

Parshat Vayikra (תש"פ): Gone Mad

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אֲשֶׁר נָשִׂיא יִחַטָּא וְעָשָׂה אַחַת מִכָּל־מִצְוֹת ה' אֲלֵקִיו אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂינָהּ בְּשִׁגְגָה וְאִשָּׁם (ויקרא ד:כב)

When the Nasi sins by inadvertently doing something Hashem his G-d commanded against, that he should not do neither mistakenly nor intentionally (Vayikra 4:22)

The posuk describing the protocol for when the נָשִׂיא sins uses the unique language “אֲשֶׁר,” a word that is not found in other contexts for people who sin. Rashi points out that אֲשֶׁר is the same lashon as “אשרי,” or happy. Rashi goes on: the generation that has a נָשִׂיא, the political leader, who brings a *korban* for when he inadvertently sins is lucky! The generation with a leader who seeks atonement for his accidental sins is quite fortunate.

The Gur Aryeh explains this Rashi -- it is quite obvious that this נָשִׂיא is not ashamed to admit his sins. This נָשִׂיא does not say, “I am a great and important person who has been appointed to such a position! How could I admit that I have sinned?” Instead, this נָשִׂיא is a humble עניו who does not hold himself in lofty esteem, and his constituents are lucky.

In modern terminology, the Menachem Tzion elaborates on this posuk and on Rashi -- the generation spoken about is democratic, and the only merit of the נָשִׂיא is that he was chosen by the people. Democracy limits him. In a case where the people were to challenge the נָשִׂיא and point out his mistakes, the נָשִׂיא would come forward to admit them. The Menachem Tzion adds that אֲשֶׁר in the posuk can be swapped out for the word אָם, as if to say אָם נָשִׂיא יִחַטָּא, *roshei teivot* of אני -- the political leader acts for his own best interest; he sees himself as the focal point of his political leadership and his political future.

We have the Covid-19 Pandemic, and we are living with such political uncertainty -- it is preposterous; quite frankly, it is ridiculous how the entire world has gone mad! Countries with incomprehensible death rates have stopped counting the dead. Who knows if China, North Korea, and many other nations are even testing their citizens or noticing the tragic losses?!

It is the time between Purim and Pesach that remains to be a נס נסתר (typical of Purim) or a נס ניגלה (prototypical of Pesach). We must say *Hashem Yirachem!* A *refuah* and the *geulah sheleima* should come to *klal yisrael* and to the entire world. *Amen V'Amen!*