**Miller’s Musings** **פרשת**אַחֲרֵי מוֹת

Transgressions are bad.  That much is clear.  But there are varying degrees of sins with varying degrees of consequences, all dependent on many factors such as one’s intentions and the impact of said deed.  When speaking about the expiation for such misdeeds, our Parsha says “And he shall bring atonement…from their rebellions and all their intentional sins”, seemingly listing the more serious type, a rebellion against Hashem, before the less grave one, that done in error.  Surely, this is the wrong way round, being that the worse misdemeanour would be harder to atone for?  If he atones for that, then certainly he would atone for the lesser one!

Despite what some may think, the Yetzer Horah is employed by Hashem and is there to provide free will by trying to manipulate our every action against G-d’s will.  To achieve this it must use its cunning and does so by only attacking us where it knows it has a chance of success.  To ask us to commit a sin of massive proportions is an exercise in futility, but to begin by enticing us towards making an error of judgment is achievable.  And so the Yetzer Horah’s scheme begins, little by little, adding one more layer of severity of sin each time it manages to lure us into temptation.  This, says the Oruch Hashulchan, is why the mistaken sins are listed after the rebellious ones, to divulge the cause of it all.  It is stating that our rebellions are rooted in their inception, when we first began to commit the most trivial of sins, only due to a lack of focus, which led to a lapse in observance.  Having fallen once, it is now easier for us to fall again until we defy entirely the will of Hashem.

Every mitzvah, however small, that we accomplish has infinite value, but conversely each sin we perpetrate has an inestimable cost.  This is not just because of the damage caused by that transgression, but because once committed, may lead us down the path to greater and more extreme infractions.  There are none that have never erred, but there can be a temptation to use this as an excuse to let this lead us into indifference about ‘smaller’ negative acts, when as we have seen the implications of such neglect can be both ruinous and far reaching.   The Yetzer Horah is devious and, given the chance, will steer us towards our downfall.  His job is to force us on to a slippery slope, ours is to never set foot on it.

May the Shabbos protect us from all that would deflect us.

לעילוי נשמת לאה בת אברהם