

The First Jewish Accountant Continued


accounts for the silver and copper that was used, however, we do not find that he showed how the gold was used. Why did he leave this detail out, it would seem to be important to tell were all the gold went?

The **Riva**¹⁾ explains, the only vessel made from pure gold was the *menorah*. The rest of the vessels were merely gold plated. The gold leaf used on these vessels amounted to a negligible amount. It was therefore a straightforward calculation; all the gold was used for the creation of the *menorah*.

The Ramban follows a similar train of thought but from a different angle. He explains that since the gold was used mostly to plate the vessels, it was not possible to give an accurate calculation of gold used for each vessel.

The Toldos Yitzchok⁸⁾ explains that the amount of gold donated was not nearly enough for all the vessels and articles that needed gold. It was only due to a miracle that the gold donated covered all the vessels. Therefore, Moshe Rabbeinu did not need to show how the gold was used since it was clear and obvious to all that there could not be any gold left over since from the onset there was not enough gold.

The Klei Yakar explains, at this point of the *parsha* the clothing of the *Kobanim* were not yet made. Moshe Rabbeinu was eager to clear his name from any rumor and after the items for the *Mishkan* were finished and all the silver and copper that was needed was used, he wanted to account for them already. The gold could not be tallied at this point since it was still needed for the clothing of the *Kobanim*. If so, why did Moshe not account for the gold used after the clothing of the *Kobanim* were finished? The Klei Yakar answers, the reason why Moshe accounted for the silver and copper was, as the Medrash explains, there were scoffers who were saying that Moshe kept for himself some of the precious metals. Moshe forgot where all the silver was used which caused an uproar, until a heavenly voice came forth and said the silver was used for the hooks on the vertical beams. At that point all rumors were dispelled and it was clear to all the integrity of Moshe. For this reason, after the gold was finished being used, there was no need for Moshe to make a public counting since his integrity had already been established beyond doubt.

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l learned from all the accounting in this week's *parshiyos* an important lesson for life.⁹⁾ We all receive from Hashem so much goodness; life, health, *parnassah*, mental abilities and more. We must make an accounting how all of these are used in Hashem's service. Accounting for the blessings bestowed by Hashem is an integral part of life, regardless of who the person may be. 

Cohen Convert? Continued

We do not know what became of this convert, but we are faced with a *halachic* issue that requires resolution. The Shulchan Aruch states that when a potential convert comes before the court, they must carefully inspect his intentions.²⁾ One is deemed ineligible for conversion if he is interested for the purposes of money or a position of power. This rule causes the necessity for an explanation as to how Hillel was allowed to accept this convert, when the convert's motives were clearly for a position of power?


Tosafos in Yevamos mentions the above Gemara as a proof that if one's intentions are ultimately for the sake of becoming a true convert, he may undergo the process even if he states a partial condition.³⁾ The exact parameters of this law are left to each court's discretion. The Shach quotes this Tosafos as the final *halachic* ruling.⁴⁾

It is important to note that the Maharsha explains that Hillel did not convert this gentile while he had ulterior motives, rather he instructed him to learn the laws of the *Kohen Gadol* as a prerequisite to the conversion process.⁵⁾ According to this explanation, the gentile was mindful of his inability to become the *Kohen Gadol* at the time of his conversion, and had proper intentions for his desire to convert.

As a result of this discussion, another issue arises. The Gemara teaches that it is forbidden to teach Torah to a gentile.⁶⁾ Based on the Maharsha's explanation, it is apparent that there is no prohibition to teach Torah to a prospective convert, as Hillel taught him Torah before converting him. In contrast, according to the opinion of Tosafos, Hillel converted the gentile at the outset, and there is therefore no proof to this new idea that a prospective convert may be taught Torah.

Seemingly, Tosafos in Bava Kama maintains the same opinion. The Gemara tells of Roman generals that commanded the Jewish scholars to teach them Torah. Tosafos is bothered that this is a transgression of the above-mentioned Gemara in Chagiga. He offers two explanations, either they already were converts, or these *Chachmei Yisrael* were forced to teach them under duress.

Why does Tosafos not answer that they came to convert? Why can we not utilize the concept of the Maharsha? It seems that Tosafos considers this to be prohibited in accordance with his view in Maseches Yevamos.

In summary, the opinion of Tosafos is that one may be converted, despite alternative motives, and a gentile may not be taught Torah under any circumstance. Conversely, the Maharsha maintains that one may not convert without completely proper intentions, and Torah may be taught to a potential convert. 

1) Shabbos 31a.

2) Y"D 268:12.

3) Yevamos 24B.

4) Y"D 268:23.

5) Shabbos ibid.

6) Chagiga 13a.

7) Shemos Rabba 51:6.

8) Rav Yitzchok ben Rav Yosef Cairo, the uncle of the famed Rav Yosef Cairo author of the Shulchan Aruch. He raised his nephew Rav Yosef after his brother Rav Efrayim died.

9) Dorash Moshe.

10) See Shabbos 75a.

11) The pasuk (Shemos 8:15) by the plague of lice states that the Egyptian magicians exclaimed that this plague is the "finger of Hashem". While the pasuk seems to be referring to the plague of lice only, the Mechilta brings Rav Yossi Hagedili and others who state that the ten plagues were

Moon Phases Continued

was puzzled by the “size” of the new moon. In other words, Moshe wanted more clarity on the exact phase which the moon must be for it to be considered a new moon. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* therefore showed Moshe with His finger the sliver of moon which was to be considered the new phase.

There are two important points in this story. Firstly, what exactly was the complication about the size of the new moon? The straightforward understanding is that when any part of the moon becomes visible it constitutes a new moon phase. Secondly, why does the Medrash use the wording that Hashem showed the moon with His finger – a seldom use idiom to describe Hashem’s actions.

The connotation of the term “Hashem’s finger” seems to imply extraordinary precision and unique intent in a specific action. For example, the ten plagues inflicted on the Egyptians are referenced as performed with Hashem’s fingers.¹¹ Each plague exhibited an amazing amount of precision to differentiate between the Egyptians who were inflicted and the Jews who were spared. Another example of the reference to Hashem’s fingers is regarding the *luchos* (tablets). The *pasuk* describes that they were written “with the finger of Hashem”. While some commentaries understand this in reference to the actual etching of the words on the stone tablets, an alternate explanation is in reference to the contents of the *luchos*. All of the 613 commandments were hinted to in the *luchos*. Additionally, the actual laws, the law of G-d, was designed with the utmost focus and attention to detail.


Regarding the solar system, the *pasuk* describes the incredible design with which it was fashioned, with reference to Hashem’s finger as well. *When I gaze*

*at the sky, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you created.*¹² The usage in this instance becomes more fitting the more one delves into the secrets of the universe. As in all areas of knowledge, the more advanced our understanding becomes as humans, we gain more appreciation for Hashem’s creation and a deeper grasp on the statements of *Chazal*. For thousands of years, humans viewed our solar system based on the geocentric model. In the sixteenth century, the great astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus set forth the heliocentric model. This new understanding allowed future astronomers to accurately graph and predict planetary movements. In the early seventeenth century, the famous astronomer Johannes Kepler theorized that planets orbit the sun in an ellipse and not a circle. Aside from giving us a new understanding of our seasons, he also opened the door for questions about why and how planets stay in orbit. The renowned physicist Albert Einstein is most famous for his theory of general relativity. One of the important points of general relativity is that gravity can affect light rays. Prior to the theory of general relativity, Isaac Newton set forth the laws of gravitational force that can only act upon physical matter. Light, or photons, do not fall into this category. Based on Einstein’s theory, it is now understood that the gravitational force generated by mass can cause light to bend. This is known as Gravitational Lensing.

Based on this concept, the light emanating from the moon will experience a light bending effect due to the gravitational pull of the moon. As such, light from the moon’s reflection will be visible to a viewer on earth even before the bright side of the moon is actually facing earth.

It is possible to postulate that Moshe Rabbeinu was bothered whether the appearance of this moon light is enough to declare the new moon phase, or does the new moon phase begin when the first crescent of moon actually becomes parallel with earth. This explanation fits very well with Rashi’s addition that Moshe was bothered regarding the necessary size of the new moon. In addition, the description that Hashem showed the new moon phase to Moshe with a finger, is befitting for such a detailed and minute differentiation.

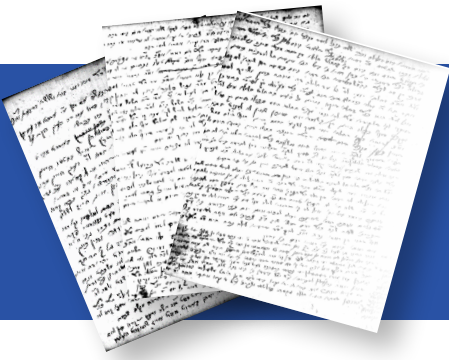
During preparation of this novel explanation of the Medrash, I conferred with a renowned physicist. It is important to make note that it was pointed out that the gravitational force necessary to produce a discernable warp of a light ray needs to be from a mass much greater than the moon. Einstein’s theory was first proven based on the prediction and fulfillment of light bending by the Sun of Mercury’s position. This was verified during a total solar eclipse in 1919.

Our understanding of the moon phases and what constitutes a *halachic* new moon is very limited. As stated above, the knowledge of planetary movements and new moon phases is the quintessential knowledge which the Jewish nation is recognized by the nations of the world. Needless to say, the relatively simple mathematical calculations used today to establish a new moon cycle is not the incredible knowledge in reference. The **Chasam Sofer**^{b)} makes this case in point and therewith determines that the knowledge used in calculating the new moon cycle with accuracy has yet to be understood by contemporary astronomers.¹³ This background gives us a renewed appreciation for the commandment of *kiddush haChodesh*. 

all called a “finger”. From this they infer that the use of the term “Hashem’s hand” regarding the infliction of the Egyptians at Yam Suf, it is multiplied by five for the five fingers on a hand, meaning that the Egyptians were inflicted with 50 plagues at Yam Suf.

12) Tehillim 8:4.

13) Kovetz Teshuvos Chasam Sofer, responsa 26.



גנזי אחרוני אשכנז

This section is dedicated to reprinting the chidushei Torah of the Gedolei Ashkenaz which are no longer in print or are still in manuscript.

רבינו יוסף הס-קוגלמאן

ספר בן פרת יוסף

הפטרות פרשת החודש

כל העם הארץ יהיו אל התרומה הזאת לנשיא בישראל. ועל הנשיא וגו'. כה אמר אדני ה' בראשון באחד לחודש תקח פר בן בקר וחטאת את המקדש. ולקח הכהן מרם החטאת ונתן אל מזוזות הבית ואל ארבע פנות העזרה למזבח ועל מזוזות שער החצר הפנימית. וכן תעשה בשבעה בחדש מאיש שגה ומפתי וכפתרם את הבית: הרד"ק פירש 'לנשיא בישראל' בעבור הנשיא. ונראה לפרש דבריו על פי מה דאמרין בגמרא והכהן הגדול מאחיו גדלוהו משל אחיו בשיתנהו מתנות. וזה הפירוש 'לנשיא' דהיינו מכח רבוי התרומות יתעשר וראוי לנשיא.

ורש"י פירש 'לנשיא' דהיינו מלך. וצריך ביאור למה מכנה המלך בשם נשיא. ונראה לפרש על פי מה דאמרין בשל"ה דמקשי האיך כתוב בנבואת יחזקאל שיהיו צריכים להביא חטאות ואשמות והא איתא במדרש כל הקרבנות בטלית לעתיד חוץ מקרבן תודה, משום דבימים ההם יבטל היצר הרע ויעברו הטומאה והקליפות מן הארץ. ותיריך דמתחילה יהיה בנין בית המקדש על ידי בני אדם דהיינו על ידי משיח בן יוסף, ואז אין בין עולם הזה לימי המשיח רק בנין בית המקדש שיקריבו קרבנותו יהיו עבדים להשם ברוך הוא. ומכח הצדיקים חכותם יבוא משיח בן דוד ואז יקוים כל הנחמות, ולא מתחילה בביאתם לארץ על ידי משיח בן יוסף ע"כ. אם כן הואיל שמלכותו

אינה מלכות שלימה לכן יכונה רק בשם נשיא וק"ל.

ובכן נלכה נא ליישב קושיות הרד"ק דמקשי על הפסוק כה אמר ה' בראשון באחד לחודש תקח פר וגו', דעל כרחק הקרא קאי על בית האחרון. דאין לפרש בבית שני קמייירי, הרי אז התחילו להקריב קרבנות באחד לחודש השביעי ולא בחדש הראשון. ואם כן קשה על המאן דאמר דסבירא ליה במסכת ראש השנה, בראש השנה עתידים לנאול, והאיך שייך לומר דבראש השנה ינאלו והבית לא יבנה עד ניסן. ונראה לפרש דלא קשה מידי דהא עוד יש להקשות דאיתא שם במסכת ראש השנה, ר"א אומר בניסן ננאלו ובתשרי עתידין לנאול דכתיב תקעו בחודש שופר וכתיב ביום ההוא יתקע בשופר גדול, ור"א אומר בניסן עתידין לנאול דכתיב ליל שמורים ליל המשומר מששת ימי בראשית. אם כן אף לר"י יהיה הגאולה ליל פסח ט"ו בניסן, והכא בקרא כתיב באחד לחודש, משמע שיהיה תחילת המלואים בניסן. אכן לפי הנ"ל ינחא הכל דפלוגתיהם קאי על עיקר הגאולה כשיבוא משיח בן דוד למר בתשרי ולמר ליל שמורים. אבל התחלת הגאולה כולי עלמא מודים שיהיה בראש חודש ניסן וק"ל.

אכן זאת צריך לימוד אצלי ליישב סוגיא דראש השנה דאיתא שם, יום הנף כולו אסור מאי טעמא מהרה יבנה בית המקדש ויאמרו אשתקד מי לא אכלנו בהאיר המזרח וכו' ומקשי דאיבני אימת ומסיק דאיבני בחמיסר סמוך לשקיעת החמה או בלילה (ועיין פירש"י שם) ומשמע שיוכל להיות שיבנה בית המקדש בט"ו בניסן ובקרא שלפנינו נאמר שיקריבו בראש חודש ניסן קרבנות מילואים וצ"ע.



Biographies

Rabbeinu Yosef Hess – Kuglemann — Rav Yosef Hess-Kuglemann was born in Meimbressen (Hassen). At a young age he traveled to the great Yeshiva in Fürth and studied under Rav Baruch Rappaport and then, upon the latter's passing, Rav Dovid Strauss. While in Yeshiva, Rav Yosef took on the surname "Hess" after his home-state of Hassen. He quickly rose to the position of Dayan in that illustrious city, and in 1762 he eulogized Rav Dovid Strauss. The eventual successor of Rav Strauss was Rav Yosef Steinhardt, however, in the interim, Rav Yosef Hess took on many leadership roles in the city. Among his disciples was Rav Betzalel Regensburg (author of Chachmas Betzalel). In 1779, Rav Yosef was appointed Av Bais Din of Kassel, where he served for 14 years, until his passing in 1793. This was considered a prestigious position; Kassel was a very wealthy community, and included the noted personality Baron Moshe Meir Rothschild among its residents. Rav Yosef authored numerous works, however, the only work which has survived in its entirety and has been printed is the sefer Bein Poras Yosef. This sefer is a commentary on the Haftoros, and was published posthumously by his son Rav Yitzchak Issac.