

Mishlei 21-29

Forbearance

Key Concepts

When a person of low character gets angry, he reveals his temper by his facial expression. In contrast, an upright man has learned to control himself and does not let himself be provoked. On the contrary, he maintains his calm demeanor.

Exploring Mishlei

(כט) הַעֵז אִישׁ רָשָׁע בְּפָנָיו וַיִּשָּׂר הוּא יָבִין דְּרָכּוֹ:

(29) *A wicked man will be brazen to his face*

but an upright man understands his way and answers calmly.

The proverb calls attention to the shameless behavior of a wicked man (רָשָׁע) who reveals his hot temper in his facial expression. The upright man (וַיִּשָּׂר) who is on the receiving end of this emotional display, recognizes the character flaw in the other party and instead of reacting in kind, he controls himself and responds calmly.

Learning Mishlei

A wicked man is brazen — הַעֵז אִישׁ רָשָׁע

and behaves angrily in his presence, — בְּפָנָיו

but the upright man — וַיִּשָּׂר

understands his way — הוּא יָבִין דְּרָכּוֹ

and responds calmly.