

# בשבת

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT  
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS  
RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

## INFINITE WISDOM

In the middle of *Parshas Emor*, we find a discussion about *Shavuos*,<sup>1</sup> the special holiday where we celebrate the giving of the Torah. As part of the celebration, *Klal Yisrael* is told to bring a *korban minchah*, a sacrifice made of flour. However, this *korban minchah* is different from all the others. Normally, a *korban minchah* is made into *matzah*,<sup>2</sup> however this *korban minchah* is specifically made into bread.<sup>3</sup> This raises the question, why indeed is the *korban minchah* of *Shavuos* different?

The *Ralbag*<sup>4</sup> (Rabbeinu Levi ben Gershon, 1288–1344) explains the idea behind *matzah* and *chometz*. *Matzah* is symbolic of something that is incomplete. On the other hand, properly baked bread indicates the idea of complete, even perfect.

As we know, *Shavuos* is the celebration of *Klal Yisrael* receiving the Torah from Hashem. This astounding manual of life was given from the Creator of the universe directly into mankind's hands. It was certainly possible that before receiving the Torah, there were people who acted properly, had correct manners, and even their thinking was, generally, in line with Torah *hashkafah*. But, with all that, there was still no way to reach, not even close, the depths of Hashem's wisdom. Only through the Torah does one truly begin to understand how to act, and how to live.

Thus, when we are celebrating the moment in time where we became the guardians of the Torah, we celebrate with a *korban* that is not like the others, one that symbolizes the idea of being a complete human being. We proclaim loudly, through our actions, that we now have the key to excellence, the secret to human perfection, the Torah.

Sadly, we no longer have the *korban minchah*. But we have the source behind it all; we still have our precious Torah. Once we truly feel that the Torah is our authority on guidance, wisdom, and essential knowledge, our learning and understanding of the Torah will be a transformative experience.

**This raises the question, why indeed is the *korban minchah* of *Shavuos* different?**

### Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

Unfortunately, even if one spends a large amount of time learning Torah it may be difficult to recognize the particular application to one's daily life. Of course, practical *halachah* and *mussar* can always be applied, but when studying the *halachah* or *Gemara* of an esoteric subject, how does one use that study to further one's understanding of what Hashem practically wants from us?

Yes, some topics may not seem relevant, but with just a bit of thought, one can transform the esoteric to the practical. The *dvar Torah* on this page is a good example of this — though we no longer have a *korban minchah*, we can still learn a very relevant message from its laws.

The trick is to recognize that it is not necessarily a natural process. It is prudent to take a moment after studying, and think, "What can I take out of this to apply to my life?"<sup>1</sup> By thinking in this way, we make our Torah learning more meaningful to us, in our day to day lives.

<sup>1</sup> Iggeres HaRamban

<sup>1</sup> Vayikra 23:15-22

<sup>2</sup> Vayikra 2:11

<sup>3</sup> Vayikra 23:17

<sup>4</sup> Vayikra, pg 356

Do You Like What You Are Reading?  
Do You Think Others Would Too?

To sponsor, or receive by email, please contact us at [info@ohr-yisrael.com](mailto:info@ohr-yisrael.com) or call 732-451-GROW

“  
Even if you think that all of your  
Mussar study has been fruitless,  
completely disregard that assessment!  
Continue to cling to your daily Mussar  
study, for in the end, you will see  
phenomenal gains. - R' Y.Y. Kanievsky  
“Steipler Gaon” zt”l, Sefer Kraiyana  
D'Iggreta vol 1, pg. 42

# KINDNESS IS SERIOUS BUSINESS

Morris Lamm\* grew up Jewish, if only in name. He knew very little of his heritage, and even less about Hashem's plans for His nation. As he grew older, his interest in Judaism grew with him. He had a particular affinity to the ethical aspects of Judaism, while he viewed the *mitzvos*, and the particulars surrounding them, as dry and uninspiring.

Nevertheless, he slowly grew in his observance of both. A topic he often visited, though, was the purpose of *mitzvos*, and the rabbi he studied with would often entertain his question of, "Why not just be a good person, what need is there for all the other commandments?"

One day, at his regular weekly learning session, the young rabbi sat across from him and placed the *sefer Ahavas Chesed* in front of him. "I thought this might interest you," Rabbi Fine said. "It's the laws of how to properly do kindness to one another. It includes lending and giving money, caring for guests, and so on."

Intrigued, Morris picked up the *sefer*, opened it up at random, and started reading the English translation. "You've got to be kidding me," he said softly. Rabbi Fine was taken aback, and wasn't sure if he made a poor choice. He had hoped that the fusion of ethics and law would soften Morris's perspective on *halachah*. However, it was looking like it backfired, and turned the ethical aspect of *Yiddishkeit* into what Morris felt was convoluted academia.

Morris kept reading, checked the cover, flipped a couple of pages, and continued reading, all the while shaking his head. Finally he spoke, "I can't believe it. I'm... I'm astounded."

"What do you mean?"

Morris was quiet for a moment. "I didn't know that Jews take their kindness so seriously! Growing up, I always knew it was important to be a 'good person,' though the definition was always fuzzy. This *sefer* is amazing. Simply amazing. It makes the idea of ethical conduct so real.

"You've always told me that all *mitzvos* have an ethical aspect to them, though I never felt that way. But this *sefer*... it's interesting. It's eye opening, at the very least. Can I borrow it?"

"Borrow it? Morris, it's yours!" Rabbi Fine said with a smile.

**"I didn't know that Jews take their kindness so seriously."**

*\*Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

## DID YOU KNOW?

- The wisdom in the laws and judgements of the Torah is apparent even to the nations of the world.<sup>1</sup>
- There is always more one can gain, both in the spiritual and in the mundane, by reviewing one's Torah knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

1 *Seforno* on *Devarim* 9:4 s.v. ומי גוי

2 *Lechem Shomayim* on *Avos* 5:22, s.v. והפוך בה