

דף יומי • חלין • דף ע"ט

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

THE SUGYA

In this daf, we continue our deep dive into the sugya of "oto v'es beno" (slaughtering an animal and its offspring on the same day) and how it applies to the father. We explore the opinion of Chananya, who holds that the prohibition applies to the father as well as the mother, and how this connects to the fundamental question of "chayshinun l'zera ha'av" — whether we concern ourselves with the seed of the father in determining the species of the offspring.

We will also learn about the halachos of kilayim (diverse kinds) regarding mules, examining how we determine their maternal lineage through physical signs like their voice, ears, and tail. The Gemara then transitions into a discussion regarding the status of a hybrid animal (a cross between a goat and a ewe) and the koy (an animal of doubtful status) regarding the prohibition of "oto v'es beno."

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

עמוד א' DAF 79A

EXPLANATION

ולחנניה, כתיב "אותו" דמשמע זכר, וכתיב "בנו" – מי שפנו פרוה אחריו דמשמע נקבה, הלכך נוהג בין בזכרים בין בנקבות.

And according to Chananya, the reason for his ruling is that it is written "it" [oto], which indicates a male parent, and it is written "its offspring" [beno] — meaning that parent whose offspring clings after it, which indicates a female parent. Therefore, the prohibition of slaughtering an animal and its offspring on the same day applies both to males and to females.

RULING

אמר רב הונא בר חייא אמר שמואל: הלכתא כחנניה,

Rav Huna bar Chiyya said that Shmuel said: The halacha is in accordance with Chananya, that the prohibition applies to the father as well.

STATEMENT

ואזדא שמואל לטעמיה, דתנן: רבי יהודה אומר: הנולדים מן הסוס, אף על פי שאביהן חמור – מותרין זה בזה, אבל הנולדים מן החמור עם הנולדים מן הסוס – אסורין.

And Shmuel follows his own line of reasoning, as we learned in a Mishnah: Rabbi Yehuda says: Those mules born from a female horse, even though their father is a donkey, are permitted to mate one with another; but those born from a female donkey mated with those born from a female horse are prohibited to mate with each other because of the prohibition of diverse kinds [kilayim].

STATEMENT

וְאָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה אָמַר שְׁמוּאֵל: זֶה דְּבַר רַבִּי יְהוּדָה, דָּאָמַר אֵין חוֹשְׁשִׁין לְזֶרַע הָאָב, אֲבָל חֲכָמִים
אוֹמְרִים: כָּל מִינֵי פִרְדּוֹת אַחַת הֵן.

And Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: This is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda, who says we do not concern ourselves with the seed of the father in determining the species of the offspring, but rather we look only at the mother. But the Sages say: All types of mules are one species, and they may mate with each other.

EXPLANATION

מֵאֵן חֲכָמִים? חֲנַנְיָה הוּא, דָּאָמַר חוֹשְׁשִׁין לְזֶרַע הָאָב, וְהָאִי בֶר סוּסִיא וְחֻמְרָא, וְהָאִי בֶר חֻמְרָא וְסוּסִיא –
כּוֹלָהוּ חֻדָּא מִינָא נִינְהוּ.

Who are "the Sages" mentioned here? It is Chananya, who says we do concern ourselves with the seed of the father. And therefore, this mule which is the offspring of a horse and a donkey, and that mule which is the offspring of a donkey and a horse — all of them are one species, since both have horse and donkey components.

QUESTION

אִיבַעֲיָא לְהוֹ: מִי פְשִׁיט לִיָּה לְרַבִּי יְהוּדָה דְּאֵין חוֹשְׁשִׁין לְזֶרַע הָאָב, אוּ דְלָמָּא סְפּוּקִי מְסַפְקָא לִיָּה?

A dilemma was raised before them: Is it certain to Rabbi Yehuda that we do not concern ourselves with the seed of the father, or perhaps he is in doubt about it?

EXPLANATION

לְמַאי נִפְקָא מִינָהּ? לְמִישְׁרָא פְּרִי עִם הָאֵם,

The Gemara asks: What is the practical difference of this inquiry? The Gemara answers: To permit mating the offspring with the species of its mother.

EXPLANATION

אִי אָמַרְתָּ: מִיפְשֻׁט פְּשִׁיטָא לִיָּה – פְּרִי עִם הָאֵם שְׂרִי, אָלָּא אִי אָמַרְתָּ: סְפּוּקִי מְסַפְקָא לִיָּה – פְּרִי עִם
הָאֵם אָסוּר. מַאי?

If you say it is certain to him that we ignore the father's seed, then mating the offspring with the mother's species is permitted, as they are both considered the same species. But if you say he is in doubt, then mating the offspring with the mother's species is prohibited, out of concern that the father's seed might determine the species. What is the resolution?

PROOF

תָּא שְׁמַע: רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אוֹמַר: כָּל הַנוֹלָדִים מִן הַסּוֹס, אַךְ עַל פִּי שְׂאֵבִיהֶן חֻמּוֹר – מוּתָּרִין זֶה בָּזֶה.

Come and hear a proof from our Mishnah: Rabbi Yehuda says: All those born from a female horse, even though their father is a donkey, are permitted to mate one with another.

INFERENCE

הִיכִי דְמִי? אִילֵּימָא דְאִבּוּה דְהָאִי חֻמּוֹר וְאִבּוּה דְהָאִי חֻמּוֹר – צְרִיכָא לְמִימַר?

What are the circumstances? If we say that the father of this male mule is a donkey and the father of that female mule is a donkey, does it need to be said that they may mate? Since both their mothers are horses and both their fathers are donkeys, they are identical!

INFERENCE

אֵלָא לָאוּ דְאָבוּה דְהָאִי סוּס וְאָבוּה דְהָאִי חֲמוֹר; וְקִתְנֵי מוֹתְרִים זֶה עִם זֶה, אֵלֶּמָּה מִיפְשִׁט פְּשִׁיטָא לִיהָ!

Rather, is it not that the father of this male mule is a horse, and the father of that female mule is a donkey? And yet it teaches that they are permitted one with another! Consequently, it is certain to him that we do not concern ourselves with the father's seed.

REFUTATION

לֹא, לְעוֹלָם דְאָבוּה דְהָאִי חֲמוֹר, וְאָבוּה דְהָאִי חֲמוֹר. וּדְקָאמְרִת: צָרִיכָא לְמִימַר?

The Gemara rejects this: No, actually we are dealing with a case where the father of this one is a donkey and the father of that one is a donkey. And as for what you said: "Does it need to be said?" — yes, it is necessary.

EXPLANATION

מָהוּ דְתִימָא: אֲתִי צַד דְסוּס מְשַׁתְּמֵשׁ בְּצַד חֲמוֹר, וְצַד חֲמוֹר מְשַׁתְּמֵשׁ בְּצַד סוּס, קָא מְשַׁמַּע לָן.

Lest you say: The horse side of the male comes and mates with the donkey side of the female, and the donkey side of the male mates with the horse side of the female, which would violate the prohibition of diverse kinds, therefore he teaches us that they are considered a single species and may mate.

PROOF

תָּא שְׁמַע: רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אָמַר, פְּרֻדָּה שֶׁתִּבְעָה – אִין מְרַבִּיעִין עָלֶיהָ לֹא סוּס וְלֹא חֲמוֹר, אֵלָא מִינָהּ.

Come and hear another proof from a Braisa: Rabbi Yehuda says: A female mule that is in heat — we do not mate with her either a horse or a donkey, but rather only one of her own kind, another mule.

INFERENCE

וְאִי אָמְרִת מִפְשִׁט פְּשִׁיטָא לִיהָ לְרַבֵּעַ עַלֶּהּ מִינָא דְאָמָה!

And if you say it is certain to him that we ignore the father's seed, let us mate with her the species of her mother! Why is that forbidden?

RESOLUTION

דְּלֹא יוֹדְעִינוּ מִינָא דְאָמָה מָאי נִיהוּ.

The Gemara answers: This is a case where we do not know what the species of her mother is.

OBJECTION

וְהָא "אֵלָא מִינָהּ" קִתְנֵי?

The Gemara objects: But does it not teach "but rather one of her own kind", which implies we do know her kind?

RESOLUTION

הֲכִי קָאמַר: אִין מְרַבִּיעִין עָלֶיהָ לֹא מִין סוּס וְלֹא מִין חֲמוֹר, לְפִי שְׂאִין יוֹדְעִין בְּמִינָהּ.

The Gemara explains: This is what it is saying: We do not mate with her either the species of a horse or the species of a donkey, because we do not know her mother's species, and therefore we must mate her only with another mule.

QUESTION

וְלִיבְדוּק בְּסִימָנֶיהָ? דָּאָמַר אָבַי: עֲבִי קָלִיָּה – בַּר חֲמָרָא, צְנִיף קָלִיָּה – בַּר סוּסָיָא.

The Gemara asks: **But let us check her by her physical signs!** As Abaye said: If its voice is deep, it is the offspring of a female donkey; if its voice is shrill, it is the offspring of a female horse.

STATEMENT

וְאָמַר רַב פָּפָא: רִבְרָבָן אוֹדְנִיָּה וְזוּטְרָא גְנוּבְתִּיָּה – בַּר חֲמָרָא, זוּטְרָן אוֹדְנִיָּה וְרִבָּה גְנוּבְתִּיָּה – בַּר סוּסָיָא.

And Rav Pappa said: If its ears are large and its tail is small, it is the offspring of a female donkey; if its ears are small and its tail is large, it is the offspring of a female horse.

RESOLUTION

הָכָא בְּמַאי עֲסָקִינוּ? בְּאֵלָמֶת וְגִידָמֶת.

The Gemara answers: **With what are we dealing here?** With a mute mule whose voice cannot be heard, and whose ears and tail are **lopped off**, so her signs cannot be checked.

QUESTION

מַאי הוּא עֲלֵהּ?

The Gemara asks: **What is the conclusion of this matter?**

PROOF

תָּא שְׁמַע, דָּאָמַר רַב הוּנָא בְּרִיהַ דְּרַב יְהוֹשֻׁעַ: הֲכֹל מוֹדִין בְּפָרִי עִם הָאִם שְׂאֲסוּר.

Come and hear, as Rav Huna the son of Rav Yehoshua said: Everyone agrees regarding mating the offspring with the mother's species that it is prohibited.

INFERENCE

שְׁמַע מִינֵה סְפּוּקֵי מִסְפָּקָא לִיָּהּ, שְׁמַע מִינֵהּ.

Learn from this that he is in doubt about whether we concern ourselves with the father's seed. The Gemara confirms: **Learn from this** that it is so.

STATEMENT

אָמַר לִיָּהּ רַבִּי אָבָא לְשִׁמְעִיהּ: אִי מְעִיִּלְתָּ לִי בּוֹדְנִיתָא בְּרִיסְפָּק, עֵינִי לְהִנָּה דְּדַמְיִין לְהִדָּדִי, וְעֵינִי לִי. אֵלְמָא קָסְבֵּר: אֵין חוּשְׁשִׁין לְזַרְעֵהָ הָאֵב.

Rabbi Abba said to his attendant: If you bring mules in for me to the team, look for those that resemble one another and bring them in for me. Consequently, he holds: We do not concern ourselves with the seed of the father, and physical resemblance is sufficient to establish that they are of the same maternal species.

עמוד ב' DAF 79B

EXPLANATION

וְסִימָנֶיהָ דְּאוֹרֵייתָא.

And he holds that these **distinguishing characteristics** apply by Torah law, and can therefore be relied upon.

BRAISA

תנו רבנן: אותו ואת בנו נוהג בכלאים ובכוי.

The Rabbis taught in a baraita: The prohibition of slaughtering an animal **itself and its offspring** on the same day applies to the offspring of **diverse kinds** of animals **and to the koy**.

BRAISA

רבי אליעזר אומר: כלאים הפא מן העז ומן הרחל – אותו ואת בנו נוהג בו, כוי – אין אותו ואת בנו נוהג בו.

Rabbi Eliezer says: With regard to a **hybrid that comes from** the mating of a **goat and a ewe**, the prohibition of **itself and its offspring** applies to it; but with regard to a **koy**, the prohibition of **itself and its offspring** does not apply to it.

STATEMENT

אמר רב חסדא: איזהו כוי שנחלקו בו רבי אליעזר וחכמים? זה הפא מן התייש ומן הצבייה.

Rav Chisda says: What is the **koy** about which Rabbi Eliezer and the Sages disagree? This is the offspring that comes from the mating of a **male goat and a doe**.

QUESTION

היכי דמי? אילימא בתייש הפא על הצבייה, וילדה, וקא שחיט לה ולברה –

The Gemara asks: What are the **circumstances** of the case? If we say that we are dealing with a **male goat that mates with a doe, and she gave birth** to this offspring, and one **slaughters her and her offspring** on the same day—

OBJECTION

והאמר רב חסדא: הפל מודים בהיא צבייה ובנה תיש, שפטור! שה ובנו אמר רחמנא, ולא צבי ובנו!

but doesn't Rav Chisda say: All concede in a case where **she is a doe and her offspring is a goat** because she mated with a goat, **that** the one who slaughters them both on the same day is **exempt** from lashes? For **the Merciful One** states in the Torah: "A sheep... and its offspring," and not a deer and its offspring!

ANSWER

אלא בצבי הפא על התיישה וילדה, וקא שחיט לה ולברה,

Rather, we must be dealing with a **deer that mates with a female goat**, and she gave birth to this offspring, and one **slaughters her and her offspring** on the same day.

OBJECTION

והאמר רב חסדא: הפל מודים בהיא תיישה ובנה צבי – שחיט, "שה" אמר רחמנא, ובנו כל דהו!

But doesn't Rav Chisda say: All concede in a case where **she is a female goat and her offspring is a deer** because she mated with a deer, **that** the one who slaughters them both on the same day is **liable**? For **the Merciful One** states in the Torah: "A sheep," and its offspring of any kind, even if it is a deer!

RESOLUTION

לְעוֹלָם, בְּתִישׁ הַבָּא עַל הַצִּבְיָה, וְיָלְדָה בֵּת, וּבֵת יָלְדָה בֶּן, וְקָא שְׁחִיט לָהּ וְלַבָּרָה.

Actually, the dispute is with regard to a male goat that mates with a doe, and she gave birth to a female offspring, which is a koy, and this female offspring gave birth to a male offspring, and one slaughters her—the mother koy—and her offspring on the same day.

EXPLANATION

רבנן סברי: חוששין לזרע האב, ושה – ואפילו מקצת שה.

The Rabbis hold: We are concerned for the seed of the father, meaning the father's genetic contribution is significant, and the word "sheep" in the verse means even if it is only partially a sheep, since its father was a goat.

EXPLANATION

ורבי אליעזר סבר: אין חוששין לזרע האב, ושה ואפילו מקצת שה – לא אמרינן.

And Rabbi Eliezer holds: We are not concerned for the seed of the father, and therefore we do not say that "a sheep" includes even that which is only partially a sheep.

QUESTION

ולפלוג בחוששין לזרע האב, בפלוגתא דחנניה ורבנן?

The Gemara asks: But let them disagree directly on whether we are concerned for the seed of the father, which is the dispute of Chananya and the Rabbis as to whether the prohibition of "itself and its offspring" applies to the father as well!

RESOLUTION

אי פליגי בההיא, הוה אמינא: בהא אפילו רבנן מודו, ד"שה ואפילו מקצת שה" לא אמרינן, קא משמע לן.

The Gemara answers: If they had disputed only in that case, I would have said: In this case of a koy, even the Rabbis concede that we do not say "a sheep" includes even that which is only partially a sheep. Therefore, the baraita teaches us that the Rabbis hold this rule applies here too.

OBJECTION

וקא דתנן: כוי אין שוחטין אותו ביום טוב, ואם שחטו – אין מכסין את דמו.

The Gemara challenges: But that which we learned in a Mishnah: A koy, we may not slaughter it on a Festival ab initio, and if he did slaughter it, we do not cover its blood on the Festival.

INFERENCE

במאי עסקינן? אלימא בתיש הבא על הצביה וילדה, בין לרבנן בין לרבי אליעזר – לשחוט וליכסי, צבי ואפילו מקצת צבי.

With what case are we dealing? If we say it is with a male goat that mates with a doe, and she gave birth, then whether according to the Rabbis or according to Rabbi Eliezer, let him slaughter it and cover its blood, since it is a deer, and we should say even if it is only partially a deer it requires covering!

INFERENCE

אַלָּא בְּצִבִּי הֵבֵא עַל הַתִּיּוֹשָׁה וְיָלְדָהּ, אִי לְרֵבֶנּוּ – לְשַׁחוּט וְלִיכָסִי, אִי לְרֵבִי אֱלִיעֶזֶר – לְשַׁחוּט וְלֹא לִיכָסִי.

Rather, we must be dealing with a deer that mates with a female goat, and she gave birth. But if this is according to the Rabbis, let him slaughter it and cover its blood because of its father; and if it is according to Rabbi Eliezer, let him slaughter it and not cover its blood at all, as it is a domesticated animal like its mother!

RESOLUTION

לְעוֹלָם בְּצִבִּי הֵבֵא עַל הַתִּיּוֹשָׁה, וְרֵבֶנּוּ סִפּוּקִי מִסַּפְקָא לְהוּי אִי חוֹשְׁשִׁין לְזֶרַע הָאָב אִי אֵין חוֹשְׁשִׁין.

The Gemara answers: Actually, we are dealing with a deer that mates with a female goat, and the Rabbis are in doubt whether we are concerned for the seed of the father or whether we are not concerned.

INFERENCE

וּמִדְלָרְבֶּנּוּ מִסַּפְקָא לְהוּי, לְרֵבִי אֱלִיעֶזֶר פְּשִׁיטָא לִיה.

And from the fact that the Rabbis are in doubt, it must be that to Rabbi Eliezer it is certain that we do not concern ourselves with the father's seed.

OBJECTION

וְהָא דִּתְנִינָא: הַזְרוּעַ וְהַלְחִיִּים וְהַקֶּבֶה נוֹהֲגִים בְּכוֹי וּבְכִלְאִים.

The Gemara objects: But that which is taught in a baraita: The foreleg, the cheeks, and the maw of the priestly gifts apply to a koy and to a hybrid.

BRAISA

רֵבִי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר: כָּלֵאִים הֵבֵא מִן הָעִז וּמִן הָרֶחֶל – חֵיִב בְּמִתְנּוֹת, מִן הַכוֹי – פֶּטוּר מִן הַמִּתְנּוֹת.

Rabbi Eliezer says: A hybrid that comes from a goat and a ewe is obligated in the gifts, but that which comes from the koy is exempt from the gifts.

INFERENCE

בְּמַאי עֲסָקִינוּ? אִילִימָא בְּתִיּוֹשָׁה הֵבֵא עַל הַצִּבִּיָּה וְיָלְדָהּ, בְּשִׁלְמָא לְרֵבִי אֱלִיעֶזֶר דְּפִטֵּר, קָסְבֵּר "שֶׁה" וְאַפִּילוּ מִקְצַת שֶׁה" לָא אִמְרִינוּ.

With what case are we dealing? If we say it is with a male goat that mates with a doe, and she gave birth, it is understandable according to Rabbi Eliezer who exempts it, for he holds we do not say "a sheep" includes even that which is only partially a sheep.

INFERENCE

אַלָּא לְרֵבֶנּוּ, נָהִי דְקָסְבֵּרִי "שֶׁה" וְאַפִּילוּ מִקְצַת שֶׁה", בְּשִׁלְמָא פִּלְגָא לָא יְהִיב לִיה, אִידָךְ פִּלְגָא לִימָא לִיה: אִיִּיתִי רֵאֲיָה דְחוֹשְׁשִׁין לְזֶרַע הָאָב, וּשְׁקוּל.

But according to the Rabbis, granted that they hold "a sheep" includes even that which is only partially a sheep, it is understandable that he does not give him half the gifts, but as for the other half, let the owner say to the Kohen: "Bring proof that we are concerned for the seed of the father, and then take it!" Why then are they fully obligated?

ANSWER

אָלֶּא, בְּצִבֵּי הַבָּא עַל הַתִּישָׁה וַיֵּלֶדָה.

Rather, we must be dealing with a deer that mates with a female goat, and she gave birth.

INFERENCE

בְּשִׁלְמָא לְרַבֵּנּוּ, מֵאִי "חַיִּיב" – בְּחֻצֵּי מִתְּנֻת; אֶלֶּא לְרַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר, לִיחַיִּיב בְּכוֹלָהּ מִתְּנֻת?

It is understandable according to the Rabbis, for what is the meaning of "liable"? It means for half of the gifts. But according to Rabbi Eliezer, let him be liable for all of the gifts, since the mother is a goat and he does not care about the father's seed!

RESOLUTION

לְעוֹלָם בְּצִבֵּי הַבָּא עַל הַתִּישָׁה וַיֵּלֶדָה, וְרַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר נִמְי סְפוּקִי מְסַפֵּקָא לִיהּ אִי חוֹשְׁשִׁין לְזֶרַע הָאָב אוֹ לֹא, וְכִיּוֹן דְּלְרַבֵּנּוּ מְסַפֵּקָא לְהוּ וְלְרַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר מְסַפֵּקָא לִיהּ, בְּמֵאִי פְּלִיגִי?

Actually, we are dealing with a deer that mates with a female goat, and she gave birth, and Rabbi Eliezer is also in doubt whether we are concerned for the seed of the father or not. And since the Rabbis are in doubt and Rabbi Eliezer is in doubt, in what do they disagree?

SUMMARY

The Gemara establishes that Shmuel rules in accordance with Chananya, who holds that "oto v'es beno" applies to the father. This leads to a detailed analysis of Rabbi Yehuda's view on whether we ignore the father's seed, concluding that Rabbi Yehuda is actually in doubt on the matter, which prohibits mating a mule with its mother's species. Finally, the Gemara introduces a baraita discussing whether the prohibition of "oto v'es beno" applies to hybrids and the koy, highlighting a dispute between the Rabbis and Rabbi Eliezer.

In today's sugya, the Gemara delves into a fascinating doubt: do we concern ourselves with the "seed of the father" (chosheshin le'zera ha'av) when determining the identity of an offspring, or do we look only at the mother? We see the Sages and Rabbi Yehuda grappling with cases of mixed parentage, trying to determine the true identity of a creature when its lineage is split. Even when physical signs are obscured, like a mute mule whose ears and tail are lopped off, the Torah demands we look deeper to understand its true nature.

This contains a profound lesson for our own avodah. Every single one of us is a product of different influences. We have a neshama, a pure spark of Hashem, but we also have a physical body and a yetzer hara. Sometimes, we look at ourselves and feel like that "mute mule", our spiritual voice feels silent, our positive signs are hidden, and we feel spiritually compromised or mixed up. We might wonder: "Who am I really? Which side of my lineage defines me?"

The Torah's answer is that we must never ignore our true spiritual heritage. You are the child of the King of kings. No matter how many mixed influences or struggles you carry from the physical world, your primary identity is defined by your divine source. Just as the halacha carefully traces the lineage of every creature to ensure it is treated according to its true identity, you must recognize your own holy pedigree and live up to it.

Today, when you feel conflicted or spiritually sluggish, stop and remind yourself of your true lineage: "I am a child of Hashem, and my neshama is completely pure." Let that realization guide your next action.

הלכות עבודת פוכבים • פרק שני

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

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, we delve into the very heart of the prohibition against avodah zarah, learning that Hashem forbade us from serving any created being whatsoever. Even if a person knows in his heart that Hashem is the true Elokim, bowing down to a star, an angel, or any of the elements as an intermediary—just as the generation of Enosh mistakenly did—is still considered actual idol worship. The Torah warns us to guard our thoughts with great yiras Shamayim, so that the "eye of the heart" does not lead us astray to view these creations as independent powers.

To protect our neshamos from the spiritual poison of heresy, the Torah also commands us to distance ourselves completely from the books and ideas of the idolaters. We are forbidden from reading their texts, contemplating their practices, or even looking at the images of their idols. The Rambam teaches us that we must not inquire about their rites even out of mere curiosity, as such thoughts can easily drag a person down and cause him to copy their ways, chas v'shalom.

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

הלכה א

Halacha 1 • The Prohibition to Worship Any Creation Even as an Intermediary

עקר הצווי בעבודת פוכבים

The essence of the commandment regarding worship of stars

שלא לעבד אחד מכל הברואים

is not to serve one of all the creations,

לא מלאך ולא גלגל ולא פוכב

not an angel, and not a sphere, and not a star,

ולא אחד מארבעה היסודות

and not one of the four elements,

ולא אחד מכל הנבראים מהן.

and not one of all the entities created from them.

ואף על פי שהעובד יודע שה' הוא האלהים

And even though the worshiper knows that Hashem, He is the God,

והוא עובד הנברא הזה

and he serves this creation

על דרך שעבד אנוש ואנשי דורו תחלה

in the manner that worshiped Enosh and the people of his generation originally,

הרי זה עובד כוכבים.

behold, this is a worshiper of stars.

וענין זה הוא שהזהירה תורה עליו ואמרה

And the matter of this is what the Torah warned about and said:

דברים ד יט "ופן תשא עיניך השמימה וראית את השמש" וגו'

"And lest you lift your eyes heavenward and you see the sun" etc.,

דברים ד יט "אשר חלק ה' אלהיך אתם לכל העמים".

"which Hashem your God apportioned them to all the nations."

כלומר שמה תשוט בעין לבך

Meaning to say, lest you wander with the eye of your heart

ותראה שאלו הן המנהיגים את העולם

and you see that these, they are the leaders of the world,

והם שחלק ה' אותם לכל העולם

and they are what Hashem apportioned to all the world

להיות חיים והוים ואינם נפסדים כמנהגו של עולם

to be alive and existing and not perishing like the custom of the world,

ותאמר שראוי להשתחוות להם ולעבדן.

and you will say that it is worthy to bow down to them and to serve them.

ובענין הזה צוה ואמר

And regarding this matter He commanded and said:

דברים יא טז "השמרו לכם פן יפתה לבבכם".

"Be careful for yourselves lest your heart will be enticed."

כלומר שלא תטעו בהרהור הלב

Meaning to say, that you do not err in the thought of the heart

לעבד אלו להיות סרסור ביניכם ובין הבורא:

to serve these to be an intermediary between you and the Creator.

הלכה ב

Halacha 2 · The Prohibition of Reading Books of Idol Worship and Inquiring into Its Rites

ספרים רבים חפרו עובדי כוכבים בעבודתה

Many books were composed by the worshipers of stars concerning its service,

היאך עקר עבודתה ומה מעשיה ומשפטיה.

explaining how is the essence of its service, and what are its practices and its statutes.

צונו הקדוש ברוך הוא שלא לקרות באותן הספרים כלל

Therefore, the Holy One, blessed is He, commanded us not to read in those books at all,

ולא נהרהר בה ולא בדבר מדבריה.

and we shall not think about it, nor about any matter of its matters.

ואפילו להסתכל בדמות הצורה אסור

And even to look at the likeness of the image of an idol is forbidden,

שנאמר "אל תפנו אל האלילים".

as it is said in the Torah, "Do not turn to the idols."

ובענין הזה נאמר "ופן תדרש לאלהיהם לאמר איכה יעבדו",

And in this matter it is said, "And lest you seek concerning their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve them?'"

שלא תשאל על דרך עבודתה היאך היא

This warns that you shall not inquire about the way of its service, how it is performed,

אף על פי שאין אתה עובדה,

even though you do not serve it yourself.

שדבר זה גורם להפנות אחריה

The reason is for this matter causes a person to turn after it

ולעשות כמה שהן עושין

and to do like what they do,

שנאמר ואעשה כן גם אני:

as it is said at the end of that verse, "and I will do so also I."

וְכָל הַלְאוּיִן הָאֵלֵּיו בְּעֵינֵי אֶחָד הֵן

And all of these prohibitions mentioned in the previous halachos are in one concept,

וְהוּא שֶׁלֹא יִפְנֶה אַחֵר עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים

and it is that one should not turn after the worship of stars;

וְכָל הַנִּפְנָה אַחֲרֶיהָ בְּדֶרֶךְ שֶׁהוּא עוֹשֶׂה בּוֹ מַעֲשֵׂה הָרִי זֶה לּוֹקָה.

and anyone who turns after it in a way that he does an action in it, behold, this one receives lashes.

וְלֹא עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים בְּלֶבֶד הוּא שֶׁאִסּוּר לְהִפָּנוֹת אַחֲרֶיהָ בְּמַחֲשָׁבָה

And not worship of stars alone is it that is forbidden to turn after in thought,

אֲלָא כָּל מַחֲשָׁבָה שֶׁהוּא גּוֹרֵם לוֹ לְאַדָּם לְעַקֵּר עֵקֶר מַעֲקָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה

rather, any thought that causes a person to uproot a principle from the principles of the Torah,

מִזְהַרִּין אָנוּ שֶׁלֹא לְהַעֲלוֹתָהּ עַל לִבֵּנוּ

we are warned not to bring it up upon our heart,

וְלֹא נִסְיַח דַּעְתָּנוּ לְכָה וְנַחֲשֹׁב וְנִמְשֵׁךְ אַחֵר הִרְהוּרֵי הַלֵּב.

and we shall not divert our mind to this and think and be drawn after the thoughts of the heart.

מִפְּנֵי שֶׁדַּעְתּוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם קְצָרָה

This is because the mind of man is limited,

וְלֹא כָּל הַדַּעוֹת יְכוּלִין לְהַשִּׁיג הָאֱמֶת עַל בְּרִיּוֹ.

and not all minds are able to comprehend the truth upon its clarity.

וְאִם יִמָּשֶׁךְ כָּל אָדָם אַחֵר מַחֲשָׁבוֹת לִבּוֹ

And if every man will be drawn after the thoughts of his heart,

נִמְצָא מַחְרִיב אֶת הָעוֹלָם לְפִי קֹצֵר דַּעְתּוֹ.

he is found destroying the world according to the limitation of his mind.

כִּיצַד.

How so?

בְּעֵמִים יְתוּר אַחֵר עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים

Sometimes he will stray after the worship of stars,

ופעמים יחשב ביחוד הבורא שמה הוא שמה אינו.

and sometimes he will think about the oneness of the Creator, perhaps He is, perhaps He is not;

מה למעלה ומה למטה מה לפניו ומה לאחור.

what is above and what is below, what is before and what is behind.

ופעמים בנבואה שמה היא אמת שמה היא אינה.

And sometimes in prophecy, perhaps it is truth, perhaps it is not.

ופעמים בתורה שמה היא מן השמים שמה אינה.

And sometimes in the Torah, perhaps it is from Heaven, perhaps it is not.

ואינו יודע המדות שידין בהן עד שידע האמת על בריו

And he does not know the measures with which he should judge until he will know the truth upon its clarity,

ונמצא יוצא לידי מינות.

and he is found going out to the hands of heresy.

ועל ענין זה הזהירה תורה ונאמר בה במדבר טו לט "ולא תתרו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם אשר אתם זנים".

And upon this matter the Torah warned, and it is said in it, "And do not stray after your heart and after your eyes which you go astray after."

כלומר לא ימשך כל אחד מכם אחר דעתו הקצרה

Meaning, each one of you shall not be drawn after his limited mind,

וידמה שמחשבתו משגת האמת.

and imagine that his thought comprehends the truth.

כה אמרו חכמים גמרא ברכות יב ב "אחרי לבבכם זו מינות ואחרי עיניכם זו זנות.

Thus said the Sages: "'After your heart'—this is heresy; 'and after your eyes'—this is immorality."

ולאו זה אף על פי שהוא גורם לאדם לטרונו מן העולם הבא

And this prohibition, even though it causes a person to banish him from the World to Come,

אין בו מלקות:

there are no lashes for it because it does not involve a physical action.

מצות עבודת כוכבים כנגד המצות כולן היא

The commandment of the prohibition of worship of stars is equivalent to all of the commandments, all of them combined, it is so severe,

שנאמר "וכי תשגו ולא תעשו את כל המצות" וגו'

as it is said in the Torah, "And if you err and do not perform all of these commandments" etc.

ומפי השמועה למדו שעבודת כוכבים הפתוב מדבר.

And from the mouth of the tradition, our Sages learned that regarding worship of stars the verse speaks here, equating this one sin to violating all the mitzvos.

הא למדת שכל המודה בעבודת כוכבים

Behold, you have learned from this that anyone who acknowledges the truth of worship of stars

כופר בכל התורה כלה ובכל הנביאים

denies all of the Torah entirely, and all of the prophets,

ובכל מה שנצטוו הנביאים מאדם ועד סוף העולם

and all of what that were commanded the prophets from Adam and until the end of the world,

שנאמר "מן היום אשר צוה ה' והלאה לדורותיכם".

as it is said in the continuation of the verse, "from the day which commanded Hashem and onward for your generations."

וכל הכופר בעבודת כוכבים

And conversely, anyone who denies and rejects worship of stars

מודה בכל התורה כלה ובכל הנביאים

acknowledges all of the Torah entirely, and all of the prophets,

ובכל מה שנצטוו הנביאים מאדם ועד סוף העולם

and all of what that were commanded the prophets from Adam and until the end of the world,

והוא עקר כל המצות כולן:

and it is the root of all of the commandments, all of them.

ישראל שעבד עבודת כוכבים

A Jew who served worship of stars

הָרִי הוּא כְּעוֹבֵד כּוֹכָבִים לְכָל דְּבָרָיו

behold he is like a worshiper of stars for all his matters,

וְאִינוּ כִּי־יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׂעוֹכֵר עֲבֵרָה שִׁישׁ בָּהּ סָקִילָהּ.

and he is not like a Jew who transgresses a transgression that has in it stoning.

מוֹמֵר לְעִבּוֹדֶת כּוֹכָבִים הָרִי הוּא מוֹמֵר לְכָל הַתּוֹרָה כָּלָהּ.

An apostate to worship of stars, behold he is an apostate for all of the Torah entirely.

וְכֵן הָאֶפִיקוֹרְסִים מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֵינָן כִּי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְדָבָר מִן הַדְּבָרִים

And likewise the heretics from Israel are not like a Jew for any matter of the matters,

וְאִין מְקַבְּלִים אוֹתָם בְּתַשׁוּבָה לְעוֹלָם

and we do not accept them in repentance ever,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר מִשְׁלֵי ב יט "כָּל בָּאִיָּהּ לֹא יָשׁוּבוֹן וְלֹא יַשִּׁיגוּ אַרְחוֹת חַיִּים".

as it is said in Mishlei, "all who come to her will not return and they will not attain the paths of life."

וְהָאֶפִיקוֹרְסִים הֵם הַתָּרִים אַחֵר מִחֲשָׁבוֹת לִבָּם בְּסִכְלוֹת דְּבָרִים שְׂאֵמְרָנוּ

And the heretics, they are those who stray after the thoughts of their heart in the foolishness of matters that we said,

עַד שֶׁנִּמְצְאוּ עוֹבְרִים עַל גּוּפֵי תּוֹרָה לְהַכְעִיס בְּשֹׂאֵט נֶפֶשׁ בְּיַד רָמָה

until they are found transgressing against the bodies of Torah to anger with contempt of soul with a hand high,

וְאוֹמְרִים שֶׁאֵין בָּזָה עוֹן.

and they say that there is not in this sin.

וְאִסּוּר לְסַפֵּר עִמָּהֶן וּלְהָשִׁיב עֲלֵיהֶן תַּשׁוּבָה כָּלֵל

And it is forbidden to speak with them and to return to them an answer at all,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר מִשְׁלֵי ה ח "וְאַל תִּקְרַב אֶל פֶּתַח בֵּיתָהּ".

as it is said in Mishlei, "and do not draw near to the entrance of her house."

וּמִחֲשָׁבָה שֶׁל אֶפִיקוֹרוֹס לְעִבּוֹדֶת כּוֹכָבִים:

And the thought of a heretic is for worship of stars.

כל המודה בעבודת כוכבים שהיא אמת

Any who acknowledges the worship of stars, believing that it is truth,

אף על פי שלא עבדה

even though he did not actually worship it,

הרי זה מחרף ומגדף את השם הנכבד והנורא.

behold, this one disgraces and blasphemes the Name, the glorious and the awesome.

ואחד העוֹבֵד עבודת כוכבים ואחד המגדף את ה'

And both the one who worships the worship of stars, and both the one who blasphemes Hashem, are equated in the Torah,

שנאמר "והנפש אשר תעשה ביד רמה מן האזרח ומן הגר את ה' הוא מגדף".

as it is said in the Torah in Sefer Bamidbar: "And the soul that acts with a high hand, from the native and from the convert, Hashem he blasphemes."

לפיכך תולין עובד עבודת כוכבים כמו שתולין את המגדף

Therefore, we hang a worshipper of the worship of stars, just as we hang the blasphemer,

ושניהם נסקלין.

and both of them are stoned by Beis Din.

ומפני זה כללתי דין המגדף בהלכות עבודת כוכבים

And because of this, I included the law of the blasphemer in the Laws of the worship of stars,

ששניהם כופרים בעקרם:

since both of them are deniers of the fundamental principle of our emunah.

ואלו הן דיני המגדף.

And these are the laws of the blasphemer:

אין המגדף חייב סקילה

The blasphemer is not liable to stoning

עד שיפרש את השם המיוחד של ארבע אותיות

until he pronounces — the Unique Name of four letters,

שהוא אָל

which is Aleph Dalet Nun Yod,

ויְבָרַךְ אוֹתוֹ בְּשֵׁם מִן הַשְּׁמוֹת שֶׁאֵינָם נִמְחָקִים

and curses it with a Name from the Names that are not erased,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "וְנִקָּב שֵׁם ה'",

as it is said in the Torah, "And he who blasphemes the Name of Hashem shall surely be put to death."

עַל הַשֵּׁם הַמִּיחָד חַיֵּב סָקִילָה

Thus, for blaspheming the Unique Name, he is liable to stoning,

וְעַל שָׂאָר הַכְּנוּיִים בְּאַזְהָרָה.

and for the rest of the appellations, he violates a prohibition but is not stoned.

וַיֵּשׁ מִי שֶׁמְפָרֵשׁ שֶׁאֵינוֹ חַיֵּב אֶלָּא עַל שֵׁם יוֹ

And there is one who explains that he is not liable to stoning except for blaspheming the Name Yod Heh Vav Heh,

וְאֲנִי אוֹמֵר שֶׁעַל שְׁנֵיהֶם הוּא נִסְקָל:

and I say that for both of them, whether he blasphemed the Name Aleph Dalet Nun Yod or the Name Yod Heh Vav Heh, he is stoned.

הַלָּכָה ח

Halacha 8 · The Warning Against Blasphemy and the Procedure for Examining the Witnesses

אַזְהָרָה שֶׁל מַגִּדֵּף מִנִּין

The warning in the Torah of a blasphemer, prohibiting this sin, is from where do we derive it? It is

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר שְׁמוֹת כָּב כֹּז "אֱלֹהִים לֹא תִקְלָל".

as it is said in the pasuk in Shemos 22:27, "God, you shall not curse."

בְּכָל יוֹם וַיּוֹם בּוֹדְקִין אֶת הָעֵדִים בְּכְנוּיִים

During the trial, on every day and day of the cross-examination, they examine the witnesses with nicknames, substituting a pseudonym for the Holy Name so they do not utter a blasphemy in court, using the formula:

יִפֶּה יוֹסֵי אֶת יוֹסֵי.

"May Yosse strike Yosse," where "Yosse" is used as a substitute for Hashem's Name.

נִגְמַר הַדִּין

Once **the judgment is finished** and they are ready to render the verdict, they must hear the exact words of blasphemy. Therefore,

מוציאין את כל אדם לחוץ

they remove every person outside the courtroom, so that the Holy Name is not desecrated in public,

ושואלים את הגדול שבָּעֵדִים

and they ask the greatest, most prominent who is among the witnesses,

ואומרים לו אמר מה ששמעת בפרוש

and they say to him, "Say what you heard explicitly," using the actual Name that was blasphemed,

והוא אומר

and he says it.

והדיינים עומדים על רגליהם וקורעין ולא מאחין.

Upon hearing the blasphemy, **the judges stand on their feet and rend** their garments in mourning, **and** these tears they **do not mend** ever again.

והעד השני אומר אף אני כמותו שמעתי.

And the second witness says, "Even I, like him, heard it," without having to repeat the explicit Name.

ואם היו עדים רבים

And if there were many witnesses,

צריה כל אחד ואחד מהן לומר כזה שמעתי:

every one and one of them needs to say, "Like this I heard."

הלכה ט

Halacha 9 · The Law of a Blasphemer Who Retracts and One Who Blasphemes with an Idol's Name

מגדף שחזר בו בתוך כדי דבור

A blasphemer who retracted his blasphemy **within the time of speaking**, which is the time it takes a disciple to greet his teacher,

אינו כלום

his retraction **is nothing** and does not save him from punishment,

אלא כיון שגדף בעדים נסקל.

rather, once he blasphemed in the presence of **witnesses**, he is **stoned** by the Beis Din.

מי שגדף את השם בשם עבודת כוכבים

One who blasphemed the Name of Hashem with the name of an idol of worship of stars, by using the idol's name to curse Hashem,

קנאים פוגעים בו והורגים אותו.

zealots who are filled with holy wrath for Hashem's honor may strike him and kill him on the spot.

ואם לא הרגוהו קנאים

And if the zealots did not kill him at the time of the act,

ובא לבית דין

and he came to the house of judgment to be tried,

אינו נסקל עד שיברך בשם מן השמות המיוחדים:

he is not stoned by the court until he blesses, which is a euphemism for cursing, with a name from the Names that are unique to Hashem, and not by using the name of an idol.

הלכה י

Halacha 10: The Obligation to Rend Garments for Blasphemy and Placing Hands on the Condemned

כל השומע ברפת השם חייב לקרע

Anyone who hears blasphemy of the Name of Hashem is obligated to rend his garments in mourning,

ואפילו על ברפת הפנויין חייב לקרע

and even upon blasphemy of the descriptive terms of Hashem, one is obligated to rend his garments.

והוא שישמענה מישראל.

And this is specifically when he hears it from a Jew.

אחד השומע ואחד השומע מפי השומע חייב לקרע.

Whether the direct hearer of the blasphemy or the one who hears from the mouth of the hearer who is repeating what happened, each is obligated to rend his garments.

אבל השומע מפי העובד פוכבים אינו חייב לקרע.

But one who hears it directly from the mouth of the worshiper of stars is not obligated to rend his garments.

ולא קרעו אליקים ושכנא אלא מפני שרבשקה היה ישראלי מומר.

And not did rend Elyakim and Shevna their garments when they heard the blasphemy of Ravshakeh, except because that Ravshakeh was a Jew apostate, and therefore they were obligated to rend.

כל העדים והדיינים סומכים את ידיהם אחד אחד על ראש המגיד

All the witnesses and the judges place their hands, one by one, upon the head of the blasphemer before he is executed,

וְאָמַר לוֹ דָּמְךָ בְּרֹאשְׁךָ שְׂאֵתָה גְרַמְתָּ לָּךְ.

and say to him, "Your blood is on your head, for you caused it to yourself."

וְאֵין בְּכָל הַרוֹגֵי בֵּית דִּין מִי שְׁסוּמִים עָלָיו אֶלָּא מְגִיד בְּלִבּוֹ

And there is not among all those executed by the house of law anyone that they place hands upon him except the blasphemer alone,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְסָמְכוּ כָּל הַשְּׁמָעִים אֶת יָדֵיהֶם:

as it is said in the Torah regarding the blasphemer, "and shall place all the hearers their hands upon his head."

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter outlines the strict prohibitions against engaging with avodah zarah in thought, speech, or deed. We learn that any action showing interest in these false beliefs is forbidden, and one who performs an action reflecting this concern receives lashes. Ultimately, the Torah warns us to guard our minds from any thoughts or philosophical inquiries that could uproot the fundamental principles of our holy faith, ensuring our hearts remain entirely pure and devoted to Hashem alone.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

The core of the prohibition against avodah zarah is not just about bowing to a physical statue; it is about the subtle temptation to look for intermediaries. The Torah warns us, 'Be very careful that your heart not be tempted,' which Chazal explain as a warning not to let our thoughts wander after our own limited understanding. When we look at the natural systems of the world, our careers, our doctors, our financial efforts, or even spiritual forces, and treat them as independent powers that we must appease, we are falling into the very trap that Enosh and his generation fell into. We must remember that every single force in creation is merely an axe in the hand of the hewer, completely subservient to Hashem.

Furthermore, the Rambam teaches us a profound rule about the human mind: 'the mind of man is short.' We are forbidden from filling our heads with foreign philosophies, secular skepticism, or looking at things that pull our hearts away from pure emunah. The yetzer hara tries to convince us that we can explore every doubt and read every cynical book without being affected. But the Torah knows our nature. If you let your mind wander into places of doubt, wondering 'maybe it is true, maybe it is not', you will eventually be drawn after the desires of your heart and damage your yiras Shamayim. Guarding our thoughts is the ultimate boundary that keeps our relationship with Hashem pure.

To live this today, choose one area where you feel anxious or dependent on a human intermediary, whether it is a business partner, a medical treatment, or a personal connection, and consciously declare: 'This is only a vessel. Hashem alone is the source of my blessing, and I trust in Him directly without any intermediaries.'

מִסְכֵּת אָבוֹת • פֶּרֶק רִאשׁוֹן

Complete Word-for-Word Interlinear • Navy & Gold Edition

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

הַשְּׁלֶשֶׁת 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 מְתוּנִים בְּדִין, וְהָעֲמִידוֹ תְּלִמִּידִים הִרְבֵּה, 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 שֶׁעָלִיָּהֶם 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 הָעֲבוֹדָה וְעַל גְּמִילוּת
acts of and on the Temple service and on the Torah on stands the world things three
חֲסָדִים:
kindness

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

עבודת השם מאהבה ומורא שמים

Mishna 3 · Serving Hashem Out of Love and the Fear of Heaven

אֲנִיטִיגֶנוֹס אִישׁ סוֹכוֹ קִבֵּל מִשְׁמֵעוֹן הַצְּדִיק. 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.

קבלת התורה וכבוד חכמים

Mishna 4 · The Transmission of Torah and Honoring the Sages

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, וְהָיוּ
 and be for the Sages meeting a house of your house let be says Zeredah man of Yoezer ben

מִתְאַבֵּק בַּעֲפָר רַגְלֵיהֶם, וְהָיוּ שׁוֹתֶה 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.

הכנסת אורחים ומעוט שיחה עם האשה

Mishna 5 · Hospitality to the Poor and Limiting Conversation with Women

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, וְסוּפוֹ
 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 הארכלי 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 הארכלי 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 אוֹמֵר, אָהַב אֶת הַמְּלָאכָה, וּשְׂנָא אֶת
— and hate work — love says Shemaiah from them received and Abtalion Shemaiah
הַרְבָּנוֹת, וְאֵל 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 אוֹמֵר, חֲכָמִים, הִזָּהָרוּ בְּדַבְרֵיכֶם, שֵׁמָא 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 אוֹמֵר, הֵיךְ 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 אוֹמֵר, נָגִיד שָׁמָא, 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, קָטָלָא חַיִּב. וְדָא שְׁתִּמְשׁ בְּתִגָּא, 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 עֲכָשִׁיו, אִמָּתִי:

when now not And if

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

מִשְׁנָה 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.

מִשְׁנָה טז

עשה לך רב והרחקה מן הספק

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

רבן גמליאל הִזָּה אומר, עשה לך רב, והסתלק מן 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.

מִשְׁנָה 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

אלא שתיקה. ולא המדרש הוא העקר, אלא המעשה. וכל המרבה

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.

מִשְׁנָה 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 שִׁפְטוֹ
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 הִחַרְשֹׁתִי 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 נִשְׂאֵת עוֹן חֲטָאתִי סָלָה:
עַל זֹאת יִתְפַּלֵּל כָּל חֹסִיד אֱלֹהִים לְעֵת מִצָּא רַק לְשֹׁטֶף מִיָּם רַבִּים אֲלִיוֹ לֹא יִגִּיעוּ:
אַתָּה סֹתֵר לִי מִצָּר תִּצְרֵנִי רָנִי פִּלַּט תְּסוּבְּבֵנִי סָלָה:
אֲשַׁכִּילָה וְאוֹרָה בְּדֶרֶךְ זֶה תִּלְךָ אֵינִי עֹלָה עֲלִיָּה עֵינַי:
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 חֹסִיד מֵאִישׁ מִרְמָה וְעוֹלָה תִּפְלֹטֵנִי:
כִּי אַתָּה אֱלֹהִי מְעוּזִי לָמָּה זִנְחִיתָנִי לָמָּה קִדֵּר אֶתְהַלֵּךְ בְּלַחֲץ אוֹיֵב:
שְׁלַח אוֹרָה וְאַמְתָּה הַמָּה יִנְחוּנִי יְבִיאוּנִי אֶל הָר קוֹדֶשֶׁךָ וְאֶל מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֶיךָ:
וְאֲבֹאָה אֶל מִזְבֵּחַ אֱלֹהִים אֶל אֵל שְׁמֹחַת גִּילִי וְאוֹדָה בְּכִנּוֹר אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִי:
מִה תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה נַפְשִׁי וּמִה תִּתְהַמֵּי עָלַי הוֹחִילִי לֵאלֹהִים כִּי עוֹד אוֹדְנוּ יְשׁוּעַת פָּנֶי וְאֱלֹהִי:

שִׁיר מְזִמּוֹר לְאַסָּף:

אֱלֹהִים אֵל דָּמִי לָךְ אֵל תַּחֲרַשׁ וְאֵל תִּשְׁקֹט אֵל:

כִּי הִנֵּה אוֹיְבֶיךָ יִהְיֶינּוּ וּמִשְׁנֵאֶיךָ נִשְׂאוּ רֹאשׁ:

עַל עֲמָךְ יַעֲרִימוּ סוֹד וַיִּתְּעֲצּוּ עַל צָפוֹנֶיךָ:

אָמְרוּ לָכֵן וְנִכְחָדֵם מִגּוֹי וְלֹא יִזְכָּר שֵׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹד:

כִּי נִוָּעֲצוּ לֵב יַחֲדוּ עָלֶיךָ בְּרִית יִכְרֹתוּ:

אֱהִלִּי אָדוֹם וַיִּשְׁמְעֵאלִים מוֹאָב וְהַגָּרִים:

גָּבַל וַעֲמֹן וַעֲמֶלֶק פָּלְשֶׁת עִם יִשְׁבִּי צוֹר:

גַּם אֲשׁוּר נִלְוָה עִמָּם הָיוּ זִרְעַ לִבְנֵי לוֹט סָלָה:

עָשָׂה לָהֶם כְּמִדְיָן כְּסִיסְרָא כְּיִבִּין בְּנַחַל קִישׁוֹן:

נִשְׁמְדוּ בְּעֵין דָּאֵר הָיוּ דָמָן לְאַדְמָה:

שִׁיתֵּמוּ נְדִיבֵמוֹ כְּעָרֵב וְכִזְאָב וְכִזְבַּח וְכִצְלָמְנָע כָּל גְּסִיכְמוֹ:

אֲשֶׁר אָמְרוּ נִירְשָׁה לָנוּ אֵת גְּאוֹת אֱלֹהִים:

אֱלֹהֵי שִׁיתֵּמוּ כַּגִּלְגָּל כְּקֶשׁ לִפְנֵי רוּחַ:

כְּאֵשׁ תִּבְעַר יָעַר וְכִלְהָבָה תִּלְהַט הָרִים:

כֵּן תִּרְדָּפֵם בְּסַעֲרָךְ וּבְסוּפָתְךָ תִּבְהַלֵּם:

מִלֵּא פְּנֵיהֶם קִלּוֹן וַיִּבְקְשׁוּ שְׁמֶךָ יְהוָה:

יִבְשׁוּ וַיִּבְהָלוּ עַדִּי עַד וַיִּחַפְּרוּ וַיֵּאבְדּוּ:

וַיִּדְעוּ כִּי אַתָּה שְׁמֶךָ יְהוָה לִבְדָּדָה עֲלִיוֹן עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ:

שִׁיר לְמַעֲלוֹת אֲשָׁא עֵינֵי אֶל הַהָרִים מֵאֵין יָבֹא עֲזָרִי:

עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יְהוָה עָשָׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ:

אֵל יִתֵּן לַמוֹט רִגְלָךְ אֵל יָנוּם שְׁמֶרְךָ:

הִנֵּה לֹא יָנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל:

יְהוָה שְׁמֶרְךָ יְהוָה צִלָּה עַל יַד מִיָּנָה:

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 הַמַּעֲלֹת מִמַּעַמְקִים קִרְאֲתֶיךָ יְהוָה:

אֲדֹנִי שְׁמָעָה בְּקוֹלִי תַּהֲיֶינָה אָזְנֶיךָ קִשְׁבוּת לְקוֹל תַּחֲנוּנִי:

אִם עֲוֹנוֹת תִּשְׁמָר יְהוָה אֲדֹנִי מִי יַעֲמֹד:

כִּי עָמָךְ הִסְלִיכָה לְמַעַן תִּזְרָא:

קוֹיֵתִי יְהוָה קִוְּתָה נַפְשִׁי וְלִדְבָרוֹ הוֹחֵלֵתִי:

נַפְשִׁי לֹאֲדֹנִי מִשְׁמָרִים לְבַקֵּר שׁוֹמְרִים לְבַקֵּר:

יַחַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵל יְהוָה כִּי עִם יְהוָה הַחֲסֹד וְהַרְפֵּה עֲמוֹ כְּדוֹת:

וְהוּא יִפְדֶּה 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.'