

NATURE AND TORAH

A Study of Psalm 19 -- Its Coherence and Message

by

Rabbi Zvi A. Yehuda

A Composite of Two Themes, Nature and Torah

As we read this spectacular hymn of adoration to God, Creator of Nature and Giver of Torah, we immediately recognize that it comprises two clearly distinguishable parts, each with its own theme. The first part (2-7) sings of nature; its exquisite wonders as reflected in the heavens and on earth, by the illustrious and vigorous route of the sun, ordaining day and night, thus routinely declaring God's glory. The second part (7-15) sings of Torah; its glorious benefits in enlightening and delighting the human person, sweetening one's experience and enriching one's outlook, especially of one individual, the psalmist, God's devotee, who is fervently eager to do God's will.

We also sense at once in wonder the sudden, transparent shift in focus and form, poetic pulsation and rhetorical articulation, between the two parts. The first part radiates descriptive verses in flowing imagery and sweeping motion. The second part begins with a repetitive recital of praise (8-11), and ends with devotional supplication (12-15). In the first part the psalmist "hears" the story of God's glory emanating from the "voiceless" splendor of the heavens. In the second, the psalmist himself "voices" his own human emotions, with both lucidity and passion. In craftily sculpted lines, using a formulaic, recitative mode, the psalmist first enumerates Torah's merits, exhibited in manifold synonyms (8-11); then he finally indulges in a personal, confessional pleading to God, "his rock and his redeemer" (12-15).

These two poetic parts of psalm 19 also evince salient differences in the invocation of the Divine Name. In the first part the psalmist mentions God only once, in the first line, using the shorter-generic Name, *El*; and that not in a direct and frontal address, but rather in a circumventive manner, by a construct idiom, *kevod-El*, God's glory. The glory of God (not God) is syntactically the direct object of the verbal phrase. Nonetheless, God is obviously the implicit Actor in the elliptical verbal-phrase about the sun (5b). In the second part, however, the psalmist employs the ineffable Name [the Tetragrammaton, YHWH]; he does so seven times, six in the construct form, while praising the Divine Torah in its various designations, and finally, in the seventh time, in the concluding line of supplication, as he addresses God directly in the second person. Part two of the psalm seemingly employs a "six and seven" numerical pattern (on its symbolic significance we shall reflect later). The final verse (15) may also befittingly serve as a solemn finale ("seal") to the entire psalm.

As we consider psalm 19 as it appears before us in the Masoretic text, as one unit, we ask: Is it one harmonious poem, or a composite of two distinctly unrelated poems, or only loosely related? At first glance we are apt to assume, as many biblical scholars currently do, that these two parts are independent poems, far apart in their content, outlook and message, as they are demonstratively dissimilar in form, genre and mood. We might easily conclude that these two

finely delineated poetic units do not at all belong to one another, nor to the same author or period. Modern scholars generally maintain that the first section (bearing some external resemblance to ancient Near Eastern poetry) stems from an early period, possibly that of David around 1000 B.C.E., and the second section from the days of Ezra around 428 B.C.E. While the first one (2-7) appears to be purely a nature poem, like psalm 102, the second one (8-15) sounds thoroughly as a hymn of praise to the Torah, like psalm 119. Notwithstanding, the Masoretic tradition has cherished and preserved psalm 19 as one intact poetic composition, its second part being an integral continuation and conclusion of the first. Contrarily, however, the old school of biblical criticism has claimed that the two parts of Psalm 19 are two wholly unrelated poetic fragments, artificially stitched together, and each ought to be read and explored on its own, the first as an older, pre-exilic, pagan-like ode to Nature, and the second as a later, post-exilic, Ezra-inspired, hymn to Torah, both parts detached from one another. Accordingly, psalm 19, as one integral, literary unit, simply does not exist.

It is my contention that this prevalent non-Masoretic view perverts, however, the essential meaning of this distinctively Hebraic psalm. I claim that psalm 19 is a thoroughly coherent literary unit, its two parts complementing and requiring each other. Only by approaching this psalm as it is, in both context and form, holistically, we can properly appreciate its profound rhetoric and world-view. By treating each part of the whole as an independent fragment, we miss the essential message of this splendid poem as a whole. To clarify this point we shall first examine the concept of nature in biblical thought.

The Biblical Idea of Nature

The tendency to label the first part of our psalm as a "nature poem" is anachronistic and misconceived. The psalmist sings God's glory, not nature's beauty. Even the very term "nature" for the cosmic order is alien to the Hebraic mind and does not appear at all in the domain of biblical thought and expression. The popular Hebrew word *teva* (related to coin minting and used in post-biblical Hebrew in the sense of "the makeup or character of"), now commonly used as equivalent to nature, was coined only in the medieval ages (out of the need to translate into Hebrew classic works of Greek philosophy).

Even the current word *olam*, now employed to denote "world," has never had any spatial meaning in the Hebrew Bible. There, as well as in early rabbinic liturgy, *olam* denotes duration in time, not substantiality in space. The well-known, recurrent, Hebrew benedictory phrase, *melekh ha-olam* surely means neither "King of the universe" nor "Ruler of all reality" (all common translations to the contrary notwithstanding) but simply "The Eternal King" as in its biblical source (Jeremiah 10:10). This term, however, gained an added spatial connotation later, in rabbinic literature, to somehow convey the import of the Greek "*kosmos*" (cosmos). The Greek term perceives the universe as a beautiful, orderly and harmonious whole, as distinct from *chaos*. Now, while the Greek *kosmos* points to a universe in terms of matter and design, the Hebrew *olam* -- even in its post-biblical, corporeal sense -- depicts all reality as dynamic, ongoing existence, occurring in both space and time, and not as static, spatial matter.

It is characteristic of the Jewish genius that the people's monuments are erected not by means of the plastic arts, in static forms, sculptures or temples, but through enduring conceptual ideas. Far from the classic universe, the Hebrew *olam* blends the physical with the metaphysical, the material with the eternal.

This is indeed the post-biblical meaning of the term *olam* in the Tannaitic phrases "*beri'at ha-olam*" (creation of the world), "*ha-olam omed/qayyam*" (the world exists/endures), "*ha-olam hazze/habba*" (this world/the world to come) or the Amoraitic phrase "*kulei alma*" (in Aramaic, the entire world), all referring not to a static, material, concrete entity (earth, monde), to its solidity and stability, but rather to social-historical continuity. Thus we find the term *olam* in its compound meaning in post-talmudic liturgy, in the morning prayer, *Barukh she'amar ve-hayya ha-olam* -- "Blessed He Who decreed and the 'world' came to be!" Namely, by the Divine Word/Idea [*logos*] this spatial/temporal "world" came into existence and continues to exist.

Another term used in post-biblical literature for "cosmos" is *ma'aseh bereshit* (referring to Torah's Genesis account), meaning creation in its perpetual process of constant self-renewal. When the psalmist wants to express in words the concept of "world" as he declares that all that exists belongs to, and stems from God, he uses an extended phrase, "the earth [*erez*] and all its fullness; the temporal world [*tevel*] and all its inhabitants" (Psalms 24:1). Why so many words? Because no single Hebrew word can convey the full complexity and multiplicity of existence. The Hebrew terms *erez* and *tevel* are used in poetic parallelism and both refer to the very same idea: the world around us, our existential reality. While we routinely render *erez* as "earth" (an alliterative or even derivative of the Hebrew) we wonder over the meaning of *tevel*. This intriguing idiom (which I have clumsily enough translated as "temporal world") suggests an ephemeral reality, something feeble and infirm, that wears out and deteriorates. This term entails a Hebraic view of reality; it points to all matter (the so-called "world") as temporal and transitory, existing and enduring only by a Higher Will. Thus, the very presence of *tevel*, in its innate frailty (yet marvelous endurance), serves as testimony to God's glory, God's Will and Might.

The biblical creation narratives employ a combination of two terms to convey the classic notion of world, *ha-shamayim*, and *ha-aretz*, the heavens and the earth. There is no one word for world in biblical Hebrew. That the Hebrew Bible had to employ numerous descriptions to present the idea of the totality of the universe is of great theological significance. The very term "universe" (from the Latin *Universum*, depicting the whole of reality as "One unified Venture") is probably an anathema to the Hebraic biblical mind. Creation represents plurality. Only God, the Creator, is One.

Three Approaches to Nature: Hebraic, Hellenic, Pagan

What is unique about the Hebrew biblical outlook on the universe and its natural order? Let us look for an answer by comparing the monotheistic, Hebraic-biblical view to the two other major contemporaneous approaches, the pagan-mythological approach of the East and the Greek-philosophical approach of the West. Classical paganism and idolatry conceive the world as consisting of various violent forces which while destined by fate and regulated by divergent gods, are yet subject to blind and capricious misfortune. Ancient pagan literature seems to depict natural phenomena with a profound sense of dread and resignation.

Greek philosophy, on the other hand, views the world as signifying unity and system, expressed by the term *cosmos*, meaning harmony and order, as opposed to chaos. The *cosmos* is a substantive, independent entity that has intelligence, a mind and soul of its own. It is a concrete reality in space, a complete structure in form. The Greek would marvel at the beauty and symmetry of the physical environment.

In short, while the pagan would generally confront nature with a sense of exasperation and submission, the Greek tended to welcome nature with a sense of appreciation and exploration.

In contrast to both dominant approaches the Hebrew Bible describes the totality of existence as a perfect manifestation of God's will. What is the quintessence of the natural world? For the pagan it was power, for the Greek order, but for the Hebraic-biblical person it was the splendid manifestation of God's will and wisdom; the consummate fulfillment of the Divine Law. Seeing in "nature" dependency rather than self-sufficiency, moral purpose rather than formal design, divine meaning rather than crafty artistry, just law rather than brute power, the biblical person has come to admire ethics more than esthetics, right rather than might, morality above rite.

The story of creation tells us, if we trust the conventional English translations, that "God said, 'Let there be light!'" Did God really say it verbally? To whom? In what language? The original Hebrew text uses the verb *amor* that contextually does not connote speech but rather resolve and decree. According to authentic Jewish view, proposed by such authorities as Sa'adia, Maimonides, Nahmanides and others, *va-yomer* in this context of creation means that God willed or decided. Also in Psalm 33:9, where we have the term *amar*, it denotes volition and decision: "For He decreed and it was, He ordained and it stood." That is the way the Hebrew monotheist sees the world: a manifestation of Divine *omer*, God's *davar*, His decree and law.

Nature and Torah as Dual Expressions of the Divine Law

For the psalmist "nature" and Torah are virtually of one essence. Both are expressions of God's Law. Therefore, the psalmist can sing of both while experiencing and expressing the same religious-poetic inspiration. The fusion of both themes, nature and Torah, into one single psalm should not surprise us at all, because while the psalmist contemplates the two, he sings only of the One.

Psalm 104, applauded by all as a peerless masterpiece, is commonly acclaimed as the nature psalm par excellence. Now, if indeed this literary gem is a pristine nature portrayal, in the modern sense, how are we to account for its bizarre (and quite "crude") concluding denunciation, in "execration" style, wishing the eradication of social evil? The supplicatory verse seals the sublime poem with these mundane words: "Let the wrongdoers (*hattaim*) cease from the earth, and the wicked ones (*resha'im*) be no more!" (33). Beruriah's reading of the verse in the sense that we pray to eliminate "wrong deeds" rather than "wrongdoers" (contrary to the masoretic vocalization) is morally very noble but hermeneutically does not resolve the literary problem.

We are compelled to conclude that while the psalmist is singing of the perfection of God's creation, he becomes imbued with a deeply religious mood of aspiration for moral perfection (moral, rather than physical). In his devotional adoration of the Creator of all, the psalmist cannot divorce the physical-natural world from the social-moral world, for both are equally under the sovereignty and providence of God. As the natural order unequivocally obeys the Laws of God, so must we. As long as we do not fully implement the divine moral laws within our society we cannot truly rejoice in the beauty and harmony of the natural order. The wicked people, the wrongdoers, who disobey the Laws of God, mar -- by their wicked deeds -- the harmony and stability of creation.

Moral corruption undermines the very foundations of creation. Only within a moral society can we sing of the beauty and glory of nature. The concluding invocation of the psalmist, praying for a morally flawless society, thus enhances the meaning of the entire psalm 104.

Psalm 119, the lengthy hymn composed in acrostic style (each of the 22 alphabetical letter repeated 8 times), clearly focuses on one theme, the praise of Torah. Nevertheless, it also depicts nature. In verses 89-90, the psalmist describes the *davar* of God, manifest in the heavens and earth, and praises its durability and stability in sustaining the universe. So, too, in Psalm 147, two consecutive verses (18-19) speak about God's *davar* (word). The first, in the realm of creation, in which God sends His *davar* as a messenger to melt the snow into water; the second, in the realm of revelation, in which the same term *davar* of God appears, in the sense that God announces (reveals, relates) His message, His laws and ordinances, to His people Israel. How scandalous! A nationalistic-parochial "nature" psalm? The Hebraic mind, however, sees no dichotomy between cosmology and history, between the natural order and the moral law, insofar that both manifest the Divine Law.

We return now to Psalm 19. This psalm, too, sings essentially on one theme -- the Divine Law. It starts with the description of God's creation. His artistry bespeaks Mastery. Each moment of enduring existence -- day to day, night to night -- manifests God's wisdom. The heavens tell God's glory constantly, day after day, night after night. The psalmist sees in nature complete adherence to God's decrees and rulings. Unlike the mythological world, the biblical universe is not rebellious. Metaphorically all natural forces worship God, sing His praises. The natural phenomena are virtually God's *mal'akhim*, His "angels," messengers (104:4), which fulfill God's will with a sense of contentment, gratification, and joy, poetically portrayed in verse 6.

The poetic link between the sun (*shemesh*) and the Torah is forged, both externally and internally, by their shared imagery of light. The light of the sun suffuses the whole earth; the light of Torah permeates the receptive human mind. Also, the imagery of consummate obedience and total dominance links the two hymnal parts, on nature and on Torah; for both embody the Divine Law and no one on earth can ignore either of these two. None can hide from both, the sun's heat and Torah's compelling brilliance and sweetness. A similar link between the Sun as Deity and the Law is curiously enough a part of the ancient Near Eastern tradition. According to Babylonian mythology, the sun god *Shamash* granted the code of laws to King Hammurabi; the king duly acknowledged his debts to the god *Shamash* in his prologue to his classic Code. This piece of information (unknown to all post-biblical generations hitherto), to which only we living in this century are privy, remarkably puts the message of this Hebraic psalm in sharper focus. The Hebraic *shemesh* (unlike the Babylonian *Shamash*) is neither a god nor a giver of law. The sun, like all other natural phenomena, serves Him (it is figuratively God's *shamash*, server). God has set a tent for the sun in the heavens (v. 5b). A better rendition: God endowed the sun with its shining light (compare Job 29:2; 31:26). The sun, by God's will, provides natural light and heat, but not social morals or norms. For moral law and instruction the psalmist turns to God's Torah.

The juxtaposition of the psalm's two poetic parts, in their varied content and form, is richly suggestive of literary associations. The dominant noun in the first part is *ha-shamaim*, the heavens. This word appears twice in this poetic unit, starting it in its first verse (2) and concluding it in its final verse (7). Its common biblical counterpart, *ha-arets* (the earth) and its parallel *tevel* (which points to the earth's temporality) appears later (in verse 5a). This dominant

noun, *the heavens*, serves as the main subject of the poetic unit. Indeed all the following verbs (even in the singular) and the possessive suffixes of nouns (all in the plural; *their* voice, *their* cord, *their* messages, *therein*) in the ensuing verses (3-5) relate to "the heavens" (only in 5b the implicit/hidden Actor of the verb "set" [*sam*] is God). While "the heavens" dominates the first part, Torah presides over the second. The second part starts with Torah (*Torat-Hashem*) and continues with a charming repetition of Torah's various epithets. These two "first" words, one of the first part and the other of the second, taken together may subtly allude to the idea of Torah's heavenly substance and origin ("*Torah min ha-shamaim*"); Torah is *from* heaven, while no more *in* Heaven, as Moses insists in Deuteronomy 30:12 (according to rabbinic view), that "*Lo ba-shamaim hi*" -- Torah is no more there (in Heaven) but here (on earth).

Also, the "six and seventh" numerical mode of the second part (obvious though not explicit) deserves critical attention: Regarding Torah, it contains six recitative lines of praise mentioning Torah, in its various honorific appellations (8-10), climaxing with the seventh superlative verse (11); and, regarding the Tetragrammaton, it mentions the Ineffable Name six times in conjunction with Torah (8-10), concluding with the psalmist's frontal appeal to God as "my rock and my redeemer" (15). This poetic mode of the second part of the psalm may likely serve as a hint (and even a link) to the idea of creation (six workdays and the Seventh Shabbat), the implicit quintessence of the natural order, the theme of the first part.

The Psalm's Poetic Transition From Nature to Torah

From the rejoicing, luminous sun, the psalmist turns to describe God's Torah, its gratifying, enlightening and brightening qualities, in the second part.

In this part Torah appears adoringly in six of her lovely names: *Torah* (Teaching), *Edut* (Testimony), *Pikudim* (Precepts), *Mitzva* (Legacy, not "commandment"), *Yir'ah* (Authority, not "Fear"), and *Mishpatim* (Decrees). All these synonymous nouns refer essentially to the same living and enduring, conceptual entity: The Divine Law, representing the Legacy (*Mitzva*) to the people and the Authority (*Yir'ah*) of God. All these facets of Torah appear as precious, enjoyable and sweet.

There is, indeed, a clear distinction between the two parts of the Psalm. The first part describes a world of function; the second a world of values. The world of creation denotes determination and decisiveness, while the world of humankind implies free choice and fallibility. While the essence of creation is stability the core of human society is liberty. So, we come to the Psalm's turning point.

Verse 12 is the turning point in the flow of the Psalm's ideas. In it the personality of the psalmist emerges for the first time. It says: "Your worshipper too is heedful of them, observing them with utmost persistence." The Hebrew verb for "heedful" is *niz'har* in the common sense of being careful, cautious and attentive; but the root-word of this passive verb (in *nif'al*) is *zohar* (exactly as the name of the Kabbalistic classic, the *Zohar*), meaning light and illumination. Thus, we may also render the verse this way: "Your worshipper too receives his light through them." Or, "lives by their light." Namely, he derives his moral and spiritual illumination, insight, instruction, from the words of Torah. The parallel and interconnectedness between the enlightenment of Torah (part two of the psalm) and the brightness and radiance of the sun (part one) becomes now transparent and crystal-clear. Here we have the psalmist's emotional

response to his objective observations of God's will, manifested in "nature" and Torah. He realizes, however, an essential distinction between the completeness and perfection revealed in creation and his own human situation. God's words reflected in nature, are in a constant state of fulfillment. God ordained light and so it was and continues regularly to be. But the laws of the Torah are given to the people to be fulfilled by them. In this mood, the psalmist concludes with a sense of humility, pleading: "Errors! Of them who can be aware? From covert faults purge me!" (13).

Encountering the world of God, the psalmist feels a sense of inadequacy. He would very much like to emulate God's hosts of devoted, obedient servants in nature, rejoicing in filling His will, but how can he? The confrontation with nature stirs in the psalmist a desire for perfection, and he realizes that to gain it he needs not only God's laws, but also God's help to fulfill them. In this spirit, he ends, "May the words of my mouth please You; the thoughts of my heart reach You..."

Psalm's Structure and Sentiment is Characteristically Hebraic

The peculiar structure of psalm 19, though not conforming to the modes and norms of customary western poetry, is yet fully compatible with and typical of later Jewish liturgy. The same scheme underlies the two *berakhot* (benedictions) before the recital of the *Shema*. In these *berakhot* we praise God first (in the first one; *yotzer ohr* in the morning; *ma'ariv aravim* in the evening) for creating the celestial luminaries, ruling the sun, bringing forth the day and the night, the light and the darkness; then (in the second one, *ahava*) for granting us Torah as an expression of His eternal and abundant love for us. As in psalm 19 so here too the worshipper acclaim God for His twofold manifestation. His creation, regulated by light and time; His revelation, discerned in love and law.

The prevailing tendency to break our coherent psalm into fragments, is largely due to the impact of Christian theologians who see a dichotomy between the realms of mundane life and religious spirituality. To many of them it seems inconceivable that the same poem could simultaneously embrace appreciation of creation and devotion to the Creator. Motivated by Christological biases, many biblical critics (consciously or unconsciously) tend to isolate those passages in the Book of Psalms which adoringly glorify the Law (Torah), and then devalue their theological significance. Some critics are especially bewildered by the fact that the psalmist appraises the Law lovingly rather than pragmatically; that this pious believer treats the Law not as a temporary necessity of transitional usefulness, but rather as a supreme value. as a precious treasure of enduring truth and spiritual appeal. Their view, unfortunately, ignores and distorts the uniqueness of the biblical approach to both nature and Torah.

To many Biblical scholars it is incomprehensible that the psalmist signs of God's ordinances with such abiding passion and affection (v. 11):

Desirable more than gold, the purest Gold;

Sweeter than honey, the most delicious honey.

The Christian theologian C. S. Lewis, in his *Reflections on the Psalms* (New York 1958 pp. 54-55), ardently expresses his personal bewilderment of this verse in his inimitable, lively style:

One can well understand this being said of God's mercies, God's visitations, His attributes. But what the poet is actually talking about is God's law, His commands; His "rulings" as Dr. Moffatt well translates in verse 9 (for "judgements" here plainly means decisions about conduct). What is being compared to gold and honey is those "statutes" (in the Latin version "decrees") which, we are told, "rejoice the heart" (8). For the whole poem is about the Law, not about "judgement" in the sense to which Chapter I was devoted.

This was to me at first very mysterious. "Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not commit adultery" -- I can understand that a man can, and must, respect these "statutes", and try to obey them, and assent to them in his heart. But it is very hard to find how they could be, so to speak, delicious, how they exhilarate. If this is difficult at any time, it is doubly so when obedience to either is opposed to some strong, and perhaps *in itself* innocent, desire. A man held back by his unfortunate previous marriage to some lunatic or criminal who never dies from some woman whom he faithfully loves, or a hungry man left alone, without money, in a shop filled with the smell and sight of new bread, roasting coffee, or fresh strawberries -- can these find the prohibition of adultery or of theft at all like honey? They may obey, they may still respect the "statute". But surely it could be more aptly compared to the dentist's forceps or the front line than to anything enjoyable and sweet.

This open confession of confusion betrays, as it is, the author's innate alienation from the Hebraic world of thought and sentiment. His brilliant deliberation fails on both accounts, the semantic and the theological. Semantically, Torah is not Law (*nomos*) in the Christian-Pauline sense but rather teaching, guidance, enlightenment. Theologically, Judaism sees in Torah, even in its pronounced aspects of legislation ("Law") an expression of Divine love.

Facing their natural environment, the ancient Hebrews were impressed more by nature's internal lawfulness than external enchantment; its reassuring constancy than capricious fury; its promising benevolence than vicious violence. Therefore they resisted the urge to placate and submit to the natural forces or to worship formal beauty, but instead learned to reject oppression and violence and admire justice and kindness. Above all, seeing in nature, metaphorically speaking, demonstrative obedience and loyalty to God's Laws, the people became devoted lovers of the Law.

Psalm 19 breathes pure Jewish monotheism, reflecting the Hebrew Bible's total rejection of Eastern paganism on the one hand, and Western heresy on the other. From the Jewish point of view, to worship any being other than God is to deny Him; to see ultimate Oneness in creation is as idolatrous as to attribute plurality to the Creator. Thus, instead of submitting to the forces of nature, the biblical Jew adhered to the Laws of God; instead of aesthetics, he developed ethics.

Our Psalm's design, with its literary balance, poetic imagery, architectonic structure and lucid religious tenor, is a perfect gem, reflecting genuine Jewish genius.

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PSALM 19

Translated by Rabbi Zvi A. Yehuda

(1) To the Conductor: A Psalm of David.

(2)
[*ha-shamaim*] The heavens tell
God's glory;
[*The glory of*] His handiwork --
[*ha-raki'a*] The firmament acclaims.

(3)
Day after day
[*The heavens*] utter thought;
Night after night
[*They*] intimates wisdom.

(4)
No phrase,
No words,
Inaudible
Is their voice;

(5a)
[*Yet*] Throughout the earth [*ha-aretz*]
Their cord [*kawwam*] goes forth,
To the edge of temporal-earth [*tevel*],
Their messages.

(5b)
For the sun --
He [*God*] has set a brightness/a tent
Therein [*in the heavens*]

(6)
He [*the sun*] appears as a groom
Emerging from his bridal chamber;
Joyous as a mighty one,
To be swift on his way.

(7)
From the heavens' edge [*ha-shamaim*]
Its rising;
Its circuit -- over their very edges.

Nothing is hidden
From its heat.

(8)
Adonai's Torah is complete,
Gratifying one's desire.
Adonai's Testimony is trustworthy
Enlightening one's mind.

(9)
Adonai's Precepts are righteous,
Delighting one's heart.
Adonai's Legacy is brilliant,
Brightening one's eyes.

(10)
Adonai's Authority is spotless,
Enduring forever.
Adonai's Decrees are the truth
Just in their wholeness.

(11)
Precious more than Gold,
The finest gold,
Sweeter than honey,
Even the syrup from the honeycomb.

(12)
Your worshipper too is
Heedful of them, lives by their light,
Observing them
With utmost persistence.

(13)
Errors! of them
who can be aware?
from covert faults
Purge me;

(14)
From overt wrongs too,
Spare your worshipper,
Let them not overrule me.
Then I shall become perfected,
Clean from grave transgressions.

(15)

May the words of my mouth please You,
The thoughts of my heart reach You,
Adonai, My rock and my redeemer.