Bekhorot 50

Daf Yomi · Shabbat, November 7, 2026 · כ״ז חשון תשפ״ז · Covers 50a (Rava on the Torah's sela) through 51a (end of the Gemara on the coin Mishnah)

Summary

Bekhorot 50 continues the Gemara on the Mishnah of 49b, which sets the Torah's fixed payments, such as the five *sela'im* for redeeming a firstborn son, in the "sacred shekel," by the "Tyrian *maneh*." Rava says the Torah's *sela* was worth only three and a third dinars, since "twenty *gerah* is the shekel" and six *ma'ah* make a dinar. A baraita that values the sacred *sela* at forty-eight *pundiyon*, four dinars, is answered by a later increase. The Sages added a sixth to the shekel, and a baraita derives from the verses that the shekel may be raised but not lowered. The difference had practical effect, as an exchange between Rav Ashi and Rav Acha son of Ravina over a redemption payment shows.

R. Chanina explains that unspecified "silver" means a *sela* in the Torah, a *litra* in the Prophets and a *kintar* in the Writings, except the silver Avraham paid Efron, which was *kintarin*. R. Oshaya and Abaye report that the Sages once considered banning certain silver and gold because Temple money from Jerusalem had been mixed into it, until they found a verse showing that the plunderers had "profaned" it. Rav Assi's rule that Torah silver is Tyrian while rabbinic silver is "provincial" is tested against four laws where a much smaller coin suffices: a claim for an oath, second tithe, consecration and betrothal. It is restated to apply only to fixed sums. Its rabbinic half is illustrated by the fine for striking someone, which is half a *zuz*, and by the story of Chanan the wicked.

The Gemara then explains why the Mishnah repeats that all the sums are in the sacred shekel: the rapist and the slanderer are not described in shekels, so one might have thought they pay plain *zuz*. Finally, a baraita expands the Mishnah's exception, "except the shekalim," to include second-tithe money and the pilgrimage offering. Each requires real minted coin, for reasons the Gemara explains: shekalim may be converted to gold *darkonot* for travel, second tithe is "bound in the hand," and Rav Yosef teaches that one may not bring dross silver to the Temple courtyard. Rashi and Tosafot read Rav Yosef's teaching differently.

Detailed Summary

1. Background: the Mishnah and the "Tyrian *maneh*" 49b–50a

The Mishnah on 49b taught: "The five *sela'im* of a son are by the Tyrian *maneh*. The thirty of a slave, the fifty of a rapist and of a seducer, and the hundred of one who defames his bride are all in the sacred shekel, by the Tyrian *maneh*, and all may be paid with silver or its equivalent, except the shekalim." The Gemara (summary of Bekhorot 49) recorded four Amoraim's definitions of the Tyrian standard, ending with R. Yochanan's calculation: from a gold dinar worth twenty-five *zuz*, subtract a *zuz* and then a sixth, leaving twenty *zuz*, the five *sela'im* at four *zuz* each.

2. Rava: the Torah's *sela* was three and a third dinars 50a

RAVA. סילעים דאורייתא תלתא ותילתא הוי: "The Torah's *sela'im* were three and a third (dinars)." It says, "twenty *gerah* is the shekel" (Shemot 30:13), which Onkelos renders "twenty *ma'in*," and a baraita teaches that six silver *ma'ah* make a dinar. Twenty *ma'ah* are therefore three and a third dinars.

CHALLENGE. A baraita: "But is the sacred *sela* not forty-eight *pundiyon*?" And what is this extra *pundiyon*? An exchange fee for each one separately.

> **Rashi – ד"ה קולבון לפרוטרוט · ד"ה והלא סלע של קודש**
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> **THE ISSUE.** Where does this baraita come from, and why does it contradict Rava?
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> **RASHI'S EXPLANATION.** One who consecrates his field in the Jubilee year redeems an area sown with a *chomer* of barley for fifty *sela'im*. Torat Kohanim says that for the forty-nine years of a Jubilee cycle, he pays forty-nine *sela'im* and forty-nine *pundiyon*, and explains: is the sacred *sela* not forty-eight *pundiyon*? The extra *pundiyon* per year is a *kalbon*, a small exchange fee for each payment separately. Since a *ma'ah* is two *pundiyon* and a dinar six *ma'ah*, a dinar is twelve *pundiyon*, and forty-eight *pundiyon* are four dinars, contradicting Rava.
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> **WHY IT MATTERS.** The baraita gives a precise conversion that seems to set the Torah's *sela* at four dinars, not three and a third.

ANSWER. בתר דאוסיפו עילוייהו: that was after they added to it. Rashi: they added a sixth to the Torah's *sela*, bringing it to the Tyrian *sela* of twenty-four *ma'ah*.

SOURCE. A baraita: "Twenty *gerah* is the shekel": we learn that a shekel is twenty *gerah*. From where that, if they want to increase it, they may? The verse says יהיה, "shall be" (Vayikra 27:25). Might they decrease it? The verse says הוא, "it is" (Bamidbar 18:16).

Rashi – ד"ה יהיה

THE ISSUE. How do these two words teach opposite limits?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. "Twenty *gerah* shall be the shekel," in the valuations passage, implies a further "being," a future change. In the passage of Korach it says "twenty *gerah* it is," so that it not be reduced.

WHY IT MATTERS. The Torah's shekel is a minimum, not a fixed amount, so the Sages could raise it to the Tyrian standard.

A PRACTICAL CASE. Rav Ashi sent seventeen *zuz* to Rav Acha son of Ravina (Rashi: a kohen) for a redemption of a son. He wrote: "Let the master send me back the extra third." Rav Acha replied: "Let the master send me three more, for they added to it."

Rashi – ד"ה שלח ליה · ד"ה לישלח לי מר תילתא

THE ISSUE. How do these numbers work?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. By Rava's figure, five *sela'im* are fifteen dinars and five thirds, that is, seventeen less a third; Rav Ashi had given a third too much. Rav Acha answered that the Sages had raised the standard to the Tyrian *sela*, so five *sela'im* are twenty *zuz*, and three more were owed.

WHY IT MATTERS. The dispute shows the increase was treated as binding: the redemption sum is twenty *zuz*.

3. R. Chanina: "silver" in the Torah, Prophets and Writings 50a

R. CHANINA. All "silver" stated without specification in the Torah means a *sela*; in the Prophets, a *litra* (Rashi: twenty-five *sela'im*); in the Writings, a *kintar* (Rashi: a hundred *sela'im* for each shekel). The exception is the silver of Efron: although it appears in the Torah unspecified, it means *kintarin*, as it says, "four hundred shekels of silver, passing with the merchant" (Bereishit 23:16). And there is a place where a *kintar* is called a "shekel."

Rashi – ד"ה והאיכא דוכתא דקרו לתקלא דידהו קינטריא · ד"ה דכתיב עובר לסוחר

THE ISSUE. How does "passing with the merchant" show that these shekels were large?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. They were accepted as "shekels" wherever there were merchants. Since there are places that call a coin as large as a *kintar* a "shekel," Avraham gave Efron *kintarin*.

WHY IT MATTERS. The phrase signals a currency accepted everywhere, including where "shekel" meant a much larger unit.

4. Banning the world's silver: Jerusalem's money 50a

R. OSHAYA. They sought to put away (ban) all the silver and gold in the world because of the silver and gold of Jerusalem, until they found a verse showing it is permitted: "and robbers shall enter it and profane it" (Yechezkel 7:22).

Rashi – ד"ה וחיללוה · ד"ה מפני כספה [וזהבה] של ירושלים

THE ISSUE. Why would Jerusalem's money forbid the world's?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. The money in the Temple chamber was consecrated and forbidden to laymen, and when gentiles took it they mixed it with other gold. "And profaned it" implies that once plunderers entered, the money became profane (unconsecrated).

WHY IT MATTERS. The verse removes the money's sanctity, so the mixture is permitted.

OBJECTION. Is Jerusalem the majority of the world? (Rashi: that its money could forbid all the world's gold.) **ABAYE.** Rather, they sought to ban the Hadrianic and Trajanic dinars because of the coinage of Jerusalem (Rashi: these coins were mostly made from Jerusalem's money), until they found the verse "and robbers shall enter it and profane it."

Tosafot – ד"ה דינרא הדריינא טריינא שייפא

QUESTION. Rashi explains *Hadriana* and *Traiana* as coins of the emperors Hadrian and Trajan. But Abaye says these coins were put away because of the coinage of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem's coinage (Bava Kamma 97b) bore David and Solomon on one side and "Jerusalem the Holy City" on the other.

ANSWER. Rabbeinu Tam explains *hadriana* as "round" and *tariana* as "large," descriptions of the coin rather than imperial names.

NOTE. Tosafot add that Rashi's reading can be defended by distinguishing the First and Second Temples, and that the emperor Hadrian is mentioned in Avodah Zarah 32a; the *Arukh* explains as Rashi does.

WHY THIS MATTERS. On Rabbeinu Tam's reading, these were Jerusalem coins in origin, which is why they could be suspected of being Temple money.

5. Rav Assi: Tyrian silver and provincial silver 50b

STATEMENT. Rav Yehuda citing Rav Assi: כל כסף האמור בתורה סתם כסף צורי ושל דבריהם כסף מדינה, "all 'silver' stated without specification in the Torah is Tyrian silver, and that of the Sages is provincial silver."

Rashi – ד"ה כסף צורי · ד"ה כסף מדינה

THE ISSUE. What exactly do these terms mean?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. Where "shekel" is written, it means a Tyrian *sela* of four dinars, as R. Yochanan explained. Where only "silver" is written, it means a Tyrian dinar. "Provincial silver" is an eighth of Tyrian silver, the Syrian *istera* mentioned earlier.

WHY IT MATTERS. Rav Assi's rule would set a high minimum for any Torah law involving "silver."

CHALLENGE 1: A CLAIM. Is this a rule? It says regarding a bailee, "if a man gives his fellow silver or vessels to guard" (Shemot 22:6), yet the Mishnah teaches that the judges' oath (for partial admission) requires a claim of only two silver *ma'ah* (Rashi: a third of a dinar). **ANSWER.** That is different: it says "silver or vessels." Just as "vessels" means at least two, so "silver" means two (coins); and just as silver is something significant, so the vessels must be significant.

Tosafot – ד"ה מה כלים שנים כו'

QUESTION. Rashi asks in Shevuot 39b how Shmuel can expound "vessels" for another purpose if it is needed to teach "as vessels are two." He answers that the Torah could have written "silvers," which implies two and something significant. But then how would we know the coins must be significant, rather than two *perutot*?

ANSWER. The Torah could have written "silver or objects."

WHY THIS MATTERS. Each element of the comparison must be justified by the Torah's word choice.

CHALLENGE 2: SECOND TITHE. It says "and you shall bind the silver in your hand" (Devarim 14:25), yet we learned that one who changes a *sela* into small coins of second tithe (Rashi: *perutot*) acts validly. **ANSWER.** "Silver ... silver" is repeated, which broadens it (Rashi: "silver" appears three times in that passage, including everything).

CHALLENGE 3: CONSECRATION. It says "he shall give the silver, and it shall be his" (Vayikra 27:19), yet Shmuel said that consecrated property worth a *maneh* redeemed on something worth a *perutah* is redeemed. **ANSWER.** Consecration too is learned from second tithe, by the analogy of "holy ... holy."

CHALLENGE 4: BETROTHAL. It says "she shall go out free, without silver" (Shemot 21:11, the source for betrothal by money), and we learned that Beit Shammai say a woman is betrothed with a dinar, Beit Hillel with a *perutah*. Would Rav Assi follow Beit Shammai?

RESTATEMENT. Rather, if it was stated, it was stated thus: כל כסף קצוב האמור בתורה כסף צורי ושל דבריהם כסף מדינה, "all *fixed* silver in the Torah is Tyrian silver, and that of the Sages is provincial" (Rashi: amounts like thirty or fifty; the challenges involved no fixed amount).

Tosafot – ד"ה כל כסף קצוב האמור בתורה כסף צורי ושל דבריהם כסף מדינה

QUESTION. Several rabbinic sums are Tyrian, not provincial: R. Yosi HaGelili's *maneh* for striking someone (Bava Kamma 90a) is a Tyrian *maneh*, and a widow's *ketubah*, which all agree is rabbinic, is a Tyrian *maneh*. Elsewhere, the fifty *zuz* for a bride's clothing are explained as ordinary coins without citing Rav Assi.

ANSWER. R. Yitzchak explains that Rav Assi speaks only of sums stated in *sela'im*, parallel to the Torah's fixed sums, which are written only as shekels. A rabbinic sum stated in *sela'im* is provincial; a *maneh* or *zuz* is not covered by the rule.

WHY THIS MATTERS. The restated rule is narrower still: it governs rabbinic sums stated in the same unit as the Torah's.

WHAT DOES IT TEACH? The Torah half we already learned: "the five *sela'im* of a son..." The rabbinic half was needed, for we learned: one who strikes his fellow gives him a *sela*. Do not say a *sela* of four *zuz*; it is half a *zuz*, which people call a *sela*.

Rashi – ד"ה התוקע

THE ISSUE. What is the offense, and which *sela* is paid?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. His teacher in Bava Kamma explained it as striking a person on the ear; here Rashi heard it as blowing into his ear. The ruling teaches that one does not pay a Tyrian *sela* of four *zuz* but a provincial *sela*, half a *zuz*, an eighth of a Tyrian *sela*.

WHY IT MATTERS. It shows "provincial silver" in a real case: a rabbinic fine set at a much smaller value.

CHANAN THE WICKED. Chanan the wicked struck a man. He came before Rav Huna, who told him to pay half a *zuz*. He had a worn *zuz* (Rashi: its image rubbed off, so no one would accept it), which could not be spent. He struck the man again and gave it to him, as payment for both blows.

6. "All in the sacred shekel": why repeat? 51a

QUESTION. "Thirty of a slave, fifty of a rapist and seducer...": why repeat "all in the sacred shekel" when the first clause already taught the standard? **ANSWER.** It was needed for the rapist and the slanderer: since shekels are not written regarding them, one might think they pay ordinary *zuz*. It teaches that they are learned from one another.

Rashi – ד"ה משום אונס ומוציא שם רע איצטריכא ליה

THE ISSUE. Which payments say "shekel," and which do not?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. "Shekel" is written for the redemption of a son (Bamidbar 3:47), for the slave (Shemot 21:32) and for the seducer ("he shall weigh silver," Shemot 22:16), but not for the rapist or the slanderer. One might have thought that where "shekel" is written one pays Tyrian *sela'im*, and otherwise Tyrian dinars. The repetition teaches that fixed sums are learned from one another, as Rav Assi said. Rashi adds that "all may be redeemed" refers to everything that is redeemed, such as a human firstborn, consecrated property and tithe, and notes that second tithe is redeemed only with minted coin, though even minted *perutot* are acceptable.

WHY IT MATTERS. The repetition, read with Rav Assi's restated rule, shows that every fixed Torah sum uses the same standard.

7. "Except the shekalim": three payments in minted coin 51a

BARAITA. Except the shekalim, second tithe and the pilgrimage offering (והראיון). Rashi: the pilgrimage burnt offering bought for two silver *ma'ah* (Chagigah 2a), which must be in minted coin.

SHEKALIM. As we learned: one may combine shekalim into *darkonot* (gold coins) because of the burden of the journey.

Rashi – ד"ה מצרפין שקלים לדרבונות

THE ISSUE. What does this show about the shekalim?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. Townspeople sending their shekalim to Jerusalem may exchange them for *darkonot*, minted gold coins, but not for other gold that is unminted. The tractate Shekalim explains the reason: pearls (or other goods) might lose value, and the Temple would lose; the same applies to any item worth money. Minted coin does not lose value.

WHY IT MATTERS. It explains the exception: shekalim must stay in a form whose value is secure.

SECOND TITHE. As it says, "and you shall bind (וצרת) the silver in your hand" (Devarim 14:25). Rashi: something with a form, i.e., minted.

THE PILGRIMAGE OFFERING. Rav Yosef taught: so that one should not bring dross silver (*sigah*) to the courtyard.

Tosafot – ד"ה והראיון תני רב יוסף כו'

QUESTION. Rashi reads "Rav Yosef *also* taught: he shall not bring dross, only minted silver," as a supporting baraita rather than an explanation. But why cite a baraita merely to support a baraita? And the phrasing "so that he should not bring" suggests a reason, as with the other two items.

ANSWER. It is an explanation, giving a different reason: if one could bring silver's equivalent, he might bring an ingot or dross silver that is not worth two *ma'ah*, and no one would sell him the offering for it.

WHY THIS MATTERS. Tosafot give each of the three exceptions its own reason, so that each requires real coin for a different practical purpose.

The next Mishnah, on what may not be used to redeem a firstborn, begins on 51a and is covered in the summary of Bekhorot 51.

The full picture in plain language

The daf is a study of money in halacha. The Torah's shekel was originally worth three and a third dinars, but the Sages, relying on the verses' wording, raised it by a sixth to the Tyrian standard of four dinars, and Rav Ashi's exchange with Rav Acha shows the higher figure was treated as binding. R. Chanina describes how "silver" grows in value from the Torah to the Writings, with Efron's silver as an exception, and the Sages' concern over Jerusalem's plundered money ends with a verse declaring it profaned.

Rav Assi's rule, Tyrian silver for the Torah and provincial silver for the Sages, fails as a blanket rule against laws where tiny sums suffice: a claim, second tithe, consecration and betrothal. It is restated for fixed sums only, and illustrated with the half-*zuz* fine for striking someone. The

same principle explains the Mishnah's repetition: every fixed Torah payment uses the sacred shekel, even where the verse does not say "shekel." Finally, three payments, shekalim, second tithe and the pilgrimage offering, require actual minted coin, each for its own reason.

Glossary

Hebrew	Transliteration	Meaning in this sugya
סלע	*sela*	The shekel coin. The Torah's was three and a third dinars; the Sages raised it to four.
גרה, מעה	*gerah, ma'ah*	A small unit; twenty *gerah* made the Torah's shekel, and six *ma'ah* a dinar.
פונדיון	*pundiyon*	A small coin, half a *ma'ah*; twelve make a dinar.
אוסיפו עילוייהו	*osifu ileihu*	"They added to them": the Sages' increase of the shekel by a sixth.
ליטרא, קינטרא	*litra, kintar*	Larger units of silver: 25 and 100 *sela'im* (per Rashi).
כסף צורי	*kesef tzori*	Tyrian silver, the standard for fixed Torah sums.
כסף מדינה	*kesef medinah*	"Provincial silver," an eighth of the Tyrian; the standard for rabbinic sums.
כסף קצוב	*kesef katzuv*	A fixed sum of silver, to which Rav Assi's restated rule applies.
שבועת הדיינין	*shevu'at ha-dayanin*	The judges' oath after a partial admission; the claim must be at least two silver *ma'ah*.
מעשר שני	*ma'aser sheni*	Second tithe, redeemed for minted coins to be spent in Jerusalem.
פרוטה	*perutah*	The smallest coin; sufficient for betrothal (Beit Hillel) and for redeeming consecrated property.
התוקע	*ha-toke'a*	One who strikes (or blows into) his fellow's ear; fined a provincial *sela*.
דרכונות	*darkonot*	Minted gold coins, into which shekalim could be exchanged for travel.
ראיון	*re'iyon*	The pilgrimage burnt offering, bought with two silver *ma'ah* in coin.
סיגה	*sigah*	Dross or unrefined silver, not to be brought to the Temple courtyard.

Sources: Gemara with relevant Rashi and Tosafot.