

# The Dee

## Pirkei Avot Project

**יוסי בן יוחנן איש ירושלים אומר, יהי ביתך פתוח לרוחה, ויהיו עניים בני ביתך, ואל תרבה שיחה עם האשה. באשתו אמרו, קל וחמר באשת חברו. מכאן אמרו חכמים, כל זמן שאדם מרבה שיחה עם האשה, גורם רעה לעצמו, ובוטל מדברי תורה, וסופו יורש גיהנם:**

Yose ben Yochanan (a man) of Jerusalem used to say: Let your house be wide open, and let the poor be members of your household. Engage not in too much conversation with women. They said this with regard to one's own wife, how much more with regard to another man's wife. From here the Sages said: as long as a man engages in too much conversation with women, he causes evil to himself, he neglects the study of the Torah, and in the end he will inherit gehinnom.

In our mishna, Yossi ben Yochanan builds upon the previous mishna in prescribing the core values of a Torah home. A person's house must always be open, but not only open, wide open. Some hesitantly and reluctantly offer hospitality and provide generosity in a way that the recipient must squeeze in narrowly. The mishna is encouraging us to open our homes widely, invite and provide for people in a generous and plentiful manner.

The model for this mindset is Avraham Avinu whose home was literally open on all four sides so that nobody scrambled to figure out where to knock or how to get in. It is no coincidence that a couple enter the bond of marriage while standing under a chuppa, open on all four sides like the tent of Avraham and Sarah. From the inception of our family, we seek to fulfill this Mishna, not only in principle but in practice.

Continuing in the same vein, the mishna instructs us to make those in need feel like members of our family. Sometimes, one provides chesed in a way that is condescending to the recipient, making them feel inferior or less than. Yossi ben Yochanan says make the beneficiary of your kindness experience your generosity as would your son or daughter, someone who receives in the spirit of loving family.

Lastly, the mishna states that one shouldn't engage in prolonged conversations with a woman or else it will result in negative consequences. Rather than see the mishna as biased or discriminatory, commentators understand it to mean, speak to the person as a tzelem Elokim, for who they are. If you are focused on their being a woman and engage them in a way that highlights the gender difference, negative things will result.

### Discussion Points:

How can we extend the idea of opening our homes into actions when we are in other environments?

How can we see the image of G-d, tzelem elokim, in those around us?

What can I do to make my conversations more meaningful this week?

Idea by Rabbi Efreim Goldberg, Senior Rabbi of Boca Raton Synagogue, Florida and friend of Rabbi Leo Dee

### לעילוי נשמת:

לאה בת רפאל הכהן וציפורה

מאיה אסתר בת הרב אריה מרדכי ולאה

רינה מרים בת הרב אריה מרדכי ולאה

היום ערבעה וערבעים יום שהם שישה שבועות ושני ימים לעומר



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