

# The Dee

## Pirkei Avot Project

הוא הִיה אומר, עֲשֵׂה רְצוֹנוֹ כְּרְצוֹנְךָ, כְּדִי שִׁיעֲשֶׂה רְצוֹנְךָ כְּרְצוֹנוֹ. בְּטֹל רְצוֹנְךָ מִפְּנֵי רְצוֹנוֹ, כְּדִי שִׁיבְטֹל רְצוֹן אֲחֵרִים מִפְּנֵי רְצוֹנְךָ. הִלֵּל אומר, אַל תִּפְרָשׁ מִן הַצְּבוּר, וְאַל תִּאֲמִין בְּעַצְמְךָ עַד יוֹם מוֹתְךָ, וְאַל תִּדְּיִן אֶת חֵבְרְךָ עַד שֶׁתִּגִּיעַ לְמִקוֹמוֹ, וְאַל תֹּאמֶר דְּבַר שְׂאֵי אֶפְשָׁר לִשְׁמַע, שְׁסוּפוּ לְהִשְׁמַע. וְאַל תֹּאמֶר לְכַשְׁאֲפָנָה אֲשֶׁנָּה, שְׂמָא לֹא תִפְנָה:

He used to say: do His will as though it were your will, so that He will do your will as though it were His. Set aside your will in the face of His will, so that he may set aside the will of others for the sake of your will. Hillel said: do not separate yourself from the community, do not trust in yourself until the day of your death, do not judge your fellow man until you have reached his place and do not say something that cannot be understood [trusting] that in the end it will be understood. Say not: 'when I shall have leisure I shall study;' perhaps you will not have leisure.

Our Mishna is quite a list of advice and instruction, and seems to be the words of two separate Sages - Rabban Gamliel and Hillel. It is not, at first glance, easy to see what binds all the different aspects of our Mishna together but on a closer look, one common theme that runs through the Mishna and ties much of it together is the concept of humility. The idea of acknowledging that we are not as great, righteous or wise as we like to think we are. Benjamin Franklin quoted an anonymous French aristocrat who once remarked to him, "It is a curious thing, but I have never met another person who is always right apart from myself." We tend to view ourselves as having the correct opinions and those who disagree with us as wrong. We tend to overestimate our abilities, and underestimate those of others. We often use a very different standard when judging ourselves than when we judge others.

And so amongst the sage instructions in our Mishna we are reminded... Don't separate yourself from the community - there is wisdom in crowds, the world doesn't revolve around you alone - you need to be part of something bigger, and be of service to other people. Don't 'believe in yourself' too much; everyone makes mistakes - and that means you will as well. Knowing that helps you avoid bad mistakes and helps you be a little kinder when you see other people make mistakes - so don't rush to judge anyone. And don't put things off. Life is short. Even you won't be here forever - if something is important to you, like learning Torah, start today.

### Discussion Points:

How can you work out what G-d's will is and how to align your will with His when it may not feel natural?

Which of the pieces of advice resonates with you the most and which do you feel you need to work on?

Is there something you are putting off and how can you take the first step?

Idea by Rabbi Shaul Robinson

לעילוי נשמת:

לאה בת רפאל הכהן וציפורה

מאיה אסתר בת הרב אריה מרדכי ולאה

רינה מרים בת הרב אריה מרדכי ולאה



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