

## Mishlei 18-03

### Dishonor

#### Key Concepts

The way a person treats others has a direct effect on his own character. Thus, the Mishnah teaches that one who honors others is himself worthy of honor (*Avos* 4, 1). The reverse effect is also true. A person who disrespects others stamps himself with dishonor and reveals himself to be a wicked person (*Rasha*).

Inevitably, when a dishonorable person looks at other people, he sees their faults and is quick to insult them, diminishing further their self-worth. In effect, his own faults are mirrored by the way he judges others. And so, the person who insults others is unwittingly reacting to his own faults.

Unfortunately, the effect of showering another person with insults is often to make that second person feel degraded and unworthy. The tragic result is that the victim begins to think of himself as shameful. And so, the bad character of the *Rasha* has had the effect of transmitting his bad character to another person.

#### Exploring Mishlei

(ג) בְּבוֹא רָשָׁע בָּא גַם בּוֹז וְעַם קְלוֹן חֲרָפָה :

(3) *With the arrival of a wicked person, insult also comes;  
and with dishonor, comes shame.*

The first part of this proverb describes how the character of a *Rasha* results in him unfairly insulting an innocent victim. The second part shows how this cruel treatment can corrupt the second person and result in that newly dishonorable person adopting the shameful qualities of the first.

#### Learning Mishlei

(3) *With the arrival of the Rasha* — בְּבוֹא רָשָׁע

there also comes insult — בָּא גַם בּוֹז

and with this dishonor brought by the Rasha. — וְעַם קְלוֹן

there follows the shame — חֲרָפָה

of the victim emulating his attacker.

## **Additional Insights**

[1] The various forms of insult, dishonor, and shame are interconnected. Each leads to the next, based on the general principle of "one sin leads to another."

(אבן עזרא)

[2] The *Rasha* should be ashamed of his sins, but because of his wicked character, not only is he unashamed, he goes one step further by insulting another person, projecting what should be his own shame into another. (רבינו יונה)