

Quotes of Rabbi Yaron Reuven on Pirkei Avot Part 1

Anyone that says Gehinnom doesn't exist or it's some washing machine that just cleans you up for a year and it's okay, it's not such a big deal, has no idea, has never read one book of Torah; or is just lying.¹

Judge each case as if it's the only case meaning whether it's a hundred dollars or 100 million dollars, you have to judge the same way. You can't say, 'Ah, it's only \$100, guilty, not guilty, let's get out of here already. 100 million dollars, let me investigate, let me research, come back tomorrow; I need to look into some more facts.' No, you have to look at every case as if it's the only case in the world. And you can't say, 'Listen, I already had five of these cases, so this one is definitely guilty also.'...Can't do that, you have to give him the benefit of the doubt – there is something different in his case than all the other five cases you saw; even if you had 5,000 cases like that.²

You guys ever noticed books today, most of the book is completely useless. Like if you take any secular book...In reality you could say the entire story of the book in maybe three pages.³

It's not the case always, but many of the times the kids are off the derech, it's the parents fault. Not that the parents are saying, 'Hey listen, buddy, yeshiva – it sucks, don't go there anymore.' They're not doing that...The problem is the kid goes to yeshiva, he has his little tzitzit, his little kippah, goes with his little Chumash, is excited to go to school, sees his rebbe – wearing black and white...He comes home: Abba – no kippah, abba – no tzitzit, abba – shorts and a t-shirt...So what is the kid going to do? He's going to be like his parents. The kid will never choose his teacher over his father...Because when he goes to school he's looking at this teacher, his rabbi, it's his job, he gets paid to look like this, he gets paid to be black and white...But my dad and my mom are my idols, they are my role models.⁴

¹ Rabbi Yaron Reuven, 'Does Every Jew Really Have A Share In Olam HaBa? - MUSSAR Pirkei Avot (1)', (YouTube, 27/10/2016, 41:27) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ku6S_lC5XKo&list=PLfeqUDL5aojazwxOuNPEytkOp2VJUwAs&index=1>

² Ibid, 1:47:47.

³ Ibid, 2:12:20.

⁴ Rabbi Yaron Reuven, 'Your Word Can Create And Destroy Worlds - MUSSAR Pirkei Avot (2)', (YouTube, 3/11/2016, 1:21:56) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kjV99HsntFA&list=PLfeqUDL5aojazwxOuNPEytkOp2VJUwAs&index=3>>

[Can you break Shabbat to save a goy [non-Jew]?]: Ken [yes], allowed to break Shabbat to save a goy. Doctor that gets a call to save a life, whether it's a goy or it's a Jew must go and save a life.⁵

According to the Gemara, according to the Oral Torah, our behaviour traits is making all of our mitzvot look terrible. As it says, a talmid chacham, someone that knows a lot of Torah, someone that's considered a scholar, that has bad middot, that has bad character traits, a dead animal on the street is better than him. That's how important middot are. So the Vilna Gaon was asked, 'Why is it that if character traits, character development is so important, why is it that it's not one of the 613 commandments?'...And the Vilna Gaon with his genius answered very simply, he said the point of all of these mitzvot is to make you a human being. The point of all of these halachot, all of these ways to connect to Hashem is to make you a structure that will keep you gated and protect you from yourself. Protect you from your own bad character traits.....When you wash your hands, it will teach you hygiene. You have to have hygiene, you can't be one of those guys that wears all of these fancy clothes but you forgot to take a shower so the rest of the world is suffering being next to you. Then it causes a chillul Hashem...people think that all Jews smell then...You are a servant and a representation of Hashem at all times. We are commanded to be a light to the nations which means that at all moments we have to be prepared to be at our best.⁶

And we learnt that anytime it says "he was accustomed to say" it really means: he was. Meaning he lived by these rules, he didn't just teach them. As the Gemara says - someone who teaches something but does something else, it's better that he would choke inside his mothers belly and never come to the world. Being a hypocrite is not acceptable in Judaism.⁷

In the Gemara it says there is a machlochet. Did Job serve Hashem purely out of fear or purely out of love? If it was fear it was the highest level of fear. If it was love, it was also a high level of love. Why a highest level of fear? Because the highest level of fear of Hashem is fear of a disconnect, not fear of a punishment. Fear of punishment is the lowest level of serving Hashem. You do the mitzvot, you fulfill the commandments, why? Because you don't want to get punished...That's the lowest level of serving Hashem, it's still good, it's respectable, especially for this generation but nonetheless it's the lowest level. The highest level of fear of Hashem is fear of Hashem like a good relationship. Meaning if a husband and a wife have a healthy relationship, then the husband and the wife are not going to yell at each other and hate each

⁵ Ibid, 1:48:33.

⁶ Rabbi Yaron Reuven, 'If You're Already Serving, Serve Like Avraham - MUSSAR Pirkei Avot (3)', (YouTube, 4/11/2016, 6:11) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9oSjvghufE&list=PLfeqUDL5aojazwxOuNPEytvKOp2VJUwAs&index=3>>

⁷ Ibid, 51:16.

other and do things like that. They are going to communicate. Now the reason why even if the wife makes the husband upset or vice versa...The reason why they are not going to insult the other person is because they're scared that this insult is going to lead to a disconnect. Where if I insult my wife then she's not going to talk to me and her not talking to me is unbearable to me. I can't deal with it, my whole day goes to nothing, so I can't do it, so then I am not going to insult her. The husband is not going to insult the wife because of that. The wife is not going to insult the husband because of that. So that's not a fear of punishment per se that's physical (like the lowest level of serving Hashem) but rather a fear of a disconnect, of hurting the relationship. So that's the highest level of fear of Hashem as well.⁸

People don't have an understanding, a full understanding of the magnitude of the Sages that are mentioned in this Mishnah, as I mentioned...each one of these people was able to revive the dead. What people give this JC Penney guy credit for that he revived somebody from the dead, whether he did or he didn't, there's no proof of it; even if he did it's not a big deal because every single person mentioned in the Gemara did the same thing, and more. There is a story in the Gemara that says Rabbi Yohanan – there was two kids that were his nephews that would come to the yeshiva – both of them were mute...Born without the ability to speak...So one day he had mercy on them, he prayed and they both got healed, both were able to start speaking...The Sages were able to change nature.⁹

When you're rebuking somebody you should push with one arm and pull with the other. You can't be overly stringent with people and with your students, with family...and just push everyone away.¹⁰

When you talk about it, you're going to have a lot more passion about it because again, who doesn't want to spread the word of God? If God spoke to you on Mount Sinai, are you not going to tell everybody!?¹¹

Out of the Satmar came this other organisation called Neturei Karta (yimach shemam). Why am I saying yimach shemam, why am I cursing them like you curse JC Penney, why am I cursing them like you curse the terrorists? Because they become part of the terrorists. They have become a walking chillul Hashem where they wear their Jewish uniform but what are they doing

⁸ Ibid, 1:05:38.

⁹ Ibid, 2:08:43.

¹⁰ Rabbi Yaron Reuven, 'Become Dusty From The Scholar's Dust - MUSSAR Pirkei Avot (4)'; (YouTube, 10/11/2016, 41:45)
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNFb39N5PmE&list=PLfeqUDL5aojazwxOuNPEytkOp2VJUWAs&index=4>>

¹¹ Ibid, 47:02.

during this proceeding? They shake hands with the Iranians that are telling us they want to annihilate all the Jews in the world. They're getting money from terrorists.¹²

What about the ones that said that Rebbe Nachman from Breslov said go to his grave site on Rosh Hashanah but then they add, (which he did say that, you should go, but they added something), *under all costs*. That's where you see people completely leaving their marriage, creating shalom bayit problems, leaving their kids, leaving their wife. The only time of the year they actually have together is during the holiday time. The wife doesn't want him to go, the kids don't want him to go; they finally saw their dad for the first time in years because he works 900 hours a day. And no, he's not going to be with them, he's going to go in a grave site with 30,000 other people.¹³

Somebody asked me, 'Listen, am I allowed to charge my client for three hours when the work only took me two hours?' Now it's a yes and a no. If it's commonly done in three hours but you worked extra fast to make it finish in two hours then you're allowed to charge for three hours. But if it normally takes two hours but you just feel like charging three hours then you're not allowed. Same token is you could actually charge three hours worth of value but just make it as a contract if that's what it's worth.¹⁴

So Hashem said to Avraham, 'Why is it that Sarah laughed saying, 'Shall I in truth bear a child though I have aged.' Is anything beyond Hashem?' So here you see Hashem actually changed the truth; Hashem changed what Sarah said. Sarah didn't say 'I'm old' – Sarah said 'my husband is old'. So what happened, Hashem forgot? So Hashem is telling Avraham – 'Avraham, your wife says that she's old' – why? Because Hashem knows as the Creator knows His creation that if he tells the husband, if he tells Avraham, listen, by the way, your wife said that you're old, Avraham is going to take it to heart. He's not going to like it, my wife thinks I'm old, maybe she doesn't like me anymore, maybe she's going to look for somebody else. A guy is always going to be jealous, could be 150 years old, still going to be jealous. Anyone that loves his wife has to be jealous. Obviously if you're righteous you contain this jealousy. But that's also the reason why a righteous husband will never let his wife walk around like a prostitute...Why do you want to share your diamond with the rest of the world?¹⁵

¹² Rabbi Yaron Reuven, 'Ignoring The Jewish Problem Is The Problem (Big Debate Eruption) - MUSSAR Pirkei Avot (5)', (YouTube, 11/11/2016, 10:26) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dhxMJg5Nbo&list=PLfeqUDL5aojazwxOuNPEytkOp2VJUwAs&index=5>>.

¹³ Ibid, 29:31.

¹⁴ Ibid, 1:15:57

¹⁵ Rabbi Yaron Reuven, 'A Ba'al TeShuva Surrounded By Wicked Family & Friends - MUSSAR Pirkei Avot (6)', (YouTube, 17/11/2016, 23:29) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-oeuRiKbCvQ&list=PLfeqUDL5aojazwxOuNPEytkOp2VJUwAs&index=6>>.

And when you cover your head, you are showing that you are proud to be Jewish, you recognise that you're Jewish which means you take the responsibility of being a Jew meaning that your actions have consequences. It's not that you're just for yourself by yourself, you are part of a nation meaning that if you are shown in public and acting in public like an animal then you are a bad mark for the entire nation. If you act like a good human being, you're a good mark for the entire nation, everyone benefits, everyone benefits or loses because of you. When you wear a kippah and you show the world I am part of Am Israel then you're showing that your Judaism is part of you; when you don't wear a kippah then your Judaism is a secret.¹⁶

Pickuach nefesh is a mitzvah. If somebody sees somebody drowning and they don't save them because they're in the middle of learning Torah and they don't want to, 'Come on, bitul Torah, I'm in the middle of my Gemara, I'm about to finish the Shas...Ok, let him drown, somebody else will save him.' The Gemara says that person is a shoteh, the person's crazy, the drunk. That's what shoteh means, a drunk. Somebody that learns Torah but he sees somebody drowning, he doesn't save him, he's a shoteh. He's a drunk. His Torah is worthless. Because the Torah is not to just learn it, Torah is to put it into action. It's an instruction set. So if you're not following the Torah, what are you studying then?¹⁷

The Satan will convince you that once you've already made one sin, you might as well continue. You're lost, once you made a sin you can turn your whole life into a sin – that's the worst part about the Satan. Tells you that you're a lost cause.¹⁸

You're not obligated to sacrifice your life for anyone so for example if someone is a soldier, soldiers are at war, there's a lot of problems with the way that the government of Israel runs their army. So for example there was one Jewish soldier that became a prisoner and the terrorists took him, he became a prisoner and there's different considerations of sending a mission to go save this one prisoner. According to the Torah you can't do any of that stuff. What ended up happening is actually they released a bunch of terrorists, at least like a thousand terrorists from jail for this one soldier which is completely not allowed, why? Because the thousand terrorists are gonna unfortunately (b'ezrat Hashem not), but unfortunately they're gonna end up probably killing a lot more than one soldier...they did kill people. Or for example you go and you try to rescue this one soldier but you're putting six or seven or ten soldiers lives at risk, you have no right to do that. His blood is not any better than theirs even though it sounds

¹⁶ Ibid, 1:55:55.

¹⁷ Ibid 2:20:08.

¹⁸ Ibid 2:21:37.

nice, 'Why should we let him suffer? Why should we do this?' Yeah great but the reality of it is that if you think about it logically, rescue missions are against the Torah because okay yes I understand you want to save one guy, I understand, you want to save two guys. But if you're putting fifteen, twenty people's lives at risk for two people, why, how does it make sense? You're not allowed to do it. Even if you know that you're gonna lose a finger saving somebody you're not obligated. If you want to, you can but you're not obligated. There's a difference. Is it a sin to kill yourself for your kid? No it's not a sin if you're trying to save your kids life. If there is a guarantee that you will die, it becomes a little bit problematic.¹⁹

The ketubah is protecting the wife from an evil husband. If this husband is just a womanizer and he just wants an excuse to have another woman in his life, and he's not interested in supporting her, he's not interested in being a good husband, then at the very least there is a contract before they get married that at least if she leaves, she's not going to leave with nothing. She's not going to be left in the middle of the street with nothing and three kids. If he doesn't fulfil the marriage, he's obligated to fulfill this ketubah. Now if he doesn't, as we read in the halacha by the Rambam, a husband that's not willing to give his wife a gett, he's not willing to fulfill the ketubah, so the wife has a right to have a gett, to leave, to get divorced. If he is not willing to give the wife a gett, according to the halacha back then and forever, the Rambam says you beat him up until he says, 'Yes, I want to give her the gett.' And until he gives the gett, he's not considered part of Am Yisrael. You're not allowed to include him in a minyan, you're not allowed to say amen to his blessings. He's mamash completely going against the rabbis in the beit din. Somebody like that is not even considered as a Jew. He is considered as someone that has his Judaism on suspension.²⁰

For 2,000 years the Christians were arguing with the Jews (which is insanity) about how to define the word 'almah.' 'Almah' means 'young lady'; we've always said it means 'young lady,' but the Christians have said that it means 'virgin.' We told them that virgin is 'betulah'... [Genesis 24:16] it is talking about Rebekah and says, 'Now the maiden was very fair to look upon, a virgin who no man had known.' What's a virgin? It says betulah.²¹

We see here that Shmaya and Avtalyon reached the highest possible level and they say: Love work – which means if you have an option to collect tzedakah or get a job that's beneath you. Work at the sanitation department, work at fixing cars, do all these different things that you feel

¹⁹ Ibid, 2:30:18.

²⁰ Rabbi Yaron Reuven, 'A Legal System or A House of Cards? - MUSSAR Pirkei Avot (7)', (YouTube, 11/11/2016, 26:08) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0d0BbxI_iRg&list=PLfeqUDL5a0jazwxOuNPEytkOp2VJUwAs&index=7>.

²¹ Rabbi Yaron Reuven, 'Should We Listen To The Sages? - MUSSAR Pirkei Avot (8 PART 1)', (YouTube, 25/11/2016, 29:56) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbnUYZflBo4&list=PLfeqUDL5a0jazwxOuNPEytkOp2VJUwAs&index=8>>.

like are beneath you – you must get a job. You must go to work. You cannot be one of these people that's just collecting tzedakah and sitting at home doing nothing. If you have a skillset, you have time, you have the ability, you must use that ability. You cannot be one of these lazy people...What about all these people that are learning Torah all day? Or about people like me that are teaching Torah? This is 100% a job, this is even a more difficult job than the job that you have. You finish your job after nine hours, I finish after about 20. A person that studies Torah studies anywhere from 12 to 16 hours a day. That is a job.²²

Definitely don't choose anything because of the kavod [honor] you're going to get. Don't become a lawyer because ima and abba want you to be a lawyer. Don't become a doctor because sabba and safta and the rest of the community want you to become a doctor. Be what you want to be. And definitely don't be one of these guys where he shows up to abba and ima at 27 years old [saying], 'Abba, I want to dance!' Don't be one of those people either. Be normal. You have a passion, you have a skillset, bezrat Hashem, you will get to the right thing. But don't pick your job based on what people think.²³

Entertainment for kids must be monitored on one hand as far as modesty. On the other hand in regards to where it could lead to. So for example going to a park like Disneyland, not like a waterpark because there's just practical nudity there. So more like Disneyland or Universal Studios, one of these parks is 100% allowed, it's fine. It's fine to take the kids there because first and foremost, people are dressing there the same as they dress everywhere else. Second of all, you can't raise your kids to such an extent that you tell them everything is not allowed yet expect them to like Judaism. They're going to end up hating you and hating Judaism. So unless there is a kosher place to replace it, halacha allows you to do it.²⁴

²² Rabbi Yaron Reuven, 'How To Get To The Truth In Life, Business and Even Shidduchim? - MUSSAR Pirkei Avot (8 PART II)', (YouTube, 25/11/2016, 34:44) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2AJ2E5qEb8&list=PLfeqUDL5aoiazwxOuNPEyvtKOp2VJUwAs&index=9>>.

²³ Ibid, 55:11.

²⁴ Ibid, 59:05.