

Mishlei 10-02

Wealth

Key Concepts

One of the challenges of life is the need to make a proper balance between the material possessions which a person must acquire to support his family and the charitable giving that he must perform to help those in need.

The first criterion in acquiring wealth is to do so honestly and honorably, without harming others. If a person does so he can anticipate having the money he needs to serve Hashem and protect himself from want. He must balance this against the expenditures he needs to make to help others.

Honorably acquired wealth can stave off misfortune. Similarly, the reward of charitable giving is protection from misfortune.

Exploring Mishlei

(ב) לא יועילו אוצרות רשע, וצדקה תציל ממות :

**Treasures of wickedness avail nothing,
but charity will save from death.**

A person's material possessions are described as treasures of wickedness if he acquired them dishonestly or did not give an appropriate portion to charity. Such treasures will not benefit him in the long run. In contrast, the portion of a person's wealth which he donates to charity will have a positive effect. It will save him from death.

Learning Mishlei

If material possessions are **treasures of wickedness — אוצרות רשע,**
they will not provide — לא יועילו —
any benefit to their owner.

In contrast, the money given to **charity — וצדקה,**
will **save the giver from death — תציל ממות.**

Additional Insights

INEFFECTIVE WEALTH

- (1) Treasures of wickedness will not be effective because they will not last and will not protect the owner from misfortune, such as death or financial ruin. (מצודות, (המאירי, מלבי"ם, רבינו יונה, שבט מיהודה
- (2) Money acquired dishonestly and then invested will not bring a successful outcome. (רלב"ג, רב ינו יונה)
- (3) In raising children, don't let their material wealth be your primary concern. If they are not Torah-observing Jews their wealth will have no value and they will not bring you the joy that you are anticipating from their wisdom. (רשר"ה)
- (4) Don't occupy yourself with accumulating wealth dishonestly, thinking it will protect you in any situation. You are mistaken because when you need it, it will fail you. (רבינו יונה)
- (5) If you see a person bribe himself out of danger with dishonestly acquired wealth, don't think he was saved by that money. He or his father once performed an act of charity and this is what saved him. (אלשיך)
- (6) Dishonestly acquired wealth will not be effective, even if given to charity. It will end up in the hands of undeserving people who pretend to be in need. Only honestly acquired wealth that is given to charity will be effective and will save the giver from death. (שבט מיהודה)

EFFECTIVE WEALTH

- (7) If a person acquires his wealth honorably and gives a suitable portion to charity, his wealth will endure. And even if he encounters a time of difficulty, the charity that he gave will save him from disaster. (המאירי)
- (8) Don't be concerned about the loss of your wealth when you spend it to help others. That expenditure will benefit you greatly, for it will save you from danger. (רבינו יונה)
- (9) All forms of charity and benevolence are a hidden influence on the timing of a person's death. (דעת סופרים)