

חובות הלבבות • שער הפרישות • פרק ששי

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

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This sixth Perek of Shaar HaPerishus is going to bring us a whole range of powerful proofs and raayos from Tanach and Chazal, showing us just how central the middah of perishus, of separating oneself from olam hazeh, truly is. We'll see how the greatest tzaddikim and prophets, from Yaakov Avinu to Moshe Rabbeinu, Eliyahu, and even the Nevi'im, all embraced this path. The Chovos HaLevavos will walk us through pesukim and maamarei Chazal that highlight the importance of minimizing physical pleasures and focusing on avodas Hashem.

We'll learn about the practices of the Nazir, Aharon HaKohen, the Bnei Rechav, and even the people of Nineveh, all demonstrating different facets of perishus. The Rambam will show us how even the nisyonos and tzaros that Hashem sends us are for our good, to bring us closer to Him. It's all about understanding that true closeness to Hashem comes from detaching ourselves from the fleeting pleasures of this world and dedicating our hearts and minds to ruchniyus.

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

אבל באור מה שבא בספרי הקדש ודברי רז"ל מענין הפרישות מן העולם.

Now, we'll explain what is brought in the holy books and the words of our Sages, zikronam livracha, regarding the matter of *perishus* (abstinence) from the world.

מהם מה שאמר יעקב (בראשית כח) ונתן לי לחם לאכל ובגד ללבוש.

Among these sources is what Yaakov Avinu said, as it's written in Bereishis (28:20), "and He will give me bread to eat and a garment to wear."

ומהם צום משה ארבעים יום ולילותם ג' פעמים.

Also among them is Moshe Rabbeinu's fasting for forty days and nights, three times.

וכן אליהו ארבעים יום כמ"ש (מלכים א יט) וילך בכח האכילה ההיא ארבעים יום.

And similarly, Eliyahu HaNavi fasted for forty days, as it's written (Melachim I 19:8), "And he went in the strength of that meal for forty days."

ומהם מה שנאמר בנזיר שקראו האלהים קדוש כמ"ש (במדבר ז) כל ימי נזרו קדש הוא לה' פעבור שפסק מפרי הגפן וגדל שער ראשו בלבד כ"ש מי שפסקה תאוותו מכל התענוגים שיש לו שחר וגמול יותר.

And among these is what is said about the Nazir, whom Hashem calls "holy," as it's written (Banidbar 6:8), "All the days of his separation, he is holy to Hashem," because he abstained from the fruit of the vine and let his hair grow; all the more so, one whose desires are cut off from all physical pleasures will have greater reward and recompense.

ומהם מה שנאמר לאהרן (ויקרא י) זין ושכר אל תשת וגוי ולהבדיל וגוי ולהורות וגוי הזהיר כל העוסק במעשה העבודה שלא יעסק בכל מה שיטרידו מהשלמת העבודה לאלהים כמו שאמרו רבותינו ז"ל שמה רביעית זין אל יורה שמה רביעית אל יתפלל.

And among these is what was said to Aharon (Vayikra 10:9), "Do not drink wine or strong drink, etc.," and "to distinguish, etc.," and "to teach, etc."; this warns everyone engaged in the work of avodah not to occupy himself with anything that would distract him from completing his service to Hashem, just as our Sages, zikronam livrachah, said: "If one drank a *revi'is* of wine, he should not teach; if he drank a *chamisheis*, he should not pray."

ומהם ענין בני יונדב בן רכב אשר צום אביהם שלא ישתו זין ולא יזרעו ולא יטעו כרם ולא יבנו בית וישבו באהלים חוץ לישוב וזה מנהג הפורשים מן העולם ושבח להם הבורא זה כמ"ש (ירמיה לה) לא כפרת איש ליונדב בן רכב.

And among these is the matter of the sons of Yonadav ben Rechav, whose father commanded them never to drink wine, nor to sow, nor to plant a vineyard, nor to build a house, but to dwell in tents outside settled areas; this is the custom of those who separate themselves from the world, and the Creator praised them for this, as it's written (Yirmiya 35:19), "Yonadav ben Rechav shall never lack a man [descendant] to stand before Me forever."

ומהם מעשה אלישע כשעבר עליו אליהו כמ"ש (מלכים א יט) שנים עשר צמדים לפניו והניח ידו מן הכל והלה אחרי כמ"ש (שם) אשקה נא לאבי ולאמי וגוי וילה אחרי אליהו וישרתהו.

And among these is the story of Elisha, when Eliyahu passed by him, as it's written (Melachim I 19:19), "twelve yokes were before him"; and Elisha left everything and followed him, as it's written (ibid. 19:20), "Let me, please, kiss my father and my mother, etc.," and he went after Eliyahu and served him.

וכן היה מנהג בני הנביאים בדור ההוא ואשר לפניו שהניחו העסק בישוב העולם וההשגחה בעניני הגופות ויצאו למדברות כדי שתתיחד נפשם ומחשבתם לאלהים.

And this was also the custom of the *Bnei HaNevi'im* (disciples of the prophets) in that generation and in previous ones: they abandoned involvement in worldly affairs and concern for their physical needs, going out to the deserts so that their souls and thoughts could be solely devoted to Hashem.

ומהם מה שצונו אותנו התורה בתענית בעת התשובה ובקשת הכפרה כדי שנחסם תאווננו מכל התענוגים שהם החזקים שבסבות העברות כמ"ש (הושע יג) כמרעיתם וישבעו ואמר בהפכו (שם ה) בצר להם ישחרנו.

And among these is what the Torah commanded us regarding fasting during the time of *teshuva* and seeking atonement, in order to curb our desires from all pleasures, which are the strongest causes of *aveiros*, as it's written (Hoshea 13:6), "According to their pasture, so were they filled"; and it says the opposite (ibid. 5:15), "in their trouble they will seek Me."

ומהם מ"ש (זכריה יג) ולא ילבשו אדירת שער למען כחש וזה מורה כי הוא היה לבוש החסידים מקדם והיו לובשים אותו אנשי הדור ההוא להחניף.

And among these is what is written (Zechariah 13:4), "neither shall they wear a robe of coarse hair to deceive"; this indicates that it was the attire of the early *chasidim*, and some people of that generation would wear it to appear pious.

ומזה מ"ש דוד (תהלים קיט) טרם אָעָנָה אָנִי שִׁגָּג וְאָמַר (שם) טוֹב לִי כִּי עָנִיתִי וְאָמַר (שם) טוֹב לִי תוֹרַת פִּיךָ וְגו'.

And from this, we have what Dovid HaMelech said (Tehilim 119:67), "Before I was afflicted, I did err"; and he also said (ibid. 119:71), "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, in order that I might learn Your statutes"; and he also said (ibid. 119:72), "The Torah of Your mouth is better unto me, etc."

ומהם מנהג איוב אשר ספר על עצמו מבזות העולם והונו וקשרו חושיו ואסרו ידיו ולשונו מכל מה שיש בו המרות הבורא ובחרו באמת והצילו העשוקים והטבתו לדלים ולאובדים כמנהגי הפורשים מן העולם.

And among these is the practice of Iyov, who described himself as despising the world and its wealth, curbing his senses, and restraining his hands and tongue from anything that might lead to rebelling against the Creator; he chose truth, rescued the oppressed, and provided for the poor and lost, just like the customs of those who separate themselves from the world.

ומהם מה שעשה דניאל בהתפללו אל האלהים בעבור ארך הגלות הראשון והתאבלו עליו שאמר (דניאל י) לחם חמדות לא אכלתי ואמר לו המלאך (שם) מן היום הראשון אשר נתת את לבך להבין ולהתענות ושאר הענין וזה הוא הטוב שבמנהגי הפרישות.

And among these is what Daniel did when he prayed to Hashem concerning the length of the first *galus* and mourned over it, as he said (Daniel 10:3), "I ate no desirable bread"; and the angel said to him (ibid. 10:12), "from the first day that you did set your heart to understand, and to chasten yourself before Hashem," and the rest of the matter. This is the best of all practices of *perishus*.

ומהם מה שעשו אנשי נינוה כששמעו מה שגזר עליהם הבורא כמ"ש (יונה ג:ה') ויאמינו אנשי נינוה באלהים ובכמוהו מה שעשו אבותינו בימי המן ככתוב (אסתר ד) מקום אשר דבר המלך ודתו מגיע אכל גדול וגו' והרבה כזה בספרינו כשתחקר על הענין הזה תמצאנו מפזר בדברי אבותינו הרבה.

And among these is what the people of Nineveh did when they heard what the Creator decreed upon them, as it's written (Yona 3:5), "So the people of Nineveh believed in Hashem"; and similarly, what our forefathers did in the days of Haman, as it's written (Esther 4:3), "And in every province, where the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning, etc."; and many such instances are found in our holy books; when you investigate this matter, you will find it frequently scattered throughout the words of our ancestors.

ומהם מה שאמר שלמה (משלי כג) אל תהי בסבאי יין וגו' (שם ו) מעט שנות מעט תנומות וגו' ומה שאמרה אם למואל (שם לא) אל תתן לנשים חילך וגו' אל למלכים למואל וגו' פן ישתה וישכח מחקך.

And among these is what Shlomo HaMelech said (Mishlei 23:20), "Be not among wine-bibbers, etc."; and (ibid. 6:10), "A little sleep, a little slumber, etc."; and what the mother of Lemuel said (ibid. 31:3-5), "Do not give your strength to women, etc."; "It is not for kings, Lemuel, etc."; "Lest he drink and forget what was decreed."

ומהם מה שאמר (קהלת ב:כ"ו) כי לאדם שטוב לפניו וגו' ואמר (שם ז) לב חכמים בבית אכל (שם) טוב ללכת אל בית אכל ואמר (שם ה) מתוקה שנת העובד ואמר (שם יא) כי הידלות והשחרות הבל ואמר (שם יב) סוף דבר הכל נשמע וגו'.

And among these is what he said (Koheles 2:26), "For to the man that is good in His sight, etc."; and he said (ibid. 7:4), "The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning"; and (ibid. 7:2), "It is better to go to the house of mourning"; and he said (ibid. 5:11), "The sleep of a laboring man is sweet"; and he said (ibid. 11:10), "for childhood and youth are vanity"; and he said (ibid. 12:13), "The end of the matter, all having been heard, etc."

אָבֵל מָה שֶׁאָמְרוּ רִז"ל בְּמִשְׁנָה וּבִתְלֻמוֹד, רַב מַחֲבֵרוֹ בְּסֵפֶר הָזֶה, וְרַבּוֹ נִמְצָא בְּמִסְכַּת אָבוֹת וְעוֹד אָמְרוּ כֵן:
הִיא דִּרְכָּה שֶׁל תּוֹרָה פֶּת בְּמִלַּח תֹּאכֵל וַיִּמֵּם בְּמִשׁוּרָה תִּשְׁתֶּה וְעַל הָאָרֶץ תִּישָׁן וְכוּ' וּמָה שֶׁסְּמוּךְ לָזֶה
מִדְּבָרֵיהֶם הַתּוֹרָה נִקְנִית בְּאַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁמוֹנֶה דִּרְכִּים וּבִפְרָקֵי דִּחְסִידֵי בְּמִסְכַּת תַּעֲנִית מָה שֶׁיּוֹרָה עַל
פְּרִיָּשׁוֹתָם וּמִי שֶׁיַּחְקֹר עַל הָעֲנָיִן הַזֶּה יִמָּצְאוּ כָּתוּב וּמִן הַשֶּׁכֶּל וּמִן הַקְּבֵלָה.

As for what our Sages, zikronam livracha, said in the Mishnah and Talmud, it is too extensive for this book, and most of it is found in
Maseches Avos; and they also said, "This is the way of the Torah: eat bread with salt, drink water in measure, sleep on the ground,
etc."; and what is similar to this from their words, "The Torah is acquired in forty-eight ways"; and in *Pirka d'Chasidei* in Maseches
Ta'anis, there is much that indicates their *perishus*. And whoever investigates this matter will find it written, and derived from
intellect, and from *Kabbalah*.

תֵּן לִבְךָ בּוֹ וַחֲשֹׁב עָלָיו בְּמִצְפּוֹנֶךָ תִּשְׁיָגְהוּ בְּעֶזְרַת הַשֵּׁם כִּמ"ש (מִשְׁלֵי ב) אִם תִּבְקֹשֶׁנָּה כִּכְסֵּף וְגו' אִזְ תִּבִּין
יִרְאֵת ה' וְגו':

Give your heart to it and reflect upon it in your conscience; you will attain it with Hashem's help, as it's written (Mishlei 2:4-5), "If
you seek her as silver, etc., then you will understand the fear of Hashem, etc."

WHAT TO TAKE FROM IT

This Perek presents numerous proofs for the importance of perishus from Tanach and Chazal. It begins with Yaakov Avinu's
vow for basic sustenance, followed by Moshe Rabbeinu's and Eliyahu's forty-day fasts. The Chovos HaLevavos then
discusses the Nazir, called holy for abstaining from wine, and Aharon HaKohen, commanded to avoid wine for proper
service. The Bnei Rechav's perpetual abstinence from wine and settled life is highlighted as a model of separation. The Perek
continues with Elisha's immediate abandonment of his worldly affairs to follow Eliyahu, and the general practice of the
Nevi'im's disciples to live in deserts for spiritual devotion. Fasting during teshuvah is presented as a means to curb desires, with
pesukim from Hoshea illustrating the dangers of satiety and the benefits of affliction. The attire of early pious ones, David
HaMelech's appreciation for affliction, and Iyov's self-description of detachment from worldly pleasures are also brought.
Daniel's fasting and mourning during exile, and the collective fasts of Nineveh and the Jews in Haman's time, further
demonstrate the power of perishus. Finally, Shlomo HaMelech's warnings against gluttony, idleness, and wine, and his praise
for wisdom over revelry, conclude the chapter's extensive proofs for the middah of perishus.

The Chovos HaLevavos brings us a whole list of gedolim and tzaddikim, from Yaakov Avinu to Moshe Rabbeinu, Eliyahu, the Nevi'im, the Nazir, Aharon HaKohen, the Bnei Rechav, Elisha, Dovid HaMelech, Iyov, Daniel, and even the people of Nineveh and our ancestors in the time of Haman. What's the common thread? They all practiced some form of *perishus* – separating themselves from worldly pleasures. It wasn't about being sad or denying life, but about creating space, a *cheder*, for Hashem.

Each of these examples shows us that *perishus* isn't a one-size-fits-all thing. For Yaakov, it was asking only for bread and clothing. For Moshe, it was forty days without food or drink. For Aharon, it was abstaining from wine before avodah. For Elisha, it was leaving his livelihood to follow Eliyahu. The common denominator is a conscious choice to step back from something that, while perhaps permissible, could distract or diminish one's connection to Hashem. It's about recognizing what truly matters and making room for it.

We live in a world full of distractions, where the *yetzer hara* constantly tries to pull us into *taavos* and *hevel*. The Chovos HaLevavos is teaching us that to truly serve Hashem, to hear His voice, we sometimes need to quiet the noise of the world. It's not about becoming a hermit, but about finding our own personal *perishus* – a small, consistent way to say "no" to a pleasure or a distraction, so we can say "yes" to Hashem with greater clarity and devotion.

So, for today, pick one small, permissible pleasure or distraction that you can consciously step back from, even for a short time, to create more space for Hashem in your day.