

tory of the people Israel that serve as models for the future. From this perspective, it was only natural to expect that succeeding layers of that history would include references to earlier acts of divine redemption. This layering of memory is an es-

sential feature of Jewish cultural consciousness and its ongoing self-identity. Recitation of these events in the synagogue transfers them to new generations, deepening the shared past and its central images.

22 David addressed the words of this song to the LORD, after the LORD had saved him from the hands of all his enemies and from the hands of Saul. ²He said:

O LORD, my crag, my fastness, my deliverer!

³O God, the rock wherein I take shelter:

My shield, my mighty champion, my fortress and refuge!

My savior, You who rescue me from violence!

⁴All praise! I called on the LORD,
And I was delivered from my enemies.

⁵For the breakers of Death encompassed me,
The torrents of Belial terrified me;

⁶The snares of Sheol encircled me,
The coils of Death engulfed me.

⁷In my anguish I called on the LORD,
Cried out to my God;
In His Abode He heard my voice,
My cry entered His ears.

⁸Then the earth rocked and quaked,
The foundations of heaven shook—
Rocked by His indignation.

⁹Smoke went up from His nostrils,
From His mouth came devouring fire;
Live coals blazed forth from Him.

כב *וַיִּדְבֹּר דָּוִד לַיהוָה אֶת־דִּבְרֵי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת בַּיּוֹם הַצֵּיל יְהוָה אֶתוֹ מִכַּף כָּל־אֹיְבָיו וּמִכַּף שָׁאוּל: ²וַיֹּאמֶר

יְהוָה סִלְעִי וּמִצְדָּתִי וּמִפְלִטִי־לִי:

³אֱלֹהֵי צוּרִי אֲחֻסָּה־בּוֹ

מִגְדִּי וְקֶרֶן יִשְׁעֵי מִשְׁגָּבִי וּמִנוֹסֵי

מִשְׁעֵי מַחְמָס תִּשְׁעֵנִי:

⁴מִהָלָל אֶקְרָא יְהוָה

וּמֵאֵיבֵי אֲנֹשֶׁעַ:

⁵כִּי אֶפְפָּנִי מִשְׁבָּרֵי־מוֹת

נַחֲלִי בְלִיעַל יִבְעֵתָנִי:

⁶חֲבָלֵי שָׁאוּל סָבְנִי

קִדְמָנִי מִקְשֵׁי־מוֹת:

⁷בַּצָּר־לִי אֶקְרָא יְהוָה

וְאֶל־אֱלֹהֵי אֶקְרָא

וַיִּשְׁמַע מִהִיכָלוֹ קוֹלִי

וַיִּשְׁוֹעַתִּי בְּאֲזִנָּיו:

⁸וַתִּגַּעַשׁ וַיִּתְגַּעַשׁ וַתִּרְעַשׁ הָאָרֶץ

מוֹסְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם יִרְגָּזוּ

וַיִּתְגַּעֲשׂוּ כִּי־חָרָה לוֹ:

⁹עָלָה עָשָׁן בְּאַפּוֹ

וְאֵשׁ מִפִּיּוֹ תֹאכַל

גִּחְלִים בָּעֵרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ:

1. בכתב היד שלנו כתוב בצורת שירה

² *Samuel 22:5-6.* Flood imagery ("breakers," "torrents") combines with figures of hunting ("snares," "coils"—that is, traps) to express the speaker's sense of overpowering and hidden dangers. The figure of Death (*mavet*) in verses 5 and

6 retains a personified quality, echoing the ancient Canaanite god Mot (death).

Death . . . Belial . . . Sheol Three names for the netherworld.

¹⁰He bent the sky and came down,
Thick cloud beneath His feet.

¹¹He mounted a cherub and flew;
He was seen on the wings of the wind.

¹²He made pavilions of darkness about Him,
Dripping clouds, huge thunderheads;

¹³In the brilliance before Him
Blazed fiery coals.

¹⁴The LORD thundered forth from heaven,
The Most High sent forth His voice;

¹⁵He let loose bolts, and scattered them;
Lightning, and put them to rout.

¹⁶The bed of the sea was exposed,
The foundations of the world were laid bare
By the mighty roaring of the LORD,
At the blast of the breath of His nostrils.

¹⁷He reached down from on high, He took
me,

Drew me out of the mighty waters;

¹⁸He rescued me from my enemy so strong,
From foes too mighty for me.

¹⁹They attacked me on my day of calamity,
But the LORD was my stay.

²⁰He brought me out to freedom,
He rescued me because He was pleased with
me.

²¹The LORD rewarded me according to my
merit,

He requited the cleanness of my hands.

²²For I have kept the ways of the LORD
And have not been guilty before my God;

²³I am mindful of all His rules
And have not departed from His laws.

²⁴I have been blameless before Him,
And have guarded myself against sinning—

²⁵And the LORD has requited my merit,
According to my purity in His sight.

¹⁰וַיִּט שָׁמַיִם וַיֵּרֶד

וַעֲרַפֵּל תַּחַת רַגְלָיו:

¹¹וַיִּרְכַּב עַל־כְּרֹוב וַיַּעֲף

וַיֵּרָא עַל־כַּנְפֵי־רוּחַ:

¹²וַיֵּשֶׁת חֹשֶׁךְ סְבִיבֹתָיו סְבֹת

חֲשֶׁרֶת־מַיִם עָבִי שְׁחָקִים:

¹³מִנְגִּה נִגְדוּ

בָּעֵרוֹ גִּחְלִי־אֵשׁ:

¹⁴וַיִּרְעַם מִן־שָׁמַיִם יְהוָה

וַעֲלִיזוֹן יִתֵּן קוֹלוֹ:

¹⁵וַיִּשְׁלַח חֲצִים וַיִּפִּיצֵם

בָּרָק וַיהִמֵּם וַיִּהָם:

¹⁶וַיִּרְאוּ אֶפְקֵי לָם

יִגְלוּ מִסְדּוֹת תַּבֵּל

בְּגַעַרַת יְהוָה

מִנְשֻׁמַת רוּחַ אָפוּ:

¹⁷וַיִּשְׁלַח מִמְרוֹם יִקְחֵנִי

יְמִשְׁנֵי מַמְיִם רַבִּים:

¹⁸וַיִּצִלֵנִי מֵאִיְבֵי עוֹ

מִשְׁנָאִי כִּי אִמְצוּ מִמֶּנִּי:

¹⁹וַיִּקְדַּמְנִי בַיּוֹם אִירִי

וַיְהִי יְהוָה מִשְׁעַן לִי:

²⁰וַיֵּצֵא לְמִרְחָב אֹתִי

יַחֲלֹצֵנִי בִי־חֶפֶץ בִּי:

²¹וַיַּגְמִלְנִי יְהוָה בְּצַדִּיקָתִי

כִּבְר יָדֵי יֹשִׁיב לִי:

²²כִּי שָׁמַרְתִּי דִרְכֵי יְהוָה

וְלֹא רָשַׁעְתִּי מֵאֱלֹהִי:

²³כִּי כָל־מִשְׁפָּטוֹ מִשְׁפָּטָיו לִנְגִדִי

וְחֻקָּתָיו לֹא־אָסוּר מִמֶּנִּה:

²⁴וְאֶהְיֶה תָמִים לוֹ

וְאֶשְׁתַּמְרָה מֵעוֹנִי:

²⁵וַיִּשָּׁב יְהוָה לִי בְצַדִּיקָתִי

כִּבְרִי לִנְגִד עֵינָיו:

11. He was seen Hebrew: *va-yera*. The version in Ps. 18:11 has the similar-looking word *va-yeide* (He was gliding /swooping)—more appropriate to the atmospheric figures used here.

26 With the loyal You deal loyally;
With the blameless hero, blamelessly.
27 With the pure You act in purity,
And with the perverse You are wily.
28 To humble folk You give victory,
And You look with scorn on the haughty.

29 You, O LORD, are my lamp;
The LORD lights up my darkness.
30 With You, I can rush a barrier,
With my God, I can scale a wall.
31 The way of God is perfect,
The word of the LORD is pure.
He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.
32 Yea, who is a god except the LORD,
Who is a rock except God—
33 The God, my mighty stronghold,
Who kept my path secure;
34 Who made my legs like a deer's,
And set me firm on the heights;
35 Who trained my hands for battle,
So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze!
36 You have granted me the shield of Your
protection
And Your providence has made me great.
37 You have let me stride on freely,
And my feet have not slipped.
38 I pursued my enemies and wiped them out,
I did not turn back till I destroyed them.
39 I destroyed them, I struck them down;
They rose no more, they lay at my feet.
40 You have girt me with strength for battle,

עם-חסיד תתחסד 26
עם-גבור תמים תתםם:
עם-נבר תתבר 27
ועם-עקש תתפל:
ואת-עם עני תושיע 28
ועיניך על-רמים תשפיל:

כי-אתה נירי יהוה 29
ויהוה יגיה חשפי:
כי בכה* ארוץ גודר 30
באלהי אדלג-שור:
האל תמים דרכו 31
אמרת יהוה צרופה
מגן הוא לכל החסים בו:
כי מי-אל מבלעדי יהוה 32
ובמי צור מבלעדי אליהו:
האל מעוזי חיל 33
ויתר תמים דרכו דרכי:
משוה רגליו רגלי באילות 34
ועל במותי יעמדני:
מלמד ידי למלחמה 35
ונחת קשת-נחושה זרעתי:
ותתן-לי מגן ישעך 36
וענתך תרבני:
תרחיב צעדי תחתני 37
ולא מעדי קרסלי:
אדדפה איבי ואשמדם 38
ולא אשוב עד-פלותם:
ואכלם ואמחצם 39
ולא יקומון ויפלו תחת רגלי:
ויתרני* חיל למלחמה 40

v. 30. יתיר די

v. 40. חסר א'

36. *And Your providence has made me great*
The Hebrew (*va-anot'kha tarbeini*) is difficult,
literally yielding something like "and Your an-
swer [to my prayer] has raised me." Psalms 18:36
reads here "and Your humility has raised me"

(*v'anvatkha tarbeini*). The problem is resolved by
a preferred reading (*azart'kha tarbeini*), which
means "Your help [or: valor] has raised me,"
found in the Qumran ("Dead Sea") scrolls.

Brought low my foes before me,

⁴¹Made my enemies turn tail before me,

My foes—and I wiped them out.

⁴²They looked, but there was none to deliver;

To the LORD, but He answered them not.

⁴³I pounded them like dust of the earth,

Stamped, crushed them like dirt of the streets.

⁴⁴You have rescued me from the strife of peoples,

Kept me to be a ruler of nations;

Peoples I knew not must serve me.

⁴⁵Aliens have cringed before me,

Paid me homage at the mere report of me.

⁴⁶Aliens have lost courage

And come trembling out of their fastnesses.

⁴⁷The LORD lives! Blessed is my rock!

Exalted be God, the rock

Who gives me victory;

⁴⁸The God who has vindicated me

And made peoples subject to me,

⁴⁹Rescued me from my enemies,

Raised me clear of my foes,

Saved me from lawless men!

⁵⁰For this I sing Your praise among the nations

And hymn Your name:

⁵¹Tower of victory to His king,

Who deals graciously with His anointed,

With David and his offspring evermore.

תִּכְרִיעַ קָמִי תַחְתָּנִי:

⁴¹וְאֵיבֵי תַתָּה לִי עָרָף

מִשְׁנָאִי וְאַצְמִיתֵם:

⁴²יִשְׁעוּ וְאִין מִשְׁעַ

אֶל־יְהוָה וְלֹא עָנָם:

⁴³וְאַשְׁחָקֵם בַּעֲפֶר־אָרֶץ

בְּטִיט־חוֹצוֹת אֲדָקֵם אֲרָקֵם:

⁴⁴וְהִפְלֹטְנִי מִרִיבֵי עַמִּי*

תִּשְׁמְרֵנִי לְרֹאשׁ גּוֹיִם

עִם לֹא־יָדַעְתִּי יַעֲבֹדְנִי:

⁴⁵בְּגִי נִכָּר יִתְכַּחֲשׁוּ־לִי

לְשִׁמוֹעַ אָזֶן יִשְׁמְעוּ לִי:

⁴⁶בְּגִי נִכָּר יִבְלּוּ

וְיִחָגְרוּ מִמִּסְגְּרוֹתֵם:

⁴⁷חַי־יְהוָה וּבְרוּךְ צוּרִי

וַיֵּרֶם אֱלֹהֵי צוּר

יִשְׁעִי:

⁴⁸הָאֵל הַנִּתָּן נִקְמַת לִי

וּמוֹרִיד עַמִּים תַּחְתָּנִי:

⁴⁹וּמוֹצִיאִי מֵאִיבֵי

וּמִקָּמִי תִרְוַמְנִי

מֵאִישׁ חֲמָסִים תַּצִּילֵנִי:

⁵⁰עַל־כֵּן אוֹדֶךָ יְהוָה בְּגוֹיִם

וּלְשִׁמְךָ אֲזַמֵּר:

⁵¹מִגְדֵּל מְגִדוֹל יִשׁוּעוֹת מְלָכֹו

וְעֹשֶׂה־חֶסֶד לְמַשִּׁיחוֹ

לְדָוִד וּלְזֶרְעוֹ עַד־עוֹלָם: פ

v. 44. סבירין ומטעין "עמים", ובנוסח אחר "עם" וגם בנוסח אחר "עמים"

44. peoples Translated per the reading in some manuscripts and in the Septuagint. The Hebrew text above, like most manuscripts and the printed editions, reads "my people" [Transl.].

51. Tower of victory Hebrew: *migdol y'shu-ot*. As usual, this translation follows the text as read (*k'rei*). Meanwhile, the text as written (*k'tiv*) preserves the first word as a verb, *magdil*, yielding

"He accords wondrous victories" (as in Ps. 18:51). The image of God as a tower is not out of keeping with the song, yet here a verb better matches the next part of the verse.

Both the *k'rei* and the *k'tiv* versions are preserved liturgically, at the close of the full grace after meals. The *k'tiv* is recited on weekdays; the *k'rei*, on *Shabbat* and festivals.