

## Mishlei 09-13

# Invitation to Ignorance

[Pesukim 9:13 thru 9:18]

### Key Concepts

In the first segment of this chapter (09-01) Mishlei presented us with the metaphor of a female spirit that graciously invites mankind to participate in the gift of Wisdom. He then demonstrated (in segment 09-02) that not everyone is ready to respond to such a kind invitation. In fact, the scoffers and instigators are happy to reject it because they hate it.

Now, in the final segment of the chapter, Mishlei presents us with the metaphor of Ignorance, a foolish woman who is the mirror-image of Wisdom. She invites mankind to neglect wisdom and enjoy the illusory benefits of ignorance. She fails to warn her guests that if they accept her invitation, they will be facing their doom.

### Exploring Mishlei

In contrast to the woman of Wisdom, who took great pains to prepare her home and set her table to receive her guests, the woman of Ignorance spends her time in idle chatter. She positions herself where everyone can see her and she calls out to passersby with rude remarks, denigrating wisdom because it interferes with sensual pleasure. Her foolish advice is to suppress self-discipline and encourage permissiveness. After all, she says, "stolen water is sweet."

(יג) אִשֶּׁת פְּסִילוֹת הַמֵּיָה פְּתִיּוֹת וּבֵל יִדְעָה מָה:

(יד) וַיֵּשֶׁבָה לְפֶתַח בֵּיתָהּ עַל פֶּסֶא מְרֹמֵי קֶרֶת:

(טו) לְקֹרָא לְעֹבְרֵי דָרְךָ הַמֵּי־שָׂרִים אֲרֻחֹתָם:

(טז) מִי פְתִי יִסֹר הִנֵּה וַחֲסֹר לֵב וְאָמְרָה לוֹ:

(יז) מֵיִם גְּנוּבִים יִמְתְּקוּ וְלֶחֶם סֶתְרִים יִנְעָם:

(יח) וְלֹא יָדַע כִּי רְפָאִים שָׁם בְּעַמְקֵי שְׂאוֹל קִרְאֶיהָ:

**(13) The woman of foolishness chatters ignorantly. She does not even know what she is saying.**

**(14) She sits immodestly at the door of her house on a chair at the city heights**

(15) to call out to the passersby, who are trying to straighten out their ways.

(16) She calls to them saying, "Whoever is unlearned, let him turn here!" And as for the one who lacks self-discipline, she says to him:

(17) "Stolen water is sweet and bread eaten in secret is pleasing."

(18) The innocent invitee does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of the netherworld.

## Learning Mishlei

(יג) אִשָּׁת כְּסִילוֹת הַמִּיָּה פְתִיּוֹת וּבַל יִדְעָה מָה :

(13) The woman of foolishness — אִשָּׁת כְּסִילוֹת —  
chatters ignorantly and incessantly — הַמִּיָּה פְתִיּוֹת.

Her chatter has no real purpose for she herself  
does not fully know what she is saying — וּבַל יִדְעָה מָה .

(יד) וַיֵּשֶׁבָה לְפֶתַח בֵּיתָהּ עַל כִּסֵּא מְרֹמֵי קֶרֶת :

(14) In contrast to Wisdom, she doesn't make an effort  
to prepare herself, but carries on where she happens to be.

She sits immodestly at the door of her house — וַיֵּשֶׁבָה לְפֶתַח בֵּיתָהּ ,  
on a chair at the city heights — עַל כִּסֵּא מְרֹמֵי קֶרֶת

where all can see her. She uses no "maidens"  
to transmit wisdom and she has set no table  
to welcome seekers of knowledge.

In her foolishness, she thinks she has  
no need to be modest and reserved.

(טו) לְקָרָא לְעַבְרֵי דָרְךָ הַמֵּיִשְׁרִים אַרְחוֹתָם :

(15) She sits there to call out to the passersby — לְקָרָא לְעַבְרֵי דָרְךָ ,  
who are still confused about their spiritual direction  
and are trying to straighten out their ways — הַמֵּיִשְׁרִים אַרְחוֹתָם .

(טז) מִי פְתִי יִסֵּר הִנֵּה וַחֲסֹר לֵב וְאָמְרָה לוֹ :

(16) She calls to them saying, "Whoever is unlearned, — מִי פְתִי  
let him turn here — יִסֵּר הִנֵּה

He will be comfortable among those of us who disdain wisdom."

She says there is no value in the abstract rules of morality.

They only interfere with sensual pleasure.

As for the one who lacks self-discipline — חסר לב,  
she says to him — אַמְרָה לוֹ:

**(יז) מֵיִם גְּנוּבִים יִמְתְּקוּ וְלֶחֶם סֵתֵרִים יִנְעֵם:**

(17) "Stolen water is sweet — מֵיִם גְּנוּבִים יִמְתְּקוּ,  
and bread eaten in secret is pleasing — וְלֶחֶם סֵתֵרִים יִנְעֵם."

In contrast to the meat and wine offered to the guests of Wisdom, the guests of Ignorance won't get much real pleasure from the stolen bread and water, but it will seem sweet because of the underhanded way in which they acquired it.

**(יח) וְלֹא יָדַע כִּי רַפְּאִים שָׁם בְּעֵמְקֵי שְׂאוֹל קְרָאִיהָ:**

(18) But the one who listens to her  
does not know that the dead are there — וְלֹא יָדַע כִּי רַפְּאִים שָׁם,  
in the depths of the netherworld — בְּעֵמְקֵי שְׂאוֹל  
is where her guests end up — קְרָאִיהָ