

SHABBAT SCHEDULE

5:21pm Shabbat Candle Lighting

Friday Night

5:25pm Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat in the Nathaniel Richman Cohen Sanctuary. Services officiated and Dvar Torah given by **Rabbi Shaul Robinson**.
Davening led by **Chazzan Yisroel Lesches**.

Shabbat Morning

7:45am Hashkama Minyan in the Belfer Beit Midrash followed by a shiur given by **Rabbi Moshe Sokolow**
9:00am Services in the Nathaniel Richman Cohen Sanctuary. Drasha given by **Rabbi Shaul Robinson** followed by Musaf. Davening led by **Chazzan Yisroel Lesches**.
9:15am Beginners Service led by **Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald** in Rm LL201
9:23am Latest Shema
9:30am Intermediate Explanatory Service
9:45am Rabbi Herschel Cohen Memorial Minyan in the Belfer Beit Midrash
10:00am Youth Groups for children ages 2-12
11:00am "Baby & Me" (ages 0-24 months, 3rd floor gym)

Shabbat Afternoon

3:00pm Herb Weiss Bikur Cholim Society:
Meets in the Shele Danishefsky Covlin Foyer to visit patients at Mount Sinai West. (New volunteers needed and welcome)
3:55pm Beginners Mishna Chavura with **Moshe Sheinwexler** in the Belfer Beit Midrash
4:25pm Samson Raphael Hirsch Bible Class with **Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald** in Rm 211
4:25pm Louis & Rhoda Lazar Memorial Shabbat Pre-Mincha Shiur in the Nathaniel Richman Cohen Sanctuary given by **Rabbi Shaul Robinson**
5:10pm Mincha/Seudah Shlishit. Dvar Torah given by **Rabbi Ohad Teharlev** on "Whole Luchot and Broken Luchot: The Need for Human Initiative in Avodat Hashem"
6:23pm Ma'ariv/Shabbat Ends

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Hashkama Kiddush:

Ron Platzer in memory of his mother, Edna Platzer, a"h.

Main Kiddush:

Chazzan Yanky Lemmer and Assistant Chazzan Yisroel Lesches sponsor together in honor of The Chaz and with best wishes for a Refuah Shleima.

Ruthy and Yisroel Lesches in honor of the birth of their daughter Shira Sophia.

Rabbi Herschel Cohen Memorial Minyan Kiddush:

Alice Cohen in commemoration of the yahrtzeit of her mother, Doris Cohen, Devora Yitta Chaya bat Yaakov Yonatan, a"h which takes place on 18 Adar.

Beginners Kiddush: **Helga Weisburger** in commemoration of the yahrtzeit of her beloved husband, John z"l and in honor of Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald.

Seudah Shlishit: **Suzan and Fred Ehrman** in honor of Rav Ohad who has dedicated his life to the advancement of serious Torah study for women in conjunction with significant service in the IDF.

MAZAL TOV

Grandparents **Judith Weil and Lloyd Epstein** on the birth of a boy to their children Oren and Elisheva in Jerusalem.

REFUAH SHLEIMA

Please daven for our beloved Chaz, Chazzan Sherwood Goffin, **Shimon ben Yehudis**. Cards of encouragement and support can be dropped off or sent to the shul office and we will pass them along to the Chaz.

THIS SHABBAT, WE WELCOME:

Shabbat Morning:

9:30am: Intermediate Explanatory Service

LSS and Kol HaNeshamah present a Shabbat Morning Intermediate Explanatory Service with Mo Kiss, Rabbanit Adena Berkowitz and Rabbi Shaul Robinson. Join us for a Shabbat morning service including Torah Reading, at a pace you can follow, and explanations of the meaning and origins of the prayers, discussion of the Torah reading, Q & A session and much more! The event is free. To help us anticipate the number of guests, please kindly RSVP at www.lss.org/event/kolhaneshamah.
Location: Pre-function room

Shabbat Afternoon:

5:10pm: Mincha/Seudah Shlishit. Dvar Torah given by **Rabbi Ohad Teharlev** on "Whole Luchot and Broken Luchot: The Need for Human Initiative in Avodat Hashem"

Rabbi Ohad Teharlev is a leading figure in the rapidly growing phenomenon of religious women enlisting to serve in the Israel Defense Forces. "Rav Ohad," as he is affectionately known, is the founding director of Israeli programs at Ohr Torah Stone's Hadas – Claudia Cohen Torah/Army School at Midreshet Lindenbaum, which combines intense Torah study with meaningful IDF service in the Air Force, Intelligence, and Education Corps. A prominent public rabbinic figure, Rabbi Teharlev appears frequently in the Israeli media. In addition to his many published op-eds on issues relating to religious women's service in the IDF, Rabbi Teharlev has also published articles in Torah journals such as Safrat v'Seifa and Akdamut, and has served as editor for "Shaalei Da'at." He studied at Yeshivat Shaalvim, served in the Armored Corps in the IDF, and was ordained by Yeshivat Shaalvim Kollel. Rabbi Teharlev resides in Talmon with his wife Avital, with whom he has three daughters and four sons, including Elchai, z"l, an IDF soldier killed in a terror attack in 2017.



Motzei Shabbat: 8:00pm: Film Club Presents Who Will Write Our History

The story of a clandestine group of journalists, scholars and community leaders in the Warsaw Ghetto who were determined to document their lives and culture for future generations.

Cost: \$15 in advance, closes Friday after candle lighting, \$20 at the door. Please register at www.lss.org/event/whowillwriteourhistory.

WELCOME

As some of you may know, Alanna Caplin, our current Event and Media Coordinator, will be leaving LSS in two weeks to make Aliyah. Though we are sad to see her go, we wish her all the best on this exciting next chapter and thank her for all that she has brought to our shul. At the same time, we are also pleased to welcome **Stephanie Iskhakov** who will be taking over Alanna's role. Please visit www.lss.org/meet-our-office-staff to read more about Stephanie and feel free to stop by the office to give her a warm LSS welcome!

HAKARAT HATOV

Josh Danziger and Fred Ehrman for writing this week's Divrei Torah.

PURIM @ LSS

The LSS Mishloach Manot Campaign

LSS is thrilled to offer the opportunity to send Mishloach Manot to members of the shul. Through your participation, your friends and neighbors will receive a beautiful gift basket all while helping to support the shul in the process.

Order yours today! Register at www.lss.org/campaign/purim2019
\$10 per family (6 family minimum, \$60), \$370 (maximum cost)

Deadline to order: Sunday, March 17

Purim Carnival: Sunday, March 17: 1:00pm-4:00pm: Join us for a fun, festive, activity filled day. Sponsors needed. Please email youth@lss.org

Purim Party: Wednesday, March 20:

The shul is looking to run a free community wide Purim celebration and is looking for sponsors. For details please Email: Rabbi@lss.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, February 26: Lelamed: A Women's Torah Leadership Initiative:

8:00pm Learn the practical skills to become leaders and educators within our shul community. Please register at www.lss.org/event/lelamed. Gabe Falk will be speaking on "If You Build It, They Will Come—Models of Community." Location: Rm 206/207

Friday, March 1: Shabbat Across America: 6:45pm

Featuring Holocaust Survivor, Dasha Rittenberg who will speak about "Shabbat Before, During, and After the Holocaust." Cost: \$45 per person, \$25 per child. To register, please visit www.lss.org/beginners. To be a host, please email bendheimd@gmail.com.

Saturday, March 2: Beginners Luncheon: 12:30pm

The cost is only \$25 per person. Register and pay online at www.lss.org/beginners or call 212-874-6100. Please make your reservations and payment by Thursday, February 28.

Monday, March 4: Beginners Schmooze: 8:15pm-9:30pm

Free and open to all. Refreshments will be served. Reserve your spot at www.lss.org/beginners or call 212-874-6100. Location: Room 211

Wednesday, March 6: World Jewry Committee Meeting: 8:00pm

After the Rabbi Robinson's sermon this past Shabbat, several members were moved to revive, reactivate, and revitalize the World Jewry Committee. If you are interested in joining the struggle against antisemitism, please come to the World Jewry Committee meeting. To help us anticipate the number of attendees please register at www.lss.org/event/worldjewrymeeting.

Sunday, March 17: Spring Food and Clothing Drive: 10:00am - 1:00pm

Join LSS and Project ORE to help feed the Jewish homeless. The food collected will be delivered in time for the homeless to utilize the foods as part of their Purim Seudah. If you are interested in volunteering, please email wbaker@panix.com.

Sunday, March 24: Reforming UNRWA – The Master Initiative: 11:00am

David Bedein, Director of the Center for Near East Policy Research will present the latest initiatives of his organization in exposing how the United Nations Relief and Works Agency misappropriates donations to indoctrinate Arab students in Gaza and the West Bank and what is being done to combat this. Cost: \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door. To register, please visit www.lss.org/event/reformingunrwa.

AIPAC CONFERENCE

The always exciting annual AIPAC Conference will be held in Washington D.C. March 24-26. Cost: \$499 for LSS members that are not club members, \$399 for LSS members that are club members. Please visit the AIPAC website www.aipac.org and register using the code PC19LSS. Discount is available through Monday, March 4. If you have any questions or would like to attend, please email Ann Crane Lowy at anncrane2750@gmail.com.

INSURANCE CLASS

LSS is considering offering an educational evening about life insurance, disability income insurance, and long term care insurance. If you are a licensed agent and wish to participate, please email info@lss.org.

WEEKLY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday:

- **Sunday Morning Responsa** with Rabbi Josh Rosenfeld; Takes place after the 2nd Minyan Location: Belfer Beit Midrash.

Monday:

- **Hebrew Reading Crash Course Levels I and II: 6:30pm-8:00pm**

There is no cost for this class. To register, please call 212-874-6100 or register online at www.lss.org/beginners.

- **Chug Ivrit** given by Hai Piazesky and Dan Munk. 7:00pm-8:15pm. In this class, we read articles from the Israeli press, watch videos of news stories, documentaries and comedy clips, listen to (and sing along!) to Israeli songs and chat in Ivrit. Location: Rm 207

- **Jewish Living Workshop: 7:30pm-8:30pm** Led by Dassa and Bill Greenbaum. First topic: Shabbat—The Friday Night Experience. To register, please email jlworkshop@yahoo.com. Location: Room 208/210

- **My Fire: The Spiritual Genius of Rebbe Nachman** led by Rabbi Josh Rosenfeld: 8:00pm-9:00pm. After his return from the Holy Land, Rebbe Nachman's springs of Torah wisdom began to overflow. Through excursions into his central ideas and teachings, we will both discover his unique genius and why it matters for improving our own spiritual lives and deepening a connection to G-d. Location: Belfer Beit Midrash

Tuesday:

- **The Marilyn & Sam Isler, "Studies in the weekly Parsha"** led by Rabbi Shaul Robinson: 10:30am– 11:30am. Location: Rm LL201

- **Introduction to Bible: The 10 Commandments with Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald: 6:30—8:00pm:** Cost: \$90, Free to LSS Members. To register, please call 212-874-6100 or register online at www.lss.org/beginners.

- **Beit Midrash night, The M'lachim (Kings) Study Group** led by Ron Platzer: 7:00pm-8:00pm. M'lachim, the Book of Kings - the death of David, the magnificent reign of Solomon and his fall, the split kingdom, the dramatic tales of Elijah and Elisha, and so much more. Join our lively weekly study/discussion group as we analyze, pasuk by pasuk, these exciting Biblical narratives. Location: Rm 211

- **Community Kollel** organized by Rabbinic Intern and Teen Director, Zac Schwartz: 7:30pm-9:30pm. To register please click on the link in the Echod electronic version or email teens@lss.org. Location: Belfer Beit Midrash

Wednesday:

- **Beit Midrash night: The Subversive Religious Poetry of Yehuda Amichai** given by Sara Brzowsky: 7:30pm-8:30pm. Location: Rm 207
- **Jewish History Series: Israel & Zionism** led by Paul Shaviv: 8:00pm-9:00pm Topic: Before Zionism: 19th century Location: Belfer Beit Midrash

Thursday:

- **Women's Talk Time:** led by School Psychologist Ruth Moser Riemer: 11:30am-12:30pm. Last Week's Topic: Growing Anti-Semitism Location: Rm LL201.
- **The Jacob Adler Parsha Class:** Explorations in the Weekly Parsha with Rabbi Shaul Robinson: 7:00pm–8:00pm. Location: Belfer Beit Midrash

HOSPITALITY NEEDS: Please host our Rabbinic Intern and Community Educator for Shabbat meals and /or lodging.

Please email hospitality@lss.org with the subject line "Intern" and your availability to meet our current needs.

LSS Teen Directors and Rabbinic Intern, Zac & Rachel Schwartz are in need of lunch on March 2 and meals and lodging on March 15-16.

Community Educator, Zissy Turner and her husband, Sam, are in need of lunch on March 9.

Weekly Prayer Schedule:

February 24

| Day | Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Daf Yomi | 7:45am | 6:15am | 6:20am | 6:20am | 6:15am | 6:20am |
| Shacharit | 7:10am, 8:30am | 7:00am, 7:50am | 7:10am, 7:50am | 7:10am, 7:50am | 7:00am, 7:50am | 7:10am, 7:50am |
| Mincha/Maariv | 5:30pm | 5:30pm | 5:35pm | 5:35pm | 5:35pm | 5:35pm |

NEW OPPORTUNITY

LSS presents a new opportunity to Boost Your Business by placing a monthly ad with LSS which would be featured on our website homepage, weekly emailed newsletter, and outdoor display located in a prime NYC location.

Cost: \$500 to place your ad in 3 locations, \$800 includes a link to your business website. To submit your ad, visit www.lss.org/boostyourbusiness.

For questions, contact Stephanie at 212-874-6100 or Stephanie@lss.org.

YOUTH DEPARTMENT

זרעים Seedlings (2 years old) Room 210
שורשים Roots (3-4 years old) Room 211
ניצנים Buds (K-1st) Room 208
פרחים Flowers (2nd-7th) Room 206
ענפים Branches (2nd-7th) Room 207



Shabbat schedule:

10:00 am Drop Off (Rooms 206-211)
 10:45 am Davening, Circle Time, and Healthy Kiddush (Rooms 206-211)
 11:00 am Parsha & Candy: The Golden Calf (Rooms 210-211)
 11:10 am Recreation, Games, and Rehydration (Room 206-207)
 11:45 am Groups End

Dvar Torah

Ki Tisa means “when we will count.” The *parsha* begins with *Hashem* commanding Moshe to count the men eligible to be apart of *Bnei Yisrael's* army. Each man put a half *Shekel* into a pot. Moshe then counted the *shekels* to see how many there were. The story takes a sad turn when Moshe climbed *Har Sinai* for 40 days and 40 nights to receive the *Luchot*. *Bnei Yisrael* miscount the days and begin to panic when Moshe hasn't returned in time. They hurry to Aharon and beg him for a G-d in place of Moshe. Aharon decides to hold them off by commanding them to collect the gold in their homes, thinking that the women and families will not so quickly oblige in donating their gold. The *Midrash* says that the people returned to Aharon with gold almost immediately and Aharon quickly threw it all into a fire. The Egyptians who came along with *Bnei Yisrael* cast a spell over the fire and the Golden Calf emerged.

Hashem saw what happened and encouraged Moshe to immediately climb back down the mountain. When Moshe sees the people worshipping the Golden Calf he throws the *Luchot* to the ground in horror. He begs *Hashem* to forgive the people, prays for another 40 days and 40 nights, and then climbs back up *Har Sinai*. When Moshe returns with the new *Luchot*, it is the 10th of Tishrei which is now known as the day of forgiveness, or Yom Kippur.

After Shul Ask Your Children:

- What does *Ki Tisa* mean?
- How long was Moshe on *Har Sinai* creating the *Luchot*?
- How did Moshe count the men for the army?
- Why is Yom Kippur on the 10th of Tishrei?

Answers:
 A. “When we will count”
 B. 40 days and 40 nights
 C. By having each man put a half *shekel* in a pot and then counting the *shekels*
 D. It was the day Moshe returned to *Bnei Yisrael* with the second set of *Luchot* and got true forgiveness from *Hashem*

BABY & ME RECAP

Last Shabbat was filled with faces, new and old. Our Purim prep is now in full swing as we read the new PJ Library book *Purim is Coming!* and sang “*Misha Misha Nichnas Adar!*” The kids loved singing and dancing along and our dear Youth Club member, Mia Levi, brought a hilarious book to share called “*The Rabbi Slurps Spaghetti*”. Everyone loved this hilarious story, which was appropriate for *Adar*.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 31, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, Babies & Brunch

Thank you to our sponsors, The Kuzniecky and Kanarfogel families

Sunday, March 17: 1:00pm-4:00pm: Purim Carnival

To register, please visit www.lss.org/event/purimcarnival2019
 LSS Youth proudly offers fun and educational programming to children every Shabbat and holiday throughout the year. The annual Purim Carnival is the most critical fundraiser for the Youth Department to defray the costs of staffing and events, and we can't do it without you. Please consider sponsoring generously by contacting youth@lss.org.

MAGEN AVRAHAM TEEN DEPARTMENT UPCOMING EVENTS:

Shabbat, March 2: Shabbat Teen Oneg: 3:45pm-5:15pm

Join us for an afternoon of sushi and life sized board games (think Jenga but bigger!)

Location: Pre-function room

Thursday, March 21: Teen Purim Fun

Megillah reading followed by breakfast

Location: Pre-function room

To be a sponsor, please email teens@lss.org



The Fiery Coin and the Soul

Next year the decennial census will be taken as prescribed by the United States Constitution, Article 1 Section 2. Our Torah reading this week describes the procedure for conducting a census of the Israelites, which however is never mandated, and we are told must have a compelling reason for being carried out. The usual method by an individual headcount is forbidden and instead a contribution of a personal item is substituted, such as a silver coin. The explanations for this have been a matter of conjecture. Some attribute it to *Ayin HaRah*, the evil eye, which is the harmful negative energy when someone looks at something with envy or ill feeling (Rashi). Others have said that a group is judged more favorably by the Divine Providence because it demonstrates unity and social cohesion, while individuals are scrutinized much more closely for their sins (Sforno). King Saul used sheep to effectuate a count (1 Samuel 15:4). We see an instance when this instruction was violated, tragedy ensued. King David conducted a forbidden census which resulted in 70,000 deaths from a plague (2 Samuel Ch. 24). Today when we count people for a *minyan*, a biblical verse (Psalm 28:9) is used which has ten words rather than pronouncing a numerical headcount.

The Torah reading begins by telling us that when taking a census of the Children of Israel, each man shall give to God an "atonement for his soul," "*Kofer Nafsho*," so that there will not be a plague when they are counted (Exodus 30:12). An atonement for his soul? What sin is he atoning for? This is only a census and if counting by head is prohibited, the verse should have simply said that the coin will prevent a plague. But atonement? Some of the funds collected would be used for communal Temple offerings, which would include offerings for some particular sins. But that alone would not account for this strange association.

The Torah goes on to say that each individual will contribute exactly a half Shekel coin (30:13), whether rich or poor. Why a half Shekel and not a whole? Some commentators say that the half is to teach us that we are incomplete unless we join with others, again the concept of unity. But then for a second time the Torah tells us that this contribution is to "*L'Chaper al Nafshosaichem*," "to atone for your souls" (30:15). And if that was not enough this section ends by saying that "you shall take the silver of the atonement...and it shall be a remembrance before God for the Children of Israel, to atone for your souls." Atonement for a third time! The Torah is generally sparing with its words. Here it seems to be emphasizing a strong connection between the half Shekel coin and our souls. Why an insistence on this connection?

I would like to suggest the following. Since the question involves a metaphysical aspect of ourselves, our souls, Rashi points to a Midrash that is of a supernal nature to help us understand this query.

When God tells Moses to take a census with a half Shekel coin, the verse says, "*Zeh Yitnu*," "This (pointing to a fiery half Shekel coin) shall they give" (30:13). The Midrash (Tanchuma 9) says that the Holy One took out a coin of fire from under His Throne to show Moses, who may not have understood why a half and not a whole Shekel was commanded, and said, "THIS, shall they give." We now may begin to piece together the connection between the fiery coin and the atonement for our souls. The coin of fire was taken from under the Divine Throne, the "*Kisei Hakovod*." Interestingly, that is the exact place from which the soul of each of the Jewish people comes. Just as our souls were stored under the Holy Throne, so the atonement for the soul when it grievously sins is stored there, the half Shekel. There is a principle in Judaism that God sends the cure before he sends the disease, "*Makdim Refuah L'Makah*." Now Moses understood how the *Machtzit Hashekel*, the half Shekel can be a "*Kofer Nafsho*," an atonement for the soul for a future sin. It had a much deeper significance than was at first apparent. Our soul, our *Neshama*, the spiritual aspect of each of us constantly strives to keep its connection to God, but sometimes it becomes sullied by our actions and needs repair.

Throughout Jewish history we have seen that disunity and "*Sinat Chinam*," causeless hatred, has resulted in tragedy for our people. May we all think about the significance of the half Shekel as a symbol of joining together with our brothers and sisters to make a complete Shekel in a display of *Achdut*, of unity among our people which will secure our well-being and bring the long hoped for state of peace. The Psalmist understood this when he said, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalm 133).

Shabbat Shalom.



Parshat Ki Tisa

In honor of Gabby Danziger’s Third birthday (13 Adar Aleph) and Purim Katan (14 Adar Aleph)

"When you take the sum of the children of Israel according to their numbers, let each one give to the Lord an atonement for his soul when they are counted; then there will be no plague among them when they are counted. This they shall give, everyone who goes through the counting: half a shekel according to the holy shekel."
(Shemot 30:11-12)

Reish Lakish said: It was well known beforehand to Him at whose word the world came into being that Haman would one day pay shekels for the destruction of Israel. Therefore, He preempted his shekels with the [half] shekel of Israel. And so we have learned, on the first of Adar, we announce [the obligation of] shekalim" (Megilla 13b)

The Hebrew language uses two words for money, each representing a different aspect. The first word, as in our *parsha*, is *shekel*, which literally means “weighed.” The second is *kesef* (“silver”), which is from the root *lichsof*, meaning “yearning” or “longing.” Money can be used in a concrete way, “weighed” out specifically to purchase a specific item. More generally though, money exists as means of potential or power which can be accreted not for any specific purposes but for a broader and increasing ability to eventually purchase. Each person has a relative scale of value of money in each of its aspects, based on the items they want, the price of those items where they live, and their desire for financial means in a general sense.

The giving of the silver half shekel in this week’s *parsha* serves to consecrate the Jewish people’s money to a holy purpose which prevents the temptation to acquire it endlessly or to squander it. When used poorly or acquired needlessly, great sums of money may have almost no effect in the world; conversely when used properly, even a small amount of money can be tremendously powerful. The relative value and power of money for each person and place can be difficult to reconcile. We see such a case in a puzzling Tosafos on the events of Purim as they relate to the half shekel.

We read in the book of Esther:
[Haman said]" If the king will agree, let it be written that the Jews should be exterminated. I, in return, will weigh out to the king's men 10,000 silver kikars to be deposited in the king's treasury."

Tosafos on Megillah 16a comments:
I was told, that the 10,000 silver kikars equaled half a shekel for each of the Jews, who totaled six hundred thousand when they left Egypt. Haman offered Achashverosh an amount equal to the value of the entire nation, check and you will find (that the calculation is correct)

However, if you do the calculation, you see that it is nowhere near correct. The total value of silver donated via the half *shekel* totaled only 100 *kikars*. Accounting for the fact that the Holy Shekel unit used for the *mishkan* was double the standard measure, Haman still gave 50 times the necessary amount.

There have been a number of attempts to resolve this difficulty, but an ingenious one was suggested by Rav Mordechai Kornfeld, based on the Vilna Gaon. The Gemara in Kiddushin debates whether various items have the minimum required value (a *perutah*) to effect betrothal when given. In Kiddushin 12a, Shmuel says *"If a man betroths a young woman with a date fruit, although dates are so inexpensive that a 'Kur' of them are sold for one dinar, we must nevertheless assume that Kiddushin has taken effect because in the country of Mede, a single date is indeed worth a perutah."*

Shmuel seems to be saying that dates are very expensive in Mede (whose empire joined to Persia shortly before the Purim story). The Gaon’s understanding (based on a verse in Isaiah) is actually that the value of silver in Mede is much lower, such that they needed to use far more of it for a single date than people in other areas. But how much more?

The conversion rates for volume are 1 *kur*=30 *seah*, and 1 *seah*=144 *beitzah*. For money, 1 *dinar*=144 *perutah*. Therefore, we see that 1 *perutah* would buy 30 *beitzah* measure of dates. Based on his comment in Mishlei and the Gemara in Kerisus, the Gaon holds that 30 *beitzah* measure equals 50 dates.

Thus, we calculate that while in all other places 50 dates could be bought for a *Perutah*, in Persia/Mede where Haman lived only one date could be bought for a *Perutah*. The silver in his area was only 1/50th as valuable, and this explains why he paid exactly 50 times the amount the Jews donated. And still our contribution overcame his!

Whether our individual resources are measured in the *half shekel* or in the thousands of *kikars*, may we merit to use them wisely, productively, and for the good of *Klal Yisrael* and in service of the One of whom it says, *"Mine is the Silver, and Mine is the Gold"* (Haggai 2:8).

Shabbat Shalom!