

## CHAPTER 3: MISHNA 7: PART 5

*by Rabbi Shaya Karlinsky*

We need further understanding in the statement that "Two have their words recorded in a book...". "Chomer" (we have translated this as "raw material") is the primary level of each thing in the world. It embodies the potential of that thing, but not the actualization of its potential. It requires "tzurah" (form or content which has been imposed on the raw material) which is the next level of reality, for the item to be actualized in the world and be differentiated from all other things. But the "tzurah" is not variable nor is it changeable. It is the "chomer" which is the source of any change or transformation in an object. (We have discussed the concepts of "chomer" and "tzurah" used in the Maharal, and will illustrate it again with the example we have used in the past. In a table, wood is the "chomer," the raw material out of which the table is fashioned. The "tzurah" the form or concept which has been imposed on the wood is "table." The fact that this specific table can change, can be enhanced or can deteriorate, is a function of the "chomer," of the matter from which the table has been fashioned. It is not a function of its "tzurah," of the concept "table," which, as a concept, is unchanging.)

Therefore, "one [person studying Torah] doesn't have his words written" for [the number] one represents the primary level, that of "chomer," and his words of Torah don't reach the level of "tzurah." Written words reflect two things. There is the clarity of the written word, which comes to explicate and clarify. And there is the permanence of the written word, which endures.

When there are two people studying Torah, that study reaches beyond the primary level (attained by one) to reach the second level, that of "tzurah." Through "tzurah" an object is actualized and clarified. Furthermore, "tzurah" is the enduring dimension of an object. This is what is meant by having the words written in a book of remembrance, which has permanence and endurance.

But only when there are two people (studying together) can the level of "tzurah" be reached, actualizing and giving endurance. When there is only one, remaining at the level of "chomer," it lacks clarity and it lacks permanence. [Therefore, his words are not written in the book.]

This explanation is clear to anyone who has a true understanding of the words of the Rabbis, which were said from a perspective of Divine wisdom. (As we have explained in the past, the Maharal uses this phrase to indicate an elevated, Kabbalistic concept which he has presented, and which isn't as easily understood as it might appear to be.)

Therefore, were taught above (Mishna 3) that two people who are sitting together, with no words of

Torah are exchanged between them, are considered to be in a session of scoffers. When two people are together, it is most appropriate that words of Torah be between them, for they represent the level of "tzurah." This is contrast to one person, who by himself is at the level of "chomer," which is not the level so intimately associated with words of Torah. So when two people are sitting together, a situation where words of Torah are most appropriate, and that Torah is not exchanged between them, it is considered a session of scoffers.

It is now clear why in relation to two people, it says "divrei Torah," words of Torah, while for one it says "osek b'Torah," involved in Torah [study]. "Dibur" (sharing the root -- dalet beith reish -- with the word "divrei") speech, which is an intellectual/spiritual activity, is associated with the more elevated level of "tzurah." (It gives form and content to the physical dimension, the raw material.) "Osek," involvement, is an activity that is associated with the physical side of man. Therefore, when describing the activity of one person, it uses the word "osek."

The Torah study of two which leads to "writing" in the book has been explained to be the result of a reflection of and an alignment with the world's reality, part of the "tziyur," of the world. This is not a physical drawing, of course, but rather a conceptual one, for Torah study by two people is itself the most elevated conceptual activity..

(To expand on the explanation of the book that is written through Torah study, I would like to quote and explain the following Kabbalistic statement taught at the beginning of Sefer Yetzirah: "With thirty two wondrous paths of wisdom G-d carved His world, with three books With a "sefer", a "sefer" and a "sippur". [The words "sefer" and "sippur" have the same root, samech, peih, reish. "Sefer" means "book" and "sippur" means "story."] The first "sefer"/book is the world, as it is written and intended by G-d. The second "sefer"/book is how man "reads" that book, the world that G-d created. He can read it correctly, as intended by the Author. This is when man studies Torah, or creation, or even history, and "reads" it according to the intentions of the author. But the reader can also read it incorrectly, in a way that suits his agenda, but does not accurately reflect the author's intention. [Today, there is a whole discipline called "deconstructionism" which is based on the premise that one need not relate to the intention of the author in interpreting a text. Judaism certainly rejects that premise when the text is Torah.! And in fact, it would be rejected when we are trying to "read" the world. The correct way to read nature or history is to look for the intention of the author, rather than use our "reading" abilities to read our agenda into what is being "written."] These two "sefarim" stand on their own, the first being the work of the Author, the second being the work of the reader. These are activities of the individual, with the author not needing to take into account the reader, and the reader not needing to take into account the author. Finally, there is "sippur," the *STORY* being told *BY THE AUTHOR TO THE READER*. This requires some form of communication between the two, to ensure that the author has done more than just write a book, and the reader has read what the author intended. The level of "sippur" is when man and G-d have a system of communication, with G- d "speaking" to man, and man listening.)

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The class is taught by Rabbi Shaya Karlinsky, Dean of Darche Noam Institutions, YeshivatDarche Noam/Shapell's and Midreshet Rachel for Women.