

## Mishlei 21-14

### Covert Gifts

#### Key Concepts

A person giving a gift in secrecy is doing so for worthy reasons if it is a charitable gift, given anonymously. The giver seeks neither recognition nor gratitude. His motives are pure and in giving this gift, he pleases Hashem.

But another kind of secret gift is a bribe given to a judge. The giver is motivated by the intent to distort justice. His motives are shameful, and instead of pleasing Hashem, he has aroused Hashem's wrath.

#### Exploring Mishlei

**(יד) מִתֵּן בְּסֵתֶר יִכְפֹּה אָף וְשֹׁחַד בְּחֵק חֲמָה עֲזָה:**

*(14) An anonymous gift to charity can overcome anger,*

*but a covert bribe to a judge to distort justice, arouses strong wrath.*

The proverb begins with an anonymous gift to charity that pleases Hashem. In fact, if the giver was guilty of a sin, the effect of the donation is to pacify Hashem's anger.

Mishlei compares this with a covert gift in the form of a bribe given to a judge. The handover is typically done by slipping the shameful gift into the bosom of the judge without formal acknowledgement. Such a gift has the opposite effect, arousing Hashem's strong wrath against both the giver and the receiver.

#### Learning Mishlei

*(14) An anonymous gift — מִתֵּן בְּסֵתֶר*

presented quietly to charity

**can overcome anger. — אָף יִכְפֹּה**

**But a bribe in the bosom — וְשֹׁחַד בְּחֵק**

will arouse

**strong wrath — חֲמָה עֲזָה.**