

Introduction

We cry out from emotional and physical pain. Yet we gain comfort and hope by reminding ourselves of God's loving kindness and His power to heal.

For the leader; with instrumental music on the sheminith. A psalm of David. Lord, do not punish me in anger, do not chastise me in fury. Have mercy on me, Lord, for I languish; heal me, Lord, for my bones shake with terror. My whole being is stricken with terror, while You, Lord - how long!! Lord, turn! Rescue me! Deliver me as befits Your faithfulness. For there is no praise of You among the dead; in Sheol, who can acclaim You? I am weary with groaning; every night I drench my bed, I melt my couch in tears. My eyes are wasted by vexation, worn out because of all my foes. Away from me, all you evildoers, for God heeds the sound of my weeping. God heeds my plea, God accepts my prayer. All my enemies will be frustrated and stricken with terror; they will turn back in an instant, frustrated.

לְמַנְצֵחַ בְּנִגְיִנוֹת עַל־הַשְּׁמִינִית מִזְמוֹר
לְדָוִד: יְיָ-הוֹה אַל-בְּאַפְךָ תוֹכִיחֵנִי וְאַל-
בְּחַמְתְּךָ תִּיַסְרֵנִי: חֲנִנֵי יְיָ-הוֹה כִּי אֲמַלֵּל
אָנֹכִי רַפְּאֵנִי יְיָ-הוֹה כִּי נִבְהָלוּ עַצְמוֹתַי:
וְנַפְשִׁי נִבְהָלָה מְאֹד וְאַתָּה יְיָ-הוֹה עַד-מָתַי:
שׁוּבָה יְיָ-הוֹה חֲלָצָה נַפְשִׁי הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי לְמַעַן
חַסְדְּךָ: כִּי אֵין בַּמּוֹת זְכָרְךָ בְּשָׂאוֹל מִי יוֹדֶה-
לָךְ: יַגְעֵתִי בְּאַנְחָתִי אֲשַׁחֶה בְּכָל־לַיְלָה מִטְּתִי
בְּדַמְעָתִי עֲרָשִׁי אֲמַסֶּה: עֵשְׂשָׂה מִכַּעַס עֵינַי
עֲתָקָה בְּכָל־צוּרְרָי: סוּרוּ מִמֶּנִּי כָּל־פְּעֻלֵי
אֲוֹן כִּי־שָׁמַע יְיָ-הוֹה קוֹל בְּכִי: שָׁמַע יְיָ-הוֹה
תְּחִנָּתִי יְיָ-הוֹה תִּפְּלֵתִי יִקַּח: יִבְשׁוּ וַיִּבְהָלוּ
מְאֹד כָּל־אֹיְבֵי יֹשְׁבוּ יִבְשׁוּ רַגְעַ: (תהלים ו')

The words of this Psalm convey a deeply emotional plea for mercy and healing in the face of overwhelming sorrow and physical suffering. We pray to God, "O Lord, do not punish me in anger, do not chastise me in fury" (יְיָ-הוֹה אַל-בְּאַפְךָ תוֹכִיחֵנִי וְאַל-בְּחַמְתְּךָ תִּיַסְרֵנִי). This opening sets the tone of desperation and fear that one often experiences when ill. We feel a sense of divine displeasure, of God's anger, and His punishment. The plea continues, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I languish; heal me, O Lord, for my bones shake with terror" (חֲנִנֵי יְיָ-הוֹה כִּי אֲמַלֵּל אָנֹכִי רַפְּאֵנִי יְיָ-הוֹה כִּי נִבְהָלוּ עַצְמוֹתַי). These lines capture profound distress, both emotional and physical, emphasizing the urgent need for divine intervention and comfort. The anguish of the sick is palpable: "I am weary with groaning; every night I drench my bed, I melt my couch in tears" (יַגְעֵתִי בְּאַנְחָתִי). This vivid imagery of relentless sadness underscores a profound sense of hopelessness and isolation.

Amidst this despair, there is also a plea to stay in this world and maintain a relationship with God. "There is no praise of You among the dead; in Sheol, who can acclaim You" (כִּי אֵין בַּמּוֹת זְכָרְךָ בְּשָׂאוֹל מִי יוֹדֶה-לָךְ)? It is precisely from this relationship that a glimmer of hope for divine compassion emerges: "God heeds the sound of my weeping! God heeds my plea, God accepts my prayer" (כִּי־שָׁמַע יְיָ-הוֹה קוֹל בְּכִי: שָׁמַע יְיָ-הוֹה תְּחִנָּתִי). (יְיָ-הוֹה תִּפְּלֵתִי יִקַּח).

Being heard by God provides consolation and strength, allowing one's feelings to transition from agony to reassurance. This Psalm encapsulates the pain from illness alongside the potential of heartfelt prayer to bring mercy for oneself and all those who are suffering.