2

אַל־תִּשְׁכַּח קוֹל צֹרְרֶיךָ שְׁאוֹן קָמֶיךָ עֹלֶה תָמִיד

Do not forget the shouts of Your foes, the din of
Your adversaries that rises all the time.
(Psalm 74:23)

Joel (Löwe) Brill, the author of *Biur* to Psalms, makes the following comment on the conclusion of Psalm 74: "From the ending of this psalm, the psalmist's voice seems to be choked and rendered inaudible by the ever-louder shouts of the enemy." This pessimism is expressed in the structure of the psalm. The course of the psalm makes two sharp reversals — from darkness to light and from light to darkness. In fact, the psalm seems to have been written with black fire on white fire: the black fire of the first stanza (verses 4-11) is the fire of destruction, the here-and-now cry of the enemy; against it, we see God's might in the past, the dazzling brilliance of the second stanza (verses 12-17). In verse 18, the psalm again changes direction: "Remember this, how the enemy blasphemes the LORD"; here we see the darkness of blasphemy.

There are other "national laments" in which the gloomy present that envelops the nation is emphasized by the remembrance of past glory. The present can be contrasted with the past as it is here and in Psalm 80, in the order present-past-present. Alternatively, the form of the contrast can be past-present, as it is in Psalm 44. This psalm begins with the glorious period about which "we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us the deeds that You performed in their time, in days of old. With Your hand, You planted them, displacing nations .... You are my king, O God; decree victories for Jacob! Through You we gore our foes .... You give us victory over our foes" (44:2-9). From this description of the past, the psalmist makes a direct transition to painful reality: "Yet You have rejected and disgraced us; and You do not go forth with our armies .... " (verses 10-17).

The spiritual state expressed in a lament in which a description of the darkened present precedes the memory of the bright past is quite different from the state realized in a lament which first recalls the past before describing the present.[1] Beginning with a memory of a better time in-

1. Zirker (*op. cit.* [p. 276, note 2]) devotes an entire chapter (pp. 118-123) to the two purposes for which the "lament of the people" might employ the recollection of the past — to intensify present misery or to arouse hope — but he fails to discern the structural differences between the two modes of expression.

dicates a more confident, contented state of mind than does an opening which describes a bleak present. In Psalm 44, the elegist succeeds in restraining his sorrow at the beginning of his lament, expressing his previous salvation. When the past is mentioned, the reader's joy is complete, for he does not yet know that this past stands in complete contrast to the present. In Psalm 74, however, the poet's suffering is so great that he is compelled to begin his poem with it. When God's mighty deeds are mentioned in the second stanza of the psalm, the praise is mingled with tears. Our joy is diluted with sorrow and bitterness, since we are already aware of the harsh realities of the present.

This same contrast can be sensed in a verse that appears, with slight differences, in both psalms. The author of Psalm 44 invokes God, "You are my king, O God" (verse 5); a similar invocation is found in Psalm 74, "O God, my king of old" (verse 12).

The difference is indicated even by the mode of invocation. In Psalm 44, God is present; He is addressed directly, in the second person. In Psalm 74, God is referred to though not directly addressed. In Psalm 44, the second person is used by the psalmist as part of his description of the past: "For it was not by their sword that they took the land ... but by Your right hand and Your arm, and Your goodwill, because You favored them" (verse 4). In the next verse we read, "You are my king, O God"; this phrase conveys a sense of undisturbed trust. However, in Psalm 74, the verse, "O God, my king of old" follows the question that bursts forth from the soul of the elegist: "Why do You hold back Your hand, Your right hand?" (verse 11). Protest, more than trust, is what is expressed here: "God", who was *my* king (the possessive is emphatic)[2] of old, bring-

2. The Septuagint translates: βασιλεῦς ἡμῶν "*our* king"; the Peshitta simply "king". Since nowhere else in the psalm is the first person singular used as here in MT (*malkī*), some scholars (e.g. Duhm, Chajes) read *melek*, with the Peshitta. So also H. D. Hummel, who argues that MT arose out of a failure to recognize an enclitic *mem* in the original text, which was *mlk-m qdm* ("Enclitic Mem in Early Northwest Semitic, Especially in Hebrew", *JBL*, LXXVI [1957], p. 97). According to Dahood, the *mem* might be enclitic, or it might be a prefix as in MT; in either case, he repoints MT *malkī* as *malkē*, and he joins the last word of verse 11 to the beginning of verse 12. Thus: *kallēh wē'lōhīm* (or: *'ēlōhīm*) *malkē miqqedem* (or: *malkē-m qedem*), "Destroy, O God, the

ing *yĕšū'ōt* (mighty deeds, deliverance) throughout the earth — where is He now, and where are His works?

"You are my king, O God" (Psalm 44:5): a proclamation.

"O God, my king of old" (Psalm 74:11): a sigh, a plea, a protest.

The clearest indication that the verse here in Psalm 74 is an expression of protest and not of trust is the direct address in verses 13-17, in which God's mighty deeds are recounted through a sevenfold repetition of the emphatic pronoun, "You". The argument used here, a sort of *argumentum ad hominem*, shows the psalmist's need to persuade himself and to overcome his shaken faith.[3]

The difference between the moods of Psalms 44 and 74 may be discerned by comparing the conclusions of the psalms. Both utter a strident demand. In Psalm 44, the demand is expressed in the imperative, "Rouse Yourself, awaken, do not reject us forever" (verse 24); the final plea, is, "Arise, help us, and redeem us as befits Your faithfulness" (verse 27). All but one of these phrases are demands for action; that one asks for a cessation, "do not reject us forever". In Psalm 74, however, the imperatives alternate between positive and negative, between action and its prevention: "remember" (verse 18), "do not deliver", "do not forget" (verse 19), "look" (verse 20), "let not the downtrodden" (verse 21), "arise", "champion", "remember" (verse 22), "do not forget" (verse 23).

The demand for God to act begins in Psalm 74 with "remember" and continues in a crescendo: "look", "arise", "champion". The first request is only for a thought, and even the second merely calls for observation. The third, however, is a demand for action: "arise"; only then is there a call for intervention: "champion". The psalmist, approaching God with requests, is not bold, but rather moves gradually. When he finally gathers enough courage to ask for God's intervention, saying "champion Your cause", he immediately loses heart and returns to his initial request, as if to say, "at least remember". This sudden decrescendo is another expression of the psalmist's lack of confidence. The conclusion of the psalm, the negative command, the request for God to refrain from an action, follows naturally from this outlook.

kings from (or: of) the East", i.e., the rulers of the Moabites, Edomites, and Ammonites.

3. Mrs. Nechama Leiter brought this to my attention.

The mood expressed in the conclusion of Psalm 74 — "the din of Your adversaries that rises all the time" — is actually present in the psalm from the very beginning, as was first felt by the *Biur*.

B. The Opening

A technique often used in the Bible, both in narrative passages and in poetry, is the use of structural or stylistic devices to summarise the intent of the whole in the opening words.[1] Careful study of the beginning of a work is thus likely to lead us to a clear understanding of the work as a whole.

The opening verses of Psalm 74 provide us with a good example of this technique.

לָמָּה אֱלֹהִים זָנַחְתָּ לָנֶצַח יֶעְשַׁן אַפְּךָ בְּצֹאן מַרְעִיתֶךָ
זְכֹר עֲדָתְךָ קָנִיתָ קֶדֶם גָּאַלְתָּ שֵׁבֶט נַחֲלָתֶךָ
הַר־צִיּוֹן זֶה שָׁכַנְתָּ בּוֹ
הָרִימָה פְעָמֶיךָ לְמַשּׁאוֹת נֶצַח כָּל־הֵרַע אוֹיֵב בַּקֹּדֶשׁ

Why, O God, do You reject [us] forever, do You fume in anger at the flock of Your pasture? Remember the community You made Yours of old, You redeemed Your very own tribe; [remember] Mount Zion where You dwell. Lift up Your feet because of the perpetual tumult, all the outrages of the enemy in the Sanctuary.

(Verses 1-3)

According to the theory of form criticism, this opening is characteristic of the "lament of the people",[2] the genre to which most scholars assign Psalm 74.[3] In Westermann's view, it contains the elements that mark the

1. For example, Jacob on Genesis 13:1; Szold on Job 1:1 (s.v. *wĕhāyāh hā'īš hahū'*); 1:3 (s.v. *wayĕhî hā'îš hahū'*); Cahana on Job 1:1; Strauss, *op. cit.* (p. 275, note 6), p. 68 (Psalm 23), p. 91 (Psalm 12). Yellin's remarks on the Biblical opening (*op. cit.* [p. 274, note 3], pp. 1-11) are too general to be of any consequence.
2. Gunkel, *Introduction*, p. 121.
3. See below, in note 9.

opening verses of psalms of this type: a) "address and introductory cry for help"; b) "reference to God's earlier saving deeds".[4]

Even if we were to assume that all "laments of the people" contained these features, the recognition that Psalm 74 opens in the same way — while it might help us make a literary and aesthetic evaluation, or perhaps even an assessment of its historical value — is of no help in interpreting the poem. If, however, we try to read the opening not as part of a fixed, stylized scheme — even if it is conventional — but rather as a unique composition, paying careful attention to its individual traits, we will be able to uncover its own structure, through which we can obtain an understanding of the whole psalm.

Verse 1 laments the present, asking "Why, O God, do You reject [us] forever, do You fume in anger at the flock of Your pasture?". Verse 2 recalls past manifestations of God's might and favour: "Remember the community You made Yours of old, You redeemed Your very own tribe; [remember] Mount Zion, where You dwell." Verse 3 invokes God's intervention in the present for the sake of the future: "Lift up Your feet because of the perpetual tumult, all the outrages of the enemy in the Sanctuary."

We may thus represent the opening of the psalm schematically, as follows:

verse 1: lament for our distress — present
verse 2: recollection of God's might and favour — past
verse 3: call for God's intervention — future.[5]

4. *The Praise of God in the Psalms* (transl. by K. R. Crim), Richmond, Va. (1965), pp. 52, 53. The second element ("reference to God's earlier saving deeds") is mentioned only on p. 53. On p. 52 Westermann establishes that "The introductory petition is not an essential part, but it is encountered precisely in the early Psalms and most probably belonged to the original structure of this category of Psalm".

5. J. P. M. van der Ploeg, in his reference to this writer's previous structural analysis of Psalm 74 (*SVT*, XXII [1972], pp. 88-112), mentions that G. Castellino (*Il libro dei Salmi*, Torino 1955) already saw the first three verses as the introduction to the main part of the psalm. According to van der Ploeg, however, Castellino, unlike this writer, "does not speak of the present, past and future times, but of 1. the stubbornness of God, putting his people to the test; 2. the recording of the relations God had of old with his people; 3. an invitation, addressed to God, to look at the ruins wrought by the enemy". Van der Ploeg himself also believes that verses 1-3 comprise "an introduction" in which, in his opinion "the present situation of the people in distress is delineated . . . . V. 1 and 2 form an antithesis, the former verse complaining that God endly [sic!] continues to reject his people . . . , the latter recalling the election of Israel . . . . This verse, of course, recalls the past but not for the past's own sake: Israel is *still* the chosen people . . . , but look at its present condition: the elected people is living in misery! This idea is strengthened by 3 which rhetorically asks God to come down and visit his most holy place on earth where the enemy destroyed everything. Far from describing present, past and future . . . these verses evoke the miserable present condition of the people in its various aspects" ("Psalm 74 and its Structure", in: *Travels in the World of the Old Testament — Studies presented to Prof. M. A. Beek*, Assen 1974, pp. 205, 208; compare also *ThLZ*, C [1975], col. 812). Only a careful consideration of the language and function of the verses under discussion will determine which of the interpretations — Castellino's, van der Ploeg's, or mine — is the correct one.

Unless we also understand the function of these verses as components of the overall structure, however, determining the structure of this section will not suffice as a means of interpretation. Before examining the structure of the whole psalm, we shall discuss Westermann's analysis of this structure. Chart A (p. 284) represents Westerman's view of Psalm 74:[6]

According to Kraus, Westermann has "succeeded" in establishing the structure of Psalm 74 by means of his schematic table. However, even a brief perusal of the chart will show that it is not the result of a careful study of the psalm, but rather of a prior assumption that is independent of the psalm and its contents. The author assumes the existence of a literary genre called "the lament of the people", which is composed of the seven divisions set out in sequence in the chart. Psalm 74 is forced into the Procrustean bed of this scheme, since it is said to belong to this genre.

The failure of the scheme to describe this psalm is particularly evident when we look, for example, at Westermann's last two sections, "Motifs" and "Vows of Praise". Westermann himself failed to find these corresponding passages in the psalm, so he extracted an idea from the verses, shattering the form created by the psalmist and changing the shape of the poem by tearing words out of their contexts. By this reshaping of Psalm 74, he obtained the "legitimate" structure of the "lament of the people"; the psalm now actually contains the two "constitutive ele-

6. *Op. cit.* (note 4, above), pp. 53-54. [The English translation of the psalm is that found in Westermann's book, and differs in many respects from ours.]

CHART A			
Address and introductory cry for help		O God Why? Remember Direct thy steps	verses 1,2aα,3
Reference to God's earlier saving deeds		Remember thy congregation which thou hast gotten ... redeemed .. where thou hast dwelt	verse 2
Lament	the foes	The foes have roared in the midst of thy holy place	verses 4-8
	we	We do not see ... no longer any prophet ... None ... who knows	verse 9
	thou	why does thou cast us off forever? How long?	verses 11, 10
Confession of Trust		Yet God is my King from of old thou hast ...	verses 12-17
Petition	hear!	Do not forget	verse 19bβ
	save!	Do not deliver Arise	verses 19a,bα,22a
Motifs	punish!	Do not forget the clamor of thy foes Is the enemy to revile thy name? the life of thy poor, thy covenant	verse 23
Double wish		———	———
Vows of Praise		let the poor and needy praise thy name	verse 21b

ments" — that is, elements required for the conclusion of any "lament of the people". In order to test the appropriateness of Westermann's scheme, we have added the corresponding verse numbers to the various sections of his table; in this way his rearrangement of the poem may clearly be seen. It is thus apparent that the section of "Motifs" required by his scheme is not present in the psalm at all. It has been assembled from fragmented verses merely in order to fill out the scheme.

Thus while the structure that Westermann has described may meet the demands of form criticism, it fails to meet the requirements of literary

criticism, since it does not reflect the development of thoughts and feelings in the text. The structure of a poem is not an arrangement of ideas in a fixed order; a paraphrase of ideas resembling those in a poem does not convey a true image of the poem. The message of the poem is embodied in its unique form and structure. By ignoring the form of the psalm as it is, Westermann's analysis is of no help in our attempt to uncover the meaning of the opening of the poem through an examination of the whole. Close examination of the psalm reveals the structure delineated in Chart B. (See pp. 286-289).

The poem is composed of two sections: verses 1-3, introduction; verses 4-23, the main part of the psalm. These two sections correspond to each other exactly in their plan of composition, their key-words, their motifs, and the order in which their motives are introduced. The introduction and the body of the psalm both fall into three sections. Each of the three opening verses corresponds to one of the three strophes which make up the main part of the psalm: verse 1 to strophe I (verses 4-11) — the present; verse 2 to strophe II (verses 12-17) — the past; verse 3 to strophe III (verses 18-23) — the future. The first part of the introductory strophe begins with *lāmāh* ("why", verse 1); the first strophe of the main part ends with *lāmāh* (verse 11). The second part of the introduction includes the word *qedem* ("of old", verse 2), as does the second strophe of the main part (*miqqedem*, "of old", verse 12). The word *neṣaḥ* occurs twice in the opening strophe: at the beginning (verse 1, *lāneṣaḥ*, "forever"), and at the end (verse 3, *neṣaḥ*, "perpetual"). In the body of the psalm, *lāneṣaḥ* occurs both in the first strophe (verse 10) and in the third (verse 19).[7]

7. Van der Ploeg states that "according to Castellino the three initial verses correspond to the three main parts of the psalm, *but in reverse order*, [verse] 1 corresponding to part 3, 2 corresponding to part 2 and 3 corresponding to part 1!" Van der Ploeg agrees with Castellino and this writer "in dividing the psalm roughly into an introduction and three main parts". But according to his interpretation, the first three verses do not correspond to the three main parts; rather, the psalm manifests a stylistic trait which van der Ploeg claims to have discovered in several psalms: "the repetition of the same motive or motives in various terms, completing each other" ("Psalm 74 and Its Structure", pp. 205, 207; italics original). "The Psalmist deepens what he has already said, or repeats it in a different way, until he thinks he has said enough. One thought leads him to others, one word summons others, without the psalm's having a *rationally* ordered structure" (*ThLZ*, C, col. 809; italics original). This approach finds expression in van

CHART B

Proem	Lament for our distress	the present	verse 1
	Recollection of God's might and favour	the past	2
	Call for God's intervention		3
Strophe I	The present		4
			5
			6
	(Description of our distress)		7
			8
			9
			10
			11

Why O God, do You reject [us] *forever*, do You fume in anger at the flock of Your pasture?	לָמָּה אֱלֹהִים זָנַחְתָּ לָנֶצַח יֶעְשַׁן אַפְּךָ בְּצֹאן מַרְעִיתֶךָ׃
Remember the community You made Yours *of old*, You redeemed Your very own tribe; etc.	זְכֹר עֲדָתְךָ קָנִיתָ קֶדֶם גָּאַלְתָּ שֵׁבֶט נַחֲלָתֶךָ וגו׳
Lift up Your feet because of the *perpetual* tumult, all the outrages of the enemy in the Sanctuary.	הָרִימָה פָעָמֶיךָ לְמַשֹּׁאוֹת נֶצַח כָּל־הֵרַע אוֹיֵב בַּקֹּדֶשׁ׃
Your foes roar inside Your meeting-place; they take their signs for true signs.	שָׁאֲגוּ צֹרְרֶיךָ בְּקֶרֶב מוֹעֲדֶךָ שָׂמוּ אוֹתֹתָם אֹתוֹת׃
It is like men wielding axes against a gnarled tree; with hatchet and pike they hacked away at its carved work.	יִוָּדַע כְּמֵבִיא לְמָעְלָה בְּסִבְכֵי־עֵץ קַרְדֻּמוֹת׃ וְעַתָּה פִּתּוּחֶיהָ יַחַד בְּכַשִּׁיל וְכֵילַפּוֹת יַהֲלֹמוּן׃
They made Your Sanctuary go up in flames; they brought low in dishonor the dwelling-place of Your presence.	שִׁלְחוּ בָאֵשׁ מִקְדָּשֶׁךָ לָאָרֶץ חִלְּלוּ מִשְׁכַּן־שְׁמֶךָ׃
They resolved, "Let us destroy them altogether!" They burned all God's tabernacles in the land.	אָמְרוּ בִלְבָבָם נִינָם יַחַד שָׂרְפוּ כָל־מוֹעֲדֵי־אֵל בָּאָרֶץ׃
No signs appear for us; there is no longer any prophet; etc.	אוֹתֹתֵינוּ לֹא רָאִינוּ אֵין עוֹד נָבִיא וגו׳
Till when, O God, will the foe blaspheme, will the enemy *forever* revile Your name?	עַד־מָתַי אֱלֹהִים יְחָרֵף צָר יְנַאֵץ אוֹיֵב שִׁמְךָ לָנֶצַח׃
Why do You hold back Your hand, Your right hand? Draw it out of Your bosom?	לָמָּה תָשִׁיב יָדְךָ וִימִינֶךָ מִקֶּרֶב חֵיקְךָ כַלֵּה׃

CHART B (continued from previous page)

Strophe II	The past	12
		13
		14
		15
	(Recollection of God's mighty deeds)	16
		17
Strophe III	The future	18
		19
		20
		21
	(Call for God's intervention)	22
		23

וֵאלֹהִים מַלְכִּי מִקֶּדֶם פֹּעֵל יְשׁוּעוֹת בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ׃	Oh God, my king *from of old*, who brings deliverance throughout the earth;
אַתָּה פוֹרַרְתָּ בְעָזְּךָ יָם שִׁבַּרְתָּ רָאשֵׁי תַנִּינִים עַל־הַמָּיִם׃	it was You who drove back the sea with Your might, who smashed the heads of the monsters in the waters;
אַתָּה רִצַּצְתָּ רָאשֵׁי לִוְיָתָן תִּתְּנֶנּוּ מַאֲכָל לְעָם לְצִיִּים׃	it was You who crushed the heads of Leviathan, who left him as food for the denizens of the desert;
אַתָּה בָקַעְתָּ מַעְיָן וְנָחַל אַתָּה הוֹבַשְׁתָּ נַהֲרוֹת אֵיתָן׃	it was You who released springs and torrents, who made mighty rivers run dry.
לְךָ יוֹם אַף־לְךָ לָיְלָה אַתָּה הֲכִינוֹתָ מָאוֹר וָשָׁמֶשׁ׃	The day is Yours, the night also; it was You who set in place the orb of the sun.
אַתָּה הִצַּבְתָּ כָּל־גְּבוּלוֹת אָרֶץ קַיִץ וְחֹרֶף אַתָּה יְצַרְתָּם׃	You fixed all the boundaries of the earth; summer and winter — You made them.
זְכָר־זֹאת אוֹיֵב חֵרֵף ה׳ וְעַם נָבָל נִאֲצוּ שְׁמֶךָ׃	Remember this: the enemy blasphemes the LORD, base people revile Your name.
אַל־תִּתֵּן לְחַיַּת נֶפֶשׁ תּוֹרֶךָ חַיַּת עֲנִיֶּיךָ אַל־תִּשְׁכַּח לָנֶצַח׃	Do not deliver Your dove to the wild beast; do not ignore *forever* the band of Your lowly ones.
הַבֵּט לַבְּרִית כִּי מָלְאוּ מַחְשַׁכֵּי־אֶרֶץ נְאוֹת חָמָס׃	Look to the covenant! For the dark places of the land are full of the haunts of lawlessness.
אַל־יָשֹׁב דַּךְ נִכְלָם עָנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן יְהַלְלוּ שְׁמֶךָ׃	Let not the downtrodden turn away disappointed; let the poor and needy priase Your name.
קוּמָה אֱלֹהִים רִיבָה רִיבֶךָ זְכֹר חֶרְפָּתְךָ מִנִּי־נָבָל כָּל־הַיּוֹם׃	Rise, O God, champion Your cause; remember how You are blasphemed by base men all day.
אַל־תִּשְׁכַּח קוֹל צֹרְרֶיךָ שְׁאוֹן קָמֶיךָ עֹלֶה תָמִיד׃	Do not forget the shouts of Your foes, the din of Your adversaries that rises all the time.

There is thus a striking parallelism between the introductory strophe and the main part of the psalm; indeed it can be truly said that the introduction is a reduced version of the main part. The new schools of poetic study have taught us the importance of listening to the kind of echoes that we find here. Formal symmetry is not just an architectural ornament but an essential element in poetry. In Psalm 74, the correspondence between the introductory strophe and the body is not just a matter of form; it signifies the fact that the two parts of the poem are mutually illuminating in terms of meaning. Both the first part of the introduction (verse 1) and the first strophe of the body (verses 4-11) deal with the present; both complain of distress. But whereas in verse 1 the psalmist laments God's anger against "the flock of Your pasture", in verses 4-11 his present sadness is concentrated not upon the suffering of the people but upon the desecration of the Sanctuary (verses 4-8) and the blasphemy of God's name (verse 10). The complaint embodied in the depiction of the present distress is voiced from a higher viewpoint than that contained in the earlier lament. This gradation, or perhaps increased depth, is already apparent in the three opening verses, in each of which the object of the disaster becomes successively more precise and thus expresses a more lofty concept: The object of God's anger is the people — this is clear in the first colon only from the context; in the second God's relation to His people is expressed metaphorically: "the flock of Your pasture" (verse 1). In the first two cola of verse 2 the object of God's kindness is His people; His special relationship to them is again noted, though not metaphorically but conceptually: "the community You made Yours of old .... You redeemed Your very own tribe". The second object is no longer God's chosen people but "Mount Zion where You dwell" (verse 2), while the object of the disaster in whose wake God's intervention is finally called for (verse 3) is the Sanctuary. Thus, while the psalmist sees God's people as the object of disaster at the outset of the psalm, as he gradually formulates his expression of God's eternal relationship with the people he visualizes God's earthly habitation, Mount Zion, which is followed in turn

der Ploeg's opinion concerning the three opening verses (above, note 5). As for this writer's interpretation of the psalm, he naturally asserts: "The demand for Total Interpretation . . . has led to false interpretations of individual units, and to a false stylistic analysis" (*ibid.*, col. 812).

by a new notion of the object of the disaster: the Sanctuary. Since the introduction ends with the words "in the Sanctuary", it follows that the lament in the main part of the psalm, corresponding to verse 1 of the introduction, begins by depicting not the suffering of the people but the enemy's vandalism in the Sanctuary, from which it proceeds to the greatest calamity of all — the desecration and blasphemy of the Divine Name.

The second strophe of the main part (verses 12-17), like the second section of the introduction, contrasts the glorious past with the gloomy present. In the introduction we find memories of how Israel was redeemed by God, thus becoming His people; in the body of the poem the psalmist continues, speaking of God "who brings *yĕšū'ōt* throughout the earth" (verse 12) and recalls that "it was You who drove back the sea by Your might, who smashed the heads of the monsters in the waters; it was You who crushed the heads of Leviathan..." (verses 13ff.). The poet expands on these memories. According to the wording of the context, *yĕšū'ōt* — "deliverance, mighty deeds" – must mean God's creation of the earth; in Babylonian and perhaps in Ugaritic mythology,[8] creation was preceded by a divine struggle against the primeval ocean of Chaos and its "allies", the monsters. Most modern commentators explain the passage in this way.[9] Some scholars believe that "as in Isa. 51:9 and Ezek. 29:3, the traditions of the creation- and salvation-stories are here presumably combined in the comprehensive view of the *Heilsgeschichte* (see verse 12), so that in verses 13-15 allusions to the miracles both of the Exodus and of the entry into the Promised Land .... are simultaneously visible through

8. See M. K. Wakeman, "Chaos", in *IDBS*, pp. 143-145 (with bibliography).
9. See, *inter alia*, P. Reymond, *L'eau, sa vie et sa signification dans l'Ancien Testament* (*SVT*, VI), Leiden 1958, pp. 190, 192, 193; S. E. Loewenstamm, *Massoret Yeẓiat Miẓrayim Behisntalsheluta*, Jerusalem 1965, pp. 105-106; van der Ploeg, "Psalm 74 and its Structure", p. 209; Dahood; W. A. Young, *Psalm 74 — A Methodological and Exegetical Study*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Univ. of Iowa 1974 [according to *Dissertation Abstracts*, XXXV, 1974, 8017-A]; A. Lelièvre, "Y' et la mer dans les Psaumes", *RHPhr*, LVI [1976], pp. 253-275; T. L. Fenton, "Gishot Shonot shel Sofre Hamiqra Lemitos Hateomakhiya", in: *Meḥqarim Bamiqra Uvamizraḥ Haqadmon — Loewenstamm Festschrift*, Hebrew vol., Jerusalem 1978, pp. 337-381. "Pattemist" exegetes, who connect Psalm 74, like all "laments of the people", with the enthronement ritual, find an especially clear relationship between the psalmist's call to the Creator God and the Enthronement Festival (compare Bernhardt, *Das Problem der altorientalischen Königsideologie im Alten Testament*, pp. 217-218). According to F. Willesen,

the medium of the mythical stylization of the creation history".[10] Other scholars,[11] however, present the traditional interpretation,[12] according to which the passage refers only to the miracles in Egypt and at the Red Sea.

The structure of the psalm as we see it now helps us, by enabling us to reconstruct the train of thought embodied in it, to grasp the real meaning of this strophe. The psalmist, having described the enemy's present violence and sacrilege, continues — according to the order of topics in the introductory strophe — by recalling the effects of God's omnipotence in the past. He mentions God's *yĕšū'ōt* (verse 12) referring not, as is generally assumed by most early commentators and some moderns as well, to His acts of grace mentioned in verse 2 (the corresponding passage in the introduction), i.e., towards Israel, but rather, as recognized by most scholars today, to God's mighty deeds at Creation, those *yĕšū'ōt* which secured the existence and order of the cosmos. The psalm's structure, its train of thought, is what insists that only these, and not other *yĕšū'ōt* are

our psalm is "a lament of the profaned sanctuary" in the context of the cult drama of the New Year Festival. On the basis of Near Eastern parallels, Willesen suggests that before the victory of the god over the forces of chaos was dramatically reenacted — that is, before the ritual purification of the Temple — a ceremony of the profanation of the Temple was performed ("The Cultic Situation of Psalm LXXIV", *VT*, II [1952], pp. 289-306). H. Ringgren avers that the *Sitz im Leben* of this lament was a Temple renewal. "The reference to Creation should indicate the necessary basis for a restoration of the Temple" ("Die Funktion des Schöpfungsmythus in Jes. 51", in: *Schalom — A. Jepsen-Festschrift*, Berlin 1971, p. 39). As far as we know, Yosef ibn Yahya (16th century) is the only mediaeval Jewish commentator who associates the psalm with Creation. According to his interpretation of verse 14 — "it was You who smashed the heads of the monsters in the waters" — "while the waters gathered, the heads of the monsters. . . were smashed by the waters' rush to fulfill the will of their Creator" (*Miqdash Me'at*, II, Warsaw 1893, *ad loc.*).

10. Weiser; see also O. Kaiser, *Die mythische Bedeutung des Meeres in Aegypten, Ugarit und Israel* (*BZAW*, LXXVIII), Berlin 1959, pp. 146ff.; Kraus; Zirker, *op. cit.* (p. 276, note 2), p. 138, note 295; and others.
11. For example, E. Hertlen, "Rahab", *ZAW*, XXXVIII (1919-20), pp. 147ff.; König; K. Galling, *Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels* (*BZAW*, XLVIII), Giessen 1928, p. 25; O. Eissfeldt, *Baal Zaphon — Zeus Kasios und der Durchzug der Israeliten durchs Meer*, Halle 1932, pp. 29-30 (otherwise in "Gott und das Meer in der Bibel", in: *Studia Orientalia Joanni Pedersen dictata*, Hauniae 1953, p. 88 [=*Kleine Schriften*, III, Tübingen 1966, p. 260]); Herkenne.
12. So already *Mekhilta ad* Exodus 14:16; Targum, *ad loc.*

intended (such as the deliverance from Egypt, God's choice of Israel, etc.), not even in metaphorical representation. The first strophe testifies that what causes the psalmist's present distress is not what the offender has done to Israel but what has happened to God's Sanctuary, and, as a result, to His name. When the psalmist calls for God's help out of his present straits, mentioning as he does so God's past acts, he can have in mind only those *yĕšū'ōt* which are required again *now*. The last statement of his opening plaint "Till when, O God, will the foe blaspheme, will the enemy forever revile Your name?" (verse 10) makes this clear: it is God's might in shattering those who rebelled against Him, namely, His *yĕšū'ōt* at Creation, which the psalmist recalls and re-calls.

The third strophe (verses 18-23) does not simply call upon God to intervene for the sake of His Name, like the final lament of the first strophe:

Till when O God, will the foe *blaspheme*,
will the enemy forever *revile Your name*? (verse 10)
Remember this, how the enemy *blasphemes* the LORD,
how base people *revile Your name* (verse 18).

Here, all the thoughts expressed in the three parts of the introduction fuse in a single cry for help.

The unity of the introduction to Psalm 74, revealed and elucidated by its structure, clarifies the sequence of thoughts embodied in the main part of the psalm.

C. The Whole Unit

The subject of Psalm 8 is expressed in the verse that occurs at the beginning of the psalm, and is repeated at the end (verses 2a, 10): amazement[1] at the majesty of God's name as it is manifested throughout the world. The psalm's intention is to address God with a hymn of praise[2] to His

1. According to Ridderbos, the word *māh* ("how", "what"), which appears three times (verses 2, 5, 10), is the key word of the psalm (*Die Psalmen*, p. 138).
2. H. Graf Reventlow disagrees with the generally accepted form-critical designation of Psalm 8 as a "Hymn". Reventlow, whose general view of poetic analysis differs somewhat from Gunkel's (see Appendix II, pp. 411ff.), asserts that the characteristic structural elements of the Hymn are lacking in Psalm 8. He claims that the psalm is a

"name", to His glorious manifestation in the world. Each verse of the psalm is intended to illustrate this majesty, and for this reason, each verse mentions aspects of nature surrounding man and perceptible to his senses. We may thus understand how majestic is the LORD's name "throughout the world".

The exact interpretation of certain details of this psalm is, however, debatable. Some regard the phenomena mentioned by the psalmist simply as examples of God's greatness, as it is revealed on earth, in the heavens, and in man as infant and adult.[3] Others consider these details to be the background for one instance: man, testifying — both in his nothingness and as supreme created being — to the majestic name of God, the source of all.[4]

"Thanksgiving Song", on the basis of both form and content. In Reventlow's analysis, the psalmist is the "little man" who thanks God for His help, "which is too wonderful for him to be able to grasp" ("Der Psalm 8", *Poetica*, I [1967], pp. 309-332).

3. For example, Kittel, Weiser, W. A. Taylor (*IB*), Kissane, Ridderbos (*loc. cit.* [note 1, above]). According to P. A. H. de Boer our psalm deals with "Jahu's Ordination of Heaven and Earth"; that is, the mighty heavenly bodies which were at the time of creation God's foes, "enemy and avenger" (verse 3) were conquered by God. They are now appointed to the heavens and man is appointed to the earth (*OTS*, II [1943], pp. 175-193; compare Schedl's view in note 4). Dahood sees in the psalm "A hymn celebrating God's infinite majesty (vv. 2-5) and the dignity and power to which God has raised man (vv. 6-10)".

4. For example, Delitzsch, Chajes, Briggs, Buttenwieser, H. Schmidt, F. Lindblom ("Bemerkungen zu den Psalmen I", *ZAW*, LIX [1942/43], pp. 1-7), F. Morgenstern ("Psalms 8 and 19A", *HUCA*, XIX [1945/46], pp. 490-506), S. Mowinckel ("Metrischer Aufbau und Textkritik an Ps. 8 illustriert", in: *Studia Orientalia Joanni Pedersen dicata*, Hauniae 1953, pp. 250-262), Kraus, C. Schedl ("Psalm 8 in ugaritischer Licht", *Forschungen und Fortschritte*, XXXVIII [1964], pp. 183-185), W. H. Schmidt ("Gott und Mensch in Ps. 8 — Form- und überlieferungsgeschichtliche Erwägungen", *ThZ*, XXV [1969], pp. 1-15). H. Schmidt writes in his commentary on Psalms: "The Hymns usually have the majesty of the God of Creation as their subject. The great beauty of *this* little poem lies in the fact that in the totality of everything created, an individual is singled out, just like a romping child. Precisely in his smallness, which is brought so palpably to mind by contrast with the shining heavens, the stars and the moon, there is a declaration of the miraculous power of God. The poet must surely have been the father of a small child himself. As he composed his song of praise, it was nighttime: he saw the starry heavens above him and dreamt of the music of the spheres, but in his heart he heard the dear cry of his little child at home — in that place of repose that surpasses anything in the night." Schedl, inspired by Ugaritic literature, takes "infants" and "sucklings" to be mythological beings. They are related to the "sons of God", heavenly beings who rejoice at God's triumph over the forces of primordial chaos (compare de Boer's opinion, note 3 above). Against this background, the greatness with which the Creator has endowed man becomes evident (*art. cit.*, p. 185). According to M.Z. Segal, who, *inter alia*, sees verses 2b-3 as an addition, the psalm in its original form was meant to praise God for making man great in the world ("Hapizmon Bashira Hamiqrait", *Tarbiz*, VI [1935], pp. 126-127). E. Baumann would emend *mippî 'ôlèlîm wĕyônĕqîm* ("from the mouths of infants and sucklings" [verse 3]) to either *mē'ôlām miqqedem* ("of yore"), or *mippā'ôlē yādeykā* ("from the works of Your hands"). In his view, the subject of the first part of the poem is God's victory over man's arrogance, and of the second part the victory of man, as God's representative, over the animals ("Struktur-Untersuchungen im Psalter I", *ZAW*, LXI [1945/46], pp. 125-126). W. Beyerlin finds discrepancies in the text of Psalm 8, which attest to the fact that "the literary unit ... is a complex of the traditio-historical sort .... In a very late milieu, poetic fragments stemming from different periods and situations were united". The oldest part of the psalm is verses 2b-3, which are remnants of a hymn which asserted "the exaltation of the divine king Y" over the heavens, for one thing, and his earthly might, 'fixed' in the royal Zion Temple, for another". Then a new historical situation imposed itself on verses 2b-3: the old traditional hymn was actualised after the cultic center of God's might on earth, the Temple, lay in ruins. The psalm fragment now maintained that God's "manifestation on the earth occurs ... for the abandoned children of the bereaved widow Zion — more precisely, in what comes forth out of their mouths in their testimony to Y"". This conception, which came about in the context of the exilic lament for Zion, was developed further in the milieu of post-exilic Wisdom, in the perspective of the Wisdom question about human existence. Thus, the second part of Psalm 8, verses 4-9. In the frame, verses 2a and 10, God is *'ădōnênū*, "*our* Lord". According to Beyerlin, this title belongs to the post-exilic cultic community that professed in the we-style; the frame verses, then, date from a relatively later phase of the post-exilic period ("Psalm 8 — Chancen der Überlieferungskritik", *ZThK*, LXXIII [1976], pp. 1-22, esp. pp. 14, 16, 20-21). Against Beyerlin's hypothesis, C. Loretz identifies three stages in the growth of Psalm 8: 1) the question about the status of man (verses 5-9) is framed by verses 2a, 10, and thereby prepared for liturgical use; 2) verse 4 (or 2b) is added to the frame; 3) verse 3 is inserted: at the same time or subsequently, verse 2b is altered so that it becomes a plea for divine aid for Israel — *tĕnāh*, "give" ("Die Psalmen 8 und 67 — Psalmenstudien V", *UF*, VIII [1976], p. 120).

We may decide between these two approaches on the basis of the structure of the psalm. The assumption more firmly grounded in the wording of the psalm — and therefore the likelier of the two — is that the psalm, enclosed as it is within a recurring refrain (verses 2a, 10), falls into two parts: a) verses 2b-3; b) verses 4-9. By juxtaposing the two parts of the psalm, we can clarify its meaning (See Chart C, p. 296).

CHART C

Second Part	First Part
	2a יְהוָה אֲדֹנֵינוּ מָה־אַדִּיר שִׁמְךָ בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ
4 כִּי אֶרְאֶה שָׁמֶיךָ מַעֲשֵׂה אֶצְבְּעֹתֶיךָ וגו׳	2b אֲשֶׁר־תְּנָה הוֹדְךָ עַל־הַשָּׁמָיִם
5 מָה־אֱנוֹשׁ כִּי־תִזְכְּרֶנּוּ וגו׳	3 מִפִּי עוֹלְלִים וְיוֹנְקִים יִסַּדְתָּ עֹז וגו׳
6 וַתְּחַסְּרֵהוּ מְעַט מֵאֱלֹהִים וגו׳	
7-9 תַּמְשִׁילֵהוּ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יָדֶיךָ וגו׳	
10 יְהוָה אֲדֹנֵינוּ מָה־אַדִּיר שִׁמְךָ בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ	

First Part	Second Part
2a O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your Name throughout the earth.	
2b (You) who have set Your glory above the *heavens*!	4 When I behold Your *heavens*, etc.,
3 From the mouths of *infants* and *sucklings* You have founded strength, etc.	5 what is *man* that You have been mindful of him, etc.,
	6 that You have made him little less than divine, etc.
	7 9 You have made him master over your handiwork, etc.
	10 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Your name throughout the earth!

The two parts display a remarkable harmony of literary form and content. In each part, the psalmist speaks of the heavens (verses 2, 4) and of man (verses 3, 5-9), emphasizing both his smallness and his greatness: "From the mouth of infants and sucklings You have founded strength" (verse 3); "What is man that You have been mindful of him", "You have made him little less than divine", "You have made him master over Your handiwork" (verses 5-9). Moreover, all the comments about the heavens are contained in dependent clauses, not only in the first part of the psalm ("*who* have set Your glory above the heavens", verse 2), but also in the second ("*when* I behold Your heavens", verse 4). the heavens' testimony to God's greatness is mentioned only incidentally, while the main emphasis is placed on the revelation of God's majesty through man.

The prophet Habakkuk uses a compound sentence to describe God's sovereignty as it is revealed in the heavens and on earth: "His glory covers the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise" (3:3). The author of Psalm 148 glorifies God's greatness in a single independent clause: "His glory is over the earth and heavens" (verse 13). When our poet praises God, however, he refers to His glory in the heavens only in passing. Instead, his hymn is centered on his amazement at the revelation of God through man's existence on earth. He begins, "O LORD, how majestic is Your name throughout the earth", and he continues in the same vein, "From the mouths of infants and sucklings You have founded strength" (verse 3). After proceeding, in verses 5-9, to marvel at the exalted status that God has bestowed upon man, he concludes, "O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name throughout the earth!" (verse 10).

From the structure of Psalm 8, then, it is evident that the poem is intended to glorify the name of God "throughout the earth" by pointing to man's nature and his place in the world.[5]

5. See further my article, "Al Arbaa Mizmorim Besefer Tehillim", *Maayanot*, V (1956), pp. 88-107.