



SAGE ADVICE

PIRKEI AVOT

פרקי אבות

Authors: 65 Rabbis
Written: 300 B.C.E. – 200 C.E.
Translation: “*Chapters of the Fathers*”



- 🌀 Traditionally read and studied between Passover and Shavuot.
- 🌀 *Pirkei Avot* is the ninth tractate of *Nezikim* in the *Mishnah*. But its
- 🌀 *Pirkei Avot* consists of six chapters and 128 verses.
- 🌀 It is the only tractate not containing laws and *halachah*.
- 🌀 Is included in all Jewish Prayer books.
- 🌀 “... a valuable source of Jewish teachings that links the spiritual world of the Old Testament with the New Testament era.” (Brad H. Young)
- 🌀 Cited many times in the Apostolic Scriptures.
- 🌀 Contains quotes from R’ Gamaliel – Paul’s teacher.
- 🌀 Commented on by many of the leading rabbis over the centuries.

Excerpts from Chapter 1:

- 🌀 (1:3) *Antigonus, leader of Socho ... used to say: Be not like servants who serve their master for the sake of reward. Instead, be like servants who serve their master not for the sake of receiving a reward. And let the fear of Heaven be upon you.*
- 🌀 (1:4) *Yose ben Yoezer ... says: Let your house be a meeting place for Sages. Sit in the dust of their feet, and drink in their words thirstily.*
- 🌀 (1:10) *Shemayah says: Love work. Despise lordliness. And do not become overly familiar with the government.*

§ (1:14) *Hillel used to say: If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am for myself alone, what am I? And if not now, when?*

§ (1:16) *Rabbi Gamaliel used to say: Accept a teacher upon yourself and remove yourself from uncertainty; and do not give excess tithes by estimating.*

REFERENCES

Acts 22:3 “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day.” [+ Acts 5:34]

Matthew 10:14 And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town.

Some parallels between *Pirkei Avot* and the Apostolic Scriptures:

<https://intertextual.bible/book/pirkei-avot/new-testament>

SUGGESTED READING

- Bunim, Irving M. *Ethics From Sinai* (Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers 2000)
- Hirsch, Rav Samson Raphael *The Hirsch Pirkei Avos* (Nanuet, NY: Feldheim Publishers 2014)
- Lieber, R' Moshe *Pirkei Avot: Ethics of the Fathers* (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications 1996)
- Marcus, R' Yosef *Pirkei Avot: Ethics of the Fathers* (Brooklyn: Kehot Publications Society 2009)
- Young, Brad H. *Meet the Rabbis: Rabbinic Thought and the Teachings of Jesus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers 2007)
- Zlotowitz, R' Meir *Pirkei Avos: Ethics of the Fathers* (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications 1989)