

Introduction

In difficult times, we are filled with questions about suffering. We wonder if our despair will ever end. Nonetheless, we are certain that even in these darkest moments, God is with us.

For the leader. A psalm of David. *How long, Lord; will You ignore me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? How long will I have cares on my mind, grief in my heart all day? How long will my enemy have the upper hand? Look at me, answer me, Lord my God! Restore the luster to my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; lest my enemy say, "I have overcome him," my foes exult when I totter. But I trust in Your faithfulness, my heart will exult in Your deliverance. I will sing to God, who has been good to me.*

לְמַנְצֵחַ מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד: עַד־אָנָּה י-הוָה
תִּשְׁכַּחֲנִי נָצַח עַד־אָנָּה תִסְתִּיר אֶת־פְּנֵיךָ
מִמֶּנִּי: עַד־אָנָּה אֲשִׁית עֲצוֹת בְּנַפְשִׁי נִגּוֹן
בְּלִבִּי יוֹמָם עַד־אָנָּה יְרוּם אֵיבִי עָלַי:
הַבִּיטָה עֲנֵנִי י-הוָה אֶ-לֹהֵי הָאֵינָּה עֵינַי
פְּרֹאֲשֵׁן הַמָּוֶת: פְּרִיאֲמַר אֵיבִי וְכָל־תִּינוּ
צָרִי יִגְּלוּ כִּי אֶמּוֹט: וְאֲנִי בְּחִסְדְּךָ
בְּטַחְתִּי יִגַּל לְבִי בִישׁוּעָתְךָ אֲשִׁירָה
לִי-הוָה כִּי גָמַל עָלַי: (תהלים ג)

We can all relate to times where it feels as though we have no strength to go on. To go through one more procedure, one more setback, one more day of pain. How much can we handle? These same feelings come up watching a friend or family member struggle. Why must our loved one continue to suffer and for how long? "How long will my enemy have the upper hand" (עַד־אָנָּה עָלַי יְרוּם אֵיבִי עָלַי)? Whoever the "enemy" in our personal situation may be - a person, a bacteria, a disease - it may feel as though we cannot win against them. We cry out to God begging for Him to answer us, "Look at me, answer me" ("הַבִּיטָה עֲנֵנִי"). We do not want to feel alone, we want to feel God's presence with us.

Despite starting with cries of loneliness, the Psalm ends by affirming that no matter what we are going through, God is with us. "I trust in Your faithfulness...I will sing to God who has been good to me" (אֲנִי בְּחִסְדְּךָ בְּטַחְתִּי. אֲשִׁירָה לִי-הוָה כִּי גָמַל עָלַי). In difficult times, thinking about the good moments from the past can help us remember that we are not alone. This Psalm gives us the space to feel lost and full of despair, but also to know that there is divine support, even if we may not always see it.