



## Parshat Tazriya (Hachodesh)

No 1060:

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### STARTING POINT

#### The Kohen and the "Metzora" - by Rabbi Amnon Bazak

After the deaths of Nadav and Avihu and after the restrained reaction by Aharon and his remaining sons, the Kohanim were commanded "to separate between the holy and the secular, and between the impure and the pure. And to instruct Bnei Yisrael about all the laws which G-d gave, through Moshe." [Vayikra 10:10-11]. And this is indeed immediately followed by the laws differentiating between the ritually pure and the impure. First come the laws pertaining to eating pure and impure animals, and then the laws of impurity related to a carcass, ending with the words, "This is the law of the animals and the birds, and of all living creatures that swarm in water, and all creatures that crawl on the earth – in order to separate between the impure and the pure, and between the animal which may be eaten and the animal which may not be eaten" [11:46-47]. In the rest of the portions of Tazriya and Metzora, the laws are brought pertaining to ritual impurities related to flows that come from the human body, and impurities stemming from a person's clothing and his home. At the end of these laws, we are told, "This is the law with respect to leprosy and to a blemish; and with respect to tzara'at of clothing or a house... in order to instruct on the day of purity and of impurity." [14:54-57]. Thus, the laws of impurity of animals are discussed in terms of "separation" between the pure and the impure, while the laws of impurity of human beings, their clothing, and their homes are included as part of the "instructions" given by the Kohanim.

The difference between separating – "lehavdil" – and instructing – "lehorot" – is clearly seen in the different roles played by the Kohanim with respect to the two different kinds of impurity. In the discussion of impure animals in Chapter 11 the Kohanim are not mentioned at all. Evidently, the role of the Kohanim in this matter is a minor one, and at the very most they are responsible for teaching the laws. However, the situation is very different with respect to the ritual impurity of a person himself and of his home. The word "Kohen" appears dozens of times in this week's Torah portion, which is reasonable in that the Kohen is deeply involved in the entire procedure that a "metzora" – a leper – goes through, starting with viewing the malady, through the various stages of being locked up before each decision, and up to the process of purification. This can lead us to ask a related question: Why should it be that the Kohen is so intimately involved in the process related to the impurity of a human being or his property?

It may be that the answer to this question will bring us back to the affair of Nadav and Avihu. After they died, their family was commanded to continue the holy rituals and not to observe the

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customs of mourning. "Do not leave your heads unkempt and do not rend your garments... and your brothers, all of Bnei Yisrael, will weep about the burning that G-d did. And you shall not leave the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, lest you die, for the Divine oil of anointment is upon you." [10:6-7]. The great strength of the Kohanim was that they were able to overcome their own personal grief and continue performing the rituals of the Mishkan on that day. Because of this, they were privileged to have the responsibility for the areas of ritual purity and impurity among Bnei Yisrael.

Note that the laws of a metzora are similar to those of a mourner. "And with respect to the afflicted one who has a malady, his clothing shall be torn, and his head shall be unkempt, and he shall be dressed up to his lips, and he will cry out, 'impure, impure'" [13:45]. However, as opposed to a mourner, who in this way expresses his sorrow at the loss of a loved one, a metzora is in effect mourning about himself and about his own difficult problems. It is therefore reasonable to expect that a metzora will be given spiritual support on his long and difficult path. Nobody could be more appropriate for this task of accompanying the metzora than the Kohanim, who acutely felt the pain of mourning but struggled against their emotions with great strength. Thus, it is no coincidence that the metzora is sent "to Aharon the Kohen or to one of his sons, the Kohanim" [13:2].

### POINT OF VIEW

#### A Supreme Court Lacking in Understanding - by Rabbi Yisrael Rozen

"Bring for you wise and understanding men from your tribes, and I will place them at your heads (as judges)... And I took as the leaders of your tribes, men who were wise and prominent..." [Devarim 1:13-15]. "But I did not find people with understanding" [Rashi]. "Understands things [I Shmuel 16:18] – One who understands one thing from another." [Sanhedrin 93b].

#### A Scandalous Decision

As one who has been closely involved in the subject of conversions for a decade (as the founder of the Conversion Authority in the Chief Rabbinate in 1995, and who continues to be a judge in the conversion courts), I declare that the Supreme Court decision this past week is a national scandal of the highest degree. Note that I specifically emphasize the "national" aspect, and not the viewpoint of religion or Orthodoxy. My feeling is that the country has "gone mad" from the national point of view, and that the court has completely "missed the

boat," without the ability to understand the consequences of its actions, as would be expected of one who "understands" (see the above quotes). In fact, I fear that the situation may be even worse: Perhaps the court understands the significance of the ruling but simply does not care...

For anybody who does not know the facts, here is a summary: Fourteen foreign citizens (most of them foreign workers) turned to the court to be awarded Israeli citizenship, including immigration benefits and all the other perks, as a result of Reform "traveling conversions." That is, they studied with the Reform movement in Israel, but they obtained the formal certificate of conversion in a short trip abroad. And this point should be emphasized: Their plea to the court was approved not only with respect to their being accepted by the Interior Ministry as Jews but also with respect to obtaining full Israeli citizenship as converts under the provisions of the Law of Return.

### The Gates of Immigration to Israel

Under pressure from the Supreme Court, the state of Israel has now opened an infinitely wide gateway welcoming any Gentile in the world who wants western citizenship, an immigration package, statewide health insurance, the right to vote in the Knesset, and all the other benefits of citizenship. There is no other nation in the world that has opened its immigration laws in such a way, without any limit, giving any sect (no matter whether eccentric or serious) the keys to the gates of immigration, without retaining any ability to control or limit the process.

Let me make this point as clear as possible: the Law of Return allows immigration and the granting of citizenship to all descendents of Jewish origin (up to and including the third generation), without any possible government limitations except for reasons of national security or fighting crime. Even if I am unhappy about the large number of non-Jews that have arrived in our country because of this law (today the fraction of non-Jews among the immigrants is as high as 75%), it is clear that this number is finite and has some limit. Eventually, the pit will become empty. In addition, this non-Jewish population (descendents of Jews) does not come from the Third World, and it does not include foreign workers or similar people who are in a constant search for any crack, in order to make their way into welfare countries, Israel included.

As is known, the Law of Return opens two other paths to immigration and citizenship, also without any governmental control, and this is in addition to the main gateway, which consists of being a biological descendent of a Jew. The first is the gateway of marriage to an Israeli (quite often this is a fictitious marriage). In order to take this path, the immigrant must first find a partner, and this is often not an easy thing to do. Also, this path is mostly blocked by the Ministry of the Interior, which demands a waiting period of five years to prove the seriousness of the marriage. Fictitious marriages usually do not last that long. The Supreme Court declared that it does not especially like such drastic demands, but in the end it gave its approval to the procedure. And this leaves the second gateway

to Israeli citizenship, independent of the other two: the path of conversion.

Until now, only Orthodox conversions were recognized within the framework of the Law of Return. It is perfectly clear that foreign workers and others like them do not have a large potential as a basis for Orthodox conversion. During my ten years of experience in this area, only a few individuals overcame this hurdle and became truly Jewish (not more than a few dozen out of about 20,000 converts!). In addition, as soon as the Conversion Authority was established in the Chief Rabbinate, a committee was set up that filters out people with an inappropriate background and does not allow them to join the studies in the conversion courses unless they have a recommendation from a respected rabbi. Now, in light (or darkness?) of the ruling of the Supreme Court, every Reform "conversion certificate" in the hands of each and every person in Israel (including those who made a short "jump" into Bucharest, Cyprus, or even Jericho) will automatically make them eligible for citizenship, immigration benefits, and all the rest, just like anybody who was born a Jew.

### Depressing the Value of an Israeli Passport

Any child can understand that the "people in charge have gone mad" and have cheapened to almost nothing the "price" that must be paid in order to obtain immigration benefits. (Any child, that is, except for the short-sighted and unwise judges who cannot understand "one thing from another." Or perhaps they are cunningly feigning innocence as a way to move closer to the concept of Israel becoming "a country of all its citizens.") Some entrepreneurs (with strong business instincts) are already making plans to build a "Temple" near the Central Bus Station in Tel Aviv. There, they will hold a "Pesach Seder" for the foreign workers, they will light Chanukah candles, they will plant trees on Tu B'Shevat, they will sing some praises and recite some other rituals, and they will then take a short trip abroad to some cooperating country (with strong business instincts). And in the graduation ceremony of each course, the participants will be awarded an immigration certificate, immigration benefits, and the very desirable Israeli passport.

Tens of thousands of Afro-Asians are a significant potential for implementing this Israeli dream, a production of the Supreme Court. I can see the 300,000 foreign workers who are in the country now laughing all the way to the conversion institutes.

I want to warn the State of Israel that the money that has been reported in the press that has been used to buy conversions is peanuts compared to the large sums that will soon be changing hands in the market for passports that has now been opened with the compliments of the Supreme Court. This will be a market for buying Israeli citizenship and immigration benefits, through the new infinitely broad channel of "conversion." You have been warned!

"I did not find people with understanding" – This refers to those who do not understand the consequences of their actions (see the quotes above).

## SERMON BY A GUEST

### Impurity of a New Mother and Circumcision - by Shlomit Tur-Paz, Director of Itim Institute – Consultants on the subject of the Jewish life cycle

"A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son will be impure for seven days... and on the eighth day his foreskin will be removed, and for thirty-three days she will sit with the blood of purity... And if she gives birth to a female, she will be impure for two weeks, the time of her bleeding, and she will then sit with the blood of purity for sixty-six days." [Vayikra 12:2-5]. Why are the laws of purity different after the birth of a boy and after the birth of a girl?

Various explanations have been given in the classical sources for this difference. For example, one approach emphasizes the way the fetus is created. "Rabbi Yishmael says... a male is completely formed within forty-one days, while a female is formed in eighty-one days" [Mishna Nida 3:7, and see the comment by Ibn Ezra]. Another explanation is that this practice is related to the common preference of parents to have a son: "Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai said... with respect to a boy, about which everybody rejoices, the woman regrets her oath (not to have any more children, because of the pain of childbirth) after one week, but with respect to a girl, about which there is a tendency to be less happy, the woman regrets her oath after fourteen days." [Nida 31b, and see Ha'amek Davar]. A third explanation is related to the mother's recovery after the birth: "The suffering after birth of a female is greater than that after the birth of a male" [Nida 31a, and see Ramban].

It would seem at first glance that the rules for the birth of a girl are those which best match the natural events. From this point of view, the time of impurity should be about two weeks, since this is approximately the usual time of separation between man and woman every month and it corresponds roughly to the normal time needed for the initial recovery from giving birth. The second period of eighty days corresponds to what has been called the "fourth term of pregnancy" (which is usually divided into three "terms") – a period of about three months which is required for the woman to return to full activity after giving birth. This also corresponds to the normal time of birth leave, 84 days. But then the question is: Why are the times after the birth of a boy substantially less than these limits? The answer is that the decrease in time is related to the circumcision, which is performed on the eighth day. This forces the family to leave the home and go out in public, within the community, after only one week has passed. In this way, the Brit Mila is similar to other Jewish life cycle events that take seven days: seven days of celebration after a wedding, seven days of mourning, and seven days between birth and circumcision.

Circumcision, as an obligation that the father must perform for his son, is an event that enhances the link between father and son. In the same way as the link between mother and child formed by the pregnancy itself, the Brit involves the formation of a physical connection, a link of blood, which involves pain and remains forever as a mark on the body. There is only one relationship which does not have this kind of link, that between father and daughter. It is clear that for every parent this

physical link is only the first step in an intimate relationship that will develop through years of love, education, and shared experiences. However, a father and daughter have a special challenge to create a bond by a process which is slow, based on emotion and education, without the trigger of any physical event. The growing trend to leave the education of older sons to the father and to have the mother responsible for the education of the girls involves a danger that this challenge will not be fully met.

## TORAH, SOCIETY, AND GOVERNMENT

### "She Shall be Impure for the Days of Mensration" - by Rabbi Uri Dasberg

According to the halacha, a husband and wife must be separated from each other when the time comes that she might possibly experience a secretion of blood. This time from one secretion to another is called "veset," a time span, and it is the constant time from one flow to the next. This time span varies from one woman to another, and the sages estimated that it is usually about 30 days. In addition, there is a law of the "average period." This is 30 days since the last time of bleeding, when it is necessary to separate (or check for blood).

This "average period" is the source of much disagreement:

- (1) Is this relevant only for a woman who does not have an established period, such that one who does have a regular period can ignore the average of 30 days?
- (2) If a woman who has an established period did not have a blood flow at her regular time, must she take the "average period" into account?
- (3) What are the rules of the "average period" – is it enough to check the situation or is it required for the man and woman to separate from one another at this time?
- (4) How long must the "average period" be in effect? That is, if the last blood flow took place during the day, is it enough to take this into account only during the day (or only at night, if the last flow took place at night)? Or, must the man and woman observe the "average period" for a full 24 hours?
- (5) We have given the length of the "average period" as 30 days, but in reality this in itself is not definite: Some commentators feel that what counts is to return to the same date on the Hebrew calendar, others indeed count exactly 30 days, and a third group counts 31 days.
- (6) The obligation to stay apart on the regular day of the period (where each woman acts according to her schedule) is based on the law of "chazaka" – an assumption that events will be repeated as in the past – and this is a principle from Torah law. The obligations stemming from an "average period" depend on the statistical fact that most women have blood flows after the time spans stated above. It is true that the rules of "majority" are also Torah law. However, "chazaka" is linked to the history of this specific woman, while a "majority" is something that can change from time to time. In modern times, the typical time from one blood flow to another varies from 27 to 29 days, and this also changes with age. Since this weakens the principle of a "majority," perhaps the obligation related to an "average period" is no longer a Torah requirement but has been replaced by a rabbinical injunction.

(7) If a woman has checked herself and has not found any blood for three times at the interval of the "average period," can she consider that this time span is no longer relevant for her?

(8) Is it necessary to observe an "average period" while a woman is pregnant?

All of these issues are quite complicated and they must be studied in great detail. To resolve the issues, it is necessary to seek the guidance of rabbis and consultants. In any case, it is clear that every woman must keep accurate records of her own.

Reference: Rabbi Yaacov Warhaftig, "Techumin," volume 24, pages 235-242

## A LESSON FOR THE CHILDREN

### Patience - by Rabbi Yikhat Rozen, Merkaz Neria, Kiryat Malachi

One day, a man who was very patient and relaxed by nature took a small calf from his village to the big city, in order to sell it in the market. He was very happy, because it was very rare for the people of his village to be able to sell their farm produce in the market. It was not often that he allowed himself to remove any animals from his small flock and sell the young calves, and this was one of those rare times. He had a long road to travel, and he did not have any money with which to rent a wagon to take to the city, but he did not hesitate, and he pulled the calf behind him with a rope, going on foot towards the city.

As he went merrily on his way, he met a man, who asked him: "Where are you taking that calf?" And the farmer answered, "To the city, my friend, G-d bless you."

Soon, another man passed the farmer and asked: "Where are you taking this calf?" And the farmer answered once again, "To the city, my friend, G-d bless you."

In a short time, the farmer met a third, a fourth, and a fifth person. This road was the main thoroughfare, and it had many people walking on it, aside from many riders in carriages and on horses and donkeys. The sight of a man walking on the main road with a calf was unusual, and every passerby asked him the same question. The friendly farmer answered each and every one: "To the city, my friend, G-d bless you."

But the farmer's patience began to wear thin. After the man with the calf had given the same answer many times, he began to feel upset. And his reply became shorter than before. When the next man asked where he was taking the calf, he simply said, "To the city, my friend."

The road was a long one. The farmer began to sweat from the long journey, and he was tired of pulling the calf. The passersby continued to ask about the calf, and he continued to respond briefly.

The interest of the other people continued, and the farmer's answer got shorter and shorter. By now, he would simply reply: "To the city!"

The farmer's voice grew more and more stubborn, and he became very impatient. What did all these people want from him, the man asked himself. Did I do anything to them? Does this calf belong to them? He became very angry and he decided that all of these strangers had joined together on purpose, to mock him.

And now, somebody new approached him. This man saw somebody walking, holding a rope and pulling a small calf behind him. The man innocently asked the farmer, with a smile of interest: "Where are you taking this calf?" The farmer saw the smile and he was filled with anger. Was this man mocking him? Did he want to laugh at me or my calf? The farmer attacked the man and started to beat him, until he killed him...

What is the moral of this story? Look how much we should appreciate the rabbis, the doctors, the clerks, the drivers, and all the other people that we meet who hear the same questions over and over again. They give the same answers, always in a pleasant manner, with a smile, and with patience. Let us learn from these people. We should understand that every person who asks a question feels as if he was the first one to ask this question. Shouldn't we take this into account when we answer?

(Source: Theodore Herzl, "Herzl's Stories," from the translation by Dov Kimchi)

## THE WAYS OF THE FATHERS (Pirkei Avot)

### Chapter 6 Mishna 2 - 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."

The first Mishna in Avot notes that Moshe received the Torah at Sinai and passed it on to Yehoshua, who then gave it to the sages, and so on. It describes the unique historical event of giving the Torah to Moshe, which has been the basis for its continued transfer from generation to generation. Now, in this Mishna, Rabbi Yehoshua wants to emphasize the continuous never-ending link to the original source at Sinai. "Each and every day a heavenly voice comes forth from Mount Chorev." This implies that the original source continues to give out Torah. In addition, the fact that the heavenly voice emanates from Mount Chorev implies that it is not meant only for the outstanding people of the generation, like Moshe, but that it is available to every single individual. That is, the Torah is not something meant only for the elite, it is meant for everybody. Every person is told to turn his heart and his ears towards the original source and to become involved in the Torah. This means not only to study now and then or to study in one's youth as a preparation for later life but to maintain a daily contact. After all, the heavenly voice calls out every single day.

This daily call which Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi describes reminds us of another daily declaration about which Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi taught us. It is written that Rabbi Yehoshua met Eliyahu, the prophet, and asked him when the Mashiach

would come (Sanhedrin 98a). And Eliyahu replied, Go and ask him yourself. When Rabbi Yehoshua found the Mashiach by following the prophet's instructions and asked when he would arrive, the answer was: Today. In the end, Rabbi Yehoshua complained to Eliyahu that the Mashiach had not told the truth, since he did not arrive that day. Eliyahu explained that the Mashiach had indeed wanted to come that day, but only on one condition: "Today, if you listen to his voice" [Tehillim 95:7].

Thus, the arrival of the Mashiach and the redemption are not linked to a specific date on a calendar but they are events which can occur at any time. They depend not so much on the Mashiach but rather on the actions of Bnei Yisrael. When Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi heard that the key to redemption is in our own hands, and that by listening to G-d's voice we advance the time of redemption, he understood that the giving of the Torah is also a continuing process which began at Sinai. Just as "one who is constantly involved in the Torah rises to greater heights," so each generation rises in level by studying the Torah, and in this way brings the time of Mashiach's arrival closer.

This means that the giving of the Torah in the past and the arrival of the Mashiach in the future are not only historical opportunities, they are also expressions of the beginnings of a process and its eventual goal. And these processes continue to develop, generation by generation.

## HOLY AND SECULAR

### The Pure and Righteous - by Rabbi Amichai Gordin

"How do we know that the lulav is the part of the palm tree that is part of the Four Species of Succot?" the Talmud asks in Succah (32a). "Perhaps what must be held is a young tree?" And Abayei replies, "It's ways are pleasant paths [Mishlei 3:17] – The Torah does not want us to carry a thorny branch on Succot that will scratch us every morning."

Our Torah is a way of life. Our Torah, as opposed to Christianity, for example, does not seek people who fight an all-out war against their natural urges, our Torah wants people to sanctify their natural inclinations and refine their lusts. Our Torah wants a life that sanctifies the world and not a life that destroys it.

However, the situation is not always that simple. Sometimes, there is a contradiction between the halacha and spiritual or physical needs. Often it is impossible to reconcile the commands of the Torah with our inclinations and our powers. Then the laws of the Torah force us into an uncompromising struggle against the world of desire.

This type of struggle cannot end with absolute victory over the bad traits. Rather, the victories in such a struggle are of a silent type, and the warriors are modest. The section below is dedicated to these humble warriors, the purest and most righteous of men, in full appreciation of their role.

Once, I heard an interesting Chassidic question: It is written that a person does not sin unless he or she is taken over by a

spirit of foolishness. If that is true, how can somebody be punished for a sin, when we know that a fool is not obligated by any of the mitzvot? The answer that the wise men of Chassidut give to this question is very simple: The punishment is not for the sin but because we did not repent afterwards!

Even if righteous and pure people stumble and fall, they rise up afterwards. They know that what is important is the will and the intention. In the First World War, Germany tried to swallow France. The German forces had a great advantage over the French, but the French nevertheless fought to hinder the rapid advance of the enemy. They stood before a larger force than their own, a force which had triumphed in every battle, but they understood that their tragic role was to block the advance of the Germans. In the end, because of these valiant soldiers, the French army managed to stop the Germans.

The righteous people do their very best. If they are defeated now and then, it is not a serious problem. This does not mean that they are bad people but rather that they have an opportunity to do better the next time, or the time after that. They do not feel frustrated by what happened, they pick themselves up, brush the dust off their clothing, and continue to march forward.

Repentance consists of regret (for the past), confession (in the present), and a resolution about the future. One who repents must indeed look at the past, but the goal of this view is to improve the future. The righteous person regrets the past in order to be able to continue to surge forward. The righteous person is not mired by the bonds with the past, he continues to emphasize the long path that lies ahead. What has happened in the past, and how much effort are the soldiers at his side putting into the battle? These questions are not relevant for him.

Rewards are not distributed by heaven in return for success but according to the effort that was expended. One who makes an attempt and fails receives a reward, and one who succeeds without making any effort is not given a reward. The Almighty knows exactly what challenge every person has and what he has to struggle against. G-d and nobody else will decide who should receive the medals. Only G-d knows whether a person is righteous or evil.

(Note: Notes on the Daf Yomi by Rabbi Amichai Gordin are available at the website of the Virtual Beit Midrash, [www.etzion.org.il](http://www.etzion.org.il).)

## THE CHAIN OF HALACHA

### The Shabbat Meals - by Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon, Rabbi of Southern Alon Shevut and a teacher in Yeshivat Har Etzion

In principle, this year we have two alternative ways of observing the mitzva of "Lechem Mishna," eating two loaves of bread on Shabbat, on the day before Pesach. We can either eat chametz or matza. Each choice presents its own challenges, but they can all be met.

## Eating Matza

According to the Talmud Yerushalmi, it is forbidden to eat matza on the day before Pesach: "One who eats matza on the eve of Pesach can be compared to one who sleeps with his betrothed in his father-in-law's house. And one who sleeps with his betrothed is punished by lashes." [Pesachim 10:1]. The ruling of the Yerushalmi is quoted by the early commentators, and it is accepted by the Shulchan Aruch (471). The commentators have suggested several reasons for this prohibition. The Meiri writes that the purpose is to make sure matza is eaten at night with full desire. Rambam writes that because of the prohibition the matza eaten at night is clearly seen to be due to the mitzva (Hilchot Chametz U'Matza 2;12); and the Rokeach explains that matza is equated to the Pesach sacrifice.

The rabbis disagree about the time when the prohibition to eat matza begins, whether it is in the morning of the fourteenth or the evening before. The RAMA rules that the prohibition begins at dawn (471:2), and the Mishna Berura adds that some people have a custom not to eat matza from the beginning of the month of Nissan (471:12). Thus, eating matza on Shabbat right before Pesach is clearly a problem. In Igrot Moshe, it is written that the custom is not to eat matza on Friday night either (Orach Chaim 155).

One solution to this problem is to eat "matza ashira," matza prepared not with water but with wine, oil, honey, fruit juice, or eggs. The Talmud discusses the laws pertaining to such matza (Pesachim 35a), and the commentators do not agree about the halacha. The Shulchan Aruch rules that fruit juice prevents the dough from becoming chametz, so that matza ashira is kosher for Pesach, while the RAMA rules that matza should not be made with fruit juice. The Mishna Berura explains that the RAMA fears that fruit juice might indeed cause the matza to be chametz, and also that he is afraid that some water will be mixed in with the juice.

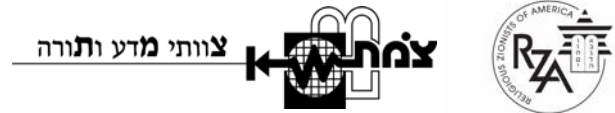
In any case, there is no problem in eating matza ashira on the fourteenth of Nissan, the day before Pesach, until the fourth hour of the day, since up to that time even actual chametz can be eaten. The rabbis disagree about whether it is permitted to eat matza ashira after the fourth hour of the day. The Aruch Hashulchan permits this until the tenth hour (about 2:50 pm), while Shulchan Aruch Harav (Sha'ar Hatzion 444:1) and Igrot Moshe (Orach Chaim 155) feel that matza ashira should not be eaten after the time of eating chametz has passed.

A different problem with matza ashira is related to the blessing to be recited. Should the blessing be "Hamotzi," the blessing for bread, or "Mezonot," for cake? The Maharil feels that the blessing should be that of cake, as does Rabbi Ovadia Yosef (Yechaveh Da'at 1:91). The Radbaz, on the other hand, writes explicitly that one who eats matza ashira on Shabbat before Pesach recites the blessing for bread. This is also accepted by Igrot Moshe (155) and the Mishna Berura (471:21).

In practice, Igrot Moshe proposes that on Shabbat the day before Pesach matza ashira can be eaten instead of bread only for the first two meals. Those who want to follow this ruling

should buy matza ashira that is certified kosher for Pesach, and it is best to obtain matza ashira that was not given the opportunity to become chametz (that is, it was baked under the same conditions as regular matza).

Some people prefer not to use this solution, either because of the problem of the blessing to be recited or because they feel that matza ashira is included in the prohibition of eating matza on the fourteenth of the month. Next week we will discuss alternate solutions for this dilemma.



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