

PARSHAT TERUMA

Why do we need a Mishkan [Tabernacle]?

It is commonly understood that ideally, God could be worshipped directly, i.e. without the need of a physical symbol. However, due to the events of **chet ha-egel** [the sin of the Golden Calf], God changed His original plans; realizing that without providing some physical medium, Bnei Yisrael would inevitably turn to idol worship instead.

This opinion is often attributed to Rashi, and the host of other commentators - who claim that the commandment to build the Mishkan [in Parshat Teruma] was first given, only **after** the sin of the golden calf [in Parshat Ki-tisa] - even though the Torah recorded the laws of Mishkan beforehand.

Those who argue that the Mishkan was not an 'after-thought', but rather part of God's ideal to have a 'meeting place' with His nation - are championed by Ramban, who claims (arguing with Rashi) that the Torah has recorded these events in their proper chronological order. [According to this opinion, it was simply coincidental that Bnei Yisrael's sin with the golden calf took place at the same time when God was teaching Moshe the laws of the Mishkan on Har Sinai.]

Hence it would appear that the underlying reason behind this 'philosophical' debate (regarding the need for a Mishkan) lies in an 'exegetic' controversy concerning **when** the commandment to build the mishkan was first given, **before** or **after** the sin of the golden calf.

In this week's shiur, as we study this controversy and its ramifications, we will arrive at a very different conclusion. Our study will focus on the thematic connections between the Mishkan and Ma'amad Har Sinai, while trying to make sense out of Chazal's understanding of "ein mukdam u-me'uchar ba-Torah" - i.e. their exegetic assumption that the Torah may intentionally record certain events out of their chronological order.

INTRODUCTION

- Four Units in the 2nd half of Sefer Shmot -

To clarify our understanding this controversy between Rashi and Ramban, it is helpful to divide the last half of Sefer Shmot into **four** distinct (and rather obvious) units.

1. Chapters 19-24 - **Ma'amad Har Sinai**
 As we discussed in our shiurim on Yitro & Mishpatim - this unit discusses both the covenants, and laws that were given to Bnei Yisrael upon their arrival at Har Sinai.
2. Chapters 25-31 - **The commandment to build the Mishkan**
 This section includes a complete set of laws concerning how to build (and operate) the Mishkan - that spans all of Parshiot Teruma & Tetzaveh, and the first half of Ki Tisa.
3. Chapters 32-34 - **The sin of the Golden Calf**
 These two chapters [i.e. the 2nd half of Parshat Ki Tisa] form a distinct unit, as they describe the incident of chet ha-egel and what takes place in its aftermath (i.e. when Moshe ascends Har Sinai to receive the second luchot).
4. Chapters 35-40 - **The building of the Mishkan**
 These six chapters [Parshiot Vayakhel/Pekudei] form the final unit in Sefer Shmot, as they describe how the Mishkan was built and assembled, concluding with God's "schechina" descending upon it.

The following table reviews these four units:

CHAPTERS	TOPIC	PARSHA
(A) 19-24	Ma'amad Har Sinai [the first luchot]	Yitro/Mishpatim
(B) 25-31	The commandment to build the mishkan	Teruma/Tetzaveh/ 1st half of Ki Tisa
(C) 32-34	Chet Ha-egel [the second luchot]	2nd half of Ki Tisa
(D) 35-40	Building the mishkan	Vayakhel/Pekudei

By referring to the above table, it is easier to understand more precisely the basic controversy between Rashi and Ramban. While Ramban keeps Chumash 'in order' [A-B-C-D], Rashi claims that God's commandment to build the Mishkan [unit 'B'] was given only after the events of chet ha-egel [unit 'C'], and hence the order would be A-C-B-D. [See Rashi on 31:18.]

As Ramban's opinion appears to be most logical, we begin our study with a discussion of his approach. Afterward, we study Rashi's approach to show how it fundamentally may be more similar to Ramban's than we originally assumed.

THE FIRST FORTY DAYS - FOR WHAT?

Recall that at the conclusion of Parshat Mishpatim [the end of Unit A], Moshe ascends Har Sinai to receive the "**luchot, torah, & mitzva**" (see 24:12). As we know, the **luchot** are the tablets upon which God inscribed the Ten Commandments. Even though it remains unclear concerning what the words **torah & mitzva** refer to (note the different opinions among the commentators on 24:12!), it would only be logical to assume that these laws that Moshe receives at this time, would relate in some form or other to these "luchot" that he now ascends to receive.

In fact, the above chart illustrates the logic of this approach. When Moshe ascends Har Sinai to receive the **luchot** at the conclusion of **unit A** (see 24:12-18) - he receives exactly those commandments that follow immediately afterward in **unit B** - i.e. the laws of the Mishkan (i.e. chapters 25 thru 31).

[For those of you familiar with computers, this is similar to the concept of 'WYSIWYG' - What You See Is What You Get. What the Torah records when Moshe goes up - is exactly what Moshe received at that time. It should be noted that Ramban himself explains that the words "torah" & "mitzvah" in 24:12 refer not only to the Mishkan, but to the laws that Moshe teaches Bnei Yisrael in Sefer Devarim as well.]

Furthermore, considering that the primary purpose of Moshe's ascent to Har Sinai is to receive the **luchot** - which serve as a symbol of the covenant at Har Sinai (see 19:5, 24:7); it only makes sense that he would receive at the same time a set of instructions to build an edifice that would house these 'tablets'. [Recall that these "luchot" are to be housed in the **aron** - the holy ark - which is located at the center of the Mishkan.]

Finally, it also appears that the Mishkan will also serve as the location from where God will continue to teach Moshe Rabeinu the remaining commandments. - Simply note the Torah's explicit explanation for the purpose of the "kaporet":

"And you shall put the kaporet above upon the aron; and in the aron you shall put the LUCHOT that I will give you.

And there I will meet with you, and I will SPEAK TO YOU from above the kaporet - from between the two cherubim - which are upon the ARON ha'EDUT, of all things which I will command you concerning Bnei Yisrael."
 (see Shmot 25:21-22)

This pasuk provides us with a perfect explanation for why the laws of the Mishkan come first. Once the Mishkan is built, the remaining mitzvot can be conveyed to Moshe via the kaporet!

[In fact, note that immediately after the mishkan is assembled (see Shmot chapter 40), God transmits an entire set of mitzvot to Moshe from the kaporet in the ohel mo'ed - as described in book of Vayikra! [See Vayikra 1:1 and our TSC shiur on Parshat Pekudei.]

Therefore, even though Moshe Rabeinu may have received certain laws at this time in addition to those of the Mishkan, it certainly makes sense that God would have given the laws of the Mishkan to Moshe at this time as well.

THE MISHKAN & HAR SINAI

Not only does Ramban follow this approach, in his commentary on the opening line of Parshat Teruma (see 25:1) he suggests an even more profound reason for the Torah's presentation of the laws of the Mishkan specifically at this time.

Based on both textual and conceptual arguments, Ramban argues that the primary purpose of the Mishkan was to serve as a vehicle that would allow Bnei Yisrael to perpetuate the experience of **Ma'amad Har Sinai**; and hence it becomes the **first** mitzva that Moshe receives when he ascends Har Sinai. Even though Moshe Rabeinu may have received other mitzvot at that time (see Ramban on 24:12), Sefer Shmot focuses specifically on the laws of the Mishkan because it will serve as an everlasting symbol of the covenant that Bnei Yisrael accepted at Har Sinai.

This provides us with yet another reason for why the first mitzva of this section is to build the "aron". That special ark will house the **luchot** - the symbol of their covenant at **Har Sinai**.

To summarize Ramban's approach, we will quote a few lines from his commentary [though it is highly recommended that you read the entire Ramban inside]:

"After God had given the Ten Commandments **directly** to Yisrael and instructed them with a sampling of the mitzvat (i.e. Parshat Mishpatim)... and Bnei Yisrael accepted these laws and entered a covenant (24:1-11)... behold they became His nation and He became their God, as was originally stipulated [at brit mila and Har Sinai]... Now they are worthy to have a house - His dwelling - in their midst dedicated to His Name, and there **He will speak with Moshe** and **command Bnei Yisrael**... Now the 'secret' ('sod') of the mishkan is that God's **glory** ('kavod') which dwelled on **Har Sinai** will now dwell [instead] on the **mishkan** 'be-nistar' [in a more hidden manner, in contrast to Har Sinai]..." (see Ramban 25:1).

RASHI'S APPROACH

Despite the beauty and simplicity of Ramban's approach, Rashi claims exactly the opposite (see 31:18): that the commandment to build the mishkan came not only **after**, but actually **because** of, chet ha-egel. In other words, Rashi posits that the parshiot are not presented according to their chronological order. Rashi goes even further, claiming that during the first forty days Moshe received **all** the mitzvot of the Torah **except** the laws of the **mishkan**!

At first glance, such an interpretation seems untenable. Why should the Torah record at this point specifically the mitzvat that Moshe **did not** receive at this time, while omitting all the mitzvot which he **did** receive at this time? What could possibly have led Rashi to this conclusion?

To answer this question, we must first explain the exegetical principle of 'ein mukdam u-me'uchar ba-Torah' [literally: there is **no order** in the sequence of parshiot in the Torah]. Despite a common misunderstanding, this principle does not imply that Chumash progresses in random sequence. Rather, it implies that when God instructs Moshe Rabeinu to write down the books of Chumash in the fortieth year, its laws and narratives are not necessarily recorded according to their chronological order. Rather, for thematic considerations, Chumash may often record events in a different sequence - in order to convey a certain thematic message.

[Most commentators, and especially many of the Midrashim quoted by Rashi, employ this approach. **Ramban**, however, consistently disagrees with this assumption, arguing that unless a certain technical detail 'forces' him to say otherwise, he will prefer to assume that Chumash is written in chronological order.]

The principle of "ein mukdam u-me'uchar" implies that when Moshe wrote down the Torah in its final form in the fortieth year (see Devarim 31:25-26), its parshiot were organized based on thematic considerations, and hence not necessarily according to the chronological order of when they were first given. By doing so, the Torah conveys its message not only by the content of each parshia, but also by intentionally juxtaposing certain parshiot next to one another.

[See Chizkuni on Shmot 34:32 for an important insight regarding this explanation.]

Rashi, following this approach, assumes that Chumash (at times) may prefer a conceptual sequence over a chronological one. Therefore, Rashi will often explain that a certain parshia actually took place earlier or later when the progression of theme implies as such.

With this background, we can better understand Rashi's approach in our context. Employing the principle of ein mukdam u-me'uchar, Rashi always begins with considerations of theme and content in mind. He therefore cannot overlook the glaring similarities between the construction of the mishkan and **chet ha-egel**. Could it just be by chance that:

- * Bnei Yisrael must collectively donate their gold to build the mishkan (compare 25:1-2, 32:2-3);
- * Betzalel, Chur's grandson, is chosen to build the mishkan; [Rashi follows the Midrash which claims that Chur was killed because he refused to allow Bnei Yisrael to build the **egel**. (See Chizkuni 31:2.)]
- * The opening pasuk concerning the mishkan - "and they shall make for Me a **mikdash** and I will **dwell in their midst**" (25:8) - appears to rectify Bnei Yisrael's situation in the aftermath of chet ha-egel, when Moshe must move his tent (called the **ohel mo'ed**) far away - outside the camp (33:7, see also 33:3 "ki lo a'eleh b'kirbecha");
- * Aharon must bring a **par** (a bull / an **egel** is a baby bull) for a **chatat** offering during the mishkan's dedication ceremony. [The requirement of a **chatat** implies the committal of a sin; see Rashi 29:1.]

Rashi therefore explains that the commandment to build the **mishkan** came **after** chet ha-egel (during the last forty days), for it served as a form of atonement for that sin.

[Nevertheless, it remains unclear according to Rashi **why** the Torah chose to record these parshiot out of chronological order. We'll return to this question later in the shiur.]

LECHATCHILA or BE-DI'AVAD?

It is very tempting to consider this dispute between Rashi and Ramban a fundamental argument regarding the reason behind the mishkan.

Clearly, according to Ramban, the mishkan is 'lechatchila' [ideal]. In other words, even had chet ha-egel never occurred, it still would have been God's desire that Bnei Yisrael build a **mishkan**, for it serves as a physical representation of God's presence in their midst and a perpetuation of the Sinai experience.

How should we understand Rashi? Can we infer from his interpretation that the mishkan is 'be-di'avad' [a compromise]? In other words, had it not been for chet ha-egel, would there never have been a commandment to build a Temple?

Was the mitzva to build the mishkan simply an 'after-thought'? Was it only in the aftermath of Bnei Yisrael's sin that God realized the people's need for a physical representation of His presence?

Despite the temptation to arrive at this conclusion, we posit that even according to Rashi's interpretation, one **can** (and **must**) agree that God had originally intended for Bnei Yisrael to have a Temple, or at least some form of physical symbol to represent Him. To do so, i.e. to reconcile Rashi's interpretation with Ramban's explanation of the mishkan, we must differentiate between two key words (and concepts):

(1) **MISHKAN** - the portable Temple in the desert
and

(2) **MIKDASH** - a permanent Temple

Although both words describe a **sanctuary** dedicated to the worship of God, for the sake of clarity, each word (in our explanation that follows) will be given a more specific meaning.

TEMPLE TERMINOLOGY

- * The **mishkan** is a **temporary** sanctuary (a Tabernacle), a portable, tent-like structure. [Good for travel.]
- * The **mikdash** is a **permanent** sanctuary (a Temple), such as the massive stone structure built by King Solomon in Jerusalem.

We posit that Rashi would agree with Ramban's claim that the concept of a Sanctuary is "lechatchila, for it serves as a symbol of God's **shchina** (the divine presence) dwelling with Bnei Yisrael. As anyone who has read the Bible must notice, the concept of a Temple emerges as a primary theme throughout the entire Tanach.

To support this assumption, let's review several related themes that we have discussed at length in our shiurim on Sefer Breishit.

Recall that we first encountered the theme of a **mikdash** when Avraham Avinu built a **mizbeich** [altar] in **Bet-El** and "called out in God's Name" (see 12:8 & 13:4). Later, at that same site, Yaakov Avinu awakes from his dream and exclaims:

"Alas, this is the site for a **Bet Elokim**, for it is the gate to the heavens" (Br.28:17).

Yaakov then erects a 'matzeva' (monument) and vows that upon his return to Canaan he will establish that site as a **Bet-Elokim** - a House for God. [See Breishit 28:17-22.]

Thus, the very concept of a **Bet-Elokim** clearly preceded the golden calf.

Furthermore, even in 'shirat ha-yam', the song that Bnei Yisrael sung after they crossed the Red Sea, we already find an allusion to the establishment of a **mikdash** immediately upon their arrival in the land:

"Tevieimo ve-titaeimo be-har nachalatcha, machon le-shivtecha... - **mikdash**, Hashem konanu yadecha..."
["You shall bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, the place, O LORD, which You have set to dwell in, the MIKDASH (sanctuary), O Lord, which Your hands have established"]

(See Shmot 15:17, and its context!)

Finally, in Parshat Mishpatim we find conclusive proof that the basic concept of a **Bet-Elokim** is totally unrelated to the events of chet ha-egel. Recall that even according to Rashi, the laws recorded in Parshat Mishpatim were certainly given **before** chet ha-egel. [See Rashi on 31:18, where he explains that those laws (in Parshat Mishpatim) were given to Moshe Rabeinu during his first forty days on Har Sinai.]

In that set of laws we find the mitzva of 'aliya la-regel' - to '**visit** God' three times a year:

"Three times a year you shall celebrate for Me... Keep chag ha-matzot... and do not **visit me** empty-handed... Three times a year all your males **shall appear before me**..." (see 23:14-17).

If we find a commandment to 'be seen by God', it implies that there must be some type of sanctuary that would represent Him - i.e. a location where we can go to visit Him! Therefore, without some sort of a **mikdash**, this mitzva of aliya la-regel could not be fulfilled.

However, the next pasuk provides conclusive proof that this sanctuary corresponds to the concept of a **Bet-Elokim**:

"Your first fruits must be brought to **bet Hashem Elokecha** -

to the **HOUSE** of the Lord your God..." (23:19).

This commandment to bring the first fruits to the Bet Elokim clearly implies that there would have to be some sort of 'sanctuary' that will serve as God's House.

Hence, even Rashi must agree that there would have been a need for a **Bet-Elokim** even had Bnei Yisrael not sinned at chet ha-egel.

Furthermore, there is no reason for Rashi not to agree with Ramban's explanation that the primary function of the mikdash (and its vessels) was to perpetuate Bnei Yisrael's experience at Har Sinai. Instead, we will now show how their dispute over the chronological order of these events stems from a less fundamental issue - concerning the need to construct a **temporary** sanctuary before entering the Land of Israel.

WHO NEEDS A TENT?

According to Rashi's interpretation, one can still assume that God's original intention was for Bnei Yisrael to build a mikdash [a Temple]. However, had they not sinned with the Golden Calf, there would not have been any need to build a temporary one in the desert. However, after they sinned, the conquest of the Land would now be delayed. Furthermore, the nation needed to do something to show their repentance. Therefore, God ordered them to build a **temporary** mikdash [what we call a mishkan] at Har Sinai - before they would continue on their journey.

Ramban would argue that even had Bnei Yisrael not sinned, it would still have been necessary for them to build a temporary **mikdash** [= mishkan] before they embarked on that journey.

Let's attempt to explain why.

Rashi's position may be based upon God's original plan that Bnei Yisrael would conquer the land through supernatural, divine intervention (see Shmot 23:20-28). Assisted by God's miracles, Bnei Yisrael would have needed only a very short time to complete at least the first wave of conquest. Had that actually occurred, there would have been no need to build a temporary mishkan, for within a very short time it would have been possible to build a permanent mikdash instead.

However, in the aftermath of chet ha-egel, the entire situation changes. As God had removed His **Shchina**, Bnei Yisrael must first bring the **Shchina** back to the camp **before** they can conquer the Land. Hence, according to Rashi, the actual process of building the mishkan could be considered a form of 'spiritual rehabilitation'. Furthermore, the mishkan would now provide Aharon and Bnei Yisrael with the opportunity to offer korbanot and thus achieve atonement for their sin.

One could also suggest that due to chet ha-egel and the 'lower level' of the 'mal'ach' that will lead them into the land (see Shmot 33:1-5 and the TSC shiur on Parshat Ki-tisa re: the 13 midot), it may now take much longer for Bnei Yisrael to complete their conquest. Therefore, a temporary mikdash [= mishkan] is required, until a more permanent mikdash can be built.

A CONCEPTUAL JUXTAPOSITION

According to this interpretation, we can now suggest (according to Rashi) a beautiful thematic reason for the Torah placing the commandment to build the mishkan out of chronological order:

Even though the mitzva to build the 'temporary' mishkan was given **after** the story of chet ha-egel, the Torah intentionally records it earlier - immediately after Ma'amad Har Sinai - to emphasize its thematic connection to that event! In other words, Rashi, like Ramban, can also understand that the primary function of the mikdash was to perpetuate Ma'amad Har Sinai. In fact, had Bnei Yisrael not sinned, the laws of the 'permanent' mikdash may have been recorded at this spot in Chumash. However, now that a mishkan was needed (due to the events of chet ha-egel), the laws of this temporary mikdash are recorded at this point in Chumash, to emphasize the very same thematic connection that Ramban describes in great detail!

Now that Rashi makes so much sense, why wouldn't Ramban agree? To answer this question, we must return to our discussion of the differing approaches to 'mukdam u-me'uchar'.

Ramban prefers his principle that Chumash follows chronological order. Despite the similarities between the mishkan and the story of chet ha-egel (as listed above), they are not convincing enough to warrant, in Ramban's view, a distortion of the order of these parshiot. Therefore, Ramban maintains that even had it not been for chet ha-egel, there still would have been a need for a temporary mishkan.

In fact, one could suggest a very simple reason for the immediate need of a temporary sanctuary. As we explained earlier, Bnei Yisrael must still receive many more mitzvot from God. A mishkan - with the **aron** and **keruvim** at its center - is therefore necessary as the medium through which God can convey the remaining mitzvot to Moshe. Furthermore, once the **Shchina** descended upon Har Sinai, some sort of vehicle is necessary to 'carry it' with them as they travel from Har Sinai towards Eretz Canaan.

[Accordingly, Ramban explains that most of all the mitzvot recorded in Sefer Vayikra and Sefer Bemidbar were actually given from the ohel mo'ed (mishkan). See Ramban Vayikra 1:1 & 7:38. In regard to Sefer Devarim, see Ramban on 24:1 & 24:12.]

In summary, the dispute between Rashi and Ramban stems from their different exegetical approaches and pertains only to **why a temporary** mishkan was necessary before leaving Mount Sinai. However, both would agree that a **permanent** mikdash would have been necessary even had Bnei Yisrael not sinned at chet ha-egel, for Bnei Yisrael, being God's special nation, require a symbol of His Presence in their midst.

In our shiur on Parshat Tetzaveh, we will analyze the internal structure of this unit of chapters 25->31 in order to uncover additional parallels between the **mishkan** and the events of Ma'amad Har Sinai. Till then,

shabbat shalom
menachem

FOR FURTHER IYUN:

A. MASKIL L'DAVID on Rashi

In our shiur, we argued that even according to Rashi, the concept of a required mikdash for serving Hashem existed even prior to the worship of the golden calf. Along similar lines, Rav David Pardo, in his supra-commentary on Rashi entitled, "Maskil le-David", writes that even in Rashi's view, the general command to build a mishkan was transmitted to Moshe during his first forty days atop the mountain. Only the details of the construction, as presented in parshiyot Teruma & Tetzaveh (and the beginning of Ki Tisa), were transmitted later.

Rav Pardo proves this from the repeated reference in parshat Teruma to Hashem's having shown Moshe the appearance of the mishkan "on the mountain" (25:40; 26:30; 27:8). In the final two of these three references, Hashem employs the past tense ("you have been shown"), suggesting that Moshe viewed the image the mishkan before receiving these detailed instructions. Apparently, as Rav Pardo argues, Moshe learned of the mishkan - albeit only the generalities - during his first forty days on the mountain, even before the calf. Thus, Rashi clearly did not view the mishkan as necessary only in response to the sin of the egel ha-zahav.

B. RAMBAN / RASHI - earlier sources

The argument as to whether Hashem ordered the construction of the mishkan before or after the sin of the golden calf predates Rashi and the Ramban; conflicting views appear already in the Midrashim. Rashi's view, that the parshiyot appear out of order, is the position of the Midrash Tanchuma (Teruma 8, Pekudei 6), Yerushalmi (Shkalim 1:1) and Midrash Hagadol to Shmot 25:17.

The Ramban's opinion is found in Seder Elyahu Rabba 17, which states explicitly that Hashem ordered the construction of the mishkan after Bnei Yisrael declared 'na'aseh ve-nishma'. Ibn Ezra (25:1) adopts the Ramban's approach, as do the Abarbanel (31:18) and the Netziv (29:20). Despite his general affinity for the Ramban's commentary, on this issue Rabbenu Bechaye adopts Rashi's approach (25:6)

C. Mikdash Before Chet Ha-egel: Midrashic Sources

Several Midrashic passages support our contention that a mikdash would have been necessary even had it not been for the golden calf. Bemidbar Rabba 12:12 compares the world before the mishkan to a chair with two legs, which cannot stand; the construction of the mishkan added the third leg, so-to-speak, which enabled the world to stand independently. However one understands the image of the chair, it clearly points to the indispensability of the mishkan - regardless of chet ha-egel.

Similarly, Bemidbar Rabba 13:6 describes that from the time of creation, Hashem wished ('kivyachol') to reside on earth. When the mishkan was consecrated, Hashem announced that on that day the world was created. Once again, we see that the construction of the mishkan marked a critical stage in the history of the world and was necessary since the dawn of creation. In the same vein, Bemidbar Rabba 13 writes that when Bnei Yisrael left Egypt, Hashem wished to "bring them into His quarters", and thus instructed them to build the mishkan. This Midrash makes no mention of the incident of the golden calf as necessitating a mikdash. A similar passage appears in the Tanchuma Yashan - Bechukotai 65.

We suggested in the shiur that according to Rashi, the Torah presents Parshat Teruma immediately following Matan Torah - despite its having occurred later, after the egel - to emphasize the thematic relationship between the mishkan and Matan Torah. Rabbenu Bechaye (25:6), however, explains that the Torah rearranged the sequence in order to demonstrate how Hashem is "makdim trufa le-maka" (recall that, as cited earlier, Rav Kasher reads this explanation into the Midrash Lekach Tov).

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin (Oznayim La-Torah) mentions this explanation without quoting Rabbenu Bechaye. A different answer was suggested by the late Lubavitcher Rebbe ("Be'urim Le-perush Rashi al Ha-Torah" - Shmot 31:18). The Torah specifically wanted to juxtapose the tzivuy ha-mishkan with the end of Parshat Mishpatim - the formal establishment of the 'brit' between Bnei Yisrael and Hashem. As the residence of the Shchina in the mishkan marked the complete fulfillment of that brit, it is only fitting that the parsha of the mishkan immediately follows that of the covenant. (This explanation, too, seems to point to the fact that the mishkan is lechatchila even according to Rashi.)

D. SEFORNO

The Seforno takes a particularly extreme approach to the concept of the mishkan. Already in his comments to 19:6, he notes that as a result of the egel, Bnei Yisrael forfeited "all the goodness of the future" promised to them before Matan Torah. As we will see in his comments elsewhere, this refers to God's direct revelation, which was supplanted by the mishkan.

In his commentary to the final psukim of Parshat Yitro (20:20-22), the Seforno interprets these psukim as informing Bnei Yisrael that they have no need to construct a sanctuary to God. Matan Torah demonstrated that Hashem would descend, as it were, and reside among them even without any physical mediums.

Commenting on 25:9, Seforno writes that after the incident of the golden calf Bnei Yisrael were required to construct a sanctuary; the direct communication experienced at Har Sinai could no longer be maintained.

Seforno expresses his position even more clearly in 31:18, where he describes more fully Bnei Yisrael's spiritual descent as a result of the golden calf, as a result of which they did not achieve the divine plan initially intended at Matan Torah. In this passage, he alludes to an interesting interpretation of the promise

in 19:6 that Bnei Yisrael would be a 'mamlechet kohanim' (a kingdom of priests): that they would have no need for kohanim to serve as intermediaries. God had originally intended for all of Bnei Yisrael to serve God directly as kohanim. (Curiously, however, this is not how the Seforno explains the term in his commentary to 19:6 - "ve-tzarich iyun".)

He develops this idea even further in Vayikra 11:2. There he explains that in response to the golden calf, Hashem decreed that He would remove His Shchina entirely from Bnei Yisrael. Moshe's intervention succeeded in restoring a very limited measure of 'hashra'at ha-Shchina', by which God would reside among Bnei Yisrael only through the structure of the mishkan. (In this passage, Seforno spells out more clearly what he meant by "the goodness of the future" of which he spoke in his comments to Shmot 19:6 - the direct presence of the Shchina, without the need for a physical representation.)

Later in Sefer Vayikra, in his commentary to the brachot of Parshat Bechukotai (26:11-12), Seforno describes the ideal condition of God's constant presence among Benei Yisrael without it being confined to any specific location and without requiring any specific actions on Benei Yisrael's part. In direct contradistinction to the Ramban, Seforno there reads the pasuk in Truma, "Ve-asu li mikdash ve-shachanti betocham", as a punishment, confining the presence of the Shchina to the mishkan.

Seforno's most elaborate development of this notion appears in his treatise "Ma'amar Kavanot ha-Torah" (published as a separate volume by Rav Yehuda Kuperman in 5754; the relevant material for our topic is found primarily in chapter 6 in Rav Kuperman's edition).

This position of the Seforno, of course, requires some explanation in light of the proofs mentioned in the shiur to the necessity of a mikdash even prior to the egel. In fact, the Seforno himself identifies Yaakov's Bet Elokim (Breishit 28:17) and the mikdash in the Shirat Ha-yam (Shmot 15:17) as the beit ha-mikdash. How could the concept of a mikdash be discussed before chet ha-egel - if it was never to have been necessary?

The Seforno does not address this question, but in at least two instances he alludes to what may be understood as a moderation of his approach. Commenting on the pasuk "be-chol ha-makom asher askir et Shmi avo eilecha" ("every place where I will have My Name mentioned I will come to you" - Shmot 20:21), the Seforno explains, "[Every place] that I will designate as a meeting place for My service". He then adds, "You will not need to draw My providence to you through mediums of silver and gold and the like, for I will come to you and bless you". Apparently, even according to this original plan, there would still be a place designated as a mikdash of sorts, only Bnei Yisrael would not need to invest effort in its lavish and intricate construction. In Ma'amar Kavanot ha-Torah, Seforno makes a somewhat similar comment in explaining this same pasuk: "In any place that will truly be called a Bet Elokim, such as batei midrash and the like - I will come to you and bless you." Here, too, he implies that there would be a special location - or perhaps several or many special locations - for avodat Hashem, only not what we know as the mishkan or mikdash.

However, in his commentary to Parshat Bechukotai (Vayikra 26:12), the Seforno strongly implies that in the ideal condition Hashem reveals Himself anywhere, without any need for an especially designated location - 've-tzarich iyun'.

E. RAMBAM - based on Sefer Devarim

Review Devarim chapter 12. Note the repeated use of the phrase "ha-makom asher yivchar Hashem" and its context. Pay special attention to 12:5-12, noting how it discusses the proper time to build the mikdash (after Am Yisrael reaches "menucha v'nachala"). Relate this phrase to the concept of a **permanent** mikdash, as discussed in the above shiur.

Considering that Sefer Devarim contains the mitzvot that God originally gave Moshe at Har Sinai (before chet ha-egel), explain why Sefer Devarim makes no mention of the **mishkan**, yet

mentions "ha-makom asher yivchar Hashem" numerous times.

Although the Rambam did not write a commentary on Chumash, we can infer his understanding of certain psukim based on his psak halacha in Mishneh Torah.

The opening Rambam in Hilchot Beit Ha-bechira (Sefer Avoda) defines the source of the commandment to build a **mikdash** (see 1:1). Read that Rambam (and, if you have time, the first five halachot). What is difficult about the Rambam's wording in 1:1? What is the source of our obligation to build a **mikdash**? Why, according to the Rambam, is the phrase "ve-asu li mikdash" (25:8) insufficient as a source for this obligation?

Why does the Rambam include the criteria, 'ready to offer upon it korbanot' and 'to celebrate there **three** times a year'? Can you relate these phrases to Shmot 23:14-19 and this week's shiur? Why does the Rambam quote the pasuk from Devarim 12:9-11? Read those psukim carefully!