Cultivating Character

LIFE WISDOM FROM THE ETHICS OF OUR FATHERS

CHAPTER 6

YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR



TEXT 1

AVOT 6:10

מְשָׁה קִנְיָנִים קָנָה לוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא בָּעוֹלְמוֹ, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן: תּוֹרָה קִנְיָן אֶחָד, שְׁמִים נָאָרֶץ קִנְיָן אֶחָד, אַבְרָהָם קִנְיָן אֶחָד, יִשְׂרָאֵל קִנְיָן אֶחָד, בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ קָנְיָן אֶחָד.

תוֹרָה מִנַּיִן? דִכְתִיב, "ה' קָנָנִי רֵאשִׁית דַרְכּוֹ קֶדֶם מִפְעָלְיו מֵאָז".

שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ מִנַּיִן? דִּכְתִיב, ״כֹּה אָמַר ה׳ הַשָּׁמַיִם כִּסְאִי וְהָאָרֶץ הֲדֹם רַגְלָי אֵי זֶה בַיִת אֲשֶׁר תִּבְנוּ לִי וְאֵי זֶה מָקוֹם מְנוּחָתִי״; וְאוֹמֵר, ״מָה רַבּוּ מַעֲשֶׂירְ ה׳ כָּלָם בְּחָכְמָה עָשִׂיתָ מַלְאָה הָאָרֶץ קִנְיָנֶרְ״.

אַבְרָהָם מִנַּיִן? דִּכְתִיב, "וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ וַיֹּאמֵר בָּרוּךְ אַבְרָם לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן קוֹנֶה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ". יִשְׂרָאֵל מִנַּיִן? דִּכְתִיב, "עַד יַעֲבֹר עַמְּךְ ה' עַד יַעֲבוֹר עַם זוּ קָנִיתָ"; וְאוֹמֵר, "לִקְדוֹשִׁים אַשֶׁר בָּאַרֵץ הֵמָה וִאַדִּירֵי כָּל חֵפִצִי בָם."

בֵּית הַמִּקְדָשׁ מִנַּיִן? דִּכְתִיב, "מָכוֹן לְשִׁבְתְּךְ פֶּעַלְתָּ ה' מִקְדָשׁ אֲדֹנָי כּוֹנְנוּ יָדֶיךְ"; וִאוֹמֵר, "וַיִּבִיאֵם אֵל גִּבוּל קַדְשׁוֹ הַר זֵה קַנְתַה יִמִינוֹ".

here are five acquisitions that G-d acquired in His world. These are: the Torah is one acquisition, heaven and earth are one acquisition, Abraham is one acquisition, the people of Israel are one acquisition, and the Holy Temple is one acquisition.

The Torah, as it is written, "G-d acquired me as the beginning of His way, before His works of yore" (Proverbs 8:22).

Heaven and earth, as it is written, "So says G-d: The heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool; what house, then, can you build for Me, and where is My place of rest?" (Isaiah 66:1); and it says, "How many are your works,

O G-d, You have made them all with wisdom; the earth is filled with Your acquisitions" (Psalms 104:25).

Abraham, as it is written, "He blessed him, and said: Blessed be Abram to G-d Most High, acquirer of heaven and earth" (Genesis 14:19).

The people of Israel, as it is written, "Until Your nation, O G-d, will pass; until this nation You have acquired will pass" (Exodus 15:16); and it says, "To the holy ones who are upon earth, the noble ones, in whom is all My delight" (Psalms 16:3).

The Holy Temple, as it is written, "The base for Your dwelling that you, G-d, have achieved; the Sanctuary, O L-rd, that Your hands have established" (Exodus 15:17); and it says "He brought them to His holy domain, this mount His right hand has acquired" (Psalms 78:54).

TEXT 2

RASHI, GENESIS 24:7

מר לו: עכשיו הוא אלהי השמים ואלהי הארץ, שהרגלתיו בפי הבריות. אבל כשלקחני מבית אבי, היה אלהי השמים ולא אלהי הארץ, שלא היו באי עולם מכירים בו ושמו לא היה רגיל בארץ.

[Abraham is saying to Eliezer:]

ow He is the G-d of the heaven and the G-d of the earth, because I have made Him familiar in the mouths of the people. But when He took me from my father's house, He was the G-d of the heavens but not the G-d of the earth, because mankind did not acknowledge Him, and His name was not familiar on the earth.

TEXT 3

TALMUD, CHAGIGAH 12A; JERUSALEM TALMUD, IBID.

ית שמאי אומרים: שמים נבראו תחלה, ואחר כך נבראת הארץ. שנאמר, "בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ".

ובית הלל אומרים: ארץ נבראת תחלה, ואחר כך שמים. שנאמר, "ביום עשות ה' אלהים ארץ ושמים"...

אמר ר"ש בן יוחי: תמיה אני היאך נחלקו... שאני אומר שמים וארץ לא נבראו אלא כלפס הזה וככיסויה.

he School of Shamai says: First the heavens were created, then the earth. As it is written (Genesis 1:1), "In the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth."

The School of Hillel says: First the earth was created, and then the heavens. As it is written (Genesis 2:4), "On the day that G-d Almighty made earth and heavens"...

Said R. Shimon ben Yochai: I wonder why they argue... I say that the heavens and the earth were created together, like a pot with its cover.

TEXT 4

TALMUD, KIDUSHIN 29A

האב חייב בבנו למולו ולפדותו וללמדו תורה ולהשיאו אשה וללמדו אומנות.

father is obligated to do the following for his son: to circumcise him, redeem him, to teach him Torah, to find a wife for him to marry, and to teach him a trade.