

"And the iron flies from the wood and finds his fellow man and he dies, he shall flee to one of these cities and live." (19:5)

The unintentional murderer was required to flee for the safety of his life to one of the designated cities of refuge. In *Parashas Masei*, the *Torah* states that the murderer was to remain within the confines of the city until the death of the *Kohen Gadol*. If the murderer were to leave the city prior to the *Kohen Gadol's* death, he may have been killed by his victim's closest kinsman.

The *Mishnah in Makkos 2:7* states that the *Kohen Gadol's* mother would provide food and drink for the exiled murderer, so that he would not pray for her son's death. Indeed, the *Talmud* explains that the *Kohen Gadol* was held partially accountable for the inadvertent death of the victim and the murderer's subsequent exile. The responsibility of a *Torah* leader is all encompassing. Had the *Kohen Gadol* prayed with increased fervor for *Klal Yisrael's* welfare, this incident might not have occurred.

Horav Y.Z. Segal, z.l., notes the importance of a *Torah* leader's communal responsibility. The potential effectiveness of the exiled murderer's prayers is indicated by the fact that the *Kohen Gadol's* mother sought the opportunity to prevent their being offered. This observation is magnified with the awareness of the type of person the sinner is. What kind of self-indulgent individual would pray for the *Kohen Gadol's* death, so that he could leave the city of refuge? Nonetheless, the sinner's sordid prayers could have had an influence upon the *Kohen Gadol's* life. Heightened responsibility accompanies his exalted position.

Indeed, as *Horav Segal* notes, it is difficult to understand how preventing the sinner's prayers would have saved the *Kohen Gadol*. Was his life hanging in the balance of the sinner's prayers?

He explains that by nature the sinner sought the *Kohen Gadol's* demise. He controlled his prayers only in deference to the *Kohen Gadol's* mother. Consequently, it was the *Kohen Gadol's* mother's effort which helped him to overcome his predisposed evil inclination. This accomplishment served as a great source of merit for the *Kohen Gadol*. Such is the power of *imrv*, *ahcf*, control of one's natural desires.

We glean two important lessons from this. It is our personal and collective obligation to care for those who are in need. Those who are suffering, regardless of the source of the affliction, must be sustained and comforted. We should also seek to improve our interpersonal relationships by restraining ourselves whenever our actions might be harmful to others. Perhaps through this reciprocal awareness, we will merit to see an end to all our suffering with the advent of *Moshiach*.