

The Divine Kabbalist Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropoli zy" a

מ'שה א'הרן ח'ור Ascended to the Top of the Hill to Annul the Three Klipos of מ'שחית א'ף ח'ימה

In this week's parsha, parshas Beshalach, we learn of the momentous battle waged by Amalek against Yisrael as they were leaving Mitzrayim (Shemos 17, 8):

"ויבוא עמלק וילחם עם ישראל ברפידיים, ויאמר משה אל יהושע בחר לנו אנשים וצא הילחם בעמלק, מחר אנכי נצב על ראש הגבעה ומטה האלקים בידי, ויעש יהושע כאשר אמר לו משה להילחם בעמלק ומשה אהרן וחור עלו ראש הגבעה, והיה כאשר ירים משה ידו וגבר ישראל וכאשר יניח ידו וגבר עמלק, וידי משה כבדים ויקחו אבן וישימו תחתיו וישב עליה, ואהרן וחור תמכו בידי מזה אחד ומזה אחד, ויהי ידיו אמונה עד בוא השמש."

Amalek came and battled Yisrael in Rephidim. Moshe said to Yehoshua, "Choose men for us and go out, do battle with Amalek; tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of Elokim in my hand." Joshua did as Moshe said to him, to do battle with Amalek; and Moshe Aharon and Chur ascended to the top of the hill. It happened that when Moshe would raise his hand Yisrael was stronger, and when he lowered his hand Amalek was stronger. Moshe's hands grew heavy, so they took a stone and put it underneath him and he sat on it; and Aharon and Chur supported his hands, one on this side and one on that side, and he was with his hands in faith until the setting of the sun.

The Gemara teaches us an amazing chiddush (Beshalach 65b). This battle waged by Amalek against Yisrael was so intense that all previous battles from the beginning of creation paled in comparison. Furthermore, there will not be a battle of that magnitude again until the coming of the Melech HaMashiach. For, that battle was fought on two distinct planes. Firstly, Amalek batted Yisrael down below in the physical world. Secondly, Amalek's forces of tumah opposed Yisrael's forces of kedushah in the heavenly realm.

This explains why Moshe Rabeinu responded to Amalek's assault by setting up two fronts—a physical and a spiritual.

He placed his loyal pupil and servant, Yehoshua in charge of the physical battle: **וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בְּחַר לָנוּ אַנְשִׁים וְצֵא הִלַּחֵם** "ויאמר משה אל יהושע בחר לנו אנשים וצא הילחם" **-- בעמלק** **-- Moshe said to Yehoshua, "Choose men for us and go out, do battle with Amalek."** He oversaw the spiritual battle himself: **מֶחָר אֲנֹכִי נֹצֵב עַל רֹאשׁ הַגְּבֻעָה וּמִטֵּה הָאֱלֹקִים בְּיָדִי**—"tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of Elokim in my hand."

The holy Torah depicts for us the difficulties presented by this encounter with Amalek. Regarding the spiritual battle conducted by Moshe Rabeinu, the foremost of all the prophets, it states: **וְיָדַי מִשֶּׁה כְּבִדִּים וַיִּקְחוּ אֶבֶן וַיִּשְׂמוּ תַּחְתָּיו וַיִּשְׁבּוּ עָלֶיהָ, וְאַהֲרֹן וְחֹר** "וידאי משה כבדים ויקחו אבן וישימו תחתיו וישב עליה, ואהרן וחור" **-- Moshe's hands grew heavy, so they took a stone and put it underneath him and he sat on it; and Aharon and Chur supported his hands, one on this side and one on that side.** It is apparent that Moshe Rabeinu anticipated the difficulty and peril associated with this encounter. Therefore, he arranged for Aharon and Chur to join him on top of the hill.

Clearly, there must be a reason why he chose these two holy personages specifically. Seemingly, they possessed unique traits that would help Moshe subdue Amalek. In fact, the Torah depicts how they actually supported his arms. So, what characteristics did Aharon and Chur possess that the "master of all the prophets," Moshe Rabeinu, lacked? Also, why does the text specifically mention the word "אחד" in connection with each of them: **וְאַהֲרֹן וְחֹר תִּמְכוּ בְּיָדָיו מִזֶּה אֶחָד וּמִזֶּה אֶחָד**? The passuk could have simply stated: **"ואהרן וחור תמכו בידי מזה ומזה"**.

Subdued מ'שה א'הרן ח'ור with Their Kedushah מ'שחית א'ף ח'ימה

I was inspired to explain the deeper connection between Moshe, Aharon and Chur, based on an allusion presented by the diving kabbalist, Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropoli, zy" a, in Likutei

Shoshanim. The passuk states: “ומשה אהרן וחור עלו ראש הגבעה”—**and Moshe, Aharon and Chur ascended to the top of the hill.** The first letters of the names of these three holy personages--מ'שה א'הרן ח'ור--correspond to the first letters of the names of the three Klipos--מ'שחית א'ף ח'ימה. For this purpose, they ascended “על ראש הגבעה”—**to the top of the hill.** The passuk specifically employs the term “ראש” indicating that their goal was to utilize their kedushah to subdue the first letters and heads of these three Klipos.

To better explain the significance of this allusion, let us refer to what Rabeinu Bachayei writes in parshas Yitro regarding the passuk (Shemos 20, 8): “זכור את יום השבת לקדשו”—**remember the Shabbat day to sanctify it.** He cites the Midrash Tanchuma (Ki Sisa 33) which teaches us that even the wicked are allowed to rest from the agony of Gehinnom on Shabbat. Then he adds the following:

“ומטעם זה אין אנו אומרים בערבית של שבת והוא רחום, מפני שלושה מלאכים, והם משחית אף וחמה, שהם ממונים על הרשעים ביסורי גיהנום, אין להם רשות בשבת, וכדי לקבוע בלב שהרשעים יש להם מנוחה בשבת, ואין אותם ממונים שולטים עליהם בשבת, ושלושתם רשומים בפסוק והוא רחום.” For this reason, “V’hu rachum” is not recited in Arvis on Shabbat night, because the three malachim responsible for the suffering of the wicked in Gehinnom—“Mashchis,” “Ahf,” and “Cheimah”—are not permitted to inflict suffering on Shabbat. These three are mentioned in the passuk of “V’hu rachum.” So, to emphasize this point, this passuk is not recited.

The source for this idea is found in the Zohar Chadash (Midrash Rut 79a). It is for this reason that it was instituted to recite every night before Arvis the passuk (Tehillim 78, 38): “והוא רחום יכפר עון ולא ישחית והרבה להשיב אפו ולא יעיר כל חמתו.” By reciting this passuk, we pray to abolish the three Klipos “Mashchis,” “Ahf,” and “Cheimah” who are in charge of Gehinnom at night. This is alluded to by this passuk as follows: “והוא רחום יכפר עון”—this part of the passuk is directed at the klipah of “משחית”; “והרבה להשיב אפו”—is meant to subdue the klipah of “אף”; “ולא יעיר כל חמתו”—while this phrase is to subdue the klipah of “חימה”. Since the wicked receive a respite from their suffering in Gehinnom on Shabbat, this passuk is not recited in Arvis on Shabbat.

This enlightens us to some degree regarding Rabbi Shimshon’s allusion that מ'שה א'הרן ח'ור ascended the hill in order to abolish the three heads of the Klipos מ'שחית א'ף ח'ימה. Rabbi Shimshon also adds another allusion concerning the Gemara’s statement

(Eiruvin 17b): “מים אחרונים חובה”—**“mayim acharonim” are obligatory.** According to the Zohar hakadosh (Terumah 154b), they are obligatory because we must give the “negative force” its due, so that it won’t bother us. Based on what we have just learned, this fact is alluded to once again by the first letters of the statement מ'ים א'חרונים ח'ובה, which are also the first letters of the three Klipos under discussion--מ'שחית א'ף ח'ימה.

Concerning this fact, we can suggest a pleasant tidbit based on the following passuk (Mishlei 27, 10): **טוב שכן קרוב מאח—better a close neighbor than a distant brother.** The “**close neighbor**” is the yetzer tov, who dwells in man’s heart. What is the advantage of this “**close neighbor**” over a “**distant brother**”? He helps a person engage in Torah study and serve Hashem; by so doing, he distances the three Klipos--מ'שחית א'ף ח'ימה--represented by the acronym מאח, so that they should not control him.

The Ministering Angel of Amalek Is the Yetzer HaRa Who Arouses the Three Klipos

Accepting the challenge, let us apply this concept as a way of explaining Moshe Rabeinu’s motive in having Aharon and Chur join him as he ascended to wage battle against Amalek. As mentioned, his prayers along with the first letters of their three names מ'שה א'הרן ח'ור were aimed at abolishing the three heads of the Klipos--מ'שחית א'ף ח'ימה. The Toras Moshe (Beshalach), authored by the Alshich hakadosh, explains at length why the war with Amalek was so intense and difficult. So much so that when all is said and done, HKB”H Himself will eradicate the name of Amalek, as it states at the end of our parsha (Shemos 17, 14): “כי מחה אמחה את זכר עמלק מתחת השמים”—**because I shall surely wipe out the memory of Amalek from under the heavens.**

Based on the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni Beshalach 243), he explains that HKB”H does not vanquish a nation below until its ministering angel has first been vanquished above. For the passuk states (Yeshayah 24, 21): “והיה ביום ההוא יפקוד ה' על צבא המרום במרום ועל מלכי האדמה על האדמה”—**and on that day Hashem will issue a command to the high army on high, and to the kings of the earth on the earth.** Note that Hashem first commands the ministering angels on high and only after that the kings down on earth.

Accordingly, the Alshich teaches us a tremendous chiddush. The ministering angel of Amalek is none other than the yetzer

hara, about whom the Gemara states (B.B. 16b): **“הוא יצר הרע, הוא יצר הרע, הוא שטן”**—**he is the yetzer hara, he is the Angel of Death, he is Satan.** Thus, before defeating Amalek below, it is essential to defeat its ministering angel above, the yetzer hara. Yet, every time we sin, we empower the yetzer hara. Consequently, it is extremely difficult to overcome Amalek below. Hence, success in this battle depends solely on the performance of complete teshuvah—refraining from following the advice and temptations of the yetzer hara. Then, HKB”H will vanquish him above—allowing Him to erase the name of Amalek below.

Amalek’s Angel Succeeded in Causing Yisrael to Sin

From the juxtaposition of pesukim related to the battle with Amalek, we learn that this battle was precipitated by Yisrael’s thoughts of heresy. Let us review the text (Shemos 17, 8):

“ויקרא שם המקום מסה ומריבה על ריב בני ישראל ועל נסותם את ה' לאמר—He called the place Massah U'Merivah, because of the contention of Bnei Yisrael and because of their test of Hashem, saying, ‘Is Hashem in our midst or not?’ Amalek came and battled Yisrael in Rephidim. Rashi comments: ‘ויבא עמלק וגו’. סמך פרשה זו למקרא זה לומר, תמיד אני ביניכם ומזומן לכל צרכיכם, ואתם אומרים היש ה' בקרבנו אם אין, הייכם שהכלב בא וגושך אתכם, ואתם צועקים אלי ותדעון היכן—ויבא עמלק וגו’. סמך פרשה זו למקרא זה לומר, תמיד אני ביניכם ומזומן לכל צרכיכם, ואתם אומרים היש ה' בקרבנו אם אין, הייכם שהכלב בא וגושך אתכם, ואתם צועקים אלי ותדעון היכן—**the Torah juxtaposed this passage with the preceding passuk to say, “I am always among you and available for all of your needs, yet you say, ‘Is Hashem in our midst or not?’ I swear by your lives that the dog (Amalek) will come and bite you; and you will cry out to Me and know where I am.”**

In light of the insight provided by the Alshich hakadosh, we can make sense of the sequence of events. Bnei Yisrael were swayed by the yetzer hara, Amalek’s ministering angel. It infected them with the venom of heresy, prompting them to ask: **“Is Hashem in our midst or not?”** As a result, Amalek’s angel above was empowered and vitalized. Additionally, this serious transgression—**עוון**—generated the three Klipos **משחית**—**א”ף חימה**—who waged a spiritual battle in the heavens against Yisrael. This enabled Amalek—the yetzer hara’s nation down on earth—to successfully wage a physical battle against Yisrael.

This prompted Moshe Rabeinu to strategically wage the battle against Amalek on two distinct fronts. He placed Yehoshua

in charge of the physical battle with Amalek down below; while he confronted Amalek in the spiritual realm himself. Seeing as Yisrael’s heresy empowered the three Klipos, **משחית א”ף חימה**, **“Moshe Aharon and Chur ascended to the top of the hill”** in order to abolish them with the kedushah of the corresponding first letters of their own names—**מ”שה א”הרן ח”ור**.

We can also begin to understand why the success of the spiritual battle against these three Klipos depended on Moshe Rabeinu raising his hands toward the heavens, as it is written: **“It happened that when Moshe would raise his hand Yisrael was stronger, and when he lowered his hand Amalek was stronger.”** For, we have learned in the Mishnah (R.H. 29a): **“וכי ידיו של משה עושות מלחמה או שוברות מלחמה, אלא לומר לך, כל זמן שהיו ישראל מסתכלין כלפי מעלה, ומשעבדין את לבם לאביהם שבשמים, היו מתגברים, ושעבדין את לבם לאביהם שבשמים, היו מתגברים, ואתם אומרים היש ה' בקרבנו אם אין, הייכם שהכלב בא וגושך אתכם, ואתם צועקים אלי ותדעון היכן—**but do Moshe’s hands win a battle or lose a battle? Rather, the Torah comes to tell you that so long as Yisrael gazed upward and subjugated their heart to their Father in Heaven, they would prevail; but if not, they would fall.**”**

By raising his holy hands heavenward, Moshe Rabeinu intended to return Yisrael to HKB”H by means of complete teshuvah. By looking upward, they would subjugate themselves to their Father in Heaven. As it relates to our present discussion, he intended that they perform complete teshuvah for their sin of heresy and merit atonement in keeping with the passuk: **“והוא רחום יכפר עון”**—**and He, the Merciful One, is forgiving of iniquity.** They would thereby abolish the three Klipos **משחית**—**עוון חימה**—alluded to by the continuation of the passuk: **“ולא ישהית”**—**and does not destroy; He frequently withdraws His anger, not arousing His entire wrath.** As explained, this is why he had Aharon and Chur join him—to unite the names **מ”שה א”הרן ח”ור** whose kedushah would effectively negate **משחית א”ף חימה**.

Aharon and Chur’s Amazing Power in the Realm of Teshuvah

Continuing onward and upward along this exalted path, let us endeavor to explain the deeper significance of Moshe Rabeinu’s choice to have Aharon and Chur join him on top of the hill. As we have learned, they supported his arms in order to awaken Yisrael to perform teshuvah, so as to subdue the three Klipos led by Amalek’s ministering angel. Moshe himself was a complete tzaddik, as HKB”H attests to Himself in the passuk (Bamidbar 12, 7): **“בכל ביתי נאמן הוא”**—**in my entire house, he is trusted.**

Thus, he himself was somewhat removed from the concept of teshuvah for a transgression; this made it difficult for him to inspire Yisrael alone to perform teshuvah. Therefore, he wisely had Aharon and Chur join him; their neshamot were intimately associated with the concept of teshuvah, as we shall explain. This in fact is the significance of the statement: **“וידוי משה כבדים”**—**Moshe’s hands grew heavy**. For, as a total tzaddik, it was difficult for him to arouse the sinners to perform teshuvah. Aharon and Chur, on the other hand, having more of a connection with the concept of teshuvah: **“תמכו בידי מזה אחד ומזה אחד”**—**supported his hands, one on this side and one on that side**. This enabled Moshe to maintain his holy hands upward, inspiring Yisrael to perform complete teshuvah. [Note that the numerical equivalent of the three names **משה אהרן חור** equals **משה**—alluding to their prowess as a unit in the realm of teshuvah.]

Now, the time has arrived to explore the incredible connection between Aharon and Chur and the performance of teshuvah. We shall begin with Aharon. In parshas Ki Sisa, we find that he was involved in the making of the “eigel,” prompting his brother to exclaim in utter amazement (Shemos 32, 21): **“ויאמר משה אל אהרן מה עשה לך העם הזה כי הבאת עלי חטאה גדולה”**—**Moshe said to Aharon, “What did this nation do to you that you brought a great sin upon it?”** This seems to contradict an explicit passuk (Mishlei 12, 21): **“לא יאונה לצדיק כל און”**—**no iniquity will befall the tzaddik**. So, how indeed did the actions of Aharon, one of Hashem’s sacred legions, lead to such a grievous sin? We can explain the matter based on what we have learned in the Gemara (A.Z. 4b):

“אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי, לא עשו ישראל את העגל אלא ליתן פתחון פה לבעלי”. **Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Yisrael only made the “eigel” in order to provide encouragement for “ba’alei teshuvah.”** Rashi explains that the Jews who received the Torah were men of strong character, in firm control of their yetzer haras. The making of the “eigel” was out of character for them. Their actions were governed from above so as to provide encouragement for those wishing to repent in the future. For, a sinner might be too demoralized to perform teshuvah, convincing himself that his teshuvah will be rejected. To assist him and encourage him we can point to those who made the “eigel”; they committed an act of sacrilege and nevertheless their teshuvah was accepted.

Thus, we learn that Aharon HaKohen’s actions did not create any stumbling blocks. On the contrary, he was chosen by

HKB”H to facilitate the Divine decree—the making of the “eigel” in order to demonstrate for Yisrael the process of teshuvah. Additionally, we find that Aharon HaKohen only made the “eigel” so as to save Yisrael from annihilation. In fact, in this merit, HKB”H gave him the position of Kohen Gadol, as we learn from the Midrash’s (V.R. 10, 3) elucidation of the passuk (Tehillim 45, 8): **“אהבת צדק ותשנא רשע על כן משחך אלקים אלקיך שמן”**—**You love righteousness and hate wickedness; accordingly has G-d, your G-d, anointed you with oil of joy above your peers.**

“בשעה שעשו ישראל אותו מעשה, בתחילה הלכו אצל חור אמרו לו (שמות לב-א) קום עשה לנו אלהים, כיון שלא שמע להן עמדו עליו והרגוהו... ואחר כך הלכו אצל אהרן אמרו לו קום עשה לנו אלהים, כיון ששמע אהרן כן מיד נתיירא... אמר אהרן מה אעשה, הרי הרגו את חור שהיה נביא, עכשיו אם הורגים אותי שאני כהן, מתקיים עליהם המקרא שכתוב (איכה ב-כ) אם יהרג במקדש ה' כהן ונביא, ומיד הם גולין... אמר אהרן אם בוגנין הן [את העגל] אותו הסירחון נתלה בהן, מוטב שיתלה הסירחון בי ולא בישראל... אמר לו הקב"ה לאהרן, אהבת צדק, לצדק את בני ושנאת מלחיבבן, על כן משחך אלקים אלקיך, אמר לו, חייך שמכל שבטו של לוי לא נבחר לכהונה גדולה אלא אתה.”

When Yisrael performed that ignoble deed, they originally approached Chur. When he refused their request, they attacked him and killed him. Next, they approached Aharon, asking him to make them a god. Hearing their request, Aharon became filled with fear. He deliberated as to how to proceed. They had already killed Chur, who was a prophet. If they now killed him, a kohen, they would in effect be fulfilling the passuk (Eichah 2, 20): **“Should a kohen and a prophet be slain in the sanctuary of Hashem,”** they would be exiled immediately. If they build the “eigel,” they will be held accountable for this despicable act; it is preferable that I be held accountable and not Yisrael. HKB”H responds to Aharon: For attempting to vindicate my children (**loving righteousness**) and not wishing to hold them accountable (**hating wickedness**), **your G-d anointed you**. From the entire tribe of Levi, only you will be chosen to fill the position of Kohen Gadol.

This subject is also addressed in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 7a); however, there it explains that had Yisrael also killed Aharon, there would have been no remedy for their actions. Concerning this matter, we find a tremendous chiddush in Toras Moshe HaShalem (Ki Sisa), authored by the Chatam Sofer. He teaches us that the magnitude of Aharon’s self-sacrifice surpassed that of Chur. For, Chur only sacrificed his physical being in this world; whereas Aharon was willing to sacrifice even his soul in order to spare Yisrael from extermination. As we have learned,

he was willing to forego his place in Olam HaBa, wanting the sin of the “eigel” to be attributed to him.

In summary, we have learned that Aharon HaKohen was willing to sacrifice his eternal soul on behalf of Yisrael. In the merit of this self-sacrifice, HKB”H chose him to be anointed as Kohen Gadol. From Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, we learned that the sin of the “eigel” was due to a Divine decree—in order to demonstrate for the masses the power of teshuvah. Thus, we see quite clearly that Aharon was instrumental in teaching Yisrael the meaning of teshuvah. Evidently, Aharon’s being was rooted in the world of teshuvah.

Chur’s Part in the Teshuvah Process

Let us continue on our quest by examining Chur’s connection with the teshuvah process. Seeing as he actually sacrificed his life and had no part in the making of the “eigel,” it would seem to outward appearances that he had no part in the demonstration of teshuvah resulting from the sin of the “eigel.” Notwithstanding, on closer examination, we will find that that is not the case. On the contrary, he indirectly played a crucial role in the lesson of teshuvah that resulted from the “cheit ha’eigel.”

We learned from the Gemara and the Midrash cited above that the Aharon was more than willing to actually give up his own life rather than make the “eigel.” Yet, he realized that if he was killed, the words of the passuk (Eichah 2, 20) would be fulfilled; and Yisrael would be doomed. Therefore, he decided to give up his life and soul in Olam HaBa by reasoning that it was preferable that he be blamed for the egregious act rather than Yisrael.

So, had Yisrael gone to Aharon first with their request to make the “eigel” for them, he would not have hesitated to actually give up his life for the sake of “kiddush hasheim”; and he would certainly have refused to make the “eigel.” However, since they approached Chur first and killed him, Aharon was left no other choice but to make the “eigel” for them—if he wished to save Yisrael from annihilation.

To clarify matters, let us take it one step further. What would have happened had the roles been reversed? What if the people had approached Aharon first with their request rather than Chur? In all likelihood, Chur would have made the same mental calculation as Aharon and arrived at the same conclusion; he would have made the “eigel” for them in order save them from annihilation.

It turns out, therefore, that Chur also played a part in the making of the “eigel.” By giving up his life and refusing to make the “eigel,” he unwittingly forced Aharon to make the “eigel.” We can now appreciate why Moshe specifically chose Chur and Aharon to ascend the hill with him for the sake of getting Yisrael to perform teshuvah. Through “ruach hakodesh,” he knew that these two holy personages were vital and inseparable for the task of teaching Yisrael the lesson of teshuvah. Hence, he joined them together to support his hands, with the goal of awakening Yisrael to perform complete, wholehearted teshuvah.

With great joy, we can now explain the specific language employed by the passuk: “ואהרן וחור תמכו בידי מזה אחד ומזה אחד”. Let us refer to the Gemara (Berachos 6a):

הני תפילין דמרי עלמא מה כתיב בהו, אמר ליה (שמואל ב ז-כג) ומי כעמד ישראל גוי אחד בארץ... אמר להם הקב"ה לישראל... אתם עשיתוני חטיבה אחת בעולם, שנאמר (דברים ו-ד) שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה' אחד, ואני אעשה אתכם חטיבה אחת בעולם, שנאמר ומי כעמד ישראל גוי אחד בארץ. **What is written in the tefillin of the Master of the Universe? . . . "And who is like Your people Yisrael, one nation in the land." . . . HKB”H said to Yisrael: "You made Me unique in this world, as it is stated: 'Hear O Yisrael: Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is One.' So, too, I will make you unique in the world, as it is stated: 'And who is like Your people Yisrael, one nation in the land.'"**

Let us now turn to the passuk in our passage: “**Moshe’s hands grew heavy**”—since he was a tzaddik and was removed from sin, it was difficult for him to arouse the sinners to perform teshuvah; “**and Aharon and Chur**”—whose souls were rooted in the world of teshuvah; “**supported his hands, one on this side and one on that side.**” “**One on this side**”—“מזה אחד”—refers to Aharon; in the merit of his self-sacrifice, he saved Yisrael—the one nation, “גוי אחד, in the land—from annihilation. “**And one on that side**”—“ומזה אחד”—refers to Chur; he sacrificed his life by refusing to make the “eigel,” demonstrating the absolute emunah that: “ה' אלקינו ה' אחד”—**Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is One.**

Betzalel Built the Mishkan in the Merit of Chur’s Self Sacrifice

Based on what we have learned, we can begin to appreciate the manner in which HKB”H repaid Chur for his act of martyrdom. His grandson—Betzalel, the son of Uri, the son of Chur—built the Mishkan, as described in the Midrash (S.R. 48, 3) on the passuk in parshas Vayakhel (Shemos 35, 30):

“ויאמר משה אל בני ישראל, ראו קרא ה' בשם בצלאל בן אורי בן חור. מה ראה להזכיר כאן חור, אלא בשעה שביקשו ישראל לעבוד עבודת כוכבים נתן נפשו על הקב"ה ולא הניחן, עמדו והרגוהו, אמר לו הקב"ה, חייך שאני פורע לך... כל בנים היוצאים ממך אני מגדלם שם טוב בעולם, שנאמר ראה קרא ה' בשם בצלאל וימלא אותו רוח אלקים.”
Moshe said to Bnei Yisrael, “See, Hashem has proclaimed by name Betzalel the son of Uri the son of Chur.”
 The Midrash questions why it was necessary to mention Chur in this passuk. It explains that when Yisrael wished to worship idols, he sacrificed his life for HKB”H and did not allow them to do so. They attacked him and killed him. HKB”H swore that He would repay him by ensuring that all of his offspring would be distinguished individuals with good reputations.

Let us explain how Chur was rewarded “measure for measure”—“midah k'neged midah”—by the fact that his grandson Betzalel built the Mishkan. It is well-known that the Mishkan served as atonement for the “cheit ha'eigel.” For, it states in parshas Pekudei (Shemos 38, 21): **“אלה בקודי המשכן:—these are the accountings of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of the Testimony.** Rashi explains that the Mishkan served as testimony for Yisrael that HKB”H overlooked the incident of the “eigel” and forgave them—for He rested His Shechinah among them.

Now, Chur sacrificed his life by refusing to make the “eigel.” Ultimately, however, Yisrael still sinned by making the “eigel.” Therefore, HKB”H chose Chur’s grandson—**“Betzalel the son of Uri the son of Chur”**—to construct the Mishkan to atone for Yisrael for the “cheit ha'eigel.” He was a mere thirteen years old, and HKB”H filled him with the spirit of “chochmah” in order to accomplish this noble task. Thus, his grandfather’s wish was fulfilled; the sin of the “eigel” did not remain with Yisrael.

We find, therefore, that both Aharon and Chur—who were instrumental in the introduction of the light of teshuvah into Yisrael, as per the Divine decree associated with the “cheit ha'eigel”—both merited taking part in the Mishkan, which was atonement for the “cheit ha'eigel.” Chur’s grandson Betzalel built the Mishkan; while Aharon served as the Kohen Gadol in the Mishkan.

We have now managed to gain a slightly better understanding regarding the intricacy of Moshe Rabeinu’s, a”h, strategic plan. He enjoined Aharon and Chur to ascend to the top of the hill with him; they supported his hands, each from their respective side; so that he could keep his holy hands directed toward the heavens, in order to inspire Yisrael to perform “teshuvah sheleimah.” In this manner, they subdued the three Klipos roused by Amalek--**מי שהיה אף ח"ימה--** with the kedushah of their three names--**מישה אהרן ח'ור**.



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