



## **Sicha Summary**

Chelek 17 | Pirkei Avos Perek 5 | Sichah 1

### **The Mishnah:**

Ten things were created on Shabbat eve at twilight.... And some say also the spirits of destruction and also the original tongs, for tongs are made with tongs.” (*Avos* 5:6)

### **The Explanation:**

Everything that humankind needed for their Divine service was created prior to Adam and Eve being created, so that their work could commence immediately. Items which are not in the realm of humankind’s divine service were created at “on Shabbat eve at twilight,” which is a time outside of the natural cycle of time. The ten items enumerated in the Mishnah are all of a miraculous nature, created by G-d without human contribution.

The “spirits of destruction” are similarly outside the normative work of humankind. Human beings are not to engage with these destructive forces, however, a person can transform these forces by transcending his natural limitations and drawing down the miraculous energy of “Shabbos” to neutralize these destructive forces. Thus, this element of Divine service is not part of the “six days of work,” but of the miraculous time of “Shabbat eve at twilight.”

Similarly, the Mishnah includes the clause “the original tongs, for tongs are made with tongs” to allude to a dimension of Divine service that transcends the normative expectation.

The first tongs had no other purpose other than being used to create the next pair of tongs. This is similar to “preparations for a *mitzvah*,” which are

not part of the *mitzvah* itself, but are necessary to make it possible to fulfill the *mitzvah*. Halachically speaking, preparations for a *mitzvah* do not assume the same sanctity as the item with which the *mitzvah* is performed. But by saying that the first tongs were made by G-d on Shabbos eve at twilight, the Mishnah conveys to us that even something which seems to be a mere means to an end was created by G-d Himself, and therefore, it must have innate significance. From G-d's perspective, each element that leads toward the fulfillment of a *mitzvah* is desired by G-d.

Thus, when a Jew occupies the space of "Shabbos eve at twilight," meaning, when he transcends the normative conception of Creation, where some things have more sanctity than others, he is able to see every step that leads toward the fulfillment of G-d's will as integral to that will. Even the original "tongs," that only existed in order to make other tongs, were essential.

**The Lesson:**

The Talmud relates that the sage Rabbi Chiya not only taught Torah to children but personally performed all the sundry tasks that were necessary to write the scrolls that the children would use. (*Ketubot* 103b) When we live with the awareness of "Shabbos eve at twilight" — above the stratification of the "natural world" — then we will be passionate about each step taken in order to fulfill G-d's will, whether it is the *mitzvah* itself, or merely a distant preparation.