



Likkutei Sichos

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Get Chaotic

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1.

NO EARLIER AND LATER IN THE TORAH

“Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Sinai desert, in the first month of the second year after their exodus from Egypt saying.”¹ It was then that Hashem gave the command about the pesach-offering (and afterwards, related the Torah passage regarding Pesach Sheni).² Rashi focuses on the words “in the first month,” and comments:

The passage at the beginning of this Book was not said until Iyar {the second month}. You have learned {from this} that there is no order of earlier and later in the Torah.

(The continuation of Rashi’s comment is examined below, in Section 3.)

We need to clarify:

We have already encountered the principle that “there is no earlier and later in the Torah.” From **several earlier** verses, we have already adduced this principle. For example, **Rashi** states this in his commentary already in the first *sedrah* (at the end of *Bereishis*), on the verse,³ “My spirit will not continue to deliberate over humanity... they will have 120 years.” Similarly, Rashi states this principle a number of times afterwards.⁴

Moreover, this particular change in the order of the “passage at the beginning of this Book” was evident **beforehand**, in the previous *sedrah* {Naso}, we **just** learnt. Regarding the sacrifices offered by the tribal princes, Scripture explicitly states there when these sacrifices took place:⁵ “It was on the day that Moshe finished erecting the *Mishkan*,” which happened on Rosh Chodesh Nissan.⁶ So we “have learned” from **there** that “there is no order of

¹ *Bamidbar* 9:1.

² *Ibid.*, v. 6, et passim.

³ *Bereishis* 6:3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 35:9; *Shemos* 4:20, 19:11, 31:18; *Vayikra* 8:2. In other places, Rashi doesn’t use the same expression as he uses here, but the intent is the same. Elaboration is beyond our scope here.

⁵ *Bamidbar* 7:1.

⁶ Rashi, ad loc.

earlier and later” concerning this particular event because “the passage at the beginning of this Book was not said until Iyar”!

Moreover, why doesn't Rashi make any comment over there?

[In fact, we find an earlier illustration of this principle, in the same *sedrah*. On the verse,⁷ “...they shall expel from the camp {everyone with *tzaraas*},” Rashi comments, “This passage was said {to Moshe} on the day the *Mishkan* was erected,” which happened on Rosh Chodesh Nissan, as discussed.]

So how can Rashi state here, “**you have learned**” — that the principle “there is no order of earlier and later in the Torah” is first derived from here?

2.

NO EARLIER AND LATER IN THE TORAH

The explanation: The novelty here is that “there is no **order**⁸ of earlier and later in the Torah.” In the previous instances, Rashi doesn't use this expression.

In the previous instances when a certain passage, event,⁹ or Divine communication is not recorded in its place,¹⁰ and Rashi comments, “there is no earlier and later in the Torah,” the change of order there is not terribly problematic. After all, the Torah was not intended to serve as a history book, chronicling the **order** of events and the timing of every commandment's communication.¹¹ Whenever Rashi says that there is no earlier or later in the Torah, his aim is just to prevent a student from making an **error** about when an event transpired or when a commandment was issued, if its timing is germane to understanding the straightforward meaning of Scripture either there or elsewhere.

⁷ *Bamidbar* 5:2.

⁸ This is the term used in the extant editions of Rashi, including the first and second edition, and a number of (extant) manuscripts. In a number of other (extant) manuscripts, this term {*order*} is absent.

⁹ As in the two aforementioned instances in *Bereishis*, and the instances in *Shemos*, including 18:13.

¹⁰ As in Rashi's commentary on *Vayikra* and *Shemos* (19:11), referred to earlier.

¹¹ According to the straight-forward meaning of Scripture, **in general**, timing in Torah when mitzvos were given is irrelevant (and what difference does it make?).

[On this basis, we can understand why Rashi doesn't comment **earlier**, on the verse, "It was on the day that Moshe finished erecting the *Mishkan*," or on the verse, "they shall expel from the camp," that "there is no earlier and later in the Torah." Rashi makes no comment earlier because in those other places, Rashi tells us when the passage was actually said. In contrast, over here, Scripture tells us explicitly when the passage was related: "on the day that Moshe finished." And on the passage about expelling *metzora'im*¹² from the camp, Rashi comments, "This passage was said {to Moshe} on the day the *Mishkan* was erected," as discussed earlier.]

However, in our case, we see that the Torah wants to **emphasize** the **order** and the **timing** of the commandments (and the events) as they occurred, both in our *parshah* and also at the beginning of the Book of *Bamidbar*. In our *parshah*, it says: "Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Sinai desert, **in the first month of the second year after their exodus from Egypt** saying." At the beginning of the Book of *Bamidbar*, it says, "Hashem spoke to Moshe in the desert of Sinai in the *Ohel Moed* **on the first of the second month in the second year after their exodus from Egypt.**" Nonetheless, the Torah records these passages, one after the other, in **reverse** order!

That's why Rashi comments, "You have learned." From **here** we learn the novelty that "there is no **order** of earlier and later in the Torah." Even when the Torah **emphasizes** the **timing** of events and commands, which seems to be the point of the Torah telling us **their order**, it's possible that even then, "there is no **order** of before and after in the Torah."

¹² {A person afflicted with *tzaraas*, a spiritual malady producing various physical abnormalities on the skin.}

3.

RASHI'S QUESTION: WHERE TO START?

In his commentary here, Rashi continues:

Why did {the Book of *Bamidbar*} not begin with this passage? Because this passage brings disgrace on Israel. It tells us that the entire forty years the Jewish people were in the desert, they had offered no pesach-sacrifice except for this one.

At first glance, this is confusing: Once we postulate that there's no chronological order in the Torah, what is the question, "Why did the book not begin..."? After all, Rashi just told us it was because in the Torah, there is no chronological order.

[As we see in the Gemara,¹³ the source of Rashi's commentary, that after concluding that in the Torah, there is no chronological order, the Gemara does not explain why the Torah does not begin with this *parshah*. Likewise, this is the case in *Sifri*.]¹⁴

On the face of it, one could answer that Rashi uses the wording, "you have learned" advisedly, rather than the {ostensibly more common} wording, "to teach you." In other words, according to *Sifri*, the Torah changed the order that it chronicled the events **for the purpose** of teaching us that "there is no order of earlier or later in the Torah." According to Rashi, however, the wording "you have learned," means that **we** adduce¹⁵ the principle that "there is no order of earlier or later in the Torah. (Meaning, it's *not for this purpose* that the Torah changes the order.)

Therefore, the question arises, "**Why** did the Book not begin with this passage?" Because as well-known,¹⁶ in the places where the Torah deviates from the chronological order, the Torah has a purpose and a reason for the change in precedence¹⁷ in which the passages are recorded.

¹³ *Pesachim* 6b.

¹⁴ In our *parshah*, on the verse.

¹⁵ See *Melech HaKodesh* (a commentary on Rashi), where this is discussed at length.

¹⁶ This is like the opinion of *Ramban*; see *Ramban* on *Bamidbar* 16:1, *Vayikra* 8:1, et al.

¹⁷ See *Shelah* 402b.

The matter, however, is still not smooth: According to the above explanation, the question is not why **didn't** the book begin with **this** passage. Rather, the question is why the Torah (a) **changed** the order, and (b) prioritizes **this** particular *parshah*. Rashi should have asked (not “why did the Book not begin with this passage,” but), “Why did it change the order, and why did it begin with the passage that is at the start of the Book,” or the like.

Likewise, explanation is needed concerning the diction used in Rashi's question, “Why did the Book not **begin...**” — and not, “Why did the book not prioritize,”¹⁸ or the like.

4.

WHAT WAS THE “DISGRACE”?

Also, we need to understand the answer (given by Rashi and others), “Because this passage brings **disgrace on** Israel. It tells us that the entire forty years that the Jewish people were in the desert, they had offered no pesach-offering except for this one”:

What was disgraceful about not offering a pesach-sacrifice sooner? Rashi **previously**¹⁹ explained that the observance of this mitzvah (the pesach-offering) was contingent on the entry of the Jewish people into the Land. In the desert, they were not obligated more than once, when they offered the pesach-sacrifice during the second year according to Divine decree. In other words, **only** in the land of Israel were the Jewish people **explicitly** commanded to bring this sacrifice.

[Consequently, the offering of a pesach-sacrifice in the desert (except for the first time) was prohibited. (For bringing a sacrifice on the Altar “for which they were not commanded,”²⁰ was forbidden.)]

¹⁸ The same as the diction Rashi uses in *Bereishis* 11:32.

¹⁹ *Shemos* 12:25; see Rashi's commentary on *Shemos* 13:5.

²⁰ Similar to (the Scriptural wording in) *Vayikra* 10:1.

And on the contrary — just **this** sacrifice in the desert was permitted only by Divine decree.

Tosafos,²¹ and commentators on Rashi,²² explain that the Jewish people were “disgraced by being detained for 40 years from entering the land on account of the sinful incident of the Spies.”

But it would be difficult to learn this way in the straightforward meaning of Scripture (in Rashi’s commentary) because:

- a) In our *parshah*, when discussing Pesach, no mention is made that the Jewish people did not enter the land of Israel on account of the sin of the Spies. On the contrary, further on in **our parshah**, it says²³ that Moshe declared, “We are traveling to the place.” **Rashi comments**, “Moshe said, ‘Very soon, within three days, we will be entering the Land.’ For on this first journey, they traveled with the intent of entering the land of Israel.” Nothing at all is insinuated about the disgrace of the Jewish people.
- b) The main issue is that according to the answer {given by *Tosafos*, and commentators on Rashi}: (1) The disgrace was actually because the Jewish people were detained for forty years, and *not* because the pesach-sacrifice was **offered** only once during this period. (2) If this prolonged detainment is deemed to be a “disgrace,” then this censure is applicable not only to the pesach-sacrifice. Rather, it can apply to all the mitzvos dependent on the Land and the Jewish people entering the Land. Isn’t it incongruous to attribute the “disgrace” specifically to the neglect of the pesach-sacrifice? And on the contrary, forfeiting the opportunity to fulfill **all** these other mitzvos in this category was a greater “disgrace.” After all, all these other mitzvos were not kept even once {during the forty-year sojourn of the Jewish people in the desert}.

²¹ *Tosafos* on *Kiddushin* 37b, s.v. “ho’il.”

²² *Re’em*, ad loc., and in *parshas Bo*; and see *Sifsei Chachamim*, ad loc; et al.

²³ *Bamidbar* 10:29.

THE OPENING TO OUR *PARSHAH* SEEMS APPROPRIATE FOR THE BOOK OF *BAMIDBAR*

In order to make sense of all this, we need to preface with a re-examination of what Rashi says: “Why did {the Book of *Bamidbar*} not begin with this passage? Because this passage brings disgrace on Israel.” This interpretation is thorny. If the Torah does not wish to record incidents portraying the Jewish people in a negative light, then why, in fact, does the Torah chronicle this disgraceful detail?

From this, it is understood that the main sensitivity concerning relating something unflattering is doing so at the very **start** of the Book. The **beginning** of a Book, and so forth, should focus on a subject that depicts “the dearness of Israel.”

We actually see that the beginning of each of the Torah’s three Books, which speak about the Jewish people, “*Shemos*,” “*Vayikra*,” and “*Bamidbar*,”²⁴ all place the spotlight on “the dearness of Israel.” In his commentary at the beginning of each Book, **Rashi** makes this focus clear: “*These are the names, {of the Children of Israel} – to inform us of **their dearness***”; “*He called to Moshe – ‘calling’ preceded every statement and every saying and every command. It is an idiom connoting **dearness***”; “*He spoke... in the desert of Sinai – because of **their dearness** before Him, He counts them at all times.*”

[Likewise, at the beginning of the Book of *Bereishis*, which deals with the creation of the **entire** world, Rashi immediately asks, “Why did the Torah **begin** with *Bereishis*?” Rashi answers that Hashem’s intent by beginning with the narrative of Creation was the following: “The power of His acts He told to **His people** in order to give **them** the estate of the nations.”]

²⁴ And also in the book of *Devarim*, “These are the words which Moshe spoke,” which as Rashi explains there, “these are words of reproof” — Rashi explains that “Moshe suppressed all mention of the matters {in which they sinned} and referred to them only by a mere **allusion** to uphold the **honor** of Israel.” Although, later on in that *parshah* {*Devarim*} and also in *parshas Eikev*, he rebuked them openly and explicitly.

Since this principle (about how to begin a Book of Torah) is already known from the **previous** Books, we must say that Rashi's question why the Book of *Bamidbar* does not begin with *this* passage {dealing with the pesach-offering and Pesach Sheni} is predicated on the premise that **this** passage expresses the virtue and dearness of Israel. Therefore, it is most appropriate, seemingly, that this passage {in our *parshah*} should serve as the opening of the Book of *Bamidbar*.

6.

THE OPENING TO OUR *PARSHAH* SEEMS APPROPRIATE FOR THE BOOK OF *BAMIDBAR*

The explanation of the matter: For virtually its entirety, Chumash *Vayikra* consists of Divine commandments given to Moshe after the *Mishkan* was erected. And Chumash *Bamidbar* speaks about (the commands and) the chronology of events in the **conduct** of the Jewish people in the desert.²⁵

Consequently, it would have been appropriate for the opening of the Book of *Bamidbar* to have described the virtue of the Jews in how they fulfilled, **in actuality**, Hashem's command:²⁶ "They made the pesach-sacrifice... according to everything that Hashem had commanded Moshe, so the Children of Israel did,"²⁷ completely and fully. The Jews all offered their sacrifice to Hashem at its designated time, in the *Mishkan*, as they were supposed to.²⁸ (In fact, {they were devoted} to the extent that they {those who could not offer the pesach-sacrifice} came to Moshe with a complaint,²⁹ "why should we be left out?")

Although the passage that opens the Book of *Bamidbar* relates a matter that depicts the dearness of Jews, as discussed, this doesn't completely answer the question: Since the chronology of our passage is earlier, it would have been

²⁵ Note Ramban on our *parshah* in his comments on the verse (at the beginning).

²⁶ Note Rashi's wording in the beginning of his commentary on the Torah: "The Torah should have **begun** with {the verse} 'This month shall be {your first month},' since it is the first mitzvah **Israel was commanded**." (See at length, *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 5, p. 3 ff.)

²⁷ *Bamidbar* 9:5.

²⁸ See *Sifri*, there: "To tell us of Israel's praise that they carried out precisely what Moshe had told them."

²⁹ {*Bamidbar* 9:7.}

more fitting to begin with **this** passage, emphasizing the dearness of Israel it conveys. Moreover, there is nothing **novel** about the dearness portrayed by Hashem by counting the Jews all the time. This point was made already at the beginning of Chumash *Shemos*.³⁰ Therefore, it would have been more suitable to use our passage as the opening of **this** Chumash.

Additionally, had Chumash *Bamidbar* indeed started with our passage, then the beginnings of all the Chumashim would have been ordered in ascending degrees of holiness, each Chumash loftier than the one before it:

The opening to the Book of *Shemos* deals with the **intrinsic** dearness of Israel, which was expressed by Hashem **counting** them.

The opening to the Book of *Vayikra* conveys the dearness of the Jews to Hashem as illustrated by His commands and mitzvos to them. This dearness was shown by every Divine command {to Moshe} being “preceded by a *calling*, ויקרא, which denotes endearment.” (And as Rashi is particular about pointing out, this happened “**before every statement; before every saying; and before every command**,” not on account of Moshe, **per se**. {Rather, it was on account of speaking to Moshe in his role as a prophet of the Jewish people.} This is along the lines of what Rashi says at the conclusion of his remarks: “but to the prophets of the **nations of the world**, He revealed Himself to them using language of volatility and impurity, as it says....” When Hashem revealed Himself to these prophets, the Torah uses this condescending term {“ויקר”} because this revelation pertains to the **nations of the world**.)³¹

The opening of the following Book, the Book of *Bamidbar*, would then have conveyed the virtue and endearment of Israel, relating how Hashem gave them a special mitzvah after the *Mishkan* was erected. And this mitzvah was not intrinsically obligatory for the Jews in the desert. Thus, the command itself

³⁰ However, understandably, the two counts are not totally similar. At the beginning of *parshas Shemos*, Rashi says, “**He counted them again after their death** to make known their preciousness for they were metaphorically referred to as stars.” At the beginning of the Book of *Bamidbar*, Rashi comments, “because of their dearness before Him, He counts them **at all times**.”

³¹ {Likewise, Hashem preceded His communication with Moshe using terms of endearment on account of Moshe’s connection with the Jewish people.}

already notes the praise and preciousness of Israel. At that time, the Jewish people fulfilled the mitzvah, offering the sacrifice in the *Mishkan* flawlessly. As Scripture says, “according to everything that Hashem had commanded Moshe, so the Children of Israel did,”³² as discussed above.

Moreover, this passage here portrays: (a) Israel’s **virtue** and **praise**, describing how eagerly the Jewish people sought to fulfill Hashem’s command. In their eagerness, even those who were made impure by contact with a human corpse, who could not offer the pesach-sacrifice, implored Hashem, arguing that they should not be excluded from offering Hashem’s sacrifice in its appointed time;³³ (b) the **affection** Hashem showed Israel, by Hashem acceding to their grievance and request not to be excluded, and by enabling them to compensate for the handicap by offering the sacrifice of Pesach Sheni.

7.

NOT BRINGING THE PESACH-SACRIFICE WAS A “DISGRACE” FOR ISRAEL

To resolve this question, Rashi answers: “Because this passage brings disgrace on Israel. It tells us that the entire forty years the Jewish people were in the desert, they had offered no pesach-offering except for this one.” In other words, the affection for Israel expressed in this passage — the command to offer the pesach-sacrifice in the desert, as a special Divine decree; and the command about Pesach Sheni — is overshadowed by an element of disgrace the passage conveys:

True, Scripture makes this mitzvah contingent upon the Jewish people entering the Land. Nonetheless, this mitzvah is different from other mitzvos that became obligatory only after entering the Land. The obligatory nature of these other mitzvos was only possible after entering the Land.³⁴

³² {*Bamidbar* 9:5.}

³³ *Bamidbar* 9:6-7.

³⁴ See Rashi on *Bamidbar* 34:2.

[Needless to say that the triggering of the obligation depended on the Land is true with mitzvos such as *bikurim*,³⁵ and *terumah* and *maaser*,³⁶ or even *challah*.³⁷ These mitzvos are linked to the physical land, and apply to the fruits and produce of the Jews in the land of Israel, specifically. However, even those matters, such as *petter chamor*,³⁸ that are not linked to the physical land (and according to one opinion cited in Rashi's commentary),³⁹ are linked, specifically, to the entry of the Jewish people into the Land — their obligation was triggered only with the Jewish people entering the Land.]⁴⁰

The offering of the pesach-sacrifice was feasible also in the desert. It was just that Hashem did not obligate this observance, **in actuality**,⁴¹ until the Jewish people had entered the Land.⁴²

Moreover, we see in this passage that because a few Jews requested and argued that they did not want to forgo the opportunity, Hashem enabled them to offer a pesach-sacrifice on the fourteenth of Iyar. There is no precedent for this allowance with any other mitzvah or sacrifice. (For all other sacrifices, the operative principle is that if the day for the offering elapses, the opportunity is lost.)⁴³

³⁵ See Rashi on *Devarim* 26:1. {*Bikurim* are the first fruit of the season.}

³⁶ {Tithes which, depending on the year within the agricultural cycle, are given either to a Levite, to the poor, or eaten by the owner in Yerushalayim.}

³⁷ See Rashi on *Bamidbar* 15:18.

³⁸ {The firstborn donkey, which either must be redeemed or decapitated.}

³⁹ *Shemos* 13:11.

⁴⁰ Regarding all the above (as examined from the vantage point of Halachah), see *Kiddushin* 37a, et passim.

⁴¹ Note the remarks of *Gur Aryeh* on Rashi's interpretation here.

⁴² We can posit that Rashi is precise in writing, “**And they were not obligated in the desert except for one pesach-sacrifice** that they offered in the second year according to Divine decree.” This is unlike *Mechilta* on *Shemos* 12:25, which says, “Scripture makes this service contingent upon them entering the Land and beyond,” but does not add “except for one Pesach.” According to the understanding of *Mechilta*, the pesach-sacrifice in the desert is considered a temporary command and is not of the same nature as the pesach-sacrifice in the land of Israel. However, according to Rashi's understanding, this “one pesach-sacrifice” is in the same category as the obligation of the pesach-sacrifice in subsequent generations.

⁴³ See Rashi on *Bamidbar* 28:10, 14; et al. {In the original, “*avar yomo, battel korbano*”; lit., “if its day passed, its offering is canceled.”}

So the question arises — even in the mind of a novice student⁴⁴ of Scripture: How was it possible that, in all these 39 years in the desert, the Jewish people did not beseech Hashem and ask for an opportunity to bring “a sacrifice to Hashem,” the pesach-sacrifice? Why did they not protest their “missing out”⁴⁵ on this mitzvah, particularly considering that this sacrifice had been the instrument of their salvation from Egypt⁴⁶ and led to their redemption from there?⁴⁷

The question is even stronger:⁴⁸ A small number of Jews had complained about “missing out,” and Hashem answered, enabling them to offer the sacrifice. All the more so, then, Hashem would have certainly agreed had all the Jewish people implored Him, expressing their desire to offer the pesach-sacrifice, as they had done earlier in the desert during their second year. (After all, they knew that this sacrifice was unlike other mitzvos that are contingent on the Land, as explained.)

It was this neglect of the Jewish people to beseech Hashem for the opportunity to offer the pesach-sacrifice that brought “disgrace on **Israel**.... The entire forty years the Jewish people were in the desert, they had offered no pesach-offering except for this one.” For had the Jewish people petitioned Hashem, articulating their desire not to be “missing out,” they would have achieved their desire, and would have offered this sacrifice every Pesach during the entire forty years.

⁴⁴ {In the Hebrew original, “*ben chamesh lemikra*”; meaning, “a five-year-old beginning to study Scripture.” This is a term borrowed from *Pirkei Avos*, which teaches that the appropriate age for a child to begin studying Chumash is at the age of five. Rashi wrote his commentary on Chumash to solve problems that a 5-year-old student would encounter in understanding the simple meaning of a verse.}

⁴⁵ {In the original, “*lamah neegarah*”; echoing the heartfelt lament of those who had been impure.}

⁴⁶ As it says, “And I beheld the blood {of their pesach-sacrifices on their front doorposts}, and passed over them, etc.” (*Shemos* 12:13)

⁴⁷ See Rashi on *Shemos* 12:6.

⁴⁸ {More literally, “The question can be posed on the logical strength of an *a fortiori* argument.”}

8.

FAITHFUL SHEPHERDS FORGO THEIR RIGHTS FOR THE SAKE OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

In light of the above explanation, however, a question arises: How was it possible that Moshe and Aharon, and others like them, did not petition Hashem and obtain His sanction to offer the pesach-sacrifice during their entire 39 years in the desert?

The explanation (from a deeper perspective):

The prime goal and priority of the leaders of Israel is the welfare of the Jewish people. In fact, we see that Moshe jeopardized his very life for the community of Israel — not only his corporeal life but his spiritual life. He had declared:⁴⁹ “But if not, then erase me now from Your book that You have written.”

From the above, it is understood that this {selflessness for the welfare of the Jews} was exertive in this situation:

As depicted in our *parshah*, the disgrace of the Jewish people is not so stressed. In the end, with their request to Hashem, the Jewish people did *not* accomplish the ability to actually offer the pesach-sacrifice itself. Rather, they were given the opportunity to **compensate** for the sacrifice that all the Jews had been obligated to offer earlier that year.

Conversely, had Moshe and Aharon petitioned Hashem to be allowed to offer the pesach-sacrifice and succeeded (even on behalf of all the Jews), this itself would have resulted in bringing to light “the disgrace of Israel” even more sharply. It would have proven that this was a sacrifice to Hashem, which the Jewish people **could** have succeeded in offering had they petitioned Hashem. And still, the Jews had not done so.

⁴⁹ *Shemos* 32:32.

Consequently, Moshe and Aharon willingly gave up the potential spiritual benefit (about which they had not been commanded) of offering the pesach-sacrifice {which they conceivably could have offered} if they had asked. But since Moshe and Aharon were faithful shepherds, they had refrained from asking Hashem. They did not want to wind up (further) accentuating the disgrace of the Jewish people. Moshe and Aharon's priority was to safeguard the honor of the Jewish people.

9.

AVODAH OF "NO ORDER" IN THE DESERT

In light of all the above, we can explain, according to the "wine of Torah" in Rashi's commentary, why the principle "there is no **order** of earlier and later in the Torah" is derived ("you have learned") specifically from this *parshah*:

The obligation of Pesach Sheni,⁵⁰ which is the **novelty** in our *parshah*, differs from the obligation of the first Pesach. (Indeed, it differs from other mitzvos, in general, in this respect.) From the outset, the first Pesach (and other mitzvos in general) were established and intended to take place, according to the **order** of Torah, (at its designated **time**). Instead, Pesach Sheni appears outside the conventional order because of those who did **not** offer the pesach-sacrifice in its proper time.

Also, how this mitzvah was **conveyed** to the Jewish people did not follow the same order as all other mitzvos that were given at the outset. Rather, the mitzvah of Pesach Sheni was given in response to the petition and grievance of those Jews who were "impure by contact with a human corpse." They didn't want to be "missing out."

In serving Hashem, this is the *avodah*⁵¹ of *teshuvah*. This *avodah* is unlike that of a person who, while serving Hashem, remains on the **straight** path —

⁵⁰ For further explanation of what follows, see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 18, p. 118, et passim; and sources cited there.

⁵¹ {Divine service.}

“G-d made man straight.”⁵² It is the *avodah* of a person who has stumbled, who has transgressed and blemished, and who has strayed from the path.⁵³

This is the deeper meaning of the scriptural phrase, “impure by contact with a human corpse,” as already elucidated.⁵⁴

This is the allusion in the words of Rashi when he says: “Because this passage brings disgrace on Israel. It tells us that the entire forty years the Jewish people were in the desert, they had offered no pesach-offering except for this one.” Rashi intimates that any pesach-offering during the entire forty years in the desert also needed to come about in a way that was out of order. (This dynamic resembled how Hashem came to instruct the Jewish people, in the second year, to offer the sacrifice of Pesach Sheni. This instruction did not follow the established order of the mitzvah. After all, in the desert, the obligation was not in effect.) And it was up to the Jews, mainly, to petition and demand it from Hashem, as discussed.

The reason for this is as follows: All the years that “the Jewish people were in the desert,” they were in a post-transgression state. For this reason, they were in the desert, as discussed. So they were not in the same condition as the Jewish people had been when they had offered the pesach-sacrifice in Egypt. At that time, they were in a “new-born” state.⁵⁵

Accordingly, in the desert, what was called for from the Jewish people was an *avodah* that was “no order.” In other words, an *avodah* that was *beyond order* was needed — “in an instant”⁵⁶ — the *avodah* of *teshuvah*.

⁵² *Koheles* 7:29.

⁵³ See *Likkutei Dibburim*, vol. 1, 187a; see also *Likkutei Torah*, “Acharei,” 27c; “Re’ei,” 34a (et al); “Shabbos Shuvah,” 64d, 66a; et al.

⁵⁴ *Likkutei Sichos*, op. cit.

⁵⁵ Per the prophecy of *Yechezkel*, ch. 16.

⁵⁶ *Zohar*, vol. 1, 159a.

10.

OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE IS THE ENTREATY OF JEWS

From all the above, what emerges is that in **our parshah**, we learn about the crucial importance of **asking** not to “miss out.”

And since “the Torah is eternal,”⁵⁷ providing eternal guidance, it is understood that this is germane at all times and in all places, and particularly at the present time.

By the same token, this quality applies to all the entreaties and prayers⁵⁸ of the Jewish people.

Even more so is this true of the soulful request of every Jew (because “all the end-dates⁵⁹ have come and gone”)⁶⁰ for the true and complete redemption. It should transpire in a way that fulfills the promise,⁶¹ “Immediately, they are redeemed.”

In the prayer parlance of the *Amidah*, with which Jews pray three times every (ordinary week) day:⁶² “**Speedily** cause the scion of David, Your servant, to flourish.” And in the conclusion of **all** prayers, also those recited on Shabbos and Yom Tov: “May it be Your will... that the *Beis HaMikdash* be speedily rebuilt in our days...,” in the simple sense — speedily in our days, in actuality.

— From a talk delivered on Shabbos *parshas Behaaloscha*, 5741 (1981)

⁵⁷ *Tanya*, beg. of ch. 17.

⁵⁸ Prayer is “a positive commandment every day... a person should supplicate and pray every day” (*Mishneh Torah*, beg. of “*Hilchos Tefillah*”; see *Kesef Mishneh*, ad loc; and *Shores Mitzvas HaTefillah* (in *Sefer HaMitzvos*, by the Tzemach Tzedek), at the beg.)

⁵⁹ {In the original, “*kitzin*”; lit. “ends”; these are dates that were considered by the Sages to be particularly propitious for the coming of Moshiach, thereby *ending* the present exile.}

⁶⁰ *Sanhedrin* 97b.

⁶¹ Rambam’s wording in “*Hilchos Teshuvah*,” ch. 7, par. 5.

⁶² Among the 12 middle blessings of the *Amidah*. (See *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Tefillah*,” ch. 1, par. 4; *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch* (and the Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*), “*Orach Chaim*,” sec. 112): “One asks for the needs he requires, petitioning and supplicating” (*Mishneh Torah*, *ibid.*, par. 2).