

Shvilei Pinches

Shabbos Shekolim

Rabbi Pinches Friedman

Shabbos Shekolim 5771

Translation by Dr. Baruch Fox

The "Half-Shekel" Serves to Complete the Missing Half of the Holy Name The Allusion in the Words "תרומה לה" – תרם ו"ה

This Shabbos kodesh, on which we recite "birkas hachodesh" for Adar Sheni, is referred to as "Shabbos Shekolim"—for, in maftir, we read about the mitzvah of "machatzis hashekel" in parshas Ki Sisa. This designation signifies that in the times of the Beis HaMikdash, the public announcement concerning the donation of the "half-shekel"s was performed on Rosh Chodesh Adar (of the Adar immediately preceding Nissan). This is described in the Gemorah (Shekolim 2.): "באחד באדר משמיעין על השקלים".

The Gemorah there explains that it was necessary to do so, because the public offerings purchased starting from Rosh Chodesh Nissan had to be purchased with the new year's Shekolim. We will see, later on in our discussion, the words of the Bnei Yissoschor—that by reading the Torah portion pertaining to the "machatzis hashekel," it is considered as if we actually donated the "half-shekel" for the purchase of the public offerings. This is in keeping with a principle derived from the possuk in Hoshea (14,3): "ונשלמה פרים שפתינו"—and let our lips substitute for bulls. Rashi explains that this possuk represents a request on our part that HKB"H accept our sincere words of Torah and prayer in place of the bulls that we were supposed to have sacrificed.

It is only fitting, therefore, that we explore the mitzvah of the "machatzis hashekel" which is described as follows in parshas Ki Sisa (Shemos 30,12):

"כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל לפקודיהם, ונתנו איש כופר נפשו לה' בפקוד אותם ולא יהיה בהם נגף בפקוד אותם, זה יתנו כל העובר על הפקודים מחצית השקל בשקל הקודש, עשרים גרה השקל מחצית השקל תרומה לה', כל העובר על הפקודים מבן עשרים שנה ומעלה יתן תרומת ה', העשיר לא ירבה והדל לא ימעט ממחצית השקל לתת את תרומת ה' לכפר על נפשותיכם".

When you will take a census of Bnei Yisroel according to their counts, every man shall give Hashem an atonement for his soul when counting them, and there will be no plague among them when counting them. This is what they shall give—everyone who passes among the counted—half of the shekel, by the holy shekel, the shekel is twenty geirah, half of the shekel as a portion to Hashem. Everyone who passes among the counted, from the age of twenty years and up, shall give the portion of Hashem. The wealthy shall not increase and the destitute shall not decrease from half of the shekel—to give the portions of Hashem, to atone for your souls.

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Our Maftir Reading Corresponds to the Donation to Hashem Used to Purchase Public Offerings

Before examining the mitzvah of the "half-shekel" in greater depth, it is worthwhile to make an important point concerning the special maftir which we will read this Shabbos. In the verses just cited, it states explicitly that the command to donate the "half-shekel" is only at the time of the census: "כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל לפקודיהם". If so, why do we recite this passage prior to Rosh Chodesh Adar in commemoration of the announcement concerning the Shekolim used to purchase the public offerings? A simple and straightforward answer to this question is provided by Rashi (ibid. 15):

"לכפר על נפשותיכם, לפי שרמז להם כאן ג' תרומות, שנכתב כאן תרומת ה' ג' פעמים, אחת תרומת אדנים שמנאן כשהתחילו בנדבת המשכן, ונתנו כל אחד ואחד מחצית השקל ועלה למאת הככר, שנאמר (שמות לח כה) וכסף פקודי העדה מאת ככר, ומהם נעשו האדנים..."

והשנית אף היא על ידי מנין שמנאן משהוקם המשכן, הוא המנין האמור בתחלת חומש הפקודים (במדבר א א) באחד לחודש השני בשנה השנית, ונתנו כל אחד מחצית השקל, והן לקנות מהן קרבנות ציבור של כל שנה ושנה, והושוו בהם עניים ועשירים, ועל אותה תרומה נאמר לכפר על נפשותיכם, שהקרבנות לכפרה הם באים. והשלישית היא תרומת המשכן... ולא היתה יד כולם שוה בה, אלא איש איש מה שנדבו לבו."

Rashi teaches us that three distinct donations are alluded to in this passage—as indicated by the phrase "terumas Hashem," which appears three times. One collection of "half-shekel"s, totaling one hundred kikar, went toward making the sockets in the Sanctuary, the Mishkan. This collection was in association with the census which took place when they began to collect donations for the building of the Sanctuary. This is described in Shemos 38,25.

The second collection, also associated with a census, took place when the Sanctuary was actually erected; this is described in Bamidbar 1,1. These Shekolim were used to purchase public offerings; the poor and wealthy contributed equally; this donation represented a form of atonement for their souls. The third donation was for the purpose of the Mishkan; each individual gave as his heart saw fit.

According to this clarification from Rashi, we see that the Torah reading designated for parshas Shekolim--read on the Shabbos when we recite "Birkas HaChodesh" for the month of Adar--corresponds primarily to the third mention of the phrase "terumas Hashem" (which represents the second donation described by Rashi): "העשיר לא ירבה והדל לא ימעט" (which represents the second donation described by Rashi): "ממחצית השקל לתת את תרומת ה' לכפר על נפשותיכם" -- The wealthy shall not increase and the destitute shall not decrease from half of the shekel—to give the portions of Hashem, to atone for your souls. This donation corresponds to the Shekolim used to purchase the public offerings which served as an atonement. It is appropriate and proper, therefore,

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when this possuk is being read, to have in mind that we want it to be considered as if we are contributing "half-shekel"s for the purchase of public offerings.

Yisroel's Shekolim Preempted Haman's Decree

In anticipation of this special Torah reading, let us examine the incredible association between the institution to announce the mitzvah of "machatzis hashekel" on Rosh Chodesh Adar and Yisroel's miraculous salvation from Haman's decree on Purim. This is described in the Gemorah as follows (Megillah 13:): "אמר ריש לקיש, גלוי וידוע לפני מי שאמר והיה העולם, שעתיד —המן לשקול שקלים על ישראל, לפיכך הקדים שקליהן לשקליו, והיינו דתנן באחד באדר משמיעין על השקלים" Reish Lakish said: it was clearly known to He who spoke, and the world came into being, that Haman was destined to weigh out Shekolim for the purpose of destroying the Jews; therefore, He caused the Jews to precede their Shekolim to his Shekolim. And thus we learned in a Mishnah: On the first of Adar, they (the Sanhedrin) announce the obligation to donate the Shekolim.

The Bnei Yissoschor (Adar 2,6) teaches us that the Torah reading on Shabbos Shekolim served Yisroel as a substitute for the actual donation of the "half-shekel." In his own incomparable words:

"והנה כי כן הנה נזכר אז לפניו יתברך שמו גם כן מצות שקלים, הגם שהעוונות גרמו ונחרב הבית המקדש, ולא שקלו אז בני ישראל את שקליהם, עם כל זה האמירה והזכירה פרשת שקלים עלתה לרצון לפניו יתברך שמו, מה שישראל קורין באדר פרשת שקלים כאילו שוקלים בבית המקדש, והן המה היו לישועה לבטל שקלי המן".

Even though the Beis HaMikdash had been destroyed, as a result of transgressions, and Bnei Yisroel, at that time, did not actually collect their Shekolim, nevertheless, the recitation of the passage pertaining to the Shekolim, was accepted mercifully as a substitute by the Holy One, Blessed is He; it was considered as if they had actually donated and collected Shekolim in the Beis HaMikdash—which provided them with salvation, negating Haman's Shekolim.

We must endeavor to explain: (a) why did the merit of the mitzvah of "machatzis hashekel" specifically save Yisroel from the wicked Haman's Shekolim? (b) why does the Mishnah state that on the first of Adar, they made the announcement concerning the "Shekolim"—"באחד באדר משמיעין על השקלים"? Clearly, the mitzvah dictates only the donation of a "half-shekel"; shouldn't the Mishnah have stated that they made the announcement concerning the "half-shekel" rather than the "Shekolim"?

In fact, this very same question can be asked concerning the phraseology employed by the poet in the yotzros (krovos) which some insert during Mussaf on Shabbos Shekolim: "אור —פניך עלינו אדון נשא, ושקל אשא בבית נכון ונשא" —The light of your countenance upon us, O Master, raise up, and the shekel allow me to donate in the Temple, established and

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exalted! Why does it say: and the shekel allows me to donate in the Temple? After all, the mitzvah is to give only a "half-shekel"—regardless of one's financial status.

A Fiery Coin from beneath the Throne of Glory

When discussing the mitzvah of "machatzis hashekel," it is impossible to ignore the association between this mitzvah and the sin of the "egel." As the Talmud Yerushalmi explains (Shekolim 9): **ז"ה יתנו כל העובר על הפקודים... לפי שחטאו במחצית היום יתנו מחצית**—"השקל"—since they sinned at the halfway point of the day, they must make amends by donating a "half-shekel." Similarly, the Midrash Tanchuma teaches (Ki Tisa 10): **מחצית**—"השקל"—they are commanded to give a "half-shekel," because they sinned during the six hours of the latter half of the day.

The simple, straightforward way to understand the connection between the "machatzis hashekel" and atonement for the sin of the "egel," is based on the well-known fact that the purpose of the Mishkan was as a dwelling place for the Shechinah in the aftermath of the sin of the "egel." As explained in the Midrash Rabbah on our parsha (S.R. 51,8): **אלה פקודי**—"המשכן משכן העדות - אמר הקב"ה, יבוא זהב המשכן ויכפר על זהב העגל, אמר הקב"ה לישראל, בשעה שעשיתם את העגל הכעסתם אותי באלה אלהיך, עכשיו שעשיתם המשכן, באלה אני מתרצה לכם, הוי אלהי המשכן"—let the gold of the Mishkan come and atone for the gold of the "egel." HKB"H said to Yisroel: when you made the "egel," you angered me using the word "eileh" (אלה אלקיך ישראל); now that you built the Mishkan, I will forgive you by means of the word "eileh" (אלה פקודי המשכן).

When Yisroel sinned with the "egel," they said to Aharon (Shemos 32,1): **קום עשה לנו אלהים**—"Rise up, make for us gods who will go before us." This request represented an act of heresy, denying HKB"H's supervision of our activities in this world. The remedy for this act of heresy came in the form of: **ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם**—"They shall make me a Sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them." Building the Mishkan was intended to ingrain and reinforce the idea of Hashem's presence and supervision in this world in the hearts and minds of Yisroel.

Now, as we have learned from Rashi, Yisroel's donations of the "machatzis hashekel" at the time of the first census—before the Mishkan was built—were used to make the sockets for the Mishkan. The donations of the "machatzis hashekel" at the time of the second census—after the Mishkan was built—were used to purchase the communal offerings sacrificed in the Mishkan. It is clear now why the "half-shekel" served as an atonement for the sin of the "egel." The very purpose of the Mishkan was as an atonement for the heresy inherent in the sin of the "egel." So, by supplying the sockets which supported the Mishkan and the communal offerings sacrificed in the Mishkan, the "half-shekel" donations were an integral part of this atonement.

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In any event, we must still endeavor to explain why HKB"H commanded Yisroel to only bring a mere "half-shekel," rather than a whole shekel or some larger amount. Furthermore, we must also explain why the commandment of the "machatzis hashekel" puzzled Moshe Rabeinu and was difficult for him to comprehend (see Rashi, Shemos 30,13). The Midrash states (S.R. 12,3): "זה יתנו, אמר רבי מאיר, נטל הקב"ה כמין מטבע של אש מתחת כסא הכבוד והראה לו: "למשה, זה יתנו, כזה יתנו"—this is what they shall give, Rabbi Meir said, HKB"H took a form of a fiery coin from beneath the Throne of Glory and showed it to Moshe, and said that they should give a coin like this.

This too requires explanation: (1) What about the "machatzis hashekel" was difficult for Moshe to comprehend? HKB"H had already given him precise details with regards to the amount of the "machatzis hashekel": "עשרים גרה השקל"—the amount was based on a whole shekel being equal to twenty geirah; thus, a "half-shekel" was equal to ten geirah. (2) Why was it necessary for HKB"H to show Moshe a fiery coin from beneath the Throne of Glory—is there any lack of "half-shekel" coins in this world?

The Numerical Value of the Word שק"ל in the א"ת ב"ש System Equals the Numerical Value of the Name הו"ה

Let us begin our journey of enlightenment with an important concept concerning the "machatzis hashekel" found in the wonderful teachings of one of the Arizal's pupils, the divine kabbalist Rabbi Mordechai HaKohen of Tzfas, in his sefer Sifsei Kohen (Ki Siso). He reveals that HKB"H commanded us to bring a "half-shekel" to make amends for the absence of half of the holy name "Havaya" during the periods of exile. Concerning this matter, the Gemorah states (Eiruvim 18:): "מיום שחרב בית המקדש דיו לעולם שישתמש בשתי אותיות, שנאמר (תהלים קנ"ו) כל הנשמה תהלל י"ה" — **Since the day that the Beis HaMikdosh was destroyed, the world can suffice using two letters from the name of G-d; as the verse states: Let all souls praise י"ה, Hallelukah.**

Utilizing the א"ת ב"ש system [where letters of the aleph-beis starting from aleph are exchanged with a corresponding letter starting from the end of the aleph-beis, from tov, in reverse order; e.g. aleph is replaced by tov, beis by shin, gimel by reish, and so on], the word "shekel," שק"ל, is transformed into כב"ד—which has the same numerical equivalent as the name "Havaya," twenty-six. Consequently, a "half-shekel" represents a half of Hashem's name—the half that is absent during times of exile. In his own sacred words:

"שקל בא"ת ב"ש גימטריא כ"ו, כמו שאמר רבי [ירמיה בן] אלעזר (שם) מיום שחרב בית המקדש דיו לעולם שישתמש בשתי אותיות, שנאמר כל הנשמה תהלל י"ה, וכונת רבי [ירמיה בן] אלעזר היא, מאחר שאין העולם מלא שהוא בית המקדש, שנאמר (שמות מ לד) וכבוד ה' מלא את המשכן, ומאחר שהוא חרב אין ראוי שיקרא השם אלא על עולם מלא.

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כמו שאמרו ז"ל [ראה במדרש ב"ר יג ג] על ויברא ה' אלקים, שם מלא על עולם מלא, שהוא עולם קטן [אולי צריך לומר קדוש], ולא היה עבודת אלילים בעולם שהיא שקר, ושם הוי"ה מורה אמיתות והויה, ומזה הטעם אין השם נקרא ככתבו אלא בכינוי, ולפי שעתיד להיות העגל לזה אמר שיתנו מחצית השקל".

He teaches us that the world is not complete without the Beis HaMikdash, and it is only appropriate for the Glory of Hashem to apply to a complete, entire world. Thus, since the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, the world must suffice with only two letters of the holy name—as taught in the Gemorah in Eiruvim. For this reason, Hashem's holy name is not pronounced as it is written. Furthermore, in anticipation of the sin of the "egel," Yisroel were commanded to donate a "machatzis hashekel."

We can interpret this association with the sin of the "egel," based on the Gemorah (Eiruvim 54.):

"מאי דכתיב (שמות לב טז) חרות על הלוחות, אלמלי לא נשתברו לוחות הראשונות לא נשתכחה תורה מישראל, רב אחא בר יעקב אמר, אין כל אומה ולשון שולטת בהן, שנאמר חרות אל תיקרי חרות אלא חירות".

We are taught that had the first luchos not been broken, Yisroel would never have forgotten the lessons of the Torah; additionally, no people or nation would have had the power to rule over Yisroel.

It is apparent, therefore, that if not for the sin of the "egel," the Beis HaMikdash would not have been destroyed and, as a result, the holy name of Hashem would fill the world in its entirety. Unfortunately, the sin of the "egel" led to the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and to the exile of Yisroel among the nations of the world. As a consequence, Hashem's name is not present in its entirety and the world must suffice with the two letters ה"י. This is the rationale behind the mitzvah of "machatzis hashekel"; it serves to atone for the fact that the world makes due and only utilizes half of the name "Havaya."

The "Half-Shekel" Corresponds to the Letters ה"י

Based on this incredible insight of the Sifsei Kohen, we are led to wonder which half of the holy name the "machatzis hashekel" corresponds to. If it corresponds to the letters ה"י—the first half of the name "Havaya"—then when donating the "half-shekel," one should have in mind to atone for Yisroel's culpability in the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, resulting in the reality that the world must currently make do with the name ה"י. On the other hand, if it corresponds to the letters ו"ה—the second half of the name "Havaya"—then one should have in mind to complete the letters of the holy name which are missing during times of exile.

We can resolve this inquiry by examining the language of the verse: **מחצית השקל תרומה**—"**half of the shekel as a portion to Hashem**". This language suggests that the "half-shekel" donation is designed to complete Hashem's name, "Havaya." This would lead us to

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conclude that Yisroel were commanded to bring the "half-shekel" with regards to the letters ו"ה—the latter half of the name "Havaya"—and, by so doing, to restore the holy name to its full four-letter glory. A nice allusion to this interpretation can be found in the very word תרומה—whose letters can be rearranged to form the words ו"ה תרם, meaning a donation of the letters ו"ה. In other words, in the process of donating the "machatzis hashekel," Yisroel effectively donated the letters ו"ה to complete the four letters of the name "Havaya." Thus, the possuk states: "מחצית השקל תרומה לה" -- **half of the shekel as a portion to Hashem.**

Following this line of reasoning, let us tackle the issue of why HKB"H chose the "machatzis hashekel," specifically, as a vehicle to atone for the sin of the "egel." First, though, let us address the statement of Chazal's quoted above: מיום שחרב בית המקדש דיו לעולם שישתמש -- **Since the day that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, the world can suffice using two letters from the name of G-d; as the verse states: Let all souls praise י"ה, Hallelukah.** Why did the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash result in the absence of the two letters ו"ה from the holy name?

We can suggest a reasonable explanation based on the passage depicting the battle with Amalek (Shemos 17,16): "ויאמר כי יד על כס י"ה מלחמה לה' בעמלק מדור דור"—**and he said: "For there is a hand on the throne of G-d: Hashem maintains a war against Amalek, from generation to generation."** Rashi comments: נשבע הקב"ה שאין שמו שלם ואין כסאו שלם עד — **HKB"H swore that His Name is not whole nor is His Throne whole until the name of Amalek is eradicated. So long as Amalek exists, the two letters ו"ה will be missing from the name "Havaya" and only the letters י"ה will remain.**

An amazing explanation for this phenomenon is provided by the Yismach Moshe (Beshalach) based on a teaching in the Tikunei Zohar (Introduction 9:). There we learn that the name "Havaya" is derived from the first letters of the possuk (Tehillim 96,11): ישמחו השמים ויתגל: **The heavens will be glad and the earth will rejoice.** In the heavens, HKB"H's greatness is always evident, even during periods when His Countenance is concealed and we are in exile down below. As a result, the condition of ישמחו השמים—**The heavens will be glad**--exists even during periods of exile.

Down below on earth, however, His Glory and Sovereignty are only revealed during periods of redemption; only then is the condition of ויתגל הארץ--**and the earth will rejoice**--in effect. During periods of exile, when His Countenance is concealed, the joy is absent down on earth. Therefore, so long as Amalek exists—causing His Countenance to be concealed down below—His Name is not complete—the letters ו"ה, which stand for ויתגל הארץ are missing. Here is the actual text of the Yismach Moshe:

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"עוד פירוש על ו"ה שנעלם מהשם, כי הויה מורה י"שמחו ה"שמים ו"תגל ה"ארץ, והנה בשמים נראה תמיד גדולתו, אבל בארץ מכוסה ונעלם, והיינו ו"ה שנעלם מהשם עד לעתיד שיתגלה כבוד ה', אז ותגל הארץ במהרה בימינו אמן".

"They Shall Make Me a Sanctuary So that I May Dwell Among Them"

Now, the purpose of building a Beis HaMikdash is so that the Shechinah may dwell down below on earth, in keeping with the possuk (Shemos 25,8): **"ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם"** -- **They shall make me a Sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them.** So we find that building the Beis HaMikdash also serves the function of restoring the two letters ו"ה to the holy name. For, if the Shechinah is revealed down below, there is no concealment of His Countenance and the condition of ו"תגל ה"ארץ is fulfilled.

This allows us to understand why HKB"H commanded Yisroel to bring the "machatzis hashekel." When they were counted prior to the construction of the Mishkan, the "half-shekel" donations were used to make the sockets supporting the Mishkan. When they were counted a second time, after the construction of the Mishkan, the "half-shekel" donations were used to purchase communal offerings. Both the building of the Sanctuary and the offering of the sacrifices served the function of revealing the Glory of Hashem down on earth. This is suggested by the possuk (Vayikra 1,2): **"אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לה'"**—**When a man among you brings an offering to Hashem.** The possuk deliberately states **"to Hashem,"** suggesting that the offering performs the function of completing the four letters of the holy name—thus fulfilling the condition of ו"תגל ה"ארץ—**The heavens will be glad and the earth will rejoice.**

It is for this very same reason that Yisroel were commanded to make the sockets for the Mishkan. They were the foundation upon which all the planks of the Mishkan stood. Now, the "half-shekel" donations brought by every member of Yisroel, alluded to the two letters ו"ה which make up the latter half of the holy name, which represent the condition of ו"תגל ה"ארץ. So, it was in the merit of these donations that they were able to make the sockets which supported the Mishkan, allowing HKBH's Divine Presence to dwell on earth and to fulfill the condition of ו"תגל ה"ארץ.

The meaning of Chazal's statement should now be much clearer to us: **"מיום שחרב בית המקדש דיו לעולם שישתמש בשתי אותיות, שנאמר כל הנשמה תהלל יה"** Due to the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash the Shechinah vanished from the earth; consequently, the world had to suffice with the two letters of the holy name י"ה—expressing the condition of י"שמחו ה"שמים. Unfortunately, the two letters ו"ה remained absent during the times of exile, since the condition of ו"תגל ה"ארץ remained unfulfilled.

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"A Sort of Coin of Fire" an Indication of the Two Letters י"ה

Now, we have also achieved a better understanding of the Tanna Rabbi Meir's statement concerning Moshe Rabeinu's perplexity concerning the "machatzis hashekel": "נטל הקב"ה כמין: HKB"H took out a sort of coin of fire from beneath the Throne of Glory and showed it to Moshe, indicating that Yisroel should give a coin like this. Apparently, Moshe Rabeinu was bewildered by the fact that HKB"H only commanded Yisroel to bring a "half-shekel" which only corresponded to half of the holy name. In his opinion, it seemed more appropriate that they bring a whole shekel, corresponding to the holy name complete with all four letters. As mentioned above, the word שק"ל in the ב"ש א"ת system transforms into the word כב"ד which has the same numerical value as the name "Havaya."

In order to dispel Moshe's confusion HKB"H took out a sort of coin of fire from beneath the Throne of Glory. This was meant to indicate to Moshe that in the heavens above, the condition of ישמחו השמים, alluded to by the two letters י"ה, is a constant—the heavens above are always glad, since His Glory is always evident. "והראה לו למשה, זה יתנו, כזה יתנו"—he showed Moshe this fiery coin and told him that Yisroel should give a coin like this. In other words, just as in heaven the half name representing ישמחו השמים, the י"ה, is complete, so, too, down below the half name ו"ה, representing the condition of ויתגל ה'ארץ must also be complete. Therefore, Yisroel only need to bring a "half-shekel" corresponding to the letters ו"ה, since the other half of the name, the י"ה, is always complete, even during periods of exile and when Hashem's Presence is not apparent down on earth.

This also explains why the "machatzis hashekel" was an atonement for the sin of the "egel." As pointed out, when Yisroel sinned, they said to Aharon (Shemos 32,1): **קום עשה לנו אלהים**—"Rise up, make for us gods who will go before us." This represented outright heresy, denying HKB"H's management and supervision of this world. Hence, this constituted serious damage to the letters ו"ה, representing the condition of ויתגל ה'ארץ—since in the aftermath of the sin of the "egel," this condition was absent on earth.

As a consequence, HKB"H commanded Yisroel to bring a "machatzis hashekel" corresponding to the latter half of the holy name, the two letters ו"ה, in order to restore all four letters of the name to their original completeness and to restore the joy on earth that is associated with the revelation of His Heavenly Glory even down on earth. As mentioned, the donations of the "half-shekel" were used to make the sockets for the Mishkan, which also serve as atonement for the sin of the "egel." For, the purpose of the Mishkan was so that HKB"H would dwell among us—thus, revealing His Sovereignty also on earth.

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We can now return to the poetic words which some insert in the Mussaf of Shabbos Shekolim with a wonderful interpretation: "אור פניך עלינו אדון נשא ושקל אשא בבית נכון ונשא" -- **The light of your countenance upon us, O Master, raise up, and the shekel allow me to donate in the Temple, established and exalted!** We pray that HKB"H will illuminate us with His Countenance even on earth, in this world, which will allow us to donate a whole shekel in the third Beis HaMikdash. For, at that time, the Glory of Hashem will be apparent both in the heavens above and on the earth below; as a result, the two halves of the name "Havaya" will join together to complete the four letter name alluded to by the possuk: י'שמחו ה'שמים ו'תגל ה'ארץ.

Haman's Goal Was to Leave Yisroel with Only Half of the Holy Name

In this manner, we can begin to comprehend the degree of Haman's wickedness and the evil he wished to perpetrate against Yisroel by collecting his Shekolim. Tosafos write (Megillah 16.): "שמעתי שעשרה אלפי ככר עולין חצי שקל לכל אחד מישראל, שהיו שש מאות אלף כשיצאו" — **Haman's Shekolim were calculated to equal precisely one half shekel for each of the six hundred thousand Yisroel that left Egypt; he was offering Achashverosh precisely this amount in exchange for the lives of all of the Jews.**

Now we know that Haman descended from Amalek, about whom we read: **כי יד על כס יה** — **For there is a hand on the throne of G-d: Hashem maintains a war against Amalek, from generation to generation.** This possuk indicates that so long as Amalek continue to exist, the name of Hashem will not be whole. With this in mind, Haman offered to give Achashverosh precisely one half-shekel for every member of Yisroel. His evil intent was to give a half-shekel corresponding only to the first two letters of the holy name, suggesting that Yisroel were not worthy to use anything but the half of the name represented by the two letters י"ה; at the same time, he wished to prevent Yisroel from making the holy name whole once again. Achashverosh responded to this offer by saying (Esther 3,11): **"The silver is given to you, the people also, to do with as you see fit."** So, we see that Achashverosh also did not want the name to be whole with all four of its letters.

This sheds light on the meaning of the following passage in the Megillah (Esther 5,3): **"ויאמר לה המלך מה לך אסתר המלכה ומה בקשתך עד חצי המלכות וינתן לך"** — **The king said to her, "What do you wish Queen Esther? And what do you request? Until half the kingdom, it shall be granted to you."** The Gemorah expounds on this possuk (Megillah 15:): **חצי** — **half the kingdom but not the entire kingdom, nor the thing that divides the kingdom. And what was that? The building of the Beis HaMikdash. At first glance, one might wonder—where do our blessed**

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sages find an allusion in the words "עד חצי המלכות"—until half the kingdom—to the fact that Achashverosh opposed the building of the Beis HaMikdash?

Based on what we have learned, we can explain the matter by referring to the writings of the great Rabbi from Shinaveh, zy"א, in the Divrei Yechezkel (Purim). He explains that when Achashverosh said to Esther: "עד חצי המלכות"—until half the kingdom—he was indicating that his wish was that the holy name of four letters remain incomplete, that it remain with only the two letters י"ה. In this light, our blessed sages were able to deduce that Achashverosh opposed the construction of the Beis HaMikdash. After all, the Beis HaMikdash is the place where the holy name is used and pronounced in its full, four-letter form; in the absence of the Beis HaMikdash, the world suffices with the two letters י"ה.

Thus, we can interpret Reish Lakish's statement as follows: "גלוי וידוע לפני מי שאמר והיה העולם, שעתיד המן לשקול שקלים על ישראל" it was clearly known to He who spoke, and the world came into being, that Haman was destined to weigh out Shekolim for the purpose of destroying the Jews—for, he only wanted them to be able to make use of half of the holy name, the letters י"ה. "--לפיכך הקדים שקליהן לשקליו, והיינו דתנן באחד באדר משמיעין על השקלים." --therefore, He caused the Jews to precede their Shekolim to his Shekolim. In other words, this is the rationale behind the mitzvah of "machatzis hashekel." Yisroel were commanded to bring a "half-shekel" corresponding to the second half of the holy name, the two letters ו"ה. By fulfilling this command, they made the holy name whole, once again, they negated the force of Haman's Shekolim and were able to undermine Haman's evil plan.

This, then, is the meaning of the verse (Esther 5,4): "ותאמר אסתר אם על המלך טוב"—Esther said, "If it please the king"—she is referring to the King of Kings, HKB"H. She continues: "ויבוא המלך והמן היום"—let the king and Haman come today. The Arizal points out (Pri Etz Chaim, Shaar HaPurim) that the first letters of these four words uttered by Esther spell out the name "Havaya." We now understand that Esther was praying to HKB"H that he annul Haman's decree—designed to prevent the holy name from being whole—and, instead, that He permit the Jews to complete the four letters of the holy name corresponding to the possuk: "וישמחו השמים ויתגל הארץ"—The heavens will be glad and the earth will rejoice.