

הלכות ידעות • פרק ששי

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

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.

הלכה א

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

דַּרְךְ בְּרִיתוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם

The way of creation of man is such that he is naturally wired

לְהִיט נִמְשָׁךְ בְּדַעוֹתָיו וּבְמַעֲשָׁיו אַחֲרֵי רֵעֵיו וְחֻבְרָיו

to be drawn in his character traits and in his actions after his friends and his companions,

וְנוֹהֵג כְּמִנהַג אֲנָשֵׁי מְדִינָתוֹ.

and to behave like the custom of the people of his country.

לְפִיכָה צָרִיךְ אָדָם לְהִתְחַבֵּר לְצַדִּיקִים

Therefore, a person needs to associate with the righteous

וּלְיֹשֵׁב אֵצֶל הַחֲכָמִים תָּמִיד

and to sit near the wise constantly,

כְּדֵי שֶׁיִּלְמַד מִמַּעֲשֵׂיהֶם.

in order that he will learn from their deeds.

וְיִתְרַחֵק מִן הָרָשָׁעִים הַחֹלְכִים בַּחֲשָׁךְ

And he should distance himself from the wicked who walk in the darkness,

כְּדֵי שֶׁלֹּא יִלְמַד מִמַּעֲשֵׂיהֶם.

in order that he will not learn from their deeds.

הוא ששלמה אומר

It is that which Shlomo says in his wisdom in

משלי יג כ "הולך את חכמים יחכם ורעה כסילים ירוע".

Mishlei 13:20, "He who walks with wise men will become wise, and he who associates with fools will suffer."

ואומר אשרי האיש וגו'.

And it says in Tehillim, "Praiseworthy is the man, etc." who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked.

וכן אם היה במדינה שמנהגותיה רעים

And so, if he was in a country whose customs are evil

ואין אנשיה הולכים בדרך ישרה

and its people do not walk in a path that is straight,

ילך למקום שאנשיה צדיקים

he should go to a place whose people are righteous

ונהגים בדרך טובים.

and behave in the path of good ones.

ואם היו כל המדינות שהוא יודעם ושומע שמועתן

And if all the countries that he knows them and hears their report were

נוהגים בדרך לא טובה כמו זמננו.

behaving in a path that is not good, like our times,

או שאינו יכול ללכת למדינה שמנהגותיה טובים

or that he is not able to go to a country whose customs are good

מפני הגיסות או מפני החלי

because of the troops of war or because of the illness that prevents him from traveling,

ישב לבדו יחיד

he should sit by himself alone,

כענין שנאמר

like the matter that is said in

איכה ג כח "יֵשֶׁב בְּדָד וְיִדָּם".

Eichah 3:28, "Let him sit alone and be silent."

וְאִם הָיוּ רָעִים וְחַטָּאִים

And if they were so evil and sinners

שְׂאִין מְנִיחִים אוֹתוֹ לֵישֵׁב בְּמִדְיָנָה

who do not allow him to dwell in the country

אֲלֵא אִם כֵּן נִתְעַרֵב עִמָּהֶן וְנוֹהֵג בְּמִנְהַגֵּם הָרַע

unless he mingles with them and behaves in their custom which is evil,

יֵצֵא לְמַעְרוֹת וְלַחֲנוּחִים וְלַמְדְּבוֹרוֹת.

he should go out to the caves and to the thorns and to the deserts,

וְאֵל יִנְהִיג עֲצָמוֹ בְּדֶרֶךְ חַטָּאִים

and he should not lead himself in the path of sinners,

כְּעֲנָנִין שְׁנֵאֵמֶר

like the matter that is said by the Navi in

ירמיה ט א "מִי יִתְּנֵנִי בַּמִּדְבָּר מְלוֹן אֲרֻחִים":

Yirmeyahu 9:1, "Who will give me in the desert a lodging place of wayfarers" so that I may leave my people.

הִלְכָּה ב

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

מִצְוַת עֲשֵׂה לְהִדְבֵּק בַּחֲכָמִים וּתְלָמִידֵיהֶם

It is a positive commandment to cleave to the Sages and their disciples

כְּדִי לְלַמֵּד מִמַּעֲשֵׂיהֶם

in order to learn from their good deeds,

כְּעֲנָנִין שְׁנֵאֵמֶר וְכוּ תִדְבֹק.

like the matter that is said in the Torah, "and to Him you shall cleave."

וְכִי אֲפֹשֶׁר לְאָדָם לְהִדְבֵּק בְּשִׂכְיָנָה.

And is it possible for a person to cleave to the Divine Presence, which is a consuming fire?

אֲלֵא כֹּה אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים בְּפִרוּשׁ מִצְוָה זוֹ,

Rather, thus said the Sages in the explanation of this mitzvah: "How do you fulfill this?"

הִדְבֵּק בַּחֲכָמִים וּבְתַלְמִידֵיהֶם.

"Cleave to the Sages and their disciples."

לְפִיכָּה צָרִיךְ אָדָם לְהִשָּׁאֵל בֵּת תַּלְמִיד חָכָם

Therefore, a person needs to strive that he should marry the daughter of a Torah scholar

וַיִּשָּׂא בָתּוֹ לְתַלְמִיד חָכָם

and marry off his daughter to a Torah scholar,

וּלְאָכַל וּלְשָׁתוֹת עִם תַּלְמִידֵי חֲכָמִים

and to eat and to drink with Torah scholars,

וּלְעֲשׂוֹת פְּרָקְמֻטָּא לְתַלְמִיד חָכָם

and to do business for a Torah scholar to help him earn a livelihood,

וּלְהִתְחַבֵּר לָהֶן בְּכָל מִינֵי חִבּוּר

and to associate with them in all types of association,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וּלְדַבְּקָהּ בּוֹ.

as it is said, "and to cleave to Him."

וְכֵן צִוּוּ חֲכָמִים וְאָמְרוּ מִשְׁנֵה אֲבוֹת אֲדָם

And so commanded the Sages, and they said in Mishnah Avos 1:4:

"וְהָיִי מִתְאַפֵּק בְּעָפָר רַגְלֵיהֶם

"And be attaching yourself to the dust of their feet,

וְשׁוֹתָה בְּצִמָּא אֶת דְּבָרֵיהֶם:"

and drinking with thirst — their words."

הַלְכָּה ג

Halacha 3 · The Mitzvah to Love Every Jew and Protect Their Honor and Property

מִצְוָה עַל כָּל אָדָם

It is a mitzvah upon every man

לְאַהֲבָה אֶת כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל כְּגּוּפוֹ

to love each and every one of Israel like his own body,

שנאמר ויקרא יט יח "ואהבת לרעהך כמוך".

as it is said in Vayikra 19:18, "And you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

לפיקה צריה לספר בשבחו

Therefore, he must speak in his praise

ולחוס על ממוןו

and to spare his money,

כאשר הוא חס על ממון עצמו

just as he spares the money of himself

ורוצה בכבוד עצמו.

and desires the honor of himself.

והמתכבד בקלון חברו

And one who honors himself through the degradation of his fellow

אין לו חלק לעולם הבא:

has no share in the World to Come.

הלכה ד

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

אהבת הגר שפא ונכנס תחת כנפי השכינה

Regarding loving the convert who came and entered under the wings of the Shechinah, there are

שתי מצוות עשה.

two commandments of do, meaning two positive mitzvos.

אחת מפני שהוא בכלל רעים

One mitzvah is because that he is in the category of neighbors, as he is now a fellow Jew,

ואחת מפני שהוא גר

and one additional mitzvah is because that he is a convert,

והתורה אמרה "ואהבתם את הגר".

and the Torah said, "And you shall love — the convert."

צוה על אהבת הגר

Hashem commanded on loving the convert

כְּמוֹ שֶׁצִּוָּה עַל אֲהַבַת עַצְמוֹ

just as He commanded on loving Himself,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ".

as it is said, "And you shall love — Hashem your God."

הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עֲצָמוֹ אוֹהֵב גֵּרִים

Indeed, the Holy One blessed is He Himself loves converts,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "וְאֹהֵב גֵּר":

as it is said, "And He loves a convert."

הַלְכָּה ה

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

כָּל הַשּׂוֹנֵא אֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל בְּלִבּוֹ

Anyone who hates one of Israel in his heart

עוֹבֵר בְּלֹא תַעֲשֶׂה

transgresses a negative commandment,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וַיִּקְרָא יי' "לֹא תִשְׂנֹא אֶת אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְּךָ".

as it is said in Vayikra 19:17, "Do not hate your brother in your heart."

וְאִין לֹקֵיין עַל לֹאוֹ זֶה

And we do not administer lashes for this prohibition,

לְפִי שֶׁאִין בוֹ מַעֲשֶׂה.

because there is no action in it.

וְלֹא הִזְהִירָה תּוֹרָה אֶלָּא עַל שִׂנְאָה שֶׁבִּלְבָּב.

And the Torah did not warn except about hatred that is in the heart.

אֲבָל הַמֶּכָּה אֶת חֲבֵרוֹ וְהַמְחַרְפוֹ

But one who strikes his fellow or who insults him,

אֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁאִינוּ רְשָׁאִי

even though he is not permitted to do so,

אינו עובר משום לא תשנא:

he does not transgress because of "Do not hate."

הלכה ו

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

כשיחטא איש לאיש

When a man sins against another man,

לא ישטמנו וישתק

he shall not hate him and remain silent, harboring resentment in his heart,

כמו שנאמר ברשעים

as is said concerning the wicked, in the verse regarding Avshalom:

"ולא דבר אבשלום את אמנון מאומה למרע ועד טוב כי שנא אבשלום את אמנון."

"And Avshalom did not speak with Amnon anything, from bad to good, for Avshalom hated Amnon."

אלא מצוה עליו להודיעו ולומר לו

Rather, it is a mitzvah upon him to inform him and to say to him openly:

למה עשית לי כה וכה ולמה חטאת לי בדבר פלוני.

"Why did you do to me thus and thus, and why did you sin against me in such and such a matter?"

שנאמר "הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך".

as it is said, "You shall surely admonish your colleague."

ואם חזר ובקש ממנו למחל לו

And if the offender repented and requested of him to forgive him,

צריה למחל.

he must forgive him wholeheartedly.

ולא יהא המוחל אכזרי

And the one who forgives should not be cruel by withholding his forgiveness,

שנאמר "ויתפלל אברהם אל ה' וה' סלח לו":

as it is said regarding Avraham Avinu forgiving Avimelech, "And Avraham prayed to God" on his behalf.

הרואה חברו שחטא או שהלך בדרך לא טובה

One who sees his fellow who sinned, or who walked in a path that is not good,

מצוה להחזירו למוטב

it is a mitzvah to return him to the good

ולהודיעו שהוא חוטא על עצמו במעשיו הרעים

and to inform him that he sins against himself by his evil deeds,

שנאמר ויקרא יט יז "הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך".

as it is said in the Torah in Vayikra 19:17, "You shall surely admonish your colleague."

המוכיח את חברו.

The one who rebukes his fellow,

בין בדברים שבינו לבינו.

whether in matters that are between him and him,

בין בדברים שבינו לבין המקום.

whether in matters that are between him and the Omnipresent,

צריך להוכיחו בינו לבין עצמו.

needs to rebuke him between him and himself, in private.

וידבר לו בנחת ובלשון רכה

And he shall speak to him gently and in a soft language,

וידיעו שאינו אומר לו אלא לטובתו

and he shall inform him that he does not say this to him except for his own benefit,

להביאו לחיי העולם הבא.

to bring him to the life of the World to Come.

אם קבל ממנו מוטב

If he accepted it from him, it is good;

ואם לאו יוכיחנו פעם שניה ושלישית.

and if not, he should rebuke him a second and third time.

וְכֵן תָּמִיד חַיֵּב אָדָם לְהוֹכִיחוֹ

And so always, a person is obligated to rebuke him,

עַד שֶׁיִּכְהוּ הַחוּטָא וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֵינִי שׁוֹמֵעַ.

until the sinner strikes him and says to him, "I will not listen."

וְכָל שֶׁאֶפְשָׁר בְּיָדוֹ לְמַחֹת וְאִינוּ מוֹחֶה

And anyone for whom it is possible in his power to protest and he does not protest,

הוּא נִתְפָּשׁ בְּעוֹן אֱלוֹ

he is held responsible for the sin of these people,

כִּיּוֹן שֶׁאֶפְשָׁר לוֹ לְמַחֹת בָּהֶם:

since it was possible for him to protest against them.

הִלְכָּה ח

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

הַמוֹכִיחַ אֶת חֲבֵרוֹ

One who admonishes his fellow

תַּחֲלָה לֹא יִדְבֹּר לוֹ קָשׁוֹת

at first, should not speak to him harshly

עַד שֶׁיִּכְלִימוּ

until he embarrasses him,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "וְלֹא תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֵטְא".

as it is said, "and you shall not bear a sin because of him."

כֶּה אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים

So said the Sages:

יָכוֹל אֲתָה מוֹכִיחוֹ וּפְנֵיו מִשְׁתַּנּוֹת

Is it possible that you admonish him and his face changes in shame?

תִּלְמוּד לומר וְלֹא תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֵטְא.

The teaching says, "and you shall not bear a sin because of him."

מִכָּאן שֶׁאֲסוּר לְאָדָם לְהַכְלִים אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל

From here we learn that it is forbidden for a person to embarrass a Jew,

וְכָל שֶׁכֵּן בְּרַבִּים.

and all the more so in public.

אף על פי שהמכילים את חברו אינו לוקה עליו

Even though one who embarrasses his fellow is not lashed for it,

עון גדול הוא.

a great sin it is.

כך אמרו חכמים

So said the Sages:

"המלבין פני חברו ברבים אין לו חלק לעולם הבא."

"One who whitens the face of his fellow in public has no share in the World to Come."

לפיכך צריך אדם להזהר

Therefore, a person needs to be careful

שלא לביש חברו ברבים

not to shame his fellow in public,

בין קטן בין גדול.

whether a minor or an adult.

ולא יקרא לו בשם שהוא בוש ממנו.

And he should not call him by a name that he is ashamed of,

ולא יספר לפניו דבר שהוא בוש ממנו.

and he should not relate before him a matter that he is ashamed of.

במה דברים אמורים

In what words are these said?

בדברים שפין אדם לחברו.

Regarding matters that are between man and his fellow.

אבל בדברי שמים

But regarding matters of Heaven,

אם לא חזר בו בסתר

if he did not repent in private,

מכלימין אותו ברבים

we embarrass him in public,

ומפרסמים חטאו

and we publicize his sin,

ומחרפים אותו בפניו

and we abuse him to his face,

ומבזין ומקלליו אותו

and we scorn and curse him,

עד שיחזר למוטב

until he returns to the good,

כמו שעשו כל הנביאים בישראל.

just as did all the prophets in Israel.

הלכה ט

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

מי שחטא עליו חברו

One against whom his fellow sinned

ולא רצה להוכיחו

and he did not want to admonish him

ולא לדבר לו כלום

and not to speak to him anything at all about the matter,

מפני שהיה החוטא הדיוט ביותר

because the sinner was an ignorant simpleton exceedingly, who would not understand or accept the rebuke,

או שהיתה דעתו משבשת

or because his mind was disturbed and confused,

ומחל לו בלב

and he forgave him in his heart completely,

וְלֹא שָׂטְמוּ

and did not hate him

וְלֹא הוֹכִיחוּ

and did not admonish him,

הֲרִי זוּ מִדַּת חֲסִידוֹת

behold this is the measure of piety.

לֹא הִקְפִּידָה תּוֹרָה אֶלָּא עַל הַמִּשְׁטָמָה

For **the Torah did not insist** on the obligation to rebuke **except upon** preventing **the hatred** that might otherwise fester in one's heart.

הִלָּכָה י

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

חַיֵּב אָדָם לְהִזָּהֵר בִּיתּוּמִים וְאֶלְמָנוֹת

A person is obligated to be careful with the feelings of orphans and widows,

מִפְּנֵי שֶׁנַּפְשָׁן שָׁפְלָה לְמַאֲד וְרוּחָם נִמּוּכָה

because their soul is exceedingly low and their spirit is depressed due to their painful loss,

אֲף עַל פִּי שֶׁהֵן בָּעֲלֵי מָמוֹן.

even though they are possessors of wealth and do not lack financial support.

אֲפִלּוֹ אֶלְמָנַתוֹ שֶׁל מֶלֶךְ וִיתוּמָיו

Even the widow of a king and his orphans,

מְזַהְרִים אֲנוּ עֲלֵיהֶן

we are warned concerning them to treat them with utmost sensitivity,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "כָּל אֶלְמָנָה וְיָתוֹם לֹא תַעֲנוּן".

as it is said, "Any widow and orphan you shall not afflict."

וְהֵיכָד נִוְהָגִין עִמָּהֶן.

And how does one behave with them?

לֹא יְדַבֵּר אֲלֵיהֶם אֶלָּא רַכּוּת.

He shall not speak to them except gently,

וְלֹא יִנְהַג בָּהֶן אֶלָּא מִנְהַג כְּבוֹד.

and he shall not behave with them except with a custom of honor.

וְלֹא יִכְאִיב גּוּפָם בַּעֲבוּדָה וְלִבָּם בְּדִבְרֵי קָשִׁים.

And he shall not pain their body with hard work, nor their heart with harsh words.

וְיִחּוּס עַל מָמוֹנָם יוֹתֵר מִמָּמוֹן עַצְמוֹ.

And he must spare their money more than the money of himself.

כָּל הַמְקַנִּיטֵן אוֹ מַכְעִיסֵן אוֹ הַכְּאִיב לָהֶן אוֹ רָדָה בָּהֶן אוֹ אֵבֶד מָמוֹנָן

Any who vexes them, or angers them, or caused pain to them, or oppressed them, or lost their money through negligence,

הֲרִי זֶה עוֹבֵר בְּלֹא תַעֲשֶׂה

behold, this person transgresses a negative commandment,

וְכָל שֶׁכֵּן הַמַּכָּה אוֹתָם אוֹ הַמְקַלְלֵן.

and all the more so one who strikes them or one who curses them.

וְלֹא זֶה אֵף עַל פִּי שְׁאִין לֹקֵין עָלָיו

And as for this prohibition, even though they do not receive lashes for it because it is a prohibition that does not involve a physical action,

הֲרִי עֲנָשׁוֹ מִפְּרֹשׁ בַּתּוֹרָה "וַחֲרָה אִפִּי וַחֲרָתִי אֶתְכֶם בַּחֶרֶב".

behold, its punishment is explicit in the Torah: "and My anger will burn, and I will kill you with the sword."

בְּרִית כָּרַת לָהֶן מִי שְׁאָמַר וְהָיָה הָעוֹלָם

A covenant He made for them, He who spoke and the world came to be,

שָׁכַל זְמַן שֶׁהֵם צוֹעֲקִים מִחֶמֶס הֵם נִעֲנִים

that all the time that they cry out from violence, they are answered immediately,

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "כִּי אִם צָעַק יִצְעַק אֵלַי שָׁמַע אֲשָׁמַע צִעָקָתוֹ".

as it is said, "for if he surely cries out to Me, I will surely hear his cry."

בְּמָה דִּבְרִים אֲמוּרִים בְּזִמְן שֶׁעָנָה אוֹתוֹן לְצָרָה עַצְמוֹ.

In what case are these words said? In a time that he afflicted them for the need of himself.

אֲבָל עָנָה אוֹתָם הָרַב כִּדְּי לְלַמֶּדֶן תּוֹרָה אוֹ אֲמָנוּת אוֹ לְהוֹלִיכֵן בְּדֶרֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל

But if the teacher afflicted them in order to teach them Torah, or a craft, or to lead them in a straight path,

הרי זה מתר.

behold, this is permitted for their own benefit.

ואף על פי כן לא ינהג בהן מנהג כל אדם

And even so, he shall not behave with them with the custom of any ordinary person,

אלא יעשה להם הפרש וינהלם בנחת וברחמים גדולים וכבוד

but he must make for them a distinction, and guide them with gentleness, and with great mercy and honor,

שנאמר "כי ה' יריב ריבם".

as it is said, "for Hashem will plead their cause."

אחד יתום מאב ואחד יתום מאם.

This applies equally to an orphan from a father and an orphan from a mother.

ועד אימתי נקראים יתומים לענין זה.

And until when are they called orphans for the matter of this law?

עד שלא יהיו צריכין לאדם גדול להסמך עליו ולאמנן ולהטפל בהן

Until they will not be needing an adult person to lean upon him, and to raise them, and to care for them,

אלא יהיה עושה כל צרכי עצמו לעצמו כשאר כל הגדולים:

but he will be doing all the needs of himself for himself, like the rest of all the adults.

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.