



Collecting Coins for *Machatzit HaShekel*

The *Mishnah* (2:3) discusses a case involving one that collected small coins (*perutot*) for the *machatzit ha'shekel* yet ultimately collected too much. The *Mishnah* explains that if one had declared "these [coins] are for my *machatzit ha'shekel*" there is a debate regarding the status of the excess coins. According to *Beit Shammai*, the remaining coins are given to the *Beit HaMikdash* and used to purchase bird offerings when there was a lull in activity – *kayitz ha'mizbeach*. *Beit Hillel* however maintains that the excess are considered regular coins - *chullin*.

The *Bartenura* explains that according to *Beit Shammai*, despite the fact the person never intended to collect more than *machatzit ha'shekel*, the excess is still *hekdesh*. That is because *Beit Shammai* maintain that *hekdesh* (consecrating property to the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*), even in error, is still effective. *Beit Hillel* however disagrees. Since the person never intended to set aside more than *machatzit ha'shekel*, only a *machatzit ha'shekel* was consecrated.

The *Mishnah* continues by explains that if however, one declared that he would bring his *machatzit ha'shekel* from the collected coins, then everyone agrees that the excess is *chullin*. The *Bartenura* explains that this is because it is as if he stipulated that he would only be taking a *machatzit ha'shekel* from the collected coins, with the remained being *chullin*.

Let us however return to the position of *Beit Hillel*. The *Tifferet Yisrael* asks how the remainder could be *chullin*. He explains that this case would be comparable to a *hekdesh* coin fell into a purse or where one declared that one coin in the purse is *hekdesh*. In that case, we are concerned that any of the coins could be the *hekdesh* one. This is despite the fact that the *hekdesh* coin is in the minority - it is not annulled (see *Tosfot, Meila* 21b, s.v. *peruta*). If that is the case, how can we be certain which coins are the ones for *machatzit ha'shekel*?

The *Tifferet Yisrael* anticipates the following argument against his question. In the case from *meilah* the *hekdesh* coin was already designated before it was mixed. Consequently, there we cannot say that a particular coin from the mixture is the *hekdesh* one. In other words, only when the *hekdesh* or *issur* item was distinct prior to the mixture do we discount the possibility of *bereira* (retroactive selection). He notes that one might argue that our case is different. Nevertheless he counters that *bereira* is not valid at all when dealing with biblical prohibitions so the distinction is irrelevant. Furthermore, the *issur* (prohibited) component was known; when the sum total of the coins equalled *machatzit hashekel* prior to the addition of the excess coins. Returning then to the original question, how can *Beit Hillel* permit the usage of the remaining coins.

The *Tifferet Yisrael* cites the *Tosfot* and explains that if one stipulated at the start that it is not *hekdesh* until it is separated, then *bereira* works, even on a biblical level. Consequently, in this case it must be that he had not consecrated the money yet but only prepared them for the purpose. We must therefore understand that when the debate between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* is explained as being about *hekdesh* in error it is not meant to be understood literally. Instead it about items that have been prepared for consecration.¹

The *Tifferet Yisrael* uses this understanding to explain an earlier *Mishnah*. We learnt (2:2) that if one was given his friend's *machatzit ha'shekel* and used it for his own contribution, then if *terumat ha'lishcah* has already been performed, then he violates the prohibition of *meilah*. The *Bartenura* explains, that since *terumat halishcha* is performed for all the coins that are to be collected, that coin is already considered the property of *hekdesh*. The *Tifferet Yisrael* asks, that if one consecrated the coin, the prohibition of *meilah* should be violated irrespective of *terumat halishcha*. He explains, that just like this case, the coin has not yet be consecrated, but only prepared for that purpose.

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¹ According to the *Tifferet Yisrael*, it would mean that *Beit Shammai's* position is even more extreme. That even though one did not consecrate the coins, but only prepared them for that purpose, even then, the excess is to be given as a *nedava*.

Revision Questions

שקלים ב' ג' - ד' ז'

- Explain the debate between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* about what to do with the money that is left over from a bunch of coins that were set aside for giving *machatzit ha'shekel*. (ב' ג')
- How does *R' Shimon* explain the different rulings of *Beit Hillel* regarding the left over coins for *machatzit ha'shekel* and left over coins for a *korban chatat*? (ב' ד')
- What is done with the left over coins that were separated for a: (ב' ה')
 - *Korban chatat*?
 - *Korban nedava*?
 - *Korban olah*?
 - *Korban mincha*?
 - *Korban shlamim*?
 - *Korban pesach*?
- How many times during the year would they refill the coin boxes? (ג' א')
- According to *R' Akiva* what else occurred during these dates? (ג' א')
- How many coin boxes were there? (ג' ב')
- How big were the coin boxes? (ג' ב')
- What was special about the dress of the person responsible for refilling the coin boxes? (ג' ב')
- How would they authorise the person responsible for filling the coin boxes to begin work? (ג' ג')
- After filling the coin boxes, when and with what did they cover the coins remaining in the storeroom? (ג' ד')
- For which sacrifices was the money used? (ד' א')
- Was the money used for anything else? (ד' א'-ב')
- What was done with the leftover funds found in the storeroom? (ג' ד')
- What was done with the leftover funds found in the coin boxes? (Include all four opinions) (ד' ד')
- What was done with the leftover *ketoret*?
- What was done with items that were 'sanctified' and given to the *Beit Mikdash* funds and were also suitable for use in the *ketoret*? (Include both opinions) (ד' ה')
- What was done with items that were 'sanctified' and given to the *Beit Mikdash* funds and were also suitable for use in the *korbanot*? (Include both opinions) (ד' ו')
- How does *R' Pappas* reconcile the two opinions referred to in the previous question. (ד' ז')

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Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
13 August כ"א אב	14 August כ"ב אב	15 August כ"ג אב	16 August כ"ד אב	17 August כ"ה אב	18 August כ"ו אב	19 August כ"ז אב
Shekalim 4:8-9	Shekalim 5:1-2	Shekalim 5:3-4	Shekalim 5:5-6	Shekalim 6:1-2	Shekalim 6:3-4	Shekalim 6:5-6

