

## The connection between parshas Pekudei and shabbos Shekalim

# The Mishkan below is aligned with the Mishkan above The Neshamah below is aligned with the Neshamah above

This Shabbos Kodesh the Torah reading cycle reaches Parshas Pekudei. However, being that we also announce the coming arrival of Adar Sheni, we read for Maftir the mitzvah of the Machatzis HaShekel, the half-shekel, from Parshas Ki Sisa. This practice is recorded in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 685:1-5) based on the Mishnah (Megilah 29a): “We read Parshas Shekalim on the Shabbos of Rosh Chodesh Adar, or, if Rosh Chodesh falls out during the week, on the Shabbos immediately preceding Rosh Chodesh.”

The Gemara there explains that in the times of the Beis HaMikdash they would begin the process of reminding and encouraging the people to donate their half-shekels on Rosh Chodesh Adar. The Gemara’s source is the Mishnah (Shekalim 1:1): “באחד באדר משמיעין על השקלים”, “On the first of Adar we announce regarding the shekalim.” The Bartenura on that Mishnah explains that the communal korbanos of every year must be paid for by that year’s shekalim. The year for these purposes goes from Nissan to Nissan. Therefore, thirty days before Rosh Chodesh Nissan, on Rosh Chodesh Adar, we begin the process of collecting the shekalim for the upcoming year.

Nowadays that we have no Beis HaMikdash we read the parsha detailing the donation of the shekalim as a remembrance to the practice once performed at this time of year. And for this reason we call it “Shabbos Shekalim.”

The Mishnah Berura (Orach Chaim 685:2) quotes from the Levush (685:1) that by reading about the shekalim it is as if we have donated them. This concept is based on the pasuk (Hoshea 14:3): “וּנְשַׁלְמָה פְּרִים שִׁפְתֵינוּ”, “And let out lips substitute for bulls.” Rashi there explains that one can replace the offerings that we can no longer bring by appeasing Hashem with our lips. By reading about the offerings it is as if we are actually bringing them.

Being that it is a leap year HKB”H has arranged that Parshas Shekalim falls out in conjunction with Parshas Pekudei (as

opposed to a regular year where it falls out on Parshas Mishpatim or Teruma.) Let us try to find meaning in the confluence of these two Torah portions.

### “These are the accountings of the Mishkan the Mishkan of the testimony”

Let us begin with the opening pasuk in this week’s parsha (Shemos 38:21):

“אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדות אשר פוקד על פי משה עבודת הלויים ביד

איתמר בן אהרן הכהן”

“These are the accountings of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of the Testimony, which were counted at the word of Moshe; the work of the Levites in the hand of Isamar, son of Aharon the Kohen.” Rashi wonders why the word Mishkan is repeated twice when it would have made perfect sense to write it once. He answers (based on Shemos Rabbah 51:3):

“המשכן משכן, שני פעמים, רמז למקדש שנתמשכן בשני חורבניו על עיונותיהן

של ישראל”

“The Mishkan, the Mishkan, is stated twice as an allusion to the Beis Hamikdash which was taken as collateral (משכון) in its two destructions for the sins of the Jewish people.”

The Medrash Tanchuma (Pekudei, 2), as explained by Rabbeinu Bachye, has a different take on the double expression. “Mishkan, Mishkan” represents the two Sanctuaries that exist, one in this world and one in heaven. The two of them are aligned, corresponding directly with each other.

### From halfway and down human From halfway and up godlike

With this we can understand the continuation of the pasuk: “which were counted at the word of Moshe.” The Medrash (Devarim Rabbah 11:4) comments on the pasuk (Devarim 33:1):

“וזאת הברכה אשר ברך משה איש האלקים. מהו איש האלקים, אמר רבי אבין,  
מחציו ולמטה איש, מחציו ולמעלה האלקים”

“And this is the blessing that Moshe, the man of God, bestowed.  
What does it mean ‘man of God?’ Rabbi Avin said: From halfway  
and down, a man. From halfway and up, like a God.”

This means that Moshe Rabbeinu was very much like the heavenly and earthly Batei Mikdash. On the one hand his upper half was Godlike. This refers to the source of his neshama which was located high in the heavens. This is what enabled him to go up to heaven for forty days and nights, without eating or drinking, to receive the Torah (see Devarim 9:9). This is what allowed him to speak face to face with Hashem as a friend speaks to a friend (see Shemos 33:11). On the other hand, when he had to give the Torah to the Jewish people, his neshama, dressed in his holy body, came back down: “And Moshe descended from the mountain to the people” (Shemos 19:14). This cycle repeated itself: he would go up to Hashem, representing the Jewish people, and back down to the people, representing Hashem. Thus, he fully united these two aspects: From halfway and down, a man. From halfway and up, Godlike.

Now we understand the continuation of the pasuk. The double expression of “Mishkan, Mishkan”, representing the two Batei Mikdash, “were counted by Moshe” because the whole Sanctuary was patterned after Moshe Rabbeinu, he being the paradigm of connecting the upper and lower worlds.

### The holiness of the lower Mikdash comes from the upper Mikdash

Now let us attempt to combine the two approaches to the double expression: “Mishkan, Mishkan.” The first approach was that it referenced the two Batei Mikdash which were taken as collateral for the sins of the Jewish people. The second understood it to refer to the connection between the upper and lower Batei Mikdash.

Now the reason that HKB”H aligned the two Batei Mikdash was to teach us that through our actions we must draw down the holiness from the heavenly Mikdash to the earthly one. We have a general principle that the only way to draw down spirituality and holiness from above is through our mitzvos and good deeds down below. This is based on the Zohar HaKadosh (Va’era 31b):

“בא וראה בהתעוררות של מטה מתעורר למעלה, ועד שלא מתעורר למטה לא  
יתעורר למעלה לשרות עליו”

“Come and see that by awakening down below we awaken that which is above. But as long as we don’t awaken down below, that which is above will be not awakened to dwell upon us.” It is upon this principle that the concept of the korbanos in the Beis HaMikdash is based. The fire on the altar goes from this world towards heaven, “a fire offering, creating a satisfying aroma for Hashem.” This in turn brings down an abundant blessing of holiness from the heavenly Mikdash to the earthly Mikdash.

With this we can explain the pasuk: **“ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם”**, “They shall make a Sanctuary for Me – so that I may dwell among them.” The commentaries ask why at first it uses the singular: “Sanctuary,” and then the plural: “dwell among them.” Based on the above we can answer that Hashem is hinting at how the process of the resting of His Presence occurs. First He dwells in the upper Mikdash, and only then can we draw down that Presence, from the upper Mikdash to the lower Mikdash, thus joining the two Sanctuaries in a supremely holy bond.

### At the time of the destruction HKB”H moved the holiness of the Mikdash back upwards

Now we understand destruction of the Beis HaMikdash on a deeper level. When the sins of the Jewish people grew, and they started bringing their sacrifices without any inner feelings of repentance, continuing to rebel instead, Hashem stopped the flow of holiness from the upper Mikdash to the lower one. This essentially means that He removed His Shechinah from the lower Mikdash and brought it back to the upper Mikdash. This left the wood and stone of the lower Mikdash void of any holiness, thereby allowing the enemy to gain control over it and destroy it (see further the Arvei Nachal, Parshas Terumah, where he expounds beautifully on this topic.)

It is wondrous now to understand that which the Holy Gaon, Rebbe Yechezkel Shraga of Shinova zy”a, brings in the Divrei Yechezkel (Selichos, s.v. Ha’ir hakodesh) in the name of his grandfather, the light of the world, the Yismach Moshe, to explain the pasuk (Tehillim 74:7):

“שלחו באש מקדשך, לארץ חללו משכן שמך”, “They have sent Your Sanctuary up in flames; to the ground have they desecrated the Abode of Your Name.” The Yismach Moshe explained that while it appeared that the Mikdash had been burned to the ground, in truth it was sent in a fire up to heaven.

Based on the above we understand this to mean that each time the earthly Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, HKB”H took all the

holiness and sanctity contained in those earthly Sanctuaries and brought them up in a fire to rest in the heavenly Beis HaMikdash. This sanctity is to be held there like a collateral (משכון) until the Jewish people complete their obligations in terms of repentance and good deeds, at which point the collateral will all be returned in the form of the Third Beis HaMikdash.

### Hkb”h will return the two collaterals with the third Beis HaMikdash

Now we are amazed as we realize that the two approaches in the Medrash to the double expression of “Mishkan, Mishkan” are very much connected. The first approach teaches us that HKB”H never really destroyed the Batei Mikdash in their entirety. He may have destroyed the physical buildings but He held on to their kedushah as a collateral, in the same way a creditor takes a collateral from someone who owes them money. This collateral is stored in the heavenly Beis HaMikdash until the debtor, the Jewish people, pays back all that we owe HKB”H through repentance and involvement in Torah. Once we have paid off our debts we will merit the complete redemption, at which point HKB”H will return the two collaterals with the building of the Third Beis HaMikdash.

This is the explanation of the teaching that Rashi and Tosafos (Sukkah 41a, s.v. Ee nami) quote from the Medrash: “מקדש העתיד שאנו מצפין, בנוי ומשוכלל הוא יגלה ויבוא משמים, שנאמר (שמות טו-יז) מקדש ה' כוננו ידיך”

“The future Beis HaMikdash that we anxiously anticipate will appear from heaven built and complete, as it says (Shemos 15:17): ‘A Sanctuary, my Lord, that Your hands established.’” This means that all the kedushah of the first two Batei Mikdash, plus all of the kedushah that has been gathering from all the good deeds of the Jewish people during this long exile, will all merge together to create a fully formed and built Third Beis HaMikdash which will descend from the heaven.

We now see that the first approach to the double expression is actually built off of the second approach. The reason that HKB”H gathered all of the kedushah of the destroyed Batei Mikdash as collateral and stored it in the heavenly Beis HaMikdash is specifically because the upper and lower Batei Mikdash are aligned, thus allowing HKB”H to send all of that kedushah back down in the form of the Third Beis HaMikdash.

### The half-shekel – the lower half of the soul

Let us continue on this path and connect this theme with the mitzvah of the Machatzis HaShekel (Shemos 30:11):

“וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר. כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל לפקדיהם, ונתנו איש כופר נפשו לה' בפקוד אותם ולא יהיה בהם נגף בפקוד אותם, זה יתנו כל העובר על הפקודים מחצית השקל בשקל הקודש, עשרים גרה השקל מחצית השקל תרומה לה', כל העובר על הפקודים מבין עשרים שנה ומעלה יתן תרומת ה', העשיר לא ירבה והדל לא ימעט ממחצית השקל לתת את תרומת ה' לכפר על נפשתיכם”

“Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: ‘When you will take a census of the Children of Israel according to their counts, every man shall give Hashem an atonement for his soul when counting them, and there will be no plague among them when counting them. This is what they shall give – everyone who passes amount the counted – half of the shekel, by the holy shekel, the shekel is twenty geirah, half of the shekel as a portion to Hashem. Everyone who passes among the counted, from the age of twenty years and up, shall give the portion of Hashem. The wealthy shall not increase and the destitute shall not decrease from half of the shekel – to give the portion of Hashem, to atone for your souls.’”

We find a wondrous explanation of the Machatzis HaShekel in the writings of the Bnei Yissacher (Adar, Maamar 2, Drush 3). It all begins with the pasuk in Behaaloscha (Bamidbar 10:2):

“עשה לך שתי הצוצרות כסף”, “Make for yourself two silver trumpets.” The holy Maggid Rebbe Dov Ber of Mezeritch zy”a said that on a deeper level this pasuk hints to the following:

“עשה לך שתי חצאי צורות שיהיו נכספים זה לזה”, which literally means: “make for yourself two half forms that long for one another.” The holy students of the Maggid presented different explanations of this cryptic teaching. The Bnei Yissacher understood it based on the Gemara (Yevamos 62a) which states:

“אין בן דוד בא עד שיכלו כל נשמות שבגוף”, “The Son of David (Moshiach) will not come until all of the souls are emptied out of the Guf.” Rashi explains that the Guf is the warehouse in heaven that houses all of the neshamos that exist. The Bnei Yissacher adds a novel point: when the soul leaves that warehouse called the Guf and comes down to this world, the root of the soul remains in the warehouse. In distinction to physical entities, when spirituality moves to a new place, it does not have to leave its previous place because spirituality can expand. These two parts of the neshama remain connected. The root of the neshama above shines down on the rest of the neshama below and the neshama that is below longs and strives to climb back to its partner above. This is what

