

Mishlei 11-06

Fair-Mindedness

Key Concepts

In Segment 11-04 we have seen how the merit earned through righteous deeds (tzedakah) can save a person from the misfortune brought brought to the world by the sins of the wicked, such as the tragedies of wartime. Now Mishlei turns to another category of misfortune, that which fair-minded people inadvertently bring upon themselves in the course of bravely defending their principles. These people will also be saved if they have been motivated by the sincere desire to do the will of Hashem (righteousness).

In contrast, people who have abandoned devotion to principle will be caught up by the self-serving schemes that they thought they could get away with. They set aside any thoughts of loyalty or gratitude and allowed themselves free license to bring harm to others. But they themselves now suffer the consequences.

The quality of fair-mindedness is identified as *yashrus* and the people who adhere to it are *yesharim*. The opposite quality is ingratitude and the people who display it are called *bogdim* (traitors).

As we have seen in Segment 11-05 the righteousness that motivates good people to do tzedakah is called *tzidkus*. This is what rescues the *yesharim* from the consequences of holding on to their principles.

Exploring Mishlei

(ו) צְדָקַת יְשָׁרִים תִּצְלִי־ם וּבְהוֹת בְּגָדִים יִלְכְּדוּ:

(6) *The righteousness of the fair-minded will rescue them, but the ungrateful will be trapped [in their own] false schemes.*

The first part of this proverb teaches that *tzidkus* rescues the *yesharim* from any negative consequences of holding on to their principles.

The second part contrasts the *yesharim* with the *bogdim* who suffer the consequences of their own abandonment of principle.

Learning Mishlei

(ו) צְדָקַת יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּצְלִימָם
וּבְהוֹת בְּגָדִים יִלְכְּדוּ:

Although **the fair-minded** expose themselves to misfortune by defending their principles, their **righteousness will rescue them** – צְדָקַת יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּצְלִימָם from any negative consequences. **But the** treacherous and **ungrateful** who try to gain personal advantage **will be trapped** in their own **false schemes** – וּבְהוֹת בְּגָדִים יִלְכְּדוּ.

Additional Insights

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

THE FAIR-MINDED

(1) The fair-minded person (yashar) recognizes, appreciates, and chooses fair-mindedness (yashrus) even when it causes him trouble. He is devoted to the truth and is prepared to defend it.

(2) The tzidkus of the yashar will save him from harm that might he come about through his choice of yashrus.

(3) If the yashar is guided by his intelligence to follow the straight way, which is the way of the Torah, there is a risk that his intelligence will mislead him. However, his tzidkus will protect him from that.

(4) When Hashem wishes to destroy the resha'im He removes the tzaddikim from among them so that the merit of the tzaddikim does not shelter them.

(5) The yesharim are saved from misfortune by the tzedakah that they performed.

THE UNGRATEFUL

(6) The bogdim who are supported by falsehood will be caught by the false schemes, which which they intended to harm others.

(7) The *bogdim* who rely on their intelligence to choose an option that is not in conformance with the laws of the Torah will be caught in their own trap.

Sources

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

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

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