

Insights from the Meshech Chochma

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וּפְדוּיוֹ מִבֶּן חֹדֶשׁ תִּפְדֶּה בְּעֶרְכָּךְ כֶּסֶף חֲמִשָּׁת שֶׁקֶלִים בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ עֶשְׂרִים גֵּרָה הוּא. (פרק יח' טז)
Those that are to be redeemed-from one month shall you redeem according to the valuation, five silver shekalim by the sacred shekel; it is twenty gera.

Earlier, in Parshas Bamidbar, Klal Yisrael was informed as to how to redeem their first-born males when their *Mishkan* duties were transferred to *Sheivet Levi*. Our Parsha deals with subsequent firstborn redemptions, and as the Artscroll Editors of the Stone Edition Chumash succinctly tell us: "The Torah lists the three kinds of living firstborns that are sources of gifts to the Kohanim...: (a) The firstborn males of kosher animals-cows, sheep and goats-are sacred from birth and are given to the Kohanim to be brought as offerings; (b) firstborn sons of Israelites are redeemed for five *shekalim*; and (c) firstborn male donkeys are redeemed for a sheep, which then becomes the property of the Kohanim.

Rav Meir Simcha refers us to Sifrei on our pasuk which says: "It is written חֲמִשָּׁת שֶׁקֶלִים כֶּסֶף- this tells me that a פְּדוּיוֹ הֵבֵן occurs only through money. From where do I derive that one can use שְׁוֵה כֶּסֶף i.e., monetary equivalent? From חֹדֶשׁ תִּפְדֶּה מִבֶּן וּפְדוּיוֹ we see that redemption can be done with anything, a בְּכֶל; from חֲמִשָּׁת שֶׁקֶלִים, כֶּסֶף, I would say only money, a פְּרָט. With regards to a בְּכֶל וּפְרָט the rule is that there is in the בְּכֶל only what is in the פְּרָט i.e., *only* money. In פְּדוּיוֹ הֵבֵן, שמות יג' יג, where the Torah also discusses פְּדוּיוֹ הֵבֵן, we are told וְכָל בְּכוֹר אָדָם בְּבִנְיָהּ תִּפְדֶּה.../...And you must redeem every male firstborn among your children, which is again a בְּכֶל. This then becomes a בְּכֶל וּפְרָט, whose rule is that we follow the nature of the פְּרָט i.e., just as the פְּרָט is worth money, so too must the בְּכֶל; and from this it is derived that the בְּכוֹר אָדָם may be redeemed with שְׁוֵה כֶּסֶף." Immediately afterwards, Sifrei asks, "Our pasuk ends חֲמִשָּׁת שֶׁקֶלִים גֵּרָה הוּא-what is the intent of this i.e., the Torah has told us previously the value of a *shekel* in other situations? Why tell us again?" It answers that one might think that חֲמִשָּׁת שֶׁקֶלִים... וּפְדוּיוֹ implies that a פְּדוּיוֹ הֵבֵן can be done only with כֶּסֶף, the superfluous חֲמִשָּׁת שֶׁקֶלִים גֵּרָה הוּא tells us otherwise i.e., שְׁוֵה כֶּסֶף that equals five *shekalim* is acceptable. (Of note, earlier in *Parshas Bamidbar*, Rav Meir Simcha provides us with a different understanding for the latter part of this Sifrei.)

As part of this piece, Rav Meir Simcha tells us to look at the פִּירוּשׁ הַסְּפָרִי on Sifrei. Who is this? Rav Kupperman explains that Rav Dovid Pardo, the mid-eighteenth-century Italian author of Sifrei D'bei Rav-he also wrote the well-known commentary on Rashi, Maskil L'Dovid-points that Rav Sulieman Ochna, a Moroccan born student of the Ari z"l, in his glosses on Sifrei, questions why Sifrei needed the second exegesis, חֲמִשָּׁת שֶׁקֶלִים גֵּרָה הוּא to add שְׁוֵה כֶּסֶף as a redemption vehicle, when the בְּכֶל וּפְרָט already "took care of it"? It is he who Rav Meir Simcha calls *הַסְּפָרִי and he leaves us with a צִרְיָה עֵינִי. Rav Pardo feels that

