



The Crown of a Good Name

R' Shimon teaches (4:13) that there are three “crowns”: the crown of *Torah*, the crown of *kehunah* (priesthood) and the crown of kingship. He however adds that crown of a good name rises above them all. We shall try to understand this *Mishnah*.

The *Bartenura* explains that the three crowns refer to the three crowns mentioned in the *Torah* that demand respect. The extra crown of having a good name, which is earned through good deeds, is not mentioned in the *Torah* as requiring respect. Nevertheless, it “rises above the other crowns” for it is a prerequisite for all the other crowns. For example, he explains that one is allowed to degrade a *talmid chacham* who behaves inappropriately.

The *Tiferet Yisrael* explains that these crowns refer to different areas of authority in *am yisrael*. He adds that they each stem from different attributes granted to a person by *Hashem*. Excellence in *Torah* is an indication of one’s *chochmah* (wisdom). One who wears the crown of *kehunah* does so because of the family in which they were born. The *Tiferet Yisrael* finally adds that the crown of *malchut* is certainly associated with great wealth. All that said, despite being blessed with these attributes, they do not warrant being called a crown if one does not utilise these gifts for good. For these attributes are G-d given, attained without much effort. If they are not used for good, the individual’s position is worse, and it is instead compared to a golden nose ring worn by a hog.

Interestingly, *Rashi* takes the opposite approach. The crown of a good name is acquired through the other crowns. If one learns diligently, or a *kohen* serves faithfully, or a king rules justly – these are means of acquiring a good name. *Rashi* rejects those that explain that this crown is better than the others. If that were the case, then the *Mishnah* should have mentioned that there were four crown. Instead, there are only three. The extra crown one can only attain through the three.

Till now we have seen that the crown of a good name is either earned by way of good deeds or a result of faithfully wearing one of the other three crowns. The *Ruach Chaim* however understands that a good name is *yirat Hashem*. It is necessary for all three as a “storehouse” to preserve them. Importantly, it is not an enabler, but a preservative. It is not solely a prerequisite or a byproduct, but rather necessary alongside the other crowns.

This understanding appears to echo an earlier *Mishnah* (3:17), if there is no *chochmah* there is no *yirah*, if there is no *yirah* there is no *chochmah*. While there are many understandings of this *Mishnah*, the simple reading is that the two are interdependent on one another. The same may also apply in this *Mishnah* as well. There is an interdependency between the crown of a good name and the other three important crowns in *Am Yisrael*. They are necessary for one another and enhance one another.

Yisrael Bankier

Revision Questions

אבות ג': י"ח – ד': י"ג

- According to *R' Elazar Chisma* which laws are "gufei halachot"? (ג': י"ח)
- What are the *parpr'ot chochma*? (ג': י"ח)
- According to *Ben Zoma* who is considered: (ד': א')
 - Wise?
 - Brave?
 - Wealthy?
 - Honoured?
- What advice does *Ben Azai* give regarding one's relationship to *mitzvot* and *aveirot*? What two principles does he bring in support of this advice? (ד': ב')
- Why does *Ben Azai* say "Do not despise any man and do not deem anything unworthy?" (ג': י')
- Why does *R' Levitas ish Yavneh* say that one should be very humble? (ד': ד')
- What does *R' Yochanan ben Bruka* say will happen to one that desecrates the name of *Hashem* in secret? (ד': ד')
- According to *R' Yishmael* what will happen to one who learns: (ד': ה')
 - For the purpose of learning and teaching?
 - For the purpose of learning and "doing"?
- Who does *R' Tzadok* cite when warning against using *Torah* for self aggrandisement? (ד': ה')
- Complete the following statement of *R' Yosi*: (ד': ו')

_____ המכבד את התורה
_____ המחלל את התורה
- From which three things does *R' Yishmael* say that a person who avoids strict judgement is saved from? (ד': ז')
- What three qualities does *R' Yishmael* attribute to an overconfident judge? (ד': ז')
- What two warnings do *R' Yishmael* provide a judge? (ד': ח')
- What does *R' Yonatan* say regarding on who fixes time for learning despite being in poverty? (ד': ט')
- What four things does *R' Meir* say regarding learning? (ד': י')
- What does *R' Eliezer be Ya'akov* say is the result of performing one *mitzvah*? Transgressing one sin? (ד': י"א)
- According to *R' Yochanan HaSandler* what is the result of a gathering that is *le'shem shamayim*? (ד': י"א)
- How does *R' Eliezer ben Shamu'a* say that one should treat: (ד': י"ב)
 - The honour of his students?
 - The honour of his friends?
 - The awe of his *Rebbi*?
- According to *R' Yehuda* why should one be careful with his learning? (ד': י"ג)

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Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
15 June י"ט סיון	16 June כ' סיון	17 June כ"א סיון	18 June כ"ב סיון	19 June כ"ג סיון	20 June כ"ד סיון	21 June כ"ה סיון
Avot 4:14-15	Avot 4:16-17	Avot 4:18-19	Avot 4:20-21	Avot 4:22-5:1	Avot 5:2-3	Avot 5:4-5

