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Shekalim Daf 2

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Background to Shekalim

The Torah at the beginning of Parshas Ki Sisa commands us the mitzva of giving *shekalim*, where each male aged twenty and above must give half of the *shekel* coin. These donations will go towards the purchase of the numerous public *korbonos* that will be brought throughout the year. The Beis Hamikdosh had other expenses which were covered by the *shekalim*, such as the ingredients for the *ketores* and the *lechem haponim*, as well as the wages for those who produced them.

The Time of the Giving of the Shekalim

The *Mishna* starts by telling us that on the first day of Adar, Beis Din would send out messengers to every city with a Jewish population, reminding the people to give their *machatzis hashekel*.

On the first of Adar proclamation is made regarding the *shekalim* and *kilayim* (*the prohibition against planting together different species of vegetables, fruit or seeds – the proclamation serves as a warning to uproot any shoots of other seeds that appear among the grain*).

On the fifteenth of Adar, they read the Megillah in the walled cities and they would be sent out to repair the roads, fix the streets, measure the mikvaos (*ensuring that they contained forty se’ah of water, and fix*

them), attend to all the needs of the public, and they would also go out to inspect the fields for *kilayim*. (2a)

The Gemora asks: Why did they proclaim on the first of Adar regarding the *shekalim*?

The Gemora answers: The Jews had to bring the *shekalim* in their designated time, so that the funds for the public offerings brought during the new year would be withdrawn from the new annual contributions in its proper time, on the first of Nissan.

The Gemora offers two reasons why specifically this date. The first opinion is of Rabbi Shmuel bar Rav Yitzchok, who says that this donation should take place on the same date of the inauguration of the Mishkon. In Parshas Pekudei, the Torah writes that the Mishkon was inaugurated on Rosh Chodesh Nissan.

Rabbi Tavi in the name of Rabbi Yoshiya quoted Rav Kahana's opinion that there is a *gezeirah shavah* between the word “*chodshei*” used in *kiddush hachodesh* (referring to Rosh Chodesh Nissan,) and the word “*chodshei*” used in general *korbonos*. Therefore, the Beis Hamikdosh’s supply of *korbonos* should be replenished on Rosh Chodesh Nissan.

Rabbi Yonah noted that Rabbi Tavi omitted the first half of the *braisa*. If we only had the second half of

the *braisa* that Rabbi Tavi brought, then it would appear that one would be obligated to donate a *machatzis hashekel* **every** month of the year. The *braisa* continued by negating that, but suggesting that one could donate the half *shekel* at **any** month one chose. Until the *braisa* concluded, based on this *gezeirah shavah*, that the mitzvah can only be performed in Nissan.

Rav Huna explains that the word ‘mashmi’in’ means to proclaim. The *Gemora* cites a Scriptural source proving that there was a custom to remind people to bring the *shekalim*. (2a)

Which Adar?

There is a *Mishna* which states: The only differences between Adar I and Adar II are *mikra megila* and *matanos l’evyonim*.”

Rabbi Simon said in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi: The announcement of the *shekalim*, and the announcement to uproot *kilayim* is also a difference between them (and these proclamations are made in the second Adar). Rabbi Chelbo, Rav Huna and Rav in the name of Rabbi Chiya the Great said that all people fulfill their obligation (of reading the Meggillah) on the fourteenth (of Adar), for that is its time.

Rabbi Yosi supports this statement (of R’ Yehoshua ben Levi) since there are sixty days from Rosh Chodesh Adar I until Rosh Chodesh Nissan. If the people were warned about *shekalim* this early, they may forget to do it in the right time. The same is true for *kilayim*. On Rosh Chodesh Adar I, the shoots are too ripe, and it’s quite difficult to tell which are *kilayim*. Therefore, the announcement of the *shekalim* and *kilayim* should be done on Rosh

Chodesh Adar II, only one month prior to Nissan. (2a – 2b)

Mussar That Can Be Learned From the Behavior of Klal Yisroel

When the Torah commanded the Bnei Yisroel to build the Mishkan, it records that only the "*nedivei lev*" (generous donors) came forth and donated their precious jewelry. However, in contrast with the *Chet Ha’egel* (the sin of the Golden Calf), the Torah says that the entire nation parted with their jewelry.

Similarly, Moshe Rabbeinu had to force the Jews to approach Har Sinai, but when it came down to the Meraglim (the sin of the Spies), everyone approached Moshe Rabbeinu to approve of the sending of the spies.

Thirdly, when Bnei Yisroel crossed the Yam Suf (the Reed Sea), Moshe Rabbeinu started singing the Shira, and only afterwards did the entire Jewish nation join. However, when the Meraglim returned with their negative report of Eretz Yisroel, the Torah records that everyone cried simultaneously.

And finally, Tzefania Hanavi admonished the Jews for rising early to worship the Egel, but when it came time to donate to the Mishkan, they did so later on in the morning.

Rabbi Yosi bar Chanina looks at the events in a more positive way. The Jews donated towards the Mishkan as a *kapora* (atonement) for their actions during the Chet Ha’Egel. (2b)

For What Were the Shekalim Used?

In both Parshas Teruma (where the Torah talks about building the Mishkan,) and Parshas Ki Sissa (where

the Torah talks about the *machatzis hashekel*,) the word *terumah* is mentioned three times. The Gemora learns that this teaches us that three donations were given: 1) for the Mishkan's building, 2) for the various *korbonos*, and 3) for the *adanim* (the base of the Mishkan's *krashim* pillars.) (2b)

More Details About Adar II

The *Mishna* said that *mikra megila* takes place on the **fifteenth** of Adar, and the Gemora immediately noticed that this contradicts general knowledge that the Megillah is read on the fourteenth.

The Gemora answers that our *Mishna* refers to the inhabitants of walled cities from the time of Yehoshua Bin Nun, who are required to read on the fifteenth. The *Mishna* is hinting to us that the mitzvos that occur on the fifteenth of Adar (such as the announcement of the *shekalim* and *kilayim*) – must be performed on Adar II. The only exceptions are eulogizing and fasting, which cannot be done on the fourteenth of both months of Adar.

There is one more difference (about which Adar) concerning the dating of documents. The Gemora brings a *machlokes* (argument) between Rav Meir and Rav Yehuda. Rav Meir holds that one (when writing a contract) must write “Adar I” during the first Adar, but just plain “Adar” during the second, as the assumed Adar is the second. Rav Yehuda on the other hand, maintains that the assumed Adar is the first one, and “Adar II” must be specified during the second month. (2b – 3a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

The Cheshek Shlomo wants to understand the exact procedure of the proclamation of the *shekalim*. He

believes that even in the times of the Beis Hamikdosh – when *shekalim* were actually donated – every shul read Parshas *Shekalim* on Rosh Chodesh Adar, thereby publicly proclaiming the upcoming mitzvah.

He also notes that it seems from Rashi in Meseches Megilla (about Parshas *Shekalim*) that messengers actually travelled from city to city to tell the Jews about the *shekalim*. (The Korban Ha'edah on our *Mishna*, and the Targum Rav Yosef on the *posuk* in Divrei Hayamim that the Gemora brings as a proof, both seem to say this latter point as well.)

If so, asks the Cheshek Shlomo, why did they proclaim twice, both messengers and the reading of the Torah?

He answers that the messengers were needed for those small towns that had a population of less than ten, and couldn't read from the Torah. And even in the larger cities where the Torah was read, the reading provided them with the details of the mitzvah.

The Sefer Hachinuch seems to disagree with this approach. He writes at the end of Mitzva 105, “And now, due to our many sins, that we don't have a Beis Hamikdosh and *shekalim*, the entire Jewish nation has been accustomed **to remember this matter** by reading every year in shul this parsha.” According to the Chinuch, Parshas *Shekalim* is categorized as a *zecher l'churban*, and not that actual proclamation required by the *Mishna*, as was suggested by the Cheshek Shlomo.

Introduction to Maseches Shekalim Talmud Yerushalmi

With the onset of Maseches *Shekalim*, we turn our attention from the cycle of Talmud Bavli to the single tractate of Talmud Yerushalmi studied in the course of Daf Yomi. Many tractates of *Mishnayos*, such as *Shekalim* and most of Seder Zeraim, have a Talmud Yerushalmi commentary, but no Talmud Bavli. Among them all, *Shekalim* alone was included in the Vilna printing of Talmud Bavli for some reason. Thereby, Yerushalmi *Shekalim* merited to be included in the study of Talmud Bavli Daf Yomi as well.

For the next twenty one days, we will become familiar with the unique form of Aramaic language found in the Yerushalmi, and with a host of many Amoraim from Eretz Yisroel, whose names do not appear in the Talmud Bavli. Unfortunately, we lack here the commentaries of Rashi, Tosefos and the other Rishonim whose light guides our path throughout the Talmud Bavli. However, other commentaries were written in later generations, such as *Korban Eida*, by R' David of Dessoi; *Pnei Moshe*, by R' Moshe Margolis of Vilna, and *Taklin Chaditin*, by R' Yisroel of Shakalov, student of the Vilna Gaon; and *Pei'as HaShulchan* and *Pnei Zakein* by R' Yitzchak Isaac Saprin, the first Kamorna Rebbe *zt"l*.

Machatzis HaShekel

As its name implies, Maseches *Shekalim* deals primarily with the mitzva of machatzis hashekel. Each Jewish man was required by Torah law to bring half a shekel to the Beis HaMikdash each year, to pay for the communal korbanos. The overseers of the Beis HaMikdash regularly took sums of money, entitled "*terumas halishka*," from this fund to pay for the korbanos. Money that was left over was used for other expenses of the Beis HaMikdash.

Overview of the masechta

The first chapter deals with the obligation to give machatzis hashekel, the manner in which it was collected, and the *kalbon*: the exchange fee that was collected when two people brought a whole shekel together.

The second chapter adds certain details about the obligation to give machatzis hashekel. It also discusses what was done with left over money that had been donated for machatzis hashekel or for other korbanos, but not needed for that purpose.

The third chapter discusses the *terumas halishka*, mentioned above.

The fourth chapter discusses how the *machatzis hashekel* money was used. Other details of korbanos are also discussed here.

From here on, the masechta digresses from the topic of *shekalim*, to discuss other matters pertaining to the Beis HaMikdash.

The fifth chapter lists the people who were appointed to supervise the various duties of the kohanim. It also discusses how an individual goes about purchasing a korban.

The sixth chapter discusses the boxes used to store money in the Beis HaMikdash, the tables, the places where people were required to prostrate themselves, and commitments made for the sake of korbanos.

The seventh chapter discusses animals, money or meat found in Yerushalayim; and several details relevant to sanctifying things for the sake of the Beis HaMikdash.



The eighth and final chapter continues the discussion of articles found in Yerushalayim, in regard to maintaining the purity required there.

The order of the masechtos

Shekalim is found after Pesachim in the order of *Mishnayos*, before Seder Moed continues with the other Yomim Tovim, in Masechtos Yoma, Sukka and so on.

The Rambam (introduction to his commentary on the *Mishna*) explains that this follows the order found in the Torah. First Pesach is discussed in Parshas Bo, then *Shekalim* in Parshas Ki Sisa, and then the other Yomim Tovim, in Parshas Emor.

Rav Sherira Gaon offers a different explanation. Each year, the Machatzis HaShekel was collected during Adar and first used in the Beis HaMikdash in Nissan. Therefore, it is relevant to Pesachim, and placed subsequently (introduction of Tosfos Yom Tov).

It is interesting to note that although the *Mishnayos* and the Talmud Bavli follow this order, in the Talmud Yerushalmi *Shekalim* appears after Yoma.

CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SHEKALIM AND KILAYIM

The *Mishna* states: On the first of Adar proclamation is made regarding the *shekalim* and *kilayim*. What is the connection between the *shekalim* and *kilayim*?

The Satmar Rebbe used to say: It is well known that the obligation to donate a half-shekel to the Beis Hamikdash and not a whole shekel implies that a person is not complete by himself. He must join together with other Jews and only then will he be considered a whole person.

At the same time, one must be wary about bonding with a wicked person. It is written in Avos d'Reb Nosson (30:3): One who unites with an evil person even if he himself does not engage in the same manner as him will receive punishment similar to the retribution that will be administered to the wicked person. One who unites with a righteous person even if he himself does not perform virtuous acts will receive reward similar to the reward of the righteous person.

The proclamation and inspecting of the kilayim is to promote this concept. The Torah prohibits various mixtures of crops from growing together, so too, one must be careful as to whom his friends are.

Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum quotes from Horav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld. He explains that a person must strive to cultivate relationships. As the Tanna says in Pirkei Avos 1:6, Knei lecha chaver, "Acquire for yourself a friend." One who lives as an individual lives as an incomplete person. He is missing a part of himself. Nonetheless, one must maintain criteria with regard to his relationships. He must be sure to associate only with those people who are appropriate. Just as certain admixtures of crops are forbidden, so, too, is it unwise to develop an affiliation with people of questionable or incompatible character. The positive effect of a good friend - and, conversely, the negative effect of a bad friend - cannot be emphasized enough.

Dr. Nosson Chayim Leff cites a Sfas Emes who offers a different explanation. "On the first day of Adar, we inform people about their obligation to donate a half shekel to the Beis HaMikdash and about kilayim (that is, the obligation, when planting one's field, to avoid



mixing seeds of different plants, such as grapes and wheat)."

The Sfas Emes poses a basic question: Why were these announcements made specifically in the month of Adar?

The Sfas Emes answers that the month of Adar resembles the month of Elul in certain important ways. We know that Elul is the month before the end of one year and the beginning of a new year that begins with Rosh Hashana. Thus its position as a potential turning point in our lives makes Elul a propitious time for doing teshuva, for repenting. So, too, the Sfas Emes tells us, the month of Adar immediately precedes the new year that begins in Nisan. Thus, Adar is also well placed for a person to look inside himself and do teshuva. Because of its importance, Adar is a good time for making the key announcements mentioned in the *Mishna*.

But, notes the Sfas Emes, there is an important difference between teshuva in Adar and teshuva in Elul. In Elul, we do teshuva from yirah (fear or a sense of awe). By contrast, in Adar, we can more easily do teshuva out of a sense of love (ahava) for HaShem. Indeed, that is why we experience heightened joy, simcha - in Adar. When Adar comes, our expansiveness and good feeling toward HaShem increase. That is the reason for our obligation to donate half a shekel to the Beis HaMikdosh. Obviously HaShem does not need our donations. What He wants is to give us the opportunity to awaken our good feelings and dedication toward Him. (Note, incidentally, that the Sfas Emes has just given us a whole new perspective on giving tzedaka. The conventional view sees us giving tzedaka because

of our commitment to observe mitzvos. Ultimately, love for HaShem may enter the process. But that happens only if we work on ourselves diligently enough to do the mitzva not by rote and or out of social pressure but rather because of our love for HaShem. By contrast, the Sfas Emes sees the process as beginning from our love and good feelings to HaShem.)

Every Jew has within him a latent devotion to HaShem. What we need is an activity to express that devotion. The obligation to give the half shekel to the Beis Hamikdosh provides such an opportunity. And because Adar gives us an opportunity to express that love for HaShem, we feel more joy!

At this point, the Sfas Emes injects a note of severe caution into the ma'amar by citing a dvar Torah from his grandfather, the Chidushei Harim. The pasuk in Shir HaShirim (7:2) says: "Mah yafu pe'ahmayich bane'alim, bas nadiv." (ArtScroll: "But your footsteps were so lovely when shod in pilgrim's sandals, O daughter of nobles.").

The Chidushei HaRim read this pasuk in the following non-pshat manner: The generosity and expansiveness of spirit (he is reading "pe'ahmahyich as "pulse rate," i.e., "spirit") of the Jewish people as the descendants of Avraham Avinu (whose great chesed and magnanimity entitled him to the sobriquet "the Nadiv," i.e., the "benefactor") is so great that it must be locked up ("min'al" = lock). That is, this love can be so overpowering that it has to be watched and controlled lest it go outside, i.e., be misdirected. (Anyone familiar with the devotion and love that too many Jews in Russia and Poland

harbored for communism will concur in this comment of the Chidushei HaRim.)

The Sfas Emes continues, addressing a question that may have bothered you earlier. The *Mishna* quoted above juxtaposes two things. First, it specifies awakening people's hearts to nedivus, expansiveness. The *Mishna* conveys his message by requiring all of us to make a donation to the Beis Hamikdosh. Then the *Mishna* warns us to be careful to avoid kilayim. What is the connection between these two items in the *Mishna*?

The Sfas Emes answers this question by offering us a non-pshat reading of the word 'kilayim'. He reads the word as an allusion to "locking up" (as in "beis ha'kela" = prison). People must be warned to be careful with their idealism and generosity.

The Sfas Emes concludes: Every year when we read the parsha of *Shekalim*, our hearts are awakened to give all to HaShem. Unfortunately, we do not have the Beis HaMikdosh and thus cannot give our all as an offering. But in any case, HaShem's love for us is awakened, and we can do teshuva with simcha.

I saw another explanation offered by the members of the St. Louis Kollel. The Talmud in Megillah 13b states in the name of Rish Lakish, "It was well known beforehand to Him at Whose word the world came into being, that Haman would one day pay shekels for the destruction of Israel. Therefore, he anticipated his shekels with those of Israel, and so, we have learned "on the first of Adar, a proclamation is made regarding the *shekalim* and the mixed seeds (kilayim).

The Shem MiShmuel explains the connection between the shekels of Bnei Yisroel and those of Haman. He cites his father who says that the mitzvah of *shekalim* alludes to the giving over of a person's ten powers for the love of Hashem. (See Gur Aryeh, beginning of Parshas Terumah.) The shekel weighed ten gairah, an allusion to these ten powers a person possesses. It was from silver, kesef, which comes from the word nichsapha, desire or longing. The giving over the silver shekel represented the desire to give over, in love these ten powers. Haman's main intent was not to merely wipe out Bnei Yisroel for the sake of eradicating them. Rather, his intent was that the seventy nations of the world should take over Bnei Yisroel's role in the world and replace them in their special relationship to Hashem. His *shekalim* therefore, were very similar in intent to Beni Yisroel's. He handed over a fortune to Achashverosh in order to bring about the replacement of Bnei Yisroel by the 70 nations. His *shekalim* were also given over, as if to say, in love of Hashem. "*Shekalim*" comes from the word "to weigh." Hashem weighed the pure intent of Bnei Yisroel, in contrast to Haman's intent that was not completely pure. His underlying intent was really to destroy Yisroel, and it was only clothed with the intent of the 70 nations gaining a closer relationship with Hashem.

This explains the connection in the *Mishna* between *shekalim* and the prohibition to mix seeds (kilayim). The *shekalim* have to be pure without any mixed intentions. Our avoda during Adar is to purify our intentions that we should truly desire to give over of ourselves all our powers for Hashem's service, without any selfishness.