

## Guided Meditation on Psalm 27

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In this meditation we will focus on the hope and strength that are available to us when we allow God to gather us in, when we dwell in God's presence.

When you are ready please close your eyes  
and turn your attention to your breathing.

Breathe in and breathe out.  
Breathe in and breathe out.

The rhythm of your breathing  
may not match my rhythm  
and that's ok.

Breathe in and breathe out.  
Keep your attention focused on your breathing.  
Breathe in and breathe out.

Feel the cool air as you inhale through your nose,  
and the warm air as you exhale.

Breathe in and breathe out.  
Imagine your lungs expanding and contracting.  
Notice your chest rising and falling.  
Breathe in and breathe out.

Breathe in and breathe out.  
Let each breathe be longer than the previous one.  
Let each breathe be deeper than the previous one.  
Breathe in and breathe out.

Each breath is a gift from the source of all breaths.  
Breathe in and breathe out.  
Each deep breath, each soul breath,  
is a gift from the source of all souls.  
Breathe in and breathe out.

As you breathe in, receive this gift from the source.  
As you breathe out, return your breath to the source.  
Breathe in and breathe out.

Continue to breathe slowly and deeply.  
Continue to draw slow easy breaths.  
Breathing in and breathing out.  
Breathing in and breathing out.

As we turn to the theme of this meditation  
allow yourself to follow my words and my images.  
At the same time continue to breathe slowly and deeply.  
Breathing in and breathing out.

When you need to turn away from other thoughts  
and return to the meditation you can do this simply  
by turning your attention back again to your breathing.  
By focusing on your breathing.  
Breathing in and breathing out.  
Breathing in and breathing out.

God is my light and my help,  
who should I fear.  
God is the strength of my life,  
what should I be afraid of.

We all find ourselves in tight spots.  
Armies are encamped all around us.  
Armies are encamped within us.  
Our lives sometimes feel like battle grounds.

Breathing in and breathing out.  
Breathing in and breathing out.

We all have our personal concerns.  
We are concerned about health ... family ... relationships ... careers.  
We all have our personal fears.  
Sometimes we are afraid of death.  
Sometimes we are afraid of life.  
Sometimes we are afraid of the past.  
Sometimes of the future.  
And often of the present.

Breathing in and breathing out.  
Breathing in and breathing out.

But you, God, you know our fears,  
you are aware of our concerns  
and you hear us when we call out to you.  
You are close to all of us when we call out to you,  
when we call upon you sincerely and honestly.

Your house is always open to us,  
you are always prepared to accept us,  
to gather us in.  
For your love for us is unconditional.

Breathing in and breathing out.  
Breathing in and breathing out.

When we look to you,  
when we seek your presence,  
when we turn to your face,  
we see the hope, the strength,  
the courage that you provide.

Put your hope in God.  
You strengthen and fortify your heart  
when you hope in God.  
Hope in God ... Hope in God.

Breathing in and breathing out.  
Breathing in and breathing out.

As the high holy days approach.  
A time we look more closely at ourselves,  
we see ourselves as we are.  
We see ourselves as we could be.  
And we see the gap between the two.  
We know we fall short in many ways.  
We can hide our deeds, our failings,  
our fantasies, our feelings.  
We can hide them from other people  
but we can not hide them from you.  
You know us inside out.  
You know our sitting down and our rising up.  
You know every word that our souls utter.

Breathing in and breathing out.  
Breathing in and breathing out.

You know every word that our souls utter.  
To you our lives are an open book.  
If others knew us as well,  
we might well expect them to reject us.  
Even those who love us the most  
might well turn away from us.  
But you God will not.

Breathing in and breathing out.  
Breathing in and breathing out.

Though even my parents abandon me you, God,  
you gather me in, you gather me close to you,  
you are always nearby, always waiting for me,

always ready to provide me with hope, with strength.

Breathing in and breathing out.  
Breathing in and breathing out.

You are always there for me.  
Gathering me in, caring for me,  
loving me, providing me a home.

Take a moment to imagine  
the feeling of unconditional acceptance.  
Of being welcomed by God.  
Welcomed with open arms.  
Of being gathered in to God's presence.

Breathing in and breathing out.  
Breathing in and breathing out.

Being welcomed to your presence is all I really need.  
Only one thing have I asked of God.  
This I ask most urgently.  
To dwell in the house of God, all the days of my life.  
To experience the sweetness of God.  
To dwell in your presence.

Breathing in and breathing out.  
Breathing in and breathing out.

How can we find this place.  
How can we dwell in your presence.  
We may be able to find your presence,  
to feel your presence  
beside a pool of still waters  
or on a majestic mountain top,  
listening to the roaring waves of the ocean  
or smelling the fragrance of an orange grove.

Your house maybe a glittering palace,  
a synagogue of our childhood,  
a secluded spot in our own house or garden,  
or a sacred space deep within ourselves.

Breathing in and breathing out.  
Breathing in and breathing out.

For our ancestor Jacob,  
the house of God was a rocky place  
where he encountered God in a dream

after a hasty departure from home.  
Surely God is in this place,  
Yaakov said afterwards,  
but I didn't know it.

Breathing in and breathing out.  
Breathing in and breathing out.

God is everywhere.  
God is ... haMakom ... the place ... every place ... all place.  
How can we find your house?  
It is wherever we look.

Breathing in and breathing out.  
Breathing in and breathing out.

Each of us, each day,  
has the opportunity to dwell in god's house.  
To feel the showering of God's blessings,  
to feel completely at home with God.

Whenever we are afraid,  
whenever we are in narrow straights,  
whenever we feel pain or aloneness,  
whenever our lives feel overwhelming,  
we can draw a few deep breaths  
and visualize ourselves as dwelling in your house,  
as the recipients of your blessings, of your hope,  
of your courage, of your strength.

Take a moment to imagine  
the feeling of dwelling in God's house,  
of feeling the hope and strength that God provides.

Breathing in and breathing out.  
Breathing in and breathing out.

The whole world is a narrow bridge, says Rebbe Nahman,  
but the most important thing to know,  
the essence of the situation,  
is that we need not fear at all.

God is my light and my help,  
whom should I fear?

Though troubles surround me,  
my heart will not fear,  
though battles rage around me and within me,

I will trust in your presence and your assistance.

Breathing in and breathing out.  
Breathing in and breathing out.

For we are in the house of God  
and you will always gather us in,  
will always provide for our needs,  
will always provide us with care,  
with love, with hope, with strength.

As we embark of our journey of introspection,  
we remind ourselves that even while we are on this journey,  
we are still in your house.  
Even when things look the darkest  
we can turn toward you with hope and with courage.

Hope in God.  
Strengthen your heart.  
Hope in God.  
Turn to God.

Breathing in and breathing out.  
Breathing in and breathing out.

May the words of our mouths  
and the meditations of our hearts  
be acceptable to you, God,  
for you are the source of our strength,  
the source of our salvation. Amen.

As we close the meditation, continue to take deep breaths until you consider yourself ready to return to your physical surroundings. Then you can open your eyes.