

בס"ד

# PIRKEI AVOS OF THE WEEK

## Perek III

26 Sivan, 5782 – June 25, 2022

Compiled from the works of  
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**The Lubavitcher Rebbe**

by  
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**An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Pirkei Avos**

**Chapter III**

**Likkutei Sichos Volume 7, Pages 365-367**

**Toras Menachem Hisvadu'vos 5744 Volume 4, Page 2324-2325**

**Chapter III, Mishnah 15**

**פרק ג', משנה ט"ו:** הכל צפוי, והרשות נתונה, ובטוב העולם נדון, והכל לפי רוב המעשה.

**Chapter 3, Mishnah 15:** All is foreseen, and freedom of choice is granted. The world is judged with goodness but in accordance with the amount of man's positive deeds.

**The Simple Explanation**

The Bartenura explains that "the world is judged with goodness" means that Hashem judges the world through His attribute of mercy. However, this Divine mercy does not apply to all of us equally. The application of G-dly mercy applies to each one "in accordance with the amount of Man's positive deeds."

In addition to this explanation, both the Bartenura and the Midrash Shmuel quote the Rambam's comments on this Mishnah. The Rambam, in his Commentary to the Mishnah, explains that "all is foreseen." This means that Hashem knows whatever each person has done and all that he will do. One might think that this being the case, there is no such thing as free choice<sup>1</sup>. Since Hashem knows everything that everyone will do, we are *forced* to be either a Tzaddik or a Rasha. Therefore the Mishnah continues by saying that "freedom of choice (literally 'permission') is granted." Hashem's knowledge does not force one to behave in a particular manner.

Why does the Mishnah say that the world is judged "in accordance with the *quantity*, the amount of man's positive deeds?" It seems that it would have been more appropriate for the Mishnah to have said that the judgment is made based on the *quality* of man's deeds. Quality is much more important than quantity, meaning the number of times one performs an act.

The Rambam explains this as follows. He says that there are times that quantity has an

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1. We know that there is free choice from the verse "Behold, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil," (Parshas Nitzovim, Devorim 30:16).

## PIRKEI AVOS OF THE WEEK

advantage over quality, for example, regarding the Mitzvah of Tzedokoh<sup>2</sup>. It is greater to give one dollar to a poor individual one hundred times than to provide the same person a hundred dollars at once. By extending the Tzedokoh over many times, one refines himself one hundred-fold. He becomes accustomed to giving Tzedokoh to the point that he acquires this all-important trait as his own.

The Alter Rebbe offers a deeper explanation of why giving smaller amounts of Tzedokoh over a more extended time is more significant than giving one large amount<sup>3</sup>. "Whoever is enlightened as to so great and wondrous a matter will discover and appreciate how profound are the words of the Sages, of blessed memory, when they said, 'Everything is judged according to the number of positive deeds.' This refers to the act of charity, which is performed numerous times. This draws down the ultimate form of life. This is also similar to what the Rambam wrote in praise of the repeated giving of Tzedokoh, 'that it refines the soul.'"

When performed over time, the repetition of these actions draws down the ultimate form of Divine life. It enables us to constantly bask in His presence, receiving life directly from Hashem.

### **Difficulties in Understanding the Mishnah**

We need to understand how it is possible to reconcile freedom of choice with the fact that whatever choice one will ultimately make is *already* known by Hashem? If the choice one will eventually make is a given before he even decides what he will do, how can we say he was free to do whatever he chose? It would seem to be cause and effect; Hashem's knowledge caused him to behave in a certain way.

### **The Explanation**

To understand this, we must first realize that Hashem is not bound by any physical limitations, including time and/or space. Past, present, and future are all one for Him. This being the case, we can understand that Hashem's knowledge of the choice that an individual *will* make, whether positive or not, is not the *cause* of his actions; instead, it is the effect of his actions. From Hashem's perspective, there is no difference between past and future. Hence, the actions that the person will perform (in the future) caused Hashem's knowledge (in the past). We initially assumed

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2. There is actually a far simpler allegory. It is necessary for ten men above the age of Bar Mitzvah to join together in order to have a Minyan, a quorum required for the recitation of various prayers. It does not help to have nine men, even if they are all of the stature (quality) of Moshe Rabbeinu.

3. See Igerres Hakodesh, Chapter 21.

## PIRKEI AVOS OF THE WEEK

(based on our limitations) that Hashem's knowledge caused the individual's actions. The truth is that it works the other way around. Hashem's knowledge is the *result* of the person's choice. Although from our perspective, G-d's knowledge came first, nevertheless, from Hashem's perspective, time is not a factor.

*(Adapted from a letter written on 22 Teves, 5709 and the Sichah of Shabbos Parshas Devorim, 5744)*

**I hope you gained as much by reading this as I did by translating and adapting it.**

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**IN LOVING MEMORY OF**

**Dr. Mindel Rivka (Muriel) bas Reb Menachem Mendel Shlomo ע"ה  
Stitt**

Passed away on Shabbat Parshat Lech Lecha, 10 Mar-Cheshvan, 5782  
**May Her Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life**

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**DEDICATED BY HER FAMILY שיהיו**

\* \* \*

**IN HONOR OF**

The Soldiers of "Tzivos Hashem"

**Chaim and Aiden Oded שיהיו**

**Morris**

May they merit to be a source of Chassidic pride  
to their family and a Torah light to their community

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**DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS**

**Rabbi & Mrs. Menachem M. and Chaya Mushka שיהיו**

**Morris**

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**IN HONOR OF**

**Mrs. Esther' שתחי Sharabani**

May she go from strength to strength  
in health, happiness, Torah, and mitzvot

\*

**DEDICATED BY HER SON**

**Mr. Gershon (Geri) שי' Bentov**

**מוקדש לזכות**

**כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש**

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**סתית**

**נפטרה ש"ק פרשת לך לך, יו"ד מר-חשון תשפ"ב**

**ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.**

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**נדבת בני משפחתה שיחיו**

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**לזכות**

**חיילי "צבאות השם"**

**חיים ועדן עודד שיחיו**

**מאריס**

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**הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וחי' מושקא שיחיו**

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