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Psalm 42-43

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

Creative Activity 1: Answer these questions in groups of two or three (maximum):

Question 1: Have you ever felt overwhelmed, like walls were crashing in on you or like the psalmist describes wave after wave of troubles, problems, and difficulties (Ps 42.8)? Share what you feel comfortable sharing. We all experience difficulties in life, trials, temptations, etc. Some of these are best talked about in a one-on-one context with a trusted friend or counselor. This depends on your personality also and your culture (what is appropriate culturally). Some feel freer to share in a group about their experiences. Some cultures allow for more fuller expression in groups. But it is important to find a context to tell our stories and for caring people to listen without judging.

Everyone is encouraged to share something; whatever you feel comfortable sharing. This may not be the context to share a huge family secret or long-term problem that requires one-on-one counselling. Pray about what to share. Take time to pray for each other at the end of the time together. The facilitator needs to monitor the time left to assure that there's enough time to wrap up and pray as a group. [Ask the group how they want to divide up. In Cameroon they felt comfortable to meet in groups of two. In South Africa they met as groups of 3.]

Question 2: The psalmist is probably in exile far from Jerusalem. The psalmist remembers times of fellowship and worship in Jerusalem (Ps 42.4). The psalmist even describes being depressed, downcast, feeling low (Ps 42.5, 6, 11, Ps 43.2, 5). Are there times of depression or feeling low that you would feel free to share with the small group? This could be similar to question 1.

Insight: The Psalms express the full range of human emotions. This is why the book of Psalms has been so precious throughout the history of the church. The Psalms are the most frequently quoted book in the NT (68 times).

Because the psalmist longs to be worshipping at the temple (Ps 42.5), most scholars think the psalmist lived far from Jerusalem or perhaps was in exile. The psalmist's remarks about those who say "Where is your God?" (Ps 42.3, 10) or comments about being "oppressed by his enemies" (Ps 43.2) and his emotional turmoil in the refrain (Ps 42.5, 11 and 43.5) all indicate that he could be in exile or at least surrounded by people that are hostile toward Jews.

Facilitator: The second activity can be done in small groups or in a large group. The facilitator should read over the Activity below and then discuss with the group what they would like to do with the creative activity 2 (small or large group).

Creative Activity 2

Question 3: Although by the end of the poem, the psalmist's problems are not fully resolved (see Ps 42.11 and Ps 43.5), there is a constant desire to be with God (Ps 42.1-2), to express his/her problems (Ps 42.3-4a), remember good times of closeness with God (Ps 42.4b), sensing God's continuing presence even in the midst of problems (Ps 42.8), waiting/hoping in God (Ps 42.5, 11,



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Ps 43.5), and looking to God for guidance/light/help (Ps 43.3). Discuss any of these points as to what aspect of God's word is speaking to you today.

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?*

Meaning and Flow of the Psalm

Creative Activity 3 (15-45 min) Facilitator: Depending on your time constraints, divide into three groups and go over key ideas in each of the three stanzas (42.1-5, 6-11, 43.1-5) NOTE: These three stanzas are presented at the end of Step 2.

Look for these key ideas (if there): a) Water b) Intimacy with God c) God's holy place/altar/ temple d) Music e) Noise f) Prayer g) Oppressors/Enemies

Come together as a large group to discover the major themes that you found.

Context and Genre of the Psalm

Here is some more background information for the facilitator to understand these psalms better. Pss 42-43 are best considered to be one psalm especially because of the refrain which repeats three times (Hebrew text: 42.6, 42.12, 43.5) and this refrain is practically identical in each instance.¹ There are three clear stanzas in the poem (Engl versification): ST 1: 42.1-5, ST 2: 42.6-11, ST 3: 43.1-5.

Ps 42 has extensive water imagery as noted in Appendix C in blue. The water imagery does not continue into Ps 43. The metaphor of waters starts positive and then moves toward painful or frightfully negative implications. There are other words or expressions uniting the two psalms as shown in Appendix C.

¹ It appears that at some point in history, the psalm was divided into two different psalms. But note that there is no superscription for Ps 43. This indicates a possible connectedness to Ps 42. The same thing happens with Pss 9-10 (a superscription in the first psalm but not in the second).



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Pss 42-43 are also the beginning of Book 2 of the Psalms in the Hebrew canon. This is significant and probably means it was an important or popular psalm because it was placed at the head of a collection of psalms. In Book 2 there are a series of songs from the songs of Korah, plus many Davidic songs are interspersed in this Book. Pss 42-43 is also part of what is called the Elohistic psalter (from Pss 42-82 or some say Pss 42-83). This is explained in the note for 42.9(8) in Appendix B.

Clues within the psalm lead us to think that the psalmist is in exile or at least far from home. Commentators speculate as to when this exile could be, but it is clear at least that the psalmist is longing to be in Jerusalem, has fond memories of being there, recalls being with God's people there, and yearns to be in God's presence near the temple.

The best guess is that a Levite wrote the psalm, and some of the notes will explain this. The psalmist may also originate from somewhere in the region of Mount Herman near the Jordan as alluded to in the psalm. However, the psalmist does not state this and may be just remembering times when he visited that region.

UNLOCKING SOME OF THE BIG PICTURE OBSTACLES

Textual difficulty of a line in Ps 42.4 – Part of Ps 42.4 is unclear. In Hebrew the text might be understood as “lead them in procession” (ESV) and the Septuagint (LXX) and some translations translate this as “under the protection of the Mighty One” (NIV11). Which is correct?

INSIGHT: Either rendering is a possible interpretation of the Ps 42.4. HOTTP (Hebrew Old Testament Textual Project) recommends the first reading (ESV) above.

Interpretive difficulty: what and where is Mount Mizar in Ps 42.6? – There are several interpretations for this part of v 6.

INSIGHT: Most English translations translate as “Mount Mizar” (literally מִצָּר Mitsar), but because this same word means “small” (see Gen 19.22), some believe that the translation could be “small mountain” or “humble mountain” (see Français Courant or Parole de Vie = “Small Mountain”. The NET Bible note explains this. The word Mitsar as a mountain only appears here in the Old Testament, and it could be one of the smaller mountains on the Herman range of mountains, but its exact meaning is unknown.

SEGMENTATION OF THE PSALM

Most scholars consider that Psalms 42-43 were one psalm at an earlier time, and then they were divided into individual psalms at some point. There is a slightly different theme in Psalm 43. However, the same refrain with slight differences (Ps 42.5, 42.11, and 43.5) occurs in the two psalms which unites them in purpose.

Stanza 1 (42.1-5) – Hunger for God, complaint of feeling mocked by ungodly people. Remembrance of fellowship with other believers while worshipping the Lord. The refrain in v 5 expresses sadness mixed with hope in God.



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Stanza 2 (42.6-11)– Further remembrance of God in the Mount Herman region. Imagery of overwhelming troubles that God allowed, but the psalmist realizes the Lord’s presence and guiding hand. He returns again to a severe complaint against the ungodly. The refrain repeats.

Stanza 3 (43.1-5) – A call for vindication and a direct plea for God’s care and guidance. A further wish to return to God’s altar and praise him. Return to the refrain.

Flow of the Psalm – The movement of the Psalm is from “near despair to surging confidence” (WORD Commentary, p. 325), but there is more intensity in Stanza 2. The first two stanzas are more classic laments with expressions of complaint yet hope and trust as the situation is laid before the Lord. The third stanza is more of a prayer. It is more of a direct call to God to intervene in the psalmist’s situation. But through it all, as reflected in the refrain, there is no full resolution to the ongoing struggles. It is a mix of suffering and hope/trust like it often is in our lives. We can all identify with the psalmist in some way.

Many of the images in Stanza 2 of this psalm are like looking at snapshots, one after the other. This makes the psalm seem compact and sometimes hard to follow. It can sometimes be ambiguous and difficult to interpret.

FINAL SUMMING UP

- In summary, what is the main point/message of the psalms?
Answer: God saves and vindicates his people. Trust in him. Honestly express your emotions and your situation clearly to God as a lament with prayer: it’s okay to feel overwhelmed and even depressed – tell it to God.
- What does this psalm teach you about the LORD?
Answer: The Lord is living and active. He allows suffering. He is sovereign over our circumstances. He saves and vindicates on behalf of his people.
- How could your church (or you) use this psalm?
Answer: Write a drama or song. The high level of emotion (crying out to God) should communicate well through drama and song. Teaching this psalm is another possibility. Teach that lamenting in a biblical way is a good thing, and we should honestly express our emotions to a loving God and Savior.
- What heading or title would the group suggest for this psalm?
Answer: “Hope in God Despite Constant Problems” or “The Prayer of a Man far from Home”. (See Appendix B for other possibilities.)





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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.

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)

Other options

First group creative response

Key words – Orally review the main stanzas discussed at the end of Step 2 when you discovered the meaning of this psalm as a whole. Then orally summarise the main points



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as indicated in the stanza division. Say them aloud. Come up with a key word or expression (or perhaps several words) for each stanza to help you remember the words.

Using the key words or expressions, make an initial attempt to retell or speak out the summary of Psalms 42-43 that you made, reflecting the development of thought. Do not be concerned about translation exactness, that comes later. Explore some of the oral poetic features you might use for this psalm: for example, ideophones, onomatopoeia, alliteration, carefully chosen images, and use of repetition. Discuss possibilities together as a group.

Now, using the ideas just mentioned, attempt to create another free poetic version of the whole psalm. You could also have a different member of your group create an oral version. Work at it until you have captured the main flow of the psalm. **Record your version.** Do not look at the written text. It is not yet the time for precise translation and correct renderings. That will come in the next stage. The goal now is still to activate creativity and true local poetry.

Second group creative response

Tableau—Translators work together to create “Freeze frames” of the action of each stanza of Psalms 42-43. Orally review the main stanzas discussed at the end of Step 2 when you discovered the meaning of this psalm as a whole.

When making the three freeze frames, it is helpful to make exaggerated poses and facial expressions which are easier to remember. You can use props like a crown or a royal scepter if you would like. If desired, take a photo of each freeze frame to refer to later to jog your memories as you translate.

Now, using the ideas just mentioned, attempt to create another free poetic version of the whole psalm. You can also have a different member of your group create an oral version. Work at it until you have captured the main flow of the psalm. **Record your version.** Do not look at the written text. It is not yet the time for precise translation and correct renderings. That will come in the next stage. The goal now is still to activate creativity and true local poetry.

Third group creative response

Skit – Act out each stanza. Orally review the main stanzas discussed at the end of Step 2 when you discovered the meaning of this psalm as a whole. Act out what’s happening in each stanza or the whole psalm, one stanza moving into the next. Use facial expressions, body language, hand motions, movement to try to experience the emotions and what is described in the psalm. If desired, you can use dialogue (direct speech) to help remember parts of the text. Or the skit can be done silently without dialogue, just using motions and facial expressions to express the psalm.

Now, using the ideas just mentioned, attempt to create another free poetic version of the whole psalm. You can also have a different member of your group create an oral version. Work at it until you have captured the main flow of the psalm. **Record your version.** Do not look at the written text. It is not yet the time for precise translation and correct renderings. That will come in the next stage. The goal now is still to activate creativity and true local poetry.



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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. Poetic devices- repetitions of words, images, and sounds

Activity: Trace all the words that are repeated. Then all the concepts/images.

2. Poetic devices - main Images or metaphors of the Psalm

- Metaphors, metonyms, similes, personifications, hyperboles, merisms,

Activity: Can you identify any images, similes or metaphors?

3. Rhythm

Activity: Listen to the psalm again and in groups, and get a feel for the rhythm. Are the lines short or long?

4. Irregular word order

- Fronting of nouns before the verbs in Hebrew is particularly in focus here

Activity: Look at the Flower Garden or the Hebrew-mirror, and identify all the verses that have irregular word order, mostly (in English) nouns put before the verbs.

5. Highlighting poetic devices

Activity: Look at the Flower Garden in Appendix C or the Hebrew-mirror in Appendix A, and identify all the verses that have highlighting devices.



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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 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).

SUGGESTIONS

- There are deep emotions in this psalm. Consider using ideophones, if applicable. Try to keep as much of the imagery as possible.
- If possible, consider using the refrain as Pss 42-43 does (three times).
- Consider also how the climax of 42.9 (42.8 in English) could be incorporated into the psalm.



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Step 5: Draft

Translating section-by-section, 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: Ps 42 Verses 1-5

1 As a deer pants toward streams of water
so my soul pants for you, God.
2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When will I go and appear to the face of
God?
3 My tears have been food by day and night,
when (people) say to me all the day:
“Where is your God?”
4 These I will remember
and I will pour out on myself my soul
how I passed with the crowd
I led them to the house of God
with sound of a shout of joy and thanksgiving,
a multitude doing festival.
5 What are you bowed down, my soul?
And what are you disturbed upon me?
Wait for God
for again I will give thanks to him,
the salvations of my face and my God.

1 As a deer thirsts for streams of water
so my inner being thirsts for you, O
God.
2 My inner being thirsts for God, for the living
God.
When will I come and appear in God’s
presence.
3 My tears have been my food day and night,
while people say to me all day long:
“Where is your God?”
4 These things I will remember
as I pour out my whole being:

how I used to go with the crowd
and lead them in procession to the
house of God
with the sound of joyful shouts and praises,
a multitude celebrating the festival.
5 Why are you bowed down, my inner being?
And why are you disturbed within?
Wait for God
for I will yet praise him,
my saving presence and my God.



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Discuss:

V 1: “inner being” or “soul” or “I” or “heart”. Do you have a standard translation for “soul” in the Psalms? This may vary according to context. “Soul” or its equivalent is used 7x in Pss 42-43. “Bowed down” is an image of feeling sad or discouraged within. Do you have a good image for this?

V 2: If “living God” is difficult, use “the God who gives me life”.

V 3: Tears as food can be a difficult image. Since tears are not strictly food, some languages need to clarify by saying: “My tears are all I can drink” (TH).

V 4: “*how I used to go with the crowd and lead them in procession...*” is the recommended translation for 4c. For an alternate rendering, see Appendix B.

V 5: The two “Why” questions in the refrain of v 5 are rhetorical questions. It may seem unclear at first who the psalmist is talking to. He is talking to himself (self-talk). This is why a proposed translation like “Why, I ask myself, are you downcast? ...” is clearer for some languages. “Bowed down” is an image of feeling sad or discouraged within. Do you have a good image for this? Where the rhetorical question does not work you can simply say “I am so downcast. I am so depressed. So, I need to put my hope in God. ...”, but this seems too descriptive or less poetic than the Hebrew text, even if it is the right meaning.

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

Stanza 2: Ps 42 Verses 6-11

6 Upon me is my soul bowed down.
Therefore, I will remember you from
land of Jordan,
and Hermons from the mountain of
Mitsar.
7 Deep to deep is calling to the sound of your
waterfalls.
All your breakers and your waves over
me have passed.
8 By day the LORD commands his loyal love,
and in the night his song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.
9 I will say to God my Rock:
“Why have you forgotten me?
Why with mourning do I walk about
in the oppression of an enemy?”
10 With shattering in my bones my adversaries
have taunted me,
While they say to me all the day,
“Where is your God?”

6 My inner being is bowed down within.
So, I will remember you from the land of
Jordan,
and from Mount Mizar in the Hermon
mountain range.
7 Deep waters call to deep waters at the sound
of your waterfalls.
All your breakers and your waves have
passed over me.
8 By day the LORD commands his loyal love,
and by night his song is with me –
a prayer to the God of my life.
9 I will say to God my Rock:
“Why have you forgotten me?
Why must I go about in mourning
because of the oppression of an
enemy?”
10 The taunts of my enemies shatter my bones,
as they say to me all day long, “Where is
your God?”
11 Why are you bowed down, my inner being?



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11 Why are you bowed down, my soul?
And why are you disturbed upon me?
Wait for God
for again I will give thanks to him,
the salvations of my face and my God.

And why are you disturbed within?
Wait for God
for I will yet praise him,
my saving presence and my God.

Discuss:

V 6: “My inner being is bowed down within”. “Bowed down” is an image of feeling sad or discouraged within. Do you have a good image for this?

V 7: “Deep calls to deep” is a poetic way of referring to turbulence or chaos, common mythological images in the ancient world. The deep represents the ocean and for the ancients was associated with a sea monster, chaos, and fear. In many OT passages God is shown to be triumphant over the deep (תְּהוֹמוֹת *tehom*). The literal text “Deep calling to deep” will not communicate well in most languages.

To make this clearer you could say: a) “Your vicious waves have swept over me like an angry ocean or a roaring waterfall.” (CEV) b) “You have sent wave upon wave of trouble over me. It roars down on me like a waterfall. All your waves and breakers have rolled over me.” (NirV) c) “Troubles have come again and again, sounding like waterfalls. Your waves are crashing all around me.” (NCV) d) “I hear the tumult of the raging seas as your waves and surging tides sweep over me.” (NLT)

V 8 “Commands” may be awkward here. You could use: “sends”, “shows”, and “directs”. See discussion in Appendix B for 42.8 (Engl).

V 10 “My enemies’ taunts shatter my bones” could be difficult to understand. Try to keep the image with the actual expression or something like “I am pained to the bones” or “even my bones ache” (suggestions from TH).

V 11: The two “Why” questions in the refrain of v 5 are rhetorical questions. It may seem unclear at first who the psalmist is talking to. He is talking to himself (self-talk). This is why a proposed translation like “Why, I ask myself, are you downcast? ...” is clearer for some languages. “Bowed down” is an image of feeling sad or discouraged within. Do you have a good image for this? Where the rhetorical question does not work you can simply say “I am so downcast. I am so depressed. So, I need to put my hope in God. ...”, but this seems too descriptive or less poetic than the Hebrew text, even if it is the right meaning.

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

Stanza 2: Ps 43 Verses 1-5

1 Vindicate me, God,
And plead my case from a nation not
faithful.
From a man of deceit and injustice,
rescue me.
2 For you are the God of my refuge.

1 Vindicate me, God,
and plead my case before an unfaithful
people,
from before a man of deceit and
injustice, rescue me.
2 For you are the God of my refuge.



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Why have you rejected me?
Why in mourning do I go about
with the oppression of enemy?
3 Send your light and your truth.
Let them lead me.
May they bring me to the mountain of your
holiness
and to your dwelling places.
4 And I will go to the altar of God,
to the God of happiness of my rejoicing.
And I will give thanks to you with lyre,
God, my God.
5 Why are you bowed down, my soul?
And why are you disturbed upon me?
Wait for God
for again I will give thanks to him,
the salvations of my face and my God.

Why have you rejected me?
Why must I go about in mourning
because of the oppression of an enemy?
3 Send your light and your truth.
Let them lead me.
May they bring me to your holy mountain
and to your dwelling place.
4 And let me go to the altar of God,
to God, my exceeding joy.
And I will praise you with a harp, God,
my God.
5 Why are you bowed down, my inner being?
And why are you disturbed within?
Wait for God
for I will yet praise him,
my saving presence and my God.

Discuss:

V 1: The words “vindicate me” and “plead my case” are often used in legal contexts, but they can also be used in more conventional, normal language to ask God to help him against his enemies, and this conventional usage is more likely. So, to translate this with more normal language, you can say here: a) “Show that I am right” ... “defend me” (CEV) b) “declare me innocent” ... “defend my cause” (GNT) c) “Plead for me” (Voice) ... “champion my cause” (TLV).

V 3: “Send me your light and your faithful care” in verse 3 is talking about giving insight and possibly truth to the psalmist, so these are some possibilities: a) “give me insight and speak your truth” b) “Reveal your light and your faithfulness” (NET) c) “shine your light and truth to help me see clearly” (Voice).

V 5: The two “Why” questions in the refrain of v 5 are rhetorical questions. It may seem unclear at first who the psalmist is talking to. He is talking to himself (self-talk). This is why a proposed translation like “Why, I ask myself, are you downcast? ...” is clearer for some languages. “Bowed down” is an image of feeling sad or discouraged within. Do you have a good image for this? Where the rhetorical question does not work you can simply say “I am so downcast. I am so depressed. So, I need to put my hope in God. ...”, but this seems too descriptive or less poetic than the Hebrew text, even if it is the right meaning.

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 or section.



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- 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

Writing it down

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 Check

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:

- how you translate certain key terms. Appendix B has more guidelines in the references given (English verse references are used below): “soul” (inner being or heart or self or I) (42.1), face/“God’s presence” (42.2), “living God” (42.2), “vindication” and other legal terms (43.1), “send your light and truth” (43.3), “holy mountain” (43.3).
- how you handle the textual difficulty of 42.4 (see discussion above in Step 2 under “Obstacles”). “Procession” is recommended.
- the exegetical choices for 42.6 “Mount Mizar” or “humble mountain” (see discussion at the end of Step 2 under “Obstacles”).
- how you handle the peak/climax – tri-colon (42.8). Do you have any special words, markers, ideophones, or structural considerations to accentuate the peak/climax?
- how you translate “deep calls to deep” (42.7). It can be easily misunderstood. It clearly refers to deep waters, and possibly chaos, and images of dark opposing forces.
- how you handle the refrain in 42.5, 42.11, and 43.5. The refrain is slightly different in 42.5 (see notes there). It is recommended to make the refrain the same throughout.
- to find the right expression for the negative emotions (ex., downcast and disturbed – 42.5) and positive emotions (“my joy and my delight) (43.4). The refrain should express the balance of the negative actual situation (soul downcast) and the positive hope in God. Will ideophones help to express these emotions?



Step 8: Poetry Check

Comparing and weighing 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.



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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:

- Refrain (42.5, 11 and 43.5) – Almost exact. Expresses both despair and hope/trust. Are refrains common in your language? Are they normally exact or can they vary?
- Rhetorical questions – There are two rhetorical questions in the refrain beginning with “why”..., “Where is your God” (42.3,10), “why...forgotten” (42.9), “Why...mourning...oppressed” (42.9, 43.2), “Why ...reject” (43.2). See Appendix C which color codes all the refrains of the poem.
- Repetition – refrain (see above), “my soul” (can you vary with “being”, “self”, and other alternatives?), words for God (Elohim El, “living God) – can you keep the terms for God or vary with pronouns? How natural is the heavy repetition of “God” in the poem (see Appendix C where the name “God” is circled in the Hebrew-tight version).
- Simile – Deer thirsting and my soul thirsting (42.1-2), Can you make it a direct metaphor “My soul is a thirsty deer searching for water”? What is natural in your language?
- Inclusio – “my God” (42.1 and 43.4) Try to keep this expression.
- Word pairs: “joy and praise” (42.5), “Savior and God” (42.5, 11, 43.5), “waves and breakers” (42.7), “deceitful and wicked” (43.1), “light and truth” (43.3), “joy and delight” (43.4) Weigh these expressions carefully. Sometimes an adjective combined with a word like “my exceeding joy” in 43.4 is possible.
- Parallelism and Climax – Mostly bi-colons: there is a key tri-colon for Ps 42.8 which is a structural and thematic climax in 42.9(8), emotional peak is at the end of Ps 43.5 as the refrain is heard for a third time. Translate these verses carefully and consider using the refrain for a song or perhaps highlighting the climax for a song or both.
- Hyperbole – tears for food (42.3), mocking all day long (42.3,10), mocking breaks my bones (42.10). Do these images work or do they need to be adjusted? Can ideophones be used?
- Striking Images/Metaphors – water images throughout Ps 42 (ex., ‘deep calls to deep’ – 42.7) (see Appendix C “Flower Garden”). Try to keep these water images. Other images: “tears have been my food” (42.3), “pour out my soul” (42.4), “soul...downcast” (42.5) “night song with me” (42.8), “God of my life” (42.8), “God my Rock” (42.9), “bones in agony from mocking” (42.10), “God my stronghold” (43.2), “send your light and truth to lead me” (43.3), “God my greatest joy” (43.4). Keep the images/metaphors where possible. Can ideophones be used to express strong emotions? See detailed notes of Appendix B for other translation suggestions for individual verses.
- Metonymy – “light and truth (of God’s revelation) will lead me” (43.3)



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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.

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:

- You could focus a song around the three refrains (42.5, 42.11, and 43.5). The refrains could be sung by the group or read together by the group in the Dramatic Reading.
- You could somehow highlight the importance of Ps 42.8 as the peak/climax of the poem.
- Some groups find it helpful to use motions or act out the psalm as it is sung or read.



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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 A: Guide Translations

Hebrew-mirror	Guide Translation
<p>Psalm 42 <i>For the director of music, maskil by the sons of Korah.</i></p> <p>1 As a deer pants toward streams of water so my soul pants for you, God.</p> <p>2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When will I go and appear to the face of God?</p> <p>3 My tears have been food by day and night, when (people) say to me all the day: “Where is your God?”</p> <p>4 These I will remember and I will pour out on myself my soul how I passed with the crowd I led them to the house of God with sound of a shout of joy and thanksgiving, a multitude doing festival.</p> <p>5 What are you bowed down, my soul? And what are you disturbed upon me? Wait for God for again I will give thanks to him, the salvations of my face and my God.</p> <p>6 Upon me is my soul bowed down. Therefore, I will remember you from land of Jordan, and Hermons from the mountain of Mitsar.</p> <p>7 Deep to deep is calling to the sound of your waterfalls. All your breakers and your waves over me have passed.</p> <p>8 By day the LORD commands his loyal love, and in the night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.</p> <p>9 I will say to God my Rock:</p>	<p>Psalm 42 <i>For the director of music, a contemplative song written by the descendents of Korah.</i></p> <p>1 As a deer thirsts for streams of water so my inner being thirsts for you, O God.</p> <p>2 My inner being thirsts for God, for the living God. When will I come and appear in God’s presence.</p> <p>3 My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long: “Where is your God?”</p> <p>4 These things I will remember as I pour out my whole being: how I used to go with the crowd and lead them in procession to the house of God with the sound of joyful shouts and praises, a multitude celebrating the festival.</p> <p>5 Why are you bowed down, my inner being? And why are you disturbed within? Wait for God for I will yet praise him, my saving presence and my God.</p> <p>6 My inner being is bowed down within. So, I will remember you from the land of Jordan, and from Mount Mizar in the Hermon mountain range.</p> <p>7 Deep waters call to deep waters at the sound of your waterfalls. All your breakers and your waves have passed over me.</p> <p>8 By day the LORD commands his loyal love,</p>



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“Why have you forgotten me?
Why with mourning do I walk about
in the oppression of an enemy?”
10 With shattering in my bones my adversaries
have taunted me,
While they say to me all the day,
“Where is your God?”

11 Why are you bowed down, my soul?
And why are you disturbed upon me?
Wait for God
for again I will give thanks to him,
the salvations of my face and my God.

Psalm 43

1 Vindicate me, God,
And plead my case from a nation not
faithful.
From a man of deceit and injustice,
rescue me.
2 For you are the God of my refuge.
Why have you rejected me?
Why in mourning do I go about
with the oppression of enemy?
3 Send your light and your truth.
Let them lead me.
May they bring me to the mountain of your
holiness
and to your dwelling places.
4 And I will go to the altar of God,
to the God of happiness of my rejoicing.
And I will give thanks to you with lyre,
God, my God.
5 Why are you bowed down, my soul?
And why are you disturbed upon me?
Wait for God
for again I will give thanks to him,
the salvations of my face and my God.

and by night his song is with me –
a prayer to the God of my life.
9 I will say to God my Rock:
“Why have you forgotten me?
Why must I go about in mourning
because of the oppression of an
enemy?”
10 The taunts of my enemies shatter my bones,
as they say to me all day long, “Where is
your God?”
11 Why are you bowed down, my inner being?
And why are you disturbed within?
Wait for God
for I will yet praise him,
my saving presence and my God.

Psalm 43

1 Vindicate me, God,
and plead my case before an unfaithful
people,
from before a man of deceit and
injustice, rescue me.
2 For you are the God of my refuge.
Why have you rejected me?
Why must I go about in mourning
because of the oppression of an enemy?
3 Send your light and your truth.
Let them lead me.
May they bring me to your holy mountain
and to your dwelling place.
4 And let me go to the altar of God,
to God, my exceeding joy.
And I will praise you with a harp, God,
my God.
5 Why are you bowed down, my inner being?
And why are you disturbed within?
Wait for God
for I will yet praise him,
my saving presence and my God.



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Appendix B: Exegetical Layout

Psalm 42-43 is best considered to be one psalm especially because of the refrain which repeats three times (Hebrew text: 42.6, 42.12, 43.5) and this refrain is practically identical in each instance.² There are three clear stanzas in the poem (Engl versification): ST 1: 42.1-5, ST 2: 42.6-11, ST 3: 43.1-5

Ps 42 has extensive water imagery as noted in the Flower Garden in Appendix C. The water imagery does not continue into Ps 43. The metaphor of water can indicate positive or negative meanings. There are other words or expressions uniting the two psalms as the notes below will explain.

Clues within the psalm lead us to think the psalmist is in exile or at least far from home. Commentators speculate as to where and when this exile could be, but it is clear at least that the psalmist is longing to be in Jerusalem, has fond memories of being there, recalls being with God's people there, and yearns to be in God's presence near the temple.

In light of these clues the best guess is that a Levite wrote the psalm, and some of the notes will explain this. The psalmist may also be from somewhere in the region of Mount Herman near the Jordan as alluded to in the psalm. However, the psalmist does not state his precise location and may be just remembering times when he visited that region.

Ps 42 is also the start of what is called the Elohistic psalter (from Pss 42-82) or some say Pss 42-83. This is explained in the note for 42.9(8) below.

The movement of the Psalm is from "near despair to surging confidence" (WORD Commentary, p. 325), but there seems to be more intensity in Stanza 2. The first two stanzas are more classic laments with expressions of complaint yet hope and trust as the situation is laid before the Lord. The third stanza is more of a prayer or prayer-lament. It is more of a direct call to God to intervene in the psalmist's situation. But through it all, as reflected in the refrain, there is no full resolution to the ongoing struggles. It is a mix of suffering and hope/trust as in life for us all.

SUGGESTED HEADING

"Hope in God Despite Constant Problems," "The Prayer of a Man Far from Home," "Yearning for God" (Ross), "Desire for God and his Temple" (TH), or "Why Are You Cast Down, O My Soul?" (ESV).

² Schökel argues strongly for unity of the two Psalms (Schökel). It appears that at some point in history, the psalm was divided into two different psalms. But note that there is no superscription for Ps 43. This indicates a possible connectedness to Ps 42. The same thing happens with Pss 9-10 (a superscription in the first psalm but not in the second). However, NICOT (p. 404) gives a strong argument for regarding Ps 42 and Ps 43 as "distinct compositions".



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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 מְשָׁכִיל לְבְנֵי־קֹרַח:	1 <i>For the director of music maskil³ of (by the) sons of Korah.⁴</i>
2 בְּאֵיל תְּעַרְגַּ עַל־אֲפִיקֵי־מַיִם	1 As (a) deer ⁵ thirsts for upon streams of water ⁶
3 בֶּן נַפְשִׁי תְעַרְגַּ אֵלַי אֱלֹהִים:	so soul my ⁷ thirsts for ⁸ to you (o) God. ⁹
3 צִמְאָה נַפְשִׁי לְאֱלֹהִים לְאֵל חַי	2 Thirsts soul my for God ¹⁰ for God (El) living ¹¹

³ MASKIL can be translated “contemplative song” (Tree of Life version) or “instruction” (Int Std Version) or “skillful” psalm (Expanded Bible) or “well-written” psalm (NET). The meaning of this word is unknown but these guesses are based on the consonants “S...K...L” which often indicate a general meaning of “to have insight, wisdom, understanding or to act prudently”. The “M...” gives it a nominative idea.

⁴ See Introductory material for deeper insight into the “director of music”, MIKTAM and “the sons of Korah”.

⁵ אֵיל is a masculine noun which can mean “hart” (m) or “hind” (f) but is best translated by the more general word “deer”. Similes can often mark the beginning of a stanza in Hebrew poetry (TH). We can see here how the simile “as a deer” has that function here.

⁶ There are many references to water or lack of water in Psalm 42 (see Appendix C). APHYAK “channels” (often) is better translated in more general form of “streams” for this context. APHYAK in many contexts seems to refer to ravines (narrow gorges) in wilderness places where water often flows at certain times of the year like wadis. This implies drought conditions and a desperate search for water (see Kidner, TOTC).

⁷ NAPSHI here, often translated “my soul” in English is better thought of as “my whole being” (see EBT, p. 381), a way of referencing oneself. This includes but is not limited to what we call “the soul”. “heart” and “I” are other options for “my soul” in Pss 42-43 (7 references to this expression). See GNB, NLT, CEV, and NET for various ways of translating “my soul” in Pss 42-43.

⁸ ARAK “thirst” can also be translated “longs for” or “pants”. It is often used in the Psalms as a longing or thirsting after God in drought conditions (see note above for word ‘streams’) as in this psalm, often as here, with water in the context.

⁹ ELOHIM is a general reference for God, often the “God of Creation”. See the note in verse 9(8) which discusses the frequent use of EL and ELOHIM and infrequent use of YHWH in this psalm (1x in Pss 42-43)

¹⁰ There is much repetition from the previous verse: a) “thirsting” (but with the more general verb here: TSAMAH) b) “my whole being” c) ELOHIM. Such repetition underlines the theme of a desperate seeking after God by the psalmist.

¹¹ The psalmist switches from ELOHIM to EL probably for stylistic reasons or is using a set personal expression EL HAY. ELOHIM had already been stated twice in the immediate context. ELOHIM HAY and EL HAY both appear in the Hebrew OT with ELOHIM HAY appearing more frequently. You could translate here as “the God of life”.





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מְתִי אָבוּא וְאַרְאָה פְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים:	when will.I.come and .will.I.appear the.face.of.(presence) ¹² God.
4 הֵיִתָּה-לִּי דְמַעְתִּי לֶחֶם יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה	3 Have.been -for.me tears.my (as).food by.day and.night, ¹³
בְּאָמַר אֵלַי כָּל-הַיּוֹם אֵינָהּ אֱלֹהֶיךָ:	when.saying to.me all-the.day where.(is) God.your?
5 אֵלֶּה אֶזְכְּרָה	4 These I. will.remember
וְאֶשְׁפֹּךְ עָלַי נַפְשִׁי	and.(as).I. will.pour.out ¹⁴ upon.me soul.my
כִּי אֶעֱבֹר בְּסֻדָּךְ	for(how) I.(used.to.)go with.the.crowd ¹⁵
אֲדַדִּים עַד-בַּיִת אֱלֹהִים	I.(used.to).lead.them ¹⁶ to-(the).house.of God
בְּקוֹל-רִנָּה וְתוֹדָה	with.sound.of-(a).shout.of.joy and.thanksgiving,
הַמִּזְוֹן הַזֶּה:	(a).multitude doing.festival ¹⁷
6 מֵ-תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לִּי נַפְשִׁי	5 (for).what-you. are.bowed.down ¹⁸ (o).soul.my?

¹² “before the face of God” refers to the longing of the psalmist to be in God’s **presence**.

¹³ Hyperbole here, as is often the case in poetry. “Day and night” means “constantly” or “all the time”. Note how the watery metaphor of tears turns the direction of the psalm from neutral or positive (thirsting for water) to a more negative image of sorrow. This image of suffering or persecution continues and build throughout stanza 1 and stanza 2. Tears as food can be a difficult image. Since tears are not strictly food, some languages need to clarify by saying: “My tears are all I can drink” (TH).

¹⁴ The verb SHAPHAQ “pour out” typically refers to water (thus the water metaphor continues) or blood. Here it is used figuratively to bringing out the psalmist’s requests with all his energy or focused attention before God.

¹⁵ The word SAK occurs only here in the Hebrew OT. The meaning is unsure, but most take it to mean “crowd(s)” (Futato, p. 158).

¹⁶ “leading” others to “God’s house” during the “festival” indicates that the psalmist is a Levite who guided others in worship (see argument for “Levite” in 43.5 note only “lyre”). Probably the idea is “leading them in procession” (see Guide translation 2 and the ESV – supported by HOTP). The festival in mind is certainly one of the three major festivals for the faithful to attend each year (Deut. 16: Unleavened Bread/Passover, First Fruits, Booths/Ingathering). “used to” fits well in a reflective context.

¹⁷ This is the standard Masoretic text interpretation. A major English version (NIV) follows the LXX, Syriac tradition: “how I used to go to the house of God under the protection of the Mighty One”. There are rare words in this verse, and it is difficult to interpret, but leading the multitude in procession in God’s temple during the feast time makes very good sense in this context and is the favored translation by commentaries and translations. “used to” fits well in a reflective context.

¹⁸ SHIYAKH “sink down” or “cast down”. The figure of speech here refers to being “depressed”, “downcast”, or “discouraged”.



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APP. A



APP. B

וְתַהַמִּי טָלִי	And.(for.what).you.(are).disturbed ¹⁹ upon.me ²⁰
הוֹתִילִי לְאֱלֹהִים	Wait.(Hope) for.God
כִּי-עוֹד אוֹדְנֹו	for.again I.will.give.thanks.to.(praise).him
יְשׁוּעוֹת פְּנֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי:	(the).salvations.of face.my.(presence) and God.my. ²¹
7 עָלַי נַפְשִׁי תִשָּׁתַח	6 Upon.me soul.my (is).bowed.down. ²²
עַל-כֵּן אֶזְכְּרֶךָ מֵאֶרֶץ יַרְדֵּן	Upon-thus.(Therefore) I.will.remember.you from.(the).land.of Jordan ²³
וְחַרְמוֹנִים מִהַר מִצָּר:	and.(of.the).Hermons ²⁴ from.(the).mountain.of Mitsar ²⁵

¹⁹ HAMAH “growl”, “astir”. The is a word pair in the parallelism with SHIYAKH mentioned in 6a(5a). The idea is “turmoil” within, being “perturbed” or “upset”.

²⁰ This refrain (v6 Heb, v5 Eng) is repeated three times in Pss 42-43 and is a key to unlocking the meaning of the psalms. There are ongoing tensions of turmoil or depression because of the current situation (negative), but a robust faith and hope in the God who saves (positive). It is the same in each faithful believer’s life (cf. “for those who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” – 2 TIM 3.12).

²¹ Lit. “the salvations of his presence”. Some versions take the beginning of the next verse and put it here (see the parallel refrain in v 12/11): “my Savior and my God” (NIV, NLT, HCSB, GNB). Other renderings are: a) “praise him, my salvation and my God” b) “my saving presence and my God” (Comm Engl Bible) c) “for his saving intervention” (NET). Choice b seems to capture the uniqueness of the phrase, especially with the idea of God’s face/presence. (See Guide translation 2 in Appendix A.). On the other hand, the Masoretic text and some translations say: “v5 ...for the help of His presence. v6 My God, ...” (NASB) This interpretation is supported by Goldingay (p. 147) who interprets here a slight difference in the refrain because of artistic variation (Van Gemeren agrees, p.384).

²² The repetition of SHIYAKH “sink down” or “cast down” underlines this negative ongoing emotion of the psalmist who is quite transparent here. It prepares the way for the heightened feeling of turbulence in the next verse.

²³ It is hard to exactly understand why the geographical references are made. They seem to be shaped by the psalmist’s experience of closeness with God in the past as he remembers how he felt.

²⁴ This refers principally to Mount Hermon, the highest mountain in the region. The plural “Hermons” probably refers to Mount Hermon and the smaller mountains around it. See Hebrew-tight version.

²⁵ Mount Mizar is unknown, but most commentators translate it as such. MITSAR can mean “little” so some translations call it the “Little Mountain” (Français Courant) or the “hill Mizar” (NKJV) or “from the foothills” (Int’l Std Vers).



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APP. A



APP. B

8 תְּהוֹם־אֶל־תְּהוֹם קוֹרָא לְקוֹל צְנוּרִיךָ	7 deep ²⁶ -to-deep is.calling to.(the).sound.of waterfalls.your. ²⁷
כָּל־מִשְׁבְּרֵיךָ וְגַלֵּיךָ עָלַי עָבְרוּ:	All-breakers.your and.waves.your ²⁸ over.me (they).passed-over.
9 יוֹמָם יַעֲזֶה יְהוָה חֲסִדּוֹ	8 By.day commands ²⁹ the.LORD ³⁰ loyal.love ³¹ .his
וּבַלַּיְלָה שִׁירָה עִמִּי	and.in.night song.his (is).with.me, ³²
תְּפִלָּה לְאֵל חַיִּי:	(a).prayer to.(the).God.(El).of life.my ³³
10 אֹמְרָה לְאֵל סִלְעִי	9 I.will.say to.God.(El) rock.my ³⁴
לָמָּה שָׁכַחְתָּנִי	why you.have.forgotten.me?
לָמָּה־קִדְרָ אֶלֶף בְּלַחֲץ אוֹיֵב:	why-mourning I.walk.(about)

²⁶ TAHOM “waters of chaos” or “the deep”. “Deep calling to deep” is a powerful image of chaotic waters which symbolically represent the psalmist’s difficult situation. TAHOM is used throughout Scripture (ex., Gen. 1.2) to show deep waters or the chaotic forces of evil, and Scripture typically shows God triumphing over TAHOM (which was probably personified often in ancient thought).

²⁷ TSINOR “waterfalls” or “waterspouts” is a rare word with uncertain meaning. There is a root meaning of “pipes” or “conduits”, so waterspouts appears preferable, but waterfalls is typically translated.

²⁸ MISHBAR “breakers (of the sea)” and GAL “waves/billows (of the sea)”. The watery images of “the chaotic waters”, “waterspouts”, “breakers” and “waves” augment the feeling of being overwhelmed in the situation. Trials can come like that in the faithful believer’s life. Powerful poetry here.

²⁹ This is an unusual use of the verb “commands” and most translations do not translate literally but say something like “sends”, “shows”, and “directs” which are all more natural than “commands” but includes an idea of God’s initiative, almost in the sense of guidance. There seems to be an echo here of how God directed Israel through the wilderness “by day” and “by night”. God’s direction in the midst of confusion in life is a comforting thought.

³⁰ The only time YHWH appears in Ps 42-43. Psalm 42-43 is part of what is called the Elohist Psalter (Pss 42-82) where the name EL or ELOHIM dominates, but YHWH is not absent. This verse is the central point (climax or peak) of Ps 42. YHWH and HESED are mentioned, there is a tri-colon pattern, and there are no finite verbs. This verse also reflects the psalmist’s persistence through prayer to God and singing to him (or remembering songs) in the night in spite of difficulties. The refrain (42.6, 42.12, and 43.5) also reflects a clinging to God in spite of suffering or persecution.

³¹ God’s covenant love or graciousness/kindness or loyal love or unfailing love. The idea of God’s faithfulness or loyalty could well be the focus here and the psalmist’s trust in that faithfulness of God.

³² “song with me in the night” is a beautiful image of God’s continual presence for the psalmist.

³³ The EL HAYI “EL of my life” echoes the EL HAY of v 3 (2) in this psalm but is now personalized: not “the living God” (v 3/2), but “the God of my life” (NIV, ESV, etc.) or “my living God” (NCV) in this verse or “the God who gives me life” (TH).

³⁴ “God is my rock” is a common image in the Psalms (Ps 18.1). In this verse, coming after the turbulence of v8 (7) and the foundational concepts of v9 (8) seems to reinforce the idea of stability in God despite the chaotic situation.



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APP. A



APP. B

	in.(the).oppression.of (an).enemy? ³⁵
11 בְּרֵצַח בְּעֲצְמוֹתַי חֲרָפוּנִי צוֹרְרֵי	10 with.shattering in.bones.my ³⁶ have.taunted.me adversaries.my
בְּאִמְרָם אֵלַי כָּל־הַיּוֹם אַיֵּה אֱלֹהֵי־ד:	when.(while).they.say to.me all.the.day where.(is) God.your?
12 מֵה־תִּשְׁתַּחֲוִי נַפְשִׁי	11 (for).what ³⁷ - you.are.bowed.down (o).soul.my?
וּמֵה־תִּהְיֶה לִּי עָלַי	And.(for).what-are.you.disturbed upon.me
הוֹחֲלִי לְאֱלֹהִים	Wait.(Hope) for.God
כִּי־עוֹד אֲוֹדֶנּוּ	for-again I.will.give.thanks.to (praise).him,
יְשׁוּעַת פָּנָי וְאֱלֹהֵי:	(the).salvations.of face.my(presence) and.God.my.
Psalm 43	
1 שְׁפֹטֵנִי אֱלֹהִים	1 Vindicate.me ³⁸ (o).God
וְרִיבָה רִיבִי מִגּוֹי לֹא־חָסִיד	and.plead case.my ³⁹ from.(a).nation not-faithful ⁴⁰
מֵאִישׁ־מִרְמָה וְעוֹלָה תִּפְלֹטֵנִי:	from.(a).man.of-deceit ⁴¹ and.injustice ⁴² rescue.me
2 כִּי־אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵי מְעוֹדִי	2 for-you (are.the).God.of refuge.my ⁴³

³⁵ This verse is very similar to Ps 43.2 (different verbal form). It explains how the psalmist is living in lament.

³⁶ “with shattering of my bones” is fronted for emphasis. It is hyperbolic as their mocking words crush him.

³⁷ This refrain is virtually the same as v 6(5) (see notes above) of this psalm and Ps 43.5.

³⁸ SHAPHAT “vindicate” could be translated “grant me your justice” (New Cath Bible) or “declare me innocent” (NLT, GNB). The psalmist of Pss 42-43 gets more specific in his petition/supplication before God.

³⁹ “Plead my cause” can be used as legal language like in “plead my case”. But it can have a more general meaning of striving and pleading for someone. Probably this is elevated language where the psalmist appeals to God’s sovereignty and power to act on his behalf against his enemies. This is a common metaphor in the Psalms.

⁴⁰ KHASID “godly” The one who is KHASID is godly, faithfully devoted to God’s service, pious. The root idea comes from KHESED “loyal love” an idea deeply connected to God’s covenant faithfulness.

⁴¹ MIRMAH “deceit” or “treachery”. For example, the word is used when Jacob deceives Esau (GEN 27.35) and when Jacob’s sons deceive the Shechemites (GEN 34.13).

⁴² AVLAH “unjust” or “unrighteous” or “wrong”. It is often translated “sinful” which would work here. “From deceitful and unrighteous men” is fronted for emphasis. Or it could be “an ungodly nation” (TH).

⁴³ ME’UZ “refuge” is a “safe place”. It has also been translated “safe haven” (NLT), “protector” (GNB), “stronghold”, or “the God who shelters me” (NET)



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APP. A



APP. B

לָמָּה זָנַחְתָּנִי	why you.have.rejected ⁴⁴ .me?
לָמָּה-קָדַר אֶתְהַלֵּךְ בְּלַחַץ אוֹיֵב:	Why-mourning I.go.about with.(the).oppression.of (an).enemy? ⁴⁵
3 שְׁלַח-אוֹרְךָ וְאִמְתָּךְ	3 Send.(out)-light.your and.truth.your ⁴⁶
הִמָּה יִנְהוּגֵנִי	They (let).lead.me.
יְבִיאֵנִי אֶל-הַר-קֹדֶשְׁךָ וְאֶל-מִשְׁכְּנֹתֶיךָ:	(let).bring.me to-mountain.of-holiness.your ⁴⁷
	and.to-dwelling.places.your
4 וְאֶבְוָאָה אֶל-מִזְבֵּחַ אֱלֹהִים	4 And.(then).I.will.go to-altar.of God
אֶל-אֵל שְׂמֵחַת גִּילִי	to.God(El) happiness.of rejoicing.my ⁴⁸
וְאוֹדֶךָ בְּכִנּוֹר אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵי:	and.I.will.give thanks.to(praise).you with.lyre ⁴⁹ (o).God God.my
5 מַה-תִּשְׁתַּוְּחָתִי נַפְשִׁי	5 (for).what-you.are.bowed.down (o).soul.my?
וּמַה-תִּהְיֶמְנִי טָלִי	And.(for)what-are.you.disturbed upon.me?
הוֹתִילִי לְאֱלֹהִים	Wait.(Hope) for.God

⁴⁴ ZANAH “reject” or “spurn”. Being rejected by God can be for a certain length of time, not forever (LAM 3.31). This can be a feeling of temporary rejection (spurn) or for disciplinary reasons. Although feeling rejected the psalmist continues to hope (refrain) and trust (ex., Ps 42.9[8]).

⁴⁵ Ps 43:2CD is very close to Ps 42:10C[9C]. This echo ties together Pss 42-43. (as well as the refrain that was already mentioned).

⁴⁶ A unique request in Scripture. “Sending light” probably is in a sense of revelation (for leading him on the right path). “Sending truth” could refer back to Ps 43.1 of asking for vindication (ex., letting your truth become known for my situation). More generally, the word-pair of sending “light and truth” could be a poetic way of asking for God’s help and insight. The word pair is personified here... “to lead me” which implies the presence of God. If the words are too abstract in your language you can say: “show your light to me and speak your truth” (TH).

⁴⁷ The “mountain of your holiness” is Mount Zion. The psalmist is probably a Levite (see 43.4 note on “lyre”). Refer to Ps 42.5 lines C and D (leading others to the sanctuary at the holy festival time” – see notes there). If “your holy hill” is not possible you can say “the hill which belongs only to you” (TH).

⁴⁸ God and his presence is clearly the psalmist’s emphasis. “happiness of my rejoicing” is an emphatic way of talking about joy. It can be translated as: 1) “to God, my greatest joy” (ChrStdBib) 2) “to God, my joy and my delight.” (NIV) 3) “to God—the source of all my joy” (NLT – but GNB is similar).

⁴⁹ KINOR “lyre” is probably a stringed instrument of wood with 4 to 8 strings, perhaps like a zither. There is uncertainty to exactly what it may have looked like (some interpreters call it a harp). In worship the Levites were traditionally the ones who played this instrument so this would affirm that the psalmist was probably a Levite. However, since David was not a Levite, and he played stringed instruments, it is not clear who else may have played the KINOR “lyre” or other stringed instruments.



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APP. A



APP. B

כִּי־עוֹד אֶזְכֹּר	for-again I.will.give.thanks.to (praise).him,
יְשׁוּעַת פְּנֵי יְאֱלֹהִי:	(the).salvations.of.face.my(presence) and.God.my. ⁵⁰

BETA

⁵⁰ Third repetition of the refrain. By the time we reach the third refrain we can see that the psalmist is aware of his present reality and in distress about it, but he also maintains faith and hope in God. The two psalms show the faithfulness of this believer (Levite perhaps), his hunger for God, his desire for God's presence especially in the temple, his suffering, his piety, his uprightness, his creativity in worship, and his dependence on the LORD.