

*Beyond Twelve Gates by Rabbi Ze'ev Smason*  
*Parshas Terumah February 21, 2015*

*Welcome to Beyond Twelve Gates ~*

Flashing the same stone-faced glare that once was so familiar in the boxing ring, Evander Holyfield appeared headed toward another fight. This time the challenge came from a hot-tempered motorist who felt he had been cut off as Holyfield pulled out of a driveway. The driver, unaware he was about to encounter the former four-time heavyweight champion, forced Holyfield off the road and slammed his hand onto the hood of Holyfield's SUV. The enraged driver continued to yell curses and threats, demanding Holyfield get out of the vehicle. Holyfield obliged, opening the door. No longer hidden by the SUV's tinted windows, Holyfield was immediately recognized and the motorist backed away, mumbling "I didn't know it was you."

It was an example of how road rage can lead to unexpected big trouble -- and it wasn't real. Holyfield and his misguided antagonist were only acting in a short public service announcement, supported by several Georgia law enforcement agencies. The closing message of the PSA is: "Avoid road rage. You never know who you might run into." Georgia Attorney General Sam Olens said Holyfield was the perfect choice for the road rage PSA. "Everyone knows Evander Holyfield," Olens said. "Everyone knows he's a former four-time heavyweight champion. And everyone knows they don't want to mess around with him." (See the PSA: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CceSRMmhv3w>) Holyfield, 52, officially retired in 2014.

Holyfield said he was happy to participate because he has seen road rage up close when he was 17. He said his car "just stopped" in the middle of the road and he was challenged by an older driver. "Somebody was blowing their horn and they got out and they just talked to me any kind of way, you know," Holyfield said. "I fought then. I wasn't heavyweight champ of the world. I was 17, but I could fight and the guy is talking all this noise. He was probably thinking I can't fight. I was a good fighter. I was an amateur champion." Holyfield said he "did the wise thing" by remembering advice from his mother to "just chill."

Anger is one of the traits most condemned in Jewish literature. In Ethics of the Fathers, Rabbi Eliezer taught, ". . . *Do not be easy to anger.*" (2:10) "Someone who gets angry," we are told, "is like one who worships idols." Anger can cause a sage to lose his wisdom, or a person who is destined for greatness to forfeit it. It's not hard to see why. When we get angry, we tend to act irrationally. Things said or done in anger are almost always destructive and cause for later regret . . . even if the other driver isn't Evander Holyfield. Be slow to anger: You never know what the consequences may be.

*Parshas Terumah Exodus 25:1-27:19*

Parshas Terumah begins a series of four out of five portions that discuss in detail the construction of the Mishkan, the traveling Tabernacle, which would serve as a 'resting place' for G-d's presence amongst the Jewish people. This week's portion recounts G-d's description to Moses of how to construct the Mishkan, beginning with a listing of the various precious materials to be collected from the Jewish people for this monumental project. G-d describes the magnificent golden and wooden Ark, which would house the tablets of the Ten Commandments, complete with its dazzling cover depicting two cherubim (angels with faces of children) facing each other. Next, G-d provides Moses with the blueprints of the shulchan (holy table) upon which the *lechem hapanim* (showbread) would be placed each week. Following the description of the pure golden menorah which was to be hammered from one large piece of gold, G-d describes the structure of the Mishkan itself. It contained splendidly woven and embroidered covers, curtains and partitions, and the sturdy outer walls. The Torah portion concludes with instructions for the copper altar and the Mishkan's large outer courtyard.

*Rabbinic Ruminations*

"A rose by any other name would smell as sweet" is a frequently referenced part of Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*. Is the danger posed by a hurricane dependent upon its name? According to new

research, the surprising answer is "yes." For many years hurricanes and other tropical storms bore only girls' names. In the 1970s the growing numbers of female meteorologists began to object to what some considered a sexist practice, and from 1978 onwards girls' and boys' names alternated. A study from the University of Illinois ([Jung et al., 2014](#)) examined over 60 years of hurricanes which hit the United States. The results showed there were higher death tolls, on average, when the hurricanes were given a female name. How can such results be understood?

The disparity in death tolls between male and female-named hurricanes, researchers found, wasn't because female-named hurricanes were any more severe; rather, what occurred is that people's behavior changed. Sharon Shavitt, one of authors of the report, explained, "In judging the intensity of a storm, people appear to be applying their beliefs about how men and women behave. This makes a female-named hurricane, especially one with a very feminine name such as Belle or Cindy, seem gentler and less violent." Apparently, some people unconsciously say to themselves: how could I be killed by a hurricane called Heather? Female-named hurricanes have lower perceived risk and consequently less preparedness -- an unfortunate and unintended consequence of the gendered naming of hurricanes. In the words of Ethics of the Fathers, ". . . *one mitzvah leads to another mitzvah, and one sin leads to another sin.*" (4:2) One mitzva causes other mitzvos to occur, and a transgression automatically drags along other undesirable consequences in its wake. This is why the Torah describes a wise person as being one who can see the future consequences of their behavior.

### *Quote of the Week*

It is never too late to be what you might have been. — *George Eliot*, Mary Ann Evans (1819 – 1880) known by her pen name **George Eliot**, was an English novelist, journalist and author.

### **Joke of the Week**

(In a follow-up to last week's item about vultures ....)

Two vultures were boarding a plane, each with three dead possums under their arms. The flight attendant said, 'Gentlemen, you can't board like that.' The vultures said, "Sir, what seems to be the problem?" The flight attendant said, "Gentlemen, we have a strict rule: Two carrion per passenger"