

## Mizmor 027

# Reconciling Bitachon to Tefillah

### Key Concepts

In Mizmor 027 David shares with us a very personal narrative of man's relationship with Hashem. He begins by declaring his own absolute *bitachon*, but then concludes that *bitachon* alone is not enough. Even if a person has complete trust in Hashem to always do what is right, there is a need for *tefillah*. It is by humbly asking for help that man is brought closer to his Creator.

So David turns from *bitachon* to *tefillah*, and pleads for closeness to Hashem. But he sees that effective *tefillah* involves vividly picturing his urgent and desperate need. David then realizes that in calling attention to his difficult situation, there is a grave danger of becoming discouraged and losing hope. And so he concludes the mizmor by strengthening his *bitachon* in a *yeshuah* that will surely come. Thus, he has found an effective balance between two key elements in man's *avodah*: *bitachon* and *tefillah*.

### Exploring the Mizmor

**PART 1. GRATITUDE AND BITACHON.** David declares his gratitude to Hashem for his very existence and expresses his absolute trust that even though his enemies are now threatening him, they will surely be defeated.

(א) לְדָוִד ה' אֹרֵי וַיִּשְׁעֵי, מִמִּי אִירָא, ה' מְעוֹז חַיֵּי, מִמִּי אֶפְחָד: (ב) בְּקִרְבִּי עָלִי מְרַעִים לֶאֱכֹל אֶת בְּשָׂרִי, צָרִי וְאֹיְבֵי לִי, הִמָּה כְּשֵׁלּוֹ וְנָפְלוֹ: (ג) אִם תִּחַנְּנָה עָלַי מִחַנְּנָה, לֹא יִירָא לִבִּי, אִם תִּקְוִים עָלַי מִלְחָמָה, בְּזֹאת אֲנִי בֹטֵחַ:

(1) By David. Hashem is my light and my yeshuah. Whom should I fear? Hashem is the stronghold of my life. Whom should I dread? (2) When evil perpetrators come together against me to consume my flesh, my tormentors and my enemies, they will stumble and fall. (3) Even if an army were to encamp against me, I would feel no fear in my heart. Even if a battle would be initiated against me, I would trust in this.

**PART 2. ONE REQUEST.** However, David quickly realizes that there is something missing. He is at risk of taking Hashem's goodness for granted. What is missing is his urgent *tefillah* to Hashem to be closer to Him. And so he reminds himself that he

has one urgent request.

(ד) אַחַת שְׁאַלְתִּי מֵאֵת ה', אֹתָהּ אֲבַקֵּשׁ, שְׁבֵתִי בְּבַיִת ה' כָּל יְמֵי חַיֵּי לַחַזוֹת בְּנֹעַם ה' וּלְבַקֵּר בְּהִיכָלוֹ: (ה) כִּי יִצְפְּנֵנִי בְּסֶכֶה בְּיוֹם רָעָה יִסְתַּרְנִי בְּסִתְרֵךְ אֶהְלֹךְ בְּצוּר יְרוּמִמֵּנִי: (ו) וְעַתָּה יְרוֹם רֹאשִׁי עַל אֵיבֵי סְבִיבוֹתַי וְאֶזְבְּחָהּ בְּאֶהְלֹךְ זִבְחֵי תְרוּעָה אֲשִׁירָה וְאֶזְמָרָה לָהּ:

*(4) There is one thing I have asked of Hashem, it is this that I will seek: that I dwell in the House of Hashem all the days of my life, to behold the sweetness of Hashem and to contemplate in His place of holiness. (5) For He will hide me in His Shelter on the day of evil; He will conceal me in the recess of His Tent; He will raise me high upon a rock. (6) And now My head is raised above my enemies around me. I will offer sacrifices in His Tent accompanied by joyous shouts. There will I sing and chant praise to Hashem.*

**PART 3. THE WONDER OF TEFILLAH.** David now proceeds to make a desperate plea for help in every aspect of his life. He feels this *tefillah* is bringing him closer to Hashem as he had hoped and so he humbly asks that he be allowed to serve Hashem. David concludes the *tefillah* by pleading not be placed at the mercy of bitter enemies who have robbed him of his good name.

(ז) שְׁמַע ה' קוֹלִי אֶקְרָא וְחַנּוּנִי וְעֲנֵנִי: (ח) לָךְ אֶמַּר לְבִי בִקְשׁוּ פָּנֶי אֶת פְּנֵיךָ ה' אֲבַקֵּשׁ: (ט) אֵל תִּסְתַּר פְּנֵיךָ מִמּוֹנֵי אֵל תִּטַּ בְּאֵף עֲבָדְךָ עֲזַרְתִּי הֵייתָ אֵל תִּטְשֵׁנִי וְאֵל תַּעֲזֹבֵנִי אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵי: (י) כִּי אָבִי וְאִמִּי עֲזָבוּנִי וְה' יֹאסֶפְנִי: (יא) הוֹרְנִי ה' דַּרְכֶּךָ וְנַחֲנִי בְּאֶרֶץ מִישׁוֹר לְמַעַן שׁוֹרְרֵי: (יב) אֵל תִּתְּנֵנִי בְּנֶפֶשׁ צָרִי כִּי קָמוּ בִי עֲדֵי שֶׁקֶר וַיִּפְחַח חֲמָס:

*(7) Hashem, hear my voice as I call. Favor me with Your kindness and answer me. (8) Of You has my heart said, [citing Your wish,] "Seek My face." Your face, Hashem, will I seek. (9) Don't hide Your face from me, don't turn away Your servant in anger. You have been my Help, don't abandon me, nor forsake me O G-d, my yeshuah. (10) When my father and mother have abandoned me, Hashem will gather me in. (11) Teach me Your way, Hashem, and lead me on a level path because of my watchful foes. (12) Don't give me over to the desires of my tormentors. For false witnesses rose against me with whispers of criminality.*

**PART 4. THE ESSENTIAL BITACHON.** David interrupts the *tefillah*, reminding himself that *bitachon* in Hashem's ultimate *yeshuah* is essential for his continued existence

and for his *tefillah* to be answered. And so he urges upon himself a strengthening of his hope and trust.

(יג) לוֹלֵא הָאֶמְנַתִּי לְרֹאוֹת בְּטוֹב ה' בְּאֶרֶץ חַיִּים: (יד) קוּה אֶל ה' חֲזַק וְיִאֲמַץ לִבִּי  
וְקוּה אֶל ה':

(13) *Had I not firmly believed I would see the goodness of Hashem in the land of life .... (14) Hope to Hashem; strengthen yourself and He will give your heart courage. Hope to Hashem.*

**Navigating Tehillim.** Mizmor 027 is an exercise in the reconciliation between *bitachon* and *tefillah*. This compares to Mizmor 026 which was an exercise in personal growth. A common feature of the two *mizmorim* is the importance of developing a closeness with Hashem, which is described as dwelling in His house. In Mizmor 026 the desire to dwell in Hashem's house became part of David's spiritual development as he said, "I love the shelter of Your House" (27:8). David now incorporates that desire into his *tefillah*, "that I dwell in the House of Hashem all the days of my life" (27:4) and demonstrates how it is the key to being close to Hashem.

The concept of dwelling in Hashem's house appears in Tehillim for the first time in Mizmor 005, where it is used in David's *tefillah* to differentiate him from his enemies. There he says, "As for me, through Your great kindness, I enter Your house. I prostrate myself toward Your Holy Sanctuary in awe of You." (5:8)

## Learning the Mizmor

### PART 1. GRATITUDE AND BITACHON.

(א) לְדָוִד,  
ה' אֹרֵי וְיִשְׁעֵי  
מִמִּי אִירָא:

This mizmor was composed **by David** — לְדָוִד.

**Hashem is** the Source of **my light** — ה' אֹרֵי, the light of human consciousness and awareness, which He granted when the first man was created on *Rosh Hashanah*. **And** He is the Source **my yeshuah** — וְיִשְׁעֵי, for He saves me from every oppressor. He even saves me from the consequences of my own sins through the gift of *teshuvah* on *Yom Kippur*. There is no other power before which I need to

stand in awe. **Whom should I fear** — מִמִּי אֵירָא ?

ה' מְעוֹז חַיִּי  
מִמִּי אֶפְתָּח:

**Hashem is the stronghold of my life** — ה' מְעוֹז חַיִּי. He is like an impregnable fortress to which I flee when I feel threatened by unknown dangers. So **whom should I dread** — מִמִּי אֶפְתָּח ?

(ב) בְּקִרְבִּי עָלִי מְרַעִים לֶאֱכֹל אֶת בְּשָׂרִי  
צָרִי וְאֹיְבֵי לִי  
הִמָּה כְּשֶׁלוֹ וְנָפְלוּ:

**When evil perpetrators come together against me** — בְּקִרְבִּי עָלִי מְרַעִים, I trust in Hashem to rescue me. Some of my enemies are seeking plunder and are effectively planning **to consume my flesh** — לֶאֱכֹל אֶת בְּשָׂרִי. Others are **my tormentors and my enemies** — צָרִי וְאֹיְבֵי לִי, motivated by vicious hatred. In either case, I know that their very greed and hatred will trip them up and so **they will stumble and fall** — הִמָּה כְּשֶׁלוֹ וְנָפְלוּ.

(ג) אִם תַּחֲנֶנֶה עָלַי מִחֲנָה  
לֹא יִירָא לִבִּי

**Even if a great army were to encamp against me** — אִם תַּחֲנֶנֶה עָלַי מִחֲנָה in an extended siege, **I would feel no fear in my heart** — לֹא יִירָא לִבִּי.

אִם תִּקּוּם עָלַי מִלְחָמָה  
בְּזֹאת אֲנִי בּוֹטָח:

**Even if a violent battle would be initiated against me** — אִם תִּקּוּם עָלַי מִלְחָמָה, **I would confidently trust in this** — בְּזֹאת אֲנִי בּוֹטָח declaration with which I began the mizmor: "Hashem is my light and my *yeshuah* — ה' אֹרֵי וְיִשְׁעֵי".

## PART 2. ONE REQUEST.

(ד) אַחַת שְׁאַלְתִּי מֵאֵת ה'  
אוֹתָהּ אֶבְקֹשׁ

Although I have absolute confidence that He will do what is right, I must not take His kindness for granted. It is my duty to appeal to Him to grant whatever I will

need to serve Him. But since I cannot be the judge of what I really need, **there is only one thing I have asked of Hashem** — אַחַת שְׁאַלְתִּי מֵאֵת ה' — and **it is this alone that I will continue to seek** — אוֹתָהּ אֲבַקֵּשׁ — even though it implies many other specific benefits.

שְׁבֹתִי בְּבַיִת ה' כָּל יְמֵי חַיִּי  
לְחַזוֹת בְּנֹעַם ה' וּלְבַקֵּר בְּהִיכָלוֹ:

All possible needs for survival are implied in one request, which is **that I dwell in the House of Hashem** — שְׁבֹתִי בְּבַיִת ה' — **all the days of my life** — כָּל יְמֵי חַיִּי — **to gaze upon the spiritual sweetness of Hashem** — לְחַזוֹת בְּנֹעַם ה' — in the form of His Torah **and to contemplate** Hashem's infinite wisdom **in His Sanctuary** — וּלְבַקֵּר בְּהִיכָלוֹ. It is my fervent hope to be spared the demands of war so that I can concentrate all my attention on spiritual endeavors.

(ה) כִּי יִצְפְּנֵנִי בַּיּוֹם רָעָה  
יִסְתַּרְנִי בְּסִתְרֵי אֹהֶל  
בְּצוּר יְרוּמָמַי:

I make this request **for** I am confident that **He will hide me in His Shelter** — כִּי יִסְתַּרְנִי — **on the day of evil** — בַּיּוֹם רָעָה — to spare me from the need to confront my enemy; **He will conceal me in the recess of His Tent** — בְּסִתְרֵי אֹהֶל — so that I can focus on spiritual matters; **He will raise me high upon a rock** — בְּצוּר יְרוּמָמַי — so that the enemy cannot reach me.

(ו) וְעֵתָה יְרוּם רֹאשִׁי  
עַל אֹיְבֵי סְבִיבוֹתַי

**And now** — וְעֵתָה — even in the presence of my adversaries, I am no longer afraid. **My head is already raised** — יְרוּם רֹאשִׁי — **above my enemies around me** — עַל אֹיְבֵי סְבִיבוֹתַי. They will surely fall before me.

וְאֶזְבְּחָהּ בְּאֹהֶל זִבְחֵי תְרוּעָה  
אֲשִׁירָה וְאֶזְמְרָה לָהּ:

To show my gratitude **I will offer in His holy Tent** (the Tabernacle) — וְאֶזְבְּחָהּ — **sacrifices accompanied by joyous shouts** — זִבְחֵי תְרוּעָה — **There I will sing and chant praise to Hashem** — אֲשִׁירָה וְאֶזְמְרָה לָהּ.

PART 3. THE WONDER OF TEFILLAH.

(ז) שְׁמַע ה' קוֹלִי אֶקְרָא  
וְחַנּוּנִי וְעֲנֵנִי:

**Hashem, hear my voice as I call** — שְׁמַע ה' קוֹלִי אֶקְרָא upon You with my request because my voice reflects what I have in my heart. Even though I am unworthy, **favor me with Your kindness** — וְחַנּוּנִי **and answer me** — וְעֲנֵנִי by giving me insight into Your Torah. For I ask only to do Your will and the request that I have made is for You to remove the obstacles which prevent me from fulfilling my duty to You.

(ח) לָךְ אָמַר לִבִּי בִקְשׁוּ פָנָי  
אֶת פָּנֶיךָ ה' אֲבַקֵּשׁ:

Hashem, I have been asking to be rescued from my enemies, but my ultimate concern is to connect with Your Presence. My heart knows that You want me to seek You. **Of You has my heart spoken** — לָךְ אָמַר לִבִּי, expressing Your wish, **"Seek My face"** — בִּקְשׁוּ פָנָי. So, to obey Your wish **I will seek Your face, Hashem,** — אֶת פָּנֶיךָ ה' אֲבַקֵּשׁ.

(ט) אֵל תִּסְתֵּר פָּנֶיךָ מִמֶּנִּי

I have been trying so hard to seek Your face! **Don't hide Your face from me** — אֵל תִּסְתֵּר פָּנֶיךָ מִמֶּנִּי and don't refuse my *tefillah*. And even when You accept my *tefillah*, please don't do it grudgingly, but show me the light of Your face in love, for as I have declared, You are my light (*posuk* א).

אֵל תֵּט בְּאַף עֲבֹדֶךָ

In any case, **don't turn Your servant away in anger** — אֵל תֵּט בְּאַף עֲבֹדֶךָ even though I have sinned against You.

עֲזַרְתִּי הָיִיתָ  
אֵל תִּטְשֵׁנִי וְאֵל תַּעֲזֹבֵנִי  
אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

In the past **You have been my Help** — עֲזַרְתִּי הָיִיתָ for You have defended me against my enemies, even when I was undeserving. So now I again ask that You **don't abandon me nor forsake me** — אֵל תִּטְשֵׁנִי וְאֵל תַּעֲזֹבֵנִי. You are the **G-d of**

**my salvation** — אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׁעֵי and I count on You alone (*posuk* א).

(י) כִּי אָבִי וְאִמִּי עֲזָבוּנִי  
וְה' יֶאֱסֹפֵנִי:

When I was young, my parents nurtured me and I relied on them completely. But they are only flesh and blood. There will come a time **when** even **my father and mother** are no longer here and will effectively **have abandoned me** — כִּי אָבִי וְאִמִּי עֲזָבוּנִי. But I know that **Hashem** will always be with me and I trust that He **will gather me in** — וְה' יֶאֱסֹפֵנִי to be under His protection. There can never be a time when He is not there.

(יא) הוֹרֵנִי ה' דְּרֹכֶךָ  
וּנְחֵנִי בְּאֵרֶח מִישׁוֹר  
לְמַעַן שׁוֹרְרֵי

I turn to You for guidance as a child looks to his father. **Teach me Your way** of morality and self-control, **Hashem** — הוֹרֵנִי ה' דְּרֹכֶךָ; **and lead me on a level path** of serenity and honest dealings — וּנְחֵנִי בְּאֵרֶח מִישׁוֹר so that I will not be disturbed in my devotion to Your service. I ask this **because of my watchful foes** — לְמַעַן שׁוֹרְרֵי, who have tried to drive me into exile and undermine my participation in the destiny of Yisrael.

(יב) אַל תִּתְּנֵנִי בְּנַפְשׁ צָרִי  
כִּי קָמוּ בִּי עֵדֵי שֶׁקֶר וַיִּפְחֵ חָמָס:

**Don't turn me over to the insidious desires of my tormentors** — אַל תִּתְּנֵנִי בְּנַפְשׁ צָרִי. They want to keep me preoccupied with unwarranted accusations so that I will not have the time and concentration I need to immerse myself in spiritual matters. **For false witnesses rose against me** — כִּי קָמוּ בִּי עֵדֵי שֶׁקֶר, with fabricated **whispers of criminality** — וַיִּפְחֵ חָמָס that robbed me of my reputation.

#### PART 4. THE ESSENTIAL BITACHON.

(יג) לוֹלֵא הָאֱמֻנָתִי  
לְרֵאוֹת בְּטוֹב ה' בְּאֶרֶץ חַיִּים:

**Had I not firmly believed** — לוֹלֵא הָאֱמֻנָתִי that in the World to Come **I would see the goodness of Hashem** — לְרֵאוֹת בְּטוֹב ה' **in the land of life** — בְּאֶרֶץ

**חַיִּים**, .... I would long ago have succumbed to my enemies. It was the *zechus* (merit) of my abiding trust in Hashem's protection that kept me going.

*David does not actually complete the above sentence because he did not want to contemplate the thought of his possible destruction.*

(יֵד) קוֹה אֶל ה'  
חֹזֵק וְיִצְמַח לִבְךָ

David reminds himself: **Hope to Hashem** — 'קוֹה אֶל ה'; even if your *tefillos* have not yet been answered; **strengthen yourself** in your hope **and He will give your heart** the **courage** — חֹזֵק וְיִצְמַח לִבְךָ you need to keep going.

וְקוֹה אֶל ה'

And continue to **hope to Hashem** — וְקוֹה אֶל ה'. Never let hope leave your heart and never give in to despair.

## Living the Mizmor

Listed below are some of the lessons that you can draw from this mizmor, as well as some of the thoughts you might have in mind when you say the words of the mizmor as a *tefillah* asking for your needs, or expressing your devotion to Hashem.

### Lessons for Life - Your Attitude.

[27:1] LIGHT. – ה' אורִי וְיִשְׁעִי – “*Hashem is my light and my yeshuah.*” Even when you are experiencing the darkness of anxiety and depression, look to Your *bitachon* in Hashem to find a source of light. Remember that your future is in His loving and capable hands. The *yeshuah* is sure to come.

[27:3] – אִם תִּקּוּם עָלַי מִלְחָמָה, בְּזֹאת אֲנִי בּוֹטֵחַ – “*Even if a battle would be initiated against me, I would trust in this.*”

[27:14] COURAGE. – קוֹה אֶל ה' חֹזֵק וְיִצְמַח לִבְךָ וְקוֹה אֶל ה' – “*Hope to Hashem; strengthen yourself and He will give your heart courage.*” Even if you are facing difficult challenges, remember that Hashem is there with you and will help you do what is right.

### Tefillos for Life - Your Relationship with Hashem.

[27:4] HASHEM'S HOUSE. – שְׁבִתִּי בְּבַיִת ה' כֹּל יְמֵי חַיִּי – “[*One thing I have*

asked] that I dwell in the House of Hashem all the days of my life." Ask Hashem to enable you to live in an environment where you can see Him and be close to Him.

[27:7] TEFILLAH. – שְׁמַע ה' קוֹלִי אֶקְרָא וְתַנְנִי וְעַנֵּנִי – "Hashem, hear my voice as I call. Favor me with Your kindness and answer me." Speak to Hashem and ask Him to favor you with His kindness even though you are unworthy.

[27:9] – אַל תִּסְתֵּר פְּנֶיךָ מִמֶּנִּי אֵל תֵּט בְּאַף עַבְדְּךָ – "Don't hide Your face from me, don't turn away Your servant in anger."

[27:11] GUIDANCE. – הוֹרְנִי ה' דְּרָכְךָ וְנַחֲנִי בְּאֶרֶץ מִישׁוֹר – "Teach me Your way, Hashem, and lead me on a level path." Ask Hashem to guide you in making the right choices in life and put you in a situation where the choices are clear.

### Tehillos for Life - Public Acclaim.

[27:6] SONGS OF PRAISE. – אֲשִׁירָה וְאֶזְמְרָה לָהּ – "[There] will I sing and chant praise to Hashem." Sing out your expressions of praise and gratitude to Hashem so that others will be inspired to follow suit.

## Sources

The primary sources used in the interpretation of the pesukim of this mizmor are listed below.

ח - אבן עזרא, מלבי"ם, רשר"ה	א - רד"ק, אבן יחיאל, מלבי"ם, רשר"ה,
ט - רד"ק, המאירי, ספורנו, מלבי"ם, נר לרגלי	מדרש ש"ט
י - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, המאירי, באר אברהם	ב - מצודות, מלבי"ם
יא - המאירי, ספורנו, מלבי"ם	ג - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, נר לרגלי
יב - רש"י, אבן עזרא, רד"ק, נר לרגלי	ד - רד"ק, מצודות, מלבי"ם, נר לרגלי
יג - רש"י, רד"ק, באר אברהם	ה - רש"י, רד"ק, מצודות
יד - רש"י, רד"ק, המאירי	ו - רש"י, אבן עזרא, נר לרגלי
	ז - אבן עזרא, באר אברהם, מלבי"ם, נר לרגלי

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