

Insights from the Meshech Chochma

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כִּי אֶת חֲזֵה הַתְּנוּפָה וְאֶת שׁוֹק הַתְּרוּמָה לְקַחְתִּי מֵאֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִזִּבְחֵי שְׁלָמֵיהֶם וְאֶתֵּן אֹתָם לְאַהֲרֹן
הַכֹּהֵן וּלְבָנָיו לְחֶק עוֹלָם מֵאֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. (ד' לד)

*For the breast of the waving and the thigh of the raising-up have I taken **from the Children of Israel**, from their feast peace-offering, and I have given them to Aharon the Kohen and his sons as an eternal stipend from the Children of Israel.*

Our pasuk outlines for us the gifts that are given to the Kohanim **שְׁלָמֵיהֶם** /from **their feast peace-offering**. It is obvious who the subject of the pronoun “their” is, and furthermore, the end of our pasuk tells us explicitly who it is referring to; why then did the pasuk have to write the phrase **יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** again at this point? Midrash Toras Kohanim notes this and expounds: **יִשְׂרָאֵל-מִרְצוֹן כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל** i.e., by the consent of all of Israel. This rather cryptic statement is explained by Ra’aved as telling the Kohanim that they cannot seize their gifts by force, they should be given them by the **יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**. The Korban Aharon (ר' אהרן אבן חיים, 1545-1632) approaches it differently: The **יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** should not make it appear that they are begrudgingly giving away parts of their **שְׁלָמֵיהֶם** but rather give them to the Kohanim enthusiastically, with an open hand.

Rav Meir Simcha presents us his approach to these words of the Toras Kohanim, but background information is needed. The law of giving the **חֲזֵה וְשׁוֹק** to the Kohanim applies only to **קְדָשֵׁי קְלָיִם**, where the owners of the animal participate in eating from its meat. **קְדָשֵׁי קְדָשִׁים**, which is eaten *only* by the Kohanim, their **חֲזֵה וְשׁוֹק** are not gifted to them. And even this rule does not apply to all **קְדָשֵׁי קְלָיִם**, only to those which are purely voluntary, such as **שְׁלָמֵי נִדְבָה וְתוֹדָה** i.e., peace-donations and thanksgiving offerings. **שְׁלָמֵי חוֹבָה** e.g., the Pesach or animal Ma’aser offering, which are obligatory, have no pre-requisite gifts to the Kohanim. Why so? Explains Rav Meir Simcha: As all **קְדָשֵׁי קְלָיִם**, **שְׁלָמֵי נִדְבָה וְתוֹדָה** require the Kohanim to be involved with the blood rituals as well as the burning of those portions of the sacrifices offered on the Altar. As these offerings are not obligatory, the Kohanim are doing extra work which is not technically required of them. For this “moonlighting,” they get “paid” with the **חֲזֵה וְשׁוֹק**. **שְׁלָמֵי חוֹבָה**, on the other hand, just as they are mandatory for the non-Kohen to bring, so too are they incumbent on the Kohen to do their Temple rituals-this is their job. The Kohanim work in the Beis HaMikdash as agents of HKBH, as the well-known expression, **כְּהֵנִי** and as such, “get no extra” for doing their duty. According to Rav Meir Simcha, **כִּי אֶת חֲזֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל-מִרְצוֹן כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** is teaching us exactly this rule: **כִּי אֶת חֲזֵה**

applies *only* to התנופה ואת שוק התרומה לקחתי מאת בני ישראל... ואתן אתם לאהרן הכהן ולבניו ושלמי חובה that are ישראל כל ישראל, voluntary ones but not to חובה!

Rav Meir Simcha has one more issue to deal with. Granted that Toras Kohanim explained why the extra ישראל בני ישראל was necessary, but could it not have expounded it similarly if the pasuk would have just written ...לקחתי מאתם.../I took (away) from them or even the singular, לקחתי מאת המקריב? He answers that we know that שלמי נדבה can be brought by two partners but not by three or more. Earlier, he mentioned that the animal Ma'aser offering does not have the Kohanic וְשֹׁק וְחֵזֶה gifts attached to it and said that the reason is because it is a חובה שלמי חובה. One could argue that perhaps it is not a strict חובה for it is obligatory only if one has animals to tithe from and therefore only the Korban Pesach, a true חובה should be exempt from the וְשֹׁק וְחֵזֶה gift but the קרבן brought from an animal of Ma'aser *should have to give* its וְשֹׁק וְחֵזֶה to the Kohen? For this reason, the pasuk spells out ישראל בני ישראל i.e., the וְשֹׁק וְחֵזֶה rule is in place only for a קרבן which can be brought by ישראל בני ישראל-a partnership of two, like נדבה שלמי נדבה. This excludes the animal Ma'aser offering which, as we are told in בכורות נו: can only have one owner and cannot be brought by partners.

Meticulousness in explaining even the most esoteric חז"ל דברי חז"ל is something we become accustomed to as we travel with our author through his sefer, Meshech Chochma.

לזכר נשמת אבי מורי ישראל מנחם בן ר' שלום ז"ל
לזכר נשמת אמי מורתי רחל בת ר' אלחנן אביגדור ע"ה
לזכר נשמת חמי מורי יעקב נתן בן ר' ישראל שלמה ז"ל
ולזכר נשמת הרב יהודה בן ר' אברהם שמחה (קופרמן) זצ"ל
מחבר הגהות על ספר משך חכמה