

Morning: Blessing, with Echo of Gunshots

Based on Psalm 30 and Jewish morning prayers

How lovely are these tents! ^[1]
not far from housing that has seen better days
and housing that has seen too many awful ones.

I love the place of Your house, reached through streets
collecting cigarette butts, the odd chicken wing, echoes of homicide.

Through Your abundant love, I enter Your house,^[1]
where these peaceful walls remind us: “If I am for myself alone, what am I?”^[2]
while a few miles away homes reel from gunshots and mourning,
makeshift memorials of teddy bears and candles pooled with tears and rain.
Meetings and vigils and “let this be the last.”

My prayer seeks a favorable time ^[1] –
Does joy come in the morning, where weeping has not tarried for the night?^[3]
Can we dance together, if we have not yet joined in lament?^[3]

You answer with your saving truth:^[1]
Your glory’s dwelling-place spans mountain top and pit.^[3]
We are shaken and we stand firm.^[3]
Remove our sackcloth^[3] and dress us to praise You, Source of Healing and Help.

— Virginia Avniel Spatz (songeveryday.org)

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Notes –

[1] *Mah Tov* [“How lovely are your tents”], recited upon arrival in synagogue for morning prayers

[2] *Pirkei Avot* [Ethics of the Fathers] 1:14

[3] Psalm 30 in the early morning prayers

...weeping may tarry for the night, but joy cometh in the morning.
...When I was carefree, I thought, “I shall never be shaken.”...
LORD, when I enjoyed your favor, You made me stand firm as a mighty mountain; when You hid Your face, I was terrified...
You turned my lament into dancing;
You removed my sackcloth and girded me with joy