

THE MISHKAN AND THE MIKDASH

by Shlomo Katz

Parshas Pekudei

The Mishkan And The Mikdash

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Today's Learning:
Shevi'it 7:4-5
O.C. 326:1-3
Daf Yomi (Bavli): Berachot 12
Daf Yomi (Yerushalmi): Bava Batra 10

In this week's parashah, an accounting of the donations to the Mishkan / Tabernacle is made and the Mishkan is finally assembled. Shortly before the end of the parashah we read (40:35), "Moshe could not enter the Ohel Mo'ed / Tent of Meeting, for the cloud rested upon it, and the glory of Hashem filled the Mishkan." This is followed by three seemingly tangential verses which describe the role of the cloud in informing Bnei Yisrael when to travel, and thus ends Sefer Shmot. The next verse is Vayikra 1:1, which states: "He [Hashem] called to Moshe, and Hashem spoke to him from the Ohel Mo'ed . . ."

R' Yehuda Herzl Henkin shlita (a posek and educator in Israel) asks: Why does the Book of Shmot

end this way? We can understand why Bereishit ends where it does--at that point a line is drawn between the history of the Patriarchs and the history of the nation that came from them. The Books of Vayikra and Bemidbar also have logical conclusions--specifically, both end with the summary, "These are the commandments that Hashem commanded Moshe to [teach] Bnei Yisrael on Har Sinai." But why is the statement at the end of Shmot that Moshe could not enter the Mishkan separated from the statement at the beginning of Vayikra that Hashem called Moshe to enter?

R' Henkin explains: After all the work that Moshe did to bring about the construction and assembly of the Mishkan, we could almost take it for granted that he would be called to enter it. It was coming to him, one might say. One could even think that it was his (Moshe's) Mishkan. That is why the Torah separates the call for Moshe to enter the Mishkan from the story that came before. We are being taught that Hashem called Moshe because He wanted to, not because He had to. Hashem has no need to call to any man, not even one as great as Moshe. (She'eilot U'teshuvot Bnei Banim IV p.131)

"Eleh pekudei / These are the reckonings of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of the Edut / Testimony . . ."
(38:21)

The Midrash notes that the word "Mishkan" alludes to "mashkon" / "collateral." The two-fold use of the word "Mishkan" at the beginning of our parashah alludes to the two Batei Mikdash which were taken away from us as collateral, so-to-speak, for our sins.

Why should the destruction of the Bet Hamikdash be alluded to at the time the Mishkan was being constructed? asks R' Yosef David Sintzheim z"l (see biography below). He answers as follows:

The Mishkan was intended to be an atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf. The Midrash teaches that since Bnei Yisrael sinned using the word "Eleh" / "These" (as in Shmot 32:4--"These are your gods, Yisrael"), their atonement came through the word "Eleh" (referring to the first word in our parashah). In the future, too, the word "Eleh" will be used, says the Midrash, specifically referring to Yishayah 48:12--"Eleh" / "These will come from afar [at the time of the ingathering of the Diaspora]." The commentary Yefei To'ar explains the message of this latter Midrash to be that since Hashem said that He would remember the sin of the Golden Calf and mete out punishment for it a little bit at a time, we might fear that it will not be forgotten even at the time of the future redemption. Therefore the Midrash assures us that the atonement that began with the construction of the Mishkan ("Eleh Pekudei") will be completed in the future ("Eleh . . .").

R' Sintzheim concludes, answering his original question of why the destruction of the Bet Hamikdash should be alluded to at the time the Mishkan was being constructed: In the interim, however, before the atonement is complete, the sin of the Golden Calf will cause the destruction of the two Temples. The word "pekudei" (as in our verse, "Eleh pekudei") means "accounting," but it can also mean "missing." It refers to the two Temples that will be missing from us until the sin of the Golden Calf is

ultimately erased.

Understood in this light, our verse is alluding not just to the destruction of the two Batei Mikdash, but to the entire process of atonement of which the Mishkan is but one part. Why is the Mishkan called the "Mishkan of the Edut / Testimony"? Because it testifies to the unfolding of the process just described.

(Shelal David)

"These are the reckonings of Ha'mishkan / the Tabernacle, the Mishkan of Ha'edut / the Testimony, which were reckoned at Moshe's bidding . . ." (38:21)

Rabbeinu Bachya z"l (Spain; 14th century) writes: The gematria of "Ha'mishkan" together with the five letters of that word equals 420, the number of years that our Sages say the Second Temple stood.

The gematria of "Mishkan" equals 410, the number of years that the First Temple stood.

The gematria of "Ha'edut" equals 479, the number of years that the Mishkan stood. [We read in Sefer Melachim that the First Temple was built 480 years after the Exodus. The Mishkan was dedicated one year after the Exodus.]

R' Moshe Sofer z"l (the Chatam Sofer; died 1840) asks: Why are the 420 years of the second Bet Hamikdash alluded to by a word whose gematria is only 415, such that we must add the five letters of the word to arrive at the total? He answers: The Gemara (Yoma 52b) relates that five elements of the First Temple were missing in the Second Temple. (For example, the Aron Ha'kodesh was missing.) These are alluded to by the value "five" that is missing from the above gematria.

(Torat Moshe)

"These are the reckonings of the Mishkan / Tabernacle . . ." (38:21)

The Midrash Tanchuma relates: Moshe said, "I know that Bnei Yisrael are complainers. Therefore, I will give an accounting of all of the donations that were given to the Mishkan." However, he forgot what he had done with 1,775 shekel, and he felt bad. Later Hashem enlightened him, and he felt better. Then he announced in a loud voice (verse 28), "And from the one thousand seven hundred seventy- five [shekel] he made hooks for the pillars, covered their tops and banded them."

Why did Moshe make an accounting? He heard people saying, "If someone was in charge of thousands of talents of silver and thousands of talents of gold, is it any wonder that he is rich?" [Thus concludes the Midrash.]

R' Chaim Moshe Reuven Elazary z"l (rabbi in Ohio in the mid-20th century) observes: From this we learn the extent to which a public official or one who is entrusted with the public's funds should go to avoid any appearance of impropriety. Surely only a few cynics questioned Moshe's integrity! Nevertheless, even to silence those few, Moshe gave a full accounting of the Mishkan's assets.

(Netivei Chaim)

R' Yosef David Sintzheim z"l

R' Yosef David Sintzheim was born in approximately 1736 to R' Yitzchak Isaac Sintzheim, rabbi of Treves (Trier) and Niederheim (Niedernai) in the Alsace region on the border between France and Germany. Young Yosef David's primary teacher in Torah was his father, and he also studied under R' Shmuel Hillman-Halpern, rabbi of Metz. (R' Hillman-Halpern's predecessor in Metz was R' Yehonatan Eyebchutz, and his successor was the author of the Sha'agat Aryeh, which gives some indication of both the quality of R' Hillman-Halpern himself and of the strength of Torah study in France in that era.)

At the age of 20, the younger R' Sintzheim married Esther Medelsheim, whose brother Naftali Herz (a/k/a Cerf Berr de Medelsheim) was the official provider of grain to the French royal court. Through the access that this role gave him, Cerf Berr served his brethren as an active lobbyist for Jewish causes. For example, since the 1600s, Jews entering the city of Strasbourg had been required to pay a head tax equal to the tax that non-Jews paid to bring cattle into the city. Through Cerf Berr's intercession with Louis XVI, this tax was abolished in 1784. Cerf Berr also used his considerable wealth to sponsor the publication of a number of significant sefarim / Torah works.

In 1778, Cerf Berr established a yeshiva in Bischeim (near Strasbourg), and he appointed his brother-in-law R' Sintzheim to be rosh yeshiva. It was also at this time that R' Sintzheim began composing his monumental Talmud commentary Yad David.

The rampant anti-Semitism in Alsace did not deter R' Sintzheim from studying and teaching Torah and continuing to write his many sefarim. With the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, conditions for the Jews improved briefly, but that respite was short-lived and was followed by Robespierre's "Reign of Terror." Officially, the Reign of Terror was directed only against Catholics; however, local officials used the occasion to again unleash their rabid hatred for the Jews. - To be continued -

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The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ('lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah'), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives at **Torah.org** start with

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