

When a man among you brings an offering. (1:2)

The word *korban* is derived from *karov*, close/near. A *korban* brings us closer to Hashem. The *Navi Hoshea* (6:6) states, “For I (Hashem) wanted *chesed*, acts of lovingkindness, and not a *korban*.” *Chesed* is being presented as being on par with *korbanos*, but also as being better than *korbanos*. *Chesed* brings about atonement, but *chesed* has an advantage that exceeds the *korban* effect. *Maharal* (*Nesivos Olam/Nesiv Gemilus Chassadim*) explains that *chesed* elevates a person, granting him a higher level of spirituality, while a *korban* does not. As *Horav Tzvi Kushelevsky, Shlita*, puts it: “*Chesed* elevates a person above his natural earthliness by allowing him to emulate Hashem when he performs kindness to others.” In other words, a *korban* atones; *chesed* causes a person to grow. Furthermore, when one performs acts of *chesed*, he achieves greater connectivity with Hashem. When one connects with the Ruler of the kingdom, the forces that want to take him down desist out of fear of offending the Ruler. So, too, when one emulates Hashem by performing *chesed*, he becomes one of His people. The forces of evil and impurity leave him alone.

The *Maharal* (*Netzach Yisrael* 36) writes that one who attaches himself to Torah and *chesed* becomes untouchable. He explains that evil cannot rule over someone who is attached to consummate good. Torah is goodness in a non-physical sense, while *chesed* is goodness in a physical, tangible sense. One who pursues both—Torah and *chesed* – is impregnable. He will be spared from the *Chevlei*, birth pangs, of *Moshiach*.

The *yetzer hora*, evil inclination, encourages us to do evil because it is evil. Indeed, Hashem refers to the *yetzer hora* as evil (*Talmud Succah* 52A). *Chazal* (*Berachos* 61B) compare the *yetzer hora* to a fly. Flies gravitate to the decayed, to the decomposed, to the dirty objects. Flies are not attracted to clean, pristine objects. Evil is attracted to evil; pure good is not a magnet for evil. It actually makes sense. Evil seeks to blend in; thus, it is drawn to its own kind. It distances itself from inherent good, because it attracts too much attention.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* concludes with our mission statement: Develop your goodness; increase your Jewish identity as a Torah Jew by studying Torah and carrying out acts of lovingkindness. [Torah defines *chesed* as acts of lovingkindness that adhere to Torah guidelines. An activity might be “kind,” but still not necessarily stand under the rubric of *chesed*.]