

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 *וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶת-דָבָרִי
הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת בַּיּוֹם הַצִּיל יְהוָה אֹתוֹ
מִפְּנֵי כָּל-אִיּוֹב וּמִפְּנֵי שָׁאוֹל: ² וַיֹּאמֶר

יְהוָה סָלָעִי וּמַצְדָּתִי וּמִפְּלִיטִי-לִי:

³ אֶלְ�לָהִי צוּרִי אֶחָסָה-הַבּוֹ
מַגְנִי וּקְרָן יְשֻׁעִי מִשְׁגָּבִל וּמְנוּסִי
מִשְׁעִי מִחְמָס תְּשֻׁבִּי:

⁴ מִהְלָל אֶקְרָא יְהוָה
וּמְאִיבִּי אָוֹשֵׁעַ:

⁵ כִּי אֶפְנִי מִשְׁבְּרִימָנוֹת
נְחָלִי בְּלִיעָל יְבָעָתַנִּי:

⁶ חַבְלִי שָׂאָל סְבָנִי
קְרָדְמִנִּי מִקְשִׁימָנוֹת:

⁷ בְּצָרְלִי אֶקְרָא יְהוָה
וְאֶל-אֶלְ�לִי אֶקְרָא
וּשְׁמַע מִהִיכָּלוֹ קֹלִי
וְשֻׁעָתִי בָּאָזְנוֹ:

⁸ וְתַגְעַשׂ וְתַגְעַשׂ וְתַרְעַשׂ הָאָרֶץ
מוֹסְדֹּות הַשְׁמִים יְרָגֹזׂ

וְתַגְעַשׂ כִּי-חֶרֶה לֹוּ:
⁹ עַלְהָ עַשְׂן בְּאָפָוּ
וְאַשׁ מִפְּרָיו תַּאֲכֵל
גָּחָלִים בְּעַרְוָה מִמְּנָךְ:

v. 1. בְּכֹתֶב הַדָּר שָׁלָנוּ כְּתוּב בְּצָוֹת שִׁירָה

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.

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.

10 וַיַּעֲמֹד שָׁמָיִם וַיַּעֲמֹד
וְעַרְפֵּל תְּחִתְּ רְגָלָיו:
11 וַיַּרְכֵּב עַל־בְּרֹב וַיַּעֲלֵ
וַיַּרְא עַל־בְּנֵפִירְוח:
12 וַיִּשְׁתַּחַשְׁר סְבִיבָתָיו סְכֹות
חַשְׁרָתִים עַבְיוֹ שְׁחָקִים:
13 מִגְּנָה נָגָה
בְּעָרוֹגְלִי־אָש:
14 יְרָעָם מִן־שָׁמָיִם יְהָוָה
וְעַלְיוֹן יְתַן קֹלָו:
15 וַיַּשְׁלַח חָזִים וַיִּפְרַצּ
בָּרָק וְהָמָם וְיָהָם:
16 וַיַּרְאֵל אֲפֻקֵי יָם
יָגְלֹו מִסְדּוֹת תִּבְלֵל
בְּגַעֲרַת יְהָוָה
מִפְשָׂתָה רֹוח אֲפֹו:
17 וַיַּשְׁלַח מִפְרָום יְקַחְנֵ
קְמַשְׁנִי מִפְמִים רַבִּים:
18 יְצִילָנִי מַאֲבִי עָז
מִשְׁנָאֵי פִּי אֲמַצּוֹ מִפְנֵי:
19 יְקַרְמֵנִי בַּיּוֹם אִירֵי
וַיְהִי יְהָוָה מְשֻׁעָן לִי:
20 וַיַּצֵּא לְמַרְחָב אָתֵי
יְחַלְצֵנִי בִּירְחָפֵץ בִּי:
21 יְגַמְלֵנִי יְהָוָה בְּצִדְקָתִי
בְּבָרֵר יְהִי יְשִׁיבָה לִי:
22 כִּי שְׁמַרְתִּי דָּרְכֵי יְהָוָה
וְלֹא רְשָׁעָתִי מְאַלְחֵי:
23 כִּי בְּלִמְשָׁפֹט מִשְׁפָטֵיו לְנָגָדִי
וְחַקְתֵּיו לְאַ-אֲסֹור מִמְּנָה:
24 וְאַהֲרָה תְּמִימִים לוֹ
וְאַשְׁתְּפָרָה מְעֻנוֹן:
25 וַיַּשְׁבֵּט יְהָוָה לִי בְּצִדְקָתִי
כְּבָרֵי לְנָגָד עִינָנוֹ:

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

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

26 עַמְּ-חַסִּיד תִּתְחַסֵּד
עַמְּ-גָבָור תִּמְפִּים תִּתְמִם:
27 עַמְּ-נָכֵר תִּתְהַבֵּר
וְעַמְּ-עַקְשׁ תִּתְהַפֵּל:
28 וְאֶת-עַם עֲנֵי תִּשְׁעֵע
וְעַנְיִר עַל-רְמִים תִּשְׁפֵּיל:

29 קִידָּתָה נִירֵי יְהוָה
וַיְהִי גִּיאָה חַשְׁבֵי:
30 פִּי בְּכֹה * אָרוֹן גָּדוֹד
בְּאֶלְ�הִי אַדְלָגְשָׁוָר:
31 הַאֲלָל תִּמְמִים דָּרְכָו
אָמְרָתִי יְהוָה צְרוֹפָה
מַגֵּן הוּא לְכָל הַחֲסִים בָּו:
32 פִּי מִיְּאָל מִבְּלָעָדִי יְהוָה
וַיְמִי צָור מִבְּלָעָדִי אֶלְהִינּוּ:
33 הַאֲלָל מְעוֹזִי וְחִיל
וַיְתַּר תִּמְמִים דָּרְכוֹ דָּרְכֵי:
34 בְּשִׁׁבְעָה רְגִלוֹ רְגִלֵּי בְּאִילּוֹת
רַעַל בְּמוֹתִי יַעֲמֹדֵנִי:
35 מַלְמָד יְהִי לִמְלֹחָמָה
וְנִתְתֵּן קָשְׁתִ-נְחֹשֶׁת וְרַעֲתִי:
36 וְתַּתְּנוּלִי מַגֵּן יִשְׁעָךְ
וְעַנְתָּהּ תְּרֵבֵנִי:
37 תְּרֵחָבִיב צָעֵדִי תִּתְחַנֵּן
וְלֹא מַעֲדָוִ קָרְסָלִי:
38 אַרְדָּפָה אִיבִּי וְאַשְׁמִיקָם
וְלֹא אַשְׁׁוֹב עַד-בְּלֹותָם:
39 וְאַכְלָמִים וְאַמְחָצִים
וְלֹא יִקְוֹמָן וַיַּפְלֹא תִּתְחַת רְגִלֵּי
40 וְזִנְגָּנִי * חִיל לִמְלֹחָמָה

ו. 30.
ו. 40.

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

(*v'anvatkhā tarbeini*). The problem is resolved by a preferred reading (*azot'ha tarbeini*), which means "Your help [or: val'ot]" 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 na-
 tions
 And hymn Your name:
 51Tower of victory to His king,
 Who deals graciously with His anointed,
 With David and his offspring evermore.

תְּכַרְעֵישׁ קְבִעִי תְּחִתָּנִי:
 41 וְאַיִבִּי תְּתַהָּה לִי עַנְפָּה
 מִשְׁנָנִי וְאַצְמִיתָם:
 42 יִשְׁעוּ וְאַיִן מַשְׁיעַ
 אֶל-יְהוָה וְלֹא עַנְםָם:
 43 וְאַשְׁחַקְמָם בְּעִפְרֵ-אָרֶץ
 בְּטִיט-חוֹצֹות אֲדָקָם אַרְקָעָם:
 44 וְתַפְלִלְתָּנִי מִרְיבִּי עַמִּי*
 תְּשִׁמְרֵנִי לִרְאֵשׁ גּוֹלָם
 עַם לְאִידְעָתִי יַעֲבֹרְנִי:
 45 בְּנֵי נָכָר יַתְפַּחַשׁ-וּרְלִי
 לְשָׁמְעוּ אָזְן יַשְׁמַעוּ לִי:
 46 בְּנֵי נָכָר יַבָּלָו
 וַיַּחֲגֹרּוּ מִמְּסִגְרוֹתָם:
 47 חַיְיָה נָהָרָה וּבְרוֹךְ צָוָרִי
 וַיָּרַם אֱלֹהִי צָוָר
 יְשָׁעֵי:
 48 הַאֲלֵל הַפְּתַנָּן נִקְמָת לִי
 וּמַוְיִיד עַמִּים תְּחִתָּנִי:
 49 וּמַוְצִיאִי מַאֲיִבִּי
 וּמַקְמִיל תְּרוּמָמָנִי
 מַאֲיִשְׁ חַמְסִים תְּצִילָנִי:
 50 עַל-פָּנָן אָזְדָּג יְהוָה בְּגֹאָם
 וְלִשְׁמָךְ אָזְמָרָה:
 51 מַגְדָּל מַגְדָּל יִשְׁוֹעָת מַלְכָּה
 וְעַשְׂה-חֶסֶד לִמְשִׁיחָה
 לְקָדוֹד וְלִזְרָעָד 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: *migdoly'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.