



“These are the accountings of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of Testimony”

The Mishkan Erected by Moshe Rabeinu Was Stored under the Cavern of the Heichal It Acts as a Source of Kedushah for the Three Batei Mikdash

This Shabbas Kodesh we conclude sefer Shemos, the second chumash, with the reading of parshas Pekudei. In this essay, we will focus on the opening passuk of the parsha (Shemos 38, 21): **“אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדות:—these are the accountings of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of Testimony, that were ordered by Moshe to be counted—the work of the leviim, overseen by Itamar, the son of Aharon HaKohen.**

In his own inimitable way, Rashi explains the repetition of the term **“משכן”** as follows: **The word (“Mishkan”) is stated twice as an allusion to the Mikdash, which was taken as collateral (“mashkon”) in its two churbans on account of the sins of Yisrael.** We find a source in the Midrash (S.R. 51, 3):

Why is the word “Mishkan” written twice? Rabbi Shmuel bar Marta said: Because it was taken as collateral two times because of them (the sins of Yisrael). This is the meaning of that which the Anshei Kenesses HaGedolah said (Nechemiah 1, 7): “We have given You a collateral for we have not observed the mitzvos and the precepts and the laws You commanded Your servant Moshe.” What is the significance of the double expression “חבול חבלנו”? It alludes to the fact that it (the Beis HaMikdash) was taken as a collateral twice. The term “chavol” refers exclusively to a collateral, as it says (Devarim 24, 6): “One should not take an upper or lower stone as a collateral.” Therefore, it is written: “These are the accountings of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of Testimony,” with the term “Mishkan” mentioned twice.

This is indeed surprising! After all, parshas Pekudei is the fifth and last of the parshiyos detailing the construction of the Mishkan and its vessels—Terumah, Tetzaveh, Ki Sisa, Vayakheil, and Pekudei. Yet, specifically in its opening passuk extolling the virtue of Moshe Rabeinu, who oversaw the construction of the Mishkan, did HKB”H choose to inform us with the repetition of the term **“Mishkan”** that He was destined to take the two Batei-Mikdash as collaterals.

Furthermore, the Mishkan itself built by Moshe Rabeinu in the midbar was never destroyed and was not taken as a collateral even once. Only the first Beis HaMikdash built by Shlomo HaMelech and the second Beis HaMikdash built by Ezra HaSofer were taken as collaterals. So, why did HKB”H allude to this here at the completion of the building of the Mishkan? Furthermore, how are we to make sense of the continuation of the passuk: **“אשר פוקד על פי משה”**? Was this double-collateral taken because Moshe ordered the accountings?

Shlomo HaMelech a Nitzotz of Moshe Rabeinu Hid the Mishkan beneath the Heichal

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by introducing a teaching from Chazal: It was impossible for Yisrael’s enemies to capture or destroy the Mishkan, because it was the handiwork of Moshe Rabeinu. Here is the pertinent Gemara (Sotah 9a):

“דרש רבי חנינא בר פפא, מאי דכתיב רננו צדיקים בה’ לישרים נאווה תהלה, אל תקרי נאווה תהלה אלא נווה תהלה, זה משה ודוד שלא שלטו שונאיהם במעשיהם, דוד דכתיב טבעו בארץ שעריה, משה דאמר מר משנבנה מקדש ראשון נגזז אהל מועד קרשיו קרסיו ובריחיו ועמודיו ואדניו.”

Rabbi Chinana bar Pappa expounded: What is the meaning of that which is written (Tehillim 33, 1): "Sing joyfully tzaddikim because of Hashem; for the upright praise is fitting"? Do not read it as praise is "fitting," but rather as "a palace of" praise. This refers to Moshe and David, for their enemies did not gain control of their handiwork. Of David, for it is written (Eichah 2, 9): "Its gates sunk in the earth." Regarding Moshe, the master said: When the first Mikdash was built, the Ohel Mo'ed was hidden—its beams, its hooks, its bars, its pillars and its sockets. The Gemara goes on to inquire where the components of the Mishkan were hidden: "אמר רב חסדא אמר אבימי, תחת מחילות של היכל"—Rav Chisda said in the name of Avimi: Under the tunnels of the Heichal.****

Thus, we learn an incredible chiddush! The Mishkan that Moshe Rabeinu built in the midbar remains hidden beneath the tunnels of the Heichal of the first Bayis built by Shlomo HaMelech. It also remained there when the second Bayis was built, and it remains there until this very day. Thus, it remains there throughout the years of galus until the third Beis HaMikdash will be built, swiftly, in our times.

I would now like to propose a novel idea with the utmost reverence. Shlomo HaMelech intentionally hid and stored the Mishkan under the tunnels of the Heichal; it is analogous to a man sowing seeds in the ground to grow grain and fruit. He intended for the Mishkan built by Moshe Rabeinu, with his supreme kedushah and exalted intent, to lie in the ground like roots imparting kedushah to the Beis HaMikdash in Eretz Yisrael. So, just like the roots of a tree sustain its branches and its fruit; in similar fashion, the incredible kedushah of the Mishkan imparted kedushah to the first and second Batei Mikdash.

We can reinforce this idea with a teaching from our master, the Arizal, in Sefer HaGilgulim (Chapter 64): **Shlomo HaMelech was a "nitzotz" of Moshe Rabeinu, a**h. Therefore, when Shlomo HaMelech, a spark from the neshamah of Moshe Rabeinu, built the first Beis HaMikdash, he strived to tap into the kedushah of Moshe Rabeinu to extend the kedushah Moshe invested in the Mishkan to the Beis HaMikdash.

"They shall make Me a Mikdash, so that I may dwell among them" Alludes to the Mishkan that Was Hidden beneath the Two Batei Mikdash

In this manner, we can reconcile the command of HKB"H related to the building of the Mishkan (Shemos 25, 8): **"ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם"—they shall make Me a Mikdash, so that I may dwell among them.** Regarding this passuk, the Sifre teaches (Beha'aloscha 34): **Wherever it says "to Me"—"לי"—it implies that it will exist forevermore.** Regarding the kohanim, He says (ibid. 28, 41): **"They shall be kohanim to Me."** Regarding the leviim, He says (Bamidbar 3, 12): **"And the leviim shall be Mine (to Me)."** Regarding Yisrael, he says (Vayikra 25, 55): **"Bnei Yisrael are slaves to Me."** Regarding the firstborn, He says (Bamidbar 8, 17): **"For every firstborn of Bnei Yisrael was Mine (to me)."** Regarding the Mikdash, He says: **"They shall make a Mikdash for Me."**

The commentaries are perplexed by the conclusion of this excerpt. How can the Midrash expound the word **"לי"** in our passuk--**"ועשו לי מקדש"**—to imply that the Mikdash will endure for all eternity? After all, the Mikdash was only extant in the midbar. Then, when Bnei Yisrael entered Eretz Yisrael, HKB"H rested His Shechinah in the Beis HaMikdash and not in the Mishkan. As explained, the Mishkan was stored away and was not used anymore.

Notwithstanding, we can reconcile this difficulty as follows: Shlomo HaMelech hid and planted the Mishkan, so to speak, in a cavern beneath the Heichal, so that the kedushah of Moshe Rabeinu would serve as a source of kedushah for the Beis HaMikdash. Thus, the holy command: **"ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם"**—remained in effect forever in its full glory. For, the kedushah of the Shechinah that HKB"H rested in the Mishkan was extended to the first two Batei-Mikdash and will also continue to exist in the third Beis HaMikdash that will be built on the same site.

This explains magnificently the Gemara's statement (Eiruvim 2a): **"אשכחן מקדש דאיקרי משכן ומשכן דאיקרי מקדש"—we find that the Mikdash is sometimes called a Mishkan and the Mishkan is sometimes called a**

Mikdash. This prompts the Gemara to ask: **בשלמא** "מקדש דאיכרי משכן, דכתיב ונתתי משכני בתוכם, אלא משכן דאיכרי מקדש מנלן... מהכא ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם." **Granted the Mikdash is called a Mishkan, as it is written** (Vayikra 26, 11): **"I will place My Mishkan in your midst."** (Rashi: When this was said, the Mishkan had already been built. Hence, the passuk must be referring to the future Mikdash.) **But where do we find that the Mishkan is called a Mikdash? . . . Rather, it is from here: "And they shall make Me a Mikdash, so that I may dwell in their midst."**

Nevertheless, why do we need two interchangeable names—Mishkan and Mikdash? Based on what we have been discussing, the answer is simple! HKB"H wanted Moshe Rabeinu to know that the Mishkan, which was built with his supreme kedushah to draw the presence of the Shechinah to it, would endure forevermore. For, as mentioned above, it was destined to be buried beneath the Heichal to serve as a source of kedushah and dwelling of the Shechinah for all future Batei Mikdash.

Let us plug this idea into the passuk: **"ועשו לי מקדש"**—they shall make a Mishkan **"for Me"** that will also be called a **Mikdash** that will exist forever. And why is the Mishkan called a **Mikdash**, which suggests a permanent location? Because the purpose of building the Mishkan was so that **"I may dwell in their midst."** The passuk does not say **"in it"** (in the singular) but rather **"in their midst"** ("among them" in the plural). From this we learn that HKB"H was destined to also rest His Shechinah in both Batei Mikdash due to the kedushah of the Mishkan that would be hidden and stored in a cavern beneath the Heichal.

This also explains why HKB"H referred to the future Beis HaMikdash as a Mishkan when He said: **"ונתתי משכני בתוכם"**. He was alluding to the fact that He was destined to place the Mishkan built by Moshe in the midbar as a resting place for the Shechinah **"בתוכם"**—in the two Batei Mikdash.

At this point, it behooves us to dispel a misconception. According to the Gemara (Yoma 21b), one of the five things that were absent in the second Beis HaMikdash was the dwelling of the Shechinah. Rabeinu Bachaye addresses this issue in parshas Vayigash (Bereishis

46, 27). He explains that the Shechinah was most definitely present in the second Beis HaMikdash but just not to the degree that it was in the first Beis HaMikdash. Also, it did not dwell there consistently as it did in the first Beis HaMikdash.

The Third Beis HaMikdash Will Incorporate the First Two Batei Mikdash

Following this enlightening path, we will now return to the opening passuk of our parsha: **אלה בקודי המשכן משכן** "העדות אשר פוקד על פי משה". We introduced the elucidation in the Midrash: **Why is the word "Mishkan" written twice? Rabbi Shmuel bar Marta said: Because it was taken as collateral two times because of them.** We will endeavor to explain why Scripture refers to the two churbans in terms of a "collateral"—**"mashkon."** A collateral is an item that a lender (creditor) takes from a borrower (debtor), which he intends to return when the latter pays off his debt. So, how does this apply to the two Batei Mikdash that were destroyed and burnt? In what way do they represent a **"mashkon"** that HKB"H is destined to return to us?

I believe that HKB"H was alluding to us a fascinating fact taught in the Zohar hakadosh (Pinchas 221a) apropos the passuk (Tehillim 147b): **"בונה ירושלים ה'—the builder of Yerushalayim is Hashem.** This passuk relates to the third Beis HaMikdash le'asid la'vo that we await with great anticipation. It will not be built by man—for then it will not endure—but rather by HKB"H. Furthermore, the third Beis HaMikdash will incorporate both of the previous Batei Mikdash. The second Beis HaMikdash will stand upon the ground in its full glory and splendor in full view, while the first Beis HaMikdash will stand on top of it concealed—like clouds of glory surrounding and illuminating it. Here is the excerpt from the Zohar hakadosh:

"ולעתיד לבוא כתוב בונה ירושלים ה', הוא ולא אחר, ולבנין זה אנו מחכים, ולא בנין בידי אדם שאין לו עמידה כלל. בית ראשון ובית שני יוריד אותם הקב"ה כאחד מלמעלה, בית ראשון מכוסה ובית שני בגלוי. אותו בית יהיה בגלוי שנקרא בית שני, שיראה לכל העולם אומנתו של הקב"ה, שמחה שלימה ורצון הלב בכל קיומו. אותו בית ראשון מכוסה יסתלק למעלה על גבי הבית הגלוי, וכל העולם יראו ענני הכבוד המקיפים על הבית שבגלוי, ובתוך אותם העננים יהיה הבית הראשון במעשה נסתר שעולה עד רום כבוד השמים, ולבנין הזה אנו מחכים."

With this understanding, we can suggest a very nice interpretation of the continuation of the passuk: **“בונה ירושלים ה' נדחי ישראל יכנס”—the builder of Yerushalayim is Hashem; the outcasts of Yisrael, He will gather in.** This implies that the third Beis HaMikdash will **“gather in”—i.e., incorporate—the two Batei Mikdash, “the outcasts,”** that were built by the hands of Yisrael and were consequently destroyed. In other words, the third Beis HaMikdash will be all-inclusive.

The First Two Batei Mikdash Paved the Way for the Third Beis HaMikdash

With great pleasure, we will now introduce an illuminating insight from the Yismach Moshe (Tetzaveh). He comments on the following passuk (ibid. 127, 1): **“שיר המעלות לשלמה אם ה' לא יבנה בית שוא עמלו בוניו בו.”** **A song of ascents for Shlomo: If Hashem will not build the house, the builders will have labored in vain.** Note that initially the word **“בונה”—“He will build”—**appears in the future tense; whereas, later in the passuk, the word **“עמלו”—“they labored”—**appears in the past tense.

In his own, sacred, inimitable way, he explains that the world was incapable and not ready to receive the immense kedushah of the third Beis HaMikdash. Hence, it was necessary to pave the way for it with the respective kedushahs of the first two Batim. The fact that that level of kedushah once blessed the world, will enable us to receive the incredible kedushah of the third Beis HaMikdash.

He explains: We need to address the question that troubled our predecessors. Were the first two Batei Mikdash that were destroyed totally for naught, chas v'chalilah, or did they serve some unknown purpose? The matter can be understood based on the following parable: A man plants seed for an exotic tree; once it blossoms and begins to bear fruit, he uproots the tree. In its place, he plants seed for a second tree; once again, he waits until it bears fruit and then uproots it, as well. Now, he acquires seed for a tree of indescribable quality and beauty. This time, he plants it and cares for it so that it will last forever. During the uprooting of the first two, beautiful, seemingly healthy trees, observers could not comprehend what this fellow was up to nor what his reasoning might be.

The fellow, himself, explained to them that all of his actions were founded on a sound, well thought out plan. Even the first two trees and their uprooting were ultimately for the sake of the survival and long-term existence of the third tree. The land, however, was not initially suited to sustain a tree of that nature and quality. Therefore, a gradual process needed to be employed, preparing the ground for its ultimate purpose. Once the soil achieved the richness and quality necessary to sustain a tree that could endure forever, the third tree was planted—the tree that was intended from the very start.

In a similar fashion, the Almighty intended all along to build the third Beis HaMikdash in its indescribable brilliance and splendor. Knowing, in His infinite Wisdom, that this physical, material world, could not, initially, sustain such a spiritual, holy structure, it was necessary to institute a gradual process involving the first two Batei HaMikdash. Thanks to their existence and the holy service that took place on their grounds over hundreds of years, the land acquired the spiritual potential and quality necessary to sustain and house the sanctity of the third Beis HaMikdash—the handiwork of the Creator, a Bayis that will outshine its predecessors and endure forever.

Hence, to strengthen our belief that the third Beis HaMikdash will certainly be built, David HaMelech said: **“אם ה' לא יבנה בית שוא עמלו בוניו בו.”** In other words, it is inconceivable that Hashem will not build the third Beis HaMikdash in the future. If not for His divine plan to build a third Bayis in their place, more magnificent than the first two, why did Hashem bother building and destroying the first two?! That would mean that the first two were built for naught: **“שוא עמלו בוניו בו.”** To think such a thing would be sacrilege and utter nonsense. Rather, we must believe with absolute certainty that HKB”H will build the third Beis HaMikdash in the near future, and that the first two Batei HaMikdash served as essential preparations for its eventual construction.

In summary, HKB”H arranged for Shlomo HaMelech to build the first Beis HaMikdash independently—a structure with a level of kedushah that the world was capable of receiving. Subsequently, He arranged for the building of the second Beis HaMikdash independently—also something that the world was capable of receiving.

After the two of them illuminated the world with their respective, incredible kedushahs, the world will be able to receive their combined illumination when the time for the future geulah is at hand. At that time, HKB"H will build the third Beis HaMikdash incorporating the two Batei Mikdash that already adorned the world.

The First Two Batei Mikdash Served as Collaterals HKB"H Will Return Them in the Third Beis HaMikdash

Indeed, our enemies prevailed over the wood and stones of the first two Batei Mikdash; they succeeded in burning and destroying their physical structures. Yet, just as they were incapable of exerting their powers of destruction over the physical Mishkan—Moshe's handiwork—all the more so that they were incapable of affecting the kedushah that he imparted to the Mishkan. And since Shlomo HaMelech stored the Mishkan under the tunnels of the Heichal, to impart its kedushah to the two Batei Mikdash, their kedushahs remain in effect forevermore. Furthermore, they will glorify the third Beis HaMikdash that HKB"H is destined to build.

This explains magnificently the passage in the Midrash (Eichah Rabbah 4, 15) related to the passuk (ibid. 79, 1): "מזמור לאסף אלקים באו גוים בנחלתך... אמרו לאסף, הקב"ה החריב היכל ומקדש ואתה יושב ומזמר, אמר להם מזמר אני ששפך הקב"ה חמתו על העצים ועל האבנים ולא שפך חמתו על ישראל." **"A psalm to Assaf: O G-d! The nations have entered into your inheritance." . . . This is what they said to Assaf: "HKB"H destroyed the Heichal and the Mikdash, and you are sitting around and composing songs?" He (Assaf) replied: "I am rejoicing that HKB"H poured out His wrath upon wooden beams and stones rather than upon Yisrael."** Let us suggest an interpretation in keeping with our current discussion. HKB"H poured out His wrath on the external structure of the Beis HaMikdash, which was not the handiwork of Moshe Rabeinu. The internal kedushah within the Beis HaMikdash, however, which emanated from the Mishkan that was built by Moshe, remained thoroughly intact.

We can now appreciate why HKB"H referred to the destruction of the two Batei Mikdash as a double collateral—"mashkon, mashkon." He is teaching

us that the churban applied only to the physical structures—the wood and stones—of the two Batim. Their internal, inherent kedushah, extending from the Mishkan, remained thoroughly intact like a **"collateral."** Therefore, at the time of the future geulah, HKB"H will return the two collaterals with the building of the third Beis HaMikdash that will include the kedushahs of Bayis Rishon and Bayis Sheini.

This illuminates for us the reason that HKB"H chose to inform us in this week's parsha, parshas Pekudei, that the kedushah of the Mishkan, the handiwork of Moshe, was beyond the reach of our enemies—that its kedushah is everlasting, even within the two Batei Mikdash in Eretz Yisrael. This then is the message of the passuk: **"אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדות אשר פוקד על פי משה"**—and Rashi's comment that the word **"Mishkan"** is mentioned twice as an allusion the **Mikdash** that was taken as a **"mashkon"** twice by means of the two churbans on account of Yisrael's sins.

Based on what we have learned, HKB"H is informing us that in the merit of the Mishkan that was ordered and overseen by Moshe, which was beyond the reach of our enemies, HKB"H is destined to restore the kedushahs of the two Batei Mikdash that were destroyed solely as collaterals. This will happen when the third Beis HaMikdash will be built incorporating the first two Batei Mikdash. For, as explained, their kedushah is drawn from the kedushah of the Mishkan that is extant forever. Hence, the Torah goes on to explain why the two Batei Mikdash were able to serve as collaterals that HKB"H is destined to return to us: **אשר פוקד על פי משה**—since their kedushah came from Moshe, Yisrael's enemies could not prevail over them.

Is an Acronym for "ת'וכו ר'צוף א'הבה מ'בנות י'רושלים"

It is with great pleasure that we will not interpret the remainder of the passuk: **אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדות אשר פוקד על פי משה עבודת הלויים ביד איתמר בן אהרן הכהן**. Rashi explains that the accountings of the Mishkan and its vessels was entrusted to the leviim in the midbar. They were delegated to carry, dismantle, and erect them as assigned. Itamar was in charge of these assignments.

In the sefer Ginat Egoz (Pekudei), authored by the esteemed Rabbi of Stanislav, ztz"l, he presents a fascinating "remez" in the name of the esteemed Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch of Zidichov, zy"a. The reason Moshe Rabeinu chose to delegate the supervision of the dismantling and setting up of the Mishkan throughout the sojourn and all the journeys in the midbar to Itamar was because the name **איתמר** is an acronym for (Shir HaShirim 3, 10): **"ת'זכו ר'צוף א'הבה מ'בנות י'רושלים"**—**its midst was decked with implements bespeaking love by the daughters of Yerushalayim.**

It appears that we can explain his meaning based on what the Alshich hakadosh (Terumah) writes with regards to the previous passuk (ibid. 9): **"אפריון עשה לו: המלך שלמה מעצי הלבנון, עמודיו עשה כסף, רפודתו זהב, מרכבו ארגמן, תוכו רצוף"**—**Shlomo HaMelech** (some translate this as a reference to HKB"H, the King Who is the quintessence of shalom) **made himself a palanquin of the trees of Lebanon. Its pillars he made of silver, its couch of gold, its curtain of purple, its interior inlaid with love, from the daughters of Yerushalayim.** In other words, HKB"H did not rest His Shechinah in the Beis HaMikdash because of the structure's external grandeur and beauty, its gold and silver, but rather because of the sincere love of every individual member of Yisrael, who brought his contribution with pure, overwhelming love.

Hence, Scripture asks: **"אפריון עשה לו המלך שלמה מעצי הלבנון"**—does HKB"H, the King of Shalom need silver pillars or upholstery of gold? To which it answers that

He does not; HKB"H chose to have His Shechinah dwell in the Beis HaMikdash on account of the sincere, burning **"love of the daughters of Yerushalayim"**—referring to the righteous people of Yisrael.

We can now interpret the continuation of the opening passuk of our parsha very nicely: **אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדות**. As we have learned, the word **"Mishkan"** is mentioned twice, because in the merit of the Mishkan, the two Batei Mikdash served as **"mashkons"** that would be returned by HKB"H with the third Beis HaMikdash. Why? **"אשר פוקד על פי משה"**—because our enemies had no power over Moshe's handiwork. Hence, Shlomo HaMelech, a nitzotz of Moshe, planted the Mishkan in a cavern beneath the Heichal, so that it could exert its influence and draw the Shechinah to the Beis HaMikdash.

How was the kedushah of the Mishkan sustained inside the Beis HaMikdash? **"עבודת הלויים ביד איתמר בן אהרן הכהן"**—by having Moshe Rabeinu place **איתמר** in charge of the assignments of the leviim. With a name that is an acronym for **"ת'זכו ר'צוף א'הבה מ'בנות י'רושלים"**, he possessed the power to inspire and strengthen Yisrael's love for HKB"H. He inherited this trait from his father, Aharon HaKohen, of whom Chazal attest (Avos 1,12): **"Be among the disciples of Aharon—love peace and promote peace, love your fellow creatures and bring them closer to Torah."** This kedushah remains for all time within every Beis Mikdash, including the third Beis HaMikdash, which will contain the first two Batei Mikdash, swiftly, in our times! Amen.

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