

Mishlei 06-04**The Anatomy of Sin
(6:16 - 6:19)****Key Concepts**

In the previous segment Mishlei described the consequences of being an unprincipled person who operates without moral or ethical restraints. The sinful behaviors of such a person were presented in a list that concluded with the sin of slandering to provoke discord. At various points in the course of his lesson Mishlei referred to parts of the human body that are associated with specific sins, i.e. mouth, eyes, feet, fingers, and heart.

Now Mishlei presents a more structured list of sinful behaviors by following top-down sequence from the eyes to the tongue, hands, heart, and feet. In this anatomical exercise he begins with an attitude that is the source of an entire sequence of bad behaviors. That is the attitude of self-importance, which leads a person to believe that respect or consideration for others is superfluous if it prevents him from satisfying his curiosity or his desires.

Exploring Mishlei

There are seven sinful behaviors in the structured list, of which the first, self-importance, is especially significant. Besides being the cause of sin, this attitude represents a direct challenge to the supremacy of Hashem in the world. For that reason, it is distinguished from the other six, which are described as the objects of Hashem's hatred. In contrast, self-importance is introduced as the object of Hashem's disgust.

Mishlei then goes on to the remainder of the list, concluding with the seventh, which is slandering to promote discord. This happens to be the same one with which he ended the list in the previous segment. By repeating the example of slander, Mishlei demonstrates its seriousness, which can be understood in terms of the grave harm that it does to the entire community. Accordingly, depending upon one's perspective, this last behavior may also be considered the seventh, the one which earns Hashem's disgust.

(טז) נֶשֶׁשׁ הֵנָּה שָׂנְאָה ה' וְשִׁבַּע תּוֹעֵבוֹת תּוֹעֵבַת נֶפֶשׁוֹ: (יז) [1] עֵינַיִם רָמוֹת [2] לְשׁוֹן

שָׂקָר [3] וַיְדִים שִׁפְכוֹת דָּם נָקִי: (יח) [4] לֵב חָרַשׁ מִחֲשָׁבוֹת אָוֶן [5] רַגְלַיִם מִמְהָרוֹת לָרוֹץ לָרָעָה: (יט) [6] יָפִיחַ כְּזָבִים עַד שָׂקָר [7] וּמְשַׁלַּח מְדִנִּים בֵּין אֲחֵים: (16) *There are six that Hashem hates, but He is [especially] revolted by the seventh: (17) [1] haughty eyes, [2] a lying tongue, [3] hands [that] shed innocent blood, (18) [4] a heart [that] plots iniquitous thoughts, [5] feet hastening to run to evil. (19) [6] a false witness spreading lies, and [7] stirring up strife among brothers.*

Learning Mishlei

(טז) שֵׁשׁ הֵנָּה שֵׁנֵא ה' וְשִׁבַּע תוֹעֵבֹת נִפְשׁוֹ:

There are six — שֵׁשׁ הֵנָּה — examples of sinful behavior **that Hashem especially hates** — שֵׁנֵא ה' , **but** even worse, **He is revolted by** a specific one that brings the count to **seven** — וְשִׁבַּע תוֹעֵבֹת נִפְשׁוֹ . That seventh behavior is an attitude of self-importance, which is the basis of the other six.

(יז) עֵינַיִם רָמוֹת

[1] The attitude of self-importance is symbolized by **haughty eyes** — עֵינַיִם רָמוֹת because such a person feels he has a right to look at anything to satisfy his curiosity and his desire. There is nothing too holy or too noble that causes him to restrain his sense of entitlement. Such an attitude is a direct challenge to the supremacy of Hashem.

לְשׁוֹן שָׂקָר

[2] For a self-important person nothing is worthy of standing in his way. And so he sacrifices the truth when it is advantageous. He is ready to deceive others with a **lying tongue** — לְשׁוֹן שָׂקָר . In so doing he disdains truth, which is an essential attribute of Hashem. Thus, he has earned Hashem's severe displeasure.

וַיְדִים שִׁפְכוֹת דָּם נָקִי:

[3] Once a self-important person has lost the sense of his listener's right to hear the truth, he may even disregard another human being's right to life. As a result, he has **hands** that **shed innocent blood** — וַיְדִים שִׁפְכוֹת דָּם נָקִי .

(יח) לֵב חָרַשׁ מִחֲשָׁבוֹת אָוֶן

[4] The self-important person disregards the rights of others in order to satisfy his immediate wants. But after a time he realizes that he can gain greater benefits by developing schemes that will cheat others over time. And so his **heart plots iniquitous thoughts** – **לֵב חָרַשׁ מַחְשְׁבוֹת אָוֶן** of thievery.

רַגְלִים מְמַהְרוֹת לָרוֹץ לָרָעָה:

[5] Such thoughts and schemes quickly lead to action as he feels the excitement of **feet hastening to run to evil** – **רַגְלִים מְמַהְרוֹת לָרוֹץ לָרָעָה**.

(יט) יִפְיֵחַ כְּזָבִים עַד שֶׁקֶר

[6] These criminal activities lead to the need to defend himself and cover his tracks. And so he becomes **a false witness spreading lies** – **יִפְיֵחַ כְּזָבִים עַד שֶׁקֶר**.

וּמְשַׁלַּח מְדֻנִים בֵּין אֲחִים:

[7] In his efforts to escape the consequences of his actions he seeks allies in the community and he does so by slandering those who seek justice. In the end **he stirs up strife among brothers** – **וּמְשַׁלַּח מְדֻנִים בֵּין אֲחִים**. In this way he has destroyed the social fabric of the community and has earned the disgust of Hashem.

Sources

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

יח - רלב"ג, חנוך לנער, שבט מיהודה
 יט - רשר"ה

טז - המאירי, רלב"ג, אלשיך, חנוך לנער,
 שבט מיהודה
 יז - המאירי, אבן יחיאל,

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