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מסכת שקלים ד' י"י

בס"ד, כ"ג אייר תשס"ו

השבוע בגליון

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דף ב/א באחד באדר משמיעין על השקלים ועל הכלאים ובט"ו בו קורין את המגילה...

Adar, A Time for Community Service

In the first Mishna of Maseches Shekalim, we find that Beis Din would tend to many community needs during the month of Adar: "On the first of Adar [Beis Din] announces that Shekalim must be brought and *kelayim* (mixed seeds) must be destroyed. On the fifteenth of Adar, the Megilla is read in walled cities, and [Beis Din appoints workers] to fix the roads, streets and mikvaos, attend to the needs of the community, mark the graves to warn people of their impurity, and set out to destroy *kilayim*." It is well understood that Shekalim were collected during Adar, since they were needed to purchase korbanos starting from the subsequent month of Nissan. It is also well understood why Beis Din tended to the destruction of *kelayim* during Adar, since the new sprouts begin to appear in Adar. However, why were the other public services, such as fixing the roads and mikvaos, performed specifically during the month of Adar? The Rashash notes with interest that on the very day of Purim for the walled cities, when they were already busy with the many of mitzvos the day, attention was given to fixing roads and mikvaos, and uprooting *kelayim*. Why specifically then?

R' Shlomo HaKohen of Vilna (Binyan Shlomo, 55) explains that the month of Adar, and specifically Purim day, are specifically appropriate to tending the needs of the community. We find in Maseches Shabbos (33b) that when R' Shimon bar Yochai was released from his thirteen year stay in the cave, he sought to do some service for the sake of the community, in thanksgiving for his miraculous survival. Therefore, he set himself to determine which areas of Tiberias were ritually impure due to lost graves buried deep underground. He thereby allowed the kohanim to travel freely around, knowing which areas were permitted and which were forbidden.

The Gemara tells us that R' Shimon learned this from Yaakov Avinu. When Yaakov returned to Eretz Yisrael from his stay at the house of Lavan in Charan, he built bathhouses and markets for the good of the community, and minted for their use a standard coin. Yaakov did this as a show of gratitude to Hashem, Who protected him during his travels.

Printing seforim for public use: The Poskim cite from this Gemara that when a person experiences a miraculous salvation, he should do something for the benefit of his city (Magen Avraham 218 s.k. 2; Mishna Berura ibid, s.k. 32). The Sefer Chassidim (cited in Kaf HaChaim ibid, s.k. 6) suggests as an example to print seforim of which the community has need.

Communal thanksgiving: R' Shlomo HaKohen learns from here that when a community experiences a miracle together, they also should do something for the public good. In the month of Adar the miracle of Purim occurred, and the Jewish people were saved from certain death. Therefore, our Sages saw fit to tend to the community's needs during Adar, and specifically on the day of Purim.

The community services listed in our Mishna parallel the services performed by Yaakov Avinu and R' Shimon bar Yochai. Yaakov Avinu minted coins, and we collect Shekalim. Yaakov Avinu built marketplaces and bathhouses, and we fix roads and mikvaos. R' Shimon located the lost burial places, and we mark graves for the good of the kohanim, that they not unwittingly become impure.

דף ז/א אין עושין נפשות לצדיקים

Memorial for a Tzaddik

Throughout the generations, the Poskim have offered many explanations to the puzzling

דבר העורך

Dear Readers,
Our thanks to Mr. Mikhail Katz for correcting a mistake we published in issue 362. There, we wrote that R' Nachman bar Yitzchak was niftar 1100 years ago. However, that would place him in the period of the Gaonim, whereas R' Nachman bar Yitzchak was in fact an Amora, who most probably passed away at least 1600 years ago. Yasher koach to Mr. Katz for catching our mistake.

A Fish for Shabbos

Many years ago, there was a distinguished talmid chachom named R' Shimshon, who was asked to preside as Rav of a certain community. R' Shimshon's entire life was utterly devoted to his Torah study, and he feared that the many responsibilities of a communal leader would distract him from his studies. Therefore, he agreed to take the place of Rav of the community, only on condition that he would not be disturbed by a constant stream of petty questions. Urgent issues could be addressed to him as the need arose, but otherwise he was to be left to learn undisturbed throughout the week. On motza'ei Shabbos, he designated a time to resolve the various grievances, disputes or problems that arose in the community.

The community agreed to this condition, realizing the great merit it was to have such a distinguished Rav among them. On one

IN MEMORY OF

ה"ר ראובן גומבו ז"ל ב"ר צבי ז"ל

נלב"ע כ"ה אייר תשנ"ה ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

הונצח ע"י בנו ידידינו ה"ר שמואל יצחק גומבו ומשפ' שיחיו - ארה"ב

נר ה'
נשמת אדם





particular Tuesday, the Rav's wife visited the market place to buy a fish for Shabbos. She was about to purchase a certain fish from the vendor, when all of a sudden the wife of a wealthy businessman pushed her aside. With an air of arrogance and disdain, the rich woman threw her money on the counter and took the fish that the Rebbetzin had chosen. She proceeded to offend the Rebbetzin with a string of nasty comments, and then walked off.

It was not long before news of this incident spread throughout the town. Nor was it the first time that this woman had shown scorn and derision for those less wealthy than herself. However, now that she had offended their cherished Rebbetzin, the city could no longer forgive her. Soon the entire city was talking about the businessman and his wife, and their arrogant airs. Many suggested that the Rav should be consulted, in order to properly chastise the wealthy woman. However, they decided to wait until motza'ei Shabbos, rather than disturb his studies.

When Friday night arrived, and the Rav came home from shul, he saw that his wife was deeply troubled. He asked her what was wrong, and she told him of the incident that occurred. "When did this happen?" he asked.

"On Tuesday," she said.

"Do you mean to tell me that since Tuesday this argument has been festering in our community? Since Tuesday you have born hatred for a fellow Jew in your heart? This is not acceptable. We must go to their house to settle the matter immediately." Before he even made kiddush, he donned his coat and set off with the Rebbetzin for the rich man's house. When they arrived, the wealthy woman was just about to serve the fish to her family. Just then, they heard a knock on the door and their servant girl announced that the Rav and Rebbetzin had come.

The wealthy woman was petrified. She knew that she had overstepped her bounds by insulting the Rebbetzin, and she also knew that she had since become the talk of the city. She quickly invited them in and offered her profuse apologies. "Please, please take this fish for

statement of R' Shimon ben Gamliel in our Gemara, "Memorial structures (*nefashos*) should not be built on the graves of tzaddikim; their teachings are their memorial." By studying their Torah teachings, we remember them forever. Therefore, there is no need to build for them memorial structures.

Needless to say, every grave must be marked, to warn people of the ritual impurity that surrounds it. R' Shimon ben Gamliel simply meant to say that the graves of tzaddikim need not be marked with splendid structures in their honor (Geshet HaChaim I, 28). The Rambam (Hilchos Aveil 4:4) distinguishes between a *tzion*, which marks a grave, and *nefesh*, an honorary structure above the grave. The Gemara tells us not to make a *nefesh* above a tzaddik's grave, but a *tzion* is still necessary. Among the questions raised by this ruling, first and foremost, is why tzaddikim should be denied this basic honor afforded to most deceased persons. Why should tzaddikim be honored any less than others?

The purpose of a *nefesh*: Firstly, the *nefesh* serves as a means of honoring the deceased, as the Rashba (Teshuvos I, 375 s.v. *Teshuva ha'din*) writes: "There is no greater honor to the dead than building a structure over his grave." In addition to this, the *niftar* receives great spiritual benefit from the structure. The Arizal writes that the structure is a "seat and resting place upon which the spiritual lights that surround the soul may rest." For this reason, the Chida ruled that if a person orders in his will that no structure be built over his grave, his heirs should not heed his request. Had the *niftar* realized the great benefit of the structure, he might have asked that a smaller structure be built, but he would not have forgone it entirely (Teshuvos Chaim Shaal I, 71:6). Why should we deny this great merit to the tzaddikim?

Remembering the deceased: The Rambam (*ibid*) cites R' Shimon ben Gamliel's ruling: "No *nefesh* is built over the graves of tzaddikim. Their words are their remembrance." The Kesef Mishna addresses our central question that this seems to be a slight to the honor of the tzaddikim. He answers that the primary purpose of a *nefesh* is to serve as a remembrance for the *niftar*, by encouraging us to visit his grave. However, Torah scholars have no need to be remembered by visiting their graves. They are remembered through their good deeds and their teachings.

Why did Yaakov Avinu build a structure over Rochel's grave? The possuk states, "Yaakov built a structure over her grave; this is the structure over Kever Rochel until this day" (Bereishis 35:20). In light of our Gemara, why was this necessary? Rochel was certainly a tzaddekes who had no need of a *nefesh*.

The Acharonim explain that a tzaddik has no need for a *nefesh* to be built for his honor. Kever Rochel was not built for her sake, but for later generations to be able to pray by her grave, and enjoin Hashem for mercy in her merit. For this purpose it is certainly proper to build a *nefesh* over the grave of a tzaddik (see Teshuvos Divrei Yatziv, Y.D. 227; see also Peiros Te'eina).

The custom to build structures: Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe Y.D. III, 154; IV, 57) explains that there is no prohibition against building a *nefesh* over the grave of a tzaddik. Rather, R' Shimon ben Gamliel meant to say that one is not obligated to do so, since a tzaddik will be remembered well even without it. This is in contrast to other *niftarim*, upon whose graves one is obligated to build a *nefesh* to honor and remember them. However, since it has become customary to build a *nefesh* over the grave of a tzaddik, one must continue this custom, and not deny the tzaddikim the honor that is now generally given to them.

A structure without a grave: Many years ago, a tragic incident occurred in which a Jew passed away on a boat during a long ocean voyage. Since the boat did not have the facilities to store his body for the remainder of the voyage, the crew threw the body overboard. When the bereaved father was informed, he wished to build a structure in a Jewish cemetery in memory of his son. He then asked R' Dovid Tzvi Hoffman *zt"l*, author of *Melamed L'Hoil* (II, 139) if it was proper to do so.

R' Hoffman replied that although there is no prohibition against building a *nefesh* with no grave beneath it, it would be better to donate the money to a Torah institution and thereby create a meaningful remembrance for the deceased. As we find in our Gemara, Torah study and good deeds create a more significant remembrance than a physical structure (see Igros Moshe Y.D. IV, 57:6-8).

A meaningful remembrance: The Chafetz Chaim (Ahavas Chessed ch. 15, see footnote) writes: "Some people wish to make an eternal remembrance for the souls of their parents. To this end, they build structures of precious marble, engraved with gold lettering and decorations, carving beautiful flowers and the like. They spend exorbitant amounts of money, believing that this will bring peace to the soul of the *niftar*... It would be better for them to build a less expensive structure, and use the extra money to buy a set of Gemara for the shul dedicated in memory of their parents. Alternately, they could use the money to make an interest free loan fund in their memory. This would be a much greater benefit to their souls... The mitzvot children perform after the passing of their parents atones for their parents' souls."



Why is a structure not built during *shiva*? The Shibolei HaLeket (Smachos, 21) writes that during the week of *shiva*, the soul of the *niftar* travels back and forth between his home and his grave. Therefore, it is not yet appropriate to build a structure over the grave. The Arizal (Shaar HaMitzvos, Parshas Vayechi) adds that for this same reason the relatives sit *shiva* during the week after the *niftar*'s passing. During this time, his neshama has not yet left his house completely.

Some have a custom to build the structure twelve months after the passing of the *niftar*. One of the reasons offered for this practice is that the structure serves as a remembrance for the deceased, in order that he not be forgotten by his loved ones. During the year after his passing, even without such a structure he will certainly not be forgotten.

How Much is a Shekel?

The precise weight of a shekel by Torah standards is relevant to many different aspects of Torah law. For example, five shekel's weight of silver is the amount necessary for *pidyon haben*. Sefardic communities give *machatzis hashekel* before Purim using half a shekel based on the Torah's standard of shekel, as opposed to three half coins of modern currency, as Ashkenazim give. Furthermore, the amount of money given to a woman in her *kesuba* is two hundred zuz. The value of a zuz is calculated based on the modern day value of a Torah shekel. The value of a peruta must also be calculated in this way. (A peruta is 1/192 of a silver dinar – see Rashi, Kiddushin 12a, s.v. Alfa).

In determining the precise weight of a shekel there are no less than eleven different opinions among the Rishonim (see Kaftor V'Ferach ch. 16. See Middos V'Shiurei Torah p. 323). Among them, the two primary opinions are those of Rashi and the Gaonim.

According to the Gaonim (Bahag, Hilchos Kiddushin; Otzar HaGaonim, Kiddushin pp. 19-20, et. al.) and the Rif (Kiddushin 6a, on Rif pages) the silver dinar discussed in the Gemara weighs the same as the gold dinar used by the Arabs for hundreds of years, during the eras of the Gaonim and Rishonim. In modern measurements, its weight is 4.25 grams. The sela (which is the Gemara's term for a shekel) equals four dinarim; hence, a shekel weighs 17 grams.

According to Rashi (Shemos 21:32), "A shekel weighs the same as four gold coins, which are half the weight of an *onkia*, according to the measurements of Kolonia (an area in medieval Germany)." Based on this measurement, the shekel equals 14.16 grams. Rashi makes use of this measurement in several places in Shas (see Bechoros 49b). Most of the German Rishonim, beginning with R' Gershom Meor Ha'Gola (Bechoros, ibid) and continuing until the end of the era of Rishonim followed Rashi's opinion (see Middos V'Shiurei Torah, pp. 385-6).

The various opinions were based mostly on conflicting traditions. The Ramban (Shemos 30:13) and others received a tradition that the shekel weighed the equivalent of 17 grams, whereas Rashi received a tradition that the shekel weighed 14.16 grams (see Tosefos and Rosh on Bechoros ibid).

The Ramban advocated his own tradition in his commentary to the Torah. Years after he completed his commentary he traveled to Eretz Yisroel. There he discovered an ancient shekel coin from the time of the second Beis HaMikdash. After bringing it to various money changers for appraisal, he concluded that its measurement matched exactly to Rashi's tradition, and not to his own. He wrote to his son of his discovery, which was later printed in an addendum to his commentary on the Torah.

The Abarbanel had a similar ancient coin in his possession (see Abarbanel commentary to the Torah, Parshas Ki Sisa), as did certain other Poskim (see Middos V'Shiurei Torah, pp. 388-9). Today, hundreds of these coins have been found in archeological digs. They were minted by Jews during the time of the revolt against Rome, towards the end of the era of the second Beis HaMikdash. On one side, they have an almond branch and the words "Holy Jerusalem" written in Ancient Hebraic lettering. On the other side is a cup, with the initials for year one, year two, year three or year four – referring to the years of the revolution against Rome, and the words "Shekel Yisrael." The Ramban notes that the Kussi tribes who are familiar with the ancient Hebraic writing (to this very day) deciphered the writing as "Shekel of Shekels." However, other scholars who examined the coins themselves saw that it in fact read "Shekel Yisrael," and a misprint must have occurred in the Ramban's commentary.

A contemporary Torah scholar who examined this coin suggested that most likely the Kussim of the Ramban's era mistakenly deciphered the coin. The ancient letters of Shekel Yisrael and Shekel of Shekels are so similar, that the mistake is easily made. He reached this conclusion since he had nearly made the same mistake himself (Middos V'Shiurei Torah, ibid).

Surprisingly, although the Ramban ultimately relinquished his own opinion in favor of

yourselves. I am so sorry this whole incident occurred."

"Just the opposite," said the Rav and the Rebbetzin. "We have come to ask your forgiveness. We are sorry that we let this controversy continue so long." They all sincerely forgave one another for all the harsh feelings that were raised, and wished one another "Gut Shabbos." With that, R' Shimshon and his wife went home to make kiddush, with hearts filled with joy and *ahavas Yisroel*.

Dear Readers,

Meoros Daf HaYomi is interested in hearing your comments, criticisms and suggestions, in order to improve the quality of our newsletter. Please contact us at: daniel@meorot.co.il

Sincerely,

The Meoros Staff

פנינים

דף ב'א באחד באדר משמיעין על השקלים

A Whole Shekel

In the past we brought only a half-shekel, signifying how Hashem's Name and His Throne are incomplete. In the future, when Hashem's kingdom will be fully revealed in this world, we will bring a whole shekel instead. A hint to this can be found in the name of this masechta. Rebbe Yehuda HaNassi entitled it, "Shekalim," implying a whole shekel, as opposed to, "Machatzis HaShekel" (Maaseh Rokei'ach).

דף ב'א באחד באדר משמיעין על השקלים

Maseches Shekalim in Place of Machatzis HaShekel

Today, we have no Beis HaMikdash and we are unable to bring the machatzis hashekel. However, our study of Maseches Shekalim takes the place of this mitzva. A hint for this can be found in the Gemara (Megilla 13b): "It was known before the Holy One, Blessed-be-He, that Haman was destined to offer Achashverosh shekalim to destroy the Jewish people. Therefore, Hashem prepared our shekalim first, to counter Haman's. As we learn: 'On the first of Adar [Beis





Din] announces about Shekalim.” We can interpret this Gemara to mean, “Hashem prepared our shekalim.... as we learn.” By learning the Mishna and Gemara, it is considered as if we offered the shekalim (Elef HaKsav).

דף ב/א משמעין על השקלים ועל הכלאים

Shekalim without Kelayim

The Sefas Emes explained that the mitzvos of shekalim and kelayim (mixed seeds) are placed together in our Mishna, to teach us that we must offer the shekalim without any mixture of selfish intentions (Mayana shel Mishna).

Rashi's, the Ramban's students and their halachic dynasty that followed (including the Rashba, Ran and Rivash) continued to follow his opinion, which is the opinion of the Gaonim (see Shulchan Aruch C.M. 88:1; E.H. 27:10; Y.D. 294:6, 305:1). How could these Rishonim contradict the empirical evidence provided by these ancient coins?

The Tashbatz (III, 226) suggests that the coins from different periods of Jewish history varied in their value and weight. Indeed, we find in the Gemara that on several occasions, one sixth was added to the measurements of weight (see Shabbos 15a). Perhaps the Ramban's 14.16-gram coin was from an earlier period. After 1/6 was added to this measurement, the later coins weighed 17 grams, as the Gaonim held. Therefore, the Ramban's students continued to follow his opinion, in spite of the ancient coins discovered.

R' Ariel Bockwold *shlita* offers a different explanation. As is known, the value of a minted coin is often greater than the worth of its metal. Although the weight of these ancient shekalim is 14.16 grams, its value equaled that of 17 grams of silver (see Bava Kama 97b, 98b; Shita Mekubetzes citing Raavad that during the time of the Talmud, the difference between the weight of a coin and its value was approximately 1/6). According to this, we can reconcile Rashi's opinion with that of the Gaonim. Rashi referred to the weight of the coin, whereas the Gaonim referred to its value in unminted silver (Middos V'Shiurei Torah, p. 390).

דף ב/ב באחד באדר משמעין על השקלים

Meoros Daf Yomi is proud to present the Meoros Halacha supplement to Maseches Shekalim, translated into English with extensive footnotes. This supplement is a comprehensive study of the relevant halachos of tzedaka, prepared with meticulous attention to detail by a team of talmidei chachomim, under the guidance of Gedolei Yisroel *shlita*. It is divided into twenty one sections, corresponding to the twenty one pages of Maseches Shekalim. Why not enhance your Daf Yomi by devoting just a few minutes each day to learning the halachos of tzedaka? The supplement can be viewed on-line at our site: www.meorot.co.il/english

Parshas Shekalim

Each year, at the beginning of Adar, we read parshas Shekalim. In Maseches Megilla (29a), the Gemara explains that this reading corresponds to the announcement made by Beis Din during the time of the Beis HaMikdash, instructing people to bring their shekalim. This announcement was made at the beginning of Adar, since the shekalim were needed to begin buying korbanos starting from Rosh Chodesh Nissan.

Was Parshas Shekalim read during the era of the Beis HaMikdash? If so, why was it necessary to make both a Torah reading and announcements, to inform people that they must bring their machatzis hashekel?

The Cheshek Shlomo (on our sugya, included in Oz V'Hadar printings of Maseches Shekalim) suggests that both the announcement and the Torah reading were practiced together. The announcements were necessary for those people who lived in small villages, where there was no minyan for Torah reading. On the other hand, if there were only announcements, people might not hear them and would remain unaware of their obligation. Therefore, a Torah reading of Shekalim was also instituted. Another explanation offered is that the announcement was made to remind people of their obligation, and the Torah reading was instituted to teach people the specifics details of their obligation.

The Cheshek Shlomo also entertains the possibility that the Torah reading of Shekalim was instituted only after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash (Binyan Shlomo, 54). The possuk in Hoshea (14:3) states, “We will offer the service of our mouths, in place of cow-offerings.” The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabba, 18:21) learns from here, that when the Beis HaMikdash is in ruins, our prayers and Torah study take the place of korbanos. Here too, studying the mitzva of machatzis hashekel takes the place of actually bringing it, and Hashem atones for our sins as if we had brought it. The Levush also follows this opinion: “We offer our words in place of sacrifices, by reading the parsha of [Shekalim in] Ki Sisa.”

The Mishna Berura (introduction to 685:1) writes that Parshas Shekalim was instituted in memory of the mitzva of machatzis hashekel. This also implies that the parsha of Shekalim was not read in the time of the Beis HaMikdash.

Giving a child an *aliya* for Parshas Shekalim: Some Poskim suggest that there is a practical difference between the two opinions. In general, a child under bar mitzva age may be given an *aliya* for *maftir*. In regard to the *maftir* of Parshas Shekalim: if we view it as an announcement, such as was proclaimed by Beis Din when the Beis HaMikdash stood, then even a child may make the announcement. However, if we view the Torah reading to take the place of machatzis hashekel, then it must be read by an adult who is obligated in the mitzva of machatzis hashekel (Mikraei Kodesh, Purim 1, Harerei Kodesh footnotes). The prevalent custom is not to allow a child to read *maftir* for Parshas Shekalim (see Mishna Berura 282 s.k. 23, citing R' Akiva Eiger. See also Binyan Shlomo, *ibid*).

If a community forgot to read Parshas Shekalim: Some Poskim suggest that if a community forgot to read Parshas Shekalim on its appropriate Shabbos, they may read it on any other Shabbos until the end of Adar. They explain that Parshas Shekalim serves to inform people of their obligation to bring machatzis hashekel. Since this obligation may be fulfilled until the end of Adar, the parsha must still be read (Binyan Shlomo 54; Maharam Shik 335). Other Poskim argue that Shekalim cannot be read on any other Shabbos (Shaar Ephraim 8:95; R' Akiva Eiger gloss to Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 685). The Mishna Berura follows this second opinion (*ibid*, s.k. 2).

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