

Mishlei 22-12

Validity

Key Concepts

People acquire knowledge (*daas*) through observation, analysis, and learning. However, once knowledge is acquired it is subject to distortion through forgetfulness, and neglect. Thus, a person needs to be concerned about how long his knowledge remains valid before it is distorted by the passage of time. To prevent the deterioration of his knowledge, the person should review it regularly.

Mishlei reminds the righteous person to look to Hashem to help him preserve the validity of the knowledge that he has acquired. In contrast, Mishlei informs a treacherous person that his knowledge is continually subject to distortion and corruption if he does not change his ways.

Exploring Mishlei

(יב) עֵינֵי ה' נִצְרוּ דַעַת וַיִּסְלֹף דְבָרֵי בִגְד:

(12) *The eyes of Hashem protect the knowledge of the righteous and He distorts the words of the treacherous.*

The preservation and protection of knowledge in the mind of a righteous person is described as being performed by the eyes of Hashem. This benefit is not available to the wicked or treacherous person, whose knowledge is continually subject to distortion.

Learning Mishlei

(12) The eyes of Hashem — עֵינֵי ה' —
protect the knowledge, — נִצְרוּ דַעַת —
of the righteous
and He distorts — וַיִּסְלֹף —
the words of the treacherous — דְבָרֵי בִגְד

Additional Insights

[1] Knowledge also refers to plans for the future. Hashem sees to it that the plans of the righteous and the deserving will succeed. In contrast, the evil plans of the treacherous will be distorted and are bound to fail. (רלב"ג)

[2] Even though knowledge may at times seem clouded by uncertainty, Hashem has provided us with certain undisputed concepts or axioms that reflect basic common sense. These act as a foundation for further understanding and so we can rely on the validity of the knowledge we have acquired in good faith. (מלב"ם)