

מִסְכֵּת אָבוֹת • פֶּרֶק שְׁלִישִׁי

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

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, our holy Sages guide us on how to build a deep, enduring connection to Hashem and His Torah, starting with the powerful words of Akabyah ben Mahalalel on maintaining yiras Shamayim by remembering our humble beginnings and our ultimate accountability before the King of kings. We are shown the immense holiness of learning Torah, whether we are learning alone, in pairs, or in larger groups, and how the Shechinah dwells among those who occupy themselves with Hashem's words.

The Sages also warn us against the dangers of letting our minds wander to idle matters or interrupting our learning to focus on worldly distractions. Through these mishnayos, we learn the proper attitude a Yid must have toward his avodah, emphasizing that our fear of sin and our good deeds must always precede our wisdom if we want our learning to truly endure.

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

מִשְׁנָה א

Mishna 1 • Reflecting upon Three Things to Prevent Sin

עַקְבִּיָּא בֶן מַהֲלָלֵאל אוֹמֵר,

Akabyah son of Mahalalel says, to help a person overcome his yetzer hara:

הִסְתַּכֵּל בְּשִׁלְשָׁה דְּבָרִים

reflect upon three things

וְאִי אֶתָּה בָּא לְיַדִּי עֲבֹרָה.

and you will not come into the hands of sin.

דַּע מֵאֵין בָּאתָ,

Know from where you came,

וּלְאֵן אֶתָּה הוֹלֵךְ,

and to where you are going,

וּלְפָנַי מִי אֶתָּה עֲתִיד לִתֵּן דִּין וְחֶשְׁבוֹן.

and before whom you are destined to give judgment and reckoning.

מֵאֵין בָּאתָ,

From where you came —

מִטְּפָה סְרוּחָה,

from a putrid drop, which should keep you humble;

וּלְאֵן אַתָּה הוֹלֵךְ,

and to where you are going—

לְמָקוֹם עָפָר רֶמָּה וְתוֹלְעָה.

to a place of dust, maggot, and worm, which should lessen your desire for physical pleasures.

וּלְפָנַי מִי אַתָּה עֲתִיד לִתֵּן דִּין וְחֶשְׁבוֹן,

And before whom you are destined to give judgment and reckoning—

לְפָנַי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא:

before the King of kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed is He, who knows all your secrets.

מִשְׁנָה ב

Mishna 2 · Praying for the Government and the Greatness of Studying Torah

רַבִּי חֲנִינָא סֵגֶן הַכֹּהֲנִים אָמַר,

Rabbi Chanina, the deputy of the Kohanim, says:

הָיִי מְתַפֵּל לְבִשְׁלוּמָהּ שֶׁל מְלָכוּת,

Be praying for the welfare of the government,

שְׂאֵלְמָלָא מוֹרְאָה, אִישׁ אֶת רֵעֵהוּ חַיִּים בְּלָעוּ.

for if not for its fear, a man would swallow his fellow alive.

רַבִּי חֲנִינָא בֶן תֶּרַדְיוֹן אָמַר,

Rabbi Chanina son of Teradyon says:

שְׁנַיִם שְׂיוֹשְׁבֵין וְאֵין בֵּינֵיהֶן דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָה,

Two who sit and there are not between them words of Torah,

הָרִי זֶה מוֹשֵׁב לְצִידִים,

behold, this is a session of scorners,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר תֵּהְיֶה אִם וּבְמוֹשֵׁב לְצִידִים לֹא יֵשֵׁב.

as it is said in Tehillim 1, "and in the session of scorners he did not sit."

אָבֵל שְׁנַיִם שְׂיוֹשְׁבֵין וְיֵשׁ בֵּינֵיהֶם דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָה,

But two who sit and there are between them words of Torah,

שְׂכִינָה שְׂרוּיָה בֵּינֵיהֶם,

the Shechinah dwells between them,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר מִלֹּאכִי גֵּאֵז נִדְּבְרוּ יְרֵאֵי יְיָ אִישׁ אֶל רֵעֵהוּ וַיִּקְשֹׁב יְיָ וַיִּשְׁמַע וַיִּכְתֹּב סֵפֶר זִכְרוֹן לְפָנָיו לְיֵרֵאֵי יְיָ וּלְחֹשְׁבֵי שְׁמוֹ.

as it is said in Malachi 3, "Then spoke those who fear Hashem, each to his fellow, and Hashem hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear Hashem and for those who value His name."

אֵין לִי אֵלָּא שְׁנַיִם,

From this verse, I have **only** a source for **two** people;

מִנֵּין שֶׁאֵפֶלֹא אֶחָד שִׁוֵּשֵׁב וְעוֹסֵק בַּתּוֹרָה,

from where do we learn that even one who sits and occupies himself with the Torah,

שֶׁהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא קוֹבֵעַ לוֹ שָׂכָר,

that the Holy One, blessed is He, establishes for him a reward?

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר אִיכָּה גֵּיִשְׁבִּי בְּדָד וַיִּדֹּם כִּי נָטַל עָלָיו:

As it is said in Eichah 3, "Let him sit alone and be silent, for He laid it upon him."

מִשְׁנָה ג

Mishna 3 · The Importance of Speaking Words of Torah at a Meal

רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן אוֹמֵר,

Rabbi Shimon says:

שְׁלֹשָׁה שֶׁאָכְלוּ עַל שְׁלֹחַן אֶחָד

Three who ate at one table,

וְלֹא אָמְרוּ עָלָיו דְּבָרֵי תּוֹרָה,

and did not say over it words of Torah,

כָּאֵלוּ אֲכָלוּ מִזִּבְחֵי יָתִים,

it is as if they ate from sacrifices of the dead—meaning, from idolatrous offerings—

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר

as it is said in the book of Yeshayahu:

כִּי כָּל שְׁלַחֲנוֹת מִלָּאוּ קִיָּא צִאָה בְּלֵי מְקוֹם.

"For all tables are full of vomit and filth, without the Omnipresent."

אָבֵל שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׂאֲכָלוּ עַל שֻׁלְחַן אֶחָד

But, three who ate at one table

וְאָמְרוּ עָלָיו דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָה,

and did say over it words of Torah,

כִּאֲלוּ אָכְלוּ מִשֻּׁלְחָנוֹ שֶׁל מְקוֹם בְּרוּךְ הוּא,

it is as if they ate from the table of the Omnipresent, Blessed is He,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר

as it is said in the book of Yechezkel:

וַיִּדְבֹּר אֵלַי זֶה הַשֻּׁלְחָן אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי ה':

"And He spoke to me: 'This is the table which is before Hashem.'"

מִשְׁנָה ד

Mishna 4 · The Danger of Neglecting Torah Study at Night and on the Road

רַבִּי חֲנִינָא בֶן חַכִּינָאִי אוֹמֵר,

Rabbi Chanina son of Chachinai says:

הַנֶּעוֹר בַּלַּיְלָה

One who awakens at night and remains awake to no purpose,

וְהַמְהִל בַּדֶּרֶךְ יָחִידִי

and one who walks on the way alone, placing himself in a position of danger,

וְהַמְפַּנֵּה לְבוֹ לְבַטָּלָה,

and one who turns his heart to idleness, removing Torah thoughts from his mind,

הֲרִי זֶה מֵתַחִיב בְּנַפְשׁוֹ:

behold, this one forfeits his life because he deprives himself of Hashem's protection.

מִשְׁנָה ה

Mishna 5 · The Yoke of Torah and the Yoke of Worldly Concerns

רַבִּי נְחוּנְיָא בֶן חַקָּנָה אוֹמֵר,

Rabbi Nechunya ben Hakkanah says:

כָּל הַמִּקְבֵּל עָלָיו עַל תּוֹרָה,

Anyone who accepts upon himself the yoke of Torah, dedicating his life to the service of Hashem and the study of His holy words,

מַעֲבִירִין מִמֶּנּוּ עַל מַלְכוּת וְעַל דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ.

Heavenly assistance is granted and they remove from him the yoke of government and the yoke of worldly concerns, freeing him from these heavy burdens so he can serve Hashem with a calm mind.

וְכָל הַפּוֹרֵק מִמֶּנּוּ עַל תּוֹרָה,

And anyone who casts off from himself the yoke of Torah, choosing instead to pursue his own desires and neglect his avodah,

נוֹתֵנִין עָלָיו עַל מַלְכוּת וְעַל דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ:

they place upon him the yoke of government and the yoke of worldly concerns, leaving him to struggle with the harsh anxieties of the physical world.

מִשְׁנָה ו

Mishna 6 · The Divine Presence Dwelling Upon Those Who Study Torah

רַבִּי חַלְפַּתָּא בֶּן דּוֹסָא אִישׁ כִּפָּר חֲנַנְיָה אוֹמֵר,

Rabbi Chalafta son of Dosa, a man of Kfar Chananya, says:

עֲשָׂרָה יּוֹשְׁבֵין וְעוֹסְקִין בִּתּוֹרָה,

If there are ten who sit and occupy themselves with Torah,

שְׁכִינָה שְׂרוּיָה בֵּינֵיהֶם,

the Shechinah dwells among them,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר תַּהֲלִים פַּח אֱלֹהִים נֹצֵב בְּעֵדַת אֵל.

as it is said in Tehillim, "God stands in the congregation of God."

וּמִנֵּין אֶפְלוּ חֲמִשָּׁה,

And from where do we learn that this applies to even five?

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר עָמוּס ט וְאֶגְדָּתוֹ עַל אֶרֶץ יִסְדָּה.

As it is said in Amos, "And His band upon earth He established it."

וּמִנֵּין אֶפְלוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה,

And from where do we learn that this applies to even three?

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר תַּהֲלִים פַּח בִּקְרֹב אֱלֹהִים יִשְׁפֹּט.

As it is said in Tehillim, "In the midst of judges He judges."

ומנין אפלו שנים,

And from where do we learn that this applies to even two?

שנאמר מלאכי ג אז נדברו יראי ה' איש אל רעהו ויקשב ה' וישמע וגו'.

As it is said in Malachi, "Then spoke those who fear Hashem, each to his fellow, and hearkened Hashem and heard, etc."

ומנין אפלו אחד,

And from where do we learn that this applies to even one?

שנאמר שמות כ בכל המקום אשר אזכיר את שמי אבא אליך וברכתך:

As it is said in Shemos, "In every place where I cause to mention My name, I will come to you and bless you."

מִשְׁנָה ז

Mishna 7 · Giving to Hashem from His Own and the Danger of Interrupting Torah Study

רבי אלעזר איש ברתותא אומר,

Rabbi Elazar, a man of Barto tha, says:

תן לו משלו,

Give to Him, to Hashem, from His own, by dedicating your wealth and strength to His mitzvos,

שאתה ושלך שלו.

for you and yours are His; everything you possess belongs to Hashem.

וכן בדוד הוא אומר

And so regarding Dovid HaMelech, it says in the pasuk:

כי ממך הכל ומידך נתנו לך.

"For from You is everything, and from Your hand we have given to You."

רבי שמעון אומר,

Rabbi Shimon says:

המהלך בדרך ושונה,

One who walks on the road and reviews his Torah learning,

ומפסיק ממשנתו ואומר,

and interrupts from his study and says in wonderment,

מה נאה אילן זה ומה נאה ניר זה,

"How beautiful is this tree!" or "How beautiful is this plowed field!"

מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו מתחייב בנפשו:

the Scripture reckons upon him as if he is guilty with his soul, because he turned his mind away from the eternal life of Torah to focus on temporary matters.

משנה ח

Mishna 8 · The Severity of Forgetting One's Torah Study

רבי דוסתאי ברבי ינאי משום רבי מאיר אומר,

Rabbi Dostai son of Rabbi Yannai in the name of Rabbi Meir says:

כל השוכח דבר אחד ממשנתו,

Anyone who forgets a single matter from his study,

מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו מתחייב בנפשו,

the Scripture reckons upon him as if he is guilty of his life,

שנאמר

as it is said in the Torah:

רק השמר לך ושמר נפשך מאד פן תשכח את הדברים אשר ראו עיניך.

"Only take heed to yourself and watch your soul greatly, lest you forget the things which your eyes saw."

יכול אפלו תקפה עליו משנתו,

One might think this applies even if his study overpowered him and he forgot it due to illness or duress;

תלמוד לומר

therefore the instruction says:

ופן יסורו מלבבך כל ימי חייך,

"And lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life."

הא אינו מתחייב בנפשו עד שישב ויסירם מלבו:

Behold, he is not guilty of his life until he sits and actively removes them from his heart through negligence.

משנה ט

Mishna 9 · Fear of Sin and Good Deeds Preceding Wisdom

רבי חנינא בן דוסא אומר,

Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa says:

כָּל שִׁירְאָת חֲטָאוֹ קוֹדֶמֶת לְחִכָּמָתוֹ,

Anyone whose fear of his sin precedes his wisdom, meaning his yiras Shamayim is the foundation for his learning,

חֲכָמָתוֹ מְתַקֵּימָת.

his wisdom endures, because his Torah study is for the sake of heaven.

וְכָל שֶׁחֲכָמָתוֹ קוֹדֶמֶת לִירְאָת חֲטָאוֹ,

And anyone whose wisdom precedes the fear of his sin, where he seeks knowledge without first establishing a commitment to avoid transgression,

אֵין חֲכָמָתוֹ מְתַקֵּימָת.

his wisdom does not endure.

הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר,

He would also say:

כָּל שֶׁמַּעֲשָׂיו מְרַבֵּין מִחֲכָמָתוֹ,

Anyone whose good deeds are greater than his wisdom, meaning his practical commitment to mitzvos exceeds his intellectual grasp,

חֲכָמָתוֹ מְתַקֵּימָת.

his wisdom endures.

וְכָל שֶׁחֲכָמָתוֹ מְרַבֶּה מִמַּעֲשָׂיו,

And anyone whose wisdom is greater than his deeds, where he knows much but does not put it into practice,

אֵין חֲכָמָתוֹ מְתַקֵּימָת:

his wisdom does not endure.

מִשְׁנָה י

Mishna 10 - Pleasing One's Fellow Creatures and Actions that Remove a Person from the World

הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר,

He, Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa, used to say:

כָּל שְׂרוּיַח הַבְּרִיּוֹת נֹחָה הֵימָּנוּ,

Anyone with whom the spirit of the creatures is pleased, because he acts pleasantly and refined with people,

רוּחַ הַמָּקוֹם נֹחָה הֵימָּנוּ.

the spirit of the Omnipresent is pleased with him as well.

וְכָל שֶׁאֵין רוּחַ הַבְּרִיּוֹת נֹחָה הֵימָנוּ,

And anyone with whom the spirit of the creatures is not pleased, because of his poor character and behavior,

אֵין רוּחַ הַמָּקוֹם נֹחָה הֵימָנוּ.

the spirit of the Omnipresent is not pleased with him.

רַבִּי דוֹסָא בֶּן הֶרְפִּינָס אוֹמֵר,

Rabbi Dosa son of Harkinas says:

שְׁנֵה שָׁל שַׁחֲרִית,

Sleep of the morning, which causes a person to miss the proper time for Krias Shema and Tefillah,

וַיֵּין שָׁל צַהֲרַיִם,

and wine of midday, which brings to intoxication and wastes the day,

וְשִׁיחַת הַיִּלָּדִים,

and the idle chatter of the children,

וַיִּשְׁבַּח בְּתֵי כְנִסְיֹת שָׁל עַמִּי הָאֲרָץ,

and sitting in the houses of assembly of the ignorant of the land, who waste their time with empty matters,

מוֹצִיאִין אֶת הָאָדָם מִן הָעוֹלָם:

all of these things waste a person's days and remove the man from the world, preventing him from achieving his spiritual purpose.

מִשְׁנֵה יֵא

Mishna 11 · Those Who Forfeit Their Share in the World to Come

רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר הַמּוֹדֵעִי אוֹמֵר,

Rabbi Elazar the Modiite says:

הַמְחַלֵּל אֶת הַקֳּדָשִׁים,

One who profanes — the sacred things, by treating holy sacrifices with disrespect,

וְהַמְבִּזָּה אֶת הַמוֹעֲדוֹת,

and one who despises — the festivals, by treating Chol HaMoed like a regular weekday,

וְהַמְלַבֵּין פָּנֵי חֲבֵרוֹ בְּרַבִּים,

and one who whitens the face of his fellow in public, causing him shame so that the blood drains from his face,

וְהַמַּכֵּר בְּרִיתוֹ שֶׁל אֲבִרָהָם אָבִינוּ עָלָיו הַשָּׁלוֹם,

and one who annuls the covenant of Avraham our father, upon him be peace, by stretching his flesh to hide his bris milah,

וְהַמְגַלֵּה פָּנִים בַּתּוֹרָה שֶׁלֹּא כְּהַלָּכָה,

and one who reveals aspects in the Torah not according to halacha, by interpreting the Torah in a way that contradicts the true mesorah,

אֲףִי עַל פִּי שֵׁשׁ בִּידוֹ תּוֹרָה וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים,

even though that there is in his hand Torah and deeds that are good,

אֵין לוֹ חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא:

there is not to him a portion in the world to come.

מִשְׁנֵה יב

Mishna 12 · Yielding to Authority and Receiving Every Person with Joy

רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל אוֹמֵר,

Rabbi Yishmael says:

הָיוּ קָל לְרֹאשׁ,

be yielding to a leader who is greater than you, to serve him with alacrity,

וְנוֹחַ לְתַשְׁחֶרֶת,

and be pleasant to youth and those who are younger than you, speaking to them gently,

וְהָיוּ מְקַבְּלִים אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם בְּשִׂמְחָה:

and be receiving — every man with joy and a cheerful countenance.

מִשְׁנֵה יג

Mishna 13 · Fences to Protect the Torah, Wealth, Abstinence, and Wisdom

רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אוֹמֵר,

Rabbi Akiva says:

שְׂחוק וְקִלּוֹת רֹאשׁ,

laughter and lightness of head, meaning a frivolous attitude,

מְרַגְּלִין לְעֶרְוָה.

accustom a person to sexual immorality.

מְסֻרֵת, סִיג לַתּוֹרָה.

The **tradition** of the scribes regarding the text of the Torah is a **fence to the Torah** to prevent errors.

מעשרות, סִיג לְעֶשֶׂר.

Giving **tithes** is a **fence to wealth**, protecting and bringing blessing to one's riches.

נִדְרִים, סִיג לְפִרְיָיוֹת.

Taking **vows** of self-denial is a **fence to abstinence**, helping a person distance themselves from physical desires.

סִיג לַחֲכָמָה, שְׁתִּיקָה:

And a **fence to wisdom is silence**, as guarding one's tongue preserves one's learning.

מִשְׁנַת יִד

Mishna 14 · The Belovedness of Mankind and Yisrael and the Gift of the Torah

הוא הָיָה אוֹמֵר,

He, Rabbi Akiva, used to say:

חָבִיב אָדָם שֶׁנִּבְרָא בְּצֶלֶם.

Beloved is man, all of humanity, for he was created in the image of Hashem.

חֲבֵה יִתְּרָה נֹדַעַת לוֹ שֶׁנִּבְרָא בְּצֶלֶם,

An extra love was made known to him by Hashem, that he was created in the image,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בְּרֵאשִׁית ט כִּי בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה אֶת הָאָדָם.

as it is said in the Torah in Bereishis, "For in the image of Elokim He made man."

חֲבִיבֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁנִּקְרְאוּ בָנִים לְמָקוֹם.

Beloved are Yisrael, for they were called children to the Omnipresent, to Hashem.

חֲבֵה יִתְּרָה נֹדַעַת לָהֶם שֶׁנִּקְרְאוּ בָנִים לְמָקוֹם,

An extra love was made known to them, that they were called children to the Omnipresent,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר דְּבָרִים יד בָּנִים אַתֶּם לַה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.

as it is said in Devarim, "Children are you to Hashem your God."

חֲבִיבֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁנִּתְּנָה לָהֶם כְּלִי חֲמֻדָּה.

Beloved are Yisrael, for there was given to them a vessel of desire, the holy Torah.

חֲבֵה יִתְּרָה נֹדַעַת לָהֶם שֶׁנִּתְּנָה לָהֶם כְּלִי חֲמֻדָּה שֶׁבּוֹ נִבְרָא הָעוֹלָם,

An extra love was made known to them, that there was given to them the vessel of desire with which was created the world,

שְׁנַאמַר מִשְׁלֵי דַּ כִּי לָקַח טוֹב נָתַתִּי לָכֶם, תּוֹרַתִּי אֶל תַּעֲזוּבוּ:

as it is said in Mishlei, "For instruction good I have given to you; My Torah, do not forsake."

מִשְׁנָה טו

Mishna 15 · Divine Foresight and Human Free Will and Judgment with Goodness

הַכֹּל צָפוּי,

Everything is foreseen by Hashem, Who knows the future and sees all of our choices beforehand,

וְהַרְשוּת נְתוּנָה,

and yet, the permission is given to man to choose his own path, as we have absolute free will,

וּבְטוֹב הָעוֹלָם נִדּוֹן.

and with goodness the world is judged by Hashem, Who desires to act with chesed and mercy,

וְהַכֹּל לְפִי רֹב הַמַּעֲשֵׂה:

and everything is according to the majority of the deed, meaning a person's judgment and reward depend on the abundance of his good deeds.

מִשְׁנָה טז

Mishna 16 · Everything is Given on Pledge and the Judgment is Truth

הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר,

He, Rabbi Akiva, was saying a parable about man's accountability in this world: Everything is given on pledge, meaning that a person's life and soul are only lent to him as a security, and he must eventually return them to Hashem,

וּמִצְוָה פְּרוּסָה עַל כָּל הַחַיִּים.

and a net is spread over all the living, so that no one can escape the ultimate day of judgment and death.

הַחֲנוּת פְּתוּחָה,

The store is open, as Hashem allows a person free will and access to all the pleasures and opportunities of this world,

וְהַחֲנֻנִי מִקֵּי,

and the storekeeper, who is Hashem, gives credit, allowing people to take what they want now and pay later, showing patience and not punishing immediately,

וְהַפְּנֻקָּס פְּתוּחָה,

and the ledger is open, in which all of a person's deeds are recorded,

וְהַיָּד כּוֹתֶבֶת,

and the hand writes down every single action automatically,

וְכָל הַרוֹצֶה לְלוֹוֹת יָבֹא וְיִלְוֶה,

and anyone who wishes to borrow, to exercise their free will and take from this world, may come and borrow, as Hashem does not stop them from acting,

וְהַגִּבָּאִים מִחֲזִירִים תָּדִיר בְּכָל יוֹם,

and the collectors, who are the angels of justice and the various tribulations of life, go around regularly on every day,

וְנִפְרָעִין מִן הָאָדָם מִדַּעְתּוֹ וְשֵׁלָא מִדַּעְתּוֹ,

and exact payment from man with his knowledge and without his knowledge, sometimes through suffering that he realizes is for his sins, and sometimes through events he does not understand,

וַיֵּשׁ לָהֶם עַל מָה שְׂיִסְמְכוּ,

and there is for them upon what to rely, because their demands are based on the accurate records of the ledger,

וְהַדִּין דִּין אֱמֶת.

and the judgment is a judgment of truth, completely fair and without any injustice,

וְהַכֹּל מֵתָקֵן לְסַעֲוֵדָה:

and everything is prepared for the banquet, meaning that ultimately, through this process of purification and justice, all of creation is being readied for the great spiritual feast of the World to Come.

משנה יז

Mishna 17· The Interdependence of Torah and Deeds and the Parable of the Deeply Rooted Tree

רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה אוֹמֵר,

Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah says:

אִם אֵין תּוֹרָה, אֵין דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ.

If there is no Torah, there is no proper conduct, because without the Torah's guidance, one cannot truly know how to behave with refined character;

אִם אֵין דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ, אֵין תּוֹרָה.

and if there is no proper conduct, there is no Torah, because Torah cannot reside in a person who lacks basic decency and refinement.

אִם אֵין חֲכָמָה, אֵין יִרְאָה.

If there is no wisdom, there is no fear of Hashem, as an ignorant person cannot truly grasp the greatness of the Creator;

אִם אֵין יִרְאָה, אֵין חֲכָמָה.

and if there is no fear of Hashem, there is no wisdom, because the ultimate purpose of wisdom is to lead to yiras Shamayim.

אם אין בינה, אין דעת.

If there is no understanding, which is the ability to deduce one thing from another, there is no knowledge, which is the internalization of facts;

אם אין דעת, אין בינה.

and if there is no knowledge, there is no understanding.

אם אין קמח, אין תורה.

If there is no flour, meaning physical sustenance, there is no Torah, because a person cannot study properly when starving;

אם אין תורה, אין קמח.

and if there is no Torah, there is no flour, as there is no purpose to physical sustenance without spiritual life.

הוא הֵאָה אומר, כֹּל שֶׁחֶכְמָתוֹ מְרֻבָּה מִמַּעֲשָׁיו, לְמַה הוּא דוֹמֶה,

He would say: Anyone whose wisdom is greater than his deeds, to what is he compared?

לְאֵילָן שֶׁעֲנָפָיו מְרֻבִּין וְשָׂרְשָׁיו מְעֻטִּין,

To a tree whose branches are many and its roots are few, so it has no strong hold in the ground;

וְהָרוּחַ בָּאָה וְעוֹקְרֶתָּהּ וְהוֹפֶכֶתָּהּ עַל פָּנָיו,

and the wind comes and uproots it and overturns it upon its face,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יִרְמְיָהּ יִזְ וְהָיָה כְּעֶרְעֵר בְּעֶרְבָה וְלֹא יֵרָאֶה כִּי יָבֹוא טוֹב וְשָׁכֵן חֲרָרִים בְּמִדְבָּר אֶרֶץ מְלָחָה וְלֹא תֵשֵׁב.

as it is said in the Book of Yirmeyahu, chapter seventeen: "And he shall be like a lonely tree in the wasteland, and shall not see when good comes, and he shall dwell in parched places in the wilderness, a land of salt and not inhabited."

אָבֵל כֹּל שֶׁמַּעֲשָׁיו מְרֻבִּין מִחֶכְמָתוֹ, לְמַה הוּא דוֹמֶה,

But anyone whose deeds are greater than his wisdom, to what is he compared?

לְאֵילָן שֶׁעֲנָפָיו מְעֻטִּין וְשָׂרְשָׁיו מְרֻבִּין,

To a tree whose branches are few and its roots are many,

שֶׁאֵפֶלּוּ כָּל הָרוּחוֹת שֶׁבָּעוֹלָם בָּאוֹת וְנוֹשְׁבוֹת בּוֹ אֵין מְזִיזִין אוֹתוֹ מִמְּקוֹמוֹ,

that even if all the winds in the world come and blow upon it, they do not move it from its place,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר שֵׁם וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ שֶׁתּוֹלַע מֵיִם וְעַל יוֹכַל יִשְׁלַח שָׂרְשָׁיו

as it is said there: "And he shall be like a tree planted by water, and by a stream it spreads its roots,

וְלֹא יֵרָאֶה כִּי יָבֹא חֹם, וְהָיָה עֲלָהּ רֵעָנוֹ,

and shall not see when heat comes, and its foliage shall be fresh,

ובשנת בצורת לא ידאג, ולא ימיש מעשות פרי.

and in a year of drought it shall not worry, and it shall not cease from making fruit."

משנה יח

Mishna 18 · The Core Halachos of Bird Offerings and Menstruation Versus Auxiliary Sciences

רבי אליעזר בן חסמא אומר,

Rabbi Eliezer the son of Chisma says:

קנין ופתחי נדה,

The complex laws of **bird offerings and the openings of menstruation**—which determine the purification process of women—

הן הן גופי הלכות.

they, they are the bodies of the halachos, the very core and essentials of the Torah.

תקופות וגמטריאות,

Whereas the calculations of astronomical **seasons and** the numerical values of **gematrias**,

פרפראות לחכמה:

are merely **desserts to wisdom**, serving as secondary aids and embellishments to the primary Torah study.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter flows from the fundamental principles of self-reflection and the fear of sin to the practical ways we bring the Shechinah into our daily lives, such as speaking words of Torah at our tables and accepting the yoke of Torah to be freed from worldly burdens. The Sages caution us against forgetting our learning, wasting time on empty pursuits like morning sleep or midday wine, and committing severe sins like embarrassing a fellow Yid in public or showing contempt for the Torah, which can cost a person his share in the World to Come. Finally, we are taught the value of silence as a fence to wisdom, the preciousness of mankind being created in the image of Elokim, and the special love Hashem has for Klal Yisrael as His children.

My dear talmid, look at the beautiful words of Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa in our perek: "Anyone whose fear of sin precedes his wisdom, his wisdom is enduring." We spend so much of our lives trying to accumulate knowledge, to understand more, and to be clever. But the Mishnah is teaching us a deep secret about how the mind of a Yid actually works. If your learning is just an intellectual exercise, it has no foundation to stand on. It is only when your simple yiras Shamayim, your desire to do the will of Hashem and your fear of stepping away from His path, comes first, that your Torah has a vessel to hold it.

This is not just about learning; it is about how we live every single day. The Mishnah also tells us that "anyone whose deeds exceed his wisdom, his wisdom is enduring." We cannot wait until we understand everything perfectly before we start acting like a kosher Yid. The foundation of our avodah is action and commitment. When you put your hands and feet into doing the mitzvos, your mind and heart will follow and find clarity.

Today, before you sit down to learn or pray, take ten seconds to stop and think: "I am doing this simply because I want to do the will of Hashem." Let that simple yiras Shamayim be the foundation for everything you do today.