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Psalm 3

Phase 1: ORAL



Step 1: Listen

Listening to a guide translation and versions of the psalm

Listen well to the poem (notice content, emotions and interesting use of language). There are two guide translations in Appendix A:

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

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

Get an overview of the poem (the big picture) - what's the main message? Who is involved? A poem must be understood as 'a whole' (unlike a story).

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE PSALM

After listening to the guide translations, please respond to any of the following questions:

- 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?
- Are there any noticeable repetitions in this psalm?



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CREATIVE RESPONSES

Discuss:

- Where would you divide the poem (into sections)?
- What made you divide at those points? (How did the poem change, that indicated a new section?)
- What is the mood of the poet in each of your sections?
- What do you think is the main theme in your first section? And in each of the other sections?
- What do you think is the cause of the psalmist's problem?
- What is the psalmist asking God to do?
- Try to list the various things that happen in the psalm.

ENGAGING WITH THE WHOLE PSALM

Facilitator: address the following topics:

- *The participants in the psalm, the different “speakers” and “audiences”*
- *The historical background and the context of the psalm, the story behind the psalm, if relevant*
- *The theme of the psalm*
- *The flow of the psalm*
- *The potential big picture obstacles*
- *Emotion map*
- *The peak or peaks of the psalm*
- *The genre and purpose of the psalm*
- *Highly important poetic device(s) related to understanding the big picture*
- *How does the psalm point to Christ?*

Discuss:

- How does the psalmist feel at the beginning of his prayer? Why does he feel like that?
- What are his enemies saying?
- How does the psalmist feel at the end of his prayer – in v.7b? And in v.8?
- Notice the use of “But” in v.3. What does that tell you? What has changed his thinking?
- What does he remember about what happens when he cries to the LORD? (v.4)
- What gives him confidence to make the statement in v.6?
- Because of what he remembers (vv.3-4), how does he feel about the future? (v.6)
- After complaining and remembering who the LORD is, what does he do? (v.7)
- What does the psalmist remember about how the LORD deals with enemies who speak badly of him? (v.7)
- What names are used for God? Who uses which word?
- What title would you give to this poem?
- Shield (v.3) is one that protects on all sides. Why is that important (v.6)?
- What verbs appear in both vv.1-2 and v.7? Why is that important?
- Who is the psalmist speaking to in v.3? In vv.4-6? In v.7?
- Who is the psalmist speaking to in the first part of v.8? And in the second part?



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- Ps 3 is a short lament prayer of an individual. It has the typical components of a lament: 1) address to God, 2) complaint, 3) petition, 4) request for justice against enemies, and 5) affirmation of trust. Which verses fit into each of these categories?

Activity: Discover and list the different actors and audiences in the psalm.

The participants are David the psalmist, mostly addressing the LORD. David also testifies of past victories, addressed to the audience of Israelites who will sing and hear this psalm sung in the temple service. Another participant (or group of participants) are the enemies, the foes, who are Absalom and all the disloyal Israelites rising up against him.

- What did the psalmist actually say? What is this psalm about?

Theme and flow of the psalm

The psalm starts with a complaint about the many enemies surrounding him, in this case Absalom and the rebellion.

The psalmist then praises by remembering who the LORD is to him, namely his shield, protection, and glory, and that he came to his aid in the past.

The psalmist then expresses his peace and calm during the campaign of being surrounded by overwhelming enemies.

The psalm ends with a call or plea to the LORD to dramatically act against his enemies, so that the mocking would stop. In the final line he declares his confidence in the LORD his salvation.

- What triggered the psalmist to compose it?
- What did the poet want to achieve? Or hoping to achieve for himself or for his audience? Why did he want to say what he said in the psalm? What motivated him to say it?

Genre and significance of the psalm

What type of song or prayer is this psalm? Do you have something similar in your language?

The relation of genre of the Hebrew poem to local genres (of poetry and music) should be explored early and helps participants to carry ideas known from that genre into their thinking in Steps 5 and 10.

The reason why David writes this psalm is not altogether clear from the psalm itself. He likely composed it during the actual flight from Absalom.

Story behind the psalm

What is the story behind this psalm? What is its historical context?

Activity: Select two narrators and volunteers to enact the text as it is read slowly. Also, one person plays the role of David and one that of Absalom. The others are the followers of David or the followers of Absalom.



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Narrator 1: In 2 Samuel 7, we read that God made a covenant with David while he was king of Israel. God chose David, and he promised David three things:

1. God would make David's name great.
2. God would provide a home for the people of Israel, where they would not be disturbed by wicked people.
3. David (and his descendants) would be king. They would be punished if they did wrong but God would never stop loving them.

Later, David had a son named Absalom, who became proud and angry with his father for some things that had happened. As a result, he rebelled against David. He raised up an army to try to take the kingdom of Israel from his father and to make himself king. This was against the covenant God had made with David.

Narrator 2: In 2 Samuel 15:13-16, we read that a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom."

Then David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Get up. We must flee, or else we won't be able to escape from Absalom. Be quick!"

The king's servants said to him, "We are ready to do whatever you decide."

So, the king left, with all his household following him.

Narrator 1: When David heard about what Absalom was doing, he was frightened. With his followers, he fled away from Jerusalem into "the bush". That is when David writes this psalm!

Activity:

1. Read aloud 2 Samuel 12: 10, 11

We see that, because David had sinned with Bathsheba, God said that there would be trouble in his family. So, Absalom's betrayal of his father, David, was part of God's punishment for David's sin. Thus, how would David feel when he sees what Absalom is doing? (Guilt? Fear as this is part of God's purpose?)

2. Read aloud 2 Samuel 18:33

We must remember that David loved Absalom very much. How do you think he feels when he experiences the estranged relationship with his loved son?

The facilitators walk around during the above exercise, giving assistance if needed. Only do feedback in the large group if many are struggling.

The deeper and higher meaning of Psalm 3?

Is there a higher meaning in Psalm 3? Yes, Christ inspired it, and as the Son of David, He also must have sung it during his life on earth. He also experienced treason against his rule, not being recognised as the Messiah-king, however hidden it was during his time on earth. He also cried out to the Father for help on the cross, and his enemies were silenced, just like David's. He could also sleep in perfect peace in the midst of a storm (Matthew 8:23-27). And he also was gloriously delivered on resurrection day, vindicated forever.



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SEGMENTATION OF THE PSALM

Verses 1-2 - Complaint to God about his many enemies

Verses 3-4 - Remembering of who the LORD is to him, and did for him, in the past

Verses 5-6 – Confessing his peace and calm in the midst of being surrounded by enemies

Verses 7 - A request to act against the enemy while remembering the intervention by the LORD

Verse 8 – Declaring confidence in the LORD as his salvation and as the blessing of Israel

UNLOCKING SOME OF THE BIG PICTURE OBSTACLES TO THE PSALM

- The **tenses of the verbs** in Psalm 3 need special care, especially verses 5 and 6. Are they in the past, present or in the future?
- The **genre** of the psalm is complicated. It is a lament, as verses 1-2 seem to indicate? But the rest of the psalm is actually in a very positive, confident tone. It seems the majority of verses are in confidence, so it seems to be a psalm of confidence at the same time. But then again, in v.7 is a prayer, a plea to act against the enemy.
- The **sequence of thought** in Psalm 3 seems to be confusing. The events are not necessarily in chronological order. In vv.3-6 David is confident, but then all of a sudden utters a plea for help, followed by an imprecatory or cursing wish on his enemies. Why does he do that if he had such confidence earlier on?
- The **image** of beating on the cheek and breaking the teeth is very vivid as an imprecatory wish, or curse, on his enemies.

FINAL SUMMING UP

Discuss:

- In summary, what is the main point/message of the psalm?
The LORD is an adequate refuge in time of trouble, when surrounded by enemies.
- What does this Psalm teach you about the LORD?
He not only delivers, he keeps one safe like a shield in the midst of danger, and he gives honour and glory. He also stops the mocking and ridicule of his enemies.
- How could your church (or you) use this psalm?
xx
- What heading or title would the group suggest for this psalm?
“The LORD is my shield”
“The LORD delivers and honours the king”
“The LORD is trustworthy”



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Step 3: Internalise

Absorbing the big picture of the psalm

‘Get the poem inside yourself’ (feel the emotions and be able to recall the main ideas).

Look at the whole psalm so that you can experience it and retell the message. 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. Aim to do at least the first two activities.

CREATIVE RESPONSES

First, do Internalisation Activities 1-5 as a whole group

Internalisation Activity: Listen to Psalm X being read again. Note all the words you hear which speak of God’s power, or which are very intense/extreme language.

Internalisation Activity: Say each line of the psalm in the right order, as a group. Use your own words; there’s no need to have it precisely right. Then let one or two persons say each line of the psalm, again in the right order

Internalisation Activity: Then, as a group, make gestures for each line and again say all the lines in order, but this time with gestures. Use mime/gestures to show the emotion and action.

Internalisation Activity: Lastly, as a whole group, use the popcorn method. Each line, in the right order, is said by a different person. Do this a second time to further reinforce.

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

Then divide the group into two or three groups

Internalisation Activity: Skits—act out what’s happening in each of the lines. Make a little drama. Encourage them to use facial expressions, body language, motions, and movement to try to experience the emotions and the sequence of events. This psalm lends itself well to a skit.

Drama – script for acting out Psalm 3.

Volunteers play the roles of the psalmist (could be several people), the enemies (at least two), and the voice of God. Have the words for each person written on papers, for them to follow as they act out.

Psalmist 1: O LORD, I have many enemies! Many are rising against me; many are saying to me,

Enemies (in jeering voice, and despising actions): God will not help him!

Voice of God (off-stage): I am your shield!

Psalmist 2: Yes, LORD, you are a shield all around me.



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Voice of God: I give you honour.

Psalmist 2: Yes, LORD, you give me honour!

Voice of God: I lift up your head.

Psalmist 2: Yes, LORD, you lift up my head.

Psalmist 3: Whenever I cry aloud to the LORD, he answers me from his holy hill. I lay down, slept, and then woke again, for the LORD kept me alive. I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around.

Psalmist 4: Arise, O LORD! Help me, O my God! For you have struck all my enemies on the cheek; You have broken the teeth of the wicked.

Psalmist 1 to God: Help comes from the LORD! Your blessing be on your people!

Internalisation Activity: Memory song, chant or memory aid to help remember the psalm. Consider making a short poem of the song in the local language or Language of Wider Communication to help you remember the different actions in order. This song is only to help everyone remember each stanza in sequence (and the lines in sequence if it is a short psalm)

For instance:

Many foes
Many rising up
Many saying
“no deliverance!”
LORD my shield
My glory
Lifter of my head
Voice calling out
He answered
I slept
I awoke
Because He sustains
No fear
Thousands around me
O LORD, arise
Deliver me
Stroke them on cheek
Broken teeth
From LORD deliverance
On people, blessing

Other options

Internalisation Activity: 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.



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Step 4: Explore and compose

Explore the Hebrew and local poetry and compose a song

EXPLORING HEBREW AND LOCAL POETRY

For the facilitator: in this step, address the following topics to explore in Hebrew poetry:

- 1) Repetition of words, images, and sounds
- 2) Handling the Hebrew parallelisms
- 3) Figures of speech, like metaphors, personification
- 4) Rhythm, verse length, beat
- 5) Word order, clause order
- 6) Poetic devices that emphasize and mark something as important

Once the artist-translators have sufficiently internalised and drafted the psalm in the workshop setting, compose a song, poem, rap, chant, or prayer to capture as much of the psalm as possible.

1. Picture language

Psalm 3 has some picture language, pictures like metaphors that enrich the meaning of each line by evoking richer thoughts and deeper feelings than simply unpacking the expressions. They are called metaphors, simile, personifications, and so on.

Activity: count all these pictures in Psalm 3 (you should find about 5 of them)

Here is a list of them, and their meanings:

- a. **Shield** – metaphor for the LORD as protector, leader, owner, deliverer, provider, carer, companion
- b. **My glory** – He is the source of my glory, honour, and good reputation
- c. **Lifter of my head** – metaphor for restoring me in my previous position as king
- d. **Holy Hill** – refers to Mount Zion where the temple, the ark, and the footstool of God's throne is
- e. **Strike on cheek** – metaphor and idiom for silencing an enemy

2. Rhythm

Study a poem in your language. How is rhythm maintained? This is often happening very intuitively.

3. Word-order

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



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Go to the Hebrew-Mirror in Appendix A. In verse 3,4,7, and 8 there are verselines with elements of the line put first, before the verb. This is to put them in special focus. It is called “fronting”.

3 But you, YHWH, a shield about me,
my glory, and the lifter of my head.

4 My voice, to YHWH I cried out,
and He answered me from the hill of his holiness.

7 Arise, YHWH!
Bring my salvation, my ELOHIM!
Yes, you stroke all my enemies cheek;
the teeth of the wicked you broke.

8 To YHWH – salvation!
On your people – your blessing!

How does your language handle this type of special focus? It may not be fronting, but maybe by some other means and word-order. Do explore this.

COMPOSING A SONG

For the facilitator: several considerations, like the big question when to start doing the song

- 1) *When to start composing a song? The guide writer and facilitator have some freedom when. Either at the end of step 4, or after step 5. There are pro’s and con’s to each option. One advantage of doing it in Step 4 (before the detailed exegesis) is that the team starts to think about poetry. They only start to think about poetry once they start composing a song. The risk is that when they compose something early, before step 5, that they settle on a melody they like, but need to change it or even abandon it after getting the more detailed exegetical insights. The advantage*
- 2) *Some other considerations: what about memory aid, the poem or song made at the end of Step 3?*
- 3) *Another option is to only compose a nice tune and song on one stanza with not any serious exegetical issues. That tune can then be used for the rest of the psalm at the end of Step 5. Experience with shorter sections, like one or two stanzas at a time, to compose.*
- 4) *The team needs to learn some song-writing skills.*
- 5) *It is not necessary to use the same tune for every stanza. Sometimes 3-4 tunes can be used for long psalms.*

Note the poetic devices used in the Hebrew mirror or in the Flower Garden (Appendix C). What is the psalmist trying to achieve? Consider what poetic devices are used in the local language to achieve the same functions.

Activity: NOW, COMPOSE A SONG! 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. The song needs to



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cover all the main stanzas, but doesn't need to be correct in every detail (that comes later in Step 5)

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



Step 5: Draft

Translating stanza-by-stanza

Listen to the poem again. Orally create stanza-by-stanza a first draft of the psalm in the target language, trying to capture the poetic elements and essential details of the meaning. To take full advantage of the oral form, avoid reverting to written Biblical text at this point.

Activity: 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).

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: Verses 1-2 Complaint to God

Psalm of David, in his fleeing from the face of Absalom, his son.

1 YHWH, how they have become many my foes!

Many are rising against me;

2 many are saying to my soul,
"There is not salvation for him in ELOHIM."

Selah

A psalm of David, when he fled from before Absalom, his son.

1 O LORD, how many my foes have become,
many who are rising against me;

2 many who say about me:

"No deliverance for him from God!"

Selah

Discussion:

- The *many* is repeated three times. Consider how to translate this in some form of initial or end rhyme in your language.
- It is important to maintain the direct speech. Poetry often contains direct speech. But do consider if that is the case in your language. If not find another way to heighten the impact of the speech.

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





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Stanza 2: Verses 3-4 - Remembrance of who the LORD is to him (covenant partner¹)

3 **But you**, YHWH, a shield about me,
my glory, and the lifter of my head.
4 **My voice**, to YHWH I cried out,
and He answered me from the hill of his
holiness.

Selah

3 **But you**, o LORD, are a shield around me,
my glory, and the One who lifts my head.
4 **With my voice, to the LORD** I called out;
He answered me from his holy hill.

Selah

Discussion:

- There is a shift in the psalm and theme here from the psalmist's anguish to the LORD. It is a new stanza, but consider how to best mark this in your language's poetry.
- Discuss the use of *shield* here. Is there a word for shield in your language that covers from head to foot?
- Notice the guide translation, *But you, LORD, [...] my glory*. This is better than *you give me glory*, because it identifies the source of his honour with the LORD himself. The LORD is not honouring him because of some achievement, but because he belongs to the LORD, he is part of God's covenant people.
- Notice the *you* repeated three times in verse 3b.
- V.3 ends with *my head*. V.4 starts with *my voice*. Almost as if the psalmist is saying, the Lord lifts my head up, I lift up my voice and call to him. V.4a ends with *I call*, v.4b starts with *and He answers*. It's beautiful how these phrases are hinged together.
- In your translation, consider the shift to the third person in verse 4. Such pronoun changes are not uncommon in the Hebrew psalter and fulfil a specific function, but it may be unpoetic and awkward in your language.

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

Stanza 3: Verses 5-6 - Remembrance of a particular example when the LORD helped him

5 **I**, I lied down and I slept;
I awoke, for YHWH sustains me.
6 **Not I** fear multitudes of people
who around took their stand against
me.

5 **I**, I lied down and I slept,
I woke again, because the LORD
(always) sustains me.
6 **I** do not fear thousands of people,
who all around me took their stand
against me.

Discussion:

¹ Words in red are related – indicate aspects of the covenant relationship. (INSERT RED FROM ORIGINAL GUIDE)



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- The tenses of the verbs could be past (preferred, remembering the past) or a present habitual (I lie down...) or future (I will lie down). The past is preferable, with the psalmist remembering what had happened.
- The meaning of *sustains me* (or *keeps me*) is that of holding up, supporting. It is a metaphor.
- *Many thousands of people* is a poetic hyperbole. Consider how to translate it poetically in your language.
- *I will not fear*: there are probably different words for being afraid and fear in your language.

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

Stanza 4: Verses 7 – (in light of stanzas 2 and 3), request and remembrance

7 Arise, YHWH!

Bring my salvation, my ELOHIM!
Yes, you stroke all my enemies
cheek;
the teeth of the wicked you broke.

7 O LORD, arise!

Deliver me, o my God!
Yes, you stroke all my enemies
on the cheek;
the teeth of the wicked you broke.

Discussion:

- *Bring me victory* means saving, delivering, helping, putting things right for me again so that I can be safe and at peace.
- *Strike on the cheek/breaking of teeth* is figurative, but a very strong poetic image. The strength of the image should be maintained in your language, even if your metaphor may be different. But do consider the literal figure for your translation as well, as it may work well enough. Do think about this violent figure: there is obviously great emotion around it, and it is very vivid. The meaning of the broken teeth is that the foes will not be able to speak against the psalmist anymore.

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

Stanza 5: Verses 8 – (in light of stanzas 2, 3, and 4), declaration of confidence

8 To YHWH – salvation!

On your people – your blessing!
Selah

8 From the LORD – deliverance!

On your people – your blessing!
Selah

Discussion:

- *From the LORD – salvation; on your people – your blessing*: Both of these clauses are verbless. If possible, keep the ambiguity of a verbless clause in the translation.

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



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PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Activities:

- 1) Listen again to the recordings of each verse or section.
- 2) Think about how to include relevant parts from previous steps and to use ideas from the previous creative activities.
- 3) Put everything together to 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 recording/s of the oral draft onto paper or a computer.

Before moving on to the checking steps, 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. Doing this now 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 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).



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Step 7: Contents Refinement

Checking exegetical faithfulness

Check the exegesis of the oral translation. Consider whether the correct meaning has been translated and if the wording used can be improved. The purpose of this step is to check the content of your draft for faithfulness and trustworthiness.

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:

- Difficult exegetical matters:
 - Be sure about the verb tenses of verses 4, 5, and 7b.
 - Can you say, “the LORD is my glory”? If you can use these identification phrases, this will be best, it is more poetic, instead of unpacking the meaning in natural language.
 - Head lifted up or head help up high? Both are acceptable.
 - The translation of victory (save/salvation). Save/salvation has to do with removing a threat or removing a person from the threat, it’s about delivering. It is stronger than merely helping or assisting.
 - The idiomatic way of translating arise, especially God arising. How is that best done in the language?
- Compare against the interlinear in the Appendix (and Hebrew, if relevant). Adjust the text as necessary. Note the following in particular:
 - How can you indicate the negative tone in the words of the enemies in v.2?
 - V.3 should begin with an adversative, or indicate a change of direction.
 - Have you used metaphors in v.3? If not, could you do so?
 - Three ideas in v.3 must be understandable. Check that the metaphor (“shield”) carries the right meaning. Idea of “glory/honour” must make sense. Ensure people understand the image of “lifting the head”.
 - Ensure the supporting statements are understood as such, viz. v.5 supporting v.4 (as an example) and v.4 giving a reason for v.6. Also vv.7b-c (giving reasons that are generally true), supporting v.7a.
 - Do you have an idiom for “thousands and thousands of people” (v.6)?
 - Note the imperatives in v.7. Also the subjunctive in v.8b.
 - Inclusios (from repetition of the vocative LORD in vv.1, 3 and 7) hold together vv.1-7 as a unit, and also vv.3-7 as a unit. Does your translation have these inclusios?
 - Would idioms or ideophones fit in v.7 for the punishment of the enemies?





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Step 8: Poetry Refinement

Compare and weigh the poetic features

Check if the Hebrew poetry is all accounted for in the translation through equivalent poetic features in the target language. Consider if the poetry of the translation can be improved, for example, look at the length of lines and the use of rhythm and ideophones.

Activity: Consider the poetic features of your translation. Do they reflect the purpose of the Hebrew poetic features, drawing attention to the correct parts? Experiment a bit with different word-orders and see what sounds the most beautiful, the most poetic.

POETIC CHECKLIST

Give special attention to:

- Is the word-order natural, or giving the focus indicated by the Hebrew?
- Consider if the following poetic features might enter well into the translation:
 - Vocative at beginning of a line (consider the position of the vocative in vv.1, 3, 7)
 - Alliteration and assonance
 - Use of ideophones for sensory ideas, e.g., the fear in vv.1-2, confidence in v.3, strong emotion in vv.7b-c.
 - Exclamations to indicate emotions (e.g., in the quotation in v.2)
- Is the rhythm good? Do you need to add words, or reduce some, to get a good rhythm? Should a change of rhythm be used to draw attention to an important idea (as in v.3)?



Step 9: Finalise

Preparing the final version of an authenticated translation

Prepare 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 (audio, visual and written).

Activity: Re-check the spelling of your transcription, the punctuation, in-setting, and the layout of paragraphs to represent stanza segmentation.

Activity: Re-check the essential accuracy of the back translation (not worrying about spelling).

Activity: In AVTT, ensure that the final text of your psalm is uploaded with a back translation, check that the recordings from different steps are in the correct place, and do a final audio recording.



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Activity: If possible, copy the final written text into Paratext.

Phase 3: PERFORMANCE



Step 10: Perform

Performing the psalm in your community

Convert text into performance (dramatic reading/song/chant) to both perform and share this psalm, ensuring the main message comes through in content and style (the same emotional mood as the original poem in the Bible).

You now want to convert your written translation into a performance (song or chant) so that you can share it with your community. You need to make sure that the main message comes through in content and style (the same emotional mood as the original poem in the Bible). The genre - lament or praise or thanksgiving or other - should be similar to songs of the same genre in your culture.

Psalm-specific ideas:

Idea 1: Do you want to bring in ideas from the New Testament for a song?

E.g., 1) God being our Helper cf. Jesus being our Saviour.

E.g., 2) God gives justice (seen in Ps 3:7, Rev 21:4, Rom 12:19, Is 30:18-19)

E.g., 3) Listen to the voice of God, not the devil, or obey the Bible, not what unbelievers say).

E.g., 4) The psalmist could sleep even when surrounded by enemies, and Jesus was able to sleep on the boat in the storm, because they trusted God.

E.g., 5) The mockery the psalmist experience in v.2 could be compared with the mockery Jesus experienced on the cross (Lk 23:35).

Idea 2: You could try another performance with v.7 as a chorus, after each verse. For example:

Verse 1: O LORD, I have so many enemies! Many are rising against me. Many are saying to me, "God will not rescue him."

Chorus: Arise, O LORD! Save me, O my God!

Verse 2: But you, LORD, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head. I cried aloud to the LORD, and he answered me from his holy hill.

Chorus: You arose, O LORD! You saved me, O my God!

Verse 3: I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the LORD kept me. I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around.



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Chorus: You arose, O LORD! You saved me, O my God!

Verse 4: For you struck all my enemies on the cheek; you broke the teeth of the wicked.

Help comes from the LORD; may you bless your people!

Chorus: You arose, O LORD! You saved us, O my God!

Activity: Identify any relevant genres or styles or performance and put the psalm to music. You can put the whole psalm to music, word-for-word, or you can use creative licence to adapt the psalm for the performance.

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, in the form of a song, hymn or chorus, 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.



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Appendix B: Exegetical Layout

Psalm 3 is a lament prayer for help against enemies.

SUGGESTED HEADING

A God-follower calls out to God for protection from enemies.

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

מְזֻמָּר לְדָוִד	1	Psalm of David
בְּבָרְחוֹ מִפְּנֵי אֲבִשָׁלוֹם בֶּן־		In.fleeing.his from.face ² .of Absalom son.his ³ .
יְהוָה מִה־רַבּוֹ צָרִי	2	1 ⁴ YHWH, how-they.became.many ⁵ foes.my, ⁶
רַבִּים קָמִים עָלַי:		many who.are.rising ⁷ against.me.

² From the face of: the phrase is idiomatic, could also be translated from before.

³ Psalm 3 is the first psalm with a superscription (cf. 2 Sam 15:13-17).

⁴ Poetic elements: repetition of many: *rabim*, rhyme of *rabim qamim*, *rabim omriem*. If possible, incorporate this repetition and build up in your translation.

⁵ The root *many* is repeated 3x in vv.1-2: the speaker is overwhelmed. Cf. v.6a.

⁶ foes: In parallel with those rising against me, and enemies.

⁷ rising: same root as *arise* (v.7a). Cf. 2 Sam 18:32.



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רְבִים אֹמְרִים לְנַפְשִׁי	3	2 Many are saying ⁸ to ⁹ .soul.my ¹⁰ :
אֵין יְשׁוּעָתָה לּוֹ בְּאֵלֵהֶם סֵלָה:		“There is not deliverance ¹¹ for him in.ELOHIM ^{12 13} ”. Selah ¹⁴
אֲתָה יְהוָה מִגַּן בְּעַדִּי	4	3 ¹⁵ But.you (2S), YHWH, (are) a.shield ¹⁶ about.me,

⁸ What his enemies, those who rise up against him, are saying, is that he has clearly been abandoned by the LORD because of his affliction. The LORD will not rescue him. This is of course a false assumption, they were wrong, as were proven by David being restored as king after the uprising of Absalom.

⁹ to (my soul): could also mean *in regard to* then translated as *of*. The third person reference in the quoted words that follow favour this option.

¹⁰ to my soul: to me, essentially, but NEPHESH does refer to his total being, or his very life.

¹¹ Victory: Some translations use “salvation” / “save” in vv.2, 7, 8, but the sense in the book of Psalms is help, restoration, deliverance from trouble, things have now been put right again. Be cautious not to use a word that means “salvation from sin” in the NT sense of the word. Note inclusio formed by repetition of YHWH and root of victory (vv.7a, 8a). Cf. Ps 62:7a which links *salvation* (victory) and *glory* (as in v.3b).

¹² ELOHIM: cf. my ELOHIM (v.7b).

¹³ These negative words of the enemy are countered by YHWH being *the lifter of his head* (v.3b), and *his victory* (v.8).

¹⁴ Selah occurs 3x in this psalm. Its meaning is uncertain. It could indicate a pause, or a musical instruction. It is suggested you transliterate *Selah* in your language.

¹⁵ There is beautiful rhyme in the Hebrew sounds, starting from the word *about me*, with repetition of i, di, and r: ... *ba’adi, kivodi. umeriem roshi*. It’s not easy to render this in English, but if there is a way in the target language to bring in rhyme, it would be fitting.

¹⁶ shield: Cf. Pss 28:7; 84:9, 11; 119:114; Gen 15:1. Symbol of protection, against *the many*. Unlike most shields, YHWH is a shield *around me*, thus protecting on all sides (cf. enemies *all around*, v.6b). He trusts YHWH for his defence, and looks to YHWH to act offensively (and violently) Cf. v.7b-c.



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כְּבוֹדִי וּמְרִים רֵאשִׁי:		glory.my ¹⁷ and.lifter ¹⁸ of.head.my ¹⁹ .
קוֹלִי אֶל־יְהוָה אֶקְרָא	5	4 My.voice ²⁰ to-YHWH I.cry ²¹ ,
וַיַּעֲנֵנִי מֵהַר קִדְשׁוֹ סֵלָה:		and.He.then.answered ²² .me from.hill of.holiness.his ²³ . Selah
אֲנִי שָׁכַבְתִּי וְאִישָׁנָה	6	5 I ²⁴ , I.lied.down ²⁵ and.then.I.slept ²⁶ ,
הַקִּיצוֹתַי כִּי יְהוָה יִסְמְכֵנִי:		I.awoke, for YHWH sustains ²⁷ .me.

¹⁷ *my glory*: the one who gives me honour (good reputation, contra shame) and salvation. *Honour* also in Ps 4:2a. *Glory* linked to *salvation* in Pss 21:5, 62:7a, contra derision in v.2b. *You are my glory* is answer to problem of *many rising against me*. In Zech 2:5 *glory* is linked to “a wall of fire all around” (total protection, salvation). The LORD is not honouring him because of some past achievement or present potential, but because he belongs to the LORD, he is part of God’s covenant people. In other words, his glory is God’s faithfulness to him, God himself is his glory, however strange that may sound.

¹⁸ *lifter of my head*: cf. *rising against me* (cf. v.1b). Could also be translated as a relative clause, *who lifts* or *who holds my head high*. Cf. Ps 27:6. The enemies have shamed his confidence in God with their words in v.2b. But YHWH is the one who removes that shame and discouragement (and lifts his head) because the psalmist is trusting in his covenant relationship with YHWH (v.1). Find a metaphor in your language that means to remove shame/despair and bring honour/salvation. Job 10:15 “I cannot lift my head . . . for I am filled with disgrace”. Lk 21:28 *raising heads* is linked to *salvation*.

¹⁹ Cf. Ps 89:17-18a which includes *shield, glory, lifting* of horn (or reputation), and YHWH. See Ps 113:7b *lifts the needy*.

²⁰ *my voice*: whereas enemies used their voice to speak badly of God and show their unbelief, psalmist uses his voice to approach God for help and show his trust. The psalmist cannot match the power or number of the enemy, but his weapon against them is his faith in God.

²¹ *I cried* indicates a habitual action, as in *I used to cry* or *I would cry* rather than a specific occurrence where the psalmist cried.

²² *I cried and he answered*: what is expected in the covenant (note covenant name YHWH 6x)

²³ *hill of his holiness*: cf. Ps 2:6. Used 26x in HB. It is the place where YHWH is present, a place of safety, represented by Zion (the hill on which Jerusalem is built).

²⁴ *I* is emphasized (used 5x in vv.4-6). This is in contrast to *You* (v.3).

²⁵ *I lay down*: Most translations render this verse in the past tense. Using past tense in this sentence brings us back to the historical setting of David fleeing from Absalom. He slept and woke without being killed – God protected him. For the sake of the historical setting, you might choose to translate the verbs as past tense. But it seems like a case can also be made to translate it in a habitual, repeated sense, as in “every night I lie down to sleep, every morning I wake again, because God sustains me”.

²⁶ *lay down and slept*: cf. Ps 4:8. The psalmist had the peace of God within so he could sleep without fear. This is explained by his comment: *For YHWH sustains me*.

²⁷ *sustains*: This verb is likely habitual. He’s not saying God did it this one time. He’s saying it’s his pattern of sustenance. Does your language have a way to express this habitual nature of an action?



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לֹא־אִירָא מִרְבָּבוֹת עַם	7	6 Not-I.fear multitudes.of ²⁸ people
אֲשֶׁר סָבִיב שָׁתוּ עָלַי:		who around ²⁹ took.their.stand against.me ³⁰ .
קוּמָה יְהוָה	8	7 Arise(S), YHWH ³¹
הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי אֱלֹהֵי		Bring salvation.my, ELOHIM.my,
כִּי־הִכִּיתָ אֶת־כָּל־אֹיְבֵי לִחֵי		For ³² -you(2S).stroke ³³ (OBJ)-all-my.enemies cheek ³⁴ ,
שְׁנֵי רְשָׁעִים שִׁבְרָתָ:		the.teeth.of wicked you.broke(2S) ^{35 36} .
לִיהוָה הַיְשׁוּעָה	9	8 To.YHWH, the.salvation,
עַל־עַמֶּךָ בְּרַכְתָּךְ		On-people.your ³⁷ , blessing.your.
סֵלָה:		Selah

²⁸ The *many* are *myriads*, literally *many thousands of people*. It is a very large number of people, probably soldiers, and a form of poetic hyperbole. *Many* are troubling him (3x in vv.1-2) but he is confident against such overwhelming *multitudes*!

²⁹ *all around*: cf. *around* in v.3a. Could also be translated *on every side*.

³⁰ *many against me*: Cf. Ps 27:3.

³¹ *Arise YHWH!* Cf. Pss 7:6; 9:19; 10:12; Num 10:35.

³² *for*: The particle *kie* could also be an intensifying marker – yes/indeed.

³³ *strike*: the verb form could also be an imperative, rendering the translation *Strike all my enemies on the cheek*. But because the following verb (*break*) is a completed action and not an imperative, it makes more sense to read this verb as a completed action as well.

³⁴ *strike on cheek* (a sign of insult): Cf. Job 16:10b and 1 Kgs 22:24. In contrast to lifting up the psalmist's head in v3, he asks God to strike his enemies on the cheek. As the psalmist had been insulted by the words of his enemies, so now he prays for an insult to be administered to them.

³⁵ *You break teeth (of the wicked)*: Cf. Ps 58:6. This results in the person not being able to speak and continue insulting the psalmist.

³⁶ There is a chiasm in v.7b: **struck; enemies; cheek; teeth; wicked; broken**

³⁷ *on your people*: psalmist thinks not only about himself being blessed, but others too.



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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:

- ...

Psalm 3

A psalm of David, when he fled from before Absalom, his son.

1 O LORD, how many my foes have become –

many who rise against me;

2 many who say about me,

“No victory for him from GOD!”

Selah

3 But you, LORD – a shield around me,

my glory, and the lifter of my head.

4 (With) my voice to the LORD I used to cry;

He answered me from his holy hill.

Selah

5 I, I lay down and I slept;

I awoke (again), because the LORD always sustains me.

6 I will not fear (many) thousands of people

who all around take their stand against me.

7 Arise, O LORD!

Bring me victory, O my GOD!

Yes, you strike all my enemies on the cheek;

The teeth of the wicked you break.

8 From the LORD – victory!

On your people – your blessing!

Selah

