



Volume 2. Issue 24.

Machatzit Ha'Shekel

Messechet Shekalim discusses the yearly *mitzvah* of giving half a *shekel* as a donation to the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*. The source of this *mitzvah* is when *Moshe* commanded the nation in the desert to give half a *shekel* as a means of counting the people. One is forbidden from counting a group of Jews. The way that the *Torah* effectively allows a census is by gathering this money from the nation and counting the money allowing one to indirectly know the number of people. When the Jews were in the desert this money was used to build the outer walls of the *Mishkan*. This *mitzvah* continued and during the time of *Beit Ha'Mikdash* this money was used to buy the *korbanot ha'tamid* - the daily *korbanot* that were brought in the *Mikdash*.

The main question that we shall address this week is the question of the placement of this *messechet* in the volumes of *Mishnayot*. As we mentioned this *messechet* deals with a yearly donation that must be given to the *Mikdash*. It follows that the place of such a *messechet* should be in *Seder Kodshim*. That *sefer*, the fifth out of the six *sidrei mishnah* deals with all the issues that have to do with the *Beit Ha'Mikdash* and the *korbanot*. The question becomes even greater when we see the *Rambam*. In his book, *Hayad Hachazaka*, *Rambam* places these *halachot* in the volume of *Zmanim*. Once again, it is placed in a volume that deals with all the *halachot* that have to do with our *chagim* such as *Shabbat*, *Pesach*, *Sukkah*, etc.

Once more it has been decided that the right place to put these *halachot* is not with all the *halachot* that deal with the *Mikdash* and the *korbanot*.

This question can be answered if we understand this *mitzvah* a bit differently. The reason that one has to give the half *shekel* is not primarily as a donation to the *Mikdash* but rather as a means of counting *Am Israel*. It is only after this money is collected and there remains a question of what to do with the funds that results in this money being given to the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*. If so what is the purpose of this *mitzvah*? What is the value in just giving the coins?

The *Midrash* explains that *Am Israel* was counted after the plague that followed the sin of the golden calf. Counting *Am Israel* at this tragic time was vital. Without this counting *Am Israel* may have felt that the betrayal was so strong that *Hashem* no longer cares about them. They could have stopped thinking that they could each contribute to the way *Hashem* is represented in the world. Giving money in order to be individually counted and using that money to build the *Mikdash* is a lesson that *Am Israel* must be reminded of each year. Remembering such a lesson is a cause for a holiday of its own. It is an important enough holiday to have its own *messechet* in *Seder Moed* – the *sefer* of the *chagim*.

Asher Shafrir

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Revision Questions

פסחים י' ג' – י' ט'

- What food is eaten immediately after *kiddush* at the *seder*? (י' ג')
 - Which five foods are placed before the *ba'al ha'seder*? (י' ג')
 - What occurs immediately after the second cup is poured at the *seder*? (י' ד')
 - What are the four question of *mah nishtanah* listed in the *Mishnah*? (י' ד')
 - Complete the following formula of how one should teach the story of *Pesach*: (י' ד')
- " _____ ומסיים _____ מתחיל "
- According to *Rabban Gamliel* what must one say in order to fulfil the *mitzvah* of *maggid*? (י' ה')
 - What are the reasons provided in the *Mishnah* for the *mitzvot* of *pesach*, *matzah* and *marror*? (י' ה')
 - What does the *Mishnah* learn from the following *pasuk*: (י' ה')
"והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים" (שמות י"ג: ח')
 - Explain the debate between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* regarding how much of the *Hallel* is read prior to the meal. (י' ו')
 - When were the third and fourth cups drunk? (י' ז')
 - Between which cups of wine is one prohibited from drinking? (י' ז')
 - What is the last thing eaten at the *seder*? (י' ח')
 - If someone dozed at the *seder* can they continue to eat when they wake up? (Include both opinions) (י' ח')
 - After what time does the *korban pesach* "*metameh yadayim*"? (י' ט')
 - What other *korbanot* are "*metameh yadayim*"? (י' ט')
 - According to *R' Yishmael* which *bracha* covers both the *korban pesach* and the *korban chagigah*? (י' ט')

שקלים א' א' – א' ז'

- What was announced on the first of *Adar*? (י' א')
- What six things were done on the fifteenth of *Adar*? (י' א')
- According to *R' Yehuda*, what did the *beit din* do when they found a field with *kilayim*? (Include all three responses.) (י' ב')
- Explain, including the important dates, the system used to collect the *shekalim*? (י' ג')
- Explain the debate regarding whether a *kohen* can volunteer to contribute a *machatzit ha'shekel*? (י' ד')
- Can a *nochri* contribute a *machatzit ha'shekel*? (י' ה')
- Which *korbanot* can a *nochri* offer? (י' ה')
- What is a *kalbon* and who is required to contribute it? (י' ו')
- Explain the debate between *R' Meir* and the *Chachamim* regarding the *kalbon*? (י' ו')
- When are two brothers required to contribute a *kalbon* and how does it relate to their obligation to separate *ma'aser behema*? (י' ז')

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Sunday -Thursday
Between mincha & ma'ariv
Mizrachi Shul

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10 minutes before mincha
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Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
12 th February י"ד שבט	13 th February ט"ו שבט	14 th February ט"ז שבט	15 th February י"ח שבט	16 th February י"ח שבט	17 th February י"ט שבט	18 th February כ' שבט
Shekalim 2:1-2	Shekalim 2:3-4	Shekalim 2:5-3:1	Shekalim 3:2-3	Shekalim 3:4-4:1	Shekalim 4:2-3	Shekalim 4:4-5

