

Mishlei 12-02

Self-Sufficiency

Key Concepts

One of the main challenges a person has to face in life derives from the instinctive desire to be self-sufficient. This desire causes him to rely on his own cleverness in planning his life and choosing what to do in any situation. What he should be doing is live his life with reference to the will of his Creator. That means doing what is right and good instead of following his own crafty schemes, no matter how innovative they may seem.

He should look to Hashem to provide him with what he needs in life rather than rely on his own clever ideas to obtain them, especially since his schemes may tempt him to go against the will of Hashem. If he does what Hashem wants him to do he will live in Hashem's favor and help bring blessing to the world. But if he chooses to rely on himself, his clever schemes will be self-destructive and he will be ripe for calamity.

Exploring Mishlei

(ב) טוב יִפְיֵק רְצוֹן מֵה' וְאִישׁ מְזַמּוֹת יִרְשִׁיעַ:

(2) A good person seeks favor from Hashem, but a scheming person brings about calamity.

This proverb compares the good person with the scheming person. Without unnecessarily deep thought or subtle planning the good man lives his life by acting in a straightforward way so as to invoke the favor of Hashem. The scheming person overestimates cleverness in general and his own cleverness in particular. He thinks that the results of his own intelligence are sufficient, but he is sadly mistaken and disaster is the result.

Learning Mishlei

(ב) טוב יִפְיֵק רְצוֹן מֵה'
וְאִישׁ מְזַמּוֹת יִרְשִׁיעַ:

A good person — טוב does not rely upon himself but **seeks** to obtain **favor from Hashem** — יִפְיֵק רְצוֹן מֵה' through doing what is right and good. He

thereby brings blessing upon the world. **But a scheming person — וְאִישׁ מְזֻמּוֹת ,** who lacks trust in Hashem and prefers to rely on his own cleverness, **brings about calamity — יַרְשִׁיעַ.**

Additional Insights

A series of insights illuminating this proverb are presented below. The numbers identifying the insights refer to the listing of sources at the end of the segment.

THE GOOD PERSON

(1) By pleasing Hashem through his behavior, the good person draws forth Hashem's good will to bring blessing to the world. This is because his simple thoughts and deeds are for good and right ends.

(2) The good person evaluates his own desires to match them against the will of Hashem. In effect he draws forth his own will from the will of Hashem.

(3) The mitzvos represent the will of Hashem and by observing them the good person evoke His true will, which is to do good to His creatures.

(4) Only what is agreeable to Hashem is good in the absolute sense.

THE SCHEMING PERSON

(5) The person who is drawn after his own schemes contributes to the preponderance of evil in the world and thereby induces Hashem to judge the world harshly.

(6) Only a person who thinks that the results of his own intelligence are sufficient dares act against G-d's Law.

Sources

The primary sources used for the additional insights illuminating this segment are listed below.

(4) - רשר"ה

(5) - מצודות

(6) - רשר"ה

(1) - רש"י, מלבי"ם

(2) - רלב"ג

(3) - הגר"א

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