

Mishlei 14-28

Participation

Key Concepts

An individual's commitment to a cause is reinforced when other people have the same opinion. It is especially strengthened when the people who share ideals come together in one place. Seeing the many people that support the same cause makes each of them feel good about participating and strengthens their convictions.

When people choose a leader or king he embodies their common belief and serves as a focal point in bringing them together so that they can be effective as a group in carrying out their ideals.

When honor and respect are publicly given to a king they serve to enhance the symbolism of the king's leadership.

In the time of the *Shoftim* (Judges), the Jewish people felt the need for someone to fulfill the role of king and unite the nation. Unfortunately, their belief in Hashem as King was still too abstract for this purpose. Nevertheless, Hashem accepted their wish and directed Shmuel HaNavi to anoint Shaul as King. Tragically, Shaul proved inadequate for this critical mission, and David was chosen by Hashem to take his place, thereby founding the Davidic dynasty that has served as a focal point in uniting the Jewish nation in service to Hashem over the centuries.

While we wait for the Royal House of David to be restored we gather in groups, large and small, to draw strength from each other and declare our loyalty to Hashem and our faith in the *Geulah* (Redemption).

Exploring Mishlei

(כח) בָּרַב עַם הַדֹּרֶת מֶלֶךְ וּבְאַפְס לְאִם מִחַתֶּת רְאוּן:

(28) In a multitude of people there is glory to their king, but without a community, the ruler is diminished.

This proverb uses the analogy of a flesh and blood king to express the great value that we find in coming together in the service of Hashem. Thus, the more people participating in any assembly, the greater is the glory that we provide to our G-d and the greater is the effect on each of us. This means that each person should feel an obligation to participate with others in any holy endeavor.

The second part of the proverb observes that if people fail to appreciate the

qualities of their leader, he may find it difficult to draw many people to him. This diminishes his ability to fulfill his mission. Similarly, when there are less people attending a gathering in honor of Hashem, the effect is to weaken their sense of participating in a glorious moment.

Learning Mishlei

(כח) בָּרַב עִם הַדָּרַת מֶלֶךְ
וּבְאֶפֶס לְאִם מְחַתֶּת רְיוֹן:

In a multitude of people there is glory to their king – בָּרַב עִם הַדָּרַת מֶלֶךְ, but without the support of a community, the ruler is diminished – וּבְאֶפֶס לְאִם מְחַתֶּת רְיוֹן.

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.

- (1) The glory of Hashem is enhanced, not only by the number of people gathered in his honor, but by the degree of their devotion.
- (2) When the people participating in an event honoring Hashem are small in number, each has a special responsibility to be more fervent in his devotion.
- (3) When doing a mitzvah people should look for opportunities to perform it in coordination with others, rather than each acting on his own.

Sources

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

(3) - מצודות

(1) - רש"י

(2) - מצודות