

Mishlei 03-21

Wisdom and Happiness

[Pesukim 3:21 thru 3:26]

Key Concepts

By acquiring the wisdom of the Torah and observing its *mitzvos*, man has been given the opportunity to live his life in harmony with the world that Hashem created. Although human life is fraught with uncertainty and danger, man is given the opportunity to live out his years with wisdom under Hashem's protection. By trusting in Hashem man need have no fear of any threat or potential mishap. On the contrary, man can be confident that just as Hashem gave him life, Hashem will continue to do what is best for him in this world and the next. No matter what happens, man can be happy in serving his Creator.

Exploring Mishlei

WISDOM IN FOCUS. Mishlei begins this segment by emphasizing the importance of not letting wisdom be displaced as the central focus of our lives. If we guard the *mitzvos* of the Torah and their profound meaning, we will continually be cheered by the life they give us.

(כא) בְּנֵי אֵל יִלְזוּ מֵעֵינֶיךָ נֹצֵר תְּשִׁיָּה וּמִזְמָה :

(כב) וַיְהִיו חַיִּים לְנַפְשְׁךָ וְחֵן לְגַרְגְּרֹתֶיךָ :

(21) My son, don't let them wisdom's three components be turned away from your eyes. Guard the Torah and [its] profound thoughts.

(22) They will be life to your soul and a graceful adornment for your throat.

THE WISDOM ROAD. Mishlei compares the challenges of life to the experience of traveling a long and dangerous road. If we trust our Guide and follow His instructions, He will see to it that we come to no harm. Even when we set up camp for the night and lay down to rest, our slumbers will be protected and we will wake up refreshed.

(כג) אַז תֵּלֵךְ לְבֵטַח דְּרָכֶךָ וְרַגְלֶךָ לֹא תִגּוֹף:

(כד) אִם תִּשְׁכַּב לֹא תִפְחָד וְשִׁכְבֹתְךָ וְעֶרְבָה שְׁנֵתֶךָ:

(23) Then you will walk securely on your way. You will not stub your foot.

(24) When you lie down you will not be afraid. You will lie down and your sleep will be pleasant.

SECURITY. We will see that living a life of security and trust in Hashem is a life of serenity in His service. Through the blessing of wisdom, we are assured that our immortal soul will continue to reflect that life in the glorious World to Come.

(כה) אַל תִּירָא מִפֶּחַד פֶּתְאִים וּמִשְׂאֵת רְשָׁעִים כִּי תִבֵּא:

(כו) כִּי ה' יִהְיֶה בְּכִסְלֶךָ וְשֹׁמֵר רַגְלֶךָ מִלֶּכֶד:

(25) Don't fear sudden terror or the devastation of the wicked when it comes.

(26) For Hashem will be your Guarantor. He will keep your foot from being caught.

Learning Mishlei

WISDOM IN FOCUS.

(כא) בְּנֵי אֵל יִלְזוּ מֵעֵינֶיךָ נֹצֵר תִּשְׁיָה וּמִזְמָה:

My son — בְּנֵי.

We have seen that all of Creation is dependent on wisdom's three components *chochmah*, *binah*, and *daas*.

Therefore, **don't let them be turned away — אֵל יִלְזוּ**

from before **your eyes — מֵעֵינֶיךָ**,

even when you are busy with your day-to-day concerns.

Stay alert and **guard the mitzvos** of the **Torah — נֹצֵר תִּשְׁיָה**,

which translate the wisdom of Creation into the deeds of men.

And guard **the profound thoughts — וּמִזְמָה** that give them meaning.

True devotion to Hashem has to be based on understanding.

(כב) וַיְהִי חַיִּים לְנַפְשְׁךָ וַחַן לְגִרְגָּתֶיךָ:

The components of wisdom **will be life to your soul** — **וַיְהִי חַיִּים לְנַפְשְׁךָ** for wisdom is a tree of life. (See verse 18). Your soul can only truly live when it is allowed to use its spiritual power to operate with wisdom. Otherwise, it is like a lifeless heart in a body that is mechanically breathing.

And they will be a graceful adornment for your throat — **וַחַן לְגִרְגָּתֶיךָ**. Your wisdom will enhance every word that you utter. (See Mishlei 1:9).

THE WISDOM ROAD.**(כג) אַז תֵּלֵךְ לְבֶטַח דְּרָכְךָ וְרִגְלְךָ לֹא תִגּוֹף:**

Then you will walk securely — **אַז תֵּלֵךְ לְבֶטַח**

on your way — **דְּרָכְךָ**

through life and you will have no fear of death because death is nothing more than a portal to immortality. You will be secure in the knowledge that

you will not stub your foot — **וְרִגְלְךָ לֹא תִגּוֹף**

on any unseen obstacle along the way. With Hashem's help you will overcome any challenge blocking the road.

(כד) אִם תִּשְׁכַּב לֹא תִפְחָד וְשִׁכְבֹתְךָ וְעַרְבֶה שְׁנֹתֶיךָ

When you lie down you will not be afraid — **אִם תִּשְׁכַּב לֹא תִפְחָד**

of bandits who come to steal your possessions. If your wisdom is your prize possession, you can be secure in the knowledge that it cannot be taken from you.

Because of your trust in Hashem, **you will lie down** — **וְשִׁכְבֹתְךָ**

without reluctance or fear **and your sleep will be pleasant** — **וְעַרְבֶה שְׁנֹתֶיךָ**,

unencumbered by bad dreams.

SECURITY.**(כה) אַל תִּירָא מִפֶּחַד פְּתָאִים וּמִשְׂאֵת רְשָׁעִים כִּי תִבֹּא:**

Do not fear a threat of sudden terror — **אַל תִּירָא מִפֶּחַד פְּתָאִים**.

You should fear only Hashem and trust that He will protect you should the threat of tragedy becomes a reality. That means you should not fear the devastation of

the wicked when it comes — **וּמִשָּׂאת רְשָׁעִים כִּי תָבֵא**,
for you will escape their catastrophe.

(כו) כִּי ה' יִהְיֶה בְּכִסְלֶךָ וְשָׁמַר רַגְלְךָ מִלֶּכֶד:

For Hashem will be your Guarantor — **כִּי ה' יִהְיֶה בְּכִסְלֶךָ**
against any danger.

And if you are faithful to Him,

He will keep your foot from being caught — **וְשָׁמַר רַגְלְךָ מִלֶּכֶד**
in the trap of sin as you continue to walk the road of life.