

For you shall not cause to go up in smoke from any leavening or any fruit honey as a fire-offering to Hashem. (2:11)

Sefer HaChinuch suggests a moral lesson concerning man's service to G-d, to be derived from the prohibition against offering leaven and fruit honey. The process of leavening is slow until the dough begins to rise. Honey symbolizes sweet pleasures, the allure of physical satisfaction. Man should neither be sluggish, slothful, nor should he be obsessed with the pursuit of the sweet forbidden pleasures.

Se'or, leavening, has other offensive characteristics, including being sour, acrimonious, grudging, and discontented – and are all aspects related to *se'or*. Someone who has an angry countenance reflects a “sour” attitude towards people in particular and life in general. An angry person is an unhappy person. One should distance himself as much as possible from the *middah*, character trait, of *kaas*, anger. *Horav Yehudah Tzedakah, zl*, was wont to admonish his students concerning losing their temper and falling into the abyss of anger. Indeed, no one ever saw this great *tzaddik*, righteous person, become angry. He never “lost it” – except when he witnessed a Torah scholar be defamed. When it concerned *kavod Shomayim*, the glory of Heaven, the rules did not apply. He would chastise anyone who was disrespectful of a Torah scholar.

He would interpret this behavior into the above *pasuk*. As mentioned, *se'or* connotes a sour, angry expression. *Devash* is quite the opposite, reflecting a sweet, amicable demeanor. A person who seeks to achieve *shleimus*, perfection in character, must know when to make use of his sweet/*devash* side and when to scorn with his *se'or* expression.

Kol se'or, one who is always expressing himself in a jaundiced manner, reflecting discontent and cynicism, is incapable of serving Hashem. Likewise, the individual who is always smiling, manifesting a *devash* countenance, is also missing the mark. When the Torah is disgraced, when Torah scholars are belittled, it is not a time to keep smiling. On the contrary, this is a situation in which a *se'or* attitude is appropriate. *Se'or* and *devash* are fine at the appropriate times. It is when they are *kol*, used all of the time – when they represent a person's prevalent demeanor – that they present a serious deficiency.