

Mishlei 07-06**A Lack of Wisdom**

[Pesukim 7:6 thru 7:9]

Key Concepts

What happens when a person neglects Wisdom? He becomes vulnerable to the forces of temptation. These forces are present in the world around us, and also exist within every person.

In this segment Mishlei provides us with a window into the soul to help us see the deterioration of character that can occur under the influence of the *yetzer hara* (the evil inclination). The *yetzer hara* is a force that Hashem put into every man as a character-building challenge. When a man is short of wisdom, he is unable to withstand that test.

Mishlei visualizes himself looking through an imaginary window to see what happens when a young man, lacking wisdom, puts aside his learning and wanders out into the world.

Exploring Mishlei

The young man decides to take a walk, perhaps thinking that this will clear his head. But his unspoken fantasies are already having an effect, drawing him to the vicinity of the house of prostitution. He strolls around the area, “killing time” until darkness descends. At that point, immoral behavior which would not be tolerated in the light of day enters the realm of possibility.

(ו) כִּי בַחֲלוֹן בֵּיתִי בְעֵד אֲשַׁנְבִּי נִשְׁקַפְתִּי :

(ז) וְאָרָא בַפְתָּאִים אֲבִינָה בְּבָנִים נְעַר חָסֵר לֵב :

(ח) עֵבֶר בְּשׁוֹק אֶצֶל פֶּנֶה וְדָרַךְ בֵּיתָה יִצְעֵד :

(ט) בְּנִשְׁף בְּעָרֵב יוֹם בְּאִישׁוֹן לַיְלָה וְאֶפְלָה :

(6) It is necessary to guard against temptation for from the window of my house, through my grilled window, I looked out. (7) And I observed moral weakness among the simple-minded. I discerned among the good sons a lad who lacks

wisdom, (8) passing through the marketplace, near her corner, in the direction of her house. (9) At twilight in the early evening, and then later in the darkness of night.

However, the young man was sufficiently inhibited by his upbringing to avoid taking any overt action. Such action did not occur until an external force of temptation, in the form of the “strange woman” confronts him. She had picked up on his unspoken signal of “availability” and began the process of seduction. The process and its tragic consequences are discussed in the coming segment.

Learning Mishlei

(ו) כִּי בַחֲלוֹן בֵּיתִי בְעֵד אֲשַׁנְבִּי נִשְׁקַפְתִּי :

When wisdom is lacking, people are vulnerable to the powerful forces of temptation. I know this **for from the window of my house** — כִּי בַחֲלוֹן בֵּיתִי

I have seen the world. One doesn't need to travel far from home to see evidence of human frailty. And that evidence is visible within each person if he takes the effort to look.

And so, **through my grilled window** — בְעֵד אֲשַׁנְבִּי, which provides a focused view of human weaknesses, **I looked out** — נִשְׁקַפְתִּי .

(ז) וְאָרָא בַּפְתָּאִים אֲבִינָה בְּבָנִים נֶעַר חָסֵר לֵב :

And I gazed among the simple-minded men — וְאָרָא בַּפְתָּאִים and discerned that **among the reputable sons** — אֲבִינָה בְּבָנִים, there was a particular **lad who lacked wisdom** — נֶעַר חָסֵר לֵב and was destined for trouble.

(ח) עִבֵּר בְּשׂוּק אֶצֶל פְּנֵה וְדָרָךְ בֵּיתָהּ יִצְעֵד :

Instead of devoting himself to learning Torah he decided to take a walk. He was fully aware that the house of the “strange woman” was located in the vicinity and continued nonchalantly **passing through the marketplace** — עִבֵּר בְּשׂוּק.

As it happened, the path he chose was **near her corner** — אֶצֶל פְּנֵה.

Although he seemed to be strolling at random, his footsteps led **in the direction of her house** — וְדָרָךְ בֵּיתָהּ יִצְעֵד.

He walked slowly, enjoying every footstep, because he secretly hoped to catch a glimpse of her, having convinced himself that he was in control of himself and therefore was not at risk. But by his actions, which were innocent on the surface,

he inadvertently signaled to her that he might be responsive if she approached him.

(ט) בְּנֶשֶׁף בְּעֶרְבַּיּוֹם בְּאִישׁוֹן לַיְלָה וְאֶפְלָה:

All this happened **at twilight** — **בְּנֶשֶׁף**
in the early evening — **בְּעֶרְבַּיּוֹם**,
when there were still people about so that
his foolishness would not result in tragedy.
But he was caught up in his fantasies and so
he continued to stroll about. He was still in the vicinity
when it became dark, and there he was
in the blackness of night and darkness — **בְּאִישׁוֹן לַיְלָה וְאֶפְלָה**.