

צְפִיָּה לְגִאוּלָּה

YEARNING FOR REDEMPTION

THE PSALMS OF
KING DAVID

A Workbook Primer for Learning, Understanding, and Living
Tehillim/Psalms as a Transformational Text

Original Multi-dimensional Translation
with commentary and notes

Avraham Sutton

צְפִיָּה לְגִּאוּלָּה

YEARNING FOR REDEMPTION

THE PSALMS OF
KING DAVID

A Workbook Primer for Learning, Understanding, and Living
Tehillim/Psalms as a Transformational Text

Original Multi-dimensional Translation
with commentary and notes

Avraham Sutton

In preparation:

A companion volume
with essays and
in-depth commentaries
on individual psalms

Please support this work

Copyright © 2014 Avraham Sutton
Jerusalem, Israel

Website: www.AvrahamSutton.com

Email: avraham.sutton@me.com

Phones in Israel: 972-2-534-1922, 972-525-640-249

I imagine...

Imagine discovering the Book of Psalms as if it were a buried scroll unearthed for the first time in thousands of years.

How uncanny that it speaks to the psychological and spiritual condition of our age. How uncanny that it depicts the geopolitical unrest of our age. How uncanny.

*

Discover the philosophical elegance of the Psalms. It was always there, but could never before have been translated into English as it has been now, as Israel returns to its ancient homeland and again becomes conscious—ever so slowly—of its historical mission.

*

Now the truth can be told in the ancient words of the Psalmist, words that reverberate through the ages, words that resonate in the heart, mind and soul. Words that empower the individual, the nation, mankind. Words that illuminate the darkest abysses of human existence that we are facing as we enter the 21st Century...

*

We are living in a special time, a pregnant time, in the history of the Jewish people, in the history of Mankind, and in the history of the planet Earth. It is a time about which our ancestors dreamed and saw visions.

It is an awesome time in which everything hangs in the balance and all of history is coming to its culmination. It is a time in which the reasons for many things will be revealed.

The single most important thing that we will understand (which includes everything else) is God's plan for us. We will understand that, through supernatural and natural means, God is bringing this plan to fruition. This involves moving into the next stage of history, the Messianic Age. This can happen in many ways, all depending on what we do. But one thing is certain: it will happen. All the "threads" of history are now being drawn together to complete a single masterful tapestry. This means that all outstanding accounts must be paid, and all unfinished business must be taken care of...

Our teachers have told us that there are tremendous obstacles before us. There is an actual power that resists bringing the Godly process of history to its final conclusion. Of course, it cannot stop the process, which is a cosmological imperative. But it can seemingly distort and divert it.

It is for this reason, we are told, that the existence of this plan was always hidden from the eyes of the multitudes, couched in seemingly disconnected metaphors, sealed and locked behind doors the keys of which could not be found. Now, however, for this process to be brought to its conclusion, it must be made intelligible to many people, Jews and Gentiles alike. This is a direct attack on the power of Disbelief that presently dominates people's minds and distorts our perceptions about reality. Only one thing can overcome this power: the combined effort of the entire Jewish People to reattain its past spiritual glory, and the participation of a good part of humanity on Israel's side...

*

The Torah is God's Teaching to Humankind. It is not just for the Jewish people, but for Mankind, via the Jewish people.

The Torah is God's Light that illuminates our world. It makes known to us the reason we were created. And what is this reason? Why did God create the cosmos, and man in it? The reason, the Torah says, is so that "You shall know today and reflect upon it in your heart that Hashem Hu HaElohim [God is the Supreme Being] in the heavens above and on the earth below—there is nothing else" (Deuteronomy 4:39).

This verse contains several crucial key axioms. God's Unity refers not only to His Sovereign Rule (there are no other gods), and not only to the uniqueness of His Oneness (there is no other oneness like it). It also means that HE IS ALL THAT THERE IS. That is, the belief that God is ONE means that despite all of the evidence of diversity and separateness which our senses communicate to us about the universe, in truth, all that actually exists is God's absolute and indivisible Unity. From the divine viewpoint of creation, there is no finite and objective universe that exists independently "out there," that separates and intervenes between God and ourselves. Even though we experience ourselves and sense the world around us as solid, hard reality, still, Jewish tradition teaches us that this is only how it appears from our limited perspective.

In the most succinct terms, what the Torah is telling us is that we live in a unified reality. We come from Oneness, and we are going to Oneness. The difference is that, before creation, God was One irrespective of us. In God, before creation, we didn't exist as individuals. Enfolded in His Infinite Light, our souls were undifferentiated in a state of Infinite Unity. But He desired to give each one of us life, eternal life, and to reveal His Infinite Oneness through the prisms of our lives. His Will, the Divine Will, is to reveal His Infinite Light into the finite fabric of creation.

What is Man's part in this? First he must yearn for this revelation, to the point that it dawns on him that it is exactly what he wants. He must find God in the holy of holies of his own temple, the human heart.

King David's Psalms are the quintessential expression of Prayer emerging from the human heart, the quintessential expression of the soul's desire for divine communion. It is man's response to having internalized the Torah, of wanting what God wants, and offering it back up to Him.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to many people. It is dedicated to my wife and children. There is no way to express how I feel about them and my gratitude to Hashem for giving me the privilege of being my wife's husband and my children's father (and my grandchildren's grandfather). To you, my most beloveds, I dedicate this book.

I dedicate this book, as well, to all our friends, from Israel to Los Angeles, and everywhere in between. To my rabbis and teachers and friends and students (the lines between them sometimes tend to blur)—from whom I have learned so much.

I dedicate this book to my brothers and their families, to my cousins and their families, and to all my friends and their families. To all the incredible people I have met, and to those of you whom I haven't yet met.

I dedicate this book to the people who have believed in me and supported my work along the way. May the Holy One bless you and safeguard you. May He shine His face upon you, always.

This book is dedicated to those who have passed on from this world. Much of the writing of this book has taken place during times of tremendous suffering for our people. I dedicate this book to the soul-elevation of all who have been killed in terror attacks, including my cousin, Avraham Yoseph Chayim Sutton of Argentina and Shilo (1975-1992).

I dedicate this book to my people, whom it is sometimes so hard to love, but who are so good. We are a holy people. Our children are holy. Our soldiers are holy. Even those among us with whom we disagree so vehemently are holy. We are all complementary parts of a great whole. May Hashem instill in our hearts and minds the wisdom needed to truly be Am Yisrael. May He enlighten us with the truth of His Torah at this crucial time when we have to be a light to ourselves before we can be a light to the nations.

Finally, I dedicate this book to Hashem, to His purposes. I thank Him for inspiring me, filling me with the passion needed to forge onward, even when the light at the end of the tunnel was not visible.

System of Hebrew transliteration used in this book:

Hebrew letter	English transliteration	English letter	Gematria
א	aleph	soft a,e,i,o,u	1
ב	beth, beit, veit	b, v	2
ג	gimel	g	3
ד	dalet dagusha	d	4
ד	dalet rafa	soft th	4
ה	heh	h	5
ו	vav	v, w	6
ז	zayin	z	7
ח	chet	ch*	8
ט	tet	t	9
י	yod	y, i	10
כ	kaf degusha	k, c	20
כ	khaf	kh, ch	20
ל	lamed	l	30
מ	mem	m	40
נ	nun	n	50
ס	samekh	s	60
ע	ayin	guttural aa, e	70
פ	peh	p	80
פ	pheh	ph, f	80
צ	tzadi	tz	90
ק	kof	k, q	100
ר	reish	r	200
שׁ	shin	sh	300
שׂ	sin	s	300
ת	tav	t, hard th	400

* The eighth Hebrew letter, chet, is a soft guttural. It is pronounced like the j in the Spanish name Juan.

YEARNING FOR REDEMPTION

THE PSALMS OF KING DAVID

Table of Contents

Foreword

- I. A New Translation of the Psalms / i
- II. A New Concept in Translation
- III. Multiple Meanings / iii
- IV. The Language of Creation / iv
- V. About This Translation / v
- VI. The Unified Vision / vi

Introduction

- I. The Five Books of Torah and Psalms / -1-
- II. G-d's Torah and Man's Torah / -2-
- III. G-d and Man / -4-
- IV. Psalms and the Power of Prayer / -5-
- V. Ten Types of Song / -5-
 - 1. Ashrei / -7-
 - 2. Shir
 - 3. Maskil
 - 150 Superscriptions (chart) / -8-
 - 4. HalleluYah / -9-
 - Candle Meditation / -10-
 - Reflecting G-d's Light / -11-
 - Halo and Aura / -12-
 - 5. Nitzuach / -12-
 - 6-7. Mizmor & Nigun / -13-
 - The Power of Music / -14-
 - Music to Probe the Soul / -14-
 - Mizmor LeDavid / -16-
 - 8. Tefillah / -18-
 - 9. Hodaah – The Power of Thanks / -20-
 - The Parable of the Flowers
 - 10. Barukh – Berakhah: Blessing as Revelation / -21-
- VI. Code-Words / -23-
- VII. The Divine Names / -25-
 - I Will Be Who I Will Be
 - YKVK / -26-
 - YKVK ADNY / -28-
 - YKVK Elokim / -29-
 - Meditating on YKVK / -32-

Table of Contents (cont.)

- VIII. The Sefirot and the Ten Divine Names / -34-
 - The Holographic Universe / -35-
- IX. Oscillations in Tense ("Past" and "Future") / -41-
 - Prophecy in the Psalms
- X. Oscillations in Person ("You" and "He") / -42-
- XI. The Holy One and the Shekhinah – Two Modes of Providence / -45-
- XII. David, Sweet Singer of Israel, and the Ten Elders / -46-
- XIII. G-d's Plan (The Cosmic Clock) / -47-
- XIV. Prayer for the Revelation of G-d's Oneness / -51-
- XV. Tehillim Drama – Turnabout / -52-
- XVI. The Psalms of King David – Songs of the Soul of Israel / -53-

Yearning for Redemption – The Psalms of King David

Psalms 1 – 150 (a total of 113 psalms completed to date) / 1-136

About the author / 137

Foreword

I. A New Translation of the Psalms

A new and completely different translation of the Psalms is needed for our generation. It must be a Speaking Psalms—a Psalms that speaks to the soul of our troubled generation. It must be a Living Psalms that can help give expression to each of our deepest yearnings, the yearnings of Israel, and the yearnings of Mankind.

This translation of the Psalms must be unique and groundbreaking in adding a dimension that is inherent in the Hebrew original but which cannot be captured in a word-for-word rendition. In order to convey an authentic glimpse into what can be called the “multi-dimensionality” of language (the Hebrew language in particular, and all languages in general), and to pierce through to the profound experiential level of prayer, explanatory words and phrases based on the root-meanings of Hebrew words, as well as on the commentaries of the greatest teachers and visionaries of our people, must be incorporated into the translation itself. In order to distinguish between the basic translation and these extra thoughts, the latter should be interspersed throughout the text in smaller letters and/or in brackets. Special consideration must be given to creating a format for each Psalm that is pleasant and easy to follow.

Thus, not only the words but the concepts and spirit that lie behind those words must be incorporated into such a translation, in a language that speaks to our generation. Again, this can only be done by bringing out and making available some of the multiple levels of meaning that are embedded in *lashon ha’kodesh*, the sacred prophetic language of the Torah. This multi-dimensionality makes *lashon ha’kodesh* the perfect vehicle for accessing and connecting to the Divine Unity that lies behind all phenomena.

Though longer, this translation must endeavor to address the major problem facing anyone who wishes to talk to God: “Do I understand what I am saying? Can I put myself behind the words I utter?”

This translation is an attempt to fulfill that need.

II. A New Concept in Translation

Did you ever read a translation of a Psalm (or any other standard Jewish prayer) in English? Did you get the feeling that there was something wrong? Did you think to yourself, “If this is what Jewish prayer (or, the Jewish Bible, or Jewish Prophecy, etc.) is about, how can anyone take this seriously?”

And if you did manage to break through and penetrate the outer shell of the translation, and realize that that prayer or that psalm really was saying something, can you really say that you understood what each verse (and, most importantly, the psalm in its entirety) was talking about? In other words, could you grasp its CONCEPT? Could you at least understand the connections between the verses? If some kind of unified concept did seem to emerge, was it clear to you why certain ideas were inevitably inserted which didn’t seem at all relevant to the major theme of the psalm?

Such understanding is next to impossible without drawing upon the deeper insights of our sages. They grasped the concepts behind the prayers and were therefore able to literally pry them open and extract their essence. By bringing the insights of the classical commentaries to bear in our translation, these verses come to life.

The source for this approach (of bringing the teachings of the Torah to bear on our prayers) is the great chasidic master, Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, grandson of the Baal Shem Tov of blessed memory. Rebbe Nachman taught that *Torah* (God's Teaching) and *tefillah* (man's prayer) are to be joined and wed as man and wife. As we shall see, *Torah* is from heaven above; *tefillah* (prayer) is man's response from earth below. *Torah* is called *or yashar* (direct light); *tefillah* is *or chozer* (rebounding light). *Torah* informs us of what Hashem wants of us; *tefillah* is our request for those very things.

The secret of effectively uniting *Torah* and *tefillah*, heaven and earth, is therefore to learn exactly what it is that God wants us to ask for. Stated in general terms, this is none other than that His Presence, His Oneness, and His Providence be revealed in our personal lives as well as in the history of Israel and the world. Most importantly, God wants us to prepare for the Final Redemption towards which history is racing at this very moment.

This is the generation that searches for the Hidden Presence, the children of Yaacov who seek Your Presence at all times, selah! (Psalm 24:6).

Our generation seeks meaning. In every sphere of human endeavor, man is seeking the fundamental truths that lie behind and beneath the surface of things. New horizons and new worlds are opening up before us at an ever-increasing rate. Tools are needed, not only to cope, but to attain the equilibrium and self mastery required to navigate the stormy seas ahead. Tourist resorts, instead of taking people's attention away from their problems, will become prayer and meditation retreats. Natural settings will be sought in which people will be able to recharge their batteries, "go inside" and explore.

The time has thus come to search beneath the surface in our understanding of prayer.

Of course, the degree that words have genuine feeling and meaning depends largely on the one uttering them. Nevertheless, the translator's job (basing himself on the Oral Tradition) is to guide us to the meaning that actually resides in words. We referred to this above as the "multi-dimensionality" of the sacred language. Its very words breathe mystery for they contain many layers and subtle nuances of meaning. There are many metaphors to express this ***unified multi-dimensionality***. Like cells in a living organism, each word (and even letter) is a tiny "information packet" containing libraries of information. Or, each word and letter can be described as a tree. The simple or surface meaning "rests on the ground," i.e., relates to something we can identify in our everyday experience. The "roots" reach down and draw their nourishment from deeper and deeper strata of language. The "trunk" and "branches" reach up to higher and higher nuances of meanings.

In our translation, we have put every effort into presenting the ancient language of *tefillah* (prayer) in a way which does not suppress the deeper meanings of its words. In this we have followed the advice of the master, Rambam (Maimonides), to his translator Rabbi Shmuel ibn Tibbon:

One who wishes to translate from one language to another, and tries to translate

word for word, maintaining the order of both the subject and the words, will find his work very difficult, and will ultimately end up with a translation that is highly questionable and confusing.

Rather, one who translates from one language to another must first understand the concept. Then he should relate and explain the subject according to his understanding, providing a clear exposition in the language [into which he is translating]. This is impossible without transposing the order of words.

Moreover, the translator will sometimes have to use many words to translate a single word, while at other times he will have to use a single word to translate many. He will have to add and delete words so that the concept may be clearly expressed in the language into which he is translating.

The problem of finding meaning in the Psalms (and in our prayers in general) does not exist only for the person who wishes to translate a psalm or prayer from the original Hebrew to another language. It also exists for one who simply wishes to understand what the psalm is about *in its own terms*. Certainly, all languages are multi-layered and contain more information than is readily apparent on the surface. It is the nature of human speech and language in general that *words* imply more than can be said in *words*! Ancient *lashon ha'kodesh*, however, is the Grandmother of all languages in this respect. It is the language par excellence that opens up the way back to infinite meaning. And when dealing with prayers composed especially in order to break through the constricted prism/prison of human existence back to the Infinite Source from which all meaning and existence emanates, there is no language like it. And yet, precisely because of its quality of infiniteness, we are at a loss to understand exactly what is being said.

A balance is needed, and it is for this reason that the great commentators of the past chose any number of novel approaches and methods with which to expound the ideas embedded in each psalm.

Of course, all of these problems arise because the psalms were written with *ruach ha'kodesh* (divine inspiration, prophetic enlightenment). And the truth is that the Psalms can only really be understood when uttered in a similar state to the one who composed them! If *ruach ha'kodesh* is defined as a state of being that is totally inaccessible to us in our generation, then we would just have to be satisfied with a piece-meal approach to the Psalms, i.e., get what we can, but never really understand what we were saying. But if the secret of *ruach ha'kodesh* lies in the Psalms themselves, then we are talking about an entirely different experience. Yes, the psalm is surrounded by a kind of protective layer which prevents us from tasting its fruit without sanctifying ourselves. But, again, the psalm itself is the way to become sanctified.

III. Multiple Meanings

"Behold, My words are like fire, says Hashem, and like a hammer that shatters rock" (Jeremiah 23:29).

Fire and hammer. Two metaphors to describe the power of God's word to split into many meanings. Just as a single flame can split into numerous flames, and just as a hammer can cause numerous sparks to fly when it strikes a rock, so every word that Hashem ever spoke split and continues to split into ever smaller and smaller units of

meaning in a seemingly endless process of breakdown.

Referring to the *Aseret haDibrot* (Ten Divine Statements) that Hashem spoke at Sinai, the Talmud states:ⁱ

Rabbi Yochanan asked, what is the meaning of the verse, "Hashem gave forth an utterance; [they became] announcements to a great host [of nations]" (Psalm 68:12)? [Why does this verse switch from the singular "utterance" to the plural "announcements"?] Rather, every utterance that the Almighty spoke [at Sinai] split into seventy languages. Rabbi Yishmael learned [this from the verse], "[Hashem's word is] like a hammer that shatters rock." Just as a hammer causes many sparks to fly when it strikes a rock, so also every statement and every word that left the mouth of the Holy One split into seventy languages.

The Midrash also asks:ⁱⁱ

What is the meaning of "Hashem spoke these words to your entire assembly...A great Voice that did not cease" (Deuteronomy 5:19)? Our Masters taught that the *Aseret haDibrot* were all spoken in One Syllable. They issued forth from the mouth of the Holy One [as one]—something so difficult [to imagine] that no human mouth can utter it, nor any human ear hear it. It is therefore written, "My soul departed at [the sound of] His Voice" (Song of Songs 5:6) [i.e., our souls were unable to remain in our bodies when we heard God's Voice at Sinai]. "A great Voice that did not cease"—the Voice split up into seven voices and then [continued splitting up] into seventy languages.

What is the purpose of this seemingly endless process of breakdown into ever smaller and smaller units of meaning? And hasn't the process gone too far? Will we never have access again to the Ultimate Meaning that lies behind all the fragments? If our ancestors experienced the One Voice as a chorus of seven and then a symphony of seventy, will we ever hear anything but a deafening cacophony of seven billion? Will the process ever be reversed so that we can hear the pristine Voice of the One?

IV. The Language of Creation

The Psalmist wrote, "With Hashem's word, the heavens were made, and all the heavenly hosts were fashioned with the breath of His mouth" (Psalm 33:6). In the Torah, we read "*Elokim* said: There shall be light, and light came into existence...*Elokim* said: The waters shall teem with swarms of living creatures...*Elokim* said: Let us make man..." All totaled the expression *va'yomer Elokim* appears in the Creation Narrative ten times. These are the *Asarah Maamarot* (Ten Divine Utterances) with which God created the universe.ⁱⁱⁱ

Lashon ha'kodesh (the sacred, transcendental language of prophecy) is the language of creation, whose very letters (like energy frequencies) lie at the basis of all existence. It is the language of the angels, the language of the soul, the ultimate language that sanctifies, elevates, and unifies all other languages back into the One Voice.

ⁱ *Shabbat* 88b.

ⁱⁱ *Tanchuma*, *Yitro* 11.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Pirkey Avot* 5:1.

Lashon ha'kodesh is holy not only because all creation and all other languages branch off from it, but because, like its Source, no matter how much it is broken down into smaller and smaller units of meaning (even into other languages), it remains unified. In other words, although it is infinitely multifaceted and multidimensional, *an inexhaustible wellspring of meaning in every day and age*, all of its meanings are grounded in Oneness, God's Oneness. Its verses, words and letters *mean* on many levels simultaneously, yet, because their source is in Oneness, all of these levels together form a Whole that is greater than the sum of its parts, a chorus and a symphony that is so awesomely harmonious precisely because it is made up of so many billions of parts. And the reason it had to be broken down into so many parts was so that each and every one of us could acquire our own unique portion in it, attuned to the deepest song of our souls.

The question still remains. How do we experience true Unity in the midst of all this multiplicity? Perhaps the first step is to be silent. To hear the *kol demamah dakah* (tenuous, *silent* voice), we ourselves need to stop for a moment. We need to enter into holiness, into the sacred space of our own souls. In that sacred space we meet others. In that sacred space, we meet Hashem.

In sum, the ***unified multi-dimensionality*** of *lashon ha'kodesh* is as important for us today as ever. Living as we do at the height (or the end) of the Age of Materialism, our everyday experience is not exactly filled with exultation and thankfulness to the Creator for the awesome privilege of being alive. The reason for this is that our lives are hopelessly fragmented. We simply do not experience the Unity that lies behind all existence in a real and meaningful way. This is what Torah is all about. This is also what Psalms (and all Jewish Prayer) is about, to revive that experience in our souls, to be healed by the wholeness of Hashem's Word.

V. About This Translation

Any translation of our Sacred Scriptures—whether it be a verse or a word in the Torah itself, in the Prophets, in the Psalms, or in any prayer, blessing, or song originally formulated in *lashon ha'kodesh*—is necessarily partial. There is no way our finite minds can grasp all that God wants to say to us in a mere translation. To overcome this, at least partially, we have based our translation on the root meanings of words as well as on the deeper insights provided in the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, and major commentaries.

The truth is that any commentary, no matter how all-encompassing, is bound to limit the nearly infinite meaning of a verse to its own particle point of view. This might seem like a problem, but it is a wonderful kindness. We cannot grasp something that is too all encompassing. Similar to the effect of too much sunlight, we are blinded by infinite meaning.^{iv} The commentaries bring meaning down to our level. At most, the

¹ There is actually a *halakhah* (Jewish law) that expresses this. Just as we respect sages according to their rank, so do we honor sacred books according to their importance. When placing sacred books in a stack, the *Torah* (Five Books of Moses) goes on top of those of the *Neviim* (Prophets) and *Ketuvim* (Sacred Writings), and not vice versa. Similarly, Biblical works are considered more sacred than Talmudic and Midrashic works, and the former should always be placed on top. Later *halakhic* (legal) codifications are placed on the bottom (see *Megillah* 27a; *Yad, Sefer Torah* 10:5; *Yoreh De'ah* 282:19).

In this sense, all the sacred books of our tradition form a single structure similar to the human body, with a head, neck, shoulders, torso, waist, legs, and feet. The Torah is infinite; it is like the head; all meaning is contained in the Torah; furthermore, its all-encompassing meaning can never be exhausted by any interpretation. The *Neviim* and *Ketuvim* are less all-encompassing; they come to explain what the

creative part of this translation lies in having combined one or more of the meanings provided by tradition on any particular verse or word. As a general rule, we have reduced the font-size and when necessary enclosed these additional meanings in brackets such that a verse can be read both with and without the additional meaning [brought out in the brackets].

Our translation thus seeks to strike a balance between the spirit and literal meaning of words. Its purpose is not to replace others and certainly not to replace the original! It is simply to inspire a deeper appreciation of the original. Its secret is that it is integrative. Like a diamond, it seeks to show how all the various nuances and meanings that are embedded in the Sacred Text are all parts of one whole.

The translation also brings out the connection between the inner, psychological, level of the psalms ("David spoke about himself and the struggles he had within his own soul"^{vi}) and the outer, historical, geopolitical level of the psalms ("David spoke about the collective destiny of the Jewish people and mankind"^{vi}). It shows how scientifically and philosophically advanced and ahead of his time David was. It shows why King David was chosen to be the progenitor of the Messiah of the House of David. Psalms reveal the true plan of the Creator for the Jewish people and the world. This and more.

Can an English translation do justice to all this? No. But, together with the notes and special in-depth commentary, this translation, which incorporates these deeper meanings, can!^{vii} This commentary emerged organically in the process of translating the Psalms. If the translation opens up a window to the multi-dimensionality of the Psalms, the commentary endeavors to open up a gate to a world of even greater profundity and wealth of meaning that lies behind these powerful prayers.

Again, this level of meaning has a special importance for our generation. Soulful prayer has the power to connect us to our individual missions and soul-destinies, the very reasons for which each of us has been born at this time, as well as to the collective mission of our people (and of all mankind), when the global consciousness foretold in the *Torah*, *Neviim* (Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (Sacred Writings) is dawning on our planet.

VI. The Unified Vision

Beyond the problem of translation of words, and even concepts, is the importance of our connecting to and aligning ourselves with the unified vision that lies behind the Scriptures, in this case the Psalms. Remember, these words were written in a state of prophecy called *ruach ha'kodesh*. In the olden days, when a prophet or a talmudic sage or a kabbalist or a chassidic master wrote words of Torah, the *Shekhinah* was said to speak through them. That is, behind the surface meaning of their words, something much more profound was happening. The problem is that when we now read their words, we are blocked from having direct access to that transforming, inner

Torah meant; in explaining, they limit; they are like the neck and shoulders of the Torah. The Talmud and Midrash are less encompassing; they are like the torso and waist. *Halakhah*, which means literally, "walking," is least encompassing; *halakhah* is concerned only with what we are to do; it corresponds to the legs and feet of the Torah structure; without the feet we could not stand or walk; still, without the head and heart, we could not think and feel. We need the entire structure embodied in all of these sacred works.

^v *Midrash Tehillim*, Psalm 18:1.

^{vi} *Ibid.*

^{vii} In the present volume, we include only a *sampling* of notes in order to give a taste of what is possible. The remainder of the notes and the in-depth commentaries that we have written on many of the psalms (and which we are still in the process of expanding) will be published separately in a companion volume.

experience of which they wished to leave an impression for posterity. For when they received their *ruach ha'kodesh*, they felt their soul embraced by Hashem. They lost their sense of separateness and attained complete *devekut* (ecstatic bonding with the Divine). They felt His kisses, drank the ecstatic wine of the Torah, became satiated with its life giving waters, enfolded in its wings.

If we would ask any of these giants of the spirit, after they returned to their normal waking consciousness: What was it like? Can you tell us, communicate it in words? Their answer would be twofold:

1) "There are no words. For, you see, I didn't exist. There was no subject-object duality. I don't know who, what, where I was. It was incredible, overwhelming. I'll never forget it." This is exactly the same as numerous reports of near-death experiences.^{viii} Because of the nature of the experience, people are reported as saying, "There are no words. Anything I say could never even approximate what I saw and felt..." One woman was reported as saying, "I felt myself in a place of all knowledge. Anything anybody could ever know or want to know was there..." She is referring, of course, to what our tradition calls the *Metivta d'Rakiya*, the Heavenly Academy... But, to continue, there is a second stage.

2) "I have to put it in words, words that will not obscure the light completely... Maybe they won't express everything, not, at least, on the surface, but deep down, inside the words themselves, I will clothe my experience for posterity. I will inscribe my *nefesh* (soul) in the words I write."

Stage #1 thus corresponds to "My soul departed when He spoke" (Song of Songs), and stage #2 corresponds to the acrostic of the word *Anokhi* (*ANoKhY*), the first word of the Decalogue, each letter of which stands for a word: "*Ana Nafshi Ketavit Yahavit—* [In these words] I have written My soul and given it [to you]."^{ix}

That was then.

Now, something has happened. Relative to former generations, we are locked out of the inner core. How shall we enter? Actually, every generation felt the same relative to those who preceded them. And for good reason. For reasons that are part of God's plan for history, at each transition from one generation to the next, a traumatic *shevirat ha'kelim* (breaking of the vessels) occurred which effectively drew a line of demarcation between two different ways of perceiving the world. What was whole, became broken; what was filled with meaning, lost meaning. Those who came before had a certain wholeness, a unity of perception, a higher consciousness. The trauma of each subsequent generation was/is that it loses its connection with what was meaningful to the last generation. This is called *hit'katnut ha'dorot* (the diminishing of the generations). This is also why it was so vitally important for each generation to transmit its experiences orally and in writing to the following generation in a way that could make itself heard even after the break had occurred. This is the importance of such key phrases as "Generation to generation will praise Your deeds..." (Psalm 145:4; see our in-depth commentary there).

This *hit'katnut* is usually understood as a negative phenomenon. This is

^{viii} According to our sources, King David himself had a near-death experience. See our in-depth commentary on Psalm 23.

^{ix} *Shabbat* 105a.

understandable. The farther away from the Garden of Eden, the farther away from Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaacov, the farther away from the Exodus and from Sinai, the farther away from the 1st Temple and the 2nd Temple (and there was a major break after every one of these), the greater the distance between us and the meaning our ancestors felt and experienced and lived.

Now we can understand why Hashem commanded His prophets to commit their messages to writing. Here, no matter how far away we are from the actual events in time and in space, we are close in spirit, in consciousness, in our inner worlds. The words of a psalm can open up to us. We can taste its essence. We can see and feel its words move, come alive, dance, and give forth meaning never-before revealed.

Can dead bones/words come alive?! Can the words of an ancient book come alive? Can meaning begin to flow from these words like water from flintstone? Can the heart of stone begin to beat again and feel God's presence, close, closer than ever before?! Until the Spirit in the words begins to whisper Its secrets...

Introduction

A word of caution: This Introduction contains important ideas that will deepen your appreciation of the Psalms. It is, however, very long—much too long to be read in one sitting without getting utterly exhausted. It is, after all, the product of years of work. In view of this, it is therefore recommended **not** to try to read it all at once. On the contrary, it might be wiser for most readers to go straight to the actual text of the Psalms—and then return.

I. The Five Books of Torah and Psalms

For everything that Moses did in his life, we find that David did something correspondingly analogous... Moses gave Israel Five Books of Torah. David gave Israel Five Books of Psalms.¹

The 150 chapters of the Book of Psalms are traditionally divided into five sections or books. These “Five Books of Psalms” correspond to the “Five Books of Moses” (the Torah). This division dates back thousands of years and is intentional.

Books of Torah	Books of Psalms	
1. Genesis	1. Psalms 1-41	(41 psalms)
2. Exodus	2. Psalms 42-72	(31 psalms)
3. Leviticus	3. Psalms 73-89	(17 psalms)
4. Numbers	4. Psalms 90-106	(17 psalms)
5. Deuteronomy	5. Psalms 107-150	(44 psalms)

Exploring Jewish tradition for other places where the number five plays a significant role, we can get an insight into why both the Torah and the Psalms are divided into five books.

One of the best analogies of the relationship between God and the world is that of the soul and the body. In a sense, we can call God the “Soul” of the universe. Of course, the analogy is far from exact, since God cannot be compared to anything in His creation. But it does serve the useful purpose of further clarifying His relationship to the world.

For example, we are told: Just as the soul fills the body, so God fills the world. Just as the soul sees and is unseen, so God sees and is unseen. Just as the soul dwells in the innermost chamber, so God dwells in the innermost chamber...²

The Midrash and Kabbalah³ speak of five levels of soul. From the highest level of the soul rooted in God’s Oneness to the lowest aspect of the soul residing in the physical organism (specifically the blood), these five levels are called: *yechidah* (unity), *chayah* (life-force), *neshamah* (divine soul), *ruach* (vital spirit), and *nefesh* (indwelling soul). The Zohar⁴ explains that we are all born with the lowest level of soul, *nefesh* (or *nefesh* of *nefesh*). It is only when we struggle to “refine” our *nefesh*, which includes our purely physical needs, drives, and instincts, that we are able to access and embody the higher levels of the soul, and attain

¹ *Midrash Shochar Tov*, Psalm 1 (end of paragraph 2 in Buber’s version called *Midrash Tehillim*).

² See *Midrash Shochar Tov*, Psalm 103:4; *Berakhot* 10a, *Vayikra Rabbah* 4:8; *Devarim Rabbah* 2:26; *Pirkey d’Rebbe Eliezer* 34; *Tikuney Zohar* 13 (28a); *Shomer Emunim (haKadmon)* 2:9-11.

³ *Bereshit Rabbah* 14:9; *Devarim Rabbah* 2:9; *Shaar haGilgulim* 1; *Ramchal, Derekh Hashem* 3:1:4.

⁴ *Zohar* 2:94b.

correspondingly greater closeness and consciousness of God. These five levels are thus like a ladder upon which to climb to ever higher levels of God-consciousness.

These five levels, in turn, parallel five general stages in the mega-system of universes that God brought into existence (and continues to sustain) for the purpose of relating to man. Beginning with the highest level, these five universes are called: *Adam Kadmon* (primordial man), *Atzilut* (emanation), *Beriah* (creation), *Yetzirah* (formation), and *Asiyah* (completion). Each of these stages involves a greater constriction and diminution of His light, resulting in the possibility of greater concealment of and separation from the Divine at every successive stage. This process culminates in the physical universe, the environment which is characterized by the greatest concealment of God's light. Finally, in the physical universe, God's presence is all but completely undetectable, and human beings are almost completely oblivious to God.

These five stages parallel the four letters of the Sacred Four-Letter Name, *YHVH* [that is, *Yod*, *Heh*, *Vav* and *Heh*, but pronounced *Yod-Keh-Vav-Keh* or *Havayah* (Eternal Being), or *Hashem* (the Name)], plus a fifth, hidden level, the apex of the first letter *Yod* (which corresponds to *yechidah*-unity).

Five Levels of the Soul	Five Universes	Havayah
<i>Yechidah</i> / Unity	<i>Adam Kadmon</i>	Apex of <i>Yod</i>
<i>Chayah</i> / Life-force	<i>Atzilut</i>	<i>Yod</i>
<i>Neshamah</i> / Divine Soul	<i>Beriah</i>	<i>Heh</i>
<i>Ruach</i> / Vital Spirit	<i>Yetzirah</i>	<i>Vav</i>
<i>Nefesh</i> / Indwelling Soul	<i>Asiyah</i>	<i>Heh</i>

Below, we shall uncover some of the meanings of this Divine Name. In the meantime, note again that these five stages parallel the four levels of the Name, *YHVH*, plus the fifth, hidden level, the apex of the first letter *Yod*. This is why the Supernal Torah—the Divine Teaching that God bestows upon mankind from above—is called *Torat YHVH* (the Torah of Hashem).

We will now explore these correspondences more fully.

II. God's Torah and Man's Torah

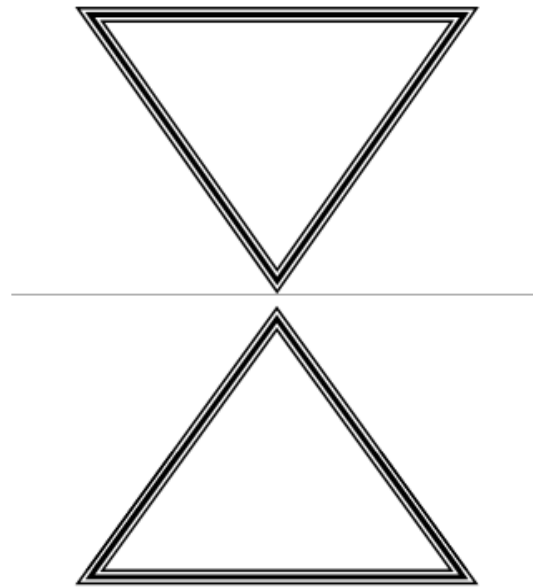
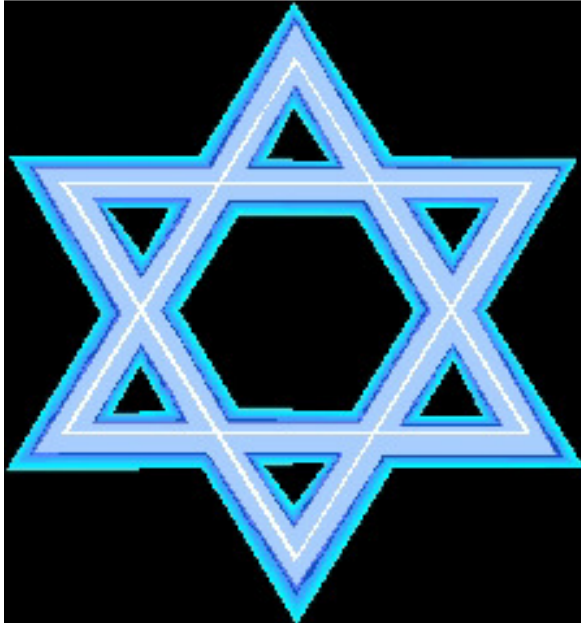
The Torah is God's teaching to humanity (human unity). It is not just for the Jewish people, but for humanity, via the Jewish people. In this sense, the Jewish people are the guardians of the prophetic spirit of the Torah that will eventually become universally accessible to all mankind.

The word *Torah* means instruction. It derives from the same root as *orah* (the source for the English *aura*), meaning light. *Torah* is spiritual light, i.e., it is the ancient word for spiritual illumination. Torah reveals God's Will, the purpose for which He created the world, and humanity in it.

The relationship is always God "above" and man "below." God bestows wisdom and light from above, while man's soul awakens from below to recognize and lift himself up towards the Source of light. In exactly the same way, God bestows Torah from above in the spiritual dimension that towers over and encompasses our little world, while the prayer must originate from within the human heart below.

This is the secret of the *Magen David*, the Six-Pointed Shield of David. As below in the right column, the upper triangle (God, Torah, heavenly light) descends from above to meet the lower triangle (man, prayer, earthly physicality) rising up from below. Together they then

create a unified whole that is greater than the sum total of both their individual parts. For although the *Magen David* has six points, its newly created heart-center embodies the concept of seven.⁵



God from above and man from below. God bestows Torah and light from above, and we respond with heartfelt prayer from below. Again, this is why the Five Books of the Psalms parallel the Five Books of the Torah. For the very content of the Psalms is a recasting of Torah into prayer. Just as God calls to man in the Torah, man calls to God in the Psalms.

The Psalms of David are the beams of God's light reflected and refracted through the prism of the human soul. David's prayer is thus the quintessential expression of Torah entering into and then emerging from the human heart. In the Psalms, David internalizes, restates, and reaffirms the Godly teaching. He then turns it back to God, saying, "We want what You want!"

In the first Psalm, David thus wrote: "Happy is the man who sees through the façade of this world... His desire is rather in the mysteries of *Torat YHVH* [Hashem's Torah]; *be'Torato* [in His Torah] he meditates day and night [thus acquiring it as his own for all eternity]" (Psalm 1:1-2).

Hashem's Torah is the Godly Plan, the Supernal Torah or Blueprint, not only of the entire physical cosmos, but of all the dimensions of our inter-dimensional universe, seen and unseen, physical and spiritual. This is implied in the expression *Torat YHVH* (*Yod, Heh, Vav,*

⁵ The number 6 can be said to represent the natural world that was created in 6 days (time) with its 6 spatial directions (east-west, north-south, up-down). The number 7 represents Hashem's immanence, the hidden presence of the Divine at the heart and core of this world. In other words, 7 is the very soul of the 6. With the power of 7, heaven thus permeates the 6 of earthly physicality, instilling it with holiness, in order to elevate it to its highest perfection. As we shall see in Psalms 6, 12, 19, and 119, relative to the permeating immanence of 7, the number 8 represents Hashem's utter transcendence—above and beyond this world. As in music, 8 is the beginning of a new octave.

The relationship between these three sacred numbers (and the concepts they embody) is made clear in the Torah. Numerous commandments in the Torah involve the number 7, which is nothing less than our ability to internalize and bring into our lives those deep lessons that Hashem has taught us when He has lifted us up above the limited confines of the 6-7 of spacetime to view the infinite 8 (∞) of Eternity.

and *Heh*), wherein each letter of the Ineffable Name represents another level of the mega-system of universes we call our world. Although this Supernal Torah is known only to God, He has revealed parts of it in divine inspiration to His chosen ones, from Adam to our day. The totality of this Torah will be revealed in the Messianic Age.

The Baal Shem Tov referred to this idea many times in connection with the verse, "The Torah of YHVH is complete, it restores the soul" (Psalm 19:8). Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl, a close disciple of the Baal Shem Tov, thus wrote in the name of his master:⁶

God's infinite light is clothed within the external garb of the Torah. This light, which is hidden in the Torah, is called *ayin* (no-thing-ness), for it is impossible for any created being to grasp it. It is beyond human comprehension because it is identified with the Blessed Creator Himself who is the Source from which the Torah emanates, such that He and the Torah are One...

It is for this reason that the inner light of the Torah is also called *Torat YKVK* [for it is forever one with its Source]. Regarding this, my master, the holy Baal Shem Tov taught, "The concealed light is still complete, whole, and untouched. [Despite the achievements of all the great teachers of our people who have never stopped revealing the most profound secrets of creation via the Torah] no man in the entire history of the world has even begun to touch upon an infinitesimal part of this great light, as it is written, 'the Torah of YHVH is complete, it restores the soul.'"

III. God and Man

(2) His desire is rather in the mysteries of <i>Torat YHVH</i> [Hashem's Torah]; <i>beTorato</i> [in His Torah] he meditates day and night [thus acquiring it as his own for all eternity].	(ב) כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה חִפְצוֹ וּבְתוֹרַתוֹ יִהְיֶה יוֹמָם וָלַיְלָה:
---	---

There is *Torat YHVH* (Hashem's Torah), and there is *Torato* (His Torah). But couldn't "His Torah" (with a capital "H" referring to God) also be "his Torah" (referring to man)? Which do we choose? Rather than missing out on the double meaning (His/his) implied in the word *Torato*, we add in brackets: [thus acquiring it as his own for all eternity]. In this way, "His Torah" (referring to the Supernal Torah) becomes "his Torah" (the Torah we acquire for ourselves by internalizing the Supernal Torah).⁷

Torat Hashem thus refers to the Supernal Torah, the infinite light with which God created the world. This light was not a physical light; it was the primeval light of the Creator Himself that was necessarily hidden in order to allow creation to exist. This light emanates continually from the infinite Source of light. It is for this reason that the Supernal Torah is limitless, and beyond our comprehension. God's desire, however, is to give us this Torah. By meditating in His Torah, we internalize it and make it our own. And that is why He *clothes* "His Torah" (the Supernal Torah) in "his Torah" (the stories of the lives of human beings). For "his Torah" **is** "His Torah." Human "history" **is** "His Story." For when we begin to meditate on the Torah and make it ours, we begin to see God's Story revealed in and through our very human lives.

Now we can understand that *Torat Hashem* also refers to the Five Books of Moses, while "his Torah" refers to the Five Books of the Psalms of David. The purpose of the Psalms is to

⁶ Meor Eynayim, parashat Chukat, p. 105a; quoted in Sefer Baal Shem Tov al HaTorah, Bereshit §34, note #27; Vaet'chanan §29.

⁷ Rashi, *ibid.*; Kiddushin 32b top, s.v. *ubeTorato yehegeh*.

teach us how to draw the Supernal Torah down into our earthly existence, how to internalize the light of consciousness in our thinking, speech, feelings, and actions. First we must realize and know that our world exists within the greater context of a wondrous multi-dimensional universe, vaster than anything we can imagine, governed, guided, and overseen by the Infinite Creator Himself. We (our souls) come from the highest dimensions wherein the light and presence of the Infinite One is very much more revealed than down here. Knowing this, we can then begin to reconnect to the higher destiny for which we have all been born at this time. We can amplify consciousness of our true Selves, and return and reconnect to our Source. Then we can begin reaching our full stature as human beings, and draw down (even now) the Torah of YKVK, the Supernal Torah that will only be fully revealed with the advent of the Messianic Age.

IV. Psalms and the Power of Prayer

In the Psalms, David turned God's Torah into exalted prayer. Never underestimate the power of prayer. Prayer can have dramatic effects. It can change the course of human affairs. Adam and Chavah (Eve), Avraham and Sarah, Yitzchak (Isaac) and Rivka (Rebecca), Yaacov (Jacob) and Rachel and Leah, Yoseph and Asnat, Moshe (Moses) and Zipporah, Yehoshua (Joshua), Shmuel (Samuel), David, Shlomo (Solomon), Eliyahu (Elijah), Elisha, Yeshaya (Isaiah), Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah), Yechezkel (Ezekiel), Daniel, Mordechai, Esther—all of them prayed. And what was the content of their prayer? They took God's Torah, and turned it into prayer.

First they internalized Torah, allowing its light to shine into their hearts and awaken their souls, thereby transforming mundane existence into divine mission. And while they were impelled to share the light and proclaim its truth publicly to all those around them, and even to inscribe it in writing for posterity, in private, they also prayed. What was their prayer? It was words, but it went far beyond words. For they used the words and letters of the Sacred Tongue to transcend conscious thought, and to soar beyond the time and space of this world. Penetrating into the *Heikhalot* (Palaces) of the spiritual dimension, they walked and talked with angelic beings and learned the Torah as it is learned in the heavenly realms.

In addition, they were often shown glimpses not only of the future, but of all time, past, present, and future. When they returned, they were permitted to communicate just a fraction of what they saw. Having tasted eternity, they prayed and yearned to bring back more of its joy, its hope, and its light; to share it with their fellows and leave behind some trace of it for generations to come. They prayed to become conduits of its light; to align themselves with the Godly Will. More than that, they basked in the light, felt God's love for them and for all His creations. They felt their pain, the pain of being human, transformed in the light. They not only prayed God's Torah back to Him. They became prayer. They melted in God. They died, only to come back to life completely renewed and transformed.

V. Ten Types of Song

We read in the Midrash (*Shochar Tov*, also known as *Midrash Tehillim*):⁸

The Psalms contain ten [archetypal] types of song/praise: 1) *Nitzuach*, 2) *Nigun*, 3) *Mizmor*, 4) *Shir*, 5) *Hallel*, 6) *Tefillah*, 7) *Berakhah*, 8) *Hodaah*, 9) *HalleluYah*, 10) *Ashrei*. And the greatest of all of them is *HalleluYah*, for it includes God's Name (*Yah*) and His Praise (*Hallel*) in one word. Rav called the entire book of Psalms *HalleluYah*.

In the Talmud, we have a slightly different listing:⁹

⁸ *Midrash Shochar Tov*, Psalm 1; *Midrash Tehillim* 1:6 end.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: The Psalms were composed using ten [archetypal] expressions of song/praise: 1) *Nitzuach*, 2) *Nigun*, 3) *Maskil*, 4) *Mizmor*, 5) *Shir*, 6) *Ashrei*, 7) *Tehillah*, 8) *Tefillah*, 9) *Hodaah*, 10) *HalleluYah*. And the greatest of all of them is *HalleluYah*, for it includes God's Name (*Yah*) and His Praise (*Hallel*) in one word.

King David began each psalm with a "superscription," a kind of headline that tells us something about the essence and purpose of a psalm. Some of these superscriptions are short, some are longer. The most recurrent superscription, *LaMenatzeyach* (pronounced la-men-a-tzei-ach), which we often translate "Dedicated to the Orchestra Leader [of Creation] who grants eternal victory," stands at the head of 55 psalms. After that, *Mizmor LeDavid* (or *LeDavid Mizmor*), "A Cutting-psalm by David," heads 36 psalms. [Of these 36, 23 are part of longer superscriptions in which the title *LaMenatzeyach* appears.] The word *Maskil*, "To teach wisdom," is part of the superscription of 14 psalms. *Shir HaMaalot*, "A Song of Ascents," heads 14 psalms. *HalleluYah*, "Praise God!" heads 10 psalms.

Main Recurring Superscriptions in Psalms

LaMenatzeyach = 55

Mizmor LeDavid (29), *LeDavid Mizmor* (7) = 36

Shir HaMaalot (14), *Shir LaMaalot* (1) = 15

Maskil = 14

HalleluYah = 10

Other superscriptions appear either as single words or in varying intriguing combinations with each other. Some of these are: *Ashrei*, *Shir*, *Mizmor*, *Tefillah*, *Mikhtam*, *Neginot*, *Barkhi Nafshi*, *Mizmor LeTodah*, *Ranenu Tzadikim*. In whatever form or combination they appear, these superscriptions tell us something important about the respective psalms at whose head they stand. In general, they are expressions of joy, thanks, hope, self-reflection, and most importantly, song.

Torah sources (Talmud, *Zohar*, and *Tikuney Zohar*) consolidate all these different superscriptions into ten basic categories, and call them "the ten archetypal types of song." According to the *Tikuney Zohar*, these ten are:¹⁰

Song	Meaning
1. <i>Ashrei</i>	Happiness, Insight
2. <i>Shir</i>	Joyous Song, Elevation
3. <i>Berakhah</i> (<i>Barkhi Nafshi</i>)	Blessing, Drawing down sustenance, Revelation
4. <i>Zemer</i> (<i>Mizmor</i>)	Cutting-song, Breaking through barriers
5. <i>Neginah</i> (<i>Bin'ginot</i>)	Soaring Melody
6. <i>HalleluYah</i>	Praise <i>Yah</i> (God), Radiating thanks and joy
7. <i>Nitzuach</i> (<i>LaMenatzeyach</i>)	Touching Eternity, Victory, Unity in multiplicity
8. <i>Hodaah</i> (<i>Hodu</i>)	Thanksgiving, Admitting the truth, Testifying
9. <i>Rinah</i> (<i>Ranenu</i>)	Joyous song, Crying out
10. <i>Tefillah</i>	Prayer, Self-evaluation

In another place, the *Zohar* lists them in slightly order, this time identifying them with their corresponding *sefirah*:¹¹

⁹ *Pesachim* 117a. See also *Yerushalmi Succah* 3:10.

¹⁰ *Tikuney Zohar*, *tikun* 13.

¹¹ *Zohar* 3:223b. We will speak more of the *sefirot* below; see below Section VIII, "The Sefirot and the Divine Names."

Song	Sefirah	
1. <i>Ashrei</i>	<i>Keter</i>	Crown
2. <i>Shir</i>	<i>Chokhmah</i>	Wisdom
3. <i>Berakhah</i>	<i>Binah</i>	Understanding
4. <i>Neginah</i>	<i>Chesed</i>	Lovingkindness
5. <i>Zemer</i>	<i>Gevurah</i>	Power / Restraint
6. <i>HalleluYah</i>	<i>Tiferet</i>	Beauty / Harmony
7. <i>Nitzuach</i>	<i>Netzach</i>	Victory / Eternity
8. <i>Hodaah</i>	<i>Hod</i>	Majesty / Thankfulness
9. <i>Rinah</i>	<i>Yesod</i>	Foundation Channel
10. <i>Tehillah</i>	<i>Malkhut</i>	Kingship

In yet another place the *Zohar* lists these ten types of song in a slightly different order and makes two substitutions: *Maskil* (A Wisdom psalm, to contemplate and understand life's lessons); *Mikhtam* (A Precious psalm, to be constantly reviewed for the lessons its contains): This fourth order is thus: 1) *Nitzuach*, 2) *Neginah*, 3) *Maskil*, 4) *Mikhtam*, 5) *Zemer*, 6) *Shir*, 7) *Ashrei*, 8) *Tefillah*, 9) *Hodaah*, 10) *HalleluYah*.¹²

Whatever their order (and whatever their variations), the great chassidic Master, Rebbe Nachman of Breslov (1772-1810), understood something very deep about these different types of song. Indeed, from Heaven it was revealed to him that each of them corresponds to and is directed at correcting and healing a different human frailty or lack.

1. Ashrei

Ashrei, for instance, which is usually translated "happy," also connotes vision and perception. We know this because the main consonants of the word *aShRei* are identical to the Hebrew root *ShuR* which means to see and perceive. Rebbe Nachman derives an important lesson from this: It is only when we fail to perceive the Unity that underlies the apparent diversity of the world that we fall into despondency. When we are blind to the way in which all things point to a common source and purpose, we inevitably become disconnected from that Source. Conversely, true happiness and joy derives from correcting our faulty vision and achieving a shift in perception which enables us to understand the true nature of the world and our purpose in it.

2. Shir

This, in turn, leads to *ShiR*, song, the song we sing when we have come out of the dark night of doubt and uncertainty into the daylight of clear vision and connectedness to our purpose. For what greater joy is there than having overcome some great difficulty in our lives, of having been tested, of having suffered, and being the better for it? There is no greater joy! *Ashrei* thus leads to *Shir*, ultimately, the song of all that is alive to the hidden Source of Life.

3. Maskil

The word *Maskil* means wise. It appears in the superscription to 14 psalms. Psalm 32, for instance, begins *LeDavid Maskil*, "A song of David to teach wisdom." Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, 1040-1105) cites a tradition which states that psalms beginning with this expression were taught with the aid of an interpreter; someone who would not only translate the words of the master but make the deeper ideas that he was communicating accessible and meaningful to all present.

¹² *Zohar* 3:101a.

150 Superscriptions

1. Ashrei HaIsh
2. Lamah
3. Mizmor LeDavid
4. LaMenatzeyach Bin'ginot Mizmor LeDavid
5. LaMenatzeyach El HaNechilot Mizmor LeDavid
6. LaMenatzeyach Bin'ginot Al HaSheminit Mizmor LeDavid
7. Shigayon LeDavid
8. LaMenatzeyach Al HaGitit Mizmor LeDavid
9. LaMenatzeyach Al Mut Laben Mizmor LeDavid
10. Lamah Hashem
11. LaMenatzeyach LeDavid
12. LaMenatzeyach Al HaSheminit Mizmor LeDavid
13. LaMenatzeyach Mizmor LeDavid
14. LaMenatzeyach LeDavid
15. Mizmor LeDavid
16. Mikhtam LeDavid
17. Tefillah LeDavid
18. LaMenatzeyach LeEved Hashem LeDavid
19. LaMenatzeyach Mizmor LeDavid
20. LaMenatzeyach Mizmor LeDavid
21. LaMenatzeyach Mizmor LeDavid
22. LaMenatzeyach Al Ayelet HaShachar Mizmor LeDavid
23. Mizmor LeDavid
24. LeDavid Mizmor
25. LeDavid
26. LeDavid
27. LeDavid
28. LeDavid
29. Mizmor LeDavid
30. Mizmor Shir Chanukat HaBayit LeDavid
31. LaMenatzeyach Mizmor LeDavid
32. LeDavid Maskil
33. Rannenu
34. LeDavid
35. LeDavid
36. LaMenatzeyach LeEved Hashem LeDavid
37. LeDavid
38. Mizmor LeDavid LeHazzkir
39. LaMenatzeyach LiYedutun Mizmor LeDavid
40. LaMenatzeyach LeDavid Mizmor
41. LaMenatzeyach Mizmor LeDavid Ashrei Maskil
42. LaMenatzeyach Maskil LiBnei Korach
43. Shofteni Elohim
44. LaMenatzeyach LiBnei Korach Maskil
45. LaMenatzeyach Al Shoshanim LiBnei Korach Maskil Shir Yedidot
46. LaMenatzeyach LiBnei Korach Al Alamot Shir
47. LaMenatzeyach LiBnei Korach Mizmor
48. Shir Mizmor LiBnei Korach
49. LaMenatzeyach LiBnei Korach Mizmor
50. Mizmor LeAsaph
51. LaMenatzeyach Mizmor LeDavid
52. LaMenatzeyach Maskil LeDavid
53. LaMenatzeyach Al Machlat Maskil LeDavid
54. LaMenatzeyach Bin'ginot Maskil LeDavid
55. LaMenatzeyach Bin'ginot Maskil LeDavid
56. LaMenatzeyach Al Yonat Elem Rechokim LeDavid Mikhtam
57. LaMenatzeyach Al Tash'chet LeDavid Mikhtam
58. LaMenatzeyach Al Tash'chet LeDavid Mikhtam
59. LaMenatzeyach Al Tash'chet LeDavid Mikhtam
60. LaMenatzeyach Al Shushan Edut Mikhtam LeDavid LeLamed
61. LaMenatzeyach Al Neginat LeDavid
62. LaMenatzeyach Al Yedutun Mizmor LeDavid
63. Mizmor LeDavid
64. LaMenatzeyach Mizmor LeDavid
65. LaMenatzeyach Mizmor LeDavid Shir
66. LaMenatzeyach Shir Mizmor
67. LaMenatzeyach Bin'ginot Mizmor Shir
68. LaMenatzeyach LeDavid Mizmor Shir
69. LaMenatzeyach Al Shoshanim LeDavid
70. LaMenatzeyach LeDavid LeHazzkir
71. Bekha Hashem Chasiti
72. LiShlomo
73. Mizmor LeAsaph
74. Maskil LeAsaph
75. LaMenatzeyach Al Tash'chet Mizmor LeAsaph Shir
76. LaMenatzeyach Bin'ginot Mizmor LeAsaph Shir
77. LaMenatzeyach Al Yedutun LeAsaph Mizmor
78. Maskil LeAsaph
79. Mizmor LeAsaph
80. LaMenatzeyach El Shoshanim Edut LeAsaph Mizmor
81. LaMenatzeyach Al HaGitit LeAsaph
82. Mizmor LeAsaph
83. Shir Mizmor LeAsaph
84. LaMenatzeyach Al HaGitit LiBnei Korach Mizmor
85. LaMenatzeyach LiBnei Korach Mizmor
86. Tefillah LeDavid
87. LiBnei Korach Mizmor Shir
88. Shir Mizmor LiBnei Korach LaMenatzeyach Al Machlat LeAnot Maskil LeHeman HaEzrachi
89. Maskil LeEtan HaEzrachi
90. Tefillah LeMoshe
91. Yoshev BeSeter Elyon
92. Mizmor Shir LeYom HaShabbat
93. Hashem Malakh
94. El Nekamot Hashem
95. Lekhu Neranena LaShem
96. Shiru LaShem Shir Chadash
97. Hashem Malakh
98. Mizmor Shiru LaShem Shir Chadash
99. Hashem Malakh
100. Mizmor LeTodah
101. LeDavid Mizmor
102. Tefillah Le'Ani
103. LeDavid Barkhi Nafshi
104. Barkhi Nafshi
105. Hodu LaShem Kiru BiShmo
106. HalleluYah Hodu LaShem
107. Hodu LaShem Ki Tov
108. Shir Mizmor LeDavid
109. LaMenatzeyach LeDavid Mizmor
110. LeDavid Mizmor
111. HalleluYah
112. HalleluYah
113. HalleluYah
114. BeTzet Yisrael
115. Lo Lanu Hashem
116. Ahavti
117. Hallelu Et Hashem Kol Goyim
118. Hodu LaShem Ki Tov
119. Ashrei Temimei Darekh
120. Shir HaMaalot
121. Shir LaMaalot
122. Shir HaMaalot LeDavid
123. Shir HaMaalot
124. Shir HaMaalot LeDavid
125. Shir HaMaalot
126. Shir HaMaalot
127. Shir HaMaalot LiShlomo
128. Shir HaMaalot
129. Shir HaMaalot
130. Shir HaMaalot
131. Shir HaMaalot LeDavid
132. Shir HaMaalot
133. Shir HaMaalot LeDavid
134. Shir HaMaalot
135. HalleluYah
136. Hodu LaShem Ki Tov
137. Al Naharot Bavel
138. LeDavid
139. LaMenatzeyach LeDavid Mizmor
140. LaMenatzeyach Mizmor LeDavid
141. Mizmor LeDavid
142. Maskil LeDavid
143. Mizmor LeDavid
144. LeDavid
145. Tehillah LeDavid
146. HalleluYah
147. HalleluYah
148. HalleluYah
149. HalleluYah
150. HalleluYah

Based on this, Rebbe Nachman explains that a wise person must be capable of interpreting the events of his life in a way that reveals purpose and meaning. Such a person overcomes despondency by seeing earth-life as a school in which the main lesson is to learn from our mistakes. Psalms beginning with *Maskil* were therefore taught through an interpreter in order to teach us that real wisdom depends on the ability to interpret events in terms of the hidden meanings which the concept of *Ashrei* has enabled us to perceive.

4. HalleluYah

Hallelu is the plural command "Praise!" and *Yah* is the Divine Name made up of the two letters *Yod* and *Heh* (representing the unification of the right and left hemispheres, and of mind and heart). *Hallel* (praise) is the joy and thanksgiving that bursts forth from the human heart when the force of despondency has been dispelled. In other words, Rebbe Nachman says, *HalleluYah* is the culmination of the concepts of *Ashrei*, *Shir*, and *Maskil*. It is the inner joy that comes when we are rid of frustration and are in harmony with God. Such joy leaves a lasting impression which continues to strengthen us throughout our lives.

The root of *Hallel* (and of *Tehillim*, the Hebrew word for Psalms) is *hal*. *Hal* is like the English halo. These two words not only sound alike (homonym), they mean alike (synonym). *Hal* means to radiate, shine, and reflect. *Hal* and halo both involve the concept of light.

The fact that *hal* and halo both involve the concept of light is brought out in a passage in which Job reminisces about the first nine months of his life in his mother's womb: "O that I was back in the months of old, in the days when God watched over me, when the halo/radiance (*hilo*) of His lamp (*nero*) shone over my head, and I walked through the darkness by His light" (Job 29:2-3).

According to the Talmud, the words *hilo nero* refer to the spiritual light that hovers over our heads before each of us is born, while we are still in our mother's womb: "A lamp shines over our heads with which we learn the entire Torah and see from one end of the universe to the other."¹³ The light over our heads is held by an angel, a being of light. This being teaches us who we are, what is expected of us, what our purpose and our mission is. In this sense, learning the entire Torah in the womb means that we are shown the entire blueprint of our lives. But it is no less true that we are taught the entire Torah, or at least allowed to perceive, in this embryonic, prophetic state, a glimpse of the infinite vastness and magnitude of the Supernal Torah.¹⁴ For in the womb, no effort is involved. The light merely shines "over our heads." It is for this reason that we can "see from one end of the universe to the other" [which, according to Kabbalah, does not only mean "from east to west and north to south," but from the highest point in the spiritual dimension down to the lowest point in our physical world, and from the beginning to the end of time]. Since, in the womb, we exist in a bodiless state in which our minds are not yet limited by our physical brains, we are not subject to the normal limitations of time and space.

Based on the above, we see that *Hallel*-praise can be compared to the exquisitely subtle glow that surrounds the incandescent flame of a candle like a halo.

¹³ *Niddah* 30b.

¹⁴ Rebbe Nachman of Breslov writes: "Before a person is born, he is taught all that he must work towards and accomplish throughout the course of his lifetime. The moment he enters the world, he forgets this entire body of knowledge. His mission in life is to seek what he lost" (*Likutey Moharan* 1:188; see also Rabbi Yitzchak Izik Chaver, *Pit'chey She'arim*, *Netiv Partzuf Zeir Anpin*, *petach* 23, Friedlander edition, part II, pp. 23a-23b; Kessin edition, volume II, p. 83).

Candle Meditation

Light a candle. Gaze at the wick. Note that the part of the wick closest to the wax or paraffin remains white, while the part that is surrounded by the flame is blackened, and the tip is a hot fiery reddish-yellow. Take a good long look at the flame. Here too there are three (or four) parts. First, at the bottom of flame, we have a cool bluish fire that clings to the wick and blackens it. Next, if you look just a little higher up, you can distinguish a dark region within the flame that itself is surrounded on its sides and above by the incandescent part of the flame. This incandescent area is, by far, the most beautiful and hypnotic part of the flame to look at. Indeed, it is the most important part of the flame to contemplate. Here, physical light borders on the spiritual. [It should come as no surprise that the wick of a candle corresponds to the physical body while the flame corresponds to the divine soul.] Finally, the fourth part of the flame (which is really not part of the flame proper) is its glow, the halo that emanates or radiates the intense light of the flame outward. In a dark room, this halo can be seen to extend for quite a distance away from the flame in all directions before it is "swallowed" in darkness.

Based on this Candle Meditation, we can now try to understand the conceptual connection between the *hilo* (halo) of a flame and the *hallel* (praise) that wells up in the human heart in response to an unusually intense positive experience (like being saved from danger or illness, etc.). This is brought out in Psalm 34:

About David, when he acted insane in the presence of Avimelech, who then drove him away. And David departed: From now on I will bless *Hashem* at all times. ***My mouth will constantly be filled with His praise!*** O my soul, glory in your closeness to *Hashem*; even the humble will rejoice when they hear this. Make *Hashem's* greatness known with me; let us acknowledge the exaltedness of His Name together. For I sought *Hashem*, and He answered me; He rescued me from all that I feared (Psalm 34:1-5).

Here, King David promises that he will declare his praise for God for the rest of his life in gratitude for miraculously escaping from Avimelekh (Achish), king of Gat (the main Philistine city in Gaza), after having been forced to take refuge there in order to escape being caught by Shaul's men.

HalleluYah! My soul, praise *Hashem*! I will praise *Hashem* with my life; I will sing to my God with my very being (Psalm 146:1).

Here, not connected with any particular event in his life, but filled with thanks for just being alive, he calls upon his soul to praise God with every fiber of his being.

In both these cases, we see that praise involves radiating and reflecting praise back to God, the Source of our life, the Source of All Existence. This connection is brought out by Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) in a number of places.

In Exodus 15:11, Hirsch writes, "*Tehillah* (praise) is the word in which the rays of the acts of God are reflected, hence, words celebrating in song the deeds of God."

On the verse, "You righteous, be ecstatic in Hashem. You upright, it befits you to reflect *tehillah* (praise and thanks)" (Psalm 33:1), he writes: "*Tehillah*, derived from *hallel*, literally 'reflect,' portrays the acts and works of God as 'emanations' or 'rays' which call to mind the existence and sovereignty of the Lord even as the rays of the sun proclaim the existence and efficacy of that heavenly body."

On the verse, "God is great everywhere, *u'mehullal me'od* (but His radiance shines exceedingly) in the City of our God, and even more so on the Mount of His Holy Presence" (Psalm 48:1), he

writes: “*Mehullal*—He is visible in His acts, which form His *hallel* (emanations), and make Him clearly apparent to any thinking mortal, just as the existence, presence, and effect of light is manifested by radiance, emanation and brightness.”

Reflecting God’s Light

Making use of the idea that *Hallel* involves the act of reflecting, we gain a new insight into how seemingly inanimate objects can “praise” God. In Psalm 148, King David sings:

HalleluYah! Hallelu—praise *Hashem* from the highest heavens; *hallelu*—reflect Him in the celestial heights. *Hallelu*—praise Him all His angelic messengers; *hallelu*—reflect Him all His hosts. *Hallelu*—praise Him sun and moon; *hallelu*—reflect Him all illuminated planets. *Hallelu*—praise Him upper stratospheres, and the waters that rise up to the heights of the earth’s atmosphere. *Ye’hallelu*—let them praise [and reflect] the Name of *YHVH*; for at His command, they were all created from nothing.

Over and over again, King David calls out *Hallelu* – Praise! To each and every level of existence, from the highest heavens to the atmosphere that surrounds and protects the delicate balance of life on our precious planet Earth, he calls out *Hallelu*! First, radiate praise back to the One who made you. Never stop praising Him for the gift of existing. Second, in faithfully fulfilling your assignments, in whatever capacity that may be, reflect and radiate the wondrous wisdom with which He created you and continues to maintain you. In the verses that follow these, David continues calling on every level of earth existence as well, down to the fundamental elements of physical reality (*domem*, inanimate). From there he starts coming back up again, calling on *tzomeyach* (all aspects of vegetation and plant life), *chai* (the animal kingdom), and *medaber* (mankind; the different rungs of human society). Finally he calls to Israel, the nation that is not only close to HaShem, but which closes the entire circle by drawing all creation close to Him.

From the highest heavens to the lowest nadir of earth existence—in every detail and nuance of creation—David perceives God’s presence and His providence. For him the universe is a Sacred Courtroom in which each and every creature in the world testifies to the existence of the One who created it and constantly gives it life. Because he sees Unity behind the incredible diversity of creation, David understands that the very existence of each creature, its inner makeup and design, is incontrovertible evidence of the existence of the One who made it.

Like a symphony orchestra leader, David calls on each detail of creation to “play its part,” to praise God by reflecting His light in a way that only it can do, thereby attesting to its special function in the symphony of creation. For how does a star praise God? One possible answer is that the angelic power that rules it can literally praise and sing to its Creator.¹⁵ In addition to this, however, a star can praise God by attesting to His Guiding Hand in the precision handiwork of its own existence. Then, joining together in orchestration with every other detail of creation, it can attest to its Creator by the sheer awesomeness of the unity of all creation. When we then glimpse this unity, the Unity of the One behind all creation is revealed in all its magnificence.

¹⁵ Ramchal (1707-1747) wrote: “Although the celestial spheres [galaxies] and stars are material bodies, they have within them a soul that animates them and binds them to their spiritual root. In the language of our Masters, this level of soul that is clothed within material reality is called *nefesh*, or the *sefirot* of *Asiyah*...” (Ramchal, *Adir BaMarom*, p. 235 in Friedlander edition, Bnei Brak 1990). The *Tzemach Tzedek* wrote: “For it is known that the sun is made of body/matter and soul/spirit, namely, the physical orb of the sun is its body, while the angelic consciousness that enlivens it is its soul” (Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, *Derekh Mitzvotekha*, *Mitzvat Milah*, p. 5a).

Thus, separately and collectively, all phenomena point to the existence of the *Melekh HaOlam*, the King of the universe whose existence is both hidden and revealed in His universe.

Tehillah as radiating praise is directed to God. *Tehillah* as reflection is the subtle praise each creature gives to its Creator by merely performing its role. For us humans, this implies that the act of praising God with *tehillah* involves radiating our thanks to Him for all He has given us. It is like a "reflected light" which is directed back to the source from which it came like the light of the sun is reflected and returned by the moon.

According to this, God planted a very deep need in us: the need to repay Him (in some small measure) for all He has done for us. But, as King David says: "How can I repay God for all His kindnesses to me?" His answer is, "I will raise up [my overflowing heart like] a cup of salvations [for all the times He has delivered us], and call out in Hashem's name [for the final redemption which is yet to come]" (Psalm 116:12-13). Yes, the cup that David offered God was his heart. It was also the entire Book of Psalms. As above, the Five Books of Psalms parallel the Five Books of the Torah; the former is a response to the latter. As the author of Psalms, David became the embodiment of the concept of the *Shekhinah* (the Indwelling Presence of God) as well as of the Moon, both of which are called "Reflected Light." David taught us that we can never exhaust our praises and our thanks to the One who created us.

Halo and Aura

Based on the Hebrew root *hal* (*heh-lamed*), we mentioned the special relationship between *hilo* and halo. A similar relationship exists between two other words. The English aura is a synonym and a homonym of the Hebrew words *Torah* and *or*, both meaning "light." In fact, all these terms refer to light that "shines" and "radiates." The difference is that *or* is like the bright sunlight of day. *Or* dispels darkness. In the *or* of day, the *hal* of night is eclipsed like a candle in the midday sun. *Hal*, on the other hand, is like the moonlight that "shines" in the dark, but does not dispel the darkness. *Hal* can only be seen and appreciated in the dark.

Again, this is reflected in the words *Torah* (*or*) and *Tehillim* (*hal*). We saw that the Torah of YHVH is the Godly light that shines down into our world from above. The *Tehillim*-Psalms of David are the beams of that Godly light reflected and refracted through the prism of the human heart [i.e., refracted to us and reflected back to God]. As the author of Psalms, David is the heart that longs for its Beloved, whose sole desire is to unite with the Infinite of which it is a part. He is the Soul that descended into the exile of this world in order to elevate and bring all creation back to its Source. He is the light of the moon, the candle of God that will not go out in the night, the halo of holiness that radiates light even when darkness tries to smother it, the Messiah-Redeemer who will bring the entire world back to God.

5. Nitzuach

As mentioned, the superscription *LaMenatzeyach* (pronounced la-men-a-tzei-yach) heads 55 out of a total of 150 psalms, over one-third of the Book of Psalms. A *Menatzeyach* is a conductor. *LaMenatzeyach* is therefore usually translated "To the Chief Musician," "For the Choirmaster," "For the Conductor." As such, the superscription *LaMenatzeyach* can be seen as a musical direction to the precentor or leader of the Temple choir.

On a deeper level, *Nitzuach* or the verb *le'natzeyach* actually means "to be victorious," "to overcome," or "to command." Accordingly, the *Menatzeyach* is the Orchestra Leader, the Maestro, the man who orchestrates all the individual instruments and voices under his command and transforms them into a symphonic whole, a tightly bound organization, a single unified "body" that pulses to the same beat.

But this definition itself leads us to the conclusion that: the ultimate *Menatzeyach* is God Himself. This is why Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch consistently renders *LaMenatzeyach* as "To the One who grants victory."

Netzach also means "eternal," in which case *LaMenatzeyach* can be rendered "To the Eternal One who grants victory" or "To the One who grants eternal victory." Tying all the various meanings together might yield, "To the Orchestra Leader of Creation who grants eternal victory."

The Midrash goes one step further and sees yet another meaning implied in the word *LaMenatzeyach*:

LaMenatzeyach—to He to whom *netzach* (eternity) belongs. *LaMenatzeyach*—to He who bestows *netzach* (victory) to His children. *LaMenatzeyach*—to He who wishes to be *nitzuach* (overcome, prevailed upon) by His children!¹⁶

The Talmud takes this last explanation one step further:¹⁷

R. Cahana said in the name of R. Yishmael the son of R. Yossi: What is the meaning of the phrase, "*LaMenatzeyach bingiot mizmor*"? It means that we should sing joyous melodies to the One who rejoices when we 'overcome' Him (*menatzchim oto*)!

Come and see. The Holy One blessed-be-He is not like a human being of flesh and blood. When you "overcome" or "prevail over" a human being, he is dejected [for he has been defeated]. Not so the Holy One, for the more you "prevail" over Him, the happier He is! This is the meaning of, "[God] thought to destroy them had not Moshe—His chosen one—stood in the breach before Him, to turn His wrath back from destruction" (Psalm 106:23).

Rashi: We see that Moshe is praised as Hashem's chosen precisely because he was able to turn His wrath back. This shows that Hashem actually rejoices when His creations "prevail" over Him.

6-7. Mizmor: the Power of Song – Nigun: the Power of Melody

The simple meaning of the word *mizmor* is "psalm" or "song," but the root *zamer* also means "cutting" or "pruning," as in "*tizmor karmekha*—prune your vine" (Leviticus 25:5). When we sing the *Mizmorim*-Psalms of King David, we are attempting to cut away the emotional barriers that prevent us from seeing God in His world.

At first sight, "singing" and "cutting" do not seem to have much in common. What does one have to do with other? Is there some inner connection between them? The answer lies in numerous verses scattered throughout the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings of the Bible (*Tanakh*) in which the root *zamer* appears. In many cases, this word means not just singing or cutting, but a wonderful combination of both.

Rabbi Yoseph Gikatilia (1248-1305), author of the Kabbalistic classic, *Shaarey Orah* (Gates of Light), explains that the closer a person wants to come to God, the more difficult it becomes. Before his prayers are able to enter the heavenly gates, many obstacles must be overcome.¹⁸

¹⁶ *Pesikta Rabati* 9:3, p. 32b.

¹⁷ *Pesachim* 119a; *Midrash Tehillim* 4:6, cited in our expanded commentary to Psalm 4:1.

¹⁸ *Shaarey Orah* 1, pp. 3b-4a; see *Tolaat Yaacov*, p. 11a.

There are troops of evil angels between earth and heaven, similar to the various snares that a traveler must overcome when passing through hazardous terrain. When a person worships, his prayers must pass through these troops in order to ascend to heaven. If he has merit, no "robbers" will ambush his prayers. But if he does not have merit, numerous "marauders" and "destroyers" lie in wait. It is for this reason that King David composed Songs of Praise (*Zemirot*). They serve to clear the way for prayer, so that it can pass through all these troops, which are likened to thick storm clouds that prevent prayer from ascending. They are alluded to in the verse, "You have covered Yourself with a cloud so that no prayer can pass through" (Lamentations 3:44). When a person prays the *zemirot* that King David composed, however, the "destroyers," "spoilers" and "marauders" are removed. It is for this reason that they are called *zemirot*, "cutters," as in "He shall cut off the arrogant with *mazmerot* (pruning shears)" (Isaiah 18:5).

In this vein, David wrote, "Your laws were *zemirot* for me in the house of my fears" (Psalm 119:54). [Capitalizing on the double meaning of *zemirot*] this can be rendered, "Your laws were like songs for me with which I dispersed and cut away the forces that frightened me as I made my way towards You." ...In sum, when a person prays, he must concentrate and direct his thoughts in such a way that his prayer will not be diverted or completely prevented from reaching its goal...

In his commentary to the Verses of Song (*Pesukey d'Zimrah*) in the Prayer Book, Rabbi Eli Munk refers indirectly to the above passage and explains its central idea:¹⁹

We have pointed out that this whole section of Morning Prayers seeks to proclaim that all events in nature and human life can be traced back to God. Any belief in intermediary powers must be eliminated before man may approach God in prayer. The *Pesukey d'Zimrah* thus have the preparatory, rather negative purpose of purifying our thoughts by expelling erroneous ideas and false dogmas. The same idea underlines a statement in the Kabbalah (Received Tradition). There, the word *zimrah* is derived from the same root as "*tizmor karmekha*—prune your vineyards" (Leviticus 25:3). The title *Pesukey d'Zimrah* would then indicate that, in this section of the service, all impediments to prayer are cut off. The positive accomplishment of the *Pesukey d'Zimrah* is then to have God acknowledged as the sole Source of power within His world.

The Power of Music

According to Rambam (Maimonides),²⁰ music was one of the disciplines used by the ancient prophets of Israel to enter a state of prophecy. This is based on such verses as, "And you shall meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with a violin, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp [being played] before them; and they shall prophesy..." (I Samuel 9:5), and "And Elisha said...bring me a musician; and it came to pass, *ke'menagen ha'menagen*—when the musician played, God's hand was upon him" (II Kings 3:15), and "David...separated off the children of Asaph, Heman, and Yedutun, the *prophets*, to play harps, violins and cymbals..." (I Chronicles 25:1).

According to the *Zohar*, music shares the same spiritual source as prophecy.²¹ It therefore has the power to cut away and penetrate all the barriers that prevent prophecy. Rabbi Chayim Vital adds that the ancient prophets would meditate to the accompaniment of

¹⁹ E. Munk, *The World of Prayer*, p. 65.

²⁰ *Yesodey haTorah* 7:4; *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:45.

²¹ *Zohar* 3:223b.

special music until they would enter a highly concentrated trance state, at which point the music would stop.²²

Music to Probe the Soul

In another place, Rabbi Chayim Vital writes:²³

When an Israelite male would bring a sin offering [to the *Mishkan* or *Mikdash*] to atone for something he had done wrong, the officiating *Cohen* would, by looking at his face, recognize the place [i.e., the spiritual limb] that this person had blemished, as well as his thoughts when he had done the sin. Knowing this, he would then work to clean this person of his sin.

[What about a woman?] The problem is that it is forbidden, for reasons of modesty, for the *Cohen* to stare too deeply into the face of a woman. What did he do to overcome this prohibition? Rather, he would take her to the washstand that had been made with the brass mirrors of the righteous women of Moshe's generation. There, he would stare deeply into her reflection and discern her thoughts. [It was necessary to know her thoughts] in order to cleanse her of the impurity of her sin.

By relentlessly questioning and probing his motivations, the *Cohen* would help a person bringing a sin-offering get to the psychological root-cause, not only of the specific action for which he had come to the Temple to gain atonement, but for the more basic loss of wholeness in his personality. To assist him in this, the *Cohen* would also enlist the services of the *Leviim* who were expert musicians. Because they possessed the deepest secrets of sound vibrations, the music of the *Leviim* had the power to cause extreme swings in emotion. Just as it could bring a person to the deepest level of crying, it could also bring one to the heights of ecstatic joy.

Thus, as the officiating *Cohen* probed ever more deeply into the psyche of the person bringing the atonement offering, the music of the *Leviim* would grow more and more somber. In fact, it was so powerfully somber that not only the person wishing to obtain atonement would begin to cry from the depths of his being. The *Cohanim* and *Leviim* would cry with him.

When, however, the officiating *Cohen*, as well as the other *Cohanim* on duty, would sense that the person had come to the brink of total breakdown (total soul remorse and regret over the kind of life he had lived), they signaled to the *Leviim* to change the music. Slowly, as if from a distance, a different kind of vibration began to fill the air. Slowly, ever so slowly, they would all emerge from the depths of remorse and begin to re-affirm life itself. Eventually, they would all dance together with awesome joy, filled with inexpressible thanks to the Creator of all souls.

For the secret of complete *teshuvah* (return, repentance) involves not only regretting what we have done, but becoming completely transformed in the process. This is the *sod* (mystery) of *Yom Kippur* being followed by *Succot* and *Simchat Torah*. On *Yom Kippur*, we stand in *Viduy* (Confession) and enumerate all the sins we committed with every limb of our body. Why do we enumerate the parts of the body? Because, consciously, we may have forgotten what we saw with our eyes, what we did with our hands, what we said with our mouths, etc. But the memory of what we did is engraved in our very tissues. By saying "I have done such and such with my eyes, such and such with my mouth, such and such with

²² *Shaarey Kedushah* 4:2.

²³ *Likutey Torah* on Exodus 38:8.

my hands, etc.” we literally bring alive the memory of those repressed deeds in those limbs, to the point that our entire body begins to vibrate at a different energy level. At this higher level, we can then be freed of the spiritual blemish that has been imprinted on those limbs, and return to a higher, more rectified state (than if we had never done wrong).

Still, *Yom Kippur* is only the negative side of *teshuvah*. We are to dance with those same limbs on *Simchat Torah* in order to complete the process. This is why the *Cohanim* would rejoice with the person bringing the sacrifice, saying, “Do you understand now why we had to be so tough on you! At first, complete *teshuvah* before our Creator must be an awesome and terrifying experience that brings us to the brink of total despair! But this is only so that our joy will be that much greater when we finally have been cleansed and transformed through His awesome mercies!”

Based on these sources, we suggest that “singing” and “chanting” are particularly suited for “cutting” through and eliminating the confusion and mental static that prevent us from penetrating to the deeper meaning of life. With music, we can soar above our daily cares and woes precisely because of the harmony it brings not only to our souls but to our perception of reality. From the point of view of the Torah, music and singing were meant to be aids for approaching our Creator and grasping the truths of His Torah. When guided by this principle, singing or chanting when we speak to God can make our prayers into powerful tools to inspire us, to free our minds and emotions to rejoice in God, to hone our ability to grasp the truth of His Torah and internalize its lessons in our lives.

Why are as many as 36 psalms introduced with the word *Mizmor*? Why does this important word appear countless other times woven into and throughout the Psalms? Psalms contain verses of *zemer* (song) which *zamer* (cut) the bonds of sleep from our eyes. They are therefore to be chanted in a kind of sing-song. The chant is thus meant to exhilarate us and arouse our emotions with a deep gratitude to God for being alive. When sung in this way, the beautiful words of King David’s Psalms become “pruning shears” to clear away the mental barriers that prevent us from seeing God in His universe.

Tying *LaMenatzeyach* to *Mizmor* (as in 23 of the abovementioned 36 psalms), when we sing (*zemer*), we sharpen and hone our ability to perceive unity in the midst of diversity. We cut away the barriers that prevent us from seeing the Oneness of God in and certainly behind His creation. It is for this reason that the leader of an orchestra or chorus is the exact human counterpart of the ultimate Maestro who orchestrates His creation in perfect harmony. Indeed, the whole idea behind an orchestra is that the total effect of all the individual instruments is vastly greater than that of any one of them alone. As we shall see, this principle is fundamental to the Psalms, to how we live our lives, and ultimately, to the entirety of Creation.

Zimrah allows us to soar beyond the fragmentary nature of the world around us, above the cacophony of seemingly disparate sounds and meanings, to the ultimate Meaning and Purpose that unites and harmonizes everything, without sacrificing or violating the unique quality of each detail of the whole. The Song of the World, the Harmony of Creation, is heard when we clear away the obstacles to that hearing.

Mizmor LeDavid

The superscription *Mizmor LeDavid* stands at the head of 29 psalms, while its mirror-image *LeDavid Mizmor* stands at the head of 7 psalms. According to the Zohar,²⁴ King David entitled a psalm *Mizmor LeDavid* when it was composed after God had bestowed *ruach ha’kodesh*

²⁴ Zohar 1:39b, 1:67a, 2:140a, 2:170a.

(divine inspiration, prophetic enlightenment) upon him. He used the reverse of this, *LeDavid Mizmor*, to indicate that he first composed and sang a particular psalm, and only then attained an exalted state of prophetic enlightenment. *Mizmor LeDavid* thus originates from *above*, with the flow of divine inspiration coming down *upon* David; while *LeDavid Mizmor* originates from *below*, with David's efforts to rise up above his own existential condition and break through to the Divine.

The Talmud,²⁵ on the other hand, records what seems to be the opposite tradition. According to the Talmud, *LeDavid Mizmor* indicates that David composed a psalm after God had bestowed prophetic enlightenment upon him. *LeDavid* thus alludes to the divine inspiration that was bestowed *upon* David, while *Mizmor* refers to the actual song. *Mizmor LeDavid*, on the other hand, alludes to those times when he used *zemer*-song in order to rise up above his troubles and attain an exalted state of enlightenment. *Mizmor* means that he first composed and sang a psalm. Only then did divine inspiration flow down *LeDavid*, *upon* David.

The apparent disparity between the Zohar and the Talmud could stem from the two ways of understanding the word *mizmor*, or its root, *zemer*.

We have noted that the word *mizmor* means both "to sing or play" and "to prune or cut." Singing is a positive action, pruning is negative. We sing when we are elated, when we have broken through some barrier in ourselves. In the Bible, singing is the spontaneous response to experiencing God.

We need to *prune* our perceptions when we cannot—when we are unable—to experience God's presence in our lives, when we feel cut off. Pruning means confronting obstacles and cutting away what is no longer necessary, eliminating what may have been useful in the past, but which has currently become an obstruction.

The Zohar sees in the word *mizmor* a powerful revelation of Godliness, a revelation that overcomes all barriers and allows David to break forth in song. The composition of the psalm that follows such a breakthrough is completely prophetic. Its very words and phrases contain the essence of David's prophetic experience. The Talmud, on the other hand, emphasizes the work that precedes such a revelation. Only after the difficult work of *mizmor* (pruning) is inspiration bestowed *LeDavid*, *upon* David.

By putting the Zohar together with the Talmud, the following pattern emerges: At times, we may be temporarily lifted up above our troubles, feel like we have transcended them and left them behind. This state of euphoria can last for a few minutes, a few months, or a few years. Eventually, however, the elation wears off. Reality intrudes. We may have "taken a vacation" and temporarily transcended our existential reality, but it itself hasn't changed and is still there waiting to be rectified.

Of course, a moment of elation can and should be used properly. We should appreciate moments of elation, moments when singing and dancing, or just moments of appreciating how blessed we are or how much we have to be thankful for, are actually the best way to pick ourselves up out of our own self pity. In truth, such exercises are therapeutic, provided we know that we must take some of their light and inspiration down with us into those parts of ourselves that are not yet ready to enter the light of day.

With the joy and inspiration we receive from song, we can reenter our old existential self (that is patiently awaiting our return), and integrate some of the elation we felt. It will not be easy

²⁵ *Pesachim* 117a; cited in Rashi, Psalm 23:1; Hirsch, Psalm 24:1.

going. At times we will feel that we can't go on. But this is a sign that we must *prune* away some of the undergrowth around our trees, clean ourselves of wrong ideas, correct what we have left unattended. There is a lot of work to do. Now, when it is hard, is the time to really learn to sing and pray to God. Now, when it is hard, is the time to really learn how our ancestors struggled with similar dark nights.

Indeed, when do we prune a tree? When its branches have become tangled or gnarled, and its vital fluids are literally being sapped away, preventing it from producing healthy fruit. Pruning is a way of cultivating something that is wild, by regulating, directing, and *training* it to develop in a way that enhances its own natural growth process. In terms of the human personality, proper pruning involves identifying and ridding ourselves of false ideas and modes of action that literally entangle us and sap our precious energy. Such inner work is difficult, but its rewards are unequaled. As we have noted, we may even reach a point at which we feel that there is no hope, that our burden is too heavy. With persistence, however, we can break through to a completely new level and experience a profound sense of liberation. At moments like these, it is as if a heavy weight has been lifted off us.

According to the Talmud, this is what David is describing here. By placing the words *Mizmor LeDavid* at the head of a psalm, David is telling us that any true breakthrough is preceded by hard work and persistence. Whether on the level of the nation as a whole or each and every one of us as individuals, if we do the work, then, when the breakthrough finally comes, we are ready to reap its fruits. We are resuscitated and elevated, and the very energy that was previously used and misused to prevent us from growing is freed and redirected for positive purposes. Moreover, we will understand that the darkness, pain, and exile we experienced was meant for our own good. We will understand one of the deepest secrets of life that King David is constantly teaching us: The struggle to be who we really are takes place in the dark, when we feel alone, abandoned, unable to go on. It is in these deep, dark forests and valleys of our own souls that we begin to meet God. To attain this goal, no amount of struggle and effort is too much.

8. Tefillah

Tefillah, the word for prayer and self-evaluation, appears at the head of four psalms (but many more times throughout the Psalms themselves). *Tefillah* comes from the root *pallel*, meaning to "judge," "think," "estimate," "to consider the possibility of." According to Rabbi Shimson Raphael Hirsch, "The Hebrew word *hitpallel* is the reflexive form of a verb meaning to judge. It therefore denotes judging oneself, or coming to a correct opinion of oneself, or at least, an inner attempt to accomplish this. In other words, true prayer is an attempt to gain true judgment of oneself."²⁶

As we have seen, *tefillah* is about discovering that deep place in our heart where we want the same thing that God wants. *Tefillah* is the all-inclusive word for prayer in *lashon ha'kodesh* (the sacred language of prophecy):²⁷

Rabbi Yochanan said, "*Tefillah* (man's prayer rising up from the depths of the human condition) is expressed in the following ten different words in *lashon ha'kodesh*: (1) *shavah* (crying out in pain), (2) *tze'akah/ze'akah* (crying to express inner pain), (3) *naakah* (crying out from a feeling of being abandoned), (4) *rinah* (crying from pain; also joyous singing), (5) *pegiah* (strong emotional request coming from a deep need), (6) *b'tzar* (crying out from a constricted state; crying out from fear of impending danger), (7) *kriah* (calling out from the heart; calling out to others to acknowledge Hashem), (8)

²⁶ Hirsch, *Chorev* 618.

²⁷ *Devarim Rabbah* 2:1.

nefillah (literally falling on one's face and prostrating oneself in order to express complete submission), (9) *pillul* (self-evaluation; articulating inner feelings in words), (10) *tachanunim* (pleading with Hashem for Him to be merciful; not based on one's own merits but rather on Hashem's magnanimity)."

After listing the above ten terms, Rabbi Yochanan quotes specific verses wherein each appears in the Tanakh. Scanning through the list, it seems pretty clear that most of them involve crying out from some deep pain or constriction; perhaps from the pain of being human.²⁸

Tefillah is the most important word we have for prayer because it includes all the rest. In addition, it shares the same root as the word *pallel*, meaning to think and judge.²⁹ It therefore connotes an inner type of consciousness that is primarily contemplative, self-reflective, and self-evaluating.³⁰ *Tefillah* itself is deep and inner. It arises out of the pain of being human, of feeling alone and abandoned. On the transpersonal level, it involves a deep sense that something is wrong, that the reality we live in is lacking in some profound way. This is the beginning of consciousness; it is also the beginning of prayer, a desire to rectify the lack that is inherent in creation.

Prayer thus has nothing to do with parroting words in a book. Real prayer connects me to my core. It is the most natural place to be. It is therefore not surprising that the same Rabbi Yochanan said, "*Ulavai sh'yitpallel adam kol ha'yom kulo*—oh that a person would pray all day long."³¹ He wasn't speaking about formal prayer as much as being connected to that deep place inside where I know that God is with me in my pain.

²⁸ According to Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik z"l, this is actually the subject of a disagreement between Rambam and Ramban. Rambam (*Sefer HaMitzvot*, positive commandment #5) regards prayer as a Torah obligation. He derives this from a number of verses, among them, "If you carefully obey My commandments...to love Hashem your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul..." (Deuteronomy 11:13), concerning which the rabbis asked, "what service does one perform with the heart? We must conclude that it is the service of prayer" (*Sifri Ekev 5; Taanit 2a*). On the other hand, we have Ramban in his gloss on *Sefer haMitzvot*. Ramban does not acknowledge prayer as a specific norm. It is a privilege to pray but it is not an obligation. He writes, "Prayer is not an obligation, but rather a kindness of the blessed Creator; for He hears and answers when we call to Him. The meaning of serving Him with all our heart is that we direct our worship to Hashem with all our heart and with pleasing intention without the slightest ulterior motive." Ramban thus insists that the obligation to pray is rabbinic, and cites many Talmudic sources to support this view. However, even Ramban concedes that, in times of *tzarah* (crisis), it becomes a Torah commandment to pray. He thus adds, "In times of crisis, it is an obligation for the community to cry out before Him...to believe that He heeds our prayer and rescues us from all calamity."

Rabbi Soloveitchik concludes: "The views of Rambam and Ramban can be reconciled. Both view prayer as meaningful only if it is derived from a sense of *tzarah* (crisis). They differ in their understanding of the word. Rambam regards daily life itself as being existentially in straits, a pervading sense of despair, a brooding meaninglessness, an overhanging absurdity. It is a persistent internal *tzarah* which exists at all times. The word *tzarah* connotes more than external trouble; it suggests a constricted strait, being forlorn, desolate without hope, a feeling of constriction...Prayer emerges out of this sense of discomfiture. Prayer in comfort and security is a paradox, modern methods of suburban worship and plush synagogues notwithstanding. The desire for proximity of wife and children at services comes from a need for security and comfort. Real prayer is derived from loneliness, helplessness, and a sense of dependence. Thus, while Ramban deals only with *tzarat tzibur* (communal crisis; intermittent crisis), Rambam regards all of life as reflective of *tzarah*, a type of depth crisis" (from "Prayer is a Dialogue," prepared by Rabbi Avraham R. Besdin, a reconstruction from notes taken during a series of lectures by Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik on "The Philosophical Foundations of Prayer" to undergraduate students at Yeshiva University, 1974).

²⁹ Yaacov thus said to Yoseph after thinking him dead for twenty-two years, "*Reoh panekha lo pillalti*—I never thought I would see your face again" (Genesis 48:11), meaning "I never allowed myself to even consider the possibility that I would see you." The connection to judgment is seen in a number of verses: "*Venatan bi'fillim*—the matter is to be given over to the judges" (Exodus 21:22), and "Their god is not like our Rock, *ve'oveinu pelillim*—even in our enemy's own judgment" (Deuteronomy 32:31). The modern Hebrew expression *avon plilli* (criminal act, i.e., an act which requires judgment in a court of law) comes from the book of Job (31:11).

³⁰ See Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsch, *Chorev* §618.

³¹ *Berakhot* 21a.

In *tefillah* I enter *within* the holy of holies of my being as opposed to experiencing myself from the outside looking in. In this sense, the phrase “meditative prayer” is a tautology. True prayer can be none other than meditative. Through *tefillah* we peel away the extraneous layers of ourself that come between us and ourself, between us and God. It is precisely for this reason that *tefillah* has such a transformative power.

The author of *Siddur Avodat HaLev* thus writes: “Prayer is that process by which we clarify and refine the thoughts that come into our hearts in a constant stream of consciousness; distinguish and separate one thought from another... Why is this word often used in the reflexive, which indicates a change in the person praying?! Prayer is not meant to change God’s Mind or Will. God Himself is beyond change... Rather, the very act of prayer causes a change in the soul of the one who prays in that he submits his soul and his thoughts to his Creator. Actually, this also allows God to bring about a change in his circumstances, for He is always ready to bestow goodness on His creations when they walk in His ways. This is how He created His world. With their wrong actions, human beings build a wall between themselves and God which prevents them from receiving His blessings. When they pray [and thereby show that they are prepared to better their ways], however, they become worthy of receiving the very good that He has prepared for them. In this sense, *tefillah*, the act of being *mitpallel* (self-reflective), works a wondrous change in the heart of the one who prays. It raises him up above his previous limitations and makes him worthy of coming closer to God.”³²

David thus says: “*Tefillah* [a prayer of self-evaluation] by David. Hashem, beneficent God, hear the righteousness of my plea and how I have striven to internalize Your standard of righteousness in judging myself; be attentive to my cry that issues forth from the depths of my being; give ear to my prayer, from lips which have not spoken guile. May my judgment come forth from before You and may the judgment I arrive at in my self-evaluation be exactly the same as Your objective judgment of me; Your eyes alone behold all things impartially” (Psalm 17:1-2).

David’s prayer teaches us that prayer consists of speaking words of truth to the One who taught us truth. He teaches us that, by speaking to Him, we can become inspired and begin to understand, connect and internalize the events of our lives in the light of what He has taught us about Himself and the way He runs the world. In this sense, prayer lifts us above the “human condition” of always being at the mercy of events. It is the ultimate expression of the human heart in response to the lessons that God teaches us.

9. Hodaah – The Power of Thanks

David turns to Hashem constantly throughout the Psalms and tells us (and himself) how important it is to thank Hashem and express our gratitude to Him: “*Hodu LaShem*—thank Hashem, for He is good; for though at times hidden His steadfast love is constant and endures forever” (see Psalms 107:1, 118:1, 136:1).

In Psalm 92:2, David exclaims, “*Tov le’hodot LaShem*—it is good to thank Hashem!”

The 100th Psalm is dedicated completely to expressing our gratitude. In the Temple, this psalm was sung when anyone brought a *Korban Todah*, Thanks Offering:

“*Mizmor LeTodah* – A Song of Thanksgiving: Let the whole earth call out to *Hashem*! Serve *Hashem* with joy; come before Him with exultation! Know that *Hashem* is the Supreme God; He alone made us; we did not make ourselves; and that is why we are His—His people and

³² Introduction to *Siddur Avodat HaLev*, in *Otzar HaTefillot*.

the flock of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving; His courtyards with praise; give thanks to Him; bless His Name to draw down ever greater revelations of His eternal love. For Hashem is good; His steadfast love endures forever; and His faithfulness to fulfill His promise of redemption endures from generation to generation" (Psalm 100).

Gratitude is one of the deepest human emotions. When we receive something from our parents, our natural reaction is gratitude. The Torah builds on this natural feeling and teaches us how to direct our deepest offerings of thanks to Hashem.

This ability to go from thanking our human providers to thanking and appreciating our Divine Provider is illustrated in the following parable.

The Parable of the Flowers

Sarah is a very special woman. A wife and mother of seven, she runs her house with the perfect combination of a strong but loving hand. Her days are filled with endless chores, from the most mundane to the most sublime, which she carries out with wisdom and supreme self sacrifice. On her 42nd birthday, after sending her husband off to work and packing the kids off to school, Sarah decided to begin celebrating her birthday alone. She went out to her beloved garden—which she had planted herself with her family—and enjoyed the morning air. Singing and whistling along with the birds and delighting in the delicate beauty of the dew on all the flowers, Sarah picked the most beautiful bouquet of her favorite flowers. In her heart she rejoiced in her portion as a woman, a wife, a mother, and as a daughter of the Almighty. Entering the house from the garden, she chose her favorite vase, arranged the magnificent bouquet, and set it in the middle of the dining room table. She chose her favorite music, set the stereo on play, and began to dance. As she danced, her heart soared with love and appreciation to Hashem for all she had.

Suddenly the front door bell rang. Quickly lowering the volume of the music and then stopping at the mirror to straighten her scarf, Sarah nimbly opened the door. No one was there. She stuck her head out the door, looked right and looked left. No one, not a soul. She was about to close the door when she looked down and saw a rather large package on the doorstep. It was a beautifully wrapped bouquet of flowers. On it, a card read simply "We love you." It was from her husband and kids. Tears welled up and rolled down her cheeks. "Oh Hashem, thank You so much."

It didn't escape Sarah's attention that this new bouquet contained exactly the same flowers as the one she picked. She carefully arranged the flowers in an identical vase and set it alongside the first bouquet. Returning to the stereo, Sarah raised the volume of the music and began to dance. With tears in her eyes and joy in her heart, she praised Hashem. This was the happiest day of her life.

Think carefully now: What is the difference between these two bouquets of flowers?

The flowers themselves are identical. Aren't they? On the outside, they look the same. Nevertheless, there is a difference. She loves the first bouquet because she loves flowers. She loves the second bouquet of flowers because she loves the ones who sent it.

Again the note "We love you" makes all the difference. For Sarah, the second bouquet of flowers is not just flowers (as much as she loved flowers). They represent something far greater, the loving affection of her beloved husband and children. They symbolize and embody a relationship with the ones she loves.

For us, the first bouquet represents our natural gratitude and appreciation for the good things we have received in life. The second bouquet represents our ability to see beyond these good things to the One who has given them to us.

True thankfulness is thus our ability to recognize and acknowledge the loving kindness of the One who gives us what we need, over and above the things themselves. True thankfulness involves a relationship, the ultimate I-Thou relationship with our Creator.

In Hebrew, the same verb, *le'hodot* (to thank, to appreciate, to be grateful) is used to express grateful acknowledgement: *Le'hodot le'emet* means "to acknowledge or to admit the truth." The Eighteenth Blessing in the *Amidah* which begins "*Modim anach'nu lakh she'atah hu Hashem Elokenu v'Elokei avotenu*," can thus be translated "We gratefully acknowledge that You, Hashem, the merciful God, are our God and the God of our ancestors..."

This connection is also seen in the reflexive form of the word *le'hodot*, *le'hitvadot*. *Le'hitvadot* is usually translated "to confess," but it is more correctly rendered as "to admit [the truth] to oneself," or even "to come clean." The implication is that, far from being a "guilt-trip," the act of *Viduy* is an owning up to what we have done and a sincere desire to come clean and correct our past, learn from it and even be a better person than we could have been had we not made the particular mistakes we made! This then becomes the greatest opening for thankfulness and gratitude.

10. Barukh – Berakhah: Blessing as Revelation

"*Barkhi nafshi et Hashem*—O my soul, bless God!" (Psalm 104:1). "*Barukh Atah Hashem lamdeni chukekha*—blessed are You, Hashem! Teach me the secrets of Your hidden decrees!" (*ibid.* 119:12).

Like an incredible diamond, the concept of blessing God has many facets. First and foremost is the simple meaning: We want to thank God for everything we have. In order to do this we want to recognize Him as the *Mekor HaBerakhah* (Source of All Blessing). This, however, is too general. The master sages instituted specific blessings so that by literally enumerating or counting our blessings we could become aware of God as the Source of every single one of our blessings.

When we think about it, however, we discover that we still do not know what it means to "bless" God. When He blesses us, He gives us something. Do we give Him anything when we bless Him? Certainly not in any simplistic way. God is intrinsically "blessed" and He doesn't need us.

This is the actual grammatical meaning of *barukh*. *Barukh* is not a command to bless God but a statement that He, the Source, is Intrinsically Blessed.

For this reason, many authorities maintain that the blessings we say are solely for our own benefit. God does not need our blessings. Rather He wants us to perfect and refine our perception. He wants us to wake up and see the world around us for what it really is. Apples do not just appear on trees. The world doesn't simply supply us with all kinds of foods so that our bodies can grow fatter. Rather, it is God Himself who feeds and nourishes us, and this, so that we can appreciate the miracle of being alive—so that we can become conscious of Him, and develop an intimate and personal relationship with Him. This begins by using this body He gave us to recognize Him. By contemplating its miraculous functions, by enjoying the good things of this world and contemplating that Someone is behind all this, our natural reaction is to bless and appreciate the Provider who gave us all this and to seek His closeness. This is one

of the main reasons for saying blessings, the recommended number per day being one hundred.

On a deeper level, we bless God in order to draw down an ever greater flow of blessing (and hence revelation of His Presence) into the system of universes from the highest spiritual to the lowest physical dimension. Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1813) describes the essence of a blessing thus:³³

Blessing God involves an initial elevation to the highest level of Divinity, followed by a drawing down [of spiritual sustenance] from above to below. This is the meaning of our sages' pronouncement on the verse, "And now, Israel, what (*mah*) does YHVH your God require of you?" (Deuteronomy 10:12)—do not only read only *mah* (what?) but *meah* (one-hundred). These are the one-hundred blessings with which a person is obligated to bless God each day."³⁴ The concept of a blessing thus involves the act of drawing down God's transcendent light and making it immanent. In other words, it involves bringing into a revealed state that which is hidden.

Pay close attention to the Rabbi's words. The concept of a blessing involves a double action, first elevation, then lowering down. Because he is trying to penetrate to the essence of what a blessing is, he does not define what it is that we elevate or draw down. As we go through the Psalms, we will appreciate this movement much more deeply. In the meantime, let us just note that something must be elevated. What it is has to do with us. There is something we elevate back up to God. We have already suggested that this is tied in to the basic act of blessing God which involves both acknowledgment and thanks. On the simplest level, we lift up our acknowledgment by expressing our thanks to Him and letting Him know that He we realize that He is the Source of all we have, and of all we are.

Next, the Rabbi uses the image of "up" and "down," of "blessings" originating above in heaven (God's transcendence) and being drawn down to earth (His immanence). In order not to limit our understanding of drawing down blessing to a simple up-down spatial metaphor, he then speaks in terms of revelation from hiddenness. Revelation from hiddenness is a more general concept which encompasses many ideas and fuses them into a single gestalt.

Undoubtedly, God's light and blessing is "hidden in heaven above" and it depends on man to draw it down and reveal it in the fabric of his earthly life. But heaven is also hidden within the concealment of our world. It is this inner heaven that is the hidden essence of spirituality that permeates physical reality and sustains it. It is hidden at the core of reality—and it awaits revelation.

Thus, revealing God's presence in our lives can and does involve both a drawing down from above and a drawing out from within. In both cases we want to penetrate the veil that separates us from our Source and draw its life-giving blessings into our consciousness, our lives, our world. We want to be instrumental in revealing Godliness in the world.

This is the essence of a *Berakhah*. *Berakhah* is man revealing and drawing God down into His world.

In other words, we want to reveal God's Presence (that permeates the innermost aspects of existence) in an external world which essentially conceals His presence. The key word here is "revelation." Drawing down from heaven and drawing out from a state of concealment are

³³ *Torah Or, Yitro*, p. 70.

³⁴ *Menachot* 43b.

both acts of revealing something that was hidden. As we shall see repeatedly, this is one reason why God is called *Melekh HaOlam*, literally, “King of the universe” or “King who hides (*alam*) Himself in His universe (*olam*).” When we call upon Him, despite His hiding, we participate in revealing His Presence in the world.

In sum, a blessing is supposed to give us an awareness that God’s Essence and Will give existence and life to all things. When we channel this awareness into specific details, this increases our total awareness a hundred-fold. This is the difference between saying, “everything is fine,” and writing a ten-page list of all the things for which we have to be thankful.

VI. Code-Words

There are many other key words in the Psalms, multi-dimensional code-words that mean on more than one level, and for that very reason open up whole new levels of understanding the Psalms and hence communion with God.

Of these key words, the most prominent are the Names of God that appear throughout the Psalms (and the entire Bible). Below, we shall begin to open up a window to the incredible power and blessing that lies locked up in these Names—blessing that is waiting to be released. We shall show how the Blessed Name, *YKVK*, is the essence and root of all the other names of God mentioned in the Bible; how they correspond to its letters, and hence to the five general universes and five levels of the soul, and how they can be used to attain the highest communion with God.

After you learn more about these Names, we hope that you will be more sensitive to them wherever and whenever they appear throughout the Psalms. We hope that you will be more sensitive to the wonder involved in our ability to articulate words. Even more basic, when you say a word, especially a Divine Name, you should pay attention to the way you move your mouth/lips and tongue. Focus on the sounds of your words. If it helps, place your hands on your ears, so that you can “hear from the inside” as opposed to “listening from without.” Feel your larynx vibrate.

When you look at the letters of a word in Hebrew, truly look at it. Note its letters and its vowel-points. There are many secret levels in the Psalms, not only of meaning, but of power. The power of Psalms is in its letters and sounds (advanced visualization and vibratory techniques), just as much as in its meanings.

In this way, you will uncover and discover deeper and deeper strata of experiential and meditative communion in the very words of the Psalms. Suffice to say that the ancient prophets used these techniques to enter the spiritual dimension. David therefore embedded them everywhere throughout the Psalms.

Before we embark on this journey, it is wise to speak about language in general. How does language work? Where does it come from, both according to the most modern theories and according to the Kabbalah? Can we unlock the power of words, that is, can we reconstruct, using words, not only the meaning that a particular author intended, but relive the experience he describes? Can words not only rigidify meaning but liberate it? Once we get past the outer level of words, can we then bring that meaning back in words? Are words to forever remain a prison, or can they become translucent enough to reveal the Godly light?

Words are not one-dimensional. The above superscriptions teach us that words overflow with meanings that we never knew were there. The words of the prophets, especially, have been

likened to living waters that revive a fainting soul, and to the Spirit of God itself that breathes new life and hope into dead bodies.

Let us ask Hashem to help us “unstop” some of the incredible wellsprings of meaning concealed in the code-words of the Psalms. We call them “code-words” because this is exactly what they are. Once we understand the “code,” a whole new world of meaning opens up to us. As we have noted, the reason for this is that the original language of the Torah and of Psalms is called *lashon ha’kodesh*, the sacred language of prophecy. In this language, words are compact information packets. At the “quantum” level, even the letters of the words of the Sacred Tongue are meaningful. Like the words of which they are apart, they have “ladders” of meaning, from the most mundane to the most sublime. This is the nature of *lashon ha’kodesh*. Needless to say, this “quantum” level of words and letters (and even dots) is too much for most people, but it is there.

Opening up a code-word is thus similar to opening up a “Zip” file in a computer. Code-words contain much more information than is apparent on the surface. They must be “unzipped” in order to grasp the concept or concepts they embody. Indeed, as mentioned, almost all of these words will be seen to have “ladders” of meanings. For while they are grounded in the mundane, they reach up very high.

In our notes (and even more so in our in-depth commentary), we develop this, giving examples of key words and how each of them “mean” on many levels (open-ended, multi-dimensional) at the same time that they are connected by one single concept (unified gestalt). Besides the fact that there is a great beauty in this type of treatment, it is important as a basis of a theory of how language works. For the way we label things has a lot to do with how we perceive and experience reality.

VII. The Divine Names

“I Will Be Who I Will Be”

In the Torah it is written, “Moshe said to God: Behold, I am supposed to go to the Children of Israel and say to them: ‘the God of your forefathers has sent me to you.’ But they will immediately ask me: ‘What is His Name?’ What shall I say to them? [In response] God said to Moshe: ‘*Eheyeh Asher Eheyeh—I Will Be Who I Will Be.*’ And He added: ‘This is what you must say to the children of Israel: *Eheyeh—I Will Be* sent me to you’” (Exodus 3:13-14).

In the Midrash, the sages reveal the exoteric meaning of this last verse:³⁵

The Holy One blessed-be-He said to Moshe: My Name you wish to know? I am called according to My actions. At times, I am called *El Shadai*, at times *Tzeva’ot*, at times *Elohim*, at times *Havayah*.

When I judge mankind, I am called *Elohim* (Ruler or Judge). When I wage war against (or when I exact retribution from) the wicked, I am called *Adonai Tzeva’ot* (Lord of Hosts). When I suspend judgment on a person’s sins, I am called *El Shadai* (all-sustaining God). When I have mercy on My world (or when I sit/dwell within the quality of mercy), I am called *Havayah* (merciful God), for *Havayah* always points to God’s mercies, as the verse attests, “*Havayah, Havayah—merciful and gracious...*” (Exodus 34:6).

³⁵ *Shemot Rabbah* 3:6; *Tanchuma Shemot* 20; see *Zohar* 3:10a, 3:11a-b.

This then is the meaning of "*Eheyeh Asher Eheyeh*," to wit, "I am called according to My actions" (or "Although you cannot know My Essence, you can know My attributes, i.e., the way I manifest to you").

Rabbi Chayim of Volozhin quotes this Midrash as well as parallel passages from the Zohar. He sums up the matter when he says, "All that we know of Him, may He be blessed, is from the point of view of His Imminence within the universes [as opposed to His Transcendence above and beyond them]."³⁶

*

According to the Kabbalah, all these Divine Names, even the Name *YKVK*, is a "sheath" for He Who Is Beyond Any Name and/or Appellation. [This is where the Kabbalah tradition reveals itself as the deeper strata of the Classical teachings of Judaism. In this sense, it could be said that the Classical teachings themselves are a "sheath" over the Kabbalah which is the powerful light of *YKVK*.] Kabbalah emphasizes that none of the Names with which the Torah describes Hashem's interaction with us (even *YKVK*) refer to Hashem Himself. No, Hashem Himself, for Whom even the appellation *Ein Sof* (Endless One) is a limitation, Is Beyond All Name and/or Description. Rather, God's Names refer to the various ways He runs His universe and relates to us. Look at any verse in the *Tanakh* in which any of the Divine Names appear. According to Kabbalah, none of these Names refer to Hashem Himself in any literal sense. That possibility simply does not exist by virtue of the rule that Hashem Is Beyond All Names.

Nevertheless, relative to all other Names, *YKVK* is the *shoresh* (root and source). The reason for this might be that *YKVK* is not just a "name," but a Four-Letter Formula: *Yod*, *Heh*, *Vav*, and *Heh*. As the Kabbalah teaches, this Four-Letter Formula includes all Names and Modes in a total Unity. All other Names are derivatives and specific aspects of this All-Encompassing Name.³⁷

Thus, although the *YKVK*, and all Divine Names that branch off from it, are very deep, God is more than any name we can call Him. This is because even the highest name is finite compared to the Infinite Light that fills it. A name is a creation that expresses a certain relationship; that is, it allows for the possibility of a relationship between God and anything that He creates. God Himself, the Infinite, is above this. He transcends any relationship. This is why "*Lekha dumiah tehillah*—to You, silence is praise!" (Psalm 65:2). Such that, when we say or think or meditate on a Divine Name, we are essentially relating to God the Infinite through this Name. As the Zohar puts it, these Divine Names are like channels or conduits through which water flows. The only difference is that a physical channel exists even when there is no water flowing through it. These Divine channels and everything else would not exist for a moment if the Divine flow of energy stopped.³⁸

YKVK

In general, the Name *YKVK* represents God's Attribute of Unconditional Love and Overriding Mercy. It is the most important of all the various Names of God that appear throughout the Bible (each of which represents a different aspect of God's relationship with His world, and our relationship with Him).

³⁶ *Nefesh HaChayim* 2:3; see Rabbi Meir Ibn Gabbai, *Avodat HaKodesh* 1:13.

³⁷ *Shaarey Orach*, Chapter 1, p. 4a.

³⁸ *Zohar* 2:42a.

There are a number of ways to render this Name in English and still distinguish it from the other Divine Names. As a general rule, when we are not actually praying to God (but rather speaking or learning about Him), we use the English letters *Yod-Keh-Vav-Keh*, or *Hashem* (The Name), or *Havayah* (Infinite/Eternal Being).

For use when actually praying, we may also use the following two substitutes for the Hebrew original: *YHVH* (*Adonai*). Note that when we use the letters *YHVH* followed by the Name *Adonai*, our intention is that you contemplate and meditate on the letters of the Four-Letter Name (*Yod, Heh, Vav, and Heh*), but only say the Name *Adonai*. This is based on Jewish law which states that when studying, or reading from the Torah, or when praying:³⁹

One should concentrate on the meaning of the words. When mentioning the Four-Letter Name, concentrate on its meaning as it is pronounced, *Adonai*—Lord/Master of all—and concentrate on its meaning as it is written, *YKVK*—He was, He is, and He will always be.

According to Jewish Law we are only to **think** the Four-Letter Name *YHVH*. We do not pronounce the Name as it is written. Instead, when we read the Torah or pray, we **say** *Adonai*. [As above, when we are not praying, we say *Havayah* or *Hashem*, or we spell out the letters of the Name, changing the two letters *Heh* into *Keh* thus: *Yod-Keh-Vav-Keh*.]

The Talmud learns this from a verse in the Torah. When God spoke to Moshe at the Burning Bush, He said: "This is what you shall say to the children of Israel, 'YHVH, God of your ancestors, God of Avraham, God of Yitzchak, and God of Yaacov, sent me to you. *Zeh shemi le'olam*—this is My Name forever, *ve'zeh zikhri le'dor dor*—and this is how I am to be remembered for all generations'" (Exodus 3:15).

The phrase, "*zeh shemi le'olam*—this is My Name forever," has a double meaning. The Hebrew word for forever is *le'olam* (לְעוֹלָם). Here, however, it is written without the letter *vav* (ו), and is spelled לְעֵלָם, which—when we disregard the vowels—can also be read *le'alem*, "for concealment." According to this, the verse can now be read, "This is My Name to conceal."⁴⁰

We find the same teaching in another context as well:⁴¹

"*Ve'hayah Hashem le'melekh al kol ha'aretz*—Hashem will be [recognized] as king over the entire world. *Ba'yom hahu yihiyeh Hashem echad u'shemo echad*—On that day, Hashem will be one and His name will be one" (Zekhariah 14:9). [How can it be written, "*Ba'yom ha'hu yihiyeh Hashem echad*—on that day, Hashem will be one"?] Isn't He one now? Rabbi Acha bar Chaninah explained: this world is not like the world to come. In this world, when hearing good tidings, we say, "Blessed is He who is good and who does good." When receiving bad news, we say, "Blessed is the Judge whose judgment is truth." [In the world to come, this will no longer be the case. Rather, we will see the good clearly in all that happens.] In the world to come, we will only say, "Blessed is He who is good and who does good."

The Talmud has explained the phrase "*Ba'yom hahu yihiyeh Hashem echad*" from Zekhariah (14:9) that Hashem's oneness will become totally revealed only in the world to come. The Talmud now expounds on the concluding words of the verse, "*u'shemo echad*":

³⁹ *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim* 5.

⁴⁰ *Kiddushin* 71a. This is reflected beautifully in the fact that, in the vast majority of places, the *Havayah* is actually vowelized with the vowels of the word *le'olam* (לְעוֹלָם), e.g., *shva, cholam, kamatz*, or with the same vowels arranged in a slightly different order [corresponding to the word *tzevakot* (צִבְאוֹת), e.g., *shva, kamatz, cholam*]. In all such cases, we read it *Adonai*.

⁴¹ *Pesachim* 50a.

"*U'shemo echad*—And His Name will be one." [How can this be?] Isn't His Name one now? Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak explained: this world is not like the world to come. In this world the Name is written *YKVK* but pronounced *Adonai*. In the world to come, however, all will be one...It is therefore written, "This is My Name *le'olam* (forever) (i.e., *le'alem*-to conceal)." The Holy One said: [In this world] I am not called as I am written. Here My Name is written *YKVK* but pronounced *Adonai*. [In the world to come, however, it will be pronounced as it is written.]⁴²

The meaning is clear: It is presently forbidden to pronounce the Four-Letter Name as it is written. As noted, in reading the Torah, when we come across the Name *YHVH*, we always read it as *Adonai* [except when it occurs in conjunction with the Name *Adonai*, in which case it is read *Elohim*].⁴³ If one actually pronounces the Name *YKVK* as it is written, he can lose his portion in the world to come.⁴⁴

The reason for this stringency is that the full power of the Written Name will only be revealed in the world to come. Until then it is, as it were, concealed in the Spoken Name "like a sword in its sheath." This is similar to the verse in psalms, "*Ki shemesh u'magen Havayah Elokim*—for *Hashem Elokim* is a sun and a shield" (Psalm 84:12). The relationship of *Hashem* to *Elokim* is that of the *shemesh* (sun) to a *magen* (shield). What shield protects us like sunglasses from the sun's rays? The ozone. Just as the ozone serves as a shield to protect us from solar radiation that is lethal for earth-life as we know it, so also *Elokim* and *Adanut* protect us from the light of *Havayah* which is too powerful for us to handle at the present time.

The reason for this stringency is because the full power of the Written Name will only be revealed in the world to come. Until then, it is, as it were, concealed in the Spoken Name, like a sword in its sheath. This parallels the fact that the spiritual light of the sun is presently concealed in the orb of the sun in order to protect us and allow earth-life to continue on as it is until the end of the sixth millennium. At that time, the Talmud says, the Holy One will remove the sun from its sheath,⁴⁵ i.e., reveal His light in all its glory. This world will no longer conceal the Godly light.

All of this is because of the intrinsic sanctity of the Name. It is the Holy of Holies of existence. It contains the secret of God's relationship with the world He created. By not speaking the Name or even pronouncing its letters out loud, we acknowledge this holiness. We acknowledge that, if there is one thing in the entire world which should never be misused or misappropriated, it is the very Essence of Being and Existence itself, the holy Name *YKVK*. Out of reverence, therefore, and as a sign that we are sensitive to that which is completely whole and holy, we may only think of its letters and what they mean, but never speak them as they are written.

⁴² There were times during the initial phase of Israel's history when the *Havayah* was pronounced as it is written. Up until the period of the second temple, the priests (*cohanim*) pronounced the four-letter name with its own unique vowel points (*cholam, segol, kamatz, segol*) when they blessed the people (Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, quoted in *Tosfot Yom Tov*, Yoma 6:2 s.v. *keshe'hayu*). It was only after Shimon haTzaddik died in 3470 (291 b.c.e.) that the *cohen gadol* alone would actually say the name, and only on *Yom Kippur*. Even then, it was pronounced in such a low voice that it was drowned out by the singing of the other *cohanim* (*Kiddushin* 71a; Rambam, *Avodat Yom haKippurim* 2:6).

⁴³ In all such cases (298 times all together; 4 times in the Torah, 294 times in the remainder of the *Nakh*), it appears with the vowels of the name *Elokim*. See Genesis 15:2, 15:8, Deuteronomy 3:24, 9:26, and Targum *ad. loc.* See Gra, *Orach Chayim* 5:1, s.v. *veyikhaven*.

⁴⁴ *Sanhedrin* 10:1 (90a); *Avodah Zarah* 18a, *Tosafot ad. loc.* s.v. *hogeh hashem*; *Tosefta Sanhedrin* 12:5; *Tanchuma Vaera* 1; Kaplan, *The Torah Anthology*, Volume 4, p. 93.

⁴⁵ *Nedarim* 8b; *Avodah Zarah* 3b.

But the time will come, the verse says, when “Hashem will be one and His name will be one” or “the oneness of Hashem and the oneness of His name will be revealed.” Then the powerful spiritual light of Hashem will be revealed. At that time, the Talmud says, “the Holy One will remove [the light of] the sun from its sheath,” i.e., reveal His light in all its glory.⁴⁶ “This world” will no longer conceal the Godly light. At that time we will be permitted to speak the YKVK as it is written—i.e., experience it directly.

YKVK ADNY

The *Havayah* consists of the four Hebrew letters, *Yod*, *Heh*, *Vav*, and *Heh*, plus a fifth level which transcends and includes the other four, the apex of the *Yod*. According to the Kabbalists, in these five levels you have everything. This is The Name that represents the totality of everything that exists.

This Name is related to the past, present, and future tense of the Hebrew word “to be.” In Hebrew, “was” is *hayah*, “is” is *hoveh*, and “will be” is *yihyeh*. Whenever you read this Name, you should have in mind that God was, is, and will be, all together, at the same instant. Paralleling the Rabbinic phrase, *HaKadosh Barukh Hu* (the Holy One blessed-be-He), the Name YKVK thus points to God’s absolute transcendence over creation and the impossibility of His being constrained or confined by the laws of time, space, and nature (i.e., that He exists in a realm where time does not exist, which is beyond anything we can imagine). It tells us He created time and that He is utterly beyond and higher than time. It tells us that in order to create, He hid his Infiniteness and brought the universe into existence in such a way that He would permeate it and yet not overwhelm it. Again, it tells us that God Himself is Existence, but that nothing could exist until He brought it into existence. He is the *MeHaveh*, the One who gives existence. All this and more is contained in the Name YKVK.

The Name *ADNY* (*Adanut*), on the other hand, parallels the concept of the *Shekhinah* and points to God’s mastery and providence over creation—i.e., how we experience His presence in our lives.

Again, YKVK leads us to contemplate how the entire universe is naught in comparison to the infiniteness of the One who created it. *Adanut* allows us to perceive His providential concern for everything in the universe down to the tiniest detail of our lives.

Of course, for God, these two poles of reality are inseparable. The problem is that the human mind is limited. We must therefore approach the Awesome Oneness of God’s Name simultaneously in two complementary ways. By doing this, we are fulfilling the command to Unify the Divine Name.

Again, this explains why Jewish law states that we are only to **think** about the Written Name while we **say** the Spoken Name. Of course we are to think about both, beginning with *Adanut* and going higher and higher with YKVK. Ideally, even when praying in English or any other language other than the Sacred Tongue (*lashon ha’kodesh*), the Spoken Name should be pronounced and the Written Name concentrated upon.

This makes the reading of one name and the pronouncing of another similar to the phenomenon of *k’tiv* (written form) and *k’ri* (spoken form) that appears in numerous places throughout the *Tanakh*. Based on the Zohar⁴⁷ and the Talmud,⁴⁸ both the Gaon of Vilna⁴⁹

⁴⁶ *Nedarim* 8b; *Avodah Zarah* 3b.

⁴⁷ *Zohar* 3:230a.

and Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi⁵⁰ maintain that the essential difference between what we are able to *think* and what we are able to *speak* is symbolically encoded in the distinction between the Torah's use of the written word and the spoken word.

Since thought is more abstract and therefore represents a higher dimension than speech, it follows that the function of speech is to constrict and limit the content of what is being thought in order to communicate it. In this sense, thought is non-physical and higher than speech, and it must undergo a step-down process in being translated into the physical dimension of the spoken word. Thus (1) the written word is associated with thought and expresses an internal relationship, whereas (2) the spoken word expresses things as we perceive them in the external world.

When this principle is applied to God's names, the following emerges: We refer to God's mastery and providential care over every detail of creation when we pronounce the name *Adanut* (Master). This is only the bottom of an infinite ladder, however, in comparison to what we are supposed to think when we see the four-letter name *YKVK*. For, what God **does** is miniscule in comparison to who He Himself **is**. Nevertheless, because we think *YKVK* when we say *Adanut*, we bring about a *yichud* (unification) of these two levels together—a *yichud* of the written and the spoken, of thought and word.

YKVK Elokim

We now bring three source texts to enter more deeply into the meaning of *YKVK* (*Havayah*) and its relationship to the Divine Name *Elokim*. Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi wrote:⁵¹

It is written, "A sun and a shield is *Havayah Elokim*" (Psalm 84:12). The explanation of this verse is as follows: By a "shield" is meant a covering of some sort that is used to protect one from the light of the sun. One shields oneself from the light so that he should be able to bear its intensity. This is reminiscent of what our Sages of blessed memory said: "In the Future, the Holy One will take [the light of] the sun out of its sheath [orb]. The wicked will be punished by it and the righteous will be healed..."⁵² For the time being, just as a sheath shields and protects us from the sun, so also does the Name *Elokim* shield and protect us from the powerful revelation of the Blessed *Havayah*... The meaning of the Name *Havayah* itself is "*Mehaveh*—He who constantly brings everything into existence ex nihilo."

The *Tzemach Tzedek*, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, quotes the above text and continues:⁵³

It is written, "A sun and a shield is *Havayah Elokim*" (Psalm 84:12)... The Name *Elokim* is like a shield, sheath or garment which conceals and hides within itself the life-force that emanates from *Havayah*—the One who constantly brings everything into existence. This then allows for the existence of finite, separate creations made up of soul and body. The soul parallels the life-force of *Havayah* that shines into *Elokim*, and the body parallels *Elokim* which hides and covers over the *Havayah*. This is [the root reason] why the body is literally a garment over the soul. It is also the reason why the Torah warns us numerous times, "Know today and reflect on it in your heart that *Havayah Hu HaElokim* in the heavens above and on the earth below—there is nothing else" (Deuteronomy 4:39). This

⁴⁸ *Pesachim* 50a; *Berachot* 54a.

⁴⁹ Gloss on *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim* 5:1.

⁵⁰ *Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh* 19.

⁵¹ *Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VehoEmunah* 4.

⁵² *Nedarim* 8b.

⁵³ *Derekh Mitzvotekha, Mitzvat Milah*, p.10.

comes to teach us that the concept of multiplicity [of finite, separate existences] that comes about through the Name *Elokim* does not imply a real separation from *Havayah* in any way whatsoever. Even after multiplicity is brought about via the Name *Elokim*, all is still included in the Unity of *Havayah* just as it was before the world was created. In truth, therefore, there is no separate existence. All is one seamless Unity.

This can be understood by way of analogy: Imagine a large barrel filled with water. In order to fill up many smaller buckets from this large barrel, we can use many tubes or pipelines [as many as there are buckets]. Of course, each tube has to limit and constrict the flow of water from the barrel to fit the size and capacity of each bucket. In this way, the water can be distributed to the various buckets—something that would be impossible if we had to pour straight from the barrel. Indeed, pouring straight from the barrel would cause great quantities of water to spill out over the sides of the small buckets [rendering the entire procedure a failure]...

Now, you can see that even though the tubes seem to have constricted the water, they are nothing more than the medium through which the water's flow is tapered off. They do not affect the water itself. In fact, as long as the water flows from the barrel through the tubes and into the buckets, it [the water] is still not separated from its source [in the barrel]. In the same way, the Name *Elokim*, which is associated with the concept of *gevurah* (restraint) and *tzimtzum* (constriction), constricts the *shefa* (life-force, illumination) of the waters of God's *chesed* (love). This is alluded to in the verse, "*Peleg Elokim malei mayim*—the Name *Elokim* differentiates [*Havayah*] which is full of water" (Psalm 65:10). It is also alluded to in the phrase "Lift up your eyes on high and behold *Mi bara eleh*—Who has created these!" (Isaiah 40:26). The *Mi* (Who) of *Elohim* is the hidden unity behind *eleh* (these) which represents the concept of multiplicity and separate existence.⁵⁴

This again is the meaning of *Peleg Elokim malei mayim*, namely, the Name *Elokim* differentiates and divides via subsidiary pipelines which are the permutations of the Hebrew letters that cover over and conceal the light of *Ein Sof* that manifests through *Havayah*—He who was, He who is, and He will be forever—who is absolutely boundless and limitless, with no beginning and no end... Behold, these permutations are merely pipelines through which the essence life-force of *Havayah* flows. And, as we saw above, even after it clothes itself in them, it is never separated from its source. All remains One.

Furthermore, the concealment that is brought about by the letters is only from our point of view and for our benefit. From God's point of view, there is no concealment whatsoever. So it is now self-evident that even after separation and multiplicity is brought into existence via the Name *Elokim*, all is still included in His Blessed Unity. On the contrary, the concealment only exists for us, whereas for Him, all of creation is as naught just as it was before He created it... And this is the mystery of *Havayah Hu HaElokim—ein od*—there is nothing else...

The Gra (Rabbi Eliyahu, the Gaon of Vilna, 1720-1797) writes:⁵⁵

Elokim. This is the Name that is used exclusively throughout the first seven days of creation. The reason for this is that every creation is made up of two elements - its individual identity and its life-force. The identity of something is a product of the Name

⁵⁴ According to the *Zohar* (1:2a), the code-word for the world of multiplicity that we see with our eyes is *eleh* (these). Look at *eleh* (these), and ask *Mi* (Who?). Combine the two words *eleh* (these) and *mi* (who) [switched around to read *im*], and you obtain *Elohim*.

⁵⁵ *Aderet Eliyahu, Bereshit*, p. 6.

Elokim. Its life-force is the product of the *Havayah* who “gives existence and life to all” (Nehemiah 9:6).

Rabbi Yitzchak Izik Chaver explains by restating the Gra’s words in terms of the Kabbalistic concept of *Tzimtzum*. He writes:⁵⁶

As explained by the Ari (Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, 1534-1572), before God created the universe, His infinite light filled all existence. In order to create anything distinct from Himself, God had, so to speak, to self-contract or constrict His light away from a certain point. This self-contraction was necessary in order to create a “vacated space” within which to emanate the universes. Once this was accomplished, God then filtered His light back into the space in measured amounts through what the Ari calls the *Kav* [a pipeline of sorts similar to what the *Tzemach Tzedek* referred to above]. The relationship of the *Kav* of measured light and the Vacated Space parallels the relationship between *Havayah* and *Elokim*. This relationship is embodied in the relationship between a husband and wife.

The Gra is alluding here to the mystery of the *Tzimtzum* and the *Kav*. The *Tzimtzum* gave birth to the concepts of boundary, finitude, individual identity, and vessels. They represent the myriad levels of creatures and powers that live and function in each universe. The whole idea of individual identity stems from *Elokim* which itself is a concept of *Gevurah* [Restraint]. The Name *Havayah*, on the other hand, is represented in the life-force that flows [unchanged] through the *Kav* at every level. It is the mystery of interconnectedness that binds all multiplicity to Unity...

We have attempted to “unstop” some of the incredible wellsprings of meaning concealed in the various Divine Names that “appear” and “disappear” throughout the Bible. Like God Himself, these Names are partly revealed, but largely hidden. At times, for a split moment, they peek out at us, and then immediately retreat into hiding. Like a bolt of lightning lighting up a dark and stormy midnight sky, these momentary revelations illuminate the pages of our lives for a split second, and then disappear. Lest we become disheartened with the way that God seems to be playing some kind of cosmic game of Hide-n-Seek, it is incumbent upon us to learn how to get the most out of what is revealed when the moment comes, instead of complaining about how little we got to see...

Meditating on YKVK

The Psalms were composed to help us connect to God’s Overriding Mercy. To get a deeper appreciation of how this works, pay attention to the number of times the Name YKVK (*Havayah*, *Hashem*) appears in certain psalms. In Psalm 3, for instance, David speaks to God and addresses Him 6 times using the Name YKVK in the space of 9 verses. In Psalm 27, it appears 13 times in the space of 14 verses. In Psalm 29, the *Havayah* appears 18 times in the space of 11 verses. Based on the total of 18 occurrences of *Havayah* in this psalm, the sages established the eighteen blessings of the weekday *Amidah*. Based on the fact that seven of these occurrences are written *Kol* YKVK (Hashem’s voice), they established the seven blessings of the *Shabbat Amidah*.⁵⁷

In Psalm 30, the Name *Havayah* appears 10 times in the space of 13 verses. In Psalm 32, David addresses God using the Name *Havayah* 13 times in the space of 22 verses. In Psalm 34, there are 16 occurrences of *Havayah* in the space of 23 verses. In Psalm 116, the Name *Havayah* occurs 15 times in 19 verses. In Psalm 118, the Name YKVK occurs 22 times, while

⁵⁶ *Be’er Yitzchak on Aderet Eliyahu loc cit.*

⁵⁷ *Berachot* 28b.

the Name *YaH* appears 6 times, all in the space of 19 verses. In Psalm 135, *YKVK* occurs 15 times in 21 verses.

This phenomenon is not limited to the Four-Letter Name. In Psalm 68, the Divine Name *Elokim* appears 26 times in the space of 36 verses. In Psalm 136, the phrase *ki le'olam chasdo*, "His love is eternal and everlasting" (or "His steadfast love to the world—though at times hidden—is constant and endures forever") also appears 26 times in the space of 26 verses. Since, 26 is the numerical value of *YKVK*, this is clearly intentional and purposeful.

Glance at these psalms and read each verse in which this Name (or any Divine Name) appears. Doesn't the Name seem redundant? Shouldn't David have used the pronoun "He" instead of the Name itself (at least in some instances)? Doesn't the 3rd of the Ten Commandments state, "Do not take the Name of *YKVK* in vain"? Doesn't this imply that we are not allowed to say God's Name without a good reason and without the greatest respect for its sanctity? Why then wasn't David more circumspect in using the Name?

To understand the answer yourself, take any psalm that contains an inordinate number of Divine Names. Read the psalm out loud, slowly, emphasizing the holy Name *YHVH*. [Read *YHVH* with your eyes, and say *Adonai* with your mouth.] All the other words that are threaded in-between these Divine Names, whisper. That is, raise your voice when you say the Name, and lower it to a whisper for all the words in between.

If you listen well, you will hear yourself saying the Name *Adanut* over and over again, one after another, raising your voice and lowering it, all to the tune of God's Name. With practice, you will be able to stretch out the Name, to lift your voice in song, to be with it, to enter into it, to allow it to enter into you, to feel its healing power. The words around the Name will be like the trees in a wondrous forest, and the Name itself will be the light of the sun shining through...

Concentrating thus on the Name as you say it, it will become clear to you that all the other words that surround it are there to help you understand the many different ways that you can see and experience God in your life. They are there to allow you to have a "left brain" understanding of what you are saying. The main thing, however, is the Holy Name! This Name transcends your human understanding of God's ways. It puts you in touch with His Overriding Mercy. In this way, you are permitted to repeat The Blessed Name over and over again. This explains why David doesn't use the pronoun "He" as often as one might do in a normal text or conversation.

You can visualize the entire text of the Psalms as if it were written on a single strip of parchment. As you read, the parchment moves (as if on a conveyer belt). Behind this parchment is a brilliant white light. Every time the Divine Name *YKVK* appears in the text, there is an aperture in the parchment. Light shines through this aperture. If you come close to the parchment and look closely into the aperture, you see the Name *YKVK* in shining white light. If you now move the parchment faster, the words on it will blur slightly. In addition, the faster you move it, the more the light will shine through. Eventually, if you move the parchment fast enough, all you will see is light.

Now, when you slow down, a wonderful thing might happen. Each and every word will begin to reveal its light to you. You will pay attention to things that you couldn't possibly have seen before hand. Having seen the rays of the sun peak through the trees, you will now start to pay attention to and rejoice in the exquisite beauty of each and every tree and blade of grass. Having seen the light behind the parchment, you will now be able to better

appreciate how that light subtly infuses every word of the Psalms and the parchment itself. The parchment itself will begin to shine.



For thus it is in life. We need peak experiences to be able to glimpse the great light that shines just beyond and behind the seemingly impenetrable parchment of our lives. But then we need to return. Like a near-death experience, in which we temporarily leave our earthly bodies to glimpse the incredible light that lies behind and beyond our physical dimension, we must now return. Like a prophet who momentarily loses consciousness of himself as separate from God in order to receive the prophetic influx, we must now return.

But now we have tasted the light. And it has transformed us. Now the details of our lives, the very fabric of our lives, the parchment itself, shines.

And this is where our comments will assist you. Some of them, to be sure, are directed at a basic understanding of what the Psalms are saying. The majority, however, are directed at helping you gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics behind and in the words—to view earth-life from the viewpoint of eternity, to be awe-struck at the magnificence of God's

Plan—and to return to the daily challenges of your life inspired, to become aware of God's Providence in the very events of your life.

So sit back and take the Psalms in hand and start to peruse this ancient text that was written by David, the once and future King. And don't be surprised if you too become overwhelmed with a desire to be a conduit of God's Torah in the process.

VIII. The Sefirot and the Ten Divine Names

Above we presented a chart of correspondences between the ten archetypal types of song in Psalms and the ten *sefirot* of the Tree of Life. In the previous section we explored the meanings of some of the Divine Names that appear throughout the Psalms. Now we will attempt to show the interrelationship between these Divine Names and the *sefirot*.

First, in a general sense, the *sefirot* themselves embody the *midot* (qualities, attributes) that Hashem uses to create, sustain, and govern His world, and most importantly, to relate to us. The term *sefirah* itself is related to the Hebrew *saper* (express or communicate), and *sapir* (sapphire, brilliance, or luminary). It is also related to *safar* (number), *sefar* (boundary, frontier), *sapar* (barber), and *sefer* (book). In essence, all these are related concepts and point to the *sefirot* as having two basic functions. First, the *sefirot* are *orot* (lights or luminaries) that serve to reveal and express Hashem's greatness. Secondly, they are *kelim* (vessels) that limit and delineate Hashem's infinite light, bringing it into the finite realm of number and boundary. It is through the ten *sefirot* that the Infinite *Ein Sof* shines His light into the system of universes in a graduated or step-down fashion. In this way, the *sefirot* reveal the will of the *Ein Sof* in a way that we humans can grasp it.

Ramak (Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, 1522-1570) explains this double function of the *sefirot* thus: "There are two reasons which are really one why Hashem emanated the *sefirot* of *Atzilut*. First, He wanted to conceal (constrict, filter, screen, channel) His *infinite* light in order to allow for the existence of *finite* creations. Second, [once this was accomplished,] He wanted to reveal Himself in such a way that these creations could actually experience His greatness, each according to their ability."⁵⁸

In the section of the *Tikuney Zohar* known as *Petichat Eliyahu*, we see the same idea: It is through the Tree of Life (the system of the *sefirot*) that Hashem constricts His light in stages in order to thereby give man the ability to receive the ultimate gift of existence from Him in a way that he (man) can handle it. As such, the *sefirot* act variously as windows, filters, garments, and vessels for the infinite light that fills them. The *sefirot* are actually the basic conceptual model or structure that underlies all creation. They allow us to speak about Hashem's immanence in His creation—what He does—without referring directly to what He is (which, as we said, is beyond any category).

The Holographic Universe

Generally speaking, our consciousness is built in such a way that we experience a particular divine attribute in isolation from its complements. The truth is that each *sefirah* or attribute is inter-inclusive (or "holographic") in the sense that it contains in miniature all the other *sefirot* within itself. Like a cell in the body, it reflects the entire system from its particular vantage point. Rabbi Shneur Zalman mentions this in relation to the attributes of *chesed* and *gevurah*:⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *Pardes Rimonim* 4:5, p. 19a.

⁵⁹ *Shaar HaYichud VehoEmunah* 6.

The quality of *gevurah* (restraint and judgment) and *tzimtzum* (self-constriction) is also a quality of *chesed* (expansion and love), for through it [or through the combination of both] the world is built. This quality of *gevurah* is actually included in *chesed*... All the attributes are unified with each other and inter-inclusive of each other, as Eliyahu taught (*Petichat Eliyahu*), "You are He who binds them [the ten *sefirot* to Your Unity above] and unifies them [from within]. And inasmuch as You are within them, anyone who separates one from the other is regarded as having caused a separation in You [and Your Absolute Unity]... Yours is the only Unity that unites everything above and below."

The inter-inclusiveness of the *sefirot* flows from their being completely unified with the One who emanated them. In truth, even after having been emanated (i.e., after having been brought forth from no-thing-ness), they still have no separate existence. Rather, they are light-vessels (made of light) through which the great infinite light flows in measured form. This teaching is the basis for the last stanza in perhaps one of the most beautiful kabbalistic poems ever written: "The Almighty unites all ten *sefirot* as one. He who truly perceives the Master's Unity, will be privileged to behold great lights. Fashioned from Oneness, they shine together as one, even in diversity."⁶⁰

The message is clear: Hashem, the Infinite Being, unites all ten *sefirot* within Himself as one, in a complete unity. This is true not only while they are still subsumed in His Infinite Oneness, but even after they are emanated. Because they were "fashioned" from His Oneness, they continue to shine together as one, even in diversity. That is, they continue to reveal His Oneness even through their diverse qualities. One who truly perceives this Oneness in all, even in this world (which gives the impression that things can exist separately from His Blessed Oneness), will be privileged to behold these great lights in their pristine form in the World to Come.

But now we go even deeper. As noted, the *sefirot* have a double function: they are both lights and vessels. This is true, but it is more correct to say that the names of the *sefirot* listed above are the instruments or vessels through which the light of pure Divinity shines. This light is like the soul of the *sefirot*, and it is embodied in ten specific Divine Names that appear in numerous places throughout the entire *Tanakh* (Torah, Prophets, and Sacred Writings).

In other words, we want to move from the level of *kelim* (vessels) to the level of *orot* (lights), from *chitzon* (external) to *penimi* (internal), from the superficial to the depth of the Godly light that is the Reality behind all that exists. This Godly level is embodied in the Divine Names that are the soul-power behind the *sefirot*.

Ten Divine Names in the order of the *Sefirot* of the Tree of Life

I Will Be / I AM	<i>Eheyeh</i> (pronounced <i>Ekeyeh</i>)	אֶהְיֶה
Supernal God	<i>Yah</i> (pronounced <i>Kah</i>)	יָהּ
Loving Judging God	<i>Havayah</i> (with vowels of <i>Elokim</i>)	יְהוָה (בְּנִיקּוּד אֱלֹהִים)
Loving God	<i>El</i> (pronounced <i>Kel</i>)	אֵל
God of justice	<i>Elohim</i> (<i>Elokim</i>)	אֱלֹהִים
God of mercy	<i>YHVH</i> (<i>YKVK</i> , <i>Havayah</i> , <i>Hashem</i>)	יְהוָה
Lord of Hosts	<i>YHVH Tzevaot</i> (<i>Hashem Tzevakot</i>)	יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
God of Hosts	<i>Elohim Tzevaot</i> (<i>Elokim Tzevakot</i>)	אֱלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת

⁶⁰ *Kel Mistater* by Rabbi Avraham Maimon, student of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero.

All-Sustaining / Living God	<i>Shadai / El Chai (Shakai, Kel Chai)</i>	שְׁדֵי (אֵל חַי)
Lord, Personal God	<i>Adonai (Adanut)</i>	אֲדֹנָי

Here are the same ten names and corresponding *sefirot*:

<i>Ten Sefirot</i>		<i>Ten Divine Names</i>
<i>Keter</i> – Crown	כֶּתֶר	אֶהְיָה
<i>Chokhmah</i> – Wisdom	חֻכְמָה	יְהִי
<i>Binah</i> – Understanding	בִּינָה	יְהוָה (בְּנִיקוּד אֱלֹהִים)
<i>Chesed</i> – Lovingkindness	חֶסֶד	אֵל
<i>Gevurah</i> – Power / Restraint	גְּבוּרָה	אֱלֹהִים
<i>Tiferet</i> – Beauty / Harmony	תִּפְאָרֶת	יְהוָה
<i>Netzach</i> – Victory / Eternity / Dominance	נֶצַח	יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
<i>Hod</i> – Majesty / Empathy / Acquiescence	הוֹד	אֱלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת
<i>Yesod</i> – Foundation Channel / Relationship	יְסוֹד	שְׁדֵי (אֵל חַי)
<i>Malkhut</i> – Kingship / Reciprocity	מַלְכוּת	אֲדֹנָי

The above is clearly not enough to understand more than an inkling of the relationship between the *sefirot* and the divine names. My purpose here is merely to attune you to the existence of this relationship. Then when praying from the *Siddur*, reading Psalms, or studying *Tanakh* (Bible), you will pay more attention to these names. In Psalms, in particular, you will notice that King David often uses many names in a single psalm. And you will wonder why.

For the sake of completeness, I therefore bring here, as an addendum to the above section in which I dealt at length with the names *Ekeyeh*, *YKVK*, *Elokim*, and *Adanut*, the meaning of the remaining primary names listed above:

The name *Yah* (*Kah*) consists of the first two letters of *YKVK* and is associated primarily with the *sefirah* of *Chokhmah*. Nevertheless, since it is spelled *Yod-Heh*, it represents the idea that *Binah* (corresponding to the first *Heh* of *Havayah*) exists in *Chokhmah* (corresponding to the *Yod*) in an undifferentiated state before it becomes expressed as a separate *sefirah*. *Kah* is thus a very exalted name, but for this very reason is very paradoxical. Indeed, it seems to contradict the rule that the higher we go, the more love and mercy we encounter. Here, on the contrary, almost everywhere we encounter the Name *Kah*, we encounter judgment.

In explaining this anomaly, Ramban cites the following verse containing this name: "Trust in Hashem forever more, for with *Yah* [i.e., with the letters *Yod* and *Heh*], Hashem fashioned worlds [this world and the world to come]" (Isaiah 26:4). He then writes:⁶¹

This means that Hashem formed worlds with the quality of judgment alluded to in the name *Yah*, as well as with the quality of mercy alluded to in the name *YKVK*. We see that *Yah* alludes to judgment in the following verses as well: "*Yah* has surely afflicted me with suffering, but He has not given me over to death!" (Psalm 118:18); "for [as long as] a hand is on *Yah's* throne, Hashem is at war with Amalek, from generation to generation" (Exodus 17:16); and "if You, *Yah*, were always to take account of intentional transgressions, O *Adonai*, who could withstand [the severity of Your judgment]?" (Psalm 130:3).

⁶¹ Ramban, *HaEmunah VehaBitachon*, Kitvey Ramban, Volume II (Hebrew), p. 358.

This is what the sages meant when they cited the verse, "O *Yah*, fortunate is the person whom You discipline [through suffering] and thereby instruct in Your Torah" (*ibid.* 94:12), and commented, "The verse does not mention the name *YKVK*, but rather *Yah*, in order to emphasize that this is like a man who is standing trial before a court of justice, under the scrutiny of the judge. When he hears his sentence, he cries out in anguish, 'Yah yah (woe, woe), *dai dai* (enough, enough).'"⁶²

Again, almost everywhere we encounter the name *Kah*, we encounter judgment. How can this be? I will answer with two sources. The first is from the Maggid of Mezeritch, in the name of his master, the Baal Shem Tov:⁶³

A father once warned his son not to go barefoot outside the house, lest he be injured. The boy joined with a group of unruly children, however, with whom he ran about barefoot. In no time at all a thorn did indeed enter his foot.

At first the boy wanted to hide from his father. He went home, but entered through the back door in order to show it to his mother. His mother, however, was extremely concerned, and called in his father. When his father saw the thorn, he was concerned lest it cause an infection and abscess. He wanted to remove it but the child would not allow him to touch it for fear that the extraction might be painful. The boy started to cry. The mother also started to cry, feeling the pain of her son. The father forcibly held his son in his lap. Holding a sharp knife, he removed the thorn from the child's foot against his son's will. The child cried out in pain. The mother cried as well.

In the child's opinion, the father acted cruelly toward him because the pain of extraction was greater than the pain of the thorn entering the flesh. In truth, however, this was a healing and not a torture. Had the thorn not been removed, an abscess could have developed in the foot.

We can see, therefore, that the father's fear cannot be compared to that of the son. The father feared the wound might become infected and abscess. The son feared the pain of having the thorn removed and considered it a punishment for having disobeyed his father. The father knew the pain was only momentary and was concerned solely about the son's ultimate benefit.

Man's fear is not the same as God's. Man generally fears punishment. God, on the other hand, is saddened by the actual sin which causes a person to sink into impurity. After the sin occurs, God does not hesitate to exact punishment because it is meant as a remedy to cleanse man and restore his spiritual stature. Man would do well to strive to make his fear the same as God's.

This is the meaning of the verse, "What does God require of you, but *le'yira eth Hashem Elokekha*—to fear **with** Hashem your God?" (Deuteronomy 10:12). That is, your fear should be one *with* God's fear—the same as His. He is concerned lest you sin and harm yourself spiritually. This should be your concern as well. This is the true meaning of the awe or fear of heaven.

⁶² *Bereshit Rabbah* 92:1.

⁶³ *Likutim Yekarim* §244. I have taken the liberty of embellishing the parable slightly in order to bring out the point more forcefully that the father and mother embody two different aspects of mercy and love, as opposed to judgment vs. mercy.

Whereas mother (embodying *Binah*) is extremely empathic about the pain of her son (man), father (embodying the higher mode of *Chokhmah*) *seems* to be completely insensitive. And yet, as the Baal Shem Tov reveals to us in the end, father and mother *both* care for their son. It is just that they embody two *different* ways of being empathic and merciful. The empathy of the father might be called far-sighted or long-range empathy, while the empathy of the mother is more immediate. Certainly both are needed. And it is reassuring to know that Hashem is both our father and our mother.

Now for the second source. It seems to me that the idea behind the above parable is based on the following passage in the Zohar. Here the terminology changes, but the idea is the same:⁶⁴

"*Bekhol tzaratam lo tzar*—in all their sorrow/affliction, **lo** *tzar*, He had no sorrow; but the angel of His presence saved them" (Isaiah 63:9). Come see: In all of Israel's pain/sorrow/affliction, whenever some calamity strikes them, **lo** (לו) is written with an *aleph* (meaning "He has **no** sorrow"). Nevertheless, we are also to read it as **lo** (לו) with a *vav* (meaning "He **is** pained"). How is this possible? Because the Holy One truly is with them in their suffering and feels their pain.

And the reason **lo** is written with an *aleph* [seemingly indicating that He does *not* suffer with them] is because it points to an extremely high level. And even though there is no anger or pain in that place, still, Israel's pain rises up to that place.

[The Demesek Eliezer explains: And the reason *lo* is written with an *aleph* (seemingly indicating that He does *not* suffer with them) is because it points to an extremely high level (*Atika Kadisha*, *Keter*) that is completely beyond our normal distinction between good and bad; the level of the World to Come when we will understand that there is nothing but Hashem's goodness and say, "Blessed is He Who is Good" over everything that happens.⁶⁵ When we raise our pain up to that exalted level, and realize that nothing else exists but Hashem's Oneness, all that we thought was pain, sorrow, and affliction, is nullified.]

There is no question that we human beings would prefer only the kind of love and empathy that we can relate to. Stop the suffering! Stop the pain! Nevertheless, our divine Parent, who is also our divine Grandparent and Great Great Grandparent, thinks otherwise. Because He sees things from the point of view of Eternity, He wants to give us the greatest gift—the ability to grow into our greatness and thereby attain our greatest potential. He therefore knows that we need both *Chokhmah* and *Binah*, father and mother, tough love and tender love. Again, this seems to be what David meant when he wrote, "O Yah, *fortunate* is the person whom You discipline [through suffering] and thereby instruct in Your Torah" (Psalm 94:12).

The Name *El* (*Kel*) is also a double-edged sword. According to Ramban, on the one hand, *Kel* is associated with the *sefirah* of *Gevurah* (power, restraint).⁶⁶ According to the Zohar, on the other hand, it is associated with *Chesed* (love).⁶⁷ Moreover, in the Zohar we are told that the particular admixture of *chesed* (love) and *din* (judgment) inherent in the name *Kel* is weighed to one side or the other by virtue of men's actions. When they are not worthy, it is weighed to *din*; when they are worthy, it is weighed to *chesed*.

⁶⁴ Zohar 1:120b.

⁶⁵ Pesachim 50a.

⁶⁶ Ramban, Genesis 17:1.

⁶⁷ Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's final explanation in Zohar 3:30b.

The same is true of *Shadai* (*Shakai*). This name too is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it means "All-Sufficient," from the root *dai*, "sufficient" or "enough." It is thus understood as "*Sh'yesh dai b'Elokuto l'khol birya*—He whose Essence is *dai* (sufficient) to sustain every creature according to its needs,"⁶⁸ or "*Sh'amar dai le'olamo*—He who said *dai* (enough) to His world," i.e., to the process of concealment with which He created His world.⁶⁹

Another meaning of the name *Shakai* is "Almighty," from the root *shadad*, "to overturn." As such, it is an expression of Hashem's ability to overturn and overcome the very laws with which He runs creation. Whenever necessary—for instance, when He brought the children of Israel out of *Mitzrayim* by means of miracles—He can and will upset and suspend the seemingly incontrovertible laws of nature. Accordingly, in this sense, this name teaches us that Hashem is not subject to any limitation or inadequacy.⁷⁰

Shakai is associated with the *sefirah* of *Yesod* (foundation channel), which stands in the central column of the Tree of Life, between *Netzach* (dominance) on the right, and *Hod* (empathy) on the left. Since it is delicately balanced between the right and left polarities, it is mankind's actions that weigh things to one side or the other.

Kel and *Shakai* are often combined, functioning in such a way that they can embody either mercy or judgment. Indeed, as the Zohar emphasizes, all Hashem's attributes are inter-inclusive: "There is not one that doesn't contain its own particular blend of *chesed* (love) and *din* (judgment)."⁷¹ In the end the way Hashem interacts with us will depend largely on our actions. Nevertheless, even when we lack merit, Hashem's mercy is always great.

This is reminiscent of a Midrash that says the same thing in terms of the two names, *YKVK* and *Elokim*:⁷²

"Elokim remembered Noah" (Genesis 8:1). Rav Shmuel the son of Nachman said: **Woe** to the wicked who overturn Hashem's attribute of compassion to judgment. Wherever the name Hashem (*Havayah*) appears, this implies compassion: "Hashem, Hashem, almighty, merciful and benevolent..." (Exodus 34:6). And yet it is written [in reference to mankind's corruption], "And Hashem saw that man's evil had become great in the earth" (Genesis 6:5), and "Hashem regretted having made man" (*ibid.* 6:6), and "Hashem said, 'I shall blot out man's existence'" (*ibid.* 6:7).

Happy are the righteous who transform Hashem's attribute of judgment to compassion. For wherever the name *Elokim* appears, this implies judgment: "You may not curse the judges (*elohim*)" (Exodus 23:27), and "Their case shall be brought before the judges (*elohim*)" (*ibid.* 23:8). However [in reference to righteous individuals], it is written, "And *Elokim* heard their anguish and *Elokim* remembered His covenant" (*ibid.* 2:24), and "*Elokim* remembered Rachel" (Genesis 30:22), and "*Elokim* remembered Noah" (*ibid.* 8:1). What merit did Hashem remember about Noah? Noah fed and sustained all the animals in the ark for twelve entire months.

See also a parallel text in the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov:⁷³

⁶⁸ Rashi, Genesis 17:1.

⁶⁹ *Chagigah* 12a; see also *Meor Vashemesh, Lekh Lekha*, Genesis 17:1, "*Ani Kel Shakai*," s.v. *venachzor*.

⁷⁰ Rabenu Bachya on Genesis 17:1, citing Rav Saadiah Gaon, Ibn Ezra, Rabbi Shmuel HaNagid.

⁷¹ *Zohar* 3:30b. See below Psalm 7:12, note #22.

⁷² *Bereshit Rabbah* 33:3 near end.

⁷³ *Keter Shem Tov* §246-247.

It is written, "A sun and a shield is *Havayah Elokim*" (Psalm 84:12). The explanation of this verse is as follows: The name *Havayah* is called "sun" and the name *Elokim* "shield"... Just as a curtain is needed to protect one from the powerful light of the sun... so also is the name *Elokim* is needed to protect from the powerful light of *Havayah*. The light that shines from the *Havayah* is very great. It was therefore necessary to restrict and limit it within the name *Elokim*, the *gematria* of which is 86, the same as *hateva* (nature, i.e., the laws of nature).

This is the meaning of the Talmud's statement, "In the future, the Holy One will remove the [light of the] sun from its sheath (orb). This same light will be a healing for the righteous and a punishment for the wicked."⁷⁴

The inner sense of this is that the Holy One will remove the name *Havayah* from its sheath, which is the name *Elokim*, whose *gematria* is the same as *hateva* (nature). At present, the miraculous level of *Havayah* is clothed and concealed within the laws of nature which are embodied in the name *Elokim*. When the light of *Havayah* shall be removed from this sheath, the righteous will be healed by it, for they shall finally see the fulfillment of the verse, "Your eyes will behold your Master!" (Isaiah 30:20). Hashem's providence over them will no longer be concealed in the laws of nature, but rather revealed as above and beyond nature. [Because they prepared themselves in this-world, by seeing the miraculous level of *Havayah* behind the façade of natural law] they will now be able to directly withstand the great brilliance of *Havayah*, and hence receive His unbounded mercies.

Not so the wicked. They will be consumed, as the prophet said, "Hashem shall go forth as a mighty warrior; he shall arouse vengeance like a man of war; He shall shout triumphantly, even roar, when He prevails over His enemies" (Isaiah 42:13). That is, although the name *Havayah* is Hashem's attribute of compassion/mercy, nevertheless, with respect to the wicked, when He removes the *Havayah* from its sheath, they will experience its light as the vengeance of a mighty warrior. Again, with respect to the wicked, He will turn His quality of compassion/mercy into judgment, as the verse states, "And Hashem struck every firstborn" (Exodus 12:29), and "Hashem said, 'I shall blot out man's existence'" (Genesis 6:7).

All that we have said here is but a drop in the bucket. Hashem's names, embodying the different ways He relates to us, are very deep. These sources emphasize the inter-inclusiveness of Hashem's names and sefirotic attributes. This itself can give us a valuable insight as to why we constantly switch from one name to another throughout the psalms and the prayers. Although each name is used in a specific way and refers to a particular divine attribute, we learn to see the great overriding oneness of Hashem—who transcends all quality and attribute—behind all apparent diversity.

IX. Oscillations in Tense ("Past" and "Future")

Prophecy in the Psalms

There are other "secrets" to the way David speaks to and about God. King David often speaks of the future as if it has already come to pass. More, he actually moves (oscillates) back and forth between past, present and future, as if they were interchangeable, or as if they were all happening at the same time.

⁷⁴ *Nedarim* 8b.

We witness this time-oscillation continually throughout the Psalms. On the individual, meditative, experiential level, this type of oscillation is intended to help us break through the time-barrier that exists by virtue of the way our minds work, and experience a kind of continuous present. On the one hand, this continuous present projects us into the future, and at the same time, brings the ultimate future into the now. In Gestalt therapy, bringing the future into the present is called presentification.

On the historical level, time-oscillation teaches us how to see through the camouflage of external events to their inner core. By overcoming the illusion of time, we grasp the process of history by the tail, and can deal with it more effectively in consonance with what Hashem wants. We can bring the Redemption closer by understanding how Hashem runs history.

King David thus spoke of the future as if it had already occurred because when he entered the exalted state of prophecy he experienced time from God's point of view. Since God is above space and time (spacetime), the future is just as real for Him as the past. When the Prophets wrote about the future in the past tense (which constantly occurs in Scriptures), it is as if the future had already come to pass for them. It is as if they had transcended time, transcended the dichotomous nature of human existence, and entered into the future in the present, seeing the panorama of history from above, from God's point of view. It is as if they could touch the Wholeness that transcends and encompasses our fragmented world, hold on to it for a moment, and bring a little of it back for us...

In doing so, they returned with a very clear message informing us that life on this planet is not the beginning or end of existence; that the whole idea of being alive is not exhausted by what we presently know. They inform us of and about the Infinite Eternal God who created us; how we and the entire world around us are sustained, watched over, guided, by the awesome Eternal One. How, in worlds "above" and "within," this is more revealed, while here "below" it is hidden. [The reason that not only the existence of the Infinite One is hidden but also His providential care, is so that man can exist in a world where he is completely, or nearly completely, a free agent.]

They inform us that every part of this meta-system of creation is interconnected; that the *Shekhinah* (Divine Presence) is everywhere. As stated, they remind us that our present awareness of the world is a drastic diminution from that of previous generations. But they also give us a way to reconnect to those levels of awareness that they accessed in an incredible way.

They teach us that our world will only exist in its present state for a limited period of time (the duration of which depends on Mankind in general and on the Jewish people in particular). They teach us that all the great miracles of the past were only an infinitesimal taste of what is to come.

They teach us the power of prayer.

In the teachings of the Ari, Prayer is called *aliyah le'shaah* (momentary ascent). Prayer can catapult a person "up" to a "place" where the ultimate future has already dawned in the present. This is very different than what most people do with their lives, dream away the present by "living" in the past or future. This is more like a meditative awareness that expands the present to include the past and future. Instead of fantasizing in a negative or unproductive sense, this is curative and restorative of present equilibrium. By becoming aware of the ultimate Future World in our present, we become *Bnei Olam haBa*, literally, "Children of the Next World." That is, even as we live and breathe and walk in this world, we are living, breathing and walking in Eternity. Again, this is different than what most people do. The

present interest in past lives is a case in point. Of course Judaism teaches that most of us have lived before, but the emphasis must be on HERE and NOW!

X. Oscillations in Person (“You” and “He”)

There is another key factor that can change our entire understanding of how King David prayed. He constantly moves (“oscillates”) back and forth between the second and third person, i.e. between speaking to Hashem as “You” or as “He.” That is, David addresses Hashem directly in the second person (*Atah-You*), and then indirectly in the third person (*Hu-He*), and very often continues to switch back and forth a number of times. This movement is extremely burdensome and uncomfortable, both in the original and in translation. Most of the time, we naturally tend to overlook it, because it really does not “fit” into our rational understanding of things. It can be said that it plays a major factor in turning off the mind during prayer, for the simple reason that speaking to someone or Someone both as here and as not here is an extremely mindboggling operation! When we begin to pay conscious attention to this phenomenon, however, it can become the key to a profound change in the way we pray. By understanding it, a whole new story opens up.

In essence, this type of formulation is an exact parallel of the above-mentioned oscillation in time. Just as time-oscillation can be seen as a device for breaking through the illusory veil of spacetime to an immediate experience of the Divine, so too is this oscillation between “You” and “He” a powerful device for breaking through the illusion of duality that characterizes our experience of reality. This “oscillation” is discussed by a number of major commentaries. It was not invented by the sages, but with King David or before.⁷⁵

The fact is that David does not merely address Hashem as *Atah-You* and then as *Hu-He* and leave it at that. In many cases, too many to be coincidental, there is an actual repeating oscillation within a particular psalm (see especially our commentary on Ashrei). In fact, when an entire Psalm is divided according to second and third person, a whole new pattern emerges. In our opinion, this pattern reflects one of the most profound levels of prayer of which we are generally totally unconscious. When it is made conscious, it becomes the vehicle for moving into an expanded state of consciousness (*mochin d’gadlut*) which is one of the explicit Kabbalistic intentions behind all prayer. Through oscillating between You and He, we actually soar beyond the confines of the conscious, rational mind which is noted for its limiting and constricting nature vis a vis actually experiencing the Divine, and jump into a higher mode of closeness to God.

In light of these considerations, we present here some further thoughts on the concept of oscillation in prayer:

When we first enter in a dialogue with the Infinite, we are attempting to transcend the limited confines of our conscious mind, to go up and peer through the concealment of this world, to taste the taste of Eternity. From our narrow straits, we call out, “You!” But we soon realize that that we are still only relating to God through a glass darkly. Essentially, we are relating a reflection of ourselves, or more correctly, of Who we unconsciously think God is. This is fine, of course, for beginners, but eventually we want to know God as He is, at least to the extent that that is possible for us at any particular stage.

So we accept the fact that it is impossible to grasp (and thereby limit) Hashem as “You” (*nokhach*-present) because, as high as we can go, there is always a level of “He” (*nistar*-

⁷⁵ See translations of Rashba, Rambam, Ramban, Abudraham, Baal Shem Tov, Gra, *Nefesh HaChayim*, *Arukh hShulchan*, etc., on this in Appendix B of *A World of Infinite Blessings*.

hidden) that lies above and beyond it. This leads us to realize that a new level of "He" will always lie beyond whatever "You" we call Hashem. In this sense, "He" is the highest level. Yes, it is important that we talk to Hashem as "You," that we feel the closeness of His Presence, but then we realize how far away this is from He who is ineffable and who is always infinitely beyond anything we can know.

As I note in *A World of Infinite Blessings*, this oscillation embodies its own constantly repeating dynamic.⁷⁶ In other words, there are different levels of "You" and different levels of "He."

This dynamic can be likened to a man and wife who come to speak to a Rabbi or family therapist. At first, they both face the therapist and speak directly to him. When the therapist speaks to the husband about his wife, he (the husband) responds by saying, "she." Only later, with the help of the therapist's wise intervention is the couple able to engage in a full one-on-one conversation to the exclusion of the therapist. In the meantime, the therapist is sitting back and smiling because, for the first time since they entered his study, they are actually talking to each other like a man and wife should!

This couple could now theoretically switch back into the He and She, but with one major difference: They have broken through the distorted system of lenses that prevented them from seeing one another. They have established direct contact. Now, the third person is used with respect to that infiniteness that lies beyond all that we can ever know of each other...

The same is true about our relationship to Hashem in prayer. We often begin our relationship with Hashem in indirect ways. Only once we are sure that we are ready to move on to the next step are we able to speak directly to Him. And only then can we begin to realize that no matter how close we get to Him, He is always infinitely beyond us. When we then oscillate between these two modes, we experience both His closeness and His awesome other-ness at the same time.

According to what we have said, conversing with Hashem in "You" and "He" implies a Vertical relationship with the Divine. This is actually built-in to our system, in which Heaven, the spiritual dimension, is always seen as being "above." In this sense, the closer we get to Hashem, the more we transcend the constrictions of this world, the "higher" we go, without end. For just as a greater "He" lies beyond every "You" we experience, so also, beyond every "He" is another "You." And beyond that "You" is another "He," ad infinitum.

This is important, because we are thus given a peek into what is in store for us. As close as we can ever get to Hashem, He is always infinitely beyond anything we can know or experience of Him. Even when we get closer and break through to a higher "You," His utter transcendence again lies beyond that. This is Hashem's gift to us. The universe will never be boring. We were created to rise up higher and higher, closer and closer, beyond anything we can imagine, forever. To even posit an "end," a "final place of rest," is categorically impossible. As high as we go, it is only a plateau, a rest-stop. This is the meaning of the Talmud's statement that, "The righteous have no rest in this-world or in the world-to-come, as it is written (Psalm 84:8), 'They continually move on, from strength to strength, to see God in Zion.'"⁷⁷

⁷⁶ See there, Chapter 4, "The Concept of Oscillation in Prayer."

⁷⁷ *Berakhot* 64a.

This leads us to another way of explaining the movement between "You" and "He" in prayer. This movement is not necessarily "up and down" but "right and left" or "back and forth." In other words, till now we have seen He-ness as a higher level that transcends any You-ness that we can know or directly relate to about Hashem.

Seeing "You" and "He" in terms of a right-left oscillation is different. Going back and forth between the two (You-He-You-He, similar to the actual letters of the Divine Name, *Yod-Keh-Vav-Keh*) represents a unification between two seemingly contradictory (but really complementary) ways of perceiving Hashem. [In the context of *Shachrit*, this paradox reaches a very interesting resolution in the *Shma*.]

The essential paradox involved here can be expressed in the following terms: Let's say we were back in the Rabbi's or therapist's office. There will be times when the wife wants to speak directly to the therapist about her husband. In actuality, she will be speaking to her husband via the therapist. It is just that she cannot say what she wants to say directly to her husband. In this sense, we can picture speaking directly with someone in the third person. But then we can always make an immediate switch back into the second person. It is only a technique to help us get over the present problem that has come between us.

It is interesting that doing this type of exercise is easier than understanding its philosophical implications. Is my husband or wife really here when I speak to someone else about him or her in their presence? How then can I speak **about** him or her? Must I not speak **to** him or her? How can I ignore someone's presence?? Here we can see a paradoxical situation that boggles the rational mind (which likes to have things one way or the other). By oscillating between the two in therapy (or in prayer), however, we go beyond the paradox, beyond the limitations of the rational mind. We break through to that higher level which is beyond "you" and "he" or "she."

In sum, what we are saying is that the dichotomy has to do with the way we perceive God. The dichotomy is in us, not Him. Through the oscillation, we begin to fuse two aspects of our experience, and come closer to His Oneness. This is the true birth of consciousness that Jewish Prayer aims at bringing about.

XI. The Holy One and the Shekhinah – Two Modes of Providence

Returning to the relationship between *YHVH* and *ADNY*, the concept of two modes of Providence, one direct and the other indirect, permeates the entire rabbinical and kabbalistic tradition. Though the names of these two modes will vary according to context, the idea is the same. For example, the first is called *YHVH*, Master of the Worlds, the Blessed Holy One, the Holy King, *Zeir Anpin*, *Tiferet*, and alluded to in code-words like sun, heaven, day, light, mercy, right hand, transcendence, etc. The second is called *ADNY*, *Shekhinah*, the Holy Queen, *Malkhut* (Kingdom), or alluded to in code-words like moon, earth, night, darkness, justice, left hand, immanence, etc.

The first is the source of revealed miracles that transcend natural law, the second the source of the hidden miracles which conform to nature. The first is called Tree of Life, the second Tree of Knowledge. The first is called *or yashar* (direct illumination), or *itaruta d'le'ela* (from-above-to-below), while the second is called *or chozer* (reflected light), or *itaruta d'letata* (from-below-to-above). The first is called Yisrael and the second is called Yaacov. In another context, the first might be called Leah and the second Rachel. In yet another context, the first might be called Yisrael or Yaacov, and the second Leah or Rachel.

The first is called *Mashiach ben David* (the Messiah from the House of David) [from the tribe of Yehudah, the son of Leah], the second *Mashiach ben Yoseph* (the Messiah from the House of Yoseph) [the son of Rachel].

In every instance the first represents a more revealed mode of divine providence and the second a more concealed mode. However much we may experience these two modes as polar opposites, contradictory dichotomies, in their root, they are One.

Perhaps the most well known but least understood example of this hidden unity (as opposed to apparent duality) is seen in the liturgical poem, *Lekha Dodi*, by Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz of Tzfat (c. 1530), sung every Friday night in order to welcome the Sabbath. This song begins:

My Beloved [God], come to greet the Bride! Together let us welcome the Sabbath Queen! Observe and Remember—the One God caused us to hear in a single utterance. *YHVH* is One and His Name (*ADNY*) is One! For the sake of the unity of His Name, for consummate harmony and glowing praise!

In this masterpiece of poetic allusion, the higher mode of *YHVH* (*Tiferet*) is called the Beloved. He is the Blessed Holy One who directs history from above in heaven. The lower mode of *ADNY* (*Shekhinah*, *Malkhut*) is called Sabbath Bride, Sabbath Queen, and Yerushalayim.

During the six weekdays (and paralleling this in the larger time-frame, during the six millennia of this world), the unity of the Holy One and the *Shekhinah* is obscured. The *Shekhinah* is said to be in exile. Yerushalayim is in ruins and the holiness of the Temple (*Beit HaMikdash*) is buried inaccessibly deep in the heart of the Jewish people. Now, on Friday night, as the holiness of the Sabbath descends and illuminates the world with a taste of the Ultimate Future, we turn around and face west, toward the back of the Synagogue (*Beth Knesset*), in order to welcome the *Shekhinah* as she rises up from the depths of exile and concealment to reunite with the Beloved. We ask God to descend from Heaven, to greet the Bride, to reveal His Absolute Oneness in history, the absolute unity of the Blessed Holy One and His *Shekhinah*. We ourselves, children of the Holy One and the *Shekhinah*, rejoice in the privilege of seeing a hint of the revelation of God's Absolute Unity on the Sabbath. We ask that the ultimate Sabbath (the seventh millennium) be ushered in when that revelation will be complete, when mankind will no longer be oblivious to God's Presence, when Jerusalem, the city that unites Heaven and Earth, will be rebuilt. We ask that the son of David come and signal the advent of the Great Sabbath.

This symbolism is the key to the entire system of Torah and Prayer. It is the key to the Song of Songs which is read on the Eve of Shabbat, as well as all the other prayers and psalms which are recited throughout the Sabbath. Finally, it is nothing less than the key to human history, at the end of which the verse will be fulfilled, "YKVK will be recognized as King over the entire earth; on that day the Oneness of YKVK (the Holy King) and the Oneness of His Name (*ADNY*, *Shekhinah*) will be revealed to all mankind" (Zekhariah 14:9).

XII. David, Sweet Singer of Israel, and the Ten Elders

Above, we quoted part of a Midrash about the ten archetypal types of song in the Psalms. Let us return to that Midrash now and quote it in full:⁷⁸

⁷⁸ *Midrash Shochar Tov*, Psalm 1; *Midrash Tehillim* 1:6.

Rabbi Nechemiah opened his discourse with the verse, "Wisdom empowers the wise man to unite his kingdom, more than ten rulers who dwell in a divided city" (Ecclesiastes 7:19).⁷⁹ The "wise man" of this verse is David. The "ten rulers" are the ten *zekenim* (elders) who composed the Book of Psalms, namely: Adam, Malkhi-tzedek, Avraham, Moshe (Moses), David, Shlomo (Solomon), Asaph, and the three sons of Korach...⁸⁰

Rabbi Huna said in the name of Rabbi Acha: Although the Psalms were composed by all ten of these elders, they were brought to completion by David, king of Israel. This is similar to a band of musicians who wished to sing and play for the king. The king praised them all, saying, "All of you are sweet singers and excellent musicians. All of you deserve to sing hymns to the king. Nevertheless, I desire to hear only one of you, for his voice is sweeter than all of yours. This is the meaning of the verse, "These are the last words of David...the anointed one of the God of Yaacov, the sweet singer of Israel" (II Samuel 23:1).⁸¹

Just as the Psalms were composed by ten elders, they also contain ten [archetypal] types of song: 1) *Nitzuach*, 2) *Nigun*, 3) *Mizmor*, 4) *Shir*, 5) *Hallel*, 6) *Tefillah*, 7) *Berakhah*, 8) *Hodaah*, 9) *HalleluYah*, 10) *Ashrei*. And the greatest of all of them is *HalleluYah*, for it includes God's Name (*Yah*) and His Praise (*Hallel*) in one word. Rav called the entire book of Psalms *HalleluYah*.

XIII. God's Plan (The Cosmic Clock)

We began by speaking about God's Plan. The Torah teaches that God has a plan for creation. That is, God created the world with a purpose in mind, and this purpose is the motivating force behind all that happens. We know of the existence of this plan (and that it will unfold in stages) from the first chapter in the Book of Genesis. There we are told that God created the

⁷⁹ This is a "wisdom" verse, meaning that it contains a spiritual truth that can be applied (at varying levels) to countless situations. Before we can understand Rabbi Nechemiah's "midrashic" explanation of this verse, it is important to understand one or more of its more basic meanings. Midrash never comes to exclude these other meanings, but rather to build on them. For instance, the "wise man" of this verse can be seen as a wise ruler (king, president, governor, etc.) who knows how to unite his people, as opposed to any number of lesser men whose only thought is to gain power. On the contrary, the wise man makes these lesser men his advisors and in this way helps them channel their capabilities for the good of the collective. Another application, in terms of the human personality (which is often portrayed in the Book of Ecclesiastes as a miniature world, country, or city), is that the "wise man" is the brain. The brain functions much like the central processing unit of a super-computer. It constantly receives information from, and coordinates activities between, all the various organs and receptors, and it stores this information in its memory bank. The brain thus acts as commander-in-chief of the body, directing the nervous system, controlling the heart and respiration rate, and maintaining the body's chemical balance. Clearly, without the brain ensuring the overall synergy of the organism, the unity of the body's various sub-systems would break down (as at death).

⁸⁰ Note that Rabbi Nechemiah has counted David among the ten elders, placing him fifth (in chronological order). These ten elders correspond to the ten *sefirot* through which the Godly light is revealed in the world. In terms of the *sefirot*, David is tenth, corresponding to *Malkhut*-Kingship, which acts as the funnel through which the light of all the higher *sefirot* is channeled down into our reality.

Although Rabbi Nechemiah has identified the "wise man" of our verse as David, and "Wisdom" is usually said to correspond to the second of the ten *sefirot* (*Chokhmah*-Wisdom), and therefore to the Brain, this does not contradict the fact that David is associated with the tenth *sefirah*, *Malkhut* (Kingship). *Malkhut* itself is also called "the Lower Wisdom" because of the special relationship that exists between these two *sefirot*. They both have a quality of unifying disparate elements. At the high end, *Chokhmah* is likened to a "seed" that contains all the instructions needed to grow a tree, and a "seed thought" that contains an entire program of instructions to bring an idea (like a house) to completion. At the lower end, *Malkhut* is the tree and its fruit, and the completed house. David is thus the wise man who brought the sum total of all the wisdom of the other nine elders together in one book, the Psalms.

⁸¹ The praises given to the other nine rulers (each of whom corresponds to a particular *sefirah*) indicate that all of them have an important role to play in revealing the Godly light. Kabbalistically, the reason that David is singled out is not because he is better than the rest. On the contrary, like the Moon, *Malkhut* is said to have no light of its own, only that which it receives from the higher *sefirot*. Similarly, David is considered the main composer of Psalms because he was a perfect channel to reveal all the prophetic teachings that the others had received in a way that would have the most powerful impact.

world in six days, and rested on the seventh day, the Sabbath. Resting on the Sabbath means that the various things that God created throughout the first six days of creation were preparatory—part of a larger plan which was brought to completion on the seventh day. This is the meaning of the Torah's statement:

It was evening and it was morning, the sixth day. The heavens and the earth and all their hosts were completed. With the advent of the seventh day, *Elohim* brought all the work He had done to completion. On the seventh day, He ceased from all the work He had completed. *Elohim* therefore blessed the seventh day. *Elohim* also sanctified and elevated it, for on it He ceased from all His work which He had created to perfection (Genesis 2:1-3).

The six days of Creation followed by a Sabbath serve as a template or blueprint for what is known as the 6000 years of history followed by the Great Sabbath. Right now, according to the Biblical calendar that has been kept by the Jewish people for millennia, we are in the year 5773, that is, 773 years into the sixth millennium, 226 years before its conclusion and the advent of the seventh millennium.

Biblical Years	Common Era
5000	1240
5250	1490
5500	1740
5750	1990
6000	2240

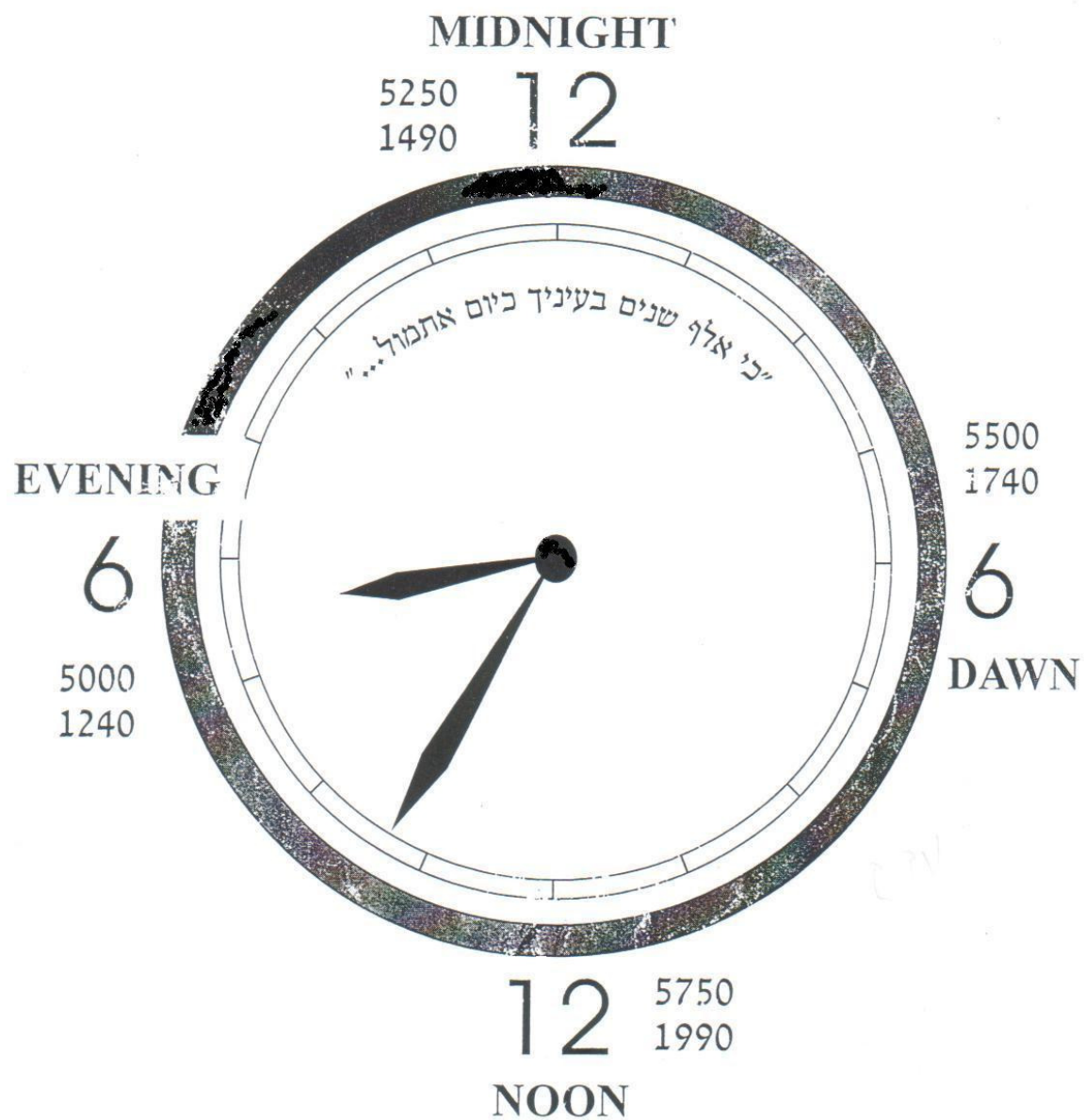
The sixth millennium corresponds to the sixth day of creation and the seventh millennium corresponds to the first Sabbath.

Everybody knows that the year 1900 C.E. was the beginning of the 20th Century. Similarly, the year 2000 C.E. marked the beginning of the 21st Century. In the same way, the above table begins with the Biblical year 5000 which marked the beginning of the sixth millennium. That year corresponded to the year 1240 of the Common Era. [We are not concerned here with why they correspond, just with the fact that they do.]

The table then jumps 250 years to the Biblical year 5250 (one-quarter of the way into the sixth millennium) which corresponded to the year 1740 C.E. Another 250 years brought us to the year 5500 (half-way into the sixth millennium), corresponding to the year 1740 C.E. Another 250 years brought us to the year 5750 (three-quarters into the sixth millennium), corresponding to the year 1990 C.E. As of this writing (2014), that was 24 years ago. As we said, that leaves us 225 years until the year 6000, the beginning of the seventh millennium.

Rabbi Eliyahu, the Gaon of Vilna (aka the GRA, an acrostic for Gaon Rabbi Eliyahu, 1720-1797 C.E.) was the first to extrapolate that each millennium, that is, each 1,000 year period of history, is like a "cosmic day" made up of 24 "cosmic hours." In other words, if 24 hours on the "cosmic clock" correspond to one "cosmic day," then each 6 hour segment corresponds to 250 years.

שנה



Biblical Years	Cosmic Clock	Common Era
5000	6:00 p.m. (evening)	1240
5250	12:00 p.m. (midnight)	1490
5500	6:00 a.m. (dawn)	1740
5750	12:00 a.m. (noon)	1990
6000	6:00 p.m. (evening)	2240

Based on this, if we count 250 years (6 hours) from 1240 C.E. (the beginning of the sixth millennium, "evening" of the sixth cosmic day), we come to 1490 C.E. Since 1240 C.E. corresponds to the beginning of the evening of the sixth day (approximately 6:00 p.m.), 1490 C.E. corresponds to "midnight" of the sixth millennium (12:00 p.m.). Another 250 years (6 hours) bring us to 1740, or "dawn" of the sixth millennium. Another 250 years (6 hours) bring us to 1990, or "noon" of the sixth millennium.

Each 6 hour period can also be broken down further. If 6 hours equals 250 years, one hour equals 41 years and 8 months, or 41-2/3 years. If 1990 was noon of the 6th millennium, 1948-9 was 11:00 a.m. and 2031-2 will be 1:00 p.m. Finally, the year 2240 will signal the end of the 6th millennium, the advent of the Great *Shabbat*.

According to the Jewish calendar we are thus more than three-quarters through the sixth millennium, in the last home-stretch of history, racing to the Great Sabbath. This fact alone gives us tremendous insight into the events of our time. Jewish communities the world over have always "welcomed the Sabbath" early, before sunset every Friday. This itself follows upon intense preparations for the Sabbath that begin on Wednesday and Thursday, and intensify throughout Friday morning and afternoon. Then, as the Sabbath approaches, all preparations cease. Whether we are ready or not, the light of the Sabbath enters and permeates the world. Time, space, and consciousness are uplifted with a taste of the Great Sabbath.

This weekly cycle of six days building up to and culminating in a seventh is a miniature of the millennial cycle of six thousand years building up to and culminating in the Great Sabbath. Just as preparations intensify as the weekly Sabbath approaches, so history begins to intensify and accelerate as the Great Millennial Sabbath approaches.

And more importantly, just as the Jewish people collectively welcome the Sabbath before sundown every Friday, so we are promised that the light of the Great Sabbath will enter and permeate the world way before the year 6000 (2240 C.E.). When that happens depends on us.

Surely, then, we are living at a crucial stage in history. Major events and major historical processes are taking place all around us and before our eyes at closer intervals and ever increasing rates. According to the Gra's "Cosmic Clock" we have passed "high noon" of the sixth millennium. This means that we have entered and are living through an important "culminating" stage in the history of the world. Similar to the last scenes of a movie or play, this last stage of history will see all the "threads" of the Historical Drama come together. In Aramaic this stage is called *Ikveta d'Meshicha*, the Footsteps or Heels of the Messiah. In English, it is called "the Pre-Messianic Era."

In the course of reading our translation and commentary on the Psalms, you will see more about the Pre-Messianic and Messianic Eras. For the moment, let us merely register the claim that, according to the Torah, history is a great Messianic Drama that leads to a

rendezvous with God, specifically, with greater and greater revelations of the Godly Unity that lies behind all existence. This rendezvous is called "the World-to-Come" and "the Great Sabbath." It is the goal of the historical process, the end of history as we know it, the beginning of a whole new world, an eternal world of light, of heaven on earth, of heaven coming down and elevating and transforming earth existence.

Again, the fact that the historical process is leading up to and will culminate in the advent of such a New World is perhaps one of the most important messages of the Torah for our generation. It is a message that is pregnant with meaning and which begs to be seriously understood and acted upon in a mature and thoughtful manner. The Psalms are filled with this message, and as Prayer directed to God, are filled with yearning and hope, not only for the fulfillment of this message, but for the privilege of consciously participating in its realization.

*

God's Plan is thus coming to fruition. God is bringing the world closer and closer to its ultimate perfection.

The process cannot be stopped; it is a cosmic imperative that God, Who is completely Infinite and beyond anything we know, brings Man and Creation ever closer to Himself. The only problem is that there must be cleansing first, and this is up to man, to decide how he wants to be cleansed. He can help in the process and gain merit, or he can try to work against it. But no one who really understood the plan of the Creator as taught by the sages of Israel would ever want to oppose it... Even the worst types of perpetrators of evil, all of whom have been reincarnated in this generation, all at once, can undergo tremendous change if all of us will begin to realize how we got here, who we are, etc. from the point of view of this Plan.

Once, long ago, starting with Adam, God gave man prophetic knowledge of Himself. This prophetic knowledge is the key to the prophetic experience, which was taken away from the Jewish People, but not forever. According to our sources, this experience will be given to all of mankind at a certain point, all the more so, the Jewish People.⁸²

These texts connect us back to our ancient mission on this planet, the ancient mission of our People and the ancient mission of our Souls. Because of its special spiritual makeup, the Psalms is really a *Merkavah*, a Sacred Vehicle for collectively ascending out of what our sages called *Avira d'Hai Alma*, the "atmosphere of this world," in order to get re-connected to Heaven, the dimension from which our souls emanated, so that we can fulfill our roles at this most awesome time in the history of the planet.

The message rings loud and clear: The Prayers of the Jewish People are not empty words. They have great power to awaken the Soul of Israel to its direct connection with God. Though we are seemingly irretrievably cut off from this direct connection, it is more possible now than ever before to regain access to it through the real meaning and power of Jewish Prayer. We are privileged to be living at a special time when history is racing ahead now at an unprecedented rate. The scientific and technological breakthroughs of the last 150 years (and especially the last 20 years) are merely the external trappings of a great wisdom that was revealed to our prophets and sages. This inner wisdom is being re-revealed in our days through a deeper understanding of the Sacred Prophetic Scriptures.

⁸² Joel 3:1; Isaiah 11:6; Ramchal, *Derekh Hashem* 2:8:4 and other places.

XIV. Prayer for the Revelation of God's Oneness

The Torah teaches that God is One. "*Shma Yisrael YHVH Eloheinu YHVH echad*—hear O Israel, Hashem is our God; Hashem is One" (Deuteronomy 6:4). This is the *Shma*. In the *Shma*, the Torah proclaims that all things come from One Ultimate Unitary Source. There is one unifying Force in the universe behind all things, God alone, and no other. God is the absolute Unity and Oneness behind all that exists. This Unity and Oneness is all inclusive. Everything—all multiplicity—is grounded in it. Nothing exists outside of God's Oneness.

This is made even more explicit in another verse: "You have been shown, so that you could know, that *YHVH* is the Only God—*ein od milavado* (there is no other beside Him)" (Deuteronomy 4:35). According to the Kabbalah (the deeper teachings of the Torah), God constricts His Infinite Light to allow worlds and dimensions to come into existence, but ultimately all these worlds and dimensions exist within Him.

The Torah wants us to internalize this important knowledge: "Know today and reflect upon it in your heart that *YHVH* is the Supreme Being in heaven and on earth—*ein od*—there is nothing else" (Deuteronomy 4:39).

Now, during the 6000 years of "this-world," the implications of this knowledge are hidden. As the Great Sabbath approaches, however, it will become more and more revealed. This itself will take place in stages. One of these stages is, "I will place My Torah inside of them, and inscribe it upon their hearts...A man will no longer teach his friend and his brother saying, 'Know God!' For all of them will know Me, great and small alike" (Jeremiah 31:32-33). After that, "I [God] will then turn the nations to a pure tongue, so that they may all call out in the Name of *YHVH* and serve Him as one man" (Zephaniah 3:9). And after that, "I will pour out My spirit on all flesh, and your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions" (Joel 3:1).

The purpose of the Psalms (and of all Prayer and Meditation) is to re-establish contact with the Source of all Being, to align ourselves with Its Will, to ask and plead that that Will be done:

Hashem! You have told us in Your Torah that we must know and feel with every fiber of our being that You are the Source of Being and Existence, and that there is no other. Your Oneness alone lies behind everything, and it is this Oneness that You wish to reveal to Your Creation, when You see fit, whether mankind is ready or not. On that day, Hashem, the world will be filled with the consciousness of Your Presence like the waters fill the seas. On that day, we will look back and see that Your Light and Your Providence had been with us from the very beginning. On that day we will see with new eyes that, behind the physical laws You created to "run" Your world, You give existence to all.

We are ready for You to reveal Yourself in Your world, in our lives, and for all eternity. We are ready for You to reveal all of history as a drama that leads to this revelation, and beyond into eternity. Let knowing, really knowing that You are here with us in all the daily events of our lives, change something in us. Let it uplift us and arouse our souls. Let it connect us to You, allow us to relate to You even in the midst of the drama of our daily lives. Let it also lift us up above the mundane, to see our lives in the perspective of eternity, as part of Your plan. Let it allow us to take part in having that awesome, wondrous and joyous plan come to fruition. Let it prepare us for the great day when You will reveal Your Oneness in our lives, and for all eternity...

XV. Tehillim Drama – Turnabout

We are, in fact, characters in a Tehillim Drama. Who's to blame for all the problems that have arisen? Any one side? Any one person? No! Everybody and Nobody! First, everybody. Because every single one of us has to take a good look inside to see what part we played (usually unwittingly and unintentionally) in allowing the darker forces of the *klipah* (*sitra achra*) to get involved. Once we have done this (and it is serious, it can't be done perfunctorily) then we get clear enough to see the *sitra achra* for what it really is: a form of "static" that interferes (when invited) and begins to take on an existence of its own—of course always feeding off our sins (especially our sins of supposed self-righteousness).

Tehillim Drama? King David is constantly talking about his enemies, crying out to Hashem to save him, to come to his aid, to overturn the schemes of his enemies, to turn their schemes against David back on their own heads, to let them fall into the pits and get trapped in the traps they have laid for him. Who are these enemies? On the factual, historical level we can usually identify them as the various characters in David's life, whether they be the Philistines and the Yebusites, or Shaul and his men, or Doeg the Edomite and Achitofel, or closer to home, his own brothers, and even his own son Avshalom.

Seen from a deeper perspective, these characters are only vehicles and instruments of the dark forces that wish to stop David from fulfilling his mission as King of Israel and Hashem's Anointed *Mashiach*. And that is why, if they can't find a suitable vehicle in the cast of characters that surround David, they will go in, and fight him in his own soul and psyche. They will try to tear him apart from within. This is why David rarely identifies the enemies he speaks about by name. Their outer guise doesn't matter. Goliath and Doeg and Avshalom are just masks worn by people who have had the unfortunate "privilege" of becoming pawns in the hands of the side of evil. It is the force that masquerades behind these masks from which David cries out to be saved. In the end, they will have a chance to do *teshuvah* (unless they become like Pharaoh and totally forfeit that opportunity). But the point is that we understand David's real message to us:

David is teaching us a much deeper lesson about what goes on in our lives and our own souls. He is teaching us how to see behind the disguise, to understand that there are forces whose only desire is to divert and subvert the Godly Plan. He is teaching us that if we are victorious on the inner battlefield, we have a much greater chance for victory in the outer circumstances of our lives. We can overcome the most powerful obstacles outside of us if we will only understand the dynamics of how Hashem tests us with difficult situations inside ourselves.

This is the concept of the Turnabout: In essence, there are two types of characters in the Psalms, the *tzadikim* (righteous) and the *resha'im* (wicked). Certainly, they represent real characters (or nations) in David's life. But it is just as true that they can be seen as stages in the life of the individual, or archetypes within each and every one of us. All of these levels of interpretation are true. When read and understood in this way, the Psalms become the vehicle for transforming the *resha'im* in society and within us into *tzadikim*. As we will show, this is the real transformational power of The Psalms of King David.

XVI. Psalms of King David – Songs of the Soul of Israel

In view of the fact that our lives (individually and collectively) become more intense and trying as we come closer to the Messianic Age and the Great *Shabbat*, the reading of psalms is more important than ever.

Psalms are meant to be read **slowly** (preferably in Hebrew, and then, for greater understanding, with this translation), with the intention of directing our emotions, focusing our thoughts, and binding our soul, without utmost outpouring, to Hashem, the Only One who can do anything to change the situation here in our land and in our world, by transforming the deepest darkness into light.⁸³

In the wake of terrorist attacks or any other form of human evil or natural disaster, pray for the soul-elevation of all those who have died. Pray that Hashem comfort and console their families and loved ones. Pray for the physical, emotional, and psychological healing of the wounded and the maimed. Pray that heavenly justice and lightning judgment be visited upon the perpetrators of these acts. Pray that mankind awaken from its amnesia, from the illusion of separateness, from the illusion that prevents us from seeing and knowing that nothing exists separate from the light and power of the Infinite One who made us all. Pray that the evil lie be exposed in all its ugliness, so that mankind will finally know the Truth.

Remember, when David speaks of himself, he speaks for all Israel. The Psalms of David are our way of connecting to the Collective Soul of Israel, and through that to the Collective Soul of All Mankind. True change and transformation will only begin on the inner soul-level of Creation. From that deep place, it will spread outwards, until the world will be transformed.

The main thing to remember is to connect and cry **in** to Hashem.⁸⁴ Don't be hardhearted. Don't intellectualize what is going on. That's not what the Psalms are about. They are meant to help you get beyond your seemingly mature rational mind, to connect to the Infinite Mind, to ask that He illuminate us with His light and His compassion. Don't be sidetracked by the notes we have added. They are not meant to take away from the emotional impact, but, on the contrary, to enhance it.

יְהוָה עֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן
יְהוָה יְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם:

Adonai oz le'amo yiten, Adonai yevarekh et amo ba'shalom.

*Hashem, give strength to Your people to endure and overcome all hardship;
Hashem, bless Your people with true everlasting peace in a world transformed, amen.*

⁸³ There are times when it is appropriate to say many psalms, one after the other, or even the entire Book of Psalms. This is praiseworthy and a very powerful thing to do. Still, quantity should never take precedence over quality. Each psalm is a whole world in itself. Thus it is possible to meditate on one psalm, or even on one verse, saying it slowly over and over again, or even stopping in the middle and speaking to Hashem in your own words, or even maintaining complete silence for an extended period (while in the middle of one psalm). Saying psalms in any or all the above ways puts you in a special place that is beyond words, a sacred space in which you know, without a shadow of a doubt, that Hashem, the Infinite One who created us, is truly here.

⁸⁴ I distinguish here between *crying out* to Hashem, and **crying in**. Crying out implies that He is outside of us, and far away. Crying in (although awkward at first) means going inside and connecting to our core. There, in that holy of holies of the human heart is where we are truly connected to Hashem.

Tehillim 1

The first and second psalms, *Ashrei HaIsh* (happy is the man) and *Lamah rag'shu goyim* (why are the nations in a commotion), are essentially one psalm (*Berakhot* 9b-10a). As a unit, they provide the key to the entire Book of Psalms. In the first psalm, David, King of Israel, speaks to the individual, and in the second psalm he speaks to the nations of the world. In both, he challenges us with the same ultimate choice, thus teaching us that neither the individual nor the collective can be seen in isolation from one another. One person can affect the entire world and change the course of history.

The ultimate choice of the individual is thus: Will you wake up and see the truth, or forever sleep your life away? Even now, in the midst of the seemingly absolute darkness of "this-world," in the midst of an almost total self-centered materialism—will you begin to perceive Hashem's hand guiding history towards the "World to Come"? If you acquiesce, Hashem Himself will teach you His Torah, He will reveal to you the deeper significance of your life, who you are, why you were born. The gates of the spiritual dimension will open up for you right now; you will be blessed; you will attain an incredible closeness with your own soul and with your Creator. Conversely, you may create your own hell; and you will perish from the face of the earth.

(1) Happy is the man who sees through the façade of this world; ¹ who has not been seduced into following after the advice of wicked men; ² who has even when he stumbles not stood to linger on the path of immoral men, and who has not sat or made his permanent dwelling with scoffers. ³	(א) אֲשֶׁרִי הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא הָלַךְ בְּעֵצַת רְשָׁעִים וּבְדֶרֶךְ חַטָּאִים לֹא עָמַד וּבְמוֹשָׁב לְצִים לֹא יָשָׁב:
(2) His desire is rather in the mysteries of Torat YHVH [Hashem's Torah]; ⁴ in His Torah he meditates day and night thus acquiring it as his own for all eternity. ⁵	(ב) כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה חִפְצוֹ וּבְתוֹרַתוֹ יִהְיֶה יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה:

¹ *Ashrei* means happy or fortunate, but also shares the same root as the word *shur*, to see, to perceive. *Ashrei* thus connotes that sense of happiness that comes from being able to see through the superficial, temporal aspects of our lives and touch eternity. Compare "*ashurenu ve'lo karov*—I perceive it, but not in the near future" (Numbers 24:17).

² What is the definition of *rasha* (*resha'im*, plural; *rasha*, singular), usually translated "evil" or "wicked" man? Look at the letter-structure of the word *rasha*: *resh-shin-ayin*. The first and last letters, *resh* and *ayin*, spell *ra* (evil). The *shin* in the center can be seen as an abbreviation of the word *ish* (man). The *shin* in *rasha* is the *ish* who is caught in *ra*. In this sense, the English term *wicked* is perfect for it carries the connotation of twistedness, as in the twisted *wick* of a candle. A wicked person is really someone who has become twisted and enmeshed in being wicked; i.e., he not only perpetrates wicked acts but has become twisted and wicked himself. Evil is also an interesting word. It contains the same letters as the word *veil*. As we shall see repeatedly, it is the nature of evil to veil itself and make people think that it is just another face of good.

³ Rashi points to the descending order in which the verbs appear: *halakh* (walking or following after) can lead to *amad* (standing or lingering), which in turn can lead to *yashav* (sitting or dwelling). Happy is the person who has not gotten caught in this downward spiral. According to R. Moshe Almosino, *reshaim* (wicked men), *chataim* (immoral men), and *letzim* (scoffers) correspond to the three levels of thought, action, and speech respectively: "Not following after the advice of *reshaim* implies guarding ourselves from evil thoughts; not lingering on the path of *chataim* implies guarding ourselves from evil actions; not dwelling with *letzim* implies not speaking evil." *Derekh chataim* means literally "path of sins," but refers here to the path of men who commit sins of immorality (Sforno); see also below Psalm 104:35 where we cite the Talmud's distinction between *chataim* and *chotim* (sins and sinners) (*Berakhot* 10a).

⁴ The Divine Name YKVK represents Hashem's attribute of unconditional love and overriding mercy (see Introduction). *Torat YKVK* (Hashem's Torah) is the Godly Plan, the Supernal Torah or Blueprint, not only of the entire physical cosmos, but of all the dimensions of our inter-dimensional universe, seen and unseen, physical and spiritual. This is implied in the expression *Torat Hashem* (i.e., *Yod, Heh, Vav, and Heh*), wherein each letter of the Four-Letter Name represents another level or universe. Although this Supernal Torah is known only to God, He has revealed parts of it in divine inspiration to His chosen ones, from Adam to our day. The totality of this Torah will be revealed in the Messianic Age.

⁵ Here we use smaller letters to catch the double meaning of the word *Torato*. *Torato* can be read "His Torah" (referring to Hashem's Supernal Torah) or "his Torah" (the Torah one acquires for oneself by internalizing the Supernal Torah). By meditating in His Torah, we internalize it and make it our own (Rashi, *ibid*; *Kiddushin* 32b top).

"*Torat YKVK*" is also the Five Books of Moses, while "his Torah" is the five books of Psalms of David. The purpose of the Psalms is to teach us how to draw the Supernal Torah down into our earthly existence, how to internalize the light of consciousness in our thinking, speech, feelings, and actions. First we must overcome the "advice of the wicked," the voice within which tries to convince us that only what we see with our physical eyes is real, and know that that Higher Dimension does exist. Then we can begin to return to our-Selves, reclaim our higher Destiny, begin to redeem the Godly sparks that are our souls and reconnect them back to their Source. Then we can begin growing up to our full stature as human beings, and not only overcome but transmute our lower energies (the desire to linger with those who have become trapped into following their lower instincts along the

(3) The Torah comes alive within him like a Tree of Life planted by tranquil streams of water, giving forth its ripe fruit in its season, its leaves never withering; granting him success in all his endeavors. ⁶	(ג) וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ שְׁתוּל עַל פְּלִי מַיִם אֲשֶׁר פְּרִיו יִתֵּן בְּעֵתוֹ וְעָלְהוּ לֹא יִבּוֹל וְכָל אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה יִצְלִיחַ:
(4) Not so those who become trapped in their own wickedness; they are likened rather to chaff blown and scattered by the wind. ⁷	(ד) לֹא כֵן הַרְשָׁעִים כִּי אִם כִּמְצָא אֲשֶׁר תִּדְפְּנוּ רוּחַ:
(5) Therefore because they have sold themselves to evil the wicked will not survive in the face of God's judgment; immoral men will not abide in the company of the righteous.	(ה) עַל כֵּן לֹא יִקְמוּ רָשָׁעִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט וְחַטָּאִים בְּעֵדַת צְדִיקִים:
(6) For Hashem knows and loves the way of the righteous, while the way of the wicked is doomed to end in ruin. ⁸	(ו) כִּי יוֹדֵעַ יְהוָה דֶּרֶךְ צְדִיקִים וְדֶרֶךְ רָשָׁעִים תֵּאבֵד:

Tehillim 2

Here David addresses the nations with the same choice: "Now beware, you kings; take heed, you judges of the earth...lest He become angry and you perish on the way [like so many other nations who rose up and then vanished from the stage of history]." The choice is yours! Choose before it is too late, or suffer the consequences! Do you join Israel in its mission to increase the awareness of God among humankind? If you do, you will rise to true heights of greatness. You will become the new Israel of the future, while Israel will become the Priests of an enlightened humanity (Rashi, Isaiah 44:5; Ibn Ezra, Isaiah 61:6). If not, know that you will perish. You may rise to the pinnacle of temporal glory and power, but in doing so you will sow the seeds of your own ruination. As above, it is a choice between "be happy" or "perish." Yet, as if to foreshadow a happy ending to the historical drama, the last verse in Psalm 2 does indeed read: "Happy are those who take refuge in Him!" But will the nations of the world get the message?

"Why are the nations in a commotion...set themselves...against Hashem and against His anointed?" Although David himself was anointed by Shmuel, he refers here to his descendent, *Mashiach ben David*, as Hashem's *Mashiach* (Anointed Redeemer). He also refers to the idea of the *meshichut*, the messiahship and the messianic mission. It is this idea, together with the revelation of Hashem's Oneness which it expresses, that the power of evil, embodied by Gog, King of Magog, opposes. In speaking to collective mankind, this psalm thus jumps ahead to the ultimate confrontation between good and evil that will take place as the historical drama draws to its ultimate finale. This psalm was composed to strengthen Israel's faith when, just prior to the final Redemption, everything

path of immorality) into a powerful desire to cling to God. Then we can lift the *Shekhinah* up to Her Beloved, uniting the lower world with the higher dimension in an eternal covenant of love. Then we can begin to draw down (even now) the Supernal Torah that will be fully revealed with the advent of the Messianic Age.

⁶ "[The Torah comes alive within him] like a Tree [of Life]..." Based on *Targum Yerushalmi*, we have translated this verse to state that the Torah becomes a Tree of Life for the person who meditates in Hashem's Torah day and night. *Daat Sofrim* sees Man himself as a tree: "A fruit tree represents something that lives long, and gives fruit for many years. David thus speaks here of a fruit tree which is planted and cared for, not one that just grows wild. This alludes to the fact that Torah learning requires a living teacher who can guide us in understanding the depths of the Torah. For it is impossible to truly understand the Torah without a living transmission. From such a teacher, we then learn how to develop our own ability to understand."

"Planted by streams of running water." "Not just by one stream or spring, but by many. One who learns Torah day and night finds in it many different types of ideas that enliven him. In addition, he is also drawn after many different types of teachers (*Shochar Tov*). Each one of these teachers is like a new stream of living waters for his soul" (*Daat Sofrim*).

"Giving forth its ripe fruit in its season." A fruit tree gives forth its fruits in its season to the best of its abilities. A person too must always strive to produce his best according to his nature.

"Its leaves never withering." The sages (*Succah* 21a) refer to the casual speech of Torah scholars as "leaves" (based on their resemblance to lips). When a person truly strives for perfection, not even his everyday speech (leaves) are allowed to become dry and lifeless.

"[Granting him] success in all his endeavors." Although David began by emphasizing the importance of learning the Torah and meditating in it, here he alludes to the importance of taking one's learning into every aspect of life. Still, success is not a direct outcome of man's actions. There is no guarantee that we will see "fruits" in our pursuits. Neither is it easy to determine if we have attained true success or merely something transient and passing. Here, David speaks of true success, success which is eternal.

⁷ Whereas a *tzadik* (one who embodies righteousness) is likened to a living tree, a *rasha* (wicked man, a man who has become enmeshed in his own wickedness) is likened to dead chaff. Compare: "Tzadikim are called 'living' even after they have passed away...*Reshaim*, on the other hand, are called 'dead' even while they are alive!" (*Berachot* 18a-b).

⁸ See our in-depth commentary on this psalm in which we explore the psychological dynamics of sin, repentance, and atonement.

will hang in the balance and it may seem that the Godly Plan has aborted.

(1) Why are the nations in a commotion, and why do governments contrive futile plans?	(א) לָמָּה רָגְשׁוּ גּוֹיִם וּלְאֻמִּים יִהְיוּ רִיק:
(2) Why do the kings of the earth set themselves in array, and rulers gather together secretly to take counsel against Hashem and against His anointed saying:	(ב) יִתְיַצְּבוּ מַלְכֵי אֶרֶץ וְרוֹזְנִים נֹסְדֹו יַחַד עַל יְהוָה וְעַל מְשִׁיחוֹ:
(3) "Let us sunder their bands of morality and cast off their cords of duty"?	(ג) נִנְתָּקָה אֶת מוֹסְרוֹתֵינוּ וְנִשְׁלִיכָה מִמֶּנּוּ עֲבֻתֵינוּ:
(4) But He who sits/dwells in the heavens will laugh. Adonai will mock them for thinking that they could defy Him. ⁹	(ד) יוֹשֵׁב בַּשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׁחַק אֲדֹנָי יִלְעַג לָמוֹ:
(5) But the time will come when He will speak to them in His anger, and terrify them with His burning indignation:	(ה) אִזְ יִדְבֹר אֲלֵינוּ בְּאָפוֹ וּבְחֲרוֹנוֹ יִבְהַלְמוּ:
(6) "It is I who have anointed David My king, on Zion, the mountain of My holiness."	(ו) וְאֲנִי נִסְכַּחְתִּי מַלְכִּי עַל צִיּוֹן הָר קִדְשִׁי:
(7) David declares: I will therefore recount it until it becomes inscribed as law: Hashem said to me, "You are My child whom I have begotten today!" ¹⁰	(ז) אֶסְפָּרָה אֶל חֵק יְהוָה אֲמַר אֵלַי בְּנִי אֲתָה אֲנִי הַיּוֹם יִלְדָתִיךָ:
(8) "Ask of Me and I will make nations your inheritance; your dominion shall extend to the ends of the earth.	(ח) שְׁאַל מִמֶּנִּי וְאֶתְנַהּ גּוֹיִם נַחֲלָתְךָ וְאַחֲזָתְךָ אֶפְסֵי אֶרֶץ:
(9) "You will break your enemies' power with an iron rod, and shatter them to pieces as potter's vessels."	(ט) תִּרְעַם בְּשִׁבְטִי בְרֹזֶל כָּכְלִי יוֹצֵר תִּנְפֹּצֻם:
(10) David speaks: Now beware, you kings; take heed, you judges of the earth.	(י) וְעַתָּה מַלְכִּים הִשְׁכִּילוּ הוֹסְרוּ שְׁפָטֵי אֶרֶץ:
(11) Serve Hashem with awe, and rejoice before Him with trembling.	(יא) עֲבֹדוּ אֶת יְהוָה בִּירְאָה וְגִילוֹ בְּרַעְדָּה:
(12) Gird yourselves with purity of heart, lest He arouse His ire, and you perish on the way like so many other nations who rose up and then vanished from the stage of history; for His wrath might be kindled soon. Happy are those who take refuge in Him!	(יב) נִשְׁקֹו בְּרֶפֶן יָאֻנֶּה וְתִאֲבָדוּ דֶּרֶךְ כִּי יִבְעַר כִּמְעַט אָפוֹ אֲשֶׁרִי כָל חוֹסֵי בוֹ:

Tehillim 3

When David speaks of his adversaries, he speaks on a number of levels simultaneously. As with every psalm, this psalm too has a physical counterpart in the events of David's life—namely, his son Avshalom's attempt to take over the throne of his aged and ailing father. By extension, David also speaks of every type of opponent Israel will face

⁹ Man sees only what is before his eyes. He is fooled by what he sees. Without the objective perspective provided by the Torah, he can never hope to see his way out the maze which he himself has created. God sees history from Above.

¹⁰ Meiri: David says, "In my estimation, this honor that You are according me is like a *chok*, a royal edict which must be obeyed whether one understands it or not." David said this in all humility, for he didn't consider himself worthy of being king over Israel. *Sfat Emet*: David says, "I am not worthy of the honor that Hashem is according me. I consider it as a *chok*, a royal edict by which the people must abide even if they do not understand the reasoning behind it." But then, Hashem Himself answers David, saying, "You are definitely worthy! And this, for two reasons: First, because you are My son, and I am your Father. In addition, today I am making you a new person, as pure as a newborn babe without the slightest trace of guilt." Meiri: "You are My child whom I have begotten today" – from the day that Shmuel anointed David, *ruach ha'kodesh* began to stir within him, as the verse attests, 'Hashem's *ruach*-spirit descended upon David from that day onward' (I Samuel 16:13)."

According to Malbim and Amos Chakham, the words *asapera el chok* mean, "I will therefore recount it until it becomes inscribed as law." King David embodies the divine attribute of *malkhut* (kingship). As such, it is his task to revive each and every one of us by shining the light of faith and hope into the darkest reaches of the human soul. David is thus the "pipeline" (in Hebrew, *ha'tzinor*, which shares the same letters as *Har Tziyon*, Mount Zion, verse 6) through which spiritual light and sustenance flow to the world. This is the deeper meaning of *asapera el chok*. *Asapera* (from *sapir*, the root of sapphire) means "I will shine and illuminate"; *el chok* (similar to a *chok*-immutable law of nature) means "into the *chok*," into the very nature of each of every soul. To each and every one of us, David declares: "*Beni atah*—you are God's child! Today you can be reborn to your true mission in life!"

in its long tear-laden history. None of these will be mere physical enemies but rather each one will divulge—in one way or another—that it wishes to destroy Israel's Torah and the God-idea that it carries. David thus forewarns us: Know that all these various different enemies are embodiments of spiritual forces, ultimately the force of evil itself which opposes Israel as the carrier of the Godly plan here on earth. Finally David also speaks of his own inner struggle with the very forces of his own soul. Here too, as in many other psalms, he wishes to teach us how not only to subdue our inner enemies, but to transmute the very energy that seems to wish to undermine us into the most powerful service of God. In line with this last level, this psalm has been incorporated into the Ashkenazic Bedtime Prayer as an inner meditation. Our translation emphasizes this meditative level.

(1) <i>Mizmor LeDavid</i> – A cutting-psalm by David, when he fled from his son Avshalom. ¹¹	(א) מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד בְּבָרְחוֹ מִפְּנֵי אֲבִשָׁלוֹם בְּנוֹ:
(2) <i>Hashem</i> , O merciful God, how myriad my adversaries and the inner constrictions that prevent me from turning to You; SO many thoughts rise up against me.	(ב) יְהוָה מָה רַבּוּ צָרֵי רַבִּים קָמִים עָלַי:
(3) Multitudes of thoughts whisper about my soul, "He has no salvation in/with <i>Elohim</i> for eternity, <i>selah</i> ." ¹²	(ג) רַבִּים אֲמָרִים לְנַפְשִׁי אֵין יְשׁוּעָתָה לוֹ בְּאֱלֹהִים סֵלָה:
(4) But You, <i>Hashem</i> , O merciful God, are my shield, my glory; You lift my consciousness up above the din. ¹³	(ד) וְאַתָּה יְהוָה מִגֵּן בַּעֲדִי כְבוֹדִי וּמְרִים רָאשִׁי:
(5) I shall therefore call out, directing my voice to <i>Hashem</i> ;	(ה) קוֹלִי אֶל יְהוָה אֶקְרָא וַיַּעֲנֵנִי מֵהָר

¹¹ This is the first of many appearances of the word *mizmor* at the head of a psalm. In our Introduction we emphasized the double meaning of the root *zamer*. *Zemer*—singing and chanting is particularly suited for *zemer*—pruning and cutting through and eliminating the confusion and mental static that prevent us from penetrating to the deeper meaning of life. With music we can soar above our daily cares and woes precisely because of the harmony it brings not only to our soul but to our perception of reality. From the point of view of the Torah, music and singing were meant to be aids for approaching our Creator and grasping the truths of His Torah. When guided by this principle, the songs and chants of our prayers can become powerful tools to inspire us, to free our minds and emotions to rejoice in God, to hone our ability to grasp the truth of His Torah and internalize its lessons in our lives.

The *mizmorim* (perhaps the source of the word *mesmerize*) of King David are thus to be chanted. The chant is meant to exhilarate our emotions with a deep gratitude to Hashem for being alive. When sung in this way, the words of the psalms become *pruning shears* to clear away the mental barriers and negative emotions that may be holding us back from feeling Hashem's presence in our lives.

In a sense, what we usually identify as negative emotions are negative thoughts. If we could just feel the emotion, that itself could bring about a powerful clearing. In our generation, this is one of the major factors in people feeling (i.e., *thinking* that they feel) unable to pray. It becomes reduced to a mental trip. These psalms are all heart. An entirely different experience opens up when they are said with all the pent up feelings within us. Just breathe deeply and allow the awareness of the deeper levels of your own being to rise up into consciousness. Be patient; give yourself a few minutes. Don't judge the feelings that come up. Feel them. This is what David himself did. It was from this deep place within that he composed his psalms. You too therefore must open up to your own feelings. And when you do, you will discover, like many before you, how these psalms are the perfect vehicle to allow you to express the deepest longings of your soul, for yourself, for your loved ones, for your people, for all humanity, for the entire world, and ultimately for the *Shekhinah*, Hashem Himself.

¹² David's enemies, or his thoughts (depending on what level we wish to read this psalm), judge him unworthy of God's salvation. His answer: Of course I don't come before God filled with pride and thinking how great I am. On the contrary, I know that, ultimately, no man can justify himself before the All-Knowing One. I therefore call out to YKVK to save me from my enemies and from my own sense of unworthiness."

¹³ We have seen that the divine Name YKVK embodies Hashem's attribute of unconditional love and overriding mercy, whereas the Name *Elokim* embodies Hashem's attribute of justice which requires that we deserve what He gives us. For the most part, we experience God as *Elokim*, as the One who judges us and relates to us in accord with our actions, i.e., according to His attribute of fair justice which requires that we deserve what He gives us. Why? Because just as parents want their children to thrive and grow into mature, responsible adults, so does God want us to grow into mature and responsible souls. As our Heavenly Parent, His desire is to bestow upon us, His children, the greatest good possible. In order to insure that we will be worthy of receiving the ultimate good that He wishes to give us, He sent our souls down into this world where we would have to struggle to attain our own perfection, acquire our own eternity. This teaches us that what we do makes a difference. It gives ultimate meaning to human action. God's judging us means that He cares how we use our free will. Out of His love for us, His creatures, He cares about what we do. Still, His love for us is not dependent upon what we do. It transcends and overrides what we do. It is because of this that we can call out to Him to save us when we have become bogged down in and cannot extricate ourselves from our own mistakes. Truly, His mercies are never exhausted.

I shall call out, trusting that He will answer me from the mountain of His holiness, <i>selah</i> . ¹⁴	קְדֹשׁוֹ סֵלָה:
(6) I lay down and I slept; I have now awakened knowing that <i>Hashem</i> alone sustains me.	(ו) אָנִי שָׁכַבְתִּי וְאִישְׁנָה הִקְצוֹתִי כִּי יְהוָה יִסְמְכֵנִי:
(7) I will therefore not be terrified, even if multitudes deploy themselves against me and surround me on every side.	(ז) לֹא אִירָא מִרְבָּבוֹת עִם אֲשֶׁר סָבִיב שְׁתוּ עָלַי:
(8) <i>Hashem</i> , arouse Your love for me; save me, for You are my God! I turn to You alone for You have always struck the jaw of all who hate me; You have broken the teeth of those who speak evil against me.	(ח) קוּמָה יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי אֱלֹהֵי כִּי הִכִּיתָ אֶת כָּל אֹיְבֵי לִחֵי שֵׁנִי רָשָׁעִים שִׁבְרָתָ:
(9) Salvation is Yours, <i>Hashem</i> ; may Your blessing therefore rest upon Your people forever, <i>selah</i> ! ¹⁵	(ט) לִיהוָה הִישׁוּעָה עַל עַמְּךָ בְּרַכְתֶּךָ סֵלָה:

Tehillim 4

In this psalm, King David emphasizes the value of trusting in Hashem and putting all our efforts into becoming worthy of His blessing. This is juxtaposed against the mistaken attitude of those who place supreme value on material prosperity as opposed to spiritual integrity. As always, it is our choice. Will we opt for a life attuned to fulfilling God's will in whatever circumstance we find ourselves, or will we forever miss the mark, mistaking outer success for the real thing? If we choose the former, we may even have to do so in the face of insults and accusations by those who have chosen the latter, those who, in their desire to attain material benefit, have lost sight of what is of real importance. In the end, they too will come to realize that happiness can never depend solely upon material possessions. On the contrary, only the power of Hashem's light beaming into our souls nourishes true feelings of trust and happiness—feelings that lead, not to spiritual torpor, but to greater and greater attainment, because they are accompanied by a determination to fulfill Hashem's will.

¹⁴ "He has no salvation with *Elohim* for eternity, *selah*" (3:3). "He will answer me from the mountain of His holiness, *selah*" (3:5). "May Your blessing rest upon Your people forever, *selah*!" (3:9). Three verses in this psalm conclude with the word *selah*. What does this mysterious word really mean? Musically, the word *selah* indicates a slight pause-in-the-beat in preparation for moving on to a new level or idea. The word itself means literally, "eternally," "forever" or "any exceptionally long period of time, whether projected into the distant future or retroactively into the distant past" (Meiri). What is a "pause-in-the-beat" if not a "pause-in-time"? What is a pause-in-time, but a breaking-out-of-time-into-eternity, or a corresponding breaking-forth-of-eternity-into-time?

¹⁵ "Salvation is *Hashem's*; may Your blessing therefore rest upon Your people forever, *selah*." Alt: "*Hashem*, the secret of ultimate redemption is Yours. May Your blessing therefore rest upon Your people forever, *selah*." The secret or key to ultimate redemption is in God's hands. Yes, man is charged with the responsibility of bringing the world to the point at which redemption becomes possible. Ultimate redemption itself, however, the crowning of man's efforts, is in God's hands alone. This same dynamic is mirrored in numerous other places. It is built into the system of Torah. In one place it is written, "*Umaltem et orlat levavkhem*—you shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart" (Deut. 10:16), and later in another place, "*Umal Hashem Elokekha et levavkha*—Hashem will circumcise your heart" (Deut. 30:6). In one place it is written, "*Veshavta ad Hashem Elokekha*—you shall return to Hashem your God" (Deut. 30:2), and immediately afterward it is written, "*Veshav Hashem Elokekha et shevutkha*—Hashem will restore/return your captivity" (Deut. 30:3). Man is charged with "awakening in *teshuvah* from below" as a preparation for God's "awakening His mercies from above." Similarly we are to work for six days of the week retrieving sparks of holiness that are trapped in the external layers of reality, in order to receive the inner light of the *Shabbat* on the seventh day. Similarly, we work hard to purify our *midot* (personality traits) as we count the 49 (7 x 7) days of the *Omer*, in order to receive the Supernal Torah on the fiftieth day, the day which is beyond our counting (although without having counted 49 days, we could never receive what God wants to give us on the fiftieth). Similarly, we struggle through 6,000 years of history in order to enter the seventh millennium, etc. In every instance we are charged with preparing the vessels with which and within which we can receive the light that Hashem wants to give us.

Additionally, the *Zohar* (3:90a) learns from here that, not only Israel and Mankind, not only Nature and the Cosmos, are presently in a state of exile from the Divine and require redemption. God Himself, the *Shekhinah*, the Divine Presence is also in exile with Israel. This is thus the alternate meaning of "*LAdonai ha'yeshuah*—redemption will also be for Hashem Himself!"

Rashi interprets the phrase *al amekha birkhatekha* not as a request that Hashem's blessing rest upon His people, but as a charge that devolves upon Israel to bless Him (*al amekha birkhatekha* = it is **on** or **for** Your people to bless You): "Hashem, while it is You alone who can bring salvation, it is for Your people to bless You forever, *selah*!" This seems to imply that even when life is dark and salvation seems far away, Israel should nevertheless bless Hashem. In this way, we play our part in fashioning (and becoming) the vessel through which ultimate Redemption will manifest.

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the Master of Creation who grants victory through melodies even in the midst of affliction. <i>Mizmor LeDavid</i> – A cutting-psalm by David. ¹⁶	(א) לַמְנַצֵּחַ בְּנִגְיֹנוֹת מְזֻמּוֹר לְדָוִד:
(2) When I call out from my narrow straits, answer me, O God who deals justly/charitably with me because I try to live a life of righteousness that is in consonance with Your Will! O You who have always enlarged me [expanded my consciousness] even in the midst of constriction, be gracious to me and continue to hearken to my heartfelt prayer!	(ב) בְּקִרְאִי עֲנֵנִי אֱלֹהֵי צְדָקִי בְּצָר הִרְחַבְתָּ לִּי חֲנֻנִי וּשְׁמַע תְּפִלָּתִי:
(3) Children of great men who have forgotten that true honor is humility before God, how long will you mock the very thing that accrues to my honor? How long will you continue to love and honor that which has no value, and seek that which will leave you disappointed in the end, <i>selah</i> ?	(ג) בְּנֵי אִישׁ עַד מָה כְּבוֹדִי לְכַלְמָה תִּתְּאָהֲבוּ רֵיק תִּבְקְשׁוּ כְּזָב סֵלָה:
(4) Know that <i>Hashem</i> has always set apart and distinguished and drawn near the one who selflessly devotes himself to Him; I am therefore certain that <i>Hashem</i> will hear when I call to Him.	(ד) וְדַעוּ כִּי הַפֶּלֶא יְהוָה חֲסִיד לֹא יִהְיֶה יִשְׁמַע בְּקִרְאִי אֵלָיו:
(5) Shudder when you contemplate the frailty of human existence in the face of God's omnipotence; stand firm against the wiles of the evil inclination and sin no more! Speak softly in your heart, upon your bed at night, and be still, <i>selah</i> . ¹⁷	(ה) רִגְזוּ וְאַל תַּחְטְאוּ אִמְרוּ בְּלִבְבְּכֶם עַל מִשְׁפָּכְכֶם וְדַמּוּ סֵלָה:
(6) Then in the morning offer joyous sacrifices of righteousness, and look trustingly to <i>Hashem</i> alone to fulfill all your needs!	(ו) זְבַחוּ זְבַחַי צֶדֶק וּבִטְחוּ אֶל יְהוָה:
(7) Many of you see material prosperity as a sign of God's favor; you therefore ask, "O that someone would show us the way to attain the material good of this-world!" Since this is partly justified, I too plead on your behalf: " <i>Hashem</i> , raise up the light of Your countenance as a sign of Your miraculous providence over us!"	(ז) רַבִּים אִמְרִים מִי יֵרְאוּנוּ טוֹב נִסָּה עֲלֵינוּ אֹר פִּנְיֶךָ יְהוָה:
(8) The difference between us is that I perceive God's providence over us in all things. I therefore thank Him, saying: "You have already placed joy in my heart, greater than when their grain and their wine increase."	(ח) נָתַתָּה שִׂמְחָה בְּלִבִּי מֵעַת דִּגְנָם וְתִירוּשָׁם רָבוּ:
(9) In peace, at one with all, I will therefore lie down and sleep peacefully, for You alone, <i>Hashem</i> , will let me dwell in safe security. ¹⁸	(ט) בְּשָׁלוֹם יִחְדּוּ אֶשְׁכְּבָה וְאִישָׁן כִּי אֶתָּה יְהוָה לְבַדִּד לְבֶטַח תּוֹשִׁיבִנִי:

Tehillim 5

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the Master of Creation who grants victory <i>El haNechilot</i> in achieving our highest destiny. <i>Mizmor LeDavid</i> – A cutting-psalm by David.	(א) לַמְנַצֵּחַ אֶל הַנְּחִילוֹת מְזֻמּוֹר לְדָוִד:
(2) Give ear to my whisper, <i>Hashem</i> ; probe the unformed thoughts of my meditation.	(ב) אָמְרֵי הָאֲזִינָה יְהוָה בֵּינָה הִגִּיגִי:
(3) Be attentive to the voice of my cry, O my King and	(ג) הַקְשִׁיבָה לְקוֹל שְׁוַעִי מַלְכִּי וְאֱלֹהֵי כִּי

¹⁶ *LaMenatzeyach* (*la-men-a-tzei-ach*)—Dedicated to the Master of Creation who grants victory. This superscription introduces 55 out of 150 psalms, over one-third of the Book of Psalms. See Introduction, p. 13. For the connection of *LaMenatzeyach* and *Mizmor*, see Introduction, p. 16.

¹⁷ Rabbi Levi bar Chama said in the name of Resh Lakish: A person should constantly arouse/agitate his *yetzer hatov* to overcome his *yetzer hara*, as the verse states, "*Rigzu ve'al techetau*—arouse/agitate yourselves and sin no more." If he overcomes it, fine. If not, he should immerse himself in Torah, as the verse continues, "*imru bilvavkhem*—speak [i.e., reflect on words of Torah] in your heart." If he overcomes it, fine. If not, he should recite the *Kriat Shma* [*sh'al ha'mitah*], as the verse continues, "*al mishkav'khem*—on your bed." If he overcomes it, fine. If not, he should remind himself of the day of death, as the verse continues, "*vedomu selah*—and be still, forever" (*Berakhot* 5a). See expanded commentary.

¹⁸ Or: "[In the meantime, even when my enemies] make peace among themselves and unite [to annihilate me], I lie down and fall peacefully asleep, for You, Hashem, grant me [the assurance I need] to dwell alone in [undisturbed] security" (R. Yeshaya Horowitz, *Shnei Luchot haBrit*).

my God, for I pray only to You!	אֵלֶיךָ אֶתְפַּלֵּל:
(4) <i>Hashem</i> , in the morning hear my call; in the morning I arrange my prayer to You and await the great dawn expectantly.	(ד) יְהוָה בֹּקֶר תִּשְׁמַע קוֹלִי בֹקֶר אֶעֱרָךְ לְךָ וְאַצְפֶּה:
(5) For You are not a God who sanctions wickedness; evil cannot abide in Your presence.	(ה) כִּי לֹא אֵל חַפֵּץ רָשָׁע אַתָּה לֹא יִגְרֶךְ רָע:
(6) Boasters cannot stand in Your line of sight; You detest all who use violence to attain their goals.	(ו) לֹא יִתְיַצְבוּ הוֹלְלִים לְנֶגֶד עֵינֶיךָ שְׂנֵאתָ כָּל פֹּעֲלֵי אָוֶן:
(7) You will bring destruction upon those who speak deceptively; <i>Hashem</i> loathes the man of murder and deceit.	(ז) תֵּאַבֵּד דְּבָרֵי כָזָב אִישׁ דָּמִים וּמְרֻמָּה יִתְעַב יְהוָה:
(8) But as for me, I am keenly aware that it is solely through Your great loving-kindness that I enter Your House; I therefore prostrate myself before the sanctuary of Your holiness, in awe of You alone. ¹⁹	(ח) וְאֲנִי בִּרְבַּח חֶסֶדְךָ אָבוֹא בֵּיתְךָ אֶשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶל הַיֵּכַל קֹדֶשְׁךָ בִּירְאָתְךָ:
(9) <i>Hashem</i> , guide me in Your righteousness, so that I may overcome those who watch for my downfall; make Your way straight before me.	(ט) יְהוָה נַחֲנִי בְצִדְקָתְךָ לְמַעַן שׁוֹרְרֵי הַיֵּשֶׁר (הַיֹּשֶׁר) לִפְנֵי דֶרֶכְךָ:
(10) For since their inner spirit is constantly scheming, there is no foundation to the utterances of their mouths; their throat is an open grave; they coat their tongues with smooth words.	(י) כִּי אֵין בְּפִיהֶם נְכוֹנָה קִרְבָּם הוֹת קֶבֶר פֶּתוּחַ גִּרְנָם לְשׁוֹנָם יַחְלִיקוּן:
(11) Let them discover their own desolation, <i>Elohim</i> , O God of justice; let them fall in their own counsels; push them away in the multitude of their crimes, for they have not only risen up against me, but first and foremost they have rebelled against You.	(יא) הָאֲשִׁימָם אֱלֹהִים יִפְּלוּ מִמַּעַצְוֹתֵיהֶם בִּרְבַּח פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם הִדְיַחְמוּ כִּי מְרוּ בָךְ:
(12) But those who trust in You will rejoice; forever they will sing ecstatically to You; for with Your love You spread Your shelter over them; in response they become lovers of Your Name, exulting in You alone.	(יב) וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ כָּל חוֹסֵי בְךָ לְעוֹלָם יִרְנְנוּ וְתִסֵּךְ עֲלֵיהֶם וַיַּעֲלֶצוּ בְךָ אֲהַבֵּי שִׁמְךָ:
(13) For You are the One who blesses the righteous one; <i>Hashem</i> , You surround him with Your crowning favor as with a shield.	(יג) כִּי אַתָּה תִּבְרַךְ צְדִיק יְהוָה כַּצֶּנֶה רְצוֹן תַּעֲטֶרנוּ:

Tehillim 6

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the Master of Creation who grants eternal victory through melodies played on the <i>sheminit</i> [eight-stringed harp]. ²⁰ <i>Mizmor LeDavid</i> – A cutting-psalm by David.	(א) לְמִנְצַח בְּנִגִּינוֹת עַל הַשְּׁמִינִית מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד:
(2) <i>Hashem</i> , do not correct/rebuke me with Your anger, or discipline/punish me with Your rage.	(ב) יְהוָה אֵל בְּאַפִּי תוֹכִיחֵנִי וְאֵל בְּחִמָּתְךָ תִּסְרֶנִּי:
(3) Be gracious with me, <i>Hashem</i> , for I am in a pathetic state; heal me, for my bones [my limbs and my inner organs] have been stricken [weakened, debilitated].	(ג) חַנּוּנִי יְהוָה כִּי אֲמַלֵּל אֲנִי רָפְאֲנִי יְהוָה כִּי נִבְהָלוּ עַצְמֵי:

¹⁹ Or: "Through Your never-failing kindnesses, I have come to Your House now [to thank You]; I bow down before Your holy *heikhal* (sanctuary) in awe of You alone."

²⁰ "Al Ha'sheminit—on the eight-stringed harp." The *sheminit* is mentioned in Tehillim 6 and 12. What does the number eight signify? According to the Maharal, the numbers six and seven represent respectively the *chitzoni* (external) and *penimi* (internal) aspects of the three-dimensional world of nature that was created in six days and sanctified and elevated on the seventh. The number eight is the *makif* (surrounding, enveloping) level of reality that transcends nature. It is the level of the Messianic Age, the level of revealed miracles that override the limited laws of the physical world as we know it. It is the level of the fifty gates of *binah*, the level of the *Yovel* / Jubilee (the 50th Year), of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* and the world-to-come, etc., that are above this world, but which shine into and illuminate our souls with their ecstatic light even now. King David played a harp with eight strings to embody this concept of eight.

(4) My soul, above all, is panic stricken. And You, <i>Hashem</i> , how long? How long will You remain aloof and withhold Your mercy? How long can I go on suffering like this?	(ד) וּנְפָשִׁי נִבְהָלָה מְאֹד וְאַתָּה (וְאַתָּה) יְהוָה עַד מָתַי:
(5) Return, <i>Hashem</i> , withdraw/retract Your anger; rescue my soul from death. Save me from this sickness for Your love's sake!	(ה) שׁוּבָה יְהוָה חֲלָצָה נַפְשִׁי הוֹשִׁיעֲנִי לְמַעַן חֲסִדְךָ:
(6) For in death there is no memory of You. Who can acknowledge You in the grave!?	(ו) כִּי אֵין בְּמוֹת זִכְרְךָ בְּשָׂאוֹל מִי יוֹדֶה לָךְ:
(7) I am worn out with my sighing; every night I drench my bed; I soak my couch with tears.	(ז) יִגְעַתִּי בְּאַנְחָתִי אֲשַׁחָה בְּכָל לַיְלָה מִטָּתִי בְּדִמְעָתִי עֲרֹשִׁי אֲמַסָּה:
(8) My eye is dimmed/darkened from affliction; aged because of the torment of all my oppressors.	(ח) עֲשָׂשָׁה מִכַּעַס עֵינַי עֲתָקָה בְּכָל צוּרָי:
(9) Depart from me, all you evildoers! <i>Hashem</i> has now heard the silent voice of my weeping.	(ט) סוּרוּ מִמֶּנִּי כָל פְּעֻלֵּי אֱוֹן כִּי שָׁמַע יְהוָה קוֹל בְּכִי:
(10) <i>Hashem</i> has heard my plea; <i>Hashem</i> will also accept my prayer.	(י) שָׁמַע יְהוָה תַּחֲנֻנָּתִי יְהוָה תַּפְלָתִי יִקַּח:
(11) May all my enemies be ashamed and panic stricken; let them feel the terrible weight of their evil so profoundly that they return in <i>teshuvah</i> immediately in shame.	(יא) יִבְשׁוּ וַיִּבְהָלוּ מְאֹד כָּל אֹיְבֵי יִשְׁבּוּ יִבְשׁוּ רַגְע:

Tehillim 7

David is on the run as a fugitive. Shaul (King Shaul) is chasing him and his band of 400 men with an army 3,000 strong. The fugitive and his band finally hole up in the caves of *Ein Gedi*. Shaul approaches with his army. David and some of his men are pressed against the walls in the far recesses of a cave. Hashem arranges it that Shaul chooses that very cave to relieve himself. Dark silence. No one breathes. David's men are urging him to slay Shaul. "Do it, now!" Tormented, he refuses, but he manages to get close enough to cut off a corner of Shaul's four-cornered garment (*tzitzit*). Shaul neither hears nor feels anything. He leaves the cave. David's heart is pounding. "What have I done?! Woe to me that I have set my hand against Hashem's anointed!" (cf. I Samuel 24:5-6). He waits a moment and then emerges into the full light of day. He calls to Shaul and bows. "My master, my king, why do you believe those who tell you that I wish to harm you? Behold, today I could have slain you, but I pitied you! O my father, look at the corner of your garment in my hand! I mean you no harm! Hashem is my witness!" (24:9-11).

Shigayon LeDavid – David begins this psalm by declaring his anguish over having erred. This is one of the meanings of the word *Shigayon*, from *shogeg* (accidental, unintentional). With regard to Shaul, he thus expresses his anguish over having touched Hashem's anointed and rendering his garment unfit for use. In the same vein, the following verses can be seen to apply to Shaul as well. Nevertheless, David does not mention Shaul's name once in the entire psalm in order not to tie it down to the particular circumstances that gave birth to it. He thus calls on Hashem to save him from all his enemies, and to recognize the righteousness of his deeds. He also insists that, as the God of Righteousness and Justice, He punish those who have attacked him without cause.

(1) <i>Shigayon LeDavid</i> – An admission of error that David sang to <i>Hashem</i> concerning the Kushite from the tribe of Binyamin.	(א) שִׁגְיוֹן לְדָוִד אֲשֶׁר שָׁר לַיהוָה עַל דָּבָרִי כּוֹשׁ בֶּן יְמִינִי:
(2) <i>Hashem</i> , my God, in You alone I have placed my trust; save me from all my pursuers and rescue me.	(ב) יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי בְךָ חֲסִיתִי הוֹשִׁיעֲנִי מִכָּל רֹדְפֵי וְהַצִּילֵנִי:
(3) Lest he succeed in tearing my soul apart like a lion, dismembering me, with no one to rescue.	(ג) פֶּן יִטְרֹף כְּאַרְיֵה נַפְשִׁי פֶּרֶק וְאֵין מַצִּיל:
(4) <i>Hashem</i> , my God, if I have done this—if corruption is inscribed on my palms—	(ד) יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אִם עָשִׂיתִי זֹאת אִם יֵשׁ עוֹל בְּכַפִּי:
(5) If I have repaid my friends with evil, after having released one who oppressed me without just cause—	(ה) אִם גָּמַלְתִּי שׁוֹלְמֵי רָע וְאַחֲלָצָה צוּרָי רִיקָם:
(6) Then let the enemy justly pursue my soul, overtake it, tread my life down to the earth, and lay my glorious soul in the dust forever, <i>selah</i> .	(ו) יִרְדֹּף אוֹיֵב נַפְשִׁי וַיִּשָּׁג וַיִּרְמַס לְאַרְץ חַיִּי וּכְבוֹדִי לְעֹפֹר יִשְׁכֵּן סֵלָה:

(7) Rise up, <i>Hashem YHVH</i> , O merciful God, in Your ire; arouse Yourself in fury against my adversaries; ²¹ stir up on my behalf the judgment that You Yourself commanded in Your Torah. ²²	(ז) קוֹמָה יְהוָה בְּאַפְּךָ הַנָּשָׂא בְּעִבְרוֹת צוֹרְרֵי וְעוֹרָה אֵלִי מִשְׁפָּט צוֹיֵת:
(8) So that a supreme council of the nations will rally round You to recognize Your sovereignty and You will return to preside over it in the heights.	(ח) וְעֵדֶת לְאֻמִּים תְּסוּבְּבֶךָ וְעָלֶיָּהּ לְמָרוֹם שׁוּבָה:
(9) <i>Hashem</i> , merciful God, You will then judge the nations. Judge me as well, <i>Hashem</i> , according to my desire for righteousness and according to my integrity.	(ט) יְהוָה יִדִּין עַמִּים שְׁפָטֵנִי יְהוָה כְּצַדִּיק וּכְתַמִּי עָלַי:
(10) Bring an end to the evil of those who become trapped in their wickedness; thus will You establish the righteous man in his way; thus will <i>Elohim</i> , the righteous God, test hearts and passions.	(י) יִגְמַר נָא רַע רָשָׁעִים וּתְכוּנֹן צַדִּיק וּבְחֹן לְבוֹת וּכְלִיּוֹת אֱלֹהִים צַדִּיק:
(11) My shield rests upon <i>Elohim</i> ; He delivers those who remain upright in heart despite all the tests they must endure.	(יא) מְגִנִּי עַל אֱלֹהִים מוֹשִׁיעַ יִשְׂרָאֵל:
(12) <i>Elohim</i> is a righteous judge; and although <i>El</i> is a loving God, He makes His indignation felt each day. ²³	(יב) אֱלֹהִים שׁוֹפֵט צַדִּיק וְאֵל זֶעֶם בְּכָל יוֹם:
(13) If my enemy does not repent, God Himself will therefore sharpen his sword, bend his bow, and prepare it.	(יג) אִם לֹא יִשׁוּב חֲרָבוֹ יִלְטוֹשׁ קֶשֶׁתוֹ דָּרְךָ וַיְכוּנֶנָּה:
(14) But to his surprise the deadly weapons he has prepared to kill me will be used against him; God will quicken His arrows against those who pursue me.	(יד) וְלוֹ הֵכִין כָּלִי מוֹת חֲצִיו לְדֹלָקִים יַפְעֵל:
(15) Behold, he labors to invent evil schemes; he conceives mischief, and gives birth to falsehood.	(טו) הִנֵּה יַחְבֵּל אֹן וְהָרָה עֵמֶל וַיֵּלֶד שָׁקֶר:
(16) He has dug a pit and hollowed it out, only to fall into the hole which he made for others.	(טז) בּוֹר כָּרָה וַיַּחְפְּרוּ וַיִּפֹּל בְּשַׁחַת יַפְעֵל:
(17) Let his mischief rebound upon his own head; let the violence he plotted come down on his own skull.	(יז) יִשׁוּב עֵמָלוֹ בְּרֹאשׁוֹ וְעַל קִדְקֵדוֹ חֲמָסוֹ יֵרֵד:
(18) As for me I will thank <i>Hashem</i> forever for the ways in which He executes His just righteousness; I will chant the	(יח) אוֹדָה יְהוָה כְּצַדִּיקוֹ וְאַזְמִרָה שִׁם

²¹ Here David calls on *YKVK*, Hashem's attribute of mercy, to punish his enemies. Mercy is not usually associated with punishment. The source for this, however, is Exodus 15:6, "Your right hand, *YKVK* (i.e., the loving-kindness with which You rescue Israel), is awesome in power. Your [same] right hand, *YKVK*, crushes the enemy" (see Rashi there).

²² Rashi: Where was this commanded in the Torah? After the Ten Commandments, Hashem promised Israel: "I will destroy your enemies and oppress your oppressors" (Exodus 23:22). David does not refer to Shaul as his enemy lightly. The truth is that, especially after such episodes as this, when it became clear that David meant Shaul no harm, Shaul regretted his treatment of David and swore in his heart never to harm him. According to the *midrash*, however, some of Shaul's men, in this case Abner, always managed to convince Shaul that David was lying. These men were David's true enemies.

²³ In Hebrew, the second half of this verse reads, "*ve'El zo'em be'kol yom—El makes His indignation/rage felt every day.*" The *Zohar* (3:30b) is bothered by the fact that the Divine Name *El* which is usually associated with Hashem's love, is here associated with His indignation and rage. The *Zohar* answers: Yes, as a general rule, the name *El*, wherever it appears, is associated with *chesed*, Hashem's love...Indeed, the world continues to exist solely through the awakening of *chesed*, as it is written, "*Chesed El kol ha'yom—God's love [sustains the world] every day!*" (Psalm 52:3). [How then is it associated here with rage? Is Hashem's love turned into rage? No. Rather:] Each day, this quality of *chesed* literally pushes away all the *dinim* (judgments) that are aroused by the wicked, thus preventing them from taking effect. This is the real meaning of "*ve'El zo'em be'kol yom—El makes His indignation felt every day.*" That is, it is through Hashem's love that He rages against these *dinim*! And if you will pay attention, this is its real meaning. For the word used here is not *niz'am* or *ze'um* (both of which would imply that He Himself is enraged). No, He Himself is not enraged or angry, for He is all *chesed*. Rather, because of His great love, He actively rages against the forces of *din* that would naturally be aroused against the world due to the evil deeds of the wicked. He thus pushes the *dinim* away and sweetens the world, as another verse fully attests, "*Yomam yatzaveh Hashem chasdo—each and every day, Hashem commands (i.e., directs) His chesed (to the world, thereby sweetening all judgments)*" (Psalm 42:9). If not for this, the world couldn't continue to exist for a moment.

merciful Name of YHVH (<i>Adonai</i>), the Most High [i.e., whose love is beyond human conception].	יְהוָה עֲלִיוֹן:
---	------------------

Tehillim 8

Malbim (Rabbi Meir Leibush Weiser, 1809-1879) wrote: This psalm contends with the philosophers who minimized man's importance in the universe and considered absurd the claim that man is somehow the crown of creation, God's chosen portion in the world...Our own sun is nothing more than a drop in a vast sea of stars and suns that make up the Milky Way. Could anyone in their right mind look up and claim that all this was created to illuminate the earth whose very existence is nullified into total insignificance? The question becomes even more absurd when we hear that they were created for man who is a mere speck of mortal dust relative to the planet which serves as his home...Would a wise craftsman prepare tools weighing thousand of tons (the cosmos) in order to manufacture a single tiny needle (man)?

Those who believe in the Torah, however, know that the entire cosmos was created for man, for it is through man that the entire cosmos will reach perfection and be brought to fulfill its ultimate purpose. They know that the entire universe was brought into existence for man's sake, and that the entire human race was created for the sake of those who would keep the commandments and ordinances of the Creator...The philosophers who claimed that the heavenly spheres are more important than man and the earthly orb upon which he exists contemplated everything from the point of view of their material aspects (quantity). When they beheld the orb of the sun, thousands of times larger than the earth...they judged the earth insignificant...But their judgment lacked wisdom. For it is known that the work of a master craftsman is not judged by its size, but rather by the sum total of knowledge that went into producing this work. The more laws and wisdom and knowledge brought to bear, the greater the value of the work. All the moreso if all this wisdom and knowhow are concentrated in something small and exquisite to the millimeter.

Now, behold, the revolutions of the stars and planets are all subject to one natural law, the law of gravity which is shared by all physical objects...This one law which the Creator made part of the nature of physical objects governs the motions of the stars and planets...When we contemplate plant life, we see greater complexity...We see the wondrous wisdom encoded in each cell. Each species is capable of reproducing its own kind...The animal kingdom exhibits even greater complexity. In addition to preserving and maintaining all the laws that govern the inanimate world of elements and minerals, and the animate vegetable world, the Creator reckoned new, more wondrous laws to govern the development and functioning of each and every inner organ and limb, as well as to oversee their working in perfect unison. How much wisdom went into designing the eye...the ear...the brain?

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the Master of Creation who grants eternity <i>al ha'gitit</i> . ²⁴ <i>Mizmor LeDavid</i> – A cutting-psalm by David.	(א) לְמִנְצַחַ עַל הַגִּתִּית מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:
(2) <i>Hashem</i> , our Master, how mighty is Your Name throughout the entire earth! It seems that it might have been more proper had You placed Your majesty above, beyond the highest heavens. ²⁵	(ב) יְהוָה אֲדִינֵנוּ מִה אֲדִיר שְׁמֶךָ בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר תִּנָּה הוֹדְךָ עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם:
(3) But out of the mouth of babes and infants [i.e., mere humans who begin life without knowing anything about You, but who attain the heights of greatness in Your service] You have established	(ג) מִפִּי עוֹלָלִים וְיִנְקִים יִסְדַּת עַז לְמַעַן צוֹרְרֶיךָ לְהַשְׁבִּית אוֹיֵב וּמִתְנַקֵּם:

²⁴ A *gitit* is a 3-stringed musical instrument from Gat. King David loved music and the opportunity it afforded him to praise Hashem in a heightened state of awareness; he therefore collected all kinds of musical instruments. A *gitit* is also a wine-press which usually represents joy, but see Hirsch (Psalms 8:1, 81:1, 84:1) where, similar to an olive-press, the image of a winepress is used to indicate the ennobling and purifying action that is inherent in suffering and in the anguish of exile [mankind's exile from Godliness, Israel's exile from its land and Temple, the exile of all souls from their heavenly Source]. This psalm embodies both initial sadness and ultimate joy, the initial realization of our all-too-human frailty and the ultimate triumph of the human soul coming back to God (see *Shemot Rabbah* 36:1 on olive-press, quoted in Kaplan Reader, p. 166).

²⁵ Rashi: "It is truly beyond belief that You allowed Your *Shekhinah* (Divine Presence) to dwell in our midst. It would have been more proper had You placed it high above the highest heavens. But because of Your great humility, You have allowed us to feel Your Presence in the *Beit HaMikdash*, where the Cohanim and Leviim, born wallowing in their mothers' blood, sing songs of never-ending praise to You."

According to the Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 38b) and Zohar (3:207b), this verse (and the verses following it) describe the initial negative reaction of the ministering angels when God took counsel with them, so to speak, before creating man. Similarly, according to the Talmud (*Shabbat* 88b), it describes how the angels protested against Moshe bringing the Supernal Torah down to earth. In line with all the above, the verse can thus also be read as a statement of the angels: "Hashem, our Master, Your Name is [too] powerful [to rule] on the earth! Establish Your Splendor [solely] in the heavens above!...What is mortal man that You think of him, and the finest human being that You even consider him!? [Let the Torah remain up here with us!]" Here, "Your Name" refers to the mysteries of God's Name which are concealed in the Torah, to which human beings, completely immersed in gross materiality, are completely oblivious.

the invincible power of Your Torah, so that Your adversaries will know that Israel is the pupil of Your eye, to put an end to the evil machinations of the enemy and the avenger [i.e., to silence those who stubbornly refuse to recognize Your mastery over all].	
(4) When I behold Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and stars that You have established;	(ד) כִּי אֶרְאֶה שָׁמַיִךְ מַעֲשֵׂה אֶצְבְּעֶיךָ יָרַח וְכוכְבִּים אֲשֶׁר כּוֹנְנִתָּה:
(5) I cannot help but ask: What is mortal man that You remember him, and the finest human that You even consider him? ²⁶	(ה) מָה אָנוּשׁ כִּי תִזְכְּרֵנוּ וּבֶן אָדָם כִּי תִפְקְדֵנוּ:
(6) Yet You have made him little less than divine [i.e., You have given human beings the ability to attain the heights of greatness]; You have crowned him with glory and splendor.	(ו) וַתַּחֲסֶרְהוּ מַעַט מֵאֱלֹהִים וְכְבוֹד וְהָדָר תַּעֲטֶרְהוּ:
(7) You have given him dominion over all Your handiwork; You have placed all under his feet [jurisdiction]:	(ז) תַּמְשִׁילָהוּ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יָדֶיךָ כֹּל שֶׁתָּה תַּחַת רַגְלָיו:
(8) Sheep and cattle, all of them [You gave man permission to use all domestic animals for his benefit], and even the beasts of the wild.	(ח) צֹאֵה וְאֶלְפִים כֻּלָּם וְגַם בְּהֵמוֹת שָׂדֵי:
(9) Birds of the heavens and fish of the sea; he [the human race to whom You have given mastery over all of them] even strides over the paths of the seas.	(ט) צֶפּוֹר שָׁמַיִם וְדָגֵי הַיָּם עֹבֵר אַרְחוֹת יָמִים:
(10) Hashem, You alone are our Lord; the absolute mastery of Your providence is evident down to the smallest detail of physical reality. ²⁷	(י) יְהוָה אֱדִינֵנוּ מָה אֲדִיר שְׁמֶךָ בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ:

Tehillim 9

We live in a world where injustice seems to run rampant. Lest we fall into the trap of believing that this is truly the case, we need to look at things from the bird's-eye-view of prophecy. Prophecy allows us to jump into the future and look back on our time (and on all of history) as if it's all happened already. This is what David did. He jumped up and ahead into the future. From that vantage point, he saw Hashem's throne in heaven, i.e., that there is a hidden Providence guiding every detail of world history...He understood that this Providence must be hidden in order that free will may operate, and for human beings to bear the full responsibility for their actions. Yes, God reigns in eternity, and it is only a matter of time until that eternity dawns into the darkness of our world. All mankind will then see and understand that there is no escape from Divine Justice. On the contrary, only those who recognize and accept the yoke of the Heavenly kingdom will attain eternal life. This is the subject of this and the following two psalms.

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach Al Mut LaBen</i> – Dedicated to the One who grants immortality to Israel the first-born son and	(א) לְמִנְצֵחַ עַל מוֹת לְבֵן מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:
--	---

²⁶ "What is mortal man that You remember him?" As an extension of Malbim's insightful words cited above, see what Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan (1934-1983) wrote about this psalm: "There is nothing in the physical universe that we know of that is more complex than the human brain. It is infinitely more complex than even the largest galaxy. The brain of the smallest infant is vastly more wonderful than all the visible stars. But besides being complex, man is also the most aware thing in the universe. He is both perceptive and introspective. Even the stars cannot match him in this. Since these are the things that really matter to God, it is not so surprising that He thinks of us. Beyond this, man is unique in creation because of his divine soul. In one place, Job says, 'What is a portion from God on high? An endowment from *Shaddai* from the highest heavens?' (Job 31:2). He is speaking here of the human soul which is called 'a portion from God on high.' Man's soul comes from the highest possible Godly levels, and is therefore a portion of the Divine. More than anything else, it is this soul that makes man unique in creation. It is closer and more meaningful to God than any star or galaxy. In a spiritual sense, we may say that a single human soul is greater than the entire physical universe. It is little wonder that the Psalmist introduced his question with the remark, 'From the mouths of babes and infants You have established the invincible strength [of Your Torah].' He was providing the answer even before he asked the question. The heavens and stars may be awe-inspiring, but a single word uttered by a child is vastly more wonderful" (Kaplan, *A World of Love, in If You Were God*, NCSY 1983, pp. 50-52).

²⁷ The source of this translation is Malbim's commentary on Psalm 34:4 ("Hashem's providential care is spread out over all His creations, especially over those who are aware of Him"). On the other hand, it is a word-for-word repetition of the beginning of verse 2, and as such can also be translated simply as: "Hashem, our Master, how mighty is Your Name throughout the entire earth."

extinction to the nations that oppose the Godly Plan. <i>Mizmor LeDavid</i> – A cutting-psalm by David. ²⁸	
(2) I thank You, <i>Hashem</i> , with my whole heart; I will relate all the supernatural wonders that You have performed from time immemorial.	(ב) אוֹדָה יְהוָה בְּכָל לֵבִי אֲסַפְּרָה כָּל נַפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ:
(3) I will rejoice and exult in You; I will sing praises to Your Name, O Most High. ²⁹	(ג) אֲשַׁמְּחָה וְאֶעֱלֶצָה בְּךָ אֲזַמְּרָה שְׁמֶךָ עָלְיוֹן:
(4) When my enemies retreat in defeat, let them stumble and be devastated before You.	(ד) בְּשׁוּב אוֹיְבֵי אַחֹר יִכָּשְׁלוּ וְיִאֲבֹדוּ מִפְּנֶיךָ:
(5) For You alone have always executed judgment for me against my enemies and upheld my cause; You alone occupy the throne, O Righteous Judge.	(ה) כִּי עֲשִׂיתָ מִשְׁפָּטִי וְדִינִי יִשְׁבֶּתָ לְכִסֵּא שׁוֹפֵט צֶדֶק:
(6) You have rebuked nations on Israel's behalf; when the time comes You will therefore have done away with the wicked man; You will obliterate their names for all eternity.	(ו) גִּעַרְתָּ גּוֹיִם אֲבֹדְתָ רָשָׁע שְׁמָם מַחִיתָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:
(7) O enemy of God and man, the destruction you wreaked is over and gone forever; the cities you demolished—their memory was lost even before you turned them into ruins. ³⁰	(ז) הָאוֹיֵב תָּמוּ חֲרָבוֹת לִנְצַח וְעָרִים נִתְּשֶׁת אֲבָד זְכָרָם הֵמָּה:
(8) But a time is coming when <i>Hashem's</i> reign will be revealed for all eternity; He is preparing His throne now for judgment.	(ח) וַיְהִי לְעוֹלָם יֵשֵׁב כִּוֵּן לְמִשְׁפָּט כִּסֵּאוֹ:
(9) He will judge the earth with righteousness. He will try the nations with equity.	(ט) וְהוּא יִשְׁפֹּט תֵּבֵל בְּצֶדֶק יִדִּין לְאֻמִּים בְּמִשְׁפָּרִים:
(10) In the meantime <i>Hashem</i> shall be a tower of protection for the crushed and the afflicted, a tower of strength in times of distress.	(י) וַיְהִי יְהוָה מִשְׁגֹּב לְדָד מִשְׁגֹּב לְעֵתוֹת בְּצָרָה:
(11) Those who discern Your Name [Your mastery over nature and history] will trust in You, for You, <i>Hashem</i> , have never forsaken those who seek You.	(יא) וַיִּבְטְחוּ בְּךָ יוֹדְעֵי שְׁמֶךָ כִּי לֹא עֲזַבְתָּ דְרָשֶׁיךָ יְהוָה:
(12) Sing praises to <i>Hashem</i> ; He reigns in Zion; declare His works among the nations.	(יב) זָמְרוּ לַיהוָה יֵשֵׁב צִיּוֹן הִגִּידוּ בְּעַמִּים עֲלִילוֹתָיו:
(13) He who demands an account for blood that has been shed has remembered them; He has not forgotten the cry of the humble.	(יג) כִּי דָרַשׁ דָּמִים אוֹתָם זָכַר לֹא שָׁכַח צַעֲקַת עֲנֻיִים (עֲנִיִּים):
(14) Grant me special grace, <i>Hashem</i> ; behold my affliction at the hands of my enemies, O You who raise	(יד) חַנּוּנִי יְהוָה רְאֵה עֲנִי מִשְׁנְאִי

²⁸ The words *Al-Mut LaBen* are the key to this psalm. First, *Al-Mut* can be read as one word or two. As one word, it comes from the root *alam* (*ayin, lamed, mem*). *Alam* itself has many forms, each one of them important in our context: *olam* (world), *olam* (eternity), *elem* or *ne'elam* (hidden, concealed), *alam* (youth). *LaBen* can mean "to the son." Which son? It can also be a man's name. Who is this man? Even this is multifaceted. Our translation attempts to cover the full range of meaning inherent in these words. In the end, the main theme of this Psalm (and the two following psalms) is: Overcoming death and attaining immortality for those who align themselves with the Godly force of good; death for those who become vehicles for the force of evil which seeks to undermine the Godly plan.

²⁹ God's Name is synonymous with His providence, specifically the hidden providence that guides history to its final goal. In this sense, this verse is the flip-side of the previous verse in which David vows to relate all of God's supernatural wonders, i.e., revealed miracles. Here, he sings praises to the "Name" (not mentioning which Name), thus referring to the hidden providence that works behind the scenes, and which, by doing so, creates the impression that it is absent. This is necessary in order to give humankind the necessary free will (and hence the responsibility) to choose to see God's Hidden hand or not, to participate in bringing His plan to fruition or not. See below Psalm 11:4.

³⁰ Hirsch: "Their memorial was lost when they still existed, before you ever turned them into ruins. That which can be made to perish with a world-conquering kick of the foot must have been based upon a principle that had no future to begin with. It is merely the case of a stronger tyrant overcoming a weaker despot. Such a victor is a tool in the hands of God for the destruction of something that is doomed to ruin just as he himself must eventually fall." Alternatively: "The enemy [rose and] is now finished; the destruction he wreaked is over and gone forever. You [God] have demolished the cities [which he built]. Their memory is lost."

me up above death's gates!	מְרוֹמֵי מִשְׁעָרֵי מוֹת:
(15) So that I may declare all Your praises, and rejoice in Your salvation, in the gates of the daughter of Zion.	(טו) לְמַעַן אֲסַפֶּרָּה כָּל תְּהִלָּתֶיךָ בְּשַׁעְרֵי בֵּת צִיּוֹן אֲגִילָּה בִּישׁוּעֶתְךָ:
(16) Nations have sunk into the pit which they themselves have dug; their feet have been trapped in the same net they so craftily hid for others.	(טז) טָבְעוּ גוֹיִם בְּשַׁחַת עָשׂוּ בְּרֶשֶׁת זו טָמְנוּ נִלְכְּדָה רְגֵלָם:
(17) Hashem is known through the judgment He has executed; He brings it about that the wicked man is snared in the work of his own hands; let this inspire us forever, <i>selah</i> .	(יז) נֹדַע יְהוָה מִשְׁפָּט עָשָׂה בַּפֶּעַל כָּפִיו נוֹקֵשׁ רָשָׁע הִגְיוֹן סֵלָה:
(18) Those who became trapped in their wickedness will return to oblivion—all the nations who forget Elohim.	(יח) יָשׁוּבוּ רָשָׁעִים לְשִׁאֻלָּה כָּל גוֹיִם שִׁכְחֵי אֱלֹהִים:
(19) For he who is defenseless will not remain forgotten forever, lest the hope of the poor man be lost for all eternity.	(יט) כִּי לֹא לִנְצַח יִשְׁכַּח אֲבִיוֹן תִּקְוַת עֲנִיִּים (עֲנוּיִם) תֵּאבֹד לְעַד:
(20) Rise up, Hashem, let not the evil man prevail; let the nations who opposed You be judged.	(כ) קוּמָה יְהוָה אַל יַעַז אָנוּשׁ יִשְׁפֹּטוּ גוֹיִם עַל פָּנֶיךָ:
(21) Instruct them, Hashem; let the nations realize how very mortal they are unless they serve You, <i>selah</i> .	(כא) שִׁיתָה יְהוָה מוֹרָה לָהֶם יִדְעוּ גוֹיִם אָנוּשׁ הֵמָּה סֵלָה:

Tehillim 10

Exile and Redemption. Exile followed by Redemption. Exile is the historical drama. In exile, Israel feels abandoned. The soul feels cast out. This is necessary. It must seem (to all outer appearances) that Israel has been utterly deserted. The opportunity must also exist to choose evil, in this case, to afflict Israel, the Pupil of God's Eye...The force of evil, especially, must be made to think that God has indeed abandoned Israel. Even Israel must flounder in the dark and experience the intense yearning that can only exist in a state of seemingly total separation from the Beloved. Nevertheless, in the end, Exile—of the *Shekhinah*, of the souls of Israel in their sojourn through this world, of each soul in its different incarnations—will be seen as a hidden agenda for Redemption. Part of this agenda involves making the "evil man" believe that the coast-is-clear and that nothing stands in the way of his realizing his plans. Unknowingly, however, he has signed his own death sentence. And in the meantime, Israel and the righteous of the nations, instead of turning away from Hashem (which is what the fool who gets trapped in the snare of the evil man does), turn to Him. They do not philosophize and talk about God, as much as discover how important it is to talk to Him. They engage Him in a conversation, a debate, to convince Him, so to speak. They cry out to Him, "The time has come to reveal the truth, namely, that You are truly with us, have never left us, and are only waiting for us to awaken to the reality of Your presence in our lives, to see behind the veil of historical events, to see all of history as a drama which leads to the final Redemption..."

(1) Why, Hashem, do You stand at a distance, hiding Your eyes from Israel's plight in times of adversity?	(א) לָמָּה יְהוָה תַּעֲמֹד בְּרָחוֹק תַּעֲלִים לְעֵתוֹת בְּצָרָה:
(2) In his boastfulness, the evil man pursues the poor man; O let them be caught in the plots they themselves have conceived!	(ב) בְּגִאוֹת רָשָׁע יִדְלַק עֲנִי. יִתְפָּשׂוּ בְּמַזְמוֹת זו חֲשָׁבוּ:
(3) For when an evil man gives praise for having attained his soul's desire, and a greedy man utters a blessing over the booty he has stolen, isn't it a mockery of You, Hashem?	(ג) כִּי הִלַּל רָשָׁע עַל תְּאוֹת נַפְשׁוֹ וּבִצָּע בִּרְךְּ נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה:
(4) In his egocentric pride, the evil man holds his countenance aloft; He doesn't care. "There is no God"—is the thought behind all his plans.	(ד) רָשָׁע כְּגִבָּה אָפּוּ בַּל יִדְרֹשׁ. אֵין אֱלֹהִים כָּל מַזְמוֹתָיו:
(5) He thinks that his ways will always prosper; the fact that he is subject to the law of Your judgments is far beyond him; it transcends his limited understanding; yet, to deceive all his adversaries, he speaks of them vowing allegiance to God's laws.	(ה) יַחֲלִי דַרְכּוֹ (דַּרְכּוֹ) בְּכָל עֵת. מְרוֹם מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ. מִנְּגִדוֹ. כָּל צוּרְרָיו יִפִּיחַ בָּהֶם:
(6) He says in his heart, "I shall never falter; evil will never befall me or my seed from generation to generation."	(ו) אָמַר בְּלִבּוֹ בַּל אָמוּט לְדֹר וָדֹר אֲשֶׁר לֹא בָרַע:
(7) His mouth is filled with vows to do good, but it is all a cover up of deceit and malicious intent; under his tongue	(ז) אָלָה פִּיהוּ מְלֵא וּמְרָמוֹת. וְתַךְ תַּחַת לְשׁוֹנוֹ עֵמֶל וָאָוֶן:

there is only mischief and violence.	
(8) He sits preparing an ambush, in the courtyards, in the hidden places, waiting to slay an innocent man; His eyes are on the lookout for those who serve in Your host.	(ח) יֵשֵׁב בְּמִאֲרָב חֲצִירִים. בְּמִסְתָּרִים יִהְיֶה נָקִי. עֵינָיו לְחִלְכָּה יִצְפֹּנוּ:
(9) He hides in secret like a lion in his den; he lays an ambush to grab the poor man; He ensnares the poor man by drawing him into his net of lies.	(ט) יֵאָרֵב בְּמִסְתָּר כְּאַרְיֵה בְּסֻכָּה. יֵאָרֵב לְחֻטֹּף עֲנִי. יְחֻטֹּף עָנִי בְּמִשְׁכּוֹ בְּרִשְׁתּוֹ:
(10) He acts humble and gives the impression that he is bowed down under the burdens of his people; it is all so that the oppressed host will be taken unawares and thus fall under his power.	(י) יִדְכֶּה (וּדְכָה) יֶשֶׁחַ. וְנָפַל בְּעֲצוּמָיו חַל כָּאִים (חֲלָכָאִים):
(11) He says in his heart, "God is oblivious; He has hidden His face and is not involved in human affairs; He will never see for all eternity."	(יא) אָמַר בְּלִבּוֹ שָׁכַח אֱלֹהִים. הִסְתִּיר פָּנָיו. בֶּל רְאֶה לְנֶצַח:
(12) Rise up, <i>Hashem</i> ! Almighty God, lift up Your hand to save Your people; do not forget the humble!	(יב) קוּמָה יְהוָה. אֵל נְשָׂא יָדְךָ. אֵל תִּשְׁכַּח עֲנֻיִם (עֲנִיִּים):
(13) Why does the evil man mock God? He says in his heart, "You will not avenge."	(יג) עַל מָה נֶאֱמַר רָשָׁע אֱלֹהִים. אָמַר בְּלִבּוֹ לֹא תִדְרֹשׁ:
(14) O God You surely behold all that the evil man does; You behold his evil thoughts and spiteful rage; You even lend Your hand to give him success in all his endeavors in this world; but Israel Your faithful host leave it up to You to execute judgment against the wicked; You have always come to the aid of the orphan.	(יד) רְאֵתָהּ. כִּי אֶתָּה עֹמֵל וְכַעַס תְּבִיט. לִתֵּת בְּיָדְךָ עָלָיו יַעֲזֹב חֲלָכָהּ. יְתוֹם אֶתָּה הֵייתָ עוֹזֵר:
(15) Break therefore the strong arm of the evil man; and then, when You come to examine the evil of those who were taken in, but who have not become evil, You will not find evil for they will repent when they behold the judgment You have in store for the wicked.	(טו) שִׁבַּר זְרוּעַ רָשָׁע. וְרַע תִּדְרֹשׁ רָשָׁעוֹ בֶּל תִּמְצָא:
(16) <i>Hashem</i> 's eternal sovereignty will then be revealed forever; for wicked nations will have perished from His world.	(טז) יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ עוֹלָם וָעַד. אֲבָדוּ גוֹיִם מֵאֲרָצוֹ:
(17) When that time comes, we will know that You truly do heed the impassioned request of the humble, <i>Hashem</i> ; O direct their hearts and minds to You; let Your ears always be attentive to their cries.	(יז) תִּתְּנָה עֲנֻיִם שְׁמִעָתָהּ. יְהוָה תִּכְּוֶן לִבָּם תִּקְשִׁיב אָזְנוֹךָ:
(18) To uphold the cause of the orphan and the downtrodden, so that no wicked man or nation from anywhere on earth will ever again be able to take power to oppress humanity or conquer the entire earth; rather, all will recognize that You are the judge, and that Your providence rules over all.	(יח) לְשַׁפֵּט יְתוֹם וְדָךְ. בֶּל יוֹסִיף עוֹד לַעְרֹץ אָנוּשׁ מִן הָאָרֶץ:

Tehillim 11

In this Psalm, King David argues with those who claim that, as long as there are evil men, it is a sign that God has abandoned the world to chance... His answer, which is now considered classical: There is a difference between abandoning and hiding. God hides, and in this way, He tests and refines the children of men. For if the wicked man's retribution would be swift and obvious, there would be no place for free will, and hence no reward for doing good, or punishment for doing bad. All humans would serve God out of fear of punishment. By disguising and concealing His Providence in the laws of nature and the seemingly random events of history, however, He tests the righteous to see whether they will continue serving Him in truth despite the fact that they suffer at the hands of the wicked. In this way their reward is greatly increased (Rashi, Malbim).

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the Master of Creation who grants eternal victory. By David. I [Israel] have taken refuge and placed all my trust in <i>Hashem</i> . Why do you nations mockingly rejoice at the destruction of my Temple and say to my soul, "You and your God have been banished from your Mountain to migrate like a sparrow!"	(א) לְמִנְצִיחַ לְדוֹד בֵּיהוָה חֲסִיתִי. אֵיךְ תֹּאמְרוּ לְנַפְשִׁי נוֹדִי (נוֹדוֹ) הִרְכָּם צָפוֹר:
---	---

(2) For behold, the wicked have already bent the bow; thinking that God does not see they set their arrows to the string, to shoot from dark hide-outs at the upright in heart.	(ב) כִּי הִנֵּה הַרְשָׁעִים יִדְרֹכּוּ קֶשֶׁת. כּוֹנְנֵי חֶצֶם עַל יָתֵר לִירוֹת בָּמוֹ אֶפֶל לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לֵב:
(3) They undermine/destroy the foundations of the world and the very fabric of society, whereas the righteous man, what has he done wrong?"	(ג) כִּי הִשְׁתּוֹת יִהְיֶה רִסּוֹן. צָדִיק מִה פָּעַל:
(4) Hashem is in His holy habitation, Hashem's throne is in heaven; yet His eyes see; His pupil probes the deeds of the children of men.	(ד) יְהוָה בְּהִיכַל קִדְשׁוֹ יְהוָה בְּשָׁמַיִם כְּסֹאוֹ. עֵינָיו יַחְזֹו עֲפַעְפּוֹ יִבְחֲנוּ בְנֵי אָדָם:
(5) Hashem tests the righteous in this world, but His soul loathes the evil man and those who love violence.	(ה) יְהוָה צָדִיק יִבְחֹן וְרָשָׁע וְאֹהֵב חָמָס שְׂנֵאָה נַפְשׁוֹ:
(6) He will therefore wait to rain coals upon the heads of the wicked; fire and burning coals of shame and a demonic spirit will be their portion in the afterlife.	(ו) יִמָּטֵר עַל רָשָׁעִים פָּחִים. אֵשׁ וְגַפְרִית וְרוּחַ זִלְעָפוֹת מִנֵּת כּוֹסָם:
(7) For Hashem is righteous; He loves those who love righteousness; the upright shall therefore behold His face in eternity.	(ז) כִּי צָדִיק יְהוָה. צְדָקוֹת אָהֵב. יִשָּׂר יַחְזֹו פָּנָיו:

Tehillim 12

(1) LaMenatzeyach – Dedicated to the Master of Creation who grants eternal victory—on the <i>sheminit</i> [the eight-stringed harp]. Mizmor LeDavid – A cutting-psalm by David:	(א) לְמִנְצַח עַל הַשְּׁמִינִית מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:
(2) Save us, Hashem, for the kind man is no more; for men of trustworthiness have disappeared from among the children of Adam.	(ב) הוֹשִׁיעָה יְהוָה כִּי גָמַר חֲסִיד כִּי פָסוּ אַמּוֹנִים מִבְּנֵי אָדָם:
(3) Those who remain speak falsehood, each man with his neighbor; they speak with smooth lips and double hearts.	(ג) שְׁוֹא יִדְבְּרוּ אִישׁ אֶת רֵעֵהוּ שֶׁפֶת חֻלְקוֹת בִּלְבַב וְלֵב יִדְבֹּר:
(4) The day will come when Hashem will cut off all smooth talking lips and tongues which speak haughty words.	(ד) יִכְרֹת יְהוָה כָּל שִׁפְתֵי חֻלְקוֹת לְשׁוֹן מְדַבֶּרֶת גְּדֻלוֹת:
(5) He will cut down those who have boasted: "With our tongues we shall prevail; our lips are ours to use as we please. Who is Lord over us!"	(ה) אֲשֶׁר אָמְרוּ לְלִשְׁנָנוּ נִגְבִּיר שִׁפְתֵינוּ אֲתָנוּ מִי אֲדוֹן לָנוּ:
(6) But Hashem will say: "For the oppression of the poor, for the cry of the defenseless, I will now arise." Even now He whispers to Himself: "I will establish salvation!"	(ו) מִשָּׁד עֲנִיִּים מֵאֲנָקַת אֲבִיּוֹנִים עֲתָה אֶקוּם יֹאמֶר יְהוָה אֲשִׁית בִּישָׁע יִפְיחַ לוֹ:
(7) Hashem's utterances and His promises to redeem His people are pure utterances; as silver distilled in a crucible set upon the ground, refined seven times over.	(ז) אִמְרוֹת יְהוָה אִמְרוֹת טְהוֹרוֹת כֶּסֶף צָרוּף בַּעֲלִיל לְאָרֶץ מִזְקָק שִׁבְעַתַּיִם:
(8) Hashem, You will preserve them; You will keep them secure forever from being sullied by such a generation.	(ח) אַתָּה יְהוָה תִּשְׁמְרֵם תִּצְרְנוּ מִן הַדּוֹר זֶה לְעוֹלָם:
(9) You will keep Your promise even if the wicked shall walk about on every side and baseness be exalted among the sons of man!	(ט) סָבִיב רָשָׁעִים יִתְהַלְכוּן כָּרֶם זֵלוֹת לְבְנֵי אָדָם:

Tehillim 13

David yearns for closeness to Hashem, for the end of his sorrows and of Israel's tear-laden exile. He asks "How long? Will You forget me forever?!" When will the light of Redemption finally illuminate the darkness of this world?! But through his very crying out, he is able to pierce the veil that separates him from Hashem's Redemption light. More, he understands that his (and Israel's) salvation/redemption is inseparably bound to the ultimate Redemption, the Redemption of the *Shekhinah*. If, in the meantime, Hashem's Presence is truly with us in our suffering, this changes the very meaning of suffering itself. He is comforted even NOW.

(1) LaMenatzeyach – Dedicated to the One who grants eternal victory. Mizmor LeDavid – A cutting-psalm by David.	(א) לְמִנְצַח מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:
---	---------------------------------

(2) How long, <i>Hashem</i> ? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your Face/Presence from me?	(ב) עַד אָנָה יְהוָה תִּשְׁכַּחֲנִי נָצַח. עַד אָנָה תִּסְתִּיר אֶת פְּנֵיךְ מִמֶּנִּי:
(3) How long must I seek counsel within my soul at night, only to be plagued with grief in my heart by day? How long will my enemy continue to raise himself up high above me?	(ג) עַד אָנָה אֲשִׁית עֲצוֹת בְּנַפְשִׁי. יְגוֹן בְּלִבִּי יוֹמָם. עַד אָנָה יְרוֹם אִיבִי עָלַי:
(4) Look down and answer me, <i>Hashem</i> , my God! Enlighten my eyes lest I sleep the sleep of death! ³¹	(ד) הַבִּיטָה עֲנֵנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי. הָאִירָה עֵינַי פֶּן אֵישָׁן הַמּוֹת:
(5) Lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed against him," and my oppressors rejoice when I stumble. ³²	(ה) פֶּן יֹאמְרוּ אִיבֵי יְכַלְתִּיו. צָרִי יִגִּילוּ כִּי אָמוּט:
(6) As for me, I have always trusted in Your unconditional love; my heart will therefore rejoice in Your deliverance; I will sing to <i>Hashem</i> forever, for He has bestowed His salvation, His love, His reward upon me. ^{33 34}	(ו) וְאֲנִי בְּחֶסֶדךָ בְּטַחְתִּי. יִגַּל לִבִּי בִישׁוּעֶתְךָ. אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה כִּי גָמַל עָלַי:

Tehillim 14

In this Psalm, King David peers prophetically into the future to the time when a Naval, a vile and contemptible man (Nevuchadnezzar) will destroy the First Temple (Rashi, Metzudot David). The Psalm is written in the past tense, because, when a prophet sees something in the future, he experiences it as if it has already happened (*Metzudot*).

In more general terms, the psalm is a continuation of the last three psalms in which David bemoans the extent to which society can deteriorate when the forces of godlessness prevail. Still, despair is not inevitable! On the contrary, our faith and our knowledge that Hashem is forever present and available, and that His plan for mankind is never inoperative, give us the fortitude to weather all tests. For the entire world is as naught for Hashem, and

³¹ "Lest I sleep the sleep of death": Lest I sleep away my existence in this world which is likened to night.

³² "Lest my enemy [the shadow-power which I was born to harness]... and my oppressors [the negative thoughts that plague me and imprison me] rejoice..." In truth, those lower aspects of our selves that seem to rejoice when we fall are waiting for the day when we will overcome their insidious influence. When we finally wake up from the sleep of this world, we will then not only become free from these negative influences, but transmute them and bring them with us as we enter a new life of God-awareness. In the end, nothing gets left behind!

³³ Or: "As for me, I have always trusted in Your *chesed* (unconditional love); my heart will therefore *yagel* (rejoice) in Your deliverance; I will sing to Hashem [forever], for all that He has *gamal* (bestowed) upon me." Based on the meaning of the word *yagel*, Malbim explains the difference between *chesed* and *gemul*: "*Va'ani be'chasdekha batachti*—as for me, I have always trusted in Your unconditional love; *yagel libi*—my heart will therefore rejoice...*ki gamal*—for He has already bestowed..." The root of *yagel* is *gil*. *Gil* is the kind of joy that we feel when something good—that we were not expecting—happens by surprise and without warning. Accordingly, when the Psalmist says: True, I have always trusted and relied upon Your *chesed* (unconditional love), namely, that You would deliver me despite my unworthiness (i.e., as an act of pure *chesed*). Now, however, I will sing to You for *gamal*, You have bestowed salvation upon me as a *gemul* (reward and recompense) for my service, i.e., as if I truly deserved it.

The Shlah sees another meaning in the word *gamal*. True, *gemul* can refer to reward and recompense, but not only in a clearly positive sense. *Gemul* is used for any payment, including "payment for debts incurred." Still, David sings to Hashem for this recompense! How is this possible? "I will therefore sing to Hashem for *gamal alai* (He has recompensed me) for all the wrongs I committed [i.e., the wrongs that caused me to be exiled, and the wrongs I committed during my exile] to my face! For in this way He has given me the merit to deserve the Messianic redemption! This is similar to the verse (Isaiah 12:1), 'And you [Israel] shall declare on that day [of the final redemption]: I thank You, Hashem, though You showed me anger!'" (Rabbi Yeshaya Horowitz, *Shnei Luchot haBrit*).

Similar to the Malbim, the Shlah distinguishes here between *chesed* and *gemul*. *Chesed* is unearned kindness. *Gemul* is the reward we reap for either having performed a task well, or conversely, for having endured whatever suffering we deserved as a result of our wrongdoings. In truth, as we see throughout the Psalms, Hashem runs the world with a perfect combination of the two. In this verse, we learn that the redemption will be a perfect combination of both as well. Redemption will be a gift, and yet it will also come as a necessary recompense for all that Israel has endured throughout history.

At any rate, according to the Shlah, even though Hashem seems to treat us harshly in this-world—*midah-keneged-midah*—still, even this is a manifestation of His great love for us that will be totally revealed in the Messianic Age and the World-to-Come.

³⁴ "My heart will therefore rejoice in Your deliverance." The Midrash does not miss an opportunity to see here a hint to the very deep connection that exists between our suffering and Hashem's: "Rabbi Abahu said: This is one of those verses in which the redemption of the Holy One is seen as inseparable from the redemption of Israel. It is not written, 'My heart will therefore rejoice in my deliverance,' but 'My heart will therefore rejoice in Your deliverance!' David said: 'Your deliverance / redemption is our deliverance / redemption'" (*Midrash Tehillim* 13:4).

His utter transcendence, which the vile man misinterprets as His absence, is for us the greatest guarantee of His closeness. For He is above the system of creation, and never limited to its rules.

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the Master over Creation who grants eternal victory. By David. The contemptible man has always said in his heart: "There is no God [no divine providence, no reward, or punishment]." They [he and his like] brought ruin to society; their behavior caused depravity to become the norm, to the extent that there is no longer any one who does good.	(א) לְמִנְצַח לְדוֹד אָמַר נָבַל בְּלִבּוֹ אֵין אֱלֹהִים הִשְׁחִיתוּ הַתְּעִיבוּ עָלֶיָּהּ אֵין עֹשֶׂה טוֹב:
(2) <i>Hashem</i> has looked down from heaven unto the children of Adam, to see if there is anyone who is using his intelligence, who seeks <i>Elohim</i> .	(ב) יְהוָה מִשְׁמַיִם הִשְׁקִיף עַל בְּנֵי אָדָם לִרְאוֹת הֵיטֵב מִשְׁכִּיל דֹּרֵשׁ אֶת אֱלֹהִים:
(3) But behold: They have all turned away from the path of righteousness; all of them together have become ruined; not one of them is a doer of good; not even one.	(ג) הֲכֵל סֵר יַחְדּוֹ נֶאֱלָחוּ אֵין עֹשֶׂה טוֹב אֵין גַּם אֶחָד:
(4) How can they think that there is no God? Behold, all workers of iniquity who have devoured my people like they devour bread—they should know that it is only because my people have not called upon <i>Hashem</i> that He has given them over into their hands.	(ד) הֲלֹא יָדְעוּ כָּל פְּעֻלֵי אָנוֹן אֲכָלִי עָמִי אֲכָלוּ לֶחֶם יְהוָה לֹא קָרְאוּ:
(5) There they feared a great fear; for <i>Elohim</i> allows His Presence to be felt in a righteous generation.	(ה) שָׁם פָּחַדוּ פָּחַד כִּי אֱלֹהִים בְּדוֹר צַדִּיק:
(6) You fools dare to ridicule the counsel of the poor one [Israel]—that <i>Hashem</i> is his sole refuge!	(ו) עֲצַת עֲנִי תִבְשִׁיו כִּי יְהוָה מַחְסֵהוּ:
(7) O that we could be lifted up to see Israel's salvation shining forth even now from Zion; then, when <i>Hashem</i> returns with His exiled people, Yaacov's ecstasy will rise up ever higher; Yisrael will attain everlasting joy!	(ז) מִי יִתֵּן מִצִּיּוֹן יְשׁוּעַת יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּשׁוּב יְהוָה שְׁבוּת עָמּוֹ יִגַּל יַעֲקֹב יִשְׂמַח יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Tehillim 15

David herein encapsulates eleven quintessential qualities and traits that one should cultivate in order to lead a Godly life, to attain the highest degree of human perfection, and thereby inherit Eternity.

(1) <i>Mizmor LeDavid</i> – A cutting-psalm by David. <i>Hashem</i> , who can dwell in Your tent [i.e., live a spiritual life even in this-world which is likened to a temporary tent]! Who will abide on Your holy mountain [i.e., in the heavenly <i>Beit HaMikdash</i>]!	(א) מִזְמוֹר לְדוֹד יְהוָה מִי יִגוֹר בְּאַהֲלָךְ. מִי יִשְׁכֵּן בְּהַר קֹדֶשְׁךָ:
(2) He who walks in wholehearted integrity, deals righteously, and speaks truth in his heart.	(ב) הוֹלֵךְ תְּמִים וּפָעַל צֶדֶק. וְדִבֵּר אֱמֶת בְּלִבָּבוֹ:
(3) He who has no slander on his tongue, who has not acted wickedly towards his brother, nor cast disgrace upon his relative [i.e., friend].	(ג) לֹא רָגַל עַל לְשׁוֹנוֹ. לֹא עָשָׂה לְרֵעֵהוּ רָעָה. וְחִרְפָּה לֹא נִשָּׂא עַל קִרְבּוֹ:
(4) He who is lowly in his own eyes, and extremely humble; who honors those who revere <i>Hashem</i> ; who, though he may swear to his own disadvantage, does not recant on his oath.	(ד) נִבְיָה בְּעֵינָיו נִמְאָס. וְאֶת יִרְאֵי יְהוָה יַכְבִּיד. נִשְׁבַּע לְהִרָע וְלֹא יִמָּר:
(5) He who has not lent his money with interest, or taken a bribe against the innocent; He who does these things will never falter.	(ה) כִּסְפוֹ לֹא נָתַן בְּנִשְׁכָּךְ. וְשֹׁחַד עַל נֶקִי לֹא לָקַח. עֹשֶׂה אֱלֹה לֹא יִמוּט לְעוֹלָם:

Tehillim 16

(1) A precious psalm by David which he prized highly and reviewed constantly for the lessons it contains: Protect me, God, for I take refuge in You.	(א) מַכְתָּם לְדוֹד שְׁמֵרָנִי אֵל כִּי חֲסִיתִי בְּךָ:
(2) O my soul say to <i>Hashem</i> : You are my Lord; the good You do for me, You are not obligated to do; [it is purely out of love].	(ב) אֲמַרְתָּ לַיהוָה אֲדֹנִי אַתָּה טוֹבַתִּי בִּלְעָלִיד:

(3) I therefore bind myself to the holy ones who dwell in the land of eternal life; they are the mighty ones who serve You faithfully, in whose merit all my longing is fulfilled.	(ג) לְקְדוּשִׁים אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ הַמָּה וְאֲדִירֵי כָל חֶפְצֵי בָם:
(4) May the sorrows of those who hasten after other gods be multiplied; I will not pour out their drink offerings of blood, nor bear their idols' names upon my lips.	(ד) יִרְבּוּ עֲצֻבוֹתָם אַחֵר מֵהֶרֶוּ בַל אֶסִּיד נִסְפִיָּהֶם מִדָּם וּבַל אֲשֵׂא אֶת שְׁמוֹתֵם עַל שִׁפְתֵי:
(5) Hashem I place all my faith in You; You are the portion of my heritage, and my overflowing cup; You guide my destiny.	(ה) יְהוָה מִנֵּת חֶלְקִי וְכוֹסִי אֶתָּה תוֹמִיד גּוֹרְלִי:
(6) The spiritual inheritance which has come down to me is pleasant; my portion my own choice to cleave to You is beautiful to me.	(ו) חֲבָלִים נָפְלוּ לִי בִנְעָמִים אֵף נִחַלֵת שִׁפְרָה עָלַי:
(7) Hashem, I will therefore bless You and thank You forever for counseling me to cleave to Your ways; especially at night, my insides admonish me to draw near to You.	(ז) אֲבָרַךְ אֶת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲצֵנִי אֵף לַיְלֹת יִסְרוֹנִי כְלִיוֹתִי:
(8) I will place the awareness of Hashem before me at all times; with You at my right hand, I will never stumble.	(ח) שׁוִׁיתִי יְהוָה לְנִגְדִי תָמִיד כִּי מִיָּמִינִי בַל אָמוּט:
(9) My heart will rejoice and my glorious soul will exult; my flesh will also rest securely.	(ט) לֵבִי שִׂמַּח לִבִּי וְיִגַּל כְּבוֹדִי אֵף בְּשָׂרִי יִשְׁכַּן לְבֶטֶח:
(10) For You will not abandon my soul to the grave, nor allow Your devoted one to see destruction.	(י) כִּי לֹא תַעֲזֹב נַפְשִׁי לְשָׂאוֹל לֹא תִתֵּן חֲסִידְךָ לְרֵאוֹת שְׁחַת:
(11) Make known to me the true path of life; allow me to experience the fullness that surpasses all other joys in Your presence, the everlasting bliss that You hold in Your right hand.	(יא) תוֹדִיעֵנִי אֶרֶח חַיִּים שִׁבְעַת שְׁמֵחוֹת אֶת פְּנִיד נְעֻמוֹת בִּימִינְךָ נֶצַח:

Tehillim 17

According to the *Midrash (Shochar Tov)* this psalm speaks of repentance on *Yom Kippur*. Indeed, in this psalm, David speaks of himself as one who has slipped from the path of righteousness but who wishes to return, and asks Hashem's help. It is also the first of ten psalms which were added to the *Pesukei d'Zimrah* on *Yom Kippur* morning. It is the first psalm to begin with the words *Tefillah LeDavid* (A Prayer of David), for the essence of *tefillah* (prayer) is the desire to speak words of truth... Its first and last verses speak of righteousness, and like the previous psalm, it speaks about the great bliss that lies in store in eternity for those who return to Hashem with all their heart and follow the paths of righteousness.

(1) <i>Tefillah</i> [a prayer of self-evaluation] by David. Hashem, beneficent God, hear the righteousness of my plea and how I have striven to internalize Your standard of righteousness in judging myself; be attentive to my cry that issues forth from the depths of my being; give ear to my prayer, from lips which have not spoken guile.	(א) תִּפְלֶה לְדוֹד שְׁמְעָה יְהוָה צֶדֶק הַקְשִׁיבָה רִנָּתִי הֶאֱזִינָה תִּפְלָתִי בְּלֹא שִׁפְתֵי מִרְמָה:
(2) May my judgment come forth from before You and may the judgment I arrive at in my self-evaluation be exactly the same as Your objective judgment of me; Your eyes alone behold all things impartially.	(ב) מִלְּפָנֶיךָ מִשְׁפָּטִי יֵצֵא עֵינֶיךָ תַּחֲזִינָה מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל:
(3) You have refined my heart with afflictions which have cleansed and humbled me, punished me with tormenting thoughts in the night; You have purified me like silver until You can find no more blemish in me; I have bridled my mouth lest a single complaint pass my lips.	(ג) בְּחִנָּת לִבִּי פָקַדְתָּ לִּלְלָה צָרְפָתָנִי בַל תִּמְצָא זִמָּתִי בַל יַעֲבֹר פִּי:
(4) I have not complained about the evil deeds that men have perpetrated against me; they are merely fulfilling the decree of Your lips; for I admit: I myself have followed in the ways of the lawless.	(ד) לִפְעֻלוֹת אָדָם בְּדִבַּר שִׁפְתֶּיךָ אֲנִי שֹׁמְרֵתִי אֲרוּחוֹת פְּרִיעַ:
(5) Now I ask: Help me establish my steps to follow in Your paths [the paths of Your righteous precepts]; let my steps never stray from the path of righteousness.	(ה) תִּמְדָּ אֲשֶׁרִי בְּמַעְגְלוֹתֶיךָ בַל נִמוּטוּ פְעָמִי:

(6) I have called out to You to help me; answer me, O God! Incline Your ear to me, hear the thoughts behind my words.	(ו) אָנִי קְרָאתִיךָ כִּי תַעֲנֵנִי אֶל הַט אָזְנוֹךָ לִי שְׁמַע אִמְרָתִי:
(7) Amplify Your loving-kindness, O Deliverer! As a sign that You are faithful to Your promise to protect those who place their hope in You, save me from those who revolt against Your right hand! ³⁵	(ז) הַפְּלֵה חֲסִדֶיךָ מוֹשִׁיעַ חוֹסִים מִמִּתְקוֹמָמִים בַּיָּמִינֶךָ:
(8) Protect me like the pupil of Your eye; conceal me under the shadow of Your wings.	(ח) שְׁמְרֵנִי כְּאִישׁוֹן בֵּת עֵין בְּצֶל כְּנָפֶיךָ תַּסְתִּירֵנִי:
(9) Protect me from wicked men who are bent on robbing and oppressing me; protect me from my enemies who encircle me in order to take/steal my soul.	(ט) מִפְּנֵי רָשָׁעִים זֶה שְׁדוֹנִי אִיבִי בְּנַפְשִׁי יִקִּיפוּ עָלַי:
(10) They are enclosed in their own fat, so that their mouths speak only with vain boastfulness.	(י) חֲלָבָמוֹ סָגְרוּ פִּימוֹ דִּבְרוּ בְּגָאוֹת:
(11) Everywhere I go, these wicked men follow me; they watch our steps; in a moment, they surround us; their eyes are on the watch to ambush us wherever we go in the land.	(יא) אֲשֶׁרֵינוּ עִתָּה סָבְבוּנוּ (סבבוני) עֵינֵיהֶם יִשְׁתּוּ לְנִטּוֹת בְּאַרְצֶךָ:
(12) The wicked man resembles a lion, eager to tear his prey to pieces, and like a young lion who sits in hidden places.	(יב) דְּמִינוּ כְּאַרְיֵה יִכְסוֹף לְטֹרֶף וְכַכְפִּיר יֵשֵׁב בְּמַסְתָּרִים:
(13) Rise up, Hashem, defy the wicked one to his face, bring him to his knees; deliver my soul from the wicked man who serves as the instrument of Your punishing sword.	(יג) קוּמָה יְהוָה קְדָמָה פָּנָיו הַכְרִיעֵהוּ פִּלְטָה נַפְשִׁי מִרָשָׁע חֲרָבְךָ:
(14) Hashem, deliver my soul from dead men who are the tools of Your hand, from dead men whose portion is in this life, whose stomachs You fill from that which is hidden with You; let them be content with children, and let them leave their abundance to their offspring.	(יד) מִמֵּתִים יָדְךָ יְהוָה מִמֵּתִים מִחֲלָד חֶלֶקָם בְּחַיִּים וְצַפּוֹנְךָ (וצפינך) תִּמְלֵא בִטְנֵם יִשְׁבְּעוּ בָּנִים וְהִנִּיחוּ יִתְּרָם לְעוֹלָלֵיהֶם:
(15) As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; when I then awaken in the next world I will be satiated with the glory of Your countenance.	(טו) אָנִי בְּצִדְקָ אֶחְזָה פָּנֶיךָ אֲשַׁבְּעָה בְּהִקִּיץ תִּמְוִנָתְךָ:

Tehillim 18

Here, in 51 verses, David (the soul of Israel) thanks Hashem for all the good with which he has been blessed during times of peace and plenty. He also thanks Hashem for all times that he has been saved from his enemies, whether by means of seemingly natural means when he wasn't deserving, or by revealed miracles and other supernatural means when he was deserving (Malbim). See our in-depth commentary on this psalm.

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the Master of Creation who grants eternal victory. A psalm by Hashem's servant, David, who uttered/sang the words of this song prophetically to Hashem, on the day [i.e., about the times] that Hashem saved him from the clutches of all his enemies, especially from Shaul.	(א) לְמִנְצֵחַ לְעַבְדְּ יְהוָה לְדוֹד אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לִיהוָה אֶת דְּבָרֵי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת בַּיּוֹם הַצִּיל יְהוָה אוֹתוֹ מִכָּף כָּל אֹיְבָיו וּמִיַּד שָׂאוֹל:
2nd Person Direct:	
(2) And David said: I love You with a child-like love, Hashem, my power and my strength!	(ב) וַיֹּאמֶר אֶרְחֹמְךָ יְהוָה חֲזָקִי:
(3) Hashem, You are my Rock [Protector] and my Fortress [secret hideaway]; You are my Rescuer, the Ground of my existence, Rock in whom I place my trust and in whom I take refuge; You are my Shield and the Ray of my salvation-light, my High-Tower.	(ג) יְהוָה סִלְעִי וּמְצוּדָתִי וּמִפְּלִטִי אֱלֹהֵי צוּרִי אֶחָסֶה בּוֹ מִגְנִי וְקֶרֶן יִשְׁעֵי מִשְׁגָּבִי:

³⁵ What does it mean to revolt against God's right hand? What is God's right hand? The right hand refers to God's loving-kindness, His desire to bestow good, even upon those who are not deserving! Who would revolt against such a force of love? Only one filled with so much guilt and self-hatred that he cannot stand anyone, including himself, being the recipient of God's love. The punishment for his sins is that he passes the strictest judgment upon himself: he feels that he can never be forgiven...David therefore asks, "Amplify the power of Your loving right hand to break the power that holds such souls in its grip!"

(4) O You who are intrinsically praised, I call upon You! <i>Hashem</i> !! And I am immediately delivered from my enemies!	(ד) מֵהֶלֶל אֶקְרָא יְהוָה וּמִן אֵיבֵי אֲנֹשֶׁעַ:
3rd Person:	
(5) When death's cords tighten around me, and floods/armies of godless men threaten to overwhelm me;	(ה) אֶפְפוּנִי חֲבָלֵי מוֹת וְנַחֲלֵי בְלִיעַל יִבְעֲתוּנִי:
(6) When Sheol's bonds enclose me, and death traps block my way;	(ו) חֲבָלֵי שְׁאוֹל סָבְבוּנִי קְדָמוּנִי מוֹקְשֵׁי מוֹת:
(7) In mortal distress, I call to <i>Hashem</i> ; I beseech and I cry out to my God to save me! He hears my voice from His heavenly sanctuary; My cry comes before Him, entering into His ears.	(ז) בִּצְרָ לִי אֶקְרָא יְהוָה וְאֵל אֱלֹהֵי אֲשׁוּעַ יִשְׁמַע מִהִיכָלוֹ קוֹלִי וְשׁוֹעֲתִי לִפְנֵי תְבוּא בְּאָזְנוֹ:
(8) When the earth has erupted and quaked, and the very foundations of the mountains have trembled, they erupted because His wrath was aroused.	(ח) וַתִּגַּעַשׁ וַתִּרְעַשׁ הָאָרֶץ וּמוֹסְדֵי הָרִים יִרְגְּזוּ וַיִּתְגַּעְשׁוּ כִּי חָרָה לוֹ:
(9) The smoke of His wrath rose up in His nostrils; devouring fire like lava erupted from His mouth; burning coals flamed forth from Him.	(ט) עָלָה עָשָׁן בְּאַפּוֹ וְאֵשׁ מִפִּיו תֹּאכֵל גִּחְלִים בָּעֵרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ:
(10) He tipped the heavens and descended to intervene in earthly events; but men did not see Him, for clouds of darkness swirled beneath His feet.	(י) וַיֵּט שָׁמַיִם וַיֵּרֶד וַעֲרַפֵּל תַּחַת רַגְלָיו:
(11) He rode upon a cherub, and flew; He sailed on the wings of the wind.	(יא) וַיִּרְפֹּב עַל כְּרוֹב וַיַּעֲף וַיֵּדָא עַל כַּנְפֵי רוּחַ:
(12) He made darkness His hiding place as a curtain between heaven and earth to mask Himself from man; and yet His canopy is constantly spread out over those who gather round Him; for the darkness that surrounds Him is like the darkness of thick rainclouds ready to give forth blessing to the earth.	(יב) יֵשֶׁת חֹשֶׁךְ סִתְרוֹ סִבִּיבוֹתָיו סִכְתּוֹ חֲשֹׁכֶת מַיִם עָבִי שְׁחָקִים:
(13) From a faint flicker of the brightness that radiates from before Him, dark clouds of hopelessness are dispersed and pass away together with all hardship: hailstones and fiery coals.	(יג) מִנִּגְהָ נִגְדּוּ, עָבִיו עָבְרוּ – בָּרָד וְגִחְלֵי אֵשׁ:
(14) It is <i>Hashem</i> thundering in the heavens! The Most High makes His voice heard—in hailstones and coals of fire.	(יד) וַיִּרְעַם בְּשָׁמַיִם יְהוָה וַעֲלִיוֹן יִתֵּן קֶלֶד – בָּרָד וְגִחְלֵי אֵשׁ:
(15) He sends His arrows forth, dispersing them to the ends of the earth; these are the powerful events that rock the world like countless bolts of lightning in quick succession, causing great confusion.	(טו) וַיִּשְׁלַח חֲצָיו וַיִּפְצֵצֵם וּבָרָקִים רַב וַיְהַמֵּם:
2nd Person:	
(16) The depths of the water were revealed when the waters of the Red Sea were split, exposing the foundations of the earth [i.e., the fundamental laws that underlie the physical world]—at the sound of Your rebuke, <i>Hashem</i> [i.e., the revelation of Your mastery over the world that resounds to the ends of the earth]!—from the subtle breath of Your nostrils that hints to Your constant supervision of the world!	(טז) וַיִּרְאוּ אֶפִּיקֵי מַיִם וַיִּגְלוּ מוֹסְדוֹת תִּבְלַת מִגְעֲרַתְךָ יְהוָה מִנְשֻׁמַּת רוּחַ אִפְךָ:
3rd Person:	
(17) He stretches forth His hand from above and picks me up when I have fallen; whenever I lose all hope and am about to drown in my troubles He pulls me out of them as from turbulent waters.	(יז) יִשְׁלַח מִמָּרוֹם יִקְחֵנִי יִמְשְׁנֵי מַמִּים רַבִּים:
(18) He rescued me from my foes, however strong they might be, and from those who hate me, when they were more powerful than me.	(יח) יִצִּילֵנִי מֵאֵיבֵי עֶז וּמִשֹּׁנְאֵי כִי אֲמָצוּ מִמֶּנִּי:
(19) When they came forward to confront me on the day of my calamity, <i>Hashem</i> was a support for me.	(יט) יִקְדָּמוּנִי בַּיּוֹם אֵי־דִי וַיְהִי יְהוָה

	לְמַשְׁעוֹן לִי:
(20) He brought me forth into expansion; He set me free because He delighted in me.	(כ) וַיּוֹצִיאֵנִי לַמָּרוֹחַ יַחְלִצֵנִי כִּי חָפֵץ בִּי:
(21) May <i>Hashem</i> bestow His loving-kindness upon me according to my righteous deeds even in this-world; may He also recompense me according to the purity of my hands in the world-to-come.	(כא) יִגְמְלֵנִי יְהוָה כְּצַדִּיקִי כְּבָר יְדֵי יוֹשֵׁב לִי:
(22) For I have kept <i>Hashem's</i> ways, and not become entangled in wickedness to the extent of distancing myself from my God.	(כב) כִּי שְׁמִרְתִּי דִּרְכֵי יְהוָה וְלֹא רָשָׁעִתִּי מֵאַלְהֵי:
(23) For the necessity of keeping all of His ethical laws governing relations before man and his fellow is before me at all times; I will never remove the yoke of His statutes governing my obligations to Him from myself.	(כג) כִּי כָל מִשְׁפָּטָיו לִנְגִידִי וְחֻקֹּתָיו לֹא אֶסִּיר מִנִּי:
(24) I will maintain complete integrity with Him no matter what befalls me, and guard myself from sins that I might otherwise easily rationalize.	(כד) וְאַהֲי תָמִים עִמּוֹ וְאַשְׁתַּמֵּר מֵעוֹנֵי:
(25) For <i>Hashem</i> has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the purity of my actions in His eyes [for only He judges with complete impartiality].	(כה) וַיֵּשֶׁב יְהוָה לִי כְּצַדִּיקִי כְּבָר יְדֵי לִנְגִיד עֵינָיו:
2nd Person:	
(26) O God with one who goes beyond the call of duty to serve You, go beyond the call of duty; with a man who serves You with virtue, aid him in becoming more virtuous.	(כו) עִם חֲסִיד תִּתְחַסֵּד עִם גִּבֹּר תָּמִים תִּתְמָם:
(27) With one who strives for the highest purity of character, aid him in attaining purity. But with one who is defiant, act to prevent him from attaining his goals.	(כז) עִם נָבֵר תִּתְבָּרַר וְעִם עֲקֹשׁ תִּתְפַּתֵּל:
(28) For You save the downtrodden people, while those with haughty eyes You bring low.	(כח) כִּי אַתָּה עִם עֲנִי תוֹשִׁיעַ וְעֵינִים רָמוֹת תִּשְׁפִּיל:
(29) For You illuminate my lamp [soul]; <i>Hashem</i> my God, You brighten my darkness.	(כט) כִּי אַתָּה תֹאִיר נְרִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִגִּיהַ חֲשֹׁכִי:
(30) With You [Your help] I can run against an entire troop; with my God, I hurdle their defensive wall.	(ל) כִּי בְךָ אֶרֶץ גְּדוּד וּבְאֱלֹהֵי אֲדָלַג שׁוֹר:
3rd Person:	
(31) The Almighty God, His way is perfect; <i>Hashem's</i> word is pure; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.	(לא) הָאֵל תָּמִים דְּרָכּוֹ אִמְרַת יְהוָה צְרוּפָה מִגֵּן הוּא לְכָל הַחֲסִידִים בּוֹ:
(32) For who is God besides <i>YHVH</i> the Eternal, and who is Creator besides our Lord!	(לב) כִּי מִי אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלַעֲדֵי יְהוָה וּמִי צוֹר זֹולָתִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ:
(33) He is <i>El</i> , the loving God; at times He girds me with strength to overcome all obstacles; at other times He smoothes my path by removing all stumbling blocks before me.	(לג) הָאֵל הַמְאֲזִרְנִי חֵיל וַיִּתֵּן תָּמִים דְּרָכֵי:
(34) He makes my legs run straight and fast like mountain stags [roes, bucks], and allows me to stand [maintain my position] in the high places that I have already attained [or, that I aspire to attain].	(לד) מְשֹׁה רַגְלִי כְּאַיְלוֹת וְעַל בְּמַתִּי יַעֲמִידֵנִי:
(35) He trains my hands in warfare, and infuses my arms with superhuman strength to bend [or, to lower] the bronze bow.	(לה) מְלַמֵּד יְדֵי לַמִּלְחָמָה וְנִחַתָּה קֶשֶׁת נְחוּשָׁה זְרוּעֹתַי:
2nd Person:	
(36) You have given me Your salvation as a shield; Your right hand of loving-kindness has been my support, and Your humility [i.e., the humility You have allowed me to emulate; or: the fact that You condescend to take notice of me] has increased me [made me great].	(לו) וַתִּתֵּן לִי מִגֹּן יִשְׁעֶךָ וַיִּמְיֶנֶךָ תִּסְעֲדֵנִי וַעֲנוֹתֶךָ תִּרְבֵּנִי:
(37) In life as in war You have widened my stride beneath	(לז) תִּרְחִיב צִעְדִי תַּחְתִּי וְלֹא מַעְדּוֹ

me [i.e., given me stability in the midst of adversity]; my feet have therefore never slipped even during the most trying times.	קִרְסָלִי:
(38) With Your help I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them, not turning back until I have demolished them.	(לח) אֲרִדּוֹף אוֹיְבֵי וְאֲשִׁיגֶם וְלֹא אָשׁוּב עַד כָּלּוֹתָם:
(39) With Your help I strike them so that they may never rise up again; until they fall and are subdued beneath my feet.	(לט) אֶמְחָצֶם וְלֹא יָכֻלוּ קוּם יִפְּלוּ תַּחַת רַגְלִי:
(40) You have girded my loins with superhuman strength for battle; You have subdued those who have stood up against me to destroy me.	(מ) וַתֶּאֱזָרְנִי חֵיל לְמַלְחָמָה תִּכְרִיעַ קָמִי תַּחְתִּי:
(41) Due to Your intervention my enemies have all turned and fled before me; with Your help I have paralyzed those who hate me.	(מא) וְאוֹיְבֵי נִתְּתָה לִי עֶרְף וּמִשְׁנָאִי אֶצְמִיתָם:
3rd Person:	
(42) They [my enemies] cry out to their fellows and to their gods, but no one comes to save them; even when they cry out to <i>Hashem</i> , He does not answer them.	(מב) יִשְׁוּעוּ וְאֵין מוֹשִׁיעַ עַל יְהוָה וְלֹא עָנָם:
(43) With His help I grind them as fine dust to be carried by the wind; like muddy sludge I have cast them out.	(מג) וְאֶשְׁחָקֶם כְּעָפָר עַל פְּנֵי רוּחַ כְּטִיט חוּצוֹת אֲרִיקָם:
David refers here to the Messianic future:	
(44) <i>Hashem</i> ! You have rescued me from the enemies among my people; You have placed me [Israel] at the head of the nations; the rulers of a people I never knew now serve me.	(מד) תִּפְּלֹטְנִי מִרִּיבֵי עַם תִּשְׁמִינִי לְרֹאשׁ גּוֹיִם עִם לֹא יִדְעָתִי יַעֲבֹדוּנִי:
<i>Mashiach ben David</i> will not have to fight physical wars:	
(45) Just hearing about me they are obedient to me; strangers cringe before me.	(מה) לִשְׁמַע אֶזֶן יִשְׁמָעוּ לִי בְּנֵי נֶכֶר יִכְחָשׁוּ לִי:
(46) Strangers wither [faint from fear]; they tremble in their strongholds.	(מו) בְּנֵי נֶכֶר יִבְּלוּ וַיִּחַרְגּוּ מִמִּסְגְּרוֹתֵיהֶם:
(47) <i>Hashem</i> is alive! Blessed is my Rock [Creator]! Exalted is the God of my salvation!	(מז) חֵי יְהוָה וּבִרְוַח צוּרֵי וַיְרוּם אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
(48) He is <i>El</i> , the Almighty God! He avenges me [i.e., He avenges all the suffering Israel has suffered at their hands]; He subdues nations who rebelled against Him beneath me.	(מח) הָאֵל הַנוֹתֵן נִקְמוֹת לִי וַיִּדְבֹּר עַמִּים תַּחְתִּי:
<i>Mashiach</i> will still have to fight Armilus:	
(49) He will rescue me from my internal enemies, and elevate me above those who will stand up against me; He will save me from a man of violence.	(מט) מִפְּלֹטֵי מְאִיבֵי אֵף מִן קָמִי תִּרְוַמְמֵנִי מֵאִישׁ חָמָס תִּצִּילֵנִי:
2nd Person:	
(50) I will therefore thank You in the midst of the nations, <i>Hashem</i> ! I will sing/chant to raise up Your Name [<i>Shekhinah</i>].	(נ) עַל כֵּן אוֹדֶךָ בְּגוֹיִם יְהוָה וּלְשִׁמְךָ אֶזְמְרָה:
3rd Person:	
(51) He grants multiple victories/deliverances to His king; He shows kindness to His anointed <i>mashiach</i> , to David and to his descendants, forever. ³⁶	(נא) מִגְדָּל יִשְׁוּעוֹת מְלָכּוֹ וְעֶשֶׂה חֶסֶד לְמִשְׁיָחוֹ לְדוֹד וּלְזָרְעוֹ עַד עוֹלָם:

³⁶ "Magdil—He grants multiple deliverances to His king; He shows kindness to His anointed *mashiach*, to David and to his descendants, forever." See Samuel II 22:51 for one slight difference: "Migdol—He is a tower of salvation for his king; He shows kindness to His anointed *mashiach*, to David and to his descendants, forever." Whereas the written form of the first word is almost the same in both cases [in our verse, *magdil* is written מגדל without the letter *yod*; in Samuel it is written מגדיל with a *yod*], nevertheless, in our verse it is pronounced *magdil*, while in Samuel it is changed altogether and pronounced *migdol*. What is the difference between *magdil* and *migdol*? According to the Midrash, the difference is between a process that leads to an end-point, and the actual end-point:

"One verse says *migdol*, and the other verse says *magdil*. R. Yudan explained: [The root of the word *magdil* is *gadal*, meaning to become great, to grow in stages. The verse thus says *magdil*] because the Redemption will not come to this nation [Israel] in one instant, rather, it will unfold ever so slowly. This is the meaning of *magdil*, namely, that the Redemption will grow and unfold for Israel... This is why the Redemption is likened to dawn, as

Tehillim 19

King David begins Tehillim 19 with seven verses describing the wonders of Hashem's creation which He made in seven days. From verse eight onwards, he describes the wonders of the Torah which transcends the seven of creation.

The symbolism of the sacred numbers seven and eight permeates the Torah. Eight represents the level of Hashem's Infinite Light, the Light of the World-to-Come that shines over and above creation, and which He reveals only at special times when He deems it necessary to give us a glimpse of the Eternity that lies beyond our world. Seven represents our task of drawing that Light down into our lives and internalizing it even in this-world. The point is always to join the two.

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the Master [the Symphony Conductor of Creation who grants eternity to Israel through His Torah]. <i>Mizmor LeDavid</i> – A cutting-psalm by David:	(א) לַמְנַצֵּחַ מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד:
(2) The heavens [i.e., the stars, galaxies, and great expanses of the universe] relate/radiate/reveal the glory of almighty God who created them; the biosphere attests to being His continuous handiwork. ³⁷	(ב) הַשָּׁמַיִם מְסַפְּרִים כְּבוֹד אֵל וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיו מְגִיד הַרְקִיעַ:
(3) Even the fact that one day follows another bespeaks the active power of God's creative word; ³⁸ while night after night divulges His omniscient all-knowing. ³⁹	(ג) יוֹם לְיוֹם יָבִיעַ אֶמֶר וְלַיְלָה לְלַיְלָה יְחַהֵּ דַעַת:

the verse attests, 'Your light will then shine like the dawn' (Isaiah 58:8)...And what is *migdol*? [Similar to *migdal* (tower), *migdol* represents the end of the process when] the *Mashiach* will reach his full stature and become a tower of strength for his people. We see this in another verse, "Hashem's Name is a tower of strength; with it, the righteous man will run and become elevated [above his enemies]" (Proverbs 18:10) (*Midrash Tehillim* 18:36).

³⁷ "HaShamayim *mesaperim*—the heavens relate, radiate, and reveal the glory of God." *Saper* (the root of the word *mesaperim*) is usually translated as declare or relate; in other words, some form of verbal communication. *Sapir* (the source of the English sapphire) also translates as shining or radiating. Certainly the heavenly bodies that we see when we look up at the sky (whether the sun in broad daylight, or the moon, the planets, and the starry galaxies at night) do not speak in any literal way. Nevertheless, their orderly parade across the sky bespeaks and communicates something extremely important to us, namely, that they (and the entire universe of which they are part) are the product of intelligent design. This intelligent design involves the transformation of light/energy into matter. Knowing this, we can work backwards from matter to energy, from a world that hides God to a world that reveals Him.

The same idea is contained in the second half of our verse, "*umaaseh yadav magid ha'rakiya*—the biosphere attests to being His continuous handiwork." According to Malbim, *rakiya* (usually translated firmament) is a catchword for the different layers of atmosphere that make planet earth hospitable to life as we know it. He writes that Hashem's command on the second day of creation that a *rakiya* divide between the upper waters and lower waters was one stage in a larger process that began on the first day. Basically the entire process involved bringing forth a physical earth (that can support life as we know it) from higher energy states in which all physical matter would be, as he put it, *incinerated*. In the Midrash, this congealing of energy into matter is expressed as "On the first day, things were soft and moist, whereas on the second, things began to harden" (*Bereshit Rabbah* 4:2).

As Dr. Zvi Faier of blessed memory points out in his translation of Malbim, the earth's atmosphere divides into troposphere, stratosphere, and ionosphere. The troposphere extends to about five miles above sea level at the poles, and ten miles above sea level at the equator. The average temperature at the bottom of the troposphere is about forty degrees centigrade, while at the top the temperature drops to about minus sixty degrees centigrade. Except for certain exceptions, the temperature thereafter remains practically constant. This critical elevation is called the tropopause. It is this tropopause which may be identified with the *rakiya* which acts as a partition. Above that is the stratosphere, where the temperature remains a fairly constant minus fifty degrees centigrade. Above fifty miles is the ionosphere... (Malbim, Volume I, Genesis: Beginning and Upheaval, pp. 76-78, notes 171, 198).

³⁸ Compare with what we say in our prayers every morning, "He mercifully illuminates the earth and its inhabitants [each morning with the light of the sun]. In His *tov*-goodness, He renews, each day, continuously, the act of creation" (Blessing of *Yotzer Or*). Hashem's *tov*-goodness is the *or ha'ganuz* (hidden light) with which He brought all creation into existence; it is called *or ha'ganuz* because although it seems to have been withdrawn completely, it is nevertheless always present and operating behind the scenes; this equivalency of the hidden light with Hashem's absolute goodness is based on the verses, "He saw the *or*-light that it was *tov*-good" (Genesis 1:4), and "How great is the *tov*-goodness that You stored away for those who revere You" (Psalm 31:20).

³⁹ Hirsch: [Each day] allows a speech/utterance, an expression bringing about its own realization, to flow forth, to be passed on, and to [thereby] be brought nearer to acceptance and realization. It is a dictum which, continually, from day to day, is brought closer to realization...Every day's life carries on the work which was begun on the previous day and interrupted by the night. This totality of daily life, both as a whole and in all its parts, is one single creative and governing dictum...one *Omer*-Word of creation...The experience of night...will revive and keep alive the realization that one *Daat*-Knower watches over the entire world as it lies languid with sleep. This

(4) True there is no speech and there are no words, their "voice" [i.e., the subtle message behind all these heavenly phenomena] cannot be "heard" in any literal sense.	(ד) אין אָמַר וְאֵין דְּבָרִים בְּלִי נִשְׁמָע קוֹלָם:
(5) Nevertheless their jurisdiction extends over the entire earth, and their message is broadcast to the farthest ends of the inhabited world. ⁴⁰ He [God] thus set the sun in their midst [i.e., under the canopy of the heavens] to give light. ⁴¹	(ה) בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ יֵצֵא קוֹם וּבִקְצָה תִּבֹּל מְלִיָּהֶם לְשֶׁשֶׁשׁ שָׁם אָהָל בָּהֶם:
(6) Every morning it resembles a bridegroom stepping forth from his wedding canopy, rejoicing like a strong runner traversing his course.	(ו) וְהוּא כְּחֹתֵן יֵצֵא מִחֻפָּתוֹ יָשִׁישׁ כְּגִבּוֹר לְרוּץ אֶרֶץ:
(7) Its point of departure is always at the eastern horizon of the heavens; from there it runs its circuit to their western extremity; nothing is hidden from its heat.	(ז) מְקֻצָּה הַשָּׁמַיִם מוֹצְאוֹ וּתְקוּפָתוֹ עַל קְצוֹתָם וְאֵין נִסְתָּר מִחֻמָּתוֹ:
(8) The Torah of Hashem is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of Hashem is faithful, conferring the wisdom to overcome all temptation to those who are easily swayed. ⁴²	(ח) תּוֹרַת יְהוָה תְּמִימָה מְשִׁיבַת נֶפֶשׁ עֲדוּת יְהוָה נְאֻמָּנָה מַחְכִּימַת פֶּתִי:
(9) The precepts of Hashem are upright, gladdening the heart; the commandments of Hashem are radiant, enlightening the mind's eyes.	(ט) פְּקוּדֵי יְהוָה יִשְׁרִים מְשֻׁמְחֵי לֵב מְצוֹת יְהוָה בְּרָה מְאִירַת עֵינָיִם:

Knower neither slumbers nor sleeps (cf. Psalm 121:4), and knows the whole and every part thereof. It watches over all things with loving care and lets them reawaken...One day thus speaks to the other, "Rise up and serve the Omer-Word of the Master," and one night says to the other, "Lie down in peace, there is one *Daat*-Knower that watches over you."

⁴⁰ "Nevertheless their jurisdiction extends over the entire earth, and their message is broadcast to the farthest ends of the inhabited world" (Psalm 19:5). In Hebrew this reads "*be'khol ha'aretz yatzah kavam*." The meaning of *kavam* is uncertain. Most ancient commentators understand *kavam* as "their *kavim*, their measuring line/lines, the measuring lines of the heavens which are stretched out over the earth (Rashi). Even Radak who says, "*kavam, binyanam*, their buildings or structures," refers to the ancient way of staking off an area. So too, by way of analogy, did Hashem set all the stars and spheres in perfect array above the earth. Based on the above, Rabbi Hirsch writes, "*Kav* is the measuring line. See the same expression in Jeremiah (31:38), '*Ve'yatzah od kav ha'midah negdo*—and another measuring line will go forth against it,' referring to the laying out of a measuring line in order to stake off a certain territory for a definite purpose. Here it means that 'the measuring line goes forth from the heavens over all the earth.' That is, heaven assigns and set the bounds for the development of [and **oversees**, and has **jurisdiction** over] every living thing on earth."

Amos Chakham (*Sefer Tehillim*, Mosad HaRav Kook) writes, "*Yatzah kavam* (their line goes forth) is an enigmatic expression (*bituy satum*). Perhaps *kavam* refers here to a form or speech or call. Another explanation: a *kav* is a string; perhaps in this case, the string of a musical instrument. The meaning would then be, 'the sweetness of their music, the music of the heavens, goes forth.' Another explanation: a *kav* is a string that is used to cordon off a designated area, as in '*Ve'yatzah od kav ha'midah negdo*—and another measuring line will go forth against it' (Jeremiah 31:38). It is also possible to explain thus: *Kavam* is *inyanam, mishpatam* (their matters, their judgments, i.e., **their jurisdiction**). This would be similar to '*Ve'samti mishpat le'kav, utzedakah le'mishkalet*—I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the weight' (Isaiah 28:17). This would refer to the fact that the judgments of heaven are revealed on earth. Finally, *kavam* could mean *oram* (their lights), as light is sometimes seen in the heavens in the form of rays of light [breaking through the clouds]."

⁴¹ The words "*la'shemesh sam ohel bahem*" are usually translated "He set the sun in their midst," i.e., under the tent/canopy of the heavens. *Avnei Eliyahu* (in *Siddur HaGra*) and Rabbi Yaacov Emdin (in *Siddur Beit Yaacov*) maintain that *ohel* means not only tent/canopy, but derives from the root *hal* meaning light (as in the English *halo* which is a kind of light-aura). *Avnei Eliyahu* thus wrote, "He set the sun in their midst to shine through them." First, the root of the word *ohel* is *hal*, as in, '*Be'hilo nero alei roshi*—with the **halo/aura/luminosity** of His candle above my head' (Job 29:3)...Next, he (King David) specifically used the expression *ohel bahem* (shine through them). The reason for this is [as we have explained elsewhere] that the light [of the sun] comes to us by way of [the various layers of] the *rakiya* (firmament, i.e., troposphere, stratosphere, and ionosphere)...for the *rakiya* absorbs the light [of the sun] and breaks it down in such a way that it arrives at our eyes [i.e., our eyes perceive it, but in such a way that we are not injured or destroyed by it]."

⁴² Maharal: The beginning of the creation of the world is [recorded in the Torah] in the letter *beth* [at the beginning of the word *Bereshit*]. The beginning [of the revelation] of the Torah, on the other hand, is [recorded in] the letter *aleph* [at the beginning] of "*Anokhi YKVK Eloekha*—I am Hashem your God" (Exodus 20:2). In this way, the Torah informs us that the Torah preceded creation [just as the letter *aleph* precedes *beth*]. King David also alluded to this in Psalm 19, "The heavens radiate the glory of almighty God," the entirety of which is founded on the fact that the Torah transcends this-world which is included in the number 7—namely, the 7 days of creation—whereas the Torah is associated with the number 8. I have explained this further in *Tiferet Yisrael*... (*Derekh Chayim* on Avot 6:2; see our expanded commentary).

(10) The awe of <i>Hashem</i> is pure, enduring forever; the decrees of <i>Hashem</i> are true and altogether just.	(י) יִרְאֵת יְהוָה טְהוֹרָה עוֹמֶדֶת לְעֶד מִשְׁפָּטֵי יְהוָה אֱמֶת צִדְקוֹ יַחְדּוֹ:
(11) All these are more desirable than gold and precious stones; far sweeter than honey and the dripping of honeycombs.	(יא) הַנְּחָמִידִם מִזֶּהָב וּמִפֶּזֶז רֵב וּמִתּוֹקִים מִדְּבַשׁ וְנוֹפֶת צוּפִים:
(12) Your servant is therefore conscientious about them, since great reward is reserved for those who persist in them.	(יב) גַּם עֲבָדְךָ נִזְהָר בָּהֶם בְּשִׁמְרָם עֲקֹב רֵב:
(13) Despite all precautions, however, who is understanding enough to avoid making mistakes? I therefore ask You to cleanse me from hidden faults.	(יג) שְׂגִיאוֹת מִי יְבִין מִנסִתְרוֹת נִקְנִי:
(14) Help Your servant refrain from willful offenses as well; do not let them overcome me; only thus can I keep myself pure and cleanse myself of the blemish that comes from the most serious transgressions.	(יד) גַּם מַזִּידִים חֲשׂךְ עֲבָדְךָ אֵל יִמְשְׁלוּ בִי אֲזֵ אֵיתָם וְנִקִּיתִי מִפֶּשַׁע רֵב:
(15) May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart find favor before You, <i>Hashem</i> , my Rock in this world and my Redeemer throughout all eternity.	(טו) יִהְיוּ לְרָצוֹן אֹמְרֵי פִי וְהִגִּיוֹן לִבִּי לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה צוּרִי וְגֹאֲלִי:

Tehillim 20

Tehillim 20 contains 9 verses, corresponding to the 9 months of birth. It also contains 70 words, which are said to correspond to the 70 cries of the Mother Deer (the *Shekhinah*, the Mother of the Souls of Israel) in her birth travail. In other words, the *Shekhinah* is seen as giving birth. To whom? To the *Mashiach*, that one individual and that one generation that will usher in a new world. Also, on a more practical level, this psalm is to be said over and over when a woman is having contractions ready to give birth. For one who understands, the two levels are really one.

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the Master of Creation who grants victory to the <i>Shekhinah</i> and Yisrael. <i>Mizmor LeDavid</i> – A cutting-psalm by David:	(א) לְמִנְצַח מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד:
(2) May <i>Hashem</i> answer you on the day of your birth travail. May the Name of the God of Yaacov raise you up and inspire you.	(ב) יַעֲנֶךָ יְהוָה בְּיוֹם צָרָה יִשְׁגְּבֶךָ שֵׁם אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:
(3) May He send your help from His holy Sanctuary, and support you from Tziyon.	(ג) יִשְׁלַח עֲזָרְךָ מִקֹּדֶשׁ וּמִצִּיּוֹן יִסְעֶדְךָ:
(4) May He remember all the times you offered up your soul, and may your constant upward striving remain before Him forever, <i>selah</i> . ⁴³	(ד) יִזְכֹּר כָּל מִנְחֹתֶךָ וְעוֹלָתְךָ יִדְשְׁנָה סֵלָה:
(5) May He grant you your heart's desires, and bring all your plans to fruition.	(ה) יִתֵּן לְךָ כָּל־בְּבֶדְךָ וְכָל־עֲצָתְךָ יִמְלֵא:
(6) We will sing for joy for your salvation; we will raise our banner high in the Name of <i>Eloheinu</i> ; may <i>Hashem</i> fulfill all your wishes.	(ו) נִרְנְנָה בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ וּבִשְׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִדְגַל יִמְלֵא יְהוָה כָּל־מִשְׁאֲלוֹתֶיךָ:

⁴³ "May He remember *kol minchotekha*—all the times you offered up [your soul], *ve'olat'kha*—and may your constant upward striving remain before Him forever, *selah*." The idea of translating *minchotekha* as "all the times you offered up your soul" comes from the teaching of our sages on the verse, "*Ve'nefesh ki takriv korban minchah laShem*—and when a soul [i.e., a person] brings a meal offering to Hashem" (Lev. 2:1). In *Menachot* 104b, they ask, "What is different about a meal offering, that it is the only offering regarding which the Torah says 'when a *nefesh*-soul brings...'? Thus says the Holy One, 'what kind of person normally brings a meal offering? A poor man [who has so little that he can't afford anything else but a little bit of grain]. But precisely for this reason, I credit him as if he brought and offered his own soul before Me.'"

The translation of *ve'olat'kha* is based on Hirsch's understanding of *olah* as an elevation offering. See his commentary on Leviticus 1:3, "If we compare the names given to all the other offerings—*chatat*, *asham*, *shelamim*, *todah*—we find that they all refer to the inducement for the offering and the object of it. None are taken from any special procedure of that particular offering. And so we believe that *olah* is the name given to an offering which is brought on account of the necessity for, and the aspiration to, strive to rise higher." Hence, here in our psalm, he translates, "May the remembrance of all your offerings and of your *constant upward striving* toward the Lord remain ever before Him." See below commentary on Psalm 51:21.

(7) Now I know that it is <i>Hashem</i> alone who delivers His anointed <i>Mashiach</i> ; may He always answer him from His heavenly Sanctuary with the mighty salvation of His loving right hand.	(ז) עֲתָה יִדְעֵתִי כִּי הוֹשִׁיעַ יְהוָה מְשִׁיחוֹ יַעֲנֵהוּ מִשָּׁמַיִם קִדְּשׁוֹ בְּגִבּוֹרֹת יֵשַׁע יָמִינוּ:
(8) Some nations rely on the power of iron chariots; others rely on a multitude of horses; we, however, speak in the Name of <i>Hashem Eloheinu</i> .	(ח) אֱלֹהִים בָּרֵכֵב וְאֱלֹהִים בְּסוּסִים וְאֶנְחֵנוּ בִּשְׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִזְכִּיר:
(9) They all bowed down to false gods, false powers, and false beliefs and fell into oblivion; we, however, have always risen again and regained our sure footing.	(ט) הִמָּה כָּרְעוּ וַנִּפְּלוּ וְאֶנְחֵנוּ קָמְנוּ וְנִתְעוֹדָד:
(10) <i>Hashem</i> , merciful God, continue to save us! O King, answer us on the day we call!	(י) יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה הַמֶּלֶךְ יַעֲנֵנוּ בְּיוֹם קִרְאָנוּ:

Tehillim 21

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the Master who grants victory. <i>Mizmor LeDavid</i> – A cutting-psalm by David.	(א) לַמְנַצֵּחַ מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:
(2) <i>Hashem</i> , the king rejoices in Your invincibility [not his own]; how greatly he exults in Your deliverance because he credits all his victories to You!	(ב) יְהוָה בָּעֶזְךָ יִשְׂמַח מֶלֶךְ וּבִישׁוּעָתְךָ מֶה יָגֵל (יגיל) מְאֹד:
(3) It is You alone who have awarded him the desire of his heart; You have never withheld the heartfelt request of his lips, <i>selah</i> .	(ג) תַּאֲוֹת לִבּוֹ נָתַתָּה לוֹ וְאַרְשֶׁת שְׁפָתָיו בַּל מִנְעַת סֵלָה:
(4) Indeed, You anticipated him with blessings of goodness the likes of which he could never have expected; You placed a golden crown upon his head.	(ד) כִּי תִקְדַּמְנוּ בְּרִכּוֹת טוֹב תִּשִּׁית לְרֹאשׁוֹ עֲטֹרַת פָּז:
(5) Life he requested from You! You gave him long days; a destiny that would endure forever!	(ה) חַיִּים שָׁאַל מִמֶּךָ נָתַתָּה לוֹ אֶרֶךְ יָמִים עוֹלָם וָעֶד:
(6) His honor has grown great through Your constant deliverance in the thick of battle; You have endowed him with majesty and splendor.	(ו) גָּדוֹל כְּבוֹדוֹ בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ הוֹד וְהָדָר תִּשְׁוֶה עָלָיו:
(7) For You appoint him for blessings for the distant future; You make him joyously happy with the revelation of Your countenance.	(ז) כִּי תִשִּׁיתָהוּ בְּרִכּוֹת לְעֵד תַּחֲדָהוּ בְּשִׂמְחָה אֶת פָּנֶיךָ:
(8) For the king trusts in <i>Hashem</i> ; he trusts in the love of the Most High, for with <i>Hashem's</i> help he will never falter.	(ח) כִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ בִּטַּח בִּיהוָה וּבַחֲסֵד עָלָיו בַּל יִמוּט:
(9) <i>Hashem</i> : Your hand will seize all Your enemies; Your right hand will overtake those who hate You [i.e., the wicked who choose a life of evil].	(ט) תִּמְצָא יָדְךָ לְכָל אֹיְבֶיךָ יְמִינְךָ תִּמְצָא שׁוֹנְאֶיךָ:
(10) It is they [the wicked] whom You used as a fiery oven to punish the righteous in times of wrath. But after the righteous have been cleansed through suffering, You will swallow them [i.e., cause the wicked to perish] in Your anger; the fire of their own evil will devour them.	(י) תִּשְׁתַּיְתְּמוּ כְּתַנּוּר אֵשׁ לַעַת פָּנֶיךָ יְהוָה בָּאֵפוֹ יִבְלַעַם וְתֹאכְלֵם אֵשׁ:
(11) You will cause their offspring to perish from the earth plane, and their seed to disappear from among the children of men.	(יא) פָּרִיָמוּ מֵאֶרֶץ תֵּאֲבֹד וְזֶרְעָם מִבְּנֵי אָדָם:
(12) For they intended evil against You: they devised a plan to destroy Israel—but they are not able to bring it to fruition.	(יב) כִּי נָטוּ עָלֶיךָ רָעָה חֲשָׁבוּ מִזְמָה בַּל יוֹכְלוּ:
(13) O that You would cause them to join together with Your people; bring them to their senses by aiming Your bow strings at their faces [i.e., let them feel the threat to their existence that will bring them to their senses].	(יג) כִּי תִשְׁתַּיְתְּמוּ שְׂכָם בְּמִיתְרֶיךָ תִּכּוֹנֵן עַל פְּנֵיהֶם:
(14) High above are You, <i>Hashem</i> , in Your invincibility; we will therefore proclaim Your omnipotence in song and	(יד) רוּמָה יְהוָה בָּעֶזְךָ נִשְׁיָרָה וְנִזְמָרָה גְּבוּרָתְךָ:

chant.	
--------	--

Tehillim 22

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach al ayelet ha'shachar mizmor leDavid</i> —Dedicated to the Master who grants victory. A cutting-song that David composed to give strength to Israel when the darkest night precedes the dawn.	(א) לִמְנַצַּח עַל אֵילַת הַשַּׁחַר מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:
(2) Israel says: <i>Eli</i> , O God who grants me existence, <i>Eli</i> , Source of all my strength: I know that I am not worthy, but still why have You forsaken me? Why have You not only distanced Yourself from saving me but from even listening to the words of my cry?	(ב) אֵלִי אֵלִי לָמָּה עֲזַבְתָּנִי רְחוּק מִישׁוּעָתִי דְבָרִי שָׁאֲגָתִי:
(3) My God, I call by day but You do not answer; I call by night as well! I will not remain silent until You come to my rescue.	(ג) אֱלֹהֵי אֶקְרָא יוֹמָם וְלֹא תַעֲנֶה וּלְיָלָה וְלֹא דַמְיָה לִּי:
(4) Surely You are utterly holy and transcendent, but You have always dwelt in the midst of [i.e., lowered Your presence in response to] the praises of Israel! ⁴⁴	(ד) וְאַתָּה קָדוֹשׁ יוֹשֵׁב תְּהִלּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל:
(5) Indeed, this is why our ancestors were able to place their unswerving trust in You; they trusted and You rescued them.	(ה) בְּךָ בִּטְחוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בִּטְחוּ וַתַּפְלִטֵמוּ:
(6) They cried out to You and were delivered; they trusted in You and were never ashamed.	(ו) אֶלֶיךָ זָעָקוּ וְנִמְלְטוּ בְּךָ בִּטְחוּ וְלֹא בּוֹשׁוּ:
(7) I in my present condition am a worm, not a man; I am despised as a person, and as a nation I am disdained by other nations.	(ז) וְאַנְכִי תוֹלַעַת וְלֹא אִישׁ חֶרְפַּת אָדָם וּבְזוּי עָם:
(8) All who see me scorn me; they reject me with a sneer of the lip and with a shake of the head, saying:	(ח) כָּל רֹאֵי יִלְעָגוּ לִי יַפְטִירוּ בְשִׁפְהָ יִנְיֵעוּ רֹאשׁ:
(9) "Let him turn to His <i>YHVH (Adonai)</i> ; He will rescue him; He will deliver him if He truly delights in him!"	(ט) גַּל אֵל יְהוָה יַפְלִטֵהוּ יַצִּילֵהוּ כִּי חִפֵּץ בּוֹ:
(10) Truly, You are the One who took me out of the womb of Egyptian exile; You gave me security upon my mother's breasts on Mount Sinai.	(י) כִּי אַתָּה גָּחִי מִבֶּטֶן מִבְּטִיחִי עַל שִׁדִּי אִמִּי:
(11) As a castaway from birth, I have always depended solely on You; ever since I left my mother's womb, You have been my only Source of strength!	(יא) עֲלֶיךָ הִשְׁלַכְתִּי מִרְחֹם מִבֶּטֶן אִמִּי אֵלִי אַתָּה:
(12) Therefore, I pray: Do not distance Yourself from me; for trouble is fast approaching and there is no one else to call on for help.	(יב) אַל תִּרְחַק מִמֶּנִּי כִּי צָרָה קְרוֹבָה כִּי אֵין עוֹזָר:
(13) Many bulls [aggressive nations] surrounded me; the mighty bulls of Bashan penned me in.	(יג) סָבְבוּנִי פָרִים רַבִּים אֲבִירֵי בָשָׁן כְּתֻרוּנִי:
(14) They stood over me with their mouths opened wide to devour me; like ravenous, roaring lions they devoured me alive.	(יד) פָּצוּ עָלַי פִּיהֶם אֲרִיֵּה טָרֵף וְשָׂאֵג:
(15) My blood was poured out like water; my bones became disjointed; my heart became like wax; it melted within me.	(טו) כַּמִּים נִשְׁפַּכְתִּי וַהֲתַפְּרְדּוּ כָּל עֲצָמוֹתַי. הָיָה לִבִּי כִדּוֹנָג נִמַּס בְּתוֹךְ מִעֵי:
(16) My strength dried up like baked clay; my tongue cleaved to my palate. Will You yet reduce me to the dust of death?	(טז) יָבֵשׁ כְּחֶרֶשׁ כָּחִי וּלְשׁוֹנִי מִדְּבָק מִלְּקוֹחִי וְלַעֲפָר מוֹת תִּשְׁפָּתֵנִי:
(17) For dogs [the scum of the nations who joined in to annihilate me] have already surrounded me; a band of evildoers has	(יז) כִּי סָבְבוּנִי כָּל־בָּיִם. עֵדֶת מְרַעִים

⁴⁴ See note below on Psalm 113:5-6, "Who is like Hashem our God, who sits upon a throne so high? [And yet] He lowers Himself to see [i.e., to bring His *hashgachah* (divine providence) to bear on] both heaven and earth alike!"

enclosed me; like lions they gnaw at my hands and feet.	הַקִּיפוּנִי כְּאַרְיֵי יָדַי וְרַגְלָי:
(18) And yet, in the midst of all this I recount to myself <i>kol atzmotai</i> [all those events that have sustained me in the past and which hold the promise of my future redemption]; they [my enemies] look upon me in amazement [they cannot understand how I find comfort in such recollections].	(יח) אֶסְפֹּר כָּל עֲצֻמוֹתַי הֵמָּה יִבִּיטוּ יְרֵאוּ בִּי:
(19) Fine, I am willing to let them divide my garments [material possessions] among themselves; let them cast lots for my clothing.	(יט) יִחְלְקוּ בְּגָדֵי לָהֶם וְעַל לְבוּשִׁי יִפִּילוּ גֹרֵל:
(20) But You, O God, do not distance Yourself; O my Strength, hasten to help me!	(כ) וְאַתָּה יְהוָה אֵל תִּרְחַק אֵילֹתַי לַעֲזָרְתִּי חוֹשָׁה:
(21) Rescue my soul from the sword; save my unique essence from being overpowered by dogs.	(כא) הַצִּילָה מִחֶרֶב נַפְשִׁי מִיַּד כָּלֵב יַחֲדָתִי:
(22) Rescue me from the mouths of lions; answer me and save me from the horns of wild oxen.	(כב) הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי מִפִּי אַרְיֵה וּמִקְרָנֵי רִמִּים עֲנִיתָנִי:
(23) For I will declare Your Name to my brethren; I will praise You in the midst of my community:	(כג) אֶסְפָּרָה שְׁמֶךָ לְאַחֵי בְּתוֹךְ קְהָל אֲהֻלָּךְ:
(24) O you who revere <i>Hashem</i> , praise Him; all you children of Yaacov, honor Him; all you children of Yisrael, stand in awe of Him!	(כד) יִרְאֵי יְהוָה הִלְלוּהוּ כָּל זֶרַע יַעֲקֹב כִּבְדוּהוּ וְגִוְרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ כָּל זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל:
(25) For however forsaken we might appear He has never rejected nor despised the poor man [Israel] in his lowliness; He has not hidden His countenance from him; when he cried to Him, He heard.	(כה) כִּי לֹא בָזָה וְלֹא שָׁקַץ עֲנוּת עַנִּי וְלֹא הִסְתִּיר פָּנָיו מִמֶּנּוּ וּבִשְׁוֹעוֹ אֱלֹו שָׁמַע:
(26) O God You are the Source of all my praises. O Israel I swear to fulfill my vows of proclaiming His greatness in the presence of those who revere Him!	(כו) מֵאַתָּךְ תִּהְלֵתִי בְּקֹהֶל רַב נְדָרֵי אֲשַׁלֵּם נֶגֶד יִרְאֵיו:
(27) O you humble ones, eat of the earth's delights and be satisfied; O you who seek His presence, praise <i>Hashem</i> in all the mundane pleasures of life; enliven your hearts forever by recognizing His greatness!	(כז) יֹאכְלוּ עֲנוּיִם וְיִשְׂבְּעוּ יִהְלְלוּ יְהוָה דַּרְשׁוּ יַחֲי לְבַבְכֶּם לָעֶד:
(28) For the day shall come when all the extremities of the earth shall remember and return to <i>Hashem</i> ; all the families of mankind shall bow down before You!	(כח) יִזְכְּרוּ וַיֵּשְׁבוּ אֵל יְהוָה כָּל אִפְסֵי אֶרֶץ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לִפְנֵיךָ כָּל מִשְׁפְּחוֹת גּוֹיִם:
(29) They will realize that eternal sovereignty has always belonged to <i>Hashem</i> ; He rules over nations and guides humanity to its destined goal.	(כט) כִּי לִיהוָה הַמְּלוּכָה וּמִשַּׁל בְּגוֹיִם:
(30) Then the fat and contented nations of the earth will bow down before Him; all who go down to the dust—whose souls are not worthy of life—will kneel before Him.	(ל) אֲכָלוּ וַיִּשְׂתַּחֲווּ כָּל דָּשְׁנֵי אֶרֶץ לִפְנֵי יִכְרְעוּ כָּל יוֹרְדֵי עָפָר וּנְפֹשׁוּ לֹא חִיָּה:
(31) But through their children who will serve Him, <i>Adonai's</i> greatness will be proclaimed to the next generation.	(לא) זֶרַע יַעֲבֹדֶנּוּ יִסְפֹּר לְאֹדְנֵי לְדוֹר:
(32) They will come and tell of His righteousness; they will proclaim what He has done for a reborn people!	(לב) יָבֹאוּ וַיְגִידוּ צְדָקְתוֹ לְעַם נוֹלָד כִּי עָשָׂה:

Tehillim 23

King David is fleeing from King Shaul. Without food or drink, he comes to a dry sun-scorched forest where he faints from hunger and thirst (I Samuel 22:5). In his sleep, David's soul leaves his body. For all intents and purposes, he is dead. As his body lies there lifeless, his soul rises up and enters the Heavenly *Gan Eden*. There he is shown a prophetic vision of his entire life. He is shown the reasons behind all his tribulations. He is shown all the trials of the Jewish people throughout their long and torturous history. He is shown Hashem's unfathomable care and providence for all creation. He is projected into the future and shown a vision of the Messianic Age and the Great *Shabbat* when this providence will no longer be concealed in the "garments" ("laws") of nature and history.

After all this, he is told that he must return to his earthly body. He is assured that he will be protected from Shaul, that his kingdom will be established, and that someday a descendent of his will be the final Redeemer of the Jewish people and mankind. Finally, he is given a taste of the Heavenly Dew with which Hashem will revive the

dead in the Ultimate Future. He awakens to find the entire forest moistened with this same Dew of Resurrection. As the fresh foliage protects him from the burning sun, he drinks from the dew and his soul re-vives into his body. To commemorate the miracle of having died and come back to life, David composed Tehillim 23.

Knowing that King David's life is a microcosm of our own, we sing *Mizmor LeDavid* at least three times on *Shabbat*. Before *Kiddush* on Friday night, we sing it to remind ourselves that Hashem has been there with us even as we have walked through all the deep valleys and dark alleys of our lives. We thank Him that He has allowed us to reach the safe haven of *Shabbat*. Before *Kiddush* on *Shabbat* Morning, we sing it to rise up to the heights of prophetic vision in order to glimpse our lives from the perspective of eternity. During the third meal, we sing it to muster strength to face the coming week(s)—knowing with complete certainty that Hashem's providence is never inoperative, and that the more we perceive His hand in history, the more He will empower us to can play our part in His Plan to guide mankind to the ultimate Redemption and the great *Shabbat*.

(1) <i>Mizmor LeDavid</i> – A chant-psalm to cut through the concealment of this world by David: <i>Hashem</i> is my Shepherd. I shall never lack for I know now that He is with me in all my trials. ⁴⁵	מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד. יְהוָה רָעִי לֹא אֶחְסָר:
(2) He has laid me down in luxuriant meadows; shepherded me along restful streams. ⁴⁶	בְּנֵאוֹת דָּשָׁא יִרְבִּיצֵנִי, עַל מֵי מְנוּחֹת יְנַהֲלֵנִי:
(3) Time and again, He has revived my soul and drawn me close to Him. ⁴⁷ He has guided me along paths of justice and righteousness so that I could thereby proclaim His Name and His care of all creatures to the whole world. ⁴⁸	נַפְשִׁי יְשׁוּבָה. יְנַחֲנִי בְּמַעְגְלֵי צֶדֶק לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ:
(4) Now, even if I must walk through a deep valley overshadowed by suffering and death, I will fear no evil, for You [Your presence and Your great loving-kindness] accompany me; both Your rod [the suffering that cleanses me] and Your staff [the Torah that guides me] comfort me and assure me that You have not abandoned my life to chance. ⁴⁹	גַּם כִּי אֵלֶךְ בְּגִיאַת צַלְמוֹת לֹא אִירָא רָע, כִּי אַתָּה עִמָּדִי. שִׁבְטְךָ וּמַשְׁעֲנֶתְךָ, הֵמָּה יְנַחֲמֵנִי:

⁴⁵ In his early years, David had been a shepherd. It was because of his tender care for his flocks that Hashem chose him to be "a shepherd of His people." But like his great ancestors, David was now being propelled forward to the next level of his mission through intense trial and tribulation. Let us not forget that Hashem had tested Avraham ten times. Yitzchak was almost sacrificed on the altar. Yaacov's entire life was a series of trials. Yoseph was sold by his own brothers and taken down to Egypt as a slave. Even after an initial period of success in Potiphara's palace, he was placed in a dungeon for twelve years. Moshe suffered tremendous setbacks in his career as Hashem's prophet. There were times when he did not know if he could go on living. Now it was David's turn. He had been anointed by Shmuel, killed Goliath, married the king's daughter, and fought and won battles for his people and his God. As he was being chased, he couldn't help feeling that Hashem's graces had been turned away. Now, however, after his vision, he realized just how much Hashem had been shepherding him. If he experienced privation and lack, it was his own inability to see Hashem's guiding hand in his life.

⁴⁶ On a literal level, "green meadows" and "refreshing streams" refer to David's experience of lying down peacefully in that dry forest after it had been moistened by the Dew of the world-to-come. On the spiritual level, "green meadows" alludes to his experience of the Garden of Eden, and "refreshing streams" alludes to the river that flows through that Garden.

⁴⁷ Hashem restored David's soul by lifting him up above his troubles and affording him an awesome vision. He also literally restored his soul to his body. More than this, however, David now realizes how Hashem has "revived" his soul countless times throughout his life. He also understands that this will continue—for him and his people—forever. He thus says, *nafshi yeshovev*, not simply *heshiv* (a single past action) or *yashiv* (a single future action), but a continuous action without termination or end.

⁴⁸ David had questioned (as we all do at times) whether he deserved such rough treatment. After all, he had been anointed king! Why was he suffering so? Why was he being struck by such tragedies one after the other? How could he stand to see his own family killed?! "O God in heaven, how can I bear this pain? Have You indeed cast Your servant away!" Now, as a result of his near-death experience, David was a different person. He began to acknowledge the profundity of Hashem's righteousness. Now he understood why all this was happening to him: It was so that he could proclaim Hashem's Name, that even in the midst of the darkest night of pain and suffering, Hashem does not abandon us. It is just that in this world we humans are not allowed to know the ultimate why of things, and that is why we suffer. But David had been catapulted above and beyond this world. It is highly probable that he reunited with the exalted souls of his martyred father, mother and brothers in heaven. With their blessings, he now returned stronger than ever. See in-depth commentary for more.

⁴⁹ "Now I can walk through this world overshadowed by suffering and death and not fear the greatest evil." And what is the greatest evil? A world devoid of God. A world in which God's presence is so eclipsed that people no longer even know that He is hiding. It is to such a world that David now proclaims loudly and clearly: "You are with me! Until now I spoke *about* You: 'Hashem is my Shepherd...He lays me down...He leads me...He restores my soul...He guides me.' Now, in the depths of hell, I call out to You: *You* are with me! Your presence and Your loving-

(5) O God prepare my royal table over and against my adversaries; You have anointed my head with oil [wisdom]; my cup [heart] overflows with thanks to You for everything You have given me.	תַּעֲרֹךְ לִפְנֵי שְׁלֹחַן, נִגַּד צִרְרִי, דִּשְׁנֹת בְּשֶׁמֶן רֹאשִׁי כֹּסִי רוּחָה:
(6) Let me continue to perceive Your goodness and kindness in all that comes upon me all the days and even the dark nights of my life; [bring the end of all our tribulations so that Your true goodness will no longer be concealed]; and may I merit to dwell in the House of <i>Hashem</i> throughout my entire life and beyond into eternity; [may the world truly become God's House, and mankind know Your presence everywhere, forever].	אֶךְ טוֹב וְחֶסֶד יִרְדּוּנִי כָּל יְמֵי חַיִּי. וְשִׁבְתִּי בְּבֵית יְהוָה לְאָרְךָ יָמִים:

Tehillim 24

(1) <i>LeDavid Mizmor</i> – By David, a chant-song: To <i>Hashem</i> alone belong the earth and all it contains, the inhabited world and all who dwell in it.	(א) לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר לַיהוָה הָאָרֶץ וּמְלֹאָהָ תִּבֶּל וְיֹשְׁבֵי בָּהּ:
(2) He founded it [human civilization] along the seas; and He continues to establish it [the world, and the course of history] along the major rivers. ⁵⁰	(ב) כִּי הוּא עַל יָמִים יִסְדָּה וְעַל נְהָרוֹת יְכוֹנְנָהּ:
(3) Who can ascend <i>Hashem's</i> mountain to perceive His hand in nature and history? And even then who can maintain his equilibrium in the place of His holiness?	(ג) מִי יַעֲלֶה בְּהַר יְהוָה וְיִרְאֶה וְיִקּוּם בְּמִקְוֵם קִדְשׁוֹ:
(4) For this, God says, one must have clean hands and a pure heart; he must not bear My soul which I have given him in vain; he must not swear deceitfully.	(ד) נְקִי כַפַּיִם וּבֶרֶךְ לֵב אֲשֶׁר לֹא נָשָׂא לְשׁוֹן נִפְשִׁי (נִפְשׁוֹ) וְלֹא נִשְׁבַּע לְמַרְמָה:
(5) Only such a person shall bear <i>Hashem's</i> blessing and be worthy of charity from the God of his deliverance.	(ה) יֵשֵׂא בְרָכָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה וְצִדְקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעוֹ:
(6) Such is the generation that seeks God's Hidden Presence, the children of Yaacov who seek Your Presence at all times, <i>selah</i> .	(ו) זֶה דּוֹר דֹּרְשׁוֹ מִבְּקֵשֵׁי פְנִידָה יַעֲקֹב סֵלָה:
(7) Lift up your heads, O you gates of consciousness; raise yourselves up, O portals of eternity! So that the King of Glory may enter. ⁵¹	(ז) שֹׂאוּ שַׁעְרֵיכֶם רֹאשֵׁיכֶם וְהִנְשְׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם וַיָּבֹא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד:

kindness have never abandoned me! I didn't know what to think; I became confused; I lost hope in You and in my own worthiness to stand before You. Now, I know that there is no other reality but You. There is therefore nothing in the world to fear except You. Even my fear that You were punishing me for all the wrong I had done until now, has become a comfort for me, for I am now certain that nothing just 'happens'; all is from You. I am thus assured that Your mercies will be aroused for me. Finally, I know that even the pain I have suffered will be for the ultimate good."

⁵⁰ Hirsch, "God formed the earth with a variety of physical features. He linked and divided continents by means of seas, and continents by rivers...By so regulating earth's geographical and climatic features the Lord set the course of history and that of the development of man in all the multiplicity of national characteristics and peculiarities, and *He still guides all the evolution in the paths* best suited for His purposes." Malbim: "The earth was originally covered with water until Hashem made the waters recede into the major oceans and seas in order to establish the dry land. In order then to finish the earth, to make it inhabitable, Hashem threaded every continent with streams and rivers. Most large cities were then founded on seacoasts and on the banks of great rivers."

⁵¹ "Lift up your heads, O you gates..." According to the *Zohar*, Hashem enters *Gan Eden* each night at *Chatzot* (Midnight) to delight with the souls of the *tzadikim* (1:77a; 1:192a-b). In kabbalistic tradition, therefore, the gates mentioned here are not physical gates, but rather the gates of *Gan Eden*—gates of new levels of consciousness—which are bidden to open up each day anew so that heavenly light can flow down into the world through them.

In the Midrash (*Yalkut Shimoni* 2:698; Rashi on Psalm 24:7), we read that, during the inauguration of the first *Beit HaMikdash*, when Shlomo *HaMelekh* wanted to bring the Ark of the covenant into the Holy of Holies, the newly constructed gates refused to open for him. He thereupon prayed twenty-four prayers, but they would not open—not until he prayed that they open in the merit of his father, "Hashem, do not turn away the face of Your anointed one; remember the loving deeds of David Your servant!" (II Chronicles 6:42). Only then did they open. According to this, the gates mentioned here are the gates of the *Beit HaMikdash*. Based on this connection, this psalm is sung in all Ashkenazi congregations after the Torah reading on Mondays and Thursdays, when returning the Torah to the Ark. Although seemingly talking about two different things, on the inner level, the *Zohar* and the Midrash are both talking about the same idea, namely, that we have to open our minds to new levels of awareness of Hashem in our lives.

(8) Who is this king of glory in whose name you admonish us? It is <i>Hashem</i> , invincible and all-powerful! <i>Hashem</i> , almighty in battle!	(ח) מִי זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד יְהוָה עֲזֹז וְגִבּוֹר יְהוָה גִּבּוֹר מִלְחָמָה:
(9) Lift up your heads, O you gates, and raise yourselves up, O portals of eternity, so that the true King of Glory may enter and reveal Himself in His world.	(ט) שָׂאוּ שַׁעְרֵיכֶם וּשְׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם וַיָּבֹא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד:
(10) Who is He, this King of Glory? <i>Hashem</i> , the God of all the hosts of heaven and earth, He is the King of Glory forever, <i>selah</i> !	(י) מִי הוּא זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הוּא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד סֶלָה:

Tehillim 25

(1) By David: To You, <i>Hashem</i> , I lift up and offer my soul. ⁵²	(א) לְדוֹד אֵלֶיךָ יְהוָה נַפְשִׁי אֲשָׂא:
(2) My God, I trust in You alone; I shall therefore never be ashamed. Do not permit my inner enemies to rejoice over me when I finally get to the point of admitting my mistakes to You.	(ב) אֱלֹהֵי בֶדְ בְּטַחְתִּי אֶל אֲבוֹשָׁה אֶל יַעֲלֹצוּ אוֹיְבֵי לִי:
(3) On the contrary may all who place their hope in You never be ashamed; shame those who refuse to acknowledge their reliance upon You; shame them with their own emptiness.	(ג) גַּם כָּל קוֹיָךְ לֹא יִבְשׁוּ יִבְשׁוּ הַבּוֹגְדִים רִיקָם:
(4) <i>Hashem</i> , make the wide-open highways of Your Torah known to me; teach me, as well, how to walk Your secret pathways.	(ד) דְּרָכֶיךָ יְהוָה הוֹדִיעֵנִי אֲרָחוֹתֶיךָ לִמְדָנִי:
(5) Guide me on Your path of truth; teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; I will therefore place my hope in You alone all the days of my life.	(ה) הִדְרִיכֵנִי בְּאֵמֶתְךָ וּלְמִדָּנִי כִּי אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵי אוֹתְךָ קוֹיְתִי כָּל הַיּוֹם:
(6) Remember Your mercies, <i>Hashem</i> , and Your kindnesses, for they have existed since before time immemorial.	(ו) זָכֵר רַחֲמֶיךָ יְהוָה וְחַסְדֶּיךָ כִּי מֵעוֹלָם הֵמָּה:
(7) Remember not the mistakes of my youth or my more serious transgressions; remember me according to Your great love; remember that You created me in order to bestow Your love upon me; <i>Hashem</i> , for the sake of Your goodness.	(ז) חַטֹּאוֹת נְעוּרַי וּפְשָׁעֵי אֶל תִּזְכֹּר כְּחַסְדְּךָ זָכֵר לִי אַתָּה לְמַעַן טוֹבֶךָ יְהוָה:
(8) <i>Hashem</i> , You are good and upright; You therefore teach those who have lost their way how to travel the disciplined path of return back to You.	(ח) טוֹב וְיָשָׁר יְהוָה עַל כֵּן יוֹרָה חֲטָאִים בְּדָרֶךְ:
(9) Once they have been cured of their arrogance and have begun to learn the value of humility You guide the humble with justice and teach the modest how to follow Your way.	(ט) יְדַרְךָ עֲנֻיִם בְּמִשְׁפָּט וּלְמַד עֲנֻיִם דְּרָכֶךָ:
(10) <i>Hashem</i> , all of Your providential ways are loving and true; even the most trying times are understood to be for the good by those who guard the purity of Your covenant and Your testimonies.	(י) כָּל אֲרָחוֹת יְהוָה חֶסֶד וְאֵמֶת לְנֹצְרֵי בְּרִיתוֹ וְעֵדוּתוֹ:
(11) <i>Hashem</i> , for the sake of Your merciful Name, I ask that You please forgive whatever wrong I have done; without Your help I cannot lift myself out of this mire for it is more than I can endure.	(יא) לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ יְהוָה וְסִלַּחְתָּ לְעוֹנֵי כִּי רַב הוּא:
(12) Who is the man who reveres You, <i>Hashem</i> ? You will surely guide him to choose the very path that You have chosen for his ultimate good. ⁵³	(יב) מִי זֶה הָאִישׁ יֵרָא יְהוָה יוֹרְנוּ בְּדָרֶךְ יִבְחָר:

⁵² "To You, Hashem, I lift up [and offer] my soul." The *Zohar* (3:120b) and the Ari (*Shaar HaKavanot, Nefilat Apayim*) explain that "lifting up and offering one's soul" in prayer is perhaps the most important thing we can do to come close to Hashem.

⁵³ *Yorenu be'derekh yiv'char* means literally, "**He** will show **him** the path **he** is to choose." The explicit emphasis is on the person's choice. Hashem will *yorei* (show, guide, and illuminate) for him which path to choose. Behind this explicit emphasis it is implied that Hashem has already chosen this path (re-read as, "**He** will illuminate and show **him** the path that **He** has already chosen"). Still, even though He has chosen it, He wants man (the man

(13) And when his final day comes his soul will find its place of rest in a world of goodness; his children will benefit from his good deeds in this world and inherit their portion in the land of eternal life.	(יג) נִפְשׁוֹ בְּטוֹב תֵּלִין וְזָרְעוֹ יִירֶשׁ אֶרֶץ:
(14) Hashem, the secret of arousing Your mercy is with those who revere You; You reveal Your covenant to them so that their prayers will never go unanswered.	(יד) סוֹד יְהוָה לִירְאָיו וּבְרִיתוֹ לְהוֹדִיעֵם:
(15) Hashem, my eyes are constantly directed towards You, for only You can liberate me from the net of habits that constricts and ensnares me.	(טו) עֵינַי תָּמִיד אֶל יְהוָה כִּי הוּא יוֹצִיא מֶרְשֶׁת רְגְלִי:
(16) Turn to me and be gracious to me, for without Your assistance I am forsaken and poor.	(טז) פָּנָה אֵלַי וְחַנּוּנִי כִּי יָחִיד וְעָנִי אָנִי:
(17) The very afflictions I have endured have expanded and unblocked the obstructions of my heart; they have served their purpose, so please deliver me from my troubles. ⁵⁴	(יז) צָרוֹת לִבִּי הִרְחִיבוּ מִמְּצוּקוֹתַי הוֹצִיאֵנִי:
(18) Behold my affliction and my travail, and forgive all the sins I have thoughtlessly committed.	(יח) רְאֵה עָנְיִי וְעֲמָלִי וְשָׂא לְכָל חַטֹּאוֹתַי:
(19) Behold how my enemies have multiplied; behold the irrational hatred with which they hate me.	(יט) רְאֵה אֵיבֵי כִּי רַבּוּ וְשִׁנְאַת חֲמָס שִׁנְאוֹנִי:
(20) O preserve my soul and rescue me; let me not be ashamed, for I have taken refuge in You alone.	(כ) שְׁמְרָה נַפְשִׁי וְהַצִּילֵנִי אֶל אֲבוֹשׁ כִּי חֲסִיתִי בְּךָ:
(21) Integrity and uprightness will protect me, for I continue to place my hope only in You.	(כא) תָּם וְיָשָׁר יַצְרוּנִי כִּי קוִיִּתִּיד:
(22) Elohim, O just God, redeem Israel from all their sorrows! ⁵⁵	(כב) פְּדֵה אֱלֹהִים אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל צָרוֹתָיו:

Tehillim 26

This is David's letter of apology to Hashem for taking Batsheva in the way he did, which caused a *chillul Hashem* (profanation of His Name) (Sforno).

who truly reveres Him) to choose it of his own accord—to choose it of his own free will, with no coercion from above. When he (the man) does so, he can then rejoice that he chose the very path that Hashem had already chosen for him. This is no game. This is the gift that the Creator gives us, the ability to consciously **align** our will with His, and thereby attain the very closeness that He wishes to bestow upon us, but which He wants us to attain through our own efforts.

See Hirsch, "By means of His workings, God makes man realize that the paths which are in conformity with His will are the only ones that are good and true. Knowing this, man, who at first may have trod these paths only with great reluctance, now walks in them out of his own free will, with joy and devotion, because the will of the Lord is also his own desire."

⁵⁴ According to Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, this is the true intent of the words "tzarot levavi hirschivu." Not that the *tzarot levavi* (afflictions of my heart) *hirschivu* (have increased and expanded), but rather that the very *tzarot* (afflictions I have endured) *levavi hirschivu* (have expanded my heart). He writes, "The oppression and limitations from without which Hashem imposes upon men are intended to 'enlarge' their spirit...This is the sense conveyed by this verse: The troubles which You have sent me have already enlarged my heart. They have had the effect on me which You desired. My spirit has already become 'broader' because of my tribulations. Therefore, lead me out now from amidst my distress...Tribulations are useful for remedial purposes. They serve as our spiritual 'medicine,' but were never intended to be our daily fare."

⁵⁵ In total, this entire psalm is arranged according to the *aleph-beth*, with the exception of three missing letters, *beth*, *vav*, and *kof*, whose sum is numerically equivalent to the word *Gehinam* (108). In addition, three other letters, *aleph*, *peh*, and *resh*, each appear twice (*aleph* is repeated in verses 1 and 2; *peh* is repeated in verses 16 and 22; *resh* is repeated in verses 18 and 19) which spell *efer* (ashes), and when re-arranged, spell *pe'er* (beauty, splendor). The connection between these two words is alluded to in the following prophecy of future redemption, "To honor those who mourn in Zion, to place a garland of *pe'er*-splendor [upon their heads] instead of *efer*-ashes; oil of joy instead of mourning, a radiant garment of praise instead of the spirit of feebleness" (Isaiah 61:3).

Since this psalm is designed to follow the alphabet, it is fair to assume that either the omission or addition of any particular letter or letters would be highly significant. By deleting the *beth*, *vav*, and *kof* whose numerical value is *Gehinam*, and doubling the *aleph*, *peh*, and *resh* which refer to the bright splendor of *Gan Eden*, King David is alluding to the fact that this psalm contains the secret of bypassing *Gehinam* and going straight to *Gan Eden*. That secret is clearly to be humble and nullify our egos before Hashem while we are still alive (see *Orach Chayim* 131, *Kaf HaChayim* note §32).

(1) <i>LeDavid</i> – By David. You judge me <i>Hashem</i> [i.e., judgment is usually unmitigated, whereas <i>Hashem</i> 's judgment is always blended with compassion]! [Only You can judge whether I did this with evil intent to rebel against You, or if it was just a temporary lapse.] For You know that I have walked in innocent wholeheartedness before You, since my youth. I have therefore placed my trust in You, <i>Hashem</i> , that I will never slip again. ⁵⁶	(א) לְדוֹד שְׁפֹטֵנִי יְהוָה כִּי אֲנִי בְּתַמִּי הִלַּכְתִּי וּבִיהוֹה בְּטַחְתִּי לֹא אֶמְעָד:
(2) Examine me, <i>Hashem</i> examine all the other areas of my life, and see that this was actually incongruent with all my other actions; test me again and again and You will see that I will never do such a thing again; refine my innards and my heart.	(ב) בְּחִנֵּי יְהוָה וְנִסְנִי צִרְפָּה (צְרוּפָה) כְּלוֹתִי וְלִבִּי:
(3) For Your loving-kindness is before my eyes at all times—urging me on to serve You out of pure love; I have walked in Your truthfulness [I have devoted every ounce of my being to studying and living the truth of Your Torah].	(ג) כִּי חֲסִדְךָ לִנְגִיד עֵינַי וְהִתְהַלַּכְתִּי בְּאַמְתְּךָ:
(4) I have not sat [dwelled, lingered] with men who have no conception of the deeper meaning of life; I have not kept company with those who hide their emptiness.	(ד) לֹא יִשְׁבַּתִּי עִם מְתֵי שְׂוָא וְעַם נִעְלָמִים לֹא אָבוּא:
(5) I despise the gatherings of evildoers; I will never sit with the wicked.	(ה) שִׁנְאַתִּי קָהָל מְרַעִים וְעַם רָשָׁעִים לֹא אֵשֵׁב:
(6) On the contrary I wash my hands in purity [i.e., I examine my deeds in the purifying waters of Your Torah]; only then do I actively encircle Your altar, <i>Hashem</i> .	(ו) אֲרַחֵץ בְּנִקְיוֹן כָּפִי וְאֶסְבְּבָה אֶת מִזְבִּיחְךָ יְהוָה:
(7) So that I may be worthy of making the voice of thanksgiving heard in Your Temple, and recounting Your wondrous kindness to the children of men.	(ז) לְשִׁמְעַת בְּקוֹל תוֹדָה וּלְסַפֵּר כָּל נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ:
(8) <i>Hashem</i> , O merciful God, I love the inner sanctum of Your temple, the place where the remnant of Your glory resides to this day.	(ח) יְהוָה אֱהַבְתִּי מְעוֹן בֵּיתְךָ וּמְקוֹם מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדְךָ:
(9) Gather not my soul with evildoers, nor my life with men who have spilt blood.	(ט) אַל תֵּאַסֵּף עִם חַטָּאִים נַפְשִׁי וְעַם אֲנָשֵׁי דָמִים חַיִּי:
(10) Their hands reach out with lust for all that is not theirs; their right hand is filled with bribery.	(י) אֲשֶׁר בִּידֵיהֶם זֶמָה וַיִּמְיֶנּוּ מְלָאָה שִׁחַד:
(11) I, however, walk in my integrity; I therefore ask: redeem me and be gracious to me.	(יא) וְאֲנִי בְּתַמִּי אֶלֶךְ פִּדְנִי וְחַנּוּנִי:
(12) O God, help me place my foot firmly upon the path of uprightness, then I will bless You, <i>Hashem</i> , O merciful God, in the assemblies of Your people!	(יב) רַגְלִי עֲמִדָה בְּמִישׁוֹר בְּמִקְהָלִים אֲבָרַךְ יְהוָה:

Tehillim 27

(1) <i>LeDavid: YHVH</i> [the Eternal God, <i>Hashem</i> alone] is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? <i>Hashem</i> alone is the stronghold of my life [source of my existence]—of whom shall I be frightened?	(א) לְדוֹד. יְהוָה אֹרִי וַיִּשְׁעִי – מִמִּי אִירָא. יְהוָה מְעוֹז חַיִּי – מִמִּי אֶפְחָד:
(2) Whenever evildoers have come upon me to devour my flesh—my tormentors and my foes—they have stumbled and fallen [for even when His protection was hidden, to the extent that my enemies were able to come upon me, <i>Hashem</i> never withdrew His love from me].	(ב) בְּקָרֵב עָלַי מְרַעִים לֶאֱכֹל אֶת בְּשָׁרִי – צָרִי וְאִיבֵי לִי – הֵמָּה כָּשְׁלוּ וַנִּפְּלוּ:
(3) If an army encamped around me to besiege me, my heart was never afraid. If an enemy waged war against me,	(ג) אִם תַּחְנֶה עָלַי מַחְנֶה לֹא יִירָא לִבִּי. אִם תִּקּוֹם עָלַי מִלְחָמָה, בְּזֹאת אֲנִי

⁵⁶ As per, "He will guard the feet of his devoted ones, while the wicked will be silenced in darkness; for no man succeeds on the basis of his own strength" (I Samuel 2:9), and as per "[In life as in war] You have widened my stride beneath me [i.e., given me stability in the midst of adversity]; my feet have therefore never slipped [even during the most trying times]" (Psalm 18:37).

I trusted and continue to trust in this [namely, Hashem's involvement in and providence over every detail of my life].	בוטח:
(4) One thing only I ask of Hashem. I seek only this: to dwell in the House of Hashem all the days of my life [that is, to be intensely aware of His presence at every moment, and in every circumstance]; to behold the sweetness of Hashem [the wondrous beauty and sweetness of Heaven's ways, i.e., how heavenly providence guides us and interacts with us from behind the scenes, such that, most of the time, we are completely unaware]; and to abide in His Sanctuary [or: to frequent His Sanctuary each morning] in order to receive deep instruction from His Torah concerning His nearness in every moment and in every aspect of my life.	(ד) אחת שאלתי מאת יהוה. אותה אבקש: שבתי בבית יהוה כל ימי חיי. לחזות בנעם יהוה, ולבקר בהיכלו:
(5) For He hides me [i.e., He allows me to enter] under the protective shelter of His Succah (the canopy of His overriding Hashgachah-providence) on the day of evil calamity [i.e., even when, to my physical eyes, life seems random and chaotic, unjust and unfair, He encompasses me with His loving providence, thus assuring me that nothing is by chance]. He conceals me in the folds of His Tent. Even in the midst of affliction and constriction, He lifts me up.	(ה) כי יצפני בסכו (בסכה) ביום רעה. יסתרני בסתר אהלו. בצור ירוממי:
(6) Even now my head is lifted up high above my enemies who have gathered round about me and within me, to mock me and convince me that I am not worthy of His love; [don't they know that His love is unconditional for those whose only desire is to come close to Him!]. I will therefore offer sacrifices of joy and loving devotion in His Tent; I will sing and praise Hashem and thereby cut away all the inner and outer obstacles that prevent me from seeing His Hand in my life.	(ו) ועתה ירום ראשי על איבי סביבותי. ואזבחה באהלו זבחי תרועה. אשירה ואזמרה ליהוה:
(7) Hashem, hear my voice with which I call out! Be attentive to my cry, for I call out only to You! Be gracious to me and answer me!	(ז) שמע יהוה קולי אקרא וחנני וענני:
(8) Hashem: On Your behalf, my heart has said: "Seek My Presence! Look for signs of My Hashgachah in your life!" O Hashem, I seek only to be found worthy of Your Presence! ⁵⁷	(ח) לך אמר לבי: בקשו פני. את פניך יהוה אבקש:
(9) Do not conceal Your Face Your Presence, Your Hashgachah from me! Do not turn Your servant away in anger! Not only have You always come to my aid, but You Yourself have always been my assistance! Do not abandon me or forsake me, O God of my salvation!	(ט) אל תסתר פניך ממני. אל תט באף עבדך. עזרתי היית. אל תטשני ואל תעזבני אלהי ישעי:
(10) Even if my father and mother were to forsake me, Hashem, You would gather me in.	(י) כי אבי ואמי עזבוני ויהוה יאספני:
(11) O Hashem, teach me darkekha (Your ways, the revealed ways of Your Torah) and guide/lead me on a straight orach (my own personal path of growth), ⁵⁸ so that I may overcome those who await my downfall. ⁵⁹	(יא) הורני יהוה דרךך ונחני בארץ מישור למען שוררי:

⁵⁷ "Lekha amar libi—on Your behalf, my heart has said." We might think that *lekha* means "to You," i.e., that my heart has spoken to Hashem, but then the next phrase wouldn't make sense. How can the heart ask Hashem to seek its face? Rather, as Rashi clarifies, *lekha* here means "*bishvil*kha" (on Your behalf), and "*bi'shlichut*kha" (as Your messenger).

⁵⁸ In *Tzavaat HaRivash* (Last Will and Testament of the Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem) the Baal Shem Tov clarifies the difference between *derekh* (public thoroughfare) and *orach* (private pathway): "King David asks, 'Hashem, teach me Your *darkekha* (ways) and lead me on the straight *orach* (path),' That is, guide me so that I know how to walk on the public thoroughfare [of the Torah]. Then, I ask that You, 'guide/lead me on my own personal path of uprightness.' [Both are needed; a connection to the public thoroughfare, i.e., the collective soul of Israel, and a private, personal path that is specifically for each individual.] This distinction is also alluded to in the verse, 'be'chol derekhakha de'ehu—know Him in all your ways; vehu ye'asher orchotekha—and He will straighten out your pathways' (Proverbs 3:6). That is, a person himself must become completely familiar with how to travel on all the 'paved' roads and public thoroughfares [of the Torah]. Indeed, a person is responsible to know [how to travel] these roads on his own. Hashem will then assuredly help him walk straight on those more private pathways, so that he not stray."

⁵⁹ Or: "Guard me from even the semblance of wrongdoing so that my foes—inner and outer—will not be

(12) Do not let me fall prey to the wishes of my oppressors, for false witnesses have stood up to accuse me. They hypocritically insinuate that I am a criminal [i.e., that I am the one who has committed unspeakable inhumanities, when it is really they who have done so]!	(יב) אֵל תִּתְּנֵנִי בְּנֶפֶשׁ צָרִי כִּי קָמוּ בִי עֲדֵי שָׁקֵר וַיִּפַּח חֲמָס:
(13) They would have succeeded in making me give up all hope had I not believed with all my heart that I will someday see Hashem's ultimate goodness in the land of eternal life.	(יג) לֹאֵל הָאֲמַנְתִּי לְרֹאוֹת בְּטוֹב יְהוָה בְּאֶרֶץ חַיִּים:
(14) Therefore, I caution you, when you are beset by troubles, never give up hope! Rather: Direct your hope to Hashem alone! Take strength and be courageous of heart, and direct your hope to Hashem!	(יד) קוֹה אֵל יְהוָה. חֲזַק וַיֵּאֱמַץ לִבְּךָ וְקוֹה אֵל יְהוָה:

Tehillim 28

(1) <i>LeDavid</i> – By David. To You, YHVH (<i>Adonai</i>), I call! My Rock, do not withdraw from me; do not turn a deaf ear to me. If You remain silent, I will be likened to those who have fallen into the pit. ⁶⁰	(א) לְדוֹד אֵלֶיךָ יְהוָה אֶקְרָא צוּרִי אֵל תַּחֲרֹשׁ מִמֶּנִּי פֶן תִּחְשָׁה מִמֶּנִּי וְנִמְשַׁלְתִּי עִם יוֹרְדֵי בּוֹר:
(2) Hear the call of my supplications when I cry out to You, when I lift my hands up to the holy of holies of Your Temple!	(ב) שְׁמַע קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנֵי בְּשׁוּעֵי אֵלֶיךָ בְּנִשְׁאֵי יָדַי אֵל דְּבִיר קֹדֶשְׁךָ:
(3) Do not let me be drawn along with those who have become trapped in their own wickedness, and with those who perpetrate injustice without the slightest hesitation or regret; who speak words of peace with their friends at the same time that they harbor wickedness in their hearts.	(ג) אֵל תִּמְשַׁכְּנִי עִם רָשָׁעִים וְעִם פְּעִלִי אֲוֹן דְּבַרִּי שְׁלוֹם עִם רַעִיָּהֶם וְרָעָה בְּלִבָּבָם:
(4) Give them their just deserts according to the wickedness of their actions; pay them back in accord with the deeds of their hands. Give them exactly what they deserve [i.e., let their evil boomerang back upon them].	(ד) תֵּן לָהֶם כַּפָּעֲלָם וּכְרַע מַעֲלָלֵיהֶם כַּמַּעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם תֵּן לָהֶם הַשֵּׁב גְּמוּלָם לָהֶם:
(5) For they fail to grasp and have consistently refused to understand the ways/actions of Hashem and the wondrous works of His hands. Destroy them, therefore, and do not allow them to be built up for they deserve only to be ruined.	(ה) כִּי לֹא יָבִינוּ אֵל פַּעֲלֹת יְהוָה וְאֵל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו יַהֲרֹסֵם וְלֹא יִבְנֶם:
(6) Blessed is YHVH (<i>Hashem</i>) who has always heard the call of my supplications!	(ו) בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה כִּי שָׁמַע קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנֵי:
(7) Hashem is my strength and my shield/protection; because my heart has trusted only in Him, He has always helped me; my heart is therefore overjoyed and I will praise Him with my song!	(ז) יְהוָה עֲזִי וּמִגְנִי בּוֹ בָטַח לִבִּי וְנִעְזַרְתִּי וַיַּעֲלֵז לִבִּי וּמִשִּׁירִי אֶהוֹדְנוּ:
(8) Hashem is the Strength of His people, the Stronghold and source of salvations for His anointed.	(ח) יְהוָה עֲזֵ לָמוּ וּמַעֲזוֹ יְשׁוּעוֹת מְשִׁיחוֹ הוּא:
(9) Deliver Your people and bless Your inheritance! Shepherd them and carry them as a shepherd carries his flock forever!	(ט) הוֹשִׁיעָה אֶת עַמְּךָ וּבָרֵךְ אֶת נַחֲלָתְךָ וְרַעַם וְנִשְׂאֵם עַד הָעוֹלָם:

Tehillim 29

Mizmor LeDavid (Psalm 29) speaks of the different times when Hashem revealed Himself in history, and of the powerful impact this had and will continue to have until the advent of the Messianic Era and the Great Sabbath. It is thus sung universally before *Lekha Dodi* every Friday night, as a preparation for the welcoming of the Sabbath

able to rejoice in my failure!" See Hirsch: "Guard me from even the mere semblance of wrongdoing, even if it is only because of my foes who would rejoice if they could find some fault with me."

⁶⁰ Hirsch: "O Thou, upon whom alone all the future depends, in whom I seek all the support of my life and the goal of my desires, do not withdraw from me without hearing my cry! If I were not to call upon Thee, and if Thou, too, were to look at my sad state without taking an interest or without concerning Thyself with it, then my life would have no more meaning and I would be as one whose path on this earth is nothing but a steady progress toward the grave."

Queen. The reason for this is that every seven-day weekly cycle embodies in miniature an entire seven-thousand-year cycle. Thus, just as we bring to mind the powerful effect of *kol HaShem al ha'mayim* (Hashem's voice on the forces of history) on a weekly basis, so too, and perhaps even more so, should it be on the millennial scale. This psalm therefore alludes to the social upheaval that will prevail during the final throes of history before the advent of the Messianic Era and the seventh millennium. The key to the psalm is in King David's use of nature imagery (oceans, trees, mountains, animals) to describe both powerful natural forces and powerful historical forces. That is, he prophetically foresaw that the world of nature would literally undergo dramatic changes as the Messianic Era was about to dawn; he also saw metaphorically that the nations of the world, who are likened to the forces of nature, would experience complete breakdown until they aligned themselves with Israel in bringing about Hashem's plan.

(1) <i>Mizmor LeDavid</i> – A cutting-psalm to penetrate to the essence of Israel's mission by David: Ascribe greatness to Hashem, O Israel, you children of mighty ancestors. Ascribe to Hashem all glory and might.	(א) מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד הָבוּ לַיהוָה בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד וְעֹז:
(2) Ascribe to Hashem the honor due His Name; bow to Hashem [and place yourselves entirely in His service with trembling] in the splendor of His holy Sanctuary.	(ב) הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ הִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לַיהוָה בְּהַדְרַת קֹדֶשׁ:
(3) Hashem's voice was heard over the waters of the Red Sea; ⁶¹ the omnipotent God of glory thundered over the Egyptians. Hashem continues to rule over many waters [the conflicting forces of history].	(ג) קוֹל יְהוָה עַל הַמַּיִם אֵל הַכְּבוֹד הָרָעִים יְהוָה עַל מַיִם רַבִּים:
(4) Hashem's voice resounded with might on Mount Sinai; Hashem's voice continues to resound with majesty in the Torah He gave to His people.	(ד) קוֹל יְהוָה בַּחֹהֵלֶת יְהוָה בְּהַדְרָה:
(5) Hashem's voice shatters mighty cedars [the kingdoms that resist His power]; Hashem will shatter the mighty cedars of Lebanon [the foreign powers that dominate Israel].	(ה) קוֹל יְהוָה שִׁבַּר אֲרָזִים וַיִּשְׁבַּר יְהוָה אֶת אֲרָזֵי הַלְבָּנוֹן:
(6) He will cause them [world powers that once seemed stable] to dance about like young calves; Lebanon and Syria will skip like antelopes.	(ו) וַיִּרְקְדוּ כַּמוֹ עֹגֵל לְבָנוֹן וְשָׂרִיֹן כַּמוֹ בֶּן רְאֵמִים:
(7) Hashem's voice will hew away darkness with laser beams of fire.	(ז) קוֹל יְהוָה חָצַב לְהַבּוֹת אֵשׁ:
(8) Hashem's voice will make a barren world experience birth travail; Hashem will cause a barren world to go into labor when He begins to reveal His holiness. ⁶²	(ח) קוֹל יוֹהוּוֹוהוּ יַחִיל מִדְבָּר יַחִיל יְהוָה מִדְבָּר קֹדֶשׁ:
(9) Hashem's voice will cause the children of Israel who are likened to female deer to go into labor; but first He will expose the nations who are likened to forests, until all that remains within His Sanctuary bespeaks His glory. ⁶³	(ט) קוֹל יְהוָה יַחֲוִיל אֵילוֹת וַיַּחֲשֹׁף יַעֲרוֹת וּבְהִיכְלוֹ כָּלֹ אִמֵּר כְּבוֹד:

⁶¹ **Hashem's Name** (YKVK/Havayah) mentioned in Psalm 29 eighteen times was the basis for establishing the original Eighteen Blessings of the weekday *Amidah* (Standing Prayer) (*Berachot* 28b). Since seven of these eighteen refer specifically to *Kol YKVK* (the voice of Hashem), this became the basis for establishing seven blessings in each *Amidah* of *Shabbat*.

Rabbi Alexander Ziskiner writes, "These eighteen *Havayot* contain 72 letters, paralleling the expansion of A"B (72) (Yod-vav-dalet, Heh-yod, Vav-yod-vav, Heh-yod) which shares the same *gematria* as *chesed* (love)...Additionally, the eleven verses in this psalm correspond to the Vav and Heh of the blessed *Havayah*. Finally, the 91 words in this psalm equal the combined *gematria* of YKVK (26) and ADNY (65)" (*Yesod VeShoresh HaAvodah, Inyan Kabbalat Nefesh-Ruach-Neshamah Yeterah b'Shabbat Kodesh, Shaar Shemini, Shaar HaElyon, Perek Sheni, Kabbalat Shabbat*).

⁶² "Hashem's voice *yachil midbar*—will make a barren world experience birth travail; *yachil HaShem midbar kadesh*—Hashem will cause a barren world to go into labor [when He begins to reveal] His holiness" (Psalm 29:8). Rashi: "The meaning of *yachil* is as in *chil ka'yoledah* (birth-pangs like a woman in childbirth) (Jeremiah 6:24)." Hirsch: "*Chil* is labor, the act of giving birth; *yachil* is a *hiphil* form (causative). Thus, even today, the voice of Hashem which speaks to us through His Torah still transforms any state of *midbar* (barrenness, wilderness, deprivation, isolation, danger) into the birth-pangs of a better and truer life."

⁶³ "Until all that remains within His Sanctuary bespeaks His glory" (Psalm 29:9). Hirsch: "All that is Hashem's—every product of His creation and of His sovereignty—serves to proclaim His greatness and declare His glory. All that is His bespeaks *kavod* (glory); proclaiming His presence and declaring His glory in the physical world." King David knows that the whole world *is* Hashem's Sanctuary, and that everything bespeaks His glory. *Mashiach ben David* will be the lightning rod through whom this consciousness will be poured out on all mankind.

(10) As during the Flood, <i>Hashem</i> remains unchanged throughout history, and <i>Hashem</i> will reign unchanged throughout eternity.	(י) יְהוָה לַמַּבּוּל יֹשֵׁב וַיֵּשֶׁב יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ לְעוֹלָם:
(11) Nothing can alter His will: <i>Hashem</i> will grant His people the inner strength to be victorious over all evil; <i>Hashem</i> will bless His people with the ability to bring the world to perfection and peace.	(יא) יְהוָה עֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן יְהוָה יְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם:

Tehillim 30

King David's life was marked by tremendous swings from pain and suffering to heartfelt joy, elation, and thanksgiving. In this psalm, he teaches us that no matter how far we fall away from awareness of and closeness to Hashem, the lifeline is never severed. On the contrary! It is only after we—as individuals and as a nation—have experienced Hashem's concealment that we can appreciate how important it is to return to Him and never cease thanking Him for all that He has given us. It is then that we will look back and see that His concealment was only momentary relative to the eternity of closeness He has prepared for us.

1) <i>Mizmor</i> – A chant song for cutting away the barriers that prevent the dedication of the Temple. By David.	(א) מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר חֲנֻכַּת הַבַּיִת לְדָוִד:
(2) <i>Hashem</i> , I will exalt You, for You have raised me up from the depths and not allowed my enemies to rejoice over me. ⁶⁴	(ב) אֲרוּמְמֶךָ יְהוָה כִּי דָלִיתִנִּי וְלֹא שָׂמַחַת אִיְבֵי לִי:
(3) <i>Hashem</i> my God, I cried out to You and You healed me.	(ג) יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שׁוּעָתִי אֵלֶיךָ וַתִּרְפָּאֵנִי:
(4) <i>Hashem</i> , You lifted my soul out of the grave; You kept me alive and saved me from descending to the pit.	(ד) יְהוָה הֶעֱלִיתָ מִן שְׂאוֹל נַפְשִׁי חַיִּיתִנִּי מִיָּרְדִי (מִיּוֹרְדִי) בּוֹר:
(5) Break forth in song to <i>Hashem</i> , O His devout ones for He will save you too when you call out to Him; give thanks for the memory of His holiness [i.e., even when He hides His countenance and you must endure hardship].	(ה) זָמְרוּ לַיהוָה חֲסִידָיו וְהוֹדוּ לְזָכֹר קִדְשׁוֹ:
(6) For His anger lasts but a moment, whereas His true desire is to give eternal life. The darkness of this world will pass like weeping that lodges for the night; the morning [redemption] will bring joyous song. ⁶⁵	(ו) כִּי רָגַע בְּאַפּוֹ חַיִּים בְּרָצוֹנוֹ בְּעֶרֶב יָלִין בְּכִי וּלְבָקֵר רִנָּה:

⁶⁴ Similar to the preceding psalm (and for the same reason), Psalm 30 also consists of 91+1 words (from verse 2 onwards). It also contains nine Havayahs and one Adanut corresponding respectively to the first nine *sefirot* plus *malkhut*.

⁶⁵ In one place, David claims (or prays) that Hashem will not arouse any of His wrath/judgment (Psalm 78:38). In other places, he tells us that, even when He does, it is always with an admixture of mercy (Psalm 33:5, 97:2). According to the Shlah (quoting Yeshaya), we even thank Hashem for being tough on us in *olam hazeh* (this-world) so that we will merit the awesome light of *yemot ha'mashiach* (the messianic age) and *olam haba* (the world-to-come). Here he adds that any wrath/judgment that Hashem might express towards us is momentary and therefore miniscule from the point of view of Eternity. This is what Yeshaya meant as well when he said, "I forsook you for a tiny moment, but with great mercies I will gather you in. With outpoured wrath I hid My face from you. It was, however, but a moment, for with eternal/infinite love I shall have compassion on you, says your Redeemer" (Isaiah 54:7-8).

Add to this what we learned from the word *selah*—that the whole purpose of our prayers is to connect us to Eternity even now within the stories of our lives—and we begin to see the full power of these amazing words. For now it becomes clear that we are/were those very sparks that were lodged in the depths of the darkness of our *mitzrayims*, and only now are we beginning to see the light of Hashem's presence.

Yes, like those sparks leaving the underworld of soul-amnesia, like the *bnei Yisrael* leaving *Mitzrayim*, we too can look back and see the whole of exile, the whole of history (our personal histories as well as the entire history of the world) as one great drama directed by the Great Author. With all this we can begin to touch on the way the Ari and the Baal Shem Tov and all the other great *tzadikim* read these prayers. We too can meet Hashem.

The secret is to see yourself here, not just as who you presently know yourself to be, but again, from the view of Eternity, from Hashem's point of view: The real you is your soul, your *neshamah*, a part of Hashem. It was as a soul that you were sent down into this world, to do something. Yes, in the meantime, you and the rest of us lose our way. We forget. We fall into amnesia [from the Hebrew *neshia*, oblivion, as Yoseph said, "*nashani Elokim et beit avi*—Hashem has helped me to forget what my brothers did to me... *al ken kara shemo Menashe*—he therefore called his son's name Menashe" (Genesis)]. But now it is time to remember. *Ki rega be'apo, chayim birtzono*—for His anger is but momentary, whereas His true desire is to bestow eternal life."

(7) At the height of my success, I thought I would never falter.	(ז) וְאֲנִי אִמַּרְתִּי בְשָׁלוֹי בִלְ אֲמוּט לְעוֹלָם:
(8) But <i>Hashem</i> , now I understand that it was solely through Your favor that You supported my ascent to power; for the moment You hid Your face, I was confounded.	(ח) יְהוָה בְּרִצּוֹנְךָ הֶעֱמַדְתָּה לְהַרְרִי עוֹ הַסִּתְרָתְךָ פָּנֶיךָ הֵייתִי נִבְהָל:
(9) To You, <i>Hashem</i> , I cry out. To You alone, <i>Adonai</i> (<i>Hashem</i>), I beseech.	(ט) אֵלֶיךָ יְהוָה אֶקְרָא וְאַל אֲדַנִּי (יהוה) אֶתְחַנֵּן:
(10) What benefit is there in my silence, in my descent to the grave? Can dust confess to You? Can it proclaim Your truth?	(י) מַה בְּצַע בְּדַמִּי בְּרִדְתִּי אֶל שְׁחַת הַיּוֹדֶךָ עֵפֶר הַיִּגִּיד אִמְתְּךָ:
(11) <i>Hashem</i> , hear me and be gracious to me; <i>Hashem</i> , be my support!	(יא) שְׁמַע יְהוָה וְחַנּוּנִי יְהוָה הִיָּה עֵזֶר לִי:
(12) Only You can transform my mourning into dancing; only You can untie my sackcloth and gird me with joy.	(יב) הַפַּכְתָּ מִסִּפְדִּי לְמַחּוֹל לִי פִתְחַת שָׁקִי וּתְאַזְרֵנִי שִׂמְחָה:
(13) In Your wisdom You knew that I had to pass through the valley of the shadow of death so that the glory of my soul could sing to You forever and never be silent. <i>Hashem</i> , my God, I will thank You forever!	(יג) לְמַעַן יִזְמְרֶךָ כְּבוֹד וְלֹא יִדָּם יוֹהוּוֹהוּ אֱלֹהֵי לְעוֹלָם אוֹדְךָ:

Tehillim 31

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the Master of Creation who grants eternal victory. A cutting-psalm by David.	(א) לְמִנְצַח מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד:
(2) In You alone, <i>Hashem</i> , I have placed my trust; I will therefore never be ashamed; O rescue me with Your loving charities.	(ב) בְּךָ יְהוָה חֲסִיתִי אֶל אֲבוֹשָׁה לְעוֹלָם בְּצַדִּיקְתְּךָ פִּלְטָנִי:
(3) Incline Your ear to me; deliver me quickly; be a Rock of strength on my behalf; a fortified stronghold to come to my rescue.	(ג) הִטָּה אֵלַי אָזְנוֹךָ מִהֲרָה הַצִּילֵנִי הִיָּה לִי לְצוּר מַעֲזוֹ לְבֵית מְצוּדוֹת לְהוֹשִׁיעֵנִי:
(4) For You alone are my Rock and my Stronghold; for the sake of Your Name, therefore, lead me and guide me.	(ד) כִּי סִלְעִי וּמְצוּדַתִּי אַתָּה וּלְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ תִּנְחַנֵּנִי וּתְנַהֲלֵנִי:
(5) Extricate me from the trap that they [those who hate me] have secretly laid for me; for You alone are my refuge.	(ה) תוֹצִיאֵנִי מִרְשֶׁת זֶז טָמְנוּ לִי כִי אַתָּה מַעֲזוֹי:
(6) Into Your hands alone I entrust my spirit; O redeem me, <i>Hashem</i> , faithful God of truth.	(ו) בְּיָדְךָ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי פְדִיתָ אוֹתִי יְהוָה אֶל אֱמֶת:
(7) I abhor those who rely on false powers to save them; I place my trust in <i>Hashem</i> alone.	(ז) שִׁנְאַתִּי הַשִּׁמְרִים הַבְּלִי שׁוֹא וְאֲנִי אֶל יְהוָה בִּטְחֹתִי:
(8) I will therefore delight and rejoice only in Your loving-kindness; for You have beheld my misery; You have taken cognizance of the pain of my soul.	(ח) אֲגִילָה וְאֶשְׂמְחָה בְּחַסְדְּךָ אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתָ אֶת עֲנִי יְדַעְתָּ בְּצָרוֹת נַפְשִׁי:
(9) You have therefore not given me over into the hands of my enemies; You have set my feet in a broad place [i.e., You have brought me forth from constriction to freedom].	(ט) וְלֹא הִסְגַּרְתָּנִי בְּיַד אוֹיֵב הֶעֱמַדְתָּ בְּמִרְחָב רַגְלִי:
(10) O be gracious to me, <i>Hashem</i> , for I am still distressed [within]; my eye has wasted away with grief; my soul and my innards are darkened [weakened].	(י) חַנּוּנִי יְהוָה כִּי צָר לִי עָשָׂשָׁה בְּכַעַס עֵינִי נִפְשִׁי וּבִטְנִי:
(11) For my life is spent in anxiety; my years in sighing; because of my iniquity my strength has been weakened; my bones have deteriorated.	(יא) כִּי כָלוּ בִּיגוֹן חַיִּי וּשְׁנוֹתַי בְּאַנְחָה כָּשֶׁל בְּעוֹנִי לִחִי וְעֲצָמִי עָשָׂשׁוּ:
(12) I have become the laughing stock of my oppressors; and even more of my neighbors; while my friends and acquaintances dread me; whoever sees me in the street	(יב) מִכָּל צָרְרִי הֵייתִי חֲרָפָה וְלִשְׂכֵנִי מֵאֵד וּפְחַד לְמִידְעִי רָאִי בַחוּץ נִדְדוּ מִמֶּנִּי:

avoids me.	
(13) I am forgotten from the heart like a dead man; I am [in their eyes] as a lost article [for which no one searches].	(יג) נִשְׁכַּחְתִּי כְּמֵת מִלֵּב הָיִיתִי כְּכֹלִי אֲבֵד:
(14) When I heard so many people libeling me [and blaming me]; casting allegations all around that would make anybody fear [to come near me], when they gathered together to take counsel against me; schemed to take my soul.	(יד) כִּי שָׁמַעְתִּי דִּבַּת רַבִּים מְגֹרֵר מִסָּבִיב בְּהוֹסְדָם יַחַד עָלַי לִקְחֹת נַפְשִׁי זָמְמוּ:
(15) But as for me, I have trusted in You, Hashem; I said, "You alone are my God!"	(טו) וְאֲנִי עָלֶיךָ בִּטַּחְתִּי יְהוָה אִמְרָתִי אֱלֹהֵי אֶתָּה:
(16) All my times [i.e., the different periods and phases of my life; good as well as troublesome] are in Your hand; O please rescue me from the hands of my enemies and from my pursuers.	(טז) בְּיָדְךָ עֲתִיתִי הִצִּילָנִי מִיַּד אוֹיְבֵי וּמִרֹדְפָי:
(17) Shine the light of Your face upon Your servant; deliver me with Your loving kindness.	(יז) הָאִירָה פָּנֶיךָ עַל עַבְדְּךָ הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי בְּחַסְדְּךָ:
(18) Hashem, I will never be ashamed, for to You alone I called; let those who have become entangled in their own evil be ashamed; let them be silenced [as they descend] to Sheol.	(יח) יְהוָה אֵל אֲבוֹשָׁה כִּי קִרְאתֶיךָ יִבְשׁוּ רָשָׁעִים יִדְמוּ לְשֹׂאֹל:
(19) Let the lips of those who speak falsehood be silenced; they speak haughtily against the righteous; let them perish in their own vainglory and contempt.	(יט) תִּתְּלֶמְנָה שִׁפְתֵי שָׁקֵר הַדְּבָרוֹת עַל צַדִּיק עֲתֵק בְּגָאוֹה וּבוֹז:
(20) How great is the goodness that You have stored away [in the next world] for those who revere You; [even in this world] You have done [wondrous things] for those who trust in You, in the sight of the children of men.	(כ) מַה רַב טוֹבְךָ אֲשֶׁר צִפְנָתָ לִירְאֶיךָ פְּעֻלַּת לַחֲסִים בְּךָ נִגְדַּת בְּנֵי אָדָם:
(21) Hide [protect] them in the concealment of Your presence, from the machinations of [evil] men; conceal them under the canopy [of Your love], from the argumentativeness of those whose tongues wag [i.e., who delight in spreading false tales].	(כא) תַּסְתִּירֵם בְּסִתְּרֶךָ פָּנֶיךָ מִרְכָּסֵי אִישׁ תַּצְפֵּנֵם בְּסִכָּה מְרִיב לְשֹׁנוֹת:
(22) Blessed is Hashem who has shown such wondrous kindness to me in the fortified city [i.e., by letting me escape from the fortified city of Keilah, thus rescuing me from Shaul] (see I Samuel 23:1-13).	(כב) בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה כִּי הִפְלִיא חֲסִדּוֹ לִי בְּעִיר מְצוֹר:
(23) And I even said in my haste, "I am cut off from Your eyes"; but in truth [unknown to me at the time], You heard the call of my supplications when I cried out to You.	(כג) וְאֲנִי אִמְרָתִי בַּחֲפָזִי נִגְרַזְתִּי מִנֶּגֶד עֵינֶיךָ אֲכֵן שָׁמַעְתָּ קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנֵי בְּשׁוּעִי אֱלֹהִי:
(24) O love Hashem, all you devoted ones [who serve Him without thought of reward]; Hashem protects those who are faithful to Him; but He surely recompenses those who act with haughtiness.	(כד) אֲהָבוּ אֶת יְהוָה כָּל חֲסִידָיו אֲמוּנִים נִצֹּר יְהוָה וּמִשְׁלָם עַל יָתֵר עֲשֵׂה גָאוֹה:
(25) Therefore be strong and courageous of heart, all you who hope in Hashem.	(כה) חֲזָקוּ וַיֵּאֱמַץ לְבַבְכֶּם כָּל הַמִּיחָלִים לִיהוָה:

Tehillim 32

(1) A song of David to teach wisdom: Happy is he whose <i>pesha</i> (rebellious crime) is forgiven, whose <i>chet</i> (misdeed) is covered through repentance.	(א) לְדוֹד מְשָׁכִיל אֲשֶׁרִי נָשׁוּי פָשַׁע כָּסוּי חֲטָאָה:
(2) Happy is the man whose <i>avon</i> (willful offense) Hashem does not hold against him, whose repenting spirit is without deception.	(ב) אֲשֶׁרִי אָדָם לֹא יַחֲשֵׁב יְהוָה לוֹ עוֹן וְאֵין בְּרוּחוֹ רְמִיָּה:
(3) As long as I kept silent and did not confess my sins before You, my bones wasted away in my moaning all day long [out of fear of punishment].	(ג) כִּי הִחַרְשָׁתִּי בָלוּ עֲצָמֵי בְּשִׂאגָתִי כָּל הַיּוֹם:

(4) For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned [drained] as in the droughts of summer, <i>selah</i> .	(ד) כִּי יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה תִּכְבֵּד עָלַי יָדְךָ נִהְפָּךְ לְשִׁדִּי בַחֲרִבְנֵי קֵץ סֵלָה:
(5) At last I acknowledged my <i>chet</i> (error) to You and to myself, no longer concealing my <i>avon</i> (wrongdoing). I said, "I will confess/admit <i>pesha'ay</i> (my crimes) to Hashem." You then forgave and cleared me of the <i>avon</i> (wrongdoing) of my <i>chet</i> (error), <i>selah</i> . ⁶⁶	(ה) חָטָאתִי אוֹדִיעֶךָ וְעוֹנִי לֹא כִסִּיתִי אֲמַרְתִּי אוֹדָה עָלַי פֶּשְׁעֵי לִיהוָה וְאַתָּה נָשָׂאתָ עוֹן חָטָאתִי סֵלָה:
(6) For this, every <i>chasid</i> [who strives to devote himself wholeheartedly to Your service] should pray to You when You can be found: Only that punishments that come like floods of rushing waters should not overwhelm him.	(ו) עַל זֹאת יִתְפַּלֵּל כָּל חָסִיד אֵלֶיךָ לַעֲת מָצָא רַק לְשֹׁטֵף מַיִם רַבִּים אֵלָיו לֹא יִגִּיעוּ:
(7) O God You alone are my secret hiding place; protect me from trouble; encompass me at all times with songs of joyous deliverance, <i>selah</i> .	(ז) אַתָּה סֵתֶר לִי מִצָּר תִּצְרֶנִי רָנִי פֶלֶט תִּסּוּבְּנִי סֵלָה:
(8) O God, You have said: "I will instruct you and light up the path you must follow; I will give you counsel and place My eye upon you.	(ח) אֲשַׁכִּילְךָ וְאוֹרְךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ זוֹ תֵּלֶךְ אִיעֲצָה עֲלֶיךָ עֵינִי:
(9) "Be not like a horse or mule, incapable of understanding that the suffering caused by bit and bridle is actually for its adornment; whose mouth must be closed, that it not come near to you to bite; [man, however, should realize that suffering comes to cleanse him and should not rebel]."	(ט) אַל תִּהְיוּ כְסוֹס כֶּפֶרדַּי אֵין הָבִין בְּמַתָּג וְרָסוֹן עֲדִיו לְבָלוֹם בַּל קָרַב אֵלֶיךָ:
(10) The wicked one who, like them, resists suffering, has many woes; but he who trusts in Hashem understands that His loving-kindness surrounds him even in the midst of his suffering.	(י) רַבִּים מְכַאֲבִים לָרָשָׁע וְהַבּוֹטָח בִּיהוָה חֶסֶד יְסוּבְּבֵנוּ:
(11) Rejoice in Hashem, and be glad, you who strive to be righteous; sing for joy all you who are upright in heart.	(יא) שִׂמְחוּ בִיהוָה וְגִילוּ צַדִּיקִים וְהִרְנִינוּ כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

⁶⁶ The Torah gives critical importance to the concept of *viduy* in the *teshuvah* process. *Viduy*, usually translated confession, is from the reflexive verb form *lehivvadot*. It means, literally, to admit [the truth] to oneself. If we admit our mistakes and return in *teshuvah*, Hashem promises us that He will consider even our most serious crimes as mistakes. We see this in our verse here wherein King David says to Hashem, "[At last] I will make known my *chet* (error) to You, no longer concealing my *avon* (premeditated wrongdoing). I said: 'Odeh (I will confess/admit) *pesha'ay* (my intentional crimes) to Hashem.' You then forgave the *avon* (premeditated wrongdoing) of my *chet* (error), *selah*." In other words, by admitting our wrongdoing to Hashem, He transmutes even a premeditated crime into an error.

According to the sages (especially Rambam, *Hilkhot Teshuvah* 1:1), in order to fulfill the Torah's command to return in *teshuvah* (which is an inner decision), we must articulate to ourselves in words (not just in thought) what we have done wrong, regret having sinned, and resolve never to fall again. In a sense, *viduy* (confession) is the mechanism which allows us to attain perfect *teshuvah*. *Teshuvah* and *viduy* are thus not merely "religious" rituals. They are the tools we were given by the Creator to reconnect to our higher self, and, at any point in our lives, do the work of inner transformation.

For instance, let's say I spoke gruffly to someone I love, thus hurting his/her feelings. Do I defend my action with all kinds of excuses (thereby not only aggravating the situation with the other person, but hardening the personality *klipah*-shell by identifying with this kind of behavior)? Or can I admit to myself and to the other person that this was an inappropriate way to act (and that it does not represent the real me)? By defending, I enclose myself in a self-created cell or shell (or, more likely, reinforce the shell that has already been created by such actions in the past). By admitting that I acted inappropriately, I open up a pathway back to myself, to my real self.

It is in this sense that *viduy* is a self-cleaning mechanism designed to help us realign with who we really are as opposed to who we have become (or, more correctly, as opposed to the distorted way in which we have come to perceive and judge ourselves) as a result of specific negative behaviors. *Viduy* certainly involves taking responsibility for what we do, but not as a guilt-trip or self-condemnation that ends up reinforcing the negative self-image and the behavior it generates. On the contrary, *viduy* is meant to help us disengage and free ourselves from any compulsions in which we may have gotten stuck. Disengaging from what we did wrong involves saying, "That is not me. If I knew then what I know now, I would never have done that. I am me; those actions are not me." Far from being a "guilt-trip," the act of *viduy* is an owning up to what we have done and a sincere desire to correct our past, learn from it, and even be a better person than we could have been before.

Tehillim 33

(1) You righteous, be ecstatic in <i>Hashem</i> ; ⁶⁷ You upright, it befits you to reflect thanks and praise.	(א) רָנְנוּ צְדִיקִים בַּיהוָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל נְאֻם תְּהִלָּה:
(2) Thank <i>Hashem</i> with a harp; cut through your emotional barriers to Him with a ten-stringed lyre.	(ב) הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה בְּכִנּוֹר בְּנִבְלָ עֶשׂוֹר זָמְרוּ לוֹ:
(3) Sing a new song to Him for the daily miracles He performs; play skillfully with passion for which there are no words.	(ג) שִׁירוּ לוֹ שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ הֵיטִיבוּ נֶגֶן בְּתִרוּעָה:
(4) Deepen your trust that <i>Hashem</i> 's word is upright, and that everything He does is performed in faithfulness.	(ד) כִּי יֵשֶׁר דְּבַר יְהוָה וְכָל מַעֲשָׂהוּ בְּאֱמוּנָה:
(5) He loves to govern His world with the perfect combination of righteous charity and strict justice; in this way <i>Hashem</i> 's loving-kindness permeates all creation.	(ה) אֱהָב צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט חֶסֶד יְהוָה מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ:
(6) With <i>Hashem</i> 's word the heavens were made, and all the heavenly hosts were fashioned with the breath of His mouth.	(ו) בְּדִבְרֵי יְהוָה שָׁמַיִם נַעֲשׂוּ וּבְרוּחַ פִּי כָל צָבָאָם:
(7) When He performs miracles He gathers the waters of the sea into a wall; but the miracle of nature is that He causes the water of the earth's depths to evaporate and collect into treasure chambers of rainclouds in the sky.	(ז) לִנְס כְּנֹד מִי הַיָּם נִתֵּן בְּאוֹצְרוֹת תְּהוֹמוֹת:
(8) Let the earth therefore fear <i>Hashem</i> , and let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.	(ח) יִירָאוּ מִיהוָה כָּל הָאָרֶץ מִמֶּנּוּ יִגּוּרוּ כָּל יֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֶל:
(9) For He spoke and the world came into existence; He commanded and it was established.	(ט) כִּי הוּא אָמַר וַיְהִי הוּא צִוָּה וַיַּעֲמֵד:
(10) Many a time He has nullified the counsel of nations, and frustrated the plans of peoples.	(י) יְהוָה הִפִּיר עֲצַת גּוֹיִם הִנִּיא מַחֲשָׁבוֹת עַמִּים:
(11) Only <i>Hashem</i> 's counsel will stand forever; the thoughts of His heart will endure throughout all generations.	(יא) עֲצַת יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם תַּעֲמֵד מַחֲשָׁבוֹת לְבוֹ לְדֹר וָדֹר:
(12) Happy is the nation that has the Eternal YHWH as its God! Happy is the people whom He has chosen to be His own inheritance!	(יב) אֲשֶׁרִי הִגִּי אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו הָעַם בָּחַר לְנַחֲלָה לוֹ:
(13) From heaven, <i>Hashem</i> looks down; He sees all mankind.	(יג) מִשָּׁמַיִם הִבִּיט יְהוָה רָאָה אֶת כָּל בְּנֵי הָאָדָם:
(14) From His dwelling place, He oversees all the inhabitants of the earth.	(יד) מִמְּכוֹן שְׁבִתּוֹ הִשְׁגִּיחַ אֶל כָּל יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ:
(15) He is the One who fashioned all their hearts as one; He therefore discerns all their actions in a single glance.	(טו) הֵיִצֵּר יְחִיד לִבָּם הִמְבִּין אֶל כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם:
(16) Kings cannot rely on large armies to save them, nor can heroes count on their great strength to rescue them.	(טז) אֵין הַמֶּלֶךְ נוֹשָׁע בְּרֶב חֵיל גִּבּוֹר לֹא יִנָּצַל בְּרֶב כֹּחַ:
(17) The speed of a man's horse is a false guarantee of deliverance; with all its strength, it cannot ensure escape.	(יז) שֶׁקֶר הַסּוֹס לְתִשׁוּעָה וּבֶרֶב חֵילוֹ לֹא יִמָּלֵט:
(18) Behold, <i>Hashem</i> 's providence is focused on those who revere Him, on those who yearn for His loving-kindness.	(יח) הִנֵּה עֵין יְהוָה אֶל יֹרְאָיו לְמִיחָלִים לְחֶסֶדוֹ:

⁶⁷ "You righteous, be ecstatic in Hashem." See *Midrash Tehillim 33*, quoted in Kaplan, *Meditation and the Bible*, p. 120, "The verse does not say 'ranenu tzadikim el Hashem—you righteous, sing joyously to God,' but 'ranenu tzadikim **ba**Shem—you righteous, be ecstatic **in** God.' It therefore refers to an ecstasy that results from seeing a vision of God." This entire psalm revolves around the concept of seeing, i.e., the amplification of Hashem's over-seeing and super-seeing providence in our lives, in response to our seeing and appreciating that providence. The more we perceive His providence in our lives, the more He "focuses" His "eyes" on us (see Rambam, *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:51, near end). Especially important is the power of our yearning and wanting to see His providence, as expressed in the last verse of this psalm.

(19) They pray that He will deliver their soul from death, and keep them alive in famine.	(יט) לְהַצִּיל מִמּוֹת נַפְשָׁם וּלְחַיּוֹתָם בָּרָעֵב:
(20) Our soul longs for <i>Hashem</i> ; He alone is our support and our shield.	(כ) נַפְשֵׁנוּ חָכְתָּה לַיהוָה עֲזָרְנוּ וּמִגִּנּוּ הוּא:
(21) It is only in perceiving Him that our heart rejoices; we have therefore placed our trust in His holy Name.	(כא) כִּי בּוֹ יִשְׂמַח לִבֵּנוּ כִּי בְשֵׁם קִדְשׁוֹ בְּטַחָנוּ:
(22) <i>Hashem</i> , may Your loving-kindness be focused upon us to the degree we yearn for You!	(כב) יְהִי חֶסֶדְךָ יְהוָה עָלֵינוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר יִחְלְנוּ לָךְ:

Tehillim 34

In this psalm, David praises Hashem for his having been delivered from Avimelekh (Achish), the king of Gat (the main Philistine city in Gaza), after having been forced to take refuge there in order to escape being caught by Shaul's men. Although it meant leaving the official boundaries of *Eretz Yisrael* and entering enemy territory, David thought that he could convince Achish that, as a rebel fugitive, he could give him a tremendous advantage over Shaul. When he crossed the border, he was taken into custody by Achish's men and taken to the royal palace. While there, Goliath's brothers, who were among Achish's counselors, recognized him and tried to convince the king to let them take revenge on David for having slain their brother. It was then that David prayed Psalm 56, pleading with Hashem to have mercy and deliver him from all his enemies. In response, Hashem brought a spirit of insanity into Achish's wife and daughter. Their screams literally drove Achish crazy. In a moment's blazing inspiration, David knew what he must do. He proceeded to play one of the most masterful parts of his life, namely, he feigned insanity. He began to write strange messages on the walls, as spit dripped down his chin. Achish's reaction: "You're telling me that this is the man who killed Goliath? This is the mighty warrior of Israel? I don't believe it. Get this madman out of here; do I lack crazy people that you bring another one into my house!" Upon being delivered, David composed this psalm.

(1) About David, when he acted insane in the presence of Avimelekh, who then drove him away. And David departed:	(א) לְדוֹד בְּשָׁנוֹתַי אֶת טַעְמוֹ לִפְנֵי אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וַיִּגְרֶשְׁהוּ וַיֵּלֶךְ:
(2) From now on I will bless <i>Hashem</i> at all times; my mouth will constantly be filled with His praise!	(ב) אֲבָרְכָה אֶת יְהוָה בְּכָל עֵת תָּמִיד תִּהְיֶה בִּפִּי:
(3) O my soul, glory in your closeness to <i>Hashem</i> ; even the humble will rejoice when they hear this.	(ג) בִּיהוָה תִתְהַלֵּל נַפְשִׁי יִשְׁמְעוּ עֲנֻיִם וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ:
(4) Make <i>Hashem</i> 's greatness known with me; let us acknowledge the exaltedness of His Name together.	(ד) גִּדְּלוּ לַיהוָה אֹתִי וְנִרְוַמְמָה שְׁמוֹ יַחְדָּו:
(5) For I sought <i>Hashem</i> , and He answered me; He rescued me from all that I feared.	(ה) דָּרַשְׁתִּי אֶת יְהוָה וַעֲנֵנִי וּמָכַל מִגּוֹרֹתַי הִצִּילָנִי:
(6) Now I know why those who looked to Him alone became illuminated; their faces will never be darkened or ashamed.	(ו) הִבִּיטוּ אֵלָיו וְנִהְרֻ וּפְנֵיהֶם אֵל יִחְפְּרוּ:
(7) This poor beggar called and <i>Hashem</i> heard; He delivered him from all his tribulations.	(ז) זֶה עֲנִי קָרָא וַיהוָה שָׁמַע וּמָכַל צָרוֹתָיו הוֹשִׁיעוּ:
(8) So it will be for all who fear Him; <i>Hashem</i> 's angel forms a protective encampment around them to deliver them from all harm.	(ח) חֲנָה מְלֹאךְ יְהוָה סָבִיב לִירְאָיו וַיַּחֲלִצֵם:
(9) Test for yourselves and you will see how good <i>Hashem</i> is; happy is the man who takes refuge in Him.	(ט) טַעְמוּ וּרְאוּ כִּי טוֹב יְהוָה אֲשֶׁרִי הִגֵּבְר יַחֲסֶה בּוֹ:
(10) Be in awe of <i>Hashem</i> , O you who sanctify yourselves to Him; for those who are in awe of Him suffer no want.	(י) יִרְאוּ אֶת יְהוָה קִדְּשׁוּ כִּי אֵין מַחְסוֹר לִירְאָיו:
(11) The rich may grow poor and hungry, but those who seek <i>Hashem</i> will never lack any good.	(יא) כְּפִירִים רָשׁוּ וָרָעִבוּ וְדָרְשִׁי יְהוָה לֹא יַחֲסְרוּ כָּל טוֹב:
(12) Come, children, listen to me; I will teach you how to attain awe of <i>Hashem</i> :	(יב) לָכֵן בָּנִים שְׁמְעוּ לִי יִרְאֵת יְהוָה אֲלַמְּדֵכֶם:
(13) First, every one must ask himself: Am I a person who truly desires life, who loves and appreciates the days of this world	(יג) מִי הָאִישׁ הַחֹפֵץ חַיִּים אֲהֵב יָמִים לְרֵאוֹת טוֹב:

because they prepare me to see eternal good?	
(14) Second: Guard your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.	(יד) נָצַר לְשׁוֹנְךָ מֵרַע וּשְׁפָתֶיךָ מִדֶּבָר מְרֵמָה:
(15) Third: Turn away from evil and never hesitate to do good. Fourth: Seek peace and actively pursue it.	(טו) סוּר מֵרַע וַעֲשֵׂה טוֹב בְּקֶשׁ שְׁלוֹם וּרְדֵּפֶהוּ:
(16) Those who strive for righteousness will then merit seeing Hashem's eyes directed toward them; in response to their cries, He will open His ears.	(טז) עֵינֵי יְהוָה אֶל צַדִּיקִים וְאָזְנוֹ אֶל שְׁוֹעֵתָם:
(17) But Hashem's anger will be directed against those who consistently perpetrate evil; He will cause their memories to be forgotten from the earth plane.	(יז) פְּנֵי יְהוָה בְּעֵשִׂי רַע לְהַכְרִית מֵאָרֶץ זְכָרָם:
(18) Nevertheless if they will only repent and cry out, Hashem Himself will listen; He will rescue them from all that oppresses and constricts them.	(יח) צַעֲקוּ וַיהוָה שָׁמַע וּמָכַל צָרוֹתָם הַצִּילָם:
(19) For Hashem allows His closeness to be felt by all who have broken the obstinacy of their hearts; He will always save those who have crushed their own proud spirit and submitted to His rule. ⁶⁸	(יט) קָרוֹב יְהוָה לְנִשְׁבָּרֵי לֵב וְאֶת דֹּכָאֵי רוּחַ יוֹשִׁיעַ:
(20) Many evils may also strike the righteous, but because they have ennobled their spirits in the process, Hashem Himself delivers them from every single affliction.	(כ) רַבּוֹת רָעוֹת צַדִּיק וּמִכָּלם יַצִּילֵנוּ יְהוָה:
(21) He helps them maintain their strength in the midst of suffering, so that they are able to draw on resources they did not know existed; as a result not even a fraction of their inner equilibrium is broken.	(כא) שֹׁמֵר כָּל עֲצֻמוֹתָיו אַחַת מֵהֵנָּה לֹא נִשְׁבָּרָה:
(22) Those who remain wicked, however, will end up being killed by their own evil, and those who hate the righteous doom themselves to guilt.	(כב) תָּמוּתֶת רָשָׁע רָעָה וְשֹׂנְאֵי צַדִּיק יִאָשְׁמוּ:
(23) But Hashem frees and redeems the souls of those who dedicate their lives to serving Him; none who take refuge in Him shall be condemned.	(כג) פֹּדֶה יְהוָה נַפְשׁ עֲבָדָיו וְלֹא יִאָשְׁמוּ כָּל הַחֹסִים בּוֹ:

Tehillim 35, Tehillim 36

Tehillim 37

(1) By David. Do not compete with those who practice evil; do not be jealous of those who practice deceit. ⁶⁹	(א) לִדְוֹד אֵל תִּתְחַר בַּמַּרְעִים אֶל תִּקְנָא בְּעֵשִׂי עוֹלָה:
(2) For, like grass, they will soon be cut down [i.e., like	(ב) כִּי כַחֲצִיר מֵהֶרָה יִמְלוּ וּכְיֶרֶק דָּשָׂא

⁶⁸ What does it mean that Hashem is close to those who consciously "break their hearts" and "crush their spirits"? This involves two stages: First, as a result of experiencing difficulties in life, we are to turn inward and feel the existential pain of being human. Along with King David, we are to realize that Hashem does not inflict pain on human beings in order to drive us away from Him, God forbid. On the contrary, suffering has served its purpose only when it has brought us closer to humbly realizing how much He takes care of us. Only then can our pain be truly healing, for it has forced us to let go of our bravado and false pride; it has softened us and allowed us to appreciate the gift of being alive. It has given us a new lease on life by bringing us closer to those who care for us, and most importantly, to ourselves. But this is just the beginning for most of us.

The next stage involves taking the initiative and consciously overcoming our own self-centeredness and immaturity. This is also called "breaking" or "circumcising" the heart, for it involves refining our latent desires for honor, power, lust, ill-gained wealth, etc., and rechanneling our deep inborn needs for love, recognition, meaning, etc., into true humility and positive action (through the specific program taught in this psalm). In sum, we learn from this that in order to attain eternal closeness to Hashem, even and especially while we are still alive in this world, we are to take the natural broken-heartedness that is the consequence of being human, build on it, and use it to effect real and lasting change in ourselves.

⁶⁹ "Do not compete with those who practice evil" – do not imitate their ways (Targum, Rashi). Alt: "Do not be frustrated by the success of those who practice evil" (Ibn Ezra). Or: "Do not be fooled into thinking that you too must be deceitful in order to attain wealth, position, power, and ease-of-life."

grass, their success will be short-lived]; like vegetation, they will quickly wither. ⁷⁰	יבולון:
(3) Trust in <i>Hashem</i> and do good; in return, <i>Hashem</i> will reward you: You will then dwell securely in the land, and earn a livelihood that is based on being faithful and trustworthy. ⁷¹	(ג) בִּטַּח בִּיהוָה וַעֲשֵׂה טוֹב שְׁכֵן אֶרֶץ וְרַעַה אֲמוֹנָה:
(4) You will delight in <i>Hashem</i> , and He will fulfill your heart's desires.	(ד) וְהִתְעַנַּג עַל יְהוָה וַיִּתֵּן לָךְ מִשְׁאֲלֹת לִבְךָ:
(5) Just turn to <i>Hashem</i> in all your ways and rely on Him for all your needs; trust in Him and He will do [i.e., He will guide you in all your ways and make sure that you arrive at your desired destination].	(ה) גּוֹל עַל יְהוָה דְּרָכְךָ וּבִטַּח עָלָיו וְהוּא יַעֲשֶׂה:
(6) As opposed to those who practice evil He will bring your righteousness forth like the light of the dawn, for all to see; as opposed to those practice deceit, who must fear <i>Hashem</i> 's judgment, He will bring forth your judgment your merit, your meritoriousness like the noon-day sun.	(ו) וְהוֹצִיא כְּאוֹר צִדְקָךָ וּמִשְׁפָּטְךָ כְּצַהָרִים:
(7) Be silent before <i>Hashem</i> and hope to Him alone [be silent and wait patiently in the face of His decrees, even if they seem unfair, i.e., even if the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper; wait for His salvation]; do not be jealous of the one whose ways are successful [i.e., who attains temporal success], of the man who uses trickery to attain his ends.	(ז) דּוֹם לִיהוָה וְהִתְחוּלֵל לוֹ אַל תִּתְחַר בְּמִצְלִיחַ דְּרָכּוֹ בְּאִישׁ עֹשֶׂה מַזְמוֹת:
(8) Relent from anger; leave off from becoming heated; stop being jealous of the one whose only thought is to do evil. ⁷²	(ח) הֲרַף מֵאַף וַעֲזֹב חֵמָה אַל תִּתְחַר אֶף לְהָרֵעַ:
(9) For those who practice evil will be cut off, while those who hope in <i>Hashem</i> will dwell securely in the land.	(ט) כִּי מְרַעִים יִכְרֹתוּן וְקוֹי יְהוָה הֵמָּה יִירָשׁוּ אֶרֶץ:
(10) And in but a little bit, the wicked man in this psalm, and in you will disappear and cease to exist; you will reflect on his place, and he will not be there. ⁷³	(י) וְעוֹד מְעַט וְאֵין רָשָׁע וְהִתְבּוֹנֵנֶת עַל מְקוֹמוֹ וְאֵינְנוּ:
(11) On the contrary: The humble will inherit the land/world; they shall delight in an abundance of good.	(יא) וְעַנּוּיִם יִירָשׁוּ אֶרֶץ וְהִתְעַנְּגוּ עַל רֹב שְׁלוֹם:
(12) Compare this with the bitter life of the wicked man: The wicked man lies in ambush for and thinks only of trapping the righteous man; he grits his teeth at him in his anger. ⁷⁴	(יב) זִמָּם רָשָׁע לְצַדִּיק וְחָרַק עָלָיו שָׁנָיו:
(13) <i>Adonai</i> is merely mocking him, seeing to it that his end is near.	(יג) אֲדֹנָי יִשְׁחַק לוֹ כִּי רָאָה כִּי יָבֵא יוֹמוֹ:
(14) On the outer stage of history we see: The wicked draw their sword, and cock their bows, in order to fell the poor and	(יד) חָרַב פָּתְחוּ רַשְׁעִים וְדָרְכוּ קִשְׁתָּם לְהַפִּיל עָנִי וְאֲבִיוֹן לְטִבּוֹחַ יִשְׂרָי דָּרָךְ:

⁷⁰ "For, like grass (*chatzir*), they will soon be cut down (*yimolu*)."
Yimolu, from *milah* (cutting) (Rashi). "Like grass their success will be short-lived" (*Metzudot*). "Like vegetation (*yerek deshe*), they will quickly wither." *Chatzir* and *yerek deshe* both refer to the green vegetation of spring which dries up and withers as soon as the hot summer sun begins to shine. In the same way, those who practice evil and deceit will dry up and wither, for their success is transient and never had any true value—not for themselves, and certainly not for others.

⁷¹ Rashi: "Trust in Hashem. Do not say, 'If I don't steal and rob, or if I give *tzedakah*, how will I make a living?' Rather, do what is good and righteous, and your dwelling in the land will be prolonged and blessed with true success. You shall eat well and earn a good livelihood in return for your *emunah*, that you believed in Hashem and relied upon Him."

⁷² *Heref* (which we have translated "relent") literally means "relax." In other words, breathe deeply, and just let the anger go.

⁷³ Malbim: "If you look well, you will discover that, even as he stands there before you, he isn't really there, i.e., he never had any real existence to begin with." Rabbi Nachman of Breslov: "*V'od m'at* [literally, 'and in a little bit,' but which can also be understood as 'with the little bit of goodness that you find in him'], the sinner is not; you shall reflect upon his place and he will not be there." The verse is telling us to judge others favorably. Even if you see that someone is a complete sinner, you must still hunt and search until you find some little bit of goodness (godliness) in him (*Likutey Moharan* I 282; *Likutey Halakhot*, *Orach Chayim* 1:1).

⁷⁴ Malbim: "Even when you see the wicked man succeed against the righteous man, don't be fooled. In the end, the apparent success that he was given will go to his head and prove to be his downfall."

the dispossessed; in order to slay those who walk the straight path.	
(15) But the day comes when: Their sword enters their own heart, and their bows are broken.	(טו) חֲרָבָם תָּבוֹא בְּלִבָּם וְקִשְׁתֹּתָם תִּשְׁבְּרָנָה:
(16) A little wealth is good enough for the righteous; more than the many possessions of the wicked.	(טז) טוֹב מְעַט לַצַּדִּיק מִהֶמּוֹן רָשָׁעִים רַבִּים:
(17) For the strong arm [material success] of the wicked will be broken; whereas Hashem will always support the righteous.	(יז) כִּי זְרוּעוֹת רָשָׁעִים תִּשְׁבְּרָנָה וְסוּמָךְ צַדִּיקִים יִהְיֶה:
(18) Hashem knows and loves the days of the wholehearted; their inheritance will endure forever.	(יח) יוֹדֵעַ יְהוָה יְמֵי תַמִּימִם וְנַחֲלָתָם לְעוֹלָם תִּהְיֶה:
(19) They will not be shamed during hard times; in times of famine, they will be satisfied.	(יט) לֹא יִבְשׁוּ בְּעֵת רָעָה וּבְיָמֵי רָעָבֹן יִשְׂבְּעוּ:
(20) For the wicked will perish; Hashem's enemies will fade away like the morning mist; they will disappear like smoke.	(כ) כִּי רָשָׁעִים יֵאָבְדוּ וְאִיְבֵי יְהוָה כִּיקָר כָּרִים כָּלֹו בְּעָשָׁן כָּלֹו:
(21) The wicked man borrows but does not repay his debt; the righteous man not only does not steal, but he graces others and gives of his own.	(כא) לֹוֶה רָשָׁע וְלֹא יִשְׁלֵם וְצַדִּיק חוֹנֵן וְנוֹתֵן:
(22) For those whom He Hashem blesses will inherit the land/world, whereas those whom He curses will be cut off.	(כב) כִּי מְבָרְכֵו יִירָשׁוּ אֶרֶץ וּמִקְלָלֵו יִכָּרְתוּ:
(23) Hashem guides the steps of a man; He delights in his way and gives him success.	(כג) מִיְהוָה מִצְעָדֵי גֵבֶר כּוֹנְנֹו וְדַרְכֹו יַחְפֹּץ:
(24) Though he [the righteous] may fall, he is never forsaken, for Hashem supports his hand.	(כד) כִּי יִפֹּל לֹא יוֹטֵל כִּי יִהְיֶה סוּמָךְ יָדֹו:
(25) I know this for I have been young and have now grown old, but I have never seen a righteous man forsaken nor his children seeking only bread [material sustenance].	(כה) נָעַר הָיִיתִי גַם זָקֵנְתִי וְלֹא רָאִיתִי צַדִּיק נֶעְזָב וְזָרְעוֹ מִבִּקֵּשׁ לֶחֶם:
(26) All day long [constantly] he acts kindly and loans others; as a result his seed is blessed. ⁷⁵	(כו) כָּל הַיּוֹם חוֹנֵן וּמִלֹּוה וְזָרְעוֹ לְבִרְכָה:
(27) Turn from evil and do good! In this way you will dwell securely forever not only in this-world, but in an eternal world of goodness.	(כז) סוּר מִרָע וַעֲשֵׂה טוֹב וּשְׁכֵן לְעוֹלָם:
(28) For Hashem loves justice; He will never abandon those who sincerely devote themselves to Him; He will protect them forever; the seed of the wicked, on the other hand, will be cut off.	(כח) כִּי יְהוָה אֱהָב מִשְׁפָּט וְלֹא יַעֲזֹב אֶת חֲסִידָיו לְעוֹלָם נִשְׁמְרוּ וְזָרַע רָשָׁעִים נִכָּרֵת:
(29) Righteous people will inherit the world; they will dwell securely on it forever.	(כט) צַדִּיקִים יִירָשׁוּ אֶרֶץ וְיִשְׁכְּנוּ לָעַד עָלֶיהָ:
(30) The righteous man's mouth expresses wisdom; his tongue speaks of Hashem's justice.	(ל) פִּי צַדִּיק יִהְיֶה חֲכָמָה וּלְשׁוֹנוֹ תִּדְבָּר מִשְׁפָּט:
(31) The Torah of his God is engraved in his heart; his steps will never falter.	(לא) תּוֹרַת אֱלֹהֵיו בְּלִבּוֹ לֹא תִמָּעַד אֲשָׁרֵיו:
(32) The wicked man watches for the righteous man, and seeks to kill him.	(לב) צוֹפֶה רָשָׁע לַצַּדִּיק וּמִבִּקֵּשׁ לְהַמִּיתוֹ:

⁷⁵ Malbim: "A man's steps are arranged from/by Hashem; even the path he chooses in life [is predetermined]. [Such that, even] when he falls [and is therefore unable to follow the path that he has chosen], he will not be abandoned; [on the contrary; even his fall was for his benefit], for Hashem was supporting his hand [and He purposely put a barrier in his way for his ultimate benefit]. [I know this] for I have been young, but I have also grown old, and I have never seen a *tzadik* abandoned completely to the point that his children were begging [just] for physical bread. [Such that even if he became impoverished] by bestowing of his good fortune on others and lending them his money, still, his children will be blessed [in the merit of their father's righteousness]."

(33) <i>Hashem</i> will not abandon him [i.e., He will not allow him to fall into his clutches]; He will not allow him [the wicked man] to accuse him in his judgment [or, He will not allow the judge to find him guilty in his judgment].	(לג) יְהוָה לֹא יַעֲזֹבֵנוּ בְּיָדוֹ וְלֹא יִרְשָׁעֵנוּ בְּהִשְׁפָּטוֹ:
(34) Therefore hope in <i>Hashem</i> ! Guard His ways! He will then raise you up, and you will inherit the world; you will see the wicked cut down.	(לד) קוֹה אֶל יְהוָה וּשְׁמֵר דְּרָכּוֹ וִירוּמָמְךָ לְרֶשֶׁת אֶרֶץ בְּהִפְרֹת רְשָׁעִים תִּרְאֶה:
(35) And though I have seen cruel wicked men strong like a sturdy old tree.	(לה) רָאִיתִי רָשָׁע עָרִץ וּמִתְעַרֵּה כְּאַזְרַח רַעְנָן:
(36) Still, nevertheless: Time passes, and behold, he is gone! I sought him, but he was nowhere to be found.	(לו) וַיַּעֲבֹר וְהִנֵּה אֵינְנוּ וְאַבְקָשְׁהוּ וְלֹא נִמְצָא:
(37) Therefore, guard your innocence; concentrate only on being upright; for, when all is said and done, only such a person will find lasting peace.	(לז) שְׁמֹר תָּם וּרְאֵה יֵשֶׁר כִּי אַחֲרִית לְאִישׁ שָׁלוֹם:
(38) Criminals, on the other hand, will be destroyed all together; in the end, the wicked will be cut off and destroyed.	(לח) וּפְשָׁעִים נִשְׁמְדוּ יַחְדָּו אַחֲרִית רְשָׁעִים נִכְרְתָה:
(39) The future salvation of the righteous will come from <i>Hashem</i> ; in the meantime He is the source of their strength in time of constriction.	(לט) וּתְשׁוּעַת צְדִיקִים מִיְהוָה מְעוֹזָם בַּעַת צָרָה:
(40) <i>Hashem</i> will surely help them and rescue them; He will rescue them from those who perpetrate evil; He will redeem them for they have taken refuge in Him.	(מ) וַיַּעֲזֶרֶם יְהוָה וַיַּפְלִטֵם יַפְלִטֵם מִרְשָׁעִים וְיוֹשִׁיעֵם כִּי חָסוּ בּוֹ:

Tehillim 38, Tehillim 39, Tehillim 40

Tehillim 41

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the One who grants victory over Israel's enemies. <i>Mizmor LeDavid</i> – A cutting-psalm by David.	(א) לְמִנְצַח מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:
(2) Happy is he who cares for the poor and the sick; on the day of his misfortune, <i>Hashem</i> will surely save him.	(ב) אֲשֶׁרִי מִשְׁכִּיל אֶל דָּל בְּיוֹם רָעָה יִמְלֻטְהוּ יְהוָה:
(3) <i>Hashem</i> will protect him in this world and give him life in the World to Come; he shall attain supreme happiness on earth, and You o God will not deliver him over to the diabolical intentions of his adversaries.	(ג) יְהוָה יִשְׁמְרֵהוּ וַיְחַיֵּהוּ וְאֲשֶׁר (יֵאשֶׁר) בְּאֶרֶץ וְאֵל תִּתְּנֵהוּ בְּנַפְשׁ אֵיבָיו:
(4) <i>Hashem</i> , You will strengthen him on his sickbed; even while bedridden, in the throes of his illness, You will cause a sudden reversal in his condition, and grant him complete recovery.	(ד) יְהוָה יַסְעִדְנוּ עַל עֶרֶשׁ דָּוִי כָּל מִשְׁכָּבוֹ הִפְכָּת בְּחַלּוֹ:
(5) As for me, I said, " <i>Hashem</i> , be gracious with me! Heal my soul, for I have sinned against You!"	(ה) אֲנִי אֲמַרְתִּי יְהוָה חֲנֻנִי רַפְּאֵה נַפְשִׁי כִּי חָטָאתִי לָךְ:
(6) My enemies speak evil about me, "When will he die, so that his name [Israel] will finally perish?"	(ו) אוֹיְבֵי יֹאמְרוּ רַע לִי מָתִי יָמוּת וְאַבָּד שְׁמוֹ:
(7) And if one of them comes to see, he only feigns concern; gathering evil counsel in his heart, he waits to speak against me when he leaves.	(ז) וְאִם בָּא לִרְאוֹת שְׂוֹא יִדְבֹּר לְבוֹ יִקְבֹּץ אָוֶן לוֹ יֵצֵא לְחוּץ יִדְבֹּר:
(8) All who hate me whisper together against me; they plot evil against me saying:	(ח) יַחַד עָלַי יִתְלַחֲשׁוּ כָּל שֹׂנְאֵי עָלַי יַחֲשִׁבוּ רָעָה לִּי:
(9) "All his treachery has reverted against him; now that he has lay down, he will never rise up again."	(ט) דְּבַר בְּלִיעַל יִצּוֹק בּוֹ וְאֲשֶׁר שָׁכַב לֹא יוֹסִיף לָקוּם:
(10) Even my close friend whom I trusted, who ate bread at my table, has lifted his heel against me to kick me down.	(י) גַּם אִישׁ שְׁלוֹמִי אֲשֶׁר בִּטְחֹתִי בּוֹ אוֹכַל לֶחְמִי הִגְדִּיל עָלַי עֵקֶב:
(11) But You, <i>Hashem</i> , be gracious to me; raise me up	(יא) וְאַתָּה יְהוָה חֲנֻנִי וְהַקִּימֵנִי וְאַשְׁלֹמָה

again and I shall repay them.	לָהֶם:
(12) With this I will know that You take pleasure in me—if my enemy is prevented from prevailing over me.	(יב) בְּזֹאת יֵדַעְתִּי כִּי חִפְצָתְךָ בִּי לֹא יִרְעֵ אֹיְבִי עָלַי:
(13) And that You support me to be able to stand in my truth and in my integrity, and establish me in Your presence forever.	(יג) וְאֲנִי בְּתִמְי תִּמְכַּתְךָ בִּי וּתְצִיבֵנִי לִפְנֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם:
(14) May <i>Hashem</i> , the God of Israel, be blessed and acknowledged as the source of all blessing from the highest world to the lowest, <i>amen</i> and <i>amen</i> .	(יד) בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִהָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם אָמֵן וְאָמֵן:

Tehillim 42

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the Master who grants eternal victory—wise counsel from the descendants of Korach.	(א) לְמִנְצַח מְשָׁכִיל לְבָנֵי קֹרַח:
(2) As a roe-deer cries out its longing for running streams of water, so my soul cries out for You, O <i>Elohim</i> !	(ב) כְּאַיִל תַּעְרָג עַל אַפִּיקֵי מַיִם כֵּן נַפְשִׁי תַעְרָג אֵלֶיךָ אֱלֹהִים:
(3) My soul thirsts for <i>Elohim</i> , for <i>El Chai</i> (the living God); when shall I come again to the Sanctuary to appear before <i>Elohim</i> ?	(ג) צָמָאָה נַפְשִׁי לְאֱלֹהִים לֵאלֹהֵי חַי מַתִּי אָבוֹא וְאֶרְאֶה פָנָי אֱלֹהִים:
(4) My tears have been my bread by day and by night, while the insidious force that seeks to undermine me and overwhelm my soul whispers to me all day long, "Where is your God?"	(ד) הֵיטָה לִּי דְמַעְתִּי לֶחֶם יוֹמָם וּלְלַיְלָה בְּאָמַר אֵלַי כָּל הַיּוֹם אֵיךְ אֱלֹהֶיךָ:
(5) I remember my visits to the Sanctuary and my soul pours itself out with longing inside me; how I once used to pass with the crowds, walking slowly up to the House of <i>Elohim</i> , amid cries of joy and thanksgiving, amid throngs gathered for a festival.	(ה) אֵלֶּה אֶזְכְּרָה וְאֶשְׁפֹּכָה עָלַי נַפְשִׁי כִּי אֶעֱבֹר בְּסוֹף אֲדָדִם עַד בֵּית אֱלֹהִים בְּקוֹל רִנָּה וְתוֹדָה הָמוֹן חוֹגֵג:
(6) Why are you so downcast, my soul, and why do you grieve for me? Put your hope in <i>Elohim</i> , for I have yet to thank Him for the salvations that will come from Him!	(ו) מָה תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה נַפְשִׁי וְתִהְיֶה עָלַי הוֹחֲלִי לְאֱלֹהִים כִּי עוֹד אוֹדְנוּ יְשׁוּעוֹת פָּנֶיךָ:
(7) My God, my soul is downcast within me; in order to revive myself I therefore remember You from the lowland of the Jordan where You dried up the waters, from the peaks of Hermon where You overlooked our wrongdoing, and from the lowly mountain [Sinai], where You forgave us for worshiping the golden calf.	(ז) אֱלֹהֵי עָלִי נַפְשִׁי תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה עַל כֵּן אֶזְכְּרֶךָ מֵאֶרֶץ יַרְדֵּן וְחֶרְמוֹנִים מִהָר מִצְעֹר:
(8) But now in exile, I suffer, as one misfortune follows another; depths of water call to depths; punishment flows down upon me like the roar of water gushing through a canal; all Your breakers and Your waves have passed over me.	(ח) תְּהוֹם אֶל תְּהוֹם קוֹרָא לְקוֹל צְנוּרִיךָ כָּל מִשְׁבָּרֶיךָ וּגְלִיד עָלַי עֲבְרוּ:
(9) O that the day would come when <i>Hashem</i> will command His loving-kindness [when He will reveal the great light of redemption to the whole world]; in the meantime may His Song [His <i>Shekhinah</i>] accompany me in the night of my exile; this is my prayer to the God of my life, and more, <i>tefillah l'El</i> [this kind of prayer to God, this very connection to Him], <i>chayay</i> [this is my life]! ⁷⁶	(ט) יוֹמָם יֵצֵא יְהוָה חֶסֶדּוֹ וּבְלֵילָה שִׁירָה עָמִי תִפְלֶה לְאֵל חַיִּי:

⁷⁶ Rabbi Nachman of Breslov: "We receive the essence of our *chiyut* (life-energy, life-force, vitality) from *tefillah*, as the verse says, 'Tefillah l'El chayay—this is my prayer to the God of my life' (Psalms 42:9), which can also be read, "prayer to Hashem is my life." When a person prays with all his strength and concentrates his energy into the very letters of the prayers, his life-force is renewed (*Likutey Moharan* I, 9:1).

Tehillim HaMevuar. Alternatively: "[If only] Hashem would command His loving-kindness each day; [I would be certain that] in the night [of my exile] His Song (His Divine Presence) accompanies me; this is my prayer to *El*, the loving God of my life!" This is based on the linguistic similarity between "His Song" (*Shiro*) and "His Presence" (*hashraat Shekhinato*). Thus Meiri: "[In the meantime] during the long night of my exile, I ask only that *Shiro* (His Presence) accompany me; this is my prayer to the God of my life!"

Alt: "[I remember the secret He revealed to me:] Hashem will command [i.e., openly reveal] His loving-

(10) [Still, in my affliction] I say to <i>El</i> : My Rock [Ground of my being], why have You forgotten me? Why must I walk blackened under the oppression of the enemy?	(י) אומרה לאל סלעי למה שכחתי למה קדר אלך בלחץ אויב:
(11) While piercing my bones to the point of death, my oppressors taunt me, saying to me all day long, "Where is your God?"	(יא) ברצח בעצמותי חרפוני צוררי באמרם אלי כל היום איפה אלהיך:
(12) Why are you so downcast, my soul, and why do you grieve for me? Put your hope in <i>Elohim</i> , for I have yet to thank Him for the salvations that will come from Him. He is the light of my countenance and my God!	(יב) מה תשתוחחי נפשי ומה תהמי עלי הוחילי לאלהים כי עוד אודנו ישועת פני ואלהי:

Tehillim 43

(1) Judge me, <i>Elohim</i> , and plead my cause against a nation bereft of loving-kindness; rescue me from a deceitful and corrupt man.	(א) שפטני אלהים וריבה ריבי מגוי לא חסיד מאיש מרמה ועולה תפלטני:
(2) For You are God, Source of my strength. Why therefore have You forsaken me? Why must I go about blackened under the oppression of the enemy?	(ב) כי אתה אלהי מעוזי למה זנחתני למה קדר אתהלך בלחץ אויב:
(3) Send Your light and Your truth; they will lead me; they will bring me home to the Mountain of Your Holiness and to Your Sanctuaries.	(ג) שלח אורך ואמתך המה ינחוני יביאוני אל הר קדשך ואל משכנותיך:
(4) Then I will come to the altar of <i>Elohim</i> , to <i>El</i> (the loving God), the Source of my joyous celebration; and I will thank You with a harp, <i>Elohim</i> my God!	(ד) ואבואה אל מזבח אלהים אל אל שמחת גילי ואודך בכנור אלהים אלהי:
(5) Why are you so downcast, my soul, and why do you grieve for me? Put your hope in <i>Elohim</i> , for I have yet to thank Him for the salvations that will come from Him; He is the light of my countenance and my God!	(ה) מה תשתוחחי נפשי ומה תהמי עלי הוחילי לאלהים כי עוד אודנו ישועת פני ואלהי:

Tehillim 44

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the One who grants victory over evil. By the descendants of Korach. A wisdom psalm:	(א) למנצח לבני קרח משכיל:
(2) <i>Elohim</i> , with our ears we have heard; our ancestors told us they made sure to leave a record that would be passed down throughout the generations about the great deeds You performed for them in their days, in days of old.	(ב) אלהים באזנינו שמענו אבותינו ספרו לנו פעל פעלת בימיהם בימי קדם:
(3) With Your powerful hand, You dispossessed nations from the land of Israel, and in their stead You <i>planted</i> them [our ancestors]; You broke the power of those nations and You sent them forth to vacate the land for Your holy people.	(ג) אתה ידך גוים הורשת ותטעם תרע לאמים ותשלחם:
(4) For not by their own sword did they [our ancestors] inherit the land, nor were they saved by their might alone, but rather by Your right hand and power, and by the light of Your countenance, because You favored them.	(ד) כי לא בחרבם ירשו ארץ וזרועם לא הושיעה למו כי ימינך וזרועך ואור פניך כי רציתם:
(5) You alone are my King, <i>Elohim</i> ! Order [i.e., direct Your] salvations now too for Yaacov as You did long ago!	(ה) אתה הוא מלכי אלהים צוה ישועות יעקב:
(6) With You [i.e., with Your help] we shall gore those who	(ו) בד צרינו ננגח בשמך נבוס קמינו:

kindness during the day, [if I do my part to maintain] His song with me even in the night; [closeness to Him both in joy and in affliction—during the bright days as well as during the dark nights—] this is my prayer to the God of my life!"

Hirsch: By the light of day, whenever a ray of light breaks through my night of exile, when things seem a little better, then I know that this is the work of Hashem, a sign of His loving-kindness. But even in the darkness of a night such as this one that surrounds me now, the song that proclaims Him even though He cannot be seen, is still with me. The word *shiro* (instead of *shir-vav*, masculine possessive) is spelled here *shir-heh*, indicating femininity, where, as it were, the Lord is limited by our actions and does not reveal Himself in the fullness of His might (*cf.* Numbers 11:15).

oppress and constrict us; with the power of Your Name, we shall obliterate those who rise up against us to destroy us.	
(7) For it is not in my bow that I place my trust; my sword will not deliver me.	(ז) כִּי לֹא בִקְשָׁתִי אֲבֹטָח וְחֶרְבִי לֹא תוֹשִׁיעֵנִי:
(8) Only You can deliver us from those who afflict us; only You can shame those who hate us.	(ח) כִּי הוֹשַׁעְתָּנוּ מִצָּרֵינוּ וּמִשְׁנְאֵינוּ הִבִּישוּת:
(9) We therefore will never stop praising You, <i>Elohim</i> ; we shall give thanks to Your Name forever, <i>selah</i> .	(ט) בְּאֱלֹהִים הִלְלָנוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם וְשִׁמְךָ לְעוֹלָם נוֹדָה סֶלָה:
(10) Even when, to our shame, You seem to desert us, and You do not go forth with our armies;	(י) אִף זָנַחְתָּ וּתְכַלִּימָנוּ וְלֹא תֵצֵא בְּצַבָּאוֹתֵינוּ:
(11) Even when You cause us to retreat before our opponent, and allow our foes to plunder and loot for themselves;	(יא) תִּשְׁיִבְנוּ אַחֲרֵינוּ מִנִּי צָר וּמִשְׁנְאֵינוּ שָׁסוּ לָמוֹ:
(12) Even when You give us over like sheep to be consumed [slaughtered], and scatter us among the nations to destroy us;	(יב) תִּתְּנֵנוּ כְּצֹאן מֵאֲכָל וּבְגוֹיִם זְרִיתָנוּ:
(13) Even when You sell Your people for free and their price brings You no gain;	(יג) תִּמְכֹּר עַמְּךָ בְּלֹא הוֹן וְלֹא רֵבִית בְּמַחֲרֵיהֶם:
(14) Even when You make us a disgrace in the eyes of our neighbors; a scorn and a derision to those round about us;	(יד) תִּשְׁמִימָנוּ חֶרְפָּה לְשֹׁכְנֵינוּ לַעַג וְקֶלֶס לְסִבִּיבוֹתֵינוּ:
(15) Even when You make us an object of ridicule among the nations, and a shaking-of-the-head among the peoples;	(טו) תִּשְׁמִימָנוּ מִשָּׁל בְּגוֹיִם מְנוּד רֹאשׁ בְּלֹאֲמִים:
(16) Even when my embarrassment is always before me, and my face is covered with humiliation;	(טז) כָּל הַיּוֹם כְּלָמְתִּי נֹגְדִי וּבִשְׁת פָּנַי כְּסֻתִּי:
(17) Even when I suffer from the taunting voice of the one who blasphemes and curses me; before the enemy and the avenger.	(יז) מִקוֹל מַחֲרֵף וּמְגִדֵּף מִפִּי אוֹיֵב וּמִתְנַקֵּם:
(18) All this has come upon us, yet we have not forgotten You, nor have we been false to [i.e., broken faith with] Your covenant.	(יח) כָּל זֹאת בָּאתָנוּ וְלֹא שָׁכַחְנוּךָ וְלֹא שָׁקְרָנוּ בְּבְרִיתְךָ:
(19) Our heart has not turned back from believing in You, nor have our steps turned aside from Your path. ⁷⁷	(יט) לֹא נָסוּג אַחֲרֵינוּ וְתַט אֲשָׁרֵינוּ מִנִּי אֲרֻחֶךָ:
(20) We believed in You even when You crushed us and humiliated us and brought us down to the place of the viper, and shrouded us under the shadow of the death.	(כ) כִּי דִפִּיתָנוּ בְּמָקוֹם תַּנִּים וְתִכַּס עֲלֵינוּ בְּצִלְמוֹת:
(21) Behold did we forget the Name of <i>Elohim</i> ?! Did we spread our hands out to a strange god?!	(כא) אִם שָׁכַחְנוּ שֵׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ וּנְפָרֵשׁ כְּפִינוּ לְאֵל זָר:
(22) Behold if we did forget, <i>Elohim</i> would search and discover it, for He knows the secrets of the heart.	(כב) הֲלֹא אֱלֹהִים יַחְקֹר זֹאת כִּי הוּא יֹדֵעַ תַּעֲלְמוֹת לֵב:
(23) You know that it was for Your sake that we gave our lives up, day after day; for Your sake we were considered as sheep for the slaughter!	(כג) כִּי עָלֶיךָ הִרְגָנוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם נֶחֱשָׁבְנוּ כְּצֹאן טִבְחָה:
(24) Awake and come to our rescue! Why do You make like You are sleeping?! <i>Adonai</i> ! Arouse Yourself! Do not forsake us forever!	(כד) עוֹרָה לָמָּה תִישָׁן אֲדֹנָי הִקִּיצָה אֵל תִּזְנַח לְנֶצַח:
(25) Why do You hide Your face? why do make like You have forgotten our affliction and our oppression?!	(כה) לָמָּה פָּנֶיךָ תִסְתִּיר תִשְׁכַּח עֲוֹנוֹנוּ וְלִחְצָנוּ:
(26) For our souls are bowed down to the dust; our	(כו) כִּי שִׁחָה לְעֹפֹר נִפְשָׁנוּ דִּבְקָה לָאָרֶץ

⁷⁷ Or: "Our heart has not turned back [from believing in You], even when we have gone astray from Your path."

stomachs are hugging the earth.	בְּטִנּוֹ:
(27) Arise, therefore, and come to our aid; redeem us for the sake of Your loving-kindness!	(כז) קוּמָה עֲזֶרְתָּה לָנוּ וּפְדֵנוּ לְמַעַן חֲסִדְךָ:

Tehillim 45, Tehillim 46**Tehillim 47**

On *Rosh Hashanah* morning, we read Tehillim 47 seven times before we blow the *shofar*. Like all psalms this psalm is very deep. It speaks about a transformation from judgment to mercy—but not in a simplistic way. The transformation takes place in such a way that we realize that what we thought was judgment was and is really Hashem's mercy and love.

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the One who grants victory on the Day of Judgment. By the descendants of Korach. <i>Mizmor</i> – a cutting-psalm:	(א) לְמִנְצַח לְבִנֵי קָרַח מְזִמּוֹר:
(2) All the angelic ministers of the nations are clapping their hands accusing us and rejoicing in their success at having deceived us; we must therefore blast the <i>shofar</i> and call out to <i>Elohim</i> , lifting our voice in fervent prayer.	(ב) כָּל הָעַמִּים תִּקְעוּ כַף הָרִיעוּ לֵאלֹהִים בְּקוֹל רִנָּה:
(3) For <i>YHVH</i> [<i>Hashem's</i> mercy] alone is supreme and awesome; He alone reigns sovereign over the entire world.	(ג) כִּי יְהוָה עֲלִיוֹן נֹרָא מְלֶךְ גָּדוֹל עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ:
(4) It is for this reason that, in the future He will subdue nations before us and place governments under our rule.	(ד) יִדְבֹר עַמִּים תַּחְתִּינוּ וּלְאֻמִּים תַּחַת רִגְלֵינוּ:
(5) He will restore our inheritance which He has chosen for us the Torah and <i>Eretz Yisrael</i> , the pride of Yaakov our prayers and the <i>Beit HaMikdash</i> , which He loves forever, <i>selah</i> .	(ה) יְבַחַר לָנוּ אֶת נַחֲלָתֵנוּ אֶת גְּאוֹן יַעֲקֹב אֲשֶׁר אָהֵב סֵלָה:
(6) <i>Elohim</i> will then rise up from His throne of judgment with the blast; <i>Hashem</i> will descend upon His throne of mercy at the sound of the <i>shofar</i> ! ⁷⁸	(ו) עֲלֶה אֱלֹהִים בְּתִרְעוּעָה יְהוָה בְּקוֹל שׁוֹפָר:
(7) For by crying out from the depths of your hearts and sounding the <i>shofar</i> we cut through to our King with piercing song!	(ז) זָמְרוּ אֱלֹהִים זָמְרוּ זָמְרוּ לְמִלְכֵנוּ זָמְרוּ:
(8) For when we sweeten judgments through our <i>teshuvah</i> <i>Elohim</i> alone reigns sovereign over the entire world with mercy; we must therefore wisely cut away the forces of darkness, not wasting a precious moment before we return wholeheartedly to our God.	(ח) כִּי מֶלֶךְ כָּל הָאָרֶץ אֱלֹהִים זָמְרוּ מִשְׁכִּיל:
(9) <i>Elohim</i> reigns sovereign over the nations! <i>Elohim</i> has seated Himself upon His throne of holiness the perfect combination of judgment and mercy.	(ט) מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהִים עַל גּוֹיִם אֱלֹהִים יֹשֵׁב עַל כִּסֵּא קֹדֶשׁ:

⁷⁸ The Midrash on this verse hints at how we can change judgment to mercy: "It is written, '*Elokim* rose up with the blast; *YKVK* with the sound of the *shofar*.' When the Holy One gets up to sit on His throne of judgment, He does so with [the divine name *Elokim*, which represents His attribute of] judgment, as it is written, '*Elokim* rose up with the blast.' When the people of Israel take the *shofar* in hand to blow it (indicating their sincere desire to return to Him), however, the Holy One rises up from His throne of judgment and sits upon His throne of mercy. [He then judges with the divine name *YKVK*, which represents His attribute of mercy,] as it is written, '*Hashem* with the sound of the *shofar*.' [The Midrash now adds a very important clarification:] He then becomes filled with mercy for them [His children]. [Out of love for them] He transforms the attribute of judgment into the attribute of mercy. When does He do this? 'In the seventh month, on the first day' (Leviticus 23:24) (*Pesikta d'Rav Cahana* 23, *ot* 28; *Vayikra Rabbah* 29:3).

This final addendum to the text of the Midrash tells us a number of things. Obviously, God does not stand up or sit down in any anthropomorphic sense. Sitting on a throne means that He makes Himself accessible, reveals Himself, and relates to His world in a certain way. When He *sits* on His throne of judgment, He judges us according to our wrong actions. When He *sits* on His throne of mercy and compassion, He shows that He takes into account our desire to rectify what we have done wrong. When He *transforms* His judgment into mercy, He shows us that His judgment and His loving mercy are really ONE. I.e., His judgment is not a contradiction to His mercy. On the contrary, it flows from His awesome compassion for us. It is the most amazing expression of His love for us, for it shows that He cares about what we do. We learn from this that the greatest gift that the Infinite One wishes to give us is the ability to *attain* our own perfection. Knowing this changes our whole relationship with Him.

(10) The angelic ministers of the nations are assembling in heaven to join the people of the God of Abraham as they accept <i>Hashem</i> as the sole ruler of the world. For <i>Elohim</i> shields the world from the powers of evil. He is greatly exalted.	(י) נְדִיבֵי עַמִּים נֶאֱסָפוּ עִם אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם כִּי לֵאלֹהִים מְגִנִּי אֶרֶץ מָאֵד נִעְלָה:
--	--

Tehillim 48

(1) A song-chant by the descendants of Korach:	(א) שִׁיר מְזֻמֹּר לְבְנֵי קֹרַח:
(2) <i>Hashem</i> is great everywhere, but His radiance shines exceedingly in the City of our God, and even more so on the Mount of His Holy Presence.	(ב) גָּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד בְּעִיר אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַר קֹדְשׁוֹ:
(3) Mount Zion is a beautiful vision, the joy of the whole earth, the aspiration of all who ascend from the north, the City of the Great King.	(ג) יִפָּה נוֹף מְשׁוֹשׁ כָּל הָאָרֶץ הַר צִיּוֹן יִרְכָּתִי צִפּוֹן קִרְיַת מֶלֶךְ רַב:
(4) In its citadels, God became known as a stronghold and a refuge.	(ד) אֱלֹהִים בְּאַרְמְנוֹתֶיהָ נֹדַע לְמִשְׁגָּב:
(5) For behold, kings assembled; together they came from afar to attack.	(ה) כִּי הִנֵּה הַמְּלָכִים נֹעְדוּ עִבְרוּ יַחְדָּו:
(6) When they witnessed the miracles that God performed on behalf of Yisrael, they were confounded; they panicked; they hastened to flee.	(ו) הִמָּה רָאוּ כִּן תִּמְהוּ נִבְהָלוּ נִחְפְּזוּ:
(7) Trembling seized them there; pangs like a woman in labor.	(ז) רָעְדָה אֲחֻזָּתָם שָׁם חֵיל כִּיּוֹלָדָה:
(8) To this day, <i>Hashem</i> , You continue to perform miracles by commanding the forces of nature to fulfill Your will: With an east wind, You smash the ships of Tarshish.	(ח) בְּרוּחַ קָדִים תִּשְׁבֵּר אֲנִיּוֹת תַּרְשִׁישׁ:
(9) And so, just as we heard from our ancestors, we have now seen miracles with our own eyes, in the City of the God of Hosts, in the City of our God, may God establish it forever and for all eternity, <i>selah</i> .	(ט) כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמְעֵנוּ כִּן רָאִינוּ בְּעִיר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בְּעִיר אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֱלֹהִים יְכוֹנְנָה עַד עוֹלָם סֶלָה:
(10) O God, we had always conceived of Your loving-kindness as being in the midst of Your Temple.	(י) דָּמִינוּ אֱלֹהִים חֲסֹדְךָ בְּקֶרֶב הַיְכָלְךָ:
(11) But now we can testify that like Your Name, O God, the radiance of Your wondrous deeds shines unto the ends of the earth; Your Right Hand with which You save Yisrael is filled with charity.	(יא) כְּשֵׁמֶךְ אֱלֹהִים כִּן תִּהְלֶתְךָ עַל קְצוֹי אֶרֶץ צֶדֶק מְלֵאָה יְמִינְךָ:
(12) Therefore, let Mount Zion be glad and the cities of Yehudah rejoice over Your righteous judgments which You have executed against those who wish to attack us.	(יב) יִשְׂמַח הַר צִיּוֹן תִּגְלָנָה בְּנוֹת יְהוּדָה לְמַעַן מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ:
(13) Walk around Zion, encircle her and count her towers.	(יג) סִבּוּ צִיּוֹן וְהִקִּיפוּהָ סַפְּרוּ מִגְדָּלֶיהָ:
(14) Set your hearts on her ramparts and behold her lofty citadels, in order to recount what you have seen with your own eyes to the last generation.	(יד) שִׁיתוּ לִבְכֶּם לַחִילָה פִּסְגּוֹ אַרְמְנוֹתֶיהָ לְמַעַן תִּסְפְּרוּ לְדוֹר אַחֲרוֹן:
(15) In order to testify that this God is our God forever. He will continue to lead us eternally beyond earthly mortality.	(טו) כִּי זֶה אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵינוּ עוֹלָם וָעֶד הוּא יִנְהַגֵּנוּ עַל מוֹת:

Tehillim 49

This psalm is said in a house of mourning. Its central verse (verse 11) is the key. The syntax of this verse is purposefully ambiguous. It can be read as we have translated it (see below), or it can be read: "They see that wise men die together with fools and scoundrels." Thus, *Metzudot David* interprets, "They see that everybody dies, whether they are wise or foolish, and they all leave their wealth behind." This is similar to King Solomon's cynical pronouncements that, "The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. Still, I could not help realizing that the same thing happens to all of them in the end... The same thing that happens to the fool happens to me. Why then did I become wiser...And how does the wise man die? Just like the fool...All is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 2:14-15), and "That which befalls the children of men also befalls the beasts...As one dies, so does the other...Man's preeminence over the beast is non-existent. All is vanity" (*ibid.* 3:19).

In answer to this, we are told to pay a little closer attention. Even King Solomon did not remain with his cynicism. As the wisest of all men, he was merely showing that the most cynical view of life cannot but give way to the light of truth and joy that penetrates to the darkest corners of man's solitude and beckons him to see beyond the seeming

randomness of this world. In the end, King Solomon himself went on to say, "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun [that will shine in the next world]" (*ibid.* 11:8), for "The dust will surely return to the earth as it was, but the spirit will return to God who gave it" (*ibid.* 12:7).

It is perhaps with this in mind that Rashi comments on our verse: "The word *ימותו* (from *mitah*, death) is mentioned in connection with the wise, for only their bodies die when they leave this world. Regarding fools and scoundrels, however, the word *יואבדו* (from *avedah*, perish) is employed." Only fools and scoundrels perish altogether and leave their wealth to others. When a person devotes his time and energy to wisdom, on the other hand, he leaves this world behind to continue in higher worlds. In addition, he takes something with him into eternity. The Torah that he has acquired in this world will not leave him in the World to Come.

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the One who grants victory even over death. <i>Mizmor</i> – A cutting-psalm by the descendants of Korach:	(א) לַמְנַצֵּחַ לְבְנֵי קֶרַח מִזְמוֹר:
(2) Hear this, all you peoples; give ear, all you inhabitants of a fleeting world.	(ב) שְׁמָעוּ זֹאת כָּל הָעַמִּים הָאֲזִינוּ כָּל יֹשְׁבֵי חָלָד:
(3) Ordinary mortals and men of distinction, rich and poor alike.	(ג) גַּם בְּנֵי אָדָם גַּם בְּנֵי אִישׁ יָחַד עֲשִׂיר וְאֶבְיוֹן:
(4) My mouth will speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart will reveal understanding.	(ד) פִּי יְדַבֵּר חֲכָמוֹת וְהִגּוֹת לִבִּי תְבוּנוֹת:
(5) I will incline my ear to the parable; I will solve my riddle to the accompaniment of a harp.	(ה) אָטָה לְמַשָּׁל אֲזִנִּי אֶפְתַּח בְּכִנּוֹר חִידָתִי:
(6) What should I fear when evil days come and my time arrives? I should fear that the sin I trampled underfoot [i.e., disdained, spurned, and therefore rationalized] will surround me [besiege me, hem me in, haunt me].	(ו) לָמָּה אִירָא בְיָמֵי רָע עוֹן עֲקָבִי יְסוּבֵנִי:
(7) In truth, those who put their trust in wealth and take pride in great riches have something to fear.	(ז) הַבֹּטְחִים עַל חֵילָם וּבָרַב עֲשָׂרָם יִתְהַלְלוּ:
(8) They fail to employ their riches to redeem their fellowman, and thereby fail to pay God the ransom He has set for them.	(ח) אֵחַ לֹא פָדָה יִפְדֶּה אִישׁ לֹא יִתֵּן לְאֱלֹהִים כִּפָּרוֹ:
(9) The effort they would have to exert to redeem their own soul seems too costly for them; their punishment is that it shall cease to exist forevermore.	(ט) וַיִּקֹּר פְּדִיוֹן נַפְשָׁם וַחֲדָל לְעוֹלָם:
(10) And yet they desire to live on in eternity; they do not wish to see decay.	(י) וַיְחִי עוֹד לִנְצַח לֹא יִרְאֶה הַשְּׁחָת:
(11) They perceive the difference between the death of wise men and that of fools and scoundrels who perish altogether and leave their wealth to others.	(יא) כִּי יִרְאֶה חֲכָמִים יָמוּתוּ יָחַד כָּסִיל וּבָעֵר יֹאבְדוּ וְעֲזְבוּ לְאַחֲרִים חֵילָם:
(12) Still, they fool themselves into thinking that their houses will last forever, their palaces from generation to generation. To perpetuate their memories they proclaim their name throughout the continents.	(יב) קִרְבָּם בְּתִימוּ לְעוֹלָם מִשְׁכָּנָתָם לְדוֹר וָדָר קָרְאוּ בְשֵׁמוֹתָם עָלֵי אֲדָמוֹת:
(13) But with all his honor a man will not outlast the coming of night if he is [i.e., conducts himself] like the dumb beasts.	(יג) וְאָדָם בִּיקָר בַּל יִלִּין נִמְשָׁל כִּבְהֵמוֹת נִדְמוּ:
(14) This is the way of fools: they hold fast to their folly, and thereby cause those who follow after them to fall for the same excuses, <i>selah</i> .	(יד) זֶה דֶּרֶכָם כָּסָל לָמוּ וְאַחֲרֵיהֶם בְּפִיָּהֶם יִרְצוּ סֵלָה:
(15) So, like sheep, they are turned to the grave; death becomes their shepherd. But morning will dawn for the upright; they will overcome death and the grave; their spirit will endure beyond the grave so that it shall not remain their dwelling-place for long.	(טו) כַּצֹּאֵן לְשֹׁאֵל שְׁתּוּ מוֹת יִרְעֵם וַיִּרְדּוּ בָם יִשְׁרִים לְבָקָר וְצוֹרֵם (וְצִירִם) לְבָלוֹת שֹׁאֵל מִזְבֵּל לוֹ:
(16) O God, only You can redeem my soul from the power of the grave by taking me to Yourself forever, <i>selah</i> .	(טז) אֱלֹהִים יִפְדֶּה נַפְשִׁי מִיַּד שֹׁאֵל כִּי יִקְחֵנִי סֵלָה:
(17) So fear not when a man grows rich and the splendor of his house increases.	(יז) אַל תִּירָא כִּי יַעֲשֶׂר אִישׁ כִּי יִרְבֶּה

	כָּבוֹד בֵּיתוֹ:
(18) For when he dies he shall carry nothing with him; his honor will not follow after him.	(יח) כִּי לֹא בְּמוֹתוֹ יִקַּח הַכֹּל לֹא יֵרֵד אַחֲרָיו כְּבוֹדוֹ:
(19) Let him bless his soul [i.e., boast] during his lifetime saying: "They will praise you because you have done well for yourself."	(יט) כִּי נִפְשׁוֹ בְּחַיָּיו יְבָרֵךְ וַיִּוְדֶךְ כִּי תִיטִיב לָךְ:
(20) But he will pass away like his parents' generation, he and they shall not see light for all eternity.	(כ) תָּבוֹא עַד דּוֹר אָבוֹתָיו עַד נֶצַח לֹא יֵרְאוּ אוֹר:
(21) With all his honor, if a man will not understand, he is likened to the dumb beasts.	(כא) אָדָם בִּיקָר וְלֹא יָבִין נִמְשָׁל כְּבֵהֱמוֹת נִדְמוּ:

Tehillim 50

Tehillim 51

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the One who grants victory and forgiveness. <i>Mizmor LeDavid</i> – A cutting-psalm by David.	(א) לְמִנְצֵחַ מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:
(2) When the prophet Nathan came to him after he had come to Batsheva:	(ב) בָּבוֹא אֵלָיו נָתַן הַנָּבִיא כְּאֲשֶׁר בָּא אֶל בֵּת שֶׁבַע:
(3) Be gracious with me, <i>Elohim</i> , O just God, in keeping with Your loving-kindness; with Your great mercies, erase my crimes.	(ג) חַנּוּנִי אֱלֹהִים כְּחֶסֶדְךָ כָּרֵב רַחֲמֶיךָ מַחֵה פְשָׁעֵי:
(4) Cleanse me completely of my transgression; purify me of my wrongdoing.	(ד) הָרֵב (הַרְבֵּה) כְּפִסְנִי מַעֲוֹנִי וּמַחֲטָאתִי טַהַרֵנִי:
(5) For I know and admit my crimes; my wrongdoing is ever before me; I therefore beseech You to forgive me.	(ה) כִּי פָשַׁעִי אֲנִי אֶדַע וְחַטָּאתִי נִגְדִי תַמִּיד:
(6) With regard to Batsheva I have sinned against You alone for I acted in haste and thereby caused Your Name to be profaned. With regard to Uriyah I have done that which is evil in Your eyes, such that You are justified in Your sentence, equitable in Your judgment.	(ו) לָךְ לְבַדְּךָ חַטָּאתִי וְהִרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ עֲשִׂיתִי לְמַעַן תִּצְדַּק בְּדִבְרֶךָ תִּזְכֶּה בְּשִׁפְטֶךָ:
(7) Indeed, I was conceived in transgression [i.e., my father did not know he was with my mother, but thought he was with another woman], and in sin my mother became pregnant with me [i.e., for she began menstruating before separating from my father]. ⁷⁹	(ז) הֵן בְּעוֹנוֹן חוֹלַלְתִּי וּבְחַטָּא יִחַמַּתְנִי אִמִּי:

⁷⁹ In Hebrew, verse 7 reads: "*Hen be'avon cholalti; u'bechet yechematni imi.*" We have translated this verse according to the Ari (see below). Hirsch: "Indeed, I was born with [the capacity to] transgress, and my mother nursed me with [a tendency to] wrongdoing." Sforino and Malbim: "Indeed, I was born with a propensity to transgress [by virtue of the fact that a human being is born without a developed intellect and therefore naturally drawn to satisfy his physical needs and appetites (even when these contradict the dictates of intellect)]; in addition, I was conceived in sin [i.e., the heat of my parents' sexual passion, which imbued me with a strong sexual desire as well]."

According to the Ari, the two parts of this verse apply specifically to David (as opposed to being statements of some kind of universal law that every human being is born in sin). He thus relates the Midrash about Yishai, David's father, who, after having seven sons, all of whom were righteous and upright, had doubts about his own Jewishness. After all, his grandmother Ruth was a Moabitess. Perhaps his grandfather Boaz had erred in his understanding of the verses, "An Ammonite or Moabite [male] may not enter [to become members of] Hashem's congregation...even after the tenth generation. This is because they did not greet you with bread and water when you departed *Mitzrayim*..." (Deuteronomy 23:4-5).

Boaz was the greatest sage of his generation. He reasoned that, since the Torah itself provided a specific reason for this prohibition ("they did not greet you..."), and since women are exempt from going out to greet guests, the verse must refer only to Ammonite and Moabite males (*Yevamot* 69a). He thus married Ruth the Moabitess (Ruth 1:4, 4:13). All his years, Yishai had accepted this line of reasoning. Now, however, in his old age, he began to have doubts. "Perhaps my illustrious ancestor was wrong?"

Yishai therefore separated from his wife (again, after she had borne seven upright sons), and composed a special "conditional" *ketubah* to marry his Canaanite maidservant. In essence, the *ketubah* stated: "If I, Yishai, am Israelite, then this Canaanite maidservant is hereby freed and becomes Israelite. If I am not Israelite, then we are

(8) Behold, You have always desired that a man serve You in truth and strive to internalize the truth in the innermost chambers of his being; I therefore ask that You make known to me the wisdom that You have hidden in the human heart [i.e., the wisdom that is needed to return in <i>teshuvah</i> , to return to You with my whole being]. ⁸⁰	(ח) הֵן אָמַת חֲפֶצֶת בְּטוֹחוֹת וּבְסִתָּם חֲכָמָה תוֹדִיעֵנִי:
(9) I beseech You: illuminate my soul; assist me in overcoming my urges; refine me with hyssop and with the ashes of the red heifer that I may be pure; wash me so that I may become whiter than snow and closer to You than if I had never erred.	(ט) תְּחַטְּאֵנִי בְּאֶזוֹב וְאֶטֶהר תְּכַבֵּסֵנִי וּמִשְׁלֵג אֶלְבִּין:
(10) Let me hear of the joy and gladness that You have in store for those who return to You; let the bones You have crushed rejoice.	(י) תִּשְׁמִיעֵנִי שִׁשׁוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה תִּגְלָנָה עֲצָמוֹת דָּכִיתָ:
(11) Hide Your face from my wrongdoings, and wipe away all my transgressions.	(יא) הִסְתֵּר פָּנֶיךָ מִחַטָּאֵי וְכָל עֲוֹנוֹתֵי מַחָה:
(12) A pure heart create for me, <i>Elohim</i> , O just God; only You can renew a steadfast spirit within me!	(יב) לֵב טָהוֹר בְּרָא לִי אֱלֹהִים וְרוּחַ נָכוֹן חֲדָשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי:
(13) Do not cast me away from Your presence; do not take Your holy spirit away from me!	(יג) אַל תִּשְׁלִיכֵנִי מִלִּפְנֵיךָ וְרוּחַ קִדְשְׁךָ אַל תִּקַּח מִמֶּנִּי:
(14) Restore the joy of Your salvation to me; let me know that You have forgiven me so that I may rejoice in Your salvation; sustain [strengthen] me with a spirit of generosity. ⁸¹	(יד) הֲשִׁיבָה לִי שִׁשׁוֹן יִשְׁעֶךָ וְרוּחַ נְדִיבָה תִּסְמְכֵנִי:
(15) I will then teach incurable rebels Your ways [i.e., the ways of Your commandments, the ways of <i>teshuvah</i>]; those who	(טו) אֶלְמָדָה פְּשָׁעִים דִּרְכֶּיךָ וְחַטָּאִים אֶלֶיךָ יִשׁוּבוּ:

married as non-Israelites." To everyone's consternation, the day was set for their marriage.

In the meantime, this Canaanite maidservant loved her mistress very much. "How can I marry him," she confided to her, "he is your husband!" They therefore concocted a plan. When they would be alone, ready to consummate their 'marriage,' she would rise up to douse the candle and bar the door, and instead of returning to bed, Yishai's wife would take her place. After all, they reasoned, he is an old tzadik whose thoughts are bound on high at all times. He won't even notice! And so it was.

With this, the Ari says, we can understand the first part of our verse: "*Hen be'avon cholalti*—I was conceived in or through a transgression." What was the transgression? When a man lies with his wife, it is forbidden for him to think of another woman, even if the second woman is also his wife! (*Nedarim* 20b; *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim* 240:2). Yishai thought that he was lying with his maidservant, when in truth it was his own beloved wife!

Concerning the second half of the verse, "*u'bechet yechematni imi*—and in sin my mother became pregnant with me," the Ari informs us that David's mother felt her menstrual period begin, at the very end, while they were still locked in loving embrace. She whispered, "I am a *niddah*," and as the *halakhah* states, they immediately separated. Nevertheless, David's mother unfortunately conceived him while in a state that is considered ritually unclean.

The reason for all this, the Ari adds, was in order to free such an exalted soul from being trapped in the service of the system of evil (another part of the story that goes back to Adam and before). In order to bring a great soul like David's into the world, Hashem had to *deceive* the system of evil. He did this by causing something to *seem* wrong; by giving the whole thing the appearance of sin. Yishai's thinking that he was with his second wife, and David's mother becoming ritually unclean, was all that was needed. With this, the soul of the *Mashiach* entered the world (see complete translation and commentary on this passage from *Shaar HaGilgulim* 38 in my *Well of Living Waters*).

⁸⁰ *Daat Sofrim*: "Behold, You have always desired that a man serve You in truth [and strive to internalize the truth] in the innermost chambers of his being"; Amos Chakham: "I therefore ask that You make known to me the wisdom that You have hidden in the human heart [i.e., the wisdom that is needed to return in *teshuvah*, to return to You with my whole being]." Malbim: "Behold, the truth that You desire [that a man strive to internalize] is covered over [by a thick layer of physicality]; and the wisdom which You make known to me is concealed in the depths of the soul; as a result of this, a man will almost surely stumble into sin." Hirsch: "Behold, Your true desire has always been that which is covered over [by the body, i.e., the powers of the soul], [and it is through these intangible, spiritual powers in me, these hidden energies, that] You teach me to perceive the Godly wisdom that is concealed in all things." Simple: "But You have always desired [that a man seek] inner truth; O teach my innermost [heart] wisdom."

⁸¹ Chakham: "Let me know that You have forgiven me so that I may rejoice in Your salvation; sustain me with Your spirit of generosity [i.e., be generous with me and illuminate me with Your light even if and when I am undeserving]."

have erred will understand that they may yet return to You.	
(16) Rescue [i.e., clear, forgive] me from the guilt of having spilled innocent blood, <i>Elohim</i> , O just God, God of my salvation! My tongue will then joyously sing of Your righteous charity.	(טז) הַצִּילֵנִי מִדְּמַיִם אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵי תְשׁוּעָתִי תִרְגֵּן לְשׁוֹנִי צִדְקָתְךָ:
(17) O God, open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise; forgive me and I hereby swear that I will never stop declaring Your praises. ⁸²	(יז) אֲדַנִּי שְׁפָתִי תִפְתָּח וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ:
(18) For You do not desire that I bring sacrifice, nor do You require a burnt offering of me.	(יח) כִּי לֹא תַחֲפֹץ זֶבֶח וְאַתָּנָה עוֹלָה לֹא תִרְצֶה:
(19) The greatest of all offerings to <i>Elohim</i> is a broken spirit; O <i>Elohim</i> , God of justice, do not reject a broken and contrite heart! ⁸³	(יט) זִבְחֵי אֱלֹהִים רוּחַ נִשְׁבָּרָה לֵב נִשְׁבָּר וְנִדְכָּה אֱלֹהִים לֹא תִבְזֶה:
(20) In accord with Your desire to redeem Israel, do good to <i>Tziyon</i> ; rebuild the walls of <i>Yerushalayim</i> .	(כ) הִיטִיבָה בְּרִצּוֹנְךָ אֶת צִיּוֹן תִּבְנֶה חוֹמוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם:
(21) Then You will accept sacrifices of righteousness; an offering of self-elevation and complete devotion; then we shall become as bulls lifted high upon Your altar. ⁸⁴	(כא) אֲזִ תַּחֲפֹץ זִבְחֵי צֶדֶק עוֹלָה וְכֻלִּיל אֲזִ יַעֲלוּ עַל מִזְבִּיחְךָ פָּרִים:

Tehillim 52, Tehillim 53, Tehillim 54, Tehillim 55

Tehillim 56

In psalm 34, David praised Hashem for having been delivered from Avimelekh (Achish), the king of Gat (the main Philistine city in Gaza), after having been forced to take refuge there in order to escape being caught by Shaul's men. In this psalm, David returns to describe the anguish he felt at the time, and how he feared for his life. For when he was there in Gaza, Goliath's brothers, who were among Achish's counselors, tried to convince the king to let them take revenge on David for having slain their brother only a short time prior. It was then that David prayed this psalm, pleading with Hashem to have mercy and deliver him from all his enemies. In response, Hashem brought a spirit of insanity into Achish's wife and daughter. Their screams literally drove Achish crazy. In a moment's blazing inspiration, David knew what he must do. He proceeded to play one of the most masterful roles of his life, namely, he feigned insanity. He began to write strange messages on the walls, as spit dripped down his

⁸² Or: "O God, it is You alone who opens my lips and gives me the ability to articulate Your praise in words." Chakham: "If You forgive me, I hereby swear that I will never stop telling Your praises."

⁸³ See *Zohar Mishpatim* (2:108a): "It is written, 'For You [O *Elohim*] do not desire that I bring sacrifice [to atone for sins], nor do You desire a burnt offering. The [greatest of all] offerings to *Elohim* [i.e., that has the power to sweeten all judgments and harsh decrees] is a broken spirit; O *Elohim*, do not disdain/reject a broken and contrite heart!' (Psalm 51:18-19). Since when do we hear that the Holy One does not require sacrifices? Didn't He Himself command in the Torah that the sinner bring a purification offering in order to obtain atonement? Rather, David was careful to use the name *Elokim* [i.e., the name that embodies Hashem's attribute of justice which declares that the sinner himself would have to be utterly destroyed for having disregarded and transgressed His commands]. It is for this reason that the name *Elokim* is never mentioned anywhere in the Torah in connection with any animal sacrifice. Rather, the Torah always speaks of *korban laShem* [i.e., *YHVH*, the name that embodies His overriding mercy]...It is for this reason that David spoke of his own broken spirit and contrite heart. When a person is sincerely remorseful for having sinned, his repentance is accepted and atonement is granted even by Hashem's quality of judgment embodied in the name *Elokim*."

⁸⁴ Hirsch: "God has prescribed two categories of sacrifices in the Torah: (1) *olah* (elevation offering), *minchah* (meal offering), and *shelamim* (peace and thanks offerings); and (2) *chatat* (purification offering) and *asham* (guilt offering). *Chatat* and *asham* are offerings necessitated by the sins of men; therefore it is not the offering itself that the Lord desires. Offerings of that nature are meant only to serve as means to help the worshiper in his efforts to regain such a moral level that would make him worthy of Divine favor once more. *Olah*, *minchah*, and *shelamim* are of value only if they are *zivchey tzedek*, if they presuppose a life and conduct marked by righteousness and loyalty to duty which the worshiper wishes to maintain and in which he is constantly striving for further self-improvement. It is not by means of *korbanot* (offerings) that Zion and Jerusalem shall be built up. Quite the reverse is true. First the Divine truth reposing in Zion and the way of life pledged by the Jewish people in Jerusalem must be in harmony with one another if we are to attain Divine favor (*bir'tzonkha*-divine favor) and protection (*chomot*-walls). It is only then that the *korbanot* will attain their full worth and serve as the symbolic expression of our desire to employ the talents and possessions granted us by God solely to serve Him with our lives. [*Olah* symbolizes the consecration of our acts; *khalil* (totality, wholeness) in *minchah* signifies the dedication of our material possessions.] Only then can we truly call ourselves *parim* (bulls), 'workers in the service of the Lord,' and upon His altar offer up the symbolic expression of our unreserved devotion to the bright, life-giving cleansing and shaping fiery might of His Law, and be worthy of His favor [and complete forgiveness]."

chin. Achish's reaction: "You're telling me that this is the man who killed Goliath? This is the mighty warrior of Israel? I don't believe it. Get this madman out of here. Do I lack crazy people that you bring another one into my house!" David was thus saved from Achish's men, but what pained him most was that he was a hunted man among his own people. The main lesson of this psalm is encapsulated in verse 11: Whatever tribulations we must endure, whatever God's justice decrees for us, is ultimately for our good, and is an expression of His great loving-kindness. His justice is His love. The two are one, just as He is One.

(1) Dedicated to the Master of Creation who grants victory to Israel the dove, who is silent and speechless after having been sent far away from her nest. <i>LeDavid Mikhtam</i> – A precious prayer by David which he prized highly and reviewed constantly for the lessons it contains, when he was taken captive by the Philishtines in Gat.	(א) לַמְנַצֵּחַ עַל יוֹנָת אֶלֶם רַחֲקִים לְדָוִד מִכְתָּם בָּאֵחָז אוֹתוֹ פְּלִשְׁתִּים בָּגַת:
(2) Be gracious to me, O <i>Elohim</i> , for base men surround me on all sides waiting to devour me; I am hard-pressed by my adversaries every moment of the day.	(ב) חֲנִי אֱלֹהִים כִּי שְׂאֲפָנִי אָנוּשׁ כָּל הַיּוֹם לִחַם וְלִחְצָנִי:
(3) They watch me all day, waiting to devour me alive; how numerous are those who oppose me! I therefore call out to You who dwell above and see all.	(ג) שְׂאֲפּוֹ שׁוֹרְרֵי כָּל הַיּוֹם כִּי רַבִּים לִחְמִים לִי מְרוֹם:
(4) The day I fear for my life, I place my trust in You alone; only You can save me from their clutches!	(ד) יוֹם אִירָא אֲנִי אֵלֶיךָ אֲבָטָח:
(5) I place my trust in <i>Elohim</i> even when He judges me harshly; I praise Him for I know that He will also keep His word to save me; I trust in <i>Elohim</i> who oversees and directs all the events of my life; I therefore have no fear of men; what can mere flesh and blood do to me?	(ה) בְּאֱלֹהִים אֶהְלֵל דְּבָרוֹ בְּאֱלֹהִים בְּטַחְתִּי לֹא אִירָא מֶה יַעֲשֶׂה בָשָׂר לִי:
(6) Still, as long as they torment me I spend my entire day expressing my anxiety in words of pained concern; for all their thoughts concerning me are to do evil.	(ו) כָּל הַיּוֹם דְּבָרֵי יַעֲצָבוּ עָלַי כָּל מַחֲשַׁבְתָּם לָרַע:
(7) They gather together, they hide in ambush, watching my footsteps [looking for my weak spot], eager to ensnare my soul.	(ז) יִגְוּרוּ יַצְפוּנוּ (יַצְפִּינוּ) הֵמָּה עֲקָבִי יִשְׁמְרוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר קוּוּ נַפְשִׁי:
(8) Is it right? Should they escape God's judgment after perpetrating such injustice against me, O <i>Elohim</i> , who casts nations down in wrath?!	(ח) עַל אֲוֹן פָּלַט לְמוֹ בָּאָף עַמִּים הוֹרֵד אֱלֹהִים:
(9) O God You have reckoned my successive migrations; the forced expulsions I have had to brave. I beg You: Place my tears and all the tears of my people in Your flask; behold, I am certain that they are accounted in Your book of reckoning.	(ט) נָדִי סִפְרָתָה אֶתָּה שִׁימָה דְּמָעָתִי בְּנֹאדֶךָ הֲלֹא בְּסִפְרָתְךָ:
(10) I am therefore also certain that the day will come when my enemies will be turned back and suffer defeat on the day I call You. This I know, for <i>Elohim</i> is with me.	(י) אֲזִי יָשׁוּבוּ אוֹיְבֵי אַחֲרֵי בְּיוֹם אֶקְרָא זֶה יִדְעֵתִי כִּי אֱלֹהִים לִי:
(11) I therefore bless <i>Elohim</i> [God's attribute of justice] for everything [even the suffering I endure] just as I bless <i>YHVH</i> [God's attribute of mercy] for everything [the kindnesses He bestows]. ⁸⁵	(יא) בְּאֱלֹהִים אֶהְלֵל דְּבַר בִּיהוָה אֶהְלֵל דְּבַר:

⁸⁵ The Talmud (*Pesachim* 50a) quotes the following verse: "[The time will come when] Hashem will be [recognized] as King over the entire world; on that day, Hashem will be one and His name will be one" (Zekhariah 14:9). The Talmud asks, "How can it be written that Hashem *will be* one? Isn't He one now?" Rabbi Acha bar Chaninah answers, "This world is not like the World to Come. In this world when hearing good tidings, we say, 'Blessed is He who is good and who does good.' When receiving evil tidings, we say, 'Blessed is the Judge whose judgment is truth.' [In the World to Come, this will no longer be the case. Rather, we will see the good clearly in all that happens.] In the World to Come, we will only say, 'Blessed is He who is good and who does good.'"

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov taught: "When a person knows that everything that happens to him is for his benefit, this [perception and understanding] is a foretaste of the level of *Olam Haba* (the World to Come). This is what King David meant when he said, 'I bless *Elohim* for everything just as I bless *YHVH* for everything.' As our sages said, this hints to the level of heightened awareness associated with *Olam Haba*...This heightened awareness is called *yediah shelemah* (complete or perfect awareness). For the essence of *daat* (awareness, consciousness) is the complete union of *chasadim* and *gevurot* (Hashem's love and His justice). This is called *daat* [because these

(12) I trust in <i>Elohim</i> who oversees and directs all the events of my life, I therefore have no fear of men. What can man do to me?	(יב) בְּאֱלֹהִים בְּטַחְתִּי לֹא אִירָא מֶה יַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם לִי:
(13) It is only for me to fulfill the vows I made to You, <i>Elohim</i> ; It is only for me to repay my thanks to You.	(יג) עָלֵי אֱלֹהִים נִדְרֵיךָ אֲשַׁלֵּם תּוֹדַת לְךָ:
(14) For You delivered my soul from death, my feet from stumbling, so that I could walk before <i>Elohim</i> in the light of eternal life.	(יד) כִּי הִצַּלְתָּ נַפְשִׁי מִמּוֹת הָלֹא רָגְלִי מִדְּחִי לְהִתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי אֱלֹהִים בְּאוֹר הַחַיִּים:

Tehillim 57

David is on the run as a fugitive. Shaul is chasing him and his band of 400 men with an army 3,000 strong. The fugitive and his band finally hole up in the caves of *Ein Gedi*. Shaul approaches with his army. David and some of his men are pressed against the walls in the far recesses of a cave. Hashem arranges it that Shaul chooses that cave to relieve himself. Dark silence. No one breathed. David's men are urging him to slay Shaul. "Do it, now!" Tormented, he refuses, but he manages to get close enough to cut a corner off of Shaul's garment. Shaul neither hears nor feels anything. He leaves the cave. David's heart is pounding. "What have I done?! Woe to me that I have set my hand against God's anointed!" (I Samuel 24:7). He waits a moment and then emerges into the full light of day. He calls to Shaul and bows. "My master, my king, why do you believe those who tell you that I wish to harm you? Behold, today I could have slain you, but I pitied you! O my father, look at the corner of your garment in my hand! I mean you no harm! Hashem is my witness!" In this psalm, David calls out to Hashem to give him the strength to weather all the trials and tribulations he must endure before he is able to assume his God-given role as King of Israel.

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach Al Tash'chet</i> – Dedicated to the Master of Creation who grants victory over destruction and who therefore saved me from certain death. <i>LeDavid Mikhtam</i> – A precious prayer by David which he prized highly and reviewed constantly for the lessons it contains, composed when he was fleeing from Shaul and hid in a cave.	(א) לְמַנְצֵחַ אֶל תִּשְׁחַת לְדוֹד מְכַתֵּם בְּבָרְחוֹ מִפְּנֵי שָׁאוּל בְּמַעְרָה:
(2) Be gracious to me, <i>Elohim</i> , be gracious and have compassion on me! In You alone has my soul taken refuge! And I will continue to take refuge in the shadow of Your wings until all evil passes away!	(ב) חֲנֻנִי אֱלֹהִים חֲנֻנִי כִּי בְךָ חֲסִיָּה נַפְשִׁי וּבְצֵל כְּנָפֶיךָ אֲחֻסָּה עַד יַעֲבֹר הָוֹת:
(3) I will call out to the supreme God, to the awesome Power who is bringing to completion all that He has promised concerning me! ⁸⁶	(ג) אֶקְרָא לְאֱלֹהִים עֲלִיוֹן לֹאֵל גָּמֵר עָלַי:
(4) He will then send His salvation from heaven and save me from the reproach of those who wish to devour me, <i>selah</i> ! <i>Elohim</i> will surely send His love and His truth to uphold the promise He made concerning me.	(ד) יִשְׁלַח מִשְׁמַיִם וַיִּשְׁעֵנִי חֶרֶף שְׂאֵפִי סֵלָה יִשְׁלַח אֱלֹהִים חֶסֶדוֹ וְאֱמֹתוֹ:
(5) In the meantime my soul is languishes in the midst of lions who wish to pounce on me; I lie down next to wild animals whose eyes are aflame with rage; I lie down among men whose teeth are sharp like spears and arrows; whose tongues are sharp like swords.	(ה) נַפְשִׁי בְּתוֹךְ לְבָאִם אֲשֻׁכְבָּה לְהָטִים בְּנִי אָדָם שְׁנִיָּהֶם חֲנִית וְחֻצִּים וּלְשׁוֹנָם חֶרֶב חֲדָה:
(6) <i>Elohim</i> is high above the heavens; He makes Himself inaccessible as a result of man's evil; whereas His glory [His	(ו) רוּמָה עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם אֱלֹהִים עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדָךְ:

two seemingly opposite poles are one in *daat*]. In other words, one who has overcome the dichotomy between Hashem's love and His justice is said to have attained *daat*. Such a person is then able to bless 'He who is good and who does good' over everything that happens to him. This is the meaning of 'Hashem will be one and His name will be one,' namely, that in the Future the unity will be totally revealed, and we will see that all was for the good" (*Likutey Moharan* I 4:1,4).

⁸⁶ *Metzudot David*: "I will call out to the supreme God, to the awesome Power who will bring to completion [all that He has promised] concerning me." Meiri: "I will call out to the supreme God, to the awesome Power who will complete what He initiated when He had Samuel anoint me in my father's house." *Bereshit Rabbah* (98:1): "I will call out to the supreme God," on *Rosh Hashanah*; "To the awesome Power who completes on my behalf," on *Yom Kippur*.

sovereignty] over the entire earth is revealed when He judges the wicked for all the evil they have done. ⁸⁷	
(7) They prepared a net to entangle my steps; they bent my soul down; they dug a pit for me to fall into; justice will not be satisfied until they become entangled in the very net they prepared for me and fall into the very pit they dug, <i>selah</i> . ⁸⁸	(ז) רֶשֶׁת הֵכִינוּ לַפְעָמִי כַּפֶּף נַפְשִׁי כָרוּ לִפְנֵי שִׂיחָה נָפְלוּ בְּתוֹכָהּ סֵלָה:
(8) My heart is firm, <i>Elohim</i> ; my heart is firm in the faith; I will therefore sing and chant praises to cut away all the barriers that prevent me from trusting in You.	(ח) נִכּוֹן לִבִּי אֱלֹהִים נִכּוֹן לִבִּי אֲשִׁירָה וְאֲזַמְרָה:
(9) Wake up, my soul, wake up; with lyre and harp I will awaken the dawn!	(ט) עוֹרָה כְּבוֹדִי עוֹרָה הַנֶּבֶל וְכִנּוֹר אֲעִירָה שָׁחַר:
(10) I will thank You among the nations, <i>Adonai</i> ; I will chant praises to You in the midst of many peoples. ⁸⁹	(י) אוֹדֶךָ בְּעַמִּים אֲדֹנָי אֲזַמְרֶךָ בְּלֵאמִים:
(11) For Your great love for those who devote themselves to You with no thought of reward reaches to the highest heavens; and Your faithfulness to honor the covenant You have made with those who revere You extends to endless skies.	(יא) כִּי גָדַל עַד שָׁמַיִם חֲסִדֶּךָ וְעַד שְׁחָקִים אֲמַתְּךָ:
(12) <i>Elohim</i> is high above the heavens; He makes Himself inaccessible as a result of man's evil; whereas His glory [His sovereignty] over the entire earth is revealed when He judges the wicked for all the evil they have done.	(יב) רוֹמָה עַל שָׁמַיִם אֱלֹהִים עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדֶךָ:

Tehillim 58**Tehillim 59**

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach Al Tash'chet</i> — Dedicated to the One who grants victory over destruction and who therefore saved me from certain death. A precious prayer by David which he prized highly and reviewed constantly for the lessons it contains, composed when Shaul sent his soldiers and they guarded the house in order to slay him.	(א) לַמְנַצֵּחַ אֵל תִּשְׁחַת לְדוֹד מִכְתָּם בְּשִׁלַּח שְׂאוּל וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ אֶת הַבַּיִת לְהַמִּיתוֹ:
(2) O my God, deliver me from my enemies; set me up high above and protect me from those who rise up against me.	(ב) הַצִּילֵנִי מֵאֵיבֵי אֱלֹהֵי מִמְתְּקוֹמִמִּי תִּשְׁגְּבֵנִי:
(3) Deliver me from those who deal treacherously; save me from bloodthirsty men.	(ג) הַצִּילֵנִי מִפְּעָלֵי אֹן וּמֵאֲנָשֵׁי דָמִים הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי:
(4) For behold, they lie in wait to ambush and capture my soul; brazen men have gathered together against me—not because of any crime or any sin of mine, <i>Hashem</i> .	(ד) כִּי הִנֵּה אָרְבוּ לְנַפְשִׁי יְגוּרֵי עָלִי עֲזִים לֹא פָשַׁעִי וְלֹא חַטָּאתִי יְהוָה:
(5) Without any wrong on my part, they hurry to pass judgment and are prepared to take my life. O awaken to come toward me and behold my anguish!	(ה) בְּלִי עוֹן יִרְצוּן וַיְכַוְּנוּ עוֹרָה לְקִרְאָתִי וּרְאָה:
(6) But You, <i>Hashem</i> , God of all the hosts of heaven and earth, God of Israel, just as You will surely arouse Yourself to judge all the nations, so too do not show any favor whatsoever to all who deal treacherously and falsely, <i>selah</i> .	(ו) וְאַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִקִּיצָה לִפְקֹד כָּל הַגּוֹיִם אֵל תַּחַן כָּל בִּגְדֵי אֹן סֵלָה:
(7) Not satisfied with what they do during the day they return in the evening; they howl like dogs and surround the city to prevent me from escaping.	(ז) יָשׁוּבוּ לָעֶרֶב יֵהְמוּ כָּפֶלֶב וַיִּסּוּבּוּ עִיר:
(8) Behold, slander pours forth from their mouths; words sharp as swords from their lips; and then they boast, saying, "Who can hear us?"	(ח) הִנֵּה יִבְעִעוֹן בִּפְיָהֶם חֲרָבוֹת בְּשִׁפְתוֹתֵיהֶם כִּי מִי שִׁמְעַ:

⁸⁷ Hirsch: "Even though Thou, O God, be high above the heavens, Thy glory is upon all the earth!" (see Psalm 8:2).

⁸⁸ See Psalm 7:16.

⁸⁹ See Psalm 18:50.

(9) But You, <i>Hashem</i> , laugh at them; just as You will scorn all the nations who go against You.	(ט) וְאַתָּה יְדֹד תִּשְׁחַק לָמוֹ תִלְעַג לְכָל גּוֹיִם:
(10) In the face of his power [the power of the enemy that threatens to overwhelm me], I wait for You alone; <i>Elohim</i> is my fortress.	(י) עָזוּ אֵלַיךְ אֲשֶׁמְרָה כִּי אֱלֹהִים מְשֹׁגְבִי:
(11) The God who deals lovingly with me will go before me; <i>Elohim</i> will show me the downfall of those who lie in wait for me.	(יא) אֱלֹהֵי חֶסְדִּי (חסדו) יִקְדָּמֵנִי אֱלֹהִים יִרְאֵנִי בְּשֶׁרְרִי:
(12) Do not kill them, lest my people forget; put them to flight with Your power; cast them down from their high places, <i>Hashem</i> , our protective shield.	(יב) אַל תַּהַרְגֵם פֶּן יִשְׁכַּחוּ עַמִּי הַנִּיעָמוּ בַּחֵילְךָ וְהוֹרִידָמוּ מִגִּבְּנֵי אֲדָנִי:
(13) Every word they utter with their mouths is a sin, a misuse of the gift of speech. O let them be caught in their own arrogance; let their impudence be their downfall; let them serve as an example of the ultimate recompense that is in store for all who speak perjury and falsehood.	(יג) חֲטָאת פִּימוּ דְּבַר שִׁפְתֵימוּ וַיִּלְכְּדוּ בְּגִאוֹנָם וּמֵאֲלָה וּמִפֶּחַשׁ יִסְפְּרוּ:
(14) Destroy them in Your wrath; destroy them until they will be no more; and all will know, to the ends of the earth, that <i>Elohim</i> rules in Yaacov, <i>selah</i> .	(יד) כֹּלָה בַּחֲמָה כֹּלָה וְאֵינָמוּ וַיִּדְעוּ כִּי אֱלֹהִים מִשַׁל בִּיעָקֹב לְאַפְסֵי הָאָרֶץ סֵלָה:
(15) But now they return in the evening; they howl like dogs and surround the city to prevent me from escaping.	(טו) וַיָּשֻׁבוּ לָעֶרֶב יִהְיוּ כְּכֶלֶב וַיִּסּוּבּוּ עִיר:
(16) Like dogs they wander around in search of something to eat; they refuse to go to sleep, for they are not satisfied until they vent their rage on me.	(טז) הֵמָּה יִנְעִוּ (יִנוּעוּן) לֹאכֵל אִם לֹא יִשְׂבְּעוּ וַיִּלְיִנוּ:
(17) But as for me, I shall sing of Your invincible might, and rejoice in Your loving-kindness in the morning; for You have been my tower of strength, and my refuge on the day of my distress.	(יז) וְאֲנִי אֲשִׁיר עֹד וְאֶרְגֵּן לְבָקֶר חֶסְדְּךָ כִּי הָיִיתָ מְשֹׁגֵב לִי וּמִנוֹס בְּיוֹם צָר לִי:
(18) My strength! To You alone I express myself in song. O <i>Elohim</i> , my tower of strength; the God whose loving-kindness toward me is unconditional.	(יח) עָזִי אֵלַיךְ אֲזַמְרָה כִּי אֱלֹהִים מְשֹׁגְבִי אֱלֹהֵי חֶסְדִּי:

Tehillim 60, Tehillim 61, Tehillim 62, Tehillim 63, Tehillim 64

Tehillim 65

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the Master of Creation. <i>Mizmor LeDavid Shir</i> – A song, a cutting-chant by David:	(א) לַמִּנְצָח מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד שִׁיר:
(2) To You, silence is praise, O <i>Elohim</i> whose presence is felt in Zion; and to You alone is a vow paid.	(ב) לָךְ דְּמִיָּה תִהְיֶה אֱלֹהִים בְּצִיּוֹן וְלָךְ יִשְׁלַם נֶדֶר:
(3) O You who hears prayer, to You alone shall all flesh come.	(ג) שִׁמְעַת תִּפְלֶה עֲדִיד כָּל בֶּשֶׂר יָבֹאוּ:
(4) The enormity of our iniquities overwhelms us; only You can purge away our willful transgressions.	(ד) דְּבָרֵי עֲוֹנֹת גָּבְרוּ מֵנִי פִּשְׁעֵינוּ אַתָּה תִּכְפֹּרֵם:
(5) Happy is the one nation whom You have chosen and drawn near to You; to dwell within Your courtyards; from there we will draw nearer to be permeated with the goodness of Your Temple, and the awesome holiness of Your Sanctuary.	(ה) אֲשֶׁרִי תִבְחַר וְתִקָּרֵב יִשְׁכֹּן חֲצִרְךָ נִשְׂבָּעָה בְּטוֹב בֵּיתְךָ קֹדֶשׁ הֵיכָלְךָ:
(6) O You who execute awesome judgments with righteousness, answer us; O God of our salvation, the stronghold of all, to the ends of the earth, and to the farthest extremities of the sea;	(ו) נֹרְאוֹת בְּצִדֵּק תַעֲנֵנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵנוּ מִבְּטָח כָּל קְצוֹי אָרֶץ וְיָם רַחֲקִים:
(7) Who, with His power, establishes the mountains; girded with strength;	(ז) מִכֵּין הָרִים בְּכֹחוֹ נֶאֱזָר בְּגִבּוֹרָה:
(8) Who silences the roar of the seas, the roar of their waves, and the tumult of the nations.	(ח) מְשַׁבֵּיחַ שְׁאוֹן יָמִים שְׁאוֹן גְּלִיָּהֶם וְהַמוֹן לְאֻמִּים:

(9) It is so that those who dwell at the extremities of the earth will fear Your signs; it is so that they may go forth morning and evening and sing praises to You.	(ט) וַיִּירָאוּ יִשְׁבֵּי קְצוֹת מְאוֹתֶיךָ מוֹצָאֵי בֹקֶר וָעֶרֶב תִּרְנִין:
(10) So that You will remember to appoint rains for the earth, and saturate it with blessing; so that You will enrich it with a torrent from Your heavenly treasure-house O <i>Elohim</i> , overflowing with water; in this way You bring forth grain; in this way You establish it [the earth].	(י) פָּקֵדֶת הָאָרֶץ וְתִשְׁקְקָהּ רֵבֶת תַּעֲשֶׂרְנָהּ פֶּלֶג אֱלֹהִים מִלֵּא מִים תִּכְיֶן דְּגָנָם כִּי כֵן תִּכְיֶנָּה:
(11) You saturate its ridges with gentle rainfall causing its furrows to settle; You soften it with showers; You bless its vegetation.	(יא) תִּלְמִיָּה רֵוָה נַחַת גְּדוּדָה בְּרִבֵּיבִים תִּמְגַּגְנָה צִמְחָה תִּבְרַךְ:
(12) You crown the year with Your goodness; so that all its paths, Your paths, drip luxuriant foliage.	(יב) עֹטְרֶת שָׁנָת טוֹבֶתְךָ וּמַעְגְלֶיךָ יִרְעֲפוּן דָּשֶׁן:
(13) They drip upon desert pastures; thereby encompassing the hills on every side with joy.	(יג) יִרְעֲפוּ נְאוֹת מִדְבָּר וְגִיל גְּבֻעוֹת תַּחְגְּרָנָה:
(14) Pastures are clothed with flocks; valleys are wrapped in vegetation; they shout for joy and sing. ⁹⁰	(יד) לְבָשׁוּ כְרִים הַצֹּאן וְעִמְקִים יַעֲטֹפוּ בָר יִתְרוֹעְעוּ אֶף יִשִּׁירוּ:

Tehillim 66**Tehillim 67**

Psalm 67 is called the *Menorah* Psalm because it is perfectly symmetrical and fits perfectly into the form of a 7-Branded *Menorah*. After its 4 word superscript (verse 1), whose 20 letters serve as the “flames” of the *Menorah*, the psalm contains 7 verses with a total of 49 words. The first and last verses (the outer “branches” of the *Menorah*) contain 7 words respectively (7 + 7 = 14). The second and second-to-last verses/branches contain 6 words each (6 + 6 = 12). The third and third-to-last verses/branches not only contain 6 words each, but are identical (6 + 6 = 12). The fourth verse/branch is exactly midway between the two extremities. It contains 11 words, bringing the total number of words in verses 2-8 to 49. This middle verse also happens to contain 49 letters. When the entire psalm is drawn in the form of a 7-Branded *Menorah*, this verse is the middle shaft or spine of the *Menorah*, while the verses that surround it are its branches.

Content-wise too, this psalm is perfectly symmetrical. It is also one of the most perfect expressions of the Universal God-idea behind all Jewish teachings. In addition, according to a tradition recorded by the Chida (Rabbi Chayim Yoseph David Azulai) in his *Midbar Kedemot*, this psalm originated when Hashem showed it prophetically to Moshe Rabbenu. Later, while in a state of *ruach ha’kodesh*, King David envisioned it engraved on a sheet of gold in the form of a *Menorah*. He then engraved the *Menorah* Psalm on his own golden shield. Whenever he would go out to war, he would contemplate its mystery. His enemies would then miraculously fall before him.

The *Menorah* Psalm thus has a special power to confer success. According to tradition, anyone who contemplates the *Menorah* Psalm each day, and concentrates on its mystery, is considered as if he had “kindled” the heavenly *Menorah*. He may then be assured that he is a *ben olam haba* (a child of the world-to-come—even while alive in this world).

The fact that this psalm is about universal peace and perfection, and yet at the same time, was used as a war psalm, is not a contradiction. For it is nothing less than a prayer for the amplification of consciousness on this planet to the point where war will no longer be desirable or possible. In other words, it contains the secret for ending all war.

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach BiNeginot</i> – Dedicated to the Master Symphony Conductor of Creation who grants victory through melodies. <i>Mizmor Shir</i> – A chant song to cut away the obstacles that prevent us from appreciating His blessings:	(א) לַמְנַצֵּחַ בְּנִגִּינַת מְזִמּוֹר שִׁיר:
(2) <i>Elohim</i> —may He be gracious to us and bless us; may the light of His Presence shine upon us and accompany us forever, <i>selah</i> .	(ב) אֱלֹהִים יַחֲנֵנוּ וַיְבָרְכֵנוּ יְאֹר פָּנָיו אֲתֵנוּ סֵלָה:
(3) May Your way become known on earth, the power of Your deliverance acknowledged among all nations. [For precisely by revealing Your special providence over Israel, Your way—the way You run the world—will become known on earth, and the power of Your deliverance acknowledged among all nations.]	(ג) לְדַעַת בְּאָרֶץ דְּרָכְךָ בְּכָל גּוֹיִם יְשׁוּעֶתְךָ:

⁹⁰ Rashi: “Pastures are clothed with flocks which have come to graze on the vegetation that the rains have caused to sprout forth.” *Metzudat David*: “The sheep become *clothed* in meat and fat from the abundance of vegetation.”

(4) O how we await the day when nations will acknowledge You, <i>Elohim</i> ; when all nations will acknowledge You together!	(ד) יִדְּוּךְ עַמִּים אֱלֹהִים יִדְּוּךְ עַמִּים כָּלָם:
(5) Nations will rejoice and sing for joy, for You will judge all peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth to their perfection forever, <i>selah</i> .	(ה) יִשְׂמְחוּ וִירְנְנוּ לְאַמִּים כִּי תִשְׁפֹּט עַמִּים מִיֶּשֶׁר וּלְאַמִּים בְּאֶרֶץ תִּנְחֵם סֵלָה:
(6) Nations will acknowledge You, <i>Elohim</i> ; all nations together will acknowledge You.	(ו) יִדְּוּךְ עַמִּים אֱלֹהִים יִדְּוּךְ עַמִּים כָּלָם:
(7) Then earth existence will have yielded its produce [i.e., fulfilled its intended purpose, the complete actualization of God-consciousness].	(ז) אֶרֶץ נִתְּנָה יְבוּלָהּ יִבְרְכֵנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵינוּ:
(8) <i>Elohim</i> our God will bless us; <i>Elohim</i> will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will be in awe of Him.	(ח) יִבְרְכֵנוּ אֱלֹהִים וְיִירָאוּ אוֹתוֹ כָּל אֲפְסֵי אֶרֶץ:

Tehillim 68

This psalm can be read on a number of levels. Most commentators read it as a description of Israel's history, focusing specifically around the Revelation of the Torah on Mount Sinai. This is substantiated by its being read in all Sefardic congregations as the psalm for *Shavuot*. Ibn Ezra finds this hard to accept because the order of the verses does not seem to support it. He inclines to reading it as a description of events in David's life. *Shlah* reads it as a description of Sancheriv's fall at the gates of Yerushalayim. Like Meiri, he sees it, as well, as referring to the future battle between *Mashiach* and Gog, when the nations will gather to battle against the nation of Israel after the ingathering to their Homeland.

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the One who grants victory through His Torah. <i>LeDavid Mizmor Shir</i> – A song, a cutting-psalm that was composed by David in an exalted state of <i>ruach ha'kodesh</i> , to be read on many levels simultaneously:	(א) לַמְנַצֵּחַ לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר:
<i>Jumping into the future</i>	
(2) The time will come when Elohim will rise up and reveal Himself; thinking that they can escape those who opposed Him [His Plan] will scatter in terror; those who despised Him [His Torah] will flee before His presence. ⁹¹	(ב) יָקוּם אֱלֹהִים יַפּוּצוּ אוֹיְבָיו וַיִּנּוּסוּ מִשְׁנֵאָיו מִפְּנֵיו:
(3) But as smoke is dissipated by the wind, so will they be dissipated and dissolved by the breath of His mouth; as wax melts before the fire, so will the wicked perish before the presence of Elohim .	(ג) כִּהְנִדֹף עֶשֶׂן תִּנְדֹּף כִּהֵמֶס דּוֹג מִפְּנֵי אֵשׁ יֵאָבְדוּ רָשָׁעִים מִפְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים:
(4) The righteous on the other hand will rejoice; they will exult before Elohim and delight with joy!	(ד) וְצַדִּיקִים יִשְׂמְחוּ יַעֲלֻצוּ לִפְנֵי אֱלֹהִים וַיִּשְׂשֻׁוּ בְשִׂמְחָה:
(5) Sing to Elohim , chant praises to His Name; soar up to the One who rides over the highest heavens with His Name, Yah , and exult greatly in His presence!	(ה) שִׁירוּ לְאֱלֹהִים זַמְרוּ שְׁמוֹ סֹלוּ לַרֶכֶב בְּעֶרְבוֹת בָּיָה שְׁמוֹ וְעִלְזוּ לִפְנֵיו:
(6) For although He is above in the abode of His holiness, Elohim is a father of orphans and a defender of widows.	(ו) אָבִי יְתוֹמִים וְדִין אֶלְמָנוֹת אֱלֹהִים בְּמַעוֹן קָדְשׁוֹ:
(7) Elohim takes those who are solitary and settles them together in one home; He takes those who are imprisoned and brings them to their freedom at an appropriate time; but those who rebel shall end up dwelling in barrenness.	(ז) אֱלֹהִים מוֹשִׁיב יְחִידִים בֵּיתָה מוֹצִיא אֲסִירִים בְּפוֹשְׁרוֹת אֶךְ סוֹרְרִים שְׁכֵנוֹ צְחִיחָה:
<i>Jumping back in time</i>	

⁹¹ The divine name *Elokim* (or *Elokei* or *Elokekhem*) appears exactly 26 times in this psalm. This is intentional. As we see throughout the psalms, whereas the name *YKVK* (*gematria* 26) embodies Hashem's attribute of unconditional love and overriding mercy, the name *Elokim* generally represents Hashem's attribute of justice [His desire that we earn what He wishes to give us]. The fact that *Elokim* appears here 26 times indicates a *yichud* (unification) of these two attributes or modes, i.e., that divine justice not only does not contradict mercy, but is an expression of it.

(8) Elohim , when You went forth before Your people, when You strode through the wilderness, <i>selah</i> .	(ח) אֱלֹהִים בָּצֵאתְךָ לִפְנֵי עַמְּךָ בַּצֵּעֲדָךְ בְּיִשְׁמוֹן סֵלָה:
(9) The earth trembled and the skies rained before the awesome presence of Elohim ; this Sinai mountain trembled and shook before the presence of Elohim , Elohei Yisrael .	(ט) אֶרֶץ רָעָשָׁה אֶף שָׁמַיִם נָטְפוּ מִפְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים זֶה סִינַי מִפְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
(10) Elohim , You poured down a generous rain of bounty; You established this people as Your inheritance when they were weary in the desert.	(י) גֶּשֶׁם נְדָבוֹת תָּנִיף אֱלֹהִים נַחֲלֶתְךָ וְנִלְאָה אֶתָּה כּוֹנֵנֶתָה:
(11) Those whom You restored to life dwelled in it [this desert]; in Your goodness; You prepared it for the afflicted people, Elohim .	(יא) חִיתְךָ יֵשְׁבוּ בָּהּ תָּכִין בְּטוֹבֶתְךָ לְעֹנֵי אֱלֹהִים:
(12) On Sinai Adonai gave forth His word; Moshe and Aharon announced it to a great host. ⁹²	(יב) אֲדֹנֵי יְתֵן אֱמֶר הַמְּבֹשְׁרוֹת צָבָא רָב:
<i>Entering the Land of Israel in the days of Yehoshua</i>	
(13) Flee, you kings of armies, flee you kings of Canaan! For when this people returns to dwell in its ancestral homeland, it will divide what you took as spoil.	(יג) מַלְכֵי צָבָאוֹת יִדְּדוּן יִדְּדוּן וְנֹת בֵּית תַּחֲלֶק שָׁלָל:
(14) Even if you kings camp at her borders to attack her, the wings of the dove [Israel] are covered with silver armor and her feathers with the shimmer of gold.	(יד) אִם תִּשְׁכְּבוּן בֵּין שְׂפָתַיִם כְּנָפֵי יוֹנָה נַחֲפָה בַּכֶּסֶף וְאַבְרוֹתֶיהָ בִּירְקָרֶק חֲרוּץ:
(15) With the power of Shadai she [Israel] will scatter kings; in it [the land of Israel] she will shimmer snow-white amidst the darkness of the shadows.	(טו) בְּפֶרֶשׁ שְׂדֵי מַלְכִּים בָּהּ תִּשְׁלַג בַּצִּלְמוֹן:
(16) Elohim 's mountain is near Mount Bashan; Mount Bashan is a mountain of peaks.	(טז) הָר אֱלֹהִים הָר בְּשָׁן הָר גְּבֻנִים הָר בְּשָׁן:
(17) Why do you look with hostility, O you mountains of peaks, upon the mountain which Elohim has chosen? For Hashem will surely make His abode there forevermore.	(יז) לָמָּה תִרְצְדוּן הָרִים גְּבֻנִים הָהָר חֲמַד אֱלֹהִים לְשִׁבְתּוֹ אֶף יְהוָה יִשְׁכֵּן לְנֶצַח:
(18) Elohim 's chariots are one million two hundred thousand <i>shinan</i> -angels; Adonai is among them, on Sinai [the mountain upon which He descended] in holiness!	(יח) רָכֵב אֱלֹהִים רַבְתִּים אֲלֵפֵי שְׁנָאן אֲדֹנֵי בָּם סִינַי בִּקְדֹשׁ:
(19) [After Hashem revealed His Torah on Sinai, He commanded Moshe to ascend;] Moshe: you ascended on high! There you re-captured booty; You retrieved the gifts that had been part of Adam, so that even the rebellious could dwell in the presence of the Yah Elohim . ⁹³	(יט) עֲלִיתָ לְמָרוֹם שְׁבִית שְׁבִי לְקַחְתָּ מִתְּנוֹת בְּאָדָם וְאֵף סוֹרְרִים לְשִׁכֵּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים:

⁹² Or, according to the Talmud (*Shabbat* 88b): Rabbi Yochanan asked, what is the meaning of the verse, "Hashem gave forth an utterance; [they became] announcements to a great host [of nations]"? [Why does this verse switch from the singular "utterance" to the plural "announcements"?] Rather, every utterance that the Almighty spoke [at Sinai] split into seventy languages. Rabbi Yishmael learned [this from the verse], "[Hashem's word is] like a hammer that shatters rock." Just as a hammer causes many sparks to fly when it strikes a rock, so also every statement and every word that left the mouth of the Holy One split into seventy languages.

⁹³ The Ari explains the strange syntax of this verse: "When he was still included within the OverSoul of Adam, Moshe took gifts [on loan], for Adam had not yet attained any of those exalted levels by his own efforts. Now, however, as Moshe, *'shivita shevi*—you re-captured booty.' For after these lights [i.e., these higher soul-levels which are called lights] departed from Adam, where did they go? The forces of evil took all these lights into captivity. When Moshe came, however, he reclaimed all that had been stolen from Adam [and which was rightfully his] by the power of his own righteous deeds. This is the meaning of the word *shevi*. It refers to something that has been taken captive by force. Now, due to Moshe's righteousness, even the rebel forces of evil were forced to return everything they had taken—even that which they had refused to give to Adam. They are called rebels similar to the *'ben sorrer u'moreh*—the rebellious, wayward son' (Deuteronomy 21:18). When they had a chance to give to Adam, they refused. They [the other angels] pressed them to give also, but they refused" (*Likutey Torah, parashat Ki Tissa*).

(20) Blessed is Adonai , who loads us with goodness and blessing each and every day, <i>selah</i> .	(כ) בָּרוּךְ אֲדֹנֵי יוֹם יוֹם יַעֲמֵס לָנוּ הָאֵל יְשׁוּעָתָנוּ סֵלָה:
(21) EI [the almighty loving God] is the power of our salvation. For YHVH (read: <i>Elohim</i>) Adonai [the One who proves His mercy even as He metes out justice], there are manifold remedies even for death. ⁹⁴	(כא) הָאֵל לָנוּ אֵל לְמוֹשָׁעוֹת וְלִיהוָה אֲדֹנֵי לְמוֹת תַּצָּאוֹת:
(22) Elohim alone will cleave the head of those who oppose Him, the hairy scalp of he who walks about untroubled by his sins.	(כב) אַךְ אֱלֹהִים יִמְחַץ רֹאשׁ אִיְבּוֹ קִדְקֹד שְׁעָר מִתְהַלֵּךְ בְּאַשְׁמִיּוֹ:
(23) Adonai has promised: I will bring you back from Bashan; I will bring you back from the shadowy depths of the sea.	(כג) אָמַר אֲדֹנֵי מִבֶּשֶׁן אָשִׁיב אָשִׁיב מִמַּצְלוֹת יָם:
(24) So that your foot can wade through the blood of your enemies; and the tongues of your dogs will have their portion from them.	(כד) לְמַעַן תִּמְחַץ רִגְלְךָ בְּדָם לָשׁוֹן כָּלִבֶּיךָ מֵאִיְבִים מִנְהוּ:
<i>At the Red Sea</i>	
(25) When Israel crossed the Sea they saw Your ways, Elohim , the ways of Eli [my God], my King, in holiness.	(כה) רְאוּ הַלִּיכּוֹתֶיךָ אֱלֹהִים הַלִּיכּוֹת אֵלֵי מִלְכִּי בִקְדֻשָּׁה:
(26) The singers went ahead and the players followed after; encircled by young maidens tapping tambourines.	(כו) קִדְּמוּ שָׁרִים אַחֲרֵי נְגִנִים בְּתוֹךְ עַלְמוֹת תּוֹפְפוֹת:
<i>In the Temple of the Future</i>	
(27) So too, in the future Temple, Israel will bless Elohim in full assemblies; we will bless Adonai , Israel's source from the beginning.	(כז) בְּמִקְהֵלוֹת בָּרְכוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲדֹנֵי מִמְקוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל:
(28) There in the midst of his brethren, even Binyamin, the youngest, will overcome those who wish to oppress them; the princes of Yehudah will overcome the thrust of their stones, together with the princes of Zevulun and the princes of Naphtali.	(כח) שֵׁם בְּנִימֵן צַעִיר רֹדֵם שָׂרֵי יְהוּדָה רִגְמָתָם שָׂרֵי זְבֻלוֹן שָׂרֵי נַפְתָּלִי:
(29) O Israel: Elohekha [your God] has commanded your invincible strength; Elohim , You alone are our strength! This is what You have wrought for us.	(כט) צִוָּה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עֲזָךְ עוֹזָה אֱלֹהִים זֶו פַּעֲלָתָ לָנוּ:
(30) From Your Temple which overlooks Yerushalayim—where kings will bring You gifts of tribute—	(ל) מִהִיכָלְךָ עַל יְרוּשָׁלַם לְךָ יוֹבִילוּ מִלְכִּים שָׂי:
(31) Rebuke the beast [the cunning nation that slinks] among the reeds; rebuke the alliance of bullish-powers followed by their calf-peoples cowering in the mud for pieces of silver, which have ever divided peoples asunder in their desire for battle.	(לא) גַּעַר חֵית קִנָּה עֵדֶת אַבִּירִים בְּעֵגְלֵי עַמִּים מִתְרַפֵּס בְּרֹצֵי כֶסֶף בְּזֹר עַמִּים קִרְבוֹת יַחְפְּצוּ:
(32) O how we yearn for the future when nobles will come forth from Egypt, and Ethiopia will hasten to stretch his hands out to Elohim .	(לב) יֵאָתִיּו חֲשַׁמְנִים מִנִּי מִצְרַיִם כּוֹשׁ תָּרִיץ יָדָיו לְאֱלֹהִים:
(33) Kingdoms of the earth, sing to Elohim ; chant praises to Adonai forever, <i>selah</i> !	(לג) מִמַּלְכוֹת הָאָרֶץ שִׁירוּ לְאֱלֹהִים זָמְרוּ אֲדֹנֵי סֵלָה:
(34) Sing to the One who rides in the highest primordial	(לד) לָרִכֵּב בְּשָׁמַי שָׁמַי קֵדָם הֵן יִתֵּן

⁹⁴ Here the name *YKVK* appears in conjunction with the name *Adanut*. Whenever this occurs the *YKVK* receives the vowels of the name *Elokim* and is read as such. This phenomenon occurs 298 times all together in the *Tanakh* (4 times in the Torah, 294 times in the remainder of the *Nakh*). Again, this represents the fact that mercy and justice are one in their source. When we realize this we understand that Hashem (the One who is behind all the events of our lives), is bidding us to see even the difficulties we encounter as challenges that are being sent to us to grow.

heavens; behold, He gives forth His voice, His voice is invincible!	בְּקוֹלוֹ קוֹל עוֹז:
(35) Give strength to Elohim whose pride rests upon Yisrael and whose strength resides in the heights. ⁹⁵	(לה) תִּנוּ עוֹז לֵאלֹהִים עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל גְּאֻתוֹ וְעֹזוֹ בְּשִׁחְקִים:
(36) O <i>Elohim</i> , Your awesomeness is revealed through those who sanctify You. O God of Yisrael, although You make the revelation of Your power dependent on Yisrael's service it is You alone who gives strength and power to the people. <i>Elohim</i> is intrinsically blessed!	(לו) נִרְאָא אֱלֹהִים מִמִּקְדָּשֶׁיךָ אֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא נִתֵּן עוֹז וְתַעֲצֻמוֹת לְעַם בְּרוּךְ אֱלֹהִים:

Tehillim 69

King David describes the anguish he experienced in being considered a stranger among his own people, as well as the anguish of the Jewish people in being exiled among the nations.

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the One who grants eternal victory, <i>Al Shoshanim</i> – for the roses [i.e., in honor of Israel which is likened to a rose among thorns]. <i>LeDavid</i> – By David.	(א) לְמִנְצַח עַל שׁוֹשָׁנִים לְדָוִד:
(2) Save me, <i>Elohim</i> , O just God; the floodwaters of history have risen up to inundate and overwhelm my soul.	(ב) הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי אֱלֹהִים כִּי בָאוּ מִים עָד נַפְשִׁי:
(3) I have sunk in the mire of the shadowy deep; I can no longer stand; I have entered deep waters, and a whirlpool is carrying me away.	(ג) טָבַעְתִּי בֵּין מְצוֹלָה וְאִין מַעֲמָד בְּאֶתִּי בְּמַעֲמָקֵי מַיִם וְשִׁבְלַת שְׁטַפְתָּנִי:
(4) I am weary of crying out; my throat burns; my eyes are worn out [exhausted] from hoping [waiting] for my God.	(ד) יָגַעְתִּי בִקְרָאִי נָחַר גְּרוֹנִי כָּלוּ עֵינַי מִיַּחַל לֵאלֹהִי:
(5) Those who hate me for no reason are more numerous than the hairs on my head; those who wish to cut me down have become empowered; they are truly false enemies; they accuse me and force me to return things that I never stole in the first place.	(ה) רַבּוּ מַשְׁעֲרוֹת רֹאשִׁי שִׁנְאֵי חֲנָם עֲצָמוֹ מִצְמִיתִי אִיבֵי שֶׁקֶר אֲשֶׁר לֹא גָזַלְתִּי אֲזִי אָשִׁיב:
(6) <i>Elohim</i> , O just God, You know; You are aware of my foolishness; my wrongdoings are not hidden from You.	(ו) אֱלֹהִים אַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ לְאוֹלָתִי וְאֲשָׁמוֹתַי מִמֶּךָ לֹא נִכְחָדוּ:
(7) Let not those who hope in You be ashamed on my account, O <i>Adonai YHVH</i> (read: <i>Elohim</i>), Lord of hosts; let not those who seek You be embarrassed because of me, O <i>Elohei Yisrael</i> .	(ז) אַל יִבְשׁוּ בִי קְוִיךָ אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה צְבָאוֹת אַל יִכְלָמוּ בִי מִבִּקְשֶׁיךָ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
(8) For You alone I endured disgrace; my face was covered with shame.	(ח) כִּי עָלִיד נִשְׁאֲתִי חֲרָפָה כִּסְתָה כְּלָמִי כְּנִי:
(9) Dear God! How unbearable my pain; nobody even recognizes me; I am like a stranger to my brothers; I am considered a bastard in their eyes; an alien to my mother's children.	(ט) מוֹזֵר הָיִיתִי לְאַחִי וְנִכְרִי לִבְנֵי אִמִּי:
(10) For the jealousy of Your house [the extreme righteousness of my father and my brothers] has consumed me [i.e., it has prevented them from seeing the good in me]; the disgraces of those who disgrace You have fallen upon me.	(י) כִּי קִנְאָת בֵּיתְךָ אֲכָלְתָּנִי וְחֲרָפוֹת חוֹרְפֶיךָ נָפְלוּ עָלַי:
(11) I fast in order to clean myself before You; I cry for the constriction of my soul; this too they use to cast aspersions on me.	(יא) וְאַבְכָּה בְּצוֹם נַפְשִׁי וְתִהְיֶה לְחֲרָפוֹתַי לִי:
(12) I attempt to atone for all my sins by making sackcloth my clothing; but this too they use as an excuse; I am a mockery to them.	(יב) וְאַתָּנָה לְבוּשִׁי שֶׁקֶ וְאַהִי לָהֶם לְמַשָּׁל:

⁹⁵ Or: "[But to arouse His mercies, Hashem requires that we:] Give strength to *Elohim* [the *Shekhinah*, the specific mode of divine providence] whose pride rests upon Yisrael and [by virtue of our service] whose strength resides in the heights."

(13) Those who sit at the gate of the city converse about me; drunkards make up songs about me.	(יג) יִשְׁיחוּ בִּי יִשְׁבִּי שְׁעַר וְנִגְיָנוֹת שׁוֹתִי שִׁכְרִי:
(14) While they are busy mocking me, however I, for my part, I offer my self in prayer to You, <i>Hashem</i> , O merciful God, in a moment of divine favor. <i>Elohim</i> , O just God, in the abundance of Your loving-kindness, answer me with the assurance of Your deliverance.	(יד) וְאֲנִי תַפְלִי לְךָ יְהוָה עֵת רְצוֹן אֱלֹהִים בָּרַב חֶסֶדְךָ עֲנֵנִי בְּאַמֶּת יִשְׁעֶךָ:
(15) Rescue me from sinking in the mud; do not let me drown; save me from my enemies and from depths of the waters the spiritual forces that threaten to engulf my soul.	(טו) הַצִּילֵנִי מִטֵּיט וְאַל אֶטְבְּעָה אֲנֻצָּלָה מִשְׁנְאֵי וּמִמַּעֲמָקֵי מַיִם:
(16) Do not let the whirlpool carry me away; do not allow the abyss to swallow me; do not let the well into which I have fallen close its mouth on me.	(טז) אַל תִּשְׁטַפְּנִי שְׂבִלַת מַיִם וְאַל תִּבְלַעֵנִי מִצּוֹלָה וְאַל תֵּאָטֵר עָלַי בְּאֵר פִּיהָ:
(17) Answer me, <i>Hashem</i> , O merciful God, for Your kindnesses are the highest good; turn to me with the overflowing abundance of Your mercies.	(יז) עֲנֵנִי יְהוָה כִּי טוֹב חֶסֶדְךָ כָּל־רַחֲמֶיךָ פִּנָּה אֵלַי:
(18) Please do not hide Your face from Your servant for I am in great pain; quickly, answer me.	(יח) וְאַל תִּסְתֵּר פָּנֶיךָ מֵעַבְדְּךָ כִּי צָר לִי מִהֵרָה עֲנֵנִי:
(19) O draw near to my soul; redeem her now; redeem me lest my enemies become emboldened.	(יט) קְרִבָּה אֶל נַפְשִׁי גְאֹלָה לְמַעַן אֵיבֵי פִדְנִי:
(20) You know and are fully aware of how much disgrace I have endured; it is all before You: the shame and humiliation I have endured at the hands of my enemies.	(כ) אַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ חֲרַפְתִּי וּבִשְׁתִּי וְכָל־מַתִּי נִגְדָּךְ כָּל צוּרְדִּי:
(21) Humiliation has broken my heart; I have fallen ill from so much suffering; I keep hoping for a reassuring nod, but it doesn't come; I await the comforters, but I haven't found any.	(כא) חֲרַפָּה שִׁבְרָה לְבִי וְאֲנוּשָׁה וְאִקְוָה לְנוֹד וְאֵין וְלִמְנַחֲמִים וְלֹא מְצֹאתִי:
(22) For when I break my fast, instead of comfort and reassurance they give me a meal of gall; they satiate my thirst with vinegar.	(כב) וַיִּתְּנוּ בִּבְרוּתִי רֹאשׁ וּלְצִמָּאִי יִשְׁקוּנִי חֲמֶץ:
(23) O let their own tables laid before them be turned against them; let their own hopes for wellbeing become their trap.	(כג) יְהִי שִׁלְחָנָם לִפְנֵיהֶם לִפְחַ וְלִשְׁלוּמִים לְמוֹקֵשׁ:
(24) Let their eyes be darkened, prevented from seeing; do not let them stand firm on their feet.	(כד) תַּחֲשַׁכְנָה עֵינֵיהֶם מֵרְאוֹת וּמִתְנִיָּהֶם תִּמְיֵד הַמַּעַד:
(25) Pour Your wrath down upon them; let the heat of Your anger pursue them and overtake them.	(כה) שִׁפְךָ עֲלֵיהֶם זַעֲמֶךָ וַחֲרוֹן אַפְּךָ יִשְׁיגֵם:
(26) Let their high towers become desolate; let their tents be devoid of anyone to inhabit them.	(כו) תְּהִי טִירָתָם נִשְׁמָה בְּאַהֲלֵיהֶם אַל יְהִי יוֹשֵׁב:
(27) For they pursued [i.e., they went further than was called for to afflict] the people whom You chastised; they claim that they are merely afflicting those whom You have already designated as dead corpses.	(כז) כִּי אַתָּה אֲשֶׁר הִכִּיתָ רִדְפוּ וְאַל מִכְאוֹב חֲלָלִיךָ יִסְפְּרוּ:
(28) Add this premeditated crime to their list of sins [consider them twice guilty as is befitting]; do not consider them worthy of Your charity.	(כח) תִּנָּה עוֹן עַל עוֹנָם וְאַל יִבְאוּ בְּצִדְקָתְךָ:
(29) Erase them from the book of life; inscribe them not in the same book as the righteous.	(כט) יִמְחוּ מִסֵּפֶר חַיִּים וְעַם צְדִיקִים אַל יִכְתְּבוּ:
(30) But as for me—I am weak and afflicted; Your salvation alone, <i>Elohim</i> , will give strengthen me.	(ל) וְאֲנִי עָנִי וְכוֹאֵב יִשׁוּעֶתְךָ אֱלֹהִים תִּשְׁגְּבֵנִי:
(31) I will then praise Your Name, <i>Elohim</i> , with song and magnify You with thanksgiving.	(לא) אֶהַלֵּל שֵׁם אֱלֹהִים בְּשִׁיר וְאֶגְדִּלְנוּ בְּתוֹדָה:

(32) O may my song be pleasing to You, <i>Hashem</i> , more pleasing than a bull-ox with its proud horns and cloven hooves.	(לב) וְתִיטֵב לַיהוָה מְשׁוֹר פֶּר מִקְרָן מִפְּרִיס:
(33) See, O you humble of spirit, and rejoice; you who seek <i>Hashem</i> , may your hearts revive!	(לג) רְאוּ עֲנוּיִם יִשְׁמְחוּ דְרָשֵׁי אֱלֹהִים וַיְחִי לִבְבָּכֶם:
(34) For <i>Hashem</i> hears the cry of the downtrodden; He will never deride the prayer of the prisoners.	(לד) כִּי שָׁמַע אֶל אֲבִיוֹנִים יְהוָה וְאֵת אֲסִירָיו לֹא בָזָה:
(35) Praise Him, all you hosts of heaven and earth, the seas and all life-forms in them.	(לה) יְהַלְלוּהוּ שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ יָמִים וְכָל רֶמֶשׂ בָּם:
(36) For <i>Elohim</i> will redeem <i>Tziyon</i> and re-build the cities of <i>Yehudah</i> ; the tribes of <i>Yisrael</i> will dwell there again and inherit it anew.	(לו) כִּי אֱלֹהִים יוֹשִׁיעַ צִיּוֹן וַיְבַנֶּה עָרֵי יְהוּדָה וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם וִירְשׁוּהָ:
(37) The offspring of His servants will inherit it; lovers of His Name will become its permanent dwellers.	(לז) וְזֶרַע עֲבָדָיו יִנְחִלֶיהָ וְאֹהֲבֵי שְׁמוֹ יִשְׁכְּנוּ בָּהּ:

Tehillim 70, Tehillim 71**Tehillim 72**

(1) <i>LiShlomo</i> – A Psalm by David for Shlomo: <i>Elohim</i> , God of justice, bestow Your judgment on the king, and Your merciful justice on the king's son.	(א) לְשִׁלְמֹה אֱלֹהִים מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ לְמֶלֶךְ תֵּן וְצִדְקָתְךָ לְבֶן מְלָךְ:
(2) Give him the wisdom to judge Your people with equity, and Your poor with justice.	(ב) יִדִּין עַמְּךָ בְּצֶדֶק וְעֲנִיֶיךָ בְּמִשְׁפָּט:
(3) The mountains will then yield peace for the people, and the hills too, in the merit of <i>tzedakah</i> when the people employ the good they have received not only for their own advantage but for the welfare of their fellow man.	(ג) יִשְׂאוּ הָרִים שְׁלוֹם לְעָם וּגְבָעוֹת בְּצִדְקָה:
(4) May he defend the right of the poor of the people, be a deliverer of the children of the needy, and crush anyone who would oppress them.	(ד) יִשְׁפֹּט עֲנִיִּי עִם יוֹשִׁיעַ לְבָנֵי אֲבִיוֹן וַיִּדְכָּא עוֹשֵׂק:
(5) So that they may fear You as long as the sun shines, and before the moon, throughout all generations.	(ה) יִירָאוּךָ עִם שֶׁמֶשׁ וְלַפְּנֵי יָרֵחַ דּוֹר דּוֹרִים:
(6) May his words descend and enter their hearts like rain upon mown grass, as showers that water the earth.	(ו) יֵרֵד כְּמָטָר עַל גֶּזַז כְּרִיבִים וְזִרְיָף אֶרֶץ:
(7) Let the righteous flourish in his days, and bring abundant peace until the moon will be needed no more.	(ז) יִפְרַח בְּיָמָיו צְדִיק וְרֵב שְׁלוֹם עַד בְּלִי יָרֵחַ:
(8) Let him rule from sea to sea, and from the great river to the ends of the earth.	(ח) וַיֵּרֶד מִיָּם עַד יָם וּמִנְהָר עַד אֶפְסֵי אֶרֶץ:
(9) Let nobles kneel before him, and his enemies lick the dust.	(ט) לִפְנָיו יִכְרְעוּ צִיִּים וְאִיְבָיו עָפָר יִלְחֲכוּ:
(10) Let the kings of <i>Tarshish</i> and of distant islands pay tribute, and the kings of <i>Sheba</i> and <i>Seba</i> offer gifts.	(י) מְלָכֵי תְרָשִׁישׁ וְאִיִּים מִנְחָה יִשִּׁיבוּ מְלָכֵי שֶׁבָּא וְסֶבְאָה אֲשָׁכַר יִקְרִיבוּ:
(11) Let all kings bow down before him, and all nations serve him.	(יא) וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לוֹ כָּל מְלָכִים כָּל גּוֹיִם יַעֲבֹדוּהוּ:
(12) For he will rescue the needy when he cries out, and the poor, and the one who has no one to assist him.	(יב) כִּי יִצִּיל אֲבִיוֹן מִשּׁוּעַ וְעֲנִי וְאִין עֲזָר לוֹ:
(13) He will pity the poor and the needy, and he will deliver the souls of the needy.	(יג) יַחֲסֵם עַל דָּל וְאֲבִיוֹן וְנַפְשׁוֹת אֲבִיוֹנִים יוֹשִׁיעַ:
(14) He will redeem their soul from oppression and violence, and their blood will be precious in his eyes.	(יד) מִתּוֹךְ וּמִחֲמָס יִגְאֹל נַפְשָׁם וַיִּיקָר דָּמָם בְּעֵינָיו:
(15) The poor man will then live, for the king will support him	(טו) וַיְחִי וַיִּתֵּן לוֹ מִזֶּהָב שֶׁבָּא וַיִּתְּפֹלֵל

from the gold of <i>Sheba</i> ; the poor man will then pray for him constantly, and bless him every day.	בְּעֵדוֹ תָּמִיד כָּל הַיּוֹם יְבָרְכֶנָּהוּ:
(16) May the borders of the grainfields in the land extend to the top of the mountains; may the sound of its harvest resound like <i>Lebanon</i> ; but more than all this, may the people blossom forth from the cities like the grass of the earth.	(טז) יְהִי פֶסֶת בֵּר בְּאַרְץ בְּרֹאשׁ הָרִים יִרְעַשׂ כָּלִבְנוֹן פְּרִי וַיִּצְיָצוּ מֵעִיר כְּעֵשֶׂב הָאָרֶץ:
(17) May his name endure forever; may his name be perpetuated in progeny before the sun; may all nations bless themselves by him, and praise him in their progress.	(יז) יְהִי שְׁמוֹ לְעוֹלָם לִפְנֵי שֶׁמֶשׁ יִנּוֹן (ינין) שְׁמוֹ וַיִּתְּבְּרוּ בוֹ כָּל גּוֹיִם יִאֲשְׁרוּהוּ:
(18) Blessed is <i>Hashem</i> , the One God, the God of Israel, who alone does wonders.	(יח) בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עֹשֶׂה נִפְלְאוֹת לְבָדּוֹ:
(19) May the Name of His glory be blessed and revealed in the world and forever; may the entire earth be filled with His radiant glory, <i>amen</i> and <i>amen</i> .	(יט) וּבָרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹדוֹ לְעוֹלָם וַיִּמְלֵא כְּבוֹדוֹ אֶת כָּל הָאָרֶץ אָמֵן וְאָמֵן:
(20) Then the prayers of David, the son of Yishai, will come to an end.	(כ) כָּלוּ תַּפְלוֹת דָּוִד בֶּן יִשָּׁי:

Tehillim 73, Tehillim 74, Tehillim 75, Tehillim 76

Tehillim 77

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach al yedutun</i> — Dedicated to the One who grants spiritual fortitude to weather the judgments meted out by the <i>hand</i> of His divine providence. ⁹⁶ A cutting psalm by Asaph.	(א) לְמִנְצַחַח עַל יְדוּתוֹן {יְדִיתוֹן} לְאַסָּף מִזְמוֹר:
(2) [I, Israel, lift up] my voice to <i>Elohim</i> (<i>Hashem's</i> attribute of justice) and I cry out; [I, Israel, lift up] my voice to <i>Elohim</i> and He listens to me.	(ב) קוֹלִי אֶל אֱלֹהִים וְאֶצְעָקָה קוֹלִי אֶל אֱלֹהִים וְהֶאֱזִין אֵלַי:
(3) On the day of my distress, I sought You, <i>Adonai</i> (the <i>Shekhinah</i> , God's indwelling presence that accompanies the souls of Israel in exile); in the night of my exile my hand—the suffering dealt me—is long drawn out and does not subside; my soul refuses to be consoled. ⁹⁷	(ג) בַּיּוֹם צָרָתִי אֲדַנִּי דְרָשְׁתִּי יְדִי לִילָה נִגְרָה וְלֹא תַפּוּג מֵאֲנָה הַנָּחַם נִפְשִׁי:
(4) <i>Elohim</i> , I remember You [when I reflect upon the kindnesses that You have done for me in the past], and I groan; I try to speak, but my spirit is enshrouded in darkness [wondering if You will ever take notice of me again], <i>selah</i> . ⁹⁸	(ד) אֲזַכְּרָה אֱלֹהִים וְאֶהְמָיָה אֲשִׁיחָה וְתִתְּעַטֵּף רוּחִי סִלָּה:

⁹⁶ On Psalm 39:1, Hirsch writes, "In *Baba Batra* 14b, *Yedutun* is mentioned among the psalmists whose songs are contained in *Sefer Tehillim*. In Psalm 77, however, the superscription reads *LaMenatzeyach al yedutun*. In that instance, *yedutun* would very definitely refer not to a singer, but to the theme of the psalm...Therefore we believe that in this psalm too (Psalm 39, as in Psalm 77), *yedutun* would be part of the description of the contents of the psalm rather than the name of a person...[From the root *yad*, hand, it would be refer here to] an act of God's hand, part of the providence of His almighty power...[*Yedutun* expresses] God's sovereignty in general as well as individual acts of divine providence."

⁹⁷ Rashi, Radak, and Metzudot David understand *yadi* (my hand) as *makati* (my wound, my suffering) [as in Exodus 9:3, "behold, Hashem's hand will be against your livestock"], and the entire phrase *yadi lailah nigrav velo tafug* as "in this exile which is like nighttime, it [my hand, my wound, my suffering] flows with puss and bitterness that does not cease." Targum Yonathan understands, "On the day of my affliction, I sought instruction from Hashem, that He would bring His spirit of prophecy upon me (as in Ezekiel 37:1, "*Hayta alai yad Hashem*—God's hand was upon me," and II Kings 3:15, "*Vatehi alai yad Hashem*—God's hand came upon me," i.e., prophecy); in the night my eye flowed with tears that would not cease..." Hirsch writes, "I sought God's support but my hand with which I sought to cling to Him for support melted and flowed away into the night without ceasing; I was unable to acquire the spiritual and moral energy I needed to soar up to God. Indeed, my strength failed perceptibly, and ebbed away into the night of suffering which was round about me."

⁹⁸ Why does his spirit refuse to be consoled? Rashi: "When I remember Hashem's former kindnesses (embodied symbolically in Hashem's right hand), and I contemplate/meditate/reflect upon those kindnesses [i.e., that they are no more; that I have been abandoned], I become faint." Hirsch: "When I wish to reflect upon God, I become agitated; if I attempt to meditate, to activate my intellect, my spirit becomes enshrouded. My every effort at spiritual growth ends in failure." Malbim: "The more he remembers Hashem's 'right-hand' support in former times, the more he feels abandoned; this is the meaning of *ve'ehmayah*, groaning and wailing from a sense of

(5) You hold [open] the guardians of my eyes [my eyelids] [thereby preventing me from sleeping]; I feel crushed and broken and cannot speak. ⁹⁹	(ה) אֲחֻזַּת שְׁמֵרוֹת עֵינַי נִפְעַמְתִּי וְלֹא אֲדַבֵּר:
(6) I ponder the good that You did for me in days of old, in years long past.	(ו) חֲשַׁבְתִּי יָמִים מִקֶּדֶם שָׁנוֹת עוֹלָמִים:
(7) I recall my song in the night [during this long exile which is likened to night, I remember the song I joyously played when I felt Your love, and how the awareness of Your presence was thus awakened within my heart]; I converse with my heart, and my spirit searchingly asks:	(ז) אֲזַכֵּרָה נְגִינָתִי בַלַּיְלָה עִם לִבִּי אֲשִׁיחָה וַיִּחַפֵּשׁ רוּחִי:
(8) <i>Adonai</i> , will You desert me and cast me off forever? Will You never again desire me and let me find favor in Your eyes as You once did? ¹⁰⁰	(ח) הֲלָעוֹלָמִים יִזְנַח אֲדָנִי וְלֹא יִסִּיף לְרִצּוֹת עוֹד:
(9) Have You cancelled out [rescinded] Your loving-kindness forever? Have You unalterably declared [decreed and sworn that You will not restrain Your anger] for generation upon generation?	(ט) הָאָפֶס לְנֶצַח חֲסִדוֹ גָּמַר אֲמָר לְדֹר וָדֹר:
(10) O loving God (<i>EI</i>), have You forgotten how to show graciousness [how to be merciful and loving even if and when we are not deserving]? Have You angrily shut off Your compassion forever [never to openly reveal it again], <i>selah</i> ?	(י) הֲשָׁכַח חֲנוּת אֵל אִם קָפַץ בָּאֵף רַחֲמָיו סָלָה:
(11) Then I said [realized], it is to inspire me with awe and trembling [and thereby to bring me to repentance]; [that is why] the loving right hand of the Most High has changed. ¹⁰¹	(יא) וְאָמַר חֲלוּתִי הִיא שָׁנוֹת יָמִין עָלְיוֹן:
(12) I recall [and I urge my people to recall] the great deeds that You, <i>Yah</i> , performed for us; I bring to mind the wonders You performed for us in the past.	(יב) אֲזַכֵּר {אֲזַכֵּר} מַעֲלָלֵי יְהוָה כִּי אֲזַכֵּרָה מִקֶּדֶם פְּלֹאֵךְ:
(13) I ponder the totality of Your work [the overriding divine plan that is leading to the ultimate redemption], and I meditate upon Your great deeds [the individual acts that all together will be revealed to have been part of this overriding plan].	(יג) וְהִגִּיתִי בְּכָל פְּעֻלָּךְ וּבַעֲלִילוֹתֶיךָ אֲשִׁיחָה:

abandonment, followed by *sichah*, whispering that borders on complete silence, and finally *ve'titatef ruchi*, which means enshrouded spirit, and indicates a state of swooning from weakness to the point of fainting."

⁹⁹ Metzudot David: "From the magnitude of my pain, I am unable to sleep, for it is as if You are holding my eyelids open and preventing me from sleeping." Only Rashi sees this as if he cannot open his eyes: "*Shmurot* (guardians) refers to *ashmurot lailah* (divisions, literally 'guard watches' of the night), times when a person awakens from his sleep refreshed. This is not so of me. During this night of exile, my eyelids are glued together like a man who has fallen into a deep sleep as a result of the unbearable suffering he endures." Hirsch: "Israel cries out in exile: And in addition to all this agony, You have held fast the guards (lids) of my eyes, so that I stared out sleeplessly into the night, and *nif'amti*, I feel as I have been crushed (literally 'stunned by the blow of a hammer'); I became as one paralyzed."

¹⁰⁰ Malbim: "Once Hashem wants something, it is forever. It is thus impossible that He would forsake us completely and forever. Thus, if now He has distanced Himself from us, it is because He made His closeness to us *conditional* on our actions. If so, if we return to Him and better our ways, His will reveal that His original positive desire toward us has never changed."

¹⁰¹ "Va'omar *chaloti hee*." Rashi and Metzudot David understand *chaloti* as *lehachaloti*, *le'yareni* (to cause me to tremble, to frighten me, to bring me to awe) (from *cheel ve'raadah*, fear and trembling) in order to bring me to repentance. Based on the noun *chalal* (corpse), Radak sees it as death, and thus translates the entire verse, "And if I feel as if I am about to die due to the length of the exile, I bring to mind how Hashem aroused His loving hand and brought me forth from the subjugation of Egypt and Babylon." While Hirsch is the only one to understand *chaloti* as deriving from *chilul* (profanation), he still agrees in principle with the above. He thus writes, "*Chalal* is to have lost one's life, either in the physical or in the moral sense, 'to be beaten to death' or 'to be desecrated,' 'to be profaned.' Israel thus says, 'My becoming profane—herein lies the explanation for what would seem like a change in the right hand of the Most High. Actually neither God nor His loving right hand have changed; it is only I that have changed for the worse, for I have forfeited the sacred character of my life...I thought it was God that had changed...but it was actually a change in me that necessitated a type of Divine discipline and guidance different from that which I had experienced in the past.'" Daat Mikra (Amos Chakham, Mossad HaRav Kook) translates *chaloti* as "my prayer" (from Exodus 32:11, "*Vay'chal Moshe*—Moshe entreated") and understands our verse thus, "After having complained, I now understand that I have no recourse but to pray and entreat (*le'hitpallel ule'chalot*) Hashem; and my prayer is: '*Shenot yamin Elyon*—may the Most High awaken His right hand again (*shenit*).'"

(14) O <i>Elohim</i> , Your way is in holiness [You sanctify Your name by meting out justice to the wicked]. Which of their gods is as great as <i>Elohim</i> ?	(יד) אֱלֹהִים בְּקֹדֶשׁ דְּרָכָךְ מִי אֵל גָּדוֹל כָּאֱלֹהִים:
(15) You are <i>HaEl</i> (Hashem's attribute of loving-kindness) who alone does wonders. O make Your invincible power known among the nations!	(טו) אַתָּה הָאֵל עֹשֶׂה פֶלֶא הוֹדַעְתָּ בְּעַמִּים עֶזְדָּךְ:
(16) You redeemed Your people with Your outstretched arm [revealed miracles], the children of Yaacov and Yoseph, <i>selah</i> .	(טז) גָּאֲלַת בְּזְרוּעַ עֲמֹךְ בְּנֵי יַעֲקֹב וְיוֹסֵף סֵלָה:
(17) The waters beheld You, <i>Elohim</i> , the waters of the Red Sea beheld You and shook from dread; even the depths trembled.	(יז) רְאוּךָ מַיִם אֱלֹהִים רְאוּךָ מַיִם יַחֲלּוּ אֶף יִרְגְּזוּ תַהֲמוֹת:
(18) The clouds poured forth water; the skies roared with thunder; Your arrows [lightning bolts] went forth.	(יח) זָרְמוּ מַיִם עֲבוֹת קוֹל נָתְנוּ שִׁחָקִים אֶף חֲצִצִיד יִתְהַלְכוּ:
(19) The sound of Your thunder rolled in the firmament; lightning bolts lit the world; the earth trembled and quaked to its very foundations.	(יט) קוֹל רַעֲמֶךָ בְּגִלְגַּל הָאִירוּ בְּרָקִים תִּבֵּל רִגְזָה וַתִּרְעַשׂ הָאָרֶץ:
(20) Your path cut right through the sea and Your lane passed through mighty waters; and yet [when the miracle of the splitting of the Red Sea was over] Your footsteps could not be recognized. ¹⁰²	(כ) בַּיָּם דְּרָכָךְ וּשְׁבִילְךָ {וּשְׁבִילֶיךָ} בְּמַיִם רַבִּים וְעֵקֶבוֹתֶיךָ לֹא נִדְעוּ:
(21) You led Your people as a flock, by the hand of Moshe and Aharon.	(כא) נָחִיתָ כְּצֹאן עֲמֹךְ בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן:

Tehillim 78

Tehillim 79

(1) A chant to cut away the powers of darkness by Asaph: <i>Elohim</i> , nations have entered Your inheritance [<i>Eretz Yisrael</i>]; they have defiled Your Holy Palace [<i>Beit HaMikdash</i>] and made <i>Yerushalayim</i> into a ruins.	(א) מִזְמוֹר לְאַסָּף אֱלֹהִים בָּאוּ גוֹיִם בְּנִחְלָתְךָ טָמְאוּ אֶת הַיֵּכָל קִדְּשְׁךָ שָׂמוּ אֶת יְרוּשָׁלַם לְעֵיִים:
(2) They have left/thrown the corpses of Your servants as food to the birds of the heaven; the flesh of Your devoted ones to the beasts of the earth.	(ב) נָתְנוּ אֶת נַבְלַת עַבְדֶּיךָ מֵאֲכָל לְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם בָּשָׂר חֲסִידֶיךָ לְחִיתוֹ אֶרֶץ:
(3) They shed their blood like water round about <i>Yerushalayim</i> ; there is no one left alive to bury them.	(ג) שָׁפְכוּ דָמָם כַּמַּיִם סְבִיבוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאֵין קוֹבֵר:
(4) We have suffered the derision of our neighbors; we have been scorned and humiliated by those around us.	(ד) הֵיִינוּ חֲרָפָה לְשִׁכְנֵינוּ לַעַג וְקֶלֶס לְסִבִּיבוֹתֵינוּ:
(5) O <i>Hashem</i> , merciful God, how long? Will You be angry forever? How long will Your zealousness for that which is right burn like fire?	(ה) עַד מָה יְהוָה תִּאָּנֵף לְנֹצֵחַ תִּבְעֵר כְּמוֹ אֵשׁ קִנְאָתְךָ:
(6) Pour Your anger upon the nations who do not acknowledge You and upon governments that refuse to proclaim Your Name.	(ו) שֹׁפֵךְ חֲמָתְךָ אֶל הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִדְעוּךָ וְעַל מַמְלָכוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמְךָ לֹא קִרְאוּ:
(7) For it [Your jealousy for the righteousness of Your Name]	(ז) כִּי אָכַל אֶת יַעֲקֹב וְאֶת נֹהוּ הַשָּׁמוּ:

¹⁰² Hirsch: "Verses 15-20 together constitute one clause, of which verse 21 is the concluding sentence. In verses 15-16, Asaph contemplated the spiritual and moral repercussions of the Exodus from Egypt. In verses 17-20, we have a description of Israel's subsequent progress through the Red Sea with all the attendant phenomena that...involved temporary suspension of the basic laws of nature...Then, after He had accomplished what He had set out to do, His 'footsteps could not be recognized,' all of nature reverted to its ordinary routine, without showing the least trace of the agitation and upheaval it had just experienced. And what, indeed, was the purpose of these extraordinary, world-shaking acts of God? 'You led Your people as a flock, by the hand of Moshe and Aharon.' You paved the way for the continued leadership of Your people at the hands of Moshe and Aharon. It was from their hands that Israel was to accept the Torah, the revelation of Your will, to the guidance of which they were to entrust themselves as a flock commits itself to its shepherd. Israel was to remain loyal to this Torah and to obey it unswervingly, however difficult might be the paths into which it might lead [however sinister the forces of evil it would have to encounter], and however obscure might seem the goals to which it is directed."

devoured Yaacov; only then were they able to destroy Your House. ¹⁰³	
(8) Do not recall our former sins; rather send Your mercies speedily toward us, for we have fallen very low.	(ח) אֵל תִּזְכֹּר לָנוּ עֲוֹנֹת רִאשֹׁנִים מִהָרָא יִקְדָּמוֹנוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ כִּי דָלוּנוּ מְאֹד:
(9) O God of our salvation, help us for the sake of the honor of Your Name; save us and cleanse us of all our sins for the sake of Your Name!	(ט) עֲזָרְנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵנוּ עַל דְּבַר כְּבוֹד שְׁמֶךָ וְהַצִּילֵנוּ וְכַפֵּר עַל חַטֹּאתֵינוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ:
(10) Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?" Let the avenging of the blood of Your servants that has been shed be made manifest among the nations before our very eyes.	(י) לָמָּה יֹאמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם אֵיזָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם יִוָּדַע בְּגוֹיִם (בְּגִיִּים) לְעֵינֵינוּ נִקְמַת דָּם עֲבָדֶיךָ הַשְׁפֹּךְ:
(11) Let the moans of the imprisoned souls come before You; release those who are condemned to death by the power of loving-kindness of Your outstretched arm.	(יא) תְּבוֹא לַפְּנֵיךָ אֲנֻכַּת אֶסִּיר כָּגֹדֶל זְרוּעֶךָ הוֹתֵר בְּנֵי תְמוּתָהּ:
(12) Recompense our neighbors sevenfold in their bosom for the slander with which they have insulted You, Adonai.	(יב) וְהִשָּׁב לְשֹׁכְנֵינוּ שִׁבְעָתַיִם אֶל חֵיקֵם חֲרָפָתָם אֲשֶׁר חָרְפוּךָ אֲדֹנָי:
(13) As for us, Your people and the flock of Your pasture, we will thank and acknowledge You forever; we will transmit Your unending praises from generation to generation!	(יג) וְאֶנְחֵנוּ עִמָּךְ וְצֹאן מְרִעִיתְךָ נֹדֶה לָּךְ לְעוֹלָם לְדוֹר וָדוֹר נִסְפָּר תְּהִלָּתְךָ:

Tehillim 80**Tehillim 81**

<i>When we realize the fairness of Hashem's judgments, we are ennobled by the suffering we must endure:</i>	
(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach Al HaGitit</i> – Dedicated to the One who grants victory to Israel even through suffering. ¹⁰⁴ A song by	(א) לְמִנְצֵיךָ עַל הַגִּתִּית לְאַסָּף:

¹⁰³ Hirsch: "The subject of 'devoured' is the preceding 'Your Name' in verse 6: In reality, it was Your Name that devoured Yaacov, because Yaacov was no longer worthy of bearing it. Hence it was Your Name—and not our foes—that won the victory. And yet, they thought that they had destroyed Your House" (Hirsch, *ad loc.*).

The source for this idea is in the midrash (*Eikhah Rabbati* 1:43): "An accuser leaped up before the Throne of Glory and said: 'Shall a wicked man (Nevuchadnezzar) boast that he has destroyed the House of God and burned His Sanctuary?! Let a fire from heaven descend immediately and burn it [before he does].' This is the meaning of the verse, 'From above, He has sent fire to burn my insides' (Lamentations 1:13). Rabbi Yehoshua said: This is what the Prophet meant when he said, 'Take the millstones and grind flour' (Isaiah 47:2). People do not grind *flour*; they ground *wheat* into flour! How can you *grind* flour! However, Jerusalem said to Babylon, 'If fire had not been sent to burn me from above, you could never have overcome me. A dead lion you have killed; ground flour you have ground; a burnt city you have burnt...'"

Rabbi Chayim of Volozhin explains: "How did 'nations defile the Abode of Your Holiness...and destroy Your House'? They were able to do so because Israel had already weakened and damaged the power of holiness in the world. Only then was Nevuchadnezzar able to destroy the First Temple and Titus the Second. They only destroyed *below* what had already been destroyed *above*. This is what our sages meant when they said, 'ground flour you have ground.' For only once our sins had damaged the supernal universes—which are none other than the *Beit HaMikdash* above—were they able to destroy the Sanctuary below" (*Nefesh HaChayim* 1:4).

¹⁰⁴ This psalm was sung in the *Beit HaMikdash* every fifth day of the week, as well as on *Rosh Hashanah*. Its main theme is the Exodus from *Mitzrayim* (Egypt). The superscription reads: *LaMenatzeyach Al HaGitit LeAsaph*. A *Menatzeyach* is a conductor, and refers to Hashem. "*Al HaGitit*" means literally, "upon the wine-press." We have rendered it, "through suffering." In his commentary to Psalm 8, Rabbi Hirsch explains: "The word *Gat* is used...as an expression for grievous catastrophes...This figure of speech, however, indicates that what is meant is only apparent destruction, while in reality the painful, bruising pressure such as occurs during the wine-pressing operation does not destroy but only brings out all the fine and noble essence that was locked within the crushed grape. Thus, the superscription of *Al HaGitit* would characterize the content of a psalm as a meditation upon the ennobling effect of those afflictions decreed by God for our moral betterment..."

Similar to the image of the wine-press, the *Midrash (Shemot Rabbah Tetzaveh* 36:1) likens Israel to an olive tree. Just as an olive must be crushed in a press to bring forth its oil, so the purpose for which Israel suffers persecution is in order to perfect it and eventually shine its light to all mankind.

Yes, suffering ennobles man, but only when he is able to use to it transcend himself and experience reality on a completely different level. Of course, this is a ladder of many rungs. It begins with knowing of the existence of the *Menatzeyach*. Once that realization hits us, we may never be the same. For we will realize that we have been

Asaph:	
(2) Sing joyously to <i>Elohim</i> , our innermost strength; stir yourselves to thank the God of <i>Yaacov</i> .	(ב) הֲרִנְנוּ לֵאלֹהִים עֲזָזְנוּ הָרִיעוּ לֵאלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:
(3) Take up a cutting-chant; sound a tambourine, a pleasant harp, and a lyre.	(ג) שָׂאוּ זִמְרָה וּתְנוּ תֶף כְּנֹר נְעִים עִם נָבֶל:
(4) Blast a <i>shofar</i> at the beginning of the month, when the New Moon is yet concealed, in honor of <i>Rosh Hashanah</i> our day of celebration.	(ד) תִּקְעוּ בַחֲדָשׁ שׁוֹפָר בַּכֶּסֶה לְיוֹם חֲגֹנוּ:
(5) For it is a law for Israel; on this day the God of <i>Yaacov</i> sits in judgment.	(ה) כִּי חֹק לְיִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא מִשְׁפָּט לֵאלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:
<i>Yoseph's suffering preceded his elevation to the highest office under Pharaoh in Mitzrayim:</i>	
(6) He ordained it in remembrance of Yehoseph when he was released from the dungeon on <i>Rosh Hashanah</i> and went forth to rule the land of <i>Mitzrayim</i> . It was then that Yoseph said: I have heard a language I never knew.	(ו) עֲדוּת בִּיהוֹסֵף שָׁמוּ בְּצִאתוֹ עַל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שֶׁפֶת לֹא יָדַעְתִּי אֲשַׁמַּע:
<i>The Nation of Israel suffered terrible oppression before the Exodus:</i>	
(7) God says: Many years later, on the same day, I began freeing Yoseph's people from the servitude of carrying bricks and the menial labor of boiling lime; I removed their shoulder from the burden; their hands were freed from the kiln.	(ז) הִסִּירוֹתַי מִסָּבֵל שְׁכֻמוֹ כִּפְיוֹ מִדּוֹד תַּעֲבֹרָנָה:
<i>Hashem continued saving us at the Red Sea, at Marah, and at Massah U'Merivah—all so that we would recognize Him and know that it is He alone who fulfills our deepest longings:</i>	
(8) And I continued rescuing you when you called out in distress on the shores of the Red Sea; when you complained against Me at <i>Marah</i> , I did not pay attention, but answered you. True I tested you but I did not fail to bring forth water from the rock when you complained at the Waters of <i>Merivah</i> , <i>selah</i> .	(ח) בְּצָרָה קָרָאתָ וְאֶחֱלָצְךָ אֶעֱנֶךָ בְּסִתָּר רַעַם אֶבְחָנְךָ עַל מִי מְרִיבָה סֵלָה:
(9) O My people, hear Me when I admonish you; O Israel, if you could only hear Me [i.e., My deepest calling to you]:	(ט) שְׁמַע עַמִּי וְאֶעֱיֶדְהָ בְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם תִּשְׁמַע לִי:
(10) Let no alien power reside within you, and do not bow down before any external force.	(י) לֹא יִהְיֶה בְּךָ אֵל זָר וְלֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְאֵל נָכָר:
(11) I am YHVH (<i>Adonai</i>) your God who lifts you up out of the land of <i>Mitzrayim</i> [the land of double binds and double constrictions]; ¹⁰⁵ open your mouth wide, articulate your prayer to	(יא) אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הַמַּעֲלֶיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הָרֹחֵב פִּיךָ וְאֶמְלֵאֲהוּ:

perceiving only a minute fraction of reality, that beyond the information (and the pain) we can access with our five senses, a vast world of meanings and interconnections exists which is orchestrated by none other than the Grand Master, that therefore nothing "just happens," but rather all is part of a single Unified Plan for Mankind and Creation. This is the meaning of our verse 11, "I am Hashem your God who lifts you up out of the land of *Mitzrayim*." *Mitzrayim* is a double form of the noun *metzarim*, the narrow straits and double bind constrictions that hold us in bondage. Our exodus from these double binds is through the power of knowing, "I am Hashem your God."

Again, this is like a great ladder which we must alight at the bottom and ascend. In our psalm, this ascent begins in verses 4-5, which allude to Hashem's judgment on *Rosh Hashanah*. As The Day of Judgment, *Rosh Hashanah* teaches us that all suffering is decreed by God and is therefore for man's ultimate good. Verse 6 takes us back in time to ancient *Mitzrayim* where Yoseph suffered prior to being released from prison and catapulted to the position of Pharaoh's chief advisor over all Egypt. Verse 7 jumps ahead to Israel's bondage in *Mitzrayim* and the Exodus therefrom. Verse 8 reminds us how Hashem continued saving them in the wilderness, first at the Red Sea, then at *Marah*, and finally at *Massah U'Merivah*. Verses 9-11 call upon us to internalize the lesson learned from those experiences, namely, that it is Hashem alone who fulfills our deepest longings. Verses 12-14 put the finger on the exact reason behind Israel's suffering in its long, tear-laden exile among the nations of the world. Verses 15-17 speak of what would happen if Israel could transcend the cycle of sin and suffering. We explore these ideas in depth in our commentary.

¹⁰⁵ "I am Hashem your God who lifts you out of the land of *Mitzrayim*." Israel is a nation set apart from other nations. Hashem not only once took us out of Egypt, He continues to take us out and lead us ever closer to the ultimate Mount Sinai and Mount Moriah at the end of history. He does this by constantly refining, extracting, and elevating us from our constrictions. (*Mitzrayim*, as we have seen, derives from the word *metzarim*, narrow straits or constrictions.) This is one explanation for why there are so many commandments in the Torah that involve separating a portion of something off from its base in order to elevate and sanctify not only itself but the base from which it was taken. We see this is the *mitzvah* of *bikurim* (first fruits to be brought to *Yerushalayim* and eaten in joyous celebration and sanctity by

Me, express your deepest longing, pray for the ultimate redemption and I will fulfill it. ¹⁰⁶	
<i>The real reason behind all our suffering: we fail to hear Him calling us:</i>	
(12) But My people did not hear/heed My voice; Israel did not wish to submit to Me.	(יב) וְלֹא שָׁמַע עַמִּי לְקוֹלִי וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא אָבָה לִי:
(13) So I sent them away to follow their hearts' fantasies, to pursue their own schemes and to suffer the consequences.	(יג) וְאֶשְׁלַחֵהוּ בְּשִׁרְיוֹת לִבָּם יֵלְכוּ בְּמוֹעֲצוֹתֵיהֶם:
(14) Still, if at any time My people would hear/listen to Me; if Israel would pursue My pathways;	(יד) לֹא עַמִּי שָׁמַע לִי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּדַרְכֵי יְהִלְכוּ:
<i>If we could only transcend the cycle of sin and suffering:</i>	
(15) I would immediately subdue their enemies and turn My hand back against their oppressors.	(טו) כִּמְעֵט אוֹיְבֵיהֶם אֲכַנֶּיַע וְעַל צָרֵיהֶם אָשִׁיב יָדִי:
(16) He would turn His hand against those who hate YHVH [His infinite compassion], against those who deny Him [His existence, His providence, His love]. Then their time would come to blot out their memory forever, whereas Israel's time would extend forever.	(טז) מִשְׁנְאֵי יְהוָה יִכְחֹשׁוּ לוֹ וְיִהְיֶה עֲתָם לְעוֹלָם:
(17) He would then feed them [Israel], even the least of them from the purest wheat. Hashem Himself says: O Israel I would miraculously satiate you with honey that flows from dry rock!	(יז) וַיֹּאכִלֵהוּ מִחֶלֶב חֹטָא וּמִצֹּר דָּבֵשׁ אֲשַׁבֵּיעֶנּוּ:

Tehillim 82

(1) <i>Mizmor</i> – A cutting-psalm by Asaph: <i>Elohim</i> stands with the litigants and the witnesses in every tribunal of God; He also sits in the midst of the <i>elohim</i> -judges to render judgment.	(א) מִזְמוֹר לְאַסָּף אֱלֹהִים נֹצֵב בַּעֲדַת אֵל בִּקְרֵב אֱלֹהִים יִשְׁפֹּט:
(2) Therefore, I ask you, you judges: How long will you continue to render distorted judgment and show partiality towards those who perpetrate evil, <i>selah</i> ?	(ב) עַד מָתִי תִשְׁפָּטוּ עוֹל וּפְגִי רָשָׁעִים תִּשְׁאוּ סֵלָה:
(3) Render fair judgment to the impoverished and the orphan; deal righteously with the afflicted and the needy.	(ג) שִׁפְטוּ דַל וְיָתוֹם עֲנִי וְרֵשׁ הַצָּדִיקוּ:
(4) Rescue the impoverished and the destitute; rescue them from the hand of the lawless.	(ד) פִּלְטוּ דַל וְאֶבְיוֹן מִיַּד רָשָׁעִים הַצִּילוּ:
(5) But the judges have been blinded by bribes; they pretend they do not know; as a result they cannot discern between right and wrong; as long as they continue to walk in their own darkness, the very foundations of earth [society] will vacillate and totter.	(ה) לֹא יָדְעוּ וְלֹא יָבִינוּ בַּחֹשֶׁכָה יִתְהַלְכוּ מוֹטוֹ כָּל מוֹסְדֵי אָרֶץ:
(6) I had always thought that you judges were supposed to be partners with <i>Elohim</i> , and that you were extensions of the	(ו) אֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי אֱלֹהִים אַתֶּם וּבְנֵי עֲלִיוֹן כְּלַכְכֶּם:

the farmers); *challah* dough, *terumah* and *maaser* of animals and of fruits, first shearings of the sheep—portions of which were all used in the *Beit HaMikdash* and/or to support the *cohanim* and the *leviim*; *peah*-corners of the fields set aside for the poor; the *omer* of barley on the second day of *Pesach*, and many others.

All these embody the idea that separating off a part of something and dedicating it completely to Hashem retroactively elevates and consecrates the entire base from which it came. This is exactly the case with Israel. Israel represents all the sparks of holiness that are scattered and trapped in the raw material of creation. When Hashem separates Israel out from *Mitzrayim* [this itself goes back to Adam who was the *challah-terumah* (dedicated essence) of the *adamah* (*Bereshit Rabbah* 14:1)], He elevates them from the narrow confines and constricted consciousness of materiality. In this way, He sanctifies them and prepares them to receive the Torah and thereby become the nation through which all of creation will eventually be rectified.

¹⁰⁶ *Harchev peekha va'amalehu* means literally, "open your mouth wide and I will fill it." In English this sounds like a play on words, but we actually learn a double lesson from this: When we take the time to speak to Hashem in detail in our own words and articulate all our deepest needs, desires, hopes, and disappointments, etc., to Him, we are promised that He will not only *fill* our mouths with the right words to say, but—having learned to ask for what He wants us to ask for—the final redemption and the ultimate revelation of Godliness on earth—He will *fulfill* our prayers and bless us.

Most High by virtue of the power you wield.	
(7) The truth is, however, that you will die just like the people you oppressed and you will stumble in your deceit like any official who misuses his vested authority.	(ז) אֲכֵן כְּאָדָם תָּמוּתוֹן וּכְאֶחָד הַשָּׂרִים תִּפְּלוּ:
(8) Arise, <i>Elohim</i> , O God of justice, judge the earth, for You control the destiny of all the nations.	(ח) קוֹמָה אֱלֹהִים שִׁפְטָה הָאָרֶץ כִּי אַתָּה תִּנְחַל בְּכָל הַגּוֹיִם:

Tehillim 83

(1) <i>Shir Mizmor</i> – A song, a cutting-psalm by Yachziel of the family of Asaph. ¹⁰⁷	(א) שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר לְאַסָּף:
(2) <i>Elohim</i> , O God of justice, do not be silent! <i>El</i> , O God of love, do not continue to hold Your peace; do not remain still!	(ב) אֱלֹהִים אֵל דָּמִי לֹךְ אַל תִּחַרֶשׁ וְאַל תִּשְׁקֵט אֵל:
(3) For behold, Your enemies are in an uproar and those who hate You have raised their heads in defiance.	(ג) כִּי הִנֵּה אוֹיְבֶיךָ יִהְיִיוּ וּמִשְׁנָאִיךָ נִשְׂאוּ רֹאשׁ:
(4) They plot secretly against Your people and conspire against the hidden treasures of Your Torah.	(ד) עַל עֵמֶךָ יַעֲרִימוּ סוֹד וְיִתְעַצּוּ עַל צְפוּנֶיךָ:
(5) They say to each other, "Come let us cut them off from being a nation so that the miraculous providence that accompanies the name <i>Yisrael</i> shall be remembered no more!"	(ה) אָמְרוּ לָכּוּ וְנִכְחִידֵם מִגּוֹי וְלֹא יִזְכֹּר שֵׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹד:
(6) For they convene together with a unanimous heart [the only time they overcome their hatred of each other is] when they make a covenant against You.	(ו) כִּי נוֹעֲצוּ לֵב יַחְדוֹ עָלֶיךָ בְּרִית יִכְרְתוּ:
(7) This includes the tent-dwellers of <i>Edom</i> and <i>Yishmael</i> ; <i>Moav</i> and the <i>Hagrim</i> ;	(ז) אֲהֲלֵי אֲדוֹם וַיִּשְׁמַעְאֵלִים מוֹאָב וְהַגְרִים:
(8) <i>Geval</i> , <i>Ammon</i> , and <i>Amalek</i> ; <i>Philistim</i> , together with the inhabitants of <i>Tzor</i> .	(ח) גְּבַל וְעַמּוֹן וְעַמְלָק פִּלְשֶׁת עִם יִשְׁבִּי צוֹר:
(9) Even <i>Ashur</i> has joined the others; they lent a hand and gladly supported the children of <i>Lot</i> [<i>Moav</i> and <i>Ammon</i>], <i>selah</i> .	(ט) גַּם אַשּׁוּר נִלְוָה עִמָּם הָיוּ זְרוֹעַ לִבְנֵי לוֹט סֵלָה:
(10) O do to them as You did to <i>Midian</i> in the valley of <i>Moreh</i> ! Do to them as You did to <i>Sisra</i> and <i>Yavin</i> in the valley of <i>Kishon</i> !	(י) עֲשֵׂה לָהֶם כְּמַדִּין כְּסִיסְרָא כְּיָבִין בְּנַחַל קִישׁוֹן:
(11) <i>Sisra</i> and <i>Yavin</i> were destroyed at <i>Ein Dor</i> ; they became dung for the soil.	(יא) נִשְׁמְדוּ בְּעֵין דֹּאר הָיוּ דָמָן לְאַדְמָה:
(12) Make [destroy] them and their nobles like <i>Orev</i> and <i>Zeev</i> , and like <i>Zevach</i> and <i>Tzalmuna</i> , all the princes of <i>Midian</i> .	(יב) שִׁיתֵּמוּ נְדִיבֵימוֹ כְּעֹרֵב וּכְזָאֵב וּכְזֶבֶח וּכְצִלְמֹנֶעַ כָּל נְסִיכֵימוֹ:
(13) They had said: "Let us inherit the pleasant habitations of <i>Elohim</i> for ourselves!"	(יג) אָשֶׁר אָמְרוּ נִירְשָׁה לָנוּ אֶת נְאוֹת אֱלֹהִים:
(14) O my God, make them as chaff, as stubble before the wind.	(יד) אֱלֹהֵי שִׁיתֵּמוּ כְּגִלְגָּל כְּקֶשׁ לִפְנֵי רוּחַ:
(15) Pursue them as a fire spreads throughout a forest and	(טו) כְּאֵשׁ תִּבְעֵר יַעַר וּכְלֵהְבָה תִּלְהֵט

¹⁰⁷ According to Malbim, this psalm is based on II Chronicles 2:20. The armies of Moav and Ammon came against King Yehoshaphat of Yehudah who immediately called the entire nation together to cry out to Hashem for miraculous assistance. At one point, a spirit of prophecy came into Yachziel, one of the descendants of Asaph. He said: "Listen, all Yehudah and the inhabitants of Yerushalayim, and King Yehoshaphat: Thus says Hashem to you: 'Do not be afraid or dismayed in the face of this great multitude. The battle is not yours, but Hashem's...It is not for you to fight this battle. Just take up your positions, stand still, and you will see Hashem's salvation for you, O Yehudah and Yerushalayim...' (II Chronicles 20:15-17). The account continues and describes how Hashem confounded Israel's enemies until they completely destroyed one another. Here, as well, the Psalmist recounts the inimitable propensity of the nations of the world to get together (despite their hatred of one another) in order to fight against and destroy Israel. He asks that Hashem protect us against their plots and conspiracies, and destroy them so that all mankind will finally recognize and submit to His absolute sovereignty.

as a flame that sets mountains ablaze.	הָרִים:
(16) Pursue them with Your hurricane wind and terrify them with Your desert whirlwind!	(טז) כֵּן תִּרְדָּפֵם בְּסַעֲרֵךְ וּבִסּוּפֶתֶךְ תִּבְהִלֵּם:
(17) Fill their faces with shame when they try to seek the good graces of Your Name, <i>Hashem</i> !	(יז) מִלֵּא פְּנֵיהֶם קָלוֹן וַיִּבְקְשׂוּ שְׁמֶךָ יְהוָה:
(18) Let them be ashamed and dismayed forever; let them be humiliated and perish.	(יח) יִבְשׂוּ וַיִּבְהֲלוּ עַד־עַד וַיִּחָפְרוּ וַיֵּאָבְדוּ:
(19) Then they will realize that You alone, <i>Hashem</i> , are the Supreme God; Your Name reigns, presides over every detail of earth existence.	(יט) וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי אַתָּה שְׁמֶךָ יְהוָה לְבִדָּךְ עֲלִיוֹן עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ:

Tehillim 84

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the Master Symphony Conductor of Creation who grants victory [to His people to overcome the suffering of exile, through melodies played] on the <i>gitit</i> . A chant by the descendants of <i>Korach</i> :	(א) לְמִנְצַח עַל הַגִּתִּית לְבְנֵי קָרַח מְזֻמּוֹר:
(2) How beloved are Your dwelling-places, <i>Hashem</i> , Lord of Israel's hosts.	(ב) מִה יְדִידוֹת מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֶיךָ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת:
(3) My soul yearns and pines for the courtyards of <i>YHVH</i> , Eternal Source of Being; it is there that both my heart and my flesh will sing with joy to the Living God.	(ג) נִכְסְפָה וְגַם כָּלְתָה נַפְשִׁי לַחֲצֵרוֹת יְהוָה לִבִּי וּבִשְׂרִי יִרְנְנוּ אֶל אֵל חַי:
(4) Even as the sparrow finds her house, and the swallow its own nest where it had sheltered its young, so we will find our home on Your altars, O <i>YHVH</i> , Eternal God of hosts, my King and my God!	(ד) גַּם צִפּוֹר מְצָאָה בֵּית וּדְרוֹר קֵן לָהּ אֲשֶׁר שָׁתָה אֶפְרָחֶיהָ אֶת מִזְבְּחוֹתֶיךָ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת מֶלְכִּי וְאֱלֹהֵי:
(5) Happy are those who dwell [i.e., who perceive their lives here on earth as a sojourn] in Your House; they will merit to sing praises and reflect their gratitude back to You forever, <i>selah</i> .	(ה) אֲשֶׁרִי יוֹשְׁבֵי בֵיתְךָ עוֹד יִהְלָלוּךָ סֵלָה:
(6) Happy is the man whose inner strength grows out of his trust in You; happy are those who internalize the pathways of Your Torah in their hearts.	(ו) אֲשֶׁרִי אָדָם עוֹז לוֹ בְּךָ מְסֻלוֹת בְּלִבָּבָם:
(7) When they pass through the valley of <i>bakha</i> -weeping, they transform it into a spring; it is bedecked with blessings by the early rain.	(ז) עֲבְרִי בְּעֵמֶק הַבִּכָּא מַעֲיֵן יִשְׁתִּיאוּהוּ גַם בְּרָכוֹת יַעֲטֶה מוֹרָה:
(8) They stride from strength to strength to finally appear before <i>Elohim</i> in <i>Tziyon</i> .	(ח) יֵלְכוּ מִחִיל אֶל חִיל יִרְאֶה אֶל אֱלֹהִים בְּצִיּוֹן:
(9) <i>Adonai Elohim Tzevaot</i> , Almighty God of hosts, hear my prayer; O God of <i>Yaacov</i> , be attentive to my plea at all times, <i>selah</i> .	(ט) יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת שְׁמָעָה תְּפִלָּתִי הֶאֱזִינָה אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב סֵלָה:
(10) O <i>Elohim</i> , our shield, behold our yearning to see the face of Your anointed <i>mashiach</i> .	(י) מִגִּנְנוּ רָאָה אֱלֹהִים וְהִבֵּט פָּנָי מִשִּׁיחֶךָ:
(11) Since one day in Your courtyards surpasses a thousand years anywhere else, I would rather stand like a beggar at the threshold of the House of my God than dwell in comfort in the tents of lawlessness.	(יא) כִּי טוֹב יוֹם בַּחֲצִירֶךָ מֵאֶלֶף בַּחֲרָתִי הַסְתּוֹפֵף בְּבֵית אֱלֹהֵי מְדוּר בְּאֶהְלֵי רָשָׁע:
(12) <i>Hashem</i> (<i>YHVH</i>) is like a sun, and <i>Elohim</i> is like a shield; <i>Hashem</i> the Eternal will reveal His grace and His glory; He will not withhold goodness from those who walk in purity of heart.	(יב) כִּי שֶׁמֶשׁ וּמִגֵּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים חֵן וְכָבוֹד יִתֵּן יְהוָה לֹא יִמְנַע טוֹב לַהֲלֹכִים בְּתָמִים:
(13) <i>Hashem</i> (<i>YHVH</i>), Eternal God of hosts, happy is the man who trusts only in You!	(יג) יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֲשֶׁרִי אָדָם בֹּטָח בְּךָ:

Tehillim 85

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the One who grants victory to Israel in exile. A chant by the descendants of	(א) לְמִנְצַח לְבְנֵי קָרַח מְזֻמּוֹר:
--	--

<i>Korach:</i>	
(2) <i>Hashem</i> , You have been favorable to Your land in the past; You returned the captivity of <i>Yaacov</i> .	(ב) רָצִיתָ יְהוָה אֶרֶץ שְׁבִית (שבות) יַעֲקֹב:
(3) You forgave Your people's crime; You covered over all their mistakes, <i>selah</i> .	(ג) נָשָׂאתָ עוֹן עַמְּךָ כָּסִיתָ כָּל חַטָּאתָם סֵלָה:
(4) You withheld all Your displeasure; You retreated from the fierceness of Your anger.	(ד) אִסַּפְתָּ כָּל עִבְרָתְךָ הַשִּׁיבוֹת מִחֶרֶן אָפֶךְ:
(5) Please bring us back to You again, O God of our deliverance; and annul Your anger towards us.	(ה) שׁוּבוּנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵנוּ וְהַפֵּר כַּעֲסְךָ עִמָּנוּ:
(6) Will You remain angry with us forever? Will You maintain Your anger from generation to generation?	(ו) הֲלָעוֹלָם תִּאָּנֶף בְּנוֹ תִמְשֹׁךְ אָפֶךְ לְדֹר וְדֹר:
(7) Won't You revive us once more so that Your people will rejoice in You again?	(ז) הֲלֹא אַתָּה תִּשְׁוֹב תַּחֲיִינוּ וְעַמְּךָ יִשְׁמָחוּ בָּךְ:
(8) <i>Hashem</i> , show us Your loving-kindness and grant us Your salvation!	(ח) הֲרֹאנוּ יְהוָה חֲסִדְךָ וְיִשְׁעֶךָ תִּתֵּן לָנוּ:
(9) But I wish to hear, what does <i>Hashem</i> the all-Powerful say? Truly He speaks [promises] peace for His people and for all those who devote themselves to Him without thought of reward; just let them not turn back to their folly!	(ט) אֲשַׁמְעָה מֶה יִדְבֹּר הָאֵל יְהוָה כִּי יִדְבֹּר שְׁלוֹם אֶל עַמּוֹ וְאֶל חֲסִידָיו וְאֵל יִשְׁוֹבוּ לְכַסְלָה:
(10) O surely His deliverance is near for those who conscientiously revere Him; the time is close when He will cause the radiant glory of His indwelling presence to be revealed in our land.	(י) אֵךְ קָרוֹב לִירְאָיו יִשְׁעוֹ לְשָׁכֵן כְּבוֹד בְּאַרְצֵנוּ:
(11) Then, kindness and truth will finally have met; righteousness and peace will have kissed.	(יא) חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת נִפְגְּשׁוּ צְדָק וְשְׁלוֹם נִשְׁקִיו:
(12) But again truth must first spring forth from man down on the earth; until then, righteousness will merely look down from heaven.	(יב) אֱמֶת מֵאֶרֶץ תִּצְמַח וְצְדָק מִשָּׁמַיִם נִשְׁקִף:
(13) <i>Hashem</i> will also give that which is good, but our earth existence must first give forth its produce [fulfill its intended purpose]:	(יג) גַּם יְהוָה יִתֵּן הַטּוֹב וְאַרְצֵנוּ תִּתֵּן יְבוּלָה:
(14) Righteousness must proceed Him on earth; only then will He set His footsteps upon the way.	(יד) צְדָק לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְיֵשֶׁם לְדֶרֶךְ פְּעַמָּיו:

Tehillim 86

(1) <i>Tefillah LeDavid</i> – A Prayer by David: <i>Hashem</i> , incline Your ear, answer me, though I am poor and destitute of merit before You.	(א) תִּפְלֶה לְדוֹד הָטָה יְהוָה אָזְנוֹךְ עֲנֵנִי כִי עֲנֵי וְאֶבְיוֹן אָנִי:
(2) Safeguard my soul, for have I not devoted myself to You without thought of reward? O my God, deliver Your servant who looks trustingly only to You.	(ב) שְׁמֹרָה נַפְשִׁי כִּי חָסִיד אָנִי הוֹשַׁע עַבְדְּךָ אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵי הַבּוֹטֵחַ אֵלֶיךָ:
(3) <i>Adonai</i> , be gracious to me, for to You alone I call throughout the day.	(ג) חַנּוּנִי אֲדֹנָי כִּי אֵלֶיךָ אֶקְרָא כָּל הַיּוֹם:
(4) Bring joy to the soul of Your servant, for to You, <i>Adonai</i> , I have offered myself completely.	(ד) שִׂמַּח נַפְשׁ עַבְדְּךָ כִּי אֵלֶיךָ אֲדֹנָי נִפְשִׁי אֶשָּׂא:
(5) For You, <i>Adonai</i> , are good and forgiving; Your loving-kindness is unlimited for all who call upon You.	(ה) כִּי אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי טוֹב וְסֹלַח וְרַב חֶסֶד לְכָל קֹרְאֶיךָ:
(6) <i>Hashem</i> , be attentive to my prayer and my inner struggle	(ו) הֲאִזִּינָה יְהוָה תִּפְלִתִּי וְהִקְשִׁיבָה בְּקוֹל

to draw close to You; hear the call of my soul in the words of my pleas. ¹⁰⁸	תַּחֲנוּנוֹתַי:
(7) In particular on days when I am distressed, I will call upon You, for I know that You will answer me.	(ז) בַּיּוֹם צָרָתִי אֶקְרָאךָ כִּי תַעֲנֵנִי:
(8) <i>Adonai</i> , there is none like You among all the heavenly <i>elohim</i> -powers; none can do what You do and nothing takes place without Your willing it.	(ח) אֵין כָּמוֹךָ בָּאֱלֹהִים אֲדֹנִי וְאֵין כַּמַּעֲשֵׂיךָ:
(9) The day will therefore come when all the nations which You have made will come to bow down and subordinate themselves to You, <i>Adonai</i> ; they will give honor to and feel the overwhelming presence of Your Name.	(ט) כָּל גּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ יִבֹּאוּ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לִפְנֵיךָ אֲדֹנִי וַיִּכְבְּדוּ לְשִׁמְךָ:
(10) For You are very great in loving-kindness; You perform supernatural wonders and will lead mankind to recognize that You alone are <i>Elohim</i> .	(י) כִּי גָדוֹל אַתָּה וְעָשָׂה נִפְלְאוֹת אַתָּה אֱלֹהִים לְבַדְּךָ:
(11) <i>Hashem</i> , teach me the way behind all Your ways so that I may walk unwaveringly in Your truth; unify the contradictory pulls of my heart so that I may consciously revere Your Name.	(יא) הוֹרֵנִי יְהוָה דְּרֹכְךָ אֶהְלֶךְ בְּאַמְתְּךָ יִחַד לִבִּי לִירְאָה שְׁמֶךָ:
(12) <i>Adonai</i> my God, then I will thank and acknowledge You with my whole heart, and I will give honor to Your Name forevermore.	(יב) אוֹדֶךָ אֲדֹנִי אֱלֹהֵי בְּכָל לִבִּי וְאֶכְבְּדָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעוֹלָם:
(13) For You extended Your great loving-kindness to me; You rescued my soul from the deepest hell.	(יג) כִּי חֲסִדְּךָ גָדוֹל עָלַי וְהַצַּלְתָּ נַפְשִׁי מִשְׁאוֹל תַּחְתִּיָּה:
(14) <i>Elohim</i> , You rescued me from malicious men who rose up against me; You rescued me from an assembly of violent men who sought to destroy my soul; they were not mindful of You.	(יד) אֱלֹהִים זָדִים קָמוּ עָלַי וְעַדְתַּי עָרִיצִים בִּקְשׁוּ נַפְשִׁי וְלֹא שָׁמוּךְ לִנְגֹדָם:
(15) They do not realize that You, <i>Adonai</i> , are a merciful and gracious God, patient, and slow to anger; You bestow Your loving-kindness abundantly and truthfully and You have therefore not forsaken me.	(טו) וְאַתָּה אֲדֹנִי אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אָרַךְ אַפִּים וְרַב חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת:
(16) O turn to me now and be gracious to me; grant Your power to Israel Your servant, to persevere against all odds; help me, child of Your maidservant, to remain faithful to my people.	(טז) פָּנֵה אֵלַי וְחַנּוּנִי תִּנֵּה עֵזֶךָ לְעַבְדְּךָ וְהוֹשִׁיעָה לִּבִּי אֶמְתִּיךָ:
(17) Show me a sign of favor so my enemies will realize You are still with me and be ashamed. <i>Hashem</i> , let them know that it is You alone who have helped me and consoled me.	(יז) עֲשֵׂה עִמִּי אוֹת לְטוֹבָה וַיֵּרְאוּ שֹׁנְאָי וַיִּבְשׁוּ כִּי אַתָּה יְהוָה עֲזַרְתָּנִי וְנִחַמְתָּנִי:

Tehillim 87

(1) By the descendants of Korach, a chant song to cut through the barriers that prevent us from drawing close to God's holiness; its foundation is in the highest mountain peaks of holiness of our people.	(א) לִבְנֵי קָרַח מְזִמּוֹר שִׁיר יְסוּדָתוֹ בְּהֶרְרִי קִדְשׁ:
(2) <i>Hashem</i> loves the gates of <i>Tziyon</i> more than all the dwelling places of <i>Yaacov</i> .	(א) לִבְנֵי קָרַח מְזִמּוֹר שִׁיר יְסוּדָתוֹ בְּהֶרְרִי קִדְשׁ:
(3) O <i>Tziyon</i> glorious things are spoken of You, eternal city of God, <i>selah</i> .	(ג) נִכְבְּדוֹת מְדַבֵּר בְּךָ עִיר הָאֱלֹהִים סֵלָה:
(4) If I mention <i>Rahab</i> [Egypt] or <i>Babylon</i> to my friends, behold they will counter with the praise of <i>Philistia</i> , <i>Tzor</i> , or <i>Kush</i> [Ethiopia]. Of every one of these places it can said: "So-and-so was born there."	(ד) אֲזַכִּיר רֶהֱב וּבָבֶל לִידְעֵי הִנֵּה פִלְשֶׁת וְצָר עִם כּוֹשׁ זֶה יֵלֵד שָׁם:
(5) But of <i>Tziyon</i> it will be said: "Every single person who ever came there was reborn." The Most High will therefore	(ה) וּלְצִיּוֹן יֹאמַר אִישׁ וְאִישׁ יֵלֵד בָּהּ וְהוּא

¹⁰⁸ "Hear the call [of my soul in the words] of my pleas." Or "Listen closely to [the tone of my] voice [as I articulate] my pleas."

establish Her preeminence forever.	יְכוֹנֶנֶה עָלֵינוּ:
(6) When <i>Hashem</i> makes a register of the nations, He will count each Jew that is found among them whose ancestors were born in <i>Tziyon</i> , and He will say: "This one is destined to be reborn there [in <i>Tziyon</i>], <i>selah</i> ."	(ו) יְהוָה יִסְפֹּר בְּכֶתוּב עַמִּים זֶה יֵלֵד שָׁם סֵלָה:
(7) O <i>Tziyon</i> singers joining together in ecstatic dance will therefore never tire of singing Your praises: "The wellsprings of all prophetic inspiration are in You!"	(ז) וְשָׂרִים כְּחַלְלִים כָּל מַעֲיָנֵי בָךְ:

Tehillim 88, Tehillim 89

Tehillim 90

(1) <i>Tefillah LeMoshe</i> – A prayer by Moshe, the man of <i>Elohim</i> . <i>Adonai</i> , only You are steadfast and unchanging; You have been our sanctuary in every generation.	(א) תִּפְלֶה לַמָּשָׁה אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים אֲדֹנָי מַעוֹן אַתָּה הָיִיתָ לָנוּ בְּדֹר וָדֹר:
(2) Before the mountains were brought forth, before You even vacated a space within which to create an earth and a world for man—from the initial concealment to the most mundane aspects of this world—You alone have always been and will always be <i>EI</i> (the single almighty Force that moves all).	(ב) בְּטֶרֶם הָרִים יֵלְדוּ וְתַחֲלֹל אֶרֶץ וְתֵבֵל וּמַעוֹלָם עַד עוֹלָם אַתָּה אֵל:
(3) When they have fallen and forfeited their status as men, You bring men low until they are crushed; You then extend a hand to help them begin again, saying, "Return to Me, O children of Adam!"	(ג) תִּשָּׁב אָנוּשׁ עַד דָּכָא וְתֹאמַר שׁוּבוּ בְנֵי אָדָם:
(4) Indeed, in Your eyes, a thousand earth years are as a single day gone by, like a night-watch that passes in the blink of an eye.	(ד) כִּי אֶלֶף שָׁנִים בְּעֵינֶיךָ כְּיוֹם אֶתְמוֹל כִּי יַעֲבֹר וְאַשְׁמוּרָה בַּלַּיְלָה:
(5) Life is slept away as it flows into the currents of unrelenting time; in its morning, it is like grass that sprouts anew.	(ה) זִרְמַתָּם שָׁנָה יְהִיוּ בַּבֶּקֶר כְּחֻצִיר יַחֲלָף:
(6) In the morning it blossoms and its strength is renewed; by evening, it withers and dries.	(ו) בַּבֶּקֶר יֵצֵץ וְחֹלֶף לְעָרֵב יִמּוֹלֵל וַיֵּבֶשׁ:
(7) In the same way, we feel ourselves consumed by Your anger; we are terrified of Your burning wrath.	(ז) כִּי כָלִינוּ בְּאַפְךָ וּבַחֲמַתְךָ נִבְהַלְנוּ:
(8) You have set our wrongdoings before Yourself; the secrets of our youth lie exposed to the light of Your scrutiny.	(ח) שֵׁת עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ לִנְגִיד עֲלַמְנוּ לְמֹאֹר פְּנֶיךָ:
(9) All our days on earth have thus waned in Your displeasure; we have caused our years to dissipate like vapor [like a word, after having been spoken, dissipates in thin air].	(ט) כִּי כָל יָמֵינוּ פָּנוּ בַּעֲבָרְתְּךָ כָלִינוּ שָׁנֵינוּ כְּמוֹ הֶהָה:
(10) The years of our lives number seventy, and if we are strong, eighty, but the honor we attain in our short lives is wearisome and futile, for the end cuts us off swiftly and everything we have done flies away.	(י) יָמֵי שְׁנוֹתֵינוּ בָּהֶם שְׁבָעִים שָׁנָה וְאִם בְּגִבּוֹרֹת שְׁמוֹנִים שָׁנָה וְרֹהֶבָם עֲמַל וְאוֹן כִּי גַז חֵישׁ וְנִנְעָפָה:
(11) Who really understands the reason for the intensity of Your anger, or that Your displeasure is proportionate to one's fear of You? ¹⁰⁹	(יא) מִי יוֹדֵעַ עַז אַפְךָ וּכְיִרְאַתְךָ עֲבָרְתְּךָ:
(12) Teach us therefore to number our days so we will acquire a wise and understanding heart.	(יב) לְמִנּוֹת יָמֵינוּ כֵּן הוֹדַע וְנִבְיֵא לִבֵּב חֻכְמָה:
(13) Return, <i>Hashem</i> , how much longer will Your anger last? Reconsider and think favorably about Your servants.	(יג) שׁוּבָה יְהוָה עַד מָתִי וְהִנָּחֵם עָלַי עֲבָדֶיךָ:
(14) Saturate us every morning with Your loving-	(יד) שְׂבַעְנוּ בַּבֶּקֶר חֲסִדְךָ וְנִרְנָנָה וְנִשְׁמַחָה

¹⁰⁹ Hirsch: "Who on earth is capable of recognizing the force of Your anger as it moves on toward its true purpose? Who is wise enough to understand that You will step forth [i.e., amplify Your ire] against us only in that measure in which it is Your desire that we fear You? In other words, God's wrath goes forth with irresistible force toward the end that the ultimate goals of His rule be promoted, but His 'stepping forth' [with displeasure]—His intervention in the course of history—is 'in accordance with the fear of Him,' that is, in accordance with the extent to which He wishes us to fear Him. The purpose of His displeasure, in other words, is *yirah* (fear, reverence, awe)."

kindness; when we know that You love us we will be able to sing with happiness and rejoice throughout all our days and even the dark nights of our suffering.	בְּכֹל יְמֵינוּ:
(15) Grant us joy corresponding to the number of days of our affliction; grant us years for every day we saw trouble. ¹¹⁰	(טו) שְׂמַחְנוּ כִּימוֹת עֲנִיתֵנוּ שָׁנוֹת רָאִינוּ רָעָה:
(16) Let the truth of Your actions become evident to Your servants; let Your splendor rest upon their children.	(טז) יִרְאֶה אֶל עַבְדֶּיךָ פְּעֻלָּתְךָ וְהִדְרֶךָ עַל בְּנֵיהֶם:
(17) May the pleasantness of <i>Adonai</i> our God be [flow down] upon us; may He establish our endeavors above in eternity, and may He establish our endeavors below in this world. ¹¹¹	(יז) וְיִהְיֶה נֶעֱם אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ עָלֵינוּ וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנֵנָה עָלֵינוּ וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנֵנָה:

Tehillim 91

(1) Fortunate is the one who dwells under the concealment of the Most High; He will abide safely under the shadow of <i>Shadai</i> .	(א) יֵשֵׁב בְּסִתְר עֲלִיוֹן בְּצֹל שְׁדֵי יִתְלוֹנֹן:
(2) I will say to <i>Hashem</i> , "You alone are my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust!" ¹¹²	(ב) אֲמַר לַיהוָה מַחְסִי וּמְצוּדָתִי אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹטָח בּוֹ:
(3) I therefore say to you who seek protection in perilous times: Only He can rescue you from the trap that ensnares, from the deadly plague.	(ג) כִּי הוּא יִצִּילְךָ מִפֶּחַ יְקוֹשׁ מִדְּבַר הַוּוֹת:
(4) Only He can protect you in His arms, and give you refuge beneath His wings; His truth is a shield and an armor.	(ד) בְּאַבְרָתּוֹ יִסֹּךְ לְךָ וְתַחַת כְּנָפָיו תִּחָּסֶה צָנָה וְסִחְרָה אָמֵתוֹ:
(5) With His protection you will not fear the terror of night or the arrow that flies by day.	(ה) לֹא תִירָא מִפֶּחַד לַיְלָה מַחֵץ יְעוֹף יוֹמָם:
(6) With His protection you will not fear the plague that lurks in darkness or the epidemic that ravages at noon.	(ו) מִדְּבַר בָּאֵפֶל יִהְלֹךְ מִקְטֵב יְשׁוּד צָהָרִים:
(7) A thousand may fall at your left side and ten thousand at your right, but danger will not come near you.	(ז) יִפֹּל מִצְדְּךָ אֶלֶף וּרְבֵבָה מִיְמִינְךָ אֶלֶיךָ לֹא יָגֵשׁ:
(8) With your own eyes, however, you will see; you will witness the punishment that is in store for the wicked.	(ח) רַק בְּעֵינֶיךָ תִּבְטֹחַ וְשִׁלַּמְתָּ רָשָׁעִים תִּרְאֶה:
(9) On the other hand, when you or any man can say with all your heart: " <i>Hashem</i> , You alone are my refuge"—when you can make	(ט) כִּי אַתָּה יְהוָה מַחְסִי עֲלִיוֹן שְׁמַתָּ מְעוֹנְךָ:

¹¹⁰ Rashi: "Grant us joy, in the Messianic Age, according to the days of our affliction." According to the Midrash (*Pesikta Rabati* 1, p. 4a; *Yalkut Shimoni* 2:806, on Psalm 72:5), every day of affliction will be compensated by a year of joy.

¹¹¹ See Rashi here (based on *Tanchuma Pekudey* 11), "Moshe blessed them twice; once that the holiness of the *Shekhinah* would rest on the *Mishkan* that they had just built [i.e., heavenly matters], and once that there should be blessing in everything else they do [i.e., earthly matters]." See also the Gra (*Aderet Eliyahu*, *Mahadurah Chamishit*, page 297, on Numbers 24:22, "*ad mah ashur tishbeka*"), that the first *maaseh yadenu* (establish our endeavors) parallels the phrase *hashamayim shamayim laShem* (the heavens belong to Hashem; Ps. 115:16) and *hanistarot laShem* (the hidden things are God's business; Deut. 29:28), while the second *maaseh yadenu* (establish our endeavors) parallels *veha'aretz natan libnei adam* (but the earth He gave to the children of man; Ps. 115:16) and *vehaniglot lanu ulbanenu* (that which is revealed is for us and our children; Deut. 29:28). This is typical of the mathematical style of the Gra. Finally, see the explanation of *Matok MiDvash* on *Zohar Yitro* (2:93b), where he clearly states, "*Konena alenu*: May the *supernal* rectification and unification be done as is proper above by virtue of our fulfillment of the commandments; and *Konenehu*: May the proper rectification be applied to the *Malkhut* [below] as well, to unite *Malkhut* with *HaKadosh Barukh Hu* (the Holy One blessed-be-He) by virtue of our fulfillment of the commandments."

¹¹² Hirsch: "[I place my trust in] *Elyon*, the Most High, who dwells in utmost concealment; [in] *Shadai*, who reposes in shadowy eclipse." Moshe says: "*Hashem* has hitherto sat enthroned in secret as the *Elyon* [Most High]; it was His will to keep Himself invisible as *Shadai* [the One who sets limits and never fully reveals Himself]. But as for me, I call Him *Hashem* [He who is not subject to the laws of the world order which He Himself created and ordained], and *Elohai* [my personal God and savior]."

the Most High your sanctuary—	
(10) Then no evil will befall you and no plague will approach your tent.	(י) לֹא תֵאָנָה אֵלֶיךָ רָעָה וְנֹגַע לֹא יִקְרָב בְּאַהֲלֶךָ:
(11) For He will instruct His angels on your behalf, to protect you in all your ways.	(יא) כִּי מִלְאָכָיו יִצְוֶה לְךָ לְשֹׁמְרֶיךָ בְּכָל דְּרָכֶיךָ:
(12) They will carry you upon their palms, lest you strike your foot on a stone.	(יב) עַל כַּפֵּימָם יִשְׂאוּנֶךָ פֶּן תִּגַּף בְּאֶבֶן רִגְלֶךָ:
(13) You will tread without fear upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the lion cub and the serpent.	(יג) עַל שַׁחַל וּפְתָן תִּדְרֹךְ תִּרְמַס כְּפִיר וְתַנִּין:
(14) Hashem Himself will then declare concerning you: "I will rescue him because he places his desire in Me; I will elevate him because he yearns to know My Name.	(יד) כִּי בִי חֶשֶׁק וְאַפְלָטָהוּ אֲשַׁגְּבֶהוּ כִּי יָדַע שְׁמִי:
(15) "Let him call upon Me; I will answer him; I am with him in the midst of his distress; I will rescue him and bring him honor.	(טו) יִקְרָאֵנִי וְאֶעֱנֶהוּ עִמּוֹ אֲנֹכִי בְצָרָה אֲחַלְצֶהוּ וְאֶכְבְּדֶהוּ:
(16) "I will satisfy him with long life forever; in My salvation, I will reveal Myself to him."	(טז) אֲרֹךְ יָמִים אֲשַׁבֵּיעֶהוּ וְאֶרְאֶהוּ בִישׁוּעָתִי:

Tehillim 92

Shabbat is "the last deed that was first in thought." It symbolizes the seventh millennium, the World to Come, a taste of which we savor at the conclusion of every seven day cycle. In this psalm, which we sing every *Shabbat*, we jump ahead into the future, to the Great Sabbath, when Hashem's oneness and sovereignty will be fully revealed. From that high vantage point, we contemplate history.

(1) <i>Mizmor Shir</i> – A chant, a song in honor of the <i>Shabbat</i> day:	(א) מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר לַיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת:
(2) It is good to thank You, <i>Hashem</i> , and to cut through the barriers that obscure Your Name, O Most High.	(ב) טוֹב לְהַדוֹת לַיהוָה וּלְזַמֵּר לְשִׁמְךָ עָלֶיךָ:
(3) It is good to recount Your loving-kindnesses in the morning, and declare Your everlasting faithfulness during the darkest nights. ¹¹³	(ג) לְהַגִּיד בַּבֹּקֶר חֶסֶדְךָ וְאֱמוּנָתְךָ בַּלַּיְלוֹת:
(4) It is good to rise up to You With the <i>asor</i> [ten-stringed harp]; to rise up to You on the notes of a lyre, to meditate to the melody of a harp.	(ד) עָלֶי עֲשׂוֹר וְעָלֶי נָבֵל עָלֶי הַגִּיּוֹן בְּכִנּוֹר:
(5) In this way You cause me to feel the mental delight that comes from contemplating You through Your works, <i>Hashem</i> ; perceiving Your presence behind Your handiwork makes me rejoice.	(ה) כִּי שִׂמְחַתִּנִי יְהוָה בְּפַעֲלֶךָ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יָדֶיךָ אֲרַנֶּן:
(6) Thus, during the week, I become aware that the wonders of Your creation are truly great, <i>Hashem</i> ; on <i>Shabbat</i> , I realize that Your thoughts concerning mankind are so very deep.	(ו) מִה גָּדְלוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יְהוָה מְאֹד עִמָּקוֹ מַחְשְׁבֹתֶיךָ:
(7) A person who refuses to use his mind fails to grasp this; one who perverts his own intelligence is incapable of comprehending this:	(ז) אִישׁ בַּעַר לֹא יָדַע וְכָסִיל לֹא יָבִין אֶת זֹאת:
(8) When he sees the lawless thrive like grass and those who act wickedly prosper, it does not dawn on him that they are merely generating and hastening their own eternal desolation.	(ח) בְּפֶרֶחַ רָשָׁעִים כְּמוֹ עֵשֶׂב וַיִּצְיָצוּ כָל פְּעָלֵי אָנוֹן לְהַשְׁמָדָם עַד־עַד:
(9) But the truth is that You will remain forever on high, <i>Hashem</i> , and Your overriding plan for mankind will not be deterred by their wickedness!	(ט) וְאַתָּה מְרוֹם לְעֹלָם יְהוָה:

¹¹³ Rashi adds, "To recount Your kindnesses in the morning"—at the time of the Redemption. "And [declare] Your everlasting faithfulness during the [darkest] nights"—even when we suffer the *tzarot* (trials, sufferings) of exile [which is likened to the darkness of nighttime], for we have faith that You will keep Your promise to us.

(10) Indeed, Your enemies, <i>Hashem</i> , indeed, those who oppose You, will perish; all who act wickedly will disintegrate and be forgotten.	(י) כִּי הִנֵּה אֵיבֶיךָ יְהוָה כִּי הִנֵּה אֵיבֶיךָ יֵאָבְדוּ יִתְפָּרְדּוּ כָּל פְּעָלֵי אָוֶן:
(11) O <i>Hashem</i> , with the light of the great <i>Shabbat</i> You lift up my fallen horn like a proud antelope; You inject the oil of eternal newness into me.	(יא) וְתָרַם כְּרָאִים קֶרְנִי בְּלַתִּי בְּשֶׁמֶן רַעְנָן:
(12) My eyes will yet see the downfall of those who watch for mine; my ears will yet hear of the defeat of the wicked who rise up against me.	(יב) וְתִבֹּט עֵינַי בְּשׁוּרֵי בְּקָמִים עָלַי מִרְעִים תִּשְׁמַעְנָה אָזְנִי:
(13) The righteous will flourish like date-palms; they will rise up high like the cedars of <i>Lebanon</i> .	(יג) צָדִיק כְּתֹמֶר יִפְרַח כְּאַרְז בְּלִבְנוֹן יִשְׁגָּה:
(14) Planted in the House of <i>Hashem</i> , they will blossom forth into the courtyards of our God.	(יד) שְׁתּוּלִים בְּבֵית יְהוָה בְּחִצְרוֹת אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִפְרִיחוּ:
(15) They will still bear fruit in old age; they will remain full of resilience and newness forever.	(טו) עוֹד יִנוּבּוֹן בְּשִׁיבָה דְּשָׁנִים וְרַעְנָנִים יִהְיוּ:
(16) They will declare that <i>Hashem</i> is upright and straight; He is my Strength; with Him, there is no injustice.	(טז) לְהַגִּיד כִּי יֵשֶׁר יְהוָה צוּרִי וְלֹא עוֹלָתָהּ (עֲלָתָהּ) בּוֹ:

Tehillim 93

(1) The time will come when <i>Hashem's</i> sovereignty will finally be revealed; He will clothe Himself in majesty; <i>Hashem</i> will clothe Himself; He will gird Himself in order to reveal the invincible might of His Will; He will also firmly establish the world of men so that it totters no more.	(א) יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ גָּאוֹת לְבֹשׁ לְבֹשׁ יְהוָה עַז הַתְּאֵזֶר אֵף תִּכּוֹן תֵּבֵל בַּל תִּמּוֹט:
(2) Your throne will then stand firm, O You who are from eternity.	(ב) נִכּוֹן כְּסֵאךָ מֵאֵז מַעֲוֹלָם אֶתָּה:
(3) In the meantime, <i>Hashem</i> , the floodwaters of history have risen; the floodwaters of mighty empires have lifted up their voices against <i>Hashem</i> ; but just as floodwaters rise before they subside, so too, the rise of mighty empires is only a prelude to their decline.	(ג) נִשְׂאוּ נְהָרוֹת יְהוָה נִשְׂאוּ נְהָרוֹת קוֹלָם יִשְׂאוּ נְהָרוֹת דְּכִיָּם:
(4) More than the thunderous roaring of many waters flowing into the sea, mightier than the ocean breakers, <i>Hashem alone</i> [i.e., His sovereignty] is mighty on high. ¹¹⁴	(ד) מִקְלוֹת מַיִם רַבִּים אֲדִירִים מִשְׁבְּרֵי יָם אֲדִיר בְּמָרוֹם יְהוָה:
(5) <i>Yisrael</i> will therefore realize: Your testimonies are remarkably faithful; Mankind will realize: Holy is the only name fit for Your House, <i>Hashem</i> , for an infinite length of days.	(ה) עֲדֹתֶיךָ נֶאֱמָנוּ מְאֹד לְבֵיתְךָ נֶאֱוָה קֹדֶשׁ יְהוָה לְאָרֶךְ יָמִים:

Tehillim 94

(1) O loving God (<i>El</i>) who executes justice, merciful God (<i>YHVH</i>), O loving God (<i>El</i>) who executes justice, reveal Yourself.	(א) אֵל נִקְמוֹת יְהוָה אֵל נִקְמוֹת הוֹפִיעַ:
(2) Arise, O Judge of the earth; let the arrogant suffer the consequences of their actions.	(ב) הַנִּשְׂא שֹׁפֵט הָאָרֶץ הִשָּׁב גְּמוּל עַל גָּאִים:
(3) How long will the wicked, <i>Hashem</i> , how long will the wicked congratulate themselves?	(ג) עַד מָתִי רְשָׁעִים יְהוָה עַד מָתִי רְשָׁעִים יַעֲלִזוּ:
(4) They converse freely and openly about what they intend to carry out; they talk big; they boast—all those who perpetrate injustice.	(ד) יִבְעִיּוּ יִדְבְּרוּ עֵתְךָ יִתְאַמְּרוּ כָּל פְּעָלֵי אָוֶן:

¹¹⁴ The wars and conquests of the nations of the world are likened here to the waves of a stormy sea. *Hashem* is above the laws of history. He will therefore bring history to its promised conclusion, ultimate Redemption.

(5) <i>Hashem</i> , they crush Your people and they oppress Your inheritance!	(ה) עֲמָךְ יְהוָה יִדְכָּאוּ וְנַחֲלֶתְךָ יַעֲנוּ:
(6) They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder orphans!	(ו) אֶלְמָנָה וְגֵר יַהַרְגוּ וְיִתּוּמִים יִרְצְחוּ:
(7) And they say: God will not see, and the God of Yaacov will not consider!	(ז) וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא יִרְאֶה יְהוָה וְלֹא יִבִּין אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:
(8) But <i>you</i> consider, you senseless people, you fools; when will you become wise?	(ח) בִּינוּ בְּעֵרִים בָּעַם וְכִסְלִים מִתִּי תִשְׁכִּילוּ:
(9) Shall He who implants the ear not hear? Shall He who forms the eye not see?	(ט) הֲנֹטֵעַ אָזֶן הֲלֹא יִשְׁמָע אִם יַצֵּר עֵין הֲלֹא יִבִּיט:
(10) Shall He who punishes nations not correct? Shall He who teaches man knowledge not know?	(י) הֲיֹסֵר גּוֹיִם הֲלֹא יוֹכִיחַ הַמֶּלֶכֶד אָדָם דָּעֵת:
(11) <i>Hashem</i> knows men's thoughts; that they are illusory.	(יא) יְהוָה יֹדֵעַ מַחְשְׁבוֹת אָדָם כִּי הֵמָּה הַבֵּל:
(12) O <i>Yah</i> , fortunate is the person whom You discipline through suffering and thereby instruct in Your Torah.	(יב) אֲשֶׁרִי הַגֵּבֵר אֲשֶׁר תִּיַּסְרֵנּוּ יְהוָה וּמִתּוֹרַתְךָ תִּלְמָדֵנּוּ:
(13) You grant him tranquility in times of adversity, until a pit is dug for the wicked.	(יג) לְהַשְׁקִיט לוֹ מִיָּמֵי רָע עַד יִכְרֶה לְרָשָׁע שַׁחַת:
(14) For <i>Hashem</i> will never renounce His people, nor forsake His inheritance.	(יד) כִּי לֹא יִטֹּשׁ יְהוָה עַמּוֹ וְנַחֲלָתוֹ לֹא יַעֲזֹב:
(15) Indeed a time will come when judgment which is now perverted will again revert to justice and all the upright in heart will pursue it.	(טו) כִּי עַד צֶדֶק יֵשׁוּב מִשְׁפָּט וְאַחֲרָיו כָּל יֹשְׁרֵי לֵב:
(16) In the meantime, Israel asks mankind: Who is prepared to rise up for me against evildoers? Who will stand up on my behalf against those who perpetrate injustice?	(טז) מִי יָקוּם לִי עִם מַרְעִים מִי יִתְיַצֵּב לִי עִם פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן:
(17) But the truth is had <i>Hashem</i> not come to my assistance, my soul would long ago have been consigned to the silence of the grave.	(יז) לֹוִלִי יְהוָה עֲזָרְתָה לִי כִמְעַט שָׁכְנָה דוֹמָה נַפְשִׁי:
(18) When I thought my foot was slipping, <i>Hashem</i> , Your loving-kindness alone upheld me.	(יח) אִם אָמַרְתִּי מָטָה רַגְלִי חֲסָדְךָ יְהוָה יִסְעֵדֵנִי:
(19) When multitudes of thoughts warred within me, only Your consolations soothed my soul.	(יט) בָּרַב שְׂרָעָפִי בְּקִרְבִּי תִנְחוּמֶיךָ יִשְׁעִשְׁעוּ נַפְשִׁי:
(20) I asked myself: Can a tribunal that negates truth, or that makes the perversion of justice into law, be associated with You?	(כ) הֲיִחְבְּרֶךָ כֶּסֶף הוֹוֹת יַצֵּר עֵמֶל עָלַי חֶק:
(21) Can a tribunal have anything to do with You if it bands together to take the soul of the righteous and condemns innocent blood?	(כא) יִגֹּדּוּ עַל נַפְשׁ צַדִּיק וְדָם נָקִי יִרְשִׁיעוּ:
(22) In the face of all this evil, I realize that <i>Hashem</i> is my only refuge; my God is the only protecting shelter I seek.	(כב) וַיְהִי יְהוָה לִי לְמִשְׁגֵּב וְאֱלֹהֵי לְצוּר מִחְסִי:
(23) He will surely turn their own violence against them and cut them down through their own wickedness; <i>Hashem</i> our God will cut them down.	(כג) וַיֵּשֶׁב עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת אוֹנָם וּבִרְעָתָם יַצְמִיתֵם יַצְמִיתֵם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ:

Tehillim 95

As the week comes to an end, we are asked to look back and retrace our steps. On the one hand, the six preceding days have seen us involved in a struggle to maintain and enhance our material livelihood. Just as our three-dimensional physical reality is made up of six directions (north-south, east-west, up-down) all leading away from a center point, so the six days of the week represent our attempts to reach outside of ourselves and effect change in the world around us.

The *Shabbat*, on the other hand, is the center axis or focal point of the six days of the week. It is the goal

towards which all our activities lead us. It is on *Shabbat* that we can concentrate on enhancing our inner life and our connection to *Hashem*—the Ground of our being. It is on *Shabbat* that we acknowledge Hashem's ultimate authority and uninterrupted providence over all His creations. We place ourselves and the products of our labor into His service. In order to prepare to enter the inner world of the *Shabbat*, therefore, we sing six Psalms (95-99, 29)—one for each of the preceding six days—to elevate all of our outward endeavors into the holiness of *Shabbat*.

(1) Let us go forth from sadness and constriction and sing joyously to <i>Hashem</i> (the infinite One); let us arouse ourselves to thank the Rock of our salvation [the Ground of our existence].	(א) לְכוּ נִרְנְנָה לַיהוָה נִרְיָעָה לְצוּר יִשְׁעֵנוּ:
(2) Let us come before Him with thanks for the special providence with which He has led us from the very beginning; let us arouse ourselves to praise Him with chants that cut through all mental and emotional barriers.	(ב) נִקְדְּמָה פָּנֵינוּ בַּתּוֹדָה בְּזִמְרוֹת נִרְיָע לּוֹ:
(3) For <i>Hashem</i> is Omnipotent over all natural forces; He is the great King over all <i>elohim</i> -heavenly powers.	(ג) כִּי אֵל גָּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל עַל כָּל אֱלֹהִים:
(4) He holds the secrets of physical matter in His hand; the summits of man's mountain-peaks are also His.	(ד) אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ מַחְקֵרֵי אָרֶץ וְתוֹעֲפֹת הָרִים לּוֹ:
(5) The sea is His; He made it [its waters] gather together so that He could fashion the dry land like clay with His hands.	(ה) אֲשֶׁר לוֹ הַיָּם וְהוּא עָשָׂהוּ וַיִּבְשֹׁת יָדָיו יַצְרוּ:
(6) Come, therefore, let us prostrate ourselves and bow down; let us acknowledge and kneel before <i>Hashem</i> , the infinite Power who made us.	(ו) בָּאוּ נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִכְרַעָה נִבְרָכָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה עֲשֵׂנוּ:
(7) For He is our God and we are the people He shepherds; we are the flock He guides with His hand; O Israel, He is ready to reveal His hand in your life even today, if only you heed His call and return to Him wholeheartedly.	(ז) כִּי הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֶנְחֵנוּ עִם מְרֻעֵיתוֹ וְצֹאן יָדוֹ הַיּוֹם אִם בְּקֻלוֹ תִשְׁמָעוּ:
(8) <i>Hashem</i> says: "Do not harden your hearts as you did at <i>Merivah</i> , on the day of <i>Massah</i> in the desert." ¹¹⁵	(ח) אֵל תִּקְשׁוּ לִבְבְּכֶם כְּמִרְיָבָה כִּיּוֹם מַסָּה בַּמִּדְבָּר:
(9) It was then that your ancestors tried Me [My patience]; though they had seen My miraculous deeds, they tested Me to see whether I would continue to carry them even when they are not worthy.	(ט) אֲשֶׁר נִסּוּנִי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בְּחֲנוּנֵי גַם רָאוּ פִּעְלִי:

¹¹⁵ After crossing the Red Sea, Moshe led the Jewish people through the desert wilderness. Each stop along the way was designed to prepare the nation to receive the Torah and enter the land of Israel. The last stop before Mount Sinai was Rephidim. Here the people began to complain that they would die of thirst if they were not given some water to drink (Exodus 17).

The request for water was completely justified. Hashem therefore told Moshe to strike a rock from which water gushed forth for the entire nation and their livestock. However, the way they asked for water revealed something deeper that was bothering them: "The people began to quarrel with Moshe. 'Give us water to drink!' they exclaimed. 'Why are you quarreling with me?' Moshe asked. 'Aren't you really testing Hashem?' But the people were thirsty for water, so they began remonstrating against Moshe. 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt? Do you want to make us, our children, and our livestock die of thirst?'" (Exodus 17:2-3).

On one level their quarrelsomeness showed that even after experiencing constant miracles in Egypt and at the Red Sea, they still did not believe or trust in Hashem to continue to sustain them. They were constantly in doubt and refused to believe that they were worthy of having their destiny directed by God's miraculous light. They feared that He would judge them according to their actions and that they would not be found worthy. It is for this reason that Moshe accused them of trying HaShem and testing His patience. He even renamed the spot *Massah u'Merivah* (Testing and Argument), "because the people had argued and tested Hashem, asking, 'Is Hashem among us or not?'" (*ibid.* 17:7).

Immediately after this, the Torah relates that Amalek arrived and attacked Israel in Rephidim. As the sages point out, the word *Rephidim* can also be read *raph-yadayim* (lax hands), alluding to Israel's slackening in the learning of Torah, i.e., the inability to distinguish truth from falsehood, which opens the door to doubting HaShem (His existence, His miracles, His providence). In a sense, this was a rerun of the Garden of Eden story in which Eve had fallen prey to the Serpent's cunning and began to doubt HaShem. Amalek, like the ancient Serpent, injects a kind of poison into a person which clouds the mind and makes it incapable of seeing the truth clearly. This is alluded to in the *gematria* of *Amalek* (*ayin-mem-lamed-kof* = 240), the same as *safek*, doubt (*samekh-peh-kof* = 240), the cause of their punishment. True punishment always fits the crime.

(10) As a result I was displeased with that generation and extended their stay in the desert to forty years; I understood that the contradictory pulls of the heart of the nation had misled them; after all I had done for them they were still unable to recognize My ways.	(י) אֲרַבְעִים שָׁנָה אָקוּט בְּדוֹר וְאָמַר עָם תָּעִי לִבָּב הֵם וְהֵם לֹא יָדְעוּ דְרָכִי:
(11) In My ire, I therefore decreed that they would not enter My rest place [<i>Eretz Yisrael</i> and <i>Yerushalayim</i> , to build My <i>Mikdash</i>] until they were ready to trust in Me and return to Me wholeheartedly. ¹¹⁶	(יא) אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּאִפִּי אִם יִבְאוּ אֶל מְנוּחָתִי:

Tehillim 96

(1) Sing a new song to <i>Hashem</i> ! Let all the inhabitants of the earth sing to <i>Hashem</i> !	(א) שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה כָּל הָאָרֶץ:
(2) Sing to <i>Hashem</i> , bless His Name; announce His constant acts of salvation from one day to the next.	(ב) שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה בְּרֹכּוּ שְׁמוֹ בְּשָׁרוּ מִיּוֹם לְיוֹם יְשׁוּעָתוֹ:
(3) Tell of His glory among the nations; His supernatural wonders among all peoples.	(ג) סַפְּרוּ בְּגוֹיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ בְּכָל הָעַמִּים נִפְלְאוֹתָיו:
(4) For <i>Hashem</i> is great and exceedingly praised; He alone is to be feared above all <i>elohim</i> -heavenly powers.	(ד) כִּי גָדוֹל יְהוָה וּמִהֲלָל מְאֹד נֹרָא הוּא עַל כָּל אֱלֹהִים:
(5) For all the gods of the nations [i.e., all heavenly powers in which the nations put their trust] are nonentities, whereas <i>Hashem</i> alone made the heavens.	(ה) כִּי כָל אֱלֹהֵי הָעַמִּים אֱלִילִים וַיהוָה שִׁמָּם עָשָׂה:
(6) Majesty and sublime honor are therefore before Him [i.e., solely His]; strength and splendor abound in the abode of His holiness [i.e., in the full light of His presence].	(ו) הוֹד וְהָדָר לִפְנֵי עַז וְתִפְאֶרֶת בְּמִקְדָּשׁוֹ:
(7) Therefore: Ascribe to <i>Hashem</i> —O you families of peoples—ascibe to <i>Hashem</i> alone all glory and might.	(ז) הָבוּ לַיהוָה מִשְׁפָּחוֹת עַמִּים הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד וְעֹז:
(8) Ascribe to <i>Hashem</i> the honor rightfully due His Name; raise up an offering and come into His courtyards.	(ח) הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ שְׂאוּ מִנְחָה וּבְאוּ לְחִצְרוֹתָיו:
(9) Bow to <i>Hashem</i> [place yourselves entirely in His service with holy trembling] in the splendor of His holy Sanctuary; let the entire earth quake before Him in pangs of birth.	(ט) הִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לַיהוָה בְּהַדְרַת קֹדֶשׁ חֵילוֹ מִפְּנֵי כָל הָאָרֶץ:
(10) Mankind will realize and proclaim: " <i>Hashem</i> 's reign is eternal and has never ceased." Only then will human society finally be established and vacillate no more; for He will judge all peoples with straight judgment.	(י) אָמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ אֵף תִּכּוֹן תִּבֵּל בֶּל תִּמוּט יָדִין עַמִּים בְּמִישָׁרִים:
(11) The heavens will then rejoice and the earth will be glad; the sea and all that fills it will thunder.	(יא) יִשְׂמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ יִרְעֶם הַיָּם וּמִלְאוּ:
(12) The field and all the creatures that inhabit it will celebrate; all the trees of the forest will sing for joy before Him!	(יב) יֵעָלֶז שָׂדֵי וְכָל אֲשֶׁר בּוֹ אֲז יִרְנְנוּ כָּל עֵצֵי יַעַר:
(13) Before <i>Hashem</i> ! For He is coming to reveal His sovereignty! He is coming to judge the earth; He will judge the world with equity, and its peoples with His undeviating truth.	(יג) לִפְנֵי יְהוָה כִּי בָא כִּי בָא לְשַׁפֵּט הָאָרֶץ יִשְׁפֹּט תִּבֵּל בְּצֶדֶק וְעַמִּים בְּאַמּוֹנָתוֹ:

Tehillim 97

(1) When <i>Hashem</i> 's sovereignty will finally be revealed,	(א) יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ תִּגַּל הָאָרֶץ יִשְׂמְחוּ אֵימִם
---	---

¹¹⁶ Targum Yonathan has "*lani'ach beit mikdashi*—to rest in My holy Temple." Rashi explains, "My resting place is *Eretz Yisrael* and *Yerushalayim*, which I have called *menuchati*, as per Psalm 132:13-14, 'For Hashem chose Tziyon and desired her as His habitation: *Zot menuchati adei ad*—this is sole My resting place forever; *po eshev ki ivitiha*—here I will dwell, for I have desired her.'"

the earth itself will be glad; the inhabitants of many isolated lands will rejoice. ¹¹⁷	רְבִים:
(2) Although He is presently surrounded with clouds and thick darkness and we cannot comprehend all His judgments concerning Israel throughout its long exile, the foundation upon which His throne rests is a perfect combination of charity and justice.	(ב) עֵנָן וְעֶרְפֶּל סְבִיבָיו צֶדֶק וּמִשְׁפָּט מְכוֹן כְּסָאוֹ:
(3) The time will therefore come when the fire of His judgment will precede Him, and His foes [those who afflicted His people] will be enveloped in flames.	(ג) אֵשׁ לִפְנֵי תֵלֶךְ וּתְלַהֵט סְבִיב צְרִיו:
(4) Lightning flashes of His presence will illuminate the clouds and darkness of human society; the world will see and be shaken by birth-pangs.	(ד) הָאֵירוּ בְּרָקֵי תֵבֵל רְאֵתָהּ וּתְחַל הָאָרֶץ:
(5) The mountains [world-powers] will melt like wax before Hashem, before the Master of all the earth.	(ה) הָרִים כְּדוֹנָג נִמְסוּ מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה מִלִּפְנֵי אָדוֹן כָּל הָאָרֶץ:
(6) The heavenly providence that guided Israel's history will be revealed and will bespeak His righteousness; all mankind will see the revelation of His glory.	(ו) הִגִּידוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם צֶדֶקוֹ וְרָאוּ כָּל הָעַמִּים כְּבוֹדוֹ:
(7) All who deified statues and took pride in idols will be ashamed; all the <i>elohim</i> -powers that men worshipped will bow down before Him.	(ז) יִבְשׁוּ כָּל עֲבָדֵי פֶסֶל הַמִּתְהַלְלִים בְּאֱלִילִים הַשֹּׁתְחוּ לוֹ כָּל אֱלֹהִים:
(8) <i>Tziyon</i> will hear that her children are about to return and rejoice; the once desolate cities of <i>Yehudah</i> will be elated when You finally execute judgment, Hashem!	(ח) שָׁמְעָה וּתְשַׂמַּח צִיּוֹן וּתְגַלְגֶּלֶה בְּנוֹת יְהוּדָה לְמַעַן מִשְׁפֹּטֶיךָ יְהוָה:
(9) For Hashem, You reign supreme over the entire world; You are exalted far above all <i>elohim</i> -heavenly powers.	(ט) כִּי אַתָּה יְהוָה עֲלִיוֹן עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ מְאֹד נִעְלִיתָ עַל כָּל אֱלֹהִים:
(10) Therefore, I say to all you who love Hashem wholeheartedly and wish to partake of His goodness: Abhor evil! For He who protects the souls of His devoted ones will surely rescue them from the power of those who have become embodiments of evil.	(י) אֲהַבֵּי יְהוָה שְׁנְאוֹ רַע שִׁמְרֵם נַפְשׁוֹת חֲסִידָיו מִיַּד רָשָׁעִים יַצִּילֵם:
(11) Light is sown to be harvested in the future world for the righteous who refuse to succumb to and constantly struggle to overcome their own evil inclination; joy is the portion of those who have straightened their hearts and internalized God's commandments.	(יא) אֹרֶךְ יָמֶיךָ לְצַדִּיק וְלִישְׂרֵי לֵב שְׂמֵחָה:
(12) So rejoice in Hashem, O you righteous! Give heartfelt thanks at the mention of His holiness!	(יב) שְׂמְחוּ צַדִּיקִים בִּיהוָה וְהוֹדוּ לְזִכְרֵךְ קִדְשׁוֹ:

Tehillim 98

(1) A chant to clear away the sadness of exile: Sing a new song to Hashem, for He will perform wonders! The mercy of His right hand and the justice of His holy arm will bring about the salvation He desired.	(א) מְזִמֹּר שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ כִּי נִפְלְאוֹת עָשָׂה הוֹשִׁיעָה לוֹ יְמִינוֹ וְזִרְעֵךְ קִדְשׁוֹ:
(2) Hashem will make His salvation known; He will reveal	(ב) הוֹדִיעַ יְהוָה יְשׁוּעָתוֹ לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם

¹¹⁷ "Hashem malakh—when Hashem's sovereignty will finally be revealed." The verb *malakh* is past tense, "reigned." Rashi and Meiri, however, maintain that this whole set of psalms is about the future *Geulah* (Redemption). It is therefore on their authority that I have transmuted all past or past perfect tense verbs into the future.

Indeed, King David often speaks about the future in the past tense. Like all the prophets, he was shown glimpses of the future in a way that felt as if it had already come to pass. In that amazing state of consciousness called *nevuah* (prophecy) or *ruach ha'kodesh* (divine inspiration), the prophets transcended time, transcended the dichotomous nature of human existence, and entered into the future in the present, seeing the panorama of history from above, from God's point of view. In doing so, their experience was so real, so tangible, that they could then return with a very clear message which informs us that life on this planet is not the beginning or end of existence, that the whole idea of being alive is not exhausted by what we presently know. They could inform us that, in worlds "above" and "within," all this is completely obvious and revealed.

His merciful justice before the eyes of mankind.	גְּלָה צְדָקָתוֹ:
(3) He will remember His loving-kindness and His unswerving faithfulness for the sake of the family of Yisrael; All the extremities [farthest corners] of the earth will see the salvation of our God.	(ג) זָכַר חֶסֶדוֹ וְאֱמוּנָתוֹ לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל רְאוּ כָּל אִפְסֵי אֶרֶץ אֶת יְשׁוּעַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ:
(4) Therefore, arouse yourselves to thank <i>Hashem</i> , all you who dwell on this earth; burst into joyous song and cut away the barriers that prevent you from perceiving His presence.	(ד) הֲרִיעוּ לַיהוָה כָּל הָאָרֶץ פִּצְחוּ וְרִנְנוּ וְזָמְרוּ:
(5) Cut through to <i>Hashem</i> with a lyre, with a lyre, and a pure chanting sound.	(ה) זָמְרוּ לַיהוָה בְּכִנּוֹר בְּכִנּוֹר וְקוֹל זְמִירָה:
(6) With the royal temple trumpets and the triumphant call of the <i>shofar</i> , shout for joy before the King, <i>Hashem</i> .	(ו) בְּחֻצְצֹרוֹת וְקוֹל שׁוֹפָר הֲרִיעוּ לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה:
(7) The sea and all that fills it will then thunder; the world and all who dwell in it.	(ז) יָרֵעַ הַיָּם וּמִלְאוּ תֵבֵל וְיִשְׁבִּי בָּהּ:
(8) The rivers will clap their hands and the mountains will sing joyously together with them.	(ח) נְהָרוֹת יִמְחֲאוּ כַף יַחַד הָרִים יִרְנְנוּ:
(9) Before <i>Hashem</i> ! For He is coming to judge the earth; He will judge the world with equity and all peoples with His straight judgments.	(ט) לִפְנֵי יְהוָה כִּי בָא לְשַׁפֵּט הָאָרֶץ יִשְׁפֹּט תֵבֵל בְּצֶדֶק וְעֲמִים בְּמִישׁוֹרִים:

Tehillim 99

(1) When <i>Hashem</i> 's sovereignty will finally be revealed, the nations will shudder; when the One who dwelled among the <i>cherubim</i> reveals Himself, the governments of the earth will totter.	(א) יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ יִרְגְּזוּ עַמִּים יֵשֶׁב כְּרוֹבִים תִּנּוּט הָאָרֶץ:
(2) For <i>Hashem</i> , who first revealed His greatness in <i>Tziyon</i> , was always high above the conception of all the nations.	(ב) יְהוָה בְּצִיּוֹן גָּדוֹל וְרָם הוּא עַל כָּל הָעַמִּים:
(3) Nevertheless, even they will acknowledge Your great and awesome Name [the revelation of Your glory], though It transcends all conception.	(ג) יוֹדוּ שִׁמְךָ גָּדוֹל וְנוֹרָא קְדוֹשׁ הוּא:
(4) Israel will also acknowledge the invincible might of the King who loves justice; they will say: You instituted straight judgments; You have always perfectly combined justice and charity in governing the descendants of <i>Yaacov</i> .	(ד) וְעַז מֶלֶךְ מִשְׁפָּט אָהַב אֶתֶּה כּוֹנֵנֶת מִישׁוֹרִים מִשְׁפָּט וּצְדָקָה בִּיעֲקֵב אֶתֶּה עֲשִׂית:
(5) O acknowledge <i>Hashem</i> our God's exaltedness by bowing toward the <i>Beit HaMikdash</i> , His earthly footstool; although He Himself is holy and transcends any limited conception we may have of Him, He reveals His glory through those who dedicate their lives to His truth.	(ה) רוֹמְמוֹ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְהַדָּם רִגְלֵי קְדוֹשׁ הוּא:
(6) For example, consider Moshe and Aharon among His <i>Cohanim</i> , and Shmuel among those who declared His Name; they called upon <i>Hashem</i> and He answered them.	(ו) מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן בְּלִהְיוֹתָם וְשִׁמְאוֹל בְּקִרְאֵי שְׁמוֹ קְרָאִים אֶל יְהוָה וְהוּא יַעֲנֵם:
(7) He would communicate with them in a pillar of cloud. They safeguarded His testimonies; in reciprocation He entrusted the deep laws of His creation into their care.	(ז) בְּעַמּוּד עָנָן יְדַבֵּר אֲלֵיהֶם שְׁמָרוּ עֲדֹתָיו וְחֻק נָתַן לָמוֹ:
(8) <i>Hashem</i> our God, on the one hand You were always there to answer them; You were a forgiving God [for the sins of Your people] for their sake; on the other hand You exacted retribution for their slightest misdeeds! ¹¹⁸	(ח) יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתֶּה עֲנִיתָם אֶל נִשְׂאָ הֵייתָ לָהֶם וְנָקָם עַל עֲלִילוֹתָם:

¹¹⁸ "Hashem...[on the one hand] You were always there to answer them; You were a forgiving God [for Israel's sins] for their sake; [on the other hand] You exacted retribution for their slightest misdeeds" (Psalm 99:8). "Even though You answered them whenever they called upon You, and for their sake You forgave Israel numerous times, nevertheless, You exacted retribution for Moshe and Aharon's slightest misdeeds, not compromising an iota. For Moshe and Aharon were not allowed to enter *Eretz Yisrael* because of what they did at Merivah; and Shmuel died young because he didn't instruct his sons properly. From all this we see that [—similar to fire or high voltage electricity—] the closer we approach to Hashem's *kedushah* (holiness, utter

(9) O acknowledge <i>Hashem</i> our God's exaltedness by bowing toward His holy mountain, for <i>Hashem</i> our God is holy and transcends any limited conception we may have of Him. ¹¹⁹	(ט) רוממו יהוה אלהינו והשתחוּו לְהַר קְדֹשׁוֹ כִּי קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ:
--	---

Tehillim 100

(1) <i>Mizmor LeTodah</i> – A Song of Thanksgiving: Let the whole earth call out to <i>Hashem</i> .	(א) מִזְמוֹר לְתוֹדָה הָרִיעוּ לַיהוָה כָּל הָאָרֶץ:
(2) Serve <i>Hashem</i> with joy; come before Him with exultation.	(ב) עֲבֹדוּ אֶת יְהוָה בְּשִׂמְחָה בָּאוּ לִפְנֵי בְרִנָּה:
(3) Know that <i>Hashem</i> [the Infinite Eternal One who transcends any conception we have of Him] is the One who conceals Himself as the Master Director of creation. He alone made us; we did not make ourselves; and that is why we are His—His people and the flock of His pasture.	(ג) דָּעוּ כִּי יְהוָה הוּא אֱלֹהִים הוּא עֲשָׂנוּ וְלוֹ (וְלֹא) אֲנַחְנוּ עָמוּ וְצֶאֱנָן מִרְעִיתוֹ:
(4) Enter His gates with thanksgiving; His courtyards with praise; give thanks to Him; bless His Name to draw down ever greater revelations of His eternal love.	(ד) בָּאוּ שְׁעָרָיו בְּתוֹדָה חֲצֹרְתָיו בְּתִהְלָה הוֹדוּ לוֹ בְּרָכוּ שְׁמוֹ:
(5) For <i>Hashem</i> is good; His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to fulfill His promise of redemption endures from generation to generation.	(ה) כִּי טוֹב יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ וְעַד דֹּר וָדֹר אֱמוּנָתוֹ:

Tehillim 101

Tehillim 102

(1) A prayer of the poor man [Israel], when he is wrapped in sorrow, and pours his thoughts out before <i>Hashem</i> . ^{120 121}	(א) תְּפִלָּה לְעָנִי כִּי יַעֲטֹף וּלְפָנָי יְהוָה יִשְׁפֹּךְ שִׁיחוֹ:
(2) <i>Hashem</i> , hear my prayer and let my cry come before You! ¹²²	(ב) יְהוָה שְׁמָעָה תְּפִלָּתִי וְשׁוֹעֲתִי אֵלַיךְ תָּבוֹא:
(3) Hide not Your face from me on the day of my distress; incline Your ear to me on the day I call; answer me quickly!	(ג) אַל תִּסְתֵּר פָּנֶיךָ מִמֶּנִּי בְיוֹם צָר לִי הִטָּה אֵלַי אֲזַנְךָ בְיוֹם אֶקְרָא מִהֵר עֲנֵנִי:

transcendence), there is less room for error" (Metzudot David, Rashi). See next note.

¹¹⁹ "You exacted retribution for their slightest misdeeds...O acknowledge *Hashem* our God's exaltedness...for *Hashem* our God is *kadosh* (holy)" (Psalm 99:8-9). Precisely because of their potential for attaining greatness, *Hashem* was extremely exacting with Adam, Noach, Yoseph, Moshe, Aharon, Shmuel, Nadav and Avihu, Shimshon, and David, and He continues to be exacting with Israel to this very day. See Rashi here on verse 9 (and Leviticus 10:3): "Hashem's Name is sanctified in the world precisely when He is exacting with the righteous; this is what He meant when He said, 've'nikdash b'khevodi—I shall be sanctified in My glory' (Exodus 29:43); as the sages said (Zevachim 115b), 'Do not read only b'khevodi (in My glory), but b'mekhuvadai (through those who glorify Me).'" This is what Moshe meant when he said to Aharon [after the death of Nadav and Avihu], "Hu asher diber Hashem lemor b'krovai akadesh—this is exactly what Hashem meant when He said, 'I shall be sanctified through those who are close to Me'" (Leviticus 10:3).

This idea—that *Hashem* is exacting to a hairsbreadth with the righteous—is what King David refers to here in the words "for *Hashem* our God is *kadosh*-holy." *Kadosh* is transcendence; *Hashem*'s being *kadosh* means that whatever He does—especially those things which bother us—transcends our limited understanding. In another place, he uses the expression *nora alilah* for the same idea. This expression is from the verse, "Come see the works/operations of *Elohim*; He is *nora alilah* [awesome in bringing liable] over the children of men" (Psalm 66:5).

¹²⁰ Zohar: "Why is the prayer of the poor man more beloved than all others? It is because the poor man's heart is broken. And isn't it written, 'Hashem is close to those with a broken heart' (Psalm 34:19)! When he therefore pleads before the Holy One, the Holy One heeds his cry and opens the firmaments for all other prayers to enter. His prayer makes an opening for all of them to rush through" (Zohar 3:195a).

¹²¹ "The entire Jewish people is described here as one individual whose soul is wrapped in untold sorrows and who is so faint that he is on the point of dying" (Meiri, Malbim). "It is evident that this cry rises up not simply from the heart of one afflicted individual, but from all of Israel, suffering the agonies of exile. As our sages state in the Midrash, wherever a Psalm speaks of a poor man, an afflicted man or a fallen man, these words denote Israel in its sad fate..." (Hirsch).

¹²² "[In this context] *tefillah* is the pouring out of the soul before *Hashem* for the sake of the entire nation" (Malbim). "Hear me as I struggle to attain a clear understanding of my present state. This is the literal meaning of *tefillah*, the ability to form a judgment concerning the truth about oneself" (Hirsch).

(4) For my days are consumed in smoke, and my bones have dried up like a furnace. ¹²³	(ד) כִּי כָלוּ בַעֲשָׁן יָמֵי וְעַצְמוֹתַי כְּמוֹקֵד נָחְרוּ:
(5) My heart has withered like vegetation which has been smitten by the sun, for I have forgotten to eat my bread [I have forgotten how to draw nourishment from the spiritual resources that are available to me]. ¹²⁴	(ה) הוֹפָה כְּעֵשֶׂב וַיִּבֶשׂ לִבִּי כִּי שָׁכַחְתִּי מֵאֲכָל לֶחֶמִי:
(6) You can tell how feeble I have become from the sound of my constant groaning; my flesh has stuck to my bones.	(ו) מִקוֹל אֲנַחְתִּי דְבָקָה עֲצָמִי לִבְשָׁרִי:
(7) I resemble a night-bird of the wilderness; I have become like an owl of the wastelands and ruins.	(ז) דְּמִיתִי לְקֹאֵת מִדְּבַר הַיִּיְתִי כְכֹס חֲרָבוֹת:
(8) I contemplated my sorry state: I have become like a sparrow perched alone on a rooftop. ¹²⁵	(ח) שָׁקַדְתִּי וְאַהֲיָה כְצִפּוֹר בּוֹדֵד עַל גֹּגֶן:
(9) My enemies taunt me all day long; those who mock me swear in my name [those who owe their brilliance to me have conspired against me]. ¹²⁶	(ט) כָּל הַיּוֹם חֲרַפּוֹנִי אוֹיְבֵי מְהוֹלְלֵי בִי נִשְׁבָּעוּ:
(10) For I have eaten ashes like bread and mixed my drink with tears.	(י) כִּי אָפַר כְּלֶחֶם אָכַלְתִּי וְשָׁקוֹי בִּבְכִי מִסְכָּתִי:
(11) Because of Your indignation and Your wrath—You lifted me up, and only then did You cast me down!	(יא) מִפְּנֵי זַעֲמֶךָ וְקִצְפֶּךָ כִּי נִשְׁאַתְתָּנִי וַתִּשְׁלִיכֵנִי:
(12) My days are like a lengthening shadow until I feel as if I am withering away like grass.	(יב) יָמֵי כִצֵּל נְטוּי וְאֲנִי כְעֵשֶׂב אֵיבֵשׁ:
(13) <i>Hashem</i> , You sit enthroned, hidden for all eternity, while the memory of the closeness we once shared with You is transmitted from generation to generation.	(יג) וְאַתָּה יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם תֵּשֵׁב וְזִכְרְךָ לְדֹר וָדֹר:
(14) Arise now, have compassion on Zion, for it is time to favor her, for the appointed time is approaching [i.e., the end-time is coming towards us as we move inexorably towards it].	(יד) אֲתָה תִקּוֹם תִּרְחַם צִיּוֹן כִּי עֵת לְחֻנָּהּ כִּי בָא מוֹעֵד:
(15) For Your servants hold her stones dear and desire only to return to her and cherish her very dust.	(טו) כִּי רָצוּ עַבְדֶּיךָ אֶת אֲבָנֶיהָ וְאֶת עֲפָרָהּ יִחַנְּנוּ:
(16) Nations shall fear the Name of <i>YHVH</i> , and all the kings of the earth shall abase themselves before Your glory!	(טז) וַיִּירָאוּ גוֹיִם אֶת שֵׁם יְהוָה וְכָל מַלְכֵי הָאָרֶץ אֶת כְּבוֹדְךָ:
(17) For when <i>Hashem</i> will have rebuilt Zion, He will be	(יז) כִּי בִנָּה יְהוָה צִיּוֹן נִרְאָה בְּכְבוֹדוֹ:

¹²³ "For my days, the days of my prosperity and independence, have been consumed like smoke. My happiness and independence have been shattered; fate has worked upon them like fire. They have utterly gone up in smoke, and no trace of them is left. And even as the flames of fate have wrought havoc in my external circumstances, so too, it is as if my bones, all the inner supports of my strength, had been the furnace in which the fire had burned!" (Hirsch).

¹²⁴ "A blade of grass smitten by hail lies crushed upon the ground. All the conditions for its growth—soil, roots, dew, rain and sunshine—are still present, but it lacks the strength to draw upon these resources for new life, and so it withers away. The same is now true of my heart. The [exile] has crushed my heart and deprived it of the strength to draw restoration and quickening from those spiritual resources that have been left me! For in my depression, I had even neglected to draw from them the spiritual nourishment which would have given me the strength to stand erect and bravely bear the trouble that assails me" (Hirsch).

¹²⁵ "*Shakadti*, I contemplated and looked into myself..." (Rashi *ad loc.*) "*Shakad* denotes a restless directing of mental energy upon a certain object. Thus: I have been startled into restless wakefulness...I fear that any moment may bring new peril; I am constantly on the watch for what is to come. I am like a lone bird, perched upon the housetop, looking about in every direction. For I am isolated and friendless; I can see only enemies on all sides. I am the startled nation who has found no peace or rest, dreading the stone which a ruthless hand may fling at any moment into the peaceful edifice of my existence!" (Hirsch).

¹²⁶ "*Mehollelai*, those who mock me" (Rashi). "[Just as *hallel* means reflection or radiance] *mehollal* means surrounded by false, borrowed brilliance. [This psalm therefore] speaks of those who shine with the brilliance they have borrowed from me. It is from me that they (i.e., Christianity and Islam) have borrowed all their supposed light, their understanding of God, their ideals of morality, justice and mercy; and they have not even managed to keep that light undimmed in their midst (i.e., in certain cases it has become distorted beyond recognition). And they are the ones who conspire against me! They feel oppressed by my existence! They sense that as long as I live, all that of which they boast will redound to my glory...Israel stands in their way, and this is to no small extent the cause of the centuries of hatred of the nations towards Israel..." (Hirsch).

revealed in all His glory.	
(18) He will have turned to the prayer of the solitary one [Israel] and not despised their prayers.	(יח) פָּנָה אֶל תְּפִלַּת הָעֲרֵר וְלֹא בָזָה אֶת תְּפִלָּתָם:
(19) Let this be recorded until the final generation, when a newly created people shall proclaim the praise of <i>Yah</i> 's mighty acts!	(יט) תִּכְתֹּב זֹאת לְדֹר אַחֲרֹן וְעַם נִבְרָא יִהְלֵל יָהּ:
(20) For He has peered down from His sacred place on high; <i>Hashem</i> has looked down from heaven to earth;	(כ) כִּי הִשְׁקִיף מִמְרוֹם קִדְשׁוֹ יְהוָה מִשְׁמַיִם אֶל אֶרֶץ הַבֵּיט:
(21) To hear the prisoner's anguished cry, to liberate those who were doomed to die;	(כא) לִשְׁמֹעַ אֲנָקַת אֲסִיר לִפְתֹּחַ בְּנֵי תְמוּתָה:
(22) So that they would tell of the Name of <i>YHVH</i> in Zion and recount the praise of His mighty acts in <i>Yerushalayim</i> ;	(כב) לְסַפֵּר בְּצִיּוֹן שֵׁם יְהוָה וּתְהַלְתּוּ בִירוּשָׁלַם:
(23) When nations and kingdoms will gather together and unite to serve <i>Hashem</i> !	(כג) בְּהִקְבֹּץ עַמִּים יַחְדּוֹ וּמַמְלָכוֹת לַעֲבֹד אֶת יְהוָה:
(24) But He has weakened my strength on the way towards redemption and my days are threatened with a premature end.	(כד) עֲנָה בְדֶרֶךְ כְּחִי (כחו) קֹצֵר יָמִי:
(25) I therefore say: O my God, do not take me up in the middle of my days! True Your years endure throughout all generations;	(כה) אֲמַר אֵלֵי אֵל תַּעֲלֵנִי בַּחֲצֵי יָמֵי בְדֹר דֹּרִים שְׁנוֹתֶיךָ:
(26) Long ago You founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands.	(כו) לִפְנִים הָאָרֶץ יִסְדֹּת וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ שָׁמַיִם:
(27) Yet they will all perish while You will endure; all of them shall become outworn like a garment; You will change them like a cloak and they shall pass away.	(כז) הֵמָּה יֵאָבְדוּ וְאַתָּה תַעֲמֹד וְכֻלָּם כַּבֶּגֶד יָבִלוּ כְּלָבוֹשׁ תַּחֲלִיפָם וַיִּחַלְפוּ:
(28) Only You remain the same and Your years will never end.	(כח) וְאַתָּה הוּא וְשְׁנוֹתֶיךָ לֹא יִתְמוּ:
(29) But because of this, we implore that the children of Your servants abide eternally and their seed be firmly established before You forever!	(כט) בְּנֵי עַבְדֶּיךָ יִשְׁכּוֹנוּ וְזֶרְעָם לִפְנֶיךָ יִכּוֹן:

Tehillim 103**Tehillim 104**

(1) O my soul, bless <i>Hashem</i> . <i>Hashem</i> , Source of my being, Your greatness is constantly magnified. All of creation is a garment of radiant light and splendor with which You ostensibly cover and yet subtly reveal Yourself.	(א) בָּרְכִי נַפְשִׁי אֶת יְהוָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי גְדֻלַּת מַאֲד הוֹד וְהָדָר לְבִשְׁתָּ:
(2) You wrap Yourself in light like a garment; You spread out the heavens like a curtain.	(ב) עֹטָה אֹר כְּשִׁלְמָה נוֹטָה שָׁמַיִם כִּירִיעָה:
(3) Behind the façade of natural law You are the One who fashions the clouds in the earth's upper atmosphere from watery mist; You ride upon the clouds and walk upon the wings of the wind.	(ג) הַמְקַרָּה בָּמִים עֲלִיוֹתָיו הַשֶּׁם עֲבִים רְכוּבוֹ הַמְהַלֵּךְ עַל כְּנָפֵי רוּחַ:
(4) And when You cause the rain to fall You make Your spiritual angels physical winds; Your heavenly ministers blazing flashes of lightning.	(ד) עֹשֶׂה מְלֶאכֶיו רוּחוֹת מְשֻׁרְתָיו אֵשׁ לֵהֹט:
(5) Still, You established the boundaries of the dry land, that it never be violated as long as the world exists.	(ה) יָסַד אֶרֶץ עַל מְכוּנֶיהָ בַּל תִּמוּט עוֹלָם וָעֶד:
(6) In the beginning You had concealed the earth's depths like a garment; ocean waters towered over the highest mountain peaks.	(ו) תְּהוֹם כְּלָבוֹשׁ כִּסִּיתוֹ עַל הָרִים יַעֲמְדוּ מַיִם:
(7) But at Your rebuke, they the waters fled and gathered into the seas; at the sound of Your thunder the revelation of Your	(ז) מִן גַּעְרָתְךָ יִנוּסוּן מִן קוֹל רַעְמְךָ יִתְפָּזֶזוּ:

mastery over the world that resounds to the ends of the earth, they hastened away to expose the dry land beneath.	
(8) Mountains then rose up and valleys descended; to the present levels that You appointed for them.	(ח) יַעֲלוּ הָרִים יִרְדּוּ בְּקַעוֹת אֶל מְקוֹם זֶה יִסְדֹּתָ לָהֶם:
(9) You set the boundary beyond which the waters would never transgress again; they cannot return to cover the dry land.	(ט) גְּבוּל שְׁמַת בַּל יַעֲבִרוּן בַּל יִשְׁבוּן לְכַסּוֹת הָאָרֶץ:
(10) Now You constantly send forth springs into rivers that flow between mountains.	(י) הַמַּשְׁלַח מַעֲיָנִים בִּנְחָלִים בֵּין הָרִים יִהְלִכוּ:
(11) All the beasts of the field drink from them; wild creatures quench their thirst.	(יא) יִשְׁקוּ כָּל חִיתוֹ שְׂדֵי יִשְׁבְּרוּ פְּרָאִים צִמָּאִם:
(12) The birds of the heavens dwell beside them; they the rivers and the birds lift up their voices from among the clefts.	(יב) עֲלֵיהֶם עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׁכּוּן מִבֵּין עֲפָאִים יִתְנוּ קוֹל:
(13) Behind the façade of natural law You are the One who waters the mountains from the earth's upper atmosphere; the earth is continually satiated by the rain, the fruit of Your handiwork.	(יג) מִשְׁקָה הָרִים מַעֲלִיּוֹתַי מִפְּרִי מַעֲשִׂיךָ תִּשְׂבַּע הָאָרֶץ:
(14) You grow vegetation for the cattle as well as seeds that man works to plant in order to bring bread forth from the earth.	(יד) מִצְמִיחַ חֲצִיר לְבִהֵמָה וְעֵשֶׂב לַעֲבֹדַת הָאָדָם לְהוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ:
(15) You gladden the hearts of downtrodden men with wine; You light up their faces with oil; You satisfy the hearts of these same downtrodden men with bread.	(טו) וַיִּין יִשְׂמַח לֵב אָנוּשׁ לְהַצְהִיל פָּנִים מִשְׁמֵן וּלְחֶם לֵב אָנוּשׁ יִסְעֵד:
(16) It all begins in the spiritual dimension above called Eden; it is from there that You satiate the upper roots of Your trees, <i>Hashem</i> with <i>berakhah</i> -blessing and <i>shefa</i> -abundance; it is from there that the cedars of Lebanon that You planted on earth constantly receive their sustenance.	(טז) יִשְׂבְּעוּ עֵצֵי יְהוָה אֲרָזֵי לְבָנוֹן אֲשֶׁר נָטַע:
(17) So that sparrows [angels] can nest there, and the Stork [<i>Shekhinah</i>] can make her home among the firs.	(יז) אֲשֶׁר שָׁם צִפְרִים יִקְנְנוּ חֲסִידָה בְּרוּשִׁים בֵּיתָה:
(18) You made high mountains a home for wild goats [prophets], and cliffs a refuge for rock badgers [ascetics].	(יח) הָרִים הַגְּבוּהִים לִיעֲלִים סִלְעִים מַחֲסֶה לְשֹׁפְנִים:
(19) You made the moon for Israel's appointed times; the sun knows when it must set in order to allow the moon to shine.	(יט) עֲשֵׂה יָרַח לְמוֹעֲדִים שֶׁמֶשׁ יָדַע מְבֹאוֹ:
(20) In this way YOU restrain the light of the sun and create darkness; You bring on the night, when all the beasts of the forest stir.	(כ) תָּשֶׁת חֹשֶׁךְ וְיִהְיֶה לַיְלָה בּוֹ תִרְמַשׁ כָּל חִיתוֹ יָעַר:
(21) This is the time when young lions roar for prey; this is their way of requesting their food from God.	(כא) הַכִּפְּרִים שֹׁאֲגִים לְטָרֶף וּלְבִקָּשׁ מֵאֵל אֲכָלָם:
(22) When the sun rises, they steal away and crouch in their dens.	(כב) תִּזְרַח הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יֹאסְפוּן וְאֵל מְעוֹנָתָם יִרְבְּצוּן:
(23) Man then goes forth to his activity and to his work, until evening comes again.	(כג) יֵצֵא אָדָם לַפֻּעַל וּלְעֲבֹדָתוֹ עַד־עֶרֶב:
(24) How manifold are Your works, <i>Hashem</i> ; You made them all with wisdom; the earth is full of Your possessions [i.e., unmistakable signs of Your ownership].	(כד) מַה רַבּוֹ מַעֲשִׂיךָ יְהוָה כָּל־לֵם בְּחִכְמָה עֲשִׂיתָ מְלָאָה הָאָרֶץ קִנְיֶיךָ:
(25) This great and wide sea is also filled with countless creatures; minute organisms together with great ones.	(כה) זֶה הַיָּם גָּדוֹל וְרַחֵב יָדַיִם שָׁם רִמַּשׁ וְאֵין מִסְפָּר חַיּוֹת קְטָנוֹת עִם גְּדֻלוֹת:
(26) It is there that ships travel; this leviathan [the multitude of life-forms] You fashioned frolics therein.	(כו) שָׁם אֲנִיּוֹת יִהְלִכוּן לְוִיתָן זֶה יִצְרֶתָ לְשֹׁחֵק בּוֹ:
(27) All of them turn expectantly to You; to provide their	(כז) כָּל־לֵם אֵלֶיךָ יִשְׁבְּרוּן לְתֵת אֲכָלָם

sustenance in its due time.	בְּעֵתוֹ:
(28) When You give it to them, they gather it in; when You open Your hand, they are satisfied with goodness.	(כח) תַּתֵּן לָהֶם לִקְטוֹן תִּפְתַּח יָדְךָ יִשְׂבְּעוּן טוֹב:
(29) When You hide Your countenance, they are dismayed; when You take back their spirit, they perish and return to their mineral element.	(כט) תִּסְתִּיר פָּנֶיךָ יִבְהִלּוּן תִּסֹּף רוּחָם יִגְוְעוּ וְאֶל עֲפָרָם יִשׁוּבוּן:
(30) But when You will send forth Your spirit, they will be created anew; the face of the entire earth will then be renewed.	(ל) תִּשְׁלַח רוּחְךָ יִבְרָאוּן וּתַחֲדֹשׁ פָּנָי אֲדָמָה:
(31) May that time come when Hashem's glory will be revealed to the world; Hashem will then finally rejoice in all that He has made. ¹²⁷	(לא) יְהִי כְבוֹד יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם יִשְׁמַח יְהוָה בְּמַעֲשָׁיו:
(32) He will gaze at the earth and it will tremble; He will touch the mountains and they will become transparent like smoke.	(לב) הַמִּבֵּיט לָאָרֶץ וּתְרַעַד יִגַּע בְּהָרִים וַיִּעָשָׁנוּ:
(33) I will therefore sing to Hashem with my very life; I will cut through to my God with the essence of my being.	(לג) אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה בְּחַיִּי אֲזַמְּרָה לֵאלֹהֵי בְּעוֹדִי:
(34) May my meditations be pleasing to Him; as for me, I rejoice only in Hashem.	(לד) יַעֲרֹב עָלָיו שִׁיחֵי אֲנֹכִי אֲשַׁמַּח בִּיהוָה:

¹²⁷ Or: "May Hashem's glory be *le'olam* (i.e., revealed to the world forever); may Hashem then finally take pleasure in His works." The word *le'olam* is associated with "infinite time." It is usually translated "forever." Expressions like *le'olam va'ed*, *le'olmey ad*, or even *min ha'olam ve'ad ha'olam*, are extensions of this idea and are usually translated "forevermore," "forever and ever," "eternally," "from eternity to eternity," etc. This is understandable. The word *olam* (which shares the same root as *heelem* and *neelam*) means "concealed" or "hidden." One thing this tells us is that the idea of existing infinitely is hidden and beyond our ability to grasp. We can think or talk about the concept of something extending infinitely, but since we live in time and think only in terms of time, such a concept is bound to remain as hidden from us as eternity itself.

On a deeper level, this helps us understand why the word *olam* itself is also translated, "world" or "universe," as in *Melekh HaOlam*, "King of the universe," or "King who hides Himself in His world." The world itself conceals His existence. Just as the "time" of this world prevents us from understanding that which is beyond time, so the "space" of this world prevents us from perceiving that which is beyond space. This becomes even more interesting when, because of the shared sense of concealment, both the "time" and the "space" aspect of *olam* can be seen simultaneously. This is possible, for instance, in our case. Here, the usual translation has it that we are asking for Hashem's *kevod*-glory to be revealed forever. Before this can happen, however, this very *kevod*-glory must be revealed in such a way that it will offset the *heelem* (concealment) of the *olam* (world). It must enter the concealment of "space" in order to connect us to the infinity of "time" that lies beyond this world.

This kind of formulation can even help us clarify what time and space are, as well as possible distortions that might arise from not understanding these all important elements of our existence. First, it is clear that "space" is only associated with the physical world. It may sound like a tautology, but there is no concept of space outside the physical world. In the spiritual domain, there is no concept of space as we know it. Time, from our point of view, would seem to extend backwards and forwards indefinitely. This too, however, is a distortion. Certainly, it is a distortion to think that time as we know it could extend back indefinitely. Time as we know and experience it is not eternal. It does not exist for Hashem. He is certainly not bound by it, for He created it. It may be impossible to understand, but He Himself is outside of time and space. All this is very "hidden," but one thing is clear: Space and time are relative concepts that God created to conceal Himself from His universe. In a very real sense, the vastness of the entire spacetime continuum is a tiny bubble that exists within God. What our verse—as others like it—is saying is that we want Hashem's glory (which itself is merely a ray or illumination of His light) to be revealed in our world as it exists now. Only then will its concealment give way to the greater reality that transcends it and continue on in eternity in dimensions higher and greater than ours.

In the Midrash we read that "*samach Hashem lo ketiv, ela yismach Hashem*," Hashem will not be fully happy with the world until He completes it, i.e., fulfills the ultimate purpose for which He created it, which is none other than to reveal Himself in it: "Hashem's glory will be revealed to the world; [on that day] Hashem will rejoice in His works." From here we learn that the Holy One has never yet fully rejoiced in His creation. For, "*samach Hashem lo ketiv*—it is not written 'Hashem rejoiced in His works' [in the past], *ela yismach Hashem*"—but rather "Hashem will rejoice" [in the future] (*Vayikra Rabba* 20:2; *Pesikta d'Rav Cahana*, *Acharey Mot*, p. 170; see *Leshem Shvo VeAchlamah*, *Drushey Olam HaTohu*, *Chelek Beit*, 2:3:1, p. 13a (25)).

Similarly in the Zohar: "Hashem's glory will be revealed to the world; [on that day] Hashem will rejoice in His works." Rabbi Abba said: Never, since the day the world was created, will there ever be a greater joy than the day that the Holy One finally rejoices in His world (*Zohar* 1:115a; see also *Zohar* 3:16).

(35) O how I await the day when the possibility of sin will cease to exist on the earth, and wicked men will be no more. O my soul, bless <i>Hashem</i> , hallelu Yah! ¹²⁸	(לה) יתמו חטאים מן הארץ ורשעים עוד אינם ברכי נפשי את יהוה הללו יה:
---	--

Tehillim 105

(1) Give thanks to <i>Hashem</i> . Call out in His Name. Make His great deeds known among the nations.	(א) הודו ליהוה קראו בשמו הודיעו בעמים עלילותיו:
(2) Sing to Him, play instruments to cut through the barriers that prevent us from coming close to Him. Meditate upon all the supernatural wonders that He has done.	(ב) שירו לו זמרו לו שיחו בכל נפלאותיו:
(3) Glory in the radiance of His holy Name. ¹²⁹ Let the hearts of those who seek <i>Hashem</i> rejoice.	(ג) התהללו בשם קדשו שמח לב מבקשי יהוה:
(4) Seek <i>Hashem</i> and His invincible strength. Seek His presence continually.	(ד) דרשו יהוה ועזו בקשו פניו תמיד:
(5) Remember the wonders He has done, His marvels, and the righteous judgments He has pronounced.	(ה) זכרו נפלאותיו אשר עשה מפתיו ומשפטי פיו:
(6) O descendants of Avraham His servant, children of Yaacov His chosen ones;	(ו) זרע אברהם עבדו בני יעקב בחיריו:
(7) Know that although <i>Hashem</i> is uniquely our God, His judgments extend throughout the entire earth.	(ז) הוא יהוה אלהינו בכל הארץ משפטיו:
(8) He is ever mindful of His covenant—the word He commanded for a thousand generations;	(ח) זכר לעולם בריתו דבר צוה לאלה דור:
(9) Which He made as a treaty with Avraham, and swore His vow to Yis'chak.	(ט) אשר פרת את אברהם ושבועתו לישחק:
(10) He confirmed it with Yaacov as a decree, with Yisrael as an everlasting covenant;	(י) ויעמידה ליעקב לחק לישראל ברית עולם:
(11) Declaring to each of them, "To you I bequeath the land of Canaan." To all of them He confirmed, "It is the portion of your eternal inheritance."	(יא) לאמר לה אתן את ארץ כנען חבל נחלתכם:
(12) He said this when they were but few in number, a minority of strangers sojourning in it.	(יב) בהיותם מתי מספר כמעט וגרים בה:
(13) They thus traveled about in the land from one tiny tribal-nation to the next; from one kingship to another.	(יג) ויתהלכו מגוי אל גוי מממלכה אל עם אחר:
(14) Still, He permitted no man [Lavan] to oppress them; and He rebuked kings [Pharaoh and Avimelekh] for their sake saying:	(יד) לא הניח אדם לעשקם ויוכח עליהם מלכים:
(15) "Touch not My anointed ones [Sarah and Avraham, Rivkah and Yitzchak]; My prophets you shall not harm."	(טו) אל תגעו במשיחי ולנביאי אל

¹²⁸ The Talmud (*Berakhot* 10a) relates the following famous story about Rabbi Meir and his holy wife Bruria: A gang of ruffians in the neighborhood bothered Rabbi Meir. He prayed that they die. Bruria challenged him on this. "Look at the verse, 'yitamu chata'im min ha'aretz—sins will cease from the world,' she said to him. Is it written that *chot'im*-sinners will cease to exist? No. Rather, *chata'im*-sins will cease to exist. And furthermore, look at the conclusion of the verse: 'u'resha'im od einam—and wicked men will be no more.'" Once the possibility of sinning ceases to exist, then wicked men will surely be no more! Pray rather that they return in *teshuvah*, then they certainly won't be wicked any more!" And so it was. Rabbi Meir prayed for them, and they returned in *teshuvah*.

¹²⁹ Rashi: "Hit'hallelu beShem kodsho: Take pride in the power of Hashem's holy name, i.e., that you have such a mighty Master." Radak: "Take pride in the fact that Hashem's transcendent name is called upon you." Malbim: "*Shem kodsho* (Hashem's holy, transcendent name) refers to the way He governs the world with regard to Israel, which is above and beyond the set laws of nature. This being the case, Israel should be proud of the fact that His transcendent name is sanctified even more through them than through any other nation."

Although the verb *le'hallel* is usually translated to praise, the root *hal* means to shine or to emanate light. Rabbi Hirsch thus translates our verse, "They shall find the emanation (radiance) of their own personalities in His holy Name," that is, they should conceive it as their life's task and purpose to be the bearers of the message of the One God, and to spread the acknowledgment of Him through their own lives and conduct."

	תָּרַעוּ:
(16) In order to put His ultimate plan into action He decreed a famine upon the land [forcing them thereby to descend to Egypt for food]; the staff upon which they depended—their bread and their entire food supply]—He broke completely.	(טז) וַיִּקְרָא רָעֵב עַל הָאָרֶץ כָּל מִטָּה לֶחֶם שֹׁבֵר:
(17) He sent a distinguished man before them; Yoseph was sold as a slave.	(יז) שָׁלַח לִפְנֵיהֶם אִישׁ לְעֶבֶד נַמְכָּר יוֹסֵף:
(18) They [the Egyptians] tortured him by binding his feet with cables; his body afflicted, it was as if his soul was encased in iron chains.	(יח) עָנּוּ בִּכְבֹּל רַגְלוֹ { רַגְלָיו } בְּרִזְל בָּאָה נִפְשׁוֹ:
(19) Until the time came to fulfill His word/plan to exile the children of Yaacov to Egypt; in the meantime, Hashem's command had to be fulfilled: he [Yoseph] was tested [to prepare him for the great role he was about to play].	(יט) עַד עֵת בָּא דְּבָרוֹ אִמְרַת יְהוָה צִרְפָּתָהּ:
(20) King [Pharaoh] sent word to release him from the dungeon; this ruler of nations set him free.	(כ) שָׁלַח מֶלֶךְ וַיִּתִּירָהּ מֶשֶׁל עַמִּים וַיִּפְתָּחָהּ:
(21) He appointed him master over his household, and made him ruler over all his possessions.	(כא) שָׁמוּ אֲדוֹן לְבֵיתוֹ וּמֶשֶׁל בְּכָל קְנִיָּו:
(22) To bind his princes with his will, and teach his elders wisdom.	(כב) לְאַסֹּר שָׂרָיו בְּנִפְשׁוֹ וּזְקִנָּיו יַחֲכִים:
(23) Thus it was that Yisrael came to Egypt, and the family of] Yaacov took up residence in the land of Cham.	(כג) וַיָּבֹא יִשְׂרָאֵל מִצְרַיִם וַיַּעֲקֵב גֵּר בְּאֶרֶץ חָם:
(24) He [Hashem] caused His nation [Israel] to multiply exceedingly, becoming stronger than their oppressors.	(כד) וַיַּפְרֹ אֶת עַמּוֹ מְאֹד וַיַּעֲצֶמְהוּ מִצְרָיו:
(25) This in turn caused them to hate His people in their heart, to conspire against His servants.	(כה) הִפְךָ לָבָם לְשׂוֹנְאֵי עַמּוֹ לְהִתְנַפֵּל בְּעַבְדָּיו:
(26) So He sent His servant Moshe to redeem them, together with Aharon whom He had chosen because he was not jealous of his younger brother.	(כו) שָׁלַח מֹשֶׁה עֶבְדּוֹ אֶהֱרֹן אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בּוֹ:
(27) They placed the words [they made clear the meaning] of His signs among them; miracles in the land of Cham.	(כז) שָׁמוּ בָם דְּבָרֵי אֲתוּתָיו וּמִפְתִּים בְּאֶרֶץ חָם:
(28) He sent forth darkness [the ninth plague], and it became so dark that no man could move.	(כח) שָׁלַח חֹשֶׁךְ וַיַּחֲשֹׁךְ וְלֹא מָרוּ אֶת דְּבָרוֹ { דְּבָרָיו }:
(29) He turned their waters to blood and caused their fish to die [the first plague].	(כט) הִפְךָ אֶת מִימֵיהֶם לָדָם וַיָּמָת אֶת דָּגֵתָם:
(30) He made their land swarm with frogs, even into their royal chambers [the second plague].	(ל) שָׂרַץ אֲרָצָם צִפְרֹדָעִים בְּחִדְרֵי מַלְכֵיהֶם:
(31) He spoke and wild beasts came [the fourth plague]; lice were everywhere throughout their territory [the third plague lasted and continued for the duration of the fourth plague as well].	(לא) אָמַר וַיָּבֹא עֶרֶב כְּנִים בְּכָל גְּבוּלָם:
(32) He turned their rains into hail; and the hail was accompanied by a flaming fire throughout their land [the seventh plague].	(לב) נָתַן גֶּשֶׁמִּיהֶם בָּרָד אֵשׁ לְהַבּוֹת בְּאֲרָצָם:
(33) It [the hail] struck their vines and their fig trees, and broke the trees within their borders.	(לג) וַיִּדְּ גִפְנֵם וּתְאֵנֹתָם וַיִּשְׁבֵּר עֵץ גְּבוּלָם:
(34) He spoke and locusts came, together with larva without number [the eighth plague].	(לד) אָמַר וַיָּבֹא אֲרָבָה וַיִּלָּק וְאִין מִסְפָּר:
(35) It [the locust swarm] consumed every herb in the land, and devoured the fruit of their soil that the hail hadn't destroyed.	(לה) וַיֹּאכַל כָּל עֵשֶׂב בְּאֲרָצָם וַיֹּאכַל פְּרִי אֲדָמָתָם:
(36) He then struck every firstborn in their land; the first of	(לו) וַיִּדְּ כָל בְּכוֹר בְּאֲרָצָם רֵאשִׁית לְכָל

all their strength [the tenth plague].	אֹנֶם:
(37) He brought them [His nation] forth with silver and gold; so that not even one member of His tribes lacked.	(לז) וַיּוֹצִיאֵם בְּכֶסֶף וְזָהָב וְאֵין בְּשִׁבְטֵי כוֹשֵׁל:
(38) Egypt rejoiced at their departure, for their dread [the fear of the Israelites] had fallen upon them.	(לח) שָׂמַח מִצְרַיִם בְּצֵאתָם כִּי נָפַל פֶּחַדָם עֲלֵיהֶם:
(39) He then spread out a cloud for protection, and a pillar of fire to light up the night.	(לט) פָּרַשׁ עָנָן לְמָסָךְ וְאֵשׁ לְהָאִיר לַלַּיְלָה:
(40) It [the nation] asked and He brought quails; He satiated them with heavenly bread [manna].	(מ) שָׁאֵל וַיָּבֵא שָׁלוּ וְלָחֶם שָׁמַיִם יִשְׂבִּיעֵם:
(41) He opened a rock and waters gushed forth; running through dry places like a river.	(מא) פָּתַח צוּר וַיִּזְוּבוּ מִיָּם הִלְכוּ בְּצִיּוֹת נָהָר:
(42) For He remembered His holy word, the promise He made to His servant Avraham.	(מב) כִּי זָכַר אֶת דְּבַר קְדֻשּׁוֹ אֶת אַבְרָהָם עֲבָדוֹ:
(43) He thus brought forth His people with joy, His chosen ones with song.	(מג) וַיּוֹצֵא עַמּוֹ בְּשִׂשׁוֹן בְּרִנָּה אֶת בְּחִירָיו:
(44) He gave them the lands of the nations, and bequeathed to them the toil of many peoples.	(מד) וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם אֲרָצוֹת גּוֹיִם וַעֲמַל לְאֻמִּים יִירָשׁוּ:
(45) He did all this so that they would safeguard His decrees and keep His Torah, HalleluYah!	(מה) בְּעִבּוֹר יִשְׁמְרוּ חֻקָּיו וְתוֹרָתוֹ יִנְצְרוּ הִלְלוּ יְהוָה:

Tehillim 106

Tehillim 107

Psalm 107 divides smoothly into five sections. The first four of these describe four types of life-threatening situations. In the Talmud (*Berakhot* 54b) and *Shulchan Arukh* (*Orach Chayim* 219:1), this psalm is thus seen as the source for the four categories of people who are required to publicly express thanksgiving to Hashem by saying the *HaGomel* blessing, as follows: (1) One who was bedridden with a serious illness and recovered; (2) One who faced serious charges, and was imprisoned, but afterwards released; (3) One who safely completed a sea voyage; (4) One who undertook a dangerous journey on land and arrived safely at his destination. These four categories of people are alluded to in a phrase we say in the second-to-last blessing of the *Shemoneh Esreh*: “*ve’khol ha-chayim yodukha selah*—and all who are alive will thank You forever!” where the four letters of the word *chayim* (*chet, yod, yod, mem*) (which means alive), form an acrostic: *chabush* (imprisoned), *yesurin* (afflictions), *yam* (sea), *midbar* (desert).

On a deeper level, the Baal Shem Tov explains, these four represent four different types of “spiritual exile” in which the souls who come down to this world tend to get “stuck.” In this sense, imprisonment, afflictions, the sea, and the desert are all metaphors for these soul exiles which can easily be seen to parallel the four major exiles of the Jewish people (Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome), the four *klipot* in Ezekiel’s vision of the chariot (storm wind, great cloud, flashing fire, radiant glow), and the four forms of capital punishment administered by the Sanhedrin (stoning, burning, sword, strangulation). Ultimately, all of these parallel the four letters of Hashem’s name, YKVK, in the sense that, if we have distorted or caused a flaw or blemish in any of these letters (or the essence ideas which they embody), in order to correct and remove this blemish, we must endure the pain of these exiles and punishments.

(1) Give thanks to Hashem for He is good! For although at times hidden, His steadfast love is constant and endures forever!	(א) הָדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:
(2) Proclaim this, O those whom Hashem has redeemed, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the oppressor.	(ב) יֹאמְרוּ גְאוּלֵּי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר גָּאֵלָם מִיַּד צָר:
(3) Proclaim this, those whom He has gathered from many lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from lands across the sea!	(ג) וּמֵאֲרָצוֹת קִבְּצָם מִמִּזְרָח וּמִמְעַרְב מִצְפוֹן וּמִיָּם:
<i>Saved from wandering in the wilderness (spiritual wilderness, pathless wasteland, spiritually empty and meaningless life, nihilism)</i>	
(4) Proclaim this, those who wandered in the desert, in a pathless wasteland, and found no city of habitation.	(ד) תָּעוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר בִּישִׁימוֹן דֶּרֶךְ עִיר מוֹשָׁב לֹא מָצְאוּ:
(5) First they became hungry and then parched, until their soul fainted within them.	(ה) רָעִיבִים גַּם צָמְאִים נַפְשָׁם בָּהֶם תִּתְעַטֵּף:
(6) But they cried out to Hashem in their distress to rescue	(ו) וַיִּצְעֲקוּ אֶל יְהוָה בְּצָר לָהֶם:

them from their constricted straits.	מִמְצוּקוֹתֵיהֶם יֻצִּילֵם:
(7) So He guided them on a straight path to go to and establish a city of habitation.	(ז) וַיְדַרְיֵכֶם בְּדֶרֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל לָלֶכֶת אֶל עִיר מוֹשָׁב:
(8) Let them thank <i>Hashem</i> for His loving-kindness and proclaim His wondrous miracles to the children of man!	(ח) יוֹדוּ לַיהוָה חֲסִדוֹ וְנִפְלְאוֹתָיו לְבָנֵי אָדָם:
(9) For He satiated the soul of those who were parched, and replenished the soul of the hungry with goodness.	(ט) כִּי הַשְׂבִּיעַ נֶפֶשׁ שָׁקָה וְנֶפֶשׁ רָעְבָה מִלֵּא טוֹב:
<i>Saved from prison (spiritual prisoners of our habits; spiritual servitude to ideas and appetites and lusts)</i>	
(10) Proclaim this, those who sat imprisoned in darkness and in the shadow of death, bound in affliction and iron.	(י) יִשְׁבִּי חֹשֶׁךְ וְצִלְמוֹת אֲסִירִי עֲנִי וּבְרָזָל:
(11) Because they rebelled against the words of <i>El</i> (the loving God) and scorned the counsel of the Most High.	(יא) כִּי הִמְרוּ אִמְרֵי אֵל וַעֲצַת עֲלִיוֹן נֶאֱצָו:
(12) He therefore humbled their heart with travail; He made them stumble in order to realize that there is no help and no one to rescue them but <i>Hashem</i> .	(יב) וַיִּכְנַע בְּעֵמֶל לִבָּם כְּשָׁלוֹ וְאֵין עֲזָר:
(13) Only then did they cry to <i>Hashem</i> in their distress, to deliver them from their straits.	(יג) וַיִּזְעֻקוּ אֶל יְהוָה בְּצָר לָהֶם מִמְצוּקוֹתֵיהֶם יוֹשִׁיעֵם:
(14) So He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and loosened their bonds.	(יד) יוֹצִיאֵם מִחֹשֶׁךְ וְצִלְמוֹת וּמוֹסְרוֹתֵיהֶם יִנְתֹּק:
(15) Let them thank <i>Hashem</i> for His loving-kindness and proclaim His wondrous miracles to the children of man!	(טו) יוֹדוּ לַיהוָה חֲסִדוֹ וְנִפְלְאוֹתָיו לְבָנֵי אָדָם:
(16) For He broke the prison gates of brass, and smashed their bars of iron.	(טז) כִּי שָׁבַר דְּלֹתוֹת נְחֹשֶׁת וּבְרִיחֵי בְרָזָל גָּדַע:
<i>Saved from physical sickness and corresponding spiritual maladies</i>	
(17) Proclaim this, those fools who, because of the way they rebelliously transgressed and because of their sins, brought suffering and sickness upon themselves.	(יז) אֲוִלִּים מִדֶּרֶךְ פֶּשַׁע וּמַעֲוֹנוֹתֵיהֶם יִתְעַנּוּ:
(18) Their soul abhorred all food and they approached the gates of death.	(יח) כָּל אֶכֶל תִּתְעַב נַפְשָׁם וַיִּגִּיעוּ עַד שַׁעְרֵי מוֹת:
(19) But they cried to <i>Hashem</i> in their distress to deliver them from their straits.	(יט) וַיִּזְעֻקוּ אֶל יְהוָה בְּצָר לָהֶם מִמְצוּקוֹתֵיהֶם יוֹשִׁיעֵם:
(20) So He sent His word and healed them, and rescued them from their extinction.	(כ) יִשְׁלַח דְּבָרוֹ וַיִּרְפָּאֵם וַיַּמְלֵט מִשְׁחִיתוֹתָם:
(21) Let them thank <i>Hashem</i> for His loving-kindness and proclaim His wondrous miracles to the children of man!	(כא) יוֹדוּ לַיהוָה חֲסִדוֹ וְנִפְלְאוֹתָיו לְבָנֵי אָדָם:
(22) And let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, and proclaim His deeds with joyous song!	(כב) וַיִּזְבְּחוּ זִבְחֵי תוֹדָה וַיְסַפְּרוּ מַעֲשָׂיו בְּרִנָּה:
<i>Saved from the stormy sea (this world is likened to a sea—we need direction to reach the dry land of the World to Come)</i>	
(23) Proclaim this, those who go down to the sea in ships, who skillfully perform their tasks in mighty waters.	(כג) יוֹרְדֵי הַיָּם בְּאֲנִיּוֹת עֹשֵׂי מְלָאכָה בַּמַּיִם רַבִּים:
(24) They have seen the works of <i>Hashem's</i> hands and His wonders in the deep.	(כד) הִמָּה רָאוּ מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה וְנִפְלְאוֹתָיו בְּמַצּוֹלָה:
(25) For He spoke and raised a storm-wind, which lifted up its waves.	(כה) וַיֹּאמֶר וַיַּעֲמֵד רוּחַ סֶעֱרָה וַתִּרְוּם גָּלָיו:
(26) They ascended to the heavens and sank down to the depths; their soul melted away in the face of such trouble.	(כו) יַעֲלוּ שָׁמַיִם יִרְדּוּ תְהוֹמוֹת נַפְשָׁם בְּרָעָה תִתְמוּגַג:
(27) They reeled and staggered like a drunkard, and all their skillful wisdom was useless.	(כז) יִחוּגּוּ וַיִּנְוְעוּ כְּשׂוֹכָר וְכָל חֵכְמָתָם

	תתבּלע:
(28) Until they cried out to <i>Hashem</i> in their distress to bring them out of their straits.	(כח) וַיַּצֵּקוּ אֶל יְהוָה בְּצָרָה לָהֶם וּמִמְצוּקֵיהֶם יוֹצִיאֵם:
(29) So He reduced the stormy seas to calm; their waves were stilled.	(כט) יָקָם סַעֲרָה לְדָמָמָה וַיַּחֲשׂוּ גְלִיָּהֶם:
(30) They rejoiced when the waves subsided, and He led them to their desired haven.	(ל) וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ כִּי יִשְׁתַּקּוּ וַיִּנָּחֵם אֶל מְחוֹז חַפְצָם:
(31) Let them thank <i>Hashem</i> for His loving-kindness and proclaim His wondrous miracles to the children of man!	(לא) יוֹדוּ לַיהוָה חֲסָדוֹ וְנִפְלְאוֹתָיו לְבָנֵי אָדָם:
(32) Let them exalt Him among His assembled people, and praise Him where the elders are seated.	(לב) וִירוֹמְמוּהוּ בְּקֹהֶל עָם וּבְמוֹשֵׁב זָקֵנִים יְהַלְלוּהוּ:
<i>Reversals of fortune as educational (do we learn from our lessons—or do we forget and have to be reminded again and again?)</i>	
(33) But the same God who delivers those who call upon Him will also turn rivers into wilderness, and water-springs into arid wasteland.	(לג) יֵשֶׁם נְהָרוֹת לְמִדְבָּר וּמִצְאֵי מַיִם לְצִמְאוֹן:
(34) He will turn fruitful land into a salty waste if the wickedness of its inhabitants has caused them to become unworthy of His mercy.	(לד) אֶרֶץ פְּרִי לְמַלְחָה מֵרַעַת יוֹשְׁבֵי בָהּ:
(35) He may also test men by turning wilderness into a pool of water and arid wasteland into springs of water.	(לה) יֵשֶׁם מִדְבָּר לְאִגָּם מַיִם וְאֶרֶץ צִיָּה לְמִצְאֵי מַיִם:
(36) He will cause those who are hungry to settle there until they establish a city of habitation.	(לו) וַיּוֹשֶׁב שָׁם רְעֵבִים וַיְכַנְּנוּ עִיר מוֹשָׁב:
(37) They will sow fields and plant vineyards which will yield fruit for harvest.	(לז) וַיִּזְרְעוּ שָׂדוֹת וַיִּטְעוּ כִּרְמִים וַיַּעֲשׂוּ פְּרִי תְבוּאָה:
(38) And He will bless them until they are greatly multiplied; He will not diminish their livestock.	(לח) וַיְבָרֲכֵם וַיִּרְבוּ מְאֹד וּבְהֶמְתָּם לֹא יִמְעֹט:
(39) But if their morals diminish and they sink down with the increase of their wealth, dominion will be turned into trouble and sorrow.	(לט) וַיִּמְעֹטוּ וַיִּשְׁחוּ מַעֲצָר רָעָה וִיגוֹן:
(40) When wealthy princes abuse their power, He will shower them with contempt and cause them to wander in a pathless wasteland [the same wasteland with which this psalm began].	(מ) שֹׁפֵךְ בּוֹז עַל נְדִיבִים וַיִּתְּעַם בְּתַהוֹ לֹא דֶרֶךְ:
(41) But He will raise the needy from affliction and establish their families like flocks of sheep.	(מא) וַיִּשְׁגֹּב אֶבְיוֹן מֵעוֹנִי וַיֵּשֶׁם כְּצֹאן מִשְׁפָּחוֹת:
(42) Let those who are upright see this and rejoice, while the mouth of all who perpetrate injustice will be closed.	(מב) יֵרְאוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ וְכָל עוֹלָה קִפְצָה פִּיהָ:
(43) Let he who is wise observe these things, and contemplate deeply <i>Hashem's</i> loving-kindnesses.	(מג) מִי חָכֵם וַיִּשְׁמַר אֱלֹהִים וַיִּתְּבוֹנְנוּ חֲסָדֵי יְהוָה:

Tehillim 108

(1) A Song of thanks, a chant psalm to cut away the barriers that prevent Israel from perceiving <i>Hashem's</i> providential care.	(א) שִׁיר מְזֻמָּר לְדָוִד:
(2) My heart is firm in the faith, <i>Elohim</i> . I [Israel] will therefore sing and chant praises to You even in the midst of my dark exile; my soul especially is awake to Your presence and shall never cease uttering Your praise.	(ב) נִכּוֹן לִבִּי אֱלֹהִים אֲשִׁירָה וְאֶזְמְרָה אֵף כְּבוֹדִי:
(3) Awaken my soul; O lyre and harp; I will awaken the morning!	(ג) עוֹרָה הַנִּבֵּל וְכִנּוֹר אֶעֱרָה שָׁחַר:
(4) I will thank You and proclaim Your sovereignty among the nations, <i>Hashem</i> ; and I will chant Your praises in the midst of many peoples.	(ד) אוֹדֶךָ בְּעַמִּים יְהוָה וְאֶזְמְרֶךָ בְּלִאֲמִים:

(5) For Your great love for those who devote themselves to You with no thought of reward reaches to the highest heavens; and Your faithfulness to honor the covenant You have made with those who revere You extends to endless skies.	(ה) כִּי גָדוֹל מֵעַל שָׁמַיִם חֶסֶדְךָ וְעַד שְׁחָקִים אֲמַתְךָ:
(6) <i>Elohim</i> is high above the heavens; He makes Himself inaccessible as a result of man's evil, but His glory [sovereignty] over the entire earth is revealed when He judges the wicked for all the evil they have done.	(ו) רוֹמָה עַל שָׁמַיִם אֱלֹהִים וְעַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדְךָ:
(7) In order to rescue Your beloved ones from all evil, save with Your right hand, and answer me.	(ז) לְמַעַן יַחְלֹצוּ יְדִידֶיךָ הוֹשִׁיעָה יְמִינְךָ וְעֲנֵנִי:
(8) <i>Elohim</i> promised in His holy Sanctuary that I [Israel] would exult greatly in His messianic kingdom; that I would apportion <i>Shekhem</i> , and mete out the valley of <i>Succot</i> .	(ח) אֱלֹהִים דָּבַר בְּקִדְשׁוֹ אֶעֱלֶזָה אֲחַלֶּקָה שְׁכֵם וְעֵמֶק סֻכּוֹת אֲמַדֵּד:
(9) <i>Gilead</i> will be mine; <i>Menashe</i> will be mine; <i>Ephraim</i> the support of my head; <i>Yehudah</i> the adjudicator of my law.	(ט) לִי גִלְעָד לִי מְנַשֶּׁה וְאֶפְרַיִם מְעוֹז רֹאשִׁי יְהוּדָה מַחְקָקִי:
(10) <i>Moav</i> will be my washpot; upon <i>Edom</i> I shall cast my shoe; I shall triumph over <i>Philistia</i> .	(י) מוֹאָב סִיר רַחֲצִי עַל אֶדוֹם אֶשְׁלִיךְ נַעְלִי עָלַי פְּלִשְׁתִּי אֶתְרוּעֶע:
(11) Who will bring me into the besieged city? He who has led me to <i>Edom</i> .	(יא) מִי יְבַלְנִי עִיר מִבְּצָר מִי נַחֲנִי עַד אֶדוֹם:
(12) Wasn't it You, O <i>Elohim</i> , who forsook us and no longer went forth with our hosts?	(יב) הֲלֹא אֱלֹהִים זָנַחְתָּנוּ וְלֹא תִצָּא אֱלֹהִים בְּצַבָּאוֹתֵינוּ:
(13) You lend us Your help against the oppressor; the aid of man is of no avail.	(יג) הִבָּה לָנוּ עֲזָרַת מִצָּר וְשׂוֹא תִשׁוּעוֹת אָדָם:
(14) With <i>Elohim</i> , we shall be victorious, for He will tread down those who oppressed us.	(יד) בְּאֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה חֵיל וְהוּא יְבוֹס צָרֵינוּ:

Tehillim 109, Tehillim 110**Tehillim 111**

"The theme of this Psalm is one of instruction...The alphabetical arrangement of the verses shows us that King David intended it to be kept not only before his own eyes, but in the minds of all the rest of humanity by constant repetition. Verses 2-5 present for our consideration God's concern for all His creatures in general, and in particular for those among mankind who fear Him. Verses 6-10 call to our attention the distinguished position that the nation of Israel enjoys among all other creatures and the rest of mankind, as well as the great importance of the task assigned it when it was given God's Law. From this is deduced the firm faith in the protection and help which we may surely expect of Him if only we seek to be loyal and sincere executors of His Law" (Hirsch).

(1) <i>Hallelu Yah!</i> I shall praise and thank <i>Hashem</i> with my whole being, in the intimate circle of the upright and in the midst of my community!	(א) הַלְלוּיָהּ אוֹדָה יְהוָה בְּכָל לֵב בְּסוֹד יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַדָּה:
(2) Though the great wonders of <i>Hashem's</i> actions are camouflaged, they are accessible to all who desire to understand them. ¹³⁰	(ב) גְּדֹלִים מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה דְּרוֹשִׁים לְכָל חִפְצֵיהֶם:
(3) The inner design of His creation is majestic and breathtaking, and His righteous altruism with which He renews creation daily endures forever. ¹³¹	(ג) הוֹד וְהָדָר פְּעָלוֹ וְצִדְקָתוֹ עֹמֶדֶת לְעַד:

¹³⁰ Hirsch: "All of Hashem's creations are important; provision is made for all their desires." Every single creature of Hashem's is great as such; none among them is insignificant or of little worth. Hashem's care extends to each one of them, so that it may find for itself all that it must have in order to live and to develop. Thus, when He made the world, He took into account even the smallest creature; He did not give life to any being for which provision had not been made in the world of His creation and in the course of the development of that world. The thought that no creature is too insignificant for God's loving concern should make every thinking person aware of the fact that every living thing on earth deserves respect because it bears the stamp of God, and that we too ought to respect ourselves as creatures of God."

¹³¹ My translation of the key words *hod* and *hadar* is based on Malbim in Psalm 145: "The difference between *hod* and *hadar* is that *hod* is more inner [i.e., the inner design that is more hidden from sight] than *hadar*. In describing

(4) He established <i>Shabbat</i> and festivals as memorials to His supernatural miracles, to remind Israel that <i>Hashem</i> is gracious and compassionate.	(ד) זָכַר עֲשָׂה לְנִפְלְאוֹתָיו חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם יְהוָה:
(5) He has always provided nourishment for His people who revere Him; He is ever mindful of His covenant with their ancestors.	(ה) טָרַף נָתַן לִירְאָיו יִזְכֹּר לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ:
(6) He has therefore informed His people of His creative power, to bequeath to them the heritage of the nations [the land of Israel]. ¹³²	(ו) לָח מַעֲשָׂיו הִגִּיד לְעַמּוֹ לָתֵת לָהֶם נַחֲלַת גּוֹיִם:
(7) He revealed that the motivation behind His handiwork is truth and fair judgment; He revealed that all the commandments of His Torah are trustworthy.	(ז) מַעֲשֵׂי יָדָיו אֱמֶת וּמִשְׁפָּט נֶאֱמָנִים כָּל פְּקוּדָיו:
(8) They will remain the foundations of the world throughout eternity, for they were designed with truth and uprightness.	(ח) סְמוּכִים לְעַד לְעוֹלָם עֲשׂוּיִם בְּאֱמֶת וְיִשְׁרָ:
(9) He has always sent redemption to His people; He has therefore commanded us to safeguard His covenant forever, in order to proclaim the holiness and awesomeness of His Name.	(ט) פְּדוֹת שָׁלַח לְעַמּוֹ צֹה לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ קָדוֹשׁ וְנוֹרָא שְׁמוֹ:
(10) The highest wisdom is awe of <i>Hashem</i> ; clear cognizance of what is good is granted to all who perform them the divine commandments of the Torah with pure motive; through His devoted people His praise will endure forever. ¹³³	(י) רֵאשִׁית חֻכְמָה יִרְאָת יְהוָה שְׂכָל טוֹב לְכָל עֲשִׂיהֶם תִּהְלֹתוֹ עֲמֻדַת לְעַד:

the creation of the world, King David thus wrote, '*Hod ve'hadar lavashta*—You clothed Yourself in *hod* (radiant light) and *hadar* (splendor)' (Psalm 104:1). He referred to the external façade of natural laws that are evident and recognizable as *hadar*. Hidden beneath and within these outer coverings, however, is the awesome inner splendor, i.e., the hidden lights [of the supernal worlds that precede the outer manifestation of a physical creation]. In Psalm 145 King David therefore says: I will speak of the *hadar*, the outer manifestation, that covers over the glory/radiance of the *hod*. Again, he uses the word *hadar* to refer to natural phenomena that are visible to the eye, but which themselves reveal a deeper level of indwelling divinity" (Malbim, Psalm 145:5).

¹³² "He has therefore informed His people of *koach maasav* (His creative power), to bequeath to them the heritage of the nations [the land of Israel]." The *gematria* of the word *koach* (power, strength, potential, energy) is 28. Based on this, the *Zohar* (3:245a) teaches that this is the secret of the first verse in the Torah which contains 28 letters, "*Bereshit bara Elokim et ha'shamayim ve'et ha'aretz*—in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." In other words, why did Hashem reveal to Israel the creative *koach*-power of His works (alluded to in the 28 letters of the first verse of the Torah)? It was in order to give them full rights to the Holy Land that they would conquer immediately after Moshe died (at the very conclusion of the Torah). In other words, this verse in Psalms embraces the entire Five Books of the Torah from beginning to end, i.e., from the creation of the world to Israel's entering the land of Israel after Moshe's passing.

This is consistent with other verses and of course with Rashi on Genesis 1:1. Rashi thus quotes our verse and adds, "For if the nations of the world should say to Israel, 'You are thieves for you have seized by force the lands of the seven nations [of Canaan],' Israel can respond to them, 'the entire world belongs to the Holy One. He created it and gave it to whomever He pleased. Of His own will He gave it to them, and of His own will He took it from them and bequeathed it to us'" (Rashi; *Yalkut Shimoni* on Exodus 12:2).

Rabbi Hirsch sees another idea here. He translates the second half of our verse, "In giving them [the Torah which will eventually be] the inheritance of all the nations." He explains: "God has placed Israel as His people...among the rest of mankind for a special purpose...As contained in the Book of Genesis, He revealed to them the motives and effects of His sovereignty in the history of mankind, and how those spiritual treasures which should be, and one day will be, the inheritance of all nations, were first communicated to Israel, His people. [See Isaiah 2:2-4 and Micah 4:1-3: 'And it shall come to pass in the end of days that the mountain of Hashem's House shall be firmly established... and all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall go and they shall say: Come, let us go up to Hashem's Mountain, to the House of the God of Yaacov. Let Him teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths. For out of Zion shall the Torah come forth, and the word of Hashem from Jerusalem. And He shall judge the nations and reprove many peoples. They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more.'] God's close relationship to earthly affairs and the Law with which He governs those affairs were originally intended to encompass all of mankind. It was only because mankind strayed from His path that Israel for the present became the bearer and keeper of God's revelation for all of mankind and the first nation to live by that Law. In order that the basis of their special relationship and obligation to God (who is after all the God of all men and nations) be clear to Israel, God set down in the first part of the Book of His Law the providential acts performed amidst mankind prior to the election of Israel, so that Israel's children may come to understand and appreciate the significance of their role and their mission among the nations."

¹³³ The word *tehilato* is purposefully ambiguous. Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra, Radak, *Metzudot David*, Rabbi Yeshayah Horowitz (*Shnei Luchot haBrit* on Tehillim), Malbim, and Hirsch read it as, "his praise," thereby taking it to refer to the

Tehillim 112

(1) <i>Hallelu Yah!</i> Happy is the person whose awareness of <i>Hashem</i> arouses in him a powerful desire to perform His commandments.	(א) הַלְלוּיָהּ אִישׁ יֵרָא אֶת יְהוָה בְּמִצְוֹתָיו חֵפֵץ מְאֹד:
(2) His children will be respected as great leaders throughout the land; the morally upright generation that follows in his footsteps will be blessed.	(ב) גִּבּוֹר בְּאַרְץ יְהוָה זֶרְעוֹ דּוֹר יִשְׁרִים יְבָרֵךְ:
(3) He will thus bequeath fortune and prosperity to his household in this world, while his righteousness will endure forever in the World to Come.	(ג) הוּן וְעֹשֶׁר בְּבֵיתוֹ וְצִדְקָתוֹ עֹמֶדֶת לְעַד:
(4) Even in the midst of the darkness of this world, <i>Hashem</i> shines His light on the morally upright, for He is gracious, full of compassion, and just.	(ד) זֶרַח בַּחֹשֶׁךְ אֹר לְיִשְׁרִים חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם וְצַדִּיק:
(5) It is good for a person to be compassionate and lend to those in need, provided he manages his own affairs judiciously.	(ה) טוֹב אִישׁ חוּגִין וּמִלָּה יִכְלֹל דְּבָרָיו בְּמִשְׁפָּט:
(6) He will then never crash; the deeds of the righteous man will be remembered forever.	(ו) כִּי לְעוֹלָם לֹא יִמוּט לִזְכָּר עוֹלָם יְהוָה צַדִּיק:
(7) He has nothing to fear from harmful hearsay; his wholehearted trust in <i>Hashem</i> is firmly anchored.	(ז) מִשְׁמוּעָה רָעָה לֹא יִירָא נֶכּוֹן לִבּוֹ בְּטַח בִּיהוָה:
(8) His heart is resolute and steadfast; He is not afraid of external circumstances; he waits patiently to behold the downfall of his adversaries.	(ח) סִמּוּךְ לִבּוֹ לֹא יִירָא עַד אֲשֶׁר יֵרָא בְּצָרָיו:
(9) He distributes charity generously to the poor; his righteousness will endure forever in eternity; his fortune will also be raised high with honor in this world.	(ט) פֶּזֶר נָתַן לְאַבְיוֹנִים צִדְקָתוֹ עֹמֶדֶת לְעַד קִרְנוֹ תְרוּם בְּכָבוֹד:
(10) When a lawless man sees the righteous man's success, he becomes infuriated; he grates his teeth and he melts from jealousy; the time will come when the obsession of wicked men will finally cease to exist.	(י) רָשָׁע יֵרָא וְכַעַס שָׁנָיו יַחְרֵק וְנִמָּס תְּאוֹת רָשָׁעִים תֵּאבֵד:

Tehillim 113

(1) <i>Hallelu Yah!</i> Let <i>Hashem's</i> servants praise, let them praise the Name of <i>Hashem</i> , YHVH!	(א) הַלְלוּיָהּ הִלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יְהוָה הִלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם יְהוָה:
(2) May <i>Hashem's</i> Name be blessed and increasingly revealed from now throughout endless eternity.	(ב) יְהִי שֵׁם יְהוָה מְבָרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם:

individual who makes the awe of God and the wisdom of His Torah the center of his life. Meiri, Sforno, Alshikh, and Chida, on the other hand, read "His praise," referring to God Himself, or "Its praise," referring to the Godly Wisdom that is embodied in the Torah, which truly endures forever.

Indeed, all of these meanings are contained in the word *tehilato*. A human being who is able to experience the Divine and embody the wisdom of the Torah in his every action is the ultimate vehicle through which the light of true Godliness is revealed in the world. Such a human being not only is promised eternal life in the World to Come, but that his temporal existence in this world will become permeated with the light of eternity. He becomes a *ben Olam Haba*, a child of the next world even as he lives in this world.

This verse thus teaches us that the way we begin our day determines to a great extent the tenor of all that will follow. *Reshit chokhmah* is the seed that contains the entire tree. *Tehilato omedet laad* is the tree and the fruit that embody and give full expression to all that was contained in the seed. This parallels the double meaning of the expression *sof maaseh be'machshavah techilah*. On the one hand, that which is last in deed existed in potential in the first thought. On the other hand, that which was only in potential in the first thought reaches full fruition in the final deed. [The subtle difference between the two depends on whether you concentrate on the cause or the effect, the seed or the fruit.] It is in this sense that our first thoughts as we arise in the morning are like the seed which will bear the fruit and determine what kind of actions we will perform throughout the day. They will even determine whether what we do will endure. That is, to the extent our actions reveal the awesome reality of God's light guiding the world, they will surely endure. They will also attain absolute significance and meaning because they embody that which is eternal.

(3) From the rising of the sun to its setting, let <i>Hashem's</i> Name be praised as the source of all light and happiness.	(ג) מִמְּזֶרַח שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבֹאוֹ מְהֵלֵל שֵׁם יְהוָה:
(4) <i>Hashem</i> Himself is beyond the conception of all the nations; His glory is above the highest spiritual heavens.	(ד) רֵם עַל כָּל גּוֹיִם יְהוָה עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ:
(5) Who is like <i>Hashem</i> our God, who sits upon a throne so high?	(ה) מִי כִיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַמְגִבִּיהִי לְשֵׁבֶת:
(6) And yet He lowers Himself to see [i.e., to bring His <i>hashgachah</i> (Divine providence) to bear on] both heaven and earth alike! ¹³⁴	(ו) הַמִּשְׁפִּילִי לְרֹאוֹת בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ:
(7) He raises the poor one [Israel] up from the dust; He lifts the beggar [Mashiach] up from the dregs!	(ז) מְקִימִי מַעֲפָר דָּל מֵאֲשָׁפֶת יְרִים אֲבִיוֹ:
(8) To seat him among nobles, among the princes of His people!	(ח) לְהוֹשִׁיבִי עִם נְדִיבִים עִם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ:
(9) He transforms the childless woman [Shekhinah/Zion] into a happy mother of children, <i>hallelu Yah</i> !	(ט) מוֹשִׁיבִי עֲקָרַת הַבַּיִת אִם הַבָּנִים שִׂמְחָה הַלְלוּיָהּ:

Tehillim 114

(1) When Yisrael left Mitzrayim and Yaacov's family went forth from a strange-speaking people;	(א) בָּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם בֵּית יַעֲקֹב מֵעַם לֵעָז:
(2) Yehudah became His holy one; Yisrael His own kingdom.	(ב) הִיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְּשֻׁלּוֹתָיו:
(3) The Sea beheld this and fled; the Jordan turned backwards.	(ג) הַיָּם רָאָה וַיִּנָּס הַיַּרְדֵּן יָסָב לֵאחֹרֶר:
(4) The mountains danced like rams; the hills like lambs.	(ד) הַהָרִים רָקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים גְּבֻעוֹת כְּבָנִי צֹאן:
(5) What is with you, O Sea, that you flee? O Jordan, why do you turn backwards?	(ה) מָה לָּךְ הַיָּם כִּי תִנוּס הַיַּרְדֵּן תִּסָּב לֵאחֹרֶר:
(6) You mountains, why do you dance like rams; you hills, like lambs?	(ו) הַהָרִים תִּרְקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים גְּבֻעוֹת כְּבָנִי צֹאן:
(7) Why do you all violate the most basic laws of nature?! The answer is that all of you are servants who tremble before the Master who conceived the earth, before the God of Yaacov who elevated His people above natural law.	(ז) מִלִּפְנֵי אֲדוֹן חוֹלֵי אֶרֶץ מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֶי יַעֲקֹב:
(8) He turns the hardest heart of stone into a pool of water and a defiant flint-stone into a flowing spring!	(ח) הֵחֱפְכִי הַצּוּר אֶגֶם מֵיִם חֲלֹמֵשׁ לְמַעֲיֵנו מֵיִם:

Tehillim 115

(1) Not for our sake, <i>Hashem</i> , not for our sake, but for the honor of Your Name; for the sake of Your loving-kindness; for the sake of Your truth.	(א) לֹא לָנוּ יְהוָה לֹא לָנוּ כִּי לְשִׁמְךָ תָּן כְּבוֹד עַל חֶסֶדְךָ עַל אֱמֻנָתְךָ:
---	---

¹³⁴ "Hashem's sitting," Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai explains, "involves His lowering the intensity of His light in order to illuminate all the lamps (*sefirot*)...to bring His *hashgachah* (Divine providence) to bear on all that is above and below" (*Zohar Bo*, 2:37a; see also *Avodat HaKodesh* 3:42). Based on this, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan also taught, "In general, the concept of a throne, when used with respect to God, indicates a sense of lowering. When a person sits down, he lowers his body. Similarly, when God 'sits,' He 'lowers' His essence so as to be concerned with His creation...When the Bible speaks of God's throne, it is speaking of the medium through which He expresses such concern. Kabbalistically, this medium is the universe of *Beriah*" (*Innerspace*, p. 26).

See also, "Hashem established His Throne in the heavens [above all change], and yet His Kingdom [i.e., His intimate involvement in every detail of creation] rules over all" (Psalm 103:19). The concept of Hashem's *Kisey* (royal throne) is synonymous with His *Malkhut* (sovereignty). Accordingly, King David is telling us: Do not think that, since Hashem's throne is so high and exalted, that He therefore is not concerned or involved with our earthly existence. No, even though His throne is above, His kingdom extends and rules over every detail of reality.

(2) Why should the nations say, "Where is their God now?"	(ב) לָמָּה יֹאמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם אֵיךָ נָא אֱלֹהֵיהֶם:
(3) The truth is that our God is in <i>heaven</i> [i.e., the spiritual dimension that transcends the material plane and is not subject to its rules], and He does whatever He pleases.	(ג) וְאֱלֹהֵינוּ בַּשָּׁמַיִם כָּל אֲשֶׁר חָפֵץ עֲשֶׂה:
(4) All other civilizations, on the other hand, have worshiped idols made of silver and gold, the work of human hands.	(ד) עֲצָבֵיהֶם כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֵי אָדָם:
(5) They [the idols] have mouths but cannot speak; they have eyes but cannot see;	(ה) פֶּה לָהֶם וְלֹא יִדְבְּרוּ עֵינִים לָהֶם וְלֹא יֵרְאוּ:
(6) They have ears but cannot hear; they have a nose but cannot smell;	(ו) אָזְנוֹת לָהֶם וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אֶף לָהֶם וְלֹא יִרְיחוּ:
(7) They have hands but cannot feel; they have feet but cannot walk; they make no sound with their throats.	(ז) יָדֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִמְשֹׁנוּ רַגְלֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִהְלְכוּ לֹא יִהְיוּ בְּגִרוֹנָם:
(8) May those who make them be like them, even all who trust in them.	(ח) כְּמוֹתָם יִהְיוּ עֲשִׂיהֶם כָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּטַח בָּהֶם:
(9) But let Israel trust in <i>Hashem</i> ; He alone is their help and their shield.	(ט) יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּטַח בִּיהוָה עֲזָרָם וּמִגְנָם הוּא:
(10) Let the family of Aharon trust in <i>Hashem</i> ; He alone is their help and their shield.	(י) בֵּית אַהֲרֹן בָּטַחוּ בִיהוָה עֲזָרָם וּמִגְנָם הוּא:
(11) Let those with awe and heightened awareness of <i>Hashem</i> trust in <i>Hashem</i> ; He alone is their help and their shield.	(יא) יִרְאֵי יְהוָה בָּטַחוּ בִיהוָה עֲזָרָם וּמִגְנָם הוּא:
(12) <i>Hashem</i> who remembered us in <i>Mitzrayim</i> will bless; He will bless the family of Yisrael; He will bless the family of Aharon.	(יב) יְהוָה זָכְרָנוּ יְבָרֵךְ יְבָרֵךְ אֶת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל יְבָרֵךְ אֶת בֵּית אַהֲרֹן:
(13) He will bless those with awe of <i>Hashem</i> , the small together with the great.	(יג) יְבָרֵךְ יִרְאֵי יְהוָה הַקְּטָנִים עִם הַגְּדֹלִים:
(14) May <i>Hashem</i> increase you all, you and your children.	(יד) יִסַּף יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם וְעַל בְּנֵיכֶם:
(15) For you are blessed by <i>Hashem</i> , Maker of heaven and earth.	(טו) בְּרוּכִים אַתֶּם לִיהוָה עֹשֶׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ:
(16) The heavens are <i>Hashem's</i> heavens, while He gave the earth to the descendants of Adam.	(טז) הַשָּׁמַיִם שָׁמַיִם לִיהוָה וְהָאָרֶץ נָתַן לִבְנֵי אָדָם:
(17) The dead do not praise <i>Yah</i> , nor can those who sink down into silence.	(יז) לֹא הַמֵּתִים יִהְלְלוּ יְהוָה וְלֹא כָּל יִרְדֵּי דוּמָה:
(18) But we will bless <i>Yah</i> , from now until endless eternity, <i>hallelu Yah</i> !	(יח) וְאֲנַחְנוּ נְבָרֵךְ יְהוָה מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם הִלְלוּ יְהוָה:

Tehillim 116

(1) I love when <i>Hashem</i> hears my voice, my supplications.	(א) אֶהְבֵּתִי כִּי יִשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת קוֹלִי תַחֲנוּנָי:
(2) Because He inclined His ear to me, I will call out to Him throughout all the days of my life!	(ב) כִּי הִטָּה אָזְנוֹ לִי וּבִימִי אֶקְרָא:
(3) The cords of death were all around me; the constrictions of the grave had found me; I found myself in the midst of sorrow and agony.	(ג) אֶפְפוּנֵי חַבְלֵי מוֹת וּמִצָּרֵי שְׂאוֹל מִצְאוּנִי צָרָה וַיְגֹן אִמְצָא:
(4) Then I called out in <i>Hashem's</i> Name: Please <i>Hashem</i> , rescue my soul!	(ד) וּבִשְׁם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא אָנָּה יְהוָה מַלְטָה נַפְשִׁי:
(5) <i>Hashem</i> is gracious and just; our God has compassion.	(ה) חַנוּן יְהוָה וְצַדִּיק וְאֱלֹהֵינוּ מְרַחֵם:
(6) <i>Hashem</i> protects simpletons; I myself was brought low, and He saved me.	(ו) שָׁמַר פְּתָאִים יְהוָה דָּלַתִּי וְלִי יְהוֹשִׁיעַ:

(7) Return, my soul, to your tranquility, for <i>Hashem</i> has acted generously toward you.	(ז) שׁוּבִי נַפְשִׁי לַמְנוּחֶיכִי כִּי יְהוָה גָּמַל עָלֶיכִי:
(8) For You delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my foot from stumbling.	(ח) כִּי חֲלַצְתָּ נַפְשִׁי מִמָּוֶת אֶת עֵינַי מִן דְּמָעָה אֶת רַגְלִי מִדְּחִי:
(9) I therefore trust that I will walk before <i>Hashem</i> in eternity, in the lands of the living.	(ט) אֶתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה בְּאַרְצוֹת הַחַיִּים:
(10) I have faith. Though I said in the bitter pain of my exile: I have suffered so much!	(י) הֶאֱמַנְתִּי כִּי אֲדַבֵּר אֲנִי עֲנִיתִי מְאֹד:
(11) Though I said in my panic: All of man is false!	(יא) אֲנִי אֲמַרְתִּי בַּחֲפָזִי כָּל הָאָדָם כִּזְבֹּ:
(12) How can I repay <i>Hashem</i> for all the kindness He has done for me?	(יב) מָה אֲשִׁיב לַיהוָה כָּל תַּגְמוּלוֹהִי עָלַי:
(13) I will raise up my overflowing heart like a cup, for all the times He has delivered me, and call out in <i>Hashem's</i> Name for the final redemption which is yet to come!	(יג) כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת אֲשָׂא וּבִשָּׁם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא:
(14) I will also fulfill my vows to <i>Hashem</i> to thank and praise Him in the presence of all His people!	(יד) נִדְרֵי לַיהוָה אֲשַׁלֵּם נִגְדָה נָא לְכָל עַמּוֹ:
(15) As for His saints who died for the sanctification of His Name, they are precious and honored in His eyes.	(טו) יָקָר בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה הַמּוֹתָה לַחֲסִידָיו:
(16) Please <i>Hashem</i> , for I am Your servant, I am Your servant, son of Your maidservant; only You can untie my bonds!	(טז) אָנָּה יְהוָה כִּי אֲנִי עַבְדְּךָ אֲנִי עַבְדְּךָ בֶּן אֲמַתְךָ פִּתְחָתָ לְמוֹסְרִי:
(17) I will then present a thanks-offering to You and call out in Your Name, <i>Hashem</i> !	(יז) לָךְ אֲזַבֵּחַ זֶבַח תּוֹדָה וּבִשָּׁם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא:
(18) I will fulfill my vows to <i>Hashem</i> in the presence of all His people!	(יח) נִדְרֵי לַיהוָה אֲשַׁלֵּם נִגְדָה נָא לְכָל עַמּוֹ:
(19) I will fulfill my vows in the courtyards of <i>Hashem's</i> House, in your midst, O Yerushalayim, <i>hallelu Yah</i> !	(יט) בְּחִצְרוֹת בֵּית יְהוָה בְּתוֹכִכִּי יְרוּשָׁלַם הִלְלוּ יָהּ:

Tehillim 117

(1) Praise <i>Hashem</i> , all you nations! Increase your praise of Him, all you peoples!	(א) הִלְלוּ אֶת יְהוָה כָּל גּוֹיִם שִׁבְחוּהוּ כָּל הָאֻמִּים:
(2) For His love for us is overwhelmingly strong [i.e., precisely because <i>Hashem's</i> love for Israel is ultimately not dependent on our merit, it remains in full force even when hidden]; for <i>Hashem's</i> truth is eternally loyal and unchanging, <i>hallelu Yah</i> !	(ב) כִּי גִבֹר עָלֵינוּ חֶסֶדוֹ וְאֶמֶת יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם הַלְלוּהָ:

Tehillim 118

(1) Thank <i>Hashem</i> , for He is so good; for though at times hidden His steadfast love is constant and endures forever.	(א) הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ:
(2) Let Israel proclaim now: Even when hidden His steadfast love is eternal and everlasting.	(ב) יֹאמְרוּ נָא יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ:
(3) Let the family of Aharon proclaim now: Even when hidden His steadfast love is constant and endures forever.	(ג) יֹאמְרוּ נָא בֵּית אַהֲרֹן כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ:
(4) Let those with awe of <i>Hashem</i> proclaim now: Even when hidden His steadfast love is eternal and everlasting!	(ד) יֹאמְרוּ נָא יִרְאֵי יְהוָה כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ:
(5) I called upon <i>Yah</i> from the narrow strait; <i>Yah</i> answered me in/with expansiveness! ¹³⁵	(ה) מִן הַמֵּצָר קָרָאתִי יָהּ עֲנֵנִי בְמִרְחָב:

¹³⁵ As the ultimate embodiment of the soul of the Jewish people, King David knew the secret of calling out to Hashem (or perhaps calling *in* to Hashem) whenever his enemies set themselves in array round about him and

	יָהּ:
(6) <i>Hashem</i> is with me even now; I will not fear. What can man do to me?	(ו) יְהוָה לִי לֹא אִירָא מֶה יַעֲשֶׂה לִי אָדָם:
(7) <i>Hashem</i> is with me as my helper; I will see the downfall of those who hate me.	(ז) יְהוָה לִי בְעֹזְרִי וְאֲנִי אֶרְאֶה בְשִׁנְאָי:
(8) It is better to rely on <i>Hashem</i> than to trust in man.	(ח) טוֹב לְחַסוֹת בַּיהוָה מִבִּטָּח בְּאָדָם:
(9) It is better to rely on <i>Hashem</i> than to trust in princes.	(ט) טוֹב לְחַסוֹת בַּיהוָה מִבִּטָּח בְּנָדִיבִים:
(10) I remember when all the surrounding nations encircled me, yet with one mention of <i>Hashem's</i> Name I was able to stand against them and cut them down.	(י) כָּל גּוֹיִם סָבְבוּנִי בְשֵׁם יְהוָה כִּי אֲמִילָם:
(11) They surrounded me, they continue to surround me; yet with one mention of <i>Hashem's</i> Name I am able to stand against them and cut them down.	(יא) סָבוּנִי גַם סָבְבוּנִי בְשֵׁם יְהוָה כִּי אֲמִילָם:
(12) They swarm around me like bees, but they are consumed like a fire consumes thorns, for with one mention of <i>Hashem's</i> Name I am able to stand against them and cut them down.	(יב) סָבוּנִי כְדִבּוּרִים דַּעְכוּ כְּאֵשׁ קוֹצִים בְשֵׁם יְהוָה כִּי אֲמִילָם:
(13) They push and shove me to fall, but <i>Hashem</i> helps me.	(יג) דָּחָה דְחִיתַנִּי לִנְפֹל וַיהוָה עֲזָרַנִּי:
(14) <i>Yah</i> is my inner strength, and His song will forever remain the unchanging source of my salvation!	(יד) עֲזִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה וַיהוָה לִי לִישׁוּעָה:
(15) Let the voice of joyous song and deliverance be heard in the tents of the righteous: <i>Hashem's</i> loving right hand has been victorious!	(טו) קוֹל רִנָּה וִישׁוּעָה בְּאֶהְלֵי צְדִיקִים יְמִין יְהוָה עָשָׂה חֵיל:
(16) <i>Hashem's</i> right hand is in the heights; <i>Hashem's</i> right hand continues to be victorious!	(טז) יְמִין יְהוָה רוֹמְמָה יְמִין יְהוָה עָשָׂה חֵיל:
(17) I [Israel] will never die, but will live and continue to proclaim the mighty deeds of <i>Yah</i> !	(יז) לֹא אָמוּת כִּי אַחֲיָה וְאַסְפֹּר מַעֲשֵׂי יָהּ:
(18) <i>Yah</i> has surely afflicted me with suffering, but He has not given me over to death!	(יח) יִסֹּר יִסְרֹנִי יְהוָה וְלָמוּת לֹא נָתַנִּי:
(19) Open for me the gates of repentance that lead to righteousness; let me come through and thank <i>Yah</i> .	(יט) פָּתְחוּ לִי שַׁעְרֵי צֶדֶק אָבָא בָם אוֹדֶה יְהוָה:
(20) This is the gate that leads to <i>Hashem</i> ; even the righteous must pass through it.	(כ) זֶה הַשַּׁעַר לַיהוָה צְדִיקִים יָבֹאוּ בּוֹ:
(21) I will thank You, for though You afflicted me You answered me and became the source of my salvation!	(כא) אוֹדֶךָ כִּי עֲנִיתַנִּי וַתֵּהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה:
(22) The stone [Israel] that was discarded by the builders has become the chief cornerstone!	(כב) אֶבֶן מְאֻסָּה הַבּוֹנִים הִיְתָה לְרֹאשׁ פִּנָּה:
(23) This was indeed all according to <i>Hashem's</i> plan; still, it is all the more wondrous in our eyes!	(כג) מֵאֵת יְהוָה הִיְתָה זֹאת הִיא נִפְלְאוֹת בְּעֵינֵינוּ:
(24) <i>Hashem</i> has brought this day about; we will rejoice and delight in Him alone!	(כד) זֶה הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה יְהוָה נִגִּילָה וְנִשְׁמְחָה בּוֹ:
(25) Please <i>Hashem</i> , bring salvation now! Please <i>Hashem</i> , grant us success now!	(כה) אָנָּה יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא אָנָּה יְהוָה

threatened to swallow him up alive. He also understood that all the ambushes his external enemies set for him were but reflections of all the narrow and constricted places within himself where *he had not yet let God in*. He discovered that calling to Hashem precisely from these narrow places allowed him to experience Hashem's overriding love in a way that completely changed him. This is the meaning of "*Anani ba'merchav Yah*—God answered me in/with expansiveness." Hashem not only delivered David from (and helped him break out of) his narrow and constricted state. He allowed David to experience His presence even in those tough places where it is most hidden and difficult to access.

	הַצְלִיחַהּ נָא:
(26) Blessed are you who come in the Name of <i>Hashem</i> ! May incessant blessing flow to you from the House of <i>Hashem</i> !	(כו) בָּרוּךְ הָבָא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה בִּרְכוּנוֹכֶם מִבֵּית יְהוָה:
(27) <i>Hashem</i> is Omnipotent; He will therefore illuminate us in His Presence, and allow us to retain the overflow of the festival by binding ourselves with cords of loving surrender that reach all the way up to the high corners of the Altar.	(כז) אֵל יְהוָה וַיָּאֵר לָנוּ אֶסְרוּ חַג בְּעִבְתֵּימָם עַד קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ:
(28) You are my God and I will thank You. O my God, I will praise You to the heights!	(כח) אֱלֹי אֶתָּה וְאוֹדֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמָמְךָ:
(29) Thank <i>Hashem</i> for He is so good; for even when hidden His steadfast love is constant and endures forever.	(כט) הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:

Tehillim 119

Aleph	אות א'
(1) Happy are those whose way is <i>tamim</i> (integrity, simplicity, wholeness), who walk in the Torah of the Infinite One, <i>YHVH</i> .	(א) אֲשֶׁרֵי תְּמִימֵי דֶרֶךְ הַהֲלָכִים בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה:
(2) Happy are those who guard His <i>edot</i> (faithful testimonies); they seek Him with their entire heart.	(ב) אֲשֶׁרֵי נֹצְרֵי עֲדוּתוֹ בְּכָל לֵב יִדְרְשׁוּהוּ:
(3) They rejoice in the fact that they have not perpetrated injustice; rather they have walked in His ways.	(ג) אֵף לֹא פָעֲלוּ עוֹלָה בְּדַרְכָּיו הִלְכוּ:
(4) <i>Hashem</i> , You instructed us regarding Your <i>pikudim</i> (precepts); to be exceedingly careful to guard them.	(ד) אֶתָּה צִוִּיתָה פְּקֻדֶיךָ לְשֹׁמֵר מְאֹד:
(5) My only wish: may my paths be firmly established in observing Your <i>chukim</i> (hidden statutes).	(ה) אֲחֲלִי יִכְנוּ דַרְכֵי לְשֹׁמֵר חֻקֶיךָ:
(6) Then I will not be ashamed when I probe deeply into into the reasons behind all Your <i>mitzvot</i> (commandments).	(ו) אֲזִי לֹא אֶבּוֹשׁ בַּהֲבִיטִי אֶל כָּל מִצְוֹתֶיךָ:
(7) I will thank You with uprightness of heart, for having learned the justice of Your charity and the charity of Your justice.	(ז) אוֹדֶךָ בִּישׁוֹר לִבִּי בְּלִמְדֵי מִשְׁפָּטִי צִדְקֶךָ:
(8) I will therefore guard Your <i>chukim</i> even if they sometimes defy my understanding; I therefore ask that You, in return never forsake me even if I sometimes do not fulfill Your expectations of me.	(ח) אֵת חֻקֶיךָ אֲשֹׁמֵר אֶל תַּעֲזֹבֵנִי עַד מְאֹד:
Beit	אות ב'
(9) How may a young man merit to refine himself, to keep his path pure, to guard it in accord with Your Word <i>Hashem</i> ?	(ט) בְּמָה יִזְכֶּה נָעַר אֶת אֲרָחוֹ לְשֹׁמֵר כְּדִבְרְךָ:
(10) I have sought You with my whole heart; do not let me stray from Your <i>mitzvot</i> (commandments).	(י) בְּכָל לִבִּי דִרְשָׁתִיךָ אֶל תִּשְׁגֵּנִי מִמִּצְוֹתֶיךָ:
(11) I have hidden/stored Your words in my heart, so that I may never sin against You.	(יא) בְּלִבִּי צִפְנֹתִי אִמְרֹתֶךָ לְמַעַן לֹא אֲחַטָּא לָךְ:
(12) Blessed are You, <i>Hashem</i> ! Teach me the secrets of Your <i>chukim</i> (hidden statutes and decrees).	(יב) בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה לְמַדְנִי חֻקֶיךָ:
(13) With my lips I recount and thereby reveal the light, the deep wisdom, in all Your just laws.	(יג) בְּשִׁפְתֵי סִפְרֹתֵי כָל מִשְׁפָּטִי פִיךָ:
(14) I continually rejoice in Your <i>edot</i> (faithful testimonies) as one who has discovered all the riches in the world.	(יד) בְּדֶרֶךְ עֲדוּתֶיךָ שִׂשְׁתִּי כָעַל כָּל הוֹן:
(15) I therefore meditate on Your <i>pikudim</i> (precepts), and look deeply into Your ways.	(טו) בְּפִקּוּדֶיךָ אֲשִׁיחָה וְאֶבִּיטָה אֲרַחֲתֶיךָ:
(16) I delight in Your <i>chukim</i> (hidden statutes and decrees); I will never forget Your Word.	(טז) בַּחֲקֹתֶיךָ אֲשַׁתְּעָשֶׂע לֹא אֲשַׁכַּח דִּבְרְךָ:

Gimel	אות ג'
(17) Bestow [of Your goodness] upon Your servant; grant me life so that I may safeguard Your Word.	(יז) גַּמַּל עַל עַבְדְּךָ אֲחִיָּה וְאַשְׁמְרָה דְּבָרְךָ:
(18) O uncover my eyes, so that I may behold wonders from Your Torah! ¹³⁶	(יח) גַּל עֵינַי וְאַבִּיטָה נִפְלְאוֹת מִתּוֹרַתְךָ:
(19) I am a stranger upon earth [i.e., my soul is like a stranger who has come from a distant land]; please do not conceal Your <i>mitzvot</i> from me [i.e., reveal Your <i>mitzvot</i> to me so that I may walk in them; in addition, reveal their deeper meaning so that my soul may excel in serving You].	(יט) גַּר אֲנִכִּי בָאָרֶץ אַל תַּסְתֵּר מִמֶּנִּי מִצְוֹתֶיךָ:
(20) My soul has absorbed [digested and broken down Your teachings with great appetite] for I desire [to understand] Your judgments at all times [i.e., in all their manifold variety, always in accord with each time].	(כ) גִּרְסָה נִפְשִׁי לְתַאֲבָה אֶל מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ בְּכָל עֵת:
(21) You have rejected [i.e., turned away from the study of Your Torah] accursed wanton sinners who subsequently stray from [the spirit of] Your <i>mitzvot</i> . ¹³⁷	(כא) גַּעַרְתָּ זֵדִים אָרוּרִים הַשֹּׁגִים מִמִּצְוֹתֶיךָ:
(22) Remove from me insult and contempt, for I have preserved Your <i>edot</i> (faithful testimonies).	(כב) גַּל מַעְלֵי חֶרֶף וּבּוֹז כִּי עֲדַתְךָ נִצְרָתִי:
(23) Even when princes sit and talk against me, Your servant [pays no attention to them, but rather concentrates and] meditates solely upon Your <i>chukim</i> (hidden statutes which transcend human understanding).	(כג) גַּם יֹשְׁבוֹ שָׂרִים בִּי נִדְּבְרוּ עַבְדְּךָ יִשִּׁיחַ בְּחֻקֶּיךָ:
(24) Even Your <i>edot</i> (faithful testimonies) [which commemorate the	(כד) גַּם עֲדַתְךָ שַׁעֲשַׁעִי אֲנִשִּׁי עֲצָתִי:

¹³⁶ Why did King David ask Hashem to uncover and open his mind's eye? Because the words of the Torah are clear and shining in and of themselves. It is our minds that are clouded, and this prevents us from understanding what is right in front of us. We must therefore pray that our eyes be opened and uncovered to see the light of the Torah and be worthy of understanding what it says. This is the source of the ancient custom to say this verse as a preparation for learning Torah. In his Introduction to the Mishnah, Rambam thus wrote, "After seeking wisdom with every last ounce of one's ability, a person should leave it to the Creator. He should pray to Him and plead that He build his mind and guide him to proper understanding, and reveal the deep secrets concealed in the Torah to him, as King David said, 'Uncover my eyes so that I may behold wonders from Your Torah!'"

¹³⁷ Hirsch: "Ga'arta zedim arurim ha'shogim mi'mitzvotekha." The use of *zedim* (wanton sinners) and *shogim* (those who stray, mistakenly err) in one breath seems an overt contradiction. *Zadon* always denotes sinning in which the transgressor is fully aware of the gravity of his sin, while *shogiah* denotes an error; and yet both are used here to describe one and the same subject. In addition, though we frequently find mention of *zedim* (wanton sinners), *reshaim* (wicked, evildoers), etc. in this psalm, it is only in this one instance that they are condemned by the harshest possible term, *arurim* (accursed). As we have already noted repeatedly, we believe that *shogiah* refers to such error in theory as stems from prejudice resulting from a certain trend of thought (see Hirsch's commentary on Genesis 8:1). [This gives us a deeper insight into the juxtaposition of *zedim* and *shogim* in this psalm.] They are called *zedim* because they transgress the divine law of the Torah knowing full well that they do so; they are called *shogim* because they then attempt to legalize their transgression through a fallacious interpretation of God's pronouncements in order to justify their defection. What is so pernicious is not the fact that they have gone astray from the Torah in practice. What is dangerous and misleading are the false interpretations and doctrines at which they arrive as a consequence of their defection, with the intention of justifying or extenuating by theory the violation they have already committed in practice. It is this defection set down in the form of theory which sows the seeds of propaganda in the minds of their contemporaries. They attempt to persuade the rest that the basis for their defection is their own new, supposedly more correct interpretation of God's Torah. The victims of such attempts do not know that these new interpretations were not the basis of the defection, but were fabricated only after God's Torah had already been violated in practice. It is therefore only right that these *zedim* should be condemned in terms such as "Arur mashgeh iver ba'derekh—cursed be he who purposely misguides a blind man on the way" (Deuteronomy 27:18), and, for the sake of the salvation of their brethren, it is to be fervently wished that their endeavors should not have any degree of success. Therefore it is said of these *zedim*, *ga'arta*, "You have turned them away from the study of the Torah." For God accepts as a disciple of His Torah only he who draws near to the threshold of His Sanctuary with a pure spirit and with the determination to subject himself and his life to the Torah of God because it is Divine. This is the meaning of the statement, "Only when a person's fear of sin comes before his wisdom can he be assured that his wisdom will endure; but when a person's wisdom comes before his fear of sin, his wisdom will not endure" (*Avot* 3:11). But as for one who has already left the foundation of the Torah in practice, let him not come near the source of the Word of the Lord, for he will change the pure Word of Life into a deadly poison for both himself and others.

miracles and wonders You have performed for Your people] are my delight; they are my unerring counselors.	
Dalet	אות ד'
(25) My divine soul has fallen asleep and become bound to the dust my body; O revive me in accord with Your Word [Your promise to resurrect the dead]!	(כה) דְּבִקָּה לְעֵפֶר נַפְשִׁי חַיִּי כְּדִבְרְךָ:
(26) I have always recounted my ways [my physical needs, my troubles, my struggles] to You, and You have answered me; teach me I beseech You, the secrets of Your <i>chukim</i> (hidden statutes)!	(כו) דְּרָכִי סִפַּרְתִּי וַתַּעֲנֵנִי לַמִּדְנִי חֻקֶּיךָ:
(27) Let me understand the mysterious ways behind Your revealed commandments, so that I may then meditate on Your hidden wonders.	(כז) דְּרֹךְ פְּקוּדֶיךָ הִבִּינֵנִי וְאַשִׁיחָה בְּנִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ:
(28) In exile my soul flows with tears from grief; sustain me according to Your Word.	(כח) דְּלָפָה נַפְשִׁי מִתּוֹנָה קִיַּמְנִי כְּדִבְרְךָ:
(29) Remove from within me the path of falseness; grace me with truth from Your Torah.	(כט) דְּרֹךְ שֶׁקֶר הִסֵּר מִמֶּנִּי וְתוֹרַתְךָ חֲנִנִי:
(30) I have chosen the path of faith, placing Your <i>mishpatim</i> [the laws whose reasons I can understand] on par with Your <i>chukim</i> !	(ל) דְּרֹךְ אֱמוּנָה בַּחֲרָתִי מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ שׁוֹיִתִּי:
(31) I have adhered to Your <i>edot</i> (faithful testimonies), <i>Hashem</i> , do not let me be embarrassed or deceived.	(לא) דְּבִקָּתִי בְּעֵדוּתֶיךָ יְהוָה אֵל תִּבְיֹשְׁנִי:
(32) I will then run the path of Your <i>mitzvot</i> (commandments), for You expand my heart through them.	(לב) דְּרֹךְ מִצְוֹתֶיךָ אֲרוּץ כִּי תִרְחִיב לִבִּי:
Heh	אות ה'
(33) <i>Hashem</i> , show me the path of Your statutes, so that I may guard it to the utmost and never stray from it.	(לג) הוֹרֵנִי יְהוָה דְּרֹךְ חֻקֶּיךָ וְאַצְרֶנָּה עֶקֶב:
(34) Give me understanding, so that I may safeguard Your Torah and observe it with all my heart.	(לד) הִבִּינֵנִי וְאַצְרָה תוֹרַתְךָ וְאַשְׁמְרֶנָּה בְּכָל לֵב:
(35) Guide me on the path of Your commandments, for therein lies my desire.	(לה) הִדְרִיכֵנִי בְּנִתִּיב מִצְוֹתֶיךָ כִּי בּוֹ חִפְצָתִי:
(36) Incline my heart to Your testimonies, and not to selfish gain.	(לו) הֵט לִבִּי אֶל עֵדוּתֶיךָ וְאַל אֶל בָּצַע:
(37) Turn my eyes away from beholding vanity, and revive me by letting me walk in Your ways.	(לז) הַעֲבֵר עֵינֵי מְרִאוֹת שׁוֹא בְּדַרְכְּךָ חַיִּי:
(38) Fulfill Your promise to Your servant who has devoted his whole life to revering You.	(לח) הִקֵּם לְעַבְדְּךָ אִמְרָתְךָ אֲשֶׁר לִירָאתְךָ:
(39) Take away the one humiliation that I dread that You will abandon me because I am not worthy, for Your judgments are ultimately for my good.	(לט) הַעֲבֵר חֲרַפְתִּי אֲשֶׁר יִגְרַתִּי כִּי מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ טוֹבִים:
(40) Behold, I yearn for Your precepts; revive me with Your merciful justice.	(מ) הִנֵּה תִאֲבָתִי לִפְקֻדֶיךָ בְּצַדִּיקְתְּךָ חַיִּי:
Vav	אות ו'
(41) <i>Hashem</i> , after all the trials I have endured which were meant to cleanse me let Your loving-kindness come to me now; even if I am not worthy, comfort me with Your deliverance, according to Your Word.	(מא) וַיִּבְאֵנִי חֶסֶדְךָ יְהוָה תְּשׁוּעָתְךָ כְּאִמְרָתְךָ:
(42) I will then be able to answer the one voice within that taunts me, for I have placed my trust in Your Word.	(מב) וְאַעֲנֶה חֲרָפִי דָּבָר כִּי בִטְחָתִי בְּדִבְרְךָ:
(43) Do not cast doubt, therefore, on the truth that has come	(מג) וְאַל תַּצַּל מִפִּי דָּבָר אֱמֶת עַד

forth from my mouth as if I have spoken falsely concerning Your statutes, for I have placed my hope solely in Your righteous laws.	מָאֵד כִּי לְמִשְׁפָּטֶךָ יַחֲלִיתִי:
(44) Then I shall keep Your Torah [Your teachings that illuminate our lives] always and forever throughout eternity.	(מד) וְאַשְׁמְרָה תּוֹרַתְךָ תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:
(45) I will then walk in expansion [trusting in Your wondrous deliverance], for I have sought out Your precepts.	(מה) וְאַתְּהִלָּכָה בְּרַחֲבָה כִּי פָקֵדֶיךָ דָּרַשְׁתִּי:
(46) I will publicly declare the righteousness of Your precepts before kings and not be ashamed.	(מו) וְאֵדְבָרָה בְּעֵדֻתֶיךָ נֶגֶד מְלָכִים וְלֹא אֲבוֹשׁ:
(47) I will delight in Your commandments which I have come to love.	(מז) וְאַשְׁתַּעֲשַׁע בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר אֶהְבֵּתִי:
(48) I will raise my palms up to accept upon myself the yoke of Your commandments which I love so much, and I will meditate on Your <i>chukim</i> (hidden statutes).	(מח) וְאַשָּׂא כָפִי אֶל מִצְוֹתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר אֶהְבֵּתִי וְאַשְׁיחָה בְּחֻקֶּיךָ:

Zayin	אות ז'
(49) Remember what You promised Your servant; for this alone I wait.	(מט) זָכֹר דְּבַר לְעִבְדְּךָ עַל אֲשֶׁר יַחֲלִתִּנִּי:
(50) This has been my comfort in my affliction, that You would fulfill Your Word; this itself gives me life.	(נ) זֹאת נַחֲמָתִי בְּעִנְיִי כִּי אִמְרַתְךָ חִיַּתִּנִּי:
(51) Greatly have wanton sinners derided me, yet I have not deviated from Your Torah.	(נא) זֵדִים הִלְצִנִּי עַד מָאֵד מִתּוֹרַתְךָ לֹא נָטִיתִי:
(52) I recalled Your righteous judgments of old, <i>Hashem</i> , and I was comforted.	(נב) זָכַרְתִּי מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ מֵעוֹלָם יְהוָה וְאֶתְנַחֵם:
(53) [Whenever] I was stricken with panic because of the lawless men who forsake Your Torah;	(נג) זָלַעְפָּה אֶחְזַתִּנִּי מִרְשָׁעִים עֲזָבִי תּוֹרַתְךָ:
(54) Your statutes have been my song in the house of my wandering.	(נד) זְמֵרוֹת הָיוּ לִי חֻקֶּיךָ בְּבֵית מְגוּרֵי:
(55) I constantly remember Your Name, <i>Hashem</i> , in the night, and I am able to keep Your Torah.	(נה) זָכַרְתִּי בַלַּיְלָה שְׁמֶךָ יְהוָה וְאַשְׁמְרָה תּוֹרַתְךָ:
(56) Thus has it been with me, for I have cherished Your precepts.	(נו) זֹאת הֵיטָה לִּי כִּי פָקֵדֶיךָ נִצַּרְתִּי:

Chet	אות ח'
(57) My portion [all that I have] is from You <i>Hashem</i> ! I have therefore decided in my heart that there is no other way to express my gratitude but to safeguard Your Words.	(נז) חֲלָקִי יְהוָה אִמְרָתִי לְשֹׁמֵר דְּבָרֶיךָ:
(58) I pleaded before You with all my heart: Grace me in accord with Your promise.	(נח) חֲלִיתִי פָנִיךָ בְּכָל לֵב חֲנִנִי כְּאִמְרַתְךָ:
(59) I examined my ways so that I will could turn my feet [i.e., even my unconscious habits] to the fulfillment of Your testimonies.	(נט) חֲשַׁבְתִּי דְרָכִי וְאַשִּׁיבָה רַגְלִי אֶל עֵדֻתֶיךָ:
(60) I have now trained myself to proceed quickly and never procrastinate in the fulfillment of Your commandments.	(ס) חֲשַׁתִּי וְלֹא הִתְמַהֲמַהְתִּי לְשֹׁמֵר מִצְוֹתֶיךָ:
(61) Though bands of evildoers gather to take counsel against me, I will never forget Your Torah.	(סא) חֲבָלֵי רָשָׁעִים עוֹדְנֵי תּוֹרַתְךָ לֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי:
(62) Midnight, I rise to thank You for the judgments of Your righteous charity. ¹³⁸	(סב) חֲצוֹת לַיְלָה אָקוּם לְהוֹדוֹת לָךְ

¹³⁸ King David teaches us here that *Chatzot Lailah* (Midnight) is the perfectly balanced meeting point between

	על משפטי צדקך:
(63) I am a friend to all who revere You, and to those who are conscientious to safeguard Your <i>pikudim</i> (precepts).	(סג) חֵבֵר אֲנִי לְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִרְאוּךָ וּלְשִׁמְרֵי פְקוּדֶיךָ:
(64) Hashem, signs of Your loving-kindness fill the entire world; teach me the secrets of Your laws.	(סד) חֲסֵדְךָ יְהוָה מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ חֻקֶּיךָ לְמַדְנִי:
Tet	אות ט'
(65) Hashem, You have acted with pure goodness toward Your servant, in accord with Your promise.	(סה) טוֹב עָשִׂיתָ עִם עַבְדְּךָ יְהוָה כְּדַבְּרְךָ:
(66) Teach me superior reason and knowledge in the merit of having performed Your commandments with pure faith.	(סו) טוֹב טַעַם וְדַעַת לְמַדְנִי כִּי בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ הָאֲמֵנִתִּי:
(67) Prior to afflicting myself [i.e., forcing myself to learn Your Torah], I erred [in my ignorance of the law]; but now [that I have begun to understand] I will be able to safeguard Your teachings.	(סז) טָרָם אֶעֱנֶה אֲנִי שֶׁגַּג וְעָתָה אֶמְרָתְךָ שְׁמֵרָתִי:
(68) Good are You, and beneficent! Teach me [to align myself with] Your <i>chukim</i> !	(סח) טוֹב אַתָּה וּמְטִיב לְמַדְנִי חֻקֶּיךָ:
(69) Wanton sinners have accused me falsely, but I will continue to keep Your precepts with all my heart.	(סט) טָפְלוּ עָלַי שֹׁקֵר זֵדִים אֲנִי בְּכָל לֵב אֲצַר פְּקוּדֶיךָ:
(70) Their heart is covered with foolishness like fat; but as for me, my delight is in Your Torah.	(ע) טָפַשׁ כַּחֲלֵב לֵבָם אֲנִי תוֹרָתְךָ שֶׁעֲשֵׂתִי:
(71) It is to my benefit that I have suffered; it was so that I could learn Your <i>chukim</i> .	(עא) טוֹב לִי כִּי עָנִיתִי לְמַעַן אֶלְמַד חֻקֶּיךָ:
(72) The Torah that issues forth from Your mouth is worth more to me than thousands of pieces of gold and silver.	(עב) טוֹב לִי תוֹרַת פִּיךָ מֵאַלְפֵי זָהָב וְכֶסֶף:
Yod	אות י'
(73)) Your hands fashioned me [my <i>nefesh</i> -soul] and established me [my body]; grant me insight now, to contemplate the wondrous wisdom of my body and the interaction between my soul and my body that I may learn Your <i>mitzvot</i> . ¹³⁹	(עג) יָדֶיךָ עֲשׂוּנִי וַיְכֻנְנוּנִי הִבִּינֵנִי וְאֶלְמְדָה מִצְוֹתֶיךָ:

mishpat-judgment (the first half of the night) and *tzedek*-righteous charity (the second half of the night leading to the revelation of morning).

¹³⁹ Malbim: The ancients taught that the 248 limbs of the human body correspond to the 248 positive commandments of the Torah, while the 365 sinews and veins correspond to the 365 prohibitive commandments. Grant us insight to contemplate the wondrous wisdom of the 613 limbs and veins of the body—the detailed connections and interactions between all the limbs and all the organs—as well as how the soul dwells within the body and enlivens it— so that we may understand the principles of the 613 *mitzvot* and all their interactions and connections.

Meiri: Your hands fashioned me [every limb of my body is designed with the most astounding wisdom] and made me a fitting vessel [i.e., You gave me the intellectual capacity to grasp this wisdom]; [this being the case, let my creation not be for naught, rather] grant me insight so that I may learn Your commandments.

Shochar Tov: When this potter's vessel is beautiful, who is praised? Is it not the potter who made it? Thus said David: I am the vessel, and You are the Potter. Make me beautiful so that humankind will praise You.

Chakham: This verse parallels the last phrase in Deuteronomy 32:6 and the first phrase in Deuteronomy 32:7: The phrase, "Hashem made you and established you," is followed immediately by "Remember days long gone by; ponder the years of each generation." Here too, David acknowledges that he (his body and soul) as well as his people (the nation of Israel) have been fashioned by God for a purpose and a destiny. He asks for the insight and the understanding needed to fulfill that destiny.

Hirsch: It is You who have fashioned me and shown me the way, that is, the destiny I am to strive to fulfill. The physical body and intellectual faculties You have given me are in accordance with this destiny. I ask only for Your divine assistance to aid me.

Ari: The verse states, "*Ner Hashem nishmat adam*—man's soul is God's candle" (Proverbs 20:27). The letters of the word for "candle" (*ner*, *nun-resh*) stand for *nefesh* and *ruach*, the two most fundamental levels of soul-consciousness) with which Hashem graces man when he is born. In a sense, they are like the basic potential that God provides. The next level, *neshamah*, is for Adam-man to attain, i.e., to utilize and develop the potential he has

(74) When those who revere You behold me and see that I have attained perfection by contemplating the spiritual laws with which You govern the universe they will rejoice; for as I hoped in Your Word and was rewarded with greater understanding, they too will be rewarded. ¹⁴⁰	(עד) יִרְאִיךָ יִרְאוּנִי וְיִשְׂמְחוּ כִּי לְדַבְּרְךָ יִחְלָתִי:
(75) I know, YHVH, O Infinite One, that Your judgments are fair; even when I have felt afflicted, You have been faithful to protect me and safeguard my soul. ¹⁴¹	(עה) יִדְעֵתִי יְהוָה כִּי צָדֵק מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ וְאַמּוֹנָה עֲנִיתָנִי:
(76) Still, let Your love be a comfort to me, as You have promised Your servant [i.e., in accordance with Your promise to uphold all who sincerely devote themselves to Your service].	(עו) יְהִי נָא חֶסֶדְךָ לְנַחֲמֵנִי כְּאַמְרָתְךָ לְעַבְדְּךָ:
(77) Arouse Your mercies toward me so that I may live; don't let me die in my affliction for Your Torah is my eternal delight.	(עז) יִבְאוּנִי רַחֲמֶיךָ וְאַחִיָּה כִּי תוֹרָתְךָ שְׂעִשְׁעִי:
(78) Let wanton sinners be ashamed, for having accused me falsely [for distorting the truth and for acting crookedly with me]. I, for my part, will continue to meditate on Your <i>pikudim</i> (precepts).	(עח) יֵבֶשׁוּ זֵדִים כִּי שָׁקַר עֲוֹתוֹנִי אֲנִי אֲשִׁיחַ בִּפְקוּדֶיךָ:
(79) Let those who revere You and who are truly knowledgeable of Your testimonies return to me after abandoning me because they believed the false accusations of my foes.	(עט) יָשׁוּבוּ לִי יִרְאִיךָ וְיִדְעִי (וידעו) עֲדָתֶיךָ:
(80) Help me safeguard Your <i>chukim</i> wholeheartedly, so that I may never again transgress Your Torah and deserve to be humiliated.	(פ) יְהִי לִבִּי תָמִים בְּחֻקֶּיךָ לְמַעַן לֹא אֲבוֹשׁ:
Khaf	אות כ'
(81) My soul yearns/faints for Your salvation; I have placed my sole hope in Your Word [the fulfillment of Your promise to redeem us].	(פא) כָּלֵתָה לְתַשׁוּעָתְךָ נַפְשִׁי לְדַבְּרְךָ יִחְלָתִי:
(82) My eyes fail with longing for the fulfillment of Your Word, saying: When will You comfort me?!	(פב) כָּלוּ עֵינַי לְאַמְרָתְךָ לֵאמֹר מָתִי תִנַּחֲמֵנִי:
(83) In my affliction I have become like a wineskin dried up by smoke. Nevertheless, I have never forgotten Your <i>chukim</i> .	(פג) כִּי הֵייתִי כְּנֹאד בְּקִיטוֹר חֻקֶּיךָ לֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי:
(84) How many are Your servant's days [how much longer will I live]? How long until I see You execute judgment on those who persecute me?	(פד) כַּמָּה יָמֵי עַבְדְּךָ מָתִי תַעֲשֶׂה בְרִדְפֵי מִשְׁפָּט:
(85) Wanton sinners have dug pits for me; the way they seek to bring about my destruction is not in keeping with Your Torah!	(פה) כָּרוּ לִי זֵדִים שִׁיחוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא כְּתוֹרָתְךָ:
(86) For the essence of Your <i>mitzvot</i> is faithfulness, whereas they pursue me with lies. Help me!	(פו) כָּל מִצְוֹתֶיךָ אֱמוּנָה שָׁקַר רִדְפוּנִי עֲזָרֵנִי:
(87) Just a little more, and they would have succeeded in destroying my earthly existence; never once did I forsake Your <i>pikudim</i> (precepts).	(פז) כַּמַּעַט כְּלוּנִי בָאָרֶץ וְאֲנִי לֹא עֲזַבְתִּי פְקֻדֶיךָ:
(88) You, however, are eternally loving; grant me therefore life in accord with Your loving-kindness! I will then guard the testimonies of Your mouth. ¹⁴²	(פח) כְּחֶסֶדְךָ חֲיֵנִי וְאַשְׁמְרָה עֲדוֹת פִּיךָ:

been given to become Adam, a complete human being. David can be seen to be making the same distinction in this verse: O God, I was born with a wondrously made physical body and a *nefesh* (potential to attain the highest spiritual understanding); now, based on my desire to serve You, expand my understanding; help me bring that potential to fruition!

¹⁴⁰ Sforno. Meiri: They will acknowledge that he who hopes in Hashem will never be turned away empty-handed.

¹⁴¹ Rashi: You have afflicted me justly [i.e., I acknowledge that I deserve every hardship I have had to endure].

¹⁴² I will dedicate my life totally to the mission with which You entrusted my soul before it descended to this world.

Lamed	אות ל'
(89) Forever, <i>Hashem</i> , Your Word [that You spoke, saying, "Let there be a firmament..."] stands firm in the heavens and maintains their existence.	(פט) לְעוֹלָם יְהוָה דְּבָרְךָ נָצַב בַּשָּׁמַיִם:
(90) Your faithfulness, as well, stands from generation to generation, just as You established the earth and insured its continued existence.	(צ) לְדֹר וָדֹר אֱמוּנָתְךָ כּוֹנֵנֶת אֶרֶץ וַתַּעֲמֵד:
(91) They [i.e., heaven and earth, and we too] stand today and every day under the scrutiny of Your judgments. All creatures are Your subjects.	(צא) לְמִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ עֲמָדוֹ הַיּוֹם כִּי הִכָּל עֲבָדֶיךָ:
(92) Had Your Torah not been my constant pursuit and delight, I would have perished long ago in my affliction.	(צב) לֹאִי תוֹרַתְךָ שְׁעִשְׁעִי אֲזִי אֲבִדְתִּי בְּעִנְיִי:
(93) I will therefore never ever forget Your <i>pikudim</i> , for through them You have given me life.	(צג) לְעוֹלָם לֹא אֶשְׁכַּח פְּקוּדֶיךָ כִּי בָם חִיֵּיתִנִּי:
(94) I am Yours. Save me from the nets of all those who pursue me, for I seek only to fulfill Your <i>pikudim</i> (precepts).	(צד) לֵךְ אֲנִי הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי כִּי פְקוּדֶיךָ דְּרָשְׁתִּי:
(95) While wicked men pour all their hopes and resources into destroying me, I spend my time contemplating and gaining greater insight into Your <i>edot</i> (faithful testimonies).	(צה) לִי קוֹו רָשָׁעִים לְאַבְדָּנִי עֲדֹתֶיךָ אֶתְבוֹנוּ:
(96) I have seen an end to every striving, whereas Your <i>mitzvot</i> are infinitely expansive.	(צו) לְכָל תַּכְלָה רְאִיתִי קֶץ רַחֲבָה מִצְוֹתֶיךָ מְאֹד:
Mem	אות מ'
(97) O how I have come to love Your Torah; it is my meditation all the day.	(צז) מִה אֶהְבֵּתִי תוֹרַתְךָ כָּל הַיּוֹם הִיא שִׁיחָתִי:
(98) Your commandment has given me the wisdom to outsmart my enemies, for it is ever with me.	(צח) מֵאִיִּבִי תַּחֲכֻמִּי מִצְוֹתֶיךָ כִּי לְעוֹלָם הִיא לִי:
(99) I have learned from all my teachers [or: I have learned more than all my teachers taught me], for Your faithful testimonies are my constant meditation.	(צט) מִכָּל מְלַמְדִּי הִשְׁכַּלְתִּי כִּי עֲדוּתֶיךָ שִׁיחָה לִי:
(100) I have gained insight from wise elders, for I have safeguarded Your precepts.	(ק) מִזְקֵנִים אֶתְבוֹנוּ כִּי פְקוּדֶיךָ נִצְרָתִי:
(101) I have restrained my feet from every evil path so that I could conscientiously guard the singular truth behind all Your Words.	(קא) מִכָּל אֶרֶץ רָע כָּלֵאתִי רַגְלִי לְמַעַן אֶשְׁמֹר דְּבָרְךָ:
(102) I have not turned aside from Your ordinances, for You have illumined my path and guided me every step of the way.	(קב) מִמִּשְׁפָּטֶיךָ לֹא סָרְתִּי כִּי אֶתָּה הוֹרֵנִי:
(103) How sweet to my palate are Your teachings, sweeter than honey to my mouth.	(קג) מִה נִמְלָצוּ לִחְכִּי אִמְרֹתֶיךָ מִדְּבַשׁ לִפִּי:
(104) I have gained insight from your precepts; I therefore disdain every false path.	(קד) מִפְּקוּדֶיךָ אֶתְבוֹנוּ עַל כֵּן שִׁנְאַתִּי כָּל אֶרֶץ שָׁקֶר:
Nun	אות נ'
(105) Your Word is a candle to guide my every step as I walk the wide open paths of Your Torah, and a light on my individual path.	(קה) נֵר לְרַגְלִי דְּבָרְךָ וָאוֹר לְנִתִּיבֹתִי:
(106) I have sworn, and I will uphold my oath, to observe Your righteous judgments.	(קו) נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי וְאֶקִּימָהּ לִשְׁמֹר מִשְׁפָּטֶי צִדְקֶךָ:
(107) I have endured incredible afflictions; revive me according to Your Word so that I may continue to serve You.	(קז) נִעֲנִיתִי עַד מְאֹד יְהוָה חֲיֵנִי כְּדִבְרְךָ:
(108) Accept the supplications which I have made with my mouth, <i>Hashem</i> , and teach me Your judgments.	(קח) נִדְבוֹת פִּי רָצָה נָא יְהוָה וּמִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ לְמַדֵּנִי:

(109) Though my soul is always in my hands [my life is constantly in danger], I haven't forsaken Your Torah.	(קט) נִפְּשִׁי בְּכַפִּי תָמִיד וְתוֹרַתְךָ לֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי:
(110) Though lawless men have placed a snare for me, I still have not strayed from Your precepts.	(קי) נִתְּנוּ רְשָׁעִים פֶּחַ לִי וּמִפְקוּדֶיךָ לֹא תָעִיתִי:
(111) I have inherited Your faithful testimonies as an eternal heritage, for they are the exultation of my heart.	(קיא) נִחַלְתִּי עֲדוּתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם כִּי שִׂשׁוֹן לִבִּי הֵמָּה:
(112) I have therefore inclined my heart to perform Your statutes forever to the utmost.	(קיב) נָטִיתִי לִבִּי לַעֲשׂוֹת חֻקֶּיךָ לְעוֹלָם עֲקֵב:
Samekh	אות ס'
(113) I loathe those who vacillate endlessly, but Your Torah I love.	(קיג) סַעֲפִים שִׁנְאַתִּי וְתוֹרַתְךָ אֶהְבֵּתִי:
(114) You alone are my secret hiding place and my shield; I will never stop yearning for Your Word.	(קיד) סִתְּרִי וּמִגְנִי אֶתָּה לְדַבְּרֶךָ יִחַלְתִּי:
(115) Leave me alone, O you rebels [i.e., who rebelliously reject Hashem's Torah], so that I may keep the commands of my God.	(קטו) סוּרוּ מִמֶּנִּי מְרִעִים וְאַצְרָה מִצְוֹת אֱלֹהֵי:
(116) Support me as You promised, so that I may live and never be embarrassed for placing all my hope in You.	(קטז) סִמְכֵנִי כְּאִמְרַתְךָ וְאַחֲיָהּ וְאֶל תְּבִישְׁנִי מִשְׁבָּרִי:
(117) Sustain me [through my dark night] so that I may be delivered [from all danger] and never stop delighting in Your statutes.	(קיז) סַעֲדֵנִי וְאוֹשַׁעָה וְאַשְׁעָה בְּחֻקֶּיךָ תָּמִיד:
(118) You will crush all who [lied and said that they] couldn't help going against Your statutes, for You will expose their falsehood.	(קיח) סָלִיתָ כָּל שׁוֹגִים מִחֻקֶּיךָ כִּי שֶׁקֶר תִּרְמִיתֵם:
(119) Like dross, You will purge the wicked of the earth; therefore I have come to love Your testimonies [which remind us that You are a God who judges fairly].	(קיט) סָגִים הַשֶּׁבֶת כָּל רָשָׁעֵי אֶרֶץ לָכֵן אֶהְבֵּתִי עֲדוּתֶיךָ:
(120) My flesh [physical existence] is stricken with fear [when I contemplate the judgment in store for the wicked]; as a result, I too fear Your judgment.	(קכ) סָמַר מִפְּחָדְךָ בְּשָׂרִי וּמִמִּשְׁפָּטֶיךָ יִרְאֵתִי:
Ayin	אות ע'
(121) I have done [i.e., I have tried my best to conduct my affairs according to the dictates of] fair judgment and righteousness; do not abandon me to my oppressors.	(קכא) עָשִׂיתִי מִשְׁפָּט וְצֶדֶק בֶּל תַּנְיַחֲנִי לְעֹשִׂקִי:
(122) Be a guarantor for Your servant for good; prevent the arrogant from oppressing me.	(קכב) עֲרֹב עֲבָדְךָ לְטוֹב אֶל יַעֲשֻׁקָנִי זָדִים:
(123) My eyes long for Your salvation, and for the fulfillment of Your righteous promise [of redemption].	(קכג) עֵינַי כָּלוּ לִישׁוּעָתְךָ וּלְאִמְרַת צֶדֶקְךָ:
(124) Act with Your servant in accord with Your loving-kindness, and teach me Your <i>chukim</i> (secret statutes).	(קכד) עֲשֵׂה עִם עֲבָדְךָ כְּחֶסֶדְךָ וְחֻקֶּיךָ לְמַדֵּנִי:
(125) I am Your servant! Grant me understanding [of Your ways] so that I may truly know Your testimonies [i.e., the deeper plan behind the way You conduct Your world].	(קכה) עֲבָדְךָ אָנִי הִבִּינִי וְאִדְעָה עֲדוּתֶיךָ:
(126) The time has come to act on Your behalf, Hashem; for they [those who are ignorant of Your ways, or worse, who think that they can rebel against You] have nullified Your Torah.	(קכו) עַתָּה לַעֲשׂוֹת לִיהוָה הִפְרוּ תוֹרַתְךָ:
(127) I have therefore come to love Your commandments, more than gold and jewels.	(קכז) עַל כֵּן אֶהְבֵּתִי מִצְוֹתֶיךָ מִזָּהָב וּמִפָּז:
(128) I hereby declare with regard to all Your precepts, all of them are straight and upright; [this being the case] I have come	(קכח) עַל כֵּן כָּל פְּקוּדֶיךָ כֻּלָּם יִשְׁרָתִי כָּל

to abhor every path of falsehood.	אֲרַח שֶׁקֶר שְׁנֵאתִי:
Peh	אות פ'
(129) You testimonies are wondrous; [the reward for even the simplest of them is hidden and beyond our understanding;] my soul will therefore guard [all of] them.	(קכט) פְּלֹאוֹת עֲדוּתֶיךָ עַל כֵּן נִצָּרְתָם נַפְשִׁי:
(130) Your opening words [the first words You uttered at Sinai, "I am Hashem your God who brought you forth from the land of Egypt"] were like a great light that shone [into our souls], causing the simplest among us to understand [that Hashem Hu HaElokim, there is no other].	(קל) פִּתַּח דְּבָרֶיךָ יָאִיר מִבֵּין פְּתִיִּים:
(131) [Ever since that day when you opened Your mouth, so to speak] I too have opened my mouth wide to breathe in [Your spirit], for I lust passionately [to understand and to fulfill] Your commandments.	(קלא) פִּי פָעַרְתִּי וְאַשְׁאֶפֶה כִּי לְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ יֵאָבֵתִי:
(132) Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is Your way with those who love Your name.	(קלב) פָּנָה אֵלַי וְחַנּוּנִי כְּמִשְׁפָּט לְאַהֲבִי שִׁמְךָ:
(133) Guide my steps with Your word, and let no abuse of power have dominion over me.	(קלג) פָּעַמִּי הֵכֵן בְּאִמְרָתְךָ וְאַל תִּשְׁלֹט בִּי כָל אָוֹן:
(134) Redeem me from the oppression of men, so that I will continue to be able to guard Your precepts.	(קלד) פְּדֵנִי מֵעֲשֹׁק אָדָם וְאַשְׁמְרָה פְּקוּדֶיךָ:
(135) Shine Your face upon Your servant, and teach me [the secrets of] Your hidden laws.	(קלה) פָּנֶיךָ הָאֵר בְּעִבְדְּךָ וּלְמַדְנִי אֶת חֻקֶּיךָ:
(136) Rivers of tears stream down from my eyes over those who do not keep Your Torah.	(קלו) פְּלָגֵי מִיִּם יִרְדּוּ עֵינַי עַל לֹא שִׁמְרוּ תוֹרָתְךָ:
Tzadi	אות צ'
(137) You are righteous, Hashem, and upright in Your judgments.	(קלז) צְדִיק אַתָּה יְהוָה וְיֹשֶׁר מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ:
(138) [Because You are righteous] You commanded us to keep Your righteous testimonies; [because You are upright, You desire our] faithful adherence above all.	(קלח) צִוִּיתָ צֶדֶק עֲדוּתֶיךָ וְאַמּוֹנָה מֵאֵד:
(139) My zeal has hardened me in the face of my oppressors who have forgotten Your words [i.e., who falsely claim that man can do what he wishes without fear of divine retribution].	(קלט) צַמְתַּתִּנִּי קִנְאָתִי כִּי שָׁכַחוּ דְּבָרֶיךָ צָרִי:
(140) [The oral transmission of] Your Word is exceedingly pure and refined; Your servant has therefore come to love it.	(קמ) צְרוּפָה אִמְרָתְךָ מֵאֵד וְעִבְדְּךָ אֶהְבֶּה:
(141) I may be young and even despised, but I have not forgotten Your precepts.	(קמא) צָעִיר אָנֹכִי וְנִבְזָה פְּקָדֶיךָ לֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי:
(142) Your righteousness is an eternal righteousness and Your Torah is truth.	(קמב) צְדָקָתְךָ צֶדֶק לְעוֹלָם וְתוֹרָתְךָ אֱמֶת:
(143) Even when distress and anguish overtook me, Your commandments are my everlasting joy.	(קמג) צָר וּמִצּוֹק מִצְאוֹנִי מִצְוֹתֶיךָ שִׁעְשָׁעִי:
(144) Grant me insight into the righteousness of Your testimonies so that I may live forever.	(קמד) צֶדֶק עֲדוּתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם הִבִּינִי וְאַחִיָּה:
Kof	אות ק'
(145) I have called [You] with my whole heart [and the very essence of my being]; answer me, Hashem, I vow to keep Your <i>chukim</i> !	(קמה) קִרְאתִי בְּכָל לֵב עֲנֵנִי יְהוָה חֻקֶּיךָ אֶצְרָה:
(146) I have called You, "O save me!" so that I may safeguard Your testimonies.	(קמו) קִרְאתֶיךָ הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי וְאַשְׁמְרָה עֲדוּתֶיךָ:
(147) Early, before dawn, I have awakened and implored;	(קמז) קִדְמָתִי בִנְשָׁף וְאַשׁוּעָה לְדַבְּרֶךָ

placing my hope in Your Word.	יְחַלֵּתִי:
(148) My eyes preceded the night watches, so that I might meditate upon the truth of Your words.	(קמח) קָדְמוּ עֵינַי אֲשֶׁמְרוֹת לְשִׁיחַ בְּאַמְרֹתֶךָ:
(149) Hear my call, hear, in accord with Your loving-kindness, <i>Hashem</i> , in accord with Your fair judgment, grant me life!	(קמט) קוֹלִי שְׁמָעָה כְּחֶסֶדְךָ יְהוָה כְּמִשְׁפָּטְךָ חַיִּי:
(150) For [now, as a result of these psalms, these prayers, these statements of truth that emanate from my heart] even those who pursued their animal lusts have drawn near again; those who were far from Your Torah [have begun to draw near].	(קנ) קָרְבוּ רַדְפֵי זִמָּה מִתּוֹרַתְךָ רַחֲקוֹ:
(151) And so You, too, have drawn near, <i>Hashem</i> , for all Your commandments [especially those which call upon us to return to You at any time and assure us that we can regain Your nearness] are true!	(קנא) קָרֹב אֶתָּה יְהוָה וְכָל מִצְוֹתֶיךָ אֱמֹת:
(152) I have also come to know the past from Your testimonies [which commemorate the miracles of Your salvation]; it is for this reason that You have established them for all time.	(קנב) קָדַם יָדַעְתִּי מַעֲדֹתֶיךָ כִּי לְעוֹלָם יִסְדָּדְתָּם:
Resh	אות ר'
(153) Behold my affliction and rescue me, for I have not forgotten Your Torah. ¹⁴³	(קנג) רְאֵה עֲנִי וְחַלְצֵנִי כִּי תוֹרַתְךָ לֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי:
(154) Fight my battle [uphold my cause] and redeem me [deliver me from my oppressors and my afflictions]; grant me eternal life in accord with Your promise to protect those who revere You. ¹⁴⁴	(קנד) רִיבָה רִיבִי וּגְאֹלֵנִי לְאַמְרֹתֶךָ חַיִּי:
(155) Deliverance is far from the lawless, for they have never bothered to seek out the reasons behind Your <i>chukim</i> . ¹⁴⁵	(קנה) רְחוֹק מִרְשָׁעִים יְשׁוּעָה כִּי חֲקִיךָ לֹא דִרְשׁוּ:
(156) But Your mercies, <i>Hashem</i> , are great and countless even when I may have forfeited Your favor through my errors; grant life to me in accord with Your fair judgment.	(קנו) רַחֲמֶיךָ רַבִּים יְהוָה כְּמִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ חַיִּי:
(157) How numerous are those who chase and oppress me! Still, I have not turned away from Your testimonies [i.e., I have not sought to retaliate by doing them harm].	(קנז) רַבִּים רַדְפֵי וְצָרִי מַעֲדוֹתֶיךָ לֹא נָטִיתִי:
(158) Indeed, whenever I beheld men of no faith who rebelled against Your Torah, I contended with them for not being true to Your Word.	(קנח) רְאִיתִי בְּגִדִים וְאַתְקוּטָה אֲשֶׁר אִמְרֹתֶךָ לֹא שָׁמְרוּ:
(159) See, therefore, that I have always loved Your mandates, <i>Hashem</i> ! Grant me life through Your attribute of loving-kindness.	(קנט) רְאֵה כִּי פְקוּדֶיךָ אֶהְבֵּתִי יְהוָה כְּחֶסֶדְךָ חַיִּי:
(160) For the sum-total of Your Word is Truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.	(קס) רֹאשׁ דְּבָרְךָ אֱמֶת וְלְעוֹלָם כָּל מִשְׁפָּט צִדְקָה:
Shin	אות ש'
(161) Princes have persecuted me without cause, but my heart stood in awe only of the manifold teachings that emerge from Your singular Word.	(קסא) שָׂרִים רָדְפוּנִי חֲנָם וּמִדְּבָרְךָ (ומדברֶיךָ) פֶּחַד לִבִּי:
(162) I rejoice over Your teachings/declarations, like a person who discovers he owns a great fortune.	(קסב) שֵׁשׁ אֲנֹכִי עַל אִמְרֹתֶךָ כְּמוֹצֵא שָׁלָל רָב:
(163) To the extent that I have come to love Your Torah, I have	(קסג) שָׁקַר שְׁנֵאתִי וְאַתַּעֲבֶה תוֹרַתְךָ

¹⁴³ Chakham: Seeing that I have not forgotten Your Torah—even in the midst of my affliction—I ask that You too never remove Your divine providence from me, but rather consider my affliction and deliver me.

¹⁴⁴ Meiri, Ibn Ezra, Radak, *Metzudat David*: And grant me life so that I can devote myself wholeheartedly to fulfill Your Word.

¹⁴⁵ Malbim: Even if the *reshaim* (lawless) spoken about in this verse might keep those commandments which make sense to them and which seem to them to have some clearly rational basis, they do not, however, keep the *chukim*, those commandments that are beyond human reason. Because their worship of Hashem is limited to their own understanding of what is right, they are far from being saved, even when they do call out for help.

learned to hate and abhor falsehood.	אֶהְבֵּתִי:
(164) Seven times each day I praise You, for the the charity of Your justice and the justice of Your charity.	(קסד) שִׁבְעַת בְּיָוֶם הַלְלֵתִיךָ עַל מִשְׁפָּטֶי צְדָקָה:
(165) Those who love Your Torah shall attain utmost peace in this world, and they will never stumble in the world to come.	(קסה) שְׁלוֹם רַב לְאַהֲבֵי תוֹרָתְךָ וְאִין לָמוּ מִכְשׁוֹל:
(166) I yearn only for Your redemption, <i>Hashem</i> ; I have therefore performed Your commandments without any thought of reward.	(קסו) שְׁבַרְתִּי לִישׁוּעָתְךָ יְהוָה וּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ עָשִׂיתִי:
(167) My soul has safeguarded Your testimonies, for I love them beyond all else.	(קסז) שְׁמֶרָה נַפְשִׁי עֲדֹתֶיךָ וְאַהֲבָם מְאֹד:
(168) I have safeguarded Your precepts and Your testimonies, for all my ways are before You and Your Divine Providence guides me at all times.	(קסח) שְׁמֶרְתִּי פְקוּדֶיךָ וְעֲדֹתֶיךָ כִּי כָל דְּרָכֵי נִגְדֶּדֶךָ:
Tav	אות ת'
(169) Draw close my heartfelt song before You, <i>Hashem</i> : Grant me deep understanding of Your Word.	(קסט) תִּקְרַב רִנָּתִי לִפְנֵיךָ יְהוָה כְּדִבְרְךָ הִבִּינִנִי:
(170) Let my plea come before You: Rescue me according to Your promise!	(קע) תָּבוֹא תַּחֲנוּנִי לִפְנֵיךָ כְּאַמְרָתְךָ הַצִּילֵנִי:
(171) My lips will forever express Your praise, for having taught me Your <i>chukim</i> .	(קעא) תִּבְעֶנָה שְׁפֹתַי תְּהִלָּה כִּי תִלְמַדְנִי חֻקֶּיךָ:
(172) My tongue will thus transmit the righteousness of Your teachings, emphasizing that the totality of all Your <i>mitzvot</i> is justice.	(קעב) תַּעַן לְשׁוֹנִי אֲמַרְתָּךְ כִּי כָל מִצְוֹתֶיךָ צְדָק:
(173) Let Your hand therefore be ready to help me, for I have chosen to forever safeguard Your <i>pikudim</i> .	(קעג) תְּהִי יָדְךָ לְעֶזְרִי כִּי פְקוּדֶיךָ בְּחַרְתִּי:
(174) O <i>Hashem</i> , I long unceasingly for Your salvation; in the meantime Your Torah is my sole delight. ¹⁴⁶	(קעד) תֵּאָבֱתִי לִישׁוּעָתְךָ יְהוָה וְתוֹרָתְךָ שְׂעִשְׂעִי:
(175) Grant my soul eternal life, so that I may forever proclaim Your praise; and may even Your attribute of justice help me [i.e., speak on my behalf that I truly tried to live according to Your truth].	(קעה) תַּחֲיֵי נַפְשִׁי וְתִהְלֶלְךָ וּמִשְׁפָּטְךָ יַעֲזָרֵנִי:
(176) Even if I have strayed as a lost sheep, seek Your servant, for I have never forgotten Your commandments.	(קעו) תַּעֲיִתִי כֶּשֶׁה אֶבֶד בִּקֵּשׁ עַבְדְּךָ כִּי מִצְוֹתֶיךָ לֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי:

Tehillim 120

(1) A Song of Ascents: In my troubled straits [when troubles overwhelmed me], I called out to <i>Hashem</i> , the merciful God, and He answered me:	(א) שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת אֶל יְהוָה בַּצָּרָתָה לִי קָרָאתִי וַיַּעֲנֵנִי:
(2) "O <i>Hashem</i> , deliver my soul from the lip of falsehood [liars] and a deceitful tongue [deceivers]."	(ב) יְהוָה הַצִּילָה נַפְשִׁי מִשֵּׁפֶת שֶׁקֶר מִלְשׁוֹן רַמְיָה:
(3) What benefit have you, what do you gain, O deceiving tongue?	(ג) מַה יִּתֵּן לָךְ וּמַה יִּסִּיף לָךְ לְשׁוֹן רַמְיָה:
(4) The arrows of the Mighty One are sharpened for you; heated with coals that burn for all time. ¹⁴⁷	(ד) חֲצֵי גִבּוֹר שְׁנוּנִים עִם גַּחְלֵי

¹⁴⁶ Malbim: The reason I so desire Your salvation [from all my trials and tribulations] is so that I can delight in contemplating Your Torah with interruption.

¹⁴⁷ Hirsch: According to *Baba Batra* 74b, the embers/coals of a *rotham* tree flow for a long time. Rashi adds that these embers continue to glow from within even though they may seem to be dead on the surface. Accordingly *rotham* is related to *radam* (as in *tardemah*) which designates deep sleep. Thus: "The arrows which are to destroy you are sharpened even now, and the flames which will lay waste your achievements glimmer even now though they are yet unseen."

	רְתָמִים:
(5) O woe for me that I have lingered in <i>Meshekh</i> , dwelt alongside the black tents of <i>Kedar</i> . ¹⁴⁸	(ה) אוֹיָהּ לִי כִי גִרְתִּי מִשֶּׁךְ שְׁכֵנֹתֵי עַם אֶהְלִי קֶדָר:
(6) My soul has had its fill of living with those who hate peace.	(ו) רַבַּת שְׁכֵנָה לָהּ נַפְשִׁי עִם שׁוֹנְא שְׁלוֹם:
(7) I am for peace, yet when I speak, they are for war.	(ז) אֲנִי שְׁלוֹם וְכִי אֲדַבֵּר הָמָּה לְמַלְחָמָה:

Tehillim 121

(1) A Song for Israel's ascent from the depths of exile: I lift my eyes up to [i.e., beyond] the highest mountain peaks, from where my real help will come.	(א) שִׁיר לַמַּעֲלוֹת אֲשָׂא עֵינַי אֶל הַהָרִים מֵאֵין יָבָא עֲזָרִי:
(2) My help comes only from <i>Hashem</i> , Maker of heaven and earth.	(ב) עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יְהוָה עֹשֶׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ:
(3) As your Creator, He cares for you; He will therefore not allow your feet to stumble; your Protector will not slumber nor remove His providence from you.	(ג) אֵל יִתֵּן לְמוֹט רַגְלְךָ אֵל יִנוּם שְׁמֶרְךָ:
(4) Behold, the Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps!	(ד) הִנֵּה לֹא יָנוּם וְלֹא יִשָּׁן שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל:
(5) <i>Hashem</i> is always protecting you; <i>Hashem</i> is like your shadow, right next to you.	(ה) יְהוָה שְׁמֶרְךָ יְהוָה צִלְךָ עַל יָד יְמִינְךָ:
(6) The sun will thus not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.	(ו) יוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא יַכְכָּה וַיָּרֵחַ בַּלַּיְלָה:
(7) <i>Hashem</i> will protect you from all evil; He will guard your soul.	(ז) יְהוָה יִשְׁמְרְךָ מִכָּל רָע יִשְׁמֹר אֶת נַפְשְׁךָ:
(8) <i>Hashem</i> will guard your going out and your coming in from now throughout eternity.	(ח) יְהוָה יִשְׁמֹר צֵאתְךָ וּבואְךָ מִעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם:

Tehillim 122

(1) A Song of Ascents by David: I was happy when Israel said to me, "Let us go to the House of <i>Hashem</i> !"	(א) שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת לְדָוִד שְׂמֵחָתִי בְּאֵמָרִים לִי בֵּית יְהוָה נִלְךְ:
(2) O Yerushalayim, our feet once stood within your gates.	(ב) עֲמֻדוֹת הָיוּ רַגְלֵינוּ בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ יְרוּשָׁלַם:
(3) O Yerushalayim, you are built as the city within which heaven and earth are united as one.	(ג) יְרוּשָׁלַם הַבְּנוּיָה כְּעִיר שְׂחֻבָּרָה לָהּ יַחֲדוֹ:
(4) It is there that the tribes ascended, the tribes of <i>Yah</i> ; they ascended to the Temple in which reposed Israel's testimony; they ascended to gratefully acknowledge the Name of <i>YHVH</i> , <i>Hashem</i> .	(ד) שָׁשִׂים עָלוּ שְׁבֵטִים שְׁבֵטֵי יְהוָה עֲדוֹת לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְהֵדוֹת לְשֵׁם יְהוָה:
(5) They ascended to the <i>Sanhedrin</i> for there reposed the seats of supreme justice as well as the thrones of the royal family of David.	(ה) כִּי שָׁמָּה יֵשְׁבוּ כִסְאוֹת לְמִשְׁפַּט כִּסְאוֹת לְבֵית דָּוִד:
(6) I therefore adjure you: Inquire about the peace of Yerushalayim! O Yerushalayim, may all who love you see	(ו) שְׁאֵלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם יִשְׁלִיו

¹⁴⁸ Hirsch sees the word *oyah* (*aleph, vav, yod, heh*) not as meaning woe, but as a conjugation of *ivah* (*aleph, vav, heh*) meaning wish or fervent desire. He writes: "*Meshekh* is a tribe descended from Noah's son *Yafeth*. Since it is mentioned together with the tents of *Kedar*, it would seem that this tribe also led a nomadic life far away from places of permanent habitation. The Psalmist thus says, 'It would have been better if I had sojourned among the Bedouins in the wilderness. True, I would have been far away from culture and civilization, but I would not then be in the midst of nations who hate truth, as I am now.'"

tranquility in their days!	אֶהְבִּיקָּ:
(7) May there be peace within your walls and serenity within your citadels!	(ז) יְהִי שְׁלוֹם בְּחִילְךָ שְׁלוֹה בְּאַרְמוֹתֶיךָ:
(8) For the sake of my brothers and friends, I shall pray for peace within you!	(ח) לְמַעַן אַחֵי וְרַעֲי אֲדַבְּרָה נָא שְׁלוֹם בְּךָ:
(9) For the sake of the House of <i>Hashem</i> our God, I shall seek your good!	(ט) לְמַעַן בֵּית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲבַקֶּשֶׁה טוֹב לְךָ:

Tehillim 123

(1) A Song of Ascents: To You I lift up my eyes, O You who are enthroned in the heavens!	(א) שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת אֵלֶיךָ נִשְׁאֲתִי אֶת עֵינֵי הַיֹּשֵׁבִי בַשָּׁמַיִם:
(2) Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maidservant look to the hand of her lady, so our eyes look to <i>Hashem</i> our God until He will be gracious to us.	(ב) הִנֵּה כְּעֵינֵי עֲבָדִים אֶל יָד אֲדוֹנֵיהֶם כְּעֵינֵי שִׁפְחָה אֶל יָד גִּבְרָתָהּ כֵּן עֵינֵינוּ אֶל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַד שִׂיחַנֵּנוּ:
(3) Be gracious to us, <i>Hashem</i> , be gracious to us, for we have suffered enough humiliation.	(ג) חֲנֻנוּ יְהוָה חֲנֻנוּ כִּי רַב שִׁבְעֵנוּ בּוֹז:
(4) Our soul is fed up with the ridicule of the complacent, with the humiliation of arrogant oppressors.	(ד) רַבַּת שְׂבַעָה לָהּ נַפְשֵׁנוּ הַלֵּעַג הַשְׂאֲנָנִים הַבּוֹז לְגֵאֵי יוֹנִים:

Tehillim 124

(1) A Song of Ascents by David: If <i>Hashem</i> had not accompanied us—let Yisrael now say:	(א) שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת לְדָוִד לְיָהוָה שֶׁהָיָה לָנוּ יֹאמֵר נָא יִשְׂרָאֵל:
(2) If <i>Hashem's</i> constant miraculous providence had not accompanied us when men rose up against us;	(ב) לְיָהוָה שֶׁהָיָה לָנוּ בְּקוֹם עָלֵינוּ אָדָם:
(3) They would have swallowed us alive in their burning rage against us.	(ג) אֲזִי חַיִּים בִּלְעֵנוּ בְּחֵרוֹת אָפָם בָּנוּ:
(4) Then, like the floodwaters of a raging sea, they would have inundated us; a river of troubles would have engulfed our soul.	(ד) אֲזִי הַמַּיִם שֶׁטְפוּנוּ נַחֲלָה עֶבֶר עַל נַפְשֵׁנוּ:
(5) The violent floodwaters of history would have engulfed our soul and finished us off completely.	(ה) אֲזִי עֶבֶר עַל נַפְשֵׁנוּ הַמַּיִם הַזִּידוֹנִים:
(6) We bless and thank You <i>Hashem</i> , for not allowing them to tear us apart with their fangs.	(ו) בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה שֶׁלֹּא נִתְּנָנוּ טָרֶף לְשֹׁנֵיהֶם:
(7) Our soul has been rescued like a bird from the fowler's snare; now the snare is broken and we have escaped.	(ז) נַפְשֵׁנוּ כְּצִפּוֹר נִמְלָטָה מִפֶּחַ יֹקֵשִׁים הַפֶּחַ נִשְׁבַּר וְאִנְחָנוּ נִמְלָטָנוּ:
(8) Our help comes when we call out in the Name of <i>Hashem</i> , Maker of heaven and earth.	(ח) עֲזָרָנוּ בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה עֹשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ:

Tehillim 125

(1) A Song of Ascents: Those who trust in <i>Hashem</i> are like Mount Zion which never vacillates but abides forever.	(א) שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת הַבֹּטְחִים בִּיהוָה כִּהָר צִיּוֹן לֹא יִמוּט לְעוֹלָם יֹשֵׁב:
(2) Yerushalayim is surrounded by mountains, but <i>Hashem</i> will surround His people from now and forevermore.	(ב) יְרוּשָׁלַיִם הָרִים סְבִיב לָהּ וַיהוָה סְבִיב לְעַמּוֹ מִעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם:
(3) He will not allow the rod of wickedness to overtake the fate of the righteous, lest the righteous send forth their hands deceitfully as well.	(ג) כִּי לֹא יִנּוּחַ שִׁבְט הָרָשָׁע עַל גּוֹרֵל הַצְדִּיקִים לְמַעַן לֹא יִשְׁלַחוּ הַצְדִּיקִים בְּעוֹלָתָהּ יָדֵיהֶם:
(4) O <i>Hashem</i> , merciful God, do good for those who do good,	(ד) הִיטִיבָהּ יְהוָה לְטוֹבִים וְלִישָׁרִים

and for those who remain upright in their hearts.	בְּלִבּוֹתָם:
(5) As for those who incline to their crooked ways, may <i>Hashem</i> lead them to their doom together with those who commit despicable crimes. Let peace be on Israel.	(ה) וְהַמָּטִים עַקְלָלוֹתָם יוֹלִיכֵם יְהוָה אֶת פְּעָלֵי הָאָוֶן שְׁלוֹם עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Tehillim 126

(1) A Song of Ascents from the depths of exile: When <i>Hashem</i> will come out of concealment and return with the captivity of Tziyon, ¹⁴⁹ we will feel as if we were/are dreaming. ¹⁵⁰	(א) שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת בְּשׁוּב יְהוָה אֶת שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן הֵינּוּ כְּחֻלְמִים:
(2) Then our mouths will be filled with laughter and our tongues with joyous song; then the nations will exclaim " <i>Hashem</i> has wrought great wonders for these!"	(ב) אֲזַי מְלֵא שְׂחוֹק פִּינוּ וּלְשׁוֹנֵינוּ רִנָּה אֲזַי יֹאמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם הַגְדִּיל יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם אֱלֹהֵי:
(3) Israel will also exclaim: " <i>Hashem</i> has truly wrought great wonders for us." We will rejoice. ¹⁵¹	(ג) הַגְדִּיל יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּנוּ הֵינּוּ שִׂמְחִים:

¹⁴⁹ The verse does not state "*behashiv Hashem shivat Tziyon*—when Hashem will restore the captivity of Zion" but rather "*beshev Hashem et shivat Tziyon*—when Hashem will return with the captivity of Zion." This implies that the *Shekhinah* is in exile with the Jewish people, and will be redeemed with us at the time of the Redemption. The source for this teaching is in found the Talmud (*Megillah* 29a): "Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai said: Come and see how beloved is Israel before the Holy One, for everywhere they were exiled, the *Shekhinah* accompanied them. When they were exiled to Egypt, the *Shekhinah* accompanied them, as it is written, 'Did I not reveal Myself to your ancestors when they were in Egypt?' (I Samuel 2:27). When they were exiled to Babylon, the *Shekhinah* accompanied them, as it is written, 'For your sake I was sent away to Babylon' (Isaiah 43:14). So too when they will be redeemed in the future, the *Shekhinah* will accompany them [back from exile], as it is written, 'Hashem your God will return with your captivity' (Deuteronomy 30:3). It is not written '*veheshiv Hashem*—Hashem will restore' but '*beshev Hashem et*—Hashem will return with...' This teaches us that, as it were, the Holy One Himself will be redeemed from exile along with Israel."

¹⁵⁰ "*Hayinu ke'cholmim*—we will all awaken as if from a deep slumber; [it will be so wondrous, as if an impossible dream has finally come true]." The phrase *hayinu ke'cholmim* is purposely ambiguous. In one sense, after glimpsing the entire panorama of time from the perspective of eternity, all of history will be seen to have been one long dream. Referring back to our present exile state, those who are privileged to live through the Messianic redemption will thus exclaim, "We were like dreamers, now we've finally woken up!" (Radak, *Metzudot David*). On the other hand, our subjective experience of the Future World which will be so much beyond anything we could ever have conceived that "we will feel like we are dreaming" (Ibn Ezra).

Radak and *Metzudot David* thus emphasize that, at the time of the *Geulah* (redemption), we will look back on our *Galut* (exile)—and on all of history—and it will seem like it was just an unreal dream. In other words, the awakening will be so great as to completely change the way we see things. Pre-*Geulah* will be seen as an ephemeral nighttime dream compared the magnificent waking reality of the Messianic Age. Ibn Ezra, on the other hand, says that the *Geulah* will be so amazing, so great, so incredible, that we will think that we are dreaming—until it dawns on us, of course, that the *Galut* was a dream, and now we are awake. Both are true. We will all awaken as if from a deep slumber, and it will be so wondrous, as if an impossible dream has finally come true.

¹⁵¹ "We will rejoice"—in the future—when exile gives way to redemption, when Hashem reveals His sovereignty in all its magnificence. "We will rejoice"—in the present—in the midst of exile when all is dark and everything seems to have gone wrong—for we know with certainty that Hashem is with us. Disguised in the events of history, concealed behind the scenes, secretly guiding history to its ultimate destination—He is with us. This is the double meaning of *hayinu semechim*. It vaults us forward into the future when our joy will be complete, but its rays also reflect back into the darkness of exile, giving us the hope and strength we need to weather all difficulties.

In a sense, this is the answer to the question, "What is the secret of Jewish immortality?" It is Israel's ability (received from King David and the prophets, and the sages of the Talmud and Zohar) to see through the façade of natural law and history; to perceive the Unity behind the fragmentation; to feel the Divine Presence with us in our broken state, the Hand of the Holy One holding ours as He secretly guides history to its messianic rendezvous.

(4) <i>Hashem</i> , retrieve our captive exiles! ¹⁵² Bring the redemption quickly! Make the hidden wellsprings in our hearts gush forth like flashfloods in the arid Negev desert.	(ד) שׁוּבָה יְהוָה אֶת שְׁבִיתֵנוּ (שבותנו) כְּאַפִּיקִים בְּנֶגֶב:
(5) The Sowers [Israel] were themselves scattered like seeds among the nations to sow Your secret plan; with tears in their eyes, they turned to You, crying and hoping only to return to You; soon we will harvest the truth with great joy.	(ה) הַזְרְעִים בְּדַמְעָה בְּרִנָּה יִקְצְרוּ:
(6) But now we are like the farmer who walks along and weeps as he carries the seed-bag of truth and justice to plant in the hearts of men; soon he will return with great joy carrying the full grown sheaves of his harvest.	(ו) הַלּוֹךְ יֵלֵךְ וּבֹכֶה נֹשֵׂא מִשָּׁךְ הַזֶּרַע בֹּא יָבֹא בְרִנָּה נֹשֵׂא אֲלֻמָּתוֹ:

Tehillim 127

(1) A Song of Ascents by Shlomo: If <i>Hashem</i> does not build a house, its builders have labored on it in vain; if <i>Hashem</i> does not guard the city, the sentry has watched in vain.	(א) שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת לְשִׁלְמָה אִם יְהוָה לֹא יִבְנֶה בַּיִת שׁוּא עֲמָלוֹ בּוֹנֵיוֹ בּוֹ אִם יְהוָה לֹא יִשְׁמָר עִיר שׁוּא שָׁקֵד שׁוֹמֵר:
(2) It is in vain that you rise early, that you sit up late, you who eat the bread of nerves; when God wishes to give He will give to His loved one even while he sleeps.	(ב) שׁוּא לָכֶם מִשְׁכִּימֵי קוֹם מֵאַחֲרֵי שֶׁבֶת אֲכָלִי לֶחֶם הָעֵצָבִים כִּן יִתֵּן לִידִידוֹ שָׁנָא:
(3) Behold, children are an inheritance from <i>Hashem</i> ; the fruit of the womb is the reward He gives.	(ג) הִנֵּה נַחֲלַת יְהוָה בָּנִים שְׂכָר פְּרִי הַבֶּטֶן:
(4) The children of one's youth are like arrows in the hand of a warrior.	(ד) כַּחֲצִיצִים בְּיַד גִּבּוֹר כִּן בָּנֵי הַנְּעוּרִים:
(5) Fortunate is the man who has filled his quiver with them; they will not be ashamed when they confront their enemies in the gate.	(ה) אֲשֶׁרִי הִגֵּבְרָ אֲשֶׁר מָלֵא אֶת אֲשַׁפְתּוֹ מֵהֶם לֹא יִבְשׁוּ כִּי יִדְּבְרוּ אֶת אוֹיְבֵים בְּשַׁעַר:

Tehillim 128

(1) A Song of Ascents: Happy are you, all who revere <i>Hashem</i> and walk in His ways.	(א) שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת אֲשֶׁרִי כָל יִרְאֵה יְהוָה הֵחֵלֵךְ בְּדַרְכָּיו:
(2) You will eat the fruit of your labors; attaining happiness in this world, with goodness reserved for YOU in the World to Come.	(ב) יִגִּיעַ כִּפְיִךְ כִּי תֹאכַל אֲשֶׁרִיךְ וְטוֹב לָךְ:
(3) Your wife will be like a fruitful vine inside your home; your children like olive saplings flourishing around your table.	(ג) אֲשֶׁתְּךָ כִּגְפֹן פְּרִיָּה בִּירְכָתִי בֵּיתְךָ בָּנֶיךָ כְּשִׁתְלֵי זֵיתִים סָבִיב לְשִׁלְחָנְךָ:
(4) Behold, this is just the way the God-fearing man is blessed.	(ד) הִנֵּה כִּי כֵן יִבְרַךְ גִּבְרִירְאֵה יְהוָה:
(5) May <i>Hashem</i> bless you from Tziyon, and may you be privileged to gaze upon the good of Yerushalayim all the days of your life.	(ה) יִבְרַכְךָ יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן וּרְאֵה בְּטוֹב יְרוּשָׁלַם כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ:

¹⁵² In its three concluding verses, David returns to the here-and-now, to the reality of exile, of Israel's being scattered like seeds to the four winds, of endless wandering—spiritual as well as physical—trying to find our way back home, back to our land, back to a relationship with Hashem that we once had. Having transcended time, though, he now returns with x-ray vision, an uncanny ability to see through the latticework of history, to feel Hashem's loving presence even in the midst of its near total eclipse, and His guiding Hand behind a terrifying wall of silence.

He therefore cries out, "Hashem! Retrieve our captive exiles!" Bring us back to you! Like the original sparks of holiness that were scattered everywhere throughout creation with the shattering of the Primordial Vessels (*Sefirot*), Israel too is dispersed to the ends of the earth. And although we were dispersed in order to retrieve those original sparks of holiness, we ourselves became trapped in the process. As a result, as the Zohar above told us, the *Shekhinah* accompanied us like a mother who cannot stand to see her children in pain. Yet, she too became trapped in exile with us! See full commentary.

(6) May you live to see your children's children; peace upon Yisrael.	(ו) וְרָאָה בָּנִים לְבָנֶיךָ שְׁלוֹם עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל:
---	---

Tehillim 129

(1) A Song of Ascents: They have persecuted me greatly since my youth! Let Israel say:	(א) שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת רַבַּת צָרוּנִי מִנְעוּרִי יֹאמַר נָא יִשְׂרָאֵל:
(2) They have persecuted me greatly since my youth, but they have not prevailed against me!	(ב) רַבַּת צָרוּנִי מִנְעוּרִי גַם לֹא יָכְלוּ לִי:
(3) The plowers plowed upon my back; they made their furrows deep and long.	(ג) עַל גִּבִּי חָרְשׁוּ חֲרָשִׁים הָאֲרִיכוּ לְמַעֲנִיתָם (למענותם):
(4) But <i>Hashem</i> is righteous; He sundered the cords of the wicked.	(ד) יְהוָה צָדִיק קָצַץ עֲבוֹת רָשָׁעִים:
(5) Let all those who hate Zion be ashamed and pushed back.	(ה) יָבֹשׁוּ וְיִסָּגּוּ אַחֲרָיו כָּל שֹׂנְאֵי צִיּוֹן:
(6) Let them be as the grass upon the rooftops, which withers before it is cut down;	(ו) יִהְיוּ כַחֲצִיר גִּגּוֹת שֶׁקֹּדֶמֶת שְׁלֶף יָבֵשׁ:
(7) With which the reaper cannot fill his hand, nor the one who binds sheaves fill his arm.	(ז) שְׁלֹא מָלֵא כַפּוֹ קוֹצֵר וְחֹבֵצוֹ מְעַמֵּר:
(8) And the passers-by never thought of saying: "May <i>Hashem's</i> blessing come to you. We bless you in the Name of Eternal One, <i>Hashem</i> !"	(ח) וְלֹא אָמְרוּ הָעֹבְרִים בְּרַכַּת יְהוָה אֲלֵיכֶם בְּרַכְנוּ אֶתְכֶם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה:

Tehillim 130

(1) A Song of Ascents: From the depths of my night exile I have called You to reveal Yourself, <i>YHVH</i> (<i>Adonai</i>).	(א) שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת מִמַּעְמָקִים קָרָאתִיךָ יְהוָה:
(2) <i>Adonai</i> , hear my voice, let Your ears be attentive to the call of my supplications. ¹⁵³	(ב) אֲדֹנָי שְׁמַעָה בְּקוֹלִי תַּהֲיִינָה אַזְנוֹיֶךָ קִשְׁבוֹת לְקוֹל תַּחֲנוּנֵי:
(3) If You, <i>Yah</i> , were always to take account of intentional transgressions, O <i>Adonai</i> , who could withstand the severity of Your judgment? ¹⁵⁴	(ג) אִם עוֹנוֹת תִּשְׁמַר יְהוָה אֲדֹנָי מִי יַעֲמֵד:
(4) But forgiveness is reserved with You alone, so that You [i.e., Your judgment] may be feared. ¹⁵⁵	(ד) כִּי עִמָּךְ הַסְּלִיחָה לְמַעַן תִּירָא:

¹⁵³ The basic supposition of true prayer is that Hashem hears us; that He pays attention to us; that we matter to Him. Without this, prayer is meaningless. Nevertheless, although we may know something to be true, even about Hashem, we must never take it for granted. David therefore precedes many of his prayers with a request that Hashem hear and be attentive to what he has to say.

¹⁵⁴ Alternatively, "O *Yah* (You who are so transcendent), if You would let intentional transgressions accumulate, O *Adonai* (my personal God), who could stand up [under the burden]?"

In another place King David pleaded, "Hashem, do not rebuke me with Your fury; do not chastise me with Your wrath!" (Psalm 38:1). The Midrash (*Shochar Tov* on Psalm 38) explains that rebuke and chastisement are good things, as it is written, "Happy is the man whom You chastise/correct, Hashem!" (Psalm 94:12), and "Hashem reproves/corrects those whom He loves" (Proverbs 3:12). What David asked was rather that such reproof should not be out of fierce anger lest we be unable to stand up in the face of misfortune. He therefore said, "Master of all worlds, rather than becoming angry when we sin and not redeeming us, cover over our sins. Please do not rebuke us with Your fury."

The Midrash continues and describes Israel's panic when "our sins have multiplied above our heads and our guilt has mounted to the heavens" (Ezra 9:6). Rabbi Yitzchak said that this can be likened to a man crossing a river with a large knapsack on his head. His feet begin to sink into the mud. People call out to him: "Let go of your pack so you will be able to free your feet!" This is what the Holy One says to Israel: "Why do you say, 'If You, God, were to always take account of our sins, O God, who could withstand Your judgment?' Let he who has sinned rather repent of his wicked ways. Let him let go of his sins and I will have mercy on him."

¹⁵⁵ Alternatively, according to the following Midrash: "But You reserved [*Rosh Hashanah* for judgment and *Yom Kippur*] for forgiveness, so that You may be feared" or "so that we could truly fear losing Your love and forgiveness."

Midrash *Shochar Tov* explains this verse: "The Holy One withholds His forgiveness (like a deposit) and does not bestow it freely on *Rosh Hashanah*. This is the meaning of 'for You reserve forgiveness with Yourself.' But why does He go to such lengths to withhold His forgiveness? [Surely, His wish is to not to withhold it!] Rather, it is 'so that You may

(5) I place the hope of my very existence only in YHVH (<i>Adonai</i>); I yearn for His word.	(ה) קוֹיִתִּי יְהוָה קוֹתָה נַפְשִׁי וְלִדְבָרוֹ הוֹחֲלֵתִי:
(6) My soul yearns for <i>Adonai</i> more than watchmen of the night yearn for the morning; more than those who watch throughout the night vigil of this world yearn for the dawn of redemption.	(ו) נַפְשִׁי לֹאֲדָנִי מִשְׁמָרִים לְבָקֶר שְׁמָרִים לְבָקֶר:
(7) Therefore, Israel, yearn to YHVH (<i>Adonai</i>); for true loving-kindness is with YHVH (<i>Adonai</i>) alone; redemption is with Him in infinite abundance.	(ז) יַחַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל יְהוָה כִּי עִם יְהוָה הַחֶסֶד וְהִרְבָּה עִמּוֹ פְדוּת:
(8) The time is surely coming when He will redeem Yisrael from all subjugation to its transgressions. ¹⁵⁶	(ח) וְהוּא יַפְדֶּה אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל עֲוֹנֹתָיו:

Tehillim 131

(1) A Song of Ascents: <i>Hashem</i> , my heart was not haughty, nor were my eyes conceited; I did not speculate about things too great and too wondrous for me.	(א) שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת לְדָוִד יְהוָה לֹא גָבַהּ לִבִּי וְלֹא רָמוּ עֵינַי וְלֹא הִלְכֵתִי בַּגְדָּלוֹת וּבַנִּפְלְאוֹת מִמֶּנִּי:
(2) Haven't I quieted and stilled my soul like a weaned child at its mother's breast? Isn't my soul with me like a weaned child?	(ב) אִם לֹא שְׁוִיתִי וְדוּמַמְתִּי נַפְשִׁי כְּגִמְלָה עָלַי אִמּוֹ כְּגִמְלָה עָלַי נַפְשִׁי:
(3) O Israel, yearn to <i>Hashem</i> , from now and forevermore.	(ג) יַחַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל יְהוָה מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם:

Tehillim 132

(1) A Song of Ascents: <i>Hashem</i> , remember for David all the hardship he endured;	(א) שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת זְכוֹר יְהוָה לְדָוִד אֶת כָּל עֲוֹנוֹתָיו:
(2) Remember how he swore to <i>Hashem</i> , vowed to the Mighty One of Yaacov:	(ב) אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לַיהוָה נְדָר לְאַבְרָם יַעֲקֹב:
(3) "I will not enter the privacy of my own house, nor will I go up unto the bed that is spread for me;	(ג) אִם אָבָא בְּאֵהָל בֵּיתִי אִם אָעִלָּה עַל עֵרֶשׁ יְצוּעִי:
(4) I will not give sleep to my eyes, nor slumber to my eyelids;	(ד) אִם אֶתֶן שֵׁנָה לְעֵינַי לְעַפְעַפִּי תִנּוּמָה:
(5) Until I find a place for <i>Hashem</i> ; until I build suitable dwellings for the Mighty One of Yaacov."	(ה) עַד אֶמְצָא מְקוֹם לַיהוָה מִשְׁכָּנֹת לְאַבְרָם יַעֲקֹב:
(6) Behold, we heard of it in the province of Ephraim; we	(ו) הִנֵּה שָׁמַעְנוּהָ בְּאֶפְרַתָּה מִצְאֲנוּהָ

be feared,' i.e., so that we will truly be in awe before Him and repent from the depths of our hearts on *Yom Kippur* [and thereby deserve His forgiveness]" (Mahari Cohen).

Malbim further explains, "The definition of forgiveness (*selichah*) is that a sin is taken away as if it were never done. No one but the Creator can do such a thing. Therefore there is not one place in the entire *Tanakh* in which forgiveness is granted by anyone other than Hashem Himself. It is in this sense that our verse emphasizes, 'For with You alone there is forgiveness'" (Malbim *ad loc.*).

Hirsch states the same idea: "Forgiveness is solely with the Lord; He alone is capable of forgiving. The mouth of a mortal, who after all is himself in need of forgiveness, cannot pronounce the sinner pure, much less render him pure. Only He, who is as omnipotent as He is gracious, in the abundance of His grace and almighty power can perform for man that miracle of miracles, the blotting out of the consequences of his past mistakes. He alone can prevent the seeds of guilt and adversity, with which the iniquity of man filled the acre of his future, from ripening; only the Lord can help him who has grown old in sin to regain peace and purity...All the continued survival of the Jewish people is based upon the fact of this direct divine forgiveness, and even unto the nethermost depths of sin it gives Israel the inalienable awareness of the divine pardon that can be obtained at all times."

¹⁵⁶ During the year, we (our vital energies) become trapped in our sins. Without knowing it, we act out of compulsion; we become slaves to acting, speaking, and thinking in ways that are detrimental to ourself and others. *Teshuvah* (repentance, returning to Hashem) involves reclaiming ourselves and our vital energies from the compulsions in which we and they have become trapped. Through our sincere *teshuvah*, Hashem not only forgives us, but literally frees and redeems us from being subjugated to our transgressions (i.e., from the very actions that were preventing redemption; our own personal redemption and the redemption of the world). He then transforms our sins into merits, for they are now seen as having been stepping stones to getting closer to Him.

found it in a forested field.	בְּשֵׂדֵי יַעַר:
(7) But now we come to His dwelling places; we prostrate ourselves towards His permanent footstool.	(ז) נְבוֹאָה לְמִשְׁכְּנוֹתָיו נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְהֵדֶם רַגְלָיו:
(8) Arise, <i>Hashem</i> , to Your Resting Place [<i>Beit HaMikdash</i>], You and the Ark of Your Strength!	(ח) קוּמָה יְהוָה לְמִנוּחֶתְךָ אֶתָּה וְאָרוֹן עֲזֶךָ:
(9) Let Your <i>Cohanim</i> attire themselves in righteousness and Your devoted servants sing for joy.	(ט) כְּהֲנִיךָ יִלְבְּשׁוּ צֶדֶק וְחֹסִידֶיךָ יִרְנְנוּ:
(10) For the sake of David Your servant, do not turn away the face or revoke the predetermined appearance of Your anointed <i>Mashiach</i> .	(י) בַּעֲבוּר דָּוִד עַבְדְּךָ אַל תִּשָּׁב פָּנָי מִשִּׁיחֶךָ:
(11) God has sworn to David in truth; He will never take it back: "Of the fruit of your virility will I set upon a throne for you.	(יא) נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְדָוִד אֱמֶת לֹא יִשׁוּב מִמֶּנָּה מִפְּרִי בִטְנְךָ אֲשִׁית לְכֶסֶּא לְךָ:
(12) "If your children will observe My covenant and this testimony which I shall teach them, then their children too will sit upon your throne forever."	(יב) אִם יִשְׁמְרוּ בְרִיתִי וְעֵדוּתִי זֹ אֶלְמָדָם גַּם בְּנֵיהֶם עָדִי עַד יִשְׁבוּ לְכֶסֶּא לְךָ:
(13) For <i>Hashem</i> chose Zion and desired her as His habitation.	(יג) כִּי בָחַר יְהוָה בְּצִיּוֹן אֹוֶה לְמוֹשָׁב לוֹ:
(14) "This is sole My Resting Place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired her.	(יד) זֹאת מְנוּחָתִי עָדִי עַד פֹּה אֶשָּׁב כִּי אוֹתִיהָ:
(15) "I will bless her provisions doubly; I will satisfy her needy with plenty of bread.	(טו) צִידָה בָּרֶךְ אֲבִיוֹנֶיהָ אֲשַׁבֵּיעַ לֶחֶם:
(16) "I will attire her <i>Cohanim</i> with salvation, and her devoted servants will sing for joy.	(טז) וְכֹהֲנֶיהָ אֲלַבִּישׁ יִשְׁעֵי וְחֹסִידֶיהָ רִנָּן יִרְנְנוּ:
(17) "There I will cause David's horn to spring forth; there I have set a lamp for My anointed <i>Mashiach</i> .	(יז) שֵׁם אֲצַמִּיחַ קֶרֶן לְדָוִד עֲרֹכְתִי נֹר לְמִשִּׁיחִ:
(18) "I will enshroud his enemies in disgrace, but upon him I will cause his crown to glow."	(יח) אוֹיְבָיו אֲלַבִּישׁ בִּשְׁתַּת וְעָלָיו יִצִּיעַ נִזְרוֹ:

Tehillim 133

(1) A Song of Ascents by David: Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together.	(א) שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלֹת לְדָוִד הִנֵּה מָה טוֹב וּמָה נָעִים שֹׁבֵת אֲחִים גַּם יַחַד:
(2) God's Mercy then flows like the anointing oil poured generously over the head of the <i>Cohen Gadol</i> , until it drips down unto his beard, the beard of Aharon, and then down unto his attributes.	(ב) כְּשֶׁמֶן הַטּוֹב עַל הָרֹאשׁ יֵרֵד עַל הַזָּקָן זָקֵן אַהֲרֹן שִׁירֵד עַל פִּי מִדּוֹתָיו:
(3) It flows like the dew that covers Mount Hermon, like the dew that descends on the Mounts of Zion, for <i>Hashem</i> has commanded the blessing of life to flow there forever.	(ג) כָּטַל חֶרְמוֹן שִׁירֵד עַל הָרִי צִיּוֹן כִּי שֵׁם צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת הַבְּרָכָה חַיִּים עַד הָעוֹלָם:

Tehillim 134

(1) A Song of Ascents: Wake up, bless <i>Hashem</i> , all you servants of <i>Hashem</i> , standing watch in the House of <i>Hashem</i> , throughout the long night of exile.	(א) שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלֹת הִנֵּה בָּרְכוּ אֶת יְהוָה כָּל עַבְדֵי יְהוָה הָעֹמְדִים בְּבֵית יְהוָה בַּלֵּילוֹת:
(2) Lift up your hands to draw down holiness by blessing the One and Only God, <i>Hashem</i> .	(ב) שֹׂאוּ יְדֵיכֶם קֹדֶשׁ וּבָרְכוּ אֶת יְהוָה:
(3) May <i>Hashem</i> , Maker of heaven and earth, bless you from Zion.	(ג) יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן עֲשֵׂה שְׁמִים וְאָרֶץ:

Tehillim 135

In Psalms 135 and 136, King David first praises Hashem for the way He works in nature, and then, without interruption, goes on to praise Hashem for the way He intervenes in history in order to execute true justice. This is not just a juxtaposition of nature and the execution of justice, but rather an *equivalency* between the physical dynamics of the universe and the spiritual/moral law from which it emerges. I.e., the One who created the universe is the same One who oversees it and brings it to its intended spiritual and moral perfection.

(1) <i>HalleluYah!</i> Praise the Name of <i>Hashem</i> with which He governs His world; offer praise, you servants of <i>Hashem</i> —	(א) הַלְלוּהָ הַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם יְהוָה הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יְהוָה:
(2) Who stand watch in the House of <i>Hashem</i> and in the courtyards of the House of our God.	(ב) שְׁעָמָדִים בְּבֵית יְהוָה בְּחִצְרוֹת בֵּית אֱלֹהֵינוּ:
(3) <i>Hallelu Yah</i> , for <i>Hashem</i> is good; chant wordless melodies to His Name, for it is pleasant. ¹⁵⁷	(ג) הַלְלוּהָ כִּי טוֹב יְהוָה זְמָרוֹ לְשִׁמּוֹ כִּי נְעִים:
(4) For <i>Hashem</i> chose downtrodden Yaacov for Himself; He chose Yisrael as His exclusive possession. ¹⁵⁸	(ד) כִּי יַעֲקֹב בָּחַר לוֹ יְהוָה יִשְׂרָאֵל לְסֻגְלָתוֹ:
(5) For I know how great <i>Hashem</i> is in His creation, and how our Master's miraculous supervision over His people supersedes all the heavenly forces that men worship as gods.	(ה) כִּי אֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי כִּי גָדוֹל יְהוָה וְאֲדַגִּינוּ מִכָּל אֱלֹהִים:
(6) In His creation <i>Hashem</i> does what He pleases, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all its depths; He causes mists to evaporate and rise up from the seas that surround the extremities of the land.	(ו) כָּל אֲשֶׁר חָפֵץ יְהוָה עָשָׂה בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ בַּיָּמִים וְכָל תְּהוֹמוֹת:
(7) He makes electrical currents condense and polarize into lightning in order to bring the rain; He generates tremendous currents of wind in the various layers of the atmosphere which are like His treasure houses in the sky.	(ז) מַעֲלָה נִשְׂאִים מְקַצֶּה הָאָרֶץ בְּרָקִים לְמִטָּר עָשָׂה מוֹצֵא רוּחַ מְאֻצְרוֹתָיו:
(8) In His miraculous supervision of His people He smote the firstborn males of the Egyptians, from man to beast.	(ח) שֶׁהָכָה בְּכוֹרֵי מִצְרַיִם מֵאָדָם עַד בְּהֵמָה:
(9) This was after He sent signs and wonders into the midst of Egypt, upon Pharaoh and upon all his servants.	(ט) שָׁלַח אוֹתוֹת וּמִפְתֵּי־מִצְרַיִם בְּפָרְעָה וּבְכָל עַבְדָּיו:
(10) Later, He struck down many nations and killed mighty rulers.	(י) שֶׁהָכָה גּוֹיִם רַבִּים וְהָרַג מְלָכִים עֲצוּמִים:
(11) He overcame Sichon, king of the <i>Emori</i> , Og, king of <i>Bashan</i> , and all the kingdoms of <i>Canaan</i> .	(יא) לְסִיחוֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֱמֹרִי וְלִעּוֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן וְלִכָּל מַמְלָכוֹת כְּנָעַן:
(12) And He gave their land as an inheritance to Yisrael, His people.	(יב) וְנָתַן אֶרֶצָם נַחֲלָה נַחֲלָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ:
(13) <i>Hashem</i> , Your Name is eternal; <i>Hashem</i> , Your memory [the memory or mention of Your Name is transmitted] from generation to generation.	(יג) יְהוָה שִׁמְךָ לְעוֹלָם יְהוָה זְכוֹרְךָ לְדֹר וָדֹר:
(14) For the day will come when <i>Hashem</i> will judge the cause of His people; He will take pity on His servants.	(יד) כִּי יִדִּין יְהוָה עַמּוֹ וְעַל עַבְדָּיו יִתְּנָחֵם:
(15) But they must be careful not to fall prey to the ideologies of the nations; they are like idols made of silver and gold, the product of human hands.	(טו) עֲצָבֵי הַגּוֹיִם כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָדָם:

¹⁵⁷ Malbim: First praise Hashem Himself, for He is the Supreme Good. Then chant to His Name, for His creation of the universe and His constant supervision thereof. 'For it is pleasant' refers to the mental satisfaction and feeling of harmony that results when we perceive the awesome symmetry and interrelatedness that characterizes the creation as a whole.

¹⁵⁸ Malbim: Furthermore, Hashem's Name is pleasant because, besides governing the regularity of the laws of the natural universe, it is also the medium through which He personally governs the unique history of His chosen nation...For Yisrael is not subject to the 'laws' of history...This holds true whether the nation is characterized in its higher capacity as *Yisrael*, or whether it has fallen to the level of *Yaacov*. One way or the other, they are set aside as Hashem's special portion.

(16) They have mouths but do not speak; they have eyes but do not see.	(טז) פֶּה לָהֶם וְלֹא יִדְבְּרוּ עֵינֵיהֶם לָהֶם וְלֹא יִרְאוּ:
(17) They have ears but do not hear; they have noses but there is no breath in their mouths.	(יז) אָזְנוֹהֶם לָהֶם וְלֹא יִאָּזְנוּ אֶף אֵין יֵשׁ רוּחַ בִּפְיָהֶם:
(18) Those who make them and all who trust in them will end up becoming like them.	(יח) כְּמוֹהֶם יִהְיוּ עֹשֵׂיהֶם כָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּטַח בָּהֶם:
(19) O Family of Yisrael, bless Hashem! O Family of Aharon, bless Hashem!	(יט) בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּרְכוּ אֶת יְהוָה בֵּית אֶהֱרֹן בָּרְכוּ אֶת יְהוָה:
(20) O Family of Levi, bless Hashem! O you who revere Hashem, bless Hashem!	(כ) בֵּית הַלְוִי בָרְכוּ אֶת יְהוָה יִרְאֵי יְהוָה בָּרְכוּ אֶת יְהוָה:
(21) Blessed is Hashem from Tziyon; blessed is the One who dwells eternally in Yerushalayim, Hallelu Yah!	(כא) בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן שֹׁכֵן יְרוּשָׁלַם הַלְלוּיָהּ:

Tehillim 136

(1) Thank Hashem for He is good—for His love is eternal and everlasting!	(א) הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
(2) Thank the Supreme Power of all powers—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(ב) הוֹדוּ לֵאלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
(3) Thank the Master of all masters—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(ג) הוֹדוּ לַאֲדֹנֵי הָאֲדֹנִים כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
(4) Thank the One who performs great wonders alone [in secret]—for His love is eternal and everlasting. ¹⁵⁹	(ד) לַעֲשֵׂה נִפְלְאוֹת גְּדוֹלוֹת לְבַדּוֹ כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
(5) Thank the One who perfects the heavens with wisdom—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(ה) לַעֲשֵׂה הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּתִבְנוּנָה כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
(6) Thank the One who levels the dry land above the water—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(ו) לְרַקַּע הָאָרֶץ עַל הַמַּיִם כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
(7) Thank the One who continually perfects the great luminaries—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(ז) לַעֲשֵׂה אוֹרִים גְּדִלִים כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
(8) Who established the sun to rule by day—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(ח) אֶת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לְמַמְשַׁלֹּת בַּיּוֹם כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
(9) Who arranged the moon and stars to rule by night—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(ט) אֶת הַיָּרֵחַ וְכּוֹכְבֵּי לַלַּיְלָה לְמַמְשַׁלֹּת

¹⁵⁹ Or: "Give thanks to the hidden One who is always performing great wonders for us *levado* (alone, in secret, behind the scenes); for precisely because His love for us is so infinite, He hides it." In the Talmud, Rabbi Elazar asks, "What is the meaning of *levado*?" Since it was obvious to Rabbi Elazar that Hashem alone is the unified source of everything in the universe, this couldn't be all that King David wanted to teach us in this verse. Rather, it means that Hashem works alone, behind the scenes and in secret, such that "even one who experiences a miracle is unaware of it" (*Niddah* 31a). Hashem doesn't advertise His presence in our lives. Rather, as Rashi explains, "Only Hashem knows when He does a miracle, whereas the one for whom the miracle was performed is completely unaware" (Rashi, Psalm 136:4).

Rabbi Elimelekh of Lizensk (1717-1787) adds: "The name YKVK [embodying Hashem's mercy] is presently hidden. That is, Hashem surely wishes to bestow His kindnesses to us, but because we are in exile [as a result of not appreciating the miracles He did for us when we dwelt on our land], he hides His kindnesses [and camouflages and disguises them in natural occurrences] so that the heavenly accusers will not be able to complain [that we are not worthy of such merciful treatment]. He therefore conceals His kindnesses and mercies, and performs miracles in secret so that they will not understand. These kindnesses are thus called *niflaot* [which means simply 'wonders,' but] which the Targum translates *yitkesei* (covered, hidden; *Targum Onkelos*, *Targum Yerushalmi*, Rashi, on Deuteronomy 17:8). This then is the meaning of '[Give thanks] to the One who is always performing great wonders *levado* (alone).' For He covers and disguises His mercies in such a way that He *alone* knows about them" (*Noam Elimelekh, Likutey Shoshanim, s.v. od perush acher al pasuk zeh ki hashem havayah barukh hu hu neelam le'et atah*, p. 367).

	בְּלִילָה כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
(10) Thank the One who struck <i>Mitzrayim</i> through their firstborn—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(י) לַמֶּכָּה מִצְרַיִם בְּבְכוֹרֵיהֶם כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
(11) And brought Yisrael out from among them—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(יא) וַיּוֹצֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתּוֹכָם כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
(12) With a strong hand and outstretched arm—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(יב) בְּיָד חֲזָקָה וּבְזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
(13) Who divided the Red Sea into channels—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(יג) לַגֹּזֵר יָם סוֹף לַגְּזָרִים כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
(14) And led Israel through it—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(יד) וַהֲעֵבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹכּוֹ כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
(15) Who overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(טו) וַיַּנְעֵר פַּרְעֹה וְחִילוֹ בַיָּם סוֹף כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
(16) Who accompanied His people in the desert—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(טז) לְמוֹלִיד עַמּוֹ בַּמִּדְבָּר כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
(17) Who struck down great kings—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(יז) לַמֶּכָּה מְלָכִים גְּדֹלִים כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
(18) And killed mighty rulers—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(יח) וַיַּהַרְג מְלָכִים אֲדִירִים כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
(19) Sichon, king of the <i>Emori</i> —for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(יט) לְסִיחוֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֱמֹרִי כִי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
(20) And Og, king of <i>Bashan</i> —for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(כ) וּלְעוֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
(21) Who gave us their land as an inheritance—for His love is eternal and everlasting. ¹⁶⁰	(כא) וַנִּתֵּן אֶרֶץ לְנַחֲלָה כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
(22) An inheritance for Israel, His servant—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(כב) נַחֲלָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדּוֹ כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
(23) Who remembered us in our degradation—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(כג) שֶׁבִשְׁפִּלְנוּ זָכַר לָנוּ כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
(24) And redeemed us from our oppressors—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(כד) וַיַּפְּרֵקֵנוּ מִצָּרֵינוּ כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
(25) Who provides sustenance for all creatures—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(כה) נָתַן לֶחֶם לְכָל בֶּשָׂר כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
(26) Thank the God of heaven—for His love is eternal and everlasting.	(כו) הוֹדוּ לֵאלֹהֵי שָׁמַיִם כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:

Tehillim 137

(1) By the rivers of Babylon, there we made our home in exile, and we also wept, when we remembered the awesome holiness of Tziyon.	(א) עַל נְהָרוֹת בָּבֶל שָׁם יֵשְׁבֵנוּ גַם בְּכִינוּ בְּזָכְרֵנוּ אֶת צִיּוֹן:
(2) There in the midst of Babylon we hung our harps upon willows to hide them, lest we be forced to play.	(ב) עַל עֲרָבִים בְּתוֹכָהּ תָּלִינוּ כְּנֻרוֹתֵינוּ:
(3) For there our captors asked us for words of song, and those who mocked us demanded joy: "Sing for us one of the songs of Tziyon!"	(ג) כִּי שָׁם שְׁאֵלוּנוּ שׁוֹבֵינֵנוּ דְּבַרֵּי שִׁיר וְתוֹלְלֵינוּ שְׂמֵחָה שִׁירוּ לָנוּ מִשִּׁיר

¹⁶⁰ See above commentary on Psalm 111:6.

	צִיּוֹן:
(4) But we thought to ourselves: How can we possibly sing Hashem's song on alien soil?	(ד) אִיךְ נָשִׁיר אֶת שִׁיר יְהוָה עַל אֲדָמַת נֹכַר:
(5) We each swore: If I forget You, O Yerushalayim, may my right hand forget itself [or: forget its skill].	(ה) אִם אֲשַׁכַּחךְ יְרוּשָׁלַם תִּשְׁכַּח יְמִינִי:
(6) Let my tongue cleave to my palate if I do not remember You, if I do not elevate the memory of Yerushalayim above my highest joy.	(ו) תִּדְבֶּק לְשׁוֹנִי לְחִכִּי אִם לֹא אֲזַכְּרֶכִי אִם לֹא אַעֲלֶה אֶת יְרוּשָׁלַם עַל רֹאשׁ שִׂמְחָתִי:
(7) Remember, Hashem, to punish the descendants of Edom, who on the day of the destruction of Yerushalayim said, "Raze it, raze it, even to its very foundation."	(ז) זָכֹר יְהוָה לְבְנֵי אֱדוֹם אֶת יוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם הָאֹמְרִים עָרוֹ עָרוֹ עַד הַיְסוֹד בָּהּ:
(8) O daughter of Babylon, it is you who will be plundered; happy is he who will repay you in retribution for the way you treated us.	(ח) בַּת בָּבֶל הַשְׂדוּדָה אֲשֶׁרִי שִׁישַׁלְמָם לָךְ אֶת גְּמוּלָךְ שֶׁגִּמַּלְתְּ לָנוּ:
(9) Happy is he who will snatch your unborn babies and dash them against the rock in retribution for the way you treated babes.	(ט) אֲשֶׁרִי שִׁיאַחֲזוּ וַנִּפֹּץ אֶת עַלְלִיךְ אֶל הַסֶּלַע:

Tehillim 138**Tehillim 139**

(1) <i>LaMenatzeyach</i> – Dedicated to the One who grants eternal victory. <i>Mizmor LeDavid</i> – A cutting-song by David: Hashem! You have probed me my heart and know everything about me.	(א) לְמִנְצַח לְדוֹד מִזְמוֹר יְהוָה חֲקֵרְתָּנִי וַתֵּדַע:
(2) You know my sitting and my standing [i.e., my every movement]; You telepathically discern my deepest thoughts from afar.	(ב) אַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ שְׁבָתִי וְקוּמִי בְּנִתָּה לְרַעִי מִרְחוֹק:
(3) You measure my walking and my lying down; You are well aware of all my ways.	(ג) אֶרְחִי וְרַבְעִי זָרִית וְכָל דְּרָכִי הִסְכַּנְתָּה:
(4) Ere a word reaches my tongue [i.e., before I am able to articulate a thought], Hashem, You know it in its entirety.	(ד) כִּי אֵין מְלָה בְלִשׁוֹנִי הֵן יְהוָה יָדַעְתָּ כָּלָה:
(5) You hem me in from the back and from the front, and You place Your palm upon me from above. ¹⁶¹	(ה) אַחֲוֹר וְקִדְמָה צִרְתָּנִי וַתֵּשֶׂת עָלַי כַּפְּךָ:

¹⁶¹ Hirsch: You confine me [i.e., You confine the sphere of my free will activity to the split second of the "present" that intervenes] between the my *back* (my past) and my *front* (the future). [I would be caught in a constant process of 'passing and coming' if not for the fact that] You have laid Your hand upon me [to give my existence meaning].

According to the Rabbi Chayim Vital (*Etz Daat Tov, parashat Shemini*), this verse alludes to the fact that, although Adam's body was created last (on the sixth day of creation, after all other life-forms), still, his soul existed before anything else was created. This is the idea behind the expression "*sof maaseh be'machshavah techilah*—last in deed but first in thought." It finds beautiful expression in the following allegory from the Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 38a; *Sanhedrin Yerushalmi* 4:9 (23b); *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:5): "A king once built a beautiful palace, decorating it lavishly and stocking it with the best food and drink. When it was all finished, he invited his guests, saying, 'If there are no guests, then what pleasure does the king have with all the good things that he has prepared?'" As Ramchal taught, "God's purpose of creation was to bestow of His goodness to another...For the intended purpose to be achieved...creation must contain many different elements, interconnected by a multitude of relationships. The creature who is destined for the great ideal of experiencing God...is man. All other created things, whether above or below, exist only for his sake" (*Derekh Hashem* 1:2:1,4). Again, this is the idea that, although man was last in deed, he was really first and foremost in thought from the very beginning.

The Midrash (*Vayikra Rabbah* 14:1) zeroes in on the responsibility that this entails: "If man is found worthy, he is praised, 'you preceded the entirety of creation!' But if he is not found worthy, he is told, 'a mosquito preceded you; an earthworm preceded you.'"

Finally the Midrash (*ibid.*) and the *Zohar* (2:231a; see *Etz Chayim* 31:5; *Shaar HaPesukim* on Psalm 63:9) see this verse as alluding to the deep teaching that Adam and Eve were first created back-to-back, and only afterwards separated so that they could unite face-to-face.

(6) Such knowledge of Your omniscience and omnipotence is too wondrous for me; exceedingly exalted [at a height my mind cannot reach]; I cannot comprehend it.	(ו) פְּלִיאָה (פלאיה) דַּעַת מִמְּנִי נִשְׁגְּבָה לֹא אוּכַל לָהּ:
(7) Where shall I go to escape from Your Spirit, and where shall I turn to flee from Your Presence?	(ז) אָנָּה אֵלֶךְ מְרוּחְךָ וְאַנָּה מִפָּנֶיךָ אֲבָרַח:
(8) If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I descend to the deepest hell, behold, You are here! ¹⁶²	(ח) אִם אֲסַק שָׁמַיִם שָׁם אַתָּה וְאִצִּיעָה שְׂאוֹל הִנֵּךְ:
(9) Were I to rise up on the wings of morning, were I to dwell at the limit of the sea;	(ט) אֲשֶׁא כְּנָפֵי שָׁחַר אֲשַׁכְנָה בְּאַחֲרִית יָם:
(10) Even there, Your hand would guide me; Your right hand would hold [sustain] me.	(י) גַּם שָׁם יָדְךָ תִּנְחֲנֵי וְתִאחֲזָנִי יְמִינְךָ:
(11) And if I were to think: But darkness will smother me and remove me from Your sight, behold, the night becomes light for me!	(יא) וְאָמַר אֶךְ חֹשֶׁךְ יִשְׁוּפְנִי וְלִילָה אוֹר בְּעֵדְנִי:
(12) Darkness is not dark for You [it obscures nothing before You]; [for You] night is as bright as day; for You darkness and light are the same.	(יב) גַּם חֹשֶׁךְ לֹא יַחֲשִׁיךְ מִמֶּךָ וְלִילָה כִּיּוֹם יֵאִיר כְּחֹשִׁיכָה כְּאוֹרָה:
(13) For You made me [You acquired me as Your own] when You formed me [i.e., my bones and my sinews] in my mother's womb.	(יג) כִּי אַתָּה קִנִּיתָ כְּלִיתִי תִּסְכְּנִי בְּבֶטֶן אִמִּי:
(14) I therefore render eternal thanks to You for the awesome and wondrous way in which I came to be; You works are wondrous; my soul knows this in the most profound way.	(יד) אוֹדְךָ עַל כִּי נִוְרָאוֹת נִפְלִיתִי נִפְלְאִים מַעֲשֶׂיךָ וְנִפְשִׁי יִדְעֵת מְאֹד:
(15) My essence was not hidden from You when I was formed in secret, and woven in the depths of the earth [my mother's womb].	(טו) לֹא נִכְחַד עֲצָמֵי מִמֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר עֲשִׂיתִי בְּסִתֵּר רַקְמָתִי בְּתַחֲתִיּוֹת אֲרָץ:
(16) Your eyes beheld my unformed substance [the genetic code of my life]; it was all inscribed in Your book! ¹⁶³ My days were listed and determined before the first one was even formed! ¹⁶⁴	(טז) גִּלְמִי רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ וְעַל סִפְרְךָ כָּלָם יִכְתְּבוּ יָמִים יִצְרוּ וְלוֹ (וְלֹא) אֶחָד:

¹⁶² Notice the switch from *there* to *here*. Paradoxically, although Hashem is most hidden in the darkest hell, nevertheless, if we will it with all our might, we can break through the concealment to know Him in hell in a way that we never could have known Him in heaven. See above Psalm 23:4.

¹⁶³ The Holy One showed Adam all the generations that would eventually come forth from him. He saw them as if they actually stood before him playing their roles...This is the meaning of "Your eyes beheld my unformed substance; it was all inscribed in Your book." This teaches us that Adam beheld each generation and its leaders, each generation and its prophets, each generation and its heroes, each generation and its troublemakers, each generation and its devout" (Avot d'Rabbi Nathan 31:3; Sanhedrin 38b; Avodah Zarah 5a; Bereshit Rabbah 24:2; Seder Olam Rabbah 30; Yalkut Shimoni Bereshit, remez 41).

¹⁶⁴ The *ketiv* (written form) of the word *ve'lo* is *vav-lamed-aleph*, but the *kri* (spoken form) is *vav-lamed-vav*. The *ketiv* (*vav-lamed-aleph*) means, "my life and the lives of all beings and their respective days (lifespans and life-stories) were written (listed and determined) at a time **when not even one of them (not even one of these days) had been formed yet**". The *kri* (*vav-lamed-vav*) translates literally, "and for it," meaning, according to Hirsch, "my life and the lives of all beings and their respective days were written, **and one of these days was even appointed for it, for my essence, which was still devoid of form.**" Rabbi Hirsch explains, "This 'day' may be the one upon which the essence was to enter into real physical being though the process of birth, or else it refers not to any *one* day of life, but to all of life as such and to the course which that life will take."

According to the Midrash (*Tana d'Bei Eliyahu Rabba* 1) the 'day' that King David is referring to is *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Atonement): "*Yamim yutzaru ve'lo echad bahem*" – This refers to *Yom HaKippur*! [Filling in the text of the Midrash according to the commentary of Meorey HaEsh:] Though I may be full of flaws all the days of the year, still, *ve'lo echad bahem*, there is one day when the Satan has no power to accuse me, namely, *Yom Kippur*, when Hashem Himself cleanses me. It was thus with great joy and great love that the Holy One gave Israel this day! And though you might think that Hashem would be disgusted having to clean me of my sins, it is not so. On the contrary, He takes great pleasure in this! How? It can be likened to a king of flesh and blood with many servants. One day, his servants decided to remove all the garbage and filth from their private quarters and pile it up high in front of the door of the king's palace! When the king came out and beheld the garbage, not only was he not wrought, but, on the contrary, he rejoiced a great rejoicing! [Hashem is not only **not** bothered when we enumerate

	בָּהֶם:
(17) O how deep and precious Your thoughts are to me, <i>El</i> [O loving God]; how awe-inspiring their beginnings [i.e., general principles, let alone their derivatives].	(יז) וְלִי מֶה יִקְרוּ רַעֲיָךְ אֶל מֶה עֲצָמוֹ רְאִישֵׁיהֶם:
(18) If I were to try to enumerate them [even the general principles], they would be more numerous than the grains of sand on the shore; even as I awaken from my reverie on these deep thoughts concerning Your omniscience I am still with You. ¹⁶⁵	(יח) אֶסְפָּרָם מִחוּל יִרְבוֹן הַקִּיצִיתִי וְעוֹדִי עִמָּךְ:
(19) O God, if You would only slay the wicked! If You would only remove the bloodthirsty ones far away from me!	(יט) אִם תִּקְטֹל אֱלֹהֵי רָשָׁע וְאִנָּשִׁי דָּמִים סוּרוּ מִנִּי:
(20) They speak of You [mentioning Your Name as if out of reverence], but it is all part of their evil plot; Your enemies take Your Name in vain.	(כ) אֲשֶׁר יִמְרוּךְ לְמַזְמָה נִשְׂוֹא לְשׂוֹא עֲרִיד:
(21) <i>Hashem</i> ! I hate only those who hate You and who, by taking Your Name in vain, turn men against You, making it seem as if You are to blame for their problems; I contend with those who rise up against You.	(כא) הֲלוֹא מִשְׂנְאִיךָ יְהוָה אֲשַׁנָּא וּבִתְקוּמִיךָ אֶתְקוּטָט:
(22) I hate them with utmost contempt; thus they came to be my enemies.	(כב) תִּכְלִית שְׂנְאָה שְׂנֵאתִים לְאוֹיְבִים הָיוּ לִי:
(23) Probe me [my intentions, to determine whether they are truly pure], <i>El</i> [O loving God], and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.	(כג) חַקְרֵנִי אֶל וְדַע לִבִּי בַּחֲנִי וְדַע שִׂרְעָפִי:
(24) See if there is even the slightest desire on my part to walk in the way of rebellion against You; all I ask is that You lead me in the path of eternity.	(כד) וּרְאֵה אִם דֶּרֶךְ עֲצָב בִּי וּנְחִנִּי בְּדֶרֶךְ עוֹלָם:

Tehillim 140, Tehillim 141**Tehillim 142**

This psalm is reminiscent of Psalms 7 and 54, both of which describe David's dire straits when he was running as a fugitive from Shaul, and held up with his men in a cave in *Ein Gedi*. Here, David pours his heart out to Hashem from the deepest depths of his being. As usual, the particular circumstance that gave voice this prayer is not mentioned. This is so that we too can see ourselves in the words and cry out to Hashem in whatever difficult circumstances we find ourselves.

(1) <i>Maskil LeDavid</i> – A precious prayer by David which he prized highly and reviewed constantly for the lessons it contains, composed when he was fleeing from Shaul and hid in the cave. <i>Tefillah</i> – A Prayer of self judgment:	(א) מִשְׁכִּיל לְדָוִד בְּהִיּוֹתוֹ בַּמַּעֲרָה תַּפִּלָּה:
(2) I lift my voice up and call out on <i>Hashem</i> ; I lift my voice up to <i>Hashem</i> and plead.	(ב) קוֹלִי אֶל יְהוָה אֶזְעַק קוֹלִי אֶל יְהוָה אֶתְחַנֵּן:
(3) I pour forth my meditation before Him; I express my pain in His Presence.	(ג) אֲשַׁפֹּךְ לִפְנֵי שִׁיחֵי צַרְתִּי לִפְנֵי אֱגִיד:
(4) When my spirit is enshrouded around me [i.e., when I languish in pain, I call out directly to You, until it becomes clear to me that] You have known my path in life from time immemorial. Long before I was born, You knew that I would travel this trail; You foresaw how many traps they would lay for me.	(ד) בְּהִתְעַטֵּף עָלַי רוּחִי וְאַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ נְתִיבָתִי בְּאֶרֶץ זֹו אֶהְלֵךְ טְמֵנוּ פֶּחַ לִי:
(5) I look to the right for assistance and support, but behold, nobody recognizes me; all roads of escape—taken from me; no	(ה) הִבֵּיט יָמִין וּרְאֵה וְאֵין לִי מַכִּיר

our many flaws and sins on *Yom Kippur*; on the contrary, He rejoices because we are no longer fooling ourselves by trying to hide them from Him. We can only be healed when we expose our flaws before the King, as opposed to when we hide them, and they become truly toxic and poisonous. Thus, not only did He give us *Yom Kippur* with great joy and great love [as a day when we could do *teshuvah* and regret our past mistakes], but He rejoices even more in forgiving us.

¹⁶⁵ Thoughts of You have such a powerful impact on me that I cannot tear myself away from them; once I enter into such reverie, I am overwhelmed and get carried away; thus, even when I awaken from my reverie, my thoughts, instead of dwelling on myself, are still with You.

one cares for my soul [not even one of my friends looks out for my welfare].	אֲבַד מְנוּס מִמֶּנִּי אֵין דּוֹרֵשׁ לְנַפְשִׁי:
(6) I therefore turn to You <i>Hashem</i> ! I cry out to You alone! I can now say categorically that You alone are my refuge; You are my portion in the land of the living beyond this world of illusion.	(ו) זָעַקְתִּי אֵלֶיךָ יְהוָה אֲמַרְתִּי אֵתָּה מַחְסִי חֲלָקִי בְּאֶרֶץ הַחַיִּים:
(7) But I request that here too in this world that is likened to a dark cave: Hearken to my cry, for I have been brought very low; rescue me from my pursuers, for they are too mighty for me!	(ז) הַקְשִׁיבָה אֶל רִנָּתִי כִּי דְלוּתִי מָאֵד הִצִּילֵנִי מִרְדְּפִי כִּי אֲמָצוּ מִמֶּנִּי:
(8) Extricate/release my soul from its prison, so that I may thank and acknowledge Your Name [the divine providence that has accompanied me throughout all my trials]; the righteous of all generations will then crown You on my account; they will acknowledge Your sovereignty when they see that You deal generously with all who fear You, just as You dealt generously with me.	(ח) הוֹצִיאָה מִמִּסְגֵּר נַפְשִׁי לַהֲדוּת אֶת שִׁמְךָ בִּי יִכְתְּרוּ צַדִּיקִים כִּי תִגְמַל עָלַי:

Tehillim 143

Tehillim 144

(1) By David for Yisrael's victory against all inner and outer enemies. Blessed is <i>Hashem</i> ! He is my stronghold and the source of all my power; He alone grants victory: He trains my hands for close combat; He guides the arrows that leave my fingers in war.	(א) לְדוֹד בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה צוּרִי הַמִּלְחָמָה יָדִי לִקְרֹב אֶצְבָּעוֹתַי לַמִּלְחָמָה:
(2) I feel His Presence in the kindness He does for me; He is my fortress; He lifts me up above the din and constantly rescues me from imminent danger. He is my shield, and I seek refuge in Him alone; It is He who makes my people acquiesce to me.	(ב) חֲסָדִי וּמִצּוֹדָתִי מִשְׁגָּבִי וּמִפִּלְטִי לִי מִגִּנִּי וְבוֹ חֲסִיתִי הָרוּדָד עִמִּי תַחְתִּי:
(3) O <i>Hashem</i> , what is man that You recognize him? What is a mere mortal that You consider at all?	(ג) יְהוָה מָה אָדָם וַתִּדְעֵהוּ בֶן אָנוּשׁ וַתַּחֲשִׁבֵהוּ:
(4) Man is like a mist; his days disappear like the passing shadow of a bird in flight.	(ד) אָדָם לַהֲבֵל דָּמָה יָמָיו כְּצֶל עוֹבֵר:
(5) O <i>Hashem</i> , incline Your heavens and descend to reveal Your Providence in our lives; touch mountains [empires that rise up] and make them evaporate like smoke.	(ה) יְהוָה הִט שְׁמִיךְ וַתִּרְדָּ גֵעַ בְּהָרִים וַיִּעָשֶׁנוּ:
(6) Send one bolt of Your light like lightning to disperse them like a cloud; send forth Your punishments like arrows to confound them.	(ו) בְּרוּךְ בָּרַק וַתִּפְיֹצַם שְׁלַח חֲצִיךְ וַתַּהֲמֵם:
(7) Stretch forth Your hands to assist me from above; deliver me, rescue me from the overwhelming currents of history, from the power of cruel strangers.	(ז) שְׁלַח יָדֶיךָ מִמָּרוֹם פָּצְנִי וְהִצִּילֵנִי מִמֵּי־רַבִּים רַבִּים מִיַּד בְּנֵי נָכָר:
(8) When they speak, their mouths are full of deceit, and even their right hand with which they offer peace is a right hand of deception.	(ח) אֲשֶׁר פִּיהֶם דִּבֵּר שְׁוֹא וְיָמִינָם יָמִין שֶׁקֶר:
(9) <i>Elohim</i> , O just God, I sing a new song to You now! With a ten-stringed lyre, I will chant and thereby cut away the illusory powers that prevent me from drawing near to You.	(ט) אֱלֹהִים שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ אֲשִׁירָה לָךְ בְּנֵבֶל עֲשׂוֹר אֲזַמְרָה לָךְ:
(10) I will praise the One who gives victory to kings, who rescued His servant David from the sword that wreaks havoc.	(י) הַנּוֹתֵן תְּשׁוּעָה לַמְּלָכִים הַפּוֹצֵה אֶת דּוֹד עַבְדּוֹ מִחֶרֶב רָעָה:
(11) Rescue me and deliver me from the power of cruel strangers. When they speak, their mouths are full of deceit and their right hand is a right hand of deception.	(יא) פָּצְנִי וְהִצִּילֵנִי מִיַּד בְּנֵי נָכָר אֲשֶׁר פִּיהֶם דִּבֵּר שְׁוֹא וְיָמִינָם יָמִין שֶׁקֶר:
(12) Our sons, on the other hand, are like cultivated plants, raised correctly while they are young; our daughters are modest like carved nooks which reinforce the design of the palace.	(יב) אֲשֶׁר בְּנֵינוּ כְּנֹטְעִים מְגֻדָּלִים בְּנֻעֲוִירֵיהֶם בְּנוֹתֵינוּ כְּזוֹיֹת מִחֻטְבוֹת תִּבְנִית הַיֵּכָל:
(13) Our storehouses overflow with produce from harvest to harvest; our flocks multiply by the thousands and the ten-thousands in our open fields.	(יג) מְזוּיָנוּ מִלֵּאִים מִפִּיקִים מִזֶּן אֶל זֶן צֹאוֹנָנוּ מֵאֲלִיפוֹת מְרֻבָּבוֹת

	בְּחֻצוֹתֵינוּ:
(14) Our leaders like oxen carry the weight of the entire generation; there is no breach in our sons' morals; no evil gossip goes out about our daughters; there is no scream of hunger in our city streets.	(יד) אֲלוֹפֵינוּ מְסַבִּלִים אֵין פֶּרֶץ וְאֵין יוֹצֵאת וְאֵין צוֹחָה בְּרַחֲבֵינוּ:
(15) Happy is the people for whom this is so! Happy is the people whose God is the Eternal YHVH.	(טו) אֲשֶׁרִי הָעַם שְׂכָכָה לוֹ אֲשֶׁרִי הָעַם שִׁיְהוּהוּ אֱלֹהָיו:

Tehillim 145 A

It is not by chance that the sages gave the psalm *Tehillah LeDavid* such an important place in the *Tefillah*. It is also not by chance that most people can say it so fast and know its *aleph-beth* progression by heart within a short time after having learned it as a child, but still not have a good grasp of what it is conveying. In essence, King David used *Tehillah LeDavid* to teach us how to perceive the world around us as a product of Hashem's handiwork. David saw and experienced Hashem in His universe. He recognized Hashem as the Source of all life, to whom we can turn and call upon at all times, and whose hidden providence and presence we can sense and feel at every point throughout our lives. Here, he lays out the steps to show us how to do this. He teaches us that every single one of us can and must develop his or her own personal relationship with Hashem, and that this is perhaps the most important reason for having been born and being alive that we can conceive.

He teaches us to contemplate the creation around us, to penetrate beneath its surface, to peek behind the scenes of the physical world, to recognize the presence of the Power that continually gives existence to all things. He teaches us how to recognize God as the ground of our being, the source of our existence, and the author and director of all the events of our lives. He teaches us how to experience His closeness, and how to thank Him with every fiber of our being. He teaches us how we can develop ourselves and evolve to the highest level of maturity and enlightenment through an entire lifetime of serving Hashem and beyond into eternity.

He teaches us that we cannot hope to come to these profound levels of experiencing God and understanding His ways without being connected to our ancestors, in other words, without seeing our lives in the context of the history of our people, without receiving something—some special gift that they preserved and handed down for us. He teaches us how to contemplate the events of our lives as extensions of the events that shaped and continue to shape our people. He teaches us that history moves towards a rendezvous with God, how all mankind will eventually know God and perceive His now-hidden providence clearly, recognize His absolute sovereignty, His infinite loving-kindness, and His awesome oneness.

He teaches us to learn and internalize the Torah that our ancestors received and transmitted to us that contains these essential teachings. He teaches us to love its deep lessons, its living waters that bring light and life to our souls, ignite us with hope and inspire us with invincible strength to be embodiments of Godliness in a world that is completely oblivious to the truth and reality of His existence. All these things and more are included in this awesome psalm, this *tehillah* (praise) to God with which the very angels in heaven (the spiritual dimension) reflect their gratitude to Him in song, and which we should all have the privilege to continue singing throughout eternity.

2nd Person:	
(1) <i>Tehillah LeDavid</i> – A psalm of praise by David: My God, I will exalt You as the supreme King and bless Your Name acknowledge Your Name as the source of blessing forevermore.	(א) תִּהְיֶה לְדָוִד אֲרוֹמָמָה אֱלֹהֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאַבְרָכָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:
(2) I will bless You each day in this world and praise Your Name forevermore throughout eternity.	(ב) בְּכֹל יוֹם אֲבָרְכֶךָ וְאֶהְלֶלָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:
3rd Person:	
(3) <i>Hashem</i> is great and exceedingly praised; though His greatness [great kindness] can never be fathomed. ¹⁶⁶	(ג) גָּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמֵהֶלֶל מְאֹד וְלֹגְדֹתוֹ אֵין חֶקֶר:
2nd Person:	
(4) Generation after generation will increasingly appreciate Your handiwork [the hidden wonders of Your creation]; they will also relate Your powerful miracles to their children.	(ד) דּוֹר לְדוֹר יִשְׁבַּח מַעֲשֶׂיךָ וּגְבוּרָתֶיךָ יִגִּידוּ:
(5) I will speak of the revealed majesty of the glory of Your inner splendor [hidden light], and meditate on the lessons of Your supernatural miracles. ¹⁶⁷	(ה) הִדֹּר כְּבוֹד הַדָּוָד וְדִבְרֵי נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ אֲשִׁיחָה:
(6) They [generation to generation] will speak of the power of Your awesome miracles; I will tell about the daily hints of Your magnanimous love.	(ו) וְעִזּוֹז נִוְרָאוֹתֶיךָ יֹאמְרוּ וּגְדֹלְתֶךָ (וּגְדֻלוֹתֶיךָ) אֲסַפְּרָנָה:

¹⁶⁶ We have purposely marked every switch in this psalm between *nokhach* (2nd person direct address) and *nistar* (3rd person hidden or indirect). Although this kind of switch is common throughout all the psalms, it is especially pronounced here. The reason for this will become clear below in the note to verse 14.

¹⁶⁷ See commentary above on Psalm 111:3.

(7) Understanding that nature and miracles have one source they will continue to transmit the memory of Your boundless goodness from generation to generation; they will also rejoice in Your righteous charity that they experience each day, declaring:	(ז) זָכַר רַב טוֹבָךְ יִבְיְעוּ וְצִדְקֶתְךָ יִרְגְּנוּ:
3rd Person:	
(8) Hashem is gracious and compassionate, exceedingly patient, and His loving-kindness is boundless.	(ח) חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם יְהוָה אָרְךָ אָפִים וְגָדֹל חֶסֶד:
(9) Hashem is good to all; His compassion is aroused for all His creations.	(ט) טוֹב יְהוָה לְכָל וְרַחֲמָיו עַל כָּל מַעֲשָׂיו:
2nd Person:	
(10) Therefore, Hashem, the totality of all that You have made thanks/attests to You; moreover, Your devoted servants constantly bless You [i.e., they become co-workers with You to actively advance the fulfillment of Your plan; they become conduits of Your blessing].	(י) יוֹדוּךָ יְהוָה כָּל מַעֲשֶׂיךָ וְחֲסִידֶיךָ יְבָרְכֻכָּה:
(11) They whisper among themselves of the glory of Your <i>malkhut</i> [hidden providential care]; they speak openly of Your <i>gevurot</i> [revealed miracles]. ¹⁶⁸	(יא) כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתְךָ יֹאמְרוּ וּגְבוּרָתְךָ יְדַבְּרוּ:
3rd Person:	
(12) They do this in order to instruct mankind about Him by means of His <i>gevurot</i> [revealed miracles]; and thereby teach them to recognize the glory of the majesty of His <i>malkhut</i> [the subtle hints of His constant supervision]. ¹⁶⁹	(יב) לְהוֹדִיעַ לְבְנֵי הָאָדָם גְּבוּרָתְךָ וּכְבוֹד הָדָר מַלְכוּתְךָ:
2nd Person:	
(13) For Your <i>malkhut</i> [kingship, sovereignty] is an eternal <i>malkhut</i> ; and Your absolute dominion spans all generations.	(יג) מַלְכוּתְךָ מַלְכוּת כָּל עֲלָמִים וּמַמְשַׁלְתְּךָ בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדָר:
3rd Person:	
(14) Even when His providence is utterly concealed, when Israel is exiled, alone, fallen, and cannot rise up Hashem supports all who have fallen; He raises up all who are bent down in despair. ¹⁷⁰	(יד) סוּמֵךְ יְהוָה לְכָל הַנִּפְלִים וְזוֹקֵף לְכָל הַכְּפוּפִים:

¹⁶⁸ Here in verse 11 we are told *how* the *chasidim* (devoted servants) of verse 10 (with David at their head) actively bless Hashem. Here, the word *yomeru* (from *amar*), means to speak softly, quietly, to ponder in one's heart, or to whisper in the private company of one's closest friends. This is contrasted with *yedaberu* (from *dibur*), which always indicates an open declaration or outward directed message (*Zohar, Idra Rabbah* 3:132b, plus 1:234b, 3:88b). First, the *chasidim* speak among themselves about Hashem's *malkhut* (kingship), His constant, but hidden, providential care of all creation. Only after they have internalized this awareness do they move out among the people to speak openly of Hashem's revealed miracles. [We see here that the initial verses contrasting Nature and Miracle were a preparation for this and the following verses.]

¹⁶⁹ Why do the *chasidim* speak about miracles when they teach in public? Verse 12 answers this. In order to teach the children of men about the Hashem's unceasing divine providence, they must first awaken them from the stupor of thinking that Nature is all there is. Miracles are like flashes of lightning on a dark stormy night. They light up the night sky for a few moments. Those who wish to see will see. They will then have the strength to persist in their work even when it becomes dark again. Moreover, they will appreciate the need for darkness, the wonders of Hashem's hidden (undercover) providence. They will get the message of the miracles and see that all life is a miracle. This is the sense of verse 12: "[They will do this] to instruct mankind about [God through] His revealed miracles, and [so teach them to recognize/discern] glory/splendor of the majesty/radiance of His kingship/constant hidden providence" (based on Ramban, end of *parashat Bo*).

¹⁷⁰ As noted (note on verse 3) this psalm switches a number of times between *nokhach* (2nd person direct address) and *nistar* (3rd person hidden or indirect). To be exact, it is constructed of eleven verses in which we speak directly to Hashem (*nokhach*), and ten verses in which we speak indirectly about Hashem (*nistar*). The words in small print that we have added at the beginning of verse 14 are the missing *nistar* verse. In truth, it could be called *nistar she'be'nistar* (hidden-of-the-hidden). It is so hidden that it is almost not there. It is there and it is not there. And it is precisely this paradoxical hiddenness that David wanted in this masterpiece, for it parallels exactly the same concept vis a vis Hashem, i.e., that He is *nistar*-hidden and yet He is *nokhach*-here.

Remember, *Tehillah LeDavid* follows the *aleph-beth*. There is only one exception. Every letter of the *aleph-beth* is represented at the beginning of a verse except *nun*. *Nun* does appear couched/hidden in the next verse, *samekh*, but it does not have a verse of its own. In the Talmud (*Berakhot* 4b), we thus read: Rabbi Yochanan taught: Why is a verse beginning with *nun* missing in *Tehillah LeDavid*? Because *nun* refers to the *nefilah* (fall) of Israel, as the verse states, "*Nafla, lo toseef kum, betulat Yisrael*—she has fallen, she will not rise again—the Virgin of Israel" (Amos 5:2). In the West (*Eretz Yisrael*), they read this verse differently: "*Nafla, lo toseef, kum betulat Yisrael*—she has fallen, she will not [fall again]; Rise up, O Virgin of Israel!" Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak taught: This

2nd Person:	
(15) Therefore, all direct their eyes longingly toward You; for You give the exact amount of sustenance allotted to them in its proper time.	(טו) עֵינֵי כָל אֱלֹדִי יִשְׁבְּרוּ וְאַתָּה נוֹתֵן לָהֶם אֶת אֲכָלָם בְּעֵתוֹ:
(16) You open Your <i>Yod</i> -Hands [the channels of divine sustenance] to satisfy the deepest needs [and unexpressed yearnings] of every living being with Your favor. ¹⁷¹	(טז) פֹּתַח אֶת יָדְךָ וּמִשְׁבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רְצוֹן:
3rd Person:	
(17) <i>Hashem</i> is just in all His ways, and kind in all His actions.	(יז) צַדִּיק יְהוָה בְּכָל דְּרָכָיו וְחַסִּיד בְּכָל מַעֲשָׂיו:
(18) <i>Hashem</i> is close to all who call upon Him, but He is especially close when they call Him sincerely and truthfully.	(יח) קְרוֹב יְהוָה לְכָל קֹרְאָיו לְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאֵהוּ בְּאֵמֶת:
(19) He fulfills the desire of those who revere Him; He hears their cries and rescues them.	(יט) רְצוֹן יִרְאָיו יַעֲשֶׂה וְאֶת שׁוֹעֲתָם יִשְׁמַע וְיוֹשִׁיעֵם:
(20) <i>Hashem</i> grants special protection to all who love Him; but He will cause all who become entrenched in their own wickedness to perish.	(כ) שׁוֹמֵר יְהוָה אֶת כָּל אֲהַבָּיו וְאֶת כָּל הָרָשָׁעִים יִשְׁמִיד:
(21) My mouth will declare <i>Hashem's</i> praise, and [will continue doing so until the day when] all mankind will bless His holy Name forever [i.e., finally acknowledge Hashem as the source of all blessing].	(כא) תְּהִלַּת יְהוָה יְדַבֵּר פִּי וּבִרְךָ כָּל בֶּשָׂר שֵׁם קִדְשׁוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

Tehillim 145 B

The following is an expanded interpretive translation of *Tehillah leDavid* (*Ashrei*). It is based on a combination of commentaries, namely, *Meshekh Chokhmah*, Rashi, Ramban (end of *parashat Bo*), Alshikh, Gra, Malbim, Hirsch, and *Chatam Sofer*. Notwithstanding the importance of paying attention to the constant alternation between He (3rd person) and You (2nd person) in the original, we have transposed the entire psalm into You (2nd person).

(1) This is David's song of praise to *Hashem*: You are the Hidden King (*Melekh*) and far beyond all praise and blessing. I therefore recognize You as the Supreme Power behind all creation. Whether You bestow good fortune or misfortune upon me, You are my God (*Elohai*), and I will acknowledge Your Name as the Source of blessing forevermore.

(2) I will bless and draw down Your sustaining blessing into every new day of my life and I will sing praises to Your Name forevermore.

(3) *Hashem*, we praise You for Your unbounded loving-kindness, though You are infinitely beyond any conception we might have of You.

(4) The more that successive generations will delve further into the phenomena of the natural world and the hidden laws that govern all physical processes (*maaseh*), their appreciation of the wondrous

notwithstanding, David returned and raised Israel (and the *Shekhinah* that accompanies Israel in exile) up again with *ruach ha'kodesh* [or, with *ruach ha'kodesh* he saw that Israel and the *Shekhinah* would be lifted up again], as he states in the next verse (*samekh*), "Hashem supports all the *noflim* (fallen ones); He raises up all who are bent down" [wherein the *nun* appears in the middle of the verse, propped up and supported by the *samekh* of *Somekh Hashem le'chol ha'noflim*].

This passage hits at the heart of what *Tehillah LeDavid* is all about. In the middle of the orderly sequence of *aleph-beth*, the letter *nun* is missing. *Aleph-beth* represents the orderly sequence of nature, and our ability to perceive Hashem through the camouflage of that orderly sequence. *Nun* represents the breakdown of our ability to perceive Hashem. *Nun* is *nefilah* (fallenness). *Nun* is exile, the total eclipse and concealment of the Divine.

From all the above, we see that *nokhach* and *nistar* are not just grammatical equivalents to 2nd and 3rd Persons. ***Nokhach* and *nistar* mean that Hashem is totally present in our lives at the same time that He is utterly hidden!** Specifically, the oscillation between *nokhach* and *nistar* in this psalm serves to help us jump up above the screen of hiddenness, to know that Hashem is with us even NOW.

¹⁷¹ This verse expresses the essence of our *emunah* (faith) that all *parnassa* (livelihood) comes from Hashem; Hashem oversees and supervises everything; He nourishes and provides for all. When saying this verse it is therefore good to spread your palms heavenward as a sign of receiving the *shefa*-flow of Hashem's blessing.

When saying the words "*poteyach et yadekha*" (which can also be read: "You open up Your Yods," i.e., the *Yod* at the head of *YKVK*, and the *Yod* at the end of *ADNY*), intend that their initials are *peh-aleph-yod*, whose *gematria* is 91, the same as the combined Names *YKVK* (26) *ADNY* (65). This is also the *gematria* of the letters *samekh* (60), *aleph* (1), *lamed* (30), which are the *at-bash* (mirror image) of *chet-tav-khaf*, the final letters of *poteyach et yadekha*. It is clearly intentional that the *gematria* of *chet* (8), *tav* (400), *khaf* (20) = 428, the exact same *gematria* of the following word, *umasbia*.

wisdom and design You implanted within creation will increase exponentially. This in turn will lead each generation to examine anew the miracles (*gevurot*) which are recorded in Your Torah and perceive them not only as isolated instances but as part of Your unfolding Plan for creation which could only be grasped in the context of the entire history of Israel and Mankind. (They will also belatedly admit that those miracles actually happened.)

(5) I will therefore meditate and be awed by Your universe which is the external manifestation (*hadar*) of Your hidden light (*kevod hod*). And I will find new meaning in the supernatural miracles (*niflaot*) which have accompanied us throughout history.

(6) Israel will speak of the power of Your awesome miracles (*noraot*, of overturning the natural order in Egypt, etc.). But I will tell about the daily hints of Your unbounded loving-kindness (*gedulah*).

(7) Understanding that nature and miracles have one source, Israel will continue to transmit the memory of Your unbounded goodness (*rav tov*) from generation to generation. They will also rejoice in Your righteousness (*tzedakah*) which is both just and charitable, declaring:

(8) *Hashem*, You are gracious and compassionate! You suspend Your judgment and are extremely patient with those who are undeserving. Your loving-kindness is unbounded for those who return to Your Torah.

(9) *Hashem*, You extend goodness to all—to return us to You. You arouse compassion for all Your creatures—that not one shall be lost.

(10) Therefore, *Hashem*, the totality of all that You have made attests/testifies (*yodu*) to Your providential care. Moreover, Your devoted servants who mirror Your ways and serve You without thought of reward will bless, acknowledge, and make it known that You are the Source of all blessings.

(11) They will speak among themselves of the hidden splendor (*kevod*) of Your constant providential care (*malkhut*). And they will speak openly about the lessons of Your powerful revealed miracles (*gevurot*) which You have performed on specific occasions.

(12) They will do this in order to instruct (*lehodia*) mankind about You by means of Your revealed miracles (*gevurot*). And thereby teach them to internalize (*daat*) the subtle hints of Your constant providential care (*kevod malkhut*) that they are capable of perceiving.

(13) For, though hidden, Your constant supervision (*malkhut*) spans all worlds, and Your absolute dominion (*memshallah*), though only partially revealed, spans all generations.

(14) (Even when Your providence is utterly concealed, when Israel is exiled, alone, fallen and cannot rise up,) *Hashem*, You support all who have fallen. You raise Israel up from the depths of despair. You give her the strength to stand erect and proclaim Your unceasing Sovereignty in the midst of all adversity.

(15) Therefore, all who have suffered affliction direct their eyes longingly toward You. For You alone determine the exact amount of sustenance to be allotted to each one at the exact moment You deem fit.

(16) You open Your Yod-Hands (channels of Divine sustenance) in response to their requests and satisfy the deepest needs and unexpressed yearnings (*ratzon*) of all that is alive! For Your desire (*ratzon*) is to give existence to all unconditionally, and then higher and higher levels of life according to our ability to receive and grow.

(17) So that, despite all appearances to the contrary, You, *Hashem*, are absolutely just and righteous in all Your ways—desiring to give the maximum but limiting Yourself, as it were, to our capacity to receive. You have created a world of pure kindness, giving, and bestowing, only for the sake of love.

(18) For this reason, *Hashem*, You are undetectably close to all who call upon You. But You reveal Your closeness to men when they call You sincerely and truthfully with the intent of living according to Your Will. (You test them to see if they will continue to direct their eyes toward You and call upon You despite not being answered immediately or not at all.)

(19) You subject them to trials to bring out their potential. You desire that they cry out and pray to You so that afterward when You *hear* their cries and save them on successive occasions, it will become ingrained in them to call out to You in every possible situation. In fact, You educate us by subjecting us to difficult trials so that our awareness of You becomes an internal unswerving conviction.

(20) But *Hashem*, You grant special protection to those who have grown to love You to the extent that closeness to You is their only desire, and they are prepared to give their lives for that love. Divine Providence is manifest openly in all their affairs and they merit to become Your prophets and sages, bearers of Your Torah and shepherds of Your people. But those who choose wickedness and who try to harm these beloved servants will be allowed to perish—they forfeit their privilege to life in this world and the next.

(21) *Hashem*, though my praises be inadequate to fully reflect Your Supreme Sovereignty over the world, I will continue to openly express Your praises and thereby help others to perceive all the events of their lives as part of Your Plan. And this, until the day when all flesh will finally bless Your transcendent Name and cause it to be revealed in this world and forever after. (Then Your Sovereignty will be revealed to all and evil itself will vanish.)

Tehillim 146

(1) <i>HalleluYah!</i> My soul, praise <i>Hashem</i> !	(א) הָלְלוּ יְהוָה הַלְלִי נַפְשִׁי אֶת יְהוָה:
(2) I will praise <i>Hashem</i> with my life; I will sing to my God with my very being. ¹⁷²	(ב) אֶהְלֵלָה יְהוָה בְּחַיִּי אֶזְמְרָה לֵאלֹהֵי בְעוֹדִי:
(3) Do not put your trust in princes, in a human being who cannot save.	(ג) אַל תִּבְטְחוּ בְנָדִיבִים בְּבֶן אָדָם שְׂאִין לוֹ תְשׁוּעָה:
(4) His spirit departs, he returns to the ground from which he came; on that day his plans come to naught.	(ד) תֵּצֵא רוּחוֹ יֵשֶׁב לְאֲדָמְתּוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אָבְדוּ עֲשָׂתָנָתוֹ:
(5) Happy is he whose help comes from the God of Yaacov; His hope is directed solely to <i>Hashem</i> his God.	(ה) אֲשֶׁרִי שְׂאֵל יַעֲקֹב בְּעֶזְרוֹ שִׁבְרוֹ עַל יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו:
(6) His hope is directed to the Maker of the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all they contain; to the One who upholds truth [and is truly faithful] for all eternity.	(ו) עֲשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ אֶת הַיָּם וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּם הַשֹּׁמֵר אֱמֶת לְעוֹלָם:
(7) To the One who executes justice for the oppressed; to the One who provides food to the hungry; to <i>Hashem</i> who releases the bound.	(ז) עֲשֵׂה מִשְׁפָּט לְעֹשׂוֹקִים נָתַן לֶחֶם לָרַעֲבִים יְהוָה מַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים:
(8) His hope is directed to <i>Hashem</i> who gives sight to the blind; to <i>Hashem</i> who straightens up those who are bowed down; to <i>Hashem</i> who loves the righteous.	(ח) יְהוָה פָּקַח עֵוְרִים יְהוָה זָקַף כְּפוּפִים יְהוָה אָהֵב צְדִיקִים:
(9) His hope is directed to <i>Hashem</i> who protects righteous converts, and supports orphans and widows, but who thwarts the path of the wicked. ¹⁷³	(ט) יְהוָה שָׁמַר אֶת גְּרָמִים יְתוֹם וְאַלְמָנָה יַעֲזוֹד וְדֶרֶךְ רָשָׁעִים יַעֲזוֹת:
(10) May <i>Hashem</i> 's sovereignty be revealed in this world and for all eternity! O Tziyon, your God, for endless generations, <i>halleluYah</i> .	(י) יִמְלֹךְ יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם אֱלֹהֵיךָ צִיּוֹן לְדָר וָדָר הָלְלוּ יְהוָה:

Tehillim 147

A person who learns Torah and then studies the wonders and mysteries of creation looks at all "natural"

¹⁷² In *Likutey Halachot* (*Orach Chayim, Hilchot Kriat Shma* 5:13), Rabbi Nathan of Nemirov illuminates the concept of *hallel*, especially as it is embodied in the final five psalms, and most specifically, in the final psalm, Psalm 150: "The section of *Pesukei d'Zimrah* (with all its *Tehillim*) was placed before the following section of *Kriat Shma* and its blessings because Israel's essence connection to *Hashem*'s oneness can be attained only when both *itaruta d'le'ela* (God's awakening from above) as well as *itaruta d'letata* (our awakening from below) are in perfect balance. By definition, *Hashem*'s oneness cannot be fully experienced until these two polarities come together. It is for this reason, therefore, that the five concluding chapters of *Tehillim* (Psalms 146-150) were placed in this section. Each of these five concluding psalms begins and ends with the word *HalleluYah*. These ten *HalleluYahs* correspond to the ten archetypal types of song—and the ten *sefirot* embodied in them—contained in the entire *Sefer Tehillim*. And the crowning touch is the final psalm (Psalm 150) which itself contains ten phrases, each beginning with *hallelu*, corresponding to all ten types of song and all ten *sefirot* in one psalm."

¹⁷³ One of the biggest problems that stands before a person who sincerely wants to understand his existence (and existence in general) is the problem of suffering, specifically the suffering of the righteous at the hands of the wicked, and the seeming success of the latter. The only way to make peace with apparent injustice is to jump into the ultimate future and then back; David learned this from *Az Yashir* and applied it throughout *Tehillim* (see *Netziv* in *Az Yashir* where he explains why it was important for the Torah to emphasize that certain Egyptians drown quickly like lead, some like stone, and some like stubble; because the latter had afflicted the Jews more, their punishment was to suffer more: measure for measure). This is why the plans and the way (goals) of the wicked end up coming to naught (*avdu*), and are thwarted (*yeavet*). It has to be like this, for it reflects—measure-for-measure—their own distortedness, crookedness. Only when we are assured that the wicked who seem to prosper in this-world will eventually receive their just desserts can we truly make peace with all the suffering we have endured individually and as a nation.

phenomena with different eyes. The wind, the water, the clouds, in short, the entire interconnected system of life and nature, all function on many levels simultaneously. As David teaches throughout the Psalms, the Torah is the key not only for seeing Hashem's holiness above and beyond the physical universe; it is the key for seeing Hashem's presence in the universe. These two different modes (the first is usually called the mystical and the second is the scientific) can never be mutually exclusive. They work together.

King David thus masterfully likens Hashem's constant supervision over Israel to His mastery over the forces of nature. Just as every phenomenon in nature cannot be seen in isolation from what comes before and after it, so also the history of the Jewish people. Israel's exile, not only away from its land, but from the closeness to Hashem that our ancestors enjoyed, is part of a master plan of history. David describes this plan here in terms of a process that will culminate in the rebuilding of Yerushalayim and the final ingathering of the exiles to *Eretz Yisrael*, to Hashem, and to His Torah.

(1) <i>HalleluYah!</i> It is good to sing praises to our God, for praise of His great kindness is pleasant and befitting.	(א) הָלְלוּ יְהוָה כִּי טוֹב זִמְרָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ כִּי נְעִים נֶאֱדָה תְהִלָּה:
(2) <i>Hashem</i> is the Builder of Yerushalayim; He will gather together the dispersed of Yisrael.	(ב) בּוֹנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַם יְהוָה נִדְחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִכְנֹס:
(3) He will heal the broken-hearted and bind up their wounds.	(ג) הָרֹפֵא לְשִׁבּוּרֵי לֵב וּמַחְבֵּשׁ לְעַצְבוֹתָם:
(4) He will count the number of those who return like stars, and call out each of their names to bring them back.	(ד) מוֹנֵה מִסְפָּר לְכוֹכְבִּים לְכָל־שְׁמוֹת יִקְרָא:
(5) Our Lord will return each one for He is great and has immeasurable power; His understanding of how to bring this about is beyond reckoning. ¹⁷⁴	(ה) גָּדוֹל אֲדוֹנֵינוּ וְרַב כַּח לְתַבּוּנָתוֹ אֵין מִסְפָּר:
(6) <i>Hashem</i> supports the humble and afflicted, but He lowers the wicked who are haughty to the dust.	(ו) מַעֲוִיד עֲנוּיִם יְהוָה מַשְׁפִּיל רְשָׁעִים עַד־אָרֶץ:
(7) Respond to <i>Hashem</i> with songs of thanks; chant melodies to our God to the accompaniment of a harp.	(ז) עֲנוּ לַיהוָה בְּתוֹדָה זַמְרוּ לֵאלֹהֵינוּ בְּכִנּוֹר:
(8) Thank Him even when He hides the heavens with clouds; for in doing so He prepares rain for the earth and causes grass to sprout forth upon the mountains.	(ח) הַמְכַסֶּה שָׁמַיִם בְּעָבִים הַמְכִּין לָאָרֶץ מָטָר הַמַּצְמִיחַ הָרִים חֲצִיר:
(9) In this way He provides animals their food and sustains young ravens when they call out.	(ט) נוֹתֵן לְבִהֵמָה לַחֲמָה לְבִנֵי עֶרֶב אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאוּ:
(10) He does not desire [He is not impressed by] the strength of the horse, nor does He delight in a man's reliance on his own physical prowess.	(י) לֹא בְגִבוּרַת הַסּוּס יַחְפֹּץ לֹא בְשׂוֹקֵי הָאִישׁ יִרְצֶה:
(11) <i>Hashem</i> desires those who conscientiously revere Him; He desires those who hope and yearn for His unbounded loving-kindness.	(יא) רוֹצֵה יְהוָה אֶת יִרְאָיו אֶת הַמֵּיַחֲלִים לְחַסְדּוֹ:
(12) O Yerushalayim, praise <i>Hashem</i> ! O Tziyon, reflect heartfelt gratitude to your God!	(יב) שִׁבְּחֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם אֶת יְהוָה הַלְלֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ צִיּוֹן:

¹⁷⁴ On its own, verse 4 simply reads, "He counts the number of the stars; calling each one by name." There is no explicit mention of any connection with the children of Israel being likened to the stars of the heavens (see *Shemot Rabbah* 1:3; *Yalkut Shimoni* 1:942 on Deuteronomoy 32; *Sifri Haazinu*, *piska aleph*). Still, in line with the way this entire psalm is composed (namely, referring to metaphysical or metahistorical truths in terms of their counterparts in the natural world), we are not surprised that Rabbi Hirsch sees this verse as an extension of verses 2-3, "And He musters not only the shining worlds, but He knows by name every single one of the dispersed sons of His nation who are all subject to His direction and to His guidance."

In the same vein, Rabbi Yaacov Emdin writes, "It is known that [the children of] Israel are likened to the stars. Thus, after referring [in verse 2] to the ingathering of their dispersion, King David emphasizes that not one will be missing as a result of the exile. Rather, the Shepherd will recall all the sheep and count them one by one in order to ensure that every single one has returned. This is the meaning of [the parallel verse in Isaiah], 'He alone brings their host forth by number, calling them all by name through the greatness of His might and the force of His power; *not one is missing*' (Isaiah 40:26)." Just as not one star will ever be missing, so too, not one Jewish soul will be missing when Hashem gathers together the dispersed of Israel. This brings out how the messianic process, which will involve the return of each and every Jewish soul, is a miracle in itself.

(13) A time will come when He will have fortified the crossbars of your gates; He will have blessed and multiplied your children in your midst.	(יג) כִּי חֲזַק בְּרִיחֵי שַׁעְרֶיךָ בְּרֹדֶךָ בְּקִרְבְּךָ:
(14) He will have established peace in your borders; He will have satiated you with the cream of the wheat.	(יד) הַשֵּׁם גְּבוּלְךָ שְׁלוֹם חֶלֶב חֲטִים יִשְׂבִּיעֶךָ:
(15) To ensure this He has sent forth His Utterance to perform its task on earth; His Word hastens swiftly to fulfill His Will.	(טו) הַשִּׁלַּח אִמְרָתוֹ אָרֶץ עַד מְהֵרָה יְרוּץ דְּבָרוֹ:
(16) His Word is like water: He makes it descend as a woolly blanket of snow; He scatters it as ashen frost.	(טז) הִנֵּתָן שֶׁלֶג כְּצֶמֶר כְּפֹר כְּאָפֶר יִפְזֹר:
(17) He casts it forth as flakes of ice; O who can withstand His cold? [Just as no one can withstand the cold produced by these different forms of water, so too, nothing and no one can stand against His Word.]	(יז) מִשְׁלִיךְ קָרְחוֹ כְּפִתִּים לִפְנֵי קָרְחוֹ מִי יַעֲמֹד:
(18) But He sends forth His Word and they [the snow, frost, and ice] melt; He causes His wind to blow and they flow again like water.	(יח) יִשְׁלַח דְּבָרוֹ וַיִּמָּסֶם יֹשֵׁב רוּחוֹ יִזְלוּ מַיִם:
(19) The same God who molds the forces of nature has declared His Word to Yaacov and His statutes and judgments to Yisrael.	(יט) מִגִּיד דְּבָרוֹ לִיעֲקֹב חֲקָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו לְיִשְׂרָאֵל:
(20) He has not done so for any other nation; He has not made the spiritual reasons for His judgments known to them, <i>hallelu Yah</i> . ¹⁷⁵	(כ) לֹא עָשָׂה כֵן לְכָל גּוֹי וּמִשְׁפָּטֵיהֶם בִּלְ יָדְעוּם הִלְלוּ יְהוָה:

Tehillim 148

Over and over again, King David calls out *Hallelu* (Praise)! To each and every level of existence, from the highest heavens to the atmosphere that surrounds and protects the delicate balance of life on our precious planet Earth, he calls out *Hallelu*! First, radiate praise back to the One who made you. Never stop praising Him for the gift of existing. Second, in faithfully fulfilling your assignments, in whatever capacity that may be, reflect and radiate the wondrous wisdom with which He created you and continues to maintain you. In the verses that follow these, David continues calling on every level of earth existence as well, down to the fundamental elements of physical reality.

From the highest heavens to the lowest nadir of earth existence—in every detail and nuance of creation—David perceives God's presence and His providence. For him the universe is a Sacred Courtroom in which each and every creature in the world testifies to the existence of the One who created it and constantly gives it life. Because he sees Unity behind the incredible diversity of creation, David understands that the very existence of each creature, its inner makeup and design, is incontrovertible evidence of the existence of the One who made it.

Like a symphony orchestra leader, David calls on each detail of creation to "play its part," to praise God by reflecting His light in a way that only it can do, thereby attesting to its special function in the symphony of creation. For how does a star praise God? One possible answer is that the angelic power that rules it can literally praise and sing to its Creator. In addition to this, however, a star can praise God by attesting to His Guiding Hand in the precision handiwork of its own existence. Then, joining together in orchestration with every other detail of creation, it can attest to its Creator by the sheer awesomeness of the unity of all creation. When we then glimpse this unity, the Unity of the One behind all creation is revealed in all its magnificence.

(1) <i>HalleluYah</i> ! Praise Hashem from the highest heavens; reflect Him in the celestial heights.	(א) הִלְלוּ יְהוָה אֶת יְהוָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם הַלְלוּהוּ בַּמְרוֹמִים:
(2) Praise Him all His angelic messengers; reflect Him all His hosts.	(ב) הִלְלוּהוּ כָּל מַלְאָכָיו הַלְלוּהוּ כָּל צְבָאוֹ:
(3) Praise Him sun and moon; reflect Him all illuminated planets.	(ג) הִלְלוּהוּ שֶׁמֶשׁ וַיָּרַח הַלְלוּהוּ כָּל כּוֹכְבֵי אוֹר:
(4) Praise Him upper stratospheres, and the waters that rise up to the heights of the earth's atmosphere.	(ד) הִלְלוּהוּ שָׁמַיִם וְהַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מַעַל הַשָּׁמַיִם:
(5) Let them praise and reflect the Name of the Eternal YHVH; for at His command, they were all created from nothing.	(ה) יְהַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם יְהוָה כִּי הוּא צִוָּה וַיִּבְרָאוּ:

¹⁷⁵ Again, the Torah is the key not only for seeing Hashem's holiness above and beyond the physical universe; it is the key for seeing Hashem's presence in the universe. It is this deep connection between the spiritual/moral and the physical that Hashem has made known to Israel in the Torah.

(6) He established them for all time, for as long as the world exists; He decreed it and it is unalterable.	(ו) וַיַּעֲמִידֵם לְעַד לְעוֹלָם חֶק נָתַן וְלֹא יֵעָבֹר:
(7) Praise <i>Hashem</i> from the earth: great sea beasts and all creatures of the deep.	(ז) הִלְלוּ אֶת יְהוָה מִן הָאָרֶץ תַּנִּינִים וְכָל תְּהוֹמוֹת:
(8) Praise <i>Yah</i> fire and hail, snow and vapor; even the destructive wind that fulfills His Word.	(ח) אֵשׁ וּבָרָד שֶׁלֹּג וְקִיטוֹר רוּחַ סַעֲרָה עֲשֵׂה דְבָרוֹ:
(9) Praise <i>Yah</i> immense mountains and all hills, fruit-bearing trees and all cedars.	(ט) הַהָרִים וְכָל גְּבְעוֹת עֵץ פְּרִי וְכָל אֲרָזִים:
(10) Praise <i>Yah</i> wild beasts and domestic animals, insects and birds in flight.	(י) הַחַיָּה וְכָל בְּהֵמָה רֶמֶשׂ וְצִפּוֹר כָּנָף:
(11) Praise <i>Yah</i> earthly kings and all governments, ministers and all earthly judges.	(יא) מַלְכֵי אֶרֶץ וְכָל לְאֻמִּים שָׂרִים וְכָל שֹׁפְטֵי אֶרֶץ:
(12) Praise <i>Yah</i> young men, and maidens as well; elders together with young lads.	(יב) בַּחוּרִים וְגַם בְּתוֹלוֹת זָקֵנִים עַם נְעָרִים:
(13) Praise and reflect thanks to <i>Hashem's</i> Name, for His Name is exalted above and beyond all conception; and the day is coming when His majesty will shine over earth and heaven alike.	(יג) יְהַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם יְהוָה כִּי נִשְׁגָּב שְׁמוֹ לְבַדּוֹ הוֹדוּ עַל אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמַיִם:
(14) For He will raise up His people's fallen honor; He will restore the pride of all His devoted ones, the descendants of Yisrael, the people that draws all creation close to Him, <i>halleluYah</i> .	(יד) וַיִּרָם קֶרֶן לַעֲמֹל תְּהִלָּה לְכָל חֲסִידָיו לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עִם קָרְבוֹ הִלְלוּ יְהוָה:

Tehillim 149

(1) <i>HalleluYah</i> ! Sing a new song to <i>Hashem</i> ! His praise is reflected in the assembly of His devoted servants.	(א) הִלְלוּ יְהוָה שִׁירוּ לִיהוָה שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ תְּהִלָּתוֹ בְּקֹהַל חֲסִידָיו:
(2) Let Yisrael rejoice in its Maker; let the inhabitants of Tziyon delight in their King.	(ב) יִשְׁמַח יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּעֲשֵׂיוֹ בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן יִגִּילוּ בַּמֶּלֶךְ:
(3) Let them reflect His Name in circular dance; let them play a chant-song for Him with drum and harp.	(ג) יְהַלְלוּ שְׁמוֹ בַּמְּחוֹל בְּתֶף וּכְנֹר יִזְמְרוּ לוֹ:
(4) For <i>Hashem</i> desires His people; He will crown the humble with salvation.	(ד) כִּי רוּצָה יְהוָה בַּעֲמֹ יִפְאַר עֲנוּיִם בִּישׁוּעָה:
(5) His devoted servants will rejoice with dignity; they will sing joyously upon their beds.	(ה) יַעֲלֻזוּ חֲסִידָיו בְּכָבוֹד יִרְנְנוּ עַל מְשֻׁכְּבוֹתָם:
(6) Lofty praises of <i>El</i> [the loving God] will resound in their throats as they brandish the double-edged sword of <i>Hashem's</i> Name, <i>YHVH</i> in their hands. ¹⁷⁶	(ו) רוֹמְמוֹת אֵל בְּגִרוֹנָם וְחֶרֶב פִּיפִיּוֹת בְּיָדָם:
(7) To execute justice among the nations; reproof among the peoples.	(ז) לַעֲשׂוֹת נִקְמָה בַּגּוֹיִם תוֹכַחוֹת בְּלֹאמִים:
(8) To bind their kings with chains and their glory seeking nobles with iron fetters.	(ח) לְאַסֹּר מַלְכֵיהֶם בְּזָקִים וְנִכְבְּדֵיהֶם בְּכַבְלֵי בַרְזֵל:
(9) To execute upon them the verdict prescribed by <i>Yah</i> ; this is the honor reserved for all His devoted ones, <i>halleluYah</i> .	(ט) לַעֲשׂוֹת בָּהֶם מִשְׁפָּט כְּתוּב הַדָּר הוּא לְכָל חֲסִידָיו הִלְלוּ יְהוָה:

Tehillim 150

(1) <i>HalleluYah</i> ! Praise <i>El</i> [the loving God] in His heavenly sanctuary (<i>Keter</i>); praise Him in the firmament of His invincible	(א) הִלְלוּ יְהוָה הִלְלוּ אֵל בְּקֹדֶשׁוֹ (כתר) הִלְלוּהוּ בִּרְקִיעַ עֲזוֹ (חכמה):
---	--

¹⁷⁶ The tiny *Yod* of *YKVK* is like the handle of a sword; *Vav* is its length; and two *Hehs* are two sides of the blade.

strength (<i>Chokhmah</i>).	
(2) Praise Him for His powerful miracles (<i>Binah</i>); praise Him for His unbounded greatness (<i>Chesed</i>).	(ב) הַלְלוּהוּ בְּגִבּוֹרֹתָיו (בינה) הַלְלוּהוּ כָּרֵב גָּדְלוֹ (חסד):
(3) Praise Him with the call of the <i>shofar</i> (<i>Gevurah</i>); praise Him with the lyre and harp (<i>Tiferet</i>).	(ג) הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתַקְעַ שׁוֹפָר (גבורה) הַלְלוּהוּ בְּנֵבֶל וְכִנּוֹר (תפארת):
(4) Praise Him with drum and tambourine (<i>Netzach</i>); praise Him with stringed instruments and flute (<i>Hod</i>).	(ד) הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתֹף וּמַחֹל (נצח) הַלְלוּהוּ בְּמִנִּים וְעֹגֵב (הוד):
(5) Praise Him with vibrating cymbals (<i>Yesod</i>); praise Him with echoing trumpets (<i>Malkhut</i>).	(ה) הַלְלוּהוּ בְּצִלְצְלֵי שָׁמַע (יסוד) הַלְלוּהוּ בְּצִלְצְלֵי תְרוּעָה (מלכות):
(6) Let every soul praise Yah, <i>halleluYah</i> !	(ו) כָּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְהַלֵּל יְהוָה הִלְלוּ יְהוָה:
177: כָּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְהַלֵּל יְהוָה הִלְלוּ יְהוָה	

¹⁷⁷ The word *halleluYah* is a composite word, joining the plural command *hallelu* (praise!) with the divine Name *Yah* (*Yod-Heh*). At its most basic level, the verse calls upon us to simply praise God out of appreciation for everything that He gives us—including the basics of existence that we usually take for granted. This is perhaps what the Midrash means when it says on the verse, “*Kol ha’neshamah tahallel Yah*—let every soul praise Yah” (Psalm 150:6), “This means that we are to praise Hashem for each and every *neshimah* (breath) we take” (*Bereshit Rabbah* 14:9, *Devarim Rabbah* 2:36).

Breathing is no small thing. Yet precisely because it is usually done effortlessly, we take it for granted. But the Midrash—based on the idea that our *neshamah* (soul) is really nothing less than the *neshimah* (breath) of the divine within us—exhorts us to breathe consciously, i.e., to contemplate and know and appreciate the incredible gift of breath as a direct connection to Hashem Himself. See Genesis 2:7, “Hashem Elokim formed the man from the dust of the earth; He then breathed into his nostrils *nishmat chayim* (the soul-breath of life), and the man became a *nefesh chayah* (living being).” When Hashem breathed into man’s nostrils, so to speak, that breath became man’s *neshamah* (divine soul). When the *nefesh* [the lowest aspect of the *neshamah* that *nafash* (rests) within the body] then fused and became one with the body, the combination of the two was called *nefesh chayah* (living being). Although the Torah portrays this as something that once happened, the Midrash is hinting to us that this was not a one-time affair. It is rather an ongoing process, our part of which is to become conscious and aware of the divine nature of our own breath.

In addition to the above, the word *halleluYah* itself is known in kabbalah as a *yichud* (unification) of heaven and earth, above and below. This is seen in the letters that make up this composite word: *hallel* (*heh-lamed-lamed*), followed by *vav*, followed by *Yod-Heh*. The *gematria* of the letters *heh* (5), *lamed* (30), *lamed* (30) = 65, the same as the divine Name *Adonai* [*aleph* (1), *dalet* (4), *nun* (50), *yod* (10)]. In kabbalah, this Name, *Adonai*, corresponds to the final *heh* of Hashem’s Ineffable Name, *YKVK*. As such it embodies our arousal from below vis-à-vis the first three letters of *YKVK* which embody Hashem’s arousal from above. When we now re-combine the remaining letters of *halleluYah* (the *vav* of *hallelu*, and the *Yod-Heh* of *Yah*), we get *YHV* (*yod-heh-vav*), the first three letters of the *YKVK*. Joining *YHV* with *hallel* (which corresponds to the final *heh*) we obtain one complete *YKVK*.

Developing further on the above, we can now add to this our understanding that, in addition to meaning “praise,” *hallel* also means “reflect,” “shine” and “radiate.” What are we being exhorted to radiate? *Hallelu Yah*! Cause the Name *Yah* (*Yod-Heh*) to radiate! Similar to what we saw above, *hallelu* is our arousal from below, with which we are asking Hashem to arouse His mercy and His love from above.

This request that *Yah* radiate love and mercy from above-to-below is based on the idea that the Name *Yah* is one-half of the complete Name, *YKVK*. Indeed, it is the superior or heavenly half, relative to the two final letters, *Vav-Heh* [as in the verse “*Yismechu Hashamayim Vetagel Ha’aretz*—the heavens will rejoice and the earth will be jubilant” (Psalm 96:11; I Chronicles 16:31), whose initials form the acrostic, *YKVK*]. As such, *Yah* embodies the idea that Hashem has, so to speak, distanced Himself from us. That is, as a result of our having become insensitive to His presence among us, Hashem acts as if He is insensitive to us by pulling back, making Himself inaccessible, and hiding in heaven. But the purpose of this pulling back is to bring us to our senses. Such that, when we call out to Him, asking Him to come out of hiding, to reveal and shine His light and His love again into us, He gladly responds in kind.

Returning to the Midrash, “*Kol ha’neshamah tahallel Yah*—let every soul praise Yah” (Psalm 150:6)—this means that we are to praise *Yod-Heh* for each and every *neshimah* (breath) we take,” this verse is also considered a meditative directive. That is, as we breathe, we inhale to the count of ten (the *gematria* of *yod*), and exhale to the count of five (the *gematria* of *heh*). In this way, we literally ascend to the heavenly level within ourself in order to draw its light down into every aspect of our lives. Based on what we have just learned, this can involve ascending to the *Yod-Heh* (*yismechu hashamayim*) to draw down more of its light into *Vav-Heh* (*vetagel ha’aretz*). On an even subtler level, it can involve ascending to the *Yod* to draw down more of its light into the *Heh* (and then into all the levels below it).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Avraham Sutton is an Orthodox Torah mentor, teacher, and author. For over 30 years he has been learning and teaching prophetic Torah, kabbalah, talmud, midrash, chassidut, prayer and meditation, and sacred song. He has translated, edited and/or authored over 20 major works in English on the deeper significance of Torah for our age.

Born in 1949 in Los Angeles to Syrian Sefardic parents, he attended the University of California (U.C.L.A., Berkeley, Santa Cruz), graduating in 1972 with a major in "Communication" (which included the History of Religion and Mythology, History of Consciousness, and the Psychology of Dreams and the Soul). In 1974, after spending the next two years in Los Angeles rediscovering his Jewish roots, he traveled to Israel to study Torah in a *yeshivah* for the first time. This was the beginning of an intense 11-year period during which he married and began raising a family, and learned from and bonded with some of the great teachers of Jerusalem.

(1974-1975) *Dvar Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem), Rabbi Baruch Horowitz
(1975-1977) *Mikdash Melech* (New York), Rabbi Chayim Benoliel
(1977-1980) *Ohr Sameach* (Givat Ada, Jerusalem) and
(1980-1981) *Nachliel* (Migdal HaEmek), Rabbi Nachman Bulman z"l
(1981-1985) *HaChayim VeHaShalom*—Israeli Rabbinical and Kabbalistic Yeshivah (Jerusalem), Rabbi Eliyahu Attieh and Rabbi Mordechai Attieh

Following this, from 1985-1990, he was the head of English research and development for Arachim Seminars in Israel, and the sole researcher, translator, and editor of ***Pathways to the Torah***, the official sourcebook used in Arachim and Discovery Seminars worldwide. During this time he edited and updated ***Survival—Israel and Mankind*** by Rabbi Raphael Eisenberg (posthumously, with the author's widow), which has since been translated into French, Russian, and most recently Hebrew.

He compiled, edited, and annotated ***Innerspace—Introduction to Kabbalah, Meditation and Prophecy*** from transcripts of classes given by the late Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan. Since its publication in 1990, *Innerspace* continues to be considered one of the finest introductions to authentic Jewish mysticism in the English language. Subsequently, he edited the second volume of Rabbi Kaplan's celebrated ***Handbook of Jewish Thought***.

He was also co-author of a unique website, ***The 2001 Principle*** (www.2001principle.net), dedicated to bridging the gap between the Torah and the most advanced theories of science. His own website (www.AvrahamSutton.com)—which features his Torah teachings in written, audio, and video format—is dedicated to raising consciousness about the relationship between personal and collective redemption, and how these two levels of redemption go hand in hand. Personal redemption involves the potential that each and every human has to develop a personal relationship with the Creator. Collective redemption involves the final awakening of Israel and Mankind to its highest calling. The relationship between these two permeates his teaching and his writing.

In 1995, Sutton began learning from **Rabbi Shmuel Darzi zt"l**, one of the last great *mekubalim* of Yerushalayim. In the eleven-year period during which he prayed and learned with Rav Darzi, his teaching and writing were catapulted to a completely new level. Under the Rav's auspices, he taught a weekly class in the teachings of the *Leshem Shvo VeAchlamah* (of Rabbi Shlomo Elyashiv z"l) in the Rav's synagogue on *Rechov Rashi* in *Makor Barukh* for seven years. He was also given permission to translate more and more of the secret teachings of Torah that our generation needs in order to grasp what is required of us—individually and collectively—at this crucial time.

Published Translations and Editing Projects

(2010) **Pirkey Avot** (Ethics of the Fathers), based on the teachings of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, translated & annotated by David Sears, edited by A. Sutton (Breslov Research Institute).

(1998) **Anatomy of the Soul** (on the spiritual significance of every aspect of the human anatomy), Chaim Kramer and A. Sutton (Breslov Research Institute). *Anatomy* has since been translated into Hebrew.

(1997) Hebrew Introduction to Rabbi Azriel of Gerona's **Biur Esser Sefirot**, by R. Moshe Schatz, edited by A. Sutton (*Machon Pitchey Megadim*).

(1996) **Sparks of the Hidden Light—Seeing the Unified Nature of Reality Through Kabbalah**, by R. Moshe Schatz, edited by A. Sutton.

(1995) **Mashiach—Who? What? Why? How? Where? and When?** Chaim Kramer with A. Sutton (Breslov Research Institute).

(1995) **The Palace Gates—Parables for the Haggadah**, by R. Shalom Wallach, translated by A. Sutton (Feldheim).

(1994) **The Palace Gates—Parables for the High Holy Days**, by R. Shalom Wallach, translated by A. Sutton (Feldheim).

(1993) **Handbook of Jewish Thought—Volume II**, by R. Aryeh Kaplan, edited by A. Sutton (Moznaim).

(1991) **Survival—Israel and Mankind**, by Rafael Eisenberg, edited and updated by Mrs. I. Eisenberg and A. Sutton (Targum/Feldheim). *Survival* has since been translated into Russian, French, and Hebrew.

(1990) **Innerspace—Introduction to Kabbalah, Meditation and Prophecy**, by R. Aryeh Kaplan, edited by A. Sutton (Moznaim).

(1985-1990) **Pathways to the Torah**—researcher, translator, and editor of 7 editions.

Innovative Works

* **The ReAwakening Spiritual Awareness Series** (7 works on Prayer and Meditation)

1. **Realizing the Unity (Giluy HaYichud)**: The Lost Art of Prayer; Wanting What G-d Wants; Connecting to the Unity; The Power of Prayer; Marrying Torah and Prayer; The *Yod-Gimel Midot HaRachamim*; The *Yichud* of *Shma Yisrael*; The Baal Shem's Parable and *Giluy HaYichud*; G-d Wants our Prayers; The 6,000-year Prayer; Prayer as Relationship; The Hide-n-Seek G-d; Thankfulness; The Vertical and Horizontal Transmission; Turning Torah into Prayer; The Return of Prophecy; Connecting Heaven and Earth: Yaacov's Ladder; Man is the Soul of the Universes; The Temple of the Soul; The Core Experience; The Pattern of the *Mikdash*; Direct your Heart to the Holy of Holies; Hashem is the Place of the Universe; *Giluy Yichudo* Revisited. Cost: \$ 30 U.S. plus postage.

2. **Devekut—Connecting to Hashem: Tefillah**—the Ladder to Heaven; Ascending to Heaven in Prayer; Overview of *Shachrit*; The 248 Words of the *Shma*; *Mesirut Nefesh*; Prayer for the Revelation of G-d's Oneness; *Kaddish*; *Amen*; The Prophetic Spirit; The Individual and the Community; The Sefirot-Partzufim Dynamic; The Paradox of G-d's Transcendence; Hashem's Names; The *Sefirot* and the Divine Names; Eight Meditative Charts. Cost: \$ 30 U.S. plus postage.

3. **A World of Infinite Blessings (Berakhot LeOlmey Ad)**: Blessing Hashem; The Structure and Meaning of a Blessing; *Modeh Ani*—Gratitude for Being Alive; *Netilat Yadayim*; *Asher Yatzar*; *Elokai Neshamah*; Overview of the Morning Blessings; Blessings on the Torah; Oscillation in Prayer; Blessings over Food; The Anatomy of a Blessing; The Mystery of Bowing; Appendix: Oscillation; Appendix: YKVK—The "Image" of G-d. Cost: \$ 30 U.S. plus postage.

4. **The Ladder of Ascent (Sulam HaAliyah)**: What is Meditative Prayer? What is Right-Brain Consciousness? Chokhmah and Binah Consciousness; The Miracle of Speech, Breath, and Movement; Ascending the Ladder of the Soul; With Every Fiber of My Being (*Bitul* and *Yesh* in Jewish Meditation); Baal Shem Tov and Rabbi Nachman of Breslov on *Hitbodedut*; The Keys to

Meditative Prayer; *Sefer Yetzirah* as a Meditative Text; Ramban's Meditation; *Kavanah*-Single-mindedness; Appendix A: *Sulam HaAliyah* of R. Yehudah Albotini; Appendix B: Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan on Rabbi Albotini. Cost: \$ 20 U.S. plus postage.

5. ***Yearning for Redemption (Tzipia LiGeulah)—The Psalms of King David***: Twenty years in the making. Now newly revised. 113 psalms are ready. Entire Book of Psalms soon to be completed! Reveals the Book of Psalms as transformational text for the individual and mankind. These original translations, according to the classical commentaries, are conceptual, poetic, and inspirational. Extremely important introduction, notes and in-depths, deepen understanding of the underlying meaning and message of each psalm and of the psalms as a whole. Cost: \$ 30 U.S. plus postage.

6. ***The Holiness of Shabbat (Kedushat Shabbat Kodesh)—The Illumination of the Light of Ein Sof on Shabbat in the Teachings of the Zohar, the Ari, the Baal Shem Tov, and others***: The *Kavanot* of Neshamah Yeterah; *Minchah Erev Shabbat Kodesh*; *Lighting Nerot Shabbat*; The Elevation of the Worlds; *Kabbalat Shabbat*; Zohar for the Three *Shabbat* Meals; The Ari's Songs for the Three Meals. Cost: \$ 20 U.S. plus postage.

7. ***Shirey Kodesh—Sacred Songs***. 50 Classics of Jewish Liturgical Poetry and Sacred Song. Hebrew text with facing English translation, notes and appendices (MP3 audio files available). Cost: \$ 10 U.S. plus postage.

* ***The Cosmology and MetaHistory Series*** (8 works)

1. ***Spiritual Technology (Tikuney Erev Shabbat Kodesh)—On the transition from profane technology to sacred technology in preparation for the advent of the Great Shabbat***: Probing deeply into the story of Adam and Eve in *Gan Eden*, focusing especially on the character of the *nachash* (serpent, snake, sneak), I explain that we are presently in the period of history that corresponds to that fateful Friday in *Eden*. I show how the teachings of the Torah are the antidote that allows us to finally stop making the same mistake and begin the process of *tikun* (repair) that will bring healing to our world. I explain the problems with modern technology (and the mindset behind it) and how the inner, prophetic, sacred technology of the Torah can help us make a major paradigm shift away from the path of destruction to true redemption. Cost: \$ 30 U.S. plus postage.

2. ***The Well of Living Waters (Ber Mayim Chayim)—Transformative Teachings for our Time from the Masters of Kabbalah***. Advanced Kabbalistic view of Man and the Cosmos: Includes translations of important primary texts as well as major essays based on these texts: **Part One**: *Giluy Eliyahu*—The Revelation of Elijah the Prophet; Access to the Inner Teachings in Our Times; The Kabbalah of the Ari; The Ari, Albert Einstein, and the *Mashiach*; The *PaRDeS* of the Torah. **Part Two**: *Olam, Shanah, Nefesh*—Space, Time, and Consciousness; Reincarnation and the Body of History; The "Souls" of the Feet of History—The Parable of the Ants; Act III Scene III of the Messianic Drama; Kindred Souls; The Mysterious 130 Years; *Shaar HaGilgulim* 38; *Sefer HaGilgulim* 2; The Dynamics of Sin and Repentance—The Power of *Teshuvah*; The Spiritual History of the World; On the Interface between the Spiritual and the Physical; The Death of the Kings & The Shattering of the Vessels; Visions of the Future; The Cosmic Clock and the Great Shabbat; In Its Time I Will Accelerate It; *Minchah Erev Shabbat Kodesh*; Psalm 107; Standing at the Edge of History; The True Jewish Concept of Infinity (R. Azriel of Gerona); The Elevation of Time; The Elevation of Space; From Eternity to Eternity. Cost: \$ 30 U.S. plus postage.

3. ***Soul Roots (Shorshey HaNeshamah)***: Internalizing the Higher Aspects of the Soul; The Collective Drama of the Souls; The Cosmic Clock and the Great Shabbat; The Baal Shem Tov on *Minchah Erev Shabbat Kodesh*; *Shaar HaGilgulim* 38; *Sefer HaGilgulim* 2; *Megilat Setarim*—Ramchal on *Megilat Ruth*; Higher Soul Connections Before *Mashiach*; The Weekly *Shabbat* and the Millennial *Shabbat*; The Messianic Surprise. Cost: \$ 20 U.S. plus postage.

4. **Dedicated to Mashiach ben Yoseph & Mashiach ben David:** Yoseph and His Brothers; Psalm 81—Translation and Commentary; The Twin Messiahs; Living at the Edge of History; Excerpts from *Kol HaTor*; Excerpts from Introduction to *Pe'at HaShulchan*; On the Relationship Between Torah and Science based on the writings of R. Chayim Friedlander z"l. Cost: \$ 30 U.S. plus postage.

5. **Discourse on Redemption (Maamar HaGeulah)** by Rabbi Moshe Chayim Luzzatto, annotated translation of this extremely vital work with extensive notes and commentary; approximately 1/3 of text completed; includes five appendices. Cost: \$ 20 U.S. plus postage.

6. **Exile and Redemption (Galut VeGeulah):** The Spiritual Principle behind History; Sources for the Four Exiles; Daniel's Visions; Ezekiel's Visions; Rabbi Chayim Vital on Psalm 124; Birthpangs of the Messianic Redemption; The Twin Messiahs. Cost: \$15 U.S. plus postage.

7. **The Spiritual Significance of the Ketoret—The Inner Meaning of the Incense:** Newly revised with important additions, including: Rabbi Kook on the Incense; Sefirotic Correspondences of the Incense Spices; Kabbalistic *Seder Pitum HaKetoret* for *Shachrit* and *Minchah*; Kabbalistic *Seder Pitum HaKetoret* for times of crisis. Cost: \$ 25 U.S. plus postage.

8. **Petichat Eliyahu—Elijah's Prayer Meditation:** Original translation and commentary of this important text from the 2nd Introduction to the *Tikuney Zohar*, based on classical sources. Includes translations of three powerful prayers (Ari, Rashash, and Ben Ish Chai) to be said after *Petichat Eliyahu*, plus Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's Torah/Tefillah, *Aremet Yeday* (*Zohar Noach*, 1:65a). Cost: \$ 15 U.S. plus postage.

*** Holidays Series**

1. **Days of Awe—Awesome Days—How to make your experience of the High Holidays deeper, more meaningful and infinitely rewarding:** Preparing for the High Holidays; Inner Work of the High Holidays; Psalm 130; Forgiveness on *Yom Kippur*; *Yom Kippur* and *Teshuvah*; Hashem's Names; *Viduy*; The *Yod-Gimel Midot HaRachamim*. Cost: \$ 20 U.S. plus postage.

2. **Chanukah Light:** The Primordial Light; The light of the first *Chanukah* shines each year; The Miracles of *Chanukah*; The Nature of Miracles; Sacred Numbers—Seven and Eight; Eight and *Chanukah*; Appendix I: Hillel and Shammai; Appendix II: *Mesirut Nefesh*; Lighting the *Chanukah* Lamps (the blessings, *Maoz Tzur*, Psalms 91, 30, 67, *Ana BeKoach*, Psalm 133). Cost: \$ 5.00.

3. **Purim Light—The Reality of G-d in Our Lives:** Esther in the *Beit HaTzelamim*; The Deepest *Purim* of our Lives; The Ari's Teachings on *Purim*; Visions of the Future (*Leshem Shvo VeAchlamah*); *Selichot* for *Taanit Esther* (Sefardi & Ashkenazi); Prayers and Blessings before the *Megillah*; Complete Translation of **Megillat Esther**; *Kavanot HaMitzvot*. Cost: \$ 25 U.S. plus postage.

4. **Pesach Light:** *Lailah KaYom Yair* (A Night That Shines Like the Day); Teachings from the Masters (*Pri Chayim*, *Ohev Yisrael*, Rebbi Nachman, Gaon of Vilna); **Haggadah Shel Pesach** (full text, Hebrew-English, original translation); *Shir HaShirim* (Song of Songs, original translation based on traditional sources); *Shirey HaNefesh* (comparing the traditional interpretation with Malbim's commentary); The Progression from *Pesach*—through the *Omer*—to *Shavuot*. Cost: \$ 25 U.S. plus postage.

Note: International postal rates from Israel range from \$5.00—\$25.00 U.S., depending on the size of the parcel, the destination, and the speed of delivery requested.

Contact: Avraham Sutton
Website: <http://www.AvrahamSutton.com>
Email: avraham.sutton@me.com

Leiluy Neshama For the Soul Elevation of:

Harav Shmuel Darzi
המקובל האלהי הרב שמואל בן יצחק
זצוקלה"ה
נלב"ע שבת וישב יעקב כ"ג כסלו תשס"ו

William Blumenfeld
זאב יהושע בן מרדכי וחיה ז"ל
נלב"ע ב' כסלו תשס"ד

Francois Blumenfeld
פרידה הדסה בת חנה ז"ל
נלב"ע ח' ניסן תש"ס

Raymond S. Sutton
רחמים בן לונה ע"ה
נלב"ע כ"א שבט תשל"ד

Jeanette Sutton
ג'מילה בת מרחבה ע"ה
נלב"ע כ"ב אלול תשמ"ט

Charles R. Sutton
שאול בן ג'מילה ע"ה
נלב"ע ח' ניסן תשנ"א

Michel S. Sutton
מיכאל בן לונה ע"ה
נלב"ע ט' ניסן תשכ"ט

Sarah Sutton
שרה בת נוחה ע"ה
נלב"ע כ"ט סיון תשנ"ד

Charles M. Sutton
שאול בן שרה ע"ה
נלב"ע י"ט אדר ב' תשס"ג

Judah S. Sutton
יהודה בן לונה ע"ה
נלב"ע ו' טבת תשנ"ו

Sarina Sutton
שרה בת רינה ע"ה
נלב"ע כ"ט אייר תשנ"ו

James S. Sutton
ג'מיל בן לונה ע"ה
נלב"ע ח' שבט תשס"ג

Ezra Hedaya
Betty Hedaya
Isaac S. Sutton
Fanny Sutton
Albert I. Sutton
Sol I. Sutton

Meyer Saff
מאיר בן מזל ז"ל
נלב"ע ד' ניסן תשנ"ח

David Shabot HaLevi
נלב"ע כ"ה שבט

Mary (Marhaba) Shabot
נלב"ע ד' סיון

Abe Shabot
נלב"ע כ"ג אב

Rose Bijou
נלב"ע כ"ו כסלו

Vicky Molkho
נלב"ע י"ז סיון

Myer Molkho
נלב"ע כ"ט אדר

Molly Shabot
מזל בת מרחבה ע"ה
נלב"ע י"א אדר תשנ"ד

Isaac Dick Shabot
יצחק בן מרחבה ע"ה
נלב"ע ו' אלול תש"ס

Lilly Shabot
לאה בת בהייה ע"ה
נלב"ע כ"ה תשרי תשנ"ז

Jack Shabot
נלב"ע א' שבט

Murray Shabot

Albert Grazi
אברהם בן מזל ע"ה
נלב"ע י"ב אייר תש"מ

R. Nachman Bulman
הרב נחמן בן מאיר זצוק"ל
נלב"ע כ"ו תמוז תשס"ב

R. Ephraïm Asher Rottenberg
הרב ר' אפרים אשר הלוי ז"ל
נלב"ע ט"ו תמוז תשנ"ו

R. Aryeh Kaplan-Carmona
הרב ר' אריה משה אליהו ז"ל בן שמואל
נלב"ע י"ד שבט תשמ"ג

R. Rafael Eisenberg
הרב ר' רפאל איזנברג הלוי ז"ל
נלב"ע ו' אדר תשל"ו

R. Shlomo Carlebach
הרב ר' שלמה בן ר' נפתלי ופסיא ז"ל
נלב"ע ט"ז חשון תשנ"ה

Hannah Zucker
חנה בת חוה ע"ה
נלב"ע כ"ג ניסן תשל"ו

Yaacov Israel HaLevi
יעקב בן אהרן שלמה הלוי ע"ה
נלב"ע ח' אייר תשנ"ב

Suzy Frel
שרה גיטל בת רבקה ע"ה
נלב"ע י' חשון תשנ"ג

David Spero
דוד בן שושנה ע"ה
נלב"ע כ"ב טבת תשנ"ד

R. YehudahLeib Mandelcorn
יהודה ליב בן צבי ז"ל
נלב"ע כ' תמוז תשנ"ג

Benjamin Mann
דוב בער בן שלום יעקב ע"ה
נלב"ע ט"ו מנחם אב תשמ"ג

Helen Mann
חנה ריבה בת כתריאל ע"ה
נלב"ע י"ד אדר תשל"ח

Mordechai Friedman
מרדכי בן אריה אהרן ע"ה
נלב"ע ט"ו חשון תשס"א

Harry Schottenfeld
הירש צבי בן יצחק אייזיק ע"ה
נלב"ע י"ז תשרי תשנ"ז

Avraham Yoseph Chayim Sutton
אברהם יוסף חיים בן משה ופנינה ע"ה
נלב"ע י"ח סיון תשס"ב
ה' ינקום דמו

Pinchas Frieberg
פינחס חיים בן טובה ע"ה
נלב"ע ט' מנחם אב תשס"ב

David Hillel Hertzberg
מים חיים דוד הלל בן שרגא פייבל ז"ל
נלב"ע י"ד מנחם אב תשס"ב

Marvin Padway
משה בן ישראל בנימין ע"ה
נלב"ע כ"ז אדר א' תש"ס

Elisha Brand
אלישע שלמה צבי בן חיה שרה
נלב"ע י' אייר תש"ס

R. Eliyahu Halberg
אליהו בן שמריהו ז"ל
נלב"ע ה' אדר א' תשס"ג

Devorah Aliza White
דבורה עליזה ע"ה בת יעקב משה
נלב"ע י' תמוז תשס"ג

Ruben Benquesus
נלב"ע יוה"כ תשס"א

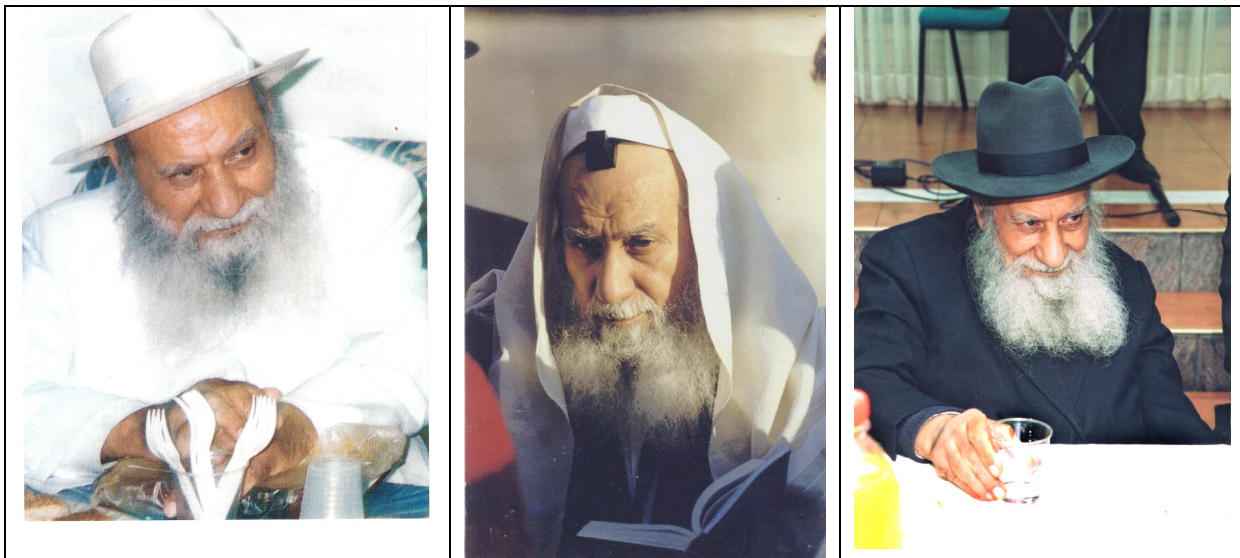
Simy Benquesus
נלב"ע י"ג סיון תשס"ח

Yonasan Moshe Sokol
יונתן משה בן ברוך שמואל וחנה טובה
נלב"ע כ"ח ניסן תשס"ח

Baruch Chai Benchayil
ברוך חי בן אברהם אבינו ז"ל
נלב"ע כ"ט ניסן תשס"ח

R. Shabtai Teicher
הרב שבתי בן צבי הירש ז"ל
נלב"ע ו' כסלו תש"ע

R. Yitzchak Izik Aisenstat
הרב יצחק אייזיק בן עזריאל מרדכי ז"ל
נלב"ע ו' כסלו תשע"ב



לעילוי נשמת המקובל האלהי
הרב שמואל דרזי בן יצחק

זכר צדיק וקדוש לברכה לחיי העולם הבא
 "לב"ע שבת קודש "וישב יעקב בארץ מגורי אביו בארץ כנען"
 כ"ג כסלו תשס"ו
 תהא נשמתו צרורה בצרור החיים

In honor of our beloved Teacher and Master, Rav Shmuel Darzi ben Yitzchak zt"l (may the memory of the righteous be for a blessing forever), who passed away during Minchah, at the highest moment of Shabbat, on the 23rd of Kislev 5766. Rav Darzi had so much and he gave so much. He was the center of my life for 10 years, the one to whom I could ask almost any question. Now Rav Darzi and Rav Kaduri zt"l are together with all their illustrious teachers—especially the Masters, the Ari, the Rashash, and the Ben Ish Chai—whose paths they embodied so beautifully and faithfully. And their passing at this time is not by chance. Momentous events are transpiring all around us—all in preparation for the final *Geulah*. The world is poised to see very heavy things happen. This is what they both lived for. Now we know that this is what they died for. They were *mosser nefesh* for *Clal Yisrael*. They are upstairs now pleading for the *Geulah*, just as they pleaded for us during their sojourns down here on earth. What a privilege it was to pray with the Rav at the Kotel! I never saw anybody like Rav Darzi who knew what to do and what to say when the *Aron haKodesh* was opened. He showed us all how to pour our hearts out in supplication before our Father in Heaven. He would pray with such realness, such power, and such joy. His smile radiated strength. *Barukh Elokenu sh'beraanu likhvodo* ("Blessed is our God for whose honor we were created!") he would always say. When we were with him, we didn't have to "believe" in the *Geulah*. The *Geulah* was a fact. He lived it. We will never forget the light of his Torah, the light of his smile, those amazing eyes that beamed with knowledge, life and joy and hope. May the memory of the righteous be for a blessing forever, amen.

