

## Mizmor 119

# 022 - Honor

### **Key Concepts (Gimel 6)**

We owe a debt of gratitude to Hashem for having given us the blessing of life and a Torah of truth to make our lives meaningful. In return we have an obligation to revere Him and honor His Name. This means we have to live honorable lives so that people who see us as His servants will want to emulate our devotion to Him.

This ideal situation is frustrated whenever ill will and hatred cause evil people to persecute us and dishonor us. As a result, instead of being a model of the benefits that come about from serving Hashem, we run the risk of becoming a model of rejection, something to be avoided. Then, whether or not we are at fault, we are failing to fulfill our mission of bringing honor to our Creator.

Furthermore, our ability to dedicate our minds to the Torah and mitzvos is hampered when we are distracted by the behavior of our enemies. Then we become burdened by the inclination to visualize ourselves as our enemies see us.

David was inspired by this challenge to incorporate into this mizmor a prayer to Hashem to remove the scorn and contempt to which we have been subjected at times. The tefillah puts his request in the best possible light, pointing out that sometimes our very act of openly doing the will of Hashem arouses ill will and jealousy on the part of our misguided enemies. Accordingly, David suggests that rather than being subjected to insult and calumny we want to be worthy of being blessed and thanked.

### **Exploring the Mizmor**

(כב) גַּל מֵעַלֵי חֲרָפָה וְבוֹז כִּי עֲדַתֶּיךָ נִצַּרְתִּי:

*Remove scorn and contempt from me, for I have kept Your testimonies.*

David begins his tefillah for the removal of scorn and contempt with the word גַּל, which may also be translated as "roll away." This word implies the removal of a foreign object that is out of place. He feels he is undeserving of the ill will because it is motivated by the resentment aroused due to his observance of the mitzvos of Hashem, especially those mitzvos which testify to Hashem's greatness.

## Learning the Mizmor

(כב) גַּל מֵעַלֵי חֶרְפָּה וְבוֹז  
כִּי עֵדוּתֶיךָ נִצְרָתִי:

It is only right that You **remove scorn and contempt from me** – גַּל מֵעַלֵי חֶרְפָּה – **וְבוֹז**, for the ill will is brought about by the fact that **I have kept Your testimonies** – כִּי עֵדוּתֶיךָ נִצְרָתִי.

## 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) The word גַּל also suggest a reversal. David is asking that at the same to the scorn is removed from him, it is heaped upon those of his enemies who really deserve it. (Radak)

(2) David is also arguing that since he has faithfully observed the Torah it would not be fair to the honor of Torah to be subjected to be disgraced. (Metzudos)

(3) The testimonies are those mitzvos which testify to what happened in the past concerning the destruction of the wicked and the extra protection provided by Hashem to our righteous forefathers. All of this provides good reason for their descendants to be granted release from any disgrace they are now experiencing. (Malbim).

(4) Since I have openly observed the Torah it would be a desecration of the Name of Hashem if people would point to my misfortune and say how they don't want such a fate to happen to them. (Ner L' Ragli)

## Sources

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

(4) - נר לרגלי

(1) - רד"ק

(2) - מצודות

(3) - מלבי"ם