

## Introduction

A person cries from the depths of despair, seeking God's mercy and forgiveness amidst suffering. Despite the darkness, the Psalm offers hope, comparing the anticipation of God's intervention to the watchful wait for the sunrise.

**A song of ascents.** *Out of the depths I call You, Lord. my Sovereign, hear my cry; let Your ears be attentive to my plea for mercy. If You keep account of sins, God, my Sovereign, who will survive? Yours is the power to forgive so that You may be held in awe. I look to God; my whole being is looking; I await God's word. I am more eager for my Sovereign than guards for the morning, guards for the morning. Israel, wait for God; for with God is steadfast love and great power to redeem. It is this One who will redeem Israel from all their iniquities.*

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת מִמַּעְמְקִים קְרָאתִיךָ יְיָ הוֹה:  
אֲ-דָנִי שְׁמַעָה בְּקוֹלִי תְהִינָה אָזְנוֹךָ קְשׁוּבוֹת  
לְקוֹל תַּחֲנוּנָי: אִם-עֲוֹנוֹת תִּשְׁמַר יְיָ הֵ-אֲ-דָנִי  
מִי יַעֲמֵד: כִּי-עֲמָךְ הַסְּלִיחָה לְמַעַן תִּגְוֹרָא:  
קוֹיִתִי יְיָ הוֹה קוֹנֵתָה נַפְשִׁי וְלִדְבָרוֹ הוֹחֲלֵתִי:  
נַפְשִׁי לֹא-דָנִי מִשְׁמָרִים לְבַקֵּר שְׁמָרִים  
לְבַקֵּר: יַחַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל יְיָ הוֹה כִּי-עַם יְיָ הוֹה  
הַחֲסֵד וְהַרְבֵּה עֲמוֹ פְדוֹת: וְהוּא יַפְדֶּה אֶת-  
יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל עֲוֹנוֹתָיו: (תהלים קל)

The opening line, "Out of the depths I call You, O Lord" (מִמַּעְמְקִים קְרָאתִיךָ יְיָ הוֹה) captures the intense emotional and physical pain that accompanies illness and suffering. These words express a profound sense of vulnerability and the desire for divine assistance. The plea for God's attentive ear, "Lord, hear my voice" (אֲ-דָנִי שְׁמַעָה בְּקוֹלִי), underscores the urgent need for God to heed our pleading voice.

"If You keep account of sins, O God, my Sovereign, who will survive" (אִם-עֲוֹנוֹת תִּשְׁמַר יְיָ אֲדָנִי מִי יַעֲמֵד)? "Yours is the power to forgive" (כִּי-עֲמָךְ הַסְּלִיחָה). These verses grant comfort, suggesting that despite human failings, God's mercy and forgiveness is always available. This is a reassuring message when we are grappling with the fear and uncertainty of sickness. The Psalm also expresses hope and anticipation for relief, like night watchmen waiting for the morning. "I am more eager for my Sovereign than guards for the morning" (נַפְשִׁי לֹא-דָנִי מִשְׁמָרִים לְבַקֵּר שְׁמָרִים לְבַקֵּר). Just as morning inevitably follows night, those in anguish are hopeful that full recovery will ultimately arrive.

The Psalm concludes with a broad call for Israel to place their hope in God: "O Israel, wait for God; for with God is steadfast love and great power to redeem" (יַחַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל-יְיָ הוֹה כִּי-עַם יְיָ הוֹה הַחֲסֵד). This reinforces the belief in God's steadfast affection and readiness to provide redemption. The message of enduring trust in God provides solace and strength. It encourages us to maintain our faith in God's love and His ability as the ultimate healer.