

# THE PSALMIST CONCEPT OF PROVISION IN PSALM 23: 5 AND ITS RELEVANCE TO AFRICAN INDIGENOUS CHURCHES (YORUBA) IN NIGERIA

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8217042>

Published Date: 05-August-2023

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**Abstract:** The book of Psalms is widely read by Christians all over the globe. Psalm 23 is very popular and mostly read among Christians of all traditions because it is considered as a text that vividly describe the cordial relationship between Yahweh and his People. This Psalm 23: 5 has become the best Psalm and the favourite biblical passage of many Christians in Africa today. This study examines Psalm 23: 5 in the context of provision that is fundamental to the needs of the African people. This study is an attempt to reread this text existentially with the African life interest and experience. African Biblical Hermeneutics was used for the study. It was discovered that the book of Psalms was used profusely by the ancient Israel and Christians in all traditions and generations. Provision is important to the African people who are currently going through economic recession. Psalm 23: 5 brought a certain form of relief and hope to the African who are in dare need of a God who can meet their economic needs on a daily basis. The God who supplies food in abundance in the presence of the enemies whose desire is to see humans suffer hunger deserve worship. The provisions of God is so much that it overflows. The study therefore concludes that African Bible Scholars must ensure that biblical text find relevance in African life interest at all times. This would make the Bible relevant in every generation.

**Keywords:** Psalm 23: 5, Christians, African, Provision, and God.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Psalms is important among the books of the Bible. That is why throughout the Christian centuries, the Psalms have received special attention among Christians all over the World. The Hebrew title for the Psalms is *Tehillim* meaning 'Hymns of Praise'. The Greek title *Psalmoi* was a translation of a different Hebrew word, *Mizmor* meaning 'songs set to music' or 'I sing'. (Hinson, 2017: 107). The writers of Christian hymns throughout centuries have drawn from the well of the Psalter. The Psalms are internal thoughts, meditations, questions and prayers of the Old Testament Saints. To read and pray the Psalms is to join the voices of numberless people who too have read and prayed them, have felt their joy, anguish and indignation (Bullock, 1979: 113). The Psalms capture the qualitative essence of man and God and lay them out in juxtaposition, thus revealing the insufficiency of the one and the all-sufficiency of the other. The Psalter speaks about God and to God in such a way that no other book has done (Weiser, 1962: 19). As poetry they tend to be more pleasing to the aesthetic sense and emotional nature of humanity than prose. They are written for the heart not the mind. (McCain2002: 187). According to some Scholars, the book of Psalms is the most cited and most discussed book in the Old Testament (Botha, 2015: 283-300; Kennedy, 1984: 14-21; Merrill, 1965: 354-360; Morgenstern, 1946:13-24). There is no better way to enter the spirit of Israelite history and faith of this people of antiquity than through the Psalms (Bullock, 1979: 113).

Psalm 23 is one of the most familiar Psalms in the Bible (Crenshaw, 2001: 61) because ‘everyone knows Psalm 23’ (McCann, 2008: 42). Psalm 23 is called the ‘American Icon’ and the ‘nightingale of the Psalms’ (Adamo, 2018:1). There are two major approaches to the reading of this Psalm. They are: as Shepherd to the Sheep and as God to Human. Although, this Psalm is short, it has however filled the whole world with ‘melodious joy’ (Segal, 2013: 103).

Psalm 23 addresses protection, provision, healing and success. Our concern in this study is Psalm 23: 5 that talks about provisions. The purpose of this study is to present an Africentric approach to Psalm 23: 5 with reference to the Yoruba Christians in African Indigenous Churches in Nigeria. African Biblical Hermeneutics which provides that the biblical text be reread in order to make the Bible relevant and meaningful to the African life and experience. This study therefore examines Psalm 23: 5 in the context of provision that is fundamental to the needs of the African people. This study is an attempt to reread this text existentially with the African life interest and experience.

## 2. LITERARY ANALYSIS OF PSALM 23

This Psalm is one of the widely read text in the Old Testament. The Psalm is filled with rich pastoral imagery. It informs us of how Yahweh as a Shepherd takes care of His Sheep. It speaks of Yahweh as the Shepherd who is committed to the well-being of the His flock by providing protection, guidance and adequate care for the Sheep. In a society where the major source of sustenance is sheep-farming, a symbol such as Shepherd could easily be associated with God (VanGemenen, 1997: 1225). The presentation of Yahweh as Shepherd in this Psalm is a perfect reflection of the image of the Yahweh the God of Israel as seen in the Old Testament Scriptures (Exod. 15: 13; Psa. 77: 21; 78: 52-53).

Psalm 23 is commonly attribute to King David but Modern Hebrew grammar of Psalm 23 points to a late period, during or after the Babylonian Exile. This help us in understanding what the Psalm meant and why it was written. It is a song of praise and worship, reflecting the renewed optimism of the returning Jews at the end of the Babylonian Exile.

A close look at the author’s description of Yahweh suggests that he is very much aware of the history, land life experiences of the ancient Israel (Botha, 2015: 283-300; Bullock, 2015: 169). However, on the origin of the Psalm, many scholars opined that it was composed during the Babylonian captivity and recited in the post-exilic Israel (Adamo, 2018: 6). It is a Psalm of trust and confidence. It expresses the confidence of the author in God’s goodness in this life and that which is to come (Barker & Kohlenberger, 1994: 823). The author presented God as guidance. What gives Psalm 23 a priceless value to all ages may be the very fact that it stands there as a pure expression of confidence in God, unhindered by all special historical circumstances, an adequate expression of the confidence of faith of all sorts of people, and at all time (Bullock, 1979: 124).

Scholars have called Psalm 23 by different titles. Mays titled this Psalm as ‘The Lord is My Shepherd’ (1994: 14). Segal called it ‘With Me’ (2013: 203). To Kraus it is ‘Security in the Goodness and Mercy of Yahweh’ (1988: 302-305). Shaefer see the Psalm as ‘You are with Me’ (2001: 58). Bullock refers to the Psalm as ‘You are with Me’ (2015: 166). On a close look at the titles given to Psalm 23 by these Scholars we can observe that the titles agree with the contents. This Psalm could be divided into six parts. They are: Possession: ‘My Shepherd’ (v.1), Position: ‘He makes me to lie down ... beside the still waters’ (v.2), Promise: ‘He restores my Soul’ (v.3), Progress: ‘Yes, though I walk through the valley (v.4), Provision: ‘You prepare a table before me...’ (v.5), and Prospect: ‘Goodness and mercy...’ (v. 6). Our concern in this paper is provision in Psalm 23: 5. We shall now proceed to consider Psalm 23: 5 in the light of Provision for the ancient Israel and the African Christians.

## 3. HERMENEUTICAL STUDY OF PSALM 23:5

Attempt is made in this section to study the key words in the text and relate them to provisions. This will help us to know what the text meant to the original audience and the western scholars.

### The Text in English

“You prepare a table before me and in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows”

### The Text in Hebrew

תַּעֲרֹךְ לִפְנֵי שֻׁלְחָן גִּיד צֶרֶף דְּשַׁנֵּת בְּשֵׁמוֹ רֵאשִׁי כּוֹסֵי רְוָה:

The phrase תַּעֲרֹךְ לִפְנֵי שֻׁלְחָן ‘you prepare a table before me’ should be noted. The basic meaning of this phrase is to ‘arrange in order’ for the sake of accomplishing a useful purpose. It is never used to describe arranging something arbitrarily or haphazardly. Thus, wood is set in order on an altar for a fire (Gen. 22: 9; Lev. 1: 7; 1kgs. 18: 33), a table is arranged for a meal (Ps. 23: 5; 78: 19; Prov. 9: 2; Isa. 21: 5; 65: 11; Ezek. 23: 41), troops draw up in battle order for engaging the enemy

(Gen. 14: 8; Judg. 20: 20, 22, 33; 1 Sam. 4: 2; 17: 2, 8, 21; 2 Sam. 10: 9-10), lamps are prepared for proper burning (Ps. 132: 17), and words and arguments are drawn up in preparation for the presentation of a persuasive legal case (Job. 13: 18). The table denotes fellowship of an official type (Neh. 5: 17), or domestic bliss (Ps. 128: 3); it can be set by the great host himself (Ps. 23: 5) providing for his people in the desert (Ps. 78: 41). In this text, Psalmist takes comfort in the God of all provision and deliverance. The Psalmist here refer to Yahweh as someone who deliberately prepare a table before him. This suggests that the Psalmist is faced with situation of famine or hunger and to his dismay, Yahweh fixed the situation. To the Psalmist, Yahweh is gracious even amid the fear and stress he experienced of difficult situation, Yahweh still supplies. Yahweh's provisions never fails. In the fact, the action of Yahweh in supplying food for the Psalmist was a big surprise. The Hebrew word שֻׁלְחָן 'table' has its origin not in the Old Testament but in Arabic cognate meaning "to strip off hide." The Syriac שֻׁלְחָן refers to the hide that has been stripped from an animal. The Hebrew usage would seem to derive from the practice of spreading a hide on the ground for use as a table. Ugaritic employs the noun שֻׁלְחָן in a sense similar to that of the Hebrew. The connection with Arabic and Hebrew may be misleading or some kind of borrowing may be involved. In any event, the meaning is table or more generally place of eating שֻׁלְחָן is used in the OT with several variations, all of them deriving from the use to which a table is put. In the first place, it describes the physical table itself, as in 2Kings 4:10 and Jud 1:7. (TWOT. 2395a, BDB 9972, 9973, p. 1018; Strong 7971; Holladay, 8630' 8868). In the latter passage conquered kings are pictured as gathering up scraps of food under the table of their conqueror. More frequently the word describes the table spread with food, as in Neh 5:17. Here the emphasis is on the meal rather than on the table itself. From this the metaphorical use derives easily, namely God's provision for man's needs (Psa 78:19).

There is the need to underscore the phrase נֶגַד צַרְרֵי 'in the presence of my enemies'. This suggests that the Psalmist is surrendered by enemies who thought that he cannot be delivered from his predicament. It was in their presence that food came. In other words, the care of Yahweh was like a wonderful feast that a person could enjoy even in the presence of enemies. This deliverance could function as a form of comfort; the enemy, in seeing the success of the one trusting God would be ashamed (Ps. 86: 17). Also, the assurance of the defeat of one's enemies functioned as hope for the righteous individual (Num. 23: 11; 1 Sam. 25: 22; 26, 27; 2 Sam. 4: 8). The word נֶגַד tell, make known. Occurs in the Hiphal and Hophal, only. This root basically denotes "to place a matter high, conspicuous before a person". In Arabic the word means "be conspicuous" and when used as noun it means "highland" Usually the "matter" was previously unknown or unknowable to the object. The verb requires varying translations depending on the context. The meaning is further enlightened by considering the following synonymous parallels: "to say" and "to make known" (Hiphil), Jer 4:5 (cf. Exo 19:3; Deut 32:4; Isa 41:22; etc.); "to report," Job 12:7-8; Psa 19:1; "to understand," Jer 9:12; "to speak," Isa 45:19; and "to advise," Jer 38:15. The verb occurs 363 times (TWOT, 1973; BDB 8364, 8365, p. 864; Strong 3334, 6889; Holladay 7366). Besides, the phrase אָנַחְתָּ בְּרֹאשִׁי בַשֶּׁמֶן 'you anointed my head with oil' is worthy of noted. In ancient Israel kings and priests were anointed. Anointing is a symbol of divine presence and power. It is an indication that the Psalmist has been appointed to exercise authority and dominion over circumstances. During the biblical times, people often used anointing oil to refresh their guests and show them honour (Lk. 7: 36-46). Although the Psalmist was surrounded by enemies, Yahweh still refreshed him.

The word שָׁן means be (come) fat, prosperous; to anoint. To pour oil on another was a token of hospitality and honour (Ps. 23: 5; 133: 2; Lk. 7: 46). The verb d'shgn is used only in poetry except for the Pentateuch, once in the Qal stem (Deut 31:20), usually in the Piel or Pual. Refers to the "fatty ashes" left after the burning of sacrificial animals (Exo 27:3; Num 4:13). God's judgment on Edom is compared to a great sacrifice as both God's sword and the ground are covered with "fat" (Isa 34:6-7). Since fat animals were considered the healthiest and the fat was regarded as the best part of sacrificial animals (cf. Psa 20:3), the metaphorical usage of "prosperous" or "rich" is easily understood. Fat, rich, an adjective used ten times. It is used to convey the idea of prosperity and well-being. The righteous man is described as a fruitful tree, "full of sap" in his old age (Psa 92:14). In Proverbs, the generous man, the diligent man, and the one who trusts in the Lord are all called "fat" or "prosperous" (Prov 11:25; Prov 13:4; Prov 28:25). Good news "gives health to the bones" (Prov 15:30). Psalm 23:5 refers to the head "anointed (made fat) with oil" as a description of the blessing of God. Oil, generally olive oil whether pure or prepared for various uses such as perfume or ointment. It is used 190 times (Holladay 1912, TWOT 0457, BDB 2236, 2237 p. 206, Strong 1878).

Furthermore, שָׂא meaning I, head, top, summit, upper part, chief, total, sum. The primary meaning of this root is "head". It is common to all Semitic languages and appears in its root forms and derivatives nearly 750 times. It is used for the "head" as part of the body (Gen 3:15) and by extension for the notion of "chief" of a family (Exo 6:14), as "chief officer" of the

divisions of Israel (Exo 18:25) and the like. The unique Hebraic character of this usage is clear in the OT as the root is rarely applied to chiefs of Gentile nations. It is used also for the top or summit of a geographical feature such as a mountain or hill (Exo 17:9) and the upper part of a building or architectural feature (Gen 11:4; 2Chr 3:15) and as a personification for such features (Psa 24:7, 9). The root was utilized in many colloquial expressions for plant names (Job 10:4) parts or portions of things (Gen 2:10) and terms for artifacts. In this last category is the usage of the root for both "head stone" (Zech 4:7) and "chief corner stone" (Psa 118:22). This passage and usage are carried over into the NT and quoted by Jesus concerning his being rejected by the Jews (Mt 21:42; Lk 20:17; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:7). The root is widely used in the OT with other terms in the sense of the superlative, since Hebrew does not have any simple form to express the third degree. There are many examples of this usage (Exo 30:23) where the meaning is "best," "foremost," the uniquely finest, which alone was fit for the service of God. This theological meaning is carried over to the officers of the temple (2Kings 25:18) and the best musicians (Neh 11:17). In most of the versions there are divergencies in the translation of *ro'esh* when it is used in the sense of "chief" as for example (Num 31:26) and many similar passages KJV reads "chief," NIV and RSV read "head" but none are completely consistent. The root appears in many passages in the sense of "sum" or "total" (Prov 8:26) RSV "first" with a footnote which cites the difficulty of the Hebrew. The KJV consistently reads "total," "sum" in passages dealing with the census of Israel (Exo 30:12; Num 1:2 etc.) and the Aramaic form appears in the unusual sense of the "sum" or "substance" of a dream (Dan 7:1). Although many of the usages of the root can be traced back to Akkadian and ultimately to Sumerian, the reliance on the nation's "head" as a high officer or chosen personage is developed in Hebrew to much greater degree than the other languages (Holladay 7716, Twot 297, 2097, BDB 8827, 8828 p. 910, Strong 7326, 7389). The theological use of the root to designate divinely appointed offices in the OT is carried over into the NT in such terms as "head of the church" (Eph 5:23), a title ascribed to Christ.

The phrase *כּוֹסֵי יַיִן* 'my cup runs over' should be underscore. It means my Cup over flows, superabundance. The picture of a full and overflowing cup shows the abundance of Yahweh's blessings on the Psalmist. The banquet prepared by God symbolically celebrates the bounty and blessing of Yahweh's covenant love experience by the Psalmist during his life time. The word *כּוֹס*, cup occurs thirty –three times in the Old Testament and it is always associated with drinking. A cup is a vessel for drinking from, of a variety of material (gold, silver, and earthenware), patterns (Est 1:7) and elaboration. It can also mean a bowl or a larger vessel used for drinking (Zech. 12: 2). Both Ugaritic and Arabic have cognate nouns for drinking cup from this root. Of the thirty-three occurrences, about ten speak of literal cups. Of these, five occur in Gen 40 where Joseph interprets the dream of Pharaoh's cupbearer. Sixteen of the figurative usages present the cup in a negative light. Primarily these relate to God's judgment upon sinful nations (Jer 25:15). They now drink to the bitter dregs (Isa 51:17, 22) the folly which they have chosen (BDB 4394, 4395 p. 468, Strong 3563, TWOT 0965, Holladay 3719). The result is as drunkenness; staggering (Isa 51:22) and shame (Hab 2:16). It is the cup of the Lord's fury (Jer 25:15). It was this cup which stood before Christ's eyes in Gethsemane (Mt 26:39). Because of God's forgiveness through Christ the cup offered to us may be one ruled with blessing and not curse (Psa 16:5; Psa 23:5). Human beings must choose the cup they will drink: fury or salvation (Psa 116:13).

#### 4. RELEVANCE OF PSALM 23: 5 TO THE AFRICAN INDIGENOUS CHURCHES (YORUBA) IN NIGERIA

It is crucial at this juncture to give a brief background on the African Indigenous Churches. These are the Churches that were started by Africans or Nigerians themselves. They are off-shoot of the existing Mission Established Churches like the Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist and the likes. As Christianity began to grow in African continent, there came agitations from the African adherents of the Christian faith of the need to have an indigenous Christianity (Awojobi, 2021). They claimed that the Christianity brought by Europeans and Americans do not have the African touch. Their aim was to contextualize the Christian faith to that it can be attracted to the African people. The first group to emerge was called African Indigenous Churches. They include: Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S), and the Church of the Lord (Aladura).

The African Indigenous Churches claim to have better approach to Christianity than the Mission Churches. The most prominent and widest characteristic of an Indigenous Churches is the strong interest in the use of African worldview in their mode of reading and interpreting the Bible. This actually distinguishes African Christianity from the Western Christianity. They claim that that the missionary/western ways of reading and interpreting the Bible are too foreign to meet the urgent needs of Africans. The Indigenous Churches preach messages that are deeply rooted in African culture in the light of the



existence of evil spirits, witches and wizards, dreams, trances and visions (Adamo, 2005: 39-40). Their emphasis of this group of Christians on Prayer made the people to call them Aladura (owner of prayer). Their leaders were also refer to as Baba Aladura (Father of Prayer). They have prayer groups called 'prayer warriors' (Afadura Jagun). The major responsibilities of this group are to pray and fast for the needy, the sick, and special programs in the churches. They use the book of Psalms in their prayers. As far as they are concerned the book of Psalms contains potent words that can be used in difficult situations. The central and the distinguishing element of African Indigenous Churches was in how embedded it was into Yoruba cosmology and worldview (Komolafe 2013: 112). It addresses the questions that deal with unseen powers, and responded in concrete ways to indigenous needs and aspirations. The African Indigenous Churches through their mode of worship and practice brought Jesus Christ into the very heart of the Yoruba culture so that the Christ they preach is the savior who gives hope to the future as well as meeting the felt needs of the people (Komolafe, 2013: 113). They have adopted the African Biblical Hermeneutics approach into the study and interpretation of Bible. This method provides that biblical passages be interpreted in a way to make the Bible relevant in African situations and times. It is the rereading of the Bible from a premeditatedly Afrocentric perspective (Adamo, 2015: 31-52).

To this end we shall now embark on the interpretation of Psalm 23: 5 and its relevance to the African Indigenous Churches in Nigeria.

**The phrase** תַּעֲרֵךְ לִפְנֵי שֹׁלֵחַן (Psa 23:5) ' you prepare a table before me' is very important to the African people. This is because the continent is always faced with famine and hunger. Many are of the view that the African continent is going through a period of economy recession. Whenever a county is in going through recession, it becomes very difficult to manage its resources properly (Nwachukwu, A.C. et al 2020: 367). Economic recession stagnates increase in wages and raises the number of people on low pay as well as increasing unemployment and underemployment. The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER, 2008) describes a recession as a significant decline in economic activity spread across economy, lasting more than a few months, normally visible in a real Gross Domestic Product (GDP), real income, employment and industrial production and wholesale-retail sales (Alisi, 2016: 8-49). Eneji, Mai-Lafia and Weiping, observed that the current economic crisis confronting the Africa's most populous country has had a catastrophic and debilitating effect on the generality of Nigerian populace (Eneji, et al, 2013: 148 -176). Sadly, economic recession is a period when employers, both public and private sectors of the economy are compelled to place embargo on further employment while others adopt either retrenchment or pay cut as a survival policy (Omololu, 1990: 1).

Besides the number of displaced persons in African is very high. A good number of African do not have access to good food and water on a daily basis. Besides, unemployment in African continues to be on the increase. It is becoming increasingly difficult for some persons in this continent to eat good food regularly. Some young African are now going abroad for greener pastures. In Nigeria, for example, many people in an attempt to seek greener pastures abroad have lost their lives. Some are in jails today in some countries for offenses they knew nothing about. Others have become slaves and sex machines or workers in some countries across the globe (Crawley, et al, 2015).

Most Africans belief that it is possible for a person to work hard and yet have nothing to show for it. They maintained that riches and achievements in life come for the gods, divinities, ancestors and spirit. It is also held that there are potent words to be recited before the gods, divinities, ancestors and spirit can bring abundant riches (Adamo, 2018). It is a common belief and practice among the Africans that humans or part of human beings can be used for money rituals. To have abundance of provision is not only through hard work but by the approval of the gods of the land (Adamo, 2005).

It is therefore a good news to an average African Yoruba Christian to hear that Yahweh can prepare a table for those who are hungry in a time like this. Gleaning through the Bible especially the book of Psalms the words resemble that of the African potent words for possession. This strengthens that belief that the book of Psalms especially Psalm 23 when correctly recited can bring possession or provision miraculously to an individual (Adamo, 2005). One of the things that Africans are searching for is food security on a daily basis. This is because of the high level of poverty in the land. It is very common to see Africans without food, clothing and daily provisions. Therefore, a Psalm that spoke of God preparing a table is of great interest to the African people. God is presented in this Psalm as a host who is honouring a guest and serving meal. As far as Abogunrin is concerned, the established Churches in African only applied the gospel to the salvation of the soul and never consider the gospel in relation to man's body, health, victory, protection from demonic agents, provision of daily needs and man's total well-being (1986: 86). The African Indigenous Churches on the other hand claimed that the gospel is for the total salvation of Humans. They stress that the gospel message must be able to meet the challenges faced by the African people on a daily basis. Africans are more interested in a savior that care for their souls and their felt needs.

The phrase 'נִגַּד צֶרֶר' 'in the presence of my enemies' is crucial to the Africans. The belief in enemies as main sources of all evil and bad occurrences is so strong in African that nothing happens naturally without a spiritual force behind it. However, in the text under review, the preparation of a table 'in the presence of my enemies' is an indication of God vindicating his servant. In the 'presence of my enemies' expresses both the adversities of life and God's love toward his own. In the presence of God the guests forget their troubles and tears (Barker & Kohlenberger III, 1994: 824). It is commonly held among the African that every human has an enemy called *ota*. The enemy of a person does not want progress or any achievement for the person. When it comes to provision, it is widely believed among the African that the enemies plan is to always block the source of supply if able. It is very common among Christians in African Indigenous Churches to see worshippers praying against their enemies in worship services. The enemies to the African people are human beings who do not want a person to achieve greater heights in life. It is believe especially among the Yorubas that the enemies do not want a person to eat good food. This is the reason for praying all sort of prayers on the supposedly enemies. There is an adage in Yoruba that says: '*Oluwa, yi o je ki ise re se oju awon ota re*': 'God will make your prosperity happen in the presence of your enemies' Putting food on the table in the presence of enemies is a great miracle that God alone can do. This to the African mind will silent the enemy who which the person die of hunger.

Furthermore, 'you anointed my head with oil' בִּשְׁמֵן רִאשִׁי must be underscored. Before entering a banquet hall, an ancient host would anoint the honoured guests with oil made by adding perfume to olive oil (Barker & Kohlenberger III, 1994: 824). In African setting, oil is used for coronation. Kings are anointed just like that of the ancient Israel. Anointing oil is belief to have restorative life giving power. Oil is used for new babies and healing of wounds. Among the Yoruba people of Nigeria, oil is used to lower body temperature in Children and high fever when applied to the head of the Child. The Yoruba adult and Children rob oil on their bodies during harsh harmattan weather in order to protect their skin (Adamo, 2018:8). As far as the African Yoruba Christians are concerned, the person anointed has been honoured. Anointing is also a sign of restoration of life and vigor. The Yorubas in Nigeria call head '*ori*'. As far as they are concerned '*ori*' is a person's destiny. It is widely held among the Yorubas that if a person succeed in life it is because his head is tie to that success. The 'head' of a person determines to a large extent what he or she becomes in life.

My cup runs over כּוֹפֵי רִגְגִי is crucial to our study. It suggests abundance of provision in the event of scarcity. The overflowing 'cup' symbolizes the care and provisions of God (Barker & Kohlenberger III, 1994: 824). To an average African Christian, this is a sign of surplus and abundance. This has generated faith in the African readers that they will surely get all the required provisions in Yahweh. African Christians frequently recite, sing and write this portion of Scripture on parchments, vehicles and houses because of the confidence that Yahweh will surely provide.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The Psalms are fundamental to worship in ancient Israel and among the African Indigenous Churches in Nigeria. One of the fundamental issues that concerns human is food security. Hunger is capable of bridging sickness, disease and untimely death. Psalm 23: 5 is read and recited by Africans for provisions. It generates hope and confidence in an average Africans who does not know where the next meal will come from. This Psalm reminds him of a God who specializes in supplying abundance of food in the presence of enemies whose desire is to see one suffer lack or hunger. The African Christian is more afraid of hunger and the enemies because his God will meet his daily provisions to the dismay of his enemies.

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