

## THE CRY OF THE DEER<sup>i</sup>

1. Like a deer longing for clear, cool, running streams, I thirst for you, the living god.
2. You are the deep desire of my whole being, I long for you with heart and soul, I yearn to see your face again, my Lord.
3. Both day and night I cry this prayer to you; tears, not bread, are now my daily food. All day long I'm asked, "Where is your God? Where has God gone?"
4. My soul empties out before you from this deep well of grief, yet I remember the pilgrimages I made into your sacred house, my visitation with the throngs.
5. How I rose up with shouts of joy and thankfulness observing holy days.
6. Why then are you so troubled, O my soul? Why this great despondency, this deep despair?
7. Await in hope god's grace, god's care, a time of praise shall surely come and bring you to the presence of the One who is your saving Lord.
8. My heart is broken, it will not mend. Yet I remember in a mountain land beyond this realm, on heights of hills that now seem far away,
9. When the depths in me called out to touch the depths in you. Like roaring waters through great canyons, deep, your presence there came crashing over me.
10. And in the daytime your loving kindness was like a flood that swept and lifted up my soul. At night my heart welled up in songs of praise, I sang to you, the God of all.
11. So this I ask, O God, have you abandoned me, you who are my rock, my solid ground? Why do enemies oppress me all around?

12. One by one my bones are being broken, splintered into bits, crushed by their insults hurled at me like stones.
13. All day long their taunting comes, "So tell us now, where is your God?"
14. Why are you so troubled, O my soul? Why this great desponding, this deep despair?
15. Await God's grace, God's help in hope, God's care, a time of praise will surely come and bring you to the presence of the One who is your saving Lord.

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<sup>1</sup> NOTES:

1. This is a Psalm of contrast, beauty and despair. In it you taste both the bitterest fruits of life and also its sweetness.
2. Throughout the Psalm a constant question is struck like a bell over and over again. A question is asked of the soul itself. It is a question concerning the inner state of the heart (or soul) in light of the continuing relationship that a human being has with the divine Presence or Being.
3. There are as many modes in our relationship with God as there are in the relationships we share with other human beings. Any relationship we have between God and ourselves or between one another cannot be characterized by a single set of words or metaphors. The range of experience in this Psalm is immense.

MEDITATION

- A. The Psalm speaks of great and terrible longing, strong emotions, and exquisite experience of grief and joy. Inside all of these emotions, however, is a relationship of deep intimacy and intensity. Can you imagine your own experience with God on this level of intimacy and intensity?
- B. In my own prayer practice I will try speaking directly to the depths of God from out of my own depth and see what I understand or learn from the encounter. You are invited to do this as well.

This translation, these notes and meditations were taken from "*Ancient Songs Sung Anew: the psalms as poetry*" by Lynn Bauman