

Proverbs 13:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.

Analysis

This proverb addresses the satisfaction of fulfilled desires versus foolish resistance to repentance. "The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul" celebrates realized goals. Ta'avah nihyah te'erav lenafesh (תָּאַוָּה נִהְיָה טְעַמֵּב לְנֶפֶשׁ), desire coming to pass is sweet to the soul). Ta'avah (תָּאַוָּה, desire, longing) when nihyah (נִהְיָה, comes to pass, is realized) becomes te'erav (טְעַמֵּב, sweet, pleasant, agreeable) to nefesh (נֶפֶשׁ, soul, life, person).

"But it is abomination to fools to depart from evil" exposes moral perversity. Veto'evat kesilim sur mera (וְתוֹעַבָּת קְסִילִים סֻר מְקֻעָה), but an abomination to fools to turn from evil). To'evah (תוֹעַבָּה, abomination, disgusting thing) describes how fools view sur mera (סֻר מְקֻעָה, turning from evil). What should be desired—repentance—they find repulsive. Conversely, what should be repulsive—continuing in sin—they desire.

The proverb reveals twisted values. Fools desire sinful pleasures and find holiness distasteful. Their sweetness is in sin, not righteousness. By contrast, the wise find deepest satisfaction in godly desires fulfilled—holiness, truth, love. Romans 1:28-32 describes those who not only practice evil but approve those who do. Ezekiel 33:11 pleads: "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways." Jesus called sinners to repentance (Matthew 9:13). True conversion makes holiness desirable and sin repulsive (2 Corinthians 5:17). The Spirit transforms desires, making God's will sweet to the soul (Psalm 119:103).

Historical Context

Ancient Israel faced constant temptation to adopt pagan practices—idolatry, sexual immorality, injustice. To fools, these seemed desirable, while covenant faithfulness seemed restrictive. The prophets condemned those who called evil good and good evil (Isaiah 5:20). Post-exilic reforms required many to put away foreign wives (Ezra 9-10)—to some, departing from sin was abominable. Yet true wisdom finds sweetness in obeying God.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What desires occupy your heart—do you long for righteousness or find departing from evil distasteful?
2. How has the gospel transformed your desires, making what once seemed sweet (sin) now repulsive?
3. What specific sins might you be finding 'abominable to depart from' rather than eagerly pursuing holiness?

Interlinear Text

בְּ סִילִים	וְתוֹעֵבָה תֵּה	לֹא פָּשַׂת	תַּעֲשֵׂב בְּ	בְּ הַיִתְהַ	פָּאֵת הַ	תַּעֲשֵׂב בְּ	בְּ הַיִתְהַ	פָּאֵת הַ
The desire	accomplished	is sweet	to the soul	but it is abomination	to fools			
H8378	H1961	H6149	H5315	H8441	H3684			

מְרַעֵּת	סִילִים
to depart	from evil
H5493	H7451

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 13:12 (Parallel theme): Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.

Proverbs 29:27 (Evil): An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked.

Proverbs 16:17 (Evil): The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.

2 Timothy 2:19 (Parallel theme): Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

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