

"When a man among you bring an offering to Hashem." (1:2)

Rashi explains that the *Torah's* uses the word *Adam* to allude to *Adam Ha'Rishon*. The first man was able to say that everything he offered up as a *korban* had no vestige of impropriety connected to it, since it all belonged to him. Likewise, when one offers a *korban* to Hashem, it may not be tainted by theft. It seems strange that we would need the lesson from *Adam Ha'Rishon* to teach us that a *korban* may not be derived through theft. In a *pasuk* in *Yeshayah 61*, the *Navi* "quotes" Hashem as saying, "*I am Hashem who despises a stolen olah.*" What special lesson is to be gleaned from *Adam Ha'Rishon*?

The **Chofetz Chaim, zl**, explains that there are two forms of theft. In the standard case of theft, one forcibly "relieves" another person of his valuables. Another form of larceny may be accepted by some, but is just as repulsive. This is taking money or gifts under false pretense. One example of this type of theft is an individual who accepts gifts from another Jew who is interested in benefitting a *Torah* scholar. Another example is an organization which intentionally misrepresents itself in order to receive communal or charitable support. These are just two types of larcenous behavior which have regrettably become the norm for some. This type of behavior, claims the *Chofetz Chaim*, is pure *geneivah*, theft! As *Adam Ha'Rishon's* *korbanos* were pure, so, too, must everything we offer to Hashem, abide by the same standards as demonstrated by the first man. Any money taken under false pretense is subject to the laws of theft.

Horav Eliyahu Lopian, zl, writes that he once joined the *Chofetz Chaim* for a meal. During the bentsching, the *Chofez Chaim* placed great emphasis upon the prayer in which we entreat Hashem with the words, "*Please make us not needful, Hashem, Our G-d, of the gifts of human hands, nor of their loans... that we not feel inner shame nor be humiliated for ever and ever.*" Afterwards, the *Chofetz Chaim* gave a "*krechtz*," moan, and asked, "What is the connection between the first part of the prayer and the end?" Ostensibly, the reference to *not being in need of the gifts of humans* concerns us in *Olam Haze*, this world, while the illusion to *not feeling shame forever and ever* refers to *Olam Habah*, the eternal world.

How do we reconcile these two seemingly disparate statements?" "The truth is," responded the *Chofetz Chaim*, "that it is possible for the gifts we receive in this world to be the cause of unfortunate shame in the next world. If we accept a gift from another person who assumes that we are more worthy than we really are, we will incur great embarrassment as we stand before Hashem -without pretense and without facade. This is what I fear."

If such words can emanate from the *tzaddik*, the *Chofetz Chaim*, how much more so should we seek to be the paragons of rectitude, striving to live up to the appropriate expectations people have of us.