

## Mishlei 10-29

# Stability and Integrity

[Pesukim 10:29 and 10:30]

### Key Concepts

The person who follows the way of Hashem will be blessed with a life of stability, one that is long and productive. The stability that is granted by Hashem is like a towering stronghold with firm foundations that are deeply implanted in the earth. Even when powerful winds shake the tower, its foundations remain firm.

And so, when a *tzadik* (righteous person) is challenged by problems which bend him low, he will be able to overcome them and recover to his full potential. On the other hand, the *resha'im* (wicked people) who reject Hashem's way will ultimately be held accountable and they will stay down.

The *tzadik* who follows the way of Hashem, lives a life of integrity. That means he conscientiously observes Hashem's Torah and *mitzvos* without re-interpreting their meaning to suit his own convenience. As previously noted (Mishlei 10-09), such a person has no need of lies or subterfuge because he is confident that no matter what happens, he will not be at a disadvantage if he stays with the truth. He trusts the good will of Hashem to ensure the best possible outcome.

### Exploring Mishlei

(כט) מְעוֹז לְתוֹם דְּרֹךְ ה' וּמַחֲתָה לְפַעֲלֵי אָוֶן:

(ל) צַדִּיק לְעוֹלָם בַּל יִמוּט וְרָשָׁעִים לֹא יִשְׁכְּנוּ אָרֶץ:

**(29) The way of Hashem is a stronghold to the *tzadik* who lives with integrity, but a disaster to wrongdoers.**

**(30) A *tzadik* will not be toppled forever, but the *resha'im* will not dwell in the land.**

Mishlei conveys the message of this segment in two proverbs (10:29 and 10:30). The first describes the way of Hashem as being a stronghold. It teaches that the essential characteristic of the *tzadik* who follows the way of Hashem is his integrity

and so he is referred to as תם (person of integrity). See also Segment 13-06 for a further discussion on the stability inherent in the way of Hashem.

The second proverb elaborates on the concept of stronghold. Because of his strong foundation, the *tzadik* will not be toppled forever, even though he may falter.

As far the *resha'im* are concerned, they are described in the first proverb as being פְּעֵלֵי אָוֶן (wrongdoers). Because they reject the way of Hashem their destiny is disastrous. The second proverb adds that they have no long-term future, that is, “they will not dwell in the land.”

## Learning Mishlei

**(כט) מְעוֹז לְתָם דְּרֹךְ ה' וּמַחֲתָה לְפַעְלֵי אָוֶן:**

**(29) A stronghold to persons of integrity — מְעוֹז לְתָם**

**is the way of Hashem — דְּרֹךְ ה'**

for they are inspired to conscientiously emulate

the qualities of Hashem, His kindness and His truth.

**But it is a disaster to wrongdoers — וּמַחֲתָה לְפַעְלֵי אָוֶן**

for their dishonest behavior will bring about their own downfall.

**(ל) צַדִּיק לְעוֹלָם בַּל יִמוֹט וְרָשָׁעִים לֹא יִשְׁכְּנוּ אֶרֶץ:**

**(30) Even when he falters,**

**a tzadik will not be toppled forever — צַדִּיק לְעוֹלָם בַּל יִמוֹט.**

**But the *resha'im* will not dwell tranquilly in the land — וְרָשָׁעִים לֹא יִשְׁכְּנוּ אֶרֶץ.**

for they will have no descendants to carry on their lineage.

## Additional Insights

**THE WAY OF HASHEM** (v. 29)

(1) The way of Hashem is a stronghold for people of integrity because even though they may be physically weak and their innocence may make them vulnerable to deceivers, Hashem is their strength and He will protect them.

(רבינו יונה, דעת סופרים)

(2) Furthermore, it is a stronghold in that they have gained the benefit of the wisdom of the Torah, which will guide them in every situation. (המאירי)

(3) Because it is a stronghold, the righteous plans they make in honesty and sincerity will surely succeed. (רלב"ג)

(4) The *tzadik* pleases Hashem by following His way. Therefore, Hashem will reward him by becoming his stronghold to bring him the joy to which he aspires. (מצודות, חנוך לנער)

(5) Because the way of Hashem is a stronghold, the *tzadik* who follows it is inspired to emulate the qualities of Hashem and practice kindness and honesty with everyone. (מלבי"ם)

**THE TZADIK** (v. 30)

(6) Despite his troubles the *tzadik* does not stay down forever because Hashem is his stronghold. (v. 29). (רש"י, רבינו יונה, אבן יחיאל, מצודות)

(7) The *hashgachah* (direct care) of Hashem will protect the *tzadik* from being pushed away from his place in this world (Eretz Yisrael). (רלב"ג, חנוך לנער)

(8) Even when the *tzadik* dies, his descendants will carry on his life's work. (אבן עזרא)

**WRONGDOERS** (v. 29)

(9) The way of Hashem is a disaster for wrongdoers because they are held to account for disregarding it. Their fate is to perish from the world. (מלבי"ם, חנוך לנער)

(10) Because they reject Hashem's qualities of kindness and truth, their behavior will bring about their own downfall. (מלבי"ם)

(11) Even though they may be full of pride and arrogance because of their apparent good fortune, Hashem will ultimately see to it that they are brought down. Their plans in violation of Hashem's way will surely fail. (רש"י, אבן יחיאל, מצודות)

**RESHA'IM** (v. 30)

(12) When the *resha'im* die, they won't leave descendants who will cherish their memory. (אבן עזרא)

(13) The good fortune of the *resha'im* will not last and they will ultimately be doomed to oblivion. When they fall, they will not rise again. they will not live on in the World to Come. (See Yeshayah 60:21) (רבינו יונה, המאירי, מצודות, הגר"א)

(14) Because of their sins, the *resha'im* will be driven out of their secure place by their many enemies. Even in this life they will have no peace. And when they fall it will be permanent. (רלב"ג, אבן יחיאל, חנוך לנער, שבט מיהודה)