

Mishlei 17-15**Falseness****Key Concepts**

There are times when one is inclined to favor a wicked person, speaking highly of him or giving in to his wishes. Correspondingly there are times when one is inclined to speak in demeaning terms about a righteous person or deny him the benefit the doubt in dispute.

The person who behaves with such falseness may prefer to believe he is fully justified in this behavior. He may think he can thereby persuade the wicked person to do something good or persuade the righteous person that he is not good enough and that needs to have more humility.

In either case, the favoring of the wicked and the demeaning of the righteous are acts that reverse the wishes of the Creator. In fact He looks upon them as hateful abominations for the go against His plan for the world. It is wrong to give the wicked person the idea that you are looking at his way of life with approval because he is eager to find some vindication that will clear his conscience. Similarly, it is wrong to give the righteous person the feeling that you disapprove of him because you may be discouraging his continued adherence to the right way.

Exploring Mishlei

(טו) מִצְדִּיק רָשָׁע וּמְרַשֵּׁעַ צְדִיק תּוֹעֵבַת ה' גַּם שְׁנֵיהֶם:

*Justifying a wicked person and condemning a righteous person,
both are an abomination to Hashem.*

This proverb sets a wicked person in opposition to a righteous person. It is important that people don't get misled into thinking that it is not so bad to be wicked or not so good to be righteous. Such falseness in either direction violates Hashem's plan for the world that He created.

Learning Mishlei

(טו) מְצַדִּיק רָשָׁע וּמְרַשֵּׁיעַ צַדִּיק
תוֹעֵבַת ה' גַּם שְׁנֵיהֶם:

Justifying a wicked person by praising him or showing him favor — **מְצַדִּיק רָשָׁע** is the wrong thing to do. **And** it is correspondingly wrong **to demean** or show disfavor **to a righteous person** — **וּמְרַשֵּׁיעַ צַדִּיק**. **Both are an abomination to Hashem** — **תוֹעֵבַת ה' גַּם שְׁנֵיהֶם** because He wants the world to be clearly aware of the difference between right and wrong.

Additional Insights

- (1) When a righteous man and a wicked man are engaged in a dispute, favoring the wicked one automatically implies a disfavor to his righteous opponent. And so the one act of false judgement becomes a doubled abomination. (אלשיך)
- (2) Once a judge has reached his verdict, then to try to urge a compromise would be unjust to both litigants since the wicked man would feel partially vindicated and the righteous man would feel partially condemned. (מלבים)
- (3) It is wrong to minimize the severity of a wicked person's offense in order to gain his friendship or good will. If a righteous person has been harmed by a wicked person, it is wrong to tell him not to be so self-righteous and thereby minimize his good opinion of himself. (מלבים)
- (4) Hashem hates those who find fault with a righteous leader and those who praise the good qualities of a wicked leader because both have the effect of influencing people in the wrong direction. (רלב"ג)