

INSIGHTS

Into The Weekly Parsha

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This week's Insights is dedicated in loving memory of Rivka Bas Brocha,
Ruth Pinken. "May her Neshama have an Aliya!"

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6 ADAR

Based on the Torah of our Rosh HaYeshiva HaRav Yochanan Zweig

PARSHAS TERUMAH

Mi Casa es Su Casa

Speak to Bnei Yisroel and they shall take for Me a portion from every man whose heart will motivate him... (25:2)

The first Rashi (ad loc) in this week's *parsha* makes a cryptic comment on this verse: "For Me" means dedicated to My name. Many of the commentators (e.g. Maharal in the *Gur Aryeh* etc.) wonder what exactly Rashi is clarifying. In other words, what in this *possuk* bothered Rashi to the point where he felt it necessary to say that taking something for Hashem means dedicating it to His name?

There is a fascinating Gemara (*Pesachim* 112a) which lists the seven directives that R' Akiva charged his son R' Yehoshua to abide by. One of those directives is to never enter one's own home suddenly. Rashbam (ad loc) quotes the Midrash (*Vayikra Rabbah* 21:8) that relates that R' Yochanan would make his presence known before entering his own home (presumably by knocking or making some other sound to announce his arrival and intent to enter).

The Midrash says we learn this from next week's *parsha* which describes the vestments of the Kohen Gadol. One of these garments was the *me'il* (a robe-like article of clothing) which had seventy-two bells sewn onto its bottom hems. The Torah explains; "It shall be on Aharon to minister; its sound shall be heard when he

enters the sanctuary before Hashem..." (28:35). That is to say, the bells ringing announced the Kohen Gadol's presence as he entered the sanctuary. The Midrash says that from here we see that upon entering a home one has to announce his presence. This would also explain R' Akiva's directive to his son.

But this requires further clarification: Obviously if one is entering another person's home, one cannot simply barge in, and this can readily be seen from the Kohen Gadol being required to wear ringing bells as he entered "Hashem's house" via the sanctuary. But how can Rashbam see from this Midrash that one must knock on the door when entering one's **own** home?

From here that we see that the Mishkan isn't Hashem's house; it is **our** house. Yes, the Mishkan is designated to be used as the place for the presence of the *Shechina* to occupy, but the *Shechina* is coming to stay in our house. Thus, the *Shechina* is actually a guest in the house we built for it. This is similar to homeowners who add an "in-laws quarters" onto their property designated for the use of their family. They may be called "in-laws quarters" but ultimate ownership stays with the



homeowner.

From here we now understand a fundamental principal of being a host; anyone who is an invited guest to our home is entitled to their own privacy and space. That is, in order for a guest to fully feel comfortable I must relinquish some of my space and designate it as theirs. Therefore, when entering one's own home while there are others inside, you must honor their presence and their space by making your presence known before entering.

This is the same message that Rashi at the beginning of this *parsha* is teaching us; the gifts collected to build the Mishkan weren't to acquire a house for Hashem nor to buy a piece of property for Hashem. These gifts were for us to build a home within our community that is **designated** for Hashem's presence.

Did You Know...

In this week's *parsha* we receive the instructions for the forming of the different utensils in the Mishkan, including the Aron and its *Cheruvim*. These *Cheruvim* were two golden, angel-like winged children, one male and one female (see below), that don't have an obvious functional explanation. Perhaps even more perplexing, they seem like they should be considered idols, and therefore be *avodah zara*. →



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Emotional Dissonance

You shall make an Aron of shittim wood...and you shall make a golden crown all around (25:10-11).

You shall make a Shulchan of shittim wood...and you shall make a golden crown all around (25:23-24).

You shall make a Mizbeach on which to bring the incense...and you shall make a golden crown all around (30:1-3).

The three holy vessels mentioned above, the *Aron*, *Shulchan*, and *Mizbeach* of gold, were ringed with a golden "crown." In Hebrew this crown is referred to as a "zeir." The Gemara (*Yoma* 72b) poses an interesting question: "Rabbi Yochanan asked, the word is read as *zeir* (crown) yet it is written as *zar* (stranger)!" In other words, the proper way to have written the word *zeir* is with a *yud* between the *zayin* and the *reish*, without a *yud* the word could be read as *zar*. So, R' Yochanan wants to know, why did the Torah choose to spell it differently than it is meant to be read?

R' Yochanan answers the question with a somewhat cryptic statement: "If one merits (to properly study) the Torah it becomes a crown (*zeir*) for him, but if he does not merit it then it becomes estranged (*zar*) to him." R' Yochanan's statement is a bit puzzling. In general, when one receives something he then has it, and if not then he just doesn't have it. For example, if someone were to get a promotion then he has it and it may even

be a "crowning" achievement. But if he doesn't get a promotion then the only result should seemingly be, that he wasn't promoted. Why does R' Yochanan say that if one doesn't merit the Torah then it becomes estranged to him?

We find a similar statement by marriage: The Gemara (*Yevamos* 63a) says, "R' Elazar said 'What is meant by the verse 'I will make him a helper opposite him (*Bereishis* 2:18)' ? If man merits it she will be a helpmate, if not she will oppose him."

We see from this Gemara an interesting lesson, when something is intrinsic to who you are, and a part of your very being - like a wife - and you merit a proper relationship, then you have something amazing. When you don't merit a proper relationship it is far, far worse than not having a relationship at all. A terrible marriage damages the very core of both the husband and the wife.

The same is true by the Torah. The Torah is meant to be intrinsic to who we are. If we don't merit the Torah it becomes

estranged to us and we begin to fight it. Anyone who has worked in Jewish communal affairs knows how true this really is. For example, most cities which have issues with putting up an Eruv or establishing a new Shul, find little opposition from the non-Jewish populace. It is almost always the virulently anti-religious segment of the Jewish population who puts up the biggest fight and court challenges.

The reason for this is exactly what the Gemara is teaching us; the Torah is meant to be an intrinsic part of us and it isn't possible to have a non-relationship with it. You either have an amazing and fulfilling life with it or you, G-d forbid, have a terrible and antagonistic relationship to Torah without it. This by its very definition means you will fight it every opportunity you have. Hashem wants each and every one of us to be crowned by the Torah; as the Gemara in *Yoma* (*ibid*) says - the crown of the Torah is there waiting for anybody who wants to pick it up and make it their own.

The Me'em Loez (*Shemos*, *Terumah* ch. 2) lists a number of reasons for these angels:

1. Rambam explains that we must believe in angels, and in order to firmly establish this belief, Hashem commanded us to fashion over the *Aron* two forms of angels. This belief in angels is important as it's next to the belief in G-d, which leads to a belief in *nevuah* (prophecy), and the truth of law. Furthermore, there were two angels facing each other to show that they are not gods (as we already know there is only one G-d (*Guide for the Perplexed* 3:45)).
2. The *Cheruvim* also indicated how much Hashem loves us. When the Jews would go up on the festivals, the kohanim would show them the *Cheruvim*, which were hugging each other like husband and wife. This expression of our relationship with Hashem is more powerful than that of the other nations of the world that have an intermediary between them and Hashem (for they are only interacted with messengers) (*Bachya*).
3. They taught the importance of training ones children in Torah

from a very young age, since they were in the form of a little boy and girl (*Arbarbanel*).

4. The *Cheruvim* also taught us that the world is sustained by the young children who are learning Torah; as their Torah is more precious than that of older people. Their thoughts are pure, without sin and evil, so too their merit protects the whole generation from evil decrees. The fact that the *Cheruvim* were on the cover of the *Aron* also teaches us that there is nothing greater than young children (*Yad*, *Bachya*)
5. Interestingly, they would periodically change position, depending on the merit of Bnei Yisroel at a given time. If the people weren't listening to Hashem, smoke would come from between them, and they would face away from each other. Alternatively, if the people were doing Hashem's will, then they would face each other and their faces would shine. The fact they were able to turn their heads was a miracle and it enabled the Jews to be aware of their actions, and adjust accordingly (*Yalkut Revueni*).



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