

## Mishlei 14-16

# Forbearance

### Key Concepts

It is not easy to remain calm in a difficult situation. However, a person with sufficient forbearance doesn't let himself be provoked into anger, no matter how frustrated he is by someone else's behavior.

It takes a wise person indeed to realize how much harm can be done through unrestrained anger and how easy it is to feel the frustration that can trigger resentment.

Once a person learns the dangers that come from the bitterness of a hot temper, he maintains a powerful fear of being drawn into such a frame of mind. Besides anger being very sinful, it moves a person to say and do things that are hurtful to everyone around him. Strife and conflict are the result. It takes a wise man to understand all this and to act accordingly.

Unfortunately, a foolish man, even if he is intelligent, will be complacent about the need to practice forbearance. He will let himself get excited by some provocation and he will convince himself that he can get away with it.

### Exploring Mishlei

(טז) חָכָם יִרָא וְסָר מִרָע וְכֹסֵל מִתְעַבֵּר וּבֹטֵחַ :

*(16) A wise man is fearful and avoids evil,  
but a foolish man becomes angry and is confident.*

This proverb calls attention to the wise man's fear of falling prey to the evil of unrestrained anger. This fear is with him at all times and enables his forbearance despite provocation. It is contrasted with the attitude of the foolish man who blithely assumes he can safely enjoy the release that he gets from experiencing anger.

## Learning Mishlei

(16) A wise man is fearful of — חָכָם יִרָא  
the consequences and avoids evil — וְסָר מִרָע  
such as expressions of anger.

But a fool becomes angry — וְכֹסֵל מִתְעַבֵּר  
and trusts — וְבוֹטָח  
that he will escape any consequences.

## Additional Insights

(1) A person's natural instincts draw him away from morality. Therefore he needs the fear of Hashem as a framework to prevent from acting against his Creator's will. (מלבניים)

(2) The wise man knows that even if he is free of bad *middos*, he must continually be on guard because there may come time when a special sensitivity or concern is provoked and he will be unable to resist acting on it. (אור יחזקאל)

(3) The wiser a person is, the greater will be his fear of sin, for the greater is he aware of the pitfalls in ordinary behavior that lead to sin. He therefore uses the power of his wisdom to develop ways of resisting temptation. (מליץ יושר)

(4) The wise man avoids evil with all his power but continues to be afraid that he will accidentally stray and fall short of his duty. In contrast, the fool does not avoid evil, but continues to trust that nothing bad will happen to him. (רבינו יונה)

(5) The wise man avoids mocking or belittling any person, even one who seems powerless, because there is no individual who does not have his hour. Perhaps that individual will find this moment to take his revenge. The fool allows himself the luxury of being angry with his fellow, thinking that his victim will never be able to stand up to him. (הגרי"א, רלב"ג)