



TOWARDS MEANINGFUL

TEFILLA

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מזמור שיר חנוכת הבית לדוד



I was twelve years old and about to go on my first rollercoaster ride. I was nervous but excited. As the rollercoaster started up the track, I was exhilarated. As we gained momentum, the thrill and excitement grew. But then we reached the top and began to drop. The sheer horror I felt was enough to convince me never to step foot on a rollercoaster again. My stomach dropped and I felt this terrible feeling of doom. I had no control and I was crashing down with nothing to hold on to. As I screamed, we reached the bottom, only to begin the ascent again. This juxtaposition of two completely opposite emotions is what we call the **Rollercoaster of Life**.

Every one of us has experienced the

highs and lows of life. We've gone through times where we were on top of the world, everything was amazing and life was perfect. And then we reached times where everything seemed terrible and we were down in the dumps. This is a rollercoaster of life, as we rise and fall, vacillating between success and failure, triumph and tragedy.

The Tefillot that he said are written in such a way that we can all find personal meaning in them

Every morning, we begin the Pesukei d'Zimra section of Shacharit with Tehillim Perek 30, מזמור שיר חנוכת הבית לדוד, Dovid Hamelech starts off the *mizmor* thanking Hashem for all He is done for him. I will praise you Hashem because You raised me up and did not allow my enemies to rejoice over me ותרפאני אליך Hashem, I cried out to you and You healed me. ה' העלית מן שאול נפשי חיייתי מירדני בור Hashem, you raised up my soul from the depths, You kept me alive so that I would not fall down into the pit.

Dovid Hamelech doesn't explain what specific issue he is being challenged

with at this time. He purposely leaves the *mizmor* vague, because it is meant to speak to all of us. Dovid experienced personal suffering in his life and he davened to Hashem to help him, but the Tefillot that he said are written in such a way that we can all find personal meaning in them and be able to use them in our personal times of need. Even the words that he uses here represent all types of issues – he speaks about enemies, and healing from sickness, and even about salvation from death. Interestingly, it is also unclear at which point Dovid Hamelech says this *mizmor* – was it when he was still in trouble, was it right when Hashem saved him, or was it much after the fact? This, again, allows us to utilize this Tefilla at all times, no matter what stage we are presently in.

Dovid Hamelech calls out to the people surrounding him - זמרו לה' חסידיו והודו לזכר קדשו All of you should learn from my experiences – praise Hashem and thank Him. Why? Because of the lesson that I learned. – רגע באפו חיים ברצונו. בערב ילין בכי ולבקר רנה Your situation can change in an instant. Hashem's anger is just for a moment but

His favor is for a lifetime. At night you might cry and things might feel terrible; You might be in complete despair. But ultimately, in the morning, you will sing; Things will get better.

Dovid Hamelech goes on to talk about the false illusions we live. עולם טוב לנו כשכל ימינו בשלום ושלום לנו כשכל ימינו בשלום When things are going well, we feel like we are on top of the world, everything is good, and it will always continue that way.

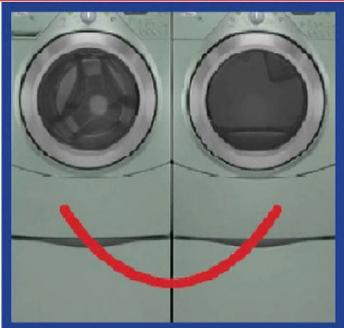
הסתרת פניך הייתי נבהל: But Hashem you showed me. You hid Your face from me and suddenly I was completely terrified! I suddenly realized I am nothing without You.

ואליך ה' אקרא ואל ה' אתחנן And so I turned to You and I cried out - מה בצע בדמי ברדתי אל שחת היווך עפר היגיד אתך What is the point of me dying? Can the dust (my decayed body) praise You?

שמע ה' חנני ה' היה עזר לי Hashem please listen to me and help me!!

הפכת מספדי למחול לי פתחת שקי תאזרני שמחה: And then you changed my mourning into dance, removed my sackcloth and girded me with happiness.

David
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I suddenly understood that Hashem has the capacity to raise me up or to bring me down. He is responsible for the rollercoaster of life. And once I understood this message, then I realized that my purpose in this world is לַמֶּטֶן יִזְמַרְךָ כְּבוֹד וְלֹא יֵדִים ה' אֱלֹקֵי לְעוֹלָם אֲדוֹרָךְ to continuously praise Hashem וְלֹא יֵדוּם and to never be silent.

Whether I am at a high in life or a low in life, I need to be constantly praising Hashem and recognizing His hand in this world. It's not only in hard times that we should call out to Hashem, and it's not only right after we've seen His salvation that we should praise Him. We need to be in constant contact. We need to remind ourselves that no matter where we are in the rollercoaster of life, Hashem is running the show, and knows where the train is headed. He has a plan and we need to be ceaselessly singing His praises through thick and thin. We

cannot become complacent when things are good; Rather we need to remember that Hashem is behind every success we've achieved and our serenity is only because of Him. Hashem sometimes needs to bring us down in order that we can cry out to Him and then praise Him when He brings us back up. If we can remember to recognize Hashem's greatness from the start, He might not need to send us on this loop.

This is a very fitting opening for Pesukei d'Zimra. In this section of the Tefilla, we will sing out praise after praise for Hashem, as we go through many chapters of Tehillim. Each morning when we daven, we may be at a different point in the rollercoaster of life. This introduction comes to tell us that no matter where we're at, it's always a good time to focus on Hashem's greatness and to recognize all that He does for us, in every single stage of our lives. ■

— Cut and paste into your siddur —



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