

"But, on/by the first day you shall put away leaven from your houses." (12:15)

The admonishment to rid ourselves of any vestige of *chametz*, leaven, is unique in the sense that this concept is not found in regard to any other forbidden food. The *Radvaz* was once questioned regarding this stringency. His response was simple, but profound. *Chametz* symbolizes the *yetzer hora*, evil inclination within a person. The leaven is the *se'or sheh-b'isah*, fermenting agent within the dough, representing the power of arrogance which is the "rising" agent within a person. The *yetzer hara* is forbidden, even *b'ma'sheh'hu*, the slightest bit. One may not accede to even the most diminutive demand of the *yetzer hara*.

Horav Moshe Feinstein z.l., derives an interesting lesson from the laws regarding *hashbosas chametz*, ridding oneself of all leaven. Essentially, one can accomplish this *mitzvah* by nullifying his ownership of the *chametz* in his possession. This is referred to as *hefker b'lev*, nullification in the heart. By this act, one disclaims his title to the *chametz*. By reciting the words of the *bitul*, "Any *chametz* which is in my possession.... shall be nullified and become ownerless... like the dust of the earth," he is fulfilling the *Torah's* mandate.

What happens, however, if one does not perform this simple, but essential act? He is in complete transgression of the laws prohibiting the possession of *chametz* on *Pesach*! Regardless of his act of nullification, the *chametz* becomes null and void. According to the *Torah*, it has no value due to its prohibited state. If this is the case, why is it essential for human articulation in regard to *bitul chametz*? What lesson do we derive from this unique *halacha*?

Horav Feinstein suggests that we learn from this law that the will of Hashem will be done irrespective of any human intervention. The lack of participation of the individual, however, is viewed as a transgression because he is not fulfilling his own obligation. Consequently, the *chametz* is considered to be in his possession, since he reneged his duty. This can be applied to all *mitzvos*. One should not assume that if he refrains from performing a given *mitzvah*, the obligation will be "abolished."

This is an inappropriate perspective. The will of Hashem will be done, and the *mitzvah* will endure. This individual, however, will be considered as if he extirpated a portion of *Toras Hashem*. Indeed, such a person contributes to the destruction of the world.