

Social Action and Responsibility- Unit Student Worksheet 1

Source 1 *Mishnah Avot 1:13*

Hillel taught:
 If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
 If I am only for myself, what am I?
 If not now, when?

הוא (הלל) קנה אומר
 אם אין אני לי מי לי
 :
 וכשאני לעצמי מה אני
 ,
 ואם לא עכשיו אימתי?

This mishnah asks three questions. Write your answers to its questions in the space provided.

Answer to question 1:

Answer to question 2:

Answer to question 3:

Source 2 *Bereshit 18:1-8*

<p>1 And GOD appeared to him by the plains of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of the tent in the heat of the day;</p>	<p>א וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו ה' , בְּאֵלְנֵי מַמְרֵא ; וְהוּא יָשָׁב פֶּתַח הָאֵהָל , בְּחֹם הַיּוֹם .</p>
<p>2 And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, three men stood over him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the entrance of the tent, and bowed down to the earth,</p>	<p>ב וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו , וַיֵּרָא , וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים , נֹצְבִים עָלָיו ; וַיֵּרָא וַיֵּרָץ לְקִרְאתָם מִפֶּתַח הָאֵהָל וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ , אֶרְצָה .</p>
<p>3 And he said: 'God, if now I have found favor in your sight, please do not pass by your servant.</p>	<p>ג וַיֹּאמֶר : ה' , אִם-נָא מָצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ- אֵל-נָא תַעֲבֹר , מֵעַל עַבְדְּךָ .</p>
<p>4 Let now a little water be fetched, and wash your feet, and recline yourselves under the tree.</p>	<p>ד זַקַּח- נָא מַעֲט- מַיִם , וַרְחֲצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם ; וְהִשְׁעֲנוּ תַחַת הָעֵץ .</p>

<p>5 And I will fetch a piece of bread, and satisfy your heart; after that you can pass by; because you have passed by your servant.' And they said: 'So do, as you have said.'</p>	<p>ה וְאָקְחָה פֶת־לֶחֶם וְסָעְדוּ לְבָבְכֶם, אַחַר תַּעֲבְרוּ כִי-עַל-כֵּן עֲבַרְתֶּם, עַל-עַבְדְּכֶם; וַיֹּאמְרוּ, כֹּן תַעֲשֶׂה כַאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ</p>
<p>6 And Avraham hurried to the tent to Sarah, and said: 'Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes.'</p>	<p>וַיְמַהֵר אַבְרָהָם הָאֵהָלָה, אֶל-שָׂרָה; וַיֹּאמֶר מַהֲרִי שְׁלֹשׁ סָאִים קִמַּח סֶלֶת-לוּשִׁי, וַעֲשֵׂי עֲגוֹת</p>
<p>7 And Avraham ran to the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it to the boy; and he hurried to prepare it.</p>	<p>ז וְאֵל-הַבָּקָר, רָץ אַבְרָהָם; וַיִּקַּח בֶּבֶן-בָּקָר בְּרֹדֵף וְנוֹטוֹב וַיִּתֵּן אֶל-הַנְּעָר, וַיְמַהֵר, לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתוֹ</p>
<p>8 And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they ate.</p>	<p>ח וַיִּקַּח חֲמֵאָה וְחֵלֵב, וּבֶן-הַבָּקָר אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, וַיִּתֵּן לַפְּנִיָּהֶם; וְהוּא-עֹמֵד עֲלֵיהֶם תַּחַת הָעֵץ, וַיֹּאכְלוּ</p>

1. Look at the first 3 *pesukim*. Identify three events that took place.

2. What causes Avraham to interrupt his mediation/prayer with God?

3. According to Rashi, we can learn from 18:1 the great mitzvah of visiting the sick. God visits Avraham three days after he became circumcised at the age of ninety-nine. Despite the greatness of receiving the divine presence, Avraham puts God on hold while the strangers approach. Was this right or wrong? Why?

4. Our Rabbis have said, "גדולה הכנסת אורחים מהקבלת פני השכינה" "Greater is the mitzvah of welcoming guests than hosting the presence of God". Which Mitzvah is more important/better in your opinion, receiving God's message or welcoming guests in from the desert? Why?

5. Describe Avraham's movements to satisfy the needs of his guests. What do we learn from his example?

Source 3 *Shulchan Aruch - Yoreh Deah 335*

1. It is a religious duty to visit the sick. Relatives and close friends should enter at once, others after three days. If the illness is serious, both groups can visit the person at once.
2. Even a distinguished person should visit a humble one. The more one visits the more praiseworthy it is, provided only that the visits do not become a burden on the patient...
3. One who visits the sick should not sit upon a bed or chair or on a stool but should sit in front of the patient, for the divine presence rests above a sick person...
4. One should not visit the sick during the first three hours of the day, for every patient's illness is alleviated in the morning, and consequently visitors will not trouble themselves to pray for the sick; and not during the last three hours of the day, for then the illness grows worse and one then will give up hope of praying for the sick.

1. Who has priority, according to the *Shulchan Aruch*, in visiting the sick?

2. What do you think the *Halacha* would be if the patient only wanted to see the close friend and not the person's parents?

3. According to the *Shulchan Aruch*, could a person fulfil the duty of visiting the sick by sending the patient a "text message" or email?

Source 4 JL Peretz story retold by British Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Every Friday morning before dawn, the Rebbe of Nemirov would disappear. He could be found in none of the town's synagogues or houses of study. The doors of his house were open but he was not there. Once a Lithuanian scholar came to Nemirov. Puzzled by the Rebbe's disappearance he asked his followers. 'Where is he?' 'Where is the Rebbe?' they replied. 'Where else but in heaven? The people of the town need peace, sustenance, health. The Rebbe is a holy man and therefore he is surely in heaven, pleading our cause.'

The Lithuanian, amused by the credulity, determined to find out for himself. One Thursday night he hid himself in the Rebbe's house. The next morning before dawn he heard the Rebbe weep and sigh. Then he saw him go to the cupboard, take out a parcel of clothes and begin to put them on. They were the clothes, not of a holy man, but of a peasant. The Rebbe then reached into a drawer, pulled out an axe, and went out into the still dark night. Stealthily, the Lithuanian followed him as he walked through the town and beyond, into the forest. There he began chopping down a tree, hewing it into logs, and splitting it into firewood. These he gathered into a bundle and walked back into the town.

In one of the back streets, he stopped outside a run-down cottage and knocked on the door. An old woman, poor and ill, opened the door. 'Who are you?' she said.

'I am Vassily', the Rebbe replied. 'I have wood to sell, very cheap, next to nothing.'

'I have no money', replied the woman. 'I will give it to you on credit', he said. 'How

will I be able to pay you?' she said. 'I trust you – and do you not trust God He will

find a way of seeing that I am repaid.'

'But who will light the fire? I am too ill.' 'I will light the fire', the Rebbe replied,

and he did so, reciting under his breath the morning prayers. Then he returned home.

The Lithuanian scholar, seeing this, stayed on in the town and became one of

the Rebbe's disciples. After that day, when he heard the people of the town tell visitors that the Rebbe ascended to heaven, he no longer laughed, but added: 'And maybe even higher.'

1. Where did the Lithuanian scholar think the Rabbi was?

2. Read the following *Mishna* from *Peah* 1:1 and identify one connection to this story.

אלו דברים שאין להם שיעור-- הפיאה, והביכורים, והריאיון, וגמילות חסדים, ותלמוד תורה.

These are the things that do not have a measure: the corners of the fields, the first fruits for offering in the Temple, appearance in Jerusalem, acts of kindness and the study of Torah.

3. What do you think the Lithuanian scholar meant by the phrase “And maybe even higher”?
