

## **KI TISA 2 - MAHASEET HASHEKEL - REFORTIFYING THE DIVINE THRONE**

We are taught by the prophet Yehezqel that the face of the spiritual ox is imprinted upon the chariot of the King of Kings. 1 The light of God is said to rest upon his throne while being transported by the four spiritual creatures. 2 The job of Israel below is to ensure that the four carriers remain in their proper position to carry out their assigned task. We taught in a previous essay that the sin of the golden calf caused the wheel associated with the ox to become unhitched from the divine chariot. 3 The throne thereby can no longer properly house the light of the Creator. Israel below will have to rectify this spiritual blemish. We must refortify the throne! We must reattach so to say the wheel back onto the chariot. A tool for repair is the Mahaseet Hasheqel - a half silver coin- that was initially donated by each member of Israel to be used in the making of the silver sockets for the Mishkan. Furthermore - it was established that an annual payment of a Mahaseet Hashekel be contributed to the Temple for the communal offerings. We will explore how the Mahaseet Hashekel served this function and why the repair is associated with the counting of the approximately 600,000 Jews above the age of twenty years old.

## **THE MAHASEET HASHEQEL - BOTH AS TIQUN HAHET AND ATONEMENT OF THE SOUL**

The Talmud Yerushalmi and the Midrash maintain that the obligation to give Mahaseet Hasheqel is associated with the spiritual repair of Het HaEgel. 4 This amount was collected from over 600,000 males who were over twenty years of age in conjunction with a head count preceding the construction of the Mishkan. 5 The Torah says that the Silver Census money included 100 talents of silver that was to be used for the 100 Adanim - or base sockets used to hold the surrounding pillars of the Mishkan and Parokhet. 6 We know that the Mishkan is to house the divine presence. 7 A properly built Mishkan below will reflect the fact that the throne above has also to some extent been repaired. The Adanim are the socket bases - which are fundamental in the construction of the Mishkan below and in the parallel divine throne above. It is then apparent that the initial Tiquin of the Mahaseet HaSheqel was to reestablish the wheel of the chariot via the Adanim- allowing a place or setting for God's presence both in this world and on his throne in the celestial region above. The annual Tiquin via the communal offering was to serve to keep the spiritual throne above in all its glory. The roots of the higher souls of Israel are found beneath the Kise HaKavod -or divine throne. 8 The sin of the golden calf also resulted in the descent of these souls. This is the secret of the injunction found at the opening of our parasha Ki Tisa Et Rosh 9 - in order to elevate the upper parts (head) of the souls of Israel back up into their root position in the celestial regions above - they will need to ransom themselves via the Mahaseet HaSheqel. The Midrash reminds us of the fact that Moshe should not be lulled into the belief that the purpose of Mahaseet HaSheqel was merely to facilitate the count. If the count was the principle factor in the matter then Moshe only had to consider the Rosh or the primary letters of each of the tribes who committed the heinous act of Het HaEgel. Namely to take the numerical value in thousands of the Resh for Reuben and continuing with Shin for Shimon and followed by the Yud, Yud, Zayin, Dalet, Nun, Gimal, Aleph, Yud and Bet for the remaining tribes - numerically totaling 597 thousand. 10 This should serve as a guide that from the 600,000 Israelites leaving Egypt - there were 3000 who were executed by the Levites as reported in our parasha. 11 The Levi'im did as Moshe ordered and three thousand fell that day. Hence the Mahaseet HaSheqel was mainly to serve to reattach the wheel of the heavenly chariot and elevate the higher soul of Israel to be stationed beneath the Kise HaKavod.

## **THE HOLY COIN - ALSO HAS ITS SPIRITUAL ROOT UNDER THE THRONE**

The coin called Sheqel HaQodesh serves a holy purpose. Each one of Israel is enjoined to contribute as a ransom for his soul 12 - which they had forfeited or blemished by participating in Het HaEgel. The souls of Israel are hewn from beneath the Holy Throne above. The Divine Presence is described by our Sages as being upheld by the throne. A blemish in one of the four carriers - the spiritual Ox - is indicative that the head or Rosh of our souls have also become unhitched from their spiritual root underneath the throne. The contribution of the Mahaseet HaSheqel - was to repair the damage. Our Sages teach that God showed Moshe the coin of fire - or the spiritual root of the Mahaseet HaSheqel - that was placed immediately below the throne of God! 13 I would suggest that the Sages intentionally related the coin with fire as this element is closely aligned with the side of the Divine chariot depicting the Ox. As both represent the aspect of Gevurah within each respective quartet. 14 The Ohr HaHayyim notes that from this we learn that payment of the ransom was not merely a physical transaction but had

far reaching effects in the spiritual domain. 15 This explains the profound Torah expression of Zeh Yitenu - 16 This you shall give. God was so to say pointing a finger and saying to Moshe - "This - what is beneath my throne - the coin of fire - is what they are to give. So the payment is holy as it has its roots in the reconnection of the wheel to the chariot. It is used below to produce the temple sockets and above as part of the throne for the divine presence.

## **THE TWENTY-YEAR-OLD MALES HAVE SOULS WITH SPIRITUAL ROOTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE HOLY THRONE**

When a baby is conceived, he is endowed with the lowest level of soul called Nefesh of BY'A. He accesses the elevated levels of Ruah and Neshama of these lower worlds respectively thru his Milah and initial stages of learning Torah. As he reaches Bar Misva - he is considered a son of Kenneset Yisrael and he is granted a soul of Nefesh from the highest world of Asilut. He is at that juncture sufficiently capable of fighting against the evil inclination in his war to keep the misvot. At the age of twenty he can attain thru his good deeds the even more elevated soul of Ruah - again from within Asilut. He is then considered according to the Zohar as a Ben of Haqadosh Barukh Hu. 17 With this spiritual asset he becomes liable for all of his actions even in the heavenly courts above. This soul level apparently gives him both privileges and responsibilities with regards to the Kise HaKavod. It appears to me that only one endowed with this elevated soul - as a son of Haqadosh Barukh Hu while reaching the age of twenty can blemish the chariot of the divine presence. Hence it is only he who is counted amongst the celestial armies of Hashem. 18 This is also the secret of the travels of Israel as detailed in the beginning of Sefer Bemidbar in four sets of tribal groups surrounding the Mishkan. This of course was to parallel the four carriers of the Holy Throne above in the celestial region.

## **ALL 600000 ARE NEEDED TO EFFECTUATE TIKUN**

The Talmud teaches in the name of R. Yishak that Het HaEgel disrupted the spiritual weights above - He comments that the weight of Het HaEgel is reduced by each punishment Israel will receive below.<sup>19</sup> It is not only suffering that balances these scales but the Mahaseet HaSheqel given by 600000 men will be shown to be the perfect equalizer. R. S. Donn cites the Ohr Ye'qarot in calculating how the Mahaseet HaSheqel was precisely a Tikun to counterbalance this blemish of the Het HaEgel - The Midrash teaches that the Egel weighed 120 centenarius of gold. 20 The Talmud notes that one centenaria equals 100 gold Sheqalim . So the Egel was 12000 Sheqalim. 21 The Talmud teaches that there are 4 gold dinarim in 1 Sheqel. This gives a sum total weight of 48000 gold Dinarm. 22 We learn in the Talmud that 1 gold Dinar is equal to 25 silver Dinar - So the total weight in silver dinarim was 1200000. 23 A half silver shekel or the Mahaseet HaSheqel proscribed in our parasha is two dinarim. So when the 600000 Jews gave the Mahaseet HaSheqel it was precisely 1200000 silver dinarim or the exact weight of the golden calf! 24 - This as we noted above was the precise weight of the 100 Adanim - or bases that held the 48 surrounding beams of the Mishkan and the 4 holding the Parokhet - a perfect Tikun. 25

## **SUMMARY AND ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS**

The blemish of Het HaEgel is the unhitching of the spiritual wheel associated with the spiritual Ox of the chariot above. This casualty in the Throne of God is rectified by the Mahaseet HaSheqel - A. We were to rebuild a dwelling place for the Divine Presence below which would parallel a rebuilding of the Fourth Faulty Wheel of the Divine Throne above. B. The Divine Throne sits atop the spiritual world of Beriah - Both the Holy Coin - Mahaseet HaSheqel shown to Moshe and the Soul acquired only by 20 year old males have their roots associated with the tikun of the Kise HaKavod - C. The 600 thousand counted qualified males each were required to re-elevate their souls via this Terumah or elevated gift of Mahaseet HaSheqel which was precisely the spiritual weight to counter the weight of the Egel - D. The residual Tikun of the sin is rectified via Yisurin of Israel and the annual donation of Mahaseet HaSheqel for the communal offerings. E. In our day we recognize our small participation in this rectification via the annual reading of Parashat Sheqalim preceding or on Rosh Hodesh Adar 26

**Shabbat Shalom, Victor Bibi**