

The
CHASSIDUS
PERSPECTIVE
with Reb Yoel Kahn



To watch this on video, visit:
MerkazAnash.com/cp/pekudei5779

Prepared by
Rabbi Yehudah Leib Altein

THE CLOSENESS OF GOLUS

Parshas Pekudei begins with the words, "These are the tallies of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of the Testimony." Why does the *possuk* state "Mishkan" twice? Rashi explains that the word *mishkan* is related to the word *mashkon*, collateral. The double language thus hints to the two Batei Mikdashos that were taken from the Jews as collateral due to their sins.

Why is it important to hint to the destruction of the two Batei Mikdashos now, when the Mishkan is first being erected?

The Alter Rebbe explains in Likkutei Torah that the word *pekudei*, reckonings, can also be used in the context of the intimate connection between husband and wife. (As an example, the Alter Rebbe quotes Chazal's directive that "A person is obligated *lifkod*, to be intimate, with his wife before leaving on a journey.") The Mishkan thus represents the deep bond between Hashem and Bnei Yisroel, similar to the union of marriage.

There is a well-known principle that whenever a single verse carries multiple interpretations, the various explanations are interrelated. How does this apply to the explanations of Rashi and the Alter Rebbe? To the contrary: While the Alter Rebbe's explanation emphasizes the higher aspects of the Mishkan, Rashi focuses on the fact that it was taken away from us due to our sins!

ONLY THROUGH SIN?!

The purpose of the Mishkan was to serve as a place where Hashem's presence could dwell. Now, there are many levels in the extent of the *shechinah's* revelation, and the Mishkan was merely the first step in this process. First came the Mishkan, which was a "temporary" dwelling place for Hashem; next came the two Batei Mikdashos, which were "permanent" dwelling places; and finally will be the third Beis Hamikdash, where Hashem's presence will be revealed in an even greater manner.

Therefore, immediately at the erection of the Mishkan, the *possuk* alludes to (the destruction of the two Batei Mikdashos, which led to) the third Beis Hamikdash. With this, the Torah is telling us that the concept of *veshachanti besocham* as it existed in the Mishkan is only the beginning, and will reach its perfection in the third Beis Hamikdash.

It follows that the third Beis Hamikdash will only be achieved through the sins that led to the destruction of the first two. How can this be?

Although a person is endowed with free will, and it is he who chooses to sin *chas veshalom*, this too is by Divine Providence. Obviously, Hashem abhors evil, and does not want us to choose that path. But the fact that He allows for such a choice to exist demonstrates that it, too, has a purpose—so that we can reach the heights that can only be achieved through *teshuvah*, which are greater than what a *tzaddik* can ever attain.

Similarly, although we were sent to exile because of our sins, there is a deeper reason behind it—to ultimately lead to the level of Divine Presence that will be revealed in the third Beis Hamikdash.

FOOD AND CLOTHING

A husband is required to supply his wife with three things: food, clothing, and intimacy. These three elements reflect three levels of G-dliness that Hashem (the "husband") grants to Bnei Yisroel (the "wife").

Food is consumed and internalized. This represents a lower level of G-dliness that can be internalized within a person. Clothing, by contrast, surround a person. This represents a higher level that cannot be internalized, "surrounding" the person instead. Yet, this level affects the person even more than the first level. (Indeed, R. Yochanan would call his clothing "those that honor me," a concept that is not achieved with food.)

These two levels correspond to *mitzvos aseï* (positive *mitzvos*) and *mitzvos lo saaseh* (negative *mitzvos*). When a person does a *mitzvas aseï*, the action serves as a vessel that receives the divine light that is drawn through the *mitzvah*. By contrast, the energy that is drawn through a *mitzvas lo saaseh* is too great to be received in a vessel, and therefore cannot be elicited through action.

The *Tikkunei Zohar* states that *mitzvos aseï* are associated with the last two letters of Hashem's name, *vav* and *hei*, while *mitzvos lo saaseh* are associated with the first two letters of *yud* and *hei*. The *possuk* states, "הַנִּסְתָּרוֹת . . . וְהַגְּלוּת" – the

hidden...and the revealed." The word *וְהַגְּלוּת* is comprised of the two words *וְהַ* גלוּת, "the letters *vov* and (second) *hei* are revealed," while *הַנִּסְתָּרוֹת* tells us that הַנִּסְתָּרוֹת – not only the *yud*, but even the (first) *hei* is concealed. Thus, *mitzvos lo saaseh* relate to a much higher level of G-dliness, which cannot be tapped through action.

The fact that Hashem allows the choice of evil to exist demonstrates that it, too, has a purpose.

REVEALING THE ESSENCE

The third element is intimacy. Food, and even clothing, are specific things the husband gives to his wife. Intimacy, by contrast, is where the essence of the husband is unleashed, reaching the essence of the wife.

The same applies to the connection between Hashem and Bnei Yisroel. Food and clothing represent the specific revelations that are achieved through *mitzvos aseï* and *mitzvos lo saaseh*. Intimacy, however, reflects a boundless revelation that comes from Hashem's essence, which we similarly receive in a deep and profound way. This level is achieved (not through *mitzvos*, whether positive or negative, but) through *teshuvah*.

This concept is expressed in a *halachah* regarding intimacy: "If a husband says, 'I will remain clothed and she will remain clothed,' she may demand a divorce." Intimacy reflects the revelation of Hashem's essence that is beyond the external level of "clothing." And despite the greatness of the revelation, it is received internally, reaching a level that is deeper than "clothing."

HASHEM'S JOURNEY AND THE KERUVIM

It turns out that the deepest level of "intimacy" is attained only through *teshuvah*—namely, only once someone has sinned!

The Alter Rebbe hints to this idea by citing the statement of Chazal, "A person is obligated to be intimate with his wife before leaving on a journey." The "journey" alludes to *golus*, when the *shechinah* has returned Above and Hashem has "left" on a lengthy "journey." However, deeper probing reveals that *golus* is when Hashem is "intimate" with his wife, *Knesses Yisroel*. This is because the sins that caused *golus* lead to *teshuvah*, which achieves the revelation of Hashem's essence.

This explains a baffling story related in Gemara. When Titus *yimach shemo* entered the Kodsh Hakodashim, he saw the *keruvim* united together as husband and wife. He proceeded to remove them and display them throughout the world, mocking, "Look at what this nation serves!"

We know that when the Jews would fulfill Hashem's will, the *keruvim* would face each other and join together, and when they would not, they would turn away from each other. How can it be that at the time of the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, and moreover—when the evil Titus entered the Kodsh Hakodashim, the *keruvim* would be in such a format?!

The answer is that although it was a time of terrible destruction, the inner intent of it all was to achieve the revelation of Hashem's essence—not just "food" and "clothing," but also "intimacy."

RETURNING COLLATERAL


We can now understand the connection between the above seemingly opposite explanations: that of Rashi (that the first *possuk* of Parshas Pekudei hints to the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash due to our sins), and that of the Alter Rebbe (that the same verse alludes to the intimate union between Hashem and Bnei Yisroel).

Both interpretations highlight the inner purpose of the *churban* and *golus*. Rashi compares the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash to taking collateral. When a borrower gives collateral, the lender must eventually return the item in the same condition as when he received it. Similarly, the purpose of the *churban* is so that Hashem will return the Beis Hamikdash—not just as it was when He took it (as with collateral), but even greater and better than before.

The Alter Rebbe adds insight into the nature of the high level that Hashem will "return" to us: we will internalize the revelation of Hashem's essence, experiencing the intimate bond between Him and His nation.

For further study, see *maamar d"h Eileh pekudei* 5730.

Deeper probing reveals that *golus* is when Hashem is "intimate" with his wife, *Knesses Yisroel*.



merkazanash.com
info@merkazanash.com
347.471.1770

Dedicated in honor of
the tireless director of Sichos In English
Rabbi Yonah Avtzon עי"ה
who led the way in disseminating
English Chassidus
by his children
Rabbi Yitzchok and Chanie Wolf שי"ח