

בס"ד



BREISHT

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MISHNA - ETHICS OF OUR FATHERS



“The world was created with ten utterances.
It could have been created with a single utterance.

to make the sinners accountable for destroying
a world created with ten utterances,

and **to reward the righteous** for sustaining
a world created with ten utterances.”

- Chapter 5, Mishna 1

REBBE'S QUESTIONS:

1. Why is punishing sinners so central to G-d, the essence of goodness?!
2. Why is it mentioned even before rewarding the righteous?!

COMMENTARY EXPLANATION:

“To make accountable” – rather than “to avenge” - is actually a kindness: “Payment collection” is gradual, allowing time for correction & rehabilitation.

BUT: What about question 2?

TORAH'S TENS: WHAT DIDN'T MAKE THE LIST?



Ethics of our Fathers, Chapter 5:

- ❖ The world was created with ten utterances.
- ❖ Ten generations from Adam to Noah.
- ❖ Ten generations from Noah to Abraham.
- ❖ Abraham's ten tests.
- ❖ Ten miracles for Jews in Egypt, & ten at sea.
- ❖ Ten afflictions upon Egyptians in Egypt, & ten at sea.
- ❖ With ten tests Jews tested G-d in desert.
- ❖ Ten miracles in Holy Temple.
- ❖ Ten things created at twilight of eve of Shabbat.



TEN COMMANDMENTS didn't make the list?!



WHERE ARE WE?



“The world was created with ten utterances...
to make sinners accountable...
and to reward the righteous...”



Rebbe's Questions:

1. Why is punishing sinners so central to G-d, the essence of goodness?!
2. Why is it mentioned even before rewarding the righteous?!
3. Why don't TEN COMMANDMENTS make the list?!

TEN IS SPECIAL – BUT WHY?

PRE-CREATION: TEN COMMANDMENTS – “*Torah is creation’s blueprint*”



IN ACT OF CREATION: 10 Utterances of Creation – Rooted in 10 Divine Sefirot/Attributes



EXAMPLES IN CREATION ITSELF:

- Each of an object’s 3 dimensions has beginning, middle & end = 9, + its space = 10.
- Every 10 years of life constitutes an era (*Mishna*)
- Soul possesses 10 faculties (*Tanya*)
- Holy congregation (*minyan*) is 10
- “Divine Presence manifests in presence of 10 Jews” (*Talmud*)
- “The 10th animal shall be holy” (*Lev. 27:32*)

ANSWERS QUESTION 3: TEN COMMANDMENTS aren’t on the list; they CAUSE it!

*“The world was created with ten utterances...
It could have been created with a single utterance.”*

10 Utterances:

G-d’s “system”; “the way things work”

Natural order

Single Utterance

G-d’s Infinite Will, beyond any “system”;
things work as He wills. Period.

Miracle

IN SERVICE OF HASHEM:

Recognizing human limitations

“TZADIK” – can elevate
neutral objects

Neshama is “literally a part of G-d”
can break through nature’s limits

“BAAL TESHUVAH” – elevates even
the prohibited

MISHNA REVISITED

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“REWARD FOR RIGHTEOUS”

- Upholding system of “10 Utterances”
- “Sustaining world”: Proper engagement with world, elevating permissible things

“SINNERS ACCOUNTABLE”

- Accessing “Single Utterance”
- “Destroying world”: TESHUVAH: Transcending world’s limitations, elevating even sin
- “Accountability”: Correction & elevation