

בס"ד

# PIRKEI AVOS OF THE WEEK

## Perek III

13 Iyar, 5782 – May 14, 2022

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

by  
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## PIRKEI AVOS OF THE WEEK

### An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Pirkei Avos Chapter III

Adapted from Sefer Hamaamorim Melukat Volume 5, Page 98

#### Chapter III, Mishnah 5

פרק ג', משנה ה': רבי נחוניא בן הקנה אומר: "כל המקבל עליו עול תורה, מעבירין ממנו על מלכות ועל דרך ארץ. וכל הפורק ממנו עול תורה, נותנין עליו על מלכות ועל דרך ארץ".

**Chapter 3, Mishnah 5:** Rabbi Nechunia, the son of Hakanah, would say, "One who accepts upon himself the yoke of Torah is exempt from the yoke of government duties and the yoke of worldly cares. But one who casts off the yoke of Torah is saddled with the yoke of government duties and the yoke of worldly cares."

#### The Simple Explanation

The primary explanation of this Mishnah seems to be relatively straightforward. Most of us are saddled with the yoke of worldly daily cares, and the Mishnah offers a solution to this burden. By accepting the yoke of the Torah, one becomes free from all of these issues.

Precisely what is the *yoke of Torah* to which one must accept upon himself? The Rambam, in his commentary on the Mishnah, defines this phrase, and it means *constantly* involving oneself in Torah study.

The Rambam continues, explaining why the yoke of the Torah exempts one from the yoke of worldly matters. The Sages tell us that<sup>1</sup> "it says<sup>2</sup>, "And the tablets are the work of Hashem's, and the writing is Hashem's writing, engraved (Hebrew Charus - חרות) on the tablets." Do not read the word "engraved" ("Charus - חרות) but rather freedom (Chairus - חירות). No one is truly free unless he occupies himself with Torah study<sup>3</sup>." Here we see that only through Torah can one attain true freedom.

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1. Pirkei Avos Chapter 6, Mishnah 2.

2. Parshas Ki Siso, Shemos 32:16.

3. Please note, that the method of "do not read ..., but rather ..." for deriving lessons from the Torah is used quite often by the Sages. However, there are two fundamental things to keep in mind. Firstly, it is not a word game. One cannot simply choose random words, and replace them with others, regardless of how similar they are. Rather, they are all teachings which the various Sages received from their teachers,

## PIRKEI AVOS OF THE WEEK

### The Deeper Explanation

We can understand this from the Alter Rebbe's explanation in Tanya<sup>4</sup> of a teaching of the Sages, which seems to be very difficult to understand. The Talmud declares, "Bar Hay-Hay said to Hillel , 'You shall return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him who serves G-d and who has not served Him.' (The two expressions seem to be redundant.) 'The righteous' is the same as 'him who serves Hashem'; 'the wicked' is the same as 'him who has not served Him!' He answered that 'he that serves Him' and 'he that serves Him not' both refer to such as are perfectly righteous. However, you cannot compare one that reviews his chapter a hundred times with one who reviews it a hundred and one times. Bar Hay-Hay responded, 'because of reviewing one less time, he is called 'him who has not served Hashem'? (How can that be?) — He replied, 'Yes, go and learn from the donkey-drivers market. Renting out his service to go ten parasangs<sup>5</sup>, they charge one zuz<sup>6</sup>; for eleven parasangs, they charge two zuz.'"

The charge for donkey drivers renting out their services of mules and the number of times that one reviews his Torah lesson seems to have no connection to each other. The Alter Rebbe explains that "it was customary to review each class one hundred times in those days. This is illustrated in the above Gemorah by the example taken from the market. Donkey drivers used to hire themselves out at a rate of ten parasangs for one zuz, but for eleven parasangs charged two zuz. This was because that extra distance went beyond their customary practice.

For the same reason, the 101<sup>st</sup> time reviewing his lesson, which is beyond the usual practice he was accustomed to since childhood, is considered equivalent to all the previous one hundred times together. It is even greater than them in endurance and effort. It, therefore, entitles him to be called 'one who is serving Hashem.'"

We are saying that the amount of Torah study needed to qualify as one who served Hashem is the amount needed to change one's very nature. The Hebrew word for service is "Oved - עובד."

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who received from their teachers, etc., who received from Moshe, who received from Hashem. Secondly, the second reading does not replace the first, rather both are true.

4. Tanya Chapter 15.

5. A unit of measure.

6. A unit of money.

## PIRKEI AVOS OF THE WEEK

This is the same word that is used for tanning hides, "Ibud Oros – עיבוד עורות." This is what is meant by "the yoke of Torah," learning Torah in a manner that completely changes one's essence.

*Compiled from a Maamor delivered on Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach, 18 Kislev 5740*

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May Her Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life**

\*

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**Chaim and Aiden Oded שיהיו**

**Morris**

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to their family and a Torah light to their community

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in health, happiness, Torah, and mitzvot

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