

# Parsha Pearls

FROM THE WORDS OF THE GEDOLIM

**“And they shall make Me a Sanctuary, and I shall dwell in their midst.” (25:8)**

The Midrash in Parshas Toldos tells the following story: In the days of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya, the evil kingdom (Rome) decreed that the Beis Hamikdash be built. Papos and Lulianos set up tables from Acco to Antioch and they supplied the Jews coming up from exile with gold, silver and all their needs. The Cuthites went and said, “Be it known to the king that if this rebellious city is built and its walls completed, they will not pay the king land tax, head tax or other taxes.” He said to them, “What can I do? I already decreed.” They said to him, “Send a message to the Jews that they must either build the city in a different place, or they must add five cubits or take away five cubits from it. Then they will stop on their own.” The Jews were gathered at that time in the valley of Beis Rimon. When the letter with the king’s new decree arrived, they began to cry. They wanted to rebel against the government. They said, “Let a wise man go and appease the multitude. Let Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya go, for he is a master scholar of Torah.” He went and spoke to them as follows: “Once a lion was eating and a bone got stuck in his throat. He said, ‘Whoever comes and gets it out, I will give him a reward.’ An

Egyptian kura-bird with a long neck came, stuck his neck in and took it out. He said, ‘Give me my reward.’ The lion said, ‘Go boast that you entered the lion’s mouth in peace and came out in peace.’ So too, it is enough for us that we entered our exile under this nation in peace and came out in peace.” (Bereishis Rabbah 64:10)

The Satmar Rav asked: Why does it say that the evil kingdom “decreed” that the Beis Hamikdash be built? “Decree” usually means something bad. He answered this with another story, from Midrash Eicha 1:31:

When Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai met Vespasian outside the walls of Jerusalem, Pangar the prince of Arabia was also present. They asked Rabbi Yochanan, “What should be done with a barrel in which a snake took up residence?” Rabbi Yochanan understood that this was a metaphor for the Holy City, in which the militant factions of Jews were living and preventing any Jew from making peace with Rome. He replied, “Bring a snake charmer and charm the snake out and keep the barrel.” But Pangar said, “Kill the snake and break the barrel.” Rabbi

Yochanan said to Pangar: “You are a bad neighbor! Instead of being our defender, you have become our prosecutor!” Pangar said, “I mean it for your own good. For as long as the Beis Hamikdash is standing, kings will fight wars against you.” Rabbi Yochanan said, “Your heart knows whether you intended for good or for bad.”

Rabbi Yochanan did not say that Pangar was wrong, only that his intentions were bad. The Beis Hamikdash was a cause for great jealousy among the gentile nations, and it was only Hashem’s protection that made the Jewish people safe during the time it stood. But now, when the time of its destruction had arrived and Hashem no longer guaranteed this special protection, it would be not be good for them to have the Beis Hamikdash. All the more so that it should not be built during exile! Therefore, the later Roman decision to build the Beis Hamikdash was called a “decree”. (Vayoel Moshe, siman 60)

The Midrash Lekach Tov brings this same story about the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash in relation to the verse in Shir Hashirim 8:4, “I have adjured you, daughters of

Jerusalem: why do you arouse and why do you awake the love before it is desired?" Why, asks the Lekach Tov, is the wording of this oath different from the first two (2:7 and 3:5)? In the first two, it says, "I have adjured

you not to arouse" and here it says "why do you arouse". The answer is that the third oath refers to time when the Romans gave permission to build the Temple and then revoked it, and the Jews wanted to rebel.

Rabbi Yehoshua said to them, "Is it not enough that Hashem lets us live among the nations? Are we to rebel against our Creator's command, to wait until redemption is desired in Heaven?"



**“And the Temple was built of complete stones, as they came; no chisel, ax or other iron tool was heard in the Temple as it was being built.” (Haftorah, Melachim 6:7)**

The Gemora (Gittin 68a) says that Shlomo Hamelech used the shamir to cut the stones for the Temple. The Gemora relates how he captured Ashmedai, king of the demons, and asked him where to find the shamir. Later, Ashmedai threw Shlomo out of his kingdom and then, taking on the appearance of Shlomo Hamelech, acted as king himself. Meanwhile, the true Shlomo Hamelech was going from door to door with his walking stick and telling everyone that he was the true king. All the Jews thought he was insane, for they saw Shlomo Hamelech sitting on his throne and the kingdom running as usual. But then he came to the Sanhedrin, who said, "We know that an insane person does not just do one insane thing." And this led them to investigate and discover that the "Shlomo Hamelech" sitting on the throne was an impostor.

Reb Amram Blau wrote in 1948: Today we find ourselves in the same situation as Shlomo Hamelech. Ashmedai did not merely conquer Shlomo Hamelech and usurp his throne, as one king conquers another. He stole Shlomo's name as well, and proceeded to run the kingdom in the name of Shlomo, thus denying the identity of the true Shlomo. And Shlomo, the true wise man, appeared to be insane. He cried out, "I am Shlomo!" but no one listened. Today as well, the Zionists have stolen our name, "Israel," and they pretend to represent the Jewish people in the world, thus denying the identity of the true Israel, the people of Hashem, the people of the Torah. And our situation is worse than that of Shlomo, for at least Ashmedai, it seems, ruled the kingdom in the same way Shlomo

ruled it. But the Zionists are using our name for a purpose that is the opposite of our national purpose - to deny the Torah and rebel against Hashem's decree of exile. And the Jewish people cries out to the world, who help this terrible forgery to exist - but no one listens.

But we must derive an important lesson from the story of Shlomo Hamelech. Shlomo never gave up even for a minute his claim, "I am Shlomo!" It was a claim that made everyone think he was insane, it was a claim that seemed futile. He could easily have decided to make peace with the facts and recognize, at least temporarily, the kingship of Ashmedai in the name of Shlomo. He could have stopped claiming to be Shlomo, and the world would no longer have called him insane. And in his wisdom, he could definitely have attained an important post in the government, to salvage whatever could be salvaged of his power. This might have appeared to be the best strategy. But had he done this, all hope would have been lost! For we see in the story that the way he eventually got his kingdom back was through his claim, "I am Shlomo," and through the wisdom of the Sanhedrin, who knew that an insane person does not just do one insane thing. Rashi explains, "He does not stick to saying one insane thing all the time." Had Shlomo abandoned his claim, even temporarily, this line of reason would have been gone, and even the Sanhedrin would have agreed that his claim had been no more than a sign of insanity. (Mishkenos Haro'im)

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