, O my soul? why bemoan me?
hope to the Lord, for I shall yet thank Him

for the salvations of His presence.

7. O my Lord, my soul has crumbled within me,
therefore I remember You from the land of Jordan,
and the Hermon mountains, from Mount Mitzar.

8. Abyss cries to abyss at the sound of Your deluge,
all Your breakers and waves have passed over me.

9. May God dispatch His kindness in the daytime,
and even in the night, may He dwell with me,
a prayer to the Lord of my life.

10. I say to the Lord, my Rock, “Why did You forget me?
why should I walk in gloom, persecuted by foes?”

11. My bones feel slain when my oppressors mock me,
when they say to me all day, “Where is your Lord?”

12. Why do you crumble, O my soul? why bemoan me?
hope to the Lord, for I shall yet thank Him for salvation,
the One who lights up my face, my Lord.

Psalm 43

Speaking in the voice of his people, the poet expresses their yearning in the depth of their long exile among their tenacious foes. He pleads with God to send His messenger to illuminate the world with divine light and to deliver His people and bring them home.

1. Judge me, O Lord, champion my cause
against an impious nation,
deliver me from deceitful, evil men.

2. For You are the Lord of my strength,
why have You cast me aside?
why should I walk in gloom, persecuted by foes?

3. Dispatch Your light and Your truth,
they will lead me, they will bring me

to Your holy mountain, to Your dwelling place.

4. Then I will come to the altar of the Lord,
to the Lord of my exuberant joy,

I will thank You with a lyre, O Lord, O my Lord.

5. O my soul, why do you crumble? why bemoan me?
hope to the Lord, for I shall yet thank Him for salvation,
the One who lights up my face, my Lord.

Psalm 44

Speaking in the voice of his people, the poet recalls that the ancients did not conquer the land by the sword but by the power of God. Even when God let their enemies gain the upper hand, they did not lose hope and faith in His ultimate salvation.

1. For the performer,

by the sons of Korach, an insight.

2. O Lord, with our own ears we heard our fathers tell us
of the things You did in their times, in bygone days.

3. You, Your hand, drove out the nations,
and settled our fathers in their place,
You ravaged nations and banished them.

4. For they did not inherit the land by the sword,
nor did their arms bring them salvation,
it was rather Your right hand, Your arm,
the light of Your face that You favored them.

5. You are my King, O Lord,
dispatch salvation for Jacob.

6. With You, we can batter our oppressors,
with Your Name, we can pulverize our assailants.

7. For I place no trust in my bow,
nor will my sword save me.

8. For You have saved us from our oppressors,
You have put our archenemies to shame.

9. All day we took pride in the Lord,
we will always praise Your Name, forever,

10. although You abandoned and humiliated us,
and You no longer accompany our armies.

11. You set us to flight before the oppressors,
our archenemies take plunder for themselves.

12. You render us like sheep to be devoured,
You scatter us among the nations.

13. You sell Your people for no great treasure,
You did not profit by their exchange.

14. You put us to shame before our neighbors,
objects of scorn and derision to our surroundings.

15. You made us a symbol of woe for the nations,
the nations contemptuously shake their heads.

16. My humiliation is with me all through the day,
the disgrace I face envelops me,

17. from the voices of hecklers and tormentors,
from the presence of foes and avengers.

18. All this came upon us, yet we did not forget You,
we did not repudiate Your covenant.

19. Our hearts did not lag behind,
nor have our footsteps strayed from Your ways.

20. Even when You lowered us to a place of serpents
and covered us with deathly shadows,

21. have we forgotten the Name of our Lord?
did we stretch out our hands to an alien god?

22. Surely the Lord can investigate this,
for He knows the secrets of the heart.

23. For we are slain for Your sake every day,

we are considered sheep to be slaughtered.

24. Arise, why do You slumber, O Master?

awaken, do not abandon us forever.

25. Why do You conceal Your face?

why do you forget our pain and persecution?

26. For our souls have crumbled to the very dust,

our bellies are pressed to the earth.

27. Arise, come to our assistance,

deliver us for the sake of Your kindness.

Psalm 45

The poet sings a paean to the sages who teach the truth of divine wisdom.

Their intellect and insight, the weapons they wield against the enemies of God,

are their grace and glory. They attract nations near and far to enter the

hallowed palace of God.

1. For the performer, on roses, by the sons of Korach,
an insight, a song of affection.

2. My heart is moved for a good thing,

I say, "My works are for a king,

my tongue is the pen of a swift writer."

3. You are the most beautiful among people,

charm is poured out over your lips,

and so the Lord has blessed you forever.

4. Strap your sword onto your thigh, mighty one,

it is your grace and your glory.

5. And may your glory ride triumphant

for the sake of truth and righteous humility,

then it will teach your right hand awesome things.

6. Your arrows are sharpened, nations fall under you,

in the heart of the King's combatants.

7. Your throne, O Lord, is forever and ever,
the rod of justice is the scepter of Your kingship.

8. You love righteousness, you despise villainy,
and so the Lord, your Lord, has anointed you
with oil of delight, from among your companions.

9. Myrrh, aloe and cassia scent all your garments,
more than ivory palaces will Mine gladden you.

10. Daughters of kings come visit you,
your consort stands at your right,
wearing a tiara from Ophir.

11. Listen, daughter, and see, incline your ear,
forget your people, your ancestral home.

12. Then the king will desire your beauty,
for he is your master, bow down to him.

13. Daughter of Tyre, the wealthiest of the nations,
will pay homage to you with gifts.

14. Every genteel princess in seclusion
has garments finer than golden brocade.

15. In embroidery, she will approach the King,
virgins will follow as her attendants,
thus will they come to You.

16. They will approach with joy and jubilation,
they will come into the palace of the King.

17. Your sons will take the place of your fathers,
You will establish them as lords in all the land.

18. I will recall Your Name for all generations,
so that nations will acclaim You forever and ever.

Psalm 46

Speaking in the voice of his people, the poet describes the cataclysms God visits upon the earth, the roaring waters, the quaking mountains, but the people

are confident that He is their refuge and strength. Even as kingdoms disintegrate and armies are shattered, the people trust in God.

1. For the performer, by the sons of Korach,
on the alamothe instrument, a song.
2. The Lord is a refuge and strength for us,
a help in distress, within easy reach.
3. And so we do not fear when the earth is transformed,
when mountains crumble into the heart of the seas,
4. when waters roar and roar, when mountains quake
before His everlasting grandeur.
5. The river's tributaries gladden the Lord's city,
the holiest of the Supreme One's dwellings.
6. The Lord is within it, it shall not fall to ruin,
the Lord will help it when morning dawns.
7. Nations whimpered, kingdoms disintegrated,
He projected His voice and the earth dissolved.
8. The God of Hosts is with us,
the Lord of Jacob is a refuge for us forever.
9. Come, observe the workings of God,
that He sowed destruction on the earth.
10. He quells wars to the very ends of the earth,
shatters bows, splinters spears, sets chariots afire.
11. "Stay back, know that I am the Lord,
I reign supreme over nations, supreme over the earth."
12. The God of Hosts is with us,
the Lord of Jacob is a refuge for us forever.

Psalm 47

The poet calls on all peoples to sing hymns and melodies to God. He decimates the enemies of His people and protects their heritage. God is exalted by the adoration of the people who recognize Him as King, the sole source of

true protection on this earth.

1. For the performer,
by the sons of Korach, a melody.
2. All peoples, join hands,
hail to the Lord with the sounds of hymns.
3. For God is supreme, awesome,
the Great King over all the earth.
4. He decimates peoples in our stead,
nations beneath our feet.
5. He will stake out our heritage for us,
the might of Jacob whom He loves forever.
6. The Lord is exalted by the fanfare,
God by the sound of the shofar.
7. Sing melodies to the Lord, sing,
sing melodies to our King, sing,
8. For the Lord is King of all the earth,
sing melodies of insight.
9. “The Lord is King over all nations,
the Lord sits on His holy throne.”
10. The heroes of the peoples assemble,
the people of the Lord of Abraham,
for earthly shields belong to the Lord,
He is exceedingly high.

Psalm 48

The poet declares that God is exceedingly exalted when He dwells on His holy mountain. He speaks of the beauty of Zion and the panicked flight of the enemies who sought to destroy it, and he calls on the builders of Zion to do their work well.

1. A song, a melody,
by the sons of Korach.
2. God is great and exceedingly exalted
in the city of our Lord, His holy mountain.
3. A beautiful panorama, the delight of all the earth
are Mount Zion, the northern side of the altar,
the metropolis of the Great King.
4. When the Lord is in its mansions
it is famed as a refuge.
5. For behold, the kings converged,
they advanced together.
6. They saw and were indeed astounded,
they were bewildered and took flight.
7. Trembling gripped them right there,
convulsions, as of a woman giving birth.
8. With an east wind You shatter
the ships of Tarshish.
9. As we heard it so did we see it
in the city of the God of Hosts, in the city of our Lord,
may the Lord set it fast forever and ever.
10. We longed for Your kindness, O Lord,
within Your palace.
11. As Your Name, O Lord,
so is Your praise to the ends of the earth,
Your right hand is filled with righteousness.
12. Let Mount Zion rejoice,
let Judah's daughters be jubilant
for the sake of Your laws.
13. Circle Zion, encompass it,
count its turrets.
14. Pay heed to its battlements, raise up its mansions,

so that you may tell it to the next generation.

15. For this Lord is our Lord forever and ever,
He will lead us as young children are led.

Psalm 49

The poet ridicules those who take pride in their riches, who build houses as if to last for all generations, who foolishly believe this will perpetuate their names. Their riches and honors will not descend with them into the grave. Only the righteous deserve to be praised.

1. For the performer,
by the sons of Korach, a melody.
2. Hear this, all peoples,
listen, all who dwell on the timeworn earth.
3. Children of prominent people, eminent men,
rich and poor alike.
4. My mouth will speak wise things,
my inner thoughts will be perceptive.
5. I incline my ear to the Doctrine,
I will resolve my enigma on a lyre.
6. Why should I be afraid in troubled times?
because the sins I trampled will beset me.
7. O those who rely on their wealth,
who take pride in their great riches.
8. Surely, a man could not redeem his brother,
he could not give the Lord his ransom.
9. For so costly is the redemption of the soul
that he must forsake the attempt forever.
10. Can he expect to live for eternity?
will he never face destruction?
11. Surely, they see that wise men die,

that fools and oafs perish together,
leaving their wealth to others.

12. They conceive houses to last forever,
dwelling places for all generations,
to perpetuate their names on the earth.

13. But no person takes his honors to his final rest,
he becomes like the beasts, utterly silent.

14. This is the way of those who are foolish,
and their successors who forever applaud them.

15. Like sheep, they stream to the abyss,
death consumes them, the sincere will dominate them
at daybreak, their form will outlast the abyss
from serving as their abode.

16. But the Lord will redeem my soul from the abyss,
for He shall welcome me forevermore.

17. Do not be alarmed when a man grows rich,
when honors accumulate in his house.

18. For he will take none of it when he dies,
his honors will not descend after him.

19. He may feel himself fortunate in his life,
but you will earn praise if you better yourself.

20. Just look at the fate of his father's generation,
they will see no light for all eternity.

21. A person can have honors but not understand,
he becomes like the beasts, utterly silent.

Psalm 50

The poet describes God's exhortation to the people after He summons the heavens and the earth to bring justice to them. God is not satisfied with sacrifices. Why does He need the flesh of animals? He has no hunger and no needs. He wants confession, remorse and repentance.

1. A melody by Assaf.

The Lord of Lords, God, spoke, He summoned the earth
from the horizon of sunrise to its point of setting.

2. From Zion, the ultimate in beauty,
the Lord appeared.

3. Our Lord approaches, He is not silent,
a consuming fire precedes Him,
a raging storm surrounds Him.

4. He calls to the heavens above and to the earth
to bring justice to His people.

5. "Gather in my pious ones to Me,
those who joined My covenant with sacrifice."

6. And the heavens declared His righteousness,
that the Lord is the Judge forever.

7. "Hear, My people, and I shall speak,
O Israel, and I shall bear witness about you,
I am the Lord, your Lord.

8. It is not for your offerings that I reprove you,
or your burnt offerings being always before Me.

9. I would not take a bull from your house,
nor goats from your barnyards.

10. For all the animals of the forest are Mine,
the cattle that graze on a thousand hills.

11. I know all the birds of the mountains,
the game of My fields are in My possession.

12. If I would be hungry I would not tell it to you,
for the world and all it contains are Mine.

13. Would I eat the flesh of mighty beasts?
would I drink the blood of goats?

14. Offer up to the Lord your confession,

then you can redeem your vows to the Supreme One.

15. Then you can call on Me in troubled times,
I will deliver you, it will be My honor.”

16. But to the villain the Lord said,
“Why should you speak of My laws?
why bear My covenant upon your lips?

17. Since you despise rebuke,
you cast away My words behind you.

18. If you see a thief you fall in with him,
philanderers are your companions.

19. You employ your mouth for evil,
your tongue is trained for deceit.

20. You loiter, you speak against your brother,
you slander your mother’s son.

21. This you did and I remained silent,
you thought I was like you, but I will rebuke you,
I will bring an accounting before your eyes.

22. Reflect on this, O forgetters of the Lord,
lest I rip you apart, with no hope of rescue.

23. One who offers remorse honors Me, showing the way,
I will show him the salvation of the Lord.”

Prayer after Reading from the Psalms

(Full version appears on p. xxx.)

May it be Your will, O God our Lord, the Lord of our fathers, in the merit of the psalms we have read before You, in the merit of their songs, in the merit of their verses, in the merit of their words and in the merit of Your holy and pure Names that derive from them, that You wipe away all our misdeeds, forgive all our sins and absolve us of all our guilt, for we have transgressed, sinned and been guilty before You. Bring us back in a

total return to You, guide us to Your service and open
our hearts to the study of Your Torah.

Third Day

(51-72)

Beset by enemies on all sides, the poet returns to this theme again and again. His foes conspire against him, hoping to gain power by causing his downfall, and he prays that God will crush them instead. Contemplating God's greatness and power, he realizes there is no end to His praises, and he calls on all the earth to sing hymns to Him. He yearns for a time when peace and prosperity will reign all over the earth, but he knows it will not happen until all the nations rejoice in the knowledge that goodness comes only from God.

Psalm 51

Filled with remorse for his sins, the poet approaches the Almighty with a broken spirit and a humble heart and pleads that his sincere repentance be accepted. He begs to be cleansed until he is whiter than snow so that other sinners will follow his example and repent.

1. For the performer, a melody,
by David,
2. when Nathan the Prophet confronted him
when he made advances to Bath-Sheba.
3. Grant me favor, O Lord, by Your kindness,
wipe away my guilt by Your great mercy.
4. Cleanse me thoroughly from my sins,
purify me from my transgressions.
5. For I acknowledge my guilt,
my transgression is ever on my conscience.
6. Against You alone did I transgress,
I did what was evil in Your eyes,
that You may be vindicated when You speak,
that You may prevail when You judge.
7. Behold, I was conceived in sin,
in sin did my mother incubate me.
8. Behold, You desired truth in my inner thoughts,
You gave me wisdom in my private heart.
9. Scrub me with hyssop, and I shall be purified,
cleanse me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
10. Let me hear exhilaration and joy,
then shall these bones you humbled be jubilant.
11. Look away from my transgressions,
wipe away all my sins.
12. Create a pure heart for me, O Lord,

forge a staunch spirit within me.

13. Do not cast me away from Your presence,
do not deprive me of Your holy inspiration.

14. Restore to me the delight of Your salvation,
support me with a noble spirit.

15. My example will teach the guilty Your ways,
then sinners will return to You.

16. Spare me bloodshed, O Lord, Lord of my salvation,
let my tongue sing hymns to Your righteousness.

17. O Master, open up my lips,
let my mouth speak Your praises.

18. For You do not desire sacrifice, which I would give,
nor do You want burnt offerings.

19. The offerings of the Lord are a broken spirit,
a broken, humbled heart, O Lord, do not disdain it.

20. Bring benefit to Zion by Your favor,
build up the walls of Jerusalem.

21. Then You will desire righteous sacrifices,
burnt offerings and whole offerings,
then bulls will ascend Your altars.

Psalm 52

The poet cries out in frustration against his tormentors who seek his destruction. They seek to gain power by destroying him, but God will surely crush them instead. Those who trust in God will triumph over their enemies. They will flourish like lush olive trees in His house.

1. For the performer,
an insight, by David,

2. when Doeg the Edomite came and informed Saul,
and he said, “David has come to Ahimelech’s house.”

3. Why take pride in the misdeeds of the mighty?
the Lord's kindness lasts all day long.
4. Your tongue contrives destruction,
like a razor honed to unexpected sharpness.
5. You prefer evil to good,
falsehood to speaking righteously always.
6. You love all clandestine words,
the language of deceit.
7. The Lord will surely crush you forevermore,
He will break you, evict you from your home,
and uproot you from the land of living forever.
8. Then the righteous will see and be awed,
they will speak derisively of him,
9. "Behold the man who seeks not strength in the Lord,
who trusts in his own great riches,
who seeks power in his destructiveness."
10. But I am as a lush olive tree in the Lord's house,
I trust in the Lord's kindness forever and ever.
11. I will give thanks to You forever when You do it,
I will look hopefully to Your Name
for the goodness towards Your pious ones.

Psalm 53

The poet denounces his rapacious tormentors who act as if God is not paying attention to them. They plunder to satisfy their needs and desires but do nothing that simply benefits others. They are mistaken. God takes note and will visit retribution upon their heads.

1. For the performer, on the mahlath instrument,
an insight, by David.
2. The blackguard said in his heart, "There is no Lord."

wickedly they destroyed and despoiled,
there was no doer of good among them.

3. From Heaven, the Lord looked down upon people
to see if there was a thinker who seeks the Lord.

4. They were all rubbish, contaminated together,
there was no doer of good among them, not even one.

5. Did they not know, those deceitmongers
who devour My people as they would eat bread,
who do not call upon the Lord,

6. that they will know fear there, fear such as never was?
for the Lord has scattered the bones of your besiegers,
You put them to shame, for the Lord has rejected them.

7. O that Israel's salvations should emerge from Zion,
when the Lord repatriates the captives of His people,
Jacob will be jubilant, Israel will rejoice.

Psalm 54

When his enemies betray him to those who wish him harm, the poet turns to God for salvation. He pleads with God to save him from those who threaten him without even considering that they are in God's presence. He promises to bring offerings when he sees their downfall.

1. For the performer of songs,
an insight, by David,

2. when the Ziphites came and said to Saul,
"David is indeed hiding among us."

3. O Lord, save me by Your Name,
judge me by Your strength.

4. O Lord, hear my prayer,
pay heed to the sayings of my mouth.

5. For strangers have risen up against me,

tyrants threatened my life,
they never considered the Lord before them.

6. Behold, the Lord is helping me,
the Master is amidst the supporters of my soul.

7. He will pay retribution to my detractors,
O destroy them in Your truthfulness.

8. I will bring You offerings eagerly,
I will thank Your Name, O God, for it is good.

9. For You rescued me from all troubles,
my eyes witnessed the downfall of my foes.

Psalm 55

Beset by former companions who have turned against him, the poet wishes he could fly away like a bird, but he knows there is no haven for him. He turns to God for protection, trusting that He will plunge his deceitful foes into the pit of destruction.

1. For the performer of songs,
an insight, by David.

2. O Lord, listen to my prayer,
do not turn away from my plea.

3. Pay heed to me, respond to me,
as I speak mournfully, and I moan

4. from the sound of the foe, the villain's duress,
for they cast aspersions against me,
in their anger, they harbor enmity against me.

5. My heart trembles within me,
mortal terrors have befallen me.

6. Fear and fright penetrate me,
they engulf me in tremors.

7. And I said, "O if I had wings like a dove,

then I would fly away and find rest.

8. Behold, I would wander to a distant place,
I would encamp in the desert forever.

9. I would hasten to find me a haven
from the gale winds, from the tempest.”

10. Destroy them, O Master, sever their tongues,
for I have seen larceny and strife in the city.

11. Day and night, they circulate upon its walls,
deceit and intrigue are within it.

12. There is mayhem within it,
its streets are never free of brawls and deceit.

13. For no foe ever shamed me that I should forbear it,
no enemy ever harassed me that I should hide from him.

14. But you are a man of my stature,
my peer and my confidant.

15. Together we unraveled secrets,
we walked with the multitude in the Lord’s house.

16. May He incite Death against them,
may they descend alive to the abyss,
for evil is in their dwellings and in them.

17. I call out to the Lord,
and God saves me.

18. Evening, morning and noon, I speak, I moan,
and He hears my voice.

19. He delivered me safely from my battles,
for the sake of the many who stood by me.

20. Let the Lord hear and bring them down,
let the One enthroned from always and forever,
strike those who disregard mortality,
who do not fear the Lord.

21. The evil one raised his hand against his comrade,

he violated his covenant.

22. His mouth was smoother than butter, his heart hostile,
his words softer than oil, but damning.

23. But cast your burden towards God,
He will provide for you,
He will never abandon the righteous to ruin.

24. You, O Lord, will lower them to the pit of destruction,
bloodstained, deceitful men, they will not live half their days,
but I place my trust in You.

Psalm 56

Pursued by his enemies, the poet realizes his only salvation is to trust in God. As long as he trusts in God, no mere mortal creatures can harm him. He pleads with God to rescue him from death and wandering and guide him in the light of the living.

1. For the performer, on a distant silent dove,
by David, a lyric poem,
when the Philistines detained him in Gath.

2. Grant me favor, O Lord, men assault me,
all day long, antagonists press in on me.

3. All day long, my detractors assault me,
for my antagonists are many, O High One.

4. On the day that I am afraid,
I will place my trust in You.

5. As I am with the Lord, I praise His words,
I trust in the Lord, I do not fear,
what can a mere creature do to me?

6. All day long, they elicit sad words from me,
all their thoughts about me are malicious.

7. They settle in, concealed, listening for my footsteps

when they are expecting me.

8. They seek reward for their deceit,
O Lord, bring down the peoples in anger.

9. You have kept track of my wanderings,
place my tears in Your flask,
they surely belong in Your tally.

10. Then my foes will fall back on the day I call out,
this I know, for the Lord is with me.

11. As I am with the Lord, I praise His word,
as I am with God, I praise His word.

12. I trust in the Lord, I do not fear,
what can a person do to me?

13. I must fulfill my vows to You, O Lord,
I will repay You with thanksgiving offerings.

14. For you rescued my soul from death,
my feet indeed from wandering,
to walk before the Lord in the light of the living.

Psalm 57

The poet is surrounded by treacherous people whose actions wound him like spears and arrows, whose words are like sharp swords. He yearns for the day when God's honor envelops the earth, and he promises to rise before dawn to sing God's praises to the world.

1. For the performer, against destruction,
by David, a lyric poem,
when he fled from Saul in the cave.

2. Grant me favor, O Lord, grant me favor,
for my soul seeks refuge in You, I will seek refuge
in the shade of Your wings until the mayhem passes.

3. I will call out to the Supreme Lord,

to the Lord who comes through for me.

4. He will send forth from the heavens and save me,
put those who strive against me to shame forever,
the Lord will send forth His kindness and truth.

5. My soul is among lions, I lie down among firebrands,
people whose teeth are spears and arrows,
whose tongues are sharp swords.

6. Ascend above the heavens, O Lord,
let Your honor cover all the earth.

7. They spread a net for my footsteps,
they bent me down, they dug a pitfall before me,
they themselves will fall into it forever.

8. My heart is staunch, O Lord, my heart is staunch,
I will sing songs and melodies.

9. Awake, my honor, awake, O harp and lyre,
I will awaken the morningstar.

10. I will thank You among peoples, O Master,
I will sing melodies to You among the nations.

11. For Your kindness is great, reaching to the heavens,
Your truth reaches the canopy of the sky.

12. Ascend above the heavens, O Lord,
let Your honor cover all the earth.

Psalm 58

The poet rails against people who abuse their power, whose acts of injustice weigh heavily on society. He pleads with God to thwart them even before they solidify their power. Let the righteous rejoice in the knowledge that there is a Lord who judges on earth.

1. For the performer, against destruction,
by David, a lyric poem.

2. Have you grown mute when you must speak justly,
when you must judge people with fairness?
3. Even in your heart, you form evil designs,
the injustice of your hands weighs heavily in the land.
4. Even from the womb, villains become estranged,
even from the belly, liars go astray.
5. Their venom is formed like a serpent's venom,
like a deaf viper who blocks up his ear
6. that he should not hear the charmers' voices,
who outsmarts the caster of spells.
7. O Lord, shatter their teeth in their mouths,
knock out their young lion's molars, O God.
8. Let them feel revulsion, like water running off,
let Him direct His arrows as if to wither them,
9. like a snail that dissolves as it goes,
a stillborn, a night owl that never sees the sun.
10. Before your soft briars know to be thorns,
let Him ravage them with vigor, with fury.
11. Let the righteous rejoice, for he has seen vengeance,
let him bathe his soles in the blood of the villain.
12. And let man say, "Yes, there is fruit for the righteous,
yes, there is a Lord who judges on earth."

Psalm 59

Enemies plot against the poet, and he prays to God for their downfall. He does not want them to suffer a quick demise that would be forgotten quickly. Instead, he pleads for a collapse of their status and power that would demonstrate God's protective power.

1. For the performer, against destruction,
by David, a lyric poem,

when Saul posted sentries near his house
so that he could be put to death.

2. Rescue me from my foes, O my Lord,
bolster me against my assailants.

3. Rescue me from the deceitmongers,
save me from bloodstained people.

4. For behold, they lie in wait for me,
they gather around me, brazen people,
yet I have no guilt, O God, no transgression.

5. For no sin of mine, they run, poised to kill,
O arise towards me and observe.

6. But You, O God, Lord of Hosts, Lord of Israel,
awake, bring them to account like all the nations,
have no pity on all the deceitful traitors forever.

7. They return in the evenings, howling like dogs,
they circulate about the city to detain me.

8. Behold, their mouths fling the barbs of their lips,
thinking, who could possibly hear it?

9. But You, O God, will laugh at them.
as You have scorned all the nations.

10. Against their power I depend on You,
for the Lord is my bastion.

11. The Lord who is kind to me will intercept them,
the Lord will let me see the fate of my detractors.

12. Do not put them to death, lest my people forget,
unsettle them with Your might, bring them down,
You are our Shield, O Master.

13. Their mouths transgress with the words of their lips,
many are ensnared by their arrogance,
by the oaths and the falsehoods they speak.

14. Destroy them in rage, destroy until they cease to exist,

then it will be known to the ends of the earth
that the Lord is the Ruler of Jacob forever.

15. For they return in the evenings, howling like dogs,
they circulate about the city in search of prey.

16. They forage for food until they are sated,
only then do they bed down for the night.

17. But as for me, I shall sing of Your power,
I shall sing hymns in the mornings to Your kindness,
for You were my bastion, a haven on my troubled day.

18. O my strength, I will sing melodies to You,
for the Lord is my bastion, the Lord is kind to me.

Psalm 60

As he prepares to head into battle, the poet recognizes that divine displeasure has emboldened his enemies. God has forsaken him and left him exposed. The poet pleads with God to be reconciled with His people and bring them salvation from those who would attack and oppress them.

1. For the performer, on the testament of the rose,
a lyric poem, by David, an enlightenment,

2. when he battled Aram Naharaim and Aram Zovah,
and Joab returned and struck down Edom
in the Valley of Salt, twelve thousand men.

3. O Lord, You have forsaken us, left us exposed,
You were incensed, O be reconciled to us.

4. You made the earth tremble, You broke it apart,
O heal its fissures, for it has fallen to ruin.

5. You showed Your people hardship,
You gave us congestive wine to drink.

6. You set ordeals to test those who fear You,
to vindicate Your judgments forever.

7. So that Your beloved ones will be delivered,
O let Your right hand bring salvation, answer us.
8. The Lord spoke in His holiness,
I shall celebrate, I shall apportion the land,
I shall parcel out the Valley of Sukkoth.
9. Gilead is mine, Menasseh is mine,
Ephraim is my head's crowning glory,
Judah is my nobleman.
10. Moab is my washbasin,
upon Edom I toss my shoes,
I shout war cries at Philistia.
11. Who will bring me to the fortified city?
the One who once led me into Edom.
12. Although You, O Lord, have abandoned us,
and You no longer go forth, O Lord, with our armies,
13. bring us relief from the oppressor,
for human salvation is worthless.
14. Only with the Lord can we perform valiantly,
for He crushes our oppressors.

Psalm 61

Having sent his armies off to fight distant battles, the poet's thoughts are ever with them, and his heart is overwhelmed with concern for their safety. He pleads with God to protect them and lead them to victories against all odds, to scale heights that are seemingly insurmountable.

1. For the performer,
on the neginath instrument, by David.
2. Hear my hymn, O Lord,
listen to my prayer.
3. From the end of the earth I call out to You,

when my heart is overwhelmed,
lead me to scale crags that rise above me.

4. For You were a refuge for me,
a tower of strength against the foe.

5. I shall dwell in Your Tent for always,
seek refuge in the hideaway of Your wings forever.

6. For You, O Lord, have heard my vows,
You restored the heritage of those who fear Your Name.

7. May You add days to the king's lifetime,
may he have full years as in all generations.

8. May he be enthroned before the Lord forever,
may You appoint kindness and truth to protect him.

9. So shall I sing melodies to Your Name forevermore,
to redeem my vows from day to day.

Psalm 62

The poet recognizes the duplicity of some of the people around him. When it became apparent that he would triumph, they represented themselves as his supporters. They blessed him with their mouths, but they cursed within. The poet does not trust them. He trusts only God.

1. For the performer, on the jeduthun instrument,
a melody, by David.

2. My soul pines only for the Lord,
my salvation comes from Him.

3. Only He is my rock, my salvation,
my bastion, I shall not fall to great ruin.

4. How long would you torture a man?
may you all be finished off,
like a decrepit wall, a dilapidated fence.

5. Just because they feared he would triumph

they plotted his downfall, they sought lies,
their mouths blessed, within they always cursed.

6. My soul pines only for the Lord,
for my hope is from Him.

7. Only He is my rock, my salvation,
my bastion, I shall not fall to ruin.

8. My salvation and honor depend on the Lord,
rock of my strength, my refuge is in the Lord.

9. Trust in Him at all times, O people,
pour out your hearts before Him,
the Lord is a refuge for us forever.

10. People are an illusion, the mighty are a myth,
placed on the scale, they and their folly are one.

11. Do not rely on extortion,
nor trust foolishly in robbery,
if ill-gotten gains flourish, pay no heed.

12. The Lord spoke one thing, I heard it as two,
that power belongs to the Lord,

13. and that kindness is Yours, O Master,
for You repay each man for to his deeds.

Psalm 63

Fleeing for his life, the poet yearns to come to the House of the Lord. His passionate love for God is more satisfying than the finest foods. He thinks about God during the day. When he goes to bed at night, he thinks about Him deep into the night.

1. A melody, by David,
when he was in the Judean Desert.

2. O Lord, you are my Lord, I shall seek You out,
my soul thirsts for You, my flesh longs for You,

in a parched, exhausted land without water.

3. As I have seen You in the Sanctuary,
so shall I see Your power and glory.

4. For Your kindness is better than life,
my lips will speak Your praises.

5. Then I shall bless You throughout my life,
I shall lift up my hands when I utter Your Name.

6. Like the choicest morsels, You satisfy my soul,
my mouth praises You with hymn-singing lips.

7. As I remember You when I lie down upon my sheets,
I still think about You deep into the night.

8. For You were a help to me,
I shall sing hymns in the shadow of Your wings.

9. My soul clings to You,
Your right hand supports me.

10. But those who pursue me in the darkness,
let them descend to the underbelly of the earth.

11. Let others run them through with swords,
let them become the pickings of foxes.

12. Then the king will rejoice in the Lord,
all who swear by Him will be gratified
that the liars' mouths have been sealed.

Psalm 64

The poet pleads with God to protect him from the rogues and deceitmongers who connive against him, who attack him from ambush without fear of reprisal. But he rejoices in the knowledge that God turns their own arrows against them and exposes them to disgrace and ridicule.

1. For the performer, a melody,
by David.

2. Hear, O Lord, my voice in prayer,
protect my life from the terror of foes.
3. Hide me from the connivance of rogues,
from the rumblings of deceitmongers
4. who sharpen their tongues like swords,
who aim their arrows, their malicious words,
5. to shoot down the innocent from ambush,
they shoot at him suddenly, they have no fear.
6. They make their malicious arguments so strongly,
they speak with cunning, concealing the hidden traps,
they say, "Who could possibly see it?"
7. They seek out libels, disguising their real intent,
their train of thought, what lies deep in their hearts.
8. But the Lord turned their arrows on them,
they were suddenly themselves struck down.
9. They were entrapped by their own tongues,
all who saw them shook their heads.
10. All the people were afraid,
they spoke of the Lord's works
they appreciated His deeds.
11. Let the righteous rejoice in God,
let them take refuge in Him,
let all the sincere of heart take pride.

Psalm 65

Because there is no end to the praises of the Lord, the poet realizes that standing speechless before Him is the ultimate psalm. He prays to God to shower us with His blessings so that the meadows will be cloaked with sheep and the valleys covered with wheat.

1. For the performer, a melody,

by David, a song.

2. Speechlessness is a psalm to You,
O Lord in Zion, to You are vows redeemed.
3. O the One who hears prayers,
all creatures approach You.
4. Our sins are beyond expression,
but You can wipe away our guilt.
5. Fortunate is the one You choose to bring near,
the one who dwells in Your courtyards,
let us be sated with the goodness of Your House,
the holiness of Your Palace.
6. Respond to us in righteousness with awesome deeds,
O Lord of our salvation, You are trusted
to the ends of the earth and the distant seas.
7. He forms mountains with His power,
He is girded with strength.
8. He stills roaring seas, their roaring waves,
the malicious clamor of the nations.
9. Dwellers far and near were awed by Your signs,
daybreak and nightfall moved them to sing hymns.
10. You remembered the earth and gave it to drink,
enriched it greatly from the Lord's water-filled river,
You prepared their grain, for this is its purpose.
11. Its furrows overflow, the masses are content,
You drench it with raindrops, bless its vegetation.
12. You crowned the year with Your goodness,
Your heavenly pathways rain down bounty.
13. They rain down upon the desert plains,
the hills abound with jubilation.
14. The meadows are cloaked with sheep,
the valleys are covered with wheat,

they trumpet their joy, and also sing.

Psalm 66

The poet declares that all the earth should sing God's praises, for his power is awesome. He controls all the world's peoples and ensures that the evil do not prevail. He leads us into adversity to refine us as silver is refined. Then he brings us salvation.

1. For the performer, a song, a melody,
let all the earth greet the Lord with fanfare.
2. Sing melodies in honor of His Name,
pay homage to His praises.
3. Say to the Lord, "How awesome are Your deeds,
when You display Your great power
Your foes confess their perfidy to You."
4. The entire earth bows and sings melodies to You,
they sing melodies to Your Name forever.
5. Come and see the Lord's accomplishments,
how awesome is His control over people.
6. He transformed the sea into dry land,
they crossed a river on foot,
there we rejoiced in Him.
7. He rules the world with His strength,
His eyes scrutinize the nations,
that the renegades should never prevail.
8. O peoples, bless our Lord,
raise your voices in His praise.
9. He is the One who gave us life,
who did not let our feet lead us to ruin.
10. For You have tested us, O Lord,
You have refined us, as silver is refined.

11. You brought us into dire straits,
You placed our loins in shackles.
12. You imposed mighty rulers on us,
we went through fire and water,
but You brought us forth into affluence.
13. I will come into Your House with burnt offerings,
I will redeem to You my vows
14. that passed through my lips,
the words of my mouth when I was troubled.
15. I will offer up to You fatted burnt offerings,
with the scented smoke of rams,
I will prepare cattle with goats forever.
16. Come and hear, all who fear the Lord,
as I tell about what He has done for me.
17. My mouth called out to Him,
praises of His glory lie ready under my tongue.
18. Even had I seen deceit in my heart,
the Master would have paid no attention.
19. But the Lord did hear,
He paid heed to the sound of my prayer.
20. Blessed is the Lord,
for he did not spurn my prayer,
nor did He remove His kindness from me.

Psalm 67

The poet looks forward to a time when peace and prosperity will reign all over the earth. He understands that this will come only when all the nations rejoice in the knowledge that all goodness comes from God, when they join together to sing hymns to Him.

1. For the performer of songs,

a melody, a song.

2. May the Lord grant us favor and bless us,
may His face shine upon us forever

3. so that Your ways will become known on earth,
Your salvation among all the nations.

4. Let peoples give thanks to You, O Lord,
let all peoples give thanks to You.

5. Let the nations rejoice and sing hymns,
for You judge peoples with fairness,
You guide nations through the earth forever.

6. Let peoples give thanks to You, O Lord,
let all peoples give thanks to You.

7. For the earth gave forth its produce,
for the Lord, our Lord, has blessed us.

8. The Lord will bless us,
they will fear Him to the ends of the earth.

Psalm 68

When God descended on the mountaintop, the earth trembled and the people glowed like snow in the shadowy dark. Still, their numerous enemies attacked them. The poet calls out to God to disperse His foes like dissipating smoke so that the righteous will be intoxicated with joy.

1. For the performer, by David,
a melody, a song.

2. Let the Lord arise, let His foes scatter,
let His archenemies flee from His Presence.

3. Disperse them like dissipating smoke,
like wax that melts before the flame,
so shall villains perish before the Lord.

4. But let the righteous rejoice,

let them revel before the Lord,
let them be intoxicated with joy.

5. Sing to the Lord, sing melodies to His Name,
glorify the One who straddles the firmament,
with His Name, God, celebrate before Him.

6. Father of orphans, Judge of widows,
the Lord is in His holy Temple.

7. The Lord brings all the refugees home,
He releases prisoners in balmy seasons,
but renegades dwell in wastelands.

8. O Lord, when You went forth before Your people,
when you strode through wilderness,
You showed You would always do so.

9. The earth trembled, the heavens also sweltered
before the Lord, even Sinai trembled
before the Lord, the Lord of Israel.

10. You showered us with bountiful rain, O Lord,
when Your estate was exhausted, You revived it.

11. Your flock settled on it, You prepared it
for the oppressed, O Lord, in Your goodness.

12. The Master makes a declaration
that informs a great host,

13. “Kings of the hosts scatter here and there,
and the native dweller gains the spoils.

14. Had you remained peacefully within your borders,
the dove’s feathers would have been sheathed in silver,
her wings would have been brilliantly gilded

15. when the Almighty presented the Teaching to its princes,
setting them agleam like snow in the shadowy dark,

16. on the Lord’s mountain, the mountain near Bashan,
on the mount of mountains, the mountain near Bashan.

17. O mountain peaks, why do you stalk
the mountain the Lord desired for His abode,
on which God will indeed dwell forever?

18. The Lord's chariot has myriad thousands of angels,
the Master came among them on Sinai in holiness."

19. You ascended to the Upper World,
you took a captive, you brought gifts for mankind,
that God the Lord might dwell even among the unruly.

20. Blessed is the Master, day after day He loads us up,
the Lord is our salvation forever.

21. The Lord is a saving Lord for us,
God, the Master, has many ways to deal death.

22. But the Lord uses them to smash His foes' heads,
the hairy-scalped one who persists in his faults.

23. The Master said, "I will bring you back from Bashan,
I will bring you back from the islands of the deep sea,

24. so that your feet will slog through blood,
the tongues of your dogs will feast on your foes."

25. They saw Your passage, O God,
the passage of my Lord, my King, in holiness.

26. Poets led the way, singing angels followed,
women bearing drums were in their midst.

27. They blessed the Lord in their gatherings,
they blessed the Master from the wombs of Israel.

28. There the young Benjamin became their ruler,
the princes of Judah became the contestants,
with the princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali.

29. Your Lord decreed that you come to power,
show Your power, O Lord, who did all this for us.

30. Because of Your Palace above Jerusalem,
kings will bring You gifts of tribute.

31. Denounce the beast of the reeds,
the mighty hordes who tyrannize peoples like calves,
who are appeased only by bribes of money,
who scatter our people, who seek to do battle.

32. They will bring presents from Egypt,
Ethiopia's hands will rush to give to the Lord.

33. Earthly kingdoms, sing to the Lord,
sing melodies to the Master forever,

34. to the One who straddles the highest ancient heavens,
behold, He puts the sound of power in His voice.

35. Attribute power to the Lord,
His majesty is seen upon Israel,
His power in the canopy of the sky.

36. The Lord is fearsome through Your Sanctuaries,
the Lord of Israel, He gives power and force
to the people, blessed is the Lord.

Psalm 69

The currents of life threaten to drown the poet in their deepest waters; his enemies are too numerous to count. In exhaustion and desperation, he cries out to God to protect him, because it was his loyalty to God that aroused the jealous anger of his enemies.

1. For the performer, on roses,
by David.
2. Save me, O Lord,
for the waters are about to engulf me.
3. I am drowning in the slime of the deep,
there is nowhere to stand, I am in the deepest waters,
the current sweeps me away.
4. My outcries exhaust me, my throat is dried out,

- my eyes grow weary hoping to the Lord.
5. My unwarranted enemies outnumber the hair on my head,
my attackers, my libelous foes, are so powerful
that I make restitution although I have not stolen.
 6. O Lord, You know my follies,
my faults are not concealed from You.
 7. Let me not disgrace those who hope to You,
O Master, Lord of Hosts, let me not humiliate
those who seek You, O Lord of Israel.
 8. For I bore shame for Your sake,
humiliation covered my face.
 9. I became estranged from my brothers,
an outcast to the sons of my mother.
 10. Their envy of my being in Your House consumed me,
the insults of those who scorn You fell upon me.
 11. I fasted and cried my heart out,
then this itself was turned to shame me.
 12. I made my garments of sackcloth,
then I became a laughingstock for them.
 13. Those who sit by the gates spoke about me,
they made ditties about me for beer drinkers.
 14. But I offer a prayer to You, O God,
may it arrive in a time of favor,
O Lord, in Your great kindness,
respond to me in the truth of Your salvation.
 15. Rescue me from the muck so that I will not drown,
let me be rescued from my enemies, from deep waters.
 16. Do not let the current of the water sweep me away,
do not let the deep swallow me up,
do not let the mouth of the chasm close over me.
 17. Respond to me, O God, for Your kindness is good,

- turn to me in the greatness of Your mercy.
18. Do not conceal Your face from Your servant,
respond to me quickly for I am troubled.
 19. Draw near to my soul, redeem it,
because of my foes, deliver me.
 20. You know my shame, disgrace, humiliation,
You see all my oppressors before You.
 21. My heart broke with shame, and I fell ill,
I hoped for sympathy, but there was none,
for people to console me, but I found none.
 22. They fed me bitter grass in my food,
they gave me vinegar to slake my thirst.
 23. Let their table become a trap before them,
let their hopes for peace become an obstacle.
 24. Let their eyes be dimmed, unable to see,
let their loins constantly stumble.
 25. Pour out Your rage on them,
let Your burning anger overtake them.
 26. Let their mansions be laid waste,
let there be no dwellers in their homes.
 27. For they persecuted those You punished,
they capitalized on the pain of those You scourged.
 28. Add this sin to all their sins,
do not let them benefit from Your righteousness.
 29. Let them be erased from the book of life,
let them not be inscribed with the righteous.
 30. As for me, oppressed and suffering,
Your salvation, O Lord, will protect me.
 31. I will praise the Name of the Lord with song,
I will glorify Him with thanksgiving.
 32. It will please God more than a full-grown bull

- whose horns were formed before his hooves.
33. See this, O humble ones, and rejoice,
O seekers of the Lord, and let your hearts be revived.
34. For God hears the downtrodden,
He does not disdain those He has confined.
35. Let the heavens and earth praise Him,
the seas and all the teeming life they contain.
36. For the Lord will save Zion,
He will rebuild the cities of Judah,
they will settle there and conquer it.
37. The offspring of His servants shall inherit it,
those who love His Name shall dwell in it.

Psalm 70

Disgraced and humiliated, the poet prays to God to save him from his persecutors and turn the disgrace they direct at him onto their own heads. Although confident that God will save him, he pleads with God to do it quickly. He cannot bear to wait.

1. For the performer, by David,
a call to remembrance.
2. O Lord, come to my rescue,
O God, hurry to my assistance.
3. Let them be disgraced and crestfallen,
those who threaten my life,
let them lag behind and be humiliated,
those who wish me harm.
4. Let their disgrace be returned to them step for step,
those who say, "Hurrah! Hurrah!"
5. Let all who seek You delight and exult in You,
let those who love Your salvation always say,

“May God be exalted.”

6. But I am oppressed and downtrodden, O Lord,
hurry to me, You are my help and deliverance,
O God, do not delay.

Psalm 71

Feeling the decline of his strength, the poet pleads with God not to abandon him to his foes who sense his weakness and are poised to exploit it. He prays that God will always be like a rocky cavern in which he can be shielded from his enemies.

1. I sought refuge in You, O God,
I will never be disgraced.
2. Rescue and deliver me in Your righteousness,
incline Your ear to me and save me.
3. Be for me a rocky cavern to enter always,
You have commanded that I be saved,
for You are my rock and my fortress.
4. O my Lord, deliver me from the grasp of villains,
from the hands of evildoers and exploiters.
5. For You are my hope, O Master, Lord,
You are my assurance since my youth.
6. I relied on You since I was in the belly,
You extracted me from my mother’s insides,
I shall always give praise to You.
7. I became an example to the public,
but You were my mighty refuge.
8. Let my mouth be filled with Your praises,
let it speak all day of Your beauty.
9. Do not cast me aside in old age,
do not abandon me as my strength declines.

10. For my foes have said about me,
those who stalk me have conspired,
11. saying, “The Lord has abandoned him,
give chase, grab him, for there are no rescuers.”
12. O Lord, do not distance Yourself from me,
O my Lord, hurry to my assistance.
13. Let my accusers be disgraced and disabled,
let shame and humiliation enfold my ill-wishers.
14. But as for me, I shall always hope to You,
then I shall add to all Your praises.
15. My mouth will tell of Your righteousness
and Your salvation all through the day,
for I do not know their limit.
16. I will proclaim Your strength, O Master, Lord,
I will recall righteousness that is Yours alone.
17. O Lord, You have taught me since my youth,
to this day I tell of Your wonders.
18. Even in wizened old age, O Lord, do not abandon me,
let me tell the generation of Your mighty arm,
let me tell all comers about Your strength.
19. and Your righteousness that reach to high heaven,
that You have done great things,
O Lord, who can compare to You?
20. The One who put me to long, hard suffering,
You will revive me again,
You will lift me again from the bowels of the earth.
21. You will raise my stature,
and console me once again.
22. Then I will indeed thank You for Your truth
on a harp instrument, O my Lord,
I will play melodies to You

on a lyre, O Holy One of Israel.

23. My lips will sing hymns as I play melodies to You,
as will my soul that You have delivered.

24. My tongue will also tell of Your righteousness all day,
for my ill-wishers are crestfallen and disgraced.

Psalm 72

The poet's thoughts turn to the future when his son will succeed him. He prays that his son will continue to spread peace and prosperity through his righteous deeds, and that others will respect his son as a defender of the poor and champion of the downtrodden.

1. About Solomon.

O Lord, impart Your justice to the king,
Your righteousness to the son of the king.

2. May he judge Your people with righteousness,
Your oppressed ones with justice.

3. May the mountains in bloom bring peace to the people,
may the hills bring peace through righteousness.

4. May he judge the oppressed of the people,
may he save the downtrodden children,
and drive down their exploiters.

5. May all fear You as long as the sun shines,
as long as there is a moon, for all generations.

6. May his influence be like rain on freshly cut sheaves,
like raindrops that seep into the ground.

7. May the righteous flourish in his lifetime,
with much peace until the moon falls apart.

8. May he rule from sea to sea,
from the river until the ends of the earth.

9. May delegations bow before him,

may his foes grovel in the dust.

10. May kings of Tarshish and the islands bring gifts,
may kings of Sheba and Seba present offerings.

11. May all kings bow down to him,
all nations serve him.

12. For he rescues the downtrodden who cry out,
the oppressed who have no one to help them.

13. He takes pity on the poor and the downtrodden,
he saves the lives of the downtrodden.

14. He redeems them from violence and larceny,
their blood is precious in his eyes.

15. May the king live, may He give him gold from Sheba,
may He always take his part and bless him every day.

16. May there be abundant grain in the mountaintop lands,
may its fruit resonate like the Lebanon,
may they outgrow the city like the grass of the earth.

17. May his name endure forever,
as long as there is a sun, may his fame increase,
may he be considered the symbol of blessing,
may all nations consider him fortunate.

18. Blessed is God, the Lord, Lord of Israel,
who works wonders by Himself.

19. Blessed is His honored Name forever,
may His honor fill all the earth. Amen and Amen.

20. Thus come to an end the prayers
of David the son of Jesse.

Prayer after Reading from the Psalms

(Full version appears on p. xxx.)

May it be Your will, O God our Lord, the Lord of our

fathers, in the merit of the psalms we have read before
You, in the merit of their songs, in the merit of their
verses, in the merit of their words and in the merit of
Your holy and pure Names that derive from them, that
You wipe away all our misdeeds, forgive all our sins and
absolve us of all our guilt, for we have transgressed,
sinned and been guilty before You. Bring us back in a
total return to You, guide us to Your service and open
our hearts to the study of Your Torah.

Fourth Day

(73-89)

The poet's thoughts turn to the suffering of his people. The walls are breached. The city is in flames. The streets are littered with corpses. The conquered people live on tear-stained bread. Looking back into history, he recalls that God once smashed the enemy hordes that besieged the city, and he prays that God rescue His people again. He looks back even further to the passage of his newly liberated ancestors through the desert, a passage punctuated by rebellion and reconciliation. He pleads with God to protect His people and render their enemies like chaff before the wind.

Psalm 73

The sight of sinners enjoying peaceful and prosperous lives disturbs the poet. He even considers following their example, but he resists the impulse. Eventually, he comes to understand that no one escapes the consequences of his deeds, and he is glad he seeks refuge in God.

1. A melody by Assaf.

The Lord is indeed good to Israel,
to those of pure heart.

2. As for me, my legs almost went astray,
my steps very nearly slipped away.

3. For I became envious of buffoons
when I saw villains enjoy peace.

4. For they die unencumbered by pain,
as solid as a massive structure.

5. They are not among the men who toil,
nor do they share the afflictions of people.

6. And so they wear arrogance like a wreath,
their flanks grow fat from their larceny.

7. Their eyes bulge from obesity,
the cravings of their hearts are glutted.

8. They vilify, they speak of exploiting the destitute,
they speak as if from haughty heights.

9. They set their mouths against Heaven,
their tongues scourge the earth.

10. And so His people are drawn after them,
the brimming waters seeming like mere seepage.

11. They say, "How can it be that the Lord knows?
how can there be awareness Above?"

12. Behold, these villains are at peace in the world,
they have amassed great wealth.

13. It was surely for naught that I purified my heart,
that I washed my hands in cleanliness.

14. For I was afflicted every day,
my misfortunes reappeared every morning.”

15. Would I consider relating all as it is,
I would alienate your children’s generation.

16. I contemplated, trying to understand this,
but it seemed difficult in my eyes.

17. Until I approached the Lord’s Sanctuaries,
only then did I perceive their ultimate fate.

18. You were surely just smoothing their way,
You plunged them into destruction.

19. How they are devastated in an instant,
they are finished, wiped out by demons.

20. Like a dream from which there is no awakening,
O Master, You tarnished their image by the city.

21. For my heart had been in ferment,
I was pierced to my very core.

22. I was a fool, I did not understand,
I was like a beast in Your regard.

23. But I always remained with You,
You held my right hand.

24. You guided me by Your advice,
then you brought me honor.

25. Whom else do I have in the heavens?
I want no one but You on the earth.

26. My body and heart are longing, O rock of my heart,
my portion, O Lord, forever.

27. For behold, those distant from You will perish,
You will destroy all who desert You.

28. But for me, the Lord’s nearness is my advantage,

I have set my refuge in the Master, the Lord,
that I may relate all Your messages.

Psalm 74

The Sanctuary has gone up in flames. The enemy soldiers drove axes into the walls, convinced that they had penetrated Heaven. The conquered people suffer in disgrace. The poet cries out to God, who tore the sea apart with His might, to rescue His oppressed people.

1. An insight, by Assaf.

Why, O Lord, have You forsaken us forever?

why do You fume in anger at the sheep of Your flock?

2. Remember Your congregation from days of old,
the tribes of Your subjects that You redeemed,
this Mount Zion upon which You dwelt.

3. Lift up Your footsteps and bring eternal ruin
upon every foe who abused the Sanctuary.

4. Your adversaries roared inside Your meetinghouse,
they flaunted their omens as prophetic signs.

5. They were convinced they had penetrated Heaven
when their axes were absorbed by the wood.

6. Now they storm all its gateways together,
they attack them with hatchet and hammer.

7. They have sent up Your Sanctuary in flames,
desecrated Your Name's Dwelling to the ground.

8. All their commanders had the same thought,
they burned all the Lord's meetinghouses in the land.

9. We have not yet seen our prophetic signs,
we no longer have prophets,
no one who knows how long this will last.

10. How long, O Lord, will adversaries cast insults?

how long will foes defy Your Name? forever?

11. Why do You hold back Your hand, Your right hand?

draw it from Your bosom and wreak havoc.

12. The Lord is my King from the days of old,

He brings salvation in the midst of the land.

13. You fragmented the sea with Your might,

You crushed sea monsters' heads on the water.

14. You smashed the heads of the leviathan,

feeding it to the people, to the multitudes.

15. You cracked open wellsprings and streams,

You dried up mighty rivers.

16. Day belongs to You, night is also Yours,

You prepared illumination and sunlight.

17. You established all the boundaries of earth,

You created summers and winters.

18. Remember this, foes insulted God,

a despicable people defied Your Name.

19. Do not deliver Your turtledove to the invaders,

do not forget the life of the oppressed forever.

20. Look upon the covenant of the forefathers,

for earth's dark places teem with lairs of larceny.

21. Do not let the sufferer return disgraced,

let the oppressed and downtrodden praise Your Name.

22. Arise, O Lord, fight Your battles,

remember the daily insults of the blackguards.

23. Do not forget the sounds of Your adversaries,

the tumult of Your assailants that ever rise upward.

Psalm 75

The poet decries the arrogance of the sinners who think they will not suffer retribution for their misdeeds. It is not the sunrise and sunset that bring success

but God's guiding hand. He prepared a strong potion and dispenses it to the villains of the earth.

1. For the performer, against destruction,
a melody by Assaf, a song.
2. We gave thanks to You, O Lord, we gave thanks,
Your Name is ever near, many tell of Your wonders.
3. When I celebrate the holidays,
I spend them as they deserve.
4. Earth and all its dwellers would have dissolved,
but we implanted its pillars forevermore.
5. I say to the buffoons, "Do not be unruly."
and to the villains, "Do not be high and mighty."
6. Do not be high and mighty towards Heaven,
do not stiffen your necks when you speak.
7. For not from the sunrise, nor from the sunset,
nor from the deserts will your fortunes arise.
8. For the Lord is the Judge,
He lowers this one, elevates that one.
9. For in God's hand is a cup, with a strong potion,
blended to full strength, this He will dispense,
even its dregs will be drunk to the last drop
by all the villains of the earth.
10. Then I will tell of it forever,
I will sing melodies to the Lord of Jacob.
11. I will tear asunder all the fortunes of villains,
then the fortunes of the righteous will soar.

Psalm 76

The poet recalls the siege of the city by vast enemy hordes. God smashed their weapons and caused the disoriented warriors, chariot drivers and even their horses to fall asleep. God rescued the suffering victims from their distress.

They give thanks and pay tribute to Him.

1. For the performer of songs,
a melody by Assaf, a song.
2. The Lord became known in Judah,
His Name became great in Israel.
3. His Dwelling was in Jerusalem,
His Temple in Zion.
4. There He shattered the bow's missiles,
shields, swords and weapons of war forever.
5. You are overpowering,
mightier than the most colossal predators.
6. The stouthearted were disoriented, they fell asleep,
all the brave warriors were completely at a loss.
7. Because of Your ire, O Lord of Jacob,
horse and chariot are both aslumber.
8. You, how awesome You are,
who can stand before You when Your anger flares?
9. You announced Your judgment from the heavens,
the earth was frightened and fell silent
10. when the Lord arose to pass judgment,
to save all the humble of the earth forever.
11. They thank You when You stifle human rage,
frustrating the rage concealed within others.
12. Make pledges and redeem them to God, your Lord,
all those nearby bring gifts of tribute out of fear.
13. He will humble the spirits of nobles,
strike awe into the earthly kings.

Psalm 77

The poet suffers the effects of persecution and wonders why God has forsaken him. He finally realizes that God is prodding him to repent. He recalls the wonders God performed for His people in bygone times, and he prays God will do the same for him.

1. For the performer, on persecution,
by Assaf, a melody.
2. I lift my voice to the Lord, and I cry out,
I lift my voice to the Lord, He will listen to me.
3. On my troubled days, I sought out the Master,
my welts oozed all night without letting up,
my soul refused to be consoled.
4. I recalled the kindness of the Lord, and I moaned,
I spoke of it, my spirit was endlessly overwhelmed.
5. You squeezed my eyes shut in the still night,
I gasped and could not speak.
6. I thought about the days of old,
about years that passed long ago.
7. I recalled my songs in the night,
I spoke of it with my heart,
but my spirit sought answers.
8. Will the Master forever forsake me?
will He never again grant pardons?
9. Has His kindness ceased for all eternity?
is His promise annulled for all generations?
10. Has the Lord forgotten to show favor?
has He in anger stifled His mercy forever?
11. Then I told myself, "It is all to frighten me,
this shift in the Supreme One's right hand."
12. I recalled the masterworks of God,
when I recalled Your wonders of bygone times.
13. I reflected on all Your deeds,

I spoke of Your masterworks.
14. O Lord, Your ways are in holiness,
which lord is as great as the Lord?
15. You are the Lord who works wonders,
You made Your power known among peoples.
16. With Your arm You redeemed Your people,
the children of Jacob and Joseph forever.
17. The waters saw You, O Lord, the waters saw You,
they were frightened, even the depths trembled.
18. Water came down in thick streams,
the heavens roared, even Your bolts streaked down.
19. The sound of Your thunder rolled forth,
streaks of lightning lit up the world,
the earth trembled and quaked.
20. Your course passed through the sea,
Your pathway through multitudinous waters,
but Your footsteps were unseen.
21. You guided Your people like sheep,
in the care of Moses and Aaron.

Psalm 78

The poet recalls the past and the lessons to be learned from it. We must always remember that we are God's people. He freed our ancestors from bondage and guided them like a flock through the desert. Even when they became rebellious, He embraced them when they repented.

1. An insight by Assaf.
Listen, my people, to my teaching,
incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
2. Let me begin with a parable,
let me present enigmas from bygone times.

3. Things we heard and have come to know,
things our fathers have told us.
4. We will not conceal them from the children,
we declare God's praises to the next generation,
His power and the wonders He performed.
5. He installed testaments in Jacob, set Teachings in Israel,
which He commanded our fathers to tell their sons.
6. Let the next generation know, let the sons to be born
grow up and tell it to their own children.
7. Then they will have confidence in the Lord,
they will not forget the masterworks of the Lord,
and they will hold fast His commandments.
8. They will not be as their ancestors,
a mutinous generation, a generation disloyal,
without a spirit of allegiance to the Lord.
9. The people of Ephraim, though heavily armed,
powerful archers, were routed on the day of battle.
10. They did not safeguard the covenant of the Lord,
they refused to walk according to His Teaching.
11. They forgot His masterworks,
the wonders He showed them.
12. But still He worked wonders before their ancestors
in the land of Egypt, in the fields of Zo'an.
13. He split apart the sea and led them through,
He stood the waters like a bulwark.
14. He guided them with a cloud by day,
and by the light of fire all through the night.
15. He split open rocks in the desert,
He gave them to drink in the great chasm.
16. He drew running water from a stone,
He sent down water like rivers.

17. But they continued to sin against Him,
to challenge the Supreme One in the wasteland.

18. They tested the Lord in their hearts
to demand food for themselves.

19. And they spoke against the Lord, they said,
“Can the Lord set a table in the desert?”

20. Yes, he struck the rock, waters flowed,
streams gushed, but can He also give bread?
can He prepare meat for his people?”

21. And so God heard and was enraged,
fire flared in Jacob, anger also rose against Israel.

22. For they had no faith in the Lord,
they did not trust in His salvation,

23. though He had commanded the skies from Above,
He had opened the portals of heaven.

24. He had rained down upon them manna to eat,
He gave them the grain of the heavens.

25. Man ate the bread of angels,
He sent them food to eat their fill.

26. Then He sent an east wind across the heavens,
with His power, He drove in a south wind.

27. And He rained down on them meat like dust,
birds on the wing like the sands beside the sea.

28. He flung it all into their encampment,
all around their dwellings.

29. They ate until they were utterly full,
for He had catered to their desires.

30. Yet they did not cast off their desires,
and while the food was still in their mouths,

31. the Lord’s anger rose against them,
He killed their elite, He humbled Israel’s elect.

32. And still they continued to sin,
they had no faith in His wonders.

33. Then He cut short their days in emptiness,
their years in confusion.

34. As He was about to kill them, then they sought Him,
they repented and appealed to the Lord.

35. They remembered that the Lord was their Rock,
that the Supreme Lord was their Redeemer.

36. And they cajoled Him with their mouths,
they lied to Him with their tongues.

37. Yet their hearts were not loyal to Him,
they were not faithful to His covenant.

38. But the Merciful One forgives sin,
He does not destroy and often restrains His anger,
He does not vent His wrath all at once.

39. He recalled that they were but flesh,
a fleeting spirit that does not return.

40. How they challenged Him in the desert,
how they provoked Him in the wilderness.

41. Still they continued to test the Lord,
they investigated the Holy One of Israel.

42. They did not remember His hand,
the day He liberated them from the oppressor,

43. that He had inflicted His signs on Egypt,
His wonders on the fields of Zo'an.

44. He turned their rivers into blood,
and made their running water unfit to drink.

45. He sent against them wild menageries
that devoured them, frogs that destroyed them.

46. He gave their crops to the locusts,
the fruit of their toil to the locust swarm.

47. He killed their grapevines with hailstones,
their sycamore trees with a plague of locusts.

48. He consigned their cattle to the hailstones,
their livestock to the flaming cores.

49. He unleashed His burning anger on them, rage, fury,
and calamity, an onslaught of malevolent messengers.

50. He blazed a path for His anger,
He did not spare them from death,
He consigned their lives to pestilence.

51. He struck down every firstborn in Egypt,
the foremost of the vigor in the homes of Ham.

52. Then He sent off His people like sheep,
He guided them like a flock through the desert.

53. He led them to safety, they did not know fear,
while the sea engulfed their foes.

54. He brought them to His holy domain,
to this mountain His right hand acquired.

55. He expelled nations before them,
and awarded them hereditary estates,
He settled the Tribes of Israel in their vacated homes.

56. But still they tested and challenged the Supreme Lord,
they did not safeguard His testaments.

57. They lagged and rebelled as their fathers had done,
they became like an unstable bow.

58. They angered Him with their pagan altars,
they infuriated Him with their idols.

59. The Lord heard and was enraged,
and He rejected Israel strongly.

60. He abandoned the Tabernacle of Shiloh,
the Tent where He had dwelled among people.

61. He let His power be taken into captivity,

His beauty into the hands of the enemy.
62. And He consigned His people to the sword,
He vented his rage against his subjects.
63. Their young men were consumed by fire,
their virgins denied wedding celebrations.
64. Their priests fell by the sword,
nor did their widows live to weep.
65. Then the Master awoke like a sleeper,
like a hero roaring against the effects of wine.
66. And He struck down His enemies from behind,
He sent them to everlasting shame.
67. But He rejected the Tent of Joseph,
He did not choose the Tribe of Ephraim.
68. He chose the Tribe of Judah,
the Mountain of Zion that He loves.
69. He built His Sanctuary like the high firmament,
He established it forever like the very earth.
70. And he chose His servant David,
He took him away from the sheep pens.
71. From behind the suckling lambs, He brought him
to shepherd His people Jacob, His subjects Israel.
72. And he shepherded them by the innocence of his heart,
he led them with the ingenuity of his hands.

Psalm 79

The poet contemplates the devastation of the holy city, the corpses in the street, the blood spilled like water, the anguish of the captives. He cries out to God to have mercy on His people. Let the world see that He avenges the blood of the innocent.

1. A melody, by Assaf.

O Lord, nations have come into Your estate,
defiled Your holy Palace, reduced Jerusalem to rubble.

2. They left the corpses of Your servants
as pickings for the birds of the heavens,
the flesh of Your pious ones for the beasts of the earth.

3. They spilled their blood like water around Jerusalem,
there was no one to bury them.

4. We were disgraced before our neighbors,
objects of scorn and derision to our surroundings.

5. How long, O God, will You be incensed? forever?
how long will Your fury blaze like fire?

6. Pour Your rage upon nations that do not know You,
upon the kingdoms that do not call out in Your Name.

7. For they have consumed Jacob,
they have laid waste his beautiful place.

8. Do not hold the early sins against us,
hurry, let Your mercy await us,
for we have been brought very low.

9. Help us, O Lord of our salvation,
for the honor of Your Name, rescue us,
forgive our transgressions for the sake of Your Name.

10. Why should the nations say, "Where is their Lord?"
make it known among the nations before our very eyes
that You avenged the spilled blood of Your servants.

11. Let the groans of the captives come before You,
as Your arm is great, release those condemned to death.

12. Repay our neighbors sevenfold into their bosoms
for the insults they hurled at You, O Master.

13. But as for us, Your people, the sheep of Your flock,
we give thanks to You forever,
we shall tell Your praises for all generations.

Psalm 80

The poet laments the plight of the exiles that live on tear-stained bread. He recalls the glorious years when God implanted His people in the land, and he pleads with Him to look down from the heavens and observe their suffering, to bring back the days of old.

1. For the performer, to roses,
a testament by Assaf, a melody.
2. Listen, O Shepherd of Israel,
the One who guides Joseph like sheep,
the One who sits upon the cherubs, appear.
3. In front of Ephraim, Benjamin and Mannaseh,
arouse Your strength, come to our salvation.
4. O Lord, bring us back,
show us the light of Your face, and we will be saved.
5. O God, Lord of Hosts,
how long will You spurn the prayers of Your people?
6. You fed them tear-soaked bread,
You gave them tears to drink yet a third time.
7. You made us a bone of contention for our neighbors,
our foes show themselves scornful.
8. O Lord of Hosts, bring us back,
show us the light of Your face, and we will be saved.
9. You transplanted a grapevine from Egypt,
You chased away the nations and implanted it.
10. You cleared everything before it,
its roots took hold, it filled the land.
11. Its shade obscured mountains,
its limbs were majestic cedars.
12. Its branches stretched out until the sea,

its young shoots until the river.

13. Why have You breached its barricades
so that all who pass by can pluck at it?

14. The swine of the forest ravage it,
the wildlife of the field gnaw at it.

15. O Lord of Hosts, please come back,
look down from the heavens and observe,
take this grapevine into account.

16. This sturdy vine Your right hand implanted,
that You nurtured for Yourself despite the favored son,

17. is consumed by fire, cut down,
they perish by the ire of Your Presence.

18. Let Your hand fall on the mighty, Your right hand,
let it fall on the person You Yourself strengthened.

19. Let us not slip away from You,
revive us so that we can call out in Your Name.

20. O God, Lord of Hosts, bring us back,
show us the light of Your face, and we will be saved.

Psalm 81

After praising God, the poet continues as if to speak in His voice. He reminds
the people that when they called out to Him from bondage He liberated them.

If only they would be loyal, He would feed them the choicest wheat and honey
from a rock.

1. For the performer, on the Gathian instrument,
by Assaf.

2. Sing hymns to the Lord, our Strength,
greet the Lord of Jacob with fanfare.

3. Strike up melodies, bring out the drums,
sweet lyres and harps.

4. Sound the shofar in the new month,
on the date of our festival day.

5. For it is a decree for Israel,
a law of the Lord of Jacob.

6. He set it as a testament for Jehoseph
when he went out into the land of Egypt,
“I can grasp this language I never knew.”

7. I removed their shoulders from the burdens,
their hands were relieved of the cauldrons.

8. You called out in your affliction, I delivered you,
I responded with thunder to your clandestine pleas,
though I always knew full well about Mei Meribah.

9. Hear, My people, I will bear witness to you,
O Israel, if you would but listen to Me.

10. There shall be no strange gods among you,
you shall not bow to alien gods.

11. I am God, your Lord,
who brought you up from the land of Egypt,
open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

12. But My people did not heed My voice,
Israel did not pay attention to Me.

13. So I banished them to the fantasies of their hearts,
let them walk by their own convictions.

14. If only My people would hear Me,
if Israel would walk in My ways,

15. I would subdue their foes in an instant,
I would turn My hand onto their oppressors.

16. The archenemies of God contradict Him,
but their time of reckoning will last forever.

17. Then He would feed them from the choicest wheat,
I would satisfy you with honey out of a rock.

Psalm 82

After declaring that God is present in the courtroom, the poet continues as if to speak in His voice. He rebukes the judges for their favoritism and corruption, and He warns them that, despite their exalted status, they will perish like mortals. The poet concludes with a prayer.

1. A melody, by Assaf.

The Lord stands in the congregation of the Lord,
He passes judgment amidst the courts.

2. How long will you issue corrupt judgments?
how long will you show constant favor to villains?

3. Rule justly for paupers and orphans,
vindicate the oppressed and the destitute.

4. Liberate the pauper and the downtrodden,
rescue them from the grasp of villains.

5. They do not know nor do they understand
that they walk in darkness,
that they are ruining all the earth's foundations.

6. I had said, "You are like archangels,
you are all celestial beings."

7. But you shall die like mortals,
you shall fall like ordinary princes.

8. Arise, O Lord, judge the earth,
for You bestow wealth upon all the nations.

Psalm 83

The poet pleads with God not to be silent while His people face mortal danger. Their enemies form alliances and conspire to destroy them and wipe their name from memory. The poet begs God to render their enemies like thistles, like chaff before the wind and destroy them.

1. A song, a melody,
by Assaf.
2. O Lord, do not choose silence for Yourself,
be not mute nor still, O Lord.
3. For behold, Your foes are howling,
Your archenemies have lifted up their heads.
4. They plot secretly against Your people,
they conspire against those who hide behind You.
5. They said, “Come, let us oust them from nationhood,
then the name of Israel will no longer be remembered.”
6. For they conspired together with all their hearts,
they made a covenant against You.
7. The dwellings of Edom and the Ishmaelites,
Moab and the Hagarites.
8. Gebal and Ammon and Amalek,
Philistia and the inhabitants of Tyre.
9. Assyria also joined with them,
they became a constant strong arm for Lot’s descendants.
10. Make them suffer the fate of Midian,
of Sisra, of Yabin at the Kishon River.
11. They were destroyed in En Dor,
they became compost for the soil.
12. Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb,
all their princes like Zebah and Zalmuna.
13. They had said, “Let us conquer for ourselves
the beautiful estate of the Lord.”
14. O my Lord, make them like thistles,
like chaff before the wind.
15. Like a fire that ignites a forest,
like a flame that sets mountains ablaze,
16. so shall You pursue them with Your storm,

so shall You confound them with Your whirlwind.

17. Cover their faces with embarrassment,
then they will seek Your Name, O God.

18. Let them be disgraced and confounded for always,
let them be crestfallen and go down to destruction.

19. Then they will know that it is You alone
whose Name is God, supreme over all the earth.

Psalm 84

The poet's soul longs for God. His heart and flesh sing hymns. How fortunate are those who dwell in God's House, even if only on the threshold. How fortunate are those who trust in God, who have made Him the sun and the shield of their lives.

1. For the performer, on the Gathian instrument,
by the sons of Korach, a melody.

2. How beloved are Your Dwellings,
O God of Hosts.

3. My soul aches and longs for God's courtyards,
my heart and flesh sing hymns to the Living Lord.

4. Even the bird has found a home, the sparrow her nest
in which to place her fledglings, on Your altars,
O God of Hosts, my King, my Lord.

5. Fortunate are those who dwell in Your House,
may they continue to praise you forever.

6. Fortunate is the person who seeks his power in You,
whose heart is set on paths of improvement.

7. Those in the Valley of Weeping, who shed fountains,
they too will envelop the Teacher with blessings.

8. May they go from strength to strength,
may they appear before the Lord in Zion.

9. O God, Lord of Hosts, hear my prayer,
always listen, O Lord of Jacob.
10. Consider our shield, O Lord,
look upon the face of Your anointed.
11. For a day in Your courtyard transcends a millenium,
I would rather be on the threshold of my Lord's House
than live in the homes of villains.
12. For God the Lord is as a sun and a shield,
God gives grace and honor, withholding no goodness,
to those who walk in innocence.
13. O God of Hosts,
fortunate is the person who trusts in You.

Psalm 85

The poet pleads with God to favor to His holy land for its own sake, if not for the sake of His people who have sinned. He asks God to bring His wayward people back to the hallowed land so that it can bloom and flourish once again.

1. For the performer, by the sons of Korach,
a melody.
2. You would show favor to Your land, O God,
if You repatriate the captives of Jacob,
3. if You forgive the sins of Your people,
if You cover all their transgressions forever,
4. if You withdraw all Your wrath,
if You relinquish Your burning anger.
5. Bring us back, O Lord of our salvation,
lay aside Your anger with us.
6. Will You be incensed with us forever?
will Your anger continue for generations?
7. Surely You will revive us again someday,

then Your people will rejoice in You.

8. Show us Your kindness, O God,
grant us Your salvation.

9. I will hear what the Lord God speaks
when He speaks of peace to His people and pious ones,
they will not revert to foolishness.

10. So near to those who fear Him is His salvation,
to settle His honor in our land.

11. Kindness and truth have come together,
righteousness and peace have kissed.

12. Truth sprouts from the earth,
righteousness is observed from the heavens.

13. God will indeed give forth goodness,
then our land will yield its produce.

14. Righteousness will go before Him,
He will fuse it into His footpaths.

Psalm 86

Oppressed and downtrodden, beset by scoundrels and tyrants, the poet cries out to God for protection. As a loyal servant who trusts in Him always and prays to Him continuously, he seeks a sign of benevolence. He deserves a response in his troubled times.

1. A prayer, by David.

O God, incline Your ear, respond to me,
for I am oppressed and downtrodden.

2. Protect my soul for I am pious,
O You, my Lord, save Your servant,
the one who trusts in You.

3. Grant me favor, O Master,
for I call out to You every day.

4. Bring joy to the soul of Your servant,
for my soul is uplifted to You, O Master.

5. For You, O Master, are good and forgiving,
with great kindness to all who call out to You.

6. Listen, O God, to my prayer,
pay heed to the sound of my pleas.

7. I call out to You in my troubled times,
for You will surely respond to me.

8. There is none like You among the archangels,
O Master, and nothing like Your deeds.

9. All the nations You created will come,
they will bow down to You, O Master,
they will pay homage to Your Name.

10. For You are great and You alone,
O Lord, perform wonders.

11. Teach me Your ways, O God,
let me walk in Your truth,
let me focus my heart on fearing Your Name.

12. I will thank You, with all my heart,
O Master, my Lord,
I will honor Your Name forever.

13. For Your kindness towards me is great,
You rescued my soul from the lowest abyss.

14. O Lord, scoundrels rose up against me,
a clique of tyrants threatened my life,
they did not consider that You were before them.

15. But You, O Master, merciful and loving Lord,
are slow to anger, great in kindness and truth.

16. Turn to me and grant me favor,
invest Your power in Your servant,
save the son of Your handmaiden.

17. Show me a sign of benevolence,
then my enemies will see it and be disgraced,
for You, O God, has helped and consoled me.

Psalm 87

The poet sings about God's special love for the holy gates of Zion, the eternal city of God. He calls on all the powerful nations that surround Zion to pay homage to her and to acknowledge that they all arose from her, that He established her supreme above all the mighty ones.

1. By the sons of Korach, a melody, a song,
composed for the holy mountains.
2. God loves the gates of Zion
more than all the dwellings of Jacob.
3. They speak of you with honor,
O eternal city of the Lord.
4. "I will remind Egypt and Babylon to pay homage
to those who know Me, behold Philistia and Tyre,
and also Ethiopia, all these arose from there."
5. And when they come to Zion, it shall be said,
"Each of these mighty ones arose from her,
but He established her supreme."
6. God will take note, when He inscribes peoples
for their eternal fate, "This one was born there."
7. Then singers as well as dancers will declare,
"All my innermost feelings are absorbed in You."

Psalm 88

The poet paints a picture of person at the edge of the abyss. Disheartened and discouraged, he feels devoid of vitality as if he were already dead, left behind and forgotten. Enveloped by darkness, shunned by his companions, he cries out to God to have mercy.

1. A song, a melody, by the sons of Korach,
for the performer, on being lovelorn and oppressed,
an insight, for Heiman the Ezrahite.
2. O God, Lord of my salvation, I cry out in the daytime,
even in the night I stand staunchly before You.
3. Let my prayers come before You,
incline Your ear to my hymns.
4. For my soul is saturated with troubles,
my life has reached the edge of the abyss.
5. I am considered among those who descend to the pit,
I have become like a man devoid of vitality.
6. I feel as if I were among the dead, dislodged,
like corpses, gravedwellers You no longer recall,
those who were cut off by Your hand.
7. You have placed me in the nethermost pit,
in places of darkness, in the depths of the sea.
8. Your rage has settled on me,
all Your crashing waves ceaselessly pounded me.
9. You distanced my companions from me,
You made them hold me in contempt,
I am a prisoner, unable to go out.
10. My eyes were saddened by affliction,
I called out to You, O God, every day,
I stretched out my hands to You.
11. Would You work wonders for deadened souls?
would slackers arise and thank you evermore?
12. Could Your kindness be told from the grave?
Your faithfulness from ruination?
13. Could Your wonders become known in the darkness?
Your righteousness in a forgotten land?

14. But as for me, I cried out to You,
my prayers await You in the morning.
15. Why, O God, should You forsake me?
why should You hide Your face from me?
16. I am oppressed, crushed to death,
I carry Your terrors deep within me.
17. Your burning anger passed over me,
Your fearsomeness tore me asunder.
18. They engulfed me like water all through the day,
they closed in on me together.
19. You distanced friends and comrades from me,
I have lost track of my companions.

Psalm 89

The poet describes God's promise that the royal lineage would endure forever. Despite the promise, God allowed the royal barricades to be breached and the fortresses to be reduced to shambles. The poet prays to God that He validate His promise and restore the royal family's crown.

1. An insight,
for Ethan the Ezrahite.
2. I will sing of God's kindness forever, for generations
my mouth will proclaim Your faithfulness.
3. For I said Your kindness is forged to last forever,
You affixed Your faithfulness in the heavens, saying,
4. "I have sealed a covenant with My chosen one,
I have made an oath to My servant David.
5. I will appoint Your offspring for all time,
I will erect your throne for all generations, forever."
6. Then the heavens will praise Your wonders, O God,
and Your faithfulness in the congregation of the holy.

7. For who is God's equal under the canopy of the sky?
who compares to God among the children of the mighty?
8. The Lord dominates great throngs of holy angels,
He overawes all those around Him.
9. O God, Lord of Hosts,
who is as mighty as You, O God?
Your faithfulness is all around You.
10. You rule over the grandeur of the sea,
when the waves surge, You still them.
11. You made the arrogant humble as corpses,
You scattered Your foes with the power of Your arm.
12. The heavens belong to You, the earth is also Yours,
You established civilization and all it contains.
13. You created both the north and the south,
Tabor and Hermon sing hymns to Your Name.
14. You have an arm invested with strength,
You empower Your hand, You lift up Your right hand.
15. Righteousness and justice underpin Your throne,
kindness and truth precede Your Presence.
16. Fortunate are the people who know the trumpet calls,
O God, they walk by the light of Your face.
17. All through the day, they rejoice in Your Name,
they are raised up through Your righteousness.
18. For You are the splendor of their might,
through Your favor our fortunes will rise.
19. For our defender belongs to God,
our king belongs to the Holy One of Israel.
20. Then You spoke in a vision to Your pious ones,
You said, "I have promised help to a hero,
I have elevated the pick of the people.
21. I have found My servant David,

I anointed him with My holy oil.

22. My hand will indeed be firmly with him,
My arm will also give him courage.

23. No foe shall rise up against him,
no evil person shall oppress him.

24. I will crush his oppressors before him,
I will strike down his archenemies.

25. My faithfulness and kindness will be with him,
through My Name his fortunes will rise.

26. I will establish his hand over the seas,
his right hand over the rivers.

27. He will call out to me, 'You are my Father,
my Lord, the rock of my salvation.'

28. I will respond and appoint him firstborn,
supreme among the kings of the earth.

29. I will preserve My kindness for him forever,
My covenant is pledged to him.

30. I will establish his offspring for always,
his throne as the days of heaven.

31. Should his descendants abandon My Teaching,
should they not walk by My laws,

32. should they disdain My decrees,
should they fail to observe My commandments,

33. then I shall punish their guilt with the rod,
their sins with plagues.

34. But I will not withdraw My kindness from them,
I will not repudiate My trust.

35. I will not violate My covenant,
nor will I alter the utterance of My lips.

36. One thing I have sworn by My holiness,
that I will never betray David.

37. His offspring shall endure forever,
his throne shall be before Me, like the sun.

38. He shall be established forever, like the moon,
trusted witnesses in the sky forevermore.”

39. Then You did forsake and reject,
You were wrathful with Your anointed.

40. You obliterated Your servant’s covenant,
You flung his crown to the ground.

41. You breached all his barricades,
You reduced his fortresses to shambles.

42. All who pass by ravage him,
he became an embarrassment to his neighbors.

43. You raised up the right hand of his oppressors,
You gladdened all his foes.

44. You even blunted the sharpness of his sword,
You did not uphold him in battle.

45. You extinguished his luminescence,
You toppled his throne to the very ground.

46. You shortened the days of his youth,
You clothed him in disgrace forever.

47. How long, O God, will You be concealed? forever?
how long will Your rage burn like a flame?

48. I know full well that my life crumbles away,
that You created all people for futility and folly.

49. Which man can live and never see death?
who can escape the abyss forever?

50. Where are Your former kindnesses, O Master?
the oath You swore to David in Your faithfulness?

51. Remember, O Master, Your servant’s disgrace,
which I bear in my bosom from many peoples,

52. that Your foes, O God, have mocked,

that they have mocked the coming of Your anointed.

53. Blessed is God.

Amen and Amen.

Prayer after Reading from the Psalms

(Full version appears on p. xxx.)

May it be Your will, O God our Lord, the Lord of our fathers, in the merit of the psalms we have read before You, in the merit of their songs, in the merit of their verses, in the merit of their words and in the merit of Your holy and pure Names that derive from them, that You wipe away all our misdeeds, forgive all our sins and absolve us of all our guilt, for we have transgressed, sinned and been guilty before You. Bring us back in a total return to You, guide us to Your service and open our hearts to the study of Your Torah.

Fifth Day

(90-106)

Striving and ambition are but illusions. The years fly by, and we are gone, like blades of grass in the wind. Recognizing that only by seeking God can we find meaning and security, the poet exults in His glory. He calls on all the earth to rejoice in the knowledge of God.

Perhaps that will bring the fulfillment of his most cherished dreams. Then the day will come when God proclaims His salvation and reveals His righteousness. The earth will ring with melodies. The rivers will clap their hands, and the mountains will sing hymns in unison.

Psalm 90

The poet sees the years fly by like blades of grass in the wind. Life is like a sprout that quickly wilts and withers away; our striving is drudgery and illusion, then we are carried off. He prays for good years and the opportunity to attain wise hearts.

1. A prayer by Moses, the man of the Lord.
O Master, You have been a temple for us
for generation after generation,
2. even before the mountains were born,
before You engendered earth and civilization,
from this world to the next, You are the Lord.
3. You reduce a man to infirmity,
then You say, “Repent, O people.”
4. For a thousand years are in Your eyes
as one yesterday gone by, as a wedge of one night.
5. The years streaming by are but a night’s sleep,
by morning they are like grass blown away.
6. The sprouts of the morning swiftly dwindle,
by evening they shrivel and wither away.
7. And yet we are consumed by Your anger,
we are confounded by Your rage.
8. You placed our sins in front of You,
our youthful misdeeds in the light of Your face.
9. For all our days are swept away by Your wrath,
our years are dissipated like a spoken word.
10. Our lives in this sorry state last seventy years,
eighty at best, their striving is drudgery, illusion,
for we are quickly torn away and carried off.
11. Who can know the power of Your anger?
as You are awesome, so great is Your wrath.

12. Let the number of our days be as first declared,
then we will have time to attain wise hearts.
13. Relent, O God, how long can this go on?
reconsider Your expectations of Your servants.
14. Fill us with Your kindness in the morning,
then we will sing hymns and rejoice all our days.
15. Give us joy as lengthy as the days You afflicted us,
as the years when we experienced misery.
16. Let Your works be seen by Your servants,
let Your glory be seen upon their children.
17. May the benevolence of the Master, our Lord,
be upon us, make our handiwork fit for us,
O make our handiwork suitable.

Psalm 91

The poet recognizes that those who seek God shall rest secure. They need not fear the terrors of the night or the demons that pillage at high noon. God's truth is their enveloping armor. When they call out in distress, He will deliver them and give them honor.

1. One who sits in the Supreme One's hideaway,
shall rest secure in the Almighty's shadow.
2. I say of God, "He is my refuge,
my citadel, my Lord in whom I trust."
3. For He rescues you from the hunter's trap,
from the devastating pestilence.
4. He covers you with His wingspan,
you find refuge under His wings,
His truth is enveloping armor.
5. You need not fear the terrors of the night,
the arrows that fly in the daytime,

6. the pestilence that stalks the darkness,
the demons that pillage at high noon.

7. A thousand may loom beside you,
ten thousand by your right,
yet they will not approach you.

8. You need only look with your eyes,
and you will see the villains laid waste.

9. For you said, "God is my refuge,"
you made the Supreme One your temple.

10. No misfortune shall befall you,
nor shall plagues encroach on your home.

11. For He dispatches His angels to you,
to protect you along all your ways.

12. They will carry you in their hands,
lest you strike your feet against a rock.

13. You will tread on wildcats and vipers,
you will trample young lions and serpents.

14. Because he longed for Me, I will liberate him,
I will elevate him because he knew My Name.

15. He will call to Me, I will answer,
I am with him in distress,
I will deliver him and give him honor.

16. I will gratify him with long life,
I will allow him to see My salvation.

Psalm 92

The poet perceives what fools cannot fathom. He admires the wonders of creation and recognizes the depth of the thoughts that produced them. God's enemies will be defeated, and the righteous will blossom like date palms in the House of God.

1. A melody,
a song for the Sabbath day.
2. It is good to give thanks to God,
to sing melodies to Your exalted Name,
3. to tell of Your kindness in the mornings,
and of Your faithfulness in the nights,
4. with the ten-stringed lyre, with the harp,
with the outpourings of the lyre.
5. For You gave me joy, O God, with Your feats,
I will sing hymns about Your handiwork.
6. How great are Your deeds, O God,
how very deep are Your thoughts.
7. A shallow man cannot know it,
nor can a fool understand this,
8. that villains sprout like weeds,
that deceitmongers flourish
only to be destroyed forever and ever.
9. But You are supreme over everything,
You are everlasting, O God.
10. For behold Your foes, O God,
for lo and behold, Your foes are beaten,
the deceitmongers are all scattered.
11. You uplifted my power like a bison,
I have become drenched with refreshing oils.
12. My eyes have discerned the fate of my enemies,
my ears heard about the rogues who assail me.
13. The righteous will blossom like date palms,
they will thrive like cedars in Lebanon.
14. They will be implanted in the House of God,
they will blossom in the courtyards of our Lord.
15. In old age they will continue to bloom,

they will be robust and refreshed
16. as they proclaim that God is fair,
“He is my Rock, He is without injustice.”

Psalm 93

Despite all the forces that threaten to tear civilization apart, the poet knows that it will not fall to ruin. God reigns supreme, mightier than the surging waters and the crashing sea. His grandeur and His power will save the world from destroying itself.

1. God reigns, He is garbed in grandeur,
God is garbed in power, He is girded with it,
civilization is relieved, it will not fall to ruin.
2. Your throne endures from antiquity,
You have always existed.
3. The rivers raged, O God, the rivers raged aloud,
the rivers raged from their very depths.
4. More than the roar of surging waters,
the might of the crashing sea,
You are mighty above all, O God.
5. Your testaments are exceedingly faithful,
that Your House will be adorned with holiness,
O God, we await it for the longest time.

Psalm 94

The poet derides the villains who oppress, who kill widows, orphans and converts, thinking that God does not see or comprehend. But God sees all and knows all their worthless thoughts. He is a bastion for the righteous, the rock of their refuge

1. God is the Lord of Vengeance,
O Lord of Vengeance, appear.

2. Rise up, O Judge of the Earth,
give the arrogant their retribution.
3. How long shall villains last, O God?
how long shall villains celebrate?
4. They speak out, they spread rumors,
the deceitmongers take pride in themselves.
5. They beat down Your people, O God,
they oppress Your subjects.
6. They kill widows and converts,
they murder orphans.
7. And they say, “God does not see,
the Lord of Jacob does not comprehend.”
8. Think into it, O shallowest among people,
fools, when will you become enlightened?
9. The One who attaches ears, will He not hear?
the One who forms eyes, will He not look?
10. The One who chastens nations, will He not rebuke?
He is the One who teaches people knowledge.
11. God knows the thoughts of people,
that they are worthless.
12. Fortunate is the man You chasten, O God,
as long as You teach him Your Teaching.
13. Thus will he be spared troubled times,
until the pit is dug for the villain’s destruction.
14. For God would not forsake His people,
He would not abandon His subjects.
15. For judgment prevails until righteousness comes,
then the sincere of heart come forward.
16. Who will defend me among rogues?
who will stand up for me among deceitmongers?
17. Had God not come to my assistance,

my soul would near be laid in the silent crypt.
18. Although I thought my legs would falter,
Your kindness, O God, supported me.
19. When my anxieties piled up within me,
Your consolations permeated my soul.
20. Are the entrenched destroyers a match for You?
or those who make travail into a way of life?
21. They beleaguer the soul of the righteous,
and pass sentence against innocent blood.
22. But God was a bastion for me,
my Lord was the rock of my refuge.
23. He turned their own coercion against them,
and cut them down by their own villainy,
God our Lord will surely cut them down.

Psalm 95

The poet sings hymns to God's transcendent greatness and hails Him as the master of the mountains and the seas. The people are His flock, and He tends to them if they heed His voice, unlike when they angered God and were prevented from entering the land.

1. Come, let us sing hymns to God,
let us greet the Rock, our Redeemer, with fanfare.
2. Let us welcome Him with thanksgiving,
let us ring out melodies to Him.
3. For God is a great Lord,
a King greater than all archangels,
4. in whose hands lie the mysteries of the earth,
to whom the pinnacles of the mountains belong,
5. who owns the sea that He has made,
and the dry land His hands have formed.

6. Come, let us genuflect and bow down,
let us kneel before God, our Maker.
7. For He is our Lord, we are the people of His flock,
sheep in His care, even today if you heed His voice,
8. “Do not harden your hearts with strife,
like the day of the trial in the desert
9. when your fathers tried Me, they tested Me,
although they had seen My feats.
10. Forty years I struggled with that generation,
I said, ‘They are a fickle-hearted people,’
but they did not know My ways,
11. that I had sworn in My anger
against their coming to My resting place.”

Psalm 96

The poet calls on the entire world to sing God’s praises. He exhorts them to approach His courtyards, to bow down to Him amidst the glorious holiness and to declare among the nations that God judges the world with fairness and civilization will not fall to ruin.

1. Sing a new song to God,
let all the earth sing to God.
2. Sing to God, bless His Name,
herald His salvation every single day.
3. Tell of His honor among the nations,
of His wonders among all peoples.
4. For God is great and very esteemed,
He is more awesome than all archangels.
5. For all the gods of the peoples are worthless,
but God made the heavens.
6. Grace and glory are in His Presence,

power and beauty in His Sanctuary.

7. Affirm to God, O tribes of the peoples,
affirm God's honor and power.

8. Affirm to God the honor of His Name,
bring gifts and approach His courtyards.

9. Bow down to God amidst the glorious holiness,
let all the earth tremble before Him.

10. Declare among the nations, "God reigns,
civilization is indeed preserved from ruin,
He will judge peoples with fairness."

11. The heavens will rejoice, the earth will be jubilant,
the sea and all its teeming life will roar their delight.

12. The fields and all they contain will celebrate,
then all the trees in the forest will sing hymns

13. before God, for He has come,
for He has come to judge the earth,
He will judge civilization with righteousness,
and peoples with His faithfulness.

Psalm 97

The poet calls on the earth to be jubilant and the multitudinous islands to rejoice, for God will destroy His enemies. A light has been planted for the righteous and joy for the sincere. The pagans will be discredited and disgraced, and all people will bow to God.

1. God reigns, let the earth be jubilant,
let the multitudinous islands rejoice.

2. Clouds and cloudbanks surround Him,
righteousness and justice underpin His throne.

3. Fire will go forth before Him, and flare out
against His enemies all around.

4. His lightning bolts illuminate the world,
the earth sees and trembles.
5. Mountains dissolve like wax before God,
before the Master of all the earth.
6. The heavens tell of His righteousness,
and all the peoples see His honor.
7. All idol worshippers, proud of their false gods,
will be disgraced, all religions will bow to Him,
8. Zion hears and rejoices,
the daughters of Judah are jubilant
because of your vengeance, O God.
9. For You, O God, are supreme over all the earth,
You are greatly elevated above all the archangels.
10. Despise evil, O lovers of God,
He protects the lives of His pious ones,
He rescues them from villains.
11. A light has been planted for the righteous,
and joy for the sincere of heart.
12. Rejoice, O righteous, in God,
give thanks at the mention of His holy Name.

Psalm 98

The poet dreams of the time God proclaims His salvation and reveals His righteousness. The earth will ring forth with melodies, and the teeming life of the seas will roar with delight. The rivers will clap their hands, and the mountains will sing hymns in unison.

1. A melody.
Sing a new song to God, for He performed wonders,
His right hand and holy arm delivered salvation.
2. God proclaimed His salvation, He revealed

His righteousness before the eyes of the nations.

3. He remembered His kindness,
His faithfulness to the House of Israel,
all the ends of the earth beheld
the salvation of our Lord.

4. All the earth, greet God with fanfare,
burst forth and sing hymns and melodies.

5. Play melodies for God with the harp,
with the harp and melodious sounds.

6. With trumpets and the sounds of the shofar
play boisterously before the King God.

7. The sea and its teeming life will roar with delight,
the world and all who live within it.

8. Rivers will clap their hands,
mountains will sing hymns in unison

9. before God, for He has come to judge the earth,
He will judge the world with righteousness,
and peoples with fairness.

Psalm 99

The poet describes God as the King who loves justice, who established fairness, who introduced justice and righteousness among the people. He exhorts the people to bow down to God's holy mountain, for He responds to the righteous when they call on Him.

1. When God reigns, peoples will tremble,
the One enthroned on cherubs,
You set the earth quake.

2. God, who resides in Zion, is great,
He towers over all the peoples.

3. They praise Your great and awesome Name,

for it is holy,
4. and the power of the King who loves justice,
You established fairness, You introduced
justice and righteousness in Jacob.
5. Bring glory to God, our Lord,
bow down to His footstool, for it is holy.
6. Moses and Aaron, among His priests,
and Samuel, among those who called His Name,
they called out to God, He responded to them.
7. He spoke to them in a pillar of cloud,
they upheld His testaments
and the decrees He had given them.
8. O God, our Lord, You responded to them,
You were a forgiving Lord because of them,
yet You were exacting with their own faults.
9. Bring glory to God, our Lord,
bow down to His holy mountain,
for God, our Lord, is holy.

Psalm 100

The poet wants the whole world to be grateful to God. He made them; they are His flock. Let them come before Him with joyous hymns. Let them praise Him and bless His holy name. For He is good, and His faithfulness endures for all generations.

1. A melody of thanksgiving,
all the earth, greet God with fanfare.
2. Serve God with rejoicing,
come before Him with hymns.
3. Know that God is the Lord,
He made us, we belong to Him,

we are His people, the sheep of His flock.
4. Come into His gates with thanksgiving,
into His courtyards with psalms,
give praise to Him, bless His Name.
5. For God is good, His kindness lasts forever,
His faithfulness endures for all generations.

Psalm 101

When he contemplates the faultless ways of God, the poet is inspired to perfect his own ways. He only associates with people who also seek the faultless way to live. He despises faithlessness, arrogance, greed and immorality and resolves to battle against them.

1. By David, a melody.
Kindness and justice make me sing,
I shall sing melodies to you, O God.
2. I contemplate the faultless way,
O when will it come into my grasp?
even within my house I walk in innocence.
3. I keep no evil things before my eyes,
I despise faithless acts, they do not affect me.
4. The crooked-hearted turn aside from me,
I do not like immorality.
5. I shall destroy those who secretly slander others,
I cannot endure the haughty-eyed and greedy.
6. My eyes seek loyal citizens to sit with me,
who walks in the faultless way, he shall attend me.
7. Do not let a swindler sit within my house,
do not let a liar appear before my eyes.
8. In the mornings I shall destroy all earthly villains
to eradicate all deceitmongers from the city of God.

Psalm 102

The poet expresses the sorrows of his oppressed people. They feel their hearts wilt and wither like weeds. They are like shore birds lost in the desert.

Overwhelmed, the poet prays to God that He return Zion to her former favor.

The moment has arrived.

1. A prayer by the oppressed,
when he is overwhelmed
and pours out his words before God.
2. O God, hear my prayer,
let my outcry come before You.
3. Do not conceal Your face from me
offer me Your ear on my day of distress,
hurry, answer me on the day I call.
4. For my days have gone up in smoke,
my bones are parched like a hearthstone.
5. My heart is wilted and withered like a weed,
for I neglected to eat my bread.
6. The sounds of my groaning
made my bones adhere to my flesh.
7. I resembled a pelican lost in the desert,
I became like an owlet in the wasteland.
8. I brooded and realized I'd become
like a bird marooned on a rooftop.
9. My foes put me to shame all day,
my mockers swear by my misery.
10. For I have eaten ashes for bread,
my drinks were diluted with the tears I shed,
11. because of Your rage and Your wrath,
for You lifted me up then cast me away.

12. My days fell away like a shadow,
and I became withered like a weed.

13. But You endure forever, O God,
Your remembrance lasts for all generations.

14. You will rise up and have mercy on Zion,
for it is time to favor her, the moment has arrived.

15. For Your servants long for her very stones,
her very dust is beloved to them.

16. Then the nations will fear the Name of God,
and all the earthly kings Your honor,

17. when they see that God rebuilt Zion,
that He appeared in His honor,

18. that He accepted the petitioners' prayers,
that He did not disdain their prayers.

19. Let this be recorded for the next generation,
then the rejuvenated people will praise God.

20. For He gazed down from His holy heights,
from the heavens God looked to the earth

21. to hear the cry of the imprisoned,
to restore the deathly ill people.

22. Then they will tell of God's Name in Zion,
of His praises in Jerusalem,

23. when the peoples gather together,
and the kingdoms, to serve God.

24. But for now, they still sap my strength
along the way, they shorten my days.

25. I say, "O my Lord, do not remove us in midlife,
let us live for all the generations of Your years."

26. At first You laid the foundations of the earth,
then Your handiwork became the heavens.

27. They can be destroyed, yet You remain,

while they all disintegrate like clothing,
You remove them like a cloak and discard them.
28. But You are the One that endures,
Your years are without end.
29. Let Your servants' sons find dwellings,
let their offspring be established in Your presence.

Psalm 103

The poet always blesses God. Regardless of the afflictions he encounters, he knows that God is merciful and loving, slow to anger, great in kindness. He forgives all sins and heals all ailments. The poet calls on the hosts of the heavens to bless God as well.

1. By David.
O my soul, bless God,
and all my innards His holy Name.
2. O my soul, bless God,
do not forget all His rewards,
3. that He forgives all your sins,
that He heals all your ailments,
4. that He saves your life from destruction,
that He crowns you with kindness and mercy,
5. that He fills your mouth with goodness,
so that your youth is replenished like an eagle.
6. God performs righteous deeds,
and justice for all the exploited.
7. He made His ways known to Moses,
His masterworks to the people of Israel.
8. God is merciful and loving,
slow to anger, great in kindness.
9. He does not conduct eternal vendettas,

nor does He forever hold a grudge.

10. He does not treat us as our transgressions demand,
nor does He repay us for our sins.

11. As the heavens are high above the earth,
so strong is His kindness to those who fear Him.

12. As east is distant from west,
so does He distance our guilt from us.

13. As a father is merciful to his children,
so is God merciful to those who fear Him.

14. For he knows our inclinations,
He remembers that we are but dust.

15. The lifetime of a man is like grass,
he sprouts like grass in the meadow.

16. When a wind passes over him, he is gone,
even his own place no longer recognizes him.

17. But God's kindness endures from this world
until the next for those who fear Him,
and His righteousness for their grandchildren,

18. for those who safeguard His covenant,
who remember His commands to fulfill them.

19. God established His Throne in the heavens,
but His Kingship extends over everything.

20. Bless God, O His angels,
you of heroic strength, who do His bidding,
who heed the sound of His words.

21. Bless God, all His hosts, His attendants,
the ones who fulfill His will.

22. Bless God, all his creations,
in all the places that He reigns,
O my soul, bless God.

Psalm 104

The poet describes the flow of life-giving water between the dome of the sky and the seabed, and he paints images of the teeming creatures that populate the mountains, fields, forests and seas. Awed by the magnificence and wisdom of creation, the poet is inspired to bless God.

1. O my soul, bless God.
O God, my Lord, You are so very great,
You are clothed in grace and glory.
2. He unfolds illumination like a garment,
He spreads out the firmament like drapery.
3. He is the One who domes His heights with water,
who straddles clouds, drives them on wings of wind.
4. He appoints winds as His messengers,
blazing fires as His attendants.
5. He set the earth on its foundations
so that it will never fall to ruin.
6. You covered the seabed as if with a cloak,
water collected upon the mountaintops.
7. They flee before Your reproof,
they scurry at the sound of Your thunder.
8. They climb mountains, descend into valleys,
to reach this place You prepared for them.
9. You erected a barrier not to be crossed,
never again should they flood the earth.
10. He is the One who sends springs to feed rivers,
they stream down amidst the mountains.
11. They give water to the creatures of the field,
the wild asses slake their thirst.
12. The birds of the skies alight beside them,
they twitter among the branches.

13. He waters the mountains from His heights,
the earth is laden with the fruit of Your works,
14. He makes grass grow for the beasts,
and crops through human cultivation,
to bring forth bread from the earth.
15. Wine to gladden a man's heart,
oil to set the face aglow,
bread to sustain a man's heart.
16. God's trees absorb their fill,
the cedars of Lebanon He planted.
17. There the birds build their nests,
the storks live among the pines.
18. Craggy mountains for the wild goats,
boulders to shelter the rabbits.
19. He set the lunar cycle for the calendar,
the sun knew its setting place.
20. You make darkness settle, night falls,
in it all the forest creatures roam.
21. The young lions roar for their prey,
they ask the Lord for their food.
22. The sun shines forth, they slip away,
they go to ground in their lairs.
23. People emerge, they tend to their business,
they do their work until evening.
24. How numerous are Your works, O God,
You made all of them with wisdom,
the earth abounds with Your possessions.
25. This sea is so immense, broad beyond measure,
teeming with countless creatures, small and large.
26. Upon it ships ply their seagoing routes,
You formed this leviathan to frolic within it.

27. They all rely upon You
to provide their food in its time.

28. You give it to them, they gather it in,
You open Your hand and feed them well.

29. When You hide Your face, they are frightened,
when You snuff out their spirits, they expire,
they become dust once again.

30. But when You send forth Your spirit,
they are revived, You renew the look of the land.

31. God's honor will endure forever,
God will rejoice over His works.

32. The One who looks at the earth and sets it atremble,
who touches mountains and sets them asmolter.

33. I shall sing to God in my lifetime,
I shall sing melodies to my Lord as long as I exist.

34. May my words be pleasing to Him,
I will rejoice through God.

35. Let sinners depart the earth, and villains vanish,
O my soul, bless God, hallelujah.

Psalm 105

The poet exhorts the people to recognize God's presence in all existence and recall the wonders He performed for them during their early nationhood. The poet traces the divine providence that guided them through every stage of their bondage and liberation.

1. Give thanks to God, call out His Name,
let peoples know about His masterworks.
2. Sing to Him, sing melodies to Him,
speak of all His wonders.
3. Take pride in His holy Name,

let the hearts of God's seekers rejoice.

4. Search for God and His power,
always seek out His presence.
5. Remember the wonders He performed,
His miracles and the laws of His mouth,
6. all you offspring of His servant Abraham,
children of Jacob, His chosen ones.
7. He is God, our Lord,
His laws extend over all the earth.
8. He remembers His covenant forever,
the word He ordained for a thousand generations,
9. that He sealed with Abraham,
the oath He swore to Isaac.
10. He confirmed it for Jacob as a decree,
for Israel as an everlasting covenant,
11. saying, "I will give you the Land of Canaan,
it shall be your hereditary estate."
12. They were still few in numbers,
a minority, yet they lived there.
13. Then they migrated from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another people.
14. He did not allow people to exploit them,
He rebuked kings on their behalf,
15. "Do not touch My anointed ones,
do not harm My prophets."
16. He called down a famine upon the land,
eliminated every source of bread.
17. He sent off a man before them,
Joseph who was sold as a slave.
18. They clamped his legs in chains,
he was wrapped in irons.

19. Until the time His plan took shape,
the word of God purified him.

20. The king ordered him released,
the ruler of peoples had him set free.

21. He appointed him royal chamberlain,
ruler over all his possessions,

22. to form close ties with his ministers,
and teach his elders wisdom.

23. And Israel came to Egypt,
Jacob lived in the land of Ham.

24. And He made His people very fruitful,
He made them surpass their oppressors.

25. He induced them to despise His people,
to conspire against His servants.

26. He sent His servant Moses,
and Aaron, the one He had chosen.

27. They carried out His signs against them,
and miracles against the land of Ham.

28. He sent darkness, and made it dark,
nothing deviated from His commands.

29. He turned their waters into blood,
and put all their fish to death.

30. Their land spawned frogs,
they penetrated the royal chambers.

31. He gave the word, wild menageries appeared,
lice throughout all their borders.

32. He transformed their rains into hail,
blazing fires descended on their land.

33. They smashed their grapevines and fig trees,
they shattered the trees within their borders.

34. He gave the word, locusts appeared,

locust swarms without number.
35. They devoured all the grass in their land,
they devoured the crops of their soil.
36. He struck down every firstborn in their land,
the foremost of all their vigor.
37. And He brought them forth with silver and gold,
there were no stumbling blocks among the tribes.
38. Egypt rejoiced at their exodus,
for they had become terrified of them.
39. He draped a cloud as a curtain,
and fire to illuminate the night.
40. They made demands, He brought pigeons,
he gave them their fill of bread from heaven.
41. He split open a rock, waters flowed,
rivers ran through the wastelands.
42. For He remembered His holy word,
his servant Abraham.
43. He brought forth His people with delight,
His elite with the singing of hymns.
44. And He gave them the lands of the nations,
they inherited the toil of the peoples,
45. so that they would safeguard His decrees,
they would hold fast His Teachings, hallelujah.

Psalm 106

The poet confesses that the people have been less than faithful throughout the years. They were contentious and did not trust God. They even turned to idols. God delivered them into the hands of the nations, but in His great kindness He let them find favor with their conquerors.

1. Hallelujah, give thanks to God,

for He is good, for His kindness endures forever.

2. Who can give expression to all His strengths?
who can proclaim all His praises?

3. Fortunate are the guardians of justice,
those who act righteously at all times.

4. Remember me, O God, when You favor Your people,
recall me at the time of Your salvation,

5. to see Your chosen ones prosper,
to rejoice in Your nation's joy,
to celebrate with Your subjects.

6. We have transgressed along with our fathers,
we have sinned, we have been villainous.

7. Our ancestors in Egypt did not discern Your wonders,
nor did they remember Your great kindnesses,
they rebelled beside the sea, by the Sea of Reeds.

8. But He saved them for the sake of His Name,
to let His might become known.

9. He lashed into the Sea of Reeds, and it became dry,
He led them through its depths, as through a desert.

10. And He saved them from the enemy,
He redeemed them from the foe.

11. The waters engulfed their oppressors,
not even one of them survived.

12. Then they believed His words,
they sang His praises.

13. But quickly they forgot His works,
they no longer sought His counsel.

14. They craved pleasure in the desert,
they tested the Lord in desolate places.

15. And He granted them their wishes,
but He directed His fury against them.

16. They infuriated Moses in the encampment,
and Aaron, God's holy one.

17. The earth opened up and swallowed Dathan,
it covered up Abiram's congregation.

18. A fire raged through their congregation,
flames blazed around the villains.

19. They made a calf-idol in Horeb,
they bowed down to the statue.

20. They exchanged His honor
for the image of a grass-eating ox.

21. They forgot the Lord, their Savior,
who had done great things in Egypt,

22. wondrous deeds in the land of Ham,
awesome deeds beside the Sea of Reeds.

23. Then He said He would annihilate them
had not Moses, His chosen one,
stood in the breach before Him,
to divert His anger from destruction.

24. They rejected the lovely land,
they had no faith in His word.

25. They quarreled in their homes,
they did not heed the voice of God.

26. Then He lifted His hand against them
to fell them in the desert,

27. to humble their offspring among the nations,
to scatter them among the lands.

28. They attached themselves to Baal Peor,
they consumed the sacrifices of the dead.

29. They angered Him with their wiles,
and a plague broke out among them.

30. But Phineas took a stand, he prayed,

the plague came to an end.

31. And this righteous deed was to his lasting credit
for generation after generation forever.

32. Then they angered Him at Mei Meribah,
Moses suffered because of them.

33. Because they resisted His spirit,
He spoke out against them with His lips.

34. They did not annihilate the peoples,
as God had commanded them to do.

35. They mingled with the nations,
they learned from their practices.

36. They worshipped their idols,
they nations became their stumbling block.

37. They sacrificed their sons
and their daughters to demons.

38. They spilled innocent blood, the blood of the sons
and daughters they sacrificed to Canaanite idols,
and the land was contaminated by blood.

39. They became defiled through their practices,
estranged through their wiles.

40. And God's anger burned against His people,
He was appalled by His subjects.

41. He delivered them into the hands of the nations,
their enemies dominated them.

42. Their foes oppressed them,
they submitted to their power.

43. Many times He saved them, still they chose rebellion,
they were diminished by their sinfulness.

44. But He saw that they were oppressed
even as He listened to their pleas.

45. He remembered His covenant for their sake,

He reconsidered in His great kindness.

46. He put them in a favorable light
before all their conquerors.

47. Save us, O God, our Lord, gather us from the nations
to thank Your holy Name, to take pride in Your praises.

48. Blessed is God, the Lord of Israel,
from this world to the next,
let all the people say, “Amen. Hallelujah.”

Prayer after Reading from the Psalms

(Full version appears on p. xxx.)

May it be Your will, O God our Lord, the Lord of our fathers, in the merit of the psalms we have read before You, in the merit of their songs, in the merit of their verses, in the merit of their words and in the merit of Your holy and pure Names that derive from them, that You wipe away all our misdeeds, forgive all our sins and absolve us of all our guilt, for we have transgressed, sinned and been guilty before You. Bring us back in a total return to You, guide us to Your service and open our hearts to the study of Your Torah.

Sixth Day

(107-119)

The poet rises early to greet the morningstar with songs of thanksgiving to God for His past kindnesses, and he pleads for continued favor and protection. All nations and people should be grateful to God, for all their successes and accomplishments come from Him. Those who were in dangerous situations and came to safety must especially thank God. They called out to him in their times of dire distress, and He heard them and came to their rescue. The poet's heart also overflows with thanksgiving when he contemplates God's incredible creation.

Psalm 107

The poet calls on those who return from a sea voyage or from a journey through the desert, those who are freed from prison or recover from a critical illness, to thank God for His kindness. They called out in distress, and He heard them.

1. Give thanks to God for He is good,
for His kindness endures forever.
2. Let those redeemed by God declare
that He redeemed them from the oppressor,
3. that He gathered them in from the lands,
from east and west, north and south.
4. Some wandered in the desert, on the desolate way,
they could not find an inhabited city.
5. They were hungry, they were also thirsty,
their souls shriveled up within them.
6. And they cried out to God in their distress,
He rescued them from their quagmires.
7. And He led them along a straight way
to come towards the inhabited city.
8. Let them give thanks to God for His kindness,
let them tell people of His wondrous deeds.
9. For He satisfied the thirsting soul,
He filled the hungry soul with goodness.
10. Some sit in darkness, in deathly shadows,
in shackles of oppression and iron.
11. For they rebelled against the words of the Lord,
they defied the counsel of the Supreme One.
12. Then He humbled their hearts with toil,
they stumbled, and there was no one to help them.
13. And they cried out to God in their distress,

He rescued them from their quagmires.
14. He took them out of darkness, the deathly shadows,
He broke apart their shackles.
15. Let them give thanks to God for His kindness,
let them tell people of His wondrous deeds.
16. For He shattered gates of copper,
He severed iron shafts.
17. Some were fools whose delinquent ways
and sins led them to become afflicted.
18. All food became repulsive to them,
they worsened until they reached death's door.
19. And they cried out to God in their distress,
He rescued them from their quagmires.
20. He sent His word and healed them,
He delivered them from their doom.
21. Let them give thanks to God for His kindness,
let them tell people of His wondrous deeds.
22. Let them sacrifice thanksgiving offerings,
let them tell of his deeds with hymns.
23. Some sailed the high seas in ships,
they labored in the watery vastness.
24. They saw the works of God,
His wondrous deeds in the ocean deep.
25. He spoke, a hurricane wind arose,
and hoisted towering waves.
26. Flung heavenward, plunged into the depths,
their souls dissolved with stark terror.
27. They were battered, they staggered like drunkards,
all their seamanship was rendered worthless.
28. And they cried out to God in their distress,
He brought them forth from their quagmires.

29.. He put a stop to the hurricane,
it fell silent, the waves subsided.

30. And they rejoiced with the tranquillity,
as He led them to their desired destination.

31. Let them give thanks to God for His kindness,
let them tell people of His wondrous deeds.

32. Let them exalt Him among crowds of people,
let them praise Him in the councils of elders.

33. He transforms river country into deserts,
fountainheads of water into waterless wastes,

34. fertile land into salt-befouled terrain,
because of the villainy of its inhabitants.

35. Yet He transformed the desert into lakelands,
parched lands into fountainheads of water.

36. And thereon He settled the hungry,
and they founded an inhabited city.

37. They sowed fields, they planted vineyards,
they produced fruits and grain.

38. He blessed them, they multiplied exceedingly,
nor did He allow their cattle to dwindle.

39. All this, though they had once been diminished,
bent over by a load of misfortune and anxiety.

40. He pours disdain upon the mighty,
and sets them adrift in a trackless waste.

41. But He helps the downtrodden overcome hardship,
He makes their families thrive like sheep.

42. Let the sincere see this and rejoice,
all injustice will clamp its mouth shut.

43. Let whoever is wise take notice of these things,
then they will fathom the kindness of God.

Psalm 108

The poet summons musical instruments to awake him in the stillness of the night so that he may greet the morningstar with songs of thanksgiving to God. He expresses his gratitude for His kindness that surpasses the heavens, and he prays for relief from his oppressors.

1. A song, a melody,
by David.
2. When my heart is staunch, O Lord,
I sing songs and melodies, it is my honor.
3. Awake me, O harp and lyre,
then I will awaken the morningstar.
4. I will thank You among peoples, O God,
I will sing melodies to You among nations.
5. For Your kindness surpasses the heavens,
Your truth reaches the canopy of the sky.
6. Ascend above the heavens, O Lord,
let Your honor cover all the earth.
7. For the deliverance of Your loved ones,
let Your right hand bring salvation, answer me.
8. The Lord spoke in His holiness,
I shall celebrate, I shall apportion the land,
I shall parcel out the Valley of Sukkoth.
9. Gilead is mine, Menasseh is mine,
Ephraim is my head's crowning glory,
Judah is my nobleman.
10. Moab is my washbasin,
upon Edom I toss my shoes,
I shout war cries at Philistia.
11. Who will bring me to the fortified city?
the One who once led me into Edom.

12. Although now, O Lord, You have abandoned us,
and You no longer go forth, O Lord, with our armies,
13. bring us relief from the oppressor,
for human salvation is worthless.
14. Only with the Lord can we perform valiantly,
for He crushes our oppressors.

Psalm 109

A target of malice and slander, the poet feels his heart breaking. He stumbles about like a grasshopper and cries out to God to rescue him from his oppressors. He begs God to clothe his accusers in humiliation and show that He stands to the right of the downtrodden.

1. For the performer, by David, a melody.
O Lord of my praises, do not be silent.
2. For evil and lying mouths opened against me,
they spoke to me with a false tongue.
3. They encircled me with hostile words,
they attacked me without cause.
4. They vilified me because of my love for You,
but I was always absorbed in prayer.
5. They repaid me with evil for goodness,
with hatred for my love.
6. Set villains upon him,
accusers to stand by his right.
7. Let his trial brand him a villain,
let his prayer be a record of his transgression.
8. Let his days be numbered,
let others inherit his rank.
9. Let his children be orphaned,
and his wife become a widow.

10. Let his children be set to wandering,
let all ask and inquire about their downfall.

11. Let creditors go after all his possessions,
and strangers plunder his hard-earned wealth.

12. Let there be no one to treat him kindly,
no one to have mercy on his orphans.

13. Let his final destiny be obliteration,
by the next generation let his name be wiped out.

14. Let the sins of his fathers be mentioned to God,
let his mother's transgression not be wiped away.

15. Let them always remain before God,
let Him obliterate their remembrance from earth.

16. Because he did not remember to act with kindness,
but he pursued to the death the oppressed,
downtrodden and broken-hearted man.

17. He loved curses, let them come upon him,
he desired no blessings, let them remain afar.

18. He wrapped himself in the curse like a cloak,
it entered him like water, like oil into his bones.

19. Let it be for him like a garment he wears,
like a sash with which he is always girded.

20. Let this be God's retribution to my accusers,
to those who speak ill of me.

21. You, O Lord, Master, for the sake of Your Name
take care of me, rescue me as Your kindness is good.

22. For I am oppressed and downtrodden,
my heart breaks down within me.

23. I fell apart like a shadow fading away,
I stumbled about like a grasshopper.

24. My knees buckled from fasting,
my flesh was drained of its fat.

25. And I have become their shame,
they see me and shake their heads.
26. Help me, O God, my Lord,
send me salvation by Your kindness.
27. Make them aware that it is Your hand,
that You, O God, have done it.
28. They may curse, but You will bless,
let them stand in disgrace, Your servant rejoices.
29. Let my accusers be clothed in humiliation,
let them be enfolded in disgrace like a coat.
30. I will give many thanks to God with my mouth,
I will praise Him among the great.
31. For He stands to the right of the downtrodden
to save him from his deadly antagonists.

Psalm 110

The poet sings the praises of God who sent him off into battle against his foes. Because his holy graces were from the womb acquired and his childhood was well spent, God entrusted him with the staff of power and assured him that he would be victorious.

1. By David, a melody.
God said to my master, “Stay on, await My right hand
until I render your foes stools for your feet.
2. God will send the staff of your power from Zion,
go down, engage your foes in battle.”
3. Your people volunteered on the day you mobilized,
for your holy graces were from the womb acquired,
the dew of your childhood stands to your credit.
4. God swore an oath, He will not revoke it,
“Priesthood is yours forever, as spoke Malchizedek.”

5. The Master stood by your right side,
He thrashed the kings on the day of His anger.
6. He condemned nations, corpses piled up,
He thrashed the leader of a great land.
7. For it was irrigated by a river's passage,
and so he dared raise his head in defiance.

Psalm 111

The poet's heart is full of thanksgiving when he contemplates the incredible greatness of God's creation. Indeed, all who seek Him can discern His mighty hand at work. And when He performed wonders for His people, He preserved their remembrance for posterity.

1. Hallelujah, I give thanks to God with all my heart,
by the counsel of the virtuous and the congregation.
2. How great are the works of God,
yet accessible to all who seek to know them.
3. Grace and glory are His design,
His righteousness endures for always.
4. He made remembrances for His wonders,
God is kind and merciful.
5. He gives sustenance to those who fear Him,
He remembers His covenant forever.
6. He told His people of the strength of His works
when He bestowed on them their national heritage.
7. His handiworks are truth and justice,
all His commandments are faithful.
8. Reinforced for always and forever,
they are formed with truth and fairness.
9. He sent deliverance to His people,
He ordained His covenant forever,

holy and awesome is His Name.

10. Wisdom begins with fear of God,
it makes good sense for all who do this,
his praise endures for always.

Psalm 112

The poet lauds the good fortune of those who fear God. They will be abundantly rewarded in this world and the next. He admires the merciful who lend freely yet are frugal with their own properties. They trust in God and need not fear.

1. Hallelujah, fortunate is the man who fears God,
who strongly desires His commandments.

2. His offspring shall be the mighty of the earth,
a virtuous generation that shall be blessed.

3. There will be treasure and wealth in his house,
his righteousness will endure for always.

4. He shone in the dark, a light for the virtuous,
He is merciful, kind and righteous.

5. Good is the merciful man who lends freely,
yet is frugal with his own properties.

6. For he shall never be ruined,
the righteous shall be remembered forever.

7. He need not fear bad tidings,
his heart is loyal, trusting in God.

8. His heart is secure, he need not fear,
while he observes the fate of his oppressors.

9. He gives generously to paupers,
his righteousness endures for always,
his fortunes rise with honor.

10. The villain sees and is enraged,
he grinds his teeth and is undone,

the villain's desire remains unfulfilled.

Psalm 113

The poet exalts the Name of God, who directs the heavens and the earth from His dwelling place Above. He raises the poor from the dust and the downtrodden from the wasteyard. He takes note of the barren woman and blesses her with children.

1. Hallelujah, offer praise, O servants of God,
offer praise to the Name of God.
2. May the Name of God be blessed
from now until forever.
3. From the rising of the sun until it sets,
may God's Name be praised.
4. God is exalted above all nations,
His honor extends over the heavens.
5. Who compares to God, our Lord,
who ascends to His dwelling place,
6. yet descends to look down
upon the heavens and the earth?
7. He raises up the poor from the dust,
He lifts the downtrodden from the wasteyard
8. to install them with noblemen,
with the noblemen of his people.
9. He installs the barren woman of the house
as a mother rejoicing over children, hallelujah.

Psalm 114

The poet recalls the triumphant exodus of the people from bondage and their passage through the sea. The earth trembled when God appeared to them in the desert; the mountains cavorted like rams, the hills like young lambs. The holiness was almost too much to bear.

1. When Israel went forth from Egypt,
the House of Jacob from among a barbarian people,
2. Judah became His holy one,
Israel became His sovereign nations.
3. The sea saw, and it fled,
the Jordan turned backward.
4. The mountains cavorted like rams,
the hills like young lambs.
5. What is with you, O sea, that you flee,
O Jordan, that you turn backward,
6. O mountains, that you cavort like rams,
O hills, like young lambs?
7. In the Presence of the Master, Creator of the earth,
in the Presence of the Lord of Jacob,
8. who transforms m into a pool of water,
the flintstone into a fountain of water.

Psalm 115

The poet begs God to give honor to His own Name by protecting His people, even if they do not fully deserve it. Why should the nations ask mockingly where He is when His people are afflicted? Let all people to trust God, and He will bless them.

1. Do not do it for us, O God, not for us,
but to give honor to Your Name,
for Your kindness and for Your truth.
2. Why should the nations say,
“Where then is their Lord?”
3. when our Lord is in Heaven,
doing all that He pleases?

4. Their idols are of silver and gold,
the handiwork of people.
5. They have mouths, but they do not speak,
they have eyes, but they do not see.
6. They have ears, but they do not hear,
they have noses, but they do not smell.
7. Their hands do not feel, their feet do not walk,
they do not articulate with their throats.
8. Let their makers become just like them,
all those who trust in them.
9. Let Israel trust in God,
He is their support and their shield.
10. Let the House of Aaron trust in God,
He is their help and their shield.
11. Let those who fear God trust in God,
He is their help and their shield.
12. May God who remembers us give blessings,
may He bless the House of Israel,
may He bless the House of Aaron.
13. May He bless those who fear God,
the small along with the great.
14. May God heap blessings on you,
on you and on your children.
15. You are blessed before God,
the Maker of the heavens and the earth.
16. The heavens are God's heavens,
but he gave the earth to mankind.
17. It is not the dead who praise God,
nor those who descend to the crypt.
18. But we can bless God,
from now until forever, hallelujah.

Psalm 116

Although surrounded by murderous gangs, the poet is confident that the merciful God who protects the vulnerable will save him. The knowledge that God hears his prayer delights him, and he lifts up a cup of salvation and praises the Name of God before all His people.

1. I love that God hears
my voice, my entreaties.
2. For He inclined His ear to me,
and I call out in my troubled times.
3. Murderous gangs surround me,
the outposts of the grave have found me,
I have found misfortune and sorrow.
4. But I call out in the Name of God,
“Please, O God, deliver my soul.”
5. God is kind and righteous,
our Lord is merciful.
6. God watches over the guileless ones,
I was brought down, but He saved me.
7. Return to your rest, O my soul,
for God has favored you.
8. For you delivered my soul from death,
my eyes from tears, my feet from wandering.
9. I shall walk before God
in the lands of the living.
10. I believed what I was told,
I responded very harshly.
11. I said in my haste,
“All people are treacherous.”
12. How can I repay God

for all His favors to me?

13. I shall lift up a cup of salvation,
I shall call out in the Name of God.

14. I shall repay my vows to God,
may it be before all His people.

15. May it be a grave thing in God's eyes
to bring death to His pious ones.

16. I plead, O God, for I am Your servant,
I am Your servant, the son of Your maid,
You have undone my chains.

17. I will sacrifice a thanksgiving offering to You,
I shall call out in the Name of God.

18. I shall repay my vows to God,
may it be before all His people

19. in the courtyards of the House of God,
in the midst of Jerusalem, hallelujah.

Psalm 117

The poet declares that all nations should praise and acclaim God, because all their successes and accomplishments come from Him. His own people, however, have a singular responsibility to praise God, because His kindness for them is strongest.

1. Let all nations praise God,
let all peoples acclaim Him.
2. But for us His kindness was strongest,
God's truth is everlasting, hallelujah.

Psalm 118

The poet is encouraged and consoled by the knowledge that God's kindness is everlasting. Beset by enemies who want to destroy him, who circle around him like buzzing bees, who leap about like fire among the thorns, the poet seeks his

salvation from God.

1. Give praise to God, for He is good,
for His kindness is everlasting.
2. Say it now, O Israel,
“For His kindness is everlasting.”
3. Say it now, O House of Aaron,
“For His kindness is everlasting.”
4. Say it now, O those who fear God,
“For His kindness is everlasting.”
5. From dire straits I called out to God,
God returned me to wide open spaces.
6. God is with me, I shall not fear;
what can people do to me?
7. God is with me as my support,
now I can look at my enemies.
8. It is better to take refuge in God,
than to trust in people.
9. It is better to take refuge in God,
than to trust in princes.
10. Though all nations encircle me,
I will wither them in the Name of God.
11. Though they encircle me again and again,
I will wither them in the Name of God.
12. Though they encircle me like bees,
though they leap like fire among the thorns,
I will wither them in the Name of God.
13. You pushed me hard to make me fall,
but God supported me.
14. The might and the power of God
were my salvation.

15. There is a sound of hymns and salvation
in the tents of the righteous,
God's right hand does great things.

16. God's right hand is upraised,
God's right hand does great things.

17. I will not die, but I will live,
I will tell about the works of God.

18. God has tormented me severely,
but He has not consigned me to death.

19. Open the gates of righteousness for me,
I will come through them, I will thank God.

20. This is the gate of God,
the righteous will come through it.

21. I thank You, for You answered me,
You were my salvation.

22. The stone the builders discarded
became the main cornerstone.

23. This was from God,
it was a wonder to our eyes.

24. This is the day that God made,
let us delight and rejoice in it.

25. I pray, O God, please send salvation,
I pray, O God, please send success.

26. Blessed is he who comes in the Name of God,
we bless you from the House of God.

27. God is the Lord, and He gives us light,
tie up the festival offerings with cords,
await the corners of the altar.

28. You are my Lord, and I thank You,
my Lord, and I shall exalt You.

29. Give praise to God, for He is good,

for His kindness is everlasting.

Psalm 119

In alphabetically ordered stanzas, the poet expresses his yearning to understand what God expects of him. Recognizing that he is an intruder on God's earth, he wants to learn and understand His commandments so that can walk along the boulevard of their guidance.

1. Fortunate are those of faultless ways,
those that follow God's Teaching.
2. Fortunate are the guardians of His testaments,
those that seek Him with all their hearts.
3. For beyond not doing wrong,
they have followed His ways.
4. You issued Your commands,
they must be strictly observed.
5. I pray my ways become conditioned
to observing Your decrees.
6. Then I shall not be disgraced
when I look upon all Your commandments.
7. I shall thank You with a sincere heart
when I learn Your righteous laws.
8. I shall observed Your decrees,
do not forsake me.

9. How does a youth refine his ways?
by observance, according to Your words.
10. I sought You with all my heart,
do not deflect me from Your commandments.
11. I infused Your sayings into my heart
so that I would not sin against You.

12. Blessed are You, O God,
teach me Your decrees.

13. I spoke out with my lips
all the laws of Your mouth.

14. I exult in the way of Your testaments
as I would over a vast treasure.

15. I converse about Your commands,
I contemplate Your ways.

16. I am obsessed by Your decrees,
I shall not forget Your words.

17. Show favor to Your servant
that I may live to observe Your words.

18. Uncover my eyes that I may look upon
the wonders of Your Teaching.

19. I am an intruder on the earth,
do not conceal Your commandments from me.

20. My soul is crushed by yearning
for Your laws at all times.

21. You condemn accursed scoundrels
that stray from Your commandments.

22. Strip away from me shame and disdain,
for I have safeguarded Your testaments.

23. Though lords sit down to mock me,
Your servant speaks of Your decrees.

24. Your testaments are indeed my obsessions,
my stalwart advisors.

25. My soul is pressed down to the very dust,
sustain me by Your words.

26. I have confessed my ways, You answered me,
teach me Your decrees.

27. Make clear to me the way of Your commands,
I will speak of Your wonders.

28. My soul melts away from sorrow,
sustain me by Your words.

29. Remove from me the way of falsehood,
grant me Your Teaching.

30. I have chosen the way of faith,
I have become attached to Your laws.

31. I clung to Your testaments,
O God, do not let me be disgraced.

32. I run on the pathway of Your commandments,
for they expand my heart.

33. Teach me, O God, the way of Your decrees,
I will hold fast to it at every step.

34. Enlighten me, and I will hold fast Your Teaching,
I will observe it with all my heart.

35. Guide me along the path of Your commandments,
for this is what I desire.

36. Incline my heart to Your testaments,
and not to profiteering.

37. Prevent my eyes from seeing folly,
sustain me by Your ways.

38. Keep Your promise to Your servant,
that we will always fear You.

39. Remove this dreaded shame of mine,
for Your laws are good.

40. Behold, I yearn for Your commands,
sustain me by Your righteousness.

41. Then Your kindness will come to me, O God,
Your salvation that You have promised.

42. I will have the last word against my detractors,
for I have trusted in Your words.

43. Do not deprive me of the ultimate truth,
for I aspire to Your laws.

44. Then I will observe Your Teaching,
always, forever and ever.

45. I will walk along its boulevard,
for I seek Your commands.

46. I will speak of Your testaments
before kings, and not be disgraced.

47. I will be obsessed by
Your commandments that I love.

48. I will raise my hands to Your commandments
that I love, I will speak of Your decrees.

49. Remember Your promise to Your servant,
that You have given me hope.

50. This is my consolation in my sorrow,
for Your promise has sustained me.

51. Scoundrels have mocked me severely,
but I did not turn aside from Your Teaching.

52. I recalled Your eternal justice, O God,
and I was consoled.

53. A burning rage took hold of me
at the villains who abandon Your Teaching.

54. Your decrees were my melodies
in the house where I lived.

55. I recalled Your Name in the night, O God,
I observed Your Teaching.

56. All this has become mine,
because I safeguarded Your commands.

57. "My portion is God," I said,
it is to observe Your words.

58. I pleaded before You with all my heart
that You grant me what You promised.

59. I evaluated my ways,
I returned my feet to Your testaments.

60. I have hastened and not hesitated
to observe Your commandments.

61. Though bands of villains beset me,
I did not forget Your Teaching.

62. I arise at midnight to thank You
for the laws of Your righteousness.

63. I am a friend to all who fear You,
to those who observe Your commands.

64. Your kindness, O God, fills the earth,
teach me Your decrees.

65. You have been good to Your servant,
O God, as You promised.

66. Teach me good taste and knowledge,
for I have been loyal to Your commandments.

67. Before I toiled I was a blunderer,
but now I observe Your word.

68. You are good and benevolent,
teach me Your decrees.

69. Though scoundrels beleaguer me with lies,
with all my heart I hold fast Your commands.

70. Their hearts are bloated like blubber,
but I am obsessed by Your Teaching.

71. It is for my own good that I toiled,
just to learn Your decrees.

72. The Teaching of Your mouth is better for me

than thousands in gold and silver.

73. Your hands have made and formed me,
enlighten me, and I will learn Your commandments.

74. Those who fear You see me and rejoice,
for I aspire to Your word.

75. I know, O God, that Your laws are righteous,
that You have faithfully made me toil.

76. May Your kindness be my comfort
as You have promised Your servant.

77. Let Your kindness come to me, and I shall live,
for I am obsessed by Your Teaching.

78. Let the scoundrels be disgraced,
for they have falsely accused me,
I will speak of Your commands.

79. Let those who fear You be reconciled with me,
and those who know Your testaments.

80. May my heart be faultless in Your decrees
so that I shall not be disgraced.

81. My soul longs for Your salvation,
I aspire to Your word.

82. My eyes long for Your word,
saying, "When will You comfort me?"

83. For I was like a smoke-cured flask,
yet I did not forget Your decrees.

84. How much longer will Your servant live?
when will You punish my pursuers?

85. Scoundrels have dug pitfalls for me
that are not in keeping with Your Teaching.

86. Though all Your commandments are faithful,
they pursued me with falsehood, help me.

87. They nearly wiped me off the earth,
but I did not abandon Your commands.
88. Sustain me by Your kindness
that I may observe the testaments of Your mouth.

89. Forever, O God,
is Your word established in the heavens.

90. Your faith is for all generations,
You formed the earth, and it stood.

91. By Your laws they stand even today,
for all are Your servants.

92. If Your Teaching were not my passion,
I would have perished in my distress.

93. I shall never forget Your commands,
for through them You sustained me.

94. I am Yours, rescue me,
for I seek Your commands.

95. Though villains hoped to destroy me,
I contemplate Your testaments.

96. I have seen an end to every aspiration,
but Your commandments are boundless.

97. How I love Your Teaching,
I speak of it all day long.

98. Your commandments make me wiser than my foes.
for it is forever with me.

99. I have learned from all my teachers,
for Your testaments are my conversations.

100. I have more insight than the elderly,
for I have safeguarded Your commands.

101. I withheld my feet from every sinister path
in order to observe Your word.

102. I did not turn away from Your laws,
for You have instructed me.

103. How pleasing are Your words to my palate,
more than honey to my mouth.

104. I gained insight from Your commands,
and so I despise all manner of lies.

105. Your words are a candle for my feet,
a light for my pathway.

106. I swore an oath, and I upheld it,
to observe the laws of Your righteousness.

107. I am so very distressed, O God,
sustain me by Your words.

108. Please accept the offerings of my mouth, O God,
teach me Your laws.

109. My soul is constantly in my hand,
but I have not forgotten Your Teaching.

110. Villains set a trap for me,
but I did not stray from Your commands.

111. I laid claim to Your testaments forever,
for they are my heart's delight.

112. I inclined my heart to fulfill Your decrees,
forever at every step.

113. I despise the wrongheaded,
but I love Your Teaching.

114. You are my hideaway and my shield,
I aspire to Your word.

115. Turn away from me, rogues,
I will hold fast My Lord's commandments.

116. Bolster me by Your promise that I may live,
do not disgrace me in my longing.

117. Brace me, and I will be saved,
I will always be obsessed with Your decrees.

118. You demolish all who err in Your decrees,
for their schemes are lies.

119. You annihilated earth's villains like dross,
and so I love Your testaments.

120. My flesh quivered, terrified by You,
I was fearful of Your laws.

121. I have done justice and righteousness,
do not leave me to my abusers.

122. Assure Your servant of goodness,
do not let scoundrels abuse me.

123. My eyes long for Your salvation,
and for Your righteous promise.

124. Treat Your servant with Your kindness
teach me Your decrees.

125. I am Your servant, enlighten me,
then I will know Your testaments,

126. when it is time to placate God
for those who nullified Your Teaching.

127. Because I love Your commandments
more than gold, more than the purest gold.

128. Because I accept all commands, all of it,
I despise all manner of lies.

129. Your testaments are wondrous,
and so my soul holds them fast.

130. Your opening words are luminous,
enlightening even the ignorant.

131. My mouth fell open, I gasped,
for I covet Your commandments.

132. Turn to me, grant me what is rightful
for those who love Your Name.

133. Plant my footsteps in Your words,
do not let any deceitfulness affect me.

134. Deliver me from the abuse of people,
then I will observe Your commands.

135. Let Your face illuminate Your servant,
teach me Your decrees.

136. My eyes shed streams of water
for not having observed Your Teaching.

137. You are righteous, O God,
and Your laws are rightful.

138. You ordained the justice of Your testaments
and their exceeding faithfulness.

139. My zeal exhausted me,
for my foes forgot Your words.

140. Your word is extremely refined,
Your servant loves it.

141. I am like a youth, disdained,
so that I will not forget Your commands.

142. Your righteousness is eternally righteous,
Your Teaching is the truth.

143. Strife and struggle beset me,
but I am obsessed by Your commandments.

144. Your testaments are eternally righteous,
enlighten me, and I will be sustained.

145. I called out to You with all my heart,
answer me, O God, I will hold fast Your decrees.

146. I called out to You, save me,
I will observe Your testaments.

147. I arose in the early darkness and cried out,
I aspire to Your words.

148. My eyes flew open deep in the night,
I was ready to speak Your words.

149. Hear my voice by Your kindness,
O God, sustain me by Your laws.

150. Those who pursue vice draw near to their goal,
they have become distant from Your Teaching.

151. You are close by, O God,
all Your commandments are the truth.

152. Early on I knew it from Your testaments,
for You established them for eternity.

153. See my distress, release me,
for I did not forget Your Teaching.

154. Fight my battle, redeem me,
sustain me for the sake of Your promise.

155. Salvation is distant from villains,
for they do not seek Your decrees.

156. Your kindness is plentiful, O God,
sustain me by Your laws.

157. Despite my many pursuers and oppressors,
I did not turn aside from Your testaments.

158. I saw renegades, I challenged them,
for they did not observe Your word.

159. Behold how I love Your commands,
O God, sustain me by Your kindness.

160. Your word is truth from its beginning,
Your every righteous law is everlasting.

161. Lords pursued me for no reason,
but my heart feared only Your word.

162. I delight over Your promises
like the discoverer of a great prize.

163. I despise falsehood, I abhor it,
it is Your Teaching that I love.

164. Seven times a day I praise You
for Your righteous laws.

165. Your Teaching's lovers enjoy great peace,
they face no obstacles.

166. I craved Your salvation, O God,
I performed Your commandments.

167. My soul observed Your testaments,
I love them dearly.

168. I observed Your commands and testaments,
for all my ways are directed toward You.

169. Let my hymn approach You, O God,
enlighten me by Your own words.

170. Let my plea come before You,
rescue me, as You promised.

171. Let my lips express Your praise,
for You shall teach me Your decrees.

172. Let my tongue repeat Your words,
for all Your commandments are righteous.

173. Let Your hand be my support,
for I have chosen Your commands.

174. I yearn for Your salvation, O God,
Your Teaching is my obsession.

175. Sustain my soul, and it shall praise You,
let Your laws support me.

176. I strayed like a lost sheep,
seek out and bring back Your servant,
for I did not forget Your commandments.

Prayer after Reading from the Psalms

(Full version appears on p. xxx.)

May it be Your will, O God our Lord, the Lord of our fathers, in the merit of the psalms we have read before You, in the merit of their songs, in the merit of their verses, in the merit of their words and in the merit of Your holy and pure Names that derive from them, that You wipe away all our misdeeds, forgive all our sins and absolve us of all our guilt, for we have transgressed, sinned and been guilty before You. Bring us back in a total return to You, guide us to Your service and open our hearts to the study of Your Torah.

Seventh Day

(120-150)

The poet is inspired to sing God's praises. God is the faithful Guardian of His people; never does He turn His attention away. The poet knows that without God's protective embrace their enemies would have already swallowed them alive. They were like birds caught in a trap, but God liberated them. Let all people rejoice with God. Let them celebrate with song and dance, with music and fanfare. God will bring home the exiles, and the sounds of laughter and grateful hymns will fill the air. Carried off in tears, they will return with joyful songs.

Psalm 120

The poet composes songs to be performed on the steps of the temple. He sings about the evils of deceit and slander, which are like sharpened shafts with smoldering embers of broom fire. Living among those who despise peace, the poet seeks only peace.

1. A song of the steps, to God.
I called out in my distress,
He responded to me.
2. O God, rescue my soul from lying lips,
from deceitful tongues.
3. What should He do for you?
with what else should he encumber you,
O deceitful tongue?
4. You are like a warrior's sharpened shafts,
with the smoldering embers of broom fire.
5. Woe is me that I lived in Meshech,
that I dwelled beside the tents of Kedar.
6. Longer still has my soul been made to dwell
with those who despise peace.
7. I stand for peace, but should I say it
they are prepared to do battle with me.

Psalm 121

The poet sings to God, the faithful Guardian of His people who never sleeps or slumbers. He guards them from all evil, whether in broad daylight or in the darkness of the night. He guards them when they depart, and He guards them when they return.

1. A song of the steps.
I lift my eyes to the mountains,
from where will my help arrive?

2. My help is from God,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
3. He will not let your feet lead you to ruin,
your Guardian does not slumber.
4. Behold, He does not slumber nor sleep,
He is the Guardian of Israel.
5. God is your Guardian,
God shelters you on your right side.
6. The sun shall not trouble you during the day,
nor shall the moon during the night.
7. God guards you from all evil,
He guards your very soul.
8. God guards your departure and return,
from now until forever.

Psalm 122

The poet sings about the holy city that must be cherished and protected. It holds the House of God, it is the seat of justice, and it is the setting for God's chosen rulers. He prays for peace in the holy city and serenity in its halls of power.

1. A song of the steps, by David.
I rejoiced when they said about me,
“We are eager to go to the House of God.”
2. Our feet marched far and wide
to protect the gateways of Jerusalem,
3. a Jerusalem that would reach completion,
like the companion city to which she is joined,
4. to which the tribes went up,
the tribes of God that are a testament to Israel,
to praise the Name of God.

5. For there seats of justice would be established,
and the thrones of the House of David.
6. Show interest in the welfare of Jerusalem,
“May your friends enjoy peace.
7. May there be peace along your ramparts,
serenity inside your mansions.”
8. For the sake of my brothers and friends,
please let me speak to you of peace.
9. For the sake of the House of God, our Lord,
let me plead for your betterment.

Psalm 123

The poet sings to God like a slave who lifts his eyes to the hands of his master, because he knows that all favor comes from Him. While he seeks peace like a dove, others heap scorn and disdain on his head, and he prays to God to help him.

1. A song of the steps.
It is to You that I lift my eyes,
to the One enthroned in the heavens.
2. Behold, like slaves’ eyes to their masters’ hands,
like a slavewoman’s eyes to the hand of her mistress,
so are our eyes to God, our Lord, until He favors us.
3. Favor us, O God, favor us,
for we have endured our fill of disdain.
4. We have had our fill of patronizing scorn,
of disdain heaped upon the valley of doves.

Psalm 124

The poet sings of God’s faithful protection. Had God not protected His people, their ferocious enemies would have swallowed them alive. The people were like birds caught in a hunter’s trap, but God did not let them be devoured. He

broke the trap, and they escaped.

1. A song of the steps, by David.
“If God had not been with us,”
let Israel now say,
2. “if God had not been with us
when people rose up against us,
3. then they would have swallowed us alive
in their burning anger against us.
4. Then the waters would have engulfed us,
sickness would have overwhelmed us.
5. Then we would have been overwhelmed
by the malevolent waters.
6. Blessed is God for not letting us
fall prey to their teeth.
7. We were like a bird escaping the hunter’s trap,
the trap was broken, and we escaped.
8. Our help comes from the Name of God,
the Maker of the heavens and earth.”

Psalm 125

The poet sings about God’s embrace of His people, just as His city is embraced by mountains. He shields the righteous from the designs of the villains, but He does not protect those who veer off on crooked paths. Their departure will leave the people in peace.

1. A song of the steps.
Those who trust in God,
like Mount Zion unspoiled, shall forever endure.
2. As Jerusalem is ringed by mountains,
so does God embrace His people,
from now until forever.

3. He does not let the rod of villainy
affect the destiny of the righteous,
for the righteous refrain from evil.
4. O God, give goodness to those who are good,
and to those who are sincere in their hearts.
5. But those who veer off on crooked paths,
let God lead them off with the deceitmongers,
then there will be peace in Israel.

Psalm 126

The poet sings a song of hope. He envisions God bringing the exiles back home; it will be like a dream come true. The sounds of laughter and grateful hymns will fill the air. Those who were carried off in tears will return with joyful songs.

1. A song of the steps.
When God returns the captives of Zion,
we will be as in a dream.
2. Then our mouths will fill with laughter,
our tongues with hymns,
then it will be said among the nations,
“God did great things for these people.”
3. God did great things for us,
and we rejoiced.
4. O God, return our captives,
like streams over parched land.
5. Those who plant as tears they weep
will sing hymns as they reap.
6. He goes off weeping, carrying his seedbag,
but he comes back singing, carrying his sheaves.

Psalm 127

The poet sings about divine providence. Those who rise early to work and stay late, who eat the melancholy bread of toil, are mistaken. If God does not build a house, its builders toil in vain. God provides sustenance to all, and He blesses the righteous with fine offspring.

1. A song of the steps, about Solomon.

If God does not build a house,
its builders toil in vain,
if God does not guard a city,
the sentry stands in vain.

2. You are deceived, early risers who stay late,
who eat the melancholy bread of toil,
He gives the same to the sleep-starved scholar.

3. Behold, their estate from God is their offspring,
the reward of their inner fruits.

4. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior,
so are the offspring of the youthful years.

5. Fortunate is the man who fills his quiver with them,
he is not embarrassed when warriors debate at the gates.

Psalm 128

The poet sings about earning a living. Although a person's sustenance comes from God, he is fortunate if he eats from the toil of his own hands. It is good for him. He will have stability within his home, and his children will be like olive saplings.

1. A song of the steps.

Fortunate are all who fear God,
who walk along His ways.

2. If you eat from the toil of your hands,
you are fortunate, it is good for you.

3. Your wife will be a fruitful vine within your house.
your sons like olive saplings around your table.
4. Behold, for this is how he is blessed.
the man who fears God.
5. May God bless you from Zion,
then you will see the good of Jerusalem
all the days of your life.
6. You will see your sons have sons,
there will be peace in Israel.

Psalm 129

The poet sings in triumph. From the earliest times, his people have been oppressed and mauled by their enemies, who inflicted wounds like furrows plowed into a person's back. But they were never vanquished. God always severs their chains and sets them free.

1. A song of the steps.
“Many have oppressed me since my youth,”
let Israel now say.
2. “Many have oppressed me since my youth,
but still they could not vanquish me.”
3. They plowed across my back,
the plowers drew long furrows.
4. But God is righteous,
He severed the chains of the villains.
5. Let them be disgraced, let them lag behind,
all those who hate Zion.
6. Let them be like grass on the roof
that withers even before it is uprooted,
7. that does not fill the palm of the reaper,
nor the coattails of the harvester,

8. that does not bring passersby to say,
“May God’s blessing be upon you,
we bless you in the Name of God.”

Psalm 130

The poet sings about the desperate straits in which he finds himself. He calls out to God from the depths of despair. He knows he is less than perfect, but if God sought perfection, who could withstand such scrutiny? He prays for deliverance from his straits and his sins.

1. A song of the steps.
From the depths I called out to You, O God.
2. Hear my voice, O Master,
let Your ears be attuned
to the sound of my entreaty.
3. If You should truly consider sins, O God,
O Master, who could withstand it?
4. For forgiveness is Yours alone,
so that You will be feared.
5. I yearn to God, my soul yearns,
I hopefully await His word.
6. My soul turns to the Master,
with those who await the dawn,
who steadfastly await the dawn.
7. Let Israel hope to God,
for kindness belongs to God,
He has many avenues of deliverance.
8. He shall deliver Israel
from all their sins.

Psalm 131

The poet sings with a humble heart and downcast eyes. He implicitly derides those whose hearts are haughty, who outdo themselves in pomp and grandeur. It is better to live in modesty and trust in God, like a suckling infant trusts its mother.

1. A song of the steps, by David.
O God, my heart was not haughty,
nor were my eyes upraised,
I did not outdo myself in grandeur and pomp.
2. O if I have I not hushed and silenced my soul,
trusting as a suckling infant to its mother,
my soul is like a suckling infant within me.
3. Let Israel hope to God
from now until forever.

Psalm 132

The poet sings of his desire to build a Temple. He dedicates himself to creating a dwelling place for God among the people. Allegorically, he vows not to lie down upon the sheets of his own bed nor allow his eyes to sleep until he reaches his goal.

1. A song of the steps.
Remember, O God, for David's sake,
all his exertions,
2. that he swore an oath to God,
he made a vow to the Mighty Lord of Jacob,
3. "O if I come home to my house,
if I lie down upon the sheets of my bed,
4. if I allow my eyes to sleep,
my eyelids to know slumber,
5. before I find a place for God,
dwellings for the Mighty Lord of Jacob."

6. Behold, we heard about it in Ephrath,
we discovered it in the forest clearings.

7. Let us come to His dwellings,
let us bow down before His footstool.

8. Rise up, O God, come to Your resting place,
You and the ark of Your strength.

9. Your priests will be clothed in righteousness,
Your pious ones will sing hymns.

10. For the sake of Your servant David,
do not turn away your anointed king.

11. God swore an oath to David, solemn, immutable,
“I will establish your offspring on your throne.

12. If only your sons will safeguard My covenant,
and this testament of Mine which I shall teach them,
their sons for all time will also sit on your throne.”

13. For God has chosen Zion,
He desired it as a setting for Himself,

14. “This is My resting place for all time,
here I shall situate Myself, for I desire it.

15. I shall surely bless her sustenance,
I shall give her paupers their fill of bread.

16. I shall clothe her priests for salvation,
and her pious ones will surely sing hymns.

17. There I shall make David’s fortunes blossom,
I have prepared a lamp for My anointed king.

18. I will clothe his foes with disgrace,
while his crown sparkles upon him.”

Psalm 133

The poet sings about brotherly love. How good and sweet it is when brothers live truly together. The support of a warm family is a wonderful pleasure both

for the mind and the heart. This pleasure is a divine blessing, a gift from God to the family.

1. A song of the steps, by David.
2. Like choice oil on the head trickling onto the beard,
Aaron's beard, trickling down to his garments.
3. Like dew from Hermon
that descends on the mountains of Zion,
for there God ordained the blessing,
life to last forever.

Psalm 134

The poet sings about the righteous who spend their nights in the House of God after their activities of the day are done. Better than anyone else, they understand the exquisite holy pleasure of living with God, and they should bless Him in veneration and gratitude.

1. A song of the steps.
Behold, bless God, all the servants of God
who spend their nights in the House of God.
2. Lift up your hands in holiness,
offer your blessings to God.
3. May God bless you from Zion,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

Psalm 135

The poet addresses those who savor the sweetness of standing in the House of God. Let them praise God for moving heaven and earth for the sake of His people. He crushed their oppressors, liberated them from bondage and brought them to the promised land.

1. Hallelujah, praise the Name of God,

give praise, O servants of God
2. that stand in the House of God,
in the courtyards of the House of the Lord.
3. Hallelujah, for God is good,
sing melodies to His Name for it is sweet.
4. For God has chosen Jacob for Himself,
Israel as His beloved.
5. For I know that God is great,
our Master is greater than all the archangels.
6. God did as He pleased with heaven and earth,
with the seas and all the depths of the ocean.
7. He raises clouds from the horizon,
made lightning to herald the rains,
finds winds in His storehouses.
8. He struck down the firstborn of Egypt,
from people down to the beasts.
9. He sent signs and wonders amidst Egypt,
against Pharaoh and against all his servants.
10. He struck down many nations,
and killed powerful kings,
11. Sichon, King of the Amorites, Og, King of Bashan,
and all the kingdoms of Canaan.
12. And He gave away their land as a heritage,
a heritage for His people Israel.
13. O God, Your Name is everlasting,
O God, Your remembrance is for all generations.
14. For God will bring justice to His people,
and linger over the fate of His servants.
15. The idols of the nations are of silver and gold,
the handiwork of people.
16. They have mouths, but they do not speak,

they have eyes, but they do not see.

17. They have ears, but they do not hear,
nor is there breath in their mouths.

18. Let their makers become just like them,
all those who trust in them.

19. Let the House of Israel bless God,
let the House of Aaron bless God.

20. Let the House of the Levites bless God,
let those who fear God bless God.

21. Blessed is God who appears from Zion,
who dwells in Jerusalem, hallelujah.

Psalm 136

The poet expresses his deep gratitude to God for his everlasting kindness. He thanks God for the wondrous creation of the world and for bringing His people out of bondage and leading them to the promised land with awesome displays of His might.

1. Give thanks to God,

for His kindness is everlasting.

2. Give thanks to the Lord of archangels,

for His kindness is everlasting.

3. Give thanks to the Master of Masters.

for His kindness is everlasting.

4. To the One who works wonders alone,

for His kindness is everlasting.

5. To the One who formed the heavens with insight,

for His kindness is everlasting.

6. To the One who spread the earth upon the waters.

for His kindness is everlasting.

7. To the One who formed great luminous bodies.

for His kindness is everlasting.

8. Who set the sun to reign by day,
for His kindness is everlasting.

9. Who set the moon and stars to reign by night,
for His kindness is everlasting.

10. To the One who struck Egypt through its firstborn,
for His kindness is everlasting.

11. Who brought Israel forth from their midst,
for His kindness is everlasting.

12. With a strong hand and an outstretched arm,
for His kindness is everlasting.

13. To the One who ripped the Sea of Reeds to shreds,
for His kindness is everlasting.

14. Who guided Israel through its midst,
for His kindness is everlasting.

15. He tossed Pharaoh and his army into the Sea of Reeds,
for His kindness is everlasting.

16. To the One who led His people through the desert,
for His kindness is everlasting.

17. To the One who struck down great kings,
for His kindness is everlasting.

18. Who slaughtered mighty kings,
for His kindness is everlasting.

19. Who killed Sichon, King of the Amorites,
for His kindness is everlasting.

20. Who killed Og, King of the Bashan,
for His kindness is everlasting.

21. Who gave away their land for a heritage,
for His kindness is everlasting.

22. A heritage for His servant Israel,
for His kindness is everlasting.

23. The One who remembered us in our downfall,
for His kindness is everlasting.
24. Who delivered from our oppressors,
for His kindness is everlasting.
25. Who provides bread for all creatures,
for His kindness is everlasting.
26. Give thanks to the Lord of the heavens,
for His kindness is everlasting.

Psalm 137

The poet and his companions sit in exile. They remember their homeland with nostalgic melancholy, and they weep. They do not know how to sing God's song on foreign soil. But they vow never to forget their loss, even in their moments of greatest joy.

1. By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat,
and also wept, when we remembered Zion.
2. Inside the willow trees that were there
we concealed our lyres.
3. For there our captors asked us for words of song,
to play merry tunes on our instruments,
“Sing for us from the songs of Zion.”
4. O how can we sing God's song
when we are on foreign soil?
5. If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
may my right hand be forgotten.
6. May my tongue adhere to my palate
if I fail to remember you,
if I do not bring up Jerusalem
amidst my greatest joy.
7. Recall, O God, Jerusalem's fateful day
to the Edomites who cried, “Smash!

Smash until her foundations are laid bare.”

8. O ravaged daughter of Babylon,
fortunate is the one who repays you
for all you have inflicted upon us.

9. Fortunate is the one who snatches your babes
and smashes them against the rock.

Psalm 138

The poet thanks God with all his heart for His protection and sustenance.

Although God is exalted, high above the mundane world, He sees the plight of the humble and strikes down their foes from the distance . He answers them when they call out to Him.

1. By David.

I thank You with all my heart,
I sing melodies about You before the mighty.

2. I bow to Your holy palace
and thank Your Name for Your kindness and truth,
for You raised Your promises above all Your Names.

3. On the day I called out You answered me,
You elevated me, gave strength to my spirit.

4. All earthly kings praise You, O God,
when they hear the words of Your mouth.

5. And they sing about God’s ways,
for God’s honor is great.

6. For though God is exalted, He sees the humble,
though He is high, He strikes from the distance.

7. If I walk amidst danger, You sustain me,
You strike with Your hand against the rage of my foes,
Your right hand rescues me.

8. May God grant me approval,

O God, Your kindness is everlasting,
do not forsake Your handiwork.

Psalm 139

Not even the poet's innermost thoughts can escape God's scrutiny, but the poet is confident He will find no corruption. The poet knows that if he would soar upon the wings of dawn, and alight on the far side of the sea, God will be there to guide and protect him.

1. For the performer, by David, a melody.
You scrutinized me, O God, and You know.
2. You know when I can sit and when I must stand,
You understand from afar how to draw me close.
3. You defined my pathways and my habitats,
You directed all my ways.
4. For a word barely appears on my tongue
and already, O God, You know it all.
5. You restrained me front and rear,
You placed Your hands upon me.
6. The knowledge is beyond me,
so high that I cannot grasp it,
7. of where I could walk away from Your spirit,
where I could escape from Your Presence.
8. If I should go up to the heavens, You are there,
if I bed down in the abyss, behold, You are there.
9. If I should soar upon the wings of dawn,
and alight on the far side of the sea,
10. there, too, Your hand would guide me,
Your right hand would grasp me.
11. If I should ask the darkness to enshroud me,
and the night to blanket me in gloom,

12. even darkness could not obscure me from You,
night shines like day, darkness and light are one.

13. For You created my intellect,
You gave me a body in my mother's belly.

14. I thank You, for I am awesomely formed,
Your handiwork is wonderful, my soul knows it well.

15. My bones were not hidden from You,
when I was made in concealment,
woven in the underbelly of the earth.

16. Your eyes discerned my figure,
for all are inscribed in Your book,
the days of their creation,
although not even one has yet existed.

17. As for me, how I value Your beloved ones, O Lord,
how vast is the number of their deeds.

18. Were I to count them, they would outnumber sand,
even to this very last moment, we are still with You.

19. If only You would kill the villains, O Lord,
and make bloodstained people leave me alone.

20. For they usurp Your Name for evil designs,
Your foes pronounce it in vain.

21. Behold, I loathe Your enemies, O God.
I feud with those who rise against You.

22. I loathe them with consummate hatred,
they have become my own foes.

23. Scrutinize me, O Lord, and know my heart,
examine me, and know my inner thoughts.

24. And see, if I have corrupt inclinations,
then lead me to the final road that all travel.

Psalm 140

The poet pleads with God to protect him from his enemies who sharpen their tongues like serpents, who lay traps for him, who put obstacles in his way. He prays that the glib-tongued should find no comfort on earth and that the larcenous be ensnared by their own evil.

1. For the performer, a melody,
by David.
2. Deliver me, O God, from evil people,
protect me from larcenous men,
3. who plan evil in their hearts,
who live with strife every day.
4. They sharpened their tongues like serpents,
spider venom is always behind their lips.
5. Guard me, O God, from villains, protect me
from larcenous men who try to make me stumble.
6. The arrogant concealed traps for me,
they spread ropes and nets by the roadside,
they always laid obstacles for me.
7. I said to God, "You are my Lord,
listen, O God, to the sound of my plea."
8. O Lord, Master, the power of my salvation,
You shielded my head in times of conflict.
9. O God, do not satisfy the villain's slanderlust,
do not let his schemes succeed, to his eternal pride.
10. As for the bands who would separate me from You,
may the inventions of their lips overcome them.
11. May burning embers tumble onto them,
cast them into the fire,
into struggles they will never survive.
12. May the glib-tongued man not find comfort on earth,
may the larcenous man's evil snare him again and again.
13. I know God will perform justice for the oppressed,

and judgment for the downtrodden.

14. O that the righteous will soon praise Your Name,
that the virtuous will sit in Your Presence.

Psalm 141

The poet sends up his prayers to God like incense. He begs God to consider him worthy of a response. He asks God to help him guard his mouth and to keep him away from evil company. Let the righteous rebuke him regardless of his status.

1. A melody by David.

O God, I called out to You, hurry to me,
heed my voice when I call out to You.

2. Let my prayer appear before You like incense,
my uplifted hands like a gift-offering of the evening.

3. O God, appoint a safeguard to my mouth,
uphold the entrance to my lips.

4. Do not let not my heart incline to evil things,
to concoct evil schemes with deceitmongering men,
do not let me break bread at their dinner parties.

5. Let the righteous kindly rebuke and chasten me,
do not let the oil that anoints my head turn it away,
for as long as I can pray, I challenge their evil.

6. Their magistrates were sidetracked by stony hearts,
although they heard my words so sweet.

7. As a woodchopper scatters splinters on the ground,
so were our bones scattered before the gaping grave.

8. For our eyes turn to You, O Lord, Master,
I seek refuge in You, do not cast away my soul.

9. Guard me from the traps they set for me,
and from the snares of the deceitmongers.

10. Let the villains fall into their own entanglements,

all of them together, while I pass safely by.

Psalm 142

Hiding in a dark cave, the poet cries out to God in distress. His pursuers overpower him. His enemies lay traps for him. He has no allies to champion his cause. He begs God to take pity on him for the sake of His own honor.

1. An insight, by David,
a prayer when he was in the cave.
2. My voice cries out to God,
my voice pleads with God.
3. I pour out my words before Him,
I speak of my distress before Him.
4. When my spirit is overwhelmed, You know my path,
that they concealed traps for me on the road I tread.
5. Look to the right and see, I am without allies,
deprived of a way out, no one champions my cause.
6. I cried out to You, O God, I said, “You are my refuge,
my portion in the land of the living.”
7. Listen to my hymn, for I am so very tormented,
rescue me from my pursuers, for they overpower me.
8. Free my cornered soul to praise Your Name,
through me the righteous will crown You,
for You have taken pity on me.

Psalm 143

The poet is beset by foes that pursue him and darken the days of his life. His spirit is overwhelmed, his heart flabbergasted. Desperate, he begs God not to conceal His face from him. He pledges his loyalty to Him and prays that He destroy his tormentors.

1. A melody, by David.

O God, hear my prayer,
listen to my pleas in Your trustworthiness,
respond to me in Your righteousness.

2. Do not let Your servant come to trial,
for no living creature can be vindicated before You.

3. For foes pursued me, they drove my life to the ground,
they sat me in darkness, like the dead of the world.

4. My spirit was overwhelmed within me,
my heart was flabbergasted.

5. I recalled the days of old,
when I was absorbed by all Your deeds,
when I spoke about Your handiwork.

6. I lifted up my hands to You,
my soul, like a land exhausted, yearns for You forever.

7. Hurry, respond to me, O God, I am desperate,
do not conceal Your face from me,
or I will become like those headed for the grave.

8. Let me hear of Your kindness in the morning,
for in You I trust, let me know the way
on which to walk, for my soul is uplifted to You.

9. Rescue me from my foes, O God,
I have concealed my troubles from all but You.

10. Teach me to do Your will, for You are my Lord,
let Your good nature lead me on level terrain.

11. For the sake of Your Name, O God, sustain me,
by Your righteousness, remove me from distress.

12. By Your kindness, destroy my foes,
annihilate all my oppressors,
for I am Your servant.

Psalm 144

The poet blesses God for training him for battle, but he knows that it is ultimately God who rescues and protects him. He wonders why God even considers the plight of a person who is like a breath of air exhaled, whose days are like a fleeting shadow.

1. By David.

Blessed is God, my Rock, who trains
my hands for battle, my fingers for war.

2. My benefactor, my fortress, my bastion, my rescuer,
He is my shield, in Him I seek refuge,
the One who unites my people under me.

3. O God, what is a person that You consider him?
a human being that You should find him worthy?

4. A person is like a breath of air exhaled,
his days are like a fleeting shadow.

5. O God, tilt down Your heavens and descend,
touch the mountains and set them as molder.

6. Discharge Your lightning and scatter them,
launch Your shafts and confound them.

7. Extend Your hand from Above, save me,
rescue me from multitudinous waters,
from the hand of strangers

8. whose mouths speak absurd things,
whose right hands are deceitful right hands.

9. O Lord, I will sing a new song to You,
with a ten-stringed lyre, I will sing melodies to You.

10. The One who grants salvation to kings,
who saves His servant David from the vicious sword.

11. Save me, rescue me from the hands of strangers,
whose mouths speak absurd things,
whose right hands are deceitful right hands.

12. For even now our sons are like sturdy saplings

nurtured from youth, our daughters are like spires
admired for their regal appearance.

13. Our granaries are filled to bursting,
they provide from harvest to harvest,
our sheep breed thousands,
even tens of thousands, in our meadows.

14. Our generals are fair-minded,
there are no breaches, no ill reports,
no cries of alarm in our streets.

15. Fortunate are the people who enjoy this condition,
fortunate are the people whose Lord is God.

Psalm 145

The poet overflows with praise for God yet knows that he can never praise
Him fully. All generations stand in awe of His wondrous works and deeds.
They talk about His goodness and sing hymns to His righteousness. God opens
His hand and satisfies every creature's wish.

1. A psalm, by David.

I will exalt You, my Lord the King,
I will bless Your Name forever and ever.

2. Every day I will bless You,
I will praise Your Name forever and ever.

3. God is great and very praiseworthy,
but no inquiry can encompass His greatness

4. All generations acclaim Your works,
they speak about Your feats of strength,

5. the glorious honor of Your graciousness,
and I talk about Your wondrous deeds.

6. They declare the power of Your awesome deeds,
and I tell about Your greatness.

7. They relate memories of Your profuse goodness,
they sing hymns about Your righteousness.

8. God is kind and merciful,
slow to anger and great in kindness.

9. God is good to all,
His mercy extends to all His creatures.

10. All Your creatures give thanks to You,
and Your pious ones bless You.

11. They declare the honor of Your kingdom,
they speak about Your feats of strength

12. to acquaint people with his feats of strength,
and the honorable grace of His kingdom.

13. Your kingdom is a kingdom over all worlds,
Your reign spans all generations.

14. God supports all those who fall,
He stands straight all the hunchbacks.

15. All eyes look to You with yearning,
and You give them their food in its time.

16. You open up Your hand,
and satisfy each living creature's wish.

17. God is righteous in all His ways,
and pious in all His deeds.

18. God is close to all who call out to Him,
to all who call out to Him with truthfulness.

19. He fulfills the wishes of those who fear Him,
He hears their outcries, and He saves them.

20. God watches over all who love Him,
and He destroys all the villains.

21. Let my mouth speak the praises of God,
let all living creatures bless His holy Name
forever and ever.

Psalm 146

The poet does not place his trust in the wealthy and the powerful. They are incapable of true salvation. When they die and return to the soil, their striving remains unfulfilled. Fortunate are those who trust in God who brings justice to the exploited and feeds the hungry.

1. Hallelujah,
let my soul praise God.
2. I will praise God as long as I live,
I will sing melodies to Him as long as I exist.
3. Do not trust in nobles,
in a person incapable of salvation.
4. When his breath expires, he returns to the soil,
on that day his aspirations are all for naught.
5. Fortunate is the one whom the Lord of Jacob helps,
whose yearning is directed to God, his Lord.
6. The One who made heaven and earth,
the seas and all they contain,
who safeguards truth forever,
7. who brings justice to the exploited,
who gives bread to the hungry,
God unties the bound.
8. God gives sight to the blind,
God stands straight the hunchbacks,
God loves the righteous.
9. God watches over the converts,
He encourages orphans and widows,
He complicates the villains' ways.
10. God will reign forever,
your Lord, O Zion, for all generations, hallelujah.

Psalm 147

The poet sings to the One who cloaks the heavens with clouds, who bedecks the earth with dew and the mountainsides with grass. God heals the brokenhearted and gives courage to the humble. He will bring peace to His nation and sustenance to His people.

1. Hallelujah, it is good to sing melodies to our Lord,
psalms befit Him because He is sweet.
2. God is the Builder of Jerusalem,
He gathers in the outcasts of Israel.
3. The One who heals the brokenhearted,
and relieves their anguish.
4. The One who keeps count of all the stars,
and knows them all by name.
5. Our Master is great and very powerful,
the signs of His understanding are countless.
6. God encourages the humble,
He casts down villains to the very ground.
7. Shout your gratitude to God,
sing melodies to our Lord on a lyre.
8. The One who cloaks the heavens with clouds,
who bedecks the earth with dew,
who covers the mountainsides with grass.
9. He provides food for the beast,
for young ravens that cry out.
10. He does not crave the power of steeds,
nor does He desire the swift legs of men.
11. God takes pleasure in those who fear Him,
those who yearn for His kindness.
12. O Jerusalem, praise God,

give praise to your Lord, O Zion.

13. For He fortified the rivets of your gateways,
He blessed your children in your midst.

14. The One who brings peace to your borders
will feed you your fill of the choicest wheat.

15. The One who commands the elements onto the earth,
they rush speedily to obey His word.

16. The One who sends snowfalls like fleece,
who scatters about frost like cinders.

17. He heaves down His ice as small pellets,
who can withstand His freezes?

18. Then He issues His command and dissolves them,
He drives across His wind, the waters flow.

19. He relates His words to Jacob,
His decrees and laws to Israel.

20. He did not do so for any other nation,
He informed them of no laws, hallelujah.

Psalm 148

The poet calls on all of creation to praise God. He set the stars on their paths and filled the earth with vegetation and teeming creatures. He made all people, the mighty and the weak, men and women, young and old, and they all should sing His praises.

1. Hallelujah, praise God from the heavens,
praise Him in the upper worlds.

2. Let all His angels praise Him,
let all His hosts praise Him.

3. Let the sun and the moon praise Him,
let all the illuminated stars praise Him.

4. Let the highest heavens praise Him,

and the waters that are above the heavens.

5. Let them praise the Name of God,
for He issued the command that created them.

6. He established them for always and forever,
He issued a decree that cannot be violated

7. Praise God from the earth,
sea monsters and all the ocean deeps.

8. Fire and hail, snow and fumes,
hurricane winds do His bidding.

9. The mountains and all the hills,
fruit trees and all the cedars,

10. wild beasts and all livestock,
small animals and birds on the wing,

11. earthly kings and all the nations,
officers and all earthly judges,

12. young men and also maidens,
the elderly and also youths,

13. praise the Name of God,
for His Name alone is exalted,
give praise over heaven and earth.

14. He raised up the fortunes of His people,
psalms for all his pious, for the people of Israel,
the people close to him, hallelujah.

Psalm 149

The poet offers up a new song of praise. Let the people rejoice in the knowledge that God favors them. Let them dance before Him. Let them sing beautiful melodies accompanied by musical instruments. God will protect them and punish their enemies.

1. Hallelujah, sing a new song to God, sing psalms

to Him in the congregation of the pious.

2. Let Israel rejoice in its Maker,
let the people of Zion be jubilant with their King.
3. Let them give praise to His Name with dances,
sing melodies to Him with drums and lyres.
4. For God desires His people,
He festoons the humble with salvation.
5. Let the pious celebrate with honor,
let them sing hymns in their resting places.
6. The homage to the Lord in their throats
shall become double-edged swords in their hands
7. to take vengeance upon the nations,
to bring retribution to the nationalities,
8. to lock their kings in chains,
their noblemen in iron shackles.
9. to carry out against them the predicted judgment,
this is the glory of all His pious ones, hallelujah.

Psalm 150

The poet concludes with a call to praise God's feats of strength and immense greatness. Let everyone join the celebration with passionate songs and dances, with thunderous music and boisterous fanfare. Let all people rejoice with God.

1. Hallelujah, praise the Lord in His holy place,
praise Him in the expanse of His power.
2. Praise Him for His feats of strength,
praise Him for his immense greatness.
3. Praise Him with blasts of the shofar,
praise Him with harps and lyres.
4. Praise Him with drums and dancing,
praise Him with strings and woodwinds.

5. Praise Him with thunderous music,
praise Him with boisterous fanfare.

6. Let every soul praise God,
hallelujah.

Prayer after Reading from the Psalms

(Full version appears on p. 247.)

May it be Your will, O God our Lord, the Lord of our fathers, in the merit of the psalms we have read before You, in the merit of their songs, in the merit of their verses, in the merit of their words and in the merit of Your holy and pure Names that derive from them, that You wipe away all our misdeeds, forgive all our sins and absolve us of all our guilt, for we have transgressed, sinned and been guilty before You. Bring us back in a total return to You, guide us to Your service and open our hearts to the study of Your Torah.

Prayer after Reading from the Psalms

7. O that Israel's salvation would emerge from Zion,
with God bringing back the captives of His people,
then Jacob would be jubilant, Israel would rejoice.

39. The salvation of the righteous is from God,
He is their strength in troubled times.

40. God helped them and liberated them,
He liberated them from villains and saved them,
for they sought refuge in Him.

May it be Your will, O God our Lord, the Lord of our fathers, in the
merit of the

first book / second book / third book / fourth book / fifth book

of the Psalms we have read before You, which correspond to the Books

Bereishis / Shemos / Vayikra / Bamidbar / Devarim

in the merit of their songs, in the merit of their verses, in the merit of their
words and in the merit of Your holy and pure Names that derive from them,
that You wipe away all our misdeeds, forgive all our sins and absolve us of
all our guilt, for we have transgressed, sinned and been guilty before You.

Bring us back in a total return to You, guide us to Your service and open our hearts to the study of Your Torah.

Send a complete recovery to the sick among Your people (*individual names can be mentioned here*). Emancipate the captives. Release the imprisoned. Protect all overland, sea and river travelers among Your people, Israel, shout from all suffering and harm. Bring them to their destination alive and well.

Ordain that all the childless have children who will live to serve and fear You. As for the pregnant among Your people, the house of Israel, protect them from miscarriage. And in Your great mercy, protect those in labor from all misfortune. Grant that nursing women should not lack milk in their bosoms. Do not let diphtheria and all other afflictions and severe illnesses take hold among the children of Your people, the house of Israel. Groom them for Your Torah, that they should study Torah for its own sake. Protect them from spiteful eyes, from pestilence and plagues, from Satan and the evil inclination.

Annul all harsh and harmful decrees issued against any of Your people, the house of Israel, wherever they may be. Incline the hearts of the rulers to consider us with favor and issue decrees that will benefit us. Bestow blessing and success on all our handiwork. Apportion our sustenance from Your expansive and full hand. Let not Your people, the house of Israel, be dependent on each other or on another people. Give each and every person ample sustenance and to each and every body that which it needs.

Hurry, hasten to redeem us and rebuild our holy and glorious Temple. Consider the merit of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy inscribed in Your Torah, as it is written, “God, God, Lord, merciful, forgiving, slow to anger, great in kindness and truth, who maintains kindness for thousands, who forbears sin, guilt and transgression, who cleanses.” These are not turned away from You empty-handed. Help us, O Lord of our salvation, for the honor of Your Name. Rescue us and wipe away our transgressions for the sake of Your Name.

Blessed is God forever. Amen. Amen.