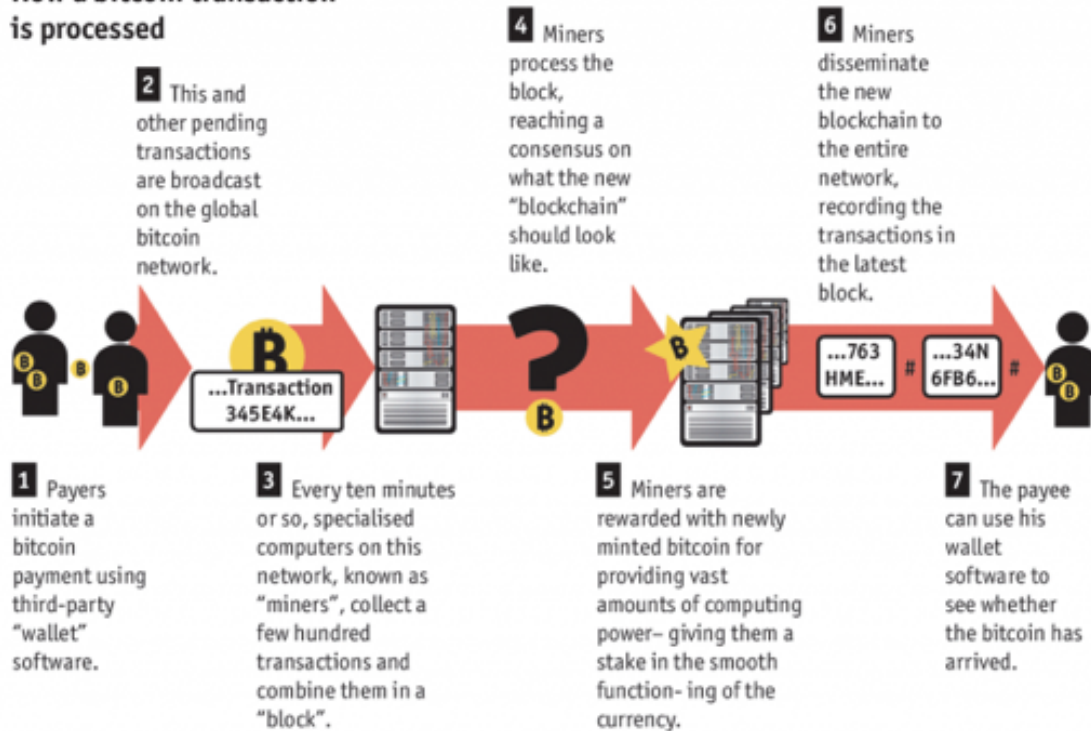


BIBLICAL BITCOINS – THE ROLE OF THE SHEKEL IN TORAH

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How a bitcoin transaction is processed



Economist.com

Source: *The Economist*, 'Blockchain: the next big thing', 9 May 2015

The fei – the stone money of Yap



STONE MONEY OF UAP, WESTERN CAROLINE ISLANDS.

(From the paper by Dr. W. H. Furness, 3rd, in *Transactions, Department of Archaeology, University of Pennsylvania*, Vol. I., No. 1, p. 51, Fig. 3, 1904.)

Tari coin of the Knights of Malta (first issued in 1566)



NON AES SED FIDES

= NOT COPPER, BUT TRUST

(*Fides* can be translated as faith, trust, confidence, belief, loyalty etc.)

The English word 'credit' ultimately derives from the Latin *credere*, to believe or trust

Exchequer tally sticks



Tally sticks had unique notches, and then split lengthwise so the two halves matched perfectly and could not be counterfeited or changed.

The upper Tally was held in the Exchequer



The Tally was given to the payee

Readings:

1. Abraham's purchase of the cave of Machpelah: Genesis 23:3-16
2. The voluntary gifts: Exodus 25: 1-8
3. The census, compulsory payments: Exodus 30: 12-15
4. Asking silver and gold from the Egyptians: Exodus 3:20-22
5. Asking silver and gold from the Egyptians: Exodus 11:1-3

The Shekel in Torah - Readings

1. Genesis 23: 14-16 (Chaye Sarah)

- יד וַיַּעַן עֶפְרוֹן אֶת אַבְרָהָם, לֵאמֹר לוֹ:
 טו אֲדֹנָי שְׁמַעֲנִי אֶרֶץ אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שְׁקָל־
 כֶּסֶף בִּינִי וּבִינָה מִה־הוּא וְאֶת־מִתְּךָ קִבֹּר:
 טז וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָהָם אֶל־עֶפְרוֹן וַיִּשְׁקַל
 אַבְרָהָם לְעֶפְרוֹן אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר
 בְּאָזְנֵי בְנֵי־חֵת אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שְׁקָל כֶּסֶף
 עִבֵּר לִסְחָר:
- 41 And Ephron answered Abraham, saying:
 51 "Pray, my lord, hear me. Land for four hundred silver shekels between me and you, what does it come to? Go and bury your dead."
 61 And Abraham heeded Ephron and Abraham weighed out to Ephron the silver that he spoke of in the hearing of the Hittites, four hundred silver shekels at the merchants' tried weight.

2. Exodus 25:1-8 (Terumah)

- א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:
 ב דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ־לִי תְרוּמָה מֵאֵת כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ לְבוֹ תִּקְחוּ אֶת־תְּרוּמָתִי:
 ג וְזֹאת הַתְּרוּמָה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְחוּ מֵאֲתָם זָהָב וְכֶסֶף, וְנֹחַשֶׁת:
 ד וְתִכְלֹת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ וְעִזִּים:
 ה וְעֹרֹת אֵילִם מְאֻדָּמִים וְעֹרֹת תְּחָשִׁים וְעֵצֵי שִׁטִּים:
 ו שֶׁמֶן לַמָּאֵר בְּשָׂמִים לְשֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וְלִקְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים:
 ז אֲבִנֵי־שֹהֵם וְאַבְנֵי מִלֵּאִים לְאַפֹּד וּלְחֹשֶׁן:
 ח וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם:
- 1 And the Eternal spoke to Moses, saying:
 2 "Speak to the Israelites, that they take Me a donation from every man, as his heart may urge him you shall take My donation..
 3 And this is the donation that to you shall take from them: gold, and silver, and bronze;
 4 and indigo, and purple, and crimson, and linen, and goat hair;
 5 and reddened ram skins and ochre-dyed skins, and acacia wood.
 6 Oil for the lamp, spices for the anointing oil, and for the aromatic incense.
 7 Carnelian stones and stones for setting the ephod and in the breastplate.
 8 And they shall make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst."

Exodus 30:12-15 (Ki Tissa)

- יב כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת־רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם וְנִתְּנוּ אִישׁ כֹּפֶר נַפְשׁוֹ לַיהוָה בִּפְקֹד אֲתָם וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה בָהֶם נֶגֶף, בִּפְקֹד אֲתָם:
 יג זֶה יִתְּנוּ כָל־הָעֵבֶר עַל־הַפְּקֻדִים מִחֲצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל בַּשֶּׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ עֶשְׂרִים גֵּרָה הַשֶּׁקֶל מִחֲצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל, תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה:
- 12 When you count heads for the Israelites, according to their numbers, every man shall give ransom for his life to the Eternal when they are counted, that there be no scourge among them, when they are counted .
 13 This shall each who undergoes the count give: half a shekel by the shekel of the sanctuary – twenty gerahs to the shekel – half a shekel, a donation to the Eternal.

- יד כל, העֵבֶר עַל־הַפְּקֻדִים, מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה יִתֵּן תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה: 14 Whosoever undergoes the count from twenty years old and up, shall give Eternal's donation.
- טו הָעֲשִׂיר לֹא־יִרְבֶּה וְהַדֵּל לֹא יִמְעִיט מִמַּחְצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל לְתֵת אֶת־תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה לְכַפֵּר עַל־נַפְשֵׁיכֶם: 15 The rich man shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give the offering of the Eternal, to atone for their lives."

4. Exodus 3:20-22 (Shemot)

- כ וְשַׁלַּחְתִּי אֶת־יָדִי וְהִכֵּיתִי אֶת־מִצְרַיִם בְּכֹל נִפְלְאוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אַעֲשֶׂה בְּקִרְבּוֹ וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יִשְׁלַח אֶתְכֶם: 20 "And I will send out My hand, and strike Egypt with all My wonders that I shall do in midst thereof, and afterwards will he send you out.
- כא וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־חַן הָעַם־הַזֶּה בְּעֵינַי מִצְרַיִם וְהָיָה כִּי תֵלְכוּן לֹא תֵלְכוּ רִיקָם: 21 And I will grant this people favour in the eyes of Egypt, and so when you go, you will not go empty-handed.
- כב וְשִׂאֵלָה אִשָּׁה מִשְׁכָּנָתָהּ וּמִגֵּרַת בֵּיתָהּ כָּל־כֶּסֶף וְכָלִי זָהָב וְשִׁמְלֹת וְשִׁמְתָם עַל־בָּנֶיהֶם וְעַל־בָּנֹתֵיהֶם וְנִצַּלְתָם אֶת־מִצְרַיִם: 22 But each woman will ask of her neighbour and the sojourner in her house ornaments of silver and ornaments of gold and robes, and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters and you shall despoil Egypt."

5. Exodus 11:1-3 (Bo)

- א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה עוֹד נֹגַע אֶחָד אָבִיא עַל־פְּרַעֲה וְעַל־מִצְרַיִם אַחֲרֵי־כֵן יִשְׁלַח אֶתְכֶם מִזֶּה כִּשְׁלַחוֹ כָּלָה גֵּרֶשׁ יִגְרַשׁ אֶתְכֶם מִזֶּה: 1 And the Eternal said to Moses: "Yet one more plague shall I bring upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt. Afterwards he will send you off from here; when he sends you off altogether, he will surely drive you out from here.
- ב דַּבֵּר־נָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם וַיִּשְׁאַלוּ אִישׁ מֵאֵת רֵעֵהוּ וְאִשָּׁה מֵאֵת רֵעוּתָהּ, כָּל־כֶּסֶף וְכָלִי זָהָב: 2 Speak, pray, in the hearing of the people, that every man borrow from his fellow man and every woman from her fellow woman, ornaments of silver and ornaments of gold.
- ג וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה אֶת־חַן הָעָם בְּעֵינַי מִצְרַיִם גַּם הָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה גָּדוֹל מְאֹד בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, בְּעֵינַי עַבְדֵי־פְרַעֲה וּבְעֵינַי הָעָם: 3 And the Eternal will grant the people favour in the eyes of the Egyptians. The man Moses, too, is very great in the land of Egypt, in the eyes of Pharaoh's servants, and in the eyes of the people.

Hebrew from www.mechon-mamre.org

Translation (adapted) from Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (W W Norton & Co., 2004)