

The second verse of this week's Parsha introduces the laws of the Korban Olah with the following verse. "Tzav et Aharon V'Et Banav Leimor, Zot Torat HaOlah – Command Aaron and his sons saying these are the laws of the Olah offering." Rashi explains that the expression Tzav always denotes urging, to promptly and meticulously fulfill a particular commandment for the present and also for future generations. Rashi then closes with a final thought, "Rabbi Shimon taught: Scripture especially needs to urge people to fulfill the commandments when there is a Chisaron Kis, a monetary loss." Although, it certainly is understandable that when money is involved people need the extra exhortation, as the temptation for the dollar is quite strong, the Gerrer Rebbe, Rabbi Yitzchok Meir Alter, understands R. Shimon to mean something entirely different.

The Rebbe explains that the word Kis has a double meaning; it can mean wallet or purse as is the simple meaning in Rabbi Shimon's statement, but it can also mean a covering or a protective layer. The Rebbe points out that biologically our human body is constructed in such a fashion that we were given built in safety nets to protect ourselves from outside elements. Our eyes were created with eyelids to close them so we don't see things that we should not see. Our ears were similarly fashioned in such a fashion that we can close them to things that we should not hear. Obviously our mouth has the ability open and close on command. The message of these anatomic irregularities is that most of our actions are controllable. It is completely up to us what we choose to see, hear, and do. We decide what food we will put into our mouths and what words will come out of it. Yet, there is one human function that is very difficult for us to control and that is our thought process. The harder we try to not think about something, the more likely we are to think about it. Our thoughts often are uncontrollable and challenging to monitor.

It is because of this Chisaron Kis, lack of covering on our minds, leaving our precious thought processes open to outside influences, and difficult to monitor that we require the extra exhortation of the word Tzav. It is precisely for this reason that Torah even instituted a Korban Olah. If one sins in deed he is required to offer a Korban Chatas, a sin offering to atone for his wrongdoing. Yet, one does not offer a sin offering for sins committed completely in the mind. However, the Midrash tells us that the Olah offering is precisely the remedy for such errors of the mind. Therefore, the word Tzav is specifically chosen here as introduction to the Olah offering to remind us that as there is no Kis, no natural covering for the wandering mind and we are often unable to control our thoughts we must be extra diligent in protecting its honor and integrity, as the UNCF famous slogan reminds us, "The mind is a terrible thing to waste."

Shabbat Shalom,

**Rabbi Meir Tannenbaum
Assistant Principal/Judaic Programming**

