

Mizmor 119**005 - The Decrees****Key Concepts (Aleph 5)**

When a person does a mitzvah he is initially motivated by the knowledge that he is fulfilling the will of Hashem. But his motivation is greatly enhanced if the content of the mitzvah itself is especially meaningful to him.

However, there are many mitzvos, like the Parah Adumah, where the actual procedure seems to have little or no rationale and may even be counter-intuitive. In such cases the person may find difficulty in overcoming arguments from outside critics or even from within his own questioning nature (his Yetzer Hara). As a result that person should make a special effort to perform those mitzvos correctly and completely. He should also seek Divine help in overcoming the challenges that may come his way. Even if these challenges are relatively weak, they may dilute the intensity of his devotion in performing the mitzvos.

Therefore a person should treat every mitzvah, even its non-rational aspects as an absolute decree, a pure expression of the will of his Creator. Such an avodah should be thought of as a **קח**, an edict engraved in stone and not subject to question, for it is actually a test of his devotion.

Exploring the Mizmor

(ה) אֶחְלִי יִכְנֹוּ דְרָכַי לְשֹׁמֵר חֻקֶיךָ:

I earnestly ask [of You], let my ways be steadfast in the observance of Your decrees.

In this pasuk David humbly turns to Hashem to ask for help in firmly grounding his resolve to do the will of Hashem. Such extra strength of character may be needed to face down the challenges that may distract his attention and weaken his resolve to conscientiously observe the non-rational aspects of mitzvos.

Learning the Mizmor

(ה) אֶחְלִי יִכְנֹוּ דְרָכַי
לְשֹׁמֵר חֻקֶיךָ:

I earnestly ask of You — אֶחְלִי, let my ways be steadfast — יִכְנֹוּ דְרָכַי in the observance of Your decrees — לְשֹׁמֵר חֻקֶיךָ, despite all the obstacles I may encounter through my lack of understanding.

Additional Insights

A series of insights illuminating this pasuk are presented below. The numbers identifying the insights refer to the listing of sources below.

(1) In his tefillah, David recognizes that the elements of a mitzvah itself may not always convey the kind of reasoning that his imagination can relate to. In such a case the distractions of daily life can weaken his devotion and so he asks that those distraction be minimized.

(2) If a person has not developed the strength of character needed to suppress the arguments of his yetzer hara, he will need to put an extra effort in asking for Divine help. Only with this help will he be able to deal with the challenges posed by those aspects of mitzvos that have the form of decrees.

(3) He may even ask Hashem to help him avoid battling his yetzer hara altogether because he is afraid he will lose.

Sources

The primary sources used for the additional insights illuminating this pasuk are listed below.

(3) נר לרגלי

(1) - רד"ק

(2) - מלבים