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{ TOPIC }

Eating Dairy on Shavuos



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Eating Dairy on Shavuos

There is a widespread custom to eat dairy products on *Shavuos*.¹ What is the source of this custom? What are the reasons for this custom? Does it apply to both days? Should the dairy meal be eaten with bread? Are there restrictions regarding eating meat after dairy? These and many more questions will be answered in this issue.

The Source

The earlier authorities who mention this custom say to eat dairy foods with honey.² The reason is that Torah

is compared to milk and honey, as it says in the *posuk*,³ דבש וחלב תחת לשונך. Just as milk has the ability to sustain the human body, so too the Torah gives us our spiritual nourishment.

However, the custom in all places⁴ is to eat dairy foods even without honey.⁵ The *Shulchan Aruch*⁶ does not bring the custom to eat dairy on *Shavuos*, but it is mentioned in the *Rama*.⁷

1. Regarding the practice of most places to serve dairy at a *bris milah* see Ohr Yisroel 8:pages 32-38 in depth.

2. Kol Bo 52, Seder Hayom seder chag hashavuos, Chok Yaakov 494:9, Mishnah Berurah 494:13, Aruch Hashulchan 494:5, Kaf Hachaim 60. Refer to Minhag Yisroel Torah 2:page 625.

3. Shir Hashirim 4:11.

4. This is the language of the Shulchan Aruch Harav 494:16.

5. Refer to Leket Yosher page 103, Minhagim (Tirna), Kol Bo 52.

6. 494:3.

7. 494:3.

איזן לל להקצי"ה בעמלמו אלאי די אמות של הלכה בלביד... (ברכות ח')

Reasons

There are numerous reasons offered for this custom⁸

One reason for eating honey and milk on *Shavuos* was mentioned above.

Another reason is based on the *posuk* that says: 'נה חדשה לה' בשבועותיכם⁹ It is interesting to note that the beginning of the last three words spell out *chalav* (milk) in Hebrew.¹⁰

The *Rama*¹¹ explains that there is a special offering on *Shavuos*, which consists of two loaves of bread. Just as we bring two dishes on the night(s) of *Pesach* as a remembrance of the *korbon Pesach* and *korbon chagigah*, so too we bring two loaves of bread to the table, which is in place of the *mizbe'ach*.¹² In order to bring two loaves, we eat dairy and then meat since the same loaf of bread cannot be used for both a milk meal and meat meal.¹³

The *Magen Avraham*¹⁴ says that the seven weeks from *Pesach* to *Shavuos* correspond to the seven days which a woman requires to become ritually pure. Blood, which represents judgment (*din*), becomes milk, which represents mercy.

Similarly, the *Aruch Hashulchan* says¹⁵ that when we received the *Torah*, we were elevated from the impurity

8. Magen Avraham 494:6, Kaf Hachaim 61. Refer to Mevakshei Torah 6:pages 185-186 who lists many reasons. In addition see Sefer Matamim pages 94-97 who quotes eighteen reasons. Refer to Moadim L'simcha 6:pages 491-495.

9. Bamidbar 28:26.

10. Matei Moshe 692:page 150, Lekutei Maharich 3:page 73 (new).

11. 494:3. Refer to Mateh Moshe ibid.

12. Magen Avraham 494:7, Mishnah Berurah 14.

13. Magen Avraham 494:8.

14. 493:6. See Be'er Heitiv 8.

15. 494:5.

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of *Mitzrayim* to *kedusha*. Therefore we drink milk, which comes from blood that turns into milk.¹⁶

The *Mishnah Berurah*¹⁷ explains that when *Klal Yisroel* accepted the Torah, they could not eat meat immediately. Numerous preparations were needed, as they had to check the knife, remove the blood vessels, wash and salt the meat, and cook it in new pots, since the old pots were not *kosher*. They were thus forced to eat dairy instead. As a remembrance of this, we eat dairy.¹⁸

The *Moadim V'zmanim*¹⁹ bases the custom on the *Gemarah*²⁰ that questions why drinking milk is not a concern of *eiver min hachai* – eating from a live animal. The *Gemarah* permits it based on a *posuk* in the Torah²¹ which refers to *Eretz Yisroel* as the land flowing with milk and honey. If milk were forbidden, then the *Torah* would not have praised *Eretz Yisroel* with milk. Milk was not permitted until after *Matan Torah*. Therefore, the Jews had their first opportunity to drink milk on *Shavuos*. To commemorate this, we drink milk and eat dairy foods on *Shavuos*.²²

The *Bais HaLevi*²³ says the following: The *malachim* protested when *Hashem* wanted to give the *Torah* to the *Bnei Yisroel*. *Hashem* responded that they ate meat and milk together when they visited *Avraham*. The *malachim* did not

16. Meseches Bechoros 6b.

17. 494:12. Refer to Shar Yisochor mamer chodesh sivan mamer chag habikurim page 122:55-56. See Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:12:footnote 35.

18. Refer to Haelef Lecha Shlomo Y.D. 322 why milk is not forbidden because of *eiver min hachai*. In addition see Moadim Vezmanim 8:213:page 79.

19. 8:213. Refer to Taamei Haminhagim 626:page 282 (kuntres achron).

20. Meseches Bechoros 6b.

21. Shemos 3:8.

22. Refer to Moadim Vezmanim 8:213 who questions this approach from Avraham Aveinu.

23. Parshas Yisro page 47. Refer to Daas Torah 494:3. See Toras Chaim Meseches Bava Metziah 86b.

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actually eat meat and milk, but were not careful to separate between meat and milk. From this arose the custom of eating dairy on *Shavuos*, to show that we can be meticulous in keeping the *Torah* by separating meat and milk.

The numerical value of *chalav* (milk) in Hebrew is forty, which represents the number of days in which *Moshe Rabbeinu* was taught the *Torah*. Therefore, we make a *remez* to this and eat milk on *Shavuos*.

As an infant, *Moshe Rabbeinu* did not want to drink milk from a non-Jewish woman. We make a *remez* to this by eating dairy on *Shavuos*.²⁴

At the time of *Matan Torah* the Jews were in a sense “born again.” Therefore, we eat dairy on *Shavuos* since newborns drink milk.²⁵

Har Sinai is called “*gavnunim*”²⁶ which is a *loshon of gevina*- cheese.²⁷

It is customary to make a *seuda* upon completing a *mitzvah*.²⁸ Since the counting of the *omer* has concluded with *Shavuos*, we make a *seuda*. A meat *seuda* would not suffice, since we always eat meat meals on *Yom Tov*. In order to indicate that the meal is for the conclusion of the *mitzvah*, we eat a dairy meal on *Shavuos*.

Practical Difference Between the Reasons

According to the *Rama*, the dairy food is simply a pretext to have two loaves of bread. There is no actual reason to eat dairy. According to the other opinion regarding the *pesukim*

24. Sefer Matamim page 95:89 (new).

25. Sefer Matamim page 95:91 (new).

26. Tehillim 68:16-17.

27. Otzer Taamei Haminhagim 1:pages 304-305.

28. Refer to Rama Y.D. 246:26, 391:2, Bais Lechem Yehuda 391.

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of honey, milk is connected to the *Torah*.²⁹ In addition, the latter reason requires both honey and milk, while the *Rama* only requires dairy.

When to Eat the Dairy?

Many *poskim* say that dairy should be eaten on the first day of *Shavuos*.³⁰ Others bring the custom without mentioning any specific time to consume dairy.³¹ The custom of most places is to only serve dairy on the first day.³²

Some eat dairy in the morning for *Kiddush*,³³ while many others eat a dairy meal on the first night of *Shavuos*.³⁴ Some suggest that according to the reason of the *Rama* one should have the dairy meal during the day and then a meat meal.³⁵

Eating Meat³⁶ as Well

One of the aspects of *Simchas Yom Tov* is to be happy by eating meat and drinking wine.³⁷ Some say that this obligation is not applicable today, as there is no real joy of eating meat without the *Bais Hamikdosh* to offer *korbonos*.³⁸

29. Birurei Chaim 3:page 970.

30. Matei Moshe ibid, Yosef Ometz 854:page 188, Shulchan Aruch Harav 494:16, Lekutei Maharich 3:page 73 (new), Mikadesh Yisroel 71.

31. Refer to Minhag Avoseinu Beyudeinu 2:pages 643-644.

32. Minhag Yisroel Torah 2:page 367, Natei Gavriel 29:2

33. Otzer Minhagei Chabad 2:page 307, Natei Gavriel 29:7:footnote 11 in depth.

34. Orchos Rabbeinu 2:page 98:3.

35. Mikadesh Yisroel 73.

36. Refer to Rambam Hilchos Chagigah 2:10 regarding eating chicken on Yom Tov. If one does not like it or cannot have meat then he can eat chicken and it is considered fulfilling simchas Yom Tov (Yechaveh Daas 6:33).

37. Rambam Hilchos Yom Tov 6:17, Magen Avraham 529:2, Toras Chaim Meseches Chullin 83a. Refer to Veyeishiv Moshe 1:105.

38. Refer to Bais Yosef 529, Shulchan Aruch Harav 529:7, Mishnah Berurah 529:11, Biur Halacha "keitzad."

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Others say the obligation is a *d'rabbanan* today.³⁹ According to many *poskim* one would have to eat meat,⁴⁰ and eating an all dairy meal on *Shavuos* would be problematic. Others say that one can be lenient with this obligation at night⁴¹ and not eat meat, but most *poskim* do not agree with this.⁴²

The custom of many is not to be concerned about this at every meal.⁴³ Nonetheless, it is preferable to have the milk meal and then meat, and not miss out on this aspect of *Simchas Yom Tov* (see below).⁴⁴ This can be accomplished by eating some milk at *Kiddush* in the morning, and then to do the proper separation and eat meat.⁴⁵

There are opinions that hold that one fulfills his obligation with any tasty food, even if it is not meat. For example, a good tasting fish brings happiness as well.⁴⁶ In any case, one should have wine at the meal.⁴⁷

Bread

Based on the opinion of the *Rama*, bread should be served with the dairy meal.⁴⁸ However, the widespread custom is to eat dairy even without a full meal (i.e.

39. Tosfas Meseches Moed Kotton 14b "asei, Magen Avraham 696:15, see Darchei Teshuva Y.D. 89:19 on the two Magen Avraham's cited (one in this footnote and the other in footnote 37). Refer to Rambam Hilchos Yom Tov 6:18 who says this is a *d'oraisa*.

40. Minhagim (Tirna), Yosef Ometz 854:page 188, Yayivorech Dovid 2:165.

41. Shagas Aryeh O.C. 65.

42. Refer to Magen Avraham 546:4, Sharei Teshuva 529, Darchei Teshuva Y.D. 89:19.

43. Opinion of Harav Nissin Korelitz Shlita quoted in Chut Shuni Yom Tov page 159.

44. Darchei Teshuva Y.D. 89:19, Nemukei Orach Chaim 539:2, Yechaveh Daas 6:33, Mikadesh Yisroel 72, Avnei Yushfei 6:87:2. One should not say he does not want to eat meat because then he will not be able to stay awake at night to learn (Avnei Yushfei 6:87:3).

45. Darchei Teshuva Y.D. 89:19.

46. V'yeishiv Moshe 1:105.

47. Ibid.

48. Magen Avraham 8, Mishnah Berurah 14.

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Kiddush).⁴⁹ Others simply drink a cup of coffee before *davening*.⁵⁰ This leniency fits nicely with the opinion of the *Bais Halevi*, since having a separation is enough to prove our commitment to the *malachim*.⁵¹

Others explain that the *Zohar* prohibits eating both milk and meat at the same meal. This stringency was not practiced during the time of the *Rama*. Today, however, we practice this stringency, and cannot practice the custom of the *Rama*. Therefore, the custom of most people is just to have dairy *mezonos* products and not a meal.⁵²

Dairy Foods or Milk

The *poskim* rule that drinking milk is enough, and there is no need to eat cheese.⁵³

Separation

One should be careful to follow all the separations that are required between eating milk and meat.⁵⁴

When eating milk and then meat, one should have a separate tablecloth.⁵⁵

Waiting after Eating Dairy – *Beracha Achrona*

According to the letter of the law, one who ate dairy does not have to wait before eating meat.⁵⁶ The only requirement

49. Binyan Sholom page 9, Minhag Yisroel Torah 2:page 365, Mikadesh Yisroel Shavuot pages 284-286, Moadim L'simcha 6:pages 495-496.

50. Mikadesh Yisroel 68.

51. Binyan Sholom *ibid*:page 11.

52. Kovetz Bais Aron V'yisroel 79:page 101:footnote *.

53. Mikadesh Yisroel pages 286-287.

54. Magen Avraham 494:6, Chok Yaakov 11, Machatzis Hashekel 6, Mishnah Berurah 16, Kaf Hachaim 65.

55. Magen Avraham 494:6, Chok Yaakov 12, Kaf Hachaim 61.

56. Meseches Chullin 105a, Rambam Machalos Asuros 9:26, Yam Shel Shlomo Chullin 8:6, Shulchan Aruch 89: 2, Bais Yosef end of O.C. 173 Levush O.C. 173:1, Shach 9, Pri Megadim Sifsei

is to wash his mouth out well as explained in the *Shulchan Aruch*,⁵⁷ and to rinse his hands.⁵⁸ Some *poskim* say a *beracha achrona* or *bentching* is required before eating meat,⁵⁹ while others disagree.⁶⁰ Some have the custom that no *beracha achrona* is required on *Shavuos*, but they do recite a blessing at any other time of the year.⁶¹

Based on the *Zohar*, some say that one should wait an hour between dairy and meat.⁶² (Some *poskim* say that if one merely drank milk and wants to eat meat, even the *Zohar* would agree that no waiting is required).⁶³ However, the custom of many in *klal yisroel* is to only wait a half hour.⁶⁴

Daas 9, Ben Ish Chai Shlach 2:14, Chochmas Adom 40:12, Darchei Teshuva 19, Nidchei Yisroel 33, Aruch Hashulchan 89:9, Kaf Hachaim 20, Nidchei Yisroel 33:5, Igros Moshe Y.D. 2:26, Yabea Omer 67, Yechaveh Daas 3:58. The Pesach Habayis page 110:18 quotes this is the *minhag* of Harav Chaim Kanievesky Shlita, see Sheilas Rav page 361:15.

57. Y.D. 89:2.

58. ⁵⁸ Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 89:2, Shach 9-10, Pischei Teshuva 4, Yad Yehuda kitzur 16, Aruch Hashulchan 8, Badi Hashulchan 42-49, Madanei Hashulchan 29, see Yechaveh Daas 3:58, Yabea Omer Y.D. 6:7.

59. Shlah Shavuos page 6:8, Pri Megadim Sisfei Daas 89:16, M.Z. 3, Machatzis Hashekel 494:6, Be'er Heitiv 89:2, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 46:11, Darchei Teshuva 14,19, Igros Moshe O.C. 1:160, Mikadesh Yisroel Shavuos 78, Pri Hador pages 163-164.

60. Darchei Moshe 89:2, Elya Rabbah 494:12, Magen Avraham O.C. 494:6, Magen Avraham O.C. 196:1, Chochmas Adom 40:12, Mishnah Berurah 494:16, Aruch Hashulchan 5, Y.D. 89:9, Keren L'Dovid 140:2, see Yalkut Yosef pages 447-448, Natei Gavriel Shavuos pages 27-28.

61. ⁶¹ Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. This is done to be concerned for the opinion of the *Zohar* who says one should not eat dairy and meat in the same meal. On *Shavuos* the *minhag* is to be lenient with this. See Pri Hador page 163:14, Minhag Yisroel Torah 2:pages 365-366.

62. Shlah Shavuos page 6:8, Gra 89:11, Pri Chodosh, Shiurei Beracha 89:6, Ben Ish Chai Shlach 2:15, Kaf Hachaim 30, Madanei Hashulchan 18, Darchei Teshuva 19, Badi Hashulchan 89:75, Metamei Hashulchan 7, Yavivorech Dovid 2:152, Divrei Shalom 6:88, Teshuvos V'hanhagos 2:390. Some say three hours (Birchei Yosef ibid:13, Ben Ish Chai Shlach 2:15). While others wait six hours (Refer to Rama Y.D. 89:2, Chochmas Adom 40:10, Ben Ish Chai Shlach 2:15). Others say that the *Arizal* waited twenty-four hours (Ben Ish Chai ibid, see Torah Leshma Y.D. 212 who says this custom is questionable).

63. Teshuvos V'hanhagos 2:390.

64. Maharshag Y.D. 1:13, Birchos Shomayim Y.D. 22:2, Divrei Chachumim pages 178-179, Mikadesh Yisroel Shavuos 75 and 82, Matei Reuvain 186, Pri Hador page 173, Madanei Hashulchan 18, Metamei Hashulchan page 55, Pesach Habayis page 111, Pischei Halacha Kashrus page 23:18, Shulchan Aruch Hamekutzar 4:page 252:footnote 31, Halichos Shlomo

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Several explanations are given for this custom. Some say that it is a compromise between the *poskim* who say one does not have to wait at all and the *Zohar* that requires an hour. Others say that the *Zohar's* hour is not literal, as we find in many places that an hour simply means a period of time. Therefore, it is sufficient to wait a half hour.⁶⁵

Those who have the custom to wait a half hour must rinse out their mouths properly before eating meat.⁶⁶

Dairy Bread for *Shavuos*

Some accomplish the custom of eating dairy on *Shavuos* by baking dairy bread.⁶⁷ The *poskim* say that it is permitted to bake a small amount of dairy bread for *Shavuos*.⁶⁸ According to this, it would only be permitted to bake enough bread for the first day of *Yom Tov*.⁶⁹ One who wishes to bake large amounts should make a conspicuous shape for the bread.⁷⁰

Cakes

Cakes and other food items that are not usually eaten together with meat are not subject to the *halacha* of dairy bread.⁷¹ Therefore, one may bake or buy cheesecake in as

Moadim page 384:footnote 49 quoting the custom of Harav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l, Shraga Hameir 7:105:3, sefer Hechsheiros 10:47:footnote 115.

65. See Rabbeinu Yona Meseches Berochos perek 5 page 21 "chassidim," Madanei Yom Tov on the Rosh Berochos 9:22:8, Magen Avraham 93:1, Machatzis Hashekel, Dugel Mervuva Y.D. 69 on Shach 26, Sdei Chemed Shin 32, Chasam Sofer 199:3.

66. Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Divrei Shalom 6:88.

67. Magen Avraham 8, Mishnah Berurah 494:15.

68. Rama Y.D. 97:1, Aruch Hashulchan Y.D. 97:10, Kaf Hachaim O.C. 494:64.

69. Darchei Teshuva 33, Badi Hashulchan 23, Madanei Hashulchan 12, Betzel Hachachmah 6:34:5-6.

70. Refer to Darchei Teshuva 33, Badi Hashulchan 23, Madanei Hashulchan 12, Betzel Hachachmah ibid.

71. Pischei Teshuva 3, Chuchmas Adom 50:3, Darchei Teshuva 1, 14, Aruch Hashulchan 7-8, Kaf Hachaim 15, Badi Hashulchan 2.

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much volume as desired, even if it is not a different shape than a regular pastry.⁷² Similarly, dairy doughnuts or croissants are permitted. Muffins that are served as dessert may be baked with milk.

Fish and Milk

It is dangerous to eat fish and meat that were cooked together.⁷³ Some extend this problem to fish with milk⁷⁴ or cheese.⁷⁵ This is the custom of some *Sefardim*.⁷⁶ However, the custom amongst the *Ashkenazim* is to be lenient in this regard.⁷⁷ The *Sefardim* are lenient with eating fish and butter,⁷⁸ but would not eat a lox and cream cheese sandwich. *B'dieved* if one ate milk with fish it is ok.⁷⁹

Cheesecake⁸⁰

The *beracha rishona* on cheesecake is *mezonos* if the crust is there for taste, if it's to hold it together then a *shehakol* is recited. The *beracha achrona* is a *borei nefoshos* since one

72. Ben Ish Chai Shlach 2:17, Chochmas Adom ibid, Aruch Hashulchan 8, Kaf Hachaim 97:1, Badi Hashulchan 2, Shevet Hakehusi 4:191, Mikadesh Yisroel 102.

73. Meseches Pesachim 76b, Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 116:2, Chochmas Adom 68:1, Tov Yehoshua page 109:82, Kaf Hachaim O.C. 173:9, Y.D. 116:15, The Magen Avraham O.C. 173:1 says today maybe it is different (see Darchei Teshuva Y.D. 116:16, Mishnah Berurah O.C. 173:3, Aruch Hashulchan Y.D. 116:10, V'ein Lumo Michshal 4:page 96:6).

74. Rabbeinu B'chai Mishpatim 23:19, Bais Yosef Y.D. 87, Knesses Gedolah 87:19, Levush 87:3, Ben Ish Chai Behalosecha 2:15, Kaf Hachaim 87:24, Shulchan Hatohar 173:5. The Me'or Uketzia 173:page 184 says this danger is not from *chachmei Yisroel* but from doctors.

75. Ben Ish Chai ibid, Rav Poalim Y.D. 2:10.

76. Yechaveh Daas 6:48, V'ein Lumo Michshal 4:page 98:8.

77. Magen Avraham O.C. 173, Darchei Moshe Y.D. 87:4, Shach 87:5, Taz 3, Pri Megadim Sifsei Daas 87:5, Pischei Teshuva 9, Aruch Hashulchan 15, Badi Hashulchan 87:35, Chelkes Binyomin 116:8, V'eim Lumo Michshal 4:page 98:8, see Yad Yehuda (kitzur) 87:10. Refer to Orchos Rabbeinu 2:page 98:3 who brings the *Steipler zt"l* as being stringent.

78. Bais Lechem Yehuda 87:3, Ben Ish Chai ibid, Kaf Hachaim O.C. 173:3, Y.D. 87:24.

79. Yalkut Yosef 87:82.

80. Regarding the *beracha* on cheesecake see Mikadesh Yisroel 103.

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does not generally eat the *shiur* of *mezonos* to recite an *al hamichya*.⁸¹

The following reason is given for the custom to eat cheese (or cheesecake) on *Shavuos*.⁸² Most foods spoil with age, but cheese improves. Some say that the *Torah* is old and outdated in our modern world. We eat cheese to indicate that old is good.⁸³

Kreplach⁸⁴

Many have a custom to eat *kreplach* on *Shavuos*.⁸⁵ Some explain that *Hashem* forced us to accept the *Torah*.⁸⁶ In the times of *Achashveirosh*, the *Yiddin* accepted the *Torah* again. When eating *kreplach*, one only tastes the dough at first. After biting into it, one tastes the good part, the cheese. Similarly, the *Yidden* were forced into accepting the *Torah*, and only later did they accept it again willingly.⁸⁷

Others explain that *kreplach* have three corners. The *Torah* consists of three parts- *Torah*, *Nevi'im* and *Kesuvim*. The *Torah* was given to three segments of the nation- *Kohanim*, *Leviyim* and *Yisroelim*. It was given through *Moshe*, who was the third child of *Amram*. It was given after three days of preparation, in the third month of the year.⁸⁸

Blintzes

Many people eat blintzes on *Shavuos*. Some *seforim* offer the following reason for this: *blintzim* in *Hebrew* is *bli* –

81. Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:10:footnote 11.

82. Refer to Ohelei Shem (Journal) 6:page 212.

83. Teshuvos V'hanhagos 5:161.

84. In regard to the *beracha* on *Kreplach* see Mikadesh Yisroel 96.

85. Divrei Yatziv E.H. 60:11, Natei Gavriel 29:9.

86. Meseches Shabbos 88a.

87. Divrei Yatziv E.H. 60:11, Otzer Taamei Haminhagim 2:pages 280-281.

88. Ohelei Shem 6:page 215.

איך ללמוד להקדיש את ה"בלינצין" בעולמו אל תי אמת של הלכה בלבד... (ברכות ח)

כל השומה הלכות בכל יום מובטח לו שהוא בן עולם הבא... (מדה עב)

nitzim, without *nitzim*. In the *Torah* we find the word *nitzim*⁸⁹ as a reference to *Dasan* and *Aviram*. When we accepted the *Torah* it was with *achdus*. Therefore, we eat blintzes on *Shavuos* to say “without *nitzim* –“ without arguing like *Dasan* and *Aveiram*.⁹⁰

89. Shemos 2:13.

90. Ohelei Shem 6:page 215.

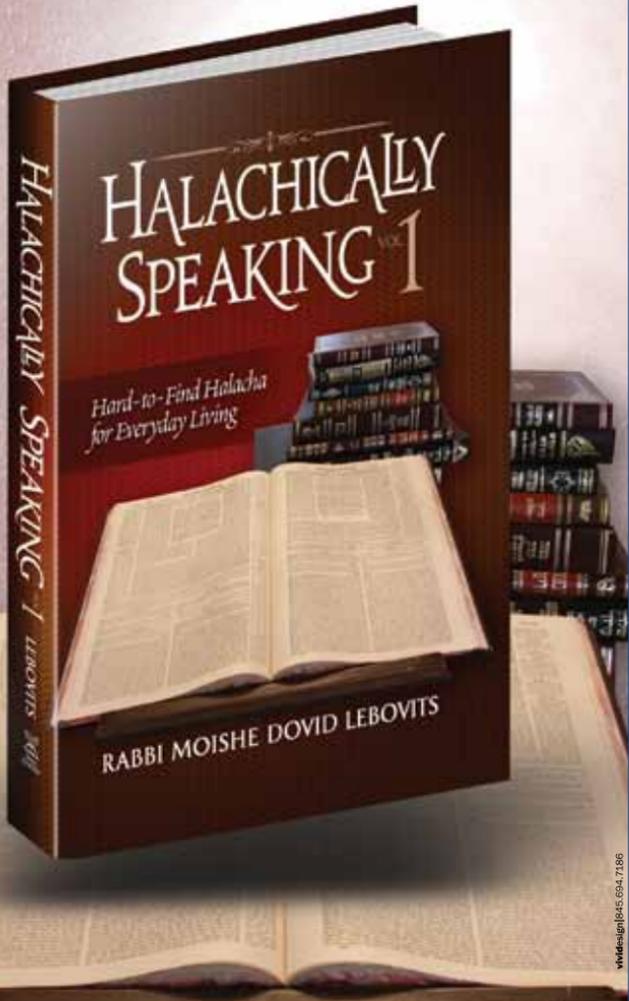
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3. Contemporary *Avodab Zarab* Issues
4. Do's and Don'ts before *Sbacbaris*
5. Summer *Halachos*
6. Placing Food under a Bed
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35. The *Beracha* of *Asber Yotzar*
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