

Mizmor 119**006 - Shame****Key Concepts (Aleph 6)**

Even if a person has the highest personal standards of behavior, he is not likely to meet them if he has no sense of shame. Shame is the emotion that impels him to listen to his conscience. It stops him from sacrificing his principles to gain short-term advantage.

Such an advantage might arise if a person is obstructed by the difficulties inherent in observing the Decrees, the mitzvos for which no rationale is given. As described in the previous pasuk, the difficulties can include arguments from outside critics or even from within his own questioning nature (his Yetzer Hara). Upon encountering these difficulties he can employ his own sense of shame to help him stay on the path he is trying to follow.

Exploring the Mizmor

In the previous pasuk David had asked for help in dealing with the obstacles to observance of the Decrees. He now concludes this thought by explaining how his sense of shame plays a role in helping him overcome such obstacles. His shame in failing to observe a particular set of mitzvos would have aggravated by the realization that he is failing to achieve the wholeness in mitzvah observance spoken of at the beginning of the Mizmor (pasuk א).

David expresses this thought from a positive point of view. He says that now, with Hashem's help, his observance of the totality of mitzvos will be complete and he will therefore escape the sense of shame that he would feel if he had weakened in the face opposition.

(ו) אִזְּ לֹא אֶבוֹשׁ בְּהִבִּיטִי אֶל כָּל מִצְוֹתֶיךָ:

Then I will not be ashamed when I regard all Your mitzvos.

Learning the Mizmor

(ו) אֶז לֹא אֲבוֹשׁ
בְּהִבִּיטִי אֶל כָּל מִצְוֹתֶיךָ:

Then — אֶז when I receive Your help **I will not be ashamed** — לֹא אֲבוֹשׁ of my inadequacy, **when I regard** the totality of **all Your mitzvos** — בְּהִבִּיטִי אֶל כָּל מִצְוֹתֶיךָ, and make a conscientious effort to fulfill every one.

Additional Insights

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

(1) David knows that if he violates any mitzvah he will feel shame when he comes across that mitzvah in reviewing the listing of all 613 mitzvos.

(2) David knows that when he looks at his tzitzis he is reminded of the totality of 613 mitzvos (תרי"ג) and if he is not missing any mitzvos, he will not be ashamed.

(3) David knows that if he is doing his utmost to observe every mitzvah, he needs to feel no shame when unavoidable circumstances prevent him from observing a particular mitzvah. But if he has not done his utmost, he cannot evade a justified feeling of shame because Hashem may very well have brought those circumstances upon him as a sign of His displeasure.

Sources

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

(3) נר לרגלי

(1) - רד"ק, מצודות

(2) - אלשיך