



FIRST  
NATIONS  
VERSION  
PSALMS AND  
PROVERBS



An INDIGENOUS  
BIBLE TRANSLATION

Taken from *First Nations Version Psalms and Proverbs*

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# STORY OF THE BOOK OF SACRED SONGS



OVER THREE THOUSAND WINTERS AGO, in a land far across the waters of the sea, the Great Spirit made a sacred treaty with the tribes of Wrestles with Creator (Israel).<sup>a</sup> They were a people uniquely chosen by the Maker of Life to bring blessing to all tribes, languages, and nations.

The Great Spirit made a treaty with them after they had suffered four hundred years of mistreatment and slavery under the foreign nation of Black Land (Egypt). The Great Spirit set them free through Drawn from the Water (Moses), who became their great lawgiver. Through him, the Giver of Life would bring their twelve tribes together to form a great nation.

The sacred treaty Creator made with the tribes gave them their own Land of Promise, ceremonies to purify them, and feasts to teach them to celebrate his goodness. Creator also gave them their tribal law, carved into stone tablets, and a sacred tent lodge, where they performed their ceremonies.

Creator wanted to be their only chief, but the tribes wanted a human chief so they could be like the nations around them. This grieved Creator, but he gave them what they wanted. Most of these chiefs became arrogant and misrepresented the Great Spirit, but there were a few whose hearts followed Creator's desires. One of these chiefs was Much Loved One (David). He had a good heart toward Creator and the people, even though he at times also strayed from the path.

Much Loved One (David) was not born a chief. His father, Original Man (Jesse), was a humble farmer and sheep breeder. Much Loved One (David) was the youngest of seven sons. As a youth, he became a shepherd who cared for his family's flock. He spent many lonely days and nights in the desert wilderness watching over them. He had to ward off predators such as bears, wolves, and even lions. His courage in the face of danger and his trust in the Great Spirit became a legend for many generations.

As a young man, Much Loved One (David) was chosen to be the armor bearer for Man Who Is Asked For (Saul), who was the first chief of the tribes of Wrestles

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<sup>a</sup>See *sacred treaty* in the Glossary of Hebrew Words and Cultural Metaphors.

with Creator (Israel). An evil spirit would at times torment this chief. He would call for Much Loved One (David) to play his hand drum,<sup>a</sup> and the evil spirit would leave him.

There is a well-known story of how Much Loved One (David) defeated a giant champion warrior from an enemy nation using only five smooth stones from a brook and a simple sling. The Great Spirit's power was with him. This increased his honor among the people and set him on a path to eventually become their grand chief.

As a young man caring for the sheep, he marveled at the beauty of creation. He began to sing songs to the Maker of All to express his love and appreciation for blue skies, star-filled nights, mountains, and valleys. He sang of rivers of living water and of creation's harmony and balance. He saw in all things the beauty of the One Above Us All. As his soul became filled with wonder, he made more songs of joy and praise, sorrow and longing, and of trust and deep respect for Creator and all the Great Spirit had made.

He put these songs into melodies with his skill on the musical instruments of his culture. Little did he know that the Great Spirit was preparing him to become grand chief of all the tribes. He was also a maker of songs that would be sung for many generations to come and eventually touch the world. Much Loved One (David) inspired many of his tribal members to make songs that would be sung in sacred ceremonies, tribal gatherings, and spiritual journeys.

These songs are filled with praise, honor, joy, and thanksgiving. But they are also filled with raw human emotion and raging anger against oppression, injustice, and lies. They tell of suffering, betrayal, love, and hate—the kinds of things all human beings can relate to. They call on the Great Spirit to right wrongs, bring deliverance, and defeat those who inflict pain and suffering on others. There are prayers for the poor and oppressed, the ones who have been pushed down and mistreated with scorn and disrespect by the rich and powerful. There are even cries of doubt and questioning, wondering why Grandfather, their Creator and Great Spirit, had forgotten them. There are expressions of vengeance and retaliation from wounded hearts and minds, but usually they end in trust that Creator will in the end bring all things back into harmony and balance.

The tribes of Wrestles with Creator (Israel) gathered these songs into a sacred book to be shared with all generations to come. While the melodies have been lost over the thousands of winters of human history, the words have made their way into the hearts of many all around the world. They can be sung with new melodies and musical instruments and with dancing, drumming, and shouting!

The first followers of Creator Sets Free (Jesus) adopted these traditional songs into their sacred family gatherings that have spread out over all the world. Our

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<sup>a</sup>Lit. a stringed instrument

Translation Council for the First Nations Version humbly submits this book of *Sacred Songs* worded in English in the way our Indigenous songmakers might have done.

*At your gatherings, tell the ancient stories and sing the traditional songs. Sing spiritual songs from your heart as you dance before the Great Spirit, giving thanks to our Father, the Creator, as you represent our Honored Chief, Creator Sets Free (Jesus), the Chosen One.*

EPHESIANS 5:19-20 FNV

# SACRED SONGS

## PSALMS

### BOOK ONE

1 ✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱

<sup>1</sup>Harmony and well-being rest on those who do not walk the path of the bad-hearted, the ones who do not stand with those who stir up disharmony, those who will not sit in a circle where others are spoken of with scorn and disrespect.

<sup>2</sup>Instead, they take joy in Grandfather's clear instructions. As the sun and the moon circle the sky, they think deeply about his ways.

<sup>3</sup>The ones who walk this path will be like a tree whose roots reach deep into the banks of the river. When the harvest moon comes, they will bear much fruit. Their shoots and leaves will not turn brown and fall to the ground. All they put their hands to will go well for them.

<sup>4</sup>But this is not so for the ones who follow their bad hearts. They are like dry corn husks blown about by the wind.

<sup>5</sup>There will be no seat for them to speak in the council house. When the good-hearted gather, there will be no room for those who follow their bad-hearted ways.

<sup>6</sup>For Grandfather walks with the ones who have good hearts and good minds. He turns his thoughts away from those on the wrong path, who will come to a bad end.

2 ✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱

<sup>1</sup>Why do the nations snort like an angry buffalo? Why do they waste their time muttering and growling as they make foolish war plans?

<sup>2</sup>The chiefs of the land take their stand, and the war councils scheme together against Grandfather and his Chosen One! They make a war cry,

<sup>3</sup>"Let us cut the ropes they have bound us with and set ourselves free!"

<sup>4</sup>Grandfather, sitting on his seat of honor in the world above, laughs with scorn at them.

<sup>5-6</sup>His words soar like angry, sharp arrows that pierce their hearts with terror. "I have chosen a chief who will represent me," he says to them *as their knees tremble*, "I have set him high above all others on Strong Mountain (Zion), the home of my sacred Village of Peace (Jerusalem)."

<sup>7</sup>Here is what Grandfather says about his Chosen One: "You are my Son. Today I make it known that I am your Father."<sup>a</sup>

<sup>8</sup>"If you ask me, I will give all nations over to you. The four corners of the earth will become your sacred lands.

<sup>9</sup>"You will guide them with a strong ironwood chief's staff, one that can break and shatter them like pots of clay.

<sup>a</sup>2:7 Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5

<sup>10</sup>“So, you *warring* chiefs, be wise and take my words to heart. Let this be a warning to you, O rulers of the lands.”

<sup>11</sup>Serve Grandfather with great respect and tremble with joy at his shining-greatness.

<sup>12</sup>Humble yourselves before his Son, or his fierce anger may burst into flame and leave you burned and charred. Like fire, his anger can be quickly kindled. But remember, harmony and well-being rest on those who make him their medicine shield.

### 3

*A sacred song of Much Loved One (David) when he fled from his son, Father of Peace (Absalom).*

<sup>10</sup> Grandfather, the enemy’s camp is growing larger!

<sup>2</sup>Many are rising against me, taunting me and saying, “Creator will leave you helpless!”

*Honor beat on the drum. (Selah)*

<sup>3</sup>Not so, Grandfather! You are my medicine shield, surrounding and protecting me. You are my headdress of honor, making me stand tall.

<sup>4</sup>When I lift my voice to Grandfather, he hears me from his sacred mountain and sends help.

*Honor beat on the drum. (Selah)*

<sup>5</sup>Because I know Grandfather watches over me, I sleep soundly through the night and awake with new strength.

<sup>6</sup>Even if many thousands of people come against me and surround me, I will not fear!

<sup>7</sup>Rise up, Grandfather! Rescue me, my Creator! Break the jawbones of my enemies and tear out their teeth.

<sup>8</sup>Grandfather is the one who will rescue me and set me free. May your blessing wrap around your people *like a warm blanket*.

*Honor beat on the drum. (Selah)*

### 4

*For the head ceremonial singer. A sacred song of Much Loved One (David).*

<sup>1</sup>Hear me, Grandfather, my Creator, when I cry out to you! You are the one who knows when I am in the right and defends me! You have opened the way before me to escape my enemies. So take pity on me again and hear my prayer.

<sup>2</sup>“O you weak human beings,” says the Great Spirit, “how long will you continue to twist the good and honorable things about me into an insult? Will you always love to swallow your own lies? How long will you follow worthless ways and speak with lying lips?”

*Honor beat on the drum. (Selah)*

<sup>3</sup>Know this: Grandfather has honored those who follow his ways by standing beside them. He hears when I send my voice to him.

<sup>4</sup>Tremble with anger, but do not let it turn into rage. When you lay down to sleep, be still, speak gently to your heart, and remain at peace.

*Honor beat on the drum. (Selah)*

<sup>5</sup>Give your ceremonial offerings to Grandfather with a good heart and put all your trust in him.

- <sup>6</sup>Many ask, “Who will bring us the good life?” Show them, Grandfather, by shining the light of your face on us.
- <sup>7</sup>A good harvest of corn, beans, and squash is what many want, but it is the light of your face that makes my heart glad.
- <sup>8</sup>Even when I am alone at night, I can sleep peacefully with no fear, for you alone are Grandfather, the one who watches over me and keeps me safe.

5

*For the head ceremonial singer. For the flute players. A sacred song of Much Loved One (David).*

- <sup>1</sup>Hear all my words, Grandfather! Listen as I groan deep from my spirit.
- <sup>2</sup>Turn your ears to my cries, my Honored Chief and Creator. It is to you that I send my voice.
- <sup>3</sup>When I send up prayers in the morning, you hear me. At first light, I make my offering, laying my heart's desire before you, and wait patiently to hear your voice.
- <sup>4</sup>O Great Spirit, those who walk in evil ways bring sorrow to your heart. Their evil path takes them far away from your sacred lodge.
- <sup>5</sup>The ones who speak arrogantly have no honor in your sight. For you hate the evil ways they walk in.
- <sup>6</sup>Those who speak lies will come to a bad end. Grandfather turns his face away from those who participate in bloodshed and deception.
- <sup>7</sup>Because of your faithful and true love, Grandfather, I can humbly enter your sacred lodge. From there, I

will perform sacred ceremonies and make my prayers.

- <sup>8</sup>Grandfather, guide me on your good road. Keep my eyes straight and my path safe from my enemies.
- <sup>9</sup>The words of my enemies cannot be trusted. Their deepest wish is to attack, hurt, and destroy. Their throats are like open graves. They speak with bent and twisted words.
- <sup>10</sup>O Great Spirit, bring their guilt down on their heads. Turn their violent ways against them. Scatter them far away from your sight, for their many wrongdoings have turned them against you.
- <sup>11</sup>But let all who trust in you always sing and dance for joy. Let those who love and honor you find safety under the shadow of your wings.
- <sup>12</sup>Yes, Grandfather, your peace and goodness rest on the ones who walk in your right ways. Your great kindness is a medicine shield around them.

6

*A sacred song of Much Loved One (David) for the head ceremonial singer.*

- <sup>1</sup>Grandfather, do not speak sharply to me when upset or instruct me when angry.
- <sup>2</sup>Take pity on me, for I am weak and fading away. Heal me, Grandfather, for I am feeble and trembling deep in my bones.
- <sup>3</sup>My inner being is in anguish, and my heart is troubled. O Grandfather, how long before you make me whole again?
- <sup>4</sup>Turn your face toward me again, Grandfather! Snatch me from the

jaws of death. I call on you to rescue me, for I know your love for me remains faithful and true.

<sup>5</sup>Those who cross over to death do not remember you. In the Dark Underworld of Death, who will give thanks to you?

<sup>6</sup>I am tired of hearing myself groan and moan in pain. Night after night, I leave behind a trail of tears where I sleep and flood my bed with my crying.

<sup>7</sup>My many tears have worn out my eyes and made them dim. My eyes grow weak from weeping about what my enemies have done.

<sup>8</sup>Go away from me, you who walk in evil ways, for Grandfather has listened to the voice of my tears.

<sup>9</sup>Yes, Grandfather has heard my cry for help and taken my desperate prayer to heart.

<sup>10</sup>Now, all my enemies will be humiliated and filled with fear. Without warning, they will be driven away in shame.

## 7

*A sacred song by Much Loved One (David) that was sung to Grandfather about Dark Hearted Man (Cush) from the tribe of Son of My Right Hand (Benjamin).*

<sup>1</sup>Grandfather, my Creator, in you I find a place safe from harm. Help me and set me free from all who chase after me.

<sup>2</sup>Without your help, they will drag me away and tear me into pieces like a mountain lion.

<sup>3</sup>Grandfather, my Creator, if I am guilty of this, if my hands have done wrong,

<sup>4</sup>If I have ever harmed the one I am at peace with or have attacked an enemy for no good reason,

<sup>5</sup>If I have done these things, let my enemies track me down and capture me. To my shame, let them trample me to the ground and grind me into the dust.

*Honor beat on the drum. (Selah)*

<sup>6</sup>Rise up, Grandfather! Show your fierce anger against the rage of my enemies. Wake up and do justice for me. You have taught us that wrongs must be made right again.

<sup>7</sup>Gather the nations around you as you sit in your honored place high above them.

<sup>8</sup>For you are the one who decides for all people who has done right or wrong. Decide in my favor, Grandfather, for I have done what is right. I am innocent of their accusations.

<sup>9</sup>O Great Spirit of what is good and right, who looks deeply into every heart, bring an end to the bad-hearted ways of those who do evil, but set the feet of the ones who do what is right on solid ground.

<sup>10</sup>Creator is my medicine shield. He rescues the good-hearted ones.

<sup>11</sup>Creator's decisions are as straight as an arrow. Day after day he shows his anger against those who do injustice.

<sup>12</sup>He sharpens his arrows and strings his bow, ready to take aim if they fail to turn and walk a new path.

<sup>13</sup>His deadly weapons are prepared. He bends his bow and sets fire to his arrows.

- <sup>14</sup>Behold, these bad-hearted ones are pregnant with evil ways. They conceive harmful plans that give birth to lies.
- <sup>15</sup>They dig a deep hole to trap others, hollow it out, and then fall into their own trap.
- <sup>16</sup>Their sly plans will come back down on their heads. The violence they commit will end up cracking their own skulls.
- <sup>17</sup>I will give thanks to Grandfather, for he always does what is good and right. I will sing a drum song to honor the One Above Us All, the one we know as Grandfather.

8

*For the head ceremonial singer. On a hand drum. A sacred song of Much Loved One (David).*

- <sup>1</sup>O Grandfather, our Great Chief. Your name is highly honored in all the land! Your shining-greatness reaches far beyond our sacred mountains into the world above.
- <sup>2</sup>The cooing sounds from the mouths of nursing babies and small children have more power than your enemies. They are enough to silence the voice of all who fight against you.<sup>a</sup>
- <sup>3</sup>When I meditate on what your hands have made, when I gaze at the night sky and into the world above, when I see the moon and stars you skillfully set in their places,
- <sup>4</sup>It makes me wonder. Why do you think so much of humanity? Why do you watch over human beings so carefully?

<sup>a</sup>8:2 Matthew 21:16

- <sup>5</sup>You made them a little lower than spirit-messengers. You placed a headdress of honor on their heads.
- <sup>6</sup>You chose them to watch over all the works of your hands. You have put all of creation under their loving care,<sup>b</sup>
- <sup>7</sup>To watch over the sheep and cattle and all wild animals,
- <sup>8</sup>The winged ones who fly in the sky, the fish of the sea, and the great creatures who swim the pathways of the sea.
- <sup>9</sup>O Grandfather, our Great Chief. Your name is filled with beauty and is highly honored in all the land!

9

*For the head ceremonial singer. A sacred song of Much Loved One (David). Sung to the tune "Death of the Son."*

- <sup>1</sup>Grandfather, I will give thanks to you from deep in my inner being. I will tell stories of your deeds that take my breath away.
- <sup>2</sup>You make my heart so glad that I dance for joy. I will sing songs of honor to you, O Most High.
- <sup>3</sup>When my enemies turned and ran from you, they stumbled before you and came to a bad end.
- <sup>4</sup>From your seat of honor and wisdom, you saw that my cause was just and decided in my favor! Your decisions are always good and true.
- <sup>5</sup>Your war cry has sounded against the nations who walk a bent and twisted path. You have brought them and their evil ways to an end. You have wiped their names<sup>c</sup> from

<sup>b</sup>8:6 Hebrews 2:6-8

<sup>c</sup>9:5 Psalm 69:28; Revelation 3:5

*the face of the earth, never to be spoken again.*

<sup>6</sup>What is more, the enemy villages you have torn down will never rise again. They will come to nothing and be forgotten!

<sup>7</sup>On the other hand, Grandfather stands firmly in his place and will never be moved. He has set his seat of honor on solid ground. From there, he will decide for all nations who has done right and who has done wrong.

<sup>8</sup>He judges the world by his right ways. His decisions are always just and true for all people.

<sup>9</sup>Grandfather is a safe place for those who have been pushed down and mistreated. In times of trouble, he remains their place of safety.

<sup>10</sup>Those who truly know you will put their trust in you. For you, Grandfather, have never left alone the ones who seek you.

<sup>11</sup>Sing honor songs to Grandfather, who is seated firmly upon Strong Mountain (Zion).

<sup>12</sup>For the one who avenges bloodshed remembers the poor and oppressed. He does not forget their desperate cry for help.

<sup>13</sup>Grandfather, have pity on me. Look at how much I suffer at the hands of those who hate me. You are the One Who Sets Me Free from the powers of the Dark Underworld of Death.

<sup>14</sup>When you set me free, I will go to Village of Peace (Jerusalem), also known as your daughter Strong Mountain (Zion). From there, when the people gather, with a glad heart I will sing honor songs to you!

<sup>15</sup>Enemies from other nations have dug a hole and fallen into it. Their feet have been caught in the same trap they hid to capture others.

<sup>16</sup>Grandfather is known for his right ways. Those who do evil are snared by their own wrongdoings. This is how Grandfather makes wrongs right again. His decisions are always good and true.

*Honor beat on the drum. (Selah)*

<sup>17</sup>Evildoers will go down into the Dark Underworld of Death, along with all the nations who ignore the Great Spirit and his ways.

<sup>18</sup>The poor who struggle to survive will not be forgotten for long. Their hopes and dreams will not always end in misery.

<sup>19</sup>Rise up, Grandfather! Do not permit weak human beings to stand against you. Bring the nations into your council house and decide their fate.

<sup>20</sup>Grandfather, fill the nations with great fear and respect for you. Show them that they are nothing more than weak human beings.

*Honor beat on the drum. (Selah)*

## 10

<sup>1</sup>Grandfather, why do you stand far away in the shadows? Why do you hide yourself when storm clouds gather?

<sup>2</sup>Bad-hearted, arrogant men hunt down the weak and poor. May their coyote ways turn around and bite them.

<sup>3</sup>These evil ones brag about their twisted ways. They boast about their greed, showing contempt and disrespect to Grandfather.

- <sup>4</sup>In their arrogance, they see no need to pray to Creator. They say to themselves, “We cannot even see that there is a Great Spirit.”
- <sup>5</sup>They always seem to get what they want. Your ways of deciding right and wrong are beyond their weak ways of thinking. They turn up their snouts and snort at their enemies.
- <sup>6</sup>In their hearts they think, “I am standing on solid ground. No trouble will ever come my way.”
- <sup>7</sup>Their mouths are filled with curses, lies, and threats of violence. Their tongues find pleasure in twisted and evil talk.
- <sup>8</sup>In our villages these evil men hide out of sight, ready to strike like a poisonous snake. Out of their hiding place, they ambush the innocent. Their eyes dart about looking for the weak and unprotected.
- <sup>9</sup>They lie low like mountain lions and then spring from hiding to snare the poor and vulnerable.
- <sup>10</sup>Their victims are crushed under them as their powerful claws drag them to the ground.
- <sup>11</sup>They think in their hearts, “Creator has forgotten them. He is looking somewhere else and will never see what we are doing.”
- <sup>12</sup>Rise up, Grandfather! Lift up your hand to protect those who are oppressed and mistreated. Do not forget them!
- <sup>13</sup>Why do these wrongdoers show such disrespect to the Great Spirit? Do they think that Creator will not punish them?
- <sup>14</sup>Creator, you do see the suffering and sorrow of the victims. You will take

up their cause because they are trusting in you, just as you do for those who have lost their father and mother.

- <sup>15</sup>Break the power of the bad-hearted and the evildoer. Find all of their evil doings and bring them to an end.
- <sup>16</sup>Grandfather is our Great Chief for all days to come. The nations who do evil will be removed from his land.
- <sup>17</sup>You have heard the desperate cry of the humble. You will make their hearts strong and bend your ear to their prayers.
- <sup>18</sup>Grandfather, you will right the wrongs done to those with no father or mother to protect them and all who have been pushed down and mistreated, so that human beings from this land will no longer be able to strike fear in their hearts.

## 11

*For the head ceremonial singer. A sacred song of Much Loved One (David).*

- <sup>1</sup>I have put my trust in Grandfather. How can you say to me, “Flee to the mountains like a winged one in flight”?
- <sup>2</sup>Take a good look! These bad-hearted ones have strung their arrows and bent their bows. They aim to shoot from their dark hiding places at the ones with good hearts.
- <sup>3</sup>When harmony and balance break down, what can the upright in heart do?
- <sup>4</sup>Grandfather, the All-Seeing One, sits on his seat of honor in his sacred lodge in the spirit-world above.

Nothing human beings do can escape his eagle eyes. He knows what is in each heart.

<sup>5</sup>Grandfather puts both the good-hearted and bad-hearted to the test. He hates the violent deeds of those who do evil.

<sup>6</sup>Like rain from the sky, he will send burning coals and fiery rocks down on these doers of evil. A scorching wind will bring them to the bad end they deserve.

<sup>7</sup>Grandfather always does what is right and loves to set wrongs right again. The ones who do what is right will see the face of the Great Spirit.

## 12

*A sacred song of Much Loved One (David).  
For the head ceremonial singer.*

<sup>1</sup>Help us, Grandfather, for there is no one left on the land who walks in a sacred manner. No one worthy of trust can be found among the people.

<sup>2</sup>With smooth tongues and lying lips, these two-hearted ones speak flattering words to each other.

<sup>3</sup>Grandfather, put an end to all this trickster talk and the tongues that puff up those who listen.

<sup>4</sup>Bring to an end those who have boasted, “Our crafty words will win the victory for us. We will say whatever we want. Who can stop us?”

<sup>5</sup>Here is what Grandfather has to say to them: “I have seen the violence your words have caused to the ones who are poor and without help. I have heard the groans of the ones you have crushed to the

ground. Now is the time for me to rise up and protect the ones who have cried out to me for so long!”

<sup>6</sup>Grandfather’s words are as pure as silver, refined seven times in an earthen melting pot.

<sup>7-8</sup>Grandfather, watch over the ones with broken spirits and keep them safe from the worthless ways of this generation. For the bad-hearted will keep making a big show of themselves as long as people speak highly of their evil ways.

## 13

*For the head ceremonial singer. A sacred song of Much Loved One (David).*

<sup>1</sup>0 Grandfather, how long will you forget me? How long will you hide your face from me?

<sup>2</sup>How long must my inward being groan for an answer? As the sun and moon circle the sky, my heart lies broken on the ground. How long will my enemies dance the victory dance?

<sup>3</sup>Grandfather, my Creator! Show me that you care and send me your voice. Strengthen my vision to keep me from crossing over to the world of the dead.

<sup>4</sup>For my enemies would howl, “We have defeated him!” And my foes would dance for joy when they saw me fall.

<sup>5</sup>But as for me, I have put my trust in your faithful and true love. My heart is dancing, for you have set me free and made me whole!

<sup>6</sup>Grandfather, you have been big-hearted toward me. I will get my hand drum and sing honor songs to you.

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