



Sha'arei Eliyahu

פרשת כי תשא

Table Talk

Secrets of the **מחצית השקל**

This week's parasha speaks of the **מחצית השקל** (½ a Shekel). The **מחצית השקל** was collected after the sin of the **עגל הזהב** (Golden Calf). This was a donation for the construction of the Mishkan that served as an atonement for the sin of the **עגל הזהב** as stated [**וְנָתַתָּ אֹתוֹ עַל-עֲבֹדַת אֱהֱלָ מוֹעֵד וְהָיָה לְבִנְיַיִשְׂרָאֵל לְזִכְרוֹן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה**] [**לְכַפֵּר עַל-נַפְשֵׁיכֶם**]. There was a set amount that needed to be collected. The rule was that each person had to give ½ a shekel and was not allowed to give more or less. Meaning a rich person was not allowed to give more and that a poor person was not allowed to give less [**הַעֲשִׂיר לֹא-יִרְבֶּה וְהַדֵּל לֹא יִמְעֹט מִמַּחְצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל**]. One

SHABBAT **פֶּרֶה** SCHEDULE

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|------------------------------|----------------|
| Mincha | 6:40 PM |
| Candle Lighting | 6:46 PM |
| Shacharit | 8:30 AM |
| Shabbat Derasha | 5:00 PM |
| Mincha | 6:00 PM |
| SUNSET | 7:05 PM |
| Aravit (Shabbat Ends) | 7:47 PM |
| Rabbenu Tam | 8:18 PM |

SHORT & SWEET

How do we know that **הַמֶּן** was from dynasty of **עֲשׂוֹ**? The Pasuk says **מִבְּנֵי עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה** **וּמִמֶּעֱלָה**. If one was to take the last letters of the word **מִבְּנֵי** **עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה** we would get the letters that spell **הַמֶּן**. If from the same Pasuk we were to take the first letters of the words **עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמִמֶּעֱלָה**, we would get the letters that spell **עֲשׂוֹ**. Teaching us that **הַמֶּן** came from **עֲשׂוֹ**'s dynasty.

~ R' Yosef Akilov

1. Which oil has the amazing ability to make a short person tall?
2. Why didn't Aharon HaKohen strongly protest the Erev Rav making of the Golden Calf?
3. Why is Yom Kippur a most happy day?

might understand why one wouldn't be able to give less than the ½ shekel, but why wouldn't a person be able to give more? There is a story about the Chazon Ish who was once approached by a woman that wanted to induce delivery to give birth to her baby earlier than her due date. There was no medical emergency for this but they wanted an early date because the date was convenient for either her or the doctor. The Chazon Ish ruled that this would be forbidden because of the following reason: In **ה'**'s calculation there are a certain amount of Jews at any given moment that need to be in this world. By inducing delivery (for simple convenience to either the doctor or parents) one is causing someone else to leave this world early and not in his/her right time. A similar concept to this explains the reason why one may not give more even had one wanted to. Since the **מחצית השקל** had a specified amount that needed to be collected, and since it was given as an atonement for the sin of the **עגל הזהב**, by giving more, the rich would prevent the poor from giving. This in effect would cause the poor person not to receive an atonement for the sin. By giving the amount that is required and not more shows that each person giving cares about his fellow Jew.

Another reason that we are obligated to give specifically ½ a Shekel helps us understand why this served as an atonement. The Sefer Ir Miklat says that Rabbenu Hananel made an investigation on a statement of **חז"ל**. **חז"ל** tell us that a persons **נשמה** (soul) stays in his body if it has at least 86 grams of blood. Any blood over 86 grams is considered extra and wouldn't be considered necessary for the person to be alive. Rabbenu Hananel's investigation showed that 86 grams of blood would amount to 5 **סלעים**, which is a type of silver coins. One **שקל** is 10 **סלעים**, making ½ a **שקל** amount to 5 **סלעים** which is equivalent to 86 grams of blood. The Sefer Ir Miklat concludes by giving a novel interpretation of why the ½ a **שקל** atones for ones sin of **עגל הזהב**. By giving the ½ a **שקל** it is as if one brings his entire being as a **קרבן** (Sacrifice) to **ה'**.

~ R' Yosef Akilov



Shabbat Shalom U'Mevorach



1. The Shemen HaMishcha had an amazing power: When it was poured on a short Kohen, it would miraculously make him grow tall! (Tanchuma on Parashat Emor Za).
2. Aharon saw that the Erev Rav murdered his nephew Chur when he protested that they were worshipping the Calf. He was worried that if he protested and was killed too, the Bnei Israel would never be forgiven! But if they were only involved with Avodah Zarah, at least they could do teshuva and be forgiven (Sanhedrin 7a).
3. Yom Kippur is a very happy day, because that's when Moshe brought us the gift of the Torah the final time! Also, we rejoice because Hashem forgives our sins and shortcomings this day each year by welcoming us to do Teshuva. Anyone who looks at Yom Kippur as a difficult and exhausting day is missing the essence of the day (Ta'anit 26b).

How many Kezayitim of Matza must one eat during the Seder?

One is obligated to eat altogether three "*Kezayit*"s of Matzah during the Pesach Seder. Every *Kezayit* amounts to approx. 30 grams of Matzah. Nevertheless, there is room for stringency to eat four or even five "*Kezayit*"s of Matzah, as we shall now explain.

The Order of the Seder Night

The order for the night of Pesach established by the great and holy Rashi, which we have already discussed, is as follows: Kadesh, Urchatz, Karpas, Yachatz, Magid, Rochtza, Motzi, Matzah, Maror, Korech, Shulchan Orech, Tzafun, Barech, Hallel, Nirtzah.

Three Matzot are placed on top of the Seder plate. Upon reaching the part of the Seder entitled, "*Yachatz*," the head of the household takes the middle Matzah and splits it into two pieces. He keeps the smaller of the two pieces and the larger of the two pieces is kept for the "*Afikomen*."

The First Kezayit

Upon reaching the part of the Seder entitled, "*Motzi-Matzah*," the head of the household takes the three Matzot already prepared on the Seder plate. The top and bottom Matzot are whole and the middle Matzah is the one which was broken in half during "*Yachatz*." He holds these Matzot in his hands and proceeds to recite the blessing of "*Hamotzi Lechem Min Ha'aretz*" followed by the blessing of "*Al Achilat Matzah*." It is customary that after one recites the blessing of "*Hamotzi*," one lets go of the bottom Matzah and continues to recite "*Al Achilat Matzah*" while holding only the top whole Matzah and the middle split Matzah. The head of the household must then eat a *Kezayit* of each Matzah.

Thus far, the head of the household will have already eaten two "*Kezayit*"s during this part of the Seder. However, the other members of the household, who do not have enough to eat two "*Kezayit*"s from the Matzot of the head of the household should be given a small piece of the head of the household's Matzah and he will then supplement that with other Matzot that he has until it reaches the amount of a *Kezayit*. Regarding the members of the household who do not eat a *Kezayit* from the head of the household's Matzot, they do not need to be eating two "*Kezayit*"s; rather, one *Kezayit* is sufficient according to all opinions. It turns out that the other members of the household (excluding the head of the household) are only eating one *Kezayit* at this point in the Seder. Even if the head of the household, for whatever reason, did not eat his allotted two "*Kezayit*"s and has only eaten one *Kezayit*, he has fulfilled his obligation. Due to time constraints, we will not be able to elaborate on the reasons behind this law any further.

The Second Kezayit

Afterwards, upon reaching the part of the Seder entitled, "*Korech*," one takes a *Kezayit* from the third Matzah on the Seder plate and wraps a *Kezayit* of Maror in it and then he dips it in Charoset, after which one recites, "*Zeicher La'Mikdash Ke'Hillel*," and then eats this while leaning on one's left side. At this point, the head of the household has eaten three "*Kezayit*"s of Matzah and the rest of the members of the household have eaten only two "*Kezayit*"s.

The Third Kezayit

Upon reaching the part of the Seder entitled, "*Tzafun*," which is after concluding the festive meal, the Matzah hidden under the tablecloth is eaten as the "*Afikomen*" and another *Kezayit* must be eaten from this Matzah. (For the other family members, the Seder leader hands out other Matzot in addition to a small piece of the designated "*Afikomen*" Matzah.) One must be very careful to eat this Matzah while leaning as well, for if one did not, one has not fulfilled his obligation and will need to eat another *Kezayit* of Matzah while leaning. This may very well lead to a point of excessive eating which can also be a cause of not fulfilling this Mitzvah, as we have already explained.

Some are stringent to eat two "*Kezayit*"s during "*Tzafun*," one in commemoration of the Pesach offering and one in commemoration of the Matzah that was eaten with it. At this point, the head of the household has eaten five "*Kezayit*"s of Matzah if he is more stringent, and if not, he has only eaten four. The other members of the household will have eaten four "*Kezayit*"s if they are more stringent, and if they are not, they will have only eaten three.

The Laws of Koshering Vessels for Pesach

A vessel is koshered in the same manner it is generally used, for we have a rule, "The same way it absorbs is the same way it releases." Therefore, any vessel which is used for cooking, such as a pot, the method of koshering it is the same way it is used, i.e. a process called "*Hag'ala*" which is immersing it in a pot of boiling water. The boiling water must be in "*Keli Rishon*" (meaning that the vessel must be immersed into boiling water which is in the original vessel where the water was boiled in and is still on the flame; however, one should not perform *Hag'ala* in a vessel which the water was not originally boiled in and was merely poured into from the original vessel which was on the fire, for this vessel is not considered a "*Keli Rishon*" and is merely a "*Keli Sheni*." The water in a "*Keli Sheni*" is not considered boiling enough to cause the vessel immersed into it to release its Chametz flavor). Thus, knives, spoons, and the like can be koshered by immersing them into water boiled in a pot on the flame or an electric kettle by first immersing one end of the knife followed by the other end. (If the handle of the knife is made of wood, it cannot be koshered through *Hag'ala*.)

Before performing *Hag'ala*, one must clean the vessel thoroughly and make sure no residue or rust remains.

Skewers and spits which are used with fire but without liquids must be torched with fire until sparks emerge, i.e. when the metal turns red. The same applies to a "Wonder Pot" which is used to bake Chametz cakes throughout the year which can only be koshered by torching it with fire until the metal turns red-hot. Usually, this is not practical with regards to pots and one must therefore purchase new pots for Pesach. Nevertheless, a pot which was used only for cooking Chametz throughout the year can be koshered with *Hag'ala* as we have explained.

The grate, which is the square or round metal piece which the pots and pans sit on the stovetop during cooking, should be koshered by cleaning it well and immersing it into boiling water in a *Keli Rishon*. However, if one pours boiling water from a *Keli Rishon* onto it, it is nevertheless koshered and is then permissible for use on Pesach.

The Month of Nissan

The month of Nissan is a joyous time for Israel; it has been in the past, it is in the present, and will continue to be in the future. This is because on the First of Nissan, the Mishkan (Tabernacle) was erected and the twelve leaders of the Twelve Tribes of Israel commenced offering their sacrifices in honor of the inauguration of the *Mizbe'ach* (altar). The day following the twelfth day, meaning the Thirteenth of Nissan, was *Isru Chag* for them and the Fourteenth of Nissan was already Erev Pesach.

After this, the seven days of Pesach commenced followed by the Twenty-Second of Nissan which was *Isru Chag*. The building of the third Bet Hamikdash, which we pray should take place speedily and in our days, will take place on the first day of Pesach and this is why this day will be especially joyous forever.

Although the Bet Hamikdash may not be built on Yom Tov, for building entails several works that are prohibited on Yom Tov, nevertheless, the third Bet Hamikdash shall be built by Hashem which is indeed permissible on Yom Tov. It is written, "In Nissan they were redeemed and in Nissan they shall once again be redeemed in the future," as the verse states, "As it was in the days you left Egypt, I shall show them wonders." The inauguration of the third Bet Hamikdash shall last for seven days but will not be able to begin until after the holiday of Pesach, for two joyous occasions may not be combined (it is for this reason that one may not get married during the holiday). Thus, the entire month of Nissan is dedicated to joy and happiness for the Jewish nation. It is therefore improper to recite *Viduy* and *Tachanun* (supplication/prayers) during these days and it is for this reason that we do not recite *Nefilat Apayim* (Tachanun prayer) during the entire month of Nissan.

Similarly, a fast cannot be decreed upon the public during this month. Nevertheless, one should customarily fast in honor of the anniversary of the passing of either of one's parents during this month. (This means that it's customary to fast on the anniversary of a parent's death and this fast should not be pushed off, even if it falls out during Nissan.)