



## DVAR TORAH

### PARSHAS MISHPATIM

### MEVORCHIM ADAR / PARSHAS SHEKALIM



By: Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Smith

#### Refining Our Relationship with Wealth: The Path to Simcha in Adar

This week we read Parshas Mishpatim. It is also Shabbos Mevorchim Rosh Chodesh Adar and Parshas Shekalim. At first glance these themes seem unrelated. Civil law, the joy of Adar, and the mitzvah of מחצית השקל appear to stand apart. Yet upon deeper reflection a powerful and unified message emerges.

Let us begin with several questions.

First, Chazal (Taanis 29a) teach us, משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה when Adar enters, one must increase in simcha.. What does it mean to increase happiness? Happiness appears to be an emotion. Either one feels happy or one does not. If someone is struggling, how can we tell him to simply become more joyful?

Second, each month corresponds to a specific shevet. ר' צדוק הכהן מלובלין explains that the shevet connected to Adar is נפתלי. What is the relationship between Shevet Naftali and the theme of Adar?

Third, in Parshas Shekalim every Jew gives exactly a מחצית השקל, no more and no less (שמות ל:טו). Why specifically half a coin? The Torah generally emphasizes completeness and wholeness. Why highlight incompleteness here?

Finally, we must consider the structure of the Torah itself. Immediately following קבלת התורה in Parshas Yisro one might expect the Torah to proceed to lofty subjects like building the Mishkan in Parshas Terumah. Instead the Torah turns to practical civil law. Theft, damages, and the laws of an עבד עברי are introduced first. Why address monetary and legal responsibility before discussing spiritual grandeur?

To answer the last question, the חפץ חיים explains that the Torah is teaching a foundational principle. Before a Jew can build a Mishkan his financial conduct must be pure. Theft or dishonest gain undermine the very essence of holiness. The Torah demonstrates that integrity in money precedes even the building of Hashem's dwelling place. A person who steals distorts his perspective on wealth and purpose. Therefore the Torah first establishes a healthy hashkafah toward money.

This brings us to Shevet נפתלי. The Netziv in דבר העמק דבר explains on pasuk in (לג:כג) וזאת הברכה (לג:כג) that says שבע רצון ומלא נפתלי ה' that Naftali possessed not only blessing but also deep satisfaction. There are two types of wealth. One is material abundance. The other is the wealth of שמח בחלקו. Naftali embodied both. He had blessing from Hashem alongside inner satisfaction.

But how is such contentment possible? Chazal (Koheles Rabbah 1:13) teach us מי שיש לו מנה רוצה מאתיים. Human nature always desires more. The answer is that money itself is neither inherently good nor bad. Its value depends on one's purpose. When wealth is pursued for honor, power, or status it leads to endless dissatisfaction. When money becomes a כלי לעבודת ה' a means to build Torah, give צדקה, and perform חסד, it transforms into a source of meaning and fulfillment.

With this understanding we can appreciate the progression from Mishpatim to Terumah. Mishpatim describes the dangers of a distorted relationship with wealth. Theft, exploitation, and misplaced desire weaken a person spiritually. Terumah reveals the elevation of wealth when used properly. Contributions to the Mishkan become vehicles for serving Hashem. The Torah teaches that before we build holiness we must refine our relationship with material possessions.

This insight sheds light on משמחה אדר מרבין בשמחה. Increasing joy does not mean ignoring life's struggles. It means recalibrating perspective. It means recognizing that Hashem gives each person exactly the tools and mission meant for him. When a person embraces his role with אמונה וביטחון and learns to be שמח בחלקו authentic simchah emerges naturally.

Now we can understand מחצית השקל. Each Jew gives only half because no one is complete alone. True completion comes through unity with Klal Yisrael and through recognizing that our achievements are not solely our own. The equal contribution teaches that value lies not in how much one possesses but in faithful participation in Hashem's mission.

In truth all three themes converge. Parshas Mishpatim teaches integrity and proper perspective on wealth. Shevet Naftali and the month of Adar teach contentment and joyful acceptance of one's portion. Parshas Shekalim reminds us that each individual's role contributes to the greater whole.

As we enter the month of Adar may we merit to refine our perspective on material success, to become שמח בחלקנו, and to use the blessings Hashem grants us as instruments for Torah, chesed, and growth. Through this renewed understanding may we truly fulfill משמחה אדר מרבין בשמחה and increase authentic and enduring joy.



By: Rabbi  
Aryeh Gitlin

# HALACHA CORNER

## PARSHAS SHEKALIM



**Why do we read Parshas Shekalim, and who gives Machatzis HaShekel?**

**Why do we read Parshas Shekalim specifically near the month of Adar?**

**Who is included today in the minhag of giving Machatzis HaShekel?**

In the times of the Beis HaMikdash, every Jew contributed a half-shekel once a year toward the communal korbanos. These funds were needed for the new korban cycle, which began on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. Therefore, the collection was announced and organized during Adar, allowing sufficient time for the entire community to participate before the new cycle began.

For this reason, we read Parshas Shekalim on the Shabbos on or closest before Rosh Chodesh Adar, as a remembrance of how Klal Yisrael prepared in advance for communal needs! Similarly, the Rema records a minhag to give tzedakah before Purim as a remembrance of the annual half-shekel that was given in Adar.

Ashkenazim customarily give three half-dollars, whereas Sephardim customarily give the value of the silver weight of the original half-shekel, approximately nine grams of silver.<sup>2</sup>

There is a machlokes<sup>3</sup> regarding the age at which one becomes obligated. Rav Ovadia of Bartenura opines that the obligation begins at age twenty, whereas the Tosafos Yom Tov holds that it begins at age thirteen.

The Eliyah Rabbah records a minhag to give on behalf of minors, and even on behalf of a child in its mother's womb. Rav Shmuel Felder shlit"א concludes that from age thirteen one is obligated, while giving earlier depends on family custom! If one does not have a family custom to give on behalf of minors, there is no requirement to do so. However, all opinions agree that once a person begins giving on behalf of a minor, the practice must continue each year, as it takes on the status of a neder.<sup>5</sup>

Regarding women, the Magen Avraham<sup>6</sup> cites an opinion that they are obligated, but he questions it. The Mishnah Berurah does not record such an obligation. The Nitei Gavriel<sup>7</sup> explains that the half-shekel served as atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf, and since women did not participate in that sin, they were not included in that obligation. If one does not have a family custom to give on behalf of women or daughters, there is no requirement to do so.

If someone began giving on behalf of a family member due to a mistaken belief that it was a strict halachic obligation, the practice may be discontinued, as it is considered a neder made in error.<sup>8</sup>

1. MB 685:1
2. Chazon Ovadyah Purim 102
3. MB 694:5
4. Shiurei Halacha 1:45:3
5. M.A. O.C. 470:2
6. O.C. 694:3
7. Purim Chapter 27 comment 3
8. Moadei Yeshurun 49 in the name of Rav Moshe Feinstein

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 Given by  
**Rabbi Freeman**  
 4:40pm  
 In the Kollel  
 The Path to Real Simcha in Adar

**DAILY SCHEDULE**

<b>Morning and Afternoon Kollel (5-7)</b> Annual Yomi with Rabbi Smith <b>7:40am - 8:30am</b> Open Beis Medrash and Chavrusa learning <b>7:40am - 8:30am</b> <b>1:15pm - 1:55pm</b>	<b>Kollel Zooms</b> <b>*10am - 10:00pm</b> <b>*1:30pm - 6:00pm</b>	<b>Night Seder (5-7)</b> Open Beis Medrash and Chavrusa learning <b>8:30pm - 10:00pm</b> Daf Yomi with Rabbi Smith <b>*1:15pm - 10:00pm</b> Kinyan Mesucha with Rabbi Eli May <b>8:30pm - 9:00pm</b> MIV (at Yona) <b>9:00pm (English)</b> <b>2:00pm and 8:00pm (Shiluv)</b>
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**WEEKLY SHIURIM**

<b>Monday</b> MNSGA with food & drinks <b>8:30pm - 10:00pm</b>	<b>Tuesday</b> SCP with Rabbi Freeman <b>8:30pm - 10:00pm</b>
<b>Wednesday</b> Rabbi Hassan on Chupa V'Yiddushin <b>8:30pm - 10:00pm</b> Rabbi Peled on Seder Tona <b>9:15pm - 10:00pm</b>	<b>Thursday</b> Shovavim shiur from Rabbi Peled <b>9:00pm - 9:40pm</b> Guest speaker <b>9:45pm - 10:00pm</b>

**Kids Programs**  
 Anus V'Banin and Sparks  
 Mezer Shulboos  
**8:00pm - 8:45pm**  
 Mishna with Rabbi Alinsky  
 Tuesday Nights  
**6:15pm - 7:00pm**

Contact Rabbi Freeman at 404-985-7565 for chavrusa  
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