

## Insights from the Meshech Chochma

### רב מאיר שמחה הכהן מדווינסק זצ"ל פרשת שלח תשפ"ב

Shulie Plawes

וְהָיָה בְּאֲכֹלְכֶם מִלֶּחֶם הָאָרֶץ תְּרִימוּ תְרוּמָהּ לָהּ. (פרק טו' יט)

*It shall be when you eat of the bread of the land, you shall set some aside as a gift to Hashem.*

Our Parsha contains the command of חֶלֶה-from every batch of dough, a portion is to be given to the Kohanim. This, as other produce of the field, is one of the twenty-four gifts that the Jewish nation is obligated to give to help support the servants of Hashem.

Several summers ago, my wife and I spent a wonderful week in Italy. One of our visits was to a small, quaint town in the heart of Tuscany, Pitigliano. It is quite beautiful, sitting on a mountain with the walls of the city blending so gracefully into the cliffs of the hillside. Although very few Jews still live there, its Jewish roots run deep-it was called "Little Jerusalem" as it was refuge for Roman Jews who were forced to leave Rome during the Inquisition. In the Jewish Ghetto, there is still a well-preserved shul, surrounded by several rooms which were used for shechita, a mikveh, wine cellar and one that housed a matza oven. This little area still contains the marble-topped table upon which the dough was prepared. On it, rests a picture of several women preparing the matza and in its background, one can see a small sign of the blessing they recited upon removing the required חֶלֶה portion-תְּרוּמָה-חֶלֶה.

This gave us a good opportunity to review some of the historical aspects of this very commonly performed Mitzva. It is surprising to note that there is no direct reference in the Talmud as to the proper nusach of the bracha. Rambam in הלכות ביכורים פרק ה' הלכה יא states: כל המפריש חֶלֶה מברך תחלה אקב"ו להפריש חֶלֶה. The Beis Yosef, in יורה דעה שכח' סעיף א, disagrees: בשעה שיפריש חֶלֶה יברך, אקב"ו להפריש תְּרוּמָה (of note, this can be added to the small list of Halachos where the Beis Yosef does not follow a psak of Rambam). R"MA adds חֶלֶה או להפריש חֶלֶה i.e., it is also permissible to finish the blessing with the word חֶלֶה. (A separate discussion is needed as to why all these opinions left out the ending of our נוסח הברכה which concludes with the words מן העיסה.) So the women of Pitigliano recited their bracha like the Beis Yosef. In truth though, their nusach predates the Beis Yosef by several hundred years, as the Italian nusach can be traced to the First Beis HaMikdash!

Rav Meir Simcha's focus is on a much lesser-known ritual of our Mitzva. He refers us to Raavad, who, based on the opinion of Rav Achai Gaon, tells us that after the blessing on the חלה, **וקורא לה שם** ואומר **הרי זו תְּרוּמָה**, i.e., the one who separates the dough for the Kohen must "pronounce the שם" and declare that "this is תְּרוּמָה". Rav Meir Simcha's

understanding of this somewhat obscure statement is that since we are reciting a blessing, it would not be sufficient to just do a הפרשה, for this does not adequately reveal that the intent of the separation is for the purpose of the mitzva-we must do an action i.e., pronounce it as תְּרוּמָה. Furthermore, he believes that Raavad's statement וקורא לה שם is that the declaration should be 'הרי זה תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה'. Also, that one should not say 'הרי זה לַיהוָה'. Lest one think that he bases this subtle difference on the words of our pasuk, תְּרִימוּ תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה, Rav Meir Simcha looks to תורה שבעל פה for support and finds it in נדרים י. which discusses the matter of כְּפִינּוּיִין, alternative words which create a vow. "What is the reason that established substitutes for the language of vows? It is so that one not explicitly say the term קֶרְבָּן/offering. And let him say the term קֶרְבָּן, what is wrong with that? Perhaps he will say, 'קֶרְבָּן לַיהוָה'. And let him say, 'קֶרְבָּן לַיהוָה? Perhaps he will say, 'לַיהוָה and he will then change his mind and not say, 'קֶרְבָּן; he will thereby express the name of Heaven in vain." Rav Meir Simcha believes that likewise, this would apply to the rule of separating חֵלֶה and as he tells us, פִּן יָמוּת, i.e., perhaps he will say 'לַיהוָה and prior to saying תְּרוּמָה dies, he will have mentioned Hashem's name for naught.

Rav Meir Simcha though does utilize תורה שבכתב to bolster this approach. He points out that although the sequence of our pasuk is תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה, notice a few pasukim later, the Torah writes מֵרֵאשִׁית עֲרֹסְתֵיכֶם תִּתְּנוּ לַיהוָה תְּרוּמָה /From the first of your kneading shall you give a portion to Hashem... Why the change in order? Precisely because תְּרִימוּ תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה is referring to the separation of the חֵלֶה-that must have a sequence that would prevent uttering שֵׁם שְׁמַיִם לְבִטּוּלָה i.e., תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה. תְּרִימוּ לַיהוָה is at the point of giving the Kohen his portion. At the time of giving, his actions speak for themselves, and no declaration is necessary. There is no concern of saying שֵׁם שְׁמַיִם לְבִטּוּלָה and so the pasuk writes תִּתְּנוּ לַיהוָה תְּרוּמָה.

I was wondering why Rav Meir Simcha does not comment on Rambam ignoring the opinion of Rav Achai Gaon and does not mention the recitation of 'הרי זה תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה' at all. Perhaps because "in the days of old," where ritual purity was an essential part of a Jew's everyday living, to avoid the חֵלֶה from becoming impure, one would **separate and give it** at the same time to the Kohen. There would therefore be no need to add 'הרי זה תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה'!

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