

Bamidbar Chapter 15 - Transcript

Shiur Overview

Summary: Bamidbar Chapter 15 — Menachot, Nesachim, Challah, Shogeg vs. Meizid, the Mekoshesh, and Tzitzis

Context and Placement

Bamidbar chapter 15 returns to a section of **mitzvos**, characteristic of the book's structure. Throughout Bamidbar, groups of **mitzvos** appear that are difficult to connect to the surrounding narrative or chronological framework. This is especially true in the middle section of the book — the section dealing with the **nisyonos hamidbar** (trials of the desert). While **midrashim** offer various connections, none are obvious or convincing at the level of **pshat**. These **halachos**, particularly those relating to **korbanot**, function as an appendix to Sefer Vayikra (**Torat Kohanim**), as Ramban notes.

The Mitzvah of Menachot and Nesachim (Meal Offerings and Libations)

A New Structural Element for All Korbanot

Although various **korbanot** have been discussed extensively — in Vayikra, in Parshat Tetzaveh (the **korban tamid**), the **miluim**, and elsewhere — the general rule that **every animal korban must be accompanied by a **mincha** (meal offering) and **nesachim** (libations)** has never been taught before. This is an entirely new layer added to the sacrificial system. Later, in Parshat Pinchas, when the **korbanos** of the **moadim** are described, the **menachot** and **nesachim** are already integrated. But here they are presented as a standalone, universal rule.

This illustrates one of the riddles of the Torah's structure: the complete picture of how to perform a single **mitzvah** often requires reading multiple, dispersed locations.

The "Ki Tavo'u" Framing — Connection to Eretz Yisrael

The section opens with **"ki tavo'u el eretz moshvoseichem"** — "when you come to the land of your dwelling." While Sefer Devarim frequently frames **mitzvos** this way, it is rare earlier in the Torah (the **omer** being one example). This is the first **mitzvah** in Bamidbar framed this way, signaling that these are **mitzvos** given specifically for the settled life in Eretz Yisrael.

Why the connection to the Land? Animal **korbanot** could be offered even by nomads — desert-dwellers had sheep and cattle. But the **menachot** and **nesachim** require the three main agricultural products of the land: **grain (**dagan**), wine (**tirosh**), and oil (**yitzhar**)**. In the desert, they had **man** instead of their own grain, water instead of wine, and no vineyards. Only upon settling the land would they have these products to offer alongside their animal sacrifices. This also connects the chapter thematically to the book's trajectory toward entering Eretz Yisrael — even though chronologically it sits between the **meraglim** story and the Korach rebellion.

The Graduated Scale of Offerings

The amounts of flour, oil, and wine scale with the size of the animal:

- **Sheep (**keves**):** 1 **isaron** of flour, ¼ **hin** of oil, ¼ **hin** of wine

- **Ram (**ayil**):** 2 **esronim** of flour (doubled), ⅓ **hin** of oil, ⅓ **hin** of wine (not doubled — increased from ¼ to ⅓)

- **Ox (**ben bakar**):** 3 **esronim** of flour (increased by one whole **isaron** each step), ½ **hin** of oil, ½ **hin** of wine

This applies regardless of the type of **korban** — **olah** or **zevach**, **neder** or **nedavah**, **moadim** offerings, or **korban tamid**. For multiple animals, the amounts multiply accordingly.

Equal Law for Citizen and Stranger (**Ger**)

The passage emphasizes three times that the same law applies to both the **ezrach** (citizen) and the **ger** (stranger). This emphasis makes particular sense in the context of settled life in Eretz Yisrael: in the desert, the concept of a **ger** is somewhat meaningless since no one truly "lives" anywhere. Once they have their own state and territory, there will be citizens and strangers, and the law must clarify that both are treated equally.

The Mitzvah of Challah

Connection to the Preceding Mitzvah

Just as the **menachot** require setting apart flour for **korbanot**, the **mitzvah** of **challah** extends this principle to everyday life: whenever bread is baked from the produce of the land, a portion (**terumah**) must be separated.

Interpretation of "Reishis"

The word **reishis** ("first") is ambiguous:

- It could mean the **first bread of the season**, parallel to the **korban omer** (first harvest offering).

- Chazal interpret it as the **first portion every time bread is baked** — a **terumah** separated at the baking stage, just as **terumas goren** is separated at the threshing stage. This creates a two-stage system: separation first from raw grain, then again from baked bread.

The **challah** goes to Hashem, which later (after Parshat Korach) is specified to mean it goes to the **kohein** — but that detail is not stated here.

Laws of Korbanos for Unintentional Sin (Shogeg)

The next section addresses **korbanos** brought when one sins **beshogeg** — unintentionally, inadvertently, or unknowingly. The passage covers violations of any **mitzvah** Hashem commanded from the very first day of commanding **mitzvos** onward.

If the entire community sinned: The **Eidah** (congregation/elders) must bring a **Par** (ox) with its **Mincha** and **Nesech**, plus a **Se'ir** (goat) as a **Chatas**. The **Kohen** performs atonement, and the Torah states: **V'nislach lahem** — it will be forgiven, for both citizens and strangers, because it was done **bishgaga**.

If an individual sinned: A single person brings a one-year-old female goat (**Ez**) as a **Chatas**. The same law applies to a

citizen (*Ezrach*) and a stranger (*Ger*).

Beyad Ramah — Intentional, Defiant Sin

The Torah does not use the rabbinic term *Meizid*. Instead it says *beyad ramah* — "with a raised arm." This phrase has a striking connection: Bnei Yisrael left Egypt *beyad ramah*, expressing freedom. But that freedom does not extend to defying the mitzvos *beyad ramah*.

Someone who sins *beyad ramah* is described as *megadef* — blaspheming God. This broadens the concept encountered in Parshas Emor, where *megadef* referred specifically to cursing God's name. Here, any blatant, defiant disobedience constitutes blasphemy.

The jump from *shogeg* directly to blasphemy is notable — the Torah presents no intermediate category. *Shogeg* may encompass a wide range including sins driven by overwhelming passion (*Yetzer Hara*). The Halacha later creates more categories, but the Torah here has only two.

The Rambam defines *beyad ramah* as someone who declares "this law doesn't exist for me" — a *porek ol*, one who throws off the yoke entirely. For such a person, no *Korban* helps. The punishment is *Kares* — being cut off. The Torah explains: *Ki devar Hashem bazah* — he denigrated God's word; *V'es mitzvaso heifer* — he destroyed/disobeyed His command. *Avono vo* — his sin remains upon him, meaning he is still guilty with no mechanism of atonement. The imagery contrasts with atonement language like *V'nasa avono* (carrying away the sin) or *V'chiper* (atonement). Critically, there is no concept of *Teshuva* in this *parsha* — this section deals strictly with *Korbanos*, and no *Korban* solves defiant sin.

The Mekoshesh Etzim — Gathering Wood on Shabbos

A man is found gathering sticks (*mekoshesh etzim*) on Shabbos. The Torah has never defined what constitutes *Melacha* on Shabbos (Masechet Shabbat addresses this), yet the narrative assumes it is obvious that gathering wood is not resting. That was never the question.

The people bring him to Moshe, Aharon, and the *Eidah* (here functioning as what would later be called a Sanhedrin). They don't know the punishment. He is placed in custody (*mishmar*) — a holding place, not a sentence — because the law had not been clarified.

Unlike the cases of Bnot Tzelofchad and Pesach Sheni, where Moshe explicitly asks Hashem, here Hashem answers Moshe's unstated question: the man must be stoned outside the camp by *Kol HaEidah*. Execution occurs outside the camp, possibly because killing within the *Machaneh* would cause *Tumah*. The sentence is carried out.

This establishes the punishment for *Chillul Shabbat* as a permanent law, not a one-time ruling. The Rambam considered this story significant precisely because Moshe himself applied capital punishment for Shabbat violation, demonstrating Shabbat's supreme importance. The story also illustrates the broader issue of under-specified laws requiring further definition — a question that continues after Moshe and is addressed in some sense in Sefer Devarim.

The Mitzvah of Tzitzis

Connection to the Preceding Material

Following the discussion of unintentional sin (*shogeg*), the Torah now presents a solution to the problem of inadvertently failing to fulfill mitzvos. The progression is logical: first the concept that one might forget or unintentionally violate a mitzvah, and now a special mitzvah designed to counteract that very problem.

The Command Itself

Hashem tells Moshe to instruct the people to make *tzitzis* on the *kanfei* of their garments for all generations, and to place upon them a *psil techeiles* (a thread of blue). The word *kanfei* is typically translated as "corners," but this is not quite the literal meaning. *Kanaf* is an image applied to clothing the same way a bird has wings or a building has a "wing" — it refers to the extremities of the garment, which may include corners but is not limited to them.

Expansion of Kehunah Kedusha to All Israel

The *psil techeiles* recalls the *techeiles* found in the *bigdei kehunah* (priestly garments), familiar from Parshas Tetzaveh. There, *techeiles v'argaman* and related materials belonged exclusively to the *kohanim*. Now, every Jew receives at least one *psil techeiles* on the extremity of their garment. This connects powerfully to a major theme of Sefer Bamidbar: the expansion of the *kedusha* of the *kehunah* and the *Beis Hamikdash* outward to the entire nation.

Memory — But in the Opposite Direction

The function of *tzitzis* parallels the function of the *bigdei kehunah*, but in reverse. The priestly garments served as *zikaron* — reminders directed at Hashem to remember Israel (as seen with the *tzitz*, the *choshen*, the *ephod*, etc., all described with the language *v'hayu lachem l'zikaron*). Tzitzis also function as memory, but the direction is inverted: instead of reminding Hashem about us, they remind **us** about Hashem's mitzvos. You will see the tzitzis, remember all the mitzvos, and perform them.

***V'lo Sasuru* — The Concept of Yetzer Hara**

The verse warns: *v'lo sasuru acharei levavchem v'acharei eineichem* — you will not stray after your hearts and your eyes. The verb *sasuru* is striking: it is the same verb used for spying (*latur*), and these are the **only two occurrences** of this verb in the Torah. The meaning involves being drawn after, distracted, or led astray — a kind of *znus* (straying/infidelity) from the correct path.

This passage is one of the Torah's sources for the concept of something like a *yetzer hara* — an internal force that causes a person to forget mitzvos or become distracted by human desires and sensory experience. The tzitzis serve as a tangible remembrance designed to counteract this pull, so that one will fulfill all the mitzvos.

***Vihiysem Kedoshim* and Hashem's Signature**

The passage concludes with *vihiysem kedoshim* — "you shall be holy" — recalling all the way back to Parshas Kedoshim, where the framing of many mitzvos was the call to be *kedoshim* to Hashem (special, holy, set apart). The final line — *Ani Hashem Elokeichem asher hotzeisi eschem me'erez Mizrayim lihyos lachem l'Elokim, Ani Hashem Elokeichem* — functions as Hashem's signature on the entire grouping of mitzvos in chapter 15. While Chazal interpret this specifically as the conclusion of Parshas Tzitzis, it can be understood as a closing signature on the entire collection: the mitzvos of

menachos and *nesachim*, *challah*, *shogeg* and *meizid*, the *mekoshesh* story, and *tzitzis* — all sealed by

Hashem's proclamation of who He is and why His commandments carry authority.

Full Transcript

Bamidbar Chapter 15: Menachot, Nesachim, and Challah

Introduction: The Structure of Mitzvot in Bamidbar

Today we're reading Bamidbar chapter 15. This chapter is back to a chapter of mitzvot [commandments], as I've discussed in the preface to this whole book. There's a bunch of groups, selections of mitzvot in this book, which it's hard to see the connection between them and the narrative or the chronological structure of the book. And as I've said there, this is especially true for the second part of the book, right? The first part, at least a big part of the mitzvot in the first part, we could sort of squint and see how they connect with the chronology, with the structure. In the third part, also there are some mitzvot that we can make fit.

In the middle part, which is the part of the nisyonot hamidbar [trials of the desert], the story of the desert and all the problems that they had in it, it's very hard to see how there's anything connected with the narrative structure. There's of course midrashim [rabbinic interpretations], more different ideas of connecting them, but none of them are very obvious or convincing in their simple reading.

So we will just treat it as some parts of halachot [laws], specifically halachot having to do with korbanot [sacrifices], that as Ramban says, is always seen as kind of an appendix to the Book of Vayikra, to Torat Kohanim [the priestly code], and Bamidbar is a continuation of that. And then some other things, which may be in this chapter one more thing, which doesn't connect to that, but we'll discuss it in a second when we get to the end of the chapter.

The Mitzvah of Menachot and Nesachim

A New Universal Rule for All Korbanot

So the first mitzvah in this chapter, or really the first mitzvah in this group of mitzvot, is this mitzvah of the menachot [meal offerings] and the nesachim [libations] that come along with each korban [sacrifice].

We have discussed in Sefer Vayikra at length, and in the beginning of it, and in some other places too, in the end of it, the korbanot of the moadim [festivals] and so on. We've discussed — and not the korbanot yet, but that there are korbanot and so on — already in Parshat Tetzaveh we had the idea of a korban tamid [daily offering]. We've discussed different korbanot and different laws of the korbanot, many laws.

Now we're adding a whole new part, a whole new series, to these korbanot, and it's actually very interesting that it's separated. Later when we get to Parshat Pinchas, where it describes the korbanot of the moadim, we'll see that this is already integrated in it. So the korbanot of Parshat Pinchas already have their menachot and their nesachim together with it.

It is true also that the korban tamid in Parshat Tetzaveh already had this in some sense, in some sense maybe the moadim had it, although it's not called a mincha [meal offering]. I mean some korbanot have something similar to

this, maybe the lechem [bread] of a todah [thanksgiving offering] can be seen as some kind of mincha that has to do with it. But in general, this general rule of every korban having nesachim and a mincha to do with it together is not something that we've learned before, it's a new thing, and it's really an appendix to every korban in the world, or as it says here, every korban in the world has to have that, and we've never learned that, it's a whole new series.

This is one of the riddles of the Torah, where certain structural features of certain mitzvot don't appear in the same place. You need to learn a lot of different locations, you need to read different areas in order to get the full picture of one mitzvah, how to do it.

The "Ki Tavo'u" Framing: Connection to Eretz Yisrael

So anyways, that's the mitzvah, and it's framed also very interesting, and this is something that connects it with the second part, or really the third part of the book, which is getting us to Eretz Yisrael [the Land of Israel], because this is the mitzvah that starts, **ki tavo'u el eretz moshveteichem** [when you come to the land of your dwelling].

We've discussed in Parshat Emor already, how in Sefer Devarim for example, many many mitzvot are framed as **ki tavo'u eretz** [when you will come to the land], when you will come to the land of Israel you will have this and this mitzvah. But we do not have many such mitzvot earlier in the Torah. We did have one, the mitzvah of the omer [first sheaf offering], maybe there were others that I'm forgetting now, but this is for sure in this book the first one framed like this, and this is showing us that these are mitzvot that are in some sense given later, or already referring to that state.

Why These Mitzvot Are Specific to the Land

There are some that say therefore, the mitzvot that we do not do in the midbar [desert], it's mitzvot that are given only for that situation when they will be in Eretz Yisrael in their land, although it's hard to understand why. Certain mitzvot, it's obvious — the mitzvah of the omer, you have to have the fruit of the earth in order to be able to do it. But a mitzvah like nesachim or menachot, it seems not entirely clear why they're connected, although it's quite obvious you could connect it in the same way, right? It seems like these are just part of korbanot, so why would they be connected?

But the answer is that these are the parts of the korbanot, korbanot of animals, which you can give also when you're a nomad. People in the desert had animals, they had sheep and herds and so on, but they didn't have their own grain and they didn't have their own bread, right? They had mann [manna], they didn't have their own wine, they had sometimes water, but they didn't have their own vineyards.

When they come to Eretz Yisrael, you will have your own grain, you will have your own bread, you will have your own wine, then you will bring korbanot also from that. So that's I think the way in which it's connected to Eretz Yisrael.

Of course, some of the descriptions of the midbar also, of course, talk about their bread, right, like we talked about the miluim [inauguration offerings], which we learned in the

parsha of the week this week, Tetzaveh, talks about them having bread and matzah and so on, but maybe that was like a special thing, maybe that was also made out of mann, I don't know, but this is specific to Eretz Yisrael because of that.

The Details of the Offerings

So this is what it says: when you come to Eretz Yisrael, you will live, you will live in a set, in a steady way, and you will make fire to Hashem, you will make a korban, doesn't matter which kind of korban. Remember there are two kinds of korbanot, olah [burnt offering] and zevach [peace offering], whether an olah, which includes chattat [sin offering] and so on, or zevach, which is in the Torah, shelamim [peace offerings] and so on. Whether it's a neder and a nedavah [vow offering and voluntary offering] — again, neder and nedavah in Chazal [the Sages] have a specific meaning; in the Torah, it's not very clear that that's a simple peshat [straightforward interpretation]. Neder means you made a promise in a tzarah [trouble], that if Hashem will save you from that or something like that, you will bring a korban. A nedavah is that you just randomly want to bring a korban. Or the moadim, which we've discussed, the moadim have set korbanot for them, or maybe even the korban tamid, which really has that.

So when you want to do that, no matter what kind of animal, from bakar [cattle], from the herd, from cows and so on, or from sheep, it doesn't matter, you will bring also, along with it, a mincha. What will this mincha be? An isaron solet [a tenth of an ephah of fine flour] — isaron is also the amount of the omer, which is the connectedness — and also together with **revi'it hahin shemen** [a quarter of a hin of oil], so that's number one. You will bring solet [fine flour], you will bring flour, you will make this flour into a mincha, a tenth of an ephah, you will bring a quarter of a hin oil, and a quarter of a hin wine. So these are the three things. The three main things, the three main products of the land, you will bring along with every korban.

The Graduated Scale

So that will be, if you bring keves [sheep], if you bring a sheep. If you bring ayil [ram], if you bring a ram, which is a bigger sheep, a bigger korban, then you will bring a bigger mincha. You will bring two esronim [two-tenths] from the solet, a third of a hin, so the solet gets doubled, two tenths instead of one, but the shemen [oil] and the wine don't get doubled, they become from a quarter to a third of a hin, both of the oil and the wine.

If you bring a ben bakar [ox], if you bring a cow, or an ox, then you will bring, no matter if it's an olah or a zevach, you will bring then, or it's a neder or shelamim, it doesn't matter which kind it is, then you will bring three esronim, so again, not doubled, it's added as one whole isaron, and a half a hin, a half a hin shemen and a half a hin wine.

That would be the rule for one shor [ox], for one ayil, for one seh [sheep], no matter which kind of seh — it has two kinds, kevasim [lambs] and izim [goats] — and then, as the peshat [plain meaning] explains, if you bring two, then you will bring according to the number, or if you bring two shorim [oxen], then you have to bring twice as many, and so on.

Equal Law for Citizen and Stranger

And this will be a law, both for a citizen, or for a stranger, anyone that lives with you will have the same law. This is also something that gets emphasized already by the simple peshat

here, maybe it's something that's getting added here, since they're going to have, you know, when you're in the desert, you don't really have a ger [stranger], you don't live here in the settled way, you don't live anywhere. When they have their own state, their own location, then there will be citizens, people that live there, that are steady there, that are part of it, and then there will be strangers, so then we have to say that the same law will be for the stranger.

And it repeats three times that the same law will be for the stranger. There might be some additions in each three times, but I'm not getting into that right now. It basically says that this is the same for ezrach [citizen] and a ger, so one separate, and then it says, together, you will have one law, one rule, both for you, but for a ger, forever, for all generations, will be the same law.

Okay, so that's one law, again. So we do understand now the connection between the chronology, although it doesn't belong between — it's not like something that happens between the story of the meraglim [spies] and the story of Korach, which will be the next, or maybe the mekoshesh [wood gatherer], but in the next chapter we have the story of Korach. But it does connect very much with this idea that we're getting closer to the third part of the book, really, and of course, the meraglim said that this is going to take 40 years, but in any case, the chronology marches on, and the end of the book will get us very clearly all the way to the doorpost of the land of Israel, so it's getting us to there.

The Mitzvah of Challah

And the same way, connected to that, we have another mitzvah, which is the mitzvah of challah [dough offering]. So mitzvah of challah is, you will bring terumah [portion set aside], you will bring a part, you will set apart a part from, just like we had now, you bring mincha, from the soil, from the flour of your land, whenever you make a challah, not only when you bring a korban, whenever you bake bread or something, when you eat from the bread of the land, what will it bring?

The reishit [first], the beginning, now this beginning can be interpreted in many ways. I said whenever you bring bread, maybe it means the first bread of the season, like we had something similar which is the korban omer, which is basically the first bread or the first harvest of the season, or I'll interpret it at least as being the first of every time you bake bread, you will give terumah, you will set a part apart, just like terumot goren [terumah from the threshing floor]. So we already know that there's terumot goren that you give from the first grain, and it's still grain. Now when you bake, it's another stage, and you give again the first of that, and you give it to Hashem. Later we'll find out that this Hashem means it goes to the kohen [priest], this is not said here, this is said later, after Parshat Korach.

That's the mitzvah of challah. Now there's one more mitzvah, and this mitzvah also in some—

Whenever you make a Challah, not only when you bring a Korban, whenever you bake bread or something, when you eat from the bread of the land, right? **V'acholchem m'lechem ha'aretz** [And when you eat from the bread of the land], you bring Terumah, you will bring the beginning, the beginning.

Now, this beginning can be interpreted in many ways. I said, whenever you bring bread, maybe it means the first bread of

the season, like we had something similar, which is the Korban Omer, which is basically the first bread or the first harvest of the season. Or Chazal interpreted it at least as being the first of every time you bake bread. You will give Terumah, you will set a part apart, just like Terumas Goren, so we already know that there's Terumas Goren that you give from the first grain, and it's still grain. Now, when you bake, it's another stage, and you give again the first of that, and you give it to Hashem.

Later, we'll find out that this Hashem means it goes to the Kohen, and this is not said here, this is said later, after Parashat Korach. That's the mitzvah of Challah.

Laws of Korbanos for Unintentional Sin (Shogeg)

Now, there's one more mitzvah, and this mitzvah also, in some sense, is already said in Parashat Naso, we had something very similar, but it's again, one thing that gets added here very clearly is this concept of the Ger, the stranger that has the same law for him, and it's a story of the Korbanos that comes. Also we had it already in Parashat Naso, and we also had it already in Parashat Vayikra, something similar, and to figure out if there's contradictions, if they say the same thing, is a whole job for itself, but we're just going to read what it says here, which is that there's a Korban, again, there's more laws of Korbanos, but it's Korbanos that come if you **b'shogeg** [unintentionally].

Understanding Shogeg

I don't think that should be entirely interpreted as something by mistake, but by some kind of, not, something distinct from, by full will, by full choice, something not by choice, not by intentionally, unintentionally, did in the mitzvah.

And so it says, and it starts like this: if you by mistake, or if you're b'shogeg, didn't do any mitzvah that Hashem commanded you, didn't do any mitzvah from the first day that Hashem started commanding mitzvah until this day, that's how I read this first passage.

When the Entire Community Sins

Then like this, it depends, who did this Aveira? I'm saying Aveira, and the Torah doesn't say mitzvah, it doesn't say Aveira, it doesn't have this concept, it says you will not do one of the mitzvot that Hashem said that you should do, or you did do something He said you shouldn't do, we assume that it's the same thing.

So it's like this: if it's the whole community that made the mistake, Eidah, Eidah means, we have the Eidah many times here, Eidah is the community, the people, the elders at the side, then you will bring a Par [ox], you will bring a full ox, and with his Mincha and his Nesach, as we just learned, and a Se'ir [goat], two animals, an ox and a Se'ir, you will have to bring for a Chatas [sin offering], and the Kohen will be mechaper [atone] for that, and then they will be forgiven, because it was b'shogeg, and they've done their duty to bring a Korban, and the Torah sort of like gives Hashem's part in the story, and it will be forgiven for them, for the people, for the congregation, for the Eidah, and for the stranger, because they did it b'shogeg.

That's when the entire community made a sin.

When an Individual Sins

What if one person did a sin, one soul, or nefesh achat [one soul], that doesn't have to mean one soul, one individual did it, then it doesn't bring a Par and a Se'ir, that's a very big Korban, right, for a big group of people, and the same thing, the Kohen

will atone for him, and this is the same thing, the same law for an Ezech [citizen], for a citizen, or for a stranger, the same law.

Beyad Ramah — Intentional, Defiant Sin

Now, this was all, if you did something b'shogeg, unintentionally, or inadvertently, or unknowingly, different meanings of the word b'shogeg. What if you do it on purpose?

The Term Beyad Ramah

And here we don't have the word Meizid, Meizid is language of Chazal. **Parshas Beshalach, u'vnei Yisrael yotzim mi'Mitzrayim beyad ramah** [and the children of Israel left Egypt with a raised arm] — so very interesting, this seems to have a connection, our freedom is that we went out of Mitzrayim beyad ramah, but that doesn't give us the freedom to go against the mitzvot beyad ramah.

Megadef — Blaspheming God

Now, also, it doesn't matter whether he's a stranger or a citizen, that is Hashem is megadef [blaspheming], he's blaspheming God. So we remember, we already had a story in Parashat Emor, about someone who is megadef et Hashem. Megadef et Hashem is a more general thing, over there was specifically someone who we say blesses, or does the opposite of blessing to God, and we explained it over there.

But here we see that anytime someone disobeys in a very blatant way, not that there's inadvertently, or unknowingly, or some other way, he had a great passion, and therefore couldn't overcome himself, which might also be considered a kind of shogeg, you see the jumping here from shogeg and anything in between, it could be that shogeg includes all of that. Of course, Halachah will make more categories in between this, but in the Torah here, there's only these two categories.

The Porek Ol — One Who Throws Off the Yoke

But someone who is entirely beyad ramah, beyad ramah is the definition for this, someone who says, this law doesn't exist for me, then, there's no Korban for that, the Korban will not happen, and of course we had the law of Karet [being cut off] in many specific mitzvot before now, now we see that in some sense, Karet is a punishment for blasphemy, someone who is what we call a Porek Ol [one who throws off the yoke], someone who says, I don't care, not only he didn't have Yirah [fear], and then there's a Korban, there's different solutions for that, someone who is not beyad ramah, in the way of great independence, he declares independence from the Torah, then, he will not have a Korban, but he will be cut off.

The Explanation for Karet

That's what it says, don't say cut off from what, will be cut off, and there's an explanation, just like there's an explanation for why the people who did a sin inadvertently can get atoned by the Korban, and so on, and here there's an explanation for why this person cannot get atoned by a Korban, because he denigrated, he insulted the word of God, he destroyed, he disobeyed his command, therefore he will be cut off, his sin is in him.

A sin being on someone is like saying he's still guilty, other than when we say a sin that's taken away, then we say, someone who atones for someone, he will be lifted of the burden of the sin from him, just means your sin is still in you, and therefore there isn't a solution for you, there isn't any Teshuvah in this Parashah for a shogeg, for a Meizid, for

someone who does beyad ramah, that's an important point, this is about Korbonot, and there's no Korban that solves that.

The Story of the Mekoshesh Etzim — Gathering Wood on Shabbat

Okay, now we have another, you see here I went back to the story of the Midbar, maybe we should really think this as part of the law, it's a story with a law, some of the laws here are given in the context of a story, in the context of a question where they didn't know what to do, and they got the answer, and that answer becomes a law, a set law, although it doesn't say entirely here that it's a set law, it's only presented as a story, but I think we should understand that this is a set law.

Finding the Violator

So what happens is, there's a story, that's why the story is here, because this is belonging in the stories of the Midbar, and they found someone gathering sticks, gathering woods, on Shabbat.

Of course, we didn't have until now, and also not now, a definition of what exactly it means to do Melachah [work] on Shabbat, what kind of work, what is considered work on Shabbat, and the Torah just said many times, many variations how you have to rest on Shabbat, you and everyone else, we never had an explanation, it seems to be that it's obvious, whoever found him, gathering sticks, whatever exactly you translate the word Eitzim [wood], is obviously not resting on Shabbat, that's not a question, that was never the question that they had.

Of course, the Mefarshim [commentators], the Chachamim, argue which Melachah this is, but in the Torah we don't see this discussion, it's obvious that that's not.

The Question: What Is the Punishment?

Now, they just don't know what to do, what they don't know is something else, they find him, they bring him to the congregation, in other words, they decide the laws that set the behavior for everyone, and they sort of ask him, okay, what do we do? We found someone disobeying this law of Shabbat, what do we do?

It just connects of course with what we just came from, that someone who disobeys a law, but until now we didn't really have a punishment, we had many things, some things that had Karet, some other punishments we had, but over here they did not know what the punishment is, therefore they put him in prison, in a guarded place, what we call a prison, or maybe a jail, somewhere where you're waiting for what's going to happen to you, because it was not told, it was not clarified to them what to do.

Hashem's Answer: Death by Stoning

And we don't have the intermediate, by the people from Pesach Sheni, we had this intermediate where Moshe goes to Hashem and tells them, here it wasn't like a question, it wasn't like someone asking, just the people found it, and he tells them what to do, he tells them he has to be put to death, and also in a specific way, he has to be stoned with stones, everyone, Kol HaEidah [the entire congregation], again, Kol HaEidah means whoever is in charge, outside of the camp.

Execution Outside the Camp

That's what you've done, you don't do executions, it's interesting in executions, although here there are public executions, Kol HaEidah, in some level of publicity at least, it's not done inside the Machaneh [camp], maybe because the Machaneh as we've said earlier that's what they do, they take

him out of the camp, and they stone him with stones, I'm repeating it twice, stoning him with stones, or throw stones at him, it may be a better translation, as Hashem told Moshe.

The Significance of This Story

And we should assume that this is the punishment for being Mechaleh Shabbat [desecrating Shabbat], not only at that one time, but this is an important story, it's a story of Moshe, applying capital punishment — it wouldn't be a story of Moshe himself doing this, but it's also a story in our context of some laws being not defined enough and then needing to get a definition.

Of course what happens to this day, like after the Torah is finished, after there's no Moshe, and that should help us tell laws that are underspecified, that's a question that will be discussed maybe in some sense, with the question.

Transition to the Next Mitzvah

Now, one more mitzvah in this series, and back to something that's for sure a mitzvah, there's no story about it, but again, it can be connected to the question of before. A second ago we had the story, the concept that we might forget, we might inadvertently do a mitzvah, there might be some ways, different ways of doing a mitzvah unintentionally, so now we have doing an Aveirah, not following a mitzvah.

The Mitzvah of Tzitzis: A Solution to Unintentional Transgression

Okay. Now, one more mitzvah in this series, and back to something that's for sure a mitzvah, there's no story about it, not entirely clear what it's doing, but it's, again, can be connected to the question of before.

A second ago we had the story, the concept that some of you might forget, we might inadvertently do a mitzvah, there might be some ways, different ways of doing a mitzvah unintentionally. And now we have doing a vedah [transgression], right, not following a mitzvah unintentionally. So now we have some kind of solution to that problem — a special mitzvah that solves the problem of doing mitzvahs unintentionally.

The Command to Make Tzitzis

And there's Hashem telling Moshe, tell the people there's a new law, new mitzvah, never heard of this mitzvah, you should make tzitzis on the **kanfeh** [extremities], on the extremities. We translate kanfeh as the corners, I don't think that's literal meaning. Kanfeh, kanfeh is an image that's said on clothing just like in the same way as we have a bird has wings, or we say sometimes a house has wings, right, the west wing of a building. It's like the extremities of it, might be the corners but not necessarily the corners, and the extremities of their clothing, for the generations always, they will make tzitzis and on the tzitzis they will **psot a psil techeiles** [place a thread of techeiles].

Techeiles: Expanding Kedushah from the Kohanim to All Israel

Psil techeiles of course remember from the **Begodim of the Kohanim Godol** [garments of the High Priest], from the Parshat Shavuah in the Tzaveh, and over here, every person — this is again something that connects very much with the theme of Sefer Midbar as we've discussed, which is to expansion of the Kedushah, of the Kahuna, of the Besamikdash [Beis Hamikdash — the Temple] for everyone. So there's **techeiles, techeiles va'agaman** [techeiles and

purple] and so on, which all of the Kohanim have, but now there's a **psil techeiles**, one psil techeiles at least on the extremity of the **Begodim** [garments] that every person has, every yid has.

Memory in Reverse: Reminding Us About Hashem's Mitzvos

And the point of this will be very interesting, just like the point of the **Big Dekonim** [priestly garments] will be, was to make God remember us, **vaylechem lezeh kodem** [and they shall be for a remembrance before], different ways of remembrance, so by the tzitzis, by the **choyishen** [choshen — breastplate], by the **eifed** [ephod] and so on. Over here also, the tzitzis has some function of memory, but it's kind of the opposite memory. Instead of reminding Hashem about us, it's reminding us about Hashem's mitzvahs. So not saying you will have tzitzis, then you will see them, and by seeing it, you'll remember all of the mitzvahs and you will do them.

V'lo Sasuru: The Yetzer Hara and Straying After Eyes and Heart

And you will not go, or not, **vaylech ha'sud** [v'lo sasuru — and you shall not stray], it's very interesting, it's the same verb, and it's only two times that it's used in the Torah, you will not be, I don't know how we translate it, a spy, or binimshach, go after your eyes and your heart, which you are **zoinim** [straying/committing infidelity], like a kind of **znos** [infidelity], so maybe a kind of like straying from the path or getting distracted from the correct way, after them.

So this is assuming that, here's one of the sources in the Torah for the concept of something like a **yetzir hara** [yetzer hara —

evil inclination], something like, there's reasons, like we said, there's something that kozes v'chisish g'v'leisah, sometimes we just forget, or we just get distracted by your eyes and your hearts, or human desires, and this yetzir is supposed to be a remembrance against death, it's supposed to help us have that not happen, and therefore we'll do all the mitzvahs.

Vihyisem Kedoshim: The Signature of Hashem

Yisam k'doyshim [vihyisem kedoshim — you shall be holy], this calls us all the way back to Parshat K'doyshim [Parashas Kedoshim], where the framing of many mitzvahs was, you will be **k'doyshim** [kedoshim — holy] to Hashem, you will be special, you will be holy, whatever exactly we translate the word k'doyshim.

And here we have the signature, the signature that is the kind way Hashem signs off on every mitzvah, **ani yash** [Ani Hashem — I am Hashem], **u'tekos erav mitzrayim** [asher hotzeisi eschem me'erezt Mitzrayim — who took you out from the land of Egypt], to be your God, I am Hashem, your God. And this of course is a signature on this whole — of course Chazal interpreted it as being specifically on Parshat K'doyshim, but the way I've explained it is, there's some grouping here, even the story of the **mikoshesh** [the wood gatherer], we can understand it, but of course everything else, there's some grouping here, and this is Hashem signing off and finishing all of these Parshat K'doyshim by proclaiming who He is, and therefore you should do His mitzvahs, right, or this is from where it comes.

So that's the end of chapter 15.