

If the daughter of a Kohen will be desecrated through adultery, she desecrates her father. (21:9)

The Torah explains what a tragedy truly is. A young woman, married or betrothed, commits an act of adultery. The actual act is an egregious sin in its own right, but her pedigree magnifies the sin. This woman's father is a *Kohen*, member of the Priestly family. Thus, not only does she disgrace herself, but she also humiliates and defames her father. As a result, her punishment is more harsh than if she had been the daughter of a *Yisrael*. The word *seichel* is translated as desecrated, a derivative of *challal* or *chillul*. *Seichal*, posits *Horav Shlomo Kluger, zl*, can have another meaning which is derived from the word *haschalah*, beginning/commences.

Horav Shlomo explains the *pasuk* in a novel manner. A *bas Kohen* begins her path of sin, commences her trajectory to infamy, with the sin of adultery. This is her first sin. In other words, she transitions from a nice, sweet girl who had never been in trouble to committing adultery the first time that she has veered from the straight and true path of the Torah. This is enigmatic.

Adultery is a sin of passion, a sin which reflects a moral compass that gravitates to moral turpitude. When did it happen? She seemed to have been such a good girl. She had never been in trouble. How did she so suddenly digress to such a depraved level? Furthermore, the *yetzer hora*, evil inclination, takes its time in leading a person down the path to sin. It encourages minor infractions, which, over time, become major breaches in observance. To go from zero to adultery as a first-time offense is out of "character" for the *yetzer hora*, who believes in gradual baiting in order to lure the unknowing person into sin. Therefore, it is inaccurate to suggest that this woman is a victim of the enticement of the *yetzer hora*. If she sinned so egregiously as a first-time offense, it is the result of a dysfunctional home in which her parents served as flawed role models of what Jewish parenthood should be. She is the product of their pernicious behavior.

This idea requires clarification. How can we suggest that the result of parental dysfunction is more deleterious than falling into the clutches of the *yetzer hora*? The *yetzer hora* knows it requires patient enticement, one sin at a time. Yet, the parents can produce a ruined child with the first sin. I think the answer is that the child did not just go off the *derech*, leave the fold, suddenly. It was gradual. The parents, either due to public embarrassment or plain incompetence, however, covered up their child's misstep until it became so intense that she committed adultery. In such a scenario, the *yetzer hora* enlisted the services of the inept, self-absorbed parents to do its work.