

sinner but restoration to life (cf. Ezek 18:32; 33:11)—to his greater glory. The sinning believer's obligation is thereby increased, and greater obedience and trust are the result. Such is God's better way.

In vv 5-6 the psalmist reflects upon this prospect of forgiveness, as yet unexperienced in his particular situation. His attitude is one of intense yearning and confident hope that his trauma of trouble—persecution or ill-health or whatever—will be resolved. He awaits a divine ruling from the sanctuary, to be delivered by a priest. Around him lurks a dark night of trouble, sinister with threat and fearfulness. He longs for relief, as ardently as the city sentinels peering into the darkness from the watchtower long for daylight and danger's end.

The psalm presupposes that the awaited positive response from God did come, as in Ps 22. In reaction the psalmist addresses the congregation and draws out from his own experience a lesson for the community at large. Yahweh's covenant attribute of "loyal love" has been attested once more as lavishly true. He does deliver from trouble and so in him lies the community's own hope for total reversal of the problems that beset it, consequences though they are of the nation's departure from Yahweh's covenant standards. Blame is due, but with God it is the prelude not to condemnation but to "redemption"—for those who turn to him in trusting, prayerful hope.

The communal implications already contained in this fine individual psalm evidently encouraged its re-use in a completely communal setting. Vv 1-6 became the voice of the personified community pouring out before Yahweh their prayers, confessing their sins and imploring him to forgive and restore (cf. Dan 9:4-19). They lay claim to divine promises of a glorious future for the covenant nation and, encouraged by a now priestly voice in vv 7-8, look forward to a new redemption surpassing that of the Exodus (111:9) and the return from Babylonian exile (Isa 50:2). Convinced that God has much more salvation and blessing in store for them than they have yet enjoyed, they plead with him to surmount the barrier of their own sinfulness, as they know he can.

The NT with its revelation of Christ gave a new dimension to the longings and affirmations of Ps 130. On the individual level 1 John 1:8-2:2 is its counterpart, assuring the believer that his failure can via confession ever find its remedy in God's grace. For the Christian this grace is grounded not only in a heart of love but in its disclosure through the death of Jesus as the objective basis of divine deliverance. From this initial redemption (Rom 3:23-25; Eph 1:7) is traced an arc which is to culminate in an awaited sequel for the church (Rom 8:19-25).

Childlikeness (131:1-3)

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Translation

- ¹ One of the processional songs.^a Davidic.
Yahweh, my heart is not haughty^b (3+3)
nor are my eyes supercilious,^c
nor have I got involved^d in matters too big (3+2)
or too difficult for me.
- ² Indeed,^a I have composed^b (2+2)
and quieted my soul. (3+3)
Like a weaned child^c carried by^d his mother,
like the weaned child I carry,^e is my soul.
- ³ Put your hope, Israel, in Yahweh (3+3)
from now on and for evermore.

Notes/Comments

- 1.a. See the note on 120:1.
 1.b. For a "high heart" cf. Prov 18:12.
 1.c. For "raised eyes" cf. Prov 6:17; 30:13; Ps 18:28 (27).
 1.d. Lit. "walk, move."
 2.a. Heb. אִל־נֶאֱמַר "if not" serves to introduce an asseveration after an implied oath. G. R. Driver (*JTS* 44 [1943] 21) suggested an adversative sense "but" on the analogy of Aram. אִלְיָ (cf. *HALAT*, 59a).
 2.b. Heb. הִשָּׁו is used of leveling ground in Isa 28:25.
 2.c. Weaning from breast feeding took place around the age of three: cf. 2 Macc 7:27; 1 Sam 1:23-24. H. W. Wolff (*Hosea*, 21) has cited an Egyptian text: "Her breast was in thy mouth for three years" (The Instruction of Ani, *ANET*, 420).
 2.d. Lit. "upon." G. Quell ("Struktur," 178-79) suggested this interpretation, referring to a scene of Syrian prisoners depicted in the Eighteenth Dynasty Egyptian grave of Hor-em-heb, which includes a Semitic woman carrying a child on her shoulders and a baby in a sling behind its brother (*ANEP*, no. 49). For later Jewish evidence for the carrying of a child to a festival on his father's shoulders or by his mother see Babylonian Talmud, *Hag.* 5b-6a; Mishnah, *Hag.* 1:1.
 2.e. Lit. "upon," here with a first person suffix in MT. It is often taken with וַשְׁפִי "my soul" and rendered "within me" (cf. BDB, 753b), but Quell ("Struktur," 178-79) has rightly urged that the parallel עָלַי in the preceding clause points to an identical rendering here. This final clause is sometimes deleted as a scribal error, e.g. by K. Budde, "Das hebräische Klageleid," *ZAW* 2 (1882) 42; NEB. P. W. Skehan (*Israelite Poetry*, 61) deletes וַשְׁפִי עָלַי. An emendation of וַשְׁפִי עָלַי to וַשְׁפִי עָלַי "my soul is weaned" i.e. "quieted," suggested by S. Mowinckel (*Psalmstudien*, vol. 1, 165 note 3), has been adopted by H. Gunkel (*Die Psalmen*, 564), A. Weiser (*Psalms*, 776), H.-J. Kraus (*Psalmen*, 1052) et al. The emendation has been encouraged by the indicative verb (έως) ἀντανόδοσεως in LXX^s (-δόσεις LXX^A, cf. σ' οὐτως ἀντανόδοθειν), but pace BHK it is merely an inner-Greek corruption of (ὡς) ἀντανόδοσος (A. Rahlfs, *Psalmi cum Odis*, 312): LXX interpreted as עָלַי עָלַי. P. A. H. de Boer (*VT* 16 [1966] 291-92) has compared עָלַי עָלַי in 2 Chr 32:25 and interpreted the repeated כּ "as . . . so." The relation of his own translation to the Hebrew is not clear, but he appears to take it as "As one deals with his mother, so (have I) dealt with (= עָלַי) my soul" i.e. he has made himself content, whatever his lot may be. Quell's interpretation, adopted by K. Seybold (*Wallfahrtspsalmen*, 37), appears to do most justice to MT.

Form/Structure/Setting

This psalm has an enigmatic quality about it, due in part to its brevity. It is generally taken as a psalm of confidence or trust in Yahweh, like Pss 16, 23, 62 (e.g. Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 564; Kraus, *Psalmen*, 1052; Weiser, *Psalms*, 776; A. A. Anderson, *Psalms*, 878; M. Dahood, *Psalms III*, 238). D. Michel (*Tempora*, 119) regarded vv 1-2 as a spiritualized form of a *Beichtspiegel* or confessional list related to the entrance liturgy of Pss 15 and 24. Quell ("Struktur," 181-85) took over this designation for vv 1-2a, detecting too implicit thanksgiving; but he regarded v 2b as a separate piece sung by a woman. For the origin of the two passages he referred to Mowinckel's suggestion (*Psalmenstudien*, vol. 6, 65-68) that in certain cases poems were written and deposited in the sanctuary at the thank offering service; in this case they were found in the archives and re-used in the collection of Pss 120-134 by the addition of v 3. Seybold (*Wallfahrtspsalmen*, 34, 37-38, 54) has largely adopted Quell's viewpoint, except that he regards vv 1-2 and perhaps v 3 as a personal expression of piety made at the gates of the temple by a woman pilgrim carrying her child.

The Davidic reference in the heading deserves some attention. It is possible that it was displaced from the heading to Ps 132 where it might appear to be more relevant: LXX^{ms} Tg. omit here and cf. לַדָּוִד "to David" 132:17 in the sense of the Davidic king. Dahood (*Psalms III*, 238) has opined that the psalm may well be a royal one. The psalm is usually regarded as post-exilic, but there is no compelling linguistic evidence for this dating. If Ps 62 is a royal psalm (J. H. Eaton, *Kingship*, 49-50), the similarity of v 2a β to 62:2, 6 (1, 5) might be taken as supporting evidence. Significant too are the references to pride in royal psalms: 18:28 (27, עֵינַיִם רְמוּז "haughty eyes"); 101:5 (גְּבוֹה עֵינַיִם וְרָחֵב לֵב "arrogant eyes and big ideas"). At least the heading may intend to pose a homiletic contrast with the reprehensible behavior of two Davidic kings, Uzziah and Hezekiah (2 Chr 26:16; 32:25 גְּבוֹה לֵבו "his arrogant heart"; cf. too כַּגְּמוּל עָלָיו in the latter verse). It is conceivable too that the psalm was regarded as an illustration of David's attitude to God in 132:1, in which case an interpretation עֲנוּתוֹ "his humility" is presupposed in common with LXX S (cf. Prov 18:12 where עֲנוּה is contrasted with גְּבוֹה לֵב).

The relation of v 3 to the preceding verses is problematic. In the light of the communal (re-)interpretations of Pss 129 and 130 it is possible that the compiler of the collection added v 3a from 130:7 and, supplying the liturgical formulation of v 3b (cf. 113:2; 115:18), thereby gave vv 1-2 a new communal significance (Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien*, vol. 1, 164-65). Then the expressions of faith of vv 1-2 are associated with patient waiting, just as in 37:7; Lam 3:26 the stem שָׁמַט "be silent, still," used here in v 2, is linked with the verbs of hope, הִתְחַוֵּל, used in v 3, and הִתְחַוֵּל (cf. 62:2, 6 [1, 5]).

Structurally vv 1-2 may be divided into two pairs of bicola, the first characterized by a triple negative and the second by the repetitions of נַפְשִׁי "my soul" and (phonetic) אִם, אִם "if, his mother." The addition of a final bicolon, v 3, supplied an inclusive element, the divine name יְהוָה (cf. v 1).

Explanation

Tantalizingly brief though this psalm is, it evidently originated in an individual's profession of an active trust in Yahweh. He has come to realize both the value of submitting to him and the folly of pretentious pride which tries to defy the divine will. Not for him a spirit of self-sufficiency: he understands his own limitations and does not, beyond these, "seek great things" (Jer 45:5) for himself.

This state of spirituality has been attained only by struggling with his headstrong self. Many an outburst of self-will has had to be quelled. Eventually he has learned the lesson of dependence upon God. His metaphor for such dependence, that of the parent carrying a child, is well attested in the OT to describe the supportive care that Yahweh had ever given his covenant people since the wilderness period (Deut 1:31; Isa 46:3-4; Hos 11:3, as generally emended). The psalmist individualizes this communal caring (cf. 23:1), whether glancing at the child he was even now carrying or merely thinking of the welcome burden that was at other times his own or his wife's. Such was his relationship to God, the mother and father of his soul (cf. 27:10), and he would not have it otherwise.

It may have been the communal associations of the metaphor that impelled the compiler of Pss 120-134 to put the psalm to new use. Now vv 1-2 seem to become the concerted voice of the religious community, expressing their humble submission to the will of their Father. Their quietness of soul is to be demonstrated in a steady waiting for Yahweh to reveal himself in climactic grace and power. To this constant hope the community is called by the priestly summons of v 3.

The OT is not alone in making a child the model of humble faith in God: Jesus himself added his memorable Amen (Matt 18:1-4).

*The King's Heritage of Blessing (132:1-18)**Bibliography*

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