

## Mishlei 14-19

# Recognition

### Key Concepts

A man's worth is not always evident from outward appearances. People who have succeeded in wealth and position are often thought of highly. But if they are inherently bad people, their true nature will ultimately be recognized. Good people are advised not to be misled. They should not be impressed by superficial success, but to look for true worth, which is defined by one's behavior towards others and one's obedience to the will of Hashem.

### Exploring Mishlei

(יט) שְׁחוּ רָעִים לְפָנֵי טוֹבִים וְרָשָׁעִים עַל שַׁעְרֵי צְדִיק:

(19) *In the future, **bad men**, who are honored today, will be recognized as low in the eyes of good men and the wicked will be at a disadvantage at the gates of the righteous.*

This proverb contrasts the apparent good fortune and social prominence of bad people with their actual status in the eyes of people who are judges of character and can recognize their true worth.

### Learning Mishlei

(19) **Bad men will be** recognized as low — שְׁחוּ רָעִים  
in the judgment of good men — לְפָנֵי טוֹבִים  
And wicked men — וְרָשָׁעִים  
will be at a disadvantage  
at the gates of the righteous — עַל שַׁעְרֵי צְדִיק  
where only worthy people will be honored.

### Additional Insights

(1) As we have seen in the previous proverb (14-18), the wise man values Torah knowledge. Therefore, it won't bother him that simpletons don't recognize the value of what he has achieved. By the same token, the good man judges people

by their character and will not be impressed by the surface good fortune of bad people. (רבינו יונה)

(2) The proverb can be understood as a consolation to the good man. The apparent advantage of the evil man in this world will be reversed in the world to come. It may even happen in this world. (רש"י, מלבים, מצודות)

(3) What distinguishes the bad person from the wicked person? The wicked person may be kind to other people, but he is sinful in regard to his duty to Hashem. In contrast the bad person is unkind and dishonest towards other people. (שבט מיהודה)