TEHILIM # 06: Feeling close to HaShem

Rabbi David Qimhi explains (6:1) that David haMelekh composed this Psalm of Tehilim at a time that he was very sick. From the very beginning we see that David attributes his illness to HaShem. The Rabbis explained that not all health-disorders are sent from heaven. The Rabbis said explicitly: "Everything comes from heaven, except colds and sunstroke". Meaning that it is man's responsibility to protect himself against the inclemency of the weather and any other elements that might affect us physically. Many diseases are man-made, the consequence of man's negligence. When we fails to take proper care of our health.

But many other times sickness is not caused by our negligence. And that is how David perceived his situation now. According to many commentators David haMelekh perceived that his condition was HaShem's retribution. The consequence of the episode with Bat Sheba.

That is why David begins his Psalm with an invocation to HaShem.Admitting that he feels responsible for his condition, he begs HaShem for mercy

6:2: *HaShem, do not rebuke me in Your anger, or discipline me in Your wrath.*

Then, after his admission, he asks for HaShem's forgiveness. He begs HaShem to absolve him and cure him.

6:3 *Have mercy on me, HaShem, for I am faint; heal me, HaShem, for my bones are shaking.*

The King's body, his bones, are shaking. We do not know the exact nature of David's illness. For all we know he could have been shivering from a simple fever, for which there was not remedy in those days.

The next pasuq reveals a deeper dimension of David's condition.

6:4 *My soul is also shaking… and You, HaShem for how long….?*

Now we see that David is sick in body and spirit. Not just his body but also his soul is shaking. His soul shakes of fear. The greatest King of Israel is not embarrass to admit his vulnerability and emotions. But it is still unclear, what

is David haMelekh afraid of? Death?
This pasuq ends with a mysterious question: *"…and You, haShem, for how long….?*The puzzle is solved in the next verse.
6:5 *Come back, HaShem, and deliver me; save me, because of Your unconditional love.*
All along the book of Tehilim David haMelekh proclaims once and again what his highest aspiration is. It is not money, or fame or eternal life: "As for me, all the good [I need/I want] is closeness with God" (Tehilim 73:28). Nothing makes the King of Israel feeling better than knowing that HaShem is with him. David haMelekh is NEVER afraid when he feels that HaShem is close to him. And vice-versa, nothing scares more the greatest King of Israel than feeling that HaShem is far, that HaShem, even temporarily, has abandoned him. David feels that HaShem's distancing Himself from him is the toughest form of a punishment.In the battlefield, fighting a superior enemy; or in times of persecution, danger or sickness, even when he must walk in the valley of the shadows of death, David is not scared, if HaShem is with him.
For David, nothing compares to the anguish of feeling far or abandoned by Him…. David is not afraid of daying. He is affraid of HaShem distancing from him.
At the end of this verse David expresses one of the strongest arguments for his requests. He says: HaShem, I might not deserve Your closeness, Your presence. I know that when I sinned I erected a barrier between Your presence and I, but still, come back, for i know that You love me…
6:5 ….*save me,[if not for my own merits, save me] because of Your unconditional love [to me]*
In this beautiful Mizmor David haMelekh teach us how to pray, and also what should be the highest aspiration in the life of a Jew.

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"As for me, all the good I need is feeling that HaShem is close to me" (Tehilim 73:28)
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