

הלכות תלמוד תורה • פרק רביעי

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

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, we learn the vital halachos of how a Torah shiur must be conducted, focusing on the spiritual and ethical standards required of both the rebbe and the talmid. The Rambam teaches us that Torah is a holy inheritance that cannot be given over to an improper student whose deeds are not refined, nor may we learn from a teacher who does not resemble an angel of Hashem. We must protect the purity of the Torah by ensuring that both those who teach it and those who receive it are walking on a straight path of yiras Shamayim.

Additionally, the chapter guides us in the proper derech eretz and physical setup of the bais medrash. We learn how the rebbe and the talmidim should sit in relation to one another, emphasizing a beautiful sense of mutual respect and equality in the presence of the Shechinah, where everyone sits either on the ground or on chairs together.

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

ה"א

הגבלת לימוד תורה לתלמיד ולמלמד הגונים

Halacha 1 - Restricting Torah Instruction to Proper Students and Proper Teachers

אין מלמדין תורה אלא לתלמיד הגון נאה במעשיו. או

or in his deeds attractive who is proper to a student except Torah teach We do not

לתם. אבל אם היה הולך בדרך לא טובה מחזירין אותו למוטב

to the good him we return good not in a path walking he was if but to an innocent person

ומנהיגין אותו בדרך ישרה ובודקין אותו ואחר כך מכניסין אותו

him we bring that and after him and we examine straight in a path him and we guide

לבית המדרש ומלמדין אותו. אמרו חכמים כל השונה לתלמיד

a student who teaches anyone the Sages said him and we teach study to the house of

שאינו הגון כאלו זרק אבן למרקוליס שנאמר משלי כו ח "כצורר אבן

a stone "Like binding 8 26 Proverbs as it is said to Mercury a stone he threw is as if proper who is not

במרגמה כן נותן לכסיל כבוד". ואין כבוד אלא תורה שנאמר

as it is said Torah except honor and there is no honor" to a fool is he who gives so in a sling

משלי ג לה "כבוד חכמים ינחלו". וכן הרב שאינו הולך בדרך טובה

good in a path walking who is not a teacher and likewise shall inherit" the wise "Honor 35 3 Proverbs

אף על פי שחכם גדול הוא וכל העם צריכין לו אין מתלמדין ממנו

from him study we do not him need the nation and all he is great a sage though . even

עד שובו למוטב. שנאמר מלאכי ב ז "כי שפתי כהן ישמרו דעת

knowledge shall guard a priest the lips of "For 7 2 Malachi as it is said to the good his return until

וְתוֹרָה יִבְקְשׁוּ מִפִּיהוּ כִּי מִלֶּאדָּה ה' צִבְאוֹת הוּא". אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים אִם
if the Sages said he is" of Hosts Hashem a messenger of for from his mouth they shall seek and Torah
הָרַב דּוֹמֶה לְמֵלֶאדָּה ה' צִבְאוֹת תוֹרָה יִבְקְשׁוּ מִפִּיהוּ אִם לֹא אֵל
do not not if from his mouth they shall seek Torah of Hosts Hashem a messenger of resembles the teacher
יִבְקְשׁוּ תוֹרָה מִפִּיהוּ:
from his mouth Torah seek

This halacha establishes that Torah may only be taught to students of good character, and that one must only study from a teacher whose conduct is exemplary.

ה'ל"ב

הַנְּהִגַת הָרַב וְהַתְּלָמִידִים בְּעֵת הַלְמוּד

Halacha 2 · The Seating Arrangement of the Teacher and Students During Torah Study

כִּיצַד מְלַמְדִּים. הָרַב יוֹשֵׁב בְּרֹאשׁ וְהַתְּלָמִידִים מְקֻפִּים לִפְנֵיו כְּעֶטְרָה
like a crown before him are surrounded and the students at the head sits The teacher do they teach How
כְּדִי שִׁיְהוּ כָּלָם רוֹאִים הָרַב וְשׁוֹמְעִים דְּבָרָיו. וְלֹא יֵשֵׁב הָרַב עַל
on the teacher shall sit And not his words and hearing the teacher seeing all of them that they will be so
הַכִּסֵּא וְתְלָמִידָיו עַל הַקֶּרֶקַע אֶלָּא אוֹ הַכֹּל עַל הָאָרֶץ אוֹ הַכֹּל עַל
on everyone or the ground on everyone either rather the ground on and his students the chair
הַכִּסְאוֹת. וּבְרֹאשׁוֹנָה הָיָה הָרַב יוֹשֵׁב וְהַתְּלָמִידִים עוֹמְדִים וּמִקֵּדָם
and before standing and the students sitting the teacher was And originally the chairs
חֲרִבּוֹן בֵּית שְׁנֵי נֶהְגּוּ הַכֹּל לְלַמֵּד לַתְּלָמִידִים וְהֵם
while they to the students to teach everyone they accustomed the Second the House the destruction of
יוֹשְׁבִים:
are sitting

This halacha details the physical arrangement of the classroom, emphasizing that the teacher and students should sit at the same level to maintain proper respect and focus.

ה'ל"ג

הַנְּהִגַת הָרַב וְהַמְתַּרְגֵּם בְּעֵת הַלְמוּד

Halacha 3 · The Conduct of the Teacher and the Spokesman During Instruction

אִם הָיָה מְלַמֵּד מִפִּיו לַתְּלָמִידִים מְלַמֵּד. וְאִם הָיָה מְלַמֵּד עַל פִּי
the mouth of by teaching he was and if he teaches to the students from his mouth teaching he was If
הַמְתַּרְגֵּם הַמְתַּרְגֵּם עוֹמֵד בֵּינוֹ וּבֵין הַתְּלָמִידִים וְהָרַב אֹמֵר
says and the teacher the students and between between him stands the spokesman a spokesman
לְהַמְתַּרְגֵּם וְהַמְתַּרְגֵּם מְשַׁמֵּעַ לְכָל הַתְּלָמִידִים. וּכְשֶׁהֵם שׂוֹאֲלִין לְהַמְתַּרְגֵּם
the spokesman ask and when they the students to all makes heard and the spokesman to the spokesman
הוּא שׂוֹאֵל לָרַב וְהָרַב מְשִׁיב לְהַמְתַּרְגֵּם וְהַמְתַּרְגֵּם מְשִׁיב לְשׂוֹאֵל.
to the questioner replies and the spokesman to the spokesman replies and the teacher the teacher asks he
וְלֹא יִגְבִּיהַּ הָרַב קוֹלוֹ יוֹתֵר מִקּוֹל הַמְתַּרְגֵּם. וְלֹא יִגְבִּיהַּ הַמְתַּרְגֵּם
the spokesman shall raise and not the spokesman than the voice of more his voice the teacher shall raise and not

קולו בעת ששואל את הרב יותר מקול הרב. אין המתרגם

the spokesman there is no the teacher than the voice of more the teacher — that he asks at the time his voice

רשאי לא לפחת ולא להוסיף ולא לשנות אלא אם כן היה המתרגמן

the spokesman was unless to change and not to add and not to subtract not permitted

אביו של חכם או רבו. אומר הרב למתרגמן כך אומר לי רבי או

or my teacher to me said so to the spokesman the teacher says his teacher or the sage of his father

כך אומר לי אבא מרי. וכשאומר המתרגמן הדברים לעם אומר

he says to the people the words the spokesman and when says my master my father to me said so

בשם החכם ומזכיר שמו של אבי הרב או של רבו ואומר

and says his teacher of or the teacher the father of of the name of and mentions the sage in the name of

כך אומר רבנא פלוני אף על פי שלא הזכיר הרב שמו של חכם.

the sage of the name of the teacher mentioned that not though even so-and-so our master said so

שאסור לקרות לרבו או לאביו בשמו:

by his name his father or his teacher to call because it is forbidden

This halacha details the protocol for teaching through a spokesman, including voice levels, faithfulness to the teacher's words, and the honor due to a father or teacher.

הליך

סבלנות הרב והתלמיד בלמוד התורה

Halacha 4: The Patience Required of a Teacher and Student in Torah Study

הרב שלמד ולא הבינו התלמידים לא יכעס עליהם וירגז

and rage with them he should become not the students did understand and not who taught The teacher angry

אלא חוזר ושונה הדבר אפלו כמה פעמים עד שיבינו עמק

the depth of that they understand until times several even the matter and repeats he returns rather

ההלכה. וכן לא יאמר התלמיד הבנתי והוא לא הבין אלא

rather did understand not and he I understood the student should say not and likewise the halachah

חוזר ושואל אפלו כמה פעמים. ואם כעס עליו רבו ורגז יאמר

he should say and raged his teacher with him became angry and if times several even and asks he returns

לו רבי תורה היא וללמד אני צריך ודעתי קצרה:

and my mind need I and to study is it Torah my teacher to him

This halachah outlines the educational duties of patience, forbidding a teacher from becoming angry at struggling students and forbidding a student from pretending to understand out of embarrassment.

הליך

הנהגת התלמיד והרב בעת הלמוד

Halacha 5: The Proper Demeanor of Student and Teacher During Torah Study

לא יהיה התלמיד בוש מחבריו שלמדו מפעם ראשונה או שנייה

second or first from the time who learned by his colleagues embarrassed the student should be Not

וְהוּא לֹא לָמַד אֶלָּא אַחֵר כַּמָּה פְּעָמִים. שָׂאֵם נִתְבַּיֵּשׁ מִדְּבַר זֶה
 this from matter he is embarrassed for if times several after except learned not and he

נִמְצָא נִכְנָס וְיוֹצֵא לְבֵית הַמְדָּרֶשׁ וְהוּא אֵינוֹ לָמַד כָּלוּם. לְפִיכָךְ
 Therefore anything learning is not and he study the house of and leaving entering he finds himself

אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים הָרִאשׁוֹנִים אֵין הַבִּישָׁן לָמַד וְלֹא הַקָּפְדָן מְלַמֵּד. בַּמָּה
 In what teaches the short-tempered and not learns the bashful person Not the first the Sages said

דְּבָרִים אֲמוּרִים בְּזֶמֶן שֶׁלֹּא הֵבִינוּ הַתְּלָמִידִים הַדְּבַר מִפְּנֵי עֲמָקוֹ אוֹ
 or its depth because of the matter the students they understood that not in a time are said words

מִפְּנֵי דַעְתָּן שֶׁהִיא קְצָרָה. אָבֵל אִם נֶכֶר לָרַב שֶׁהֵם מְתַרְשְׁלִין
 are lazy that they to the teacher it is apparent if But short which is their mind because of

בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה וּמְתַרְפִּין עֲלֵיהֶן וּלְפִיכָךְ לֹא הֵבִינוּ חֵיב לְרַגֵּז
 to show anger he is obligated they understood not and therefore upon them and are lax Torah in the words of

עֲלֵיהֶן וּלְהַכְלִימָן בְּדִבְרֵים כְּדֵי לְחַדְדָם. וְכַעֲנָן זֶה אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים
 the Sages said this And like the matter to sharpen them in order with words and to shame them at them

זֶרֶק מָרָה בַּתְּלָמִידִים. לְפִיכָךְ אֵין רְאוּי לָרַב לְנַהֵג קִלּוֹת רֹאשׁ
 head lightness of to behave with for the teacher fitting not Therefore among the students fear Cast

לְפָנֵי הַתְּלָמִידִים וְלֹא לְשַׁחֵק בְּפָנֵיהֶם וְלֹא לֵאכֹל וּלְשִׁתּוֹת עִמָּהֶם כְּדֵי
 in order with them and to drink to eat and not before them to jest and not the students before

שֶׁתִּהְיֶה אִימָתוֹ עֲלֵיהֶן וְיִלָּמְדוּ מִמֶּנּוּ בְּמַהֲרָה:
 quickly from him and they will learn upon them his fear that there shall be

This halacha outlines the necessity of a student overcoming embarrassment to ask questions, and the teacher's duty to maintain authority and discipline.

הל"ו

הַנְּהִיגַת הַשְּׂאֵלוֹת בְּבֵית הַמְדָּרֶשׁ וּבְחִינַת הַתְּלָמִידִים

Halacha 6 · Proper Conduct for Asking Questions in the House of Study and Testing Students

אֵין שׂוֹאֵלִין אֶת הָרַב כְּשִׁיכָּנֵס לַמְדָּרֶשׁ עַד שֶׁתִּתְיַשֵּׁב דַּעְתּוֹ עָלָיו.
 upon him his mind settles until the house of study when he enters the teacher — ask We do not

וְאֵין הַתְּלָמִיד שׂוֹאֵל כְּשִׁיכָּנֵס עַד שֶׁתִּתְיַשֵּׁב וְיָנוּחַ. וְאֵין שׂוֹאֵלִין שְׁנַיִם
 two ask and we do not and rests he settles until when he enters asks the student and not

כְּאַחֵד. וְאֵין שׂוֹאֵלִין אֶת הָרַב מֵעַנָּן אַחֵר אֶלָּא מֵאוֹתוֹ הָעַנָּן שֶׁהוּא
 that they the subject from that except other on a subject the teacher — ask and we do not as one

עֲסוּקִין בּוֹ כְּדֵי שֶׁלֹּא יִתְבַּיֵּשׁ. וְיֵשׁ לָרַב לְהִטְעוֹת אֶת
 — to mislead to the teacher And there is he will be embarrassed that not in order with it are occupied

הַתְּלָמִידִים בְּשִׂאֵלוֹתָיו וּבְמַעֲשָׂיו שֶׁעוֹשֶׂה בְּפָנֵיהֶם כְּדֵי לְחַדְדָן. וְכְּדֵי
 and in order to sharpen them in order before them that he does and with the actions with his questions the students

שִׁידַע אִם זֹכְרִים הֵם מַה שֶּׁלְּמָדָם אוֹ אֵינָם זֹכְרִים. וְאִין צָרִיךְ
need and there is no remember they do not or he taught them what they remembering if that he will know
לֹמַר שֵׁשׁ לוֹ רְשׁוֹת לְשָׁאֵל אוֹתָם בְּעֶנְיָן אֲחֵר שָׂאִין עֹסְקִין בּוֹ
with it occupied that they are not other on a subject them to ask permission to him that there is to say
כְּדִי לְזַרְזֵם:
to stimulate them in order

This halacha outlines the proper etiquette for students when questioning their teacher, and the pedagogical methods a teacher may use to sharpen his students' minds.

ה'ל' ז

דָּרָךְ אֲרֵץ וְהִלְכוֹת הַשְּׁאֵלָה לְפָנֵי הָרַב

Halacha 7: Proper Conduct and Laws of Questioning One's Teacher

אִין שׂוֹאֵלִין מֵעַמָּד וְאִין מְשִׁיבִין מֵעַמָּד וְלֹא מִגְבוּהָ וְלֹא
and not from a high place and not standing answer and one does not standing ask One does not
מֵרְחוֹק וְלֹא מֵאַחֲרֵי הַזְּקֵנִים. וְאִין שׂוֹאֵלִין הָרַב אֶלָּא בְּעֶנְיָן
on the subject except the teacher ask and one does not the elders from behind and not from far away
שֶׁהֵן קוֹרִין בּוֹ. וְאִין שׂוֹאֵלִין אֶלָּא מִירְאָה. וְלֹא יִשְׁאֵל
ask and he should not with awe except ask and one does not in it are reading that they
בְּעֶנְיָן יוֹתֵר מִשְּׁלֹשׁ הִלְכוֹת:
halachot than three more on the subject

This halacha outlines the respectful manner in which a student must address and question their Torah teacher.

ה'ל' ח

סֵדֶר קְדִימָה בַּשְּׁאֵלוֹת הַתְּלִמִּידִים לְרַב

Halacha 8: The Order of Precedence When Multiple Questions Are Asked of a Teacher

שְׁנַיִם שֶׁשְּׁאֵלוּ. שָׁאֵל אֶחָד בְּעֶנְיָן וְשָׁאֵל אֶחָד שֶׁלֹּא בְּעֶנְיָן נִזְקְקִין לְעֶנְיָנוֹ.
to the point we attend to the point not one and asked to the point one asked who asked Two
מַעֲשֶׂה וְשִׂיאָיו מַעֲשֶׂה נִזְקְקִין לְמַעֲשֶׂה. הִלְכָּה וּמִדְּרָשׁ נִזְקְקִין
we attend and midrash halacha to the practical case we attend a practical case and that which is not a practical case
לְהִלְכָּה. מִדְּרָשׁ וְאַגָּדָה נִזְקְקִין לְמִדְּרָשׁ. אַגָּדָה וְקַל וְחֹמֶר נִזְקְקִין לְקַל
to the kal we attend vachomer and a kal aggadah to the midrash we attend and aggadah midrash to the halacha
וְחֹמֶר. קַל וְחֹמֶר וְגִזְרָה שְׁוֶה נִזְקְקִין לְקַל וְחֹמֶר. הֵיוּ הַשּׂוֹאֵלִין שְׁנַיִם
two the questioners If they were vachomer to the kal we attend shavah and a gezeirah vachomer a kal vachomer
אֶחָד חָכָם וְאֶחָד תְּלָמִיד נִזְקְקִין לְחָכָם. תְּלָמִיד וְעַם הָאָרֶץ נִזְקְקִין
we attend person and a common a student to the sage we attend a student and one a sage one
לְתְּלָמִיד. שְׁנֵיהֶם חָכְמִים שְׁנֵיהֶם תְּלָמִידִים שְׁנֵיהֶם עַמִּי הָאָרֶץ שָׁאֵלוּ
they asked people common both of them students both of them sages both of them to the student
שְׁנֵיהֶם בְּשֵׁתֵי הִלְכוֹת אוֹ בְּשֵׁתֵי תְּשׁוּבוֹת אוֹ בְּשֵׁתֵי שְׁאֵלוֹת שְׁנֵי מַעֲשִׂים.
practical cases of two questions about two or answers about two or halachos about two both of them

הַרְשׁוֹת בְּיַד הַמְתַּרְגֵּם מֵעַתָּה:

from this point on the spokesman is in the hand of the choice

This halacha outlines the hierarchy of priority for a teacher or spokesman when multiple questions are posed simultaneously, prioritizing practical halacha and greater Torah scholars.

ה'ט

קְדֻשַּׁת בֵּית הַמִּדְרָשׁ וְהַנִּהְגָּתוֹ

Halacha 9 · The Sanctity of the House of Study and Proper Conduct Within It

אֵין יְשָׁנִים בְּבֵית הַמִּדְרָשׁ וְכָל הַמְתַּנְמְנִים בְּבֵית הַמִּדְרָשׁ חֲכָמָתוֹ

his wisdom study in the house of who dozes and anyone study in the house of sleep We do not

נַעֲשִׂית קָרְעִים קָרְעִים. וְכֵן אָמַר שְׁלֹמֹה בְּחֲכָמָתוֹ מִשְׁלֵי כַּג כֹּא "וּקָרְעִים

and rags 21 23 Mishlei in his wisdom Shlomo said and so shreds shreds becomes

תִּלְבִּישׁ נֹמָה". וְאֵין מְשִׁיחִין בְּבֵית הַמִּדְרָשׁ אֶלָּא בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה

Torah with words of except study in the house of converse and we do not drowsiness will clothe

בְּלִבָּד. אֲפֹלוּ מִי שֶׁנִּתְעַטֵּשׁ אֵין אֹמְרִים לוֹ רְפוּאָה בְּבֵית הַמִּדְרָשׁ

study in the house of healing to him say we do not who sneezed one even alone

וְאֵין צָרִיךְ לֹאמַר שְׁאֵר הַדְּבָרִים. וְקְדֻשַּׁת בֵּית הַמִּדְרָשׁ חֲמוּרָה

is stricter study a house of and the sanctity of matters other to say need and there is no

מִקְדָּשׁ בְּתֵי כְּנִסְיֹת:

assembly houses of than the sanctity of

This halacha outlines the strict rules of conduct in a house of study, including prohibitions against sleeping, idle chatter, and even wishing someone health upon sneezing, due to its supreme sanctity.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter outlines the strict qualifications for teaching and studying Torah, ruling that we only teach a student whose deeds are proper and refined, while an improper student must first be guided to teshuvah. Similarly, one must never learn from a teacher who does not follow a proper path, as a rebbe must resemble a messenger of Hashem. Finally, the Rambam details the physical arrangement of the shiur, explaining that the teacher sits at the head with the students around him so they can see his face, and establishes that the teacher and students must sit on the same level—either all on the ground or all on chairs—to maintain the proper honor and environment for learning.

The very heart of our avodah in the beis midrash is the understanding that Torah is not a mere academic subject; it is the ultimate 'honor' of Hashem, and it demands a vessel of pure character. Chazal teach us that 'ein habayshan lamed', the one who is embarrassed to ask does not learn. When you sit to learn, you must strip away all pretense and pride. If you did not understand, even after the teacher repeated it multiple times, you must have the courage to say, 'Rebbi, I do not understand, and I need to learn.' True kabalas haTorah requires us to value the truth of Hashem's wisdom far more than our own social standing or the fear of looking foolish in the eyes of others.

At the same time, we must treat the place and the process of learning with the utmost awe and seriousness. The Rambam warns us that one who sleeps or even dozes in the beis midrash will find that his wisdom becomes 'torn into shreds.' This is because Torah cannot be acquired with a lazy, half-hearted attitude. It requires our full presence, our sharpest focus, and a deep reverence for the holiness of the space, which is even greater than that of a shul.

Today, make a conscious effort to elevate your learning. If there is a concept or a halacha you are learning that you do not fully grasp, do not let your pride silence you; ask, review, and seek clarity. Before you begin learning, take a moment to sit up straight, clear your mind of idle chatter, and remind yourself that you are standing in the presence of the King, receiving His holy Torah.