

³² *Idem* II, 329—32.³³ *Ibid.*, 329—32, 449—56.³⁴ Schürer, vol. I, p. 370.³⁵ Thiering, p. 30.³⁶ *Idem*, p. 28.³⁷ G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Penguin, 1987), p. 156.³⁸ Thiering believes that "the one hanged alive upon the tree" (1:8) refers to Jesus (see note 39), and that Jesus and his supporters continue to be referred to all the way to the end of verse 2:1 (Thiering, pp. 30, 164). However her explanation of how these verses could refer to Christians is unconvincing (*Idem*, pp. 150, 187). The passage from "behold I am against you ..." (1:8) in the biblical portion to the end of verse 2:1 in the commentary portion continues to refer to the "Lion of Wrath," as has been the case as far back as verse (1:4).³⁹ I do agree with Thiering that the "one hanged alive upon the tree" (1:8) is refers to Jesus, but I interpret it in a different way than she does (see note 38).⁴⁰ Horgan, p. 196.⁴¹ Josephus II, 277—9, 406—7, 556—8.⁴² *Ibid.*, 417—24, 523—6.⁴³ *Ibid.*, 562—68.⁴⁴ *Idem* IV, 244—58.⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 305—17, 326—44, 353—65.⁴⁶ Horgan, p. 163.⁴⁷ *Idem*, p. 164—5.⁴⁸ *Ibid.*⁴⁹ *Idem*, p. 162.

ZDZISŁAW PAWŁOWSKI

THE REALITY OF DEATH AND THE FACT OF PRAYER:
PSALM 88

There say this is one of the most tragic songs in the Psalter but it is rather very realistic one in its approach to the most tragic fact of life, namely the death. Paradoxically the term "death/*mwt*" does not appear in the Psalm at all. Unique mode of speaking of death is just imagery developed in many features throughout the Song. However along with images of death there stand also a fact of prayer: it is not so much the content of prayer but simply its fact. Thus two elements constitute a structure of the Psalm: the imagery of death and the fact of prayer.

I. GENRE AND COMPOSITION

1. Genre

Usually Ps 88 is seen as belonging to the larger group of the psalms qualified as individual supplication¹ and analyzed according to their form-critical structure established in a most discerning way by C. Westermann². He has distinguished the following principal components of the individual supplication³:

A. Address to God or invocation of the divine name which tend to be intimate and personal⁴ but in some places they may also contain a description of God as the helper and protector⁵.

B. Complaint or description of distress which bring about prayer. There may be many different situations like sickness, social isolation, oppression or inner sorrow and despair caused by sin which stand behind them. The psalmist intends here to turn his problem into a problem for Yahwe for it is he who is both able and responsible for doing something about it⁶.

C. Petition, expressed often in bold imperatives which aims to obtain something from God. The suppliant asks Yahwe for attentive compassion or deliverance but he also insists on his rights and requests God for his protection⁷.

D. Confession of trust in Yahwe which often attempts to give reasons for answering the prayer⁸.

E. Assurance of being heard which expresses the certainty that a prayer is now heard and then a situation of the psalmist is about to be changed⁹.

F. Vow of praise which often comes at the end of the psalm and contains the suppliant's promise of praise and thanksgiving towards God¹⁰.

In the light of these structural components of the individual supplication Ps 88 exhibits some peculiarities: it lacks any explicit expression of trust in Yahweh though the invocation in v. 2 and the long series of rhetorical questions in vv. 11—13 provide a certain kind of motivations to give God reason to act; an assurance of being heard and a vow of praise are also completely absent. There may be distinguished only a threefold introductory petition (vv. 2—3, 10bc, 14) and subsequent complaint (vv. 4—10a, 11—13, 15—19)¹¹. But even the petitions do not fit to the standard petition which requests something from God. The first one (vv. 2—3) is rather simple address to God with an introductory plea for hearing (cf. Ps 5, 23; 83,2)¹². In two others (v. 10bc and 14) the theme of prayer is repeated while in other psalms a petition usually expresses specific demands: for answer (Ps 13,4; 86,6; 142,7), deliverance (3,8; 9,20; 17,7; 28,3), Yahweh's protection etc.¹³. The threefold complaint which follows also betrays unusual character for its only theme it occupies with is death. It seems like obsession of the suppliant.

However the uniqueness of Ps 88 appears not only from structural point of view. Its distinctive character is shown even much more by the specific occasion which stands out for the supplication. K. Seybold has established the criteria according to which he has distinguished a relatively small group of texts as psalms of sickness and healing¹⁴. In his opinion Ps 88 belongs to the group of few psalms with "certain reference to sickness" (besides Ps 88 yet 38 and 41). To the group of those with "relative certainty" he regards also the following psalms of sickness: 30; 39; 69; 102; 103; and Is 38,9—20¹⁵. But it is difficult according to him to indicate a clearly recognizable and fixed structure of psalms of sickness. It concerns especially Ps 88 and 38¹⁶. However he tried to distinguish some common features of the psalms of sickness. In most of them enemies or evildoers are explicitly mentioned but there are no references to the wicked in Ps 88. Some of them contain penitential elements with sin against God as the dominant theme (cf. Ps 6; 32; 38; 51; 102) but in our Psalm we do not have any explicit confession of sin¹⁷. Along with description of suppliant's misery and need many psalms have quite clear references to the healing or being heard (cf. Ps 6,9f; 13,6; 30,3—6.8.12; 41,5ff.12; 69,14.17; 102,18f; 103,1—3; Is 38,16f.19), yet again none of these features appears in Ps 88¹⁸. It is not easy to say why these quite common features do not come out here. The motifs of the enemies and of sins seem to be taken over by the imagery of death which intends to present the whole situation of being in danger as the inner experience referred only to God. On the other hand the lack of assurance of being heard serves to strengthen the urgency of the petitions. So all these facts show that Ps 88 must be analyzed in its own way according with its distinctive structure and composition.

2. Composition

It has been just said that Ps 88 shows no plainly recognizable structure. However apart from threefold petition which seems to divide it into three parts there are some linguistic and semantic factors which have to be taken into account when we analyze a composition of the Psalm.

The first factor regards the threefold appeal to God. Each request contains a time reference concerning the prayer. Yet it must be noticed that outside petitions the indication of time appears twice in the last section of the Psalm in vv. 16.18 expressing the duration of distress/sickness.

The second factor is more complicated. It concerns a structure of images of death which seems to be based on some semantic centres¹⁹. The motif of grave²⁰ is the most impressive. It appears four times in vv. 5—6 in some different expressions: *bwr* "pit" (v.5a), *qbr* "grave" (v.6b), *bmtym hpsy* "a freed one among the dead" (v.6a), the experience of weakness conveyed by the v.5b also indicates a man already destined for the grave²¹. The same theme of grave is taken up again in vv. 11—13 making the parallel account. Each of six rhetorical questions refers somehow to the image of grave: "the dead" and "the shades" in v. 11 evokes motif of Sheol (v.4b); again "darkness" (v.13a), "the land of forgetfulness" (v.13b) and "the place of destruction" (v.12b) all these are the characteristics of the grave (v.12a)²².

The next set of images of death seems to refer to the motif of waters. Although it is mentioned directly only in v.8b where the expression *msbrym* "breaks/surging waves" is used, however the phrase *mslwt* "the depths of sea" (v.7b) and *bwr thtywt* "the deepest pit" (v.7a) evoking an image of the cistern also belong to the same semantic field²³. And again the motif of waters returns in the section vv. 17—18 where all images of death are compared to the mighty waters encompassed the suppliant²⁴.

The last motif symbolizing death we can find in vv.9, 10a repeated then with some changes in v.19. It denotes the social isolation and the completely separation from the other people as the consequence of divine anger against the psalmist²⁵. Thus the factors indicated above allow to see here three parallel sets of images of death conveyed through the motif of grave (vv.5—6 and 11—13), of waters (vv.7—8 and 17—18) and of social isolation (vv.9.10a and 19). Then the composition of the Psalm seems to consist in two parts: vv.4—10a and 11—19, each one introduced by the introductory petition (vv.2—3 and 10bc). Third petition in v.14 does not seem to introduce a new section. The *Waw adversativum*²⁶ at the beginning of the sentence indicates its auxiliary function to strengthen motivations expressed by the series of rhetorical questions in previous passage.

II. DEATH IMAGERY

1. Motif of grave

a) vv.5—6

The motif of grave explicitly is expressed by the phrases *bwr* "pit" (v.5a) and *qbr* "grave" (v.6b). Though the concept of grave is not identical with that of Sheol²⁷ but both are strictly connected with each other. The pit (*bwr*) similar to the grave (*qbr*) may denote the entrance into the underworld and as such may be used for the whole realm of the dead (cf. Ps 28,1; 143,7 and 44,23)²⁸. The image in v.5a "I am reconed among those who go down into the

pit" may have the meaning of census list of Sheol's citizens just suggested by M. Dahood²⁹. It is then taken up by the expression based on the opposition between *yn 'yl* and *qbr* in v.5b. The whole phrase "I am like a man who has no strength" again denote the extremity of powerlessness and weakness as the experience of being placed into the grave; its destructive power brings the psalmist's life to the state of death (cf. Job 14,10f.13.14)³⁰. In v.6a *bmtym* "among the dead" seems to be used the parallel to the *qbr* "grave" in v. 6b and to indicate a place rather than its inhabitants as it is pointed out by M. Dahood (cf. Job 33, 22)³¹. In the textual problem of the term *hpsy* "free" I follow F. Delitzsch in retaining the reading as it is and accepting the meaning "one set free among the dead"³². On the basis of the use of the word in Job 3,19 (cf. vv.17.18) and Koh 9,5 A.A. Anderson maintains the term may be used slightly ironically: "to be free among the dead means to be liberated, not only from pain and trouble, but also from all that is precious and desirable" and thus to be completely separated from the living (cf. Ps 31,13; 143,3; Lam 3,6)³³. The use of term *qbr* "grave" in v.6b³⁴ is modified by the phrase *hllym* "the slain" giving the whole expression a connotation of a horrible state of being buried not as usually in the family tomb (cf. Gn 49,29—32; 2 Sm 21,14 etc.) but in a mass grave like the fallen in the battle — an image parallel to the Ez 32,17—32³⁵ which illustrates the nether world as a huge necropolis, a place of permanent uncleanness³⁶. The image is then developed in two next formula (v.6c,d) in which the terrible fate of the buried in a common grave is referred directly to God's non-intervention³⁷. In both quite unusual expressions (*1' zkr tm 'wd* and *mydk ngzrw*) the state of being separated from the living and contaminated with the dead is viewed now as a total separation from God. It means that they are excluded from the worship of Yahwe and stand outside his deeds performed in the history (cf. Ps 31,23; Lam 3,54; Is 53,8)³⁸.

This thought is obviously taken up again by a parallel set of images we find in vv.11—13. Each one presents a different aspects of the condition of the dead (v.11) destined for dwelling in the grave (v.12a): the term *rp'ym* "shades" stands in parallel to "the dead" and both may designate the dead as a massed community dwelling in the nether world (cf. Is 26,14)³⁹; silence (v.12) is the characteristic of the realm of death (as praise is the characteristic mode of life cf. Ps 6,6; 30,10; 115,17; Is 38,18f)⁴⁰; *bdwn* <place of> destruction (v.12b) which may either reflect the idea of the fate of a man after death or the observation of decay of the corpse in the grave⁴¹; *hsk* "darkness" (v.13a) and *'rs nsyh* "the land of forgetfulness" (v.13b) also qualify the resting-place of the dead (cf. Job 10,21: *'rs hsk wslmwt* "the land of darkness and the shadow of death) for its inhabitants are soon forgotten (cf. Ps 31,13; cf. Koh 9,5; 9,10). As we have seen above these two passages (vv.5—6 and 11—13) employing the motif of grave and then developing it from different point of view present the state of death as the place (grave, pit) where a person not only experiences extreme diminution of life being completely separated from the world of living but it is also a condition in which a man is definitively cut off from God and his saving activity and placed in the sphere of total silence, darkness, forgetfulness and destruction.

2. Motif of waters

a) vv.7—8

In this section motif of waters is introduced by the phrase *bwr thtywt* "the lowest pit". The *bwr* may denote the grave (cf. v.5) but its association with *thtywt* ("the depths") in our expression suggests its original connotation as "the cistern" which according with its purpose is designed in such a way that rain water flows into it and remains there. Thus sinking into the masses of water and mire makes the cistern symbol of the floods of Chaos⁴². The concept of the nether world — state of death — as watery abyss is evoked by another term we find in v.7: *mslwt* "the ocean's deep" always is used in the sense of submarine depths (cf. Ex 15,5; Jon 2,4; Ps 69,3; 107,24) in which the darkness (*mhslym*) is their constitutive element (cf. Lam 3,6; Ps 143,3)⁴³. The notion of drowning is developed in v.8 where the use of the term *msbr* "breakers"⁴⁴ refers explicitly to the waves of the great sea (cf. Jon 2,4; Ps 42,8) but it can be also viewed as an allusion to the waters or ocean of the underworld⁴⁵. The expression "your wrath have weighed upon me" in v.8a seems not to fit into the motif of waters. The notion *hnh* often combined with the term's "fire" is usually employed to express "anger". It is frequently predicated with the verb *spk* "to pour out" like water but in our case *hnh* forms an unusual phrase being connected with the verb *smk* which in other places appears in the construction "to lay hand upon"⁴⁶. Having taken into account the parallel expression in v.8b we may conclude that the picture of Yahwe's wrath weighing upon the psalmist even strengthens the whole image of drowning and being submerged by the waves⁴⁷.

b) vv.17—18

The section is constructed on the basis of comparison between the images of "anger" and "terrors" in v.17 and the motif of great waters in v.18 which from the semantic point of view seems to prevail here. Although the term *hrwn* employed in v.17a in its intensive form⁴⁸ conveys the meaning of God's burning anger yet the use of the verb *'br 'ly* "to pass over me" modifies the imagery and shifts it to the picture of a fluid and thus evokes once more the theme of waters⁴⁹.

The second image used in v. 17b is quite unique in the Psalter due to the rare terms of which it is composed. The notion of "terrors" (*b'wtym*) occurs yet only in Job 6,4 in similar phrase⁵⁰ but our expression employing the intensive form of the verb *smt* "to silence"⁵¹ makes the metaphor even more impressive. According to the use of the verb in Lam 3,53 the notion of being reduced to the silence denotes another condition of death experienced as the sinking into the cistern⁵². In v.18 God's wrath is now explicitly portrayed as waters engulfing the psalmist. The picture of *mym* predicated with the *sbb* may include a reference to the primeval chaotic floods as it is depicted in Jon 2,6. Another verb *hqyp* (hif.) used in the second line of the verse denotes a confinement that is closer than *sbb*⁵³ (cf. Lam 3,5; Job 19,6; Ps 22,17). Thus God's wrath becomes every destroying and overthrowing floods which seek to drown the suppliant and to enclose him in the masses of water⁵⁴.

In this way a function of the motif of waters in the imagery of death seems to be quite clear. It intends to present the death as the most aggressive and hostile force which swallows up all life in the primordial destruction of the chaotic floods. The power of death manifests itself not only in the weakness or sickness but also in the epitome of terror focused on the single human life to destroy it ⁵⁵.

3. Motif of social isolation

a) vv. 9.10a.19

The last set of images provides a picture of social isolation which can be viewed as the lack of solidarity of the psalmist with his community ⁵⁶. Just the first line of v.9 betrays a sense of total alienation the suppliant experiences. The term *myd'y* in all its five occurrences (apart from Ps 88,9) is accompanied by other words coming from the same semantic field: nobles, priests, neighbour, companion, brother etc. ⁵⁷. In this way it evokes the whole social environment in which a man lives (cf. especially Job 19,13f). It may suggest that the psalmist feels not only to be forsaken by all his familiar friends ⁵⁸ but also to be excluded from society and worship community ⁵⁹. The latter possibility is just supported by the second line of the verse where we find the term *tw'bw't* "abomination" which occurs most frequently in the cultic context ⁶⁰. Then the suppliant's social isolation can be considered also as the cultic separation because the dead remain completely outside the cultic sphere of Yahwe ⁶¹. So it is not surprising that the next image (v.9c) describes the situation of the psalmist as a confinement from which there is no escape ⁶². The phrase "Imprisoned and I cannot go out", though quite unusual has some striking parallels in Jr 32, 2,3; 37,15,18 but especially in Lam 3,7 where expression *wl' s'* is literally repeated. According to M. Dahood ⁶³ it can be allusion to the Sheol or grave (as it is suggested by O. Keel ⁶⁴) as a prison (cf. Job 12,14). Thus the image of the suppliant whose "eye grows dim from affliction" because he is banished to the depths as to a prison and cannot escape makes a strong impression. The word play on *'ny* (my eye) and *'ny* (affliction or sorrow) evokes the pun in Lam 1,16: "my eyes overflow with tears" which is used in similar context (cf. the next line of the verse 16: "No-one is near to comfort me, no-one to restore my spirit"; and also Dt 28,65: "The Lord will give you eyes weary with longing and a despairing heart") ⁶⁵. So the expression may suggest not so much the gradual loss of sight but rather the emotional exhaustion with an element of despair ⁶⁶. As the context makes it clear the physical fatigue also can well be included ⁶⁷.

Verse 19 again evokes the state of separation from the social environment however now in much more intimate terminology (*'hb* "lover", *r'* "neighbour", cf. the same terms used in Lam 1,2: "Among all her lovers there is none to comfort her; all her friends have betrayed her"). In this way the contrast which results in the second line of the verse ("My only companions are darkness") is extremely powerful (cf. Job 17, 14). So the psalmist's social isolation and state of being forsaken by all is then complete ⁶⁸.

III. DYNAMIC STRUCTURE ⁶⁹

From the analysis performed above there may draw conclusion that the death imagery dominates the composition of the Psalm dividing it into two parallel parts. But on the other hand we have already observed that just on the level of the metaphors of death there is gradual progression in the developing of each set of images. The formal marks of the stages which a drama of the psalmist passes through seems to be signalled by threefold petition of which the third one functions as the transition from the set of the rhetorical questions in vv. 11—13 to the next one in v.15. The constitutive position of the petitions is confirmed also by what has been pointed out by W. Brueggemann ⁷⁰ that by Westermann ⁷¹ established movement from petition to praise has an important exception just in Ps 88 which does not end with any kind of praise. Then it seems to be quite clear that the first and the second petition introduce a new stage of the psalmist's drama. However the last sections of the distinguished parts, vv. 9.10a and 19ab also form a certain kind of similarity. Both denote a passage from social separation and confinement to obscurity and darkness. The metaphor of an eye growing dim — the last phrase in the first part — makes an especially strong allusion to "the darkness" — the last word in the second part ⁷².

1. First part: vv.2–10a

a) petition vv. 2–3

The Psalm opens with an urgent appeal to Yahwe which contains a particular concentration of the prayer terminology. Although it may be quite conventional in the Psalter but here because of the lack of the other structural elements it may be relevant. Three nouns describe the act of praying: *s'qty* "my crying out" ⁷³, *tpty* "my prayer" and *rnty* "my cry". Thus connected with time reference "by day and at night" (cf. Ps 22,3; 86,3) the language suggests the act of praying has to be the suppliant's long experience. It is like the meditation on the law (*tw'rh*) mentioned in Ps 1,2 but here the object of prayer is different. The threefold allusion to prayer makes then a strong impression how much the psalmist insists on the fact of his appealing (cf. Lam 2,18) ⁷⁴. However the same must be said of a way in which he addresses God. The invocation "O Lord, God of my salvation" ⁷⁵ implies that the suppliant has a strong experience of previous saving deeds of God. It is a kind of a confidence which suggests that the psalmist knows God as the One who has acted on his behalf in his own personal history ⁷⁶. It cannot be only conventional invocation: the images of death that follow are just contrasted by this title. Thus the very fact of prayer results from the certainty that Yahwe is the God who has previously delivered the psalmist and who is able to do so again (cf. Ps 62,2; 89,27; 140,8) ⁷⁷. Then the entire Psalm with all the images of death even the most despairing and hopeless must be seen in the light of this assurance of God's saving activity. Just the first term "my crying out" in v.2 introduces the act of prayer. Then the next steps of appealing follow: *tpty* "my prayer" seeks the

way to God and *rnty* "my cry" asks for God's turning ear⁷⁸. Although throughout the Psalm God is silent and gives no answer the structure of invocation in vv.2—3 does not suggest that the suppliant is speaking to the empty sky. The petition is expressed in such personal language which results rather in more intense address⁷⁹.

b) motivation v.4

As the consequence of God's silence the mere invocation of the suppliant turns now into the language of motivation which attempts to give reasons for Yahwe to answer the prayer. One of most frequent reasons giving for answering the prayer is the confession of trust of the worshiper that is explicitly not expressed here. Instead the psalmist seeks to give reason for God's intervention describing the situation in which he finds himself⁸⁰. In the easily recognizable chiasmic construction⁸¹ the psalmist draws God's attention on his desperate position. The whole line tends then to present the suppliant's situation as the state of being near death. Ch. Barth has suggested that the experience of the condition of death is here only a partial and limited one and the one in distress never identifies himself directly as being "in death" itself⁸². However he acknowledges also that "in the thinking of the ancient oriental people even this nearness of death counts as real experience of death; Only in a limited extent, perhaps only at one point the one in distress comes into contact with reality of death but just that suffices for him to experience the entire reality of death"⁸³. That is the case of our Psalm. The sufferings with which the suppliant is satiated obtain the quality of reality of death.

The concept of Sheol to which the psalmist refers his desperate situation introduces at the same time the entire imagery of death. As the reality connected with all graves Sheol reveals common characteristics constituting the nature of the grave⁸⁴. Consequently the next section begins with the motif of grave.

We have already distinguished three motifs that govern the entire imagery of death. Now we must ask for what function each one performs in the whole sequence. Following the suggestion by C.C. Broyles⁸⁵ we may see the logical progression of the motifs in the passage from the mere description of distress or situation in which the psalmist finds himself to the interpretation of distress in which he tries to identify the cause or the agent of his situation.

c) description of distress vv.5—6

Just in the first image that of "going down to the pit" the suppliant sees his situation diametrically changed. The nearness of death (v.4) is now experienced as the displacement⁸⁶ into the real state of death which results in the extremity of weakness. Then verse 6 comes with three metaphors and a fourth climactic line, uttered in one breath: "dead... grave... remember no more... cut off"⁸⁷. All images describe the situation of the psalmist as the more and more desperate one culminating in the state of being totally cut off from God's presence and his saving acts. Thus motif of grave functions here to present the situation of the psalmist as the state which belongs no longer to the realm of the living but to that of the dead.

d) interpretation of distress vv.7—10a

Once more in verses 7—10a the entire picture is changed. Not only does death come but it is Yahwe who has caused it. It is just very function of the motif of waters to describe the suppliant's distress in the categories of God's wrath expressed by the powerful images of the chaotic floods which seeks to destroy him. God seems to act like psalmist's only enemy for there is no mention of others besides him. Then the suppliant tries to make God the One who is exclusively responsible for all sufferings to which he is submitted. However the anger of Yahwe he has experienced effects also his social position. The dislocation from the familiar relationships and from the worshipping community completes in the situation from which there is no escape. But the language through which the psalmist attributes to God the very cause of his desperate state expresses at the same time his community with God. It appears as the unique means of communication which enables him to go beyond himself and his unbearable sufferings. Therefore once again there may hear his cry directed to God.

2. Second part: vv.10bc—19

a) petition v.10bc

It must be surprising to find no request for God's intervention, only a statement of the fact of praying expressed now in the more dramatic way. The gesture of lifting up or spreading out the hands/palms of the hands which accompanies the prayer is not frequent (cf. Ps 28,2; 44,21; 63,5; 77,2 etc. and also Lam 1,17; 2,19; 3,41). As the consequence of previous description the place where the psalmist pictures himself must be the depths of the pit in which imprisoned and enclosed he calls to God every day. In this light the gesture of spreading out the hands becomes a sign of the extreme urgency of his prayer (cf. Lam 3,55 and especially Sir 51,9; "And I sent up my voice from the City (Sheol), and my cry from the gates of Sheol", translation M. Dahood)⁸⁸.

b) motivation and description of distress vv.11—14

We may just observe that from verse 11 on the structure of the second part of the Psalm is more complicated. There is no clear distinction between motivation and description of distress. The one stands along with the other. They are combined together in a set of six rhetorical questions which ask about Yahwe's capacity to work his sovereign way in death⁸⁹. On the one hand we have the succession of nouns describing the realm of the dead in such a way that they intensify this sense of horror: "dead... shades... grave... place of destruction... darkness... land of forgetfulness". That is the situation which the psalmist refers to himself⁹⁰. On the other hand we have six corresponding words that characterize Yahwe's usual action: "wonders... praise... steadfast love... faithfulness... wonders... righteous deeds". The pattern of two sets of words shows the incongruity between the state or condition where the suppliant pictures himself and what God is used to do in the history. The latter

set, especially the words like *hsd* "steadfast love", *mwnh* "faithfulness" and *sdqh* "righteousness" evoke the concept of God's covenant loyalty which results in the experience of intimate fellowship with Yahwe⁹¹. The entire section serves then to underscore once more the urgency of the psalmist's appeal through which he suggests that God can still do his life-giving work⁹². That is the one reason why the third petition follows. The second one is there is still no answer and despite all motivations the suppliant presents God remains silent. With *w'ny* "But I" he contrasts himself with the dead who are separated from God's saving activity. Though undergoing the reality of death he is still able to pray and call to God⁹³. The time reference applied to the petitions throughout the Psalm reaches here is climactic point: "by day and at night" ... "every day" ... "in the morning" since it is at dawn that God comes to the aid of the suppliant (cf. Ps 46,6; 90,14; 143,8; for the morning as a conventional and opportune time for prayer see Ps 57,9; 119,147)⁹⁴. Together with his temporal indication of prayer all psalmist's expectations and hopes of God's help also gain their culmination here. However his urgent appeal remains without answer. Hence another rhetorical question follows this time directly addressed to God: "Why, O Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me?"

c) interpretation of distress vv.15—19

This twofold question seems to perform particular function in the interpretation of distress. Up to now the psalmist has searched out the cause of his desperate situation, at the moment he moves to look for a reason of God's silence and his absence (cf. Ps 22,2; 74,1)⁹⁵. In two parallel lines the "Why?" of God's rejection (cf. Ps 43,2; 60,3; 74,1; 77,8ff; 89,39) is echoed by the "Why?" of God's hidden face (cf. Ps 13,2; 27,9; 44,24; 69,18; 89,41.47; 102,3; 143,7). Arriving until this point the psalmist concludes that the terrors and horrors of death he suffers are thus from Yahwe⁹⁶. Then God's action against the psalmist contrasts with his position of afflicted man *'ny* v.16. The term *'ny*⁹⁷ plays a special role. This is only one instance where *'ny* concludes his cry on a note of complaint and does not move on to join the *'nwym* in praise⁹⁸. Though *'ny* must be translated here in the sense of afflicted one it still keeps a judicial quality of the poor. Thus the psalmist can be seen as the afflicted man who cries for help from within an imagined law-court situation where God is at one and the same time both judge and counsellor for the defence⁹⁹. Thus using the term *'ny* the suppliant pictures his situation as the state of helplessness and presents himself as the one who is not able to defend himself against the hostile forces which attack him. Therefore he insists on his rights of *'ny* "afflicted one" since Yahwe is the only source of help¹⁰⁰. Then the phrase which follows "I am at the point of death" aims to identify his position of the *'ny* as of the one who from his youth has been afflicted and close to death and therefore needs God's special protection. He continues his insistency in the second line of the verse, describing the situation in which he finds himself as the state of being utterly helpless¹⁰¹.

But God gives no answer. In the next two verses the motif of waters returns

again, at the moment with significant addition: the reference of time "all day long". Thus the psalmist's state of despair and helplessness contrasts with outpourings of God's wrath and terrors viewed in the temporal dimension of all day long duration. Then the motif of social separation results and completes his total abandonment. Now there is only darkness.

CONCLUSION

The last word of the Psalm is darkness. There are no answers, no arguments, no explanation. Nothing is resolved. All things deny life but there is still possibility to speak to God, even if he is the one who seems to be the only cause of all suppliant's afflictions. In the bottom of the Pit, encompassed with destructive forces of death the psalmist is still able to address God. This is the very paradox of his faith. Even in the total abandonment he is still speaking to God: "my only companion is darkness".

In this regard Psalm 88 betrays some striking similarities with the Book of Job. However at the end Job received an answer from God. That is not the case here. The last word of the Psalm is but darkness and no answer is given. Therefore the experience of the suppliant described in Psalm 88 shows more affinities with the fate of Jesus¹⁰². Jesus' death was also accompanied by his prayer without hearing (cf. Mk 14,32—42). In the last days of his life he had to face the reality of death completely forsaken by God and his last cry to heaven also receives no answer (cf. Mk 15,34). Then the suppliant of Ps 88 seems to stand between Job and Jesus. He teaches us to speak of all of life also of its most dark side — death and to address this speech always to God. At the same time he warns of cheap talk of resolution which even God does not want to give. What remains is the community with Jesus in his total abandonment by God.

NOTES

¹ Cf. H. — J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, BKAT XV/2, Neukirchen 1978, p. 773; R. Rendtorff, *The Old Testament. An Introduction*, London 1985, pp. 102f.

² *Lob und Klage in den Psalmen*, Göttingen 1977.

³ *ibid.*, pp. 118 and 129f.

⁴ Cf. W. Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms*, Minneapolis, Augsburg 1984, p. 54.

⁵ Cf. W. H. Bellinger, *Psalmody and Prophecy*, JSOT Suppl. Series 27, Sheffield 1984, p. 22.

⁶ Cf. W. Brueggemann, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ Cf. C. Westermann, *The Role of Lament in the Theology of the Old Testament*, Int 28, 1974, p. 26.

⁹ Cf. W. H. Bellinger, *op. cit.*, p. 23f.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ Cf. H. — J. Kraus, *op. cit.*, p. 773; A. A. Anderson, *Psalmes*, II/73—150, The New Century Bible Commentary, London 1981, p. 623.

¹² W. H. Bellinger, *op. cit.*, 22f.

- ¹³ *ibid.*
¹⁴ K. Seybold, *Das Gebet des Kranken in Alten Testament* BWANT 99, Stuttgart 1973, pp. 165–185.
¹⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 169f; cf. the group of those with probable reference to sickness: Pss 6; 13; (31); 32; (35); 51; (71); (73); 91.
¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 180.
¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 169f.
¹⁸ *ibid.*
¹⁹ Cf. L. Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics*, Subsidia Biblica 11, Rome 1988, p. 197.
²⁰ Cf. O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, London 1978, pp. 63f. and 70.
²¹ *ibid.*; cf. Ch. Barth, *Die Erretung von Tode in den individuellen Klage – Dankliedern des Alten Testaments*, Basel 1948, pp. 83 ff.
²² *ibid.*, pp. 79ff; cf. O. Keel, *op. cit.*, pp. 64–69.
²³ Cf. Ch. Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 85; O. Keel, *op. cit.*, pp. 70f.
²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 73.
²⁵ Cf. C. C. Broyles, *The Conflict of Faith and Experience in the Psalms. A Form-Critical and Theological Study*, JSOT Suppl. Series 52; Sheffield 1989, pp. 105ff.
²⁶ Cf. W. Gesenius, E. Kautzsch, *Hebrew Grammar*, Oxford 1910, 163a.
²⁷ Ch. Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 85; cf. L. I. J. Stadelmann, *The Hebrew Conception of the World*, AnBib 39, Rome 1970, p. 170.
²⁸ Cf. O. Keel, *op. cit.*, p. 64; A. A. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 625.
²⁹ *Psalms*, II, Anchor Bible, New York 1968, p. 303; cf. the similar expression used in Ugaritic Myth of Baal: "Be of those who descend into earth... be off on your way into his city Pit"; ANET, p. 135(VIII).
³⁰ Cf. O. Keel, *op. cit.*, p. 64; H. W. Wolff, *Anthropologie des Alten Testaments*, München 1984, p. 156; H. — J. Kraus, *Theology of Psalms*, Minneapolis 1986, p. 166.
³¹ M. Dahood, *op. cit.*, p. 303.
³² There are some different propositions of the emendation of the phrase: *hpsy* in the sense of isolatio according to the 2 Kings 15,5 (a separate house); or in the sense of "my couch" according to the Ez 27,20 (but the passage is uncertain); or *hsbty* instead of *hpsy* (cf. Lam 3,6); however all the solutions do not change the principal idea of participation in the same fate of the dead expressed by the phrase retained, cf. F. Delitzsch, *Psalms*, V, Grand Rapids, Michigan 1980, p. 25.
³³ A. A. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 625.
³⁴ There are only two uses of this word in the Psalter, just in our Psalm (vv.6 and 12) and both form quite unique expressions; cf. Ps 5,10 where *gbr* has a metaphorical rather than real meaning.
³⁵ Cf. A. A. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 626; L. I. J. Stadelmann, *op. cit.*, p. 174.
³⁶ A. A. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 626.
³⁷ C. C. Broyles, *op. cit.*, pp. 76ff.
³⁸ Cf. H. — J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, p. 774; A. A. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 626.
³⁹ A. A. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 629.
⁴⁰ Cf. C. Westermann, *Lob und Klage*, pp. 120ff.
⁴¹ L. I. J. Stadelmann, *op. cit.*, p. 168.
⁴² O. Keel, *op. cit.*, pp. 70ff (illustrations).
⁴³ Cf. L. I. J. Stadelmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 171f.
⁴⁴ The verb 'nh in the sense "you have brought upon me" according with LXX fits into context much better than 'nh (MT), cf. H. — J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, p. 772; A. A. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 627.
⁴⁵ Cf. C. C. Broyles, *op. cit.*, pp. 91f; Ch. Barth, *op. cit.*, pp. 85f.
⁴⁶ Cf. Ex 29,10.15.19; Lev 3,8.13; Num 8,10.12 etc.
⁴⁷ Cf. S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, II, Oxford 1962, p. 239; C. C. Broyles, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
⁴⁸ *hrwn* in plural of amplification (W. Gesenius, E. Kautzsch, *op. cit.* 124e) is found only in this instance, cf. F. Delitzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 28; A. A. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 630.

- ⁴⁹ Cf. C. C. Broyles, *op. cit.*, pp. 64ff.
⁵⁰ "God's terrors are marshalled against me"
⁵¹ Cf. W. Gesenius, E. Kautzsch, *op. cit.*, 55d; F. Delitzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 28; usually the verb is emended and used in the form of Piel: *smtnwy* in the meaning "to reduce to silence, to destroy" according to the original meaning of the ugaritic parallel, cf. C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*, AnOr 38, Rome 1963, nr. 2176.
⁵² Cf. O. Keel, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
⁵³ Cf. S. R. Hirsch, *Psalms*, II, New York 1973, p. 121.
⁵⁴ Cf. O. Keel, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
⁵⁵ Cf. H. — J. Kraus, *Theology of Psalms*, p. 165.
⁵⁶ Cf. C. C. Broyles, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
⁵⁷ Cf. 2 Kings 10,11; Pss 31,12; 55,14; 88,19; Job 19,13–14.
⁵⁸ According to F. Delitzsch (*op. cit.*, p. 26) and A. A. Anderson (*op. cit.*, p. 627) *myd'y* signifies "intimate friends" rather than mere acquaintances.
⁵⁹ Cf. A. A. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 627; Ch. Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
⁶⁰ Cf. Lev 18,22.26.30; Dt 7,25; 13,15 etc.; Ez 5,9.11; 6,9 etc. everywhere with quite precise definition what kind of things or acts are abominable for Yahwe; very rarely it is employed to the persons: cf. Gn 43,32 and 46,34 which indicate completely separation of Jacob's clan from Egyptians.
⁶¹ Cf. G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, I, London 1975, p. 277; but there is no mention in our text about leprosy as F. Delitzsch (*op. cit.*, p. 26) and others would suggest, cf. H. — J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, p. 775.
⁶² Cf. Ch. Barth, *op. cit.*, pp. 96f; H. — J. Kraus, *op. cit.*, p. 775.
⁶³ *op. cit.*, p. 305.
⁶⁴ *op. cit.*, pp. 63ff.
⁶⁵ Cf. also Job 17,7; Pss 6,8; 31,10, M. Dahood *op. cit.*, p. 305.
⁶⁶ Cf. Job 41,14 and especially Dt 28,65.
⁶⁷ Cf. C. C. Broyles, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
⁶⁸ Cf. M. Dahood, *op. cit.*, p. 307.
⁶⁹ In this topic I have been inspired by L. Alonso Schökel, *Trenta Salmi: Poesia e Preghiera*, Bologna 1982, pp. 168ff; C. C. Broyles, *op. cit.*, pp. 28f.
⁷⁰ *Psalms and the Life of Faith: A Suggested Typology of Function*, JSOT 17, 1980, pp. 7ff.
⁷¹ *The Role of Lament*, p. 26f.
⁷² Fr. L. Alonso Schökel has drawn my attention to it.
⁷³ I repent the verb and read it as the noun following the suggestion by L. Alonso Schökel.
⁷⁴ Cf. C. C. Broyles, *op. cit.*, p. 207.
⁷⁵ The noun *ysw'ty* is often emended and taken as the verb *sw'ty* in the parallel to the second one *sq'ty*. The former reading seems to be preferable because the phrase "God of my salvation" forms a strong contrast to the imagery of death which is so characteristic to the Psalm.
⁷⁶ H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, p. 774.
⁷⁷ *ibid.*
⁷⁸ S. R. Hirsch, *op. cit.*, p. 115.
⁷⁹ W. Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms*, p. 79.
⁸⁰ The word *nps* though connected with the verb *sb'* which may suggest the meaning "throat" (cf. H. W. Wolff, *op. cit.*, pp. 26ff; H. — J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, p. 774) seems to intend the connotation of the personal pronoun "I" which is indicated by the use of *hyy* in the parallel line and the tendency of the whole section vv. 2–4, cf. A. A. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 624 and H. W. Wolff, *op. cit.*, p. 160.
⁸¹ Two verbs and four nouns makes a perfectly composed sequence: ABC/C'B'A', cf. L. Alonso Schökel, *Manual*, p. 79.
⁸² Ch. Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 116.
⁸⁴ L. I. J. Stadelmann, *op. cit.*, p. 170.
⁸⁵ *op. cit.*, pp. 11–34.

- ⁸⁶ W. Brueggemann, *Psalms and the Life of Faith*, p. 8.
⁸⁷ W. Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms*, p. 80.
⁸⁸ M. Dahood, *op. cit.*, p. 305.
⁸⁹ W. Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms*, p. 80.
⁹⁰ *ibid.*; C. C. Broyles, *op. cit.*, pp. 207f.
⁹¹ Cf. H. - J. Kraus, *Theology of Psalms*, p. 155; A. A. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 629.
⁹² W. Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms*, p. 80; cf. L. Alonso Schökel, *Manual*, pp. 150f.
⁹³ Cf. F. Delitzsch, *op. cit.* p. 27.
⁹⁴ Cf. J. Ziegler, *Die Hilfe Gottes "am Morgen"*, in: H. Junker, J. Botterweck (ed.), *Alttestamentliche Studien*, FS. F. Nötscher, BBB 1, Bonn 1950, pp. 284ff.
⁹⁵ W. Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms*, p. 81.
⁹⁶ C. C. Broyles, *op. cit.*, p. 207.
⁹⁷ 'ny represents the second word play in this Psalm, cf. M Dahood, *op. cit.*, p. 306.
⁹⁸ As it happens in other psalms where these two terms appear, S. Croft, *The Identity of the Individual in the Psalms*, JSOT Suppl. Series 44, Sheffield 1987, p. 50.
⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 61.
¹⁰⁰ H. - J. Kraus, *Theology of Psalms*, p. 151.
¹⁰¹ The meaning of the verb 'pwnh is uncertain, I follow the reading of F. Delitzsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 27f.
¹⁰² Cf. H. - J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, p. 776.

PRZEMYSŁAW PIEKARSKI

WORD COUNT AND BASIC HINDI

The aim for the present study is to find out the fundamental zones in Hindi lexics. The zones are grammatical and basic. More details on the zones will be given below.

A statistical investigation of linguistic data can be used as an instrument of objective analysis. It would be profitable to remaind as motto the Herdan's statement: "Literary statistics should be treated in such a way as to make it a branch of linguistics rather, than just another application of conventional statistics"¹. The data collected and tested with this instrument can be of multipurpose use.

The main purpose is a didactic one. The basic type dictionary could be useful especially for learners of the language, both beginners and advanced students. Another purpose is to contrast the statistical method and its results, that is the zones of lexics, with previous works of "basic Hindi" type².

The results are important for scientific reason, either. Statistics gives data for description of language grammatical structure. Statistical investigation of the main styles can be a starting point for the stylometrical analysis, the question of authorship, etc. Such didactic use as primers, grammars, exercises cannot be omitted.

Previous investigation

Only two works can be cited here as far as Hindi language area is concerned. The first is Phonemic and Morphemic Frequencies in