

"This they shall give... half a shekel of the shekel of the sanctuary." (30:13)

Rashi explains that Hashem showed Moshe a "fiery" likeness of the half-*shekel* coin. The *Chachma Umusar* explains this homiletically, as an allusion to the fire of devotion that must permeate our fulfillment of *mitzvos*. It is not sufficient to merely give one's *shekel*. The significance lies in how it was given. Does one part with his coin with coolness or does he distribute it with the enthusiasm and joy which should be present in the performance of *mitzvos*? When a Jew keeps *Shabbos* but does it indifferently, without the warmth that should permeate an *Oneg Shabbos*, he will not be able to transmit this *mitzvah* to others, not even to his own children. This applies to other *mitzvos* as well. Upon being questioned regarding the lack of *Shabbos* observance among many second-generation American Jews, *Rabbi Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz Z"l*, responded, "*Their parents observed Shabbos with mesiras nefesh (self-sacrifice).*" One must perform *mitzvos* ecstatic with the opportunity to serve Hashem. When one feels that serving Hashem is a hardship which he must endure, he conveys to his children a negative message. This applies in all areas of Jewish endeavor, including the performance of *mitzvos*, public service, and education. If one desires his *shekel* act to be accepted, it must glow with the fire of enthusiasm and zeal.