

**PARSHAT PEKUDEI**

Sefer Shmot ends triumphantly, with the Torah's detail of how the **shechina** returns to dwell upon the Mishkan. Nonetheless, this conclusion seems to include a 'sour note', for it also informs us that Moshe Rabeinu was not able to enter the Mishkan! [See 40:34-35.]

Did something go wrong? Was Moshe unworthy?

To answer this question, this week's shiur examines a textual parallel that will not only highlight the thematic connection between the Mishkan and Har Sinai, but it will also help us understand the relationship between the books of Shmot, Vayikra, and Bamidbar.

**INTRODUCTION**

A rather obvious parallel exists between the concluding five psukim of Sefer Shmot and Torah's description of how God's glory had descended upon Har Sinai, when Moshe ascended the mountain for the first forty days (see Shmot 24:12-18).

As Ramban explains (in his opening commentary to Shmot 25:1), this parallel lends irrefutable support to our understanding that a primary goal of the Mishkan was to perpetuate the special relationship between God and His people that had reached its apex at Ma'amad Har Sinai. However, when comparing these two sets of psukim, there also appears to be some rather significant differences. Therefore, we begin our study by examining this parallel.

**THE PARALLEL**

The final chapter of Parshat Pekudei describes how the Mishkan is assembled for the very first time on the first day of Nissan (in the second year /see 40:1-33). Then, upon the completion of its assembly, the Torah informs us of what happened:

"Then the **anan** (cloud) covered the **ohel mo'ed**, and **kvod Hashem** (God's glory) filled the **Mishkan**" (see 40:34).

Let's compare this pasuk with a very similar description of Moshe Rabeinu's ascent to Har Sinai (as described at the end of Parshat Mishpatim):

"And Moshe ascended the **mountain** and an **anan** covered the **mountain**, and **kvod Hashem** dwelled upon **Har Sinai**..." (24:15-16).

[It is highly recommended that you compare these two sets of psukim in their original Hebrew.]

This obvious parallel highlights how the '**ohel mo'ed**' has replaced 'the **mountain**' and, correspondingly, 'the **Mishkan**' has replaced '**Har Sinai**.'

In essence, the Mishkan will now serve a similar purpose as Har Sinai, as both serve as a medium whereby Bnei Yisrael can 'encounter' the **shechina**.

Furthermore, as we discussed in our shiur on Parshat Tetzaveh, in both instances a completely 'direct' encounter, although desirable, is impossible. Therefore, Bnei Yisrael must be shielded from God's Presence by the '**anan**'.

However, the next pasuk in each of these two sources seems to 'ruin' the completeness of this parallel. In contrast to Har Sinai, where Moshe actually **enters** the **anan**, as we are told:

"And **kvod Hashem** dwelled on Har Sinai and the cloud covered it for six days, and **God called to Moshe** on the seventh day... and Moshe came **inside** the **anan** and ascended the mountain" (24:16-18).

In Parshat Pekudei, we find that he cannot enter:

"And Moshe was **unable** to enter the **ohel mo'ed**, because the **anan** was dwelling upon it..."(40:35).

Certainly, had Sefer Shmot concluded with God '**calling**' upon Moshe to enter the Mishkan, just as He had '**called**' upon him to enter the **anan** at Har Sinai, this parallel would have been complete; Yet, for some reason, Moshe cannot enter the Mishkan! Has Moshe been demoted?

**JUST TURN THE PAGE!**

Even though there may be a temptation to search for a reason for Moshe's 'demotion' (possibly due to the events of "chet ha'gel"), the truth is that there is no 'demotion'. To understand why, we simply need to 'turn the page', i.e. to read the opening pasuk of sefer Vayikra, where we find the precise pasuk that was 'missing' at the end of Sefer Shmot:

"And [God] **called out** to Moshe, and God spoke to him from the **ohel mo'ed** saying..." (Vayikra 1:1).

In other words, God **did** call upon Moshe to enter the 'anan' that covered the Mishkan (just as He had called him at Har Sinai) - and indeed - the parallel to Har Sinai is complete!

[See commentaries of Ramban, Rashbam, & Ibn Ezra on Shmot 40:35 and on Vayikra 1:1; as they explain these psukim in a similar manner!]

The following table illustrates how the opening pasuk of Sefer Vayikra actually belongs at the conclusion of Sefer Shmot:

<b>HAR SINAI (24:15-18)</b> =====	<b>MISHKAN (Shmot &amp; Vayikra)</b> =====
the <b>anan</b> covers the <b>har</b>	the <b>anan</b> covers the Mishkan
<b>kvod Hashem</b> dwells upon it	<b>kvod Hashem</b> fills Mishkan
Moshe must wait until called	Moshe cannot enter (Shmot 40:35)
God calls Moshe ("vayikra el...")	God calls Moshe (Vayikra 1:1)
Moshe enters the <b>anan</b> & God speaks to Moshe	Moshe enters the Mishkan & God speaks to Moshe

Even though our parallel is complete, we now have a new problem, i.e. if the first pasuk of Vayikra actually belongs at the end of Sefer Shmot, why does the Torah begin a new sefer in the middle of a story?

To answer this question, we must carefully study the remaining psukim at the conclusion of Sefer Shmot.

**A DOUBLE FINALE**

Our understanding of Vayikra 1:1 as the logical continuation of Shmot 40:34-35 works only if these psukim had indeed been the final psukim of the book. However, Shmot 40:35 is not the end of Sefer Shmot! Rather, there remain three more psukim (i.e. 40:36-38), which appear to 'interrupt' this logical progression. Let's read them:

"And when the **anan** lifted from the Mishkan, Bnei Yisrael would travel. If it would not lift, they would not travel... For the **anan** was upon the Mishkan during the day and fire would appear in it by night, before the eyes of Bnei Yisrael throughout all their travels" (see 40:36-38).

Even though all five psukim (40:34-38) relate to the topic of the **anan** that covered the Mishkan, these last three psukim discuss a topic which is quite different than the first two. While the first two psukim discussed Moshe entering the Mishkan, the last three discuss the effect of this **anan** on Bnei Yisrael's journey through the desert.

In fact, when you read these five psukim, the transition from 40:35 to 40:36 is rather disjoint. And when you consider the logical flow from 30:35 to Vayikra 1:1 (as we discussed above), then these final psukim seem to form an 'interruption'.

Furthermore, these final three psukim not only interrupt the natural flow of topic, they also appear to belong somewhere else!

You may recall from Sefer Bamidbar that we find a very similar set of psukim in Parshat Beha'alotcha, when the Torah describes how Bnei Yisrael were supposed to travel in the desert:

"On the day that the Mishkan was set up, the **anan** covered the **Mishkan**... and in the evening it appeared as fire... And when the **anan** lifted from the **ohel [mo'ed]**, then Bnei Yisrael would travel, and at the place where the **anan** rested Bnei Yisrael would set up their camp..." (See Bamidbar 9:15-23, compare with Shmot 40:17 & 40:34-38.)

Clearly, the opening pasuk (9:15) points us directly to Shmot chapter 40 - i.e. the assembly of the Mishkan and the 'anan' etc. The psukim that follow describe how Bnei Yisrael were to travel, with almost the identical words that we find at the conclusion of Sefer Shmot. Note as well how the next chapter in Sefer Bamidbar (i.e. 10:1-36) narrates Bnei Yisrael's actual departure from Har Sinai.

Thus, the three final psukim of sefer Shmot clearly 'belong' in Sefer Bamidbar, as one of the primary themes of that book is Bnei Yisrael's journey through the desert as they depart Har Sinai.

Now, we must explain why they are recorded 'prematurely' at the conclusion of Sefer Shmot.

## TWO POINTERS

Note how our analysis thus far has shown that the final five psukim of sefer Shmot divide into two distinct topics, each of which points us to a different book of the Bible:

(A) 40:34-35 describes the **anan** dwelling upon the Mishkan, and continues directly into **Sefer Vayikra**;

(B) 40:36-38 describes how Bnei Yisrael journey through the desert in accordance with this **anan**, and continues directly into **Sefer Bamidbar**.

A very interesting structure emerges from this analysis. Sefer Shmot concludes with two 'pointers': one to sefer Vayikra (A) and one to sefer Bamidbar (B)!

This 'double pointer' may be significant as it highlights the return to God's original plan after the Exodus, despite the events of "chet ha'egel".

Recall the 'double purpose' of Yetziat Mitzraim, as discussed in our shiur on Parshat Shmot (re: God's hitgalut at the 'burning bush'):

(A) - For Bnei Yisrael to receive the **Torah** at Har Sinai and  
(B) - to travel to (& conquer) the Promised Land.

As the events of chet ha-egel constituted a breach in the covenant between God and His People at Har Sinai, God consequently threatened to break His end of the deal, consequently taking His **shechina** away from the people (see Shmot 33:1-7). Had it not been for Moshe Rabeinu's intervention (see 33:12-17), Bnei Yisrael would not have received the remaining mitzvot [A], nor would they have been worthy of God's direct assistance in conquering the Land [B] (see 33:1-7 and our shiur on Parshat Ki Tisa).

Now that Bnei Yisrael have built the Mishkan and God's **shechina** has indeed returned, God once again commits Himself, as it were, to both elements of His original plan:

(A) In Sefer Vayikra, Bnei Yisrael continue to receive the special **mitzvot** that will reflect their special level of **kedusha**;

(B) In Sefer Bamidbar, Bnei Yisrael begin their travel towards the Promised Land, accompanied by God's **shechina**.

The **shechina**'s 'dwelling' upon the Mishkan thus yields a dual effect, reflected in the distinct themes of Vayikra and Bamidbar:

(A) First and foremost, it affects the Mishkan itself, as explained and elaborated upon at length in sefer Vayikra. The **Shechina**'s dwelling upon the Mishkan allows man to approach God and offer korbanot (Vayikra / Tzav); forbids one's entry into the Mishkan when one is 'tamei' (Shmini, Tazri'a, Metzora); demands a special **kapara** (atonement) ritual every Yom Kippur and forbids the offering of korbanot outside the Mishkan (Acharei-Mot). Finally, this 'kedusha' emanates into all three

realms of existence: 'kedushat **adam**' (Kedoshim), 'kedushat **zman**' (Emor) and 'kedushat **makom**' (Behar).

[Iy'h, we'll discuss all this in our shiurim on Vayikra.]

- (B) Secondly, it affects the 'machaneh' - the camp of Israel, as reflected in sefer Bamidbar. The presence of the **Shechina** raises the entire camp of Israel to a higher level, as God travels, as it were, with them. The **camp** is arranged in a formation that surrounds the Mishkan (as described in parshiot Bamidbar and Naso), and Bnei Yisrael travel through the desert following the **anan** over the Mishkan (Beha'alotcha). Had Bnei Yisrael not sinned, Sefer Bamidbar would have concluded with the story of their conquest of the Land (Matot, Mas'ei). Instead, it explains **why** that generation didn't enter the land (Shlach, Korach), as well as the events of the fortieth year (Balak, Pinchas).

In this manner, the triumphant conclusion of Sefer Shmot thematically points us in two directions: one - to the laws of Sefer Vayikra, and two - to Bnei Yisrael's journey in Sefer Bamidbar.

## ONE DAY IN THREE BOOKS

This interpretation can also help us appreciate why the events that transpired on the first of Nissan, the day when the Mishkan was first erected, are detailed in **three** different books instead of just one.

- (1) In Sefer Shmot (40:1-35), we find the commandment to assemble the Mishkan on the **first of Nissan**, and the details of how it was assembled on that day.

These details are found in Sefer Shmot, for they conclude the topic of building the Mishkan, as discussed in Parshiot Teruma, Tetzaveh & Vayakhel. Furthermore, Shmot concludes by describing how the **shechina** returned to the **Mishkan** on that day, signaling the its **return** despite the events of chet ha-egel, as discussed in Parshat Ki Tisa.

- (2) In Sefer Vayikra we find the details of the special korbanot offered on **yom ha-shmini**, and the tragic event which occurred on that day - the death of Nadav and Avihu. [See 9:1 thru 10:7.] According to most commentators, that day coincides with the first of Nissan.

As those events, as well as those special **korbanot** offered on that day, directly relate to many of the mitzvot found in Sefer Vayikra, the narrative of those events is recorded intentionally and specifically in Sefer Vayikra.

- (3) In Sefer Bamidbar (7:1-89), we find the story of the special gift brought by the **nesi'im** [the tribal leaders] to the Mishkan on the day of its dedication - six wagons and twelve oxen (see 7:1-4). As these wagons were used by the Levites to transport the Mishkan during their travel through the desert to the Land of Israel, this account appears in Sefer Bamidbar - the book that describes how Bnei Yisrael traveled thru the desert.

Hence, although all of these events took place on the same day - the first of Nissan, the Torah prefers to record them in three different books, corresponding to the theme of each sefer.

We will iy'h return to this theme in our study of both sefer Vayikra and sefer Bamidbar. Till then,

shabbat shalom  
menachem

## FOR FURTHER IYUN

A. Note the importance of the date of the first of Nissan in Shmot chapter 40. Relate God's selection and designation of this date to Parshat ha-chodesh / Shmot 12:1-20. Relate this as well to the importance of this date in Divrei Ha-yamim II 29:1-17.

B. Relate the main points of the above shiur to Shmot 29:45-46, specifically relating to the question if the purpose of Yetziat Mitzraim was to worship God in the desert or to inherit the Promised Land / see also Shmot 3:6-12. [Relate your answer as well to the main point of our shiur on Parshat Tetzaveh.]