

Content Issues in Shemot

Following are a number of issues that arose while we were working on the commentary, and how we did or did not (yet) deal with them. Your feedback and suggestions on any of these issues would be greatly appreciated.

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Shemot

1:7 The Israelites were fertile and prolific: JPS notes similarity of synonyms for fertility with creation story. (A new humanity...) Anyone say anything about this?

1:10 Job: Rashi accepts as *peshat* the Midrash that Jethro and Balaam were Pharaoh's advisors, so it seems reasonable to assume that he accepts that Job was there, too. The question, then, is: at what point and under what circumstances did Job move to Israel, where we find him dying when the spies came?

1:11 named after a rock formation: This is how R. Dan Schwartz (in a telephone conversation I had with him I Adar 6, 5765) reconciles Rashi's statement on 14:2 that *Pi Hachiroth* is Pitom, when all other contexts and sources indicate that these two cannot be the same location. Rabbi Yosef Deutsch (*Let My Nation Go*, p. 326) also says that Pi Hachiroth is not this Pitom, although (in a telephone conversation I had with him the same day) he does not remember his source for this.

1:15 midwives: In *Hitva'aduyot 5746*, vol. 2, pp. 370-373, the Rebbe does not accept Ibn Ezra's *peshat* that Shifra and Puah were the heads of a league of midwives, but says that Rashi holds that there were in fact only 2 midwives for the whole population. The reason why only two midwives were needed was that the Jewish women did not need midwives, as Rashi says on v. 19. This must have been true, the Rebbe says, because it is an assertion Pharaoh could have easily verified. The purpose of having these 2 midwives was just to calm the women *in case* there would be complications in a birth and they would need midwives.

But if this is the case, (1) why did Pharaoh turn to the midwives in the first place to kill the babies? Did *he* think that 2 single midwives were enough to take care of the whole birthing population? Or did he think, like Ibn Ezra, that they were merely the leaders of the midwives' guild? And (2) why do the midwives later say "before the midwife gets to them they give birth" when the midwives did not even *try* to go to them; they were just there in case?

2:1 Yocheved: Why did Yocheved give birth to her first child (Miriam) only at the age of 123? Did she marry late or was she infertile till then?

2:1 Yocheved: Although Rashi (on *Sotah* 12a, s.v. *simanei naarut*) says that she regained her *orach kanashim*, i.e., her period, when she remarried, he does not mention this here. And indeed, if she was still having kids at 127 and 123, when Aaron and Miriam were born, it seems unlikely according to *peshuto shel mikra* that she stopped menstruating *davka* between Miriam and Moses. Furthermore, if she had stopped menstruating, why would it be necessary for Amram to divorce Yocheved? What would it accomplish?

Anyway, it's hard to understand Rashi's comment that Yocheved resumed menstruating just before her remarriage, for the *gemara* there is assuming that she was 3 months pregnant with Moshe already (in contradistinction to Rashi here)!

Why, then, did Yocheved “became young?” Was it a reward for remarrying, or because in order to set an example for the nation it had to be clear that Amram was marrying a woman capable of childbirth, or because Moses had to be born of a young woman?

The Arizal asks most of these questions (*Shaar HaPesukim* on Exodus 1:8), but his answers of course are far from *derech hapeshat*.

2:5 Bitya: Does it say anywhere that we can contrast Bitya, who immersed, and her maidservants, who just walked on the banks and refrained from immersing, i.e., clung to idolatry and therefore were considered dead, walking to spiritual death?

2:5 Pharaoh cancelled his decree: Did this decree remain in force from the day of Moses’ birth until now, three months later? It would seem that it would have made sense for the decree to throw the baby boys into the river to apply only for that one day, since the reason for it was because Pharaoh’s astrologers saw that the Jews’ redeemer had been born that day but that he would meet his end through water. At most, the decree should have applied to any boy born on Adar 7, even if he was found later. The (Jewish) boys born from Adar 8 on should have been killed in accordance with the previous decree, the purpose of which was to curb the Jews’ population growth. Perhaps, once they started killing the babies by throwing them into the river, they kept this method up even though they no longer had any need to kill them in this way *davka*. But then, does this mean that once Moses’ basket entered the Nile, the decree to kill the boys altogether was nullified? Why would Pharaoh quit his plan to curb the Jews’ population growth just because his astrologers saw that their redeemer had “met the water?” What does one have to do with the other? Because there is no more redeemer, he suddenly doesn’t care if they increase?

2:15 He fled to Ethiopia: The Rebbe (LS 8, p. 251, note 20) quotes the *Sifrei, VeZot HaBrachah* 16, where it says that Moses “was in Egypt for 40 years, in Midian 40 years, and led the Israelites for 40 years.” The Rebbe, of course, notes that this contradicts all the sources quoted in *Seder HaDorot*. He does not, however, state that this is necessarily *peshuto shel mikra*, nor is the discussion where this is brought up necessarily relevant to *peshuto shel mikra*.

A problem with the *Sifrei*’s version is that it implies a 28-year hiatus between the events of v. 10-11a (“when the child grew up to the age of 12 or so...Yocheved brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter...*In those days*, the precocious Moses was elevated by Pharaoh to be the overseer of his personal household.”) and those of v. 11b (“he went out to his brethren and observed their suffering”), while the plain sense of the verse is that all this happened around the same time. True, *Seder HaDorot* has Moses slaying the Egyptian at age 18 and the Rebbe has him being appointed over Pharaoh’s house at 12 or so, thus implying a 6-year hiatus between the first and second half of v. 11, but a 6-year hiatus is a little less far-fetched than a 28-year one.

I’ve therefore opted for the version of *Seder HaDorot*. (Also, it is evident that Rashi adopts some of the story as it appears in *Sefer HaYashar*, which is *Seder HaDorot*’s main source for this stuff.)

2:15 Miriam married Caleb: My conjecture, for lack of anything definitive, would be that this was around 2430, based on the fact that Caleb was born in 2410 (*Seder HaDorot* based on Joshua 12) and his son Hur was old enough to stand on the mountain with Moses and Joshua during the war with Amalek and get himself killed at the incident of the Golden Calf. If Caleb was 20 when he got married, and Hur was born that year, that would make Hur 18 in the year 2448. Of course that means that Miriam was 69 when she married Caleb at the age of 20, but so what?

2:17 Moses arose and rescued them: Plaut: We see here that Moses didn't think twice about standing up for justice even though he'd been burned by doing so with the Egyptian taskmaster. Furthermore, these ladies were not even his kinsmen. (Idea from Achad HaAm). Any traditional source for this?

2:23 They cried out: It does not say that the Jews cried to God; only that they cried out (i.e., complained) and God heard. The R. Rayatz takes this to mean that they indeed cried to God, but others make a point of the *diyuk* in the text. Any thoughts?

2:25 He appeared to Aaron: I would love insert the following into the interpolation: "The natural choice would be Amram, the eldest son of Kehot and the leader of the generation. But by this time he had died, so the next choice was his eldest son, Aaron." Any sources? objections?

Also: *Shemos Rabbah* 3:16 and *Tanchuma Shemot* 27 says that Aaron was prophesying for 80 years before God appeared to Moses at the burning bush (i.e., since he was 3).

3:1 (Chasidic Insights) Moses ran after it: Couldn't find the actual quote for מִמַּעֲיָנֵי הַחֲסִידוּת p. 22 top.

3:1 (Chasidic Insights) to rescue the Divine sparks in Jethro's control from their idolatrous milieu: Hadn't Jethro given up idolatry by this time?

3:3-5 (Chasidic Insights) According to yet other opinions: why *prevent* Pharaoh from acquiescing so that he'll be so impressed with G-d's power that he'll acquiesce?

3:7 Even though I promised...: The Rebbe says that (a) all 10 lands were promised to Abraham, (b) only the 7 lands were promised to the Jews about to be liberated from Egypt, (c) all 10 lands were promised to the Jews after the Torah was given, (d) the halachic borders of the promised land included only the 7 lands, and (e) the Jews going into the land were only allowed to conquer the 7 lands.

Why was the promise of Abraham diminished for the Jews leaving Egypt? Especially in light of the assumption—articulated in several contexts—that the entry into the Land of Israel led by Moses was intended to be the final Redemption?

3:18 They will heed your voice: God tells Moses the people will listen, but he doesn't believe Him (as pointed out by Richard Friedman). JPS says God is talking about the elders, Moses about the masses—Moses believes God about the elders but points out that the *masses* will not believe him, based presumably on 4:16 and 4:30.

3:20 I will do: Regarding the vocalization of the *ayin* in the word *E'eseh*:

A marginal note in *Torah Temimah* (quoting *Minchat Shai*) says that it should be a *sheva*. Hirsch, *Koren*, DBS, *Judaica Tanach CD*, Margolin, Gutnick, and *Shai LeMora* have a *sheva*.

Letteris (Hertz, Kaplan), Rosenberg-Silverman, Bar-Ilan CD, Artscroll, and Leningrad (JPS, *Keter Yerushalayim*) have a *chataf-segol*.

The Netter edition has a *chataf-segol*, but the *Mesorah* in that edition says that it should be a *sheva pashut*.

Dr. Dovid Lyons told me it should be a *chataf-segol*, and that the *sheva* is an error that crept into later texts.

4:1 They: See JPS translation of ׀ as "What if...?" This is borne out by Artscroll's other translations of this word elsewhere, although not here.

4:8 If they do not heed the first sign: Anything about the chidush of the second sign over the first? Maybe: that not only did G-d reprove Moses for slandering the people (calling him a snake), but actually punished him for it (leprosy)? And, what is the chidush of the third sign (water to blood)? does it mean the same thing it means later, i.e., that you have to make coldness into enthusiasm? And if so, why did God want Moses to tell the Jews the same thing as the Egyptians? (Note: JPS says third sign = 1st plague.)

4:10 for a full week: According to *Shemos Rabbah* 3:14, the six days were *before* the bush. Rashi does not mention this detail; perhaps he holds that seven days had transpired *since* God showed him the burning bush? *Seder Olam* 5:1 says that the whole seven days were “at the bush.”

4:10 I am not a man of words: Conservative (*Etz Chaim*): even if we are “challenged” God can use us to do great things. A nice point, any sources?

4:22 Eminent Son: Conserv: implies that all humanity is God’s children, but the Jews are the firstborn, with greater responsibility and a sharing with the parents the job of educating the others. Source?

Also: if firstborn son means “the priest” who then has the God-given right/responsibility of performing service (hence the demand that they be freed from service to serve God in the desert), this should be pointed out, and it should be shown from where in the Torah we know that the firstborn has this right/responsibility (Jacob & Esau?) (the fact that the Genesis genealogies only list the firstborn of each link in the line, the rest being called “sons and daughters”?) (Is this perhaps what Cain and Abel were fighting over?)

Note that this statement is made as if to explain to Pharaoh why the Jews should be allowed a vacation. Presumably, Pharaoh knows about the firstborn=priest.

4:30 performed: Who performed? Aaron or Moses? and if Aaron, why? (Plaut)

5:18 now: In *Sanhedrin* 111a, it is implied that the Egyptians began immuring the children into the walls after Moses’ arrival on the scene as the redeemer. This is based on 5:23: “since I went to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has made things worse for this people.”

In *Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer* 48, it is implied that they began immuring the children while Moses was still in Midian, attaching this event to the verse (2:24) “And G-d heard their cry....”

In *Sefer HaYashar, Shemot* (p. 188 in the Alter Bergman edition, Tel Aviv 1980), the story of immuring the children is given immediately after Moses’ birth and before an incident that occurred when he was 3 years old.

Let My People Go (p. 114-115) puts it more or less in the same chronological slot as *Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer*: while Moses was in Midian and the old Pharaoh died and the new one started to rule (which, of course Rashi does not accept as *peshat*). His source for all this, however is *Sefer HaYashar* (?).

I have put it here since the Rebbe does not seem to want this to be the reason for the Jews’ crying out after Pharaoh contracted *tzara’at* and started slaughtering babies to bathe in their blood—the chronological slot of *Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer*.

5:20 Dathan and Aviram: Does this mean that Dathan and Aviram were foremen? If so, did they receive or forfeit the honor given the foremen later?

Vaeira

6:9 they did not listen: Why *should* they have listened? Was there any *chidush* here over what they had already heard from Moses? It can't be that now G-d is revealing to them the Name *Havayah*, because G-d already told Moses at the bush to do that. (UNLESS: they in fact did not ask Moses about G-d's Name as he suspected they would, and therefore there was no occasion to reveal to them the secret of G-d's Name/reliability until now?)

6:12 if you plan to redeem the Jews or not: According to Rashi quoted in the footnote, the answer to this question is 6:1. How does *that* work?

6:26 These are the same Aaron and Moses: Interesting: the *only* other places Aaron is mentioned first (Num 3:1, 1 Chron 5:29 and 23:13) are in the context of the order of birth. So Rashi's *diyuk* is based on the fact that here Aaron is mentioned first *not* in the context of birth order.

7:4 Pharaoh will not listen to you: What does this verse add over the previous one?

7:8 (Inner Dimensions) Changing something into something else can only be accomplished by changing the letters of God's speech that are enlivening the object: The necromancers did this, too. Did they manipulate God's speech, or was their act some kind of trick?

7:9 Take your staff: The Rebbe holds that Moses & Aaron each had their own staffs, and Aaron used his to smite the river. But in 17:5, God tells him to take the staff *with which you smote the Nile River* (even though Aaron did this)." This would imply either that Aaron smote the river with Moses' staff, or God is telling Moses (in 17:5) to take Aaron's staff to bring water from the rock (but this is not borne out by Rashi *ad loc.*, who says that the Jews were referring to this staff as the one that smote Pharaoh at the Sea of Reeds, and that staff was for sure Moses'), or perhaps the words "with which you smote the Nile River" refer back not to the plague of blood but to Moses' miracle that he showed the Jews beforehand (Exodus 4:9, 4:17, 4:30), although this is difficult since it doesn't imply in 4:9 that Moses did this with his staff (although 4:17 might imply this) and Rashi on 17:5 paraphrases "with which you smote the Nile Rivers" as "through which Pharaoh and the Egyptians were smote via a number of plagues."

7:14 (A Closer Look) Specifically, the first set of three plagues was intended: I did not find where the Abarbanel explains just *how* the first three demonstrate that God exists, the second three His providence, and the third three His power. ???

7:14 (A Closer Look) in God's words to Pharaoh: What about 8:6 (frogs) "...that there is none like *God*, our God" and 9:29 (hail) "...that the land is God's?" Maybe because these are not part of the *warnings*, but part of the prelude to the cures? Still...

7:17 (Chasidic Insights) The Land of Israel's dependence upon rainwater was conducive:

8:2 Frogs: If one frog arose out of the Nile and the Egyptians split it into swarms, how does this show how the Nile was plagued *anywhere other than that one spot*? If the frogs swarmed out of the Nile, each one by itself, one can imagine how they swarmed also out of the part of the Nile that was in Goshen. But if not, how do we see that this plague affected the Nile in Goshen, too? The fact that the swarm spread to Goshen too does not prove that the Nile in Goshen was affected. ??

8:14 the minimum size...: So Rosenberg/Silverman.

8:18 I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people dwell, so that there will not be any mixed horde there. Thus you will realize that I am G-d not only in heaven but also on earth: How did this prove that? Because in the previous plagues there was no geographical divide between affected and non-affected areas (other than in Egypt in general vs. the rest of the world)? If so, the miracle of this must have been that it was quite evident that the horde did not pass into the Goshen district.

8:19 I will make a distinction: What does this verse say that is not said in the preceding one?

9:8 Soot from a hot kiln: Was it a miracle that it didn't burn their hands?

9:9 left in the fields: This is evident, for if it was to affect *all* the remaining animals, there would be none left to warn about for the next plague, hail (see 9:19). Evidently, what need to be articulated explicitly for the epidemic and the hail was implied for the boils.

9:14 as devastating to your beliefs as all My other plagues together: Any explanation of how this was so?

9:29 your city is full of idols: Rosenberg/Silverman and *Devek Tov* (cited in Artscroll Rashi) say that now that some Egyptians had gathered their sheep (which they worshipped) from the field into the city, the city was full of idols and therefore Moses had to leave the city, whereas until now he did not have to leave the city. This seems rather weird, since surely the city was always full of zillions of idols, especially Pharaoh's capital city (see Rashi on 12:1). Is there anything in the laws of idolatry that permits davening in the presence of statues etc. that are just *representations* of objects of idol-worship as opposed to the actual objects themselves? If so, is this the solution: that all the zillions of idols around town were just icons rather than true objects of worship?

Another problem: in the plague of the epidemic (and presumably in the plague of boils), it was enough for the G-d fearing Egyptians to gather their flocks into their stables and barns, which presumably were outside the city. Why here, in the plague of hail, did they have to gather them into the city? (And if here, too, it was enough to gather them into the barns and stables outside the city, we're back to square one.)

Bo

10:1 (Chasidic Insights) Come to Pharaoh: Everyone makes a big deal about how it says here "*Come to Pharaoh*" instead of "*Go to Pharaoh*," but we see that it actually says "*Come to Pharaoh*" four times (Exodus 6:11, 7:26, 9:1, 10:1) of which this is the *last*!

10:23 (Chasidic Insights) In contrast, in the future redemption from the present and final exile...: In *Ma'amarei Admor HaZaken* pp. 445-446 and *Sefer HaSichot* 5702 p. 86 it is implied that there will be Jews who won't merit redemption. Is the Rebbe "refining" this position?

10:23 four fifths: 600,000 adult men went out, this implies that 2-3 million left. Assuming the smaller figure of 2 million, that means that until the plague of darkness there were 10 million Jews around and 8 million died during those three days! If 3 million went out, that means that there were originally 15 million and 12 million died during the darkness.

11:4 Whereas I smote you with the preceding nine plagues via emissaries: But the plagues of *arov* and *dever* occurred without any action on Moses or Aaron's part, too, as the Rebbe points out. ??

11:4 The proof will be: But the plague of hail also was announced and timed precisely. There, the Rebbe explains that this showed God's absolute mastery over nature, etc.

True, in LS 21, p. 58, the Rebbe says that a precise time was given for the plague of hail so the G-d-fearing Egyptians could know by when to get their cattle into the barn. But in LS 31, p. 43, the Rebbe demonstrates that this cannot be, because (1) the mark was made inside Pharaoh's palace, and anyway (2) Moses was talking to Pharaoh in the early morning, so "this time tomorrow" would also be early morning, so what would giving an exact time help above and beyond just saying "tomorrow" in general?! So if we accept LS 31 as the *Mishnah acharonah*, then we are back to having to figure out what the *chidush* of *makat bechorot* was over *makat barad* (in that both were given a precise time).

Maybe (and it could be the Rebbe alludes to this in LS 31), the point of *makat bechorot* was not a precise time but that it took place instantaneously?

11:4 on the 15th of Nisan: The Rebbe (LS 31, p. 58) says that Moses did *not* say what day the plague would take place. But I'm going on the assumption—based on Rashi's statement that all the plagues took one month—that they all began on the 7th of the month (working backwards from *makat bechorot*, which we know took place on the 15th and that it alone lasted one day [i.e., instant] rather than a week). (The Rebbe does allude to this problem in footnote 30 on p. 58 of LS 31).

12:3 and the sheep is one of the deities of Egypt: What about the goat, since a kid is also kosher for a korban pesach?

12:12 metal idols will melt: Stone idols will crack?

12:15 childless: What if the offender has children who themselves already have children? If the grandchildren don't die, how does this qualify the grandfather as being "cut off?"

12:17 And I did not leave you in Egypt one moment longer than necessary: This would seem to be the purport of this clause.

12:22 The elders of Israel: Why just the elders, especially in light of v. 27?

12:27 It is the Passover offering: But isn't the answer to the *ben rasha* 13:8?

12:37 Raamses: I'm using this spelling to make it consistent with Genesis 47:11 and Exodus 1:11. Rashi does not differentiate between Raamses and Rameses, although Ibn Ezra does.

12:37 600,000 men aged twenty: to 60?

13:2 Consecrate to me: According to Rashi (Genesis 49:3-4), Jacob already took the priesthood away from his firstborn, Reuben. He does not explicitly give it to Levi, although he does allude to this by saying he will spread the Levites out, making them traverse the countryside looking for *terumos* & *maasros* (*ibid.* v. 7). So it appears that already back then, the priesthood had been assigned to Levi—or at least, the people understood that it eventually would be (since Jacob's prophecy presumably was not kept secret from them).

From this, it sounds like the Reubenites as a tribe were originally intended to have the priesthood, and not all the firstborn from all the tribes.

Whatever the case, the *makas bechoros* happened and G-d "appropriated" the firstborn to be His priests. (Or did He? There is no mention here of them being sanctified specifically for *priesthood*, although to tell the truth, it doesn't mention what they're supposed to be sanctified *at all*, so the priesthood is as good an option as any.)

In v. 13, the commandment is given to *redeem* the firstborn. But it is specifically stipulated that this will apply only once the people reach the Land of Israel (v. 11). So it sounds like the firstborn are going to be priests until the people arrive in the land (which, at this point, is scheduled to happen fairly quickly: 50 days to Mt. Sinai, 40 days for Moses to come down with the tablets, and 11 days trip to Kadesh Barnea), at which point the Levites will take over.

In any case, how do we understand this against what everybody knows: that the priesthood was given to the Levites only as a consequence of the Golden Calf? Had there not been any such sin, would the firstborn have retained the priesthood? What about Jacob's prophecy? And had there not been this sin, what sense would we make of v. 13—why *redeem* the firstborn? Does this verse prophesy, as does Jacob's prophecy, that there will be some as yet unspecified reason to deprive the firstborn of the priesthood and transfer it to the Levites?

Maybe the priesthood was intended to be transferred from the firstborn to the Levites only upon entrance into the Land of Israel, as above, and the sin of the Golden Calf simply moved it up a few weeks? That seems sort of anticlimactic, no?

I have worked these issues into my interpolations in the following verses as best I could.

13:5 they can be construed to be included in the general term “Canaanites”: So can all the others. Why are the Perizites singled out this way here?

Beshalach

13:17 The people may have a change of heart...: Didn't they in any case have to go Mt. Sinai?

13:21 They also expelled anyone who committed a sin: How did this work? Did somebody who sinned suddenly catapult out of the camp?

14:8 In contrast to Pharaoh's hesitation: Or maybe it means “Pharaoh hesitated *because* the Israelites had left with a high hand?”

14:11 They said to Moses: Since Rashi refers this back to 5:21, which he put in Dathan and Aviram's mouth, it would seem that this whole verse could be ascribed to them. This would eliminate the problem the Rebbe raises in LS 11, pp. 52-54. But neither Rashi nor the Rebbe mention this possibility. Did I misunderstand Rashi on 5:21? On the other hand, this is the first of the ten times *the people* challenged God's ability to come to their aid.

14:22 One path for each tribe: Where did the Erev Rav go?

14:22 (Chasidic Insights) Whenever there is an opportunity to utilize some part of creation in fulfilling God's purpose...: Yossi Marcus got this from http://www.meaningfullife.com/torah/holidays/7a/A_MomentDIVs_Harvest.php where it says it's from *Sichot Kodesh* etc. I couldn't find it in the hanachah, but the hanachah was pretty sparse anyway. Maybe someone who wrote it up remembered it verbatim from the farbrengen itself?

14:25 The heavens also split open: Am I being too literal here regarding “the heavens split,” implying that they only “saw” this “vision” when they were able to actually look upwards at the sky?

15:16 The Arnon River...the Jordan River: This means that they prophetically saw that (1) they were going to cross the Jordan on their way into Eretz Yisroel, and not take the southern entry route, and (2) they were going to cross the Arnon before the Jordan, and (3) that it

would be a while before they got to Eretz Yisroel—for if not, what’s so significant about the fact that the nations will be so scared that they will remain scared *until they cross the Arnon/Jordan?*

What did they think about this? Or did the “prophesy and not know what they were prophesying?”

15:25 A branch of it: Not the whole tree, right?

15:25 Marah: In *Sichot Kodesh 5728*, the Rebbe explains that “He tested them” as referring to Shabbos, for God was soon to test them regarding keeping Shabbos. Rashi, however, says that “He tested them” refers to the water at Marah, not Shabbos. And furthermore, it was Alush, not Marah (i.e., two stops later) that God tested them regarding Shabbos, so it doesn’t fit into *peshat* to say that “*there* He tested them” refers to Shabbos. For both these reasons, and because this *sichah* was not edited, I didn’t feel compelled to include it here.

In *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 16, p. 165, note 21, the Rebbe notes that the Jews complained obnoxiously three times in this *parashah* (Marah, for water; Alush, for meat; Refidim, for water). Each time, God not only answered their complaint by providing them with what they needed, but also rebuked them for their attitude (by giving them laws to study at Marah, by rebuking them verbally at Alush, and by exposing them to attack by Amalek at Refidim). However, he does explain there how giving them laws at Marah was a *tikun* for their chutzpah. So I did not incorporate this here.

15:25 the group of laws that He later gave during the first forty days Moses was on top of Mount Sinai after the Giving of the Torah: I am assuming this means only as far as 23:19, for the material from there until the end of chapter 23 appears to be a “covenant” regarding what precedes it.

15:27 The seventy elders: What seventy elders? When did the number of elders become seventy?

16:2 the 61st meal: Breakfast on Shabbos, the 15th of Iyar, was the 61st and last meal. The quails came down that “evening,” and the manna started the next morning. Thus, the “evening” meal of Shabbos (afternoon) was just meat, no bread.

16:15 peeled back: Is there any way of using the words “peeled back” to describe the manna? How can something thin as frost look like it was peeled?

16:17 Some less than this: Less than they were supposed to, and then at home it “grew” to the right amount? If so, they were rewarded for laziness! Maybe it means “and some collected less than those who over-collected, i.e., they collected the right, minimum amount?” Or maybe the whole thing just means that they estimated how much they should gather but none of them got it exactly right?

16:21 The people gathered it each morning: The Rebbe here says that this verse describes how after Moses’ rebuke in the previous verse, Dathan and Aviram stopped leaving over manna for the next day. But I don’t see how this fits into the words of the verse: the verse simply states that everyone gathered manna every morning, and (as we know from v. 18), this amount was just what they needed, regardless how much they actually gathered. It doesn’t say anything about anyone leaving or not leaving manna over for the next day.

16:35 Similarly, the quails also descended every evening until they entered the Land of Israel: LS 16, p. 170, note 53: the Rebbe raises the possibility that the Jews were allowed to gather them on this Shabbat only because Shabbat did not become binding until Matan

Torah—but then asks how they were allowed to gather them after that. Maybe they fell double on Friday like the manna?

17:9 Go out tomorrow: The Rebbe (LS 14, p. 65, n11) says that Rashi implies that the word *machar* cannot refer both to “go out and fight against Amalek” and “I will station myself at the top of the hill.” It has to refer either to what comes before or what comes after it, but not both. Okay, but does that necessarily mean that Moses here told Joshua to go out *today* and fight Amalek, and he would station himself only *tomorrow* on the hilltop? Why would Moses want to do it this way?

Yitro

18:7 Aaron and his sons: Rashi only mentions Nadav and Avihu; what about Eleazar and Itamar? Maybe only the two older ones went out first, and the younger two were included in “who saw these go out and did not go out?”?

18:12 When Moses descended the mountain: The Rebbe (LS 6, p. 213) says that “It was on the day following” of the next verse refers also to this verse, i.e., that it was on the day following the meal, and therefore the meal was on Yom Kippur. It should be noted that there is no *petuchah* or *setumah* in the text between vv. 12 & 13, only an *aliyah*-break, which is of course much “weaker.” So taking vv. 12 & 13 as a continuation and making the chronological break between vv. 11 and 12 is just as legitimate vis-à-vis the text as making the break between vv. 12 & 13.

However, it seems difficult to assert that Rashi puts everything up to v. 11 in Sivan 2448 and v. 12 in Tishrei 2449, because with regard to the meal (v. 12), he says “didn’t Moses cause Yitro all the glory by going out and meeting him? Where, then, was he at this meal?” It’s a little far fetched to say that Rashi means “Didn’t Moses cause Yitro all the glory 4 months ago when he went out to greet him? Why, then, wasn’t he at *this* meal?” Although, I suppose it is possible.

Also, I always thought this meal was a celebration of Yitro’s conversion, or decision to convert. If we move it ahead to Yom Kippur, what was this meal about? A celebration of Moses’ return from the mountain and his securing forgiveness from God, etc.? Why would *davka* Yitro make a big deal about that?

18:15 it is because the people come to me to seek instruction from God: How does this answer Jethro’s question—if his question is as Rashi has it: “why do you let the people stand?” instead of the simple meaning of the words: “why are you sitting in judgment *all day*?” Is the answer: I am letting them stand because “the people come to me to seek *instruction from God*...I make known *God’s statutes and His teachings*,” i.e., they are hearing it from God—the King—not me, so it’s therefore okay to let them stand? This actually seems to be implied by the Rebbe’s angle on this passage, as I have put it in.

18:18 you yourself as well as: Rashi adds Hur, but Hur was already dead by this time. Some say this is a copyist’s error (since Hur is not mentioned in the *Mechilta*); others say Rashi meant for Jethro to say “even if you had Hur with you,” etc. Since Rashi does not mention Hur later, in v. 23, I opted for leaving him out here. On the other hand, in v. 23 Rashi mentions Nadav and Avihu (once again, where are Eleazar and Itamar?) but does not mention them here. Is there a *chiluk* here that I’m missing?

19:3 The angels protested: This is part of the account in Shabbos 88b-89a about the angels arguing with God over whether to give the Torah to Moses (and mankind) or not. After

Moses convinces, them, they shower him with gifts; the gift of the Angel of Death is this secret about the incense. From the context of the story, it sounds like it occurred before God gave the Torah, but when was that, exactly? Most logically, on one of Moses' trips up the mountain before 6 Sivan. Problem is, Rashi does not refer to this story explicitly, so I can imagine the Rebbe saying that according to *peshuto shel mikra* it happened in some other context. Putting it here sort of interrupts the flow, but for lack of any more compelling suggestion, it seems the only logical place. Any thoughts?

19:5 (A Closer Look: "The Judicial System") **...or the act was not legally witnessed:** Is this correct?

19:20 to the mountain peak: Klutz kasha: If the mountain was suspended in mid air (v. 17), how did Moses jump up to it and climb it? And why did G-d have to warn the people not to ascend it (v. 21)? Should we say that the mountain rose over them only momentarily (long enough for them to answer the "threat" of G-d dropping it on them)? or that it did so only just before G-d started to speak?

20:1 The people heard the sound of God's voice issuing from heaven, but they were able to hear distinct words only from the Divine fire on top of the mountain: This resolves the verses in which God appears to speak from heaven with those in which He appears to speak from the fire, which was atop the mountain. I found this resolution in *Rashi Hashalem* on Exodus 20:19, in the name of *Zeh Yenachameinu* (commentary of R. Moshe v. Shimeon Frankfurt [1672-1762] on the *Mechilta*), quoting his teacher.

20:6 God then had Moses repeat the remaining eight commandments: This is (evidently) evident from the fact that in the third commandment (and in the subsequent commandments) God is referred to in the third person, as opposed to the first two, in which He is referred to in the first person.

20:8 continuously: Rashi says that the infinitive is used here to indicate continuous action, and illustrates this: we are to remember the Sabbath continuously, keeping it in mind the whole week. But *shamor* is also in the infinitive: how are we to observe the Sabbath continuously (other than on the Sabbath day itself)?

20:15 flames: "Lightning" would be *berakim*, not *lapidim*. But what about "torches?" Did they see torches?

20:15 The same thing happened after they heard each subsequent commandment: As I see it, there are two ways of rendering these three and a half verses (see sources quoted in *Let My Nation Serve Me*, pp. 222-229). The first way is as I have done in the text.

Second way:

...and escorted them back to the mountain. [16] The leaders and elders of the people then **said to Moses, "You speak to us and we shall hear, but let God not speak with us, lest we die."** [17] **Moses said to the people, "Be not afraid, for God has come in order to raise you up** in the esteem of all other nations, **and He has appeared before you in this fearsome way in order that you be imbued with the awe of Him** and the awareness that there is no god beside Him, **so that you will not sin."** [18] Yet, when they heard the second commandment, **the people** again withdrew and **stood at a distance. Moses drew near** through all three degrees of cloud: the darkness, the cloud, and **the thick cloud where God was present**, and from there he reiterated the ensuing eight commandments, as stated above.

The source of the idea of the retreat after hearing God's voice is *Shabbat* 88b (כל דיבור (ודיבור שיצא מפי הקב"ה חזרו ישראל לאחוריהם שנים עשר מיל (כל דיבור ודיבור and not just שני הדיברות הראשונות, the implication is that this applies to all ten. On the other hand, the words שיצא מפי הקב"ה could be there to include only the first two and to exclude the last eight. So this source by itself seems inconclusive.

In *Midrash Aseret HaDibrot*, the whole thing is described as happening after the first commandment, only—it would seem.

Also, the phrase in v. 18, “the people stood at a distance” would seem more aptly to apply to the time of the actual giving of the Torah rather than a description of the ensuing 120 days when Moses was on the mountain.

On the other hand, the Rebbe (LS vol. 17, p. 284) cites the quote just before this in *Shabbat* 88b, to the effect that the people died after ודיבור ודיבור שיצא מפי הקב"ה and understands it as obviously referring to all ten commandments.

Finally, these verses seem to be paralleled/expanded in Deuteronomy 5:20-28:

[20] And it was, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, and the mountain was burning with fire, that you approached me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders. [21] And you said, “Behold, God, our God, has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we heard His voice from the midst of the fire; we saw this day that God speaks with man, yet man remains alive. [22] So now, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we continue to hear the voice of God, our God, anymore, we will die. [23] For who is there of all flesh, who heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? [24] You approach, and hear all that God, our God, will say, and you speak to us all that God, our God, will speak to you, and we will hear and do. [25] And God heard the sound of your words when you spoke to me, and God said to me, “I have heard the sound of the words of this people that they have spoken to you; they have done well in all that they have spoken. [26] Would that their hearts be like this, to fear Me and to keep all My commandments all the days, that it might be well with them and with their children forever! [27] Go say to them, ‘Return to your tents.’ [28] But as for you, stand here with Me...

Now, in this passage, it is clear that the whole exchange between Moses & Israel and the Moses & God took place *after* all of the ten commandments, for surely God did not say “Go say to them, ‘Return to your tents’” between the 2nd and 3rd commandments!!! So, this would lend support to the idea that the first way is correct. (The Gutnick Chumash, Exodus, p. 128, seems to have missed this point.)

20:18 Yet: *Shabbat* 88b also states that they died and were revived after each of the Ten Commandments, but Rashi does not mention this. The Rebbe (LS vol. 17, p. 284) brings this source, but only as part of his explanation of Rabbi Akiva's opinion (that the people heard both the כללים and the פרטים at Sinai), which he says is *contrary* to Rashi's exposition of *peshuto shel mikra*.

20:18 While Moses drew near: If we render these verses the *second* way described two (or so) notes ago, then we gain something interesting: It says in *The Midrash Says* that after God set it up that Moses would be on the mountain top while He was giving the Torah, He told Moses to go down and warn the people, etc., and then, while Moses was at the foot of the mountain He “surprised” everyone and started giving the Torah, so in fact, Moses was at the

bottom of the mountain with the rest of the people when the Torah was given. Rashi doesn't bring this, but maybe this verse—the second way of rendering it—supports this idea. Moses was downstairs for the first two commandments and then, after the people said they couldn't take it, he ascended to the mountaintop (where he was “supposed” to be from the outset) and from there reiterated the last eight commandments with God magnifying his voice.

20:19 While he was on the mountain: It is true that in the LS noted here, the Rebbe says that this passage was given to Moses “immediately after the giving of the Torah,” perhaps implying that God said it to Moses on the 6th of Sivan *before* Moses descended the mountain (assuming he was there during the giving of the Torah, see comment above) prior to his re-ascend at the beginning of the first 40 days. But that would be untenable because the Rebbe also says that the Jews had not yet heard about the prohibition of 20:20 when they made the Golden Calf, and it is unlikely that if Moses *had* descended the mountain after he heard this commandment he would not tell the people about it immediately.

20:19 This is what you shall tell the Israelites: Compare above, 19:3.

20:21 you shall sacrifice your ascent-offerings and your peace-offerings: What about sin and guilt offerings? At this point, it was not planned that they would sin?

Mishpatim

21:1 While Moses was still on Mt. Sinai: “Rabbi Yishmael says: The general outline (*kelalim*) of the commandments were given at [Mount] Sinai and the details (*peratim*) in the *Ohel Moed*. Rabbi Akiva says: the general outline and the details were given at [Mount] Sinai, repeated in the *Ohel Moed*, and repeated again in the Plains of Moab” (*Chagigah* 6a, *Sotah* 37b, *Zevachim* 115b).

In the earlier years (LS vol 8, p. 39, note 45; vol 13, p. 93, note 5), the Rebbe said that Rashi says (on Lev 25:1) that all their “general outlines (*kelalim*) and subtleties (*dikdukim*) were given at Mt. Sinai” but not their details (*peratim*) [and thus holds like Rabbi Yishmael].

Later, (LS vol 17, p. 276, note 2, vol 26, p. 154, subnote to note 9) the Rebbe says that from a more general perspective, Rashi says that both the *peratim* and *dikdukim* of all the commandments were given at Sinai, but that “Sinai” here means both *Mount* Sinai and the *Ohel Moed* at the foot of Mt Sinai [and so nonetheless still holds like Rabbi Yishmael].

In any case, it's clear that the Rebbe holds that Rashi holds like Rabbi Yishmael, according to whom the details of the laws were given at the *Ohel Moed*.

Nonetheless, the Rebbe holds (LS 13, p. 93 ff and LS 17, p. 280, note 25) that there were certain laws (i.e., *details* of certain commandments) that Moses did not hear about until after they left the Sinai desert, and even until the 40th year.

In the above mentioned footnote, the Rebbe brings 4 instances of Moses not knowing what to do:

- a. the blasphemer,
- b. Pesach Sheini,
- c. the Stick-gatherer,
- d. Tzelofechad's daughters. To this, he adds (there, and footnote 7):
- e. the Menassites' argument against Tzelofechad's daughters,

- f. the incident with Pinchas & Zimri.
- g. immersing vessels.

But: (a) happened, at least according one opinion in Rashi, when they were still around the *Ohel Moed* [which is presumably when the laws of *lechem hapanim* were given], as did (b), (c) happened before the giving of the Torah altogether, (d) was not because the law hadn't been given but because God made Moses forget it, (e) Rashi does not indicate that Moses only found out *now* about this law, (f) was also because God made Moses forget it, not because it hadn't been given yet, and (f) was because Moses got angry. So, these instances do not seem to necessarily support the possibility that there were laws Moses never heard before leaving the Sinai desert.

However, the example of the sacrificial laws of *parashat Pinchas*, etc., which the Rebbe brings in note 25, does seem to support this view. Still, the Rebbe indicates that only such “new” laws found in the Book of Numbers (and maybe Leviticus) can be accepted as having been given later—not laws found in Deuteronomy.

Note: apparently, this still means that all the *mitzvot* of the *tamidim* & *musafim*, for example, were given at Sinai. It is only the *details* of these laws that were given in the 40th year—even though the actual content of the verses in question *themselves* don't contain much detail above and beyond the simple enumeration of the *mitzvot*.

21:1 between Tishrei 10, 2449...and Iyar 20, 2449: It is also possible that God did not talk to Moses after he came down from the mountain until the Tabernacle was erected on 1 Nisan, i.e., from 10 Tishrei to 1 Nisan there were no Divine communications. This would “heighten the drama,” so to speak, of the opening of the Book of Leviticus—that after the Tabernacle was finally erected, as described in the end of the Book of Exodus, God, after a hiatus of almost 6 months, once again “called to Moses from the Tent of Meeting.”

This would mean that Moses' tent was the “Tent of Meeting” during these intervening months only insofar as people went there to hear Moses teach what he had heard on Mt. Sinai, i.e., the civil laws of *parashat Mishpatim*. This would also mean that God didn't give Moses any specific instructions about how to offer sacrifices until the Tabernacle was already standing and they had to do it, which is rather strange, considering He could have prepared him (and Moses could have taught Aaron & sons, etc.) over the course of the preceding months. But it is possible.

If this is the case, then we should write “between Nisan 1, 2449, when the Tabernacle was erected permanently, and Iyar 20, 2449....”

21:6 he is in no hurry to be rid of the stigma of having been sold into slavery because of it: Rashi adds: “In the case of someone who sold himself, his ear heard how the Jews are to be G-d's slaves, and then he went and acquired another master for himself—let his ear be pierced.” This is not in the Mechilta Rashi is quoting; it appears in Kidushin 22b (as the Rebbe notes in LS 11, p. 89, note 7) and Rashi sticks it in here. There is a *machlokes* (Kidushin 14b) over whether a person who sold himself can elect to stay on after his six years just like someone who was sold by the *beis din*, and Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai as quoted in the Mechilta goes with opinion that he cannot, while Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai as quoted in Kidushin 22b goes with the opinion that he can. Rashi apparently sides with the latter opinion, while the Rambam [Avadim 3:6] and the Meiri [on Kidushin 22b]) side with the former opinion. The Meiri explains Kidushin 22b as referring to someone whom the *beis din* sold, not to someone who sold himself.

21:23 According to another opinion, the party guilty of manslaughter must be put to death: What, then, according to this opinion, differentiates this case from the one in v. 13 (or 14), which states that an inadvertent killer is not liable to the death penalty?

22:8 (Chasidic Insights) When we have been remiss in fulfilling our Divine mission, the prosecuting angel can claim...: It would seem here that the *mashal* does not fit the *nimshal*: In the *mashal*, you loaned me something and want it all back, while I'm saying I already paid you half of it back (or half of it was stolen) so I only owe you half. In the *nimshal*, God loaned us something and wants it all back, while we're saying we already paid half back (we admit that He owns part of our powers) but the other half we say is ours? Or the *yetzer hora* is saying that since we destroyed or lost half of the loan (that *God* gave us? why should the *yetzer hora* demand something God gave us?) then we have to pay him the other half as well (i.e., be given over entirely into his *reshus*)? How does all this work?

22:8 (Chasidic Insights) But in fact, we took this oath long ago: The Rebbe (LS 16, p. 271) does not say explicitly that the oath is the oath administered at birth, but neither does he explain, if this is what he means, how God "satiates" (is *masbia*) the soul with extra powers each and every time the person commits a sin and needs these powers to answer the claims of the *yetzer hora*/prosecuting angel.

22:19 offers incense: Artscroll Rashi translates מִקְטֹרֶת as "burns sacrificial meat," while R/S, Soncino (Sanhedrin 60b), Blackman (Judaica Mishnayos), and Kehati translate it as "offer incense." Any definitive resolution here?

23:1 By even promising: Source: *Shai LaMora* on this verse and the *girsā* of Rashi he quotes.

23:6 You shall no pervert justice: Is the difference between this verse and v. 3 simply that between a *dal* and an *evion*? Or is the Torah telling us that we should not *exploit* the poor, just as in v. 3 we must not *favor* them?

23:11 without obligation to give a tithe: what about *terumah*?

23:12 whether or not he is actually the son of your bondwoman: True, *Maskil l'David* talks about a case where a person buys a woman and her son and doesn't circumcise him for 12 months, but since the Rambam says the *din* is that in such a case the son must be circumcised immediately, and implies that the 12-month waiting period only applies to an adult bondman, I left this possibility out.

23:21 Even though...: On the other hand, the whole tenor of this verse ("Watch out, because Matat will not forgive sin") seems to contravene this whole idea of "Since you're going to sin, you're not going to merit My presence anymore": It would seem that G-d should say, "Since you're going to sin and not be fit to live in My presence, I'll have to send you someone who can deal with your constant sinning." ???

23:25 I will bless your bread and your water: How? in what way? That the bread will fill your stomach (as in Rashi on Deuteronomy 11:15)? Or that you will have no shortage of bread and water? Or that the bread will be tasty and the water pure? Maybe it's the latter and the contextual meaning is: "I will bless you with healthy bread and pure water, and in this way, I will banish illness from your midst?" ???

24:5 in water: The stream coming down from the mountain (Deuteronomy 9:21)? the well of Miriam?

24:10 Nadav...: But not Aaron, since Rashi does not mention anywhere that Aaron deserved to be punished for doing this.

24:12 which I have written: Does this refer to the tablets or some other scroll?

Terumah

25:2 God indicated His restoration of the contractual side of the relationship by replacing the broken tablets and the commandments inscribed on them: Where did I get this from? And doesn't it contradict the idea mentioned at the end of *Mishpatim* that the *luchot* represented the *covenantal* side of the relationship: *luchot habrit*, etc.?

25:10 (Chasidic Insights) Eventually, a Torah scroll was placed inside the Ark: This is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir, which is how we are depicting the Altar: 15 handbreadths by 9 handbreadths outer dimensions.

25:13 rods: We have adopted the views of the author of the excellent book *Melechet HaMishkan VeKeilav* in many instances, but here we find it difficult to do so.

On p. 36, note 66, he infers from the Meiri on *Yoma* 72a that the length of the poles was just enough to enable the ark to be carried. This would make them about $1.5 + 2$ cubits = 3.5 cubits (1.5 for the width of the ark and a cubit on each side for carrying) or maybe a little more, but certainly not 10 cubits. But the Meiri doesn't really say this explicitly; he just says that the poles extended beyond the width of the ark so the ark could be carried and makes no issue about whether or not they were longer than the minimum that would be required to carry them.

The author then cites *Tosefot* on *Menachot* 98b, s.v. *dochakin*, where it is stated that "the length of the poles was not ten cubits." The *Tosefot*'s solution is that the poles became longer miraculously. But while the sages mention other aspects of the Tabernacle that were miraculous, they don't mention this as being one of them.

The author then interprets the Radak's statement (on 1 Kings 8:8, s.v. *vayaarichu habadim*) that the poles were ten cubits long to mean that they were *no longer than* ten cubits, so they couldn't have reached the curtain in the Temple. This seems to be a forced interpretation. Indeed, the second solution he gives in his comment there makes sense *only* if the length of the poles was ten cubits.

He does not cite—in this note, at any rate—the Malbim on Exodus 25:13, where it is implied that the length of the poles was ten cubits.

The citations from R' Abraham son of the Rambam and the *Paneach Raza* do imply that the poles were no longer than 5 cubits, but since these make assertions about the poles being moved back and forth between the rings or disengaged entirely from one ring—of which there is no mention in any of the other sources—these can at best be thought of as "other opinions." (It should be pointed out that it seems that R' Abraham's opinion requires *two* miracles: the first being the *Tosefot*'s, required in the Temple, and the second, required in the Tabernacle, too, that the poles remained suspended in mid air even though they were in only one of the two rings. At least the *Paneach Raza*'s opinion does not require this second miracle.)

So, in summary there seem to be three possibilities:

1. The poles were 10 cubits long, and they protruded through the Cover in the Tabernacle while in place, and through the Cover in the Temple by being slid through the rings eastward, or released from the western rings altogether, but no miracle was involved in any of these cases.

2. The poles were at least 5 cubits long, and they protruded through the Cover in the Tabernacle by being slid through the rings eastward, or released from the western rings altogether, and they protruded through the Cover in the Temple by being miraculously elongated.
3. At least in the Temple, the original poles were replaced by longer ones.

The first possibility seemed to us to be the most logical and the least requiring relying on miracles.

25:36 Its spheres and branches: The literal translation of this verse is “Their spheres and their branches will be from it; it will all be one hammered-work of pure gold.” Who is *their*? Rashi says nothing.

26:5 The tapestries: Although Rashi brings two opinions here (*Beraita d’Melech HaMishkan* and the Talmud), and I usually try to incorporate both opinions when Rashi brings two, I have here opted only to interpolate the opinion of the *Beraita d’Melech HaMishkan*, for 2 reasons: (a) not to overly complicate things, since detailing the second opinion here would be very cumbersome, and (b) because Rashi clearly prefers the 1st opinion, as the Rebbe points out (LS 36, p. 131 ff): he not only says it first, but quotes only it in several other contexts.

27:7 Its rods shall be inserted through the rings: The rings were affixed to the Grate (*michbar*), which occupied the sixth cubit of the altar’s height (from the bottom), i.e., they were between 5 and 6 cubits off the ground. Furthermore, sources say that they extended *above* the Grate so that the bottom of the bars would be at the point that is 2/3 the way up the altar, that is, 6.67 cubits above ground. Taking a cubit at 0.48m, this is 3.2m or 10.5 feet, meaning that the shoulders of those carrying the altar were 10½ feet above ground level! So, we must say that miraculously the 10 feet of the altar collapsed into the 5 or so feet that is the normal height of a person’s shoulders from the ground. Or that people back then were 11 feet tall.

27:18 (Chasidic Insights) However, the Talmud also records an opinion that Moses was ten cubits tall: I remember seeing someplace where the Rebbe says that Rashi does not hold this way in *peshuto shel mikra*; it would be good to refer to it here in a footnote.

Tetzaveh

28:12 whenever he enters the Sanctuary: Correct? I.e., as opposed to into the Tabernacle in general? See also vv. 30, 35, 42.

28:15 The breastplate atones: when it is worn? by its very existence?

28:17 gems: Hirsch, Artscroll, and Margolin just transliterate the Hebrew. My own preferences are based on the arguments of Kaplan and D. Ginsburg (in the appendix to vol. 2 of Exodus in *Da’at Mikra*). I also looked at *Encyclopedia Judaica* (vol. 13, col. 1007 ff) and *Diamonds and Gemstones in Judaica*, etc.

Odem: a carnelian is a red variety of chalcedony, which is a variety of quartz.

Pitdah & Bareket: Kaplan says that the sources that translate these as “topaz and emerald” are based on a corrupt version of the Septuagint, where these two were reversed.

Nofech: Ginsburg rejects carbuncle for *nofech*, but doesn't say why. Although the Midrash says this was green, Onkelos says it was red, and Rashi relies on Onkelos more than the Midrash for *peshat* in most cases.

Sapir: Ginsburg says "corundum," but sapphire is a variety of corundum, so since sapphire has the right color, I used that word.

Yahalom: Ginsburg opines for "diamond" but questions how the name was etched onto this stone.

Leshem: aquamarine is a variety of beryl.

29:2 a batch of flour: How much flour was used to prepare these loaves?

29:2 Lambda: As noted in the Artscroll edition of *Rashi* (on this verse), it is not clear what Rashi means when he describes the form of the brushing as "a Greek *kaf*." We have chosen to translate this as the letter *lambda* since this form seems to be consistent with most of Rashi's explanations throughout his commentaries on the Torah and Talmud.

29:4 mikveh: Where was this mikveh? Did the immersion take place before they entered the courtyard or while in it?

29:7 and anoint him by putting some more of this oil...: Artscroll Rashi says that "between the eyelashes" means "on both eyelashes," there thus being three applications of oil, while the simple meaning of "between" is "between the two eyelashes," implying one application at that point, for a total of two. It would be nice if Artscroll was right, though, because then it would be easy to imagine the *lambda* being formed as a triangle between the three points. Is there any support for their *peshat*? (Soncino Talmud [*Keritot* p. 36] says there are two points of application, but then it also says that the oil is then spread to the neck, citing Rashi. I don't see that in my Rashi, unless *padachat* sometimes means "neck" instead of "forehead.")

29:16 anywhere in the eastern half of the Courtyard: Yes?

29:20 in the north: Yes?

29:22 the fat: In Leviticus 3, it is stated that the fat parts of the *shelamim* that are to be burned include: (1) the fat that covers the innards and (2) all the fat on the innards. Rashi (on v. 3) says that the latter phrase means either the fat of the stomach or the fat of the small intestines, this being the argument of R. Yishmael and R. Akiva.

Here, the Torah does not list "the fat on the innards" as one of the fat parts that has to be burned, only "the fat that covers the innards." Rashi indicates that the generic term "the fat" means to indicate "the fat on the innards," because he says this term means either the fat of the stomach or the fat of the small intestines, this being the argument of R. Yishmael and R. Akiva.

OK, but why is "the fat on the innards" mentioned before "the fat that covers the innards?"

Rambam (*Maachalot Asurot* 7:6) calls the fat on the omasum and the rectilium "the fat on the innards," but it is clear from *Chulin* 49ab, etc. that in the Torah this is called "the fat that covers the innards" while "the fat on the innards" refers to the fat on the small intestine or the abomasum.

29:37 "Holy of Holies": This term is used to refer to the inner sanctum of the Tabernacle, distinguishing it from the outer sanctum, which is just "holy." Here, it refers to the outer altar. How can the outer altar be construed to be "holy of holies?" The Rebbe (*Sefer HaSichot*

5748, vol. 1, p. 287-288) rejects the possibility that Rashi means to explain *this* when he says “and what is its holiness? that whatever touches it will become holy” (on the grounds that [a] Rashi cites only the word *kodesh* and not *kodesh hakadoshim* and [b] does not explain the word *kodashim* in his comment), and says that in *peshat* it is not clear how the outer altar can be “holy of holies.” The same applies to the use of the term in 30:29, when the term is used to apply to the whole Tabernacle and everything in it. (As for the *inner* altar, [30:10] Rashi *does* explain how it is “holy of holies”: it is set aside just for incense and special blood, and not used for day-to-day service.)

Allegorically, however, the Rebbe does explain the term, basing his explanation on the Rambam’s famous quote about how someone who dedicates himself to serve G-d becomes like a *high* priest, who is *holy of holies*, and how according to *Ba’al HaTurim* the phrase “you shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests” means *high* priests. Thus, “holy of holies” in these contexts means “super-holy relative to the mundane, profane, material life of the world” rather than “holier than something already holy.” So we have borrowed this understanding of the term to explain its meaning on the *peshat* level, for want of any other explanation.

Tisa

30:12 ransom: *Kofer*. Here, I’m understanding this as being a “prophylactic” (to use Artscroll’s term) ransom—to forestall the effects of counting heads. The root *kaper* is used two more times in this passage: in v. 15 and v. 16. In the former I’m understanding it as referring to the fact that communal sacrifices atone; in the latter I’m understanding it as referring to the fact that the Tabernacle was a *kaparah* for the sin of the Golden Calf.

30:13 sacred shekel: In Talmudic times, the “shekel” was the Biblical *beka* (half-shekel) and they called the coin worth two of these a *sela*. Thus, the Talmudic shekel was half the Biblical *shekel hakodesh*. The question is: does this mean that in Talmudic times they were using the term *shekel* to refer to a Biblical “regular, non-holy” shekel that was worth half of the *shekel hakodesh*, a la other Biblical “holy” weights that were twice the “non-holy” weights of the same name, OR was there no such “non-holy” shekel in Biblical times, and in Talmudic times they used the term *shekel* to mean half of what it meant in Biblical times for some unknown reason, and the Torah calls the shekel *shekel hakodesh* not to contrast it with some *shekel chol* but rather just because it is the base-value used for all holy purposes, as Rashi says?

30:19 by placing the right hand on the right foot...: I couldn’t find anywhere where this process is described in any way that makes sense other than this. First of all, does *regel* here mean just “feet” or the whole “leg” as it often does in Torah-usage? Secondly, it sounds like the priest is supposed to wash both hands and both feet at the same time, because the phraseology is “he puts his right hand on his right foot and his left hand on his left foot and washes them” rather than “he puts his right hand on his right foot and washes them and his left hand on his left foot and washes them.”

But if so, how is this done—unless another priest holds him up or he jumps into midair for a second? The rabbis, whose opinion this is (in *Zevachim* 19b) contrast their way of doing it with Yosi ben Yehudah’s way, which they say is impossible because the priest will fall down if he tries unless he is assisted. This means that they think the priest can do it *their* way unassisted and *not* fall down.

This explains why a number of places (Artscroll Chumash, Steinberg) imply that the priest washes one pair of hand-feet first and then the other, even though this is not stated super-explicitly (even though Artscroll Chumash quotes Rashi [!] as saying this).

Thirdly, wouldn't we require *koach gavra*? If so, how is this accomplished? Another priest opens the spout?

31:12 the princes will enter: Is there any resolution to the fact that in Exodus 34:31 and Numbers 30:2 (and in Rashi there) it says “princes,” while in the braisa from Eruvin it says “elders”?

31:18 The two tablets were square...: It follows from this that the tablets were laid down in the ark face up, so a person peering into the ark from above could read the tablets. But the Rebbe says (in his discussion of why the tablets could not have had semicircular tops) that if they had rounded tops there would be extra space in the *top* of the space inside of the ark—implying that the tablets were stood up inside the ark. Does this mean that the three-handbreadth thickness of the tablets was in fact their front-back side? That would seem pretty weird—writing the Ten Commandments in a space three handbreadths tall and six handbreadths wide, no?

32:4 but the idolaters killed him: Rashi (on 32:6) seems to imply that Hur was assassinated on the 17th of Tamuz in the morning, but previously he said that Aaron saw him being killed on the 16th, and this was one of his justifications for building the altar to the calf.

32:4 (Chasidic Insights) the Egyptians worshipped the zodiacal sign Aries: In my Arizal work, I noted that the Egyptians worshipped the ram-headed god Khnum as the creator. He was also one of the gods of the Nile. There was also an Egyptian bull-god, Apis, an incarnation of the creation-god Ptah. “The priests at Memphis kept a real bull that was thought be the god’s living image. The bull lived in luxurious accommodations near the temple of Ptah, and at regular festivals the Egyptian upper classes were allowed to come and view the bull. When the bull died, it was mummified in a solemn ceremony and buried in underground catacombs” (Philip Wilkinson, *DK Illustrated Dictionary of Mythology* [London: Dorling Kindersley, 1998], pp. 31, 35).

32:5 Tomorrow there will be a festival to G-d: Why did the idolatrous festivities begin only the next morning? Was it because Aaron tarried enough so that the altar was not finished during the daytime, and since sacrifices are not offered at night, they had to wait till morning? Or was it because the people agreed/assented when he said, “Tomorrow will be a festival to G-d”?

32:9 they do not accept rebuke: as we saw just now with Hur?

32:11 (Chasidic Insights) He knows that the illusion is a ruse and refuses to be duped: is this the inner meaning of being “stiff-necked”?

32:15 The tablets were inscribed: Why are the tablets described here, especially since (a different aspect of) their miraculous nature was mentioned in 31:18? Is the Torah trying to say, “These tablets were so *gevaldik*, and see how the Jews made it necessary to destroy them because of the Golden Calf”? If so, fine, but why say it in two different places?

32:19 (Chasidic Insights) When the Jews sinned, the writing “departed”: Doesn't this contradict the idea that engraved letters can never be removed from the stone into which they've been engraved?

32:20 Continuing the analogy: Regarding Rashi's analogy of the king, queen, handmaidens, and bridesman corresponding to G-d, the Jews, the mixed multitude, and Moses (34:1): How

far can we take this analogy? That is, if the mixed multitude are “handmaidens” (*shefachot*), the Rambam says that *shefachot* are like “animals” have no *dinim* of *ishus* whatsoever (*Isurei Biah* 14:19), if I understand correctly. (This is interesting, because non-Jews do have some regulations regarding *ishus* [*Isurei Biah* 14:10], including adultery!) Thus, if the mixed multitude committed “adultery”/idolatry, they are not legally culpable at all. So, taking this a step further, would we say that the court that was set up to try those who had served the calf was only for the born Israelites (similar to how the *sotah*-solution of the calf’s ashes was administered only to the born Israelites)? The problem with this is that the analogy “breaks down” when applied, since idolatry is a capital offense for both Jews and non-Jews. (Unless we make a real *chidush* and say that idolatry was *not* a capital offense for the semi-Jewish mixed multitude, just like adultery is not a capital offense for a *shifchah*. BUT this is untenable since the Rebbe explicitly contrasts the usage of הַעֵם in reference to execution by the sword or plague with that of בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל in reference to trial by ordeal.)

32:21 In the course of the legal proceedings: This is one possibility; others are that Aaron told Moses himself; Moses figured it out himself; etc. I put it this way since this conjecture seems make this verse flow from the previous one.

32:25 the people were now exposed: “Now” that Aaron had said “they are bent on evil,” “exposing” their stubborn and quarrelsome nature? Or “Now” that Aaron had made the calf?

And what is the purport of this verse: Since Aaron had exposed them and made them an object of disgrace among their adversaries, what had to happen? Moses had to execute the guilty? Does this mean that if Aaron had said nothing, Moses would not have had to execute the guilty?? How does this verse fit into the flow of the story?

32:30 the 18th: Failing any other option, I’ve opted to follow the *Gur Aryeh* who says that when Rashi says (on 33:11) that Moses ascended on the 19th, he means that the 19th is counted as the first full day of third 40 days, since the 18th wasn’t a full day (since Moses ascended in the morning). When Rashi says (there) that “he judged the people on the 18th,” I’m assuming it means these words: “You’ve committed a grave sin.” It can’t refer to all the punishments etc. mentioned above, because it says “on the next day...” *after* all that.

32:31: Moses...said: In Deuteronomy 9:26-29, Moses says he used 4 other arguments during the second 40 days: (1) the merits of the patriarchs, (2) lest the Egyptians say that God wasn’t powerful enough to overcome the nations in the Land of Israel, (3) lest the Egyptians say that God hated the people, and therefore took them out into the desert to slaughter them, and (4) because the Jews are God’s people and inheritance. No mention of these arguments is made here, although during the *first* forty days, when God first confronts Moses with the news of the calf, Moses uses (1), at v. 13, and (3), at v. 12. It would therefore be tempting to say that Deut 9:26-29 is referring to the 1st forty days, but this is taking them somewhat out of context, at least according to Rashi on Deut. 9:25.

32:34 Therefore, now: In LS 16, p. 408, fn 5, the Rebbe says that it appears from Rashi that this verse already begins the 3rd period of 40 days when Moses was on the mountain. This is hard to fit in contextually, however, since (a) a few verses later we are told how G-d smote the people with a plague, and it’s hard to imagine that this was a manifestation of G-d’s good favor He showed during the 3rd 40 days; (b) in 34:2, G-d tells Moses to come up to the mountain, this being the 3rd 40 days, in which the tablets were restored. I therefore wrote it as if “at the end of the 2nd period of 40 days” (Rashi on Deut 10:1) G-d assented to Moses’ pleas and granted partial forgiveness to the people. Perhaps I can be forgiven for not trying to write things up according to this footnote because it is only in the Rebbe’s אַמְיֵנָה of the Sicha?

32:34 who did not yet have any children: I am assuming this is the case because of my assumption that *karet* means “dying without any male descendants” and not just “without sons.” If this is the case, then Pinchas must have been born between now (17 Tamuz) and 1 Nisan, when Aaron and his sons became installed in the priesthood and any sons they would have thereafter would be priests. So Mrs. Eleazar was probably pregnant with Pinchas at this time. *Seder HaDorot* (s.v. 2892) says that Pinchas lived on into King David’s time, to the age of almost 440 years. If he means that he died in 2892, that means that he was born no earlier than 2452, 4 years after 2448. Oh well. Any ideas?

32:34 Nadav and Avihu: Why did Nadav and Avihu die? Besides the reasons given in *parashat Shemini* (unauthorized incense, teaching in the presence of their teachers, being unmarried, *ratzo* without *shov*), Rashi says (on Leviticus 10:12 and Deuteronomy 9:20) it was because of the sin of the Golden Calf. But elsewhere (on Leviticus 10:3), he says it was because “and I will be sanctified by My honor[ed ones]” (Exodus 29:43), i.e., that someone had to die when the Tabernacle was inaugurated, implying that their death was decreed even before the Golden Calf. ???

33:7 Moses, seeing that God had removed His presence somewhat from the people, concluded that he should do likewise: During the almost six-month period between Moses’ final descent from the mountain on the 10th of Tishrei and the inauguration of the Tabernacle on the 1st of Nisan, 2449, God was still relatively distanced from the people.

This is how I get around the issue mentioned in R/S, p. 189, note 1: If G-d was already reconciled with the people by 10th of Tishrei, how could He be described as being “angry” with them during the period when Moses’ tent acted as the Tent of Meeting—which, Rashi says, was between Tishrei 10 and Nisan 1?

33:12 You told me you will send an angel, but I do not accept this: So Rashi, but Moses’ words seem to imply that the complaint is not that G-d is appointing a representative altogether, but that He has not yet informed Moses who this is going to be.

33:23 But after My attributes of mercy have passed by and the danger is gone, I will remove My hand: Two things are happening here: (1) G-d is removing His hand from covering/sheltering Moses, and (2) G-d’s glory is departing. On the words, “And I shall remove My palm,” Rashi quotes Onkelos as translating, “And I shall remove the guidance of My glory” in order for it to move on. This seems to confuse the two: the palm and the glory. It could be that G-d’s protecting hand, so to speak, is being extended forth *from the apparition of the Shechinah passing by*, so that when it passes Moses both the Glory (*Shechinah*) and the hand extending from it withdraw and move on. ??

34:9 After God’s presence had passed by: On Numbers 14:18, Rashi quotes *Sanhedrin* 111ab, where the conversation between G-d and Moses over whether “long suffering” should apply to the wicked as well as the righteous is recorded. The *Gemara* uses this story to prove that “and Moses hurried and bowed and prostrated” was in response to seeing the attribute of “long suffering” (as opposed to the other possibility, the attribute of truth). But Rashi here on this verse does not say that Moses hurried to prostrate because he saw the attribute of “long suffering” but because he saw the *Shechinah*. The Rebbe explains that Rashi ignores this *Gemara* because according to *peshuto shel mikra* there’s no reason why Moses should have prostrated himself when seeing either of these two attributes more than any of the others. So it’s interesting that Rashi uses the story about the conversation but takes it out of the context of proving what it was Moshe prostrated himself to.

But the real question is: when could this conversation have taken place? It is clear from the story that it had to have occurred before the sin of the Golden Calf, because it says that when that happened, Moses invoked the 13 attributes and then both G-d and he referred back to this conversation. But if it was during the first forty days that Moses saw G-d writing the 13 attributes, that would mean that they were part of the “original” Torah, while the implication of the narrative is that G-d revealed them to Moses only after—and as a result of—the incident of the Golden Calf!

34:9 Moses prayed: It appears from this very verse that Moses did pray during these third 40 days: “May my Lord go in our midst,” etc. Indeed, in one set of sources (*Sichot Kodesh* 5727, vol. 2, p. 345; Response to someone’s questions on this, published in the *Teshurah* from Lison-Wilhelm Wedding, reprinted with commentary in *Beis Moshiach* #527, pp. 62-65; *Hitva’aduyot* 5743, vol. 4, p. 1950) the Rebbe states that Moses *did* pray during these 40 days. In another set of sources, however (*Sichot Kodesh* 5733, vol. 2, pp. 335-338; *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5744, p. 444), the Rebbe says that Moses *did not* pray during these 40 days, and that the reason he had to stay on the mountain 40 days was only so that the holiness he absorbed would be equal to the holiness he absorbed during the first 40 days, and that the reason why total forgiveness was deferred until *Yom Kippur* (and was not achieved on 29 Av, when the middle 40 days and Moses’ praying was finished) was because *total* forgiveness means *joyous* forgiveness, and this was only achieved after 40 days of Moses acting as the people’s representative to receive the Torah anew and promise to transmit it to further generations.

Interestingly, the footnote in *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5743-5744, p. 444 refers to *Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer*, chapter 46, as the source for the fact that Moses only studied Torah and did not pray during the third 40 days. But the Rebbe says in the *teshurah* cited above that this same chapter in *Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer* indicates that Moses also *prayed* during the third 40 days! I looked at this chapter, and it does say that Moses learned then, but it also implied (at the end) that he also prayed.

In any case, it could be argued that in *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5743-5744 the Rebbe is not necessarily speaking in the context of Rashi’s *peshat*. The address in *Sichot Kodesh* 5733 has some anomalies and lacunae, so I don’t feel any great obligation to *davka* incorporate it. Finally, it could be argued that the type of “prayer” Moses did during the third 40 days (the 13 attributes of mercy) is really a form of *teshuvah*, and that the Torah learning he did during this time is also a form of *teshuvah* (as is stated explicitly in *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5743-5744). Again, even in *Sefer HaMa’amarim* 5743-5744 the Rebbe immediately says after this that during Elul we have to increase in prayer as well as Torah study—sort of maybe implying that this was part of the original 40 days, too.

Another question: In the beginning of the discussion in *Sichot Kodesh* 5733, the Rebbe says that Rashi seems to imply that the reason Moses had to stay on the mountain for 40 days the third time was because God took away the “gift” He gave him at the end of the 1st 40 days—the full understanding of the Torah. The Rebbe then rejects this option because (1) Rashi himself offers a second explanation, indicating that the first explanation is difficult, and (2) logically, if 40 days was not enough to learn the Torah properly, why would God make Moses stay on the mountain 40 days at all and not just give it to him immediately?

But: (1) I thought that even when Rashi offers a second explanation, this does not *invalidate* the first explanation completely, but only indicates that it can’t be the end-all-and-be-all of *peshat* because there is some unresolved issue in it. (2) Why can’t we say that God wanted Moses to exert himself to understand the Torah and exhaust the power of human intellect to

reach first, and only then give him the rest as a gift? The 40 days could then be a *miniature* of the 40 years it takes a student to understand his teacher's teachings (?).

The idea that this gift of the Torah is what God gave and took away and then gave back to Moses when He said *Leich reid, leich alei* is so beautiful I'd love to use it.

34:11 Renewing the Covenant: These verses are more or less a repeat of 23:10-19 (or 10-33). Here is a comparison of the order of the two passages:

Mishpatim	Tisa
	Conquering the Land of Israel
<i>Shemittah</i>	
Shabbat	
Idolatry (part 1)	Idolatry
Festivals	Festivals (part 1)
	Redeeming the firstborn
	Festivals (part 2)
	Shabbat/Sabbatical Year
	Festivals (part 3)
Bikurim	Bikurim
Meat in Milk	Meat in Milk
Idolatry (part 2)	
Conquering the Land of Israel	
Idolatry (part 3)	

Other than the differences highlighted in this table, some others are:

Mishpatim: destroy their idols and pillars; Tisa replaces idols with altars and adds sacred trees.

Mishpatim: 3x appear before “G-d, the Master”; Tisa inverts “the Master, G-d” and adds: “the G-d of Israel.”

There are also differences in contents of the prohibition of idolatry and their order.

34:31 Aaron's sons would come: If this passage describes the learning order effective Tishrei 11, 2449, then where are Nadav and Avihu? They didn't die until Nisan 1 of that year. Maybe the passage describes how things were most of the time; i.e., from Nisan 1 until Iyar 20 (when they started traveling) and whenever Moses got a communication from God after that. (But when was *this*? There were no new *mitzvot* communicated during the 38-year hiatus, so does this mean that this learning *seder* was defunct between Iyar 20, 2449 and Av 2487? Or did they use it for *chazarah*?)

34:31 The leaders of the community: Who was this? The princes (the word in this verse is *נְשִׂאֵי הָעֵדָה*)? It would seem that the Rebbe thinks so, because of LS 33 p. 191—assuming that the *seder halimud* here is mirrored in the beginning of *parashat Matot*, which is not at all for sure). On the other hand, the Rebbe points out (LS 16 p. 425 note 12) that Rashi says in the next verse (v. 32) that these *נְשִׂאֵי הָעֵדָה* are the *elders*, and that the word *nasi* can mean “elder,” just as it has a few times already in *Chumash*. Any ideas?

Vayakheil

35:21 they had used them all up by now: The Rebbe says this, but it's hard to picture: Notwithstanding all the booty and plunder they left Egypt and the Sea with, they used up *all* the precious stones, spices, and oil? In less than 6 months? What did they spend them on? We'd have to say that they bought stuff from the traveling salesmen who were in the desert, because otherwise these items would still exist among the people. And didn't they need oil for sacrifices and throughout the 40 years? If they used it all up, where did they get more? Again from the traveling salesmen?

35:22 They did not have enough...: How does this fit in with the Rebbe's explanation (see on 25:2, above) that God only asked (for building the Tabernacle) for things that the Jews had ready at hand?

35:22 (Chasidic Insights) the four ingredients of proper child-rearing that all parents must contribute: Although the original says "mothers," this was an address to women, so that could be why the previous Rebbe said "mothers" rather than "parents." Certainly the lessons apply to both parents, and this is how this source was translated in *MiMa'ayanei HaChassidut*. On the other hand, the verse is talking about specifically what the *women* contributed....

37:22 Its: This verse literally reads: "*Their* spheres and *their* branches (fem.) were..." Why *their*? and why is the word for branch all of a sudden in the feminine? Same for 25:36.

Pekudei

38:21 under the direction of Itamar: When supervision over the Levites is given in the Book of Numbers to Eleazar and Itamar, it is already a month after Nadav and Avihu died. But *this* passage (in Exodus) refers to the events of Tishrei 10 *until* Nisan 1. So, unless this is to be understood as a back-projection from then, the Torah already planned to give the supervision to the younger sons when the older ones were still alive. Any thoughts?

38:24 To demonstrate how Moses was in charge of the entire process: In LS 26 pp. 272 ff, the Rebbe rejects the idea that the reason for this accounting was to clear Moses of suspicion that he had embezzled any funds. However, in *Hitva'aduyot* 5744, vol. 2 (pp. 1137-1140, 1145-1147), the Rebbe states that it's obvious in *peshuto shel mikra*, to any 5-year-old, that after collecting all these funds Moses would have to give an account, in order to clear himself of any suspicion. I've opted to follow the *Likutei Sichot*, because in general *Likutei Sichot* is the edition *mishneh acharonah*, and particularly because this *likut* came out in 5746, 2 years after 5744. Nonetheless, I was able to use the idea that there wasn't enough gold from the *Hitva'aduyot* (although it did create some problems, as can be seen).

39:32 All the work of making the Tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting and its accoutrements, was completed: Does the idea that all was ready by Kislev 25 fit in with *peshuto shel mikra*?

39:32 The rest of the Israelites brought: The translation of this half of the verse follows the Rebbe, but what was there about their bringing the raw materials that can be described as "exactly in the manner that God had commanded Moses?" Maybe that they didn't bring anything on Shabbos? Also: what does the fact that they brought everything properly have to do with the context of the verse?

39:32 exactly: The word "exactly" is Uri's idiomatic translation of *kein asu*.

40:21 He then put the broken first set of tablets into the original wooden ark:

Presumably Moses put the broken tablets into the wooden ark as soon as there was room for them there; i.e., as soon as he took the second tablets out of it and put them in the gold-covered ark. Rashi does not mention where the broken tablets were kept between Tamuz 17, 2448, when they were first broken, and Adar 23, 2449, when Moses started setting up the Tabernacle and removed the unbroken tablets from this wooden ark and put them in the Tabernacle ark—a period of over 8 months. UNLESS: Moses made two arks: one on Tamuz 17, 2448, which he used for the broken tablets from then until 23 Adar, when they disappeared from history, and one on 29 Av, 2448, which he used to temporarily hold the second tablets (from 11 Tishrei until 23 Adar, and into which the broken tablets were then moved). If there was only one Moses-made ark, it could have held *both* sets of Tablets: the broken ones from Av 29, 2448 (when he made them) and the unbroken ones from 11 Tishrei until 23 Adar, just as the Tabernacle-Ark evidently held both sets of Tablets (*Berachot* 8b; *Bava Batra* 14b) once the people reached the Land of Israel (and there was no more need for a portable guide-ark). But that does not tell us where the unbroken ones were from 17 Tamuz till 29 Av.

Any ideas?

40:33 Aaron then performed the inauguration rites: Yes?