

KOLLEL AGUDATH ACHIM

Rosh Kollel

1430 E. 7th Street

רחוב דסקין 5

Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

Brooklyn, NY 11230 ירושלים, ישראל

917-538-3834

050-2925389

Parshat Vayak'heil -, 2022

פרשת ויקהל 5782

Shabbos Maverchim Chodesh Adar II - Rosh Chodesh will be, Thursday & Friday Mar. 3 & 4 .

THE DUALITY OF A MIRROR

“And he made the (Kiyor) Laver of copper and its base of copper, from the mirrors of the legions who massed at the entrance of the Ohel Mo’ed” (38:8)

In the Courtyard of the Mishkan stood this large, copper water- filled sink from which the Kohanim were required to wash their hands and feet before doing the Avodah (Service). The purpose of this washing was not for cleanliness but rather for Kedusha, for sanctification. (Note: Unkelos who translates the word for “washing” as L’kiddush.) This washing was quite a difficult and complicated procedure, for the Kohanim had to wash their hands and feet simultaneously. The Gemara Zevachim (19b) describes how the Kohen would place his right hand upon the bottom of his right leg and then his left hand upon the bottom of his left leg and thus wash his hands and feet simultaneously. Quite an acrobatic stunt, can you do that ??

The copper used for this large sink was not the ordinary copper, rather it was a shiny brightly polished sheet of copper that women used as mirrors in those days, and now they willingly contributed to the Mishkan. Moshe was at first reluctant to accept these gifts from the women because these mirrors the women had used to beautify themselves and make-up their faces to appear more desirable to their husbands. So Moshe did not think that this was an appropriate item to use for holiness in the Mishkan. However, HaShem told Moshe he was wrong, because these same mirrors were instrumental in the survival of our people. In Mitzrayim, the men would come home at night exhausted from a long day of backbreaking labor, and the wives had used these mirrors to entice their husbands to continue normal family life. Thus we read in beginning of Sefer Shemot (Shemot 1:12), “But as much as they afflicted them, so they would increase and spread out”, Jewish children would continuously be born. So it’s very appropriate to be used in the Mishkan.

Furthermore, HaShem said, not only should the mirrors be accepted, but even the “Kiyor”, the sink, should be made exclusively from the shiny copper which the women donated. It was positioned adjacent to the Mizbei’ach, on which a Jew brings his sacrifice with a broken heart. Given that the Mizbei’ach and the Kiyor represent two mutually exclusive motifs, the physical proximity of these two items seems strange. How can the beauty of the mirror harmonize with the sensation of self-criticism with which the road to the altar is bound?

Despite this, HaShem said to Moshe, *accept them!* The woman who knows she is beautiful, who was able in Egypt, in the bitter dark exile, to comfort her husband and raise a generation thirsty for redemption that same woman, when she will transgress, will recite her confession with hot tears and regret more than any other person. This woman will remember her supreme efforts to maintain the continuity of our people under terrible adverse conditions.

Furthermore, this Kiyor would be used in the future to bring “Shalom Bayit”, peace between husband and wife by proving the innocence of women suspected of adultery, being a Sotah (Bamidbar 5:17,28). Thus, the implements that brought husbands and wives together in Mitzrayim were the same implements that were used to end suspicion and animosity within families.

A mirror can be used for very noble, lofty and pure purposes. Many men use a mirror in the morning when they put on their Tefillin, to adjust the Tefillah on the head, to make sure it is perfectly centered on the forehead. True, it can also be used for impure and improper motives. There is nothing wrong with a mirror, it all depends on the motives of the one in front of the mirror.

Shabbat Shalom, from Yerushalayim,
Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

Parsha Questions:

1. The Torah says 35:3 Lo Tivaru Eish Bechol Moshvotchem. Fire is one of the 39 Melachot. Why is there a need to mention separate? Answer Shabbat 70a
2. How do we know that on Chag you can use fire (if prohibited on Shabbat)? answer Yerushalmi Beitzah 5:2