

## Mishlei 20-18

# Planning

### Key Concepts

Much of the thinking that is continuously going on in a person's mind involves planning for the future, both near term and long term. Mishlei advises that a person should never initiate important activity without thinking it through carefully in advance and, if appropriate consulting with others.

### Exploring Mishlei

Three planning modes are identified in the proverb given here.

The first planning mode consists of the options that are under consideration. They are referred to by the general term: thoughts (*machashavos*).

The second mode consists of choices that have been tentatively or firmly made for a particular course of action. These choices, which may be made in consultation with another person, are referred to as counsel (*eitzos*).

The third planning mode consists of specific stratagems associated with anticipated contingencies. These stratagems are referred to as *tachbulos*. Typically, stratagems involve deep thinking and intense analysis. They are often applied to military or wartime situations. They are also employed by people who are involved in planning criminal activities.

**(יח) מַחְשָׁבוֹת בְּעֵצָה תִּכְוֶן וּבְתַחְבֻּלוֹת עֲשֵׂה מְלַחְמָה :**

**(18) *Thoughts of planning options are typically firmed up in consultation but are extended with contingency plans to wage war.***

The three planning modes are also discussed in Mishlei 12-05. However, in that proverb, the third mode is associated with criminal activity, especially involving deceptive alternatives.

### Learning Mishlei

**(18) Thoughts of options under consideration – מַחְשָׁבוֹת – are firmed up in consultation to become plans. – בְּעֵצָה תִּכְוֶן –**  
**And they become contingency plans. – וּבְתַחְבֻּלוֹת –**  
**To wage war – עֲשֵׂה מְלַחְמָה –** ☉

## Additional Insights

[1] Before seeking counsel, the first step is **מחשבות**, careful independent thought by the person who is directly involved. The person should carefully analyze all positive and negative aspects of the situation before seeking outside counsel (**בְּעֵצָה**) to make sure that no options have been overlooked. (רבינו יונה)

[2] However, even the wisest person should be prepared to consult with others, for any one can subconsciously overlook matters that affect him personally. (מאירי)

[3] In planning war strategy, one must carefully consider the likelihood that the enemy is going through a similar process. Every possible move by the opposing side must be taken into account. (רבינו יונה)

[4] Wartime planning also has to take into account methods of misleading the enemy and preventing leaks that might be picked up by their spies. (אלשיך)