

Shvilei Pinches

Parshas Ki Siso

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Parshas Ki Siso 5771

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“גם אלה תשכחנה ואנכי לא אשכחך”

“גם אלה תשכחנה” Refers to the Sin of the Egel

“ואנכי” Is an Abbreviation for Aryeh Neshet Keruv Yaakov

In this week’s parsha, parshas Ki Siso, we read about the sin of the “egel,” the “golden calf.” The taint of that sin accompanies us and remains with us in every generation. As HKB”H said to Moshe Rabeinu (Shemos 32,34): “**וביום פקדי ופקדתי עליהם את חטאתם**”—and on the day that I make an accounting, I shall bring their sin to account against them. Rashi comments: **תמיד כשאפקוד עליהם עוונותיהם, ופקדתי עליהם מעט מן העון הזה עם שאר העוונות, ואין כפור עליהם—פורענות באה על ישראל שאין בה קצת מפרעון עון העגל.**—always, whenever I shall make an accounting of their sins against them, I will bring to account against them a bit of this sin along with the other sins. There is no punishment that comes upon Israel which does not have in it some retribution for the sin of the golden calf.

In this essay, we wish to examine the people of Yisroel’s plea before HKB”H to forget their wrongdoing in the matter of the “egel.” Expounding on the possuk (Yeshayah 49,15): **ותאמר ציון עזבני ה’ וה’ שכחני, התשכח אשה עולה מרחם בן בטנה, גם אלה תשכחנה ואנכי לא אשכחך**—Tzion said, ‘Hashem has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me.’ Can a woman forget her baby, or not feel compassion for the child of her womb? Even these will be forgotten, but I (ואנכי) will not forget you—the Gemorah (Berochos 32:) states:

“אמרה כנסת ישראל לפני הקב”ה, רבונו של עולם הואיל ואין שכחה לפני כסא כבודך, שמא לא תשכח לי מעשה העגל, אמר לה, גם אלה תשכחנה, [רש”י: מעשה העגל שאמרו אלה אלהיך ישראל]. אמרה לפניו, רבונו של עולם הואיל ויש שכחה לפני כסא כבודך, שמא תשכח לי מעשה סיני, אמר לה, ואנכי לא אשכחך, [רש”י: זה מעשה סיני שנאמר בו אנכי ה’ אלקיך], והיינו דאמר רבי אלעזר אמר רבי אושעיא, מאי דכתיב, גם אלה תשכחנה, זה מעשה העגל, ואנכי לא אשכחך, זה מעשה סיני.”

The congregation of Yisroel said before HKB”H: “Master of the Universe! As there is no forgetfulness before Your Throne of Glory, perhaps You will not forget to hold the incident of the “egel” against me.” He responded to her: “**Even these will be forgotten.**” She said before him: “Master of the Universe! As there is forgetfulness before Your Throne of Glory, perhaps You will forget to credit me with the incident that occurred at Sinai.” He responded to her: “**But I will not forget you.**” And this is the same interpretation that R’ Elazar stated in the name of R’ Oshaya: What is the meaning of that which is written: **Even “these” will be forgotten?** This refers to the incident of the “egel.” **But I will not forget for you?** This refers to the incident at Sinai.

At first glance, this is an enigmatic, obscure elucidation. How could the people of Yisroel have dared say to HKB”H: **רבונו של עולם הואיל ויש שכחה לפני כסא כבודך, שמא תשכח לי מעשה**—“Master of the Universe! As there is forgetfulness before Your Throne of Glory, perhaps You

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will forget to credit me with the incident that occurred at Sinai.”? It is even conceivable that HKB”H agreed to forget their involvement in the incident of the “egel,” because there is forgetfulness before His Throne of Glory? Surely, it is as clear as day that He agreed to forgive them regarding the incident of the “egel” as an expression of His enormous mercy and kindness. Additionally, how is it even possible to imagine that HKB”H would forget the merit they deserve for accepting the Torah on Har Sinai?

“אכן יש ה' במקום הזה ואנכי לא ידעתי”

Let us begin our discussion with the illuminating words of the divine kabbalist Rabbi Shimshon of Ostroplol, hy”d, quoted in the sefer Peninim Yekarim. He addresses an allusion in the possuk (Bereishis 28,16): **“וַיִּיקָץ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁנָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר, אֲכֵן יֵשׁ ה' בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי”**—**Yaakov awoke from his sleep and said: “Surely, (אכן), Hashem is present in this place and I (ואנכי) was unaware!”**

It is known that the heavenly throne, upon which HKB”H sits, as it were, is carried by four heavenly creatures, referred to as “chayos hakodesh.” These creatures are in the forms of: a lion, a cherub, an eagle and a human being. This is how they were perceived by Yechezkel in his vision of the “account of the Chariot,” ma’aseh Merkavah (Yechezkel 10,14): **“וְאַרְבַּעַת פָּנִים לְאַחַד, פְּנֵי הָאֶחָד פְּנֵי וְהָרְבִיעִי פְּנֵי נֶשֶׁר”**—**Each one had four faces: the one face, the face of a Cherub; the second face, the face of a man; the third, the face of a lion; and the fourth, the face of an eagle.**

Furthermore, it is known that the image of Yaakov Avinu is etched in the Throne of Glory as the image of the man. This is learned from the Gemorah (Chullin 91:) elucidating the possuk pertaining to Yaakov’s dream (Bereishis 28,12): **“וַיַּחְלוֹם וְהִנֵּה סוּלָם מוּצָב אֶרֶצָה וְרֵאשׁוֹ מַגִּיעַ הַשְּׁמַיִמָה”**—**He dreamed. And, behold! There was a ladder standing on the ground, whose top reached toward the heavens. And, behold! Angels of G-d were ascending and descending on it.** The Gemorah states:

“תָּנָא עוֹלִין וּמִסְתַּכְלִין בְּדִיוּקְנוֹ שֶׁל מַעְלָה, [רש”י: פֶּרְצוֹף אָדָם שֶׁבְּאַרְבַּע חַיּוֹת בְּדַמּוֹת יַעֲקֹב], וְיורְדִין וּמִסְתַּכְלִין בְּדִיוּקְנוֹ שֶׁל מַטָּה, בְּעוֹ לְסַכּוֹנִיָּה [בִּיקְשׁוּ לְהַכְנִיסוֹ בְּסַכַּנַּת מוֹת מַחֲמַת הַקְּנָאָה], “מִיָּד וְהִנֵּה ה' נֹצֵב עֲלָיו” – לְשִׁמְרוֹ.

The angels would ascend to look at the human image above etched among the four heavenly creatures, chayos—the very likeness of Yaakov; then, they would descend and look upon his image below; out of jealousy, they wished to endanger his life; immediately, Hashem hovered over him to protect him.

Until he had this dream, Yaakov was only aware of three of the creatures bearing the Throne of Glory—the lion, the cherub and the eagle; he was unaware that his own image was etched on the Throne of Glory, as well. This fact was revealed to him in this dream. This is alluded to by the words **אֲכֵן** and **אֲנֹכִי**. He proclaims: **“Surely, (אכן), Hashem is present in this place.”** The word **אֲכֵן** is an abbreviation for “aryeh” (lion), “keruv” (cherub), and “nesher” (eagle); this represented his level of awareness prior to the dream. **“And I (ואנכי) was unaware!”** After the dream, his new

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awareness is alluded to by the word **אנכ"י**—an abbreviation for “aryeh,” “nesher,” “keruv,” and “Yaakov.” This is the essence of Rav Shimshon’s illuminating words.

“I am אנכ"י Avraham’s Servant”

This same allusion can be found in the words of Eliezer, Avraham’s servant. As Rashi (Bereishis 24,42) states, in the name of the Midrash: **יפה שיחתן של עבדי אבות לפני המקום מתורתן של בנים**—the ordinary conversation of the Patriarchs’ servants is more pleasing to G-d than the Torah of their children. When Eliezer meets Lavan and Besuel, intending to obtain their consent regarding Rivka’s betrothal to Yitzchak, the first words he utters are (Bereishis 24,34): **עבד אנכ"י—אברהם אנכ"י—I am (אנכ"י) Avraham’s servant.**

The Imrei Yosef (Chayei Sara) explains the matter in the name of the great Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch of Riminov, zy”a, in the following manner: when Eliezer remarked, **“I am (אנכ"י) Avraham’s servant,”** he was conveying the message that Avraham’s mission in the world was **“אנכ"י”**—to publicize the first of the Ten Commandments (Shemos 20,2) which begins with the word “anochi”: **אנכ"י ה’—אלקיך**—expressing faith in the existence of G-d and His supervision of the world.

Additionally, based on our previous explanation, we can suggest an alternative interpretation. Eliezer, Avraham’s trustworthy servant, who spread his master’s Torah and teachings, understood his mission clearly. He understood that he was entrusted with finding an appropriate wife for Yitzchak, with whom Yitzchak was destined to beget a holy son, Yaakov—whose visage would be etched on the Throne of Glory. Therefore, as he fulfilled his mission, he proclaimed: **עבד אברהם אנכ"י—I am (אנכ"י) Avraham’s servant**—my mission is to complete the merkavah, the Chariot, consisting of **אנכ"י**—an abbreviation for the lion, the eagle, the cherub and Yaakov.

In this light, we can interpret his plea to Hashem (Bereishis 24,42): **וּאָבָא הַיּוֹם אֶל הָעַיִן וְאָמַר ה’ אֵלֹקֵי אֲדֹנָי אַבְרָהָם אִם יִשְׁךָ נָא מִצְלִיחַ דְּרַכִּי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי הוֹלֵךְ עֲלֶיהָ—And I arrived today at the spring, and I said, “Hashem, G-d of my master Avraham if You would graciously make successful the way on which I go.”** He appeals to Hashem, specifically employing the formula **אנכ"י**—implying that he is on a mission to help complete the complement of creatures carrying the merkavah, represented by the abbreviation **אנכ"י**. So, when he realizes that HKB”H has insured the success of his mission, he declares (ibid. 24,27): **וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּךְ ה’ אֵלֹקֵי אֲדֹנָי אַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא עֹזב חֲסֵדוֹ וְאֱמֻנָתוֹ מֵעַם אֲדֹנָי, אֲנִי בְּדֶרֶךְ נַחֲנִי ה’ בַּיִת אַחֵי אֲדֹנָי—He said, “Blessed is Hashem, G-d of my master Avraham, Who has not withheld His kindness and truth from my master. As for me, Hashem has guided me on the way to the house of my master’s brothers.”** Once again, he specifically employs the formula **“אנכ"י”**, expressing gratitude to Hashem for guiding him on the appropriate path to complete the complement of four chayos, heavenly creatures, represented by the term **“אנכ"י”**.

Yechezkel Mercifully Requested that the Ox Be Transformed into a Cherub

Let us now introduce the Gemorah (Chagigah 13:) which points out a contradiction concerning Yechezkel’s vision of the “ma’aseh merkavah.” One possuk states (Yechezkel 1,10): **וּפְנֵי אָדָם, וּפְנֵי אַרְיָה אֶל הַיְמִינִן לְאַרְבַּעַתָּם, וּפְנֵי שׁוֹר מֵהַשְּׂמַאל לְאַרְבַּעַתָּן, וּפְנֵי נֶשֶׁר**

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“לארבעתן—As for the likeness of their faces: There was a human face; and a lion’s face to the right for the four of them; and an ox’s face to the left for the four of them, and an eagle’s face for the four of them. A second possuk, however, states (ibid. 10,14): “וארבעה פנים לאחד, פני “וארבעה פנים לאחד, פני הכרוב, ופני השני פני אדם, והשלישי פני אריה, והרביעי פני נשר”—Each one had four faces: the one face, the face of a Cherub; the second face, the face of a man; the third, the face of a lion; and the fourth, the face of an eagle. We must endeavor to explain why the face of the ox is replaced by the face of a cherub in the second verse.

The Gemorah explains the contradiction as follows: **“אמר ריש לקיש, יחזקאל ביקש עליו רחמים—Reish Lakish said: Yechezkel beseeched G-d for mercy regarding the ox, and transformed it into a Cherub. He said before Him, “Master of the Universe, is it possible that a prosecutor can act as a defender?” Rashi comments: “אנו צריכין שיבקשו מרכבותיך עלינו רחמים והשור קטיגור הוא”**—we need the bearers of the Chariot to request mercy on our behalf and the ox is an accusatory figure. He is referring to the fact that the ox is a reminder of the sin of the “egel,” since the calf and ox are related to one another. The Gemorah goes on to clarify: **“מאי כרוב, אמר רבי אבהו, כרביא, שכן בבבל קורין לינוקא—מאי כרוב, אמר רבי אבהו, כרביא, שכן בבבל קורין לינוקא—what is the likeness of a “cherub”? Rabbi Abahu answers: Like a child; the Babylonian term for a youth is a “ravva.” As Rashi explains: “כרביא, פני תינוק”**—a “cherub” has the face of a child.

Next, the Gemorah asks: **“אלא מעתה דכתיב, פני האחד פני הכרוב, ופני השני פני אדם, “אלא מעתה דכתיב, פני האחד פני הכרוב, ופני השני פני אדם, והשלישי פני אריה, והרביעי פני נשר, היינו פני כרוב, היינו פני אדם”**—if a “cherub” is the face of a child, which is a human form, how does this differ from the face of the man, which is also a human form? The Gemorah answers: **“אפי רברבי ואפי זוטרי”**—the “face of a man” refers to that of a grown man, whereas the “face of a cherub” refers to the face of a young child. The Maharsha in Chidushei Agadot explains the matter of the “face of a cherub” as follows:

“לפי שמלאכים וכל צבא השמים עומדים לפניו יתברך ברוך הוא, יש מיימינים מלמדים זכות בדינו של אדם, ויש משמאילים מלמדים חובה... והכי נמי הנך ד’ חיות, יש מלמדים זכות מימין דכתיב ודמות פניהם פני אדם, ופני אריה אל הימין וגו’, אבל גבי השור כתיב פני השור מהשמאל דהיינו מלמד חובה, ועל כן ביקש יחזקאל רחמים והפכו לכרוב שהוא גם כן צורת אדם, שיבקש גם כן רחמים על ישראל שנקראו אדם.”

Among the angels and heavenly court, there are those—on the right side—standing up in man’s defense; on the other hand, there are those—on the left side—coming to accuse and prosecute. The same is true of the four creatures bearing the Throne of Glory; the human form and the lion align with those on the right; the ox, however, aligns with those on the left pointing out man’s shortcomings. For this reason, Yechezkel mercifully requested that the ox be transformed into a cherub, which is also a human form—and, thus, will stand up on Yisroel’s behalf seeking mercy for them.

HKB”H Also Showed Yaakov Avinu the Image of the Ox Bearing the Chariot

According to this understanding, let us review the holy Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropol’s revelation concerning Yaakov’s dream. He taught us that HKB”H showed Yaakov the four creatures bearing the

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Throne, symbolized by the term **אנכ"י**—an abbreviation for aryeh (lion), nesher (eagle), keruv (cherub) and Yaakov. To which Yaakov replied: **"ואנכי לא ידעתי"**—I was unaware of this **אנכ"י**. It is unclear, however, why HKB"H chose to show Yaakov Avinu the four chayos as they appeared after Yechezkel interceded and had the ox replaced by the cherub. Why didn't He show Yaakov the chayos in their original forms?

We can answer this question based on the Midrash (B.R. 68, 12-13). The Midrash teaches us that HKB"H revealed to Yaakov, in the vision of the ladder, all that would befall his descendants, Yisroel, in the future—the giving of the Torah, the offering of the korbanos and the Jewish exiles. It is not surprising, therefore, that HKB"H would reveal this event to Yaakov, as well—that initially the four chayos bearing the Throne were a lion, an eagle, an ox and a man; however, the prophet Yechezkel would eventually come along and bring about the replacement of the face of the ox with that of a cherub.

At this point, we are struck by an obvious question. If that were the case, why don't we find an allusion in the text that Yaakov also saw in his dream the face of the ox before it was replaced by that of the cherub? In fact, an allusion can be found in Yaakov's words: **"אכן יש ה' במקום הזה"**--**"Surely, Hashem is present in this place."** The words **אכ"ן י"ש** constitute an abbreviation for all of the images of the holy chayos that would bear the Throne, both originally and after Yechezkel's intervention on Yisroel's behalf—aryeh, keruv, nesher, Yaakov and shor (ox). Then, Yaakov adds: **"ואנכי לא ידעתי"**—I was never aware of the fact, that the human image found on the Chariot was my own; this message is alluded to by the word **אנכ"י**—an abbreviation for aryeh, nesher, keruv and Yaakov.

When the Torah Was Given the Throne of Glory Descended upon Har Sinai

Based on the Midrash (B.R. 68,12), we can explain why HKB"H revealed to Yaakov in the dream the four heavenly creatures bearing the Throne of Glory. According to the Midrash, the dream of the ladder is an allusion to the giving of the Torah to Yisroel by HKB"H on Har Sinai:

"רבנן פתרון ליה בסיני, ויחלום והנה שלם, זה סיני, אותיות דדין הוא אותיות דדין, [פירוש של"ם בגימטריא סינ"י], מוצב ארצה, ויתיצבו בתחתית ההר, וראשו מגיע השמימה, וההר בוער באש עד לב השמים... והנה מלאכי אלקים, זה משה ואהרן, עולים, ומשה עלה אל האלקים, ויורדים, זה משה, וירד משה, והנה ה' נצב עליו, וירד ה' על הר סיני אל ראש ההר."

The numerical values of the words **של"ם** (ladder) and **סינ"י** (Sinai) are both the same, 130. The fact that the ladder spanned from earth to the heavens represents the fact that Yisroel stood at the bottom of the mountain, while the top of the mountain was in the heavens ablaze with fire. The angels of G-d ascending and descending were Moshe and Aharon (although, the Midrash only quotes verses illustrating that Moshe ascended and descended). Just as Hashem hovered over Yaakov in the dream, Hashem descended on Har Sinai.

We learn from the Midrash that when Yaakov saw in his dream of the ladder: **"והנה ה' נצב עליו"**—**And behold! Hashem was standing over him**—this was alluding to the fact that HKB"H descended upon Har Sinai—as stated in the possuk (Shemos 19,20): **"וירד ה' על הר סיני"**. Rashi

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(ibid.) comments in the name of the Mechilta: **וירד ה' על הר סיני, יכול ירד עליו ממש, תלמוד לומר (שם כ יט) כי מן השמים דיברתי עמכם, מלמד שהרכין שמים העליונים ותחתונים, והציען על גבי ההר כמצע על המטה, וירד כסא הכבוד עליהם**. Rashi provides evidence that when the Torah was given, HKB"H descended upon Har Sinai with His Throne of Glory.

This fits in beautifully with the account found in the Gemorah (Shabbos 88:). According to the Gemorah, when Moshe ascended to the heavens to receive the Torah, the ministering angels wished to burn him with their fiery breath; after all, they wanted the Torah for themselves. Nonetheless, HKB"H protected Moshe and instructed him: **"אחוז בכסא כבודי וחזור להן תשובה"**—grab hold of my Throne of Glory and respond to them. Clearly, this is a reference to the fact that the Throne of Glory descended upon Har Sinai.

Another reference to this fact is found in the Gemorah (Succah 5.) elucidating the possuk describing the events that took place at Sinai (Iyov 26,9). The possuk states: **"מאחז פני כסא פרשו עליו עננו, מלמד שפירש שדי מזיו שכינתו ועננו עליו"**—He allows him to grasp the face of the Throne; He spreads upon him His cloud. The Gemorah elucidates: **"אישתרבובי"**—in other words, the Throne of Glory was lowered to within ten tefachim (handbreadths) of the mountain and Moshe grabbed onto it.

In light of the fact that HKB"H descended upon Har Sinai with His Throne of Glory, at the time of "matan Torah," inevitably, the four heavenly chayos bearing the Throne also descended on the mountain. So, when Yaakov saw in his dream a representation of the events that took place at Sinai, he saw the four heavenly creatures bearing the Throne, as well. Consequently, he proclaims: **"אבן"** **יש ה' במקום הזה ואנכי לא ידעתי**. He states that he was unaware that his image was among the images of the four chayos; he was unaware that the four images were **"אנכי"**—aryeh, neshet, keruv, Yaakov.

Accepting the Torah Established HKB"H as King

Let us now consider what was accomplished by this entire process. Besides descending upon Har Sinai Himself, so to speak, why did HKB"H find it necessary to bring the Throne of Glory down with Him? Certainly, one of the purposes could have been for the sake of protecting Moshe from the angels' fiery breath—as we saw, HKB"H instructed Moshe-- **"אחוז בכסא כבודי וחזור להן תשובה"**—Grab onto My Throne and respond to them. Even so, HKB"H could just as easily have protected Moshe without directing him to grab hold of the Throne of Glory.

We can propose an explanation based on an important principle concerning the purpose of creation taught to us by the author of the Tanya in Shaar HaYichud V'haemunah (Chapter 7): **"הנה הוא ידוע לכל, כי תכלית בריאת העולם, הוא בשביל התגלות מלכותו יתברך, דאין מלך בלא עם"**. In other words, the purpose of creation is that we relate to HKB"H as the **"מלך"**, the king; and, clearly, there cannot be a king without a people serving him and honoring him. As a result, when Yisroel accepted the Torah and along with it the Sovereignty of Heaven, they made HKB"H, in essence, King and Master of the Universe.

This same idea is expressed by Rabeinu Bachaye (Vayeshev 38,30): **"אנו אומרים בראש השנה שבו נברא העולם, המלך הקדוש והמלך המשפט, לפי שהיום ההוא הוא תחלת מעשיו, שאין"**

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“מלך בלא עם”—on Rosh HaShannah, commemorating the beginning of creation, we declare that HKB”H is the “melech hakadosh”—the holy King—and “hamelech hamishpat”—the King of judgment; for, on that day, He became a king—to be a king, one must have subjects. In fact, the original source for this idea is the Pirkei D’Rabbi Eliezer (Chapter 3). There we find the presentation of another incredible idea--that the Torah advised HKB”H to create the world in order to be proclaimed king:

“עד שלא נברא העולם, היה הקב”ה וישמו הגדול בלבד, ועלה במחשבה לברוא את העולם... מיד נתייעץ הקב”ה בתורה ששמה תושיה לברוא את העולם. השיבה לו ואמרה, רבון העולמים, אם אין צבא ואין מחנה למלך, על מה הוא מולך, ואם אין עם מקלסין למלך איזה הוא כבודו של מלך, שמע ארון העולם וערב לו. אמרה תורה, בי נתייעץ הקב”ה לברוא את העולם, שנאמר (משלי ח יד) לי עצה ותושיה... מכאן אמרו חכמים, כל מלכות שאין לה יועצים אין מלכותה מלכות.”

Once again, the principle is expressed that as great as HKB”H is, He was not, yet, truly a king. For, a king requires an army and loyal subjects to honor and praise him. The Torah, acting as HKB”H’s advisor is referred to as “toshiyah,” as stated in the possuk (Mishlei 8,14): “לי עצה ותושיה”—**Mine are counsel and wisdom.** Hence, the sages conclude that there can be no kingship without advisors.

After careful consideration, we begin to understand why the Torah, specifically, merited to provide HKB”H with this advice—to create the world in order to be acclaimed as king. The Torah contains the two hundred and forty-eight positive commandments and three hundred and sixty-five prohibitions, negative commandments. When Yisroel accepted the Torah and consented to abide by these tenets, this constituted an acceptance of HKB”H’s sovereignty and an acceptance of his laws and commandments. Thus, the purpose of creation was realized; HKB”H was crowned King of His people Yisroel—who had accepted His sovereignty.

It is now apparent to us why HKB”H descended upon Har Sinai with His Throne of Glory. When HKB”H sits upon His Throne of Glory, it is akin to a king sitting upon his throne. As the possuk states (Tehillim 29,10): “וישב ה’ מלך לעולם”—**Hashem sits on His Throne as King, forever.** Since HKB”H’s coronation as King of Yisroel was when they accepted the Torah, it was appropriate for Him to descend upon Har Sinai atop His Throne of Glory. This act signified that He was now able to sit on His Throne of Glory even down on earth, since He was now a king in all respects—as explained above.

The Neshomos of Yisroel and the Tablets Were Chiseled from the Throne of Glory

Come and see how this ties in beautifully with Rabeinu Bachayei’s revelation in this week’s parsha (31,18) that the two “luchos,” tablets of the covenant, were chiseled from the Throne of Glory. Here are his illuminating words:

“וידוע כי הלוחות היו של סנפירינן ולוקחו מכסא הכבוד, וכן מצינו בכסא הכבוד (יחזקאל א כו) כמראה אבן ספיר דמות כסא, ומלת לחת בא”ת ב”ש כסא, ולכך שכינה שורה עליהם כמו על כסא, ומפני שהלוחות לוקחו מכסא הכבוד, נקראת התורה כבוד שנאמר (משלי ג לה) כבוד

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חכמים ינחלו, וכן הנפש השכלית שורשה בכסא הכבוד, ונקראת כבוד שנאמר (תהלים ל יג) למען יזמרך כבוד, ונפשו של אדם המתעסק בתורה זוכה לשוב לשורשה, שנאמר (שם יט ח) תורת ה' תמימה משיבת נפש."

He states that the tablets were hewn of sapphire from the Throne of Glory. Additionally, the word "לחת" (spelled here without the "vav") can be transformed into the word for throne, "כסא", employing the methodology of "א"ת ב"ש". [In this method, the letter aleph is paired with the letter taf; beit is paired with shin; gimel is paired with reish; and so on, pairing letters starting from the beginning of the aleph-beit with letters from the end of the aleph-beit in reverse order. Thus, lamed corresponds to kaf, chet corresponds to samech, taf corresponds to aleph, and "לחת" becomes "כסא".] For this reason, the Divine Presence rests upon the luchos as it would upon a throne. Seeing as the luchos were hewn from the Throne of Glory, the Torah is also referred to as "kavod," glory or honor. Similarly, the intellectual soul, which also originates from the Throne of Glory, is referred to as "kavod." Thus, the soul of a person engaged in Torah study is able to return to its source.

We learn from Rabeinu Bachayei that the tablets, the Torah and the intellectual neshomeh of a Jew all originate from the Throne of Glory. This explains so clearly, once again, why HKB"H descended upon Har Sinai with His Throne of Glory. At that momentous occasion, He chiseled out the first luchos and the Jewish neshamos from the Throne of Glory. In the merit of Yisroel accepting the Torah, HKB"H occupied His Throne of Glory as King even down of earth.

Thus, we have achieved a small amount of insight concerning HKB"H's instruction to Moshe: **אחוז** "אחוז" -- grab hold of my Throne of Glory and respond to them. HKB"H was hinting to Moshe to respond to the angels wishing to harm him with a convincing irrefutable argument. By Yisroel accepting the Torah down on earth, the purpose of creation will have been fulfilled. Not only would HKB"H occupy His Throne of Glory as a king in the heavens, amidst the angels, but He would do so down below on earth, as well. Therefore, it would be only fitting for them to receive the Torah down below in order to achieve this goal.

This, then, is the message conveyed by HKB"H's directive to Moshe. Grab hold of My Throne of Glory, currently hovering over Har Sinai due to Yisroel's acceptance of the Torah; for I am now able to occupy My royal Throne even down on earth. Thus, you can respond to the angels with a resounding, irrefutable argument. Yisroel are definitely worthier recipients of the Torah than the angels; only because of Yisroel is HKB"H able, as it were, to be a king both in the heavens and on earth.

A Solution to the Sages' Riddle

Finally, we can rejoice and return to address our sages' enigmatic words presented earlier. **אמרה** **כנסת ישראל לפני הקב"ה, רבונו של עולם, הואיל ואין שכחה לפני כסא כבודך, שמא לא תשכח לי מעשה העגל** -- The congregation of Yisroel said before HKB"H: "Master of the Universe! As there is no forgetfulness before Your Throne of Glory, perhaps You will not forget to hold the incident of the "egel" against me." Apparently, the congregation of Yisroel shared the same fear and suspicion as did Yechezkel. Seeing as the face of the ox was among the bearers of the Throne of

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Glory, the sin of the “egel” would be recalled. To this HKB”H replied: “גם אלה תשכחנה”—I will forget the incident of the “egel,” where you declared: “אלה אלהיך ישראל”—This is your G-d, Yisroel. (Note the word אלה in both of these statements; this is the basis for Rashi’s comment that HKB”H’s reply, “גם אלה תשכחנה”, is a reference to the events that surrounded the sin of the “egel.”)

“אמרה לפניו, רבונו של עולם, הואיל ויש שכחה לפני כסא כבודך, שמא תשכח לי מעשה סיני-- She said before him: “Master of the Universe! As there is forgetfulness before Your Throne of Glory, perhaps You will forget to credit me with the incident that occurred at Sinai.” It seems that Yisroel understood that HKB”H would forget their participation in the sin of the “egel” by vacating His Throne of Glory in order not to see the face of the ox. Hence, they feared that He would forget the merit they deserved for accepting the Torah at Sinai. After all, it was in that merit that HKB”H was able to occupy His Throne as a king. If HKB”H would choose not to occupy the Throne in order not to recall the sin of the “egel,” He would necessarily not recall their merit either.

HKB”H responds, incredibly: “אמר לה, ואנכי לא אשכחך”—But I (אנכי) will not forget you. Once again, we look to Rashi for clarification. HKB”H responds that He will not forget the merit they deserve for their actions at Sinai—their acceptance of the Ten Commandments which begin with the word “אנכי”. Thus, HKB”H conveys the message that they should not mistakenly think that He plans to vacate His Throne of Glory.

Based on what we have learned, we appreciate that HKB”H meant to forget Yisroel’s participation in the matter of the “egel,” not by vacating His Throne of Glory, but, rather, by acquiescing to Yechezkel’s entreaty to replace the face of the ox with that of a cherub. This accomplished two things for Yisroel’s benefit: (1) the absence of the image of the ox on the Chariot would allow HKB”H to forget the sin of the “egel,” so to speak, and (2) by switching the ox with a cherub, HKB”H would always recall Yisroel’s merit for accepting the Torah at Sinai. Firstly, He would continue to occupy the Throne of Glory as a king. Secondly, with the cherub as one of the chayos bearing the Chariot, the new symbol representing the four chayos would be אנכי—an abbreviation for aryeh (lion), neshar (eagle), keruv (cherub) and Yaakov. Of course, אנכי is also the first word of the Aseres HaDibros—a reminder of Yisroel’s merit.

This was the message conveyed by HKB”H’s response: “ואנכי לא אשכחך”-- But I (אנכי) will not forget you. Specifically, because the face of the ox was replaced by the face of a cherub, I will not forget the fact that Yisroel accepted the Torah at Sinai in the form of the Ten Commandments beginning with the words: “אנכי ה' אלקיך”.