



The Complete Psalms: The Book of Prayer Songs in a New Translation

Pamela Greenberg, Susannah Heschel

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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Pamela Greenberg "favors beauty before theology," in the words of Mary Karr, writing in the *Washington Post* of the unpublished manuscript of this book, "breathing new life into the ancient texts."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.



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Carolyn Walton:

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