

Psalm 27

In Genesis 32, Jacob is faced with a confrontation with Esau, and this psalm perfectly fits that situation.

The Midrash says the Rabbis understood the whole psalm as relating to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. On the Day of Judgment, it is said, 'He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noon day' (**Psalm 37:6**)" - <http://www.matsati.com/>

In fact, this psalm is recited every day in the month of Elul leading up to the High Holy Days (not an ancient practice, but only for the last 200 years)

David shows fearlessness and confidence in God in verses 1-6, because he's seen God deliver military victories.

But in verses 7-14, as he thinks about his struggles with doubt and his own sin, the psalm goes deeper into an examination of David's inward soul.

Psalm 27:1 - "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

"Since distress is like darkness, David describes salvation as light" (Medieval Rabbi David Kimchi - known as Radak)

The Midrash says, "These words are to be considered in the light of the verse: 'Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path' (**Psalm 119:105**)"

"salvation" is "yesha" related to Yeshua, (Joshua, Jesus, Savior)

"strength" is Heb., ma'oz, rendered "rock" or strong place, defense, bulwark

"Whom shall I fear?" - see **Romans 8:31** - "What then shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"

Psalm 27:2 - "When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell."

The Midrash (Vayikra Rabba 21:2) refers to Goliath of whom it is written, 'And the Philistine approached [the Israelite camp] early in the morning and in the evening, so he stood firm for forty days' (**1 Samuel 17:16**).

"...to devour my flesh..." 'And the Philistine said to David, "Come to me and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field"' (**1 Samuel 17:4**; Midrash ibid.). But Goliath was brought down with David's sling.

Psalm 27:3 - "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear:

though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.”

“Now that I have witnessed Elohim’s miraculous assistance against Goliath, I know that I need not fear anything, not even an army” (Midrash *ibid.*, Radak).

Psalm 27:5 - “For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.”

“pavilion” is “sukkah,” the booth on the Feast of Tabernacles.

Psalm 27:7 - “Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.”

David now turns his attention to the most difficult struggle of all, the conflict against the “Evil Inclination,” (what Paul calls “the flesh” or *sarx*) according to some 19th century rabbis, and he requires unprecedented assistance.

David directs his plea to Yahweh’s ‘Attribute of Mercy.’ David realizes that if he is judged strictly he will not deserve to be pardoned. He cannot verbally express himself in order to plead his case. His thoughts are in disarray and he cannot recognize them. All he can do is scream out wordlessly with his ‘voice’ and plead for help (Chaim Azulai, 18th cent. Palestinian Rabbi).

Psalm 27:12 - “Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.”

False witnesses are the voices in our head that contradict what God has revealed to us to be true, through his scripture and our own experience.

Psalm 27:13 - “I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.”

The Talmud (Berachot 4a) relates that although David did not take the slanderous, fake accusations of his enemies to heart, he never doubted that he was, indeed, guilty of some wrongdoing and this did, indeed, shake his confidence.

Psalm 27:14 - “Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.”

An interesting doublet here - we are to be strong, and simultaneously, God will strengthen our heart. In faith we step into what we know is true and He will give us the courage to continue. But we actually do have to *do* something: we show up, we do what is before us to do, despite our fear or confusion and weakness, and he puts the required courage and strength into our hearts.

