

## Mishlei 21-05

### Planning

#### Key Concepts

Previously (12-24), Mishlei had praised the important quality of diligence (zerizus), which involves applying focused energy to one's work. But pure energy can sometimes be counterproductive if it is not properly channeled. Any project involving the expenditure of energy also requires careful planning to ensure that no damage is done when energy is released.

In the previous chapter, Mishlei spoke of three modes in the planning process (20-18). The first mode was described as thoughts (*machashavos*) about the options under consideration. If insufficient attention is given to these thoughts, the project will fail.

However, if a worker gets too enthusiastic about his project, he may rush through the planning process and the result will be inadequate plans. There is then a risk that instead of ensuring a successful outcome, a hasty initiation will also result in failure.

#### Exploring Mishlei

(ה) מְחַשְׁבוֹת חָרוֹץ אֵדָּ לְמוֹתָר וְכָל אָץ אֵדָּ לְמַחְסוֹר :  
 (5) *The deliberations of the industrious are purely beneficial,  
 but any haste is purely for loss.*

The first part of the proverb speaks about an industrious (diligent) person who is engaged in work, and emphasizes that enthusiasm is not enough; planning is also needed. This planning is referred to as deliberations (מְחַשְׁבוֹת) or thoughts.

The second part of the proverb points out that excess enthusiasm in the form of haste (אָץ) will not help the project succeed. On the contrary, haste will diminish success.

## Learning Mishlei

(5) The deliberations of the industrious — מְחַשְׁבוֹת חָרוּץ  
are purely beneficial, — אֵד לְמוֹתָר

because they contribute to the planning process.

But any haste — וְכָל אֶץ

is purely for loss — אֵד לְמַחְסוֹר

## Additional Insight

This proverb is especially relevant to learning Torah. A person should learn with a plan. That is, he should have specific goals in mind and conduct a systematic review at periodic intervals. He will then come away from the process with a wealth of Torah knowledge. However, if he forges ahead without a plan, seeking only to accumulate as much knowledge as possible in the shortest time, will be left with nothing. (הגר"א)