

The Journey Out of Sorrow into Joyⁱ

1. It is you I praise, my God, you took me by the hand to lift me high up off the ground. You did not let my adversaries trample over me.
2. O God, when I called out to you, you heard my cry for help and nursed me back to health again.
3. I was dying and you revived me. It is you who saved my life when I was spiraling down.
4. Let everyone who serves you praise the sacred name we know and now confess.
5. If indeed you are ever angry, God, it flashes out for one brief moment and then is gone, but your kindness never fades even for an instant. It is life itself.
6. Tears may wash me through the night, but when the morning breaks your joy awaits.
7. Once in great prosperity with grace abounding, foolishly I said, "I will never be disturbed. I am as strong and sure as any mountain."
8. But suddenly, it was as if you were not there. It was as though your face had turned away. I found myself in deep despair.
9. I called, I cried, I begged for pity, Lord.
10. I argued with you. "God," I said, "What good would it do you if I vanished into death?"
11. "And would the dust that's left when I am gone keep promise or speak your praise?"
12. "Lord listen, hear and help me now," I pled and prayed.
13. Then suddenly, you turned my mourning into dancing, you stripped the rags of grief away and wrapped me round with your astounding joy.
14. Now from my heart there pours unceasing song, a voice with music and with praise, that will sing on you forever.

ⁱ NOTES:

1. This is a Psalm of deep personal experience and insight into the inner nature of God, and the differences that exist between our human viewpoints and sentiments and the divine response. The psalmist struggles with life and the sense of grief, but out of that experience comes insight into the nature of God and how to evaluate and understand God's nature.
2. One example is the flash of understanding concerning the divine anger and its relationship to kindness. The two exist, but they cannot be compared in the same way.
3. Notice that this Psalm manifest stages of the grief experience, especially the bargaining that often goes on the grieving process.

MEDITATION

- A. As you meditate upon this Psalm, plot or chart the course of the psalmist's relationship to God. It unfolds over time and through hard-won experience. Have you ever had similar experience?
- B. Verses 7-14 express one particular experience of God. The impression is that it takes place perhaps in a youthful mode of deep confidence. What would be the purpose of such sudden shifts in the sense of divine Presence? Is it the psalmist, or is there some teaching taking place here that we each will learn or need to learn? What might that teaching be?

These notes and the psalm translation comes from "**ANCIENT SONGS SUNG ANEW: the psalms as poetry**" by Lynn C. Bauman