

Wicked and Wickedness

By

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When you hear about someone who is wicked what do you think about? Is like the Wicked witch of the West from the wizard of Oz. Or is like a character from the Tanakh like Jezebel. How does society define wickedness today and does that match what Tanakh says is wickedness. Lets look at the terms in Hebrew that are mostly translated as wicked or wickedness. The word wicked comes from old English.

wicked c.1275, earlier *wick* (12c.), apparently an adj. use of O.E. *wicca* "wizard" (see *wicca*). For evolution, cf. *wretched* from *wretch*. Slang ironic sense of "wonderful" first attested 1920, in F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Wicca An O.E. masc. noun meaning "male witch," curiously taken by Gerald Gardner's followers (c.1954) as an abstract noun meaning "witchcraft" and thus becoming the title of a modern pagan movement. See *witch*.

wretch O.E. *wrecca* "wretch, stranger, exile," from P.Gmc. **wraġjan* (cf. O.S. *wrekkio*, O.H.G. *reckeo* "a banished person, exile," Ger. *recke* "renowned warrior, hero"), related to O.E. *wreccan* "to drive out, punish" (see *wreak*). Sense of "vile, despicable person" developed in O.E., reflecting the sorry state of the outcast, as presented in much of Anglo-Saxon verse (e.g. "The Wanderer"). A Ger. word for "misery" is *Elend*, from O.H.G. *elilenti* "sojourn in a foreign land, exile."

Unless wicked in Hebrew means witch then it is not likely that meaning of this word is wicked.

The first word in Hebrew we will be looking at that is translated as wicked is Rasha' (Resh-Shin-Ayin) and it is a verb. You will find this word under reference number 7561 in the BDB (Brown Driver Briggs Hebrew English Lexicon) on page 957. It is also found in the NEHC (New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance) on page 1192. It is something like act guilty.

We find this word used in Qal form (active/stative simple) in:

Daniel/Dani'el 9:15

15 "Now, Yehovah our Elohim—You who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, winning fame for Yourself to this very day—we have sinned, **we have acted wickedly (we acted guilty – rasha'nu רָשָׁעֵנוּ)**.

Here we see that as one who sins we are guilty. We know from other studies that Sin is missing the mark or deviating from the path we are to follow. Thus, when we sin we act as one who is guilty or wrong.

Kohelet/Ecclesiastes 7:17

15 In my own brief span of life, I have seen both these things: sometimes a good man perishes in spite of his goodness, and sometimes a **wicked [guilty] one (rasha' – 7563 רָשָׁע)** endures in spite of his **wickedness [in his evil] (bara'ato בְּרַעְתּוֹ)**. 16 So don't overdo goodness and don't act the wise man to excess, or you may be dumfounded. 17 Don't overdo **wickedness (tir'sha' תִּרְשָׁע)** and don't be a fool, or you may die before your time. 18 It is best that you grasp the one without letting go of the other, for one who fears Elohim will do his duty by both. [**tov asher te'echoz bazeh vagam mizeh al tannach et yadeykha kiy yera Elohim yetze et kulam טוב אשר תאחז בזה וגם מזה אל תנח את ידך כי ירא אלהים יצא את כולם**]
Good that you will take hold in this and also from this not you leave your hands because fear Elohim brings forth everyone.]

It appears that Kohelet is saying we should balance our actions and not be overly wise nor be foolish; basically we do both good and wrong but in the end Elohim bring us all forward to him.

Shemu'el Bet/2 Samuel 22:22

22 For I have kept the ways of Yehovah
And have not been **guilty (rasha'tiy רָשַׁעְתִּי)** before my Elohim;

Here David is saying to Yehovah that he has kept Yehovah's ways (der'khey דִּרְכֵי) and not brought guilt/Rasha' on himself. Rasha' is when one does not keep Yehovah's ways.

Melekhim Aleph/I Kings 8:47

47 and then they take it to heart in the land to which they have been carried off, and they repent and make supplication to You in the land of their captors, saying: 'We have **sinned (chata'nu חָטָאנוּ)**, we have **acted perversely (done iniquity – vahe'viynu רָשַׁעְנוּ)**, we have **acted wickedly (rasha'nu רָשַׁעְנוּ)**,'

Here we see that sin having been done then becoming iniquity and thus this is our guilty action.

Divrei HaYamim Bet/2 Chronicles 6:37

36 “When **they sin** (yechet’u יִחַטְּאוּ) against You—for there is no person who does **not sin** (lo yecheta לֹא יִחַטְּאֵהוּ)—and You are angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and their captors carry them off to an enemy land, near or far; 37 and they take it to heart in the land to which they have been carried off, and repent and make supplication to You in the land of their captivity, saying, ‘We have **sinned** (chata’nu חָטְאָנוּ), we have **acted perversely** (done iniquity – he’viynu הִעֲוִינוּ), we have **acted wickedly** (verasha’nu וְרָשָׁעָנוּ),’

This is another account of the same prayer by Melekh Shlomo. You will also notice that this is very similar to what Dani’el prayed too.

Tehillim/Psalms 18:22(21)

22 for I have kept to the ways of Yehovah, and have not been **guilty** (rasha’tiy רָשָׁעִי) before my Elohim;

Here again we see Melekh David saying he has done the ways (derekiy דִּרְכֵי) of his Elohim but not done my guilt.

In the other forms we find the word used:

Devarim/Deuteronomy 25:1

1 When there is a dispute between men and they go to law, and a decision is rendered **declaring the one in the right and the other in the wrong** [declare righteous the righteous one and declare guilty (vahir’shiy’u וְהִרְשִׁיעוּ) the guilty one (et-harasha’ אֶת־הָרָשָׁע)]

Here we see there is one who is right found righteous and one who is wrong found guilty.

Nehemyah/Nehemiah 9:33

33 Surely You are in the right with respect to all that has come upon us, for You have acted faithfully, and **we have been wicked** (done guilt – hir’sha’enu הִרְשָׁעָנוּ).

We again have acted wrongly and are guilty. Here we see that when wrong we should admit our guilt.

Tehillim/Psalms 106:6

6 **We have sinned** (chata'nu חָטָאנוּ) like our forefathers; we have **gone astray** (**did iniquity** – he'viynu הִעֲוִינוּ), **done evil** (we did wrong/guilt - hir'sha'nu הִרְשָׁעֵנוּ).

Like the passage from Melekh Shlomo prayer in I kings and 2 Chronicles we see that one sins, it becomes iniquity because we are guilty (done wrong).

Daniel/Dani'el 9:5

5 **We have sinned** (chata'nu חָטָאנוּ); we have **gone astray** (and we did iniquity - va avinu וְעֲוִינוּ); we have **acted wickedly** (we did wrong/guilt – hir'sha'nu הִרְשָׁעֵנוּ); we have been rebellious and have deviated from Your commandments and Your rules,

Here Daniel shows us that same formulas we seen before but also tells us why it occurred. We have rebelled – not kept his ways-and have deviated- turned from doing-mitzvotkha מִמְצֻוֹתֶיךָ (your commandments) and from umishpateykha וּמִמִּשְׁפָּטֶיךָ (and your judgements).

Daniel/Dani'el 12:10

10 Many will be purified and purged and refined; the **wicked** [**guilty ones**] (**rasha'im רָשָׁעִים**) will **act wickedly** (**wrongly/guilty** – v'hir'shiy'u וְהִרְשִׁיעוּ) and none of the **wicked** [**ones**] (**rasha'im רָשָׁעִים**) will understand; but the knowledgeable will understand.

Here the guilty ones will act in a guilty way or doing wrongly and they will not understand they are being guilty.

Shemot/Exodus 22:8 (9)

8 In all charges of misappropriation—pertaining to an ox, an ass, a sheep, a garment, or any other loss, whereof one party alleges, “This is it”—the case of both parties shall come before Elohim: he whom Elohim **declares guilty** (yar'shiy'un יִרְשִׁיעַ) shall pay double to the other.

The one declared in the wrong is guilty. Here this person must pay restitution.

Shemu'el Aleph/I Samuel 14:47

47 After Saul had secured his kingship over Israel, he waged war on every side against all his enemies: against the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, the Philistines, and the kings of Zobah; and wherever he turned **he worsted** (yar'shi'a יִרְשִׁיעַ) [them].

Melekh Shaul wronged the people around him by attacking them. Here we see it used in a way that denotes wronging someone but not guilt.

Mishlei/Proverbs 12:2

2 A good man earns the favor of Yehovah, A man of intrigues (mazimot מְזִמּוֹת – plotter/maker of plans), His condemnation (**guilt** – yar'shi'a יִרְשִׁיעַ).

Condemns the man planning to do wrong.

Mishlei/Proverbs 17:15

15 To acquit the **guilty** (rasha' רָשָׁע) and **convict** (and wrong - u'mar'shiy'a וּמַרְשִׁיעַ) the innocent (just/right one)—Both are an abomination to Yehovah.

Here to call the guilty just and wrong the just/right one are hated things to Yehovah.

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 50:9

9 Lo, Adoni Yehovah will help me— **Who can get a verdict** (yar'shiy'enyi יִרְשִׁיעֵנִי) **against me?** They shall all wear out like a garment, The moth shall consume them.

Used here in the sense of wrong in being condemned or found guilty.

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 54:17

17 No weapon formed against you Shall succeed, And every tongue that contends with you (arise against you) at law (in judgment) **You shall defeat [he find guilty me]** (tar'shiy'iy תִּרְשִׁיעֵי). Such is the lot of the servants of Yehovah, Such their triumph through Me

Here we see that one that goes against the judgment of Yehovah he will condemn or find guilty.

The next word in Hebrew we will be looking at that is translated as wicked is Resha' (Resh-Shin-Ayin) and it is an adjective. You will find this word under reference number 7565 in the BDB (Brown Driver Briggs Hebrew English Lexicon) on page 957. It is also found in the NEHC (New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance) on page 1192. It describes someone or something as being guilty.

Bereshit/Genesis 18:23, 25

23 Abraham came forward and said, "Will You sweep away the innocent along with the **guilty** (rasha' רָשָׁע)?

25 Far be it from You to do such a thing, to bring death upon the innocent as well as the **guilty** (rasha' רָשָׁע), so that innocent and **guilty** (karasha' קָרָשָׁע) fare alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"

Here Avraham pleads with the messenger of Yehovah who Yehovah is speaking through to Avraham.

Shemot/Exodus 2:13

13 When he went out the next day, he found two Hebrews fighting; so he said to the **offender** (to guilty larasha' לָרָשָׁע), "Why do you strike your fellow?"

Here the one who was wrong in the fight, Moshe was talking to.

Shemot/Exodus 9:27

27 Thereupon Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and said to them, "I stand **guilty** (sinned chata'tiy חָטַאתִי) this time. Yehovah is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong [ones] (harasha'im הָרָשָׁעִים).

Here Pharaoh acknowledges his disobeying of Yehovah's command and says they are guilty/wrong.

Shemot/Exodus 23:1,7

1 You must not carry false rumors; you shall not join hands with the **guilty** (rasha' רָשָׁע) to act as a malicious witness:

7 Keep far from a false charge; do not bring death on those who are innocent and in the right, for I will not acquit the **wrongdoer** (rasha' רָשָׁע).

A false witness that sheds blood sins and is a guilty one (rasha')

Bamidbar/Numbers 16:26

26 He addressed the community, saying, “Move away from the tents of these **wicked (the guilty ones - harasha'im הַרְשָׁעִים)** men and touch nothing that belongs to them, lest you be wiped out for all their sins.”

Here the guilty ones are being singled out with those who associated with them.

Bamidbar/Numbers 35:31

31 You may not accept a ransom for the life of a murderer who is **guilty (rasha' רָשָׁע)** of a capital crime; he must be put to death.

One who kills is guilty/wrong there is not redeeming of them. Today this would be shunning of the person from the community.

Tehillim/Psalms 1:1,4-6

1 Happy is the man who has not followed the counsel of the **wicked (guilty ones - rasha'im רָשָׁעִים)**, or taken the path of sinners, or joined the company of the insolent;

4 Not so **the wicked (the guilty ones - harasha'im הַרְשָׁעִים)**; rather, they are like chaff that wind blows away. 5 Therefore the **wicked (guilty ones - rasha'im רָשָׁעִים)** will not survive judgment, nor will sinners, in the assembly of the righteous. 6 For Yehovah cherishes the way of the righteous, but the way of **the wicked (guilty ones - rasha'im רָשָׁעִים)** is doomed.

Yehovah's ways are righteous and if we do them we are righteous also. Those who do not do them are rasha' guilty, wrong will perish from among the righteous. In that day the person would have been cut off which in some cases meant death.

Tehillim/Psalms 10:2-4, 13, 15

2 The **wicked (rasha' רָשָׁע)** in his arrogance hounds the lowly—may they be caught in the schemes they devise! 3 The **wicked (rasha' רָשָׁע)** crows about his unbridled lusts; the grasping man reviles and scorns Yehovah. 4 The **wicked (rasha' רָשָׁע)**, arrogant as he is, in all his scheming [thinks], “He does not call to account; Elohim does not care.”

[guilty like the height of his face not will seek/enquire, there is no Elohim all in his thoughts – rasha' kagoveh 'apo bal yid'rosh ein Elohim kol mezimotayv רָשָׁע
כְּגִבַּה אָפוּ בַל-יִדְרֹשׁ אֵין אֱלֹהִים כָּל-מְזִמּוֹתָיו]

We see the thoughts of the guilty one who does not seek Elohim.

13 Why should the **wicked/guilty** (rasha' רָשָׁע) man scorn Elohim, thinking You do not call to account?

15 O break the power of the **wicked/guilty** (rasha' רָשָׁע) and evil man, so that when You look for **his wickedness** (rish'o רִשְׁעוֹ) You will find it no more.

The guilty one will think there is no Elohim to hold him to account and has no fear of being caught. Yet, Yehovah will deal with them.

Tehillim/Psalms 36:2

2 I know what Transgression says **to the wicked/guilty** (l'rasha' לְרָשָׁע); he has no sense of the dread of Elohim,

There it is again no fear of Elohim. He knows fully what he is doing this is the attitude of the guilty one.

Tehillim/Psalms 37:21

21 The **wicked/guilty** (rasha' רָשָׁע) man borrows and does not repay; the righteous is generous and keeps giving.

Mishlei/Proverbs 12:6

6 The words of the **wicked/guilty** (rasha'im רָשָׁעִים) are a deadly ambush, But the speech of the upright saves them.

The guilty ones can lead you astray. A righteous person can save you.

Mishlei/Proverbs 21:10

10 The desire of the **wicked/guilty** (rasha' רָשָׁע) is set upon(desires) evil (ivatah-ra אִוְתָה־רָע); His fellowman finds no favor in his eyes.

The desire of the guilty is to do harm/bad.

Yehez'qel/Ezekiel 3:18-19

18 If I say **to a wicked/guilty** [man] (**larasha' לַרְשָׁע**), 'You shall die,' and you do not warn him—you do not speak to warn the **wicked/guilty** (**rasha' רָשָׁע**) [man] of his **wicked/guilty** (**har'sha'ah הַרְשָׁעָה**) course in order to save his life—he, the **wicked/guilty** (**rasha' רָשָׁע**) [man], shall die for his iniquity, but I will require a reckoning for his blood from you. 19 But if you do warn the **wicked/guilty** (**rasha' רָשָׁע**) man, and he does not turn back from **his wickedness/wrongness** (**merash'o מֵרָשָׁעוֹ**) and his **wicked/guilty** (**har'sha'ah הַרְשָׁעָה**) course, he shall die for his iniquity, but you will have saved your own life.

Here Yehez'qel is saying that we must warn the guilty of their wrongness and wrong ways.

Yehez'qel/Ezekiel 18: 20,21,23,24,27

20 The person who sins, he alone shall die. A child shall not share the burden of a parent's guilt, nor shall a parent share the burden of a child's guilt; the righteousness of the righteous shall be accounted to him alone, **and the wickedness/wrongness** (**varish'at -7564 וְרָשָׁעַת**) of **the wicked/wrong** (**yarasha הַרְשָׁע**) shall be accounted to him alone.

21 Moreover, if **the wicked/guilty** (**vaharasha' וְהַרְשָׁע**) one repents of all the **sins** (**chattatayv חַטָּאתָיו**) that he committed and keeps all **My laws** (**chuqotay חֻקוֹתַי**) and does what is **just** (**mishpat מִשְׁפָּט**) and **right** (**utz'dakah וּצְדָקָה**), he shall live; he shall not die. 22 None of the transgressions he committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness he has practiced, he shall live. 23 Is it my desire that a **wicked/guilty** (**rasha' עָשָׂה**) [person] shall die?—says Adoni Yehovah. It is rather that he shall turn back from his ways (**miderekhav מִדַּרְכָּיו**) and live (**vachayah וְחָיָה**).

24 So, too, if a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does wrong, practicing the very abominations that **the wicked/guilty** (**harasha' הַרְשָׁע**) [person] practiced, shall he live? None of the righteous deeds that he did shall be remembered; because of the treachery he has practiced and the sins he has committed—because of these, he shall die.

27 And if a **wicked/guilty** (rasha' רָשָׁע) person turns back **from the wickedness/wrongness** (merish'ato מִרְשָׁעָתוֹ) that he practiced and does what is just and right, such a person shall save his life.

Here Yehovah states that if one who is guilty/wrong in not following his ways turns and follows Yehovah way then he saves his life.

Yehez'qel/Ezekiel 33:8,9,11,12,14,15, 19

8 When I say **to the wicked/guilty** (larasha' לְרָשָׁע), “**Wicked/guilty** (rasha' רָשָׁע) man, you shall die,” but you have not spoken to warn **the wicked/guilty** (rasha' רָשָׁע) man against his way, he, that **wicked/guilty** (rasha' רָשָׁע) man, shall die for his sins, but I will demand a reckoning for his blood from you. 9 But if you have warned the **wicked/guilty** (rasha' רָשָׁע) man to turn back from his way, and he has not turned from his way, he shall die for his own sins, but you will have saved your life.

This tells the righteous ones are to warn the people then their saves own life. Otherwise he forfeits his life too. Some say this applies to us today also. While I agree we should do this as a practice with our brothers. I don't think this is a mission to warn the world of it guilt.

10 Now, O mortal, say to the House of Israel: This is what you have been saying: “**Our transgressions** (fasha'eynu פְּשָׁעֵינוּ –6588) and **our sins** (chattateynu –2403 וְחַטָּאתֵינוּ) weigh heavily upon us; we are sick at heart about them. How can we survive?” 11 Say to them: As I live—declares Adonay Yehovah—it is not My desire that **the wicked** (harasha' הָרָשָׁע) shall die, but that **the wicked** (rasha' רָשָׁע) turn from his [evil] ways and live. Turn back, turn back from your **evil** (hara'im הָרָעִים) ways, that you may not die, O House of Israel!

Notice this is directed to Yehez'qel to warn the children of Yisrael. He does not want the death of the guilty not does he take pleasure in it. Only that the guilty or wrong one turn and follow Yehovah's ways and that he takes pleasure in.

12 Now, O mortal, say to your fellow countrymen: The righteousness of the righteous shall not save him when he transgresses, nor shall the **wickedness/wrongness** (verish'at וְרִשְׁעָת) of **the wicked/guilty** (harasha' הָרָשָׁע) cause him to stumble when he

turns back from **his wickedness/wrongness** (**merish'o מְרִשָׁעוֹ**). The righteous shall not survive through his righteousness when he sins. 13 When I say of the righteous “He shall surely live,” and, relying on his righteousness, he commits iniquity, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered; but for the iniquity that he has committed he shall die. 14 So, too, when I say **to the wicked/guilty** (**larasha' לַרְשָׁע**), “You shall die,” and he turns back from **his sinfulness** (**mechatta'to מִחַטָּאתוֹ**) and does what is just (mishpat) and right (utz'daqah)—15 if the **wicked/guilty** (**rasha' רָשָׁע**) man restores a pledge, makes good what he has taken by robbery, follows the **laws of life** (**bachuqot hachayim בְּחֻקֹת הַחַיִּים**), and does not commit iniquity—he shall live, he shall not die.

The righteous who do wrong are not saved. Only the ones who do right are saved. Those who follow the statues/practices of life (torah) and does not do sin (chattat) and do Iniquity (aval).

Malakhi/Malachi 3:18

18 And you shall come to see the difference between the righteous and the **wicked** (**larasha**), between him who has served Yehovah and him who has not served Him.

Here we see the righteous serve Yehovah and the guilty/wrong ones don't serve him.

The next word in Hebrew we will be looking at that is translated as wickedness is Rasha' (Resh-Shin-Ayin) and it is a noun masculine. You will find this word under reference number 7562 in the BDB (Brown Driver Briggs Hebrew English Lexicon) on page 957. It is also found in the NEHC (New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance) on page 1194. It is guiltiness.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 9:26-27

26 I prayed to Yehovah and said, “Adoni Yehovah, do not annihilate Your very own people, whom You redeemed in Your majesty and whom You freed from Egypt with a mighty hand. 27 Give thought to Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and pay no heed to the stubbornness of this people, **its wickedness/wrongness** (**rish'o רִשָׁעוֹ**), and **its sinfulness** (**chatt'to חַטָּאתוֹ**).

Here we see that in sin they do wrong and are guilty. Moshe is asking for the forgiveness of the children of Yisrael.

Shemu'el Aleph /I Samuel 24:14

14 As the ancient proverb has it: ‘**Wicked/wrong deeds (resha’ רָשָׁע)** come from **wicked (merasha’im מְרַשְׁעִים)** men!’ My hand will never touch you.

In the Hebrew it is rendered better as from guilty ones comes guiltiness/wrongness.

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 58:4,6

4 Because you fast in strife and contention, And you strike with a **wicked/wrongness (resha’ רָשָׁע)** fist! Your fasting today is not such As to make your voice heard on high.

5 Is such the fast I desire, A day for men to starve their bodies? Is it bowing the head like a bulrush And lying in sackcloth and ashes? Do you call that a fast, A day when Yehovah is favorable? 6 No, this is the fast I desire: To unlock fetters of **wickedness/wrongness (resha’ רָשָׁע)**, And untie the cords of the yoke To let the oppressed go free; To break off every yoke.

Instead of doing wrongness and being guilty, we should take off the wrongness/guilt on us and our brothers.

Yermiyahu/Jeremiah 14:20

20 We acknowledge **our wickedness (rish’enu רִשְׁעֵנוּ)**, Yehovah—The iniquity (‘aon עֲוֹן) of our fathers—For we have sinned (chata’nu חָטָאנוּ) against You.

In asking forgiveness we must acknowledge the wrong we have done to Yehovah. And as seen earlier we must also restore that which was stolen, or damages to those we have wronged too.

Yehez’qel/Ezekiel 7:11

11 **lawlessness (violence-hechamas הַחֲמָס)** has grown **into a rod of wickedness (lamatteh resha’ לַמַּטֵּה-רָשָׁע)**. Nothing comes of them, nor of their abundance, nor of their wealth; nor is there preeminence among them

Here we see that violence becomes wrongness too. In this case we see it as a rod which one would use to do harm (evil) with.

The last word in Hebrew we will be looking at that is translated as wickedness is Rish’ah’ (Resh-Shin-Ayin-Hey) and it is a noun feminine. You will find this word under reference number 7564 in the BDB (Brown Driver Briggs Hebrew English Lexicon) on

page 957. It is also found in the NEHC (New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance) on page 1194. It is guiltiness.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 9:4,5

4 And when Yehovah your Elohim has thrust them from your path, say not to yourselves, "Yehovah has enabled us to possess this land because of our virtues"; it is **rather because of the wickedness/wrongness (morisham מוֹרִישָׁם)** of those nations that Yehovah is dispossessing them before you. 5 It is not because of your virtues and your rectitude that you will be able to possess their country; but it is **because of their wickedness/wrongness (morisham מוֹרִישָׁם)** that Yehovah your Elohim is dispossessing those nations before you, and in order to fulfill the oath that Yehovah made to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The nations before them were wrong in not following the ways of Yehovah. Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaqov were all living in the land and as examples to the peoples around them. Thus the people could have seen a servant of Yehovah and followed them. Just as Beni Yisrael was to be an example to the peoples around them, they could have followed the example or inquired of their success in their undertakings..

Mishlei/Proverbs 11:5

5 The righteousness of the blameless man smooths his way, But the **wicked/guilty (rasha' רָשָׁע)** man is felled by **his wickedness/wrongness (barish'ato וּבְרִשְׁעָתוֹ)**.

A guilty one is brought down by his being wrong in his ways.

Mishlei/Proverbs 13:6

6 Righteousness protects him whose way is blameless; **Wickedness/wrongness (verish'ah וְרִשְׁעָה)** subverts the sinner.

Wrongness causes the sinner harm.

Malakhi/Malachi 3:15

15 And so, we account the arrogant happy: they have indeed **done evil/wrongness (rish'ah רִשְׁעָה)** and endured; they have indeed dared Elohim and escaped."

Here the wrong doers test Elohim in thinking they have escaped punishment.

Malakhi/Malachi 3:19

19 For lo! That day is at hand, burning like an oven. All the arrogant and all the **doers** (**'oseh – makers עֹשֵׂה**) of **evil/wrongness (rish'ah רִשְׁעָה)** shall be straw, and the day that is coming—said Yehovah of Hosts—shall burn them to ashes and leave of them neither stock nor boughs.

Here we have seen that what is translated, as wicked/wickedness is guilt and wrongness in not doing the ways of Yehovah. It is by keeping his ways that we do right and are righteous. But when we do our own ways, which are not of his, we are wrong. Thus, we are found guilty like a judge pronouncing sentence upon a matter and finding one right and the other wrong we see that rasha', resha', rish'ah are all telling us that this is a action, person, or something done which is in opposed to Yehovah. So we should focus our attentions to his ways and do them that we will not be found to be rasha' or guilty and in the wrong.