

הלכות ידעות • פרק ששי

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

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, we learn how a Yid must guard his environment and his heart to stay close to Hashem. The Rambam teaches us that a person is naturally influenced by his friends and neighbors, making it a vital necessity—and indeed a positive mitzvah—to cleave to talmidei chachamim, marry into their families, and do business with them to learn from their holy ways. If, chas v'shalom, one's surroundings are wicked, he must flee to the deserts rather than be swept up in their bad middos.

We also delve into the beautiful mitzvos of ahavas Yisrael and loving a ger. The Rambam guides us on how to truly love every single Jew as ourselves, to protect their dignity and their money, and to avoid the terrible sin of gaining honor through a friend's degradation.

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

הליא

ההשפעה החברתית על האדם והחובה להתרחק מרשעים

Halacha 1 • The Social Influence on Man and the Obligation to Distance Oneself from the Wicked

דָּרָךְ בְּרִיתוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם לִהְיוֹת נִמְשָׁךְ בְּדַעוֹתָיו וּבְמַעֲשָׁיו אַחֵר רֵעִיו
his friends after and in his actions in his character traits drawn is to be man of of creation The way

וּחִבָּרָיו וְנוֹהֵג כְּמִנְהַג אֲנָשֵׁי מְדִינָתוֹ. לְפִיכָךְ צָרִיךְ אָדָם
a person needs therefore his country the people of like the custom of and to behave and his companions

לְהִתְחַבֵּר לְצַדִּיקִים וְלִישֵׁב אֵצֶל הַחֲכָמִים תָּמִיד כִּדִּי שִׁילְמַד
that he will learn in order constantly the wise near and to sit with the righteous to associate

מִמַּעֲשֵׂיהֶם. וְיִתְרַחֵק מִן הָרָשָׁעִים הַהוֹלְכִים בַּחֹשֶׁךְ כִּדִּי שְׁלֹא
that not in order in the darkness who walk the wicked from and he should distance from their deeds himself

יִלְמַד מִמַּעֲשֵׂיהֶם. הוּא שֶׁשְׁלֹמֹה אוֹמֵר מִשְׁלֵי יֵג כ "הוֹלֵךְ אֶת חֲכָמִים
wise men — "He who walks 20 13 Mishlei says that Shlomo it is from their deeds he will learn

יִחָכֵם וְרָעָה כְּסִילִים יָרוּעַ". וְאוֹמֵר אֲשֶׁרִי הָאִישׁ וְגו'. וְכֵן
and so etc." the man "Praiseworthy is and it says will suffer" fools and he who associates will become wise with

אִם הָיָה בְּמִדְיָנָה שְׂמִנְהֻגוֹתֶיהָ רָעִים וְאִין אֲנָשִׂיהָ הוֹלְכִים בְּדָרָךְ יִשְׁרָה
straight in a path walk its people and not are evil whose customs in a country he was if

יֵלֶךְ לְמָקוֹם שֶׁאֲנָשִׂיהָ צַדִּיקִים וְנוֹהֲגִים בְּדָרָךְ טוֹבִים. וְאִם הָיָה כָּל
all were and if good ones in the path of and behave are righteous whose people to a place he should go

הַמְּדִינוֹת שֶׁהוּא יוֹדֵעַם וְשׁוֹמֵעַ שְׂמוֹעָתָן נוֹהֲגִים בְּדָרָךְ לֹא טוֹבָה כְּמוֹ זְמַנֵּנוּ.
our times like good not in a path behaving their report and hears knows them that he the countries

או שְׁאִינוּ יָכוֹל לָלֶכֶת לְמַדִּינָה שְׂמִנְהֻגֹתֶיהָ טוֹבִים מִפְּנֵי הַגָּסוֹת או
 or the troops because of are good whose customs to a country to go able that he is not or
 מִפְּנֵי הַחֲלִי יֵשֵׁב לְבִדּוֹ יַחֲדִי כָּעֲנָן שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר אֵיכָה ג כח "יֵשֵׁב
 "Let him sit 28 3 Eichah that is said like the matter alone by himself he should sit the illness because of
 בְּדָד וְיָדָם". וְאִם הָיוּ רָעִים וְחַטָּאִים שָׂאִין מְנִיחִים אוֹתוֹ לֵישֵׁב
 to dwell him allow who do not and sinners evil they were and if and be silent" alone
 בְּמַדִּינָה אֲלֵא אִם כֵּן נִתְעָרַב עִמָּהֶן וְנוֹהֵג בְּמִנְהַגָּם הָרַע יֵצֵא
 he should go out the evil in their custom and behaves with them he mingles . . unless in the country
 לַמַּעְרוֹת וְלַחֲוָחִים וְלַמְדְּבוֹרוֹת. וְאֵל יִנְהִיג עַצְמוֹ בְּדֶרֶךְ חַטָּאִים
 sinners in the path of himself should he lead and not and to the deserts and to the thorns to the caves
 כָּעֲנָן שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יֵרֵמְיָה ט א "מִי יִתְּנֵנִי בַּמִּדְבָּר מְלוֹן אֲרָחִים":
 wayfarers" a lodging place of in the desert will give me "Who 1 9 Yirmeyahu that is said like the matter

The Rambam explains how a person is naturally influenced by his environment and must seek righteous companions or isolate himself if necessary.

ה'ל"ב

מִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה לְהִדְבֵּק בַּחֲכָמִים וּבְתַלְמִידֵיהֶם

Halacha 2 · The Positive Mitzvah to Cleave to Torah Sages and Their Disciples

מִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה לְהִדְבֵּק בַּחֲכָמִים וּתְלָמִידֵיהֶם כְּדִי לְלַמֵּד מִמַּעֲשֵׂיהֶם כָּעֲנָן
 like the matter from their deeds to learn in order and their disciples to the Sages to cleave of action A mitzvah
 שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וּבּוֹ תִדְבֹּק. וְכִי אֶפְשָׁר לְאָדָם לְהִדְבֵּק בִּשְׂכִינָה. אֲלֵא כֹּה
 thus rather to the Divine Presence to cleave for a man possible and is it you shall cleave and to Him that is said
 אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים בְּפִרוּשׁ מִצְוָה זוֹ, הִדְבֵּק בַּחֲכָמִים וּתְלָמִידֵיהֶם. לְפִיכָּה
 therefore and their disciples to the Sages cleave this mitzvah in the explanation of the Sages said
 צָרִיךְ אָדָם לְהִשְׁתַּדֵּל שִׁישָׂא בֵּת תְּלָמִיד חָכָם וַיֵּשֵׂא בֵּתוֹ
 his daughter and marry off a Sage a disciple of the daughter of that he should marry to strive a man needs
 לְתַלְמִיד חָכָם וּלְאָכַל וּלְשָׁתוֹת עִם תְּלָמִידֵי חֲכָמִים וּלְעֲשׂוֹת פְּרָקְמֻטָּיָא
 business and to do Sages disciples of with and to drink and to eat a Sage to a disciple of
 לְתַלְמִיד חָכָם וּלְהִתְחַבֵּר לָהֶן בְּכָל מִינֵי חֲבוּרָא שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וּלְדַבְּקָהּ בּוֹ.
 to Him and to cleave as it is said association types of in all with them and to associate a Sage for a disciple of
 וְכֵן צִוּוּ חֲכָמִים וְאָמְרוּ מִשְׁנֵה אַבוֹת א ד "וְהוֹי מְתַאַפֵּק בַּעֲפֹר
 the dust of attaching yourself to and be 4 1 Avos Mishnah and said the Sages commanded and so
 רַגְלֵיהֶם וְשׁוֹתָהּ בְּצֻמָּא אֶת דְּבָרֵיהֶם":
 their words — with thirst and drinking their feet

The Rambam explains the positive commandment of clinging to Hashem by associating with, marrying into, and doing business with Torah scholars.

ה'ל"ג

מִצְוָה עַל כָּל אָדָם לְאַהֲבֹת אֶת כָּל אֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל כְּגוּפוֹ
 like his own body of Israel and every one one each — to love man every upon It is a mitzvah
 שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וַיִּקְרָא יי יח "וְאַהֲבֹתָ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ". לְפִיכָךְ צָרִיךְ לְסַפֵּר
 speak he must therefore as yourself your neighbor and you shall love 18 19 Vayikra as it is said
 בְּשִׁבְחוֹ וּלְחֹסֵם עַל מְמוֹנוֹ כְּאִשֶּׁר הוּא חָס עַל מָמוֹן עֲצָמוֹ וְרוֹצֶה בְּכְבוֹד
 the honor of and desires himself the money of · spares he just as his money · and to spare in his praise
 עֲצָמוֹ. וְהַמְתִּכִּיד וְהַמְתִּכִּיד בְּקָלוֹן חֲבֵרוֹ אֵין לוֹ חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא:
 to come in the world share to him has no his fellow through the and one who honors himself
 degradation of himself

This halacha outlines the positive commandment of loving one's fellow Jew as oneself, which includes speaking of their praise and protecting their property and dignity.

הלי ד

מצות אהבת הגר וחיובה מן התורה

Halacha 4 · The Mitzvah of Loving a Convert and Its Double Obligation

אֶהֱבֶה הַגֵּר שָׂבָא וְנִכְנָס תַּחַת כַּנְפֵי הַשְּׁכִינָה שְׁתֵּי מִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה.
 do commandments of two the Shechinah the wings of under and entered who came the convert Loving
 אֶחָת מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא בְּכָלֵל רַעִים וְאֶחָת מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא גֵר וְהַתּוֹרָה אָמְרָה
 said and the Torah a convert that he is because and one neighbors in the category of that he is because one
 דְּבָרִים י יט "וְאַהֲבֹתָם אֶת הַגֵּר". צִוָּה עַל אֶהֱבֶה הַגֵּר כָּמוֹ
 just as the convert loving on He commanded the convert — and you shall love 19 10 Devarim
 שְׁצִוָּה עַל אֶהֱבֶה עֲצָמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר דְּבָרִים ו ה "וְאַהֲבֹתָ אֶת ה'
 Hashem — and you shall love 5 6 Devarim as it is said Himself loving on He commanded
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ". הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עֲצָמוֹ אוֹהֵב גֵּרִים שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר דְּבָרִים י יח
 18 10 Devarim as it is said converts loves Himself is He blessed the Holy One your God
 "וְאוֹהֵב גֵּר":
 a convert and He loves

This halacha explains that loving a convert fulfills two positive Torah commandments, equating the love of a convert to the love of Hashem Himself.

הלי ה

אסור שנאה שכלב לאחד מישראל

Halacha 5 · The Prohibition of Hating a Fellow Jew in One's Heart

כָּל הַשּׂוֹנֵא אֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל בְּלִבּוֹ עוֹבֵר בְּלֹא תַעֲשֶׂה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וַיִּקְרָא יי
 19 Vayikra as it is said commandment a negative transgresses in his heart of Israel one who hates Any
 יז "לֹא תִשְׂנֹא אֶת אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְּךָ". וְאֵין לֹקִין עַל לֹא זֶה
 this prohibition for administer lashes and we do not in your heart" your brother — hate "Do not 17
 לְפִי שֶׁאֵין בּוֹ מַעֲשֶׂה. וְלֹא הִזְהִירָה תּוֹרָה אֲלֵא עַל שְׂנֵאָה שְׂכֵלֵב.
 that is in the heart hatred about except the Torah warned and not an action in it there is not because

אָבֵל הַמֶּכֶּה אֶת חֲבֵרוֹ וְהַמְחִרְפוֹ אַף עַל פִּי שְׂאִינוֹ רֹשָׁאִי אִינוֹ
he does not permitted he is not though · even or who insults him his fellow — one who strikes but
עוֹבֵר מִשּׁוּם לֹא תִשָּׂא:
hate do not because of transgress

This halacha teaches that the Torah prohibition of harboring hatred applies specifically to unexpressed feelings in the heart.

ה'ל'ו

הָאָסוּר לְשֹׂנְאָה בִּלְבָב וְהַמִּצְוָה לְהוֹכִיחַ וּלְמַחֵל

Halacha 6 · The Prohibition to Hate in One's Heart and the Mitzvah to Rebuke and Forgive

כְּשִׁיחָטָא אִישׁ לְאִישׁ לֹא יִשְׁטַמְנוּ וְנִשְׁתַּק כָּמוֹ שְׂנֵאָמֵר בְּרִשְׁעִים
concerning the wicked that is said as and remain silent shall he hate him not against a man a man When sins
שְׁמוּאֵל ב' יג כב "וְלֹא דִבֶּר אַבְשָׁלוֹם אֶת אֲמִנּוֹן מֵאוֹמָה לְמַרְעֵ וְעַד טוֹב
good and unto from bad anything Amnon — Avshalom spoke "And not 22 13 II Shmuel
כִּי שָׂנֵא אַבְשָׁלוֹם אֶת אֲמִנּוֹן". אֶלָּא מִצְוָה עָלָיו לְהוֹדִיעוֹ וְלֹמַר לוֹ לְמָה
why to him and to say to inform him is upon him a mitzvah rather Amnon" — Avshalom hated for
עָשִׂיתָ לִּי כֹךָ וְכֹךָ וְלָמָּה חָטָאתָ לִּי בְּדִבְרֵ פְלוֹנִי. שְׂנֵאָמֵר וִיקְרָא יֵט
19 Vayikra as is said such and such in matter against me did you sin and why and thus thus to me did you do
יז "הוֹכֵחַ תוֹכִיחַ אֶת עֲמִיתְךָ". וְאִם חָזַר וּבִקֵּשׁ מִמֶּנּוּ לְמַחֵל לוֹ
him to forgive from him and requested he repented and if your colleague" — admonish "You shall surely 17
צָרִיךְ לְמַחֵל. וְלֹא יִהְיֶה הַמוֹחֵל אֲכֻזָּרִי שְׂנֵאָמֵר בְּרִאשִׁית כ' יז "וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל
"And prayed 17 20 Bereishis as is said cruel the forgiver should be and not forgive he must
אֲבִרָהֶם אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים":
God" to Avraham

This halacha teaches that one must not harbor silent hatred against someone who wronged him, but must instead speak to him openly, rebuke him, and readily forgive him if he asks for forgiveness.

ה'ל'ז

מִצְוַת תוֹכִיחַ לְחֲבֵרוֹ וְהַמוֹחָה בִּיד עוֹבְרֵ עֲבֵרָה

Halacha 7 · The Mitzvah of Rebuking a Fellow Jew and the Obligation to Protest Sin

הָרוֹאֶה חֲבֵרוֹ שֶׁחָטָא אוֹ שֶׁהִלֵּךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ לֹא טוֹבָה מִצְוָה לְהַחֲזִירוֹ לְמוֹטָב
to the good to return him it is a mitzvah good not in a path who walked or who sinned his fellow One who sees
וְלְהוֹדִיעוֹ שֶׁהוּא חוֹטֵא עַל עֲצָמוֹ בְּמַעֲשָׁיו הָרָעִים שְׂנֵאָמֵר וִיקְרָא יֵט יז
17 19 Vayikra as it is said the evil by his deeds himself against sins that he and to inform him
"הוֹכֵחַ תוֹכִיחַ אֶת עֲמִיתְךָ". הַמוֹכִיחַ אֶת חֲבֵרוֹ. בֵּין בְּדִבְרִים
in matters whether his fellow — The one who rebukes your colleague" — admonish "You shall surely
שְׂפִינּוֹ לְבִינּוֹ. בֵּין בְּדִבְרִים שְׂפִינּוֹ לְבִין הַמָּקוֹם. צָרִיךְ
needs the Omnipresent and that are between him in matters whether and him that are between him
לְהוֹכִיחוֹ בֵּינוֹ לְבִין עֲצָמוֹ. וַיְדַבֵּר לוֹ בְּנִחָה וּבְלִשׁוֹן רַכָּה
soft and in a language gently to him and he shall speak himself and between him to rebuke him

וְיֹדִיעוּ שְׂאִינוּ אוֹמֵר לוֹ אֶלָּא לְטוֹבוֹתוֹ לְהִבְיֹאוֹ לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם
 the world to the life of to bring him for his benefit except to him say that he does not and he shall inform him
 הֵבֵא. אִם קָבַל מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹטָב וְאִם לֹא יוֹכִיחֵנוּ פַּעַם שְׁנִיָּה
 second a time he should rebuke him not and if it is good from him he accepted If the coming
 וּשְׁלִישִׁית. וְכֵן תָּמִיד חַיֵּב אָדָם לְהוֹכִיחוֹ עַד שִׁיכְהוּ הַחוּטָא וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ
 to him and says the sinner he strikes him until to rebuke him a person obligated always and so and third
 אֵינִי שׁוֹמֵעַ. וְכָל שְׂאֵפֶשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ לְמַחֹת וַאֲיִנוּ מוֹחָה הוּא
 he protest and he does not to protest in his power that is possible And anyone listen I will not
 נִתְפָּשׁ בְּעֵז אֱלֹהֵי כִּיּוֹן שְׂאֵפֶשֶׁר לוֹ לְמַחֹת בָּהֶם:
 against them to protest for him it is possible since these for the sin of is held responsible

This halacha outlines the obligation to gently admonish a fellow Jew who sins, repeating the rebuke if necessary, and the responsibility borne by those who fail to protest wrongdoing when they have the power to do so.

ה'ל"ח

הָאִסוּר לְהַכְלִים אֶת חֲבֵרוֹ וְתוֹכָחָה בְּדַבְרֵי שְׂמִים

Halacha 8 · The Prohibition of Embarrassing a Fellow Jew and the Manner of Admonishment

הַמוֹכִיחַ אֶת חֲבֵרוֹ תַּחֲלָה לֹא יְדַבֵּר לוֹ קָשׁוֹת עַד שִׁיכְלִימֵנוּ
 he embarrasses him until harshly to him should speak not at first his fellow — One who admonishes
 שְׁנַאֲמַר וַיִּקְרָא יִט יוֹ "וְלֹא תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֲטָא". כֹּף אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים
 the Sages said so a sin because of him shall you bear and not 17 19 Leviticus as it is said
 יָכוֹל אֶתָּה מוֹכִיחוֹ וּפָנָיו מִשְׁתַּנּוֹת תִּלְמוּד לּוֹמֵר וְלֹא תִשָּׂא
 shall you bear and not says the teaching changes and his face admonish him you is it possible
 עָלָיו חֲטָא. מִכָּאן שְׂאִסוּר לְאָדָם לְהַכְלִים אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכָל שָׂפָן
 the more so and all a Jew — to embarrass for a person that it is forbidden from here a sin because of him
 בְּרַבִּים. אַף עַל פִּי שֶׁהַמְכָּלִים אֶת חֲבֵרוֹ אֵינוֹ לוֹקֶה עָלָיו עֲזוֹן גָּדוֹל
 great a sin for it lashed is not his fellow — that one who though · even in public embarrasses
 הוּא. כֹּף אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים גִּמְרָא סְנֵה־דְרִין קִז א "הַמְלַבִּין פָּנָי חֲבֵרוֹ בְּרַבִּים
 in public his fellow the face of one who whitens a 107 Sanhedrin Gemara the Sages said so it is
 אֵין לוֹ חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הֵבֵא". לְפִיכָף צְרִיךְ אָדָם לְהִזָּהֵר שֶׁלֹּא לְבִישׁ חֲבֵרוֹ
 his fellow to shame not to be careful a person needs therefore to come in the world a share for him has no
 בְּרַבִּים בֵּין קָטָן בֵּין גָּדוֹל. וְלֹא יִקְרָא לוֹ בְּשֵׁם שֶׁהוּא בּוֹשׁ מִמֶּנּוּ.
 of it ashamed that he is by a name him should he call and not an adult whether a minor whether in public
 וְלֹא יִסְפֵּר לְפָנָיו דְּבַר שֶׁהוּא בּוֹשׁ מִמֶּנּוּ. בְּמָה דְּבָרִים אָמוּרִים
 are said words in what of it ashamed that he is a matter before him should he relate and not
 בְּדַבְרִים שֶׁבֵּין אָדָם לְחֲבֵרוֹ. אֲבָל בְּדַבְרֵי שְׁמִים אִם לֹא חִזַּר
 he repented not if Heaven regarding matters of but and his fellow man that are between regarding matters

בו בִּסְתֵר מִכְּלִימִין אוֹתוֹ בְּרָבִים וּמִפְּרֻסָּמִים חָטְאוּ וּמִחָרְפִּים אוֹתוֹ בְּפָנָיו
to his face him and we abuse his sin and we publicize in public him we embarrass in private in it
וּמִבִּזְיוֹן וּמִקְלָלִין אוֹתוֹ עַד שְׁיָחֹזֵר לְמוֹטֵב כְּמוֹ שֶׁעָשׂוּ כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים
the prophets all did just as to the good he returns until him and we curse and we scorn
בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:
in Israel

The Rambam explains that while one must admonish a fellow Jew gently to avoid embarrassing them, public shaming is permitted for unrepentant religious transgressions.

ה'ט

מִדַּת חֲסִידוֹת בְּמַחֲלָה בְּלֵב לֹא הוֹכָחָה

Halacha 9· The Measure of Piety in Forgiving in One's Heart Without Admonishment

מִי שֶׁחָטָא עָלָיו חֲבֵירוֹ וְלֹא רָצָה לְהוֹכִיחוֹ וְלֹא לְדַבֵּר לוֹ כְּלוּם
anything to him to speak and not to admonish him did he want and not his fellow against him who sinned One
מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהָיָה חַחוּטָא הִדְיוּט בְּיוֹתֵר. אוֹ שֶׁהָיָה דַּעְתּוֹ מְשֻׁבָּשֵׁת. וּמָחַל לוֹ
him and he forgave disturbed his mind that was or exceedingly a simpleton the sinner that was because
בְּלִבּוֹ וְלֹא שָׂטְמוֹ וְלֹא הוֹכִיחוֹ הִרִי זֶה מִדַּת חֲסִידוֹת. לֹא
not of piety is the measure this behold admonish him and did not hate him and did not in his heart
הִקְפִּידָה תוֹרָה אֲלָא עַל הַמְשֻׁטְמָה:
the hatred upon except the Torah did insist

This halacha teaches that it is a pious act to quietly forgive a wrongdoer in one's heart without admonishing them, provided one harbors no hatred.

ה'י

הַחוּבָה לְהִזְהָר בְּכבוֹד יְתוּמִים וְאַלְמָנוֹת

Halacha 10· The Obligation to Show Extreme Care for Orphans and Widows

חַיֵּב אָדָם לְהִזְהָר בְּיְתוּמִים וְאַלְמָנוֹת מִפְּנֵי שֶׁנַּפְשָׁן שְׁפֵלָה לְמָאֵד
exceedingly is low that their soul because and widows with orphans to be careful a person is obligated
וְרוּחָם נְמוּכָה אֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁהֵן בְּעַלֵּי מָמוֹן. אֲפֹלוּ אֲלֻמָּנָתוֹ שֶׁל
a king the widow of even wealth are possessors of that they though even is depressed and their spirit
מֶלֶךְ וְיְתוּמָיו מְזֻהָרִים אָנוּ עָלֵיהֶן שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר שְׁמוֹת כָּבֹד כֹּא "כָּל
widow "Any 21 22 Exodus as it is said concerning them we warned and his orphans
אֲלֻמָּנָה וְיְתוֹם לֹא תַעֲנֹוּן". וְהֵיאֵךְ נוֹהֲגִין עִמָּהֶן. לֹא יְדַבֵּר
to them shall he speak not with them does one behave and how shall you afflict" not and orphan
אֲלֵיהֶם אֲלָא רַכּוֹת. וְלֹא יִנְהַג בָּהֶן אֲלָא מִנְהַג כְּבוֹד. וְלֹא יִכְאִיב
their body shall he pain and not honor a custom of except with them shall he behave and not gently except
גּוּפָם בְּעִבּוּדָה וְלָבָם בְּדִבְרִים קָשִׁים. וְיָחוּס עַל מָמוֹנָם יוֹתֵר
than the money of more their money and he must spare harsh with words and their heart with work
מִמָּמוֹן עֲצָמוֹ. כָּל הַמְקַנִּיטֵן אוֹ מַכְעִיסֵן אוֹ הַכְּאִיב לָהֶן אוֹ
oppressed or to them caused pain or angers them or who vexes them any himself

רָדָה בָּהֶן אוֹ אֶבֶד מִמוֹנֵי הָרִי זֶה עֹוֹבֵר בְּלֹא תַעֲשֶׂה וְכָל
 the more and all commandment a negative transgresses this behold their money lost or them
 שֵׁפֶן הַמִּכָּה אוֹתָם אוֹ הַמְקַלְלֵן וְלֹא זֶה אֶף עַל פִּי
 that they do not though · even this and this prohibition one who curses them or them one who strikes
 שְׂאִין לֹוִקִין עָלָיו הָרִי עֲנִשׁוֹ מִפְּרֹשׁ בְּתוֹרָה שְׁמוֹת כֹּב כֹּג
 "and will burn 23 22 Exodus in the Torah is explicit its punishment behold for it receive lashes
 "וְחָרָה אִפִּי וְהִרְגֹתִי אֶתְכֶם בַּחֶרֶב". בְּרִית כָּרַת לָהֶן מִי שֶׁאָמַר
 and was who spoke He for them He made a covenant you with the sword" — and I will kill My anger
 וְהָיָה הָעוֹלָם שָׁפֵל זִמָּן שֶׁהֵם צוֹעֲקִים מִחֶמֶס הֵם נִעֲנִים שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
 Exodus as it is said are answered they from violence cry out that they the time that all the world
 שְׁמוֹת כֹּב כֹּב "כִּי אִם צָעַק יִצְעַק אֵלַי שָׁמַע אֲשָׁמַע צִעֲקָתוֹ". בְּמָה
 words in what his cry" I will hear surely to Me he will cry out cry · "for 22 22
 דְּבָרִים אֲמוּרִים בְּזִמָּן שֶׁעָנָה אוֹתוֹן לְצָרָה עֲצָמוֹ. אֲבָל עָנָה אוֹתָם
 the teacher them if he afflicted but himself for the need of them that he afflicted in a time are said
 הָרִב כִּדִּי לְלַמֶּדֶן תּוֹרָה אוֹ אֲמָנוֹת אוֹ לְהוֹלִיכֵן בְּדֶרֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל הָרִי
 this behold straight in a path to lead them or a craft or Torah to teach them in order
 זֶה מִתֵּר. וְאֵף עַל פִּי כֵן לֹא יִנְהַג בָּהֶן מִנְהַג כָּל אָדָם
 but person any the custom of with them shall he behave not so · · and even is permitted
 אֲלֵא יַעֲשֶׂה לָּהֶם הַפֶּרֶשׁ וּיְנַהֲלֵם בְּנִחָת וּבְרַחֲמִים גְּדוֹלִים
 and honor great and with mercy with gentleness and guide them a distinction for them he must make
 וְכָבוֹד שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר מִשְׁלֵי כֹב כֹּג "כִּי ה' יִרְיֵב רִיבָם". אֶחָד יְתוֹם
 from a father an orphan one their cause" will plead Hashem "for 23 22 Proverbs as it is said
 מֵאֵב וְאֶחָד יְתוֹם מֵאֵם. וְעַד אֵימָתִי נִקְרָאִים יְתוֹמִים לְעֵנֶן זֶה. עַד
 that not until this for matter of orphans are they called when and until from a mother an orphan and one
 שְׁלֵא יִהְיוּ צָרִיכִין לְאָדָם גָּדוֹל לְהַסְמָךְ עָלָיו וּלְאַמְנוֹ וּלְהַטְפִּיל בָּהֶן
 but for them and to care and to raise them upon him to lean person an adult needing they will be
 אֲלֵא יִהְיֶה עוֹשֶׂה כָּל צָרָכֵי עֲצָמוֹ לְעֲצָמוֹ כְּשֶׁאֵר כָּל הַגְּדוֹלִים:
 — the adults all like the rest of for himself himself the needs of all doing he will be

This halacha outlines the strict prohibition against afflicting widows and orphans, and details how one must treat them with gentleness and honor.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter outlines the essential halachos of social connection and interpersonal sensitivity. It begins with the obligation to seek out righteous companions and Torah scholars, even moving cities or secluding oneself in caves if the local environment is corrupt. The Rambam then transitions to the positive mitzvah of loving every Jew as oneself, which requires us to speak their praises and cherish their property and honor. Finally, the chapter highlights the special, double obligation to love a convert who has come to seek shelter under the wings of the Shechinah.

The central chiddush of this sugya is that our middos and our very neshama are not formed in a vacuum. The Rambam teaches us a fundamental rule of human nature: we are deeply and inevitably shaped by our surroundings, our friends, and the local customs of where we live. This is why the Torah commands us to actively cleave to talmidei chachamim. We cannot rely on our own strength to remain pure and refined if we are swimming in a cold or coarse environment. We must deliberately place ourselves in a warm, Torah-true atmosphere where we can absorb the fine character and yiras Shamayim of those around us.

This reality of influence works in both directions. Just as we absorb the spiritual temperature of our environment, we also project our own warmth onto others. The Rambam connects this directly to the mitzvah of loving our fellow Jew as ourselves. True ahavas Yisrael is not just a passive feeling in the heart; it is an active avodah of protecting another person's dignity, speaking in their praise, and caring for their physical and emotional well-being as if it were our very own. When we treat others with this level of sensitivity, we create the very holy environment that elevates everyone in it.

Today, take five minutes to look at your immediate environment, your friends, your daily reading, or the media you consume. Choose one small way to surround yourself with more holiness, whether by setting a fixed time to learn with a friend who inspires you, or by making a conscious effort to speak only in praise of another Yid today.