

## CHAPTER 3: MISHNA 3: PART 3

*by Rabbi Shaya Karlinsky*

There is a further depth to the qualitative difference between two people and one person, which will explain why the Divine presence resides specifically between the two who are studying Torah. Immediately following the giving of the Torah at Sinai, the Jewish people were commanded to build a Mishkan, a dwelling place for the Divine Presence ("...make for Me a sanctuary, Shemoth 25:8). The relationship between these two elements is illustrated by the following Midrash (Shemoth Rabbah 33:1) on the verse "...and take for me Terumah" (Shemoth 25:2).

A king had an only daughter. One came and requested her hand in marriage. After the wedding, the new husband wanted to return to his home town with his new wife. The king presented a royal dilemma. "This daughter is my only one, and I can't separate from her. On the other hand, she is your wife, so I can't ask you to refrain from taking her with you. What I ask is the following favor. Wherever you go, make a small cottage, in which I can dwell with you.

So, too, said G-d to the Jewish people. I have given you the Torah (viewed by Him as an only daughter). For Me to be separated from it is impossible. So, every place that you go, I ask that you build Me a house in which I can dwell.

Why is the Torah referred to as G-d's daughter? A daughter is the offspring (literally "consequence") of the father, descending from him. So, too, the Torah is G-d bringing "Himself" into the world, with the Torah an extension of His essence, the way a daughter is the extension of the father's essence. (The reason why the Midrash compared the Torah to a female descendant, rather than a male descendant, is a very deep matter, beyond the scope of these on-line shiurim. But it is not a random choice, and it relates to the Torah perspective on gender differences. )

The "conventional wisdom" is that G-d gave the Torah to man in accordance with its appropriateness for man. But if this were true, then the Torah wouldn't be the source and the path for man to be connected with G-d. Rather, the Torah is the intelligence that emanates from the essence of G-d [enabling G-d to manifest and "actualize" Himself in this world] which is why the Torah brings man closer to G-d, and why G-d is close to man as a result of his study of Torah. Wisdom is called a person's offspring, as is explained by the Rambam (Moreh Nevuchim 1:7) in his interpretation the verse (Yeshaya 2:6) "And with children of foreigners they contented themselves." "Children" refers to the thoughts born from a person's mind. The prophet is teaching us that the Jews were satisfied with ideas and offspring that were produced by strangers and foreigners. But it is clear that thoughts and

ideas are compared to children, which is particularly represented by a daughter. (My Rodale's Synonym Finder lists "thoughts; ideas" as synonyms for "offspring".)

It further compares the Torah to an ONLY daughter, since the Torah is a compelling (Divine) intelligence, exactly as is presented, with no possibility of any deviation. This is what makes words of Torah so unique, and why there can be only one Torah. (Torah, conceptually, is the will of G-d. This is the meaning of the Zohar that G-d looked in the Torah and created the world. And that the Torah preceded the creation of the world by nine hundred seventy-four generations. Torah reflects Divine will, which is the foundation of creation, and this world is created to be aligned with that will.)

The Midrash teaches us (Breishith Rabbah 1:14): The giving of the Torah opened with the letter "aleph" - Anochi HaShem Elokechah - which represents the number one, to teach that the Torah is singular. What this means is that the words of Torah are imperative, with no possibility of any alternative to what is written. This singularity is the unique virtue of the Torah. The world itself has a duality, for in addition to "this world" (Olam Haze) there is also a "next world" (Olam HaBah). It is for this reason that the world was created with the letter "bet" (Breishith Barah Elokim...) which represents the number two, signifying multiplicity.

There is nothing in the Torah which could have been any different than it actually is. One might think that while a law written in the Torah is certainly proper and correct, it isn't imperative that it be legislated that way. This is incorrect, for if something is only proper and fitting, but not imperative, then it is not unique and singular. But since the Torah is one, there is no possibility of any alternative or deviation. This is what gives it the quality of being absolutely unique and singular, just like an only daughter.

It is for this reason that it is impossible for G-d to separate Himself from the Torah. Something which is unique and singular has no alternative but to exist in its primary state. (Any deviation would imply an alternate existence, contradicting the principle of singularity and absolute uniqueness.) So G-d requested from the Jewish people to build a house to enable Him to dwell among them, never being separated from the Torah. This shows the inseparable relationship that exists between G-d and His Torah. (It becomes clear from this entire discussion that Torah which isn't accompanied by an intimate attachment to G-d loses its character as Divine will.)

When two people are sitting, and words of Torah pass between them, the Divine presence is there, between them. Since G-d never separates from the Torah, He must be there. (But it requires that the Torah be brought into this world in the way that it was given, which requires two people being involved together in the exchange of Torah, as we mentioned last time.)

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