

Temple Beth Am / עדת בית עם
Shabbat Afternoon Parsha Study
February 13, 2021 / ראש חודש אדר, תשפ"א
Parshat Terumah / פרשת תרומה

Cherubs, *Shalom Bayit* and Love

Exodus 25:20

(20) The cherubim shall have their wings spread out above, shielding the cover with their wings. Their faces to one another, the faces of the cherubim being turned toward the cover.

שמות כ"ה:כ'

(כ) וְהָיוּ הַכְּרֻבִים פְּרָשֵׁי כְנָפַיִם
לְמַעַן עֲלֶה סִכְכֵימָם בְּכַנְפֵיהֶם
עַל־הַכַּפֹּרֶת וּפְנֵיהֶם אִישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו
אֶל־הַכַּפֹּרֶת יִהְיוּ פְּנֵי הַכְּרֻבִים:

Commentary of the Malbim (Rabbi
Meir Lebusch ben Yechiel Michel
Wisser, 19th C. Ukraine)

"Their faces one to another."

The 10 commandments were written on the two stone tablets. Half on one side--those commandments between a person and God. And half on the other side, those commandments between a

פירוש המלבי"ם

"ופניהם איש אל אחיו"

עשרת הדברות כתובים על שני
לוחות אבנים, מחיצתם
מזה--מצוות שבין אדם למקום,
ומחיצתם מזה--מצוות שבין אדם

person and one's fellow." And the Torah said "Their faces to one another," directed at one another. It is impossible to fulfill the commandments between a person and God unless it goes along with the commandments between a person and one's fellow. And also in reverse.

Commentary of the Pardes Yosef
(Rabbi Yosef Patzanovsky, 20th C.
Poland).

"And their faces to one another."

With respect to Solomon's Temple it says (II Chronicles, 3:13), "And their faces to the House." This is not a contradiction. One is with respect to when Israel is doing the will of God, and one is when Israel is not doing the will of God. (Bava Batra 99). "And their faces to one another"--that is doing the will of God, for that is God's will, that each person attends to one's fellow, and to God, and not merely to oneself and to one's house. But "With their faces to the House," refers to when a person is

לחברו. ואמרה התורה "ופניהם
איש אל אחיו," מכוונים זה לזה.
אי-אפשר לקיים מצוות שבין אדם
למקום אלא עם המצוות שבין אדם
לחברו, וכן להיפך.

פרוש פרדס יוסף

"ופניהם איש אל אחיו"

ובמקדש שלמה הוא אומר (דה"ב ג,
יג) "ופניהם לבית." לא קשיא. כאן
בזמן שישראל עושין רצונו של
מקום, כאן בזמן שאין ישראל עושין
רצונו של מקום (ב"ב צט).
"ופניהם איש אל אחיו"--בעושים
רצונו של מקום, שזהו רצונו שידאג
כל אחד לאחיו ולזולתו ולא לעצמו
ולביתו בלבד. אך "כשפניהם
לבית"--שדואגים אך איש לביתו

concerned only with one's house and one's self, and that is not fulfilling the will of God.

ולעצמו אין זה רצונו של מקום.

Sforno on Exodus 25:20

When the Torah describes the cherubs as "spreading their wings upward," (this describes the source from which all this inspiration has to come.) The sages already explained that these cherubs had the faces of a young boy and a young girl, (Yoma 54) a reference to the initiation of actions originating in abstract principles. What is initiated there resembles something masculine, as the male is symbolic of initiating matters whereas the female's role is more receptive in nature. **ופניהם איש אל אחיו**, this describes that what is initiated in abstract, disembodied regions of the universe, i.e. in heaven, is accepted, received willingly and in a complementary fashion by the creatures in this concrete, i.e. physical part of the universe. Only by a merging of these two basic constituent parts of our universe can "perfection" on earth be attained. The reason why the Torah continues in describing these cherubs as facing the lid of the Ark, i.e.

ספורנו על שמות כ"ה:כ"א

אמר שיהיו הכרובים "פורשי כנפים למעלה." וכבר אמרו שהכרובים זכר ונקבה היו, המורים פעולת המצאת הכללים מופשטים, שהיא כפעלת הזכר הממציאו, ומורים קבלת אותם המופשטים שהיא כפעלת הנקבה. ואמר ופניהם "איש אל אחיו," כי פעולת המצאת הכללים והפשטתם תביט ותכוין אל פעולת קבלת הכללים המופשטים מחומר, אשר בה קנין השלמות המכוון

looking downwards whereas their wings are spread upwards, is a reminder that although inspiration originates in heaven, understanding of God and how God works can only come by paying close attention and studying what God does in our material, “lower” part of His universe. The ideal means of unraveling the meaning of God’s actions is through God revealed word, the Torah, of which the Ark has become the repository. The upshot of the message contained in the symbolism represented by the cherubs, their shape, their posture, etc., is that for us on earth the key to obtaining all these insights must be obtained by study of the Torah.

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