

Toldot Shimshon

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Chapter VI – Mishnah 5

כִּף הִיא דְרַכָּה שֶׁל תּוֹרָה, פֶּת בְּמִלַּח תֹּאכַל, וּמִיָּמִים בְּמִשׁוֹרָה תִּשְׁתֶּה, וְעַל הָאָרֶץ תִּישֶׁן, וְחֲסִי צֶעַר תִּחְיֶה, וּבַתּוֹרָה אֶתָּה עֹמֵל, אִם אֶתָּה עוֹשֶׂה כֵן, אֲשֶׁרִיד וְטוֹב לָךְ. אֲשֶׁרִיד בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְטוֹב לָךְ לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא. אֵל תִּבְקַשׁ גְּדוּלָה לְעִצְמָךְ. וְאַל תִּחְמוֹד כְּבוֹד יוֹתֵר מִלִּמּוּדָךְ (ב"א: עֲשֵׂה). וְאַל תִּתְאַוֶּה לְשִׁלְחָנָם שֶׁל מְלָכִים, שֶׁשִּׁלְחָנְךָ גְּדוֹל מִשִּׁלְחָנָם, וְכִתְרְךָ גְּדוֹל מִכִּתְרָם, וְנֶאֱמַן הוּא בְּעַל מְלֶאכֶתְךָ שִׁישְׁלֵם לָךְ שְׂכָר פְּעוּלָתְךָ.

Such is the way [of a life] of Torah: bread with salt, you shall eat; and rationed water, you shall drink; and on the ground, you shall sleep; and your life will be one of privation, and in the Torah, you shall labor. If you do this, “You will be happy and it will be good for you”¹: “You will be happy” in this world, “and it will be good for you” in the World-to-Come.

Do not seek greatness for yourself. Do not covet honor; more than you learn (you shall do).² Do not yearn for the table of kings, for your table is greater than their table, and your crown is greater than their crown, and faithful is your Employer to pay you the reward of your labor.

עֵינָי הַתָּנָא לְנֹכַח גְּבִיטוֹ, וְעַפְעַפְיוֹ יִישִׁירוּ נִגְדוֹ עַל הָאוּרִים וְעַל הַתּוּמִים, לְהָאִיר וּלְהַשְׁלִים אֶת דְּבָרָיו, וְלָתֵת טַעַם לְשִׁבְחָה, לָמָּה לֹא פִירַשׁ הַקְרָא שֶׁהַתְּמִימִים וְהַתְּמִימִים יִנְחֲלוּ הַטוֹב וְהַכְּבוֹד מִמֶּשׁ, וְלָמָּה הוֹצֵרָה לְהוֹצִיא הַדְּבָר מִפְּשׁוּטוֹ לְפָרֵשׁ "אִין כְּבוֹד אֱלָא תּוֹרָה", "אִין טוֹב אֱלָא תּוֹרָה", דְּהֵינּוּ הַפְּשׁוּט וְהַסּוּד, כְּנֻפֵּר לְעִיל.

Let the eyes of the Tanna look forward, and his gaze be straight ahead³ to the Urim and Tumim,⁴ to illuminate and to complete his words, and to give reason for praise, why the Scripture didn't explain that the sages and the pure will literally inherit the good and the honor. That is, the previous Mishnah quoted Prov. 3:35 that “It is honor that sages inherit,” and quotes Prov. 28:10 that “And the pure shall inherit good.” The Mishnah explained that this wasn't meant literally, but rather that both “honor” and “good” mean nothing but Torah.”⁵ **Why was it necessary to draw out the matter from its simple meaning, to explain “‘honor’ means nothing but Torah,” “‘good’ means nothing but Torah”? That is the simple meaning, on the one hand, literally “honor” and “good,” and the esoteric secret, on the other hand, “Torah,” as mentioned above.**

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¹ Ps. 128:2.

² The first edition notes that some texts omit the word “you shall do,” while some have it. The analysis will consider the implication of this, whether the text intends one single thought: “Do not covet more honor than you learn,” or two thoughts: “Do not covet honor,” and “more than you learn, you shall do.”

³ Cf. Prov. 4:25: “Let your eyes look forward, your gaze be straight ahead.”

⁴ Ex. 28:30.

⁵ Pirkei Avot, chapter VI, Mishnah 4.

לפי שהדָּרָךְ שֶׁל הַתּוֹרָה אֵינוֹ טוֹב וְכַבּוּד מִמֶּשׁ, אֲלֵא אֲדַרְבָּא לְהַפְדָּ. כִּךָּ הִיא דְרָכָה שֶׁל תּוֹרָה וְכוּ'. דְאָמְרִינּוּ בְּיַלְקוּט עַל פְּסוּק "וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל וְלִשְׁתּוֹ" וְכוּ', נִסְתַּמֵּל מִשֶּׁה בְּלוּחֹת וְרָאָה שֶׁפִּרַח הַפֶּתַח מִעֲלֵיהֶן, וְהִשְׁלִיכּוּ מִיָּדוֹ וְכוּ', בְּאוֹתָהּ שָׁעָה נִגְזְרָה עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל, שֶׁיִּלְמְדוּ אוֹתָהּ מִתּוֹךְ הַצָּעֵר וּמִתּוֹךְ הַשְּׁעֵבּוּד וּמִתּוֹךְ הַטִּירוּף וְהַטְּלָטוּל וְהַדּוּחַק וְכוּ'. וּבִשְׁבִיל אוֹתוֹ צָעַר שָׁהֵם מִצְטַעְרִים, עֲתִיד הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְשַׁלֵּם לָהֶם שְׂכָרָם כְּפוּל וּמְכוּפָל לַיָּמֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ. עכ"ל. וְכֵן אָמְרוּ ו"ל, יָאֵה עֲנִיּוֹתָא לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, כְּנֻדָּא סוּמְקֵי וְכוּ'.

The answer is that **the way of the Torah is not literally “good” and “honor,” but rather the opposite.** As this Mishnah teaches, **“Such is the way [of a life] of Torah: bread with salt, you shall eat; and rationed water, you shall drink; and on the ground, you shall sleep; and your life will be one of privation.”** **As it is said in the Yalkut Shimoni on the verse** describing the creation of the Golden Calf, **“Early next day, the people offered up burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; they sat down to eat and drink, and then rose to dance,”⁶ Moses looked at the Tablets and saw that the writing flew off, and he cast them from his hand etc. At that moment, a decree was passed on Israel, that they should learn [Torah] with the privation, and with the slavery, and with the destruction, and the exile, and the oppression, etc. Because of this privation that they are suffering, in the future, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will double and redouble their wages until the days of the Messiah.⁷ Likewise, [the rabbis] of blessed memory said, “Poverty is good for Israel, like a red bridle for a white horse.”⁸** I.e., Just as a red bridle accentuates the white color of the horse, so the challenge of poverty draws out the purity of the Jewish people.

"פֶּת בְּמֶלַח תֹּאכַל." הַגֵּה מֵלֶת פֶּת, פִּירְשׁוּ הַמְּפָרְשִׁים, חֲתִיכַת לֶחֶם, מִלְשׁוֹן "פְּתוֹת אֹתָהּ פֶּתִים". וּבִפְסָחִים אָמְרִינּוּ, מֵה דְרָכּוֹ שֶׁל עֲנִי בְּפְרוּסָה וְכוּ'. וְקִיָּמָא לוֹ, דְּפֶת נְקִי, אֵין צָרִיךְ מֶלַח, מִכְּלָל דְּפֶת שְׂאִינוּ נְקִי, צָרִיךְ מֶלַח. פְּלוּמַר, אֵין לָךְ לְהַקְפִּיד אִם לֹא יִהְיֶה לָךְ כְּפֶר שְׁלֵם, אֲלֵא אֲפִילוֹ אִם הַפְּרָנְסָה שְׁלָךְ לֹא תִהְיֶה אֲלֵא חֲתִיכוֹת חֲתִיכוֹת, וְאֲפִילוֹ אִם אוֹתָהּ חֲתִיכָה שֶׁל לֶחֶם הִיא מִפֶּת שְׂאִינוּ נְקִי, גַּם מִזֶּה אֵל תִּצְטַעַר, שְׂזוֹ הִיא דְרָכָה שֶׁל תּוֹרָה.

“Bread with salt, you shall eat.” Here is the word *pat* [פֶּת], which the commentators interpreted as “a piece of bread,”⁹ from the language, “break it into pieces,”¹⁰ and in tractate Pesachim it is written, “Just as [it is] the manner of a poor person to [eat] a piece [of bread, not having a whole loaf].”¹¹ We also hold that “clean bread” [*pat naki*], i.e., bread made from fine white flour, does not need salt, indicating that bread that is not “clean” does need salt.¹² That is, you don’t have to be strict if you don’t have a whole loaf for a meal,¹³ but even if your income is intermittent so that for weekday meals you can’t afford a whole loaf, and even if the piece of bread is not “clean,” i.e., it is not made of fine white flour, and thus will need salt, don’t be sorry, for this is the path of Torah.

⁶ Ex. 32:6.

⁷ Yalkut Shimoni, Ki Tisa, remez 391:14.

⁸ Chagigah 9b.

⁹ David Kimchi (1160–1235) (“the RaDaK”), on Gen. 18:5.

¹⁰ Lev. 2:5–6: “If your offering is a meal offering on a griddle, it shall be of choice flour with oil mixed in, unleavened. Break it into bits and pour oil on it; it is a meal offering.”

¹¹ Pesachim 115b.

¹² See the gloss of the Rema on Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim, 475:1.

¹³ Other than Shabbos, when it is mandatory to have two whole loaves.

"ומים במשורה תשתה." כמו שהקדוש ברוך הוא גזר על יחזקאל שישתה המים במשורה, כלומר, בכלי קטן שהוא שותה מעט בכל פעם, ואינו יכול לריות צמאונו בפעם אחת כדרך העולם, כדי שישתה בצער.

“And rationed water, you shall drink.” This is as the Holy One, Blessed be He, decreed for Ezekiel, that he should drink the water sparingly.¹⁴ This is as if to say, he should drink from a small vessel from which he drinks a little at a time. In this way, he will not be able to quench his thirst at once as is the way of the world, so that he instead drinks in privation.

"ועל הארץ תישן." כדי שיתעכל המזון מהר, דאמרינו במדרש על פסוק "ותורתך בתוך מעי", עד שיתפלל אדם שיכנס דברי תורה במעיו, יתפלל שלא תכנס אכילה ושתיה מרובה בתוך מעיו. וכל זמן שימחר המזון להתעכל, יהיה לבו יותר מוכן ללמד התורה, דאמרינו בפרק ד' דגיטין, אמרה ליה ברתיה לריש לקיש, לא בעית מידי למזגא עליה. אמר לה, בתי, כרסי כרי. ופירשו המפרשים שדרךכם היה לשכב על בטנם, משום דהוא טוב לעיכול.

“And on the ground, you shall sleep.” In order for the food to be digested quickly, as it is said in the Midrash on the verse, “And your Torah is in my stomach”¹⁵: “until he prays that the words of the Torah will enter his stomach, he should pray that excessive eating and drinking does not enter his stomach.”¹⁶ As long as the food is digested quickly, his heart will be more prepared to learn Torah, as it is said in the 4th chapter of tractate Gittin, “The daughter of Reish Lakish said to him, ‘Don’t you want something to lie upon?’ He said to her, ‘My daughter, my belly is my pillow.’”¹⁷ The commentators explained, that their custom was to lie on their stomachs, because this was good for digestion.¹⁸

ואם תאמר, בשלמא "פת במלח תאכל", בא מחמת הדוסק והעוני. אבל מים במשורה תשתה, למה לו לצער עצמו בכך, מאחר שהמים הם הפקר לכל, ונמצאים אפילו לעניים. וכן "על הארץ תישן", אפילו עני שבעניים יש לו מעט תבן, ומה לו לצער הנה. לכן הוסיף, "ונסי צער תתנה", כך הוא האמת והדרך של התורה, שמלבד הדוסק והעוני, יהיה גם הצער.

Perhaps you'll say, "Granted, 'bread with salt, you shall eat,' that comes because of the stress and the poverty. But 'rationed water, you shall drink,' why should he make himself suffer this way, since water is free for everyone, and exists even among poor people?" Thus too, we can question the instruction that "on the ground, you shall sleep," for even the poor person in his poverty has a little straw, so why does he need this privation? Therefore, [the Tanna] adds, "your life will be one of privation." The privation is not simply a byproduct, but this is the truth and the path of the Torah, that beside the stress and the poverty, there will also be privation.

¹⁴ Ezek. 12:18: "O mortal, eat your bread in trembling and drink your water in fear and anxiety."

¹⁵ Ps. 40:9.

¹⁶ Tosafot on Ketubot 104a: "The Midrash says that before a person prays that Torah enter his body, he should pray that delicacies not enter his body."

¹⁷ Gittin 47a.

¹⁸ Tosafot on Gittin 47a.

ועוד, בסוף ברכות אמר ריש לקיש, אין דברי תורה מתקיימין אלא במי ששמית עצמו עליהם, "הסבת ושמע ישראל", פתתו עצמכם על דברי תורה. אמרי דבי רבי ינאי, "פי מיז חלב יוציא חמאה", במי אתה מוציא חמאה של תורה, במי שמקיא חלב שניק משדי אמו עליה, ועי"ש. ומשום הכי אמר, "ובתורה אתה עמל", שאף לאחר שנתקיים בה הדרך של התורה, "פת במלח" וכו', "ונסי צער", שבנה בנדאי אתה מקיא החלב שניקת משדי אמה, ונקרא שאתה ממית עצמך על דברי תורה. עם כל זה, לא יצאת ידי חובתך. שעדיין צריך לטרום ולעמול בתורה עצמה, כדכתיב "הסבת", פתתו עצמכם על דברי תורה.

Further, at the end of tractate Berachot:

Reish Lakish said, "the words of Torah will endure only for one who kills himself over them, as it says, 'Silence! Hear, O Israel,'¹⁹ break yourselves over the words of Torah. . . ."²⁰

The school of Rabbi Yannai said: " 'As milk under pressure produces butter.'²¹ In whom do you find the butter of Torah? In one who spits out the milk that he nursed from his mother's breasts over it [i.e., one who struggles with all his might to study Torah].

- Berachot 63b

Because of this, [the Tanna] said, "and in the Torah, you shall labor," that even after the path of Torah is created within you, "bread with salt, you shall eat . . . and your life will be one of privation." For in this way, certainly you will spit out the milk that you nursed from the breasts of your mother, and it will be considered that you are killing yourself over the words of Torah. Despite all this, you have not fulfilled your obligation. You still must toil and strive in the Torah itself, as it is written, " 'Silence,' break yourselves over the words of Torah."

ומדשני תנא בלישניה, ולא אמר "ותעמל בתורה", כמו שאמר "ועל הארץ תישן" וכו'. יש לומר, שבא לרמוז ענין אחר, שמי שנתקיים בו הדרך של התורה "פת במלח" וכו', מובטח לו שייסייעוהו מן השמים להיות עמלו דוקא בתורה, כדתנן כל המקבל עליו עול תורה, מעבירין ממנו עול מלכות ועול דרך ארץ. וזהו ובתורה אתה עמל, שהיא כמו הבטחה טובה. וכל זה הוא לפי הדרך של התורה, והגזר דין שיצא מלפניו בעת שבירת הלוחות, ואין לה להקפיד ולהצטער, שהרי כנגד זה יהיה שכרך כפול לעתיד לבא.

The Tanna taught this wording, "and in the Torah, you shall labor," and he didn't say, "and you shall labor in the Torah." This is the same parallelism as he said, "and on the ground, you shall sleep," etc. By placing the noun before the verb, and specifically by mentioning "Torah" before "labor," it can be said that he came to hint another matter, that one in whom is fulfilled the path of Torah, "bread with salt, you shall eat," etc.. He is guaranteed assistance from Heaven that his labor will specifically be in Torah. This is as it is taught, "whoever accepts upon himself the yolk of Torah, they remove from him the yoke of government and the yoke

¹⁹ Deut. 27:9.

²⁰ The Gemara suggests the word "silence" [הסבת] [hasket] is related to "break yourselves" [כתתו] [kat'etu].

²¹ Prov. 30:33.

of worldly concerns.”²² This is the meaning of “and in the Torah, you shall labor,” that it is like a good promise. All this is according to the path of the Torah, and regarding the decree that went out from Him at the time of the breaking of the Tablets, as noted above, that Israel would learn Torah out of sorrow, slavery, destruction, exile, etc.,²³ you don’t have to be careful and to regret, because against this, there will be a double reward for the age to come.

אָבֵל לְפִי הָאָמֶת, אֵינֹו בְּהִכָּרֵם שְׂפָל הַתְּלַמִּידֵי חֻכְמִים יִסְבְּלוּ זֶה הַצַּעַר וְהַדוּחַק, שֶׁהָרִי מְצִינֹו כַּמָּה תְּלַמִּידֵי חֻכְמִים שֶׁהָיוּ עֹשִׂיִים הַרְבֵּה. וְכַנְגֵד אֵלֹו הוֹסִיף, וְאִם אַתָּה עוֹשֶׂה כֵּן מְרַצֹּנָה וּמְדַעֲתָהּ, אֲשֶׁרִיד וְטוֹב לָךְ.

But according to the truth, it is not necessarily that all the Torah scholars will suffer this privation and pressure, because we find some scholars who were very rich. Also, against this [the Tanna] added, “If you do this, of your own free will and mind, ‘You will be happy and it will be good for you.’ ”

וְיֵשׁ לְדַקְדָּק, שֶׁהֵנָּה לִיה לְמִימַר, וְאִם אַתָּה עוֹשֶׂה כֵּן "אֲשֶׁרִיד בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְטוֹב לָךְ לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא", וְלָמָּה תִּנִּי "אֲשֶׁרִיד וְטוֹב לָךְ", וְהַדָּר מְפָרֵשׁ "אֲשֶׁרִיד בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה" וְכוּ', וְנִרְאֶה שֶׁפֶת יָתֵר. אֵלָּא לְפִי שְׂמִי שֶׁהוּא עֹשִׂיר וּמְסַגֵּף עֲצָמוֹ כְּדֵי לְזַכּוֹת בְּכַתֵּר תּוֹרָה, אֵין לוֹ כָּל כֶּף צַעַר כְּמוֹ מִי שֶׁהוּא עֲנִי וְשְׂפָל מִחֻמַּת הַתּוֹלְדָה, אוֹ הַגִּזֵּר דִּין, שֶׁהָרִי אֵינֹו דוֹמָה מִי שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ פֶּת בְּסֵלוֹ, לְמִי שֶׁאֵין לוֹ. מִשּׁוֹם הֵכִי תִּנִּי סֵתֵם "אֲשֶׁרִיד וְטוֹב לָךְ", שֶׁאֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ אוֹשֶׁר וְשִׂמְחָה לֵב בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה, לְפִי שֶׁהוּא עֹשִׂיר וְיֵשׁ לוֹ פֶּת בְּסֵלוֹ, וְאֵינֹו סוֹבֵל כָּל כֶּף צַעַר, עִם כָּל זֶה, יִתְקַיֵּים בּוֹ אֲשֶׁרִיד בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְטוֹב לָךְ לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא, כְּמוֹ מִי שֶׁמוֹכֵרָה לְחַיִּית סִי צַעַר וְדוּחַק מִחֻמַּת הַגִּזֵּר דִּין שֶׁל שְׂבִירַת הַלּוּחֹת.

We need to check, that he should have simply said, “If you do so, ‘You will be happy in this world, and it will be good for you in the World-to-Come,’ ” and why did he first teach Ps. 128:2, “You will be happy and it will be good for you,” and then go back to explain, “ ‘you will be happy’ in this world, ‘and it will be good for you’ in the World-to-Come”? This appears to be extraneous language, to first give the shortened form from Scripture and then a longer explanation. Rather, it’s because one who is rich and sacrifices himself in order to merit the crown of Torah does not have as much privation as the one who is poor and lowly because of his genealogy, or because of the decree from the time of the breaking of the Tablets, for “There is no similarity between one who has bread in his basket and one who does not have it.”²⁴ Because of this, [the Tanna] initially simply taught “You will be happy and it will be good for you,” which is directed toward one who is poor and lowly, and then he added an explanation that would be directed toward one who is wealthy. That is, even though he already has wealth and happiness of heart in this world, because he is wealthy and he has bread in his basket, and he does not suffer so much privation, with all this, it will be fulfilled for him that “You will be happy in this world, and it will be good for you in the World-to-Come,” like one who is compelled to live a life of privation and pressure because of the decree of the breaking of the Tablets.

²² Pirkei Avot, chapter III, Mishnah 6.

²³ Yalkut Shimoni, Yehoshua, 24:17.

²⁴ Yoma 18b.

ועוד יש לומר, "אשר יהי טוב לך" הכל לעולם הבא, רוצה לומר, שלעולם הבא יהיה לו שכר כפול ומכופל, כמדריך ילקוט הגנזך לעיל. ועוד מן הדין הוא שיהיה כה, דלפום צערא, אגרא, ד"אשר יהי" שיהי לעולם הבא ששם הוא האושר האמיתי, כמו שפירש הר"י בפרק קמא דברכות על "גדול הנהנה מיגיעו" וכו' ועי"ש. ועוד, דאיתא במדריך, כל מי שנתאמר בו "אשרי", יש לו לעולם הבא. ואף "וטוב לך" מירי לעולם הבא, ששם הוא הטוב האמיתי, והיגיו שכתרו כפול.

It can also be said, "You will be happy and it will be good for you," everything is for the World-to-Come, meaning to say, that in the World-to-Come he will have a doubled and redoubled reward, as written in the Yalkut Shimoni mentioned above. Also, according to the law it should be thus, "According to the labor is the reward,"²⁵ that "You will be happy" is relevant to the World-to-Come, for there is the true wealth, as the Rif explained in the first chapter of tractate Berachot on the text, "One who benefits from his hard labor is greater than someone who fears G-d [to the extent that he sits idly and does not work]," and see there. Further, it is brought in the Midrash, anyone about whom it is said, "He will be happy," he will have the World-to-Come. Even "and it will be good for you" is speaking about the World-to-Come, for there is the true good, and this is the meaning of "his reward will be doubled."²⁶

ואחר כך רצה התנא לומר, שגם בעולם הזה יהיה לו אושר מעין העולם הבא, אף על פי שהוא חי חיי צער, כדאיתא במדריך תנחומא פרשת נח, "העם ההלכים בחושך ראו אור גדול", אלו בעלי תורה שבעל פה, שהקב"ה מאיר עיניהם באיסור והיתר בטמא וטהור וכו'. עכ"ל. וזהו "אשר יהי בעולם הזה", שכולם יצטרכו לך, והקב"ה יאיר עיניהם במאור תורתו. "וטוב לך לעולם הבא", שיתרבה שכרה במה שאמה מזכה את ה[רבי]ם.

Afterward, the Tanna wanted to say that even in this world he will have wealth of the World-to-Come, even though he lives a life of privation, as it is brought in the Midrash Tanchuma, parashat Noach, siman 3, "The people that walk in darkness have seen a brilliant light"²⁷: These people are the masters of the Oral Torah, that the Holy One, Blessed be He, has enlightened their eyes as to what is prohibited and permitted, pure and impure." This is the meaning of "You shall be happy in this world," that everyone will need you, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, will enlighten your eyes with the light of His Torah. "And it will be good for you in the World-to-Come," that your reward will be increased by how you benefit the multitude, through the Torah that you have acquired and that you share.

וסגם שכולם יצטרכו לך, ואמה בנדאי תהיה לנשיא, שתהיה יותר חכם מכלם, יש לך לקיים מה שצוה רבי לבנו, נהוג נשיאותה ברמים, ונרוק מרה בתלמידים, שגם זה מכבוד שמם, דכתיב ו"כל-משנאי אהבו מנת". אפלו הכי, אל תבקש הגדולה לעצמך ליהנות ממנה, אלא דוקא לכבוד שמם.

Since all of them will need you, and you will certainly be the president of the Sanhedrin, you will be wiser than all of them, you have to fulfill what Rabbi Yehudah haNasi commanded his elder son, "conduct your presidency with assertiveness; and cast fear upon [your]

²⁵ Pirkei Avot, chapter V, Mishnah 22.

²⁶ Tanna debei Eliyahu Zuta, chapter I.

²⁷ Isaiah 9:1.

students,”²⁸ **for this position is from the sake of Heaven.** This is as it is written, “**All who hate me love death,**”²⁹ which the Talmud interprets homiletically as “Those who cause Me to be hated love death,” that a Torah scholar is a representative of G-d, and if he acts in a bad manner, it causes others to disrespect or even hate G-d.³⁰ **Even so, don’t seek greatness for yourself to enjoy it, rather specifically for the sake of Heaven.**

ועוד, דבפרק קמא דסנהדרין אמרינו, רב פי הנה חזי אמבוהא דאמי בתריה, אמר "אם-ינעלה לשמים שיאו" וכו', "כגללו לנצח" וכו'. מר זוטרא חסידא, פי הו' מכתפי ליה בשבתא דרגלא, אמר הכי, "פי לא לעולם חסון" וכו'. ופרש רש"י, לפי שיהיו זקנים, ואינם יכולים לרוץ, ומטריחים את הצבור לעמוד מפניהם, משום הכי נושאים אותם על הכתף, והיו העבדים רצין מהר. עכ"ל.

Furthermore, in the first chapter of tractate Sanhedrin, it is said:

When Rav would see a convoy of scribes following him [in honor], he would say: “Though he grows as high as the sky, his head reaching the clouds, he perishes forever, like his dung; those who saw him will say, ‘Where is he?’”³¹

[Regarding] **Mar Zutra the Pious, when they would carry him [to his lectures] on their shoulders during Shabbat of the Festival, [he would] say this [to avoid becoming arrogant]: “For power is not forever; and does the crown endure for all generations?”**³²

- Sanhedrin 7b

Rashi explained, it’s because [the sages] were old, and they weren’t able to run, but they troubled the crowd to stand before them. Because of this, thus they were carried on their servants’ shoulders, and the servants were running quickly so as to minimize the time the students had to stand before them.

וזהו "ואל תחמוד", אפילו הכבוד שמגע לה מן הדין לפי שאמה נשיא, אל תחמוד אותו. אלא "יותר מלימודך עשה", יותר ממה שהוא רגילות שלך, דהיינו ללכת ברגליך, אדרבא, עשה שעבדך ישאו אותך מהר, כדי שיתמעט כבודך, כמו שהיה עושה מר זוטרא חסידא.

This is the meaning of this Mishnah, “and don’t covet” honor, not even the honor coming to you according to the law because you are the president of the Sanhedrin, “don’t covet it.” Rather, “more than you learn (you shall do),” more than what is customary for you, that is, to go by foot slowly. To the contrary, act that your servants will carry you quickly, in order that your honor will be reduced, as Mar Zutra Chasida did. I.e., instead of having your students stand while you slowly travel, they will only have to stand for a short time.

²⁸ Ketubot 103b.

²⁹ Prov. 8:36.

³⁰ Megillah 28a; Shabbat 114a; Eruvin 99a.

³¹ Job 20:6–7.

³² Prov. 27:24.

אי נמי, דאמרינן בפרק י"ב דכתובות, על ההיא דנהוג נשיאותה ברמים וכו', איני, והא כתיב, "ואת־יראי ה' יכבד", ואמר מר, זה יהושפט מלך יהודה, פשהיה רואה תלמיד חכם, היה עומד מפסאו ומחבקו ומנשקו, וקורא לו, רבי רבי, מורי מורי. לא קשיא, הא בצנעא, הא בפרהסיא.

Alternatively, as it is said in the 12th chapter of tractate Ketubot, on the same “conduct your presidency with assertiveness”:

Is that so? But isn't it written, “but who honors those who fear the L-rd.”³³ The Master said: This [is referring to] 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 master, my master, my teacher, my teacher.”

[The Gemara answers: This is] **not difficult. This [behavior should be] in private [when only the teacher and student are present, and] that [stern demeanor should be] in public [to reinforce the teacher's authority.]**

- Ketubot 103b

ואם כן, ההיא דנשיאותה ברמים לא מיירי אלא בפרהסיא, למי שרוצה להתנהג במדת חסידות. אבל למי שרוצה לעמוד על שורת הדין, יכול להטיל אימה אפילו בצנעא. ועל זה אמר, אף על פי ששורת הדין היא שתנהג נשיאותה ברמים, עם כל זה, בצנעא תעשה יותר מלימודה.

If so, this “conduct your presidency with assertiveness” is only speaking of in public, for the one who wishes to behave in a pious manner. But one who wants to stand in accordance with the letter of the law is able to impose fear even in private. About this, [the Tanna] of our Mishna said, even though the letter of the law is that you will conduct your presidency with assertiveness, nevertheless, in private, more than you learn, you shall do, i.e., be modest.

ויש מי שגורס, ואל תחמוד כבוד יותר מלימודה. ויובן, במה שקתב רש"י בפרשת אלה הדברים על פסוק "ראשים עליכם", שהנשיא נכנס אחרון, ויוצא ראשון. וקא משמע לן התנא, שאף על פי שהרשות בידו לעשות כן, והקהל מחוייבים לסבול דבר זה ממנו, אם הוא ימנע עצמו מזה, יהיה לו שבת, ונקרא מדת חסידות, כמו שקתב הט"ז ביורה דעה סימן רמ"ד ס"ק ח', יענין שם. והיינו ממש "ואל תחמד כבוד יותר מלימודה", שלא תפגס לבית המדרש אחרון, לאסר שנתמנית נשיא, אלא כמו שהיית רגיל קודם הנשיאות. ולימודה' לשון רגילות.

There are those who have a different reading for our Mishnah. Instead of, “and do not covet honor,” and “more than you learn (you shall do),” their version omits the word “do,” so that they combine the two separate concepts into one: “and do not covet more honor than your learning.” This will be understood by what Rashi writes in the parasha Eleh Devarim on the verse, “So I took your tribal leaders, wise and experienced men, and appointed them heads over you.”³⁴ Rashi writes that the president of the Sanhedrin enters last, and leaves first. The Tanna

³³ Ps. 15:4.

³⁴ Deut. 1:15.

is teaching us, that even though he has permission to act thus, and the community is obligated to suffer this for his sake, if he will prevent himself from this behavior, he will be praised, and this will be called pious behavior, as the Taz³⁵ writes in Yoreh De'ah, siman 244, se'if katan 8, as will be seen there. This is exactly the meaning of “and do not covet more honor than your learning,” that you should not enter the study hall last, after you have been appointed president of the Sanhedrin, rather enter as you were used to before the presidency. The term “your learning” is the language of regularity.

"ואל תתאנה לשלחנם של מלכים". דאמרינו בבבא קמא פרק ה' מאי טעמא בדברות הראשונות לא נאמר בהם "טוב", ובדברות האחרונות נאמר בהם "טוב". מפני שסופן להשתפר. וכי סופן להשתפר מאי הוי. חס ושלום פסקה טובה מישראל. שניראה מפאן שהקב"ה רוצה שתהיה טובה ומלכות בישראל, ואיך אמרינו הקא כד היא דרקה של תורה וכו'.

“Do not yearn for the table of kings, for your table is greater than their table.” As it is said in Bava Kamma, chapter 5:

Why is “good” not stated in the first [version of the Ten] Commandments,³⁶ [whereas] in the latter [version of the Ten] Commandments, it is stated “good”?³⁷ . . . Because [for the first Tablets,] their end was to be broken [after the sin of the Golden Calf].

[The Gemara asks:] **And [even] if their end was to be broken, what of it?**
Rav Ashi said: [If this term had been mentioned in the first Tablets, then] **goodness [would have,] G-d forbid, ceased from Israel.**

- Bava Kamma 54b

That is, it appears from here that the Holy One, Blessed be He, wanted there to be goodness and kingship in Israel. But then how does it say here in this Mishnah that “Such is the way [of a life] of Torah: bread with salt, you shall eat etc.”?

משום הכי הוסיף, "ואל תתאנה" וכו', אף על פי שהשלחן והמלכות יתנה בישראל, אל תתאנה שאילו הדברים יהיו לה, אלא לאחרים, דבכתי יתנה שלחנה גדול משלחנם. שכתב השפתי כהן שראשי תבות "שלחן" הוא "שולם לה חסיד נאמן", אי נמי, "שומר לה חסידה³⁸ נאמן". ואם פו, למי שהוא מלה, הקב"ה שולם לו מחסדו בעולם הזה. ומי שהוא עני, הקב"ה שומר לו כל חסדו. ומנימא לו, יפה שעה אחת של קורת רוח בעולם הבא, מכל חיי העולם הזה, ולכן יתנה שלחנה גדול משלחנם, שחסדו העליון יתנה שומר לה, והם כבר אכלו ממנו בעולם הזה.

Because of this, [the Tanna] adds, “Do not seek greatness for yourself.” Even though the table and kingship is in Israel, do not seek greatness that these things should be yours, but rather that they should belong to others, for this way, your table will be greater than their

³⁵ David ha-Levi Segal (c. 1586–1667), author of a commentary on the Shulchan Aruch entitled *Turei Zahav* (abbreviated “*Taz*”).

³⁶ Ex. 20:12: “Honor your father and your mother, that you may long endure on the land that the L-rd your G-d is assigning to you.”

³⁷ Deut. 5:16: “Honor your father and your mother, as the L-rd your G-d has commanded you, that you may long endure, and that it be good [יטב] for you, in the land that the L-rd your G-d is assigning to you.”

³⁸ The first edition reads חסיד [“kindness”], but has been corrected to חסדיך [“your kindness”] to match the language of the *Siftei Cohen*.

table. For the *Siftei Cohen* wrote for parashat Terumah that שלחן [shulchan] [table] is an acronym for “sending you faithful kindness,” alternatively, “guarding for you your faithful kindness.”³⁹

That is, parashat Terumah describes the *shulchan* of the Temple as being made of wood and overlaid with gold, and crowned with a golden trim.⁴⁰ The Talmud states that the crown around the *shulchan* is symbolic of royal wealth, which King David deserved and received.⁴¹ The Zohar states that the *shulchan* brought blessing of sustenance to the tables of the whole world.⁴²

If so, the significance of the Tanna using the word “table” in this Mishnah, is that **for one who is king, the Holy One, Blessed be He, sends him a portion from His own kindness in this world, and for one who is poor, the Holy One, Blessed be He, guards for him all of his kindness. We hold that “more precious is one hour of the tranquility of the World-to-Come, than all the life of this world.”**⁴³ Therefore, your table will be greater than their table, that is, His supernal kindness will be reserved for you in the World-to-Come, but they already ate from [His kindness] in this world.

”וכתרה גדול מכתרם”. שכתב בעל הטורים שם”אנכי” עד ”לרעה” של הדברות ראשונות, יש תר”ך אותיות כמנן ”כתר”. והואיל שדברות הראשונות דלא פתיב בהו ”טוב”, יש בהם אותיות מנן כתר. יש לנו להוכיח מכאן, שמי שאין לו טוב בעולם הזה, יתנה לו כתר לעולם הבא, שיתנה יותר גדול מכתר המלכות שיתנה להם בעולם הזה, שיהי בדברות אחרונות שכתוב בהם ”טוב”, אין בהם אותיות כמנן ”כתר” דוקא.

“And your crown is greater than their crown.” The author of the *Arba’ah Turim*⁴⁴ wrote that from the opening word אנכי [anochi] [“I”]⁴⁵ to the final word לרעה [le’rei’acha] [“of your neighbor”]⁴⁶ of the first Ten Commandments, there are 620 letters, corresponding to the count, i.e., the Gematria value, of the word כתר [keter] [“crown”]. Since in the first Ten Commandments, the word “good” it is not written, there are within it 620 letters with the count of *keter*.

We can prove from here, that one who does not have good in this world, will have a crown in the World-to-Come, that will be greater than the crown of kingship that they will have in this world, for in the latter Ten Commandments, in which “good” is written, they do not have letters with the count of *keter*.

³⁹ Rabbi Mordechai Ha’Cohen of Safed (1621–62), *Siftei Cohen on Torah* (Venice 1605).

⁴⁰ Ex. 25:23–28.

⁴¹ Yoma 72b: “[The crown] of the table [symbolized the abundance and blessing associated with the crown of kingship]; David was deserving and took it [for himself and his descendants after him].”

⁴² Zohar II:153b (Terumah 47:503).

⁴³ Pirkei Avot, chapter IV, Mishnah 17.

⁴⁴ Yaakov ben Asher (c. 1270–1340).

⁴⁵ Ex. 20:2: “I the L-rd am your G-d who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage.”

⁴⁶ Ex. 20:14: “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house: you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or male or female slave, or ox or ass, or anything of your neighbor’s.”

וְשָׂמָא תֵאמֵר, וְהִלָּא אַף עַל פִּי נְשִׁיכֵר הַמִּצְוֹת אֵינּוּ כְּתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה, הֲלֹא מִכָּל מְקוֹם קָמִי שְׂמָיָא זְלִיָא, וּכְבָר קְצוּב וְעוֹמֵד לְפָנָיו שְׂכָר כָּל מִצְוָה וּמִצְוָה. וְדָרְדַר מִשָּׁל, הַמְּנִיחַ תְּפִילִין יְהִיגָה שְׂכָרוֹ כָּה, וְהַמְּנִיחַ טְלִית כָּה, וְהַמְּנִיחַ מִצְוֹת מִיְלָה כָּה. וְאִם יִקְיִמוּ אֵלֶּה הַמִּצְוֹת בְּשִׁנְיָה הַעֲשִׂיר וְהַעֲנִי, יְהִיגָה לְהֵם נְמִי שְׂכָרוֹ בְּשִׁנְיָה, וְיִמָּה מְרוּיִם הַעֲנִי יוֹתֵר מִן הַעֲשִׂיר, דְּאִי אֶפְשָׁר שְׂיִפְחָתוּ לְעֲשִׂיר אוֹ יוֹסִיפוּ לְעָנִי.

Lest you say, even though the reward of the mitzvot is not written in the Torah, is it not so that it is revealed before Heaven, and the reward of each and every mitzvah is already fixed and stands before Him?

By way of a parable, one who lays *tefillin*, his reward will be such-and-such; and one who dons a *tallit*, his reward will be such-and-such; and one who fulfils the mitzvah of circumcision, his reward will be such-and-such. If these mitzvot are fulfilled equally by a rich man and a poor man, their reward will also be equal, and how can a poor man earn more than a rich man, for it is impossible to diminish a rich man or to add to a poor man.

עַל זֶה אָמַר, "וְנִאָּמַן הוּא בְּעַל מְלֵאכְתֵּיךָ שְׂיִשְׁלַם לְךָ שְׂכָר פְּעוּלְתֵךָ." דְּאִמְרִינן בְּהַשְׁוֹכֵר אֶת הָאוּמָנִים דְּף ע"ו וע"ז, דְּהִיכָא דְטָרְחִי וְעָבְדִי עֲבִידְתָּא שְׂפִירְתָּא, יֵשׁ לְהֵם לִישׁוּל יוֹתֵר מִהַשְׁכָּר הַנְּהוּג וְהָרְאוּי לְאַחֲרִים. וְאִף כָּאֵן הוּא נִאָּמַן לְהַכִּיר וְלְדַעַת הַמְּלָאכָה יוֹתֵר יְפָה שְׂעֵשִׂית אַתָּה בְּחִסְדֵי וְיִתְיָה, וְאִף עַל פִּי שְׂלָא עֲשִׂית אֵלֶּה הַמִּצְוֹת שְׂעֵשׂוּ אַחֲרִים, עִם כָּל זֶה, הוּאִיל וְשָׁלְךָ יוֹתֵר יְפָה, וְטָרְחָתָהּ יוֹתֵר, אִף הוּא יִשְׁלַם לְךָ שְׂכָר פְּעוּלְתֵךָ, וְלֹא שְׂכָר הַמִּצְוָה לְבַדּוֹ, אֵלֶּה אִף שְׂכָר הַטּוֹרָח. וְעוֹד הָאֲרַכְנּוּ לְעִיל סוּף פְּרָק ב', וְעִי"ש.

About this, [the Tanna] said, “and faithful is your Employer to pay you the reward of your labor.” As it is said in chapter 6 of tractate Bava Metzia, entitled, “One who hires artisans,” page 76 and 77, that where we made an effort to do higher-quality work for you [than others], they pay more than the customary and proper salary for others. Even here, He is faithful to recognize and know the more beautiful work that you did in your piety, and even though you only did the mitzvot that others did, nevertheless, since yours is more beautiful, and you put more effort into it, He will also pay you the wages of your labor, and not the wages of the mitzvah alone, but also the wages of the labor. Also, we have expanded on this above at the end of chapter II, mitzvah 18, and see there.

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