

## Parshas Pekudei

*Rabbi Ari Kellerman*

As we come to the end of Sefer Shemos, the Mishkan is finally completed and ready for use. It may be worthwhile at this point to take a step back from the details of poles, sockets, and hooks to consider the purpose of the Mishkan as a whole. Many theories are proposed, but none compel me like the approach of the Midrash Tanchuma on Parshas Pekudei which compares the construction of the Mishkan to the creation of the world.

The similarities between the two accounts are striking if you pay attention. The Midrash parallels each day of creation with a different feature of the Mishkan, comparing the various korbanos to the animals of creation, the waters of the washing basin to the waters of creation, and even likening the Kohen Gadol to Adam HaRishon.

But the comparisons go much deeper; in creating the world, Hashem is mavdil, or separates, three times: light from darkness, waters above the firmament from waters below the firmament, and day from night. The Mishkan was built with three separations as well: Kodesh HaKodashim from Kodesh, Kodesh from the chatzer (courtyard), and the chatzer from the rest of the camp.

The keruvim play a prominent role in both stories as well. They guard the entrance of Gan Eden after Adam's sin, as well as protect each holy region of the heichal. It is for this reason that in addition to being mounted atop the Aron Kodesh, the image of the keruvim was also embroidered onto the paroches and the curtain at the entrance to the Kodesh.

There are other similarities, but why? Why would Hashem want us to recreate a scenario which ended in such tragedy for mankind? I believe the Midrash here is hinting to the ultimate goal of the Mishkan – perhaps it is a tikkun, or some sort of repair, for Adam's sin. Let me explain.

By building the Mishkan, we are engaging in the same creative actions as did Hashem when he created the world. In fact, the physical actions done in these stories are referred to by the same term: melachah. Hashem created Gan Eden in order for mankind to be close to Hashem and receive His brachos. The Mishkan is built for the

invite Hashem's presence in to reclaim that relationship that was lost.

In Bereishis the keruvim serve as a barrier, keeping us from reuniting with Hashem's presence. In the Mishkan, the keruvim are the place from which Hashem communicates with Moshe, enhancing our relationship with Him. The keruvim in the Mishkan also served as a barometer of that ongoing relationship – letting B'nei Yisrael know if they were veering off course.

The opportunity that the Mishkan provided for B'nei Yisrael was one of closeness to Hashem and strict adherence to His commandments. We are told many times throughout Sefer Vayikra that

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*“We now build a home of our own,  
and invite Hashem's presence in”*

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exact same purpose – so B'nei Yisrael can serve Hashem and be closer to Him. But in Bereishis, Adam doesn't heed Hashem's law and is expelled. He rejected Hashem's commandment, and so is rejected by Hashem in kind.

You may notice as you read through the second half of Sefer Shemos, a phrase which appears a seemingly unnecessary amount of times with regard to the Mishkan's construction: 'Ka'asher tziva Hashem es Moshe', every step of the Mishkan was built "just as Hashem commanded Moshe". The Torah is emphasizing how much attention the Jewish people paid to Hashem's commandments this time, in contrast to the last time there was a creation this important. Hashem had to kick Adam out of his home so we now build a home of our own, and

the violation of rules governing the service in the Mishkan were punished harshly. But for non-Kohanim and Leviim as well, the Mishkan provided the opportunity to follow all of Hashem's mitzvos more closely. With the ability to bring korbanos, Jews were now responsible on a deeper level for their own mistakes in observance.

With the absence of a Mishkan today, we certainly feel that lack of accountability as Hashem has kicked us out once again. The closest thing we have is our shul, our mikdash me'at. May our prayers here bring about a time when we can once again invite Hashem properly into our camp so that we may rekindle the closeness we once shared with Him. ♦

*Good Shabbos!*