

Pekudai - Rabbi Lerner - February 27, 2011

38:21: *These are the accountings of the Mishkan, the Mishkan Ha'Edus.* **Ramban, Rabbeinu Bachya, Abarbanel**: What is the meaning of the term Mishkan Ha'Edus? The Mishkan is the entire building; what is the meaning of the building of testimony? It is not the whole building; it is the Aron that proves the existence of God, and from the space right above that, between the Keruvim - it is from that point that God talks to Moshe; the luchos are inside the Aron; it is the luchos that are referred to as the Luchos Ha'Edus, the testimony to God's giving us laws. They were also miraculous, with engraved writing being able to be read from both sides, with floating letters - all of this was testimony to the existence of a supernatural being. So when referred to as the Mishkan Ha'Edus, it is really referring to the Aron, which is the Aron Ha'Edus. **Rashi**: the Mishkan is Edus to the Jewish people, testifying that God has forgiven them for the sin of the Egel. God had been infuriated with the nation, and wanted to destroy them and make a new nation from Moshe; Moshe convinced Hashem to change His mind through intense prayer; but God could just as well have forgiven the punishment without a true reconciliation - the Mishkan bore testimony to the fact that God completely forgiven them - He will dwell amongst us and has completely forgiven our sin - there was recognizable presence of God in the Mishkan with the mystical ananim. The entire Mishkan was therefore a Mishkan Ha'Edus - despite the nation's adultery with the Egel, He has forgiven us and this building stands as testimony to that, with God's miraculous presence there. The **Sifsei Chachimam**: why does Rashi have to say that the Mishkan is the Edus, instead of just the Aron? Edus means to elucidate something, to clarify it; it is a witnesses who testifies to something, providing details, providing public knowledge of an event; that is why you need the miracle of the Mishkan itself - the Luchos are hidden away inside the Aron - no one sees them and they are not bearing public testimony - if there are open miracles as seen in the Mishkan, that is public testimony. The Luchos wouldn't even make it clear that God was with us in the eyes of the nation - this is clear from the **Medrash Tanchuma**, which says that while Moshe convinced God to forgive the Jewish people and Moshe was happy that God forgave them, Moshe really wanted the entire world to know that God forgave us and that Judaism is the true religion - how would the whole world know, he asked - God responded by saying He will cause his shechina to come down to the Mishkan - this shechina will bear testimony to the entire world that Moshe was successful and God has forgiven us completely - anyone will be able to see this when they come to see the Mishkan; Rashi said it was to convince the Jews they were forgiven, but here it is even more - it is to convince the rest of the world with these open miracles. This was also the case with the first Bais Hamikdash itself, with testimony to the whole world that we are God's chosen nation through the many open miracles manifest there.

Another way of learning this is from the **Or Hachayim** who says that it is called Mishkan Ha'Edus because it will testify (as it says in **Midrash Rabah**) that Moshe himself set up the Mishkan - in 40:17-8 - he made it stand up, literally. No one was able to achieve this final step - he had to make it stand up as a real building; many tried to do what they could - they didn't know how to get it started; each worker therefore came to Moshe and brought their parts to him. The Shechina came upon Moshe and he made it all come together. This Mishkan was the testimony that Moshe erected it - he had the cleanest of hands, had no involvement in the sin of the Egel, he got God to forgive them - the Mishkan bore testimony to the greatness of Moshe.

40:34: *The cloud covered the Ohel Moed and the shechina filled the Mishkan.* Are these two different things?

40:35: *Moshe could not go into the Ohel Moed because the cloud took up residence there; the Glory of God filled the Mishkan.*

40:36-38: *When the cloud would lift, it was a signal for the Jews to move; when it did not move, they would stay put. The cloud would stay there during the day, a fire at night.*

Rashi: Elsewhere it says that Moshe would constantly go into the Ohel Moed; here it says he was unable to go in. Here it clarifies it when it says that the reason he could not go in was because the cloud was resident there; as long as the cloud was hovering over the Ohel Moed, he could not go in; when it lifted and left, then he could enter and speak to Hashem. But it says that the cloud, the Anan, is always there except when it was time to travel; so when could Moshe actually enter to communicate with God?

Ibn Ezra: Moshe could not go in until God calls out to him to enter, as we see in the beginning of Vayikra - Hashem calls out to Moshe and speaks to him from the Ohel Moed - God calls him to enter and He speaks to Moshe. The cloud blocks Moshe until he is given permission to enter, and then he would speak to God face to face. God authorizes Moshe to do what other Kohanim Gedolim could do only once a year on Yom Kippur. When Hashem wants Moshe to come in, he can penetrate the cloud. Moshe is a Ben Bayis, someone who lives in that house; he belongs there. Moshe placed the Luchos in the Aron, he was the one who placed the Aron in the Kodesh Kadashim; he can do everything on the inside because no one else could do this; he lifted the cover of the Aron and placed the luchos inside and set up the cover with the keruvim again. When the Aron had to move, only Moshe could enter the Kodesh Kadashim and cover the Aron with the outside curtain so no one else could see it.

Rashbam: Moshe could not enter when it first was erected; on that day he was blocked, like everyone else when that cloud initially enveloped the Ohel Moed; it was to show the tremendous love of Hashem for the Jewish people; after that, the Anan did not stay on the whole Mishkan - it started off surrounding the entire Mishkan, but then settled on top of the Aron - that is from where Hashem spoke to Moshe. Then Moshe was able to enter and talk to God. This is parallel to the Bais Hamikdash, where a pasuk in Melachim Aleph said that the Kohanim could not enter because the Glory of God filled the entire house; but that was only on the first day; Hashem then contracted Himself to reside only above the Aron, so the kohanim could then enter. "Hashem dwelt in the shadows - Hashem Shochein Betazail" - He doesn't have to be so open, manifest to all.

Kli Yakar: the Glory of Hashem is not the same as the Anan, the cloud - they are different things. The cloud is outside of the Mishkan; the Kevod Hashem is different - it is the spiritual fire and spiritual light. Hashem is this brilliant fiery illumination that could be seen from the midst of the cloud. You needed the cloud and the Kevod Hashem - we needed the cloud because the Kevod Hashem was blinding, we could not look at it - it was infinitely more powerful than the sun. That is why we needed the cloud, to shade and tone down the light emanating from the Kevod Hashem. When the Mishkan was erected, the two separated from each other; the Kevod Hashem filled the inside, while the Anan was on the outside. Moshe could not go in because of that intense light; it was like the fiery light that appeared on Har Sinai, that was covered by a cloud to lower the intensity of it. Without the surrounding Anan, you could not look at it. That is why it says Moshe could not enter it; if the cloud was covering it, Moshe could enter; at this point when Hashem separated the two, Moshe could not go in, until Hashem was ready to remove the Kevod Hashem and goes between the Keruvim. The cloud always remains outside, above the Mishkan; the Kevod Hashem had to contract itself to stay above the Aron for Moshe to enter.

