

Mishlei 11-04

Wealth and Misfortune

Key Concepts

People accumulate wealth as a bulwark against misfortune. They think that the more money they have the more protected they are. But they are mistaken, because the money they spend may be a better protection than the money they save. That is the case if the money is used to give charity to help those in need. It is the *tzedakah* the gave which will save them from death.

Exploring Mishlei

(ד) לא־יועִיל הוֹן בְּיוֹם עֲבָרָה וְצָדָקָה תַּצִּיל מִמּוֹת:

Wealth will not help in the day of wrath, but charity will save from death.

Even honestly acquired wealth will be of no help when a person faces tragedy. But what can save him is the charity he gave during his lifetime.

A very similar message is given by the proverb in Segment 10-02. However, in that proverb Mishlei was referring to dishonestly acquired wealth. Now he is adding that even honestly acquired wealth is of little value compared to the money he spent in doing *mitzvos*.

Learning Mishlei

(ד) לא־יועִיל הוֹן בְּיוֹם עֲבָרָה

וְצָדָקָה תַּצִּיל מִמּוֹת:

Wealth will not help a person survive **in the day of** Hashem's **wrath** – לא־יועִיל הוֹן בְּיוֹם עֲבָרָה, especially in wartime, **but** the **charity** that he gave **will save** him **from death** – וְצָדָקָה תַּצִּיל מִמּוֹת – even on the day of wrath.

Additional Insights

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.

WEALTH

(1) Even honestly acquired wealth will not protect the owner from unexpected personal misfortune.

(2) If wealth is honestly acquired it may prove to be of some value, but only under normal world conditions, such as during peace time.

(3) During times of war or calamity when Hashem is expressing His anger over the sins of mankind, even the wealth that a person has acquired honestly will be of no value in saving him.

(4) At the time of a person's death, when he is personally subject to the judgment of Hashem over his sins, the material wealth he acquired during his lifetime will be of no help to him.

(5) If wealth is honestly acquired with conscious attention to the laws of the Torah, including the practice of tzedek (going beyond the letter of the law), it will work in his favor to save him from the eternal death of Gehinnom.

CHARITY

(6) If a person gives a suitable portion of his wealth to charity, it will save him from personal disaster.

(7) The charity that an individual has given will work in his favor to save him from death even in times of war when Hashem is expressing His anger over the sins of mankind.

(8) The charity that a person gives will save him from the eternal death of Gehinnom.

(9) At the time of a person's death, when he is subject the the wrath of Hashem over his sins, special note will be taken of the charity he gave during his lifetime, and that will contribute to his surviving the eternal death of Gehinnom.

Sources

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

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|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (6) - רבינו יונה, המאירי, רלב"ג | (1) - רבינו יונה, המאירי, רלב"ג |
| (7) - מצודות, מלבי"ם | (2) - מלבי"ם |
| (8) - חנוך לנער | (3) - מלבי"ם |
| (9) - הגר"א | (4) - הגר"א |
| | (5) - חנוך לנער |

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