

דף יומי • חלין • דף ע"ד

Daf Yomi • The Full Daf • Elucidated Talmud • Navy & Gold Edition • with Rashi

THE SUGYA

We begin this daf by diving deeper into the sugya of a hanging limb on an animal, exploring the profound halachic difference between an animal that dies on its own versus one that is properly slaughtered. The Gemara brings a beautiful limud from the pesukim of sheratzim to show how death and shechitah affect these limbs differently, and we see a classic yeshivish chakirah between Rav Chisda and Rabba regarding a limb of a dead fetus.

We then move into a fascinating discussion about an eight-month-old fetus, analyzing whether shechitah can purify it from tumas neveilah. This leads us to a deep inquiry by Rav Hoshaya about whether one can perform shechitah on a living fetus while it is still inside its mother's womb, before we begin the next Mishnah which teaches the fundamental halachos of what we find inside a slaughtered animal.

All introductions, summaries, and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.

עמוד א' DAF 74A

STATEMENT

אין בהן אלא מצות פרוש בלבד.

Therefore, **there is not in them** any Torah prohibition, **but only a mitzvah to separate** oneself from eating them as a Rabbinic safeguard.

STATEMENT

תניב רב יוסף קמיה דרב הונא, ויתניב וקאמר: אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: אכלו לזה – לוקה.

Rav Yosef sat before Rav Huna, and he sat and said: Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: If one ate this hanging limb after the animal died, he **is flogged** for violating the prohibition of eating a limb from a living animal.

OBJECTION

אמר ליה ההוא מרבנן: לא תציתו ליה, הכי אמר רב יצחק בר שמואל בר מרתא משמיה דרב: אכלו לזה – אינו לוקה.

One of the Sages said to him: Do not listen to him in his transmission of Rav's ruling, for this is what Rav Yitzchak bar Shmuel bar Marta says in the name of Rav: If one ate this hanging limb, he **is not flogged**.

QUESTION

אמר ליה רב הונא: אנון אמאן נסמוד?

Rav Huna said to Rav Yosef: Upon whom shall we rely to know the true opinion of Rav?

ANSWER

אֶהְדְּרִינָהוּ רַב יוֹסֵף לְאַפִּיָּה, אָמַר לִיה: מַאי קוּשְׁיָא?

Rav Yosef turned his face away in anger and said to him: What is the difficulty? There is no contradiction between the two versions.

EXPLANATION

כִּי אָמַרְי אֲנָא – בְּמִיתָהּ, דְּעוֹשָׂה נִיפּוּל; כִּי אָמַר אִיהוּ – בְּשַׁחֲיטָהּ, דְּאִינָה עוֹשָׂה נִיפּוּל.

When I said in Rav's name that he is flogged, it was in a case where the animal died **by death** other than slaughter, which **renders** the hanging limb **as though it had fallen off** before death, and thus it remains forbidden as a limb from a living animal. When he said in Rav's name that he is not flogged, it was in a case where the animal died **by slaughter**, which **does not render** the hanging limb **as though it had fallen off** before the slaughter, and therefore the slaughter permits it.

QUESTION

אָמַר רַבָּא: מִנָּא הָא מְלָתָא דְאַמּוּר רַבְּנִין: מִיתָה עוֹשָׂה נִיפּוּל, שַׁחֲיטָה אִינָה עוֹשָׂה נִיפּוּל,

Rava said: From where is this matter that the Sages stated derived, that death renders a hanging limb as though it had fallen off, whereas slaughter does not render a hanging limb as though it had fallen off?

PROOF

דְּכְתִיב: "וְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִפֹּל עָלָיו מֵהֶם בְּמָתָם יִטְמָא", לְמַעוּטֵי מַאי?

As it is written regarding the eight creeping animals: "And anything upon which any of them falls, when they are dead, shall be impure." Now, what does the phrase "when they are dead" serve to exclude?

INFERENCE

אֵילִימָא לְמַעוּטֵי בְּחַיָּיהֶם – מִ"נִבְּלָתָם" נִפְקָא,

If we say it is to exclude them during their lifetime, that is already derived from the word "their carcass," which teaches that only their dead carcass imparts impurity.

INFERENCE

אָלָא שְׁמַע מִינָּה: מִיתָה עוֹשָׂה נִיפּוּל, וְאִין שַׁחֲיטָה עוֹשָׂה נִיפּוּל.

Rather, learn from this that death renders a hanging limb as though it had fallen off, and slaughter does not render a hanging limb as though it had fallen off.

OBJECTION

אָמַר לִיה רַב אֲדָא בַר אַהֲבָה לְרַבָּא: וְהָא קָרָא בְּשָׂרָצִים כְּתִיב!

Rav Adda bar Ahava said to Rava: But this verse is written regarding creeping animals, which are not subject to slaughter at all! How can we derive a law of slaughter from here?

RESOLUTION

אָמַר לִיה: אִם אֵינוּ עֲנִין לְשָׂרָצִים, דְּלֹא בְּגִי שַׁחֲיטָה נִינְהוּ – תִּנְהוּ עֲנִין לְבִהֵמָה.

Rava said to him: If the verse is not needed for the matter of creeping animals, which are not subject to slaughter, apply its matter to an animal, which is subject to slaughter.

OBJECTION

ואבתי מבעי ליה, פצין מיתה: לחין – מטמאים, יבשים – אין מטמאים!

The Gemara objects: **But still**, the phrase "when they are dead" **is needed** to teach that they only defile when they are **similar to** the state of **death**: when they are **moist they impart impurity**, but when they are completely **dry they do not impart impurity**!

RESOLUTION

תרי "במתם" כתיבי.

The Gemara answers: **Two** instances of the phrase "**when they are dead**" **are written**, so one is free for Rava's derivation.

STATEMENT

אמר רב חסדא: מחלוקת באבר דעובר חי, אבל באבר דעובר מת – דברי הכל שחיטה עושה ניהול.

Rav Chisda said: **The dispute** between Rabbi Meir and the Sages regarding a limb of a fetus that protruded **is only regarding a limb of a living fetus**; but regarding a limb of a dead fetus, **everyone agrees** that **slaughter renders** the limb as though it **had fallen off** before the slaughter, and it is not permitted.

STATEMENT

ורבה אמר: במחלוקת בזה כה מחלוקת בזה.

But Rabba said: **Just as there is a dispute in this** case of a living fetus, **so too there is a dispute in that** case of a dead fetus.

מִשְׁנָה MISHNAH

MISHNAH

בן שמונה חי.

Our Mishnah taught: **An eight-month-old fetus born alive** is not rendered pure by slaughtering it, because the concept of slaughter does not apply to its kind.

גְּמָרָא GEMARA

OBJECTION

והתנא: בן שמונה חי יוכיח, שאף על פי שיש במינו שחיטה – אין שחיטתו מטהרתו.

The Gemara challenges: **But isn't it taught in a Braisa: An eight-month-old fetus born alive will prove the point, for even though there is slaughter in its kind, its slaughter does not render it pure** from carcass impurity! This contradicts our Mishnah's reasoning.

RESOLUTION

אמר רב כהנא: יש במינו שחיטה אנב אמו, ותנא דידן מינא דאמיה לא פריה.

Rav Kahana said: **The Braisa** considers that **there is slaughter in its kind by virtue of its mother's slaughter**, which permits the fetus inside her; **but the Tanna of our Mishnah does not raise a challenge from the kind of its mother**, as he does not consider that to be "its kind."

QUESTION

וְלֵהָאֵי תַנָּא דְפִרְיָה, טְרֵפָה דְשְחִיטָתָהּ מְטַהֲרָתָהּ מִנָּא לִיָּה?

And according to this Tanna of the Braisa who does raise the challenge, from where does he derive that the slaughter of a tereifah renders it pure from carcass impurity?

ANSWER

נִפְקָא לִיָּה מִדְּרַב יְהוּדָה אָמַר רַב, דְּאָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה אָמַר רַב, וְאָמַרִי לָהּ בְּמַתְנִיתָא תַנָּא: אָמַר קְרָא
 "וְכִי יָמוּת מִן הַבְּהֵמָה", מְקַצֵּת בְּהֵמָה מְטַמְּאָה וּמְקַצֵּת בְּהֵמָה אֵינָהּ מְטַמְּאָה, וְאִיזוּ זֶה? זֶה טְרֵפָה
 שְשִׁחְטָהּ.

He derives it from that which Rav Yehuda says that Rav says, as Rav Yehuda says that Rav says, and some say it was taught in a Braisa: The verse states: "And if there dies of the animal," and the word "of" implies that only a part of the animal class imparts impurity when it dies, and a part of the animal class does not impart impurity. And which is this? This is a tereifah that one slaughtered.

QUESTION

בְּעֵי רַב הוֹשְׁעִיא: הוֹשִׁיט אֶת יָדוֹ לְמַעַי בְּהֵמָה, וְשָׁחַט בֶּן תִּשְׁעָה חֳדָי, מָהוּ?

Rav Hoshaya raised a dilemma: If one inserted his hand into the womb of an animal and slaughtered a nine-month-old living fetus inside, what is the law?

EXPLANATION

תִּבְעֵי לְרַבִּי מֵאִיר, וְתִבְעֵי לְרַבָּנָן.

Let the question be asked according to Rabbi Meir, and let the question be asked according to the Rabbis.

EXPLANATION

תִּבְעֵי לְרַבִּי מֵאִיר: עַד כָּאֵן לֹא קָאָמַר רַבִּי מֵאִיר בֶּן פְּקוּעָה טְעוֹן שְׁחִיטָה – הֲנִי מִלִּי הֵיכָא דִּינְצָא
 לְאוּרִי הָעוֹלָם, אֲבָל בְּמַעַי אִמּוֹ – לֹא שָׁרִיָּא לִיָּה שְׁחִיטָה. אוּ דִילְמָא, אֲפִילוּ לְרַבָּנָן, אֲרַבְעָה סִימְנִין
 אֲכֻשָׁר בִּיה רַחֲמָנָא.

Let the question be asked according to Rabbi Meir: Perhaps Rabbi Meir only says that a fetus born alive requires slaughter when it has emerged into the air of the world, but inside its mother's womb, slaughter does not permit it? Or perhaps, even according to the Rabbis, the Merciful One made four signs valid in it—the mother's two and the fetus's two—and thus this slaughter is effective.

PROOF

אָמַר רַב חַנְנְיָא, תָּא שְׁמַע: הָרִי שָׁנוּ לָדָה טְרֵפָה מִן הַבֶּטֶן, וְאִי אִיתָא, מִשְׁכַּחַת לָהּ דְּהִיתָה לָּהּ שְׁעַת
 הַכּוֹשֶׁר, דָּאִי בְּעֵי עֵיִל יָדֶיהָ וְשָׁחַטָהּ!

Rav Chananya said, come and hear: A Braisa states, "If it was born a tereifah from the womb..." And if it is so that slaughter inside the womb is valid, you could find a case where it had a period of fitness before birth, for if he wanted, he could have inserted his hand and slaughtered it in the womb while it was still healthy!

RESOLUTION

אמר ליה רבא: תני שנוצרה טרפה מן הבטן, ומשפחת לה בבטן חמש רגלים.

Rava said to him: Teach the Braisa as, "If it was formed a tereifah from the womb," and you can find it in a case of an animal with five legs, which was a tereifah from the very moment of its formation.

משנה MISHNAH

MISHNAH

מתני' השוחט את הבהמה, ומצא בה בן שמנה חי או מת, או בן תשעה מת – קורעו ומוציא את דמו.

MISHNAH: One who slaughters an animal and finds in it an eight-month-old fetus, whether alive or dead, or a nine-month-old fetus that is dead, tears it open and drains its blood, and it is permitted to be eaten without slaughter.

MISHNAH

מצא בן תשעה חי – טעון שחיטה, וחיוב ב"אותו ואת בנו", דברי רבי מאיר.

If he found a nine-month-old fetus that is alive, it requires slaughter, and one is liable for violating the prohibition of slaughtering "it and its offspring" on the same day if he slaughters both it and its mother; these are the words of Rabbi Meir.

MISHNAH

וחכמים אומרים: שחיטת אמו מטהרתו.

But the Sages say: The slaughter of its mother permits it for consumption, and it does not require its own slaughter.

עמוד ב' DAF 74B

MISHNAH

רבי שמעון שזורי אומר: אפילו בן חמש שנים וחורש בשדה – שחיטת אמו מטהרתו.

Rabbi Shimon Shezuri says: Even if the fetus emerged alive and is now a five-year-old and plowing in the field, the slaughter of its mother renders it permitted to be eaten without any further slaughter.

MISHNAH

קרעה ומצא בה בן תשעה חי – טעון שחיטה, לפי שלא נשחטה אמו.

But if one tore her open, meaning he killed the mother animal without halachic slaughter, and found in her a live nine-month-old fetus, it requires slaughter, because its mother was not slaughtered.

גמרא GEMARA

GEMARA

גמ' אמר רבי אלעזר אמר רבי אושעיא: לא הילכו בו אלא על עסקי שחיטה בלבד.

GEMARA: Rabbi Elazar said that Rabbi Oshaya said: They did not discuss the status of this live nine-month-old fetus except regarding the matter of slaughter alone, to permit its meat.

QUESTION

למעוטי מאי? למעוטי חלב וגיידו.

The Gemara asks: **What does** this statement serve **to exclude**? The Gemara answers: It serves **to exclude its fat and its sciatic nerve**, which remain prohibited as in any other animal.

OBJECTION

חלב דמאי? אילימא: חלב דשלי, מפלג פליגי!

The Gemara asks: **The fat of what part?** **If we say** it means **the fat of the fetus** itself, but **they disagree** about this in a braisa!

PROOF

דתנא: גיד הנשה נוהג בשליל וחלב אסור, דברי רבי מאיר. רבי יהודה אומר: אינו נוהג בשליל וחלב מותר.

As it is taught in a braisa: **The sciatic nerve applies to a fetus and its fat is prohibited**; these are **the words of Rabbi Meir**. **Rabbi Yehuda says**: It does not apply to a fetus and its fat is permitted.

EXPLANATION

ואמר רבי אלעזר אמר רבי אושעיא: מח לוקת בכו תשעה חי, והלה רבי מאיר לשיטתו, ורבי יהודה לשיטתו.

And Rabbi Elazar said that Rabbi Oshaya said: **This dispute is regarding a live nine-month-old fetus**, and Rabbi Meir followed **his reasoning** that it is an independent animal, and Rabbi Yehuda followed **his reasoning** that it is part of its mother. Thus, they do not agree that its fat is prohibited!

OBJECTION

אלא, חלב דגיד מפלג פליגי, דתנא: גיד הנשה – מחטט אחריו בכל מקום שהוא, וחותה שמנו מעיקרו, דברי רבי מאיר. רבי יהודה אומר: גוממו עם השופי.

Rather, say that Rabbi Oshaya meant **the fat of the sciatic nerve** of the fetus. But they also **disagree** about that, as it is **taught** in a braisa: Regarding **the sciatic nerve**, one **scrapes** after it in any place that it is, and **cuts away its fat from its root**; these are **the words of Rabbi Meir**. **Rabbi Yehuda says**: One **cuts it level with the flesh** and does not need to **scrape** the fat.

RESOLUTION

אלא אי אתמר – הכי אתמר, אמר רבי אלעזר אמר רבי אושעיא: לא היכלו בו אלא על עסקי אכילה בלבד, למעוטי רובעו, וחורש בו.

Rather, if it was stated, it was stated like this: Rabbi Elazar said that Rabbi Oshaya said: They did not discuss the status of the fetus **except regarding matters of eating alone**, but for other matters it is a full animal, **to exclude one who copulates with it, and one who plows with it** together with another species, which are prohibited by all.

STATEMENT

אמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש: לדברי המתיר בחלב – מתיר בדמו, לדברי האוסר בחלב – אוסר בדמו.

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: According to the words of the one who permits its fat—namely Rabbi Yehuda—he also permits its blood; according to the words of the one who prohibits its fat—Rabbi Meir—he also prohibits its blood.

STATEMENT

ורבי יוחנן אמר: אף לדברי המתיר בִּחְלָבוֹ – אוֹסֵר בְּדָמוֹ.

And Rabbi Yochanan said: Even according to the words of the one who permits its fat, he prohibits its blood.

OBJECTION

איתיביה רבי יוחנן לרבי שמעון בן לקיש: קורעו ומוציא את דמו.

Rabbi Yochanan raised an objection to Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish from our Mishnah: One tears it and removes its blood, which shows that its blood is prohibited even though its fat is permitted!

RESOLUTION

אמר רבי זירא: לומר שאין ענוש כרת.

Rabbi Zeira said: Reish Lakish meant to say only that eating its blood is not punishable by kares, whereas Rabbi Yochanan holds that it is.

QUESTION

למאן קאמרי? לרבי יהודה, לא יהא אלא דם התמצית, דתנא: דם התמצית באזהרה, רבי יהודה אומר: בהכרת.

The Gemara asks: According to whom are they saying this? According to Rabbi Yehuda. But let it be no less than the blood of exudate, as it is taught in a braisa: The blood of exudate is subject to a negative prohibition, but Rabbi Yehuda says: It is subject to kares!

ANSWER

תרגמא רב יוסף בריה דרב סלא חסידא קמיה דרב פפא: אית ליה לרבי יהודה "דם" ו"כל דם", כל היכא דמיתייב אדם הנפש – מיתייב אדם התמצית, וכל היכא דלא מיתייב אדם הנפש – לא מיתייב אדם התמצית.

Rav Yosef the son of Rav Salla the Pious explained it before Rav Pappa: Rabbi Yehuda holds that the Torah writes 'blood' and 'any blood'; therefore, wherever one is liable for the blood of life, he is liable for the blood of exudate, and wherever one is not liable for the blood of life—such as the fetus, whose life is covered by its mother's slaughter—he is not liable for the blood of exudate.

QUESTION

איבעיא להו: מהו לפדות בכֶּן פְּקוּעָה?

A dilemma was raised before them: What is the law as to whether one may redeem a firstborn donkey with a ben pekua—a fetus found alive inside a slaughtered animal?

EXPLANATION

אליבא דרבי מאיר לא תיבעי לך, דכיון דאמר טעון שחיטה – שֶׁה מַעֲלִיא הוּא.

According to Rabbi Meir, do not raise the dilemma, because since he says it requires slaughter, it is a proper lamb in every way and may be used.

QUESTION

כִּי תִיבָעִי לָךְ אֶלֶיכָא דְרַבְנָן, דְּאָמְרִי: שְׁחִיטַת אִמּוֹ מְטַהֲרָתוֹ, מַאי?

When you should raise the dilemma is according to the Rabbis, who say: The slaughter of its mother renders it permitted. What is the law?

QUESTION

כִּינּוּן דְּאָמְרִי שְׁחִיטַת אִמּוֹ מְטַהֲרָתוֹ – כְּבָשָׂרָא בְּדִיקוּלָא הוּא, אוּ דִּילְמָא, כִּינּוּן דְּרַהֲיִט וְאַזִּיל וְרַהֲיִט וְאַתִּי – ”שֶׁה” קָרִינָא בִּיהּ?

Do we say: Since they say the slaughter of its mother renders it permitted, it is like meat in a basket, and not a living lamb? Or perhaps, since it runs back and forth, we call it a 'lamb'?

STATEMENT

מַר זוּטְרָא אָמַר: אֵין פּוֹדִין, וְרַב אֲשִׁי אָמַר: פּוֹדִין.

Mar Zutra said: We do not redeem with it. And Rav Ashi said: We do redeem with it.

QUESTION

אָמַר לִיהּ רַב אֲשִׁי לְמַר זוּטְרָא: מַאי דַּעְתָּךְ? דְּגַמְרַת ”שֶׁה” ”שֶׁה” מִפְּסָחִים?

Rav Ashi said to Mar Zutra: What is your reasoning? That you derive the word 'lamb' here from the word 'lamb' from the Pesach offering?

OBJECTION

אִי מָה לְהֶלֶן – זָכָר, תָּמִים, וּבֶן שָׁנָה, אִף כָּאֵן – זָכָר, תָּמִים, וּבֶן שָׁנָה!

If so, just as there it must be a male, unblemished, and in its first year, so too here it must be a male, unblemished, and in its first year! But we know that is not required.

ANSWER

”תַּפְּדָּה” ”תַּפְּדָּה” רִיבָה.

Mar Zutra replied: The Torah's repetition of 'you shall redeem' 'you shall redeem' included other types of lambs.

OBJECTION

אִי ”תַּפְּדָּה” ”תַּפְּדָּה” רִיבָה, אֲפִילוּ כָל מִילֵי נֶמִי, אִם כֵּן ”שֶׁה” ”שֶׁה” מַאי אֶהְיִי לָךְ?

Rav Ashi asked: If 'you shall redeem' 'you shall redeem' included everything, then even anything else also should be valid! If so, what did the gezerah shavah of 'lamb' 'lamb' accomplish for you?

QUESTION

אִיבָעִיא לְהוֹ: מַהוּ לְמִנּוֹת בּוּ רִאשׁוֹן וְשֵׁנִי?

A dilemma was raised before them: What is the law as to whether we count first and second degrees of ritual impurity in it, as we do with food, or is it like a living animal which cannot become tamei?

STATEMENT

רבי יוחנן אמר: מונין בו ראשון ושני.

Rabbi Yochanan said: We count first and second degrees of impurity in it, because it is considered slaughtered meat.

STATEMENT

רבי שמעון בן לקיש אמר: אין מונין בו ראשון ושני, נעשה כפאגוז המתקשקש בקליפתו.

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish says: We do not count first and second degrees of impurity in it; it is made like a nut that rattles in its shell, meaning it is a separate living body inside the mother.

OBJECTION

איתיביה רבי שמעון בן לקיש לרבי יוחנן: הפשר מצע נבלה – דברי רבי מאיר. וחקמים אומרים: מצע טרפה שחוטה.

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish raised an objection to Rabbi Yochanan from a Mishnah: The fetus's flesh is considered the touch of a carcass; these are the words of Rabbi Meir. And the Sages say: It is like the touch of a slaughtered treifah.

OBJECTION

בשלמא לדידי, דאמינא חד גופא הוא – היינו דאיתכשר בדמא דאמיה, אלא לדידך, במאי איתכשר?

Granted according to me, who says it is one body with the mother, that is how it became fit to receive impurity through the blood of its mother's slaughter. But according to you, how did it become fit? It was never touched by liquid!

ANSWER

אמר ליה: בשחיטה, וכרבי שמעון.

Rabbi Yochanan said to him: It became fit through the slaughter itself, and according to Rabbi Shimon who holds that slaughter makes meat fit to receive impurity even without liquid.

OBJECTION

איתיביה רבי יוחנן לרבי שמעון בן לקיש: עבר בנהר – הוכשר, הלה לבית הקברות – נטמא.

Rabbi Yochanan raised an objection to Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish from a braisa: If the fetus crossed a river, it became fit to receive impurity; if it went to a cemetery, it became tamei.

OBJECTION

בשלמא לדידי דאמינא תרי גופי נינהו, משום הכי הוכשר – אין, לא הוכשר – לא, אלא לדידך דאמרת חד גופא הוא, הא איתכשר בדמא דאמיה!

Granted according to me, who says they are two bodies, that is why the braisa says: if it became fit by crossing the river, yes, it can become tamei, but if it did not become fit, no. But according to you, who says it is one body, it was already made fit by the blood of its mother's slaughter!

SUMMARY

The daf establishes that while the natural death of an animal renders a hanging limb as if it had fallen off beforehand (leaving it forbidden as a limb from a living animal), a proper shechitah does not have this effect, and thus the shechitah successfully permits the limb. We learn that this distinction is derived from the words 'when they are dead' written by sheratzim. The Gemara then discusses the status of an eight-month-old fetus, clarifying that its shechitah is ineffective to purify it from tumah because shechitah does not apply to its kind, though we explore how its mother's shechitah might connect to this definition. Finally, the Gemara presents a dilemma regarding whether shechitah can be performed on a fetus inside the womb, and introduces the Mishnah ruling that a found eight-month fetus (alive or dead) or a dead nine-month fetus is permitted through the mother's shechitah, whereas a live nine-month fetus requires its own shechitah.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

In our sugya, the Gemara discusses the status of a limb that is partially severed and hanging from a live animal. When the animal dies, we must determine if this hanging limb is considered to have fallen off before death, or if it is still considered connected. This concept of "nipul", whether something hanging by a thread is already deemed fallen and separated, is a profound lesson in our own spiritual lives.

How often do we find ourselves "hanging by a thread" in our avodah? We might feel disconnected from our learning, our tefillah, or our passion for Yiddishkeit, feeling as though we are barely holding on. The yetzer hara whispers to us that we are already spiritually detached, that we have already fallen. But the Torah teaches us otherwise: as long as there is a connection, as long as the animal is slaughtered properly, we do not say it has fallen. You are still connected.

Never write yourself off as detached just because the connection feels weak. Even a thin thread of desire to do the ratzon of Hashem keeps you fully attached to the source of life. Your job is not to despair over the fraying connection, but to strengthen it, knowing that in the eyes of the Aibershter, you are still completely there.

Today, identify one area of your avodah where you feel weak or disconnected, and perform one small, deliberate act of connection, a single minute of focused tefillah or learning, to show that you are still firmly attached.

הלכות תלמוד תורה • פרק רביעי

Learned like the daf, the literal words in bold, flowing with the elucidation

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, we learn the vital halachos of how a Torah shiur must be conducted, focusing on the spiritual and ethical standards required of both the rebbe and the talmid. The Rambam teaches us that Torah is a holy inheritance that cannot be given over to an improper student whose deeds are not refined, nor may we learn from a teacher who does not resemble an angel of Hashem. We must protect the purity of the Torah by ensuring that both those who teach it and those who receive it are walking on a straight path of yiras Shamayim.

Additionally, the chapter guides us in the proper derech eretz and physical setup of the bais medrash. We learn how the rebbe and the talmidim should sit in relation to one another, emphasizing a beautiful sense of mutual respect and equality in the presence of the Shechinah, where everyone sits either on the ground or on chairs together.

All introductions, summaries, and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.

הלכה א

Halacha 1 - Restricting Torah Instruction to Proper Students and Proper Teachers

אין מלמדין תורה אלא לתלמיד הגון נאה במעשיו.

We do not teach Torah except to a student who is proper and attractive in his deeds,

או לתם.

or to an innocent person who has not shown any bad traits.

אבל אם היה הולך בדרכו לא טובה

But if he was walking in a path that is not good,

מחזירין אותו למוטב ומנהיגין אותו בדרכו לשרה

we return him to the good and we guide him in a path that is straight,

ובודקין אותו

and we examine him to see if he has truly changed,

ואחר כך מכניסין אותו לבית המדרש ומלמדין אותו.

and after that we bring him to the house of study and we teach him.

אמרו חכמים כל השונה לתלמיד שאינו הגון

Said the Sages: Anyone who teaches a student who is not proper,

כִּאֲלוּ זָרַק אֶבֶן לְמֶרְקוּלִיס

it is as if he threw a stone to Mercury, which is an act of idolatry,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר מִשְׁלֵי כו ח "כְּצֹרֹר אֶבֶן בְּמַרְגָּמָה כֵּן נוֹתֵן לְכֹסִיל כְּבוֹד".

as it is said in Mishlei, "Like binding a stone in a sling so is he who gives to a fool honor".

וְאֵין כְּבוֹד אֶלָּא תּוֹרָה

And there is no honor except Torah,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר מִשְׁלֵי ג לה "כְּבוֹד חֲכָמִים יִנָּחֵלוּ".

as it is said, "Honor the wise shall inherit".

וְכֵן הָרֵב שְׂאִינוּ הוֹלֵךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ טוֹבָה

And likewise, a teacher who is not walking in a path that is good,

אֲףִי עַל פִּי שֶׁחֲכָם גָּדוֹל הוּא וְכָל הָעָם צָרִיכִין לוֹ

even though a sage great he is and all the nation need him for his wisdom,

אֵין מִתְלַמְּדִין מִמֶּנּוּ עַד שׁוּבוֹ לְמוֹטָב.

we do not study from him until his return to the good,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר מִלֵּאכִי ב ז "כִּי שְׁפָתַי כֹּהֵן יִשְׁמְרוּ דַעַת וְתוֹרָה יִבְקְשׁוּ מִפִּיהוּ כִּי מִלֵּאָה ה' צְבָאוֹת הוּא".

as it is said, "For the lips of a priest shall guard knowledge and Torah they shall seek from his mouth for a messenger of Hashem of Hosts he is".

אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים אִם הָרֵב דּוֹמָה לְמִלֵּאָה ה' צְבָאוֹת תּוֹרָה יִבְקְשׁוּ מִפִּיהוּ

Said the Sages: If the teacher resembles a messenger of Hashem of Hosts, Torah they shall seek from his mouth,

אִם לֹא אֵל יִבְקְשׁוּ תּוֹרָה מִפִּיהוּ:

if not, do not seek Torah from his mouth.

הִלָּכָה ב

Halacha 2 · The Seating Arrangement of the Teacher and Students During Torah Study

כִּיצַד מְלַמְּדִים.

How do they teach Torah to the disciples?

הָרֵב יוֹשֵׁב בְּרֹאשׁ

The teacher sits at the head of the study hall,

וְהִתְלַמִּידִים מְקַפִּים לְפָנָיו כַּעֲטָרָה

and the students are surrounded before him like a crown, in a semi-circle,

כְּדִי שִׁיהוּ כָּלֶם רוֹאִים הָרֶב

so that they will be, all of them, seeing the teacher

וְשׁוֹמְעִים דְּבָרָיו.

and hearing his words clearly.

וְלֹא יֵשֵׁב הָרֶב עַל הַכִּסֵּא

And not shall sit the teacher on the chair

וְתִלְמִידָיו עַל הַקֶּרְמַע

and his students on the ground, as this is disrespectful to them,

אֶלָּא אוֹ הַכֹּל עַל הָאָרֶץ

rather, either everyone sits on the ground,

אוֹ הַכֹּל עַל הַכִּסְאוֹת.

or everyone sits on the chairs.

וּבְרֵאשׁוֹנָה הָיָה הָרֶב יוֹשֵׁב

And originally, in earlier generations, was the teacher sitting

וְהִתְלַמִּידִים עוֹמְדִים

and the students standing out of great awe and respect for the Torah,

וּמִקֵּדֶם חָרְפָּן בֵּית שְׁנִי

and before the destruction of the House, the Second Beis HaMikdash, when weakness descended upon the world,

נִהְגּוּ הַכֹּל לְלַמֵּד לְתִלְמִידִים

they accustomed everyone to teach to the students

וְהֵם יוֹשְׁבִים:

while they are sitting.

הִלְכָּה ג

Halacha 3 · The Conduct of the Teacher and the Spokesman During Instruction

אִם הָיָה מְלַמֵּד מִפִּי לְתִלְמִידִים מְלַמֵּד.

If he was teaching directly from his mouth to the students, he teaches them in this manner.

ואם הִיָּה מְלַמֵּד עַל פִּי מְתַרְגֵּם

And if he was teaching by the mouth of a spokesman who broadcasts his words to the large crowd,

הַמְתַּרְגֵּם עוֹמֵד בֵּינּוּ וּבֵין הַתְּלָמִידִים

the spokesman stands between him and between the students,

וְהָרֵב אוֹמֵר לַמְתַּרְגֵּם וְהַמְתַּרְגֵּם מְשַׁמֵּיעַ לְכָל הַתְּלָמִידִים.

and the teacher says the lesson quietly to the spokesman, and the spokesman makes it heard to all the students.

וּכְשֶׁהֵם שׁוֹאֲלִין לַמְתַּרְגֵּם

And when they ask questions, they address them to the spokesman;

הוּא שׁוֹאֵל לָרֵב וְהָרֵב מְשִׁיב לַמְתַּרְגֵּם וְהַמְתַּרְגֵּם מְשִׁיב לַשׁוֹאֵל.

he asks the teacher, and the teacher replies to the spokesman, and the spokesman replies to the questioner.

וְלֹא יִגְבִּיהַּ הָרֵב קוֹלוֹ יוֹתֵר מִקוֹל הַמְתַּרְגֵּם.

And not shall raise the teacher his voice more than the voice of the spokesman, so as not to confuse the listeners.

וְלֹא יִגְבִּיהַּ הַמְתַּרְגֵּם קוֹלוֹ בְּעֵת שֶׁשׁוֹאֵל אֶת הָרֵב יוֹתֵר מִקוֹל הָרֵב.

And not shall raise the spokesman his voice at the time that he asks the teacher, more than the voice of the teacher, out of respect.

אֵין הַמְתַּרְגֵּם רֹשֵׁאִי לֹא לִפְחֹת וְלֹא לְהוֹסִיף וְלֹא לְשַׁנּוֹת

There is no the spokesman permitted not to subtract, and not to add, and not to change anything from the teacher's words,

אֲלֵא אִם כֵּן הִיָּה הַמְתַּרְגֵּם אֲבִיו שֶׁל חָכָם אוֹ רַבּוֹ.

unless was the spokesman his father of the sage, or his teacher, in which case the teacher must show them extra honor.

אוֹמֵר הָרֵב לַמְתַּרְגֵּם כֹּה אָמַר לִי רַבִּי אוֹ כֹּה אָמַר לִי אָבִא מְרִי.

In such a case, says the teacher to the spokesman, "So said to me my teacher," or "So said to me my father, my master."

וּכְשֶׁאוֹמֵר הַמְתַּרְגֵּם הַדְּבָרִים לָעָם

And when says the spokesman the words to the people,

אוֹמֵר בְּשֵׁם הַחָכָם וּמִזְכִּיר שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל אָבִי הָרֵב אוֹ שֶׁל רַבּוֹ

he says them in the name of the sage, and mentions the name of of the father of the teacher, or of his teacher,

וְאוֹמֵר כֹּה אָמַר רַבָּנָא פְּלוֹנִי

and says, "So said our master, so-and-so,"

אף על פי שלא הזכיר הרב שמו של חכם.

even though that not mentioned the teacher the name of of the sage explicitly when speaking to him.

שאסור לקרות לרבו או לאביו בשמו:

This is because it is forbidden for a person to call his teacher or his father by his name.

הלכה ד

Halacha 4: The Patience Required of a Teacher and Student in Torah Study

הרב שילמד ולא הבינו התלמידים

The teacher who taught, and the students did not understand the lesson,

לא יכעס עליהם וירגז

he should not become angry with them and rage at them;

אלא חוזר ושונה הדבר אפלו כמה פעמים

rather, he goes back and repeats the matter, even several times,

עד שיבינו עמק ההלכה.

until they understand the depth of the halachah.

וכן לא יאמר התלמיד הבנתי והוא לא הבין

And likewise, the student should not say, "I understood," when he did not understand;

אלא חוזר ושואל אפלו כמה פעמים.

rather, he goes back and asks, even several times.

ואם פגע עליו רבו ורגז

And if his teacher became angry with him and raged,

יאמר לו רבי תורה היא וללמד אני צריך ודעתי קצרה:

he should say to him, "My teacher, it is Torah, and I need to learn, but my mind is short and limited."

הלכה ה

Halacha 5: The Proper Demeanor of Student and Teacher During Torah Study

לא יהיה התלמיד בוש מחבריו

The student should not be embarrassed by his colleagues

שְׁלֵמָדוֹ מִפַּעַם רִאשׁוֹנָה אוֹ שְׁנִיָּה

who learned and understood the lesson from the first or second time,

וְהוּא לֹא לָמַד אֶלָּא אַחֵר כַּמָּה פְּעָמִים.

and he did not learn and grasp it except after several times.

שָׂאֵם נִתְבַּיֵּשׁ מִדְּבַר זֶה

For if he is embarrassed by this matter,

נִמְצָא נִכְנָס וְיוֹצֵא לְבֵית הַמְדָּרֶשׁ

he finds himself entering and leaving the house of study

וְהוּא אֵינוֹ לָמַד כְּלוּם.

and he is not learning anything at all.

לְפִיכָּה אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים הָרִאשׁוֹנִים

Therefore, the early Sages said:

אִין הַבִּיּוֹשׁ לָמַד

'The bashful person does not learn,

וְלֹא הַקָּפָדָן מְלַמֵּד.

and the short-tempered person does not teach.'

בְּמָה דְּבָרִים אֲמוּרִים

In what circumstances are these words said?

בְּזֶמַן שֶׁלֹּא הִבִּינוּ הַתְּלָמִידִים הַדְּבַר

At a time when the students did not understand the matter

מִפְּנֵי עֲמָקוֹ אוֹ מִפְּנֵי דַעְתָּן שֶׁהִיא קְצָרָה.

because of its depth, or because of their mind which is short and limited.

אָבֵל אִם נֶכֶד לָרַב

But if it is apparent to the teacher

שֶׁהֵם מְתַרְשְׁלִין בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה וּמְתַרְפִּין עֲלֶיהֶן

that they are lazy in the words of Torah and are lax upon them,

וּלְפִיכָּה לֹא הִבִּינוּ

and therefore they did not understand,

חַיֵּב לְרַגֵּז עֲלֵיהֶן וּלְהַכְלִימָן בְּדִבְרֵים

he is obligated to show anger at them and to shame them with words

כְּדֵי לְחַדְדֵם.

in order to sharpen them and wake them up from their laziness.

וּכְעֲנִיָּן זֶה אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים

And like this matter, the Sages said:

זֶרֶק מָרָה בְּתַלְמִידִים.

'Cast fear among the students' to keep them focused.

לְפִיכָּה אֵין רְאוּי לָרַב

Therefore, it is not fitting for the teacher

לְהִהָיֵת קִלּוֹת רֹאשׁ לְפָנֵי תַלְמִידִים

to behave with lightness of head before the students,

וְלֹא לְשַׁחֵק בְּפָנֵיהֶם

and not to jest before them,

וְלֹא לֶאֱכֹל וְלִשְׁתּוֹת עִמָּהֶם

and not to eat and drink with them,

כְּדֵי שֶׁתִּהְיֶה אֵימָתוֹ עֲלֵיהֶן

in order that there shall be his fear upon them,

וְיִלְמְדוּ מִמֶּנּוּ בְּמַהֲרָה.

and they will learn from him quickly.

הַלָּכָה ו

Halacha 6 · Proper Conduct for Asking Questions in the House of Study and Testing Students

אֵין שׂוֹאֵלִין אֶת הָרַב בְּשִׁיכָּנֹס לְמִדְרַשׁ

We do not ask questions of the teacher when he enters the house of study

עַד שֶׁתַּתְּיֹשֵׁב דַּעְתּוֹ עָלָיו.

until his mind settles upon him so he can focus properly.

ואין התלמיד שואל כש'כנס

And the student himself does not ask a question immediately when he enters

עד ש'תישב וינوح.

until he settles and rests from the exertion of his journey.

ואין שואל'ין שנים כאחד.

And we do not ask, meaning two students should not ask questions as one.

ואין שואל'ין את הרב מענ'ין אחר

And we do not ask the teacher on another subject

אלא מאותו הענ'ין שה'ן עסוקין בו

except from that subject that they are occupied with at that moment,

כדי שלא יתביש.

in order that he will not be embarrassed if he does not have the answer immediately ready.

ויש לרב להטעות את התלמידים בשאלותיו

And there is permission for the teacher to mislead the students with his questions

ובמעשים שעושה בפניהם כדי לחדדן.

and with the actions that he does before them in order to sharpen them and test their reasoning.

וכדי שידע אם זוכרים הם מה שלמד'ם או אינם זוכרים.

And in order that he will know if they remember what he taught them or if they do not remember.

ואין צרי'ה לומר שיש לו רשות לשאל אותם בענ'ין אחר שאין עוסקין בו

And there is no need to say that he has permission to ask them on another subject that they are not occupied with

כדי לזרזם:

in order to stimulate them and keep them alert.

הלכה ז

Halacha 7: Proper Conduct and Laws of Questioning One's Teacher

אין שואל'ין מעמד

One does not ask a Torah question while standing,

ואין משיב'ין מעמד

and one does not answer a question while **standing**,

ולא מגבוה

and not from a high place,

ולא מרחוק

and not from far away,

ולא מאחורי הזקנים.

and not from behind the **elders** who are sitting before the teacher.

ואין שואליו הרב אלא בענין שהן קורין בו.

And one does not ask the teacher except on the subject that they are currently reading in it, so as not to embarrass him.

ואין שואליו אלא מיראה.

And one does not ask except with awe and respect for the Torah.

ולא ישאל בענין יותר משלש הלכות:

And he should not ask on the subject more than three **halachot** at one time, so as not to burden the teacher.

הלכה ח

Halacha 8 · The Order of Precedence When Multiple Questions Are Asked of a Teacher

שנים ששאלו.

If there are **two who asked** questions of the teacher at the same time, we must prioritize them as follows:

שאל אחד בענין ושאל אחד שלא בענין

if **one asked to the point**, regarding the topic currently being studied, **and one asked not to the point**, regarding a different topic,

נזקקין לענין.

we attend to the one who asked **the point** first.

מעשה ושאינו מעשה

If one asked about a **practical case** that requires an immediate halachic ruling, **and** the other asked about something **that is not a practical case**,

נזקקין למעשה.

we attend to the one with the **practical case**.

הלכה ומדרש

If one asked about a practical **halacha and** the other about **midrash**, the analytical derivation of a law,

נִזְקָקִין לְהֵלֵכָה.

we attend to the halacha.

מִדְרָשׁ וְאַגְדָּה

If one asked about **midrash and** the other about **aggadah**, homiletic teachings,

נִזְקָקִין לְמִדְרָשׁ.

we attend to the midrash.

אַגְדָּה וְקַל וָחֹמֶר

If one asked about **aggadah and** the other about a **kal vachomer**, an a fortiori logical derivation,

נִזְקָקִין לְקַל וָחֹמֶר.

we attend to the kal vachomer.

קַל וָחֹמֶר וְגֵזֵרָה שְׁוָה

If one asked about a **kal vachomer and** the other about a **gezeirah shavah**, a derivation based on identical words in different verses,

נִזְקָקִין לְקַל וָחֹמֶר.

we attend to the kal vachomer, as it is based on logical reasoning.

הָיוּ הַשּׁוֹאֵלִין שְׁנַיִם

If **the questioners were two** people asking about the same type of topic, but they differ in stature:

אֶחָד חָכָם וְאֶחָד תַּלְמִיד

one is a sage and **one** is a student,

נִזְקָקִין לְחָכָם.

we attend to the sage first.

תַּלְמִיד וְעַם הָאָרֶץ

If one is a **student and** the other is a **common person**,

נִזְקָקִין לַתַּלְמִיד.

we attend to the student.

שְׁנֵיהֶם חָכְמִים שְׁנֵיהֶם תַּלְמִידִים שְׁנֵיהֶם עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ

If **both of them** are sages, or **both of them** are students, or **both of them** are common people,

שאלו שניהם בשתי הלכות

and both of them asked about two halachos of equal weight,

או בשתי תשובות

or about two answers they required,

או בשתי שאלות שני מעשים.

or about two questions regarding two practical cases of equal urgency,

הרשות בידי המתרגם מעתה:

the choice is in the hand of the spokesman, the teacher's assistant who communicates the lessons, to decide whom to answer from this point on.

הלכה ט

Halacha 9 • The Sanctity of the House of Study and Proper Conduct Within It

אין ישנים בבית המדרש

We do not sleep in the house of study,

וכל המתנמנם בבית המדרש

and anyone who dozes in the house of study,

חכמתו נעשית קרעים קרעים.

his wisdom becomes shreds shreds, meaning it becomes fragmented and forgotten.

וכן אמר שלמה בַּחֲכָמְתוֹ מִשְׁלֵי כג כא "וּקְרָעִים תִּלְבִּישׁ נֹמָה".

And so said Shlomo in his wisdom in the Sefer of Mishlei 23:21: "and rags will clothe drowsiness."

ואין משיחין בבית המדרש אלא בדברי תורה בלבד.

And we do not converse in the house of study except with words of Torah alone.

אפלו מי שנִּנְתַּעַשׂשׁ אין אומרים לו רפואה בבית המדרש

Even one who sneezed, we do not say to him "healing"—meaning "Assuta" or "get well"—in the house of study so as not to interrupt the learning,

ואין צריק לומר שאר הדברים.

and there is no need to say that we do not speak of other matters of mundane conversation.

וקדשת בית המדרש חמורה מקדשת בתי כנסיות:

And the sanctity of a house of study is stricter than the sanctity of houses of assembly, which are shuls.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter outlines the strict qualifications for teaching and studying Torah, ruling that we only teach a student whose deeds are proper and refined, while an improper student must first be guided to teshuvah. Similarly, one must never learn from a teacher who does not follow a proper path, as a rebbe must resemble a messenger of Hashem. Finally, the Rambam details the physical arrangement of the shiur, explaining that the teacher sits at the head with the students around him so they can see his face, and establishes that the teacher and students must sit on the same level—either all on the ground or all on chairs—to maintain the proper honor and environment for learning.

למעשה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

The very heart of our avodah in the beis midrash is the understanding that Torah is not a mere academic subject; it is the ultimate 'honor' of Hashem, and it demands a vessel of pure character. Chazal teach us that 'ein habayshan lamed', the one who is embarrassed to ask does not learn. When you sit to learn, you must strip away all pretense and pride. If you did not understand, even after the teacher repeated it multiple times, you must have the courage to say, 'Rebbi, I do not understand, and I need to learn.' True kabalas haTorah requires us to value the truth of Hashem's wisdom far more than our own social standing or the fear of looking foolish in the eyes of others.

At the same time, we must treat the place and the process of learning with the utmost awe and seriousness. The Rambam warns us that one who sleeps or even dozes in the beis midrash will find that his wisdom becomes 'torn into shreds.' This is because Torah cannot be acquired with a lazy, half-hearted attitude. It requires our full presence, our sharpest focus, and a deep reverence for the holiness of the space, which is even greater than that of a shul.

Today, make a conscious effort to elevate your learning. If there is a concept or a halacha you are learning that you do not fully grasp, do not let your pride silence you; ask, review, and seek clarity. Before you begin learning, take a moment to sit up straight, clear your mind of idle chatter, and remind yourself that you are standing in the presence of the King, receiving His holy Torah.

מִסְכֵּת אָבוֹת • פֶּרֶק רִאשׁוֹן

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CHAPTER PREVIEW

We begin our learning of Pirkei Avos by establishing the golden chain of the mesorah, tracing how Moshe Rabbeinu received the Torah at Sinai and passed it down through the generations. This holy transmission went from Yehoshua to the elders, the prophets, and the Men of the Great Assembly, showing us that our oral tradition is unbroken and divine. From there, the chapter introduces the early pairs of Sages, the Zugos, who carried the torch of Torah with immense holiness.

As we delve into their teachings, we find fundamental guidance for our daily avodah and yiras Shamayim. The Sages guide us on how to build a home of Torah, how to conduct ourselves in judgment, how to treat our fellow Jews with warmth, and how to guard our speech. We are introduced to the timeless wisdom of Hillel and Shammai, who teach us the path of peace, diligence in learning, and serving Hashem with absolute sincerity.

All introductions, summaries, and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.

מִשְׁנָה א

הַשְּׁלֵשֶׁת שֶׁל קַבְּלַת הַתּוֹרָה וְהַנְּהִיגַת הַחֲכָמִים

Mishna 1 • The Chain of Torah Transmission and the Three Directives of the Great Assembly

מֹשֶׁה קִבֵּל תּוֹרָה מִסִּינַי, וְיֵהוֹשֻׁעַ לְזִקְנִים, וְזִקְנִים
and the elders to the elders and Yehoshua to Yehoshua and transmitted it from Sinai Torah received Moshe
לְנָבִיאִים, וְנָבִיאִים מְסֻרוֹתָ לְאַנְשֵׁי כְּנֶסֶת הַגְּדוּלָּה. הֵם אָמְרוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה
three said They the Great the Assembly to the Men of transmitted it and the prophets to the prophets
דְּבָרִים, יְהוּ מִתּוֹנִים בְּדִין, וְהַעֲמִידוּ תַלְמִידִים הֶרְבֵּה, וַעֲשׂוּ סִיג לַתּוֹרָה:
for the Torah a fence and make many disciples and establish in judgment deliberate Be things

This Mishnah establishes the unbroken chain of Torah transmission from Sinai down to the Sages of the Great Assembly, who provided foundational guidance for judges and teachers.

מִשְׁנָה ב

הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁעָלֵיהֶם הָעוֹלָם עוֹמֵד

Mishna 2 • The Three Pillars Upon Which the World Stands

שִׁמְעוֹן הַצַּדִּיק הָיָה מִשִּׁיְרֵי כְּנֶסֶת הַגְּדוּלָּה. הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, עַל
on say would he the Great the Assembly from the remnants of was the Righteous Shimon
שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים הָעוֹלָם עוֹמֵד, עַל הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל הָעֲבוּדָה וְעַל גְּמִילוּת
acts of and on the Temple service and on the Torah on stands the world things three
חֶסֶדִּים:
kindness

Shimon the Righteous teaches that the existence of the world depends upon Torah study, the Temple service, and acts of lovingkindness.

אֲנִיטִיגֶנוֹס אִישׁ סוֹכוֹ קִבֵּל מִשְׁמֵעוֹן הַצַּדִּיק. הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, אַל תְּהִי
be do not say would he the Righteous from Shimon received Socho a man of Antigonus

כְּעֲבָדִים הַמְשַׁמְשִׁין אֶת הָרֵב עַל מְנַת לְקִבֵּל פָּרֶס, אֲלֹא הָיוּ כְּעֲבָדִים
like servants be but a reward to receive condition on the master — who serve like servants

הַמְשַׁמְשִׁין אֶת הָרֵב שְׁלֹא עַל מְנַת לְקִבֵּל פָּרֶס, וַיְהִי מוֹרָא שָׁמַיִם
Heaven the fear of and let be a reward to receive condition on not the master — who serve

עֲלֵיכֶם:

upon you

Antigonus of Socho teaches that one should serve Hashem without the expectation of receiving a reward, while maintaining a constant fear of Heaven.

יוֹסִי בֶן יוֹעֶזֶר אִישׁ צֶרֶדָה וְיוֹסִי בֶן יוֹחָנָן אִישׁ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם. יוֹסִי
Yose from them received Yerushalayim man of Yochanan ben and Yose Zeredah man of Yoezer ben Yose

בֶּן יוֹעֶזֶר אִישׁ צֶרֶדָה אוֹמֵר, יְהִי בֵּיתְךָ בֵּית וַעַד לַחֲכָמִים, וְהָיָה
and be for the Sages meeting a house of your house let be says Zeredah man of Yoezer ben

מִתְאַבֵּק בַּעֲפָר רַגְלֵיהֶם, וְהָיָה שׁוֹתָה בְּצִמָּא אֶת דְּבָרֵיהֶם:
their words — with thirst drinking and be their feet in the dust of attaching yourself

Yose ben Yoezer and Yose ben Yochanan transmit the tradition, advising one to make their home a gathering place for Sages.

יוֹסִי בֶן יוֹחָנָן אִישׁ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם אוֹמֵר, יְהִי בֵּיתְךָ פֶּתוּחַ לְרוֹחָה, וַיְהִי
and let be wide open your house let be says Yerushalayim a man of Yochanan son of Yose

עֲנִיִּים בְּנֵי בֵּיתְךָ, וְאַל תִּרְבֶּה שִׁיחָה עִם הָאִשָּׁה. בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ אָמְרוּ,
they said with his wife the woman with conversation increase and do not your household members of poor people

קֹל וְחֹמֶר בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ חֲבֵרוֹ. מִכָּאן אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים, כָּל זְמַן שֶׁאָדָם מֵרַבֶּה
increases that a man the time all the Sages said from here his fellow with the wife of and heavy a light

שִׁיחָה עִם הָאִשָּׁה, גּוֹרֵם רָעָה לְעַצְמוֹ, וּבוֹטֵל מִדְּבַרֵי תוֹרָה, וְסוֹפּוֹ
and his end Torah from words of and desists to himself evil he causes the woman with conversation

יורש גִּיהֵנוֹם:

Gehinnom he inherits

Yose ben Yochanan teaches the importance of keeping a home open to the poor and warns against excessive conversation with women, which distracts from Torah study.

עשה לה רב וקנה לה חבר

Mishna 6 · Appointing a Teacher, Acquiring a Companion, and Judging Others Favorably

יהושע בן פרחיה ונתאי הארבלית קבלו מהם. יהושע בן פרחיה אומר,

says Perachyah son of Yehoshua from them received the Arbelite and Nittai Perachyah son of Yehoshua

עשה לה רב, וקנה לה חבר, והוי דן את כל האדם

man every — judging and be a companion for yourself and acquire a teacher for yourself make

לכף זכות:

merit to the scale of

This Mishnah teaches the importance of spiritual mentorship, friendship, and giving others the benefit of the doubt.

משנה ז

הרחקה משכן רע ומרשע

Mishna 7 · Distancing Oneself from an Evil Neighbor and the Wicked

נתאי הארבלית אומר, הרחק משכן רע, ואל תתחבר לרשע,

with the wicked associate and do not who is evil from a neighbor distance yourself says the Arbelite Nittai

ואל תתיאש מן הפרענות:

retribution of despair and do not

Nittai the Arbelite warns against associating with bad influences and reminds us that divine justice is inevitable.

משנה ח

הנהגת הדין עם בעלי הדין

Mishna 8 · The Conduct of a Judge Toward Litigants

יהודה בן טבאי ושמעון בן שטח קבלו מהם. יהודה בן טבאי אומר,

says Tabbai son of Yehudah from them received Shetach son of and Shimon Tabbai son of Yehudah

אל תעש עצמך כעורכי הדין. וכשיהיו בעלי דין עומדים

standing judgment the masters of and when are the judges like the arrangers of yourself make do not

לפניה, יהיו בעיניה כרשעים. וכשנפטרים מלפניה, יהיו

they should be from before you and when they are like wicked ones in your eyes they should be before you dismissed

בעיניה כזכאין, כשקבלו עליהם את הדין:

the judgment — upon themselves when they accepted like innocent ones in your eyes

Yehudah ben Tabbai teaches that a judge must remain completely impartial, avoiding advocacy and viewing both parties equally during and after the trial.

משנה ט

דרישה וחקירה של עדים וזהירות בדברי הדינים

Mishna 9 · Thorough Interrogation of Witnesses and Caution in the Words of Judges

שמעון בן שטח אומר, הוי מרבה לחקר את העדים, והוי זהיר

careful and be the witnesses — to investigate much be says Shetach son of Shimon

בדבריה, שמא מתוכם ילמדו לשקר:

to lie they will learn from within them lest with your words

Shimon ben Shetach warns judges to cross-examine witnesses thoroughly and to speak carefully so as not to inadvertently teach them how to fabricate testimony.

משנה י

אהבת המלאכה ושנאת הרבנות

Mishna 10 · Loving Work and Shunning Lordship and Government Intimacy

שְׁמַעְיָה וְאַבְטָלְיוֹן קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם. שְׁמַעְיָה אָמַר, אָהַב אֶת הַמְּלָאכָה, וּשְׂנָא אֶת
— and hate work — love says Shemaiah from them received and Abtalion Shemaiah
הַרְבָּנוּת, וְאַל תִּתְּוֹדַע לְרִשּׁוֹת:
to the ruling authority make yourself known and do not lordship

Shemaiah and Abtalion teach the importance of honest labor, avoiding positions of power, and keeping a safe distance from the ruling authorities.

משנה יא

אזהרה לחכמים להזהר בדבריהם מפני חלול השם

Mishna 11 · A Warning to Sages to Guard Their Words to Prevent Desecration of Heaven's Name

אַבְטָלְיוֹן אָמַר, חֲכָמִים, הִזָּהָרוּ בְּדַבְרֵיכֶם, שִׁמָּא תַּחֲבוּבוּ חֻבַּת גָּלוּת
exile the obligation of you will obligate lest with your words be careful Sages says Avtalyon
וּתְגַלּוּ לְמָקוֹם מִיַּם הָרָעִים, וְיִשְׁתּוּ הַתְּלָמִידִים הַבָּאִים אַחֲרֵיכֶם
after you who come the disciples and they will drink the evil waters to a place of and you will be exiled
וְיָמוּתוּ, וְנִמְצָא שֵׁם שָׁמַיִם מְתַחֲלָל:
is profaned Heaven the Name of and it will be found and they will die

Avtalyon warns Torah scholars to speak with extreme precision so that heretical disciples do not misinterpret their words and stray after false doctrines.

משנה יב

הנהגת הלל לאהב שלום ולקרב את הבריות

Mishna 12 · The Conduct of Hillel to Love Peace and Draw Creations Close to Torah

הֵלֵל וְשַׁמַּי קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם. הֵלֵל אָמַר, הֵיטֵב מִתְּלָמִידָיו שֶׁל אַהֲרֹן, אוֹהֵב
loving Aharon of from the disciples be says Hillel from them received and Shammai Hillel
שְׁלוֹם וְרוֹדֵף שְׁלוֹם, אוֹהֵב אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת וּמִקְרָבָן לְתוֹרָה:
to the Torah and drawing them the creations — loving peace and pursuing peace
close

Hillel teaches that one should emulate Aharon the Kohen Gadol by actively pursuing peace and bringing people closer to the Torah through love.

משנה יג

הסכנה בגאווה ובכטול תורה

Mishna 13 · The Danger of Seeking Fame and Neglecting Torah Study

הוּא הָיָה אָמַר, נָגִיד שָׁמָּא, אֲבָד שְׁמָהּ. וְדָלָא מוֹסִיף, יָסַף.
ceases add and one who does not his name destroys his name one who makes great say used to He
וְדָלָא יָלִיף, קָטְלָא חַיִּב. וְדֹאשְׁתִּימָשׁ בְּתַגָּא, חֵלִיף:
passes away of the crown and one who makes use deserves death learn and one who does not

This Mishnah warns against using Torah knowledge for self-aggrandizement and emphasizes the necessity of continuous study.

משנה יד

הוא הִזָּה אומר, אם אין אני לִי, מי לִי. וכִשְׁאֲנִי לְעַצְמִי, מה אני.

am I what for myself alone And when I am is for me who for myself I not If say used to He

וְאִם לֹא עֲכָשְׁיוּ, אִימָתִי:

when now not And if

Hillel teaches that a person must take personal responsibility for their own spiritual growth and act without delay.

משנה טו

קביעות התורה, מעוט דבור והסברת פנים

Mishna 15 · Making Torah Study Fixed, Speaking Little and Doing Much, and Welcoming Everyone Warmly

שמאי אומר, עשה תורתך קבע. אומר מעט ועשה הרבה, והוי מקבל את

— receiving and be much and do little say fixed your Torah make says Shammai

כל האדם בספר פנים יפות:

face expression of with a cheerful person every

Shammai teaches the importance of establishing a fixed schedule for Torah study, prioritizing actions over words, and greeting every person with a pleasant and welcoming countenance.

משנה טז

עשה לך רב והרחקה מז הספק

Mishna 16 · Appointing a Teacher and Avoiding Doubt and Estimations in Tithing

רבן גמליאל הִזָּה אומר, עשה לך רב, והסתלק מז הספק, ואל

and do not doubt from and remove yourself a teacher for yourself make say would Gamliel Rabban

תרבה לעשר אמודות:

by estimation to tithe increase

Rabban Gamliel teaches the importance of establishing a halachic authority to resolve doubts and avoiding guesswork when performing mitzvos like tithing.

משנה יז

מעלת השתיקה והמעשה על פני הדבור

Mishna 17 · The Virtue of Silence and Action Over Mere Words

שמעון בנו אומר, כל ימי גדלתי בין החכמים, ולא מצאתי לגוף טוב

better for the body did I find and not the Sages among I grew up my days all says his son Shimon

אֶלָּא שְׁתִּיקָה. וְלֹא הַמְדָּרֶשׁ הוּא הָעֵקֶר, אֶלָּא הַמַּעֲשֵׂה. וְכֹל הַמְרַבֵּה

who increases and anyone the action but the main thing is the study and not silence than

דברים, מביא חטא:

sin brings words

Shimon the son of Rabban Gamliel teaches that silence is the best path for the body, and that practical action is superior to mere study and excessive speech.

משנה יח

רַבִּן שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל אוֹמֵר, עַל שְׁלֹשָׁה דְבָרִים הָעוֹלָם עוֹמֵד, עַל הַדִּין
justice on stands the world things three on says Gamliel ben Shimon Rabban

וְעַל הָאֱמֶת וְעַל הַשְּׁלוֹם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר זְכַרְיָה ח אֱמֶת וּמִשְׁפָּט שְׁלוֹם שֹׁפֵט
judge peace and judgment of truth 8 Zechariah as it is said peace and on truth and on

בְּשַׁעְרֵיכֶם:

in your gates

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel teaches that the preservation of human society depends upon the three pillars of justice, truth, and peace.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter opens with the Men of the Great Assembly and Shimon the Righteous establishing the pillars of the world, followed by Antigonus of Socho's warning to serve Hashem without expecting reward. We then progress through the teachings of the Zugos: Yose ben Yoezer and Yose ben Yochanan on bringing Sages and the poor into our homes; Yehoshua ben Perachiah and Nittai the Arbelite on acquiring teachers and avoiding evil neighbors; Yehudah ben Tabbai and Shimon ben Shetach on careful justice; and Shemaiah and Abtalion on avoiding the ruling power and guarding one's words. Finally, Hillel and Shammai teach us to pursue peace, fix our Torah study, and receive everyone with a pleasant countenance, leading into the instructions of Rabban Gamaliel and his son Shimon on silence and action, and concluding with Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel's declaration that the world stands on justice, truth, and peace.

לְמַעַשָׂה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

My dear friend, look at how this first chapter of Pirkei Avos begins. It does not start with abstract philosophies, but with a chain of transmission: Moshe received the Torah from Sinai and passed it down, generation after generation, until it reached us. This tells us that our Torah is not a theory; it is a living, breathing legacy of connection. When you learn, you are not just reading a book, you are joining a chain of holy souls. And what do these sages tell us? They tell us that the world stands on Torah, avodah, and gemilus chasadim, and that the ultimate goal of all our learning is not just to speak, but to do. Shimon his son says it clearly: 'Study is not the most important thing, but actions.'

Think about Shammai's golden rule: 'Say little, but do much, and receive all men with a pleasant countenance.' How often do we promise ourselves or others big things, only to fall short? The Torah wants us to build our lives on quiet, solid action. When you greet another Yid with a warm, genuine smile, you are literally sustaining the world. You are bringing the peace and truth that Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel says keeps the world standing.

Let us also take to heart the famous words of Hillel: 'If I am not for myself, who is for me? But if I am for my own self, what am I? And if not now, when?' We cannot wait for someone else to do our avodah for us, nor can we live only for ourselves. We must step up, take responsibility for our spiritual growth, and do it today, without putting it off.

Today, choose one small, concrete action instead of just talking about it. When you meet someone, greet them with a genuine, warm smile and a pleasant countenance, and make a fixed five minutes to learn Torah today without any distractions.

תהלים • חמשה קאפיטלער

The Five Daily Kapitlach

CHAPTER PREVIEW

These are the five kapitlach of Tehillim said every single day: 32, 43, 83, 121, and 130, each set word for word with its English meaning. They are gathered here as one section so the whole daily Tehillim can be said and downloaded together.

All introductions and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.

פֿאַרק ל"ב CHAPTER 32

לְדוֹד מִשְׁכִּיל אֲשֶׁרִי נָשׁוּי פֶשַׁע כָּסוּי חֲטָאָה:
אֲשֶׁרִי אָדָם לֹא יַחְשֹׁב יְהוָה לוֹ עוֹן וְאִין בְּרוּחוֹ רַמְיָה:
כִּי הִחַרְשָׁתִּי בָּלוּ עֲצָמַי בְּשֹׁאֲגָתִי כָּל הַיּוֹם:
כִּי יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה תִּכְבֵּד עָלַי יְדָה נִהַפָּה לְשׁוֹדִי בַּחֲרַבְנִי קִיץ סָלָה:
חֲטָאתִי אוֹדִיעָה וְעוֹנִי לֹא כִסִּיתִי אֲמַרְתִּי אוֹדָה עָלַי פֶשַׁעִי לִיהוָה וְאַתָּה נָשֵׂאתָ עוֹן חֲטָאתִי סָלָה:
עַל זֹאת יִתְפַּלֵּל כָּל חֹסֶיד אֱלֹהִים לְעֵת מִצָּא רַק לְשֹׁטֶף מִיָּם רַבִּים אֱלֹהִים לֹא יִגִּיעוּ:
אַתָּה סֹתֵר לִי מִצָּר תִּצְרֵנִי רָנִי פִּלַּט תְּסוּבְּבֵנִי סָלָה:
אֲשַׁכִּילָה וְאוֹרָה בְּדֶרֶךְ זוֹ תִּלְךָ אֵינִי עֹלָה עֲלֶיךָ עֵינִי:
אֵל תִּהְיוּ כָּסוּס כְּפָרֵד אִין הִבִּין בְּמִתְּג וְרָסוֹן עֲדִיו לְבָלוֹם בַּל קָרַב אֱלֹהִים:
רַבִּים מִכְּאוּבִים לָרָשָׁע וְהַבּוֹטֵחַ בִּיהוָה חֹסֵד יְסוּבְּבֵנוּ:
שִׁמְחוּ בִיהוָה וְגִילוּ צְדִיקִים וְהִרְנִינוּ כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵב:

פֿאַרק מ"ג CHAPTER 43

שָׁפֹטֵנִי אֱלֹהִים וְרִיבָה רִיבִי מִגּוֹי לֹא חֹסֶיד מֵאִישׁ מִרְמָה וְעוֹלָה תִּפְלֹטֵנִי:
כִּי אַתָּה אֱלֹהִים מְעוּזִי לָמָּה זִנְחִתָּנִי לָמָּה קִדֵּר אֶתְהַלֵּךְ בְּלַחֲץ אוֹיֵב:
שְׁלַח אוֹרָה וְאַמְתָּה הַמָּה יִנְחוּנִי יְבִיאוּנִי אֶל הַר קוֹדֶשְׁךָ וְאֶל מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֶיךָ:
וְאֲבֹאָה אֶל מִזְבֵּחַ אֱלֹהִים אֶל אֵל שְׁמֹחַת גִּילִי וְאוֹדָה בְּכִנּוֹר אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים:
מִה תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה נַפְשִׁי וּמִה תִּתְהַמֵּי עָלַי הוֹחִילִי לֵאלֹהִים כִּי עוֹד אוֹדְנוּ יְשׁוּעַת פָּנֶי וְאֱלֹהִים:

שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר לְאָסָף:

אֱלֹהִים אֵל דָּמִי לָךְ אֵל תַּחֲרַשׁ וְאֵל תִּשְׁקֹט אֵל:

כִּי הִנֵּה אוֹיְבֶיךָ יִהְיֶינָיִם וּמִשְׁנֵאֶיךָ נִשְׂאוּ רֹאשׁ:

עַל עֲמָךְ יַעֲרִימוּ סוֹד וַיִּתְּעֲצּוּ עַל צָפוֹנֶיךָ:

אָמְרוּ לָכֵן וְנִכְחֵידֶם מִגּוֹי וְלֹא יִזְכָּר שֵׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹד:

כִּי נִוָּעֲצוּ לֵב יַחֲדוּ עָלֶיךָ בְּרִית יִכְרֹתוּ:

אֱהִי אָדוֹם וַיִּשְׁמְעֵאלִים מוֹאֵב וְהַגָּרִים:

גָּבַל וַעֲמֹן וַעֲמֶלֶק פָּלְשֶׁת עִם יִשְׁבִּי צוּר:

גַּם אֲשׁוּר נִלְוָה עִמָּם הָיוּ זִרְעַ לִבְנֵי לוֹט סָלָה:

עָשָׂה לָהֶם כְּמִדְיָן כְּסִיסְרָא כְּיִבִּין בְּנַחַל קִישׁוֹן:

נִשְׁמְדוּ בְּעֵין דָּאֵר הָיוּ דָמָן לְאֲדָמָה:

שִׁיתֵּמוּ נְדִיבֵמוֹ כְּעֶרֶב וְכִזְאָב וְכִזְבַּח וְכִצְלָמָנֶע כָּל גְּסִיכֵמוֹ:

אֲשֶׁר אָמְרוּ נִירְשָׁה לָנוּ אֵת גְּאוֹת אֱלֹהִים:

אֱלֹהֵי שִׁיתֵּמוֹ כַּגִּלְגָּל כְּקֹשׁ לִפְנֵי רוּחַ:

כְּאֵשׁ תִּבְעֶר יָעַר וְכִלְהָבָה תִּלְהַט הָרִים:

כֵּן תִּרְדָּפֶם בְּסַעֲרָךָ וּבְסוּפָתְךָ תִּבְהַלֵּם:

מִלֵּא פְּנֵיהֶם קִלּוֹן וַיִּבְקְשׁוּ שְׁמָךְ יְהוָה:

יִבְשׁוּ וַיִּבְהָלוּ עַדִּי עַד וַיִּחַפְּרוּ וַיֵּאבְדּוּ:

וַיִּדְעוּ כִּי אַתָּה שְׁמָךְ יְהוָה לִבְדָּדָה עֲלִיוֹן עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ:

שִׁיר לַמַּעֲלוֹת אֶשָּׂא עֵינַי אֶל הַהָרִים מֵאֵין יָבֹא עֲזָרִי:

עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יְהוָה עֲשֵׂה שְׁמִים וְאָרֶץ:

אֵל יִתֵּן לַמוֹט רִגְלָךְ אֵל יָנוּם שְׁמֶרְךָ:

הִנֵּה לֹא יָנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל:

יְהוָה שְׁמֶרְךָ יְהוָה צִלָּךְ עַל יַד מִיִּנָּה:

יוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא יִכָּכֶה וַיֵּרַח בִּלְיָלָהּ:

יְהוָה יִשְׁמְרֶךָ מִכָּל רָע יִשְׁמֹר אֶת נַפְשְׁךָ:

יְהוָה יִשְׁמֹר צַאתְךָ וּבֹאֶךָ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם:

פָּרָק ק"ל CHAPTER 130

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת מִמַּעַמְקִים קִרְאתֶיךָ יְהוָה:

אֲדֹנָי שְׁמֶעָה בְּקוֹלִי תַהֲיֶינָה אַזְנוֹיְךָ קִשְׁבוֹת לְקוֹל תַּחֲנוּנֵי:

אִם עֲוֹנוֹת תִּשְׁמֹר יְהוָה אֲדֹנָי מִי יַעֲמֹד:

כִּי עָמַךְ הִסְלִיכָה לְמַעַן תִּגְוֶרָא:

קִוִּיתִי יְהוָה קִוְּתָה נַפְשִׁי וְלִדְבָרוֹ הוֹחֵלְתִּי:

נַפְשִׁי לֹאֲדֹנָי מִשְׁמָרִים לְבַקֵּר שֹׁמְרִים לְבַקֵּר:

יַחַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵל יְהוָה כִּי עִם יְהוָה הַחֲסֹד וְהַרְבֵּה עֲמוֹ פְדוּת:

וְהוּא יַפְדֶּה אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל עֲוֹנֹתָיו:

לְמַעֲשֶׂה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

When you feel weighed down by your mistakes, do not keep silent or try to hide them. Open your heart to Hashem in honest confession, and then immediately shift your focus to absolute trust in His forgiveness and constant protection, knowing that He never slumbers and is always guarding your steps.

Today, the moment you feel a heavy heart or a sense of spiritual distance, stop what you are doing, speak to Hashem in your own words to acknowledge your mistake, and then say out loud: 'My help is from Hashem, who forgives and guards my soul.'