a paper:
ON THE NATURE OF HEBREW POETRY IN PSALM 100

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PREFACE

       This paper was written in preparation to better deliver a sermon on PSALM 100. By understanding the nature and structure of Hebrew poetry, and by looking and listening for their poetic patterns in both the Hebrew and English texts, the depth of meaning in the words of The Psalmist may be better understood. The sermon on a PSALM that takes these things into account, not as an end in themselves but to appreciate GOD's Word contained therein more deeply, is a sermon that may better minister to the hearts, souls and minds of GOD's people.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

       To better preach a sermon from The PSALMS, it is better to also consider The Text in The Hebrew, as well as in our own native language. Within The Hebrew Text of The PSALMS are patterns and structures of word and sound that are often lost in translation to other tongues. Evident in The PSALMS, regardless of language, are also certain forms characteristic of Hebrew poetry called parallelism.

       This may take many forms, 3 of the most common being synonymous, antithetical and synthetic parallelism. Synonymous parallelism repeats the thoughts of one unit in a following unit using similar words. Antithetical parallelism contrasts the thoughts of one unit with words of opposite meaning in a following unit. Synthetic parallelism amplifies the message of one unit by combining synonymous and antithetical words in following units. There is also the rhyme and rhythm of Hebrew poetry that is evident only as one reads and speaks The Hebrew Text, but which we miss in translations to other languages.

       Recognizing and studying such devices in Hebrew poetry are however not an end in themselves, but should serve in seeking a deeper understanding of The Scripture Text, which is in fact inspired by GOD. Having stated this caution, the study of the structure of Hebrew poetry may be profitable to the heart, soul and mind of the pious Christian man if used as a faithful servant to The Word of GOD and not lifted up as if a false master.

DEDICATION

       O Lord GOD, look not upon our iniquity, but upon the righteousness of The Saviour JESUS CHRIST over us! Cleanse our hearts, souls and minds of sin by the washing of The HOLY SPRIT! Make us white as snow, and renew a right spirit within us! As in The PSALMS, teach us to better minister to, testify of, thank and praise You! This, that we may be fitter instruments of Your Will to carry Your Gospel to the lost and better bearers of Your Name to encourage the faithful! In The Name of GOD The Father, and The Son and the Holy Ghost. AMEN.

EPIGRAPH

       I CHRONICLES 16:4, "And …[King David] appointed certain of the Levites to minister before The Ark of The LORD, and to record, and to thank and praise The LORD GOD of Israel." [KJV]

I. THE NATURE OF THE PSALMS

We must first remember that all of The PSALMS are part of GOD's Special Revelation – The Holy Scriptures – to man. As such, in contrast to those who in gross error study The PSALMS as mere excellent poetry of ancient Hebrew minds, it is to be firstly always remembered that The Ultimate Author is The HOLY SPIRIT. The holy men of ancient Israel could not have written The PSALMS as the immediate authors without The Spirit of The Living GOD also working in them. And The Almighty being perfect and without error, so is His Holy Word imparted to mankind. In The PSALMS the human spirit and The HOLY SPIRIT meet to uplift the searching hearts of men to The Sacred Heart of JESUS CHRIST our Lord. Having acknowledged This Truth, we may continue.

Arend Remmers provides an overview of The PSALMS, which may be divided into different Sections based upon content and central message: Book I, PSALMS 1-41, "Separation of the Just from the Unjust;" Book II, PSALMS 42-72, "The Suffering of the Just;" Book III, PSALMS 73-89, "Return of the People and GOD's Goodness;" Book IV, PSALMS 90-106, "JEHOVAH's Government in the Millennium;" Book V, PSALMS 107-150, "Summary of JEHOVAH's Ways with His People." [1] Reemers titles PSALM 100 as "Worldwide Worship of JEHOVAH." [2]

55 of the 150 PSALMS are addressed, "To the chief Musician…" [3] Of the 58 PSALMS labeled "A Psalm of David," 34 of these are addressed, "To the chief Musician…" [4] So it is not surprising that The PSALMS are central to much of the public worship today in both the synagogue and The Church, as many were expressly written for just this purpose.

The PSALMS in Hebrew are called "TEHILLIM," meaning "praise." They are of various kinds, "historical, doctrinal, …supplicatory, …[or] laudatory." They may be sung unto GOD in voices "…of joy, …to assist the memory [in recalling Who GOD is, what He has done, who man is and what he must do], and both to express and to excite all the other affections… [Or they may be] …a mournful muse as well as joyful ones." [5] Of The PSALMS, Saint Paul says in COLOSSIANS 3:16, "Let The Word of CHRIST dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to The Lord!" [6]

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[1] 8, Reemers, "Book of PSALMS," 4. Overview of Contents, division of The PSALMS into 5 sections or Books based on content.

[2] 8, Reemers, "Book of PSALMS," 4. Overview of Contents, title given to PSALM 100 in summary of its content.

[3] 1, A search of The KJV of The PSALMS in Bible Works 6 for "To the chief Musician" yields by my count 55 PSALMS so addressed, out of the 150 PSALMS of Holy Scripture.

[4] 1, A search of The KJV of The PSALMS in Bible Works 6 for "To the chief Musician A Psalm of David" yields by my count 34 of the 150 PSALMS of Holy Scripture.

[5] 3, Matthew Henry, PSLAMS, Introduction, I.

[6] 1, KJV, COLOSSIANS 3:16.

The PSALMS then are of many natures. There are of both joyful and sorrowful kinds. There are of those that lift up praise to GOD and those that prayerfully entreat Him from the depths of suffering. It is often difficult to so classify many of The PSALMS, as they often contain many or all of these natures. As to their use, The PSALMS are suitable for both public and private worship and instruction, both individual and corporate.

Different systems of classifications have been offered for The PSALMS. S. R. Driver developed a system based upon content and historical background, dividing The PSALMS into 7 categories: "1. Meditations on various aspects of Divine Providence; 2. Reflections on GOD's moral government of the world; 3. Expressions of faith, resignation [or] joy in GOD's Presence; 4. PSALMS with distinct reference to the circumstances of the psalmist; 5. National PSALMS; 6. Historical PSALMS; 7. Royal PSALMS." [7]

A later system of 7 classifications was offered by Herman Gunkel, who sought the "genre" of each PSALM by identifying the "Sitz im Leben" or "setting in life" of the author and of ancient Israel: "1. Hymns, sung on holy days at The Temple; 2. Community laments, chanted by the people when disaster had struck; 3. Songs of the individual, sung by pious persons; 4. Thank-offering songs, sung by one who had been delivered from great distress, and accompanied by a thank offering; 5. Laments of the individual, intoned by one who had suffered physical or emotional affliction; 6. Entrance liturgies, chanted by those who desired to enter the place of worship; 7. Royal PSALMS, sung in honor of the king." [8]

II. THE USE OF THE PSALMS IN ISRAEL'S ORGANIZED WORSHIP OF GOD

I CHRONICLES 16;1-3 records that King David personally oversaw the bringing of The Ark of The LORD into Jerusalem. There the Israelites offered "…burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before GOD." [9] When this worship of The LORD came to an end, David "…blessed the people in The Name of The LORD" and gave the people bread and wine. [10] David then "…appointed certain of the Levites to minister before The Ark of The LORD, and to record, and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel." [11] Here with music and song, The PSALMS were first officially employed in organized worship of The Almighty by royal Israelite decree. [12] King David here "…delivered first this

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[7] 9, Bullock, Classification of The PSALMS, an older system based upon content, page 118.
[8] 9, Bullock, Classification of The PSALMS, a newer system based upon life situations of the individual and the nation in ancient Israel, page 121.
[9] 1, KJV, I CHRONICLES 16:1.
[10] 1, KJV, I CHRONICLES 16:2-3.
[11] 1, KJV, I CHRONICLS 16:4.
[12] 1, KJV, I CHRONICLES 16:5-6.

psalm [13] to thank The LORD into the hand of Asaph and his brethren" for this very purpose. [14]

Within I CHRONICLES 16:4 we find four purposes of organized liturgical worship of The LORD, which began under King David of ancient Israel. It was for this purpose for which The PSLAMS were heavily employed: "And …[King David] appointed certain of the Levites to minister before The Ark of The LORD, and to record, and to thank and praise The LORD GOD of Israel." [15] From The Hebrew text we get the four offices of The PSALMS, all of which are directed to "The LORD GOD of Israel:" MESHARTIYM [16] - מְשָׁרְתִים - to minister; ULEHAZKIYR [17] - וּלְהַזְכִּיר – and to record; ULEHODOT [18] - וּלְהוֹדוֹת - and to thank; ULEHALLEL [19] - וּלְהַלֵּל – and to praise. [20] PSALM 100 opens in The Hebrew text by declaring its purpose with the words – MIZMOR LETODAH - מִזְמוֹר לְתוֹדָה - meaning literally "A melody for thanksgiving." [21]

III. THE NATURE OF HEBREW POETRY

The PSALMS accomplish these tasks of worship and praise to GOD in part by employing certain structures and styles common to Hebrew poetry called "parallelism," which is defined in The New Advent Encyclopedia as "…the balance of verse with verse, an essential and characteristic defining feature in Hebrew poetry. Either by repetition or by antithesis or by some other device, thought is set over against thought, form balances form, in such wise as to bring the meaning home to one strikingly and agreeably." [22]

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[13] 1, "This PSALM" first delivered by King David to the Priests and Levites in I CHRONICLES 16:7 closely parallels the text of PSALM 105 in many places in The KJV.

[14] 1, KJV, I CHRONICLES 16:7.

[15] 1, KJV, I CHRONICLES 16:4.

[16] 5, Whitaker's R-BDB Hebrew Lexicon, B10697 SHARAT שָׁרַת verb – to minister, serve: 1. of ministerial service…; 2. usually of special service in worship: a. of Levites [and] Priests… Piel [intensified] participle masculine plural absolute, page 1058.

[17] 5, Whitaker's R-BDB Hebrew Lexicon, B2636 ZACHAR זָכַר verb – to remember: I. human subject. 1. remember, recall, call to mind, usu. as affecting present feeling, thought or action: a. remember past experiences… b. recall past distress, etc. c. remember sins, (1) to repent of them…. Hiphil [to cause to] infinitive, page 269, 272.

[18] 5, Whitaker's R-BDB Hebrew Lexicon, B3832 YADAH יָדָה verb - to throw, cast: …Hiph. 1. give thanks, laud, praise; a. …of ritual worship… 2. confess, a. The Name of GOD. b. confessing and forsaking (his transgressions). Hiphil [to cause to] infinitive, page 392.

[19] 5, Whitaker's R-BDB Hebrew Lexicon, B2420 HALAL הָלַל verb – to be boastful, to praise: …2. usually praise ['ELOHIYM] אֱלֹהִים [GOD]: …d. note especially: praise ye Yah! e. …CHRONICLES, of technical Levitcal function… Verb Hiphil [to cause to] infinitive, page 237, 239.

[20] 4, BHS, I CHRONICLES 16:4.

[21] 4, BHS WTT translation of The Hebrew, PSALM 100:1.

[22] 10, New Advent Encyclopedia. "Parallelism, Hebrew Poetry."

In 1753 Bishop Robert Loweth identified three types of parallelism in Hebrew poetry: synonymous, antithetical and synthetic. [23] In synonymous parallelism "…the very same thought is repeated, at times in the very same words…" [24] In antithetical parallelism "…the thought of the first line is expressed by an antithesis in the second; or is counterbalanced by a contrast in the second;" [25] And in synthetic parallelism "…the theme is worked up by the building of thought upon similar thought." [26]

Some other common forms of parallelism in Hebrew poetry include, but are by no means limited to, introverted, stair-like and emblematic. Again from The New Advent Encyclopedia: Introverted parallelism is when "…the thought veers from the main theme and then returns thereto." [27] Stair-like parallelism is when "…the thought is repeated, in pretty much the same words, and is developed still further." [28] And emblematic parallelism is when "…the building up of a thought by use of simile." [29] There are other aspects of Hebrew poetry, including "syntactic (word order) and semantic (word meaning) parallelism." [30] These may be evident only in The Hebrew text and are not uncommonly lost partly or completely in translations into other languages.

Balance and counterbalance in Hebrew poetry may be between words and words, phrases and phrases, lines and lines and groupings of lines with grouping of lines. Units may be in groupings of two, three or even more. Scholars are finding in fact that the forms and groupings of these patterns in Hebrew poetry are far more complex that has been previously appreciated. [31] For example, Robert Alter identifies "focusing" in Hebrew poetry, "…by which the poet introduces a term in one line and then focuses more specifically on it in the next. Sometimes the effect is an intensification of meaning." [32]

As to the structure of Hebrew poetry itself, two or more "units" combine to form "lines" or "stitches." Lines group together to form "verse," where groups of two lines are known as a "distich" and three lines are known as a "tristich." [33] If one unit in a line has a corresponding part in the next line, the parallelism is "complete;" if lacking, the parallelism is "incomplete." Further, parallelism operating in the same verse is termed "internal," while parallelism between verses is called "external." [34] Within these structures, patterns of poetry not as evident in translations to other languages may be more clearly seen and heard in the Hebrew text. These qualities in Hebrew poetry are often not as apparent to the eye as much as to the ear. Such is the case with rhyming and rhythmical patterns.

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[23] 9, Bullock, paragraph 1, page 32.
[24] 10, New Advent Encyclopedia. "Parallelism, Hebrew Poetry, I. Synonymous Parallelism."
[25] 10, New Advent Encyclopedia. "Parallelism, Hebrew Poetry, II. Antithetical Parallelism."
[26] 10, New Advent Encyclopedia. "Parallelism, Hebrew Poetry, III. Synthetic Parallelism."
[27] 10, New Advent Encyclopedia. "Parallelism, Hebrew Poetry, IV. Introverted Parallelism."
[28] 10, New Advent Encyclopedia. "Parallelism, Hebrew Poetry, V. Stair-like Parallelism."
[29] 10, New Advent Encyclopedia. "Parallelism, Hebrew Poetry, VI. Emblematic Parallelism."
[30] 9, Bullock, paragraph 1, page 32.
[31] 10, New Advent Encyclopedia. "Parallelism, Hebrew Poetry."
[32] 9, Bullock, paragraph 2, page 32.
[33] 9, Bullock, paragraph 4, page 32-33.
[34] 9, Bullock, paragraph 1, page 33.

IV. THE IDENTITY OF THE HUMAN AUTHOR OF PSALM 100

David is called in I SAMUEL 23:1 "the sweet psalmist of Israel." [35] Many of The PSALMS are attributed to David directly in their titles in Holy Scripture, 58 being labeled "A Psalm of David." [36] Others that are not labeled so are attributed to David elsewhere in The Bible. [37] Moses is recorded as the author of PSALM 90 in the title, "A Prayer of Moses the man of GOD…" [38] Elsewhere in Holy Scripture it is recorded that Asaph authored some of The PSALMS. [39] PSALM 137 is uniquely associated with the Babylonian exile, opening with this lament: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion." [40]

C. Hassell Bullock gives the known authorship of 101 of the 150 PSALMS as follows: 73 by David; 12 by Asaph; 11 by the Sons of Korah; 2 by Solomon; 1 by Moses; 1 by Herman the Ezrahite; 1 by Ethan the Ezrahite. [41] The well known PSALM 100 is for example not amoung them.

And although the text of PSALM 100 does not itself disclose the identity of the human author to us, we may discern that he was a man whose heart held great faith in GOD and whose soul was filled with much thankful joy towards The Creator. Of the writer of PSALM 100, John Calvin observes from the title - "A PSALM of praise" [42] - that "The Psalmist, in an especial manner, invites believers to [join him to] praise GOD, because He has chosen them to be His people, and has taken them under His care!" [43]

V. A BRIEF EXEGESIS OF PSALM 100 FROM THE HEBREW TEXT

PSALM 100:1 - Key words: "shout for joy." The King James Version of PSALM 100:1 gives us, "Make a joyful noise unto The LORD, all ye lands." [44] And from The Biblia Hebreica Stuttgartensia: [45]

מִזְמוֹר לְתוֹדָה [46]הָרִיעוּ ׳לַיהוָה כָל־הָאָרֶץ׃

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[35] 1, KJV, I SAMUEL 23:1.

[36] 1, A search in The KJV of The PSALMS in Bible Works 6 for the phrase "A Psalm of David" yields by my count 58 PSALMS so titled, out of the 150 PSALMS of Holy Scripture.

[37] 1, In The KJV, ACTS 4:25 reads, "Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?" The KJV of PSALM 2, though not labeled as authored by David, opens in verse 1, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?"

[38] 1, KJV, PSALM 90:1.

[39] 1, KJV, II CHRONICLES 29:30, "Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto The LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer…"

[40] 1, KJV, PSALM 137:1.

[41] 9, Bullock, Table "The Authorship, Dedication, and Collection of The PSALMS," page 119.

[42] 1, KJV, PSALM 100:1. Title of This PSALM given in the text.

[43] 2, Calvin's Commentaries, Volume VI, PSALM C, "The title of this PSALM may serve for a summary of its contents…," page 83.

[44] 1, KJV, PSALM 100:1.

[45] 4, BHS, PSALM 100:1.

MEZMOR LETODAH HARIY"U LAYHVAH KAL-HA'ARETS. Or more literally, "A melody for thanksgiving: You all cause to shout for joy to JEHOVAH, all the earth!"

       PSALM 100:2 - Key words: "serve, gladness, singing." The King James Version of PSALM 100:2 gives us, "Serve The LORD with gladness: come before His Presence with singing." [47] And The Biblia Hebreica Stuttgartensia: [48]

[52]עִבְד֣וּ אֶת־יְהוָ֣ה [51]בְּשִׂמְחָ֑ה [50]בֹּ֥אוּ לְ֝פָנָ֗יו [49]בִּרְנָנָֽה׃

"IVDU 'ET-HASHEM BESIMCHAH BO'U LEFANAYN BIRNANAH. Or more literally, "You all serve to JEHOVAH in joy! You all come in the face in a ringing cry of exaltation!"

       PSALM 100:3 – Key words: "made, sheep, pasture." The King James Version of PSALM 100:3 gives us, "Know ye that The LORD He is GOD: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture." [53] And from The Biblia Hebreica Stuttgartensia: [54]

[57]דְּע֗וּ כִּֽי־יְהוָה֮ ה֤וּא אֱלֹ֫הִ֥ים הֽוּא־[56]עָ֭שָׂנוּ [55]וְלֹ֣א אֲנַ֑חְנוּעַמּ֥וֹ וְצֹ֝אן מַרְעִיתֽוֹ׃

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[46] 5, Whittaker's R-BDB Lexicon, B9263 RU"AH רוּעַ vb. Hiph. 1. raise a shout. 2. give a blast with clarion or horn -- 1. shout a war-cry, or alarm of battle. 2. sound a signal for war or march; c. עַל against. 3. shout in triumph over enemies: c. עַ; abs. 4. shout in applause: abs. 5. shout with religious impulse: so in public worship with music and sacrifice, c. לְ, to God; in joy. 6. cry out in distress… Hiphil imperative masculine plural, page 929.

[47] 1, KJV, PSALM 100:2.

[48] 4, BHS, PSALM 100:2.

[49] 5, Whittaker's R-BDB Lexicon, B9437 RENANAH רְנָנָה n.f. a ringing cry of joy; exultation. Noun common feminine singular absolute, page 943.

[50] 5, Whittaker's R-BDB Lexicon, B1059 BO' בּוֹא vb. come in, come, go in, go -- Qal 1. come in… b. of taking part in worship of congregation; or entering into tabernacle for priestly service. c. of entering on official duty. d. of bride coming into her husband's house… Qal imperative masculine plural, page 97.

[51] 5, Whittaker's R-BDB Lexicon, B9764 SHIMCHAH שִׂמְחָה n.f. joy, gladness, mirth -- 1. mirth, gladness, e.g. in festivity; joy of heart, cf. (of inward joy); = gaiety, pleasure, of foolish; malicious joy… 2. religious: … make a (sacred) festivity; …joy of heart… 4. glad result, happy issue. Noun common feminine singular absolute, page 970.

[52] 5, Whittaker's R-BDB Lexicon, B6927 "AVAD עָבַד vb. work, serve -- Qal 1. labour, work, do work… 2. work for another, serve him by labour… 3. . serve as subjects:… 4. serve God… serve with peace-offering and grain-offering… 5. serve - with Levitical service…, Qal imperative masculine plural, page 712.

[53] 1, KJV, PSALM 100:3.

[54] 4, BHS, PSALM 100:3.

[55] 4, The BHS gives the alternate form of this word as וְלֹו

[56] 5, Whittaker's R-BDB Lexicon, B7712 "ASAH עָשָׂה vb. do, make -- Qal I. 1. do… Verb qal perfect 3rd person masculine singular suffix 1st person common plural, page 793.

DE"U KIY-HASHEM HU' 'ELOHIYM HU'-"ASANU VELO' 'ANACHNU "AMMO VETS"ON MAR"IYTO. Or more literally, "You all know that The LORD He [is] GOD. He makes us, and not we. [We are the] people of Him. And [we are the] flock [of the] shepherding of Him!"

PSALM 100:4 – Key words: "thanksgiving, praise, thankful, bless His Name." The King James Version of PSALM 100:4 gives us, "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His Name." [58] And from The Biblia Hebreica Stuttgartensia: [59]

[64]בֹּ֤אוּ שְׁעָרָ֨יו ׀ [63]בְּתוֹדָ֗ה חֲצֵרֹתָ֥יו [62]בִּתְהִלָּ֗ה [61]הֽוֹדוּ־ל֝֗וֹ [60]בָּרֲכ֥וּ שְׁמֽוֹ׃

BO'U SHE"ARAYN BETODAH CHATSROTAYN BITHILLAH HODU-LO BARACHU SHEMO. Or more literally, "You all come in [to] the gate of Him with thanksgiving, in[to] His courts with praise! You all cause to give thanks to Him! You all bless [The] Name of Him!"

PSALM 100:5 – Key words: "good, mercy, truth." The King James Version of PSALM 100:5 gives us, "For The LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations." [65] And from The Biblia Hebreica Stuttgartensia: [66]

[69]כִּי־ט֣וֹב יְֽהֹוָה֮ לְעוֹלָ֪ם [68]חַ֫סְדּ֥וֹ וְעַד־דֹּ֥ר וָדֹ֗ר [67]אֱמוּנָתֽוֹ׃

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[57] 5, Whittaker's R-BDB Lexicon, B3843 YADA" יָדַע vb. know -- Qal 1. a. know, learn to know, good and evil… way to wisdom… Qal imperative masculine plural, page 393.

[58] 1, KJV, PSALM 100:4.

[59] 4, BHS, PSALM 100:4.

[60] 5, Whittaker's R-BDB Lexicon, B1475 BARAH בָּרַךְ vb. kneel, bless -- …Pi. 1. bless God, adore with bended knees… verb piel imperative masculine plural, page 138.

[61] 5, Whittaker's R-BDB Lexicon, B3832 YADAH יָדָה vb. throw, cast …Hiph. 1. give thanks, laud, praise… …of the ritual worship. 2. confess, a. the name of God. b. confessing and forsaking (his transgressions)... Verb hiphil imperative masculine plural… particle preposition suffix 3rd person masculine singular, page 392.

[62] 5, Whittaker's R-BDB Lexicon, B2429 TEHILLAH תְּהִלָּה n.f. praise, song of praise -- 1. praise, adoration, thanksgiving, paid to… 2. the act of general, public, praise. 3. praise-song, as title… Noun common feminine singular absolute, page 239.

[63] 5, Whittaker's R-BDB Lexicon, B3835 TODAH תּוֹדָה – noun – thanksgiving: 1. give praise to…, praise rendered by acknowledging and abandoning sin. 2. thanksgiving in songs of liturgical worship. 3. thanksgiving choir, procession, line, company. 4. thank-offering.   Noun common feminine singular absolute, page 392.

[64] 5, Whittaker's R-BDB Lexicon, B1059 BO' בּוֹא vb. come in, come, go in, go -- Qal 1. come in… Qal imperative masculine plural, page 97.

[65] 1, KJV, PSALM 100:5.

[66] 4, BHS, PSALM 100:5.

[67] 5, Whittaker's Revised BDB Hebrew Lexicon, page 53, B597 'EMUNAH אֱמוּנָה - n.f. firmness, steadfastness, fidelity.

KIY-TOV YEHVAH, LE"OLAM CHASEDO, VE"AD-DOR VADOR 'EMUNATO.
Or more literally, "Because good [is] The LORD! Belonging to antiquity [is] the mercy
of Him! And as far as the period and the generation [is] the steadfastness of Him!"

VI. POETIC RHYME AND RHYTHM OF PSALM 100 IN THE HEBREW TEXT

       To determine the rhyme and rhythm of The PSALMS, it is necessary to read and
speak them in their original Hebrew. Here we may look for repeating consonant and
vowel patterns which, designed to enhance the beauty and intensity of the message, give
us a sense of the meter of the text. This is generally called "alliteration, which is "…the
use of the same or similar sounds at the beginning of words or syllables and in stressed
positions." [70] I see and hear such accents which use many repeating vowel sounds in The
Hebrew Text.

       From a brief study of The Text in English for patterns of Hebrew poetry, I offer
this division, which is based on the repeating presence of units of synonymous
parallelism. [71] Unit [a] is synonymous parallelism to [a'] and [a"]; Unit [b] is
synonymous parallelism to [b'] and [b"]; etc:

0 [a] A PSALM [b] of praise.
1 [a'] Make a joyful noise unto The LORD, [b'] all ye lands.
2 [a"] Serve The LORD with gladness: [b"] come before His Presence with singing.
3 [c] Know ye that The LORD   [d] He is GOD:
    [c'] it is He that hath made us,   [d'] and not we ourselves;
    [c"] we are His people, [d"] and the sheep of His pasture.
4 [e] Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, [f] and into His courts with praise:
    [e'] be thankful unto Him, [f"] and bless His Name.
5 [e"] For The LORD is good; [f'"] His mercy is everlasting;
    [e'"] and His truth endureth [f""] to all generations.

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[68] 5, Whittaker's Revised BDB Hebrew Lexicon, page 338, B3297 CHESED חֶסֶד n.m. goodness,
kindness of GOD.

[69] 5, Whittaker's Revised BDB Hebrew Lexicon, page 373, B3664 TOV טוֹב adj. - pleasant, agreeable,
good, kind, ethical, right [as characteristics of GOD].

[70] 9, Bullock, paragraph 2, page 37. Alliteration may take the form of stress upon common consonants,
called "consonance," or upon vowels, called "assonance." [paragraphs 2, 3]

[71] 1, KJV, PSALM 100:1-5.

VII. POETIC UNITS OF PSALM 100 IN THE HEBREW TEXT

We may transfer to The Hebrew Text this same system of division of units based on synonymous parallelism, which we observed in The King James Version Text: [72]

[a]מִזְמוֹר [b] לְתוֹדָה [1]

[a']הָרִיעוּ לַיהוָה [b']כָּל־הָאָרֶץ:

[a"]עִבְדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה [b"] בְּשִׂמְחָה בֹּאוּ לְפָנָיו בִּרְנָנָה: [2]

[c]דְּעוּ כִּי־יְהוָה [d]הוּא אֱלֹהִים [3]

[c']הוּא־עָשָׂנוּ [d']וְלֹא אֲנַחְנוּ

[c"]עַמּוֹ [d"]וְצֹאן מַרְעִיתוֹ:

[e]בֹּאוּ שְׁעָרָיו׀ בְּתוֹדָה [f] חֲצֵרֹתָיו בִּתְהִלָּה [4]

[e']הוֹדוּ־לוֹ [f']בָּרֲכוּ שְׁמוֹ:

[g]כִּי־טוֹב יְהוָה [h] לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ [5]

[g']וְעַד־דֹּר וָדֹר [h']אֱמוּנָתוֹ:

When we transliterate The Hebrew Text with those same units based on synonymous parallelism, and then read and speak it out loud, we find that repeating patterns of sounds do several things: First, they give The Hebrew Text a certain rhyme and rhythm. Second, the repeating patterns of word and sound, and the rhyme and rhythm they produce, revolve around the units of synonymous parallelism which we have identified. They give The Hebrew a certain heartfelt passion and artistic emphasis which we could not discern in The English Text: [73]

0 [a] MEZMOR [b] LETODAH
1 [a'] HARIY"U LAYHVAH [b'] KAL-HA'ARETS.
2 [a"] "IVDU 'ET-YEHVAH BESIMCHAH [b"] BO'U LEFANAYN BIRNANAH.
3 [c] DE"U KIY-YEHVAH [d] HU' 'ELOHIYM
    [c'] HU'-"ASANU [d'] VELO' 'ANACHNU
    [c"] "AMMO [d"] VETS"ON MAR"IYTO.
4 [e] BO'U SHE"ARAYN BETODAH [f] CHATSROTAYN BITHILLAH
    [e'] HODU-LO [f'] BARACHU SHEMO.
5 [g] KIY-TOV YEHVAH [h] LE"OLAM CHASEDO
    [g'] VE"AD-DOR VADOR [h'] 'EMUNATO.

If we next rewrite the transliterated Text, using small case letters for unaccented sounds and capital letters for accented sounds, we may observe these repeating word and sound patterns within lines and between lines more clearly. These repeating sounds suggest where the accent is to be placed and how the rhyme and rhythm of The PSALM might function. I offer the following:

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[72] 4, BHS, PSALM 100:1-5.

[73] In my transliteration, I represent the Hebrew letter aleph as ' and the letter ayin as ".

0 [a] mezMOR [b] letoDAH
1 [a'] hariy"U layhVAH [b'] kal-HA'arets.
2 [a"] "ivDU 'et-yehVAH beshimCHAH [b"] bo'U lefaNAYN birnaNAH.
3 [c] de"U kiy-yehVAH [d] HU' 'eLOhiym
   [c'] HU'-"asaNU [d'] veLO' 'anachNU
   [c"] "amMO [d"] vets"ON mar"iyTO.
4 [e] BO'u she"aRAYN betoDAH [f] chatsroTAYN bithilLAH
   [e'] HOdu-LO [f'] baraCHU sheMO.
5 [g] kiy-TOV yehVAH [h] le"Olam CHAseDO
   [g'] ve"ad-DOR vaDOR [h'] 'emunaTO.

VIII. IN CONCLUSION

        Many PSALMS state their purpose in their titles, which was often presumably the public liturgical worship of The Almighty in ancient Israel. Many of the PSALMS state their human authorship as well, a large number of which were written by King David. We have seen that theologians offer various schemes of dividing The PSALMS, some based on content, others based on genre, and still others based on their possible historical settings and purposes.

        We have visited several common characteristics of Hebrew poetry. A hallmark of Hebrew poetry is parallelism, in which the meaning of one unit of text is amplified in various ways in following units of text. Other qualities of Hebrew poetry, lost to us in translations into our own modern languages, are evident only in the reading and speaking of The Hebrew text. We have thus briefly focused on The Hebrew Text of PSALM 100, looking and listening for rhyme and rhythm in the psalmist's native tongue.

        The PSALMS are part of GOD's inspired and perfect Special Revelation – The Holy Scriptures – to man. As such, any study of their structure must serve, not as an end in itself, but only to help us draw closer to The LORD. The great depths of richness of The PSALMS – which transcends the ages, languages, national borders and circumstances of men - speak to all hearts, souls and minds first because They are inspired Words of The HOLY SPIRIT, and second because they were written by pious men who loved The Almighty with every fiber of their being. O Lord JESUS CHRIST, may we, in our prayerful study and contemplation of The PSALMS, be so brought closer to Thee!" In The Name of GOD The Father, and The Son, and The Holy Ghost, AMEN!

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