

Sickness and Wholeness in Psalm 38

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Abstract

The Bible presents YHWH, Israel's God, as a God of healing, just as He is also a God of justice and a God of mercy. He is seen as the answer to human sickness, whether natural or caused by human sin. All these are dramatized in the text of Psalm 38. The Psalmist is presented as suffering from a serious sickness that has affected his entire frame, and the sickness is attributed to his sinfulness. The Bible often presents sickness as a consequence of human sin. This paper examines the idea of sickness in the entire text of Psalm 38 together with the proposed means of regaining wholeness. The study of the psalm opens up discussion on some aspects of the traditional and modern approaches to sickness and healing, most particularly in the African context. The historical critical method of exegesis is adopted in the analysis as it helps to address both the diachronic and synchronic dimensions of the text.

Key words: body, healing, salvation, sickness, sin, wholeness

1. Introduction

Sickness is a destabilising phenomenon in human life and in the entire creation. It brings about brokenness which hampers the wholeness of the created entity. In the Bible, the sick person usually cries to God for healing, believing that God is the author of wholeness and the only one capable of restoring the broken condition. The human response to God in the face of sickness and its attendant brokenness looms large in the psalms. The Psalmist of Psalm 38 presents himself as a sick penitent before God to whom he appeals for restoration to wholeness. The penitent in the psalm believes that his sickness is a consequence of his sin and,

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so, pleads for both forgiveness and healing. This essay examines this biblical understanding of sickness as presented in Psalm 38. The essay undertakes a literary critical analysis of the psalm with a view to understanding its meaning within its context and its relevance for the contemporary question of sickness and wholeness. The relationship between sin and bodily health is a critical theme in many currents of modern theology.¹ As a matter of fact, the search for healing and wholeness defines most indigenous African approaches to religion.² In the contemporary setting, many Africans flock to Christian sects and Church groups that promise instant healing from sickness. This is a biting challenge to the faith in most contemporary African societies. While this essay does not pretend to provide answers to these problems, it exposes the biblical understanding of sickness and wholeness from the perspective of Psalm 38.

2. Translation of Psalm 38

A Psalm of David, for Remembering

¹ O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger
or chastise me in your wrath.

² For your arrows have sunk into me,
and your hand has come down on me.

³ There is no soundness in my flesh
because of your indignation;
there is no health in my bones
because of my sin.

⁴ For my iniquities have gone over my head;
they weigh like a burden too heavy for me.

¹ See Simeon Zahli, "Sin and Bodily Illness in the Psalms", *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 42 (2020) 186-207.

² See Elochukwu E. Uzukwu, *God, Spirit, and Human Wholeness. Appropriating Faith and Culture in West African Style* (Eugene, Or: Pickwick Publications, 2012) 1-224.

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- ⁵ My wounds grow foul and fester
because of my foolishness;
- ⁶ I am utterly bowed down and prostrate;
all day long I go around mourning.
- ⁷ For my loins are filled with burning,
and there is no soundness in my flesh.
- ⁸ I am utterly spent and crushed;
I groan because of the tumult of my heart.
- ⁹ O Lord, all my longing is known to you;
my sighing is not hidden from you.
- ¹⁰ My heart throbs; my strength fails me;
as for the light of my eyes—it also has gone from me.
- ¹¹ My friends and companions stand aloof from my affliction,
and my neighbours stand far off.
- ¹² Those who seek my life lay their snares;
those who seek to hurt me speak of ruin
and meditate on treachery all day long.
- ¹³ But I am like the deaf; I do not hear;
like the mute, who cannot speak.
- ¹⁴ Truly, I am like one who does not hear
and in whose mouth is no retort.
- ¹⁵ But it is for you, O LORD, that I wait;
it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer.
- ¹⁶ For I pray, “Only do not let them rejoice over me,
those who boast against me when my foot slips.”
- ¹⁷ For I am ready to fall,
and my pain is ever with me.
- ¹⁸ I confess my iniquity;
I am sorry for my sin.
- ¹⁹ Those who are my foes without cause are mighty,
and many are those who hate me wrongfully.
- ²⁰ Those who render me evil for good
are my adversaries because I follow after good.

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- ²¹ Do not forsake me, O LORD;
O my God, do not be far from me;
²² make haste to help me,
O Lord, my salvation.

3. Form and Setting

Psalm 38 belongs to the first book of Psalms, which comprises of Psalms 1-41. It is among the class of psalms designated as psalms of David and is a song of an individual penitent in crisis of sickness and asking for healing and wholeness. It is a penitential psalm belonging to the group of individual lament psalms.³ There are seven psalms in the Psalter regarded as Penitential Psalms (6; 32; 38; 51; 102; 130; 143), and Psalm 38 is the third of these. These psalms resemble on many levels. For instance, Joel Hamme argues that Psalm 38 just like Psalm 51 is a ritual prayer in the likeness of Mesopotamian penitential prayers through which the penitent reconciled with God in order to receive healing and re-establish wholeness.⁴ According to Hamme, “What we see in the lament literature is not a case of a cultural borrowing, such as the Israelites borrowing a cultural form from their neighbors, but an expression of a common cultural form by which the peoples of the ancient Near East addressed concerns about illness, attacks from enemies, ostracism from friends and family, and so

³ Hans Winfried Jüngling, “Psalms 1-41”, *The International Bible Commentary* (ed. W. R. Farmer; Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1998) 817-819; J. T. Hamme, “The Penitential Psalms and wholeness. Penitential Psalms in the context of Ancient Near Eastern Penitential Prayers”, *Pneuma* 38 (2016), 1-19; Dirk J. Human, “An Injured and Sick Body – Perspectives on the Theology of Psalm 38”, *HTS Theologiese/Theological Studies* 78 (1, 2022) 1-8.

⁴ Hamme, “The Penitential Psalms”, 1-19.

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forth.”⁵ The lament psalms usually begin with acknowledgement of a crisis or sinful situation and plea for God’s intervention, then description of the danger, complaint, affirmation of trust and petition. All these are present in Psalm 38.⁶

The psalm is a confession of total weakness involving both sin and personal health and persecution. The language is excessively emotive and expresses the depth of the psalmist’s pain. As a literary piece, it seems to articulate the human condition in a terrible situation. According to J. H. Eaton, one can hardly imagine anyone in the appalling human condition described in the psalm still having the physical stamina to write down the experience.⁷ So he describes the psalm as “a work of controlled artistry”.⁸ He sees its significant 22 verses as seemingly aligning it with the alphabetic psalms.⁹ However, there is no indication that the psalm is one of the alphabetic psalms.¹⁰ But still, one can say that the psalm constitutes a typical portrait of human condition of brokenness for which one depends solely on God for healing and wholeness. In this way, the psalm can fit into any historical period. It can also be read as a representative description of Israel’s broken condition caused by various forms of infidelity to God.

⁵ Hamme, “The Penitential Psalms”, 2.

⁶ Cf. Jüngling, “Psalms 1-41”, 818.

⁷ J. H. Eaton, *Psalms: Introduction and Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1967) 109.

⁸ Eaton, *Psalms*, 109.

⁹ Eaton, *Psalms*, 109.

¹⁰ For more on this, see Ronald Benun, “Evil and the Distribution of Order: A Structural Analysis of the Acrostics in the First Book of the Psalms”, *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 6 (2006) 2-30.

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4. Structure of the Psalm

The text of Psalm 38 is structured into nine stanzas of unequal lengths in the numbers of strophes and cola. The term “stanza” designates a major subdivision of a poem, which is usually made up of patterned lines, while the term “strophe” refers to a group of two or more lines that constitute a subdivision of a stanza.¹¹ A strophe is made of lines each of which is called a “colon” (plural “cola”). The term “stanza” is a borrowed word from Italian, designating a room in a house. The idea is that a poem is like a house having rooms or stanzas, and the strophes constitute the furniture in the room.¹²

Every stanza of Psalm 38 has an interesting parallel structure. The first thing one may not fail noticing in the reading of the psalm is the similarity between the opening part in vv 1-2 and the closing part in vv. 15-22, particularly vv 21-22. Each of these is a plea for urgent help from God as the psalmist finds himself in dire straits. One also notices the similarity between vv. 3-8 and vv 9-14, as both parts describe the different ailments of the psalmist. What this shows is a chiasmic structure, otherwise called inverse parallelism. It is arranged in a symmetrical pattern and with the main issues in the middle of the psalm. The plea to God at the beginning (vv 1-2) and the end (vv 15-22) frame the psalm while the middle elements are the description of the psalmist's plight (vv 3-8) and the complaint to God about the plight (vv 9-14). The main thrust of the lament is on the description and the complaint. For the purposes of the present discourse, the structure can be represented simply, as follows:

¹¹ Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry. A Guide to Its Technique* (JSOTS 26; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986) 161-162.

¹² See Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 162.

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Vv 1-2 – Plea to God for help

Vv 3-8 – Description of the Plight

Vv 9-14 – Complaint to God about the Plight

Vv 15-22 – Plea to God for help

5. Analysis of the Text

5.1 vv 1-2 – Plea to God for help

This is the first stanza (vv 1-2) of the psalm, and it is laid out in two synonymous parallel pairs. The first line, which is “do not rebuke (*yāqah*) me in your anger (*qesep*)”, is synonymous with the second line, “nor chastise (*yāsaḥ*) me in your wrath (*hēmāh*)”. The third line, which is “your arrows have sunk into me”, is synonymous with the fourth line, “your hand has come down on me”. The synonymity is well expressed in the use of words with similar senses. The terms rebuke (*yāqah*) and chastise (*yāsaḥ*) are similar as both have the sense of teaching and disciplining somebody, while anger (*qesep*) and wrath (*hēmāh*) are similar. The Hebrew noun *hēmāh* actually means “heat”, and it is often used to express the emotion of anger or wrath as a raging heat. It is used interchangeably with *qesep* (anger). The opening of the psalm in 38:1 is similar to the opening of Psalm 6:1, but instead of *qesep*, the word for anger used in 6:1 is *'aph* with the same sense of raging anger.

The affirmation in v. 2 is that God has pierced the psalmist with his arrows (*hiššim*) and he feels the weight of the divine power, which is symbolized by the hand (*yād*). All the four lines of vv. 1-2 express how severely the psalmist feels the punitive weight of the divine anger. The hand of YHWH is heavy upon him. He does not yet say what made him deserve such divine anger. What is clear in this opening section is that the suffering of the psalmist is as a result of divine arrows (*hiššim*) and divine hand (*yād*) upon

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him. This is very significant for the rest of the poem. He is suffering the weight of divine punishment.

5.2 vv 3-8: Description of the Plight

This part elaborates the psalmist's suffering and its cause. The elaboration is done in two stanzas (vv 3-4 and vv 5-8), structured in synthetic parallel forms. The main ailment is named in v. 3a as "no soundness (*m^etōm*) in my flesh (*bāśār*)", and the reason is given in v. 3b as "because of Your indignation (*za'am*)". In the Hebrew usage, the term *bāśār* usually means "flesh", and it expresses the external, visible and tangible aspect of the existent.¹³ There is often the use of the expression "all flesh" (*kol bāśār*), and this actually expresses the whole reality of earthly creatures as tangible and visible things. The Hebrew noun *m^etōm* is derived from the verb root *tmm* (to be complete, finished) and the noun *tōm*, having the sense of completeness, fullness, wholeness, soundness, integrity.¹⁴ By saying that there is no *m^etōm* in his flesh, the psalmist means that his bodily condition is broken, as it has lost its wholeness. Thus, he is sick and in need of healing. The cause of this sickness is what he describes as divine indignation (*za'am*). The word *za'am* rendered as "indignation" expresses intense anger. Thus far, the psalmist has used three related terms to express the divine anger against him, and these are *qesep*, *hemah* and *za'am*.

In the second strophe of v. 3, the psalmist confesses that the lack of well-being (*shālôm*) in his bones is as a result of his sin

¹³ As N. P. Bratsiotis (*TDOT* 2, 325) explains, "*basar* is probably the most comprehensive, most important, and most frequently used anthropological term for the external, fleshly aspect of man's nature, and when used in this sense it can be translated by the two main meanings of this word, 'flesh' or 'body,' depending on the context."

¹⁴ See BDB – F. Brown – S. R. Driver – C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford 1907) ## 8537, 8552,

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(*ḥaṭā't*). The term *shālôm* is used here in the sense of wholeness or health. It is in synonymous parallelism with *m^etôm*, which also means wholeness, soundness. The place of the absence of wholeness is identified as the bones (*'āṣāmîm*) while in the first line of v. 3, it is located in the flesh (*bāśār*). Do they refer to different parts of the body? Both terms express the inner (bone) and the external (flesh) parts of the body. The Hebrew term *'ešem* is used usually to mean “bone”, which is considered as the seat of physical strength and health (Job 20:11; 21:24; Prov 3:8; 15:30; Isa 58:11; 66:14; Lam 4:7).¹⁵ The two terms *'ešem* and *bāśār* (bone and flesh) are often used as a merismus in the Old Testament to express the totality of the human person from the material dimension.¹⁶ Once the two are not performing harmoniously together, the whole person suffers disorder. This is what is happening to the psalmist.

The connection between the sickness and sin is further developed in v. 4. The connection is a bit difficult. The psalmist says that his iniquities have crossed over to his head and they are too heavy for him to bear. In the preceding verse, he says that there is no health or wholeness in his bone because of sin, but now the sinful condition has brought a heavy burden on his head. While *ḥaṭā't* (sin) is used in v. 3, now in v. 4 a synonymous term *'āwôn* is employed. The Old Testament employs different terms to represent sin or evil act, depending on what is meant in each instance. The four most prominent terms are “failure or error (*ḥaṭā't*); “rebellion” or transgression (*pesha'*); iniquity, guilt

¹⁵ Robert B. Chisholm, “*'ešem*,” *NIDOTTE* 3, 499-500.

¹⁶ Luke E. Ijezie, “Expressions of Personal Identity in Igbo Religious Language and Biblical Hebrew Equivalents: A Comparative Philology,” in *Interface between Igbo Theology and Christianity* (eds. Akuma-Kalu Njoku and Elochukwu Uzukwu; New Castle Upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014) 120-139.

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(*'āwôn*); and evil, wickedness (*ra'*).¹⁷ The term *ḥaṭā't* has the basic sense of “missing the mark”, that is, missing the goal of one’s action. When used in relation to God, it expresses the sense of failing to do God’s will, going against God’s word or command. The noun *'āwôn* expresses the sense of iniquity or guilt. It connotes the idea of perverting the way, twisting the right path, bending the path. In its expression of sin, there is the idea of perverting, distorting, making crooked or twisting the path indicated by God, bending God’s law or will, deviating from the way of God. By accusing himself of *'āwôn*, the psalmist is in effect saying that he has used crooked ways to pervert God’s law, to subvert the truth. Sometimes this is as a result of selfish interests. The crookedness has now perverted his very head, and the burden is too heavy to carry.

The third stanza of the poem (vv 5-8) enumerates the different levels of the ailment which his sinful condition has brought about. It opens in v. 5, which is the first strophe, with the words: “My wounds (*ḥabbûrôt*) grow foul and fester because of my foolishness (*'iwwelet*).” The psalmist now informs us that he has wounds on his body. Already he has let us know that there is sickness in his flesh and bones, but now he goes further to make mention of wounds. Are these physical wounds? He describes them as stinking and putrefying, thus giving the impression that he means physical wounds. He attributes all these to his foolishness (*'iwwelet*). The term *'iwwelet* is a moral perversion caused by indiscipline and lack of wisdom. It refers to recklessness in behaviour. According to Prov 22:15, such acts are characteristic of the youth and have to be removed only by the rod of discipline.¹⁸ “Folly is bound up in the heart of a youth (*na'ar*),

¹⁷ Luke E. Ijezie, “The Problem of Sin and God’s Merciful Response,” in *West African Journal of Ecclesial Studies (WAJES)*. Vol. 12. RECOWA, West Africa (2016/2017) 55-67.

¹⁸ Cf. BDB, #200.

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but the rod of discipline drives it far away” (Prov 22:15). The psalmist’s waywardness has caused him his present physical pain. He goes on to enumerate the different forms of the pain in vv 6-8: he is bowed down, mourning, with burning loins, with unsound flesh, spent and crushed, and continuously groaning because of a tumultuous heart. From this description, his suffering involves both physical and emotional pain as well as spiritual. He is not at peace in every sense of the word.

5.3 vv 9-14 – Complaint to God about the Plight

In this section of the poem, the psalmist makes a complaint to God about his suffering condition. It is developed in two stanzas. The text begins with the assertion to God in v. 9: “O Lord, all my longing is known to You; my sighing is not hidden from you.” Then he goes on to enumerate the different dimensions of his ailment in a form of synthetic parallelism. The suffering is on three levels: bodily dimension, social dimension and emotional dimension. The bodily dimension involves the heart that throbs, the failing strength and the eyes that have been robbed of light. The social dimension involves friends and companions who show no concern, neighbours who don’t behave as neighbours by staying far away, and enemies who seek to harm him. The emotional dimension involves his reaction of silence, as his suffering has made him emotional deaf and dumb. He remains speechless in the face of pain and torture.

5.4 vv 15-22 – Plea to God for help

In this concluding part of the poem, the psalmist implores God to intervene to rescue him and restore his wholeness. The section is developed in three stanzas of unequal lengths. In v. 15, the psalmist pleads for God’s intervention, expressing his firm conviction that God will answer him. So he waits for God with faith and hope. He goes on to express why God should deliver

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him and his radical weakness to save himself. The reason for the deliverance is mentioned in v. 16: he fears that his foes will make mockery of him if he collapses. God must not allow this to happen.

In the second stanza (vv 17-20), he confesses his weakness and sin and exposition to many and very powerful enemies. In v. 17, he reiterates the intensity of his pain which makes him very weak and liable to fall at any time. Again he reiterates in v. 18 the fact that his iniquity is the cause of his present condition. So he confesses them. In vv 19-20, he elaborates on the nature of his adversaries. They are many and mighty, and they hate him without any good cause. They render him evil for good because he follows the part of goodness. So despite his acknowledged iniquities, he still considers himself a virtuous man.

The final stanza (vv 21-22) brings the rhetorical argument to an end with a renewed plea for God to hasten to save him. He calls God not just his saviour but his salvation (*t^eshû'âtî*). Three things he asks God to do as his salvation: not to abandon him, not to be far from him, and to hasten to his aid. So God is not like those mentioned in v. 11 as friends and companions who show no concern and neighbours who remain far away.

6. Synthesis

Psalm 38 articulates the cry of a sick man who recognises God as his only source of healing. He sees his sickness as God's punishment for his sins and iniquities. These iniquitous acts are as a result of his folly, but they have ended up in making his life miserable. He suffers from physical pain. He suffers from social alienation, as his friends and neighbours have abandoned him. His enemies band together against him. Worst of all he suffers from psychological and spiritual torture. So, he is completely broken in

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body and in spirit. He cries to God for wholeness seeing God as his only salvation in the prevailing circumstances.

7. Theology and Relevance

7.1 Sin and Sickness: The psalm highlights the relationship between sin and sickness in the Old Testament. Most sicknesses are considered to be consequences of an evil act on the part of the sick person. Most currents of Christian theology and modern thought try to dissociate the relationship between sin and bodily pain, but there is a rethink among some modern theologians who tend to see a connection based on some researches in medicine and psychology. Simeon Zahli argues on the basis of Augustine's interpretation of Psalm 38¹⁹ to establish the link between bodily pain and divine curse.²⁰ According to Zahli,

For Augustine, the sin in question—the sin for which all his bodily ailments are a form of punishment—is not some specific sin committed by the psalmist. Rather, the sin in question is the sin of Adam: original sin. In other words, the physical condition being described in Psalm 38 is not a one-off condition—a disease the psalmist happened to contract during an otherwise healthy life. Rather, his physical sufferings are all symptoms of mortality itself. Mortality is the punishment for original sin, and all specific instances or outworkings of that mortality thus fall under the broader umbrella of punishment for transgression.²¹

¹⁹ Augustine, *Ennarationes in Psalmos* Ps. 37.5 (English: Augustine, *Expositions of the Psalms*: Volume 2, trans. M. Boulding, *The Works of St Augustine* III/16 [New York: New City, 2000], 148).

²⁰ Zahli, "Sin and Bodily Illness in the Psalms", 200-206.

²¹ Zahli, "Sin and Bodily Illness in the Psalms", 201.

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Zahli acknowledges the problematic dimensions of Augustine's interpretation of the fall and the link to Adam, but he still recognizes the validity of his link of sin and mortality and sin and bodily suffering.

7.2 Problem of God's Anger and Human Sickness: The psalm attributes the psalmist's sickness and suffering to God's anger caused by sin. Does God's anger really cause sickness? How can we understand the biblical texts that attribute sickness to divine anger? Many penitential prayers and lament hymns are pleas to God to sheathe the sword of his anger. Just as in the present case of Psalm 38, the psalmist cries out in Ps 6:1: "O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your anger, nor chasten me in Your wrath." In the face of the national catastrophe of exile, the psalmist captures the plaintive cry of the whole community with these words of Ps 74:1: "O God, why have You rejected us forever? Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture?" Also, one reads in Ps 78:31: "The anger of God rose against them and killed some of their stoutest ones, and subdued the choice men of Israel." In the Old Testament, many forms of suffering are interpreted as consequences of God's anger. In many of such circumstances, the belief is that God is placated either through sacrifice or related means.

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Despite all these, many other Old Testament biblical texts affirm that God is slow to anger and abounding in mercy and loving-kindness (Exod 34:6; Num 14:18; Neh 9:17; Pss 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Nah 1:3). But if God's mercy is so abundant and his love without end, as the Scriptures unanimously affirm, how does one explain the anger? Focused studies on the

word show that the term "anger"³⁴ with God as subject occurs 518 times in the Old Testament, apart from other texts where divine wrath or anger is implied.²² It is clear, then, that the idea of God getting angry is affirmed in many biblical texts, but its real meaning is rather problematic. A theological understanding of God as goodness itself makes the idea of God's anger or God's wrath a theological problem. It is a fact that many people live with the burden that they are literally victims of God's anger or divine wrath. The belief is both biblical and contemporary.

This problem has continued to be discussed by scholars from the early Church theologians to the present times. Most interpreters see the attribution of the emotion of anger to God as anthropopathism, that is, the use of what is specifically human emotion or pathos to describe God. The Old Testament writers are said to have presented God in a way that makes him very much involved in human affairs different from the philosophical presuppositions caused by later Greek philosophy.²³

7.3 God as Healer: The psalm shows that God is considered the primary healer of sickness based on the logic that sickness is linked to sin against God. The psalm is a very relevant one to those who believe their sickness is as a result of one form of sin or the other. It gives them hope that they can run to God for wholeness.

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²² See Bruce Baloian, "Anger," *NIDOTTE* 4, 380.

²³ See Gary A. Herion, "Wrath of God," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 6 (ed. D. N. Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992) 989-996.

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7.4 Healing as Restoration to Wholeness: Sickness brings about complete disharmony within the bodily and spiritual dimensions of life. So healing involves a restoration to wholeness of body and spirit.

7.5 The psalm advocates forgiveness and compassion towards those who suffer. It cautions against being too judgemental and hostile to those who suffer, even when they suffer for their misdeeds. Compassion is itself a way of mending the brokenness on the social level.

8. Conclusion

This article has exposed the nature of Psalm 38 as a penitential lament of a sick person. The sickness could be a temporary or terminal one, but it is shown to be a very severe one. It has brought about a radical brokenness on all aspects of the sick person's life. He sees himself as being under the wrath of God and considers his sickness as arrows that God has pierced him with. But he does not give up as he runs to God for succour and healing. The type of healing meant here is total restoration to wholeness.

Psalm 38 shows a systematic disintegration of wholeness at various levels. Ordinarily, wholeness is represented by the sound body. But the psalmist shows how his body is broken and rendered dysfunctional. The brokenness moves from his physical frame to the whole inner being. Then the social body represented by friends and companions also suffer wholeness, as these abandon him in his pain and misery. The fundamental cause of this loss of wholeness is attributed to the religious and spiritual realm, namely, by his sin that alienates him from God. The psalmist thus seeks integral wholeness which involves all these levels.

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The point is that sickness disrupts the harmony of the human body, and the causes of sickness are often very complex, involving rupture of relationships on both physical and spiritual levels. Healing involves restoration to wholeness, and this entails wellbeing on all levels of relationship: harmony within the physical and inner self, harmony with significant others in the society and harmony with God.

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