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Menachos Daf 20

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Salt Requirement

Rav Huna asks: But the requirement of placing salt on a *minchah* is not repeated in the Torah, and nevertheless, it is essential to the offering!? For it was taught in a *braisa*: *It is an eternal covenant of salt*. This is an eternal covenant declared in regard to salt (*and if it's eternal, it is therefore essential*). Rabbi Shimon said: It is written here: *It is an eternal covenant of salt*. It is also written: An eternal covenant of *Kehunah*. Just as it is impossible to offer sacrifices without a *Kohen*, so too it is impossible to offer sacrifices without salt.

Rav Yosef answers: Rav holds like the *Tanna* of our *Mishna*, who states: If it was not salted, it is nevertheless valid.

Abaye asked Rav Yosef: If so, when the *Mishna* states that he did not pour the oil into the *minchah*, which seemingly means that he did not pour it at all, but in truth, it means that it was not done by a *Kohen*, but rather, by a non-*Kohen*; here too, the *Mishna* means that a *Kohen* did not salt it, but rather, it was salted by a non-*Kohen* (*and that is when it is ruled to be valid; however, if it is not salted at all, it is invalid*)!?

Rav Yosef replied: Would it enter your mind that a non-*Kohen* can come close to the altar to perform the salting?! [*Obviously not! It therefore must mean that it is valid even though it wasn't salted.*]

Alternatively, you can answer that since the Torah writes covenant by it, it is as if the Torah repeated it (*and therefore salt is ruled to be indispensable to an offering*).

The *Gemora* asks: And is it not repeated in the Torah? But it is written: *And your every minchah offering, you shall salt with salt!*

The *Gemora* answers: This is needed for that which was taught in the following *braisa*: If the verse had stated: And every offering, *you shall salt with salt*, I might have thought that it also applied to wood and the blood (*brought to the altar*), since these are also called “*offering*”; the verse therefore adds the word “*minchah*” to teach us that just as the *minchah* is distinguished in that other things are obligated to come to the altar because of it (*the wood – which is needed to burn the komeitz*); so too everything for which other things are obligated to come to the altar because of it (*must be salted with salt; but blood and wood are excluded, for nothing comes to the altar because of it*). The *braisa* asks: But perhaps I might argue that just as the *minchah* is distinguished in that it permits something (*the komeitz renders the remainder of the minchah permissible for consumption*), so too everything which renders something permissible (*must be salted with salt*). Blood would therefore be included since it renders something permissible! The verse therefore states: [*You shall not discontinue the salt*] *from upon your minchah*, but not from your blood. I might argue that the entire *minchah* requires salting; the verse therefore states: *offering*, indicating that only what is offered (*the komeitz*) requires salting, but the entire *minchah* does not require salting. I now know that the *komeitz* requires salting, but from where do I know to include the *levonah* (*frankincense*)? I include the *levonah* since it is offered with the *komeitz* in the same vessel. And from where do I know to include the *levonah* that is offered by itself, the *levonah* that is offered in the spoons (*with the lechem hapanim*), the incense offering, the *minchah* of *Kohanim*, the *minchah* of the anointed *Kohen*, the *minchah* that is offered together with the libations, the sacrificial parts of a



chatas, the sacrificial parts of an *asham*, the sacrificial parts of all *kodshei kodashim*, the sacrificial parts of *kodashim kalim*, the limbs of the *olah*, and the bird *olah*? The verse therefore states: *On your every offering you shall offer salt.* [Accordingly, none of the verses are extra, and this is why Rav Huna said that the Torah does not repeat the salt requirement.]

It was stated: I now know that the *komeitz* requires salting, but from where do I know to include the *levonah* (*frankincense*)? I include the *levonah* since it is offered with the *komeitz* in the same vessel. [The *braisa* continued to derive all offerings from the verse: *On your every offering you shall offer salt.*] The *Gemora* asks: But didn't the *braisa* state previously: Just as the *minchah* is distinguished in that other things are obligated to come to the altar because of it (*the wood – which is needed to burn the komeitz; so too everything for which other things are obligated to come to the altar because of it must be salted with salt*). [If so, why is a new verse necessary? All these offerings require wood as well!?]

The *Gemora* answers: This is what the *braisa* meant: I might argue that the expression '*offering*' is a generalization, and '*minchah*' is a specification, so that we would have here a generalization followed by a specification, in which case we would include only that which is included in the specification; accordingly, only the *minchah* would require salting, but nothing else! The *braisa* responded to this: The verse therefore added: *On your every offering*, which is another generalization, so that we now have a generalization, specification, generalization, in which case they include only such things that are similar to the particular item specified: as the item specified is clearly something that other things are obligated to come to the altar because of it, so too everything for which other things are obligated to come to the altar because of it (*requires salting*).

The *Gemora* asks: And what are the other things that are obligated to come to the altar because of it? It is the wood (*and therefore blood is excluded from the requirement of salting*). But perhaps it is the *levonah* (*that comes with the komeitz*), so that I would include the blood since libations come with it!?

The *Gemora* answers: The libations come with the burning of the sacrificial parts (*not with the blood*).

The *Gemora* asks: But what is the reason that you chose to link the libations with the sacrificial parts? It is because one is regarded as "eating" and the other as "drinking." On the contrary! Let us link the blood and libations, for one is regarded as "atonement" and the other as "rejoicing"!?]

The *Gemora* answers: Rather (*blood is distinct from the levonah*) it is because the *levonah* comes together with the *minchah* in one vessel (*but the blood and libations are not placed in one vessel*). But the wood (*there is a good comparison between the minchah and other offerings*) - for just as it is essential for the *minchah*, so too it is essential for all offerings.

[We understood the *braisa* above to be saying that all offerings are included in the salting requirement because of the generalization, specification, generalization sequence.] The *Gemora* asks: But perhaps I could argue that just as the item specified (*the minchah*) is clearly something that other things are obligated to come to the altar because of it (*the wood*) and also renders something permissible (*the komeitz renders the remainder of the minchah permissible for consumption*), so too everything for which other things are obligated to come to the altar because of it and which renders something permissible (*requires salting*); and what would be included? Only the *levonah* that is in the spoons, since it permits the *lechem hapanim* for consumption, but other offerings would not be included!?

The *Gemora* answers: Since the expression, '*from upon your minchah*' was necessary to exclude the blood (*and blood is compared to minchah only in one aspect*), it follows that everything else is included by one aspect.

The *braisa* had stated: *from upon your minchah*, but not from your blood.



The *Gemora* asks: Perhaps, it should be expounded in the following manner: *from upon your minchah*, but not from your limbs?

The *Gemora* answers: It is more reasonable to include the limbs (*in the salting requirement*) since (mnemonic: ASHBaN TaMei) they are similar (*to a minchah*) in the following ways:

1. other things are obligated to come to the altar because of it, just like a *minchah*
2. they are burned by fire like it (*unlike blood, which is sprinkled on the side of the altar*)
3. they are performed outside (*in the Courtyard*) like it (*unlike blood, which is sometimes applied in the Sanctuary*)
4. they are subject to the laws of *nossar* (*if they remain past their time*) like it
5. they are subject to the laws of *tumah* like it
6. they are subject to the laws of *me'ilah* like it.

The *Gemora* asks: On the contrary! Blood should be included (*in the salting requirement*) since it is similar (*to a minchah*) in the following ways:

1. it is a permitter, just like a *minchah*
2. it becomes invalidated at sunset, like it

The *Gemora* answers: The similarities to the sacrificial limbs are more numerous (*and therefore it is reasonable to assume that they have a salting requirement, just like a minchah*).

The *braisa* had stated: If the verse had stated: And every offering, *you shall salt with salt*, I might have thought that it also applied to wood and the blood (*brought to the altar*), since these are also called "*offering*."

The *Gemora* asks: Who has said that wood is called an "*offering*"? It is Rebbe. But Rebbe, in fact, holds that wood does require salting!? For it was taught in a *braisa*: The term '*offering*' indicates that one may donate wood as an offering. And how much must he donate? Two blocks. Rebbe says: A wood offering is regarded as a *minchah* offering, and therefore it requires salting, and it must be brought near the altar. And Rava had said that according to Rebbe's opinion, one must separate a *komeitz*

from the wood (*by cutting up the wood into splinters and a handful should be taken and burned upon the altar*). And Rav Pappa had said that according to Rebbe's opinion, an offering of wood requires other wood too!

The *Gemora* answers: Remove wood from the *braisa*.

The *Gemora* asks: Then what does the verse exclude? It cannot be excluding blood, for this is excluded by the expression: *from upon your minchah*!?

The *Gemora* answers: Remove wood and insert libations. For it was taught in a *braisa*: But wine, blood, wood and incense do not require salt. (19b – 21a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Non-Kohen Salting

The *Gemora* below (21b) states: There were three places that the salt was placed: 1. In the salt chamber, where they would salt the sacrificial hides; 2. On the ramp, where they would salt the limbs; 3. On top of the altar, where they would salt the *komeitz*, *levonah*, *ketores*, *Kohanim's minchah*, Anointed *Kohen's minchah*, libation *minchah* and a bird *olah*.

The Lechem Mishnah writes that although the salting should take place on the top of the altar, nevertheless, if it was salted elsewhere, the offering would still be valid.

The Chazon Ish proves from our *Gemora* otherwise. Our *Gemora* states: Would it enter your mind that a non-*Kohen* can come to the altar to perform the salting!? Obviously, it is essential to perform the salting on the top of the altar; for otherwise, we could have explained the *Mishna* to be referring to a case where a non-*Kohen* salted it elsewhere.

The Tosfos HaRosh is uncertain what the *halachah* would be if a non-*Kohen* went and salted the *korban*; would it become invalid or not? (*The Mikdash Dovid explains that this would be dependent on a different question; when a disqualified person*

performs on of the services, does he disqualify the sacrifice, or it is regarded as if this service was not performed? Accordingly, here it can be said that a Kohen can re-salt it after a non-Kohen and it will still be valid.)

It is noteworthy that the Ramban in Chumash (Vayikra 2:11) writes that it is preferable for a non-Kohen to perform the salting. This is in direct conflict with our *Gemora*!

The Sfas Emes asks: Why was it necessary for R' Yehudah and R' Shimon to find a Scriptural verse to disqualify a *korban* that was not salted? It should be invalid based upon the following principle: anything which the Torah says not to do if you do it, it does not help! One who offers a *korban* without salt violates the Biblical prohibition of offering without salt; accordingly, the *korban* should automatically be ruled invalid! This question can be asked on our *Mishna* which rules that such a *minchah* is valid.

He answers that this rule does not apply by *kodashim*, for by *kodashim* even if he violates a biblical prohibition, if the Torah does not repeat it, it is not essential and if the service is performed without this requirement, it would still be valid.

Salting a Sacrifice

The *sugyos* now being learned detail the *halachos* of salting a sacrifice, about which the Torah commands: "on all of your sacrifices you shall offer salt" (Vayikra 2:13). The *Mordechai* writes (Chulin, 720) that as opposed to salting ordinary meat, which is meant to extract the blood, salting sacrifices is not meant to extract their blood. He proves this from the *menachos*, which are only dough, and were also salted.

Why salt merited to be offered on the altar: About salting sacrifices *Chazal* said (see Rashi and Ramban, *ibid*) that "a covenant was established for salt since the six days of Creation, that the lower waters were promised to be offered on the altar by means of salt, and by the libation of water during Sukkos." Other Midrashim (Rabeinu Bechayei, *ibid*) say that the sea stood before Hashem and said, "The Torah was given in the desert; the Temple was built in settled land; what about me?" Hashem

promised the sea that the salt produced from it would be offered on the altar. Some wrote (*Peirush HaRaavad* on *Sefer Yetzirah*, p. 69) that the sea merited such because it parted for the Jews when they left Egypt (see *Torah Shleimah*, Vayikra, Ch. 2, os 111 in the remark).

An unsalted sacrifice is not desirable to anyone: About salting sacrifices, the *Chinuch* writes (mitzvah 119, and thus wrote Ramban, Ibn Ezra and Rabeinu Bechayei): "To arouse the soul of he who brings a sacrifice, he was commanded to offer good, tasty things that he likes, as we wrote above..." True to his explanation that a sacrifice is meant to "rectify and straighten the soul of he who offers it", he explains that a sacrifice should be salted "as anything without salt is not desirable to anyone, not its taste and not even its smell."

As opposed to the custom of idolaters: Rambam (*Sefer HaMitzvos*, negative mitzvah 99) also mentions the reason of the Rishonim: "...that it is not allowed to sacrifice the unsalted, which has no taste". In his *Moreh Nevuchim* he offered another reason. As he is wont to explain (*Moreh Nevuchim*, III, Ch. 46), that the *mitzvos* of offering sacrifices are meant to distance us from idolatry, Rambam extends his explanation to the *mitzvah* of salting sacrifices: "...and because idolaters...choose to sacrifice sweet things and dirty their sacrifices with honey, as is well known in the books I have told you about, and you will not find any salt in their sacrifices, Hashem warned us not to sacrifice leavening or honey and commanded to constantly use salt: *On all of your sacrifices you shall offer salt.*" In other words, we were commanded to behave completely as opposed to the way of idolaters. They put honey on their sacrifices and we should not do so. They do not salt their sacrifices, so we salt them.

(The Chazon Ish *zt"l* [Menachos 25:18] wondered that it is not Rambam's wont to mention reasons in *Sefer HaMitzvos*. Therefore, he explains – and thus wrote HaGaon Rav Itzel of Ponivezh *zt"l* [*Zecher Yitzchak*, 40] – that Rambam wanted to inform us that the prohibition to offer an unsalted sacrifice is not that he mustn't fail to salt it but that one mustn't offer an unsalted sacrifice. In other words, aside from the fact that there

is a positive *mitzvah* to salt a sacrifice, there is a negative *mitzvah* not to **offer** it without salt. The *halachic* implication is whether offering an unsalted sacrifice is considered a negative *mitzvah* without an act (*lav she'ein bo ma'aseh* – he failed to salt it) and if so, it is not punishable by lashes, or whether it is a negative *mitzvah* with an act (he offered it unsalted), which is punishable by lashes. Now that we know that the prohibition is in the act of offering, it is punishable by lashes and Rambam indeed wrote so in *Hilchos Isurei HaMizbeich*, 5:12. Rav Itzel mentions another example that expresses the difference between the two definitions: if a *Kohen* offers a sacrifice on which salt fell. In this case the *Kohen* did not observe the *mitzvah* and failed to salt it, but according to Rambam he did not transgress a prohibition, as he did not offer an unsalted sacrifice. Members of our *beis midrash* remarked that therefore we can understand why Rambam mentions both his reason in *Moreh Nevuchim*, that sacrifices are salted to distance us from idolatry, and the reason of the other Rishonim, that sacrifices are salted so that they may have a taste. In the light of the aforesaid, it could be that the positive *mitzvah* to salt a sacrifice is in order to **act** completely differently from gentiles and that the negative *mitzvah*, not to offer an unsalted sacrifice, is not dependent on the *mitzvah*-act of salting, because it is merely so that the meat should have a taste. Aside from that, we can explain that the main reason is as he wrote in *Sefer HaMitzvos* and the reason for choosing salt for the taste is as he wrote in *Moreh Nevuchim*).

Salt to preserve a person's soul: It is interesting to mention another reason stated by *Sefer HaChinuch* (ibid) for salting sacrifices: “because salt preserves everything and saves from waste and rot and thus, by offering a sacrifice, a person is saved from waste and his soul is preserved forever.”

Should the meat eaten by the *kohanim* be salted? We conclude with an interesting remark by the author of *Revid HaZahav* (Vayikra 2:13). There is a disagreement among the Rishonim as to which meat should be salted. According to the Rashba, as cited in his *Toras HaBayis* (*bayis 3, sha'ar 3*) and in his *Responsa Mishmeres HaBayis* which he wrote in response to the Raah's remarks on his *sefer*, only sacrifices offered on the altar should

be salted (and thus wrote Rosh, Pesachim Ch. 2 §23). On the other hand, the Raah, in his remarks on *Mishmeres HaBayis*, wrote that meat eaten by the *kohanim* and the owner of the sacrifice should also be salted (and that is the opinion of other Rishonim; see the Ran, Chulin 15b; the manuscript attributed to Rashi, Nedarim 18b, s.v. *Lishna Acharina*; and see *Kli Yekar*, Vayikra, ibid).

The Remo writes (*O.C.* 167:5) that “it is a *mitzvah* to put salt on every table before one breaks bread, as the table resembles the altar” and eating, meant to strengthen a person to serve his Creator (*Mishnah Berurah*, ibid, S.K. 31), is considered a sacrifice. The author of *Revid HaZahav* writes that it seems that the Remo agrees with the Rashba, that only meat offered on the altar needs salting and therefore he compared eating to a sacrifice **offered on the altar** and not to the meat eaten by the *kohanim* and the owner (though we could explain the Remo's statement as referring to the meat eaten by the *kohanim*). The next article treats the custom to put salt on the table, its source and what to do if we have no salt.

Sweet Salt!

In this article we shall address, among other topics, a revolutionary innovation by Rabbi Yosef Chayim zt"l (*Responsa Torah Lishmah*, 500), by which we could dip the *hamotzi* slice of bread in sugar instead of salt! But first we shall focus on our custom to dip the *hamotzi* in salt.

Salt for *hamotzi* for two reasons: On examining this custom, we find two reasons. The *Gemora* in Brachos 40a explains that the *hamotzi* slice should be dipped in salt so that it should have a taste. In our era, when all baked goods are seasoned with various ingredients, there is no need for salt to give the *hamotzi* a taste (Tosfos, ibid, s.v. *Havei melach*, and *Shulchan Aruch*, *O.C.* 167:5) but the Remo writes (ibid) that at any rate “it is a *mitzvah* to **put** salt on every table before one breaks bread because the table resembles the altar and eating is like a sacrifice.”

Two stages in putting salt on the table: Our present custom also comprises two stages: bringing salt to the table, to remind of the Torah's command "on each of your sacrifices you shall offer salt" (Vayikra 2:13), and dipping the bread in salt. Some learn such from the Remo's statement that "it is a *mitzvah* to **put** salt on every table..." The Remo ruled apparently only to place salt but there is no need to dip the *hamotzi* slice in salt, just as on the Seder night we put two cooked foods on the Seder plate to remind us of the *pesach* and *chagigah* sacrifices though they are not eaten (Responsa *Dvar Shmuel*, 37; we should mention, however, that the simple meaning of the Remo is to also dip the bread in salt, as he writes "and eating is like a sacrifice" and sacrifices are salted; see *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, 41:6, and *Mishnah Berurah*, 475, S.K. 4, and see also *Dvar Shmuel*, *ibid*, who concludes "and perhaps, in his opinion, it is good to also eat it with salt"). At any rate, the Mekubalim wrote that one should dip the *hamotzi* slice in salt three times (*Mishnah Berurah*, 167, S.K. 33, according to *Magen Avraham*, S.K. 15, and the explanation of *Machatzis HaShekel*). We should remark that according to the Mekubalim, the *hamotzi* slice should be **dipped** in salt and not sprinkled with it (*Bishvilei HaParashah*, p. 304, in the name of *Derech Se'udah* by Maharam Papparish).

Dipping bread in sugar: A few fascinating *halachic* discoveries stem from the fact that our custom to bring salt to the table is based on the comparison of the table to the altar and eating to a sacrifice. One of them was recorded by Rabbi Yosef Chayim of Baghdad, who was asked: "We heard that one must put salt on the table. If there is no salt, can anything else be put there instead that can help like it?" He replied that it could be that one may dip the bread of *hamotzi* in sugar.

Salting a sacrifice with sugar: This reply is based on the tremendous innovation of Rabbi Yaakov Chagiz, author of Responsa *Halachos Ketanos* (I, 218), who wrote that in the absence of salt in the Temple, one may salt sacrifices with sugar! He consulted experts who expressed their opinion that every type of sugar contains salt and, as he writes, "Chemistry experts say that everything contains salt and in the sugar cane brought from Egypt, close to its root and in its top, there is a salty taste". The author of *Minchas Chinuch* (end of *mitzvah* 119) expresses

it thus: "sugar is also a kind of salt, but sweet." However, the Torah says "All leavening and all honey [i.e., sweet fruity substances] you shall not offer from it a burnt-offering to Hashem" (Vayikra 2:11), and sugar is also considered fruit. Nonetheless, the positive *mitzvah* to season an offering pushes away the negative *mitzvah* of offering sweet food (see *Minchas Chinuch*, *ibid*, who remarks that the matter is unclear as a positive *mitzvah* does not push away a negative *mitzvah* in the Temple).

Salting ordinary meat with sugar: Some widely extended Rabbi Chagiz's comparison between salt and sugar, as related by the author of *Avnei Nezer* zt"l (Responsa, O.C. 532) about the Gaon of Lissa who would "salt" meat with sugar.

Salting the sacrifice to observe the *mitzvah* and not to extract blood: However, many *halachic* authorities strongly opposed this permission as salting sacrifices was not meant to extract their blood but to improve their taste and therefore, in the absence of salty salt, one may observe the *mitzvah* with sweet salt. We cannot learn therefrom for salting ordinary meat, which is meant to extract its blood – a quality reserved only for salty salt (*Divrei Chayim*, Y.D. 25; *Ruach Chayim* by Rabbi Chayim Falaji, Y.D. 69, S.K. 5, and Responsa *Rav Pe'alim*, II, Y.D. 4).

A plate of honey on Rosh HaShanah: Rabbi Yosef Chayim says that though we don't learn from Rabbi Chagiz's ruling for salting meat, it could be that we can learn therefrom for the *halachah* of bringing salt to the table, which is based only on the salting of sacrifices. It could be that this is a basis for those who have the custom to put a plate of sugar on the table on Rosh HaShanah for a good sign.

The letters of *melach* form *lechem*: Still, he writes that he finds it hard to agree that sugar might serve as a substitute for salt. Not only that but "in dipping the *hamotzi* slice in salt there is a secret and profound intention, for the letters of מלח (salt) form לחם (bread)...and by this dipping the (Divine) harshness becomes tempered with kindness...as all this is mentioned by the Ari z"l." He concludes by saying that also on Rosh HaShanah,



when he was offered a plate of sugar, he dipped one side of the bread in sugar and the other side in salt.

Dipping bread in bread: It is interesting to note the statement of the author of *Kaf HaChayim* (167, S.K. 37, in the name of *Yafeh Lalev*) that in the absence of salt one should dip the bread in more bread as the letters of *lechem* form *melach*.

The Chasam Sofer's custom on Shabbos evening: *Minhagei HaChasam Sofer* (Ch. 5, os 12) mentions that on Shabbos evening he would not dip his bread in salt though he put salt on the table (*Responsa Be'er Sarim* III, 43) as in the Temple limbs left from the sacrifices were burnt every night (see *Menachos* 26b) aside from Shabbos and thus on Shabbos night salt was not used. *Minhag Yisrael Torah* (I, 274) mentions that the custom nonetheless to dip the bread in salt on Shabbos evening is explained by the fact that limbs that were put on the altar before Shabbos continued to be burnt on Shabbos.

HALACHOS FROM THE DAF

Shulchan Aruch rules that one should not cut the bread until salt (or some other condiment) is brought to the table.

It is required to have salt set on the table before breaking bread, and to dip into the salt the piece of bread over which the *hamotzi* is said, because the table represents the altar and the food symbolizes the offerings, and it is said (vAYIKRA 2:13): "With all your offerings you shall offer salt."

The Shulchan Aruch HaRav (167:8) and the Mishnah Berurah (167:33) mention, that, according to Kabbalah, it is proper to dip the bread in the salt three times.

If no salt is available, according to some Poskim, it should be dipped into sugar (*as the korbanos were allowed to be salted with sugar; the Chasam Sofer also had this custom when no salt was available; however, the Kaf HaChaim 167:37 maintains that sugar is not an acceptable substitute*).

If sugar is also unavailable, it is best to dip the bread into a salty

food item (fish, spread or dip) that is on the table, as to give the bread the taste of the salt.

DAILY MASHAL

The Water Wept at the Destruction of the Temple

Midrashim say (cited by Rabeinu Bechayei, Vayikra 13) that the sea stood before Hashem and said, "The Torah was given in the desert; the Temple was built in settled land; what about me?" and Hashem promised that the salt produced from it would be offered on the altar. The Gerer Rebbe zt"l, author of *Imrei Emes*, said that therefore, when the Jews were exiled, we are told: "There we sat, we **also** wept" (Tehilim 137:1). "Also" includes whom else? The lower water which wept again once the Temple was destroyed and the sacrifices and salting were discontinued (*Likutei Yehudah*, 96).