

## **KI SAVO- AVANIM SHLEIMOS, COMPLETE STONES, COMPLETE WORDS OF PRAYER**

**[FROM RASHI, SIFSAI CHACHAMIM AND TORAS CHAIM OF KOSSOV**

**By Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh**

In Devarim 27:2-8 we are told about the stones to be put up on Har Eival. This was to be done as soon as we crossed the Yarden River. Rashi quotes the Gemara in Sota that tells us that there were actually three sets of stones placed. One set was placed in the Yarden River, one in Gilgal and the third on Har Eival. The Sifsai Chachamim clarifies that although we do not see in the Chumash a command for three sets of stones, nevertheless, we are told in Sefer Yehoshua Chapter 4 that twelve stones were placed in the Yarden where the Kohanim walked as they carried the Aron and the twelve in Gilgal when Am Yisroel entered Eretz Yisroel. The twelve in Har Eival we are told about over here. Our Mesorah is that there were three sets of stones. The Sifsai Chachamim simply clarifies how we are to see it from here and Sefer Yehoshua.

We are also told that the stones contained the words of the Torah Baer Haitaiv which Rashi explains to mean in all seventy languages. The Sifsai Chachamim clarifies for us that this applied specifically to the stones on Har Eival. There is discussion among the Torah Commentators regarding exactly how the entire Torah was to fit on these stones in seventy languages. Some say it was just the mitzvos of the Torah and not all five books and some say it was the entire five books and it was accomplished miraculously.

In verse 8 we are told to build an altar of complete stones and not use any iron tools. This prohibition of using iron in the construction applied to any altar we had in our history. Chazal tell us that iron, being used chiefly for weapons, shortens man's life and the altar prolongs man's life and the two do not belong together.

The Toras Chaim of Kossov extends the altar to be built on Har Eival to Our Tefilos to Hashem. The letters of the Aleph-beis are the 'stones' or building blocks of our tefillos. They must be perfect and complete. In the case of our prayers, this means they must be recited clearly and with proper thoughts. The attribute of Hashem's kingship, *malchus* is also called even, *stone*. The first three words in verse 8, *Avanim Shliemos tivneh*, complete stones you shall build, is an acronym for *Hashem Sfasai Tiftach*. Hashem open my lips, which we recite at the start of every shmone esrei. Though we do not have the Bais Hamikdash and the altar today, we still can proclaim Hashem's kingship in the world. This is accomplished by davening slowly, carefully and with inner fire. Truly, all of our tefillos that were recited by Klal Yisroel throughout our centuries of exile and the tears cried reciting them are adding up to a beautiful tapestry of spiritual merits that will bring about the rebuilding of our Bais Hamikdash. May we merit seeing it rebuilt speedily in our days. Amen.