

Mishlei 19-12

Royalty

Key Concepts

There are certain advantages in being a member of royalty. People treat you with special courtesy and pay close attention to your wishes. They try to avoid upsetting you and seek your favor.

So, wouldn't it be nice to be a royal person? Actually, most people share in some of the qualities of what it takes to be a royal person. If you employ people or are in a position to make life easier for workers, they will want to keep you favorably disposed towards them. If you have a husband or a wife, you can expect your spouse to want you to be nice to them. If you have children, you can expect them to depend on you.

That means you are a royal person, a king or a queen, to a lot of different people. They hang on your words and whatever you say in anger or joy makes an impression on them. They will be concerned about your reaction to them, and they will feel gratified if you are pleased with them.

Perhaps you didn't realize you have so much power over so many people. Mishlei has written a proverb that can remind you to stop and think about the effect you have on people. It may very well be an emotional effect that can be far greater than you ever imagined.

Exploring Mishlei

(יב) נְהִים כְּפִפִּיר זֶעַף מֶלֶךְ, וּכְטֵל עַל יֵשׁוּב רְצוֹנוֹ:
(12) *The wrath of a king is like the roar of a lion,*
but his favor is like dew upon the grass .

This proverb examines the mood of a powerful king as perceived by his subjects. Because such a king has the potential to cause great harm, his anger is as frightening to his people as the roar of a lion. And yet the very same king has a gentle side which is compared to the fall of dew on a sunny morning.

Who is this king? In a sense it is every person who is important to another individual. The king should realize that no matter what he does he is making a lasting impression on those who depend on him. He should keep his reactions under active control and realize the emotional damage done by a show of anger. By the same token he should be aware of the human warmth transmitted by a show of kindness and appreciation.

Learning Mishlei

(12) Like **the roar of a lion** — נהם כִּכְפִיר —
is the **wrath of a king** — זַעַף מֶלֶךְ —
but like dew upon the grass — וּכְטֵל עַל עֵשֶׂב —
is his **goodwill** — רְצוֹנוֹ —

Additional Insights

[1] The proverb doesn't identify the king, but we always need to remember that Hashem is the King of the universe. It is our duty to live our lives in such a way that there is no need for His anger and there is every reason for His goodwill.
(רש"י)

[2] The attitude of Hashem is compared to dew upon the grass, reminding us that He is the Creator of the World Who gives life to every individual blade of grass. In the same way He grants life to each human being on an individual basis. (מלבי"ם)

[3] Every individual has the responsibility to be king and master over his own mind. He must be especially aware of the destruction that can be committed by a person who lets uncontrolled rage overtake him. (רלב"ג)

[4] The actual source of anger is not always evident; it is like the sound of a distant lion's roar in the forest, and all who hear it tremble. Similarly, the good done by the gentle dew is universal, reaching all vegetation with blessing. (הגר"א)