

INSIGHTS

Into The Weekly Parsha

FEBRUARY 5, 2022

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VOLUME 12, ISSUE 19

4 ADAR I

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 Hashem... (28:35). That is to say, 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) that lists the seven directives by which R' Akiva charged his son R' Yehoshua to abide. One of those directives is to never enter one's own home suddenly. Rashbam (ad loc) quotes the Midrash (*Vayikra Rabbah* 21:8) 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.

However, 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 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 his own privacy and space. That is, in order for a guest to feel completely 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 is teaching us at the beginning of this *parsha*; 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 was **designated** for Hashem's presence.

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*, 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 was 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 that 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, God forbid, have a terrible and antagonistic relationship to the 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.



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