



פרשת תרומה

אדר תש"פ

STUDYING THE MEGILLAH

Rabbi Yossi Gordon gave a fascinating shiur on Megillas Esther to over 20 women.

Participants were engaged in the textual study with insights from the Midrashim and Meforshim.

Megillah shiur for men

Continues Wednesday night
8:40pm in the Kollel.

PURIM HALACHA SERIES

On Tuesday night Rabbi Michael Stern led a Halacha shiur exploring an array of Purim topics including; women's Megillah readings and hearing the Megillah through a microphone or hearing-aid.

Join us for part 2 this Tuesday night, Adar 7 (Mar 3) at 8:30pm in the Lunchroom.

7 REBBE'S ON PURIM

Prepare for Purim with insights from each of the 7 Chabad Rebbe's on various aspects of Purim and the Megillah.

A textual Chassidus Shiur with
Rabbi Y. Johnson

Thursday Night Adar 9, Mar 5.
8:30pm in the lunchroom.

**YESHIVAS MORDECHAI
HATZADDIK**

All boys are invited to join our annual Yeshivas Mordechai Hatzaddik learning program. 11:20am on Purim day in the Mezzanine. Special Prizes!



Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Mendel Gurkow

In this EditionThoughts on the Aron Hakodesh **P.1**Where to give Machatzis Hashekel **P.2****Thoughts on the Aron Hakodesh****Splitting the soul into three boxes**

The Aron was a wooden box coated with gold. It was actually made as three boxes; the innermost and outermost were boxes of gold. In between was a box of acacia wood. The exposed tops of the wooden box were then plated with gold.

Like the Aron, our Neshama also has multiple layers.

Gold cannot decay and will not tarnish. It is pure and will always be beautiful. Wood on the other hand is subject to decay. It can be beautiful and polished but it can also be rotten.

The inner core essence of every soul is pure gold. It desires only goodness and connection with Hashem.

The middle layer is our psyche of feelings and ideas. Here we have the emotions and understandings of our G-dly soul, but we also have the desires and dark emotions of our animalistic side. We cannot stop ourselves from having these feelings. Like wood, our middle layer can be beautiful but it can also be downright rotten.

Our outer layer are our behaviours; our thoughts, our speech and our actions. Tanya teaches that no matter what we may feel on the inside, we have the ability to rule over our negative inner feelings to not give them expression.

So while the middle box may be a place of inner turmoil. Our outer box, our behaviours can and should still be like pure gold.

Through this, we too become a fitting vessel for Hashem's presence to rest and be manifest.

The faces of love

On top of the Kapores, the cover of the Aron, stood two golden Keruvim. The Keruvim depicted the love between Hashem and the Jewish people.

According to the Zohar, one of the Keruvim was in the form of a man. The other was in the form of a woman.

When the Jewish people would visit the Beis Hamikdash for the Festivals, they would open the curtain of the Kodesh Hakodoshim and show the Jewish people the Keruvim embracing one another. They would say "see how you are beloved to Hashem, like a woman is beloved to a man". The love between husband and wife represents passionate desire.

According to the Gemara both Keruvim had the face of a man; one had the face of an adult and the other the

face of a young child. The love of a father to their child is a metaphor for Hashem's love for the Jewish people.

A parent's love for their child is not based on the child's qualities and achievements. It is not based on what the child does and how they behave or if they embrace their parent's values or not. The love of a parent to their child is an essential, unconditional love - because the child is part of them.

This is true for every child, but the younger the child, the more apparent this is. A newborn baby has no achievements to boast and yet we love them deeply.

At the deepest level of our relationship with Hashem, the experience of the Kodesh Hakodoshim, Hashem's love for every Jew runs deeper than our observance of the Mitzvos. Every Neshama is part of Hashem Above. He loves us deeply and unconditionally because we are part of Him.

The important pole position

A number of the Keilim in the Mishkan had poles (Badim); the Aron, Shulchan, the golden incense altar and the copper sacrificial altar.

The Badim were not integral parts of the Keilim. They were used to transport the Keilim when travelling. When they were not required, the poles were removed.

The exception was the Aron, whose poles remained in place even when it rested permanently in the Kodesh Hakodoshim. There is Biblical prohibition on removing the poles of the Aron. For the other Keilim, the Badim were functionary. In the Aron, the Badim were an integral part of the Keili and had to remain forever in place.

The Aron, with its solid gold cover and Keruvim was incredibly heavy. When the Kohanim would carry the Aron with its poles, our sages teach that actually the Aron miraculously carried those who carried it.

The Aron represents the study of Torah. The Badim represent those who 'carry' the study of Torah by financially supporting Torah scholars and institutions.

Like the Badim of the Aron, the supporters of Torah are an integral part of the Aron itself. This support must be constant and perpetual and cannot be removed.

It may be a heavy burden, but like the Aron, support of Torah does not conform to the limitations of nature. Those who support Torah are uplifted and carried themselves, with blessings for material and spiritual success.

The weekly Halacha analysis

Where should you give Machatzis Hashekel

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

Where should the money go?

☞ 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 teaches 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 practise 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 even though this resembles donations to “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 our Machatzis Hashekel is only a zecher, one need not give it to a Shule.

☞ To the 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 is directed 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 their claim.

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”l;

- 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 that were purchased with the half-Shekels and 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 the sacri-

fices¹⁴.

- 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 כִּי הִסְדֵּךְ הִפְצַתִּי וְלֹא זָבַח וְדָעַת אֲלֵקִים מַעֲלוֹת - “I desire Chessed 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.

Rav Ovadiah Yosef 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
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 accordingly quotes this Magen Avraham in his comment of Seif 2
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