

Mishlei 12-27

Wealth and Value

Key Concepts

When wealth is acquired deceptively and dishonestly it will not have lasting value. The person who acquired it will not get the opportunity to benefit from his efforts. Furthermore, he will have to keep it hidden lest he be found out. But a person who acquires his wealth through honest effort will have the opportunity to put it to good use in serving Hashem.

Exploring Mishlei

(כז) לַאֲיֹחֲרֹן רְמִיָּה צִידוֹ וְהוֹרְאָדָם יִקְרֶה רוֹץ :

(27) **A swindler will not get the opportunity to roast his catch but the wealth of the hard-working person will have value.**

This proverb compares the swindler to a hunter who uses deception to trap animals. If he is unworthy, he will find that he will not even have the opportunity to roast his catch. Only wealth acquired through hard work will have lasting value.

Learning Mishlei

(27) **The swindler will not roast — לַאֲיֹחֲרֹן רְמִיָּה — his catch — צִידוֹ**

because his wealth will have no value

but the wealth of a hard-working man — וְהוֹרְאָדָם

will have value — יִקְרֶה

if he is honest — רוֹץ.

Additional Insights

(1) The swindler will not be able to get the benefit of his ill-gotten gains. He uses deception to cheat people the way a hunter uses deception to catch unwitting animals. But the swindler will be like a lawless hunter. Not only will he not get the opportunity to eat his catch, he will not even get the opportunity to roast it. (רש"י, המאירי, דעת סופרים)

(2) The money that a person acquires through dishonesty will bring him no satisfaction or honor. Even if he succeeds in his deception, he must conceal his ill-gotten wealth lest he be found out. (רבינו יונה, מלבי"ם)

(3) Money that a person earns honorably without using deception will keep its value. (רש"י)

(4) If you see that a person's wealth is respected by people it is reasonable to assume it was acquired honorably. (רבינו יונה)

(5) A deceitful person will not have the opportunity to enjoy his wealth for even a short time. This is suggested by the phrase לַאֲיֶחָרָךְ, which refers to the initial stage of roasting. He will not even be able to do that. (חנוך לנער)

(6) A person who does not review the Torah he has learned is like a swindler who will not keep his wealth. His learning will quickly dissipate. (שבט מיהודה)