

Toldot Shimshon

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Chapter IV – Mishnah 8

רבי יוסי אומר, כל המכבד את התורה, גופו מכובד על הבריות. וכל המחולל על התורה, גופו מחולל על הבריות.

Rabbi Yossi said: “Whoever honors the Torah, his body is honored above human beings. Whoever dishonors the Torah, his body is dishonored above human beings.”

שְׁתֵּי דְבָרִים דִּבֶּר הַתַּנָּא, וְלְכַאוּרָה אֶחָד שְׁמַעְנֵנוּ, וְתַרְתִּי לָמָּה לִי. וְעוֹד, מָה רְצוֹנוֹ לֹאמֵר "גּוּפוֹ מְכֻבָּד" וְ"גּוּפוֹ מְחֻלָּל", הֲגַיָּה לוֹ לֹאמֵר "הֲגַיָּה מְכֻבָּד" וְ"הֲגַיָּה מְחֻלָּל". וְעוֹד, מָהוּ "עַל הַבְּרִיּוֹת", וְהֲגַיָּה לוֹ לֹאמֵר "מִן הַבְּרִיּוֹת".

The Tanna¹ of our Mishnah said two things, first regarding one who honors the Torah and secondly one who dishonors the Torah. **Apparently, we heard one teaching,² and why do I need both?** I.e., if we learn the first point regarding one who honors the Torah, wouldn't we grasp the second point regarding the opposite case, even if it were not taught explicitly?

Also, what does he mean to say by “his body is honored” and “his body is dishonored”? He should have said, “he will be honored” and “he will be dishonored.” Also, what is this “above human beings”? He should have said “by human beings.”

אֲמַנָּם אֵימָר בְּיוֹרָה דְּעַה סִימָן רמ"ג, אֲסוּר לְהַשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בְּמִי שְׁשׁוֹנָה הַלְכוֹת. וְעוֹד אֵימָר שֶׁם בְּסִימָן רמ"ד, שֶׁהַחֲכָמִים אָף שֶׁהוּא מוֹפְלֵג בְּחֻקָּהּ, רָשָׁאי לְעִמּוּד מִפְּנֵי מִי שֶׁהוּא בְּעַל מַעֲשִׂים. עכ"ל. וְכַתְּבוּ הַט"ז וְהַש"ך, שֶׁהַטוֹר וְהַר"ן וְהַב"ח כְּתוּבוֹ, שֶׁחַיִּיב לְעִמּוּד בְּפְנֵי בְּעַל מַעֲשִׂים, וְכֵן בְּדִין, שֶׁהָרִי כְּמָה פְּעָמִים מְצִינּוֹ שֶׁחֲמוּר יוֹתֵר בְּעַל מַעֲשִׂים מִבְּעַל תּוֹרָה, כְּדֹאמְרֵינוּ בְּקַמָּא, גְּדוֹל תְּלִמוּד, שֶׁהַתְּלִמוּד מְבִיא לִידֵי מַעֲשֵׂה.

Indeed, it's brought in the Rema's gloss to the Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah, siman 243, se'if 6, “It's forbidden to be served by one who learns halachot.”³ It is also brought there, in siman 244, se'if 12, that “The wise man, even one distinguished in wisdom, has permission to stand before one who is a man of deeds.” The Taz⁴ and the Shach⁵ wrote, that the Tur⁶ and

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¹ A rabbinic sage of the Mishnah.

² Cf. Pl. 62:12, “One thing G-d has spoken; two things have I heard.”

³ An earlier source is the Talmud, which cites a teaching derived from elsewhere in Pirkei Avot. Megillah 28b: “We learned [in a Mishnah] there [Pirkei Avot 1:13]: And one who makes use of the crown [of Torah learning] will perish [from the world]. Reish Lakish taught: This is [referring to] one who [allows himself to be] served by one who studies *halachot*, [which is] the crown of the Torah.”

⁴ Rabbi David ha-Levi Segal (c. 1586–1667), author of *Turei Zahav* (“Ta’z”), commentary on the Shulchan Aruch.

⁵ Rabbi Shabtai ben Meir HaCohen (1621–62), European posek (decisor) and commentator on the Talmud, called “the Shach” after his work, *Siftei Cohen* (שפתיהוה) (Krakow 1646) a famous commentary on the Yoreh De'ah section of the Shulchan Aruch.

⁶ Rabbi Jacob ben Asher (c. 1269–c. 1343), author of the *Arba'ah Turim* (“the Tur”).

the Ran⁷ and the Bach⁸ wrote, that it is obligatory to stand before a man of deeds. This is also found in the law, for a few times we find that a man of deeds is greater than a Torah scholar, as it says in tractate Bava Kamma, “Study is great, as study leads to action.”⁹

וְהָכִי קָאָמַר הַתַּנָּא, "כָּל הַמְּכַבֵּד אֶת הַתּוֹרָה", דְּהֵינּוּ שְׂהוּא בְּעַל מַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים, אִף שְׁלֵא יְהִיָּה חָכֵם, "גּוֹפּוֹ מְכּוּבָד עַל הַבְּרִיּוֹת", שֶׁהַבְּרִיּוֹת לֹא יִרְצוּ לְהִשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בּוֹ, כְּמוֹ מִי שֶׁשׂוֹנֵה הַלְכוֹת, וְזֶהוּ "גּוֹפּוֹ מְכּוּבָד" דְּנִקְא. וְנִיחָא "עַל הַבְּרִיּוֹת", וְלֹא "מִן הַבְּרִיּוֹת", שֶׁיְהִיָּה נִרְאָה לָהֶם שְׂהוּא גְּדוֹל מֵהֶם, וְלֹא יִרְצוּ לְהִשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בּוֹ.

Thus, as the Tanna said, “everyone who honors the Torah,” which is one who is a man of good deeds, even if he is not wise, “his body is honored above human beings.” That is, the human beings don’t want to be served by him, as they wouldn’t want to be served by one who learns *halachot*, and this is the meaning specifically of “his body is honored.” I.e., unlike the Torah scholar, who is honored for his mind and his intellect, the man of deeds is honored for his physical efforts in serving the community, such as working with his hands, his feet, etc., in collecting money, or in repairing the synagogue and study hall, etc.

The phrase **“above human beings” is convenient, and not “by human beings,” for it appears to them that he is greater than them, i.e., he is on a higher level than them, and they don’t want to be served by him.**

וְסִיפָא דְקָאָמַר "וְכָל הַמְּחַלְלִי" וְכוּ', אֲשֶׁר מוֹעִינֵן חִידוּשָׁא, שְׂאִי אִם יְהִיָּה בְּעַל תּוֹרָה, לֹא יְהִיָּה "גּוֹפּוֹ מְכּוּבָד", אֲלֵא אֲדַרְבָּא, יְהִיָּה מְחוּלָל. וּפְרַשׁ רַשִׁ"י, חוּלִין, כְּלוּמַר, שֶׁיִּשְׁתַּמְשׁוּ בּוֹ בְּלִי שׁוּם אִיסוּר, כְּדִאֲמַרְיֵן בְּפֶרֶק ז' דִּיּוֹמָא כָּל תַּלְמִיד חָכֵם שְׂאִין תּוֹכּוּ בְּכָרוֹ, אִינּוּ תַלְמִיד חָכֵם, וְנִקְרָא תוֹעֵבָה. וְהָכִי נִמְי אֲמַרְיֵן בְּפֶרֶק קַמָּא דְתַעֲנִית, אִם תַּלְמִיד חָכֵם הֵגוֹן הוּא, כְּטַל. וְאִם לֹא, עֲרַפְהוּ כְּמַטֵּר.

Regarding **the end** of our Mishnah, **“whoever dishonors the Torah,” you hear a novelty** from this apparently redundant statement. **For even if one will** outwardly appear to **be a Torah scholar**, displaying Torah knowledge and expressing piety, if he dishonors the Torah, then **his body will not be honored. Rather, to the contrary, he will be dishonored. Rashi explained** “his body will not be honored” as meaning **it will be made profane, as if to say, that [the people] will be served by him without any concern for the usual prohibition** against being served by a Torah scholar.

As it says in the seventh chapter of tractate Yoma 72b, “Rava said: Any Torah scholar whose inside is not like his outside [i.e., whose outward expression of righteousness is insincere], is not [to be considered] a Torah scholar,” and is called “abhorrent.” So too, it is said in the first chapter of tractate Taanit (7a), “Rava said: If he is a worthy Torah scholar [the Torah flows through him] like the dew, but if [he is] not [worthy], it snaps his neck like the [powerful] rain.”

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⁷ Rabbi Nissim ben Reuven (the “Ran”) (1320–76), Spanish Talmudist.

⁸ Rabbi Yoel ben Samuel Sirkis (1561–1640), Polish *posek* (decisor).

⁹ Bava Kamma 17a. This also appears in Kiddushin 40b and Megillah 27a.