

## Command Aharon and his sons, saying. (6:2)

The Torah begins the *parshah* with the laws concerning the *Korban Olah*, Elevation/Burnt Offering, in which the entire animal is burnt on the Altar. While the Torah introduces the laws of *korbanos* with the word *v'amarta*, "and you should say," it introduces the *Korban Olah* with the more emphatic *tzav*, "command." *Rashi* explains that this implies that the Torah is urging the *Kohanim* to be especially zealous in carrying out this service and to make a point to underscore this exhortation to future generations of *Kohanim*. Rabbi Shimon (*Kiddushin* 29a) presents an additional caveat that this exhortation is especially relevant to commandments involving a monetary loss, such as the *Korban Olah* which is wholly burnt, so that no meat is left for the *Kohanim*.

We must remember that the Torah meant this directive for Aharon, the *Kohen Gadol* and his sons – all men of righteous virtue, unparalleled integrity and humility. Furthermore, as *Chazal* (*Yoma* 17a) note, the *Kohen Gadol* was elevated over his fellow *Kohanim*. Among his attributes was the wealth which he either had or was given. Are we to suspect that such paragons of veracity and virtue were to be suspect of indolence regarding a *korban* which did not bring them a "return" for the time they expended for their service?

*Horav Yechezkel Levenstein, zl*, says yes. Regardless of one's virtue and wealth, when one incurs a loss of money, he feels a twinge of second thoughts. It is typical of human nature. No one should ever consider himself perfect and above monetary concern.

*Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl*, once went to a philanthropist to petition him for a *tzedakah* cause. They were sitting in the man's study in which he stored some serious cash. During the course of the conversation, the man left the room to attend to something. In the interim, *Rav* Yisrael immediately arose from his seat and left the room. When the man returned and noticed *Rav* Yisrael in the hall, he asked why he had left the office. *Rav* Yisrael explained that he refused to sit alone, unwatched, in a room with so much money. *Chazal* teach that a minority of Jews might fall prey to a moral lapse. Thus, we have the laws of *yichud*, prohibition of seclusion in a private area for an unmarried man and woman. Concerning the laws of financial theft, the percentage of offenders rises considerably. Understandably, the laws of *yichud*, being alone with someone else's money, should apply. *Rav* Yisrael saw that his volume of *Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat*, which deals with monetary issues, is much "thicker" than the other volumes. He was saying that he was meticulous to study every commentary, and then some. We may never forget that, at the end of the day, we are human beings, with all the weaknesses that accompany this appellation.