



Katan and Machatzit HaShekel

This week we began *masechet Shekalim* that deals with the obligation for males to contribute a half *shekel* to the *Beit HaMikdash* on an annual basis. A portion of those funds were separated and used to fund the public offerings in the *Beit HaMikdash*. The *Mishnah* (1:3) teaches that *ketanim*, normally translated as minors, are not obligated to contribute the half *shekel*. If however their father contributes for them once, he must continue to do so every year.

The *Bartenura* explains that in this context a “*katan*” refers to anyone under the age of twenty. Even though this departs from the regular meaning of a *katan*, in this case it makes sense, since the obligation to contribute the *machatzit hashekel* only begins at the age of twenty¹. The *Tosfot Yom Tov* however notes that the *Rambam* and *Ramban* maintain the simple meaning of *katan*. The *Tosfot Yom Tov* explains that they must understand that the *pasuk* cited by the *Bartenura*, is referring to the contributions that funded the *adanim* (socket) for the construction of the *mishkan*.

As noted above, if the father contributes for the *katan*, then he must continue to do so every year. The *Melech Shlomo* cites the *Rash* who explains that since the father began educating his son in this *mitzvah*, he must continue. Furthermore, since the obligation is based on *chinnuch*, if the father refused to contribute for his son the next year, we would not forcibly take a collateral, like we would for one that was obligated and refused.

Based on this understanding, the *Tosfot Yom Tov* explains that it follows the if the father dies, then the *katan* would not be required to contribute. This is because the obligation to contribute is the father’s, based on the *mitzvah* of *chinnuch*.

The *Bartenura* however explains that the *katan* would indeed continue to contribute even after the father died. The *Tosfot Yom Tov* however finds this explanation difficult based on the reasoning above. The *Tosfot Yom Tov* however

suggests that perhaps the *Bartenura* means that these payments are being made from the father’s estate, on which the obligation to contribute existed during the father’s life.

There are however other explanations. The *Rama* (OC 470:2) explains that if one fasts *erev Pesach* for his first-born son, he must continue to do so. The *Magen Avraham* explains that that ruling is like the case in our *Mishnah*. He explains that once the father fasts, or contributes the *machatzit ha’shekel*, it is treated like a *neder*. In other words, it is not *chinnuch* that obligates the father, but rather because it is treated like an vow. This is how the *R’ Chaim* on the *Yerushalmi* also explains our *Mishnah*.

In *Shekel HaKodesh* (1:7, *Bi’ur Halacha*), *R’ Chaim* however asks that a voluntary practice is only considered a *neder* once it is performed three times or if one explicitly stated they wanted to do so permanently. These requirements are absent from our *Mishnah*. Further the concept of such a *neder* is not unique to *shekalim*. So if the reason is because it is a *neder*, why is it mentioned in our *Mishnah*?

R’ Chaim explains that the *Torah* states that a wealthy person may not give more and a poor person may not give less when it comes to *machatzit ha’shekel* - everyone must be equal. If someone is not obligated at all (a *katan* or woman), giving *machatzit ha’shekel* would not be a violation of that law. If a father wishes to give a *machatzit ha’shekel* for his son, from the outset it must be with the intention to do so every year. Otherwise, it would not be satisfying the *mitzvah* of *chinnuch* and would be considered as if he was giving more than *machatzit ha’shekel*, violating this law. *R’ Chaim* explains that when the *Rokeach* explains that he is obligated because of *chinnuch* it does not contradict the explanation that it is because of a *neder*. The *mitzvah* of *chinnuch* is what makes it a *neder*. He continues that in this context, a father would not be able to give the *machatzit hashekel* for his son and say *bli neder*.²

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¹ This is also the understanding of the *Taklin Chadatin*, *Korban HaEda* and *Mahara Fulda*.

² Note however that this explanation does not necessary answer the question raised above on the *Bartenura*: why would the son continue to be obligated after the father died? The *Tosfot Yom Tov* anticipated this suggestion and

argued that even if it is a *neder*, if the father died, it would not obligate the son to continue to do so. *R’ Chaim* however also cites the *Talmid Rashbash* who explains that the obligation is a *takanat chachaim*. Accordingly, it could continue to apply to the son after the father died.

Revision Questions

פסחים ט: י' – י" ט'

- What is the law regarding a case where two different groups' *korbanot* got mixed together? (י: ט')
- What is the law regarding a case where two individuals' *korbanot pesach* got mixed together? (ט: י"א)
- From what time on *erev Pesach* should one refrain from eating? (י: א')
- What *mitzvah* is listed in the *Mishnah* as obligatory irrespective of one's financial means? (י: א')
- Explain the debate regarding the order of *brachot* on the first cup of wine? (י: ב')
- Who are the *Tana'im* that are involved in the debate described in the previous question? (י: ב')
- What food is eaten immediately after *kiddush* at the *seder*? (י: ג')
- Which five foods are placed before the *ba'al ha'seder*? (י: ג')
- What occurs immediately after the second cup is poured at the *seder*? (י: ד')
- What are the four questions of *mah nishtanah* listed in the *Mishnah*? (י: ד')
- Complete the following formula of how one should teach the story of *Pesach*: (י: ד')
"מתחיל _____ ומסיים _____"
- According to *Rabban Gamliel* what must one say in order to fulfil the *mitzvah* of *maggid*? (י: ה')
- What are the reasons provided in the *Mishnah* for the *mitzvot* of *pesach*, *matzah* and *marror*? (י: ה')
- What does the *Mishnah* learn from the following *pasuk*: (י: ה')
"והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים" (שמות י"ג: ח')
- Explain the debate between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* regarding how much of the *Hallel* is read prior to the meal. (י: ו')
- When were the third and fourth cups drunk? (י: ו')
- Between which cups of wine is one prohibited from drinking? (י: ו')
- What is the last thing eaten at the *seder*? (י: ח')
- If someone dozed at the *seder* can they continue to eat when they wake up? (Include both opinions) (י: י')
- After what time does the *korban pesach* "*metameh yadayim*"? (י: ט')
- What other *korbanot* are "*metameh yadayim*"? (י: ט')
- According to *R' Yishmael* which *bracha* covers both the *korban pesach* and the *korban chagigah*? (י: ט')

שקלים א': א'-ג'

- What was announced on the first of *Adar*? (א': א')
- What six things were done on the fifteenth of *Adar*? (א': א')
- According to *R' Yehuda*, what did the *beit din* do when they found a field with *kilayim*? (Include all three responses.) (א': ב')
- Explain, including the important dates, the system used to collect the *shekalim*? (א': ג')

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Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
30 April ט' אייר	1 May י' אייר	2 May י"א אייר	3 May י"ב אייר	4 May י"ג אייר	5 May י"ד אייר	6 May ט"ו אייר
Shekalim 1:4-5	Shekalim 1:6-7	Shekalim 2:1-2	Shekalim 2:3-4	Shekalim 2:5-3:1	Shekalim 3:2-3	Shekalim 3:4-4:1

