

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



על דשא

AL E DESHE

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

Worthy of Reward

אַרְבַּע מַלְכוּתֵי נָדוּשׁ נָא. בְּמִדּוֹתֶיךָ פְּעֻלָּתָם
כְּבָרָאשׁוּנָה.

The four kingdoms we should quash now, / as You assess their actions, as in olden days (Piyut for Mussaf Shabbos Parshas Hachodesh).

Klal Yisrael is different. We remember constantly our connection with the Ribono Shel Olam. Even when we labor in worldly pursuits, we toil for the sake of the betterment of the Torah.

The *mefarshim* explain that we beseech Hashem: Just as You gave retribution to Mitzrayim, the first kingdom that oppressed us—so too, mete out retribution to all the kingdoms that oppress us.

Let's explore an alternative explanation. The Gemara (Avodah Zarah 2b) tells us that *l'asid lavo* Hashem will hold a *Sefer Torah* in His lap and call anyone

who toiled in Torah to come forward and receive their reward. Immediately, all the nations will assemble and claim that all their accomplishments in the world helped Klal Yisrael learn Torah. Hashem will retort that everything they did was for their own selfish reasons; they had no intentions of helping Klal Yisrael learn Torah.

The claim of the nations is quite astonishing. Suppose it is announced that prizes are offered for anyone who is tested on 1,000 *blatt* Gemara with Rashi and Tosafos. One Yid comes in and says, "I myself never learned, but I pushed my two sons very hard to learn the 1,000 *blatt* and be tested." It is obvious that this father will not receive the prize. He will get his just reward in Gan Eden, but he does not deserve this prize, which is intended for those who actually learned! How could the nations claim to deserve this reward if Hashem said that He only intends to give the reward to those who toiled in Torah?

But the truth is, the nations had a good point. Had they had the proper intentions when enabling Klal Yisrael to learn Torah, they really would have been deserving of this reward. The *sefarim* discuss how it was possible for Hashem to offer the Torah to the nations of the world before finally giving it Klal

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Unshackled

הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֵאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים רֵאשׁוֹן הוּא לָכֶם
לְחֹדֶשִׁי הַשָּׁנָה.

This month shall be for you the beginning of months; it shall be for you the first of the months of the year (Shemos 12:2).

The Sfas Emes writes² that in the upper worlds time does not exist. Time was created along with this world—in this world, everything is constricted to time. In the upper worlds, time was not created; there is no constraint of time. It follows then, that the more we carve up time, the farther removed we are from Hashem. When we divide the year into twelve months, Hashem becomes all the more hidden from our view. Hashem renews the whole creation each day—nothing would exist for even a second without Him. Yet the *zmanim* cover this up. Time is nature, and the more there is nature, the less we can see Hashem.

We can understand the message of the Sfas Emes: When people live in a temporary dwelling, they do not establish themselves there. They don't bring in all their furniture, and they don't make elaborate arrangements to ensure all their needs are met. When we come to this world and set up shop, arranging all our times and settling in, we are effectively treating this world as a permanent dwelling place. We forget that the true purpose is the next world and we are only here temporarily.

Worthy of Reward

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Yisrael. How would it look if the *goyim* learned Torah? Even had they accepted the Torah, they would not have become Klal Yisrael. They would have the Torah as *goyim*, and they would be submissive to Klal Yisrael, as it is written regarding *l'asid lavo*—וְעָמְדוּ זָרִים וְרָעוּ צֹאנֵכֶם וּבְנֵי נֶכֶךְ – *Foreigners will stand and tend your flocks and the sons of the stranger will be your plowmen and your vineyard workers* (Yeshayah 61:5). All this can be counted as toiling in Torah. Even if the *goyim* would only facilitate our learning, it would be considered for them as if they toil in Torah. However, there is one condition: they must know when they are working that it's all for the Torah. If all their work is for their own purposes—they may have helped us learn, but they are not deserving of the prize.

Hashem will take a *Sefer Torah* because only a *Sefer Torah* will know who had a real connection. When we act as supporters of

Torah—the *atzei chaim* of the Torah—are we doing it with the intention of furthering *limud haTorah*, or is it for ourselves? The judgment in the *olam ha'emes* goes according to the intentions.

As the Gemara describes it, the first nation to come before Hashem will be Rome. They will enter first because they were the most prestigious: their currency was used worldwide.¹ Why is the currency of Rome important? We are talking about *l'asid lavo*! Why would we care about the currency of Rome—the *olam hasheker*? Yet that is exactly the point. At that time, Hashem will reveal the truth and expose the falsehood of this world. Who better to bring in than Rome? The world will see that even the prestigious Rome, whose currency is used worldwide, is devoid and empty of value. The only thing true is the Torah!

We ask in the *piyut*, “Please, Hashem, בְּמִדּוֹתַי פִּיעֲלֵתָם – *You should measure their*

deeds כְּבִרְאשׁוֹנָה – *based on their previous actions.*” What were the nations’ previous actions? When they were offered the Torah, they were not interested—they were only interested in furthering their own worldly ambitions. When the time comes, *l'asid lavo*, they will step forward and try to claim their prize. We ask Hashem to judge them based on their history. It is not toiling for Torah if it was done with the wrong intentions.

Klal Yisrael is different. We remember constantly our connection with the *Ribono Shel Olam*. With this connection we are always able to connect to the truth in this world full of deception. Even when we labor in worldly pursuits, we toil for the sake of the betterment of the Torah.

May Hashem help us constantly live with the Torah and be connected to Torah. Torah will then light the way for us and lead us through this *olam hasheker*.

(ס"ג פרשת שמייני – החודש תשפ"ד מאמר א)

1 See Maharsha.

Unshackled

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Yet, there is a deeper way to understand the Sfas Emes. Hashem renews the creation every second—every instant, He breathes brand new life into the world. In reality, each second is unrelated to the second preceding it, or the second following it. We don't see it that way because Hashem willed the true essence of the world to be hidden. We see the world as being 5785 years old, and we assume that everything will continue in the same way that it has been running until now. When we divide the year into separate parts, we reinforce this deception. We see ourselves as existing in the current month, and we can calculate that in another thirty days

it will be the next month, etc. We cannot grasp the concept of a world not confined to time—but the division of time only serves to strengthen the illusion.

The Sfas Emes explains that הָיָה in the Torah is used to connote vivid clarity. Moshe Rabbeinu spoke *nevuah* using “הָיָה” because he saw Hashem as through a clear looking-glass. Although the screen of months hides the true essence of the world from our eyes, הָיָה לָכֵן—Hashem gave us this month, Nissan, to give us clarity. Hashem reveals Himself enough during Nissan to counter the haze of the rest of the year.

The Mishnah (Avos 4:17) tells us that one moment of *teshuvah* and *maasim tovim* in this world is better than an entire lifetime in *Olam Haba*. The moment Chazal are speaking of is a moment when, to whatever extent, we rise above the constraints of time. For a moment, we are able to lift ourselves up and recognize that this second is not connected with whatever has happened or what will happen in the future; it stands alone. We lift ourselves out of the limits of this world, and use that special moment for *teshuvah* and *maasim tovim*—that moment is better than an entire lifetime in *Olam Haba*.

(ס"ג פרשת שמייני – החודש מאמר ג)

אֵלֶּה הַקְּדוּיִּי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת אֲשֶׁר פָּקַד
עַל כִּי מֹשֶׁה עֲבַדֵּת הַלְוִיִּם בְּיַד אִיתָמָר בֶּן אֶהֱרֹן
הַכֹּהֵן.

These are the reckonings of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of testimony (הָעֵדוּת), which were reckoned by Moshe's bidding. The labor of the Levi'im was under the authority of Isamar, son of Aharon Hakohen (Shemos 38:21).

The Midrash³ relates: When the Yidden brought their donations for the Mishkan there was found to be a surplus. Hashem told Moshe to use the surplus for a *Mishkan HaEidus*. When Moshe accounted for all the materials, he said, "Such-and-such materials were used for the Mishkan, and the excess was used for the *Mishkan* of the *Eidus*." This is the *Mishkan HaEidus* that our pasuk is referring to.

What was the *Mishkan HaEidus*? Hashem commanded Moshe to make two *Aronos*. One would house the *luchos*—the second *luchos*—and would be placed in the *Kodesh Hakodashim*. The other was the *Mishkan HaEidus*, a wooden box which would house the first set of *luchos*—the broken *luchos*—and would go out to battle together with Klal Yisrael. Although the Gemara (Bava Basra 14b) states that both sets of *luchos* were housed in the *Aron* in the *Kodesh Hakodashim*, Tosafos writes⁴ that this was true only in the Beis Hamikdash; before the time of the Beis Hamikdash, they were placed separately in this wooden ark, the *Mishkan HaEidus*.

All materials donated for the sake of the Mishkan were *hekdesh*, and could only be used for building the Mishkan. Since this second *Aron* was not to have the same sanctity as the rest of the Mishkan, how could the excess materials be used for building it?

The *Panim Yafos* writes that the answer can be found in the pasuk, עֲבַדֵּת הַלְוִיִּם בְּיַד אִיתָמָר בֶּן אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן – *The labor of the Levi'im was under the authority of Isamar, son of Aharon Hakohen*. Which work of Shevet Levi are we discussing? What work was under the authority of Isamar? The pasuk is telling us that it was possible to make the second *Aron*—the *Mishkan HaEidus*—using *hekdesh* funds, with the help of the workers who were directed by Isamar.

Every year, the *ketores* had to be purchased from the donated funds of that year. The *ketores* of the previous year was *hekdesh* and was no longer usable. What did they do with the old *ketores*? To sell it and transfer its *kedushah* onto money would be a *bizayon*. Chazal (Shekalim 4:5, Shevuos 10b) tell us that the *ketores* was used to pay the craftsmen who blended it, and it was then repurchased by *hekdesh*. First, the craftsmen's pay (which was *hekdesh* funds) was transferred to their possession, whereby it became *chullin*. Then, the *ketores* was traded for that money, and became the property of the craftsmen. Finally, *hekdesh* repurchased the *ketores* from the craftsmen, using the funds of

the new year. Now that the *ketores* was purchased using funds of the new year, it could be used for the new year.

A similar process was used to release the funds of *hekdesh* to build the second *Aron*; yet there was a setback. The craftsmen who constructed the Mishkan had done so free of charge, donating their skill and energy to the cause. How could *hekdesh* pay them, if they were not owed any money? But there was a solution. Shevet Levi had never pledged their effort of erecting the Mishkan each day of the *shivat yimei miluim*. They still had the right to receive payment. The excess contributions were used to pay Shevet Levi, and the money now became *chullin*. Now, Shevet Levi could donate those funds specifically toward building the second *Aron*.

Which part of Shevet Levi was in charge of erecting the Mishkan? The families of Gershon and Merari. Under whose authority? Under the authority of Isamar. This is what the pasuk is telling us. The excess from the donations of the Mishkan was used to make the *Mishkan HaEidus*. How was that possible? עֲבַדֵּת הַלְוִיִּם בְּיַד אִיתָמָר בֶּן אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן—it was made possible by those Levi'im who were under the authority of Isamar.

These words of the *Panim Yafos* are hard to understand. Chazal tell us⁵ that the Mishkan was too heavy to erect—and it was only erected through a *nes*: Moshe Rabbeinu went through the motions to

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³ *Tanchuma* 5, *Shemos Rabbah* 51:2.

⁴ *Eruvin* 63b s.v. *kol zman*.

⁵ Cited by Rashi 39:33.

Mishkan Minutes

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hoist it, and it was lifted by itself. How could the Levi'im take payment for this labor if they didn't do anything? Even if they undertook the job and tried to erect it, did they earn payment if it happened without their help? The Gemara (Bava Metzia 77a) discusses a case where someone hired workers to water his field. Before they were able to do their job, it rained, and they were no longer needed. Yes, the field was watered, but not through them. The Gemara states clearly that they are not paid. Here, too, the Levi'im should not deserve to receive payment.

Yet, we can suggest that our case is different. In the Gemara's scenario, the workers did not do any work whatsoever, but in our case, the Levi'im in fact did work. They had to put forth their best effort and at least make the attempt to erect the Mishkan. Only then could the Mishkan erect itself.⁶

However, a question remains: The *Panim Yafos* is suggesting based on our pasuk that the Levi'im erected (or tried to erect) the Mishkan; yet Chazal seem to say that it was Moshe Rabbeinu. Even if we assume that one who does such work receives payment, it was not the Levi'im governed by Isamar who did the work; it was Moshe Rabbeinu.

וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת צִיץ נֶזֶר הַקֹּדֶשׁ זָהָב טָהוֹר וַיִּכְתְּבוּ
עָלָיו מִכְתָּב פְּתוּחִי חֹתָם קֹדֶשׁ לַה'

They made the Tzitz, the holy crown, of pure gold, and they inscribed script on it like that of a signet ring, "Holy to Hashem." (39:30)

The *Sefer Chassidim* asks:⁷ Why does the pasuk write וַיִּכְתְּבוּ in the plural form? Didn't one person alone write these words on the Tzitz?⁸ He answers that it is written in the plural because it was written in front of a *tzibbur*. There is a rule that we cannot say *devarim shebi'kedushah* with less than a *minyan* of ten men. This rule applies to the writing of Hashem's Name on the Tzitz as well—it required that a quorum of ten be present. The *Sefer Chassidim* then describes a custom surrounding the writing of a *Sefer Torah*, that ten *tzaddikim* should be present every time the Name of Hashem is written.

We can suggest another answer to the *Sefer Chassidim's* question. Chazal⁹ speak at length about the creation of man and how man is a microcosm of the world. The Mishkan also is a microcosm of the world and therefore corresponds to the human body. The *bris milah* is a
וַיִּכְתְּבוּ חֹתָם קֹדֶשׁ לַה'

קֹדֶשׁ לַה' alludes to that which is written on every Jewish male—

At the end of each *parshah* in the Chumash, a *siman* is given for the number of *pesukim* in that *parshah*. *Parshas Pekudei* is the one exception; there is no *siman*. Why is this the case?

The *mefarshim* discuss how it was that the Torah could count all that was used for making the Mishkan. Don't we have a rule that *brachah* is only found in that which is hidden from the eye? The *sefarim hakedoshim* explain,¹⁰ based on the *Zohar Hakadosh*,¹¹ that the "eye" has no authority over *devarim shebikedushah*.

Yet this is not so simple. There are mixed messages in the *Zohar Hakadosh* as to whether and when this is true. Because of this, we leave out the number of *pesukim* at the end of *Pekudei*. We can count all that went into the Mishkan because the "eye" does not really have authority over that which is holy; however, we must tread cautiously. We omit the number of *pesukim* to give room for the *brachah* to enter.

(שלום זכר פרשת פקודי תשכ"ד)

⁶ See *Sifsei Tzaddik* 9.

⁷ 1362 in the *Mekitzei Nirdamim* Edition.

⁸ The Imrei Emes (*Kisvei Hachassidim*) noted that we find the word וַיַּעֲשׂוּ many times in the *parshah*, yet *Sefer Chassidim* is not bothered by those because it is reasonable to assume that several people did the work together. However, here we are discussing writing, and it doesn't make sense to say that more than one person wrote these words on the Tzitz.

⁹ *Tanchuma* 3.

¹⁰ *Kedushas Levi* and others.

¹¹ 221b-222a, 225a.