

The Feminine Dimension

Part Three: Challah, Kashrus, Elevating the Physical

Challah

I. From the Torah:

"And G-d said to Moshe saying: speak to the children of Israel and say to them, when you come to land that I bring you to. And it will come to be when you eat from the bread of the land, bring an offering to G-d. From the first of your dough, bring up Challah like the offering from the threshing floor. From the first of your dough, give to G-d as a gift for all generations." (Bamidbar, Numbers 15:17-21)

- as soon as enter
- before you eat
- enough to be called "dough"
- only 5 grains
- part of dough (not all)
- no specified amount (Rabbis instituted 1/24 home owner, 1/48 baker)

II. From the Prophets

"The first of all first-born, and all your elevated gifts to the Kohain you shall give, to rest a blessing on your house." (Ezekial, 44:30)

III. Some Ideas

- G-d wanted to make us meritorious with a continual mitzva in our bread so that a blessing should rest in it through the mitzva, and we could receive a merit though it in our souls... (also) in order that the servants of G-d - the Kohanim - should be able to live through it. (*Sefer HaChinuch*)
- Why is the section of Challah next to the section of idol worship? To tell you that all who sustain the mitzva of Challah it is as if they have nullified idol worship and all who nullify the mitzva of Challah it is as if they have sustained idol worship. (*Midrash, Vayikra Rabbah 15,6*)

Why is this mitzva so strongly stated - "nullify" or "fulfill idolatry"?

I. General Points

1. Two parts of mitzva
 - taking Challah (no Torah measurement)
 - giving to Kohain (yes measurement)
2. Why bread? - "Bread is considered to be the mainstay of one's livelihood" (Sicha)
3. A person could forget that all is from HaShem, while he is busy making money/bread.
We remember:
 - "He (G-d) is the one who gives strength
 - "The blessing of G-d is that which makes wealth
 - "He (G-d) recreates in His goodness, the act of creation every day, all day

∴ The Torah says that an offering for G-d is not charity for Kohanim.

II. Relationship to Idol Worship

- "Idolatry" here does not mean bowing, etc., but rather *thinking* that things have their own sustenance
- ∴ When we give our livelihood, we nullify the existence of the thought (idea that things have their own existence). When we nullify Challah, G-d forbid, we give sustenance to the illusion that things exist on their own

III. Relationship to amounts given of Challah

- ∴ A home owner needs to give more, he is more removed from G-d's hand in the bread
- ∴ A business man sees Divine Providence more so he can give less

Sources

1. Numbers 15:17-21

" And HaShem said to Moshe; Talk to the Jewish people and say to them, when you come to land which I shall bring you, when you are going to eat the bread of the land, offer and offering (from it) to HaShem. The first of your dough you shall offer to G-d and "Challah", like the gift given from the threshing floor. For all generation, you should give the first of your dough as an offering."

2. Yechezkiel 44:30

"The first of your dough you shall give to the priest so that a blessing can rest in your house."

Ideas

1. Sefer HaChinuch

"HaShem wanted to us merit with a constant mitzvah in our bread, so that a blessing can rest in it through the mitzvah, and we can receive a merit for our souls ... and in order that the servants of G-d can live - the priests"

2. Vayikra Rabba

"Why is this section of Challah next to the section about idol worship? To tell you that one who keeps the mitzvah of Challah is as if he nullified idol worship..."

Details

1. Flour from one of the five grains (wheat, rye, oat, spelt, barley)

2. Needs some water

3. Measurements:

- less than 2 lbs. 11 oz. - no Challah is taken
- between 2 lbs. 11 oz. And 3 lbs. 11 oz. - take Challah, no blessing
- over 3 lbs. 11 oz. - take Challah with a blessing

4. Thick dough - take before baking

Thin dough - can take after baking (outside of Israel)