

English

בס"י עתא דשמיא

# Zera Shimshon

*Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmeni zy"l, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.*



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## Understanding the Dispute Between Moshe And Betzalel In the Building of the Mishkan

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רְאוּ קָרָא ה' בְּשֵׁם בְּצַלְאֵל בֶּן אוּרִי בֶן חוּר לְמִטֵּה יְהוּדָה: (שמות ל"ה ל')

*Moshe said to the Children of Israel, "See, Hashem has proclaimed by name, Betzalel son of Ur son of Chur, of the tribe of Yehudah.*

The Gemara in Brachos (נח ע"א) tells us the following about Betzalel. 'Betzalel' [which can be read as 'Betzel El', which means 'in the shadow of Hashem'] was so named on account of his wisdom, which was demonstrated in the following incident. When Hashem said to Moshe, "Go and tell Betzalel to build the Mishkan, the Ark and the vessels", Moshe went and reversed the order and said to Betzalel, "Build the Ark, the vessels and the Mishkan". Betzalel said to him, "Moshe our teacher! The practice of the world is that first a person builds a house and then he brings vessels into it. But you say, 'Build an Ark, vessels and then the Mishkan'. Into what shall I put the vessels that I build? Perhaps Hashem said to you as follows, 'Build the Mishkan, and then the Ark and the vessels'? Moshe said to him, "Perhaps you were in the shadow of Hashem and that is how you knew this".

We need to understand, firstly, why indeed Moshe deviated from the order that Hashem commanded him with. Secondly, what was the great wisdom which the Gemara accredits Betzalel with, when all he presented was the simple and logical practice of first beginning with building a home and only afterwards continuing with building its vessels?

The Gemara in Brachos (כח ע"א) teaches us the following principle. *In matters of sanctity, we ascend but do not descend.* Therefore, in regards to building the Mishkan and its vessels, we would need to follow this principle; to first build the one which has lesser sanctity, and then ascend to build the one with greater sanctity, and not the other way around.

When deliberating which of the two, the Mishkan or the Ark and vessels, was of lesser sanctity, and thus was to be built first, there are two conflicting notions.

For one, we know that when the Jews sinned, the Bais Hamikdash was destroyed by the hands of their enemies, while, as the Gemara in Yuma (נב ע"ב) tells us, the Ark and the vessels were hidden away before the hands of the enemies would be able to reach them. This would seem to be a clear indication that the Ark and vessels were of a higher sanctity, and thus the enemies were never able to get

their hands on them.

On the other hand, we know that after the Jews entered the Land of Israel, it was many years before the Bais Hamikdash was finally built. All those years the Mishkan continued to function in the towns of Shiloh, Nov and Giv'on. Yet, during all those intermediate years, Hashem did not rest His Holy Presence in the Mishkan, for although the Ark and vessels were in place, nevertheless, because it lacked in its building structure, the Holy Presence did not rest there. This would seem to indicate that, on the contrary, the structure in which the Ark and vessels were to be placed was of superior sanctity, and hence, although the Ark and vessels were indeed present, nevertheless, because the structure was lacking it wasn't worthy of the Holy Presence.



The Gemara in Sotah (ט ע"א) says, רננו צדיקים בה' לישרים, אל תקרי נאוה תהלה אלא נוח תהלה, זה משה ודוד שלא שלטו נאוה תהלה, אלא תקרי נאוה תהלה אלא נוח תהלה. זה משה ודוד שלא שלטו נאוה תהלה, אלא תקרי נאוה תהלה - *What is the meaning of that which is written 'Sing joyfully, O righteous, because of Hashem; for the upright, praise is fitting'? Do not read it 'for the upright praise is fitting' [i.e. it is fitting for the upright to praise], but rather 'for the upright, a palace of praise' [i.e. the upright will be praised for the palaces that they erect]. This refers to Moshe and Dovid, for their enemies did not gain control over their handiwork [i.e. the enemies of Israel never derived any benefit from the labors of Moshe or Dovid]. Accordingly, the Megaleh Amukos writes, that were Moshe to enter Eretz Yisroel and build the Bais Hamikdash, the Jews' enemies would never have been able to lay their hands on it to destroy it.*

Thus, Hashem, who knew that Moshe was not destined to enter the Land of Israel and build the Bais Hamikdash, knew that consequently the Bais Hamikdash would eventually be destroyed. Accordingly, He told Moshe to build the Mishkan first because its sanctity was less than the sanctity of the Ark and vessels, for the Bais Hamikdash would to be destroyed while the Ark and vessels were to be hidden away. Moshe, on the other hand, who was under the impression that he would indeed enter the Land and build the Bais Hamikdash, thought that the Bais Hamikdash, as well, would never be destroyed. Accordingly, he felt that the Bais Hamikdash was of greater sanctity, as is alluded from the absence of the Holy Presence in the Mishkan in Shiloh, Nov and Giv'on. Thus, he told Betzalel to build the Ark and vessels first, for he felt that they were of lesser sanctity.

Betzalel, on the other hand, who did know that Moshe was destined to die in the desert and not enter the Land of Israel, knew that consequently the Bais Hamikdash would eventually be

destroyed, and thus the Ark and vessels, which would never be destroyed, were of greater sanctity and therefore should be built second. Nevertheless, not wanting to break the news to Moshe that he was to die in the desert, disguised his knowledge and instead told Moshe that he felt it was correct to build the Bais Hamikdash first as is the general worldly practice.

This knowledge, that Moshe was destined to die without ever entering the Land of Israel, which even Moshe himself did not know yet, definitely demonstrates the great wisdom which Betzalel possessed.

זרע שמשון פרשת ויקהל אות ח

### **Anyone Who Sins, Whether an Individual or an Entire Community, Can Always Repent and Be Forgiveness.**

**אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדת אשר פקד על פי משה עבדת הלויים ביד איתמר בן אהרן הכהן (לח כא):**

**These are the accountings of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of the Testimony...**

Rashi comments on this Passuk as follows: **המשכן משכן שני פעמים**, רמז למשכן שנתמשכן בשני חורבנין על עונותיהן של ישראל: משכן העדות. עדות לישראל שיותר להם הקב"ה על מעשה העגל שהרי השרה שכנינו ביניהם: **The Mishkan, The Mishkan: The word Mishkan** (which is an allusion to the word משכון - *Mashkon*, which means collateral) *is stated twice, as an allusion to the Bais Hamikdash which was taken as collateral in its two destructions, for the sins of Israel. The Mishkan of the Testimony: Testimony for Israel, that Hashem overlooked the incident of the Golden Calf for them, for He rested His Shechinah among them, in the Mishkan.*

The commentaries ask the following, on the words of Rashi. After Hashem forgave the Jews for the sin of the Golden Calf, He told Moshe as follows: **וביום פקדי ופקדתי עליהם חטאתם** (פרק ל"ב פסוק ל"ד); *And on a day that I make an accounting, I shall bring their sin to account against them.* Rashi explains this Passuk to mean that "Although I have heeded your entreaty not to annihilate the Jewish Nation, nevertheless, whenever I shall make an accounting of Israel's sins, I will bring up this sin against them, too". Thus, there is no punishment that comes upon Israel which does not have in it some retribution for the sin of the Golden Calf. Accordingly, after Rashi just finished stating that the Passuk that says the word 'Mishkan' twice is alluding to the Bais Hamikdash which was destroyed as a result of the sins of the Jews, and we know, as well, that every punishment for the Jews includes within itself a punishment for the sin of the Golden Calf, too, consequently it would seem that the punishment of the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash would demonstrate the contrary; that the sin of the Golden Calf was *not* absolved.



The Gemara in Avodah Zarah (ה ע"א) says, לא דוד ראוי לאותו מעשה ולא ישראל ראוי לאותו מעשה וכי' אלא למה עשו לומר לך שאם חטא יחיד אומרים – *King David was not suited to perform that deed with Bas-Sheva and Israel was not suited to perform that deed with the Golden Calf... If so, why did they act in this manner? To teach you that if an individual sins we tell him: "Go and reflect about another individual; King David, who committed a sin and his repentance was accepted", and if a community sins we tell them: "Go and reflect about another community; the Jews who worshipped the Golden Calf, and their repentance was accepted"*.

The Gemara teaches us that if not for the sin of the Golden Calf, one could have assumed that only an individual who has sinned can repent and be forgiven, yet a community that has sinned does not have the opportunity to repent, rather every member of that community would need to accept his just and deserving punishment. For this very reason, Heaven decreed that the Jewish Nation should sin with the Golden Calf, with the aim that their subsequent repentance and forgiveness would serve as an example to all future offenders, that sincere repentance will assuredly bring Divine absolution even for an entire community that has sinned. Furthermore, we can say, that not only did the sin of the Golden Calf and the Jews' repentance and subsequent forgiveness *prove* that a community, too, can repent, moreover, the very fact that the Nation as a whole sinned with the Golden Calf and then repented and were subsequently forgiven by Hashem due to Moshe's pleading on their behalf was what set the precedence and ability for a community to also have the opportunity to repent and to be forgiven.



The destruction of the Bais Hamikdash was obviously not a 'punishment' for their sins, as their severe sins which caused the destruction were all of great severity, warranting a destruction of the transgressors *themselves*, and not 'merely' destroying the Bais Hamikdash. Rather, we must say that the Bais Hamikdash was only destroyed as 'collateral', until the Jews would repent. This is actually the very reason why the Bais Hamikdash was called 'Mishkan', which has the same root as the word 'Mashkon', collateral, in reference to its eventual being 'taken' and destroyed, not as a punishment for their sins rather as collateral for their repentance.

Since the Bais Hamikdash was taken as collateral for the Jewish Nation's repentance, this would obviously establish that even a community who has sinned *can* repent, which would demonstrate that the sin of the Golden Calf *was* absolved, in order to be the basis, foundation and testimony to the future generations that even a community, who has sinned as a whole, can repent and be forgiven.

זרע שמשון פרשת פקודי אות א

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