

לעילוי נשמת  
 מרת עקא עדנה  
 צפורה ע"ה  
 בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



# ענין השבוע

## ALIEI DESHE

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"za of Gur

## Claiming What is His

The Mishkan is referred to (38:21) as משכן העדות – *Mishkan of Testimony*. Rashi explains that it was a testimony to the Jewish people, שויתר להם על חטא, the העגל – that Hashem overlooked the sin of the *Eigel*. The Sfas Emes' addresses the obvious difficulty that stands out to many who learn this Rashi. Chazal<sup>2</sup> tell us in no uncertain terms that Hashem doesn't just 'overlook' sins. In fact, כל האומר שהקב"ה וותרן הוא יתותרן בני מעוהו,

the Purim story to make this point. Achashveirosh sold the Jewish nation and then sat down to feast. Chazal<sup>3</sup> see this as a retribution for the sale of Yosef, noting a striking parallel: the brothers, too, sold Yosef and then sat down to feast. Mordechai donned sackcloth and went out to the boulevard of Shushan, and cried out a great and bitter cry (Esther 4:1). Why was this necessary? To counter the merit of Eisav's 'great and bitter cry' (Bereishis 27:34).<sup>4</sup> How could it be that Hashem 'overlooked' the sin of the *Eigel*?

The Sfas Emes writes: אבל התירוץ הוא שיש גם על זה משפט, ויש מי שזוכה בדיון להיות וותרן כנגדו, ומי שזוכה על פי דין אין זה בכלל – *The answer is that there is justice to the 'overlooking' as well. For some, the judicial verdict is that their sins will be 'overlooked.' If someone was justly awarded this consideration, that is not included in the [blasphemous] 'overlooking.'* There is a careful *cheshbon* in everything Hashem does, and when He rules that 'overlooking' is in order, that is not to say that He simply 'overlooks' sins.

The Sfas Emes goes on to explain the rationale here. Hashem 'overlooked' their sin when Klal Yisrael proved their

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## Account Reconciliation

The *Avnei Nezer*<sup>7</sup> cites the opinion of the *Yerei'im* that the *av melachah* of writing (כתב) — the primary or 'parent' *melachah* — is specifically writing with ink on parchment. Other writing, such as with a pencil, or on paper, is forbidden as a *toladah* or 'descendant,' derived from the *av melachah*. The *Avnei Nezer* then objects: how can the *av melachah* be specifically on parchment? We know that the *avos melachos* are derived from the building of the Mishkan, and the *melachah* of writing is learned from the writing that was marked on the *kerashim*, the beams that made up the walls of the Mishkan. The *kerashim* were not parchment!

The *Avnei Nezer* explains: the *Yerei'im*<sup>8</sup> holds that the *melachah* of writing is learned from the recording of donations to the Mishkan, which was done in writing. As we know from the *Zohar*,<sup>9</sup> all of the donations were duly recorded, so that a reckoning could be given for every cent — as the *pasuk* (38:21) states, אלה פקודי המשכן. Standard writing was done with ink on a parchment.

It is difficult to understand this approach. The *melachos* of the Mishkan are learned from the *necessary* tasks of constructing the Mishkan. Keeping record of the donations is a very important aspect, as we are commanded to keep ourselves above suspicion, והייתם. Still, it is not integral to the actual

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The month of Adar is a time of teshuvah born of love, teshuvah me'ahavah. Now is the time to inspire ourselves with love and yearning for Hashem

Whoever states that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* overlooks — his intestines will be neglected. Rather, He bides His time — and claims what is His. Chazal reference two incidents in

1 ברש"י 5638 s.v.

2 *Bereishis Rabbah* 67:4.

3 *Esther Rabbah* 7:25.

4 *Bereishis Rabbah* 67:4

7 *Melech Koseiv, O.C.* 207:3.

8 And others; see *Avnei Nezer O.C.* 199:10.

9 *Pekudei* 221-222.

10 See *Shemos Rabbah* 51:6.



# Claiming What is His

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special qualities in their dedication to the building of the Mishkan. We know that all the experiences of Bnei Yisrael in the *midbar* made a lasting imprint on all generations of Yidden. Their sins affected the future generations, as we read in Ki Sisa, וביום פקדי ופקדתי - *Whenever I recall your sins, I will recall some of this sin.* The *sanegoria* (defense) was to stand for all generations. The 'overlooking' was for all generations. And likewise, the *teshuvah* with which they merited that 'overlooking' was also for all generations.

As the Sfas Emes explains: Certainly sin affects the person. However, Bnei Yisrael cleave to Hashem, in their deepest essence, and therefore no sin can interrupt the deepest roots of their love for Hashem. The *pasuk* says in Shir Hashirim (8:7), *Great quantities of water cannot quench the love.* The contribution of the Jewish nation towards the building of the Mishkan exhibited and exemplified that the deepest desire of their hearts is Hashem, and that this heartfelt desire will never be corrupted. Therefore, the just decision of the True Judge was to 'overlook' what they had done, as the *pasuk* in Hoshea (14:5) expresses it: אוהבם נדבה - *I will love them gratuitously.* Hashem overlooks what Klal Yisrael did because of His love for them, in response to their love for Him.

It is difficult to understand the answer of the Sfas Emes. Why is it so reprehensible to say 'Hashem overlooks sin'? Is it because he didn't say that Hashem's overlooking is justified? If in truth Hashem does overlook, why does it matter whether Hashem overlooked because of

their heartfelt love, or for whatever other reason?

To help us understand the words of Chazal and the words of the *Sfas Emes*, see the story related in the accompanying article, "The *Yahrtzeit* of the Beis Yisrael."<sup>5</sup>

What does the *Midrash* mean, "He bides His time - and claims what is His"? Does Hashem desire retribution? We know Hashem desires only good. The entire world was created so that Hashem can grant kindness and benevolence.<sup>6</sup> So how can Chazal describe it as 'claiming what is His'?

Rather, Hashem bides His time, and waits for the *retzonos* of Klal Yisrael; He waits for their demonstration of their love for him. After all, that is the purpose of punishment - that we awaken our love for Him. And that is what He is waiting to claim. Yiddishe *retzonos*; that's what they collect in *Shamayim*.

When someone says that Hashem 'overlooks' and does not awaken his love for Hashem - he just wants license to sin more. But someone who says that Hashem 'overlooks' with the knowledge that what He is waiting for are Yiddishe *retzonos* of love for Hashem, which is the ultimate goal of the punishment in the first place, then Hashem employs His *gratuitous love*, as this person has reached the ultimate purpose, that of exhibiting his love for Hashem.

The month of Adar is a time of *teshuvah* born of love, *teshuvah me'ahavah*. Now is the time to inspire ourselves with love and yearning for Hashem, מִשׁוֹךְ עֲבֹדָךְ אֵל רְצוֹנְךְ.

(ס"ג תשפ"ב מאמר ב')

# Yahrtzeit of the Beis Yisrael

In honor of the *yahrtzeit* of the Beis Yisrael, *zy"a*, we can relate a story of the Beis Yisrael and the unforgettable *mashgiach*, R. Gad'l Eisner z"l.<sup>18</sup> Aside from the lesson we will learn from it, the story will give us a glimpse into the holy character of the Beis Yisrael.

In Yeshivas Chiddushei HaRim there was a *bachur* who acted improperly. Apparently he was impacting others negatively, and some of the faculty wished to expel him from the yeshivah. R. Gad'l was against this move, as he had his own way of influencing *bachurim* and drawing them close.

A member of the faculty went to consult with the Rebbe, the Beis Yisrael, and described the situation - as he saw it - and he returned to the yeshivah and said the Rebbe had instructed that the *bachur* be expelled from the yeshivah.

R. Gad'l ignored the directive, and continued with his own approach. When this faculty member saw that his words were being ignored, he lost his cool and did something he shouldn't have. Instead of approaching R. Gad'l directly and discussing the matter, this man went

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5 We cannot compare creations with the Creator, but, as we know, the tzaddikim parallel their Creator. See *Bereishis Rabbah* 67:8; *Esther Rabbah* 6:2.

6 "It is the way of the good, to do good unto others."

18 This story was not included in the biography of R. Gad'l, but it is a true story; one that may be publicized, and certainly one we can learn from.



# Account Reconciliation

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building of the Mishkan; the Mishkan could stand erect and strong without any recording of donations. How, then, can the *melachah* of writing be known to us through the donation records?

The Sfas Emes<sup>11</sup> quotes a famous *midrash* cited by Rashi on the words in the opening *pasuk* of the *parshah* (38:21), אלה פקודי המשכן, משכן העדות – *This is the accounting of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of Testimony*. The Midrash expounds: the Mishkan served as testimony that Hashem's *Shechinah* rests among Yisrael.

How so? The Sfas Emes explains. We mentioned last week<sup>12</sup> the premise with which the Sfas Emes explained the *pasuk* in this week's *parshah* (38:27), מאת אדנים, למאת הככר – the size and materials of the Mishkan was predicated on how much heart the Yidden had to donate. On the other hand, we know that the measurements and the donations were exactly as Hashem wanted them to be, as the *pasuk* says in Vayakhel (36:7), והמלאכה היתה דימים – *the labor was just enough for them*. This means that the combined *ratzon* and the inspired hearts of the Yidden had converged with the *ratzon* of Hashem, and the two met at precisely the same point.<sup>13</sup>

*Sfas Emes* concludes that if the two *retzonos* had such complete synchrony, it can only be through the *hashra'as haShechinah* among Yisrael. If Klal Yisrael had so subjected themselves to Hashem's will, that is certainly to bring the *Shechinah* into their hearts.

The Midrash<sup>14</sup> tells us that when Moshe Rabbeinu calculated how he has used all the material that was donated for the Mishkan, he couldn't remember what he had done with 1775 *shekalim*. He wondered what had happened to them, and worried that the

people would start wagging their tongues, accusing him of pocketing the money. Hashem had mercy on Moshe Rabbeinu, and he remembered that the silver had been used for hooks on pillars, to hold up the curtains.

Why did it matter if in such a large accounting, out of hundreds of thousands of *shekalim*, less than two thousand were left unaccounted for? *Tiferes Shlomo*<sup>15</sup> explains that there were individuals among Bnei Yisrael who feared that their donation would not be accepted for inclusion in the building of the Mishkan. Moshe had to make sure he could reassure them that their heartfelt contribution was accepted by Hashem, and was utilized in the Mishkan.

Now that we have been enlightened by the Sfas Emes as to the centrality of the calculations being exact, and how that itself is the testimony that Hashem's *Shechinah* is among us, it is understood that Moshe Rabbeinu needed to have a precise calculation of what was utilized in the Mishkan.

Now we can understand the difficult approach of the *Avnei Nezer*. The recording of the donations was not peripheral nor dispensable. The exact reconciliation of Hashem's account with Klal Yisrael's account served a very central purpose in the Mishkan, so central that it is represented in its title of משכן העדות.

While this idea speaks of the aggregate *ratzon* of Klal Yisrael as a whole, we can distill it down to the individual level. The word פקודי (calculations) also means 'something missing.'<sup>16</sup> The two meanings are two sides of the same coin. A Yid who lives with an accounting and knows where he is in this world will be able to recognize where he falls short, and mend those breaches.

This week, 2 Adar, was the *yahrzeit* of the Beis Yisrael *zy"á*. He would often repeat the adage: "Calculated is half repaid."<sup>17</sup> Even if a person has not yet fulfilled his requirements and fixed his ways, if he has a clear account of where he is holding, of where he is on this world, he is halfway there. The *cheshbon* itself directs him to the path he must follow. This is why the reckoning of המשכן is so central: because the *cheshbon* itself is a basic requirement for *hashra'as haShechinah* in every Yid's personal Mishkan.

The Gemara says in Bava Basra (78b) on the *pasuk* (Bamidbar 21:28) כִּי אִשׁ יֵצֵא מִחֶשְׁבוֹן – *For a fire has blazed forth from Cheshbon*; תִּצַּא אִשׁ מִמְּחֻשְׁבֵי וְתֹאכַל אֶת שְׂאִינָן מִחֶשְׁבֵינִי – *Let a fire blaze forth from those who make an accounting and consume those who do not make an accounting*. The Gemara is referring to the fire of *Gehinnom*, but as with everything, there is a message relatable to this world, where we still have the opportunity to correct that which needs correction. 'Let a fire blaze forth from those who make an accounting' – the fire that blazed forth from the Rebbe, the Beis Yisrael, *zy"á*, who would constantly encourage us and remind us to live with a *cheshbon*, and from all our holy Rebbes – that blaze kindled a fire in the hearts of all who listened. Their words are like fiery coals, which carry the power and heat of the fire long after it is extinguished. Whether one was *zocheh* to hear them personally, or by learning their *sefarim*, their words inspire a Yid to audit his life, to live with a *cheshbon hanefesh*. To know where he is; how much he owes, how far behind is he on his payments. Adar is a month of *yahrtzeits* of *tzaddikim*, as my father remarked. May Hashem help us, in the *zechus* of the *tzaddikim*, to walk in the correct and righteous path.

(ס"ג תשפ"ב מאמר א')

11 5639.

12 See *Alei Deshe* Vayakhel 5784, "Permeating Wisdom."

13 The rest of what they had brought, was too much –; והוּתוּ these contributions were given with less than a full heart. See *Alei Deshe* *ibid*.

14 *Shemos Rabbah* 51:6.

15 *Pekudei*, s.v. פקודי אלה.

16 See Rashi, *Bamidbar* 31:49, ולא נפקד ממנו איש.

17 גערעכנט איז האלב באצאלט, or, sometimes, גערעכנט איז האלב באצאלט, in Yiddish.



# Yahrtzeit of the Beis Yisrael

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to instigate the *bachurim*, telling them, “The Rebbe wants to expel the *bachur*, and R. Gad'l doesn't let!”

At this point R. Gad'l, who always preferred to act in his quiet but very effective way, could no longer ignore the controversy. He felt compelled to explain himself. He gathered the *bachurim* together and, as was his way, he started to dissect the matter and ruminate over it. He said, “We need to think about what was said, ‘the Rebbe wants to expel the *bachur*.’ We say the words ‘the Rebbe wants’ too quickly; they just serve as a *hechsher* for the second part: ‘to expel the *bachur*.’

“But, as *chassidim*, we need to think about those words. ‘*The Rebbe wants*’; the Rebbe is our shepherd. The shepherd cares for his flock, and especially the stragglers and stumbling among the sheep, as the *navi* says in Yechezkel (34). The Rebbe is a man who is exalted and elevated above his followers; he gets special energy from Hashem, and through him Hashem directs that community. ‘*The Rebbe wants*’ – the *ratzon* of the Rebbe is sublime and exalted. A person eats, drinks, speaks, and walks; but the *ratzon* is a function of the soul, the part of man that is most *ruchani*, with which he cleaves to Hashem.”

Rav Gad'l continued at length, with his exceptional rhetoric,

to discuss the exalted nature of the will of the Rebbe. “*The Rebbe wants*’ – in the highest part of his holy essence – what? ‘to expel the *bachur*’?! Is that the true desire of a great man? These two clauses simply cannot be read in the same breath!

“The Rebbe desires in his essence that the yeshivah should be a place where the *bachurim* are able to grow and serve Hashem to their greatest capacity. And if a faculty member speaks to him in a tone that says that there is a *bachur* who is affecting the yeshivah negatively, and that there is no way to save the yeshivah except by expelling the *bachur*, so the Rebbe agreed that he should do as he sees fit.<sup>19</sup>

“The story is told of R. Shmuel Hanaggid who was walking with the king when he was approached by a Jew who began to yell invectives at R. Shmuel. The king was incensed and instructed R. Shmuel to cut out the man's tongue. R. Shmuel investigated and he found out that the man was poor and had a troubled life. R. Shmuel arranged for his problems to be resolved and gave him enough money for his needs. A while later R. Shmuel was again walking with the king, when the same man started shouting the praises of R. Shmuel. The king recognized the man and demanded to know why R. Shmuel had

flouted his command. R. Shmuel explained, ‘I have indeed followed the king's command. I cut out his bitter tongue, and replaced it with a sweet one.’

“The Rebbe is the shepherd of Klal Yisrael; he certainly does not desire for a *bachur* to be expelled. He wants everyone to be able to serve Hashem – including that *bachur*.”

R. Gad'l concluded that in his opinion, there was a better approach to dealing with this troubled *bachur*, without damaging the rarified atmosphere of *avodas Hashem* in the yeshivah, and this was certainly the *ratzon* of the Rebbe.

Certainly R. Gad'l was exceptional in his love, patience, and wisdom, and sometimes expelling a *bachur* is unavoidable. But to place it on the Rebbe?! The Beis Yisrael, who never shut the door on anyone! To ascribe to him that he ‘wants to expel the *bachur*’?!

Even on those rare occasions when the Beis Yisrael was forced to distance someone, he let him know that when no one is looking, there is a side door which opens to a small entranceway which leads to the Rebbetzin's kitchen that is always open for him.

*Zechuso yagen aleinu.*

(ס"ג תשפ"ב מאמר ב)

<sup>19</sup> Perhaps because in his great wisdom he knew that R. Gad'l would know how to avoid this option, if he thought he would be able to deal with the *bachur* without taking this drastic step.