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Shekalim Daf 6

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamah of

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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

If a person gathers small coins one by one, and proclaims that “these will go towards my shekel,” Beis Hillel and Beis Shammai are in a disagreement about what to do with any money above the shekel amount, where Beis Hillel maintains that this extra money is *chullin* (non-consecrated), while Beis Shammai holds that it should go towards a *nedova* – a voluntary offering. However, if the person proclaims, “that I will bring from them (will be the shekel)”, than all agree that the remainder is a *nedova* (since the leftovers are included in his proclamation.) (6a1)

When it comes to gathering coins for a *chatas* that one is obligated in bringing, even Beis Hillel agrees that the remainder is considered a *nedova*. Rabbi Shimon says the difference between *shekalim* and *chatas* is that *shekalim* are always a fixed amount (therefore it is possible to say that the remainder will be *chulin*,) contrasted with the *chatas* that has no fixed amount, so the entire sum that he has amassed will be a *nedova*. (6a1)

Rabbi Yehuda brings an historical account that at times when more funding was needed for the Beis Hamikdosh, the Jews brought an amount larger than a half shekel for their donation, so therefore any remaining coins **should** be a *nedova*. Rabbi Shimon answered that even at those times, each Jew brought

the same amount. But any *chatas* can be of a different value. (6a1 – 6a2)

The *Gemora* cites a discussion if Beis Hillel and Beis Shammai are arguing only when the person actually collected the sum coin by coin, or even in a case when his hand reached into a container of coins and grabbed a “random” amount, which was more than a half shekel's worth. (6a3)

Ezra Hasofer proclaimed to the people, “We have established a mitzva to donate a third of a shekel each year towards the House of Hashem.” This verse has been interpreted in the *Gemora* to mean that there was a time in history when the Jews donated three half *shekalim* each year, instead of the normally prescribed half shekel. As long as each Jew donated the same amount, this was permitted to do.

The *Gemora* derives several other lessons from this verse:

1. Beis Din cannot make more than three appeals a year for public donations.
2. The *shekalim* funds were utilized in the Beis Hamikdosh three times a year (before Pesach, before Shavuot, and before Sukkos.)
3. The funds were stored in three containers, and they were all emptied out in sequence.

(These last two points are detailed later in the next chapter.) (6a4)

When Moshe Rabbeinu ascended Har Sinai to bring down the Torah, he told the Jews that he will return in forty days. They didn't realize that his calculation started the following day. So precisely at midday of the fortieth day (of their calculation) when he didn't return, they turned to commit the *chet ha'egel* (the Golden Calf). The Gemora understands that since this sin was committed at the exact half of the day, the proper atonement shall be a half a shekel. Another explanation is that since the sin was done on the sixth hour of the day, the Jews shall donate a half a shekel, equivalent to six Garmasin coins (a currency during the time of Moshe Rabbeinu.)

The Gemora now draws a few other similar comparisons:

1. The Torah writes that a shekel is worth twenty Geras, therefore a half shekel is worth ten Geras, which would atone for the *chet ha'egel* which was a violation of the *Aseres Hadibros* (Ten Commandments.)
2. The brothers sold Yosef for twenty silver coins, and to atone for that sin, each Jew has to redeem his first born son with an amount of silver of the same equivalence. (The mitzva of Pidyon Haben is to give 5 Sela coins to a Kohen, and each Sela is worth 4 Dinars, altogether equaling 20 silver coins.)
3. Ten of the twelve brothers sold Yosef. (There are two opinions on which two weren't present then. One is that neither Binyomin nor Yosef were involved in the sale. The other is that Binyomin and Reuven weren't present.

Yes, Yosef too is at fault, since he instigated their jealousy of him, it is as if he himself was actively involved in his own sale!) Therefore, each Jew has to donate a half shekel (each shekel is worth two silver coins, multiplied by ten equals the twenty coins of the sale.) (6a4 – 6a5)

The Gemora notes (via its arguments, and back-and-forth logical negotiations) several points regarding Kodshim (korbanos), both related and not related to our original topic, of what is done with the surplus of donations.

- If a person set aside the shekel coin, but died before he donated it, that coin will go towards a *nedova*.
- A Kohen Godol who has leftover *asiris ho'eifa* (a mincha flour offering) shall bring this extra flour and dispose of it at sea. (Since one cannot derive benefit from it, but one doesn't transgress the *meila* prohibition either.)
- If the *asiris ho'eifa* belonged to a regular Jew (not the Kohen Godol,) then the remaining flour shall be a *nedova*.
- A Korban Pesach that was slaughtered with the intention of being a Shlomim will be considered Shlomim (since any korbanos that the animal is either a sheep or a goat will be a Shlomim. The two exceptions to this rule are an Olah – which can **also** come from cattle, and an Oshom – which can **only** be a ram, but not a goat.)
- The general rule is that the word “min” (from) comes to limit, and concerning Korban



Pesach, the word “min” limits this Korban that it should come only from a female animal, who is less than two years old. (6b1 – 6b4)

DAILY MASHAL

Atonement of the Shekalim

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

We mentioned that Yosef Hatzaddik is partially to blame for his own sale, since he instigated the matter by arousing his brother's jealousy.

The Ksav Sofer (Al HaTorah) in Parshas Mishpotim (Shmos 22:23) writes a very similar thought. The Torah warns us not to afflict a widow or an orphan, and if they are afflicted and turn to Hashem, Hashem will hear their cries. Hashem will then become angry, and will kill those who hurt these downtrodden people. Subsequently, the children of the oppressors will themselves become orphans, and their wives will be widows.

The Ksav Sofer asks, isn't it obvious that if Hashem kills these men, then their children will become orphans, and their wives widows? He answers with the general rule that anyone who causes someone else to be punished, he himself will also be punished. The widows – who cried to Hashem after being afflicted – have inadvertently caused the oppressors to be killed by Hashem's wrath. Therefore, **they themselves** are now subject to punishment, and their children will too be orphaned.

The Shem mi'Shmuel explains why the commandment to us to bring shekalim could forestall the shekalim of Haman.

We read concerning Amalek, “Asher karkha- who cooled you,” (Dvarim, 25:18) and “they camped in Rephidim” (Shmot, 17:8); where the Jewish avodah became weakened and casual, then there came Amalek. Eisav, Amalek and Haman, were devoted to a cooling of the Avodah of Israel, to a cooling of the relationships of one Jew to the next and to the resultant separation of Israel from Hashem.

We need to understand the discussion (Yerushalmi, Shekalim, 2, halakha 3; Also the Midrash Ki Tisah, 10), as to which sins the shekalim came to atone for.

One said that it was for their error of the Golden Calf that they had made at midday while another said that that had been at the 6th hour of the day.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Rabbi Nechemiah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, as they had transgressed the Ten Commandments, each one in Israel had to bring in atonement, a half shekel, that is a tenth of a gerah in weight.

Rabbi Shimon Ben Levi taught that as they had collectively sinned by selling Rachel's first born for 20 pieces of silver, each descendant of the 10 brothers



had to bring a coin, in memory of their share of the sale price, in atonement.

Those scholars that relate the shekalim to the error of the Golden Calf saw their test as being their inability to serve Hashem even without wisdom or knowledge [that is only with their bodies]. Wisdom and knowledge were missing at that time, either because Satan had caused confusion and ignorance amongst Israel at the absence of Moshe that obviated their wisdom [Israel said, "We do not know what has happened to the man Moshe" (Shmot, 32:1)], or because the number 6 represents the unity of the diverse parts of our bodies, but does not include our wisdom, that is the innermost part of us, represented by the number 7.

Rabbi Shimon ben Levi, who held that the shekel came to atone for the sale of Yosef, argues that that sin was one of the mind and the intellect. They had to judge him with their minds but there occurred a distortion in their intellectual wisdom that led to an error in judgment.

The two aspects that are contained in the shekalim will show that there is no difference between the Sages. There was the numerical element of shekalim and there was the element of the silver in them. The numerical element is reflected in the 6th hour and this refers to the chet haeigel. There is an insistence on silver in the shekalim; "All the hekdeishot may be redeemed [by payment with near money] except for shekalim that have to be brought in silver coins" (Bechorot, 72). This insistence on silver is a reminder of the knowledge and intellect involved in the sin of the selling of Yosef.

The Maharal explains that "You shall love your G-d with all your might, meodekha", [that means as Rashi comments, 'with all your possessions'] refers to our minds, intellect and wisdom since our possessions are at the heart of everything and Mankind is immersed in their possessions. That is why they are called 'Kesef' since our kissuffim, all our yearnings, are for them.

Now we can understand the saying of our Sages, that Hashem commanded us to bring shekalim, to forestall the coins of Haman. In that period, the Jews had committed two sins; one with their bodies, in that they partook of the king's feast and one with their minds and intellect, in that they bowed to the idol. The shekalim atoned both for their bodily sin and for the intellectual one, since they combine both body and mind.