

The *Mesilas Yesharim* began the second *perek* by defining the *middah* of *zehirus*. *Zehirus* means mindfulness, watchfulness and the way he defined it was that a person should be “*nizhar bumasav ube’inyanav*”, careful in his ways, in his actions, but what does that mean “*misbonen umefakeach*” to become wise, to contemplate his actions, his ways with one single criteria in mind, “*hatovim heim im lo*” are they good for him or not?

My actions, my ways, what I'm involved in, my time spent, do I spend it in ways that benefit me, that help me, the way I interact with people, the way I *daven*, the way I learn, the way I go about this thing called life, am I doing it in a way that's beneficial, that's detrimental, are my actions and ways good for me or not?

And he explains that what that means is “*lo yolecha bumehalech hagero*” not to go in the path that a person's accustomed to, “*ku'iver bu'afelah*” like a blind man in the darkness.

And then he goes on to say “*mipnei shedavar sechli chayav buvaday*” it's something that intelligence demands, “*ki acharei sheyesh lu'adam dei'ah vuhaskel*” after a man has intelligence, has understanding, to say to himself “*vulivrach me'adon nishamsa*” and to run away, to escape from his *neshamah* being lost “*eich yitaken*” how is it possible “*sheyirtzeh luholim enav me'atalaso*” how is it possible that he'll possibly wish to lift his eyes from his salvation, it's absurd, it can't be.

And yet it is. And the last session we explained why it's so difficult to be mindful, to be aware, to pay attention to what should be the most obvious, conscious thought, am I acting in my best interest? The way I use my time, the way I do things, is it good for me or bad for me. You would think that any intelligent person would do it, always, all the time, but if that were the reality of being a human, there would be no freewill and therefore Hashem introduced four factors that makes it difficult.

Number one the deadening of physicality. When Hashem put me into this body, I don't feel, it's like novocaine for the soul, I don't feel *Shabbos*, I don't feel holiness, I don't feel Hashem's presence, I'm dead inside.

Number two, there's something called rationalizations, whatever I do is good, right and proper and only because of that factor can I really have free will because now I could choose exactly what I want to do.

The third element is emotions. Emotions when I feel something, not only does it color the way I view things, it changes the very way that I think. I look at you differently, I look at the situation differently and that greatly shapes the way I approach life, the way I conduct myself.

And the fourth thing is something called habit. And habits are something that rule everything, *al hakol sholet*, it rules over everything, everything that we do is basically controlled by habit and again, it's one of the greatest boons for productivity because I can pay attention to the important things, I don't have to pay attention to the neutia??? (3:34) of life, the very small details but again, the cost of it is that if my habits weren't formed with great wisdom, they might work against me.

And then the *Mesilas Yesharim* goes on to explain to us one of the most profound *meshalim*. He says “*Haholech bu'olamo*” if one goes about this thing called life “*beli hisbonenus*” without contemplation,

*"im tovim darkov oy lo"* whether his ways are good for him or not, if one doesn't step away from the business, if one doesn't analyze his time, his actions, if one doesn't do this process, *"hinei hu kesuma haholech al sfas hanahar"* that person is like a blind man who's walking on the river banks *"asher sakanaso vady atzumah"* whose danger is grave, he is in grave danger, *"ro'oso krova me'azalaso"* and the odds are far better that he'll end up in the river than that he will continue walking *"ku'ulam chesser hashmirah mipnei uvar hativi"* because if you think about it, says the *Mesilas Yesharim*, if you're blind by nature or if you're blind by choice, it's the same.

If you close your eyes and you don't see, you don't see. If you're blind because you're not looking, if you're blind because you're not paying attention, you are functionally blind. And with this *mashal*, the *Mesilas Yesharim* defines for us very, very clearly life from a perspective that I think is different than we normally think about it.

And if you'd like to understand what he's saying, let me give you a very simple example. If you drive from New York City to Monsey, over the Washington bridge, most likely you'll travel along the Palisades Parkway. The Palisades Parkway is named that because it passes by the Palisades which is this very beautiful, long, bluff that drops down to the Hudson River. And along the twenty miles or so, you'll see many scenic stops and you could stop there and see the beautiful majestic, you'll be three hundred feet above the ocean, and you see it's a sheer drop down, rocks straight down and there is the Hudson River, beautifully laid out and it's a majestic sight.

I want you to imagine that one day you're going on a drive, it's a Sunday afternoon and you stop at one of these scenic lookouts and you look out at the Hudson and it's beautiful and you see three hundred feet of sheer drop right down the rocks and it's just a gorgeous scene and suddenly out of the corner of your eye you notice someone walking near the rocks, near the edge and you see he has a cane and he's blind and he's feeling along the rocks and he's feeling, you want to scream 'Hallay Hohoh' but you see he's very deliberate and it's clear that he's going for a stroll and it's clear that he almost looks like he knows what he's doing.

But here's the point, one slip, one little mistake and he falls to his death, three hundred feet down below, crushed on the rocks. The odds of that man succeeding, the odds of that man going to bed that night in his bed are very slim.

What the *Mesilas Yesharim* is saying to us is that is the human condition. If you're not constantly observing yourself, if you're not contemplating, if you're not looking at your behaviors, your actions, your ways, if you're not asking yourself these key critical questions, am I doing things for my betterment or my detriment? Am I happy with the results?

If you're not analyzing your day, if you're not looking at your habits and your ways, you are like the blind man on the riverbanks, the odds of your succeeding are very slim.

But that's really not what the *Mesilas Yesharim* is saying, what he's saying really is a step beyond that. Let's say at that scene, you find out that this is not the first day that that blind man is walking. As a matter of fact he walked along the path yesterday and the day before and the day before that and you

find out that that's his daily stroll, every day he goes along the riverbank of the Palisades, every day he walks there. Now suddenly the stakes are a lot higher because you can get lucky once and if you're skilled, okay, maybe you can navigate it once or twice or three times, but if you do it day after day after day, eventually you're going to slip, eventually you're going to miss something and you will be toast.

You see we're not in this thing called life one Sunday in the year, we're at this thing called life, day after day after day, what the *Mesilas Yesharim* is saying, if you're not stopping, if you're not analyzing your ways, your actions, if you're not contemplating, if you're not thinking about whether you're doing things for your betterment or your detriment, I guarantee he says, you will end up in the river, much like the blind man who walks day after day after day, his danger is far closer than his safe return, that is the human condition.

And I believe the first point that the *Mesilas Yesharim* shares with us is a vastly different perspective than we usually have. Look, I'm a *Yeshivah* guy, I went to the finest *Yeshivahs*, I learnt and I did very well, maybe I even went to *Kolel*, and I'm married, I'm working, listen I *daven* with a *minyán* three times a day, I learn in *daf hayomi*, I'm doing everything I should.

Listen, I am not in danger. The *Mesilas Yesharim* isn't talking to me, right?

But he is, he's talking to *frum* Jews who're observing the *Torah*, who keep the *mitzvahs* but aren't stopping to look at their path, their ways, aren't analyzing their actions, aren't scrutinizing the way they interact with others, what they do and how they do. And he's saying you, me, all of us, are in this state. If you're not "*misbonen umefakeach*" if you don't become wise to your actions, if you don't contemplate, if you don't step away from the business of your day and on a regular basis analyze, you are going to be like the blind man in the riverbank and you will end up in a vastly different place.

And if it sounds a little strange, all you have to do is just focus on the fact that people end up two years later, five years later, ten years later, eventually in vastly different places than they started. No one intended to, no one meant to, but if you're not constantly course correcting, if you're not constantly analyzing, scrutinizing, you will end up in many, many situations, many things and you will either totally blow it, partially blow, but certainly you will never become a fraction of what you could have been.

Hashem put us on the planet to grow, to accomplish, to be truly great. But that requires thinking, it requires contemplating, it requires looking at my actions, looking at my ways. And as we'll discuss soon, the *Mesilas Yesharim* will explain to us on a daily basis, not once a year, not *Yom Kippur*, *Yom Kippur's* great, *Elul's* wonderful, on a daily basis, looking at my ways, looking at my action, constantly improving and again the first *chiddush* is that if I don't do this process, the odds of my making it are like that blind man on the river, but I'm keeping the *Torah*, I'm doing *mitzvahs*, yeah but you're a blind man, whether you're blind by birth or blind because you close your eyes it's the same.

You're a human being like any other human being, you're housed in a body and that body deadens and doesn't let you feel things. You have a rationalization system that's beautifully colorful and tremendously active. Your emotions will carry you away, and finally your habits are what your habits are. And if you're a human being like any other human being, just the fact that you're *frum* and you're

learning and you're doing what your, that's great, but it will not protect you much like the blind man, he's alive, he might eat well, he might exercise, he might even work on the technique of how to feel with the stick, but he's in grave danger because walking on the riverbanks, is not too bright. If you don't contemplate, if you don't study your actions and your ways, you're closing your eyes, you were given wisdom but you're not using it.

And now here's the reason behind you see the first point the *Mesilas Yescharim* is explaining to us is that wow, life is a little bit different than I thought about it, maybe even a little bit scary. The opportunity surely is great but if I don't it's not so great but the question is why, after all, I'm an intelligent person I'm not a fool. My brain is on, I have an IQ, I have intelligence, so ok I get it, habit, emotions, I get it, but nevertheless I'm an intelligent thinking person, how is this going to happen to me?

And I'd like to share with you something that I find profound. Intelligence is a measure of your ability to compute information, to retain information, maybe to process it and apply it to different situations, and there are various different functions of intelligence and various different ways of measuring them, one measurement is an IQ test, an IQ test measures a certain dimension of your intelligence. Okay.

Now let's say we give a person an IQ test and they rank a hundred and eighty, brilliant, the man is clearly very, very intelligent, very intelligent. That tells you his ability to process information, his ability to compute, his ability to retain but it doesn't tell you that he's using it. You see there is intelligence and there is functional intelligence. Intelligence is your raw ability to compute, but whether you do that or not is a different question altogether and not every person who's intelligent functions that way, and not all intelligence works in a functional manner.

And I'll share with you an example that I find very eye-opening. My father *zecher livrachah* married Grandma Pearl and they had a beautiful marriage and I remember when my father went to undergo an operation, I waited with Grandma Pearl outside the operating room and the surgeon was actually a family friend but the surgery was supposed to take four hours but it took a lot longer and Grandma Pearl was very, very nervous, very nervous. It was three and a half hours, four hours, four and a half hours, after about almost five hours, the surgeon walks out and he says the operation went well and he began explaining what happened, why it was delayed, he asked do you have any questions, he spent maybe twenty minutes, again he was a family friend and he had all the time needed, he explained clearly what the prognosis was, what the treatment was, he went through the entire thing and he then again asked, any other questions and then he walked away.

And then Grandma Pearl turned to me and said, please tell me what did he say, I couldn't, I couldn't hear. And I'll explain to you what was going on:

This woman was very attached to her husband, emotionally she was very, very distraught and because of this she couldn't hear, she couldn't listen because you could be very, very intelligent but if you're nervous, if you're uncomfortable, it's going to interfere with your ability to concentrate and functional intelligence is not the same thing as intelligence.

And by the way as an aside, if you go to the doctor, if you're going for a serious procedure or a serious exam, or you're going to her the results of a serious test, bring someone else with you. Because likely the anxiety, the nervousness will impact you, will affect you when you can be a brilliant person but when you're nervous, you're not thinking. Or you're surely not thinking clearly.

And the distinction between intelligence and functional intelligence is vast. You will find many, many brilliant people who do the stupidest things in the world but what the *Mesilas Yesharim* is explaining to us is that we all are in that category. You see in the heat of the moment, I'm busy, I'm doing, I might be carried away emotionally, I might be carried away by my agenda, I might be in my role in the habits without thinking, but whatever it is, my functional intelligence likely is vastly different than my intelligence.

And I could do things that are so foolish, and it's only by stepping away afterwards, looking, stepping outside myself and viewing it as an outsider and asking myself, wait a minute, is that wise, yes I was doing this, was that a good choice. Yes I'm on that path, is that a path I want to remain on? It's only by stepping away and divorcing yourself from the immediacy, from the emotionality, from the business of the moments, it's only by stepping away that you get the clear objective and you could then again bring your intelligence to function because in the heat of the moment, in the business of life, we're all just doing, doing, doing and busy and doing and doing and doing and doing but the intelligent part of us is often not there and you could be brilliant but if you don't step away analyze, scrutinize, "*misbonen umefakeach*" if you don't become wise intelligent, if you don't analyze and scrutinize you're going to make blunders and mistakes and you'll get onto path and you'll get involved with things that aren't in your best interest at all and you'll do them time after time after time until they become new habits and before you know it, who knows where you are.

And you could see this in so many walks of life that intelligence and functional intelligence are vastly different. And what the *Mesilas Yesharim* is sharing with us is, if you're blind because you're blind it's a *nebach*, but if you're blind because you're closing your eyes, that's far sadder and if you're not looking at your behaviors, if you're not analyzing your ways, if on a regular basis you're not scrutinizing what you do and how you do it, you are effectively blind, functionally in terms of intelligence, you're not and you're going to make blunders.

But I'd like to give you an example that's a little extreme but I think it bears the point. War, is dumb. Throughout history, basically one side, the king, nobility, the prince took offense at some other side or he decided he wants to expand his borders, or he had a long, horrible hatred, and he decided to go to war.

What would happen is each side would stand against the other, kill one another and basically the last man standing when you killed enough of the enemy, that they can no longer fight back, you were now the winner and a lot of bloodshed, a lot of harm, a lot of really bad things went on. And that is war, war is ugly, war is dumb.

But if war is ugly, and war is dumb it doesn't begin to compare to a civil war because a civil war means within your own country, your own people are fighting against each other, your own people are making each other dead, and guess what the results are not very, very pretty.

But if a war is dumb, and typically a war within a country is dumb, the civil war in the United States of America was probably one of the dumbest wars you could ever imagine. And you have to see reenactments to appreciate quite how dumb it was. You would see rows and rows of soldiers the north and the south and they'd line up and the war, the battle would begin and they'd start shooting and they all stood there, like wooden blocks, they would stand and shoot, stand and shoot, this one would fall, this one would fall, and you'd see tttt ttt tt, people after people falling and falling and falling but the amount of carnage, the amount of people that died was frightening, almost six hundred thousand soldiers died in two years. In totality they claim in the four years, the American soldiers that died were between six hundred thousand and eight hundred thousand soldiers died but you have to appreciate what that means.

In all the years of the United States of America, one point two million soldiers died. That means in these battles, in this war, the civil war, half of all the battles, meaning in Vietnam fifty thousand soldiers died, that's a lot of people but fifty thousand is not six hundred thousand but that wasn't the saddest point.

The United States of America was a fledgling country, it was tiny, two percent of the population died. It wasn't just six hundred thousand people it was everyone had lost a brother, a cousin, someone because the carnage, the absolute murder was disastrous.

Abraham Lincoln was the sitting president and for the sake of the union, he basically arranged for this war and he carried this as a huge burden and he did everything in his power to win the war quickly because the more quickly the war is won, the less casualties on both sides and here is the observation:

The north far outmanned, outnumbered, outgunned the south. The union in the north should have won the war in no time and certainly that was the predictions. We're talking more than two to one in terms of soldiers and really that's an understatement because the south had very little in terms of arms they didn't really have an army, they didn't really have the development in the same way the north did. The odds of this war lasting for any length of time was very slim.

Nevertheless the war lasted for four years and again hundreds of thousands of soldiers died. But here's the most interesting thing about the civil war, the civil war was fought largely with muskets. You remember the musket from the revolutionary war period, a soldier would take his gun, he would put a charge and the powder inside the barrel of the gun. Then he would put the bullet, round bullet in it. He would then take a ramrod which is a piece of metal and jam it in tight, then he'd hold his gun and aim it, tch, fire it and this as you could see the reenactments, you can see that a trained soldier would go through this whole procedure, shoot, go through the whole procedure. A trained, skilled soldier could get off two to three shots in a minute.

And the two sides would stand against each other shooting and shooting and falling and falling and obviously when you're putting the bullet in etc., you're a sitting duck and the bloodshed was horrific.

Could you imagine what it would have been like had one side had modern weapons? Could you imagine if the north had machine guns, the war would have lasted two days. I mean, you know you take one battle ddddup and it's over because the south sees they're so outmanned, so outgunned they just can't fight, they quit after two days of battle.

Of course machine guns didn't exist then, but they did. The Spencer rifle was invented by Christian Spencer back in 1860, it was patented the year before the war began. Now the Spencer rifle was a repeater rifle. You would load seven bullets into the breach, into the back of the gun and then you'd shoot one two three four five six seven. They you'd load again seven bullets and shoot a trained soldier could get off twenty to thirty shots a minute. Could you imagine if the north had these rifles, fighting against the south, the south far less in numeric, numbers, far less in weaponry and the south are fighting, shooting off two bullets a minute and the north twenty to thirty bullets, I mean it would be over again in two days, in two weeks, two months for sure.

But again, the odd part was, repeater rifles existed and Spencer who invented the Spencer repeater rifle, tried everything to get the armies to buy the guns but they wouldn't buy, it was newfangled weaponry, can't trust it in combat and he proved time after time it was reliable. The cavalry in fact used it and after one battle, the cavalry said it was the most effective weapon, in fact the Major who was leading that battle said the words 'It is sad to watch the other side being plowed down. I almost wanted to stop my men because they were just shooting like sitting ducks'.

So why didn't the north use those guns? Time after time, Spencer tried to get the army to buy. Time after time the army ordinance officers refused. Finally after the battle of Gettysburg, the Christian Spencer shows up at the Whitehouse with one of his guns and he walks in and Abraham Lincoln meets him and they sit down to talk and he explains the gun and Abraham Lincoln grew up in Connecticut, he knew about guns and he was very impressed with it. They went out onto the Whitehouse lawn and first Christian Spencer began shooting and he showed the accuracy and how fast it was. And then he gave it to the president. The president began shooting and he was astonished.

He immediately told the ordinance officer to order ten thousand of these weapons and the ordinance officer, a fellow named Ripley, refused. He said he would but didn't do it, until the bitter end, the battles were fought with these old fashioned guns and hundreds of thousands of soldiers went to their grave because I don't know, it's newfangled, it's different, we don't trust it, we're not familiar with it, we're not comfortable with it because of utter stupidity.

And if you'd like to see an example of complete lack of functional intelligence, it's that exact thing. Now imagine if you're in the army and imagine that you know about this weapon and you know that there's even a Gettling gun which was a legitimate machine gun, imagine that you know the technology is there and you hear your general say, strong, fight harder, keep the lines straight, keep loading those muskets, keep and you want to scream out idiot, get us guns, get us repeater rifles and we'll win the war in two weeks, why are we doing this?

And I believe that's exactly what the *Mesilas Yesharim* is saying, if you're not paying attention to your actions, to your ways, if you're not carefully contemplating, if you're not looking at the way you spend

your time, you're not looking at the way you speak to people, if you're not looking at who you are, what you are and what you do, you're functionally acting without intelligence. I dare say you're functioning as an idiot.

You could be brilliant, you could have the highest IQ but if your brain is on off it doesn't help you. And all of us get into the moment, all of us get into things it's just human nature. And the solution is to put the brain on on.

Now putting the brain on on when I'm busy and doing isn't so simple. But it is simple after the fact. If after the fact, I review my day, review my week, go over how I act, how I behave what I do and what I don't do, and then I plan, then I think what could I change, what could I implement, how could I do this differently?

If I do that process on an ongoing, regular basis, I'm functioning with brilliance, the brilliance that G-D gave me. But if I'm not doing that process, I'm just existing.

There is a wonderful expression, we don't plan to fail, we simply fail to plan. Meaning if you don't plan your life, if you don't plan your day, if you don't plan your week, if you're not asking yourself what am I accomplishing, what can I improve in, how can I do better, whatever, you get busy and you do and you'll be busy and doing and busy and we're all busy doing, but what you're busy doing, how you're doing it, who knows.

And you wake up five years later, ten years later and you say, wow, ha, I'm older not much wiser, not much better, I'm older and what did I do? And by the way one of the great exercises on *Rosh Hashanah*, on *Yom Kippur*, is to ask yourself, okay, I was standing in the same spot last year, how much better am I now than I was then? Is my *davening* better, are my *middos* better? Have I amassed more *Torah* knowledge? Have I become a better *eved Hashem*, am I the same person I was a year ago?

But when you ask that question, and the answer is I don't know how could I tell, I mean who could remember? And how could I tell? What you're saying is you're just doing this thing called life, you're not planning, you're not growing, you're not changing, you're not observing, you're not contemplating because if you were, you'd have a plan, if you were you would have markers along the way and yes you hit some goals, you miss some, but you'd have a very clear version of who you are compared to who you were a year ago, surely who you were five years ago.

But if you walk into *shul* and say, I don't know, who could know, what you're saying is you're living your life by whatever, but it's surely not by design. And living without a plan is forfeiting your life because you will be busy from now until you leave this earth, but what you're busy with, and what you're accomplishing and what you're doing with your time is the question.

The *Mesilas Yesharim* explains to us if you're not doing this process, you're like a blind man on the river bank, you will end up in the, in the Hudson. You may say to me, I'm not that kind of person, and it may be it's true, it might be true that your sin of commission won't be that grave, you're not going to murder, you won't be involved in *avodah zara*, *eishes ish*, okay, I got that, maybe, but I guarantee you



won't be a tenth of the person you could have been. I guarantee unless you set goals, unless you have a concrete plan, unless you have a plan of action and you hold yourself accountable to it, and you measure and you weigh and you analyze and you scrutinize, unless you do that, you will not end up being a fraction of what you could have been.

You won't realize it at the time, oh you'll be busy doing, busy involved, but after five years, after ten years, after twenty years, you'll say to yourself, yep definitely older, got some white in my hair now, oh boy. I wonder what I've done with my time.

And again, intelligence is great, but it's functional intelligence that matters. What the *Mesilas Yesharim* is explaining to us is, even though it sounds so obvious that a person should be "*misbonen umefakeach al masov uderachav*" on his actions and his ways, asking himself are they good for me or not, even though we think that any intelligent person should do that, we don't do it.

And unless you train yourself, unless you actively engage in the process, you live your life like everybody does, whatever, we'll wing it, hey I'm winging it. Listen, I went to *Yeshivah*, I learnt, I'm a good guy, I'm doing what I should do don't worry about me. And if you wing it, says the *Mesilas Yesharim*, just know and understand you are comparable to the blind man on the river.

What do you mean, the blind man is blind. Yeah, you could be intelligent but if you're shutting your brain off, it's worthless and if you are analyzing afterwards then in the moment you're going to make it wrong decisions, make your mistakes and if there's no course correction, forget it. But more than that, if there's no plan, if there's no objective, if there are no goals, well guess what, whatever you're going to be busy with, you'll be busy with but you're not going to be growing, you're not going to be accomplishing, you're not going to be becoming a fraction of what you could have been.

And I want to close this session with one very powerful observation. Arguably the invention that had the greatest impact on history, on humankind was the printing press. Keep in mind, before Guttenberg came along, all books, any book had to be handwritten by a scribe. What that means is it was very, very expensive and books were rare.

In Europe, prior to Guttenberg, prior to the fourteen hundreds, basically the average person didn't have a book, not a book. You went from house to house, there were no books. Obviously there were no newspapers and knowledge, understanding was in the hands of the few, the scholars, but basically the written word wasn't.

What Guttenberg did was he changed the face of mankind because when there are books, there's knowledge, there's understanding, there's information and it was again, probably the greatest invention of history in terms of the impact, it changed the course of humankind.

Now the invention itself really was a major feat, he had to invent three different processes. You see Guttenberg was a goldsmith and he said to himself at a certain point, you know, to write by hand, maybe I could invent something that you could actually print. But he had to invent three separate technologies.

Number one he had to invent the numerable type. Because he was an engraver, because he was a goldsmith he knew that he could engrave the letters and he figured a way that he could put them into a sort of a track so that he could take them out and move them at will, but then he had to devise a way to press that against the paper.

He took a wine press that he modified but then he had to invent a whole new thing called ink that would dry quickly. You see, when the movable type when the ink presses against the paper it lifts up and you have to move the paper, you can't wait three hours till the ink dries, you're not going to get very far, so after ten years of careful analyses, careful thinking, trial and error, he was confident that he had what it took and he went back to Mains, his home place and he set up shop to put his invention into practice.

Now obviously it took a lot of money there was a person he knew from his youth, Forst who loaned him, there were two loans that were made quite substantial loans, and Guttenberg set out with his new invention, to offer what he could to mankind.

Now, first he did very well, he printed announcements for the Church, they would pay him, he would print them and he bought the paper and the ink etc. and he was doing pretty well and after things started growing, he decided to embark on his main mission, he was going to print his first book and it was going to be the bible. Now the Guttenberg bible is famous because Guttenberg printed it. But you have to appreciate, it was twelve hundred pages, two volumes and because it was such a major work and he had to print one page at a time, he decided to print two hundred volumes because you had to print page after page, so he set out to print two hundred of these volumes he spent all of his money on the paper, on the ink and he began doing it and he printed two hundred volumes and he found himself out of funds and in desperation he found himself without money, without the ability to continue his business and he had to sell the type, the ink and the press to Forst and for the rest of his life he worked as a paid hand in the printing press that he invented.

He died penniless because he didn't have a plan. You see imagine that he thought it through carefully, and he realized that two hundred might be too many, what if he printed fifty and sold them and with those profits then reinvested he would have been one of the wealthiest men of his generation but there was no plan and because there was no plan, he died penniless and again spent the rest of his life as a worker in his invention, he changed the course of humanity but didn't reap the benefits of it because he didn't have a plan.

And I think that's a very apt *mashal*. You could have a brilliant invention, you could be brilliant and you could have so much to offer the world and you might even do such, but if you don't have your life planned out, if you're not thinking about your life, if you're not analyzing, if you're not scrutinizing, if you're not studying your day, your weeks, your months, how you use your time, what you do, your reactions with others, your interpersonal relationships, your relationship with Hashem, your purpose in existence, if you're not really studying yourself, who knows?

Without a plan you could invent the printing press and die penniless and a person could spend his life and who knows.

What the *Mesilas Yesharim* is sharing with us is that this is the fundamental any thinking person should do it but we don't "*misbonen umefakeach*" to contemplate, to think, to analyze, that leads a person to *zehirus*, to watchfulness, then ultimately a person becomes the growing type of person, becomes the type of person who accomplishes, and reaches the reason for his purpose in existence, but if you don't do it, you'll never succeed.

May Hashem help us and give us the wisdom to implement this and to really put it into practice.