

# Parsha Pearls

FROM THE WORDS OF THE GEDOLIM

**These** are the deposits of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of the Testimony (38:21).  
**Rashi:** This is an allusion to the Beis Hamikdash, which was taken as a security deposit for the sins of Israel in the two destructions.

**"The** hand of Hashem was upon me, and He brought me out by a wind of Hashem, and He placed me in the midst of a valley, and it was full of bones." (Yechezkel 37:1)

With this verse begins the haftarah of Shabbos Chol Hamoed Pesach, about the dry bones resurrected by Yechezkel Hanavi. The Ben Ish Chai (Yedei Chaim, Hilchos Tefillah for Chol Hamoed Pesach, Section 9) asks: Chazal say that this story took place in Tishrei, so why do we read it in Nissan? He answers that our Sages (Sanhedrin 92b) tell us that these were the bones of the tribe of Ephraim who forced the end, left Egypt before the foreordained time, and were killed by the Philistines. Since we hope for our future redemption in Nissan more than in any other month, as our Sages say, "In Nissan we were redeemed and in Nissan we will be redeemed" (Rosh Hashanah 11a), we read this Haftarah as a warning to the Jewish people not to force the redemption, as Scripture says (Shir Hashirim 2:7), "I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the deer of the field, not to arouse or awaken the love before it is desired." In view of this, it is no coincidence that we read Shir Hashirim on that very same day, Shabbos Chol Hamoed Pesach.

The author of Shir Hashirim was Shlomo Hamelech. The Gemara tells an incredible story about Shlomo Hamelech. The Mishnah (Sanhedrin 90a) lists three kings who lost their share in Olam Haba: Yeravam, Achav and Menashe. The Gemara (104b) says that this list was written by the Men of the Great Assembly. They wanted to list one more king (Shlomo Hamelech), but an image of his father's face came and pleaded with them not to list him. They paid no attention to him. Fire came from heaven and scorched their chairs, but they paid no attention to it. A Heavenly

Voice called out, "Have you seen a man who is quick in his work? He will stand before kings, not before darkened ones (Mishlei 22:29) - this refers to the one who built My house before he built his own house, and not only that - it took him seven years to build My house, but thirteen years to build his own house. Such a man will surely stand before kings in Olam Haba, and not before darkened ones in Gehinom." But they paid no attention to this Heavenly Voice. Finally another Heavenly Voice called out, "Will reward be paid by you? You may have despised [Shlomo Hamelech], but will you choose [who should get Olam Haba] and not I?" (Iyov 34:33)

Why did the Men of the Great Assembly want so badly to exclude Shlomo Hamelech, the wisest man in history and the author of three books of the Tanach, from Olam Haba? The Satmar Rav, speaking in the town of Margareten in 1932, explained it as follows. The Men of the Great Assembly were prophets and men of Divine inspiration. They foresaw all the suffering that would come upon the Jewish people throughout the centuries of exile, and they sought to avoid the exile by forcing the complete redemption to come right away. However, they could not do so because of the oath in Shir Hashirim "not to arouse or awaken the love before it is desired." So they sought a way to exempt themselves from the oath. An oath cannot be forced upon a person; the person must accept the oath himself. Therefore the mere fact that Shlomo Hamelech wrote or spoke this oath does not automatically mean that the Jewish people have to keep it. It must be shown that the Jewish people actually accepted

the oath. And even if Shlomo Hamelech did gather all the Jews of his time and they accepted the oath, one cannot impose an oath on unborn people (Yoreh Deah 228:35). If so, perhaps the oath of Shir Hashirim does not apply to future generations who were not alive at the time the oaths were made.

Now, if Shir Hashirim is part of the Tanach, then we can apply the words of the Midrash (Shemos Rabbah 28:6) that all the words of the prophets were said at Sinai, and the prophets' souls, who were standing at Sinai, learned their words from there. The Jewish people, including the souls of all future Jews, accepted all of the Torah given at Sinai (Rashi on Devarim 29:14), and this included the oaths.

The Men of the Great Assembly realized that the only way out of this oath was to issue a ruling that Shlomo Hamelech was a sinner, thus excluding him from Olam Haba and excluding his books from Tanach. They stood by this decision with self-sacrifice, unfazed by Heavenly fire and Heavenly Voices, until they heard the Voice say, "Will you choose and not I? You may not understand why the exile is for the Jewish people's benefit, but it is, and therefore you have no right to interfere in these matters." (Machzor Divrei Yoel, Pesach)

For what sin did the Men of the Great Assembly wish to exclude Shlomo from Olam Haba? The Maharsha says it was the sin of marrying many foreign wives, who turned his heart aside. We can explain that the Men of the Great Assembly's argument against Shlomo Hamelech over the foreign wives was related to their argument against him over the oaths. The reason why Shlomo married the wives was as follows: His father Dovid had wanted to build the Beis Hamikdash, but Hashem told him (Divrei Hayamim I 22:8) that he could not build it because he had shed much

blood during his many battles. The Ramban (Bamidbar 16:21) explains Dovid was a man of justice and therefore could not build a house of mercy. The Ramban means that Hashem knew a time would come when the Jews deserved destruction for their sins, but He would be merciful and take out His anger on the sticks and stones of the Beis Hamikdash (Tosafos Kiddushin 31b), while the Jews achieved atonement through exile. Had Dovid built the Beis Hamikdash, it would have been a house of strict justice, and would not have allowed itself to be mercifully substituted for the Jews. Shlomo knew that he would be the one to build the Beis Hamikdash, and therefore he could not be a fighter. But he was worried: what if another nation attacked during his reign and he had to fight back? Therefore he married a thousand wives – from the royal families of every nation in the world – so that the kings of all the nations would be his allies and never attack his country. Thus he was assured that he could build a Beis Hamikdash of mercy, which could one day be destroyed and atone for the Jews. This is why Chazal (Shabbos 56b) say that on the day Shlomo married his first foreign wife, the daughter of Pharaoh, the angel Gavriel came down and placed a stick in the sea, earth accumulated and it later became the site of Rome, the empire that destroyed the Beis Hamikdash.

But the Men of the Great Assembly, who wanted to avoid the exile and nullify the oaths by excluding them from Tanach, held that Shlomo was wrong for marrying the foreign wives. Of course, all agree that he was wrong to violate the Torah's prohibition against a king having many wives. But he did not lose his Olam Haba because of this sin, since he had noble intentions. The Men of the Great Assembly, however, wished to argue that exile was unnecessary and thus even his intentions were wrong. Hashem answered them, "Will you choose and not I?"



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