

בס"ד

PIRKEI AVOS OF THE WEEK

Introduction to **Pirkei Avos**

9 Menachem Av, 5778 – July 28, 2018

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

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

Sefer Maamarim Melukat Volume 3, Page 221

Important Note

This Shabbos is Tisha B'Av, the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Menachem Av. On Shabbos one may neither fast nor display public signs of mourning, hence this year the fast is pushed off until Sunday. However, there are certain private signs of mourning which must be observed on Shabbos. Since words of Torah make one happy¹, one may not study Torah on the ninth day of Menachem Av². For the exact halachic time of midday in your location, check https://www.chabad.org/calendar/zmanim_cdo/aid/143790/jewish/Zmanim-Halachic-Times.htm.

That said, we will not continue with Chapter III until next Shabbos. Therefore, this week's "Pirkei Avos of the Week" will offer an explanation of the Mishnah which we read prior to each week's chapter. Next week, with Hashem's help, we will continue with an explanation of the Rebbe of a Mishnah in Chapter III. Please remember not to learn this after midday on this Shabbos, 9 Menachem Av, 5778 - July 21, 2018.

Introduction

סנהדרין פרק י', משנה א': כל ישראל יש להם חלק לעולם הבא, שנאמר ועמדו כלם צדיקים, לעולם יירשו ארץ, נצר מטעי מעשה ידי להתפאר

Sanhedrin Chapter 10³, Mishnah 1: All Israel have a share in the World to Come, as it is stated⁴, "Your people are all righteous; they shall inherit the Land forever. (They are) the branch of My planting, the work of My hands in which to take pride."

The Simple Explanation

This Mishnah is customarily learned prior to reciting/learning each chapter of Pirkei Avos. There is a difference of opinion as to the general meaning of the term "World to Come." Some say that it refers to Gan Eden, where the souls (without bodies) bask in Hashem's presence⁵. Others are of the opinion that it refers to the era of

1. Tehillim 19:9.

2. See Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim, Laws of Tisha B'Av, Chapter 554. There are exceptions to this ruling; laws directly related to Tisha B'Av, and sorrowful sections of the Torah, such as Iyov.

3. In the printed editions the Mishnah which we have, this is Chapter 10. ,, in our printed editions of the Talmud it is Chapter 11.

4. Yeshayahu 60:21.

5 Rambam, Laws of Teshuvah, Chapter 8, Paragraph 8.

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the “Revival of the Dead⁶.” However, in this context it certainly means the time following the revival of the dead⁷. The proof for this is from the continuation of the Mishnah, “the following do not have a portion in the World to Come. One who says that ‘there is no indication in the Torah that the dead will be resurrected.’” The Gemorah explains⁸ that G-d punishes and rewards “measure for measure.” Because an individual *denies* the resurrection, he will not *merit* resurrection.

Furthermore, the only possible explanation of this Mishnah is that it’s discussing the revival of the dead. The Mishnah is saying that each and every Jew has guaranteed entry into the “World to Come.” However, this cannot be the case regarding the Garden of Eden, the reward given to bodiless souls. Regarding Gan Eden, we are told that⁹ “Who may go up to the mountain of Hashem? (Only) one who has clean hands and a pure heart.” In other words, entry into Gan Eden is based upon one’s conduct throughout his lifetime. It is an “exclusive” world. Furthermore, Gan Eden has many levels. Even one who is granted entrance, can only go to the level which he has earned in his lifetime. Here the Mishnah says that the World to Come is not exclusive; “all Israel have a share in the World to Come.” Therefore, it cannot possibly refer to Gan Eden, which is not accessible to many.

Difficulties in Understanding the Mishnah

Gan Eden exists now as well. Nevertheless, it is called the “World to Come,” which implies a world which does not exist as yet. The reason for this is that one does not acquire a portion in Gan Eden until after he completes his life in this world and earns it. Throughout one’s lifetime it’s a world which has yet to come to him. On the other hand, the era of the “Resurrection of the Dead” will not exist until after the arrival of Moshiach. In other words, the “Resurrection of the Dead” cannot take place until the world reaches a level of perfection sufficient to warrant the coming of Moshiach. Furthermore, we say¹⁰ “There is none comparable to You... in this world, and none apart from You... in the life of the World to Come. There is nothing aside from You... in the Era of Moshiach and there is none like You... in the Era of Resurrection of the Dead.” This prayer lists four different epochs in ascending order. The first is this world. This is followed by the World to Come (meaning Gan Eden). Next comes the Era of Moshiach. The fourth and highest is the era of the Resurrection of the Dead.

This makes it clear that the revelations of the era of the Resurrection of the Dead are far greater than those of Gan Eden. Nevertheless, the era of the Resurrection of the Dead is accessible to one and all. Contrast that with

6. This is the opinion followed by the Kabbalists and Chassidic teachings. There are many sources for this; see, for example Likkutei Torah, Parshas Tzav, Page 16, c.

7. Bartenura (and other commentaries) on our Mishnah in Sanhedrin. See also Midrash Shmuel, beginning of Pirkei Avos.

8. See Gemorah Sanhedrin 90, a.

9. Tehillim 24:3-4.

10. Shabbos morning prayer service.

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Gan Eden, which has a lower level of revelation, and nevertheless has “limited membership.” Why should that be so?

The Explanation

There are various explanations given to answer this apparent difficulty. The core of one of these is as follows. It is written in many Chassidic discourses that¹¹ Gan Eden is a reward for Torah study. On the other hand, the Resurrection of the Dead comes as a reward for the observance of Mitzvos. This explains why Gan Eden is a world of souls without bodies; Torah study is primarily related to the soul. In the Era of Resurrection, the souls will be clothed within bodies. This is because the observance of Mitzvos relates primarily to the body¹².

Each and every Jew, without exception, observes Mitzvos. The Sages tell us that¹³ “even the sinners of Israel are as full of Mitzvos as a pomegranate (is full of) seeds.” That is why “Every Jew has a share in the World to Come.”

This may also be the reason the Mishnah follows the statement that all Jews have a portion in the World to Come with the verse¹⁴ “your people are all righteous, they will inherit the land forever...” This proof-text serves to prove that all Jews have a portion in the World to Come (“they will inherit the land forever”). However, in addition to this it also serves to explain why this is so.

One who observes Mitzvos is called “righteous,” in Hebrew a Tzaddik. This is because all of the Mitzvos are called Tzedokoh¹⁵, meaning righteousness. Hence, those who perform Mitzvos are termed Tzaddikim, “righteous ones¹⁶.” Since “your people are all righteous,” meaning that *all* Jews perform Mitzvos, therefore “they shall inherit the land forever” — the “Land of Life¹⁷,” which refers to life in the World to Come.

(Adapted from the Maamor (Chassidic discourse) Lehovin Inyan Techiyas Hamaisim, 5746)

To dedicate a week, a month or a year of

Pirkei Avos of the Week, visit

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

11. See Torah Ohr, Parshas Yisro 73, b. See also Sefer Hamitzvos of the Tzemach Tzedek, 15, b.

12. See Tanya chapters. 35 and. 37.

13 See Talmud Eiruvin 19, a and Chagigah 27, a.

14. See Footnote 4.

15. See Tanya chapter. 37 (page 48b). See also Sefer Hamaamorim Melukat Volume I, page 308, footnote. 33.

16. Likkutei Torah, Shir Hashirim, Page 16, c.

17. Or Hatorah, Nach, on this verse of Yeshayahu, chapter. 3, page 288.

**DEDICATED IN HONOR OF
the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

* * *

**IN HONOR OF
Chaim and Aiden Oded שיחיו Morris**

*

**DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS
Rabbi & Mrs. Menachem M. and Chaya Mushka שיחיו Morris**

* * *

**IN HONOR OF
Hatomim Avrohom Moshe ben Mina Esther שי' Gordon
For a complete and speedy recovery**

*

**DEDICATED BY HIS CLASSMATES
in
YESHIVAH TORAH OHR שיחיו**

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR MOTHER
Mrs. Brocha bas Reb Tzvi Nechemiah Hacoheן ע"ה Cohen
Passed away on 8 Shevat, 5778
May Her Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life**

*

DEDICATED BY HER FAMILY

* * *

**IN HONOR OF
Mr. Sholom Moshe Hacoheן ben Tzivia שי' Cohen
For a complete and speedy recovery**

* * *

**DEDICATED BY
Hatomim Moshe Shlomoh Zohar שי' Mars**

*

May he merit to be a Chossid, a Yerei Shomayim and a Lamdon

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 וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא שיחיו מאריס

* * *

לזכות

הת' אברהם משה בן מרת מינה אסתר שי' גארדאן

לרפואה שלימה וקרובה

*

נדפס ע"י חבריו התמימים

בישיבה תורה אור

* * *

לעילוי נשמת

מרת ברכה בת ר' צבי נחמי' הכהן ע"ה כהן

נפטרה ביום ח' שבט, ה'תשע"ח

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

נדפס ע"י בני משפחתה שיחיו

* * *

לזכות

ר' שלום משה הכהן בן צבי' שי' כהן

לרפואה שלימה וקרובה

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נתרם ע"י

הת' משה שלמה זהר שי' מארס

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יהי רצון שיזכה להיות חסיד, ירא שמים, ולמדן