**Questions for Reflection:**

1. ‎After diligently reading and studying the different readings for this Shabbat what reading especially touched your heart and fired your ‎imagination?‎

I was touched by the Hakham’s commentary on the meaning of the shekel, in Matityahu, as meaning the price Gentiles pay to learn Torah.

1. How is Shemot 30:1 related to Shemot 30:37-38?

V.1 speaks of building an altar to burn the ketoret (incense) properly before HaShem and v.37-38 speak of the improper way to use the ketoret for our own gratification.

1. There are various subjects being treated in this Torah seder. How is the subject of the Half Shekel related to the other subjects being treated?

The incense altar, the incense, and the atonement of the altar both suggests that the shekel is used to provide atonement and is used to be pleasing to HaShem. Both the Yom Kippur atonement and the half shekel are both done once a year. It also suggests that atonement from the half shekel is like the cleansing of the water. Finally, the anointing oil is used to prepare the priests for service. This suggests that the half shekel also prepares the people for service by providing the tamid offering with its atonement.

A. Altar of incense – atonement.

B. Half-shekel – atonement.

C. Kior –ritual purity before atonement can be made.

D. Anointing consecration – redemption, atonement.

E. Spices – atonement of the gentile by Jews.

If there is no half shekel, then there is no incense for the altar and there is no answer to prayers (the incense represents the prayers of the righteous). If you want to get HaShem’s attention just give money to His ventures, as we see in the following passage:

***II Luqas (Acts) 10:1*** *There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,*

*2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.*

*3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.*

*4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.*

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Exodus 30:3?

**its top** – Why is a this ‘top’ specifically mentioned?

**a golden crown** – What does this symbolize?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Exodus 30:7?

**when he sets… in order** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: בְּהֵיטִיבוֹ?

**the lamps** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: הַנֵּרֽת?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Exodus 30:10?

**But Aaron shall make atonement**- What does this refer to?

**once a year** – When is this to be done?

**the sin offering of the atonements**- What specifically are these offerings?

**a holy of holies**- What do we learn from this phrase?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Exodus 30:12?

**When you take** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew phrase: כִּי תִשָׂא ?

**then there will be no plague among them** – Why are these exempt from the plague?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Exodus 30:13?

**This they shall give** – How did they know what to give?

**who goes through the counting** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew phrase: הָעֽבֵר עַל-הַפְקֻדִים?

**half a shekel according to the holy shekel** – What is the weight of this shekel?

**Twenty gerahs equal one shekel** – How much is this?

**Twenty gerahs equal one shekel** – What is this size?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Exodus 30:14?

**from the age of twenty and upward** – What does this teach us?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Exodus 30:15?

**to atone for your souls** – What would be the consequence if this were not done?

**to atone for your souls** – Why was this written?

The half shekel acted like professional insurance that was used to protect against mal-practice. By giving a gift to the synagogue, a person was given insurance agains mal-practice.

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Exodus 30:16?

**and use it for the work of the Tent of Meeting** – What do we learn from this?

**for the work of the Tent of Meeting** - What is this work?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Exodus 30:18?

**a washstand** – What did this look like?

**and its base** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: וְכַנּוֹ?

**for washing** – What does this refer to?

**between… the altar** – What does this refer to?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Exodus 30:19?

**their hands and feet** – How was this done?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Exodus 30:20?

**When they enter the Tent of Meeting** – Why would they enter?

**so that they will not die** – What does this imply?

**the altar** – Which altar?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Exodus 30:21?

**so that they will not die** – Why was this pasuk written?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Exodus 30:23?

**spices of the finest sort** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew phrase: בְּשָׂמִים רֽאשׁ ?

**fragrant cinnamon** – Why is it called ‘fragrant’?

**half of it two hundred and fifty [shekel weights]** – Why is this stated?

**fragrant cane** What do we learn from this Hebrew phrase: וּקְנֵה-בֽשֶׂם ?

**two hundred and fifty [shekel weights]** – Is this the total sum?

1. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Exodus 30:34?

**balsam sap** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: נָטָף?

**onycha** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: וּשְׁחֵלֶת?

**and galbanum**- What does this teach us?

**aromatics** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew word: סַמִּים?

**and pure frankincense** – What doe we learn from this?

**they shall be of equal weight** – What is the meaning of the Hebrew phrase: בַּד בְּבַד יִהְיֶה ?

1. What word/words/phrase/concept of the Torah fired the imagination of our Psalmist this ‎‎week?‎

The psalmist is comparing the implements in the Temple to the things that HaShem created in the world. For example: The Psalmist see the waves of the sea as related to the laver which is also called a ‘sea’. The Psalmist is also calling our attention to the fact that the new moon is coming soon.

1. How is our Ashlamatah of II Kings 11:17–12:17‎ ‎ related to our Torah Seder?‎

The Ashlamata is reflecting the building of the Mishkan with the repair and restoration of the Beit HaMikdash (the Temple). He see the half shekel in contrast to the collection for the repair. This collection was voluntary.

1. ‎How is ‎ Matityahu (Matt.) 17:24-27‎ related to our Torah Seder, Psalm and Ashlamatah?‎

Each section is somehow related to the half-shekel or the Temple by some sort of imagery. In order to meet one’s obligation to the body, one must put a hook in the sea. If people do not contribute to the building and maintenance of the Temple, then the whole profession will wither.

1. ‎‎In your opinion what are the basic teachings of Matityahu (Matt.) 17:24-27‎?‎

We should pay the taxes that are required by the leaders even if we are not necessarily supposed to, if it would give offense.

As Chacham already stated, the Gentile pupil is to support the Jewish teacher and therefore express his gratitude of learning Torah.

1. We are all connected.

2. There is no such thing as individual Judaism

3. When striving to become a Torah teacher there is nothing to worry about…..the tax will get paid… by the Hand of HaShem.

This section of Mattiyahu teaches the vitality of doing things G-d’s way. The dynamics of the Kingdom cannot be altered. This is the true system of God’s governance. The Governance of G-d is a Corporate occupation.

1. If one truly is seeking to Know HaShem and his will, it will lead to nowhere but the feet of a Torah scholar (Hakham). Once one arrives, there should be no doubt that supporting the Governance (Kingdom) of G-d, is not just a requirement, but actual evidence of the reality of your Emunah.

2. Also in keeping with His Majesties teaching, we are to be fishers of men (goyim), and since the Jews have been appointed guardians of the Torah (written/oral) and have seen that the chain has remained unbroken, how great is the debt owed to such a studious and faithful people. Let us not support the Kingdom in word only, but also in deed.

That gentile believers, as well as Jews, share a financial responsibility to support the torah teachers and to contribute to the upkeep of the local synagogues and in the future, to the temple in Jerusalem.

The Hakham taught that Maimonides said that there would never be another Temple. He saw future references to the Temple as being metaphorical or symbolical. The Hakham agrres with Maimonides and sees the Temple as bringing the people of HaShem together and building and equiping them. This is the purpose of the prayer services and Torah study. Thus a Temple of *Living Stones* rather than a Temple of *stones*.

1. ‎In your opinion, and taking altogether our Torah Seder, Psalm, Ashlamatah and the ‎Pericope of Matthew for this Shabbat, what do you think is the ‎prophetic statement for the coming ‎week?‎

We are part of a community which is a microcosm of the world. Because of this we need to be carefull to do our part for the community and we should study diligently to understand our role in the world and in the community.

Give to the work of God with all your heart, so it might be well with us.

We should seek to become unified in all of our ways. The greater unification, the greater Tikkum Olam is being accomplished.

Community and unity is the key and core of true holiness. Work to build the community with all your resources. SUPPORT YOUR HAKHAM!!!!

As an outward sign of an inner work, that he or she has been grafted into the Jewish Olive Tree and brought near the Commonwealth of Israel, as taught by a Jewish Scholar, we should support the Jewish Scholar.

As no man is an island, neither is the Jew. We need the other half of our shekel (community).

Keep fishing. You never know, after all I took the bait (HH. R.P and HH.) and was hooked.

In Matityahu: we are told we are told to fish for men’s souls and they will as they become Torah educated, support (half shekels) the Jewish educators and thereby the Governance of G-d.

That we have all have a need for a Torah centered community. Not only do we all need it, Jews and gentiles alike, but we all have a financial responsibility for the Torah teachers of the community.

**Rabbit trail:**

1 Corinthians 6:16 = Definition of marriage. The sexual act constitutes marriage. What happens when a just man is joined to a harlot? There is a transference from the woman to the man. They have joined both physically and spiritually. *The woman’s sins are transferred to the man*. A woman atones for her sins through the sexual act. She becomes clean while the man acquires the woman’s sins. The man has to repent, enter the mikveh, and sometimes even go through a Yom HaKippurim.

A woman was made for marriage. Therefore she atones for her sins through intimacy. A man atones for his sins by:

1. Praying in the Esnoga with a minyan.
2. Studying Torah
3. Works of charity (particularly the teaching the Torah).

Therefore, a wife should insure that her husband to go to the synagogue to pray and study.

There was no half shekel. Therefore two had to unite to bring a whole shekel to the Temple in order that each could give half off this one coin. As in marriage where the two become one, so the half shekel causes two men to become one. The study of the Torah demands that two join together to properly study (his study partner, as we learn in the Mishna - ***Abot 1:6***).

How does a widow or an unmarried woman atone for her sins?

**1 Timothy 5:3** Honour widows that are widows indeed.

4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

6 But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

7 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.

8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore (50) years old, having been the wife of one man,

10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints’ feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

11 But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

12 Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

**These are the things that atoned for for a widow’s sins:** *10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints’ feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work*.

Bear in mind that Hakham Shaul is speaking in the remez and that this is not to be taken literally!

**1 Corinthians 6:16** What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.