



Sicha Summary

Chelek 16 | Pekudei | Sichas 2

The Context:

Parshas Pekudei opens with the verse, “These are the accounts of the *Mishkan*, the *Mishkan* of testimony... (*Shemos* 38:21) Our Sages teach that the repetition of the word “*Mishkan*” alludes to “the Temple which was taken as collateral (*mashkon*) the two times it was destroyed,” referring to the destruction of the First and Second Temples. (*Tanchuma*, “*Pekudei*,” sec. 2; *Shemos Rabbah* 51:3)

The Implication:

Our Sages taught that the components and utensils of the *Mishkan* were never destroyed because “Moshe’s handiwork is eternal.” (*Yoma* 72a) The materials of the Holy Temple, on the other hand, were destroyed. Thus, at first glance, the *Mishkan* was endowed with eternity while the Temple was not.

But the *Midrashic* interpretation of our verse — that the repetition of the word *Mishkan* alludes to the First and Second Temples which were taken by G-d as collateral — implies that the Temple is eternal as well. Collateral is taken by the creditor, but he holds onto it and returns it when the debt is satisfied. Thus, the “destruction” of the Temple was merely a temporary seizure by G-d as collateral. It will eventually be returned to the Jewish people.

The Question:

Now, in a certain respect, the Temple *does* possess a greater degree of eternity than the *Mishkan*. The Temple grounds were eternally sanctified, while the ground on which the *Mishkan* stood was only sacred so long as

the *Mishkan* remained there. (See *Rambam, Hilchos Beis HaBechirah, 1:1-3*)

But here we are talking about the eternity of the *Mishkan*'s materials and utensils and suggesting, based on the Midrash, that the Temple has a semblance of this eternity as well. How so?

The Preface to the Explanation:

To understand this more clearly, we need to preface with a teaching of our Sages on the verse, “For you will not yet have come to the resting place and to the heritage.” (*Devarim 12:9*) Our Sages explain: “The resting place’ refers to the *Mishkan* of Shiloh; ‘the heritage’ refers to the Temple of Jerusalem.” (*Megillah 10a*)

“Rest” portrays the condition of a **person** when he is calm, surrounded by things that are familiar to him — his material furnishings. “Heritage,” in contrast, describes the state of the **thing** itself — in this case, the land.

The *Mishkan* of Shiloh was made partially from materials from Moshe’s *Mishkan*. And because the eternity of Moshe’s *Mishkan* stemmed from its components, when the people settled permanently in Shiloh, as opposed to wandering in the desert, the *Mishkan* of Shiloh was called the “resting place,” which describes the state of a person surrounded by familiar furnishing.

In contrast, the Temple, whose outstanding feature was (not its components and utensils, but) its site, is called the “heritage,” which describes the state of the site.

The reason for this distinction is as follows: Eternity is beyond the grasp of human effort; it can only come from G-d. The site of the Temple was chosen by G-d; it was not the result of human action. Therefore, its sacredness is eternal. Its construction, however, was man-made; therefore, its components and materials were not eternal. The site of the *Mishkan*,

however, was not in itself chosen by G-d. Its construction, however, was Moshe's handiwork. Being a selfless servant of G-d, Moshe had no independent identity. His work was synonymous with G-d's work. Therefore, the materials of the *Mishkan* itself are eternal.

The Explanation:

This distinction notwithstanding, we also find the term "resting place" used to describe Jerusalem, as it says, "G-d has chosen Tzion (Jerusalem} ... this is My resting place for all time." (*Tehillim* 132:13-14) *Rambam* cites this verse as support for the law that once the First Temple was built in Jerusalem, it became forbidden to build a Temple in any other place. Thus, this verse refers to the First Temple and calls it G-d's "resting place" despite it seemingly not having the quality of material eternity.

The explanation is that since G-d called the Temple "a house" (see *Shmuel II* 7:5ff), it is considered as if it had permanence. The structure of the Temple itself was not "temporary." Rather, it resembled the quality of a resting place — even its material construction had an eternal quality.

In a more concrete sense, the physical eternity of the Temple will be realized in the Third Temple, which will be built by G-d, and will therefore be literally eternal.

The Personal Dimension:

The Ark was only physically present in Moshe's *Mishkan*. It was hidden during the First Temple era, and it will only be revealed in the Third Temple.

The *Mishkan* and the Third Temple share the quality of actual physical eternity, as opposed to the First and Second Temples, the eternity of which was mainly expressed in their location. What is the deeper significance to the fact that the Ark was and will be present only in a structure that has material eternity?

The Ark represents the deepest essence of a Jew's soul — the “Moshe” within each Jew that is selflessly devoted to G-d and willing to sacrifice life itself for G-d's sake.

This power of self-sacrifice is specifically expressed in the realm of action. When a Jew's essence is revealed, he is propelled to concrete action. Thus, the “Ark” can only be present in a structure whose eternity is seen in its very physical properties — Moshe's *Mishkan* and the Third Temple.