

Mishlei 22-02

Destiny

Key Concepts

People are inclined to define themselves by their financial worth. A rich man thinks that he was meant to be rich and that is who he is. A poor man thinks that he was meant to be poor. The same kind of thinking is found among those who encounter rich men and poor men. They assume the men they are dealing with can be identified by whatever their financial worth happens to suggest at that time. This kind of thinking limits a person's potential for change or growth.

Mishlei teaches us to look beyond surface qualities such as financial status. We are reminded that we were all created by the same Maker, and therefore the qualities of any individual person are subject to his own efforts and the will of Hashem. Similarly, each person created by Hashem is free to choose his destiny.

Exploring Mishlei

(ב) עָשִׂיר וְרֵשׁ נִפְגְּשׁוּ עֲשֵׂה כָלָם ה':

(2) *A rich man and a poor man met;*

they realized that Hashem is the Maker of all .

To illustrate concept of unlimited potential, Mishlei asks us to visualize the encounter between two men. One happens to be rich and one happens to be poor. But who knows what potential they have for a change of status? Since all men share the same Maker, there is no limit to their ultimate destiny.

Learning Mishlei

(2) A rich man and a poor man — עָשִׂיר וְרֵשׁ
met. — נִפְגְּשׁוּ

They realized that

Hashem is the Maker of all — עֲשֵׂה כָלָם ה' —

Additional Insights

[1] Wealth and poverty are not stable, permanent conditions. People can move up or down the ladder of life. Thus, two individuals can easily “meet” on the way up or down. (מלבי"ם)

[2] Since any person can move up or down on the ladder of financial success, each person must be prepared to serve Hashem no matter what his financial status happens to be at any one time. (רשר"ה)