

Pirkei Avot Community Learning Study Resource

Chapter 2

Questions to Consider

Mishna 5

How can we deal with our feelings when we disagree with members of our community?

How are the teaching in this Mishna connected to one another? By telling us what we should not do, what is this mishna actually teaching us about how we should behave?

Mishna 6

What kind of person should we try to be? Why can't an ignorant person be pious? Why can't a timid person learn?

What character traits keep us from achieving the things we want to achieve? What can we do about this?

What kind of place is a place without men/human beings? How does one try to be a human being?

Mishna 7

Discuss the rabbinic principle of middah k'neged midah (measure for measure, what you do to others will be done to you). What do you think of this principle?

Mishna 8

What gets in the way of the things we truly value? What distractions are we surrounded by? How can we reorganize our lives to correspond to what we truly want?

Who do you think the Mishna says will be involved in sorcery, lewdness, and thievery?

Mishna 9. What do you think Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai would suggest we do with what we have learned?

Mishna 10–11. What can we learn about Rabbi Yochanan's connection to his students, through his unique thoughts on each one of them? How can it inform the way we appreciate people who we learn with?

Mishna 12. How do you think the value of a sage or teacher should be weighed?

Mishna 15. How do you honor your friends? How do you understand the teaching to repent the day before you die? How do you understand the metaphor of the sages' fire? How could it bring harm?

Mishna 16. What strategies would you advise for a person who struggles with negative feelings towards others? How can we look at others with only a kind and loving eye?

Mishna 17. Is there a common thread in the three lessons of Rabbi Yose?

Mishna 18. What do we need to be careful about when we pray? Do you have ideas on how to make prayer a fresh experience? How can we enhance a relationship that becomes dry?

Mishna 19. What are your thoughts on how to approach people who are experiencing challenges with belief?

Mishna 20. What do you think “the task” is? What do you think the reward for study is?

Mishna 15–20. Which sage’s advice feels most relevant, powerful, or inspiring? Why?.