

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

Rashi notes the double use of the word *Mishkan*. He explains that it alludes to the two *Mishkanos* which were taken as a *mashkon*, collateral, until that day in which we repent and become deserving of having our collateral returned to us, with the building of the *Bais Hamikdash Ha'Shilishi*, Third Temple. *Horav Yosef Chaim Sonenfeld, zl*, asks a powerful question. The Torah provides for a lender to take collateral from someone to whom he lends money. Otherwise, he has little to no assurance that his money will be returned. The Torah, however, presents one stipulation: If the debtor is poor, and the collateral that he had given is something he needs at night, for example a pillow or a blanket, the lender must return it to him at night and retrieve it the following morning. If this is the case, how is it that Hashem has taken our *Batei Mikdash* and not returned them? We need them back as soon as possible! Veritably, our spiritual lives depend on it.

Rav Yosef Chaim responds with an answer that indicates the critical importance of increasing the Jewish nation's sense of yearning for *Moshiach*. He explains that the idea behind returning the collateral is based upon the premise that the poor man requires it for his existence: i.e., he cannot sleep without it. Can we truthfully assert that we cannot function without the *Bais HaMikdash*? Do we feel the "pain" of the *Shechinah*, Divine Presence, in *galus*, exile, with us? Do we think that Hashem does not want to return the *Bais HaMikdash* as soon as we demonstrate a craving, an eagerness to have it back? We are all too complacent with our lives. We have become accustomed to not having a *Bais HaMikdash*, as is expressed by the popular idiom of the state of potentiality and ambiguity: "It is what it is" – and we do nothing about it.

Horav Zalmen Volozhiner, zl, advances that although *Klal Yisrael* as a whole, in its entirety, has not merited the return of the *Bais HaMikdash*, it does not mean that each individual who sincerely yearns for its rebuilding is not to be considered as if he himself had the *Bais HaMikdash*. In other words, both a general cumulative component and an individual component exist concerning the rebuilding of the *Bais HaMikdash*. Each individual Jew who truly pines for the *Bais HaMikdash*, who agonizes over its exile and the dismal state of *Klal Yisrael* without it, merits to some extent that the *Shechinah* will repose within him. He will enjoy the return of the "collateral," albeit on an individual basis.

In previous generations (perhaps because they were exposed to much less materialism), Jews – even the simple unschooled Jew of the *shtetl*, far removed from the citadels of scholarship – were more focused on the advent of *Moshiach* and would talk about it with a realistic sense of expectation each day. The arrival of *Moshiach* was imminent and, therefore, often the thrust of their conversations. *Horav Moshe Shternbuch, Shlita*, relates that his mother had purchased a new dress. It was a special dress which her family expected her to wear for a special occasion. She agreed, "Yes, it will be put aside for a special occasion, a day of extreme joy and rejoicing: when *Moshiach Tziddkeinu* will arrive!"

Horav Shmuel Aharon HaLevi Pardes, zl, visited Poland in the beginning of 1932, and he made a point to travel to Radin to receive the blessing of the *Chafetz Chaim*. Following *Tefillas Maariv*, the evening prayer, he walked over to the *Chafetz Chaim* who greeted him warmly. "From where to you hail?" the sage asked. "From America," *Rav* Pardes replied. The *Chafetz Chaim* continued his conversation: "Here in Radin, we are anxiously awaiting the arrival of *Moshiach* at any moment. Does this yearning prevail as well in America?" *Rav* Pardes did not want to respond. Clearly, American sentiment was different than what was manifest in Radin. Nonetheless, he answered, "Yes, in America we, too, are anxiously awaiting his arrival."

As the conversation ended, *Rav* Pardes overheard the *Chafetz Chaim* "speaking" to Hashem (this was not unusual), as if he were expressing a personal prayer: "Hashem, the Jews in Poland suffer from deprivation and extreme poverty. It is, thus, understandable that they are waiting for *Moshiach* to come and redeem them from their physical afflictions. In contrast, however, Jews of America have a surplus of material comforts and wealth. Yet, despite their material indulgence, they still yearn and wait for *Moshiach*. If so, Hashem, why are You holding us back from finally greeting *Moshiach*?"