

## Introduction

A deeply emotional and personal plea for mercy, healing, and forgiveness. In this Psalm, we find a voice for our suffering as well as a source of comfort.

**A psalm of David. Le hazkir.** Lord, do not punish me in wrath; do not chastise me in fury. For Your arrows have struck me; Your blows have fallen upon me. There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your rage, no wholeness in my bones because of my sin. For my iniquities have overwhelmed me; they are like a heavy burden, more than I can bear. My wounds stink and fester because of my folly. I am all bent and bowed; I walk about in gloom all day long. For my sinews are full of fever; there is no soundness in my flesh. I am all benumbed and crushed; I roar because of the turmoil in my mind. My Sovereign, You are aware of all my entreaties; my groaning is not hidden from You. My mind reels; my strength fails me; my eyes too have lost their luster. My friends and companions stand back from my affliction; my kin stand far off. Those who seek my life lay traps; those who wish me harm speak malice; they utter deceit all the time. But I am like the deaf, unhearing, like the mute who cannot speak up; I am like one who does not hear, whose mouth has no retort. But I wait for You, Lord; You will answer, my Sovereign, my God. For I fear they will rejoice over me; when my foot gives way they will vaunt themselves against me. For I am on the verge of collapse; my pain is always with me. I acknowledge my iniquity; I am fearful over my sin; for my mortal enemies are numerous; my treacherous foes are many. Those who repay evil for good harass me for pursuing good. Do not abandon me, Lord; my God, be not far from me; hasten to my aid, my Sovereign, my deliverance.

מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד לְהַזְכִּיר: י-הוה אֵל-בְּקִצְפְּךָ  
תּוֹכִיחַנִי וּבְחַמְתֶּךָ תִּיַסְרֵנִי: כִּי-חָצִיף נִחְתּוּ  
בִי וַתִּנְחַת עָלַי יָדְךָ: אִין-מָתָם בְּבִשְׂרִי מִפְּנֵי  
זַעַמְךָ אִין-שְׁלוֹם בְּעַצְמֵי מִפְּנֵי חַטָּאתִי: כִּי  
עֹונֹתֵי עָבְרוּ רֵאשִׁי כַּמֶּשָׂא כְּבִד וְכָבְדוּ מִפְּנֵי:  
הַבְּאִישׁוֹ נִמְקוּ חִבּוּרֹתַי מִפְּנֵי אִוְלָתִי: נַעֲוִיתִי  
שְׁחַתִּי עַד-מָאֵד כָּל-הַיּוֹם קִדְר הַלְכָתִי:  
כִּי-כִסְלִי מָלְאוּ נִקְלָה וְאִין מָתָם בְּבִשְׂרִי:  
נְבוּגוֹתִי וְנִדְפִיתִי עַד-מָאֵד שְׁאֲגַתִּי מִנְהַמַּת  
לְבִי: אֶ-דָּנִי נִגְדָּד כָּל-תַּאֲוֹתַי וְאֲנַחְתִּי מִמֶּךָ  
לֹא-נִסְתַּתְּרָה: לְבִי סָחַרְחַר עֲזָבַנִי כַחֲוֵי וְאוֹר־  
עֵינַי גַּם-סֵהֵם אִין אֲתִי: אֶהְבִּי וְרַעִי מִנְגִּד נִגְעִי  
יַעֲמְדוּ וּקְרוּבֵי מֵרַחַק עֲמְדוּ: וַיִּנְקְשׁוּ מִבְּקָשִׁי  
נִפְשִׁי וְדַרְשִׁי רַעֲתִי דָבְרוּ הוֹוֹת וּמְרֻמוֹת כָּל-  
הַיּוֹם יִהְיוּ: וְאֲנִי כְחֹרֵשׁ לֹא אֶשְׁמַע וּכְאֵלֶם  
לֹא יִפְתַּח-פִּי: וְאֶהִי כְּאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-שָׁמַע  
וְאִין בְּפִיו תּוֹכְחוֹת: כִּי-לֶךְ י-הוה הוֹחֵלְתִי  
אֶתָּה תַעֲנֶה אֶ-דָּנִי אֶ-לֵהִי: כִּי-אֲמַרְתִּי פֶן-  
יִשְׁמְחוּלִי בְמוֹט רַגְלִי עָלַי הַגְּדִילוּ: כִּי-אֲנִי  
לְצַלַּע נִכּוֹן וּמִכְאוּבֵי נִגְדִי תָמִיד: כִּי-עֲוִנִי  
אֲגִיד אֲדַאֵג מִחַטָּאתִי: וְאִיבֵי חַיִּים עֲצָמוּ  
וְרַבּוּ שִׁנְאֵי שִׁקָּר: וּמִשְׁלָמֵי רַעַה תַּחַת טוֹבָה  
יִשְׁטַנּוּנִי תַחַת (רְדוּפִי) [רְדָפִי]-טוֹב: אֶל-  
תַּעֲזָבֵנִי י-הוה אֶ-לֵהִי אֶל-תַּרְחֵק מִפְּנֵי:  
חוֹשָׁה לְעִזְרָתִי אֶ-דָּנִי תִשׁוּעָתִי: (תהלים לח)

Featuring a vivid portrayal of suffering, and a deep plea for Divine mercy, this Psalm begins with the poignant words, "There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your rage, no wholeness in my bones because of my sin" (אִין-מָתָם בְּבִשְׂרִי, מִפְּנֵי זַעַמְךָ; אִין-שְׁלוֹם בְּעַצְמֵי, מִפְּנֵי חַטָּאתִי). This resonates deeply with those experiencing physical and emotional pain. We can use this experience as a time for soul-searching and an opportunity for repentance and forgiveness.

“My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my affliction; and my kinsmen stand afar off” ( אֲהָבַי וְרַעֵי מִנְגֵד וּקְרוּבַי מִרְחֹק עִמָּדוֹ ). These words capture the emotional sense of loneliness and estrangement that is so often experienced during times of sickness. We may believe that nobody can fully relate to us or comprehend what we are feeling. The Psalm provides us the reassurance of being understood at a time when the overwhelming sentiment is one of abandonment and isolation. Written many centuries ago, these words validate the feelings of the ill even today.

The Psalm pleads for help and healing, reflecting a deep reliance on Divine intervention. It encourages us to maintain hope. The closing verses, “Forsake me not, O Lord: O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation” ( "אֶל-תַּעֲזָבֵנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהַי; אֶל-תִּרְחַק מִמֶּנִּי. חַיְשָׁה לַעֲזָרְתִּי; אֲדֹנָי תְּשׁוּעָתִי" ), convey a heartfelt request for emotional and physical closeness to God and an appeal for swift Divine assistance.

