



## Having Proper Intent when Reciting the Berachah of HaMotzi

### The Fascinating Connection between the Berachah of "המוציא לחם מן הארץ" and the Text "המוציא אתכם מתחת סבלות מצרים"

This week's parsha is parshas Vaeira. I would like to focus on the passuk (Shemos 6, 7): "ולקחתי אתכם לי לעם והייתי לכם לאלקים, וידעתם כי אני ה' אלקיכם המוציא אתכם מתחת סבלות מצרים." Regarding "yetzias Mitzrayim," HKB"H announces: **"I shall take you to Me for a people and I shall be a G-d to you; and you shall know that I am Hashem your G-d, Who takes you out from under the burdens of Mitzrayim."** From the phrase: "המוציא אתכם מתחת סבלות מצרים"—our sages of blessed memory derive an important practical halachah. In the Talmud, they debate whether the proper berachah over bread should be: "מוציא לחם מן הארץ"—without the letter **"hei"** as a prefix for the word "מוציא"—or **"המוציא לחם מן הארץ"**—with the letter **"hei"**.

To comprehend the basis of this dispute, it is important to understand that according to all authorities, this berachah relates to the past. In other words, the bread that we are consuming at this time was taken out of the ground by Hashem at a previous time. Thus, the dispute concerns which term is most appropriate to acknowledge this fact—"מוציא" without a **"hei"** or **"המוציא"** with a **"hei"**. Here is the pertinent passage in the Gemara (Berachos 38a):

"תנו רבנן מה הוא אומר, המוציא לחם מן הארץ, רבי נחמיה אומר, מוציא לחם מן הארץ. אמר רבא, במוציא כולי עלמא לא פליגי דאפיק משמע דכתיב אל מוציאם ממצרים, כי פליגי בהמוציא, רבנן סברי המוציא דאפיק משמע דכתיב המוציא לך מים מצור החלמיש, ורבי נחמיה סבר המוציא דמפיק משמע שנאמר המוציא אתכם מתחת סבלות מצרים ורבנן ההוא הכי קאמר להו קודשא בריך הוא לישראל, כד מפיקנא לכו עבידנא לכו מלתא, כי היכי דידעיתו דאנא הוא דאפיקית יתכון ממצרים, דכתיב וידעתם כי אני ה' אלהיכם המוציא."

**The Rabbis taught in a Baraisa: What does one say before eating bread? He recites the berachah: "Hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz" (with the letter "hei" as a prefix. But Rabbi Nechemiah says that the correct formula one recites is: "Motzi lechem min ha'aretz" without the letter "hei" as a prefix. Rava said: Everyone agrees that the term "motzi" means brought forth, in the past tense, as it is written (Bamidbar 23, 22): "G-d who brought them forth ('motziam') from Mitzrayim." When do they disagree? With regard to the term "hamotzi." The Rabbis hold that "hamotzi" means that He brought forth (in the past), as it is written (Devarim 8, 15): "Who brought forth ("hamotzi") for you water from a rock of flint," which depicts a past event. But Rabbi Nechemiah holds that "hamotzi" means that Hashem will bring forth in the future, as it is stated: "I am Hashem, your G-d, Who is bringing you forth ("hamotzi") from under the burdens of Egypt" (Rashi: When this was said to Moshe, they had not been taken out, yet). And the Rabbis (who hold that the correct formula of the berachah is "hamotzi"), they interpret that passuk to mean that HKB"H said to Yisrael as follows: When I eventually bring you forth, I will perform things for you, so that you will know that I am the one who brought you forth from Mitzrayim, as it is written: "And you will know that I am Hashem, your G-d, Who brought you forth ('hamotzi')"—referring to something that occurred in the past.**

Let us explain. Indeed, HKB"H said **"המוציא אתכם מתחת סבלות מצרים"** before Yisrael actually left Mitzrayim. But He was assuring them that after exiting Mitzrayim, He

would perform an act that would prove to them that it was HKB”H Who had taken them out of Mitzrayim. Thus, when it is written: **וידעתם כי אני ה' אלקיכם המוציא אתכם מתחת סבלות מצרים**—it is stating that after the exodus (past tense), they would realize retroactively that Hashem had taken them out of Mitzrayim.

### According to Halachah the Correct Formula Is “המוציא לחם מן הארץ”

The Gemara (ibid.) relates an incident involving Rabbi Zeira teaching us that he held that according to halachah, the correct formula of the berachah is to say “המוציא” with the letter “hei”:

“משתבחין ליה רבנן לרבי זירא את בר זביד אחוה דרבי שמעון בר רב זביד דאדם גדול הוא ובקי בברכות הוא, אמר להם לכשיבוא לידכם הביאוהו לידי. זמנא חדא איקלע לגביה אפיקו ליה ריפתא פתח ואמר ‘מוציא’.

אמר זה הוא שאומרים עליו דאדם גדול הוא ובקי בברכות הוא, בשלמא אי אמר ‘המוציא’, אשמעינן טעמא ואשמעינן דהלכתא כרבנן, אלא דאמר ‘מוציא’ מאי קמשמע לן. וכך היא מסקנת הגמרא (שם עמוד ב): “והלכתא המוציא לחם מן הארץ, דקיימא לן כרבנן דאפיק משמע”, כי הלכה כרבנן ש“המוציא” הוא בלשון עבר.

**The Rabbis extolled the praise to Rabbi Zeira of a certain scholar known as the son of Rav Zevid, the brother of Rabbi Shimon bar Rav Zevid, claiming that he is a great man and an expert in Berachos. He (Rabbi Zeira) said to them: When he comes to you, bring him to me. One time, he came to him; they brought out bread to him; he began and recited: “Motzi” (rather than “hamotzi”). He (Rabbi Zeira) said (critically): This is the one about whom they say that he is a great man and expert in Berachos? It would have been well if he had recited “hamotzi,” he would have then taught us the meaning of the passuk (מתחת סבלות מצרים) and would have also taught us that the halachah is in accordance with the Rabbis. But by reciting “motzi,” what is he teaching us?! In point of fact, the Gemara concludes that the halachah is that we recite “hamotzi lechem min ha’aretz,” and this accords with the opinion of the Rabbis that “hamotzi” also connotes the past tense.**

The Tosafos, the Rosh, and the Rashba are perplexed by this conclusion seeing as Rava stated that everyone agrees that the term **“motzi”** connotes a past event. So, why recite a berachah with the term **“hamotzi,”** whose connotation is disputed? Would it not be preferable to employ the term **“motzi,”** which all agree connotes the past tense?! The Rosh (Pesachim) suggests an answer based on a teaching in the Gemara (Berachos 50a): **מברכותיו של אדם ניכר אם תלמיד: “חכם הוא אם לאו”**—**from the way one recites his Berachos, it can be discerned whether he is a talmid-chacham or not.** Thus, by employing the term **“hamotzi,”** one demonstrates that this formula is also acceptable.

### The Earth Will Produce Ready to Eat Bread Rolls

On a deeper level, we find a marvelous explanation from three of our esteemed luminaries—the Shela HaKadosh (Vayeitzei), the Toras Chaim, and the Megaleh Amukos (Shelach). They raise an obvious question concerning the formula of the berachah: **“המוציא לחם מן הארץ”**. Clearly, bread, **“lechem,”** does not grow from the ground; man harvests grain, grinds it, and then bakes it. So, it would be more accurate to recite the formula: **“המוציא דגן מן הארץ”**—**Who brings forth grain from the earth.**

They provide an appealing explanation based on a discussion in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 70b) concerning the identity of the tree that Adam HaRishon ate from: **רבי יהודה: שאין התינוק יודע לקרוא אבא ואימא עד שיטעום טעם** אומר חיטה היה, **Rabbi Yehudah says: It was a stalk of wheat. For an infant does not even know how to say “father” or “mother” until it has tasted grain.** The problem with this opinion, however, is that wheat does not grow on a tree; it grows out of the earth.

Chazal address this problem in the Midrash (B.R. 15, 7): **“מתמרות היו כארזי לבנון”**—in Gan Eden, the stalks of wheat grew tall like the cedars of Lebanon. As such, the wheat could aptly be described as the fruit of a tree. After the sin, however, the wheat stalks were diminished in height, and the kernels of wheat were more aptly described as fruit of the ground. Regarding this matter, the Toras Chaim

writes (Sanhedrin 70b): **We are compelled to say that it (the tree) was not actually wheat.** After all, the Torah describes the tree as being good to eat, and wheat kernels are not actually edible. **Instead,** we must conclude that he does mean wheat kernels but loaves of bread from wheat—i.e., **the earth brought forth bread rolls like it will in the future.** This is consistent with a teaching in the Gemara (Shabbas 30b): **“עתידיה ארץ ישראל שתוציא גלוסקאות וכלי—מילת”**—**in the future, the soil of Eretz Yisrael will yield bread rolls and fine woolen clothing.**

The Toras Chaim discusses this in greater detail in relation to the Gemara earlier on. There (ibid. 59b), the Gemara describes the life of Adam HaRishon in Gan Eden: **“אדם הראשון מיסב בגן עדן היה, והיו מלאכי השרת היו צולין לו בשר”**—**Adam HaRishon would recline in Gan Eden; ministering angels would broil meat for him and strain wine for him.** The Toras Chaim writes that bread was readily available for him; it did not require any preparation, since at that time, the earth produced bread rolls like it will in the future. After the sin, however, man was cursed and had to labor for his bread; its preparation required toil and effort.

Based on this information, these three luminaries justify the formula: **“המוציא לחם מן הארץ”**—**Who brings forth bread from the earth.** It alludes to the fact that prior to the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as,” HKB”H provided man with actual bread from the ground, fully prepared and ready to eat. We will be privileged to experience this again in the future without having to labor to prepare bread. Furthermore, as we have learned, the term **“hamotzi,”** with the **“hei”** as a prefix, can refer both to the past and the present and future. As such, it relates both to the situation of Adam HaRishon prior to the cheit and also to the situation we will be privileged to experience in the future—G-d willing.

### **The Berachah over Bread and Its Consumption Are a Tikun for the Cheit Eitz HaDa’as**

Thus, we learn a fundamental principle: Eating bread and reciting the appropriate berachah constitute a tikun for the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as”—which was a form of wheat

according to Rabbi Yehudah. Furthermore, this implies that Adam and Chava sinned by eating the rolls of bread growing on the Eitz HaDa’as Tov VaRa. We have also learned that as a consequence of their cheit, bread fell from its lofty madreigah. Instead of growing as a fully prepared, ready-to-eat bread roll on wheat stalks as tall as the cedars of Lebanon, it grows as kernels from the ground. Hence, in order to make bread, man has to go to the trouble of grinding it, making it into a dough, and then baking it.

This concurs with a fascinating insight found in the siddur Beis Yaakov written by the brilliant Ya’avetz. He comments on a passage in Perek Shirah (Chapter 3): **“שיבולת: חטים אומרת שיר המעלות ממעמקים קראתיך ה”**—**the sheave of wheat says (Tehillim 130, 1): “A song of ascents. From the depths, I called to You, Hashem.”** We can suggest that the wheat specifically sings this song of praise, because of its transformation. It went from a type of fruit growing on tall stalks to kernels sprouting forth from the ground. Hence, the sheave of wheat sings: **“שיר המעלות ממעמקים קראתיך ה”**—since I have fallen to the depths of the earth as a consequence of the sin of Adam HaRishon, I call out to You, Hashem, from there. The psalm continues: **“ה’ שמעה בקולי תהיינה אזניך קשובות לקול תחנוני, אם עוונות תשמר י”ה אדני מי יעמוד, כי עמך הסליחה למען תורא.”** **Hashem, hear my voice, may Your ears be attentive to the sound of my pleas. If Your preserve iniquities, O G-d, O Lord, who could survive? For with You is forgiveness, that You may be feared.** We can suggest that the sheave of wheat is pleading for a tikun for the sin of Adam HaRishon, so that it can once again grow tall and be picked like fruit ready to be eaten.

Understood in this light, when we consume bread and recite its berachah, we intend to make amends for the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as” that involved the consumption of bread. For this reason, we employ the formula: **“המוציא לחם מן הארץ”**—connoting the past and the future—the bread that HKB”H made available to Adam HaRishon, and the bread rolls He will make available to us le’asid la’vo. In other words, we are not only reciting a berachah for the bread we are about to eat, but we are also praying for a tikun for the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as.”



## Bread Must Be Baked by Exposure to Fire

We know have a better understanding of the punishment HKB”H imposed on Adam HaRishon and mankind (Bereishis 3, 17): **”בזעת אפך תאכל לחם”—by the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread.** Based on this insight, it behooves us to consider why HKB”H chose to punish mankind in this specific fashion—having to labor to make bread rather than have it grow fully prepared on trees. We will learn that a part of the tikun required after the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as” involves baking bread in an oven—exposing it to fire. Now, we find the following query in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 102b): **From where are you supposed to break the loaf of bread over which you recite the berachah of “hamotzi”?** **מהיכא דקריים בישולא—from the part that is baked into a crust.** Rashi explains that if a person has a cut piece of bread rather than a whole loaf, he should recite the berachah and break off a piece from the crust rather than from the middle of the bread.

The Yearos Dvash explains the matter as follows: **Prior to the cheit of Adam HaRishon, no food required baking or cooking . . . The reason being that the only thing that expels (eliminates) the poisonous venom of the nachash is fire . . . Hence, as a result of the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as,” the poison of the nachash affects most of man’s food, such that it is not suitable for consumption until it has been subjected to fire . . . For this reason, some are of the opinion that anything raw and uncooked is harmful. See what the Rambam writes in Hilchos Madah.**

**Thus, you will understand why we recite “hamotzi” on the place where the baking begins, because the place the fire cooks fastest and affects first has less venom in it . . . Thus, it is more suitable for a berachah. For, as soon as the venom of the force of contamination is expelled, the force of kedushah takes effect . . . Therefore, this part is more suitable for a berachah!**

## Women Bake Bread on Erev Shabbas as a Tikun for the Cheit Eitz HaDa’as

The remarks of the Yearos Dvash enlighten us as to why prior to the cheit of Adam and Chava bread grew on trees

ready to be eaten. In contrast, after the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as,” bread does not grow but only kernels of wheat do. It is because prior to the momentous cheit, bread was not polluted with the filth of the nachash; hence, it was unnecessary to subject it to fire to eliminate its poisonous venom.

After Adam and Chava sinned, however, and were swayed by the counsel of the nachash, its pollution and filth entered all foodstuff but especially bread, which was involved in the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as.” Thus, it is impossible to consume bread without baking it in fire first to eliminate and incinerate the venom of the nachash. Therefore, after the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as,” HKB”H arranged for only wheat to grow rather than fully formed bread. This requires man to grind it, make it into a dough, and then bake it in a fire in order to remove the poisonous effects of the nachash.

This sacred insight of the Yearos Dvash enables us to better appreciate the admirable, time-honored minhag of Jewish women to bake challot on Friday in honor of Shabbas Kodesh. The Rama writes (O.C. 242): **It is customary to knead a certain quantity of dough at home from which to bake loaves of bread to be sliced (broken) on Shabbas and Yom Tov; this is to honor Shabbas and Yom Tov, and one should not deviate from this minhag.**

The Magen Avraham writes: **This is to fulfill the mitzvah of “challah,” because she (the first woman, Chava) caused the loss (fall) of the “challah of the world” (a reference to Adam HaRishon). We find a source for these teachings in the Midrash (ibid. 17, 8): And why was she given the mitzvah of separating “challah”? Because she led astray Adam HaRishon, who was the completion (the most perfect part) of the “challah” of the world; therefore, the mitzvah of “challah” was given to her.**

The Magen Avraham brings a source for this minhag from the times of the Gemara (Ta’anis 24b, 25a). We are told that the wife of Rabbi Chanina would fire up her oven every Erev Shabbas even if she did not have flour with which to bake challot so as not to be embarrassed. Rashi explains that she was embarrassed, because her neighbors were all baking their dough in honor of Shabbas, and she did not have any.

In the Beirur Halachah, the Mishnah Berurah (242) writes: **This is alluded to in the text** (Shemos 16, 5): **“And it shall be that on the sixth day, when they prepare what they shall bring . . . that which you shall bake, bake, etc. This implies that it is proper to bake on Shabbas in preparation for Shabbas. This was an established practice even in the times of the Gemara cited by the Magen Avraham. Unfortunately, due to our numerous iniquities, some women today have ceased to practice this minhag . . . They are not acting properly; for they are diminishing the kavod of Shabbas.**

In light of what we have discussed, the rationale for this minhag is easy to understand. By baking challot, a woman is performing a fabulous tikun for Chava’s sin—for persuading Adam HaRishon to partake of the Eitz HaDa’as and the resultant consequence—the earth ceasing to produce fully prepared bread. To make amends, a Jewish woman bakes challot fully prepared and ready to be consumed just like before the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as.” To counteract the pollution and incinerate the venom that the “nachash hakadmoni” introduced into the bread that Adam and Chava ate, a Jewish woman bakes the challot in a fiery oven.

### The Berachah of “HaMotzi” and Yetzias Mitzrayim Are Both Tikuns for the “Cheit Eitz HaDa’as”

Following this illuminating path, we will now proceed to explain why HKB”H taught us to recite the berachah on bread of “המוציא לחם מן הארץ” specifically from the passuk related to “yetzias Mitzrayim: “המוציא אתכם מתחת סבלות מצרים”. We will begin by referring to a comment of Rashi’s (Pesachim 99b) based on teachings in the Yerushalmi (Pesachim 10, 1) and the Midrash (ibid. 88, 5). He explains the basis for the practice instituted by Chazal of drinking four cups of wine on the first night of Pesach: **They commemorate the four expressions of geulah mentioned in association with galus Mitzrayim in parshas Vaeira: והוצאתי אתכם, והצלתי אתכם, וגאלתי אתכם, ולקחתי אתכם.** In reality, there was only one geulah from Mitzrayim. So, why was it necessary to mention four expressions of geulah? Clearly, they are significant, since Chazal saw fit to commemorate them with the “arba kosot.”

We find an intriguing explanation in the Megaleh Amukos on Vaeschanan (236). He refers to a teaching of the illustrious Arizal in Sha’ar HaPesukim (Shemos). When Adam HaRishon sinned by eating from the Eitz HaDa’as Tov VaRa, all the neshamos destined to come into this world were contained within him. Hence, they were all sullied by his sin. They achieved their tikun through several reincarnations—the generation of the mabul, the generation of the dispersion, and the corrupt inhabitants of Sedom. In each of those gilgulim, they continued to sin and remained wicked. Therefore, all of those generations reincarnated into the generations in Mitzrayim to achieve their tikun through the arduous enslavement.

In truth, the Arizal only mentions three generations; the Megaleh Amukos, however, includes a fourth generation that also required tikun—the generation of Enosh—which is included in the generation of the mabul. Thus, the exodus from Mitzrayim encompassed four geulos—i.e., geulos of four distinct generations. Hence, we drink four cups of wine on the first night of Pesach corresponding to these four generations.

With this in mind, the Megaleh Amukos adds an amazing allusion regarding David HaMelech’s declaration (Tehillim 6, 7): “מטתי בדמעתי ערשי אמסה”—**I drench my bed every night; I soak my couch with my tears.** With these words, he expresses his heartfelt intent to cry and make amends for the wrongdoings of these four generations, alluded to by the word אמסה—an acronym for הפלגה אנוש מ’בול ס’דום ה’פלגה. As we have explained previously, David HaMelech, a”h, was a gilgul of Adam HaRishon, who contributed seventy years of his life to David HaMelech.

Returning to this week’s parsha, we find that these four evil, corrupt generations that reincarnated into Mitzrayim to achieve their tikun are alluded to by the first letters of the words: “ה’מוציא אתכם מתחת סבלות מצרים”—i.e., הפלגה אנוש מ’בול ס’דום ה’פלגה. We can now begin to appreciate the connection between the berachah of “המוציא לחם מן הארץ” and the passuk appearing immediately after the four expressions of geulah: **“ולקחתי אתכם לי לעם והייתי לכם לאלקים, וידעתם כי אני ה’ אלקיכם**

"המוציא אתכם מתחת סבלות מצרים—I shall take you to Me for a people and I shall be a G-d to you; and you shall know that I am Hashem your G-d, Who takes you out from under the burdens of Mitzrayim. As explained, the four expressions of geulah correspond to the four generations of the mabul, Enosh, the dispersion, and Sedom; they were all sullied by the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as" and achieved their tikun in Mitzrayim. Similarly, the berachah of

"hamotzi" constitutes a marvelous tikun for the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as," which involved bread. As explained, the formula of this berachah—"hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz"—alludes both to the past—when HKB"H provided Adam with fully prepared, ready to eat bread rolls prior to the cheit. Additionally, this berachah represents a prayer for the future total tikun, when HKB"H will once again provide us with fully prepared bread growing from the earth.



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