

## **But for one who had not lain in ambush and G-d caused it to come to his hand, I shall provide you a place to which he shall flee. (21:13)**

The *Torah* grants the unintentional murderer the dispensation of fleeing to one of the *Arei Miklat*, Cities of Refuge, where he is protected from the close relatives of the victim. In his *Igeres Ha'Mechaber* the *Sefer Ha'Chinuch* distinguishes between the various *mitzvos* that we are obliged to fulfill. We must perform some *mitzvos* only under certain conditions; all Jews are commanded to perform other *mitzvos* at all times. There are two hundred and seventy of the latter *mitzvos*, of which forty-eight are *mitzvos asei*, positive *mitzvos*. The remaining two hundred twenty-two are *mitzvos lo sa'asei*, negative commandments. Of these *mitzvos*, only six are applicable every day, every minute of one's existence. They are: belief in the Almighty; the prohibition against believing in any deity other than Hashem; *yichud* Hashem, the oneness of Hashem; loving Him; fearing Him; and the prohibition against following what the mind thinks and the eyes see. The symbol of these six *mitzvos* are the six *Arei Miklat* which are available to protect a person.

The *Sefer Ha'Chinuch* apparently sees a common denominator between the ability of the Cities of Refuge to protect a person from physical harm and power of the *mitzvos* which protect one's *neshamah*, soul. *Horav Elimelech Moller, Shlita*, explains that those *mitzvos temidios*, constant *mitzvos*, which focus basically upon our belief in, and love of, Hashem serve as an island of serenity and succor for the Jewish soul.

The *Sefer Ha'Chinuch* suggests a reason that the *arei ha'Leviim*, cities in which the *Leviim* lived, were selected to be cities of refuge. The sublime level of *yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven, and devotion to *Torah* and *mitzvos* of the inhabitants earned them this distinction. Men of virtue and refinement, whose perspective on life has been influenced by *Torah*, will not show animus towards the unintentional murderer. Nothing will deter these people from their commitment to Hashem. Thus, they will carry out His will to love His children - even when they have erred. They will not hate the unintentional murderer, who, for some unknown reason, was Hashem's agent to take someone's life. Rather, their love and virtue will inspire him, raise him from the depths of depression and give him courage to go on.

The *Ramban* suggests that while "Levi" is ostensibly a reference to a specific *shevet*, tribe, the underlying idea of a person totally dedicated to serving Hashem applies to all Jews. Such a person is sanctified, and Hashem becomes his portion and sanctuary. He is removed from the mundane aspect of *Olam Haze*, this temporal world, as he receives his sustenance in the same manner as the *Kohanim* and *Leviim* merit subsistence from Hashem.

Thus, we can understand how one finds true peace and serenity only through *Torah* and *mitzvos* - especially those *mitvos* that underscore one's total devotion to the Almighty.