Parshas Terumah — 4 Adar 5759, 19 & 20 February 1999

Parsha Questions

1. How many types of items were the Jews to donate?
2. The donation of silver for the mishkan differed from the donation of the other items. How?
3. What property do techeles and argamon share that oros eilim m’adamim do not share?
4. What property do the above three share that shesh and oros techashim do not share?
5. Onkelos translates “tachash” as “sasgona.” Why?
6. What kind of trees did Yaakov plant in Mitzrayim?
7. Describe two uses of: a) oil; b) spices; c) jewels.
8. The aron was made with three boxes, one inside the other. Exactly how tall was the outer box?
9. Why is the Torah referred to as “testimony”?
10. What did the faces of the keruvim resemble?
11. On what day of the week was the lechem hapanim baked?
12. What does miksha mean?
13. What was the purpose of the menorah’s gevi’im (cups)?
14. How did Moshe know the shape of the menorah?
15. What designs were embroidered into the tapestries of the mishkan?
16. What is meant by “standing wood”?
17. How long was the mishkan?
18. How wide was the interior of the mishkan?
19. Why was the altar coated with nechoshes?
20. Which function did the copper yeseidos serve?

Sherlox Holmes and the Mysterious Crown

“I’m perplexed.” said Watstein. “Regarding the aron (holy ark) the verse says: ‘And make for it a gold rim all around.’ (Exodus 25:11) Rashi says that this golden rim surrounding the aron represents the ‘Crown of Torah.’ Why does Rashi make this comment?”

“The aron,” said world famous detective Sherlox Holmes, “housed the Two Tablets of the Torah. How beautiful that it be crowned with gold, as if to say: Whoever is dedicated to Torah merits a golden crown!”

“It brings tears to my eyes,” said Watstein. “Yet, it does not answer my question.”

“What is your question?” asked Sherlox.

“All aspects of the Temple and its vessels are infused with ethereal symbolism; however, Rashi does not make it his business to explain them all. Why specifically here does Rashi do so?”

“Indeed, it is a mystery, Dr. Watstein, yet I think I have an answer...”

Answer

“Was the rim part of the aron?” asked Sherlox.

“Apparently,” said Watstein.

“Then why wasn’t it made of wood?”

“What do you mean?” asked Watstein.

“The aron was wood covered with gold. The rim was just gold. Why?”

“Hmm, I think I see your point,” said Watstein. “If the rim was an integral part of the aron, it should have been made of wood like the rest of the aron and then covered with gold. The fact that it was not made of wood indicates that it was separate from the aron, that it served some other function. Thus, Rashi explains its purpose: To symbolize the ‘Crown of Torah.’”

“Majestic insight, Dr. Watstein.”

(Sherlox” is by Reuven Subar, inspired by Dr. Avigdor Bonchek’s “What’s Bothering Rashi”)
I Did Not Know That!

“They shall make me a mishkan and I will dwell (v’shachanti) amongst them.” (Exodus 25:8)

The word v’shachanti (I will dwell) hints at the number of years that both the First and Second Temples stood, as follows: Read as two words, v’shadantti means “He dwelt 410.” This hints that Hashem’s Presence dwelt in the First Temple for 410 years, until its destruction. Rearranged, v’shachanti spells v’sheni kaf tav, which means “and the Second, 420.” This hints that the Second Temple stood for 420 years.

Ba’al Haturim

Recommended Reading List

Ramban

25:1 The Mishkan, a “Portable Sinai”
25:10 Universal Torah Involvement
26:33 Making and Placing

Ibn Ezra

25:3 The Need for Silver

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh

25:8 The Shechina Within Jewry

Sefer Hachinuch

95 Our Need for a Mishkan
96 Utility and Form
97 Blessings and Benefit

Answers to this Week’s Questions

All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary, unless otherwise stated

2. 25:3 - No fixed amount of the other items was required. The silver was given as a fixed amount: A half shekel.
3. 25:4,5 - They are wool, oros elim are not.
4. 25:4,5 - They are dyed; shesh and oros techashim are not.
5. 25:5 - The tachash delights (sas) in its multi-colors (gvanim).
6. 25:5 - Arazim — cedars.
7. 25:6-7 - a) The oil was lit in the menorah and used for anointing. b) The spices were used in the anointing oil and for the incense. c) The precious stones were for the ephod and the choshen.
8. 25:11 - The outer box was one and a half amos plus a tefach plus a little bit, because it rose a little bit above the kapores. [The kapores was a tefach thick (see 25:17)].
9. 25:16 - It testifies that Hashem commanded us to keep the mitzvos.
10. 25:18 - The faces of children.
11. 25:29 - Friday.
12. 25:31 - Hammered.
13. 25:31 - Purely ornamental.
14. 25:40 - Hashem showed Moshe a menorah of fire.
15. 26:1 - On one side a lion; on the other side an eagle.
16. 26:15 - The wooden beams were to be upright and not stacked one upon the other.
17. 26:16 - 30 amos.
18. 26:23 - 10 amos.
19. 27:2 - To atone for brazenness.
20. 27:19 - They secured the curtains against the wind.