

Mishlei 10-06

## The Community

**Key Concepts**

The presence of a *tzadik* in a community creates a general feeling of goodwill which promotes the well-being of the entire community, for people seek to emulate the role model that the *tzadik* presents. They also know that Hashem showers blessings on the entire vicinity when there is a *tzadik* present. Accordingly, an enlightened community will join with Hashem in blessing the *tzadik* that they are privileged to have in their midst.

However, the community may also harbor wicked people (*resha'im*), whose instinctive motivation is to take advantage of their fellow man and cause him harm. This gives them a temporary feeling of success, but ultimately leads to resentment and friction. The harm they do undermines and blocks any potential for blessing reaching them. See also Mishlei 11-10.

**Exploring Mishlei**

(ו) בְּרִכּוֹת לְרֹאשׁ צַדִּיק וּפִי רְשָׁעִים יִכָּסֶה חֶמְס׃

**(6) Blessings will cover the head of the *tzadik*, but the harm of the *resha'im* will cover their mouth to block their evil speech.**

In comparing the effect of a *tzadik* upon a community with that of *resha'im*, Mishlei distinguishes between the *tzadik's* head, which is the seat of his wisdom and the mouth of the *rasha*, which is his instrument of harm through deception, falsehood, and gossip.

The head of the *tzadik* initiates goodwill and is also the instrument for receiving goodwill in the form of blessings. The instinctive reaction of a *tzadik* is to feel love towards everyone with whom he interacts. He expresses his love through kind words and blessings.

The mouth of the wicked person causes harm to others and also represents his appetite, which he seeks to satisfy in dishonest ways.

The blessings that the *tzadik* issues through his wisdom return to him (his head) in the form of blessings. The harm that the *resha'im* do through the workings of their

mouth return to them by “covering” that mouth so that their appetite will remain unsatisfied.

## Learning Mishlei

**Blessings** from Heaven and from the people will descend — **בְּרָכוֹת** —  
**upon the loving head of the tzadik** — **לְרֹאשׁ צַדִּיק**

for his mouth issues a blessing to all,

**but the mouth of the resha'im** — **וּפִי רְשָׁעִים**

which tries to issue evil speech

**will be covered by the harm** — **יִכָּסֶה חֶמְסֵם**

done by that evil speech.

## Additional Insights

### THE TZADIK

(1) People bless the *tzadik* because he brings fulfillment to their lives. Also, it is as though they are living under his protection because the blessings of Hashem come to them in his zechus (merit). (המאירי, אבן יחיאל)

(2) The head is described as the organ where blessings are received because the source of all blessings is from Hashem, on high. The head is the highest and most prominent part of the body so that it is the first organ to be encountered by the descending blessings. (רבינו יונה)

(3) The Gemara (Sotah 38b) states that a *tzadik* is continually blessing people, as it says (Mishlei 22:9), “**A person of generous character will bless others**” (הגר"א). (טוב עין הוא יברך)

(4) Because the *tzadik* does good to others it is as though the whole community lays their hands upon his head and blesses him. (מלבי"ם)

### THE RESHA'IM

(5) The *resha'im* harm others through their mouth which curses people and shames them. The harm that they intended to do to others comes back to affect them. (הגר"א)

(6) The *resha'im* try to cover up their wicked behavior, symbolized by covering their mouth, the source of the evil that they do. (מלבי"ם)

THE COMMUNITY

(7) Through the actions of the *tzadik* the whole community gains benefit and honor. The actions of the *rasha*, however, undermine the well-being of the entire community. Therefore, a community is glad not only about the happiness of the righteous but also about the downfall of the *resha'im*. (רשר"יה)

(8) The *tzadik* is described as an individual, using the singular form, because a true *tzadik* is a rarity. In contrast, the *resha'im* are described in the plural form, because they tend to proliferate. Because of the power of the *yetzer hara* (evil inclination) it takes more effort for a person to be righteous than to be wicked. But this is every man's challenge and his mission. (דעת סופרים)