

**Mishlei 19-06****Generosity – Expectations****Key Concepts**

When someone is blessed with good fortune, he has the opportunity to befriend others by helping people in financial need. Similarly, a person who is blessed with Torah knowledge has the opportunity to share his wisdom with others who need a guiding hand. In either case, helping people is a *mitzvah* that can make the generous person feel good about himself. Indeed, it can be very gratifying to have people flock to his door, showering him with praise and friendship.

Mishlei encourages such generosity, but the donor is advised not to count upon the sincere gratitude of those who are being helped. It is inevitable that people who need help will be drawn to the one who is able and willing to provide it. This means that the beneficiaries of the giver's kindness will find it in their interest to reward him with their attention and good will, but consistent gratitude is too much to expect.

The reverse of this situation arises when a person falls upon hard times and is in desperate need of help. It is natural for him to expect friends or relatives to volunteer their assistance, especially considering that such help is a great mitzvah. Mishlei warns the dependent person that such help may not be forthcoming because people resist associating with someone who has an air of failure about him.

The conflicting scenarios of generosity versus dependency are touched upon by Mishlei in two related pesukim.

**Exploring Mishlei**

**(ו) רַבִּים יַחֲלוּ פְּנֵי נְדִיב וְכָל הָרֵעַ לְאִישׁ מִתָּוֶן:**

**(6) *Many entreat the favor of a philanthropist  
and everyone is a friend to a man who gives gifts.***

**(ז) כָּל אַחֵי רֵשׁ שְׁנֵאָהוּ אֵף כִּי מִרְעָהוּ רָחֲקוּ מִמֶּנּוּ מְרִדִף אֲמָרִים לוֹ הַמָּה:**

**(7) *All a pauper's relatives shun him, even his friends withdraw from him.  
Though he pursues them with words, the words remain his.***

The first proverb is concerned with people who are known in the community as generous individuals, especially when it comes to worthy causes. As we have previously seen in Segment 19-04 above, the friendship of people towards a rich man may not really be friendship to him, but friendship to his wealth. He can easily be misled into thinking that everybody likes him and approves of him, no matter how he behaves. That could be a serious mistake. Even if he is not a known philanthropist, he may have a reputation as a man who enjoys giving gifts. People are eager to be associated with such a man, for they are hopeful of being on the receiving end.

Similarly, the poor man in the second proverb may find himself shunned, not only by strangers, but even by close relatives. He may have disappointed them in their expectations of him, even though their expectations are unrealistic. Since they don't share their thoughts with him, he has no way way of telling them how wrong they are. So, the words are never spoken.

We also see that a poor man is often frustrated by the coldness and rejection of people who could help him. These people may resent the implication that the poor man is putting them on the spot or that he is not sufficiently grateful for help they may have given him in the past. If they are his relatives, they may resent being associated with someone who makes them look bad.

## Learning Mishlei

(6) Many seek — רבים יחלו  
 the favor of a philanthropist — פני נדיב.  
 And everyone is a friend — וכל הרע  
 to a giving man — לאיש מתן.

(7) All the relatives — כל אחי  
 of a pauper — רש  
 shun him — שניאו.  
 Even his friends — אף כי מרעהו  
 distance themselves — רחקו  
 from him — ממנו.  
 Though he pursues them with words — מרדף.  
 the words remain his — אמרים לו המה