

Ψ Psalms for Contemplation Translations by Max D. Ticktin

**Introduction by Deborah McCants
and Ruth Ticktin, Editors
Video**

**Invitation to an Intimate Reading
of Selections from 36 Psalms**

From the Introduction:

“Although the plagues of today may differ from those of the Psalmists’ days, Max suggests that while considering the historical use, we continue to sing the Psalms on the steps of our personal temples, in our own exile, or on our life pilgrimages.”

Thank you to:

Ruven Afanador for cover photograph; Rabbi Edward Feld for preface;

Dr. Lauren B. Strauss for review; Solomon McCants for back cover portrait.

Ezra McCants for the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUiatkejSeo>

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A Translation Excerpt

From Psalm 77 verses 3-7

*In troubled times I sought the Eternal. At night, my hand was outstretched
unceasingly. All of me refused to be eased.
I but bring Adonai to mind, and I groan. I muse and my spirit is enveloped.
You had a tight hold on my eyelids. I lay pulsating without words
I counted out the days of old. Considering the years long ago
I had my night-time song in my heart. I muse and my spirit goes exploring*

Praise

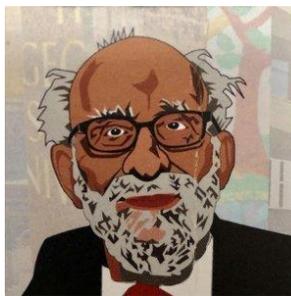
Max wants the reader to meet the psalms, to see the human being who is its author. Max reads the Psalms, tries to understand the inner meaning of the text, and then attempts to have the person who will read his “renderings” fully engage the human emotions behind the text. In this, Max is the consummate teacher, always conscious of what the student may be bringing to the page, and how difficult it is for students to master the biblical world view. Max is telling them, “The Bible is a work of human understanding. Seen in the right light, you will find that its concerns are the same as the workings of your own soul.”

Rabbi Edward Feld

Fortunately for the present group of translations, Rabbi Max Ticktin was both a great scholar of Jewish literature and a pursuer of peace, one who confronted challenging imagery in beloved texts and explored the layers of nuance in the Psalms’ lines – and in the ways they have been used. He also favored a democratic approach to translation, not shying away from using the translations of other scholars in his teaching, and incorporating later works of literature that drew on imagery and words from the original Psalms.

Lauren B. Strauss, PhD.

About the Author



Max Ticktin, 1922-2016 received BA from University of Pennsylvania; Rabbinic Ordination/MA/Honorary Doctorate from the Jewish Theological Seminary. Max was Hillel director at University of Wisconsin, University of Chicago, and assistant national director in Washington, DC. In his 2nd over thirty-year career, Max taught Hebrew literature and humanities at George Washington University.

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