

# א ביסל תורה!

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פקודי

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## When Was the Grand Opening of the משכן?

By Yochanan Cramer

ספר שמות concludes with a perfect segue into the next book, ויקרא. With ויקרא mostly revolving around laws that trace back to the משכן, the sixth עליה of פקודי begins with the משכן's establishment: "וַיְהִי בַּחֹדֶשׁ" וַיִּבְנֶה אֶת-הַמִּשְׁכָּן. "הָרִאשׁוֹן בַּשָּׁנָה הַשֵּׁנִית בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ הוּקָם הַמִּשְׁכָּן" (שמות מ:ז). "And it was in the first month of the second year, on the first of the month, that the משכן was established".

However, considering the תורה's ambiguous dating system, how is one supposed to understand when exactly this is? Was the משכן finished on ראש חודש ניסן? Or was it built earlier and its grand opening was pushed off towards this date?

רש"י explains, at the beginning of the seventh עליה, that this was a seven-day process of installation, thus clearing up any confusion surrounding the משכן's grand opening, since it would be on the eighth day. In his commentary on פרשת שמיני, עזרא expands on רש"י, by saying that the installation process consisted of putting together and taking apart the משכן, so the לויים become familiar with it. רמב"ן further expands on רש"י and עזרא's explanation, by saying that the building process began on the 23rd of אדר, and it was completed on ראש חודש ניסן, as per the surface level reading of the פסוק.

While these may seem like insignificant details, they actually teach us something very important about how the משכן was meant to be used. First, as per רמב"ן, it was supposed to be completed on one of the major New Year Days in Judaism. This teaches us that it was meant to be completed when the Jews have a fresh start, a new building to dedicate themselves to ה' in this new year. Secondly, as per עזרא, in the days preceding the opening of the משכן, all of the לויים and כהנים were familiarized with it and all of its facets. This teaches us, that for the כהנים to be able to serve ה', they needed to know all of the ins and outs of the משכן. If they did not, they would be doing it in an inferior manner, and would not be able to help other Jews in the משכן to the highest degree. Finally, the משכן was to be open only after these steps were completed, showing us how much preparation needed to be put in just to open the משכן. What all of these have in common, is that the משכן was supposed to be a place of perfection. Nothing could be even slightly off, as in the work of serving ה', even the smallest amount of extra effort goes a long way. Even when the בית המקדש was destroyed, the משכן was buried, since it was so perfect it could not be destroyed.

The ambiguous timeline posed by this verse is a great example of how looking at multiple מפרשים can build upon an idea and shed light on different nuances in the text. It is important that we never give up on ambiguous content, or confusing ideas in the תורה, rather, may we use them as an opportunity to immerse ourselves in deeper תלמוד תורה.

# ה' The Constant Presence of

By Binyamin Orkaby

At the end of פרשת פקודי, ענן, cloud, covers the משכן, and, “כבוד ה' מלא את המשכן” “the holy presence of ה' entered the משכן” (שמות מ:לג). This is the wondrous culmination of all of בני ישראל's donations and hard work. They have finished building the משכן and ה' cloud has settled upon the משכן, while ה' כבוד has filled the משכן. When the cloud would move from the משכן, בני ישראל would travel, but if the cloud stayed there, on the משכן, then they would remain in their present location until the day the cloud was lifted from the משכן. The very last פסוק of פרשת פקודי states that “ענן ה' עליהם” “the cloud of ה' would be upon the משכן during the day” (שמות מ:לח).

The cloud, being the guide of בני ישראל, first appears in פרשת בשלח when בני ישראל leave מצרים. “ה' הלך לפניך יומם בעמוד ענן לנחותם הדרך” “and ה' traveled before בני ישראל during the day with a cloud to show them the path” (שמות יג:כב). When בני ישראל were leaving מצרים they were also running from the Egyptians. In their moment of danger and need, through the use of a cloud, ה' showed בני ישראל that He was with them, guiding them on their way. Here in פרשת פקודי the cloud is coming to the משכן to guide בני ישראל in a time of peace.

בני ישראל traveled before ה' “ה' הלך לפניך” פסוק says when the פרשת בשלח, אבן עזרא explains that the strength of ה' was traveling with בני ישראל. This means that ה' not only guided בני ישראל, but also protected them.

In פרשת תרומה, where בני ישראל are told to build the משכן, “וְנִשְׁכַּנְתִּי בְתוֹכְכֶם” “and ה' will be within” (שמות כה:ח), the אור החיים says that this פסוק is not teaching us that ה' would dwell in the משכן, but rather that ה' would dwell within each and every member of בני ישראל.

If we can understand that the cloud of ה' was to guide and protect בני ישראל, and the אור החיים's explanation, that ה' dwells within each and every Jew, we find an amazing message at the end of פרשת פקודי, in the final sentence of ספר שמות. The last few פסוקים all discuss this cloud of ה', and His presence in filling up the משכן. If we take to the אור החיים's understanding, then this idea of ה' presence surrounding and filling up the משכן can be a metaphor for how ה' is always with us. Additionally, בני ישראל are told that ה' will be with them for all their journeys, for the good times when they are on top of the world building magnificent structures like the משכן, as well as bad times when בני ישראל are running from those who wish to destroy us. May we be able to understand that ה' is always with us in the good times and the bad, guiding and protecting us on all our journeys.

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