

And this is the teaching of the offering of the meal-of-peace. (7:11)

Previously (Ibid 3:1), the Torah referred to the *Korban Shelamim*, Peace-offering, as *Zevach Shelamim*, meal of peace. The *Korban Shelamim* is the only offering that carries with it the added appellation, *zevach*, meal/feast. In his commentary to *Sefer Bereishis* (46:1), *Horav S. R. Hirsch, zl*, writes that *Yaakov Avinu* was the first Patriarch to offer a *Korban Shelamim*. This was only after he heard that *Yosef HaTzaddik* was physically and spiritually safe. When the Patriarch arrived in Be'er Sheva, he was in his happiest frame of mind, having reached a zenith in his life, enabling him to leave his troubles and struggles behind him. It was now that he felt qualified to offer a *Korban Shelamim*, a *korban* which is a *zevach*, a meal, to be shared with family. The *Korban Olah* expresses complete submission to Hashem. Thus, it is completely burnt. The *Shelamim* is the only *korban* which the *baalim*, owner, eats. This offering consecrates the "family home," transforming it into a veritable sanctuary and rendering the family table an altar. A *zevach* denotes the concept that Hashem is a personal G-d. He comes to us. It is understood from that happy consciousness that in a place where the family unit lives in harmony and joy, with fidelity to Hashem, sensing Hashem always in the midst, His Presence suffuses the family circle.

A major motif of the *Mishkan* and the *Bais HaMikdash* is that what transpires in the *Mishkan* does not stay in the *Mishkan*, but goes home with us. The hope is that the nucleus of the *Mishkan* will transfuse our home with its sanctity. One who has experienced *Kedushas HaMikdash* should come home spiritually humbled. His learning, *davening*, eating, and social relationships should be elevated. The goal of the *Mikdash* is to invigorate our mundane lives with sanctity, so that we bring *Mikdash* into our homes, *shuls* and offices.

Rav Hirsch notes that in the *Mikdash*, the night belongs to the preceding day. A twenty-four-hour cycle begins with the morning and ends with the following morning. In the rest of Jewish life, the day belongs to the preceding night – the night being the beginning of the twenty-four-hour day, which concludes the following night. Furthermore, all *korbanos* are to be eaten in the *Azarah*, *Bais Hamikdash* proper, in contrast to the *Shelamim*, which is eaten anywhere in *Yerushalayim*. Last, the *z'man achilas Korban Shelamim*, time allotted for eating the *Korban Shelamim*, is not two days and two nights like other *korbanos*, but rather, two days and one intervening night. Actually, at nightfall of the second day, the *korban* becomes *nosar*, sacrificial leftovers, but may not be burnt until the next morning, since the burning of *Kodoshim* must always be done *ba'yom*, during the day. Thus, the *Mikdash* day - which begins in the morning and concludes at night - is followed by a morning which was preceded by night. The *Korban Shelamim*, which may be eaten outside of the *Mikdash* environs, fuses the *Mikdash* day with the mundane day outside the *Mikdash*. The night serves a two-fold purpose: it is the end of the *Mikdash* day; and also the beginning of the ordinary mundane day, which has now been infused with the sanctity of the preceding day, via the night that connects them.

As Rav Hirsch expresses it so well, the *Korban Shelamim* is inherently, by its very nature, a “Jewish” sacrifice. It marks occasions of family life by expressing the awareness of Hashem’s blessing in our circle of life. Veritably, the concept of being absorbed in G-d and devoted to Him is also found in non-Jewish dogma; it does not, however, penetrate every aspect of mundane life as it does in Jewish theology. The essence of Judaism is best characterized by the notion that our ordinary day-by-day lifestyle can be elevated and consecrated to the point that his table becomes an altar, his home a sanctuary, his children dedicated servants to Hashem, and every aspect of his daily routine a spiritual endeavor. We believe in *Kiddush ha’yeish*, consecrating the mundane, by transforming it into a spiritual activity.

A Jew who puts on *Tefillin* in the morning has a different perspective on his day. One who davens in *shul* on *Shabbos* has a different *Shabbos* meal. An evening *shiur* or *chavrusa* alters one’s outlook on his day. Obviously, when one “visits” *shul* and uses it as an opportunity for socializing, he does not develop that much sanctity to take along with him, although he is certainly better off than the one who does not attend.

It is all in one’s attitude. A typically mundane act can be transformed into a holy service to Hashem, with just the proper attitude. A cup of coffee can be a caffeine “fix,” or it can be an opportunity to revive oneself, so that he can learn more or better.

One day, *Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl*, gave a *shiur klali*, general lecture, to the entire Yeshivas Mir. By chance, one of his old friends from pre-World War II Mir and Shanghai was visiting the Holy Land. He, too, attended the *shiur* of his good friend, *Rav Chaim Stutcher* (as *Rav Chaim* was called in the Mir). Following the *shiur*, the *yeshivah davened minchah*, after which everyone went home for dinner/lunch. *Rav Chaim* invited his guest to join him. As soon as they came home, *Rav Chaim* called out to his *Rebbetzin* (who was the daughter of *Horav Eliezer Yehudah Finkel, zl*, founder of *Yeshivas Mir Eretz Yisrael* and son of the *Alter, zl, m’Slabodka*), “*Chanah Miriam, Boruch Hashem*, we have a special guest to join us for dinner.” They sat down to eat, as the *Rebbetzin* brought a hot soup out to the table.

Rav Chaim began to eat, and, as was his habit, he ate quickly. Indeed, he had finished his portion before his guest had even made a dent in his bowl of soup. *Rav Chaim* immediately called out, “*Rebbetzin*, could I please have another soup?” The *Rebbetzin* promptly brought out another bowl of soup. Meanwhile, the guest kept eating his first bowl. It did not take long before *Rav Chaim*’s second bowl of soup was history. He immediately called the *Rebbetzin* and asked for a third bowl of soup. The guest was amazed at how quickly *Rav Chaim* devoured his soup, but, more so, at his immediate request for a refill. When *Rav Chaim* asked for his fourth bowl of soup, his guest finally spoke up, “*Rav Chaim*, our friendship goes back to our youth, so I am not afraid to bring to your attention that, for a Torah scholar of your distinction, a *gadol b’Yisrael*, *Rosh Yeshivah* of the Mir, it is below your exalted dignity to ask for one bowl of soup after another. It just does not *pas*, does not suit you.”

Rav Chaim replied, "My dear friend, let me explain to you how I view the *Rebbetzin's* soup. Her soup (to her) is no different than my *shiur klali*. (Rav Chaim spent much time preparing. Indeed, he submerged his entire being into a *shiur*. His *shiur* was a dynamic production of himself fused with the Torah.) After I say my *shiur*, and someone approaches me to compliment the *shiur*, I have incredible joy when someone asks me to repeat it again -- and again. My joy increases, regardless of how many times I repeat it. (Rav Chaim neither looked for, nor needed, a compliment. He enjoyed it if someone responded positively to his *chiddush*, innovative exposition of the topic, such as, 'Perhaps the *Rosh Yeshivah* can repeat the main point again.')

"The *Rebbetzin* prepares the soup with much devotion. She understands that the nourishment I receive allows me to learn more and better. She goes out early in the morning to the *makolet* to purchase the necessary ingredients. She then prepares the ingredients, which is a labor of love requiring time and effort. Next, she must hope the gas stove will work. (Apparently, it did not always work.) Now, after all of her effort, do you not think she deserves and even enjoys a compliment? The greatest compliment that one can render is to ask for more soup. This is the reason for my behavior." Rav Chaim taught his friend how a *gadol b'Yisrael* should act – he must be a *mentch*.

Would anyone ever posit that schlepping bags of garbage is a spiritual endeavor? If one would know the "hero" of the story as I did, however, its veracity would be unimpeachable. A young couple (whose parents did not raise them properly) met with *Rav Mordechai Gifter, zl, Rosh Yeshivas Telshe*, to discuss their marital issues. Apparently, the young couple was in serious need of guidance. They had the usual litany of complaints: "He does not listen," "She is too bossy." The young man felt that his wife did not respect his stature as a *ben Torah*. (He was a *talmid chacham*, just lacking in common sense.) The wife felt that his refusal to lift a finger to help her bordered on unjustified arrogance. The *Rosh Yeshivah* spent one hour listening to their individual complaints, as they went back and forth, (immaturely) each blaming the other for their marital issues. Finally, came the clincher, the problem concerning which they came to the *Rosh Yeshivah*: the garbage. Apparently, the wife could not carry out the garbage for its weekly pickup, because it was too heavy. The husband patently refused to be seen in the street with a garbage bag: "Imagine, someone of my stature carrying out the garbage!" Rav Gifter asked what day and what time the garbage pickup was. He told them that he needed a few days to mull over their issues. Then, he would get back to them.

Wednesday morning was "garbage pickup day" at 7:50 A.M. Promptly at 7:40 A.M. there was a knock at the door of the couple's apartment. Who would be knocking so early in the morning? The wife answered the door to see the *Rosh Yeshivah* standing there. "Where is your garbage?" he asked. She looked at him incredulously. "I have come to take out your garbage," he said. The wife called her husband, who was equally shocked to see the *Rosh Yeshivah*. "Quickly, we have only three more minutes before the garbage truck picks up the garbage," the *Rosh Yeshivah* told them. The young couple remained adamant. They were not letting the *Rosh Yeshivah* of Telshe, who was one of the premier *gedolim* in the world, take out their garbage. Rav Gifter walked past them, grabbed the bags, and carried them outside to the street. They got the message. The *Rosh*

Yeshivah had taken a purely mundane, menial task and transformed it into a Torah lesson, and he succeeded in saving a marriage!