**\*Miller’s Musings פרשת** **שְּׁמִינִי\***

**\*The Blame Game\***

Minor technical hitches are part and parcel of any great endeavour.  But when the whole nation is waiting for the Presence of Hashem to manifest itself in the Mishkan, it would surely be a cause of tremendous discomfort.  So when all the necessary actions have been performed and Hashem still delays His appearance in the Mishkon, Aharon begins to fear that there is something preventing this occurrence, that something being himself.  But how does Aharon know that his involvement in the sin of the golden calf is the impediment to G-d’s descent rather than anyone else amongst the Jewish people?  In fact why does he not conclude that it is the entire nation’s terrible error of judgement that has caused the obstruction, rather than the noble, albeit to some extent faulty, intentions of one man?

In former times, when the Jewish people faced some tragedy, or when dangers such as famine, befell them, the communities would assemble within their town to plead with Hashem for forgiveness and by doing so evoke shame for the sins that had led to the catastrophe. Yet in reality why would it be that any individual would look to themselves as the cause of the misfortune?  Could it not be that each one would point to everyone else, laying the blame at their door?  The answer to both our questions, as elucidated by R’ Yerucham Leibovitz zt’l, is that a person’s first reaction, where some guilt must be established, should always be to look at oneself.  Yes, it is true that there may be others that may be logically responsible, but our own function in this situation is to consider where **we** could have been at fault and what **we** can do about it.

When things go awry and everyone is searching for someone to ascribe blame to, it is only natural that we immediately look everywhere else but at ourselves. This however is not the way it should be.  If there is some culpability that needs to be apportioned to someone, it must begin with introspection rather than a scrutiny of others.  This is of course contrary to our instinctive urge to deflect any criticism away from us, maintaining the positive image to ourselves and to those we seek approval from.  Nonetheless, a person of truth, secure in their own self-worth and interested in real growth, rather than spurious aggrandisement, will know that the place to begin is always within.

\*May the purity of Shabbos encourage meaningful self-reflection\*

לעילוי נשמת לאה בת אברהם

לרפואה שלימה:  שרה יעל בת ברכה אסתר