

Rabbi's Article II

Keeping Order: Let's Not Mix Things Up

The Torah of G-d is perfect, and hence, even the order of teachings in the Torah are with reason. Concerning the order of the teachings of laws in the setup of the *Mishnayot* (-[Link](#)), by Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi, known as *Rebbi* (-[Link](#)), in the first of the *Six Orders* of the *Mishnayot*, called *Zeraim* -*Seeds* (in which all the laws of agriculture are discussed) there is the order of tractates: (i) *Peah* -*edge; corner* (-[Link](#)), [(ii) *Dmai* -*Doubtful* [if tithing was given]] (-[Link](#)), and (iii) *Klayim* -*hybrid; crossing* (-[Link](#)). Maimonides explains (-*Pirush Hamishnayos*, Introduction, d"v Hachelek Hashishi) that this is based on the order of the verses in our Torah-portion, in which we first have (-*Leviticus 19:9*), "*When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field,*" and then (-*ibid*, verse 19), "*You shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed...* [*And he (Rebbi) organized after Peah tractate Dmai (and not immediately Klayim) because the poor have a right in it, just like in the Peah.*]"

However, this leads to the question, why in his own *Mishneh Torah* (-[Link](#)) does Maimonides discuss the laws of *Klayim* before the laws of *Peah*?! And while the *RaDVAZ*, Rabbi Dovid Ibn Zimra (-[Link](#)), gives two answers, they both need deeper understanding. However, the simple explanation is that Maimonides, in his book of laws, is simply following the chronological order in which their obligations appear. The laws of *Klayim* take place when sowing the field (and once in the laws of *Klayim* of agriculture, he already explains the other two categories of *Klayim*: *Mating Animals* and *Mixture of Materials in Garments*), while the laws of *Peah* first apply when harvesting the field (and once in the laws of *Pe'ah*, which is a *Gift to the Poor*, he already explains all the other categories of *Gifts to the Poor*), followed by the laws that begin only after harvest, when smearing the produce, such as, *Terumah*, *Tithing*, *First Fruit*, etc., after which he then discusses the laws of the *Sabbatical* and *Jubilee Years*, which take place only once in seven and fifty years.

Let us take a look into the esoteric reason of why the verse and the *Mishnayot* follow one order, while Maimonides follows another. To understand this, we will first speak of another issue of order in a law discussed in the *Mishna* (-*Shekalim*, Chapter 1, *Mishna* 1), "*On the first of Adar they make a public announcement about the shekels* (-[Link](#)) *and concerning kilayim.*" Here too, why do they first announce concerning the *half-shekel* before of *Klayim*, when (a) the *half-shekel* only applies to men (and not to women and children), while the prohibition of *Klayim* applies to everyone, (b) *Klayim* is not just concerning the proactive sowing of seeds together, but even concerning the reactive not removing any growth of *Klayim*, while the *half-shekel* is only a proactive law, and (c) once *Klayim* grows 1/200, removing it only helps for the future, and not for the past, while the *half-shekel*, even when given late, still retroactively gives the giver a part in all the past *Communal Sacrifices*, hence the severity of *Klayim* over that of the *half-shekel* should give it precedence in the concerns of the Jewish Court?!

To understand this, let us see Nachmanides (-on *Leviticus 19:19*) deeper reasoning for the prohibition of *Klayim*: "*Now the reason for* [the prohibitions against] *Klayim*, *is that G-d has created in the world various species among all living things, both plants and moving creatures, and He gave them a power of reproduction enabling them to exist forever as long, as He blessed be He, will desire the existence of the world, and He further endowed them with a power to bring forth* [only] *after their kind, and that they should never be changed, as it is said with reference to all of them* [at the time of Creation], *'after its kind'...* Thus, one who combines two different species, thereby changes and defies the work of Creation..."

The *Zohar* (-*Vol II*, 161b) tells us, "*The Holy One, blessed be He, looked into the Torah and created the world.*" Hence, what exists in the world exists in the Torah, and even more so, it first exists in the Torah, and through (our service of the) Torah it happens in the world. Now, the entire reason for announcing concerning the *half-shekels* (from which the *Communal Sacrifices* were bought) is because we cannot *mix* and buy the *Communal Sacrifices* of the upcoming year from the *half-shekels* of the previous year. Therefore, first we must take care of not having *mixtures* in our Torah-service (*Communal Sacrifices*), and then we can tend to not having *mixtures* in our personal mundane assets. More so, even within one's own *Service of Refinement and Elevation* (-[Link](#)), one cannot confuse that which he must give to the poor, and that which he must use for himself and his family in serving G-d, and hence (-*Laws of Eircohin VCharimim*, closing law), "*A person should never consecrate all of his property or designate it as a dedication offering... Instead, a person who distributes his money... should not distribute more than a 1/5,*" while the other 4/5 is to be used in his personal *Service of Refinement and Elevation*.

Therefore, Maimonides first (in the *Laws of Eircohin VCharomim*) opens the last chapter with the law of, "*On the 15th of Adar, the court diverts... so that the entire nation will be prepared to give the gift of shekalim,*" and closes the chapter with, "*a person who distributes his money for mitzvot should not distribute more than a fifth,*" in order to take care that there be no *mixtures* in our spiritual Torah-service. --However, in order we not make the mistake of the evil *Trufus* ([Link](#); -*Talmud Baba Basra* 10a), "*If your G-d loves the poor, for what reason does He not support them Himself?*" therefore, Maimonides now continues with all the laws of *Gifts to the Poor*,-- after which he then discusses the laws of *Klayim* -not creating *mixtures* in our personal assets. For just as, "*The Holy One, blessed be He, looked into the Torah and created the world,*" so must we first take care of our Torah-service, and then our personal assets.

Now, the verse and the *Mishna* first speak of a person not *mixing* his service with that of the poor man's, hence starting with the *Peah* (give away only the *edge* of the field), which is about *mixtures* in our spiritual service, and then about *Klayim*, *mixtures* in our personal physical assets. However, Maimonides already discussed this spiritual issue of not mixing spiritual services (giving away more than a 1/5th) in the previous laws (of *Eircohin VCharomim*), hence, for Maimonides, now goes first *Klayim* (about mixtures in personal gains). Only after that he speaks of all the *Gifts to the Poor* (starting with *Peah*), which is not about *mixtures*, that which we can't give away (more than a 1/5th), rather, now is the time to discuss what we must give away (*Peah*, and all the other laws of *Gifts for the Poor*).