

Mishlei 12-20**(Tracherous Counsel)****Key Concepts**

If a person has earned sufficient credibility that disputants will accept his counsel, he must avoid using this opportunity to achieve some personal benefit or to nourish some pet peeve. The counsellor has a special responsibility to give honest advice and promote peace among all parties.

Exploring Mishlei

(כ) מְרֵמָה בְּלִבְחַרְשֵׁי רָע וְלִיעֲצֵי שְׁלוֹם שְׂמֵחָה :

(20) *Treachery is in the heart of advisers who plot harm, but for those who counsel peace there is joy.*

The proverb compares the treacherous adviser who has an unspoken agenda with the honest adviser who is motivated by the urge to promote peace. The dishonest adviser will be under constant strain for fear that the treachery that is in his heart will be discovered. In contrast, the honest adviser will be relaxed and happy. He knows that he has no need to apologize or be embarrassed for seeking peace.

Learning Mishlei

(20) Treachery is in the heart — מְרֵמָה בְּלִבְ
of advisers who plot harm — חַרְשֵׁי רָע
but for those who counsel peace — וְלִיעֲצֵי שְׁלוֹם
there is joy — שְׂמֵחָה

The consequences of treachery lurk in the heart of people who pretend to give honest advice but are secretly plotting harm against their adversaries. They are constantly in fear of being found out. But for those who counsel peace there is joy, for their intentions are innocent and so they have no fear that their counsel will be public knowledge.

Additional Insights

(1) The treacherous advisers are preoccupied with insidious schemes and therefore never find tranquility. However, those who promote peace are relaxed and confident. (רש"י)

(2) The treacherous advisers live in constant fear that their true intentions will be found out and so they are under strain. (הגר"א, מצודות)

(3) The treacherous advisers are motivated by the urge to destroy which is shameful and therefore they act in secret. In contrast, the honest adviser is motivated by the urge to promote universal well-being and has no need of secrecy. (מלבי"ם)

(4) If your adviser is suggesting that you harm another or take vengeance against him, don't listen to him because he is not acting out of friendship to you but out of hatred for the one he wants to harm. (רבינו יונה)

(5) If your adviser is suggesting that you make peace with another, listen to his advice because you will have the goodwill of both your adviser and the other person. (רבינו יונה)