



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

Psalm 13

Phase 1: ORAL



Step 1: Listen

Listening to a guide translation and versions of the psalm

There are two guide translations in Appendix A:

1. **Hebrew-mirror** - copied from the Exegetical Layout and adjusted for minimal readability,
2. **Hebrew-tight** - the literal, type 1 corresponding (but more readable) translation, exegetically the same as Hebrew-mirror.

Pre-Activity (Optional): Can you think of a poem or a song in your language of someone who is very despondent or depressed? Discuss how this type of lament poetry is viewed in your culture. Is it appropriate or acceptable in your language?

Activity: Read the Hebrew-mirror and the Hebrew tight version in Appendix A. One reader per translation or one reader for all translations (as skills permit). Others to listen with closed books. Consider 'how to listen' – posture? with responses? in silence?



Step 2: Familiarise

Explaining and discussing the meaning and beauty of the psalm

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE PSALM

- What do you like about the psalm?
- What do you find difficult?
- **How does the psalm make you feel?**
- Which verse do you find particularly important in this psalm?
- What does this psalm teach you about the LORD? What is the LORD like?
- What is repeated a lot in this psalm?



STEP 1



STEP 6



STEP 2



STEP 7



STEP 3



STEP 8



STEP 4



STEP 9



STEP 5



STEP 10



APP. A



APP. B

CREATIVE RESPONSES

Discuss:

- What question is repeated over and over? How does it make you feel? When have you felt like asking it?

Creative activity: how would you, in your own poetry, express this emotion of almost despair? Maybe try several different ways, in poetry, to say the same plea of desperation and discuss which form will work best.

ENGAGING WITH THE WHOLE PSALM

Address the following topics:

- *The participants in the psalm, the different “speakers” and “audiences”*
- *The theme and flow of the psalm*
- *The peak or peaks of the psalm*
- *The patterns of images, like metaphors, if relevant*
- *The genre and purpose of the psalm*
- *The historical background and the context of the psalm, the story behind the psalm, if relevant*
- *Key poetic features of the psalm, but only those relevant to the big picture*

Activity: Imagine the setting. What do you think caused David to write this poem?

Activity: Where do you think is the peak or the climax of the psalm? [Answer: verse 3]

Activity: Go through each line and note the emotion of each line. Then try to express them through gestures or postures.

- Why did he want to say what he said in the psalm? What motivated him to say it?
- What did the poet want to achieve? Or hoping to achieve for himself or for his audience? Psalmist’s purpose with composing this psalm is complex. Only self-expression, if it is depression that he is struggling with? Or teaching by example how depression should be handled? We don’t know enough...
- In verses 5-6, three beautiful, faith-filled things are said about Yahweh. What are they?
- Why did he want to say what he said in the psalm? What motivated him to say it? What triggered the psalmist to compose it? What is the story behind this psalm?

Historical setting of this psalm

The original setting is not altogether clear, but we have some clues. It is a Psalm of David, of whom we have many other laments.

In this psalm however, it may very well be that the darkness the psalmist is experiencing in the first three verses is a case of spiritual depression. Postponed fulfilment of a certain hope of which he has certainty of the promise, with the last two verses regaining that hope that remains unfulfilled nevertheless. The climax of the psalm is the three imperatives of verse 4:



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. A



APP. B

“Notice me, answer me, give light to my eyes”. That light in his eyes, a renewed hope, happens in verses 5-6.

The feeling of being cut off from the Lord, the *“struggling with his soul”* of verse 2, the sorrow, building up to depression being his enemy about to completely overcoming him, reinforce the idea of spiritual depression.

BACKGROUND IDEAS

- The question "How long?" signals lament. It is not really a question, but rather, in speech act terms, an expressive. Similar expressions are known from ancient Mesopotamia, often in prayers for healing.
- Sickness was viewed as just as dire a situation as a battle wound, brought on by men's curses and overcome by YHWH's compassion.
- The expression "to hide one's face" is used several times in the Psalms, in the sense of turning a blind eye to the suffering of the innocent (Pss 10:11; 13:2; 22:25; 27:9; 30:8; 44:25; 51:11; 69:18; 88:15; 102:3; 104:29 (obj.: animals); 143:7).
- YHWH promised to David that:
 - he would one day be king (1 Sam 16:1, 12),
 - his house and kingdom would be established forever (2 Sam 7:16).

UNLOCKING SOME OF THE BIG PICTURE OBSTACLES TO THE PSALM

- Do you often hear prayers of complaint like this? What is such a complaint about? A death? Or a calamity? Is it disrespectful to speak to God this way? Or in your culture, would it be acceptable to address the Supreme Being with such a challenge, by four times repeating "how long?"
- It is important to understand the difference between what the psalmists do and what the Israelites did in the wilderness. Does their complaining move them away from God in rebellion, or towards God in prayer for help?

Activity: Who can be these *“enemies”*? There are several options:

- 1) enemy nations at war with him,
- 2) local enemies in his royal court and family,
- 3) spiritual enemies like demonic forces, or
- 4) emotional enemies like despondency or even spiritual depression. Which ones of these seems the most likely?

Activity: now do an emotional analysis of Psalm 13. List the emotions of each verse line.

Activity: This psalm contains various instances of what can be called *“patterns of intensification”*. Can you identify them all? (How long in vv1-2, enemies going from bad to worse in v4, the three petitions in v3, the final two verses)



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

SEGMENTATION OF THE PSALM

Psalm 13 has three stanzas, and develops in the following way:

vv 1-2 **Sharp complaint.** Lamenting the fact that Yahweh delays: four “how long?” cries

vv 3-4 **Vigorous plea.** A cry for help, and three reasons what the enemies will say if help is not forthcoming

vv 5-6 **Joyous confidence.** “*but as for me*” Four expressions of trust in Yahweh

FINAL SUMMING UP

To summarise the Psalm, discuss the following questions:

- In summary, what is the main point/message of the psalm?
The psalm is despairing because of suffering and feeling distant from the LORD. But there is hope of salvation.
- What does this Psalm teach you about the LORD?
The LORD can change these despondent moods, He gives hope.
- How could your church (or you) use this psalm?
The church can help people who are despondent by going through this psalm. Depressed people can use these same words in prayer.
- What heading or title would the group suggest for this psalm?
“How long, o Lord!”



Step 3: Internalise

Absorbing the big picture of the psalm

In this section we look at the whole psalm so that we can retell the message of the entire psalm. This is not an attempt to memorize the psalm, but to be able to understand the whole message and to express it in the target language. The facilitator should do at least the first two activities and consider doing the third activity, if desired.

CREATIVE RESPONSES

Internalisation Activity 1: Skits—act out what’s happening in the set. Encourage them to use facial expressions, body language, motions, movement to try to experience the emotions and the



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. A



APP. B

sequence of events. They can also use this opportunity to try out how they will say any dialogue (direct speech) in the set.

Internalisation Activity 2: The key word method: give a key word or a macroword, or maybe a short phrase, for each verse line or each parallelism. Then try to recite all the key words in order. Do it as a group first, each one calling out what they remember. Then let one or two people recite the list, in order.

Internalisation Activity 3: The gesture method: this can follow the key word method. For each verse line or verse, make a fitting gesture, based on the key word or key phrase. Do it all in order again.

Alternatively,

Internalisation Activity 3: The storyboard method: draw pictures of each event in the psalm as they unfold.



Step 4: Compose

Crafting a song of the psalm

Once the artist-translators have sufficiently internalised the psalm in the workshop setting, compose a song, poem, rap, chant, or prayer to capture as much of the psalm as possible. This could be a further refinement of a song, if that was done in Step 3.

Activity: Participants are to choose a style or genre that is relevant for the psalm, and to set the whole psalm or sections to a rhythm or music.

Activity: Make a recording of the composition(s).



Step 5: Draft

Translating stanza-by-stanza

To take full advantage of the oral form, avoid reverting to written Biblical text at this point. Divide into smaller groups and let one in each group read through guide translation #2: Hebrew-tight (or play a recording) while others translate. The oral draft can at that point be recorded and/or immediately written down (Step 6 merged with Step 5).

Activity: Have a look in the poems of your language and look for instances where there is a strange word-order, not the usual. Sometimes it would work to use some unusual word-order in your



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

language as well. Experiment a bit with different word-orders and see what sounds the most beautiful, the most poetic.

STANZA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Often it speeds the work to have different groups do different stanzas. If you do this, make sure you all hear the psalm from top to bottom and to make suggestions to other groups when you come together...

Stanza 1: Verse 1-2 - Sharp complaint

1 Until when, YHWH, will you forget me?
Forever?

Until when will you hide your face from
me?

2 Until when will I set counsels in my whole
being,

sorrow in my heart by day.

Until-when will my enemy be lifted up against
me?

1 How long, O LORD? Will you forget me
forever?

How long will you hide your face from
me?

2 How long must I have anxiety in my being,
have sorrow in my heart all the day?

How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

Discuss:

- How will it work in the poetry of your language, this four-fold repetition of “*how long*”? They are rhetorical questions expressing the lament that the desperate situation has now gone on far too long.
- Discuss where in the line should the ‘**how long**’ question words be, at the beginning, at the end, or maybe somewhere in the middle? What position in the line will be comfortable for you to place the question word/phrase, if that is different from Hebrew/English?
- Do an additional exercise by finding out in what way you can ask the simple question ‘*how long, O Lord*’ that opens the psalm, without having to say *how long till what*.
- There is a pattern of growing intensity in verses 1 and 2. Can you recognise the pattern in this first stanza? Each “*how long*” seems to be more intense.

Creative activity: in the collection of your own poetry, examine them and look for something similar, of question words repeated in this way. Does your collection has any examples of this?

- Discuss the meaning of the line, How long must I have anxiety in my soul? (The Hebrew literally has will I set counsels in my soul). Look at other translations, but then try a few options to say this in a poem. How would you say it? Are there idioms in your language to play with here?

Creative activity: Make a poetic oral translation of these verses and record it.



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. A



APP. B

Stanza 2: Verses 3-4: Vigorous plea

3 Pay attention, answer me, YHWH my God;
give my eyes light.

If not, I would sleep the death.

4 If not, my enemy says "I have defeated him",
My foes they rejoice that I totter.

3 Pay attention, answer me, O Lord my God;
give light to my eyes.

If not, I will sleep the sleep of death.

4 If not, my enemy will say, "I have defeated
him,"
my foes will rejoice because I totter.

Discuss:

- In verse 3 there is the plea "*consider and answer me, O YHWH my God*". Discuss here: 1) would you put the vocative "O YHWH my God" first or last in the verse line?
- Discuss what God should *consider* before answering.
- The two "*lest/if not*". There is actually a third line, where the "*lest/if not*" is implied. Can you find it? How would you translate it? Would you repeat the "*if not*" where it has been only implied?

Creative activity: consider starting with all three *lest*'s, reduce it to two, reduce to one, and find out which has the best sense and impact to them. Then ask yourselves: How does it sound? Which do you like best? He pictures what could potentially happen if the Lord does not answer the pleas.

- What changes in verse 3, after the cries of "*how long*"?
- In verses 3-4 the psalmist utters a desperate plea for help. He uses three verbs. List these three verbs and discuss them. And then, consider the *order* they are in. Can they be in a different order?
- "*light to my eyes*" means this idiom in reference to a God-given joy in living, to health and well-being at a spiritual as well as a physical level. Together, in your own language, look for an idiom about 'eyes', or a reference to brightness or to light, which might give the same sort of idea. Play around here. Which idioms in your language do you have that could be used here? Try a few.
- In verses 3-4 the poet gives strong reasons for the Lord to come and intervene. He presents three reasons, two of which start with "*if not, lest*". The third *lest* is implicit in the Hebrew, and left implied in most translations, although it's spelt out in the ESV and in various forms in LEB, GNB, NLT etc. What are these three consequences the psalmist foresees? Do you agree with him?
- This psalm contains some complex sayings, like "*I take counsel with my soul*" (verse 2) and "*sleep the sleep of death*" Compare other translation versions. NIV has "*I wrestle with my thoughts*" (verse 2). What do these expressions mean to you? Discuss them in your group.
- The shift of the theme from complaint and pleading to thanksgiving and praise in verse 5 is stark and unexpected. How do you think the last stanza (vv 5-6) of trust and praise relates to the first two stanzas of despair and pleading? Discuss this in your group, taking your time. This is important.
- Why do you think the poet said that he is going to die unless Yahweh answers him? This is serious to say that he is going to die. Or is it just over-stating something, exaggerating?
- What does it mean to be *shaken*? Afraid? Cold? About to topple over? How would you say that in your language?



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

- the figurative statement, “*sleep the (sleep of) death*”. What does it mean to you? And how can you express this in the poetry of your language?

Creative activity: Make a poetic oral translation of these verses and record it.

Stanza 3: Verses 5-6: Joyous confidence

5 But I, in your HESED I have trusted,
rejoice my heart in your salvation.
6 Let me sing to YHWH,
for he has dealt abundantly with me.

5 But as for me, in your covenant love I have
trusted;
my heart will rejoice in your salvation.
6 I will sing to the LORD,
because he has dealt bountifully with
me.

Discuss:

- In verse 5, the mood of the psalm changes. At first it was almost despair, a crisis. What is happening now?
- It might be worth asking the participants to explore together whether they can find in their own language an idiom about ‘eyes’, or a reference to brightness or to light, which might give the same sort of idea.
- How will you best express this shift from despair and pleading to praise in a poem of your language?
- I rejoice in your salvation* means I rejoice because you saved me. However, *save* has a special meaning: it does not in the first place mean eternal salvation, but being vindicated, being restored, being in a place where everything has been put right, where there is *shalom* (peace).

Creative activity: try a few different formats, maybe two or even three different ways to express this shift in the psalm in your own oral poetry

- There is a pattern of intensification in this stanza, from the psalmist *trusting* to *rejoicing* to *singing*. Discuss how you will express this poetically in your language. Would it help to put all three verbs at the end of their lines, or at the beginning of their lines? Maybe there is some other order of words and phrases you would want to experiment and play with.

Creative activity: After discussing this pattern of intensification, try a few different ways to bring out this poetic device in your language.

- The reason for all the confidence is given right at the end of the psalm: *for he has dealt bountifully with me*. Discuss if this reason for his confidence should be in the beginning or the end of the stanza.
- In the middle of this last stanza*, there is a shift from the 2nd Person Singular “you”, God being addressed, to 3rd Person Singular, “he”, describing, praising God, celebrating. this shift from the 2nd Person to the 3rd Person in the middle of a stanza is quite unique to Hebrew poetry. Skim your poems in your local poetry and look for similar instances.



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. A



APP. B

Creative activity: as you orally translate this stanza, notice how you handle this transition from 2nd to 3rd person. Does it sound odd, or strange? How do you think this can be handled best in your poetry?

Creative activity: Make a poetic oral translation of these verses and record it.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Activities:

- 1) Listen again to the recordings of each verse/section.
- 2) Think about how to use ideas from the previous creative activities, and try to include the different ideas you've had so far.
- 3) Make a poetic oral representation of the complete psalm and then record it.

Phase 2: TEXT



Step 6: Transcribe

Make a written draft

Activity: Transcribe the recordings of each section/stanza onto paper or a computer.

Before moving on to the exegetical check, check the transcribed draft for the following. This should be done as a whole group, looking at the psalm projected onto a screen or wall. It is up to the facilitator to make this step move on at a good pace, but getting this out of the way at the beginning will help the exegetical and poetical checks that follow to stay focused on essential matters.

1. **Versification:** put the verse numbers into the psalm.
2. Check that the number of the psalm, and any **superscription**, are in place at the top. (Superscriptions are often left out completely according to team policy, but they are recommended to be put in the written text but not the song.)
3. Put in the **stanza breaks** (blank lines usually).
4. Correct the **punctuation**, in particular finding out where the sentences should end. Different groups use different approaches. Our recommendation is to use capital letters only for the beginning of sentences, not for the beginning of each poetic line.
5. Correct the **spelling**. You may find that there is a lot of discussion over this. The group needs to have consistency but also needs to abide by any government guidelines.
6. Raise any questions you have about the **back translation** at this point. The back translation just needs to be comprehensible; it does not need spell checks etc. You, the facilitator, are



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

the only person who needs it. However, without a good back translation you cannot understand what is going on. As a bonus, at least a couple of exegetical questions you've prepared usually turn out to be unnecessary after this step.

7. Check the **line divisions** (this refers to how the power is broken up into lines and where to make those breaks).



Step 7: Contents Check

Checking exegetical faithfulness

The purpose of this step is to check the content of your draft for faithfulness and trustworthiness as you compare it to the guide translations found in Appendix A and details in Appendix B.

Activity: Review the draft translation in detail, using the oral recording of Step 5 or the transcription of Step 6. Do an exegetical check by comparing the draft with the guide translations given in Appendix A and the exegetical layout in Appendix B and adjust the text as necessary.

EXEGETICAL CHECKLIST

Give special attention to:

- The four-times repetition of “how long”
- v2 counsels of my soul
- v3 the light to my eyes
- v3 sleep the sleep of death
- vv3-4 the “if not” repetition is important and need to be repeated carefully
- Check if HESED is consistently translated with the rest of the Psalter and the OT.
- Check if salvation is consistently translated
- v6 he dealt bountifully with me



Step 8: Poetry Check

Compare and weigh the poetic features

Attention now needs to be given to the poetic devices found in the Hebrew, as well as poetic devices found in the receptor language that might not have been used in the Hebrew text (or might have served a different function).

Activity: Consider the poetic features of your translation. Compare also the compositions from Step 4 with the draft. See if there are any features from the compositions that can be used in the final official version.



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

POETIC CHECKLIST

Give special attention to:

- Idioms for v3 maybe?
- The parallelism of v4
- The tottering/shaken lends itself for an idiom
- Rhyme
- Rhythm and syllable count
- Figures of speech, like metaphors
- Ideophones?



Step 9: Finalise

Preparing the final version of an authenticated translation

Preparation of the final version which will serve as an authorized translation, that in turn will serve as the basis for performing the psalm in the community.

Activity: Check the spelling of your transcription.

Activity: Recheck the punctuation, for instance whether there are appropriate commas for pauses, the in-setting, and the layout of paragraphs to represent stanza segmentation.

Activity: Recheck the line divisions of your transcription and recheck the essential accuracy of the back translation (not worrying about spelling).

Activity: In AVTT, open a new passage for Step 9 and make a blank recording (a second or two without any speech). This will open transcription and back translation boxes in that passage. Copy the transcription and the back translation of your translation into the new step. This will be the place you make changes as you go through Steps 7 and 8 and edit your translation. The performances will be based on this version.

Activity: Copy the final written text into Paratext.



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B

Phase 3: PERFORMANCE



Step 10: Perform

Performing the psalm in your community

Introduction to the creative performances. Different groups can do different performances.

Activity: Complete a transcript and back translation for the lyrics of any song created by the team to be checked before recording.

FINAL CHECKLIST

In the end of each psalm, there should ideally be four products:

1. Transcription: An authorized, authenticated, or officially written draft in AVTT and Paratext.
2. Dramatic Reading: A recording of a dramatic reading or recitation of the whole psalm, using the authenticated version word-for-word, recorded in AVTT.
3. Whole Psalm Performance: A recording of a performance of the whole psalm, using the entire authenticated version but with freedom to adapt it for authentic performance, including poetic and dramatic features beyond the authenticated version, recorded in AVTT.
4. Song or Hymn: A recording of a performance of part of the psalm including the main idea of the psalm (this could be from v 2 as mentioned in Psalm-specific ideas above), in the form of a song or a hymn, with or without drama, with freedom to adapt it for authentic performance and to make it easy to sing and remember, recorded in AVTT. An improved version of the Step 4 composition could be used here.
5. Chorus: A recording of a short chorus of a main verse of the psalm. Something catchy and highly memorable, recorded in AVTT.



STEP 1



STEP 6



STEP 2



STEP 7



STEP 3



STEP 8



STEP 4



STEP 9



STEP 5



STEP 10



APP. A



APP. B



Appendix A: Guide Translations

Guide Translation #1 (Hebrew-mirror)

To the choirmaster, psalm to David.

1 **Until when**, YHWH, will you forget me?
Forever?

Until when will you hide your face from me?

2 **Until when** will I set counsels in my whole
being,
sorrow in my heart by day.

Until-when will my enemy be lifted up against
me?

3 Pay attention, answer me, YHWH my God;
give my eyes light.

If not, I would sleep the death.

4 If not, my enemy says "I have defeated him",
My foes they rejoice that I totter.

5 But **I, in your HESED** I have trusted,
rejoice my heart in your salvation.

6 Let me sing to YHWH,
for he has dealt abundantly with me.

Guide Translation #2 (Hebrew-tight)

To the choirmaster, a psalm of David.

1 How long, O LORD? Will you forget me
forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

2 How long must I have anxiety in my being,
have sorrow in my heart all the day?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

3 Pay attention, answer me, O Lord my God;
give light to my eyes.

If not, I will sleep the sleep of death.

4 If not, my enemy will say, "I have defeated
him,"
my foes will rejoice because I totter.

5 But as for me, in your covenant love I have
trusted;
my heart will rejoice in your salvation.

6 I will sing to the LORD,
because he has dealt bountifully with
me.





STEP 1



STEP 6



STEP 2



STEP 7



STEP 3



STEP 8



STEP 4



STEP 9



STEP 5



STEP 10



APP. A



APP. B



Appendix B: Exegetical Layout

This psalm flows from acute complaint (vv.1-2) to vigorous plea (vv.3-4) and then to joyful declaration of confidence (vv.5-6). Even the complaint is based on YHWH's covenant commitment: his help is desperately late to arrive, but David can complain because help is promised. Note that the sections are not of equal length. The first section is drawn out with more words, enacting the sense of "How long?".

SUGGESTED HEADING

A prayer pleading for help

Coding for TAM Verbs and Hebrew features:

- Qatal perfective = blue
- Yiqtol imperfective = red
- Infinitive construct = purple
- Wayyiqtol waw+imperfective = pink
- Jussive/cohortative = light brown
- Imperative = brown
- Participle = green
- Weqatal = navy

לְמַנְצַח מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד	To.the.choirmaster, a.psalms of.David.
עַד-אֵנָּה יְהוָה תִּשְׁכַּחֲנִי נָצַח	1 Until-when ¹ , YHWH ² , will.you.forget.me? Forever ³ ?
עַד-אֵנָּה תִּסְתִּיר אֶת-פְּנֵיךְ מִמֶּנִּי:	Until-when will.you.hide your.face from.me ⁴ ?

¹ This barrage of four "how long?" questions is highly marked. Many languages may prefer question words at the end of clauses. "How long?" implies a **promise** has been made to do something for the person complaining and that there has now been a delay. We are not certain that a promise has been made to the person specifically, but we can at least say that the person has an expectation based on YHWH's character – that is, he trusts in YHWH's 'steadfast love' (v5). The translation should allow for this meaning, and not just be a general complaint, such as: 'you don't care what's happening to me!'

² Note that YHWH's name marks each section (1, 3, 6). It appears once in each stanza, but the occurrence in the middle (v3a) occurs together with 'my God' as well.

³ Here is NETSACH 'forever, permanently', and in v2 has YOMAM * 'day by day', thus in parallel.

⁴ "Hide your face" means 'refuse to look at me.' The complaint that YHWH is not looking at the psalmist (1) is answered by the demand to look (3).



STEP 1



STEP 6



STEP 2



STEP 7



STEP 3



STEP 8



STEP 4



STEP 9



STEP 5



STEP 10



APP. A



APP. B

עַד־אָנָה אֲשִׁית עֲצוֹת בְּנַפְשִׁי	2 Until-when will.I.set counsels ⁵ in.NEPHESH.my, ⁶
יָגוֹן בְּלִבִּי יוֹמָם	sorrow ⁷ (will be) in.heart.my by.day ⁸ ?
עַד־אָנָה יָרוּם אִיבִי עָלַי:	Until-when will.he.be.lifted.up my.enemy against.me?
הַבִּיטָה עֲנֵנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי	3 Consider ⁹ , answer.me ¹⁰ YHWH my.God
הָאֵירָה עֵינִי פֶּן־אִישָׁן הַמָּוֶת:	give.light my.eyes ¹¹ If.not-I.would.sleep the.death.
פֶּן־יֹאמַר אִיבִי יִכְלָתִיו	4 If.not-he.should.say my.enemy ¹² "I.have.prevailed.over.him", ¹³

⁵ "Councils" also means plans (AM).

⁶ "I will set councils" in my soul means 'busy myself with worrying about what to do,' or 'setting the plans before himself' (AM). Many languages will have a lively idiom for this. It leaves a picture of indecision and anxiety leading to anxiety (AM).

⁷ "Until-when" is assumed here, too.

⁸ By day: the adverbial use of a noun like this is difficult. There are a few valid options worth a footnote at least: (a) by day; (b) day to day; (c) for a day. The durative nature of the questions עַד־אָנָה probably rules out (c). Option (a) implies the anxiety is only during the day, which would be weird for the Psalms when mostly anxiety comes at night. The best option is probably (b) even though we normally would expect יוֹם וַיּוֹם as in Ps 19:2 [3].

⁹ Consider (as in NIV) means "pay attention", but it is a looking word, not a listening word, implying "look at me".

¹⁰ The two verbs "pay attention" and "answer me" have no "and" to link them, but they are linked in thought. The thinking about my problem and responding to my need go hand in hand. It is a poetic device of compactness for enhanced emotional effect.

¹¹ "Give light to my eyes" means bringing joy and revival to the person, to his face. If is not referring to death, it more likely means bringing radiance, vitality, resilience (AM). In the text translation, consider keeping the Hebrew idiom if possible (if it makes any sense). In the oral performance versions, feel free to bring out the different interpretations.

¹² He is not praying for his enemy's destruction but for his frustration (AM).

¹³ Or "prevail over".



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. A



APP. B

צָרִי יָגִילוּ בִּי אֲמוֹט:	my.foes ¹⁴ they.will.rejoice that ¹⁵ I.totter ¹⁶ .
וְאֲנִי בַחֲסֶדְךָ בָטַחְתִּי	5 But ¹⁷ .I ¹⁸ , in.your.HESED ¹⁹ I.have.trusted, ²⁰
יָגַל לִבִּי בִישׁוּעָתְךָ	it.wants.to.rejoice ²¹ my.heart in.your.salvation ²²
אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה כִּי גָמַל עָלַי:	6 Let.me.sing ²³ to.YHWH for ²⁴ he.has.dealt.abundantly ²⁵ with.me. ²⁶

¹⁴ “Lest, if not” is assumed here, too.

¹⁵ Note the contrasting phrases with כִּי (‘that, for, because’): one gives the reason for the enemy’s rejoicing (v.4), the other gives the reason for the person’s praise (v.6). כִּי can be temporal as well as causal or (as you have here) epexegetical.

¹⁶ “when I totter” to maintain the irrealis mood. Note the assonance between מוֹת in the previous verse and מוֹט here. They are very hard to distinguish aurally.

¹⁷ “And” instead of “but” can be equally effective: not contrast is emphasized, but in addition to the despair there is hope and rejoicing with singing (AM).

¹⁸ This fronted “I” marks a sharp break: My situation is still terrible. My complaint and my plea stand, but here is what I am going to continue to do...

¹⁹ This psalm enriches our understanding of HESED: it creates a confidence to complain.

²⁰ Two verbs in this final section are past tense (*trust, dealt abundantly*); David is so sure of rescue that he speaks of it as already done.

²¹ “my heart will rejoice” means ‘I am choosing to rejoice from my heart’. The verb, in technical terms, is an unambiguous jussive*. Jussive is 3rd person volitive, expressing what a person wants to happen – either a wish (request) or a decision. (It is unusual to use 3rd person to express a decision, but this is poetry.)

²² “I will rejoice ... in your salvation” means I will rejoice when you save me. However, *save* does not mean eternal salvation, but rescue from trouble. It simply means *rescue* in the OT, being vindicated, being restored, being in a place where everything has been put right, where there is *shalom* (peace), now, here in this life. The NT has given this concept a special meaning. As with other laments, the person is still in his trouble, so God’s rescue is still in the future.

²³ ‘Let me sing’ is an unambiguous cohortative. Cohortative is 1st person volitive, expressing what a person wants to happen – either a wish (or request such as ‘may we’ or ‘let us’) or a decision (‘I shall’, ‘we shall’).

²⁴ The “for” here can mean a reason (‘because, for’) or epexegetical (a comment; “let me sing that He dealt abundantly...”)

²⁵ How best to translate גָּמַל is not easy. The root means to *wean* or to *repay*. If the former, perhaps “he has dealt abundantly” as in the way a parent deals with a child. If the latter then “reward” would be better. Ps 142:8 is a parallel.

²⁶ The “against.me” (2c) and “with.me” (6) ending stanzas 1 and 3 are the same in Hebrew. They highlight the emotional contrast and create here a sense of conclusion.





STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



APP. A



STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



APP. B



Appendix C: Flower Garden

The repetitions and patterns below are placed upon guide translation #2 (Hebrew-tight). Read the commentary at the end of this Appendix which explains insights into these patterns.

Colour Code:

- Sets of parallel items
- Repeated words/concepts
- Repeated words/concepts
- Repeated words
- Matching opposite concepts
- Repeated words

See the commentary below concerning the themes, colours, and patterns in this section.

Psalm 13

To the choirmaster, a psalm of David.

1 How long, O LORD, will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

2 How long must I have counsels in my soul?

Sorrow is in my heart all the day.

How long shall be exalted my enemy over me?

3 Pay attention, answer me, O LORD my God;

Give light to my eyes,

If not, I will sleep the sleep of death,

4 If not, my enemy will say, "I have defeated him,"

my foes will rejoice because I am tottering.

5 But I, in your covenant love I have trusted;

my heart will rejoice in your salvation.

6 I will sing to the LORD,

because he has dealt bountifully with me.

