

Mishlei 01-04**Negative Influences (1:10 – 1:19)****Key Concepts**

My son, don't be surprised if someone approaches you with a shady get-rich scheme that seems too good to be true. Unfortunately, you won't find out until it is too late that it is too good to be true and you will pay a high price for the lesson.

You may very well be tempted because the person seems trustworthy and he assures you of his friendship. It may give you a good feeling to be part of such a "successful" venture, but the end can be tragedy.

My advice is to stay away from suspicious schemes and from the kinds of people who promote them. In the end they will fail. Don't let them drag you down with them.

Exploring Mishlei

PART 1. AN INVITATION TO TROUBLE. When you hear of a dishonest scheme I suggest you visualize it as an invitation to join a band of highwaymen, who claim they can get rich by robbing rich wayfarers. The story they give you makes your eyes light up and you are tempted to overlook the terrible wrong they are doing and the risks they are taking.

(י) בְּנֵי אִם יִפְתּוּד חֲטָאִים אֶל תִּבְּא: (יא) אִם יֹאמְרוּ לְךָ אֲתֵנּוּ נֶאֱרָבָה לְדָם נִצְפָּנָה לְנֶקֶי חַנּוּם: (יב) נִבְלָעִם כְּשָׂאוֹל חַיִּים וַתְּמִימִים כְּיֹרְדֵי בֹר: (יג) כָּל הַזֶּה יִקָּר נִמְצָא נִמְלֵא בְּתֵינוּ שָׁלָל: (יד) גּוֹרְלָךְ תִּפִּיל בְּתוֹכֵנוּ כִּיס אַחַד יִהְיֶה לְכֻלָּנוּ:

(10) My son, if sinners entice you, don't go along. (11) If they say, "Come with us. We'll set up an ambush to [spill] blood. We'll hide to [catch the] innocent, free [of complications] . (12) We'll swallow them alive like the grave. [We'll swallow them] whole like those who descend into the pit. (13) All [kinds of] valuables are to be found. We'll fill our houses with plunder. (14) Cast in your lot among us. We will share in one purse."

PART 2. GOOD ADVICE. Turn down the invitation, no matter how tempting it sounds. You are like a bird who sees tasty seeds laid out in a hunter's trap. The bird fools itself into thinking that the seeds just happen to be there and there will be no

price to pay. But the bird will inevitably get caught and likewise, the robbers are likely to add their new "friend" to their list of victims.

(טו) בְּנֵי אֵל תִּלְךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ אֲתָם מִנְע רַגְלְךָ מִנְתִּיבָתָם: (טז) כִּי רַגְלֵיהֶם לָרַע יִרְצוּ וַיִּמְהָרוּ לְשֹׁפֵךְ דָּם: (יז) כִּי חֲנָם מִזֶּרֶה הִרְשִׁית בְּעֵינַי כָּל בַּעַל כָּנָף: (יח) וְהֵם לְדָמָם יִאָּרְבוּ יִצְפְּנוּ לְנַפְשֹׁתָם: (יט) כִּן אֲרָחוֹת כָּל בַּיַּעַב בַּיַּעַב אֶת נַפְשׁ בַּעֲלֵיו יִקָּח:

(15) My son, don't go with them on [their] way. Keep your feet away from their paths. (16) For their feet are running to evil and they are rushing to spill blood. (17) For the [trapper's] net is spread out for no purpose in the eyes of every winged creature. (18) They are waiting in ambush for their [victims'] blood and they are hiding themselves [to take] their [victims'] lives. (19) Such are the ways of all who make unjust profit. They take the lives of its owners, [including yours].

Learning Mishlei

PART 1. AN INVITATION TO TROUBLE.

(י) בְּנֵי אִם יִפְתּוּךָ חַטָּאִים
אֶל תֵּבֵא:

My son — בְּנֵי, **if sinners entice you** — אִם יִפְתּוּךָ חַטָּאִים to join their group, **don't go along** — אֶל תֵּבֵא with them because what they have in mind will end up disastrously for you.

(יא) אִם יֹאמְרוּ לְכֵה אִתָּנוּ
נִאָּרְבֶּה לְדָם נִצְפְּנָה לְנִקְי חֲנָם:

If they say — יֹאמְרוּ: **"Come with us** — לְכֵה אִתָּנוּ and get rich. You won't have to do anything bad yourself. We know of a rich man carrying large amounts of cash and diamonds on his person. **We'll set up an ambush** — נִאָּרְבֶּה and grab it all even if we have **to** spill some **blood** — לְדָם. But don't worry because **we'll hide** — נִצְפְּנָה in a good spot **to** catch that **innocent** — לְנִקְי fool and we will be **free** — חֲנָם of any complications."

(יב) נִבְלָעִים כְּשֹׂאוֹל חַיִּים
וּתְמִימִים כְּיֹרְדֵי בֹר:

"Stick with us and we'll catch many more unsuspecting fools on the road and in

their homes. We'll have the advantage of surprise so it will be as if **we swallow them alive** — נִבְלָעִם חַיִּים, **like the grave** — כְּשֵׂאוֹל that swallows bodies. Everything they have will be ours. **And** so we will swallow them **whole** — וְתַמְיִמִּים without effort **as if** they were innocently walking and fell **down into an open pit** — כְּיֹרְדֵי בּוֹר.”

(יג) כָּל הוֹן יִקָּר נִמְצָא
נִמְלֵא בְּתֵינוּ שָׁלָל:

“**All** kinds of **precious wealth** — כָּל הוֹן יִקָּר **are** there to be **found** — נִמְצָא. **We will fill our houses with loot** — נִמְלֵא בְּתֵינוּ שָׁלָל.”

(יד) גּוֹרְלֶךָ תִּפְּיֵל בְּתוֹכֵנוּ
כִּי־ס אֶחָד יִהְיֶה לְכָלֵנוּ:

“**Cast in your lot among us** — גּוֹרְלֶךָ תִּפְּיֵל בְּתוֹכֵנוּ and you will get your fair share of the the loot to take home with you. But in addition, **we will have one purse** — כִּי־ס אֶחָד יִהְיֶה לְכָלֵנוּ with a common fund so that we can celebrate together. You will be part of our great team and you will reap the rewards with us.”

PART 2. GOOD ADVICE.

(טו) בְּנֵי אֵל תִּלְךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ אֲתָם

My son — בְּנֵי, **don't go with them on their crooked way** — אֵל תִּלְךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ אֲתָם. Even if you don't join them in their ambush, sooner or later another opportunity will arise and they will tempt you to get involved. Your defenses will be lowered and what they are doing will come to seem normal to you.

מִנַּע רַגְלֶךָ מִנְתִּיבָתָם:

You should even **keep your feet away from their paths** — מִנַּע רַגְלֶךָ מִנְתִּיבָתָם so you won't encounter them by chance and get drawn in.

(טז) כִּי רַגְלֵיהֶם לָרַע יָרוּצוּ
וַיִּמְהָרוּ לְשִׁפְךְ דָּם:

For their feet are running to do evil — כִּי רַגְלֵיהֶם לָרַע יָרוּצוּ and **they are rushing to spill blood** — וַיִּמְהָרוּ לְשִׁפְךְ דָּם. These people are driven by greed and the excitement of violence. And so they take chances, not stopping to calculate the risk of being caught. They may find success at first, but in the end they will fail.

(יז) כִּי חֲנֹם מְזַרְהָהּ הַרְשֵׁת
בְּעֵינֵי כָּל בֹּעֵל כָּנָף:

Don't think you will come out of this unharmed. That's what the foolish bird thinks when it when it ventures into the hunter's net to eat the tasty seeds he has placed there. **For the net** seems **spread out for no purpose** — **כִּי חֲנֹם מְזַרְהָהּ הַרְשֵׁת** — **in the eyes of every winged creature** — **בְּעֵינֵי כָּל בֹּעֵל כָּנָף**. The birds are focused on the seeds and pay no attention to the net that will close in on them.

(יח) וְהֵם לְדָמָם יֶאֱרְבוּ
יִצְפְּנוּ לְנַפְשֵׁתָם:

My son, your new friends act as though they have your interest at heart but that's what the birds think when they see the hunter spreading the bait. They think he is giving them food out of the kindness of his heart. In the end you yourself will be a victim because the robbers will never be satisfied. Like the hunter **they are waiting in ambush** — **וְהֵם לְדָמָם יֶאֱרְבוּ** **for their** victims' **blood and they are hiding themselves** to take **their** victims' **lives** — **יִצְפְּנוּ לְנַפְשֵׁתָם**. Once they draw you into their net you will be their next victim.

(יט) כִּן אַרְחוֹת כָּל בֹּצֵעַ בֹּצֵעַ
אֶת נַפְשׁ בֹּעֲלָיו יִקַּח:

Such are the ways of all who make unjust profit — **כִּן אַרְחוֹת כָּל בֹּצֵעַ בֹּצֵעַ** from property that isn't theirs. They don't stop until **they take the lives of its owners** — **אֶת נַפְשׁ בֹּעֲלָיו יִקַּח**. In the end they will take your possessions, and your life will be forfeit as well.

Sources

The primary sources used in the interpretation of the verses of this segment are listed below.

א' טו - רבינו יונה, מצודות, המאירי, הגר"א
א' טז - רש"י, המאירי
א' יז - רש"י, אבן עזרא, רבינו יונה, הגר"א
א' יח - רש"י, המאירי
א' יט - אבן עזרא, מלבי"ם

א' י' - מדרש משלי, מלבי"ם, הגר"א
א' יא - המאירי, מלבי"ם, הגר"א
א' יב - רבינו יונה, מצודות, הגר"א
א' יג - מצודות
א' יד - מצודות, המאירי, מלבי"ם

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