

QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT KI TISA

Q-1. (a) For whom did the $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel atone? (b) Why did Hashem order giving $\frac{1}{2}$, not full, shekalim (6 reasons)? (c) Why does the Torah (1) say, “ve-natnu ish” (a man shall give), with “ve-natnu” plural, but “ish” singular? (2) use the word “teruma” (donation) 3 times? (Shemot 30:12-15)

A-1. (a) For all of Bnei Yisrael who witnessed the *cheit ha'eigel* but did not protest nor answer Moshe's call to destroy the sinners (Shemot Raba). (b) (1) This money atoned for the *cheit ha'eigel*, made at midday – Bnei Yisrael should have waited another $\frac{1}{2}$ day, signified by the $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel, for Moshe's return; (2) a shekel equaled 20 geirot – at the *cheit ha'eigel*, Bnei Yisrael violated all 10 Aseret haDibrot and gave 10 geirot ($\frac{1}{2}$ shekel) to atone for the 10 sins; (3) Yosef's 10 brothers sold him for 10 silver dinarim, equaling 5 shekels – each received a $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel – the $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel donations atoned for Yosef's brothers' sin (Shekalim 3b). (4) The $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel conveys that one can never fulfill all his desires; (5) a man without a woman is called *peleg gufa* ($\frac{1}{2}$ a body) – since only the men, not the women, sinned in the *cheit ha'eigel*, Hashem commanded each man to give $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel, since only “ $\frac{1}{2}$ of him” sinned; (6) since *kol Yisrael areivim zeh la-zeh* (all of Bnei Yisrael are responsible for one another), each of us individually is less than whole, symbolized by the $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel – we must join others to be in complete service to Hashem (Alshich). (c) (1) The word *ve-natnu* is a palindrome, spelled the same forward and backwards, telling us that what one gives to *tzedaka* will come back to him – he will lose nothing by giving (Ba'al haTurim). (2) Bnei Yisrael gave 3 donations – (i) $\frac{1}{2}$ shekels for the Mishkan's *adanim* (silver sockets); (ii) $\frac{1}{2}$ shekels for the census, used to buy the communal *korbanot*; (iii) silver and copper voluntarily given to maintain the Mishkan (Rashi).

Q-2. (a) Since the Torah mentions only 4 spices to make the *ketoret* (incense), how do we know it included 11 spices, as listed in Keritut 6a? (b) Why was *chelbena*, a foul-smelling spice, included? (c) What is the purpose of burning *ketoret*? (Shemot 30:34-38)

A-2. (a) Hashem told Moshe to take “*samim*”, plural, meaning 2 spices; *nataf*, *shecheilet* and *chelbena* – 3 more, for a total of 5 spices; “*samim*” again, meaning 5 more, for a total of 10 spices; and pure *levona*, totaling 11 spices; (b) it teaches Bnei Yisrael to include sinners as members of the congregation for fasts and prayers (Rashi). (c) It symbolized Bnei Yisrael's duty to make all their actions pleasing to Hashem (Hirsch).

Q-3. (a) How old was Betzalel when he designed the Mishkan? (b) What did Hashem convey by saying, “I have called him by the name Betzalel” (4 views)? (c) How do we know that one should not appoint a leader of a community before first consulting the community? (d) Why does the Torah, concerning observing Shabbat, spell “*le-dorotam*” (for their generations) without the 2 *vav*'s? (Shemot 31:2,16)

A-3. (a) 13 (Sanhedrin 69b). (b) (1) Hashem called Betzalel by name to build the Mishkan since no one else was able to do it (*ibn Ezra*). (2) On Har Sinai, Hashem showed Moshe *Sefer haAdam* (the Book of Adam), which lists the leaders of every future generation – Moshe saw that He had named Betzalel to build the Mishkan from the time of Creation (Shemot Raba). (3) Betzalel stands for “*be-tzeil Keil*” (in Hashem's shadow) – he knew exactly how Hashem wanted the Mishkan built; (4) Betzalel knew the art of combining the letters with which Hashem created heaven and earth – the building of the Mishkan was like creating the universe, and Betzalel understood its secret; (c) Hashem first asked Moshe, and Moshe asked Bnei Yisrael to consider appointing Betzalel to build the Mishkan, and they agreed (Berachot 55a). (d) Without the *vav*'s, it can be pronounced “*le-dor tam*” (for a wholesome generation) – members of a generation that carefully observe Shabbat are “*tam*”, worthy offspring of Ya'akov, who is called “*ish tam*” (a wholesome man – Bereishit 25:27) (Tana Devei Elyahu).

Q-4. (a) Why are commands to observe the Shabbat stated before (31:13) and after (34:18,21) the *cheit ha'eigel* incident? (b) (1) How was the *cheit ha'eigel* (i) Moshe's fault? (ii) Hashem's fault? (2) Why did Bnei Yisrael not wait until Moshe returned from Sinai (2 views)? (c) Why did the idolaters want a calf's image? (d) (1) After Aharon made the *eigel*, why did Hashem reward him by appointing him *Kohen Gadol*? (2) (i) Why and (ii) how was Aharon punished for this? (e) When Moshe prayed that Bnei Yisrael be spared, he said, “remember for the sake of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yisrael, Your servants” – why did Moshe say “*Yisrael*”, not “*Ya'akov*”? (Shemot 32:4-5,13,18-21,31)

A-4. (a) Keeping the Shabbat atones for all of Bnei Yisrael's sins, beginning with the *cheit ha'eigel*; (b) (1) (i) Hashem did not want Moshe to take the *eirev rav* from Mitzrayim – He agreed, when he insisted on taking them closer to Him – the *eirev rav* demanded a god to substitute for Moshe and worshipped the *eigel* (Abarbanel). (ii) Moshe told Hashem that He caused Bnei Yisrael's sin – by supplying them with so much gold, how could they not sin? (Rashi). (2) (i) They assumed he died after 40 days without food (*ibn Ezra*). (ii) On 6 Sivan, Moshe told them he would return “at the end of 40 days, during the first 6 hours” – he meant “full days”, and counted from 7 Sivan, but they counted from 6 Sivan – Satan made them believe Moshe had died (Rashi). (c) At *matan Torah*, Hashem appeared with the 4 faces of the Divine Chariot – a cow, man, lion and eagle – since the *eirev rav* would not worship a carnivore, an abomination to the *Mitzrim*, they wanted a herbivorous calf (Shemot Raba). (d) (1) Aharon believed that Bnei Yisrael had a deep-seated longing for idol worship – to expose the sinners, he agreed to their request for the calf – *Sheivet Levi*, under Moshe's direction, was able to exterminate them – Aharon was rewarded for this. (2) (i) Aharon erred since the sin was not intrinsic to Bnei Yisrael, only to the *eirev rav* – he could have separated Bnei Yisrael from any desire for idol worship through persuasion; (ii) Hashem punished him by decreeing two of his sons' death (*Tiferet Tzion*). (e) When He named Ya'akov “*Yisrael*”, He said, “a nation and a congregation of nations shall descend from you” (Bereshit 35:11) – “a nation” referring to Binyamin and “a congregation of nations” referring to Efrayim and Menashe – the promises of these “nations” could not be come from Moshe, who was from *Sheivet Levi* – he “reminded” Him to carry out His promise by keeping alive all of Yisrael's *shevatim* (Maharil Diskin).

Q-5. (a) Why did Hashem list only 6 of the 7 nations that He would drive out from *Cana'an*? (b) When saying that an angel would lead *Bnei Yisrael* to *Eretz Yisrael*, why did Hashem again call it "a land flowing with milk and honey"? (c) (1) Why did Moshe move the *ohel mo'ed* (his tent) outside the camp? (2) For what period was it outside the camp (2 views)? (*Shemot* 33:2-11)

Q-5. (a) The *Girgashi* are not listed since they abandoned *Cana'an* on their own when *Bnei Yisrael* approached (*Rashi*). (b) The *Shema* says that idolatry's punishment is unproductive land (*Devarim* 11:17) – *Bnei Yisrael* thought after the *cheit ha'egel*, Hashem would make *Eretz Yisrael* unproductive – He told them that the land would be good, flowing with milk and honey (*Oznayim le-Torah*). (c) (1) Because of the *eigel's tumah*, Hashem did not want to speak to Moshe in *Bnei Yisrael's* camp until the *Mishkan* was built (*Rashbam*). (2) Moshe moved his tent on (i) 18 *Tamuz*, the day after breaking the *luchot*, until *Rosh Chodesh Nisan*, when the *Mishkan* was dedicated as the new *ohel mo'ed* (*Ramban*). (ii) 11 *Tishrei*, the day after returning from *Sinai* with the 2nd *luchot*, until *Rosh Chodesh Nisan* (*Rashi*).

Q-6. (a) (1) How did Moshe become wealthy? (2) Why did Hashem make him rich? (3) Why must a prophet be wealthy (2 views)? (b) Why did Hashem ban everyone from going with Moshe up *Har Sinai* to get the 2nd *luchot*? (c) In Hashem's 13 Attributes of Mercy, (1) why is "Hashem" stated twice? (2) what does the attribute "ve'emet" (and truth) convey about His way of punishing sinners? (3) to what attribute of reward and punishment does "ve-chata'ah" refer? (d) Why is the letter *reish* in "*eil achier*" ([not to bow to] another god) enlarged? (e) Why does the *Torah* say 3 times that Moshe's face became radiant after returning from *Sinai*? (*Shemot* 34:1,6-7,14,29-35)

A-6. (a) (1) When telling Moshe to carve the *luchot* from sapphire, Hashem said, "*pesol lecha*" (carve for yourself) – the carved chips became "yours" – Moshe's – making him rich (*Rashi*). (2) Hashem imparts prophesy only to someone mighty, wealthy, wise and humble (*Nedarim* 38a). (3) (i) It maintain his authority over the people, who respect wealth (*Ran*). (ii) Only one financially secure can admonish the people fearlessly (*Shita Mekubetzet*). (b) The 1st *luchot*, given with fanfare, were affected by the evil eye and did not survive – the 2nd *luchot*, given modestly to Moshe, lasted (*Rashi*). (c) (1) To tell us that Hashem has the same compassion (i) before one sins, as He has (ii) after he sins and repents; (2) Hashem joins *chesed* (mercy) to *emet*, to delay punishment, even if, based on *emet*, one deserves instant punishment; (3) if one's merits equal his sins, Hashem reduces the sins' weight so the scales tip in his favor (*Rosh Hashana* 17b). (d) It prevents us from wrongly reading the *reish* as a *daled*, i.e., "*Keil echad*" (one G-d) – the *daled* also is large in the *Shema's* 1st verse, so as not to read "[Hashem,] another god" (*Ba'al haTurim*). (e) Its shine reflected Moshe's 3 accomplishments – (1) leading *Bnei Yisrael* from *Mitzrayim*; (2) receiving the *Torah* at *Sinai*; (3) saving them from destruction for the *cheit ha'eigel* (*Medrash Tanchuma*).

Q-7. In the *haftara*, what reward does the *navi* say *Bnei Yisrael* will receive when they repent their sins? (*Yechezkeil* 36:25)

A-7. Just as a husband separates from his wife when she is *tamei*, Hashem exiled *Bnei Yisrael* from their land for their sins – once they do *teshuva* and are purified from their sins, He will restore them to their homeland (*Radak*).