Mishlei 21-01

Control – King

Key Concepts

We have seen in Mishlei 16-09 that no matter how much thought a person has put into a proposed plan of action, the actual implementation depends completely on the will of Hashem. This means that Hashem reserves the right to intervene and make the changes He finds necessary.

We have learned to trust Hashem and rely on the rightness of the steps He ultimately takes. But we shall now see that there is special significance to the changes He makes to the plans and decisions of world leaders, who exert authority over large numbers of people.

Exploring Mishlei

(א) פַּלְגֵי מַיִם לֵב מֶלֶךְ בְּיַד ה׳ עַל כָּל אֲשֶׁר יַחְפֹּץ יַטֶּנּוּ׃

(1) ***The heart of a king is like streams of water in the hand of Hashem; He inclines it in whichever direction He desires.***

The will of a king is compared to the powerful flows of water rushing down a mountain side. If they are allowed to follow a random course, they could easily bring destruction instead of blessing. But if properly channeled they can irrigate and give life to the parched soil of the valleys. Similarly, if the king is permitted to allow the emotions of his heart to drive events in the kingdom, the result can be almost anything. But, since Hashem is in control, people can be sure that events will be compatible with the will of Hashem.

Learning Mishlei

(1) The **heart of a king** — **לֵב מֶלֶךְ**
is controlled like **streams of water** — **פַּלְגֵי מַיִם**
in the hand of Hashem — **בְּיַד ה׳**.
In whichever direction He desires — **עַל כָּל אֲשֶׁר יַחְפֹּץ**
He directs it — **יַטֶּנּוּ**

Additional Insights

[1] Mishlei compares the control of king's heart to streams of water because the direction in which a stream flows through agricultural land can be determined by digging channels. (מצודות)

[2] It is important for people to realize that the public policy decisions taken by a king are not under his control but under the control Hashem. Accordingly, they will learn to fear and obey Hashem, rather than the king. (רבינו יונה)