

**Mishlei 16-09****Accomplishment****Key Concepts**

Any action that a person undertakes normally begins with the thought of what he would like to do. He considers whether it is the right thing to do and whether it is likely to succeed. He then puts his mind to it and begins the action. What is the role of Hashem in all this? Mishlei reminds us here that no matter how much thought the person has put into a proposed plan of action, the actual implementation depends completely on the will of Hashem.

This means that a person needs to appeal to Hashem for success in any initiative that he undertakes, whether it is earning his livelihood, raising his children, baking a cake, or anything else. Furthermore, he needs to be grateful to Hashem when his efforts are met with success and a result that is truly worthwhile. He must be aware of his dependence on Hashem with every step he takes. This is a great nisayon (challenge), demanding a high level of *bitachon* (faith and of trust), because life is full of uncertainties. Success cannot be taken for granted.

**Exploring Mishlei**

(ט) לֵב אָדָם יַחֲשֵׁב דַּרְכּוֹ וְה' יָכִין צִעְדּוֹ:  
 (9) *A man's heart determines his way,  
 but Hashem directs his steps .*

This proverb compares the thoughts that a person puts into any course of action with the actual step-by-step implementation. It is up to the person to think about what he wants to do and how he wants to go about it. But he must look to Hashem to direct his steps to a real and worthwhile result.

The concepts of this proverb are also explored in Segment 16-01 (Control) with regard to the power of speech. In contrast, our proverb here uses the metaphor of walking to a destination, step by step.

## Learning Mishlei

(9) A man's heart — **לב אדם**  
determines his way — **יחשב דרכו**;  
but Hashem directs — **וה' יגיד**.  
his individual step — **צעדו**.

## Additional Insights

(1) This proverb is a reminder that although a person should put every reasonable thought and effort into achieving an undertaking, he should not rely on his own efforts alone, but should look to Hashem to implement his initiatives.  
(מלבי"ם, המאירי, רלב"ג, חנוך לנער)

(2) If a man sincerely wants to give more charity, Hashem provides him with the means. (אלשיך)

(3) Elaborate plans are of no avail if the undertaking does not have Hashem's approval. Therefore, before beginning his preparations a person should honestly ask himself whether the activity that he wishes to pursue will be agreeable to Him.  
(רשר"ה)

(4) When a person is facing a difficult decision, especially in regard to self-improvement, it is important to remember that Hashem eagerly wants to implement his worthy thoughts and is always ready to help. As the Gemara says: "One who comes to purify himself is assisted (Shabbas 104a)." (רש"י, אבן עזרא, הגר"א)