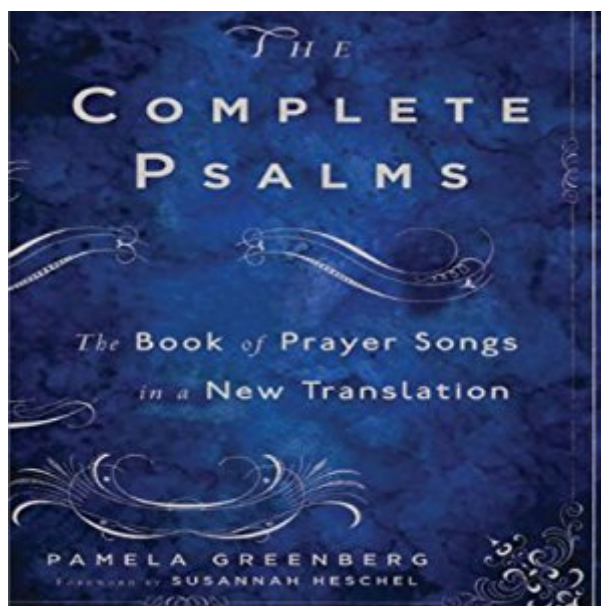


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# The Complete Psalms: The Book Of Prayer Songs In A New Translation



## Synopsis

In her new, complete translation of the Book of Psalms, Pamela Greenberg "favors beauty before theology," in the words of Mary Karr, writing in the *Washington Post* of the unpublished manuscript of this book, "breathing new life into the ancient texts." It is precisely the honesty of these prayer songs, overflowing into wild jubilation or deeply wrenching despair, that Greenberg has captured in her new translations, making them touch us so deeply. Traditional translations - from those of the medieval Jewish commentator Rashi to early Christian commentators to the King James version-have downplayed anger at God and reinterpreted the Psalms in ways that would be doctrinally more palatable, but which flatten the richness and subtlety of the Hebrew verse. Greenberg's translation aims to restore the poetry and vibrancy of the Psalms as a prayerful act, replicating their emotional passion while both wrestling with the text as living liturgy and remaining as true as possible to the originals. Her desire in this new translation is to rekindle the relevance of the Psalms, to bring to life what makes their words cry and breathe and shout-a labor of yearning, necessity, and love.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As someone who is average when it comes to knowledge about the Old Testament Psalms and who never particularly connected to them on a deep level, I found this translation to be a revelation. The poetic language of the psalms themselves and dramatic choices in wording spoke to me in a deep way. The introduction added to my enjoyment and appreciation of both the ancient text and the translator's abilities. In it Pam Greenberg described how she approached the project which she

did in such a soulful and impassioned manner. Even the cover is a work of beauty. In addition to enjoying the book myself I found that it is wonderful as a gift to friends. I recently bought it for a totally non-religious friend facing a serious illness. The book brought tears to her eyes and is by her bedside when in need of solace and spiritual connection.

I never thought I'd buy another translation of the Psalms until I read some of these. I was dubious that anyone could have a new, fresh, take on the Psalms. Let's face it; they have been around for a long time! It takes a lot of guts to even try. Pamela Greenberg not only tried, she succeeded in bringing new nuance to this English translation of the Hebrew text. Ms Greenberg is a poet and a scholar; her knowledge of how poetry works enhances her translation. Hebrew is a very poetic language; many words have multiple meanings. I find her choices fascinating. This book is good for study or devotion. It reads like good poetry. The rhythms roll like Hebrew, with carefully chosen English. It's a masterpiece and an obvious labor of love.

This book is beautifully written and well-grounded in a loving spirituality, but I would not have bought it for that. My trouble with the Psalms has been the overwhelming affirmation of violence and revenge that spoils the other aspects for me. This translation has managed to stick close to the original text, while making it possible to read these words as prayers rather than just study them as scholarly translations. Two examples: 23 (The Lord is my shepherd): "You have prepared a feast in the presence of my enemies" becomes "You spread a table before me in face of my greatest fears" 126 (By the waters of Babylon): "O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones" becomes "O daughter of Babylon, ravaged one, your wrongs have led you to suffer. One day you, too, will see your brightest future shattered against a rock." She also deals respectfully and reverently with names and gender of God. This translation brings the Psalms into harmony with modern ethics. I bought this book at a reading even though I wasn't intending to! I highly recommend it.

The Complete Psalms, Pamela Greenberg's new translation is a fresh look at these traditional prayers. She gives them fresh life as she takes them from The Book to make connections, her soft turns of phrase make them real for today's believer. See the end of Psalm 1: "the road of the wrongful is covered with weeds", or Psalm 83 "God... don't stiffen into silence." She shows a personal experience of the God who walks with us. The text can be beneficially used for occasional

prayer or sharing in a group.

Although I cannot speak as a scholar in this area, I have been reading the Psalms, often aloud, in many English translations for years. When I finished THE COMPLETE PSALMS, I began again the same morning with Psalm 1. I look forward to learning more about Pamela Greenberg's thoughtful and creative work. This week, through .com, it was also my privilege to send gift copies to the libraries at Northern Illinois University and Northeastern Illinois University. Thank you and blessings...

This translation of the psalms touches me as no other translation ever has. It is personal with gorgeous poetic translation of the original Hebrew. When I read them out loud, it feels like prayer. Thank you, Pamela Greenberg!!!!

Pamela Greenberg's masterful, imaginative, poetic, and deeply feeling translation of the psalms transforms Old Testament poetry into universal poetry. One needn't believe in God or prayer or religion to appreciate, admire and love the enormous range of feelings expressed in these psalms. Greenberg's psalmists sing of anger, longing, love, hope, comforting, and the entire range of human emotions. Her command of the language and her inventive use of words serve to bring the psalms to my ears in a whole new way. I read them aloud with friends and relatives as I never would the older versions. A book to be cherished, indeed.

The Complete Psalms: The Book of Prayer Songs in a New Translation offers a new translation that's been praised for rendering the psalms in a way that allows new insights into the text. A focus on language and meaning offer this rare major biblical translation by a woman and creates a modern version focusing on the key underlying meaning and the poetic beauty of the language. Any spirituality collection will find this meaningful and fine.

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