



RABBI SHALOM

ROSNER

RAV KEHILLA, OHEL EPHRAIM IN NOFEI HASHEMESH
MAGGID SHIUR, DAF YOMI, OU.ORG
ROSH BAIS MEDRASH ENGLISH SPEAKING PROGRAM JCT MACHON LEV

Mirror Image

וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת הַכִּיּוֹר נְחֹשֶׁת וְאֶת כַּנּוֹ נְחֹשֶׁת בְּמִרְאֵת
הַצְּבָאוֹת אֲשֶׁר צָבְאוּ פָתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
“He made the copper sink and its copper
base out of the mirrors of the legions of wom-
en who gathered at the entrance of the Ohel
Moed” (Shemot 38:8).

When the women donated their mirrors for the Mishkan, Moshe initially hesitated. Rashi explains that Moshe felt these mirrors that were associated with physical appearance were unfit for use in such a holy structure. Hashem responded that these mirrors were precious to Him, for they had been used by the women in Egypt for the most sacred of purposes: to restore hope, dignity, and continuity to Am Yisrael under unbearable oppression. Far from being rejected, they were worthy of being elevated.

The *Ma’ayanah Shel Torah*, citing the Maggid of Mezritch, suggests that embedded within the use of mirrors is a deeper spiritual message. A mirror allows a person to see themselves. So too, when we see faults in others,

we are often being shown something about ourselves. At times, individuals project their own deficiencies outward. Instead of investing our energy in fixing others, we are meant to internalize what we see and ask: *What is this teaching me about who I need to become?*

Perhaps this explains why the mirrors were used specifically in the construction of the *kiyor*. The *kiyor* was used by the Kohanim to purify themselves before serving in the Mikdash. As they washed their hands and feet, they were invited, symbolically, to look deeply into the mirror and ask not only how to cleanse their physical selves, but how to purify their character, intentions, and inner world.

There may be an additional layer as well. When a person brings a *korban* seeking atonement, a Kohen might be tempted, consciously or unconsciously, to question that person’s sincerity. *Wasn’t he here last week? Is this repentance genuine?* To counter such judgment, the Kohen encounters the mirror before performing the service. He is reminded that he, too, is imperfect. He, too, stands in need of compassion, patience, and growth.

A mirror reflects more than an image. It can become a catalyst for humility, introspection, and transformation. The *kiyor* purifies not only the body, but the soul as well.

We live in a world overflowing with mirrors. Mirrors not of glass, but of people. Every interaction reflects something back to us. Every frustration, every criticism, every moment of judgment is an invitation to pause and ask: *What is Hashem showing me about myself?*

In loving memory of
our dear mother
רייזל בת משה יוסף ע"ה
Rosalyn Safer a"h
From her children
Avraham, Robin and Yossi

The Torah teaches us that holiness does not come from perfection, but from honesty. From the courage to look inward before pointing outward. From the humility to cleanse our hands while working on our hearts.

If the mirrors that once reflected pain and survival in Egypt could become vessels of sanctity in the Mishkan, then certainly our own flaws, when met with sincerity, can become tools for growth. When we learn to look into the mirror with compassion rather than criticism, we allow ourselves to serve Hashem not as finished products, but as works in progress. That, perhaps, is the deepest purification of all. ■

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