

Mishlei 18-02

Complacency

Key Concepts

Fools who think highly of themselves are not motivated to learn from others. They are not aware that there may be some valuable insight or wisdom they don't already know.

On the other hand, such people enjoy drawing attention to themselves by talking about whatever happens to be on their mind. They assume that others will be impressed by their knowledge.

Exploring Mishlei

(ב) לא יִחַפֵּץ כְּסִיל בְּתְבוּנָה כִּי אִם בְּהַתְגַּלוֹת לְבוֹ:

*The fool has no wish for wisdom,
except to reveal what is in his mind.*

The fool has no wish to gain wisdom if it means admitting that someone else knows something of value that he doesn't know. Accepting wisdom from others interferes with his sense of self-importance. However, he is all in favor of wisdom if he can claim it is wisdom that he possesses. By sharing such wisdom, whether true or not, he boosts his own sense of self-importance.

Learning Mishlei

(2) The fool has no wish — לא יִחַפֵּץ כְּסִיל —
for wisdom — בְּתְבוּנָה —

that is in the possession of others.

The **only** wisdom that interests him is **that** — כִּי אִם —
which he employs **in revealing** — בְּהַתְגַּלוֹת —
what is in **his own mind** — לְבוֹ .

Additional Insights

(1) A student who interrupts the presentation of his teacher may be motivated by the need to appear more knowledgeable than he actually is. He would be better off putting off his questions until he has thought them through. (רבינו יונה)

(2) An alternate interpretation of the proverb is that the fool has no interest in gaining knowledge unless he is forced to face his own ignorance by exposing what is actually in his mind. It is only then that he applies himself to learn what he needs to know. However, that resolve is not likely to last because of his poor character. (רלב"ג)