

מִסְכֵּת אָבוֹת • פֶּרֶק שְׁנִי

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

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, our holy Sages guide us on how to direct our hearts and actions to serve Hashem with true yiras Shamayim. We begin with the golden advice of Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi on choosing a straight path in life, balancing Torah study with a worldly occupation, and working for the sake of Heaven. The Mishnah warns us to be careful with the ruling authorities and teaches us to nullify our own will before the will of Hashem, ensuring our avodah is pure and complete.

We then learn the profound teachings of Hillel, who cautions us against separating from the community or trusting in ourselves before the day of our death. The chapter transitions into the legacy of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai and his five chashuve disciples. Through their holy discussions, we are shown the ultimate traits a Yid must cleave to, such as a good heart, and the destructive traits we must run away from, alongside practical guidance on honoring our friends and guarding ourselves from the yetzer hara.

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

מִשְׁנָה א

הַדָּרָה הַיְשָׁרָה וְזִהְיוּת בְּמִצְוֹת

Mishna 1 • The Straight Path and Caution in Mitzvos

רַבִּי אוֹמֵר, אִיזוּהִי דֶרֶךְ יִשְׁרָה שֶׁיִּבְרַח לּוֹ הָאָדָם, כֹּל שֶׁהִיא תִפְאֶרֶת
an honor that is any a person for himself that should choose straight a path which is says Rabbi
לְעוֹשֶׂיהָ וְתִפְאֶרֶת לּוֹ מִן הָאָדָם. וְהָיָה זִהְיוּת בְּמִצְוָה קָלָה כְּבִחְמוּרָה, שְׂאִין
for not as with a grave one light with a mitzvah careful and be people from to him and an honor to its doer
אֶתָּה יוֹדֵעַ מִתֵּן שְׂכָרָן שֶׁל מִצְוֹת. וְהָיָה מִחֲשָׁב הַפֶּסֶד מִצְוָה כְּנֶגֶד
against a mitzvah the loss of calculating and be mitzvos of their reward the giving of know you
שְׂכָרָהּ, וְשֹׂכֵר עֲבֵרָה כְּנֶגֶד הַפֶּסֶדָּה. וְהִסְתַּכֵּל בְּשִׁלְשָׁה דְּבָרִים וְאֵין
and not things at three and look its loss against a transgression and the reward of its reward
אֶתָּה בָּא לִידֵי עֲבֵרָה, דַּע מָה לְמַעַלָּה מִמֶּנָּה, עֵין רוֹאָה וְאֵזֶן
and an ear seeing an eye you above what is know transgression to the hands of will come you
שׁוֹמְעֵת, וְכֹל מַעֲשֶׂיךָ בְּסֵפֶר נִכְתָּבִין:
are written in a book your deeds and all of hearing

Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi teaches how to choose a proper path in life, the importance of valuing all mitzvos equally, and how constant awareness of Hashem prevents sin.

מִשְׁנָה ב

רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל בְּנוֹ שֶׁל רַבִּי יְהוּדָה הַנָּשִׂיא אוֹמֵר, יָפָה תְּלִמּוּד תּוֹרָה עִם
 with Torah study of excellent is says the Nasi Yehudah Rabbi of his son Gamliel Rabban
 דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ, שִׁיגִיעַת שְׁנֵיהֶם מְשַׁכַּחַת עֹז. וְכָל תּוֹרָה שֶׁאִין עִמָּה מְלָאכָה,
 work with it that is not Torah and all sin causes to forget both of them for the toil of occupation worldly
 סוֹפָה בְּטִלָּה וְגוֹרֶרֶת עֹז. וְכָל הָעֹמְלִים עִם הַצָּבוּר, יִהְיוּ עִמָּלִים עִמָּהֶם
 with them labor should the community with who labor and all sin and drags nullified its end is
 לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם, שְׂזֻכוֹת אֲבוֹתָם מְסִיעֶתָן וְצִדְקָתָם עוֹמֶדֶת לְעַד.
 forever endures and their righteousness assists them their forefathers for the merit of Heaven for the sake of
 וְאַתֶּם, מַעֲלָה אֲנִי עֲלֵיכֶם שְׂכָר הַרְבֵּה כְּאִלּוּ עֲשִׂיתֶם:
 you accomplished as if much reward upon you I reckon and as for you

Rabban Gamliel teaches the importance of combining Torah study with a worldly occupation and serving the community with pure intentions.

משנה ג

הַזְהִירוֹת מִן הַמְּלָכוֹת וְהַשְׁלָטוֹן

Mishna 3 · Being Careful in Dealings with the Ruling Authorities

הָיוּ זְהִירֵין בְּרִשּׁוֹת, שֶׁאִין מִקְרִבִּין לוֹ לְאָדָם אֶלָּא לְצָרָה עֲצָמָן.
 themselves for the need of except a person draw near for they do not with the ruling-careful Be
 authority
 נִרְאִין כְּאוֹהֲבִין בְּשַׁעַת הַנֶּאֱתָן, וְאִין עוֹמְדִין לוֹ לְאָדָם בְּשַׁעַת
 at the time of for a person for him stand but they do not their benefit at the time of like friends they appear
 דִּחְקוֹ:
 his distress

This Mishnah warns a person not to rely on the friendship of government officials, as they only act out of self-interest.

משנה ד

עֲשֵׂית רְצוֹן הַשֵּׁם וְהִנָּהֲגַת הָאָדָם עִם הַצָּבוּר

Mishna 4 · Doing the Will of Hashem and Proper Conduct with the Community

הוּא הִיָּה אוֹמֵר, עֲשֵׂה רְצוֹנוֹ כְּרְצוֹנָהּ, כְּדִי שִׁיעֲשֶׂה רְצוֹנָהּ כְּרְצוֹנוֹ. בְּטִל
 Nullify like His will your will He will do so that like your will His will Do say used to He
 רְצוֹנָהּ מִפְּנֵי רְצוֹנוֹ, כְּדִי שִׁיבְטִל רְצוֹן אֲחֵרִים מִפְּנֵי רְצוֹנָהּ. הִלֵּל אוֹמֵר,
 says Hillel your will before others the will of He will nullify so that His will before your will
 אַל תִּפְרֹשׁ מִן הַצָּבוּר, וְאַל תִּאֱמִין בְּעַצְמָךְ עַד יוֹם מוֹתְךָ, וְאַל
 and do not your death the day of until in yourself trust and do not the community from separate yourself Do not
 תִּדְּיוֹן אֶת חֲבֵרְךָ עַד שֶׁתִּגִּיעַ לְמָקוֹמוֹ, וְאַל תֹּאמַר דְּבָר שֶׁאֵי אֲפָשָׁר
 possible that is not a thing say and do not his place you reach until your fellow — judge
 לְשִׁמְעַ, שְׁסוּפּוֹ לְהִשְׁמַע. וְאַל תֹּאמַר לְכִשְׁאֲפָנָה אֲשֶׁנָּה, שְׁמָא
 perhaps I will study When I am free say and do not it will be understood that in the end to understand

לא תפנה:

be free you will not

This Mishnah teaches the importance of aligning one's will with Hashem's will, and provides essential ethical guidance from Hillel regarding community, humility, and Torah study.

משנה ה

מדות האדם בתורה ובהנהגת העולם

Mishna 5 · Personal Traits for Torah Study and Ethical Conduct in Society

הוא היה אומר, אין בור ירא חטא, ולא עם הארץ חסיד, ולא

and not pious · an ignoramus and not sin is fearing of a brute not say used to He

הביטן ללמד, ולא הקפדן מלמד, ולא כל המרבה בסחורה

in business who increases everyone and not teaches the impatient person and not learns the bashful person

מחכים. ובמקום שאין אנשים, השתדל להיות איש:

a man to be strive men where there are no and in a place becomes wise

Hillel teaches the essential character traits required for acquiring Torah, teaching others, and taking responsibility in a leaderless community.

משנה ו

מדה כנגד מדה וענש הרשעים

Mishna 6 · Measure for Measure and the Ultimate Punishment of Evildoers

אף הוא ראה גלגלת אחת שצפה על פני המים. אמר לה, על

because to it he said the water the face of on that floated one a skull saw he Also

דאטפת, אטפוף. וסוף מטיפין יטופון:

will be drowned those who drowned and the end of they drowned you you drowned you

Hillel Hazaken saw a floating skull and noted that those who commit violence will ultimately suffer the same fate.

משנה ז

המרבה בתורה ובצדקה מרבה חיים ושלו

Mishna 7 · Increasing Torah and Charity Brings Life and Peace while Materialism Brings Worry

הוא היה אומר, מרבה בשר, מרבה רמה. מרבה נכסים, מרבה

increases possessions one who increases worms increases flesh One who increases say used to He

דאגה. מרבה נשים, מרבה כשפים. מרבה שפחות, מרבה זמה.

lewdness increases maidservants one who increases witchcraft increases wives one who increases worry

מרבה עבדים, מרבה גזל. מרבה תורה, מרבה חיים. מרבה

one who increases life increases Torah one who increases robbery increases servants one who increases

ישיבה, מרבה חכמה. מרבה עצה, מרבה תבונה. מרבה צדקה,

charity one who increases understanding increases counsel one who increases wisdom increases sitting

מרבה שלום. קנה שם טוב, קנה לעצמו. קנה לו

for himself one who has acquired for himself has acquired good a name One who has acquired peace increases

דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָה, קָנָה לוֹ חַיִּי הָעוֹלָם הַבֶּא:

to come the world the life of for himself has acquired Torah words of

Hillel teaches that while physical and material pursuits increase negative outcomes, spiritual pursuits like Torah study, wisdom, and charity bring lasting peace and eternal life.

משנה ח

תְּלִמִּידֵי רַבִּן יוֹחָנָן בֶּן זַכַּאי וְשִׁבְחָם

Mishna 8 · The Disciples of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai and Their Unique Virtues

רַבִּן יוֹחָנָן בֶּן זַכַּאי קָבַל מֵהֵלֵל וּמִשְׁמַאי. הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, אִם

If say used to He and from Shammai from Hillel received Zakkai ben Yohanan Rabban

לְמַדְתָּ תוֹרָה הַרְבֵּה, אַל תַּחְזִיק טוֹבָה לְעַצְמְךָ, כִּי לְכֹךָ נּוֹצַרְתָּ.

you were created for this because for yourself credit claim do not much Torah you have learned

חֲמִשָּׁה תְּלִמִּידִים הָיוּ לוֹ לְרַבִּן יוֹחָנָן בֶּן זַכַּאי, וְאֵלּוּ הֵם, רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר

Eliezer Rabbi are they and these Zakkai ben Yohanan to Rabban to him were disciples Five

בֶּן הוֹרְקָנוֹס, וְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן חֲנַנְיָה, וְרַבִּי יוֹסִי הַכֹּהֵן, וְרַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן

ben Shimon and Rabbi the Priest Yose and Rabbi Hananiah ben Yehoshua and Rabbi Hyrcanus ben

נֹתְנָאֵל, וְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲרָךְ. הוּא הָיָה מוֹנֶה שְׁבָחָן. רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר בֶּן

ben Eliezer Rabbi their praise list used to He Arach ben Eleazar and Rabbi Nethaneel

הוֹרְקָנוֹס, בּוֹר סוֹד שְׂאִינוֹ מְאִבֵּד טֶפֶחַ. רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן חֲנַנְיָה, אֲשֶׁרִי

praiseworthy is Hananiah ben Yehoshua Rabbi a drop lose that does not plastered is a cistern Hyrcanus

יֹלְדָתוֹ. רַבִּי יוֹסִי הַכֹּהֵן, חָסִיד. רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן נֹתְנָאֵל, יֵרָא חֲטָא.

sin fears Nethaneel ben Shimon Rabbi is a pious man the Priest Yose Rabbi she who bore him

וְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲרָךְ, מַעֲיֵן הַמִּתְגַּבֵּר. הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, אִם יִהְיוּ כָּל

all there would be If say used to He that gathers force is a spring Arach ben Eleazar and Rabbi

חֲכָמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכַף מֵאֲזֵנִים, וְאֶלִּיעֶזֶר בֶּן הוֹרְקָנוֹס בְּכַף שֵׁנִיָּה,

second on a scale Hyrcanus ben and Eliezer a balance on a scale of Yisrael the Sages of

מְכַרִּיעַ אֶת כָּלָם. אַבָּא שְׂאוּל אוֹמֵר מִשְּׁמוֹ, אִם יִהְיוּ כָּל חֲכָמֵי

the Sages of all there would be If in his name says Shaul Abba all of them — he would outweigh

יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכַף מֵאֲזֵנִים וְרַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר בֶּן הוֹרְקָנוֹס אֶף עִמָּהֶם, וְרַבִּי

and Rabbi with them even Hyrcanus ben Eliezer and Rabbi a balance on a scale of Yisrael

אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲרָךְ בְּכַף שֵׁנִיָּה, מְכַרִּיעַ אֶת כָּלָם:

all of them — he would outweigh second on a scale Arach ben Eleazar

This Mishnah lists the five primary disciples of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, detailing their unique spiritual and intellectual strengths.

משנה ט

הַדֶּרֶךְ הַיְשָׁרָה וְהַדֶּרֶךְ הָרָעָה לְאָדָם

Mishna 9 · The Straight Path to Cleave to and the Evil Path to Avoid

אָמַר לָהֶם, צֵאוּ וּרְאוּ אֵיזוֹהִי דֶּרֶךְ יִשְׁרָה שְׂיִדְבֵּק בָּהּ הָאָדָם. רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר

Eliezer Rabbi a person to it that should cleave straight a path which is and see go out to them said

אומר, עין טובה. רבי יהושע אומר, חבר טוב. רבי יוסי אומר, שכן
a neighbor says Yose Rabbi good a companion says Yehoshua Rabbi good an eye says
טוב. רבי שמעון אומר, הרוצה את הנולד. רבי אלעזר אומר, לב טוב.
good a heart says Elazar Rabbi the outcome — one who sees says Shimon Rabbi good
אמר להם, רוצה אני את דברי אלעזר בן ערף מדבריכם, שבכלל
for included in above your words Arach son of Elazar the words of — I see to them said
דבריו דבריכם. אמר להם צאו וראו איזוהי דרך רעה שיתרחק ממנה
from it that should distance evil a path which is and see go out to them said are your words his words
himself
האדם. רבי אליעזר אומר, עין רעה. רבי יהושע אומר, חבר רע. רבי
Rabbi evil a companion says Yehoshua Rabbi evil an eye says Eliezer Rabbi a person
יוסי אומר, שכן רע. רבי שמעון אומר, הלוח ואינו משלם. אחד
one repay and does not one who borrows says Shimon Rabbi evil a neighbor says Yose
הלוח מן האדם, כלוח מן המקום ברוך הוא, שנאמר תהלים
Tehillim as it is said is He blessed the Omnipresent from is like one who borrows man from who borrows
לז לוח רשע ולא ישלם, וצדיק חונן ונותן. רבי אלעזר אומר,
says Elazar Rabbi and gives is gracious but the righteous repay and does not the wicked borrows 37
לב רע. אמר להם, רוצה אני את דברי אלעזר בן ערף מדבריכם,
above your words Arach son of Elazar the words of — I see to them said evil a heart
שבכלל דבריו דבריכם:
are your words his words for included in

Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai asks his disciples to identify the ultimate good trait and the ultimate bad trait for a person to adopt or avoid.

משנה י

כבוד חבר ומוֹרָא תלמידי חכמים

Mishna 10 · Honoring One's Friend and Fearing the Sages

הם אמרו שלשה דברים. רבי אליעזר אומר, יהי כבוד חברך חביב
dear your friend the honor of Let be says Eliezer Rabbi things three said They
עליה כשלה, ואל תהי נוח לכעס. ושוב יום אחד לפני מיתתה. ויהי
and be your death before one day and repent to anger easy be and do not as your own to you
מתחמים כנגד אורן של חכמים, ויהי זהיר כנגח לתן שלא תפוח,
you will be burned so that not with their coal careful and be the Sages the fire of opposite warming yourself
שנשיכתו נשיכת שועל, ועקיצתו עקיצת עקרב, ולחישתו לחישת שרף,
a serpent is the hiss of and their hiss a scorpion is the sting of and their sting a fox is the bite of for their bite
וכל דבריהם כנגח לי אש:
fire are like coals of their words and all of

Rabbi Eliezer teaches the importance of respecting others, controlling anger, repenting daily, and treating Torah scholars with immense caution and respect.

הדברים המוציאים את האדם מן העולם

Mishna 11 · Traits and Behaviors That Remove a Person from the World

רבי יהושע אומר, עין הרע, ויצר הרע, ושנאת הבריות, מוציאים

remove the creations and hatred of the evil and the inclination the evil an eye says Yehoshua Rabbi

את האדם מן העולם:

the world from the person —

Rabbi Yehoshua warns against the destructive spiritual and physical consequences of an evil eye, the evil inclination, and misanthropy.

כבוד ממון חברו ועמל התורה

Mishna 12 · Cherishing the Property of Others and Exerting Oneself in Torah Study

רבי יוסי אומר, יהי ממון חברך חביב עליה כשלה, והתקן עצמה

yourself and prepare as your own upon you as precious your fellow the property of let be says Yose Rabbi

ללמד תורה, שאינה ירשה לה. וכל מעשיה יהיו לשם שמים:

Heaven for the sake of be your deeds and let all to you an inheritance for it is not Torah to study

Rabbi Yose teaches us to value our fellow's money as our own, to realize Torah requires personal effort rather than inheritance, and to dedicate all actions to Heaven.

הזהירות בקריאת שמע ובתפלה ושל לא להיות רשע בפני עצמו

Mishna 13 · Carefulness in Shema and Prayer and Not Viewing Oneself as Wicked

רבי שמעון אומר, הוי זהיר בקריאת שמע ובתפלה. וכשאתה

and when you and with the prayer Shema with the reading of careful be says Shimon Rabbi

מתפלל, אל תעש תפלתך קבע, אלא רחמים ותחנונים לפני

before and supplications compassion but a fixed routine your prayer make do not pray

המקום ברוך הוא, שנאמר ואל ב פי חנון ורחום הוא ארך אפים

to anger slow is He and merciful gracious for two Yoel as it is said is He blessed the Omnipresent

ורב חסד ונחם על הרעה. ואל תהי רשע בפני עצמך:

yourself in front of wicked be and do not the evil of and relenting kindness and abundant in

Rabbi Shimon teaches that prayer must be a heartfelt plea rather than a rote obligation, and that one should never despair and view themselves as irredeemably wicked.

שקיפה בתורה, תשובה לאפיקורוס, והפרת הבורא

Mishna 14 · Diligence in Torah Study, Answering Heretics, and Knowing Your Employer

רבי אלעזר אומר, הוי שקוד ללמד תורה, ודע מה שתשיב לאפיקורוס.

to an epicuros to answer what and know Torah to learn diligent be says Elazar Rabbi

ודע לפני מי אתה עמל. ונאמן הוא בעל מלאכתך שישלם לך

to you Who will pay your work the Master of is and faithful toil you whom before and know

שְׂכָר פְּעֻלָּתָהּ:

your labor the reward of

Rabbi Elazar teaches the importance of diligent Torah study to defend the faith, and reminds us of the ultimate reward from our Divine Employer.

משנה ט

הַיּוֹם קָצֵר וְהַמְּלָאכָה מְרֻבָּה בְּעִבּוּדַת הַשָּׁם

Mishna 15 · The Shortness of Life and the Greatness of Torah Study

רַבִּי טַרְפוֹן אוֹמֵר, הַיּוֹם קָצֵר וְהַמְּלָאכָה מְרֻבָּה, וְהַפּוֹעֲלִים עֲצֵלִים, וְהַשְּׂכָר

and the reward are lazy and the laborers is plentiful and the work is short the day says Tarfon Rabbi

הַרְבֵּה, וּבֵעַל הַבַּיִת דּוֹחֵק:

is pressing of the House and the Master is great

Rabbi Tarfon uses the metaphor of a short workday and a pressing master to emphasize the urgency of Torah study and mitzvos.

משנה טז

הַחוֹבָה לְעֹסֵק בַּתּוֹרָה וּשְׂכָר הַצְדִּיקִים

Mishna 16 · The Obligation to Study Torah and the Reward of the Righteous

הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, לֹא עָלֶיךָ הַמְּלָאכָה לְגַמֹּר, וְלֹא אָתָּה בֶּן חוֹרִין לְבָטֵל

to desist freedom a son of you and not to complete the work upon you not saying was He

מִמֶּנָּה. אִם לְמַדְתָּ תּוֹרָה הַרְבֵּה, נּוֹתְנִים לְךָ שְׂכָר הַרְבֵּה. וְנֶאֱמָן הוּא

is and faithful much reward to you they give much Torah you studied if from it

בֵּעַל מְלֹאכְתּוֹ שִׁישְׁלֵם לְךָ שְׂכָר פְּעֻלָּתוֹ. וְדַע מִתֵּן שְׂכָרוֹ

the reward of the giving of and know your labor the reward of to you Who will pay your work the Master of

שֶׁל צְדִיקִים לָעָתִיד לָבֵא:

to come is in the future the righteous of

Rabbi Tarfon teaches that while one is not expected to complete the infinite task of Torah study, one is never free to abandon it, and the ultimate reward is paid in the World to Come.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter flows from foundational principles of personal avodah and communal responsibility into the deep teachings of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai and his disciples. We are taught to weigh the temporary loss of a mitzvah against its eternal reward, to avoid anger, and to repent daily. The Sages outline how positive traits like a good heart, a good eye, and a good companion bring a person closer to Hashem, while warning that an evil eye, the yetzer hara, and hatred of others can completely remove a person from the world. Ultimately, we are exhorted to treat our fellow's property with the same care as our own and to warm ourselves in the fire of the wise.

In this chapter, Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai asks his greatest disciples to find the one path a person must cleave to above all else. While they suggest beautiful paths like a good eye or a good friend, he points to the answer of Rabbi Elazar ben Arach: a "lev tov", a good heart. The Rebbe explains that a good heart is the root of everything; if the heart is pure and aligned with Hashem, then the eyes, the actions, and the relationships will naturally follow.

We often get caught up trying to fix every external detail of our lives, but the real avodah starts from within. When you work on cultivating a lev tov, you are building a foundation of genuine love for Hashem and His creations. This inner goodness is what transforms a person's entire life, ensuring that their Torah study and mitzvos are alive, warm, and true.

Today, before you speak to a family member, a coworker, or a neighbor, pause for one second and consciously bring a feeling of warmth and genuine goodwill into your heart toward them, letting your words flow from a true lev tov.