



מִסְכַּת אָבוֹת פָּרֵק א מִשְׁנֵה יב: "הוּי מִתְלַמְדֵיּוֹ שֶׁל אֶהְרֹן"



The Mishna:

Avot, Chapter 1, Mishna 12:

... Hillel used to say:
be of the disciples of Aaron,
loving peace and pursuing peace,
loving mankind and drawing them
close to the Torah

המשנה:

אבות א, יב

... הֵלֵל אָמַר
הוּי מִתְלַמְדֵיּוֹ שֶׁל אֶהְרֹן,
אוֹהֵב שְׁלוֹם וְרוֹדֵף שְׁלוֹם,
אוֹהֵב אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת וּמְקַרְבֵּן לַתּוֹרָה.

● *Who was Hillel the Elder?*

Read the story in the Havruta and complete the assignments.

Talmud Bavli, Masechet Shabbat, Page 30:

There was an incident involving two people who wagered with each other and said: Anyone who will go and aggravate Hillel to the point that he reprimands him, will take four-hundred zuz. One of them said: I will aggravate him. That day that he chose to bother Hillel was Shabbat eve, and Hillel was washing the hair on his head. He went and passed the entrance to Hillel's house and in a demeaning manner said: Who here is Hillel, who here is Hillel? Hillel wrapped himself in a dignified garment and went out to greet him. He said to him: My son, what do you seek? He said to him: I have a question to ask. Hillel said to him: Ask, my son, ask. The man asked him: Why are the heads of Babylonians oval? He was alluding to and attempting to insult Hillel, who was Babylonian. He said to him: My son, you have asked a significant question. The reason is because they do not have clever midwives. They do not know how to shape the child's head at birth.

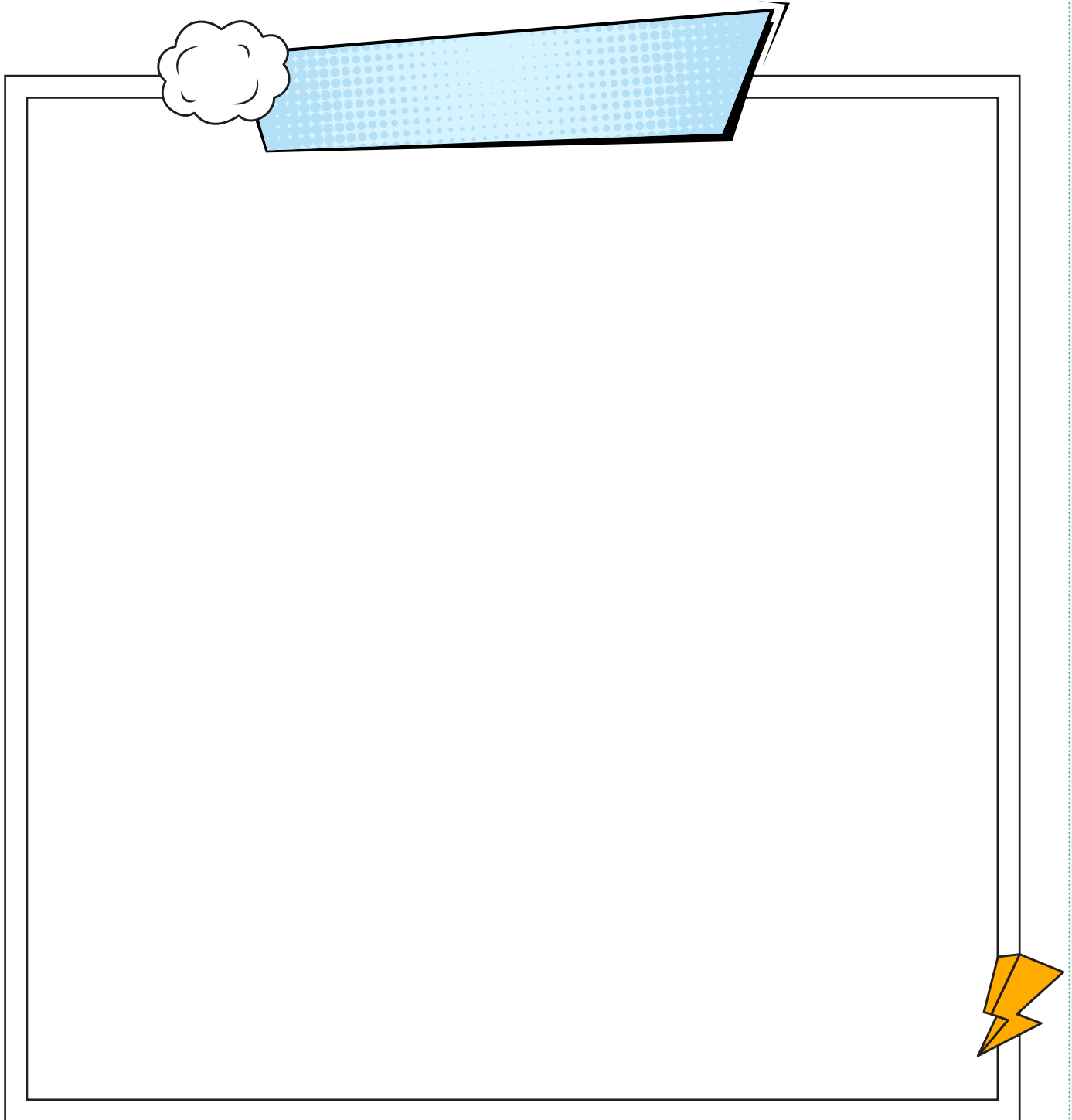
That man went and waited one hour, a short while, returned to look for Hillel, and said: Who here is Hillel, who here is Hillel? Again, Hillel wrapped himself and went out to greet him. Hillel said to him: My son, what do you seek? The man said to him: I have a question to ask. He said to him: Ask, my son, ask. The man asked: Why are the eyes of the residents of Tadmor bleary [terutot]? Hillel said to him: My son, you have asked a significant question. The reason is because they live among the sands and the sand gets into their eyes.

Once again the man went, waited one hour, returned, and said: Who here is Hillel, who here is Hillel? Again, he, Hillel, wrapped himself and went out to greet him. He said to him: My son, what do you seek? He said to him: I have a question to ask. He said to him: Ask, my son, ask. The man asked: Why do Africans have wide feet? Hillel said to him: You have asked a significant question.

The reason is because they live in marshlands and their feet widened to enable them to walk through those swampy areas.

That man said to him: I have many more questions to ask, but I am afraid lest you get angry. Hillel wrapped himself and sat before him, and he said to him: All of the questions that you have to ask, ask them. The man got angry and said to him: Are you Hillel whom they call the Nasi of Israel? He said to him: Yes. He said to him: If it is you, then may there not be many like you in Israel. Hillel said to him: My son, for what reason do you say this? The man said to him: Because I lost four hundred zuz because of you. Hillel said to him: Be vigilant of your spirit and avoid situations of this sort. Hillel is worthy of having you lose four hundred zuz and another four hundred zuz on his account, and Hillel will not get upset.

- **Draw a comic** in which you see the man's three questions to Hillel, and the answers that Hillel gave him. (You can also add Hillel's thoughts in bubbles above his head during his conversation with the man.)



- **Discuss** this in the Havruta and answer the questions:

- ❖ Why did the man ask Hillel so many questions?

- ❖ "That day was Friday afternoon, Shabbat eve, and Hillel was washing his hair." Why is it important to say that the incident occurred on Shabbat eve, and that Hillel was busy washing his hair?

- ❖ According to this story, what outstanding quality did Hillel the Elder have?



- ❖ How does the story you read connect to Hillel's words in the Mishna?

- When Aaron Hakohen died, the Torah tells us that all the house of Israel cried:

“All the house of Israel bewailed Aaron thirty days”

(Numbers, 20:29)

Rashi explains:

“Both women and men.

For he would bring peace between husband and wife”

(Avot D'Rabi Natan, 12)

- ❖ According to Rashi, why did everyone cry when Aharon died?

❖ What did Aharon do as a "pursuer of peace"?

❖ Give examples, or present an imaginary situation, about a family or social event in which Aaron Hakohen intervened and helped. In particular emphasize a possible a solution that Aaron could have presented.
