

CHAPTER 2: MISHNA 6: PART 5

by Rabbi Shaya Karlinsky

He (Hillel) used to say: A boor is not one who fears sin; nor can an ignorant person be pious. A shy person does not learn, and an [overly] strict person is not one who can teach. And not everyone who increases commerce ("sechorah") becomes wise. And in a place where there are no "people," attempt to be a "person."

Another perspective on our Mishna can be understood in light of what we explained in Ch. 1, Mishna 18 (see part 2 of our classes on that Mishna). Man, as a creation dwelling in the physical world, gives to some and receives from others. This is the nature of the lower, physical world, which functions through mutual dependencies; in contrast to the upper spiritual and purely intellectual world, in which everything that exists has a pure independence. Pure "sechel" and absolute truth stand completely independent of any external factors.

Therefore, our Mishna focuses on the limitations of "sachranim," those whose livelihood is through "giving and taking" (buying from some and selling to others), which is completely founded on external dependencies. This is in contrast to a person whose livelihood is built on what he is able to produce himself. Even though this "producer" also needs to sell his products in order to ultimately make a his living, the primary income (or profit) comes from his own productive ability. The primary income of the "socher" (trader) comes from his ability to take from some and give to others. He has not produced anything from within himself, but has only been able to make a profit from what exists outside of himself. This reflects his connection to the material, as it is the material which exists through mutual dependencies (as we see in the physical world). It is for this reason that he lacks connection to the "sechel," since "sechel" is not dependent on things outside of itself. This is one of the reasons that one who is overly involved in commerce is distanced from true wisdom, the lesson of our Mishna. (These concepts will be further developed in Mishna 9 when we discuss the borrower who does not repay.)

The section in the Gemara (Eiruvin) that connects the verse "It is not in heaven" (Devarim 30:12) to "sachranim" indicates an understanding in line with our first approach (presented in the previous class).

The language of our Mishna specifically refers to one who is "**Marbeh** beschorah," involved to an excess. But one who is involved, even in commerce, only to the extent that is necessary, is no more

distanced from the "sechel" than the nature of his humanity dictates. True, this person is not attached to the "sechel." But as a human being who is a material creation, he can't exist on a purely intellectual/spiritual plane. The true deficiency arises only when he involves himself in "sechorah" with more effort than is necessary, indicating that his true attachment is to the material, giving him no connection to his intellectual/spiritual dimension. This is the precise intention of our Rabbis, rather than the simplistic way some people would like to explain our Mishna. If the intention our Mishna was to teach simply that one who is overly involved in business has no time to study Torah, this is a lesson that even simple people realize.

(We wouldn't need to use "Rabbinical band width" to teach such obvious lessons! :-) This is a common theme of the Maharal. If the average person could have figured it out for himself, then you know you have not understood what the Rabbis are really teaching. We need Rabbinical insight to teach hidden truth, which goes contrary to the simple understanding.)

Our Tanna has focused on the various dimensions of man's existence, teaching the need for perfection in each of them. Man has a dimension of "sechel" (intellectual/spiritual). Man has a dimension of "nefesh" (emotional). Man has a dimension of "guf" (physical). And man has his monetary possessions (necessary for his continued existence in this world). (The breakdown of the first three is found frequently in the Maharal. But the fourth one also is mentioned in a number of places. The most important place, and the place that we will discuss it at length, is in the first Mishna of the fourth chapter.)

If a person lacks "sechel," he will lack fear of Heaven and he will lack piety. Therefore, he must embody "sechel."

The lack of control in man's emotional dimension leads to his being overly strict, for anger emanates from the "nefesh." (See Devarim 19:6)

If man allows himself to be governed by his physical dimension, his behavior is not uniquely human. It is the nature of the true human to have a certain presence and self-confidence, while most animals have a certain shyness, causing them to back away when confronted by a person. (See Shabbath 151b, which teaches that there is a dimension of fear that a live human being engenders in animals. This is developed from the verse (Breishit 9:2) that "Your fear and dread will be on the animals of the earth...") So, an overly shy person lacks an element of human perfection, behaving in a way that is more befitting for an animal personality. (A human being that lacks true self-confidence lacks a perfection of his humanity.)

Finally, we are taught that one who is overly involved in "sechorah" lacks a perfection in relation to his monetary possessions. Lack of perfection in this area is also a fundamental deficiency, for money is what gives man a certain stability of existence in this world, and it is an integral part of the total person. (See Pesachim 119a, and what we will write Chapter 4, Mishna 1. The written shiur may be a couple of years off, at the rate we are going :-). But those of you who acquired a tape cassette of our

live shiur on that Mishna should be able to connect what is taught there to this Mishna.)

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