



פרשת ויקרא
פרשת זכור
אדר ב תשע"ט

PURIM HALACHA SERIES

All men are invited to join for part 2 of the Pre-Purim Halacha series with Rabbi Michael Stern.

Part 2

Halachos of Shalach Manos

Tuesday 12 Adar 2 - March 19

8:45-9:30pm in the Yeshivah
lunchroom

COMMUNITY MEDRASH PRE-PURIM

All men are invited to join together in a night of learning in preparation for Purim.

Monday night 11 Adar 2 -
March 18, 8:00-9:00pm in the
Goldhirsch Hall.

Join one of the shiurim or learn with a Chabrusa. Learning material will be provided.

Refreshments will be served and the program will be followed by Maariv.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

On Purim day the Kollel will be celebrating our 40th anniversary, marking the day on which the first Shluchim of the Kollel arrived in 5739.

To mark this milestone for our community, all men are invited to a Shalosh Seudos to be held in the lunchroom this Shabbos afternoon after Mincha.

We will also be welcoming the new Yungeleit who have recently joined our Kollel.



Participants at a Shiur, Yarchei Kallah 5779

In this Edition

Fighting the inner Amalek **P.1**

Who should get the Machatzis Hashekel **P.2**

Fighting the Inner Amalek

Parshas Zachor is the most important Krias Hatorah of the year. Through it, we fulfil our Biblical Mitzvah of remembering what Amalek did to us.

Today we can no longer identify the nation of Amalek. Even if we could, without a king we cannot go to war. Yet every Mitzvah in the Torah is eternal, with an inner message that is relevant at all times. So what is the message of Parshas Zachor for us?

After the first battle with Amalek, recorded in Parshas Beshalach, the posuk says; וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי יָד עַל כַּס וַיֹּאמֶר רַשִׁי רַשִׁי Rashi explains that this means that Hashem swears by His holy throne to fight Amalek throughout the generations.

In the verse, only 2 letters of Hashem's name וי are written, prompting the Medrash to observe that Hashem's name will not be complete until Amalek is destroyed. Amalek's opposition is to the final letters of Hashem's name וי. Only once he has been eradicated can they be restored.

In Kabbalistic thought, the 4-letter name of Hashem represents the process by which G-dly energy comes down into our world. This process filters through the Divine Sefiros which are represented by these 4 letters. This process can be understood, by parallel in our own conscious processes which bring our ideas into existence and then translates it into actuality.

To keep it simple; The first 2 letters of Hashem's name represent two phases of intellect, the origination and subsequent development of an idea. These are the Sefiros of Chochma and Binah which are represented by the ו and ה respectively. The ו of Hashem's name represents the downward flow of our intellectual understanding into the 6 emotions of the heart. The final letter ה represents the translation of emotion into practical action through speech or deed.

Ideally this flow should be direct and automatic. What our mind understands to be right and true should flow through to excite us and inspire our emotions. This excitement should find expression in

the words we speak or propel our decision to act or grow in a certain way.

Our study and meditation on Hashem's greatness, His ongoing supervision of Creation and the truth of His holy Torah should generate feelings of love and awe which inspire us in keeping His commandments.

Chassidus explains that Amalek comprises the words Am Malak, the nation who performs Melikah. Melikah, the special way in which the bird offerings were slaughtered in the Beis Hamikdash by piercing or severing it at the neck. This is what Amalek seeks to do - to disconnect the head from the body, separating the וי from וי and obstructing the natural flow whereby our intellect directs our emotions.

Amalek is happy for our study of G-dly truths to remain in our heads. But he chokes the neck to prevent it from becoming personally meaningful and developing into a feeling which just might bring us to make real spiritual growth and changes in our lives.

We all suffer from the Amalek syndrome. We learn concepts in Torah and Chassidus, but it remains conceptual and cerebral. We can be proficient in the ideas, but the voice of indifference inside of us cools us off telling us not to get so excited and take it to heart.

The antidote to Amalek is not more meditation or deeper understanding. Amalek knows all of that already. Amalek does not object to the intellectual pursuit. He just won't let it through to affect how we feel and how we behave. This is the ultimate Chutzpah, to know what is right and true and to disregard it.

The only way to fight the Chutzpah of Amalek is with a Chutzpah of Kedusha, a brazen resolve that we will not give any regard to the voice of Amalek and that we will do what Hashem wants of us, because that is how it has to be. When we do this, Hashem will reciprocate with the end to all evil when once again His name will be whole.

Who should Machatzis Hashekel be given to?

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

In last week's edition we discussed some of the Halachos of "Machatzis Hashekel". In this edition we will discuss where the money of "Machatzis Hashekel" should be given. There are different opinions as to who is the preferred beneficiary.

To the poor

Many Poskim write that the proceeds of "Machatzis Hashekel" should be given to the poor¹. This is based on Mesechta Sofrim² which says that the "Machatzis Hashekel" should be used to provide food for their poor brothers as a form of Matanos L'evyonim.

Others write that it is preferable to give the money to poor Torah scholars who dedicate themselves to the study of Torah. Kaf Hachaim³ records a custom of those living in Chutz Laaretz to send their "Machatzis Hashekel" to Chachmei Eretz Yisroel. This mirrors the observance of Machatzis Hashekel in the times of the Beis Hamikdash when Jews in Chutz Laaretz would send their Shekalim to Yerushalaim.

To the Shule

Aruch Hashulchan⁴ writes that one may give their "Machatzis Hashekel" to any cause that they wish. It need not be given specifically for the upkeep or maintenance of the Shule which resembles "Bedek Habayis" – the upkeep of the Temple. It seems from this that there is a basis for giving "Machatzis Hashekel" to the Shule since the Shule is a Mikdash Me'at (miniature Beis Hamikdash) and the Biblical Machatzis Hashekel was used for Korbanos that were brought in the Beis Hamikdash. Nonetheless since this our "Machatzis Hashekel" is only a zecher, one need not give it to a Shule.

To the Chazzan or Baal Koreh

The Ba'er Heitev⁵ records a custom of giving the "Machatzis Hashekel" proceeds to the Chazzan. This refers to the Baal Koreh who leans the Megillah. He writes that there is no prohibition in doing so, but that one is not Yotzai Matanos L'evyonim if the money is not distributed to the poor⁶. He quotes this custom in the name of the Masas Binyamin as brought by the Magen Avraham⁷.

Shaarei Teshuvah⁸ writes that the Ba'er Heitev is mistaken. The Magen Avraham and Masas Binyamin are not referring to "Machatzis Hashekel" but rather to "Maos Purim". The Magen Avraham is commenting on the second Seif in

Shulchan Aruch that teaches; One may not change Maos Purim to be used for a different Tzedaka⁹.

This Halacha refers to the Tzedaka collector. Since he is collecting money from people for the specific purpose of giving to the poor, he is not permitted to change its designation. On this the Masas Binyamin writes that if the custom in that place is to give the money to the Baal Koreh, it is presumed that the giver gives his money with this understanding (even though they are not Yotzai Matanos L'evyonim and the money should not really be called Maos Purim).

Therefore Shaarei Teshuvah rules that there is no source for giving "Machatzis Hashekel" to the Chazzan and if the Gabbai does so, he is depriving the poor of what they are entitled to. He gives first-hand account of Baalei Koreh who tried to claim the "Machatzis Hashekel" for themselves based on the Ba'er Heitev and that after he showed them that the Ba'er Heitev was mistaken, they withdrew.

There are those who disagree with the Shaarei Teshuvah and maintain that the Magen Avraham is discussing "Machatzis Hashekel" and that it may be given to the Chazzan¹⁰.

To Torah institutions

Rav Ovadiah Yosef¹¹ writes that the "Machatzis Hashekel" should be given to support Yeshivos and institutions of Torah study. He explains that this is because the Biblical Machatzis Hashekel was used to purchase Korbanos which served to atone for the Jewish people. In the absence of the Beis Hamikdash and Korbanos, Torah study provides this atonement. He illustrates this point by quoting a number of Maamarei Chaza";

- ☞ From the time that the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed, Hashem only rests in this world in the 4 Amos of Halacha¹² i.e. Torah study takes the place of the Beis Hamikdash where the Korbanos would be brought.
- ☞ Midrash Tanchuma records that Torah study provides atonement for the sins of the Jewish people. Therefore Torah comes as a substitute for the Korbanos which were purchased with the half-Shekels which are called an atonement.
- ☞ On the Posuk "I swear to the house of Eli that the sin of the house of Eli will not be atoned through sacrifices and Menachos", the Gemara¹³ comments that whilst their sin cannot be atoned with Korbanos, they can be atoned for through Torah study.

☞ Torah study is greater than offering sacrifices¹⁴.

☞ Yalkut Shimoni¹⁵ teaches that when the Beis Hamikdash stood, the Mizbeach served as atonement for all of the Jewish people. Now, when the Beis Hamikdash is no longer standing, the Chachamim and their students, through their Torah study, atone for the Jewish people.

☞ In Hoshea¹⁶ Hashem says בְּיָהוֹשָׁעַ אֶלֶּם חֶסֶד וְיִדְעָתָא אֶלְקִים מַעֲלֹת – "I desire Chesed and not sacrifices, knowledge of Hashem more than Olos". Yalkut Shimoni explains that we learn from this verse that Hashem desires charity and Torah study more than all of the Korbanos in the Torah.

☞ On seeing the ruins of the Beis Hamikdash, Rabbi Yehoshua bemoaned the loss of the Beis Hamikdash which would atone for our sins. Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai consoled him that we still have an equal source of atonement, namely Talmud Torah and Gemilus Chassadim¹⁷.

He concludes his Teshuvah that based on the above it is certainly a great Mitzvah to give the money of "Machatzis Hashekel" to benefit Yeshivos. He concludes with the words of the Gemara¹⁸ that one who places money into the pockets of the Torah scholars will merit to sit in the Heavenly Yeshivah – the Yeshivah Shel Maalah.

1. Elya Rabbah, Minchas Elozor 30 accordingly quotes this Magen Avraham in his comment of Seif 2
2. 21:4
3. 694:22
4. 694:8
5. 694:2
6. The Ba'er Heitev must be referring to a case where the money is given to the Chazzan on Purim itself, because otherwise one would not be Yotzai Matanos L'evyonim even if the money was given to the poor.
7. 694:3
8. 694:2. He also writes likewise in Yad Efraim.
9. Mishna Berura
10. Minchas Elozor and Mishnas Sachir Siman 230 quoting the Or Zarua and Aruch Hashulchan
11. Yechave Daas 1:86
12. Brachos 8a
13. Rosh Hashona 18a
14. Megillah 3a
15. Vayikra siman 455
16. 6:6
17. Yalkut Shimoni
18. Pesachim 53b