



## Parshat Acharei Mot Shabbat Hagadol

No 1062:

14 Nissan 5765 (April 23, 2005)

### STARTING POINT

#### Blood and the Soul - by Rabbi Amnon Bazak

The Torah commands every man "who slaughters an ox, a sheep, or a goat" [Vayikra 17:3] within the camp or outside not to do so unless he offers it as a sacrifice to G-d. The commentaries do not agree if this specifically refers to an animal which has been set aside as a sacrifice or if it includes animals that are simply meant to be eaten. The simplest approach would seem to be that of the Ramban. He feels that the prohibition is valid for all meat, and that the animals must be offered as a Shelamim sacrifice, in which case some of the flesh is eaten by the owner. Later on, when Bnei Yisrael were about to enter Eretz Yisrael, the Torah permitted eating meat that is not related to a sacrifice (Devarim 12:20-21). Why was it forbidden to slaughter animals that were not sanctified while the nation was in the desert?

The Torah gives two reasons for this law. "If he does not bring it to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting to offer it as a sacrifice to G-d in the Tabernacle: (1) This will be considered blood with respect to that man, he has spilled blood, and he will be cut off from his nation; (2) In order that Bnei Yisrael bring the sacrifices that they offer on the fields to G-d, at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, to the Kohen." [17:4-5]. The second reason is clear. It implies that the purpose of the prohibition is to avoid idol worship. This is explicitly stated in the following verse, "And let them no longer offer their sacrifices to the demons towards which they turn" [17:7]. However, the first reason given above is somewhat problematic. Is killing an animal for the purpose of food to be considered spilling blood? Weren't Noah and his sons given permission to eat meat (see Bereishit 9:3)?

Evidently the first reason is not based on a vegetarian approach to life, which was appropriate for Adam but not Noah, but rather is related to what we are taught further on in this chapter with respect to the prohibition of eating blood: "For the soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the Altar to atone for your souls. For blood atones for the soul." [17:11]. The blood of an animal is a tool to be used for atonement, and it is not proper to use such important material for a purpose that is not holy. That is the reason that this command was only given after the Tabernacle and the Altar were constructed, since before the existence of the Altar the blood of an animal did not yet have such spiritual significance. In view of this approach, it is clear why this prohibition appears at this point, since in the previous chapter we were taught about the power of mankind, in the form of the rituals performed by the High Priest on Yom Kippur – "And he shall slaughter the goat of the Chatat belonging to the people and bring its blood to the area of the

# שבת

## 1202

curtain. And he shall do to the blood what he did to the blood of the bull, let him sprinkle it on the curtain and in front of the curtain. And he will atone for the holy site from the impurities of Bnei Yisrael and from their sins..." [16:15-16].

This also explains why there is a difference between the blood of a domesticated animal and that of a wild one, since the latter is never brought as a sacrifice, and the blood of a bird, which is not sprinkled on the Altar (see, for example, Vayikra 1, 5, 11, and 15). The Torah permitted slaughtering wild animals and birds for everyday needs even in the desert, since their blood was in any case not used for atonement. Since the blood is linked to the "soul," the Torah commanded that it must be covered by earth and not eaten (17:13-14), but there is no problem in killing a wild animal or a bird for private use.

### POINT OF VIEW

#### Is There a Crisis in Religious Zionism? - by Rabbi Yisrael Rozen

Who is in a Crisis?

We noted above that there is a feeling of crisis. I hear such declarations as "a crisis in Religious Zionism," sounds of a "loss of faith," echoes of wondering whether we "are following the right path." Others are raising the possibility that we are in a period of "retreat of the redemption." Is all of this true?

As far as I am concerned, the worst crisis that we face here and now is not the personal suffering of the people to be expelled from their homes. I do not belittle the seriousness of the personal and family tragedies and the frightful consequences of the coming crisis on a personal and community level. However, as one who has spent my entire life preaching that general needs take precedence over personal ones, in the spirit of the teachings of Rabbi A.Y. Kook, I must remain true to my view and look at the developing process from the point of view of the community as a whole. The saying that "trouble shared by the community is a partial solace" does not refer only to psychological comfort, as if to say, "I am the same as everybody

This issue of Shabbat B'Shabbato  
is sponsored

לז"נ

מרת הנא בת ר' מרדכי מנדל אלינער

ר' עוזר בן ר' שאול אלינער

הרב שמעון בן ר' זכריה סמנער

else." (I have seen this quoted in a book of responsa, "Chaim Bayad," in the name of "the sages," but I have not been able to find a direct source for the quote.) It requires us to recognize that the community often overshadows the individual and his needs. Thus, personal grief may be swallowed up and absorbed into the nationwide distress that we are experiencing at the current time.

I do not accept the thesis that the world of religious Zionism is in a state of total disintegration, even taking into account the trepidation of some marginal elements who voice their doubts about the correctness of our path. I do not fear a weakening of faith, collapse, or complete loss of the faith of our youth, as I do not expect anybody to "divorce himself from the State of Israel," G-d forbid. As far as I can see, the fears voiced by some rabbis and educators are greatly exaggerated, and this is what has created an atmosphere of crisis in religious Zionism. In the oppressive political air of intimidation, warning, and threats, all in the shrillest possible tones, we should not be surprised that the angry prophets of the Apocalypse can see a future with "the end of the path of religious Zionism."

The real and very dangerous crisis, as far as I am concerned, is a crisis of Zionism in general. Religious Zionism is not involved! We seem to be near the end of the general era of Zionism – involving settlements, security, and general political objectives. Uprooting the Gaza Strip puts a seal of government approval on the post-Zionist approach, and shatters all of the previous Zionist values.

"Lavan Wanted to Uproot Everything"

We still have not reached the worst element of all. It may not be such a terrible thing to have the citizens of a State of Tel Aviv living without any real Zionism and without any national values. What really shocks and upsets me is the development of an opposing "religion," what can only be described as unlimited enthusiasm for the process of destroying the Zionist accomplishments and returning to "a normal existence." I have begun to see more and more examples of people who are literally celebrating the joys of the "disengagement" process. As far as these people are concerned, "it is about time that we have reached our ultimate place of rest." How wonderful it is, according to this approach, that we will no longer be forced to contend with the corruption of conquest. The elites of society are literally "dancing on the rooftops" – they are busily putting flowers on the chains of the bulldozers which will accomplish their objectives. The "disengagement" has become a holy end in itself, and it has been crowned with religious adoration by knowledgeable people who use their pen to write prominent articles in the press. This reminiscent of the phrase quoted above from the Haggadah, "Lavan wanted to uproot everything."

Based on this situation, and on the ramifications to be expected, I can see the beginnings of a wide-ranging cultural war centered on the character and the value system in the Jewish State. The withdrawal from the land of the Philistines will be carried over to the fields of Beit Lechem, the place where our style of government was born. The Zionist ethic is the main glue that has in the past held together the different

parts of the nation that dwells in Zion. If this no longer exists, or if it is replaced by a secular "existence," the seeds of division will have appeared.

Religious Zionism will be in a "crisis" as long as it continues to consider itself a bridge between different sectors. The "bridge" will remain floating in the air if both banks on which it rests withdraw and retreat. If instead of this we continue to have faith in our own internal truths - national Zionism, a Zionism of settlements, and a Zionism of redemption – we will not be in a crisis. We can continue on our path, alone or accompanied by others.

NOTE: Do you know the source of the famous declaration, "In every generation everybody must see himself as if he was redeemed from Egypt"? Here is a quote from the Midrash: "It is written, 'he rescued our houses (that is, in every generation)...' This means that in every generation a man must see himself as if he was redeemed from Egypt." [Pesikta Zutrata Shemot 12:27]. Every generation needs its houses to be rescued...

Let us console ourselves with the memory that even at the time of the Exodus from Egypt not everybody went along wholeheartedly. Even then some of the people worshipped the Golden Calf as a first choice. The sages taught us that the seeds of the "religion of the calf" joined the nation when they were redeemed from Egypt. "Idol worship passed through the sea together with the nation of Yisrael, as is written, 'the trouble will pass through the sea and make waves in the sea' [Zecharia 10:11]. Trouble refers to idol worship ... but in spite of this the sea split before them." [Tanchuma Re'eih 16].

## SERMON BY A GUEST

### Which is the Best One of the Four Sons? - by Rabbi Yosef Carmel, Head of Eretz Chemdah Institute

"Even if we are all wise, all full of understanding, all elders, and all have complete knowledge of the Torah – We have been commanded to talk about the redemption from Egypt." [Haggadah].

The Four Sons discussed in the Torah present a challenge to the commentators and the illustrators of the Haggadah. Here are some of the difficulties that this passage presents: Why do most of the "sons" not seem to be highly successful? What is the significance of the order in which the "sons" appear? Why is there no "righteous" son? What is the difference between the simple son (according to the Talmud Yerushalmi, a "foolish" son) and the one who does not (even) know how to ask a question?

One way to answer these questions is to emphasize the phrase in the Haggadah, "the Torah discusses" four sons. Let us try to determine the essence of each son, based on the specific passages in which they appear. We will look at the sons in sequence of their character, from the worst to the best.

The evil son asks, "What is the point of these rituals for you" [Shemot 12:26], referring to the command to bring a sacrifice on Pesach. The offering of the sacrifice was already a test of faith in the Almighty in the generation of the redemption in

Egypt, and it remained an annual test of faith for every Jew. Anybody who did not bring the sacrifice was punished by "Karet," and he was cut off from the nation. The evil son is an apostate, one who does not want to make a covenant with the Almighty and who does not want to remain within the Jewish nation.

The wise son is only one stage higher than this. His question, which appears in Devarim (6:20-25), is the query of an intellectual. He knows the difference between different kinds of laws, but in his reserved manner he asks, "What are the laws... that our G-d commanded you?" If he does not receive an answer, he will remain with one foot on the outside.

The simple son is at the next highest level. In the language of the Torah, the word "tam" refers to one who is complete and perfect, one who believes without any doubts. This appears in the Torah both in relation to commands and as a compliment: "Go before me and be whole" [Bereishit 17:1]... "You shall be whole with your G-d" [Devarim 18:13]. The son's question, "What is this?" [Shemot 13:14], refers to the mitzva of redeeming a firstborn donkey. Even one who has reached such a high degree of holiness does not understand the meaning of this mitzva. He wonders, "What does a donkey have to do with holiness?"

The best of the four sons, the most righteous of them all, is the one who asks no questions at all. This is one who serves his G-d in utter silence. Rabbi A.Y. Kook described the essence of such a person in a wonderful way: "When the master of silent thought is engaged in his high level of silence, many different worlds are being constantly built..." [Orot Hakodesh, Derech Hakodesh, page 474]. This extremely righteous person is mentioned in the Torah in relation to eating matza. This is described as "lechem oni" [Devarim 16:3], interpreted in the Talmud as "bread around which many things are discussed" [Pesachim 36a]. On the Seder night of Pesach, even this "son" is required to observe the mitzva of telling about the redemption from Egypt, and whoever talks at the greatest length deserves the most praise.

## MOUNT MORIAH

### The Pesach Sacrifice - by Rabbi Yitzchak Levy, Yeshivat Har Etzion

We will look at two related aspects of the Pesach sacrifice. On one hand, Pesach is the time every year when Yisrael renews its covenant with the Almighty, and as such it is an expression of the connection between the nation and the Almighty. On the other hand, Pesach is related to the link between every person in Bnei Yisrael and the community as a whole, and in this way it is symbolic of the unity of the nation. Clearly, these two approaches are related to each other. The connection of the nation to the Almighty stems from the internal unity of the people.

#### A Covenant Between the Nation of Yisrael and the Almighty

Pesach is the time when the Bnei Yisrael were formed into a nation. This primary characteristic can be seen throughout the

succeeding generations in that Pesach is the first holiday that was celebrated after the dedication of the Tabernacle and the first holiday celebrated after they crossed the Jordan into the land of Gilgal (after the mass circumcision of the people). It probably was also the first holiday celebrated in the Temple after the return from the Babylonian exile.

On Pesach, the nation of Yisrael forms a covenant with the Almighty by destroying all idol worship. The first time, in Egypt, this was very clearly seen, and it also occurred in the Pesach holidays celebrated by Shmuel, Chizkiyahu, and Yoshiyahu. The three leaders eliminated all idol worship in Yisrael, and they followed this by celebrating Pesach in a way that led to unity of the people, a renewal of the covenant with G-d.

#### Unifying the Nation of Yisrael

The Pesach is at one and the same time a sacrifice by an individual and a community sacrifice. On one hand, it is a private matter, in that every individual pays for his own sacrifice. On the other hand, the Pesach has aspects that are usually characteristic of a community sacrifice: it is brought at a specific time, it takes precedence over the prohibitions of Shabbat, and it is brought even if the majority of Bnei Yisrael are ritually impure.

The unifying character of the Pesach sacrifice can also be seen from the internal link between the Pesach and circumcision, between one kind of blood and another. The Brit Mila is an expression of the Divine seal in the flesh of every Jew, while the Pesach sacrifice symbolizes the link between the community of Yisrael and the Almighty. Because of this close link, these are the only two positive mitzvot which are punished by Karet, being cut off from the community. The unity of Bnei Yisrael also explains the unique laws of Pesach Sheini: people who are ritually impure or far away from the Temple on the day of Pesach do not have to give up the opportunity to bring a sacrifice, since they are not ready to be separated from the community of Yisrael in its covenant with G-d. The Talmud discusses a possibility that a convert might bring a Pesach sacrifice instead of the regular sacrifice brought as part of the conversion process. While this suggestion is rejected in the end, it illustrates the principle of the Pesach sacrifice, as a way of strengthening the link between a single Jew and the entire community. For this reason, it was conceivable to replace the normal sacrifice of the convert by the Pesach sacrifice.

The laws of the Pesach sacrifice include setting aside "one lamb for each household" [Shemot 12:3], slaughtering with a specific list of participants in mind, eating the flesh as part of a designated group, and the prohibition of moving from one group to another. This emphasizes the link between the individual and the family, between fathers and children. Pesach is celebrated as a family, where the father is required to retell the story of the redemption from Egypt and explain to the children that he sees all of Bnei Yisrael unified on its day of independence, eating from a holy table, physically close to the House of G-d. This is the day that the nation of Yisrael was created, and therefore by eating the sacrifice together on this

day we take note of the link between all sectors of the nation and between the nation and G-d.

The laws of the Pesach sacrifice serve as the source for the principle that "a messenger is the same as the one who sent him." This is another example that shows the mutual responsibility of all people for each other, and it is especially relevant to the holiday of Pesach. Some of the commentators also see this principle in the specific laws of the Pesach sacrifice: it is an unblemished animal one year old; it is consumed as a whole, the head with the legs and the internal organs; "not one single bone of it shall be broken" [Shemot 12:46]; and it is to be cooked by broiling on a flame.

According to the sages, in the future all of Bnei Yisrael will belong to one group and participate in a single Pesach sacrifice. This illustrates what we have been saying, that the Pesach has the power to combine the entire nation into a single unit. And this explains why rabbis have discussed the Pesach in relation to renewal of the sacrifices in the Temple. Let us hope and pray that we will have the privilege of partaking in the Pesach and all the other sacrifices, and that G-d will show us His wonders in this modern age, just as He did in the days of our redemption from Egypt (see Micha 7:15).

## A LESSON FOR THE CHILDREN

### A Wise Man's Answer - by Rabbi Yikhat Rozen, Merkaz Neria, Kiryat Malachi

There was a light knock on the door to the room of Rav Yossef Ber from Brisk. "Come in," the rabbi said. The door opened, and a modest and shy man entered, one of the inhabitants of the city.

"I have a question for the rabbi about Pesach," the man said. "Can the obligation to drink four cups at the Seder be fulfilled by drinking milk?"

"What is wrong?" the rabbi asked. "Are you sick? Will wine damage your health?"

And the man replied, "No, I am healthy, thank G-d, and I am able to drink even more than four cups of wine. However," he continued in a quiet voice, "wine has become very expensive this year, and I cannot afford to buy enough wine for four cups. What can I do? So I thought of drinking milk instead of wine."

"Well, milk is not suitable for use in the Four Cups of the Seder," the rabbi answered. "But please wait a minute." The rabbi turned to his wife and whispered to her, "Give this man twenty-five rubles in order to buy wine for the holiday."

"Rabbi, G-d forbid," the man cried out. "I did not come here to beg but to ask a question. If the rabbi will tell me his halachic ruling, I will follow his instructions."

"Don't worry," Rav Yossef Ber answered with a smile. "I am giving you the money as a loan until G-d helps you recover your money. Meanwhile, you can buy wine and celebrate the

holiday in the proper way. As to returning the loan, you do not have to worry. I am in no hurry, and you can return it when it is convenient. Even if it takes a long time, it does not matter."

The man took the money, put it in his pocket, and left the house happily.

After the man left, the rabbi's wife came back into the room. She said to her husband, "I am very happy that we had the opportunity to help this poor Jew who needed money to buy wine for Pesach. But please explain to me why you told me to give him twenty-five rubles. Wine for the Four Cups would not cost more than two or three rubles at the most."

"Just pay attention to the man's question," the rabbi explained to her. "He did not ask if he could observe the mitzva of Four Cups using whiskey, juice, or any other liquid. He only asked about milk! In every Jewish household, it is known that there is no true holiday spirit without a large meal, including meat and fish, with all the good side dishes. But this Jew, who asked about drinking milk instead of wine, clearly did not have any meat for the holiday, and that is why he suggested that he drink milk! He did not want to take money from charity, and he therefore would not turn to the public charity fund for support, but from the details of his question you could understand his situation. He was about to begin the holiday with nothing in his house except for some milk, and perhaps with a few other very basic materials. Can this be called having joy on the holiday?"

The conclusion is that the sensitivity of the rabbi and the effort he made to understand the situation of the man not only led to a correct halachic decision but also enhanced the holiday joy of an entire Jewish family.

## THE WAYS OF THE FATHERS (Pirkei Avot)

### Chapter 6 Mishna 2 (continued) - by Rabbi Yehuda Shaviv

"Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi said: Each and every day a heavenly voice comes forth from Mount Chorev and declares, Woe to the people from the insult of the Torah. Anybody who is not involved in Torah is considered one who is to be reprimanded, as is written, 'Like a golden ring in the snout of a pig, so is a pretty woman who has no taste' [Mishlei 11:22]. And it is written, 'The Tablets were the work of G-d, and the writing was the writing of G-d, engraved on the Tablets.' [Shemot 32:16]. Do not read this as 'charut,' engraved, but 'cheirut,' freedom. There is nobody who is as free as one who is involved in the Torah. Whoever is constantly involved in the Torah rises to greater and greater heights, as is written, 'From Matana to Nachliel, and from Nachliel to Bamot' [Bamidbar 21:19]."

The heavenly voice from Chorev is an echo of the "great sound" that was heard on the mountain of the day of the gathering (Devarim 5:19), when the Ten Commandments were heard. This was a sound that "did not end" (see Rashi and Onkeles). However, while the holy sound at that time commanded that the mitzvot must be observed, the heavenly voice of this Mishna is concerned with those who ignore the command. For this is what it says: "Woe to the people from the insult of the Torah." The word used, "beriyot," refers to all

mankind and not just the Jews, who received the Torah. The "insult of the Torah" could mean that the Torah insults the person who refrains from studying it, but it could also mean that the Torah is insulted, by being treated like a golden ring in the snout of a pig, where it is regularly pushed into filth and garbage. When Torah is treated as a Torah of life, it is a jewel on the nose. But evil creatures who decorate themselves with the jewelry desecrate it and pollute it.

On the other hand, anybody who is involved in the study of Torah is not only decorated by the jewel and honors the jewel by wearing it. Wearing the jewel in fact gives him freedom, in spite of the fact that at first glance he seems to be under control of an outside force and not free. This can be seen from the Tablets, which at first glance seem to be the ultimate example of something that is tough and immovable – but since G-d did the writing, the Tablets have a soul which provides true freedom. If this is true of stone tablets, how much more must it be true of a human being who is involved in the study of G-d's Torah. In answer to the claim that the Torah is ancient and out of date, we are taught, "Whoever is constantly involved in the Torah raises to greater and greater heights." Every day that a man's ear responds to the heavenly voice that emanates from Mount Chorev, he renews his being and is transformed into somebody else, at a higher level than he was the day before.

Another point is to compare this Mishna to the words of Rabbi Meir (Mishna 1). Rabbi Meir discusses the high level of one who studies Torah for its own sake, while Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi demands the minimum level of study, and this is the demand made of every person "each and every day." Therefore, Rabbi Yehoshua does not refer to one who "studies Torah for its own sake," as Rabbi Meir does, but rather one who "is involved in the Torah." Thus, while Rabbi Meir speaks only from the positive angle, listing the many rewards given to one who studies Torah for its own sake, Rabbi Yehoshua refers to the negative side, those people who do not even make the minimum effort required.

In the beginning of Pirkei Avot, we were taught that "Moshe received the Torah from Sinai," while Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi tells us that a heavenly voice calls out from "Mount Chorev." Perhaps this is a play on words, hinting that if people will not become involved in Torah the wellspring of Sinai can become transformed into a dry place, "Chorev."

## HOLY AND SECULAR

### A Legend About a Prince - by Rabbi Amichai Gordin

Once upon a time, an important and powerful king had a son, a dear boy whose name was Efraim. Efraim was the favorite son of the king. Every time he would mention his son, the king would remember him and have pity on him.

The king commanded his son to build a house where the two of them could meet. Efraim built the house, and the king left his throne to move in. The king lent his name not only to the house itself but to the whole city where the house was built. The king gave the city the name, "Kerach-Shalem." He decided

that his son should meet him in Kerach-Shalem three times during the year: at the beginning of spring, in the middle of summer, and at the beginning of the fall.

After some time, the king became angry at his son and expelled him. From the day that he was sent away, Efraim was no longer able to visit his father. He was very unhappy because his father had expelled him from his house, and because he could no longer visit Kerach-Shalem. Whenever the season that they used to meet approached, the son would be very unhappy and sad. When the king saw how sad his son was, he had pity on him. He decided to send messengers to the son to remind him about his father, the king, and to make him happy. The king sent many ministers to his son, and each one had his own way to speak to the son and make him happy. One of the ministers did the best thing of all. His name was Nachman Ben Saleb, and he understood that the son needed a temporary house where he could meet his father. The minister searched for a place to build this temporary house, and he chose a place called "Kerach-Uman."

The son was very happy that he would have a house where he could meet his father, and the king was happy with his son's joy. Every year the son would arrive in Kerach-Uman. There he would meet his father and tell him about his troubles, asking for mercy and help. The king was happy to listen to his son, and he offered to help him.

One day, after many years, the king decided that he would allow his son to return home. And then the king waited in Kerach-Shalem to meet his son at the appointed time, according to their previous custom. When the day finally arrived, the king was very surprised that his son did not arrive in Kerach-Shalem. When he searched for his son, he was surprised and upset to see that the son had forgotten that the king's true house was in Kerach-Shalem. The son had once again returned to Kerach-Uman.

The custom of traveling to the city of Uman has greatly expanded in recent times. Tens of thousands of people travel every year to visit the grave of Rabbi Nachman. I do not want to hold such a holy place in contempt, after so many Jews pray at the site. However, at the same time, it is wrong to ignore the true holy city of the Almighty.

Many times, the Torah uses the phrase, "the place where G-d will choose for His name to dwell." There is only one place where G-d placed His name. There is only one place where we have been commanded to go to meet the Almighty. This place is called Jerusalem. With all due respect to other holy places, the Torah gives explicit instructions where we are supposed to go every holiday. Anybody who wants to meet the Almighty on Pesach, Shavuot, or Rosh Hashanah is invited to come to the place where he was invited by G-d – to Jerusalem!

In response to the terrible earthquake that struck Tzefat about 170 years ago, the Chatam Sofer eulogized the city in his own community ("Torah Moshe," the portion of Emor, quoted in "Maynei Hayeshua," by Elyada Bar Shaul):

"Our G-d is righteous, and the outrage of Jerusalem caused this tragedy. For that is the gateway to heaven... It is the site of Mount Moriah, where Yitzchak was bound, it is where Yaacov lay down and dreamed of a ladder, it is the mountain where the House of G-d was built, it is the hill towards which all mouths turn in prayer, and the Shechina has never moved away from the Western Wall. And then, a hundred years ago, the people turned to Tzefat, because that is near where the holy man Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai is buried, in Miron, and where the holy ARI is buried, in Tzefat itself. And all those who came to Eretz Yisrael went only to Tzefat and Teveria, while Jerusalem was completely ignored. But this is the city with G-d's name on it, and even in these times it is a mitzva to go to Jerusalem."

## THE CHAIN OF HALACHA

**Is It Necessary to Wake Up Early on Shabbat? - by Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon, Rabbi of Southern Alon Shevut and a teacher in Yeshivat Har Etzion**

"It is the custom to rise early in the morning on this Shabbat" [Mishna Berura 444:4]. Anybody who plans on eating "matza ashira" and whose custom is to eat such matza, made with fruit juice or eggs, even while chametz is prohibited, can wake up later. However, most of those who follow Ashkenazi customs are stringent about this.

It would seem that there is a simple way to wake up relatively late. It is possible to begin the meal before the end of the time for eating chametz, starting with a large enough piece of bread, then to change the tablecloth, declare all chametz to be null and void, and then continue the meal at a leisurely pace. This seems to be a way to eat slowly without any need to wake up especially early. Why was this not suggested by the commentators?

There are several answers to this question. First, even without the problem of eating chametz we are quite pressed for time on this Shabbat, since there is a requirement to eat three meals. In addition, the suggestion in the previous paragraph might lead to problems from the point of view of the blessing to be recited. According to the Shulchan Aruch, a person who starts out with bread and then stops eating it must recite a separate blessing for every other food in the meal (such as meat and rice), since they are no longer secondary to the bread, and they are therefore not included in the blessing for the bread (177:2). The Shulchan Aruch notes that it is rare today for this to happen, since the table is usually not removed while the meal is still in progress, but the Be'er Halacha rules that according to many of the sages the same rule applies if the bread is removed from the table, even though the table itself is not moved.

On this special Shabbat, it may well be that since we are required to remove any bread it is indeed necessary to recite a special blessing for the other components of the meal – there is no clearer way of removing the bread than when it becomes forbidden by Torah law. Even though this is not definite, there is at least some doubt about whether such separate blessings should be recited. However, there is a solution for this problem too. It is possible to eat small amounts of these other foods in the first part of the meal, and then it will not be necessary to

recite separate blessings. In addition, there still remains a recognized ruling that it is possible to eat the bread first and remove it, according to the Rashba (quoted in Bei'ur Halacha).

## Practical Advice

The usual practice is to wake up early and finish the entire meal while chametz can still be eaten. This allows us to eat the third meal, Seudah Shelishit, without pressure, and avoids questions of the proper blessing for food other than bread. Somebody who wants to continue eating after this meal (until about half an hour before the end of the time when it is permitted to eat chametz) may do so. If he wants to make sure he is not obligated to recite special blessings for the food in the meal, he should eat small amounts of the same foods together with the chametz. Another possibility is to eat a very short meal, finishing before the end of the time for eating chametz, and then to eat a full meal without any bread for Seudah Shelishit, at noon.

Many people are wary of Shabbat which is also the eve of Pesach because of the many special halachic rulings that pertain to it. In fact, it does seem to have some special significance. Every year, there are many preparations for Pesach, and they are usually not completely finished until right before the holiday begins. This year, we are privileged to have a full Shabbat before the holiday begins. This provides us with sanctity and the ability to rise to a high spiritual level before the holiday itself begins. It gives us the opportunity to use Shabbat as a time of spiritual preparation before Pesach begins. In that way, we can begin the Seder rested in body and soul, and we can celebrate the Seder in a completely free way, out of a feeling of strength and a high spiritual level.

צוותי מדע ותורה



This publication is distributed by the RELIGIOUS ZIONISTS OF AMERICA - MIZRACHI and by THE ZOMET INSTITUTE OF ALON SHVUT. It is an extract from SHABBAT B'SHABBATO, a weekly bulletin distributed in hundreds of synagogues in Israel and has been translated by Moshe Goldberg. If you are interested in sponsoring an issue of Shabbat B'Shabbato, contact the RZA Mizrachi office at 212-465-9234 or [mizrachi@rza.org](mailto:mizrachi@rza.org).

## CONVENTION 2005 RELIGIOUS ZIONISM: CHARTING A PATH FORWARD

*Park East Synagogue  
163 E. 67th St., New York City*

May 15, 2005 9.00am

Speakers List (in formation): Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, David Makovsky, Dr. Yoram Hazony, Dr. Bernard Lander

Please Join us by contacting the office at 212.465.9234 or by email at [mizrachi@rza.org](mailto:mizrachi@rza.org)