

## Mishlei 20-21

# Inheritance

### Key Concepts

Property acquired through inheritance from a parent causes mixed emotions. On the one hand, there is a sense of empowerment brought about by sudden wealth, but on the other hand there is the bitter knowledge that it was the loss of a loving parent that made it possible.

Another problem arises because the money that came into a person's possession without the need for investment or hard work may encourage a free-spending attitude, which in the long run can be destructive to peace of mind and family serenity.

Even worse is the temptation on the part of someone who is anticipating a future windfall to jump the gun, taking a permissive attitude to the money he has not yet received, thereby resulting in bitter conflict among the future heirs. And so instead of bringing about happiness and goodwill, the newfound wealth brings about ill will and tumultuous conflict.

### Exploring Mishlei

Mishlei points out that some of the issues associated with inherited wealth begin right at the beginning. People who are in line to become heirs need to resist the feeling that they already have a stake in what is to come. They need to practice serenity and patience so that the acquisition of wealth does not begin in turmoil. It would be foolish to think that a person can get rich without the blessing of his Creator.

**(כא) נַחֲלָה מִבְּהֶלֶת בְּרֵאשִׁיטָה וְאַחֲרֵיתָהּ לֹא תִבְרָךְ:**

***(21) An inheritance may be acquired hastily at the outset, but then its end will not be blessed.***

### Learning Mishlei

**(21) An inheritance in turmoil, — נַחֲלָה מִבְּהֶלֶת —  
at the outset, — בְּרֵאשִׁיטָה —**

but its end — וְאַחֲרֵיהָ  
will not be blessed — לֹא תִבְרָךְ.

## Additional Insights

(1) The word **מְבֻקָּלֵת** implies haste and turmoil, typically involving a son who seizes his parents' possessions during their lifetime with the justification that it would be his anyway. Mishlei predicts that he will not receive any blessings from such an inheritance. (רבינו יונה)

(3) The same thing can happen if a person tries to gain knowledge without putting in effort, his path to learning will be strewn with unexpected obstacles. By the time he reaches the end of the subject, he will have forgotten the beginning. (רלב"ג, הגר"א)