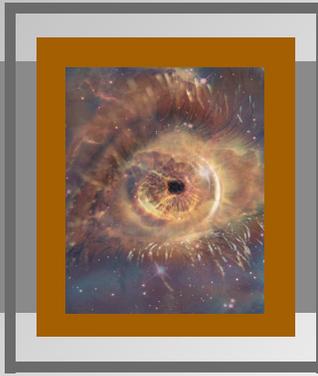


VISIO



DIVINA

*The Wisdom of Contemplative Vision*

**THE RE-GREENING OF EARTH**

*Psalm 107:33-43*

This final stanza of Psalm 107 highlights desertification as a huge issue across our planet, and it sees that life itself is flowing, like a river, and it's course can be changed.

Both hemispheres, North and South, suffer from climate change that has deepened the crisis of desertification. As populations have exploded and the climate has changed, once fertile land has increasingly been turned into deserts.

In many places across the planet, however, there have been heroic attempts to reverse this progression and turn back the spreading deserts. In sub-Sahara Africa, for example, multiple nations in the region of the Sahel are working together to hold back the desert and re-green the region with some success.

Speaking from a visionary perspective, this final section of Psalm 107 describes this same re-greening as a divine activity. On the level of the human spirit, desertification is a metaphor describing what has happened to the arid souls of human beings in the wastelands of human society. The life-giving waters have vanished leaving the human spirit parched and the soul dying. It is God's intention, however, to re-green the world, make the divine waters flow, and cause human life to flourish again.

Using agricultural metaphors, the psalmist describes how God redirects the courses of ancient rivers, opening up new and hidden springs from aquifers, and desalinating the poisoned earth to bring it back to full fertility. If we could imagine the human condition in

this same way, we could understand the redirection of ancient resource to be the perennial wisdom bringing fresh water from other locales. We could also see that opening up springs from the deep aquifers of the collective unconscious is required, and we could recognize that to cleanse the salt-poisons out of the fields of human consciousness would miraculously re-green the human spirit.

Looked at in this way, it is clear that these very processes have indeed been occurring. Into our cultural and spiritual landscapes have come new rivers of fresh water from traditional sources of wisdom. Depth psychology has made the great aquifers from the collective unconsciousness available to the conscious mind. The ability to critique and cleanse the cultural horizons of modern society has made it possible to extract out the poisons of systemic racism and fertilize the fields of human society anew. Even though it is slow, it appears that something is at already work. This is the slow terra-formation of the human spirit.

This Psalm's metaphors are part of the visionary vocabulary and prophetic tradition that understands the omega-point of the human spirit to be not in a desert but to end in a paradise regained. The Abrahamic traditions speak of the creation of a new heaven and new Earth where the waters have returned and the poisons have been washed away. The prophetic and hymnic traditions of our ancient ancestors speak hopefully to us and transformations of human consciousness have begun to re-green the world. This is the visionary trajectory of the limitless mercy of God.

## Reflections on Image and Text:

1. *The culminating point of this psalm is an omega-point of hope—the re-greening and desalinization of the human spirit. Do you share its hopefulness?*
2. *What do you know about the process of reclaiming desert lands and making them green again? Explore the internet about this subject. What do you find that is helpful as a metaphor for re-greening human society?*
3. *Using desert wastelands as a spiritual metaphor, how have you experienced desertification in your own life? What have been your deserts? When and where have you been wandering in them? Where have you found water?*
4. *How would you understand “salt” in the cultural world of humanity?*
5. *In what ways do you think previous eras and contemporary society have poisoned the human spirit?*
6. *What are the signs of reversal that you see? What is the cure to poisoning? How do you see health being restored both to the earth and to the human spirit?*
7. *Can you imagine a complete reversal, or are we destined to live with a certain amount of desertification and poisoning in ourselves and our society?*
8. *What is your sense of the meaning of verse 39-40 in this psalm?*
9. *The images attempt to express metaphors from the final stanza of this Psalm. Which image or images speak most directly to you? What insights come to you from them?*

## A Place for your Notes and Journaling

*This reflection, text and its illumination have been provided by Alison Hine and Lynn Bauman as a means for contemplative prayer.*  
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# LECTIO DIVINA

*The Contemplative Reading of a Sapiential Text*

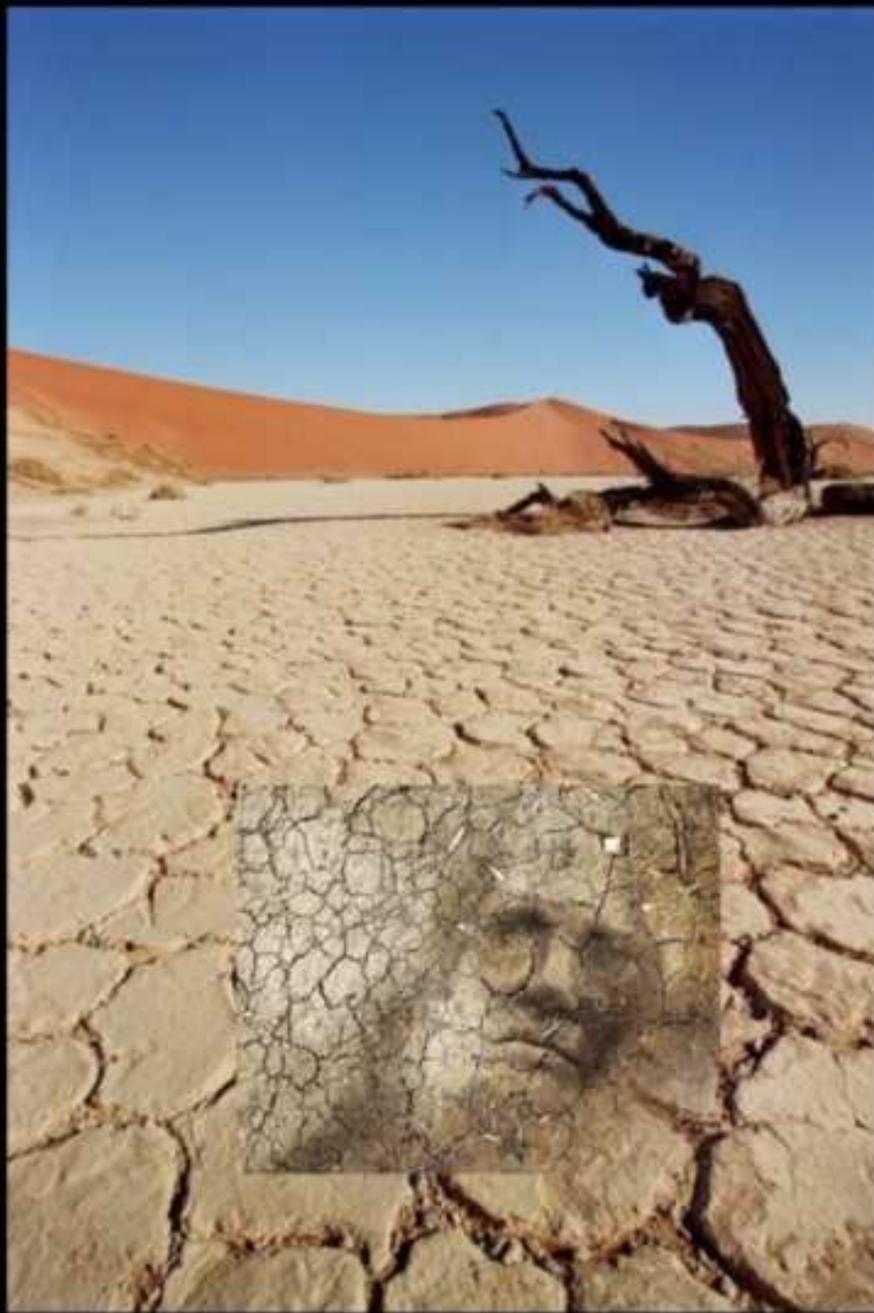
## **PSALM 107: 33-43**

*The Mystery of God's Limitless Mercy*

33. In all the deserts of our world you change the river's course,  
and bring forth waters springing from the thirsty ground.
34. You take our barren land now turned by waste and wickedness  
to salted flats,
35. And bring these back to fruitfulness again  
alive with pools and flowing springs.
36. And there you settle all the hungry ones,  
to build,
37. And sow their fields  
and plant their vineyards full for harvest.
38. So blessed are these by this increase  
it spreads to flocks and herds of beasts.
39. And even in the cycles of diminishment  
when stress, adversity and sorrow of every kind
40. Send kings and queens  
to wastes as wanderers and refugees again,
41. You take the hands of these brought low,  
and from their state of misery  
you multiply, and many-fold, all that has been wasted.
42. Let all who listen, keen of heart, awake, aware,  
close off the source of every evil thought,
43. And in their joy recall for wisdom's sake  
your mercy that has never known a limit  
but lives and lasts forever.

—translated by  
Lynn C. Bauman  
*Ancient Songs Sung Anew*

*Contemplating*  
**THE ILLUMINATIONS**



*Contemplating*  
**THE ILLUMINATIONS**



