

MOTIVE IS EVERYTHING

Noach transmitted the “essence and attributes” of Adam to his son Sheim. The Torah writes:

יפת אלקים ליפת וישכן באהלי שם

G-d shall enlarge Yefes, and He shall dwell in the tents of Sheim (*Bereishis* 9:27).

After Cham sinned against his father Noach, mankind was divided into three branches, the descendants of Noach’s three sons: Sheim, Cham, and Yefes.

Sheim, the ancestor of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, and ultimately *Klal Yisrael*, represents the destiny of mankind. Cham, whose offspring, Canaan, Noach cursed, was barely a significant factor in world history. Except for the kingdoms of Egypt and Ethiopia, no great Hamitic empire or culture existed. By and large, Cham represented the insignificant and inferior segment of humanity. From Yefes were descended the great empires and cultures of mankind. Greece, Macedonia, Rome, Persia, India, the Latin countries, the Sanskrit language countries, Europe, Russia, are all the legacy of Yefes.

ויקח שם ויפת את השמלה וישימו על שכמם שניהם וילכו אחרנית ויכסו את ערות אביהם ופניהם
אחרנית וערות אביהם לא ראו

Sheim and Yefes put the garment over their shoulders, they walked backwards, to cover the nakedness of their father; their faces were turned backwards, and they did not see their father’s nakedness (*Bereishis* 9:23).

Sheim initiated this benevolence to Noach. Since Yefes joined him, the Torah credits Yefes with partnership in the good deed (*Sanhedrin* 70•). Cham, who was the cause of his father’s shame, was relegated to a position of eternal inferiority (Rashi, *Bereishis* 9:23).

Yefes achieved worldly greatness. Spiritual greatness was reserved for Sheim: “The *Shechinah* will dwell in the tents of Sheim” (*Yoma* 10•). The Talmud asks why the *Shechinah* dwelt only in the First Temple, but not in the Second Temple. The response is simple: Yefes, in the persons of Darius and Cyrus, had a hand in the construction of the Second Temple, diminishing its purity. The *Shechinah* can dwell only in a Temple constructed solely by the descendants of Sheim — *Klal Yisrael*.

The true success of *Klal Yisrael* is described by Bilaam:

הן עם לבדד ישכן ובגוים לא יתחשב

It is a people who shall dwell alone, and among the nations shall not reckon itself (*Bamidbar* 23:9).

The idea of building the Temple in total purity and sanctity is also evident in the building of the first *Beis Hamikdash* and the *Mishkan*. The Malbim (on *Melachim* I, 5:17) asks why the *Beis Hamikdash* was built by Shlomo *Hamelech* and not by David *Hamelech*. The familiar answer: David *Hamelech*, a man of war, a spiller of blood, could not be permitted to build the paramount symbol of peace. The Malbim however, explains that David's disqualification went much deeper.

David's *raison d'etre* was twofold: a) to establish the Davidic kingdom in *Klal Yisrael* and b) to bring peace within Israel's borders. To accomplish this it was necessary for him to engage in war although, in fact, he wanted nothing more than peace. It was well known that the dedication of a House for Hashem would ensure peace for *Eretz Yisrael*. However, it was imperative that the sole motivation for the establishment of this sanctuary be exclusively לשם שמים — *L'sheim Hashem* (totally devoid of any other motives). As righteous as David was, and he was among the most righteous of men, he could not totally set aside the ulterior motive of seeking relief from his enemies. David's motivation in constructing the Temple would have been tainted by his desire for the inevitable peace that the Temple would have provided. Thus, David was disqualified from building the *Beis Hamikdash*, because the purity of thought that its construction demanded would have been lacking.

Similarly, there was an injunction against foreign and impure thought during the construction of the *Mishkan* in the *midbar*. In *Parshas Terumah* when the concept of *Mishkan* is first introduced, Hashem invited all to participate;

ויקחו לי תרומה מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו תקחו את תרומתי

Take to me an offering, of every man that gives it willingly with his heart, you shall take my offering (*Shemos* 25:2).

In *Parshas Vayakheil*, when the construction became reality, Hashem employed a more limited invitation of participation:

קחו מאתכם תרומה לה'

Take from *among you* an offering to Hashem (*Shemos* 35:5).

The *Zohar* explains the switch from the general invitation ("of every man") to the more limited ("from among you,") as excluding the *eirev rav* — the mixed multitude — that accompanied *B'nei Yisrael* from *Mitzraim*. Between the conceptual introduction of the *Mishkan* until its actual construction, the *Ma'aseh Ha'eigel* — the incident of the Golden Calf — took place. According to the *Zohar*, this was the sole culpability of the *eirev rav*. Once they displayed their unholy motivations, they were disqualified from participating in the construction of the Holy abode of the *Shechinah*. Their input would have tainted the true purpose of the *Mishkan*.

Just as Hashem is pure, so must we strive to develop perfection in our being and in our thoughts. Any deviation from this state of purity is movement away from Hashem; in order to be closer to Hashem we must emulate His ways. Only the seed of Sheim is capable of this state of holiness.

The *Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer* (21) extends this concept of the necessity of total purity of thought and intent in serving Hashem to the incident of Kayin and Hevel, stating that Kayin's offering to Hashem was flax, while Hevel's was sheep still wearing their wool. Kayin displayed impure motives in bringing his offering: he did not offer his best produce, but instead offered the

inferior flax. He displayed jealousy toward his brother, and he plotted his brother's murder so that he could marry Hevel's beautiful wife (ibid.). Hashem recognized this and thus set up a memorial for eternity, in the form of the prohibition against *shatnez*. This memorial is intended to teach mankind the significance of purity of thought. Although they used the same altar, the remnants of Kayin's offering did not mix with Hevel's, not then, not ever.

Who was charged with carrying out this memorial for holiness? The seed of Sheim, specifically *Klal Yisrael*. Hashem acknowledged that only *Klal Yisrael* was capable of attaining the highest levels of perfection. It was the seed of Sheim that was destined to be invested with the title *Am Hanivchar* — the Chosen People — the nation capable of accommodating the Divine. According to *Derech Hashem* (2:4), from the inception of the world until the time of Noach, any nation had the potential to become the *Am Hanivchar*. None bothered.

From the time of Sheim the opportunity for the title *Am Hanivchar* became limited to his descendants. With the advent of the world's twentieth generation, Avraham sealed the fate of humanity forever, by guaranteeing through his great deeds that the *Am Hanivchar* would be generated from his seed (see *Rosh David*, Balak).

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