

Psalms 119:92

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.

Analysis

Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction (לֹא אִם-תּוֹרַתְךָ שְׂשׂוֹנִי אֶזְאָבֶדֶתִּי בְעֹנִי lulei toratekha sha'ashu'ai az avadeti ve'onyi)—The psalmist testifies to Scripture as life-sustaining medicine. Sha'ashu'a (delight, pleasure) is stronger than mere intellectual assent—it's the joy one takes in a beloved companion. Without this delight in torah (instruction, law), he would have perished (avad, been destroyed) in oni (affliction, poverty).

This verse reveals Scripture's therapeutic power: God's Word doesn't merely inform suffering but transforms it into occasion for deeper communion. Job's patience, Joseph's prison psalms, Paul's Philippian joy—all exemplify finding sha'ashu'a in dark providences. The law becomes not burden but ballast, steadying the soul when storms rage.

Historical Context

The Exile tested whether Israel could maintain faith without temple, land, or political autonomy. This verse likely reflects that crisis: Torah became portable sanctuary, sustaining Jewish identity through centuries of dispersion. The Talmud later said, "More than Israel kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath kept Israel."

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Can you identify a time when Scripture sustained you through affliction?
What specific passages brought comfort?
2. What's the difference between knowing God's law and delighting in it? How can duty become delight?

Interlinear Text

י	ת וְכִתְבְּךָ	י	אֶזְכֹּר	אֲבִי דָתִי
Unless	thy law	had been my delights	H227	I should then have perished
H3884	H8451	H8191		H6

בְּצָרָתִי:
in mine affliction
H6040

Additional Cross-References

Romans 15:4 (Word): For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Psalms 119:143 (Word): Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet thy commandments are my delights.

Psalms 27:13 (Parallel theme): I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

Psalms 119:77 (Word): Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight.

Psalms 119:24 (Light): Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.

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