



פרשת ויקהל
שבת שקלים
שבת מברכים
אדר א תשע"ט

27 YEARS STANDING STRONG

All of Anash; men, women and children are encouraged to participate in a special Asifa marking 27 years since Chof Zayin Adar 5752

Rabbonim and Mashpiim from the community will share words of Chizzuk and inspiration.

This Sunday night 7:30-8:30pm in the Yeshivbah Shule. The program will be followed by Maariv and Chas-sidishe Farbrengen for men in the 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.

SHABBOS SHIUR

This week's shiur will be given by Rabbi Chaim Cowen on the topic "Purim in the Garden of Eden".

After Mincha, Shabbos afternoon in the Yeshivah Shule.

A collection of Torah thoughts produced by Kollel Menachem

אין בית המדרש בלא
חידוש Chiddush



In this Edition

Marriage lessons from a broken coin **P.1**

The other half of the half-Shekel **P.2**

Marriage lessons from a broken coin

At the foot of Har Sinai, the Chuppah of the cosmic marriage forged between Hashem and the Jewish people, the bride did the unthinkable.

Having heard Hashem declare "I am Hashem your G-d" and "You shall have no other gods before Me", Bnei Yisroel built and worshipped the Golden Calf, committing spiritual adultery. Could there be a greater betrayal of Hashem? How would they be able to make amends and restore the relationship?

Hashem told Bnei Yisroel that to atone for their sin they would need to give - **תכפר נפשו** to pay up!

The Midrash describes how at that moment, Bnei Yisroel began to despair "Why did we waste our time gathering the spoils in Egypt and at the Sea when we will now have to give it all away." So great was their betrayal, they knew that they would not get off cheap.

Hashem knew what the people were thinking and told Moshe to tell them not to fear: "I am not asking for 1,000, not 100, not fifty silver coins, not even 1 solitary Shekel. **אני אשאל אתכם... מחצית השקל**. I am asking is for a half Shekel."

Half a Shekel, that's all? Moshe was perplexed. How could a mere half Shekel be sufficient to atone for their terrible wrongdoing?

The half Shekel was not about monetary value. Hashem was telling Moshe that this half Shekel would be worth far more than the thousands of silver coins that Bnei Yisroel thought would be required. Exactly half a Shekel would be the penalty without exception. The rich could not give more and the poor no less. Half and only half.

But why a half? Generally, our gifts to Hashem have to be whole and perfect, like a korban which cannot have any blemishes. So why here was a half required?

Further, the Torah specifies that the weight of a full Shekel is 20 Gerah. If they were only giving a half Shekel, of what relevance is the value of a whole Shekel? The Torah should have said that the weight of the half Shekel is 10 Gerah?

The Torah seems to be teaching Bnei Yisroel that they should know that there is a full Shekel (which is 20

Gerah), but that of this whole Shekel, they are only giving half of it.

The Ariza"l explains that every soul is initially created comprising a feminine and a masculine element. The soul is then split in two; the feminine aspect being placed into a female and the masculine aspect into a male. They grow up as individuals, sometimes on other sides of the world, until Hashem brings them back together to unite under the Chuppah.

In their single lives each saw themselves as a "whole", living only responsible to and for themselves. Under the Chuppah, in order to become one, each partner must surrender their sense of "wholeness" to become a "half" once again. A half which completes and is completed by the other, achieving a far deeper level of "wholeness" than ever before.

When a spouse wrongs the other, it is because they have reverted back to the more familiar "whole" mode and lost sight of their other half.

The marriage between Hashem and the Jewish people is the same. To unite with Hashem means to surrender our ego, our own sense of independence as a "whole", and to see ourselves as being incomplete without our relationship with Him.

This is the power of the half Shekel. A gift worth thousands of dollars may say "I'm sorry" or "I love you". But it is parting only with my money. A half Shekel carries the message saying "I am incomplete without you", "You complete me." Giving a half Shekel is (re) devoting my very self.

After the tragic sin of the Golden Calf, Hashem asks for half a Shekel. He does not want to be "bought off" with lavish gifts. True atonement is internalising that without Him we are incomplete.

Hashem pulled out a fiery half Shekel from under His throne and showed it to Moshe. When we give our half, Hashem reciprocates. Hashem is saying to the Jewish people, so-to-speak, "I will complete your lacking and make you whole." But beyond that, Hashem's half Shekel says that just as I complete you, You complete Me. I need you, for without you, My deepest desire cannot be achieved. Together we create the Shekel Hakodesh

The other half of the half-Shekel

Each year, every Jewish male over the age of 20 (and according to some opinions from the age of 13), was obligated to give a half-shekel. These half Shekels were used to purchase the communal sacrifices that were offered in the Beis Hamikdash on behalf of the Jewish people.

The half-shekel coins would be collected in each Jewish community and sent to the Temple treasury.

From Rosh Chodesh Nissan each year, the communal sacrifices had to be purchased using the new year half-Shekel contribution. To ensure that the half-Shekels were received in time, the Beis Din would begin to announce the new year half-Shekel collection on Rosh Chodesh Adar.

As a remembrance of this annual occurrence, we lay the Parsha of the half-Shekel on the Shabbos before Rosh Chodesh Adar. This Shabbos is called Shabbos Shekalim.

The Torah records the Mitzvah of the half-Shekel in a strange and overly-wordy way.

זֶה אֲשֶׁר יִתְּנוּ כָּל־הָעֶבֶר עַל־הַפְּקוּדִים מִחֻצֵי הַשֶּׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ עֶשְׂרִים גֵּרָה הַשֶּׁקֶל מִחֻצֵי הַשֶּׁקֶל תְּרוּמָה לַה'

“This is what each of those who are being counted should give; a half-Shekel by the Shekel weight of the Sanctuary – 20 gerahs of the Shekel – a half-Shekel as an offering to Hashem”.

Chassidus raises a number of questions on this Mitzvah. Firstly, surely something that we give to Hashem should be whole; perfect and complete. Why is the Mitzvah here to give something half?

Further, since the Mitzvah is to give a half-Shekel, why does the Torah tell us the weight of a full Shekel (20 gerah) and that the Jewish people should give a half-Shekel. The Torah could have said each person should give a half-Shekel which is 10 gerah!

The answer is that whilst we have to give a half-Shekel which is only 10 gerah, the Torah wants us to know that the half-Shekel that we are giving is only half of something; half of a full Shekel. The full Shekel can only be achieved by combining with another half.

Every detail in Torah is a lesson for us in our spiritual lives and our service of Hashem. This message of the half-Shekel plays out in a number of different areas;

Ahavas Yisroel

Each Jew on their own, like the half-Shekel that they give, is only a half and therefore incomplete. In order to be ‘whole’, one needs to join together and unite with the half-Shekel of a fellow Jew. This embodies the Mitzvah of Ahavas Yisroel, the sense that we cannot be complete unless we are united with our fellow Jews.

In a similar way, we cannot satisfy ourselves with our own service of Hashem and spiritual accomplishments. If we don’t help our fellow Jew’s to come closer to Hashem and Torah observance, our own service of Hashem remains incomplete.

Two souls

In Tanya, the Alter Rebbe explains that each Jewish person possesses two souls; an animalistic soul which seeks self-indulgence and a G-dly soul that desires only to serve Hashem.

This is alluded to in the Torah’s description of the creation of Adam; *‘and Hashem formed’*. The word וַיִּצַר ה' should be written with only one Yud. In this verse the word is spelled with 2 Yuds. The 2 Yuds allude to the 2 inclinations with which Man was created – the Yetzer hatov and the Yetzer Hara (the word וַיִּצַר is related to יִצַר). Each Yud has a gematria of 10.

Kabbalah teaches that each of our two souls possesses 10 qualities which form our intellectual abilities and emotional drives. Our G-dly soul with its 10 qualities are en clothed within and covered over by the animalistic soul.

The half-Shekel (10 gerah) that we give is through working on refining the 10 qualities of our animalistic side and directing it to the service of Hashem. When we do this, Hashem helps us to reveal our other half, unleashing the 10 powers of our G-dly soul.

Two experience of love

There are two levels on which we can experience Ahavas Hashem. One way to achieve love of Hashem is through the conscious levels of the Neshama. By using our minds to mediate on

Hashem’s greatness and the preciousness of Torah and Mitzvos, a person can come to love Hashem. This love is a love that is based on reason and by nature, as a human experience will be limited.

There is a deeper love which is a powerful yearning and desire for Hashem that transcends logic and rationale. This experience of love is not something that we can attain on our own. It is a gift from Hashem.

When we give our half-Shekel, using our own 10 Kochos to experience an earthly, rational love for Hashem, Hashem responds by giving us His half, so that we can experience this deeper, unlimited love.

10 Above and 10 below

The letter Alef is written with two Yuds, one on top and the other on the bottom, with a line connecting them in between. The upper Yud represents Hashem and the lower Yud represents the Neshama.



As described earlier, our soul possesses 10 Kochos, our qualities of intellect and emotion. Man is made in the image of Hashem, this is reflected in the name Adam which can mean ‘to resemble’. In his vision of the Merkava, Yechezkel describes the Image of Man that was on the Divine throne. This Image of Man refers to the 10 Sefiros, the G-dly energies through which Hashem channels His light into the created reality.

We have to give our entire being (our Yud) over to Hashem, with the awareness that we are incomplete and can only be complete through our connection to Hashem, our other half. In a certain regard, Hashem too is only whole through the Jewish people.

Through working on applying the message of giving a half-Shekel in the above areas of our Avodas Hashem, may we merit the reciprocation to complete a full Shekel Hakodesh. And may we be zoche to the immediate arrival of Moshiach and be able to bring the half-Shekel on Rosh Chodesh Adar from which we will once again bring Korbanos to Hashem in the Beis Hamikdash Hashlishi.