

Mishlei 10-28

Hope

Key Concepts

We live in the present, but our state of mind is highly influenced by our hope and expectation of what will happen in the future. Hope is an essential quality that gives a person happiness and joy in what he is doing. It invigorates him and increases his inclination to expend positive energy in whatever task he is addressing. Thus, hope is important in *avodas Hashem* because it leads a person to put his heart and soul into the performance of *mitzvos*.

Hope is directly related to *bitachon* (trust) and to *tefillah* (prayer). A person who has *bitachon* in Hashem will place his hopes in Him. This is a constant theme in *Tehillim*. In Mizmor 027 David Hamelech provides us with a framework for thinking about *tefillah*, *bitachon*, and hope.

The word “hope” implies eagerly awaiting a future event. However, this leaves open the question as to whether the hoped-for result is truly worthwhile and what basis the person has for expecting the desired outcome. Is it really likely to occur? And then there is the question of whether the person will be pleased with the final result. These issues are succinctly touched upon by Mishlei in the present proverb.

Exploring Mishlei

(כח) תוֹחֶלֶת צְדִיקִים שְׂמֵחָה וְתִקְוַת רְשָׁעִים תֵּאָבֵד:

**(28) The hope of tzadikim will be fulfilled in joy,
but the hope of resha'im will fail.**

As in many of the previous proverbs, Mishlei provides us with a contrast, distinguishing between the effect of hope upon righteous people (*tzadikim*) and wicked people (*resha'im*). He implies that the hope of *tzadikim* is for a worthwhile outcome and this is related to the confidence with which they can expect it to be fulfilled.

To emphasize the difference between the hope of *tzadikim* and that of *resha'im*, Mishlei uses different terms for hope (תִּקְוָה and תוֹחֶלֶת) for the two types of person. Aspects of these terms are elaborated upon in the Additional Insights section below. These aspects are based on the views of different commentators, each of

which emphasizes some of the important qualities inherent in hope. It is important to remember that hope is a good attitude to have and ultimately the difference lies in who is experiencing it.

Learning Mishlei

(כח) תוֹחֶלֶת צְדִיקִים שְׂמֵחָה וְתִקְוֹת רְשָׁעִים תֵּאבֵד:

(28) The **hope of *tzadikim*** — **תוֹחֶלֶת צְדִיקִים**

will become their **joy** — **שְׂמֵחָה**,

when it is fulfilled.

But the hope of *resha'im* — **וְתִקְוֹת רְשָׁעִים**

will be doomed — **תֵּאבֵד**.

Additional Insights

TZADIKIM

(1) The outcome for which *tzadikim* are hoping is destined to be fulfilled and when that time comes, they will surely rejoice. (רש"י, מצודות)

(2) The outcome for which *tzadikim hope* is not subject to disappointment because it is not dependent on their own abilities or on chance, but on the kindness of Heaven. And even when it is delayed, *tzadikim* are joyful because they know that they have served Hashem by putting their trust in Him. They will be rewarded for the trust. (רבינו יונה, שבט מיהודה)

(3) What do *tzadikim* hope for? A longer, healthy life in this world so that they can serve Hashem and do more *mitzvos*, as in the previous proverb (Mishlei 10-27). (חנוך לנער)

(4) What do *tzadikim* hope for? The joy of eternal life in the World to Come. There is no material reward in this world that can compare to it. (רלב"ג, אבן יחיאל, חנוך לנער)

(5) *What do tzadikim hope for?* They also hope that the destructive hopes of the *resha'im* will be doomed to failure. (חנוך לנער)

(6) The term תוֹחֶלֶת implies eagerly awaiting an outcome. (רבינו יונה)

(7) The term תוֹחֶלֶת implies awaiting an outcome that is sure to happen. Thus, it is especially applicable to *tzadikim* for they have *bitachon* (trust). (מלבי"ם)

(8) The term תוֹחֶלֶת implies patiently awaiting an event which may be delayed into the distant future. This is not a problem for *tzadikim* because they have *bitachon* that, no matter how long it takes, the promise will be fulfilled in the next world. (הגר"א)

RESHA'IM

(9) The *resha'im* are doomed to disappointment because that for which they are hoping will not happen. (רש"י, מצודות)

(10) When the particular outcome for which *resha'im* are hoping fails, their hope is dashed because they do not receive any reward for having placed their hope in material gains. (רבינו יונה)

(11) What do *resha'im* hope for? Acquisition of worldly goods and physical pleasures. These are temporary by their very nature and are therefore doomed. (רלב"ג)

(12) What do *resha'im* hope for? Success in criminal schemes involving violence and deception. These are inevitably doomed to failure. (חנך לנער)

(13) The term תִּקְוָה implies awaiting an outcome that is expected to arrive in the immediate future. This can quickly lead to disappointment. *Resha'im* are impatient and expect gratification for their desires in the near term. (הגר"א)

(14) The term תִּקְוָה implies optimistically looking for something to happen but with no real foundation or sense of certainty that it will actually take place. (מלבי"ם)