

These are the reckonings of the Mishkan. (38:21)

What appears to be a sad commentary on the nature of people is actually Hashem's way of rewarding the righteous. The *parsha* begins with Moshe *Rabbeinu's* accounting of all the precious metals and jewelry that *Klal Yisrael* donated for the construction of the *Mishkan*. Why did Moshe do such an accounting? Was he not trustworthy? Unquestionably, Hashem trusted Moshe, knowing that his integrity and devotion were impeccable. Some disturbed people in every community have nothing else to do but denigrate their leaders. This is, unfortunately, the product of envy which is espoused by insecure individuals who look at themselves and see a wretched example of someone who could have been a successful person. Regrettably, as noted in the *Midrash (Shemos Rabbah 51:6)*, Moshe heard some scoffers speaking behind his back, claiming that he had become wealthy through the contributions to the *Mishkan*. They asserted in a not-so-subtle manner that he had skimmed off the top.

What is most shocking about this is that Hashem Himself had attested to Moshe's integrity. *Horav Moshe Shternbuch, Shlita*, suggests that specifically because of Moshe's greatness, Hashem orchestrated this slander to reward him. The *Sefarim (Maggid Meishaim, Vayakhel)* contend that when one speaks evil, slanderous speech against his fellow, the victim receives all of the *z'chuyos*, merits, that the offender possessed, and the offender, in turn, receives all of the victim's sins. *Orchos Tzaddikim (Shaar Anavah)* relates that a person once slandered a righteous man. The victim sent a gift to the offender in return for the merits that he had just received – which had once been the slanderer's merits. When the *Yom HaDin* – the day in which we will all stand before the Heavenly Tribunal to give an accounting of our lives – arrives, we will be surprised at the many merits that have accrued from those who have spoken derogatorily of us. Likewise, we will be shocked by the many sins that have resulted when the coin is flipped, and we have been the slanderers.

The *Satmar Rebbe, zl*, notes the *Mishnah* in *Pirkei Avos (6:1)* which delineates the many benefits garnered by one who studies Torah, among them *mochel al elbono*, one who forgives the individual who shames/slanders him. This implies that one who has achieved a lofty level of Torah scholarship, who has accrued a reputation of piety and devotion to Hashem, can (and will) still be slandered by a malcontent. Despite a person's spiritual achievements, scoffers and slanderers, jealous people who cannot tolerate his success and will do everything in their power to take him down, will always exist. After all, if they were capable of speaking audaciously against Moshe, what would prevent men of such execrable character from attempting to destroy a contemporary Torah scholar?

Rav Shternbuch cites the *Chasam Sofer (Teshuvos II pg. 590)* who explains *Chazal's (Sanhedrin 14)* teaching that Heaven absolves the sins of one who ascends to a leadership position. The *Chasam Sofer* asserts that when one achieves distinction, when he rises above his peers, some people will always be ready to speak *lashon hora* against him. After all, his sins will be absolved and transferred to them.