



Parshas Pekudei, Sanctuary Beyond Structure

**The Parsha Perspective is in honor of Eretz Yisroel. May G-d protect our brave soldiers.
May G-d return all the hostages in Gaza immediately.**

The Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna, Hinda Bas Udl. And in loving memory of Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

Our Parsha begins with Moshe making an accounting of all the gold, silver, and copper that the Jewish nation donated toward the building of the Mishkan. The two foremen in charge of its construction, Betzalel and Aliyev, brought all the completed components to Moshe for inspection.

After reviewing each part, he consecrated them with special oil and placed them in their intended place. He sprinkled his brother, Aaron Hakohen, and his four sons with the same oil to initiate them into the covenant of priesthood.

When Moshe concluded, the cloud of glory appeared, signifying G-d's presence in the Mishkan. The cloud also served as the nation's guide in the desert; when the cloud moved, the people would travel, following it until it stopped, where they would then set up camp.

I previously discussed and wrote about the following question in the Parsha Perspective for Pekudei in 2022. Yet, it is warranted to revisit this question amid the challenges we face today.

The profound lessons embedded in our Torah directly counter the questions many ask themselves today. I hope to share a new perspective that will G-d-willing give us some direction and focus in these confusing times.

The question I previously addressed is that the first Pasuk of Parsha seemingly repeats itself. The Torah writes (38:21) אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן הַמִּשְׁכָּן הַזֶּה "These are the numbers of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of testimony." Why does the Torah, which is normally very concise, use the word Mishkan twice consecutively in the same Pasuk?

The Kli Yakar, Rav Shlomo Ephraim Ben Aaron, the Rabbi of Prague in the early 17th century gives a powerful explanation. He quotes the Midrash Tanchuma (Parshas Pekudei chapter 1) that just as there is a physical Mishkan down on earth, there is a parallel Mishkan in heaven as well. They resemble and mirror each other in holiness, effort and service to G-d.

The Kli Yakar explains that Moshe is teaching the Jewish people that the heavenly Mishkan testifies before G-d how much effort and passion they put into constructing the physical Mishkan. This affirmation continued for 480 years till the building of the Beis Hamikdash in Jerusalem by Shlomo Hamelch. Therefore, it is essential that the physical Mishkan be as magnificent and majestic as possible, as it demonstrates the depth of our love for G-d.

The Kli Yakar continues that when there is no Mishkan or Beis Hamikdash, our drive, struggle, and effort bear witness for us on high. Each time we fight our nature to build character, a deeper level of our soul is revealed as we further develop our connection to G-d.

The Sforno, Rav Ovadiah Sforno, gives a deep perspective that when combined with the above explanation should give a new perspective. He writes that Moshe's Mishkan was superior and superseded all others including both Beis Hamikdash. The Mishkan had a unique characteristic and a distinctive feature that all others were lacking.

Before the Mishkan was created, there was an Ohel Moed - tent of meeting, Moshe would designate a specific place to meet and speak with G-d. It contained none of the holy vessels nor did it have constant service as the Mishkan had each day.

Hence, the Mishkan was superior to the Ohel Moed as a result of its purpose. The Ohel Moed was a site of meeting as opposed to the Mishkan, a home and dwelling for G-d.

The Sforno maintains that Moshe's Mishkan was superior than both Beis Hamikdash as well. He argues that the first Beis Hamikdash was mostly built by non-Jews from the nation of Tzor as detailed in Malachim 2 (22:5). On the hand, Moshe's Mishkan was constructed by expert craftsmen with G-dly wisdom and spirit. The Pasuk writes (Shemos 36:1) *"And Bezael, Oholiav and all skilled people whom G-d has granted wisdom, talent and ability to carry out all the holy work that G-d has commanded."*

The second Beis Hamikdash did not contain the Aron Hakodesh, the holy Ark of the Covenant which Moshe's Mishkan had. The Sforno argues that Moshe's Mishkan was holier and superior to all other places intended for speaking or meeting with G-d. He adds a point that should give us some perspective during these challenging times.

The Sforno continues that Moshe's Mishkan was built during one of the most chaotic times for the Jewish people. Despite experiencing G-d in all His glory with their own eyes, they rebelled and worshiped another in His stead. While the Mishkan served as a testimony of G-d's forgiveness, its goal was to be the nucleus of the Jewish experience.

From connection to repentance, the Mishkan was the essence of our nation's purpose, bringing G-d down to earth. Notwithstanding how temporary the Mishkan was in comparison to the grand beauty of the Beis Hamikdash, Moshe's Mishkan was unparalleled.

It served when the roots of our people were still taking hold, while former slaves were changing the narrative of their story. As a young nation just redeemed from Egypt were shaping their perspective while learning their divine purpose.

Moshe's Mishkan was not as majestic or imposing as the Beis Hamikdash on top of a mountain, it was equally if not greater in its effect on our story. **No matter the actions of the Jewish people, G-d wants in, He desires a place in our hearts and a home here on Earth. He wishes that we seek His holiness despite the mistakes we make, keeping the door open for an everlasting embrace.**

The depth of this lesson is only magnified with the teachings of the Lubavitch Rebbe, Rav Menachem Mendel Schneerson. The Rebbe constantly emphasized that we are the last generation before the ultimate redemption. Despite how low we may feel in comparison to the holiness of previous generations, our actions will be the last nail in the coffin of exile.

**"The foundation of any enduring work is not in its physical form
but in the commitment and spirit of those who bring it to life."**

Have a meaningful Shabbos!

Rabbi Sholom Yemini