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# Cultivating Character

LIFE WISDOM FROM THE  
ETHICS OF OUR FATHERS

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CHAPTER 5

UNREASONABLE LOVE



## TEXT 1

1: AVOT 5:16

כֹּל אֲהָבָה שֶׁהִיא תְלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר, בְּטֵל דְּבָר, בְּטֵלָה אֲהָבָה. וְשֵׂאִינָהּ תְלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר,  
אֵינָהּ בְּטֵלָה לְעוֹלָם. אִיזוֹ הִיא אֲהָבָה הַתְלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר, זֶה אֲהָבַת אֲמִנוֹן וְתָמָר.  
וְשֵׂאִינָהּ תְלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר, זֶה אֲהָבַת דָּוִד וַיהוֹנָתָן.

**A**ny love that is dependent on something—when the thing ceases, the love also ceases. But a love that is not dependent on anything never ceases. Which is a love that is dependent on something? The love of Amnon for Tamar. And one that is not dependent on anything? The love of David and Jonathan.

## TEXT 2

MAIMONIDES, MISHNEH TORAH, LAWS OF REPENTANCE 10:2

עוֹבֵד מֵאֲהָבָה עוֹסֵק בַּתּוֹרָה וּבַמִּצְוֹת וְהוֹלֵךְ בְּנִתְיָבוֹת הַחֻקִּים לֹא מִפְּנֵי דְבָר  
בְּעוֹלָם וְלֹא מִפְּנֵי יִרְאַת הָרָעָה וְלֹא כְּדֵי לִירֵשׁ הַטּוֹבָה אֲלֵא עוֹשֵׂה הָאֱמֶת  
מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא אֱמֶת וְסוֹף הַטּוֹבָה לְבוֹא בְּגִלְלָהּ.

**O**ne who serves Gd out of love, fulfills the Torah and the mitzvot and follows in the paths of wisdom for no reason in the world—not out of fear that something bad will happen to them, nor in order to acquire benefit. Rather, one does the truth because it is true, and ultimately, good will also come because of it.

### TEXT 3

TALMUD, PESACHIM 50B

לעולם יעסוק אדם בתורה ומצות אף על פי שלא לשמה, שמתוך שלא לשמה  
בא לשמה.

**A** person should always occupy themselves with the Torah and the Mitzvot, even if it is not for its own sake; because from doing it not for its own sake, one comes to do it for its own sake.