

הלכות תלמוד תורה • פרק ששי

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

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, we learn the beautiful and essential halachos of showing proper kavod to a Torah sage, even if he is not one's own rebbe. Hashem commands us in the Torah to stand up before a zakein, which refers to a wise person who has acquired Torah wisdom. We will learn the specific guidelines of when and where this obligation applies, such as the requirement to stand when the sage comes within four cubits, and the places where standing is not appropriate.

We will also see how the Torah protects a person from financial loss, exempting craftsmen from standing while they are in the middle of their work. The chapter also guides the sages themselves on how to conduct themselves with deep humility, avoiding putting themselves in a position where they would trouble the tzibbur to stand up for them.

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

הלכה א

Halacha 1 • The Mitzvah to Respect and Stand Before a Torah Sage

כל תלמיד חכם

Every Torah scholar,

מצוה להדרו

it is a mitzvah to respect him,

ואף על פי שאינו רבו

and even though he is not his own teacher,

שנאמר

as it is said in the Torah in Sefer Vayikra,

"מִפְּנֵי שִׂיבָה תִּקּוּם וְהִדַּרְתָּ פָּנֵי זָקֵן."

"Before a hoary head you shall rise, and you shall respect the face of an elder."

זמן זה שקנה חכמה.

An elder, this refers to one who has acquired wisdom.

ומאימתי חייבין לעמד מפניו.

And from when is one obligated to stand before him?

משקרב ממנו בארבע אמות

From when he approaches within four cubits of him,

עד שיעבר מִפְּנֵי פָּנָיו:

and the obligation to stand remains **until he passes from before his face**.

הלכה ב

Halacha 2 · Exemption from Standing in Bathhouses and During Melacha

אין עומדין מפניו

We do not stand before him, the Torah scholar,

לא בבית המרחץ ולא בבית הכסא

not in a bathhouse and not in a bathroom, because these are places where showing honor is inappropriate,

שנאמר ויקרא יט לב "תקום והדרת"

as it is said in the Torah (Vayikra 19:32), "**You shall rise and you shall honor**,"

קימה שיש בה הדור.

which teaches that the Torah only obligated a **rising that has in it honor**, which excludes these undignified places.

ואין בעלי אמנויות חייבין לעמד מפני תלמידי חכמים

And craftsmen are not obligated to stand before Torah scholars

בשעה שעוסקין במלאכתן

at the time that they are occupied with their work,

שנאמר תקום והדרת

as it is said, "**You shall rise and you shall honor**";

מה הדור שאין בה חסרון כס

just as the "**honoring**" mentioned in the verse is something **that does not involve a financial loss**,

אף קימה שאין בה חסרון כס.

so too, the obligation of "**rising**" is only that **which does not involve a financial loss**, and craftsmen would lose money by interrupting their work.

ומנין שלא יעצים עיניו מן החכם

And from where do we know that a person may not shut his eyes from the scholar

כדי שלא יראהו עד שלא יעמד מפניו.

in order that he will not see him, so that he will not have to stand before him?

שנאמר ויראת מאלהיה.

As it is said at the end of that same verse, "And you shall fear your God."

הא כל דבר שהוא מסור ללב

Behold, any matter that is given over to the heart—meaning, a hidden motive that only the person himself knows—

נאמר בו ויראת מאלהיה:

it is said concerning it, "And you shall fear your God," because Hashem knows the true thoughts of the heart.

הלכה ג

Halacha 3 • A Sage Avoiding Troubling the Public to Stand for Him

אין ראוי לחכם שיטריח את העם

It is not proper for a sage that he trouble the people

ויכון עצמו להן כדי שיעמדו מפניו

and direct himself to them in order that they stand before him,

אלא ילה בדרך קצרה

rather he should go by a short way

ומתכוון שלא יראו אותו

and intending that they not see him,

כדי שלא יטריחן לעמד.

in order that he not trouble them to stand.

והחכמים היו מקיפין והו לכו בדרך החיצונה

And the Sages would go around and walk by the outer way,

שאינו מכיריהן מצויין שם

where those who recognize them are not found there,

כדי שלא יטריחום:

in order that they not trouble them to stand up for them.

הלכה ד

Halacha 4 • One Who Rides is Considered Like One Who Walks Regarding Standing

רוכב הרי הוא כמהלך

One who rides on an animal, behold he is like one who walks on foot regarding the laws of showing honor,

וּכְשֶׁם שֶׁעוֹמְדִים מִפְּנֵי הַמֶּהלֵךְ

and just as we are obligated to stand before one who walks by,

כִּךָ עוֹמְדִין מִפְּנֵי הָרוֹכֵב:

so too we stand before one who rides by.

הִלְכָה ה

Halacha 5 · The Order of Walking on the Way for a Master and His Disciples

שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׂהָיו הוֹלְכִין בַּדֶּרֶךְ.

Three Torah scholars who were walking on the way should arrange themselves so that

הָרֵב בְּאֶמְצַע

the master walks in the middle,

גָּדוֹל מִיְמִינוֹ

the greater of the two disciples walks on his right,

וְקָטָן מִשְּׂמאלוֹ:

and the lesser disciple walks on his left.

הִלְכָה ו

Halacha 6 · Laws of Standing in Deference to a Sage, Av Beis Din, and Nasi

הְרוֹאֶה חָכָם

One who sees a sage

אֵינוֹ עוֹמֵד מִפְּנָיו

does not have to stand before him

עַד שֶׁיִּגִּיעַ לוֹ לְאַרְבַּע אַמּוֹת.

until he reaches within four cubits of him.

וְכֵיוָן שֶׁעָבַר יוֹשֵׁב.

And once he has passed by, the onlooker sits down again.

רָאָה אֶבֶיִת דִּין

If he saw the Av Beis Din,

עומד מלפניו משיראנו מרחוק מלא עיניו

he stands before him from when he sees him from afar, as soon as he is within the fullness of his eyes' sight,

ואינו יושב עד שיעבר מאחריו ארבע אמות.

and he does not sit until he passes behind him four cubits.

ראה את הנשיא

If he saw the Nasi,

עומד מלפניו מלא עיניו

he stands before him as soon as he is within the fullness of his eyes' sight,

ואינו יושב עד שישב במקומו

and he does not sit until the Nasi sits in his place,

או עד שיתכסה מעיניו.

or until he is hidden from his eyes.

והנשיא שמחל על כבודו

And the Nasi who forgave his honor,

כבודו מחול.

his honor is forgiven.

כשהנשיא נכנס

When the Nasi enters the Beis Medrash,

כל העם עומדים

all the people stand,

ואינן יושבין עד שיאמר להם שבו.

and they do not sit until he says to them, "sit."

כשאב בית דין נכנס

When the Av Beis Din enters,

עושין לו שתי שורות

they make for him two rows of people,

ועומדין מכאן ומכאן

and they stand from here and from here on either side,

עד שנכנס וישוב במקומו

until he enters and sits in his place,

ושאר העם יושבין במקומן:

and the rest of the people sit in their places.

הלכה ז

Halacha 7: Showing Honor to a Sage Upon Entering the House of Study

חקם שנכנס

Regarding a sage who enters a study hall or a gathering,

כל שיגיע לו בארבע אמות עומד מלפניו

everyone whom he reaches within four cubits of distance stands before him out of respect.

אחד עומד ואחד יושב

As he walks by, one stands and one sits—meaning, as he moves along, those he has passed may sit down while those he approaches must stand—

עד שנכנס וישוב במקומו.

and this process continues until he enters and sits in his own designated place.

בני חכמים ותלמידי חכמים

The sons of sages and the disciples of sages,

בזמן שהרבים צריכין להם

at a time that the public needs them to teach or to clarify a halachic matter,

מקפצין על ראשי העם ונכנסים למקומם.

may leap over the heads of the people who are sitting on the floor and enter to their place, and we do not worry about them appearing haughty.

ואין שבח לתלמידי חכמים שיכנסו לאחרונה.

And it is not praiseworthy for disciples of sages that they should enter last, as this forces the congregation to stand up for them and disrupts the learning.

יצא לצורך חזור למקומו.

If a disciple went out for a personal need, he may return to his place even if it requires stepping over others.

בני חכמים בזמן שיש בהן דעת לשמע

The sons of sages who sit before their father, at a time that there is in them understanding to listen and comprehend the Torah being taught,

הופכים פניהם כלפי אביהם.

turn their faces toward their father to show him respect and to learn from him.

אין בהם דעת לשמוע

But if there is not in them understanding to listen and follow the shiur,

הופכים פניהם כלפי העם:

they turn their faces toward the people, so they do not appear to be ignoring their father's teaching.

הלכה ח

Halacha 8 · Limiting the Standing for a Constant Teacher to Avoid Exceeding the Honor of Heaven

תלמיד שהוא יושב לפני רבו תמיד

A student who is sitting before his teacher constantly, learning from him all day,

אינו רשאי לעמוד מפניו

is not permitted to stand before him every single time the teacher enters or exits,

אלא שחרית וערבית בלבד

except morning and evening only,

שלא יהא כבודו מרבה מכבוד שמים:

so that his honor should not be greater than the honor of Heaven, as a person only accepts the yoke of Hashem's sovereignty twice a day when reciting the Shema.

הלכה ט

Halacha 9 · The Obligation to Stand and Show Respect for an Extremely Elderly Person and an Elderly Gentile

מי שהוא זקן מפלג בזקנה

One who is an elder exceedingly advanced in age,

אף על פי שאינו חכם

even though he is not a sage,

עומדים לפניו.

we stand before him.

ואפלו החכם שהוא ילד

And even the sage who is young

עומד בפני הזקן המפּלג בזקנה.

stands before the elder exceedingly advanced in age.

ואינו חייב לעמד מלא קומתו

But he is not obligated to stand his full height,

אֶלָּא כְּדֵי לְהַדְרֹו.

rather only enough to honor him.

ואפלו זקן כותי

And even an elder non-Jew,

מְהַדְרִין אוֹתוֹ בְּדִבְרִים

we honor him with words

וְנוֹתְנִין לוֹ יָד לְסִמְכוֹ

and we give to him a hand to support him,

שְׁנַיִמָּר "מִפְּנֵי שִׁיבָה תָּקוּם"

as it is said, "Before a white-haired person you shall rise,"

כָּל שִׁיבָה בְּמִשְׁמָע:

which teaches that any white-haired person is implied.

הלכה י

Halacha 10 · Exemption of Torah Sages from Taxes and Communal Labor and Their Priority in Commerce and Court

תלמידי חכמים אינם יוצאים בעצמן

Disciples of Sages are not to go out themselves

לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם כָּל הָקָהָל בְּבִנְיָן וּבְחִפּוּרָהּ שֶׁל מְדִינָה וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָהֶן

to perform with all the community in building and digging of the city and the like of them,

כְּדֵי שֶׁלֹּא יִתְבּוֹז בְּפָנֵי עַמִּי הָאָרֶץ.

in order that they not be disgraced in the presence of the common people.

ואין גובין מהן לבנין החומה ותיקון השערים

And they do not collect from them for the building of the wall and the repair of the gates

ושכר השומרים וכיוצא בהן ולא לתשורת המלך.

and the wages of the watchmen and the like of them, and not for the gift of the king.

ואין מחייבים אותן לתת המס

And they do not obligate them to give the tax,

בין מס שהוא קצוב על בני העיר

whether a tax which is fixed upon the residents of the city

בין מס שהוא קצוב על כל איש ואיש

whether a tax which is fixed upon every man and man,

שנאמר הושע ח י "גם כי יתנו בגוים עתה אקבצם ויחילו מעט ממשא מלך ושרים".

as it is said in Hoshea 8:10, "Even though they give among the nations now I will gather them and they shall begin a little from the burden of king and officers."

וכן אם הייתה סחורה לתלמיד חכם

And likewise, if there was merchandise to a disciple of a Sage,

מניחים אותו למכור תחלה

they allow him to sell first,

ואין מניחים אחד מבני השוק למכור עד שימכר הוא.

and they do not allow anyone from the people of the market to sell until that sells he.

וכן אם היה לו דין

And likewise, if there was to him a lawsuit

והיה עומד בכלל בעלי דינים הרבה

and he was standing among many litigants,

מקדימין אותו ומושיבין אותו:

they bring forward him and they seat him to have his case heard first.

הלכה יא

Halacha 11 · The Severe Prohibition of Disgracing Torah Sages and Its Consequences

עון גדול הוא לבוזת את החכמים או לשנואתן.

It is a great sin to disgrace the Sages or to hate them.

לא חרבה ירושלים עד שבוזו בה תלמידי חכמים

Yerushalayim was not destroyed until they disgraced Torah scholars in it,

שנאמר דברי הימים ב לו טז "ויהיו מלעבים במלאכי האלהים ובוזים דבריו ומתעצתים בנבאיו".

as it is said in the pasuk, "And they were mocking the messengers of God, and despising His words, and scoffing at His prophets."

כלומר בוזים מלמידי דבריו.

Meaning to say, they were despising the teachers of His words.

וכן זה שאמרה תורה ויקרא כו טו "אם בחקתי תמאסו",

And likewise, this which the Torah said, "If you despise My statutes,"

מלמידי חקותי תמאסו.

means that you despise the teachers of My statutes.

וכל המבזה את החכמים אין לו חלק לעולם הבא

And anyone who disgraces the Sages has no portion in the World to Come,

והרי הוא בכלל במדבר טו לא "כי דבר ה' בזה":

and behold, he is included in the category of the pasuk, "For he has despised the word of Hashem."

הלכה יב

Halacha 12 · The Punishment for Disgracing a Torah Sage and the Laws of Ostracism for His Honor

אף על פי שהמבזה את החכם אין לו חלק לעולם הבא,

Even though one who disgraces a Torah sage has no portion in the World to Come because of the severity of his sin,

אם באו עדים שפזזו אפלו בדברים חייב נדוי,

if witnesses came and testified that he disgraced him, even merely with words, he is obligated to receive ostracism for his behavior,

ומנדין אותו בית דין ברבים

and the court places him under the ban in public,

וקונסין אותו ליטרא זהב בכל מקום ונותנין אותה לחכם.

and they fine him a litra of gold in every place, and they give it to the sage as compensation for his humiliation.

והמבזה את החכם בדברים אפלו לאחר מיתה

And one who disgraces the sage with words, even after the sage's death,

מְנַדִּין אוֹתוֹ בֵּית דִּין וְהֵם מְתִירִים אוֹתוֹ כְּשִׁיחֹזֵר בְּתַשׁוּבָה.

the court places him under the ban, and they release him from the ban when he returns in repentance.

אָבֵל אִם הָיָה הַחֶכֶם חַי אֵין מְתִירִין אוֹתוֹ

But if the sage was alive, they do not release him

עַד שְׂרָצָה זֶה שֶׁנִּדְּוָהוּ בְּשִׁבְלֵוֹ.

until he appeases this one whom they banned him for his sake.

וְכֵן הַחֶכֶם עֲצָמוֹ מְנַדֵּה לְכְבוֹדוֹ לְעַם הָאָרֶץ שֶׁהִפְקִיר בּוֹ

And so, the sage himself has the authority to place under the ban, for his own honor, an ignoramus who acted outrageously against him,

וְאֵין צָרִיךְ לֹא עֵדִים וְלֹא הִתְרָאָה.

and there is no need for either witnesses or a warning before doing so.

וְאֵין מְתִירִין לוֹ עַד שְׂרָצָה אֶת הַחֶכֶם.

And they do not release the ban for him until he appeases the sage.

וְאִם מֵת הַחֶכֶם בָּאֵין שְׁלֹשָׁה וּמְתִירִין לוֹ.

And if the sage died before releasing him, three people come and release it for him.

וְאִם רָצָה הַחֶכֶם לְמַחֵל לוֹ וְלֹא נִדְּוָהוּ הָרְשׁוּת בְּיָדוֹ:

And if the sage wished to forgive him and did not ban him, the permission is in his hand to do so, as a sage may forgo his own honor.

הַלְכָּה יג

Halacha 13 · The Laws of a Ban Issued by a Teacher, Student, Nasi, or City

הָרֵב שֶׁנִּדְּוָה לְכְבוֹדוֹ

The teacher who banned someone for his own honor,

כָּל תַּלְמִידָיו חַיְבִין לְנַהֵג נְדוּי בְּמִנְיָהּ.

all of his students are obligated to practice the laws of ban with the banned person.

אָבֵל תַּלְמִיד שֶׁנִּדְּוָה לְכְבוֹד עֲצָמוֹ

But in the case of a student who banned someone for the honor of himself,

אֵין הָרֵב חַיֵּב לְנַהֵג בּוֹ נְדוּי.

the teacher is not obligated to practice with him the laws of ban.

אָבֵל כָּל הָעָם חַיְבִין לְנַהֵג בּוֹ נְדוּי.

But all of the people other than the teacher are obligated to practice with him the laws of ban.

וְכֵן מְנַדָּה לְנִשְׂיָא מְנַדָּה לְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

And so too, one banned to a Nasi is banned to all of Yisrael.

מְנַדָּה לְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵינוֹ מְנַדָּה לְנִשְׂיָא.

However, one banned to all of Yisrael is not banned to the Nasi.

מְנַדָּה לְעִירוֹ מְנַדָּה לְעִיר אַחֶרֶת.

One banned to his own city is banned to another city.

מְנַדָּה לְעִיר אַחֶרֶת אֵינוֹ מְנַדָּה לְעִירוֹ:

But one banned to another city is not banned to his own city.

הַלָּכָה יָד

Halacha 14 · The Twenty-Four Transgressions for Which a Person is Placed Under a Ban of Ostracism

בְּמָה דְּבָרִים אֲמֹרִים

In what circumstances are these words said? Only regarding

בְּמִי שֶׁנִּדְּוָהוּ עַל שִׁבְעָה תְּלִמְיָדֵי חֲכָמִים.

one whom they banned for the fact that he disgraced disciples of sages.

אָבֵל מִי שֶׁנִּדְּוָהוּ עַל שְׂאָר דְּבָרִים שֶׁחַיִּבִּים עֲלֵיהֶם נְדוּי

But as for one whom they banned for other matters that are liable upon them banishment,

אֲפֹלוּ נִדְּוָהוּ קָטָן שְׁבִיִּשְׂרָאֵל

even if banned him the smallest person in Israel,

חַיִּב הַנִּשְׂיָא וְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל לְנַהֵג בּוֹ נְדוּי

is obligated the Nasi and all Israel to behave toward him with banishment,

עַד שֶׁיִּחְזֹר בְּתַשׁוּבָה מִדְּבַר שֶׁנִּדְּוָהוּ בְּשִׁבְלֹו וַיִּתֵּירוּ לוֹ.

until he returns in repentance from the matter that they banned him for its sake, and they release him.

עַל עֶשְׂרִים וָאַרְבָּעָה דְּבָרִים מְנַדִּין אֶת הָאָדָם

For twenty and four matters they ban a person,

בֵּין אִישׁ בֵּין אִשָּׁה.

whether a man or a woman.

ואלו הן:

And these they are:

א המבזה את החכם ואפלו לאחר מותו.

1. One who disgraces the sage, and even after his death.

ב המבזה שליח בית דין.

2. One who disgraces a messenger of the house of law.

ג הקורא לחברו עבד.

3. One who calls his fellow a slave.

ד מי ששלחו לו בית דין וקבעו לו זמן ולא בא.

4. One whom they sent to him from the house of law, and they set for him a time, and not he came.

ה המזלזל בדבר אחד מדברי סופרים ואין צריה לומר בדברי תורה.

5. One who treats with disrespect one of the words of Sages, and there is no need to say regarding the words of Torah.

ו מי שלא קבל עליו את הדין מנדין אותו עד שיתן.

6. One who did not accept upon himself the judgment, they ban him until he gives what he owes.

ז מי שיש ברשותו דבר המזיק כגון כלב רע או סלם רעוע מנדין אותו עד שיסיר הזקו.

7. One who has in his domain a thing that damages, such as a dog that is bad, or a ladder that is rickety, they ban him until he removes his damage.

ח המוכר קרקע שלו לעובד כוכבים מנדין אותו עד שיקבל עליו כל אנס שיבוא מן העובד כוכבים לישראל חברו בעל המצר.

8. One who sells land of his to a worshiper of stars, they ban him until he accepts upon himself all accidental damage that will come from the worshiper of stars to Israel his fellow, the owner of the boundary.

ט המעיד על ישראל בערפאות של עובדי כוכבים והוציא ממנו בעדותו ממון שלא כדין ישראל, מנדין אותו עד שישלם.

9. One who testifies against an Israelite in courts of worshipers of stars, and extracted from him by his testimony money that is not according to the law of Israel, they ban him until he pays.

י טבח כהן שאינו מפריש המתנות ונותנן לכהן אחר מנדין אותו עד שיתן.

10. A butcher who is a Kohen who does not separate the gifts and gives them to a Kohen another, they ban him until he gives them.

יא המחלל יום טוב שני של גלויות אף על פי שהוא מנהג.

11. One who desecrates the day good second of exiles, even though that it is only a custom.

יב העושה מלאכה בערב הפסח אחר חצות.

12. One who does melacha on the eve of Pesach after midday.

יג המזכיר שם שמים לבטלה או לשבועה בדברי הבאי.

13. One who mentions the Name of Heaven in vain, or for an oath in words of nonsense.

יד המביא את הרבים לידי חלול השם.

14. One who brings the many to a situation of desecration of the Name.

טו המביא את הרבים לידי אכילת קדשים בחוץ.

15. One who brings the many to the eating of sacrificial foods outside the Beis HaMikdash.

טז המחשב שנים וקובע חדשים בחוצה לארץ.

16. One who calculates years and establishes months outside of the Land of Israel.

יז המכשיל את העור.

17. One who causes to stumble the blind by placing a spiritual or physical obstacle before them.

יח המעכב הרבים מלעשות מצוה.

18. One who prevents the many from performing a mitzvah.

יט טבח שיצאה טרפה מתחת ידו.

19. A butcher from whom went out non-kosher meat from under his hand.

כ טבח שלא בדק ספינו לפני חכם.

20. A butcher who did not inspect his knife before a sage.

כא המקשה עצמו לדעת.

21. One who hardens himself intentionally to bring about a wasteful emission.

כב מי שגרש את אשתו ועשה בינו ובינה שותפות או משא ומתן המביאין להן להזקק זה לזה
פשיבואו לבית דין מנדין אותם.

22. One who divorced his wife and made between him and between her a partnership or business dealings that bring them to interact, this one with this one; when they come to the house of law, they ban them.

כג חכם ששמועתו רעה.

23. A sage whose reputation is bad.

כד המנדה מי שאינו חיב גדוי:

24. One who bans whoever is not liable to banishment.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The halachos in this chapter outline the practical application of honoring Torah scholars, establishing that one must stand when a sage approaches within four cubits, though this does not apply in places like a bathhouse or toilet. Craftsmen are exempt from standing while working so they do not suffer financial loss, but one is strictly forbidden to look away to avoid seeing a sage and escaping the obligation to stand. Finally, the Rambam teaches that a sage should actively avoid troubling the public to stand for him by taking side routes, that riding is treated the same as walking regarding these laws, and that when three travel together, the master must walk in the center with the greater student on his right.

למעשה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

The Torah's laws of standing for a talmid chacham contain a profound secret about the inner life of a Jew. The Gemara asks: what if you see a sage coming from a distance, and you quickly close your eyes or look at your phone so you can pretend you didn't see him, thereby avoiding the effort of standing up? No one else on the street knows you saw him. But the Torah warns: "And you shall fear your God." Chazal teach that for any mitzvah that is "masur l'lev", dependent entirely on the secret thoughts of the heart, the Torah must remind us of yiras Shamayim.

This is the ultimate test of our avodah. It is easy to look like a yarei Shamayim on the outside, where everyone is watching. But the real measure of a Yid is what happens in those quiet, hidden moments that are "masur l'lev," where only you and Hashem know the truth. When we choose to look away from a spiritual obligation just because we can get away with it, we are forgetting that Hashem's presence fills the entire world and He sees our innermost thoughts.

Today, make a conscious effort to pass the "masur l'lev" test. When a quiet opportunity arises to do a mitzvah, show respect, or avoid a small transgression when absolutely nobody else is watching, do it purely for the honor of Hashem.