



## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### THE YERUSHA

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

We know that in the Torah there is a mitzvah to give the bechor, the firstborn, a double portion of an inheritance. Rav Samson Rafael Hirsch writes that perhaps a reason behind this mitzvah is that the firstborn is the leader of the family and the extra portion is for him to help take care of the needs of his siblings.

This leads us to the following interesting story about Pesach.

Baruch owned a food distribution business. He had large factories and warehouses filled with chametz items. It was a million-dollar business.

Every year Baruch would of course



### GIVE ME YOUR TIRED, YOUR POOR, YOUR HUDDLED MASSES YEARNING TO BREATHE FREE

In this week's Parsha, Vayikrah, the Torah introduces the various korbanos (offerings) that were brought in the Mishkan. The first animal offering is the bull, the second is the sheep and goats and the third animal is the bird offering. The first paragraph begins, "If from the bull is his offering..." and the second paragraph begins, "If from the sheep is his offering". The third paragraph begins slightly differently, "If from the birds is his offering to HaShem..."

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh notes that by the animals it does not identify the offering as being an offering to HaShem and by the bird the Torah refers to it as "an offering to HaShem". In explaining this discrepancy he introduces the verse in Yishayahu 57:16 "So says the exalted and uplifted One, Who resides for eternity and Whose Name is holy; I abide in exaltedness and holiness, but I am with the broken one and lowly of spirit to revive their spirit and their heart." The Talmud teaches that although HaShem's place is exalted and holy, nevertheless, He lowers His Presence to be with the lowly spirit.

The accurate definition of korban is not 'offering'. The name "offerings" implies a gift that one offers to HaShem, which is not what a korban is. HaShem has no need for our gifts. Korban derives from 'karov' which is an adjective meaning 'close to' or l'kareiv a verb which means 'to bring close'. The intent of the korban was to bring the owner of the korban closer to HaShem. However, that closeness was not generated by giving an animal gift to HaShem; HaShem has enough animals without this one. The closeness was generated by

sell the chametz in his factories to a non-Jew. One Pesach after all the chametz was sold Baruch passed away in his sleep.

Baruch had two sons, Eli and Yoni. Eli was the bechor. When all the dust was settled after the funeral, Eli and Yoni discussed the yerusha of their father's holdings. Eli assumed that he would get a double portion of the value of the factories. "But I'm not so sure about that", Yoni countered. At the time of Abba's death, the factory was not owned by him, it was in the possession of the non-Jew who bought it. That means that when he died, Abba did not own the factory it was just "coming to him". A bechor only takes a double portion of what the father owns, not what is coming to him. That is called Raui."

But Eli replied, "I'm not sure you are right. Even though it was sold to the non-Jew, we knew it would come back to our father's possession. It is therefore like muchzack, and it is like it is assumed to be in the fathers possession".

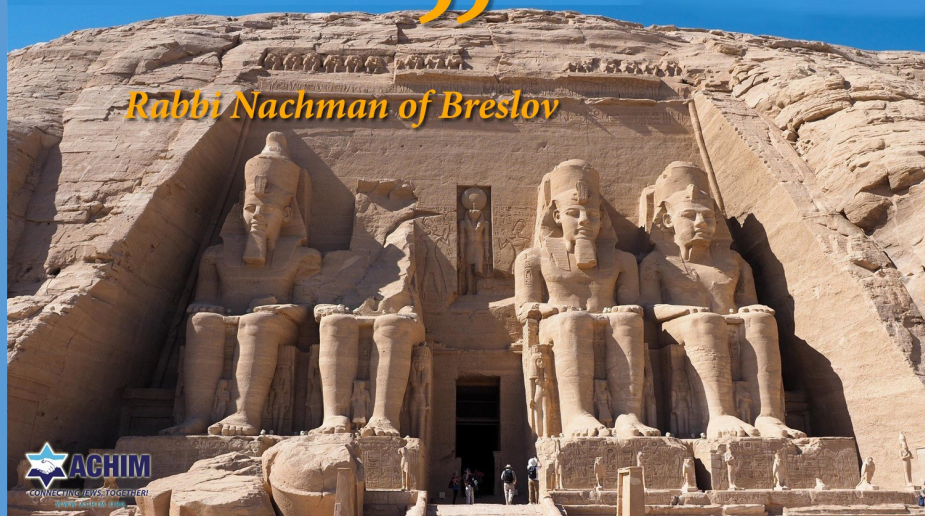
What do you think?

Does the bechor get pi shnayim, a double portion from the chametz that was sold on Pesach?

See Chashukei Chemed Pesachim 173

“When you are about to leave Egypt - any Egypt - do not stop to think: But how will I earn a living out there? One who stops to make provisions for the way will never get out of Egypt.”

*Rabbi Nachman of Breslov*



the inspiration which the owner receives through bringing it upon the Altar.

People of stature would not bring birds for korbanos because they give off a bad smell when burnt and it is small and inexpensive. The poor folk were the ones who brought the birds as korbanos.

Based on the verse from Yishayahu, the Ohr Hachaim explains that since HaShem, Whose place residence is otherwise on high and exalted, changes His location to be near the unfortunate and lowly spirited. When this poor fellow brings his bird korban to the Mishkan, even before it is placed on the Altar, that korban is already a korban to HaShem, because HaShem is right there next to him. Contrast this to the wealthy fellow whose korban is an ornate animal and comes to be inspired through his korban to bring him-

self close to HaShem. Until his animal is sacrificed and brought up upon the Altar he has not yet achieved closeness to HaShem. The wealthy fellow must wait until the procedure is completed to be close to HaShem.

This is the reason for the bird having the distinction of being referred to as a "korban to Hashem" even before it is slaughtered.

Given this insight, the Ohr Hachaim points out how grateful we must be to the poor and the needy among us. Not only do the needy provide others with the incredible mitzvah and merit of giving tzedakah, but they are the ones who bring HaShem's Presence within our community. Be near to those who are lowly spirited and despondent. Lift them up and you will discover how uplifted you become. We become nearer to HaShem as we make ourselves nearer to them.

Have a very safe and very wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**





## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### RISING DOUGH AND CHAMETZ

We know that chametz is dough that has leavened, that has risen. But how exactly does dough rise by itself? What exactly is happening? Let's look a bit deeper.

We commonly call this process "dough rising" but the technical term is called proofing. Rising begins when yeast ferments the dough and produces gases. This thereby leavens the dough. Fermentation begins when baker's yeast or a sourdough starter (Se'or in Hebrew) is added to flour and water. Enzymes in the flour and yeast create sugars, which are consumed by the yeast, which in turn produce carbon dioxide and alcohol.

Here is how this works in detail. The grain enzyme in the flour called diastase begins to convert starch in the grain to maltose. Then the yeast enzyme maltase converts the maltose into the sugar glucose. The enzyme invertase converts any added sucrose to the sugars, glucose and fructose.

Then the enzyme zymase converts glucose and fructose to carbon dioxide gas. This gas fills the dough and makes the dough rise. In addition, the zymase turns the glucose and fructose into alcohol. This alcohol gives the bread its great baked flavor.

You might ask, "Do you mean to tell me that there is alcohol in my bread? Can one get drunk on bread?". The answer is, there is alcohol in the dough, but much of it evaporates during the baking process. But scientists have quipped, "Beer is liquid bread, they have the same ingredients — water, grain, yeast — just in different proportions." As an aside, isn't it fascinating that you can make kiddush on bread and on wine?

Sourdough starters work in a similar way as outlined above, but they also produce lactic and acetic acids, further contributing to the bread's flavor.

But all this would just be bubbling brews without something to contain them. Here's where gluten comes in. Wheat flour contains two proteins, glutenin and gliadin, which, when combined with water, form gluten. As one kneads the dough, the gluten becomes more and more stretchy. This gum-like substance fills with thousands of gas bubbles as the yeast goes to work during rising.

If the dough is left to rise too long, and too much gas is produced, it is called overproofing. When this occurs the gas bubbles grow so large that they pop and tunnel, and dough baked at this point would

result in a bread with poor structure. A bread that is properly proofed will balance gas production with the ability of the bread's gluten structure to contain it, and will be springy when baked. However, a bread that is under or overproofed will be more dense. An overproofed bread may even collapse in the oven as the volume of gas produced by the yeast can no longer be contained by the gluten structure.

This process works as described at room temperatures between 70 - 100 degrees. However, a cold environment will slow the activity of the yeast to produce sugars and gas.

Similarly, warm temperatures increase the activity of the yeast, resulting in increased carbon dioxide production and a higher, faster rise. This idea of needing the ambient conditions to be room temperature is reflected in many of the halachos of making matzah.

What is really fascinating is that historians say that the process of using yeast and sourdough starter to make dough rise was invented by **the ancient Egyptians**. When we don't eat chametz, and don't eat bread that has risen on Pesach, what we are really doing is rejecting the culture, and the arrogance, of the Egyptians! Our Sages call the Yetzer Hara the Se'or Shebi'isah, the sourdough starter in our bread. You can say that our Yetzer Hara is the Mitzrayim influence that causes us to "ferment or sour".

Until relatively recently the yeast that was used to make bread rise was primarily sourdough starter. It was only in the 1860's when Louis Pasteur made his discoveries about the nature of yeast, and shortly afterward, when Jewish whisky maker Charles Fleischman mass-produced yeast, that dry baker's yeast that we are used to was introduced.

Another interesting thing is the etymology of the word sourdough. According to etymologists, sour dough comes from the Proto-Germanic word *sura* which means sour or fermented dough. But is it possible that the word sour comes from an earlier source, from Hebrew? Can the word sour, fermented, come from *שָׁאֹר*? In modern Hebrew the way to say sourdough is *מחמץ שאור*. This is conjecture but it seems that the linguists who created modern Hebrew seemed to be pretty sure that the word sourdough comes from the Hebrew word *שָׁאֹר*.



## LET THEM START ALREADY!

About seven years before his passing, Harav Ovadia was complaining of terrible stomach pains, and his son Rav David accompanied him to the hospital. The doctors ordered a battery of tests, and they uncovered an issue that required immediate laparoscopic surgery. But at his advanced age, and considering his weak overall medical condition, the doctors felt that it was dangerous to place him under anesthesia. "It will take him several weeks to recover from the anesthesia," they explained. "That's when he'll come out of it."

They told Rav David that they would do the half-hour surgery without anesthesia, but they warned him that the procedure would be extremely painful. "We're going to summon several staff members just to hold him down," they said, "and you must remain outside because you won't be able to handle the sight of him suffering so much. If you want to remain right outside the operating theater, you may, but be prepared for his shrieks of pain."

Rav David asked the doctors to describe to the Rav what the procedure would be like, so that he wouldn't be shocked when the pain began. "B'seder," Harav Ovadia sighed upon hearing the plan. "If this is a pain that I have no choice but to suffer, it should be kaparat avonot (an atonement for my sins). But please bring me my Gemara and I'll try to distract myself from the pain as much as possible." "I brought him his Gemara - he was learning Bava Batra at the time — and I left the room," relates Rav David. "A large group of doctors and other hospital staff entered the operating room, but I did not hear a single sound emanating from within. Finally, after about half an hour later, the doctors came out and said, 'We were shocked —' he didn't utter a peep."

"I went inside and asked, Abba, how are you feeling?" He looked up at me and said, slightly irritated, "Ask the doctors how long they're going to make me wait. Let them start already!" He was so utterly absorbed in his learning that he had not felt them operating!"

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### THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about whether an oath taken under duress in order to save your life is binding, Rav Zilberstein quotes a major authority who says that it would not be binding. However, he concluded from his brother-in-law, Rav Chaim Kanievsky that the oath is still binding in this case and therefore the man would have to make every effort to keep his oath.

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