

"Halacha Sources" Highlights - Why "Shekalim"? - Can't "Ki Sisa" Stay In Its Own Week?

Question: Why are the first six *pesukim* of *parshas "Ki Sisa"* read upon the arrival of the month of Adar, as *Parshas Shekalim*? What is the Halachic relationship between this *mitzvah* and the regular reading of "*Ki Sisa*" (which falls no more than a few weeks away, in any case)?

Answer: The sources discuss these issues much more richly than is widely known. We will address the obvious aspects (**why** there is a "*Parshas Shekalim*" at this time, and **which Torah reading** it is), and then explain the fascinating issue of the Shabbos of *Parshas Shekalim* falling in the week of "*Ki Sisa*" itself!

Part 1: Why is there a "*Parshas Shekalim*", and when, accordingly, is the logical time for it to be read?

This is addressed in *Megillah* (29a⁴):

The Mishnah says: *When Rosh Chodesh Adar is on Shabbos, the congregation reads Parshas Shekalim on that Shabbos. [On the other hand,] when Rosh Chodesh Adar is during the week - the congregation "advances" [the reading of Parshas Shekalim] to the previous [Shabbos].*

The Gemara explains, first bringing a different Mishnah (*Shekalim* 1:1): *On the first of Adar, the community publicizes [instructions] - concerning the shekalim (i.e. the annual obligatory contribution of a half-shekel per person toward the expenses of the communal offerings in the Beis HaMikdash) [by announcement of the Rabbinical court (Rashi)], [29b] and concerning the forbidden mixtures ["kilayim"].*

To clarify that Mishnah, the Gemara asks: *We understand [that the first of Adar is a time for announcements] "concerning the forbidden mixtures", because it is a time of sowing. But [why is the first of Adar a time for announcements] "concerning the shekalim"? From where do we derive that?*

R' Tavi answered (in the name of R' Yoshiyah) by expounding: *The pasuk says (Bamidbar 28:14): "This is the burnt offering of the month - [each one] in its month - for [all] the months of the year." [The question is obvious: Why does the pasuk need to repeatedly mention the "month"? (Rashi)] [The answer is that] the Torah has thus said, "Renew matters [as the word "chodesh", meaning "month", hints here at its other meaning - "new"], and bring the [relevant] offering [i.e. the regular burnt offerings and the special "mussaf" offerings (Mishnah Berurah)] from the new contribution [of annual shekalim]. [Rashi here quotes the Gemara in Rosh HaShanah (7a), which explains that this "renewing" must be in Nissan, because our pasuk contains the word "year", and therefore, we can derive its intent from the pasuk (Sh'mos 12:2) which says Nissan is considered "the first of the months of the year" for the Jewish people (Rashi).]*

The Gemara concludes: *[This explains the timing of "publicizing concerning the shekalim", and likewise the timing of reading a parsha related to shekalim:] Since in Nissan it is*

necessary to offer up [already] from the new contribution, we [act in] advance and read on the first of Adar, in order that the shekalim be brought to the Beis HaMikdash [in time].

The *Mishnah Berurah* writes (introducing *siman* 685): "The Sages instituted that four *parshiyos* be read each year [in the period] from *Rosh Chodesh Adar* until *Rosh Chodesh Nissan*, as a commemoration for four things, and they are as follows: The first is *Parshas Shekalim*, [which was instituted] as a commemoration for the Mitzvah of the half-*shekel* [contribution]," etc. Later on, he writes slightly differently: After explaining why there was a "publicizing concerning the *shekalim*" on *Rosh Chodesh Adar*, he concludes that "we" [i.e. generations without the *Beis HaMikdash* service] therefore read *Parshas Shekalim*, as a "compensation for [the missing] bulls with our lips" [i.e. when prayers (or the like) "compensate" for missing offerings (or the like)].

Part 2: What is the Torah Reading For "*Parshas Shekalim*", and Why?

There is actually a position in the Gemara that "*Parshas Shekalim*" is the *parsha* of the daily *Tamid* offering (which we read every *Rosh Chodesh*)!

This is discussed in the next segment of Gemara (*Megillah* 29b¹):

What is "*Parshas Shekalim*"? [There was a disagreement:] **Rav said:** It is [the passage introduced by the pasuk (*Bamidbar* 28:2)]: "Command the Children of Israel and say to them: My offering My food", etc. **Shmuel said:** It is [the passage introduced by the pasuk (*Sh'mos* 30:12)]: "When you will count" [i.e. "*Ki Sisa*", which begins with the half-*shekel* contributed at the Jews' counting].

The Gemara checks these positions against the parsha's name: According to the one who says *Parshas Shekalim* is "When you will count", we understand why it is called "*Parshas Shekalim*", because [the subject of] *shekalim* is written [about] in it. But according to the one who says *Parshas Shekalim* is "My offering My food" - is anything [about] *shekalim* written **there**?

The Gemara answers: Yes! For what is the reason [that the *shekalim* are brought in *Adar* (*Rashi*)]? It is like *R' Tavi* said (as quoted in the previous subject) [i.e. linking the bringing of the *shekalim* to the purchase of offerings, which is a subject discussed in that same passage (*Rashi*)].

Now the Gemara tests the content of the two passages: According to the one who says *Parshas Shekalim* is "Command the Children of Israel", we understand [why it is fitting for the reading's purpose], because the offerings are "written there" [i.e. that subject is discussed in the passage], [and this is appropriate] in line with the [above] statement of *R' Tavi*. But according to the one who says *Parshas Shekalim* is "When you will count" - are the offerings "written there"? [The] *shekalim* for the [support] bases [of the *Mishkan*] are "written there"! [After all, the pasuk (*Sh'mos* 30:16) says that the half-*shekel* collection of that time was to be used for the *Mishkan* (i.e. for the silver socket bases)! (*Rashi*)]

The Gemara answers: [Yes, the subject of purchasing offerings is in fact to be found in the passage of the half-shekel,] as Rav Yosef taught: There are three "contributions" [mentioned there - i.e. the word "contribution" ("terumah") is used three times - which indicates that there in fact **are** three of them (Rashi)]: (1) the Contribution of the Mizbayach (altar) - [which was to be used] for the mizbayach [i.e. to purchase the communal offerings for the entire year - as it is written by this (word) "contribution" (the phrase) "to atone for your souls" (Rashi)], and (2) the Contribution of the Bases - [which was to be used] for the bases, and (3) the Contribution of the Building Maintenance - [which was to be used] for the building maintenance [of the Mishkan].

The Gemara [ibid. 29b⁴] quotes a Baraisa in support of Shmuel: When Rosh Chodesh Adar is on Shabbos, the congregation reads [the passage which begins with] "When you will count".

This establishes that the Halacha follows Shmuel, that *Parshas Shekalim* starts at the beginning of "Ki Sisa". The Rambam (Halachos of Prayer 13:22) clarifies this by writing that the *parsha* continues "until [but not including] 'And you shall make a washbasin of copper' (i.e. *Sh'mos* 30:18)." [This means that *Parshas Shekalim* ends with *pasuk* 16. *Pasuk* 17 says, "And Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying," introducing the passage about the washbasin.] The *Shulchan Aruch* [O.C. 685:1] rules likewise, and the *Gra* [R. Eliyahu of Vilna, Lithuania, 1720-1797, also known as the Vilna Gaon, commentary *ibid.*] points out that this is clear from a later Gemara [i.e. the Gemara quoted in our next subject].

Part 3: The Shabbos of *Parshas Shekalim* Falling in the Week of "Tetzaveh" Or "Ki Sisa"

This, too, is addressed by the Gemara in *Megillah* (29b⁵):

R' Yitzchak Nafcha said: If the Shabbos of *Parshas Shekalim* falls in the week of "And you shall command" [i.e. the *parsha* "Tetzaveh" (*Sh'mos* 27:20)], six *aliyah* honorees [should] read from [the opening *pasuk* of "Tetzaveh"] "And you shall command" until "When you will count" [i.e. until the beginning of the next *parsha*, "Ki Sisa"], and the seventh reads from "When you will count" until "And you shall make" [i.e. he reads *Parshas Shekalim* (as defined above)].

Abbaye disagreed: [30a] [If so,] people will say, "[Presumably] this is merely the point we got up to"! [I.e. it is not recognizable that this last *aliyah* is being read as *Parshas Shekalim*; people will think that the *parsha* "Tetzaveh" simply did not end until this point! (Rashi)] **Rather, (Abbaye said,)** six *aliyah* honorees [should] read from [the opening *pasuk* of Tetzaveh] "And you shall command" [all the way] until "And you shall make", and the seventh reads **over again** from "When you will count" until "And you shall make".

R' Yitzchak Nafcha also said [similarly to the above]: If the Shabbos of *Parshas Shekalim* falls in the week of "When you will count" [i.e. the *parsha* "Ki Sisa"] **itself**, six *aliyah* honorees [should] read from "And you shall make" [i.e. starting where *Parshas Shekalim* ends] until "And [Moshe] assembled" [i.e. until the beginning of the next weekly *parsha*, "VaYakhel" (*Sh'mos* 35:1)], and the seventh reads from "When you will count" until "And you shall make".

Abbaye challenged this [as well]: [If so,] people will say, "[Presumably] the parsha was merely read out of order"! **Rather, (Abbaye said,)** six aliyah honorees read until "And he gathered" [i.e. the entire parsha "Ki Sisa" starting from the **beginning**], and the seventh reads **over again** from "When you will count" until "And you shall make".

The Gemara quotes a Baraisa in support of Abbaye [in the second case]: If the Shabbos of Parshas Shekalim falls in the week of "When you will count" **itself**, the congregation reads it - and "doubles" it [i.e. Parshas Shekalim is read again, even though that material was already read].

Almost all the authorities codify this Halacha by simply ruling like Abbaye, in both cases. The Tur [*Rabbeinu Yaakov ben Asher*, Spain, ~1280 - ~1345, O.C. *ibid.*], however, has a unique approach. For there are two major issues here:

(1) The major early authorities describe the two cases as "when **Rosh Chodesh** falls on the Shabbos of these *parshiyos*. The Tur follows "our version" [i.e. that of our editions of the Gemara, as quoted above], which does not specify whether it was also *Rosh Chodesh* or not. Certain authorities [including the *Sefer Halitim*^o (*Rabbeinu Yehudah ben Barzilai* of Barcelona, Spain, ~1100, end of 181) and the *Korban Nesanel* (*Megillah* 4:10, n4)] write that "our version" **must** be correct, because [a] if it was *Rosh Chodesh*, "the seventh" [*aliyah*] is the *Rosh Chodesh* reading, and [b] that itself would remove Abbaye's objections, because *Parshas Shekalim* would be clearly set off from the weekly *parsha* reading! [From here on, we will continue with this approach, i.e. that "our version" is correct and we are *not* discussing *Rosh Chodesh*.]

(2) The accepted *minhag* [as stated in the Halachos of Shabbos, O.C. 282:4] is that on Shabbos [or *Yom Tov*], the *aliyah* of "*maftir*" is not read until the number of required *aliyahs* for that particular reading is completed. In our case, which is the Shabbos morning reading, this means "*maftir*" is not read until after seven *aliyahs*. How does that fit together with the explicit statements of our Gemara, that *Parshas Shekalim*, which is the "*maftir*" in our case, is the **seventh** *aliyah*? The Tur appears to be addressing this, as he adds the following twist to his ruling [emended text, see *Shiras Devorah* edition, *Machon Yerushalayim*, 1993]: Abbaye's measure of "doubling" is followed (writes the Tur) only where the *minhag* is that the *aliyah* of "*maftir*" counts toward the seven of Shabbos; but where the *minhag* is that the *aliyah* of "*maftir*" does *not* count toward the seven of Shabbos, no "doubling" is called for (i.e. the reading is as R' Yitzchak Nafcha said). However, the Tur only makes this distinction regarding the week of "*Tetzaveh*". When it comes to the week of "*Ki Sisa*", he merely points out that where the *minhag* is that the *aliyah* of "*maftir*" does *not* count toward the seven of Shabbos, the "*maftir*" who "repeats" the *Parshas Shekalim* material is the **eighth** *aliyah*, not the seventh. How do we understand all this?

The key is that the above-mentioned accepted *minhag* (that on Shabbos "*maftir*" is *after* the seven) is *not required* by the strict Halacha. There is a disagreement in the Gemara (*Megillah* 23a) as to whether the "*maftir*" counts toward the required number of *aliyahs* for a Torah reading. The Rif [*Rabbeinu Yitzchak "Alfasi"* ("of Fez" - and later Spain), 1013 - 1103] and the Rosh [*Rabbeinu Asher ben Yechiel*, Germany and Spain, ~1250 - 1327] bring **our Gemara** as clear proof that the *accepted* position is that "*maftir*" **does** count, as it says explicitly that *Parshas Shekalim*, which is the "*maftir*" in our case, is the **seventh** *aliyah* of that Shabbos morning. This is also the

position of the Tosafos [collection of commentary material, authorities of France and Germany, twelfth to fourteenth centuries, *Megillah* *ibid.*, in the name of *Rabbeinu Tam*], which then adds that "on Shabbosim and on *Yamim Tovim* and on *Yom Kippur* morning, [our *minhag* is that] the "*maftir*" is not one of the [required] amount [of *aliyahs*], because since it is *muttar* to add on to them [i.e. to the *aliyah* amounts of those three Torah readings] - we are able to have our *minhag* [work out] according to everyone [i.e. even the position that '*maftir*' cannot 'count'].¹ Now we can understand the "accepted *minhag*" better, as the *Mishnah Berurah* (O.C. 282 n19) explains, concluding: "and in order to make known to everyone that the '*maftir*' is not 'of the count', it was instituted that the proper [procedure] 'initially' is to interrupt with the 'Kaddish' between its reading and the reading of the other *aliyahs*; and consequently it is necessary to complete the [weekly] *parsha* beforehand, in order not to interrupt with the 'Kaddish' in the middle of the [main] reading."

The Tur can now be explained, as follows: Abbaye said that if "*Tetzaveh*" would be read normally and then *Parshas Shekalim* would follow, people would not realize that **the break in between** marked the end of the weekly reading and the beginning of a special *parsha*. The Tur is pointing out that the break can only be misinterpreted if the congregation follows the strict Halacha of "counting '*maftir*' as one of the seven"; but in a congregation which follows the accepted *minhag* of not reading "*maftir*" until *after* the seven, it's *clear* that *Parshas Shekalim* is separate, so "doubling" is not necessary. If the weekly *parsha* is "*Ki Sisa*", on the other hand, where R' Yitzchak Nafcha allows "reading out of order", then the potential for confusion comes from the fact that the first section *was not read* to start with, and that persists even where "*maftir*" is the eighth *aliyah*.

In practice, however, the Tur concludes by pointing out that according to **our system for dividing up the weekly parshiyos**, this entire subject is irrelevant. The *Beis Yosef* spells out: "because **for us**, *Parshas Shekalim* falls out neither in [the week of] the *parsha* '*Tetzaveh*' nor in [the week of] the *parsha* '*Ki Sisa*.'" [To explain briefly: "*Tetzaveh*" and "*Ki Sisa*" are the twentieth and twenty-first *parshiyos*; simple arithmetic shows that if we begin the Torah on the Shabbos after *Simchas Torah*, these *parshiyos* always fall *before* the reading of *Parshas Shekalim* in a leap year, and *afterwards* in a non-leap year. In contrast: (1) In the Land of Israel in the days of the Gemara, the entire Torah was completed every *three* years (*Megillah* 29b); (2) In medieval Provence, in order to enable the *parsha* "*Tzav*" to be the one read immediately before Pesach (see O.C. 428:4) *even in a leap year* (which is impossible according to our regular division of the *parshiyos*), they would *split* a large number of the *parshiyos* before "*Tzav*" in a leap year, which **incidentally** would result in "*Tetzaveh*" or "*Ki Sisa*" sometimes coinciding with *Parshas Shekalim* (*Rabbeinu Menachem Me'iri*, 1249 - ~1315, *Megillah* 30a), since they would no longer be the twentieth and twenty-first *parshiyos*.]

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