

## PIRKEI AVOT 2-4

### Translation:

**He used to say: Make/do God's will your will, so that God will make/do your will as God's own. Nullify your will because of God's will, so that God will nullify the will of others because of your will.**

### Rav Chaim of Volozhin

(As Read by Chanoch Levi in "Ruach Chaim")

**Make God's will like your will.** Although Rabban Gamliel had advised that work is important (Avos 2:2), do not equate this to Torah study. Work is necessary but not significant. At the very least, treat His will like your will. Spend as much time in Torah study without requiring support from communal funds, then Hashem will reward you by making your will into His will. Even the time spent on material pursuits will be considered to have been spent on Torah study, since your purpose in those pursuits was to facilitate Torah study. It is in this context that the Sages declared that greater things are said about one who lives by his own labor than one who fears Heaven. Concerning the former, the verse says, "You are fortunate and it is good for you." You are fortunate in this world, and it is good for you in the Next World (Berachos 8a on Tehillim 128:2 and 112:1). Someone who spends some time on his material needs will have sole claim to the reward for his spiritual accomplishments in the Next World. "It is good for *you*," only you, as there is no need to share it with others. ... There is an additional aspect to making His will your will. Conventional wisdom says that when purchasing an item, it is best to buy a product of the best quality. Although it may cost a little more now, it will require fewer repairs and need not be replaced as often as an item of poor quality.

More expensive actually becomes cheaper. Make His will like your will. Treat Hashem the same way you treat yourself. When studying his Torah or performing a mitzvah, make sure that it is done in the best, most sincere manner. We can approach this issue from a different angle. People occasionally grant a friend an unwarranted favor, with the understanding that the recipient will reciprocate at a later time. Similarly, we find that the angels asked Hashem, "Why do You show such favor to the Jewish nation?" Hashem answered, "They show Me favor! I only require grace after meals if they eat to satiation, but they are stringent and recite grace after consuming a small volume of food. Therefore, I show them favor as well" (Berachos 20b). Make His will like your will. Go

הוא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, עֲשֵׂה רְצוֹנוֹ  
כְּרְצוֹנְךָ, כְּדִי שְׂיַעֲשֶׂה רְצוֹנְךָ  
כְּרְצוֹנוֹ. בְּטֵל רְצוֹנְךָ מִפְּנֵי  
רְצוֹנוֹ, כְּדִי שְׂיַבְטֵל רְצוֹן  
אַחֵרִים מִפְּנֵי רְצוֹנְךָ :

beyond the letter of the law and Hashem will respond by making your will like His will, thus giving you more than you deserve. **Make His will like your will, nullify your will before His will ...** This total devotion and trust in Hashem is poetically described in Tehillim 23, "Hashem is my

Shepherd, I shall not lack." Sheep are totally dependent on their shepherd, someone who provides them with all their needs. ... Shlomo HaMelech described this special relationship: "If you do not know, fairest of women, go out in the tracks of the sheep and graze your kids by the shepherds' tents" (Shir HaShirim 1:8). ... If you go out in the tracks of the sheep, if you define your will by the will of your Shepherd, Hashem, just as sheep define their will by the will of their shepherd; then you may graze your kids by the shepherds' tents – you will be pampered like sheep by the Shepherd. Alternatively, make His will like your will: Even when man is involved in material pursuits and physical pleasures, he should strive to satisfy his bodily needs in order to serve Hashem. At the very least, equate His will to your will so that your intentions are for both Hashem and yourself. By doing so, you will progress to the point where you nullify your will completely. Then your most mundane acts will be performed with pure intentions.