

The Dee

Pirkei Avot Project

יוסי בן יועזר איש צרדה ויוסי בן יוחנן איש ירושלים קבלו מהם. יוסי בן יועזר איש צרדה אומר, יהי ביתך בית ועד לחכמים, והוי מתאבק בעפר רגליהם, והוי שותה בצמא את דברייהם:

Yose ben Yoezer (a man) of Zeredah and Yose ben Yohanan (a man) of Jerusalem received [the oral tradition] from them [i.e. Shimon the Righteous and Antigonus]. Yose ben Yoezer used to say: let thy house be a house of meeting for the Sages and sit in the very dust of their feet, and drink in their words with thirst.

The essence of Rabbi Yose ben Yoezer's teaching is that to learn and truly acquire (to be *MeKabel*) the Torah, there are three prerequisites:

1) Make your house a place where the wise and learned will gather.

Bring into your home and into your lives people whose love and respect for the Torah will inspire you, and who can act as role models.

2) Sit at the sages' feet.

To learn Torah you need to be curious, present and humble. Sitting at someone's feet means that you know that they are the expert and you are there to learn. It is the essence of humility. The Torah was given on Sinai, the low, plain mountain which epitomized humility. Torah is often compared to water, which will always find the lowest spot to flow towards. So too, by being humble and sitting at the feet of those who know more, the torah and its values will "flow" down to you.

3) Drink in their words with thirst.

In *Ethics From Sinai*, Irving M. Bunim suggests that Torah does not actually ever quench ones thirst for it. The more you learn, the 'thirstier' you get, because the more you learn the more you realize there is still to learn and the more you will want to continue learning. Yose ben Yoezer is encouraging us to develop a genuine thirst for knowledge, so that we will continue learning and growing throughout our life.

Discussion Points:

What does making your home a "meeting place for sages" mean to you? Is it to be taken literally or does it represent something else?

Why do you think the Torah and the Mishna value humility so highly? Why is humility necessary in order to learn?

Is it always good to want more of what you have?

Idea by Bracha Krohn, friend of Lucy Dee

לעילוי נשמת:

לאה בת רפאל הכהן וציפורה

מאיה אסתר בת הרב אריה מרדכי ולאה

רינה מרים בת הרב אריה מרדכי ולאה

היום שבעה ושלושים יום שהם חמישה שבועות ושני ימים לעומר



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