

**Good Shabbos Everyone.** In our portion this week Vayikra, the Torah describes the various korbanos - sacrifices which were brought in the tabernacle and later in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. The root of the word korban - (sacrifice) is karov which means close. The essence of the korbanos was that they brought Jews closer to Hashem. The korbanos are sacrifices for Hashem. Our lesson this week is therefore the following: Whenever we make sacrifices for Hashem, we grow closer to Hashem and His Holiness. The following amazing and touching true story illustrates how one Jew grew closer to Hashem through an amazing "twist" of circumstances.

Our story begins shortly after the Six-Day war. A young yeshiva student, a Chassid from Australia came to visit America. One Erev Shabbos, the Australian student joined his fellow yeshiva students who went out to put on tefillin on under-affiliated Jews.

The Australian fellow, who we will call Avroham, announced that he would buy some refreshments for the road. He ran to the nearby grocery store, bought some Kosher cookies, fruit and drinks and jumped into the car with a bunch of fellows that were going to a nearby hospital and they were off. No one had eaten breakfast so he began pulling out food from his bag. But to his chagrin one thing he bought; a small box of Hamantashin (triangular cookies filled with fruit that are traditionally eaten on Purim) was avoided by everyone. Purim had passed almost three months ago! Needless to say no one even opened the box and the Hamantashin were left behind in the car untouched while they went to do the work of putting on Tefillin.

They met with much success; many of Jews in the hospital agreed to put on Tefillin, some for the first time in years, and some for the first time since they had left concentration camps in Poland. But then they came up against Max. Max must have been close to ninety and as soon as they entered his room he shouted, "What do you want here? Get out! Go jump in the lake!!" etc.

They explained that they were only asking people to put on Tefillin ....." But he didn't let them finish. "I'm just as close to G-d as you! I don't need your boxes and your rituals!! I have my own commandments. Now get out!!" And he rolled over with his back to them."

The young Chassidim didn't want to leave on such a bad note so one of them held out some of the fruit the Australian had bought and said in the most friendly way he could muster up, "Hey, no hard feelings. We're leaving, we're leaving! Okay? But maybe you'd like a piece of fruit before we leave?"

"Fruit?" The old man turned to them and scoffed. "What, you think they don't have fruit here? Why don't you bring me something good? You know what? You want me to put on Tefillin? Well then" he said mockingly, "bring me Hamantashen!! I haven't had a Hamantashen for forty years!! That's right! A Hamantashen from Purim."

He was sure that the last thing they would have was a three month old cookie. All the fellows stared silently and unbelievably at Avroham who got the hint and ran from the room like a jet.

Less than five minutes later he returned, out of breath, with the box of old Purim cookies that he had almost thrown into the garbage. The old man couldn't believe his eyes as Avroham opened the box and handed him a Hamantashen. He took it, examined it, sniffed it (it was still edible!) and even took a small bite (the fellows reminded him which blessing to make beforehand) and, for the first time in forty years, actually began to smile... !

The Chassidim broke out in a Purim song and danced. "Nu?" The old fellow said as he rolled up his sleeve. "I don't know where you got that hamantashin but you got me in a corner! Where are the Tefillin?"

It was the beginning of a long friendship. Chassidim came to visit him every day thereafter until he announced that he bought a pair of Tefillin for himself. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**