

הלכות תלמוד תורה • פרק ראשון

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

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, we begin our journey into Hilchos Talmud Torah, learning about the fundamental obligation of teaching and studying the Torah. We will explore who is obligated in this great mitzvah, focusing on the exemption of women, slaves, and minors, while highlighting a father's sacred duty to teach his young son the words of the living Torah.

We will also see how this beautiful chain of transmission extends beyond one's immediate children. The Rambam guides us through the obligation of teaching one's grandchildren and, indeed, teaching any student who wishes to learn, establishing the proper order of precedence and the father's responsibility to hire a teacher for his son.

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

ה"א

פטור נשים ועבדים וחיוב האב ללמד את בנו

Halacha 1 • Exemption of Women and Slaves and the Father's Obligation to Teach His Son

נשים ועבדים וקטנים פטורים מתלמוד תורה. אבל קטן אביו חייב

is obligated his father a minor but Torah from study of are exempt and minors and slaves Women

ללמדו תורה שנאמר דברים יא יט "ולמדתם את בניכם לדבר

to speak your sons — them And you shall teach 19 11 Devarim as it is said Torah to teach him

בם". ואין האשה חייבת ללמד את בנה. שכל החיב ללמד חייב

is obligated to learn who is obligated for anyone her son — to teach is obligated the woman and not in them

ללמד:

to teach

This halacha establishes who is exempt from Torah study and who bears the responsibility of teaching a young boy.

ה"ב

החיוב ללמד את בנו וכן פנו ואת כל התלמידים

Halacha 2 • The Obligation to Teach One's Son Grandson and All Students

כשם שחייב אדם ללמד את בנו כך הוא חייב ללמד את בן בנו

his son the son of — to teach is obligated he so his son — to teach a man that is obligated Just as

שנאמר דברים ד ט "והודעתם לבני ולבני לבניה" ולא בנו

his son And not your sons and to the sons of to your sons And you shall make 9 4 Devarim as it is said them known

ובן בנו בלבד אלא מצוה על כל חכם וחכם מישראל ללמד

to teach of Israel and wise man wise man every upon it is a mitzvah rather alone his son and the son of

אֶת כָּל הַתְּלִמִּידִים אַף עַל פִּי שְׂאִינָן בְּנֵיו. שְׁנֵאֲמַר דְּבָרִים ו ז

7 6 Devarim as it is said his sons that they are not though · even the students all —

"וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבִנֶיךָ" מִפִּי הַשְׁמוּעָה לָמְדוּ בְּנֵיךָ אֵלֶיךָ תְּלִמִּידֶיךָ

your students these are your sons they learned the tradition From the mouth of to your sons And you shall teach them sharply

שֶׁהַתְּלִמִּידִים קְרוּיִין בָּנִים שְׁנֵאֲמַר מַלְכִּים ב ב ג "וַיֵּצְאוּ בְנֵי

the sons of And they went out 3 2 II Melachim as it is said sons are called for the students

הַנְּבִיאִים". אִם כֵּן לָמָּה נִצְטָוָה עַל בְּנוֹ וְעַל בֶּן בְּנוֹ.

his son the son of and concerning his son concerning was he commanded why so If the prophets

לְהַקְדִּים בְּנוֹ לְבֶן בְּנוֹ וּבֶן בְּנוֹ לְבֶן חֲבֵרוֹ:

his fellow before the son of his son and the son of his son before the son of his son To give precedence to

This halacha establishes that the obligation of teaching Torah extends to grandchildren and students, while defining the order of precedence among them.

ה'יג

הַחֵיבוּב לְשָׂכַר מְלָמֵד לְבְנוֹ וְקְדִימַת הַתְּלִמּוּד לַמַּעֲשָׂה

Halacha 3 · The Obligation to Hire a Teacher for One's Son and the Precedence of Study over Action

וְחֵיבוּ לְשָׂכַר מְלָמֵד לְבְנוֹ לְלַמְדוֹ. וְאִינוּ חֵיבוּ לְלַמְדַּת בֶּן חֲבֵרוֹ

his fellow the son of to teach obligated and he is not to teach him for his son a teacher to hire And one is obligated

אֶלָּא בְּחִנָּם. מִי שֶׁלֹּא לָמְדוּ אָבִיו חֵיבוּ לְלַמְדַּת אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּשִׁיפִיר

when he understands himself — to teach is obligated his father teach him who did not One for free except

שְׁנֵאֲמַר דְּבָרִים ה א "וּלְמַדְתֶּם אֹתָם וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם לַעֲשֹׂתָם". וְכֵן אַתָּה

you And so to perform them and you shall safeguard them And you shall study 1 5 Devarim as it is said

מוֹצֵא בְּכָל מְקוֹם שֶׁהַתְּלִמּוּד קוֹדֵם לַמַּעֲשָׂה מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהַתְּלִמּוּד מְבִיא לִידֵי

to leads study because action precedes that study place in every find

מַעֲשָׂה וְאִין הַמַּעֲשָׂה מְבִיא לִידֵי תְּלִמּוּד:

study to leads action and not action

This halacha establishes the financial obligation of a father to hire a Torah teacher for his son, the duty of self-instruction in adulthood, and the principle that Torah study takes precedence over action because study leads to proper action.

ה'יד

קְדִימוּת פְּלִמּוּד הַתּוֹרָה בֵּין אָב לְבְנוֹ

Halacha 4 · Priority in Torah Study Between a Father and His Son

הֲיָה הוּא רוֹצֶה לְלַמַּד תּוֹרָה וַיֵּשׁ לוֹ בֶּן לְלַמַּד תּוֹרָה הוּא קוֹדֵם

takes priority he Torah to teach a son to him and there is Torah to study wants he If

לְבְנוֹ. וְאִם הֲיָה בְּנוֹ נָבוֹן וּמִשְׁפִּיל לְהִבִּין מֶה שֶׁיִּלְמַד יוֹתֵר מִמֶּנּוּ

than him more he will study what to comprehend and wise understanding his son was and if over his son

בְּנוֹ קוֹדֵם. וְאֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁבְּנוֹ קוֹדֵם לֹא יִבְטֹל הוּא. שְׁפָשֵׁם

for just as he should neglect not takes priority that his son though · and even takes priority his son

שְׁמִצְוָה עָלָיו לְלַמֵּד אֶת בְּנוֹ כִּךְ הוּא מִצְוָה לְלַמֵּד עַצְמוֹ:

himself to teach is commanded he so his son — to teach is upon him that a mitzvah

This halacha delineates when a father's own Torah study takes precedence over his obligation to teach his son, and vice versa.

ה'ה

קְדִימַת תַּלְמוּד תּוֹרָה לְנִשְׂיַאת אִשָּׁה

Halacha 5 · The Precedence of Torah Study Over Marriage

לְעוֹלָם יִלְמַד אָדָם תּוֹרָה וְאַחֵר כִּךְ יִשָּׂא אִשָּׁה שָׂאָם נָשָׂא אִשָּׁה תַּחֲלָה

first a wife he marries for if a wife marry that and after Torah a person should study Always

אִין דַּעְתּוֹ פְּנוּיָה לְלַמֵּד. וְאִם הָיָה יִצְרוֹ מִתְגַּבֵּר עָלָיו עַד שֶׁנִּמְצָא שְׂאִין

that not it is found until him overcoming his inclination was and if to study is free his mind not

לְבוֹ פְּנוּי יִשָּׂא וְאַחֵר כִּךְ יִלְמַד תּוֹרָה:

Torah study that and after he should marry is free his heart

This halacha establishes that one should first study Torah and then marry, unless his physical desires prevent him from concentrating on his studies.

ה'ו

גִּיל חֲנוּךְ הֵבִין לְתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה

Halacha 6 · The Age at Which a Father Must Begin Teaching His Son Torah

מֵאִימָתִי אָבִיו חַיֵּב לְלַמְדּוֹ תּוֹרָה. מִשִּׁיתְחִיל לְדַבֵּר מְלַמְדּוֹ דְּבָרִים

Devarim he teaches him to speak From when he begins Torah to teach him obligated is his father From when

לֵג ד' "תּוֹרָה צְוָה לָנוּ מֹשֶׁה" וְדְבָרִים ו' ד' "שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל", וְאַחֵר כִּךְ

that And after Yisrael Shema 4 6 Devarim and Moshe us commanded Torah 4 33

מְלַמְדּוֹ מְעַט מְעַט פְּסוּקִים פְּסוּקִים עַד שִׁיְהִיָּה בֶּן שֵׁשׁ אוֹ בֶּן שִׁבְעַ

seven a son of or six a son of he is until by verses verses by little little he teaches him

הַכֹּל לְפִי בְּרִיּוֹ. וּמוֹלִיכּוֹ אֶצֶל מְלַמֵּד הַתִּינוּקוֹת:

the children a teacher of to and he brings him his health according to everything

This halacha outlines the progression of a child's Torah study, starting from basic verses when he begins to speak, until he is enrolled with a teacher at age six or seven.

ה'ז

הֵיטֵר שְׂכָר לְמוֹד תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּכָתָב וְאִסּוּר תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּעַל פֶּה

Halacha 7 · Permissibility of Payment for Teaching Written Torah and Prohibition for Oral Torah

הָיָה מִנְהַג הַמְּדִינָה לְקַח מְלַמֵּד הַתִּינוּקוֹת שְׂכָר נוֹתֵן לוֹ שְׂכָרוֹ.

his payment to him one gives payment the children a teacher of to take the province the custom of If

וְחַיֵּב לְלַמְדּוֹ בְּשְׂכָר עַד שִׁיקְרָא תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּכָתָב כְּלָה. מָקוּם

A place all of it that is in writing Torah he can read until with payment to teach him and he is obligated

שֶׁנֶּהֱגוּ לְלַמֵּד תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּכָתָב בְּשְׂכָר מִתֵּר לְלַמֵּד בְּשְׂכָר. אֲבָל

but with payment to teach it is permitted with payment that is in writing Torah to teach where they accustomed

תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּעַל פֶּה אִסּוּר לְלַמְדָּה בְּשְׂכָר שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר דְּבָרִים ד' ה' "רְאֵה

Behold 5 4 Devarim as it is said with payment to teach it it is forbidden mouth that is by Torah

לְמַדְתִּי אֶתְכֶם חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוֵּנִי ה' וְגו' מָה אֲנִי בְּחִנָּם
 for free I Just as etc. Hashem commanded me as and ordinances statutes you I have taught

לְמַדְתִּי אֶף אַתֶּם לְמַדְתֶּם בְּחִנָּם מִמֶּנִּי וְכֵן כְּשֶׁתְּלַמְדוּ לְדוֹרוֹת לְמַדוּ
 teach to the generations when you teach and so from me for free learned you so learned

בְּחִנָּם כְּמוֹ שֶׁלְמַדְתֶּם מִמֶּנִּי. לֹא מֵצֵא מִי שִׁילְמְדוּ בְּחִנָּם יְלַמְדוּ
 he must teach him for free who will teach him someone find If he did not from me you learned just as for free

בְּשָׂכָר שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר אֱמֶת קִנְהָ. יָכוֹל יִלְמַד לְאַחֵרִים בְּשָׂכָר. תְּלַמּוּד
 the teaching with payment to others he may teach One might think buy truth as it is said with payment

לֹמֵר מִשְׁלֵי כַּג כַּג "וְאַל תִּמְכֹּר". הֵא לְמַדְתָּ שְׂאָסוּר לוֹ לְלַמֵּד
 to teach for him that it is forbidden you have learned Behold sell and do not 23 23 Mishlei says

בְּשָׂכָר אֶף עַל פִּי שֶׁלְמְדוֹ רַבּוֹ בְּשָׂכָר:
 with payment his teacher taught him though · even with payment

This halacha outlines when a teacher may receive payment for teaching Torah and the source for the prohibition of charging for the Oral Law.

ה'ל"ח

הַחֵיּוֹב הַכִּלְי לְתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה לְכָל אָדָם

Halacha 8: The Universal Obligation of Every Jewish Man to Study Torah

כָּל אִישׁ מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל חַיֵּב בְּתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה בֵּין עָנִי בֵּין עָשִׁיר בֵּין שְׁלֵם
 whole whether rich whether poor whether Torah in the study of is obligated of Israel man Every

בְּגוֹפּוֹ בֵּין בַּעַל יְסוּרִין בֵּין בָּחוּר בֵּין שֶׁהָיָה זָקֵן גָּדוֹל שֶׁתִּשְׁשׁ
 whose strength great an elder he was whether a youth whether suffering a possessor of whether in his body

כָּחוֹ אִפְלוּ הָיָה עָנִי הַמְתַּפְּרִינֵם מִן הַצְדָּקָה וּמִחֲוֵיר עַל הַפֶּתָחַיִם
 the doorways upon and goes around charity from who is supported a poor man he was even if has weakened

וְאִפְלוּ בַּעַל אִשָּׁה וּבָנִים חַיֵּב לְקַבֵּעַ לוֹ זְמַן לְתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה
 Torah for the study of a time for himself to establish is obligated and children a wife a possessor of and even

בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ א ח "וְהָגִיתָ בּוֹ יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה":
 and night day it and you shall 8 1 Yehoshua as it is said and by night by day
 contemplate

This halacha establishes that no personal circumstance, whether poverty, illness, age, or family responsibility, exempts a man from the daily obligation of Torah study.

ה'ל"ט

עֲמַל הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁל גְּדוֹלֵי הַחֻכָּמִים

Halacha 9: The Torah Study and Livelihood of the Great Sages

גְּדוֹלֵי חֻכָּמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיוּ מֵהֶן חוֹטְבֵי עֲצִים וּמֵהֶן שׂוֹאֲבֵי מַיִם
 water drawers of and among them wood choppers of among them were Yisrael Sages of The great

וּמֵהֶן סוּמִיִּם וְאֶף עַל פִּי כֵּן הָיוּ עוֹסְקִין בְּתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה בַּיּוֹם
 by day Torah with the study of occupied they were so though · and even blind men and among them

וּבַלַּיְלָה וְהֵם מְכַלְלִים מַעֲתִיקֵי הַשְּׂמוּעָה אִישׁ מִפִּי אִישׁ מִפִּי
 from the mouth of man from the mouth of man the tradition the transmitters of are among and they and by night

This halacha highlights how the greatest Sages of Yisrael, despite extreme poverty or physical limitations, dedicated themselves to Torah study day and night.

הלי

החוב ללמוד תורה עד יום המות

Halacha 10 · The Obligation to Study Torah Until the Day of One's Death

עד אימתי חוב ללמוד תורה עד יום מותו שנאמר דברים ד ט"ו וכן
and lest 9 4 Devarim as it is said his death the day of until Torah to study is obligated when Until
יסורו מלבבך כל ימי חייך. וכל זמן שלא יעסק בלמוד
with study he occupies himself that not the time and all your life the days of all from your heart they depart
הוא שוכח:
forgets he

This halacha establishes that Torah study is a lifelong obligation that never ceases, and warns that ceasing to study leads to forgetting.

הליא

חלוקת זמן הלמוד לשלישי

Halacha 11 · Dividing One's Study Time into Three Parts

וחוב לשלש את זמן למידתו שליש בתורה שבכתב.
that is in writing in the Torah one third his study the time of — to divide into three And is obligated
ושליש בתורה שבעל פה. ושליש יבין וישכיל אחרית דבר
a matter the end of and conceptualize he shall understand and one third mouth that is by in the Torah and one third
מראשיתו ויוציא דבר מדבר וידמה דבר לדבר ויבין במדות
the principles and understand to a matter a matter and compare from a matter a matter and derive from its beginning
שהתורה נדרשת בהן עד שיידע היאך הוא עקר המדות והיאך
and how the principles the essence of is how he knows until by them is expounded that the Torah
יוציא האסור והמותר וכיוצא בהן מדברים שלמד מפי
from the mouth of that he learned from matters to them and similar and the permitted the forbidden he shall derive
השמועה. וענין זה הוא הנקרא גמרא:
Gemara is called it this and the subject of the tradition

The Rambam outlines the obligation for a person to divide their daily Torah study into three equal parts: Written Torah, Oral Torah, and Gemara.

הליב

חלוקת זמן הלמוד בין מקרא משנה וגמרא

Halacha 12 · Dividing One's Study Time Between Written Law, Oral Law, and Gemara

פיצד. היה בעל אמנות והיה עוסק במלאכתו שלש שעות ביום
in the day hours three with his work occupying himself and he was a craft a master of was How
ובתורה תשע. אותן התשע קורא בשלש מהן בתורה שבכתב ובשלש
and in three that is in writing in the Torah of them in three he reads nine those nine and in the Torah

בתורה שפועל פה ובשלש אחרות מתבונן בדעתו להבין דבר
a concept to understand with his intellect he meditates others and in three the mouth that is on in the Torah

מדבר. ודברי קבלה בכלל תורה שבכתב הן
they are that is in writing Torah in the category of prophetic tradition and the words of from a concept

ופרושן בכלל תורה שפועל פה. והענינים הנקראים פרדס
Pardes that are called and the matters the mouth that is on Torah in the category of and their explanation

בכלל הגמרא הן. במה דברים אמורים בתחלת תלמודו של אדם
a person of the study in the beginning of are said words In what they are the Gemara in the category of

אבל פשיגדיל בחכמה ולא יהא צריך לא ללמד תורה שבכתב ולא
and not that is in writing Torah to learn not need he will and not in wisdom when he grows but

לעסוק תמיד בתורה שפועל פה יקרא בעתים מזמנים תורה
Torah designated at times he should read the mouth that is on with the Torah constantly to occupy himself

שבכתב ודברי השמועה כדי שלא ישכח דבר מדברי דיני
the laws of from the words of a matter he will forget that not in order the oral tradition and the words of that is in writing

תורה ויפנה כל ימיו לגמרא בלבד לפי רחב שיש בלבו
in his heart that there is the breadth according to alone to the Gemara his days all and he should turn Torah

וישוב דעתו:

his mind and the settling of

The Rambam explains how a working person should divide his daily study hours, and how an advanced scholar should eventually focus primarily on Gemara.

הלייג

למוד תורה לנשים וההבדל בין תורה שבכתב לתורה שפועל פה

Halacha 13 • Torah Study for Women and the Distinction Between the Written and Oral Law

אשה שלמדה תורה יש לה שכר אבל אינו כשכר האיש. מפני

because the man like the reward of it is not but reward has Torah who studied A woman

שלא נצטוית. וכל העושה דבר שאינו מצוה עליו לעשותו אין

is not to do it upon it commanded that he is not a matter who performs and anyone commanded she was not

שכרו כשכר המצוה שעשה אלא פחות ממנו. ואף על פי

though and even than him less but who performed the commanded one like the reward of his reward

שיש לה שכר צו חכמים שלא ללמד אדם את בתו תורה.

Torah his daughter — a person should teach that not the Sages commanded reward for her that there is

מפני שרב הנשים אין דעתם מכוונת להתלמד אלא הן מוציאות דברי

words of turn they but to learn focused their mind is not women most because

תורה לדברי הבאי לפי עניות דעתן. אמרו חכמים כל המלמד את

— teaches whoever the Sages said their mind the poverty of according to nonsense to words of Torah

בְּתוֹ תוֹרָה כְּאִלּוּ לְמִדָּה תִּפְלוּת. בְּמָה דְּבָרִים אַמּוּרִים בְּתוֹרָה שֶׁבְּעַל
that is by regarding Torah are said words in what foolishness he taught her is as if Torah his daughter
פֶּה אֲבָל תוֹרָה שֶׁבְּכֶתֶב לֹא יִלְמַד אוֹתָהּ לְכַתְּחָלָה וְאִם לְמִדָּה אֵינוּ
it is not he taught her and if at the outset her should he teach not that is in writing Torah but mouth
כְּמִלְמִדָּה תִּפְלוּת:
foolishness like teaching her

This halacha outlines the reward a woman receives for studying Torah voluntarily and explains the Rabbinic restriction against teaching daughters the Oral Law.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter begins by clarifying that while women, slaves, and minors are exempt from the formal obligation of Torah study, a father is strictly commanded to teach his young son. This duty of transmission is so great that it extends to one's grandchildren and even to other students, who are cherished like sons. Finally, the halachah establishes that a father must go so far as to hire a teacher for his son to ensure he receives a proper Torah education, prioritizing his own descendants over others in this holy task.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

No matter how busy or overwhelmed you are with the demands of life, Hashem wants your connection to His Torah to be a permanent, daily reality. The Rambam makes it clear that every single Yid, whether rich or poor, healthy or suffering, a young bachur or an elderly man whose strength has faded, is absolutely obligated to establish a set time for Torah study by day and by night. There are no excuses. Even the greatest of our sages, the holy giants who transmitted the Torah down through the generations, were sometimes simple woodcutters and water-drawers who worked hard for their parnassah, yet they never let a day pass without their learning.

This is not just a duty; it is your life force. The Torah warns us that the moment a person stops engaging in study, he begins to forget. Torah is not a subject you finish and put away on a shelf; it is an ongoing, lifelong avodah that must continue until your very last day on this earth. When you set a fixed time for learning, you are anchoring your neshama to its source, ensuring that your daily actions are guided by the light of ratzon Hashem.

Today, make an unshakeable commitment to your daily learning. No matter what comes up, set aside at least fifteen minutes tonight and fifteen minutes tomorrow morning to learn Torah, treating this appointment as completely non-negotiable.