

CHAPTER 3: MISHNA 6: PART 1

by Rabbi Shaya Karlinsky

Rabbi Nechunia ben HaKannah says: Anyone who subjects himself to (imposes upon himself) the burden of Torah has the burden of the government (bureaucracy) and the burden of livelihood removed from him. And anyone who releases himself from the burden of Torah has the burdens of government and of livelihood imposed upon him.

This lesson also communicates (as did the previous Mishna) that through the Torah one has an attachment to G-d. It is for this reason that one who accepts upon himself the burden of Torah has the burdens of government and livelihood lifted from him. (The Maharal will explain why the first premise generates this outcome.)

You should know that there are three systems in the world which regulate the behavior of a person. A person is regulated by a system of nature, which requires man to plow, plant, and other activities dictated by the natural order of the world. Then there is a system which is not a natural one (with its fixed laws) but is a product of human choice, including a system of government legislation and political order, societal norms, etiquette, etc. Man is regulated by this system, since he is bound by the ruling body of the society in which he lives (monarchy, parliament, etc.). Finally, there is a Divine system, which is the system set up by G-d, regulating man's behavior and actions in a way that is aligned with the laws of the Torah that was given to him.

The first system is imposed upon man by the laws of nature. The second system requires man to behave according to rules imposed through governmental authority and human consensus. The third system is imposed by G-d. This system transcends nature (reflecting a metaphysical reality rather than a physical one) and is not the result of any human choices.

(Despite the imposed nature of the Divine system, man still has a choice whether to conform to this system or not. But at its core, this choice is really whether he will align himself with the reality of the Divine system, or to resist it. Just as the laws of nature CAN be ignored, with the natural consequences that follow, the Divine law can also be ignored. The consequences, however, can't be avoided. Stephen Covey likes to quote the line from the movie "The Ten Commandments" where Charlton Heston (in the role of Moses) says: "You can't break the law. You can only break yourself against the law." This "line" reflects a Midrash, where G-d responds to the complaint that Shlomo, by marrying more wives than the Torah allowed, has annulled the Torah. "A thousand people as great as Shlomo will be rendered invalid, yet not even one letter of the Torah can be rendered invalid" replied G-d to the complaint. See Talmud Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 2:6.)

When one submits to the authority of Torah, the person becomes connected to HaShem, and this connection liberates him from the control of other systems. The Divine system regulates the world in a way that transcends the material dimension of existence, while the first two systems are totally rooted in the limitations of Olam HaZeh, the physical world. One who is under the control of G-d transcends the control of governments and of natural systems, which are based on the limitations imposed on man by the material dimension of existence.

(We are in the introductory phase of this Mishna, and this last paragraph could easily lead to misunderstandings, if taken out of context. We are taught that "Lessons of Torah are poor in their place, but wealthy in another place" (Talmud Yerushalmi Rosh Hashana 3:5). When one tries to reach conclusions based on a limited examination of the sources, one is bound to get it wrong. This is even more true when conclusions are drawn without seeing even one complete section. The following sections will address the obvious need of man to conform to both laws of nature and the laws of the land in which he lives.)

The class is taught by [Rabbi Shaya Karlinsky](#), Dean of [Darche Noam Institutions](#), YeshivatDarche Noam/Shapell's and Midreshet Rachel for Women.
