



דרכים בפרשה

משפטים-שקלים



זה יתנו כל העובר על הפקודים מחצית השקל בשקל הקודש (ל:יג)

This Shabbos has three different focuses: Parshas Mishpatim, Parshas Shekalim and Shabbos mevorchim of Chodesh Adar. The seforim note many connections between the three. I would like to explore one of the common threads.

זה יתנו כל העובר על הפקודים מחצית השקל - There are three main points of the mitzvah of *machtzis hashekel* which demonstrate the overall concept of *achdus*/unity.

The first idea is that one may not bring a full shekel; only a half is acceptable, thereby forcing each person to unite with another to create a whole. One may have achieved the greatest possible accomplishments, and yet, they will not amount to more than just a half. In order to reach completion, one must unite with another half. This brings about a beautiful *achdus* in Klal Yisroel.

The second idea is the fact that everyone must give a coin of the same value. The wealthy may not give more and the poor may not give less. This causes that no matter what, come what may, we are all doing the same thing.

Machlokes and *pirud* come about when one feels superior over the other. The equality of this mitzvah will cause another level of *achdus*.

The third idea is that all of the combined half shekalim were donated for the exact same cause. This does not mean that there were two different pushkas, Poilisher and Ingirishe, or two different kupas with pictures of different gedolim posing while putting in the coin. There was just one kuppa and all the money went for the same project thus uniting Klal Yisroel, once again underscoring the role of this great mitzvah of achieving *achdus*. The Vilna Gaon takes this a step further explaining that where there is *achdus*, the shechina finds a resting place. This means that the reason the shechina rested in the Mishkan is not because it was an available, beautiful spot, but rather, the *Shechina* is attracted to *achdus*. "Where there is *achdus*, there you shall find the shechina." All the shekalim were combined to pay for the Mishkan. The Mishkan represented unity because of the three factors mentioned above, hence ushering in the shechina. Due to the *achdus*, there was no better place to host the *Shechina*.

Shabbos Mevorchim of Chodesh Adar is very appropriate to read this idea of achdus because this was exactly the point that Haman tried to convey to Achashveirosh. He noted that at that very moment, Klal Yisroel was splintered within themselves; they were also scattered and not unified amongst the gentile nations. This was the perfect time to attack! So as we enter the month, we are *mashmi'im al hashkolim*- we announce the collection of the shekalim, to remind ourselves to unite, thereby not allowing Haman to have any claims against us, as Chazal say, our shekalim shall precede his shekalim.

Looking into Parshas Mishpatim, we note that it deals with many mitzvos that are *bein adam l'chaveiro*. The underlying principle of these mitzvos is rooted in *v'ahavta lira'acha kamocho*. The concept of achdus, in a practical sense, is the idea of understanding that other people shall be as important to us as we feel ourselves to be; it means to elevate the sensitivity that we feel towards the needs of another person. How does one come to such a level? If we look at ourselves as a whole, we most likely

will not notice what others are missing. But if we go with the attitude of "half", no one wants to remain deficient. By looking at ourselves as lacking when our neighbor is in need, we learn to *tracht fun yener*.

May we be zoche to have all of our half-shekalim join together in a great display of achdus thus bringing upon us hashro'as hashechina. In this manner, we will blot out the name of Amalek once and for all.

Good Shabbos, מרדכי אפפעל



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