

## *Davar* in the Psalms

### Introduction

The Hebrew noun *davar* is rather inclusive and means word, speech, discourse, a saying, thing...in general, something that is expressed. It is not unlike the Greek *logos* which in the New Testament applies to Jesus Christ as *Logos* or expression of the Father. *Davar* may be compared with the equally common *'amar* (verbal root of *'emer*) which translates as to say, to speak, the general idea being to bring forth something as in speech. However, the former has a fulness and richness you can detect easily by the context in which it's found. While often is associated with the Lord addressing his people, *davar* can have plenty of negative overtones as some Psalm verses below reveal. Nevertheless these references are more to the point or expressive of the person uttering them, not something spoken off the cuff, if you will.

What gave birth to this interest in a single word is a document completed just before it, *Expansions on the Book of Deuteronomy*, which is posted on this, the Lectio Divina homepage. While going through that biblical text, one can't help but be struck by the all-present *davar*, intensified, if you will, by the frequent association with its verbal root of the same spelling. All in all, Deuteronomy has some ninety-five occurrences of this noun. For example, not infrequently you'll come across expressions such as "the Lord *davar* a *davar*." Reading it as such is far richer than any translation. It compels you want to pause and feel the action of *davar* issuing from the Lord into a *davar*, this transition coloring the situation at hand. The same forcefulness applies when *davar* is used in a negative sense as just noted. Indeed, the Psalter would be a far less document if this word and noun were not present.

As for the Psalter, it has a little over one-hundred and seven instances, pretty much the same amount as in Deuteronomy.<sup>1</sup> Psalm One Hundred and Nineteen is the jackpot for references, twenty-two of them. This isn't surprising because this psalm glorifies God's law or Torah.

Because the psalms are the expression of Hebrew piety, instances of *davar* are singled out followed by a series of brief notations which cover both divine and human utterances. As stated in many Introductions relative to "expansion" texts on this homepage, the reason for this documentation is to assist in the practice of *lectio divina*, the sole task which of this document and nothing else. Thus by putting these "expansions" at the disposal of helping to remain in God's presence is the one and only reason for their existence.

On this homepage is a document entitled *Notes on the Psalter*. From it is lifted some of what's contained here and often modified. **At the end of this document is a "Supplement**

<sup>1</sup>Please note that *davar* found in the title of a psalm it isn't included.

to *davar*.” That is to say, a verse by verse list of this noun within the phrase it occurs. In other words, it’s a summary. Taking them in at one glance gives an overall snapshot of how *davar* is used throughout the entire Psalter.

As with all biblically orientated texts on this homepage, the Bible used is **The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha** (New York, 1973).

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**17.4:** With regard to the works of men, by the word of your lips I have avoided the ways of the violent.

God’s word, *davar*; is singular with respect to the plurality of works or *pehulah* which derives from a verbal root meaning to make in the sense of to fabricate. Note the use of two prepositions here: *l-* or “to” here in the sense of “concerning” prefaced to *pehulah* and the preposition *b-* prefixed to *davar* or “in.” As for *davar*, it’s the guiding principle for the psalmist—a word in contrast to a deed—for the preposition *b-* signifies a being-in this *davar*, the true vantage point to observe *pehulah* or works. The association of *davar* with lips intimates the active, vivifying activity of divine speech which is singular, not plural.

The verb *shamar* for “avoided” fundamentally means to keep or to observe which here applies not so much to the violent but to their ways or paths, *’orach* as in the sense of Prov 2.15: “Men whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways.” The image of *’orach* by use of the plural corresponds to the plurality of works as noted with regard to this same verse. *Parats* as the verbal root for violent intensifies this plurality further; it means a breaking asunder or dispersion.

**19.3:** There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard.

Reference here is to heavens and firmament of vs. 1, both lacking *’emer* and *davar* which are the two basic forms of conveying the notion of a word. Instead, the verb *saphar* is used which applies to writing or inscribing. “My tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe” (*sopher*, Ps 45.1). Perhaps the joyous words of Baruch (LXX) may apply here: “The stars shined in their watches and rejoiced; when he calls them, they say, ‘Here we are, and so with cheerfulness they showed light to him who made them’” [3.31].

In the verse at hand, note the difference between *’emer* and *davar* from voice or *qol* which may be taken as a combination of both. The overall idea is that the heavenly luminaries don’t utter speech but are present without it. They appear during the night, not day when the sun rules the firmament. As for the sun, it isn’t mentioned with regard to *davar* but is mentioned later in vs. 4.

**22.1:** My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

This psalm traditionally has been associated with Jesus Christ on the cross and is quoted in Mt 27.46 in the Hebrew: “Eli, Eli, lama sabach-thani?” *Hazav* is the verb for to forsake and also connotes letting go as in Ps 9.10 (‘For you have not forsaken those who seek you’). Referring to Christ, such *hazav* was uttered shortly before his death implying that he was about to let go of human existence.

Both Jesus and the person uttering these words originally in the Psalm don’t expect an answer to the two questions directed toward God which is distinct from doubting his existence or the like. At issue is a sharp distinction between help and distance, *yeshuah* (the verbal root for Jesus) and *rachok*, this latter term augmenting the notion of remoteness by the prefix *m-* (from) to *yeshuah*. With regard to Jesus, we could say in a sense that it is he addressing God to Jesus himself.

As for groaning, the verb is *sha’ag* which connotes a lion: “They shall roar like young lions” [Is 5.29]. Note that *davar* is associated with this loud and mighty roar, so it is very forceful and even threatening.

**33.4:** For the word of the Lord is upright; and all his work is done in faithfulness.

Two manifestations of the Lord: *davar* and *mahaseh*, word and work. The former is *yashar* and the latter, *’emunah* or upright and faithfulness. *Yashar* connotes straightness and therefore directness with regard to communication of the divine *davar*. The adjective “all” does not need to apply to the immaterial (spiritual) *davar* but for the concrete *mahaseh*. Both lack verbs, that is, “is” and “done,” a lack which is indicative of direct action and presence by and of the Lord.

**33.6:** By the word of the Lord the heavens were made and all their host by the breath of his mouth.

The preposition *b-* or “in” is prefaced to *davar*, literally as “in the word of the Lord.” This in-ness, if you will, is the means by which the Lord makes...passive or were made (*nahsu*)...through the instrumentality of his mouth the heavens. As for the hosts, Implication is that *shamaym*, while physical, partakes of the divine realm by reason of its ethereal character. As for the heavenly hosts or *tseva’am* (*tsava’*, singular), reference is to angels or stars and planets. They are similarly fashioned passively (*nahsu*) by the Lord’s breath or *ruach*, this being the common noun for spirit which is specified as coming from the Lord’s mouth whereas the heavens aren’t so specified.

**35.20:** For they do not speak peace but against those who are quiet in the land they

conceive words of deceit.

“They” refers to those foes who are rejoicing over the psalmist in the previous verse. Their hostility precludes them from *davar* peace or *shalom*. In addition to this, they *davar* against (the preposition *hal*, more specifically as ‘upon’) persons who are *rageh* or quiet, the verbal root of this adjective meaning to terrify, to threaten, so the quiet produced is a result of such a threatening stance. *Rageh* is specified as being in the land or ‘*erets*’ which is more than a physical place but can apply to a nation or people. Against...“upon”...these the psalmist’s foes show another side of *davar*, if you will. That is to say, they engage in a deliberate process of *chashav* or conceiving, of working out all the details, relative to *davar* of hate, *mirmah* which also means fraud or riches obtained by fraud.

**36.3:** The words of his mouth are mischief and deceit; he has ceased to act wisely and do good.

*Davar* as associated with the wicked (cf. vs. 1) are both ‘*aven* and *mirmah*, mischief and deceit. The former also means vanity or emptiness as well as falsehood while the latter is noted in 35.20 just above, fraud. Speaking such causes the wicked person or *rashah* (connotes unrighteousness) to cease from acting wisely and doing good. *Chadal* is the verb to cease or to give something up which here pertains to wisdom and takes the form of the verb *sakal*. It means to look at in the sense of beholding and thus to act with prudence. The common verb *yatav* means to do good, a general way of putting it.

**41.8:** They say “A deadly thing has fastened upon him; he will not rise again from where he lies.”

Here *davar* assumes a generic form (‘thing’) described as deadly or *belyahal*, a noun meaning wickedness or that which is vile. This phrase could be taken as speaking (*davar*) in such a fashion, for the words of such a person have fastened upon him, *yatsq*. This verb means to pour out as well as to cast (metal). Once such liquid has found its place or form, it hardens and cannot be broken. Such hardness prevents a person from getting up from where he is laying down, that its weight has pressed upon him. Laying down can intimate that the *davar* which is so deadly has been waiting to spring its trap.

**45.1:** My heart overflows with a goodly theme; I address my verses to the king; my tongue is like the pen of a scribe.

This psalm is helpful to read in conjunction with the Song of Songs which deals with a royal wedding. The psalmist’s heart overflows, *rachash*, which fundamentally means to boil or bubble up and is the only instance of this verb in the Bible. *Davar* translates here as “theme” with the adjective *tov* or good. The idea is that the psalmist has so much to *davar* that barely is he able to contain himself when addressing (‘*amar*’) literally what he

has made to the king, the noun being *mahseh*.

The psalmist's tongue resembles the pen of a ready scribe, a scribe being a secretary usually associated with a royal court. The noun for this writing instrument is *het*, more specifically referring to an instrument for inscribing on rock: "Oh that with an iron pen and lead they were graven in the rock forever" [Job 19.23]! With this in mind, we may say that the psalmist's tongue is endowed with a special gift for writing on any hard object; it is ready, *mahyr*, in the sense of being quick with respect to effecting this writing which may be taken as a kind of carving.

**45.4: In your majesty ride forth victoriously for the cause of truth and to defend the right; let your right hand teach you dread deeds!**

In vs. 3 glory and majesty are applied to the king, whereas in this verse majesty or *hadar*, also as an adornment or decoration. It alone accompanies the king as he "rides forth victoriously," *tsalach*, whose verbal root also means to attack. Another use of this verb is the coming of the Spirit upon a person: "And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him [Samson, Judg 14.19]." The purpose or cause (*davar*) for *tsalach* is truth or *'emeth*, also as faithfulness and fidelity.

Bound up with this is the duty to defend what is right, the verb not in the Hebrew text and *hanwah* as the right which has one other biblical reference, Ps 18.35, "And your help made me great." The RSV inserts a note, *hanwah* for "help" translated as gentleness which is applicable to the verse at hand. Perhaps intimated are the so-called *anawim*, those afflicted and favored by the Lord.

The Lord's right hand is to teach deeds which are full of dread, *yarah* being the verb meaning to found or to cast with respect to the verb *yare'*, to fear.

**50.17: For you hate discipline, and you cast my words behind you.**

Those whom the psalmist is addressed are the wicked of vs. 16, *rashah* (cf. 36.3). The objected of hatred or *sane'* is discipline, *mosar* also meaning admonition whether to children or to adults. Concomitant with *sane'* is the casting away of God's words...not just that but behind "you" or the person who is *rashah*. The verb at hand is the common *shalach* usually as to send. *'Achar* also translates as after. And so the wicked person walks away from the divine *davar* which continue to address him all the while knowing it but not paying attention to them.

**52.4: You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue.**

In Ps 50.17 the wicked person hates discipline, *sane'*, which here can be contrasted with love or *'ahav* which connotes desire, a breathing after. The object of such *'ahav* are *davar*

which devour, *balah* meaning to consume in the sense of swallowing down all at once. What aides this swallowing is a tongue that is deceitful, *mirmah* (cf. 36.3).

**55.21:** His speech was smoother than butter, yet war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.

Compare speech with *davar*, the former being *peh* or mouth from which *davar* come. Also compare being smooth and war, *chalaq* as the verb which also means to divide as by lot as well as to despoil. *Qerav* means war or battle; it derives from a verbal root meaning to draw near and can imply the close-quarter nature of combat. The closeness of such conflict parallels the closeness or inward-ness of heart, *lev*.

*Davar* are softer than oil, *rakak* as being tender as well as weak, this as a disguise of sorts for swords which are drawn, *patach* meaning to open or loosen; “swords” is not in the Hebrew text.

**56.4:** In God whose word I praise, in God I trust without a fear. What can flesh do to me?

An amplification of the short, heart-felt sentiment expressed in the previous verse. It contains two references to “in (*b-*) God:” the first relative to praising not God directly but his *davar*, *halal* having multiple meanings such as to be clear, be foolish or to be bright. The idea seems to make manifest beyond any doubt and is the most frequently used verb for praise. The second “in God” is tied in not simply with trust or *batach* but one lacking fear, *yare'* (cf. 45.4).

After this bold proclamation of trust he utters an equally bold rhetorical question by calling his foes flesh, *basar*. This can be a way of both denigrating them as well as expressing trust in God's *davar*.

**56.5:** All day long they seek to injure my cause; all their thoughts are against me for evil.

*Davar* here is “cause” and like other Psalm instance where this noun doesn't specifically refer to speaking, it can be taken with the fuller sense of expression. “They” are the enemies in vs. 2 who are toiling way to cause grief (*hatsav*) with regard to the psalmist's *davar* which isn't specified. In a way, the thoughts entertained by these people precede their *hatsav*, *machashavah* which implies counsel or purpose or in sum, something which is done in consort with others. In this verse *machashavah* followed by *hatsav* is for evil, *rah* prefaced with the preposition *l-*, literally as “to evil.”

**56.10:** In God whose word I praise, in the Lord whose word I praise.

Two instances of “in-ness” or the psalmist’s location, God and the Lord, both with the verb *halal* or praise (cf. 56.4). Both uses of *halal* have *davar* as their object which both differ yet are the same.

**59.12:** For the sin of their mouths, the words of their lips, let them be trapped in their pride.

*Lakad* is the verb for trapped, often with regard to being taken captive and here is associated with *ga'on* or pride which alternately refers to majesty or an ornament. Being so caught or held captive is a direct result of the psalmist’s enemies (cf. vs. 10). For them both sin and words are synonymous, *chata'oth* whose verbal root means to miss or to be liable to a penalty. Such sin is in their mouths whereas their *davar* are closer to being manifested, that is, on their lips.

**64.3:** who whet their tongues like swords, who aim bitter words like arrows.

*Shanan* is the verb for whet meaning to sharpen or to pierce. Once this honing of the organ responsible for speech is finished, there come *davar* which are bitter (*mar*) or arrows. And so *shanan* is followed immediately by *darak* or aiming of *davar*, the second verb being the root for road or way.

**79.9:** Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us and forgive our sins for your name’s sake!

Help and deliver are similar, *hazar* and *natsal*. The former as to come to one’s aide and the latter as to draw or to pull away in the sense of snatching. Salvation or *yeshah* has as its verbal root *yeshuah* (cf. 21.2), the verbal root for the proper name Jesus...“O God of Jesus,” if you will.

*Hazar* or helping has a specific goal, that is, the glory or *kavod* of God’s name. Here *davar* is hidden, if you will, reading literally as “on the *davar*” (etc.). It could taken as related to the divine manifestation as glory which essentially means heaviness or weightiness.

*Natsal* is used with *kaphar* or forgive, essentially as to cover over, sins being the object of this covering which doesn’t apply to their elimination, just taking away from sight. Both *natsal* and *kaphar*...snatching and covering...are for the sake of the Lord’s name.

**101.3:** I will not set before my eyes anything that is base, I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cleave to me.

*Shyth* is the verb to set; it connotes permanency and stability which the psalmist refuses to do when it comes to a *davar* that is *belyahal*, “deadly” as in Ps 41.8. That is to say, a *davar* of such character he will refuse to see, will not establish it in his presence.

*Sane’* or hatred is directed toward the work or *hasah* which here is the common verb to do and is associated with persons in the act of falling away, *setym*, the only use of this verb in the Bible. One could say that while such persons are falling, their work will not drag down the psalmist with them by clinging to him, *davaq* which connotes a sticking-to.

**105.8:** He is mindful of his covenant forever, of the word that he commanded for a thousand generations.

*Zakar* or mindful fundamentally meaning to remember or to recall and has two objects: 1) the covenant (*beryth*) which in the next verse is specified as being made with Abraham in Gen 15.18 where the Lord promises what’s essentially the land of Canaan. 2) *Davar* which the Lord had commanded. Note two references with respect to time: forever and one thousand generations. While the covenant has no end, the *davar* comes to an end after the passage of all these generations.

**105.19:** until what he had said came to pass the word of the Lord tested him.

The previous verse speaks of the Lord being mindful of his covenant (with Abraham), that is, as it pertains to the land of Canaan. Such mindfulness is limited by “until” or *had-heth*, literally “until the time,” *heth* suggestive of an opportunity or proper time not unlike *kairos*. In other words, the Lord’s *davar* has arrived, this being the sense of the common verb *bo’*. Once it has come, the words or *emer* took on the function of testing Abraham, *tsaraph* meaning to refine or to smelt. The first refinement, if you will, took place immediately after the covenant was made or when Abraham’s wife Sarai was unable to bear children (cf. Gen 16.1+).

**105.27:** They wrought his signs among them and miracles in the land of Ham.

The Hebrew text reads literally “*davar* of signs” implying that such signs (*oth*: either a portent or a military sign) are spoken...expressed...in a more profound way. “They” refer to Moses and Aaron of vs. 26 with the verb *sum* (to place) which has two parts, if you will: 1) the “*davar* of signs” literally “in (*b-*) them” and 2) *mopheth* or miracles, also as sign in the sense of proof. These occur in Ham which a footnote in the RSV calls referring to Gen 10.6 “A poetic synonym for Egypt”

**105.28:** He sent darkness and made the land dark; they rebelled against his words.

There are two steps here happening in sequence but different from one another. First the

Lord sends darkness after which he is making darkness (present tense). Darkness or *choshek* (it also means misery or adversity) comes down from the Lord upon the earth, pauses to look around, and then makes the land *choshek*. Implied, of course, is the ninth plague in Egypt which came about by Moses stretching out his hand. What's notable there is that this darkness was felt as Ex 10.21 puts it. The Egyptians were pretty much frozen in place, not being able to move because of the darkness weighing upon them. With this in mind, the words of the psalm verse are apt which read literally, "they did not rebel (*marah*).” The Egyptians couldn't, pressed down from all around by the darkness.

**105.42: For he remembered his holy promise and Abraham his servant.**

The Lord remembering (*zakar*, cf. 105.8) is within the context of him having opened the rock to give water to the Israelites who had complained for lack of it in Chapter Seventeen of Exodus, this shortly after the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. The psalmist's observation here is a good insight into the Lord's mind. While he was angry with the Israelites, he shifted this anger to remembrance of the covenant made with Abraham put here as *davar*. The adjective "holy" or *qodash* (it means something or someone set apart from the ordinary) modifies *davar*, "holy word," if you will. So the Lord preferred that over the current stressful situation which amounts to ingratitude.

**106.12: Then they believed his words; they sang his praise.**

*'Aman* is the verb "for believed" which also means to stand firm, to be faithful. Here *davar* has the preposition *b-* or "in" prefaced to it, "in his words." Once settled "in" the *davar* at hand, the Israelites sang the praises of the Lord, *tehilah* which also means psalm.

**106.24: Then they despised the pleasant land, having no faith in his promise.**

Reference is to Num 14.1+ when the Israelites balked at having heard of the spies' report of the Canaanites being as giants and they as grasshoppers before them. The verb for "despised" is *ma'as*, also as to reject, to condemn. The rejection of the land which is pleasant is intensified by the preposition *b-* prefaced to *'erets* (land), "despised in the land" as it reads literally. Taking this yet further, *ma'as* contrasts with the adjective describing *'erets*, *chemdah* or something agreeable or to be desired. Lack of faith (the verb *'aman* as in 106.12) in the Lord's *davar* is the natural result of this *ma'as*. Implied is the similarity of *'erets* and *davar*, land and word (promise).

**107.20: he sent forth his word and healed them and delivered them from destruction.**

Reference seems to be Israel after having left Egypt, one among several incidents when the people rebelled against the Lord. Here *davar* is associated with divine healing, *rapha'*, which fundamentally means to mend or to sew together. The second aspect of *davar* is

having delivered Israel, *malat* (to slip away, to escape) with regard to *mashchyth* or destruction. This noun also means a noose and connotes waiting in ambush.

**109.3:** They beset me with words of hate and attack me without cause.

Here *davar* are those of *sin'ah* or hatred which hem in the psalmist, *savav* meaning to surround. Once having been so besieged, they ('wicked and deceitful mouths' of vs. 2) attack him, *lacham* meaning to wage war. They do so without reason, *chinam* meaning gratuitously or for nothing.

**112.5:** It is well with the man who deals generously and lends, who conducts his affairs with justice.

*Yatov* is the verb for "it is well" from which is derived the common adjective for good, *tov*. It pertains to the man engaged in two activities related to money, *chanan* and *lavah* to be inclined favorably and to borrow. Both may apply to one's *davar* justly, the verb *kul* meaning to hold or sustain and *mishpat* or justice.

**119.9:** How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.

Ps 119 is 176 verses long and contains the most instances of *davar* which comes to 22 verses. The rhetorical question is with regard to purity, the verb *zakah* here most likely referring to sexual abstinence. The answer: to guard or *shamar* it (the same verb as applied in Ps 119 to Torah, cf. 17.4) in accord with the divine *davar*. This requires listening in order to hear the *davar*.

**119.16:** I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.

*Shahah* is the verb for to delight and fundamentally means to overspread or to smear, the idea being that such joy bubbles up and virtually smothers everything before it. The object of such delight: the divine statutes or *chuqah* which in the verse at hand is closely connected with being mindful of God's *davar*, *shakach* as to forget.

**119.17:** Deal bountifully with your servant that I may live and observe your word.

*Gamal* is the verb to deal bountifully and generally means to do good to a person, the object here being the psalmist as God's servant and the wish that his life may be sustained. Such support has one goal, to observe or *shamar* God's *davar* (cf. 119.9).

**119.25:** My soul cleaves to the dust; revive me according to your word!

*Davaq* as to cleave suggests being glued and not being able to be released, here as applied to the soul or *nephesh* whereas the second part of this verse deals with “me.” This is not to suggest a difference or two parts of one person but an urgent request to be kept alive. However, this being alive is different from simply being kept alive; it’s according to God’s *davar*. Apparently *davaq* with regard to the dust is a synonymous with the grave.

**119.28:** My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word!

Sorrow or *tugah* causes the psalmist’s soul to melt, *dalaph* also meaning to drip and suggestive of a slow, constant affliction which can be remedied only by God strengthening him by his *davar*. The verb is *qum* meaning to rise.

**119.42:** then shall I have an answer for those who taunt me, for I trust in your word.

This verse forms part of a larger sentence begun in the previous verse where the psalmist asks for God’s steadfast love or *chesed* which is more or less equivalent to *agape*. Having such *chesed* will enable him to answer anyone who taunts him, *charaph* basically as to gather or to pluck off. It’s used with *davar* reading literally as “reproaching me *davar*.” While this is transpiring, the psalmist trusts in God’s *davar*, the verb being *batach* (cf. 56.4).

**119.43:** And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for my hope is in your ordinances.

The key word here is “utterly” or *me’od* meaning that which is done to excess. It seems the psalmist consents to the Lord taking the *davar* of truth (*emeth*) from his mouth or from speaking it. That is to say, he doesn’t wish it to be taken away totally but that some *emeth* may be left present within him. The reason is his hope or the verb *yachal* meaning also to prevail or to be powerful with respect to divine ordinances, *mishpat* also as judgements (cf. 112.5).

**119.49:** Remember your word to your servant in which you have made me hope.

The psalmist asks the Lord to remember or *zakar* (cf. 105.42) a *davar* he had uttered earlier which gave him hope, *yachal* also meaning to expect (cf. 119.43).

**119: 57:** The Lord is my portion; I promise to keep your words.

The word “promise” isn’t in the Hebrew, just the verb *shamar* (cf. 119.17) or to keep the Lord’s *davar* which stems directly from the Lord himself being the psalmist’s portion or *chalaq* (cf. 55.21 for the verbal root).

**119.65:** You have dealt well with your servant, O Lord, according to your word.

*Davar* is the measure by which the Lord deals with (the common verb *hasah*, to do, to make; cf. 101.3) the psalmist meaning that he speaks with him chiefly through the often mentioned commands, etc., of Ps 119.

**119.74:** Those who fear you shall see me and rejoice because I have hoped in your word.

A direct correspondence between fear and hope, *yare'* and *yachal* (cf. 54.4 and 119.49 respectively), both resting in the Lord's *davar*. The connecting point, if you will, is rejoicing or *samach*.

**119.81:** My soul languishes for your salvation; I hope in your word.

*Kalah* suggests a pinning away as well as to come to an end, here with regard to (the preposition *l-* or 'to') *teshuhah* or salvation which also means deliverance. This noun is closely related to the proper name Jesus. While the psalmist's soul is in this condition, he hopes (*yachal*, cf. 119.74) in (again, *l-* or 'to') the divine *davar*.

**119.89:** Forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens.

*Holam* or "forever" has as its verbal root that which is hidden and thus is suggestive of something beyond or transcending human knowledge. It's prefaced with the preposition *l-* or "to," literally as "to forever." The proper name "Lord" is interjected between *holam* and *davar*, an exclamation on the psalmist's part. This divine *davar* resides in the heavens, *natsav* meaning to set or be established without the possibility of moving. Although *davar* resides above humankind, it isn't limited to that realm.

**119.101:** I hold back my feet from every evil way in order to keep your word.

*Kala'* or hold back also means to restrain or to shut up, here with regard to the psalmist not advancing (the Hebrew lacks this verb) not just in a way which is evil but in them all. The noun is *'orach* which is a path as well as manner of living and described as *rah* or evil (cf. 56.5). That, however, isn't sufficient but is done along with keeping (*shamar*, cf. 119.57) the divine *davar*.

**119.105:** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

The divine *davar* is both lamp and light, *ner* and *'or*, the former also meaning a candle. *Natyv* is a path (compare with *'orach* of 119.101). Both feet and path are prefaced with the preposition *l-* ('to') suggestive of *davar* and *'or* being held directly to both.

**119.107:** I am sorely afflicted; give me life, O Lord, according to your word!

The psalmist doesn't just ask for life from the Lord but in accord with his *davar* or communication. The context is more than being afflicted, that is, *sorely*, *had-me'od* which may be rendered as something "until excessively." The verb *hanah* has a wide range of meanings, fundamentally as to be receptive or to respond.

**119.130:** The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.

*Petach* or unfolding is more along the lines of an opening or entrance. Applied to *davar*, they have the capacity to bestow light, 'or being the verb but only with respect to *petach*. Once opened, if you will, the divine *davar* give understanding, the verb being *byn* which means to distinguish, to separate and used here concerning the simple, *pety* also applied to someone who is silly or easily persuaded.

**119.139:** My zeal consumes me because my foes forget your words.

*Qin'ah* is the noun for zeal which also applies to jealousy as well as indignation which eats up the psalmist. *Tsamath* means to be silent, to extinguish and more forceful than the common verb one would associate here. Forgetfulness of God's *davar* in and by itself makes a person a foe, *tsar* also as distress.

**119.147:** I rise before dawn and cry for help; I hope in your words.

*Nesheph* means "dawn" as well as twilight, signifying the cooler time of day when the psalmist cries to God for help, *shavah*. At the same time he has hope in his *davar*, *yachal* (cf. 119.81) with *l-* or "to" prefaced to *davar*, literally as "to your words."

**119.160:** The sum of your word is truth; and every one of your righteous ordinances endures forever.

*Ro'sh* as "sum" primarily means the head as source and origin, here with regard to God's *davar*. In this *ro'sh*, if you will, is truth, 'emeth (cf. 119.43). The ordinances or *mishpat* (cf. 119.43) at hand which are essentially identical with righteousness (*tsedeq*; noun) makes them last forever, no verb being used in the Hebrew.

**119.161:** Princes persecute me without cause, but my heart stands in awe of your words.

*Sar* means "princes" as well as a leader or commander of soldiers who are persecuting

the psalmist, *radaph* meaning to put to flight which here is *hinam*, without cause. Despite this, his heart remains in awe of God's *davar*, *pachad* as to tremble or be fearful.

**119.169:** Let my cry come before you, O Lord; give me understanding according to your word!

*Rinah* or cry can also apply to a shout of joy which the psalmist wishes to be near God, *qarav* intimating an approach. Once there, if you will, this cry will beseech God for understanding or *byn* (cf. 119.130) in accord with his *davar*.

**130.5:** I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope.

Two uses of the verb *qavah*: first person singular and third person singular, the latter with respect to *nepesh* or soul (cf. 119.25). The second is an intensification of the first resulting in hope (*yachal*, cf. 119.147) literally "to (*-l*) his *davar*."

**137.3:** For there our captors required of us songs and our tormentors, mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"

"There" obviously refers to Babylon where Israel is held by their captors, *shavah* being a verb, this rendered literally as "capturing us." They wish that the Israelites take down their harps from the willows and play a song (*shyr*) of Zion. The noun "mirth" derives from the verbal root *samach* (cf. 119.74).

**141.4:** Do not incline my heart to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deeds in company with men who work iniquity; and let me not eat of their dainties!

*Natah* as "incline" has the sense of actively stretching out, here with reference to the psalmist's heart. In addition to this he bids God not to avoid being engaged in wicked works (*halal*; verb connotes both gleaning and binding). Such iniquity or '*awen* (implies vanity) is the original result of inclining or most likely listening in the interior sense.

To eat with anyone means that one has already met that person and has agreed to sit down and partake of food, thereby extending the conversation. *Manhamym* is only use of this term in the Bible.

**145.5:** On the glorious splendor of your majesty and on your wondrous works I will meditate.

Two objects of the psalmist's (future) meditation: splendor (*kavod*, cf. 79.9) and *hadar*, the latter also as an ornament. Both are attributed to divine majesty or *hod*. The second is the object of meditation or *syach*, fundamentally as to utter something, are "wonderful

works” which derive from the verbal root *pala’*.

**147.15:** He sends forth his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly.

Both *davar* and *emer* (cf. 105.19) are used in one verse, the latter derived from *amar* as to say, to speak, the general idea being to bring forth something as in speech. *Emer* goes to the earth and once there, changes into *davar*, if you will, after which it goes about the earth swiftly, *ruts* also as to hasten.

**147.18:** He sends forth his word and melts them; he makes his wind blow and the waters flow.

Reference to melting is snow and hoarfrost of vs. 16 which is effected by the Lord sending his *davar* which here intimates blowing hot air. Blow and flow or *shuv* and *nazal*, the former meaning to turn around, literally as “reversing the wind.” *Ruach* or wind (also as spirit) applies to the first and water to the second.

**147.19:** He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and ordinances to Israel.

*Davar* is declared, *nagad* also as to show or declare openly. Mention of Jacob and Israel are reminiscent of Ps 78:5: “testimony in Jacob...law in Israel.” With regard to the change in name from Jacob to Israel in Gen 32.28, the former applies to before wrestling with the unknown being and the latter to after when Israel prevailed (cf. vs. 28). In the verse at hand, Jacob is the object of *davar* whereas for Israel, it’s statutes and ordinances, *choq* and *mishpat* (cf. 119.60).

**148.8:** fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!

The five elements of this verse are more or less extreme forms of weather compared with the kind which is generally mild and more common. Despite the damage they can inflict, all five fulfill the Lord’s command, the common verb *hasah* (to do, to make; cf. 119.65) used with *davar*.

### Supplement to *Davar*

17.4: *davar* of your lips  
19.3: nor are there *davar*  
22.1: far...from the *davar* of my groaning  
33.4: *davar* of my lips  
33.6: *davar* of the Lord  
35.20: *davar* of deceit  
36.3: *davar* of his mouth  
41.8: a deadly *davar*

45.1: a goodly *davar*  
45.4: for the *davar* of truth  
50.17: cast my *davar* behind you  
52.4: *davar* that devour  
55.21: *davar* soften than oil  
56.4: whose *davar* I praise  
56.5: injure my *davar*  
56.10: God whose *davar* I praise  
59.12: *davar* of their lips  
64.3: bitter *davar*  
79.9: for (i.e., *davar*) the glory  
101.3: *davar* that is base  
105.8: *davar* that he commanded  
105.19: *davar* of the Lord  
105.27: *davar* of signs  
105.28: rebelled against his *davar* (literally, 'did not rebel')  
105.42: holy *davar*  
106.12: they believed his *davar*  
106.24: no faith in his *davar*  
107.20: sent forth his *davar*  
109.3: *davar* of hate  
112.5: *davar* with justice  
119.9: according to your *davar*  
119.16: will not forget your *davar*  
119.17: observe your *davar*  
119.25: revive me according to your *davar*  
119.28: strengthen me according to your *davar*  
119.42: reproaching me *davar* (literally) and trust in your *davar*  
119.43: *davar* of truth  
119.49: remember your *davar*  
119.57: to keep your *davar*  
119.65: according to your *davar*  
119.74: hoped in your *davar*  
119.81: hope in your *davar*  
119.89: *davar* is firmly fixed  
119.101: to keep your *davar*  
119.105: *davar* is a lamp  
119.107: according to your *davar*  
119.130: unfolding of your *davar*  
119.139: forget your *davar*  
119.147: hope in your *davar*  
119.160: *davar* is truth  
119.161: in awe of your *davar*

119.169: understanding according to your *davar*  
130.5: in his *davar* I hope  
137.3: *davar* of song (literally)  
141.4: to *davar* of evil (literally)  
145.5: splendor and *davar* (literally)  
147.15: *davar* runs swiftly  
147.18: sends forth his *davar*  
148.19: *davar* to Jacob  
148.8: fulfilling his *davar*

+ The End +