



פרשת פקודי
אדר ב תשע"ט

PURIM HALACHA SERIES

Rabbi Mochoel Stern will be delivering a pre-Purim Halacha series.

All men are invited to join in this textual refresher on some of the practical Halachos of Purim.

Part 1

Halachos of Megilla reading
Tuesday 5 Adar 2 - March 12

Part 2

Halachos of Shalach Manos
Tuesday 12 Adar 2 - March 19

All shiurim in the lunchroom
8:45-9:30pm.

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.

SHALOSH SEUDOS

On Shabbos Parshas Zachor all men and bochorim are invited to a Shalosh Seudos being held in honour of the 40th Birthday of Kollel Menachem Lubavitch and welcoming the new Yungeleit who have recently joined our Kollel.



Participants at a Shiur, Yarchei Kallah 5779

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Celebrating our diversity

The final two Parshios of Sefer Shemos discuss the actual building of the Mishkan with the donations given by Bnei Yisroel. The Mishkan was a collective project, involving all of the Jewish people.

The names of the Parshios Vayakhel and Pekudei highlight two different aspects of being a part of a community and the contribution that each of us makes.

Vayakhel means to gather together, reflecting the community as a whole, seemingly homogenous group devoted to a common cause or set of values. To achieve this unity one must transcend, and sometimes forgo their individuality to become a part of the greater goal and greater good.

In contrast, the message of Pekudei is the celebration of diversity and uniqueness of the individual and the specific contribution that they can make.

Pekudei means to count. In the opening of the Parsha Moshe Rabbeinu gives a tally of the contributions made to the Mishkan and how they were used in the various aspects of the Mishkan's construction. Counting an object recognises and declares the unique value of each counted item.

We see this contrast in the Mishkan itself as described within these Parshios.

On one hand, the Mishkan was a total unit, a single Mitzvah - expressing the theme of Vayakhel. But it was made up of unique elements; materials and keilim, each serving a different function - the theme of Pekudei. If any of the details were missing, the totality of the Mishkan would be lacking and Hashem's presence would not rest amongst Bnei Yisroel.

These contrasting themes are also reflected in the different donations that were given to build the Mishkan. The half Shekel coin was given by each Jew equally, whether rich or poor. The idea of giving an equal donation reflects how each member is an equal part of a homogenous whole.

But there was another type of donation where each person would (and was expected to) give according to their ability and their generosity. Some would

give gold, others silver or copper. These items differ greatly in their nature and value.

As a community we look more-or-less homogenous. We wear similar clothing, ascribe to similar beliefs and share common facilities. But far from minimising uniqueness, a community thrives on uniqueness and diversity of opinions.

Like each brush-stroke in a masterpiece or each note in a song, we are each unique parts of the greater whole. We each possess talents that only we can offer and which make us unique. For some it is teaching or speaking. Another might be a good organiser, implementer or source of ideas. Our unique views and perspectives, even when challenging or unpopular, should be heard and valued.

The underlying base is Vayakhel, to work together as a Kehillah with Achdus and Ahavas Yisroel.

Within this framework, Pekudei encourages each of us to utilise our uniqueness and contribute it to the greater good of the community; to building our Mishkan. Like the individual items in the Mishkan, it is our diversity that actually creates the fabric of the community and without each individual, the community would not be complete or reach the successes that we are capable of.

Footnotes from reverse

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| 1. Ram"o OC 694:1 | 15. 694:4 |
| 2. 21:4 | 16. Shekalim 1:3 |
| 3. Including the Rif, Rosh and Rambam | 17. Shemos 30:14 |
| 4. OC 694:1 | 18. Pirush Hamishnayos Shekalim |
| 5. Shu"t Maharsham 2:74 | 19. See Aruch Hashulchan 694:8 |
| 6. Megillah Chapter 1 Siman 777 | 20. 686:4 |
| 7. Shemos 25:2-3 | 21. See Mishna Shekalim 1:3 |
| 8. Biur Halacha 694 ליתן ויש | 22. 694:3. This view is brought in Tehillah Ledovid 47:9 |
| 9. Biur Halacha ibid. Although Aruch Hashulchan writes that in Russia one could give 3 half-Kopek coins even though they had a low value | 23. Daas Torah, Shevet Halevi 7:183. This opinion is based on the Yerushalmi Shekalim 1:3. The Alter Rebbe rules in OC 47:10 that women are obligated to say the Korban Tomid each day as they are obligated to daven in place of the Korbanos. This seems to suggest that women did have a share in the Korbanos and likely participated in the Machatzis Hashekel. |
| 10. Tzitz Eliezer 13:72 quoting Maharsham | |
| 11. Hilchos Shekalim 1:6 | |
| 12. Kaf hachaim 694:20 | |
| 13. ibid | |
| 14. 694:2 | 24. ibid |

The Minhag of Machatzis Hashekel

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

In addition to the Mitzvah of giving Matanos L'evyonim on Purim, there is a custom brought in Shulchan Aruch¹ of giving a half coin as a remembrance of the Machatzis Hashekel.

In the times of the Beis Hamikdash, each person would have to give a half-Shekel of silver. These coins would be used to purchase the communal sacrifices, so that each Jew would have a share in the Korbanos. This yearly contribution was a Biblical Mitzvah. After the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed and the sacrifices were no longer able to be brought, the Biblical Mitzvah of Machatzis Hashekel ceased.

The custom of giving "Machatzis Hashekel" before Purim is in keeping with the requirement of making a Zecher Lamikdash – a remembrance of the Temple practises.

The earliest source quoted that refers to the custom of giving a "Machatzis Hashekel" is Mesechta Sofrim² which states; "Since Hashem knew that Haman would weigh 10,000 Kikar of silver (to be able to destroy the Jewish people), Hashem told Moshe that the Jewish people would give their Shekalim beforehand (to counter Haman's coins). Therefore the Jews should give their Shekalim before Shabbos Zachor."

The Minhag of giving "Machatzis Hashekel" is detailed in the writings of a number of Ashkenazi Rishonim. Most of the Rishonim³ do not record this Minhag. The Mechaber does not record the Minhag in the Shulchan Aruch, however the custom is brought by the Ram"o⁴.

When giving the "Machatzis Hashekel" one should say that this is being given as a Zecher - a remembrance of the half-Shekel. One should not say that this "is" the Machatzis Hashekel⁵ so that it does not look like one is actually pledging towards the Korbanos.

How many coins

The Mordechai⁶ initially writes that one should give a half of the fixed coin used in their place of residence – suggesting that 1 half coin suffices. He then continues that because the Parsha⁷ of the donations to the Mishkan uses the word Terumah (donation) 3 times, one should give 3 coins.

The Vilna Gaon is recorded as stating that one only needs to give 1 coin, especially in a place where the half-coins are very valuable.

Which coins can be used?

It is preferable that the coins that are given for "Machatzis Hashekel" should be called 'a half' for example a half-dollar (USA) or half-sovereign (old UK currency). The Australian 50c coin, whilst being half a dollar, is not "called" a half-dollar.

The Ram"o writes that in his land, one should give "half Gedolim" (Gedolim-Polish – large Polish coins) since this is the only coin that is called a half. The Vilna Gaon⁸ would give a half-Polish coin of gold, as this was the only coin that was called a 'half'.

If one does not have coins that are called 'half' in their location, they should give coins which are half of the currency denomination of the place in which they live. E.g. 50c coin in Australia. The currency denomination used should be a significant amount and not half cents and the like⁹.

Alternatively, one may give 3 whole coins and have in mind that half of each coin is for "Machatzis Hashekel" and the balance is for Tzedaka¹⁰.

The Biur Halacha records a practise that people would give a small amount for "Machatzis Hashekel" and the Gabbaim would give them 3 silver half-Ruble coins to use as they are both silver and are called a 'half'. He writes that this practise is not ideal since the coins are recycled and not given as a genuine gift.

Silver weight

The Biblical Machatzis Hashekel was a silver weight based on the Shekel used for consecrated items. The Rambam¹¹ writes that this was the equivalent of 3 Drahm of silver. The Poskim write that this converts to 9.6 grams of pure silver. At current silver prices this is approximately \$6.90 AUD.

Some Poskim¹² write that each of the 3 coins should have a minimum value of the half-Shekel of silver. Others suggest that it is sufficient if the combined value of the 3 coins comes to this amount.

The vast majority of Poskim do not write that there is a requirement to give the value of silver. Since this is only a Zecher, it is sufficient to give 3 coins as per above. On the contrary, trying to imitate the half-Shekel for the Korbanos by being precise on the weight could appear like one is actually pledging towards the sacrifices.

When should it be given?

The Mahari"l writes that the Minhag is to give the "Machatzis Hashekel" coins at Mincha on Taanis Esther. Mesechta Sofrim¹³ records that the "Machatzis Hashekel" should be given before Parshas Zachor. Magen Avraham¹⁴ records that the

Minhag is to give "Machatzis Hashekel" on the morning of Purim before leining the Megillah. The Mishna Berura¹⁵ rules that the custom nowadays is to give "Machatzis Hashekel" before Mincha and to give Dmei Megillah on the morning of Purim.

Who is required to give?

The Mahari"l writes that the obligation of giving "Machatzis Hashekel" is from age 20 and up. This follows the view of Rav Ovadiah Bartenura¹⁶ that the Biblical Mitzvah of Machatzis Hashekel was for those over the age of 20. This is derived from the Posuk in Ki Sisa¹⁷ "all who enter into the records, from the age of 20 and above, shall give the Terumah to Hashem". This is the Psak of the Ram"o.

Tosfos Yomtov writes that this is subject to a Machlokes. The Rambam¹⁸ rules that Machatzis Hashekel had to be given by everyone over Bar Mitzvah. Tosfos Yomtov explains that only the initial half-Shekel used for the building of the Mishkan was for those over 20. The Machatzis Hashekel given each year for the Korbanos is a separate Mitzvah and applies from the age of 13. This is also the view of the Ramban in his commentary on the Torah. Most Poskim¹⁹ follow this position concerning the custom of "Machatzis Hashekel".

All of the above is Min Hadin. Elya Rabbah²⁰ records that the custom nowadays is for a father to give on behalf of all of his sons, even those below Barmitzvah. If a father gives on behalf of his child even once, he must continue to do so each year²¹.

Magen Avraham²² writes that one is not obligated to give on behalf of women and one's daughters. He takes the view that women did not give the Biblical Machatzis Hashekel and did not have a personal share in the Korbanos. This is derived from the verse ונתנו איש כופר, that each man should give an atonement the half-Shekel. However other argue and maintain that women are obligated in Machatzis Hashekel²³.

Darkei Moshe quotes Mahar"l Brin that even a pregnant woman must give "Machatzis Hashekel" on behalf of her fetus. This is alluded to in the Posuk²⁴ – כֹּל הַעֲבֵר עַל-הַפְּקֻדִים – the word מעובר can also be read as Ubar, meaning a fetus.

Footnotes on reverse