

"And the man took a golden ring of half a shekel (its) weight and two bracelets for her hands, of ten (shekels) of gold was their weight." (24:22)

In the *Midrash*, *Chazal* suggest that this "jewelry" symbolizes a deeper spiritual entity. The golden ring of a half *shekel* alludes to the *machatzis ha'shekel*, the half *shekel* which each Jew gave for the *Mishkan* ; the two bracelets represent the two *luchos* which were joined together; and the ten-shekel weight denotes the *Aseres Ha'Dibros* which were engraved on the *luchos*. We must endeavor to understand the underlying message of these pieces of jewelry.

Horav Mordechai Rogov z.l., implies that the lessons to be gleaned from the *machatzis ha'shekel* and the *luchos* with the *Aseres Ha'Dibros* underscore the foundations for building an everlasting, harmonious marriage. The half *shekel* or ,kdkd gec, which each Jew was implored to give, teaches us that one must take the last coin in his pocket and divide it to share with the *Mikdash* or with another Jew who does not have his own means of support.

The word gec means "to split". We must take whatever we have and share it with others. Yitzchak's message to Rivkah was simple. A marriage must be founded and maintained upon the noble concepts of *tzeddakah*, charity, and *chesed*, kindness.

The two *luchos* are joined together as one with the Ten Commandments, five on each tablet representing the *mitzvos* between man and Hashem and man and his fellow man. The configuration of the *luchos* also teaches an important lesson. The relationship man shares with his fellow man and the one he shares with Hashem must be joined together in total symmetry. If one "tablet" is missing, if an individual assumes that social welfare and sensitivity to his fellow man is all important, while his affinity to *Torah* and *mitzvos* is given cursory acknowledgment, he is woefully mistaken. Indeed, it is man's relationship with Hashem which should inspire him and govern his concern for his fellow man.

The goal of marriage is to unite two diverse individuals into one being. This is a remarkable, if not almost impossible, undertaking. What joins them together? What is the bonding agent which sustains this union? Just as the symbolic design of the *luchos* implies, it is the couple's fidelity to Hashem and the adherence of each to *Torah* and *mitzvos* which nurtures and preserves their marriage.

A home that is founded upon loyalty and obedience to the Almighty, one in which each partner shares the same *hashkafos*, philosophy of life, one in which each one strives for the same style of spiritual ascendancy, can endure. Yitzchak's message to Rivkah is timeless: just as the *mitzvos* on each of the two *luchos* must be observed in unison, so, too, must a couple's spiritual observance play an active role in their marriage.