

## Psalm 23

King James Version (1611)	JPS (1985)	Robert Alter (2007)		
A Psalm of David. (1) The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.	A psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I lack nothing.	A David psalm. The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.	מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד ה' רֹעִי לֹא אֶחָסֵר:	1
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.	He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me to water in places of repose;	In grass meadows He makes me lie down, by quiet waters guides me.	בְּנְאוֹת דְּשָׁא יִרְבִּיצֵנִי עַל־מֵי מְנוּחֹת יְנַהֲלֵנִי:	2
He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.	He renews my life; He guides me in right paths as befits His name.	My life He brings back. He leads me on pathways of justice for His name's sake.	נִפְלְשִׁי יְשׁוּבָב יִנְהִי בְּמַעְגְּלֵי־צֶדֶק לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ:	3

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.	Though I walk through a valley of deepest darkness, I fear no harm, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff—they comfort me.	Though I walk in the vale of death's shadow, I fear no harm, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff - it is they that console me.	גַּם כִּי־אֵלֶךְ בְּגִיא צְלֻמוֹת לֹא־אִירָא רָע כִּי־אַתָּה עִמָּדִי שִׁבְטְךָ וּמִשְׁעֶנֶתְךָ יְהַמָּה יְנַחֲמֵנִי:	4
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.	You spread a table for me in full view of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my drink is abundant.	You set out a table before me in the face of my foes. You moisten my head with oil, my cup overflows.	תַּעֲרוֹךְ לִפְנֵי שִׁלְחָן נֶגֶד צִרְרֵי דִשְׁנֶנָּה בְּשֶׁמֶן רֹאשִׁי כּוֹסִי רוֹיֵה:	5
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.	Only goodness and steadfast love shall pursue me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for many long years.	Let but goodness and kindness pursue me All the days of my life. And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for many long days.	אֵךְ טוֹב וַחֲסֵד יִרְדְּפוּנִי כָּל־יְמֵי חַיִּי וְשִׁבְתִּי בְּבֵית־ה' לְאָרְךָ יָמִים:	6

## Deep Dive into Psalm 23

- 1) What is the narrative arc of the psalm? What story is the poet telling?
- 2) What shifts do you notice as the poem progresses?
- 3) What emotional experiences are present in the poem?
- 4) All translation is an act of interpretation. Notice where the translations diverge from one another. How are the translators interpreting the text differently in these places?
- 5) What resonates with you in the psalm?
- 6) What are you wrestling with in the text?
- 7) Psalm 23 is traditionally recited at funerals, during the yizkor memorial service, and during Shabbat. Why do we turn to this psalm in these times?

YOU ARE MY SHEPHERD, I am content  
You lead me to rest in the sweet grasses  
To lie down by the quiet waters  
And I am refreshed

You lead me down the right path  
The path that unwinds in the pattern of your name.

And even if I walk through the valley of the shadow  
of  
    death  
I will not fear  
For you are with me

Comforting me with your rod and your staff  
Showing me each step

You prepare a table for me  
In the midst of my adversity  
And moisten my head with oil

Surely my cup is overflowing  
And goodness and kindness will follow me  
All the days of my life  
And in the long days beyond  
I will always live within your house

## **Bobby McFerrin**

The Lord is my Shepherd, I have all I need,  
She makes me lie down in green meadows,  
Beside the still waters, She will lead.

She restores my soul, She rights my wrongs,  
She leads me in a path of good things,  
And fills my heart with songs.

Even though I walk, through a dark & dreary land,  
There is nothing that can shake me,  
She has said She won't forsake me,  
I'm in her hand.

She sets a table before me, in the presence of my  
foes,  
She anoints my head with oil,  
And my cup overflows.

Surely, surely goodness & kindness will follow me,  
All the days of my life,  
And I will live in her house,  
Forever, forever & ever.

Glory be to our Mother, & Daughter,  
And to the Holy of Holies,  
As it was in the beginning, is now & ever shall be,  
World, without end. Amen