

“Command Aharon.” (6:2)

In general, the Torah introduces the commandments regarding the *korbanos* with the less emphatic term, *amarta*, say (1:2), or *daber*, speak (4:2). Regarding the *Korban Olah*, Elevation/Burnt offering, the command is emphasized with the word *tzav*, command. *Chazal* explain that the *Kohanim* are being urged to be especially zealous in performing this service and to reiterate its significance to future generations. Rabbi Shimon adds that this exhortation is expressly applicable to commandments that involve a *chisaron kis*, monetary loss, such as the *Korban Olah*, which is entirely burnt on the Altar, leaving nothing for the *Kohanim*.

The concept of *chisaron kis* has several connotations and, indeed, the various commentators take different approaches towards interpreting it. The *Satmar Rebbe*, z.l., renders Rabbi Shimon's statement homiletically as a reference to the Torah studied by one who is in severe financial straits. What relationship is there between *chisaron kis* and *zos Toras haOlah*, “This is the Torah/law of the Elevation/Burnt offering”? *Chazal* teach us that when one studies the laws of the *korbanos*, offerings, diligently, it is considered as if he actually offered the *korban* – *k'ilu hikriv Olah*.

Chazal exhort us to be especially mindful of *bnei aniyim*, children of the poor, for from them will come forth Torah. In his commentary to the *Talmud Nedarim* 81a, the *Ran* explains that due to their financial distress, they achieve a level of erudition unrivaled by their more financially secure brethren, because they have nothing else with which to occupy their time and because they have a strong sense of humility.

This, claims the *Satmar Rebbe*, is the underlying meaning of Rabbi Shimon's statement. The Torah places greater emphasis on “the individuals” whose lives are relegated to *chisaron kis*, monetary loss. They will achieve a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the *Toras haOlah*.

What does “poor” mean? Does it indicate a lack of money? Or is it possible that one could be poor, so abjectly poor that he has nothing, yet he finds something to share with someone else? I recently read a story in *Rabbi Paysach Krohn's* latest book in the *Maggid* series that gave me a new perspective on poverty and wealth. The story is about *Reb Yisrael Klein*, z.l., a *Belzer chassid* and designated *baal korei*, Torah reader, in the *Belzer Shul*. Shortly after *Reb Yisrael* was *niftar*, passed away, and his family was sitting *shivah*, a man came in to *menachem avel*, comfort the bereaved. The following episode occurred.

The man that entered the room knew no one. He stood in the background, waiting for an opening up front, where *Reb Yisrael's* sons were sitting. He slowly went forward and took a seat at the side of one of the sons and waited to be acknowledged. He waited for a few minutes and when one of the sons looked up at him, he said, “I came here tonight out of a sense of *hakoras ha'tov* to your father. It is only because of him that I am a *frum Yid* today.

“What happened goes back many years to the dark, painful days of the Holocaust. I was a sixteen-year-old boy lost, scared and hungry, interned in the infamous Auschwitz concentration camp. I was going from garbage can to garbage can in search of whatever scraps of food I might find. I was terrified that I would die of hunger very soon if I did not get some food. As I was searching, I noticed another fellow, somewhat older than I, who was also searching from place to place. That fellow was your saintly father.

“He came over to me and asked, “What are you looking for?

Perhaps I can help.”

“I am starving,” I told him. “I need some food, anything, I do not care what it is, as long as I can eat it.”

“He looked at me forlornly and said, ‘I, too, am looking for food, but I have not succeeded in finding any.’ He then came close to me, put his arms around me and said, ‘This is what I can give you,’ he said, ‘a hug, because I love you. I love you because you are a *Yid*, and the *Ribono Shel Olam* also loves you, just because you are a *Yid*.’”

The man struggled to continue his story, momentarily stopping to dab at a tear running down his cheeks. “I went through much upheaval after that fateful day. There were moments when my faith in Hashem was challenged, and I might have given in, but I always remembered your father’s warm, loving embrace. His special words glowed within me, and they gave me support to keep on going. I eventually settled in *Eretz Yisrael*. I have led an observant lifestyle only because of your father.”

A poor man might not have money, but he still has one commodity that can never be taken away from him: himself. We do not realize that sharing warm feelings and caring words with another Jew is as important as – and in some circumstances, more important than – financial support. The right words can save a life.