

## This is the law of the Olah/Elevation-offering (that stays) on the flame on the Altar. (6:2)

The *Korban Chatas*, Sin-offering, is brought when one inadvertently commits a transgression for which the punishment is, when intentional, either *kares*, Heavenly excision, or the death penalty [any of the four forms of capital punishment/execution]. A person brings a *Korban Olah* for a sin which he committed with his mind, in which he had improper, sinful thoughts. Interestingly, when one performs a sin with his hand, his punishment is *chatas*, which is partially eaten by the owners and *Kohanim*. In contrast, when one commits a sin with his mind, he must bring a *korban* which is completely burnt. Why is this?

Simply, I would suggest that a sin which one commits with his mind permeates his entire body, tainting everything, because the mind determines what the body does. *Ramban* observes that the same hand that writes a *Sefer Torah* can commit murder. Is the hand to blame? No! It is the mind that determines and defines the actions of the hand. On the other hand, when hands/actions commit a sin, it is only the hands that have committed the sinful act. It does not affect the other organs of the body. Thus, a *Korban Olah* which atones for the sins of the mind is wholly burnt, and a *Korban Chatas* which atones for actions, is partially eaten by both owner and *Kohen*.

The *Nesivos Chaim* (cited in *Nifle'osecha Asichah*) explains that the purpose of a *korban* is to teach its donor what it is that Hashem wants/expects of us and in what manner a Jew should carry out his daily endeavor. It is unrealistic to ask a person that all of his activities should be totally untainted of any physical/material prejudices and interests. We are human, and, as such, we are prone to human tendencies. We cannot expect a person to execute a *mitzvah* and not derive any physical pleasure or purpose thereby. It is what it is. In the realm of thought, however, we may expect that one's mind be completely in sync with his actions. Upon *davening* (for example), one should maintain *kavanah*, proper intention, focus and devotion. One has no excuse for a "wandering" mind. Therefore, the Torah distinguishes between thought and action with regard to its various *korbanos*.

In his inimitable manner, *Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita* relates an inspiring story which underscores the importance of proper thought, *kavanah*, when one is engaged in a *davar she'b'kedushah*, holy endeavor. *Horav David Segal HaLevi, zl*, authored the *Turei Zahav* commentary to the *Shulchan Aruch*. The *Taz* (as he is reverently known) is one of *Klal Yisrael's* premier *poskim*, *halachic* arbiters. In the *Pincas*, notebook, of the *Chevra Kaddisha*, Jewish Sacred/Burial Society, of the city of Lvov, Poland, it is noted that the *Taz* was known to wear an old, torn *Tallis*. It was obvious from the color of the *Tallis* and the pattern of its tatters that he had worn it for quite some time. When it became known that the man who represented the city's spiritual centerpiece, a man known throughout the entire Torah world for his brilliance and erudition, was attired in an old *Tallis*, the women of the community assembled and donated a brand new white *Tallis* made of the finest wool, as befits a Torah scholar of the stature of the *Taz*. They

brought the gift to him. He opened up the package and saw the impressive *Tallis* which they had commissioned for him. He remarked, "Thank you. My deepest gratitude to you for the thought. However, I refuse to wear a new *Tallis*. I require my old, torn *Tallis* to serve as a testament on my behalf in Heaven Above that I never had any extraneous thoughts during *Shemoneh Esrai*." His mind was always focused on the words, their meaning and implications. Can we make such a statement?

Indeed, *Rav* Zilberstein supplements the story (*Chashukei Chemed Bechoros 37a*) with the following observation: The *Taz* was a saintly angel, an unparalleled *tzaddik*, about whom his *Tallis* could attest such positive testimony. Those of us who are unable to make such a statement, whose *Tallis* cannot (for obvious reasons) vouch to our positive, appropriate focus during *Shemoneh Esrai*, should repair and clean the *Tallis* that we wear, so that we should at least be attired in a clean *Tallis* when *davening* to Hashem.

Perhaps this might be a time to mention that this applies to all *devarim she'b'kedushah*, sacred objects: *Tallis*; *Tefillin*; the clothing we wear to *shul*, which indicates the esteem in which we hold the *shul*, the congregation, the *Shabbos*. Certainly, to find the money to purchase an expensive wardrobe, but continuing to wear an old *Tallis* that could use a cleaning, reflects misplaced values and imperiousness that borders on disdain for a *mitzvah*.