

# Introduction: The Addition of אֲרֵי וְיִשְׁעֵי לְדָוָד ה'

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As we begin the quest toward repentance and connection to our spiritual selves, let us explore *Perek 27* - our spiritual map providing direction and structure for our journey through the Yemei Ratzon. The *perek* (chapter) has certain features that we will look at using a more broad strokes view and then zoom in to see the details more clearly. We are so familiar with this *perek*, saying it close to one hundred times from *Rosh Chodesh Elul* to Shemini Atzeres twice a day. So the route is familiar but if we pause and slow down, we aspire to find meaning on the journey and hope along the way.

The *perek* begins with the words אֲרֵי ה' אֲרֵי לְדָוָד ה' אֲרֵי - Dovid Hamelech describes Hashem as “my light and my salvation” and as the Tehillim reader - we sense a spirit of expressiveness, of connection with Hashem, a person who feels connected even in challenging times. In fact, the Midrash Vayikra Rabba shares that אֲרֵי alludes to Rosh Hashanah describing the light brought to the world with the creation of Man and וְיִשְׁעֵי refers to the salvation we find on Yom Kippur. Hashem is referred to in the third person, suggesting a sense of faith that Hashem is a constant, there, steady, protective - if I believe in Hashem, why would I be afraid?

One thing I ask of the L-rd, only that do I seek: to live in the house of the L-rd all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the L-rd, to frequent His temple.

אחת | שאלתי מאתה  
אותה | אבקש שבתי  
בביתך | כל ימי חיי  
לחיות | בנעם־ה' ולבקר  
בהיכלו:

The Malbim who never seems to let a repetitive phrase pass without comment says that a *she'eila* is an expressed request while a *bakashah* is an unspoken desire of the heart. These are in essence one request - אותה - I pray that I remain consistent and connected to Hashem. The word - ולבקר - has the word *boker*, morning, as its root word. We ask to interact with Hashem with the vigor and vitality of morning. As an aside, it actually struck me that perhaps this is one perspective we should have on *bikur cholim* - to visit the sick to restore their vigor and vitality and give them a sense of dawn and a new day.

Back to our *perek* - suddenly, we meet another person – Dovid Hamelech is no longer the confident, energetic voice but rather we hear a fear - in *pasuk 7* (verse 7): כי יצפני | בסכה ביום | וְיִשְׁעֵי אֶהְלֶה בְּצֹלֵי יְרוּמָמָי He will shelter me in His pavilion on an evil day, grant me the protection of His tent, raise me high upon a rock. Dovid Hamelech is now reaching out directly to Hashem using second person - do not leave me, do not reject me, protect me in your *succah* - כי יצפני | בסכה - another reference to this time of year. My mother and father have left me, there is only G-d to take me in.

Don't hide your face | אל־תסתור פניך ממני אל־  
from me, don't push | תטשני ואל־תעזבני אלקי  
me away. | יִשְׁעֵי:

When you look at *pesukim* 1-6, the tone seems entirely different than *pesukim* 7-13. There appears to be a different tone and a different stance. In fact, the narrator is seemingly a

different person and yet remarkably, words from the first half are echoed in the second half.

Rabbi Elchonon Samet points out that there is a common language and similarity of phrase when one compares the first half of the *perek* and the second half of the *perek*. I will point out two examples:

Example 1:

First half: Posuk 1

**The L-rd** is my  
Light and **my**  
**Salvation** [a  
fact]

ה' אורֵי וְיִשְׁעֵי

Second half: Posuk 9

Do not  
abandon me, **O**  
**G-d of my**  
**salvation** [a  
request]

וְאַל-תַּעֲזֹבֵנִי  
אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵי

Example 2:

First half: Posuk 4

One thing I ask  
of the L-rd, that  
is what **I seek**

אוֹתָהּ אֶבְקֵשׁ

Second half: Posuk 8

Your face, **O**  
L-rd, **I seek:**

ה' אֶבְקֵשׁ:

Why are the words from the first half of the *perek* echoed in the second half? What is the message of these seemingly two voices in our *perek*? In truth, these are not two different people but the same person. There are times in life when we feel confident, times that we can depend on Hashem and He has our back, and then there are other times when this

relationship is strained and tenuous - we are holding on by a thread.

If you look carefully, there are many dots surrounding the word - לולֵא as if to use underline, bold, large font to underscore. Dovid states - “had I not the assurance that I would enjoy the goodness of the L-rd in the land of the living, had I not had Your assurance,” as if to say, if I did not think You, Hashem believed in me and that I would pull through, I might not have made it. Let us take another closer look at the word - לולֵא. If you reverse the letters, it spells Elul - because it is in Elul that we may experience these feelings of spiritual despondency and despair.

The six *pesukim* of quiet confidence are followed by six *pesukim* of trepidation and fear. What joins the two halves and allows us to synthesize these two voices is the final *pasuk* – and, interestingly or rather intentionally, it repeats itself. These words address our real concerns - of a certain confidence of Hashem’s reach and support but at the same time, how will we make it.

As Dovid Hamelech concludes this *perek*, he states boldly to us - we who look to Tehillim for strength and support - קוֹה אֱלֹהֵי חֲזַק וְיִאֲמַץ לְבָבְךָ - קוֹה אֱלֹהֵי, hope to Hashem; strengthen yourself and He will give you courage, And hope to Hashem! The *pasuk* repeats this phrase - קוֹה אֱלֹהֵי twice. The root of the word hope is *kav* - line - Hashem is extending a lifeline to us, speaking to our dual voices - the voice of quiet confidence and faith and the voice of worry and fear. Strengthen yourself - חֲזַק and I will be there for you and give you courage to soldier on.

In a time where we may feel as though we are faltering - with unprecedented challenges, with

situations - whether it be personal, professional, family or community, that are facing us - Hashem is saying I have you, I will be your light and salvation. May we experience the redemption and see Hashem's light and salvation in the year 5781.