

פרק א', משנה יד

הוא הִיהָ אֹמֵר, אִם אֵין אֲנִי לִי, מִי לִי. וְכִשְׁאֲנִי לְעַצְמִי, מָה אֲנִי. וְאִם לֹא עֲכָשְׁיוּ, אִמְתִּי
used to say: If I am not for me, who will be for me? (- no one!)

And when evaluating my development, what have I become?

And if not now, then when?

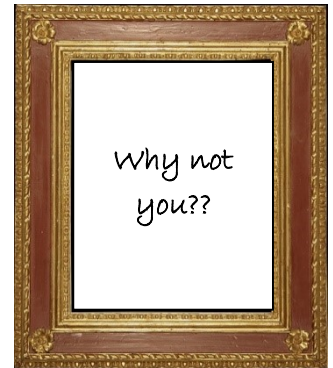
אם אין אני לי, מי לי?

IT'S UP TO ME!

I must motivate myself to refine my personal qualities and develop into the person I want to become, because no one else can.

As a young boy growing up in America, Rav Mordechai Gifter (1915-2001), זצ"ל, shared a room in a dorm while studying at yeshiva. Over his bed, he hung up pictures of גדולי ישראל that he wished to emulate. In the center of those pictures, he hung a mirror.

Over the mirror, he had written the words, "**Why not you?**" Apparently, every day, young Mordechai would go over to that wall, gaze at the great people that he aspired to be like, stare into his reflection, and contemplate, "Why not me?? - Why shouldn't my picture one day be included among these great *tzaddikim*?!" And amazingly, through his tremendous התמדה - toiling in Torah with great persistence and diligence - he became the Rosh Yeshiva of Telz, Cleveland, and is remembered world-wide today as a true גדול בישראל.



How so? Because *he recognized his unique potential and invested in himself* to become the great person that he became!

וְכִשְׁאֲנִי לְעַצְמִי, מָה אֲנִי?

REALITY CHECK...

I need to identify the *gaps* between *who I am today*, and *who I wish to become*.

וְאִם לֹא עֲכָשְׁיוּ, אִמְתִּי?

BRIDGE THE GAP – NOW!

The best time to work on developing the character, knowledge, and skills that we wish to have, is **NOW**, while it's easiest. *There will never be a better time!* As we get older, our ability to make significant changes diminishes as we become established and set in our ways.



- Imagine that someone hands you an ice-cream-cone on a hot sunny day... Why wait?