



שְׁמַעוֹן הַצַּדִּיק הָיָה מְשִׁיבֵי כְּנֶסֶת הַגְּדוּלָה. הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, עַל שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים הָעוֹלָם עוֹמֵד, עַל הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל הָעֲבוּדָה וְעַל גְּמִילוּת הַחֲסִדִּים

The world stands on [was created to fulfill] three things. Torah – Learning, Avodah – serving Hashem with Karbanos, and Chessed – doing acts of kindness.



DAILY ACTIVITY

Challenge yourself write down at least 5 acts of chessed you did throughout the day, every day of the week.



CHESTED AT HOME CHECKLIST

Wow! I never realized how many opportunities for chessed there are all around me!

HOLDING UP THE WORLD

The world is compared to a chair that is supported on four legs. If one leg falls off, the chair will not stand. What must the craftsman do? Take wood and nails and support the chair.

Just like a chair needs all of its legs to be stable, the world needs all of its supports to exist. There are three 'legs' that uphold the world, and one of them is chessed. As we know, "עוֹלָם חֲסֵד יִבְנֶה" - the world is built on chessed.

A ROLE MODEL IN CHESTED

How? What is Chessed?

To understand what chessed is, we look to Avraham Avinu. Avraham Avinu personified Chessed, as the possuk says "תָּתֵן... חֲסֵד לְאַבְרָהָם". Avraham Avinu's tent had four doors and every passerby was welcomed in, wined and dined. There was another person in Tanach who excelled in

chessed: Iyov. Iyov also opened his home to guests, serving them food and drink, yet he was stricken with illnesses and punishments. Iyov asked Hashem why he was being so punished if he did so much chessed. Hashem responded, "You haven't even reached half the level of Avraham Avinu's chessed." What was lacking from Iyov's chessed? What was unique about Avraham Avinu's actions of chessed?

When Iyov served his guests, he gave them what they were accustomed to: to those who were accustomed to bread and water, he served bread and water. To Those who had higher standards, he served meat and wine. Avraham Avinu, on the other hand, sought to emulate Hashem. He saw how Hashem designed the world with exceptional beauty, with minute details just for our enjoyment. When Avraham Avinu cared for his guests, he did the mitzvah b'hiddur – considering what they

would want, rather than only what they needed. This is why Avraham Avinu is the symbol of chessed.

DO IT WITH THE DETAILS

This is the aspect of chessed we should strive for – to give more than what is asked, to figure out what extra details the recipient will appreciate. Because we emulate Hashem when we do Chessed, Chessed supports the world.

If a classmate asks for notes from a lesson he/she missed, it's wonderful if you do him the favor. But why not go an extra step and offer to explain the material?

If you go to the grocery for your grandmother, how about adding her favorite treat to the cart?

Every **חסד** we do, big or small, is huge! We have so many opportunities around us each day to hold up the world!

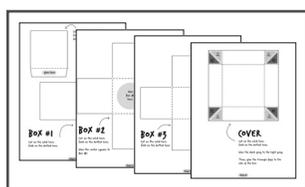


אנטגיגנוס איש סוכו קבל משמעון הצדיק. הוא היה אומר, אל תהיו כעבדים המשמשין את הרב על מנת לקבל פרס, אלא הווי כעבדים המשמשין את הרב שלא על מנת לקבל פרס, ויהי מורא שמים עליכם:

...Do not be like servants who serve the master for the purpose of receiving even a token reward. Rather, be like the servants who serve the master not for the sake of receiving even a token reward.



DAILY ACTIVITY



EXPLODING BOX CRAFT

Gain self-awareness as you discover your true motivations for doing things. Peel away the outer layers of your thoughts with this fun activity and take a step toward serving Hashem better!

It's hard to do what's right without receiving any recognition for it... but it makes me feel really good.

THE IDEAL WAY

חס ושלום, doesn't mean to imply, אנטגיגנוס, that there is no value to mitzvos that are done with ulterior motives, not solely לשם. Every mitzvah, even if done with our own benefit in mind, is worth more than we can ever imagine. What אנטגיגנוס is teaching here is that the highest level of performing mitzvos is doing so for one purpose alone: because I love Hashem and want to do His will.

THE REAL REASON

This is not at all easy. If we examine our actions closely, we'll find that many, if not most, of our actions are performed with personal gain in mind. What kind of personal gain? It could be the desire to make a good impression, or the fear of suffering the consequences. Perhaps we want to be complimented, earn a prize, or win a contest. There are many reasons that can motivate us to do something good.

Often, we're not even fully aware of the real reason we do things. If we concentrate, though, and try to 'peel away the layers' of perceived motivations, we'll find the truth.

EXAMPLE: Shimon is a role model for the whole third grade class when it comes to tefilla. Shimon says the words loud and clear, he follows along in the siddur and sings with passion. If you asked Shimon, "Why do you daven so nicely?" he'll answer, "Because I love davening!" But for some reason, on vacation days, Shimon's mother has to remind him many times to daven and he actually has a hard time getting excited about it. What happened? Doesn't he love tefilla? If Shimon would really think about it, he might find that the reason he davens so nicely in cheder is because he looks up his rebbe and wants to impress him with his beautiful tefilla. He loves getting compliments

from him, and he also knows Rebbe chooses those who daven nicely to lead the tefillos. Perhaps Rebbe also implemented a tefilla contest, and Shimon is trying to earn the prize. Now, does that mean that Shimon's tefillos are worthless, since he's really mostly thinking about himself? Of course not! His tefillos are precious to Hashem! But surely, Hashem has even more pleasure when Shimon davens nicely at home, without his teacher watching him.

BETWEEN ME AND HASHEM

The Mishna here challenges us to raise our level of עבודת ה' by doing מצוות even though no one will know, nobody will see and be impressed, and we won't get any recognition for it at all. Doing so proves that my only reason for performing this mitzvah is Hashem's will alone. And nothing can compare to the pleasure Hashem derives from that.



יוסי בן יועזר איש צרדה ויוסי בן יוחנן איש ירושלים קבלו מהם. יוסי בן יועזר איש צרדה אומר, יהי ביתך בית ועד לחכמים, והוי מתאבק בעפר רגליהם, והוי שותה בצמא את דבריהם:

...sit in the dust of their feet, and learn from them and drink their words with thirst



DAILY ACTIVITY

Be inspired by your interviewee's adherence to Daas Torah.



INTERVIEW

When you follow daas Torah, it makes you feel really calm, because you know you made the right decision.

IN THEIR WAYS

This Mishna teaches us to walk in the ways of our Chachamim. How so? So we become "dusty" from their footsteps. When a person walks on a path, his feet become covered in dust. And if he walks behind someone, the dust from the person in front of him billows onto his feet. We should follow the chachamim and not veer from their guidance, like a person who follows closely behind another and his feet get dusty from his steps.

In what way should we follow them? In the way we live our lives. Dusty footsteps are only seen outside, in the dirt. The Mishna specifically mentions dust to show us that our Chachamim do not only guide us inside, in the beis medrash, but also outside, in every aspect of our lives.

UNQUENCHABLE THIRST

והוי שותה בצמא את דבריהם... The phrase "drink with thirst" is strange.

It should have said "drink to quench your thirst" – once a person drinks, he is no longer thirsty. The Mishna is teaching us how to relate to our Chachamim: we should feel an unquenchable thirst for their teaching. A fish is surrounded by water, it lives in the water, and yet it always swims eagerly to a new drop of water dripped in from above. So too, a person should love to learn from his Rebbe so much so that no matter how much he learns, he should always thirst for more.

FAR-REACHING VISION

Chachamim have a special **סייעתא דשמיא** to give proper guidance. When one faces a heavy a decision, he should ask daas Torah and follow the advice he is given.

Not always is it easy to accept the words of our Chachamim. Sometimes, a Gadol puts down guidelines that we feel are unnecessary, or too extreme. We have to trust that they have a certain foresight

that we don't, and follow their directives anyway, without understanding.

All was quiet at the army base in the fields, when suddenly, a loud siren pierced the air. Zack jumped to his feet and called out to Jim, who was sleeping, "Quick! The guard at the top of the watchtower pulled the alarm! That means the enemy is nearing!" Jim stood up and exited the tent. He looked into the distance, in all directions, and replied, "I don't see anything. There's no danger at all. I'm going back to bed."

Foolish soldier! He trusts his own limited vision over that of the guard, who sees from an elevated vantage point and uses advanced binoculars.

We do the same if we dismiss the words of our Torah leaders. Our Chachamim are called **"עיני ישראל"** - the eyes of our nation. Their vision is much more far-reaching, and we must rely on their guidance.



יוסי בן יוחנן איש ירושלים אומר, **יהי ביתך פתוח לרוחה**, ויהיו עניים בני ביתך, ואל תרבה שיחה עם האשה. באשתו אמרו, קל וחמר באשת חברו. מכאן אמרו חכמים, כל זמן שאדם מרבה שיחה עם האשה, גורם רעה לעצמו, ובוטל מדברי תורה, וסופו יורש גיהנם:

...Let your house be open wide



DAILY ACTIVITY

Be the ultimate host with this beautiful gift bag, prepared in a few easy steps. Fill your guest's welcoming package with items they will appreciate.



DO-IT-YOURSELF HOSTESS BAG

I always thought Hachnasas Orchim was a mitzvah only for adults - after all, they are in charge of the house. Now I see that with small actions, I can do it, too!

[UN]WELCOME

David kneels near his top-quality camera and steadies the tripod. The scene is perfect, a glowing ball of sun setting majestically in the valley. If he gets this shot right, the job of his dreams is his. This is his trial assignment to prove his talent. He adjusts the lens and peers at the screen with satisfaction. His breath quickens and his finger hovers over the button, poised to click, when a most unwelcome figure saunters into view, blocking the breathtaking scene. "Hey, man, you have water, please, for a thirsty fellow? Maybe a chocolate bar?" David stares at him. A chocolate bar! Seriously?! Can't he see I can't be bothered right now?

The mishna teaches us, **יהי ביתך פתוח לרוחה** – your home should be open wide to welcome others. The mitzvah of **הכנסת אורחים**, while important, is not necessarily easy. It usually requires giving up of our time, strength, and comfort. We may be

tempted to say, "Go somewhere else. I'm too busy. I just can't be bothered now." "I'm tired and want to sleep in my own comfortable bed. Why must I give it up for my cousin who's coming for Shabbos?"

This doesn't only apply at home. **הכנסת אורחים** means making others feel welcome in any setting. Often, this requires looking past our own interests.

I have my group of friends and am comfortable in the class. It's hard to go out of the way to include a new classmate and make her feel 'part of the club'.

Or, I myself am adjusting to my new bunk in camp. It takes extra effort to notice the shy new campers who joined for the second half of the summer.

THE GREATEST PRIVILEGE

The ultimate model of **הכנסת אורחים** is Avraham Avinu. Avraham was ill, three days after his **ברית מילה**. In order to spare Avraham the physical effort of **הכנסת אורחים**, Hashem told

the very strong sun of **עולם הבא** to shine, so that visitors wouldn't come that day. But when Hashem saw Avraham waiting in the intense heat, wanting so desperately to perform the **מצוה**, He sent the **מלאכים** to pass by. As soon as Avraham caught sight of them, he ran to invite them, despite his age and illness. Not only was he sick, **אברהם** was talking to Hashem when the guests arrived. Nevertheless, Avraham asked Hashem to wait, **בניכול**, while he tended to the guests! Avraham did not seek excuses. He could have said, "I can't be bothered now. I'm talking to Hashem." Or, "I am weak today. Tomorrow I'll invite guests."

AVRAHAM'S LEGACY

Avraham performed all **613 מצוות** whole-somely, so why did the **תורה** spend a whole **פרשה** discussing his **אורחים**? To teach us, his children, how this important **מצוה** should be done. This **מצוה** characterizes us as Bnei Avraham, and we should therefore be careful to perform it properly.

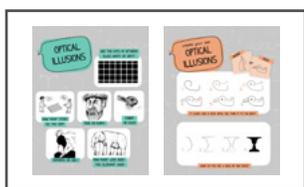


הוֹשֵׁעַ בְּוֶן פְּרִיחָהּ אוֹמֵר, עֲשֵׂה לְךָ רַב, וּקְנֵה לְךָ חֵבֵר, וְהוּי דָן אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם לְכַף זְכוּת

... Judge every person favorably.



DAILY ACTIVITY



OPTICAL ILLUSIONS

Let these optical illusions demonstrate to you that there is always another side to everything if you analyze it from a second angle. Then have fun drawing your own illusion!

When something seems hard to understand, I should remind myself that I must be missing details and don't see the full picture.

MIX IT UP

Flour, oil, eggs, sugar. Add the cocoa. Now all that's needed is a spoon, to mix the ingredients around and around, until a flavorful batter is formed and the original components are indiscernable.

It is not for nought that the Mishna uses the words, "הוי דן את כל האדם לכף זכות" when teaching us to judge others favorably.

Often, we see a person acting in a way that seems so cruel, dishonest, or insensitive that at first we think there is no way to explain it positively. In such a case, it is necessary to take the raw facts that we see, and mix them around in our minds, as if with a כף - a spoon - until we come up with a way to explain the action in a positive light.

BE CREATIVE

How far are we expected to go to think positively about others?

Baalei Mussar explain that the obligation to judge other favorably applies not just

when it is easy to see the good in someone. To the contrary - specifically when it seems impossible to view something positively, that is when we need exercise our דן לכף זכות skills. We need to think it over and use our creativity to concoct an 'excuse' for the behavior we saw - even if it seems far fetched!

Just like a defense attorney seeks every possible loophole to prove his client's innocence, we should see ourselves as every Jew's lawyer and try to defend his actions.

Suppose you saw a frum Jew enter a car on Shabbos and turn on the music. Your first thought might be, "I can understand that it's probably a situation of פיקוח נפש - but what gives him a היתר to turn on music?!"

How can you judge him favorably?

If we truly want to think well of others, we can always find a way. It turns out that this man was rushing to the hospital, and was gripped with such intense panic and fear

that his trembling fingers accidentally hit the wrong button when he tried to turn on the engine.

THE WHOLE PICTURE

We often 'attack' a person and get so angry at him, when really we're just missing one detail, a detail that changes the whole picture...

That is why it says, הוי דן את כל האדם - judge the whole person, with all of the details that surround his actions, and then it will be easier to view him positively.

A WORTHWHILE DEAL

Who stands to gain when we judge favorably? We ourselves! If we constantly see the good in others, we will attract many friends. And that explains why this directive follows directly after "קנה לך חבר" - for viewing others favorably is essential for maintaining good relationships.

Additionally, Hashem promises that if one always judges others favorably, he himself will be judged favorably by Hashem.

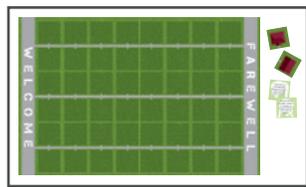


נתאי הארכלי אומר, הרחק משכונך, ואל תתחבר לרשע, ואל תתקרא מן הפרענות

Keep distant from a bad neighbor...



DAILY ACTIVITY



BOARD GAME

Evaluate the statements of potential 'friends' you meet in this game, and try to determine if such a companion would influence you in a positive or negative way.

I never realized it before, but now that I think about it, I've definitely started using some of the expressions my friend always says.

ONE BLACK GARMENT

Have you ever encountered this frustrating experience? You placed a load of white laundry into the washing machine, and when the cycle was done, the clothes had all turned a light shade of gray.

Did you ever think about the power of the single black garment that accidentally made its way into a load of white clothes - and tinged them all black?

Indeed, a small cloth is enough to cause damage to a whole pile of clothes...

IT'S IN THE AIR

"הרחק משכן רע ואל, נתאי הארכלי teaches us, Distance yourself from a bad neighbor and don't connect to an evil person. Why?

A man walks in the city streets, and notices people distancing themselves from him. Noting the repulsed expressions on their faces, he realizes that his foul-smelling clothes are putting people off. He argues with them, "My

clothes are completely clean! I was just in the slaughter house, but I did not deal with the animals at all, and my clothes smell already?"

It is remarkable that there is no need to touch or deal with bad-smelling materials to pick up the odor ourselves. It is enough only to be near them. The same applies the other way around; hang around potpourri or perfume, and its smell will cling to you.

THE RIGHT CROWD

The Rambam explains in הלכות דעות that the nature of man is to be drawn after his companions. By nature, people want to belong to a group, to feel part of "everyone else". But -

Stop! Pay attention!

Who is "everyone"?

Do you really want to be part of this particular crowd?

What behaviors do you learn from the company around you?

Who do you imitate?

We need to choose the right crowd, because they have a real power to draw us after them.

Korach's followers were primarily from Shevet Reuvein. Why? Was it a coincidence? Not at all. The people of Reuvein camped right near Korach's family, and that's how they were influenced.

INVISIBLE, BUT DEADLY

During the time of the חפץ חיים, there was an distressing phenomenon in which patients who stayed in an old hospital became infected with various illnesses in addition to their original ailment. After some investigation, they discovered the root of the problem: The walls of the hospital were so saturated with germs, that they infected the patients.

A bad hashpa'ah is likened to dangerous germs. Just by being exposed to people who think and act improperly, we can become 'infected' and affected by their negative ideologies and behavior.



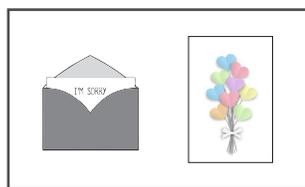
הוֹדָה בְּן טוֹבֵאֵי אֹמֵר, אֶל תַּעֲשׂ עֲצֻמָּה כְּעוֹרְכֵי הַדִּינִין. וְכִשְׁיָהִיו בְּעֵלֵי דִינִין עוֹמְדִים לְפָנָיִךְ, יִהְיוּ בְּעֵינֶיךָ כְּרֹשְׁעִים. וְכִשְׁנִפְטָרִים מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יִהְיוּ בְּעֵינֶיךָ כְּזֹכָאִין, כִּשְׁקֹבְלוּ עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת הַדִּין:

...Do not make yourself like the legal counselors



DAILY ACTIVITY

Offer an apology to someone you know you've wronged. Create a beautiful card to express your regret and make amends.



APOLOGY CARD (2 OPTIONS)

It's not easy or pleasant to admit I was wrong, but I found that if I do, others are quick to forgive, and resentment disappears.

LOOKING FOR LOOPHOLES

You probably look at this mishna, **“אל תעש”** *“do not make yourself like the lawyers in court, and think, When would I ever do that, anyway?”*

When, indeed? In truth, we act like lawyers all the time, without even realizing it.

In court, the lawyer attempts to minimize the severity of the crime which the defendant is accused of. He finds all types of excuses and legal loopholes, using anything he can to avoid punishment.

This Mishna warns us to avoid acting this way regarding our own behavior. The average person is complacent; he uses a special ‘pair of glasses’ when accounting for his deeds, amplifying every righteous act and minimizing any wrongdoings. Just like a defense lawyer, the Yetzer Hara presents us with every excuse to make light of our misdeeds, to convince us that “it’s not so wrong”. Worse than the aveira itself, therefore, is our inability to own up

and recognize that we have done wrong.

Furthermore, when facing trial in a human court, the defendant hesitates to confess, for if the judges hear what he has done, he will be punished. But Hashem sees and knows all our actions. There is nothing to hide, and we cannot avoid punishment by concealing our deeds. It is far better for us to acknowledge our mistakes.

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

What does a righteous person do? He examines his deeds with a magnifying glass, inspecting each action for the slightest flaw. He assumes responsibility for his mistakes. Our tzaddikim fast and do teshuva continuously to amend for their misdeeds.

Shaul and Dovid were the first two kings of Klal Yisrael. Both committed a sin (with good intentions) for which they were reprimanded by Hashem, but the two responded differently. Shaul, who was confronted for failing to kill all of Amalek,

including their cattle, defended himself. He claimed that he kept the best cattle alive to use as sacrifices for Hashem. For failing to own up, Shaul lost his kingship.

When Dovid Hamelech was reproached by Nasan HaNavi for placing the husband of Bas Sheva in the front lines, he didn’t try to explain or defend himself. He confessed immediately - **“חטאתי לה”**

BE A LAWYER - FOR OTHERS

This Mishna teaches us how we should relate to ourselves – to our own actions. Instead of focusing on our good deeds and minimizing our bad deeds, we should take responsibility for what we have done. Accustom yourself to apologizing for mistakes: “I’m sorry, that comment was insensitive.” “I apologize, it was my fault. I’ll try to be more careful next time.”

When relating to others, however, we should magnify their good deeds and seek to see the good within them.



שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן שֵׁטַח אוֹמֵר, הָיָה מְרַבֵּה לְחַקֹּר אֶת הָעֵדִים, וְהָיָה זֹהִיר בְּדַבְרֵיהָ, שְׂמָא מִתּוֹכָם יִלְמְדוּ לְשַׁקֵּר:

...and be careful with what you say, maybe they will learn how to lie.



DAILY ACTIVITY

Match up common exaggerated expressions with the reality each one represents. Notice how inaccurate we often are when we aren't careful.



MATCHING GAME

I say these things all the time! I never even thought twice. But now I see that I need to be more careful...

REALLY? IS THAT SO?

"I'll be there at seven."
 "I warned you fifty times!"
 "I'm never talking to her again!"

You've heard these phrases before. You've probably said them yourself in the past. The question is – did you actually mean it? Of course, you're thinking. And why not?

Let's rephrase that question: Did you actually mean *exactly* what you said? Did you intend to be there at seven, or that's when you thought to leave your house? Did you really repeat the warning fifty times? Are you sure you won't ever speak to 'her' again?

Sure, you can say that these are 'just expressions, everyone says it'. But let's take a look at this Mishna.

The Mishna cautions us, "הוי זהיר בדבוריך" – We must be careful with our words, because even a slight deviation from the complete truth can have serious ramifications.

When Sarah Imeinu heard from the מלאך

that she will give birth to a son, "תצחקי בלבה" - she laughed in her heart. *Could it be?* she thought with wonder. *At this age, I will become a mother?* When Hashem then demanded, "למה צחקתי" - "Why did you laugh?", Sarah answered, "I did not laugh." It wasn't exactly a lie. Sarah did not mean to mock or dismiss the news. But it wasn't 100% true, and that is why as soon as she uttered those words, the מלאכים immediately left. They could not remain in the presence of the slightest untruth.

SAY WHAT YOU MEAN

R' Mendel of Kotzk would often say in Yiddish, "א האלבע אמת איז א גאנצע שקר" – A half-truth is a complete lie. We sometimes permit ourselves to say a 'little white lie':

"I wasn't feeling well last night, I couldn't study." *Well, all those pages of notes were kind of giving me a headache.*

"I'm starved! I didn't eat a thing all day." *Besides for breakfast and a tiny snack.*

But the Mishna warns us to keep away

from any inaccuracies, "שמא מתוכם ילמדו לישקר" – lest others learn from your words to lie. If we get used to speaking inaccurately, then others, and ourselves, may think that it's not a problem to skew the truth.

...AND MEAN WHAT YOU SAY

Not only must we be careful that our words are exact, we also have to keep our word exactly as we said it.

It once happened that the daily minyan at the Chazon Ish's home was delayed a bit, and was only ready to begin mincha at 12:45. One of the men approached the Chazon Ish and said that he had made up to meet someone at 1:00, and remaining now for mincha would cause him to be delayed by a few minutes. The Chazon Ish instructed him to leave at once. It is better that they be missing a tenth man for the minyan, than for him to arrive later than the time he arranged.

Say what you mean, mean what you say.





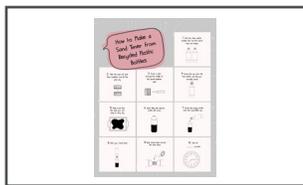
שמעיה ואבטליון קבלו מהם. שמעיה אומר, אהב את המלאכה, ושנא את הרבנות, ואל תתנדע לרשות:

Shmaya says: Love work



DAILY ACTIVITY

Create a sand timer out of household materials, and use it to time yourself as you perform tasks. See how timing yourself gives you more energy and motivation, and makes the work fun!



D-I-Y SAND TIMER

Once I started throwing myself into my work, I discovered how enjoyable it could be, and how energized it makes me feel!

DON'T JUST 'DO IT'

Stand up! Turn right! Pick up the box! Bring it back!

The above sound like technical instructions intended for a person to follow. But they can just as easily be intended for a robot. Robots can perform many of the tasks we do, too. So what differentiates between the two? One factor: **Emotion**.

Our feelings accompany each action that we do. We can perform tasks with vigor and excitement, so that it infuses us with energy and puts us in a good mood. Or, we can work with anger or resentment, with the feeling that it was forced upon us, and be left feeling miserable.

In this Mishna, the Tannah שמעיה deviates from the general style of his colleagues. Most of the Tanna'im teach actions that should be taken: *Do not be like..., Distance yourself from...* Here, שמעיה uses emotion. He did not say, "Busy yourself with work," but rather, "Love work." With this, he reveals an integral part of human nature.

Have you ever discussed art with a professional artist? Did you notice his passion and excitement? An artist does not create his art just for the return of the sale. The act of crafting - the stroke of the brush, adding details to a sculpture - this is his goal! He loves his work. The toil itself gives him pleasure that is worth way more than the money he will receive for the sale.

THE WORK IS THE GOAL

In Sefer Iyov it says, "אדם לעמל יולד" - Man was born to work. Rambam explains how work is good for a person's growth, since the sense of accomplishment satisfies him, puts him into a good mood, and drives him with a powerful force that leads to more positive actions. Boredom, on the other hand, makes a person feel empty and leads him to sin.

אדם הראשון was placed in עֵדֶן and given the command "לעבדה ולשמרה" - to work on it and to guard it. There was nothing for אדם to achieve with his toil; everything he needed was ready for him! But achieving

is not the point. The goal is the work itself, and the positive feeling it generates. And the result? The result is merely a secondary benefit of the work.

The Emperor אדרינוס, while traveling in טבריה, saw an old man digging and preparing soil for planting. Surprised, he asked the old man: "How old are you?" "One hundred years old," he answered. "And you think you will still eat the fruits of this tree?" Said the old man, "If I will merit it, then I will, and if not, then I'll toil so others can enjoy it." After a while, when the fig trees grew and bore fruit, the old man took a basket full of figs and presented it to the emperor. When the emperor discovered that he was the man who planted the tree, he ordered his servants to seat him in a golden chair and his basket to be filled with golden dinars.

Of course, we all gain satisfaction from the success of our toil. But we must first learn to appreciate the toil itself!

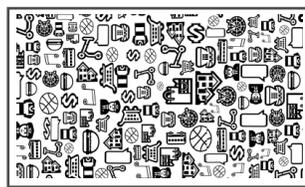


אבטליון אומר, חכמים, הזהרו בדבריכם, שמא תחובו חובת גלות ותגלו למקום מים הרעים, וישתו התלמידים הבאים אחריכם וימותו, ונמצא שם שמים מתחלל:

Chachamim, watch your words ... [for you may cause] that the Name of Hashem be desecrated.



DAILY ACTIVITY



'I SPY' ACTIVITY

Can you find all the copies of each icon in the display? Now here's the harder part: Can you find some ways that you can make a Kiddush Hashem with each of the icons?

A tip that helps me make sure that I don't make a chilul Hashem is to picture myself as if I'm on stage, and an audience is watching my every move. The truth is, we really are on show, and we never know who sees!

THE FLICK OF A SWITCH

Total darkness. Black shadows dance on the wall, creating a rustling sound. What is it? Bears? Thieves? A moment later, room is bathed in light, revealing the curtains swaying in the night breeze. All it took was the flick of a switch.

What is this wonder-switch? Is it magic?

It doesn't take a genius to know that the switch itself has no power to light up a room. It is the flow of electricity which creates a glowing energy when it reaches the bulb. The switch, however, can activate or stop the flow of electricity, indirectly causing light, or darkness, to fill the room.

The Mishna states, "חכמים... הזהרו בדבריכם..." ונמצא שם שמים מתחלל. Avtalyon warns the sages, who are used as an example for the rest ישראל, "Be careful with your words... and it will cause the Name of Hashem to be disgraced." We have to be exceedingly careful, because just a few words, just a tiny action – just the flick of a switch! – can

set off a powerful effect.

One cannot say, "Let me do what I want, and everyone else should mind their own business." Whether we intend it or not, our every action projects a message about Hashem and his nation. It can either 'activate the energy flow', causing Hashem's glory to fill the world, or, חס ושלום, it can 'obstruct the flow', diminishing His honor in the eyes of others.

NOT TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY

Causing a חילול ה' is an extremely serious matter.

When בני ישראל complained in the desert that they were thirsty, Hashem instructed Moshe to speak to a particular rock so that it should produce water. Despite the explicit instructions, Moshe hit the rock. Why? It is known that the שכינה spoke from Moshe's throat. Moshe feared that since he was angry at that moment because כלל ישראל complained, the שכינה had left him, and if he spoke to the rock, it might not

produce water, causing a public חילול ה'. Moshe was willing to suffer the עונש for disobeying Hashem's command, so as not to risk being שם שמים מחלל.

YOU NEVER KNOW

A once recounted what prompted her return to Yiddishkeit. She was on a crowded public bus, during an hour-long journey, which should have taken half the time. The ride was rough, the traffic dense, and the passengers were growing increasingly impatient. Some started blaming the driver's incompetence, throwing angry comments his way. Seated near this woman was a large Torah-observant family, and she could not get over how calm and patient they remained throughout the journey. This experience had such a profound effect on her, that she set out to discover what a Torah life is all about.

We never know the far-reaching effects of our conduct and actions.



עקביא בן מהללאל אומר, הסתכל בשלשה דברים ואי אתה בא לידי עברה. דע מאין באת, ולאן אתה הולך, ולפני מי אתה עתיד לתן דין וחשבון. מאין באת, מטפה סרוחה, ולאן אתה הולך, למקום עפר רמה ותולעה. ולפני מי אתה עתיד לתן דין וחשבון, לפני מלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא:

Know... to where you are going, and before whom you are going to [have to] give justification and a detailed report [of everything you did]



DAILY ACTIVITY



MAZE ACTIVITY

Life's a maze, with countless different paths to take along the road. It is crucial to stay focused on reaching the goal if we wish to make the right turns. See if you can complete this maze to the end!

Sometimes when I get very upset about something, like a cake that flopped or a rip in my favorite sweater, I try to remind myself that these things don't really matter in the long run, and it helps me not get angry.

THE GREATER REWARD

His eyes grow large and his mouth waters as he stares at the luscious marshmallow in his hands. He brings it to his lips... and pulls it away. He wants to eat it. Now. Oh, how he craves that sweet fluffiness! But no. He will wait.

In the famous 'Marshmallow Study' in 1972, a child was handed a small treat and offered the following choice: he can eat the treat immediately, or, if he refrains from eating the treat for fifteen minutes while the researcher leaves him alone in a room, he can get two treats. In follow-up studies, the researchers found that children who were able to wait for the preferred rewards tended to be more successful in life.

If you would be given a similar choice, would you be able to forgo the instant pleasure and wait for the greater reward? In life, whenever we are faced with a temptation, we face a similar test: will we choose instant gratification, or are we

strong enough to focus on the inestimable reward that awaits those who overcome those נסיגות?

Can we bite back that piece of הרע, or is the pleasure of sharing it too tempting?

The problem is that we often forget what our true goal is. In our busy daily marathon, it's hard not to get stuck in the now, and to focus on what's truly important. What can give us clarity, the power to acquire as much נצחיות as possible?

THREE ROAD SIGNS

עקביא בן מהללאל offers the following advice: along the long road of life, we should set up signs with messages that will lead us in the right direction. What are these signs?

The first – "מאין באת?" – Where do you come from? From nothing! What are you, really? Nothing more than flesh and blood! Our strength is limited. A robust man can fall sick, and be transformed into a weak patient with no strength at all. When man is confronted by his own powerlessness, it

humbles him and keeps him from sinning.

The second sign: "ולאן אתה הולך?" - Where are you headed? If we remember that in the World to Come, nothing has value besides for our good deeds, it will help us focus on truly worthwhile pursuits.

A wealthy man passed away, leaving two wills: one to be read immediately, the other to be opened in 30 days. The first will contained one request: to be buried wearing a certain pair of socks. A pair of socks?! Strange. But though his sons wished they could comply, halacha prevented them from doing so. Thirty days later, the sons opened the second will and began to read:

Dear Sons, I know that I've been buried without the socks. Before you take over my fortune, remember: In the end, you cannot even take along a pair of socks.

And finally, don't forget: "ולפני מי אתה" – "עתידי ליתן דין וחשבון" - You will have to give Hashem an exact accounting of how you used every minute on This World.



הוא הִיָּה אֹמֵר, אִם אֵין אָנִי לִי, מִי לִי. וּכְשָׁאֲנִי לְעֶצְמִי, מָה אָנִי. וְאִם לֹא עֲכָשְׁיוּ, אֵימָתָי:

If I do not [try to] help myself, who [will do so] for me?



DAILY ACTIVITY



GAME: OWN UP OR PAY UP

In this game of chance, you have to either own up and take responsibility... or pay the price. Practicing on the small things train us for bigger responsibilities in life.

It's very tempting to give excuses and 'get away with it', but learning to take responsibility for my actions will fortify me for life.

IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

Max grips the steering wheel as he peers up into the rear-view mirror in the front of the bus. No fair, he thinks as he looks at passengers behind him. They can all do as they please – eat, sleep, talk on the phone – while I have to focus on driving the bus. Why can they rest and I can't?

The fact is, though, that the bus lies in the driver's hands. If the bus veers off course because Max decided to take a snooze, the ramifications are solely Max's responsibility; he can't blame anything on the passengers.

Each of us are the 'bus drivers' in charge of our own lives. We can't afford to 'let the bus run its own course' – because we are responsible for the outcome! "אם אין אני לי, מי לי" – If I do not take responsibility for myself, who else will?

Imagine a muddy chicken on a farm. The farmer tries to wipe off the dirt, his wife pours water over its feathers, but still, mud clings to it. If the chicken would just spread

its wings and flap them, it could shake everything off. So, too, a person can have help and support from parents, teachers, and mentors, but ultimately, he is the only one who can make something of himself.

Suppose somebody says, "I don't want to work hard; whatever happens, happens. I don't really care." You might think, this person isn't going to get too far in life. But the Chazon Ish warns that such an attitude of indifference is far worse – it affects every aspect of a person's life and leads him on a path to destruction.

NO EXCUSES

It's hard to own up, even for small things. It's a lot easier to blame: "It's not my fault, I was just copying someone else." "So what if I didn't put it away, he shouldn't have touched it!" "I was absent, how was I supposed to know?"

Owning up takes maturity and courage, but it trains us to take responsibility for ourselves and our lives. Making excuses and 'playing victim' might help one avoid

punishment sometimes, but it won't get him anywhere in the long run.

Suppose רבי עקיבא would have said, "I'm 40 years old. I'm just a simple shepherd. I'm ashamed to sit in a kindergarten class!" He would probably have died a shepherd...

There was a particular ראש ישיבה who deliberately delivered his מוסר lectures in a low voice, so that it was difficult to hear if one sat even a few feet away. He reasoned as follows: However powerful and stirring his words are, only those who truly wish to take charge of themselves and work on improving their middos will hear. Those students will rush to get a seat in the front, and concentrate on every word. Those who sit in the back are transmitting a message that they are present because they have to be, not because they want to work hard - they don't have to hear a word!

What type are you? Are you ready to 'lean in and catch every word', or would you rather 'take it easy and sit in the back'?

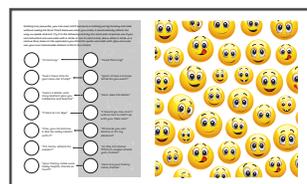


שְׂמַאי אָמַר, עֲשֵׂה תוֹרַתְךָ קֶבֶע. אָמַר מְעַט וְעֲשֵׂה הַרְבֵּה, וְהָיָה מְקַבֵּל אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם בְּסִבָּר
פְּנִים יְפוֹת:

... greet every person with a cheerful face



DAILY ACTIVITY



'SAID WITH A SMILE' ACTIVITY + D-I-Y SMILEY STICKERS

Analyze the quotes and see how easy it is to tell which ones were said with a smile. You can also have some fun creating your own smiley stickers, and stick one wherever it will cheer someone up!

You know those people who are always smiling and making others feel good? I would love to be such a person; I guess the only way to get there is by starting to smile today!

THE POWER OF A SMILE

Here's a fascinating experiment that was conducted on a group of 40 infants, which were divided into two groups of 20: All babies were housed in the same room and cared for by nurses who provided them with all the food, toys and necessities a baby needs. There was just one difference: The nurses who cared for the babies in Group A did so with love and warmth, singing, smiling and talking to them. The babies in Group B, however, received only their technical physical needs, not even a smile.

The results were undeniable: After several months, the first group of babies were all thriving, alert, active and generally happy babies. The second group, who received no emotional care, were underdeveloped, passive, and uninterested in their surroundings. They cried a lot and did not communicate.

Look at the power of a smile and a little warmth; see the effect it can have, even in infants! Chazal teach, "גדול המלבין שינים לחבור",

Greater is one who makes teeth white, than one who gives him milk. Giving a smile (thereby revealing your white teeth) is more valueable than giving basic needs, like food. It's not always what we give, it's how we give it.

NOT WHAT YOU GIVE, BUT HOW

הנותן פרוטה לעני מתברך בשש ברכות, והמפייס בדברים מתברך באחת עשרה ברכות.
One who gives a penny to the poor is blessed in six blessings, and one who encourages him with words is blessed with eleven blessings.

There was a woman who used to go from door to door collecting money in a certain neighborhood. Though she knew that the family who lived at the edge of town had little money to give, she nevertheless looked forward to going there. "I know you can't give me much money," she explained each time she visited. "But your warm smile and encouraging words give me more joy than a large donation."

שלמה המלך attested to this himself. When he was banished from his throne, forced to beg for food, a man invited him for a meal and served him many delicacies. While שלמה המלך ate, his host reminisced about the days when the king was in the palace, bemoaning שלמה's current sorry state. שלמה המלך cried throughout the meal. The next day, a poor man offered him a simple repast, while he spoke words of consolation and encouragement. Despite the meager meal offered by the pauper, שלמה המלך preferred it over eating a hearty feast while hearing harsh talk.

That is why Chazal say, המקבל את חברו בסבר פנים יפות אפילו לא נתן לו כלום מעלה עליו הכתוב - one who greets his friend with a pleasant, smiling face, even if he gave him nothing, it is considered as if he gave him all the good gifts in the world.

So next time you have the opportunity, give someone a smile. Show a bit of warmth, and see how far it can go!

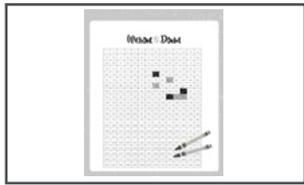


רבו גמליאל היה אומר, עשה לך רב, והסתלק מן הספק, ואל תרבה לעשר אַמְדוֹת:

... remove yourself from uncertainty



DAILY ACTIVITY



PIXEL ART

Identify the voice of the doubt that tries to justify things that are really wrong. Use the key to shade the squares grey or black to reveal the mystery image!

My 'justification' voice pipes up all the time, trying to convince me to do all kinds of things. Now I know that it's really אַמְתָּק speaking...

SHADES OF GREY

I have two buckets of paint before me.

Black paint: Deep, dark, and intense.

White paint: Clean and pure.

What happens if I take a bit of the black paint and drop it into the white?

Or a drop of the white gets mixed into the black paint? Well, then, the black is no longer as intense as it was, and the white takes on a grey tone.

Not everything is black or white, wrong or right. There are many shades of grey in between, and that's where a person can be left in doubt: *What do to? Which way to go? is this right or wrong?*

THE DANGER OF DOUBT

This mishna advises: הסתלק מן הספק - remove yourself from doubt.

Serious doubt can be dangerous. The tanna תלמיד was a brilliant אבוי-ה ר' מאיר, and the primary teacher of ר' חננין. Yet, despite his vast knowledge, he ultimately strayed from the תורה path and threw away

his former life... all because of one ספק that he had.

Chazal teach, "ספק עבירה קשה מעבירה" - it is worse when someone commits a sin that he isn't sure is wrong, than if he commits an act that he knows is an עבירה.

Why? Because after a person sins knowingly, his conscience is plagued by a feeling of guilt, which causes him to do תשובה. But when a person is unsure, he justifies his actions, and doesn't feel guilty at all, so he never feels the need to repent.

EISAV'S WEAPON

It is interesting to note that the גימטריא of עשו and the everlasting enemy of כלל ישראל - is the same as the word "ספק". With its very first attack, עמלק succeeded in 'cooling off the boiling bathtub' - until then, all the nations regarded בני ישראל as 'untouchable' and wouldn't dare attack them. עמלק came and showed, "See? They're not so fearsome, after all." The force of עמלק continues to

plant seeds of doubt regarding forbidden things: *What's so bad? Maybe it's fine?*

That is why עשו is compared to a חזיר. In the תורה, the חזיר is one of the four animals that possess only one the signs of כשרות. Unlike the other three, who chew their cud but do not have split hooves, the חזיר does have split hooves, but does not chew its cud. The גמרא tells us that the חזיר sticks out its leg to show, "See, I'm נכשר!", when in reality it is the most טמא of animals. So, too, the force of עשו tries to make sins look okay from the outside, and thus convince one to sin.

AVOID THE TRAP

Our task is to recognize that niggling voice of doubt and justification as the force of עשו and עמלק, and not be fooled it.

How can we make sure that we don't fall into the trap of doubt? The mishna starts off with the solution: עשה לך רב והסתלק מן הספק - Appoint for yourself a רב, and he will help you resolve your doubts.





בן הוא הא אומר, לפום צערא אגרא:

The reward for a mitzvah is in proportion to the work exerted.



DAILY ACTIVITY



D-I-Y PUPPET SHOWS

Create your own adorable puppets with basic materials, then use them to act out a puppet show with a friend! Entertain your younger siblings while imparting a valuable lesson about the worth of our efforts.

I often get discouraged when I try and try and don't see results, but I remind myself that my efforts are worthwhile and precious to Hashem.

MORE PAIN, MORE GAIN

He was walking alone, reviewing his learning, when a man approached. "Rabbi," he said, "would you like to buy a painting?" The artist gestured toward his nearby display, and pointed out a particular painting of a goose. "See this one?" he continued passionately. "This is my most expensive piece, since it is most detailed and realistic."

The rabbi looked at the price tag and said, "I don't understand. A real goose costs a fraction of this price, and this painting only resembles the real thing!" "It is self-understood," explained the artist. "A painting's price reflects the amount of time and effort invested in it; the more effort, the higher the price."

The Rabbi continued on his way thoughtfully. When recounting the experience, he told his students, "If the value of a simple object is calculated like that, how much more so with רחמיית! The more effort we invest, the harder we toil, the more reward we will earn."

When a farmer calculates the value of his crop, he adds up the amount of bushels, and calculates how much he can sell them for. There are hours of toil behind each bushel, time spent planting, weeding, and fertilizing, but he can't charge for that. And if it doesn't rain, or disease destroys his crop, he farmer is left with nothing, regardless of his sweat and toil. On this world, one is generally paid based on productivity, regardless of the effort. Only Hashem can accurately calculate every bit of effort expended and reward us for it.

Often, we look around and notice another person's devout תפילה, or his masterful self-control, and we get discouraged: *To him, it seems to come so easily, while I struggle so much to have כונה/control my anger. I'll never get up to his level, so why try?*

This misha teaches us not to despair, because Hashem looks at our efforts, not at our accomplishments: "לפום צערא אגרא" - although to us it seems like we struggle and get nowhere, Hashem values the

struggle itself and rewards us for it.

THE MOST PRECIOUS PLACE

When deciding on the location for His בית המקדש, He chose הר המורי, the mountain on which אברהם אבינו was prepared to sacrifice his son יצחק. Wouldn't it be more honorable to build the בית המקדש on הר סיני, the prominent mountain upon which the תורה was given? By choosing הר המורי, Hashem demonstrated that there is no greater attribute than overcoming struggle; there could be no better place for Hashem's home than the mountain where אברהם אבינו overcame his most difficult challenge.

A HUNDRED TIMES THE VALUE

Chazal teach, 'אחד בצער ממה שלא בצער' - a מצוה performed with difficulty is worth 100 times more than a מצוה performed with ease! So instead of giving up on מצוות that present a huge challenge, or feeling discouraged when we try and don't seem to succeed, remember how much Hashem cherishes our efforts, and how much we will be rewarded.



חֲמִשָּׁה תְּלֻמִידִים הָיוּ לוֹ לְרֵבֵן יוֹחָנָן בֶּן זַפְאִי, וְאֵלוּ הֵיוּ... וְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲרָה. הוּא הָיָה מוֹנָה שְׁבָחוּ... וְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲרָה, כַּמְעִין הַמִּתְגַּבֵּר...

...and Rabi Elazar ben Arach is like a fountain that flows with ever-increasing strength...



DAILY ACTIVITY

Create a bulletin and fill it with your favorite inspirational quotes. Keep these important messages in sight, and eventually they will sink in!



D-I-Y BULLETIN

I always wondered how some people can go through such difficult challenges, and remain strong, while others break down. They must be drawing upon a strong foundation of *אמונה* inside of them.

FULLY CHARGED

Low battery. Please connect to a power source.

It happens to everyone at some point - usually at the most inopportune times. You're about to snap the perfect picture, and the camera battery dies. You need to make an important call, but your phone battery is depleted. It's annoying, frustrating, and highly inconvenient.

There are solutions, of course. It's a good idea to have a spare battery handy all the time. Better yet, take along a power bank so that you can recharge your device. But the best idea of all is to make sure your device is always fully charged so that you don't get stuck in the first place.

The *ספר אמרי שפר* offers another explanation for "מעין המתגבר". A spring flows nonstop, through rain or shine, thunderstorms and blizzards. So, too, a person has to be able to move forward in all kinds of 'weather' and situations, and not get stuck in difficult times. How? By building himself up in *אמונה* and *השקפה* during calm, smooth times, a person 'charges his battery' so that he has the power to continue when the winds blow.

TOIL NOW FOR LATER

אוגר בקיץ בן, *שלמה המלך, ספר משלי* In *He who gathers in the summer is wise*. Someone who toils throughout the summer to fill his warehouses will have what to live off during the long winter, while a person who spends his summer relaxing in the sun will be left with nothing to carry him through the next season.

מלבים explains that this refers to a man who learns throughout his life - when he grows old and no longer has the ability to be *תורה* new *מחדש*, he can still learn because

he accumulated so much knowledge.

WITHOUT FAIL

We can learn the importance of consistent 'עבודת ה' from the *קרבן תמיד*, which was offered every morning and every evening in the *בית המקדש*, without fail. 'Morning' represents good times, while 'evening' symbolizes dark, difficult periods - throughout it all, we need to consistently serve Hashem with the same devotion.

It says, "מצא חן במדבר" - Hashem was fond of בני in the desert. Why specifically in the desert? The Yidden were on a higher level by *יצירת מצרים* - they were even able to perceive the *שכינה*! The answer is because Hashem favored their devotion to Him throughout their travels in the desert, when it was often difficult. From where did they take the strength to carry on? They drew upon the abundance of *אמונה* that they absorbed during *יצירת מצרים*. Let's try to 'stock up' on *אמונה* and inspiration, so that our 'battery is fully charged' at all times!



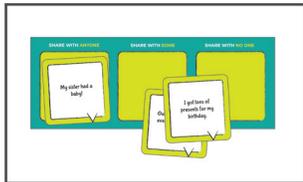
שָׁמְעוֹן בְּנֵו אֹמֵר, כֹּל יְמֵי גְדֻלָּתִי בֵּין הַחֲכָמִים, וְלֹא מָצָאתִי לְגוֹף טוֹב אֲלֵא שְׁתִּיקָה. וְלֹא הַמְדַרְשׁ הוּא הָעֵקֶר, אֲלֵא הַמַּעֲשֵׂה. וְכֹל הַמְרַבֵּה דְבָרִים, מְבִיא חֶטָּא:

All my days I grew up among Chachamim, and have not found anything better for a person than silence.



DAILY ACTIVITY

Analyze the statements on each card and decide for each one, "Who would I tell this to?" Place the card in the correct pile, based on your decision.



'TELL WHOM?' ACTIVITY

The words are on the tip of my tongue, but wait- Is it important? Wisdom is to know when to say and when not to say that comment

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING

The notice is posted prominently, warning the developers of the impending deadline. Within a week, the upper ten floors of the skyscraper, which exceed the municipal zoning laws, must be destroyed.

"Fats are important," the nutritionist explains to her client. "But too much, or the wrong kinds, can be very harmful."

A bowl of hearty soup is tasteless without salt. But if an extra teaspoon is added, the broth is rendered inedible.

Too much of anything, even a good thing, is usually not good. In any field, the professional knows what the right measure is.

The top professors of body and soul, our חכמים, have taught us regarding speech: "לא מצאתי לגוף טוב משתיקה" - according to רבן who claims to have grown up all his life among the sages, the best formula for the human body and the נשמה is silence. If

words are worth money, silence is worth gold.

THE TRUE ARTIST

Anyone can put a paintbrush to canvas and fill it with strokes of color. But one who uses precise strokes, with the right amount of pressure, perfect blends of color - he is a true artist. The masterpiece he creates is possible only due to the many hours of practice and training he invested.

We, too, must be like an artist when it comes to our speech. "מהי אומנותו של אדם" - What is the art of a person on this world? To make himself like a mute. The art of silence, like any other art, requires a lot of training and practice until one becomes a master.

TO SAY OR NOT TO SAY

ישפה's stone on the חושן was called beautiful, because he kept quiet and did not reveal to יוסף that יוסף was

sold. If בנימין remained silent, why do we praise him that he had a mouth? Because only he who can control his mouth from speaking, truly owns his mouth.

The wisdom is to know when to say, and when not to say.

Rav Dovid Trenk זצ"ל was a master מוהר. He was once consulted by another מוהר about how to deal with a בחור who did something terribly wrong. "What should I say to him?", he asked.

Rav Dovid looked at him and replied, "Say nothing." He then added, "And do you know how hard it is to say nothing?"

It takes a lot of self control not to blurt out something that we want to say. It might be sensitive information about someone, or good news that is not yet meant to be public. It may mean keeping silent after witnessing a wrongdoing, or holding back a personal question when we're so curious. But we can do it.