

Mishlei 21-07**Justice**

[Pesukim 21:7 and 21:8]

Key Concepts

People who are in the habit of committing crimes don't see the justice system as their friend. If they themselves become a victim of crime, they become frustrated and frightened since they don't have any where to turn for protection. In contrast, people whose character is pure, feel no reluctance in turning to the forces of law and order if they are in danger.

Exploring Mishlei

(ז) שֵׁד רְשָׁעִים יִגּוּרֵם כִּי מֵאֲנוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט:

(7) *Robbery committed against the wicked frighten them, because they have refused to practice honesty and justice,*

(ח) הַפְּכָפֶד דְּרֶךְ אִישׁ וְזָר וְזָד יֵשֶׁר פְּעָלוֹ

(8) *and so they find the ways of man changeable and strange. But the deeds of the pure are upright*

The quandary of wicked people (*resha'im*) is presented in two related proverbs (21:7 and 21:8). The first of these sets the scene, reminding us that in the past the *resha'im* have antagonized righteous people responsible for administering the courts. These are people who would otherwise be sympathetic to the plight of crime victims.

Since the *resha'im* have refused to admit their own crimes, they cannot easily play the part of a victim when they have been robbed. Thus, the *reshai'm* are frustrated because they know that the judges have a reputation for helping other victims of crime. As the second proverb suggests, the *resha'im* have no way to communicate with people who reject criminal behavior.

Because a wicked person stands outside the justice system, he continually lives in fear, as we have seen in Segment 10-24 (What the *rasha* fears, that will come upon him).

If he himself now becomes a victim of robbery, he cannot turn to a friend in the courts because the judges see him as their enemy.

Learning Mishlei

(7) The robbery of the wicked — שׁד רְשָׁעִים
frightens them, — יִגְוֹרֵם
because they have refused — כִּי מֵאַנּוּ
to practice honesty and justice, — אֶד לְמַחְסוֹר
having lived a life of crime.

(8) and so they find the ways of man to be changeable — הַכִּפְפוֹ דְרָד אִישׁ
and strange. — וְזָר

As for the man of pure character, — וְזָד
his deeds are upright — יֵשֶׁר פְּעָלוֹ
so he has nothing to hide.