

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

PARSHAT PEKUDEI

The Most Is Accomplished In Our Struggles

At the end of Parshas Pekudei, and for that matter, the whole book of Shemos, it tells us how Moshe erected the Mishkan, and that Hashem's Presence filled it. "The cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of Hashem filled the Mishkan. Moshe could not enter the Tent of Meeting since the cloud had rested on it, and the glory of Hashem filled the Mishkan." It continues and concludes with these three verses, "Whenever the cloud rose from above the Mishkan, the Children of Israel would embark on all their journeys. And if the cloud did not rise, they did not travel until the day it rose. For the cloud of Hashem was above the Mishkan by day and fire would be there by night, to the eyes of the entire House of Israel, at all their journeys."

The last three verses seem out of place. We just finished reading all about the completion and the erecting of the Mishkan, and how the Divine Presence filled it. And all of a sudden, it concludes with some rules about journeys. As the Midrash tells us about these verses, "This is the story of the journeys." How does it fit in with the flow of the Parsha?

The question becomes stronger, when you read the Midrash on the next verse, the first verse of the book of Vayikra. It says that the first verse of Vayikra, "And Hashem called to Moshe," comes in continuation of what it says in Pekudei, "Moshe

could not enter the Tent of Meeting since the cloud had rested on it, and the glory of Hashem filled the Mishkan." He couldn't enter, so Hashem called him and then he was able to enter. So Vayikra

comes in continuation of the verses of the Divine Presence filling the Mishkan, and these three verses clearly seem to be a break between the two.

Now that we know that Pekudei and Vayikra are connected, with these three verses in between, we have to ask: How do these verses connect to the themes of Parshas Pekudei and Vayikra?

Being that they are the last verses of the book of Shemos, they must encapsulate the theme of the book of Shemos. And since the Midrash says that the end of Shemos is connected to the beginning of Vayikra, these verses must also connect to the theme of the book of Vayikra. How do they connect to the themes of both of these books?

The book of Vayikra speaks mainly about the different offerings brought in the Mishkan, it is even referred to as Sefer Hakarbanos, the Book of Offerings. One might think that the connection between the two books, is that Shemos tells of the building of the Mishkan, and Vayikra speaks of the offerings brought in the Mishkan. But since the last verses of Shemos tells of the Divine Presence filling the Mishkan, and the Midrash says that this is the connection to Vayikra, we must conclude that the idea of offerings is more connected to the Divine Presence filling the Mishkan than to the Mishkan itself. And to take it a step further, being that the final three verses speak about the journeys, and specifically, how the cloud of Hashem's Presence rose away from the Mishkan when they journeyed, we can infer, that the connection is even greater when the Divine Presence is away from the Mishkan, than when it fills it, as will be explained.

The book of Shemos begins with Parshas Shemos and ends with Parshas Pekudei. Both of the names of these parshas indicate some sort of counting. Rashi on the word "Shemos" explains, that even though Hashem counted the children of Israel when they were alive, He counts them again here, because He cherishes them. So Shemos is about counting the Jewish people.

Pekudei means the tally, it speaks of the tally of the donations to the Mishkan, and what they were used for in the construction of the Mishkan. So the book of Shemos begins with the counting of the Jewish people and ends with the counting of the Mishkan.

The theme of the book of Shemos is the redemption from Egypt. It is strange that it is preoccupied with numbers because in a way numbers are the opposite of redemption. When you could count something it shows that it is limited. Redemption, on the other hand, is breaking out of all limitations. It seems to be limited and unlimited at the same time.

In the Parsha of Shemos itself, you have limited and unlimited together. First, it counts the number of people who came down to Egypt, then it says, "And the Children of Israel were fertile and swarmed and increased and became very very strong, and the land was filled with them." They had a birth rate that was far beyond the natural.

Parshas Pekudei also has limited and unlimited together. First, it tallies all the details of the Mishkan, then it says that the glory of Hashem filled it, to the point that even Moshe,

WHERE YOU FIND G-D YOU FIND YOURSELF.



the greatest of men couldn't enter it. Because the Divine Presence is infinite.

How do we reconcile having limited and unlimited at the same time? It seems impossible.

The explanation. Although we are meant to reach for and connect to the infinite, which is the idea of redemption, to go beyond the limitations of the world, that doesn't have to come at the expense of the world's limitations. Rather, there has to be the unification of the infinite and the finite.

We see this in the Mishkan itself. The infinite Presence of Hashem filled the limited Mishkan and its vessels.

Since the ultimate purpose is that "Hashem desired to have a dwelling for Himself below." There has to be two things simultaneously, first, a "dwelling," a home for His infinite essence, and second, that it should be "below," in this limited lowly world.

We, the Jewish people, are the home for Hashem. Because He "specifically wants to live and dwell in the souls of the Children of Israel." And we are the perfect place for Hashem to feel at home, because, as the Zohar says, "Israel and Hashem are One." We are the ultimate dwelling for Hashem, not the world. It is only that it has to be "below," in this world. Through our interaction with the world, we make it into a vessel for Hashem, and the more we refine the world, the clearer it becomes that He is everything, and the physical world is just a facade. The clearer that becomes, the more the oneness of Hashem and the Jewish people is revealed. When this essential connection is totally revealed, the home is complete.

While the book of Bereishis tells us about the creation and the settling of the world, the book of Shemos tells of how the Children of Israel became a nation and that Hashem gave us His Torah to fulfill His will and make a home for Him. This idea is seen in the building of the Mishkan, which was a revealed home for Hashem's Presence.

But the Mishkan itself didn't show how we can transform the mundane physical world into something holy, it merely was a place for the Divine Presence to be. It was the offerings in the book of Vayikra, that was taking a mundane physical animal and making it into a holy offering for Hashem. And this is what draws the infinite Presence of Hashem into the world.

That is how the parshas of Pekudei and Vayikra, and the books of Shemos and Vayikra connect to the verses of the Divine Presence filling the Mishkan. Because the whole purpose of the Jewish people, the Torah, the Mishkan, and the offerings was to make a dwelling for Hashem; so that Hashem's essence could dwell openly in the world.

When is our ability to do this the greatest? That is where the last three verses about the journeys come in. It is specifically when the Divine Presence rises away, and we are forced to journey, that our work is most powerful. And Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi said that the journeys in the desert hint at the journeys in exile. Just as in the desert, they only journeyed on Hashem's command, now too, the place you find yourself is directly by His command. And when you do what Hashem wants you to do in times of journeys, when it is dark and Hashem is hidden, then, when you reach the

place of rest, when Hashem descends and is seen once again, it is a far greater revelation than before the journey began.

This is a lesson to each and every one of us in exile, and in our personal exiles that we go through. You have to know, that Hashem specifically put you in your situation, and you have a mission to accomplish there. The darker the situation, the more you can accomplish, turning the world into a home for Hashem.

This idea keeps me positive in my difficult situation, suffering with ALS. I know that Hashem specifically put me in this darkness, and therefore, I am doing everything I can to make a difference in my journey. I could have never imagined the impact I would have in the world, lying in bed unable to move, and how my wife Dina would change the lives of so many with her talks, filling them with strength and hope. But we see and we are grateful for the amazing amount of good being done on behalf of our family. In this tremendous darkness we are going through, the most is being accomplished.

May our personal journeys come to an end, and may the journey of the Jewish people through this dark and bitter exile finally come to an end. And we will merit to see that it was our work in this great darkness that revealed that we and Hashem are one, with the coming of Moshiach. May he come soon.

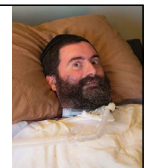
"Dear Rabbi Yitzi

I have been following your story over time. Despite your challenges, you never give up. Someone wrote that as long as there's life, Rabbi Yitzi is all in. And I couldn't agree more!"

- Ellyn K, Boca Raton

RABBI YITZI WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU! SEND YOUR MESSAGE TO:
(937) 770-4802 | TORAHFROMMYEYES@GMAIL.COM

Despite facing one of life's most difficult challenges, Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz continues to spread joy and faith to thousands around the globe. Diagnosed in 2012 with ALS, Rabbi Yitzi is now 95% paralyzed and no longer able to speak or breath on his own. Thanks to the miracle of technology, Rabbi Yitzi continues to spread his wisdom through his eyes, focusing on each and every letter of these Torah articles. Rabbi Yitzi, his wife Dina and their seven children are the Rebbe's Shluchim to Temecula, California.



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