

Mizmor 119**020 - Yearning****Key Concepts (Gimel 4)**

Ordinary daily living is filled with activities and concerns that distract a person's attention from the Torah he wants to learn and the mitzvos he wants to perform. So how can a person overcome the effect of all these distractions and seemingly necessary activities?

David found that a person can stay focused on something if it is important enough to him. He developed such a great attachment to the Mishpatim that when external influences distracted him, he yearned with all his heart to get back to the Torah thoughts he was thinking about. His intense yearning helped David overcome the the worries and concerns that were affecting him. They even gave him the strength to muster his energies and increase the level of his actual commitment to meaningful Torah study.

He now shares this simple secret with us here in the fourth pasuk of the Gimel series. Of course, to implement it is easier said than done. It requires the dedication and effort necessary to prepare the mind through study, seeking to understand and appreciate what Hashem is saying to us in the words of the Torah.

Exploring the Mizmor

(כ) גְּרָסָה נַפְשִׁי לְתַאֲבָה אֶל מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ בְּכָל עֵת:

My soul is crushed with yearning for Your Mishpatim at all times.

In this pasuk David gives us a sense of the yearning he has developed for the words and thoughts of the Torah. In effect, he feels as though his deepest soul is almost breaking apart as it reaches out to comprehend every detail and nuance in the Torah. He describes this powerful longing as being with him at all times. That means even when he is busy taking care of the affairs of state or family matters, his mind is drawn to the Torah thoughts that he is missing.

Learning the Mizmor

(כ) גִּרְסָה נִפְשִׁי לְתַאֲבָה
אֶל מְשַׁפְּטֶיךָ בְּכָל עֵת:

My soul is crushed — גִּרְסָה נִפְשִׁי with yearning — לְתַאֲבָה for Your Mishpatim
— אֶל מְשַׁפְּטֶיךָ at all times — בְּכָל עֵת, no matter what I may be doing.

Additional Insights

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

(1) This pasuk may also be read as an earnest tefillah to Hashem, asking Him to remove the shell of indifference that prevents a person from feeling the spiritual emotion of attachment to the Torah and mitzvos.

(2) This pasuk teaches an important lesson for those whose circumstances prevent them from devoting as much time and effort into learning Torah as they would like. They should take an example from David and, if nothing else, they should be aware and be moved by their deep and sincere desire to be more involved in Torah.

Sources

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

(1) - מלבים

(2) - טיב התהילות