



Likkutei Sichos

Volume 16 | Bo | Sichah 4

Rich Bread, Broke Bread

Translated by Rabbi Eliezer Zalmanov

General Editor: Rabbi Eliezer Robbins | Editor: Rabbi Y. Eliezer Danzinger

Content Editor: Rabbi Zalmy Avtzon

© Copyright by Sichos In English 2023 ◦ 5783

A note on the translation: Rounded and square brackets reflect their use in the original *sichah*; curly brackets are interpolations of the translator or editor. The footnotes in curly brackets are those of the translator or editors and do not correspond to the footnotes in the original. Bolded words are italicized in the original text.

Considerable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the translation, while maintaining readability. As in all translations, however, the possibility of inadvertent errors exists.

Feedback is appreciated — please send comments to: info@projectlikkuteisichos.org

1.

MATZAH BEFORE THE EXODUS

Regarding the mitzvah,¹ “They shall eat... on this night... and matzos...” — that on the night of the 15th of Nissan, while still in Egypt, the Jews were required to eat matzah — we find something astonishing; seemingly:

When the mitzvah to eat matzah is given for future generations (in *parshas Re’eh*), the Torah says:² “For seven days you shall eat matzos with it,³ bread of poverty,⁴ for in haste you departed from the land of Egypt.” This is the source⁵ of the requirement for matzah to be specifically “bread of **poverty**” {i.e., bland matzah}⁶ — as opposed to enriched matzah.⁷ So, since in our *parshah*, which discusses the matzah eaten in Egypt, there is no mention of it being “bread of poverty,” the inference is that in Egypt, it was conceivable for the Jews to have fulfilled their obligation of eating matzah by eating enriched matzah.

On this basis, it is understood that although for future Pesach observances, the matzah must be specifically “bread of poverty,” before the actual Egyptian exodus, however, enriched matzah could have conceivably been used. But even then, they did not eat enriched matzah while **leaving** (because then the Jews had eaten “bread of poverty”); they only ate enriched matzah **prior** to leaving (to prepare for the Exodus).

¹ *Shemos* 12:8.

² *Devarim* 16:3.

³ {In the verse, “it” refers to the pesach sacrifice.}

⁴ {In the original, “*Lechem oni*”; lit., “poor bread,” bland matzah made only with flour and water.}

⁵ *Pesachim* 35a, 36a; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Chametz uMatzah*,” ch. 5, par. 20; *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Orach Chaim*,” sec. 462, par. 1; Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, sec. 462, par. 1; sec. 462, par. 6; sec. 454, par. 4.

⁶ {Containing flour and water only.}

⁷ {In the original, “*matzah ashirah*”; referring to matzah made also with (added) fruit juice, eggs or other ingredients aside from flour and water.}

2.

ENRICHED MATZAH TODAY

The *pesach* observance in Egypt is the source and basis for the *pesach* (and matzah) observance of future generations. This means that the above point regarding how Pesach was observed in Egypt (that to prepare for the Exodus, enriched matzah conceivably could have been used) must also exist (it must have a parallel) in future Pesach observances:

The *Mordechai*⁸ says⁹ that “during Temple times, the entire {Pesach} *seder* was held after the {festival} meal, and the matzah was only eaten on a full stomach...,” and, “in those days, enriched matzah was eaten during their meal”¹⁰ (so that the blessing of *hamotzi* recited for the meal shouldn’t be recited over matzah with which they will later — during the *seder* — fulfill the mitzvah of eating matzah {viz., bread of poverty}).¹¹

We find a **resemblance** of this also nowadays (although we conduct the *seder* **before** the meal): According to halachah, on Erev Pesach¹² (prior to the tenth hour of the day), although consuming {regular} matzah is forbidden,¹³ “eating enriched matzah is allowed.”¹⁴ We can say that since *Shulchan Aruch* (that is, Torah) unreservedly¹⁵ permits eating enriched matzah then, this indicates that on **Erev** Pesach (when the Jews were preparing for Pesach and their exodus from Egypt), the Torah allowed for the consumption of enriched matzah.

⁸ {Rabbi Mordechai ben Hillel HaKohen, 1250-1298, a Talmud commentator and halachic decisor. His primary commentary on the Talmud is referred to as “*Mordechai*.”}

⁹ End of *Pesachim*, in the laws of the *seder*, quoting Rabbeinu Meir; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Chametz uMatzah*,” ch. 8 disagrees.

¹⁰ *Pesachim*, at the end (119b).

¹¹ See *Pesachim* 115a, at the beg.

¹² {The day before Pesach.}

¹³ *Jerusalem Talmud*, *Pesachim* 10:1 (quoted by *Tosafos*, *Pesachim* 99b, s.v. “*lo yochal*”); *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Chametz uMatzah*,” ch. 6, par. 12; *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Orach Chaim*,” sec. 471, par. 2; Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, sec. 471, par. 4.

¹⁴ *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Orach Chaim*,” sec. 471, par. 2; Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, sec. 471, par. 4.

¹⁵ See *Tosafos*, s.v., “*lo yochal*,” loc cit., (at the end): “However, enriched matzah is permitted, and **this was the practice of Rabbeinu Tam**”; *Hagaos Maimonides*, “*Hilchos Chametz uMatzah*,” end of ch. 6; et al.

3.

DEPARTING IN HASTE

In the (above) verse, which commands us to eat **bread of poverty**, the Torah explains this requirement — “for in haste you departed from the land of Egypt” (and thus, “dough did not have the chance to leaven”).¹⁶

Since “bread of **poverty**” excludes more than just **chametz**, but also enriched matzah (as discussed), it makes sense that the clause, “for in haste you departed...” is also the reason that the obligation cannot be discharged by eating enriched matzah.

We need to clarify: How does the clause, “for in haste you departed,” disqualify enriched matzah from being used to fulfill the mitzvah?

4.

ENRICHED MATZAH IN EGYPT

From the beginning of the same verse — “You shall not eat *chametz* with it, for seven days you shall eat matzos with it...” — we learn that the obligation of {eating} matzah can only be fulfilled with “grains that can become leavened.”¹⁷

[The logical connection between the clause, “for in haste you departed...,” and **this** law (and how this clause serves as the rationale for this law) can be explained simply: Since for their *pesach* observance in Egypt, the Jews used dough that **could have** become *chametz*, and **only** because of the haste, it did “not **have the chance** to leaven,” therefore, the matzah that we eat to commemorate the Exodus must also be made of “grains that can become leavened.” Thus, there must {also} be something that prevents it {from

¹⁶ Rashi on *Devarim* 16:3.

¹⁷ *Pesachim* 35a.

leavening} — **we must guard it** from leavening to commemorate the Exodus — recalling the detail of “**in haste** you departed...”]

And since regarding both these laws — a) concerning rich matzah; and, b) concerning grains that cannot become leavened — Scripture offers the same reason (“for in haste you departed...”), it is understood that both types of matzah share the **same** general deficiency when it comes to fulfilling the obligation of eating matzah.

Conversely, although the prohibition of enriched matzah only went into effect for future *pesach* observances (as mentioned in Section 1), when Pesach was observed in Egypt, there was already a (general) rule that the matzah that they ate on the night of Pesach (had to be made of dough that) could “become leavened.” This is derived (in the *Jerusalem Talmud*)¹⁸ from the verse,¹⁹ “You shall guard the matzahs,” {implying} that the obligation can only be fulfilled with “matzah that requires guarding.” In other words, although when Pesach was observed in Egypt, the obligation could have been fulfilled with enriched matzah, it still had to be dough that required guarding [for example, by mixing water with fruit juice, as then, the dough can leaven; in fact, the fruit juice hastens the leavening process].

5.

NO POTENTIAL FOR EVIL

The explanation for all the above (from a deeper perspective) will be clarified based on defining the difference between “bread of poverty” and enriched matzah in a person’s *avodah*:

“Bread of poverty” is made from dough that contains only flour and water — water has no (and gives no) flavor. Enriched matzah is made from dough that

¹⁸ *Jerusalem Talmud*, “*Pesachim*,” ch. 2, *halachah* 4.

¹⁹ *Shemos* 12:17 (indicating that they were commanded to guard the matzos while they were still in Egypt).

is kneaded with wine, oil, honey (or other fruit juices), which *do* give the dough flavor.

Translated in terms of *avodah*: “Bread of poverty” refers to serving Hashem with *kabbalas ol*²⁰ (rather than with “enjoyment”). Although a person can’t make sense of Divine matters intellectually and (therefore) cannot **enjoy** them, nevertheless, he serves Hashem with *kabbalas ol*. “Enriched matzah” refers to serving Hashem with understanding, and this type of *avodah* has “*taam*”;²¹ it is enjoyable.

When a Jew’s *avodah* is motivated only by *kabbalas ol*, without the “*taam*” of intellect and emotion, his mindset is such that it is **conceivable**, intellectually and emotionally, to do something bad. Only because he is empowered by *kabbalas ol* is he able to subdue the bad (*iskafya*)²² and serve Hashem. But when his *avodah* is a result of (perfect) reason and understanding, then his intellect and emotions automatically **negate** the potential for transgressing the Divine will. There is simply no evil (*is’hapcha*).²³

This is how the two types of matzah [(a) enriched matzah, and (b) matzah made from grain that can’t become leavened] connect on a deeper level. One feature results from the other: *Avodah* that is performed perfectly, as “enriched matzah,” engaging a person’s intellect and emotion, will **automatically** prevent the possibility of leavening and evil. [This is analogous to how enriched matzah simply **cannot** become leavened (ordinarily)].²⁴

Only (the *avodah* of) “bread of poverty” — *kabbalas ol* — allows for the possibility of *chametz* and evil (it can become leavened), except that the evil is subdued, and any type of spreading, rising, or leavening is prevented by

²⁰ {Lit., “acceptance of the yoke (of Heaven),” meaning, unquestioning, disciplined, self-subordination to Hashem and His will.}

²¹ {*Taam* means both “taste” and “reason.”}

²² {Lit., “bending,” the *avodah* of a person subduing his negative impulses and overcoming his urges and impulses.}

²³ {Lit., “transformation,” the *avodah* of a person transforming his negative impulses and urges into good.}

²⁴ Unless water is included in the batter, since fruit juice (alone) cannot leaven dough. (*Pesachim* 35b; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Chametz uMatzah*,” ch. 5, par. 2; *Tur*, *Shulchan Aruch* (and Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*), sec. 462.

{fulfilling the command}, “you shall guard” — {which entails} *avodah* and engagement.²⁵

6.

WHY THE HASTE

These two types of *avodah* are also expressed, generally speaking, in the two general forms of redemption — the Redemption from Egypt and the Future Redemption:

Regarding the Redemption from Egypt, the Torah says,²⁶ “the people had fled” (denoting haste), because, “the evil in the souls of Israel was still **strong**,”²⁷ therefore, they had to flee the evil of the “Egyptian impurity.” This is “bread of poverty” — the *avodah* of *iskafya*. In contrast, in the Future Era, “you will not leave in haste,”²⁸ and “I will remove the spirit of impurity from the land,”²⁹ a state of *is’hapcha* — enriched matzah.

This explains how “in haste you departed...” serves as the reason that matzah on the *seder* night may not be enriched (and why it also may not be made from dough made of grains that cannot become leavened): Since “**in haste** you departed...” — because the evil was still strong (as discussed) — the required *avodah* was that of *kabbalas ol* and *iskafya*, “bread of poverty” specifically.

²⁵ {While a person is working and busy with the dough, this activity prevents the dough from leavening.}

²⁶ *Shemos* 14:5.

²⁷ *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 31.

²⁸ *Yeshayahu* 52:12.

²⁹ *Zechariah* 13:2.

THE ADVANTAGE OF TOIL

One cannot fulfill the obligation to eat matzah on Pesach {nowadays} with enriched matzah not only because the idea of enriched matzah is **dissimilar** to the idea of our Redemption from Egypt, when “the people **fled**” [*kabbalas ol* and *iskafya*, as discussed above], but also because bread of poverty itself (and also the Redemption from Egypt) has an advantage over enriched matzah (and the Future Redemption):

Although *is’hapcha* (enriched matzah) causes the evil to become entirely nullified, in one way, *iskafya* is still superior. Only **this** *avodah* of *iskafya* is intertwined with a person’s **struggle** — the person battling with his adversary and subduing evil.

Put differently: *Is’hapcha* is expressed by how a person **unites** with G-dliness by refining himself such that his selfhood leaves no place for evil. *Iskafya*, however, expresses a person’s **bittul**³⁰ and submission to G-dliness — how, despite his intellect and emotions still leaving the potential of evil, he stifles himself, acting contrary to the proclivities of **his** selfhood, and fulfilling Hashem’s will.

This is one explanation why also in the era of the Future Redemption, the exodus from Egypt will still be commemorated³¹ — because the ultimate purpose is for there to be **both** qualities: Even when a person is at the stage of *is’hapcha* — a person’s nature being fully refined to the point that there can be no evil — there should still be the benefit of *iskafya* (the Redemption from Egypt); a person should have **bittul**, as expressed through *avodah* and exertion.

³⁰ {*Bittul* connotes self-nullification, humility, and the negation of ego.}

³¹ *Berachos* 1:5.

8.

EACH REDEMPTION CONTAINS AND EFFECTS THE OTHER

In *Torah Or*,³² the Alter Rebbe explains that when the Torah says, regarding the **Redemption from Egypt**, “I will also bring you back up again”³³ {using the repetitive wording³⁴ of אעלך גם עלה} — implying two ascents — it alludes also to a second ascent, which will occur at the Future Redemption.

Consequently, it is understood that just as the Redemption from Egypt will be “mentioned” after the Future Redemption — the Redemption from Egypt will influence the Future Redemption — the converse is also true. Namely, Hashem’s promise and **words**³⁵ regarding the Future Redemption needed to be felt at the Redemption from Egypt.

To explain: How can a person find the strength to battle (and vanquish) his evil even when it is strong [and even **after** overcoming it, it still retains its strength (the same as it was at the exodus from Egypt, forcing the Jewish people to **flee**)]? This is facilitated by the person recognizing and sensing that his *avodah* of *iskafya* will eventually lead to *is’hapcha*.

Thus, even before the Redemption from Egypt began, Hashem already spoke about **both** ascents, informing the Jews — “I will also bring you back up again, אעלך גם עלה” — which also refers to the Future Redemption.

³² *Torah Or*, beg. of “*Shemos*.”

³³ *Bereishis* 46:4.

³⁴ {By repeating a word, and calling attention to it, Scripture is simply emphasizing it. However, homiletically, a deeper meaning is often derived from this figure of speech.}

³⁵ Speech is considered an action (*Bereishis Rabbah*, ch. 44, par. 22; et al).

9.

A TASTE

The fact that the Future Redemption was mentioned at the time of the Redemption from Egypt doesn't mean only that the Jewish people were told about what would transpire in the **future**. Rather, this foreknowledge was meant also to bolster a person's **avodah** in the present. Immediately, at the outset of his *avodah* (analogous to the Egyptian exile), a person should already experience an "inkling" of the Future Redemption.

One may ask: Since the person is only at the beginning of his *avodah* and evil is still **strong**, how can he possibly experience (even) a "inkling" of the Future Redemption, which is all about *is'hapcha* (ensuring that there is **no** evil)?

The explanation: Although at the beginning of a person's *avodah*, the **bittul** of evil's existence is not feasible — which is why the focus is on *avodah* through battle and *kabbalas ol* (as discussed above in Section 5) — still, this *bittul* and *kabbalas ol* should not be (only) a matter of self-discipline. Instead, the *bittul* itself must be connected with a person's "**selfhood**." Meaning, even the person's intellect and emotions should "agree" with this *bittul* and *kabbalas ol*, so that then his *avodah* of *kabbalas ol* is performed with relish.

Meaning, {the key quality of} the Future Redemption within the {process of} Redemption from Egypt does not refer to the *avodah* of intellect and emotion itself [an *avodah* that eventually achieves *is'hapcha*, as discussed in Section 5]. Rather, it {the quality of the Future Redemption} constitutes a component within the *iskafya* (of the Redemption from Egypt) so that the *avodah* of *kabbalas ol* is pleasurable.

[The same applies to the Redemption from Egypt being commemorated in the Future Era — it is but a "component" within the Future Redemption: The primary advantage in the Future Era will be the refinement of a person's selfhood (*is'hapcha*). But this refinement will not be measured or delimited by

how much **he** (with respect to his “selfhood”) can refine himself. Rather, it will exceed the limitations of his selfhood ({exhibiting the boundlessness associated with} the quality of *bittul*).

10.

NOT THERE YET

This also clarifies why the matzah that the Jews ate in Egypt (to prepare for the Exodus) could be enriched, while it also had to be matzah that required guarding:

Since {an aspect of} the Future Redemption was incorporated in the Redemption from Egypt, eating enriched matzah was also possible while **in** Egypt: But the “inkling” of the future that was experienced in Egypt only concerned the detail of {being permitted to use matzah that was} “enriched.” Meaning, the *kabbalas ol* itself {which was characteristic of the *avodah* in Egypt} should have “flavor” and be performed with relish. However, the *kabbalas ol* then {at that stage} could not also incorporate {the loftier sort of *avodah* associated with the law stipulating that the matzah eaten for the mitzvah} “cannot become leavened” (*is’hapcha*), since this cannot happen while evil is still strong.

11.

KEEPING SELF OUT OF IT

All this was true, however, only while the Jews were still in Egypt, prior to their redemption. But the matzah they ate while they were departing Egypt after the redemption [as well as the matzah eaten at the *seder* to commemorate the **exodus** from Egypt] had to be specifically “bread of poverty.”

To explain: The Egyptian exodus brought about a new state in which the Jews were no longer “Pharaoh’s servants.” Instead, they became “Hashem’s servants.” In other words, they had then reached the level of **accepting Hashem’s sovereignty**, which preceded the *kabbalas ol* required to fulfill Hashem’s **commands**. [As our Sages put it:³⁶ “First accept the yoke of Hashem’s sovereignty, and only then accept upon yourself the yoke of performing mitzvos.”]

A person’s “selfhood” should not be mixed up in this *avodah* — as our Sages say,³⁷ the penalty for {merely} gesturing in front of the king is death. Therefore, any “*taam*” or enjoyment, characteristic of enriched matzah, doesn’t belong in this *avodah*, since submitting to Hashem’s monarchy (**becoming** Hashem’s servants) can only come about through “bread of **poverty**” — **absolute bittul**.

— From talks delivered on *Achron Shel Pesach* and *Shabbos parshas Shemini*, 5726 (1966)

³⁶ *Berachos* 2:2.

³⁷ *Chagigah* 5b.