

בשבת



PARSHAS
VAYIKRA

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DON'T LEAD ME TO SIN

Parshas Vayikra introduces the subject of *korbanos*, including what types there are, and when to bring them. Amongst these is the *chatas*, the offering brought after an accidental *aveirah*. Before discussing the general populace, the Torah first discusses people in positions of power. The first subject is the *Kohen Gadol*, and then the narrative turns to *Sanhedrin*, and what to do if the nation sins because of an erroneous ruling on their part.¹

In both of these scenarios, the Torah introduces the subject with, "If so-and-so were to sin..." However, there is a third character discussed as well. This is the leader of *Klal Yisrael*, one in a position of governmental power.² He, too, has a special sacrifice to bring if he were to sin. However, the language is markedly different — instead of using the conditional "if" the Torah uses the more absolute "when," as if it is inevitable that the leader of *Klal Yisrael* will sin.

Rabbeinu Bachya³ (1255–1340) highlights this nuance and agrees with the implication — the leader of *Klal Yisrael* is extremely likely to sin, to the point where it can be considered a done deal. And why is this? Because the position brings with it the difficult challenge of pride and arrogance. And once one is arrogant, there is a much greater chance they will sin, more than one who is not prideful.

What is truly amazing about this explanation is that the Torah includes any and every leader of *Klal Yisrael*. Though some of the Jewish nation's kings might have been less than excellent, some were true *tzadikim*, even *nevi'im*! *Shaul HaMelech*, for example, was exceedingly humble,⁴ yet he is also included in this statement.

The trait of arrogance is poison for the soul, slowly twisting and distorting one's values until they no longer are able to discern right from wrong. Everyone is susceptible, no one is immune. For the greatest amongst us, it was a guarantee that they would at least accidentally sin — but for the rest of us, who knows?

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

Arrogance is an insidious ailment, one that may be hard to discern and harder to treat. Are there any practical approaches one can take to help oneself mitigate one's hubris?

A beautifully elegant approach is mentioned by R' Shlomo Wolbe.¹ He suggests that a person use their *tefillah* to work on their arrogance.

Davening is filled with deference to and reverence for Hashem. If one were to focus on the words and take them to heart, it would naturally wear away the layers of pride that one may have.

As one recognizes the absolute greatness of Hashem and, by comparison, how ridiculous arrogance truly is, they will be less likely to act towards others with the disdain and pretension that arrogance would normally cause.

Additionally, they would be less likely to do *aveiros*, after all, who can sin when one feels such devotion to Hashem?

1 *Alei Shur*, Vol. II, pg. 310

1 *Vayikra* 4:1-21

2 *Vayikra* 4:22-26

3 *Vayikra* 4:22 s.v. אשר נשיא

4 *Rashi* on *Shmuel* 10:16 and 10:22

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**It is hard to understand how
anyone can reach any level of truth
without the study of Mussar. - R'
Chatzkel Levenstein, Ohr Yechezkel, Letter**

SOME TECHNICAL HELP

“Ok, what’s next on the agenda?” asked Yossi* as he looked down at his paper. It was the quarterly meeting, the one where the faculty hunkered down for hours on end, over two days, where the *yeshiva’s* next steps were carefully planned.

Everything was discussed, from fundraising to attendance. “Here we are — we need to discuss morning *seder*. It seems that there is a hole that needs to be filled. We have some *bochrim* who can use some guidance, and would really appreciate the additional help, not to mention the personal attention. However, we aren’t ready to hire another *rebbe*, so... any suggestions?”

The *Rosh Hayeshiva* sat there, stroking his beard, while the head of IT looked out the window. The room was silent as the question hung heavy in the air. Each member of the faculty had gone through this very *yeshiva* themselves, and despite their different roles, each one felt a personal commitment to help every student as best as they could.

Finally, some discussion ensued, with tentative suggestions proposed and rejected. Nothing seemed likely to succeed, and the question remained.

Finally, the *Rosh Hayeshiva*, Rabbi Bess, turned to Zev Braun with his eyebrows raised. “What about you, Zev? Do you want to do it?” Zev stifled a laugh. Rabbi Binyomin Bess and Zev Braun were actually classmates many years ago, but Zev had gone into the field of computers, while Rabbi Bess had stayed many more years in *yeshiva*. In fact, he never left.

“Yes, you! If I recall correctly, you were one of the top guys in *shiur* when we were there. I think you can do it. And didn’t you have some experience doing this, as well?”

Once the suggestion was out in the open, the rest of the faculty jumped in. Despite his protestations, Zev knew in his heart that it was the right thing to do. He was the man for the job, and if he would not step in, what would happen to these precious *talmidim*?

“And don’t worry about the computers, Zev. We can work something out, either compensation for this, or less hours for that. But as of now, consider yourself the newest *Rosh Chaburah!*”

“Please don’t call me that,” Zev said quietly. He didn’t feel like a *Rosh* anything. He was the IT guy, and was happy to be so. He didn’t want any title, even something as trivial as *Rosh Chaburah*.

Rabbi Bess was surprised. Though not brash, Zev wasn’t usually shy, but he suddenly seemed extremely bashful.

“Certainly. We don’t have to call you that, but what should we...”

“*Chaburah* Guy,” stated Yossi, with a smirk.

And *Chaburah* Guy it was.

**Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

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DID YOU KNOW?

- When the great and humble Hillel felt slight stirrings of arrogance, it was enough to cause him to forget some of his Torah knowledge.¹
- The ability of the *Bnei Beseira* to relinquish the role of leader to Hillel in recognition of Hillel’s erudition was a feat that *Reb Yehuda HaNasi* declared would not be able to be repeated.²

¹ *Pesachim* 62b

² *Bereishis Rabbah* 33:3