

Parsha Points to Ponder

by Rabbi Dov Lipman

KI TISA

- ① Why does the Torah command that water be placed THERE (SHAMA) when referring to the special basin for washing hands and feet in the Temple (30:18), and not that water be placed INSIDE OF IT (BO)?
- ② Why does the Torah say to both OBSERVE (V'SHAMRU) the Shabbat and to PRACTICE (LA'ASOT) the Shabbat in the same verse (31:16)?
- ③ Why does the Torah teach the laws of the holidays - which are already taught in other places in the Torah - right after the sin of the Golden Calf (see 34:18-26)?

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The suggested answers are elsewhere
Ponder the questions first, then see further

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Suggested answers

- ① The Meshech Chochma answers that they were not mandated to use the special basin to wash their hands and feet. However, they were commanded to wash their hands and feet in that specific spot BETWEEN THE OHEL MO'ED AND THE ALTAR as the verse dictates. Therefore, the Torah says that water must be placed THERE, in that spot, whether in the basin or in some other vessel.
- ② The Ohr HaChayim teaches that the word V'SHAM'RU - which is usually translated as OBSERVE - can also mean ANTICIPATE as seen in other places in the Torah (B'reishit 37:11). The verse is instructing us to anticipate and wait anxiously for the Shabbat so we can perform the commandments of the Shabbat when it arrives.
- ③ The Da'at Zekainim MiBaalei HaTosfot explain that since the Jews had declared their own HOLIDAY TO THE LORD (32:5), G-D had to make it clear to them that they can only observe the holidays that He commands and not create their own.