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# Psalm 13

## 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:

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

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

## ENGAGING WITH THE WHOLE PSALM

**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?*

### Theme and flow of the psalm

In Psalm 13, an unknown psalmist expresses his (or her?) anguish to the LORD about some unresolved situation we don't know. This anguish and lament turns to intense and desperate prayer if the LORD does not bring the desired change, death and shame will then result. Then the psalmist unexpectedly turns to statements of confidence that the answer from God will indeed come and abundance of blessing will be enjoyed. The cause of the lament has not yet been removed, but in faith, the psalmist believes a positive outcome will come.

### Emotions in Psalm 13

It is important to map the different emotions in this psalm, such as complaint, despair, earnestness, and confidence. What emotions do you discern here?

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

### The peak in Psalm 13

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





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### What is the significance of Psalm 13? What did the psalmist want to achieve?

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

### Historical setting of this psalm

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

In this psalm, however, it may very well be that the darkness the psalmist is experiencing in the first three verses is a case of prolonged spiritual anguish. The cause of this anguish we are not told. Postponed fulfillment of a certain hope of which he has certainty of the promise, with the last two verses regaining that hope that remains unfulfilled, nevertheless. The climax of the psalm is the three imperatives of verse 4: "*Notice me, answer me, give light to my eyes*". That light in his eyes, a renewed hope, happens in verses 5-6.

The feeling of being cut off from the Lord, the "*struggling with his soul*" of verse 2, the sorrow, the fear that his enemy is about to completely overcome him, reinforce the idea of intense anxiety. But that anxiety turns to intense petition and ends in great confidence. There is a strong contrast in this psalm.

Some background ideas of the psalm will help us to understand the psalm:

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

### How does this psalm point to Christ and the New Testament?

Our Lord Christ also agonized over unfulfilled desires, like his lament over unrepentant Jerusalem, or the slowness of his disciples to understand things.

He may also have prayed similar words when he faced his suffering, perhaps in the Garden of Gethsemane, groaning for relief of the sorrow to come.



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Finally, the confidence of a good final outcome in the middle of pain and sorrow is also typical of the unwavering trust of Jesus in his Father. He more than anybody else truly trusted and lived verses 5-6.

## UNLOCKING SOME OF THE BIG PICTURE OBSTACLES TO THE PSALM

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

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

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

## SEGMENTATION OF THE PSALM

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

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

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

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

## FINAL SUMMING UP

To summarise the Psalm, discuss the following questions:

- In summary, what is the main point/message of the psalm?  
*The psalmist is despairing because of suffering and feeling distant from the LORD. But there is hope of salvation.*
- What does this Psalm teach you about the LORD?



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*The LORD can change these despondent moods; He gives hope.*

- How could your church (or you) use this psalm?  
*The church can help people who are despondent by going through this psalm. Depressed people can use these same words in prayer.*
- What heading or title would the group suggest for this psalm?  
*“How long, o Lord!”*



## Step 3: Internalise

Absorbing the big picture of the psalm

‘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



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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)



## 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.

There are several poetic devices to investigate here in Psalm 134:

#### 1. Repetition

Look at the Flower Garden in Appendix C for an overview of the repetitions. Give special attention to the four-fold repetition of *how long* and the double repetition of *if not/lest*. Do not hesitate to use repetition in your translation.

#### 2. Shifts

**Activity:** in the segmentation of the psalm (see above under Step 2), two stanza breaks have been identified. Look at them again, and discuss how this shift has been indicated in the wording of the Hebrew-mirror.

#### 3. Figures of speech

**Activity:** try to identify the few figures of speech in this psalm. There are about three or four, not many.

#### 4. Word order and clause order

**Activity:** there are a few word order frontings in this psalm. Find them in the Hebrew-mirror and discuss how you might translate them.



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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).



### 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).



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## 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 make suggestions to other groups when you come together...

### Stanza 1: Verse 1-2 - Sharp complaint

<p><b>1 Until when, YHWH, will you forget me?</b> Forever?</p> <p><b>Until when</b> will you hide your face from me?</p> <p><b>2 Until when</b> will I set counsels in my whole being, sorrow in my heart by day.</p> <p><b>Until when</b> will my enemy be lifted up against me?</p>	<p>1 O LORD, how long? Will you forget me forever?</p> <p>How long will you hide your face from me?</p> <p>2 How long must I have anxiety in my being, have sorrow in my heart all the day?</p> <p>How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?</p>
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#### Discuss:

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

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

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

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

### Stanza 2: Verses 3-4: Vigorous plea

<p>3 Pay attention, answer me, YHWH my God; give my eyes light. Lest/If not, I would sleep the death.</p>	<p>3 O Lord my God, pay attention, answer me; give (the) light (of life) to my eyes. If not, I will sleep the sleep of death.</p>
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4 Lest/if not, my enemy says, "I have defeated him",

**My foes** they rejoice that I am shaken.

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

my foes will rejoice because I totter.

#### Discuss:

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

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

- What changes in verse 3, after the cries of "*how long*"?
- In verses 3-4, the psalmist utters a desperate plea for help. He uses three verbs. List these three verbs and discuss them. And then, consider the *order* they are in. Can they be in a different order?
- "*light to my eyes*": this idiom refers to a God-given joy in living, to health and well-being at a spiritual as well as a physical level. Together, in your own language, look for an idiom about 'eyes', or a reference to brightness or to light, which might give the same sort of idea. Play around here. Which idioms in your language do you have that could be used here? Try a few.
- In verses 3-4, the poet gives strong reasons for the Lord to come and intervene. He presents three reasons, two of which start with "*if not, lest*". The third *least* is implicit in the Hebrew and left implied in most translations, although it's spelled out in the ESV and in various forms in GNB, NLT, etc. What are these three consequences the psalmist foresees?
- This psalm contains some complex sayings, like "*I take counsel with my soul*" (verse 2) and "*sleep the sleep of death*". Compare other translation versions. NIV has "*I wrestle with my thoughts*" (verse 2). It might be worth asking the participants to explore together whether they can find, in their own language, an idiom about 'eyes' or a reference to brightness or light that might convey the same idea.
- What do these expressions mean to you? Discuss them in your group.
- Why do you think the poet said that he is going to die unless Yahweh answers him? It is serious to say that he is going to die. Or is it just overstating something, exaggerating?
- Notice the word order of the *foes* put in front in v4b. It is a way to put focus on *foes*. The second line in the parallelism of v4 is an intensification. The psalmist already mentioned what the enemy will say. Now he reinforces it and intensifies it by not only saying something, but actually *rejoicing* in the result. How can you bring out this intensification and focus in your language? Fronting is the Hebrew way, and in some languages fronting will also work. But maybe there is another way, like "*Those very foes! They will even rejoice while I am about to fall!*" Discuss it.
- What does it mean to be *shaken* or to *totter*? Afraid? Cold? About to topple over? How would you say that in your language?

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



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### Stanza 3: Verses 5-6: Joyous confidence

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

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

#### Discuss:

- In verse 5, the mood of the psalm changes. The shift of the theme from complaint and pleading to thanksgiving and praise in verse 5 is stark and unexpected. How do you think the last stanza (vv 5-6) of trust and praise relates to the first two stanzas of despair and pleading? Discuss this in your group, taking your time. This is important. At first it was almost despair, a crisis. What is happening now?
- How will you best express this shift from despair and pleading to praise in a poem of your language?
- *I rejoice in your salvation* means I rejoice because you saved me. However, *save* has a special meaning: it does not, in the first place, mean eternal salvation, but being vindicated, being restored, being in a place where everything has been put right, where there is *shalom* (peace).

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

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

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

- The reason for all the confidence is given right at the end of the psalm: *for he has dealt bountifully with me*. It refers to the LORD's generosity of favour and blessings guaranteed in the covenant. It has a sense of abundance, of overflow. Discuss if this reason for his confidence should be in the beginning or the end of the stanza.
- In the middle of this last stanza\*, there is a shift from the 2nd Person Singular "you", God being addressed, to 3rd Person Singular, "he", describing, praising God, celebrating. this shift from the 2nd Person to the 3rd Person in the middle of a stanza is quite unique to Hebrew poetry. Skim your poems in your local poetry and look for similar instances.

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

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



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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 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:

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



## Step 8: Poetry Check

Compare and weigh the poetic features

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:

- Idioms for v3 maybe?





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



## Step 9: Finalise

Preparing the final version of an authenticated translation

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.



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## 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:**

- ...

**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><i>To the choirmaster, psalm to David.</i></p> <p>1 <b>Until when</b>, YHWH, will you forget me? Forever?</p> <p><b>Until when</b> will you hide your face from me?</p> <p>2 <b>Until when</b> will I set counsels in my whole being, sorrow in my heart day.</p> <p><b>Until-when</b> will my enemy be lifted up against me?</p> <p>3 Pay attention, answer me, YHWH my God; give my eyes light. If not, I would sleep the death.</p> <p>4 If not, my enemy says "I have defeated him", <b>My foes</b> they rejoice that I am shaken.</p> <p>5 But <b>I, in your HESED</b> I have trusted, rejoice my heart in your salvation.</p> <p>6 Let me sing to YHWH, for He has dealt abundantly with me.</p>	<p>To the choirmaster, a psalm of David.</p> <p>1 O LORD, how long? Will you forget me forever?</p> <p>How long will you hide your face from me?</p> <p>2 How long must I have anxiety in my being, have sorrow in my heart day by day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?</p> <p>3 O Lord my God, pay attention, answer me! Give the light of life in my eyes! If not, I will sleep the sleep of death.</p> <p>4 If not, my enemy will say, "I have defeated him," my foes! They will rejoice because I totter.</p> <p>5 But as for me, in your covenant love I have trusted; my heart will rejoice in your salvation.</p> <p>6 I will sing to the LORD, because He has dealt generously with me.</p>





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## Appendix B: Exegetical Layout

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

### SUGGESTED HEADING

A prayer pleading for help

#### Coding for TAM Verbs and Hebrew features:

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

לְמַנְצֵחַ מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד	To.the.choirmaster, a.psalms of.David.
עַד-אֲנָהּ יְהוָה תִּשְׁכַּחַנִּי נָצַח	1 <b>Until-when</b> <sup>1</sup> , YHWH <sup>2</sup> , will.you.forget.me? Forever <sup>3</sup> ?
עַד-אֲנָהּ תִּסְתִּיר אֶת-פְּנֵיךָ מִמֶּנִּי:	<b>Until-when</b> will.you.hide your.face from.me <sup>4</sup> ?

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

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

<sup>3</sup> Here is NETSACH 'forever, permanently', and in v2 has YOMAM \* 'day by day', thus in parallel.

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





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עַד־אָנָה אֲשִׁית עֵצוֹת בְּנַפְשִׁי	2 <b>Until-when</b> will.I.set counsels <sup>5</sup> in.NEPHESH.my, <sup>6</sup>
יִגֹן בְּלִבִּי יוֹמָם	sorrow <sup>7</sup> (will be) in.heart.my day <sup>8</sup> ?
עַד־אָנָה יָרוּם אִיבֵי עָלָי:	<b>Until-when</b> will.he.be.lifted.up enemy.my against.me?
הַבִּיטָה עֲנֵנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי	3 Consider <sup>9</sup> , answer.me <sup>10</sup> YHWH my.God
הָאֵירָה עֵינַי פֶּן־אִישָׁן הַמּוֹת:	give.light eyes.my <sup>11</sup> If.not-I.would.sleep the.death <sup>12</sup> .
פֶּן־יֹאמֵר אִיבֵי יִבְלָתִיו	4 If.not-he.will.say enemy.my <sup>13</sup> "I.have.prevailed.over.him", <sup>14</sup>

<sup>5</sup> "Councils" also means plans (AM).

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

<sup>7</sup> "Until-when" is assumed here, too.

<sup>8</sup> *By day*: the adverbial use of a noun like this is difficult. There are a few valid options worth a footnote at least: (a) by day, during the day; (b) day to day; (c) for a day. The durative nature of the questions עַד־אָנָה probably rules out (c). Option (a) implies the anxiety is only during the day, which would be strange for the Psalms, when mostly anxiety comes at night. Or it could mean even in daytime, I am sorrowful, when I am normally not supposed to be so anguished. The best option is probably (b), even though we would normally expect יוֹם וַיּוֹם, as in Ps 19:2 [3].

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

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

<sup>11</sup> "Give light to my eyes" means bringing joy and revival to the person, to his face. If is not referring to death, it more likely means bringing radiance, vitality, resilience (AM). In the text translation, consider keeping the Hebrew idiom if possible (if it makes any sense). Otherwise, consider the guide translation's rendering: *give the light of life in my eyes*. In the oral performance versions, feel free to bring out the different interpretations.

<sup>12</sup> Sleep here is equalled with death, a clear Biblical idiom.

<sup>13</sup> He is not praying for his enemy's destruction but for his frustration (AM).

<sup>14</sup> Or "prevail over".



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צָרִי יִגִּילוּ כִּי אָמוּט:	my.foes <sup>15</sup> , they.will.rejoice that <sup>16</sup> I.totter <sup>17</sup> .
וְאֲנִי בְּחַסְדֶּךָ בָּטַחְתִּי	5 But <sup>18</sup> .I <sup>19</sup> , in.HESED.your <sup>20</sup> I.have.trusted, <sup>21</sup>
יִגַּל לְבִי בִישׁוּעָתֶךָ	it.wants.to.rejoice <sup>22</sup> heart.my in.salvation.your <sup>23</sup>
אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה כִּי גָמַל עָלַי:	6 Let.me.sing <sup>24</sup> to.YHWH for <sup>25</sup> He.has.dealt.abundantly <sup>26</sup> with.me. <sup>27</sup>

<sup>15</sup> “Lest, if not” is assumed here, too.

<sup>16</sup> Note the contrasting phrases with כִּי (‘that, for, because’): one gives the reason for the enemy’s rejoicing (v.4), the other gives the reason for the person’s praise (v.6). כִּי can be temporal as well as causal or (as you have here) epexegetical.

<sup>17</sup> “when I totter” to maintain the unreal mood. Note the assonance between מוֹת in the previous verse and מוֹט here. They are very hard to distinguish aurally.

<sup>18</sup> “And” instead of “but” can be equally effective: not contrast is emphasized, but in addition to the despair there is hope and rejoicing with singing (AM).

<sup>19</sup> This fronted “I” marks a sharp break: My situation is still terrible. My complaint and my plea stand, but here is what I am going to continue to do...

<sup>20</sup> This psalm enriches our understanding of HESED: it creates a confidence to complain.

<sup>21</sup> Two verbs in this final section are past tense (*trust, dealt abundantly*); David is so sure of rescue that he speaks of it as already done.

<sup>22</sup> “my heart will rejoice” means ‘I am choosing to rejoice from my heart’. The verb, in technical terms, is an unambiguous jussive\*. Jussive is 3<sup>rd</sup> person volitive, expressing what a person wants to happen – either a wish (request) or a decision. (It is unusual to use 3<sup>rd</sup> person to express a decision, but this is poetry.)

<sup>23</sup> “I will rejoice ... in your salvation” means I will rejoice when you save me. However, *save* does not mean eternal salvation, but rescue from trouble. It simply means *rescue* in the OT, being vindicated, being restored, being in a place where everything has been put right, where there is *shalom* (peace), now, here in this life. The NT has given this concept a special meaning. As with other laments, the person is still in his trouble, so God’s rescue is still in the future.

<sup>24</sup> “Let me sing” is an unambiguous cohortative. Cohortative is 1<sup>st</sup> person volitive, expressing what a person wants to happen – either a wish (or request such as ‘may we’ or ‘let us’) or a decision (‘I shall’, ‘we shall’).

<sup>25</sup> The “for” here can mean a reason (‘because, for’) or epexegetical (a comment; “let me sing that He dealt abundantly...”)

<sup>26</sup> How best to translate גָּמַל is not easy. The root means to *wean* or to *repay*. If the former, perhaps “he has dealt abundantly” as in the way a parent deals with a child. If the latter then “reward” would be better. Ps 142:8 is a parallel.

<sup>27</sup> The “against.me” (2c) and “with.me” (6) ending stanzas 1 and 3 are the same in Hebrew. They highlight the emotional contrast and create here a sense of conclusion.



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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:

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

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

### Psalm 13

*To the choirmaster, a psalm of David.*

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

How long will you hide your face from me?

2 How long must I have counsels in my soul?

Sorrow is in my heart all the day.

How long shall be exalted my enemy over me?

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

Give light to my eyes,

If not, I will sleep the sleep of death,

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

my foes will rejoice because I am tottering.

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

my heart will rejoice in your salvation.

6 I will sing to the LORD,

because he has dealt bountifully with me.

