

Mishlei 16-20

Control–Planning

Key Concepts

What does it take to succeed in any endeavor? The answer is to carefully think through what you want to do, what you want to achieve and what it will take to get it done. Why do projects fail? Because people haven't given the matter enough thought. They embark on an activity without considering what effect it will have on other people and whether the desired result will be pleasing to Hashem. Even if they are optimistic about the means and the result they allow themselves to be carried away by wishful thinking and by their illusions.

If a person has given the matter sufficient thought and taken into account all of the factors, there is a good likelihood that he will succeed. But there is a real possibility that whatever he hopes to achieve was not meant to be because Hashem has a different plan. Ultimately, it is a person's challenge to trust in the will of Hashem and to accept the outcome graciously.

Exploring Mishlei

(כ) מְשַׁכֵּיל עַל דְּבַר יִמְצָא טוֹב וּבֹטֵחַ בַּה' אֲשֶׁר יוֹ:

One who thinks through a planned action **will be likely to find a good** result. **Fortunate is he who trusts in Hashem** to provide the right outcome.

This proverb advises a person planning a course of action to carefully consider the implications. If he does so, he is likely to meet with success. However, despite the best intentions, the definition of success may not be what he thought it would be. That is up to Hashem. If his trust in Hashem is sufficiently great, he will be satisfied with the result.

The concepts of this proverb are also explored in Segment 16-01 (Control) and 16-09 (Accomplishment).

Learning Mishlei

(כ) מְשַׁכֵּיל עַל דְּבַר יִמְצָא טוֹב
וּבֹטַח בַּה' אֲשֶׁר יוֹ:

One who thinks through a planned action — מְשַׁכֵּיל עַל דְּבַר is likely to find a satisfactory result — יִמְצָא טוֹב. Fortunate is he who trusts in Hashem — וּבֹטַח בַּה' אֲשֶׁר יוֹ to provide the right outcome.

(19) **It is better to be a humble spirit — טוֹב שְׂפַל רוּחַ**
living **among the poor — אֶת עֲנִיִּים**
than to be sharing the spoils of robbery — מִחֲלֵק שָׁלַל
living **among the proud — אֶת גֵּאִים.**

Additional Insights

(1) The text uses alternate terms to refer to the people with whom the humble person should be prepared to associate. The written text (כְּתִיב) uses the word **עֲנִיִּים** meaning poor. The vocalized text (קָרִי) uses the word **עֲנָוִים** meaning humble. Generally, the vocalized text is used to carry the plain meaning, but in this case the written text carries the plain meaning. (הגר"א)

(2) Ordinarily a person should try to choose the middle way of humility (**עֲנָוִים**) rather than the extremes of abject humility (**שְׂפַל רוּחַ**) or pride (**גֵּאִים**). But, if necessary, the abject humility of poverty is preferable to pride. (שבט מיהודה)