



# Likkutei Sichos

Volume 18 | Pinchas | Sichah 2

Moshe Said...

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## 1.

### MOSHE DIDN'T FOLLOW ORDERS?

At the conclusion of the *parshah* — after the offerings are enumerated: the *tamid*<sup>1</sup> offering, the *Shabbos musaf*<sup>2</sup> offering, the *musaf* for *Rosh Chodesh* and the festivals — it says:<sup>3</sup> “Moshe said to the Jewish people according to everything that Hashem had commanded Moshe.”<sup>4</sup>

Why does the verse need to say that Moshe conveyed everything to the Jewish people? Could it be in order to inform us that Moshe fulfilled Hashem’s commandment to “command the Jewish people and say to them, ‘My offering...’”?

In many places, the Torah records only Hashem’s commandment to Moshe without saying explicitly that Moshe fulfilled Hashem’s command.

[The reason is simple and obvious: Since Hashem spoke to Moshe in order for him to convey His words to the Jewish people, Moshe would certainly have done so. (This is so simple that we don’t find that Rashi includes this in his commentary.)]

If so, why is it necessary for this verse to **explicitly** tell us {that Moshe followed Hashem’s command}?

Rashi explains:

Rabbi Yishmael says,<sup>5</sup> {this was done in order} to make a pause between topics. Until this point, Hashem spoke, and then Moshe began speaking as recorded in the section about vows that follows. Scripture first had to pause and say that Moshe returned and conveyed this {previous} section {of the offerings} to the Jewish

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<sup>1</sup> {An offering brought twice daily, at the beginning and end of the daily service.}

<sup>2</sup> {Special offerings brought on *Shabbos*, festivals and *Rosh Chodesh*.}

<sup>3</sup> *Bamidbar* 30:1.

<sup>4</sup> Earlier, in *Bamidbar* 28:2.

<sup>5</sup> *Sifri Bamidbar* 30:1.

people. For if Scripture had not done so, it could be inferred that Moshe did not convey the section of the offerings, but rather, began speaking as recorded in the section of vows.

We must clarify: True, if the verse (“Moshe said to the Jewish people...”) had been omitted, then the **implication of the passages** would be that Moshe did not convey the previous section {of the offerings} to the Jewish people (since immediately afterward — “begins with the speaking of Moshe”). Nevertheless, how can we even think that Moshe failed to fulfill Hashem’s command, “Command the Jewish people and say to them?!”

## 2.

### A SUGGESTION BY RAMBAN

*Ramban* explains the meaning of Rabbi Yishmael’s expression, “to make a pause between topics”: Had the verse not said, “Moshe said...” we would not have known what the verse, “Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes,”<sup>6</sup> refers to: Does it refer to what follows — the laws discussed in *parshas Matos* — or to the earlier laws discussed in *parshas Pinchas*? Therefore, the verse at the end of our *parshah* says, “Moshe said to the Jewish people...” to “make a pause between topics,” teaching us that the verse, “Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes” begins a new subject — the section dealing with vows.

[This explains the meaning of the concept, “to make a pause between topics” mentioned several times in *Sifra* and *Sifri*. As *Ramban* explains and elaborates, **Rashi himself** comments on the verse (later on in *parshas Matos*), “So now, kill... {every male} and every woman... kill.”<sup>7</sup> The second word “kill” is written “to make a pause between topics,” and Rashi explains: If after the words “and every woman” Scripture did not repeat {the command to} “kill,” we would not know to which category “and every

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<sup>6</sup> *Bamidbar* 30:2.

<sup>7</sup> *Bamidbar* 31:17.

woman” belongs: whether to the previous category of “**kill** every male” or the following category — “all the young children... **keep alive.**”]<sup>8</sup>

Rashi’s comments **here** cannot be construed this way. Rashi (deviates from the wording of the *Sifri* (which says, “I am unsure what these words refer to) and) writes explicitly that if the verse would have omitted the words, “Moshe said ...,” we would have assumed mistakenly (**not** that the following verse, “Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes...” refers to the earlier subject, as *Ramban* maintains, but rather) that “**Moshe did not convey these words to them.**” (Moshe only began speaking the section of vows.)

### 3.

WHY WAIT UNTIL NOW?

We must also clarify (as *Ramban* asks): In *parshas Emor* as well, at the end of the section about the festivals, the verse says, “Moshe conveyed {Hashem’s command regarding} the appointed festivals of Hashem to the Jewish people,”<sup>9</sup> and the *Midrash* gives many explanations why this verse is necessary. **Rashi**, however, does not comment on the verse.

We must clarify: If the simple meaning of Scripture needs clarification as to why the verse says that Moshe conveyed Hashem’s command regarding the festivals to the Jewish people, Rashi should have done so (earlier in *parshas Emor*) where this statement first appears. Why did he wait until *parshas Pinchas*?

Furthermore: The explanation Rashi provides here — only “**Until this point**, Hashem spoke...” — cannot be applied to *parshas Emor* because there, the following section begins with “**Hashem’s** words” — “Hashem spoke to Moshe saying.”

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<sup>8</sup> *Bamidbar* 31:18

<sup>9</sup> *Vayikra* 23:44.

## 4.

### PARSHAS EMOR VS PARSHAS PINCHAS

The reason why this question — why must Scripture say that Moshe conveyed Hashem’s command to the Jewish people? — is raised here specifically and not in *parshas Emor*, can be explained simply:

The section of the festivals and *parshas Emor* was related in proximity to the section that describes the setting up of the *Mishkan* (even before the census — “on the first of the second month” — which is written in the book of *Bamidbar*). Among the commandments recorded, there are those that can only be fulfilled in the Land of Israel (for example, *omer*,<sup>10</sup> *chadash*,<sup>11</sup> and *shtei halechem*).<sup>12</sup>

We might have therefore presumed that surely Moshe related all of Hashem’s commandments to the Jewish people. Furthermore, Moshe would have done so **immediately** after hearing each commandment from Hashem. This is demonstrated in the verse based on Rashi’s comments<sup>13</sup> (regarding the giving of the Torah): “Moshe did not attend first to his own business; rather {he went directly} from the mountain to the people.” In **this** section {of the festivals} however, Moshe did not **immediately** transmit (all of the details), since at that point they were still irrelevant in practice. Moreover, at that time Moshe was preoccupied with addressing<sup>14</sup> “the difficult things” that “they {the Jewish people} would bring to Moshe {to judge}” — “you shall make known to them the path in which they should go and the deeds that they should do,”<sup>15</sup> on a **daily basis**.

Furthermore, according to the opinion in the *Mishnah* (quoted in Rashi’s comments in *parshas Emor*<sup>16</sup>) that implies that the section of

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<sup>10</sup> *Vayikra* 23:10. {The commandment to bring the first of your harvest to the *Kohen*.}

<sup>11</sup> *Vayikra* 23:14. {The prohibition to eat the new grain harvest before bringing the *Omer*.}

<sup>12</sup> *Vayikra* 23:17. {An offering brought on *Shavuot* consisting of two loaves of bread baked from flour of the new harvest.}

<sup>13</sup> *Shemos* 19:14.

<sup>14</sup> *Shemos* 18:26.

<sup>15</sup> *Shemos* 18:20.

<sup>16</sup> *Vayikra* 24:10.

festivals was said after the section of the flags,<sup>17</sup> there were many **other** sections which were **practically** relevant then (for example: the census, the flags, the procedures for traveling, *Pesach Sheni*, etc.).

Therefore, the verse in *parshas Emor* concludes by adding, “Moshe said the appointed festivals of Hashem to the Jewish people.”<sup>18</sup> Moshe **immediately** conveyed all of the details of the section {of festivals} to the Jewish people. (This itself teaches us that Hashem’s commandment to Moshe to “speak to the Jewish people and say to them, Hashem’s appointed festivals...” means that Moshe was to immediately convey all of the details to the Jewish people.)

In *parshas Pinchas*, however, there is no such reason to assume that Moshe did not immediately convey Hashem’s instruction to the Jewish people. It is self-understood, as mentioned above, that immediately after Hashem’s command “command the Jewish people and say to them...,” Moshe relayed all of the details — especially since this was at the end of the forty years {in the desert, immediately before Moshe’s passing}, if not now, when?

It is, therefore, difficult to understand why the verse tells us that “Moshe said to the Jewish people...” How does this enhance our understanding?

To address this issue, Rashi explains: “To make a pause between topics....,” for if Scripture had not done so, it might be inferred that Moshe did not convey the section of the offerings, but rather, began speaking with the section of vows,” as will be explained in section 7.

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<sup>17</sup> {Section regarding the encampment of the Jewish people in the desert according to the “flags” of the tribes.}

<sup>18</sup> *Vayikra* 23:44.

## 5.

### RABBI AKIVA VS RABBI YISHMAEL

In light of the above, we also understand why Rashi records the name of the author — “Rabbi Yishmael says:”

We explained above that “Moshe said... to the Jewish people” had to be said in *parshas Emor*. If it was not, we would have assumed that the Torah left the details for later on. (According to this explanation, we must clarify why this reasoning does not apply in *parshas Pinchas*.) This explanation only fits according to Rabbi Yishmael’s opinion:<sup>19</sup> “General statements were said at Sinai; the details, in *Ohel Moed*.”<sup>20</sup> Therefore, it is also reasonable to say here, as mentioned earlier, that Moshe waited to convey the details of the festival laws.

However, Rabbi Yishmael’s disputant — Rabbi Akiva — maintains that “the general statements and details were said at Sinai {and later} repeated in *Ohel Moed*, and {reiterated a third time} in the plains of Moav.”<sup>21</sup> This demonstrates that Moshe conveyed all of the details of the commandments, even if they were not practically relevant at that time. If so, why should we say that in *parshas Pinchas* he waited to convey the details until later?

We must, therefore, say that according to Rabbi Akiva, there was never a question in the first place because (he maintains that) this is the linguistic style of Scripture: Sometimes Scripture records Hashem speaking to Moshe; other times, it records Moshe speaking to the Jewish people; and other times, it records **both**. Therefore, the verse in *parshas Pinchas* does not pose a difficulty.

We cannot ask why this solution — that Scripture here records Moshe speaking (is not in order to avoid an error in understanding, but rather) for this is the style of Scripture — is not suitable according to Rabbi Yishmael.

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<sup>19</sup> *Chagigah* 6a.

<sup>20</sup> {Lit. “tent of meeting.” This refers to the *Mishkan*.}

<sup>21</sup> *Chagigah* 6b.

For we can suggest that this itself is the dependant on the debate between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Yishmael:

Rabbi Akiva maintains that, “the general statements and details were said at Sinai and {later} repeated in *Ohel Moed*, and {reiterated a third time} in the plains of *Moav*.”<sup>22</sup> We must say that although all of the commandments were stated generally, and in detail, three times — in *Ohel Moed*, at Sinai, and in the plains of *Moav* — Scripture does not offer a detailed explanation of each commandment all three times. Rather, only some {details} of the commandment are repeated in the latter two instances.

Similarly, in our case, sometimes Scripture (also) offers details of what Moshe conveyed to the Jewish people, and sometimes, it does not.

According to Rabbi Yishamel, however, “general statements were said at Sinai, the details were said in *Ohel Moed*.” He maintains that **generally** we must assume that every detail, as it is written in Scripture, represents what actually happened (unless there is proof otherwise). He therefore maintains that the details of the commandments were given only where Scripture says so explicitly (and **not** on all three occasions — at Sinai, in *Ohel Moed*, and at the plains of *Moav*).

Similarly, in our case, since Scripture specifically details and explains here that “Moshe spoke... to the Jewish people,” we must conclude that there must be a novelty here that is relevant to **this** section.

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<sup>22</sup> *Chagigah* 6b.



## 6.

### THE ORDER OF THE SECTIONS

The general subject of festivals is recorded in two *parshiyos*: (a) *Parshas Emor* stresses primarily the prohibition of *melachah*<sup>23</sup> (and the commandments relating to each festival); it also speaks (generally) about the sacrifices offered on each festival. (b) *Parshas Pinchas* stresses primarily the **details** of the offerings brought (every day, *Shabbos*, *Rosh Chodesh*, and) on each festival. It also speaks about the prohibition of *melachah* on the festivals.

The subjects of the festivals being recorded in two *parshiyos* can be explained in two ways:

- a) The two *parshiyos* were said to **Moshe** on two separate occasions: *parshas Emor* — when the *Mishkan* was erected, and *parshas Pinchas* — at the end of the forty years {in the desert}.

[The reason why the portion dealing with the sacrifices recorded in *parshas Pinchas* was not recorded in the *parshah* describing the construction of the *Mishkan* (even though we can **simply** assume that all of the sacrifices were brought in the desert — except for those regarding which the verse says clearly, “when you will come to the Land {of Israel}”) can be explained as follows:

The novelty of *parshas Pinchas* is: “Command the **Jewish people** and say to them...” — a command to **all Jews** that that the communal sacrifices should be brought at the proper time. The details of the sacrifices, however, were already conveyed to Moshe earlier, which he, in turn, taught to the individuals who were involved with the sacrifices — Aharon and his sons, the *kohanim*.]

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<sup>23</sup> {The 39 categories of creative activity prohibited on *Shabbos*.}

b) Both *parshiyos* were conveyed to Moshe **at the same time**. As opposed to the previous explanation {at the time these *parshiyos* were conveyed to Moshe}, the portion describing the sacrifices (in *parshas Pinchas*) was conveyed **before** the portion describing the festivals (in *parshas Emor*).<sup>24</sup> [Therefore, in the portion describing the festivals, the verse states vaguely, “you shall bring a fire-offering...” (without expressing what kind of sacrifice should be brought), because the details of the sacrifices were already conveyed to Moshe earlier.]

Nevertheless (for whatever reason) **Scripture** placed the portion describing the sacrifices in *parshas Pinchas* (at the end of the forty years), in accordance with the principle (which Rashi quotes in many places): “Scripture does not follow chronological sequence.”<sup>25</sup>

According to this explanation — that both portions (*parshas Emor* and *parshas Pinchas*) were conveyed to Moshe at the same time — it would be logical that the commandment at the beginning of the section of the festivals (in *parshas Emor*),<sup>26</sup> “Speak to the Jewish people and say to them: Hashem’s appointed festivals...,” intends to distinguish the following **details** {written in *parshas Emor*} from all of the laws of the festivals which Hashem already commanded Moshe (the detailed laws which are {only recorded later on} in *parshas Pinchas*): **These** laws **specifically** must be given to the Jewish people — and **not** the laws that are recorded in *parshas Pinchas* (for they are not relevant to **all** of the Jewish people, as mentioned above).

[With the above explanation, we can also clarify the reason for the difference in wording used in the portion of the festivals (*parshas Emor*) and in the portion of the offerings (*parshas Pinchas*): In the portion of the festivals, {the laws of} **every** festival begins with a **new** address (“Hashem spoke to Moshe saying, speak to the Jewish people...”). In contrast, in

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<sup>24</sup> {Although in Scripture, *parshas Emor* precedes *parshas Pinchas*.}

<sup>25</sup> For example: *Bereishis* 6:3, 35:29.

<sup>26</sup> *Vayikra* 23:2.

*parshas Pinchas*, there is a **general** command at the beginning of the section — “Command the Jewish people and say to them.”

The introduction, “speak to the Jewish people...” in *parshas Pinchas* is a general introduction to the **general** subject of the festivals and their sacrifices (which are recorded in *parshas Pinchas* **and** *parshas Emor*). Afterward, the second commandment, “command the Jewish people and say to them,” relates the detailed laws that Moshe must **convey to the Jewish people** (those which are recorded in *parshas Emor*, as mentioned previously). Therefore, in order to further emphasize this point, Hashem explicitly says, “**speak to the Jewish people**,” to introduce each individual festival.]

## 7.

### THE END OF *PARSHAS PINCHAS*

The principle that “Scripture does not follow chronological sequence” only applies (according to the *pshat*)<sup>27</sup> when we are **compelled** to say that the verses {and any narratives described} are not chronological (as stated many times previously). Thus, according to *pshat*, the section of the offerings (recorded in *parshas Pinchas*) was said at the end of the forty years.

Rashi comments on the verse, “Speak to the Jewish people (and say to them, the offerings of My food...): “What has been **stated** above?...”, rather than asking, “Why is the section {beginning}, ‘Hashem should appoint’<sup>28</sup> juxtaposed to the section of the offerings?” **Simply** understood, Rashi needs to establish that the section of the offerings (was not only “**juxtaposed**” here — **recorded** {in the Torah} at this point, but maybe was really communicated earlier — rather, it) was **conveyed** at this time.

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<sup>27</sup> {Most simple and straightforward understanding of the verse.}

<sup>28</sup> {The section describing Hashem designating Yehoshua as Moshe’s successor.}

If, however, Scripture would have omitted **here**, at the conclusion of the section of the sacrifices, the clause “Moshe conveyed to the Jewish people,” one would assume that “Moshe began his discourse with the portion of vows” and “Moshe did not convey this to the Jewish people.” We would then be compelled to say that this section is not recorded {in the Torah} in its proper {chronological} place. The section was **conveyed** to Moshe together with (in truth, earlier than) the section of the festivals in *parshas Emor*. [Scripture only *recorded* the section of offerings here {in *parshas Pinchas*} for whatever reason]. Consequently, “Moshe did not relay **this** to the Jewish people” (the details of the laws in *parshas Pinchas*). Only the laws of *parshas Emor* were conveyed to all of the Jewish people, as stated previously in section 6.

Therefore, Scripture had to say, “Moshe said to the Jewish people” at the end of *parshas Pinchas* in order to clarify that Moshe also conveyed this section to all of the Jewish people. From this, it is then understood that this section was **communicated** at this point in time, according to the **simple** understanding that the verses are written in chronological order.

## 8.

### A DEMAND AND A PLEA

Another distinction between the section of the festivals (recorded in *parshas Emor*) and the section of the sacrifices (recorded in *parshas Pinchas*): At the end of *parshas Emor*, the Torah says, “Moshe **spoke...**” **וידבר**, but in *parshas Pinchas*, it says, “Moshe **said, ויאמר, ....**” We can clarify this (from a *halachic* perspective):

*Parshas Emor*, which (primarily) discusses laws that are relevant equally in **all** eras — the prohibition of *melachah*, the commandments regarding all festivals, and so on — uses the word “spoke,” **וידבר**, connoting something “ongoing, without interruption.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *Tzafnas Paneach* on *Makkos* 11a.

In contrast, our *parshah*, *Parshas Pinchas*, which (primarily) discusses sacrifices that (simply understood) are **not** offered during exile, except in the sense that “whomever toils in the {Torah} **laws** of the *olah*... is as if he has brought...”<sup>30</sup> — uses the verb “say, אמירה”.

Furthermore:

The laws of the festivals which are relevant equally throughout all ages are introduced by the verb “spoke,” וידבר, which is a **stern** expression. Hashem **insists firmly** that the Jewish people fulfill the commandments (whether during the era of the *Beis Hamikdash*, or in exile).

In contrast, the obligation for a Jew to toil in the study of the laws of the *olah*, etc., during exile, is not an absolute commandment, obligation, or necessity — it is therefore not demanded with stern wording. On the contrary — the Jewish people demand:<sup>31</sup> “May it be Your will... to return... and build it (the *Beis Hamikdash*) **speedily**, etc., and there we will perform the obligatory offerings... as You have commanded and have written to us in Your Torah” (referring to *parshas Pinchas*) — and not just by toiling in the laws... **as if** the offering was brought.

Therefore, in *parshas Pinchas*, the phrase “Moshe said” — a **gentle** expression — is used: Hashem **entreats** the Jewish people to exert themselves in the “order of the sacrifices”<sup>32</sup> (including, in particular, the sacrifices discussed in our *parshah*) by reciting the verses in our daily prayers.

Also, generally, to study earnestly the laws of the *olah*, etc. (and by doing so, it is as if one has brought, etc.) — this will lead to us offering the *olah* sacrifice **in reality**.

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<sup>30</sup> End of tractate *Menachos*.

<sup>31</sup> {Found in the *musaf* prayer for the festivals.}

<sup>32</sup> See *Megillah* 31b; *Shulchan Aruch* of the Alter Rebbe, “*Orach Chaim*,” end of ch. 591, par. 5.

— {Then} King Moshiach... will build the *Beis Hamikdash*... and we will return... and offer sacrifices... properly, as commanded in Torah<sup>33</sup>—

Speedily in our days, in actuality, as stated previously — “there we will perform before You the obligatory offerings... as You have commanded us.”

— From a talk delivered on *parshas Pinchas*, 5725 (1965)

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<sup>33</sup> *Rambam*, “*Hilchos Melachim*,” ch. 11, in the beginning.