

The Weekly Daf



by Rav Mendel Weinbach - Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

Shekalim 9-15

Week of Week of 4 - 10 Teves 5759 / 23 - 29 December 1998
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud
studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

A Mouthful Of Caution

"You shall be pure in the eyes of Hashem and of Israel." (Bamidbar 32:22)

Moshe Rabbeinu's counsel, given to the tribes of Reuven and Gad in regard to fulfilling their end of the bargain in exchange for their desired portion of *Eretz Yisrael*, serves as a warning to all generations. It is not sufficient for a person to be right in the eyes of Heaven alone; he must also avoid raising suspicion in the minds of people.

The *shekalim* contributed during the month of Adar were tithed three times a year to buy animals for the communal sacrifices. In so doing, every caution was taken to assure that the tither remained above all suspicion of having appropriated some of the coins for himself. Not only did he avoid wearing any item of clothing in which a coin could be concealed, but steps were taken to ensure that he could not even hide a coin in his mouth.

How did they prevent such oral embezzlement? They engaged him in conversation from the time he entered until he left the office where the coins were stored. "But isn't there a simpler way?" ask our Sages. He could have been required to perform this brief action of tithing with his mouth filled with water, rendering it impossible to open it and hide a coin.

The response to this challenge is that this would have created a problem regarding the blessing. One of the early commentators understood this to mean that working with a mouth filled with water could result in his inadvertently swallowing some water, upon which he had made no blessing beforehand.

This approach is challenged by the great seventeenth century Amsterdam scholar, Rabbi Chacham Zvi Ashkenazi (*Responsa Chacham Zvi 121*) on the grounds that when someone drinks water not to relieve his thirst but for other reasons (e.g., to relieve congestion in his throat or to help him swallow medicine), no blessing is necessary. His explanation of the aforementioned *gemara*, which has been adopted by mainstream commentaries, is that the blessing referred to is the one which the tither was to make before doing the mitzvah of tithing, a blessing impossible to make with a mouth filled with water.

Shekalim 9a

Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel

©1998 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

The Weekly Daf is available from several sources:

- World Wide Web: Our address is <http://www.ohr.org.il>
- Fax and Mail in Israel and US-MAIL in America. Send us a note requesting a subscription in Israel, or call 800-431-2272 in the US for details.
- E-Mail via InterNet. To subscribe, send the message "sub dafyomi {your full name}" to listproc@virtual.co.il

22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel ☎ 972-2-581-0315 fax: 972-2-581-2890 ✉ info@ohr.org.il
38 East 29th Street 8th floor, New York, NY 10016, USA ☎ 1-212-213-3100 fax: 1-212-213-8717 ✉ RZCorlin@aol.com or estern@aol.com
613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario L4J 5V3, Canada ☎ 1-905-886-5730 fax: 1-905-886-6065 ✉ Somayach@MSN.com

Dedication opportunities are available for **The Weekly Daf** — Please contact us for details.

Production Design: **Eli Ballon**

This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect. Do not let this land on a garbage heap.

Issue #254 - Shekalim 9-15

For the week of Week of 4 - 10 Teves 5759 / 23 - 29 December 1998 (Parshas Vayigash)

The Challenge Of Responsibility

A problem faced the Jewish community of Kufrah. There was a desperate need for some people to assume responsibility for the affairs of the community, but there was a reluctance upon the part of the qualified citizens to become trustees.

When Rabbi Yossi visited this community he attempted to persuade these qualified members to assume trustee responsibility. They refused to do so, apparently because of a desire to avoid the honor and responsibility of leadership. In order to convince them, this sage quoted the Mishna which lists all the distinguished officials in charge of different departments in maintaining the *Beis Hamikdash*. On the same list with those in charge of the properties, finances and services is Ben Bavi who was in charge of the wicks. Although his job was limited to the relatively insignificant responsibility of assuring that the wicks should be straight he is placed in the same Mishna with all of those who had the most important responsibilities.

If Ben Bavi deserved this tribute, Rabbi Yossi concluded, for honorably discharging a relatively unimportant responsibility, how much credit will you receive for assuming responsibility for matters affecting the actual lives of the community!

By comparing their responsibility to lifesaving Rabbi Yossi intended to convey the idea that just as saving a life takes precedence over all *mitzvos*, so should the opportunity to save the lives of the community through leadership, push aside all of their hesitations.

Shekalim 14a

Prepared by **Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel**

©1998 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

The Weekly Daf is available from several sources:	• World Wide Web: Our address is http://www.ohr.org.il
	• Fax and Mail in Israel and US-MAIL in America . Send us a note requesting a subscription in Israel, or call 800-431-2272 in the US for details.
	• E-Mail via InterNet. To subscribe, send the message "sub dafyomi {your full name}" to listproc@virtual.co.il

☎ 22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel	☎ 972-2-581-0315	☎ 972-2-581-2890	✉ info@ohr.org.il
☎ 38 East 29th Street 8 th floor, New York, NY 10016, USA	☎ 1-212-213-3100	☎ 1-212-213-8717	✉ RZCorlin@aol.com or estern@Aol.com
☎ 613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario L4J 5V3, Canada	☎ 1-905-886-5730	☎ 1-905-886-6065	✉ Somayach@MSN.com

Dedication opportunities are available for **The Weekly Daf** — Please contact us for details.

Production Design: Eli Ballon

This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect. Do not let this land on a garbage heap.

Issue #254 - Shekalim 9-15

For the week of Week of 4 - 10 Teves 5759 / 23 - 29 December 1998 (Parshas Vayigash)