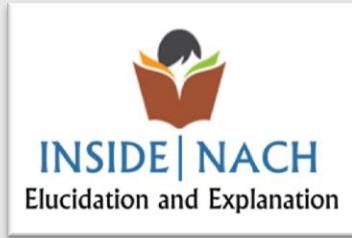


פרק ב



קהלת

PEREK OVERVIEW:

Perek 2: Shlomo reflects that light-hearted recreation and indulging in material pleasures achieves nothing (Rashi). Shlomo attempted to combine delight with wisdom by drinking wine, (Ibn Ezra), purchasing luxurious fields, houses, slaves, animals, treasures and even musical instruments- all, whilst maintaining his wisdom. Although these were pleasurable, they provided no deep meaning and were therefore of no use (Ibn Ezra). Although both the wise and the foolish will die, the wise will leave a legacy behind (Metzudas David). Shlomo questions how it is fair that it could be that a righteous person toils and then the fruits of his labour are inherited by his wicked descendants (Rashi).

POSSUKIM IN CONTEXT:

(ב:יד) -הַחֵכֶם עֵינָיו בְּרֹאשׁוֹ (ב:יד) - A wise person has his eyes in his head

- The מפרשים explain that this means that wise person expects things to change. It is foolish to focus only on the here-and-now without a thought to potential consequences. Colloquially, this phrase is used to mean that somebody with a smattering of common sense should plan things in advance.

ELUCIDATION

פסוק א:

אמרתִי אֲנִי בְלִבִּי לֵכֶה-נָא
אֲנַסְכֶה בְשִׂמְחָה וּרְאָה בְטוֹב
וְהִנֵּה גַם-הוּא הִבֵּל:

"I said in my heart: Come, I will test [myself] with joy and enjoy pleasure. [However] that also turned out to be futile."

Having just understood that wisdom increases anger, Shlomo says that he decided to test himself by delving into the delights of the world, such as by feasting and drinking wine, in order to see whether this is the correct way in order to achieve meaning from life. However, Shlomo saw that this too was futile as there are many bad consequences that come from indulging in materialistic pleasures and light-headedness. [רש"י ומצודת דוד]

פסוק ט:

וּגְדַלְתִּי וְהוֹסַפְתִּי מִכָּל שְׂהִיָּה
לִפְנֵי בִירוּשָׁלַיִם אִף חִכְמַתִּי
עִמְדָה לִי:

"Thus, I grew and surpassed any of my predecessors in Jerusalem; [but] still my wisdom stayed with me."

Despite the fact that he became so involved in physical and ostentatious delights, achieving greater things than any king before him, Shlomo's wisdom remained with him. [מצודת דוד].
Despite his actions on the surface, he did not refrain himself from thinking deeply and contemplating life. [ספורנו]

פסוק יד:

הַחֶכֶם עֵינָיו בְּרֹאשׁוֹ וְהַכְּסִיל
בְּחֹשֶׁךְ הוֹלֵךְ ...

"The wise man has eyes in his head, whereas a fool walks in darkness..."

"The wise man has eyes in his head." This means that he contemplates at the beginning of a matter what will occur at the end. [רש"י]. Similarly, it refers to the fact that a wise man looks at situations with a clear perspective. The verse says that he has "eyes in his head," meaning, that a חכם views situations from a high place and can thus see what the consequences of his actions will be. Because of this he will know how to conduct himself and will not stumble in his ways. In contrast, a fool does not do this and therefore is like one who stumbles around in darkness. [מצודת דוד].