



HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

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From Half a Shekel to Shared Responsibility

Shabbat Shekalim introduces one of the Torah's most deceptively simple mitzvot: everyone gives the same half-shekel. Not more if you are wealthy, not less if you are struggling. The Mishkan, and later the Beit HaMikdash, is sustained not by a few benefactors, but by collective participation. Sacred space is built through shared responsibility.

The Haftorah from Melachim II, chapter 12 brings that principle to life. King Yoash ascends the throne at a fragile moment of renewal. The Beit HaMikdash still stands, but years of neglect have taken their toll. Funds are collected - obligatory gifts, vowed offerings, voluntary donations, yet nothing is repaired. That gap - between contribution and impact - lies at the heart of the story.

The half-shekel establishes equality, but the Haftorah presses further. Equality alone does not sustain sacred space. When Yoash places a collection box in the Beit Hamikdash, responsibility shifts. The people give not only because they must, but because they understand that the future of the Mikdash depends on them.

This is unity at its strongest: not uniformity, but shared ownership. No one assumes the work belongs to someone else. The Beit HaMikdash is sustained by "us." The funds are not used for ornamentation, but for beams and walls - the work that keeps the Mikdash standing. Repairing what is broken is not secondary to avodah; it is avodah.

Shabbat Shekalim asks us to think beyond how much we give. Do we show up only for

moments of inspiration or also for the steady work that keeps something standing?

This is not only the story of the Mikdash. It is the story of every sacred space we build together.

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a structure rises. When we gather for a siyum, we are not marking an ending, but celebrating what shared commitment can build.

This, too, is a kind of Mikdash.

The half-shekel reminds us that no one builds alone.

The Haftarah reminds us that holiness endures when everyone takes responsibility.

Shekalim leaves us with one question:

What are we helping to sustain? ■



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