

Mishlei 16-04

Purpose

Key Concepts

When we look at the world we live in, we are awed by all its wonders. We are filled with gratitude at being given the opportunity to be part of it and to live and breathe within it. However, the world is far too complex and too vast a place for mere mortals to fully appreciate. There are so many things and so many creatures in this world we don't understand and we will never hope to understand. So we are left with an open question: Why?

Mishlei assures us that all of Creation follows a definite plan and design. Everything we see and everything that happens in the world in the world, no matter how seemingly insignificant, is serving a specific purpose and that purpose is part of Hashem's grand plan. Furthermore, the power of Hashem is so great that nothing can escape accountability to Him and nothing can escape His will.

This is true even though Hashem has given man free will to choose between good and evil every day of his life. The majestic state of man's free will within the framework of the created universe represents the pinnacle and glory of the miracle of Creation.

There are so many people in the world who have rejected the will of Hashem. How can that be? Mishlei tells us that they are taking advantage of the freedom given to them by Hashem and that this is also serving a purpose. Their ultimate fate on the day of retribution is an essential part of that purpose. If nothing else, it serves as an essential lesson for those who have not yet made their choice.

When we see the purpose of Hashem being fulfilled in this world we recognize this as a Kiddush Hashem (the sanctification of His Name). It is our duty to do whatever we can to promote and facilitate a Kiddush Hashem whenever we have an opportunity to do so. We think of any Kiddush Hashem as causing a spiritual pleasure (nachas ruach) to the Creator, although we realize that this is merely an attempt to express it in terms that are meaningful within human experience.

Exploring Mishlei

(ד) כֹּל פֶּעַל ה' לְמַעַנְהוּ וְגַם רָשָׁע לְיוֹם רָעָה:

Hashem made all things for His own purpose, even the evildoer for the day of retribution.

This proverb very briefly provides us with a way to think about Creation. We are told that despite the world's vastness and complexity everything in Creation is here to serve a purpose. This means that in recognition and gratitude to the Creator each individual should do his best to fulfill his own mission and purpose. But even those who decline to do what Hashem expects of them are inevitably filling a necessary role that is all part of His purpose.

Learning Mishlei

(ד) כֹּל פֶּעַל ה' לְמַעַנְהוּ

וְגַם רָשָׁע לְיוֹם רָעָה:

Hashem made all things – לְמַעַנְהוּ for His own purpose – There is **even** a purpose for **the evildoer – וְגַם רָשָׁע**, which will not become evident **on the day of the day of retribution – לְיוֹם רָעָה**.

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) We must always remember that no creature is useless. Even if its purpose is unknown to us, it is here to fulfill His plan. Hashem looked at everything He made and declared it to be very good (Bereishis 1:31).

(2) Adversity and suffering are an integral part of Hashem's methods. In some cases they serve to goad us into doing what is right and to educate us. In other cases they test us and provide us with challenges that make us better. The destruction of wicked people also serves a purpose, to rescue their surroundings from them. In the end, however, they become a tool in Hashem's design for the good of the world.

(3) The insecurity caused by fear of possible harm by another human being has a special effect of bringing man to realize there is a Higher Power that rules the world.

(4) Even though a wicked person may be desecrating the Name of Hashem, his ultimate effect is to sanctify the Name of Hashem. This happens when he is openly punished for his sins.

Sources

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

(3) - דעת סופרים

(4) - מלבנים, רלב"ג

(1) - אלשיך

(2) - רשר"ה