

Mishlei 22-11

Royal Friend

Key Concepts

It takes a special kind of person to be a good friend. A really good friend is loyal and his devotion to your welfare is authentic and pure, uncontaminated by self-interest. If you are a king in a position of power, you will find a great need for a trustworthy friend who you can safely rely upon to give you good advice in difficult situations.

Mishlei describes such a good friend as a man of a pure and loving heart, who is able to express his advice in a way that gives the king the confidence that his friend's words are sincere.

Exploring Mishlei

(יא) אֱהַב טָהוֹר לֵב חֵן שְׂפָתָיו רֵעֵהוּ מֶלֶךְ:

(11) *One who loves with a pure heart and kind lips, may be friend to a king.*

In this proverb Mishlei gives us a summary of the qualities that qualify a person for the role of being a friend to a king or to any other person of stature. These qualities are described in terms of two organs of the body: the heart and the lips. The heart represents the underlying motivations that drive a person's actions. The lips represents the words and ideas with which a person expresses himself to others.

To be valued as a friend, the individual must be sincere and honest. That is to say his motivations for befriending the king are pure. Furthermore, the manner in which the individual speaks must be such as to inspire trust and confidence.

Learning Mishlei

**(11) One who loves, — אֱהַב
with a pure heart, — טָהוֹר לֵב
and kind lips — חֵן שְׂפָתָיו
may be friend to a king — רֵעֵהוּ מֶלֶךְ**