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Shekalim Daf 4

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamah of

**Tzvi Gershon Ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o”h**

May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for his neshamah and may his soul find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

## The Kalbon

The *Mishna* introduces the *kalbon*, a small service fee paid to the money changers by each person who donates a *machtzis hashekel*. The reason why the Torah requires this additional *kalbon* is since the pasuk writes “They will give *this*”, a full half shekel value. If one were to figure in the changers' fee, then the amount donated will be short of the requirement. Therefore, the Torah added the *kalbon* to compensate for the service. (3b)

### **Who is obligated in giving the kalbon?**

Everyone who is obligated in the *machtzis hashekel* is obligated in the *kalbon*. However, one who is obligated in the *kalbon* (such as a Yisroel or a Levi) that changes the coin on behalf of someone who is exempt (such as a Kohen or a woman), he himself is also exempt from that *kalbon*.

There's a disagreement between Rav Meir and the Chachomim concerning how many *kalbons* are required when one person donates for himself and someone else, where the Chachomim require just one *kalbon*, and Rav Meir requires two.

One who donates on the behalf of a poor person, a neighbor or a resident of his own city is exempt. As we will see later, the reason is that they are considered having the same account. If the former lent money to the latter, then he is obligated in the *kalbon*, since it's a different account.

Finally, the *Mishna* lists the general rule for who is obligated and who is exempt from the *kalbon*. Brothers (who have together inherited their father), or business

partners who are exempt from Maaser Beheima (tithing of animals), are obligated in the *kalbon*. The rule of Maaser Beheima is that if it's a continuation of a previous state (i.e., when the father was still alive), then they are obligated. But if they purchased the animals from a seller (i.e., it's now a new account), they're exempt from maaser.

The exact opposite is true with the *kalbon*. If they inherited their father, it is a continuation of the previous state, and they must add a *kalbon*. But if they are two separate people going in together, they are exempt from the *kalbon*. (3b – 4a)

### **Demanding the Machtzis Hashekel from children who are exempt**

The *Mishna* opened up by saying that even though we don't take collateral from children who are exempt, if they came forth themselves to donate, we accept their donation.

The Gemora feels that there is a contradiction here. We don't take collateral, but we can demand it from them. On the other hand, if the children donated on their own we accept from them, but surely we don't demand the half shekel.

The Gemora answers that it depends on the maturity of the child. If he is mature (i.e., he has grown two pubic hairs), then we can demand from him. But beforehand, we don't demand. (4a)

## **Accepting korbanos from non-Jews and Cutheans**

The *Mishna* also said that we don't accept the *machtzis hashekel* from non-Jews and Cutheans, and neither do we accept any obligatory *korbanos* from them. They may however bring a voluntary *korban* (a *neder* or *nedova*).

Although the *Mishna* openly said that we don't accept the shekel from neither the non-Jews nor the Cutheans, it only said that we don't accept the obligatory *korbanos* from "them".

The Gemora introduces a disagreement whether "them" refers only to non-Jews, or even to the Cutheans. Rebbi holds that the Cutheans has the same *halachos* as a non-Jew, while Rabban Shimon Ben Gamliel maintains that a Cuthean is like a full fledged Jew. According to Rabban Shimon Ben Gamliel we are forced to say that the first half of the *Mishna* (concerning accepting the shekel) refers to non-Jews and Cutheans, while the second half (concerning accepting the voluntary *korbanos*) refers only to non-Jews. (4a)

### **Can non-Jews donate items to the Beis Hamikdosh?**

Rav Yochanon and Reish Lakish argue about what types of items can a non-Jew donate to the Beis Hamikdosh. Rav Yochanon's opinion is that we can only accept from them non-significant items, and only at the end of the building of the Beis Hamikdosh (in order that they shouldn't be lax in the building later on.) Reish Lakish argues and says that we never accept anything from the non-Jews towards the building of the Beis Hamikdosh. This is based on the *pasuk* that the *Mishna* brings, "You (the non-Jews) have no portion in the building of the House of Hashem." Rav Yochanon explains that this refers to significant donations during the course of the building.

Another *Mishna* says that non-Jews can donate their value to the Beis Hamikdosh. Reish Lakish explains that this does not refer to their own value, but rather to an *Olah korban*, and only when the Jew donated an *Olah* himself, and the non-Jew heard this and said that he'll do the same.

Finally, the Gemora concludes that in either case, the intent is towards Heaven, and the funds are transferred to the *Bedek Habayis* (Beis Hamikdosh fund). (4a – 4b)

### **The coin of fire**

We mentioned earlier that the *kalbon* is meant to compensate for the money changers' service fee, so that the *machtzis hashekel* shall be a full half shekel. The Gemora cites Rabbi Meir who said that Hashem showed Moshe Rabbeinu a coin of fire, to teach him which coin the Jews have to bring. Just like this coin was made completely out of fire, so too the Jews' coins should have nothing lacking. (4b)

### **The general rule of obligation and exemption from the machtzis hashekel**

The Gemora now expounds on the general rule we mentioned earlier. If it is a new account, then the partners are exempt from giving *Maaser Beheima* (one animal out of ten), but are obligated to give the *machtzis hashekel*. And if it's an existing account (such as brothers who have inherited their father), they are obligated to give *Maaser Beheima*, and are exempt from the *machtzis hashekel*.

The Gemora questions why we can't find a case where both are obligated (such as when the brothers divided up the their father's possessions, but not his animals, where in this case they are obligated in both the *kalbon* and *Maaser Beheima*, since it's a new account for the *kalbon*, and an existing account for the animals. Conversely, if they divided up the animals but not the other monetary possessions, they would be exempt from both the *kalbon* and the *Maaser*.)

The Gemora answers that this would only be true if most of the inheritance was comprised of animals, but if the majority was made of monetary possessions, then the Kalban and Maaser Beheima principle would apply. (4b)

## INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

### *Value of the Shekel*

The above-mentioned medrash about the coin of fire allows for another interpretation in the reason for the *kalbon*. The reason we have been citing is the service fee for the money changers. But another reason is that the shekel coin's value during the generation that received the Torah has depreciated in later generations, and therefore one must add a little extra money to reach a full Torah shekel value. This is the unique opinion (daas yochid) of Rav Meir.

The Torah Temima points us to a Tosafos in Menachos 29a. The Gemora there lists three things that Hashem showed Moshe: the Menorah; Rosh Chodesh; and *tumas sherotzim*. All three contain the word "zeh" (this), meaning that Hashem showed Moshe exactly what He meant (due to the difficulties in comprehension of these mitzvos). Tosafos asks why this Gemora doesn't include our shekolim, where the same word "zeh" is used, which is the source of our Gemora's medrash. Tosafos offers a few answers (including that Moshe Rabbeinu couldn't fathom how such a small monetary amount can atone for the large *chet ha'egel*.)

But the Torah Temima adds his own answer, that it is only Rav Meir who insists that later generations give the full Torah shekel amount. The majority opinion is that one gives the current shekel amount, and therefore the Gemora in Menachos didn't include the coin of fire in its list of the items that Hashem showed Moshe.

## DAILY MASHAL

### *Coin of Fire*

HaShem showed Moshe a coin of fire and told Moshe, they should "give a coin like this." A coin is like a fire, it can do great good, give warmth and light, or harm, burn and destroy.

Daf Digest relates: A man went up to Heaven. His good and bad deeds were weighed and the bad were greater. However, one of the judges noted that the man had once given a coin to a poor family and the coin had saved them. The Heavenly court decided in his favor. Another man in Heaven had his deeds weighed and the good outweighed the bad, but one of the judges recalled that he had stolen a coin from a poor family and they all died. The man should have been condemned, yet the Heavenly judges also decided in his favor. Why? The judges decided to concentrate on the intention of each man. The first man intended to help the family, the second man only intended to steal a single coin. He had no intent to harm a whole family and should not suffer for having done so.

### *The Complexity of the shekel Coin*

By: Rabbi Doniel Stoum

The Yerushalmi (Shekalim 1:4) relates in the name of Rabbi Meir that G-d took out a 'fiery coin' from beneath His Throne of Glory and showed it to Moshe declaring, "like this you shall give". The commentators question why this was necessary. What was so complex about a tax of a half-shekel that Moshe couldn't comprehend without a Divine demonstration?

When G-d commanded that each Jew offer a half-shekel as atonement, it was to symbolize that the physical giving was only half the job. Were they commanded to give a full

shekel, they might feel that the act of giving was itself a complete act and they have now achieved full repentance. The half-shekel reminded them that the remainder of their 'giving' was on a very personal level, within the heart and soul of each individual.

When G-d originally commanded Moshe to instruct the Jews to contribute the half-Shekel, Moshe wondered why they were not expected to give a complete Shekel. G-d showed Moshe a coin of fire to symbolize that indeed each Jew was expected to give a complete Shekel. However the second half of the coin had to emanate from the internal flames of passion within one's heart.

## ***The Soul of Prayer***

By: Rabbi Eliyahu Hoffman

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Hashem showed Moshe a half-shekel coin of fire, taken from beneath the Throne of Glory. "This is what they should give," He said. (Talmud Yerushalmi, Shekalm 1:4)

Apparently Moshe had some difficulty understanding the mitzvah of machtzis ha-shekel, donation of a half-shekel, until Hashem was forced to demonstrate it to him. We find similar comments regarding the construction of the Menorah and consecrating the new moon. However, those cases are indeed complex, whereas giving a half-shekel coin seems like a pretty straightforward mitzvah. What exactly didn't Moshe understand? And why indeed is the mitzvah a half-shekel and not a full one?

Also, it seems funny that the coin was found "beneath the Throne of Glory," not normally the place one would think to look for coins. And why was it made of fire?

Early mefarshim note that the word shekel has the same numerical value (430) as nefesh, spirit – the lowest level of the Jewish soul.

This is significant: The funds collected from the half-shekels were used to purchase communal offerings. Since the destruction of the Beis Ha- Mikdash (Holy Temple), our prayers stand instead of the sacrifices. The word nefesh is connected to prayer: *"I pour out my spirit (nafshi) before Hashem"* (Shmuel-1 1:15). *"To you, Hashem, I pick up my spirit"* (Tehillim/Psalms 25:1). The fact that nefesh and shekel share the same numerical value is not coincidental; it alludes to the fact that the two share one function.

*"And for me, my prayer is to You Hashem, at an acceptable time"* (Tehillim 69:14). Why does the Psalmist begin the verse with the conjunction "and" – implying there's someone else besides 'me'?

Sefer Chasidim (1157-8) writes that every Jew has a malach/mazal (angel) that defends him in prayer before the Heavenly Court, and asks Hashem to accept the prayers of his charge with compassion. This malach also awakens the soul of his guarded one, encouraging him to pour out his heart before Hashem with concentration and enthusiasm.

This malach/mazal, the Bobover Rebbe shlita explains, is not necessarily an angel in the traditional sense. When man's soul is 'hewn from beneath the Throne of Glory' and placed within a body, it doesn't move from one place to the next as would a material object. Rather, it expands its reach from its origin to the body with which it connects.

This, explains the Ba'al Tanya, is the meaning of (Devarim/Deuteronomy 32:9), "For Hashem's portion is His nation; Yaakov is the rope of His inheritance." 'Hashem's portion' refers to the soul, which we are taught is "the G-dly portion within man." The soul is like the rope; no matter how long, it remains tethered to its source.

Thus, the Rebbe explains, the malach which initiates prayer on our behalf, and awakens us to pour out our hearts, is the out-of-body portion of our soul, which remains forever connected to its source – Hashem – and can never be corrupted by our shortcomings. This fits in with the Sefer Chasidim's description of this malach/mazal: Ba'al Tanya writes that man's soul is sometimes referred to as mazal, from nozel, to flow, because it flows from its source beneath the Throne into man's body, and through it all goodness flows from heaven to earth.

This may also explain why even those completely distant from G-d, in their most testing moments, inevitably turn to prayer. Prayer, which stems from the soul, remains intimately connected with its upper source, and is at times the one uncorrupted source of purity in an otherwise tainted existence.

Note that it is shekel which has the same numerical value as nefesh, and not machtzis ha-shekel, the half shekel. The shekel, like the sacrifices it supports, represents prayer. It is half inasmuch as our this-worldly prayer is only part of the picture. Our 'better half' resides beyond our physical existence, keeping us connected with a higher calling.

Perhaps this explains what puzzled Moshe, and Hashem's answer. It was not the 'how' of the half-shekel but the 'why' – why is this mitzvah to be done with a half coin?

Hashem responded by showing him a fiery coin – it is significant that coin (matbeah) is also used by Chazal to represent prayer (kol ha-mishaneh mi- matbeah she-tav'u Chachamim/whoever changes the liturgy from the one established by our Sages...). The coin, which corresponds to the soul (shekel=nefesh), was made from fire: prayer is not something to be done by rote, but rather an expression of the fiery heart, a revelation of man's deepest emotions and desires.

The 'coin' was taken from beneath the Throne of Glory, the source of all Jewish souls. It is only a half coin, because the prayer we express is preceded by the prayer of our upper soul, which stirs our hearts to pray. The month(s) of Adar is a most opportune time to take inventory of our prayers – what we're putting in to the 'pushka' and what we're taking out. Have a good Shabbos. [Based on dvar Torah of the Rebbe, Mishpatim/Shekalim 5766]