

Being Tocho Kevaro: Does Your Inside Match Your Outside?

Shemot 25:11 (Terumah)

Regarding the Aron, the pasuk says that its inside and outside should be gold...

וְצָפִיתָ אֹתוֹ זָהָב טָהוֹר מִבֵּית וּמִחוּץ תִּצְפְּנֵנּוּ וְעָשִׂיתָ עָלָיו זֶר זָהָב סָבִיב

“You shall cover it with pure gold, from inside and outside you shall cover it, and you shall make on it a golden diadem [a crown] all around.”

Gemara in Yoma 72b

מִבֵּית וּמִחוּץ תִּצְפְּנֵנּוּ אָמַר רַבָּא כֹּל תַּלְמִיד הָכֵם שְׂאִין תּוֹכוֹ כְּבָרוֹ אֵינוֹ תַלְמִיד
הָכֵם

“From inside and outside you shall cover it.” [Regarding the pasuk,] Rava said: “Any Torah scholar whose inside is not like his outside is not a Torah scholar.”

Important Insight 1: Like the Aron, which housed the Luchot and had gold on the inside and gold on the outside, a talmid chacham “houses” the Torah and must also have “gold” on his inside and outside.

Important Insight 2: Rava is teaching us that having “gold on the inside and outside” means having our inside match our outside.

Gemara in Berachot 28a

שְׁהִיָּה רַבּוֹ גַּמְלִיאֵל מְכַרִּיז וְאוֹמֵר כֹּל תַּלְמִיד שְׂאִין תּוֹכוֹ כְּבָרוֹ לֹא יִכְנֵס לְבֵית
הַמְדֻרָּשׁ

And it was that Rabban Gamliel would proclaim and say: “Any student whose inside is not like his outside will not enter the study hall.”

The Gemara tells us, though, that Rabban Gamliel was removed as the Nasi due to how he treated Rebbe Yehoshua.

His rule was abolished when Rebbe Elazar Ben Azarya took over. As a result, there was a tremendous influx of Yidden who came to learn Torah.

On that day, the Gemara tells us, hundreds of benches were added to the Bet Midrash to accommodate all who came to learn. Not only that, but also all of Eduyot was learned—and unrivaled clarity emerged from all of the learning.

Question: Does this mean that being tocho kevaro, is not the right approach?

Answer: **No!** This Gemara only implies that tocho kevaro is not the best standard for admission to a bet midrash to learn Torah.

Important Insight 3: Although it might not be the best “admissions test” for OTHERS to judge who should learn Torah in their bet midrash, being tocho kevaro IS a phenomenal yardstick we should all measure OURSELVES with.

Thought Question: **What does it mean for our inside to match our outside?**

Being Consistent in Public and in Private

How are you at home vs. when you are out of the house?

Case 1: “Big baal chessed” in the community, but “grumpy despot” at home?

Case 2: “Big boss man” at work, beloved by all employees and actively working hard, but “couch potato” waiting to be served by his wife (with no time for his kids) at home?

Important Note: Yes, “lo lishma, bo’lishma” has its place (and, in the right context, is laudable). However, you need to be true to who you are! Do not fool yourself! [Do not use it as an excuse to be a hypocrite!]

Remember: I’m trying to get “there,” but I’m real with myself that I truly am “here” and looking to grow.

The Big Takeaway

We need to have our inner/internal world reflect our outer world. Who we are at home needs to match who we are in the outside world and vice versa.

Of course, we can have a “private” space with our wife, etc. and things we DO privately do not necessarily need to become public, but who we ARE must match up and be consistent everywhere we go.