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In Memory of Rabbi Abraham Leibtag

Shiurim in Chumash & Navi by Menachem Leibtag

PARSHAT TETZAVEH

Order in the 'court-yard'? Certainly that's what we'd expect to find when the Torah presents the laws of the mishkan; and that is exactly what we do find - most of the time.

However, there is one glaring exception - that relates to the placement of the laws of the **mizbach ha-ktoret** at the end of Parshat Tetzaveh (instead of at the beginning of Parshat Teruma).

In the following shiur, we will first clarify our question; afterward we will offer an explanation that relates once again to the thematic connection between the mishkan and Ma'amad Har Sinai.

INTRODUCTION

Recall, from last week's shiur how Parshat Tetzaveh forms part of the larger unit (chapters 25 thru 31), which we referred to as **tzivui ha-mishkan** [the commandment to build the mishkan]. This unit contains a complete set of laws in which God explains to Moshe how the mishkan is to be built and how it will operate.

In that shiur, we discussed the controversy concerning when and why this set of laws was first given to Moshe Rabeinu. In the following shiur, we analyze the internal structure of this unit, to show how (and why) it actually contains **two** distinct units - that overlap in a very special manner.

A VERY LONG 'DIBBUR'

Before we begin, we must make one general observation concerning why parshiot Teruma and Tetzaveh (i.e. Shmot 25:1-30:10) should be considered a distinct 'sub-unit'. Note how Parshat Teruma begins with God's commandment to Moshe to "speak to Bnei Yisrael and tell them..." (25:1) - followed by a lengthy set of instructions that continues all the way until the end of Parshat Tetzaveh (i.e. 30:10). To prove this, simply note how the next "dibbur" doesn't begin until the opening pasuk of Parshat Ki Tisa. [See the new "dibbur" in 30:11, while noting that there has not been any similar opening statement since 25:1. However, from 30:11 till the end of chapter 31, every parshia in a separate "dibbur"! We'll return to this observation later in the shiur.]

Therefore, we begin our study with an analysis of this first 'sub-unit' (i.e. 25:1 thru 30:10). Afterward, we will discuss how the six short 'parshiot' in Parshat Ki Tisa (30:11 thru 31:18) that follow, even though they are outside this unit, complete the larger unit of "tzivui ha-mishkan" - the commandment to build the Mishkan.

AN OUTLINE OF TERUMAT/TETZAVEH

The following outline summarizes the topic of each parshia within this unit of parshiot Teruma/Tetzaveh. Study it carefully, noting how it appears to follow in a rather logical order (at least until the very end). It will clarify our opening question.

[Follow this chart with a Tanach Koren at hand.]

Introduction - Donation of the **materials** (25:1-7)

& the purpose of this project:

"Ve-asu li mikdash ve-**shachantl** betocham" (25:8-9)

Vessels in the Kodesh Kodashim (innermost sanctuary)

Aron - the ark to house the "luchot" (25:10-16)

Kaporet - the special lid for the ark (25:17-22)

Vessels in the Kodesh (main sanctuary)

Shulchan - the table for the show-bread (25:23-30)

Menora - the candelabra (25:31-40)

The Ohel Mo'ed [The tent housing these vessels] (26:1-37)

Yeriot - The canvas of the tent - from cloth & goatskins

Krashim - the wooden beams supporting this tent

Parochet - the curtain to partition the Kodesh Kdoshim

The Chatzer [The outer courtyard & its vessels]

Mizbeiach Ha-Ola (the altar / 27:1-8)

Chatzer - the outer courtyard

its curtains and poles (see 27:9-19)

Oil For The Menora (27:20-21)

[A priori, we would have expected to find this commandment with the **menorah**. See further *iyun*.]

The 'Bigdei Kehuna' - (28:1-43)

Six parshiot describing the priestly garments

The Seven-Day Inaugural Dedication Ceremony (29:1-37)

Olat Tamid (29:38-46)

The daily offering on the altar (after its dedication)

The Mizbach Ha-Ktoret - the incense altar (30:1-10)

[This seems 'out of place', as we will discuss.]

As you review this outline, note the logical order of its progression. It begins by describing the 'aron' - the most sacred object in the mishkan, situated in the 'kodesh kodashim'; then continues with the vessels located in the 'kodesh', followed by the 'ohel mo'ed' [Tent of Meeting], which houses these vessels. Afterward we find the 'mizbach ha-ola' - which is located outside this tent - and the courtyard ['chatzer'] that surrounds it. This unit concludes with the 'bigdei kehuna' - the special garments for the kohanim who will officiate in the mishkan, followed by the details of its seven-day dedication ceremony (and the daily sacrifice that will be henceforth offered).

However, the final parshia describing the "mizbach ha-ktoret appears to be totally 'out of place'. After all, this golden altar is one of the three vessels situated in the kodesh. Clearly, this parshia should have been recorded in chapter 26 together with the laws of the "shulchan and menorah - the other vessels located in the ohel mo'ed.

To verify this point (that the mizbach ktoret is recorded out of place), simply note the parallel mention of these vessels in Parshat Vayakhel (see 35:13-15, 37:10-29, & 39:35-39). There the laws of the mizbach ktoret are consistently recorded together with the laws of the menorah and the shulchan.

Furthermore, this 'displacement' of the mizbach ha-ktoret is only half the problem. We will now explain how the psukim that precede this parshia place this golden altar in even greater 'isolation'!

OUT OF 'PLACE' and 'OUT' OF PLACE

Review the above outline once again, noting how the parshia of the olat tamid (29:38-46) forms what 'should have been' the conclusion of this unit. Let's take a closer look at this parshia, noting how its concluding verses forms a beautiful summary for this entire unit (see 29:42-44):

"Olat tamid for all generations, in front of the ohel mo'ed - the place where we will meet to speak to you from there."

[note how this pasuk 'matches' 25:22!]

And I will sanctify the **OHEL MO'ED** (& its vessels),

[summarizing chapters 25 & 26]

the **MIZBEIACH** (i.e. the **chatzer**),

[summarizing chapter 27]

and the **KOHANIM...** (i.e. their garments & dedication)

[summarizing chapters 28 & 29]

(see 29:44)

As you review these psukim, note how the words in **CAPS** correlate to the primary topics in the above outline! But that's not all, for the next pasuk forms almost a perfect 'bookend' for this entire unit: "ve-**shachanti** betoch **bnei Yisrael...**" (see 29:45) - matching: "ve-asu li mikdash ve-**shachanti** betocham" (see 25:8) - the opening commandment of this entire unit - found at the beginning of Parshat Teruma!

Finally, to top it off, this parshia concludes with its 'grand finale' - that connects the purpose of this mishkan to the very purpose of the entire process of Yetziat Mitzrayim:

"And they shall know that I am their God who took them out of Egypt - **le-shochni** betocham - **in order** to dwell among them; I am the Lord their God" (see 29:42-46).

Thus, chapters 25 thru 29 form a clearly defined unit with 'matching bookends'. But this only magnifies our opening question regarding the placement of the laws concerning the **mizbach ha-ktoret** (in the next parshia / see 30:1-10) - for it is not only 'out of place' - it is totally isolated - outside this 'shechina' unit!

This total isolation of the mizbach ha-ktoret forces us to search for a thematic reason for the Torah's intentional placement of these laws after the closure of the shechina unit.

BACK TO HAR SINAI

To suggest an answer to this question, let's return once again to the conceptual parallel between the mishkan and Har Sinai, as discussed in last week's shiur, and as explicated by Ramban:

"... the hidden purpose ['sod'] of the mishkan is for God's **glory** which dwelled ('shachan') on **Har Sinai** to dwell upon it..." (Ramban on 25:1, see TSC shiur on Teruma).

According to Ramban, the very purpose of the mishkan was to serve as a vehicle that could perpetuate the Sinai experience! This purpose is reflected in the numerous parallels that exist between Ma'amad Har Sinai and the mishkan. For example:

* The **aron**:

contains the **luchot ha-eidut** (25:21), the everlasting testimony of the covenant forged between God and bnei Yisrael at Har Sinai (see 24:3-12).

* The **keruvim**:

situated above the **kaporet** (on top of the **aron**), serve as the site from where God will continue to speak to Moshe. There, Moshe will receive the remaining mitzvot, just as he had received the dibrot from God on Har Sinai.

* The **mizbach ha-ola** -

where Bnei Yisrael will offer their **olot & shlamim**, is similar to the **mizbeiach** that Bnei Yisrael built at the foot of Har Sinai, upon which they offered **olot & shlamim** (see 24:4-8).

Following this train of thought, we should expect to find a parallel as well between the mizbach ha-ktoret and Ma'amad Har Sinai - a parallel that may shed light on why the Torah places the mizbach ha-ktoret after the Shechina unit of the mishkan was completed. To find it, we must first consider a more general parallel between Har Sinai and the mishkan.

THREE MECHITZOT

One of the most striking parallels between the mishkan and Har Sinai relates to the concept of '**mechitzot**' - boundaries. At Har Sinai, the **people** are instructed to remain at the **foot** of the mountain while the **kohanim** are permitted to come a bit closer (see 19:22; 24:1-2 & 24:9). Only **Moshe** is granted access to the **top** of the mountain (see 19:20-24 & 24:2 & 24:12).

In regard to the mishkan, we find a very interesting parallel. The **people** are permitted to proceed only as far as the outer courtyard of the mishkan (where the **mizbach ha-ola** is located). The **kohanim** are allowed into the "**kodesh**" (where the **shulchan & menorah** are located), and only Moshe (and Aharon) can enter the "**kodesh ha-kodashim**" (where the **aron & keruvim** are located).

[Additionally, Bnei Yisrael may enter the courtyard only after first purifying themselves (i.e. they must be "tahor"), just as a purification process was required in preparation for Ma'amad Har Sinai (see 19:10-15).]

The following table summarizes this parallel:

GROUP	HAR SINAI	THE MISHKAN	FUNCTION
Moshe	top of mountain	Kodesh kodashim	dibur
Kohanim	mid-mountain	Kodesh (ohel mo'ed)	meeting
People	foot of mountain	Chatzer (courtyard)	korbanot

So how does the **mizbach ha-ktoret** fit into all this?

In our shiur on Parshat Yitro, we discussed the dialectic nature of the encounter between God and Bnei Yisrael at Har Sinai. Ideally, Bnei Yisrael should have heard the commandments directly from God [**panim be-panim**']. However, as mortal man is incapable of withstanding God's Presence (see Devarim 5:4-5, 20-25), God found it necessary to 'buffer' this encounter. due to this tension, God found it necessary to cover Har Sinai with a **cloud** before revealing himself:

"Behold I am coming to you **be-av** **he-anan** - in the **thickness** of a **cloud** - in order that they can hear as I speak to you..." (see 19:9)

"... And Har Sinai was full of **smoke** ['ashan'], for God had come down upon it with fire..."

(see 19:16-18 and the TSC shiur on Parshat Yitro).

In this manner, the **anan** (cloud) on Har Sinai effectively served as a **buffer** between:

- Bnei Yisrael at the **foot** of the mountain, and
- God's revelation at the **top** of the mountain.

One could suggest that the **mizbach ha-ktoret** serves a similar function. When the **ktoret** [incense] is offered on the coals of this small altar, it creates a cloud of smoke (see Vayikra 16:13) in the "kodesh". In this manner, this "anan" [cloud of smoke] forms a buffer between Bnei Yisrael, who stand outside in the **chatzer** - and God, whose presence dwells in the "**kodesh ha-kodashim**".

THE AXIS: -Aron -- Mizbach Ktoret -- Mizbach Ola

This interpretation is supported by two key psukim that describe the relationship between the **mizbach ha-ola**, **mizbach ha-ktoret**, and the **kodesh kodashim**.

The first pasuk stresses the connection between the **mizbach ha-ola** and the **ohel mo'ed**. As you study this pasuk, note how redundant it appears to be:

"**olat tamid** [the daily offering on the mizbach ha-ola]

- for all generations,
- in front of the entrance to the **ohel mo'ed** -
- before God [lifnei Hashem]
- from where **I will meet you**
- to **speak** to you there" (see 29:42).

Surely, the Torah could have explained where this public offering is brought in half the words; yet for some reason the Torah wishes to emphasize a thematic connection between the "olat tamid" and the place where God will speak to Bnei Yisrael.

Then, in the next 'parshia', the Torah provides explicit instructions concerning where to place the **mizbach ha-ktoret**. Note once again the 'wordiness' of this pasuk, and how it relates to the pasuk above:

"And you shall **place** it [the mizbach ktoret]

- in front of the **parochet**,
- which is over the **aron ha-eidut**,
- in front of the **kaporet** which is upon the **eidut**
- from where **I will meet with you.**" (see 30:6).

It is for this reason that the Torah emphasizes that the mizbach ktoret must be located between these two focal points, i.e. along this very same **axis** that connects the **mizbach ha-ola** with the **kodesh kodashim**.

In fact, later on in the same chapter, when the Torah explains how the ktoret was made, it emphasizes this point once again:

"...and you shall grind it very fine, and **put it**:

- before the testimony [lifnei ha'eidut]
- in the tent of meeting [**ohel moed**],
- where **I will meet with you**; - it shall be for you most holy." (see 30:36)

The above table shows how (1) the **mizbach ktoret** and (2) the mitzvah to make the **ktoret** delineate a second unit, which contains several peripheral commandments regarding the mishkan.

A 'PROTECTED' DIVINE ENCOUNTER

In a manner very similar to what took place at Har Sinai, God 'comes down' from the heavens, as it were, to the **kodesh kodashim**; while Bnei Yisrael come from their camp, to stand before God in the **chatzer** of the mishkan.

Hence, the main section of the **ohel mo'ed** serves as a buffer between God and Bnei Yisrael. There, the **ktoret** must be offered each time the **kohen** enters to perform his service, which creates an **anan** [cloud of smoke] to 'protect' the **kohen** when he enters the **kodesh**:

"And Aharon shall offer the **ktoret** daily, in the morning before tending to the **menorah**, and when lighting the **menorah** in the evening..." (30:7-8).

[Note also Vayikra 16:2, where Aharon must also offer ktoret to create a similar cloud of smoke to protect himself before entering the kodesh ha-kodashim on Yom Kippur!]

With this background we can answer our opening question. One could suggest that by placing the commandment to build the **mizbach ha-ktoret** after the summary psukim at the very end of this unit, the Torah alludes to its unique function as a 'buffer' in this covenantal encounter. As - 'realistically' - Bnei Yisrael may not be worthy of this encounter, the Torah commands Bnei Yisrael to place the **mizbach ktoret** in the kodesh to serve as a buffer, to protect them for the Shechina that dwells in the kodesh kedoshim.

[Note the similarity between the nature of this 'protected encounter' in the mishkan and what we referred to in our shiur on Parshat Yitro as '**plan A**,' by which God speaks to Moshe while 'covered by a cloud' so that the people can only overhear their conversation. See Shmot 19:9! See also Devarim 5:5.]

Furthermore, the dialectic nature of this encounter is highlighted by the placement of the laws of the mizbach ha-ktoret outside this Shechina unit, yet within the same dibur!

THE KTORET UNIT

Up until this point, we have treated parshiot Teruma/Tetzaveh as one, integrated unit, as indicated by the single **dibur** that introduces these two parshiot. Now we must consider the remaining parshiot (in Parshat Ki Tisa) that form the final six paragraphs of the greater **tzivui ha-mishkan** unit.

Take a minute to review the beginning of Ki-Tisa (i.e. 30:11-31:17), noting how it describes several other mitzvot concerning the mishkan that were also 'left out' of the **Shechina unit**.

When we list these parshiot in order, we find once again a set of 'bookends':

30:1-10 **mizbach ha-ktoret** (* bookend 1 *)
(as explained above)

30:11-16 **Machatzit ha-shekel** -
money collected to fund the **ohel mo'ed**

30:17-21 **Ki'yor**
the faucet for the kohanim to wash their hands

30:22-33 **Shemen ha-mishcha**
special oil to anoint the mishkan's accessories and the kohanim

30:34-38 **Ktoret** (* bookend 2 *)
the incense for the **mizbach ktoret**

[At this point, the **laws** concerning the mishkan end. Chapter 31 discusses the appointment of Betzalel to build the mishkan and the prohibition to work on **Shabbat** (to preclude the possible, mistaken notion the work for the mishkan on shabbat is permissible). Whereas these do not involve laws directly relating to the construction of the mishkan and its accessories, we have omitted them from this table.]

A PARALLEL STRUCTURE

As your review these parshiot, note how a rather amazing parallel structure emerges; pointing to the direct connection between this **Ktoret** unit and the previous **Shechina unit**. Note how each of these peripheral commandments in the **Ktoret unit** corresponds (in the same order!) to a related topic in the **Shechina unit**!

The following table illustrates this parallel:

TOPIC	SHECHINA UNIT	KTORET UNIT
Accessories in the mishkan	aron, kaporet, shulchan, menorah	mizbach ktoret
Ohel Mo'ed	yeriot, krashim	machatzit ha-shekel le-avodat ohel mo'ed
Chatzer	mizbach ha-ola	kiyor
Dedication	bigdei kehuna & milu'im (to anoint the kohanim)	shemen ha-mishcha
Daily Offering	korban tamid on mizbach ha-ola	ktoret tamid on mizbach ha-ktoret

The mitzvot found in the **Shechina unit**, which focus on God's 'hitgalut' in the mishkan, are complemented by the mitzvot in the **Ktoret unit**, which focus on the need to protect Bnei Yisrael in this special encounter.

Note as well how all of the mitzvot in the Ktoret unit emphasize either kapara (see shiur on Yom Kippur, where we explained how kapara involves protection from God's hitgalut) or warn of impending death if not performed properly (see 30:10; 30:12; 30:21; 30:33; 30:38; relate to Devarim 5:21-23!). Protection is required from the potential punishment enacted should man not prepare himself properly for this encounter with God in the mishkan.

In this manner, the laws of the mizbach ktoret can serve as an eternal reminder of how man must not only value his ability to enjoy a relationship with God, but also remain aware of the natural limits of this encounter.

shabbat shalom,
menachem

FOR FURTHER IYUN

A. Be sure to see Ramban on 30:1, where he explains why the mizbach ha-ktoret is at the end of the unit. See also Seforno & Chizkuni. Relate these approaches to our analysis of this unit in the above shiur.

B. In our discussion of the overall structure, we noted that (B) comprises the complete unit of **tzivui ha-mishkan**. Note that this complete unit includes **seven** dibur's. [A dibur is each time the Torah introduces God's speech to Moshe with, "Va-yedaber Hashem el Moshe leimor" or "va-yomer ...", etc.

[See 25:1, 30:11, 30:17, 30:22, 30:34, 31:1, and 31:12.]

One could view these dibur's as allusions to the seven days of creation. The first **dibur**, covering the entire **Shechina unit**, may reflect the concept of God's creation of **light / Shechina** (see Rashi on Breishit 1:3). The next four deal with other mitzvot of the mishkan. [Admittedly, they don't work out as good as the rest.] The sixth **dibur** describes the appointment of Betzalel to build the mishkan. This may parallel God's creation of man on the sixth day. Just as man in Creation [**perek aleph**] was to master the material world and utilize his God-given talents towards a divine purpose, so must Betzalel organize the materials collected and use his God-given talents to oversee the construction of the mishkan. To do so, he requires 'ruach Elokim' (31:3/ relate to the creation of man 'be-tzelem Elokim').

The seventh **dibur** is the mitzvah to keep **Shabbat!** (See 31:15.) This may serve as the basis for the many Midrashim that describe the mishkan as the pinnacle of the creation process. This reflects, once

again, the biblical theme that the natural world needs to be directed towards a divine purpose. This is the duty of man not only in the mishkan, but also throughout his daily life, as well.

C. A FULL TIME JOB

Recall from our original outline how the first two psukim of Parshat Tetzaveh (i.e. the mitzvah to light the menorah /see 27:20-21) also appears out of place. If we follow the logic of the structure of the **Shechina unit**, it should have been recorded together with the mitzvah to build the menorah (just as the mitzvah to offer the **lechem ha-panim** is included with the mitzvah to build the **shulchan** / see 25:30).

Nevertheless, the Torah transfers these psukim from chapter 26 and juxtaposes them with the mitzvah to make the **bigdei kehuna** (in chapter 28). Why?

One could suggest that in doing so, the Torah alludes to a more important role of the **kohanim**. Aside from the honor and glory of their position, as reflected by their special garments, their primary job is to 'spread the light' of Torah - the message of mishkan, as represented by the **aron ha-eidut** at its focal point - to Bnei Yisrael.

It is this mitzvah of the **kohanim**, to disseminate the Torah, which may explain why it referred to as a "chukat olam le-doroteichem - an everlasting law for all generations" (see 27:31). Even when the mikdash lay in ruins, this mitzvah forever remains the obligation of our religious leaders.

D. ADDITIONAL SOURCES & RESEARCH

Re: The 'displacement' of the mizbach ha-ktoret

We explained that the Torah 'transferred' the discussion of the mizbach ha-ktoret to the end of the mishkan unit to emphasize its role as a 'buffer', protecting Bnei Yisrael from the 'hashra'at ha-Shechina' that occurs in the mishkan. This general idea appears in the Vilna Gaon's "Aderet Eliyahu". The Gaon explains that neither the ktoret nor the machatzit ha-shekel (which the Torah discusses immediately following its discussion of the mizbach ha-ktoret) was indispensable for 'hashra'at ha-Shechina'. They come into play once the Shechina has already descended, in order to bring kapara for Bnei Yisrael. Though the Gaon does not mention the 'buffer' idea developed in the shiur, his explanation does feature the concept of a need for kapara when the Shechina descends and the mizbach ha-zahav as filling that role. Like the Gaon, the Seforno also writes that the mizbach ha-zahav is not necessary for the Shechina to descend. However, rather than pointing to atonement as the ktoret's primary function, the Seforno views it as an expression of kavod to Hashem, and hence a prayer of sorts asking the Almighty to accept the korbanot offered on the other mizbeiach. The Ramban also writes along the lines, describing the mizbach ha-zahav as an expression of kavod rather than a means of bringing the Shechina.

This point, whether or not the ktoret is required to bring the Shechina, appears to be subject to dispute. The Midrash Tanchuma, Tetzaveh 15, writes clearly that the Shechina would not descend into the mishkan until after the ktoret was offered. This is also the view of the Da'at Zekeinim mi-Ba'alei ha-Tosafot on Shmot 25:6. This view would oppose the position of the Seforno and Vilna Gaon.

Several different answers to the question of this parsha's location appear in other mefarshim. Some Acharonim, including the Meshech Chochma (30:1), view the location of this parsha as an allusion to the halacha allowing the offering of ktoret even without the mizbach ha-ktoret. The Or Ha-chayim (25:9) also sees here a subtle allusion to a technicality, that Shlomo Ha-melech built his own mizbach ha-ktoret rather than using Moshe's. (This assumption is somewhat controversial - see Torah Shleima, milu'im to Parshat Tetzaveh, 29.) The Tzror Ha-mor (30:1) writes that the Torah places this parsha last to indicate the unique stature of the mizbach ha-ktoret as the most important of all the klei ha-mikdash. A similar theory is advanced by Rav Dov Rabinowitz ("Da'at Sofrim"), who claims that Bnei Yisrael are worthy for the ktoret, the most exalted of all the offerings, only after they have loyally executed all the commands of the previous chapters and the Shechina has taken it residence in the mishkan. Rav Zalman

Sorotzkin (Oznayim la-Torah 30:1) suggests precisely the opposite: lest one afford too much importance to the mizbach ha-zahav over the mizbach ha-nechoshet, the Torah extracted the former from the discussion of the klei ha-mikdash in order to emphasize that the mizbach ha-nechoshet actually constitutes the primary altar. The Netziv understands the Torah's structure as intended to underscore the distinct themes symbolized by the two mizbachot. The mizbach ha-nechoshet - along with the menorah - represents Torah, whereas the mizbach ha-ktoret symbolizes gemilut chasadim. The Torah emphasizes their symbolic distinction by separating them; their coexistence in the heichal points to the need for the two to work in tandem. The Malbim, who develops an elaborate system of symbolism with regard to the mishkan and its accessories, views the mizbach ha-ktoret as representing the spiritual result of the avoda performed in the mishkan. It is therefore presented last and apart from the rest of the mishkan's components, as it represents that which is attained as a result of that was discussed beforehand.