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A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

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פרשת ויקהל - פקודי

וַיַּעַשׂ שְׁנֵי כְרֻבִים זָהָב וְכוּ'. וַיְהִי הַכְרַבִּים פְּרָשֵׁי כְנָפִים לְמַעַלָּה, סִכְכִּים בְּכַנְפֵיהֶם עַל הַכַּפֹּרֶת, וּפְנֵיהֶם אִישׁ אֶל אַחִיו, אֶל הַכַּפֹּרֶת הָיוּ פְּנֵי הַכְרַבִּים. (שמות לז, ט-ז)

He made two Keruvim of gold ...The Keruvim were with wings spread upward, sheltering the Cover with their wings, with their faces toward one another, towards the Cover were the faces of the Keruvim. (Shemos 37:7-9)

In this week's *Sidrah*, Moshe addresses Klal Yisroel and charges them with the privilege of building the Mishkan, following the instructions provided in the earlier *Sidros*. Much of the text is a near repetition of the directives from Terumah and Tetzaveh; however, there are several subtle differences which require explanation.

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* notes that in our *Sidrah*, when the Torah repeats the description of the Keruvim, there are two differences between how they are mentioned here and the earlier command in Terumah. Firstly, the *possuk* here reads וַיַּעַשׂ שְׁנֵי כְרֻבִים, while earlier it states, וַעֲשִׂיתָ שְׁנַיִם כְּרֻבִים (25:18). What is the difference between שְׁנֵי and שְׁנַיִם, and what is the reason behind this change? Secondly, in Terumah, the Torah concludes, וְנָתַתָּ אֶת הַכַּפֹּרֶת עַל הָאָרֶן מִלְּמַעְלָה וְאֶל הָאָרֶן תִּתֵּן אֶת הָעֲדֻת, וְנֹשַׁעְתִּי לְךָ שֵׁם וְדַבַּרְתִּי אֵתְךָ מֵעַל הַכַּפֹּרֶת אֲשֶׁר אֶתֵּן אֵלֶיךָ. וְנֹשַׁעְתִּי לְךָ שֵׁם וְדַבַּרְתִּי אֵתְךָ מֵעַל הַכַּפֹּרֶת וְנָתַתָּ אֶת הַכַּפֹּרֶת עַל הָאָרֶן מִלְּמַעְלָה וְאֶל הָאָרֶן תִּתֵּן אֶת הָעֲדֻת, אֲשֶׁר אֶתֵּן אֵלֶיךָ. וְנֹשַׁעְתִּי לְךָ שֵׁם וְדַבַּרְתִּי אֵתְךָ מֵעַל הַכַּפֹּרֶת (25:21-22). However, this continuation is entirely omitted in our *Sidrah*. Why is that?

The Rosh Yeshiva offers an explanation based on an insight from Rabeinu Bachya (Terumah) regarding the difference in terminology between שְׁנֵי and שְׁנַיִם. He notes that שְׁנֵי is used to equate two things, similar to its use in phrases like לַחַת הָעֲדֻת or שְׁנֵי כְּבָשִׂים. In the case of the Keruvim, however, there was a difference: one depicted a male and the other a female. Therefore, they were initially referred to as שְׁנַיִם, to indicate their distinct forms. Following this distinction, the Torah then refers to them as שְׁנֵי to symbolise their equality in weight and unity.

This explanation of the distinction in terminology is also mentioned in the Netziv. The *possuk* states regarding testimony, עַל פִּי שְׁנַיִם עֵדִים אוֹ שְׁלֹשָׁה עֵדִים יוּמַת הַמֵּת, *By the testimony of two or three witnesses shall the condemned person be put to death (Devarim 17:6)*. In his commentary Ha'emek Davar, the Netziv points out that the Torah chose the term שְׁנַיִם here to imply that witnesses are not meant to provide identical accounts; instead, they should be two distinct individuals who come together to give their testimony. As the Yerushalmi (*Sanhedrin*) teaches, when the testimony of two witnesses aligns very closely, we must carefully investigate to ensure that this evidence is not fabricated. Therefore, the slight differences between the pair of witnesses are what make them a reliable unit for testimony.

With the above insight, the Rosh Yeshiva explains that the Torah is teaching the importance of balance in the relationship between a husband and wife. The two Keruvim, one male and one female,

represent this idea, as they are similar in many ways. Both share the aspiration of *פרשי כנפים למעלה* – spreading their wings upward, aiming to reach elevated spiritual levels. They are also both *סככים על הכפרת* – *בכנפיהם* - sheltering the Cover with their wings, protecting the Torah, symbolised by the Luchos contained in the Aron. Furthermore, they are positioned *אחייו איש אל אחיו* - with their faces toward one another, living in unity and committed to observing the Torah and *mitzvos*.

However, their relationship must be based on the concept of “*שְׁנַיִם*,” meaning both partners should recognise that, despite sharing a common goal, their roles are distinct. A wife should understand that the value of her husband's study of Torah is what will lead her to Olam Habah. Her purpose is to support and encourage him to engage deeply in Torah learning. There should be no power struggle or comparison regarding whose role is more challenging. Just as different limbs of a body appreciate each other's importance, recognising that they all contribute to its functioning, so too must each spouse value their differing roles. These unique contributions complement one another and help bind them together as one unit.

The Torah hints at this ideal through its wording in Terumah. The *possuk* that states, *תִּתֵּן אֶת הָעֵדוּת*, *you shall place the Testimonial-Luchos*, is fulfilled in a couple who embraces this perspective, as such a home is suitable to be established as a *mokom Torah*. Furthermore, regarding a marriage like this, the Torah affirms, *וְנוֹעַדְתִּי לָךְ שָׁם וְדַבַּרְתִּי אֵתְךָ מֵעַל הַכַּפֹּרֶת*, *It is there that I will set My meetings with you, and I shall speak with you from atop the Cover*. As the Gemara (*Sotah 17a*) states, when there is peace between husband and wife - when each appreciates their distinct roles and what unites them - the Shechinah dwells among them.

However, in our *Sidrah*, *Vayakhel*, the Torah discusses the practical fulfilment of Betzalel creating the Mishkan and does not need to mention the goal and assurance of Hashem resting Himself on the Aron. Therefore, when the *possuk* usage of the term *שְׁנַיִם* alludes to a couple who fail to appreciate their distinct yet complementary roles in marriage. As a result, they are not granted the assurance of Hashem's presence resting among them.

Let us draw inspiration from the lesson above to recognise the unique role each spouse plays in marriage. Even when sharing the same goals and spiritual aspirations, a couple must understand that fulfilling their individual purposes allows them to unite as one. May we be *zoche* to achieve this ideal, resulting in the Shechinah dwelling among us.

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