

## חובות הלבבות • שער הפרישות • פרק רביעי

Sentence by Sentence • Punctuated Hebrew with Translation and Notes • Navy &amp; Gold Edition

## ON THIS PAGE

In this fourth Perek of Shaar HaPerishus, Rabbeinu Bachya continues to illuminate the path of true spiritual detachment. After laying the groundwork for what perishus truly means, he now brings us to a deeper understanding by presenting a comprehensive list of the character traits and behaviors that mark a genuine ascetic.

This Perek is a powerful mirror, allowing us to reflect on our own middos and actions. Rabbeinu Bachya, through the words of one of the pious, gives us a detailed portrait of the ideal ben Torah, a person whose inner world and outer conduct are completely aligned with Hashem's will, serving as a guide for our own avodas Hashem.

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

אָבֵל תִּנְאִי הַפְּרִישׁוֹת הַמִּיחָדָת כְּאִשֶּׁר אָמַר קִצֵּת הַחֲסִידִים: הַפְּרוּשׁ, צִהָלְתוֹ בְּפָנָיו וְאָבֵלוֹ בְּלִבּוֹ.

However, the conditions of unique separation, as some of the Chassidim said, are that the true Perush's joy is on his face, but his sorrow is in his heart.

**NOTE** A "Perush" (ascetic) here refers to someone who has reached a high level of spiritual detachment from worldly desires, not just someone who is physically separated.

לִבּוֹ רָחֵב מְאֹד.

His heart is exceedingly broad.

**NOTE** A 'broad heart' means he has great patience, understanding, and compassion, not easily angered or distressed.

וְנַפְשׁוֹ שְׂפֵלָה מְאֹד.

And his soul is exceedingly lowly.

**NOTE** A 'lowly soul' means he possesses profound humility, considering himself insignificant.

אֵינָנוּ נוֹטֵר, וְלֹא חוֹמֵד, וְלֹא מְסַפֵּר בְּגִנוּת, וְלֹא מְדַבֵּר מֵאָדָם.

He does not bear a grudge, nor does he covet; he does not speak negatively about anyone, nor does he speak about people at all (in a gossipy way).

מוֹאֵס בְּגָדְלָהּ, וְשׂוֹנֵא הַשָּׂרְרָה.

He despises greatness and hates dominion over others.

מִשָּׁב, זְכָרוֹ, מוֹדָה, רֵב בְּשֵׁת, מְעַט נֶזֶק.

He is settled, has a good memory, admits the truth, possesses much shame, and causes little harm.

אִם יִשְׁחַק לֹא יִרְבֶּה, וְאִם יִכְעַס לֹא יִתְקַצֵּף.

If he laughs, he does not do so excessively; and if he becomes angry, he does not become enraged.

שִׁחְקוֹ רוּחַ שְׂפָתַיִם, וּשְׂאֵלָתוֹ לְלִמּוּד.

His laughter is merely a parting of the lips, and his questioning is for the purpose of learning.

חִכְמָתוֹ רַבָּה וְעֲנֻתוֹ גְּדוֹלָה.

His wisdom is abundant, and his humility is great.

הַסִּכְמָתוֹ חֲזָקָה.

His resolve is strong.

לֹא יִמְהָר וְלֹא יִסְכַּל.

He does not act hastily, nor does he act foolishly.

מִחֻלָּתוֹ נָאֶה וּתְשׁוּבָתוֹ נִכְבְּדָת.

His arguments are pleasant, and his replies are respectful.

צַדִּיק אִם יִכְעַס, חוֹמֵל אִם יִבְקֹשׁ.

He is righteous even when he is angry, and he is compassionate when entreated.

יְדִידוּתוֹ זָכָה, וְאִסּוּרוֹ חָזָק, וּבְרִיתוֹ נֶאֱמָנָה.

His friendship is pure, his commitment is strong, and his covenant is faithful.

רוּצָה בְּדִין הַבּוֹרָא, מוֹשִׁיל בְּיָצְרוֹ.

He desires the judgment of the Creator and rules over his evil inclination.

לֹא יִדְבֹר עֵתֶק עַל מִי שִׁיזִיקָהוּ, וְלֹא יִתְעַסֵּק בְּמָה שֶׁלֹּא יוֹעִילָהוּ.

He does not speak harshly about one who harms him, nor does he occupy himself with what is not beneficial to him.

לֹא יִתְנַקֵּם לְאִיד, וְלֹא יִזְכֹּר לְאָדָם רָעָה.

He does not rejoice in the downfall of an enemy, nor does he remember a wrong done to him by another person.

מִשָּׂאוֹ קָל וְעֲזָרָתוֹ רַבָּה.

His burden on others is light, and his help to them is abundant.

הוֹדָאתוֹ רַבָּה בְּעֵת הָרָעָה, וְסָבְלוֹ אָרְךְ בְּעֵת הַנֶּזֶק.

His gratitude is great in times of trouble, and his patience is long in times of loss.

אִם יִשְׁאַלּוּ מִמֶּנּוּ יָתֵן, וְאִם יִחְמָסוּ אוֹתוֹ יִמְחֹל.

If others ask from him, he gives; and if they rob him, he forgives.

וְאִם יִמְנְעוּ מִמֶּנּוּ יִתְנַדֵּב, וְאִם יִרְחִיקוּהוּ יִקְרַב.

And if they refuse him something, he will still volunteer; and if they distance him, he will draw them close.

רַךְ מִחֶמֶאָה וּמִתּוֹק מִדְּבַשׁ.

He is softer than butter and sweeter than honey.

מִצְוָה עַל הָאֱמֶת, דּוֹבֵר צֶדֶק, עוֹזֵב מְאֻיָּיו, מְצַפֶּה לְיוֹמוֹ.

He commands adherence to the truth, speaks righteously, abandons his desires, and anticipates his final day.

אוֹמֵר וְעוֹשֶׂה, חָכָם, זָרִיז.

He says and he does; he is wise and diligent.

נִפְשׁוֹ יָקָרָה, וּבְרִיתוֹ נְאֻיָּה.

His soul is noble, and his covenant is agreeable.

גִּבּוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ, נִצּוֹל מִכָּל גְּנוּת.

He is mighty in the land, and he is saved from all blame.

**NOTE** The variant reading 'נֵר מְאִיר' (a shining lamp) instead of 'גִּבּוֹר' (mighty) also conveys a similar idea of positive influence and prominence.

עֹזֵרָה לְדָל וּתְשׁוּעָה לָעֲשׂוּק.

He is a helper to the poor and a salvation to the oppressed.

לֹא יַחֲשֹׁף מִסְתּוֹר וְלֹא יִגְלֶה סוֹד.

He does not expose what is hidden, nor does he reveal a secret.

צָרוֹתָיו רַבּוֹת וּתְלֻנָּתוֹ מְעוּטָה.

His troubles are many, but his complaints are few.

כַּשֵּׁיִרְאָה טוֹב יִזְכְּרֶנּוּ, וְאִם יִרְאָה רָע יִכְסֶּנּוּ.

When he sees good, he mentions it; and if he sees bad, he covers it up.

רָצוֹי וְזָה.

He is pleasing and pure.

חֶבְרָתוֹ שִׂמְחָה, הִרְחַקְתּוֹ אֲנָחָה.

His company brings joy; his absence causes sorrow.

זִקְּמָתָהּ הִחֲכֶמָה, וְיִפְתָּהּ הָעֲנָוָה.

Wisdom has purified him, and humility has adorned him.

מִזְכִּיר לַמְּשֻׁכִּיל, מְלַמֵּד לַסֹּכֵל.

He reminds the wise, and he teaches the foolish.

כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה אֲצִלוֹ זֶה מִמַּעֲשֵׂהוּ, וְכָל נֶפֶשׁ בְּעֵינָיו יוֹתֵר בְּרָה מִנֶּפֶשוֹ.

Every act of others is purer to him than his own act, and every person is purer in his eyes than his own soul.

יֹדֵעַ אֶת מוֹמוֹ, זֹכֵר אֶת עֲוֹנוֹ.

He knows his own flaws and remembers his iniquity.

אוֹהֵב הָאֱלֹהִים, רוֹדֵף רְצוֹנוֹ.

He loves Hashem and pursues His will.

לֹא יִנָּקֵם לְנַפְשׁוֹ, וְלֹא יִתְמִיד בְּקִצְפוֹ.

He does not take revenge for himself, nor does he prolong his anger.

חֵבֵר לַמִּזְכִּירִים, יוֹשֵׁב עִם הָעֲנִיִּים.

He is a companion to those who remind him (of his duties to Hashem), and he sits with the humble.

אוֹהֵב לְאִנְשֵׁי הַצֶּדֶק, נֶאֱמָן לְאִנְשֵׁי אֱמֶת.

He loves men of righteousness and is faithful to men of truth.

עוֹזֵר לָרֵשׁ, אָב לַיְתוֹם, בֹּעֵל לְאִלְמָנָה, מְכַבֵּד הַדֹּלִים.

He helps the poor, is a father to the orphan, a protector to the widow, and shows respect to the needy.

וּמִתְנַאֲיָהּ עוֹד קִבֵּלְתָּ כָּל חוּבוֹת הַלִּבָּבוֹת אֲשֶׁר וְכִרְנוּ מִמָּה שֶׁקָּדַם בְּסִפְרֵי הַזֶּה וְאִינֶנִּי צָרִיךְ לְשַׁנוֹתָם שֶׁלֹּא יֵאָרְכוּ לָנוּ הַדְּבָרִים בַּשַּׁעַר הַזֶּה, וְאַתָּה יָדַע לָךְ:

And among its conditions is also the acceptance of all the Duties of the Heart that we mentioned earlier in this book, which I do not need to repeat so that the discussion in this chapter does not become too lengthy; and you, know this for yourself.

#### WHAT TO TAKE FROM IT

This Perec presents a detailed list of the marks of a true ascetic, as declared by one of the pious. The Tanna describes a person whose joy is internal, whose heart is broad, and whose soul is lowly. Such an individual does not bear grudges, covet, or speak negatively of others. He abhors honor and dominion, is calm, remembers well, admits truth, and possesses great shame. His laughter is minimal, his anger controlled, and his speech is for learning. He is wise, humble, resolute, and acts without haste or foolishness. His arguments are polite, his replies courteous, and he acts righteously even when angry. He is compassionate, sincere in friendship, faithful to covenants, and desires Hashem's judgment. He rules over his yetzer hara, does not speak ill of those who harm him, and avoids useless pursuits. He does not rejoice in an enemy's downfall, nor does he remind others of their wrongs. He troubles others lightly but helps them greatly, shows gratitude in adversity, and patience in loss. He gives when asked, forgives when robbed, volunteers even when refused, and brings close those who distance him. He is soft, sweet, exhorts to truth, and acts righteously. He relinquishes desires, anticipates his final day, and practices what he preaches. He is wise, energetic, noble, agreeable, powerful, and free of blame. He helps the poor and oppressed, keeps secrets, and has many troubles but few complaints. He highlights good and covers bad, is pleasing in manners, pure in heart, and a joy to be with. Wisdom purifies him, humility embellishes him, and he mentors the wise while teaching the ignorant. He considers others purer than himself, is aware of his own failings, remembers his iniquity, and loves Hashem, chasing His will. He does not take

revenge or hold onto anger. He keeps company with those who remind him of his duties, sits with the humble, loves righteous men, and is faithful to men of truth. He helps the poor, is a father to orphans, a protector of widows, and respects the needy. The Perek concludes by adding that a true ascetic also undertakes all the duties of the heart previously mentioned in the sefer.

למעשה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

The Chovos HaLevavos gives us here an incredible list, a whole picture of what a true \*parush\* looks like. Lichoira, we might think a \*parush\* is someone who just runs away from the world, who is sad and withdrawn. But the Tanna is telling us something else entirely: "His joy is on his face, and his sorrow is in his heart." This is the chiddush! The true \*parush\* isn't gloomy; he's a source of light and warmth to others, even while his inner world is deeply serious, focused on his avodah and his own spiritual accounting.

This teaches us a profound lesson about what it means to be a \*ben Torah\* in this world. We are not meant to be detached or aloof. On the contrary, the more we grow in our \*avodas Hashem\*, the more we should become a blessing to those around us. We see this throughout the list: "He troubles others lightly but helps them much," "If he is asked from, he gives. If he is robbed, he will forgive." His inner \*perishus\* from worldly desires allows him to be truly selfless and giving, without ego or expectation.

Think about it: when a person is truly free from \*gaava\* (pride) and \*kinah\* (jealousy) and \*taavah\* (desire), they have so much more capacity to give to others. They are not focused on themselves, on what they are lacking, or on what they can get. Instead, their heart is "exceedingly broad," full of compassion and a desire to do Hashem's will, which includes helping His creations. This is the ultimate expression of \*yiras Shamayim\* and \*ahavas Hashem\*.

So, the takeaway for today is: Choose one middah from this incredible list that resonates with you, and make it your focus. For example, "If he sees good, he will mention it, if he sees bad, he will cover it." Try to actively praise someone today, and hold back from speaking negatively about another, even if you feel justified.