



by Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple z"l

## **PRINCES WHO TRANSGRESS**

The Torah refers to a NASI, a prince, committing a sin (Vayikra 4:27).

A Chassidic teacher asks, "How can anyone imagine a prince, a leader of the community, committing a transgression?"

He answers his question by quoting the whole Hebrew phrase, ASHER NASI YECHETA, the initials of which read ANI - "I". If a leader's ego gets hold of his personality he begins to think only of himself and his own advantage.

No-one should enter upon leadership for personal status or benefit. He should never say, "I want to be a leader because I want to be famous, important, rich or powerful." Leadership is only genuine if it is a means of serving the cause and the community.

The moment a leader realises that he is thinking of "I" and not "us", he should step down and resign.

## **STOLEN GOODS**

Rashi emphasises the word ADAM, a man, at the beginning of the sidra (Vayikra 1:2) when the Torah speaks of "any man of you" who offers a sacrifice to God.

ADAM is not only "a man"; it is the name of the first human being. Says Rashi, "Adam did not offer a sacrifice of anything stolen since everything was his; similarly when you bring an offering to God it must not be something which was stolen".

There is a verse in Y'shayahu that probably inspires this comment, 61:8, which says that God "hates robbery in offerings". The person who wants to show God how much he loves Him may be tempted to take something which isn't his and bring it to the sanctuary.

What we are being told by the Navi, Rashi and Jewish tradition as a whole, is that your religiosity is no excuse for acting unethically.

A modern example might be a person who acquires assets by questionable means and seeks to whitewash himself by using them for a big donation to the synagogue.

Maybe he thinks no-one will ever find out, but he has forgotten that God sees and notes everything... and if

God cannot possibly condone the act of dishonesty that lies behind the donation, the putative donor dare not quieten his conscience and imagine that the end justifies the means. -OZ

**Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH**