

Promotional  
Sample



From the  
**SOURCE** with **SPIRIT**  
**Hilchot Bein Adam LeChavero**  
**הלכות בין אדם לחברו**  
מן המקורות אל הנשמה



# From the Source; with Spirit

## Hilchot Bein Adam LeChavero

מן המקורות אל הנשמה  
הלכות בין אדם לחברו



### Student Workbook

Written by Rabbi Binyamin Zimmerman

Under the Guidance and Advisement of **Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon**

**Copy Editor:** Rabbi Avraham Lifshitz, Mordy Oberstein, Alexis Levy

**Graphic Design:** Shulamit Meir, Shira Herskovitz, Aviva Rhein

Some of the Illustrations in the book Created by Freepik

**Production:** Yitzchak Bodner





**HESBER Director: Rabbi Binyamin Zimmerman**

**HESBER Business Manager: Yitzchak Bodner**

**This** work is produced by **HESBER**, an organization committed to providing top-quality Hebrew/English Source Based Educational Resources. **HESBER** operates as a division of *Sulamot* (formerly the *Mercaz HaHalacha*, the Halacha Education Center), and has served as the English language division of the *Mercaz* for the past few years.

Founded in 2008 by the well-known Rabbi/ author/ educator/ chessed personality Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon, the Halacha Education Center produces educational materials and leads educational initiatives in four languages, servicing tens of thousands of students and adults throughout the world. The Center's goals include making the world of Torah and Halacha accessible to all segments of the Jewish people – to Jews of all ages, with varying levels of knowledge and commitment, in Israel and the Diaspora.

**HESBER's** materials are marked by a unique style of instruction which allows Jewish law and values to be taught in an innovative and engaging manner. The *From the Source; with Spirit* curricula are studied by thousands of students each year throughout the English-speaking world, in more than 40 different schools on 5 continents. Each work is set to be part of a completely integrated, homogeneous and comprehensive curricular series spanning from elementary/middle school all the way through high school. After producing three separate curricula for high schools (on the topics of *Kashrut*, *Shabbat*, and *Tefilla*), **HESBER** has begun to develop middle school curricula as well, paving the way for an integrated curriculum.

This work on *Hilchos Bein Adam LeChavero* is our first *From the Source; with Spirit* book for middle schools. We are grateful for the collaboration and special partnerships with two schools, Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy in Los Angeles, CA under the leadership of Rabbi Boruch Sufrin, Head of School, and Hebrew Academy (RASG) in Miami Beach, FL, under the leadership of Rabbi Avi Bossewitch, Dean of Academics & Innovation. The insight of the staffs have greatly benefitted the development of this book and we view them as cherished partners in the initial development of these *Bein Adam LeChavero* materials.

**Contact  
HESBER:**

**Israel Main Office**

POB 230 Alon Shvut 9043300, Israel  
(972) 505-729-700  
[info@hesber.org](mailto:info@hesber.org)  
[www.hesber.org](http://www.hesber.org)

**US Office**

254 Chestnut ST, Englewood NJ 07631, USA  
(716) 216-3615  
[info@hesber.org](mailto:info@hesber.org)  
[www.hesber.org](http://www.hesber.org)

© 2018 All rights reserved by **HESBER** and the Halacha Education Center

For the overall benefit of Jewish Education, no part of this work may be reproduced in any form, without exception; including photocopying or storing or disseminating through computer retrieval systems, without written permission from **HESBER** and the Halacha Education Center.

# The Color Key For Identifying the Source of The Sources

In order to be able to quickly identify the nature of the various sources that appear in this work, the sources are color coded based on the time period in which they were written. This colorful codification system will hopefully help us trace the *halachic* process from the source in the Torah to the practical *halachic* rulings of contemporary *Poskim*.



## What would you think?

Think independently about the question before seeing the sources



## Straight to the Sources:

Study the sources inside in their original language.



## Food for Thought:

Additional questions or thoughts to contemplate before proceeding



## Important Terms

Important *Halachic* and Hebrew terms are noted so students can improve their vocabulary and remember primary terms



## A Little Lomdus

Advanced sections for students looking for added material. The flow of the chapter can be understood without these sections.



## Review

Charts and review questions that call upon the students to recall information and organize it. These review sections also serve as internal assessments.



## Summarize your thoughts

A space for students to put their thoughts together and record them.

מקור בתורה שבכתב (תנ"ך)

Sources from the Written Torah

מקור בתורה שבעל פה

Sources from the Oral Law (*Mishna* and *Gemara*)

מקור ממפרשי התלמוד הראשונים, ופסקי השלחן ערוך

Sources From The *Rishonim* (Early Commentaries on the *Gemara*) and the Rulings of the *Shulchan Aruch*

מקור ממפרשי השלחן ערוך ומהאחרונים

Sources From the Commentaries on the *Shulchan Aruch* and the Later Commentators

מקור מפוסקי זמנינו

Sources From the Contemporary *Poskim* (*Halachic Decisors*)

מקור מהסידור

Sources From the *Siddur*



מקור לא רבני

Non Rabbinic source



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Part 1: The Principles of מצוות בין אדם לחברו

- 1 מצוות - An Introduction to *Mitzvot*
- 2 *Mitzvot* that Deserve Special Attention
- 3 Distinguishing between מצוות בין אדם למקום and מצוות בין אדם לחברו
- 4 מצוות בין אדם לעצמו - A Third Element of Interpersonal *Mitzvot*
- 5 גמילות חסדים - Performing Acts of Kindness

## Part 2: תיקון המדות and והלכת בדרכיו: Developing a Refined Personality

- 6 An Introduction to *Middot* Refinement and Character Development
- 7 The 13 *Middot* of Rav Yisrael Salanter

## Part 3: The Overarching מצוות בין אדם לחברו

- 8 ואהבת לרעך כמוך - Loving One's Fellow
- 9 הכרת הטוב - The Attitude of Gratitude

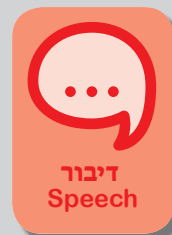
## Part 4: A Life of גמילות חסדים

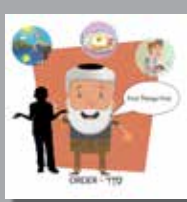
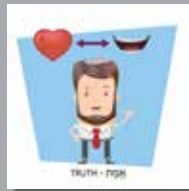
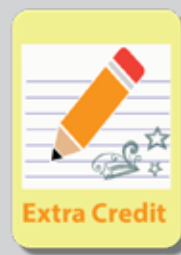
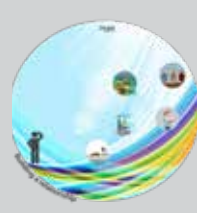
- 10 חסד - The *Mitzvot* of *Chessed*
- 11 בקור חולים - Caring for the Sick
- 12 הכנסת אורחים - Hospitality
- 13 The Milestone *Mitzvot* of *Chessed*- Assisting in Joyous and Sad Occasions

## Part 5: Putting the Tools into Practice

- 14 Student Analysis of 10 Interpersonal *Mitzvot* Using Acquired Methodology and Tools

# BEIN ADAM LECHAVERO • ICONS







# An Introduction to *Mitzvot*

## I. Introduction: Recording My Thoughts About the Subject



Before launching our study of an exciting new subject, let's examine our thoughts about some of the issues we will discuss. Understanding our attitude and perspective regarding mitzvot will help us begin the subject with a fresh look.

What do we know and think about mitzvot. What mitzvot do we view as most important?

## Rate the Mitzvot



If you had to rate the importance of each of the various *mitzvot* below on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being most important), how would you rate them?

The Mitzva	1-5	The Mitzva	1-5
Not stealing		Loving Hashem	
Not desecrating Shabbat		Learning Torah	
Not mixing wool and linen (שַׁעֲטָנִים, <i>Sha'atnez</i> )		Respecting and honoring your parents	
Not worshipping idols (עֲבוֹדַת זָרָה)		Davening every day	
Not eating non-kosher foods		Reciting or hearing Kiddush on Shabbat	
Not eating on Yom Kippur		Loving other Jews	
Not eating <i>chametz</i> on Pesach		Lighting Chanukah candles	

What differences do you notice between the *mitzvot* in the right column and those in the left?

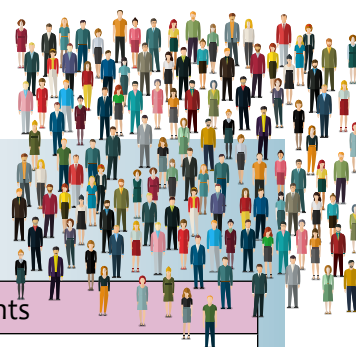
Would you consider someone to be properly following the Torah if they perform all the *mitzvot* in the right column but aren't always careful with those in the left column? Why?

Are there any *mitzvot* on the list that we might view as “the right thing to do” even if the Torah never explicitly said so?

You might have noticed that the *mitzvot* on the left are prohibitions, associated with *mitzvot* that don't involve other people. The *mitzvot* on the right, however, are positive *mitzvot*, some of which indicate how we should treat others. *Mitzvot* which instruct us how to treat others are known in English as **interpersonal mitzvot**.



To appreciate the role of interpersonal *mitzvot*, let's think a little about our relationships with our friends and family by filling in the following chart.



## Individual or Community:

Question	My Thoughts
Is it easier for you to perform <i>mitzvot</i> when you're alone or in a group?	
Is it easier for you to get along with other members of your family or with people you don't know?	
Would you rather work with others or complete a project by yourself?	
Do you think you would be happy if you were all alone on a desert island?	
Do you get along with people easily or is it hard for you?	



You might have realized that while each of us is a unique individual, we are also members of a community and society. Sometimes it is easier to act properly when we're alone, while at other times we need the support of others. It is not surprising that the Torah, which guides us to perfection in all aspects of life, instructs us both in *mitzvot* we should perform alone, as well as how to interact with others.

After recording our thoughts, we should now be ready to take off on our exciting new study adventure but let's just summarize our thoughts for a moment.



Before turning the page, think about this question: We all just rated the different *mitzvot*, but how do we know how important each one of the *mitzvot* is? What makes one *mitzva* seem to us more important than another?

---



---



## II. Are All Mitzvot Created Equal?

On one hand, many of us might feel that some mitzvot are more important than others, but on the other hand, aren't all mitzvot important? Can we really distinguish between mitzvot and consider some more significant than others?



Are all mitzvot equally important? Are some more important than others? What do you think?

---

---

Now ready to see what the sources have to say!

Note: This is something we will do often. After putting some thought to a topic, we will then open up the sources to understand the Torah's view on the issues.



### Seeing the Torah Perspective Inside

What does the following Mishna in Pirkei Avot say? How does this relate to our questions above?

משנה מסכת אבות פרק ב, משנה א

Rebbi says: ... Be as scrupulous (careful) in performing a minor mitzva as you are with a major one, for you do not know the rewards given for mitzvot...

רבי אומר... והוי זהיר במצוה קלה כבחמורה, שאין אתה יודע מתן שכרן של מצות.

---

---



The mishna makes it clear. **All mitzvot are important!**



if, as the mishna states, Hashem wants us to keep all the mitzvot equally, do you think one should be permitted to turn down a mitzva opportunity in order to do another mitzva they would prefer to do? Why or why not?

---



---

The Gemara discusses this exact situation. What principle does Reish Lakish state and why do you think that is?

תלמוד בבלי מסכת יומא דף לג עמוד א

Reish Lakish said: One may not pass over one mitzva (that comes their way) in order to perform another mitzva.

אמר ריש לקיש אין מעבירין על המצוות.



We have already seen two sources that express that every mitzva is important, and therefore we should not pick favorites:



הוי זהיר במצוה קלה כבחמורה:  
Be as careful with a "light" mitzva as a serious one.



אין מעבירין על המצוות:  
Don't pass over one mitzva in order to perform another mitzva



### But What if You Need to Choose?

What if a situation arose in which you only had time to do one mitzva, how would you decide which mitzva to do? Are there any mitzvot that could be considered more important than others?



What if you were in a situation where you needed to choose "the most important mitzva in the Torah", which mitzva would you choose, and why?

---



## The Question Posed to the Radvaz

This question is not just hypothetical, and was actually posed to one of the Rishonim (a survivor of the Spanish Inquisition), the Radvaz. Here's the background.

A Jew was falsely accused of a crime and jailed (something very common at the time). This Jew desperately wanted to perform as many *mitzvot* as possible while in prison. After pleading for permission to go to *shul* and daven, he was granted this opportunity:

**You may choose one day to get out of jail and perform as many *mitzvot* as you can manage. But only one day. Deliver your decision as soon as possible.**

The Jewish prisoner was overjoyed to have been granted one whole day to do *mitzvot*, but he wondered: Which day should it be? Which day is the most important to be out of jail? Which day can be used for the most important *mitzvot*?

While thinking about it, he sent his question to the Radvaz for assistance.

שו"ת רדב"ז חלק ד' סימן יג (אלף פז)

Question: Reuven was imprisoned in jail and was unable to get out in order to daven in a minyan or perform *mitzvot*. He pleaded before the officer ... who was unwilling to make any allowances other than to allow him one day of the year of his choice to be able to get a furlough from the prison. May the guide please teach me which day of all the days of the year should Reuven choose in order to be able to leave jail to go to the synagogue?

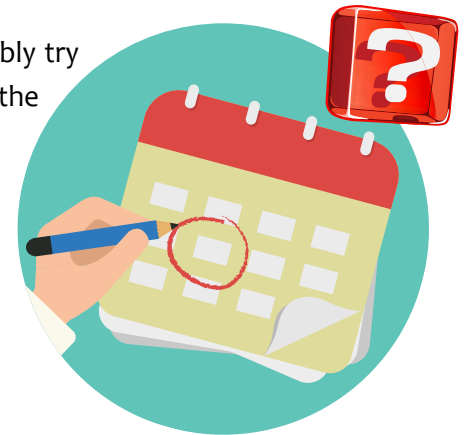
שאלה: ראובן היה חבוש בבית האסורים ולא היה יכול לצאת להתפלל בעשרה ולעשות המצוות והתחנן לפני השר... ולא אבה שמוע להניחו זולתי יום אחד בשנה איזה יום שייחפץ. יורה המורה איזה יום מכל ימות השנה יבחר ראובן הנזכר ללכת לבית הכנסת:

### What would you answer?

If you had a "get out of jail free" card for one day on the calendar, you'd probably try to choose a day where you could maximize your freedom to perform as many of the most important *mitzvot* as possible.

Think about some of the possible days you might choose:

- Maybe choose **Yom Kippur**, to spend time in shul doing *Teshuva*?
- Maybe **Rosh Hashana** to hear the *shofar*?
- Maybe the closest **Shabbat**?
- Maybe a different day, but which one?



Which day would you choose? Why?

# The Importance of Every Single Mitzva

How did the Radvaz answer this question? Let's take a look inside.

## The Radvaz's Response

שו"ת רדב"ז חלק ד' סימן יג (אלף פז)

Response: I have seen one of the wise men of our generation ... who at first wrote that it is best to choose Yom HaKippurim, afterwards he switched it for Purim... but it is not proper to rely on his opinion. But what is a proper source for us to rely on is that we have an established principle: *"Ein ma'avirin al ha-mitzvot"*, we are not permitted to pass over mitzvot (and no one argues with this principle). Therefore, the first mitzva that comes to a person which can otherwise not be performed while he is in jail, takes precedence, and we do not analyze if the mitzva that comes is a "light" mitzva or a more "stringent" one, as one does not know the reward for various mitzvot, and this is very evident to me.

תשובה: הנה ראיתי אחד מחכמי דורנו בתשובה ... בתחלה כתב דעדיף יום הכיפורים ואחר כך החליפו ביום הפורים ... ואין ראוי לסמוך על דבריו. אבל מה שראוי לסמוך עליו הוא דאנן קיימא לו דאין מעבירין על המצוות ואין חולק בזה כלל הלכך המצוה הראשונה שתבא לידי שאי אפשר לעשותה והוא חבוש בבית האסורים קודמת ואין משגיחין אם המצוה שפגעה בו תחילה היא קלה או חמורה שאי אתה יודע מתן שכרן של מצות וזה פשוט מאד אצלי.

The Radvaz answers that the prisoner should choose the first available day to leave jail- whether it be a holiday, a Shabbat, or just a mere weekday. Are you surprised by this answer?



If you look back at the Radvaz's answer, it's clear that he bases his solution on the two principles we saw earlier. Review each principle and explain how it impacts his answer:

	אין מעבירין על המצוות	והוי זהיר במצוה קלה כבחמורה, שאין אתה יודע מתן שכרן של מצות.
Meaning of the principle		
The Radvaz's application of this principle		

## No Difference Between Easy and Hard Mitzvot

Essentially, as the Radvaz explained, the Torah goes out of its way to show that all *mitzvot* are significant. We cannot treat one *mitzva* as being more important than another. We shouldn't choose favorites, as they are all favorites.



In this context, think about the following idea based on a thought by Rabbi Benjamin Bleich (from his book, *Understanding Judaism*). Read the passage and jot down some of your thoughts.

"The Torah only mentions a specific reward for two specific *mitzvot*. In the fifth commandment of the *Asseret HaDibrot*, i.e., the *mitzva* to honor one's parents, the Torah states that the reward is long life. The other *mitzva* is *shiluach haken* i.e., the *mitzva* to shoo the mother bird away before taking her eggs. This *mitzva* is also linked to the reward of longevity (long life)."

---



---



Let's take a look at the two separate *mitzvot* whose reward is long life. Underline or highlight the mention of long life in the pasuk, and explain what *mitzva* is being discussed.

Source	Mitzva
<p>דברים פרק ה פסוק טז</p> <p>כָּבֵד אֶת אָבִיךָ וְאֶת אִמֶּךָ כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוְּךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְמַעַן יָאָרִיכוֹן יְמֶיךָ וְלִמְעַן יֵיטֵב לָךְ עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ:</p>	
<p>דברים פרק כב פסוק ז</p> <p>שִׁלַּח תִּשְׁלַח אֶת הָאֵם וְאֶת הַבָּנִים תִּקַּח לָךְ לְמַעַן יֵיטֵב לָךְ וְהָאָרֶץ תִּמְיָן:</p>	







Why do you think the Torah promises long life specifically for these two *mitzvot*? Do either of the *mitzvot* seem easier to perform than the other? Should that make a difference?

---

---

Take a look at Rabbi Bleich's explanation and summarize it.

"The Talmud teaches us that honoring one's father and mother is the most difficult *mitzva* to properly perform. It recounts and provides numerous illustrations and examples of rabbis trying to fulfill this *mitzva*. One story tells of Rabbi Tarfon who would bend down and allow his mother to step on him every time she climbed into bed. Even that, the Talmud states, did not fulfill even half of his obligation! What is the easiest *mitzva* to fulfill? Imagine yourself walking down the road and you see a mother bird perched on top of some eggs. The Torah commands us to shoo the mother away before taking her eggs. That is so easy to fulfill -- it is just a simple wave of the hand. It takes no effort at all. It doesn't cost us anything. As the Talmud in Tractate Chulin states, it is the easiest *mitzva* to fulfill.

These two *mitzvot* are the only ones mentioned with a reward next to them because, in effect, they encompass and include all of the remaining 611 *mitzvot*. By telling us that the reward for both the simplest

and most difficult *mitzvot* are one in the same, Hashem is teaching us that all *mitzvot* are created equal. There is a reward given for both of these *mitzvot* and every one in between. If we had to choose one *mitzva*, what would it be? The first one that comes our way. Don't miss the incredible opportunity."

---

---



So far we have seen that the sources state that every *mitzva* is important and all *mitzvot* have great value. The better we understand the reason why all *mitzvot* are important, the easier it will be to know how to act when we don't have time to do all the *mitzvot* we would like to do and have to make tough choices.



## But Why is Each and Every *Mitzva* so Important?

Let's take a look back at the two principles we saw:

אין מעבירין על המצוות

משנה מסכת אבות פרק ב, משנה א

רבי אומר...וזהו זהיר במצוה קלה כבחמורה,  
שאין אתה יודע מתן שכרן של מצוות..

These sources seem to tell us a lot about why every mitzva is so important:

1. **Every Mitzva is Gold:** Even the most basic mitzvot are worthy of a tremendous reward.

Therefore, all mitzvot are significant.

2. **How Can we Know:** We humans can't determine which mitzvot deserve greater reward than others, so we would never know how to choose.



3. **The Reward is just an Added Benefit:** The purpose of performing mitzvot is not for the reward, and therefore, the level of reward shouldn't be on our minds.



Why do you think this is so? Why is it that every mitzva is significant, and can't just be easily pushed aside for the benefit of another mitzva?

### Two Reasons Why Every Mitzva is Important

There are at least two reasons why every mitzva is important:

1. Hashem doesn't command us to do a mitzva unless it is important.
2. All Mitzvot are like a team that work together towards perfection.

Let's explain each one of these ideas.

#### 1. Hashem Wouldn't Command Us in Unimportant Mitzvot

As we saw above, the *mishna* tells us clearly that there is no insignificant mitzva and even the "smallest" mitzva can offer the greatest reward, and all mitzvot should be treated equally.

Every mitzva is the word of Hashem, and if Hashem told us to do a number of mitzvot, He clearly knows they are all important and deserving of great reward. How could we even think that one would be more important than another?

This can be better appreciated when we understand what mitzvot are really all about. Let's make sure we know what the word מצוה means.

## What are מצוות?

In order to get a better grasp on mitzvot, let's investigate a little about them.



How would you translate the word מצוה?

Of the following terms, which do you feel best expresses what מצוות are all about, and why?

- Restrictions
- Requirements
- Commandments
- Opportunities

There is an important tool we will use often to make sure we understand the meaning of a Hebrew word.

### Researching the Definition

To understand the meaning of a Hebrew word we look for its root, its שורש/shoresh. Unlike English, every Hebrew word is a conjugation of its root (although at first glance Hebrew might seem like a difficult language, its rules are in fact very logical).



שורש: The root of every Hebrew word is referred to as its shoresh



In this case, what is the 3 letter root of the word מצוה, and what does it mean?

The word מצוה comes from the shoresh צוה, which means "command". Therefore, a מצוה is a commandment from Hashem.

Some refer to a mitzva as a "good deed" and in fact it is a good deed for us to do, because we are listening to Hashem's commandment. [You might think that the word "commandment" is a scary word, but even in English it begins with "co", like "cooperation"- it is a way of connecting]



מצוה: a divine commandment (From the Hebrew root צוה meaning command.)

A mitzva is a commandment that is actually for our benefit, and enables us to know what Hashem wants us to do.

Think about the *beracha* we recite before performing mitzvot. It's clear from the *berachot* that each *mitzva* commandment helps us achieve added holiness. How do you see that in the language of

these *berachot*?

We recognize that Hashem has: **Sanctified us (Kedusha) with His mitzvot and commanded us** to perform.... (a specific mitzva)

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו...

## A Deeper Appreciation of the Meaning of מצוות

Some sources note that beside the shrosh צוה, the word מצוה resembles the word צוּתָא, which means relationship. How does Rav Levi Yitzchak MiBerditchev explain this idea.

קדושת לוי (רב לוי יצחק מברדיצ'ב), וירא לד

The deeper meaning of the word מצוה is derived from צוּתָא, a word describing companionship and relationship. In other words, the performance of a מצוה is meant to establish a relationship between man and Hashem.

וְהָיָה לְשׁוֹן מִצְוָה פְּרוּשׁ לְשׁוֹן חֵבֶר קְנוּדָה לְשׁוֹן צוּתָא חֲדָא. ...  
כְּפִירוּשָׁה שֶׁל מִצְוָה שֶׁמִּתְחַבֵּר עִצְמוֹ עַל יְדֵי כֵן לְהַבְרָא יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמִי  
יְכוֹ'

In other words, performing *mitzvot* enables us to develop a relationship with Hashem. He put us in the world for a purpose and performing *mitzvot* helps us achieve that purpose.



Often, when trying to have a relationship with others, we would be glad to do what would make them happy, but we don't know what they would want us to do. Think about how Hashem commanding us in His *mitzvot* actually helps us know how to develop a relationship with Him.

With this in mind, we can look at each and every *mitzva* as an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with Hashem.

Take a look at the picture below and explain how you feel performing *mitzvot* helps us strengthen our relationship with Hashem.



---

---

---

---

---



Review the meanings of the word מִצְוָה as both a command and a means of strengthening our relationship with Hashem. How similar are the two meanings?



## The Mitzva Gift

The mishna even tells us that we should be happy that there are a lot of mitzvot.

What exactly does the following mishna say?

משנה מסכת מכות פרק ג משנה טז

Rabbi Chanania ben Akashia says: *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* wanted to merit the Jewish people, therefore, he increased for them the Torah and mitzvot, as the *pasuk* states: "Hashem desires on account of his righteousness that the Torah should be made great and powerful."

רבי חנניה בן עקשיה אומר: רצה הקדוש ברוך הוא לזכות את ישראל, לפיכך הרבה להן תורה ומצוות, שנאמר: (ישעיה מב, כא) "ה' חפץ למען צדקו, יגדיל תורה ויאדיר".



Mitzvot are such gifts that the more mitzvot we have the more it shows Hashem's love and care for us.



**Extra Credit:** Do you know two occasions where this Mishna is commonly recited? Why do you think that is?

### Rambam- Acing Every Mitzva, One at a Time

Take a look at the Rambam's fascinating understanding of this *mishna*. What does he say?

פירוש הרמב"ם למשנה מכות ג, טז

It is a pillar of faith in the Torah that if a person would fulfill any one of the 613 mitzvot properly and suitably, without any ulterior motives involved, but rather with the proper mindset out of love, he will be worthy of the world to come. Therefore Rabbi Chananyah said since there are so many mitzvot it is impossible that a person will not do one during the course of his entire life wholeheartedly and as such, merit the soul's eternal life because of that action.

מיסודות האמונה בתורה שאם קיים האדם מצוה מתרי"ג מצוות כראוי וכהגון ... ועשה לה שמה מאהבה... הרי הוא זוכה בה לחיי העולם הבא, לכן אמר ר' חנניה כי מחמת רבוי המצוות אי אפשר שלא יעשה האדם אחת בכל ימי חייו בשלמות ויזכה... באותו המעשה.

The Rambam notes that since every mitzva is important, every mitzva one masters makes one deserve tremendous reward. Based upon the Rambam's approach, we can begin by trying to perfect our performance of one mitzva at a time.



# Mastering a Mitzva

Based on the Rambam’s explanation about perfecting one’s performance of one mitzva at a time, many individuals looked to find mitzvot that weren’t being observed properly. They would then learn about the mitzva and teach others what they learned about the importance and proper fulfillment of that mitzva. Consider this story about Joseph Rosenberger, the man who brought *sha’atnez* checking to American shores:

In post World War II America, the *mitzvah* of *sha’atnez* seemed to have been forgotten. Rabbi Yosef Rosenberger was a young refugee from Vienna, Austria. He arrived in the United States in 1940, after surviving Dachau concentration camp. His father had been in the clothing trade, and preventing the prohibition of *sha’atnez* became a burning passion for Rabbi Rosenberger. Despite being destitute and living in a refugee home, he saw a higher need and set out to fulfill it.

He studied textiles and learned to identify linen in wool clothes. After a year he developed a simple laboratory test to identify *sha’atnez*. His efforts showed people how simple it was to fulfill this *mitzva*, and he is credited with the widespread fulfillment of this *mitzva* in America.

Not everyone can be as big a trailblazer as R' Yosef Rosenberger, but everyone can start perfecting their own



*mitzvot* one by one. Choose a *mitzva* that you would like to learn about and work on its fulfillment. Write down why you chose that *mitzva*, and how you can help others appreciate the *mitzva* and help make keeping the *mitzva* more popular:

The Mitzva I Choose to Excel In	What I Want Others to Appreciate About it	My Plan for Learning About it and Inspiring Others

## The 2nd Principle: The Mitzva System

### 2- All Mitzvot Together Create a Perfect System

Just as looking at each *mitzva* independently shows us how important each one is, the same idea emerges when we look at all the *mitzvot* together.

Hashem commanded us to do many *mitzot*. What do you think that means about each one? Think about the following examples and decide if you think all *mitzvot* play a unique role within the whole large system of Torah.

- Imagine the *mitzvot* as a **puzzle** with 613 different pieces. If you take one piece out, what happens to the puzzle?
- Think about your **name** for a minute. Write your name missing a letter or two. Does it look the same or even sound the same? Is it the same name?



Based on these analogies, if you took a *mitzva* or two out of the Torah, what impact would that have on the *mitzvot* as a unit?

The Torah makes it clear that the system of *mitzvot* is perfect and that we shouldn't add or subtract from it. Take a look:

Don't add to that which I command you and don't detract from it, observe the *mitzvot* of Hashem your G-d which I command you.

לא תספו על הדבר אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם ולא תגרעו ממנו לשמר את מצות ה' אלקיכם אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם.

We are privileged to have a perfect system of *mitzvot*, where each one is golden and makes the whole system all the more beautiful .

Explain how you might compare the system of *mitzvot* to a gem in a crown full of gems. How do you understand the analogy?



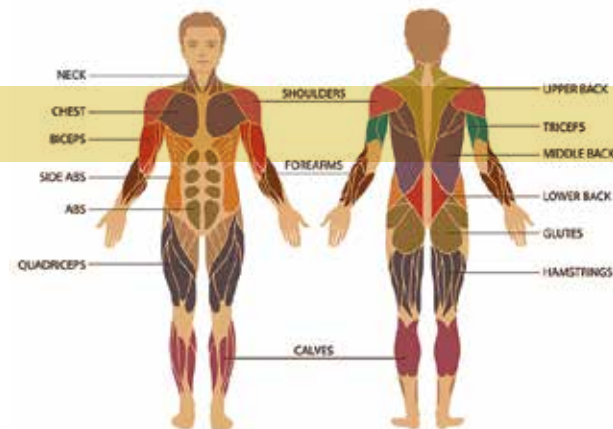
## The Mitzvot and the Body

Is the number of mitzvot in the Torah random?

Certainly not, as Hashem does everything for a reason!

How many mitzvot are in the Torah?

Take a look at the following gemara which points out the number of mitzvot and their breakdown between both *mitzvot asseh* (positive mitzvot requiring us to perform a certain act) and *mitzvot lo ta'asseh* (mitzvot requiring us to refrain from certain activities).



תלמוד בבלי מסכת מכות דף כג עמוד ב - כד עמוד א

Rebbi Simlai explained: 613 commandments were given to Moshe. 365 negative commandments corresponding to solar year and 248 positive commandments corresponding to the limbs of the body. Rav Hamnuna says, "What *pasuk* in the Torah tells this to us? – (the *pasuk* of) 'Moshe commanded the Torah to us, an inheritance'...the numeric value of the letters of the word 'Torah' is 611. (The mitzvot of) 'I am (Hashem your Lord)' and 'You should not have (any other gods)' were heard from Hashem directly."

דַּרְשׁ רַבִּי שִׁמְלַאי: שֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת וּשְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה מִצְוֹת נֶאֱמְרוּ לוֹ לְמֹשֶׁה: שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת וּשְׁשִׁים וְחֲמֵשׁ לְאוּיָן - כְּמִנְיַן יְמוֹת הַחֲמָה; וּמֵאוֹת וְאַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁמוֹנֶה עֶשֶׂה - כְּנֶגֶד אֵיבָרָיו שֶׁל אָדָם. אָמַר רַב הַמְנוּנָא: מֵאֵי קָרָא? "תּוֹרָה צִוָּה לָנוּ מֹשֶׁה, מוֹרָשָׁה" (דְּבָרִים ל"ג) - 'תּוֹרָה' בְּגִימַטְרִיָּא -שֵׁת מֵאָה וְחָד סָרִי הוּא; "אֶנְכִי" (שְׁמוֹת כ') וְ"לֹא יִהְיֶה לָּךְ" - מִפִּי הַגְּבוּרָה שְׁמַעְנוּם.

Based on the gemara, what is the significance of the following numbers (next to each number is its *gematria*)?

תרי"ג, 613	
שס"ה, 365	
רמ"ח, 248	

How does the gemara explain תּוֹרָה צִוָּה לָנוּ מֹשֶׁה and why is that significant?

The numbers 613, 365, 248 pop up in many other places (as can be seen in the chart in the appendix of the book) As you can see from the gemara above and the chart, the number of mitzvot corresponds perfectly to the human body as well.



מצות עשה  
Mitzvot Asseh

248 positive mitzvot = Correspond to the 248 limbs



מצות לא תעשה  
Mitzvot Lo Ta'aseh

365 prohibitory mitzvot = Correspond to the 365 tendons in the body

Together

= תרי"ג, 613



Some sources explain that since each mitzva corresponds to a particular body part, performing that mitzva infuses that body part with extra life.

Just as a person's physical body requires food in order to grow and live, so too the spiritual aspects of one's body require nourishment, which is achieved by fulfilling mitzvot.






## The importance of every person

Based on what we just learned, we understand that each of the 613 mitzvot is essential and important, just like each part of the body.

### Chart exercise:

Some mitzvot, however, only apply to specific Jews. What are some examples of this? Fill in the chart below.



 Kohanim	
 Leviim	
 Men	
 Women	
 Kings	

Not all mitzvot can be done by everyone. Some mitzvot uniquely apply to men, others only apply to women. Some apply only to families of Kohanim, while others are only for kings. If each mitzva is important, why can't one person fulfill them all?



If all 613 mitzvot are essential, and each gives life to a different part of the body, how can we understand a system where no Jew can perform all of the mitzvot independently?

---



---

## A Nation of Mitzvot

In order to fulfill the entire Torah from A-Z we need the entire Jewish people. Each Jew has his or her own unique role to play in the fulfillment of the Torah. To keep all the mitzvot means to have the entire Jewish people observing Hashem's Torah and mitzvot. In a way, each Jew is like another *mitzva*. Just like each *mitzva* represents another part of the body, so too each Jew represents another limb. Together, a full body is formed.



The mitzvot were given to the Jewish people as a whole. The more unified we are, the more our individual fulfillment of mitzvot can be viewed as one big body, our whole people, keeping all the mitzvot together.



What do you think is the message that Hashem is sending us about the Torah?

---

---



Which mitzvot do you particularly enjoy keeping? why?

---

---

As we relish the mitzvot Hashem gave us, we also understand that the more unified we become as a nation, the more our mitzvot combine together.

### Our Next Step

This chapter has helped us understand what a mitzva is and why each and every mitzva is so important and we can't choose favorites.

The question we are left with is: If all mitzvot are important, is there any way to determine what to do when we



are unable to do all the mitzvot we would like to? How do we decide which mitzvot get precedence if they are all significant? We will discuss this important question in the next chapter.



## Chapter Review

Learning about mitzvot helps us understand that every mitzva is significant and important.

All mitzvot are important:

The Definition of the word מצוה is:

\_\_\_\_\_

How does this definition indicate all mitzvot are important? \_\_\_\_\_

Summarize the meaning of the mishna:

הוּי זְהִיר בְּמִצְוָה קְלָה כְּבִחְמוּרָה

\_\_\_\_\_

What did the Radvaz advise the prisoner based on this Mishna?

\_\_\_\_\_

The importance of each Individual Mitzva:

\_\_\_\_\_

The Importance of all the Mitzvot together:

\_\_\_\_\_

Complete and explain:

רְצָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְזָכוֹת אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל

\_\_\_\_\_

Explain the principle:

אֵין מַעֲבִירִין עַל הַמִּצְוֹת

\_\_\_\_\_

613

248

365

The need for all Jews:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



אֵין מַעֲבִירִין עַל הַמִּצְוֹת

רְצָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְזָכוֹת אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל

הוּי זְהִיר בְּמִצְוָה קְלָה כְּבִחְמוּרָה

שָׂרָשׁ

מִצְוָה