

Construction of the Mishkan Representing the Original Gan Eden Does Not Override Shabbas Representing the Tikun of Olam HaBa

On the upcoming, auspicious Shabbas, we read from the Torah two parshiyos — Vayakheil and Pekudei. Hence, it is only fitting that we connect the subject matters with which these two portions open. Let us begin by examining the opening passuk of parshas Vayakheil (Shemos 35, 1):

”ויקהל משה את כל עדת בני ישראל ויאמר אליהם, אלה הדברים אשר צוה ה' לעשות אותם, ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי יהיה לכם קודש שבת שבתון לה' כל העושה בו מלאכה יומת” — And Moshe assembled the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael and said to them: “These are the things that Hashem commanded, to do them. For a period of six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for Hashem; whoever does work on it shall be put to death. Rashi comments: Moshe first told them the prohibition of working on the Shabbas before the order to build the Mishkan — indicating that the construction of the Mishkan does not override the Shabbas.

We must endeavor to understand why one might logically think that the construction of the Mishkan would override Shabbas. Consider for a moment that the purpose of the Mishkan was to serve as a dwelling place for the Shechinah, as it states in parshas Terumah (Shemos 25, 8): **”ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם”** — and they shall make Me a sanctuary so that I may dwell among them. If this is the reason then we must explain why, in fact, the construction of the Mishkan does not override the Shabbas.

Both the Mishkan and the Shabbas Atone for the Sin of the Eigel

Let us begin our investigation with the opening passuk of parshas Pekudei (Shemos 38, 21): **”אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדות”** — אשר פוקד על פי משה עבודת הלויים ביד איתמר בן אהרן הכהן” — These are the accountings of the Mishkan, Mishkan HaEidus, which were counted at the word of Moshe--the work of the Leviim, overseen by Ithamar, the son of Aharon the kohen. Here Rashi clarifies the meaning of the title “Mishkan HaEidus.” It attested to the fact that

HKB”H forgave Yisrael for the incident involving the eigel.

In effect, observance of the Shabbas is also atonement for the sin of the eigel. For, we have learned in the Gemara (Shabbas 118b): **”כל המשמר שבת כהלכתו אפילו עובד עבודה זרה כדור אנוש”** — מוחלין לו” — whoever observes Shabbas according to its precepts, even if he engages in avodah zarah as the generation of Enosh did, is forgiven. The Yearos Devash (Part 2, Drush 3) explains that “avodah zarah” constitutes a lack of faith in Hashem, a denial of Hashem; whereas Shabbas observance displays one’s faith in Hashem. Concerning Shabbas, the passuk states (Shemos 31, 16): **”ושמרו בני ישראל את השבת... כי ששת ימים עשה ה' את השמים ואת הארץ וביום השביעי שבת וינפש”** — Bnei Yisrael shall observe the Shabbas . . . for in a six-day period Hashem made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He relaxed and He rested. We see that Shabbas observance also constitutes atonement for the “cheit haeigel,” which was a form of “avodah zarah.”

We can now appreciate why the command to observe Shabbas precedes the command to build the Mishkan. We are being taught that the construction of the Mishkan does not override the Shabbas. One might have thought that combining these two atonements for the “cheit haeigel” — by working on the Mishkan on Shabbas — would be advantageous. On the one hand, one would abstain from ordinary work; and, on the other hand, one would engage in the holy work of the Mishkan. Therefore, it was necessary for the Torah to teach us that the construction of the Mishkan does not override the Shabbas. For, the kedushah of Shabbas alone possesses the power to atone for the “cheit haeigel.” The atonement provided by the Mishkan is necessary on the weekdays — in the absence of Shabbas.

The Mishkan Represents Gan Eden Prior to the Cheit of the Eitz HaDa’as

I was struck by a wonderful idea with the Almighty’s help. I would like to propose a novel explanation concerning the natures

of these two apparatuses — the kedushah of the Mishkan and the kedushah of Shabbas — which both constitute marvelous tikuns for the “cheit haeigel”. Let us begin by addressing the nature of the kedushah of the Mishkan, based on a statement from our blessed sages in the Midrash (Shir HaShirim Rabbah) elucidating the passuk (Shir HaShirim 5, 1):

”באתי לגני אחותי כלה. אמר רבי מנחם חתניה דרבי אלעזר בר אבונה בשם רבי שמעון ברבי יוסנה, באתי ‘לגן’ אין כתיב כאן, אלא ‘לגני’ – לגנוני, למקום שהיה עיקרי מתחלה, ועיקר שכינה לא בתחתונים היתה [בלשון שאלה], הדא הוא דכתיב (בראשית ג-ח) וישמעו את קול ה’ אלקים מתהלך בגן, אמר רבי אבא מהלך אין כתיב כאן אלא מתהלך, מקפץ וסליק, מקפץ וסליק.

חטא אדם הראשון ונסתלקה השכינה לרקיע הראשון, חטא קין נסתלקה לרקיע השני, חטא אנוש נסתלקה לרקיע השלישי, חטא דור המבול נסתלקה לרקיע הרביעי, חטא דור המגדל נסתלקה לרקיע החמישי, חטאו אנשי סדום נסתלקה לרקיע הששי, חטאו המצריים בימי אברהם נסתלקה לרקיע השביעי.

כנגדן עמדו שבעה צדיקים והורידה לארץ, זכה אברהם והורידה משביעי לששי, עמד יצחק והורידה מששי לחמישי, עמד יעקב והורידה מחמישי לרביעי, עמד לוי והורידה מרביעי לשלישי, עמד קהת והורידה משלישי לשני, עמד עמרם והורידה משני לאחד שהוא ראשון, עמד משה והורידה לארץ... ואימת שרת שכינה עליה, ביום שהוקם המשכן שנאמר (במדבר ז-א) ויהי ביום כלות משה להקים את המשכן.

The passuk states: “I came to My garden, My sister, My bride.” The passuk specifically emphasizes “My garden,” referring to my original place of importance. When Adam HaRishon sinned, the Shechinah vacated this world and went up to the first firmament; when Kayin sinned It left for the second firmament; when Enosh sinned, It went to the third firmament; when the generation of flood sinned, It left for the fourth firmament; when the generation of the Tower sinned, It went to the fifth firmament; when the people of Sedom sinned, It left for the sixth firmament; when the Egyptians sinned in the times of Avraham, the Shechinah distanced Herself all the way to the seventh firmament.

Seven tzaddikim, correspondingly, brought the Shechinah back down to earth; each succeeded in bringing the Shechinah down one firmament. In order, they were Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Levi, Kehas, Amram and Moshe. Thus, on the day the Mishkan was inaugurated, the Shechinah finally returned to its dwelling place on earth.

Upon careful analysis of this Midrash, we find that our blessed sages are revealing a tremendous chiddush, which we were previously unaware of. Let us expand on this subject based on the pesukim depicting the creation (Bereishis 2, 8):

”ויטע ה’ אלקים גן בעדן מקדם וישם שם את האדם אשר יצר, ויצמח ה’ אלקים מן האדמה כל עץ נחמד למראה וטוב למאכל ועץ החיים בתוך הגן ועץ הדעת טוב ורע... ויקח ה’ אלקים את האדם ויניחהו בגן עדן לעבדה ולשמרה, ויצו ה’ אלקים על האדם לאמר מכל עץ הגן אכול תאכל, ומעץ הדעת טוב ורע לא תאכל ממנו כי ביום אכלך ממנו מות תמות” Hashem G-d planted a garden in Eden, to the east, and placed — the man there whom he had formed. And Hashem G-d caused to grow from the ground every tree that was pleasing to the sight and good for food; also the Eitz HaChaim in the midst of the garden, and the Eitz HaDa’as Tov VaRa... Hashem G-d took the man and placed him in Gan Eden to work it and to guard it. And Hashem G-d commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the Eitz HaDa’as Tov VaRa, you must not eat thereof; for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die.”

The text goes on to describe how Adam and Chava fell into the serpent’s trap and ate from the Eitz HaDa’as Tov VaRa — causing the Shechinah to vacate Gan Eden. The situation deteriorated to the point that it was necessary for HKB”H to expel Adam and Chava from Gan Eden, as it is written (ibid. 3, 24): **”ויוגרש את האדם וישכן מקדם לגן עדן את הכרובים ואת להט החרב המתהפכת לשמור את דרך עץ החיים”** — and He drove the man out, and He stationed to the east of Gan Eden the Keruvim and the blade of the turning sword — to guard the path to the Eitz HaChaim.

”I Came to My Garden” — I Returned to the Mishkan a Representation of Gan Eden

We learn from our blessed sages in the Midrash above that beginning with Adam HaRishon’s sin, the situation deteriorated progressively from generation to generation; the Shechinah vacated one firmament after another, each time moving to the next higher firmament, until Moshe Rabeinu eventually built the Mishkan as a dwelling place for the Shechinah. HKB”H expresses this fact to Yisrael with the words: **”באתי לגני אחותי כלה”**-- I came to My garden, My sister, My bride. With the construction of the Mishkan, I returned to My garden — Gan Eden — where HKB”H’s Divine Presence dwelled at the time of creation. Subsequently, His Shechinah left on account of the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as”; now, with the completion of the Mishkan, HKB”H returned to His garden, to rest His Shechinah in Gan Eden.

This is truly an incredible chiddush! The Mishkan represents the original Gan Eden — which the Shechinah abandoned. With the completion of the Mishkan, HKB”H returned so that His Shechinah would dwell there once again, as expressed by the passuk: “I came to My garden.” This is apparently the message of the Tikunei Zohar (Introduction 13a): **“ותקונא דמשכנא הוה ציורא: דעובדא דבראשית וגנתא דעדן”** — the establishment of the Mishkan replicates the act of creation and Gan Eden.

Additional substantiation for this incredible notion can be found in the teachings of the divine kabbalist Rabbi Avraham Azulai (the grandfather of the great gaon Chida), ztz”l, zy”a, in Chesed L’Avraham. He teaches us that Gan Eden served as Adam HaRishon’s Beis HaMikdash, providing all his spiritual needs; while the rest of the world supplied his material needs. Here is what he writes:

“הענין כי בעת בריאת אדם הראשון היה בגן עדן, אמנם שאר העולם לא לחנם נברא, אלא היה אדם הראשון יוצא מהגן לצורך תשמיש הגוף וכל צרכיו, והיה הגן אליו כבית המקדש וכבית הכנסת להתפלל בו וכיוצא, וכבית המדרש לעסוק בתורה ולקיום המצות ולהתנבאות בשם ה’, ושאר העולם [היה שייך] לכל רכושו ולכל חייתו הגשמי.”

When Adam HaRishon was created, he was in Gan Eden. Nevertheless, the rest of the world was not created for naught. Adam HaRishon would leave the Gan for the sake of his physical needs. The Gan served as his Beis HaMikdash, his Beis Kenesses to pray in and his Beis Midrash to engage in Torah study, to perform mitzvos and to prophesy in the name of Hashem. The rest of the world contained his belongings and pertained to his physical, material existence.

The Two Keruvim at the Gates of Gan Eden

Based on what we have learned, we can begin to comprehend a fascinating idea presented in the Targum Yonasan on the aforementioned passuk: **“ויגרש את האדם וישכן מקדם לגן עדן”** — **“את הכרובים ואת להט החרב המתהפכת לשמור את דרך עץ החיים”** — and He drove the man out, and He stationed to the east of Gan Eden the Keruvim and the blade of the turning sword — to guard the path to the Eitz HaChaim. Whereas Rashi explains that the Keruvim were angels of destruction, the Targum Yonasan provides a different approach. He explains that the passuk is referring to the two Keruvim between which HKB”H rested His Shechinah:

“וטורד ית אדם מן דאשרי יקר שכינתיה מן לקדמין בין תרין כרוביא, קדם עד לא ברא עלמא ברא אורייתא, ואתקין גינתא דעדן לצדיקיא”

דייכלון ויתפנקון מן פירי אילנא, על די פלחו בחייהון באולפן אורייתא בעלמא הדין וקיימו פקודיא, אתקין גיהנם לרשיעייא דמתילא לחרבא שנינא אכלה מתרין סטרין, אתקין בגווה זיקוקון דינור וגומרין דאשתא, למידן בהון לרשיעייא דמרדו בחייהון באולפן אורייתא.”

According to the Targum Yonasan, the passuk--**“וישכן מקדם”**—reveals that Gan Eden, the place from which HKB”H expelled Adam, was the place He had rested His Shechinah **“מקדם”** — even before creation, between the two Keruvim. As an additional precaution, HKB”H stationed at the gates to Gan Eden: **“ואת להט החרב המתהפכת”** — Gehinnom, represented by the double-edged sword. This insured that the wicked “reshaim” could not enter Gan Eden before purification by the fire of Gehinnom. [Translator’s note: The word “kedem” can mean east or it can refer to an earlier time.]

Thus, we have evidence, clear as day, that even prior to creation, HKB”H’s Divine Presence dwelled in Gan Eden between the two Keruvim. Subsequently, however, in the aftermath of the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as,” the Shechinah vacated Gan Eden and relocated in the first firmament. Ultimately, when Moshe Rabeinu built the Mishkan, HKB”H rested His Shechinah, once again, between the two Keruvim. This coincides perfectly with the notion that the Mishkan was a representation of the primeval Gan Eden.

The Keruvim Predated the Rest of Creation

This helps us understand a statement of the Tanna D’Vei Elyahu Rabbah (Chapter 1): **“וישכן מקדם לגן עדן את הכרובים, מלמד שהכרובים קדמו לכל מעשה בראשית. ואת להט החרב המתהפכת, זו — גיהנם”** — we learn from the passuk that the Keruvim predated the entire creation. “The blade of the turning sword” is a reference to Gehinnom. The commentaries find this perplexing. According to Rashi, the Keruvim mentioned here were angels of destruction. So, it is not possible to posit that they predated all of creation. For, the angels were not created until the second day of creation; so, that they could not claim that they were partners in the creation.

Thus, it seems evident that the Tanna D’Vei Elyahu agrees with the Targum Yonasan; prior to creation, the Shechinah dwelled between the two Keruvim in Gan Eden. Based on this understanding, he states: **“מלמד שהכרובים קדמו לכל מעשה בראשית”** — the passuk teaches us that the two Keruvim that were in the Mishkan predated all of creation. Additionally, HKB”H placed “the blade of the turning sword” there — Gehinnom — to safeguard the entrance to Gan Eden — preventing anyone who is unworthy from entering.

Based on these sources, we can conclude that the Mishkan was a representation of the primeval Gan Eden — where HKB”H rested His Divine Presence between the two Keruvim, at the beginning of creation. There he introduced Adam HaRishon to work and to protect by means of Torah and mitzvos. By failing with the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as,” Adam caused the Shechinah to abandon the Gan. Measure for measure — “midah k’neged midah” — HKB”H also drove Adam out of Gan Eden and punished him with the decree of (Bereishis 3, 19): “בזעת אפך תאכל לחם” — by the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread.

Nevertheless, after enduring the purification process of the exile in Mitzrayim and receiving the Torah on Har Sinai, Yisrael were commanded to construct the Mishkan. Thus, the semblance of Gan Eden was returned to earth so that the Shechinah could return. As a consequence, HKB”H announces: “I have come to My garden, My sister, My bride” — I have returned to My garden in Eden of old. According to this interpretation, it turns out that when Yisrael observed the commandment to go up and enter the Beis HaMikdash three times a year, they were replicating Adam HaRishon’s entrance into Gan Eden before he was driven out.

Shabbas Arrived Rest Arrived

So far, we have learned how the Mishkan was a representation of Gan Eden. It served as a tikun for Adam HaRishon’s sin — which resulted in the Shechinah vacating Gan Eden and Adam himself being expelled from Gan Eden. Let us now consider how Shabbas observance is also a tikun for the sin of Adam HaRishon.

Let us begin with the enlightening words of Rashi on the passuk (Bereishis 2, 2): “ויכל אלקים ביום השביעי... מה היה העולם חסר מנוחה, באת שבת באת מנוחה כלתה ונגמרה המלאכה” — Elokim completed on the seventh day . . . what was the world lacking at that point? Rest. Shabbas came, rest came; the work was completed and finished. To explain this phenomenon, let us recall that Shabbas is a semblance of the World to Come — Olam HaBa. The Gemara states (Berachos 57b): “שבת אחד מששים לעולם הבא” — Shabbas is one-sixtieth of Olam HaBa.

Now, we have learned in the Gemara (R.H. 31a): “בשביעי היו” — “אומרים (תהלים צב-א) מזמור שיר ליום השבת, ליום שכולו שבת” — on the seventh day, they would recite: A hymn, a song for the day of Shabbas, to the day that is entirely Shabbas. Rashi explains that the world is destined to be destroyed. There will be no man on earth and all forms of work will cease. Regarding this day, we recite the hymn for the Shabbas day. We learn that every Shabbas

is a semblance of Olam HaBa; we draw upon the kedushah of the day that is entirely Shabbas — when all forms of work cease.

We can now suggest that this is the meaning of Rashi’s comment: “what was the world lacking? Rest.” In this world, until we merit the complete, ultimate tikun, we will continue to lack rest and peace of mind. For, everyday is replete with problems — may Hashem protect us; however, with the arrival of Shabbas — a semblance of Olam HaBa — rest arrives. On Shabbas, we are able to draw upon the rest of the seventh millennium — the day that is entirely Shabbas.

Prior to the “Cheit” the Entire World Resembled Gan Eden

Let us now introduce an amazing principle revealed to us by the Shela hakadosh (Introduction to parshas Vayikra). He writes that prior to Adam HaRishon’s sin, the entire world was imbued with the kedushah of the Beis HaMikdash and Gan Eden. The sin, however, caused defects and damaging ramifications throughout creation. Consequently, a special location was required thereafter for the priestly service.

Let us clarify the Shela hakadosh’s meaning. Above, we presented the following in the name of the Chesed L’Avraham: When Adam HaRishon was created, he was in Gan Eden. Nevertheless, the rest of the world was not created for naught. Adam HaRishon would leave the Gan for the sake of his physical needs. The Gan served as his Beis HaMikdash, his Beis Kenesses to pray in and his Beis Midrash to engage in Torah study, to perform mitzvos and to prophesy in the name of Hashem. The rest of the world contained his belongings and pertained to his physical, material existence.

With this schema in mind, we can suggest that the same three levels of kedushah that existed in the Mishkan and the Beis HaMikdash also existed in creation. Rabeinu Bachaye classified the three levels of kedushah in the Mishkan as follows (Shemos 25, 9): (1) “קודש הקדשים” (Kodesh HaKodashim) — the Holy of Holies — the area beyond the paroches; no human being entered this area except for the Kohen Gadol, once a year, on Yom HaKippurim. (2) “אהל מועד” (Ohel Moed) — the Tent of Meeting — the location of the menorah, the shulchan and the mizbach haketores; kohanim were only allowed to enter this area after ritually washing their hands and feet. (3) “חצר אהל מועד” — the courtyard outside the Ohel Moed — the location of the outer mizbeiach upon which the sacrifices were offered; it was

also the designated area to eat from the sacrifices possessing the highest level of kedushah. Three parallel areas of kedushah also existed in the Beis HaMikdash: (1) "קודש הקדשים" (Kodesh HaKodashim) — the Holy of Holies. (2) "היכל" (Heichal) — the Holy — corresponding to the Ohel Moed. (3) "עזרה" (Azarah) — the courtyard of the Beis HaMikdash including the sections of the women, the men and the kohanim, each with its unique level of kedushah — corresponding to the courtyard of the Ohel Moed.

Returning to the words of the Shela: **כי אלו לא חטא אדם** "הראשון... הכל היה ענין גן עדן והכל היה קודש" — had Adam HaRishon not sinned . . . everything would have been like Gan Eden and everything would have been holy. The entire world would have been imbued with the kedushah of Gan Eden and the Beis HaMikdash; however, various levels of kedushah would have existed, just like in the Beis HaMikdash. Gan Eden itself possessed a level of kedushah corresponding to the Kodesh HaKodashim and the Heichal; it was designated exclusively for holy service, the study of Torah and tefilah (prayers). The rest of the world possessed the level of kedushah corresponding to the courtyards — a place to eat and drink with kedushah and purity.

The Mishkan and the Shabbas Both Atoned for the Cheit HaEigel

Continuing on along this exalted path, let us proceed to explain how the Mishkan and the Shabbas atone for the cheit haeigel. It is well-known that at the time of Matan Torah, prior to the cheit haeigel, Yisrael rose to the spiritual level of Adam HaRishon prior to the cheit. Yet, after the cheit, they fell from their lofty level to the level of Adam HaRishon after the cheit. This is described in the Gemara (A.Z. 5a): **לא קיבלו ישראל את התורה, אלא כדי שלא יהא מלאך המות שולט בהן, שנאמר (תהלים פב-ו) אני אמרתי אלהים אתם ובני עליון כולכם, חבלתם מעשיכם [בחטא העגל] אכן כאדם תמותון** — Yisrael only received the Torah so that the Malach HaMaves, the Angel of Death, would have no power over them, as it states (Tehillim 82, 6): I said, "You were Godes, and all of you the sons of the Most High"; however, you have acted corruptly, and, "so it shall be, you will die like men."

According to this, it turns out that had Yisrael not committed the cheit haeigel, they would have rectified all of creation — returning creation to the state of affairs preceding the cheit of Adam HaRishon. For this reason, the Mishkan provided atonement for the cheit haeigel; because the Mishkan represented the primeval Gan Eden — where HKB"H rested His Shechinah between the two Keruvim. Similarly, Shabbas atones for the cheit haeigel. For it is a semblance of Olam HaBa. On every Shabbas, we draw the element of rest into all of creation mirroring Olam HaBa. In this manner, we correct the damage caused by cheit haeigel.

We can now rejoice and stand enlightened as to why Moshe Rabeinu introduced the warning regarding Shabbas prior to the command to build the Mishkan. He taught us that the work of the Mishkan does not override the prohibition to work on Shabbas. It is true that both of these mitzvos provide atonement for the cheit haeigel, which led to harmful repercussions throughout creation.

Notwithstanding, the Mishkan itself was only a representation of Gan Eden — the place where HKB"H rested His Shechinah. For, when a Jew entered the Mikdash on the three festivals, he resembled Adam HaRishon entering the original Gan Eden to luxuriate in the splendor of the Shechinah. Yet, when he exited the Mishkan, he was returning to a world that had not yet been rectified and did not possess the kedushah of the Beis HaMikdash.

In contrast, Shabbas is like a mini-Olam HaBa. The immense kedushah of Shabbas enables us to draw from the bright light representing the final and complete tikun. Thus, we can rectify all of creation, imbuing all of creation with the kedushah of the Mishkan — like the situation prior to the cheit. This is why: **באת שבת באת** "מנוחה" — when Shabbas came, rest came. We find, therefore, that the tikun afforded by Shabbas is greater than the tikun afforded by the Mishkan. Hence, Moshe Rabeinu delivered the warning regarding Shabbas prior to the command to build the Mishkan. He wished to teach us that the advantage and greatness of Shabbas exceed that of the Mishkan. Therefore, the construction of the Mishkan does not override Shabbas.

Donated by Dr. Ralph and Limor Madeb

For the Refua shelema of Refael Gavriel Simcha Chaim Ben shulamit

To receive the mamarim by email: mamarim@shvileipinchas.com