

## A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

## Coming Closer

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HASHEM CALLED OUT TO MOSHE RABBEINU IN *loshon chiba*, the language of affection, says Rashi. Ramban says this calling became the way that Hashem would summon Moshe.

Why is it expressed here, the very first words of *Vayikra*? Looking with eyes from the outside it seems strange; the entrance to a slaughter house? The whole concept of *karbanos* (sacrifices) seems foreign. Yet it is here that Hashem asks Moshe to come close and sets forth ways in which we, Adam, not just Jews, can come close to Hashem.

Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch explains that the root of the word *korban* is "to come close," that what is offered up is that which is already dead in order for that which is always living to rise up into presentness and come before Hashem.


The world teaches man to look at our problems and challenges as things that come upon us from the outside, and the language of prophesy that comes to Bilaam is *vayikar*, to happen upon him. The Torah teaches us that we can be more if we have the courage to look inwards, to "*mal* (circumcise) the foreskin of our hearts" to cut away that calloused covering we erect to defend against the hurt and pain that life brings us.

We know somewhere deep inside when we've done wrong, strayed from the path and Hashem calls out to us in words of affection and all we need to answer is *hineini*, here I am.

When we've looked deep and brought forth the courage to confront our own actions, we're ready to come close. Hashem gave us a mechanism, a symbol of that which in ourselves needs to be discarded so our *neshamas* can soar heavenward. As in an *Olah*, which Rav Hirsch explains means to elevate ourselves we have the choice of bringing a *bakar*, from the cow family, or *tzone*, from the sheep. Rav Hirsch says that the *bakar* represents the element in man that strives to serve his Master and *tzone* represents our being shepherded by Hashem.

When we look in that mirror and see we haven't lived up to our mission, we choose *bakar*. When we haven't nullified our will sufficiently before the *Ribono Shel Olam*, we bring a *tzone*.

We no longer have the *Beis Hamikdash*, we no longer can bring a representation of ourselves to offer upon the *Mizbeach*, but we still have *tefillah*. In fact, we can go where no one but the *Kohen Gadol* could enter. As Rav Shimon Schwab explains, our goal in *tefillah* is to see ourselves entering the *Beis Hamikdash*, by the time we come to *Shemoneh Esrei* we should be inside the *Kodesh Kodashim*. As we say *Melech, Ozer, Moshia u'Magen* we should be in front of the *Aron HaKodesh*.

May we offer ourselves up to the *Ribono Shel Olam*, and through our *ma'asim tovim* (good actions) and *tefillah* come ever closer to Hashem. 

## THE RABBI WAS ASKED

ADAPTED BY RABBI DOVID TZVI MEISSNER FROM  
ME'AH SHE'ARIM BY RABBI YITZCHOK ZILBERSTEIN

**Q** If one sends *mishloach manos* with a monkey, does he fulfill the mitzvah?

**A** The Satmar Rebbe once told a student not to feel insulted if someone were to deliver *mishloach manos* to him dressed up like a monkey, because one would even be able to send them with a real monkey! The student asked, "is that really true?!" The Satmar Rebbe answered him that indeed the Chasam Sofer writes that himself! The student looked through the writings of the Chasam Sofer related to Purim and he couldn't find that *halacha*.

He returned to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe told him that this is in the Chasam Sofer's writings on the Talmud (*Gittin* 22b). He writes there that when the Torah says to do a *mitzvah* initially by one's self, there are instances where he can appoint a messenger to act on his behalf. In those cases, the messenger must be competent like himself. However, when *halacha* states that one may perform a *mitzvah* initially with a messenger (e.g. *mishloach manos*), the messenger need not be competent, and it can even be a monkey.


Likewise, Shu"t Yehuda Yaaleh (O.C. 207) explains that the mitzvah of *mishloach manos* differs from other mitzvos. Whereas other mitzvos should preferably be done one's self, this mitzvah may be done through others, and perhaps it's more preferable in that fash-

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## A PARASHA Q 4 U

RABBI DOVID SPETNER

What *d'oraisa* (biblical) *kashrus* law that applies today is derived from this week's *parasha*?

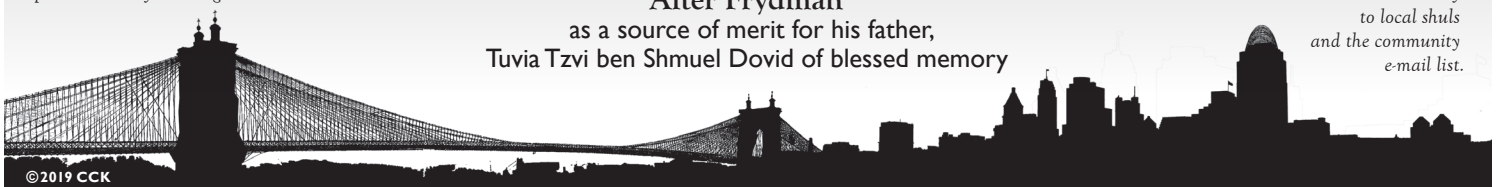
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## THE RABBI WAS ASKED

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ion, for the purpose of *mishloach manos* is to foster closeness and friendship to others, and sending through a messenger is honorable.

However, if a respected person were to be insulted if one were to send him *mishloach manos* with his child dressed up as a monkey, perhaps he wouldn't fulfill the *mitzvah*. As we mentioned, the purpose of *mishloach manos* is to engender closeness and friendship (see *Manos Halevi Esther 9,19*), and here, the opposite was accomplished. 📖

## GLIMPSES OF THE KOLLEL

## PURIM NIGHT LEARNING

The Kollel Beis Medrash fills to capacity each Purim night for interactive learning of Purim related topics. Many sets of chavrusos [Torah-study partners] can be heard debating the nuances of the source material provided by the Kollel. Others learn in small groups facilitated by the chevrei Kollel [Kollel faculty].



## GREAT ACTS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

JOE HOROWITZ AND HERSHEL GOLD WERE BOTH ELECTRICIANS WHO LIVED IN THE SAME NEIGHBORHOOD of Brooklyn. Joe was a union man and made a nice living, while Hershel never joined the union and had a hard time paying the bills. Joe and Hershel were friendly acquaintances as they *davened* in the same *shul* and would occasionally walk back and forth from their homes together. Unfortunately, Hershel took sick and eventually passed away. Joe went to visit Hershel's family while they sat *shiva* and, never having been inside Hershel's home before, never realized how poor Hershel had been. Joe left and brought back a car full of groceries and dropped them off at the Golds. Then throughout the *shiva* he returned every day with another car load until they were stocked up with several months' worth of food. After the *shiva* ended, Mrs. Gold called Joe and told him that their basement was full of tools and electrical equipment that Hershel had collected over the years and he was welcome to take them all for \$100. Joe went down to their basement and assessed how much stuff was down there and then spent several days organizing everything there. He then called any and all of his business associates and told them about a sale of tools that would be worth their while to check out. The day of the sale came, and Joe sold off all of Hershel's tools, giving the proceeds to the Golds. Mrs. Gold could not believe it. \$100 had turned into more than \$3,000. 📖

## BEYOND ELLIS ISLAND

### THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

One of the greatest Torah scholars to call America home, albeit for a relatively short time, was Rabbi Yaakov Dovid Willowsky. Also known by the acronym Ridvaz, he completed a landmark commentary on the entire Jerusalem Talmud (as opposed to the more commonly learned Babylonian Talmud) in the year 1900. The completion of this commentary is actually what brought Rabbi Willowsky to America for the first time in order to raise money to print copies of the Jerusalem Talmud with his commentary. He visited all the major American cities and in 1903 accepted an offer for the Rabbinate of Chicago. His time in Chicago was marked by much controversy, both regarding his authority over the community and his authority over the Kashrus supervision of the giant meat processing companies of Chicago. The Ridvaz did not last there a year, and in the summer of 1904 he left Chicago, eventually moving to Tzfas in Israel. While he was in America, he published a work on the *Chumash* entitled *Nimukey Ridvaz*, which in the introduction gives his perspective on the dire state of Jewish life in America and, indeed, highlights the tremendous accomplishment of those leaders who did stay in America. 📖

SOURCE: Rakeffet-Rothkoff, Aaron. "The Silver Era." pp.35-36. Feldheim, 1981.

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