

You must be vigilant regarding the matzos. (12:17)

Rashi comments: *She'lo yavo'u liy'dei chimutz*, "So that they do not become leaven. From here *Chazal* say (*Pesachim* 3:4), 'If the dough has begun to rise (if you see a part of the dough is about to become *chametz*), pat it with cold moisture.' (The coolness prevents it from rising further and becoming *chametz*.)"

Horav Zalmen Sorotzkin, zl, explains the concept of *chimutz*, leavening, with regard to part of the dough beginning to rise. Leaven is a sign of separation, dissolution of a relationship, whereby a part of an entity splits from the rest to "do its own thing." One spot/ part of the dough breaks from the rest and begins to rise. If it is not stopped, it will overflow the bowl and become *chametz*, lost forever.

This, the *Lutzker Rav* says, is an important (homiletic) lesson for us with regard to the Egyptian redemption (and, in fact, all redemption). Moshe *Rabbeinu* had his share of detractors who sought to undermine his authority, demean his mission and impede the Jews' exodus from Egypt. With the *mitzvah* to safeguard the *matzos*, we are adjured to apply the lesson of the matzos to Jewish communal life in general. We must see to it that no Jew is left behind, and we must prevent fractionalization by those who seek to separate and become "leaven." When Jews work together and live in harmony, we are acting as Jews are supposed to act. The key to meriting redemption is a unified nation working together with one common goal and objective: to serve Hashem on His terms, thereby glorifying His Name and establishing ourselves as a holy nation. This is effected when *ahavas chinam*, unwarranted love, prevails among the Jewish People.

In his *Aznaim LaTorah*, the *Lutzker Rav* explains that the theme of unity, which is critical to redemption, is underscored by the fact that the Jewish People became a nation after the pagan, gentile nations had all been established. We can only survive amid unity. Avraham *Avinu's* home suffered from a disconnect (rightfully so) between brothers. Yitzchak *Avinu's* home, likewise, saw two brothers disassociate (once again, rightfully so). Yaakov *Avinu's* home saw the *shevatim*, tribes, in conflict with Yosef. Thus, the Jews were relegated to endure the bitter *galus Mitzrayim*, Egyptian exile, during which they were subjected to untold brutality and cruel labor, which broke them physically and emotionally. They had each other with whom to struggle against the harsh Egyptian people. They all united as one, thus meriting their redemption.

As a result, we emphasize national unity in our approach to celebrating *Pesach*, the festival commemorating the Exodus. The *Korban Pesach*, Offering, is a *Korban Tzibbur*, communal offering in which large groups of Jews share together in love and friendship. A single person cannot slaughter a *Korban Pesach* just for himself. It must be a group endeavor. It must be consumed in a family setting with friends and neighbors sharing as one. Hashem is One and, to become His nation, we must emulate Him.