

## **“Then they will confess their sin... and also for having behaved toward Me with casualness. I, too, will behave toward them with casualness.” (26:40- 41)**

If they confess their sins, why does Hashem say, “I, too, will behave toward them with casualness”? Why does He not accept their repentance? *Horav Shimon Schwab, z.l.*, explains that when one peruses the *parsha*, he will note that the underlying sin for which *Klal Yisrael* is held in contempt is the sin of *keri*, casualness. Their lackadaisical attitude to everything is what led to their downfall. Yet, when they confess, they admit only to *avonam*, their actual sin. They also happen to confess to their casualness – disregarding the fact that it was specifically this apathetic observance that catalyzed their other sins. Hashem demands a complete reckoning, an unbiased and open recognition of their sin and its source. To relegate the sin of indifference to the back burner, to consider it an “also,” defies the essence of *teshuvah*, repentance.

*Horav S.R. Hirsch, z.l.*, posits that historically the scenario of Hashem responding to our dispassion – with religion in general and tradition in particular – with a corresponding casualness has played itself out more often than we realize. It begins with our phlegmatic treatment of *Halachah*, granting it secondary significance to everything else. This leads to a slow decaying of our spiritual and moral life. Eventually, our social life will begin to atrophy. When we come to our senses and realize that our lack of fidelity to Hashem’s *mitzvos* did not achieve for us the happiness that we thought it would engender, we will confess to our sins. We will recognize the consequences of our indifference.

Hashem’s response coincides with the sin. Since we did not completely sever our relationship with Him, but remained in contact with the Torah in a passive manner, Hashem will also not give us up. He will act towards us *b’keri*, with casualness. We will be left entirely to the influences of the historical occurrences of the various nations among whom we live. In all these happenings, which seem to us to be just unlucky “chance,” Hashem will still be with us. He will not let us become destroyed. Historical world events, which seem to be isolated occurrences, are actually for the purpose of the spiritual and political rehabilitation of *Klal Yisrael*. The painful educative effects of the developments of the history of the world itself will have consequences in the maturing of *Klal Yisrael*. They will ultimately be fit for independence and return to their homeland. Thus we understand that the long exile in “the land of the enemies” is all part of a long circuitous route, guided by Hashem as part of His Master Plan to return us to our eternal calling. We are never alone.