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**The Complementary Verses of the Command Concerning the Mishkan**

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The four complementary verses that conclude the commands concerning the Mishkan map out the important milestones in the narrative of the Torah, from the time of the forefathers up until *Sefer Bamidbar*.

Before we examine the above assertion, let us first clarify what it is that we are referring to as the "complement to the command concerning the Mishkan."

The command to build the Mishkan occupies two entire *parashot* – *Teruma* and *Tetzaveh* – as well as five more sections in *Parashat Ki Tisa* (30:11-31:11). Clearly, though, these latter five sections, along with the last section in *Parashat Tetzaveh* (on the subject of the incense altar, 30:1-10) are appendices, as it were, that are attached to the body of the command.

This impression is created by the structure of the command. The command to build the Mishkan, as set out in the *parashot* of *Teruma* and *Tetzaveh* (*Shemot* 25-29) follows a fairly clear structure: it starts from the inner parts of the Mishkan and moves outward. *Parashat Teruma* starts (after the command to collect the necessary raw materials) with the fashioning of the vessels that are located in the inner part of the Mishkan: the Ark, the table for showbread, and the *menora*. Then comes a list of the components that make up the structure of the Mishkan itself – the curtains, covering, boards, sockets and bars, and the veil. This is followed by a description of the altar, and then the courtyard of the Mishkan with its hangings, pillars, and screen. Following the end of the command to fashion all these parts of the Mishkan there follow (in *Parashat Tetzaveh*) the commands concerning the *kohanim* and their garments, and the procedure for the sanctification of the *kohanim* and of the Mishkan (during the seven days of consecration).

In *Shemot* 29:38 we find the details of the daily sacrifice, which is manifestly meant as the conclusion of the command concerning the Mishkan. The daily sacrifice is presented as the central service performed upon the altar, facing the Tent of Meeting, and as the service that allows the Divine Presence to dwell there – which is cited at the outset of the command concerning the Mishkan as being its objective.

I shall not address here the question of why the *parashiyot* that follow are not integrated into the body of the command concerning the Mishkan. (For a discussion of the subject see *myshiur* on *Parashat Korach*.) For our purposes it is sufficient that the discussion of the daily sacrifice (29:38-46) is seen as completing the main command concerning the Mishkan. As stated at the outset, we shall focus on the final four verses (43-46).

The text of the command concerning the daily sacrifice reads as follows:

This is what you shall offer upon the altar: lambs of the first year – two each day, continually.  
You shall offer one lamb in the morning, and the other one towards evening.  
And a tenth measure of flour... and a drink offering... for the one lamb,  
And the other lamb... like the meal offering of the morning, and like its drink offering, for a sweet savor, an offering by fire, to God.  
It shall be a daily burnt offering for your generations, at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting before God, where I will meet with you to speak with you there.  
And I shall meet there with Bnei Yisrael,  
And it will be sanctified with My glory.  
And I shall sanctify the Tent of Meeting and the altar,  
And I shall sanctify Aharon and his sons to minister to Me,  
and I shall dwell amongst Bnei Yisrael  
And I shall be their God,  
And they will know that I am the Lord their God Who took them out of the land of Egypt, to make My dwelling among them;  
I am the Lord their God. (38:-46)

Verses 38-41 address the offering of the daily sacrifice.

Verse 42 characterizes this daily service in two respects. Firstly, it is a continual service, for all generations. Secondly, it is a sacrifice made to God. What defines it as such is the fact that the altar is at the "entrance to the Tent of Meeting," with the "Tent of Meeting" representing – as its name testifies – a place of meeting between God and Bnei Yisrael. The practical expression of this meeting is that God speaks to Moshe as he stands in the Tent of Meeting (as described in *Bamidbar* 7:89 – "And when Moshe came to the Tent of Meeting to speak with Him...").

Verses 43-46 describe the results of the continual, daily offering in the Mishkan with a series of seven verbs in the future tense: by virtue of the daily sacrificial service, "I shall meet... it will be sanctified... I shall sanctify... I shall sanctify... I shall dwell... I shall be... they will know..." It is clear that these objectives are not the purpose of the daily sacrifice alone; they are the purpose of the Mishkan as a whole, which achieves its completion in the daily sacrifice. This is highlighted especially in the fifth verb – "I shall dwell amongst Bnei Yisrael" – which clearly matches up with the purpose of the Mishkan as set out at the beginning of *Parashat Teruma* (25:8), "Let them make Me a Sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst."

However, it is not only this fifth verb that has appeared previously in the text as a goal which is fulfilled by means of the Mishkan. As well shall see, all seven are either explicitly stated or hinted to in other places in the Torah. Let us review them in order of their appearance here:

· "And I shall meet there with Bnei Yisrael, and it shall be sanctified with My glory" (43). As stated, this concept of "meeting" is hinted at earlier, in verse 42, as the factor that defines the location of the altar as being "before God." Thus, the "meeting" is both a condition for the daily service (in order that this service will be "before God," as described in verse 42) and its result (as described in verse 43).

This meeting, together with its practical expression, has already appeared previously as the central purpose of the Mishkan. The section on the Ark, at the beginning of *Parashat Teruma* (25:10-22) ends with a description of the role of the Ark and the *keruvim* (verse 22): "And I shall meet with you there, and I shall speak with you from above the covering, from between the two *keruvim* that are upon the Ark of Testimony – all that I shall command you (to pass on) to Bnei Yisrael." The essence of the purpose of the Ark and the *keruvim*, then, is to be the place of emanation for God's meeting with Moshe, where He will speak with him from above the Ark, from between the *keruvim*. From the verses in our *parasha* it becomes clear that the meeting is not with Moshe alone, but with Bnei Yisrael ("And I shall meet there with Bnei Yisrael"), and that the meeting and the speech are not two separate events or manifestations; rather, the speech is the practical expression of the meeting ("Where I shall meet with you to speak with you there"). It also becomes clear that the sacrificial service, which completes the Mishkan, facilitates and brings about the meeting and the speech.

· "And it shall be sanctified with My glory" – the goal of sanctifying the Tent of Meeting has not been explicitly stated until now, but it is hinted to. At the end of *Parashat Mishpatim*, we find a description of God's revelation upon Mount Sinai in anticipation of Moshe's ascent (during which he will be commanded concerning the Mishkan):

And Moshe ascended the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain.

And God's glory rested upon Mount Sinai...

And the appearance of God's glory was like a consuming fire at the top of the mountain, before the eyes of Bnei Yisrael. (24:15-17)

When our verse refers to "My glory," it is the same "God's glory" referred to at the end of *Mishpatim*. A further allusion is the use of the word "rested" (*va-yishkon*), which hints to the Mishkan. The same revelation that was perceived by Moshe, in preparation for the command to build the Mishkan, will come to the Tent of Meeting in the wake of the completion of the Mishkan: "And it will be sanctified with My glory."

· "And I shall sanctify the Tent of Meeting and the altar" (44) – the sanctification of the Tent of Meeting is referred to already in the previous verse, since the Tent of Meeting is the subject of the clause "And it will be sanctified with My glory." The new element that is introduced in verse 44 is that with the sanctification of the Tent of Meeting – and perhaps as a result of it – God will also sanctify the altar. The sanctification of the altar has been mentioned already in our chapter, in

the command concerning the seven days of consecration (29:36-37):

And you shall offer a bull on each day for a sin offering for atonement, and you shall cleanse the altar when you have made atonement for it, and you shall anoint it to sanctify it. For seven days you shall make atonement for the altar and sanctify it, and the altar shall be most holy; anyone who touches the altar shall be holy.

These verses are talking about sanctification of the altar by Moshe, by means of anointment, while in our verse it is God Who sanctifies the altar. Nevertheless, these appear to be two stages in the same process that is aimed towards the same goal. First, man (Moshe) sanctifies and consecrates the altar for the sacrificial service – a sanctification that is expressed through the act of anointing – and then God confirms the sanctification and accepts the altar and the sacrifices as His own.

· "And I shall sanctify Aharon and his sons to minister to Me" – the sanctification of Aharon and his sons for priesthood is repeated several times in *Parashat Tetzaveh* (chapters 28-29):

As for you – bring to you Aharon your brother and his sons with him from among Bnei Yisrael, to minister to Me... (28:1)

And they shall make Aharon's garments, to sanctify him that he may minister to Me... (3)

And you shall dress Aharon your brother in them, and his sons with him, and you shall anoint them and consecrate them and sanctify them, that they may minister to Me... (41)

And this is what you shall do with them, to sanctify them to minister to Me... (29:1)

He shall be sanctified, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons garments with him... (21)

And they shall eat those things with which atonement was made to consecrate them and to sanctify them.... (33)

The above verses show that the essence of the purpose of making the priestly garments and of consecrating Aharon and his sons is to sanctify them for priesthood. Here too, as in the case of the altar, there are two stages of the same process that leads to the same goal: first Moshe sanctifies and consecrates Aharon and his sons for Divine service, and then God confirms this sanctification and accepts the *kohanim* as His servants, who are close to and minister to Him.

· "And I shall dwell in the midst of Bnei Yisrael" (45) – We have already discussed this phrase as conveying the crux of the purpose of the Mishkan, as stated at the beginning of *Parashat Teruma*: "Let them make Me a Sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst."

· "And I shall be their God" – we will examine this objective together with the next one:

· "And they will know that I am the Lord their God Who took them out of the land of Egypt, to make

My dwelling among them" (46). These expressions appeared in almost identical form at the beginning of *Parashat Vaera*, when God tells Moshe about the plan for the Exodus from Egypt:

Therefore, say to Bnei Yisrael: I am the Lord. And I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt...  
And I shall take you to be My nation  
And I shall be Your God  
And you will know that I am the Lord your God Who brings you out from under the burdens of Egypt. (6:6-7)

This goal of Hashem being our God was set forth already at Avraham's circumcision:

And I shall establish My covenant between Me and you, and your descendants after you, for their generations, as an eternal covenant, to be your God – and to your descendants after you... and I shall be their God. (*Bereishit 17:7-8*)

From all the way back to the time of Avraham's circumcision, then, the purpose of the forging of the covenant had been clear, with the primary substance of the covenant being the forging of a relationship between the nation and God. In *Parashat Vaera* we are told that the aim of the Exodus from Egypt (and perhaps also of the descent to Egypt in the first place – see *myshiur on Parashat Shemot*) is the realization of this aim. The purpose is not just the creation of this relationship, but also the inculcation of an awareness of the relationship amongst Bnei Yisrael, through the memory of the Exodus from Egypt. In our verses there is the added element of "to make My dwelling in their midst." This tells us that the purpose of the Exodus – "And I shall take you as My nation," with the inculcation of the consciousness of the Exodus – will be realized with the completion of the Mishkan and the commencement of the Divine service within it. We shall not elaborate here on the way in which the Mishkan serves to inculcate not only the consciousness of this relationship, but specifically the consciousness of the Exodus. Suffice it to say that at the heart of the Mishkan are the tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandment, starting with the words, "I am the Lord your God Who took you out of the land of Egypt...."

Thus, these verses, describing the purpose of the completion of the Mishkan and the commencement of the Divine service that is performed in it, actually describe the realization of God's long-term plans that were expressed long before, starting with the covenant with the forefathers, continuing through the plans for the Exodus from Egypt and God's revelation to convey the command concerning the Mishkan, and ending with the purposes of the Mishkan in general, and of each of its constituent parts: the Ark and the *keruvim*, the consecration of Aharon and his sons for priesthood, and the sanctification of the altar.

The next stage of our study will examine how the completion of the Mishkan and the commencement of the Divine service actually bring the aforementioned objectives to realization. If we follow the continuation of the story, we see the milestones on the path of realizing these objectives.

The completion of the job of building the Mishkan, with all of its vessels, occurs towards the end of *Parashat Pekudei*:

...and Moshe completed the work (*Shemot 40:33*).

Immediately afterwards, we read:

And **the cloud covered** the Tent of Meeting,  
And **God's glory** filled the Mishkan  
And Moshe was not able to come to the Tent of Meeting, for the **cloud rested upon it, and God's glory** filled the Mishkan... (40:34-35)  
**And He called to Moshe**, and God spoke with him from the Tent of Meeting, saying.... (*Vayikra 1:1*)

These verses are a perfect parallel to the revelation discussed above, at the end of *Parashat Mishpatim*, just prior to the command concerning the Mishkan (*Shemot 24:15-17*):

"And Moshe ascended the mountain  
And **the cloud covered** the mountain  
And **God's glory rested** upon Mount Sinai  
And **the cloud covered it** for six days  
And **He called to Moshe** on the seventh day from within the cloud  
And the appearance of **God's glory** was like a consuming fire at the top of the mountain, before the eyes of Bnei Yisrael...."

In other words, the same revelation that God showed to Moshe and to Bnei Yisrael prior to the command concerning the Mishkan, and which God promised would be recreated in the Tent of Meeting once it was completed – "and it shall be sanctified with My glory" – is what now fills the Mishkan.

However, there seems to be a problem: the promise of "it shall be sanctified with My glory" is uttered in connection with the daily sacrifice, as a description of what is going to happen in the wake of the commencement of the Divine service in the Mishkan. In practice, however, it appears that the promise is realized immediately upon the completion of the building of the Mishkan, without any mention of the sacrificial service taking place in it!

There is a well-known dispute among the commentators concerning the order of events at the end of *Parashat Pekudei* and in the first part of *Sefer Vayikra*; we shall not elaborate on it here. The view of Ibn Ezra would seem to make the most sense. He maintains that the text does in fact follow the chronological order of the events: God's glory filling the Mishkan, described in *Parashat Pekudei*, took place at the beginning of the month of Nissan, immediately upon completion of its building. Thereafter, following the command concerning the sacrifices (*Parashat Vayikra*, and perhaps the first part of *Tzav* – see *my shiur on Parashat Tzav*), came the seven days of consecration, as described in the second part of *Parashat Tzav* (*Vayikra 8*). Then, on the eighth day of consecration – which apparently was on the 8<sup>th</sup> of Nissan – we are told:

And it was, on the eighth day...  
**For on this day God will appear to you...**  
And Moshe said: This is the matter that God commanded that you do, **in order that God's glory will appear for you...**  
And Aharon came close to the altar, and he slaughtered the calf of the sin offering which was for himself...

And he slaughtered the burnt offering... and he brought the offering of the people... and he sacrificed the burnt offering... and he sacrificed the meal offering... besides the burnt sacrifice of the morning... And he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. And Moshe and Aharon came to the Tent of Meeting... And **God's glory appeared** to all of the people. And a **fire** came out from before God, and it **consumed** upon the altar the burnt offering and the fats  
And all the people saw, and they shouted, and they fell upon their faces. (9)

Once again in *Parashat Shemini*, then, there is a description of a revelation of "God's glory," in the form of a "consuming fire." Here it does indeed follow the commencement of the sacrificial service: the sacrifices are no longer being offered only to sanctify and consecrate the altar, and to inaugurate the *kohanim* (as during the seven days of consecration), but rather is an expansion of the daily sacrifice, an inauguration of the altar with its regular service –albeit in expanded form, to mark the beginning. This event seems better suited as a fulfillment of the promise "And it shall be sanctified with My glory," and includes not only the Tent of Meeting, but "I shall sanctify the Tent of Meeting and the altar." Why, then, does God's glory fill the Mishkan even before the commencement of the service in it, on Rosh Chodesh Nissan?

It seems that the answer to this question is quite simple. Concerning the daily sacrifice, our *parasha* tells us "a daily burnt sacrifice for your generations, at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, where I shall meet with you, to speak with you there." Having the Tent of Meeting as a place of meeting and dialogue is a condition for the daily sacrifice to be considered as being offered "before God." The situation is something like the paradox of tongs only being able to be created by means of other tongs: the Divine Presence must be the result of the service, but the service cannot be carried out "before God" so long as the Divine Presence is absent!

For this reason the Divine Presence descended to the Mishkan at first in concealed form, and only afterwards was revealed. At the end of *Parashat Pekudei* we are told that God's glory filled the Mishkan, but the cloud covered the Mishkan and God's glory could not be seen; even Moshe himself was unable to enter the Tent of Meeting because of the cloud. God speaks from inside the Tent of Meeting to Moshe, who stands outside (in contrast to the opinion of the commentators, who maintain that God's call to Moshe at the beginning of *Sefer Vayikra* facilitated his entry). This continues throughout the seven days of consecration, as well as during the sacrificial service of the eighth day. Thus, the Tent of Meeting indeed became the place "where I shall meet with you, to speak with you there," and the service took place "before God." It was only after the sacrifices of the eighth day that Moshe and Aharon entered the Tent of Meeting for the first time, and then God's glory appeared to the people, when the fire – the same consuming fire that is the appearance of God's glory, as explained at the end of *Mishpatim* – emerged from the Tent of Meeting and consumed the sacrifices upon the altar. Only now was the Tent of Meeting truly sanctified with God's glory, such that God truly met with Bnei Yisrael there, and together with the Tent of Meeting God also sanctified the altar, by accepting the

sacrifices through the revelation of the consuming fire upon the altar.

Not all of the expressions from our *parasha* appear here. Most conspicuous is the omission of the sanctification of Aharon and his sons for priesthood. From our verse it would seem that this was meant to happen together with the sanctification of the altar. From a thematic point of view, too, we would have expected it to occur close to their inauguration during the seven days of consecration.

Apparently, the sanctification of the *kohanim* by God was indeed meant to happen on the eighth day, and would have happened then had it not been for an unexpected hitch: the sin of Nadav and Avihu (10:1). Instead of "and I shall sanctify Aharon and his sons," there is an episode following which we are told, "I shall be sanctified among those who are near Me." Instead of God's glory, appearing as a consuming fire, sanctifying Aharon and his sons, it ends up consuming his sons. It is not clear how exactly the sanctification of Aharon and his sons would have been expressed had it not been for the sin (perhaps fire would have emerged from the Tent of Meeting and consumed the incense on their censers), but the sin of Nadav and Avihu disrupted the course of events from their planned progression.

Almost all the rest of *Sefer Vayikra* (with the exception of the story of the blasphemer) records the giving of commandments. We shall not elaborate here on the reason for their being given and/or written at these particular stages; therefore we shall continue with *Sefer Bamidbar*.

The first two chapters of *Sefer Bamidbar* deal with the census of Bnei Yisrael and the ordering of the camps around the Mishkan. The opening command concerning the ordering of the camps reads as follows:

Every man of Bnei Yisrael shall pitch by his flag, with the insignia of their fathers' houses; they shall encamp around the Tent of Meeting. (*Bamidbar* 2:2)

For the meantime we will skip over chapters 3-4. In chapter 5, God commands Moshe concerning those individuals who must temporarily be removed from the various parts of the camp:

God spoke to Moshe, saying:  
Command Bnei Yisrael, that they should send away from the camp anyone with *tzara'at*, and anyone who has experienced an issue, and anyone who is impure through contact with the dead...

So that they will not defile their camps, **in the midst of which I dwell.** (1-3)

The Torah explains the sending away of those who are ritually impure from the camps of Israel by the fact that God dwells amongst Bnei Yisrael. Apparently, the command comes at this time in the wake of the ordering of the camps of Israel around the Tent of Meeting, as described in chapter 2 (see my *shiur* on *Tazria-Metzora*). Hence, it is the ordering of the camps that brings to realization the promise of "I shall dwell in their midst" (from the beginning of *Parashat Teruma*) and of "I shall dwell among Bnei Yisrael" (from our *parasha*).

In between the ordering of the camps and the command to send out those who are ritually impure, in *Bamidbar* 3-4, we find two different subjects:

1. 3:1-4

These are the generations of Aharon and Moshe on the day that God spoke to Moshe at Mount Sinai, And these are the names of the sons of Aharon: the eldest – Nadav, and Avihu, Elazar, and Itamar.

These are the names of the sons of Aharon, the *kohanim* who were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister.

But Nadav and Avihu died before God when they offered a strange fire before God in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no sons. So Elazar and Itamar ministered in the sight of Aharon, their father.

2. 3:5 – 4:49

Appointment of the *leviim*, their sanctification, and their charge for service.

The connection between these two subjects seems quite clear: the *leviim* are given to the *kohanim* to serve them; for this reason, the matter of the *kohanim* ministering precedes the matter of the appointment of the *leviim*. However, as explained, the sending away of those who are ritually impure – which appears after both of these subjects – is the result of the ordering of the camps, which took place in chapter 2. Why, then, do chapters 3-4 come between chapter 2 and the command to send away those who are ritually impure?

It seems that the function of the beginning of chapter 3 (ministering of Aharon and his sons) is to signify God's acceptance of the ministering of the *kohanim*, after this acceptance had been postponed in the wake of the sin of Nadav and Avihu. Apparently, this acceptance had to be put off until after the ordering of the camps; then, once the camps were in place, the acceptance of the *kohanim* was necessary before the sending away of the impure was required.

It would seem that the sin of Nadav and Avihu was an attempt to promote themselves above Bnei Yisrael. As Moshe explains to Aharon, God declares, "I shall be sanctified among those who are close to Me" – meaning, only the *kohanim* who are close to Me will be the ones to sanctify; they will be the ones to perform the service in the Mishkan, "and I shall be honored in the face of the entire nation" - i.e., My response, the revelation of God's glory and the resting of the Divine Presence, will be revealed to the entire nation, not only the *kohanim*. Nadav and Avihu, who failed to internalize this message, wanted to bring God's glory first and foremost upon themselves. For this reason they brought the foreign incense (see my *shiur* on *Parashat Korach*). In order to emphasize and reinforce the message that the sons of Aharon had not understood, God postponed the acceptance of the *kohanim* and their sanctification until after the stage where the revelation of God's glory had become a phenomenon that cast its light over all of *Am Yisrael* – until after the ordering of the camps around the Tent of Meeting, signifying that God dwelled in the midst of *Am Yisrael*.

Similarly, in the commandments concerning sanctity in the *parashot* of *Kedoshim* and *Emor* (*Vayikra* 19-22), the commandments pertaining to the sanctity of Israel precede the commandments pertaining to the sanctity of the *kohanim*.

The continuation of *Sefer Bamidbar*, following some halakhic units (5:5 – 6:27), brings us to the description of the sacrifices brought by the princes for the inauguration of the altar. We shall not elaborate here on the relationship between this inauguration, at the initiative of the princes of Israel, and the sacrifices of the eighth day of consecration. In any event, the immediate response to this expansion of the Mishkan service is:

And when Moshe came to the Tent of Meeting to speak with Him,

He heard the Voice speaking to him from above the covering that was upon the Ark of Testimony, from between the two *keruvim*, And He spoke to him. (7:8-9)

Once again, it is the same message from our *parasha*: it is the Divine service that leads to the meeting and the dialogue.

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