

**Mizmor 119****008 - Perseverance****Key Concepts (Aleph 8)**

The mizmor began (Aleph 1) with a commitment to wholeness in serving Hashem. But as David develops the mizmor he introduces an awareness that the inherent limitations of blood and flesh humanity prevent him from achieving perfection in that goal.

And so David shows that his mission is a continued search for spiritual wholeness despite the obstacles. His challenge is to persevere in that search as he rises ever closer to the ultimate goal which is only achievable in the spirituality of the World to Come. Furthermore, his progress to ever higher degrees of perfection depends upon the direct help of Hashem and so he pleads with Hashem not to forsake him despite his faults.

**Exploring the Mizmor**

In this last pasuk of the Aleph segment David turns once more to the Decrees (Chukim) which symbolize the challenges that he faces in his search for a spiritual connection to his Creator. The lack of rationale for the Decrees suggests that he cannot have a perfect understanding of their meaning even though he meticulously performs the physical actions involved in these mitzvos.

(ח) אֶת חֻקֶיךָ אֲשֶׁמֹר אֶל תַּעֲזֹבֵנִי עַד מְאֹד:

*I will [do my utmost to] observe Your Decrees. Don't forsake me [because I look to Your support so that I can observe them] to the highest degree.*

And so David begins by reiterating his commitment to observe Hashem's Decrees. Implied in that observance is a continued search for greater meaning and for greater spirituality. He commits himself to persevere in that search and he pleads with Hashem not to forsake him because David knows that Hashem's help is needed every step of the way.

With this thought David has completed the Aleph segment of the mizmor. It began (Aleph 1) with praises of the life that is lived in devotion to Hashem. Halfway through the segment (Aleph 4) David was moved to address Hashem directly, singing of his eagerness to observe every aspect of the mitzvos, even those for

which no rationale is evident. He then committed himself to perseverance in this goal, and concluded with a plea for Hashem's help in making progress on the road to spiritual perfection.

## Learning the Mizmor

(ח) אֶת חֻקֵיךָ אֲשָׁמֵר

אֵל תִּעְזָבֵנִי

עַד מְאֹד:

**I will** do my utmost to **observe Your Decrees** — אֶת חֻקֵיךָ אֲשָׁמֵר as I continue to delve into their meaning. **Don't forsake me** — אֵל תִּעְזָבֵנִי because I look to Your support so that I can observe them **to the highest degree** — עַד מְאֹד.

## Additional Insights

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

- (1) The last phrase of the pasuk (עַד מְאֹד) is directly linked to the first phrase (אֶת חֻקֵיךָ אֲשָׁמֵר). David signifies that he wants to observe the mitzvos to the highest degree that is possible and he looks to Hashem to help him do that.
- (2) An alternate interpretation is that by studying the Mishpatim for which a rationale is evident he will be enabled to better observe the Decrees, even without knowing their rationale. He then pleads with Hashem's help to make this possible.
- (3) David pleads with Hashem to help him perfect his soul until he is able to understand the meaning of the Decrees.
- (4) David is also pleading with Hashem to save him from his present misfortunes in the merit of his observance of the decrees.
- (5) Finally, David pleads with Hashem to help him overcome his yetzer hara that tempts him to neglect complete observance of the Decrees.

## **Sources**

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

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|----------------|------------------------------|
| (4) - בן רמוך  | (1) - אבן עזרא, רד"ק, מצודות |
| (5) - גר לרגלי | (2) - מלבים                  |
|                | (3) - המאירי                 |