

We Are Not Alone

"Chaim, you look worn out."
 "I am, Imma."
 "What have you been doing?"
 "I have been fighting the whole day."

Chaim's mother is very surprised. Her son Chaim? Fighting? She and her husband always stress the importance of shalom. It is a cornerstone of their children's education. How is it possible that Chaim could be fighting the whole day?

"Come, Chaim dear. Sit down and have a hot drink. Let's talk about this."

Chaim eagerly accept his mother's kind offer. He slowly sips the cup of hot chocolate.

"Chaim, I want to help you. Tell me about the fight."

"No problem, Imma. First, I must tell you that this fight will never end. The other side hates me and will not let me rest a minute. He constantly taunts me and tries to make a fool of me. I have beaten him many times, but he keeps coming back for more."

Chaim's mother is shocked. She must get to the bottom of this.

"Chaim, this is very serious. Please tell me who you were fighting with, and what the argument was about."

"Imma, my enemy is . . . the Yetzer Hara! He bothers me from the moment I open my eyes in the morning. He tells me to stay in bed and be late for school. He wants me to rush through my blessings and prayers. He would love me to grab a seat from an elderly person on the bus. He tries to make me daydream and talk during class. In short, he wants me to commit as many sins as possible. Imma, how can I ever win this fight?"

Chaim's mother smiles, somewhat relieved. Baruch Hashem her son's fight is kosher.

"Chaim, you are right. On your own, you can never hope to win. Your enemy is bigger, stronger, older, and more experienced than you are. He knows every trick in the book. However, you have a big advantage over him."

"What is that, Imma?"

"You have the most powerful ally in the world . . . Hashem Yisborach. The Gemora (Kiddushin 30b) relates that a person's Yetzer Hara overpowers him every day, trying to kill him. Were it not for The Almighty's help, he would not be able to live. This idea is also expressed in this week's parasha, Chaim."

"Where, Imma?"

"Chapter 40, verse two. Hashem spoke to Moshe saying, 'On the first day of the first month you shall erect the Mishkan (Tabernacle).' Moshe Rabbeinu assembled the entire structure. Rashi (39:33) relates that it was too heavy for anyone to lift."

"Imma, if it was too heavy for normal human strength, how could Moshe do it alone?"

"Excellent question, Chaim. Rashi describes the tremendous *Siyata Di'shmaya* (Heavenly Assistance) that Moshe received. Hashem told him to go through the motions of lifting it. Moshe did, and the Mishkan erected itself. The Keli Yakar is inspired by this event, finding in it a hint to all human activities. Man's hands are inadequate to complete their worldly tasks. We can only begin the work, and Hashem finishes it for us. This is especially true of our battle with the Yetzer Hara. We could never hope to defeat him without Hashem's help."

"Imma, that is so uplifting."

"Chaim, you need it. You and all of us are involved in a big fight every day. Our only hope is to realize that we are not alone. Hashem is there to help us. We need only to turn to Him."

Kinderlach . . .

When does the Yetzer Hara fight you? In the morning when you need to get out of bed? During your daily prayers when you are trying to concentrate? When you are supposed to share with your brother, and want the whole cake for yourself? When it is time to do homework? These are all times of weakness. He is ready to make us sin.

What can we do to beat him? Call upon Our Father in Heaven. He is ready, willing, and able to help us. With His help, we will win the fight. We are not alone.



Small World

This is the age of miniaturization. Machines that were once the size of a suitcase now fit into the palm of your hand. Jobs that used to take weeks to complete can now be done in a few minutes. Work that once took an entire staff of workers now just requires a few people and sophisticated equipment. An entire meal is freeze dried into a little powder. Jet air travel has made the world a small place. Amazing. Do not think, however, that miniaturization is a new invention. Our ancestors built a miniature model of the world in the desert over three thousand years ago. It was called the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle). The Medrash Tanchuma vividly describes how the work on the *Mishkan* corresponded to the Six Days of Creation. On the first day, Hashem created the Heavens. The verse in Tehillim

(104:2) describes Heaven as a curtain. Similarly, the *Mishkan* contained curtains (Shemos 26:7). On the second day, Hashem created the *rakiya* as a separation between the waters. Corresponding to this was the *paroches*, which separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy (Shemos 26:31). On the third day, Hashem gathered the waters. In the *Mishkan*, the *kiyor* held the water (Shemos 30:18). Hashem created the lights in the heavens on the fourth day, and in the *Mishkan* the Menorah (Shemos 25:31) shed light. Day number five saw the creation of birds. The descendants of those birds were brought as sacrifices in the *Mishkan*. On the sixth day, man was fashioned in Hashem's image (so to speak). Correspondingly, the Kohen Godol performed Hashem's service in the *Mishkan*. On Shabbos, Hashem finished the Heavens and earth (Bereshis 2:1). Similarly, "All the work of the *Mishkan* was completed (Shemos 39:32). Hashem sanctified and blessed the Seventh Day. So too, the *Mishkan* was anointed and blessed.

Why was the *Mishkan* designed as a miniature model of the world? Because the service performed there influenced the entire world. The *korbonos* (sacrifices) brought down a multitude of blessings from heaven to earth. The *Mishkan* existed to benefit the whole world. Nowadays, we do not have a *Mishkan*. However, we have an even more miniaturized model of the world – the human being. Our deeds have an influence on the universe. When we serve Hashem with a pure heart, we create "spiritual vibrations" that reverberate through the upper and lower worlds. They bring down the blessings of prosperity and success to humanity. The power is within us. We hold the world in our hands.

Kinderlach . . .

We hold within us the world's most sophisticated micro-technology. It is called the Jewish heart. It is a super-powerful spiritual transmitter, which is on the same wavelength as the world. When we serve Hashem with simcha (happiness) and a lev tov (good pure heart), it transmits vibrations which have a positive influence on the world. Prosperity, health, and success are the result. Kinderlach, get the maximum benefit from the mini-technology. Serve Hashem with a pure heart and help the whole world.

Parasha Questions

- How many Jews gave half-shekels? (38:26)
- What color was the *mell*? (39:22)
- What were the bells made of? (39:25)
- How much copper was used altogether? (38:29) What was it used for? (38:30,31)
- Which day was the *Mishkan* erected? (40:2,17)