

בס"ד

PIRKEI AVOS OF THE WEEK

Perek V

27 Iyar, 5779 – June 1, 2019

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 V

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Chapter V

פרק ה', משנה ו': עשרה דברים נבראו בערב שבת בין השמשות, ואלו הן: פי הארץ; פי הבאר; פי האתון; הקשת; והמן; והמטה; והשמיר; הכתב; והמכתב; והלוחות ...

Chapter 5, Mishnah 6: Ten things were created at twilight of Shabbos eve. These are, (1.) the mouth of the earth, (2.) the mouth of (Miriam's) well, (3.) the mouth of (Bilaam's) donkey, (4.) the rainbow, (5.) the Mon – Manna, (6.) (Moshe's) staff; (7.) the Shamir, (8.) the writing, (9.) the inscription and (10.) the tablets (of the Ten Commandments) ...

The Simple Explanation

The Bartenura explains that this Mishnah is discussing the end of the sixth day of creation, Friday afternoon at twilight, immediately prior to Shabbos. That is when these ten miraculous items were created.

The ten items were (1.) *the mouth of the earth* which would swallow Korach and his band; (2.) *the mouth of (Miriam's) well* which traveled together with the Jews throughout their 40 years in the wilderness, supplying them with water to drink; (3.) *the mouth of (Bilaam's) donkey*. On twilight of that Friday, it was decreed that when the time came, this donkey would have the ability to speak to Bilaam; (4.) *the rainbow* which appeared in the sky after the Great Flood. It was a sign of a covenant that Hashem would never again destroy the world with a flood; (5.) *the Mon – Manna* with which Hashem fed the Jewish Nation for forty years in the desert; (6.) *(Moshe's) staff* with which he performed the miracles at the time of the Exodus, which are described in the Torah; (7.) *the Shamir*, which was a sort of worm. It was able to slice through stone. It following a path on the stone which consisted of a line which was drawn upon it. In this manner, the stones which were used to construct the altar in the Bais Hamikdosh were cut to size. It was prohibited for these stones to be hewn with metal implements; hence this miraculous worm was necessary; (8.) *the writing*, meaning the form of the letters which were engraved upon the two tablets; (9.) *the inscription* upon the two tablets. The letters went completely through the stones, yet they could miraculously be read from all four sides; and (10.) *the tablets (of the Ten Commandments)*, which were made of sapphire.

Difficulties in Understanding the Mishnah

In this chapter of Pirkei Avos, the Sages teach us a number of lists which are grouped by number.

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First, we find seven lists which consist of ten items each. At the very beginning of this chapter, we read that¹ “the world was created with ten utterances.” In other words, the first list which the Mishnah teaches us is regarding the creation of the world. It then goes on to say that² “There were ten generations from Adam to Noach.” We see that the Mishnah follows the story of creation with a second list of ten regarding the “crown” of creation, i.e. the first man. The Sages are teaching us these lists in chronological order; the same is true of the rest of the groups of ten listed in our chapter.

The famous Maharal asks³ that our Mishnah, which is the last list of tens items, seems to be the exception to this rule. The first Mishnah discusses Creation. It would seem that our Mishnah, which lists those items created at the conclusion of the sixth day, should be the next teaching. Why is this not so; why is our Mishnah pushed off until the end of the list?

The Explanation

This can be explained as follows. Everything which was listed before our Mishnah, is within the realm of nature. It is all connected to the creation of the world. Even miracles are within the scope of Creation; they are a part of the “chain” of creation by means of which G-d created (and continues to create) the world. The Holy Temple, and the ten miracles which occurred there on a regular basis, were also a part of nature; albeit its ultimate perfection. We are taught that Hashem created this world in order to have “a dwelling place below⁴.” One’s dwelling place, his residence, is where his true being is open for all to see. That is where his essence is revealed. The meaning of “below,” is a world where no one would recognize Hashem’s presence within the creation. A world where we would see the creation, without extrapolating the presence of a Creator.

The difference between our Mishnah and the one’s preceding it, is not just a difference in quantity. It is a difference in quality as well. The miracles described in our Mishnah totally transcend nature. They leave no doubt whatsoever that they are supernatural.

The fact that these ten items are completely and undeniably beyond nature, is the very reason that they were created on Friday at twilight.

The Halachic meaning of twilight is the time between sunset and nightfall. Day and night are opposites, yet this period of time is able to connect both of them. In order to connect two opposites, one must be on a level which is greater than both. “Day” and “night” are the greatest expression of nature. We

1. Pirkei Avos, Chapter 5, Mishnah 1.

2. Pirkei Avos, Chapter 5, Mishnah 2.

3. See his commentary to Pirkei Avos, Derech Chaim, Chapter 5, Mishnah 2.

4. See Bamidbar Rabbah, Parshas Naso Chapter 16. See also Tanya Chapter 36.

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can see this from the Torah's description of Creation⁵, "And it was evening, and it was morning, one day."

In our Mishnah, the meaning of twilight is far greater. Here we are talking about twilight of Friday. It does not merely connect day and night; it connects the six weekdays, meaning the act of creation, and Shabbos, that which transcends creation. From this we can see that it is a time which is totally above nature. Therefore, it was the time in which Hashem created those items which totally transcend creation.

We are impatiently waiting for, and working toward the days of Moshiach. This is a time that will be a constant Shabbos; we will always be permeated with a light which is beyond the limitations of nature. May we reach that time now!

(Adapted from the Sichah of Shabbos Parshas Behar-Bechukosai, 5723)

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5. Parshas Bereishis, Bereishis 1:4.

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Mr. **Sholom Moshe** ben Reb **Shlomo Meir** Hacoheh ע"ה **Cohen**

Passed away on Shabbos Parshas Beshalach, 13 Shevat, 5779

May His Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

*

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**מוקדש לזכות
כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש**

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נדפס ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא שיחיו מאריס

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