

# SICHA SUMMARY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



## Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 17

*Pirkei Avos, Perek 6*

### The Mishnah:

Rabbi Meir would say: Whoever occupies themselves in the study of Torah for Torah's sake alone, merits many things... He is called... [a] lover of G-d, lover of humanity... [Torah] distances him from sin.... From him, people enjoy counsel and wisdom, understanding and power... He becomes... forgiving of insults. (Avos 6:1)

### The Questions:

1. Who is Rabbi Meir addressing? If the person studies Torah for its own sake, why would any of the “many things” he “merits” be relevant information for him? And if this person does find these many rewards motivating, then he is not one who “studies Torah for Torah’s sake alone”?!
2. Many of the items listed do not seem to be “rewards” that a person can earn through merit. Loving G-d and humanity, distancing from sin, becoming forgiving of insults, are all personal qualities that demand spiritual work, they are not rewards.

3. The Mishnah uses an unusual phrase, “from him, people enjoy counsel and wisdom.” Why not “people seek counsel,” or “receive counsel.” What is meant by “enjoy counsel”?

### The Explanation:

Rabbi Meir refers to a person who “occupies themselves in the study of Torah for Torah's sake.” Treating the study of Torah as an occupation means to be singularly and radically devoted to it, just like an entrepreneur is wholly consumed in his or her business venture. When a person is consumed with Torah for no extraneous purpose, just to become attached to G-d Himself as expressed in the Torah, then they are liable to worry about other areas of importance in their spiritual lives. How can they cultivate love of G-d without spending time on meditative prayer? How will they love their fellow Jew without spending time getting to know them?

Rabbi Meir reassures this person that his immersive Torah study will “merit” him the “many things” he needs and desires. He does not use the word “reward,” because, for this person, his “reward” is the service and work itself — the attachment to G-d he achieves through Torah study. Instead, he “merits” these “many things” as secondary

items that assist him in other areas of his spiritual life.

The abilities relevant to spiritual growth in one's relationship with G-d are given partially but still require the person to develop those abilities with some of their own effort. But the abilities relevant to loving and helping others are given outright, so as to not require the person to leave his "spiritual occupation."

Thus, the person intuitively knows how to guide people with counsel and wisdom even without explicitly educating himself on those subjects, by virtue of his devotion to

Torah for its own sake. This causes his advice to give great satisfaction to those who receive it.

### The Lesson:

Even for those who do not occupy themselves with Torah to this extent, this Mishnah still teaches us that the foundation of Torah study, at any level, is complete absolution of self-interest. To begin studying Torah, we must not seek any personal or spiritual benefit from it, but see it as a means to connect with G-d Himself.

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