

INSIGHTS

Into The Weekly Parsha

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This week's Insights is dedicated in loving memory of Abbey Berkowitz, R' Avraham Abba ben R' Moshe Chaim. "May his Neshama have an Aliya!"

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Based on the Torah of our Rosh HaYeshiva HaRav Yochanan Zweig

PARSHAS PEKUDEI

Forgive or Forget?

This is the accounting of (all the things of) the Mishkan, the Mishkan of Testimony [...] (38:21).

Rashi (ad loc) explains why it is called the *Mishkan of Testimony*: "It's a testimony to the Jewish people that Hashem overlooked the incident of the Golden Calf, for he rested his *Shechina* among them (in the Mishkan)." This teaching is based on a *Midrash Tanchuma (Pekudei 6)* that says that the Mishkan was a "testimony to all of mankind that Hashem forgave them for the sin of the Golden Calf."

Many *achronim* (Maharal, Taz) are bothered by this. Why is the Mishkan the proof that Hashem forgave them? Wasn't the actual proof that Hashem gave them a second set of *luchos*? Rashi, it seems, was bothered by the very same question. Perhaps it is for this reason that he changes the language of the Midrash from "Hashem **forgave** them for the sin" to "Hashem **overlooked** the sin."

Rashi is teaching us a remarkable life lesson in managing relationships. There is a well-known maxim "women can forgive, but they will never forget

that they forgave." When someone hurts another person, even if forgiveness is granted, there is always some degree of discomfort. The reason for this is understandable; not only did they hurt them but the injured party then freely gave the kindness of forgiveness – giving the perpetrator the feeling of indebtedness to the magnanimous injured party. Therefore, all

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interactions between the two become, at best, a little uncomfortable. In such a situation, the guilty party often feels like he's walking on eggshells and basically avoids interaction whenever possible.

In life, we often find ourselves in situations where we have been hurt or otherwise mistreated. By far and away, the best way to deal with the offending party who is asking for forgiveness (particularly when we are



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dealing with close family members) is to make them feel that it didn't really bother us. After all, they already feel bad enough and understand their transgression. Introducing the debt of forgiveness into the relationship will only serve to make them more uncomfortable in the future and avoid interaction.

Hashem is bringing his presence to reside within the Jewish people. The only way to get past the sin of the Golden Calf and the subsequent forgiveness is for Hashem to give Bnei Yisroel the feeling that he is "overlooking" the sin. In other words, he wants to be close to us and wants us to feel close to him. The fact that Hashem is coming to stay in "our house" is a sign that he overlooked the sin because he wants us to be comfortable in his presence.



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Give or Get?

All the gold that was used for the work [...] was twenty nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels [...] (38:24).

Ibn Ezra, quoting Rav Saadia Gaon, points out that while we have an exact accounting of how much gold was given to the Mishkan, the Torah omits what exactly, it was used for. However, by the accounting of both the silver and the copper the Torah gives us both an exact accounting of how much was given and a detailed description of how the silver and copper were used. Why did the Torah not give a complete accounting for the different uses of all the gold?

There is a fascinating Midrash (*Shemos Rabbah* 51:6) that explains why Moshe wanted a complete audit for everything given. The Midrash explains the reasoning based on the *possuk*, "And it would be, when Moshe went out to the tent, that all the people rose up and stood, every man at his tent door, and gazed after Moshe [...]."

The Midrash explains that there were three schools of thought on the trustworthiness of Moshe: 1) The group that didn't suspect him at all and simply thought, how fortunate is a human to have such a close relationship with Hashem; 2) The group

who suspected him of stealing from the donations; 3) The group that felt that he was taking money from the donations but that it wasn't stealing because he deserved it since he had undertaken the massive responsibility of building the Mishkan. When Moshe heard of these groups he insisted that at the end a full accounting of everything be made.

Da'as Zekanim in *Parshas Terumah* explains that gold, silver, and copper represent the three different types of givers. Gold represents people who give when they are healthy. In other words, they give purely and are not expecting anything in return; they give because they believe in the cause. Silver represents those who give while sick, hoping that in return they will get healed. However, even if he isn't healed he doesn't regret giving the charity (see *Tosfos Pesachim* 8b). Copper represents those who only give after death; their giving is only in a situation where they won't be negatively affected by the giving.

The Talmud (*Kiddushin* 70a) teaches the following rule: One who suspects

another of wrongdoing is basing his suspicions on what he himself would do in such a situation. Based on this, we can now understand the three groups of givers. The group who gave the gold looked up to Moshe and didn't suspect him of any wrongdoing. The group who gave the copper suspected Moshe of stealing because they are incapable of giving freely. They could not understand why anyone would do what Moshe had undertaken; therefore he must be stealing from the donations. The group who gave the silver understood that while there is some element of giving, it isn't purely altruistic. In other words, Moshe could work hard for the Mishkan, but should rightfully be compensated.

Now we can understand why the Torah didn't account for how the gold was used, yet had to still account for the uses of the copper and the silver. The silver and copper came from those without complete altruism and they suspected Moshe. The gold came from those who believed in the cause and trusted Moshe, therefore they never suspected him of taking any of it.



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