
THE TANACH STUDY CENTER www.tanach.org
In Memory of Rabbi Abraham Leibtag
Questions for self study - by Menachem Leibtag

PARSHAT TERUMA

PART I - QUESTIONS FOR THE 'SHABBOS TABLE'

TAKING CHUMASH 'LITERALLY'

1. In the opening lines of Parshat Terumah, we are told how God requested for Bnei Yisrael to **donate** gold, silver, and copper etc. for the Mishkan (see 25:1-3).

Review Shmot 38:21-31 (i.e.the beginning of Parshat Pekudei), noting how the Torah summarizes the total amount of these precious metals that we collected (and what they made with them).

Finally, review as well Shmot 30:11-16 (the beginning of Parshat Ki-tisa), noting how much silver each person was 'allowed' to give.

Based on these sources, would you say that:

- * it was forbidden to donate silver, hence no one did;
- * it was permitted to donate silver, but no one did
- * people did donate silver, but the Torah simply did not inform us what that silver was used for;

After pondering these questions, see Rashi & Ibn Ezra on 25:3, noting how they understood these psukim, and how they entertained these various possibilities!

2. If you liked that comparison, then you can try this one.

Review 25:21-22, noting how the Torah describes how God will speak to Moshe once the Mishkan will be assembled.

Then, review Vayikra 1:1 and Bamidbar 7:89, noting whether or not those descriptions concur with Shmot 25:22.

After you have pondered these questions, see Rashi & Ibn Ezra on Shmot 25:22, and enjoy!

'FACING' THE MISHKAN

1. As you study the various vessels of the Mishkan, and their placement, see if you can identify a parallel with the human body (or face). If so, can you suggest any significance behind this parallel?

2. Review Shmot 25:15-22, noting how the ARON, which houses the LUCHOT and a copy of the Sefer Torah, is covered by the Kaporet with its KERUVIM. Review Breishit 3:24, noting the function of the KERUVIM in that pasuk? Can you suggest a thematic connection? In your answer, relate to Mishlei 3:18!

FOR 'US' or FOR 'THEM'

1. Review 25:8 and its parallel in 29:45-46. Based on these psukim, what is the primary purpose (or function) of the Mishkan? [See also Shmot 40:34-38.] Relate your answer to Shmot 19:5-6, 24:7, and our shiur last week on Parshat Mishpatim.

In addition to this purpose for the people of Israel, does the Mishkan appear to have any sort of 'international' value? Attempt to explain why it would, or why it would not.

2. Next, read David ha'melech's charge to his son Shlomo regarding the construction to the first Bet ha'Mikdash, as described in Divrei ha'Yamim Aleph 22:5-10. See as well Melachim Aleph 8:41-43, noting how Shlomo ha'melech makes a special request that God should answer the prayers of the gentile who comes to the Temple. Finally, note as well Melachim Aleph 10:1, and what transpires in that chapter.

Based on these sources, can you find any 'international' value in the Mikdash? In your answer, relate to Devarim 4:5-8!

In your opinion, would this relate only the Mikdash, or to the Mishkan as well? [Can you explain the difference between the Mishkan and the Mikdash, and why a Mikdash was not built until the time period of Shlomo?]

3. How would you translate the word 'mishkan'? What is its Hebrew 'shoresh' [root]?

Review 26:1. Based on that pasuk, what is the precise meaning of the word 'mishkan' in that pasuk, as well as in the remainder of chapters 26 & 27? Relate also to 25:8-9.

Does the word **mishkan** also have a more general meaning? If so, explain what that is, and how it relates to the more specific meaning of its use in 26:1. In your answer, relate to the *structural* differences between the mishkan and the Bet ha-Mikdash.

4. In your opinion, what is the precise meaning of the word 'mikdash', and how does it relate to its shoresh "k.d.sh."?

Is mikdash simply another word for **mishkan** (if so explain the reason for each name), or does each name imply something specific (if so, what is common to both and what is unique to each name)?

See 25:8 "Ve-asu li mikdash..." - and note how Rashi, Rasa'g, Rashbam, Ramban, Chizkuni & Ibn Ezra all relate to the above question in their commentaries on this pasuk! Attempt to explain how and why each commentator provides a different interpretation.

Finally, see Rambam Hilchot Beit Ha'Bechira I.1->3, noting how he relates to this pasuk.

COMPLICATED INSTRUCTIONS

1. Note a similar phrase that appears in 25:40, 26:30, and 27:8.

Can you explain why this phrase appears specifically at these three points in God's commandment to Moshe to build the Mishkan?

Review 25:8-9. How does 28:9 relate to the above psukim?

Review 35:30-36:3 & 39:33 & 39:42-43. How does this relate to the above psukim? Can you explain the meaning of "ruach Elokim" in 35:30? [See the commentators on that pasuk.]

THE 'ARON' & ITS FUNCTION

1. As your review Parshat Teruma, note the wording of the opening commandment to build each of the vessels of the mishkan - or in other words, see 25:10,17,23,31 etc. Be sure to note if the command is in singular or plural.

How does the wording of the opening commandment to build the **aron** differ from the others? Can you explain why?

Be sure to check Ramban on 25:10 for a beautiful explanation.

In addition to this difference, in what manner does the **function** of the **aron** differ from the **function** of all the other vessels of the mishkan? Would you say that the **aron** is a 'part' of the mishkan, or that the mishkan is built 'for' the **aron**?

Relate this distinction to the above question!

2. In case you had not noticed, the function of the 'aron' and the 'keruvim' is described in 25:21-22. Review those psukim, and attempt to relate this function to the **purpose** of Moshe's ascent to Har Sinai for forty days, as explained in 24:12.

Could this explain why the 'aron' is the **first** vessel of the mishkan to be described in Parshat Teruma? Can you suggest any other reason?

Review 29:42-46, noting how these psukim summarize the commandment to build the mishkan, and compare them with 25:8 and 25:21-22! Relate this to the above questions.

How is the function of the 'aron' different than the functions of all other vessels of the mishkan?

3. In relation once again to 25:21-22, how does the function of the **aron** relate to the function of the keruvim? How does this function relate to Bnei Yisrael's request (at Ma'amad Har Sinai) that Moshe speak to them instead of God? In your answer, relate to Shmot 20:15-16 & Devarim 5:20-28).

How does this relate to the location of Parshat Teruma within Sefer Shmot and in relation to the events of Ma'amad Har Sinai?

4. In what context is the word 'keruvim' used in Sefer Breishit?

[In case you forgot, re-read the end of Breishit chapter 3!]

Can you relate its meaning there to the function of the **keruvim** in the mishkan. Be sure to note where the 'keruvim' are located in the mishkan (see 25:17-22, 26:1 & 26:31).

Relate your answer to Mishlei chapter 3, especially 3:18 - but be sure to read that entire chapter!

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PART II - QUESTIONS FOR PREPARATION (for weekly shiur)

1. Review Shmot 24:12-18. Based on these psukim, for what purpose does Moshe ascend Har Sinai in 24:12? Up until this point, have Moshe and/or Bnei Yisrael received any other mitzvot from God? If so, which mitzvot, and when (and where) were they given? How do (or should) those mitzvot differ from the mitzvot that Moshe is now about to receive on Har Sinai?
2. Note from 24:18 that Moshe will now spend forty days on Har Sinai. In your opinion, how much of the Torah does he receive during these forty days? Can you explain why it will take so long?
If Moshe does not receive all the 613 mitzvot at this time, can you explain what he does receive at this time (and what he doesn't)?
When does he receive all of the other remaining mitzvot?
See Ibn Ezra on 31:18 re: this topic [rather amazing]! If you have sufficient time, note as well the various commentaries on Shmot 34:32, especially Chizkuni, and explain why that pasuk may relate to 24:12.
3. Even though 24:12-18 is a narrative, the Torah does not continue that narrative until Moshe descends from Har Sinai in chapter 32. In the interim, i.e. chapters 25-31, the Torah records many parshiot of mitzvot. Scan this unit, noting the general categories of the mitzvot that are discussed. Can you identify one general category, or is this simply an assortment of various mitzvot?
If there is one general category, can you explain why specifically this category is discussed at this time?
In your opinion, do chapters 25 thru 31 contain **all** of the mitzvot that Moshe received from God during those forty days?
* If not, why are only these specific parshiot recorded at this point in Sefer Shmot, and not the others?
* If yes, why do think that these are the **only** mitzvot that Moshe receives at this time?
4. As you probably realized, chapters 25 thru 31 discuss the various laws concerning the mishkan. As you study these laws, and the various vessels of the mishkan and its structure, can you identify any thematic parallels between these laws and the events that took place at Ma'amad Har Sinai (as described in Shmot chapters 19,20 & 24? Relate especially to 19:9-15,20-24 and 24:1-12.
Can you suggest a reason for any of the parallels that you find?
Be sure to study the first Ramban on Parshat Teruma, where he discusses the significance of these parallels.
5. In a similar manner, attempt to identify any thematic parallels that may exist between this section about the mishkan and the events that take place during the events of 'chet ha-egel'. Relate to:
The person who was chosen to construct the mishkan (and his grandfather, see 31:2 & 24:12-14);
The need for Aharon to bring a 'korban chatat' during the **milu'im** ceremony (see 29:14);
The commandment to collect 'donations from the people' to build the mishkan (see 25:2-4); &
The need to 'count the people' prior to its construction, as described in 30:16.
6. Based on your answers to the above two questions, attempt to explain the reason for the controversy between Rashi and Ramban concerning **when** the parshiot of the mishkan were first given to Moshe Rabeinu.
Be sure to see Rashi on 29:1 and Chizkuni on 31:2.
Then, see Rashi on 31:18, and be sure that you understand the reason for this conclusion that these events took place **before** God's commandment to build the mishkan in Parshat Teruma.
7. When Rashi (on 31:18) states 'ein mukdam u-me'uchar' [the parshiot in Chumash are not necessarily written in chronological order], does this imply that the Torah is written in **random** order?
If not, then what order is it written in, according to Rashi?
Why do you think Ramban disagrees with this principle?
[See also Chizkuni on 34:32 for an extra insight on this matter!]
8. Review 33:7, noting its context within 33:1-11. Note the word 'ohel mo'ed', and be sure that you understand its meaning within that

context. Compare this with 25:8, noting its parallel with 29:42-46, and use of the word 'ohel mo'ed' in those psukim (29:42,44).

How would this thematic and textual parallel provide support for Rashi's opinion? According to Ramban's opinion, how could one explain the nature of this parallel?

9. According to Rashi, who claims that the commandment to build the mishkan was first given only **after** the events of chet ha-egel, does this imply that had it not been for chet ha-egel that there would never have been a need for a Mikdash?

In your answer, relate to Shmot 15:17, 20:19-22, 23:14-19, and Breishit 28:16-18! Do any (or all) of these psukim indicate that there may have been a need for a Mikdash, even had Bnei Yisrael not sinned during the events of chet ha-egel?

If so, how could this be explained according to Rashi's opinion that the mishkan came after chet ha-egel?

[See and relate to Chizkuni on Shmot 20:20-21 and 31:18. See also Seforno on 20:20-21.]

PART III - PARSHANUT THE MISHKAN of the MISHKAN

1. Review 26:1, and while reading the pasuk, try to determine what the word "mishkan" is referring to. [In other words, is the "mishkan" made out of "yeriot", or - are the "yeriot" made for the mishkan?]
Up until this point, what did you think that the word "mishkan" referred to? See Rashi, how would he answer the above question?
Then see Rashbam. How would he answer the above question? Would you say that each one understands the pasuk in a different manner, or does each one simply relate to a different point?
Then see Seforno, noting how he follows Rashbam. What does Seforno add to Rashbam's interpretation?
Also, see Bamidbar 10:21, noting its context! How does this pasuk help your understanding of Shmot 26:1?
Finally see [the lengthy] Ibn Ezra [ha'aroch] on 26:1; even though you may find the first few lines a bit difficult, I suggest that you try to read this entire Ibn Ezra carefully, as he provides an excellent explanation not only for the Mishkan, but also about the concept of a "neshama" [soul] and the essence of life!
- ### RAMBAN & THEME
2. In addition to the first Ramban on Parshat Teruma, see also his introduction to Sefer Shmot, as well as his introductions to Sefer Vayikra, and Sefer Bamidbar, noting how often the mishkan is mentioned.
What conclusion can you make from these Ramban's, in regard to his understanding of the thematic importance of the mishkan?
- ### LIGHTING [OR LIFTING] the CANDLES
3. Re: the menorah, read 25:37 - and translate the pasuk into English, based on what you always thought this pasuk meant.
Now, read the entire parshia from 25:31-40, and pay careful attention to how you translate 25:37 in the context of the entire 'parshia'. What are the 'neirot' of the menorah? Are they an integral part of the rest of the menorah as described in 25:31-36?
[If not, why not?]
Based on your answer, what should "ve-he'ela et neiroteha" imply? - to light [kindle] the menorah? Or:
- to place the 'neirot' upon the menorah?
Relate your answer to the standard meaning of the Hebrew word 'le-ha'a lot'. Next, see Rashi on 25:37.
How does Rashi's explanation relate to the above questions?
Finally, see Bamidbar 8:1-4. Based on your answer to the above question, how would you translate these psukim, especially the word 'be-ha'alotcha'?
- ### FOR THE DESERT or FOREVER?
4. How do we know that the mitzva to build the mishkan is for all generations, and not just something special for the generation in the desert (or is it?). Is there any pasuk indicating that the mishkan should also be set up once Bnei Yisrael enter Eretz Canaan?
See Rashi on 25:9. See also Chizkuni & Ibn Ezra on that pasuk. See Ramban - Hilchot Beit Ha-bechira, 1:1-3.
Then, review Devarim 12:5-12, Shmot 23:14-19 & 20:18-22, and attempt to find a connection between those psukim and the wording of Ramban's first halacha in Hilchot Beit Ha-bechira.
be-hatzlacha menachem