

Sedeq and *Sedaqah* in the Book of Psalms

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for Ordination

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Graduate Rabbinical Program
New York, New York

Feb. 1, 2011

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Introduction

Hebrew is a gendered language. Some words appear in masculine and feminine renderings. An oft-appearing example in the Hebrew Bible is a pair of nouns created from the root *sdq*: *sedeq* and *sedaqah*. Are the words synonymous? Or do the masculine and feminine renderings create different shades of meaning?

Bible scholars who have attempted to distinguish between *sedeq* and *sedaqah* have reached polar opposite conclusions. Elizabeth Achtemeier writes, "The terms for righteousness are consistently *sedeq* (masculine) and *sedaqah* (feminine), *there being no significant difference in the employment of the masculine and feminine nouns*" [emphasis added].¹ Similarly, C.F. Whitley writes, "There appears to be no difference in meaning between the masculine and feminine form. Cf. N. H. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (London 1944), 72."²

By contrast, B. Johnson writes, "Although *sedeq* and *sedaqah* are in many instances interchangeable, they cannot really be treated as synonyms."³ And following a book-length

¹ Achtemeier, E., "Righteousness in the OT," IDB, Vol. IV, (tk: 1962), 80.

² Whitley, C. F., "Deutero-Isaiah's Interpretation of Sedeq," VT, Vol. 23, Fasc. 4 (Oct. 1972), 470.

³ Johnson, B., "Sedeq," TDOT, 256.

study, Ahuva Ho concludes that "Hebrew recognizes masculine and feminine forms of *sedeq* because they convey different meanings. It is definitely not a matter of caprice..."⁴

Acknowledging the scholarly divide, this study attempts a methodical examination of the words *sedeq* and *sedaqah* in one book of the Hebrew Bible, the Book of Psalms. No attempt is made to ascertain the historical development of these words' meaning. Biblical scholars have been unable to date most of the Psalms with any degree of accuracy.

Instead, my main focus is on the context of the words *sedeq* and *sedaqah* as they appear in individual Psalms. To determine context, I look at a variety of factors, for example, What is the main theme of the Psalm? Do the words relate to YHWH, people, or objects? Do they appear in parallelisms and, if so, are they synonymous, antithetical or synthetic parallelisms? What are other markers in the Psalm that might delimit or define the meaning of these words?

In the Book of Psalms, *sedeq* and *sedaqah* appear to carry 7 nuances of meaning: legitimate, straight (physically), redemptive (over illness, or evil, or ultimately redemptive, salvific), ethical/moral, legal/vindication/justice and generosity/bountifulness/beneficence.

These categories are, of course, somewhat arbitrary. Nor are they completely distinct from one another. Effective categorization is made more difficult because the meaning of many Psalms is quite obscure, both in language and theme. No tidy interpretations are possible.

Despite these difficulties, I attempt to assign each of the 84 instances of the words *sedeq* and *sedaqah* in the Book of Psalms to one of these seven categories. I will then total the categorizations of the word *sedeq* and compare it to the word *sedaqah*. The aim of this comparison is to discern nuances between the two, if indeed any such nuances exist.

⁴ Ho, A., *Sedeq and Sedaqah in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 143.

Background: *Sedeq* and *Sedakah* in the Book of Psalms

Ancient Hebrew words are freighted with meaning. The root *sdq* is particularly rich, thereby frustrating Bible scholars who attempt to define it precisely or otherwise limit its meaning. Metaphorically speaking, Franz Rosenthal must have been tearing out his hair and stamping his foot on the ground in frustration when he wrote, "For clarifying the semantic range of *sedaka*, the statement that *sedaka* means 'righteousness' is about as valuable as to say: *sedaka* means *sedaka*."⁵

Examining the etymology of the root *sdq* is not a particularly useful exercise for determining what it means. Most lexicons have defined it from the Arabic as 'straightness.' Yet the English language, which boasts a vastly broader vocabulary than biblical Hebrew, offers widely disparate meanings for the word 'straight.' For example, 'straight' can indicate physical measurement, that is, without curves; or it can delineate ethical attributes such as honesty, honorable, upright, virtuous; or it can carry the nuance of consecutive; or claims of legitimacy such as right or correct.

Similarly, in the Book of Psalms, the root *sdq* is employed in ways that demonstrate its many shades of meaning. Among the JPS translations of words derived from *sdq* are righteousness (Pss. 7:18, 97:2, 119:142), just (Ps. 17:1), beneficent (Ps. 35:24), vindication (Ps. 37:6), truthfully (Ps. 52:5), merit (Ps. 18:25) and victory (Ps. 65:6).

Bible scholars have worked hard and creatively to try to explain some of the seemingly inexplicable uses of the root *sdq* in Scripture. Roy Rosenberg, for one, proposed the existence of a god named *Sedeq* in pre-Israelite Jerusalem. The feature which distinguished the sun cult of Babylonia from that of other ancient peoples, he explains, is the association of justice and

⁵ Rosenthal, F., "Sedaka, Charity," HUCA 23, Part One (1950-1951), 412.

righteousness with the god. "Samas, the Sun God, was the judge of mankind who brought hidden crimes to light, punished the wrongdoers and righted the wrongs done to those who had been unjustly condemned."⁶

Rosenberg proposes that the attributes of this god *Sedeq*, justice and righteousness, were later subsumed into YHWH. In this way, he explains difficult to render passages like Psalm 4:6 זָדֶק וְיִשְׁתָּדֶק וְיִשְׁתָּדֶק וְיִשְׁתָּדֶק וְיִשְׁתָּדֶק וְיִשְׁתָּדֶק Sacrifice sacrifices of *Sedeq* and trust in YHWH, or Ps. 48:11 זָדֶק מִלְּאֵה יְמִינֶךָ *Sedeq* fills your right hand and Ps. 85:14 זָדֶק לְפָנָיו יִהְיֶה *Sedeq* walks before him.

C.F. Whitley disagrees with Rosenberg's proposal. *Sedeq* and *sedaqah* appear most often in the Book of Psalms and in the writings of the prophet Isaiah, but Whitley asserts that Deutero Isaiah would not have tolerated a foreign deity. "For this writer was so concerned with the monotheistic status of Yahweh that he could not conceive of the existence of another deity or entity independent of him."⁷ Rather, he writes "Sedeq is merged into Yahweh's personality and represents his being and that which is purposed and destined for him."⁸

Ahuva Ho also rejects Rosenberg's theory in her study of *sedeq* and *sedaqah* in the Hebrew Bible. Among other things, Ho points to the four attributes outlined in Ps. 85:11, חֶסֶד וְיִשְׁתָּדֶק וְיִשְׁתָּדֶק וְיִשְׁתָּדֶק וְיִשְׁתָּדֶק commenting, "That kindness, truth, "righteousness" and peace meet and kiss is merely a metaphor."⁹

I note this scholarly dispute over the god *Sedeq* without acknowledging or denying his (or her) existence. Rather, I attempt to find meaning for *sedeq* and *sedaqah* as commonly used words. I make one exception, offering an alternative rendering of *sedeq* as a proper name in Ps. 110:4 עַל-דִּבְרֵי מֶלֶךְ זָדֶק. Here, *sedeq* can be read as a noun in *smichut* form in a phrase translated

⁶ Rosenberg, R., "The God Sedeq," HUCA 36 (1965), 161.

⁷ Whitley, "Deutero-Isaiah's Interpretation of Sedeq," VT, Vol. 22, Fasc. 4 (Oct. 1972), 471.

⁸ Ibid., 472.

⁹ Ho, 45.

as "my just king." However, it is also commonly understood as the name of King Melchitzedek, the king of Salem, who brought bread and wine and blessed Abram after Abram's victory over the four kings (Gen. 14:18).

Survey of the Literature: Are *Sedeq* and *Sedaqah* Synonyms?

Among scholars generally, some consider *sedeq* and *sedaqah* synonyms; others do not. Those who do make distinctions, however, do not all agree on how to define those distinctions. Nor are some of them able to clearly articulate the nuances they profess to see.

In the first camp is Elizabeth Achtemeier, who admits no distinction in meaning between *sedeq* and *sedaqah*. Instead, she understands all words derived from the root *sdq* very specifically as delineating responsibilities arising between two or more parties based on their relationship. Moreover, she writes very confidently about what, in her estimation, the words *sedeq* and *sedaqah* in the Hebrew Bible do not mean:

"The concept deserves some negative definitions. In the OT, it is not behavior in accordance with an ethical, legal, psychological, religious or spiritual norm. It is not conduct which is dictated by either human or divine nature, no matter how undefiled. It is not an action appropriate to the attainment of a specific goal. It is not an impartial ministry to one's fellow men. It is not equivalent to giving every man his just due. Rather, righteousness is in the OT the fulfillment of the demands of a relationship, whether that relationship be with men or with God."¹⁰

The writers of BDB disagree with Achtemeier's conclusions. The lexicon defines *sedeq* and *sedaqah* widely and broadly, recognizing most of the nuances that she rejects. *Sedeq* is defined variously as "what is right, just, normal; rightness, and justness, of weights and measures," along with righteousness in government, in a case or a cause; rightness, in speech; righteousness as ethically right; righteousness as vindicated; and as deliverance, victory,

¹⁰ Achtemeier, 80.

prosperity.¹¹ With much overlap, but not completely, BDB defines *sedaqah* as righteousness, in government, God's attribute as sovereign; righteousness in a cause or case; righteousness as truthfulness, ethically right, vindicated, justification, salvation etc.¹²

The BDB definition relies heavily on the English word 'righteous,' a problematic word. The Random House Dictionary of the English Language offers this definition: 'righteous' means characterized by uprightness or morality; morally right or justifiable; virtuous. The dictionary offers good and honest as synonyms, and evil, wicked as antonyms. This English word is construed much more narrowly than the biblical Hebrew words *sedeq* and *sedaqah*, which, as demonstrated both by BDB and the results of this research, are much wider in scope.

Like Achtemeier, Sam Williams fails to recognize any distinctions between *sedeq* and *sedaqah*. Writing on the 'Righteousness of God' in Romans, Williams examines passages in the Books of Isaiah and Psalms in which the singular noun *sedaqah* designates the righteousness of Yahweh. In his research, he uses *sedeq* and *sedaqah* interchangeably, informing his readers that "Such passages as these and others in which the adjective *sadiq* or the noun *sedeq* refers directly to Yahweh would yield generally the same conclusions as *sedaqah*."¹³

By contrast, some scholars do attempt to distinguish nuances of meaning between *sedeq* and *sedaqah*. Among them is B. Johnson, who notes that "*sedeq* invokes the notion of correctness and order, while *sedaqah* emphasizes action and activity rather than condition. In this sense, *sedaqah* represents *sedeq* functionally."¹⁴ He also writes that *sedeq* is often associated with God, whereas *sedaqah* is often associated with movement; *sedeq* is clearly associated with

¹¹ BDB, 841-842.

¹² BDB, 842

¹³ Williams, S., "The 'Righteousness of God' in Romans," JBL 99/2 (1980), 260.

¹⁴ Johnson, 256.

heaven and rain, *sedaqah* more with the earth and its fertility.¹⁵ Moreover, Yahweh is associated equally with both terms. "He is not only the guarantor of the principle of *sedeq*, he also actively intervenes and implements *sedaqah*."¹⁶ The distinction between condition and action seems clear. But 'the notion of correctness and order' seems a little vague when applied to the word *sedeq* in Ps. 18:21 יְגַמְלֵנִי יְהוָה בְּצִדְקָה and Ps. 132:9 כְּתִיבֵנִי יְלִבְשׁוּ צִדְקָה, among others.

Moshe Weinfeld, in his study of social justice in the ancient near East, makes a similar distinction between condition and action when he defines *sedeq* and *sedaqah*. He writes:

In general, *sedeq* refers to the abstract principle of righteousness, while *sedaqah* refers to the concrete act. *Sedeq* as an abstract ideal is thus personified... By contrast, *sedaqah* is bound up with actions... and later it became the Hebrew word for giving alms to the poor."¹⁷

Ahuva Ho takes an entirely different tack. In her study, she concludes that *sedeq* is a general term for 'justice,' 'righteousness' and 'blessing,' while *sedaqah* is broader in meaning and more specific. *Sedaqah* is a state of being, human and divine, she writes; it is a set of behavior and actions.¹⁸ Specifically in the Book of Psalms, she writes, *sedeq* is "the righteousness of God and a protective element mainly in legal matters."¹⁹ In contrast, *sedaqah* "is the glorious, wondrous acts of God in nature, in the universe, and to Israel and the individual. This stems from His goodness. It is also the *blessed protective sphere* [sic.] that is for those who do righteous acts. It is cause and effect. It is a worldly blessing."²⁰

I do not find these distinctions clear, particularly Ho's equating "a state of being" with "a set of behavior and actions." It is worth noting that her definition directly conflicts with that of

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 257.

¹⁷ Weinfeld, 34.

¹⁸ Ho, 143.

¹⁹ Ho, 144.

²⁰ Ibid.

Johnson, who avers that *sedeq* implies condition, presumably what Ho calls "a state of being", while Johnson writes that *sedaqah* implies action and activity, which Ho says is synonymous with "a state of being." Nor is Ho's phrase "broader in meaning and more specific" easy to grasp.

Other scholars, in commentaries on the Book of Psalms, attempt to draw distinctions between the meanings of *sedeq* and *sedaqah*. For example, Samson Raphael Hirsch renders Ps. 71:2 בְּצִדְקָתְךָ תַצִּילֵנִי וְתַפְלִטֵנִי "Thou wilt deliver me in Thy merciful justice" and uses the same rendering for words derived from *sdq* in all subsequent verses of the Psalm. He comments:

"*Sedaqah* when used with reference to God, denotes *sedeq* tempered by mercy, mercy proving itself in righteous judgment. It is that loving justice which is demonstrated particularly in the case of a person who, in accordance with the dictates of strict *sedeq* would have deserved to perish, but, instead, is given an opportunity to mend his ways" (486).

However, Hirsch distinguishes *sedeq* and *sedaqah* differently in his commentary on Ps. 72. He renders Ps. 72:2 יִדְּיוֹ עֲמֶךָ בְּצִדְקָה וְעֲנִיֶיךָ בְּמִשְׁפָּט: "May he judge thy people in accordance with justice and Thy poor according to lawful order." He translates the next verse יִשְׁאֹז הָרִים וְשָׁלוֹם לָעָם "and the hills, through [sense of] duty." Hirsch writes that in this verse, and the following verse, "we have mention of two basic ideals, namely *sedeq* and *sedaqah*. Justice and duty -- these are the basic pillars upon which the Jewish state is founded" (497).

In his commentary on Psalm 85, the medieval commentator Rashi offers a third definition of *sedaqah*. The Hebrew of Ps. 85:14 is difficult to translate. יִצְדֵּק לְפָנָיו יְהוָה וְיִשָּׂם לְדָרוֹךְ פָּעֻמֵּיוֹ. According to Rashi's reading, "He shall make His footsteps for a way to be followed by His children," that is, God marks out a path for Israel to walk that leads to salvation and happiness. In his translation of Rashi, Mayer Gruber adds that the interpretation of Ps. 85:14 as a prayer of petition requires that *sedeq* not be rendered 'justice' but 'charity, kindness,' which Gruber writes, "is the normal meaning of the feminine form *sedaqah* in rabbinic Hebrew" (555). (See below on

Rabbinic versus Biblical exegesis.). According to these commentaries, *sedaqah* variously means justice tempered with mercy, duty and charity, three quite distinct ideas.

The pairing of צדקה וּמִשְׁפָּט 'justice' and 'righteousness' deserves special mention. Both terms are part of the vocabulary of a formal treaty covenant parlance in the ancient Near East. "While... these roots can be interpreted to have more than one meaning or point of reference,...[they] have been shown by various scholars and textual evidence to have strong grounding in the near Eastern and Biblical treaty covenant tradition and practice."²¹

The phrase became the biblical hendiadys commonly used to express the concept of social justice. In Weinfeld's study, he examines צדקה וּמִשְׁפָּט which he translates as "righteousness and justice."²² The phrase appears frequently in the Book of Psalms, among other places, in Pss. 9:9, 33:5 and 58:2. Weinfeld notes that in his survey of verses that refer to *sedeq* and *sedaqah* in the prophetic literature and the Psalms:

"We find that the meaning of the concept is not confined to the judicial process. On the contrary, the concept refers primarily to the improvement of the conditions of the poor, which is undoubtedly accomplished through regulations issued by the King and his officials, and not by offering legal assistance to the poor man in his litigation with his oppressor."²³

He concludes that the interpretation of "justice and righteousness" is broader than its juridical sense of the expression. Rather, it includes elements of mercy or fairness. He writes, "The judge, although subject to legal rules, do not overlook considerations of fairness and equity, does bringing about 'true judgment'" (44). This distinction is similar to that which Hirsch defines in his commentary on Ps. 71:2, justice tempered with mercy.

²¹ Seilhamer, F., "The Role of Covenant in the Mission and Message of Amos." *A Light unto My Path: Old Testament Studies in Honor of Jacob M. Myers*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974).

²² Weinfeld, 25.

²³ Ibid. 35.

As this brief survey illustrates, Bible scholars disagree whether differences exist in the meaning of the words *sedeq* and *sedaqah*, generally in Scripture and specifically in the Book of Psalms. Moreover, scholars who do recognize shades of meaning between the two words do not agree how to understand and interpret those nuances.

Study Parameters

The Book of Psalms is difficult in many ways. Scholars lack criteria by which to create a dependable chronology of the Psalter; neither an historical analysis nor a linguistic analysis has been conclusive.²⁴ The entire collection, consensus holds, was written over many centuries. "It is probably fair to say that the Book of Psalms has an ancient foundation, with additions made in the period of the second Temple."²⁵ Nor has much scholarly process been made in delineating the redaction of the Psalter, which difficulty "lies in the evident complexity of the process of its composition."²⁶

Classification of the Psalms into genres, such as Psalms of lament or praise, or wisdom or Royal Psalms is not easy to do: "In the case of many Psalms a clear-cut categorization into one of these genres is impossible because they are composites of mixed genres."²⁷ Part of this problem stems from the fact that the language of Psalms is difficult, as might be expected in a composite work spanning many centuries.²⁸ See also Whybray, "... no two scholars have agreed about which Psalms belong to this category [wisdom Psalms], and it has not even been possible to establish agreed upon criteria for their identification."²⁹

A wide variety of methods has been used to interpret the Psalms and plumb their meaning. Interpreters have taken an historical-biographical approach, applied form criticism (H. Gunkel), the "cultic method" (S. Mowinckel), and an approach called "stylistic criticism," which reads each Psalm as a unique text. This sampling of approaches, Craig Broyles reminds us, "is not meant to suggest that they are contradictory, nor that they are mutually exclusive. It does

²⁴ Buitenweiser, 1, 18-25; Hirsch, xxi; Briggs, xxii; Dahood, xxxi

²⁵ Greenstein, E., "Psalms," EJ, 2nd Edition, Vol. 16, 668.

²⁶ Whybray, 35.

²⁷ Westermann, 27.

²⁸ Ibid., 16.

²⁹ Whybray, 15.

make clear, however, that those texts that they endeavor to interpret are multidimensional."³⁰ I think Broyles' comment is a vast understatement. The commentaries consulted in the course of this study illustrate keenly the lack of scholarly agreement on the meaning of individual Psalms.

Much of this interpretative difficulty arises from the fact that Psalms are poems. Like all poetry, Psalms use indeterminate means of expression. Unlike everyday prose, which tries to describe things as precisely as possible, "... it is the way of poetry to circumvent the general reality and only state the essential... the author is content to speak in all kinds of allusions and images."³¹ The indeterminacy of meaning makes interpretation very challenging, whether of the theme of a Psalm generally or the precise definition of individual words in a particular Psalm. To complicate matters, Hebrew poetry is largely paratactical, meaning it is often up to the interpreter to infer the logical connections within the poem.³²

Grammatically, the Book of Psalms is loosely governed by the principle of "parallelism," often found in classical Hebrew biblical verse.³³ Biblical poetry, Dahood writes, is characterized by "fixed pairs of synonyms or related words appearing in parallelism."³⁴ Three major types of parallelism have been identified. Synonymous parallelism repeats an idea or a phrase in a single verse or in two verses. This is seen very clearly in certain Psalms. For example, in Ps.50:61, the phrase וַיִּגִּדוּ שְׁמִים צִדְקוֹ seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of justice or vindication, as supported by the phrase that follows, כִּי־אֱלֹהִים שֹׁפֵט הוּא.

However, as several Psalms commentators demonstrate, direct parallels in a particular verse do not necessarily lead to identical translations or understandings. For example, Rozenberg

³⁰ Broyles, 13.

³¹ Gunkel, 1.

³² Broyles, 28.

³³ Westermann. 22, 23; Briggs xxxiv; Dahood, xxxiii.

³⁴ Dahood, xxxiii.

translates יִשְׂעוּ בְרָכָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה וְצִדְקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Ps. 24:5): "And just reward from God, his deliverer" (137). But Dahood renders "generous treatment from his saving God," citing Zorell, who writes, "From the benevolent justice of God for generous gifts that are given to the just," citing a list of nouns with which צִדְקָה is found in parallelism, including Psalm 72:3 (151). Justice? Generosity? The two are not synonymous; in fact, generosity can be undeserved. Moreover, do these attributes equate with blessing? Why choose one translation over another in this verse?

In antithetical parallelism, two ideas or phrases stand in contrast to one another. The difficulty can lie in determining which phrases to contrast. For example, in Ps. 45:8, אֶרְבֶּתְּ צִדְקָה וְתִשְׁנֶא רִשְׁעִי, the word צִדְקָה seems most aptly viewed as denoting justice or vindication, following the word מִיִּשָּׁר in the preceding verse: יִשְׁבֹּט מִיִּשָּׁר שִׁבְטֵי מַלְכוּתֶךָ: (Ps. 45:7). However, viewing צִדְקָה as a counterpoint to רִשְׁעִי in the same verse suggests a very different sense of *sedeq* as ethically or morally correct, good versus evil.

In synthetic parallelism, successive lines are structured to produce a cumulative effect. While this principle can help illuminate certain words or phrases, its application sometimes is unclear. For example, in Ps. 48:11, the phrase צִדְקָה מִלֵּאָה יְמִינֶךָ can be construed to use *sedeq* in its sense of vindication or justice because the Psalm's theme is the Psalmist's vindication from enemies (e.g., Ps. 48:6). However, the discrete section on praise (Ps. 48:10-12) uses three words in parallel that may be seen as separate attributes of YHWH that individually are worthy of praise: faithful care or compassion חַסְדְּךָ (48:10), beneficence צִדְקָה (48:11) and judgments מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ: (48:12).

And in Ps. 85:11 וְשָׁלוֹם וְצִדְקָה וְנֶאֱמַר נִפְגְּשׁוּ צִדְקָה וְשָׁלוֹם the word *sedeq* seems to suggest ethics and morality because it appears in a list of ethical and moral attributes: וְשָׁלוֹם חַסְדֵּי-וְאֱמֶת. In the

following line, *sedeq* appears in parallel with truth, another moral attribute אֱמֶת מֵאֲרֶץ תִּצְמַח וְצֶדֶק (Ps. 85:12). In both verses, however, an equally valid argument can be made for translating *sedeq* as justice, which would then become another example in a long list of different types of moral attributes.

Similarly, in Ps. 89:15 צֶדֶק וּמִשְׁפָּט מְכוֹן כְּסֵאָךְ תִּסְדֹּךְ וְאֱמֶת יִקְדְּמוּ פְנֶיךָ, the word *sedeq* is parallel with *mishpat*, צֶדֶק וּמִשְׁפָּט suggesting a legal usage of the word. But *sedeq* might be construed in its ethical and moral sense, one more example in a list of similar attributes, as in Ps. 85:11. This reading would mirror the second half of the verse, which contains two more attributes of YHWH that appear in synonymous parallel but are not identical: תִּסְדֹּךְ וְאֱמֶת.

Moreover, Biblical exegesis is very different from rabbinic exegesis. The idea of parallelism occupied a very specific place in the Rabbinic mind, where every word of a text holds meaning. Therefore, synonyms and repetitions suggest a homiletical interpretation. Thus in Ps. 9:9 וְהוּא יִשְׁפֹּט-תִּבְלָל בְּצֶדֶק יִדְּיוֹ לְאֵמִים בְּמִישָׁרִים Malbim contrasts *sedeq*, strict judgment without leniency, with *mesharim*, which takes into account compassion (Rozenberg, 45).

Among the Sages, Radak takes a different approach, explaining parallelisms using formulas like ‘he repeats the meaning with different words’ or ‘the verse gives the same meaning twice.’ Joshua Baker and Ernest Nicholson, who edited and translated David Kimchi’s commentary on Psalms 120 to 150, remark, "All this is obviously a close approximation to the modern treatment of parallelism, but whether he [Kimchi] regarded the parallelism structure as a form of poetry is really beside the point, for in practice the result is in either case the same."³⁵

³⁵ Baker, xxvi.

In sum, Claude Westermann writes, "...the Psalms belong to a world which is no longer our world, and we will never fully understand or appreciate much of what is in them."³⁶

Against this background of scholarly difficulties and disagreements, I attempt a modest study examining the nuances of meaning of the words *sedeq* and *sedaqah* in the Book of Psalms.

As Nehama Leibowitz reminds us, interpretation is a dangerous thing:

One takes the poem, which is a living entity, and begins to dissect it with a surgeon's scalpel. Often one can indeed say about the dissection of poetry that 'the operation succeeded, but the patient died.' I hope that in my dissections, I have been delivered from this danger."³⁷

So do I.

³⁶ Westermann, 11.

³⁷ Leibowitz, 2.

Methodology

This study assigns each of the 84 instances of *sedeq* (50 occurrences) and *sedaqah* (34 occurrences) in the Book of Psalms to one of seven categories, depending on its context and usage in the individual Psalm. These categories are defined below, following the definitions in The Random House Dictionary of the English Language:

1. Legitimate: according to established rules, principles or standards
2. Physical: without bend, angle, curve (= straight).
3. Redemptive: ultimate salvation, saving, delivery from penalty of sin.
4. Redemptive: protecting from harm or loss, such as evil, or illness; victory.
5. Ethical: moral, according to rules or standards for right conduct
6. Legal/vindication/justice: justify, clear of accusation or suspicion.
7. Beneficence: generosity, bountifulness, doing of good, active kindness or charity.

These categories are nowhere near as neat and precise as the definitions suggest. Questions abound. For example, is an instance of *sdq* an illustration of YHWH's beneficence (Category 7), manifest in the Psalmist's vindication (Category 6)? Or in the redemption of the Psalmist (Category 4)? If so, what is the best way to analyze the ideas of beneficence, vindication and redemption and choose one appropriate category?

Similarly, can vindication (Category 6) be the just result of ethical conduct (Category 5)? Again, if so, how are the ideas – vindication, justice, ethics - best separated? Similarly, redemption can flow from beneficence or vindication. And what might be understood as generous might simply be a deserved or just reward for upright, ethical or moral behavior. Particularly in the Book of Psalms, the indeterminate meaning of the overarching themes and the words of individual Psalms makes decisive classification into one of these categories an educated guess at best.

Moreover, as commentary mentioned previously demonstrates, scholars have interpreted instances of *sedeq* and *sedaqah* in ways that span two or even three categories. For example, look at *sedaqah* in Ps. 51:16, תִּרְנֶנָּה לְשׁוֹנֵי צִדְקָתְךָ. Cohen writes that righteousness constitutes “God's faithful adherence to His promise to forgive the truly penitent” (Category 3; 163). Contrast Rozenberg, who translates, “joyfully acclaimed Your justice,” explaining “Once the Psalmist knows he is exonerated, he will burst forth with songs of praises and thanks, lauding God as a righteous judge” (Category 6; 318). Dahood “... loudly proclaiming Your goodness” (Category 7; 2). Briggs renders “... will declare Thy praise” (Category unclear; 4).

Look too, at the admittedly difficult phrase זִבְחֵי צֶדֶק (Ps. 4:6): sacrifices of righteousness or legitimate sacrifices. (See also Ps. 51:21: זִבְחֵי צֶדֶק.) The Targum understands this phrase in the prophetic spirit: Live righteously and your conduct will be acceptable as an offering (S. Freehof, 8). See also S. R. Hirsch, “And then bring unto God the sacrifices of a dutiful and righteous life” (22). According to Ibn Ezra, offering sacrifices of righteousness means “forsake vanity and give thanks to God for favoring you” (N. Strickman, 44). According to these commentators, the word *sedeq* would be classified in Category 5, reflecting its nuance of morality and ethics.

However, Rashi comments, “Make your deeds just so that thereby you will be like those who present sacrifices”; Gruber adds, “i.e., to say, the practice of justice is a form of worship; for the same ideas see Mic. 6:6-8” (187). According to these commentators, the word *sedeq* would be classified in Category 6, reflecting its nuance of justice.

By contrast, Dahood translates “legitimate sacrifices” commenting, “as opposed to sacrifices to idols.” Weiser translates, “right sacrifices” (119). According to these commentators, the word *sedeq* would be classified in Category 1, reflecting its nuance of legitimacy.

Rozenberg (who translates “sincere offerings”) explicitly acknowledges one difficulty. He writes, "*Sedeq* could be understood as referring to the sacrifice or sacrificer. In the first sense the meaning would be that the sacrifice must be one that was properly prescribed and prepared [in other words, Category 1, legitimate sacrifices]. In the second sense, the reference is to the attitude of the person who makes the sacrifice, whose intention must be sincere in the act of worship” (19) [in other words, Category 5, ethical and moral behavior].

The commentators disagree on another difficult phrase, *בְּמַעְגְּלֵי־יָדָק* (Ps. 23:3), which they understand variously as paths of righteousness, or justice, or simply straight paths, either ethically, physically or both. For example, Cohen translates “straight paths” but picks up a nuance of ethical rightness in his comment, "the right way, not an easy way" (67); so does Freehof, who notes a parallel meaning of *sedeq* as *yashar*, a word that connotes literal as well as ethical or moral straightness (59). These commentators’ readings fit Category 5, moral and ethical.

By contrast, Hirsch translates *בְּמַעְגְּלֵי־יָדָק* "paths of justice," noting that they are "ways of life circumscribed by law, which keep within the bounds of law and order. Anything outside that ‘circle’ is wrong, transgressing the balance of righteousness" (171). This reading fits Category 6, justice or vindication.

Rozenberg (133) agrees with Rashi, who comments, "in straight paths so that I should not fall into the hands of my enemies" (Gruber, 263); Gruber adding that Rashi's interpretation is more congruent with the context, in verses two and four, which speaks of God's guiding the physical rather than the moral paths of the Psalmist (265). Ibn Ezra similarly uses a literal meaning "He does not lead me upon the high mountains and valleys" (Strickman, 275). These readings fit Category 2, physically straight.

Briggs picks up both meanings, understanding the ethical element as implicit in the phrase. He renders "right tracks," noting "those that lead directly and safely to the place of destination... The moral and religious reference is involved in the whole figure, and it is not to be gained by departing from it in the rendering "righteousness"..." (209). While many of these opposing interpretations make sense logical, I have chosen to categorize *sedeq* in the phrase בְּמִעֲגָלֵי־צֶדֶק in Category 2, physical straightness, as a metaphor for ethical or moral fitness.

Moreover, in their commentaries scholars explicitly define *sedeq* in a variety of ways. Some say *sedeq* means salvation. For example, commenting on כְּתֹנִיֹתָיִם יִלְבָּשׁוּ־צֶדֶק (Ps. 132:9) Briggs translates, "Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness," commenting "so 2 Ch. 6:41 and v. 16, except that these passages use 'salvation' of which indeed righteousness is a common syn." (470-471). Similarly, Weiser translates הִגִּידוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם צֶדֶקוֹ "The heavens declared His righteousness" (Ps. 97:6), adding "The Hebrew term *sedeq* has a wider meaning than the translation: it comprises God's entire plan of salvation, its order and its contents, and could, in fact, be translated here directly by the word 'salvation.'"

Others equate *sedeq* with vindication. Briggs translates וְדִיעַ יְהוָה יְשׁוּעָתוֹ לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם גִּלְיָה צֶדֶקָתוֹ (Ps. 98:2) "His righteousness," commenting "the vindictory, practical exhibition of His righteousness on behalf of the oppressed, as usual in Hebrew literature" (307).

Further confusion arises in identifying to what the word *sdq* connects in a verse. For example, Briggs translates כִּי־צִדִּיק יְהוָה צִדְקוֹת אֱהָב (Ps. 11:7) "righteous acts," adding "... which may be interpreted either of righteous acts of the righteous man, as Isaiah 64:5, or of the righteous acts which Yahweh Himself loves to do" (92).

I too have encountered difficulties in classifying *sdq* in particular verses. For example, in Ps. 11:7, noted above, the phrase צִדְקוֹת אֱהָב seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of justice (Category 6),

particularly because of the parallel to ‘equity’ ישר (11:2, 7). Thematically, the Psalmist is asking for redemption from the wicked (11:2) and asks that the wicked be punished (11:6); that is, the Psalmist asks for vindication. However, one could also argue that vindication is deserved because of the Psalmist’s moral and ethical rightness (Category 5), suggested by the antithetical usage of רשע (11:2, 5).

To illustrate further, redemption can be one example of YHWH’s beneficence among many of YHWH’s generosity. In Psalm 71, the Psalmist seeks deliverance or salvation. Therefore, Ps. 71:2 seems to use בְּצִדְקָתְךָ in its sense of redemption (Category 4), particularly because of the parallels in the verse to the phrase תַּצִּילֵנִי וְתַפְלֹטֵנִי וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנִי. Thematically, the Psalmist is asking to be saved. See also Ps. 71:15 אֶפְיֹן יִסְפָּר צִדְקָתְךָ כָּל־הַיּוֹם תְּשׁוּעָתְךָ This ability to save is the particular attribute of YHWH upon which the Psalmist calls in these two verses. Yet once the Psalmist is delivered from evil, he presumably uses a much more expansive definition *sedaqah*, enumerating the beneficence (Category 7) of YHWH: וְצִדְקָתְךָ אֱלֹהִים עַד־מָרוֹם (Ps. 71:16), אֶזְכִּיר צִדְקָתְךָ לְבָדָּךְ (Ps. 71:19), גַּם־לְשׁוֹנִי כָּל־הַיּוֹם תְּהַלֵּל צִדְקָתְךָ (Ps. 71:24).

More difficulties arise in determining cause and effect. Ps. 98:2 reads הוֹדִיעַ יְהוָה יְשׁוּעָתוֹ לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם גָּלָה צִדְקָתוֹ [righteousness] (320). By contrast, Rozenberg renders צִדְקָתוֹ "triumph" in parallel with יְשׁוּעָתוֹ "victory," noting that the Psalmist appears to be referring to an historical event" (613). Dahood reads “vindication,” adding "... the precise nuance of צִדְקָתוֹ, often translated ‘his justice’...” (365). Briggs agrees. He renders "His righteousness," commenting "the vindictory, practical exhibition of His righteousness" (307).

The same interpretation problems surface in the next Psalm. מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה בִּינְעָקְבוֹ אֱתָה עָשִׂיתָ. (Ps. 99:4) Dahood translates וְצִדְקָה “kindness” (24), (Category 7). By contrast, Briggs renders

"his righteousness, which latter, here, as usual, must be His vindictory, redemptive righteousness." (Category 6).

Similarly, in certain cases I could not distinguish between Categories 6 and 7. Therefore I created a separate category for four verses in which the word *sedaqah* appears in three Psalms. Pss. 24:5, 106:3, and 143:1, 11.

The phrase in Ps. 24:5 reads: יֵשׁוּא בְּרִכָּה מֵאֵת יְהוָה וְצִדְקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי יֵשׁוּעוֹ. Briggs renders "righteousness," explaining "... not in the sense of alms... or in the sense of that which is ethically right, which could hardly be bestowed upon him; but in the meaning urged by the phrase *God of his salvation*, saving righteousness, righteousness of vindication, as usual..." (216). But Dahood renders "generous treatment from his saving God" (151).

In my analysis, the phrase יֵשׁוּעוֹ מֵאֱלֹהֵי יֵשׁוּעוֹ "just reward," seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of justice or vindication (Category 6), particularly because of the parallel to יֵשׁוּא בְּרִכָּה מֵאֵת יְהוָה. The Psalmist is rightly rewarded with blessing and a just reward; these are fully deserved because of the moral behavior outlined previously in the Psalm: נָקִי כַפִּים וְבֵרֶךְ לֵב אֱשֶׁר לֹא-נִשְׂא לַשָּׁוְא (Ps. 24:4). However, Dahood's rendering of "generous treatment" – Category 7 – is persuasive and illustrative of the difficulty of making these categorizations. This rendering works well with the parallelism; the question is cause and effect: is the blessing a just reward due to the Psalmist, or is the generosity of YHWH a reward for the Psalmist separate from the blessing?

Again, in Ps. 106:3 the word צִדְקָה in the phrase עֲשֵׂה צִדְקָה בְּכָל-עֵת seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of justice or vindication because of the parallel to the word וּמִשְׁפָּט (Category 6). However, equally plausible is a more expansive reading that suggests the nuance of beneficence or generosity (Category 7), in which justice might logically be subsumed.

And in Ps. 143:1, as in Ps. 119:40, the word *בצדקה* in the phrase *בצדקה יצוני* seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of legality (Category 6), given the parallel to *לפקדוני*; However, a case might be made that the Psalmist, who is an acknowledged sinner, asks for undeserved redemption, following Cohen and Weiser. This would suggest a nuance of beneficence or generosity (Category 7), following Dahood and Rozenberg. A similar analysis applies to Ps. 143:11.

Summary

The methodology I attempt to apply in this study is not without its flaws. Any methodology devised to interpret individual words in the Book of Psalms would be imperfect, given the difficulties inherent in the texts themselves.

To reiterate, the Book of Psalms lacks a dependable chronology; neither historical nor linguistic analyses have been conclusive. Little scholarly progress has been made in delineating redaction of the Psalter, or in interpreting the meanings of individual Psalms. Scholars have interpreted individual Psalms in drastically different ways, both as to theme and content.

Against this unsettled background, I have created this methodology to test for shades of meaning in the words *sedeq* and *sedaqah*. The indeterminate meaning of the overarching themes and the words of individual Psalms makes decisive classification into one of these categories an educated guess at best. Despite this, and while admitting that all methodologies contain imperfections, I think the results of this analysis are striking enough to create food for scholarly thought.

Analysis: *Sedeq* in the Book of Psalms

Sedeq in Psalms 4, 7, 9

Psalm 4

בְּקוֹרְאִי עֲנֵנִי | אֱלֹהֵי צְדִיקִי בַּצָּר הִרְחַבְתָּ לִּי חֲזִנִי וּשְׁמַע תְּפִלָּתִי: ^{WTT} Psalm 4:2

When I call out, answer me, God of my vindication; in troubles (narrowness), you widened (my path) for me; be gracious to me, and hear my prayer.

Answer me when I call O God my vindicator! You freed me from distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer (JPS).

וְזָבַחַו זְבַח־צֶדֶק וּבִטְחוֹ אֶל־יְהוָה: ^{WTT} Psalm 4:6

Offer (Sacrifice righteous) legitimate sacrifices and trust in YHWH.

Offer sacrifices in righteousness and trust in the Lord (JPS).

Context: Psalm 4 is a psalm of praise for God/ YHWH couched in a lament. The Psalmist calls upon God/ YHWH for salvation (4:2). The psalm may be seen as a communal lament and a call for rainfall in the land (4:7) (Dahood, 23). Most of the psalm enumerates the glories of God/ YHWH (4:3-9). Freehof reads the psalm as stressing the personal confidence and peace of heart of those who trust in God (17). *Sedeq* appears twice in Psalm 4. Ps. 4:2 connects *sedeq* to God, as an attribute of God. Four lines later, *sedeq* refers to sacrifices that must be offered to YHWH (Ps. 4:6).

Sperling views *sedeq* primarily as a judicial term. Worshipers viewed themselves as defendants in court who protested their innocence and called on God to vindicate them. See also Cohen: "The Hebrew word for 'innocent' is the same as 'righteous' (*tzaddik*). So here the phrase is best translated 'God is my vindication.' He prays to Him to prove him in the right" (8).

Dahood similarly comments, "This connotation of *sedeq* is present in Psalms 17:1, 35:27... If the Psalmist's prayer goes unheeded, his reputation as a *hasid* will suffer; hence he is eager to be

vindicated and purposefully invokes God with the epithet, 'God of my vindication.' In Ps 17:1, where the epithet occurs anew, the vindication of the poet consists in being acquitted of false accusations" (23).

See also Rozenberg, who translates "God who upholds my cause," commenting, "The thought here is that God supports him in his cause; justifies him when he is innocent" (18). Ibn Ezra reads "God of righteousness," which means "God who reveals my righteousness"; Strickman comments, "Ibn Ezra speaks of God as being the first cause and revealing David's righteousness because he believed that God does not act directly in human affairs" (40). Briggs translates "God of my right," adding "... the God who vindicates his cause against his adversaries and establishes his right" (30).

Sacrifices of righteousness (Ps. 4:6). See also Ps. 51:21: אֵז תִּתְּנֵנִי זִבְחֵי צֶדֶק. The Targum understands this phrase in the prophetic spirit: Live righteously and your conduct will be acceptable as an offering (Freehof, 8). See also Hirsch, "And then bring unto God the sacrifices of a dutiful and righteous life" (22). According to Ibn Ezra, offering sacrifices of righteousness means "forsake vanity and give thanks to God for favoring you" (Strickman, 44). Rashi comments, "Make your deeds just so that thereby you will be like those who present sacrifices"; Gruber adds, "i.e., to say, the practice of justice is a form of worship; for the same ideas see Mic. 6:6-8" (187).

By contrast, Dahood translates "legitimate sacrifices" commenting, "as opposed to sacrifices to idols." Weiser translates, "right sacrifices" (119); Rozenberg, "sincere offerings" (17). Rozenberg writes, "*Sedeq* could be understood as referring to the sacrifice or sacrificer. In the first sense the meaning would be that the sacrifice must be one that was properly prescribed

and prepared. In the second sense, the reference is to the attitude of the person who makes the sacrifice, whose intention must be sincere in the act of worship” (19).

Semantic field: *Sedeq* is a noun that appears in *simchut* form: אֱלֹהֵי צְדִיקִי literally, God of my vindication, with *sedeq* modified by a first-person singular possessive suffix (Ps. 4:2) and זְבַח־יִצְדִּיק sacrifices of righteousness or legitimate offerings (Ps. 4:6).

Categories: In Ps. 4:2, the phrase אֱלֹהֵי צְדִיקִי seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of vindication (6). In Ps. 4:6, זְבַח־יִצְדִּיק sacrifices of righteousness, the phrase seems most aptly viewed as legitimate offerings (1).

Psalm 7

יְהוָה יִדִּין עַמִּים שְׁפֹטֵנִי יְהוָה בְּצִדְקִי וּבְתִמְנִי עָלַי ^{WTT} Psalm 7:9

YHWH, who (he will) judges people, judge me, YHWH, according to (as) my righteousness and my integrity (upon me).

The Lord judges the people; vindicate me, O Lord,
for the righteousness and blamelessness that are mine (JPS).

אֲזִדָּה יְהוָה בְּצִדְקוֹ וְאֶזְמְרָה שֵׁם־יְהוָה עֲלִיּוֹן: ^{WTT} Psalm 7:18

I will thank YHWH for (as) His righteousness and sing (praise to) the name of YHWH the Highest.

I will praise the Lord for His righteousness, and sing a hymn to the name of the Lord Most High (JPS).

Context: Psalm 7 is a psalm of lament in which the Psalmist calls upon YHWH for personal deliverance from his enemies (e.g., 7:2,7). He simultaneously enumerates the glories of YHWH, Who vindicates the righteous (7:11-12,18). *Sedeq* appears twice in Psalm 7. Ps. 7:9

connects *sedeq* to the Psalmist, as an attribute of Psalmist. Nine lines later, *sedeq* refers to a attribute of YHWH (Ps. 7:18).

Rashi reads Ps. 7:9 "Vindicate me, O Lord, according to the righteousness...that are mine," commenting, "I. keep Israel on the basis of the good deeds to their credit and not on the basis of their transgressions" (Gruber 195). Briggs offers a similar reading: "The keyword of the five lines [9b to 12] is righteousness, according to my righteousness v.9b, the righteous v. 10a, the righteous God v. 10b, be upright in mind v. 11b, righteous judge v.12; cf. the syn. terms for judgment: Judge me v. 9b., establish, v10a, in the sense of vindicate..." (55).

Freehof translates Ps. 7:18 "I will give thanks unto the Lord according to His righteousness," commenting, "God's vindication of the innocent proves that God is a just ruler whose righteous decisions will triumph" (26). See also Cohen (17).

Semantic field: *Sedeq* is a noun that describes a condition of being כִּצְדִיקִי my righteousness, with *sedeq* attached to a prefix (כ) and modified by a first-person singular possessive suffix (Ps. 7:9). In the second mention, *sedeq* attached to the same prefix (כ) and modified by a third-person singular possessive suffix (Ps. 7:18).

Categories: In Ps. 7:9, the phrase כִּצְדִיקִי וּבְתִמִּי עָלַי seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of ethics/morals (5), particularly given the parallel to וּבְתִמִּי. In Ps. 7:18, אֲזַדְכֶּה יְהוָה כִּצְדָּקוֹ, the phrase seems most aptly viewed as vindication (6) – YHWH will deliver the upright (7:11) and punish those who do evil (7:17).

Psalm 9

WTT Psalm 9:5
:שָׁפֵט צֶדֶק: וְיִשְׁבֹּת לְכִסֵּא שׁוֹפֵט צֶדֶק:

For You do (did) what is right and just for me; You sat on (to) a throne as a just judge.

For You uphold my right and claim, enthroned as righteous judge (JPS).

Psalm 9:9
וְהוּא יִשְׁפֹט תִּבְלָה בְּצֶדֶק יָדִין לְאֻמִּים בְּמִישְׁרִים:

And He will judge the world with justice, He will judge the nations with equity (uprightness).

It is He who judges the world with righteousness, rules the peoples with equity (JPS).

Context: Psalm 9 is a psalm of lament introduced by verses of praise for YHWH (Dahood, 54) or a simple psalm of thanksgiving (Rozenberg, 41). The Psalmist details YHWH's righteous actions: destroying the wicked (9: 4, 6-7), ruling the people with equity (9:9), providing havens for those in distress (9:10), hearing the cries of the afflicted and requiting bloodshed (9:13). *Sedeq* appears twice in Psalm 9. Ps. 9:5 connects *sedeq* to YHWH, describing YHWH as a righteous or just judge. Four lines later, *sedeq* refers to YHWH indirectly as a righteous judge, Who will judge the world with *sedeq* (Ps. 9:9).

Rozenberg translates Ps. 9:5 as "righteous judge," commenting "An essential function of a ruler is to institute justice and adjudicate. God as the Supreme Ruler is also the guarantor of justice and the Judge of the world which is His domain" (44). Rozenberg refers to Genesis 18:25, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"

Malbim contrasts *sedeq*, strict judgment without leniency, with *mesharim*, which takes into account compassion (Rozenberg, 45). Similarly, Hirsch reads Ps. 9:9 as His judging the nations through the principle of *mesharim*, defined as "not rigid justice, but the concept of rectitude, which strives to meet the needs of the circumstances, and which can be practiced by means of the waiver of certain legal claims that would be justified in themselves under other conditions" (63). Using a similar rationale, H.L. Ginsberg translates (9:9) "He will provide for

the peoples with graciousness," rather than "...judge the people with equity." Yehezkal Kaufmann observes that Heb. *sapat* means "provide for" rather than "judge" in Ps. 7:9, 9:8-9, 67:5, 96:13 and 98:9, and Gruber comments that this insight reflects Rashi's "sensitivity to the nuances of Heb. *sedeq* 'kindness' and Rashi's realization that judgment is essentially incongruous with kindness..." (Gruber, 206). Rozenberg reads "He governs the world with righteousness," noting that "God's verdict, in contrast to human ones, is perfect and equitable without prejudice" (45).

Semantic field: *Sedeq* is used without any prepositions or other changes in both instances, as an adjective modifying 'judge' noun (9:5) or as an adverb modifying "he will judge" (9:9).

Categories: In Ps. 9:5, the phrase **שׁוֹפֵט צֶדֶק** seems to use *sedeq* in its legal usage, particularly in its sense of vindication (6). In Ps. 9:9, **יִשְׁפֹּט יְהוָה בְּצֶדֶק**, the phrase similarly seems most aptly viewed as justice/ or vindication (6) – YHWH does not ignore the cry of the afflicted (9:13) and punishes those who do evil (9:16). Further context in both verses is offered by the connection of **צֶדֶק** to the verb **שׁוֹפֵט**.

SUMMARY: *Sedeq* in Psalms 4, 7, 9

References to YHWH – 4

References to people – 1

References to other – 1 (sacrifices)

Synonyms: **תָּמִי, מִשְׁפָּטִי, מִיִּשְׁרָיִם**

Prepositions: **כ** (2x), **ב**

Parts of speech: nouns -4 (*smichut*- 2); adjective - 2

JPS translations of *tzedek*: righteous/ness, vindicator/vindication

Categories: 1 (1), 5(1), 6 (4).

Psalm 15

הוֹלֵךְ תָּמִים וּפְעֵל צֶדֶק וְדָבָר אֱמֶת בְּלִבּוֹ: WTT Psalm 15:2

He who behaves (walks) with integrity, and acts rightly, and speaks truth in his heart.

He who lives without blame, does what is right, and in his heart acknowledges the truth (JPS).

Context: Psalm 15 is a wisdom psalm, a didactic teaching text which outlines divinely favored conduct. Gunkel indentifies in this a prophetic influence that raises moral demands (1933, 289). It opens with the question, "Who may live in YHWH's tent, who may dwell on Your holy mountain?" (15:1) and tells of the qualities of one who may do so, e.g., those who honor those who fear YHWH (15:4). Weiser reads Psalm 15 as relating to the cult, specifically, the question of the ritual fitness required for taking part in public worship (167).

Psalm 15:2 connects *sedeq* to people. This verse addresses the opening question by detailing the first three characteristics of people who may dwell with YHWH: those who live without blame, act rightly and speak truth.

Cohen translates וּפְעֵל צֶדֶק "worketh righteousness," defining righteousness as "an all embracing term for honest, straightforward dealing, the ethically right" (35). See also Freehof (39), Briggs (113). Hirsch translates "practice righteousness," which he defines as social justice (99); Ibn Ezra comments, "in his dealing with his friends" (Stickman, 161). Similarly Weiser translates "does what is right" (167). Dahood reads "practices justice" (83).

Semantic field: *Sedeq* is a noun appearing in its pure form as the object of a verb: וּפְעֵל

צֶדֶק.

Category: In Ps. 15:2, the phrase **וּפְעַל צֶדֶק** seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of ethical or moral fitness of people, as may be posited by the parallels to the words **אֱמֶת** and **תָּמִים**.

Psalm 17

שְׁמַעַה יְהוָה | צֶדֶק הַקְשִׁיבָה רִנָּתִי הָאֲזִינָה תִפְלָתִי בְּלֹא שִׁפְתֵי מְרֵמָה: WTT Psalm 17:1
Hear YHWH what is right; listen to my song; hear (give ear to) my prayer; my tongue (speaks) no lies.

Hear, O Lord, what is just; heed my cry, give ear to my prayer, uttered without guile (JPS).

אֲנִי בַצֶּדֶק אֶחֱזֶה פָנֶיךָ אֲשַׁבְּעָה בְּהִקִּיץ תְּמוֹנָתְךָ: WTT Psalm 17:15
Then I, vindicated, will view Your face; I will be sated, when awake with Your image.
Then I, justified, will behold Your face; awake, I am filled with the vision of You (JPS).

Context: Psalm 17 is a psalm of individual lament in which the Psalmist protests his innocence. (17:3-5). However, he does not list his trials in detail, as often do many psalms of lament. *Sedeq* appears twice in Psalm 17. The first reference (17:1) indirectly connects *sedeq* to YHWH, asking YHWH to hear the righteousness of the Psalmist's plea; the inference is that YHWH is a god of righteousness Who does righteousness, but may more directly connect to the Psalmist's view of himself. The second reference (17:15) is to the Psalmist.

In Ps. 17:1, Cohen translates **שְׁמַעַה יְהוָה | צֶדֶק** "Hear the right" (40); see also Freehof, who comments "The consciousness of being in the right and the sense of complete sincerity" (42). Hirsch prefers "thoughts of the right" (109); *sedeq*, he writes, is "the ideal of righteousness inherent in the test to be discharged by every individual as well as the ideal state of the conditions of human affairs" (110). Rozenberg translates "what is right," commenting "right conduct and lack of duplicity" (83). Briggs, "O hear YHWH, a righteous man" (127), for which

he finds support in verses 3 through 6 (128). Similarly, Ibn Ezra comments, "...because I will rightfully speak" (Strickman, 175).

Weiser translates "O Lord of my salvation," following the LXX (179); he writes, "The worshiper hopes to be vindicated by God, trusting in God's unprejudiced righteousness..." (180). Dahood translates, "Hear YHWH my plea for vindication (92). Rozenberg follows a similar theme: "I, having been justified, shall look at Your face" (83). So too Rashi, who reads, "May the transgressions, of which I am guilty, for which I deserve to be punished by means of physical suffering, depart from you, and may they never come before You in court" (Gruber 232). Briggs omits translating the word *sedeq*, understanding it as a later interpolation, "doubtless influenced by verse one...as a qualification" (133).

In Ps. 17:15, Cohen translates אֲנִי בַצֶּדֶק אֶחְיֶה פָנֶיךָ "I shall behold Thy face in righteousness" (42); see also Weiser (180). Rashi prefers "Then because of Your kindness I will behold your face," adding, "Dismiss from Your presence the charges against me and take hold of the virtues which are to my credit, so that because of them I may behold Your face" (Gruber, 234).

Semantic field: *Sedeq* is a noun appearing in the first reference in its unadorned form. In the second reference (17:15), *sedeq* is a noun preceded by a ב.

Categories: In Ps. 17:1, the phrase שְׁמֵעָה יְהוָה | צֶדֶק seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of justice or vindication (6) because of the Psalmist's plea for justice and because of the parallel in the following verse with its reference to *mishpat*. In Ps. 17:15, *sedeq* in the phrase בַּצֶּדֶק אֶחְיֶה פָנֶיךָ, similarly seems most aptly viewed as justice or vindication (6).

Psalm 18

יְגַמְלֵנִי יְהוָה בְּצִדְקִי כְּבֹר יָדַי יֵשִׁיב לִי: ^{WTT} Psalm 18:21

YHWH rewarded me for my merit; for the pureness of my hands, He requited me (cause me to return) (to me).

The Lord rewarded me according to my merit; He requited the cleanness of my hands (JPS).

וַיִּשָּׁב־יְהוָה לִי בְּצִדְקִי כְּבֹר יָדַי לְנֶגֶד עֵינָיו: ^{WTT} Psalm 18:25

YHWH rewarded me for my merit; for the pureness of my hands before His eyes.

And the Lord has requited me according to my merit, the cleanness of my hands in His sight (JPS).

Context: Psalm 18 is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving. YHWH saves the Psalmist from death (18:5) and from his enemies (18:18, 39-40). YHWH's redemption is ascribed to the Psalmist's righteousness or merit, the cleanness of his hands (18:21, 25) because every man receives his just due according to his behavior (18:26-28). A nearly identical text appears in II Samuel 22, David's song of triumph over his enemies; righteousness is guiltlessness attributed to David in his relations with Saul (Freehof, 48). Gunkel on 18:21, 25 refers to the "righteousness and piety" (1933, 111).

Cohen translates יְגַמְלֵנִי יְהוָה בְּצִדְקִי "righteousness," commenting "guilelessness" (48).

Dahood reads "YHWH rewarded me because I was just" (102); Rozenberg, "as I merited" (90).

Briggs avers that Ps. 18: 21 introduces a new concept, "the doctrine of the reward of righteousness, and especially of legal righteousness, a doctrine which did not originate until after the Deuteronomic Law and which did not attain its height till after the giving of the priestly Law" (145). Thus he reads verse 23 "for all His judgments" in the sense of legal decisions in law codes, and "depart from" as expressed in Dt. 9:12 See also Rashi, "I have continually placed them on my heart (cf Deut. 11:18)" (Gruber, 239).

Semantic field: *Sedeq* appears twice in Psalm 18 in nearly identical verses. In both cases, it is a noun modified by a first person singular suffix, referring to the Psalmist and preceded by the preposition כּ.

Categories: Ps. 18 seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of ethics and morality in both instances (5). In the first reference, in the phrase יִגְמְלֵנִי יְהוָה בְּצֶדֶק the definition of *sedeq* is expanded in the following verse, which describes righteousness accruing from following the ways of YHWH שְׁמֵרְתִּי דְרָכֶי יְהוָה (18:22). In the second reference, *sedeq* appears in parallel with חסיד and תמים (18:26).

Psalm 23

וַתִּשְׁבֹּב יְיָ נַפְשִׁי יְשׁוּבָב יִנְחֵנִי בְּמַעְגְלֵי-צֶדֶק לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ: WTT Psalm 23:3
He renews my life; He leads me on straight paths for the sake of His name.

He renews my life; He guides me in right paths as befits His name (JPS).

Context: Psalm 23 is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving within the smaller subgroup of psalms of trust or confidence. YHWH is the Psalmist's shepherd, shielding him from harm (23:4) and ensuring that only goodness and love will come his way (23:6). *Sedeq* in this Psalm refers to YHWH, whose attribute of righteousness is mirrored in the worthy follower of YHWH.

Weiser reads בְּמַעְגְלֵי-צֶדֶק "paths of righteousness" (227). An alternative translation is "straight paths", which echoes the parallel meaning of *sedeq* as *yashar*, a word that connotes literal straightness as well as ethical or moral straightness (Freehof, 59). Cohen translates "straight paths," commenting, "-the right way, not an easy way" (67). Ibn Ezra chooses the ethical meaning as well, paths of righteousness, adding, "... God does not act in this manner for

my sake. He acts in this manner for His name's sake. He guides me in straight paths so that his name will be declared all over the world" (Strickman, 275). Briggs renders "right tracks," noting "those that lead directly and safely to the place of destination, as distinguished from wrong tracks that would lead astray. The moral and religious reference is involved in the whole figure, and it is not to be gained by departing from it in the rendering "righteousness"..." (209).

Hirsch translates "בְּמַעְגְּלֵי-צֶדֶק" "paths of justice," noting that they are "ways of life circumscribed by law, which keep within the bounds of law and order. Anything outside that 'circle' is wrong, transgressing the balance of righteousness" (171). Rozenberg translates "right paths," commenting "Just as the shepherd leads his flock carefully avoiding places of danger, so does God through Providence protect the Psalmist" (133).

Rashi says "in straight paths so that I should not fall into the hands of my enemies" (Gruber, 263); Gruber adding that Rashi's interpretation is more congruent with the context, in verses two and four, which speaks of God's guiding the physical rather than the moral paths of the Psalmist (265). Ibn Ezra uses a literal meaning "He does not lead me upon the high mountains and valleys" (Strickman, 275). By contrast, Dahood considers the *hapax legomenon* as parallel to and equivalent to *neot desheh* (23:2), referring to the idea of abundance in the root of *sedeq* evidenced in Ps. 5:9 (Dahood, 146).

Semantic field: *Sedeq* is a noun in *smichut* form preceded by a preposition modifying the word "paths."

Category: In Ps. 23:3, the phrase בְּמַעְגְּלֵי-צֶדֶק seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of physical straightness, as a metaphor for ethical or moral fitness.

SUMMARY: Sedeq in Psalms 15, 17, 18, 23:

References to YHWH – 0

References to people – 5

References to other – 1 (paths of righteousness)

Synonyms: מרמה, אמת, תמים, חסיד

Antonyms:

Prepositions: ב (2x), כ (2)

Plural - 0

Parts of speech: nouns - 5 (*smichut-1*); adjective - 1

JPS translations of *sedeq*: right/righteous, justified, merit

Categories: 2 (1), 5(3), 6 (2)

Psalm 35

שְׁפֹטֵנִי בְצִדְקַת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֵל־יִשְׁמַחוּ־לִי: ^{WTT} Psalm 35:24

Judge me according to Your justice, YHWH my God (alternative: Judge me, O YHWH, God of my vindication); do not let them (they will not) rejoice in me.

Take up my cause, O Lord my God, as you are beneficent, and let them not rejoice over me (JPS).

יִרְנּוּ וְיִשְׁמַחוּ חֲפֹצֵי צִדְקִי וַיֹּאמְרוּ תַמִּיד יִגְדַּל יְהוָה הַחֲפֹץ שְׁלוֹם עַבְדּוֹ: ^{WTT} Psalm 35:27

May they sing out and rejoice, those who delight in my vindication; they will speak unendingly of the greatness of YHWH, the One who desires peace for His servant.

May those who desire my vindication sing forth joyously, may they always say, "Extolled be the Lord who desires the well-being of his servant..."(JPS).

וְלִשׁוֹנִי תִהְיֶה צִדְקָתְךָ כָּל־הַיּוֹם תְּהַלֵּלֶנָּה: ^{WTT} Psalm 35:28

My tongue will tell of Your justice; all day, Your praises.

... While my tongue shall recite Your beneficent acts, Your praises all day long (JPS).

Context: Psalm 35 is a psalm of individual lament: the Psalmist pleads with YHWH/God to deliver him from his enemies (35:4-8), to rescue him (35:17) and to intervene on his behalf (35:23). It uses the metaphor of a lawsuit, in which the Psalmist asks YHWH to confound the false witnesses rising against him (35:11).

Psalm 35:24 connects *sedeq* to YHWH; the Psalmist appeals to YHWH/God to judge him rightly according to YHWH/God's attributes of *sedeq*. Psalm 35:27 connects *sedeq* to the Psalmist, speaking of those who delight in his vindication. Psalm 35:28 also connects *sedeq* to YHWH, Whom the Psalmist's tongue will praise.

As the righteous Judge of the world, YHWH vindicates the innocent (Cohen, 88). Ibn Ezra understands "Judge me according to your righteousness" as "Execute righteous judgment

upon them on my behalf" (Strickman, 408). Dahood notes that the idea of vindication is present in Pss. 4:2, 17:1 and 35:27; he translates the phrase **בַּצְדִּיקָאֱלֹהִי** "God of my vindication" (23).

Similarly, Briggs renders "Judge me according to my righteousness" in the sense of vindication of the Psalmist (308); he continues this theme in his reading of Ps. 35:28.

By contrast, Psalm 35:27 connects *sedeq* to the Psalmist, speaking of those who delight in his vindication. Freehof, commenting on "that delight in my righteousness," writes, "Let those rejoice who will be happy at my vindication" (91). Rozenberg renders Ps. 35:28 "Let my tongue voice Your kind deeds," commenting that "God has been faithful to His promise and the Psalmist is grateful for having been vindicated" (208).

Semantic field: *Sedeq* appears as a noun three times in Psalm 35. In the first instance (35:24) it is modified by a second person singular suffix relating to YHWH and introduced by the preposition **כ** **בַּצְדִּיקָאֱלֹהִי**. In the second instance (35:27), it is modified by a first-person singular possessive suffix connected to the Psalmist and serves as the second word in the *smichut* phrase **חִפְצִי צְדִּיקִי**. In the third instance, it is again modified by a second person singular suffix relating to YHWH – **צְדִּיקָאֱלֹהִי**.

Category: All three instances of *sedeq* in Ps. 35 seem to use *sedeq* in its sense of vindication (6). The legal focus of the entire Psalm, from its opening line **רִיבָה יְהוָה אֶת־יְרִיבִי** to its reference to witnesses **יְקוֹמוּן עֲדֵי חֲמָס** (Ps. 35:11), suggests a legal usage of *sedeq*, the idea of justice and vindication.

Psalm 37

Psalm 37:6^{WTT} וְהוֹצִיא כְּאֹרֶץ צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּטָהּ כְּצַהֲרִים:

He will bring (out) like light your vindication and your justice like the afternoon (sun).

He will cause your vindication to shine forth like the light, the justice of your case, like the noon day sun (JPS).

Context: Psalm 37, an abcedary or acrostic, resembles Psalm 15; they are both a wisdom psalms, didactic teaching texts which outline divinely favored conduct. Psalm 37 strives to counsel and encourage those who are discouraged by the apparent ascendancy of the wicked and triumph of doers of evil. Psa 37:6 connects *sedeq* to Psalmist; the Psalmist appeals to YHWH to judge him rightly, that is, to vindicate him.

Cohen comments on צְדָקָה "As often in the Psalter, vindication" (111). See also Freehof (95); Hirsch (267). Dahood renders "justice" (225), Rozenberg, "innocence," remarking that "The cause of the righteous may temporarily be subverted by the wicked." (220). Briggs translates "just cause," citing similar reasons (326). Ibn Ezra comments on the meaning of the verse, "God will fulfill your needs and exact vengeance on your behalf... in public. Your righteousness will then be seen" (423).

Semantic field: *Sedeq* is a noun modified by a second person singular suffix relating to the Psalmist.

Category: Ps. 37 וְהוֹצִיא כְּאֹרֶץ צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּטָהּ seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of vindication (6). The legal focus of the entire Psalm, from its opening line רִיבָה יְהוָה אֶת־יְרִיבִי to its reference to witnesses יְקוֹמוּן עִדֵי חָמָס (Ps. 35:11) suggest a legal usage of *sedeq*, an idea of justice and vindication. So does the parallel to וּמִשְׁפָּטָהּ.

Psalm 40

בְּשִׁרְתִּי צִדְקָה | בְּקִהְלָה רַב הִנֵּה שִׁפְתֵּי לֹא אֶכְלָא יְהוָה אֶתָּה יִדְעָה: WTT Psalm 40:10

I delivered the news of (Your) deliverance in a great community; behold, my lips, I will never restrain; YHWH, You, You know (knew).

I proclaimed [Your] righteousness in a great congregation; see, I did not withhold my words; O Lord, You must know it (JPS).

Context: Psalm 40 is a composite psalm. It contains elements of individual lament; the Psalmist speaks of misfortunes without number (40:13) and pleads with YHWH for deliverance (40:18). Many of the verses offer praise to YHWH, placing Psalm 40 in the smaller subgroup of Psalms of trust and confidence. *Sedeq* is directly connected to and seen as an attribute of YHWH, which the Psalmist acknowledges to himself and his community (40:11).

Dahood translates, "I have announced the glad news of your deliverance" without comment (243). Rozenberg renders "I have heralded what is right," explaining, "I took every opportunity to proclaim Your righteousness, goodness..." (245). Briggs reads "I will not withhold...Your righteousness," commenting "What the people in that worship will not withhold is the praise of YHWH's vindictory, saving righteousness" (356).

Semantic field: *Sedeq* is an unmodified noun.

Category: Ps. 40: 10 בְּשִׁרְתִּי צִדְקָה | בְּקִהְלָה seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of redemption (4), specifically, delivery from harm or evil. The Psalmist says that YHWH "lifted me out of the miry pit" (40:3) and will rescue him עֲזָרְתִּי וּמִפְּלִטִי אֶתָּה (Ps. 40:18). The following verse lists more of YHWH's attributes: צִדְקָתְךָ אֱמוּנָתְךָ וְתִשׁוּעָתְךָ חֶסֶדְךָ (Ps. 40:11). Briggs reads Ps. 40:10 as referring to YHWH's vindictory righteousness in the salvation of His people (356), noting its parallel to מִפְּלִטִי (40:18). A similar salvific usage appears in Psalm 31:2.

Psalm 45

וְהִדְרֵךְ | צֹלַח רֶכֶב עַל־דְּבַר־אֱמֶת וְעֲנוּה־צֶדֶק וְתוֹרָה נֹרְאוֹת יְמִינֶךָ: WTT Psalm 45:5

(In) your splendor, succeed; ride on a word of truth, humility and justice, and do (teach) wonders (with) your right hand.

In your glory, win success; ride on in the cause of truth in meekness and right; and let your right hand lead you to awesome deeds (JPS).

אֶהֱבֵת צֶדֶק וְתִשְׁנֶא רָשָׁע עַל־כֵּן | מִשְׁחָךְ אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁמֵן שֶׁשֶׁן מִחֲבֵרֶיךָ: WTT Psalm 45:8

You loved the right and hated evil; therefore, God, your God anointed you (with) oil of gladness over your fellows.

You love righteousness and hate wickedness; rightly has God, your God, chosen to anoint you with oil of gladness over all your peers (JPS).

Context: Psalm 45 is a royal psalm, specifically, an epithalamion, a wedding song which extols a king and his bride on the occasion of their marriage. The first half of the Psalm praises the king, who is fairer than all men (45:3) and who holds a scepter of equity (45:7). The second half of the Psalm addresses his bride, who is told to obey him (45:11-12).

In both verses, *sedeq* is directly connected to and seen as an attribute of the king. Cohen suggests that like the Song of Songs, Psalm 45, which had a secular origin, came to be understood as referring to King Messiah (so the Targum) and the marriage is an allusion to God's redemption of Israel (140). Briggs names the king as Jehu (386); so too Briggs (383).

On Ps. 45:5, Rozenberg acknowledges that the meaning of the Hebrew is obscure, but different renderings generally agree that the warrior is committed to the cause of truth and the poor... The heroism of the king is thus motivated... by his desire for righteousness. Cf. Malbim” (276-277). He renders, "Ride on truth, humility and right." See also Weiser (360). Similarly, Rashi renders ‘ride upon a word of truth,’ explaining its meaning as “to render legal decisions properly and to enjoy the meekness of justice,” (Gruber, 350).

Hirsch notes the unusual combination of **זְדִקָּה וְעֲנָוָה** commenting that **זְדִקָּה** is the ideal of right; however it stands back modestly and waits until it is given effective representation by the right man (325). By contrast, Dahood translates, “defend the poor” (272). Freehof notes that the king’s righteousness is rewarded by God’s fulfilling His promise to David to establish his throne, citing Isaiah 9:6, “Upon the throne of David... to establish it... through justice... forever” (119).

Semantic field: *Sedeq* appears twice in Psalm 45. It appears first in Ps. 45:5 as an unmodified noun comprising the second half of a *smichut* pair, **זְדִקָּה וְעֲנָוָה**. עֲנָוָה וְאִמָּת. In the second mention, *sedeq* also appears as an unmodified noun, in parallel to the word רִשְׁעָה.

Categories: In Ps. 45:5, the phrase **זְדִקָּה וְעֲנָוָה וְאִמָּת** seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of justice or vindication (6), another attribute in parallel to the attributes of humility and truth in the verse. In Ps. 45:8, **אֶהְבֶּתְּ צְדָקָה וְתִשְׁנֶא רִשְׁעָה**, the phrase similarly seems most aptly viewed as justice or vindication (6), following the preceding verse: **שִׁבְטִי מִיֵּשֶׁר שִׁבְטֵי מַלְכוּתָךְ**: (Ps. 45:7). However, the counterpoint to **רִשְׁעָה** can also suggest a sense of *sedeq* as ethically or morally correct (5).

SUMMARY: *Sedeq* in Psalms 35, 37, 40, 45

References to YHWH (3)/God (0)

References to people – 3 (2-king)

References to other – 0

Synonyms: אִמָּת, עֲנָוָה, מִשְׁפָּתָךְ, מִיֵּשֶׁר

Antonyms: רִשְׁעָה

Prepositions: כ

Parts of speech: nouns -6 (*smichut*-2); adjective - 0

JPS translations of *tzedek*: right/eousness, beneficent (acts), vindication

Categories: 4 (1), 6 (6)

Psalm 48

כְּשֵׁמֶךָ אֱלֹהִים בֵּן תִּהְלֶתֶךָ עַל־קְצוֹי־אֶרֶץ צֶדֶק מְלֵאָה יְמִינֶךָ: WTT Psalm 48:11

Like Your name, God, (thus) Your praises (reach) the ends of the earth; Your beneficence fills Your right hand.

The praise of you, God, like Your name, reaches to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is filled with beneficence (JPS).

Context: Psalm 48 is psalm of praise and thanksgiving for YHWH, Who is great and acclaimed (48:2), Who provides faithful care (48:10) and Who is God for ever (48:13). In Ps. 48, *sedeq* is connected to God Whose hand is filled with *sedeq*.

Hirsch renders צֶדֶק “Thy mighty acts” (343). Rozenberg translates “Your right hand is filled with justice,” explaining that “The defeat of Israel's enemies is due not to God's capricious desire to punish... but because God is a just judge” (293-294). Similarly, Briggs, “Thy right hand is full of righteousness,” commenting that this understanding is “probably vindictory and redemptive of His city” (403). However, Dahood translates “Your right hand is full of generosity” (288).

Semantic field: In Psalm 48, *sedeq* appears as an unmodified noun.

Category: In Ps. 48:11, the phrase צֶדֶק מְלֵאָה יְמִינֶךָ seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of generosity, goodness (7), following Dahood, who uses the more expansive definition. While the Psalm tells of vindication from enemies (e.g., 48:6), the section on praise (48:10-12) uses three words in parallel that may be seen as separate attributes of YHWH worthy of praise: faithful care or compassion חַסְדֶּךָ (48:10), beneficence צֶדֶק (48:11) and judgments מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ (48:12).

Psalm 50

וַיִּגִּדּוּ שָׁמַיִם צִדְקוֹ כִּי־אֱלֹהִים | שֹׁפֵט הוּא סֵלָה: ^{WTT} Psalm 50:6

The heavens will declare His justice, because God is Judge.

Then the heavens proclaims His righteousness, for He is a God who judges (JPS).

Context: Psalm 50 sets a court scene in which God/YHWH arraigns the Israelites after the manner of a prophet, stating that sacrifices without spiritual motive are not acceptable. As the trial is about to begin, the Psalmist depicts the heavens as testifying that the proceedings will be just because God, Who is righteous, presides as the judge. In Psalm 50, *sedeq* is related to YHWH, Who judges.

Freehord renders “righteousness” (132); Hirsch (356), Rozenberg (308). Dahood translates, “Let the heavens announce His just claim, for He is the God of justice,” commenting that “Within the literary framework of a lawsuit, this seems to be the connotation borne by צִדְקוֹ; see Job 33:32” (307). Similarly, Briggs: “And let the heavens proclaim righteousness, that (YHWH) Himself is about to judge,” that is, the heavens will “make this solemn, public proclamation that righteousness is about to be administered” as YHWH judges the fidelity of His people to their covenant obligations (417); so too Cohen (157).

Semantic field: In Psalm 50, *sedeq* is a noun modified by a second person possessive suffix related to YHWH.

Category: In Ps. 50:61, the phrase וַיִּגִּדּוּ שָׁמַיִם צִדְקוֹ seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of justice or vindication (6). Further support is added from the phrase that follows, כִּי־אֱלֹהִים | שֹׁפֵט הוּא.

Psalms 51

אֲזַ תַּחֲפֹץ זִבְחֵי־צֶדֶק עֹלָה וְכֹלִיל אֲזַ יַעֲלוּ עַל־מִזְבִּיחְךָ פָּרִים: WTT Psalm 51:21

Then You will desire legitimate sacrifices: burnt offerings and whole-offerings; then will bulls mount Your altar.

Then You will want sacrifices offered in righteousness, burnt and whole offerings; then bulls will be offered on Your altar (JPS).

Context: Psalm 51 is a psalm of individual lament; the Psalmist pleads with God for mercy (51:1), asks to be purged with hyssop (51:9) and not to be despised in contrition (51:19). It is the first of a group of 17 Psalms with the superscription "for David" and one of eight connecting a psalm to a specific event in David's life, Nathan's prophecy to David after David consorted with Bathsheva. Toward the end of the Psalm, the Psalmist seems to speak more generally about communal deliverance. Cohen reconciles consensus scholarship, which holds that the Psalm is later than David, and that the "I" refers to the nation, not an individual, by viewing Psalm 51 as a personal *cri du coeur* adapted for recital after the Babylonian exile, a time of national humiliation, when the prayer for the restoration of the Temple was appended (161). In 51:21, *sedeq* relates to sacrifices and offerings to God at the time of communal deliverance, when the walls of Jerusalem are rebuilt (51:20).

Cohen reads the phrase זִבְחֵי־צֶדֶק "sacrifices of righteousness," commenting that these are sacrifices, "brought in a right spirit and with a proper motive" (164). See also Freehof (139), Hirsch, 369-370). Briggs omits a direct translation, rendering "Then wilt thou delight in peace offering and whole burnt offering," remarking, "The sacrifices that really were acceptable to YHWH... 'sacrifices of God' = 'sacrifices of righteousness'" (9).

Dahood reads "legitimate sacrifices," remarking that these are "performed according to ritual prescriptions; for such sacrifices Jerusalem was the only legitimate site" (10). See Ps. 4. Similarly Rozenberg, "proper sacrifices" (319).

Alternatively, such sacrifices זְבַח־יִצְדָק are offered in contrast with those offered to God as a broken spirit and a broken heart זְבַח־יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים רוּחַ נִשְׁבָּרָה לֵב־נִשְׁבָּר (Cohen, 164). This would support an understanding of *sedeq* as connected with people, not God.

Semantic field: In Psalm 51, *sedeq* is a noun, the second word in the *smichut* phrase זְבַח־יִצְדָק. The identical phrase appears in Ps. 4:6.

Category: In Ps. 51:21, the phrase זְבַח־יִצְדָק seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of legitimacy or fitness (1).

Psalm 52

WTT Psalm 52:5 רַע מְטוֹב לִי שֶׁקֶר | מִדְּבַר צֶדֶק סִלָּה:

You love evil more than good; a lie, more than speaking truth.

You prefer evil to good, the lie, to speaking truthfully (JPS).

Context: Psalm 52 is the second of a group of 17 Psalms with the superscription "for David" and one of eight connecting the Psalm to a specific event in David's life, here, Doeg the Edomite's informing Saul that David had taken refuge in the house of Ahimelekh the priest (I Sam 22).

It is difficult for scholars to fit the Psalm into one of the standard literary categories. Dahood reads it as contrasting the condition and destiny of the pagan, who relies on his cunning,

with that of the just believer who draws his strength from God (12). Ps. 52:5 connects *sedeq* to Psalmist, contrasting the Psalmist's evil traits with the preferred ones of goodness and truth.

Psalm 52 is similar to Psalm 37 and Psalm 15; they are both wisdom psalms, didactic teaching texts which outline divinely favored conduct. In particular, Psalm 52, like Psalm 37, strives to counsel and encourage those who are discouraged by the apparent ascendancy of the wicked and triumph of doers of evil.

Cohen translates שקר | מדבר צדק, "Falsehood rather than speaking righteousness," commenting, "Using the faculty of speech for promoting justice (cf. *speaking peace to all his seed*, Esther x.3" (165). See also Hirsch (371), Freehof (142). Dahood reads "lying instead of telling the truth" (11); so does Weiser (411) and Rozenberg (321). Similarly, Briggs renders "lying rather than the right," noting "the good of speaking that which is just and right" (14).

In Psalm 52, *sedeq* is the second of two antithetical parallelisms in the verse רַע מְטוֹב | שקר | צדק, followed by שקר | צדק. This explains the translation as "truth" rather than "righteousness." (See also Dahood, 11.) However, Freehof translates otherwise, "Falsehood rather than speaking righteousness" (140); so does Cohen (165). The two antithetical parallels refer to attributes of human beings, not God, and they describe ethical attributes: good and evil, lies and truth.

Semantic field: In Psalm 52, *sedeq* appears as an unmodified noun.

Category: In Ps. 52:5, the phrase שקר | מדבר צדק seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of morality and ethics (5), particularly with the contrast to רַע מְטוֹב | שקר.

SUMMARY: *Sedeq* in Psalms 48, 50, 51, 52

References to YHWH (0)/God (2)

References to people – (-0)

References to other – sacrifices

Synonyms: אמת, חסד, שלום תשפטו

Antonyms: שקר

Prepositions: (0)

Parts of speech: nouns - 3 (*smichut-1*); adjective - 0

JPS translations of *sedeq*: Righteousness, beneficence, truthfully

Categories: 1 (1), 5 (1), 6 (1), 7 (1)

Psalm 58

הָאֱמָנִים אֵלֶם צֶדֶק תִּדְבְּרוּן מִיִּשְׁרִים תִּשְׁפֹּטוּ בְנֵי אָדָם: WTT Psalm 58:2

Do the leaders (surely) speak justice? The upright judge man?

O mighty ones, do you really decree what is just? Do you judge mankind with equity? (JPS).

Context: In Psalm 58, the Psalmist denounces the leaders or judges who fail to judge justly but he is confident that justice ultimately will be done. The Psalmist' protest is not individual or personal but rather against the general lawlessness prevailing in the land. *Sedeq* in Ps. 58 is a quality of man, not divine.

The phrase הָאֱמָנִים אֵלֶם צֶדֶק תִּדְבְּרוּן is uncertain. Dahood renders "counselors, leaders, may you pronounce just verdicts" (57). Rozenberg presents the same idea in the form of a question: "Do you, rulers, indeed render just verdicts?" and adds that "The judges do not know what righteousness is because they are so steeped in falsehood and deceit" (351). Briggs renders the phrase similarly as a question (42).

Freehof follows Kimhi "a righteous company"(153), Cohen does the same (183). Rashi, "Is justice really silent? You speak," which he derives from אֵלֶם as mute (Gruber, 409). Similarly, Hirsch renders "Is silence truly just when you should speak instead? When you should judge the sons of men in equity?" (397).

Semantic field: In Psalm 58, *sedeq* appears as an unmodified noun.

Category: In Ps. 58:2, הָאֱמָנִים אֵלֶם צֶדֶק תִּדְבְּרוּן the word *sedeq* seems to denotes justice (6); the parallel phrase speaks of תִּשְׁפֹּטוּ. This is supported by the theme of the Psalm,

a denunciation of corrupt judges and an appeal to the impartial administration of justice in the Pentateuch and in the Prophets.

Psalm 65

נִזְרָאוֹת | בְּצִדְקַתְּ תַעֲנֵנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעָנוּ מִבְּטָח כָּל־קְצוֹי־אָרֶץ וַיִּם רְחֻקִּים: ^{WTT} Psalm 65:6

(With) wondrous (works) answer us with deliverance, God of our salvation; Who is a refuge for all the (ends of) the earth and the deep sea.

Answer us with victory through awesome deeds O God our deliverer, in whom all the ends of the earth and the distant seas put their trust (JPS).

Context: Psalm 58 is a Psalm of praise and thanksgiving, in the subset of Psalms of trust and confidence. The Psalmist calls out to God that "praise befits You in Zion" (65:2) and he enumerates God's works: stilling the raging seas (65:8) and crowning the year with bounty (65:12). Several scholars read it as a poem of thanks for a bountiful harvest (e.g., Cohen, 201).

Cohen reads *sedeq* as an adverb, "You answer us in righteousness," noting that "effect of divine equity which ensures the triumph of right over wrong" (202); Freehof offers an identical reading (173); so does Hirsch, adding, "This Thy answer is, the shaping of all the affairs of men in accordance with the righteousness of God as taught by His law to Israel" (436). Rozenberg reads the phrase as a request, "Answer us in righteousness" (386).

By contrast, Weiser offers a salvific reading, noting that the Psalmist begins by offering a hymn to God Who makes His salvation come true in creation, in history and at the end of time (464). Similarly, Dahood suggests that the Psalm looks to the eschatological future, reading Ps. 58:6 as a prayer for admittance to God's heavenly abode after death (109). He reads בְּצִדְקַתְּ as "At the vindication," that is, the day of final judgment alluded to in verses 3-4. He sees the same nuance in Ps.17:15, where it is parallel to "At the resurrection." (111). Briggs renders "With

awful things in righteousness Thou answerest us, O God of our salvation," explaining 'in righteousness' "not judicial, forensic, or legal; but, as usual vindictory and saving, and accordingly emphasized in *O God of our salvation*" (82).

Semantic field: In Psalm 65 *sedeq* appears as an unmodified noun, preceded by the preposition ב.

Category: In Ps. 65:6, בְּצֶדֶק תַּעֲנִינוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵנוּ | נִרְאוֹת the word *sedeq* appears in its redemptive sense, specifically, in the idea of deliverance (3). The parallel speaks of יִשְׁעֵנוּ and no specific mention occurs in the psalm of victory over enemies, illness or other strife; therefore, deliverance is understood here as ultimate saving salvation.

Psalm 72

...That he may judge Your people justly and Your needy with judgment. ^{WTT} Psalm 72:2
 ... That he may judge Your people rightly, Your lowly ones, justly (JPS).

Context: Psalm 72 is a royal psalm, a prayer for God's blessing on the king, perhaps composed originally for the coronation ceremonies of an Israelite king (Dahood, 179). The Psalmist asks God to endow the human rulers with God's justice and righteousness (72:1), to extend his rule (72:8) because he saves the needy (72:12-13). Rozenberg notes that the idyllic picture of the king's reign has suggested to some scholars that the Psalm is messianic, supported by the Targum; however, he writes that the contents of the Psalm do not support this contention (431).

Sedeq is directly connected to God, Who has attributes of *sedeq*. These attributes are imitated by people, who execute God's laws: "As God is righteous and the defender of the weak, so must the national ruler be" (Cohen: 227). Freehof refers to the ideal king portrayed in Isaiah 11:4, "with righteousness shall he judge the poor" (196). Similarly, Weiser writes "the righteousness of the king is a function and a mirror image of the righteousness of God" (503).

Hirsch renders, "May he judge Thy people in accordance with justice and Thy poor according to lawful order." He notes that in this verse, and the following verse, "we have mention of two basic ideals, namely *sedeq* and *sedaqah*. Justice and duty -- these are the basic pillars upon which the Jewish state is founded" (497). Briggs renders similarly (131).

Semantic field: In 72:2, *sedeq* is an unmodified noun preceded by the preposition ב.

Category: In Ps. 72:2, בְּצֶדֶק וְעֲנִיִּיךָ בְּמִשְׁפָּט, the word *sedeq* seems to denote justice (6).; the parallel phrase peaks of בְּמִשְׁפָּט. This is supported by the theme of the Psalm, in which the Psalmist asks God to endow the human rulers with God's justice and righteousness. This reading is supported by Cohen's reading of וְעֲנִיִּיךָ. He notes, "Under a corrupt system the rich had the advantage by their ability to bribe judges; here the strictly impartial administration of justice to all is demanded" (227).

Psalm 85

חֶסֶד־וְאֱמֶת נִפְגְּשׁוּ צֶדֶק וְשָׁלוֹם נִשְׁקוּ: WTT Psalm 85:11

Kindness and truth meet; righteousness and peace kiss.

Faithfulness and truth meet; justice and well-being kiss (JPS).

אֱמֶת מֵאֶרֶץ תִּצְמַח וְצֶדֶק מִשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׁקֹף: ^{WTT} Psalm 85:12

Truth sprouts up from the earth and kindness looks down from the heavens.

Truth springs up from the earth; justice looks down from heaven (JPS).

צֶדֶק לְפָנָיו יִהְיֶה וַיֵּשֶׁם לְדֶרֶךְ פְּעָמָיו: ^{WTT} Psalm 85:14

Righteousness before him strides; and shall make His footsteps a way.

Justice goes before him; as He sets out on his way (JPS).

Context: The main thematic focus of Psalm 85 is unclear. It is alternatively a prayer for rain (Dahood, 286), a prayer of the return to Babylonian exiles (Cohen 277; Freehof, 243), a hymn of praise used as liturgy during the fall cultic festival (Weiser, 571-572), a supplication for God's help in a time of unknown calamity (Rozenberg, 530).

In 85:11, *sedeq* is an unmodified noun appearing in synonymous parallelism with three other words: וְשָׁלוֹם חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת. In Dahood's reading of the Psalm as a prayer for rain, the four attributes are personified as attendants of God who cooperate in the production of rain (289-290).

He notes that *sedeq* is specifically associated with rain in Joel 2:23 כִּי־יִתֵּן לָכֶם אֶת־הַמּוֹרָה

לְצִדְקָה וַיּוֹרֵד לָכֶם גֶּשֶׁם מוֹרָה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ בְּרָאשׁוֹן:

By contrast, Freehof understands these four attributes as virtues that men must practice: Mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, which must unite into character; they must 'kiss' each other" (244). He translates 'righteousness' in all three instances. According to Rashi's reading, the end result of human *sedeq* is divine well-being, where Rashi understands *sedeq* in the rabbinic sense of "charity" (Gruber, 553).

On Ps. 85:11, Briggs renders "*righteousness and peace*, only associated here, because of the emphasis upon 'peace' v.9, which takes the place of the term 'justice, usually coupled with 'righteousness'" (233). He similarly translates "righteous" in verse 14. Rozenberg renders "justice and wholeness" (531), and 'justice' in the following verses (531-2).

Weiser offers a salvific reading. He sees the imminency of salvation in the preceding two verses, "The fact that God appears and is present in His glory is the decisive fact of the new age of salvation that starts with the theophany in the festival cult" (574). This viewpoint continues in verses 10 and 11, he says, with righteousness and peace as God's messengers and servants as his advent at work to fashion the end of time (ibid).

See too Ibn Ezra, who understands 85:11 as a precondition for God's presence to dwell in the land; therefore, salvation depends on human conduct (Rozenberg, 534). Rozenberg reads salvation into verses 85:11 and 85:14, the idea that the human practice of justice and truth hasten the advent of God (Ibid).

On Ps. 85:12, Briggs writes, "*Kindness*, which by a copyist's mistake, at an early date, has been replaced by "righteousness," destroying the parallel, *doth look down from heaven*" (233).

The Hebrew of Ps. 85:14 is difficult to translate. According to Rashi's reading, "He shall make His footsteps for a way to be followed by His children," that is, God marks out a path for Israel to walk that leads to salvation and happiness. Gruber notes that the interpretation of 85:14 as a prayer of petition that requires that *sedeq* not be rendered 'justice' but 'charity, kindness,' which he says is the normal meaning of the feminine form *sedaqah* in rabbinic Hebrew (555).

In an alternative reading, *sedeq* is the subject of the sentence, a herald clearing a way for God Who brings well-being for the nation (Cohen, 279; Rozenberg, 534). Freehof offers a third

alternative, that man's righteousness must build a highway for God's footsteps on the earth. He

supports this reading by citing a passage from Isaiah: קוֹל קוֹרֵא בַּמִּדְבָּר פָּנּוּ דְרֹךְ יְהוָה יֵשְׁרוּ

(Isa 40:3). בְּעֶרְבָה מְסֻלָּה לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ:

Semantic field: In Ps. 85:11, *sedeq* is an unmodified noun appearing in synonymous parallelism with three other words: וְשָׁלוֹם חֶסֶד-וְאֱמֶת. In Ps. 85:12, *sedeq* is an unmodified noun preceded by a conjunctive *vav*. In 85:14, *sedeq* is an unmodified noun.

Category: In Ps. 85:11, חֶסֶד-וְאֱמֶת נִפְגְּשׁוּ צֶדֶק וְשָׁלוֹם נִשְׁקוּ the word *sedeq* appears in its ethical and moral sense, in a list of similar attributes: (5) וְשָׁלוֹם חֶסֶד-וְאֱמֶת. *Sedeq* in Ps. 85:12 appears in parallel with truth, another moral attribute (5), following Briggs. In both verses, however, an equally valid argument may be made for translating *sedeq* as justice, which would then become another entry into a list of attributes, and categorizing *sedeq* in Category 6. In Ps. 85:14, צֶדֶק לִפְנֵי יְהוָה the context is very unclear but categorized similarly as 5, following Briggs and Gruber.

SUMMARY: *Sedeq* in Psalms 58, 65, 72, 85

References to YHWH (3)/God (4)

References to people – (1)

References to other – 0

Synonyms: אמת, חסד, שלום תשפטו

Antonyms: 0

Prepositions: ב (1), ו (1)

Parts of speech: nouns - 4; adjective – 1; adverb, 1

JPS translations of *sedeq*: just, victory, rightly, justice

Categories: 3 (1), 5 (1), 5/6 (2) 6 (2)

Psalm 89

צֶדֶק וְ־מִשְׁפָּט מְכוֹן כִּסְאֶךָ חֶסֶד וְ־אֱמֻנָה יִקְדָּמוּ פְנֶיךָ: WTT Psalm 89:15

Right and justice are the foundation of Your throne; kindness and truth go before You.

Righteousness and justice are the basis of Your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness stand before You (JPS).

Context: Psalm 89 is a royal psalm. It begins as a psalm of thanksgiving and praise to YHWH, shifting abruptly in verse 39 to become a psalm of lament. Cohen considers Psalm 89 a communal lament relating to the national downfall before the Babylonians (289); Freehof, as early post-Babylonian (252); Weiser, as communal lament in times of national disaster (591). Dahood characterizes Psalm 89 as a royal psalm in which the Israelite king prays for deliverance from his enemies (311), so does Rozenberg (551). Freehof reads the theme of Psalm 89 as the promise God gave to David that his dynasty would be eternal, a promise that seems to have been set aside (252). So too Weiser (590-591) and Rozenberg (551). *Sedeq* in Psalm 89 is directly connected to YHWH, Whose throne is based on *sedeq*.

Cohen renders "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Thy throne," commenting that "*Justice* is *righteousness* in practice. God's sovereignty does not rest upon His might but upon His ethical attributes" (291). Rozenberg agrees: "God's rule is based not solely on might but also on the attributes of God [righteousness, justice, love, truth] cited here" (559). So too Briggs (257). Freehof renders similarly, commenting, "God's power as a moral force in the world" (253). Dahood translates "justice and right," recalling the four personified attributes in Psalm 85:11 (315). Dahood suggests that the motif, echoed in the four personified sacred mountains in the verse 13, probably stem from Canaanite tradition (315).

The phrase "righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne" appears also in Psalm 97:2.

Semantic field: *Sedeq* is an unmodified noun.

Category: In Ps. 89, the word *sedeq* appears in parallel with *mispat*, צֶדֶק וּמִשְׁפָּט,

suggesting a legal usage of the word (6). It might also be seen here in its ethical and moral sense as one more in a list of similar attributes; the second half of the verse contains two more attributes of YHWH that appear in synonymous parallelism to each other חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת. (A similar pattern in Ps. 85:11, חֶסֶד-וְאֱמֶת נִפְגְּשׁוּ צֶדֶק וְשָׁלוֹם נִשְׁקוּ, is categorized differently because of the absence of the word *mishpat*.)

Psalm 94

כִּי-עַד-צֶדֶק יָשׁוּב מִשְׁפָּט וְאַחֲרָיו כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל: WTT Psalm 94:15

For right will be restored (return) to justice, and after it (follow) the upright of heart.

Judgment shall again accord with justice and all the upright shall rally to it (JPS).

Context: Psalm 94 is a psalm of individual and communal lament that includes elements of praise and thanksgiving. The psalmist entreats YHWH to judge the earth and punish the wicked (94:1-3), warning the wrongdoers that retribution is forthcoming (94:10). The psalmist also writes of his trust and confidence in YHWH, Who will not forsake or abandoned the people (94:14), Who will provide a haven (94:22) for him and annihilate the evil doers (94:23).

Scholars differ as to whether the unjust to which the psalmist is referring are the foreign nations who oppress Israel or the arrogant rich Israelites who oppress their unfortunate brothers. The psalmist's emphasis of his faith in God as a source of support and deliverance, and his

certainty that the wicked will be punished, puts Psalm 94 in the category with other Psalms of lament that typically end with an affirmation of faith (Rozenberg, 590). *Sedeq* in Ps. 94 is connected to YHWH, Whose attributes of *sedeq* and justice ultimately will triumph among humanity, rewarding the deserving and punishing the evil.

Psalm 94 opens with an appeal to the God of retribution, אֱלֹהֵי נִקְמָה יְהוָה (94:1) which, Rozenberg writes, is "not in the sense of revenge or vengeance that seeks to satisfy a low emotion but rather as a coefficient of justice" (593). Dahood translates the opening phrase "God of vindication," noting that by rescuing the oppressed and punishing the wicked YHWH has vindicated His law (346). Freehof offers a similar translation and understanding (269); so does Cohen (308). These interpretations support a legal usage of the word *sedeq*.

By contrast, Rashi translates "judgment shall again accord with justice," commenting, so that they [the punishments] will be justified from their [the culprits'] standpoint. He continues, "and... after [the carrying out of the sentence] all the upright [will be gathered together so that they may collect their rewards. Thus, Gruber comments, Rashi invokes the rabbinic doctrine that simple justice is achieved not in this life but only after death (Gruber, 592-594).

Dahood translates Ps. 94:15 "But the tribunal of justice will restore equity, and with it all upright hearts." He writes that 94:15 is "unfortunately the thorniest line of the entire Psalm, grammatically and lexically" (349). He understands the phrase as the antonym of the phrase, in verse 20: כִּסֵּא הַדִּין (Ps. 94:2) Thus, he concludes, as in Psalm 1:5, the tribunal refers to the day of final judgment when the just will be vindicated and the wicked condemned to a special pit in Sheol (ibid). The readings of Rashi and Dahood support a salvific reading of the word *sedeq*.

Semantic field: *Sedeq* is an unmodified noun.

Category: In Ps. 94:15, the phrase **צֶדֶק יָשׁוּב מִשְׁפָּט** seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of

legal vindication or justice (6). It appears in synonymous parallelism to **וּמִשְׁפָּט**, Cohen writes of *mishpat*, "the administration of law; it will again be governed by equity" (310). Kimchi explains that justice and right belong together but the wicked have separated them; accordingly, this verse means that the wicked minister the law without righteousness, but when God has corrected the unrighteous judges than righteousness shall return to human justice (Freehof, 271). Similarly, Rozenberg comments "The giving of verdicts in the legal process will be according to just norms; i.e., legality would become synonymous with morality" (595).

Psalm 96

לִפְנֵי יְהוָה | כִּי בָא כִּי בָא לְשֹׁפֵט הָאָרֶץ | יִשְׁפֹּט-תִּבְלָה בְּצֶדֶק | וְעַמִּים בְּאַמוּנָתוֹ: ^{WTT} **Psalm 96:13**
Before YHWH, Who comes; Who comes to rule the earth. He will rule the world justly, and (its) people in His faithfulness.

At the presence of the Lord, for He is coming, for He is coming to rule the earth; He will rule the world justly, and people, in His faithfulness (JPS).

Context: Psalm 96 is a psalm of and thanksgiving for YHWH. The Psalm is quoted in I Chronicles 16:23-33 as the Psalm which Asaph and others sang before the ark of God at the command of King David. In thought and language, it resembles Psalm 29. Dahood reads Psalm 96 as a hymn celebrating YHWH's sovereignty. Its universalistic theme, namely the rule of God over the known world as well as over one people, was current in the ancient near East from the third millennium onward, he writes (357). See also Cohen: "It is not enough if Israel acknowledges God. His Sovereignty must be accepted by all the nations of the world" (315). Weiser views Psalm 96 as a cultic liturgy appointed for the celebration of the enthronement of

YHWH, related to Psalms 47, 93, and 97 (628). *Sedeq* in Psalm 96 is directly connected to YHWH, Who comes to rule the world justly, *b'sedeq*.

Cohen translates "He will judge the world with righteousness" (317). So too Weiser (628). Dahood translates "He will govern the world with His justice" (356), similar to Rozenberg, "He will rule the world justly" (603).

Semantic field: *Sedeq* is preceded by the preposition ב and used in adverbial form.

Category: In Ps. 96:13, the phrase יִשְׁפֹּט-תִּבְלָבּ בְּצֶדֶק seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of legal vindication or justice (6). The word appears in conjunction with the verb יִשְׁפֹּט suggesting a legal usage. Similarly, the phrase יִשְׁפֹּט-תִּבְלָבּ בְּצֶדֶק can be seen as appears in synonymous parallelism to an earlier phrase in the Psalm, לִפְנֵי יְהוָה יִדִּין עַמִּים בְּמִישָׁרִים (96:10). The phrase יִשְׁפֹּט-תִּבְלָבּ בְּצֶדֶק is repeated in Ps. 98:9, below, which concludes with the phrase from Ps. 96:10, עַמִּים בְּמִישָׁרִים

Psalm 97

עָנָן וְעָרַפַּל סְבִיבוֹ צֶדֶק וּמִשְׁפָּט מְכוֹן כְּסֹאוֹ: WTT Psalm 97:2
Cloud and fog surround Him; right and justice are the foundation of His throne.

Dense clouds are around Him, righteousness and justice are the base of His throne (JPS).

הַגִּידוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם צֶדֶקוֹ וְרָאוּ כָּל-הָעַמִּים כְּבוֹדוֹ WTT Psalm 97:6
The heavens declare His justice; and all the people see His glory.

The heavens proclaim His righteousness; and all the people see His glory (JPS).

Context: Psalm 97 is a psalm of thanksgiving and praise to YHWH. Its second phrase is nearly identical to that of Ps. 89:15 צֶדֶק וּמִשְׁפָּט מִכֹּן בְּסֵאֵף. Dahood reads Ps. 97 as an eschatological hymn portraying the coming of YHWH is universal judge (361). Similarly, Cohen writes that Ps. 97 "develops the theme of the concluding verse of the preceding song. It tells of the effects which result from God's assumption of the Judgeship over the world..." (318). Weiser views it as a cultic liturgy appointed for the celebration of the enthronement of YHWH, related to Pss. 47, 93, and 96 (631). *Sedeq* in Ps. 97 is directly connected to YHWH, Whose throne is based on *sedeq* (97:2) and Whose *sedeq* is proclaimed by the heavens.

For Ps. 97:2, see Ps. 89.

For Ps. 97:6, Cohen translates "The heavens declared His righteousness" (318). So too Weiser, who adds "The Hebrew term *sedeq* has a wider meaning than the translation: it comprises God's entire plan of salvation, its order and its contents, and could, in fact, be translated here directly by the word 'salvation'" (633). Briggs: "The heavens declare His righteousness," adding, "The object of the theophany is to make known the righteous judgment of Yahweh" (306).

Dahood renders "The heavens announce his just claim," comparing the nuance of *sidqo* in this instance to that of its usage in Ps. 98:2: "The Lord of Israel has claims which he upholds against the would-be usurpers" (362). Similarly, Rozenberg renders "The heavens proclaim His justice," remarking, "*justice*: or righteousness. Gordon suggests that the sense here is God's victory" (608).

Semantic field: *Sedeq* appears twice in Psalm 97. First, it appears in Ps. 97:2 as an unmodified noun. In the second instance, Ps. 97:6, *sedeq* is modified by a third person singular possessive suffix relating to YHWH: צִדְקוֹ.

Category: In Ps. 97:2, the word *sedeq* appears in parallel with *mishpat*, צִדְקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט, suggesting a legal usage of the word (6). In Ps. 97, the word *sedeq* similarly suggests a legal or vindictory use of the word (6), following Dahood and Rozenberg.

Psalm 98

לִפְנֵי־יְהוָה כִּי בָא לְשֹׁפֵט הָאָרֶץ יִשְׁפֹּט־תִּבְלָה בְּצִדְקָה וְעַמִּים בְּמִישְׁרִים: ^{WTT} Psalm 98:9
Before YHWH, Who comes to rule the earth. He will rule the world justly, and (its) people with equity.

At the presence of the Lord, for He is coming to rule the earth; He will rule the world justly, and its people with equity (JPS).

Context: Psalm 98 is a psalm of and thanksgiving for YHWH. Dahood reads Psalm 96 as a hymn praising YHWH's kingship, extolling Him for His triumph over heathen gods both in primordial and historical times, and for telling His return to reestablish the universal reign of justice (365). Weiser views a Psalm 96 as a cultic liturgy appointed for the celebration of the enthronement of YHWH, related to Psalms 47, 93, and 97 (628). *Sedeq* in Psalm 98 is directly connected to YHWH, Who comes to rule the world justly, *b'sedeq*.

See analysis, Ps. 96.

Semantic field: *Sedeq* is preceded by the preposition כִּי and used in adverbial form.

Category: In Ps. 98:9, the phrase יִשְׁפֹּט־תִּבְלָה בְּצִדְקָה seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of legal vindication or justice (6). The word appears in conjunction with the verb יִשְׁפֹּט suggesting a

legal usage. Similarly, the phrase **יִשְׁפֹּט-תִּבְלַבְל בְּצִדֵּק** can be seen as appears in synonymous

parallelism to the end of the phrase **לְשֹׁפֵט עַמִּים בְּמִישְׁרִים**. The phrase **לִפְנֵי יְהוָה כִּי בֹא לְשֹׁפֵט**

יִשְׁפֹּט-תִּבְלַבְל בְּצִדֵּק הָאָרֶץ is repeated in Ps. 96:13 above, which concludes with the phrase from

Ps. 96:10, **עַמִּים בְּמִישְׁרִים**. See also Ps. 9:9 **יְדִין לְאֲמִים בְּמִישְׁרִים**: **וְהוּא יִשְׁפֹּט-תִּבְלַבְל בְּצִדֵּק יְדִין לְאֲמִים בְּמִישְׁרִים**.

SUMMARY: *Sedeq* in Psalms 89, 94, 96, 97, 98

References to YHWH – 6, God -0

References to people – 0

References to other –0

Synonyms: **בְּמִישְׁרִים וּמִשְׁפָּט חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת**

Antonyms: 0

Prepositions: ב (3), ו (1)

Plural -

Parts of speech: nouns - 2 (*smichut-0*); adverb - 4

JPS translations of *sedeq*: righteousness, judgment, justly

Categories: 6 (6)

Psalm 110

וְיָשָׁבַע יְהוָה | וְלֹא יִנָּחֵם אֶתְּהֶ-כֶּהֱן לְעוֹלָם עַל-דִּבְרֹתַי מֶלֶכִּי-צֶדֶק: WTT Psalm 110:4

YHWH swore and will not repent; you are an Eternal Priest; upon My word, a rightful king (like Melchitzedek).

The Lord has sworn and will not relent, "You are a priest forever, a rightful King by My decree" (JPS).

Context: Psalm 110 is a royal Psalm, asking for YHWH's blessings upon the king. Some scholars, including Rashi, aver that the Psalm refers to King David, who served as priest and king (Cohen, 372; Gruber, 651), Rashi also says it may refer to Abraham (Gruber, 645). So does Ibn Ezra, noting that King David was "my king of righteousness" because he was regarded as administering justice and acting righteously to all his people [II Sam 8:15] (Rozenberg, 712). Another candidate is Simon the Just of the Maccabean period (Rozenberg, 708).

In the Psalm, YHWH promises that the king will be like King Melchitzedek and YHWH will be by his side (110:5). Melchitzedek, the king of Salem, brought bread and wine and blessed Abram after Abram's victory over the four kings (Gen. 14:18). The Psalmist here is telling the king that he too, like Melchitzedek, will combine the functions of priesthood and royalty, as was common in the ancient Near East (Freehof, 318; Rozenberg, 709). See also Rashi, "You are a priest for ever because of the word of Melchitzedek...The priesthood and kingship will issue from you so that your descendents will become the inheritors of your ancestor Shem with respect to priesthood and kingship, which were granted to him" (Gruber, 646). *Sedeq* in Ps. 110 is connected to humanity, most likely to a named king.

Interpretations of the phrase מֶלֶכִּי-צֶדֶק must take into account the fact that the context of the Psalm and much of its language is unclear (Rosenberg, 708; Freehof, 318; Cohen, 371;

Dahood, 112). Dahood quotes Fitzmyer: “whatever the puzzling Hebrew phrase ‘*al dibrati malki-sedeq* means” in CBQ 25 (1965), 308. He parses *malki-sedeq* as a construct chain with the third person singular suffix -y interposed, and translates as "legitimate king" (117). Briggs omits the phrase from his English translation, noting that it “is based on the story of Melchizedek, which many critics regard as a post-exilic midrash... But this being a gloss, it does not give evidence as to the original Psalm" (374).

Cohen translates, “Thou art a priest for ever after the manner of Melchizedek,” remarking that Melchizedek, as priest-king, “was the ideal set to the Davidic dynasty” (372). See also Freehof (320), Weiser (695). Rozenberg renders “You are a priest forever, by My say a just king,” noting that the phrase “a just king’ forms a parallel with ‘priest forever’ of the previous clause” (712). He also acknowledges, however, that other scholars understand Melchizedek as a proper name (*ibid.*).

Semantic field: *Sedeq* can literally appear as an unmodified noun in *smichut* form in Psalm 110 in the phrase “my just king.” However, it is also commonly understood as the name of King Melchizedek who appears in the book of Genesis.

Category: In Ps. 110:4, the phrase מְלִכִּי־צֶדֶק seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of legitimacy (1), following Rozenberg. This is similar to its usage in Pss. 4:6 and 51:21, זְבַח־יִצְדָּק sacrifices of righteousness, a phrase most aptly viewed as legitimate offerings. It also parallels the earlier phrase in the verse as a descriptive, כֹּהֵן לְעוֹלָם, Eternal priest.

Psalm 118

פֶּתַח־חַיִּי שַׁעַר־צֶדֶק אֲבֹאֲבָם אוֹדָה יְהוָה: WTT Psalm 118:19

Open for me the gates of victory; I will enter them and give thanks to YHWH.

Open the gates of victory (or righteousness) for me that I may enter them and praise the Lord (JPS).

Context: Psalm 118 is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving to YHWH, Whose steadfast love is eternal (118:2, 3, 4, 29), Who is the Psalmist's strength and might (118:14) and Whose right hand is triumphant (118:16). YHWH helped the Psalmist (118:13), answered him and became his deliverance (118:21). It can be read variously as a psalm of individual praise (118:5 - 7) or communal praise (118:10-13).

Cohen understands Psalm 118 as the joyful procession of the people to the Temple on an occasion of national jubilation, probably for the Festival of Tabernacles (389). So he literally reads the phrase שַׁעַר־צֶדֶק "gates of righteousness" as the gates of the Temple "where the Presence of the righteous God abides and from which He sent forth His help to distressed Israel" (391). So too Rozenberg (752). Briggs calls it a "composite processional with responsive voices" (402).

Freehof understands Psalm 118 as a celebration of the Passover at the Temple (335). So he too reads the phrase שַׁעַר־צֶדֶק "gates of righteousness" literally, as the pilgrims' request that the gates of the Temple be opened for them (338). Similar, Rashi writes that the "gates of righteousness" means the Temple, which is the abode of righteousness (Gruber, 672). Others understand it as a liturgical composition used in the dedication of the newly rebuilt Temple following the Babylonian exile (Rozenberg, 746, 752).

Briggs translates “Open to me the gates of Zedek,” commenting that “It is probable that this is an ancient proper name of the Holy City [Isa. 1:26 ; cf. Jer. 31:23, 50:7, and whose ancient kings were called Adonizedek Jos. 10:1, 3 and Melchizedek Gen. 14:18; as “Salem” is used 76:3” (406). Dahood translates “the gates of victory,” approving Ehrlich’s reading (Die Psalmen, p. 299) in Ps. 118:15 of the word *saddiqim* as “the victors,” given the military context (158-159).

Semantic field: *Sedeq* appears as an unmodified noun in *smichut* form in Psalm 118 in the phrase שַׁעֲרֵי־צֶדֶק "gates of victory."

Category: In Ps. 118:19, the phrase שַׁעֲרֵי־צֶדֶק seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of redemption, specifically, victory over evildoers (4).

SUMMARY: *Sedeq* in Psalms 110, 118

References to YHWH – 0, God -0

References to people – 1 (king)

References to other – 1 (gates)

Synonyms:

Antonyms:

Prepositions:

Parts of speech: nouns - 2 (*smichut*-1); adjective - 0

JPS translations of *sedeq*: rightful, victory, righteousness.

Categories: 1 (1), 4 (1)

Sedeq in Psalm 119, 132

אֲדֹכֶּךָ בְּיֹשֶׁר לִבִּי בְּלִמְדֵי מִשְׁפָּטֶי צְדִקָּךָ: ^{WTT} Psalm 119:7

I will praise You with upright heart; with my understanding, Your just laws.

I will praise You with a sincere heart as I learn Your just rules (JPS).

חֲצֹת-לַיְלָה אֶקוּם לְהוֹדוֹת לָךְ עַל מִשְׁפָּטֶי צְדִקָּךָ: ^{WTT} Psalm 119:62

At midnight I will arise to praise You for Your just laws.

I will arise at midnight to praise You for Your just rules (JPS).

יָדַעְתִּי יְהוָה כִּי־צֶדֶק מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ וְאַמוּנָה עֲנִיתָנִי: ^{WTT} Psalm 119:75

I know (knew)YHWH that your laws are just; faithfully You have humbled me.

I know, O Lord, that Your rulings are just; rightly have You humbled me (JPS).

נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי וְאֶקְיָמָהּ לִשְׁמֹר מִשְׁפָּטֶי צְדִקָּךָ: ^{WTT} Psalm 119:106

I have sworn to and I will (may I) fulfill (my oath) to keep Your just rules.

I have firmly sworn to keep Your just rules (JPS).

עָשִׂיתִי מִשְׁפָּט וְצֶדֶק בְּלִתְנִיחָנִי לַעֲשֹׂקִי: ^{WTT} Psalm 119:121

I have done what is just and right; do not leave me to those who would wrong me

I have done what is just and right; do not abandon me to those who would wrong me (JPS).

עֵינַי כָּלוּ לִישׁוּעָתְךָ וְלִאֲמֶרֶת צְדִקָּךָ: ^{WTT} Psalm 119:123

My eyes are exhausted [have finished] (from seeking) Your deliverance, and (I) of speaking of Your victory.

My eyes pine away for Your deliverance, for Your promise of victory (JPS).

צִוִּיתָ צֶדֶק עֲדֹתֶיךָ וְאַמוּנָה מְאֹד: ^{WTT} Psalm 119:138

You have commanded just decrees, and much steadfastness.

You have ordained righteous decrees; they are firmly enduring (JPS).

צְדִקְתֶּךָ צֶדֶק לְעוֹלָם וְתוֹרָתְךָ אֱמֶת: ^{WTT} Psalm 119:142

Your justice is just forever, and Your instruction is truth.

Your righteousness is eternal; Your teaching is true (JPS).

צֶדֶק עֲדֹתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם הַבִּינֵנִי וְאַחִיָּה: WTT Psalm 119:144

Your just decrees are eternal; bring me understanding and renew me.

The righteous decrees are eternal; give me understanding, that I may live (JPS).

רִאשֹׁן־בְּרִיךְ אֱמֶת וְלְעוֹלָם כָּל־מִשְׁפָּט צֶדֶקְךָ: WTT Psalm 119:160

(The first of) Your word is truth, and eternal are all Your just laws.

Truth is the essence of Your word; Your just rules are eternal (JPS).

שִׁבְעַת בְּיָוֶם הִלְלֵתִיךָ עַל מִשְׁפָּטֶי צֶדֶקְךָ: WTT Psalm 119:164

Seven times every day I praise You for Your just rules.

I praise you seven times each day for Your just rules (JPS).

תַּעֲנֵן לְשׁוֹנִי אִמְרֹתֶיךָ כִּי כָל־מִצְוֹתֶיךָ צֶדֶק: WTT Psalm 119:172

My tongue will answer what You say, because all your commandments are just.

My tongue shall declare Your promise, for all Your commandments are just (JPS).

Context: Psalm 119 is a didactic teaching Psalm. It is the longest in the Psalter, is an octuple acrostic paean to praise of YHWH. Its 22 verses comprising eight stanzas are dedicated to knowledge of God's instruction, Torah. Ibn Ezra notes that every verse (but 122) contains the word Torah or one of eight synonyms: מצוות, חוק, עדות, among others. The Psalmist expresses his joy and obeying YHWH's instruction (119:1-2), castigates evildoers (119:85, 95, 115) and ends with praise of YHWH (119:172, 174).

Weiser called Psalm 119 a "particularly artificial product of religious poetry" (see also Briggs, 414) whose formal character stifles the subject matter. The Psalm is a many colored mosaic of thoughts which are often repeated in a wearisome fashion..." (739).

Overall, the word *sedeq* occurs 12 times in Psalm 119 (*sedaqah* occurs twice). *Sedeq* appears in connection to YHWH, to humanity, and to describe laws and commandments, e.g, כָּל-מִצְוֹתֶיךָ צֶדֶק:

Cohen translates “righteous ordinances (119:7, 62, 106,) or righteousness (119:75, 123, 138) et al. See too Freehof, on those verses. Weiser translates “the ordinances of thy salvation” (119:7) or “righteous judgments” (119:62, 75, 106, 172) and similarly “right” or “righteousness” (119:121, 123, 138, 142) et al. Rozenberg reads “just rulings” (119:7, 62 et al.). Dahood prefers “just ordinances” (119:7, 62, et. al) and “You are just in your judgments” (119:75); Rashi reads the phrase in an identical manner (Gruber, 681). Briggs translates “righteousness” in all 12 of these instances.

Dahood considers *sedeq* as an adverb in 119:138, translating “You justly imposed Your stipulations” for צִוִּיתָ צֶדֶק עֲדָתֶיךָ rather than “just decrees.” In 119:123, Gruber translates Rashi's note on וְלֹא־מַרְתָּ צֶדֶקְךָ as “Your word of vindication”; Rozenberg reads “deliverance.”

Category: In Ps. 119, the phrase מִשְׁפָּטִי צֶדֶקְךָ or כִּי-צֶדֶק מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of justice or legal vindication (6) in verses 119:7, 62, 75, 106, 121, 138, 142, 144, 160, 164 and 172, which reads כָּל-מִצְוֹתֶיךָ צֶדֶק, a total of 11 times. In Ps. 119:121, the phrase עֲשִׂיתִי מִשְׁפָּט וְצֶדֶק carries the same shade of meaning.

Ps. 119:123 appears to have a different meaning, given its parallel to לִישׁוּעָתָךְ. The most likely type of redemption is deliverance from those who seek harm, (4) following the preceding verse בַּל-תִּנְיָחֵנִי לַעֲשָׂק (Ps. 119:121).

Psalm 132

וְהִנֵּיךָ יְלִבְשׁוּ-צֶדֶק וְחֲסִידֶיךָ יִרְגְּנוּ: WTT Psalm 132:9

Your priests will be clothed in justice; Your pious ones will sing of You.

Your priests are clothed in triumph; Your loyal ones sing for joy (JPS).

Context: Psalm 132 is difficult to classify; it may be a "Song of Zion, a "royal Psalm" or simply a "liturgy" (Dahood, 241). It contains elements of a psalm of trust and confidence in YHWH, a subset of a larger group of psalm of praise and thanksgiving. Psalm 132 speaks to the restoration of the Davidic monarchy. The Psalmist invokes the story of David bringing the ark to Jerusalem and calls on YHWH to remember the oath made to David (132:11-12, 17-18). The Psalm expresses the messianic hope that Zion will again become the sanctuary of YHWH.

This verse is part of a unit (Psalm 132:8-10) that is included in King Solomon's dedication prayer in II Chronicles 6:41.

Rozenberg translates "Let your priests be garbed in justice," commenting, "The priests in ancient Israel was not limited to performing cultic rituals. He also carried judicial responsibilities. Since priests at times became corrupt (Cf. I Sam. 2:12), therefore, honest priests who carried out justice were a source of joy to the people..." (849). Dahood, "clothed with justice" despite the II Chron 6:41 reading of... *tesuah* for... *sedeq*" (245-246).

Freehof translates, "You let your priests be clothed with righteousness," noting, "The pure garments of the priests which symbolize purity and righteousness" (374). See also Cohen: "... but also be imbued with the moral virtues which render their ministrations acceptable to

Him" (132). Briggs: "Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness," commenting "so 2 Ch. 6:41 and v. 16, except that these passages use 'salvation' of which indeed righteousness is a common syn." (470-471). Weiser reads "Thy priests get clothed with salvation," noting that "The priests receive God's 'salvation' [cf. v. 16] to pass it on to the congregation by means of the blessing they pronounce" (781).

Semantic field: *Sedeq* appears as an unmodified noun in Psalm 132:9 in the phrase לְבָשׁוּ צֶדֶק "clothed in justice."

Category: Acknowledging its opaqueness, in Ps. 132:9, the phrase לְבָשׁוּ צֶדֶק seems to use *sedeq* in its sense of justice (6), following Rozenberg. It simply makes sense from a commonsensical point of view; 'clothed with salvation' seems less likely, especially when referring to priests and not YHWH.

SUMMARY: *Sedeq* in Psalm 119, 132

References to YHWH - 2 , God -0

References to people – 0

References to other – law (8), right (1), clothes of/victory (2)

Synonyms: מִשְׁפָּט יְשׁוּעָתוֹ

Antonyms: 0

Prepositions: ו (1)

Parts of speech: nouns - 6 (*smichut*-0); adjective – 6; adverb - 1

JPS translations: just, righteousness, righteous, victory

Categories: 4 (1), 6(12)

Analysis: *Sedaqah* in the Book of Psalms

Sedaqah in Psalms 5, 11, 22, 24, 31

Psalm 5

WTT Psalm 5:9 | נְהַנִּי בְצִדְקָתְךָ לְמַעַן שׁוֹרְרֵי (הַיָּשָׁר) לִפְנֵי דְרָכְךָ:

YHWH lead me (safely) in Your righteousness because of (for the sake of) my enemies; make straight before me Your path.

O Lord, lead me along Your righteous path because of my watchful foes; make Your way straight before me (or "as You are righteous, lead me...") (JPS).

Context: Psalm 5 is a psalm of individual lament for God/ YHWH which incorporates praise; the Psalmist calls upon YHWH for personal salvation while simultaneously enumerating the attributes of YHWH, Who punishes those who do evil and blesses the righteous צדיק (5:13). Freehof calls it "a prayer of deep devotional feeling and of high ethical sincerity" (19). *Sedaqah* appears once in Psalm 5, indirectly connected to YHWH as an attribute of YHWH, Whose path is righteous or Who behaves righteously.

Psalm 5 is connected to Psalm 23 by two words: נְהַנִּי (Ps. 5:9) and יְנַהֵנִי (Ps. 23:3) and צִרְרִי (Ps. 5:9) and צָרָרִי (Ps. 23:5). The ideas are similarly parallel: leading the Psalmist along [paths of] righteousness, נְהַנִּי בְצִדְקָתְךָ (Ps. 5:9) and בְּמַעְגְלֵי-צֶדֶק (Ps. 23:3).

Cohen translates "... lead me in Thy righteousness," commenting, "As Thou art a God of righteousness, keep me steadfast in the right path" (11). Weiser: "Lead me, O Lord, according to Thy righteousness" (123). So too Hirsch, who adds "Help me so that I may recognize the right path to not miss it," that is, not to act in a blameworthy fashion" (29) and Ibn Ezra "I open my

prayer with the supplication that You lead me in Your righteous ways" (Strickman, 58). Briggs reads similarly "Guidance in life is needed because of those lying in wait" (40).

Rozenberg renders as an adverb: "... in Your righteousness, lead me because of my insidious enemies" (21).

Dahood translates, "Lead me into your meadow," which he bases on three texts: Ps. 23:3, 69:28-29, 143:10b-11. In Psalm 23, "Semantically, *yanheni b'ma'gle sedeq* appears to be synonymous with vs. 2, *bin'ot dese*, 'green meadows,' an inference borne out by comparison with Ps 65:12 -13" (146)." He also asserts that this sense of *sedaqah* may have developed from the ideas of abundance and prosperity in the root *sdq* (34), particularly looking at Joel 2:23. In Psalm 29, Dahood writes, "... since the entire context is eschatological, *sedaqah* must be a poetic term for Paradise" (34).

Semantic field: *Sedaqah* is a noun בְּצִדְקָתִי preceded by the preposition ב, with *sedaqah* modified by a first-person singular possessive suffix.

Category: In Ps. 5:9, the phrase יְהוָה | נִחַנִּי בְצִדְקָתֶךָ seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of redemption (4), here, from the enemies around the Psalmist. Even if the word בְּצִדְקָתֶךָ is understood as an adverb, the quality of redemption appears to be the one on which the Psalmist is calling. Another approach would be to view the phrase לִפְנֵי דְרָכֶיךָ [יְהוָה] as parallel to the first half of the verse, noting the connections detailed above to Psalm 23, where בְּמַעְגְּלֵי-צֶדֶק (Psa 23:3 WTT) is understood as "straight" paths. This analysis would supply a missing word, meaning "path," and use בְּצִדְקָתֶךָ as an adjective, a rather complicated procedure.

Psalm 11

כִּי־צַדִּיק יִהְיֶה צְדָקוֹת אֱהָב יֵשֶׁר יִחַזּוּ פָנָיו: ^{WTT} Psalm 11:7

For YHWH is righteous; He loves just deeds; the upright will see His face.

For the Lord is righteous; He loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold His face (JPS).

Context: Psalm 11 is a psalm of praise for YHWH, the subgroup of psalms of trust or confidence. The Psalmist enumerates the attributes of YHWH, who punishes those who do evil (11:5,6) and Who loves the righteous (11:5, 7). Humanity is called צַדִּיק (11:3), so is YHWH (11:7). *Sedaqah* appears once in plural form in Psalm 11 connected to YHWH, Who loves righteousness.

Cohen translates "for the Lord is righteous, He loveth righteousness, noting that "... righteousness is part of the Divine Essence" (28). Weiser offers similar ideas (157). Similarly, Hirsch writes about the "moral improvement of men" (82). Rozenberg renders similarly, adding that "...He Himself is righteous and His worshipers can praise him only with righteous deeds" (59). Briggs sees the verse as a later addition; he translates "righteous acts," adding "... which may be interpreted either of righteous acts of the righteous man, as Isaiah 64:5, or of the righteous acts which Yahweh Himself loves to do" (92).

Dahood renders "For the Just One is Yahweh, who loves just actions," noting that *saddiq* is recognized as a divine appellative which recurs in Pss. 31:19 and 75:11" (69).

Semantic field: *Sedaqah* is a noun צְדָקוֹת in plural form, the object of YHWH's love.

Category: In Ps. 11:7, the phrase צְדָקוֹת אֱהָב seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of justice (6), particularly because of the parallel to 'equity' יֵשֶׁר (11:2,7), following Dahood. Thematically, the Psalmist is asking for redemption from the wicked (11:2) and asks that the wicked be punished (11:6); that is, the Psalmist asks for vindication. However, one could also

argue for the nuance of moral and ethical rightness (5), given the antithetical usage of רשע (11:2, 5).

Psalm 22

יָבֹאוּ וַיְגִידוּ צְדִקְתּוֹ לְעַם נֹלָד כִּי עָשָׂה: ^{WTT} Psalm 22:32

They will come and tell of His deliverance to people (not yet) born, for He has acted.

They shall tell of His beneficence to people yet to be born, for He has acted (JPS).

Context: Psalm 22 begins as a psalm of individual lament: the Psalmist accuses YHWH of abandoning him and being deaf to his pleas (22:2-3). At midpoint, it abruptly shifts to praise and thanksgiving to YHWH for deliverance (22:27-31). The phrase “not yet” added in the translation - to people (not yet) born – follows from the previous verse, which speaks of “offspring” and, perhaps, the ‘generation to come.’”

Cohen renders “They shall come and declare His righteousness” (66). Weiser writes, “... and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,” in his understanding of Psalm 22 as a “messianic prophecy pointing to the consummation of the rule of God in Christ” (226). Hirsch translates “His merciful justice,” which he describes as God's deliverance of mankind (169). Similarly, Rozenberg: “The future generation, inspired by their ancestors’ experience, will then look with hope to God's intervention in their behalf” (130). Briggs writes, “His vindication of His suffering servant, His salvation of His people, in accordance with the usual meaning of righteousness in Psalms and Isaiah 2:3” (201).

Ibn Ezra comments “His righteousness is similar to his righteousness endureth for ever [Ps. 112:9]”; Strickman adds, “Both verses speak of God's lasting acts of righteousness to the descendents of the pious” (273). Dahood renders “generosity,” a connotation he says is well attested in Qumranic literature (144).

Semantic field: *Sedaqah* is a noun modified by a third-person singular possessive suffix, referring to YHWH.

Category: In Ps. 22:32, the phrase צִדְקָתוֹ arguably uses *sedaqah* in its sense of munificence, generosity and general doing of good. All the people will know of YHWH's goodness (7). However, thematically the Psalm focuses on redemption and salvation. The Psalmist begins by asking God, "why so far from delivering me?" (22:2), and begs to be saved (22:9, 12). He asks to be aided (22:20), saved from the sword (22:21) and delivered from the lion (22:22). Therefore צִדְקָתוֹ is used in its sense of redemption from evil and from enemies in Psalm 22, Category 4.

Psalm 24

יֵשׁׁא בְּרַכָּה מֵאֵת יְהוָה וְצִדְקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעוֹ: ^{WTT} Psalm 24:5

He will carry a blessing from YHWH, and a just reward from God, his deliverer.

He shall carry away a blessing from the Lord, a just reward from God, his deliverer (JPS).

Context: Psalm 24 is a psalm of praise for YHWH; the Psalmist enumerates the attributes of YHWH, the 'king of glory' (24:9,10) and 'Lord of Hosts' (24:10) and asks, Who is worthy to ascend the mountain of YHWH? (24:3).

Freehof translates "... righteousness from the God of his salvation," commenting, "God who will deliver him. The phrase is frequently used in the Bible, e.g., Psalm 25:5, God of my salvation" (62). Cohen adds, "Perhaps the meaning is 'vindication,'" (70) consonant with the way in which he translates the phrase אֱלֹהֵי צִדְקִי | in Psalm 4:2. Weiser translates "... salvation from the God who helps him" commenting "... we shall have to understand also the promise of

blessing and salvation not only in the sense of a material reward but as including the spiritual help which God will give to those ... in communion with him" (234).

Similarly, Briggs renders "righteousness," explaining "... not in the sense of alms... or in the sense of that which is ethically right, which could hardly be bestowed upon him; but in the meaning urged by the phrase *God of his salvation*, saving righteousness, righteousness of vindication, as usual, Psalms 5:9, 22:32, 36:11..." (216).

Rozenberg: "And just reward from God, his deliverer" (137). Dahood renders "generous treatment from his saving God," citing Zorell, who writes, "From the benevolent justice of God for generous gifts that are given to the just," citing a list of nouns with which **וְצִדְקָה** is found in parallelism, including Psalm 72:3 (151). See also Briggs on Psalm 23:3. See too Hirsch, who renders "the God of his salvation," commenting that " **צדקה** is that benevolent care which God shows us... He may expect his loving care, **צדקה** , **ישעו** , **מאלהי ישעו** from the God of his salvation (literally, from the God of his real, actual existence)..." (175).

Semantic field: *Sedaqah* is a noun in its simple form, with the addition of a connective *vav* that creates a parallelism with the preceding word **בְּרָכָה**.

Category: In Ps. 24:5 the phrase **וְצִדְקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעוֹ** "just reward," seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of justice or vindication (6), particularly because of the parallel **יֵשָׁא בְּרָכָה**.

מֵאֵת יְהוָה. The Psalmist is rightly rewarded with blessing and a just reward; these are fully deserved because of the moral behavior outlined previously in the Psalm: **נְקִי כַפַּיִם וְבֵר־לֵבָב**.

לֹא-נִשְׂא לְנִשְׂא לְנִפְשִׁי וְלֹא נִשְׁבַּע לְמִרְמָה: (Ps. 24:4). Dahood's rendering of "generous

treatment” – Category 7 – is persuasive and illustrative of the difficulty of making these categorizations. This rendering works well with the parallelism; the question is cause and effect: is the blessing a just reward due to the Psalmist, or is the generosity of YHWH a reward for the Psalmist separate from the blessing?

Psalm 31

WTT Psalm 31:2
יְהוָה בְּךָ יְהוָה חֲסִיתִי אֶל-אֲבוֹשָׁה לְעוֹלָם בְּצַדִּיקְתֶּךָ פְּלִטָנִי:

In You YHWH I seek refuge; may I never be disappointed; in Your righteousness, You deliver me.

I seek refuge in You, O Lord; may I never be disappointed; as You are righteous, rescue me (JPS).

Context: Psalm 31 begins as a psalm of praise and thanksgiving to YHWH (31:1-7), switching at that point to a psalm of individual lament: the Psalmist asks YHWH for help with his distress (31:8-14). It concludes with more praise, presumably for the prayer answered. Overall, it can be seen as a psalm of lament with verses indicating trust or confidence in YHWH's deliverance of the Psalmist from trouble.

Freehof translates "Deliver me in Thy righteousness" (77); Cohen adds "Being the righteous Judge of the world, He vindicates the innocent" (88). Weiser renders "Be Thou... a strong fortress to save me" (274). Hirsch renders "Let me escape in thy loving justice," reading into the verse David's hope to escape from the suffering that encompasses him (218). Rozenberg: "Because You are righteous, rescue me," commenting that the Psalmist "feels confident that if God's standard of justice is applied to him, he will be vindicated and saved" (177). Similarly, Dahood translates "In your fidelity rescue me," explaining that the preceding preposition seems to be causal: "Since the Psalmist has put his full trust in him, Yahweh is in fidelity obliged to rescue the Psalmist" (187).

Briggs writes "In thy righteousness... speedily deliver me," commenting, "...not ethical, but redemptive, vindictory of the cause of His people, as usual in Psalms and Isaiah" (265).

Semantic field: *Sedaqah* is a noun modified by a second-person singular possessive suffix, referring to YHWH, and introduced by the preposition ב.

Category: In Ps. 31:2 the phrase בְּצִדְקָתְךָ פְּלֹטֵנִי seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of redemption (4), following Briggs. This reading seems apt because of the parallel in the following phrase, 'deliverance' פְּלֹטֵנִי. Thematically, the Psalmist is asking to be saved הַצִּילֵנִי (Psa 31:) and redeemed אֶתִּי (Ps. 31:6) from his enemies וְלֹא הִסְגֵּרְתָּנִי בְּיַד־אֹיֵב (Ps. 31:9.) This is the particular attribute of YHWH upon which the Psalmist calls. Arguably, Category 6 might be appropriate, if the Psalmist's redemption is the result of YHWH's vindication of the Psalmist, following Cohen and Rozenberg.

SUMMARY: *Sedaqah* in Psalms 5, 11, 22, 24, 31

References to YHWH – 4

References to people – 0

References to other – 1 (deeds/righteousness)

Synonyms: ישר, ישעה, ברכה פלטני

Antonyms: רשע

Prepositions: ב (2x), ו

Plural - 1

Parts of speech: nouns - 5 (*smichut*-0); adjective - 0

JPS translations of *sedaqah*: righteous (deeds)/, beneficence, just reward

Categories: 4 (3), 6(2)

Psalm 33

אֱהֵב צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט חֶסֶד יְהוָה מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ: ^{WTT} Psalm 33:5

He loves what is right and just; YHWH's compassion fills the earth.

He loves what is right and just; the earth is full of the Lord's faithful care (JPS).

Context: Psalm 33 is a psalm of praise for YHWH; the Psalmist enumerates the attributes of YHWH, Whose word is right (33:4) and Who saves them from death (33:19). Its content fits with the subgroup of Psalms of trust and confidence. *Sedaqah* indirectly connects to YHWH, Who loves *sedaqah* and *mishpat*, which are reflections in humanity of YHWH's ideal attributes. See Psalm 11:7 צְדָקוֹת אֱהֵב or by analogy Ps. 9:5 שׁוֹפֵט צְדָק.

Freehof translates אֱהֵב צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט "He loveth righteousness and justice" (83); so too Cohen, who adds, "*righteousness and justice*. In Hebrew ethics these are the foundations of a stable order of society" (95). Weiser offers an identical translation, commenting "'Righteousness and justice' are the ordinances of the covenant which God observes and which is therefore binding also on the life of God-fearing man" (291). So too Briggs, who adds, "... probably the doing of it on His part as the context suggests..." (287). Similarly Dahood: "He loves what is just and right" (199).

Hirsch renders "The mercy of God, of which the earth is full, loves righteousness and justice." He adds, "... His, *sedaqah*, His righteousness and lovingkindness..." (234). Rozenberg renders "He loves honesty and justice," commenting "Righteousness [honesty] is the principle of justice; judgment the application of it in act (Kirkpatrick)" (189). Ibn Ezra comments, "*Sedaqah* means righteousness. God treats all equally" (Strickman, 370).

Semantic field: *Sedaqah* is a noun in its simple form, appearing as the object of the verb “love.”

Category: In Ps. 33:5 the phrase צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט אֱלֹהִים seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of justice or vindication (6), particularly because of the parallel to the word וּמִשְׁפָּט.

Psalm 36

צְדָקָתְךָ | בְּהַרְרֵי־אֵל מִשְׁפָּטְךָ תִּהְיוּם רַבָּה אָדָם־וּבְהֵמָה תוֹשִׁיעַ יְהוָה: ^{WTT} Psalm 36:7

Your beneficence is like the mountains, God; Your justice like the mighty deep; (the) deliverance of man and beast (is through) YHWH.

Your beneficence is like the high mountains; Your justice like the great deep; man and beast You deliver, O Lord (JPS).

מִשֶּׁךְ חֶסֶדְךָ לִידְעֶיךָ וְצְדָקָתְךָ לִישְׁרֵי־לֵב: ^{WTT} Psalm 36:11

Pour forth Your compassion on those who know You; and Your beneficence on the upright of heart.

Bestow Your faithful care on those devoted to You and Your beneficence on upright men (JPS).

Context: Psalm 36 is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving for YHWH; the Psalmist enumerates the attributes of YHWH, Whose faithfulness reaches to heaven (36:6) and Who shelters people in the shadow of His wings (36:8). Its content puts it in the subgroup of Psalms of trust and confidence. *Sedaqah* is directly connected to YHWH, Whose beneficence is described as high as mountains (33:7) and Who bestows beneficence on the upright (33:11).

Freehof translates צְדָקָתְךָ | בְּהַרְרֵי־אֵל “...righteousness is like the mighty mountains”

(92); so too Cohen (109). Hirsch adds, “*Sedaqah* denotes that righteousness in which the Lord

gives man as much good as will advance his welfare in accordance with the particular needs of his personality (see Psalm 33:5)" (260).

Similarly Weiser: "Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God" (305). Briggs renders "Thy righteousness is like the mountains of El" (314). Rozenberg reads "Your goodness is like the celestial mountains" (210). Dahood, "Your generosity is like the towering mountains," noting that Psalm 36:7 forms an inclusio with Psalm 36:11, which he translates "kindness"; both verses carry the same meaning as Psalm 24:5, where he translates "generous treatment." (223).

In Ps. 36:11 Freehof translates: **מְשֹׁךְ צְדָקָתְךָ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל** "O continue... Thy righteousness to the upright of heart" (93); so too Cohen (110), Weiser (305). Hirsch renders "O defer Thy loving kindness to them that know Thy" (262). Rozenberg reads "Extend Your faithfulness to those who acknowledge You" (214). Briggs, "Draw out Thy kindness" (320).

Semantic field: In both verses, *sedaqah* is a noun modified by a second-person singular prefix relating to YHWH. In 36:11, *sedaqah* is preceded by a *vav* consecutive.

Category: In Ps. 36:7 the word **צְדָקָתְךָ** in the phrase **צְדָקָתְךָ | בְּהַרְרֵי-אֵל מְשַׁפֵּט תְּהוֹם** **צְדָקָתְךָ** can seem to use *sedaqah* in its sense of justice or vindication, particularly because of the parallel to the word **וּמְשַׁפֵּט**. However, equally plausible is a reading that suggests the nuance of beneficence or generosity (7), following Rozenberg and Dahood. See also Ps. 24:5. More support can be found by reading the entire verse as a list of YHWH's separate attributes as One Who is beneficent, Who is just and Who delivers **תּוֹשִׁיעַ** those who are worthy. In 36:11, *sedaqah* appears in parallel with **חֶסֶד** suggesting a similar use of the word **וְצִדְקָתְךָ**, Category 7.

Psalm 40

וְאִמַּתְךָ לְקָהָל רַב׃ צְדָקָתְךָ לֹא־כִסִּיתִי | בְּתוֹךְ לִבִּי אֲמוֹנָתְךָ וּתְשׁוּעָתְךָ אִמַּרְתִּי לֹא־כִתְּדִיתִי חֶסֶדְךָ ^{WTT} Psalm 40:11

וְאִמַּתְךָ לְקָהָל רַב׃

I did not hide Your beneficence in my heart; (of) Your faithfulness and Your deliverance I spoke; I did not hide Your compassion and faithfulness from (to) a great community.

I did not keep Your beneficence to myself; I declared Your faithful deliverance; I did not fail to speak of Your steadfast love in a great congregation (JPS)

Context: Psalm 40 is a composite psalm. It contains elements of individual lament; the Psalmist speaks of misfortunes without number (40:13) and pleads with YHWH for deliverance (40:18). Many of the verses offer praise to YHWH, placing Psalm 40 in the smaller subgroup of Psalms of trust and confidence. *Sedaqah* is seen as an attribute of YHWH, which the Psalmist acknowledges to himself and his community (40:11).

Ps. 40:11 can be seen as a synthetic parallelism, four ways in which the Psalmist enumerates attributes of YHWH: חֶסֶדְךָ, אֲמוֹנָתְךָ וּתְשׁוּעָתְךָ, צְדָקָתְךָ. YHWH's salvific role is addressed directly (וּתְשׁוּעָתְךָ); Dahood understands this literally, as the Psalmist's delivery from death from his illness (246), not in the sense of eternal salvation. See also Freehof, who notes that the two preceding Psalms describe the physical misery of the Psalmist, concluding that Ps. 40 must have been written after his recovery from illness (103-104).

By contrast, Weiser interprets God's salvation in the larger sense, particularly noting that "God's righteousness is not used here in the legal sense, but as signifying God's activity, which includes his saving will, his grace and truthfulness and also the constancy of his actions" (339). One might see the other three words as describing YHWH's covenantal role. Ibn Ezra understands the negative sentence formation in the positive parallel, "I have preached righteousness," commenting that David speaks of his relationship to God's righteousness in

secret and in public (Strickman, 470). Cohen translates, “I have not hid Thy righteousness...” (40), Freehof (105), Hirsch (299). (339). Rozenberg renders "goodness" (242), Dahood, “generosity” (244). Briggs: "righteousness" (341).

Semantic field: In Psalm 40, *sedaqah* is a noun modified by a second-person singular prefix relating to YHWH.

Category: In Ps. 40:11 the word צְדָקָתְךָ in the phrase |לֹא־כִסִּיתִי צְדָקָתְךָ| seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of beneficence or generosity (7). It is one of YHWH's attributes along with faithfulness and deliverance אֱמוּנָתְךָ וְתִשׁוּעָתְךָ and compassion חֶסֶדְךָ

Psalm 51

הַצִּילֵנִי מִדָּמִים | אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵי תִשׁוּעָתִי תִרְנֶן לְשׁוֹנֵי צְדָקָתְךָ: ^{WTT} Psalm 51:16

Save me from blood (guilt), God, God my deliverer; I (my tongue) will sing of Your beneficence.

Save me from bloodguilt, O God, God, my deliverer, that I may sing forth Your beneficence (JPS).

Context: Psalm 51 is a psalm of individual lament; the Psalmist pleads with God for mercy (51:1), asks to be purged (51:9) and asks not to be despised in contrition (51:19). It is the first of a group of 17 Psalms with the superscription "for David" and one of eight connecting the Psalm to a specific event in David's life, Nathan prophecy after David consorted with Bathsheva. Cohen reconciles consensus scholarship, which holds that the Psalm is later than David, and that the "I" refers to the nation, not an individual, by viewing Psalm 51 as a personal *cri du coeur* adapted for recital after the Babylonian exile, a time of national humiliation, when the prayer for the restoration of the Temple was appended (161). *Sedaqah* an attribute of YHWH, which the Psalmist promises to sing out.

Freehof translates תִּרְנֶנּוּ לְשׁוֹנִי צְדָקָתְךָ "So shall my tongue sing aloud of thy righteousness" (138), Weiser (400); Cohen adds that righteousness constitutes, "God's faithful adherence to His promise to forgive the truly penitent" (163). Hirsch renders "... so that my tongue may rejoice in the justice of thy loving kindness." He translates Psalm 71:15 פִּי יִסְפָּר צְדָקָתְךָ בְּלִי-הַיּוֹם תְּשׁוּעָתְךָ "My mouth shall tell of thy merciful justice," commenting on both Psalms, "This literal *sedaqah*, this clemency clothed in judgment, which leads depraved men back to the road to salvation... a demonstration of God's greatness..." (491).

Contrast Rozenberg "joyfully acclaimed Your justice," who explains "Once the Psalmist knows he is exonerated, he will burst forth with songs of praises and thanks, lauding God as a righteous judge" (318). Dahood "... loudly proclaiming Your goodness" (2). Briggs renders "... will declare Thy praise" (4).

Semantic field: In Psalm 51, *sedaqah* is a noun modified by a second-person singular prefix relating to YHWH.

Category: In Ps. 51:16 the word צְדָקָתְךָ in the phrase תִּרְנֶנּוּ לְשׁוֹנִי צְדָקָתְךָ seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of beneficence or generosity (7); the Psalmist tells YHWH that if he were saved, he would praise YHWH for His goodness and generosity. The parallel language used in verse 16, הִצִּילֵנִי, תְּשׁוּעָתִי might suggest that the word צְדָקָתְךָ is used in its redemptive sense; this would limit the Psalmist's praise of YHWH to YHWH's ability or righteousness in delivering him from his guilt. I choose a more expansive reading, following Dahood.

Psalm 69

וְתִתֵּן עֲלֵי עֲוֹנָם וְאַל-יָבֹאוּ בְּצִדְקָתְךָ: WTT Psalm 69:28

Put transgressions on their transgressions; do not let them (come in) experience Your beneficence.

Add that to their guilt; let them have no share of Your beneficence (JPS).

Context: Psalm 69 is a psalm of individual lament; the Psalmist pleads with God for deliverance (69:2, 14-19), for his enemies are numerous (69:5) and he is in pain (69:30). The *midrash* understood the Psalmist as relating to the Babylonian exile; many modern scholars see parallels between this Psalm and the prophet Jeremiah (Cohen, 216). Weiser notes that Ps. 69 is the Psalm most frequently quoted in the New Testament, after Ps. 22, and so is interpreted in a messianic senses referring to Christ (393). *Sedakah* is seen as an attribute of God, which the Psalmist asks God to withhold from his enemies.

Cohen translates וְאַל-יָבֹאוּ בְּצִדְקָתְךָ "and let them not come into Thy righteousness," adding, "May they never participate in the Divine graciousness which brings forgiveness to penitent sinners" (220). Briggs offers the same rendering, commenting "...share in the saving righteousness bestowed by God on His faithful servants" (120). Weiser renders "let them not be enrolled among the righteous" (492). Hirsch writes "... they shall never again have access to Thy clemency" (479). Rozenberg renders "and include them not in receiving Your justice," commenting, "God's justice is tempered with mercy" (419).

Dahood justifies the verb וְאַל-יָבֹאוּ by positing that בְּצִדְקָתְךָ is a meadow, "lest they enter your meadow," a name for Paradise (164). However, scholarly consensus sees *sedakah* as an attribute of God (eg – Freehof, 190, Cohen, 220, Weiser, 495).

Semantic field: In Psalm 69, *sedaqah* is a noun modified by a second-person singular prefix relating to God. It is preceded by the preposition ב. No synonyms or antonyms appear in the immediate semantic field.

Category: In Ps. 69:28 the phrase :וְאֵל-יִבְּאוּ בְּצִדְקָתְךָ seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of redemption (4). The Psalmist is asking for redemption for himself and asks that redemption be withheld from his enemies. Redemption could also be viewed as a form of vindication or justice. However, as in Ps. 51:16 the word |צִדְקָתְךָ| could be viewed as *sedaqah* in its sense of beneficence or generosity (7); the Psalmist tells YHWH that if he were saved, he would praise YHWH for His goodness and generosity.

SUMMARY: *Sedaqah* in Psalms 33, 36, 40, 51, 69

References to YHWH (4)/God (3)

References to people – 0

References to other – 0

Synonyms: משפט, חסד, תשעתי

Antonyms:

Prepositions: ב, ו

Plural - 0

Parts of speech: nouns -6 (*smichut*-0); adjective - 0

JPS translations of *sedaqah*: right, beneficence

Categories: 6(1), 7(5)

Psalm 71

WTT Psalm 71:2 בְּצִדְקָתְךָ תַּצִּילֵנִי וּתְפַלֵּטֵנִי הַטָּה־אֱלֹהִי אֲזַנְךָ וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנִי:

In Your righteousness, rescue me and save me, incline to me Your ear and deliver me.

As you are beneficent, save me and rescue me; incline Your ear to me and deliver me (JPS).

WTT Psalm 71:15 פִּי יִסְפֹּר צִדְקָתְךָ כָּל־הַיּוֹם תִּשׁוּעָתְךָ כִּי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי סְפָרוֹת:

My mouth will recount Your righteousness, all day, Your deliverance, for Your acts of righteousness and deliverance are innumerable (I do not know the numbers).

My mouth tells of Your beneficence, of Your deliverance all day long, though I know not how to tell it (JPS).

WTT Psalm 71:16 אָבוֹא בִּגְבוּרֹת אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה אֶזְכֵּיר צִדְקָתְךָ לְבַדְּךָ:

I will come (to praise Your) might, my God YHWH; I will cause them to remember Your righteousness, (for) You alone.

I come with praise of Your mighty acts, O Lord God; I celebrate Your beneficence, Yours alone (JPS).

WTT Psalm 71:19 וְצִדְקָתְךָ אֱלֹהִים עַד־מָרוֹם אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂיתָ גְּדֻלּוֹת אֱלֹהִים מִי כָמוֹךָ:

Your righteousness, God; in (up to) the heights in which You did great works; God, who is like You?

Your beneficence, high as the heavens, O God, You who have done great things; O God, who is Your peer! (JPS).

WTT Psalm 71:24 גַּם־לְשׁוֹנִי כָּל־הַיּוֹם תִּהְיֶה צִדְקָתְךָ כִּי־חָפְרוּ מִבִּקְשֵׁי רַעְתִּי:

(Also) My tongue all day will tell of Your righteousness; because they were disappointed, those who seek my downfall (evil).

All day long my tongue shall recite Your beneficent acts, how those who sought my ruin were frustrated and disgraced (JPS).

Context: Psalm 71 is a psalm of individual lament. The Psalmist asks YHWH, Who is beneficent to save him and deliver him (71:2), to not forsake him (71:9, 18); in return, the Psalmist will celebrate YHWH's beneficence (71:6, 22-24). The phrasing of Psalm 31:2-

הַטָּה אֱלֹהִי אֲזַנְךָ מִהֲרָה הַצִּילֵנִי (Ps. 31:2) and then combined with בְּצִדְקָתְךָ פְּלִטֵנִי:

(Ps. 31:3) is nearly identical to that of this Psalm, Ps. 71:2 **בְּצִדְקָתְךָ תַּצִּילֵנִי וּתְפַלֵּטֵנִי הֹדֶה-אֱלֹהִי**

אֲזִנֶּה וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנִי: Some scholars read the Psalmist as David (e.g., Hirsch, 485), others, as an elderly individual; see, Dahood, who reads Psalm 71 as "the lament of an old man who prays for deliverance from personal enemies" (172); Briggs (124). *Sedaqah* is directly connected to YHWH and God, Doer of *sedaqah*.

Cohen reads **בְּצִדְקָתְךָ תַּצִּילֵנִי** (71:2) "Deliver me in Thy righteousness," adding "Being a righteous God, He supports the good when they are assailed by the wicked" (223). He titles the psalm "Prayer in Old Age, and translates "righteousness" in all subsequent verses. Freehof reads identically without comment. So too Weiser (495-496). Rozenberg translates "righteousness" throughout (424-425), so too Briggs (125). Dahood renders "fidelity" in Ps. 71:2 , 16, 19 and, similarly, "faithful" in Ps. 71:15 and 24.

Hirsch renders Ps. 71:2 "Thou wilt deliver me in Thy merciful justice" (485) and uses the same rendering in all subsequent verses. He comments, "*Sedaqah* when used with reference to God, denotes *sedeq* tempered by mercy, mercy proving itself in righteous judgment. It is that loving justice which is demonstrated particularly in the case of a person who, in accordance with the dictates of strict *sedeq* would have deserved to perish, but, instead, is given an opportunity to mend his ways" (486). Similarly Briggs, "In your fidelity" (170) but he switches to "faithful deeds" for **פִּי יִסְפָּר צִדְקֹתֶיךָ** (71:15) and "faithful acts" (71:24) without comment.

Semantic field: *Sedaqah*, appears five times in Psalm 71, in all cases as a noun modified by a second-person singular possessive pronoun; **צִדְקֹתֶיךָ** ; in 71:2, preceded by the preposition **ב**, in 71:19, by a conjunctive *vav*.

Category: Ps. 71:2 seems to use **בְּצִדְקָתְךָ** *sedakah* in its sense of redemption (4),

particularly because of the parallels in the verse: **תַּצִּילֵנִי וְתַפְּלֹטֵנִי וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנִי**. Thematically, the

psalm is focused on redemption; the Psalmist is asking to be saved. See also Ps. 71:15 **פִּי יִסְפָּר**

צִדְקָתְךָ כָּל־הַיּוֹם תְּשׁוּעָתְךָ. This is the particular attribute of YHWH upon which the Psalmist

calls in these two verses. Yet once the Psalmist is delivered from evil, he will enumerate the

beneficence of YHWH: **אֲזַכִּיר צִדְקָתְךָ לְבָדְךָ** (Ps. 71:16), **וְצִדְקָתְךָ אֱלֹהִים עַד־מָרוֹם** (Ps. 71:19),

גַּם־לְשׁוֹנִי כָּל־הַיּוֹם תְּהַגֵּה צִדְקָתְךָ (Ps. 71:24). The nuance of **צִדְקָתְךָ** in these verses seems closer

to beneficence, the generosity and bountifulness of YHWH (7).

Psalm 72

לְשִׁלְמָה | אֱלֹהִים מְשַׁפְּטִיךָ לְמֶלֶךְ תֵּן וְצִדְקָתְךָ לְבֶן־מֶלֶךְ: ^{WTT} Psalm 72:1

God, give Your justice to the king, and Your righteousness to the king's son.

O God, endow the king with Your judgments, the king's son with Your righteousness (JPS).

יִשְׂאוּ הָרִים שְׁלוֹם לָעָם וְגִבְעוֹת בְּצִדְקָה: ^{WTT} Psalm 72:3

Let the mountains put (lift) well-being upon the people, and the hills, (in) justice.

Let the mountains produce well-being for the people, the hills, the rewards of justice (JPS).

Context: Psalm 72 is a royal psalm, a prayer for God's blessing on the king. The Psalmist asks God to endow the human ruler with God's justice and righteousness (72:1), to extend his rule (72:8) because he saves the needy (72:12-13). *Sedakah* is directly connected to God, Who

has attributes of *sedaqah*. These attributes are imitated by people, who execute God's laws: "As God is righteous and the defender of the weak, so must the national ruler be" (Cohen: 227).

Cohen translates both verses as "righteousness." So too Freehof, who comments on 72:1 "Justice comes from God" and on 72:3, "The result of righteous government is peace. Thus Isaiah 32:17, 'the work of righteousness shall be peace' (196). Weiser notes the preeminence of righteousness in the Psalm: "Righteousness is ultimately not a relative human requirement of humanitarianism, but a divine... requirement of a religiously binding character... the righteousness of the King is a function in the mirror image of the righteousness of God..." (503). Weiser also renders "righteousness," distinguishing it from salvation, and noting that "Righteousness is ultimately not a relative human requirement of 'humanitarianism' but a divine... requirement of a religiously binding character" (503). Briggs renders 'righteousness' for 72:1, commenting "*thy righteousness*, cf. v.2; interpreted as pl. 'judgments,' acts of judgment in Hebrew" (132).

Rozenberg renders "righteousness" in 72:1 but renders **וּגְבֻעוֹת בְּצִדְקָה** "and the hills justice" per Sforno, who explains hills to mean the wives of rulers, who will also deal justly, commenting that "Sforno is just suggesting that justice will be all pervasive" (434). Dahood translates "justice" in both instances (178). Rashi on 72:1: "Your justice" so as to justify the sentence"; Gruber comments "The rabbinic Hebrew idiom *sidduq haddin* correspond semantically to English 'theodicy' and refers to submission to divine dispensation..." (471). Rashi on 72:3, "and the hills with kindness," commenting "and the hills will produce well-being for them, well-being as recompense for the kindness that will be done" (Gruber 472).

Semantic field: In 72:1, *Sedaqah* is a noun modified by a second-person singular possessive pronoun; צִדְקָתְךָ and preceded by a conjunctive *vav*. In 72:3, *Sedaqah* in its unmodified form is preceded by the preposition ב.

Category: Ps. 72:1 אֱלֹהִים מְשַׁפֵּט לְמִלְךָ תֵּן וְצִדְקָתְךָ לְבֹן־מֶלֶךְ seems to use בְּצִדְקָתְךָ *sedaqah* in its sense of justice (6), particularly because of the parallel in the verse to מְשַׁפֵּט. Moreover, the Psalm is in honor of a king, asking him to judge the people rightly (72:2, deliver the needy (72:4) and save those who cry out (72:12) Ps. 72:3 יִשְׁאֲזוּ הָרִים שְׁלוֹם לָעָם וְגִבְעוֹת יִשְׁאָזוּ הָרִים שְׁלוֹם לָעָם וְגִבְעוֹת בְּצִדְקָה similarly suggests that the word בְּצִדְקָה is used in its sense of justice (6), as a parallel to the earlier verse and in contrast to another attribute, שְׁלוֹם.

SUMMARY: *Sedaqah* in Psalms 71, 72

References to YHWH – 1, God - 6

References to people – 0

References to other –0

Synonyms: שְׁלוֹם, מְשַׁפֵּט, תְּשׁוּעָתְךָ, תְּצִילֵנִי וְתַפְּלֵטֵנִי וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנִי

Antonyms: 0

Prepositions: ב (2x), ו (2x)

Plural - 2

Parts of speech: nouns - 7 (*smichut*-0); adjective - 0

JPS translations of *tzedakah*: beneficent, righteousness, beneficent acts, beneficence

Categories: 4 (2), 6 (2), 7 (3).

Psalm 88

הַיּוֹדֵעַ בְּחֹשֶׁךְ פְּלִאָה וְצִדְקָתְךָ בְּאֶרֶץ נִשְׁיָה: ^{WTT} Psalm 88:13

Are Your wonders known in the darkness, Your beneficence in the land of oblivion?

Are Your wonders made known in the netherworld, Your beneficent deeds in the land of oblivion? (JPS).

Context: Psalm 88 is a psalm of individual lament, many say, of mortal illness (Dahood, 202; Cohen, 285) or exilic lovesickness (Rashi, Gruber 563). The Psalmist tells YHWH that he is sated with misfortune (88:4) and his eyes pine away from affliction (88:10). He asks why YHWH rejects him (88:15). Unlike most Psalms of lament, Ps. 88 includes no redemptive language, no suggestions of anticipated deliverance; it ends abruptly on a note of hopelessness. "Darkness" is understood as Sheol. Several commentators translate נִשְׁיָה as "Land of Forgetfulness" (Cohen 287; Freehof, 251; Dahood, 306; Weiser, 585; Rozenberg, 546). *Sedaqah* in Ps. 88 is directly connected to YHWH, Doer of *sedaqah*.

Cohen translates וְצִדְקָתְךָ "righteousness" (287); so too Freehof (249), Weiser (585). Rozenberg renders "Your goodness" (546), Dahood, "generosity" (302). Briggs understand this verse as a later interpretation, rendering "righteous acts" as a parallel to the divine attribute of faithfulness expressed in the preceding verse אֱמוּנָתְךָ בְּאֶבְדּוֹן: (88:12) (247).

Semantic field: *Sedaqah* is a noun modified by a second-person singular possessive pronoun וְצִדְקָתְךָ. It denotes an attribute of YHWH, appearing in synonymous parallelism to a second attribute of YHWH, Who is a doer of wonders פְּלִאָה.

Category: In Ps. 88:13 the word |צִדְקָתְךָ| in the phrase בְּאַרְץ נְשִׁיָּהּ |צִדְקָתְךָ| seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of beneficence or generosity (7).

Psalm 89

בְּשִׁמְךָ יִגְלוֹן כָּל־הַיּוֹם וּבְצִדְקָתְךָ יִרְוּמוּ: ^{WTT} Psalm 89:17

In Your name they rejoice all day; in Your righteousness they are exalted.

They rejoice in Your name all day long; they are exalted through Your righteousness (JPS).

Context: Psalm 89 contains elements of a royal Psalm. It begins with thanksgiving and praise to YHWH, shifting abruptly in verse 39 to become a psalm of lament. Cohen considers Psalm 89 a communal lament relating to the national downfall before the Babylonians (289); Freehof, as early post-Babylonian (252); Weiser, as in times of national disaster (591). Dahood characterizes Psalm 89 as a royal psalm in which the Israelite king prays for deliverance from his enemies (311), so does Rozenberg (551). Freehof reads the theme of the Psalm as the promise God gave to David that his dynasty would be eternal, a promise that seems to have been set aside (252). So too Weiser (590-591) and Rozenberg (551). *Sedaqah* in Ps. 89 is directly connected to YHWH, Doer of *sedaqah*.

Freehof renders "righteousness" (254), Cohen (291), Weiser (588), Rozenberg (553) and Briggs (257). Dahood reads "... are jubilant over your generosity" (309).

Semantic field: *Sedaqah* is a noun modified by a second-person singular possessive pronoun and preceded by a conjunctive *vav* and a preposition |וּבְצִדְקָתְךָ|.

Category: In Ps. 89:17 the word |וּבְצִדְקָתְךָ| in the phrase יִרְוּמוּ |וּבְצִדְקָתְךָ| seems to use *sedaqah* in its expansive sense of beneficence or generosity (7). It appears in a section of a

lengthy Psalm about those who walk in the presence of YHWH (89:16), Who provides them with various attributes; besides righteousness, strength (89:18) and protection (89:19)

Psalm 98

Psalm 98:2 הוֹדִיעַ יְהוָה יְשׁוּעָתוֹ לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם גָּלָה צְדָקָתוֹ:

YHWH has made known His deliverance; before (in the eyes of) the nations, revealed His victory.

The Lord has manifested His victory, has displayed His triumph in the sight of the nations (JPS).

Context: Psalm 98 is a psalm of thanksgiving and praise to YHWH Who has worked wonders (98:1), Who is victorious (98:4) and Who is coming to rule the earth justly (98:9). Dahood reads Psalm 98 as a hymn praising YHWH's kingship, extolling His triumph over pagan gods in primordial and historical times, and foretelling His return to reestablish the universal reign of justice (365). Similarly, Freehof considered this a theocratic Psalm (278). So too Weiser, who posits use of this Psalm in cultic festivals, noting that "the renewal of God's covenant for the new year must be matched by a new song" (637). Rozenberg takes a more literal understanding of YHWH's "victory" and "triumph," commenting that the Psalmist appears to be referring to an historical event, perhaps the return from Babylonia or a celebration after repulsing an attack by a neighboring nation (613). *Sedaqah* in Ps. 98 is directly connected to YHWH, Doer of *sedaqah*.

Freehof renders "righteousness" (278), So too Cohen, commenting that the former [salvation] was the effect of the latter [righteousness] (320). Weiser, noting alternative scholarly readings of "victory" and "salvation," writes that the Psalmist's understanding of reality leads him to understand the events as ultimately divine. Therefore, the reality described in the Psalm is eschatological, its goal the manifestation of the divine salvation and God's righteousness to the whole world (637-638). See also Rashi, who ascribes to the introductory phrase, "Sing to the

Lord a new song," eschatological time, citing Isaiah 42:10, and Psalms 33:3, 40:4, 96:1, among others (Gruber, 601).

Rozenberg renders "triumph" in parallel with **יְשׁוּעָתוֹ** "victory," noting that the Psalmist appears to be referring to an historical event" (613), so too Briggs (257). Dahood reads "vindication," adding "... the precise nuance of **צְדָקָתוֹ**, often translated 'his justice' ... Yahweh is not only vindicated in his supremacy over other deities, but he has also manifested his sovereignty to heathens by exalting the house of Israel" (365). See Ps. 97:6. Briggs renders "His righteousness," commenting "the vindictory, practical exhibition of His righteousness on behalf of the oppressed, as usual in Hebrew literature" (307).

Semantic field: *Sedaqah* is a noun modified by a second-person singular possessive pronoun, **צְדָקָתוֹ**.

Category: In Ps. 98:2 the word **צְדָקָתוֹ** in the phrase **לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם גָּלָה צְדָקָתוֹ** seems to use *sedaqah* in its redemptive sense, specifically of victory (4) that is celebrated over the entire earth (Ps. 98:4, 5, 8). **צְדָקָתוֹ** appears in parallel in the first with **יְשׁוּעָתוֹ** "deliverance." But see the argument among the commentators, above. The "victory" might be that discrete event (Rozenberg), it may be eschatological (Weiser) or it may be the result of YHWH's justice, a form of vindication (Dahood, Briggs).

Psalm 99

וַיַּעַז מֶלֶךְ מְשַׁפֵּט אֱהָב אֶתְּהָ כּוֹנֵנֶת מִישְׁרִים מְשַׁפֵּט וְצִדְקָה בֵּיעָקֵב | אֱתָה עָשִׂיתָ: **Psalm 99:4**

And, Mighty King, Who loves justice, You established uprightness; righteousness and justice in Israel You created (did).

Mighty King, who loves justice, it was You who established equity, You who worked righteous judgment in Jacob (JPS).

Context: Like the preceding Psalm, Psalm 99 is a psalm of thanksgiving and praise to YHWH, Who is great in Zion (99:2), Who gave the law to the prophets (99:7) and Who must be exalted (99:9). Dahood reads Psalm 99 as a hymn praising YHWH's kingship; Freehof also considers this a theocratic Psalm (278); so too Cohen (322), Rozenberg (615) and Weiser (640). *Sedaqah* in Ps. 99 is directly connected to YHWH, Doer of *sedaqah*. Kimchi says that the king referred to is God, but Ibn Ezra writes that God is the strength of every mortal king who loves justice; in either case, the ultimate source of justice is God (Freehof, 279-280; Rozenberg, 617).

Freehof renders the word *וְצִדְקָה* in the phrase *אֱתָה עָשִׂיתָ | אֱתָה בֵּיעָקֵב מְשַׁפֵּט וְצִדְקָה* "righteousness" (279), Cohen (322). Weiser reads Ps. 99 as further explicating God's holiness, which is revealed not only in God's sovereign power but also in His righteousness: "It is He who established the rule of law that governs the life of the people of Israel, and who in the history of that people have not only ordained justice as the divine principle determining their life, but has seen to it that justice was done" (642). Dahood translates, "Right and justice in Jacob" (367); similarly, Briggs (309). Rozenberg translates the phrase, "It is you who executed true justice in Jacob" (616); he notes that according to Sforino, this Psalm will be recited on the Day of Judgment (615), an understanding that implies an eschatological framework.

Semantic field: *Sedaqah* is an unmodified noun preceded by a conjunctive *vav* in the phrase *מְשַׁפֵּט וְצִדְקָה*. Compare *מְשַׁפֵּט אֱהָב* with Ps. 11:7, *צִדְקוֹת אֱהָב*.

Category: In Ps. 99:4 the word **וְצִדְקָה** in the phrase **מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה** seems to use

sedakah in its sense of justice (6). See also preceding word **מִישְׁרִים**, equity. The theme of justice is echoed in the Psalm in the naming of three prophets.

Psalm 103

עֲשֵׂה צְדָקוֹת יְהוָה וּמִשְׁפָּטִים לְכָל-עֲשׂוּקִים: ^{WTT} Psalm 103:6

YHWH does righteous acts, and justice for the oppressed.

The Lord executes righteous acts and judgments for all who are wronged (JPS).

וְחֶסֶד יְהוָה | מְעוֹלָם וְעַד-עוֹלָם עַל-יִרְאָיו וְצִדְקָתוֹ לְבָנֵי בָנִים: ^{WTT} Psalm 103:17

YHWH's kindness everlasting is upon those who fear Him, and His beneficence upon their descendents (sons of sons).

But the Lord's steadfast love is for all eternity toward those who fear Him, and His beneficence is for the children's children... (JPS).

Context: Psalm 103 is a psalm of thanksgiving and praise to YHWH, Who is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love (103:8). The Psalmist urges himself and us to "Bless the Lord, O my soul (103:1) because the Lord has compassion for those who fear Him (103:13) and has established His sovereign rule over all (103:19). Several scholars read the Psalm as a hymn of praise as the Israelites rejoice in their return from the Babylonian exile (Freehof, 286; Cohen, 333). It can also be read as a hymn for praise for individual, not communal redemption. *Sedakah* in Psalm 103 is directly connected to YHWH, Doer of *sedakah*.

Freehof translates **צְדָקוֹת** as mercy, which "continues to develop the passage in Exodus 34:6, cited in Psalm 103:8, where God's ways are described as "merciful, gracious, abundant in

goodness” (288). Cohen reads "righteous acts" or "acts of salvation" which are the results of His righteousness (334). RSV translates צְדָקוֹת as “vindication,” not ‘righteous acts’ (Weiser, 656). He further comments that Ps. 103:6 is the Psalmist’s attempt to understand that all that has happened in the past has a common denominator of God's righteousness, and that history has a divine order: "It is this general religious idea, and not only **its formal legal element**, that is first of all meant by the words "righteous acts" and "justice" (661, emphasis added). Rozenberg reads “just acts,” commenting that these include "the good deeds in behalf of His worshipers and the punishments upon the oppressors" (641).

Dahood translates “kindness” (24). Briggs renders "*his righteousness*, which latter, here, as usual, must be His vindictory, redemptive righteousness. The glossator who limited v. 11b-13b by adding ‘them that fear Him,’ did the same here; and to this a still further limitation in a legalistic direction based on Exodus 20:6, and using the late legal term of Pss. 19:9, 111:7, 119:4, 21" (327).

Semantic field: *Sedaqah* appears twice in Psalm 103. In Ps. 103:6, it is an unmodified noun appearing in the plural form: צְדָקוֹת in a *smichut* phrase, צְדָקוֹת יְהוָה. In Ps. 103:17, *sedāqah* appears as a noun modified by a third person possessive suffix and preceded by a conjunctive *vav*. In this verse, it appears in parallel with another word describing an attribute of YHWH, וְחֶסֶד.

Category: In Ps. 103:6 the word צְדָקוֹת in the phrase עֲשֵׂה צְדָקוֹת יְהוָה וּמִשְׁפָּטִים seems to use *sedāqah* in its sense of justice (6), in view of the parallel word לְכָל-עֲשׂוּקִים

וּמִשְׁפָּטִים as well as the subject of the verse, לְכָל־עֲשׂוּקִים. In Ps. 103:17 the word וְצִדְקָתוֹ in

the phrase וְצִדְקָתוֹ לְבָנֵי בָנִים | מֵעוֹלָם וְעַד־עוֹלָם עַל־יְרֵאָיו seems to use *sedaqah* in its

sense of beneficence and generosity (7), in view of the parallel word וְחֶסֶד.

SUMMARY: *Sedaqah* in Psalms 88. 89. 98. 99. 103

References to YHWH – 6 , God -0

References to people – 0

Synonyms: , וְחֶסֶד יְשׁוּעָתוֹ מִשְׁפָּט פְּלִאָה

Antonyms: 0

Prepositions: ב (1), ו (4x)

Plural - 1

Parts of speech: nouns - 6 (*smichut-I*); adjective - 0

JPS translations of *sedaqah*: beneficent deeds, triumph, righteousness, righteous, righteous acts

Categories: 4, 6 (2), 7 (3).

Psalm 106

אַשְׁרֵי שֹׁמְרֵי מִשְׁפָּט עֹשֵׂה צְדָקָה בְּכָל־עֵת: ^{WTT} **Psalm 106:3**

Happy are those who do (guardians of) justice, those who do rightly at all times.

Happy are those who act justly, who do right at all times (JPS).

וַיִּתְחַשֶּׁב לּוֹ לְצְדָקָה לְדֹר וָדֹר עַד־עוֹלָם: ^{WTT} **Psalm 106:31**

It was considered to his merit, for all generations, forever.

It was reckoned to his merit for all generations, to eternity (JPS).

Context: Gunkel classifies Psalm 106 as a psalm of communal lament. The Psalmist asks, Who can tell the mighty acts of YHWH? (106:2). The Psalmist then recounts all the wrongdoings of the people, from failing to perceive the wonders performed in Egypt (107:7), creating a golden calf (106:19) and worshiping idols of other nations (106:3). Despite all these evil doings, YHWH was merciful (106:45) and is blessed for ever (106:48). Weiser notes a connection with the cultic ceremony in the autumn festival, and like other scholars, he sees a connection to the communal lament in Psalm 78 (679).

Several scholars argue that Psalms 105 and 106, which both begin and end with "Hallelujah," are closely related. Together they describe the history of Israel; Psalm 106 focuses specifically on the rebelliousness of the Israelites in their journeys through the wilderness (Freehof, 294-295; Cohen, 351). Weiser disagrees, noting the shift in its centrality from the obedience owed God for God's saving acts in history in Psalm 105, to the ingratitude and disobedience of the people at the core of Psalm 106 (679). See also Rozenberg, 667.

Freehof translates Ps.106:3 צְדָקָה עֹשֵׂה מִשְׁפָּט שֹׁמְרֵי "justice... righteousness," commenting that "We cannot do justice to all of God's greatness, but we can keep justice in our relationships with our fellow men" (299). Similarly, Cohen writes that these are "the essential

principles of conduct which win God's approval and bring to men true happiness" (351). Briggs renders "righteousness," commenting "and not 'judgment,' whether interpreted in the sense of the Law or more generally" (348).

Rozenberg translates, "those who preserve justice... that practice fairness," commenting "Those who deal justly fulfill part of God's greatness. Cf. Ibn Ezra. The Malbim suggests that "preserve justice" applies to the laws between man and his fellow whereas "practice fairness" refers to the laws between God and man" (672). Dahood writes, "How blest the alert to what is right, the doer of justice at all times" (67). *Sedaqah* in Ps. 106 is directly connected to the righteous people, doers of *sedaqah*.

Sedaqah in Psalm 106:31 לְצַדִּיקָהּ וַיִּתְחַשֶּׁב לוֹ is connected to Phineas, whose intervention (the killing of the Israelite man and the Midianite woman, Num 25:12-13) earned him the everlasting priesthood. Freehof renders "and that was counted unto him for righteousness" (302); Weiser (678); Briggs (352). So too Cohen, who notes that a similar phrase is used in commendation of Abraham in the story of the "covenant between the pieces" in Genesis 15:6 וְהָאֱמִן בַּיהוָה וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ לוֹ צְדָקָה: (355). Similarly, Rozenberg writes "noted to his credit" (677) and Dahood, "credited to his virtue" (65).

Semantic field: In Psalm 106:3, *sedaqah* is an unmodified noun. In Psalm 106:31, *Sedaqah* is an unmodified noun preceded by the preposition ל.

Category: In Ps. 106:3 the word צְדָקָה in the phrase אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁמְרֵי מִשְׁפָּט עֲשֶׂה צְדָקָה seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of justice or vindication, particularly because of the parallel to the word וּמִשְׁפָּט. However, equally plausible is a more expansive reading that

suggests the nuance of beneficence or generosity (7), in which justice might logically be subsumed.

In Ps. 106:31 the word צדקה in the phrase וַתֵּחָשֶׁב לוֹ לְצִדְקָה ל , with its connection to the priest Phineas and its echo of the Abraham story earlier in Genesis, suggests a legal or vindictory use of the word (6).

Psalm 111

הוֹדֵה־וְהָדָר פִּעְלֵוֹ וְצִדְקָתוֹ עֲמִדַּת לְעֶד: ^{WTT} Psalm 111:3

Majestic and splendid are His works, and His beneficence remains forever.

His deeds are splendid and glorious; His beneficence is everlasting (JPS).

Context: Psalm 111 is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving to YHWH in the form of an abcedery or acrostic, each half verse starting with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The psalm praises YHWH, Who is gracious and compassionate (111:4), Whose handiwork is truth and justice (111:7) and Whose name is holy and awesome (111:9). *Sedaqah* in Psalm 111 is connected to YHWH, Whose וְצִדְקָתוֹ is eternal.

Cohen distinguishes "glory and majesty" as "the attributes in which God is clothed. His dealings with mankind reveal these qualities" from His righteousness, the eternal characteristics of His work (374). See also Freehof, "God's greatness is manifested both through His glorious works of nature and through the ethical influence which He exerts in human life" (322). Briggs renders "His righteousness," commenting "vindictory, redemptive, as usual" (383).

Rozenberg distinguishes God's eternal "beneficence" from human good deeds, which are transitory (716). Dahood renders "his generosity," commenting "The catalog of divine

benefactions in the following verses suggest that this is the meaning of *sidqato* rather than "his righteousness" (123). See Psalms 24:5, 36:7, 11.

Semantic field: In Psalm 111, *sedaqah* is a noun modified by a third person singular possessive and introduced by a connective *vav*.

Category: In Ps. 111:3 the word הוֹדוּהֶדֶר פִּעְלֹ וְצִדְקָתוֹ עֹמֶדֶת in the phrase הוֹדוּהֶדֶר פִּעְלֹ וְצִדְקָתוֹ עֹמֶדֶת seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of beneficence or generosity (7), following Rozenberg and Dahood. *Sedaqah* seems to appear in synonymous parallelism with הוֹדוּהֶדֶר פִּעְלֹ. However, all 10 verses of this short psalm, a paean to YHWH, detail YHWH's attributes, so the placement is not necessarily determinative. Indeed, Weiser writes that the acrostic format imposes an outward form which is certainly not conducive to a consistent thought sequence: "The several hymnic statements about what God means to the worshiper... are loosely placed side-by-side...without any very systematic arrangement" (698).

Psalm 112

הוֹן־וְעֶשֶׂר בְּבֵיתוֹ וְצִדְקָתוֹ עֹמֶדֶת לְעֹד: ^{WTT} Psalm 112:3

Riches and wealth in his house, and his beneficence is (stands) forever.

Wealth and riches are in his house, and his beneficence lasts forever (JPS).

נָתַן לְאַבְיוֹנִים צִדְקָתוֹ עֹמֶדֶת לְעֹד קִרְנוֹ תְּרוֹם בְּכְבוֹד: ^{WTT} Psalm 112:9

He has scattered (widely his wealth); he gave to the poor; his beneficence is eternal; his cornucopia is exalted in honor.

He gives freely to the poor; his beneficence lasts forever; his horn is exalted in honor (JPS).

Context: Like Psalm 111, Psalm 112 is a psalm of praise in the form of an abcedery or acrostic, each a letter of the Hebrew alphabet introducing a verse. However, Psalm 111 is a

psalm of praise for YHWH while Psalm 112 is a psalm of praise that uses much of the same language and imagery to describe fearers of YHWH. They are "devoted to His commandments" (112:1), gracious, compassionate and beneficent (112:4) and trust in YHWH (112:7). It is perhaps indirectly a psalm of praise for YHWH in its conclusion that evildoers shall ultimately fail while those who fear YHWH will triumph. Psalm 112 develops this theme in the closing verses of Psalm 111 to describe the life of one who is inspired by the ideal of *imitatio dei*.

Freehof reads Ps. 112:3 **וְצִדְקָתוֹ עֲמִדָּת לְעֶד** "his righteousness endureth forever,"

commenting that the prosperity promised to the fearer of YHWH as the reward of an ethical life is "the favorite idea in the Book of Proverbs and in all the Wisdom Literature" (323). See Proverb 3:16, "In her (Wisdom's) right hand is the length of days, In her left, riches and honor." Briggs reads "righteousness" in both instances, commenting on 112:3 "*His righteousness*, doubtless in the sense of prosperity, as Pr. 8:18 Jo. 2:23" (385, 386). Cohen translates similarly, "righteousness," but comments that 112:9 repeats 112:3, which he translated differently, "and his merit endures forever" (376, 377).

Rozenberg translates **וְצִדְקָתוֹ** "goodness," adding in a note that the term can also be rendered "righteousness" or "justice." According to Ibn Ezra, this term is used here because the wealth was gotten by just means. Another reading: "The good a man does is his eternal memorial and in a sense his immortality" (721). Dahood renders "generosity" in both instances (126).

In contrast, Weiser reads Ps. 112:3 as "blessing manifested in righteousness, which is here not understood in the sense of a moral quality but is God's gift of happiness in man's inward and outward life. The fact that words similar to what has been asserted of God in Psalm 111:3

are said of the godly man in verse three indicates that his blessedness in the last analysis means that he partakes of the nature of God." (703)

Sedaqah appears twice in Psalm 112. In both instances, it is connected to the fearer of YHWH, whose **וְצִדְקָתוֹ** is eternal. Compare this to *sedaqah* in Ps. 111, which uses identical language to describe YHWH, Whose **וְצִדְקָתוֹ** is eternal.

Semantic field: In Ps. 112, as in Ps. 111, *sedaqah* is a noun modified by a third person possessive **צִדְקָתוֹ** and in the first instance, introduced by a connective *vav*.

Category: In Ps. 112:3 the word **וְצִדְקָתוֹ** in the phrase **הוֹן-וְעֹשֶׁר בְּבֵיתוֹ וְצִדְקָתוֹ עֹמֶדֶת** **לְעַד** seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of beneficence or generosity (7); see the parallel to prosperity immediately preceding: **הוֹן-וְעֹשֶׁר בְּבֵיתוֹ**. In Ps. 112:9 the word **וְצִדְקָתוֹ** in the phrase **נָתַן לְאֲבִיוֹנִים צִדְקָתוֹ עֹמֶדֶת לְעַד** similarly seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of beneficence or generosity (7), suggested by the preceding parallel to **לְאֲבִיוֹנִים**.

SUMMARY: *Sedeq* in Psalms 106,111,112

References to YHWH 1 , God -0

References to people – 4

References to other –0

Synonyms: **מִשְׁפַּט הוֹן-וְעֹשֶׁר**

Antonyms: 0

Prepositions: ל (1), ו (2x)

Plural - 0

Parts of speech: nouns 50(*smichut*-0); adjective – 0

JPS translations of *sedaqah*: Right, merit, beneficence

Categories: 6(1), 6/7 (1), 7(3)

Sedaqah in Psalms 119, 143, 145

Psalm 119

הִנֵּה תִאֲבָתִי לִפְקֻדֶיךָ בְּצִדְקָתְךָ חַיִּי: ^{WTT} Psalm 119:40

(Behold) I have desired Your precepts; in Your righteousness, sustain me.

See, I have longed for Your precepts; by Your righteousness preserve me (JPS).

צִדְקָתְךָ צֶדֶק לְעוֹלָם וְתוֹרָתְךָ אֱמֶת: ^{WTT} Psalm 119:142

Your beneficence is (beneficent) forever, and Your instruction is truth.

Your righteousness is eternal; Your teaching is true (JPS).

Context: Psalm 119 is a didactic teaching Psalm. It is the longest in the Psalter, is an octuple acrostic paean to praise of YHWH. Its 22 verses comprising eight stanzas are dedicated to knowledge of God's instruction, Torah. Ibn Ezra notes that every verse (but 122) contains the word Torah or one of eight synonyms: מצוות, חוק, עדות, among others. The Psalmist expresses his joy in obeying YHWH's instruction (119:1-2), castigates evildoers (119:85, 95, 115) and ends with praise of YHWH (119:172, 174).

Weiser called Psalm 119 a "particularly artificial product of religious poetry" (see also Briggs, 414) whose formal character stifles the subject matter. The Psalm is a many colored mosaic of thoughts which are often repeated in a wearisome fashion..." (739). The word *sedaqah* occurs twice in Psalm 119 (*sedeq* appears 12 times). *Sedaqah* is connected to YHWH, Whose righteousness is forever.

In Ps. 119:40, Freehof translates בְּצִדְקָתְךָ חַיִּי "Quicken me in Thy righteousness" (344), Cohen (412), Briggs (411). Rosenberg renders "Keep me alive through Your goodness" (759). Dahood renders, "in your justice give me life" (163).

In Ps. 119:142, Freehof translates צִדְקַתְּךָ לְעוֹלָם “Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness” (352), Cohen (412). Similarly, Weiser translates “Thy righteousness is in the right forever” (736). Rozenberg renders “justice,” commenting, “God’s justice is forever, as is the truth of the teaching that sustains the world by its morality” (796). Briggs, “Your justice is just” (169).

Dahood points out an introverted parallelism between verse 137-138, *Righteous art Thou, In righteousness and faithfulness exceeding*, and 119:42, *Thy righteousness is righteousness forever*, repeated in 119:44. He comments that the “context shows that it is a righteousness synonymous not with justice, but rather with faithfulness and accordingly a saving attribute” (434).

Semantic field: In Ps. 119:40, *sedaqah* is an noun modified by a second person possessive suffix related to YHWH and preceded by a ב. In Ps. 119:142, *sedaqah*, a noun, also is modified by a second person possessive suffix related to YHWH.

Category: In Ps. 119:40 the word בְּצִדְקָתְךָ חַיִּי in the phrase בְּצִדְקָתְךָ חַיִּי seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of legality (6), given the parallel to לִפְקֻדֶּיךָ; however, a case might be made that following the precepts creates a moral and ethical life, suggesting the nuance of beneficence or generosity (7).

In Ps. 119:142 the word צִדְקָתְךָ in the phrase צִדְקַתְּךָ לְעוֹלָם seems to use *sedaqah* in its nuance of beneficence or generosity (7), following Dahood and Briggs. Depending on the

reading, צִדְקָתְךָ can appear in synonymous parallelism with אֱמֶת, at the close of 199:142 or,

according to Briggs' reading, with faithfulness, in 119:138 צוֹיֵת צִדְקָה עֲדָתִיךָ וְאֵמוּנָה מְאֹד.

Psalm 143

WTT Psalm 143:1 מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד יְהוָה | שְׁמַע תְּפִלָּתִי הָאֲזִינָה אֶל־תַּחֲנוּנִי בְּאֱמֻנָתְךָ עֲנֵנִי בְּצִדְקָתְךָ:
YHWH, hear my prayer, give ear to my pleadings; answer me by means of Your faithfulness and righteousness.

O Lord, hear my prayer; give ear to my plea, as You are faithful; answer me, as You are beneficent (JPS).

WTT Psalm 143:11 לְמַעַן־שְׁמֶךָ יְהוָה תַּחֲיֵנִי בְּצִדְקָתְךָ | תוֹצִיא מִצָּרָה נַפְשִׁי:
For the sake of Your name, YHWH, sustain me; in Your righteousness, save me from distress (in my life).

For the sake of Your name, O Lord, preserve me; as You are beneficent, free me from distress (JPS).

Context: Psalm 143 is a Psalm of individual lament. The Psalmist's foe has hounded him (143:3); the Psalmist pleads with YHWH not to hide YHWH's face from him (143:7) and asks that his foes be destroyed (143:12). In both verses in which the word *sedaqah* appears in Ps.143, it is connected with YHWH.

The Psalmist admits that his petition is not based on personal merit because he acknowledges that no man is without sin (143:2). Therefore several scholars reject legalistic readings of the word בְּצִדְקָתְךָ. Cohen writes, "The term [in Thy righteousness] cannot be employed here in its usual meaning of strict equity, because in the next verse the Psalmist begs to be spared the ordeal of a trial by God in which neither he nor any other mortal could justify himself. Accordingly the word has to be understood in the sense of God's character as One Who

forgives" (462). Weiser similarly dismisses the notion of "a sort of legalistic righteousness meting out reward and punishment" in favor of a reading of man's salvation (819).

Briggs comments "*righteousness*, in their vindication against their enemies" (515). He translates 143:11 "Quicken me in thy righteousness" (514). Kimchi: "*in thy righteousness*, for thou art righteous and upright and thou sees that right is with me and that my enemies are in the wrong" (Baker: 117).

Rozenberg on Ps. 143:1: "Answer me by means of Your justice," commenting that "The Psalmist appeals to God on the basis that He is faithful and will respond. He hopes that God's response will come by intervention in his behalf through God's justice. Cf. Ibn Ezra" (904). Similarly, he renders 143:11 "Through Your justice bring me out of trouble" (ibid.).

Dahood writes "In Your fidelity answer me, in your justice" (323). Similarly, he renders 143:11 "in your justice deliver my life from my adversaries" (322).

Semantic field: In both instances in Psalm 143, *sedaqah* is modified by a second person singular possessive suffix relating to YHWH and preceded by the preposition ב: בְּצִדְקָתְךָ. Also in both instances, it appears in synonymous parallelism with בְּאַמְנֹתֶךָ.

Category: In Ps. 143:1, as in Ps. 119:40, the word בְּצִדְקָתְךָ in the phrase בְּאַמְנֹתֶךָ לְעֵנִי; בְּצִדְקָתְךָ seems to use *sedaqah* in its sense of legality (6), given the parallel to לְפָקְדֶיךָ; However, a case might be made that the Psalmist, who is an acknowledged sinner, asks for undeserved redemption, following Cohen and Weiser. This would suggest a nuance of beneficence or generosity (7), following Dahood and Rozenberg. A similar analysis applies to Ps. 143:11.

Psalm 145

זָכַר רַב־טוֹבָךְ יִבְּעוּ וְצִדְקָתְךָ יִרְנְנוּ: ^{WTT} Psalm 145:7

(The) memory of Your great goodness they will pour out [joyously]; and Your beneficence they will sing.

They shall celebrate Your abundant goodness, and sing joyously of Your beneficence (JPS).

Context: Psalm 145 is a composite Psalm of praise and thanksgiving for God in the form of an acrostic (without the letter *nun* between verses 13 and 14) and the only Psalm with the prefix תְּהִלָּה לַדָּוִד, a “song of praise.” It is the first in the unit that concludes the Book of Psalms, all of whose themes are praise of YHWH. The Psalmist praises YHWH for his greatness (145:5), wondrous deeds (145:4 -6), for the glory of his kingdom (145:11 -13); He raises up the fallen (145:14), near to those who worship him (145:18) to help and preserves (145:19 -20). Some scholars identify Psalm 145 as a liturgical hymn of the cult community (Weiser, 826).

Cohen translates צִדְקָתְךָ “righteousness,” commenting that righteousness is identical with faithfulness, as used in Ps. 143:1 (בְּאִמָּנוּתְךָ עֲנִי בְּצִדְקָתְךָ): “The nations will bear witness to God's fidelity to His attributes as a just and merciful King with exultant song” (468). Rozenberg comments, “concrete acts that benefit the people, giving them cause to celebrate” (917). Briggs translates “*saving righteousness*, in their vindication against their enemies” (527). Dahood renders “... and ring out your justice” without comment (334).

Semantic field: In Psalm 145, *sedaqah* is an noun modified by a second person possessive suffix related to YHWH.

Category: In Ps. 145:7 the word **וְצִדִּיקְתָּ** in the phrase **זָכַר רַב־טוֹבָךְ יִבְיְעוּ וְצִדִּיקְתָּ**

יִרְנְנוּ seems to use *sedaqah* in its expansive sense of beneficence or generosity, particularly

given the parallel in the same verse to the word **רַב־טוֹבָךְ** (7).

SUMMARY: *Sedeq* in Psalms 119, 143, 145

References to YHWH – 5, God -0

References to people – 0

References to other –0

Synonyms: **מִשְׁפָּט רַב־טוֹבָךְ**

Antonyms: 0

Prepositions: **ב** (3), **ו** (1)

Parts of speech: nouns -5 (*smichut*-0); adjective - 0

JPS translations of *sedaqah*: Righteousness, beneficent, beneficence

Categories: 6/7 (2), 7 (3)

Conclusion

I trust I have fully described earlier in this paper the difficulties of assigning shades of meaning to *sedeq* and *sedaqah* in the Book of Psalms. That said, this modest project has yielded one striking variation in the nuance of meaning between the two words. (For complete results, see the chart below.)

The goal was to assign each of the 84 instances of *sedeq* (50 occurrences) and *sedaqah* (34 occurrences) in the Book of Psalms to one of seven categories, depending on its context and usage in the individual Psalm. These categories were defined as below, following the definitions in The Random House Dictionary of the English Language:

1. Legitimate: according to established rules, principles or standards
2. Physical: without bend, angle, curve (= straight).
3. Redemptive: ultimate salvation, saving, delivery from penalty of sin.
4. Redemptive: protecting from harm or loss, such as evil, or illness; victory.
5. Ethical: moral, according to rules or standards for right conduct
6. Legal/vindication/justice: justify, clear of accusation or suspicion.
7. Beneficence: generosity, bountifulness, doing of good, active kindness or charity.

In the 50 instances of the word *sedeq*, I have classified more than half to the category of legal usage, that is, vindication: justify, clear of accusation or suspicion. I found 33 examples of *sedeq* in what I call Category 6. This compares to just seven examples of the word *sedaqah* that seem to carry this nuance (or 11, if the separate Category 6/7 is included). The second largest category for the word *sedeq* was Category 5, ethical, moral, according to rules or standards for right conduct. I found eight instances that carry this nuance for the word *sedeq*, and no such usages for the word *sedaqah*.

Just as strikingly, in the 34 instances of the word *sedaqah* in the book of Psalms, nearly half carry a nuance of generosity or beneficence. I found 16 examples of *sedaqah* in what I call

Category 7: generosity, bountifulness, doing of good, active kindness or charity. By comparison, just one of the 50 appearances of the word *sedeq* seems to carry this nuance.

In conclusion, the words *sedeq* and *sedaqah* are often used interchangeably in the Book of Psalms. However, one striking difference exists between them. This study has found that in a majority of the verses in the Psalter, the word *sedeq* connotes legality, vindication or justice, a connotation rarely found in its sister word *sedaqah*. In contrast, nearly half the instances of the word *sedaqah* carry a nuance of beneficence, generosity, bountifulness, a connotation rarely found in its sister word *sedeq*. The meaning of the words, then, overlap, but by no stretch of the imagination can they be considered as synonyms, at least in one book of Scripture.

Chart: *Sedeq* and *Sedaqah* in the Book of Psalms

Each of the 84 instances of *sedeq* (50 occurrences) and *sedaqah* (34 occurrences) in the Book of Psalms was assigned to one of seven categories (eight, including a special category, combining Categories 6 and 7), depending on its context and usage in the individual Psalm.

1. Legitimate: according to established rules, principles or standards
2. Physical: without bend, angle, curve (= straight).
3. Redemptive: ultimate salvation, saving, delivery from penalty of sin.
4. Redemptive: protecting from harm or loss, such as evil, or illness; victory.
5. Ethical: moral, according to rules or standards for right conduct
6. Legal/vindication/justice: justify, clear of accusation or suspicion.
7. Beneficence: generosity, bountifulness, doing of good, active kindness or charity.

| Category | <i>Sedeq</i> | <i>Sedaqah</i> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. Legitimate | 3 | 0 |
| 2. Physical | 1 | 0 |
| 3. Redemptive: ultimate salvation | 1 | 0 |
| 4. Redemptive: protecting from harm | 3 | 7 |
| 5. Ethical | 8 | 0 |
| 6. Legal/vindication | 33 | 7 (6/7=4) |
| 7. Beneficence | 1 | 16 |

Total
34

50

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