חוּמָּשׁ עִם רַשִׁ"י · בראשית · חֲמִישִׁי

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BERESHIT · 5TH ALIYAH

📖 CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this aliyah, the Torah continues tracing the generations of Kayin, focusing on his descendant Lamech and the family he built. We learn about the two wives Lamech took, Adah and Zillah, and the specific roles and lifestyles that their children introduced to the world.

The pesukim describe how Lamech's sons became the pioneers of various worldly occupations and crafts. From nomadic herding and music to the forging of metal weapons and tools, this section outlines the early development of human civilization and technology through Kayin's lineage.

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

פָּסוּק א

Pasuk 1

וַיִּקַּח לוֹ לֶמֶךְ שְׁתֵּי נָשִׁים שֵׁם הָאַחַת עָדָה וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִית צִלָּה׃

And took for himself Lamech two wives the name of the one Adah and the name of Zillah the second

רַשִׁ"י

ויקח לו למך. לֹא הָיָה לוֹ לְפָרֵשׁ כָּל זֶה, אֶלָּא לְלַמְּדֵנוּ מִסּוֹף הָעִנְיָן,

of the matter from the end to teach us except this all to explain to him was not Lamech for himself And took

שֶׁקַּיֵּם הַקָּבָ"ה הַבְטָחָתוֹ שֶׁאָמַר שִׁבְעָתַיִם יֻקַּם קַיִן, עָמַד לֶמֶךְ לְאַחַר

after Lamech stood up Cain shall be avenged sevenfold that He said His promise the Holy One blessed be He that fulfilled

שֶׁהוֹלִיד בָּנִים וְעָשָׂה דּוֹר שְׁבִיעִי וְהָרַג אֶת קַיִן, זֶהוּ שֶׁאָמַר כִּי אִישׁ הָרַגְתִּי

I have slain a man for what he said this is Cain — and killed seventh generation and made children that he begot

לְפִצְעִי וְגוֹמֵר׃

etcetera to my wounding

רַשִׁ"י

שתי נשים. כָּךְ הָיָה דַּרְכָּן שֶׁל דּוֹר הַמַּבּוּל אַחַת לְפִרְיָה וְרִבְיָה וְאַחַת

and one and multiplication for fruitfulness one the Flood the generation of of their custom was so wives Two

לְתַשְׁמִישׁ, זוֹ שֶׁהִיא לְתַשְׁמִישׁ מַשְׁקֶה כּוֹס שֶׁל עִקָּרִין כְּדֵי

in order sterilizing potion of a cup he would make her drink for companionship who is this one for companionship

שֶׁתֵּעָקֵר וּמְקֻשֶּׁטֶת כְּכַלָּה וּמַאֲכִילָהּ מַעֲדַנִּים, וַחֲבֶרְתָּהּ נְזוּפָה

was neglected and her companion delicacies and he would feed her like a bride and she was adorned that she become barren

וְאַלְמָנָה כְּאַלְמָנָה, וְזֶהוּ שֶׁפֵּרֵשׁ אִיּוֹב רָעָה עֲקָרָה לֹא תֵלֵד

give birth who does not the barren woman He associates with by Iyov what was explained and this is like a widow and mourning

וְאַלְמָנָה לֹא יֵיטִיב איוב כ"ד , כְּמוֹ שֶׁמְּפֹרָשׁ בְּאַגָּדַת חֶלֶק וּבְבְרֵ"ר :

and in Bereishis Rabbah Chelek in the Agadah of it is explained just as 24 Iyov do good he does not and to the widow

רַשִׁ"י

עדה. הִיא שֶׁל פְּרִיָה וּרְבִיָה עַל שֵׁם שֶׁמְּגָנָה מֵאֶצְלוֹ, וּמוּסֶרֶת עָלָיו
Adah — she was for fruitfulness and multiplication on account of that she was repulsive from beside him and removed to him

עָדָה תַּרְגּוּם שֶׁל סוּרָה:
adah is the translation of turn aside

רַשִׁ"י

צלה. הִיא שֶׁל תַּשְׁמִישׁ, עַל שֵׁם שֶׁיּוֹשֶׁבֶת תָּמִיד בְּצִלּוֹ, דִּבְרֵי אַגָּדָה הֵם
Zillah — she was of companionship on account of that she sits always in his shadow the words of Agadah they are

בְּבְ"רַ:
in Bereishis Rabbah

פָּסוּק ב

Pasuk 2

וַתֵּלֶד עָדָה אֶת יָבָל הוּא הָיָה אֲבִי יֹשֵׁב אֹהֶל וּמִקְנֶה:
And she bore Adah — Jabal he was the father of those who dwell in tents and herds

רַשִׁ"י

אבי ישב אהל ומקנה. הוּא הָיָה רִאשׁוֹן לְרוֹעֵי בְהֵמוֹת בַּמִּדְבָּרוֹת,
The father of such as abide in tents and of cattle he was the first of those who pasture animals in the wildernesses

יוֹשֵׁב אֹהָלִים חֹדֶשׁ כָּאן וְחֹדֶשׁ כָּאן בִּשְׁבִיל מִרְעֶה צֹאנוֹ, וּכְשֶׁכָּלָה הַמִּרְעֶה
dwelling in tents a month here and a month here for the sake of the pasture of his sheep and when is finished the pasture

בְּמָקוֹם זֶה הוֹלֵךְ וְתוֹקֵעַ אָהֳלוֹ בְּמָקוֹם אַחֵר. וּמִדְרַשׁ אַגָּדָה בּוֹנֶה בָּתִּים לַעֲ"זָ,
in a place this he goes and pitches his tent in a place another. And the Midrash Aggadah he built houses for idol worship

כְּמָה דְּאַתְּ אָמַר סֵמֶל הַקִּנְאָה הַמַּקְנֶה יחזקאל ח' , וְכֵן אָחִיו
just as that you say the image of jealousy which provoketh Ezekiel chapter 8 and likewise his brother

תּוֹפֵשׂ כִּנּוֹר וְעוּגָב לְזַמֵּר לַעֲ"זָ:
handled harp and guitar to make music for idol worship

פָּסוּק ג

Pasuk 3

וְשֵׁם אָחִיו יוּבָל הוּא הָיָה אֲבִי כָּל תֹּפֵשׂ כִּנּוֹר וְעוּגָב:
and the name of his brother Yubal he was the father of all who grasp harp and flute

פָּסוּק ד

Pasuk 4

וְצִלָּה גַם הִוא יָלְדָה אֶת תּוּבַל קַיִן לֹטֵשׁ כָּל חֹרֵשׁ נְחֹשֶׁת
And Zillah also she bore — Tubal Cain who sharpened every cutting instrument of copper

וּבַרְזֶל וַאֲחוֹת תּוּבַל קַיִן נַעֲמָה:
and iron and the sister of Tubal Cain was Naamah

רַשִׁ"י

תובל קין. תּוּבַל אֻמָּנָתוֹ שֶׁל קַיִן, תּוּבָל לְשׁוֹן תַּבְלִין, תִּבֵּל וְהִתְקִין
Tubal Cain — Tubal the handicraft he refined of Cain Tubal is an expression of spices he spiced and improved

אָמָנוּתוֹ שֶׁל קַיִן לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּלֵי זַיִן לָרוֹצְחִים׃

the handicraft of Cain to make weapons of armaments for murderers

רַשִׁ"י

לטש כל חרש נחשת וברזל. מְחַדֵּד אָמָנוּת נְחֹשֶׁת וּבַרְזֶל כְּמוֹ יְלְטֹשׁ עֵינָיו

sharpener of every craftsman of copper and iron he sharpens the craft of copper and iron like he sharpens his eyes

לִי איוב ט"ז . חוֹרֵשׁ אֵינוֹ לְשׁוֹן פּוֹעֵל אֶלָּא לְשׁוֹן פּוֹעֵל, שֶׁהֲרֵי

at me Iyov sixteen choresh is not a noun form of po'el but rather a participle form of po'el for behold

נָקוּד קָמָץ קָטָן וְטַעְמוֹ לְמַטָּה, כְּלוֹמַר, מְחַדֵּד וּמְצַחְצֵחַ כָּל כְּלֵי אָמָנוּת

it is vocalized with kamatz katan and its accent is below meaning to say he sharpens and polishes all vessels of the craft of

נְחֹשֶׁת וּבַרְזֶל׃

copper and iron

רַשִׁ"י

נעמה. הִיא אִשְׁתּוֹ שֶׁל נֹחַ׃

Naamah she the wife of Noach ·

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The aliyah details how Lamech married Adah and Zillah, and goes on to list the accomplishments of their children. Adah gave birth to Jabal, the father of tent-dwellers and cattle herders, and Jubal, the ancestor of harp and pipe musicians. Zillah gave birth to Tubal-cain, who sharpened and forged copper and iron implements, and his sister Naamah.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

The Torah is telling us about the children of Lamech, the very first people to build the foundations of human civilization. One son, Jabal, starts building tents and raising cattle. His brother, Jubal, invents musical instruments. Their half-brother, Tubal-cain, becomes the first to forge copper and iron. Lichoira, we are looking at a list of impressive, world-changing accomplishments. These brothers literally built the physical, cultural, and technological world we live in today.

But if you look closely at the pesukim, there is a deep kasha here. The Torah calls them the "father" of these crafts, yet we know that the entire generation of Lamech was completely wiped out in the Mabul. Not a single physical structure they built, not a single instrument they fashioned, and not a single iron tool they forged survived the flood. Mimeila, what was the point of all their building and inventing if it was all destined to be washed away? What is the Torah coming to teach us by recording their achievements for eternity?

The chiddush here is a powerful yesod for our own avodah. The Torah is showing us that when a person puts their heart and soul into developing a talent, an art, or a technology, they are creating a pathway in the world. Even though the physical tents and the physical harps of Lamech's sons were destroyed, the spiritual reality of their innovation remained. They opened up the potential for these concepts in the briah, and that potential survived the flood. The question for us is never whether our physical accomplishments will last forever, but rather: what are we using our talents to build? Are we using our skills to build "tents" of Torah and "music" that brings us closer to Hashem, or are we just building for our own temporary honor?

Today, take one talent, skill, or professional tool that you use in your daily life, and consciously dedicate its use for a mitzvah or to help another Yid, elevating a temporary worldly craft into something eternal.

דַּף יוֹמִי · בְּכוֹרוֹת · דַּף כ׳

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📖 THE SUGYA

We start off on our daf by wrapping up the shakla v'tarya regarding Rabbi Yishmael's shitta on whether we are choshesh for a minority. Ravina brings a beautiful chiddush to explain how even the Rabbis, who generally go after the rov, might agree here because we are dealing with a rov that depends on an action, namely whether a male copulated with the young goat. From there, the Gemara brings a fascinating braisa discussing a case where a Yid buys an animal from a non-Jew and we do not know if it gave birth already. The braisa lays out the different timeframes for a goat, a ewe, a cow, and a donkey, and we see a major machlokes between Rabbi Yishmael, Rabbi Yehoshua, and Rabbi Akiva.

The main point of contention between the Tannaim is what actually exempts an animal from the din of bechor. While Rabbi Yishmael focuses on a previous live birth, Rabbi Yehoshua points out that the Rabbis hold other discharges, like a murky discharge in a small animal or an afterbirth in a large animal, also exempt the next offspring. Rabbi Akiva, on the other hand, tells us he does not get involved in calculating these specific ages; rather, if we know it gave birth it is exempt, if we know it did not it is a bechor, and if it is a safek, the kohen gets nothing because of the classic rule of hamotzi mechavero alav hara'aya.

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עַמּוּד א׳ DAF 20A

STATEMENT

מְחַוַּורְתָּא רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל כְּרַבִּי מֵאִיר סְבִירָא לֵיהּ, דְּחָייֵישׁ לְמִיעוּטָא.

The Gemara concludes: **It is clear** that **Rabbi Yishmael holds in accordance with Rabbi Meir, who is concerned for the minority**, and that is why he is concerned that the young goat might have given birth already.

ANSWER

רָבִינָא אָמַר: אֲפִילּוּ תֵּימָא רַבָּנַן,

Ravina said: You may even say that Rabbi Yishmael holds like **the Rabbis** who generally follow the majority,

EXPLANATION

כִּי אָזְלִי רַבָּנַן בָּתַר רוּבָּא — בְּרוּבָּא דְּלָא תְּלֵי בְּמַעֲשֶׂה, אֲבָל רוּבָּא דִּתְלֵי בְּמַעֲשֶׂה — לָא.

for **when the Rabbis follow the majority**, it is only **with regard to a majority that does not depend on an action**, such as the physical development of an animal; **but** regarding **a majority that depends on an action**, such as whether a male copulated with this young goat, the Rabbis do **not** follow the majority, and therefore they too would be concerned.

BRAISA

תָּנוּ רַבָּנַן: עַז בַּת שְׁנָתָהּ — וַדַּאי לַכֹּהֵן, מִיכָּן וּלְהַלָּן — סָפֵק.

The Rabbis taught in a braisa: If one purchased from a non-Jew a **goat** that is **within its first year**, and it gave birth, the offspring is **certainly for the kohen** as a firstborn; but if it gave birth **from this point and onward**, after its first year, its status is a **doubt**, because it may have already given birth.

BRAISA

רָחֵל בַּת שְׁתַּיִם — וַדַּאי לַכֹּהֵן, מִיכָּן וּלְהַלָּן — סָפֵק.

If it was a **ewe within its second year**, the offspring is **certainly for the kohen**; but **from this point and onward**, it is a **doubt**.

BRAISA

פָּרָה בַּת שָׁלֹשׁ — וַדַּאי לַכֹּהֵן, מִיכָּן וּלְהַלָּן — סָפֵק.

If it was a **cow within its third year**, the offspring is **certainly for the kohen**; but **from this point and onward**, it is a **doubt**.

BRAISA

חֲמוֹרָה — כְּפָרָה.

A female **donkey** is subject to the same halacha **as a cow**.

BRAISA

רַבִּי יוֹסֵי בְּרַבִּי יְהוּדָה אוֹמֵר: חֲמוֹרָה בַּת אַרְבַּע שָׁנִים.

Rabbi Yosei son of Rabbi Yehuda says: A female **donkey** can give birth even **within its fourth year**, so only then is it a doubt.

BRAISA

עַד כָּאן דִּבְרֵי רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל.

Until here are the words of Rabbi Yishmael.

BRAISA

כְּשֶׁנֶּאֶמְרוּ דְּבָרִים לִפְנֵי רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, אָמַר לָהֶן: צְאוּ אִמְרוּ לוֹ לְרַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל: טָעִיתָ!

When these matters were stated before Rabbi Yehoshua by the students, **he said to them: Go out and say to Rabbi Yishmael: You have erred**!

BRAISA

אִילּוּ בְּוָולָד בִּלְבַד הַבְּהֵמָה נִפְטֶרֶת — הָיָה כִּדְבָרֶיךָ,

If it were only by giving birth to a live **offspring that the animal is exempted** from the law of the firstborn, then the halacha **would be as you said**, that we only worry about a previous birth.

BRAISA

אֶלָּא סִימַן הַוָולָד בִּבְהֵמָה דַּקָּה — טִינּוּף, וּבַגַּסָּה — שִׁלְיָא, וּבְאִשָּׁה — שָׁפִיר וְשִׁלְיָא.

But the Rabbis said that there are other discharges that exempt: **the sign of an offspring in a small animal is a murky discharge**, which exempts subsequent births; **and in a large animal**, the sign is **an afterbirth; and in a woman**, the sign is **a fetal sac or an afterbirth**.

BRAISA

וַאֲנִי אֵין אֲנִי אוֹמֵר כֵּן, אֶלָּא: עֵז שֶׁטִּינְּפָה בַּת שִׁשָּׁה — יוֹלֶדֶת בְּתוֹךְ שְׁנָתָהּ, רָחֵל שֶׁטִּינְּפָה בַּת שְׁנָתָהּ — יוֹלֶדֶת בְּתוֹךְ שְׁתַּיִם.

Rabbi Yehoshua added: **And I, I do not say so** like the Rabbis, **but rather: a goat that expelled a murky discharge at six months** of age **can** still **give birth within its first year; and a ewe that expelled a murky discharge within its first year can** still **give birth within its second year**.

BRAISA

אָמַר רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא: אֲנִי לֹא בָּאתִי לִידֵי מִדָּה זוֹ, אֶלָּא: כֹּל שֶׁיְּדוּעַ שֶׁבִּיכְּרָה — אֵין כָּאן לַכֹּהֵן כְּלוּם, וְכֹל שֶׁלֹּא בִּיכְּרָה — הֲרֵי זוֹ לַכֹּהֵן, סָפֵק — יֵאָכֵל בְּמוּמוֹ לַבְּעָלִים.

Rabbi Akiva said: I have not come to this measure of calculating ages. **Rather, any** animal **where it is known that it gave birth first, there is nothing here for the kohen; and any where it is known that it did not give birth first, behold this goes to the kohen; and if it is a doubt, it must be eaten in its blemished state by the owner**, and the kohen gets nothing because of the rule that the burden of proof is on the claimant.

QUESTION

בְּמַאי קָמִיפַּלְגִי רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל וְרַבִּי ...?

The Gemara asks: **In what** principle **do Rabbi Yishmael and Rabbi Yehoshua disagree**?

QUESTION

לֵימָא בְּטִינּוּף פּוֹטֵר קָמִיפַּלְגִי, רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל סָבַר טִינּוּף אֵינוֹ פּוֹטֵר, וְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ סָבַר טִינּוּף פּוֹטֵר?

Shall we say they disagree about whether a murky discharge exempts the animal from the law of the firstborn? That **Rabbi Yishmael holds a murky discharge does not exempt, and Rabbi Yehoshua holds a murky discharge exempts**?

ANSWER

אִי דַּחֲזִינָא דְּטַנּוּף — דְּכוּלֵי עָלְמָא לָא פְּלִיגִי דְּטִינּוּף פּוֹטֵר,

The Gemara rejects this: **If we actually saw that it expelled a murky discharge, everyone agrees that a murky discharge exempts**.

EXPLANATION

וְהָכָא בְּחוֹשְׁשִׁין לְטִינּוּף קָא מִיפַּלְגִי: רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל סָבַר: אֵין חוֹשְׁשִׁין לְטִינּוּף, וְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ סָבַר: חוֹשְׁשִׁין לְטִינּוּף.

But here, they disagree about whether we are concerned for a murky discharge that might have happened without us seeing it: **Rabbi Yishmael holds we are not concerned for a murky discharge**, so the offspring born within the year is definitely a firstborn; **and Rabbi Yehoshua holds we are concerned for a murky discharge**, making it a doubt.

OBJECTION

וְלָא חָיֵישׁ? וְהָאָמַר רָבָא: מְחַוַּורְתָּא רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל כְּרַבִּי מֵאִיר סְבִירָא לֵיהּ, דְּחָיֵישׁ לְמִיעוּט!

The Gemara asks: **And is** Rabbi Yishmael **not concerned** for a minority possibility? **But didn't Rava say: It is clear that Rabbi Yishmael holds like Rabbi Meir, who is concerned for the minority**! If so, he should be concerned for a murky discharge too!

RESOLUTION

כִּי חָיֵישׁ — לְחוּמְרָא, לְקוּלָּא — לָא חָיֵישׁ.

The Gemara answers: **When he is concerned** for a minority, it is only **for a stringency**, to make the animal a doubt and forbid it to be eaten without a blemish; but **for a leniency**, to exempt the offspring from being given to the kohen, **he is not concerned**.

RESOLUTION

וְאִיבָּעֵית אֵימָא: בֵּין לְקוּלָּא בֵּין לְחוּמְרָא חָיֵישׁ,

And if you want, say instead: Whether for a leniency or whether for a stringency, he is concerned for the minority,

EXPLANATION

וְהָכָא בִּמְטַנֶּפֶת וְחוֹזֶרֶת וְיוֹלֶדֶת בְּתוֹךְ שְׁנָתָהּ קָמִיפַּלְגִי,

and here they disagree about whether an animal that expels a murky discharge can return and give birth within its first year.

EXPLANATION

דְּרַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל סָבַר: מְטַנֶּפֶת אֵינָהּ חוֹזֶרֶת וְיוֹלֶדֶת בְּתוֹךְ שְׁנָתָהּ, וְהָא מִדְּאוֹלִיד — וַדַּאי לָא טַנְפָה.

For **Rabbi Yishmael holds: An animal that expels a murky discharge does not return and give birth within its first year; and** therefore, **since this one gave birth** within its first year, **it certainly did not expel a murky discharge** beforehand, so it is definitely a firstborn.

EXPLANATION

וְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ סָבַר: מְטַנֶּפֶת חוֹזֶרֶת וְיוֹלֶדֶת בְּתוֹךְ שְׁנָתָהּ.

And Rabbi Yehoshua holds: An animal that expels a murky discharge can return and give birth within its first year, so we must be concerned that it did expel a discharge.

BRAISA

וַאֲנִי אֵינִי אוֹמֵר כֵּן, אֶלָּא עֵז שֶׁטִּינְּפָה בַּת שִׁשָּׁה — יוֹלֶדֶת תּוֹךְ שְׁנָתָהּ, רָחֵל שֶׁטִּינְּפָה בַּת שְׁנָתָהּ — יוֹלֶדֶת בְּתוֹךְ שְׁתַּיִם.

The Gemara quotes the braisa: Rabbi Yehoshua said, **"And I do not say so, but rather: a goat that expelled a murky discharge at six months can give birth within its first year; a ewe that expelled a murky discharge within its first year can give birth within its second year."**

QUESTION

מַאי אִיכָּא בֵּין גְּמָרֵיהּ לְסְבָרֵיהּ?

The Gemara asks: **What is the difference between his tradition** of the Rabbis' view **and his own reasoning**, since both agree that such an animal can give birth within the year?

ANSWER

שֶׁטִּינְּפָה בְּסוֹף שִׁשָּׁה,

The Gemara answers: The difference is in a case **where it expelled a murky discharge at the very end of six months**,

EXPLANATION

וְאִיכָּא בֵּינַיְיהוּ דְּזְעֵירִי, דְּאָמַר זְעֵירִי: אֵין טִינּוּף פָּחוֹת מִשְּׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם.

and there is a difference between them regarding the ruling of Ze'eiri, as Ze'eiri said: There is no murky discharge that allows the animal to become pregnant again in **less than thirty days**.

EXPLANATION

לְגַמָּרֵיהּ — אִית לֵיהּ דְּזְעֵירִי, לְסָבְרֵיהּ — לֵית לֵיהּ דְּזְעֵירִי.

According **to his tradition** of the Rabbis, **he holds of Ze'eiri's** rule, so it could not have given birth within the year; but according **to his own reasoning, he does not hold of Ze'eiri's** rule.

RESOLUTION

וְאִיבָּעֵית אֵימָא: דְּכוּלֵי עָלְמָא אִית לְהוּ דְּזְעֵירִי, וְהָכָא — בִּיוֹלֶדֶת לִמְקוּטָּעִין קָמִיפַּלְגִי;

And if you want, say instead: Everyone holds of Ze'eiri's rule, **and here they disagree about whether an animal can give birth to incomplete** months of pregnancy, which would allow it to give birth within the year even with Ze'eiri's thirty-day delay.

עמוד ב׳ DAF 20B

EXPLANATION

לְגַמָּרֵיהּ — לָא אָמְרִינַן יוֹלֶדֶת לִמְקוּטָּעִין,

According **to his tradition** of the opinion of the Rabbis, **we do not say** that an animal **gives birth after incomplete** months of pregnancy, and therefore she must have been pregnant for a full five months, which means she became pregnant within thirty days of the discharge, proving the discharge was not a fetus.

EXPLANATION

לְסָבְרֵיהּ — אָמְרִינַן יוֹלֶדֶת לִמְקוּטָּעִין.

But according **to his own reasoning, we say** that an animal **gives birth after incomplete** months, so she could have become pregnant after thirty days and had a shorter pregnancy, meaning the discharge was indeed a fetus.

RESOLUTION

וְאִיבָּעֵית אֵימָא: לָא אָמְרִינַן יוֹלֶדֶת,

And if you wish, say instead that everyone agrees **we do not say** that an animal **gives birth** after incomplete months,

EXPLANATION

וְהָכָא בְּמִקְצָת הַיּוֹם כְּכוּלּוֹ קָמִיפַּלְגִי.

and here, they disagree with regard to whether we say **part of the day is like an entire day**.

EXPLANATION

לְסָבְרֵיהּ — אָמְרִינַן מִקְצָת הַיּוֹם כְּכוּלּוֹ,

According **to his own reasoning, we say part of the day is like an entire day**, so she could have conceived on the thirtieth day and given birth exactly five months later, just before the year ended.

EXPLANATION

לְגַמָּרֵיהּ — לָא אָמְרִינַן מִקְצָת הַיּוֹם כְּכוּלּוֹ.

But according **to his tradition, we do not say part of the day is like an entire day**, so the earliest she could give birth is on the first day of the second year.

מִשְׁנָה MISHNAH

MISHNAH

אָמַר רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא: אֲנִי לֹא בָּאתִי לִידֵי מִדָּה זוֹ, אֶלָּא כׇּל שֶׁיָּדוּעַ כּוּ'.

The Mishnah taught that **Rabbi Akiva says: I have not arrived at this method** of calculation. **Rather, in any case where it is known** that she previously gave birth, the priest has nothing here, **etc.**

גְּמָרָא GEMARA

QUESTION

מַאי אִיכָּא בֵּין רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא לְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ?

The Gemara asks: **What** practical difference **is there between** the opinion of **Rabbi Akiva and** the opinion of **Rabbi Yehoshua**?

ANSWER

אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינָא מִסּוּרָא: חָלָב פּוֹטֵר אִיכָּא בֵּינַיְיהוּ,

Rabbi Chanina of Sura says: The case of whether the discharge of **milk exempts** the next offspring from the law of the firstborn **is** the practical difference **between them**.

EXPLANATION

רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא סָבַר: חָלָב פּוֹטֵר, הַלֵּךְ אַחַר רוֹב בְּהֵמוֹת, וְרוֹב בְּהֵמוֹת אֵין חוֹלְבוֹת אֶלָּא אִם כֵּן יוֹלְדוֹת,

Rabbi Akiva holds: The discharge of **milk exempts** the next offspring, because we say **follow the majority of animals, and the majority of animals do not produce milk unless they have given birth**.

EXPLANATION

רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ סָבַר: הָא אִיכָּא מִיעוּטָא דְּחוֹלְבוֹת אַף עַל פִּי שֶׁאֵין יוֹלְדוֹת.

And Rabbi Yehoshua holds: But there is a minority of animals **that produce milk even though they have not given birth**, so we must worry about this minority, making the next offspring a doubtful firstborn.

QUESTION

וּמִי חָייֵשׁ רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ לְמִיעוּט?

The Gemara asks: **And does Rabbi Yehoshua** really **worry about a minority**? But we have a rule that he does not!

OBJECTION

וְהָתְנַן: הָיְתָה לָהּ חֲמוֹת — אֵינָהּ חוֹשֶׁשֶׁת, יָצְאָה מְלֵיאָה — חוֹשֶׁשֶׁת. רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אוֹמֵר: אֵינָהּ חוֹשֶׁשֶׁת.

But didn't we learn in a Mishnah: If a childless widow's **mother-in-law went** overseas, **she does not need to worry** that she gave birth to a son who would require her to perform yibum. But if the mother-in-law **left pregnant, she must worry**. Yet **Rabbi Yehoshua says: She does not need to worry** even then.

EXPLANATION

וְאָמְרִינַן: מַאי טַעְמָא דְּרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ?

And we said in explaining that Mishnah: **What is the reason of Rabbi Yehoshua**?

EXPLANATION

קָסָבַר: רוֹב מְעוּבָּרוֹת יוֹלְדוֹת, וּמִיעוּט מַפִּילוֹת, וְכָל הַיּוֹלְדוֹת — מֶחֱצָה זְכָרִים וּמֶחֱצָה נְקֵבוֹת.

He holds: The majority of pregnant women give birth to viable children, **and a minority miscarry; and of all those who give birth, half** bear **males and half** bear **females**.

EXPLANATION

סְמוֹךְ מִיעוּטָא דְּמַפִּילוֹת לְמֶחֱצָה דִּנְקֵבוֹת, וְהָווּ לְהוּ זְכָרִים מִיעוּטָא, וּלְמִיעוּטָא לָא חָייְשִׁינַן!

Add the minority of those who miscarry to the half who give birth to **females, and the** viable **males become a minority** of the total possibilities, **and we do not worry about a minority**! This proves Rabbi Yehoshua does not worry about a minority.

RESOLUTION

אֶלָּא אֵיפּוֹךְ, וְהָתַנְיָא: חָלָב פּוֹטֵר, דִּבְרֵי רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ. רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אוֹמֵר: חָלָב אֵינוֹ פּוֹטֵר.

Rather, reverse the opinions of the Tanna'im in our sugya, **and indeed it was taught** in a beraisa: The discharge of **milk exempts** the next offspring from being a firstborn, which is **the statement of Rabbi Yehoshua; Rabbi Akiva says: Milk does not exempt** it.

BRAISA

תָּנוּ רַבָּנַן: גְּדָיָיה שֶׁיָּלְדָה שָׁלֹשׁ בָּנוֹת, וְכָל בְּנוֹתֶיהָ יָלְדוּ שָׁלֹשׁ שָׁלֹשׁ — כּוּלָּן נִכְנָסוֹת לַדִּיר לְהִתְעַשֵּׂר.

The Rabbis taught in a beraisa: In the case of **a kid that gave birth to three female** kids, **and all her daughters** each **gave birth to three** female kids **each, all of them enter the pen to be tithed**, since there are now thirteen animals born in the same year.

STATEMENT

אָמַר רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן: אֲנִי רָאִיתִי שֶׂעִישְׂרָה בְּתוֹךְ שְׁנָתָהּ.

Rabbi Shimon said: I saw a single kid **that yielded enough offspring to be tithed within its** first **year**.

QUESTION

לְמָה לִי לְמִיתְנֵי שָׁלֹשׁ שָׁלֹשׁ? תּוֹלֵיד חַד מִינַּיְיהוּ תְּלָת, וְאִינָךְ תַּרְתֵּי תַּרְתֵּי!

The Gemara asks: **Why do I need** the beraisa **to teach** that they each gave birth to **three** offspring **each**? **Let one of them give birth to three, and the other two** give birth to **two each**, which would make ten goats in total!

ANSWER

אַיְידֵי דְּאִיכָּא חֲדָא דְּלָא סַגְיָא בְּלָא שָׁלֹשׁ, תְּנָא כּוּלְּהוּ דְּיָלְדוּ שָׁלֹשׁ שָׁלֹשׁ.

The Gemara answers: **Since there is one** goat **where it is not enough without** her giving birth to **three** to reach the number ten, the Tanna **taught** for consistency that **all of them gave birth to three each**.

QUESTION

וְלָמָה לִי לְמִיתְנֵי שָׁלֹשׁ כְּלָל? לֵילְדוּ כּוּלְּהוּ תַּרְתֵּי, וְתֵיהְדַּר אִיהִי וְתוֹלֵיד בַּהֲדַיְיהוּ!

The Gemara asks: **But why do I need** the beraisa **to teach** that any of them gave birth to **three at all? Let all of them give birth to two, and let her**, the mother, **go back and give birth** again **along with them** in the same year!

SUMMARY

The Gemara analyzes the underlying mechanism of the machlokes between Rabbi Yishmael and Rabbi Yehoshua. We explore whether they argue about whether a murky discharge exempts an animal, or if they agree it exempts but argue whether we are choshesh that a murky discharge occurred unseen. The Gemara refines this by explaining that Rabbi Yishmael only worries about a minority possibility to be machmir, not to be mekel and exempt the animal from the kohen. Alternatively, the Gemara suggests they argue over whether an animal that expels a murky discharge can actually turn around and give birth again within that same year. This leads into a discussion of Ze'eiri's rule that an animal cannot become pregnant again within thirty days of a murky discharge, and whether we say an animal can give birth to incomplete months of pregnancy.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה · WHAT TO TAKE HOME

In our sugya, the Gemara is medayek a beautiful yesod about how we look at the world. We see a machlokes between Rabbi Yishmael and Rabbi Yehoshua about whether we are choshish for a "tinuf", a murky discharge that we never actually saw, but which might have happened in secret and exempted the animal from being a firstborn. Rabbi Yehoshua is choshish for this hidden reality, teaching us that just because we didn't witness something doesn't mean it didn't happen.

Lichoira, we often live our lives only believing what is right in front of our eyes. If we don't see someone's pain, we assume they are perfectly fine. If we don't see the immediate fruits of our avodas Hashem, our tefillos, or our learning, we think nothing is happening. But the Torah is telling us: there is a whole world of unseen reality. Just like the "tinuf" that happened behind closed doors, there are hidden movements in the neshama, silent struggles in the hearts of our family members, and quiet yeshuos that Hashem is preparing for us behind the scenes.

We must train ourselves to be "choshish" for the unseen. When a child or a friend acts out, don't just judge the action you see; be choshish for the hidden pain or pressure they might be experiencing. When you daven and feel like nothing is changing, remember that every single tefillah creates a hidden impact in the upper worlds, even if the yeshua hasn't physically birthed yet.

Today, when someone around you acts a bit off or impatient, do not judge them based only on what is visible. Stop and tell yourself: "There is a hidden story here that I cannot see," and treat them with extra gentleness and dan l'kaf zechus.

מַסֶּכֶת אָבוֹת · פֶּרֶק רִאשׁוֹן

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📖 **CHAPTER PREVIEW**

We begin our learning of Pirkei Avos by establishing the golden chain of the mesorah, tracing how Moshe Rabbeinu received the Torah at Sinai and passed it down through the generations. This holy transmission went from Yehoshua to the elders, the prophets, and the Men of the Great Assembly, showing us that our oral tradition is unbroken and divine. From there, the chapter introduces the early pairs of Sages, the Zugos, who carried the torch of Torah with immense holiness.

As we delve into their teachings, we find fundamental guidance for our daily avodah and yiras Shamayim. The Sages guide us on how to build a home of Torah, how to conduct ourselves in judgment, how to treat our fellow Jews with warmth, and how to guard our speech. We are introduced to the timeless wisdom of Hillel and Shammai, who teach us the path of peace, diligence in learning, and serving Hashem with absolute sincerity.

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

משנה א

הַשַּׁלְשֶׁלֶת שֶׁל קַבָּלַת הַתּוֹרָה וְהַנְהָגַת הַחֲכָמִים

Mishna 1 · The Chain of Torah Transmission and the Three Directives of the Great Assembly

משֶׁה קִבֵּל תּוֹרָה מִסִּינַי, וּמְסָרָהּ לִיהוֹשֻׁעַ, וִיהוֹשֻׁעַ לִזְקֵנִים, וְזִקֵנִים

Moshe received Torah from Sinai and transmitted it to Yehoshua and Yehoshua to the elders and the elders

לִנְבִיאִים, וּנְבִיאִים מְסָרוּהָ לְאַנְשֵׁי כְנֶסֶת הַגְּדוֹלָה. הֵם אָמְרוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה

to the prophets and the prophets transmitted it to the Men of the Assembly the Great They said three

דְבָרִים, הֱווּ מְתוּנִים בַּדִּין, וְהַעֲמִידוּ תַלְמִידִים הַרְבֵּה, וַעֲשׂוּ סְיָג

things Be deliberate in judgment and establish disciples many and make a fence

לַתּוֹרָה:

for the Torah

> *This Mishnah establishes the unbroken chain of Torah transmission from Sinai down to the Sages of the Great Assembly, who provided foundational guidance for judges and teachers.*

משנה ב

הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁעֲלֵיהֶם הָעוֹלָם עוֹמֵד

Mishna 2 · The Three Pillars Upon Which the World Stands

שִׁמְעוֹן הַצַּדִּיק הָיָה מִשִּׁיָרֵי כְנֶסֶת הַגְּדוֹלָה. הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, עַל

Shimon the Righteous was from the remnants of the Assembly the Great he would say on

שְׁלֹשָׁה דְבָרִים הָעוֹלָם עוֹמֵד, עַל הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל הָעֲבוֹדָה וְעַל גְּמִילוּת

three things the world stands on the Torah and on the Temple service and on acts of

חֲסָדִים:

kindness

> *Shimon the Righteous teaches that the existence of the world depends upon Torah study, the Temple service, and acts of lovingkindness.*

מִשְׁנָה ג

עֲבוֹדַת הַשֵּׁם מֵאַהֲבָה וּמוֹרָא שָׁמַיִם

Mishna 3 · Serving Hashem Out of Love and the Fear of Heaven

אַנְטִיגְנוֹס אִישׁ סוֹכוֹ קִבֵּל מִשִּׁמְעוֹן הַצַּדִּיק. הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, אַל תִּהְיוּ

be do not say would he the Righteous from Shimon received Socho a man of Antigonus

כַּעֲבָדִים הַמְשַׁמְּשִׁין אֶת הָרַב עַל מְנָת לְקַבֵּל פְּרָס, אֶלָּא הֱווּ כַּעֲבָדִים

like servants be but a reward to receive condition on the master — who serve like servants

הַמְשַׁמְּשִׁין אֶת הָרַב שֶׁלֹּא עַל מְנָת לְקַבֵּל פְּרָס, וִיהִי מוֹרָא שָׁמַיִם

Heaven the fear of and let be a reward to receive condition on not the master — who serve

עֲלֵיכֶם:

upon you

Antigonus of Socho teaches that one should serve Hashem without the expectation of receiving a reward, while maintaining a constant fear of Heaven.

מִשְׁנָה ד

קַבָּלַת הַתּוֹרָה וּכְבוֹד חֲכָמִים

Mishna 4 · The Transmission of Torah and Honoring the Sages

יוֹסֵי בֶן יוֹעֶזֶר אִישׁ צְרֵדָה וְיוֹסֵי בֶן יוֹחָנָן אִישׁ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם. יוֹסֵי

Yose from them received Yerushalayim man of Yochanan ben and Yose Zeredah man of Yoezer ben Yose

בֶן יוֹעֶזֶר אִישׁ צְרֵדָה אוֹמֵר, יְהִי בֵיתְךָ בֵּית וַעַד לַחֲכָמִים, וֶהֱוֵי

and be for the Sages meeting a house of your house let be says Zeredah man of Yoezer ben

מִתְאַבֵּק בַּעֲפַר רַגְלֵיהֶם, וֶהֱוֵי שׁוֹתֶה בְצָמָא אֶת דִּבְרֵיהֶם:

their words — with thirst drinking and be their feet in the dust of attaching yourself

Yose ben Yoezer and Yose ben Yochanan transmit the tradition, advising one to make their home a gathering place for Sages.

מִשְׁנָה ה

הַכְנָסַת אוֹרְחִים וּמְעוּט שִׂיחָה עִם הָאִשָּׁה

Mishna 5 · Hospitality to the Poor and Limiting Conversation with Women

יוֹסֵי בֶן יוֹחָנָן אִישׁ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם אוֹמֵר, יְהִי בֵיתְךָ פָּתוּחַ לְרִוָחָה, וְיִהְיוּ

and let be wide open your house let be says Yerushalayim a man of Yochanan son of Yose

עֲנִיִּים בְּנֵי בֵיתֶךָ, וְאַל תַּרְבֶּה שִׂיחָה עִם הָאִשָּׁה. בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ אָמְרוּ,

they said with his wife the woman with conversation increase and do not your household members of poor people

קַל וָחֹמֶר בְּאֵשֶׁת חֲבֵרוֹ. מִכָּאן אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים, כָּל זְמַן שֶׁאָדָם מַרְבֶּה

increases that a man the time all the Sages said from here his fellow with the wife of and heavy a light

שִׂיחָה עִם הָאִשָּׁה, גּוֹרֵם רָעָה לְעַצְמוֹ, וּבוֹטֵל מִדִּבְרֵי תוֹרָה, וְסוֹפוֹ

and his end Torah from words of and desists to himself evil he causes the woman with conversation

יוֹרֵשׁ גֵּיהִנֹּם:

Gehinnom he inherits

Yose ben Yochanan teaches the importance of keeping a home open to the poor and warns against excessive conversation with women, which distracts from Torah study.

מִשְׁנָה ו

עֲשֵׂה לְךָ רַב וּקְנֵה לְךָ חָבֵר

Mishna 6 · Appointing a Teacher, Acquiring a Companion, and Judging Others Favorably

יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן פְּרַחְיָה וְנִתַּאי הָאַרְבֵּלִי קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם. יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן פְּרַחְיָה אוֹמֵר,

says Perachyah son of Yehoshua from them received the Arbelite and Nittai Perachyah son of Yehoshua

עֲשֵׂה לְךָ רַב, וּקְנֵה לְךָ חָבֵר, וֶהֱוֵי דָן אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם

man every — judging and be a companion for yourself and acquire a teacher for yourself make

לְכַף זְכוּת:

merit to the scale of

This Mishnah teaches the importance of spiritual mentorship, friendship, and giving others the benefit of the doubt.

משנה ז

הַרְחֶק מִשָּׁכֵן רָע וּמֵרָשָׁע

Mishna 7 · Distancing Oneself from an Evil Neighbor and the Wicked

נִתַּאי הָאַרְבֵּלִי אוֹמֵר, הַרְחֵק מִשָּׁכֵן רָע, וְאַל תִּתְחַבֵּר לָרָשָׁע,

with the wicked associate and do not who is evil from a neighbor distance yourself says the Arbelite Nittai

וְאַל תִּתְיָאֵשׁ מִן הַפֻּרְעָנוּת:

retribution of despair and do not

Nittai the Arbelite warns against associating with bad influences and reminds us that divine justice is inevitable.

משנה ח

הַנְהָגַת הַדַּיָּן עִם בַּעֲלֵי הַדִּין

Mishna 8 · The Conduct of a Judge Toward Litigants

יְהוּדָה בֶן טַבַּאי וְשִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן שָׁטָח קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם. יְהוּדָה בֶן טַבַּאי אוֹמֵר,

says Tabbai son of Yehudah from them received Shetach son of and Shimon Tabbai son of Yehudah

אַל תַּעַשׂ עַצְמְךָ כְּעוֹרְכֵי הַדַּיָּנִין. וּכְשֶׁיִּהְיוּ בַעֲלֵי דִינִין עוֹמְדִים

standing judgment the masters of and when are the judges like the arrangers of yourself make do not

לְפָנֶיךָ, יִהְיוּ בְעֵינֶיךָ כִּרְשָׁעִים. וּכְשֶׁנִּפְטָרִים מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יִהְיוּ

they should be before you like wicked ones in your eyes they should be from before you and when they are dismissed

בְעֵינֶיךָ כִּזְכָאִין, כְּשֶׁקִּבְּלוּ עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת הַדִּין:

the judgment — upon themselves when they accepted like innocent ones in your eyes

Yehudah ben Tabbai teaches that a judge must remain completely impartial, avoiding advocacy and viewing both parties equally during and after the trial.

משנה ט

דְּרִישָׁה וַחֲקִירָה שֶׁל עֵדִים וְזְהִירוּת בְּדִבְרֵי הַדַּיָּנִים

Mishna 9 · Thorough Interrogation of Witnesses and Caution in the Words of Judges

שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן שָׁטָח אוֹמֵר, הֱוֵי מַרְבֶּה לַחְקֹר אֶת הָעֵדִים, וֶהֱוֵי זָהִיר

careful and be the witnesses — to investigate much be says Shetach son of Shimon

בִּדְבָרֶיךָ, שֶׁמָּא מִתּוֹכָם יִלְמְדוּ לְשַׁקֵּר:

to lie they will learn from within them lest with your words

Shimon ben Shetach warns judges to cross-examine witnesses thoroughly and to speak carefully so as not to inadvertently teach them how to fabricate testimony.

מִשְׁנָה י

אַהֲבַת הַמְּלָאכָה וּשְׂנִיאַת הָרַבָּנוּת

Mishna 10 · Loving Work and Shunning Lordship and Government Intimacy

שְׁמַעְיָה וְאַבְטַלְיוֹן קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם. שְׁמַעְיָה אוֹמֵר, אֱהֹב אֶת הַמְּלָאכָה, וּשְׂנָא אֶת

Shemaiah — Shemaiah says love — and hate work — and Abtalion from them received

הָרַבָּנוּת, וְאַל תִּתְוַדַּע לָרָשׁוּת:

lordship and do not make yourself known to the ruling authority

Shemaiah and Abtalion teach the importance of honest labor, avoiding positions of power, and keeping a safe distance from the ruling authorities.

מִשְׁנָה יא

אַזְהָרָה לַחֲכָמִים לְהִזָּהֵר בְּדִבְרֵיהֶם מִפְּנֵי חִלּוּל הַשֵּׁם

Mishna 11 · A Warning to Sages to Guard Their Words to Prevent Desecration of Heaven's Name

אַבְטַלְיוֹן אוֹמֵר, חֲכָמִים, הִזָּהֲרוּ בְּדִבְרֵיכֶם, שֶׁמָּא תָּחוּבוּ חוֹבַת גָּלוּת

Avtalyon says Sages, be careful with your words lest you will obligate the obligation of exile

וְתִגְלוּ לִמְקוֹם מַיִם הָרָעִים, וְיִשְׁתּוּ הַתַּלְמִידִים הַבָּאִים אַחֲרֵיכֶם

and you will be exiled to a place of the evil waters and they will drink the disciples who come after you

וְיָמוּתוּ, וְנִמְצָא שֵׁם שָׁמַיִם מִתְחַלֵּל:

and they will die and it will be found the Name of Heaven is profaned

Avtalyon warns Torah scholars to speak with extreme precision so that heretical disciples do not misinterpret their words and stray after false doctrines.

מִשְׁנָה יב

הַנְהָגַת הִלֵּל לֶאֱהֹב שָׁלוֹם וּלְקָרֵב אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת

Mishna 12 · The Conduct of Hillel to Love Peace and Draw Creations Close to Torah

הִלֵּל וְשַׁמַּאי קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם. הִלֵּל אוֹמֵר, הֱוֵי מִתַּלְמִידָיו שֶׁל אַהֲרֹן, אוֹהֵב

Hillel and Shammai received from them Hillel says be from the disciples of Aharon loving

שָׁלוֹם וְרוֹדֵף שָׁלוֹם, אוֹהֵב אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת וּמְקָרְבָן לַתּוֹרָה:

peace and pursuing peace loving — the creations and drawing them close to the Torah

Hillel teaches that one should emulate Aharon the Kohen Gadol by actively pursuing peace and bringing people closer to the Torah through love.

מִשְׁנָה יג

הַסַּכָּנָה בְּגַאֲוָה וּבְבִטּוּל תּוֹרָה

Mishna 13 · The Danger of Seeking Fame and Neglecting Torah Study

הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, נָגַד שְׁמָא, אָבַד שְׁמֵהּ. וּדְלֹא מוֹסִיף, יָסֵף.

He used to say one who makes great his name destroys his name and one who does not add ceases

וּדְלֹא יָלַיִף, קְטָלָא חַיָּב. וּדְאִשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בְּתָגָא, חָלַף:

and one who does not learn deserves death and one who makes use of the crown passes away

This Mishnah warns against using Torah knowledge for self-aggrandizement and emphasizes the necessity of continuous study.

מִשְׁנָה יד

הַחוֹבָה לִפְעֹל בְּעַצְמוֹ וּלְלֹא דְחוּי

Mishna 14 · The Obligation of Personal Responsibility and Avoiding Procrastination

הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, אִם אֵין אֲנִי לִי, מִי לִי. וּכְשֶׁאֲנִי לְעַצְמִי, מָה אֲנִי.

He used to say: If not I for myself, who is for me? And when I am for myself alone, what am I?

וְאִם לֹא עַכְשָׁיו, אֵימָתָי:

And if not now, when?

Hillel teaches that a person must take personal responsibility for their own spiritual growth and act without delay.

מִשְׁנָה טו

קְבִיעוּת הַתּוֹרָה, מְעוּט דִּבּוּר וְהַסְבָּרַת פָּנִים

Mishna 15 · Making Torah Study Fixed, Speaking Little and Doing Much, and Welcoming Everyone Warmly

שַׁמַּאי אוֹמֵר, עֲשֵׂה תוֹרָתְךָ קֶבַע. אֱמֹר מְעַט וַעֲשֵׂה הַרְבֵּה, וֱהֱוֵי מְקַבֵּל אֶת

Shammai says: Make your Torah fixed. Say little and do much, and be receiving

כָּל הָאָדָם בְּסֵבֶר פָּנִים יָפוֹת:

every person with a cheerful expression of face.

Shammai teaches the importance of establishing a fixed schedule for Torah study, prioritizing actions over words, and greeting every person with a pleasant and welcoming countenance.

מִשְׁנָה טז

עֲשֵׂה לְךָ רַב וְהִתְרַחֵק מִן הַסָּפֵק

Mishna 16 · Appointing a Teacher and Avoiding Doubt and Estimations in Tithing

רַבָּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר, עֲשֵׂה לְךָ רַב, וְהִסְתַּלֵּק מִן הַסָּפֵק, וְאַל

Rabban Gamliel would say: Make for yourself a teacher, and remove yourself from doubt, and do not

תַּרְבֶּה לְעַשֵּׂר אֹמְדוֹת:

increase to tithe by estimation.

Rabban Gamliel teaches the importance of establishing a halachic authority to resolve doubts and avoiding guesswork when performing mitzvos like tithing.

מִשְׁנָה יז

מַעֲלַת הַשְׁתִיקָה וְהַמַּעֲשֶׂה עַל פְּנֵי הַדִּבּוּר

Mishna 17 · The Virtue of Silence and Action Over Mere Words

שִׁמְעוֹן בְּנוֹ אוֹמֵר, כָּל יָמַי גָּדַלְתִּי בֵּין הַחֲכָמִים, וְלֹא מָצָאתִי לַגּוּף טוֹב

Shimon his son says: All my days I grew up among the Sages, and I did not find better for the body

אֶלָּא שְׁתִיקָה. וְלֹא הַמִּדְרָשׁ הוּא הָעִקָּר, אֶלָּא הַמַּעֲשֶׂה. וְכָל הַמַּרְבֶּה

than silence. And not the study is the main thing, but the action. And anyone who increases

דְּבָרִים, מֵבִיא חֵטְא:

words brings sin.

Shimon the son of Rabban Gamliel teaches that silence is the best path for the body, and that practical action is superior to mere study and excessive speech.

מִשְׁנָה יח

הַדִּין הָאֱמֶת וְהַשָּׁלוֹם שֶׁהָעוֹלָם עוֹמֵד עֲלֵיהֶם

Mishna 18 · Justice Truth and Peace Upon Which the World Stands

רַבָּן שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל אוֹמֵר, עַל שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים הָעוֹלָם עוֹמֵד, עַל הַדִּין

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says, on three things the world stands, on justice

וְעַל הָאֱמֶת וְעַל הַשָּׁלוֹם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר זכריה ח אֱמֶת וּמִשְׁפַּט שָׁלוֹם שִׁפְטוּ

and on truth and on peace, as it is said, Zechariah 8 truth and judgment of peace judge

בְּשַׁעֲרֵיכֶם:

in your gates

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel teaches that the preservation of human society depends upon the three pillars of justice, truth, and peace.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter opens with the Men of the Great Assembly and Shimon the Righteous establishing the pillars of the world, followed by Antigonus of Socho's warning to serve Hashem without expecting reward. We then progress through the teachings of the Zugos: Yose ben Yoezer and Yose ben Yochanan on bringing Sages and the poor into our homes; Yehoshua ben Perachiah and Nittai the Arbelite on acquiring teachers and avoiding evil neighbors; Yehudah ben Tabbai and Shimon ben Shetach on careful justice; and Shemaiah and Abtalion on avoiding the ruling power and guarding one's words. Finally, Hillel and Shammai teach us to pursue peace, fix our Torah study, and receive everyone with a pleasant countenance, leading into the instructions of Rabban Gamaliel and his son Shimon on silence and action, and concluding with Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel's declaration that the world stands on justice, truth, and peace.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

My dear friend, look at how this first chapter of Pirkei Avos begins. It does not start with abstract philosophies, but with a chain of transmission: Moshe received the Torah from Sinai and passed it down, generation after generation, until it reached us. This tells us that our Torah is not a theory; it is a living, breathing legacy of connection. When you learn, you are not just reading a book, you are joining a chain of holy souls. And what do these sages tell us? They tell us that the world stands on Torah, avodah, and gemilus chasadim, and that the ultimate goal of all our learning is not just to speak, but to do. Shimon his son says it clearly: 'Study is not the most important thing, but actions.'

Think about Shammai's golden rule: 'Say little, but do much, and receive all men with a pleasant countenance.' How often do we promise ourselves or others big things, only to fall short? The Torah wants us to build our lives on quiet, solid action. When you greet another Yid with a warm, genuine smile, you are literally sustaining the world. You are bringing the peace and truth that Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel says keeps the world standing.

Let us also take to heart the famous words of Hillel: 'If I am not for myself, who is for me? But if I am for my own self, what am I? And if not now, when?' We cannot wait for someone else to do our avodah for us, nor can we live only for ourselves. We must step up, take responsibility for our spiritual growth, and do it today, without putting it off.

Today, choose one small, concrete action instead of just talking about it. When you meet someone, greet them with a genuine, warm smile and a pleasant countenance, and make a fixed five minutes to learn Torah today without any distractions.

תְּהִלִּים · חֲמִשָּׁה קַאפִּיטְלָעך

The Five Daily Kapitlach

📖 **CHAPTER PREVIEW**

These are the five kapitlach of Tehillim said every single day: 32, 43, 83, 121, and 130, each set word for word with its English meaning. They are gathered here as one section so the whole daily Tehillim can be said and downloaded together.

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

פֶּרֶק ל״ב CHAPTER 32

לְדָוִד מַשְׂכִּיל אַשְׁרֵי נְשׂוּי פֶּשַׁע כְּסוּי חֲטָאָה׃

אַשְׁרֵי אָדָם לֹא יַחְשֹׁב יְהוָה לוֹ עָוֹן וְאֵין בְּרוּחוֹ רְמִיָּה׃

כִּי הֶחֱרַשְׁתִּי בָלוּ עַצְמָי בְּשַׁאֲגָתִי כָּל הַיּוֹם׃

כִּי יוֹמָם וָלַיְלָה תִּכְבַּד עָלַי יָדֶךָ נֶהְפַּךְ לְשַׁדִּי בְּחַרְבֹנֵי קַיִץ סֶלָה׃

חַטָּאתִי אוֹדִיעֲךָ וַעֲוֹנִי לֹא כִסִּיתִי אָמַרְתִּי אוֹדֶה עֲלֵי פְשָׁעַי לַיהוָה וְאַתָּה נָשָׂאתָ עֲוֹן חַטָּאתִי סֶלָה׃

עַל זֹאת יִתְפַּלֵּל כָּל חָסִיד אֵלֶיךָ לְעֵת מְצֹא רַק לְשֵׁטֶף מַיִם רַבִּים אֵלָיו לֹא יַגִּיעוּ׃

אַתָּה סֵתֶר לִי מִצַּר תִּצְּרֵנִי רָנֵּי פַלֵּט תְּסוֹבְבֵנִי סֶלָה׃

אַשְׂכִּילְךָ וְאוֹרְךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ זוּ תֵּלֵךְ אִיעֲצָה עָלֶיךָ עֵינִי׃

אַל תִּהְיוּ כְּסוּס כְּפֶרֶד אֵין הָבִין בְּמֶתֶג וָרֶסֶן עֶדְיוֹ לִבְלוֹם בַּל קְרֹב אֵלֶיךָ׃

רַבִּים מַכְאוֹבִים לָרָשָׁע וְהַבּוֹטֵחַ בַּיהוָה חֶסֶד יְסוֹבְבֶנּוּ׃

שִׂמְחוּ בַיהוָה וְגִילוּ צַדִּיקִים וְהַרְנִינוּ כָּל יִשְׁרֵי לֵב׃

פֶּרֶק מ״ג CHAPTER 43

שָׁפְטֵנִי אֱלֹהִים וְרִיבָה רִיבִי מִגּוֹי לֹא חָסִיד מֵאִישׁ מִרְמָה וְעַוְלָה תְּפַלְּטֵנִי׃

כִּי אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵי מָעוּזִּי לָמָּה זְנַחְתָּנִי לָמָּה קֹדֵר אֶתְהַלֵּךְ בְּלַחַץ אוֹיֵב׃

שְׁלַח אוֹרְךָ וַאֲמִתְּךָ הֵמָּה יַנְחוּנִי יְבִיאוּנִי אֶל הַר קָדְשְׁךָ וְאֶל מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֶיךָ׃

וְאָבוֹאָה אֶל מִזְבַּח אֱלֹהִים אֶל אֵל שִׂמְחַת גִּילִי וְאוֹדְךָ בְכִנּוֹר אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהָי׃

מַה תִּשְׁתּוֹחֲחִי נַפְשִׁי וּמַה תֶּהֱמִי עָלָי הוֹחִילִי לֵאלֹהִים כִּי עוֹד אוֹדֶנּוּ יְשׁוּעֹת פָּנַי וֵאלֹהָי׃

פֶּרֶק פ״ג CHAPTER 83

שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר לְאָסָף׃

אֱלֹהִים אַל דֳּמִי לָךְ אַל תֶּחֱרַשׁ וְאַל תִּשְׁקֹט אֵל׃

כִּי הִנֵּה אוֹיְבֶיךָ יֶהֱמָיוּן וּמְשַׂנְאֶיךָ נָשְׂאוּ רֹאשׁ׃

עַל עַמְּךָ יַעֲרִימוּ סוֹד וְיִתְיָעֲצוּ עַל צְפוּנֶיךָ׃

אָמְרוּ לְכוּ וְנַכְחִידֵם מִגּוֹי וְלֹא יִזָּכֵר שֵׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹד׃

כִּי נוֹעֲצוּ לֵב יַחְדָּו עָלֶיךָ בְּרִית יִכְרֹתוּ׃

אָהֳלֵי אֱדוֹם וְיִשְׁמְעֵאלִים מוֹאָב וְהַגְרִים׃

גְּבָל וְעַמּוֹן וַעֲמָלֵק פְּלֶשֶׁת עִם יֹשְׁבֵי צוֹר׃

גַּם אַשּׁוּר נִלְוָה עִמָּם הָיוּ זְרוֹעַ לִבְנֵי לוֹט סֶלָה׃

עֲשֵׂה לָהֶם כְּמִדְיָן כְּסִיסְרָא כְיָבִין בְּנַחַל קִישׁוֹן׃

נִשְׁמְדוּ בְעֵין דֹּאר הָיוּ דֹמֶן לָאֲדָמָה׃

שִׁיתֵמוֹ נְדִיבֵמוֹ כְּעֹרֵב וְכִזְאֵב וּכְזֶבַח וּכְצַלְמֻנָּע כָּל נְסִיכֵמוֹ׃

אֲשֶׁר אָמְרוּ נִירָשָׁה לָּנוּ אֵת נְאוֹת אֱלֹהִים׃

אֱלֹהַי שִׁיתֵמוֹ כַגַּלְגַּל כְּקַשׁ לִפְנֵי רוּחַ׃

כְּאֵשׁ תִּבְעַר יָעַר וּכְלֶהָבָה תְּלַהֵט הָרִים׃

כֵּן תִּרְדְּפֵם בְּסַעֲרֶךָ וּבְסוּפָתְךָ תְבַהֲלֵם׃

מַלֵּא פְנֵיהֶם קָלוֹן וִיבַקְשׁוּ שִׁמְךָ יְהוָה׃

יֵבֹשׁוּ וְיִבָּהֲלוּ עֲדֵי עַד וְיַחְפְּרוּ וְיֹאבֵדוּ׃

וְיֵדְעוּ כִּי אַתָּה שִׁמְךָ יְהוָה לְבַדֶּךָ עֶלְיוֹן עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ׃

פֶּרֶק קכ״א CHAPTER 121

שִׁיר לַמַּעֲלוֹת אֶשָּׂא עֵינַי אֶל הֶהָרִים מֵאַיִן יָבֹא עֶזְרִי׃

עֶזְרִי מֵעִם יְהוָה עֹשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ׃

אַל יִתֵּן לַמּוֹט רַגְלֶךָ אַל יָנוּם שֹׁמְרֶךָ׃

הִנֵּה לֹא יָנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל׃

יְהוָה שֹׁמְרֶךָ יְהוָה צִלְּךָ עַל יַד יְמִינֶךָ׃

יוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא יַכֶּכָּה וְיָרֵחַ בַּלָּיְלָה׃

יְהוָה יִשְׁמָרְךָ מִכָּל רָע יִשְׁמֹר אֶת נַפְשֶׁךָ׃

יְהוָה יִשְׁמָר צֵאתְךָ וּבוֹאֶךָ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם׃

פֶּרֶק ק״ל CHAPTER 130

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת מִמַּעֲמַקִּים קְרָאתִיךָ יְהוָה׃

אֲדֹנָי שִׁמְעָה בְקוֹלִי תִּהְיֶינָה אָזְנֶיךָ קַשֻּׁבוֹת לְקוֹל תַּחֲנוּנָי׃

אִם עֲוֹנוֹת תִּשְׁמָר יָהּ אֲדֹנָי מִי יַעֲמֹד׃

כִּי עִמְּךָ הַסְּלִיחָה לְמַעַן תִּוָּרֵא׃

קִוִּיתִי יְהוָה קִוְּתָה נַפְשִׁי וְלִדְבָרוֹ הוֹחָלְתִּי׃

נַפְשִׁי לַאדֹנָי מִשֹּׁמְרִים לַבֹּקֶר שֹׁמְרִים לַבֹּקֶר׃

יַחֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל יְהוָה כִּי עִם יְהוָה הַחֶסֶד וְהַרְבֵּה עִמּוֹ פְּדוּת׃

וְהוּא יִפְדֶּה אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכֹּל עֲוֹנֹתָיו׃

לְמַעֲשֶׂה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

When you feel weighed down by your mistakes, do not keep silent or try to hide them. Open your heart to Hashem in honest confession, and then immediately shift your focus to absolute trust in His forgiveness and constant protection, knowing that He never slumbers and is always guarding your steps.

Today, the moment you feel a heavy heart or a sense of spiritual distance, stop what you are doing, speak to Hashem in your own words to acknowledge your mistake, and then say out loud: 'My help is from Hashem, who forgives and guards my soul.'

אור החיים הקדוש · בראשית · חֲמִישִׁי

Explanatory English · Line-by-Line Edition

BERESHIT · 5TH ALIYAH

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This edition has no Ohr HaChaim commentary on this aliyah.

פָּסוּק יט — *Genesis 4:19*

וַיִּקַּח־לוֹ לֶמֶךְ שְׁתֵּי נָשִׁים שֵׁם הָאַחַת עָדָה וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִית צִלָּה׃

And Lamech took unto him two wives; the name of one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

פָּסוּק כ — *Genesis 4:20*

וַתֵּלֶד עָדָה אֶת־יָבָל הוּא הָיָה אֲבִי יֹשֵׁב אֹהֶל וּמִקְנֶה׃

And Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of such as dwell in tents and have cattle.

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

פָּסוּק כא — *Genesis 4:21*

וְשֵׁם אָחִיו יוּבָל הוּא הָיָה אֲבִי כָּל־תֹּפֵשׂ כִּנּוֹר וְעוּגָב׃

And his brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all such as handle the harp and pipe.

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

וְצִלָּה גַם־הִוא יָלְדָה אֶת־תּוּבַל קַיִן לֹטֵשׁ כָּל־חֹרֵשׁ נְחֹשֶׁת וּבַרְזֶל וַאֲחוֹת תּוּבַל־קַיִן נַעֲמָה׃

And Zillah, she also bore Tubal-cain, the forger of every cutting instrument of brass and iron; and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

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