

Mishlei 12-07

Foundations

Key Concepts

Righteous people (*tzadikim*) build their lives on firm foundations. They are like a house that is designed to endure. Even when they encounter a setback, they do not lose their confidence and their trust in Hashem. In contrast, the wicked (*resha'im*) have built their lives on superficialities. When their facades collapse, such people themselves become buried under the ruins.

Exploring Mishlei

(ז) הַפּוֹךְ רְשָׁעִים וְאִינָם וּבֵית צַדִּיקִים יַעֲמֹד :

(7) When the resha'im are overthrown, they are no more, but the house of the tzadikim will endure.

What happens to *resha'im* is described as being "overthrown," representing an utter catastrophe, a reversal of all their hopes and achievements. In contrast, the *tzadikim*, even if they should deserve punishment, can be sure that their solid basis in existence will be untouched.

Learning Mishlei

When **the *resha'im* are overthrown** — הַפּוֹךְ רְשָׁעִים, it is the end, and **they are no more** — וְאִינָם, because their downfall is permanent. But when Hashem punishes *tzadikim*, their fall is temporary. Eventually, they rise again for **the house of the *tzadikim* will endure** — וּבֵית צַדִּיקִים יַעֲמֹד.

Additional Insights

(1) As long as events are unfolding normally, Hashem allows *resha'im* to continue along their wicked ways. But as soon as there is some upheaval in the world, they disappear as if they never were. This has come true for individuals and entire nations. (דעת סופרים, רשר"ה)

(2) The first major example of the destruction of *resha'im* was the Generation of the Flood which was completely obliterated (Bereishis 7:23). Other examples were the destruction of Sodom (ibid. 7:25) and the army of Pharaoh (Shemos 14:28). (אלשיך, ילקוט שמעוני)

(3) When God punishes Yisrael, however, their fall is temporary. Eventually, they rise again, as it says, "Don't rejoice over me, my enemy. Although I have fallen, I will rise again. Though I sit in the darkness, Hashem is a light unto me!" (*Michah* 7:8). (ילקוט שמעוני)

(4) The *resha'im* may appear firmly rooted, but when their time is up Hashem overturns them in a complete reversal so that they disappear from existence. (מלבי"ם)