

**Mishlei 03-01****The Continuity of Wisdom**

[Pesukim 3:1 thru 3:4]

**Key Concepts**

In His kindness Hashem created man with the capacity to acquire wisdom in unlimited amounts. However, He intentionally made man a living organism whose store of wisdom is constantly deteriorating. It is our challenge to constantly work on preserving the continuity of our wisdom by reviewing it and linking new wisdom to the old. For the same reason we must integrate wisdom into our daily lives, practicing the lessons that wisdom teaches us and applying those lessons to every experience we encounter. The four verses of this segment explore these ideas:

**Exploring Mishlei**

(א) בְּנֵי תוֹרַתִי אֵל תִּשְׁכַּח וּמִצְוֹתַי יִצַר לִבָּךְ:

(ב) כִּי אֲרֹךְ יָמִים וְשָׁנוֹת חַיִּים וְשָׁלוֹם יוֹסִיפוּ לָךְ:

(ג) חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת אֵל יַעֲזֹבְךָ קִשְׁרִים עַל גְּרוֹתֶיךָ כְּתָבֵם עַל לִוַּח לִבָּךְ:

(ד) וּמָצָא חֵן וְשָׂכַל טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי אֱלֹהִים וְאָדָם:

***(1) My son, don't forget My Torah and let your heart guard My mitzvos. (2) For they will extend for you the length of your days, years of life and inner peace. (3) Don't let kindness and truth forsake you. Bind them upon your throat. Write them on the tablet of your heart. (4) Then you will find favor and good sense in the eyes of G-d and man.***

(1) Mishlei begins this chapter speaking to the reader in the Name of Hashem. Hashem tells us to preserve the continuity of His Torah by not allowing it to be forgotten. In conjunction with this mission, we are reminded to safeguard our observance of His *mitzvos* so that we are constantly linking wisdom into every aspect of our daily lives.

(2) In the next verse Mishlei describes our reward for preserving the continuity of wisdom: Hashem will preserve the continuity of our lives and give us a long and peaceful life.

(3) Mishlei then reminds us that we will succeed in this endeavor only if we develop and preserve the continuity of our good *middos* (character traits), which are summarized by the concepts of kindness and truth. Kindness and truth must accompany us in everything we do, especially our words and thoughts. They must be like a necklace adorning our throat and an inscription on the tablet of our heart.

We have already seen the metaphor of wisdom as a golden necklace adorning the throat in Mishlei Segment 01-08 (posuk 9).

(4) Mishlei concludes Segment 03-01 by noting that every good word and thought promotes further continuity by eliciting favor in the eyes of Hashem and mankind.

## Learning Mishlei

### (א) בְּנֵי תוֹרָתִי אֶל תִּשְׁכַּח וּמִצְוֹתַי יִצַּר לְבָבְךָ

**My son** — בְּנֵי, even though you have begun to acquire the wisdom of My Torah, don't become overconfident. You will quickly forget what you have learned unless you make an ongoing effort to study it and integrate it into your life. **Don't forget My Torah** — תוֹרָתִי אֶל תִּשְׁכַּח.

**And let your heart guard My mitzvos** — וּמִצְוֹתַי יִצַּר לְבָבְךָ so that when you do them, you will feel the enthusiastic joy of serving your Creator. That joy will make the *mitzvos* live for you and will help keep you from forgetting the Torah teachings in which the mitzvos are defined.

### (ב) כִּי אֶרְךָ יָמֶיךָ וּשְׁנוֹת חַיִּים וְשָׁלוֹם יוֹסִיפוּ לָךְ:

**Preserve the continuity of My Torah and My mitzvos for** — כִּי if you do so, they will enable you to preserve the continuity of your own existence in this world.

**They will extend for you** — יוֹסִיפוּ לָךְ

the **length of** your lifespan of productive **days** — אֶרְךָ יָמֶיךָ .

**And your life will not be marked by sorrowful events, but by years of fulfilled life and inner peace** — וּשְׁנוֹת חַיִּים וְשָׁלוֹם.

**(ג) חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת אֵל יַעֲזֹבְךָ קְשִׁירָם עַל גְּרִגְרוֹתֶיךָ כְּתִבֶם עַל לוח לְבָבְךָ:**

In order to preserve the continuity of My Torah and My *mitzvos* it is essential for you to develop and maintain the quality your *middos*, those that affect your relationship with other people and those that affect your relationship with Me.

**Don't let your sense of kindness**

**and your love for truth forsake you — חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת אֵל יַעֲזֹבְךָ .**

*Middos* should be integrated into every aspect of your life. **Bind them** like a necklace **upon your throat** — **קְשִׁירָם עַל גְּרִגְרוֹתֶיךָ**

so that the words you speak

are words of kindness and truth.

**Write them on the tablet of your heart — כְּתִבֶם עַל לוח לְבָבְךָ**

so that they inspire your every thought.

**(ד) וּמִצָּא חֵן וְשִׂכָּל טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי אֱלֹקִים וְאָדָם:**

Then **you will find favor — וּמִצָּא חֵן**

**and good sense — וְשִׂכָּל טוֹב**

**in the eyes of G-d and man — בְּעֵינֵי אֱלֹקִים וְאָדָם .**

Kindness to others will elicit favor in the eyes of other men, but more importantly in the eyes of Hashem for He rewards selflessness. Devotion to truth will elicit admiration in the eyes of man, but especially in the eyes of Hashem, who will reward you with a higher level of good sense and wisdom.