

## **A satisfying aroma to Hashem. (1:9)**

The service comes to its conclusion as the aroma of the offering rises up in smoke to Hashem. This pleases Hashem because, as *Chazal* (*Sifra*, cited by *Rashi*) explain, “I have spoken, and My will has been carried out.” Hashem certainly is not into aroma, nor does He require offerings. We do not understand the esoteric rationale behind *korbanos*, offerings. We do understand, however, that when Hashem commands – we respond by executing to His will. What could be more pleasing than having one’s will carried out to perfection. Indeed, the *Talmud* (*Menachos* 110a) teaches: “The term *ishei reiach nichoach* is written concerning the burnt-offering of an animal (cattle), the burnt-offering of a fowl and the meal-offering made of flour and oil. This is to teach that, regardless what one brings as an offering, be it expensive (cattle) or little (such as the offering of a poor man, a *Korban Minchah*, meal-offering), offerings are all the same before Hashem, as long as the donor is *mechavein*, directs his heart, focuses his intention, toward Heaven/Hashem.”

In order to give the reader an understanding and appreciation of the meaning of *yechavein libo laShomayim*, “directs his heart Heavenward,” *Horav Reuven Karlinstein, zl*, relates a vignette concerning the saintly *Bobover Rebbe, zl, Horav Shlomo, zl*. When *Rav Karlinstein* was in America to receive treatment for an illness, a *Bobover chassid* who was himself very close to the *Rebbe* attended to *Rav Karlinstein*’s needs, which included traveling to various medical centers across the country. This *chassid* related that the *Rebbe* had an interesting daily custom. Almost like clockwork, every day, between the hours of four and five o’clock, the *gabbai*, aide, would bring in a plate with egg *kichel*, light cookies, of which the *Rebbe* would partake, make a *B’racha Achronah, Al Ha’michyah*, and continue with his day. The *Rebbe* insisted specifically on cookies – no fruit substitute. Indeed, one day, the *gabbai* said he had always wondered what it was about cookies that “excited” the *Rebbe*.

Shortly prior to the *Rebbe*’s passing, a close confidant of the *Rebbe* gathered up the courage to question the *Rebbe* concerning his insistence on cookies for his daily afternoon repast. The *Rebbe* was not into food. He ate very little, and he was not finicky concerning his menu, except when it concerned his afternoon cookies. “Why?” he asked. “What is so unique about these cookies that they mean so much to the *Rebbe*?”

The *Bobover* explained, “The *Bracha Achronah*, After Blessing, recited for *mezonos*, cookies and other such snack-oriented foodstuffs, is *U’nevarechcha alehah bikedushah u’vtaharah*; “and we will bless You in holiness and purity.” It is the only *brachah* of its kind; the only one in which we petition Hashem to allow us to bless Him in sanctity and purity. I cannot allow a day to pass during which I do not beseech Hashem to allow me to be worthy of this opportunity.” [In an addendum to this story, my brother-in-law, *Reb Moshe Brunner*, a staunch *Bobover chassid*, was, for all intents and purposes, a *ben bayis*, frequent guest/visitor at the *Rebbe*’s home. He observed the *Rebbe* many an afternoon, and eating cookies at 4:00 p.m. was not his usual daily tidbit. In fact, he remembers being with the *Rebbe* at 10:00 p.m. as the *Rebbetzin* came in to insist that he have dinner. The *Rebbe* responded that there were *chassidim* still waiting to be seen. He would have his

egg *kichel* instead. He had not yet blessed Hashem *b'kedushah u'be'taharah*.

*Rav Karlinstein* bemoans the fact that *Al Ha'michyah* is one of the most neglected *b'rachos*. We attend a *Kiddush* after *davening*; someone has *yahrzeit*, we grab a danish, eat and run – no *Al Ha'michyah*. We make *Havdalah*, and something comes up which requires our attention. The result is that we neglect to say *Al Ha'gefen*. When we stop to think about the implications of this *brachah* and the opportunity it affords us to offer a “satisfying aroma to Hashem,” we will think twice before neglecting this important *brachah*.