

## You shall make two Keruvim of gold... It is there that I will set My meetings with you, and I will speak with you from atop the Cover, from between the Keruvim that are on the Aron HaEidus. (25:18,22)

It is interesting to note the change in the spelling of the word “two.” At first, the *Keruvim* are referred to as *shnayim Keruvim*, while later on they are called *shnei Keruvim*. **Rabbeinu Bachya** distinguishes between *shnayim* which means “two,” but does not denote anything more than a quantity of subjects or items. *Shnayim* is not used when the “two” are of equal status, such as: *Shnei Luchos HaEidus*, Two Tablets of Testimony, which were the same; *shnei seirim*, two he-goats, used for the *Yom Kippur* service, which were also similar to one another. The *Keruvim*, however, were male and female, which represent two distinct images. The second time that the *Keruvim* are mentioned is in reference to their both being comprised of gold. In this respect, they were equal. Thus, the word *shnei* is used.

**Horav Avraham Gurwitz, Shlita**, applies the distinction between *shnayim* and *shnei* homiletically in establishing the principles of marriage and the ideal relationship between husband and wife. One *Keruv* has the image of a male, the other has the image of a female; the two together, represent the union of man and woman in matrimony. The Torah describes the image manifest by the *Keruvim* as they face one another, “The *Keruvim* shall be with wings spread upward.” This “spreading upward” alludes to both the husband and wife’s aspirations to reach upward, to achieve great heights in their spiritual endeavor. Both are focused on establishing a Torah home dedicated to glorifying Hashem’s Name. Also, the Torah says that they are both “sheltering the Cover with their wings.” This implies their attitude with regard to protecting the Torah (within the *Aron Kodesh*, beneath the Cover): “They live together in love and harmony, their faces toward one another.” What could be wrong? This appears to be an idyllic relationship, a marriage that is totally in accord with the Torah’s views.

Yet, is important that their relationship be a *shnayim*, two distinct, individuals who each knows his or her specific and unique role in life. Each one respects the other’s individuality and does not attempt to usurp or outdo the other. While their goals are equal, the manner of achieving them are different, because man and woman are different. A woman understands that she gains access to *Olam Habba*, the World to Come, through the medium of Torah study. She also understands that her *z’chus*, merit, for *Olam Habba* is the result of the support that she gives her husband in pursuing his Torah study. No envy exists between them, because the woman realizes that she and her husband are different: that he has a *mitzvah* of *limud haTorah*, and she is empowered to assist, encourage, and spur him on to achieve greatness in Torah. Neither one feels, “My purpose is greater than yours,” because they are both aware that one complements the other and neither one can do it alone.

Concerning such a couple, the Torah writes, “It is there that I will set My meetings with you, and I will speak with you from atop the Cover.” The Torah now refers to the *Keruvim* as *shnei*, because, although they are different, the harmony that exists between them equates them.

Veritably, in the “olden” days, this is how a Jewish girl was raised. She understood her role in a Torah home and never clashed with her husband concerning the supporting nature of that role. She understood that supporting Torah is a privilege and raising children to be Torah Jews is an honor. She was a complete partner with her husband – despite their distinct roles. It was relationships such as these that produced the Torah leaders and spiritually-committed laymen of the past and present. The Torah exhorts us never to remove the *Badim*, poles, referring to the *Tomchei Torah*, those who support Torah study and dissemination, from the *Aron*. They too, should maintain an inextricable bond to the Torah, never being removed from it. This applies not only to their attitude, but to the reciprocal feeling between them and the *bnei Torah* who devote their lives to Torah. They must acknowledge, appreciate and extend everlasting gratitude to those who serve as their partners in Torah study.

To the external view, it appeared as if those who carried the Ark via the poles were somehow supporting it, when, in truth, it was impossible to lift – it was that heavy. Hashem had the *Aron* miraculously carry itself and those who carried it. Thus, we have the rule, *Aron nosei es nasaav*, “The Ark carried its supporters.” This idea is equally true with regard to Torah support. The Torah actually sustains its supporters. One who makes the move to uphold the Torah, will, in turn, be supported by it.

**Horav Eliyahu Miller**, quoted by *Horav Shlomo Levinstein*, maintains that the idea of the Torah supporting its supporters does not apply exclusively to the wealthy who write out checks in support of Torah study. It applies to anyone who plays a role in supporting Torah learning. This is especially true of wives and mothers who are true *tomchei Torah*. This, explains Rav Miller, is why, when a man marries, he is referred to as a *nasui*, which is also translated as “being carried.” The woman becomes a *nesuah*, which is the feminine gender for being carried. Since *Aron nosei es nasaav*, the Ark carried those who carried it, as a *tomeches Torah*, she, too, is carried. The marriage bond is concretized with a ring that the man gives to his intended. Similarly, the poles which carry the *Aron* are fitted into the *tabaas*, rings!

There is no shortage of stories concerning our *gedolim*, Torah leaders, and the unique relationship they had with their wives. I had the opportunity to read Rabbi Yechiel Spero’s wonderful biography of **Horav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg, zl**, and I came across a picture of the *Rosh Yeshivah* sitting next to his *Rebbetzin* as she recited *Tehillim*. I think this picture alludes to the message we have presented: men and women, husbands and wives, have a similar purpose – to raise a Torah family that will be an honor to Hashem. The manner in which each individual achieves his or her goal is distinct from one another.

*Rav* Scheinberg and his *Rebbetzin* had an incredible relationship that flourished for close to eighty

years! The *Rebbetzin*'s role in the *Rosh Yeshivah*'s *avodas hakodesh*, holy service, was supportive. Yet, the *Rosh Yeshivah* considered her to be an equal partner in all of his endeavors, and he displayed extraordinary reverence for her. On *Simchas Torah*, as he was being escorted home by hundreds of students, amid singing and dancing, his *Rebbetzin* would look down from the porch of their fifth floor apartment. When he entered the apartment and was greeted by his wife, he would say to her, "Did you see that? Did you see all the *talmidim*, students, dancing and singing? That was all because of you! It is all yours, Basha!"

When the *Rebbetzin* would walk into the *yeshivah* building to visit him in his office, *Rav* Scheinberg would rise and give her his seat. With tears in his eyes, he would say, "Basha, this seat belongs to you." He was acutely aware that his wife did everything within her power to enable his learning, by eliminating any outside distractions. He would say, "The only reason I have a *yeshivah* today is because of my wife."