

## Mishlei 10-02

# Wealth and Charity

### 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 being saved from misfortune.

### Learning Mishlei

(ב) לֹא יוֹעִילוּ אוֹצְרוֹת רָשָׁע, וְצִדְקָה תִצְּלֵל מִמָּוֶת:

*Treasures of wickedness will not be effective, but charity will save from death.*

A person's material possessions are described as **treasures of wickedness** – אוֹצְרוֹת רָשָׁע if he acquired them dishonestly or did not give an appropriate portion to charity. No matter what the person hoped to achieve with this wealth he will find that **it is not effective** – לֹא יוֹעִילוּ. In contrast, the portion of a person's wealth which he donates to **charity** – וְצִדְקָה, will have a positive effect. It will **save** him **from death** – תִצְּלֵל מִמָּוֶת.

A series of insights illuminating this proverb are presented below. The numbers identifying the insights refer to the listing of sources of at the end of the segment.

### 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.

(2) Money acquired dishonestly and then invested will not bring a successful

outcome.

(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 (Segment 10-01).

(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.

(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.

(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.

### **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.

(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.

(9) All forms of charity and benevolence are a hidden influence on the timing of a person's death.

### **Sources**

The primary sources used for the insights illuminating this segment are listed below.

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|------------------|---|
| (5) - אלשיך      | (1) - מצודות, המאירי, מלבי"ם, רבינו יונה, |
| (6) - שבט מיהודה | שבט מיהודה                                |
| (7) - המאירי,    | (2) - רלב"ג, רב ינו יונה                  |
| (8) רבינו יונה   | (3) - רשר"ה                               |
| (9) - דעת סופרים | (4) רבינו יונה                            |

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