



Dvar Torah for Parshat Shekalim Based on *Likutey Halakhot, Shutfim b'Karka* 5:17

This Shabbat is the first of the Four Parshiot, the additional Shabbat Torah readings that our Sages mandated for this time of the year. Parshat Shekalim is read the Shabbat prior to the month of Adar, serving, in part, as an announcement of the annual campaign to donate money for the communal offerings that were brought in the Holy Temple. Each family head was to contribute a half-shekel, no more, even if he was rich, and no less, even if he was poor.

Reb Noson points out a number of lessons that can be learned from the above. First, that no Jew is an island. As much as you or I can do on our own, certain projects can't even be started—let alone finished!—unless we work together. Beyond the obvious, that our resources are expanded, he reminds us that the mazel of a group is better than that of a single individual.

The half-shekel gives us advice in how to proceed in that partnership (and others). We all have ideas of how God ought to be served, what is "the best way" to live Jewishly. We all have positive characteristics: some of us are creative, some never get discouraged, can work non-stop for hours, etc. The good thing about this is that we can learn and be inspired by one another. There are, however, two dangers. The first is to not overwhelm, or discourage, anyone else with your ideas or your personality. The second is to not be overwhelmed, or discouraged, by anyone else's ideas or personality.

How to avoid these dangers? Reb Noson points out that the word *SheKeL* is related to the word *liShKoL*, to weigh. Think and consider who and what you are, who and what the other person is. Do your best to gauge what can be realistically shared and how that sharing is best accomplished. (Praying to do this right won't hurt!) The more we try—and the better we get—to respect each other's boundaries, the more we do away with *sinat chinam*, the baseless hatred that cause the destruction of our Holy Temple. May we soon see our people re-united and redeemed. Amen.

agutn Shabbos!

Shabbat Shalom!

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