

פרשת ויקהל / Parashat Pekudei

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Is Yeshua the Shekhina glory of G-d?

This Weeks Reading List:

Torah: Exodus 38:21-40:38

Haftarah: 1 Kings 7:51-8:21

B'rit HaChadashah: Hebrews 1:1-14

Exodus 40:34-38

40:34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of ADONAI filled the tabernacle. 40:35 Moshe was unable to enter the tent of meeting, because the cloud remained on it, and the glory of ADONAI filled the tabernacle. 40:36 Whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Isra'el continued with all their travels. 40:37 But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not travel onward until the day when it was taken up. 40:38 For the cloud of ADONAI was above the tabe! rnacle during the day, and fire was in [the cloud] at night, so that all the house of Isra'el could see it throughout all their travels.

All of the imagery of the Mishkhan (Tabernacle), the priestly garments, the altar, the Ark of the Covenant, and finally the glory of Adonai filling the tabernacle has a lot of meaning and significance. The filling of the Mishkhan with the glory of G-d has special significance with the Messiah Yeshua, let me explain. It is written: *John1:3 All things came to be through him, and without him nothing made had being.* (פְּלִי-הַמַּעֲשִׂים נִהְיוּ עַל-יְדוֹ וְאִין דָּבָר אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה מִבְּלִעְדָּיו:) and *Coll:16 because in connection with him were created all things - in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, lordships, rulers or authorities - they have all been created through him and for him.* (כִּי-בּוֹ נִבְרָאוּ כָּל אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׁמַיִם וְאֲשֶׁר בְּאָרֶץ הַנִּגְלוֹת וְהַנְּסֻתוֹת אִם כְּסֻאוֹת וּמִמְשָׁלוֹת אוֹ) (CJB) God created the universe through Him as taught by the scriptures. The universe was created through an intermediary, the Word (John1:3), the Shekhina, wisdom, the Torah, all of these are not foreign to Judaism. This is demonstrated from the Talmud in *Avot 3:14*:

Avot 3:4

"He used to say, '... God loves Israel, because he gave them a precious instrument [Heb. Kli (כלי), "instrument, vessel"]. But he enhanced that love by letting them know that the precious instrument they have been given was the very one through which the universe was created – as it is said, "For I give you good doctrine; do not forsake my Torah" (כִּי) (לקח טוב נתתי לכם תִּירְתֵי אֶל-תַּעֲזֹבוּ: (Proverbs 4:2)

Also, examining the reading from the B'rit HaChadashah; *Hebrews 1:1-14* we find the son is the radiance of, literally “the glory” which is best rendered in a Jewish way as the “Shekhina;” which the Encyclopedia Judaica Volume 14, pg. 1349-1351 defines as “the Divine Presence, the numinous immanence of God in the world, ... a revelation of the holy in the midst of the profane ...”

Hebrews 1:3

1:3 This Son is the radiance of the Sh'khinah, the very expression of God's essence, upholding all that exists by his powerful word; and after he had, through himself, made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of HaG'dulah BaM'romim. (והוא ז' הָרַ הַ כְּבוֹדוֹ וְצִלְמֵ פָנָיו וְנִשְׁאֵר כִּי לְבַכֵּחַ דְּבָרוֹ וְאַחֲרָי אֲשֶׁר טָהַר אֶתְנוּ בְּנִפְשׁוֹ מִחַטָּ אֲתִינּוּ יֹשֵׁב מִיְמִין אֲשֶׁר לוֹ הַגְּדָלָהּ (בְּמֵרוֹם): (CJB)

The encyclopedia Judaica continues “One of the more prominent images associated with the Shekhina is that of light. Thus on the verse, ‘...the earth did shine in His glory’ (Ezekiel 43:2), the rabbis remark, “This is the face of the Shekhina’ (Avot diRabbi Natan [18b-19a]; see also Chullin 59b-60a). Both the angels in heaven and the righteousness in olam haba (the world to come) are sustained by the radiance of the Shekhina (Exodus Rabba 32:4, B'rakhot 17a; cf. Exodus 34:29-35)

“According to Saadiah Gaon [882-942 C.E.], the Shekhina is identical with the kevod hashem (the glory of G-d), which served as an intermediary between G-d and man during the prophetic experience. He suggests that the ‘glory of G-d’ is the biblical term, and the Shekhina the Talmudic term for the created splendor of light which acts as an intermediary between G-d and man, and which sometimes takes on human form. Thus when Moshe asked to see the glory of G-d, he was shown the Shekhina, and when the prophets in their visions saw G-d in human likeness, what they actually saw was not G-d himself but the Shekhina (See Saadiah’s interpretation of Ezekiel 1:26, 1 Kings 22:19, and Daniel 7:9 in *Book of Beliefs and Opinions* 2:10).

The point of these citations is not to suggest that Yeshua is a “created splendor of light,” but to demonstrate some of the associations found in the rabbinic literature of the expression, “the brightness of the glory” or “the radiance of the Shekhina.” It is clear in the rabbinic literature the presence of G-d is represented by the glory of G-d, the Shekhina. Yeshua, like Adam is the visible image of the invisible G-d (*Genesis 1:26-27*); and it is logical the writer of Hebrews 1:3 draws the conclusion that Yeshua is the Shekhina glory of G-d. Such comparisons are not unknown in Judaism as demonstrated by a fourteenth-century Midrash by Rabbi David ben-Amram of Aden (*See Midrash HaGadol B'reshit, pp. 135-136; it can be found in Raphael Patai, The Messiah Texts, pg. 263*)

The Mishkhan was to become the spiritual center of Israel representing G-d’s wisdom and the testimony of the presence of G-d was demonstrated by the appearance of the Shekhina. I believe this is very relevant for us today because of what Yeshua said: *John8:12 Yeshua spoke to them again: "I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light which gives life." (נִיּוֹסָף יֵשׁוּעַ וַיְדַבֵּר אֵלֵיהֶם לֵאמֹר אֲנִי כִי אֹר הָעוֹלָם הֵהָ לְךְ אַחֲרָי לֹא יִלְךְ בַּח' אֲשֶׁר כִּי-לוֹ) John9:5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (אֹר הַחַיִּים: בְּעוֹד אֲנִי בְּעוֹלָם אֹר הָעוֹלָם) (הַגִּנִּי: (CJB)* The scriptures show there is a connection between the Shekhina and the Messiah, therefore, Yeshua, being the Shekhina glory of G-d now has become our spiritual center.

It was this agency of the Shekhina, the divine presence of G-d that enabled Yeshua to live a perfect life, completely Torah observant, and then enabling him to lay his life down on our behalf. This is how Yeshua is referred to as the second Adam in the sense that as Adam the man brought death to all through his disobedience, Yeshua brought life to all through his obedience. Even though Yeshua and Adam were different in the sense that Adam was “created by” HaShem and Yeshua was “begotten of” HaShem; this distinction is elucidated within the term of the Shekhina, the glorious presence of Hashem that dwelt in the Mishkhan (Tabernacle) also indwelt Yeshua. The difference between Yeshua and Adam was in the essence of their being; the uniqueness of Yeshua is that he possessed the Glory of HaShem. *John1:14 The Word became a human being and lived with us, and we saw his Sh'khinah, the Sh'khinah of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.* (וְהָדָבָר לְבַשׁ בְּשָׂר וַיֵּשֶׁבֶן בְּתוֹכֵנוּ וְאָת־כְּבוֹדוֹ רָאִינוּ כְּכַבֹּד בֶּן יָחִיד) (לאָבִיו מְלֵא חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת: (CJB)

Yeshua offered His own body up to be the perfect Sacrifice for sins. By His shed blood we are given complete atonement before Adonai. The Torah foreshadows the true and abiding sacrifice of Yeshua as the means of our reconciliation with HaShem. Indeed, Yeshua Hamoshiach is the propitiation of expiation (atonement) for our sins.

Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever