

הַשְׁתַּחֲוֹו לַיהוָה בְּהַדְרַת קֹדֶשׁ,
חִילוֹ מִפְּנֵי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ.
אָמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ,
אֵף תִּבּוֹן תִּבַּל בַּל תִּמוּט,
יִדִין עַמִּים בְּמִישְׁרִים.

◀ יִשְׁמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ,

יִרְעוּ הַיָּם וּמְלֵאוֹ,

יַעֲלֹז שִׁדְי וְכָל אֲשֶׁר בּוֹ,
אֲז יִרְנְנוּ כָּל־עַצְי יַעַר.
לְפָנֵי יְהוָה כִּי בָא,
כִּי בָא לְשַׁפֵּט הָאָרֶץ,
יִשְׁפֹּט תִּבַּל בְּצֶדֶק,
וְעַמִּים בְּאִמּוֹנָתוֹ.

תהלים צו

THIS HOLY PLACE קֹדֶשׁ. Undoubtedly, the psalmist was referring to the Temple. But those who included this psalm in the Friday night liturgy could imagine that the service they were conducting welcomed the presence of God no less than the ancient Temple service had done. Indeed, although the synagogue is called “the little Temple,” the truest successor to the “holy place” of the Temple may well be Shabbat itself (holy time) and the community of worshippers striving to fulfill God’s injunction to be a “holy nation.”

COMES TO JUDGE THE EARTH לְשַׁפֵּט הָאָרֶץ כִּי בָא. Ultimately, the joy in God’s presence results from the reign of justice that God inaugurates.

DIVINE TRUTH בְּאִמּוֹנָתוֹ. Although the more literal biblical meaning of *emunah* may be “faithfulness,” later Judaism understood the word as “truth.” Thus, we respond to a *b'rakhah* with the word “Amen”—derived from the same root—acknowledging our agreement that the statement is true.

SONG OF SONGS 1:15–2:3 (*opposite page, far left*). The lovers enter into a dialogue, enchanting each other as desire and longing are building. For the rabbis, this poetic language captured their yearning for a more palpable connection with the non-corporeal God. Thus, the midrash (Song of Songs Rabbah 2:2) understands this metaphor of the delightful taste of fruit to be symbolic of Sinai, when Israel began to speak words of Torah, like fruit, sweet on our tongues.