



פרשת ויקרא - Parshas Vayikra

”דבר אל בני ישראל לאמר נפש כי תחטא בשגגה מכל מצות ד' אשר לא תעשינה ועשה מאחת מהנה” ויקרא ד;ב

“Speak to the Bnei Yisroel saying, if/when a person will sin unintentionally by transgressing one of the commandments of Hashem that he should not transgress and he will commit one of these sins.”

Vayikra 4:2

This week we begin to read *Sefer Vayikra*. The Ramban in his introduction explains that this is the *Sefer* of קרבנות (Sacrificial Offerings) and the upkeep of the Mishkan. *Sefer Shemos*, which we concluded last week, was the *Sefer* of “הגלות והגאולה ממנו” (The Exile and our Redemption.) As *Sefer Shemos* ends off with the אהל מועד (Tent of the Meeting) and the כבוד ד' (G-d's Glory) which filled the Mishkan, *Sefer Vayikra* follows with the Commandments of the קרבנות and the Shmiras HaMishkan, seeing as the קרבנות are an atonement for the Bnei Yisroel and will prevent any potential sins from causing the שכינה (Divine Presence) to vacate the premises.

Towards the middle of this week's Sedrah, we find the Parsha of the קרבן חטאת (sin offering). The *pasuk* states that if someone sins unintentionally they must bring a sin offering. However it appears that the words at the end of the *pasuk*, “ועשה מאחת מהנה” – “and he will commit one of these sins,” are extra, seeing as the beginning of the *pasuk* has already mentioned “מכל מצות ד'” - “from all of the Mitzvos of Hashem,” meaning that the person had committed a sin unintentionally. Why does the *pasuk* mention two Transgressions?

The Alshich explains that in reality a person would not need atonement for an unintentional sin because he committed it unknowingly. However the truth is, as the *pasuk* in משלי states, “גם בלא דעת נפש לא טוב”. If a person sins unintentionally, it must be that his נפש was already no good as a result of a previous transgression. For a person who is not guilty of intentional sin will never sin accidentally. As Chazal tell us in many places that Hashem does not allow even the animals of Tzaddikim to sin, all the more so Hashem protects the Tzaddikim themselves from transgressing unwittingly. A person only comes to sin unintentionally after he has already sinned willfully-if a person would never sin willingly, they would never find themselves in a situation of committing an Aveirah unintentionally. That is what the *pasuk* means when it says that “if a person sins accidentally by transgressing one of the commandments of Hashem which he is not to transgress.” How did the person come into this situation? “ועשה מאחת מהנה” because he had previously sinned by transgressing one of the Mitzvos of Hashem, that's what caused him to fall unintentionally this time around. This person must bring a קרבן חטאת because he sinned unintentionally, which only occurred because he had initially sinned willingly.

Our Avodah is to be aware and in control of ourselves at all times. We are striving for perfection; that is our goal in this world. Not to sin. To distance ourselves from situations that will challenge us and to put ourselves into situations that will help us succeed in conquering our Yetzer Hara. If we can hold ourselves back and not commit Aveiros; willful sins, we will be cleansed and protected from unintentional Aveiros and their ill side effects as well.