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## The Book of Psalms

I lift up my eyes to the hills  
from where will my help come?  
My help comes from the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot be moved;  
he who keeps you will not slumber.  
He who keeps Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.

The LORD is your keeper;  
the LORD is your shade at your right hand.  
The sun shall not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.

The LORD will keep you from all evil;  
he will keep your life.  
The LORD will keep  
your going out and your coming in  
from this time on and forevermore.

(Psalms 121)

The Book of Psalms is a book of the Holy Bible with 150 hymns. Each of them was sung, using a stringed musical instrument. They were sung with joy, praising God's goodness. Yet, there are hymns, sung with sadness, lamentation or contrition. There are also hymns, sung during illness and bad experience. More than any other books of the Holy Bible, this book speaks about the experience of God in ordinary life. This book is known as "Book of Praises" and "Psalter." It is the prayer book in the Holy Bible.

The authorship of the Psalter is attributed to King David. However, all do not agree about King David's authorship due to different language styles, its contents and time. The background of the book is the worship and homage, paid to God by the Israelites.

The Psalter has five books. (The Pentateuch also has five books.)

First Book - Psalms 1-41  
Second Book - Psalms 42-72  
Third Book - Psalms 73-89  
Fourth Book - Psalms 90-106  
Fifth Book - Psalms 107-150

The last verse of each book is prayerful. Each book ends with praise to God.

Ex. Psalm 41:13  
Psalm 72:19  
Psalm 89:52  
Psalm 106:48  
Psalm 150

## Classification of the Psalms

### 1. Hymns of Praise

These hymns speak about God's creation and salvation and God's features, such as goodness, mercy, love, greatness, royalty. E.g. Psalm 8, 112, 145-150.

O' LORD, our Sovereign,  
how majestic is your name in all  
the earth!  
You have set your glory above the  
heavens.

(Psalm 8:1)

### 2. Lament Psalms

These hymns are called by this name, because they were sung during times of difficulties and distress, asking God's help. These hymns can be divided into two:

- i. Personal Lament Psalms (Psalm 3, 5, 6, 7, 13, 140)
- ii. Communal Lament Psalms (Psalm 44, 74, 79, 80, 83)

I said unto the LORD,  
Thou art my God:  
hear the voice of my supplications,  
O' LORD.  
O' GOD the Lord, the strength of my  
salvation,  
thou hast covered my head in the day of  
battle.

(Psalm 140:6-7)

### 3. Thanksgiving Psalms

They were sung with gratitude to God for the graces and benefits, received. E.g. Psalms 18, 105 and 116

O give thanks to the LORD, for he  
is good,  
for his steadfast love endures  
forever.

(Psalm 136:1)

### 4. Wisdom Psalms

These psalms encourage the people to lead a righteous life. E.g. Psalms 1, 73 and 133

Happy are those  
who do not follow the advice of the wicked,  
or take the path that sinners tread,  
or sit in the seat of scoffers;  
but their delight is in the law of the LORD,  
and on his law they meditate day and night.

(Psalm 1:1-2)

### 5. Royal Psalms

These psalms were sung during the consecration or weddings of kings. E.g. Psalms 2, 45 and 72

Give the king your justice, O' God,  
and your righteousness to a king's  
son.

(Psalm 72:1)

## 6. Psalms of Zion

Zion is Jerusalem. These Psalms speak of the greatness of Jerusalem. They were used in pilgrimages to Jerusalem. E.g. Psalms 46, 48, 122 and 125

Those who trust in the LORD are  
like Mount Zion,  
which cannot be moved, but  
abides forever.

(Psalm 125:1)

## 7. Psalms of Trust

These speak of firm faith on God. Trusting in God, these Psalms were sung. E.g. Psalms 23, 62 and 71

Even though I walk through the darkest  
valley,  
I fear no evil;  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff  
they comfort me.

(Psalm 23:4)

Psalter is a treasure of prayer. It is the best proof that the Israelites experienced God in their ordinary life. They brought all their life experience to God in prayer.

Lord Jesus has quoted from Psalms. He used psalms in the Sermon on the Mount. E.g. Psalm 6:9 (Matthew 7:23), Psalm 24:3-4 (Matthew 5:8), Psalm 37:11 (Matthew 5:5). Lord Jesus used Psalm 22:1 on the cross.

In happiness and win, we praise God and in pain and distress, we appeal to God: we ask His help. When we fall into sin, we are contrite. We go back to God; ask pardon. We take all these to God in prayer, using psalms.

We use psalms in the Responsorial Psalms of the Holy Mass, the highest act of liturgy. In the Liturgy of the Hours and the Vespers, Psalter is indispensable.

Therefore, the Psalter has been in use from ancient times to present day. It is a prayer book that helps to lift the heart of the faithful to God.

### Activity



1. Get a psalm of your choice from the Psalter and write it in your exercise book.
2. Display a psalm on your Wallpaper.
3. Write an essay of 100 words on the topic, "Psalter is our prayer book."
4. Compose a hymn, praising God.



**For Life**

Make use of the Psalter for your prayer.