

## Rabbi's Article II

### Challah Cancels Idolatry!

Very often, after explaining the "*I have come only [to teach] the simple meaning of the Scripture*" of Rashi, the Rebbe would then delve into the '*Wine of Torah*' (esoteric teachings) to be learned from the Rashi. And so it is with the Rashi explained in the article, "*The Biblical Challah*".

The Midrash (-Vayikra Rabba 15:6, [Link](#)) teaches, "*Why was the Torah-portion of challah (-Numbers 15:17-21) assigned to the Torah-portion of idolatry (-ibid, 15:22), 'And if you should err --Rashi: 'Scripture speaks of idolatry'-- and not fulfill all these commandments', to tell you that anyone who maintains the mitzva of challah is as if he canceled idolatry, and everyone who cancels the mitzva of challah is as if he maintains idolatry.*"

**Question:** What is the connection between (a) the mitzva of *challah*, (b) entailed of the simple action a Jew does with his dough, with (a) cancelling idolatry, (b) which is a foundation of faith and of the entire Torah?

Additionally, why are the sages using the terminology, "*anyone who maintains the mitzva of challah,*" and, "*as if he cancelled idolatry,*" which denotes that idolatry already existed, and the individual is now only either *maintaining* or *cancelling* the pre-existing idolatry? Why do the sages not use their regular terminology of "*denies*" and "*acknowledges*" (or "*serves*") idolatry?

**The Explanation:** One of the insights given to the nature of the mitzva of *challah* is that by, "*You shall set aside a gift for G-d the first portion of your dough,*" a person acknowledges that all of his sustenance comes from G-d. Being that one's sustenance --generally referred to as *bread*-- demands the human's work of plowing, sewing, harvesting, etc. ((-Shabbat 74b), "*Our sage cited the sequence of (preparing) bread*"), for the Jew just as for the gentile, hence, the Jew may think, (i) his sustenance comes not from G-d, but through his work, according to the *Laws of Nature*, and (b) even if we are to say that G-d is the one who established the *Laws of Nature*, nevertheless, once G-d set the *Laws of Nature*, they now function on their own, with no need for G-d. Therefore, the mitzva of *challah* comes to teach us that, even though producing sustenance demands work, imposed upon us by the *Laws of Nature*, nevertheless, "*The first of your dough,*" the source of our sustenance is, "*a gift for G-d,*" comes from G-d! In other words, the source of our sustenance is, (-Proverbs 10:22) "*It is the blessing of G-d that will bring riches,*" and (-Deuteronomy 8:18), "*For it is He Who gives you strength to make wealth.*" More than this, being that (-Prayer, Blessings of Shema), "*In His goodness He renews the creation of the world ever day continuously,*" thus, not only does, "*the blessing of G-d,*" clothe itself within nature, but rather, nature itself, and all its functions, is not an existence of its own, but rather, their entire existence is that G-d continuously brings them into existence, vivifies them, and maintains them!

This is why Rashi (see the article, "*The Biblical Challah*"), in the, "*simple meaning of the Scripture,*" sees the essence of the mitzva of *challah* not as a mitzva of charity, that it be given to the *kohain*, but rather, first and foremost it is the mitzva of, "*A Teruma to G-d,*" being that the essence of the mitzva is to acknowledge that all one's sustenance comes from G-d!

The prohibition of idolatry is not just the actual act of idolatry, accepting upon one's self a foreign god, G-d forbid. Rather, as Maimonides explains in his opening to his *Laws of Idolatry*, "*Mankind made a great mistake... They said G-d created stars and spheres with which to control the world... Accordingly, it is fitting to praise and glorify them and to treat them with honor.*" In other words, giving any credence of having the 'power of control' to the *stars, spheres*, and so too, to the *Laws of Nature*, other than that are but, "*As an ax in the hand of the carver,*" is a form of idolatry. On an even more refined level, to merely see creation and its *Laws of Nature* as an existence of its own, other than, "*G-d is everything and everything is G-d,*" is idolatry, for (-Deuteronomy 4:35), "*There is none else besides Him!*"

However, in this world and its *Laws of Nature*, this ("*There is none else besides Him!*") is not recognizable. Creation presents itself as an existence of its own, and one needs to study and contemplate in order to see, "*There is a Master to this palace!*" Therefore, when a Jew "*maintains the mitzva of challah*" he is acknowledging and revealing that his "*dough*", his sustenance that *he works for*, is absolutely and completely from G-d, and through this he "*cancels*" the existing idolatry of creations natural disposition, that it is an existence of its own. On the other hand, when he "*cancels the mitzva of challah*" he is "*maintaining*" the pre-existing "*idolatrous paradigm*" of the world and its *Laws of Nature* are a force and an existence of their own.

More than this, if one does not observe the mitzva of *challah* by accident, that he forgot, with this too, he is "*maintaining*" idolatry, for only that which is not plain and clear to all can be forgotten, hence, his forgetting is reinforcing that G-d's dominance, and G-d's being the only existence, is not present, and what is plain and clear is that the world is an existence of its own.

With this, we can now understand the different measurements there is to the *challah* that is separated and given to G-d (see the article, "*The Biblical Challah*"). Just as the prohibition of idolatry is of any "*something*", so too, the measurement of *challah*, on its own, has no measurement, and any "*something*" is suffice. While, on the other hand, just as with idolatry (see Maimonides, quoted above), which evolved into deifying definable and measurable beings, such as the sun, moon, statues, etc., or at the least (-Avoda Zorah 46a), "*Erected a brick in order to bow to it,*" hence, "*the sages gave a --quantifiable-- measurement,*" for the mitzva of *challah*, as well.

Meaning, from the point of the *Essence of the Soul*, the concept of *Faith*, the prohibition of idolatry is of any "something". For in *Faith* it is forbidden to give any "something" an *existence* outside of G-d. So too, with the *positive realm* of the mitzva of *challah*, representing the *Pinnacle of Faith*, there is no quantitative measurement, and any "something" amount suffices. However, in the qualitative arena, the "*Challah: Pinnacle of Faith* of the *Essence of the Soul*," its *qualitative infinity* is not limited to any *quantitative* amount. Then, "However, the sages (intellect; wisdom) *gave an amount*". For when *Faith* (*Essence of the Soul*) descends into the *wisdom* and *intellect* of the soul, --just as by idolatry, there then is a legal quantitative measurement to its prohibition, so too,-- the mitzva of *challah* --the *cancellation* of idolatry within the intellect of the person-- now needs to have a legal quantitative amount of dough that is to be given to G-d.

Being that we are speaking of *challah* being the *cancellation* of idolatry, of giving any credence to the *Laws of Nature*, through which he habitually earns his livelihood, hence, there is the difference between the required measurement of *challah* for the *baker* and for the *householder*. The *Business Man* on the street openly sees the *Divine Providence* that correlates all the 'coincidences' that align for him to earn his livelihood. Therefore, the *baker* only has to give  $1/48^{\text{th}}$  of the dough as *challah*, in order to recognize that all sustenance comes from G-d. While the *Baaleh Busteh* (*householder*), who receives all the ingredients at home ready to use, needs to give the larger amount  $1/24^{\text{th}}$  of the dough as *challah*, in order to recognize that all sustenance comes from G-d.