



Fluctuating Machatzit HaShekel

This *Mishnah* (2:3) discusses the case where one gradually collects money for the *machatzit ha'shekel* and has an excess. *Beit Shammai* maintains that that excess is treated as a *nedava* - it must be given to the *Beit HaMikdash* to fund the public voluntary *korbanot*. *Beit Hillel* however argues that the remainder is *chullin* – it has no *kedusha* and is considered regular money. If however one declared that he was going to take his *machatzit ha'shekel* from a large sum of money, then everyone agrees the excess is *chullin*.

The *Mishnah* however continues that if one was collecting money for his sin offering then everyone agrees that the excess must be used for a *nedava*. If however one declared that the funds would come from a collection of money, then the excess is *chullin*.

Note that the difference between whether the money was for *machatzit ha'shekel* or a *chatat* is only within the position of *Beit Hillel* and if one was gradually collecting the funds. For *machatzit ha'shekel* they argue the remainder is *chullin*, while if the money was for a *chatat* the remainder is treated as a *nedava*.

R' Shimon in the next *Mishnah* (2:4) explains that the difference between the two cases is that *machatzit ha'shekel* has a fixed amount. The *Baretnura* explains that therefore any excess was consecrated in error and can be considered *chullin*. A sin offering however does not have a fixed value. Consequently, all the money collected would have *kedusha* and the excess would be used for a *nedava*.

R' Yehuda however argues that historically we find that the value that was contributed for the *machatzit ha'shekel* did change. *R' Shimon* however answers that nevertheless, at any given moment, there was a standard value of what needed to be contributed. That being the case, *Beit Hillel* would maintain that any excess was consecrated in error.

How the *machatzit ha'shekel* contribution could change is the subject to debate. The *Rambam* (*Shekalim* 1:4) explains

that the *mitzvah* is to contribute half the standard coin of the day, provided its value is greater than the half *shekel* in the time of *Moshe Rabbeinu*. The *Raavad* however argues that the obligatory value did not change. That said, when there was a financial need in the *Beit HaMikdash*, they had the right to demand more money. That is what occurred at the times listed in our *Mishnah*.

The *Chazon Ish* however reasons that our *Mishnah* makes more sense according to the *Raavad's* understanding. *R' Yehuda* argued that *machatzit ha'shekel* should be considered the same as *chatat* considering that the value can change. According to the *Raavad*, the argument is that even though there is a fixed obligation, if deemed necessary, the obligation can be increased. Consequently, the *machatzit ha'shekel* is also variable and the excess should be considered a *nedava*. According to the *Rambam* however, the obligation is determined by the coin of the day. Even if everyone wanted to change the mandatory obligation, they would not be able to do so. Consequently, the *machatzit ha'shekel* is not variable at all, making *R' Yehuda's* argument difficult to understand.

Rav Chaim ztz"l (*Shekel HaKodesh* 1:6, *Beur Halacha*) suggests that it is true that according to the *Rambam* the *machatzit ha'shekel* is indeed determined by the coin of the day. However, that too can be changed! They might agree to increase the standard coin's weight, which would increase the value of the half coin. Accordingly, the base obligation is also variable albeit requiring greater effort to do so.

Rav Chaim continues that *R' Shimon's* only response is that the reason why *machatzit ha'shekel* is different to the *chatat* is because that change would be universal. Were it not for that argument, one might think that when separating the money, one might be concerned that the base obligation might have increased. Consequently they would consecrate the remainder such that the excess would need to be used for a *nedava* (see *Keritut* 23b).

Revision Questions

שקלים א' ד' – ד' א'

- Explain the debate regarding whether a *kohen* can volunteer to contribute a *machatzit ha'shekel*? (א' ד')
- Can a *nochri* contribute a *machatzit ha'shekel*? (א' ה')
- Which *korbanot* can a *nochri* offer? (א' ה')
- What is a *kalbon* and who is required to contribute it? (א' ו')
- Explain the debate between *R' Meir* and the *Chachamim* regarding the *kalbon*? (א' ו')
- When are two brothers required to contribute a *kalbon* and how does it relate to their obligation to separate *ma'aser behema*? (א' ז')
- Were the change tables in each city allowed to convert the collected half *shekels* to other coins to lighten the load? (א' ז')
- What was the shape of the collection boxes? (א' ז')
- If the coins collected from a particular city were stolen or lost in transit, when are the citizens required to replace the lost coins? (א' ז')
- If a person gave his friend a half *shekel* to give on his behalf, yet the friend went and gave it on his own behalf, when do we say that the friend has transgressed the prohibition of *me'ilah*? (א' ז')
- What should one do if they contributed their half *shekel* from *ma'aser sheni* money? (א' ז')
- Explain the debate between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* about what to do with the money that is left over from a bunch of coins that were set aside for giving *machatzit ha'shekel*. (א' ז')
- How does *R' Shimon* explain the different rulings of *Beit Hillel* regarding the left over coins for *machatzit ha'shekel* and left over coins for a *korban chatat*? (א' ז')
- What is done with the left over coins that were separated for a: (א' ז')
 - *Korban chatat*?
 - *Korban nedava*?
 - *Korban olah*?
 - *Korban mincha*?
 - *Korban shlamim*?
 - *Korban pesach*?
- How many times during the year would they refill the coin boxes? (א' ח')
- According to *R' Akiva* what else occurred during these dates? (א' ח')
- How many coin boxes were there? (א' ח')
- How big were the coin boxes? (א' ח')
- What was special about the dress of the person responsible for refilling the coin boxes? (א' ח')
- How would they authorise the person responsible for filling the coin boxes to begin work? (א' ח')
- After filling the coin boxes, when and with what did they cover the coins remaining in the storeroom? (א' ח')
- For which sacrifices was the money used? (א' ח')

Shiurim

ONLINE SHIURIM

Yisrael Bankier
mishnahyomit.com/shiurim

Rabbi Reuven Spolter
mishnah.co

Rabbi Chaim Brown
www.shemayisrael.com/mishna/

Rabbi E. Kornfeld
Rabbi C. Brown
<http://www.dafyomi.co.il/calendars/myomi/myomi-thisweek.htm>

APPS

Mishnah Yomit
mishnahyomit.com

All Mishnah
 Orthodox Union

Mishna Yomi
 Our Somayach, South Africa

Kehati

SHIUR ON KOL HALOSHON

Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss
 In US dial: 718 906 6400
 Then select: 1 – 2 – 4

Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
7 May ט"ז אייר	8 May י"ז אייר	9 May י"ח אייר	10 May י"ט אייר	11 May כ' אייר	12 May כ"א אייר	13 May כ"ב אייר
Shekalim 4:2-3	Shekalim 4:4-5	Shekalim 4:6-7	Shekalim 4:8-9	Shekalim 5:1-2	Shekalim 5:3-4	Shekalim 5:5-6

