

## Mishlei 21-27

# Hypocrisy

### Key Concepts

As we have seen in Segment 15-08, hypocritical patterns of behavior are not limited to a person's relationships with other people. They also affect his relationship with the Creator. The person who is hypocritical towards other people is also inclined to be hypocritical when he thinks about Hashem. The problem, of course, is that Hashem knows a person's thoughts and actions, even though the individual would like to believe that he can hide them.

In the current proverb Mishlei reminds the wicked that their hypocrisy is not working. The only solution is to think and do what is right. As in Segment 15-08 the focus is on those who bring sacrificial offerings in the Bais Hamikdash, although it could equally apply to any grand gesture or public act that earns him respect and goodwill.

A sacrifice is effective if it promotes a closer relationship with Hashem. Tragically, if the one bringing the offering has an ulterior motive, it is a hypocritical exercise, and so the sacrifice is perceived by Hashem as an abomination.

### Exploring Mishlei

(כז) זָבַח רְשָׁעִים תּוֹעֵבָה אֵף כִּי בְזָמָה יְבִיאָנוּ:

**(27) The sacrificial offering brought by the wicked is an abomination to Hashem; how much more when they bring it with an ulterior motive.**

In this proverb the wicked person is bringing an offering that defies the will of his Creator by acting with an ulterior motive. The proverb puts him on notice that the offering will not achieve its misguided purpose, and instead will be considered an abomination by Hashem. An example of such a motive would be to persuade others of his piety. Another example would be Balaam and Belak who foolishly hoped to persuade Hashem to curse the Jewish people.

### Learning Mishlei

**(27) The sacrifice of the wicked — זָבַח רְשָׁעִים  
is an abomination to Hashem — תּוֹעֵבָה**

It doesn't bring the individual any closer to Hashem as a sacrifice should.  
In fact, it is seen as though he is bribing Hashem to grant his wishes.

**how much more when — אַף כִּי**  
**they bring it with an ulterior motive — בְּזָמָה יְבִיאֵנּוּ .**

## **Additional Insights**

[1] The lesson of this proverb also addresses the case where an individual prays to Hashem with an impure motive. (הגר"א)

[2] The abomination mentioned by this proverb is even greater if the individual is bringing a sin offering while thinking fondly about the sin that he committed.  
(רבינו בחיי)