



לעילוי נשמת  
ר' מנחם זאב בן ר' פנחס ע"ה הרמן  
נלב"ע כ"ה אלול ה'תשנ"ט

ולעילוי נשמת זוגתו  
מרת ח'ל' רייסא בת ר' מרדכי ע"ה  
נלב"ע יום א' דחג הסוכות ה'תשפ"ב  
ת"נ'צ"ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י  
משפחתם שיחי

# Take Responsibility

IN HONOR OF 60 YEARS SINCE THE REBBE INTRODUCING  
HIS REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING  
RASHI, 5725—5785, THIS MONTHLY COLUMN FEATURES AN  
ADAPTATION OF ONE OF THE REBBE'S "RASHI SICHOS."

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וְהוֹרְדוּ זִקְנֵי הָעִיר הַהוּא אֶת־הָעֵגְלָה אֶל־  
נַחַל אֵיתָן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִעֲבֹד בוֹ וְלֹא יִזְרַע  
וְעִרְפוּ־שָׁם אֶת־הָעֵגְלָה בְּנַחַל: (דברים כא, ד)

"אָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא: תֵּבֵא עֵגְלָה בֵּת שְׁנֵתָה שְׁלֹא  
עִשְׂתָּה פְרוֹת וְתַעֲרַף בְּמָקוֹם שְׂאִינֹ עוֹשֶׂה פְרוֹת, לְכַפֵּר  
עַל הַרִיגָתוֹ שֶׁל זֶה שְׁלֹא הִנִּיחוּהוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת פְרוֹת."

And the elders of that city shall bring the calf down to a rugged valley, which was neither tilled nor sown, and there in the valley, they shall decapitate the calf.

"The Holy One, blessed be He, said: Let a calf in its first year, which has not produced offspring, come and have its neck broken in a location that produces no yield, to atone for the killing of this person, which prevented him from producing offspring."

One can ask:

1. We know that Rashi's purpose with his *pirush* on Chumash is to explain the literal meaning of the *pesukim*. How does this statement of Rashi help us to better understand the *possuk*?

2. What is the meaning of the unusual introduction, "The Holy One, blessed be He, said"? Was not every word in the Torah uttered by Hashem?!

The answer is as follows:

Rashi is addressing a fundamental question regarding the general concept of *egla arufa*:

The idea of taking an animal's life as a means of atonement appears in the Torah many times, and is invariably linked to the Beis Hamikdash. The most common instance of this is a *korban*, brought as atonement, which is slaughtered and sacrificed inside the Beis Hamikdash. Even the *sa'ir hamishtale'ach* (the goat taken to the wilderness on Yom Kippur) and *para aduma*—whose procedures take place *outside* the Beis Hamikdash—maintain a direct connection to the Beis Hamikdash: The Kohen Gadol places his hands on the goat and says *viduy* in the Beis Hamikdash courtyard, and the *para aduma* is slaughtered



and burned facing the Beis Hamikdash.

The *mitzva* of *egla arufa*, however, in which the life of the animal is taken as an atonement (“Grant **atonement** for your people Yisroel... [Thus] the blood [guilt] will be **atoned** for them” (Devarim 21:8)), stands out. Unlike any of the above-cited instances, the *egla arufa* requires neither *shechita* nor blood-sprinkling; it is killed neither in nor near the Beis Hamikdash; there is no presence of a *mizbe'ach*, and it does not require the involvement of a *kohen*.

In order to address this seeming inconsistency, Rashi quotes these words of Chazal (“*The Holy One, blessed be He, said: Let a calf in its first year, which has not produced offspring... to atone for the killing of this person, which prevented him from producing offspring*”) in order to convey to us that, indeed, the process of this *mitzvah* is an unusual one relative to what we know from the rest of the Torah. This is also expressed in the unusual introduction, “*The Holy One, blessed be He, said...*”: Hashem is introducing a new type of atonement; one that is, in fact, different than all others and not linked to the Beis Hamikdash. The reason being that this is a *mitzvah* whose procedure is specifically designed to mirror the act of the criminal: “*Let a calf in its first year, which has not produced offspring, come and have its neck broken in a location that produces no yield, to atone for the killing of this person, which prevented him from producing offspring.*”



Torah is eternal. Therefore, the lesson that can be learnt from the *mitzvah* of *egla arufa* must be one that can be applied to all Yidden, in all places and at all times.

The lesson is:

We are talking about a situation in which an individual

is found lifeless in a field. One can argue, “The Gemara says, ‘There is no death without sin.’ As well, this is a person “who has not produced ‘*peiros*’”; i.e. he had no Torah and *mitzvos* to shield him from harm. Additionally, if such a thing happened to him, it must have been decreed from Above. So what do I have in common with such an individual that I should get involved in this whole business?”

The same argument can also be made when encountering an individual who is spiritually “lifeless.” Whose fault is it that he is in this state? It was *he* who chose to remain in a spiritually toxic environment (“field”) and not in an environment of holiness and purity (“city”). So why do those living in a “city” surrounded by *yirei shomayim* have to leave it and deal with such a person...?

The Torah teaches us that, indeed, every Yid is responsible for every other Yid. Which is why the elders of the Beis Din need to announce, “We did not see him and [then] let him go off without food and without escort” (Rashi, 21:7): “Food” is Torah, and “escort” refers to *mitzvos* which escort a person on their journey through the “field” of *galus*.

### Takeaway:

Elul is a time when the King of all kings is “in the field,” and accessible to every single Yid—no matter their spiritual standing. We, too, must go out into the “field,” and assist every single Yid in revealing their *neshama*.

(Adapted from *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 24, p. 121)