

מחצית השקל הרב שעפטל נויברגר

This week's *parsha*, *Ki Sisa*, begins with the mitzvah of *Machatzis Hashekel*. My father, *zichrona livrocho*, used to always ask the following question: How come the *nedovo* for *binyan haMishkon* was "kol *nediv lev*," whereas the fund for the communal *korbanos* required a mitzvah of *Machatzis Hashekel*, a standardized amount from every individual? He used to say that donating to the *binyan haMishkon* was giving towards buildings, and for that everyone is willing to give *b'yad rechovo*. *Korbanos*, on the other hand, was maintenance and when it comes to maintenance, without the mitzvah of *Machatzis Hashekel* there would not have been a *perutah* for a *korban*.

Let us look at it in a slightly different way. On *Erev Purim*, we try to be *yotzei* the *inyan* of *Machatzis Hashekel* and we give three of them, which in this country is three half-dollars coins. Of course, we do this to symbolize the *gimmel terumos*, two of which were a *machatzis hashekel*. These were the *terumah* for the *adonim*, the sockets which held up the boards of the *Mishkon* walls, and the *terumah* in our *parsha*, for the *korbanos*. As we mentioned, the third was the *terumah* for *binyan haMishkon*, whose amount was optional- "kol *nediv lev*."

I believe there is an interesting *yesod* to understand the difference between those that were standardized and that which was optional. When it came to the *avodah* of *korbanos*, the Kohen brought them every single day for all of Klal Yisroel. There was no difference between the *pashuteste yid* and the *greste talmid chochom*; the *korban* was brought equally for each and every member of Klal Yisroel. The reason why each of us can only give a *machatzis hashekel* is because it is a *nesinah* which requires *tziruf*—we are all joining together equally in the *avodas haklal*. The reason we are equal in this regard is because it pertains to the *kedushas Yisroel*, which we all share equally as *bnei Avrohom Yitzchok v'Yaakov*. This is the baseline *kedushas Yisroel* which binds us all together, regardless of our individual levels in *ruchniyus*.

I believe the same thing is true by the *adonim*. The *adonim* were the foundation of the *Mishkon*, the baseline *kedusha* of the *Mishkon*. Because of this, it addresses itself to the baseline level of *kedushas Yisroel*, where each of us were exactly the same. Therefore, the *nesinah* for the *adonim* also required the uniformity of the *Machatzis Hashekel* from every person.

However, when it came to *binyan haMishkon*, the *vort* was "kol *nediv lev*." Even more than that, the Torah tells us that Betzalel was chosen to oversee the construction of the *Mishkon*, and part of his job was "*lach'shov machashavos*." Chazal tell us that Betzalel could look at any piece of material and discern to what degree of *kavono* it was donated with. Based upon his understanding, he used those items given with greater *kavono* for the items and places in the *Mishkon* that held greater *kedusha*. Those given with lesser *kavono* were used for things which held less *kedusha*. "Kol *nediv lev*" of the *binyan haMishkon* represents the other kind of *kedushas Yisroel*—that each and every individual has his own place according to his level, his *kedusha*, his Torah, and *yiras Shomayim*. We are all different and we all live at different *madreigos*, and the *nedovos* given to the *Mishkon* were employed accordingly.

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Being as this week marked Purim Katan, I would like to share something *Purimdig* which comes from this week's *parsha*:

The *gemara* has a *remez* for the "main characters" of the Purim story. It states that Haman is alluded to in the *posuk*, (בראשית ג, י) "הַמֶּן הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צוּיֵתִיךְ לִבְלֹתִי אֲכַל מִמֶּנּוּ אֲכַלֹּת" (בראשית ג, י) "הַמֶּן הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צוּיֵתִיךְ לִבְלֹתִי אֲכַל מִמֶּנּוּ אֲכַלֹּת", about Adam eating from the *Eitz Hada'as* which he was commanded against. Indeed, Haman is the crystallization of the *koach harah* which resides in Amalek, whose own *makor* is the *Eitz Hada'as Tov v'Rah*. Eating from it instilled the *koach harah* into the *neshomo* of the world, which remains a challenge to us every single day. This is a *pashut* and easily understood *remez*.

The *remez* for Esther comes from the *posuk*, (דברים לא, יח) "וּאֲנִי הַסֵּתֶר אֶסְתֵּר פְּנֵי בְיוֹם הַהוּא". We know that Purim was the time when there was near total *hastoras ponim* following the destruction of *Bayis Rishon*, when Hakadosh Boruch Hu took away *nevuah* and the *Urim v'Tumim*. The open manifestations of Hakadosh Boruch Hu, especially the everyday *nisim geluyim* of the Beis Hamikdosh, disappeared. Esther represents this idea because she was the queen during this *tekufah* of *hastoras ponim*.

What is curious is the *remez* for Mordechai, which is found in this week's *parsha*. The *remez* is from the first ingredient in the *Shemen Hamish'cha*. The *Targum* of (שמות ל, כא) "מִיֵּרָא דְכִיָּא" is "מִר-דְרוּר" (שמות ל, כא), which spells Mordechai when connected.

Two questions we may ask on Mordechai's *remez* are the following:

1) We can easily understand the *remez* for Haman and Esther because they directly relate to their respective purpose and issue they represent. But what does Mordechai have to do with the *Shemen Hamish'cha*?

2) Furthermore, why is the *remez* for Mordechai in the *Targum*? It is not even in a *mefurashe posuk* as are the others.

I think there is an essential *limud* for us that *teitches* up the whole *metziyus* of Purim. The *tachlis* of the *Shemen Hamish'cha* was that anything touched by it was imbued with a *kedusha*. Hakadosh Boruch Hu infused it with the ability to install and activate *kedusha* into anything it came into contact with. In fact, until *Churban Bayis Rishon*, that colored the entire relationship we had with Hakadosh Boruch Hu. After it went away, the *gemara* tells us that during *Bayis Sheini* the process of giving *keilim* their *kedusha* was through "avodaso mechanchaso." Using the *keilim* for their given purpose created the *kedusha* within them. "Avodaso Mechanchaso" is internally generated *kedusha*. Indeed, that is what Purim is all about.

At the time of the Purim story, Klal Yisroel was at very loose ends. The *posuk* in Yechezkel reads, "וְהָעֵלָה עַל רוּחְכֶם הִיוּ לֹא תִהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם אֹמְרִים נְהִיָּה כְּגוֹיִם כְּמִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאָרְצוֹת לְשֶׁרֶת עִץ וְאֶבֶן" (כ, לב), and the *Midrash* explains that Klal Yisroel said the following: If an *eved* was sold by his master, do they have any relationship anymore? If a woman was divorced by her husband, do they have any relationship anymore? The Ribono Shel Olam took away our Beis HaMikdosh and threw us into *Galus*, and took away our *Navé*- now we have to fend for ourselves.

Let us understand what Mordechai accomplished. Chazal tell us that the *posuk* in the Megilah which introduces Mordechai as "אִישׁ יְהוּדִי...אִישׁ יְמִינִי" means that Binyomin and Yehuda each claimed that Mordechai was from the other *shevet*. Neither one wanted to take credit for him because Mordechai was the *da'as yochid* against going to the *seudas Achashverosh*. He was trying to maintain their *kedusha*, but they looked at him as being out of touch with reality. They viewed the situation as having been abandoned by the Ribono Shel Olam, which therefore necessitated them to fend for themselves. The invitation to participate in the affairs of the realm was too good an opportunity to pass up. Then comes the *gezeira* of "לְהַשְׁמִיד לְהַרְגוֹ וּלְאַבְדוֹ" and all of the sudden Mordechai is able to unify the entire *kehila* to fast for three days straight and to *daven* for *hatzolo*.

What turned everything around? The answer is *pashut*: We see from the first Mishna of the fourth *perek* of *Maseches Kiddushin*, which states that there were ten different *yuch'sin* that came up from Bavel, that in the seventy years of *Galus Bavel* there was a tremendous breakdown in marriages. There were so many questionable marriages and situations amongst the *yidden*, in such a short period of time.

Mordechai had a most cogent argument, which came from his *chochmas haTorah*: He told the people that the *gezeira* of destruction itself showed that Hakadosh Boruch Hu cared. Were He to leave us alone for another hundred years, we would assimilate ourselves into extinction. The *gezeira* must be a message that the Ribono Shel Olam truly does care and we must adjust ourselves, through *chochmas haTorah*, to the idea that we must internally create and understand what *ratzon Haborei* is for us. This means that the leadership of *chachmei haTorah*, part in parcel of the "Kimu v'Kiblu" of *Torah Sheh B'al Peh*, must direct the movement. They exemplify the internal production of *ratzon haBorei* equivalent to "avodaso mechanchaso."

If that's the case, then *avadeh* the *remez* for Mordechai must be in the *parsha* of *shemen hamish'cha*. Not only that, but it must even lie in the *Torah Sheh B'al Peh* of it- the *Targum* of that *parsha*. This is because Mordechai represents the new relationship with Hakadosh Boruch Hu- that we must discern *Ritzono Yisborach* internally from our Torah, *avoda*, *yiras Shomayim*, and listening to the *chachmei Yisroel*.