

DIMENSIONS IN CHUMASH

Parshas Terumah

Between the Holy and the Holy of Holies Understanding the Role of the Paroches

וַעֲשִׂיתָ פָּרוֹכֶת... וְהִבֵּאתָ שָׁמָּה מִבֵּית לְפָרוֹכֶת אֶת אֲרוֹן הָעֵדוּת וְהִבְדִּילָהּ הַפָּרוֹכֶת לָכֶם בֵּין הַקֹּדֶשׁ
וּבֵין קֹדֶשׁ הַקֹּדָשִׁים

You shall make a Paroches (partition)... and you shall bring there, inside the Paroches, the Ark of the Testimony, and the Paroches shall separate for you between the Holy and the Holy of Holies.¹

ROLE I: "AND THE PAROCHES SHALL SEPARATE FOR YOU"

The Paroches (dividing curtain) in the Mishkan is well-known to us. Indeed, within our synagogue, which is known as "מִקְדָּשׁ קָטָן – lesser sanctuary" the curtain which sections off the Ark that contains the Torah scrolls is modelled on the Paroches of the Mishkan.²

If we were to be asked what the role and purpose of the paroches in the Mishkan was, we would likely respond that the answer is explicitly stated in our verse: to serve as a division between the two domains of the Kodesh (Main Sanctuary) and the Kodesh Hakodashim (Holy of Holies). Indeed, Rashi states that the word "פרוכת" is an expression of "מחיצה – partition". *Hakesav V'Hakabbalah elaborates that the root letters of the word are פ-ר-כ, which means to break, as the Paroches provides a break or division between the two domains of the Mishkan. Moreover, the "dividing" function of the Paroches was not always provided by a curtain made of material – in the first Beis Hamikdash, it was a wall of stone that divided between the main Sanctuary and the Kodesh Hakodashim.*

ROLE II: "AND YOU SHALL BRING THERE... THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY"

However, while the above response is undoubtedly correct, a closer look at our verse will reveal that the paroches served not one function, but two. The earlier part of the verse states: "*and you shall bring there, inside the Paroches, the Ark of the Testimony.*" As the Ramban points out, these words are not describing the way the Mishkan is to be set up, for that is something that is not dealt with until the end of Parshas Pekudei.³ Rather, the verse here is denoting a second role of the Paroches, namely, that it

1 Shemos 26:31-33.

2 See R' Moshe Feinstein, *Igros Moshe, Orach Chaim 4:40*.

3 Shemos Chapter 40.

serves to “cover” the holy Aron and shield it from view. This second purpose is reiterated in the Torah’s instructions for setting up the Mishkan, where it states: “וְשָׂמַתָּ שָׁם אֶת אֲרוֹן הָעֵדוּת וְסָכַתָּ עָלָיָהּ – You shall place there [in the Mishkan] the Ark of the Testimony, and you shall shield the Ark with the Paroches.”⁴

DIVIDING BETWEEN THE ROLES

Having identified the two purposes of the Paroches – dividing between the two domains in the Mishkan and covering the Aron from view – it is most interesting to note that there were times when the Paroches fulfilled only the first purpose, and other times when it fulfilled only the second.

- ▷ During the Second Beis Hamikdash, there was no Aron in the Kodosh Hakodashim and hence, there was no requirement for a Paroches to shield it from view. At that time, the Paroches served only the function of dividing between the two domains of Sanctuary and the Kodosh Hakodashim.
- ▷ In Chapter 4 of Parshas Bamidbar, the Torah describes how the Mishkan and its vessels were to be transported as the people journeyed through the wilderness. Verse 5 reads: “וּבָא אַהֲרֹן וּבָנָיו בְּנֹסַע הַמַּחֲנֶה וְהוֹרְדוּ אֶת פְּרֹכֶת הַמִּסְכָּה וְכִסּוּ בָּהּ אֶת אֲרוֹן הָעֵדוּת – Aharon and his sons shall come when the camp is to journey, and they shall take down the Paroches and cover the Ark of the testimony with it.” With the people in transit, there were no domains for the Paroches to divide between; yet even there it continued to fulfill the function of shielding the Aron from view by covering it.⁵

Moreover, when we return to the situation in the first Beis Hamikdash – where both roles of the Paroches were fulfilled – we will see that each role was taken care of by a different component, for the Paroches at that time consisted of a wall, with an entrance in the center that was covered by a curtain:

- ▷ On the one hand, the division between the main Sanctuary and the Kodosh Hakodashim was provided by the wall. Even had the entrance in the center not been covered with a curtain, that would in no way have negated the wall’s status as a partition.
- ▷ On the other hand, the curtain which covered the entrance served the function of shielding the Aron from view.⁶

ROLE III: CREATING SPACE

Looking yet more carefully at our verse, we will discover a third element within the Paroches. The verse concludes:

וְהִבְדִּילָהּ הַפְּרֹכֶת לָכֶם בֵּין הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּבֵין קֹדֶשׁ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים

And the Paroches shall divide for you between the Holy and the Holy of Holies

The Netziv⁷ asks: What is the meaning of the seemingly redundant word “לָכֶם – for you”? This word does not appear with regards to any other aspect of the building of the Mishkan or the

4 Ibid. verse 3.

5 R’ Aharon Dovid Goldberg shlit”a, *Shiras Dovid Parshas Terumah*.

6 R’ Menachem Kasher, Torah Sheleimah, endnotes to Parshas Terumah sec. 18.

7 Commentary Haamek Davar to Shemos 26:33.

manufacture of its vessels. In what way was the Paroches' division between the two domains anymore "for the Jewish people" than anything else mentioned in our parsha?

TWO TYPES OF DIVISION

The Netziv further draws our attention to the verse's phrasing the division as "בין הקדש ובין קדש" "הקדשים," in light of a most interesting principle of parshanut. In Lashon Hakodesh, there are two ways to describe something that divides between two things:

1. With the letter "ל" in between the two things being divided. For example: "ויהי מבדיל" "בין מים למים"⁸
2. With the word "ובין" in between the two things. For example: "ויבדל אלקים בין האור" "ובין החשך"⁹

What is the difference between these two forms? The Netziv explains:

3. If the division is described with a "ל", then the divider serves only to divide between the two things, but does not partake of any quality of either of them.
4. If the word "ובין" is used, it means that the item that is in between the two things is also a "middle ground" in that has qualities of the two things it is dividing.

Applying that principle to our verse, we conclude that the paroches was to effect a division that enjoyed a status somewhere between the Holy and the Holy of Holies. The question is: Where did this take place and to what end?

ENTERING THE IMPOSSIBLE

The meaning behind this lies in a Midrash¹⁰ which states that although Aharon could not enter the Kodosh Hakodashim at any time apart from Yom Kippur, Moshe was able to enter whenever he wanted, and indeed did so regularly in order to commune with the Divine Presence and receive Torah from there. The problem is, at the end of Chumash Shemos¹¹ we are told that Moshe was unable to enter the Mishkan on the day of its inauguration, on account of Hashem's cloud that hovered over it. However, Hashem's cloud was constantly over the Kodosh Hakodashim! If so, how could Moshe ever enter there?

The answer is given in our verse: to create a zone between the Holy and the Holy of Holies where Moshe could stand. Yet how could such a zone be created? Surely one is either in the one domain or the other! To this end, Hashem informs Moshe that the Paroches shall divide "for you" between the two domains. This means that it specifically for Moshe that the dividing line was whether he was in front of or behind the Paroches, whereas for Hashem, the division was between the innermost ten cubits and that which lay beyond. Although these two dividing points generally coincided, they could be caused to diverge – and indeed, they were. It is well-known that the poles of the Aron protruded eastward into the main sanctuary somewhat, moving the Paroches one amah back.¹² The purpose of this protrusion? To create a space that, on the one hand, was behind the Paroches, while at the same not within the final ten *amos*! This was the middle ground where Moshe was able to stand and receive Torah from Hashem.

8 Bereishis 1:6.

9 Ibid. Verse 4.

10 *Toras Kohanim to Vayikra 16:2.*

11 40:35.

12 See Yoma 54a.

Truly a new dimension in our understanding of these domains!

FOLLOW-UP: FROM MOSHE TO AHARON

In light of this idea, it is further fascinating to consider the way in which Aharon's own entry into the Kodesh Hakodashim on Yom Kippur is phrased by the Torah. In the beginning of Parshas Acharei Mos, in words well-known to us from the Torah reading on Yom Kippur morning, Hashem instructs Moshe:

דַּבֵּר אֶל אֶהֱרֹן אֶחֱיֶיךָ וְאֵל יִבְאֵ בְּכֹל עֵת אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִבַּיִת לַפְּרֻכֹּת

*Speak to your brother Aharon, and he shall not come at all times into the Sanctuary that it behind the Paroches.*¹³

Here, too, the Torah refers to the place where Aharon can enter only on Yom Kippur, not as the "Kodesh Hakodashim," but as "the Kodesh (Sanctuary) that is behind the Paroches." For indeed, entry into the Kodesh Hakodashim itself was off-limits for Aharon even on Yom Kippur – as it was for Moshe during the forty years on the wilderness. What the special avodah of Yom Kippur did allow Aharon to do was for him to enter "the Kodesh that was behind the Paroches," the middle ground that was "between the Holy and the Holy of Holies."¹⁴

13 Vayikra 16:2.

14 Haamek Davar ibid.