

## Mishlei 12-16

# Anger and Shame

### Key Concepts

The emotion of anger is aroused when a person feels a threat to his sense of self, that is, when he feels belittled by the words or actions of another. However, the very act of displaying anger has the effect of bringing shame upon him and diminishing his stature in the eyes of others. The anger that he feels is driven by the desire to take revenge upon the source of his hurt. However, he has indulged himself in a motivation that is itself forbidden by the Torah.

A person may respond to the sense of resentment in three ways: (1) If he is a foolish person he will feel anger at the most trivial of insults and will react by privately or publicly berating the person who he holds responsible for what he believes has been done to him. In either case he has shamed himself. (2) If he is a clever person he will restrain his public show of anger because he knows that people will think less of him when anger is displayed. Also, he knows he will be further harmed if the nature of the insult is further revealed through his reaction. (3) If he is a wise man he will react to an insult with humility, knowing how small he is in the overall scheme of things. He will not only restrain public display of anger, he will even suppress the sense of resentment that he might be tempted to feel.

### Exploring Mishlei

(טז) אָוִיל בַּיּוֹם יִדַּע בְּעֵסוֹ וְכֹסֵה קִלְוֹן עָרוֹם:

*The anger of a fool becomes known on the [same] day, but a clever man covers up disgrace.*

The proverb contrasts the reaction of a foolish man and a clever man when experiencing anger. The fool makes no effort at restraining himself or even delaying his response to another day when he has had time to think it over. Thus, he brings shame upon himself by immediately making his feelings and his inadequacies known to everybody in the vicinity. The clever man is shrewd enough to keep quiet and cover up his shame.

The proverb leaves out any mention of the wise man, but his virtue of self-control is demonstrated by implication.

## Learning Mishlei

(טז) אָוִיל בַּיּוֹם יִנְדַע כְּעֵסוֹ  
וְכִסָּה קִלּוֹן עָרוֹם:

**The anger of a fool becomes known on the very day** that he feels it — **אָוִיל** because he hasn't trained himself to restrain his resentment, **but a clever man covers up** the **disgrace** — **וְכִסָּה קִלּוֹן עָרוֹם** that he would bring upon himself by erupting in anger.

## Additional Insights

A series of insights illuminating this proverb are presented below. The numbers identifying the insights refer to the listing of sources at the end of the segment.

### THE WISE MAN

- (1) Wisdom teaches a person to suppress the feeling of anger because it reflects pride and leads him to take revenge upon the source of hurt.
- (2) It is a mark of wisdom not to display anger because it brings only shame upon himself.

### THE FOOL

- (3) The fool gets angry about the smallest matter that displeases him and makes those around him aware of his displeasure.
- (4) An angry fool is likely to publicly insult the one who provoked his anger.
- (5) An angry fool is likely to publicize the revenge that he wants to take. In this way he adds to his shame.
- (6) In the course of his tirade the angry fool further publicizes the insults that were applied to him and which caused his anger. Thus, he adds to his shame.
- (7) The angry fool is tempted to reveal private information and therefore makes others see him as an unreliable person.

### THE CLEVER MAN

- (8) The clever man avoids getting into an embarrassing confrontation even if he is not particularly wise. He knows that it is not in his interest to be exposed to public disgrace, However, that does not prevent him from exacting revenge when he can do so without harming his reputation.

## **Sources**

The primary sources used for the additional insights illuminating this segment are listed below.

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|--------------------|-----------------|
| (5) - רבינו יונה   | (1) - מלבי"ם    |
| (6) - רבינו יונה   | (2) - מלבי"ם    |
| (7) - רבינו יונה   | (3) - אבן יחייא |
| (8) - רש"י, מלבי"ם | (4) - רש"י      |