

Mishlei 10-16

Attitude

Key Concepts

A person's pattern of behavior is governed by his overall attitude. Over time that attitude leans toward either serving Hashem or pleasing himself. At the positive extreme he is described as a righteous man (*tzadik*) and at the other extreme he is described as a wicked man (*rasha*). The quality of a man's actions and the effect of those actions upon his surroundings are directly influenced by the attitude that he has adopted.

Exploring Mishlei

(טז) פְּעֻלַּת צַדִּיק לְחַיִּים תְּבוֹאֶת רָשָׁע לְחֵטְאֵת:

(16) The activity of a tzadik is for life.

The outcome of the activity of the rasha is for failure.

Everything that a *tzadik* does is guided positively by his overall attitude, which is to serve Hashem. The result is that he pays attention to ensure that his activity is consistent with the *halachah* and so he is rewarded by the blessing of life.

In contrast, the attitude of the *rasha* is to live for his own pleasure. Therefore, the actions of the *rasha* are governed by his selfish urges of the moment. The result is that his every initiative will ultimately lead to tragedy.

Learning Mishlei

Not only the noble purpose of an action, but even the ordinary **activity of a tzadik is for life** – פְּעֻלַּת צַדִּיק לְחַיִּים – because the manner in which he acts is affected by his purpose and his overall attitude.

The reverse is true for the *rasha*.

Not only does he commit perverse actions for unworthy ends, but even **the outcome of the action of a rasha is defective** – תְּבוֹאֶת רָשָׁע לְחֵטְאֵת.

No good will come of what he sets out to do.

Additional Insights

THE TZADIK

(1) The *tzadik* sees activities such as sowing and plowing, which serve only as preparation for something more important, as worthy. Therefore, in everything he does, the *tzadik* has in mind that he is doing it for the sake of Heaven. As for the result, even eating and drinking, which others might see as an end in themselves, are seen by him as a means to better serve Hashem. They all bring the blessing of life.

(רבינו יונה, אלשיך, חנוך לנער, מלבנים, הגר"א)

(2) Because the *tzadik* sees every action as part of serving Hashem, he pays attention to what he is doing. In his heart he feels the enthusiasm of pleasing Hashem.

(ר' יראוחם הלוי)

THE RASHA

(3) Every accomplishment of the *rasha* is a means to enable him to sin. Even if he acquires wealth honestly, it is a negative accomplishment because the wealth will be used for any unworthy purpose. The food that he eats is for his own pleasure and leads to a state of mind in which he is more likely to sin.

(רבינו יונה, אלשיך, חנוך לנער, מלבנים, הגר"א)