

Messianic Rabbi: Stop Telling People That Yeast Is Sin

As Passover nears, those of us who celebrate the biblical Holy Days will be spending the next few days cleaning our homes from top to bottom and thoroughly searching every cupboard, cabinet, closet, couch and corner in order to make sure that there is no yeast to be found anywhere in our houses.

At my home, this preparation began weeks ago as we began to purchase less bread and other products that contain yeast. This search for yeast will end just before Passover begins when I, as the oldest man in my home, will take time to search my home. At the end of the search, I will sweep a small amount of crumbs left by my wife into a napkin, which I will symbolically burn while saying a prayer asking G-D to search our hearts and know our intent was to remove every remnant of yeast from our home and to forgive us if we missed something that was hidden from us during our search.

The Bible tells us that yeast is a symbol of sin. Yeast is not sin itself, but a symbol of sin. We know yeast isn't sin itself because on Shavuot (Pentecost), which is the next biblical feast on the calendar after Passover, Israel was commanded to wave two loaves of leavened bread as a part of the celebration.

“Until the morrow after the seventh Shabbat you are to count fifty days, and then present a new grain offering to Adonai. 17 You are to bring out of your houses two loaves of bread for a wave offering, made of two tenths of an ephah of fine flour. They are to be baked with yeast as first fruits to Adonai” (Lev. 23:16, TLV).

So, if yeast isn't sin, why were the Israelites commanded to get rid of all of the yeast and eat only matzah (unleavened

bread) during feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread?

Yeast is a living organism that causes a change within grains, which causes them to rise or puff up. It only takes a small amount of it to impact a large amount of bread.

“A little *hametz* [yeast] works its way through the whole batch of dough!” (Gal. 5:9).

Before you could buy yeast in little packages, you would save “starter” from previous loaves, which you would add to your new bread. Because this yeast goes bad after some time, in order to have good bread, you have to get rid of the old yeast and start with new yeast, so you can have good fresh bread.

“Your boasting is no good. Don’t you know that a little *hametz* leavens the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old *hametz*, so you may be a new batch, just as you are unleavened—for Messiah, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast not with old *hametz*, the *hametz* of malice and wickedness, but with unleavened bread—the *matzah* of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor. 5: 6-8).

When Israel’s family first went into Egypt, they were good yeast, which, through Joseph, brought change to Egypt and saved the entire known world. But, after 400 years in Egypt, Israel’s yeast became old. Instead of affecting Egypt, Egypt had affected Israel. They went from leading in Egypt to slavery in Egypt.

So, before Israel left Egypt, G-D provided a symbolic reminder to them. He told them that they had let their yeast go bad. “Get rid of all your yeast and spend seven days eating bread with no yeast.”

When we read the words “seven days” it should immediately remind us of the creation. We should understand that just as Israel started over with new yeast after their redemption from Egypt, G-D symbolically renewed the nation Israel’s spiritual

yeast so that they would once again influence the nations that they interacted with instead of those nations influencing Israel.

So, every year we are reminded that we must remove our old yeast completely. As we eat matzah for seven days, we are reminded to not only search our homes for yeast, but also search our hearts for any yeast that has become tainted or influenced by the world.

This year, as we prepare to celebrate Passover, please join me in allowing the Spirit of G-D to shine brightly into every corner of our hearts so that we can find even the tiniest bits of yeast, remembering that it only takes a little yeast to leaven the whole lump. Look for hidden bitterness, anger, envy, greed, lust and so forth.

This year, let's all make extra effort to search out any ungodly fears that we have allowed to enter in and remain to cause our yeast (our ability to influence the world) to become weakened and sour. Fear will cause us to become slaves to this world and makes us ineffective as messengers of the Good News.

Remember, our message to the world today is the same message Moses was given: Let my people go! But, in order to speak with faith, boldness and authority, we must renew the strength of our yeast. {eoa}

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