

"And Avraham (was) old, advanced in age, and Hashem blessed Avraham in all things." (24:1)

Surely the *Torah* is not apprising us of Avraham's success in amassing material wealth. The *Torah* intends to teach us the true meaning of wealth. Success is not measured by quantity, but rather by quality. Everything Avraham *Avinu* possessed was worthy of blessing. To possess a fortune means nothing if that fortune is not blessed. Everything that Avraham had was a source of blessing to him. Why?

Horav Moshe Swift z.l. suggests that the answer lies in the fact that Avraham controlled his possessions, rather than the possessions dominating him. He had business dealings with various people; he was even compelled to bargain for a small plot of land to be used as a burial site. Yet, he never employed any form of unethical behavior. He was never submissive to whims and passions. On the contrary, he always ruled over them. This was the greatest tribute to the Patriarch.

There is a remarkable difference between the man who permits himself to be driven by his material ambitions and the man who holds the reins controlling his moral integrity. To reach the end of one's life-span, able to look back with pride at a life of self-discipline and honor, is truly a significant achievement and a most notable epitaph.