

בס"ד

PIRKEI AVOS OF THE WEEK

Perek V

22 Iyar, 5780 – May 16, 2020

Compiled from the works of
Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson
The Lubavitcher Rebbe

by
Rabbi Shmuel Mendelsohn

A Project of
Vaad L'Hafotzas Sichos
Copyright 2020©

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

Likkutei Sichos, Volume 4, Pages 1226 - 1228

Chapter V

פרק ה', משנה א': בעשרה מאמרות נברא העולם. ומה תלמוד לומר, נהלא במאמר אֶחָד יְכוּל לְהִבְרָאוֹת וכו'.

Chapter 5, Mishnah 1: The world was created with ten utterances. What does this come to teach us? Indeed, it could have been made with a single statement, etc.

The Simple Explanation

This week we learn the fifth chapter of Pirkei Avos. The first six Mishnayos (plural of Mishnah) are lists of things that are in groups of ten. Ten utterances¹, ten generations², ten tests³, ten miracles in Egypt⁴, ten miracles in the Bais Hamikdosh⁵, and ten things created during the twilight of the sixth day of creation⁶. The reason for this is that ten is a complete, perfect number, which includes the entire universe.

The first Mishnah in our chapter makes this clear. This Mishnah tells us that Hashem created the world with ten utterances. The commentaries explain⁷ what these utterances were: “⁸G-d said ‘let there be light,’” “⁹G-d said ‘Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters,’” etc. However, if we count the number of times that the Torah writes, “G-d said let there be,” it only adds up to nine! The explanation is that we also include the first verse in the Torah¹⁰, “At the beginning of G-d’s creation of the heavens and the earth.” This verse is also an utterance because the Sages said that¹¹ “Bereishis (in the beginning) is also an utterance.”

On the outset of creation, with the very first verse of the Torah, Hashem created the primordial matter from which He created each being. On each day, Hashem “said,” meaning

-
1. Pirkei Avos Chapter 5, Mishnah 1.
 2. Pirkei Avos Chapter 5, Mishnah 2.
 3. Pirkei Avos Chapter 5, Mishnah 3.
 4. Pirkei Avos Chapter 5, Mishnah 4.
 5. Pirkei Avos Chapter 5, Mishnah 5.
 6. Pirkei Avos Chapter 5, Mishnah 6.
 7. See the comments of the Bartenura and the Rambam to this Mishnah.
 8. Parshas Bereishis, Bereishis 1:3.
 9. Ibid., Bereishis 1:6.
 10. Ibid., Bereishis 1:1.
 11. Talmud Rosh Hashanah 32, a and Megillah 21, b.

PIRKEI AVOS OF THE WEEK

commanded, called for, the primordial matter to take its final form.

Difficulties in Understanding the Mishnah

The Mishnah seems to have neglected to mention one group of ten, namely the Ten Commandments. Hashem created (and continues to make) the entire world through the Torah. Hashem created the world in ten utterances *because* there are ten commandments. One would think that the Torah would undoubtedly be at the head of the list.

The reason for this is based on the way the Sages explain the verse¹² "... each spoon weighing ten (shekels)¹³ according to the holy shekel ..." They explain that the ten utterances are parallel to the ten commandments¹⁴. Accordingly, the Mishnah should undoubtedly list the Ten Commandments here as well.

The Explanation

The explanation is as follows. While it is true that Hashem creates the entire world through the Torah, nevertheless, the Torah is infinitely higher than the world. The Torah is in a completely different category than the world. The Torah is Hashem's Will and Wisdom, both of which are one with Him. Therefore, we cannot include the Torah with lists that describe the creation.

While it is true that there are miracles included within the Mishnas in our chapter, which lists groups of ten, among them are the ten miracles that continuously occurred in the Bais Hamikdosh. The Holy Temple is the place where G-d Almighty's presence rested in this world! It would, therefore, seem as if the Torah could also be included.

However, this is not the case. The Bais Hamikdosh is the epitome of perfection in this world. It can be said that the world was created for the sake of the Temple. The purpose of creation was because Hashem¹⁵ "desired to have a dwelling place below, in this world."

However, the Torah preceded the world¹⁶. It surpasses the world and everything in it, including the Holy Temple. The purpose of the world is, as previously said, to have a dwelling place below. However, the Torah and G-d are one. We cannot say that there is a *reason* for having G-d in the world. His existence is complete and perfect.

12. Parshas Naso, Bamidbar 7:86.

13. The original Hebrew text says "ten, ten, the spoons according to the holy shekel." Obviously, that is not syntactically correct in English.

14. See Zohar Section 3 11, b.

15. Midrash Tanchumah Parshas Naso 16.

16. See Talmud Pesachim 54, b and Nedorim 39, b.

PIRKEI AVOS OF THE WEEK

A Practical Lesson

The very word Torah means a lesson. We must learn a lesson from everything in the Torah. Not only that, but we must even learn a lesson from what the Torah does *not* say. The fact that our Mishnah does not mention the Torah teaches us *how* to study Torah. Our Torah study must be for its own sake, not for any worldly benefit.

(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Bechukosai, 5719)

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

To dedicate a week, a month or a year of

The Rashi of the Week or Pirkei Avos of the Week, visit

<http://rebbeteachesrashi.org/contact-us-dedicate-an-issue>

You can find us on the web at www.RebbeTeachesRashi.org.

You can find our blog at <https://rebbetr.org>.

**DEDICATED IN HONOR OF
the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

* * *

IN HONOR OF

The Soldiers of Tzivos Hashem **Chaim** and **Aiden Oded** שידיו **Morris**

*

DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS

Rabbi & Mrs. **Menachem M.** and **Chaya Mushka** שידיו **Morris**

מוקדש לזכות
כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש

*** * ***

לזכות
חיילי "צבאות השם" חיים ועדן עודד שיחיו מאריס

נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וחי' מושקא שיחיו מאריס