

QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT KI TISA

Q-1. (a) (1) Why did Moshe conduct a census of *Bnei Yisrael* now? (2) Why is conducting a census briefly mentioned here, whereas, *Bamidbar* 1:1 – 4:49 is an extensive, detailed count? **(b)** For whom did the $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel atone? **(c)** Why did Hashem order giving $\frac{1}{2}$, not full, shekalim (6 reasons)? **(d)** (1) Why does 30:12 say, “*ve-natnu ish*” (a man shall give), with “*ve-natnu*” plural, but “*ish*” singular? (2) Why does 30:13-15 use the word “*teruma*” (donation) 3 times? (*Shemot* 30:12-15)

A-1. (a) (1) Moshe had to collect the $\frac{1}{2}$ shekalim from *Bnei Yisrael* to atone for their sins and to pay for the *avoda* of the *Ohel Mo'ed* (the *Mishkan*) – since he was about to build the *Mishkan*, he inferred that he should count and collect the shekalim from them now; (2) for the *Bamidbar* census, Moshe and Aharon systematically visited every tent to verify that the count was accurate – here, to quickly collect the funds needed for the *korbanot*, Moshe merely instructed every man between 20 and 60 to come forward and give a $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel (*Ramban*). **(b)** For all of *Bnei Yisrael* who witnessed the *cheit ha'eigel* but neither protested nor answered Moshe's call to destroy the sinners (*Shemot Raba*). **(c)** (1) This money atoned for the *cheit ha'eigel*, which was 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*, equal to 5 shekalim – each brother 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*, each man had 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*). **(d)** (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) $\frac{1}{2}$ shekalim, for making the *Mishkan's adanim* (silver sockets); (ii) $\frac{1}{2}$ shekalim for the census, used to buy the communal *korbanot*; (iii) silver and copper voluntarily given to maintain the *Mishkan* (*Rashi*).

Q-2. (a) (1) Why did a *kohen* have to wash his (i) hands and (ii) feet before doing the *avoda*? (2) Did he have to wash using water in the *kiyor* (laver)? (3) After a *kohen* washed in the morning, under what 4 circumstances during the day would he have to wash again? (4) If he stayed up all night, did he have to wash in the morning? **(b)** (1) The *shemen ha-mishcha* (anointing oil) could not be poured “*al zar*” (on an alien) – who was a “*zar*” (2 views)? (2) On whom could the *shemen ha-mishcha* be smeared? (3) Who, beside Moshe, made *shemen ha-mishcha*? **(c)** (1) What was the purpose of burning *ketoret* (incense)? (2) Since 30:34 mentions only 4 spices to make the *ketoret*, how do we know that the *ketoret* included 11 spices, as listed in *Keritut* 6a? (3) Why was *chelbena*, a foul-smelling spice, included? (*Shemot* 30:18-38)

A-2. (a) (1) It was a matter of respect for Hashem – (i) anyone approaching a king's table and touching his food or drink would have to first wash his hands; and (ii) since the *kohanim* did the *avoda* barefoot, their feet could become foul and unpleasant; (2) no, there was no preference to using the *kiyor* – they could wash in any holy vessel, like the *Kohen Gadol* who used a gold pitcher on *Yom Kippur* (*Yoma* 43b), but they could not wash under running water – a vessel had to be used (*Ramban*). (3) If he (i) left the *Mishkan* or *Beit haMikdash*; (ii) fell asleep; (iii) passed water; or (iv) diverted his mind from the *avoda*; (4) yes – with the passing of the night, his hands became unfit for *avoda* (*Rambam* – *Hilchot Bi'at haMikdash* 5:3,8) **(b)** (1) Anyone who was not a (i) *kohen* or a king (*Rashi*). (ii) *kohen* – it could not be poured on a king (*ibn Ezra*). (2) It could never be smeared on anyone, including a *kohen* or king (*Ramban*). (3) No one – Moshe made all of the *shemen ha-mishcha* that was used in the *Mishkan* or both *Batei haMikdash* (*Rambam* – *Hilchot Klei haMikdash ve-ha'Ovdim* Bo 1:5). **(c)** (1) It symbolized *Bnei Yisrael's* duty to make all their actions pleasing to Hashem (*Hirsch*). (2) 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; (3) it teaches *Bnei Yisrael* to include sinners as members of the congregation for fasts and prayers (*Rashi*).

Q-3. (a) What did Hashem convey by saying, (1) “See”, I have called [*Betzalel*]? (2) “I have called him by name, *Betzalel*” (4 views)? **(b)** How old was *Betzalel* when he designed the *Mishkan*? **(c)** How do we know that one should not appoint a leader of a community before first consulting with the community? **(d)** What were the “*bigdei serad*” (2 views)? **(e)** Why does (1) 31:13 add the word “*ach*” (however) “observe My *Shabbatot*” (2 views)? (2) 31:16 spell “*le-dorotam*” (for their generations) without the 2 *vav's*? (*Shemot* 31:2,5,11-18)

A-3. (a) (1) Hashem wanted *Bnei Yisrael* to see how amazing *Betzalel* was – despite being unable to learn, to do or even to see fine craftsmanship in *Mitzrayim*, he miraculously was a highly-skilled artisan in every single craft (*Ramban*). (2) (i) Hashem called *Betzalel* by name to build the *Mishkan* since no one else was able to do it (*ibn Ezra*). (ii) On *Har Sinai*, Hashem showed Moshe the *Sefer haAdam* (Book of Adam), which lists the leaders of every future generation – Moshe saw that from the time of Creation, Hashem had named *Betzalel* to build the *Mishkan* (*Shemot Raba*). (iii) *Betzalel* stands for “*be-tzeil Keil*” (in Hashem's shadow) – he knew exactly how Hashem wanted the *Mishkan* built; (iv) *Betzalel* knew the art of combining the letters with which Hashem Created heaven and earth – building the *Mishkan* was like creating the universe, and *Betzalel* understood its secret; **(b)** 13 years old (*Sanhedrin* 69b). **(c)** Hashem first asked Moshe, and Moshe asked *Bnei Yisrael* to consider appointing *Betzalel* to build the *Mishkan*, and they agreed (*Berachot* 55a). **(d)** (1) Distinctive cloths used to cover the *Mishkan's* utensils while they were transported (*Rashi*). (2) Another name for the *bigdei kehuna* (*Ramban*). **(e)** (1) “*Ach*” restricts (i) doing *Mishkan* construction *melacha* (work) on *Shabbat* (*Rashi*). (ii) *Shabbat* observance to doing a *brit mila* or offering *korbanot* (*Ramban*). (2) 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 Divei Eliyahu*).

Q-4. (a) Why are commands to observe the *Shabbat* stated both 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)** (1) What was the “*elohim*” that the people wanted Aharon to make (3 views)? (2) Why did they ask for *elohim*, in the plural? **(d)** (1) Before Moshe ascended *Har Sinai*, he had instructed *Bnei Yisrael*, in 24:14, that if they had any problems while he was gone, they should approach Aharon and Chur – why did those who wanted a substitute for Moshe approach only Aharon and not Chur? (2) What was it that Aharon “saw” that caused him to build a *mizbei'ach* and proclaim a festival? (3) Why did Aharon make the *eigel*? (4) How did Hashem reward Chur? **(e)** Why did the idolaters want a calf's image? **(f)** (1) After Aharon made the *eigel*, why did Hashem reward him by appointing him as the *Kohen Gadol*? (2) (i) Why and (ii) how was Aharon punished for this? **(g)** 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* 32:1-5,13,18-21,31)

A-4. (a) Keeping the *Shabbat* will atone for all of *Bnei Yisrael's* sins, starting with the *cheit ha'eigel*; **(b)** (1) (i) Hashem did not want Moshe to take the *eirev rav* from *Mitzrayim*, but He finally agreed when Moshe insisted on taking them to bring them closer to Him – it was the *eirev rav* who

demanding a god to substitute for *Moshe* and who 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 that he died after 40 days without food (*ibn Ezra*). (ii) On 6 *Sivan*, the day of *matan Torah*, *Moshe* told them he would return “at the end of 40 days, during the first 6 hours” – he meant 40 “full days”, and counted from 7 *Sivan*, since 6 *Sivan* was no longer a full day, but they counted from 6 *Sivan* – *Satan* made them believe *Moshe* had died (*Rashi*). (c) (1) They asked for leadership in the form of (i) many gods with Divine powers (*Rashi*). (ii) a “spiritual glory”, like the angels associated with Pillars of Clouds and Fire that led them out of *Mitzrayim* (*ibn Ezra*). (iii) a replacement for *Moshe* whom *Hashem* would inspire – they did not seek a Divine power; (2) since they did not know what form of a leader for which to ask, they asked for many, so one would emerge as best for them (*Ramban*). (d) (1) When *Chur* saw that the *eirev rav* wanted to sin, he rebuked them, and they rose and killed him – then, they approached *Aharon* (*Shemot Raba*). (2) When *Aharon* saw that the people were disposed toward evil, he built a *mizbe'ach* and directed them to offer *korbanot* for *Hashem* (*Ramban*). (3) After seeing them murder *Chur*, *Aharon* did not want them to sin again by murdering him, too; (4) *Chur's* grandson, *Betzalel*, merited to be the architect and builder of the *Mishkan*; (e) 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*). (f) (1) *Aharon* believed that some of *Bnei Yisrael* had a deep-seated longing for idolatry – to expose the sinners, he agreed to their request for the calf – *Sheivet Levi*, under *Moshe's* direction, then was able to destroy 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 by persuasion; (ii) *Hashem* punished him by decreeing two of his sons' death (*Tiferet Zion*). (g) When *Hashem* gave *Ya'akov* the name, “*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* – *Moshe* “reminded” *Hashem* 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)? (d) (1) What did *Moshe* seek to comprehend when he said to *Hashem*, “Show me Your Glory” and (2) what did *Hashem* reply? (*Shemot* 33:2-11,18)

A-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 that after the *cheit ha'egel*, *Hashem* would make *Eretz Yisrael* unproductive – *Hashem* assured them that the land would be good, flowing with milk and honey (*Oznayim leTorah*). (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*). (d) (1) *Moshe* asked for so clear an understanding of *Hashem's* Existence that the knowledge might be like what one has for a human, whose face one has seen and whose image is imprinted on his mind, and whom his mind distinguishes from other beings, so he would know – by way of miracle – the truth of His Existence; (2) *Hashem* responded that it is beyond the mental capacity of a being of a body and soul to obtain clear knowledge of the Truth, but He imparted to *Moshe* what no man has before or since known (*Ramban – Hilchot Yesodei haTorah* 1:10).

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) (1) What is the goal of *Hashem's* *Yud-Gimel Midot Shel Rachamim* (13 Attributes of Mercy)? (2) In the *Yud-Gimel Midot*, (i) why is “*Hashem*” stated? and (ii) repeated? (iii) for what does “*Keil*” stand? (iv) what is difference between “*Rachum*” and (v) “*Chanun*”? (vi) to what does “*Erech Apayim*” refer? (vii) what do the attributes of “*Rav Chesed*” and (viii) “*ve'Emet*” (and Truth) convey about His way of punishing sinners? (ix) to what does “*notzeir Chesed la'Alafim*” refer? (x) What is the difference between “*avone*” and (xi) “*fesha*”? (xii) to what attribute of reward and punishment does “*ve-chata'ah*” refer? (xiii) To what does the contradiction, “*ve'Nakei*” ([*Hashem*] holds guiltless) and “*Lo Yinakei*” ([He] does not hold guiltless) refer? (d) Why is the *reish* in “*eil acheir*” ([not to bow to] another god) enlarged? (e) Why does 34:15 ban eating what a heathen slaughters – eating *neveila* already is banned? (f) Why do 34:29, 34:30 and 34:35 say 3 times that *Moshe's* face became radiant after returning from *Sinai*? (*Shemot* 34:1,6-7,14-15,29-35)

A-6. (a) (1) When telling *Moshe* to carve the *luchot* from sapphire, *Hashem* said, “*pesol lecha*” (carve for yourself) – the chips that were carved off of the *luchot* 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, but the 2nd *luchot*, given quietly to *Moshe* alone, would last (*Rashi*). (c) (1) It is the way *Bnei Yisrael* should *daven* to achieve forgiveness for their sins; (2) (i) to tell us that (i) *Hashem* has the same compassion before one sins, (ii) as He has after he sins and does *teshuva*; (iii) it is the name of one of *Hashem's* Attributes of Mercy; (iv) “*Rachum*” refers to His compassion, and (v) “*Chanun*” refers to His graciousness; (vi) *Hashem* is “longsuffering” – He hopes and waits for even a *rasha* to do *teshuva*; (vii) even if one's sins outweigh his merits, *Hashem* nevertheless spares him due to His Attribute of Mercy; (viii) *Hashem* joins *Chesed* (Mercy) to *Emet*, to delay punishment, even if, based on *emet*, one deserves instant punishment; (ix) if one does *mitzvot* out of love of *Hashem*, the *mitzvot's* merits will protect his offspring for more than 2,000 generations; (x) a willful sin; (xi) a far-worse sin out of rebelliousness – *Hashem* shows *chesed* for both of these kinds of sin; (xii) if one's merits equal his sins, *Hashem* reduces the sins' weight so the scales tip favorably for him; (xiii) *Hashem* does not punish those who do *teshuva*, only those who refuse to do *teshuva* (*Rosh Hashana* 17b). (d) It prevents us from wrongly reading the letter *reish* as a similar-looking letter *daled*, i.e., “*Keil echad*” (one G-d) – the *daled* also is large in the *Shema's* 1st verse, “*Hashem Echad*” (one G-d), so as not to read “[*Hashem,*] *acheir* (another god)” (*Ba'al haTurim*). (e) Even if a non-Jew does a proper *shechita* under a Jew's supervision, with a perfect knife, the *shechita* may appear perfect, but it is *neveila* (*Ramban – Hilchot Shechita* 4:11-12). (f) His face's shine reflected *Moshe's* 3 accomplishments – (1) leading *Bnei Yisrael* from *Mitzrayim*; (2) receiving the *Torah* at *Sinai*; (3) saving them from destruction as a result of the *cheit ha'eigel* (*Medrash Tanchuma*).

Q-7. In the *haftara*, why did *Ba'al's* prophets agree to have their deity send fire to burn their *korbanot* (4 views)? (1 *Melachim* 18:23)

A-7. (a) *Ba'al* followers worshipped the sun, which has a “husband-wife” (*ba'al ve'ishto*) relationship with the moon – since the sun radiates heat, *Ba'al's* prophets believed it ruled over fire and hoped *Ba'al* would ignite their altar's wood; (b) *Bnei Yisrael* favored the contest – they would have stoned *Ba'al's* prophets for refusing to participate; (c) since *Eliyahu* violated *Torah* law by offering *korbanot* outside of the *Beit haMikdash*, they assumed he would be no more successful than they; (d) they assumed that their and *Eliyahu's* *korbanot* would be offered simultaneously, and *Hashem's* fire would consume both – when *Eliyahu* instructed them offer their *korbanot* first, they were unable to withdraw (*Abarbanel*).