

"I have not eaten of it in (during my period of) mourning, neither have I put away while (I was) unclean, nor have I given of it to the dead." (26:14)

This seems to be a three part statement. *Horav M. Swift, z.l.*, applies this *pasuk* to three types of Jews whose distorted sense of (Jewish) values preclude their proper observance of *Torah* and *mitzvos*. The first type is the Jew whose religious life centers around his period of mourning. His observance of Judaism is manifest through his expression of grief. In modern times, *shiva* has been diminished by the "enlightened Jew" from seven days to one night. Next, we find the Jew whose mixed sense of values distorts his perspective. He can no longer discern between "*kodesh*," holy, and "*tamei*," unclean. His total devotion to charitable causes knows no bound. Unfortunately, he substitutes his enthusiasm for rational deliberation. He gives indiscriminately to all, whether or not they are *halachically* worthy of receiving *tzedakah*. There is yet a third type of Jew whose entire *Yidishkeit* is concentrated upon the dead. The funeral, monument, and hiring of a *kaddish* reciter are the cornerstones of his Jewish theology.

These three Jews do not represent the average sinner. They are committing sins due to their lack of prudence and good sense. They want to be religious, and they even think of themselves as religious, but they do not know how and when to be religious. They give *tzedakah*, but they do not know to whom to give.

The individual who comes to the *Bais Ha'mikdash* responds to these three particular weaknesses; "*I have not eaten from it during mourning.*" My period of mourning was not my prime focus of religious observance. "*I have not put it away while unclean.*" I never gave of myself and my fortune indiscriminately to all causes alike. "*And I did not give of it to the dead.*" My sentiments towards Judaism have not focused upon death. As *Horav Swift* says, a Jew must be discriminate in spiritual endeavor. The cognitive ability and objective knowledge required for this discernment is truly a blessing. Not everything which appears to be good is truly good. Likewise, bad may not be so bad after all. The guidance and direction received from our *gedolim*, *Torah* leaders, is an invaluable source of illumination for our spiritual quest.