

Mishlei 15-02

Eloquence

Key Concepts

The wisdom of the wise rests not only in the knowledge they have acquired over the years, but in the skills they have developed to impart that knowledge in a meaningful manner. The eloquence of the wise man is an essential teaching tool to enhance the knowledge of the student.

The wise man has given thought to the proper sequence in which ideas are best communicated, starting with foundational concepts and moving on the detailed thoughts that depend on them.

The wise man is also careful to use words and analogies which are meaningful to the student. In this way, the student is able to take ownership of what he has learned. It becomes real to him, rather than a collection of abstract words and thoughts. This real knowledge is referred to as "daas." It is like knowledge based on personal, sensory experience, like the knowledge that fire is hot.

In contrast, fools tend to talk continuously, without regard to the value of what they are communicating. The ideas they touch upon are not developed properly and leave only confusion in the mind of the listener.

Exploring Mishlei

(ב) לְשׁוֹן חֲכָמִים תִּיטִיב דָּעַת וּפִי כְּסִילִים יַבִּיעַ אֲוִלָּת:

(2) The tongue of wise enhances knowledge, but the mouth of fools issues foolishness.

This proverb compares the carefully focused talk of wise men to the uncontrolled flow of confusing thoughts expressed by fools. The tongue of the wise is associated with the forming of insightful and meaningful speech. It is contrasted with the mouth of fools which is seen as an opening through which undifferentiated thoughts are continuously flowing.

Learning Mishlei

(ב) לְשׁוֹן חֲכָמִים תִּיטִיב דַּעַת
וּפִי כְסִילִים יַבִּיעַ אִוֶּלֶת:

The tongue of the wise — לְשׁוֹן חֲכָמִים speaks with eloquence and thereby **enhances the knowledge** — תִּיטִיב דַּעַת of the listener, **but the mouth of fools** — וּפִי כְסִילִים **issues** a continuous stream of **foolishness** — יַבִּיעַ אִוֶּלֶת .

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) If wise men present wisdom with elegant and memorable language, the ideas which they convey become exalted and valued by those who hear them.
- (2) Daas refers to wisdom that a person is totally convinced as being the truth, because he has seen it or because he feels as though he has experienced it personally.
- (3) The tongue refers to speech that enhances insight. A good speaker makes it so clear that it feels like daas.
- (4) Besides speaking foolishness through his lack of knowledge, the fool adds to the problem by poring forth a confusing stream of disorganized thoughts.
- (5) Through the power of intelligent and eloquent speech the wisdom of wise men becomes reinforced and clarified in their own minds as well as the minds of their students. Speakers as well as listeners are then able to take ownership of the daas and it becomes their permanent possession. This is the essence of the Oral Torah .

Sources

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

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| (4) - הגר"א | (1) - שבט מיהודה |
| (5) - רלב"ג, רשר"ה | (2) - מלבי"ם |
| | (3) - רבינו יונה |