

Mishlei 07-01**Bonding with Wisdom**

[Pesukim 7:1 thru 7: 5]

Key Concepts

In contrast to the dangers symbolized by the “strange woman,” Mishlei has already given us an idealized image of the female Wisdom who appears everywhere throughout the city and calls out to mankind to overcome ignorance (see Segment 01-20). Now he associates that virtual image of Wisdom with the bonds of love that a person feels towards a sister, for that love represents a relationship of purity and unselfishness. And so Mishlei calls upon his reader to permanently relate to Wisdom, saying to it, “You are my sister.” Wisdom symbolizes the the eternal Torah, given to man by Hashem. Just as the bond to a sister begins at birth and can never be abrogated, so is man’s bond with Wisdom.

Exploring Mishlei

PRESERVE. Mishlei begins the segment in the Name of Hashem by instructing the student to closely guard and preserve the teachings of the Torah and the practice of the *mitzvos*.

(א) בְּנֵי שֹׁמֵר אִמְרֵי וּמִצְוֹתַי תִּצְפֹּן אֶתְךָ:

(ב) שֹׁמֵר מִצְוֹתַי וְחַיָּה וְתוֹרָתִי כְּאִישׁוֹן עֵינֶיךָ:

(1) My son, heed my words and keep My mitzvos with you.

(2) Heed My mitzvos and you will live. Guard My Torah as the apple of your eye.

ACCESS. To make the weapon of wisdom available when it is needed, Mishlei advises the reader to symbolically bind the *mitzvos* upon his ten fingers so that he thinks of them throughout his day. He is also told to inscribe the words of the Torah upon the tablet of his heart so that they will always be accessible.

(ג) קִשְׂרִים עַל אֶצְבְּעֹתַיךָ כְּתִבָּם עַל לִוַּח לְבָבְךָ:

(3) Bind them on your ten fingers.

Inscribe them on the tablet of your heart.

BOND. Mishlei then instructs the student to bond with the Torah and *mitzvos* so that they are part of him. He calls upon his reader to permanently relate to Wisdom, effectively saying to it, “You are my sister” and “You are my comrade.”

(ד) אָמַר לַחֲכָמָה אַחֲתִי אֶת וּמָדַע לְבִינָה תִקְרָא:

(4) Say to Wisdom. “You are my sister.”

Call insight a comrade.

CONCLUSION. He concludes by explaining that all these steps are needed to enable the student to call upon wisdom whenever needed to protect himself from the temptations of life. These temptations are to be further elaborated in the remaining segments of the chapter.

(ה) לְשֹׁמְרֵךְ מֵאִשָּׁה זָרָה מִנְּכַרְיָה אֲמַרְיָה הַחֲלִיקָה:

**(5) That they may safeguard you from the strange woman,
from the alien woman who smooths her words.**

Learning Mishlei

PRESERVE.

(א) בְּנִי שְׁמַר אֲמָרִי וּמִצְוֹתַי תִּצְפֵּן אֹתָךְ:

My son — בְּנִי,

I will now be speaking to you of what you must do when you encounter temptations that can lead to spiritual disaster.

Therefore, **heed my urgent words — שְׁמַר אֲמָרִי**

and keep all the details of **My mitzvos with you — וּמִצְוֹתַי תִּצְפֵּן אֹתָךְ**

at all times. You need to be fully aware of what is forbidden to you and you must prepare yourself to take the right course of action in every situation.

(ב) שְׁמַר מִצְוֹתַי וְחַיָּה וְתוֹרַתִּי כְּאִשׁוֹן עֵינֶיךָ:

Heed My mitzvos — שְׁמַר מִצְוֹתַי

and you will live — וְחַיָּה

in this world and the next.

Guard My Torah as the apple of your eye — וְתוֹרַתִּי כְּאִשׁוֹן עֵינֶיךָ,

for without it you will be like a sightless person groping in the darkness.

But with the Torah you will experience the blessing of light, as it says, “For the mitzvah is a lamp and the Torah is light” — **כִּי נֵר מִצְוָה וְתוֹרָה אֹר** (Segment 06-20, posuk 6:23). The Torah gives you a conceptual framework to give meaning to the *mitzvos* and help you understand my instructions to you.

ACCESS.

(ג) קְשִׁיִּים עַל אֶצְבְּעוֹתַיִךְ כְּתִיבִם עַל לִוַּח לִבְךָ:

Let your thoughts continually dwell upon the Torah and the *mitzvos*. In this way you will not forget them.

Bind them symbolically on your ten fingers — **קְשִׁיִּים עַל אֶצְבְּעוֹתַיִךְ**,

which represent the work of your hands as you go about your day doing *mitzvos*.

Inscribe them on the tablet of your heart — **כְּתִיבִם עַל לִוַּח לִבְךָ**

so that you are aware of the significance of every action that you take.

BOND.

(ד) אָמַר לְחָכְמָה אָחֹתִי אָתָּה

Form a loving bond with Wisdom, which calls out to mankind and urges each person to examine himself [see Segment 01-20]. Then you will be able to

say to Wisdom — **אָמַר לְחָכְמָה**,

“You are my sister” — **אָחֹתִי אָתָּה**.

Through Wisdom you will be empowered to focus on relationships of purity and unselfishness, modeled on your relationship with your sister. And just as she will always be your sister, so should your relationship with the wisdom of the Torah be eternal.

וּמִדַּע לְבִינָה תִקְרָא:

Empowered by Hashem’s gift of wisdom, you will have the opportunity to develop further insight and understanding of the Torah. And so you will be able to

call Torah insight a comrade — **וּמִדַּע לְבִינָה תִקְרָא**.

Just as a comrade stands ready to help you in time of need, so should you call upon the power of understanding to help you gain additional Torah insight whenever you need it.

CONCLUSION.

(ה) לִשְׂמֹרֶךְ מֵאִשָּׁה זָרָה מִנְּכַרְיָה אֲמַרְיָה הַחֲלִיקָה:

Remember well these teachings,

that they may safeguard you from the strange woman — **לִשְׂמֹרֶךְ מֵאִשָּׁה זָרָה**,

from the alien woman who smooths her words — מִנְכַרְיָה אֲמֹרֶיָה הַחֲלִיקָה
to trick you into immoral and unethical behavior.