



Triticum Vulgare ~ חֲטָה

Wheat

Wheat ~ חֲטָה *Triticum Vulgare* Chesed ~ חֶסֶד (*Loving-Kindness*)



וַיֹּאכִלְהוּ מִחֶלֶב חֲטָה וּמִצֹּר דְּבִשׁ אֲשֶׁר־יֵעָק: (תהילים פא, יז)
“He would feed him with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock I will satisfy you” (Psalms 81:17).

This verse teaches us that when the Israelites walk in the way of Hashem, then the dry places will be transformed to sheer abundance (*Metzudat David*).

לחם חטה בחסד זן בחסדו כל בשר.
 (ספר ביאורי אגדות (אפיקי ים) - קידושין לא, ע"ב)
The bread of wheat is in chesed, with chesed He sustains all flesh (Beurei Agadot, Afikei Yam, Kidushin 31b).

Attribute: Chesed – Loving-kindness

Character trait: The ability to nourish (expansion)

Holiday: Shavuot, when we offer two wheat *challot* (loaves of bread)

Weekday: יום ראשון / *Yom Rishon* – First day of the week (Sunday)

World: עֲשֵׂיָהּ / *Asiyah* – Action (hard inedible husk)

Body parts: The right shoulder, arm and hand

Shepherd: אַבְרָהָם / Avraham

Prophetess: שָׂרָה / Sarah

Numerical value: 22, equivalent to the word טוֹבָה / *tovah* – ‘goodness’¹

Mentioned in the Bible 29 times²

Meaning of Latin Name: A genus of the common cereal grasses including wheat, from the root word ‘triturum,’ to grind.



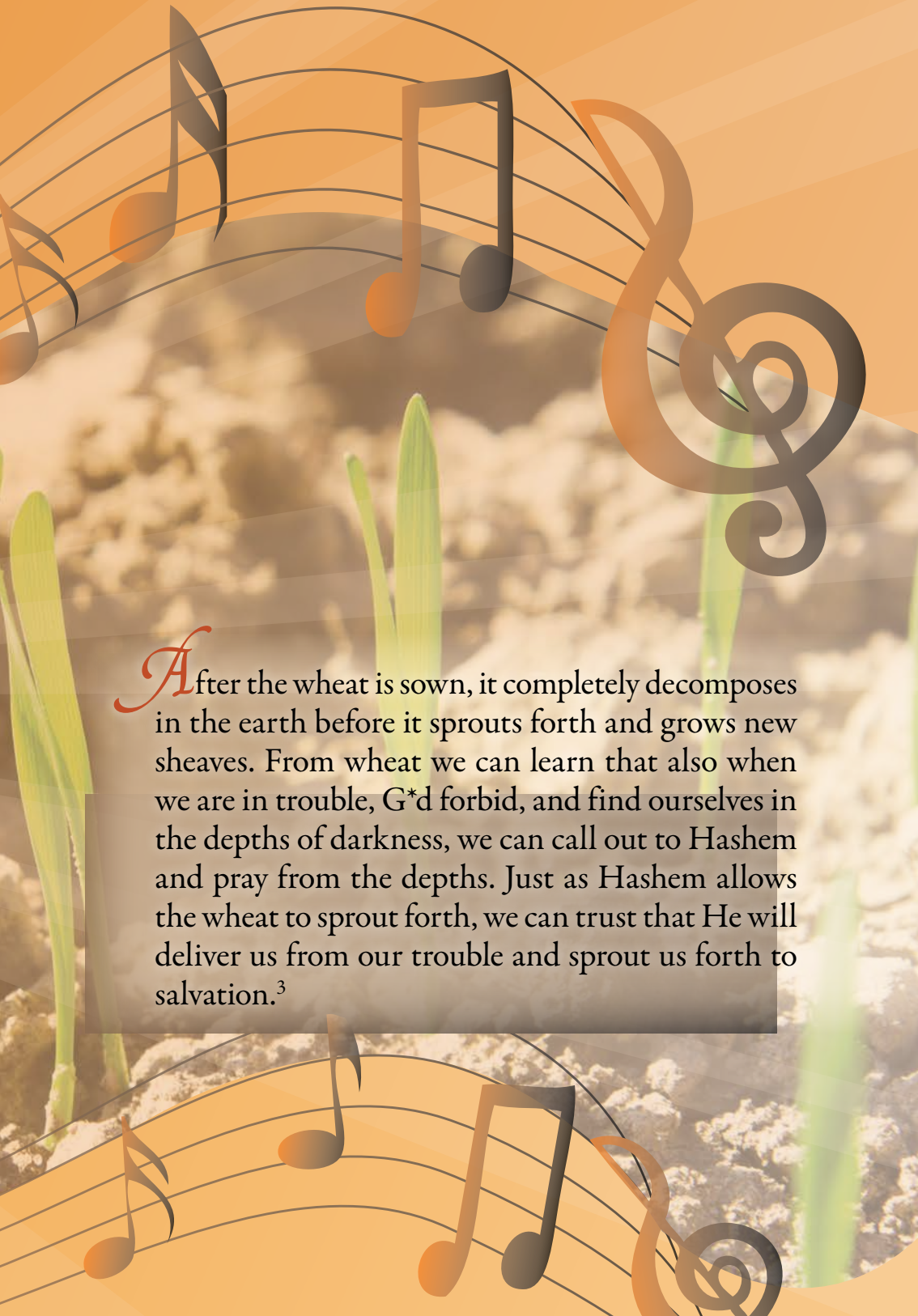
פִּירְק שִׁירָה

Perek Shirah

The Song of the Universe

נְשִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת מִמַּעַמְקִים קָרָאתִיךָ הָשֵׁם:
(תהלים קל, א)

The Song of Wheat: "A song of ascents.
Out of the depths I called You, O Hashem"
(Psalms 130:1).

The image features a background of a field with young green wheat sprouts growing from brown soil. Overlaid on this are two musical staves. The top staff has three notes: a quarter note, a half note, and a quarter note, followed by a large treble clef. The bottom staff has three notes: a quarter note, a half note, and a quarter note, followed by a large treble clef. The notes and clefs are in shades of orange and black.

*A*fter the wheat is sown, it completely decomposes in the earth before it sprouts forth and grows new sheaves. From wheat we can learn that also when we are in trouble, G*d forbid, and find ourselves in the depths of darkness, we can call out to Hashem and pray from the depths. Just as Hashem allows the wheat to sprout forth, we can trust that He will deliver us from our trouble and sprout us forth to salvation.³

*Nutrition Facts and Information about Wheat*⁴

*Mineral Content of Wheat*⁵

Wheat is an excellent source of iron, phosphorus, magnesium, manganese, copper and selenium. Wheat berries are particularly rich in selenium. Wheat is a great source of zinc. It also contains potassium and a small amount of calcium.

Vitamin Content of Wheat

Wheat is an excellent source of thiamin and niacin. It is also a good source of riboflavin and vitamin B6, with some folate, and small amounts of vitamin E in whole wheat flour. Wheat germ oil is one of the main sources of vitamin E.

Oriental Medicine

According to Chinese medicine, wheat chaff affects the heart. It is sweet and slightly cold. Its properties are astringent, sedative and tonic.⁶



Wheat Nutritional Facts/100 g

Minerals	Whole Wheat Flour	Soft Red Winter Wheat berries	Recommended Daily Dietary Allowance (RDA)	
Calcium	33 mg	27 mg	3.5%	2.5%
Iron	3.71 mg	3.21 mg	46%	40%
Magnesium	117 mg	126 mg	33.5%	36%
Phosphorus	323 mg	493 mg	48%	73%
Potassium	394 mg	397 mg	8.5%	
Sodium	394 mg	2 mg	<1%	26.5%
Zinc	2.96 mg	2.63 mg	21%	19%
Copper	0.475 mg	0.434 mg	52.5%	48%
Manganese	3.399 mg	3.985 mg	>100%	
Selenium	12.7 µg	70.7 µg	21%	>100%
Vitamins	Whole Wheat Flour	Soft Red Winter Wheat berries	RDA	
C	0 mg	0.0 mg	0%	
B1 (Thiamin)	0.297 mg	0.394 mg	26%	35%
B2 (Riboflavin)	0.188 mg	0.096 mg	13.5%	7%
B3 (Niacin)	5.347 mg	4.800 mg	28.5%	25.5%
B6	0.191 mg	0.272 mg	9%	13%
B9 (Folate)	28 µg	41 µg	7%	10.5%
A	9 IU	0 IU	0.4%	0%
E	0.53 mg	0 mg	3%	0%
K	1.9 µg	0 mg	1.5%	0%





Wheat corresponds to Chesed. The attribute of *Chesed* is expansion: reaching out and extending oneself toward others. Wheat, likewise, has nourishing and expanding qualities. *Chesed*, through which the world is built,⁷ corresponds to the skeletal system – the most essential building block of the body.⁸ Likewise, wheat is the most essential food, which builds and sustains the body.

Most Nourishing of Foods

Wheat reflects the nourishing food of kindness. Since the times of the ancient Israelites until today, it remains our main sustaining food staple.⁹ Wheat bread nourishes the heart.¹⁰ Avraham told the angels, “I will fetch a morsel of bread, and nourish your hearts.”¹¹ Wheat strengthens the body, aids digestion, increases blood volume, and improves circulation. It also increases mother’s milk, the ultimate nourishment of *Chesed*.¹² Wheat germ contains significant amounts of vitamin E and folic acid. Vitamin E is an antioxidant, which helps to prevent destruction and waste of nutrients. Folic acid is important for the proper early development of the fetal nervous system.¹³

Protects against Breast-Cancer

I found it interesting that both wheat germ and wheat bran have a protective effect against breast cancer.¹⁴ It is possible that one of the underlying causes for this illness is the expansiveness of *Chesed* going overboard, causing cells to reproduce randomly without proper boundaries. Therefore, in some cases, certain middle-aged women may be prone to cancer, especially breast-cancer, if they can’t find a proper outlet for their *Chesed* when their children leave the nest. The breast embodies ultimate giving. Therefore, misplaced *Chesed* or the inability to find a proper recipient for a woman’s desire to give, may cause inappropriate growths specifically in her breasts (May Hashem protect us!).



Rambam teaches that one of the healthiest foods to consume on a regular basis is properly prepared sourdough bread made from unrefined un-hulled fully ripened wheat kernels. Nothing else made from wheat is fitting to eat for a health-conscious person.¹⁵ Fine, white wheat flour and anything cooked from wheat products are not proper food.¹⁶ Boiled dough such as noodles, macaroni, dumplings and fried dough-balls, as well as pancakes and bread soaked in oil, are especially unhealthy. Only a stomach with great power to digest them can derive any nourishment from these wheat products.¹⁷



Wheat – The Tree of Knowledge

Today, bread produced from wheat represents human technology, since so much human effort is invested into producing bread.¹⁸ There is a rabbinic opinion that the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was a ‘wheat tree,’ as according to the Talmud a baby only knows to pronounce the initial cognitive words such as ‘Mommy’ and ‘Daddy’ after having tasted wheat.¹⁹ In addition, the numerical value of the word חֵטֶה/*chitah* – ‘wheat’ is 22, corresponding to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, through which we express knowledge. Therefore, in order to imbue within the Jewish people that the Divine Torah (The Tree of Life) takes precedence over scientific knowledge (The Tree of Knowledge), the Torah restricts eating wheat products throughout the week of Pesach. During this holiday, the most pivotal time when the Jewish nation was born and its foundation laid, we may not eat חָמֵץ/*chametz* – (leavened bread), which is most often made from wheat.





The Limitations of Health Consciousness

The restriction against eating regular bread, which is naturally healthier than the dry unleavened matzah, teaches us the principle to choose *halacha* (Jewish law) over health. Keeping Hashem's commandments overrides the importance of healthy lifestyles. Ultimately, human health is determined by Hashem's continual creation and providence, rather than by what we eat. The spiritual nourishment of keeping Hashem's mitzvot enhances our physical health even more than the most wholesome nutritious super-food. We do not take care of our body for its own sake, but rather in order to keep Hashem's directives to "take very good care of yourselves."²⁰ This mitzvah teaches us that we must do our outmost to treat our body respectfully, and eat only wholesome foods that promote physical health whenever possible. However, sometimes, in order to better serve Hashem, we need to bend our health standards, and trust that He will bless even the white wheat flour to provide us with the nutrients that our body needs. The concept of eating matzah on Pesach signifies that we must avoid worshipping the knowledge of scientific research – including New Age alternative organic wisdom – and realize that the Jewish person is beyond the natural.²¹

In Judaism, bread is the mainstay of every meal. At all seudot-mitzvah (religious celebrations) including circumcisions, bar mitzvahs and wedding celebrations, wheat bread is served. We are encouraged to partake in the bread and join together in the Grace after Meals.

With the increasing wheat allergies and the fact that bread is no longer considered such a healthy food, whether to eat or not to eat bread becomes a serious dilemma, for health conscious, observant Jews. The mitzvah to take care of our health alongside the importance to partake of the mitzvah bread may pull us in opposite directions. Each person must endeavor to make the right decision, depending on the particular circumstances.



Wheat Allergies

Today, allergy to wheat has become very common, and not everyone is able to partake in the bread of mitzvah meals. During the last decade, a growing percentage of people have become gluten intolerant. Perhaps there is a spiritual underlying reason for the prevalent allergies to Biblical grains.

I believe there are physical, emotional and especially spiritual reasons for the increasing wheat/gluten allergies we experience in recent times. On the physical plane, wheat and other gluten-containing grains today are not what they were in the past. In our industrialized world, mass-produced wheat is hybridized to produce a larger, fatter and sweeter grain, to make it more sellable. Dr. William Davis explains that the kind of wheat available today is detrimental to human health. The reason for this is that “genetic differences generated via thousands of human-engineered hybridizations make for substantial variation in composition, appearance and quantities.”²²

On the emotional level, perhaps one reason for the prevalent wheat allergy is that wheat represents the power of food to nourish. Many people today have been force-fed, or required to finish their plate by parents of the post-holocaust generation. Since they were not allowed to be in control over their eating as children, their body may react, attempting to regain control by rejecting specifically wheat, which represents food in general.

In the spiritual sense, the Talmud teaches us that the Tree of Knowledge was a wheat tree.²³ In the Garden of Eden, wheat was a fruit tree producing ready-to-eat fruits in the form of rich cakes or muffins. At the End of Days, “the land of Israel will [once again] produce muffin trees.”²⁴ As a result of eating from the Tree of Knowledge, Adam was cursed: “By the sweat of your brow you shall eat (wheat) bread.”²⁵ Since then, wheat bread became the ultimate ‘hard-work-food.’ It must be planted, plowed, ground, harvested, bundled, trampled, winnowed, separated from pebbles, sifted, kneaded and baked. Bread became a symbol of all the toil we do in order to make





a living. Therefore, bread represents industrialization and modern technology – today’s Tree of Knowledge.

Although the Tree of Knowledge, represented by bread, caused the great downfall and expulsion from Eden, it nevertheless can be redeemed. Adam’s curse can be redefined as the rectification for eating from the Tree of Knowledge. “The sweat of your brow” entails not only hard physical work, but also emotional and spiritual refinement. Bread, thus, is a manifestation of what it means to be refined and transformed over and over, until we become what we are meant to be. The main rectification is to learn to recognize that even when we apply our ultimate effort to produce our most refined product, nevertheless Hashem is still the Creator of all. He is the One who gives us the wheat and the ability to plough, sow, harvest, winnow, grind, sift, knead and bake it. The more our own effort goes into producing a certain product, and the more the technology of the Western World evolves, the temptation is greater to be misled into thinking that we are the creators and masters of the world: “It is my power and the strength of my hand that made all these.”²⁶ This was the original temptation of the serpent that lured Eve to eat from the Tree in order to become “like G*d.”²⁷

Today in our industrialized Western World, we have succumbed big time to the temptation of the Tree of Knowledge, the source of our knowledge, science and technology, to think we are “like G*d.” This may be a spiritual reason why we experience so much intolerance to wheat in our time. Our spiritual health and true life depends on recognizing Hashem as the Creator of everything. We need to return the ultimate labor of our hands to Him, in recognition that even what we have put most of ourselves into really belongs to Him, Who is the source of our life and labor. Only when we have reached this level of conscious existence, will we be able to heal our relationship with wheat completely.



Returning the Life to the Wheat

The Torah alludes to our current challenging relationship with wheat. The correct spelling of wheat in Hebrew is חֵטָה/*chitah*. However, the biblical spelling of the word for wheat, חֵטָה/*chitah*, is missing the letter י/*yud* which usually follows the *chirik* (*ee*) vowel sound in Hebrew.²⁸ Without the *yud* the word חַי/*chai* – ‘life’ is mysteriously missing from חֵטָה/*chitah* – wheat. Devoid of the *yud*, wheat is removed from the source of life, Hashem. Perhaps since wheat is identified with the Tree of Knowledge, which brought mortality to the world, it is missing the life from the Tree of Life, its antidote.²⁹ This could be why so many people have wheat allergies today. Furthermore, the root of the Hebrew word for wheat, implies sinning extensively and removing something from the source of life, yet it can also symbolize the elimination of sin, (חֵטָה/*chet*).³⁰

At the Final Redemption, the *yud* and the *chet* will reunite in the word חֵטָה/*chitah*, wheat, to form the word חַי/*chai*, ‘life’. When life will return to the wheat, it will transform its entire root and everything it represents. The wheat from the Tree of Knowledge, with all its glittering temptation, will become elevated and transformed into the fruit of the Tree of Life – the actual material manifestation of the Torah. Then the Tree of Knowledge (wheat and human technology) and the Tree of Life (Torah) will become unified. There will no longer be a gap between the spiritual and the physical, between body and soul. The *yud* represents the ‘*pintele yid*,’ the aspect of the Jewish soul hardwired into the Divine, which can never be extinguished. Once the *yud* will infuse our bread, the source of our physical sustenance, we and the wheat will make peace, and together we will rise to a higher level of existence. Our *chayah* and *yechidah* soul levels of life will then be reawakened and activated.³¹

By pronouncing חֵטָה/*chitah* as חֵטָה/*chiytah* with the inclusion of the letter *yud*, we are infusing our lower state of awareness with the *kavanah* (intention) of propelling us toward a state of Messianic





awareness. The wheat bread, the very same vehicle (Knowledge) that caused our original separation from the source of our life, will reunite us with G*d during the Messianic grandeur as it states: “For the land shall be full of the knowledge of Hashem as the water covers the sea.”³²

The Final Redemption ushered in by Mashiach will take place when we will have completed the rectification for eating from the Tree of Knowledge. It is not by chance that once our relationship with wheat is healed, the most refined and perfected human being, Mashiach, will arise specifically from Bethlehem, in Hebrew, בֵּית לֶחֶם/*Beit Lechem* – The House of Bread, to repair the world.³³ At that time the rectified wheat will reflect human refinement and the actualization of our full potential. Then “the land of Israel will [once again] bring forth bread-cakes.”³⁴

Reverting the Curse of Eating from the Tree of Knowledge

בָּזְעַת אֶפְיךָ תֹאכַל לֶחֶם עַד שׁוֹבְבָ אֶל הָאֲדָמָה... (בראשית ג, יט)

“In the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread, till you return to the ground...” (Genesis 3:19).

Bread was only introduced to our diet as a consequence of eating from the Tree of Knowledge.³⁵ Perhaps we are in the process of returning to the ‘Edenic’ lifestyle and diet consisting of fruits and vegetables alone.³⁶ Just as the rest of the curses resulting from eating from the Tree of Knowledge are gradually fading out, as we approach the Final Redemption, perhaps the curse of eating bread (with or without “the sweat of your brow”) is also drawing to a close, as we await the day when “the Land of Israel will once again produce muffin trees.”³⁷ Until then, sourdough whole wheat and sprouted wheat bread serve as a healthy alternative to our dilemma of whether or not to eat wheat.



Infusing our Bread with Torah

One should place both hands on the bread at the time of blessing, for the hands have ten fingers corresponding to the ten mitzvot connected with producing bread.³⁸ Therefore, there are ten words in the blessing of 'Hamotzi' (Who brings forth bread...) There are also ten words in the verse "A land of wheat and barley..." (Deuteronomy 8:8).³⁹

The ten words in the blessing:

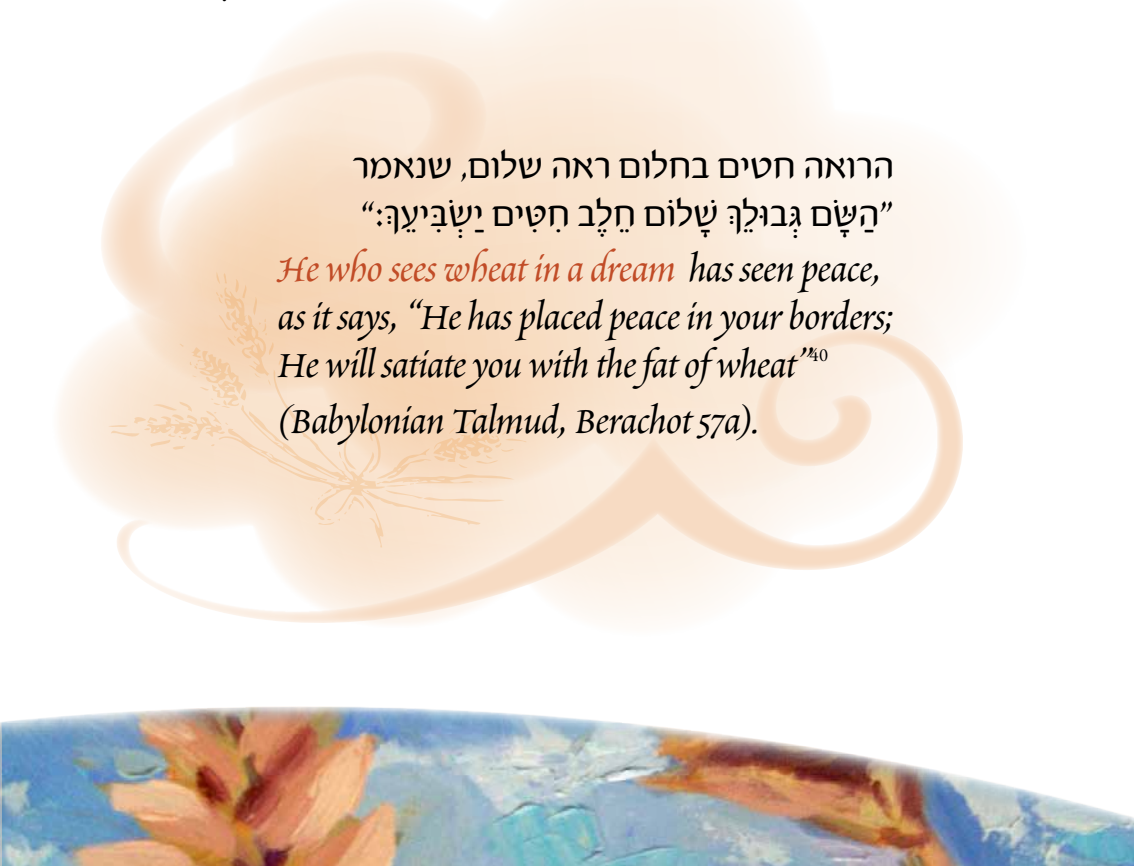
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' שֵׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

*Blessed are you, Hashem our G*d, Sovereign of the world, Who brings forth bread from the earth*, moreover, correspond to the Ten Commandments – the essence of the Torah – which we connect with our bread, infusing our eating and physical existence with the ways of the Torah.

הַרוֹאֵה חֲטִיִּים בַּחלוּם רֹאֵה שְׁלוֹם, שְׁנֵאמַר
 "הַשֵּׁם גְּבוּלָךְ שְׁלוֹם חֲטִיִּים יִשְׁבְּעֶיךָ:"

He who sees wheat in a dream has seen peace,
as it says, "He has placed peace in your borders;
He will satiate you with the fat of wheat"⁴⁰

(Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 57a).





❖ A Taste of Kabbalah – Bread with Salt

הרבה פעמים אמרו רז"ל פת במלח, "משהעני נכנס לאכול פתו במלח", "כך דרכה של תורה פת במלח", "פת במלח וקיתון של מים מבטלתו", והרבה כיוצא, ונראה לי שרומז על מה שכתבתי לעיל סוד פת הוא סוד מוחין דגדלות ודקטנות והוא סוד החסד וגבורה, ונדע שכל זמן שאין הגבורות יורדין עד יסוד אין נמתקין, רק כשבאין ליסוד ומתעכבין יחד אז נמתקים... והנה מלח הוא יסוד, על כן פת במלח רומז על התכללות חסד וגבורה מוחין דגדלות וקטנות ביסוד דאקרי מלח ושם נמתקים... וכן דרכה של תורה להמשיך המוחין ליסוד ומשם נשפעים לכל העולמות, וזה שאמר "פת במלח תאכל", וכן מה שאמר "פת במלח וקיתון של מים מבטלתן חלאים דמרה" שהוא מבחינת שמאל, ועל ידי המשכת החסדים שביסוד דאקרי פת במלח... (קהלת יעקב - ערך פת)

Our Sages often speak about eating bread with salt, for example: "When the poor comes to eat bread with salt."⁴¹ "This is the way of the Torah, bread with salt..."⁴² "Bread with salt and a pitcher of water..."⁴³ It seems to me that it alludes to the secret of bread, which is the secret of expansive and constricted consciousness, the secret of *Chesed* and *Gevurah*. It is known that *Gevurah* is only sweetened when it comes into *Yesod* and remains with it. Salt is *Yesod*, therefore bread with salt alludes to the inclusion of *Chesed* and *Gevurah*, the expansive and constricted consciousness in *Yesod*, which is called salt, and there they become sweetened. This is the way of the Torah to draw down consciousness into *Yesod* and influence all the worlds from there. This is the meaning of "you shall eat bread with salt." Likewise, "bread with salt and a pitcher of water counteracts the illnesses of the gall," which are from the aspect of the left, by means of drawing down *Chesed* into *Yesod*, which is called "bread with salt..." (Rabbi Ya'acov ben Chaim Tzemach, *Kobelet Ya'acov*).

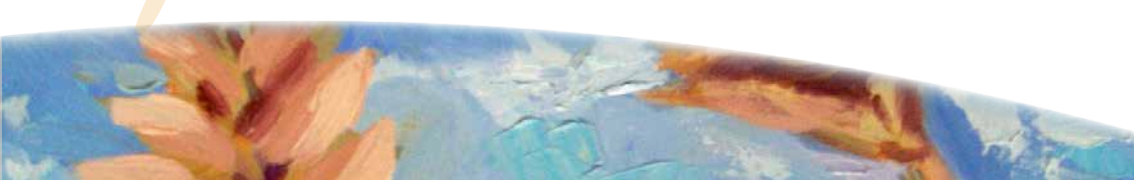
Explanation: The above text is discussing the deeper Kabbalistic reason for why the Talmud often recommends eating bread with salt. In all of the citations mentioning bread together with salt, the Hebrew word for bread is *פַת*/*pat* rather than *לֶחֶם*/*lechem*. This is



because the word *pat* (פַּת) has the *gematria* (numerical value) of 481 with the *kollel* (when counting the word itself as one). 481 equals the *gematria* of *right* (יָמִין), 110 and *left* (שְׂמֹאל), 371, which represent *Chesed* and *Gevurah*, respectively. *Chesed* is on the right branch of the Tree of Life, while *Gevurah* is on the left. Bread includes both *Gevurah* and *Chesed*, because it is made from wheat and water, which correspond to *Chesed*, but baked with the fire of *Gevurah*. Salt, the most fundamental of all seasonings, corresponds to *Yesod*, the channel through which the remaining sefirot merge on their way to *Malchut*. In order to access the light of the harsh judgments of *Gevurah* (from the fire of baking the bread) it needs to be sweetened by *Chesed*. This sweetening and mingling takes place in the foundation of *Yesod*. Therefore, our Sages recommended that we dip bread in salt, in order that the *Gevurah* of the bread can be properly blended with the *Chesed* of the bread by means of *Yesod*, embodied by the salt.

The Jewish way is to always dip our bread in salt, not only on Shabbat. Additional reasons for this are that our table is considered an altar,⁴⁴ and in the Holy Temple salt was offered together with every sacrifice. Salt never spoils or decays, therefore, it is symbolic of our eternal covenant with G*d and referred to as “the salt of your G*d’s covenant.”⁴⁵ Salt also adds taste to everything. Our bond with Hashem is supposed to add meaning and flavor to every moment of our lives, even when we are not directly involved in spiritual pursuits.

We dip the bread in salt rather than sprinkling salt on the bread because salt can also represent *Gevurah*, Divine Severity, while bread, the staff of life, primarily represents *Chesed*, Divine Kindness. We don’t want to sprinkle severity on top of kindness; rather, we endeavor to overpower the severity with kindness. In addition, the *gematria* of the Hebrew word for bread, *lechem* (לֶחֶם), is 78. We dip the bread three times, dividing the energy of 78 into three times 26, the *gematria* of the name of G*d. This reminds us that “humanity does not live by bread alone, but rather by whatever comes forth from the mouth of Hashem...”⁴⁶





Wheat Recipes

