

Mishlei 09-01**Invitation to Wisdom
(9:1 – 9:6)****Key Concepts**

After having emphasized the great importance of wisdom in Creation and in our lives, Mishlei now offers a warm invitation to those who have not yet been fully persuaded. To convey his message he again chooses the metaphor of Wisdom that he employed in Segments 01-05 and 08-01. This metaphor of a female spirit is especially appropriate to convey the welcoming warmth that may be needed to win over the reluctant individual.

The segment addresses two types of individuals, those who suffer a basic lack of Torah knowledge and those who have the basics but lack the insight of self-knowledge and discipline which will enable them to explore the further depths of wisdom.

Exploring Mishlei

Mishlei begins the segment by giving us a sense of the preparations that Wisdom has made to cause her visitors to feel welcome. She has built a sturdy house representing the perfect structure and completeness of the Torah. She has prepared the food and set the table for a tempting meal. These preparations assure the reluctant visitor that despite the complexity of the many forms of wisdom, he will find that form which is specifically suited to his taste and his abilities. She sends out her invitation through her maidens, who are the prophets, wise men, and teachers of each generation because the way the wisdom is presented must reflect the aptitude and character of the individual.

(א) חֲכָמוֹת בָּנְתָהּ בֵּיתָהּ חָצְבָה עֲמוּדֶיהָ שִׁבְעָה: (ב) טָבַחָהּ טָבַחָהּ מִסְכָּה יִינָה אֶף
 עָרְכָה שְׁלֶחְנָה: (ג) שְׁלַחָהּ נִעְרֹתֶיהָ תִקְרָא עַל גִּפְי מְרִמֵי קֶרֶת: (ד) מִי פָתִי יִסֵּר הֵנָּה
 חֲסֵר לֵב אָמְרָה לוֹ: (ה) לָכוּ לַחֲמוּ בְלַחְמֵי וְשִׁתּוֹ בִּיַיִן מִסְכָּתֵי: (ו) עֲזְבוּ פְתָאִים וְחִיו
 וְאַשְׁרוּ בְדַרְךְ בֵּינָה:

(1) Wisdom has built her house; she has sculpted its seven pillars. (2) She has prepared her meat, mixed her wine, and she has also set her table. (3) She has sent out her maidens to call out [her invitation] upon the city

heights. She says: (4) “Whoever is unlearned, let him turn here [to acquire wisdom].” And as for the one who lacks self-discipline, she says to him: (5) “Come and eat my bread and drink the wine that I have mixed. (6) Abandon your foolish ignorance and live. And step forward on the path of understanding where you will find happiness.”

Learning Mishlei

(א) חֲכָמוֹת בְּנִתָּה בֵּיתָה
חֲצֵבָה עֲמוּדֶיהָ שְׁבָעָה:

She who is the essence of **all forms of wisdom has built her house** — חֲכָמוֹת בְּנִתָּה בֵּיתָה, to be a perfectly integrated and logically constructed whole. All of wisdom is interrelated because all wisdom comes from the same Divine Source. **She has sculpted its seven pillars** — חֲצֵבָה עֲמוּדֶיהָ שְׁבָעָה, representing all the many components of wisdom that support the entire structure in a unified manner.

The seven pillars of wisdom also allude to the seven days of Creation because the world was constructed through wisdom.

(ב) טְבַחָה טְבַחָה
מִסְכָּה יֵינָה אֶף עֲרֻכָה שְׁלֻחָה:

She has prepared her meat — טְבַחָה טְבַחָה, **mixed her wine** — מִסְכָּה יֵינָה **and also set her table** — אֶף עֲרֻכָה שְׁלֻחָה. Wisdom is intended for mankind and is therefore designed to be inviting. It is like a meal that is appealing to the eye and easy to digest. The food is served in bite-size portions that are appropriate to the capacity of each individual.

The three elements of this preparation correspond to the three parts of the Torah: The Written Torah, the Mishnah, and the Gemara.

(ג) שְׁלַחָה נְעֻרֹתֶיהָ
תִּקְרָא עַל גְּפֵי מְרֻמֵי קֶרֶת:

She has sent out her maidens — שְׁלַחָה נְעֻרֹתֶיהָ, which are all the prophets, wise men and teachers in every generation **to call out** her invitation **upon the city heights** — תִּקְרָא עַל גְּפֵי מְרֻמֵי קֶרֶת, where they are visible and audible to all. Everyone has access to wisdom. No one can say they were excluded.

(ד) מִי פִתִּי יִסֵּר הִנֵּה
חֲסֵר לֵב אֲמַרָה לוֹ:

She says, "**Whoever is unlearned** – מי פתי, **let him turn here** – יסר הנה! Let him learn my wisdom and become learned." As for the one who **lacks self-discipline** – חסר לב, **she says to him** – אמרה לו :

(ה) לָכוּ לַחֲמוּ בְלַחְמִי
וּשְׁתוּ בַיַּיִן מִסִּכְתִּי:

"Don't be discouraged by your difficulties in adhering to the way of the Torah. Even if you do not have as much learning as you should, **come and eat my bread** – לכו לחמו בלחמי of basic Torah knowledge. **And** then **drink the wine** of wisdom **that I have** specially **mixed** for you – ושתו בייין מסכתי to give you the depth of insight that will help you control your emotions."

(ו) עֲזְבוּ פִתְאִים וְחִיו
וְאֲשְׂרוּ בְדֶרֶךְ בִּינָה:

"To those of you who are unlearned, I say, **abandon your foolish ignorance and live** – עזבו פתאים וחיו. **And** to those of you who lack self-discipline, I say, **step forward** happily – ואשרו to self-control **on the path of understanding** – בדרך בינה."

Sources

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

ד - רש"י, רלב"ג, מצודות, מלבי"ם
ה - מלבי"ם
ו - רש"י, רלב"ג, מלבי"ם, רשר"ה

א - המאירי, רלב"ג, מלבי"ם
ב - המאירי, הגר"א
ג - הגר"א, מלבי"ם

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