

Mishlei 15-25

Providence

Key Concepts

Providence refers to the individual care and attention that Hashem exercises on a personal level for each of us. This phenomenon is also known as “*hashgachah pratis*” (individual attention). This attention to each of His creatures is symbolized by the *Ananei Hakavod*, the Clouds of Glory, that accompanied and protected *Klal Yisrael* throughout the 40 years of their wandering in the *Midbar*. We celebrate this care during the *yom tov* of *Sukkos* when we leave our permanent homes and take up residence in the temporary structures that correspond to the *Ananei Hakavod*.

Despite the flimsy construction of these dwellings, we feel secure in the knowledge that Hashem is taking care of us and seeing to our needs.

But there are times in life when we feel discouraged by events that seem to be going against us. We feel like the lonely widow who is at the mercy of a dishonest landowner. Why is he being so greedy and inconsiderate? Instead of being satisfied with his grand mansion, he takes unfair advantage over the struggling widow by stealing her land.

So, the message of Mishlei is not to lose hope. Hashem is watching over us and will surely see to it that justice is done, even if it is in an unexpected way. The impressive mansion with which the arrogant landowner flaunts his wealth will ultimately be demolished. The poor widow will not be forgotten. The boundary of her property will be affirmed, and she will dwell securely under Hashem’s protection.

Similarly, all of us are under the providential care of Hashem and we can trust that He will be there for us at the right time and the right place.

Exploring Mishlei

(כה) בֵּית גְּאִים יִסַּח ה' וְיִצַּב גְּבוּל אֶלְמָנָה :

(25) Hashem will demolish the house of the arrogant,
and He will affirm the boundary of the widow.

This proverb advises the suffering widow not to lose hope. Despite her apparent weakness, Hashem will fight her battle and see to it that justice is done. In contrast, the arrogant and thieving owner of a majestic mansion will lose out in the end and see his beautiful mansion collapse.

Learning Mishlei

(25) The house of the arrogant — **בֵּית גֵּאִים**
Hashem will demolish it — **יִסַּח ה'**
and He will affirm the boundary — **וַיַּצֵּב גְּבוּל**
of the widow — **אֶלְמָנָה**

Additional Insights

- (1) Arrogant people foolishly place confidence in their worldly success and the seeming permanence of their possessions. The proverb reminds them that they are mistaken, and they would do well to take a lesson from the Sukkah. (רבינו יונה)
- (2) The wealthy and powerful landowner is politically connected and is able to ride roughshod over the interests of his weaker neighbors. He disregards the boundaries of others, thinking that there is no one to stop him. But in the end, he will learn that he is mistaken. (מלב"ים)