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Shekel or Money?

The *Gemora* notes that the repetition (*of when the Mishna states that ‘these are paid with the holy shekel in the Tyrian maneh*) is needed on account of the cases of one who rapes a woman and one who defames his virgin bride. I might have thought that since *shekalim* is not written in connection with these cases, I might say that mere *zuzim* are sufficient; the *Tanna* therefore informs us that we derive one from the other.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: [All can be redeemed with money or something worth money] with the exception of (*half-*) *shekel* payments, *ma’aser sheini* (*may be redeemed with a minted coin*) and the money used for the appearance offering (*when one appears in the Temple on the three festivals; this korban is bought for two ma’ah, which must be in minted money*).

The *Gemora* cites the sources for each of these *halachos*:

- *Shekel* payments – a *Mishna* states: You (*when bringing the donations from those who lived outside of Yerushalayim*) may exchange *shekels* for gold *darkons* (*which were minted coins*) on account of the burden of the journey (*but coins which are not minted or other objects of value cannot be sent to Yerushalayim, for we are concerned that it will decrease in value and hekdesch will then suffer a loss*).
- *Ma’aser sheini* - it is written: And you shall bind up the money in your hand (*and the Hebrew word itself – ve’tzarta - suggests that the money must have an image impressed on it*).
- And the appearance offering – Rav Yosef taught that this is In order that one may not bring unrefined silver

to the Temple Courtyard (*for perhaps it will not possess the value of two silver ma’ahs, and as a result, he will not be able to purchase a proper offering*). (51a)

Mishna

We may not redeem (*a firstborn*) with slaves, nor with notes of indebtedness (*if one has a bond of five sela’im against a debtor, he cannot give this to the Kohen in payment of the redemption of his son*), nor with real properties, nor with consecrated objects.

If one writes to a *Kohen* that he owes him five *sela’im*, he is obligated to give them to him, although his son is not redeemed through it (*out of concern that people will say that it is permissible to redeem with notes of indebtedness*); therefore, if the *Kohen* wishes to give him back (*the second payment of five sela’im*) as a gift, he is permitted to do so.

If one designated the redemption money of his son and it became lost, he is responsible for it, because it is written: *shall be yours ... you shall surely redeem*. [*The verse implies that only when the Kohen has the redemption money is the firstborn son redeemed.*] (51a)

Manners of Exposition

The *Gemora* notes that our *Mishna* is not in accordance with the opinion of Rebbe, for it has been taught in a *braisa*: Rebbe says that a person can use anything to redeem his firstborn son from the *Kohen*, aside from documents. The Rabbis say: A person can use anything besides for slaves, documents, and land.



The *Gemora* explains Rebbe's reasoning: He expounds the following verse using the "limitation and then an extension" method. *And its redemption from one month old extends. With a value of five shekels of silver limits. You should redeem extends.* This means that everything is included, besides for documents.

The Rabbis, however, derive using the "generalization and a specification" method. *And its redemption from one month old* is a generalization. *With a value of five shekels of silver* is specific. *You should redeem* is a generalization. This means that the rule must be like the specific item. Just like the specific item is something that is movable and it has intrinsic value, so too anything that is movable and has intrinsic value can be used for redemption. This excludes land, as it is not movable. This excludes slaves, as they are compared to land. This also excludes documents, as despite the fact that they are movable, they themselves do not have intrinsic value (*i.e. it is just a piece of paper*).

Ravina asked Ameimar: Does Rebbe indeed derive using the "limitation and then an extension" method? Rebbe uses the "generalization and a specification" method! The *braisa* states: "An awl." How do we know that a sharp piece of wood, a thorn, a needle, a sharp piece of metal, and an engraving tool can also be used? The verse states, "And you will take," implying anything that can be taken in one's hand. These are the words of Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah. Rebbe says: Just as an awl is made of metal, so too, anything made of metal can be used. Alternatively, this includes a great awl. What is their argument (*regarding what implements can be used*)? Rebbe used the method of "generalization and a specification." "And you will take," is a generalization, "an awl," is a specification, and "in his ear...by the door," is a generalization. In such a case, we say that the rule is similar to what is specific. Just like an awl is made out of metal, so too, anything that is used for the piercing must be metal. Rabbi Yosi used the method of "limitation and then an extension." "And you will take," is an extension, "an awl," is a limitation, and "in his ear...by the door," is an extension. This means that everything is included besides

one thing. What is excluded? We exclude an acidic liquid (*to pierce his ear*).

The *Gemora* answers: In truth, Rebbe expounds according to the "generalization and a specification" method. Here (*by the firstborn's redemption*), it is different (*and he uses the "limitation and then an extension" method*) because of that which was taught in the academy of Rabbi Yishmael, for it was taught: The verse says, "in the water" twice (*with respect to which water creatures are permitted to be eaten*). This is not to be used as a "generalization – specification - generalization" teaching, but rather an "extension – limitation - extension" teaching, which includes everything. [*This is because the two generalizations are next to each other, both of them preceding the specification.*]

The Rabbis, however, hold that whenever there are two generalizations next to each other, the specification is placed between them, and we may still expound using the "generalization – specification - generalization" method. (51a)

Explaining the Mishna

The *Mishna* had stated: [*We may not redeem (a firstborn) with slaves, etc.*] nor with consecrated objects.

The *Gemora* asks: Surely this is obvious, since they do not belong to him!?

The *Gemora* answers: The *Mishna* means that objects of *hekdesh* cannot be redeemed with all these (*slaves, documents and land*).

The *Mishna* had stated: If one writes to a *Kohen* that he owes him five *sela'im*, he is obligated to give them to him [*although his son is not redeemed through it*].

Ulla said: Biblically, his son would be redeemed when he gives the money; the Rabbis decreed that he is not redeemed because people might mistakenly say that one may redeem a



firstborn son with a debt document (*and those are Biblically invalid for redemption*).

A *braisa* was recited before Rav Nachman: His son is redeemed after payment. Rav Nachman said to him: This is the teaching of Rabbi Yosi son of Rabbi Yehudah whose opinion has been reported anonymously. There were those who reported it as follows: This is the teaching of Rabbi Elozar son of Rabbi Shimon, whose opinion has been reported anonymously. However, the Sages say: His son is not redeemed. And the law is that his son is not redeemed.

The *Mishna* had stated: therefore, if the *Kohen* wishes to give him back (*the second payment of five sela'im*) as a gift, he is permitted to do so.

The *Gemora* notes that the *Mishna* here teaches that which was taught in a *braisa*: If one gave (*the five sela'im*) to ten *Kohanim* simultaneously (*and left*), he has discharged his duty of redemption. If he gave (*the five sela'im*) one after the other (*one sela at a time*), he has discharged his duty. If the *Kohen* took the redemption money and returned it to him, he has discharged his duty. And this was the custom of Rabbi Tarfon. He used to take the five *sela'im* and then return them. When the Sages heard of this they said: This person has observed this law.

The *Gemora* asks: And did he only observe this law and no other?

The *Gemora* answers: This person observed even this law.

The *Gemora* relates: Rabbi Chanina was in the habit of taking (*the five sela'im*) and returning them. Once he saw a man who (*after giving him the five sela'im*) kept on walking back and forth before him. He said to him: It appears that you have not resolved to give the money; you did something wrong, and consequently, your son is not redeemed (*if I return to you the money*).

The *Mishna* had stated: If one designated the redemption money of his son and it became lost, he is responsible for it.

The *Gemora* discusses the Scriptural source for this *halachah*. (51a – 51b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Specifications, Generalizations, Limitations and Extensions

Generalization and a specification – only the specifics mentioned are included.

Specification and a generalization – everything is included.

Generalization, specification and a generalization – other cases must resemble the specifications mentioned at least in one way.

Specification, generalization and a specification - other cases must resemble the specifications mentioned in two ways.

Limitation and extension – everything except for one thing is included.

Extension and limitation - other cases must resemble the limitations mentioned.

Extension, limitation and extension - everything except for one thing is included.

Limitation, extension and limitation – there is no such type. (Hame'or)

Redemption with a Minor Kohen

The Pischei Teshuva (Y"D 305:4) cites a Chasam Sofer who holds that one may not redeem his firstborn son by using a *Kohen* who is a minor. For, generally, the *Kohen* uses his ability to remove the obligation of redemption from the father; a minor does not have the power to accomplish this.

Reb Chaim Kanievsky proves from a *Gemora* otherwise. The *Mishna* (Bechoros 51a) states: If one wrote a document to a

Kohen which said, "I am obligated to you for five *selaim*," he is liable to pay him five *selaim*, but his son is still not redeemed (*one who has a firstborn son is obligated to give five selaim to a Kohen in order to redeem him; since this document is regarded as an admission to a debt, it cannot be used for the independent obligation of redeeming his firstborn; if this document is an unsigned one, and nevertheless, it is regarded as a valid and binding admission to a debt, it would be following the opinion of Rabbi Yochanan and not Rish Lakish*).

The *Gemora* deflects the proof: This case is different because there is a Biblical obligation to the *Kohen* (*this, in turn, strengthens the unsigned document and renders it effective even according to Rish Lakish, just as if it would be a signed document*).

The *Gemora* explains that the son is not redeemed because of Ulla's decree. For Ulla said: Biblically, his son would be redeemed when he gives the money; the Rabbis decreed that he is not redeemed because people might mistakenly say that one may redeem a firstborn son with a third-party debt document (*and those are Biblically invalid for redemption; his own debt document, like in our case, would be Biblically valid, but the Rabbis were concerned that people would not understand the difference between the two types of documents*).

Reb Chaim states: It is evident from the *Gemora* that the father did not inform the *Kohen* that he was giving him the document for the sake of redemption, for if he would have done so, it would not be regarded as a new obligation according to Rabbi Yochanan.

It would emerge from here that if one gave money to a *Kohen* without informing him of the purpose, his son would be considered redeemed. This would prove that the *Kohen* is not actually effecting anything; it is the father's giving of the money that accomplishes the redemption. Therefore, one would be able to give the five *selaim* to a *Kohen* who is a minor, and his firstborn son would be redeemed.

Redeeming with Paper Money

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Rebbe says that a person can use anything to redeem his firstborn son from the *Kohen*, aside from documents. The Rabbis say: A person can use anything besides for slaves, documents, and land.

The Chasam Sofer in a *teshuva* (Y"D 134) discusses if redemption would be valid when the father pays the *Kohen* by paper money. Is paper money regarded as money because it is accepted as cash all over or do we say that it is regarded as a document since there is no inherent value in the paper itself?

He concludes that paper money can be regarded as money for some things, but as a document for others. If it is regarding a matter which is between people, then paper money would be considered money, since it is commonly accepted. However, regarding redemption of a firstborn, which is between man and Hashem, paper money would be regarded as a document and the redemption would not be valid. He explains: The father is actually redeeming his firstborn son from Hashem, but He gave over the monetary rights to the five *selaim* to the *Kohen*. Since it is the Torah that set the requirement for the money, the redemption will only be valid if the father gives to the *Kohen* something that is itself valued at five *selaim*.

The Chazon Ish (Y"D 72:10) disagrees and maintains that paper money would be regarded as money and the redemption would be valid.

One would not fulfill the mitzvah of redemption by giving the *Kohen* an 'IOU' note or a bond. It must be something that has inherent value such as merchandise. A check is an order of payment instructing the bank to release funds, but itself has no inherent value. Therefore a check is not equal to cash and is not valid for redemption.