

THEMES AND IDEAS IN THE HAFTARA

This haftara series is dedicated in memory
of our beloved Chaya Leah bat Efrayim Yitzchak
(Mrs. Claire Reinitz), zichronah livracha,
by her family.

PARASHAT PEKUDEI
HARAV MOSHEH LICHTENSTEIN
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The *haftara* for *Parashat Pekudei* (I *Melakhim* 7:51-8:21)^{1[1]} is the last *haftara* in the series of *haftarot* connected to the Temple. It therefore does not deal with its building, but rather with the ceremony of its dedication. Thus, it relates to the final verses of *Parashat Pekudei* (and of the book of *Shemot*), which describe the resting of the *Shekhina* in the *Mishkan* and constitute the climax of the *parasha*, and it is not directed at the verses that describe the building of the *Mishkan*.

Upon considering the final verses in *Pekudei* and comparing them to what is stated in the *haftara*, we discern a significant difference between the description of the resting of the *Shekhina* in the *Mishkan* and the corresponding account regarding the Temple. These are the verses in the Torah:

Then a cloud covered the *Ohel Mo'ed*, and the glory of the Lord filled the *Mishkan*. And Moshe was not able to enter the *Ohel Mo'ed*, because the cloud rested on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the *Mishkan*. And when the cloud was taken up from over the *Mishkan*, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys; but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey until the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the *Mishkan* by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, through all their journeys. (*Shemot* 40:34-38)

As is plainly evident, there is no human involvement in the descent of the *Shekhina*. The verse that precedes these verses describes the completion of the erection of the *Mishkan* through human hands – "And he erected the court round about the *Mishkan* and the altar, and set up the screen of the court gate. So Moshe finished the work" (v. 33). Immediately afterwards, we read: "Then a cloud covered the *Ohel Mo'ed*, and the glory of the Lord filled the *Mishkan*." Almost automatically, and without any additional human initiative, the *Shekhina* descends as

1 [1] This is the *haftara* according to the Ashkenazi custom. The *haftara* for *Parashat Pekudei* according to the Sefardi custom is I *Melakhim* 7:40-50, which we already discussed in the context of the *haftara* for *Parashat Vayakhel*.

soon as the *Mishkan* is completely erected. There is no human involvement accompanying the process of the *Shekhina's* descent; rather, man builds the *Mishkan* ("And let them make Me a sanctuary"), and God comes down and dwells in it ("that I may dwell among them" – *Shemot* 25:8). God's descent into the *Mishkan* at the completion of its building and erection was like God's descent at the revelation at Mount Sinai, which occurred without any prayers or requests on the part of Moshe or the people.^{2[2]}

In contrast, the resting of the *Shekhina* in the Temple was accompanied by the extensive involvement of Shelomo and the people. The *haftara* opens with a verse that describes the completion of the building of the Temple: "So was ended all the work that King Shelomo made for the house of the Lord" (7:51). In terms of content, this parallels the verse that describes the completion of the erection of the *Mishkan*. However, while the Torah states: "So Moshe finished the work," and "Then a cloud covered the *Ohel Mo'ed*, and the glory of the Lord filled the *Mishkan*," in the book of *Melakhim*, the verse that follows "So was ended all the work that king Shelomo made for the house of the Lord," is not, "Then a cloud covered the house of the Lord... and the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord," but rather, "Then Shelomo assembled the elders of Israel" (8:1). Only after ten verses that describe at length the people's assembling before Shelomo, the process of bringing the ark and the other holy vessels to their proper

^{2 [2]} It may be noted that the Torah describes extensive human involvement and protracted preparation in anticipation of the resting of the *Shekhina* in *Parashat Shemini*, including sacrificial service, assembly of the people, and a blessing bestowed upon them. The explanation is that a distinction must be made between *Parashat Shemini* and *Parashat Pekudei*. The resting of the *Shekhina* in the *Mishkan* is described in *Parashat Pekudei*; *Parashat Shemini* is not an expansion upon the concluding verses of *Parashat Pekudei*, but rather an account of something different – namely, the consecration of the priests and/or the preparation of the *Mishkan* for service, in the wake of the *parashiyot* dealing with offerings that precede it. It is therefore *Pekudei*, and not *Shemini*, that is the fitting *parasha* for a *haftara* dealing with the resting of the *Shekhina* in the Temple.

In other words, the book of *Shemot* deals with the building of the *Mishkan* and it reaches its climax in the concluding verses of the book, whereas the book of *Vayikra* deals with the sacrifices and those who offer them, and in that framework describes the days of *milu'im* that are intended for the consecration of the priests. Paraphrasing the Rambam's terminology, it may be argued that *Shemot* deals with *Hilkhot Beit Ha-Bechira* and *Kelei Ha-Mikdash*, whereas *Vayikra* deals with *Hilkhot Ma'aseh Ha-Korbanot*, *Pesulei Ha-Mukdashim*, and *Bi'at Mikdash*. (It should be noted that this division stands in a certain tension with the Rambam's own division, who included the laws governing the vessels together with the laws governing the priests under the heading "*Hilkhot Kelei Ha-Mikdash Ve-Ha-Ovedim Bo*.") Therefore, our *haftara*, which describes the resting of the *Shekhina* at the completion of the building of the Temple, is the fitting *haftara* for *Parashat Pekudei*, and not for *Parashat Shemini*.

Moreover, our working assumption here is that the account of the dedication ceremony of the tribal princes in the book of *Bamidbar* (chap. 7) is not intended to describe the appearance of the *Shekhina* in the *Mishkan* or the factors that brought about its descent, something that is not at all mentioned in those verses. Rather, it describes the dedication of the *Mishkan* – that is, the beginning of man's use of the *Mishkan* after it was consecrated and the *Shekhina* rested in it. For this reason, it is not relevant to our discussion concerning the descent of God's glory into the *Mishkan*.

It should be noted that understanding the concept of dedication as initial use rather than consecration has halakhic ramifications regarding various issues, but this is not the forum in which to expand upon the matter.

places, and a massive offering of sacrifices ("that could not be told nor numbered for multitude" [8:5]), is an account given of the *Shekhina's* descent and resting in the Temple:

Then Shelomo assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chiefs of the fathers of the children of Israel, to King Shelomo in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion. And all the men of Israel assembled themselves to King Shelomo at the feast in the month of Etanim, which is the seventh month. And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark, and they brought up the ark of the Lord, and the *Ohel-Mo'ed*, and all the holy vessels that were in the tent, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up. And King Shelomo and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled to him were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude. And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place, into the sanctuary of the house, to the most holy place, under the wings of the *keruvim*. For the *keruvim* spread out their two wings over the place of the ark, and the *keruvim* covered the ark and its poles above. And they drew out the poles so that the ends of the poles were seen from the holy place, before the sanctuary, though they were not seen outside, and there they are to this day. There was nothing in the ark save the two tablets of stone, which Moshe put there at Chorev, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. (8:1-11)

Likewise, there is a significant difference between the two accounts with respect to what happened after the *Shekhina* rested. Both the book of *Shemot* and the book of *Melakhim* describe the presence of the *Shekhina* in almost identical verses ("And the glory of the Lord filled the *Mishkan*. And Moshe was not able to enter the *Ohel Mo'ed*, because the cloud rested on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the *Mishkan*"; "That the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord"). But the corresponding reactions are altogether different. In the book of *Shemot*, there are two more verses that describe the ramifications that the resting of the *Shekhina* had on the people's journeys in the wilderness and the connection between the resting or the rising of the cloud and those journeys – and nothing else. The cloud is described as being present or being removed at the will of God, just as it had descended in the first place, and with that the book ends. There is no report of any response on the part of Moshe or the people to the *Shekhina's* descent into the *Mishkan* or to the presence of the glory of God which filled the *Mishkan*. In the book of *Melakhim*, in contrast, the appearance of the glory of God leads Shelomo to two extended prayers that deal with the meaning of God's revelation, His choice of Jerusalem and the house of David, and the connection between the people and the Temple.

The account ends as it had begun. In the book of *Shemot*, no human action precedes the resting of the *Shekhina*, and likewise there is no human reaction in its wake, whereas in the book of *Melakhim*, there is human involvement both before and after the *Shekhina's* resting.

The question which arises is: What is the difference between these two events? Why do we find one type of behavior in one place and a second type in the other place? Does the difference stem from a different spiritual reality and different manners of providence? Or perhaps the man involved is responsible for the difference, as Moshe's approach was not the approach of Shelomo.

Two different explanations can be offered. The first is connected to the gap between the way God governed Israel in the wilderness and the way He governed them after they entered *Eretz Yisrael*. In the wilderness, Israel huddled in the shade of the *Shekhina*, which governed their entire lives through close and manifest providence. The pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire led them, manna fell for them from heaven, and their entire governance was miraculous, by way of direct Divine intervention. In such a world, in which the *Shekhina* rests by itself and accompanies them in all their ways, the resting of the *Shekhina* in the *Mishkan* was also a matter that was taken for granted. As soon as the building was completed and the *Mishkan* was erected, the *Shekhina* was ready to descend, and there was no need for any further preparations. Therefore, as soon as Moshe finished erecting the *Mishkan*, the cloud of the Lord came down on the *Mishkan* and His glory filled it.

In Jerusalem, on the other hand, the spiritual reality and the way God governed His people were radically different. From the moment of Israel's entry into *Eretz Yisrael*, natural governance began. The manna stopped, the pillar of cloud departed, and life entered a course in which the *Shekhina* did not accompany Israel in the management of their day-to-day lives. People plowed during the plowing season, sowed during the sowing season, and harvested during the harvest season. The new motif of life after the wilderness was natural governance.

In such a world, the descent of the *Shekhina* and the creation of a permanent presence of God's glory in man's world were not things that were supposed to happen by themselves; it fell upon man to invite God into his world. In order to bring about the revelation of God's glory in His house, human intercession of a spiritual sort was needed, in the form of a gathering of the people, their participation in the bringing of the ark, their offering of sacrifices, and their appeal to God that He should cause His *Shekhina* to rest upon them. It fell upon man to turn to God, to express his recognition and appreciation of the King of kings, to give expression to the human longing for an earthly encounter between man and God, to proclaim his readiness for this, to feel the proper awe of majesty toward the Creator, and to entreaty the King to appear in His Temple. When man proclaims: "I have surely built You a house to dwell in, a settled place for You to abide in for ever" (8:13) and he invites God to the place that he had prepared for Him to dwell in this world ("a settled place for You to abide in"), then God leaves heaven and descends into man's world and into the house that was built for Him so that He may dwell among Israel.

This difference between the *Shekhina's* descent in the *Mishkan* and its appearance in the Temple is reflected, as stated earlier, in the reaction as well. In the book of *Shemot*, the Torah does not mention any reaction, whereas in the book of *Melakhim*, Shelomo begins a historical speech about the resting of the *Shekhina* and the selection of the house of David and Jerusalem.

This speech is accompanied by a blessing bestowed upon the people, and the blessing comes in response to the revelation of the glory of God. When God is found in the human world, the world becomes blessed,³[3] and therefore Shelomo sees fit to bestow of this blessing upon the people.

All this is missing in the book of *Shemot* because of the difference in the ways that God governs His people. In *Shemot*, the *Shekhina's* presence among the people is a known phenomenon that does not begin with the building of the *Mishkan*, but only focuses upon it. There therefore is no special reaction in the wake of the erection of the *Mishkan*. The reaction to the descent of the *Shekhina* occurred in the wake of the revelation at Mount Sinai, as is recounted in the Torah extensively there. But the erection of the *Mishkan*, which *Chazal* and the *Rishonim* perceived as a continuation of the appearance of the *Shekhina* on Mount Sinai,⁴[4] did not give rise to any new reaction.

Another point should be added in this context. The political-economic reality in the period of Shelomo was quite favorable. The security and economic situation had greatly improved following David's wars, which expanded the country's borders and removed the threats against Israel posed by the neighboring nations. Israel's strength and security continued in the time of Shelomo:

For he had dominion over all of the region on this side of the river, from Tifsach to Azza, over all the kings on this side of the river; and he had peace on all sides round about him. And Yehuda and Israel dwelt in safety, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan to Be'er-Sheva, all the days of Shelomo. (I *Melakhim* 5:4-5)

Political power combined with economic activity, leading to unprecedented abundance and prosperity. The Bible testifies to King Shelomo's wealth in many verses:

Now the weight of gold that came to Shelomo in one year was six hundred and sixty six talents of gold... And all king Shelomo's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels

³ [3] As we say every day in the *Amida* prayer: "For by the light of Your countenance You gave us, O Lord our G-d, the Torah of life and loving-kindness, **righteousness, blessing, mercy, life and peace.**"

⁴ [4] "The secret of the *Mishkan* is that the glory which abode upon Mount Sinai [openly] should abide upon it in a concealed manner. For just as it is stated there: 'And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai' (*Shemot* 24:16), and it is further written: 'Behold the Lord our God has shown us His glory and His greatness' (*Devarim* 5:21), so it is written of the *Mishkan*: 'And the glory of the Lord filled the *Mishkan*' (*Shemot* 40:34). Twice is it mentioned with respect to the *Mishkan*: 'And the glory of the Lord filled the *Mishkan*,' corresponding to 'His glory and His greatness.' The glory that appeared to Israel on Mount Sinai was always with them in the *Mishkan*. And when Moshe entered, the word was with him that had been spoken to him at Mount Sinai. And just as it is stated about the giving of the Torah: 'Out of heaven he made you hear His voice, that He might instruct you; and upon earth He showed you His great fire' (*Devarim* 4:36), so in the *Mishkan*: 'He heard the voice speaking to him from off the covering that was upon the ark of Testimony, from between the two *keruvim*: and it spoke to him' (*Bamidbar* 7:89)" (Ramban, commentary to the Torah, *Shemot* 25:1).

of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver: that was considered nothing in the days of Shelomo. For the king had at sea a ship of Tarshish with a ship of Chiram; once in three years the ship of Tarshish came, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. So King Shelomo exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. (I *Melakhim* 10:14-23)

It is also worth noting that the Bible attests to the fact that the abundance trickled down to the rest of the people:

And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem like stones, and he made cedars to be like the sycamore trees that are in the lowlands for abundance. (ibid. v. 27).

Chazal also noted this in many *midrashim* based on these verses. They viewed the period of Shelomo as the political highpoint of the kingdom of Israel throughout the ages. Thus, for example, the *midrash* uses the image of the moon which waxes and wanes to describe the situation in Shelomo's time, in contrast to the periods that preceded and followed his reign:

The moon begins to shine on the first of Nissan and increases in luminance till the fifteenth day, when her orb becomes full; from the fifteenth till the thirtieth day, her light wanes, till on the thirtieth it is not seen at all. With Israel too, there were fifteen generations from Avraham to Shelomo. Avraham began to shine... Yitzchak came and he too shined... Yaakov came and added light... And after them came Yehuda, Peretz, Chetzron, Ram, Aminadav, Nachshon, Shemuel, Boaz, Oved, Yishai, and David. When Shelomo appeared, the moon's orb was full, as it is stated: "And Shelomo sat on the throne of the Lord as king" (I *Divrei Ha-Yamim* 29:23). Can a man sit on the throne of the Holy One, blessed be He?... Rather, just as the Holy One, blessed be He, rules from one end of the world to the other, and He dominates all the kings..., so too Shelomo ruled from one end of the world to the other... Thus, the orb of the moon became full. Henceforth, the kings began to diminish in power. (*Shemot Rabba, Parashat Bo* 15:26)

This situation has a ramification for our question regarding the dedication of the Temple. The state of "And Yehuda and Israel dwelt in safety, every man under his vine and under his fig tree" is, of course, desirable, but it carries within it considerable spiritual danger. Time and again, the Torah emphasizes its deep concern about the destructive spiritual implications of an affluent society. From Kivrot Ha-Ta'ava until "And Yeshurun grew fat, and kicked," the Torah repeatedly warns about abundance that can bring a person to forget God and walk with the stubbornness of his heart, "to add drunkenness to thirst," to the point that it may be argued that this is one of the central motifs in the chapters dealing with the preparation of Israel to enter the Promised Land.

In the wilderness, on the other hand, there was no abundance of silver and gold. There was food to satisfy their needs, but not to satisfy the pursuit of pleasure. The people did not lack anything, but they were not exposed to the economic reality of "houses full of all good," with all that this entails.

This accounts for the difference between the dedication of the *Mishkan* and the dedication of the Temple. When Israel enjoys great economic abundance, as at the time of the dedication of Shelomo's Temple, their participation and involvement in the dedication of the Temple and in the resting of the *Shekhina* among them is of great importance, for the reality of their lives contains within it the danger of "lest your heart be lifted up, and you forget." The major question facing the people is whether they will be wise enough to direct the abundance of gold and silver towards heaven and use it to beautify God's Temple or whether they will use it only to fill their bellies. The king and the people are required to take an active part in the process of the *Shekhina's* resting in the Temple, in order to sense and feel the significance of the *Shekhina* in their world because the political-economic situation is liable to wipe out this consciousness. This was not necessary in the *Mishkan*, since the people of Israel ate off the table of God, who supplied all their needs in a controlled manner.

We see, then, that there was a twofold difference between the wilderness and the time of Shelomo. In the wilderness, there was, on the one hand, miraculous Divine governance and providence that closely accompanied them on a daily basis, while on the other hand, the people lived in a reality that emphasized their absolute dependence upon God. They did not live in an affluent society that emphasizes economic achievement and accumulation of gold and gives the feeling that a person's fate is in his hands. In the time of Shelomo, the opposite was true. God's governance and providence was exercised in a natural manner, and the people's political-economic success was liable to lead them to spiritual complacency. This accounts for the differences between the respective dedication ceremonies.

A second possible explanation of the difference between the *Mishkan* and the Temple is not connected to the difference in the ways that God governed Israel in the wilderness and in *Eretz Yisrael*, but rather focuses on the different approaches of Moses and Shelomo to the building the Temple. In the previous *shiurim* that dealt with Shelomo's Temple (on *Parshiyot Teruma* and *Vayakhel*), we noted two significant differences between the *Mishkan* and the Temple. The first is the emphasis placed on the role and status of Shelomo as builder of the Temple and the person responsible for it, as opposed to Moshe, who did not see himself as builder of the *Mishkan* so that it should be called by his name, and the implications that this had on the status of the people. The people of Israel are driven to contribute to the *Mishkan* out of religious feeling and good will; all their work is performed on a voluntary basis, and it is called by their name. Shelomo, on the other hand, recruits the people by force through exercise of his royal authority, and they work for him as a tax that was imposed on them. The second difference, closely related to the first, is the difference in size between the *Mishkan* and the Temple. The first is small and intimate, while the second is a monumental royal building.

It may be proposed that the difference in the degree of human involvement in the wilderness as opposed to the Temple depended on this distinction. In the case of the Temple, as opposed to the *Mishkan*, there was concern that the building would be perceived as Shelomo's private enterprise, and therefore there was a need for all the preparations and prayers that are spelled out in the *haftara*. Shelomo's declaration, "I have built a house for the name of the Lord, God of Israel" (I *Melakhim* 8:20), is a critical statement that had to be voiced in the wake of the

manner in which the Temple was built and Shelomo's personal involvement in the process. Similarly, the emphasis on the role of the ark and the tablets in consecrating the Temple was much more needed here than with the *Mishkan*.

The beginning of the *haftara* notes that "then Shelomo assembled (*yakhel*)" the leadership of the people to bring up the ark. The verb, "assembled," with which we are of course familiar from the way Moshe led the people at the time of the erection of the *Mishkan*, has an implication that is different from that of all the other words sounded in the book of *Melakhim* thus far. Until now, the terms used with respect to the people are officers, tax, and slavery,⁵[5] with Shelomo viewing Israel as a reservoir of manpower to carry out his works. The term that is appropriate for the way Shelomo governed the people in the previous chapters is "he summoned" or "he recruited" or the like. However, when dedicating the Temple, Shelomo changes his attitude toward the people, as was necessary owing to the spiritual needs of the dedication of the Temple. God rests his *Shekhina* in Israel – not in the private Temple of any person whatsoever, even if he is a king. Therefore, the resting of the *Shekhina* required the participation of the people as the king's partners, rather than as his subjects or slaves. The root *k-h-l*, which does not appear at all earlier in the book of *Melakhim*, is found in chapter 8, which describes the dedication of the *Mikdash*, no less than seven times (of them four are found in our *haftara*).⁶[6]

Shelomo's reference at this point to the merit of his fathers and his mention of David's part in the building of the Temple seem to be part of this phenomenon. Seeing the Temple as the Temple of all the people of Israel, and not as the personal enterprise of the king, finds expression in the participation of previous generations, who are also part of the people of Israel and their heritage. The resting of the *Shekhina* on the people at the dedication of the Temple includes all the Jews of that generation and of all generations. Shelomo himself points this out in the final verse of the *haftara*: "And I have set there a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of the Lord, which He made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt" (8:21).

On the one hand, mentioning David's activities in this context indicates that the Temple is not Shelomo's private enterprise, and on the other hand, it emphasizes the idea of Divine choice with respect to the builders of the Temple. The building of the Temple is not an activity privately

5 [5] 1. "And Shelomo had twelve officers over all Israel, who provided stores for the king and his household" (I *Melakhim* 4:7).

2. "And my servants shall be with your servants" (I *Melakhim* 5:20).

3. "And king Shelomo raised a levy out of all Israel" (I *Melakhim* 5:27).

6 [6] Only in one other place is this word used in the book of *Melakhim* in connection with the people, and that is at the time of the split between Yerav'am and Rechav'am, when the people cast off themselves the yoke of slavery and insisted upon their autonomous rights as a people.

carried out by a king, to his honor and glory. Rather, the building is built by the chosen servants of the King of kings, acting by virtue of their selection by God and for the sake of His name. The choosing of David and the building of Jerusalem are concepts that are closely related one to the other,^{7[7]} and their mention by Shelomo is intended to emphasize this connection.

All these points were very much needed in the Temple in light of the way in which it was built, but they were not necessary in the *Mishkan*. This accounts for the great difference in the process of the resting of the *Shekhina* described in our *haftara* and that which took place in the *Mishkan*, as described in the closing verses of *Parashat Pekudei*.

^{7 [7]} The clearest expression of this is found in the *Amida* prayer, which joins these two ideas of the re-establishment of the Davidic monarchy and the rebuilding of Jerusalem in one blessing. This is even more striking in the version used in *Eretz Yisrael*, as found in the *Tosefta* and in the *Yerushalmi*, in which the blessing concludes: "God of David and builder of Jerusalem" (*Tosefta, Berakhot* 3:25; *Yerushalmi, Berakhot* 4:5; and in the sources cited in *Tosefta Ki-Peshuta*, ad loc.).