

The Path of Spiritual Growth

In this week's *Torah* portion *Terumah*, the *Torah* describes the Cherubim (angelic like figures on top of the Ark). They were positioned where their wings were spread upwards, while facing each other on both sides of the *Aron* (ark). The commentaries point out that the detailed description of how the Cherubim were positioned is a timeless lesson for how to go about one's spiritual growth.

The following story helps us understand this message clearly. A young man, who we will call *Reuven*, is running late for *Minyan*. In a rush, he double parks the car blocking another car as he runs in to start his prayers. In the meantime, *Shimon*, the person he blocked, comes out and is now late for a meeting because he can't find the owner of the car that is blocking him to move it. Twenty minutes later the young man runs out. An irate *Shimon* turns to him and asks, "What were you thinking?"

Reuven replies, "I was davening. What is the problem?" *Reuven*, in the name of spirituality, claims he has done nothing wrong. What has really happened here is that he has missed the point. As one travels in his/her spiritual journey, one has to make sure not to hurt someone else in that process for that is not spirituality.

The *Torah* teaches us this message from the Cherubim. Their wings were facing upwards, symbolizing the spiritual growth of all mankind to strive higher. At the same time they were facing each other indicating that one must be aware of his/her surroundings. In the process of growth, the Cherubim convey to us to be aware of our fellow Jew emphasizing that one's personal growth and gains cannot be at the expense of another person.