

Mishlei 14-32

Steadfastness

Key Concepts

A person's true character is tested when misfortune strikes. If he shows steadfastness and perseveres in his righteous way of life, he is worthy. But if he becomes quickly discouraged and allows himself to be dislodged from his good intentions he reveals his weak character.

Many people pay lip service to their claims of trust in Hashem. As long as things go well this is easy to do. But in the face of tragedy, only the truly devoted person is able to carry on and put his complete reliance upon his Creator.

Exploring Mishlei

(לב) בְּרַעְתּוֹ יִדְחָה רָשָׁע וְחָסָה בְּמוֹתוֹ צַדִּיק :

In his time of **adversity**, the *rasha* is dislodged from the right way.

But if he trusts in Hashem, even at his death, he is a *tzadik*.

This proverb compares the *rasha* and the *tzadik* in their response to adversity. The *rasha* is easily dislodged from the right way because his commitment was never that strong. However, the *tzadik* perseveres in his trust of Hashem. He knows that even if he lacks a full understanding of what has happened, he owes Hashem his loyalty, even when his death is near.

Learning Mishlei

(32) In his time of **adversity** — בְּרַעְתּוֹ
the *rasha* allows himself to be **pushed away** — יִדְחָה רָשָׁע
from the right path,

But if he trusts in Hashem — וְחָסָה
even at his death — בְּמוֹתוֹ,
he is a *tzadik* — צַדִּיק

Additional Insights

(1) In the face of adversity, the man of weak character becomes angry at his fate or His Creator and feels justified in behaving dishonestly and wickedly.

(רלב"ג, שבט מיהודה)

(2) A person may seem at the peak or saintliness and nobility, but there is a rot in his character, he can fall to the greatest depth of perversion and corruption when misfortune strikes. (מלב"ים)

(3) A person may pretend to believe that Hashem will reward the righteous and punish the wicked, but if his belief is insincere it will be tested by adversity.

(לנער חנוך)

(4) When a weak person experiences tragedy he may feel rejected by Hashem. He may lose all hope and give up on making an effort to do what is right. But the tzaddik has complete trust so that no matter how bad things are he has the attitude that Hashem will carry him through it. (חבל נחלה)