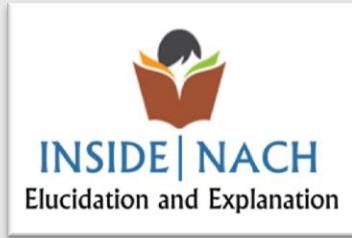


פרק ה



קהלת

PEREK OVERVIEW:

Perek 5: One should not criticise Hashem as we are finite and limited and He is all-powerful (Rashi). Shlomo stresses the importance of keeping to one's vows and repaying debtors on time (Rashi), so much so, that it is preferable not to pledge money, rather than promise money and not keep the vow. One should ignore distractions such as false prophets, dreams (which are mostly results of one's thoughts during the day) and futile pursuits; rather focus on fearing Hashem (Rashi). One is seldom content with their money; the more they have- the more they worry; additionally, there is always a chance that all can be lost in one bad investment (Ibn Ezra). Material wealth is not compatible with the currency of the world to come, so any effort in acquiring it is wasted. Therefore, any effort in Torah and Mitzvos - the true currency of the next world- is well spent - one can derive pleasure from pursuing them in this world (Rashi). Excessive chatter is the hallmark of a fool. Reward follows our performance of good deeds, whilst riches can be lost in a second.

POSSUKIM IN CONTEXT:

(ה:ד) -טוב אשר לא-תקד מן-תקדור ולא תשלם (ה:ד) - It is better that you don't vow, than that you vow and do not pay it.

- The Metzudas Dovid explains that one could regret their vow and therefore delay in fulfilling it. The ספורנו elaborates that often one makes a vow thinking that Hashem would really like their vow, even if they are late in fulfilling it. This is not the case, however, rather it is the opposite and the punishment for delaying is really quite severe.

ELUCIDATION

פסוק א:

הִנֵּה אֲשֶׁר־רָאִיתִי אֲנִי טוֹב
אֲשֶׁר־יָפָה לְאֹכֹל־וְלִשְׁתּוֹת
וְלִרְאוֹת טוֹבָה בְּכָל־עֲמָלוֹ |
שִׁיעַמַל תַּחַת־הַשָּׁמֶשׁ מִסֶּפֶר
יְמֵי־חַיָּו [חַיִּי] אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן־לִי
הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי־הוּא חִלְקוֹ:

Don't let your mouth bring you to sin, and then don't plead before the messenger that it was an error; else God may be angered by your talk and destroy your possessions.

The Torah Temimah brings the Medrash in which Rashi explains that the Possuk is talking about someone who speaks הרע לשון. He understands the Possuk as: "Don't let your mouth - your הרע לשון-bring upon your flesh -your body- sin. And don't say before the מלאך -the מלאך who Hashem instructs to record all the הרע לשון a person speaks- that it was a mistake -I didn't speak הרע לשון. For then-Hashem will be angered by your talk and he will destroy your possessions -your bones and sinews.

פסוק יא:

מְתוֹקָה שְׁנַת הַעֲבָד אִם־מְעַט
וְאִם־הַרְבֵּה יֹאכַל וְהִשָּׁבַע
לְעֹשֵׂי אֵינֶנּוּ מְנַיֵּחַ לוֹ לִישׁוֹן:

A worker's sleep is sweet, whether he has much or little to eat; but the rich man's abundance doesn't let him sleep.

Rashi gives a novel explanation of this Possuk, according to the Medrash Tanchuma. It interprets the word "שנת" to mean "שנה של"-the year of, (not sleep) so the Possuk is now read "the year of the worker is sweet." The explanation is that even if one has a short life with which to serve Hashem-even just one year, that is still sweet. This is seen from the fact שמואל, who led בני ישראל for only 10 years is likened to משה who led them for 40 years.

פסוק יז:

הִנֵּה אֲשֶׁר־רָאִיתִי אֲנִי טוֹב
אֲשֶׁר־יָפָה לְאֹכֹל־וְלִשְׁתּוֹת
וְלִרְאוֹת טוֹבָה בְּכָל־עֲמָלוֹ |
שִׁיעַמַל תַּחַת־הַשָּׁמֶשׁ מִסֶּפֶר
יְמֵי־חַיָּו [חַיִּי] אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן־לִי
הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי־הוּא חִלְקוֹ:

Only this, I have found, is a real good: that one should eat and drink and get pleasure with all the gains he makes under the sun, during the numbered days of life that God has given him; for that is his portion.

From a simple reading of this Possuk, it seems like Shlomo Hamelech is endorsing gluttony as the only "really good" venture in the world. However, Rashi points out from the Medrash that "eating and drinking" across Koheles, refers to the learning of Torah. The Metzudas Dovid adds that the "pleasures" in the Possuk mean acts of צדקה and תּוֹן. Thus Shlomo Hamelech's message, is that one should try use as much of his resources and time for Torah and good deeds, for that is the reason he received them from Hashem.