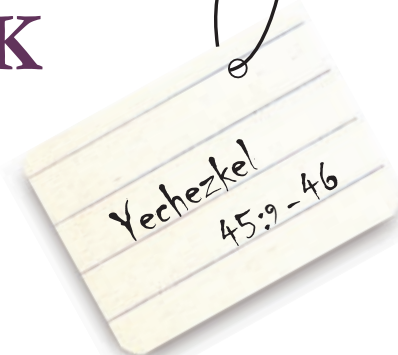


MATAN AL HAPEREK

The Six-Year Online Weekly Tanach Learning Program



Perek 45:9-25

Central to perakim 45 and 46 are the roles of the prince among the people and in the temple, which are part of the process of renewal and repair in the future temple. The laws of the prince in these perakim reflect the complex status of the king - the king's honor and exalted status on the one hand, and the balances and limits which are meant to emphasize his subordination to God and the Torah on the other hand. This change was meant to prevent the king from taking advantage of the people, as was prevalent in the time of the First Temple. One expression of this change is Yechezkel's use of the term "prince" (in Hebrew *Nasi*) in place of "king".

1 a) "Enough, princes of Israel; remove violence and plunder, and perform justice and righteousness" (9) In pesukim 9-12 the obligations of the princes in the areas of law and justice are listed. Examine these pesukim and discuss the two aspects of law and justice which are required of the prince.

b) Compare pesukim 10-12 to the parallel pesukim in Vayikra 19:35-36. To whom is the commandment directed in each of the sources? To understand this difference, read the **Radak**:

You shall do no unrighteousness in judgment in measurements and in weights as you did until now. For example, to say to make the Efav smaller or the Shekel larger and to distort the weighing of the scales. And what the people do is the sin of the kings, for they do not protest.





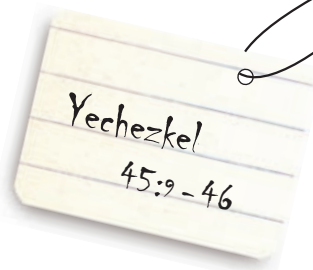
- 2 After listing the obligations of the princes in the areas of law and justice in detail, the prophet continues with their sacred obligations and their obligations in the temple. In pesukim 13-16 a special offering which the prince received is described. A similar tax on the people to be given to the king is described in the laws of the king in Shmuel I 8:15-17. Pay attention to the similarity in the items which are taxed, and to the differences in the amounts of tax and its purpose in each place. Think about how this prophecy is a “correction” to the status of the king as described in the laws of the king as they appear in Shmuel I.
- 3 In pesukim 18-25 the days on which the prince is commanded to give sacrifices for the atonement of the people are listed. Some of these are not mentioned in the Torah at all (1 and 7 Nissan), and others are familiar (Pesach and Sukkot). However, there are differences between the sacrifices described in the Torah and the sacrifices described in Yechezkel. See the opinions brought in the Gemara in Menachot and the opinion of the Radak, which is very different in principle, and try to understand the different ways of dealing with this problem.

Menachot 45a: R. Yochanan said, “This passage will be interpreted by Eliyahu in the future.” R. Ashi said, “[It refers to] the special consecration-offering [to be] offered in the time of Ezra just as it was offered in the time of Moshe (meaning at the time of the consecration of the Temple).”

Radak: And this sacrifice is not the calf which is spoken about in the Torah, for there is no sin-offering of a calf, rather of a goat...rather we are forced to understand that there will be innovation in the future sacrifices.

See also the explanation of the **Daat Mikra:**

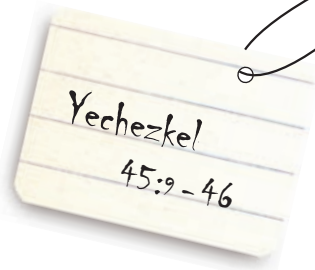
We are not speaking here about a change in the laws of the sacrifices... rather about sacrifices which the prince will give as an additional ritual...the association here is with the laws of the prince.



Perek 46

Perek 46 continues to deal with the laws of the prince. The perek begins with the sacrifices of the prince and his roles on Rosh Chodesh and Shabbat (1-15). It continues with the laws of transfer of property by inheritance from the prince (16-18). These end the listing of laws for the prince. The perek ends with the completion of Yechezkel's tour in the Temple – in the cooking places (19-24). Here, too, we see the trend of additional sanctification in the separation of the cooking places of the priests in the inner court, where the sacred meats are cooked, from the cooking places of the Levites in the corners of the outer court, where the sacrifices of the people are cooked, which are at a lower level of sanctity.

- 4 On Shabbatot and Roshei Chodashim the Inner Eastern Gate is opened for the prince and the people (1-3). Pay attention to the difference between the place to which the prince is allowed to enter and prostrate himself as compared to where the people prostrate themselves. In the continuation of the perek the rules of exiting the Temple for the people and the prince on the Holidays are given, when the Eastern Gate remains closed (8-10) and the prince is described as being “in the midst of them”. Think about how the laws of entering and exiting the Temple express the complex status of the prince.
- 5 The laws of the prince conclude with a section which deals with the sale of land (16-18). The first two laws (16-17) contrast between a gift given to the son of the prince and a gift given to his slave. These laws are based on the Jubilee year as described in Vayikra 25. What is the meaning of placing these limitations on the prince in light of the principle which is the basis for the laws of the Jubilee year (Vayikra 25:23-24)?



Appendix

King and Prince

The exclusive term for the ruler in perakim 40-48, as well as in the perakim of the redemption (34:28, 37:25) is “prince” (in Hebrew *Nasi*). In these perakim the term “king” has a negative connotation, and indicates the Kings of Israel who have sinned in the past.

The fact that the prince receives directions from Yechezkel in God’s name renders the prince a servant of God who is subordinate to the prophet. It seems that in these perakim Yechezkel is attempting to create a balance in the status of the prince. On the one hand he receives a land inheritance which is almost as large as one of the inheritances of the tribes, and which is spread over both sides of the “offering” of the land on which the Temple is built. He is allowed to distribute his land to his servants and to bequeath it to his sons as an inheritance. He is responsible for the communal sacrifices. He is the only one who is allowed to enter through the Eastern Gate of the Inner Court on Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh, or at any other time he would like to give a voluntary offering. On the other hand, the prince cannot take part in the ritual practices. He cannot take land from the people, and on the holidays he enters and leaves the court of the Temple as one of the people. Additionally, the prince has no judicial status. The priests are the judges: “*And in dispute they shall stand in judgment, according to My ordinances shall they decide it.*” (44:24) (Based on R Kasher, Mikra LeYisrael – Introduction to Sefer Yechezkel p. 129)

It seems that the change in name from king to prince, reflects the future status of restrictions and separations from the sacred, and limitation of the power and rule over the people which the prince will have. These restrictions are in contrast to the oppressive status of the king as stated in the “laws of the king”.