

בס"ד

PIRKEI AVOS OF THE WEEK

Chapter Five

20 Menachem Av, 5784 – August 24, 2024

Compiled from the works of
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The Lubavitcher Rebbe

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PIRKEI AVOS OF THE WEEK

An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Pirkei Avos Chapter V

Likkutei Sichos Volume 22, Pages 49 - 53

Chapter V

פרק ה', משנה י"ט: ... תלמידיו של אברהם אבינו, אוכלין בעולם הזה ונוחלין בעולם הבא, שנאמר (משלי ח', כ"א), להנחיל אהבי יש, ואצרתיהם אמלא ...

Chapter 5, Mishnah 19: The disciples of our Father Avrohom benefit in this world and inherit the World to Come, and as is stated¹, "There is substance to give as an inheritance to those who love Me, and I will fill their treasuries"

The Simple Explanation

Our Mishnah contrasts the students of the righteous Avrohom with those of the wicked Bilaam. It first lists the attributes of each. Then, the Mishnah tells us the consequences of these traits. Finally, the Mishnah tells us of the reward given to the disciples of Avrohom and the punishment Bilaam's students receive.

What reward do Avrohom's students receive? The Mishnah says they "benefit in this world and inherit the World to Come." It then cites a proof text², "There is substance to give as an inheritance to those who love Me, and I will fill their treasuries." Avrohom is called one "who loves Me," as the prophet writes³, "Avrohom, who loves Me." "Substance" refers to this world; "I will fill their treasures" refers to the World to Come⁴.

Difficulties in Understanding the Mishnah

As discussed above, the Mishnah teaches us the reward the "disciples of Avrohom" will receive. When talking about the World to Come, we must understand why the Mishnah speaks of an inheritance. The proof text that the Mishnah cites also uses the words "to give inheritance." An inheritance is not a reward for one's actions. Instead, an inheritance comes as a matter of course to the one who inherits, and it is simply a matter of his relationship to the one from whom he inherits.

Furthermore, we find elsewhere that the Sages use the verb "give" rather than "inherit"

1. Mishlei 8:21.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Yeshayahu 41:8.

4. See the Bartenura's commentary to this Mishnah.

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regarding reward, precisely as we would expect. The Talmud says that⁵ "in the future, Hashem will *give* (rather than bequeath to) every Tzaddik 310 worlds." Thus, the word "inheritance" in our Mishnah requires explanation.

The Explanation

This can be explained by understanding our Mishnah differently. The Mishnah does *not* teach us the reward for performing Mitzvos, which is evident from using the verb "inherit," as explained above. Instead, it teaches us the perfection that one can achieve due to serving G-d out of love for Him ("to those who love Me").

The famous Rogotchover Gaon⁶ explained that inheritance differs from a sale or any other way of transferring property from one person to another⁷. For example, in the case of a sale, "A" owns the property, and he transfers its ownership to "B." inheritance works differently. When "B" inherits property from "A," he is standing in "A's" place. "A" and "B" serve as one unit. Scripture expresses this in the verse⁸, "Your sons will be *in place of* your fathers." In this manner, inheritance is different than any other form of acquisition.

The same is true of spiritual inheritance. We can perfect ourselves by learning the Torah and performing Mitzvos. The root of the word Mitzvah is the Hebrew word meaning commandment. However, it is also related to the Aramaic word meaning connection (צוותא). This is because we connect ourselves to Him each time we perform an act that the Almighty commanded⁹. This is the meaning of what the Zohar says¹⁰: "The Holy One, Blessed be He, the Jews, and the Torah are all one."

We can see this from the proof text that our Mishnah quotes¹¹. "There is substance to give as an inheritance . . ." The Rambam explains the words "something of substance" (Yesh - יש) as¹² "an absolute, constant, unlimited existence." Based on this, the verse says Hashem declares that He will bequeath an

5. Sanhedrin 100, a.

6. Rabbi Yosef Rosen, 1858 – 1936.

7. She'aylos U'teshuvos Tzafnas Pa'aneach (Dvinsk edition), Section 1, Chapter 118.

8. Tehillim 45:17.

9. The same is true in the English language. To "join" means to connect two things together. To "enjoin" means "to direct or impose by authoritative order or with urgent admonition." See www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary.

10. Zohar Section 3, Page 73, a.

11. See footnote 1.

12. See his Commentary to the Mishnah, at the end of Tractate Uktzin.

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absolute, unlimited existence to those who love Him. This is because the World to Come is a world of eternal life.

The question remains: how can a limited creation such as ourselves merit an eternal existence? The explanation is that it is not something that Hashem gives us. Instead, we inherit it. We are Hashem's children¹³. As such, we inherit Him.

Adapted from the Sichah of 19 Kislev and Motzo'ai Shabbos Parshas Vayeishev and Mikeitz 5738)

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

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13. See Tanya, the beginning of Chapter 2.

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