

Mishlei 10-07

Blessings

Key Concepts

After a *tzadik* (righteous person) has passed away, the impression that his good deeds have made on the community continues to inspire others. Thus, whenever they think of him, they bless his memory in gratitude for the contribution he has made to their spiritual well-being. That memory also serves as a role model for future generations, and so they bless their children to be like him. Furthermore, through his contribution to society the *tzadik* himself continues to earn an enhanced spiritual blessing in the World to Come.

In contrast, the *resha'im* (wicked people) leave no blessings behind. The wealth and fame that they may have achieved during their lifetime has no lasting value. They leave behind no memory of good deeds or Torah teachings and so their name, which represents their identity fades away and is no more.

Exploring Mishlei

(ז) זְכוֹר צַדִּיק לְבִרְכָה וְשֵׁם רְשָׁעִים יִרְקָב:

(7) Recalling the life of the *tzadik* is for blessing, but the name of the *resha'im* will rot away.

Mishlei associates the memory of the *tzadik* with blessing, since the good deeds he has done during his lifetime continue to elicit blessings. In contrast, the *resha'im* are not remembered at all since they have not performed worthwhile deeds by which they can be remembered. All they have left is their name, but that is described as rotting away. It is like the remains of a creature that has died and serves no further function. Its carcass deteriorates and even loses its identifying form.

Learning Mishlei

**(7) Recalling the life of the *tzadik* — זְכוֹר צַדִּיק —
is for blessing — לְבִרְכָה**

because the impression left by his good deeds continue to inspire others, who bless his memory in gratitude and bless their children to be like him.

but the name of the *resha'im* — שֵׁם רְשָׁעִים

will rot away – ירקב

for in the absence of good deeds, there is nothing worth remembering.

In fact, nothing will remain from their wealth and fame.

Even their name fades away from memory.

Additional Insights

THE TZADIK

(1) We gain much by remembering the good deeds of a *tzadik*. Besides the inspiration it gives us and our children, we become a means of facilitating his reward in Heaven. (המאירי)

(2) The life stories of *tzadikim* are in themselves the most effective *mussar sefer*. (דרשות ספר משלי)

THE RESHA'IM

(3) Organic matter that is lifeless rots away without any active intervention. It loses its characteristic form and thus can no longer be identified. Thus, the name of the *resha'im* is gone forever. (רש"י, המאירי, מצודות, מלבי"ם)

(4) However, in certain instances the fate of the *resha'im* serves as an object lesson for future generation. Examples are the fate of Mitzrayim and Amalek. (רבינו יונה)

(5) Sometimes, *resha'im* appear to have gained wealth and fame through their exploitation of the innocent. However, Mishlei teaches us that they leave nothing behind. Their wealth dissipates and their fame is evanescent. (דעת סופרים)