

## HEBREW PARALLELISM IN THE PSALMS

In our way of thinking, poetry has rhyming words. However, Hebrew poetry has rhyming *thoughts* or *ideas* rather than words. Most verses in the Psalms are composed of two lines which the author has carefully constructed to rhyme in thought, rather than sound; this is called **PARALLELISM**.

**I. SYNONYMOUS** [similar] reinforces the thought of the 1<sup>st</sup> line by repeating it in the 2<sup>nd</sup> line using very similar words and ideas.

19.1-2

25.4 *Show me thy ways, O Lord; Teach me thy paths.*

**II. ANTITHETIC** [contrast] contrasts the thought of the 1<sup>st</sup> line with the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Key word-*but*.

1.6 *For the LORD knows the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*

**III. EMBLEMATIC** [pictorial] uses a word picture in the 1<sup>st</sup> line to illustrate the thought contained in the 2<sup>nd</sup> line. Key words- *like, as, so*.

42.1 *As the deer pants for streams of water, so pants my soul for you, O God.*

**IV. SYNTHETIC** [additional] uses the 2<sup>nd</sup> line to add something or complete the thought of the 1<sup>st</sup> line.

23.1 *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

## FIGURES OF SPEECH

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*Look for the intent of the metaphor.*

**SIMILE** A comparison between two things that resemble one another. Key words- *like* or *as*. Ps 1.3

**HYPERBOLE** The use of exaggeration to emphasize a point. Ps 6.6

**RHETORICAL QUESTION** A question with an obvious answer. Ps 106.2

**METAPHOR** A comparison in which one thing is declared to be another. Key word- *is*. Ps 84.11

**ANTHRHROPOMORPHISM** Assigning an appropriate part of man's body to God. Ps 31.2

**ZOOMORPHISM** Assigning an appropriate part of an animal to God. Ps 17.8

**PERSONIFICATION** Assigning human characteristics to lifeless objects. Ps 35.10