

Mishlei 22-17

Wisdom - Oral

Key Concepts

In the first lesson for acquiring wisdom, Mishlei speaks of wisdom that a person can acquire by carefully listening to the words of wise men. Listening begins with paying close attention to the sound and form of individual words. The next step is to think about what you have heard and organize your thoughts to comprehend the significance of the ideas conveyed by the words you have heard.

It is not enough to be able to repeat the ideas one has heard. One must take ownership of those ideas. The student must “know” them, for in knowing the ideas of Hashem, one gets to “know” Hashem Himself.

Exploring Mishlei

(יז) הַט אָזְנְךָ וּשְׁמַע דְּבַרֵי חֲכָמִים וּלְבָבְךָ תִּשֵׂית לְדַעְתִּי:

(17) *Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise;*

direct your heart to My knowledge.

The emphasis here is not to be satisfied by the act of passively listening. The student must put his heart into the acquisition of knowledge. That means rebuilding the thoughts anew in his own mind. He must then understand what he has heard and remember it.

Learning Mishlei

(17) Incline your ear — הַט אָזְנְךָ

and hear the words of the wise — וּשְׁמַע דְּבַרֵי חֲכָמִים

and direct your heart. — וּלְבָבְךָ תִּשֵׂית

to My knowledge — לְדַעְתִּי.

Additional Insight

In studying the words of Torah wisdom, the student must consider the ultimate purpose that motivated the choice of specific words and ideas. (רבינו יונה)