

Mishlei 04-02**Acquiring Wisdom
(4:5 - 9)****Key Concepts**

Wisdom is a gift from Hashem, but it becomes effective only if you take personal possession of it. To acquire wisdom you will need to do what it takes to make it part of you. You will then see the difference in the way other people react to you. It will be as though you are wearing a valuable piece of jewelry which draws admirers to the person wearing it.

What does it take to acquire wisdom? (1) Learn and reflect upon what you have learned. Keep reviewing it so you don't forget it. (2) Remain loyal to the Torah and develop your love for it. Then you won't abandon it for other pursuits. (3) Get the help you need to acquire wisdom. Don't expect to be able to do it on your own. (4) Draw wisdom into your daily life so that you are continuously interacting with it and making contact with it.

Exploring Mishlei

PART 1. LEARN AND REVIEW IT. Learn the wisdom of the Torah and reflect upon what you have learned. Keep reviewing it so you don't forget it.

(ה) קִנְיַת חִכְמָה קִנְיַת בִּינָה אֶל תִּשְׁכַּח וְאֶל תִּטּ מֵאִמְרֵי פִי:

(5) Acquire wisdom, acquire understanding. Don't forget; don't deviate from the words of my mouth.

PART 2. BE LOYAL TO IT. Remain loyal to the Torah and develop your love for it. Then you won't abandon it for other pursuits.

(ו) אֶל תַּעֲזֹבָהּ וְתִשְׁמְרָהּ אֶהְבֶּהּ וְתִצְרָף:

(6) Don't abandon it and it will protect you. Love it and it will sustain you.

PART 3. GET HELP. Get the help you need to acquire wisdom. Don't expect to be able to do it on your own.

(ז) רֵאשִׁית חִכְמָה קִנְיַת חִכְמָה וּבְכֹל קִנְיָנֶיהָ קִנְיַת בִּינָה:

(7) *The beginning of wisdom is to acquire wisdom [from a teacher]. [Then] from your every acquisition [of wisdom] acquire understanding.*

PART 4. INTERACT DAILY. Draw wisdom into your daily life so that you are continuously interacting with it and making contact with it.

(ח) סִלְסַלְתָּ וַתְּרוֹמְמֶנָּהּ תִּכְבְּדֶנָּה כִּי תִחַבְּקֶנָּה:

(8) *Interact with it. It will uplift you; it will honor you as you embrace it.*

PART 5. A NOTICEABLE RESULT. As a result of your efforts the wisdom within you will change you and the effect upon you will be noticeable to all. (posuk 9)

(ט) תִּתֵּן לְרֵאשִׁיךָ לִוְיֹת חַן עֲטֹרֹת תִּפְאָרֶת וַתִּמְגְּנֶנָּה:

(9) *It will place upon your head an accompanying aura of charm. It will provide you with a wreath of honor.*

Learning Mishlei

PART 1. LEARN AND REVIEW IT.

(ה) קִנְיָה חֲכָמָה

קִנְיָה בִינָה

Learn diligently to **acquire wisdom** — קִנְיָה חֲכָמָה so that it becomes your personal possession. A basic knowledge of the Torah is not enough. You must also engage in intense reflection to **acquire understanding** — קִנְיָה בִינָה and deep insight into what you have learned. If you fail to do all this, you are liable to forget the wisdom that you have acquired. Let your enhanced understanding guide you in the way you interact with other people. Don't let your efforts into acquiring the detailed knowledge of *mitzvos* lead you to neglect the moral discipline and *middos* that are essential to fulfilling your mission in life.

אַל תִּשְׁכַּח

וְאֵל תִּט מֵאִמְרֵי פִי:

Constantly review so that you **do not forget** — אַל תִּשְׁכַּח your wisdom. Erroneous knowledge leads to erroneous action. It is essential that you **do not deviate from the words of my mouth** — וְאֵל תִּט מֵאִמְרֵי פִי, which you are liable to do if you have forgotten.

PART 2. BE LOYAL TO IT.

(ו) אַל תַּעֲזֹבָה וְתִשְׁמָרָךְ

Remain loyal to the Torah and **don't abandon it** — אַל תַּעֲזֹבָה when you are exposed to distractions that compete for your time. If you are loyal to the Torah **it will protect you** — וְתִשְׁמָרָךְ from trouble. In the *zechus* of your wisdom, Hashem will be loyal to and you will receive His protection.

אַהֲבָה וְתִצְרָךְ

Love it — אַהֲבָה with intense devotion so that you never grow weary of exploring it. In return **it will sustain you** — וְתִצְרָךְ for you will be given the opportunity to find its inner meaning. And so you will achieve continued spiritual growth.

PART 3. GET HELP.

(ז) רֵאשִׁית חֲכָמָה קִנְיָה חֲכָמָה

וּבְכֹל קִנְיָנָךְ קִנְיָה בִּינָה

The proper beginning of wisdom is to acquire wisdom — רֵאשִׁית חֲכָמָה קִנְיָה from a teacher because if you rely on yourself to discover wisdom you will open yourself to serious error. Once there is an error in your thinking you will find it difficult to correct. But getting wisdom from a teacher is not a passive process. You must put real effort into it for it is up to you to acquire your wisdom and you should even be ready to pay your way.

Once you have acquired some wisdom you must continually reflect upon it to gain further insight. Thus, **from your every acquisition** of wisdom you should proceed to **acquire** in-depth **understanding** — וּבְכֹל קִנְיָנָךְ קִנְיָה בִּינָה. The acquisition of understanding is also an active process, which takes real effort. You may need to engage the help of a fellow student — chaver to help you through it by means of active give and take.

PART 4. INTERACT DAILY.

(ח) סִלְסְלָה וּתְרוֹמְמָךְ

תִּכְבְּדָךְ כִּי תַחַבֵּקְנָה

Continually **interact with it** — סִלְסְלָה and manipulate it with your thoughts as you explore nuances in meaning. You will discover multiple interpretations of the same text — *drush*, all of which have something to teach you. If you do this, **it will**

uplift you — וְתִרְוַמְמֶךָ, making you a better person. And if you learn the Torah with loving devotion, **it will honor you** — תִּכְבְּדֶךָ by becoming part of you **as you embrace it** — כִּי תִחַבְּקֶנָּה.

PART 5. A NOTICEABLE RESULT.

(ט) תִּתֵּן לְרֹאשְׁךָ לְוֵיַת חֵן
עֶטְרַת תְּפָאֶרֶת תִּמְגְּנֶנְךָ:

It will place upon **your head** — תִּתֵּן לְרֹאשְׁךָ **an accompanying aura of charm** — לְוֵיַת חֵן, so that you will find favor in the eyes of people and they will want to be enlightened by your wisdom. **It will also provide you with a wreath of honor** — עֶטְרַת תְּפָאֶרֶת תִּמְגְּנֶנְךָ. Your wisdom will be respected because people will recognize it as being authentic.

Sources

The primary sources used in the interpretation of the verses of this segment are listed below.

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|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ח - רש"י, אבן עזרא, מצודות, מלבי"ם | ה - רבינו יונה, חנוך לנער, מלבי"ם |
| ט - רש"י, אבן עזרא, רבינו יונה, אבן יחיאל, | ו - אבן עזרא, רלב"ג, חנוך לנער |
| חנוך לנער | ז - רש"י, המאירי, הגר"א |

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