**# Commentary on Psalm 145**

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**## Psalm Text**

1. תְּהִלָּ֗ה לְדָ֫וִ֥ד אֲרוֹמִמְךָ֣ אֱלוֹקַ֣י הַמֶּ֑לֶךְ וַאֲבָרְכָ֥ה שִׁ֝מְךָ֗ לְעוֹלָ֥ם וָעֶֽד׃   A song of praise. Of David.

I will extol You, my God and king,

and bless Your name forever and ever.

2. בְּכׇל־י֥וֹם אֲבָרְכֶ֑ךָּ וַאֲהַלְלָ֥ה שִׁ֝מְךָ֗ לְעוֹלָ֥ם וָעֶֽד׃   Every day will I bless You

and praise Your name forever and ever.

3. גָּ֘ד֤וֹל ה׳ וּמְהֻלָּ֣ל מְאֹ֑ד וְ֝לִגְדֻלָּת֗וֹ אֵ֣ין חֵֽקֶר׃   Great is the LORD and much acclaimed;

His greatness cannot be fathomed.

4. דּ֣וֹר לְ֭דוֹר יְשַׁבַּ֣ח מַעֲשֶׂ֑יךָ וּגְב֖וּרֹתֶ֣יךָ יַגִּֽידוּ׃   One generation shall laud Your works to another

and declare Your mighty acts.

5. הֲ֭דַר כְּב֣וֹד הוֹדֶ֑ךָ וְדִבְרֵ֖י נִפְלְאֹתֶ֣יךָ אָשִֽׂיחָה׃   The glorious majesty of Your splendor

and Your wondrous acts-a will I recite.

6. וֶעֱז֣וּז נֽוֹרְאֹתֶ֣יךָ יֹאמֵ֑רוּ (וגדלותיך) [וּגְדֻלָּתְךָ֥] אֲסַפְּרֶֽנָּה׃   Men shall talk of the might of Your awesome deeds,

and I will recount Your greatness.

7. זֵ֣כֶר רַב־טוּבְךָ֣ יַבִּ֑יעוּ וְצִדְקָתְךָ֥ יְרַנֵּֽנוּ׃   They shall celebrate Your abundant goodness,

and sing joyously of Your beneficence.

8. חַנּ֣וּן וְרַח֣וּם ה׳ אֶ֥רֶךְ אַ֝פַּ֗יִם וּגְדׇל־חָֽסֶד׃   The LORD is gracious and compassionate,

slow to anger and abounding in kindness.

9. טוֹב־ה׳ לַכֹּ֑ל וְ֝רַחֲמָ֗יו עַל־כׇּל־מַעֲשָֽׂיו׃   The LORD is good to all,

and His mercy is upon all His works.

10. יוֹד֣וּךָ ה׳ כׇּל־מַעֲשֶׂ֑יךָ וַ֝חֲסִידֶ֗יךָ יְבָרְכֽוּכָה׃   All Your works shall praise You, O LORD,

and Your faithful ones shall bless You.

11. כְּב֣וֹד מַלְכוּתְךָ֣ יֹאמֵ֑רוּ וּגְבוּרָתְךָ֥ יְדַבֵּֽרוּ׃   They shall talk of the majesty of Your kingship,

and speak of Your might,

12. לְהוֹדִ֤יעַ ׀ לִבְנֵ֣י הָ֭אָדָם גְּבוּרֹתָ֑יו וּ֝כְב֗וֹד הֲדַ֣ר מַלְכוּתֽוֹ׃   to make His mighty acts known among men

and the majestic glory of His kingship.

13. מַֽלְכוּתְךָ֗ מַלְכ֥וּת כׇּל־עֹלָמִ֑ים וּ֝מֶֽמְשַׁלְתְּךָ֗ בְּכׇל־דּ֥וֹר וָדֹֽר׃   Your kingship is an eternal kingship;

Your dominion is for all generations.

14. סוֹמֵ֣ךְ ה׳ לְכׇל־הַנֹּפְלִ֑ים וְ֝זוֹקֵ֗ף לְכׇל־הַכְּפוּפִֽים׃   The LORD supports all who stumble,

and makes all who are bent stand straight.

15. עֵֽינֵי־כֹ֭ל אֵלֶ֣יךָ יְשַׂבֵּ֑רוּ וְאַתָּ֤ה נֽוֹתֵן־לָהֶ֖ם אֶת־אׇכְלָ֣ם בְּעִתּֽוֹ׃   The eyes of all look to You expectantly,

and You give them their food when it is due.

16. פּוֹתֵ֥חַ אֶת־יָדֶ֑ךָ וּמַשְׂבִּ֖יעַ לְכׇל־חַ֣י רָצֽוֹן׃   You give it openhandedly,

feeding every creature to its heart’s content.

17. צַדִּ֣יק ה׳ בְּכׇל־דְּרָכָ֑יו וְ֝חָסִ֗יד בְּכׇל־מַעֲשָֽׂיו׃   The LORD is beneficent in all His ways

and faithful in all His works.

18. קָר֣וֹב ה׳ לְכׇל־קֹרְאָ֑יו לְכֹ֤ל אֲשֶׁ֖ר יִקְרָאֻ֣הוּ בֶאֱמֶֽת׃   The LORD is near to all who call Him,

to all who call Him with sincerity.

19. רְצוֹן־יְרֵאָ֥יו יַעֲשֶׂ֑ה וְֽאֶת־שַׁוְעָתָ֥ם יִ֝שְׁמַ֗ע וְיוֹשִׁיעֵֽם׃   He fulfills the wishes of those who fear Him;

He hears their cry and delivers them.

20. שׁוֹמֵ֣ר ה׳ אֶת־כׇּל־אֹהֲבָ֑יו וְאֵ֖ת כׇּל־הָרְשָׁעִ֣ים יַשְׁמִֽיד׃   The LORD watches over all who love Him,

but all the wicked He will destroy.

21. תְּהִלַּ֥ת ה׳ יְֽדַבֶּ֫ר־פִּ֥י וִיבָרֵ֣ךְ כׇּל־בָּ֭שָׂר שֵׁ֥ם קׇדְשׁ֗וֹ לְעוֹלָ֥ם וָעֶֽד׃ {פ}   My mouth shall utter the praise of the LORD,

and all creatures shall bless His holy name forever and ever.

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**## Introduction**

Psalm 145 is the only psalm whose superscription names the piece itself “a tehillah,” a praise. That title is not mere labeling. It signals the psalm’s program: to model praise—its reasons, its reach, and its rhythm—and to gather an individual’s daily benediction into an ever-widening chorus until “all flesh” blesses God’s holy name (v. 21). The poem is an acrostic: each bicolon begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet—an A-to-Z of praise. Alphabetic acrostics in biblical poetry often claim comprehensiveness: here is praise in all its letters. Yet the Masoretic Text lacks a nun (נ) line between v. 13 and v. 14. Ancient and medieval readers noticed; the Greek (LXX) inserts “Faithful is the LORD in all his words, and gracious in all his works,” and a form of this line appears in the Dead Sea Psalms Scroll (11QPs-a). Many medieval manuscripts and Jewish prayerbooks preserve it. Whether original or a deft repair, the nun line states themes central to the psalm—divine fidelity in word and graciousness in deed—and keeps the acrostic whole.

The architecture of the poem is simple and sophisticated at once. Verses 1–2 begin with the “I”: “I will exalt… I will bless.” Verse 3 shifts to declaration: the LORD’s greatness cannot be searched out. Verses 4–7 widen the frame to “generation to generation,” then to “they”—the community—reciting and recounting. At the center of the poem’s theology, vv. 8–9 restate Israel’s creed (Exod 34:6–7) in compressed form: gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love; good to all, with mercy over all his works. Verses 10–13 turn to kingship: all God’s works acknowledge him; his faithful bless him; his rule is everlasting. The second half (vv. 14–20) demonstrates kingship in action: upholding the falling, straightening the bent, feeding every living thing, attending to prayer, guarding those who love him, opposing the wicked. Finally, the psalm returns to the “I”—“my mouth shall speak”—and ends with the universal “all flesh” blessing God’s holy name. The rhetorical movement is deliberate: private resolve becomes public witness becomes cosmic liturgy.

Two equally insistent themes run through the psalm: divine majesty and divine tenderness. This is royalty language reworked within Israel’s theology. Verse 13 pairs malkhut (kingship) with memshalah (dominion), a West Semitic way of naming both the institution and its exercise. The verse’s temporal sweep—“for all ages” and “for every generation”—echoes Near Eastern claims for enduring rule; here it is ascribed to Israel’s God, who sets the calendar of ages. Yet the king of v. 13 is the sustainer of vv. 14–16: he supports all who are falling, raises all who are bowed down, opens his hand, and satisfies every living thing. This is not the ancient stereotype of a capricious divine monarch. Instead, kingship is measured by upholding the vulnerable and provisioning creatures at the right time (v. 15). Israel’s credal adjectives (v. 8) and universal scope (v. 9) anchor this vision: the moral character confessed at Sinai is the character of the ruler of all.

The psalm’s diction for praise is varied and purposeful. It begins with bless (barak) and exalt (romem), moves to laud (shabach; an Aramaizing verb), declare (nagad), recount (safar), praise (halal), thank/acknowledge (yadah), and make known (hodia’). What begins as devotion becomes testimony. The language of glory and splendor—kavod, hod, hadar—clusters in vv. 5, 11–12, describing the radiance of kingship. Parallel lines often reinforce rather than merely repeat; this is a hallmark of Hebrew poetics. For readers, two terms are useful. Parallelism names the pairing of lines that mirror or intensify one another; here, lines often move from general to particular, from attribute to act. Inclusio names the phenomenon of a unit beginning and ending with the same motif; here, “forever and ever” frames the opening (vv. 1–2) and conclusion (v. 21), and praise brackets the whole (the superscription’s tehillah and “the praise of the LORD will my mouth speak”).

Another thread binds the poem: the small word kol, “all.” The psalm speaks of “all” with a kind of liturgical insistence—good to all (v. 9), all his works (vv. 9–10), all ages (v. 13), all who fall and all who are bent (v. 14), the eyes of all (v. 15), every living thing (v. 16), in all his ways and in all his works (v. 17), all who call (v. 18), the desire of those who fear him (v. 19), all who love and all the wicked (v. 20), and “all flesh” (v. 21). As the poem expands from “I” to the cosmos, kol punctuates the reach of both God’s action and the response it elicits.

The psalm does not flatten mercy and justice into a slogan. Verse 9 affirms: the LORD is good to all, with compassion over all his works. Verse 20 says: all the wicked he will destroy. Medieval interpreters already felt the tension. Some distinguished times: mercy now, judgment at the end. The poem suggests a deeper coherence: the same moral reliability that makes provision dependable (vv. 15–16), that hears true prayer (vv. 18–19), and that guards those who love (v. 20a) also opposes what corrodes a just creation (v. 20b). The poem’s triad at the end is instructive: near to all who call “in truth” (v. 18), he fulfills the desire of “those who fear” (v. 19), and he guards “all who love” (v. 20). “Truth,” “fear,” “love”—postures of heart that belong together. The universe of praise is moral as well as musical.

A final note on v. 16: “You open your hand and satisfy every living thing ratzon.” Ratzon can mean “favor” or “good pleasure,” and many render “the desire of every living thing.” The line carries both senses: God’s open hand grants creatures what they need in a way consonant with his gracious will. The image is as intimate as it is imperial: the king rules by opening his hand.

Psalm 145 thus performs what it proclaims. Its acrostic strives for completeness; its verbs escort praise from private resolve to public witness; its royal diction serves mercy; its “all” binds creatures and nations; its last line returns to the first voice and then yields it to “all flesh.” The psalm is not simply about praise. It is itself the architecture by which a single voice enters the larger chorus.

**## Verse-by-Verse Commentary**

**### Verse 1**

תְּהִלָּ֗ה לְדָ֫וִ֥ד אֲרוֹמִמְךָ֣ אֱלוֹקַ֣י הַמֶּ֑לֶךְ וַאֲבָרְכָ֥ה שִׁ֝מְךָ֗ לְעוֹלָ֥ם וָעֶֽד׃

A song of praise. Of David.

I will extol You, my God and king,

and bless Your name forever and ever.

“Tehillah le-David”—a praise, of David—names the genre and the aim. This is the only psalm to call itself a tehillah. The first bicolon balances intimacy and sovereignty: “I will exalt you, my God, the King.” The verb ארוממך (’aromimkha) is the Piel “I will exalt/raise you,” a frequent praise verb for heightening God’s name in speech (cf. Ps 30:2; 118:28). Two key terms for devotion appear: “exalt” (romem) and “bless” (barak). Blessing God means acknowledging and confessing God’s blessedness, often in public worship. “Forever and ever” (le-‘olam va-‘ed) already sets an inclusio with v. 21. The juxtaposition “my God” and “the King” frames the poem’s paradox: personal address to the one whose rule is universal.

Poetically, this aleph-line launches a sequence of first-person imperfects (“I will bless,” v. 2; “I will meditate,” v. 5; “I will recount,” v. 6). The imperfect here expresses commitment and habit, not mere futurity. The psalm begins with a vow of practice: praise is not occasional but the speaker’s way.

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**### Verse 2**

בְּכׇל־י֥וֹם אֲבָרְכֶ֑ךָּ וַאֲהַלְלָ֥ה שִׁ֝מְךָ֗ לְעוֹלָ֥ם וָעֶֽד׃

Every day will I bless You

and praise Your name forever and ever.

“Every day I will bless you” grounds eternity in the ordinary. The daily rhythm (be-kol-yom) converses with “forever and ever.” The verbs shift from line 1’s exalt to line 2’s praise (ahallelah), a verb family that in Piel typically means “to praise,” and in Hallel psalms summons the congregation (“hallelujah”). Here the individual’s daily “blessing” and “praising” anticipate the communal program in vv. 4–7. The line moves from direct address (“I will bless you”) to “your name.” In biblical usage, God’s “name” is not a mere label but the public reality of God’s character, especially as made known in saving actions. To bless the name is to bless the revealed God.

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**### Verse 3**

גָּ֘ד֤וֹל ה׳ וּמְהֻלָּ֣ל מְאֹ֑ד וְ֝לִגְדֻלָּת֗וֹ אֵ֣ין חֵֽקֶר׃

Great is the LORD and much acclaimed;

His greatness cannot be fathomed.

“Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; and of his greatness there is no searching.” The Hebrew plays with the root g-d-l: “great/gadol” and “his greatness/gedullah.” The passive participle “mehullal” (worthy of praise, acclaimed) underscores that praise is owed. “There is no cheqer” (searching out) is rare and Joban (Job 5:9; 9:10; 36:26). The line states a paradox at the heart of biblical worship: praise aims at comprehensiveness (the acrostic), yet God’s greatness is unsearchable. The formulation is not defeatist; it locates praise in wonder rather than inventory.

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**### Verse 4**

דּ֣וֹר לְ֭דוֹר יְשַׁבַּ֣ח מַעֲשֶׂ֑יךָ וּגְב֖וּרֹתֶ֣יךָ יַגִּֽידוּ׃

One generation shall laud Your works to another

and declare Your mighty acts.

“Generation to generation shall laud your works; they shall declare your mighty acts.” The plural “generations” (dor la-dor) is a stock phrase for continuity (cf. Isa 34:17; Joel 4:20). The verb yeshabbach (“shall laud”) belongs to the Aramaizing root שׁבח “to praise,” characteristic of post-exilic diction (cf. Ps 117:1; 147:12). The second colon’s “declare” (yaggidu, from נגד) often has the sense of public recounting or bearing witness. The parallel is not simple synonymy: the first colon names a general laud; the second specifies testimony to גבורות, God’s “mighty acts,” a technical term for decisive interventions (Exodus, conquest). Praise is transmissive; it becomes pedagogy.

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**### Verse 5**

הֲ֭דַר כְּב֣וֹד הוֹדֶ֑ךָ וְדִבְרֵ֖י נִפְלְאֹתֶ֣יךָ אָשִֽׂיחָה׃

The glorious majesty of Your splendor

and Your wondrous acts-a will I recite.

“On the majestic glory of your splendor, and on the matters of your wonders, I will muse/recite.” The concentration of radiance terms—hadar (majesty), kavod (glory/weight), hod (splendor)—is deliberate. These words form the psalm’s aesthetic of kingship (see vv. 11–12). The verb ’asichah (from שׂיח) means “to muse, speak meditatively.” It bridges inner reflection and spoken recollection (cf. Ps 119). “Divrei nifl’oteikha” (“the matters/words of your wonders”) blurs act and word: God’s wonders are deeds that speak, requiring thoughtful retelling.

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**### Verse 6**

וֶעֱז֣וּז נֽוֹרְאֹתֶ֣יךָ יֹאמֵ֑רוּ (וגדלותיך) [וּגְדֻלָּתְךָ֥] אֲסַפְּרֶֽנָּה׃

Men shall talk of the might of Your awesome deeds,

and I will recount Your greatness.

“They shall say the might of your awesome deeds; and your greatness I will recount.” The alternation between “they” and “I” creates antiphonal movement. “Awesome deeds” (nora’otekha) shares a root with “fear” (yir’ah): God’s acts evoke the reverence proper to God. The noun ‘ezuz (might) derives from עזז (strength), not a foreign loan; it intensifies might that inspires awe. The first colon’s “they shall say” suggests general proclamation; the second’s “I will recount” (’asaprennah) suggests detailed narration—cataloging greatness in story.

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**### Verse 7**

זֵ֣כֶר רַב־טוּבְךָ֣ יַבִּ֑יעוּ וְצִדְקָתְךָ֥ יְרַנֵּֽנוּ׃

They shall celebrate Your abundant goodness,

and sing joyously of Your beneficence.

“They shall gush forth the memory of your abundant goodness, and your righteousness they shall sing.” The verb yabbi‘u (from נבע) is vivid: like a spring that bubbles up. Praise becomes overflow. “Memory/mention” (zeker) is the public commemoration of God’s acts; “abundant goodness” (rav-tuvkha) echoes Exod 33:19. “Righteousness” (tzedaqah) here is not sternness opposed to goodness but God’s right-making fidelity—an attribute often paired with mercy (cf. Ps 36:7; 103:17). The move from “gush forth” to “sing joyously” (yerannenu) traces a natural arc: commemoration becomes song.

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**### Verse 8**

חַנּ֣וּן וְרַח֣וּם ה׳ אֶ֥רֶךְ אַ֝פַּ֗יִם וּגְדׇל־חָֽסֶד׃

The LORD is gracious and compassionate,

slow to anger and abounding in kindness.

“Gracious and compassionate is the LORD, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.” This is the core confession of Exod 34:6–7 in abridged form (omitting “truth/faithfulness,” ‘emet, and the long clauses on forgiveness and punishment). The pairing “gracious/compassionate” recurs often; “compassionate” (rachum) is cognate with “womb” (rechem), an image of visceral care. “Slow to anger” is a bodily metaphor (“long of nostrils”): patience before wrath flares. “Abounding in chesed” names covenant loyalty that does not quit. The psalm’s kingship will be defined by this character, not the other way around.

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**### Verse 9**

טוֹב־ה׳ לַכֹּ֑ל וְ֝רַחֲמָ֗יו עַל־כׇּל־מַעֲשָֽׂיו׃

The LORD is good to all,

and His mercy is upon all His works.

“Good is the LORD to all, and his compassions are over all his works.” The double “all” (kol) is programmatic: the psalm will keep widening its circle. “Compassions” (rachamim, plural of intensity) denote repeated, lived mercy. Traditional Jewish readers already sensed the scope here is genuinely cosmic, extending beyond Israel (cf. Ps 104). The universality will be matched by the universal summons of v. 21.

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**### Verse 10**

יוֹד֣וּךָ ה׳ כׇּל־מַעֲשֶׂ֑יךָ וַ֝חֲסִידֶ֗יךָ יְבָרְכֽוּכָה׃

All Your works shall praise You, O LORD,

and Your faithful ones shall bless You.

“All your works shall thank you, LORD, and your faithful ones shall bless you.” Two communities appear: all creatures (your “works”) and your chasidim, those who practice loyalty. The verbs differentiate: “thank/acknowledge” (yodukha) is a universal response; “bless” (yevarkhukha) is the covenant community’s role in articulating praise. In Hebrew idiom, blessing God is not bestowing something but declaring God blessed—naming God aright.

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**### Verse 11**

כְּב֣וֹד מַלְכוּתְךָ֣ יֹאמֵ֑רוּ וּגְבוּרָתְךָ֥ יְדַבֵּֽרוּ׃

They shall talk of the majesty of Your kingship,

and speak of Your might,

“They shall speak of the glory of your kingship and talk of your might.” The psalm’s royal diction gathers: “glory” (kavod) and “kingship” (malkhut). The verbs pair ordinary speech (yomeru) with more formal declaration (yedabberu). Royal splendor is not a private intuition but a theme of public speech.

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**### Verse 12**

לְהוֹדִ֤יעַ ׀ לִבְנֵ֣י הָ֭אָדָם גְּבוּרֹתָ֑יו וּ֝כְב֗וֹד הֲדַ֣ר מַלְכוּתֽוֹ׃

to make His mighty acts known among men

and the majestic glory of His kingship.

“To make known to the sons of Adam his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingship.” Here praise becomes mission: “to make known” (lehodi‘a, hiphil of ידע) is to turn worship into witness. The audience—“sons of Adam”—is deliberately universal. The cluster “glory/majesty/splendor” (kavod/hadar/malkhut) reprises v. 5’s radiance terms around kingship: God’s rule has a beauty to be named among the nations.

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**### Verse 13**

מַֽלְכוּתְךָ֗ מַלְכ֥וּת כׇּל־עֹלָמִ֑ים וּ֝מֶֽמְשַׁלְתְּךָ֗ בְּכׇל־דּ֥וֹר וָדֹֽר׃

Your kingship is an eternal kingship;

Your dominion is for all generations.

“Your kingship is a kingship for all ages, and your dominion in every generation.” Paired terms—malkhut (institution) and memshalah (exercise)—name the breadth of sovereignty. The time markers (“all ages,” “every generation”) avoid abstraction: the rule lasts across concrete human time. At this point many Hebrew manuscripts and the Greek and Syriac translations add a nun-line: “Faithful is the LORD in all his words, and gracious in all his works.” The line appears in a Qumran Psalms scroll and in medieval prayerbooks. It fits the acrostic and the psalm’s themes (word/deed; faithfulness/grace), and many modern editions include it in brackets. Whether original or an early restoration, it expresses the reliability that grounds vv. 14–20.

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**### Verse 14**

סוֹמֵ֣ךְ ה׳ לְכׇל־הַנֹּפְלִ֑ים וְ֝זוֹקֵ֗ף לְכׇל־הַכְּפוּפִֽים׃

The LORD supports all who stumble,

and makes all who are bent stand straight.

“The LORD supports all who are falling and straightens all who are bent.” The royal center moves to the pastoral edge. The participles (“supporting,” “straightening”) present ongoing action. “Falling” and “bent” are bodily figures for vulnerability—physical, social, or spiritual. The repeated “all” insists no sufferer is outside scope. This is kingship as care: sovereignty measured by the plight of the low.

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**### Verse 15**

עֵֽינֵי־כֹ֭ל אֵלֶ֣יךָ יְשַׂבֵּ֑רוּ וְאַתָּ֤ה נֽוֹתֵן־לָהֶ֖ם אֶת־אׇכְלָ֣ם בְּעִתּֽוֹ׃

The eyes of all look to You expectantly,

and You give them their food when it is due.

“The eyes of all look expectantly to you, and you give them their food in its time.” The verb yesabberu belongs to an Aramaizing root meaning “hope, wait.” The figure is striking: all creatures become a congregation of eyes, watching the true patron. “In its time” is as important as the gift: providence is wise in timing as well as quantity (cf. Qohelet: “a time for every matter”).

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**### Verse 16**

פּוֹתֵ֥חַ אֶת־יָדֶ֑ךָ וּמַשְׂבִּ֖יעַ לְכׇל־חַ֣י רָצֽוֹן׃

You give it openhandedly,

feeding every creature to its heart’s content.

“You open your hand and satisfy every living thing with favor/its desire.” The picture is anthropomorphic and intimate: an open hand. The participle “masbi‘a” (“satisfying, filling”) belongs to the lexicon of abundance (contrast hunger). The noun ratzon can mean “favor” (God’s good pleasure) or “desire” (of the creature). Either way, the sense is that provision meets creaturely need in a manner consonant with divine goodness. Liturgically, this line has become a touchstone: in Jewish prayer, it is recited with special attentiveness as a confession of daily dependence.

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**### Verse 17**

צַדִּ֣יק ה׳ בְּכׇל־דְּרָכָ֑יו וְ֝חָסִ֗יד בְּכׇל־מַעֲשָֽׂיו׃

The LORD is beneficent in all His ways

and faithful in all His works.

“Righteous is the LORD in all his ways and chasid (gracious/faithful) in all his works.” Few texts call God chasid (cf. Jer 3:12). Here “righteous” (tzaddiq) and “chasid” form a pair that resists a false dichotomy: justice and covenantal kindness are not opposites; they are two names for God’s moral reliability. The double “in all his ways/works” reiterates scope.

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**### Verse 18**

קָר֣וֹב ה׳ לְכׇל־קֹרְאָ֑יו לְכֹ֤ל אֲשֶׁ֖ר יִקְרָאֻ֣הוּ בֶאֱמֶֽת׃

The LORD is near to all who call Him,

to all who call Him with sincerity.

“Near is the LORD to all who call him, to all who call him in truth.” “Near” (qarov) is the psalm’s answer to the problem of royal distance. Access is democratized: “to all.” The qualifier “in truth” (be’emet) is crucial. Classical commentators took it to mean sincerity—mouth and heart aligned—not liturgical correctness or testing God. The poem has traveled from greatness unsearchable (v. 3) to nearness to the true caller. Transcendence and immanence are held together.

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**### Verse 19**

רְצוֹן־יְרֵאָ֥יו יַעֲשֶׂ֑ה וְֽאֶת־שַׁוְעָתָ֥ם יִ֝שְׁמַ֗ע וְיוֹשִׁיעֵֽם׃

He fulfills the wishes of those who fear Him;

He hears their cry and delivers them.

“The desire of those who fear him he does; their cry he hears, and he saves them.” Three verbs sequence the response: he acts (does), he listens, he delivers. The recipients are “those who fear him,” the reverent. The middle term “their cry” (shav‘atam) is a word for urgent appeal, the cry of distress. The verse answers v. 18’s “call in truth” with the lived posture of reverence.

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**### Verse 20**

שׁוֹמֵ֣ר ה׳ אֶת־כׇּל־אֹהֲבָ֑יו וְאֵ֖ת כׇּל־הָרְשָׁעִ֣ים יַשְׁמִֽיד׃

The LORD watches over all who love Him,

but all the wicked He will destroy.

“The LORD guards all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.” The poem’s ethic crystallizes: nearness (v. 18), reverence (v. 19), and love (v. 20) mark the relation the psalm imagines. “Guard” (shomer) is a covenant verb. The stark antithesis with “the wicked” is not an afterthought. Divine goodness to “all” (v. 9) does not blur moral lines; it sustains a world in which evil is finally opposed. Medieval readers often resolved verse 9 and verse 20 temporally (mercy now, judgment then); the psalm also resolves them theologically: the same faithfulness that feeds and answers also keeps watch over love and resists what undoes goodness.

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**### Verse 21**

תְּהִלַּ֥ת ה׳ יְֽדַבֶּ֫ר־פִּ֥י וִיבָרֵ֣ךְ כׇּל־בָּ֭שָׂר שֵׁ֥ם קׇדְשׁ֗וֹ לְעוֹלָ֥ם וָעֶֽד׃ {פ}

My mouth shall utter the praise of the LORD,

and all creatures shall bless His holy name forever and ever.

“The praise of the LORD my mouth shall speak, and all flesh shall bless his holy name forever and ever.” The psalm returns to “my mouth”—the singular with which it began—then passes the word to “all flesh,” a biblical phrase for all living, especially humankind. “His holy name” gathers the poem’s theology into worship: holiness as God’s otherness and reliability, the name as God’s public character. The final “forever and ever” answers v. 1. The movement from “I” to “all flesh” is complete: praise learned in the first person expands into a human vocation. The acrostic has done its work: nothing has been said exhaustively, but praise has been said from aleph to tav—comprehensively enough to teach us how to join the chorus.

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