The semantics of a number of occurrences of the root נֵֽמ in the
Hebrew Bible are problematic. For example, the conventional
translation “Beauty, pleasantness” for the noun נֵֽמָּם does not
always yield good sense. The occurrence of the noun in Ps. xxvii 4
is complicated by the presence of an equally obscure term, וְּבַֽאֲקָּרֶּבֶר, in the same verse:

反倒ֹצְתָה לֵֽנֶֽמָּּם יְהוָּה
וְּבַֽאֲקָּרֶּבֶר בְּהֵֽהֶׂכָּלָּה

Four interpretations of this term dominate the history of its transla-
tion. Perhaps the LXX (ἰπποκέπτετον θεό τον ναόν αυτοῦ) and certainly
the Vulgate (visitem templum ejus) have been influenced by one rab-
binic meaning of בַּקְּר, “to visit”. Although this translation makes
sense in context, it remains doubtful that the verb had this meaning
in biblical times. Rashi, following Dunash ibn Labrat and followed
by Mitchell Dahood (although Dahood does not cite either Rashi or
Dunash), interprets the word as a denominative from בֵּר, “morning’’;
thus, “to appear there every morning.” 1 Although plausible,
this translation, too, seems to lack a biblical parallel. The third
translation is influenced by Ezek. xxxiv 11-12, in which בַּקְּר seems
synonymous with דָּרָא, “to seek, search out”. This is another
sense of LXX ἐπισκέπτετον, and it underlies the King James
rendering, “to inquire in his temple”. Rudolf Kittel gives the verb
a spiritual nuance along the same lines (zu sinnen). 2 The fourth in-

1 Rashi to Ps. xxvii 4; Mitchell Dahood, Psalms I (Garden City, New York,
as meaning “mit Interesse (und hier Wohlgefallen) zusehen und darüber nachsinn-
en” (p. 110), i.e., as signifying a form of meditation. It is interesting, however,
that in the 5th and 6th edition (1929) of the same book, he insists that the word be
taken “in kultischen Sinne” (p. 104).
terpretation of ûtëbaqqër is a more practical specification of the third: it sees the inquiry in question as a form of omen-taking. Such an interpretation fits nicely with the use of the verb in connection with priestly inspection of skin disorders (Lev. xiii 36) and with the examination of animals consecrated for donation (Lev. xxvii 33). It also fits nicely with the occurrence of the infinitive in 1 Kgs xvi 15, where it specifies what Ahaz wishes to do at the rebuilt altar. It is noteworthy that one meaning of biqqër in rabbinic Hebrew means "to examine a sacrificial animal for blemishes" (e.g. M. Tamid III 4). The likelihood is that the psalmist in Ps. xxvii 4 is expressing a wish to perform some sort of augury in the Temple. Although the semantics of biqqër, buttressed by comparative Near Eastern evidence, might suggest extispicy, any specification of the form of augury would be speculation.

It may be that the noçam which the psalmist wishes to behold is unrelated to the augury mentioned at the end of the verse. The term has always been rendered by words meaning "beauty, pleasantness", but this seems excessively abstract. What is the beautiful or pleasant object which the speaker wants to see? It is possible that it is an icon, perhaps a statue of YHWH like the one which the Ephraimite Micah's mother made for him and which seems to have been put in his temple (Judg. xvii 1-6). If it is connected with the divination mentioned in the same verse, then it probably denotes the exta arranged in a propitious pattern. On the other hand, the only other attestation of noçam in the Psalter suggests a more dramatic meaning:

16 May your deed appear to your servants,
And the vision of you (hâdârêkâ) to their sons.

17 May the noçam of the Lord our God be upon us,
May you establish the work of our hands,
May you establish the work of our hands! (Ps. xc 16-17).

The term hâdâr, traditionally rendered as "majesty, splendor", has been shown to denote, in some contexts, an "apparition" or "revelation". Its use in Ugaritic in parallelism with hlm, "dream", and in description of a visitation of El, provides strong support for

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