

**Mishlei 03-05****Connecting to the Source**

[Pesukim 3:5 thru 3:10]

**Key Concepts**

In Gan Eden when man gained the power of *bechirah* (free will), he lost something precious. He lost the fullness of his bond to Hashem and the instinctive sense of having been created by Him. His mind became clouded with the illusion that he was an independent being who could choose to do as he wished. It was no longer obvious to him that everything which happened in the world was Hashem's will. He no longer knew in his heart that even when he made a choice, the physical outcome would be determined by the Creator.

The challenge that man now had was to overcome the illusion that he was the owner of his wisdom. His task was to use that wisdom to connect back to the Source of wisdom. This was extremely difficult for him and it took many generations before Avraham Avinu came on the scene and fully re-established the bond between man and his Creator.

**Exploring Mishlei**

We, who are Avraham's descendants, have the benefit of his spiritual legacy and the teachings of the Torah. We need to make use of these resources to make the connection with the Creator that is so important to our avodas Hashem. In this segment Mishlei offers us four basic guidelines (Authenticity, Awareness, Humility, Gratitude) to help us implement these teachings.

**AUTHENTICITY.** Act only on authentic wisdom — the wisdom of Torah.

**(ה) בְּטַח אֵל ה' בְּכָל לִבְךָ וְאַל בִּינְתֶךָ אֶל תִּשְׁעֶן:**

**(5) Trust in Hashem with all your heart and don't rely on your understanding.**

**AWARENESS.** Always be aware of Hashem — the Source of Wisdom.

(ו) בְּכֹל דְרָכָיִךְ דַּעְהוּ וְהוּא יִישֹׁר אַרְחֻתֶיךָ:

*(6) Know Him in all your ways and He will smooth your paths.*

**HUMILITY.** Don't take pride in your wisdom.

(ז) אֵל תְּהִי חָכֶם בְּעֵינֶיךָ יָרֵא אֶת ה' וְסוּר מִרָע:

(ח) רַפְאוֹת תְּהִי לְשִׁרְךָ וְשִׁקּוּי לְעֲצָמוֹתֶיךָ:

*(7) Don't be wise in your own eyes. Fear Hashem and turn away from evil. (8) It will be health to your navel and the marrow of your bones.*

**GRATITUDE.** Be grateful for your wisdom.

(ט) כִּבֵּד אֶת ה' מִהוֹנֶךָ וּמִרְאשִׁית כָּל תְּבוּאָתֶךָ:

(י) וַיִּמְלְאוּ אֶסְמֶיךָ שָׁבַע וְתִירוֹשׁ יִקְבִּיךָ יִפְרְצוּ:

*(9) Honor Hashem with your wealth and the first of all your produce. (10) Then your storehouses will be filled with plenty and the wine of your vats will burst forth.*

## Learning Mishlei

**AUTHENTICITY.**

(ה) בְּטַח אֵל ה' בְּכֹל לִבְךָ וְאֵל בִּינְתֶךָ אֵל תִּשְׁעֶן

Trust in Hashem— בְּטַח אֵל ה'

and His wisdom, as revealed in the Torah

with all your heart— בְּכֹל לִבְךָ .

Let your decisions in life be based on that wisdom. It would be foolish arrogance to think that you can achieve your selfish objectives by following your own thoughts when they go against Hashem's will.

Let Hashem's wisdom be your only guide

and don't rely on your understanding — וְאֵל בִּינְתֶךָ אֵל תִּשְׁעֶן

which may be self-serving. Accordingly, don't put your trust in the illusory power of your wealth and in promises that people have made to you. If you do, you are really placing your trust in yourself, and the assessment you have personally made. Instead, place your trust in Hashem, and you can be assured of a satisfactory outcome, for the power to determine the outcome is really in His hands, not yours.

### AWARENESS.

**(ו) בְּכֹל דְרָכֶיךָ דַּעְהוּ וְהוּא יִישֹׁר אַרְחֻתֶיךָ:**

Don't limit your commitment to Hashem to the major issues in life. Be aware of His presence and apply His wisdom in everything you do, no matter how small. Always consider whether you are pleasing Him by your action. This means that **you should know Him in all your ways** — **בְּכֹל דְרָכֶיךָ דַּעְהוּ** . Remember, that everything in your life depends on Him.

If you make a sincere effort to involve the wisdom of Hashem in your every action, He will be there to help you every step of the way **and He will smooth your paths** — **וְהוּא יִישֹׁר אַרְחֻתֶיךָ** so that you will succeed in what you do.

### HUMILITY.

**(ז) אַל תְּהִי חָכָם בְּעֵינֶיךָ יָרֵא אֶת ה' וְסוּר מִרָע:**

Remember that wisdom is a gift from Hashem. When you are being admonished, **don't be wise in your own eyes** — **אַל תְּהִי חָכָם בְּעֵינֶיךָ** and say you know better. And when you achieve success don't pat yourself on the back for your shrewdness. Your success came from Hashem.

Don't be misled by your pride. **Fear Hashem** — **יָרֵא אֶת ה'** , Who created you and watches over you.

It is only with His help that you will be able to overcome your bad *middos* **and turn away from evil** — **וְסוּר מִרָע** .

**(ח) רַפְאוֹת תְּהִי לְשִׁרְךָ וְשָׁקוּי לְעֵצְמוֹתֶיךָ:**

By turning way from what is bad you will be pleasing your Creator. It will also make you a better person, morally and physically.

Thus, **it will be** a source of **health to your navel** (**רַפְאוֹת תְּהִי לְשִׁרְךָ**) which symbolizes the flow of nutrients to your body when

you were an embryo in your mother's womb.

**And** it will infuse strength to the structure of your body as symbolized by **the marrow of your bones** (וְשִׁקוּי לְעַצְמוֹתֶיךָ).

### GRATITUDE.

(ט) כִּבֵּד אֶת ה' מִהוֹנֶךָ וּמֵרֵאשִׁית כָּל תְּבוּאֹתֶיךָ:

You are indebted to your Creator for giving you wisdom.

**Honor Hashem** — כִּבֵּד אֶת ה'

by serving Him with everything that He has given you.

Honor him **with your wealth** — מִהוֹנֶךָ

and everything you possess, including your wisdom and all your talents. If you are blessed with a good voice, honor Hashem with it by singing beautiful *zemiros* and *tefillos* to inspire others.

**And give the first of all your produce** — וּמֵרֵאשִׁית כָּל תְּבוּאֹתֶיךָ

to the Kohanim and Leviim, so that they can devote themselves to guiding the people. Then they can serve as a conduit for the blessings of Hashem to His nation. If you have been blessed with wisdom, devote the best of your abilities to learning and teaching Torah.

(י) וַיִּמְלְאוּ אֶסְמִיךָ שֶׁבַע וְתִירוֹשׁ יִקְבְּיךָ יִפְרְצוּ:

Don't let your devotion be inhibited by the cost of doing *mitzvos* and giving *tzedakah*. The blessings of Hashem's bounty will come back to you.

**Your storehouses will be filled with plenty** — וַיִּמְלְאוּ אֶסְמִיךָ שֶׁבַע and the **wine of your vats will burst forth with fullness.** — וְתִירוֹשׁ יִקְבְּיךָ יִפְרְצוּ

Just as your material assets will be blessed so will your spiritual endeavors, such as building institutions of learning and kindness, for you have devoted the best of your intellectual powers to serving Hashem.