



Love Work

The *Mishnah* (1:10) records that amongst the things that *Shamaya* taught was “love work”. We shall try to understand this statement.

Rashi simply explains that work is necessary, otherwise one would need to turn to thievery or charitable handouts for support.

The *Nishmat Chayim* adds that a *chacham* that is self-sufficient, is generally accepted with a great level of respect and he can therefore create a greater *kiddush Hashem*.

The *Bartenura* explains that *Shamaya* is teaching that even if a person has means to support himself, he should nevertheless still work. The reason is because doing nothings can drive a person mad (*shi'amum*). The *Tosfot Yom Tov* continues that that is why the *Mishnah* taught that one should “love” work and not just “do” work. One works not just for the paycheck, but for the love of it.

The *Ruach Chaim* explains that this statement is understood in contrast to the second statement of *Shamaya* “hate leadership”. He explains that it is better to earn a living by working than by acting as a spiritual leader. A leader can potentially become arrogant and is also punished for the sins of his people. In other words, despite natural aspiration to be a leader, love working instead.

Irving Bunim also explains that the *Mishnah* is referring to spiritual leadership; however, the *Mishnah* does not deter one from taking the position. Instead, he explains that the *Mishnah* is focusing on the different aspects of that job. There is lot of work to be done in a rabbinic post – building the religious infrastructure and

taking care of the people. It is that work that he must love and not position or title.

Focusing more broadly, the *Mishnah* mentions that one must “love the work”.

Irving Bunim explains that this love is the positive emotion resulting from success and the satisfaction coming from a creative enterprise. Ironically however, we find that such success hinges on one’s attitude to the work at hand. Indeed, the *Tifferet Yisrael* explains that the *Mishnah*’s instruction to love work, is providing the key to success in one’s work. Furthermore, doing so makes the work itself easier. He notes that we find sailors that engage in heavy lifting, will sing as they work, to lighten the burden.

Interestingly the *Avot DeRebbi Natan* explains that one should love *melacha*, because just as the *Torah* was given with a *brit*, so too *melacha* was given with a *brit*. It would seem then, that the love is not for any particular practical benefit, be it physical or spiritual. Instead, it is because it was given with a *brit*, a covenant, that we should work for six days and rest on the *Shabbat*. That *brit* entails the connection we have with *Hashem* and it should therefore be loved.

With all the above said, one should note that the term “love” is used rather than *amal*, toil. The term “love” is also used by *Hillel* (1:12) when referring to people. Perhaps the *Mishnah* is also teaching that with all the positive benefits of work, it should not be all consuming and become servitude. One’s relationship with work should be one of love – a healthy relationship.

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¹ As explained by the *Midrash Shmuel* above.

Revision Questions

אבות א' י' – ב' ה'

- What three things did *Shema 'ya* teach regarding work? (א' י')
- What did *Avtalyon* teach regarding speech? (א' י"א)
- According to *Hillel* what four traits characterise a "student of *Aharon*"? (א' י"ב)
- What is different about the thirteenth *Mishnah*? (א' י"ג)
- What did *Hillel* say regarding one who: (א' י"ג)
 - Pursues honour?
 - Stops learning?
 - Does not learn?
 - Makes personal use of "*keter Torah*"?
- Complete the following statement made by *Hillel*: (א' י"ד)

אם אין אני לי ___ __? וכשאני לעצמי ___ __?
אימת? _____
- Complete the following statement made by *Shammai*: (א' ט"ו)

עשה תורתך ____, אומר מעט ____,
והוי מקבל את כל אדם _____
- What three things did *Rabban Gamliel* teach? (א' ט"ז)
- What three things did *Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel* teach regarding speech? (א' י"ז)
- According to *Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel*, on what three things is the world sustained? (א' י"ח)
- According to *Rebbi*, what is the straight path in which one should lead his life? (ב' א')
- If one focuses on which three things will he be saved from sin? (ב' א')
- According to *Rabban Gamliel* the son of *Rebbi Yehuda HaNasi* with what should *Torah* be combined? What is the result if one does not do so? (ב' ב')
- What guidance does he give to one who will be involved in communal affairs? (ב' ב')
- What warning does he give to one who will be involved in affairs with the government? (ב' ג')
- Complete the following statement: (ב' ד')

עשה רצונו כרצונך, _____
בטל רצונך מפני רצונו, _____
- What five statements did *Hillel* make beginning with *אל*? (ד' י')
- What did *Hillel* say regarding: (ב' ה')
 - A *boor*?
 - An *am ha'aretz*?
 - A *bayshan*?
 - A *kapdan*?
 - One who increases in business?

Shiurim

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
25 May כ"ז אייר	26 May כ"ח אייר	27 May כ"ט אייר	28 May א' סיון	29 May ב' סיון	30 May ג' סיון	31 May ד' סיון
Avot 2:6-7	Avot 2:8-9	Avot 2:10-11	Avot 2:12-13	Avot 2:14-15	Avot 2:16-3:1	Avot 3:2-3

