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WHY IS IT SO HARD TO SAY, "I AM SORRY"?! PARSHAS VAYIKRAH

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The following is an excerpt from the Reader's Digest dated September 15, 2017. Similar stories can be said about friends, spouses, and family. **How sad it is when we make a mistake but are too proud to admit it.** People have suffered years of misery, estranged from loved ones whom they truly care about, because of their inability to admit their mistakes and say, "I am sorry".



"Years ago, I had a falling out with a friend due to a misunderstanding that was completely my fault. I was afraid to admit that I was wrong, so we didn't speak for years. Then we bumped into each other and decided to meet for lunch. It was so pleasant that we kept meeting. After two or three meals together, I felt compelled to apologize for my transgression years earlier".

**"When a ruler
sins... in
error...."
(Vayikrah 4:22)**

explains that the word "when" - "asher", signifies the word "ashrei" which means fortunate or praiseworthy. The pasuk is saying, fortunate is the generation whose leader brings an atonement (a sacrifice to Hashem) for a sin that he does in error.

They lost the benefit of their friendship for so many years. Many are not so fortunate and pass away after a life of sadness of relationships lost. If only they would have had the courage to apologize! Admitting to a mistake and apologizing is not easy, but it is so worthwhile!

The pasuk also adds the extra word "elokav", his G-D, indicating that the leader who admits his error has greatness and a special relationship with Hashem (**according to the Radak in Shmuel 1; 15:15**).

If a relationship is important enough to you, you may even choose to take the initiative to be the one to say, "I am sorry". In so doing, you are saving that close and meaningful connection.

Why was it considered so special for a leader to repent for a sin done in error? You would think that it would be easy for a great person to want to get atonement for his sin! **HaRav Henach Leibowitz zt"l answered** that it is very difficult for any person, even a great person, to admit that he sinned or that he made a mistake. Even admitting a small mistake that was done in error, is difficult. **The Maharal from Prague**, in his commentary the Gur Aryeh, adds a further insight. When a leader admits he sinned it is a sign of his humility. He doesn't feel that he is too great to admit that he had sinned. Since he is not arrogant, he is more apt to be a gentle leader to his people. Fortunate is the generation whose leaders are humble and won't lord excessively over their people.

Our parsha discusses the sacrifices brought if different people sin in error. "If" the anointed kohen sins; "If" the Sanhedrin (the high court of 70) sins; "If" any person sins; and "When" the Nasi (leader) sins. Why does the Torah change the wording and not say "If" the Nasi sins? **Rashi**

**Admitting a mistake is not an easy thing to do. It requires humbleness and courage.
Yet it can spare you from untold sadness. Remember, it is never too late to say, "I am sorry".**

Rabbi Yaakov Finestone is the director of JEP Queens. For almost 50 years JEP Queens has been in the forefront of kiruv. JEP has changed the lives of thousands of Jewish children enrolled in public schools and kiruv schools. Many are shomrei Torah and mitzvos today because of JEP.

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