



The Joy of Torah - For Life

Parshas Achrei Mos/Kedoshim - Sensitivity to Animals!

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The pasuk in Vayikra 17:4 states, "דָּם יַחֲטֵב לְאִישׁ הֵהוּא דָּם שְׂפָה". "The blood shall be considered to the man himself; he has spilled blood." According to the Chezkuni, this means that one who slaughters an animal outside of the azarah is considered to have spilled blood that should have been sprinkled on the mizbeach before Hashem, making killing the animal a main reason for this severe punishment.

It is important to note that before Noach, killing animals was prohibited, but after Noach, it became permissible for humans to consume them. However, the Torah here is teaching us that an animal that is designated as a korban does not have the full permissibility that exists for an animal not designated for a korban.

One might have thought that the primary reason for the punishment of kareis is the fact that the person committed shechutei chutz on an animal that should have been brought as a korban to Hashem, and that the person who committed this act is in direct violation of not listening to Hashem's commandments. However, it is surprising to learn that a main reason why shechutei chutz is punished with kareis is because it demonstrates a lack of sensitivity towards the life of an animal.

If the Torah is concerned with the sensitivity of an animal, how much more so are we obligated to be concerned with the sensitivity of a fellow human being, who is created in the image of G-d. We should strive to treat others with kindness, respect, and dignity, and follow Hashem's commandments in all aspects of our lives, especially in our interactions with our fellow Jews.