



## Petachya is Mordecha

The fifth *perek* begins by listing the different positions and responsibilities in the *Beit Midkash*. The *Mishnah* also includes names of individuals alongside those responsibilities. The *Batenura* provides two explanations for the inclusion of the names. The first is that the individuals named were those who were exemplary in those positions. Alternatively, these were the individuals that first served in these positions, such that those that served after were called by those names. We shall focus on *Petachya*.

The *Mishnah* teaches that *Petachya* oversaw the *kinim*. A *ken* refers to a *korban* that consists of two birds. If the pair is obligatory it would consist of a *chatat* and *olah*, whereas if it were voluntary, they would both be *olah* offerings. The *Bartenura* explains that when one was obligated to bring a *ken*, they would place the money in a chest marked for that purpose. An appointee would then empty the chest and bring the *kinim* with that money. Given the complexity regarding the laws of *kinim* a wise expert was needed.

The *Tifferet Yisrael* however explains that mixtures of bird offering were common, and the resolution of such problem were very complicated. Consequently, an expert in these laws was necessary to rule on these matters. In other words, he was not responsible for executing the funds, but rather he was responsible the legal rulings.

Interestingly the *Rambam* (*Klei Midkash* 7:9) explains that this job was to supply the bird to the *Beit Hamikdash*.

The *Mishnah* however continues that *Petchya* was *Mordechai*. He was called *Petachya* since he was able to “open matters and expound them and knew seventy languages”. How does his knowledge of languages relate to this role?

The *Gemara* (*Yerushalmi*) cites an incident where three women came to the *Beit HaMikdash* wanting to bring *korbanot* but each expressed the reason in strange ways. Initially they thought that each of the woman were *zavot* and needed to bring obligatory *kinim*. *Petachya* however understood that each woman really expressed a danger from which they were miraculously save. Consequently, the

*korbanot* were voluntary ones. The *Maharsha* (*Menachot* 65a) notes that we see from this incident, that it was necessary for the appointee to have a clear understanding of those that wished to bring the *korban*. Similarly, the *Tifferet Yisrael*'s explanation that it was necessary for the appointee to have a strong command of language since subtle changes even in the sentence structure can change which *korban* must be brought.

The above appears to support the understanding that the command of the languages was important for the allocation of the funds. Nevertheless, we find in the final *Mishnah* in *Kinim* how subtle changes in how one structures their *neder* may lead to one needing to bringing seven replacement bird if the *ken* was not offered correctly. Consequently a strong understanding of the native tongue of the person that brought the *ken* is needed in the resolution of the mixtures or errors also.

The *Gemara* (*Menachot* 65a) however asks that the knowledge of seventy languages was not unique. All the *Chachamim* that sat on the *Sanhedrin* had to know all seventy languages. The *Gemara* explains that *Mordechai* was different since he was able to blend different languages to understand the intent of the speaker. That is why in *Nechemya* he is referred to *Mordechai Bilshan*. Two examples of this skill were also recording in the *Gemara* where individuals were trying to communicate where to source barley for the *omer* and wheat for the *shte ha'lechem*. *Petachya* was able to interpret what they were saying despite it being a blend of two languages.

The *Agadot Eliyahu* however explains that he was referred to as *Mordechi Bilshan* due to the miracle that occurs because of his vast knowledge of languages. Recall for *Megillat Esther*, he overheard *Bigtan* and *Teresh* as they plotted to kill *Achashveirosh*. He was able to then save the king, which was recorded and was later a key piece leading to the downfall of *Haman*. Consequently, he was called *Bilshan* as a *zecher le'nes* – a reminder of the miracle of the miracle of *Purim*.

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## Revision Questions

שקלים ד' ב' – ה' ר'

- Was the money used for anything else? (ד' א' ב')
- What was done with the leftover funds found in the storeroom? (ד' ג')
- 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' ו')
- 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' ו')
- What was done with wine and oil that were 'sanctified' and given to the *Beit Mikdash* funds? (ד' ח')
- How was the *Beit Ha'Mikdash's* supplier agreements managed in the event of market value fluctuations? (ד' ט')
- When were the suppliers paid and why? (ד' ט')
- By what other name was *Mordechai* referred to and why? (ה' א')
- Which family were experts in preparing the *ketoret*? (ה' א')
- How many treasurers (*gizbarin*) were there in charge of the *Beit Ha'Mikdash's* funds? (ה' ב')
- How many financial controllers (*amarkalin*) were there overseeing the *Beit Ha'Mikdash's* funds? (ה' ב')
- In general what is the minimum number of people that should be placed in charge of public funds? (ה' ב')
- How many *chotamot* were there and what were they used for? (ה' ג')
- Explain how one would purchase the *nechasim* required for their *korban*? (ה' ד')
- What would happen if one lost his *chotam*? (ה' ה')
- What did they do to try and combat *chotam* fraud? (ה' ה')
- What was the *lishchat chasha'im* used for? (ה' ו')
- What was the *lishchat keilim* use for and how often was it cleared? (ה' ו')

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## Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
14 May כ"ג אייר	15 May כ"ד אייר	16 May כ"ה אייר	17 May כ"ו אייר	18 May כ"ז אייר	19 May כ"ח אייר	20 May כ"ט אייר
Shekalim 6:1-2	Shekalim 6:3-4	Shekalim 6:5-6	Shekalim 7:1-2	Shekalim 7:3-4	Shekalim 7:5-6	Shekalim 7:7-8:1

