



Your Actions Will Bring You Close

The end of the fifth *perek* of *masechet Eduyot* (5:7) describes the final moments in the life of *Akavya ben Mehalalel*. The first thing mentioned, is that he instructed his son to follow the rulings of the *Chachamam*, which conflicted with his own opinion. He explained to his son that he maintained his position since he learnt the laws as the majority opinion. Now, however, since they *Chachamim* were the majority, his son must adopt their position.

The *Mishnah* then continues that his son requested that *Akavya ben Mehalalel* instruct his peers to bring him close. *Akavya ben Mahalalel* however denied the request. When queried whether this meant that he found something wrong with his son, *Akavya* responded that “it is your actions that will bring you close, and your actions will distance you.”

The *Meiri* explains that the son was concerned that since *Akavya ben Mehalalel* had several points of disagreements with the *Chachamim*, it would impact his relationship with the *Chachamim*. *Akavya* however was not concerned that his disagreements harmed their relationship.

The *Meiri* however understands the continuation of the *Mishnah* differently to how it was explained above. When the *Mishnah* continues with the question, “did you find a flaw in me”, the *Meiri* understands that *Akavya* posed that question to his son. In other words, *Akavya* maintained his position in the various disputes since what he learnt was the majority opinion and it was therefore justified for him to maintain that position. Since there was no deficiency in doing so, his

son had no reason to be concerned of an issue that would distance him. That being the case, *Akavya* assured him that it would ultimately be his actions that would affect his standing.

Which “actions” would affect his standing? Academic achievement? Piercing novella? Breadth of knowledge? The *Meiri* explains that it is how he would relate to them – “treat them with respect and awe.” *Kavod* and *yirah*, how he would treat other, are attributes that earn respect.

The *Tifferet Yisrael* however asks why *Akavya ben Mehalalel* nevertheless denied his son’s request. What would hurt if slipped in a recommendation? The *Tifferet Yisrael* explains that there is what to lose if one is not respected solely because of his actions. *Akavya* was concerned that the *Chachamim*’s attitude to his son would only be because of his actions. The reason is that their attitude to him would serve to regulate his behaviour. Good behaviour would effectively be rewarded through recognition. If however, the son would not behave appropriately, *Akavya* wanted the *Chachamim* to respond with disdain so that his son would feel the importance of righteous behaviour. *Akavya ben Mahalalel* understood the importance of a religious environment, but not just immersion. The environment would also need to be critical of negative behaviour and reward admirable conduct to ensure growth within it. Had his son’s standing been established solely due to his father’s recommendation, he would have lacked this critical catalyst for growth.

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Revision Questions

עדינות ה' ב' – ז' ה'

- What are the six cases that *R' Yosi* listed that *Beit Shammai* is more lenient than *Beit Hillel*? (ה' ב')
- What are the three case that *R' Shimon* listed that *Beit Shammai* is more lenient than *Beit Hillel*? (ה' ג')
- What are the two case that *R' Eliezer* listed that *Beit Shammai* is more lenient than *Beit Hillel*? (ה' ד')
- What is the law concerning a case where two brothers marry two sisters and they both die without any children with respect to *Yibum* and *Chalitzah*? What is *R' Eliezer's* opinion? (ה' ה')
- What were the four *dinim* that were debated between the *Chachamim* and *Akavya ben Mehalalel*? (ה' ו')
- According to *R' Yehuda* on which *Tana* did they place a *nidui* and why? (ה' ז')
- What did *Akavya ben Mehalalel* request of his son before he died? (ה' ח')
- What did his son request and what was the response? (ה' ט')
- Which animal did *R' Yehuda ben Bava* testify committed a capital offence and was punished with stoning? (ה' י')
- What were the other four laws that *R' Yehuda ben Bava* presented? (ה' יא')
- Explain the debate regarding whether a limb from a corpse can be a source of *tum'ah*. (ה' יב')
- According to *R' Eliezer* what is a greater source of *tum'ah*, a live person or a corpse? (Explain) (ה' יג')
- What are the three opinions (*R' Eliezer*, *R' Yehoshua* and *R' Nechunya*) regarding *kezayit basar min ha'chai* and *etzem ke'seorah min ha'chai* and explain the rationale behind each of those opinions? (ה' יד')
- Explain the debate regarding a *peter chamor* that is lost. (ה' טו')
- What did *R' Tzadok* testify regarding:
 - *Tzir* from *chagavim te'emeim* and how did it differ from the *mishnah rishona*? (ה' טז')
 - A body of water where the *zochalin* is more than the *notfim* and why is this law important? (ה' טז')
 - *Zochalin* that pass over the "aleh" of a nut? (Explain) (ה' טז')
- What is a *kalal shel chatat* and what did *R' Yehoshua* and *R' Yakim* testify regarding if it is place on top of a *sheretz*? (ה' טז')
- Who disagrees with the previous law? (ה' טז')
- If someone accepted two terms of *nezirut* what, *bedi'eved* could be the minimum length of his *nezirut*? (ה' טז')

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Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
6 April ה' ניסן	7 April ט' ניסן	8 April י' ניסן	9 April יא' ניסן	10 April יב' ניסן	11 April יג' ניסן	12 April יד' ניסן
Eduyot 5:2-3	Eduyot 5:4-5	Eduyot 5:6-7	Eduyot 6:1-2	Eduyot 6:3-7:1	Eduyot 7:2-3	Eduyot 7:4-5

