

Parashat Pekudei 5782, 2022:

The Glory of Hashem

Rabbi David Etengoff

Dedicated to the sacred memories of my mother, Miriam Tovah bat Aharon Hakohen, father-in-law, Levi ben Yitzhak, sister, Shulamit bat Menachem, sister-in-law, Ruchama Rivka Sondra bat Yeziel, Chana bat Shmuel, Yehonatan Binyamin ben Mordechai Meir Halevi, Shoshana Elka bat Avraham, Tikvah bat Rivka Perel, Peretz ben Chaim, Chaya Sarah bat Reb Yechezkel Shraga, Shmuel Yosef ben Reuven, Shayndel bat Mordechai Yehudah, the *Kedoshim* of Har Nof, Pittsburgh, and Jersey City, and the *refuah shlaimah* of Mordechai HaLevi ben Miriam Tovah, Yocheved Dafneh bat Dinah Zehavah, and the health and safety of our brothers and sisters in Israel and around the world.

The term, “*u’chvode Hashem*,” is found twice in the context of the *Mishkan*: “The cloud covered the Communion Tent, and Hashem’s glory (*u’chvode Hashem*) filled the Tabernacle. Moshe could not come into the Communion Tent, since the cloud (*anan*) had rested on it, and Hashem’s glory (*u’chvode Hashem*) filled the Tabernacle.” (*Sefer Shemot* 40:34-35, translation, *The Living Torah*, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan *zatzal*, with my emendations) In his Aramaic translation of the Torah on our *pasukim*, Onkelos (first-second century CE) renders *u’chvode Hashem* as, “*vi’kara d’Hashem*” (“and the honor of Hashem”), reminiscent of the celebrated verse in *Megillat Esther*, “And the Jews had light and happiness and gladness and honor—*l’yehudim hayitah orah v’simchah v’sasone vi’kar*.” (8:16, translation my own)

What does *u’chvode Hashem* mean? Was it a mystical feeling engendered by being in proximity to the Almighty’s Presence, or something else entirely? While Rashi (1040-1105) is silent regarding the meaning of *u’chvode Hashem* in our *pasukim*, his brief gloss on *Sefer Bamidbar* 14:10, one of the five other *pasukim* containing this expression in Tanach, identifies *u’chvode Hashem* with the *anan*. In contrast, the Rambam (Maimonides, 1135-1204) in his philosophic *magnum opus*, *Moreh HaNevuchim* (*Guide for the Perplexed*) interprets our expression as: “... the created light (*ha’or sh’nivra*) that is designated as *kavode* in every passage [in Tanach] and that

filled the tabernacle...” (I:19, translation, Dr. Shlomo Pines, page 46, brackets my own, and see as well, I:64) Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim ben Aaron Luntschitz (1550-1619), known as, “the Kli Yakar,” after the name of his commentary on the Torah, embraces the Rambam’s approach in his examination of our *pasuk*:

It appears from this verse that *kavode Hashem* is not the same thing as “the *anan*.” Rather, the fire and the light, that is, *kavode Hashem*, was visible from the midst of the *anan*, for without the cloud it would have been impossible to gaze upon it. For if a person cannot look directly at the light of the sun, all the more so is it the case regarding the splendid light of His *Shechinah*, may He be blessed. Therefore, this holy light was visible solely from inside the cloud. (Translation my own)

We now have two ways of defining the nature of *kavode Hashem*: According to Rashi, it refers to the *anan*, whereas both the Rambam and the Kli Yakar associate it with some kind of Divine light; either “*ha’or sh’nivra*” (Rambam) or “the splendid light of His *Shechinah*, may He be blessed” (Kli Yakar). These explications bring us closer to a more profound understanding of one of the most celebrated *pasukim* in our *tefilot*: “And one [of the *Seraphim*] called to the other and said, “Holy, holy, holy is the L-rd of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory (*m’lo kol ha’aretz k’vodo*).” (*Sefer Yeshayahu* 6:3, translation, *The Judaica Press Tanach*, brackets my own)

May the time come soon, and in our days, when the entire Jewish people, and all humankind, will gaze upon the splendid light of the *Shechinah*, and join the *Seraphim* in recognizing *m’lo kol ha’aretz k’vodo. V’chane yihi ratzon.*

Shabbat Shalom

Past *drashot* may be found at my blog-website: <http://reparashathashavuah.org>.

Please contact me at rdbe718@gmail.com to be added to my weekly email list.

*** My audio *shiurim* on the topics of *Tefilah* and *Tanach* may be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/8hsdpvd>

*** I have posted 164 of Rabbi Soloveitchik's English language audio *shiurim* (MP3 format) spanning the years 1958-1984. Please click on the highlighted link: [The Rav](#)