

The Ladies Gallery

Whoever did not see the "Simchas Beis Hashoeva," says the *mishna*, never saw true *simcha* in his life. In preparation for this great scene of music, singing and dancing which accompanied the drawing of water to be poured on the altar during the offering of the daily morning sacrifice on Succos, a "major adjustment" was made in the *Beis Hamikdash*.

What was this "major adjustment"?

Since there was an interest in enabling women to watch this great celebration, precautions had to be taken to prevent the mingling of men and women. After a couple of experiments in separating them on one level proved unsuccessful, it was decided to build a gallery from which the women could look down upon the proceedings without any danger of contact with the men below. This required building girders into the walls, and each Succos placing boards on them to form the balconies.

But how could they do this, asks the *gemara*, when King David declares (*Divrei Hayamim I 28:19*) that all the exact details of the structure of the *Beis Hamikdash* were recorded in writing on the basis of prophecies from Gad and Nassan, indicating that no adjustments are permitted?

The answer, says the Sage Rav, is that the leaders making this adjustment based themselves on a passage in *Zecharia (12:12)* which stresses the urgency of separating men from women in public gatherings to prevent them from being corrupted.

On the surface it seems that the *gemara* is simply pointing out that in a situation of such emergency the ban on making adjustments in the *Beis Hamikdash* could be relaxed. Maharsha, however, seemed to have been troubled by the idea of an explicit ban on adjustments being suspended in order to accommodate women as spectators. If such accommodation requires building galleries for the *Simchas Beis Hamikdash* service to be complete, then this would constitute an adjustment in the functional structure of the *Beis Hamikdash*, and would be forbidden. But Rashi stresses that the purpose of the adjustment was not to affect the service itself, but to achieve the separation between men and women. This idea of separation is strongly underlined by the Prophet Zecharia as a way of preventing the negative effect of mingling. Since the purpose of the galleries was morality rather than service, concludes Maharsha, it was not included in the ban on adjustments of which King David spoke. The blueprints prophetically handed down to David were perfect, requiring no adjustment. It was human nature that was so imperfect that the separations attempted without galleries proved insufficient, and a "major adjustment" had to be made in order to allow women to watch the *simcha* without their presence creating a spiritual problem.

Succah 51a

The Mountain and the Hair

A scene of weeping that will take place in the end of days is described by the Prophet Zecharia (12:12). One of the Sages interprets this as a reference to the slaughtering by Hashem of the *Yetzer Hara* (Evil Inclination) as both the righteous and the wicked look on.

To the righteous this inciter to evil appears as a huge mountain, while to the wicked he seems like a thin hair. Both groups weep at the sight. The righteous weep as they recall the anguish they experienced in overcoming this force of evil and they wonder how they were able to conquer such a formidable mountain. The wicked weep as they wonder why they were unable to overcome such a thin hair.

How can two people see the same object in such radically different ways?

When the *Yetzer Hara* starts "making his sale" he paints a picture of the mammoth satisfaction his client will enjoy from the sin he is invited to commit, a virtual mountain of pleasure. The client who falls for the pitch of this evil persuader is always disappointed at the tremendous gap between expectation and realization. He realizes that the huge mountain he was promised was nothing more than a thin hair of pleasure.

The righteous encountered and abandoned the *Yetzer Hara* during the stage of mountain-high expectation, so this is how they view him now as they tearfully recollect how difficult it was for them to resist such temptation. The wicked, however, followed the *Yetzer Hara* to the final stage of realization and saw his mountainous promise exposed as hairline illusion. They weep at the realization that they forfeited their eternal reward for nothing more than a thin hair of satisfaction in this world.

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