

Let the people go out and pick each day's portion on that day, so that I can test them, whether they will follow My teaching or not. (16:4)

The *Manna* that descended from Heaven daily like clockwork was a test from Hashem. Would they receive the *Manna* daily, or would it suddenly stop and leave them without sustenance? Would they not put *Manna* away for the next day? Would they not seek it on *Shabbos*? Would a lack of food impede their relationship with Hashem? Would they become so complacent in their food expectancy that they would balk if it did not arrive as usual in a timely fashion? We have become so accustomed to receiving our daily fare that we cannot imagine what it would be like if, for some reason, it did not materialize. We take so much for granted until it is taken from us. We are then shocked, not knowing what to do; at times, we are even moved to anger. How could this have happened? Why? We conveniently forget the years when everything was going so well. Perhaps, had we been more appreciative, we would have acknowledged our debt of gratitude before we realized that it is neither a given, nor is it owed to us.

A *shailah*, question, was brought up during a *shiur*. The *halachah* is clear that one who sins *b'shogeg*, unintentionally, must atone for his actions by offering a *Korban Chatas*, Sin-offering. The question was raised about a Jew who was born, raised and lived on a faraway island, never having had the privilege of meeting his coreligionists and never becoming aware of the meaning of *mitzvah*, *aveirah*, sin, etc. He was a person who grew up clueless about Torah and, one day, he discerned his heritage and found out what it means to be a Jew. Is he compelled to atone for his past with a *Korban Chatas*? The *rebbe* to whom the question was addressed responded with a story. An observant fellow, a good person both ethically and morally, was one day informed that that day was to be his last day at work! He was being replaced. The fellow left quite dejected. After all, he had no idea how he would provide for his sizable family. He did not sleep that night. The next morning, he arose early, figuring that he would quickly scan the classified section of the newspaper. How surprised he was to see a crisp 200 *shekel* bill fall out from in between the pages. He checked every page of the paper, then checked the bill. It was real.

The next day, the same thing happened. Inside his paper, he discovered a crisp 200 *shekel* bill. This continued for two months – every day, a 200 *shekel* bill lay between the folds of his newspaper. One morning, his paper was left on his lawn closer to his neighbor's house. He ran over there, insisting on retrieving his paper. His neighbor thought that he had become unhinged. "What difference is there whose paper you have?" he asked. "No, I insist on my paper." "Well, I used your paper as a tablecloth for my children's breakfast!" "No problem. I will take it in whatever condition it is in." After picking up the soiled paper, he went home to once again find his 200 *shekel* bill!

This scenario continued for four years! Why should one work when he receives his livelihood in his morning paper? People began to wonder. Their neighbor did not work; yet, he seemed to have

enough money to serve his needs. One morning, as he was about to pick up the paper, he noticed someone's shoe pressing down firmly on the newspaper. The nerve of the person to step on his paper, impeding him from retrieving his livelihood! He was about to raise his voice and tell the individual to get off or else, when he heard a voice say to him, "What about some gratitude?" "What? What are you saying?" the man asked.

"Why do you not say thank you? For four years, you have received 200 *shekel* daily in your newspaper, and not once did you say thank you."

"Please, sir, you must understand, I had no idea who you were. To whom was I supposed to show my appreciation?" he asked.

"This is exactly what bothers me about you. For years, you eat my bread, drink my water, satiate yourself with my food. Did you once think – perhaps I should find out who is my benefactor? You took it for granted that it would always be there. Today, when my shoe prevented you from taking your money, you finally raised up your head to find out who is doing this! Had I not come by, you would never know that I exist, because you would never have looked!"

We go through life taking everything for granted. A Jew – regardless of his spiritual and physical locus has a responsibility to recognize and acknowledge the existence of Hashem. Therefore, if, after years, he discovers that, due to his unawareness of Torah and *mitzvos*, he has transgressed unintentionally – he must atone for his actions. We should not wait until the "foot" is pressed down on our livelihood to acknowledge Who our true benefactor is.