

In our *Parashah*, *Bnei Yisrael* put the finishing touches on the *Mishkan* / Tabernacle. *Midrash Rabbah* teaches: *Hashem* said, "You angered Me by saying about the Golden Calf (*Shmot* 32:4), 'Eileh / These are your gods, *Yisrael*.' So, too, you have appeased Me with (the opening words of our *Parashah*), 'Eileh / These are the accountings of the *Mishkan*.'" [Until here from the *Midrash*]

R' Avraham Dov Auerbach z"l (Chief Rabbi of Teveryah, Israel; died 2021) asks: In the case of the Golden Calf, the word "Eileh" was part of a sinful declaration! Here, the word "Eileh" is simply an introductory word to the *Parashah*. How can the *Midrash* compare the two uses of the word?

R' Auerbach explains: The purpose of the accounting in our *Parashah* was not simply to prove that nothing was embezzled by those building the *Mishkan*--though our Sages say that that was one of the purposes of the accounting, since a person should go out of his way to shown others he is "clean." The accounting also was made to elevate each and every member of *Bnei Yisrael* by confirming that every person's contribution was used somewhere in the construction. The words, "Eileh / These are the accountings," are not simply the Torah's introductory words to our *Parashah*. They were spoken by Moshe when he pointed out how each of the donations was utilized.

R' Auerbach adds: The *Midrash* refers to Moshe as a "trustworthy, loyal" person. In light of the above, we may explain that the *Midrash* is not referring to Moshe's trustworthiness in not embezzling funds--which is not a particularly high praise. Rather, it refers to his loyalty to *Bnei Yisrael* in trying to highlight their contributions to the *Mishkan*, rather than his own. (*Pitchei Avraham*)

## Bitachon

This year--a *Shemittah* year--we will *iy"H* devote this space to discussing the related subject of *Bitachon* / placing one's trust in *Hashem*.

*Rabbeinu Bachya ibn Pekudah* z"l (*Saragossa, Spain; early 11<sup>th</sup> century*) lists ten benefits of *Bitachon*. The fourth of these benefits is as follows:

One of the benefits of *Bitachon* relates to a person's observance of the Torah. A person with *Bitachon* who is well-off will hurry to fulfill his obligations to G-d and man willingly and with a generous spirit. A person with *Bitachon* who lacks money will see his poverty as a kindness from *Hashem*, for he does not need to worry about whether he is fulfilling his financial obligations to G-d and man adequately.

(*Chovot Ha'levavot: Sha'ar Ha'bitachon*, Introduction)

R' Chaim Avraham Katz z"l (*Mogilev, Belarus; died 1804*) writes: Examples of obligations to G-d that may be expensive to fulfill include *Tefilin* and *Oneg Shabbat*. Examples of a rich person's obligations to his fellow man include feeding and clothing the poor. (*Pat Lechem*)

R' Shlomo Moshe Amar *shlita* (former *Sefardi* Chief Rabbi of Israel, now *Sefardi* Chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim) writes: It is very difficult for a person of means to be certain that he is giving charity at the level that Heaven expects of him. The *Gemara* (*Ketubot* 66b) tells of a man named *Nakdimon ben Gurion* who lived at the end of the Second Temple period. Using his fabulous wealth as collateral, this *Nakdimon* single-handedly provided water for all the inhabitants of Yerushalayim when it was under Roman siege. Even so, says the *Gemara*, Heaven found his level of charitable giving to be inadequate for a person of his means, and he ultimately lost everything. A less well-off person does not have such worries, writes R' Amar; therefore, if he has *Bitachon*, he is grateful for his lack of wealth.

(*Be'chasdecha Batachti*)

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**“He took and placed the Testimony [i.e., the *Luchot*] into the Aron / Ark . . .” (40:20)**

R’ Shlomo Kluger z”l (1785-1869; rabbi of Brody, Galicia) notes that our verse contains two verbs (“took” and “placed”) while the verses relating to the other implements of the *Mishkan* have only one verb. (For example, verse 22 states: “He put the Table in the *Ohel Mo’ed*.”) Why?

R’ Kluger explains: The *Gemara* (*Kiddushin* 7a) teaches that when A gives a gift to B, who is a distinguished person, and B accepts the gift, A is considered to be a recipient because he is receiving a favor from B in that B honored A by accepting his gift. This is why the Torah says earlier (*Shmot* 25:2), “Take a donation for Me,” rather than, “Give a donation to Me,” because a person who is fortunate enough to give a gift to Hashem actually is receiving a favor from Hashem.

Similarly, it was an honor for Moshe to be able to put the *Luchot* into the *Aron*. Thus, when he “placed” them, he also “took” something for himself. (*Imrei Shefer*)

**“For the cloud of Hashem would be on the Mishkan by day, and fire would be on it at night, before the eyes of all of Bnei Yisrael throughout their journeys.” (40:38)**

R’ Meir Eliyahu *shlita* (Yerushalayim) writes: When a person is undergoing challenges, he can be confident that *Hashem* is with him during these challenges more than at other times. The reason for this is that *Hashem* is closer to us when we are humbled.

R’ Eliyahu writes that this is alluded to in our verse: “For the cloud of *Hashem*”--the *Shechinah* / Presence of *Hashem*--“would be on the *Mishkan*”--literally, “the home,” i.e., the body, which is the home of the soul--“by day”--when life is bright. But, “and fire”--a stronger revelation of the *Shechinah*--“would be on it at night”--when life is dark. This is “before the eyes of all of *Bnei Yisrael*”--a person who retrospects will see that, indeed, *Hashem*’s Presence was with him during his darkest hours even more than when things were going well. *Hashem* is there “throughout [our] journeys.” (*Merkevet Argaman*)

R’ Yitzchak Weiss z”l *Hy”d* (rabbi of Verbau, Czechoslovakia; killed in the Holocaust in 1942) writes: The *Mishkan*, where the *Luchot* were housed, alludes to a Torah scholar. If a Torah scholar publicizes himself, as the day is public, *Hashem* will bring a cloud of obscurity over him. However, if a Torah scholar conceals himself like an object concealed at night, *Hashem* will spread his fame as a fire is seen from a distance.

(*Siach Yitzchak*)

**“These are the accountings of the *Mishkan*, the *Mishkan* of Testimony . . .” (38:21)**

*Rashi* z”l comments: “The *Mishkan* was a testimony to *Yisrael* that *Hashem* had forgiven them for the sin of the Golden Calf.”

Commentaries ask: We read (*Vayikra* 16:16; see *Rashi* there) that *Hashem* dwells among *Bnei Yisrael* “amidst their *Tum’ah*.” If so, how does the *Mishkan* testify that *Hashem* has forgiven *Bnei Yisrael*? Maybe He is “residing” in the *Mishkan* even though *Bnei Yisrael* remain defiled by the sin of the Golden Calf!

R’ Avraham Mordechai Alter z”l (1866-1948; *Gerrer Rebbe*, known as the “*Imrei Emes*”) answers: The holiday of *Chanukah* commemorates the fact that one day’s supply of oil burned for eight days, the length of time it took the *Kohanim* to acquire oil that was not *Tamei* / ritually impure. Why was this miracle necessary? According to *Halachah*, the Temple service may be performed in a state of *Tum’ah* when it is impossible or even impractical to perform it in a state of *Taharah* / ritual purity. [For example, if a majority of *Kohanim* are *Temei’im*, the *Korban Tamid* / daily burnt offering may be offered by a *Kohen* who is *Tamei*.] If the only oil available was *Tamei*, why couldn’t the *Chashmona’im* have used that oil?

The *Gerrer Rebbe* answers: Performing the Temple service in a less than ideal fashion, i.e., in a state of *Tum’ah*, is acceptable for routine Temple service. However, the *Chashmona’im* were re-dedicating the Temple; indeed, the word “*Chanukah*” means “dedication.” When a dedication is taking place, when a *mitzvah* is being inaugurated, we cannot settle for second best. Thus, only *Tahor* oil was acceptable for the dedication.

Similarly, it is true that *Hashem* dwells among *Bnei Yisrael* amidst their *Tum’ah*. However, the inauguration of the *Mishkan* could not have taken place unless *Bnei Yisrael* had been cleansed of the sin of the Golden Calf.

(Quoted in *Pardes Yosef: Chanukah* p.107)

*Rashi* z”l writes: The word “*Mishkan*” is mentioned twice in our verse to allude to the *Bet Hamikdash*, which was taken as a *Mashkon* / pledge, so-to-speak, by being twice destroyed for the Jewish People’s sins. [Until here from *Rashi*]

R’ Shlomo Wolbe z”l (1914-2005) notes that a *Mashkon* is the property of its original owner even when it is in the possession of the creditor. It follows that the *Bet Hamikdash* still belongs to the Jewish People--i.e., we still have a connection to it--even though we do not possess it.

(*Shiurei Chumash*)