

# Toldot Shimshon

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## Chapter VI – Mishnah 4

הלמד מחברו פרק אחד או הלכה אחת או פסוק אחד או דיבור אחד או אפילו אות אחת, צריך לנהוג בו כבוד, שכן מצינו בדרך מלך ישראל, שלא למד מאחיתופל אלא שני דברים בלבד, וקראו רבו אלופו ומיודעו, שנאמר "ואתה אנוש כערכי אלופי ומיודעי". והלא דברים קל וחומר, ומה דוד מלך ישראל, שלא למד מאחיתופל אלא שני דברים בלבד קראו רבו אלופו ומיודעו, הלמד מחברו פרק אחד או הלכה אחת או פסוק אחד או דיבור אחד או אפילו אות אחת, על אחת כמה וכמה שצריך לנהוג בו כבוד. ואין פבד אלא תורה, שנאמר "כבוד חכמים ינחלו". "ותמימים ינחלו-טוב", ואין טוב אלא תורה, שנאמר "כי לקח טוב נתתי לכם תורת אל-מעזבו".

**One who learns from his fellow one chapter, or one *halacha*, or one verse, or one utterance, or even one letter, is obligated to treat him with honor; for so we find with David, king of Israel, who learned from Ahitophel no more than two things, yet called him his teacher, his guide and his beloved friend, as it is said, "But it was you, a man my equal, my guide and my beloved friend."<sup>1</sup> Aren't these words an *a fortiori* argument? If David, king of Israel who learned from Ahitophel no more than two things, nevertheless called him his teacher, his guide and his beloved friend; then in the case of one who learns from his fellow one chapter, or one halacha, or one verse, or one utterance, or even one letter, all the more so he is under obligation to treat him with honor.**

**And "honor" means nothing but Torah, as it is said, "It is honor that sages inherit."<sup>2</sup>**

**"And the perfect will inherit good,"<sup>3</sup> and "good" means nothing but Torah, as it is said, "For I give you good instruction; do not forsake my Torah."<sup>4</sup>**

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**שלשה** אלה נפלאו ממנו, וארבעה לא ידענו, שמדברי רש"י ומדרש שמואל ואבות עולם, נראה שהשני דברים שלמד ממנו, הם רמוזים בפסוק הסמוך לו "אשר יחדו נמתיק סוד" וכו'. וקשה, דהא בסוף סופה, נראה שלמד ממנו דשרי למכתב שם אחספא וכו'. ועוד, בי לקוט שמואל איתא בשם הירושלמי, דלמד ממנו שהארון נושאין אותו דנקא בכמה, ושם איתא נמי, הא דשרי למיכתב שם אחספא. ואם כן, הם ארבעה דברים שדוד למד ממנו.

**"These three things are beyond me, and four I do not know,"<sup>5</sup> that from the words of Rashi and *Midrash Shmuel*<sup>6</sup> and *Avot Olam*,<sup>7</sup> it appears that the two things that [David]**

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 55:14.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. 3:35.

<sup>3</sup> Prov. 28:10.

<sup>4</sup> Prov. 4:2.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Prov. 30:18–19: "Three things are beyond me; four I cannot fathom: How an eagle makes its way over the sky; how a snake makes its way over a rock; how a ship makes its way through the high seas; and the way of a man with a young woman."

<sup>6</sup> Samuel de Uçeda, a 16th century rabbi in Tzfat and Constantinople, *Midrash Shmuel* (Venice 1579).

<sup>7</sup> Rabbi Binyamin HaKohen ("Rabach"), *Avot Olam* (Venice, 1719).

learned from [Ahitophel] are hinted at in the adjoining verse: “Together we took sweet counsel; in the house of G-d we walked with the throng.”<sup>8</sup>

The first teaching, on “together we took sweet counsel,” is that one should not learn Torah alone. Rashi writes: When Ahitophel found David sitting alone and learning Torah, he said to him, “Why are you studying alone? And has it not already been stated (Jer. 50:36), ‘A sword is upon the fabricators [*badim*] and they will become foolish.’” [Berachot 63b explains that this verse can be interpreted homiletically to mean a curse upon Torah scholars who sit alone, *bad bevad*, and study Torah.]

The second teaching is that one should enter the study hall in a modest manner. Rashi writes: When Ahitophel found David entering his House of Study with an upright posture. He said to him, “And has it not already been stated (Lev. 19:30), ‘and fear My holy place,’ that a man should enter there with fear, so that the fear of Heaven be upon him. And so [too], it states, ‘in the house of G-d we walked with the throng [בְּרִגְשׁוֹ] [*be’ragesh*]’ [read not *ragesh*, a throng, but *regesh*, emotion], an expression of awe and fear.”

*Question 1: Were there really only two things that David learned from Ahitophel?*

**A difficulty is that at the end of tractate Sukkah, it appears that we learn that David learned a third thing from Ahitophel:**

David dug the drainpipes [in the foundation of the Temple, and the waters of] the depths rose and sought to inundate the world. . . . David said, “Is there anyone who knows if it is **permitted to write the [sacred] Name on an earthenware shard?** [If it is permitted,] we will [write it and] throw it into the depths, and they will subside. There was no one who said anything to him. David said: Anyone who knows [what] to say and does not say [anything] may he be strangled in his throat. Ahithophel raised an *a fortiori* argument on his own: And just as [in order] to make peace between a man and his wife [in the case of *sotah*, when the husband suspects his wife of having committed adultery], the Torah said: My Name that was written in sanctity will be erased on the water to establish peace for the whole world in its entirety,<sup>9</sup> all the more so [it is permitted]. **He said to David: It is permitted.**

- Sukkah 53a–b

**Furthermore, in Yalkut Shimoni on Samuel,<sup>10</sup> it is brought in the name of the Yerushalmi (Sanhedrin 10:2), that [David] learned from [Ahitophel] a fourth thing, that they carry the ark specifically with the shoulder<sup>11</sup> and not on a cart.<sup>12</sup> It is also brought there that it is permitted to write the sacred Name on an earthenware shard. If so, those are four things that David learned from [Ahitophel].**

<sup>8</sup> Ps. 55:15.

<sup>9</sup> It is typically forbidden to erase the Name of G-d, but Num. 5:11–31 describes the *sotah* procedure, that if a man suspects his wife of having secluded herself with a particular man after being warned not to do so, a priest would write curses including the Name of G-d, then dissolve the writing in water, and make her drink the water.

<sup>10</sup> The translator has not found the text in Yalkut Shimoni on Samuel.

<sup>11</sup> Num. 7:9.

<sup>12</sup> II Sam. 6:3–8.

ועוד קשה, דבפרק חלק אמר רבי יוחנן, בתחלה קראו דוד לאחיתופל רבו, ולבסוף חבירו, רבו דכתיב "ואתה אנוש כערכי" וכו'. ולבסוף חבירו, דכתיב "אשר יחדו נמתיק סוד". וזה הפך המפרשים הנ"ל, שהם אדרבה, הביאו ראיה מזה הפסוק "אשר יחדו" וכו', לשני דברים שאומר המנא.

**Another difficulty, is that in the 11th chapter of tractate Sanhedrin, entitled “All Israel have a part in the World-to-Come”:**

**Rabbi Yochanan said: Initially, David called Ahithophel his teacher, and eventually, he called him his colleague, and ultimately, he called him his friend. Initially, “his teacher,” as it is written: “But it was you, a man my equal, my guide and my beloved friend” [and a teacher is called “a guide”]. And eventually, he called him his colleague, as it is stated: “Together we took sweet counsel; in the house of G-d we walked with the throng” [i.e., “together” indicates that they were equals]. And ultimately, he called him his friend, as it is stated: “Even my ally, in whom I trusted, who did eat of my bread, has lifted his heel against me.”<sup>13</sup>**

- Sanhedrin 106b–107a

**This is the opposite of the commentators above, for they to the contrary brought evidence from this verse, “together we took sweet counsel; in the house of G-d we walked with the throng” of two things of which the Tanna spoke, viz, not learning Torah alone, and in humbling oneself upon entering a House of Study.**

וצריך לומר, כמו שכתב מהרש"א בחדושי אגדות שלו, דמדרשים חלוקים הם וכו', ועיי"ש. ואין הכי נמי, דלכולי עלמא הם שני דברים, ותו לא, אלא דמדרש אחד סובר, שהם השני דברים הרמוזים בפסוק "אשר יחדו" דסמיה ליה. והמדרש אחר סבר, דפסוק "אשר יחדו" בא לרמז, שלבסוף קראו חבירו, והשני דברים הם, הא דשרי למכתב שם, ובכתף ישאו.

**It needs to be said, as an answer to Question 1, and as the Maharsha wrote in his *Chiddushei Agadot*,<sup>14</sup> that these are different Midrashim. It is indeed so, that for everyone there are two things that David learned from Ahithophel, and nothing else. Rather, that one Midrash is of the opinion, that there are two things hinted at by the verse, “together we took sweet counsel,” that is adjacent to [the verse], “But it was you, a man my equal, my guide and my beloved friend,” with those two things being not learning Torah alone, and in humbling oneself upon entering a House of Study.**

**The other Midrash was of the opinion that the verse, “together we took sweet counsel” came to hint that at the end [David] called him his friend, and the two things are, that it is permitted to write the [sacred] Name on an earthenware shard, and on the shoulder they will carry [the ark].**

<sup>13</sup> Ps. 41:10.

<sup>14</sup> Rabbi Shmuel Eliezer Eidels (“the Maharsha”) (1555–1631), *Chiddushei Agadot* on Sanhedrin 106b.

ובנה יתורץ מה שמקשים, למה עשה התנא כל אלו החלוקות, שהנה לו לומר בקיצור, הלמד מחבירו אפילו אות אחת צריך לנהיג וכו'. שמתחלה רצה להשמיענו דעת פרק אהד צריך לנהוג בו כבוד, אבל אינו כרבו. ואם למדהו יותר מפרק אהד, הנה נחשב רבו ממש. ועיין באבות עולם ובמדרש שמואל.

**By this understanding that David learned two things from Ahitophel, we will explain what they question, why the Tanna made all these distinctions, viz, one halacha, one verse, one utterance, one letter. [The fifth distinction, “one chapter,” would contain many teachings, so it isn’t relevant to the example of David learning two things.] That is, he could have said simply, “One who learns from his fellow even one letter needs to treat him with honor. For initially, he wants to inform us that up to one verse, he needs to treat him with honor, but he is not his teacher. But if he will teach him more than one verse, he will be considered literally his teacher. See in *Avot Olam* and in *Midrash Shmuel*.**

ואחר כך בא התנא כמסופק, מה הם השני דברים שלמד דוד מאחיתופל, וכנגדם עשה ארבע חלוקות. ומתחלה אמר "הלכה אחת", דהיינו הא דשרי למכתב שם אחספא, שלמדו מכת קל נחמר, והיינו הלכה.

**Afterward, the Tanna came with uncertainty as to what are the two things that David learned from Ahitophel, and corresponding to them he made four distinctions. Initially he said “one *halacha*,” thinking of the teaching from Sukkah 53a-b that it is permitted to write the [sacred] Name on an earthenware shard, which they learned from the strength of an *a fortiori* argument, and this is a *halacha*.**

"או פסוק אהד". כמו שכתבו רש"י והמפרשים, שפעם אחת מצא אחיתופל לדוד שהנה לומד, ואמר לו, נהלא כבר נאמר "חרב אל-הבדים ונאלו". שבה לא לימדו אלא פסוק אהד.

**“Or one verse.” As Rashi and the commentators wrote, that one time, Ahitophel found David learning Torah, and said to him, “Has it not already been stated, ‘A sword is upon the fabricators and they will become foolish.’ ” By this, he only taught him one verse.**

"או דיבור אהד". שפעם אחת מצאו שנקנס לבית המדרש בקומה וקופה, אמר לו, שצריך ליכנס שם במורא, כדכתב "ומקדשי תיראו". ועיקר קרא ד"ומקדשי תיראו" לאו להכי אתא, ומשום הכי קראו דיבור אהד.

**“Or one utterance.” That one time, [Ahitophel] found [David] entering a study hall standing upright, and he said to him, that he needs to enter in fear, as it is written, “and fear My holy place.” The principal of the reading, “and fear My holy place,” didn’t come for this purpose, as respecting the Temple is obvious, and because of this, he said to him one utterance.<sup>15</sup>**

<sup>15</sup> The term in the Mishnah, דיבור [*dibur*], is often translated as “word,” but can also mean “utterance.” Here the Toldot Shimshon appears to be focusing on two words, ומקדשי תיראו, “and fear My holy place,” and therefore the translator translates *dibur* as “utterance” instead of “word.”

"או אפילו אות אחת", דהיינו מאי דאיתא גלקוט, דאמר לו "בכתף ישאו", ופירש הקלי יקר בשמואל-ב ו' על פסוק "וַיִּרְכְּבוּ אֶת־אֲרוֹן" כו', דמפשטיה דקרא הנה משמע ליה לדוד, שאין שום איסור להביא הארון על העגלה, אלא מפני שבגיר-קתה הקמירו על עצמם להביאו בכתף, לפיכך לא נתן להם עגלות. נאחיתו פל רמז לו הדיוק שהיה לו לומר בכתף "נושאין". ומדקאמר "ישאו", משמע שהוא לשון צווי לעתיד, שהם מחוייבים שישאו בכתף, ולא בזולתו. עכ"ל. והוא דיוק של אות אחת לבדה.

**“Or even one letter,” that this is what the Yalkut Shimoni brought, that he said to [David], “on the shoulder they were to carry [the ark].” The *Kli Yakar*<sup>16</sup> explained on II Samuel 6:3, on the verse, “They loaded the Ark of G-d onto a new cart and conveyed it from the house of Abinadab,” that from the plain meaning of Scripture, it connoted to David that there was no prohibition against bringing the Ark on a cart. Rather, because the Kohathites were strict upon themselves to bring it on the shoulder, therefore [Moses] did not give them carts. Thus, as it is written: “Moses took the carts and the oxen and gave them to the Levites. Two carts and four oxen he gave to the Gershonites, as required for their service, and four carts and eight oxen he gave to the Merarites, as required for their service—under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest. But to the Kohathites he did not give any; since theirs was the service of the [most] sacred objects, they were to carry it by shoulder.”<sup>17</sup>**

However, **Ahitophel hinted to [David] the precision, for [Scripture] should have said “they are carrying,” in the present tense. But from the fact that it said “they were to carry,” in the future tense, the meaning is that this is a command for the future, that they are obligated that they will carry the Ark on the shoulder, and not in some other way.** In other words, it was not just that the Kohathites were being strict upon themselves, but it is actually the *halacha* that the Ark should be carried by shoulder, and that is why David erred in using a cart. This ends the *Kli Yakar*'s explanation. **This is the precision of one letter alone**, i.e., of Scripture using the future tense rather than the present tense.<sup>18</sup>

ומעתה נבא לביאור המשנה. הלמד מחבירו, מקושים למה לא אמר, המלמד לחבירו. ויובן, במה שכתב ההגהה בשלחן ערוך יורה דעה סימן רמ"ב סעיף ל"ד, ושמ בש"ה ס"ק ס"ו, בשם ספר החסידים, בענין רבו המובהק, שאבידתו קודמת לישל אביו, שאם המלמד אינו רוצה ללמד בחנם, ויהודי אחד גותן שכר המלמד, אז אבידת הנותן המעות - קודמת. ואם אביו גותן השכר, אבידת אביו קודמת לאבידת רבו, ועיי"ש.

### Now we come to an understanding of the Mishnah.

*Question 2: Why didn't the Mishnah say “one who teaches his fellow”?*

Regarding the term, **“one who learned from his fellow,” people ask why [the Tanna] didn't say, “one who teaches his fellow.” This will be understood, in what the Rema's gloss**

<sup>16</sup> This does not refer to the *Kli Yakar* authored by Shlomo Ephraim ben Aaron Luntschitz of Prague, but to the work on the early prophets authored by the Syrian rabbi, Shmuel Laniado (d. 1605).

<sup>17</sup> Num. 7:6–9.

<sup>18</sup> For the particular words being discussed נושאין [*no'seen*] [“carrying”] vs ישאו [*yi'sa'u*] [“will carry”], the difference is more than one letter. But the point is that one letter can sometimes mean the difference between past, present, or future tense.

writes in the Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah, siman 242, se'if 34, and there in the Shach,<sup>19</sup> siman katan, se'if 6, in the name of the *Sefer haChasidim*. It says there, regarding his primary teacher, that tending to his lost object takes priority to that of his father. However, if the teacher does not want to teach for free, and one Jew pays the wages of the teacher, tending to the lost object of the one who gave the funds has priority. If his father gives the wages, the requirement to tend to the lost object of his father takes priority to the requirement to tend to the lost object of his teacher, and see there.<sup>20</sup>

והכי נמי, אף על גב דהתנא מיירי ברב שאינו מובהק, מכל מקום, לא קתני "המלמד", אלא "הלמד מחבירו", שלפעמים אף על פי שהוא מלמדו, אינו חייב כל כך בכבודו, ושהואיל שאינו מלמד לו אלא בשכר, כל הכבוד שיהיה למי שנותן המעות. והמ"ם היא מ"ם הסיבה, כמו "מתמס אחיה יעקב", כלומר, מי שלמד "מתמת" חבירו שלמדו בחנם, ובה נכלל מי שנתן מעות למלמד, הואיל שהוא למד מתמתו אחד מאלה התמשה דברים, צריך לנהוג בו כבוד.

**Thus too, even though the Tanna is speaking about one who is not a primary teacher, in any case, he doesn't say "the one who teaches," rather "one who learns from his fellow." This is because sometimes even though he teaches him, [the student] is not that obligated to honor him, as perhaps he is only teaching him for a salary, and all the honor instead belongs to the one who has given the funds.**

Actually, in understanding the term מחבירו [*me'chavero*], we should consider that **the letter "mem" is a "reclining mem,"** not the usual prefix meaning "from," but "on account of," as in the verse, **"On account of the violence to your brother, Jacob."**<sup>21</sup> That is as if to say, instead of translating as "one who learns from his fellow," we should translate as **"one who learns on account of his fellow," who taught him for free.**

Furthermore, if he learns from a teacher who is being paid, then **by this interpretation of me'chavero as "on account of his fellow," we include one who gave funds to teach him, since because of him, he learned one of the five things,** i.e., one chapter, or one *halacha*, or one verse, or one utterance, or even one letter. Thus, **he needs to treat him with honor.**

ולא תנא בלשון קצרה "צריך לכבוד", משום דדוקא פשאינו במקום אביו, חייב לכבודו. הא במקום אביו, אינו חייב לכבודו אלא ברבו מובהק, וכן אבידתו קודמת ברבו מובהק. וזהו "צריך לנהוג בו כבוד", "בו" דוקא פשהו יחידי, ולא פשהו עם אביו. "בו" דוקא, ולא במקומו. ומביא ראיה מדוד, שלא למד מאחיתופל אלא שני דברים בלבד, וקראו רבו, דשמע מינה, שאף מי שאינו רבו מובהק, נקרא רבו.

*Question 3: Why didn't the Mishnah say "he needs to honor him"?*

The Tanna wrote, "he needs to treat him with honor," **and he didn't teach in a shorter language "he needs to honor him," because specifically when he is away from home,**<sup>22</sup> such as at a yeshiva, **he is required to honor [his teacher]. If he is living with his father, he is only**

<sup>19</sup> Shabtai ben Meir haCohen (1621–62) ("the Shach"), noted for his *Siftei Cohen* commentary on the Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah.

<sup>20</sup> See also Mishnah Bava Metzia 2:11; Bava Metzia 33a.

<sup>21</sup> Obad. 1:10.

<sup>22</sup> Literally, "not in his father's place."

**obligated to honor his primary teacher, and similarly, when living at home, i.e., with his father paying for the primary teacher, the requirement to tend to the lost object of [his father] takes priority to that of his primary teacher.**

But it's a different matter is the student is away from home, even if his studies are being funded by his father or someone else. **This is the meaning of “he needs to treat him with honor,”** the student must treat **“him,”** his teacher, with honor **specifically when [the student] is alone,** i.e., away from home. He does **not** need to do so **when he is with his father,** except for a primary teacher. When away at yeshiva, the student must honor **“him,”** his teacher, **specifically, and not “his [father’s] money.”**

**[The Tanna] brings evidence from David, who only learned two things from Ahitophel, and yet he called him his teacher, that we learn from this, that even one who is not a primary teacher, is called his teacher.**

ומה שהקשו ו"ל, דמדוד אין ללמוד אלא דוקא אם למד ממנו שני דברים. אינה קושיא קלל, שהרי מצינו בגמרא פקק ב' דמצינא, שלא חילקו קלל אלא בין רבו מובהק, לרבו שאינו מובהק. ואם באת לסלק בין דבר אחד לשני דברים, הנה לנו גם כן לסלק בין שנים לשלושה לארבעה לתמישה, וכדומה. וכשם שברבו מובהק אין חילוק בין אם הוא תלמיד שלמד ממנו הרבה, או אם הוא תלמיד שלמד ממנו מעט, אלא כל שרוב חכמתו ממנו, אם מקרא, מקרא, אם משנה, משנה וכו'. כן אין לסלק ברבו שאינו מובהק, בין אם למד הרבה דברים, בין אם למד אחד או שנים.

*Question 4: How does David learning two things teach us about learning one thing?*

**What the commentators of blessed memory questioned,<sup>23</sup> is that from David we only learn specifically how a person should act if he learned from [a person] two things. This is not difficult at all, for we learned in the Gemara, chapter 2 of Bava Metzia 33a, that we only make a distinction between a primary teacher and a teacher who is not primary. If you come to distinguish between one thing and two things, then we should similarly distinguish between two and three and four and five, and the like. Just as with a primary teacher, we don't distinguish between whether he is a student who learned much from him, or if he is a student who only learned a little from him, as long as the majority of his wisdom comes from him. I.e., if we are talking about Scripture, if he learned a majority of his knowledge of Scripture from this teacher. If we are talking about Mishnah, if he learned a majority of his knowledge of Mishnah from this teacher. Etc. Thus, we shouldn't distinguish between a teacher who is not primary, whether [the student] learned many things, or whether he only learned one or two things.**

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<sup>23</sup> See, for example: *Avot Olam*; Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel (c.1512–1609) (“Maharal of Prague”), *Derech Chaim* (Prague c. 1578–88); and Immanuel Hai ben Avraham Ricchi (1688—1743), *Hon Ashir* (c. 1710–40).

ומה דוד מלך ישראל שלא למד וכו', קראו וכו'. ענגן הקל נחמר זה, יובן במאי דאמרין בפרק י"ב דכתובות, "ואת-יראי ה' יכבד", זה יהושפט מלך יהודה, כשהיה רואה תלמיד חכם, היה עומד מפסאו ומחבקו ומנשקו, וקורא לו, רבי רבי, מורי מורי. ומקשה התם ומתרגז, הא בצנעא, הא בפרהסיא. ופרש רש"י, בצנעא היה מכבד כל אחד ואחד, ובפרהסיא מטיל עליהם אימה כדי להודיע נשיאותו. עכ"ל. ואף שהיה דוד - מלך ישראל, לא נמנע לקרותו רבו אלופו ומיודעו בפרהסיא, שהרי דוד כתב ספרו על ידי עשרה זקנים, דשמע מינה, שהוא חיוב מצד הדין לנהוג כבוד אף במי שלמד ממנו מעט, ולא נקרא מוחל על כבודו. מפל שפן, הדיוט הלמד מן ההדיוט. ומי שרצה לחלוק בין דבר אחד לשני דברים, צריך נמי לחלוק בין מלך להדיוט.

**But what about David, king of Israel, who learned no more than two things from Ahitophel, yet called him his teacher, his guide and his beloved friend. The matter of this *a fortiori* argument will be understood by what is said in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of tractate Ketubot 103b: “ ‘He will honor those who fear the L-rd’<sup>24</sup>—This is Jehoshaphat, king of Judea. When he would see a Torah scholar he would rise from his throne and hug him and kiss him and call to him: My teacher, my teacher, my master, my master.”**

**They question there and solve: [Shouldn't] this [display of affection be only] in private, and that [aloofness be] in public? Rashi explains: In private he would honor each and every one, but in public he casts fear upon them to inform of his sovereignty.**

**Even though he was David, king of Israel, he didn't abstain to call him his teacher, his guide and his beloved friend, for David had written his book of Psalms by means of ten elders of previous generations, assembling a collection that included compositions of others along with his own.<sup>25</sup> We hear from this that it is an obligation by the force of law to act with honor even toward one from whom one learned a little, and a person should not be considered forgiven for failing to honor a teacher because of [the student's] own honor. This is all the more so true in the case of a layman learned from the layman. Whoever wanted to distinguish between one thing and two things, also needed to distinguish between a king and a layman.** In other words, David honored Ahitophel, but David learned two things from him. How do we learn from David that we should honor someone who taught us even one thing? The difference is that David was king and learned from a layman, whereas in our case, it would be a layman learning from a layman. Maybe if David had only learned one thing from Ahitophel, his status as king would have allowed him to ignore Ahitophel, but even that isn't certain, and in any case, we are not kings.

עוד הרגישו המפרשים, שהתנא הרכיב שני פסוקים זה עם זה, "כבוד חכמים ינחלו", "ותמימים ינחלו-טוב". ועוד יש לדקדק, מהו אין כבוד אלא תורה, אין טוב אלא תורה, תרתי למה לי. איברא, שראינו במקצת גססאות "אין כבוד אלא לחכמים", ששינוי לשון משנתם מחמת קושיא זו. והוא דוחק.

*Question 5: How do we understand the structure of the final section of the Mishnah?*

**The commentators<sup>26</sup> were upset that the Tanna combined the two verses “It is honor that sages inherit”<sup>27</sup> and “The perfect will inherit good”<sup>28</sup> with each other.**

<sup>24</sup> Ps. 15:4.

<sup>25</sup> Bava Batra 14b.

<sup>26</sup> *Avot Olam*; also Moses Almosnino (c. 1515-c. 1580), Salonikan preacher, *Pirkei Moshe* (Salonika 1563).

<sup>27</sup> Prov. 3:35.

<sup>28</sup> Prov. 28:10.



I.e., the structure of the last part of this Mishnah is:

- a) A first teaching, “And ‘honor’ means nothing but Torah”;
- b) A first quotation from Scripture, “It is honor that sages inherit”;
- c) A second quotation from Scripture, “And the perfect will inherit good”;
- d) A second teaching, “And ‘good’ means nothing but Torah”; and
- e) A third quotation from Scripture, “For I give you good instruction; do not forsake my Torah.”

Some commentators were critical because they believed that the first and second quotations from Scripture were both intended as support for the first teaching. However, the *Toldot Shimshon* understands the second quotation as introducing the second teaching.

**We also can check, what is the meaning of “ ‘honor’ means nothing but Torah,” and “ ‘good’ means nothing but Torah”—why do I need both statements?**

**In truth, we see a few versions of Pirkei Avot with the language, “there is no honor except to the wise,” that they changed the language of their versions of the Mishnah because of this question.** For example, in *Derech Chaim* by Judah Loew ben Bezalel, the Maharal of Prague, he keeps the language of the Pirkei Avot that we have, but in his commentary he says that the statement “ ‘honor’ means nothing but Torah” is irrelevant to this Mishnah of Pirkei Avot, and it should instead say “there is no honor except to the wise.” There are other commentaries that actually change the text of the Mishnah of Pirkei Avot in this way.

The *Pirkei Moshe* changes the text of the Mishnah of the Pirkei Avot in a different way. He omits the Scriptural verses “It is honor that sages inherit,” “And the perfect will inherit good,”<sup>29</sup> and he omits the teaching “and ‘good’ means nothing but Torah.” Instead, he shows this Mishnah as ending: “And “honor” means nothing but Torah, as it is said, ‘For I give you good instruction; do not forsake my Torah.’ ”

**This is a forced interpretation.** I.e., the *Toldot Shimshon* considers such changes to be inappropriate, as he will make sense of the text that we have.

ויובן, במה שכתב הנרע ברך חלק א' בפ'רשת בהעלותה, שיש בשימוש תלמידי חכמים שתי תועליות. האחת, שמתוך שהוא רגיל אצל רבו, לומד ממנו כל תורתו. והשנייה, שבשכר שעומד ומשגרת את רבו ומכבדו, זוכה לרוח הקדש. ועל זה אמרו, גדולה שימושה יותר מלימודה וכו', ועיי"ש. ואם כן, מי שעושה כבוד ושירות לחכמים, יהיה לו נחלה, דהיינו רוח הקדש שיפתחו לו שערי בינה וחקמה, כמו שאמרו ו"ל על פסוק "וממתנה נחליאל", נחלו אל. וזהו "ואין כבוד אלא תורה", שיננים התורה שיאירו לו מן השמים, דהיינו פנימיות התורה שהוא חלק הסוד, דכתיב "ובהיכלו פלו אמר כבוד", וכמו שהארכנו לעיל בפ'ק ג' על "סביבין ישראל שניתן להם פלי חמדה".

**It will be understood, that the *Zera Berech*<sup>30</sup> wrote in part I, on parashat Beha'alotecha, that there are two advantages to the service of a Torah scholar. The first, is that by being regularly around his teacher, he learns all of his Torah from him. The second,**

<sup>29</sup> Prov. 28:10.

<sup>30</sup> Rabbi Berachia Berech ben R' Yitzchak Izaak Shapiro, *Zera Berech* (Krakow 1646), commentary on the Torah.

is that in the merit of standing and serving his teacher and honoring him, he merits Divine inspiration. On this, they said: Service of Torah is greater than its study.<sup>31</sup>

If so, whoever honors and serves the sages, he will have an inheritance, which is Divine inspiration that will open for him the gates of understanding and wisdom, as [the rabbis] of blessed memory said on the verse, “and from Matana to Nachaliel, and from Nachaliel to Bamoth”<sup>32</sup>:

[Rava] said: If a person makes himself [humble] like this wilderness, [which is open to all and] upon which everyone treads, the Torah will be given to him as a gift [matana]. And once it is given to him as a gift, it his inheritance from G-d [nechalo El], as it is stated: “And from Matana to Nachaliel.” And once G-d has made it His inheritance, he rises to greatness, as it is stated: “And from Nachaliel to Bamoth” [which means heights].

- Eruvin 54a

This is the meaning of the Tanna’s statement “and ‘honor’ means nothing but Torah, as it is said, ‘It is honor that sages inherit.’” I.e., [the student who honors and serves a Torah scholar] will earn Torah, that will be enlightened to him from Heaven, which is the internality of the Torah, which is part of the esoteric secret, as it is written, “While in His temple, all say ‘Honor!’”<sup>33</sup> As we detailed at length above in chapter 3, Mishnah 16, about “beloved are Israel in that a precious vessel was given to them.”

ועוד, שאם יכבד אותו ויהנה שריו אצלו לעולם, יקנה וילמוד ממנו דבר חדש, ויהנה תמים בתורה, ואז יגמל הטוב דהיגו התורה, שיהנה יודע להשיב דבר אמת לאמתו בפשט התורה, בהלכות ודינים הצריכים למעשה, כמו שכתבנו לעיל בפירוק ג' משנה הנ"ל, על פסוק "כי לקח טוב נתתי לכם" וכו', ועיי"ש.

Furthermore, if he respects him and stays with him forever, he will obtain and learn from him something new, and he will be perfect in the Torah, and then he will inherit the good, that is, the Torah. That is why the Tanna said “And the perfect will inherit good,” as it is said, “‘good’ means nothing but Torah.” I.e., [the student who attaches himself to a Torah scholar] will know to answer actual true words in the plain meaning of the Torah, in laws necessary in practice, as we wrote above in chapter 3, the Mishnah mentioned above, i.e., Mishnah 16, on the verse, “For I give you good instruction; do not forsake my teaching,”<sup>34</sup> and see there.

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<sup>31</sup> Berachot 7a.

<sup>32</sup> Num. 21:19.

<sup>33</sup> Ps. 29:9.

<sup>34</sup> Prov. 4:2.

והשני פסוקים שהרפיב, מורים על שני ענינים אלו. שהפסוק "כבוד חכמים ינחלו", מסיים "וכסילים מרים קלון", דהיינו החכמים יש להם השגה גדולה והארה עליונה בפנימיות התורה, שה' עמם, והם מודבקים בקדושה. אבל הכסילים הם הפך זה, דכתיב "וכסילים ישנאו דעת", ומי שאין לו דעת, אסור לרחם עליו, לפי שהיא רחוק מהקדושה, כמו שכתבו המקובלים. ועוד הוסיף להוכיח על ענין השני, מהפסוק של "ותמימים ינחלו טוב", דרישיה דקרא "משגה ישירים" וכו', שמי שלא שמש תלמידי חכמים ולא למד כל צרכו, הוא מורה הוראות שלא פדיו ומכשיל את הרבים. אבל מי שישב תדיר אצל תלמידי חכמים, קונה לנפשו השלימות, והוא תמים ושלם בתלמודו. וזהו "ותמימים ינחלו טוב", "ואין טוב" אלא תורה", שנאמר "כי לקח טוב" וכו', וכמו שהארבנו לעיל, כנזכר לעיל. ועיין במשנה הבאה.

**The two verses he combined teach about these two matters.**

**That is, regarding the first verse, “It is honor that sages inherit,” the verse concludes “but fools get disgrace as their portion.”**

**That is: the wise have a great achievement and a supreme illumination of the innermost parts of the Torah, for G-d is with them, and they adhere to its holiness. They honor and serve a Torah scholar, even attaching themselves to the scholar.**

**But the fools are the opposite of this, as it is written, “You fools hate knowledge,”<sup>35</sup> and regarding one who has no knowledge, it is forbidden to have mercy upon him,<sup>36</sup> because he is distant from the holiness, as the Kabbalists wrote.**

**Also, [the Tanna] went on to prove the second issue, regarding fools, from the second verse of “the innocent will inherit good,” for the beginning of that verse is “He who misleads the upright into an evil course will fall into his own pit.”**

**That is, one who does not serve Torah scholars and who doesn't learn all of his needs to learn regarding the plain meaning of the Torah, in laws necessary in practice, he teaches instruction that is not in accordance with the law, and misleads many people.**

**But one who sits frequently with Torah scholars, acquires perfection for his soul, and this is perfection in his learning. This is the meaning of “the innocent will inherit good,” “and ‘good’ means nothing but Torah,” that it is said, “For I give you good instruction; do not forsake my teaching,” and as we explained at length above, as has been mentioned above. See in the coming Mishnah.**

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<sup>35</sup> Prov. 1:22.

<sup>36</sup> Berachot 33a.