

Kohelet Thoughts 7

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“The sleep of the laborer is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the satiety of the rich does not allow him to sleep.” Kohelet 5:11

Which is more valuable, wealth of the body or wealth of the soul? Money can indeed buy many things, but how much money does it cost to buy peace of mind? How much money do you need to really be happy? How little peace of mind can you live with and still function without going insane?



מתוקה שנת העבד
אם פעט ואם הרבה יאכל
והשבט לעשיר
אינו מניח לו לישון

Push, push, push; this is the mantra of the modern world. Make money, more money and on top of that even more money; only this defines accomplishment and success. So many have so much and the more that they have the less they become. If money is supposed to buy happiness, how come so many of the rich are unhappy? If money makes one rich, how come so many of the rich are so psychologically poor?

Is there a connection between financial wealth and inner psychological poverty? Can it be that one builds on the outside at the cost of tearing down what is on the inside? Is one defined as a person by who one is of by what one has? To have or to be? I am not the first one to ask this question.

With little worries the mind can be at rest. The rested mind can sleep deeply and sound. Life is good for one with peace of mind. With peace of mind, financial wealth is a peripheral thing. It is good to have and good not to have. One way or another, the worker works and fulfills his obligations and provides for his needs. Why do more than what is needed? The worker then goes home relaxed, at peace and enjoys however much or little he has. He is truly wealthy because he is happy with what he has and does not crave or miss that which he does not.

Having a lot or having a little will all balance out in the end. But peace of mind, being able to sleep soundly and at peace every night; how much does it cost; how can one buy it? The answer is that the price for peace of mind costs nothing and at the same time it costs everything. No amount of money can buy it, however great or small. Being rich will not give you peace of mind and neither will being poor.

Peace of mind is an attitude, not an acquisition. It is an attitude of having a full soul. The empty belly eats when hungry, so too the empty soul cries out to be full. Why feed the belly and starve the soul? This is foolishness and imbalance. This is why so many are so unhappy.

Let enough be enough. Go to work and work hard. Fulfill your daily chores and provide for that which you must. When the day is through and the work is done; don't push any further. Go home and enjoy your well earned rest. In this there is peace of mind. Feed your soul and you will no longer be spiritually hungry.