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**THE TANACH STUDY CENTER mail.tanach.org**  
**In Memory of Rabbi Abraham Leibtag**  
**Questions for Self Study - by Menachem Leibtag**  
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**PARSHAT PEKUDEI**

**PART I - QUESTIONS FOR THE 'SHABBOS TABLE'**

**FOR PEKUDEI & PARSHAT SHEKALIM**

As this year is a leap-year, it just so happens that we read Parshat Shekalim together with Parshat Pekudei - which is a 'perfect combination' for those of you who enjoy the study of Chumash. Before we begin this special battery of questions - we should note the reason for Parshat Shekalim.

When the Temple stood, every Jew was obligated to donate a "machatzit ha'shekel" [a half of a shekel] during the month of Adar. These coins would go into a special fund, that would be used to buy the "korbanot tzibur" [the public offerings] for the upcoming year (that begins in Nisan). [See first mishna in Mesechet Shekalim, and/or Rambam Zmanim/Shekalim 1:1.]

1. Even though we often take this law for granted, its source its Biblical source is not so easy to identify. To start you study, carefully read Shmot 30:11-16 (i.e. Parshat Shekalim), and based on these psukim alone, what appears to be the purpose of this donation: As you study, answer the following questions

- Who is obligated to donate this "machatzit ha'shekel"?
- When (or how often) does this obligation take place?
- What is supposed to be done with the money collected?

In your opinion, do these psukim relate in any manner to this 'yearly' obligation to donate a "machatzit ha-shekel"?

If not, what is the source for the obligation to give the yearly machatzit ha-shekel?

Based on these psukim alone, should there be a limit to the amount of silver that one could donate for building the Mishkan?

2. Next, compare this command to God's original instruction to Moshe concerning raising money to build the Mishkan as described in Shmot 25:1-9! Be sure to compare this as well to the actual implementation of 25:1-9, as described in the beginning of Parshat Vayakhel, noting especially 35:4-5 and 35:21-24.

Based on these psukim, does it appear that there was supposed to be a voluntary donation of silver, similar to that of gold and copper, or was the silver given in a special manner?

In 35:4-5, Moshe Rabeinu explains to the people the various metals that he would like for them to donate. Based on your understanding of 35:5, should there be any limit on the amount of silver (or gold or copper) that any single person could donate?

Respectively, what was the intended use for the gold, silver and copper (i.e. what vessels were to be made from them)?

In your opinion, how does Shmot 25:1-9 and 35:4-24 relate to the commandment of Parshat Shekalim (i.e. Shmot 30:11-16)?

Whether or not it does relate, can you explain why this specific donation of silver (in 30:11-16) needs its own special 'parshia'?

3. Next, read (and study) the opening psukim of Parshat Pekudei, paying special attention to the details of 38:25-28 in regard to the silver, within the overall context of the general tally described in 38:21-31!

How does this tally relate to what was described in 38:21-24?

How does the tally of the silver relate to the commandment in Shmot 30:11-16?

As you review Shmot 38:24-31, note how the Torah's description of the tally of the silver is worded in a different manner than its tally of the gold and copper. [Note the words "tnufa" &

"pkudei".] Can you explain why?

Considering that one 'kikar' is the equivalent of 3,000 shekel; how does 38:27-30 correspond to the phrase "avodat ohel moed" in 30:16?

Based on what is described in Parshat Pekudei, when and how did Moshe relay to Bnei Yisrael that commandment in 30:11-16 (which God had given to him at an earlier time on Har Sinai)?

Finally, see Chizkuni's commentary to 38:30, noting how he explains what happened to the additional metals that were donated, but not included in this tally!

4. Next, review the opening chapter of Sefer Bamidbar, noting the details of census that was taken on the first day of the second month. Pay special attention to Bamidbar 1:1-3 and the total of that tally 1:44-47.

Compare those details to Shmot 38:25-28 and Shmot 30:11-16! Is it possible that this was all the same census, or must one conclude that two different censuses were taken? [If so, what problem arises? // See Rashi on Shmot 30:15 and 30:16! If you have ample time, see also Raman's rebuttal of Rashi's view in middle of his lengthy commentary to Shmot 30:12!]

5. For an interesting reference to the collection of the "machatzit ha'shekel", read the story about the special collection made to renovate the Mikdash during the reign of Yoash, as described in Divrei Ha'yamim II 24:4-14, noting especially the phrase "maasat Moshe" in 24:6 and 24:9.

Note as well the special collection that Bnei Yisrael took upon themselves during the time of Ezra, as described in Nechemya 10:33; but to appreciate that pasuk, you'll need to study its context as you review chapters ten and eleven in Sefer Nechemya.

As long as you have your Tanach open, see also the tragic story of what happened when David ha'melech counted the people, as described in Shmuel II chapter 24. In your opinion, how does that story relate to the commandment in Shmot 30:11-16? Was David ha'melech wrong by the very counting of the people, or because he didn't use the "machatzit ha'shekel" method? [See the various opinions of the commentators on that chapter!]

6. Review 30:11-16 once again, noting the Torah's use of the word "kapara" in relation this commandment. In your opinion, would the need to donate this "machatzit ha'shekel" be related in any manner to the sin of the Golden Calf? In your answer, relate to where this 'parshia' is recorded in Chumash.

Then, see Rashi on 30:16 and Chizkuni on 30:12

7. Review Bamidbar 28:1-3, noting how this commandment to bring the daily "korban tamid" (and later the "musafim") is directed to the people of Israel. In your opinion, how can an entire nation bring one offering (or set of offerings)? Which funds would be used to offer this korban?

Relate this to Chazal's understanding of the law of "machatzit ha'shekel" that is brought by the entire nation. Relate your answer as well to Shmot 29:38-46, and to the collective nature of Am Yisrael as they stand before God in the "ohel moed".

8. After studying the above sources, you are ready to study the lengthy Ibn Ezra and Ramban on Shmot 30:11-16. Enjoy!

Based on the above sources, would it be logical to conclude that the primary source for the "machatzit ha'shekel" may be "halacha l'Moshe m'Sinai" in addition to (or supported by) various 'hints' to this obligation in Shmot 30:11-16?

## [for Parshat Pekudei]

### MAKING A POINT!

1. Scan Parshat Pekudei (using a Tanach Koren / or similar), noting the last phrase of almost every single 'parshia' (especially in chapter 40). Can you discern a pattern? If so, attempt to explain why this phrase is repeated so many times.

Next, review the opening psukim of Parshat Vayakhel (i.e. 35:1-4), looking for a similar phrase (or context). What are the very first words that Bnei Yisrael (who gather in 35:1) hear from Moshe Rabeinu (see 35:1). Can you explain the connection the phrase that is repeated so often in Parshat Pekudei?

Attempt to relate your understanding of the Torah's emphasis on this phrase (in regard to building the Mishkan) to the events at "chet ha-egel". Relate to the nature of Aharon's sin, i.e. his 'good' intentions, despite the disastrous results.

2. Note the opening six psukim of Vayikra chapter 9 (in regard to the ceremony on "yom ha'shmini"), especially 9:5-6. In what context does Moshe explain to the people - "zeh ha'davar asher tzivah Hashem..."? Note also, the concluding words of 9:7, 10, & 21.

Then, note what happens in 10:1-2. Based on these observations, what seems to be the primary reason for why Nadav & Avihu are punished? [Note as well the "taamei ha'mikra" on the phrase "asher LO tzivah otam!"]

See Rashi on 10:2 and Seforno on 10:1.

### WHO'S COUNTING?

1. Compare the amount of gold, silver, and copper that was collected to build the mishkan, with the amounts that were collected by David ha-melech to help Shlomo build the first Bet ha-Mikdash, as described in Divrei Ha-yamim I 29:1-9!

What can we infer from this in regard to the difference in size between the Mishkan and the Mikdash.

[See as well Divrei Ha-yamim II 1:15 & 4:18 & 5:1, noting how Shlomo used these precious metals. Note as well the parallel between Shmot 40:34-35 and Melachim I 8:10-11.]

2. In Megillat Esther, we are told about the amount of money that Haman gives to Achashverosh as a bribe to issue the decree against the Jews. See Esther 3:9; and compare that amount of silver to the amount that the Jews collected to build the Mikdash, as recorded in Divrei ha'yamim I 29:7. Can you suggest any possible thematic connection? [See our TSC shiur on Megillat Esther!]

### THE MISSING "MILUIM"

1. In case you didn't notice, just about all of the commandments re: the Mishkan that were recorded in Parshiot Teruma /Tetzaveh (i.e. chapters 25-30) are repeated in Parshiot in Vayakhel / Pekudei.

As you verify this statement, you should notice that one major section is missing. [If you didn't find it, then note that the details of chapter 29 (the 7 day milu'im ceremony) is not repeated.]

Where **do** we find the story of its execution?

Again, in case you give up, you'll find those 'missing details' in Vayikra chapter 8! [That should be obvious.]

2. To prove that Vayikra chapter 8 'belongs' in Parshat Pekudei, note the command in Shmot 40:9-15, whose execution doesn't take place in 40:17-33 (as do the commands of 40:1-8) but are detailed instead in Vayikra chapter 8. Note as well other textual similarities between Vayikra chapter 8 and Shmot chapter 40 (e.g. the phrase "kaasher tzivah Hashem et Moshe", etc.).

Can you suggest a reason why the Torah may have preferred to record this seven-day dedication ceremony in Sefer Vayikra instead? In your answer, relate to the primary difference between the type of laws regarding the Mishkan that are found in Shmot, and the type of laws that are found in Vayikra.

Relate your answer to the difference between 'building' and 'using' the Mishkan. Would you consider the seven day miluim as part of the 'building' process, or part of the 'using' process? [or a bit

of both?]

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### PART II - QUESTIONS FOR PREPARATION (for weekly shiur)

1. Note the date of the events that take place in Shmot chapter 40. Based on 40:1 and 40:17 (and Shmot 12:1-2), why do you think that specifically this day was chosen?

Next, carefully review Shmot 40:34-38. In what manner do these psukim form the conclusion not only of chapter 40, but also of the entire unit that began in chapter 35? How do these 'finale' psukim relate as well to Shmot 25:8 and 29:44-46?

2. What would you say is the primary topic 40:34-38?

Despite their common topic, can you divide these psukim into two distinct topics? If so, explain what each topic is, where they can be divided, and why.

In what manner is this flow (or change) of topic not logical?

3. Next, compare 40:34-38 to Shmot 24:12-18, especially 15-18.

Did you find any textual parallels? If so, can you explain their thematic significance?

What does this parallel suggest in regard to the connection to the purpose of the Mishkan and how it serves as a perpetuation of Ma'amad Har Sinai? [See Ramban in his introduction to the laws of the Mishkan at the beginning of Parshat Terumah (Shmot 25:1).]

4. Compare these two sources once again, noting not only what is similar, but also what is different. Based on this parallel, does Sefer Shmot appear have a 'happy' or 'sad' ending?

[In other words, was it ideal that Moshe was not able to enter the Ohel Moed, even though he was able to enter the cloud at Har Sinai - or does appear that something went wrong?]

Would there be any reason why he should have entered the Ohel Moed? [Relate to Shmot 25:21-22!]

If the parallel between Shmot 24:16 and 40:35 would be complete, what 'ideally' should have happened at this point immediately after 40:35?

5. Next, read Vayikra 1:1, comparing it with Shmot 24:16 & 25:22! How would this observation answer the above question?

See Rashbam, Ramban, Chizkuni, Ibn Ezra to Vayikra 1:1; noting how they all relate to this parallel.

Based on this parallel, where (more precisely) in chapter 40 should Vayikra 1:1 have been recorded?

6. Next, return to 40:36-38, noting how this set of psukim begins a 'new' topic that relates more to how Bnei Yisrael would travel through the desert.

Compare these psukim with Bamidbar 9:15-18. Based on 9:15, how do these psukim relate to Shmot chapter 40?

What is the textual and thematic connection between the concluding psukim of Sefer Shmot on Bamidbar 9:15-22? [Rather obvious?] Can you explain why these details are repeated in Sefer Bamidbar?

7. Based on these two observations regarding Shmot 40:34-38, what would you say is the relationship between the conclusion of Sefer Shmot and Sifrei Vayikra and Bamidbar?

How would this relate to the main topic of each of these books?

Relate your answer to the two primary reasons **why** God took Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt, based on Shmot 3:8 & 3:12. Note as well Shmot 29:46.

8. With these questions in mind, read once again Ramban's introduction to sefer Shmot, as well as his introductions to Vayikra and Bamidbar. How does he define the difference between each of these three books?

See also Seforno's introduction to Chumash (found in Torat Chaim sefer Breishit) and his explanations of sefer Vayikra and Bamidbar.

[Relate as well to the phrase "et ha'mishkan" in 35:11.]  
Then, see Ramban on 39:33, noting how he understands this  
pasuk, and why he adds a "vav" to "et ha'ohel!"  
See also Seforno on 39:33.

be-hatzlacha,  
menachem

9. In the last chapter of parshat Pekudei, the Torah describes the events that take place when the mishkan is assembled on the first of Nissan. Note, however, that certain other events also take place on this very same day, as recorded in Vayikra 9:1-10:10, and in Bamidbar 7:1-89 and 9:15-23.

Can you explain why these events, even though they all take place on the same day, are recorded in three different books?

Quickly review those events as recorded in each sefer and attempt to explain how each specific event relates to the theme of the sefer in which it is recorded.

Can you explain why the Torah doesn't simply record all these events together in one sefer?

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### PART III - PARSHANUT

#### ONE WHAT DAY WAS THE EIGHTH DAY?

1. Recall from Shmot chapter 29 (and Vayikra chapter 8) that a seven day dedication ceremony takes place **before** the mishkan becomes fully 'functional' on the 'eighth' day.

In your opinion, do the events which are described in chapter 40, that take place on the first of Nissan, correspond to the first day of the seven day milu'im ceremony or to the 'eighth' day? Support your answer.

Be sure to relate to Vayikra 9:1-6, and Bamidbar 9:15.

Does your answer to this question affect how you understand on what date Bamidbar chapter 7 begins?

[In other words, on what days in the month of Nissan did the **nesi'im** offer their korbanot?]

2. After you answer this question, see Ibn Ezra on 40:2.

What are the two opinions that he offers, and why does he prefer the opinion that the seven day milu'im ceremony began on the first of Nissan? Be sure that you can follow his logic.

Then, see Ramban, noting how he too relates to both opinions, but prefers the opinion that the **yom ha-shmini** ceremony took place on the first of Nissan, and the miluim began seven days earlier. Note as well how he relates to Ibn Ezra's peirush.

Why 'should' Ramban prefer Ibn Ezra's peirush? [Relate to his approach to 'ein mukdam u-me'uchar'.] Why then does he prefer the other opinion? Which source does Ramban consider primary?

According to Ramban, **when** were the mitzvot of Vayikra chapter 1 - 7 given to Moshe Rabeinu, and from where?

How does Ramban solve the 'problem' of ein mukdam u-me'uchar between these events and the order of events in sefer Vayikra? [See Ramban on Vayikra 7:38 and 25:1.]

#### VANITY MIRRORS

3. Note that according to 38:29-31 this copper that was collected was only used for the mizbach ha-nechoshet, but apparently not for the "kiyor". Based on Shmot 30:18, does this make sense?

Then, see 38:8, noting the special mention of how the "kiyor" was made. Relate this pasuk to the above question.

Then, see Rashi on 38:8, noting his explanation for why specifically this copper was used for the "kiyor". Then, see Ibn Ezra on 38:8, noting how his explanation is quite different.

According to each commentator, which behavior was deserving of praise?

Finally, see Ramban on 38:8, noting how he quotes both commentaries. Note also how Ramban relates to the "ohel moed" that is mentioned in 38:8. What 'chronological' problem in 38:8 leads Ramban to search for a different meaning for the phrase "ohel moed" in this pasuk? Relate as well to Shmot 33:7!

#### THE MISHKAN, or JUST THE MISHKAN?

4. Read 39:33. In your opinion, what does the word Mishkan refer to, i.e. just the ten "yeriot" - or to the entire complex? In your answer, relate to the Hebrew grammar of 39:33, and to the "pshat" of Shmot 26:1 in relation to 26:15.