

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 quickly 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) בְּרָעָתוֹ יִדָּחָה רָשָׁע וְחָסָה בְּמוֹתוֹ צַדִּיק;

In his adversity the rasha is dislodged [from the right way], but if he is trusting at his death he is a tzaddik.

This proverb compares the rasha and the tzaddik in their response to adversity. The rasha is easily dislodged from the right way because his commitment was never that strong. However, the tzaddik 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

(לב) בְּרָעָתוֹ יִדָּחָה רָשָׁע
וְחָסָה בְּמוֹתוֹ צַדִּיק;

In his time of **adversity the rasha** [allows himself to be] **pushed away** יִדָּחָה רָשָׁע from the right path, **but if he trusts** in Hashem even **at his death he is a tzaddik** — וְחָסָה בְּמוֹתוֹ צַדִּיק.

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) 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.

(2) A person may seem at the peak of 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.

(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.

(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.

Sources

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

(3) - חנוך לנער

(4) - חבל נחלה

(1) - רלב"ג, שבט מיהודה

(2) - מלבי"ם