PSALM 145 (ASHREI). This
calling, which was treasured
by the ancient rabbis, is
recited thrice daily. It was
in liturgical use during the
Second Temple period, as
attested by the Dead Sea
Scrolls, where it appears
with a congregational
response attached to each
verse: "Blessed is Adonai
and blessed is God's name."
Psalm 145 begins and ends
with personal verses of
praise. In between, the
author affirms God's
sovereignty and insists that
God's rule is one of love
and compassion.

Two additional verses
(Psalm 84:5 and 144:5),
both of which begin with
the word asher, "joyous,
were added to the opening.
appearingly in imitation of
the Book of Psalms itself,
which opens with that
word. The reference to
God's house evokes those
praying in the synagogue.
Psalm 115:18 was appended
to the end, transform-
ing the prayer from the
first-person singular to the
plural, and thus creating a
bridge to the five "Hallelu-
yah" psalms that follow.

Ashrei is an alphabetic-
ical acrostic—although it is
missing a verse beginning
with the letter nunn—and
thus easy to memorize,
which may help to explain
its popularity in Jewish
liturgy. Many readers relate

to individual verses more than to the literary flow of the whole poem. It is the only psalm explicitly called a
chhillah, "a song of praise," though the entire Book of Psalms is called by the plural Sefer Thillim.

JOYOUS כַּלְעַלְעַלְעַל. The Hebrew word covers a spectrum of emotions: happy, blessed, contented.

ADORNAI SUPPORTS ALL WHO FALTER הניבר לאכלם. This verse marks a turning point in the psalm.
Now, the poet has praised God's greatness and splendor; now, the focus shifts to God's concern for those
in need. Here, God's sovereignty is primarily manifest in love and care.

ALL THAT IS MORTAL שַׂמִּים. In Psalm 145, there are no references to the Temple, to Israel, or to historical
events. God is here depicted as the sovereign of the world who cares for all creatures.