

Introduction

A prayer of thanksgiving, recalling the fears of illness and the hopes for salvation.

A psalm of David. *A song for the dedication of the House. I extol You, Lord, for You have lifted me up, and not let my enemies rejoice over me. my Eternal God, I cried out to You, and You healed me. Lord, You brought me up from Sheol, preserved me from going down into the Pit. you faithful of God, sing out, and praise the holy name. For [God] is angry but a moment, and when pleased, there is life. One may lie down weeping at nightfall; but at dawn there are shouts of joy. When I was untroubled, I thought, "I shall never be shaken," for You, Lord, when You were pleased, made [me] firm as a mighty mountain. When You hid Your face, I was terrified. I called to You, Lord; to my Sovereign I made appeal, "What is to be gained from my death, from my descent into the Pit? Can dust praise You? Can it declare Your faithfulness? Hear, Lord, and have mercy on me; Lord, be my help!" You turned my lament into dancing, you undid my sackcloth and girded me with joy, that [my] whole being might sing hymns to You endlessly; my Eternal God, I will praise You forever.*

מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר־חֲנֻנֵת הַבַּיִת לְדָוִד: אֲרוֹמְמָךְ
י-הוה כִּי דָלִיתַנִּי וְלֹא־שִׂמְחָתָ אִיבֵי לִי:
י-הוה אֱ-לֹהֵי שְׁוַעְתִּי אֱלֹהֵי וַתִּרְפְּאֵנִי:
י-הוה הֶעֱלִיתָ מִן־שְׂאוֹל נַפְשִׁי חַיִּיתַנִּי
מִיַּרְדֵּי־יָבוֹר: זָמְרוּ לִי-הוה חֲסִידָיו וְהוֹדוּ
לְזָכָר קִדְשׁוֹ: כִּי רָגַע בְּאִפּוֹ חַיִּים בְּרָצוֹנוֹ
בְּעָרֵב יָלִינוּ בְּכִי וְלִבְקָר רָנָה: וְאֲנִי אֶמְרָתִי
בְּשִׁלְוִי בַל־אֶמוּט לְעוֹלָם: י-הוה בְּרָצוֹנְךָ
הֶעֱמַדְתָּה לְהַרְרִי עַל־הַסִּתְרָתְךָ פָּנֶיךָ הַיִּיתִי
נִבְהָל: אֱלֹהֵי י-הוה אֶקְרָא וְאֶל־אֱ-דֹנָי
אֶתְחַנֵּן: מֵהַבְּצַע בְּדַמִּי בְרַדְתִּי אֶל־שַׁחַת
הַיּוֹדֵף עֶפְרַיִם הַיְגִיד אֶמְתַּף: שְׁמַע י-הוה
וְחַנּוּנִי י-הוה הִיָּה־עֲזָר לִי: הַפְּכֶת מִסְפְּדֵי
לְמַחֹל לִי פִתְחַת שָׁקִי וַתֹּאזְרֵנִי שְׂמֵחָה:
לְמַעַן יִזְמְרָךְ כְּבוֹד וְלֹא יָדָם י-הוה
אֱ-לֹהֵי לְעוֹלָם אֲוֹדְךָ: (תהלים ל)

At first glance, this Psalm seems to be intended for someone giving thanks to God after surviving a difficult ordeal. It does not seem to be an obvious choice for people still in the midst of dealing with an illness, "You have lifted me up, and not let my enemies rejoice over me" (אַרוֹמְמָךְ יְהוָה כִּי דָלִיתַנִּי וְלֹא־שִׂמְחָתָ אִיבֵי לִי). Yet many commentators believe that this Psalm is intended to be a source of inspiration during difficult times. Often when life is going well we don't focus on God. "When I was untroubled I thought, I shall never be shaken" (וְאֲנִי אֶמְרָתִי בְּשִׁלְוִי בַל־אֶמוּט לְעוֹלָם). Life changes, and we suddenly find ourselves searching for Him, "When You hid Your face, I was terrified" (הַסִּתְרָתְךָ פָּנֶיךָ הַיִּיתִי נִבְהָל). Prayer connects us with God. We call out in hope that our connection with Him will guide us through the darkness. "One may lie down weeping at nightfall; but at dawn there are shouts of joy" (בְּעָרֵב יָלִינוּ בְּכִי וְלִבְקָר רָנָה).

We can look back at times in the past, both personally and communally, when it seemed as though God was hidden but then ultimately revealed Himself. These memories serve as an inspiration. They comfort us in the midst of our current ordeal, or when praying for someone else going through a struggle. We may not be able to see the hand of God. We hope that if we continue to reach out to Him, we will arrive at a time when we too can give thanks. We look forward to a future when we can say, "You turned my lament into dancing, you undid my sackcloth and girded me with joy" ("הַפְּכֶת מִסְפְּדֵי לְמַחֹל לִי פִתְחַת שָׁקִי וַתֹּאזְרֵנִי שְׂמֵחָה").