



מִסְכַּת אָבוֹת פָּרָק ד מְשֻׁנָּה כ: "אֵל תִּסְתַּכֵּל בְּקַנְקוֹ"



The Mishna:

Avot, Chapter 4, Mishna 20

Rabi said: don't look at the container but at that which is in it:
there is a new container full of old wine,
and an old [container] in which
there is not even new [wine].

הַמְשֵׁנָה:

אבות ד, כ

רַבִּי אֹמֵר:
אֵל תִּסְתַּכֵּל בְּקַנְקוֹ, אֶלָּא בְּמָה שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹ.
יֵשׁ קַנְקוֹ חֲדָשׁ מְלֵא יֵשׁוּן,
וְיֵשׁוּן שְׂאֵפְלוֹ חֲדָשׁ אֵין בּוֹ.

A short explanation on the Mishna:

Don't look at the container – don't look at the external quality of any person or object.
But at that which is in it – look at its internal qualities.

There is a new container full of old wine – sometimes people think that a new jug will be holding new wine (but new wine is generally of inferior quality to older wine).

And an old [container] in which there is not even new [wine] – and sometimes the jug is old, and we think there would be old wine in it (which is fine wine!), but really there is nothing in it – not even new wine!

For example, a young person might be wise and has studied much Torah, while an older person does not have these qualities.

Level 1

- **Memorize** the Mishna with hand movements.

(Click or scan the barcode)



- **Opening:**

- ❖ The teacher shows a picture on the board:



What can we see here? Is this a young woman or a very old woman? True, it's both. (Show the students how we can see the young woman and then the old woman).

- ❖ The teacher shows the next picture and asks:

What can we see in this picture?



The wrapping is very pretty. Is there a valuable gift inside? Maybe the boxes are empty?

- ❖ The teacher shows the next picture and asks: what can you see in this picture?

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In the arch of the building, can you see people walking down the road and a light blue sky?

No! This is a drawing on the building!

- ❖ And what do you think this is? (The teacher shows the third picture on the board).

Barrels of wine? What wine is in the barrels? New? Old? Maybe they are empty?



- **Comment to the teacher:** You can choose to use any one (or more) of the pictures.

The Mishna teaches us that this is also the case in life. One must be careful not to look at the exterior, but to try really hard to look at what's inside ...

Sometimes this world confuses us, and makes us judge things according to their exterior appearance.

There is the inside and there is the outside. There is the outer body, and there is the inner soul.

For example: you might know someone very young who is a champion chess player! And someone very old who doesn't even know how to play chess.

● **Group assignment**

Choose one of the titles and write a short story about it: include the principle we learned "Don't look at the container but at that which is in it" in your writing. (The exercise appears on the student's worksheet). We will use a practice called Storytelling. You can read more about this practice on United's website: <https://unitedjed.org/practice-page-storytelling/>

The titles:

- Why was a rabbi, who was only 18 years old, appointed to serve the community?
- The diamond ring that was discovered to be a fake.
- Who is the mysterious flower seller, and how did she actually help the whole world?

The students can suggest additional titles.

You can read several selected stories in the classroom, or hang the stories on the wall next to the poster.



Level 2:

● **Class discussion:**

Do you think the Mishna intends to say that the exterior is not important at all?

Explain your opinion.

The answer is that the Mishna does not focus on the importance of the exterior, but on the fact that people often judge by the exterior and make a mistake by doing so, as they do not know how to properly evaluate the interior. The exterior is not a measure of the interior values of a person or an object. From other sources we learn that it is also important to maintain a respectable exterior. So, we learn from this source that the internal is more important than the external.

- ❖ What message do I take from the lesson today into my life?