

Wisdom in Pursuit of Wind

✓ Saved

EG Eric Grossman

Lecture 4: The Mystery of Life and its End

קהלת י"ב-ט"ו

(יב) דְּבַרֵּי פִי־חָכָם חֵן וְשִׁפְתוֹת פֶּסֶל
תִּבְלַעְנָו: (יג) תְּחִלַּת דְּבַרֵּי־פִיהוּ סִכְלוֹת
וְאַחֲרֵית פִּיהוּ הוֹלָלוֹת רָעָה: (יד) וְהַסֵּכֶל
יִרְבֶּה דְּבָרִים לֹא־יֵדַע הָאָדָם מִה־שִּׁיחֶיהָ
וְאִשֶּׁר יִהְיֶה מֵאַחֲרָיו מִי יֵגִיד לוֹ: (טו)
עֲמַל הַכְּסִילִים תִּיגַעְנֻ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יֵדַע
לֵלְכֶת אֶל־עִיר:

Ecclesiastes 10:12-15

(12) A wise man's talk brings him favor,
but a fool's lips are his undoing. (13) His
talk begins as silliness and ends as
disastrous madness. (14) Yet the fool
talks and talks! A man cannot know
what will happen; who can tell him what
the future holds? (15) A fool's exertions
tire him out, for he doesn't know how to
get to a town.

קהלת ט'ז'-י'

(ז) לֶךְ אֲכַל בִּשְׂמִינָה לַחֲמֶךְ וּשְׂתֵה
בְּלִב־טוֹב יִינֶה כִּי כָבֹד רָצָה הָאֱלֹהִים
אֶת־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ: (ח) בְּכָל־עֵת יִהְיוּ בְּגָדֶיךָ
לְבָנִים וְשֶׁמֶן עַל־רֹאשְׁךָ אַל־יִחָסֵר: (ט)
רְאֵה חַיִּים עִם־אִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר־אַהֲבָתָּ
כָּל־יְמֵי חַיֵּי הַבְּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לְךָ תַּחַת
הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ כֹּל יְמֵי הַבְּלֶךְ כִּי הוּא חֻלְקָךְ
בְּחַיִּים וּבְעַמְלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה עֹמֵל תַּחַת
הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ: (י) כֹּל אֲשֶׁר תִּמְצָא יָדְךָ לַעֲשׂוֹת

Ecclesiastes 9:7-10

(7) Go, eat your bread in gladness, and
drink your wine in joy; for your action
was long ago approved by God. (8) Let
your clothes always be freshly washed,
and your head never lack ointment. (9)
Enjoy happiness with a woman you love
all the fleeting days of life that have been
granted to you under the sun—all your
fleeting days. For that alone is what you
can get out of life and out of the means
you acquire under the sun. (10)

בְּכַחַךְ עֲשֵׂה כִּי אֵין מַעֲשֶׂה וְחִשְׁבוֹן
וְדַעַת וְחִכְמָה בְּשֵׂאוֹל אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה הֹלֵךְ
שָׁמָּה:

Whatever it is in your power to do, do
with all your might. For there is no
action, no reasoning, no learning, no
wisdom in Sheol, where you are going.

בראשית מ"ב:ל"ח

(לח) וַיֹּאמֶר לְאֶיְרָד בְּנִי עִמָּכֶם כִּי־אֲחִיו
מֵת וְהוּא לְבַדּוֹ נִשְׁאָר וְקָרָאָהּ אֶסּוֹן
בְּדַרְדְּרוֹ אֲשֶׁר תִּלְכוּ־בָּהּ וְהוֹרְדֶתֶם
אֶת־שִׁיבֹתִי בִּיגּוֹן שְׂאוֹלָה:

Genesis 42:38

(38) But he said, "My son must not go
down with you, for his brother is dead
and he alone is left. If he meets with
disaster on the journey you are taking,
you will send my white head down to
Sheol in grief."

במדבר ט"ז:ל"ב-ל"ג

(לב) וּתִפְתָּח הָאָרֶץ אֶת־פִּיהָ וּתִבְלַע
...אֶת כָּל־הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר לְקֶרַח... (לג) וַיֵּרְדּוּ
הֵם וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם חַיִּים שְׂאוֹלָה...

Numbers 16:32-33

(32) The earth opened its mouth and
swallowed ... all Korah's people ... (33)
They went down alive to Sheol...

שמואל א כ"ח:ז'-ט"ו

(ז) וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂאוֹל לְעִבְדָּיו בְּקִשׁוּ־לִי אִשָּׁת
בְּעַל־תְּאוֹב וְאֶלְכָה אֵלֶיהָ וְאִדְרָשָׁה־בָּהּ
וַיֹּאמְרוּ עֲבָדָיו אֵלָיו הִנֵּה אִשָּׁת
בְּעַל־תְּאוֹב בְּעֵין דּוֹר:

I Samuel 28:7-15

(7) Then Saul said to his courtiers, "Find
me a woman who consults ghosts, so
that I can go to her and inquire through
her." And his courtiers told him that
there was a woman in En-dor who
consulted ghosts.

(יא) וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה אֶת־מִי אֶעֱלֶה־לָּךְ
וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת־שְׁמוּאֵל הֶעָלִי־לִי

(11) At that, the woman asked, “Whom shall I bring up for you?” He answered, “Bring up Samuel for me.”

וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה אֶל־שְׂאוּל אֱלֹהִים רָאִיתִי
עֲלִים מִן־הָאָרֶץ: (יד) וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ
מִה־תֵּאָרוּ וַתֹּאמֶר אִישׁ זָקֵן עָלָה וְהוּא
עֹטָה מְעִיל וַיֵּדַע שְׂאוּל כִּי־שְׁמוּאֵל
הוּא... (טו) וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל־שְׂאוּל
לָמָּה הִרְגִּזְתָּנִי לְהַעֲלוֹת אֹתִי...

And the woman said to Saul, “I see a divine being coming up from the earth.”
(14) “What does he look like?” he asked her. “It is an old man coming up,” she said, “and he is wrapped in a robe.”
Then Saul knew that it was Samuel...
(15) Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me and brought me up?”

קהלת י':ט"ז-י"ט

(טז) אֵי־לֶךְ אֶרֶץ שְׁמֶלֶכָּךְ נָעַר וְשָׂרִיף
בְּבֹקֶר יֹאכְלוּ: (יח) בַּעֲצָלָתִים יִמְּךָ
הַמִּקְרָה וּבִשְׁפָלוֹת יָדַיִם יִדְלָף הַבַּיִת: (יט)
לְשִׁחוֹק עֹשִׂים לֶחֶם וַיֵּינ יְשַׂמַּח חַיִּים
וְהַכֶּסֶף יַעֲנֶה אֶת־הַכֹּל:

Ecclesiastes 10:16-19

(16) Alas for you, O land whose king is a youth and whose ministers dine in the morning! (18) Through slothfulness the ceiling sags, Through lazy hands the house caves in. (19) They make a banquet for revelry; wine makes life merry, and money answers every need.

מסילת ישרים ו':ח'

וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹמֹה שָׁנָה מְאֹד בְּאַזְהָרְתּוֹ עַל
זֶה בְּרֹאוֹתוֹ אֶת רַע הָעֲצָלָה וְהַהֲפֹסֵד

Mesillat Yesharim 6:8

Behold, Shlomo repeatedly exhorted many times on this in seeing the evil of

הַגְדוֹל הַנִּמְשָׁךְ מִמְנָה וְאָמַר (משלי ו':י')-
י"א): מַעַט שְׁנוֹת מַעַט תְּנוּמוֹת מַעַט
חֶבֶק יָדַי לְשָׁכָב, וּבָא כְּמַהֲלֵךְ רֹאשׁוֹ
וּמַחְסֹרֶךְ כְּאִישׁ מָגוּן. כִּי הִנֵּה הֶעֱצֵל אֶף
עַל פִּי שְׁאִינוּ עוֹשֶׂה רַע בְּקוֹם עֲשֵׂה,
הִנֵּה הוּא מְבִיא אֶת הָרָעָה עָלָיו בְּשֵׁב
וְאֵל תַּעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹ.

laziness and the greatness of the harm
resulting from it. He said "a little sleep, a
little slumber, a little folding of the
hands to rest. Then shall your poverty
come as a traveler" (Mishlei 24:33). For
behold, even though the lazy person is
not doing evil actively, nevertheless he
brings evil on himself through his very
inactivity.

קהלת י"א:ה'

(ה) כַּאֲשֶׁר אֵינְךָ יוֹדֵעַ מֶה-דֶּרֶךְ הָרוּחַ
פִּעֲצָמִים בְּבֶטֶן הַמְּלָאָה כִּכָּה לֹא תִדַּע
אֶת-מַעֲשֵׂה הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה
אֶת-הַכֹּל:

Ecclesiastes 11:5

(5) Just as you do not know how the
lifebreath passes into the limbs within
the womb of the pregnant woman, so
you cannot foresee the actions of God,
who causes all things to happen.

קוהלת רבה י"א:ה'

כַּאֲשֶׁר אֵינְךָ יוֹדֵעַ, שִׁבְעָה דְּבָרִים מְכֻסִּים
מִבְּנֵי אָדָם, וְאֵלּוּ הֵם: יוֹם הַמִּיתָה, וְיוֹם
הַנִּחְמָה, וְעֶמֶק הַדִּין, וּבִמָּה הוּא
מְשֻׁתָּפֵר, וּמָה בְּלָבוֹ שֶׁל חֲבֵרוֹ, וּמָה
בְּעִבּוּרָהּ שֶׁל אִשָּׁה, וּמַלְכוּת זוֹ שֶׁל
אֱדוֹם אֵימָתִי נוֹפֶלֶת.

Kohelet Rabbah 11:5

"Just as you do not know" – there are
seven matters obscured from people, and
they are 1) the day of death, 2) the day
of consolation, 3) the profundity of
judgment, 4) how one profits, 5) what is
in the heart of another, 6) what is in a
woman's pregnancy, 7) and this
kingdom of Edom, when it will fall.

קהלת י"ב:א'-ח'

(א) וזֹכֵר אֶת־בִּזְרָאִיךָ בַּיָּמִי בַּחֲוֹלְתֶיךָ עַד
אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָבֹאוּ יָמֵי הַרְעָה וְהִגִּיעוּ שָׁנִים
אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר אֵין־לִי בָהֶם חֶפֶץ: (ב) עַד
אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִחַשֵּׁף הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְהָאוֹר וְהַיָּרֵחַ
וְהַכּוֹכָבִים וְשָׁבוּ הָעָנָנִים אַחֵר הַגֶּשֶׁם: (ג)
בַּיּוֹם שֶׁיָּזְעוּ שִׁמְרֵי הַבַּיִת וְהַתְּעוּתוֹ אֲנָשֵׁי
הַחֵיל וּבָטְלוּ הַטַּחֲנוֹת כִּי מַעֲטוֹ וַחֲשָׁכוֹ
הָרָאוֹת בָּאֲרָבוֹת: (ד) וְסָגְרוּ דִלְתֵּי
בִשּׁוּק בִּשְׁפֹל קוֹל הַטַּחֲנָה וַיָּקוּם לְקוֹל
הַצִּפּוֹר וַיִּשָּׁחוּ כָּל־בָּנוֹת הַשִּׁיר: (ה) גַּם
מִגְבֵּה יֵרָאוּ וַחֲתַחֲתִים בְּדָרָךְ וַיִּנָּאֵץ
הַשִּׁקָּד וַיִּסְתַּבֵּל הַחֲגָב וַתִּפֹּר הָאֲבִיוָּנָה
כִּי־הִלָּךְ הָאָדָם אֶל־בֵּית עוֹלָמוֹ וְסָבְבוּ
בִּשּׁוּק הַסּוֹפְדִים: (ו) עַד אֲשֶׁר
לֹא־[יִרְתֵּק](יִרְחַק) תִּבֶּל הַפֶּסֶף וַתִּרְוֹץ
גִּלְתֵּי הַזָּהָב וַתִּשָּׁבֵר כָּל־עַל־הַמְּבֹועַ וַנִּרְץ
הַגִּלְגָּל אֶל־הַבּוֹר: (ז) וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעֶפֶר
עַל־הָאָרֶץ כְּשֶׁהָיָה וְהָרוּחַ תָּשׁוּב
אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר נִתְּנָה: (ח) הֶבֶל
הַבָּלִים אָמַר הַקּוֹהֶלֶת הַכֹּל הֶבֶל:

Ecclesiastes 12:1-8

(1) So appreciate your vigor in the days of your youth, before those days of sorrow come and those years arrive of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them"; (2) before sun and light and moon and stars grow dark, and the clouds come back again after the rain: (3) When the guards of the house become shaky, And the men of valor are bent, And the maids that grind, grown few, are idle, And the ladies that peer through the windows grow dim, (4) And the doors to the street are shut— With the noise of the hand mill growing fainter, And the song of the bird growing feebler, the women singers are rehearsing quietly (5) When one is afraid of heights And there is terror on the road.— For the almond tree may blossom, The grasshopper be burdened, And the caper bush may bud again; But man sets out for his eternal abode, With mourners all around in the street.— (6) Before the silver cord snaps And the golden bowl crashes, The jar is shattered at the spring, And the jug is smashed at the cistern. (7) And the dust returns to the ground As it was, And the lifebreath returns to God Who bestowed it. (8)

Utter futility—said Koheleth— All is futile!

קהלת י"ב:ט'-י"ד

(ט) וְיִתֵּר אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה קֹהֵלֶת חָכָם עוֹד
לְמַד־דַּעַת אֶת־הָעָם וְאִנּוּן וְחָקֵר תִּקְוָן
מִשְׁאֵלִים הָרַבָּה: (י) בִּקְשׁ קֹהֵלֶת לְמַצָּא
דְּבָרֵי־חִפְץ וְכָתוּב יֵשֶׁר דְּבָרֵי אֱמֶת: (יא)
דְּבָרֵי חֲכָמִים כְּדַרְבָּנוֹת וְכַמְשֻׁמְרוֹת
נְטוּעִים בַּעֲלֵי אֲסָפוֹת נִתְּנוּ מֵרַעָה אֶחָד:
(יב) וְיִתֵּר מִהֶמָּה בְּנֵי הַזֶּהָר עֲשׂוֹת
סִפְרִים הָרַבָּה אֵין קֶץ וְלֹהֵג הָרַבָּה יִגְעַת
בָּשָׂר:

(יג) סוּף דְּבָר הַכֹּל נִשְׁמָע אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים
יֵרָא וְאֶת־מִצְוֹתָיו שְׁמֹר כִּי־זֶה
כָּל־הָאָדָם: (יד) כִּי אֶת־כָּל־מַעֲשֶׂה
הָאֱלֹהִים יָבֹא בְּמִשְׁפָּט עַל כָּל־נִפְעָלָם
אִם־טוֹב וְאִם־רָע:

Ecclesiastes 12:9-14

(9) A further word: Because Koheleth was a sage, he continued to instruct the people. He listened to and tested the soundness of many maxims. (10) Koheleth sought to discover useful sayings and recorded genuinely truthful sayings. (11) The sayings of the wise are like goads, like nails fixed in prodding sticks. They were given by one Shepherd. (12) A further word: Against them, my son, be warned! The making of many books is without limit And much study is a wearying of the flesh.

(13) The sum of the matter, when all is said and done: Revere God and observe His commandments! For this applies to all mankind: (14) that God will call every creature to account for everything unknown, be it good or bad.

מחזור אשכנז ליום כיפור, תפלת

נעילה, קדושת היום

מָה אָנוּ. מָה חַיֵּינוּ. מָה חֲסִדָּנוּ. מָה
צְדָקָנוּ. מָה יְשׁוּעָתָנוּ. מָה כְּחָנוּ. מָה
גְּבוּרָתָנוּ. מָה נֹאמַר לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְאַלֵּהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ הֵלֵא כָּל הַגְּבוּרִים כָּאִין
לְפָנֶיךָ וְאַנְשֵׁי הַשֵּׁם כֹּלָא הֵיוּ וַחֲכָמִים
כְּבִלֵי מַדָּע וְגִבּוֹנִים כְּבִלֵי הַשֹּׁפֶל כִּי רַב
מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם תָּהוּ וַיְמִי חַיֵּיהֶם הֶבֶל לְפָנֶיךָ.
וּמֹתֵר הָאָדָם מִן הַבְּהֵמָה אִין כִּי הַכֹּל
הֶבֶל.

אַתָּה הַבְּדַלְתָּ אָנוֹשׁ מֵרֶאשׁ, וַתְּפִירָהוּ
לְעָמוֹד לְפָנֶיךָ. כִּי מִי יֹאמַר לְךָ מָה
תַּפְעֵל, וְאִם יִצְדַּק מָה יִתְּנוּ לְךָ:

Machzor Yom Kippur Ashkenaz, Neilah;
Concluding Service, Sanctification of
the Day

What are we? What is our life? What are
our acts of kindness? What is our
righteousness? What is our deliverance?
What is our strength? What is our
might? What can we say before You,
Adonoy, our God and God of our
fathers? Are not all the mighty men as
nothing before You? Famous men as
though they had never been? The wise as
if they were without knowledge? And
men of understanding as if they were
devoid of intelligence? For most of their
actions are a waste and the days of their
life are trivial in Your presence. There is
no superiority of the human over the
beast, for all is *havel*.

(80) [Nevertheless] You have set humans
apart from the beginning and recognized
them [as worthy] to stand before You.

For who could tell You what You should
do, and even if one be righteous, what
[benefit] does it give You?

