

## Mishlei 12-21

### (Precedents)

#### Key Concepts

A righteous person (*tzadik*) makes a conscientious effort to do the right thing in every situation. As a result, he influences his surroundings (his home, family, and friends) and thereby builds a support system which protects him from inadvertently committing a sin in the future. This adds to the reward that Hashem gives him for his righteousness. Because the *tzadik* has shown how much he fears sin, Hashem rewards him by helping him avoid it.

Furthermore, the *tzadik* is motivated to continually grow in his personal development and in his ability to do the will of his Creator. Thus, each action becomes a precedent that promotes further growth.

In contrast the wicked (*resha'im*) degrade their environment and they get the opposite effect. Furthermore, each time a sin is committed, the psychological resistance to committing sin becomes weaker. The person says to himself, "I did this before and had no problem, so why not do it again?".

#### Exploring Mishlei

(כא) לֹא־יֵאָנֶה לְצַדִּיק כָּל־אֶוֶן וְרִשָׁעִים מְלֵאוּ רָע:

(21) *No sin will happen to the tzadik  
but the resha'im will be filled with evil.*

The proverb compares the events of the *tzadik's* life with those of the *resha'im*. Through his *mitzvos* the *tzadik* has created factors that help him avoid sin. The *resha'im* have created a downward spiral in which events seem to conspire against them, leading to a bitter end. This is all their own doing, and they are too ready to go with the flow.

#### Learning Mishlei

(21) There will not happen — לֹא־יֵאָנֶה  
any trigger for sin — כָּל־אֶוֶן  
to the *tzadik* — לְצַדִּיק

and so he will be protected from inadvertent sin.  
This is effectively a reward for always avoiding sin.

**But the sins of the *resha'im* — וְרָשָׁעִים**

continually lead to other sins

until they **become filled with evil** — מְלֵאֵי רָע

### **Additional Insights**

(1) Every person is vulnerable to events caused by his surroundings. These may include sinful thoughts as well as sinful deeds that were committed without knowledge. In reward for his righteousness, Hashem protects the *tzadik* from all these factors. (הגר"א)

(2) Each sin committed by a *rasha* becomes a causative factor which moves him to commit another sin. (מלבי"ם)

(3) The *tzadik* is less likely to sin because he has no precedent for it, and he instinctively avoids uncharted territory. (מלבי"ם)