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DE-LEAVENING OUR HOMES FOR THE DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

All of us in the churches of God have observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread for many years. We understand that amongst other things God instructs us to de-leaven our homes for the seven-day period of this feast. The question is: how do we do that? **What factors come into consideration in our de-leavening?** It seems that different people have different standards regarding what items should be removed from our homes during this seven-day period.

For this article we'll focus primarily on the instructions to de-leaven our homes. How long we are to eat unleavened bread (7 days or 8 days?) and from which day these instructions are to start (the 14th or the 15th?) are not our concern here; those matters can be and are addressed elsewhere. Our focus here is primarily on establishing what is included in the biblical instructions to de-leaven our homes.

THE BASIC INSTRUCTIONS

Let's look at the instructions in Exodus 12.

Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; **even the first day ye shall (have) put away leaven out of your houses**: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. (Exodus 12:15)

In this verse God tells us:

- 1) We are to eat "unleavened bread" for seven days.
- 2) We are to put all "leaven" out of our homes.
- 3) We are NOT to eat any "leavened bread" for seven days.

There is one often overlooked point we should note at this juncture, and that is this:

The Hebrew word for "**bread**" is "**lechem**". But this word "lechem", which is used 297 times in the Old Testament, is **never used after Exodus 2:20 and before Exodus 16:3**. Specifically, the Hebrew word for "bread" is NOT used in any verse in Exodus chapters 12 and 13. In all the relevant verses in these two chapters (i.e. Exodus 12:8, 15, 17, 18, 20; 13:3, 6, 7) the Hebrew word "matzah" (or "mazzah") is used **without the word for "bread"**. And "matzah" means "unleavened". The implied meaning for this word is "**unleavened foods**", without being limited to the category of "bread".

The expression "**the feast of unleavened bread**" is used ten times in our English translations of the Old Testament (i.e. Exodus 12:17; 23:15; 34:18; Leviticus 23:6; Deuteronomy 16:16; 2 Chronicles 8:13; 30:13, 21; 35:17; and Ezra 6:22), and in all ten instances there is never a word for "bread" in the Hebrew text. A more correct translation of this Hebrew expression in all ten instances would be "**the feast of unleavened foods**", whether that be bread or whether that be any other food item, in the preparation of which we might under other circumstances want to use some leaven.

The same is also true in the New Testament. The Greek word for "bread" is "artos", which is used 99 times in the New Testament. But "artos" is **never used in reference to the Feast of Unleavened Bread**. Here are all the relevant New Testament Scriptures.

Matthew 26:17

Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover?

The Greek text here reads "te prote ton azumon", which literally means "the first of unleavened". In the Greek text there are no words for "day" or "feast" or "bread" in this verse. Specifically, this feast is here NOT called "the Feast of Unleavened BREAD"! The word "bread" is not used at all in this verse.

Mark 14:1

After two days was the feast of the Passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put *him* to death.

The Greek text here reads "en de to pascha kai ta azuma", which literally means "and it was the Passover and the unleavened". In the Greek text there are no words for "feast" or "bread" in this verse. Specifically, this feast is here also NOT called "the Feast of Unleavened BREAD"! The word "bread" is simply not used in this verse.

Luke 22:1

Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.

The Greek text here reads "he heorte to azumon", which literally means "the feast of unleavened". In the Greek text there is again no word for "bread". The word "bread" is simply not used in the Greek text of this verse.

1 Corinthians 5:8

Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; **but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.**

The Greek text here reads "alla en azumois heilikrineias kai aletheias", which literally means "but with unleavened of sincerity and truth". In the Greek text there is once again no word for "bread". That is interesting because this verse more than any other in the New Testament speaks specifically about the practical side of this feast. If anywhere, then this is certainly the verse where Paul should have used the word for "bread". But he didn't!

In all four of the above verses the Greek word for "bread" is consistently avoided. Just as in the Old Testament, so also the New Testament writers clearly understood that it is really the feast of unleavened FOODS, without in any way being restricted to "bread".

Thus we can now already see the following points:

- 1) We are to **eat unleavened foods** for seven days.
- 2) We are **not** to eat **any leavened foods** for those same seven days.

3) We are also to **put all leaven out** of our homes for those seven days.

The first point to notice is that we are NOT instructed to eat "unleavened BREAD" for every one of those seven days. The correct meaning of God's instruction is that we are to eat "unleavened FOOD" for those seven days, i.e. including any of the following: bread, meat, dairy products, fish, fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, etc., and IF we eat any bread THEN that bread must be unleavened. But that is not to say that we actually must eat at least some unleavened bread every day. There are many people today who almost never eat any bread for a variety of reasons, and there is no requirement that such people must eat some unleavened BREAD on every one of these seven days, even as the Israelites didn't eat any bread for the entire 40 years they wandered in the wilderness, including the 40 seven-day periods that would theoretically have been "the Feast of Unleavened Bread". The point is that ALL our foods are to be prepared without using leaven, or even any parts of leaven, in their preparation.

The focus is not and never should have been exclusively on "bread". **The correct focus is on all foods** consumed at this time of year **being unleavened**. In practical terms "breads" used to be the overwhelmingly dominant category of foods in the production of which leaven is usually used. But breads are by no means the only category of foods that might contain leaven. And so God did not include the word "bread", which would have restricted these instructions to a limited category of foods, in any of His instructions for this feast.

Also, if we are not to **eat** leaven during this time, it follows that we are not to **drink** leaven either. The word "eat" is intended to cover everything we ingest, i.e. eating and drinking are included in the umbrella term "eat". Keep in mind that "bread" is not the exclusive focus of God's instructions in this matter.

It is interesting to note that the two Hebrew words for "unleavened bread" (i.e. "matzah" + "lechem") are only used together as an expression twice in the whole Old Testament, and in both instances this expression is used in the context of Aaron's consecration as High Priest. These two Scriptures are **Exodus 29:2** ("... and **unleavened bread**, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil ...") and **Leviticus 8:26** ("... and out of the basket of **unleavened bread** ..."). In all other places in the OT the expression "unleavened bread" in our English Bibles does not contain a word for "bread" in the Hebrew text. So "bread" is never the exclusive focus of God's instructions in the Old Testament, apart from Exodus 29:2 and Leviticus 8:26. The same is true for the New Testament.

The fact that God's instructions for the consecration of Aaron do contain the Hebrew word for "bread", while at the same time God consistently omitted the word for "bread" in all references to this seven-day feast, shows that God certainly did not want His instructions for the "Feast of Unleavened Foods" to be restricted to "bread", whereas with Aaron's consecration God really did mean "unleavened **bread**"! In the instructions for this feast bread is simply the dominant category of foods that are affected, but bread is by no means the only category of foods involved in God's instructions.

[COMMENT: While a more accurate translation of the Hebrew expression is "the Feast of Unleavened Foods", I see no problem with us continuing to refer to it as "the Feast of Unleavened Bread", provided that in our own minds we clearly understand that God intended His instructions to apply to any and all foods we might consume during this seven-day Feast, and not just to the category of bread. We should guard against the name for this feast becoming a striving about words to no profit (see 2 Timothy 2:14). The important point is that we understand God's instructions correctly, while the precise name with which we refer to this Feast is not a major concern. It is not as if calling it "the Feast of Unleavened Bread" is somehow wrong; it isn't wrong. It is just that some people might want to build some unjustified argument based on that name, and then read an unintended limitation into God's instructions. So let's continue to call it "the Feast of Unleavened Bread", while being aware of the fact that other foods in addition to bread are most certainly also to be included in these instructions.]

Now let's consider God's intentions.

THE INTENTIONS FOR GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS

In our desire to understand "the mind of the Lord" (see 1 Corinthians 2:16) we should ask the question:

WHY did God instruct Israel to avoid all leaven for this Feast of Unleavened Bread? EXACTLY WHAT did God intend to achieve with these instructions?

Yes, we all understand that for this seven-day period God uses leaven to represent sins. And we also understand that sins "puff people up" (1 Corinthians 4:6, 18-19; etc.), even as leaven puffs up dough. So when God instructs us to put out all leaven, God is instructing us to put out all the things that have **the ability to puff up food items** we might want to consume during these seven days.

Put very plainly: God's instruction to put out all leaven is aimed at depriving us of the means to prepare "puffed up foods". **That is God's intention** underlying this instruction, that without "leaven" we will not be able to produce puffed-up foods. It doesn't matter whether we actually intend to use that leaven to puff up foods or not. What matters is that at one point this leaven had that ability, and **the use to which we put that leaven is not the criterion.**

It is not that leaven itself (i.e. yeast) is evil or sinful or is itself a problem in some way. Yeast is in fact an extremely good source of many essential nutrients. God has instructed us to put out all leaven because of **the effect leaven has on certain foods**. It follows that **if any other substances have the ability to achieve the same effects on foods** as are achieved by leaven, THEN those other substances are **ALSO not to be used in that way** during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

What could possibly be the point if we say:

"Alright I won't use any leaven to puff up my baking dough; but I can achieve the identical puffed up texture in my dough without using any leaven whatsoever. So during the Days of Unleavened Bread **I simply use a totally different method to achieve a leavened look and feel in my food items.** And while we are at it, I think I would like to have some other non-bread foods that are nice and fluffy and puffed up ... since I don't have them very often at other times of the year, this is probably as good a time as any to have those puffy foods, right?" (I speak as a fool.)

That approach of trying to achieve a puffed up effect without using any leaven would debase God's instructions to de-leaven our homes to the level of some game, where we have been able to outsmart God, would it not?

Many years ago there was a professional baker in the congregation I pastored. He came from a completely different background where he had never before been exposed to the idea of de-leavening. And he told me quite openly: "I don't need any yeast or baking powder or leavening to produce a loaf of bread that will be basically identical to a leavened loaf. There are any number of things I can do to achieve such a result without using any leaven."

So when we consider God's instructions to de-leaven our homes and also to not consume any leavened products, **it is clearly God's intention to deprive us of the means to produce and to consume puffed up foods!** Keep in mind that the word "bread" never appears in God's instructions for this period. We need to look for God's intent in His instructions and not restrict ourselves to the letter of the law (see 2 Corinthians 3:6), if we truly seek to do "those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John

3:22).

A PRINCIPLE TO KEEP IN MIND

In God's dealings with mankind God's instructions have always been presented in ways that applied to the people who were living at that point in time. Those instructions have typically taken the circumstances extant at that time (e.g. slavery, polygamy, etc.) into account.

Now humanity has moved on from the days of Moses and from the days of Jesus Christ's ministry. Today we have many customs and practices and ways of doing things that people 2000 and more years ago had never heard of or considered. And so many of the things that we today have to deal with are not addressed directly by God's laws as recorded in the Bible.

For example: smoking tobacco and the use of narcotic drugs was not something the people of Israel were ever exposed to. And so neither in the days of Moses, nor during Christ's ministry did God ever give any specific instructions for His people regarding tobacco and narcotic drugs. It follows that we need to seek out the correct principles that should be applied to these matters.

We have also developed a vast range of ways for preparing our foods, with multiple thousands of different substances that are today routinely added in the production of the chemical cocktails we refer to as "our foods". These things didn't exist in biblical times and are therefore not addressed directly in the biblical laws. So we need to once again look for principles to help us decide what we should or should not eat. That goes beyond asking whether the food item is clean or unclean. Some items may well be "clean" but they are nevertheless still detrimental to human health. So we have to make decisions.

Now regarding leaven:

In biblical times the only use for leaven was to raise dough, in order to produce baked goods with a lighter and more desirable texture. The Israelites had no other use for leaven. They certainly were not aware of the enormous nutritional value of yeast. Therefore God's instructions in Exodus focused on the only use leaven had back then. And so God said regarding leaven during this feast: 1) don't use it, 2) don't have it around, and 3) don't eat anything in which it has been used. But God still very conspicuously avoided using the word "bread" in these instructions (this avoidance is obscured in our English translations) to indicate that these instructions would not be limited to "breads". God's instructions covered every possible use of leaven that anybody at the time of Moses might have contemplated.

Today we live in a vastly different world. Today any supermarket shelf makes clear that the vast majority of foods available to us come from FACTORIES! Today we have thousands of food additives, and a vast range of different ways in which these foods are produced for us. And today we have also found a whole new range of uses for leaven (i.e. yeast), uses that were unheard of in biblical times, and which uses were therefore obviously not addressed directly in God's instructions given at the time of Moses. Today we use leaven itself as a food source, we use "extracts" of leaven in multiple different ways, we use leaven to make drinks (i.e. beer), we use leaven as a flavoring agent, we use leaven in the production of some animal foods, we use leaven in the production of pharmaceutical products, and we use leaven itself as a very nutritious dietary supplement. Furthermore, as far as baking is concerned, we have also developed chemicals to perform the function of leaven (e.g. baking soda and baking powder) in the production of baked goods.

Since all these things did not exist when God gave His laws, and since they are thus not addressed directly by God's laws, THEREFORE WE MUST APPLY THE PRINCIPLES which underlie these laws which God gave in the days of Moses. All of God's laws are really statements of principles, and the laws regarding de-leavening are no exception to this approach.

So the point is this:

It is not a case of us having to do the same thing the Israelites did in the days of Moses. Instead of de-leavening their homes, the Israelites walked away from their homes and left all their leaven behind. And during the 40 years in the wilderness they didn't have any leaven, and they didn't keep the Days of Unleavened Bread for those 40 years.

That is not the way we today are expected to observe this Feast. We can't really walk away from our leaven, and that is not what God wants from us today. We today face vastly different circumstances. And so we must apply the principles inherent in God's instructions given in the days of Moses. We need to seek to meet the intentions with which God originally gave those instructions.

THAT APPROACH WE REFER TO AS APPLYING "THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW"!

So don't ask: what did the Israelites in Egypt do with these instructions from God? Rather, let's ask: **what were God's underlying intentions** when God gave those instructions, and **how are those intentions best met in our present circumstances?**

I believe that it is safe to assume that **God's intentions** regarding the things we are to put out and the things we are not to do during this seven-day Feast **have not changed!** So we need to establish how we can best comply with those intentions. And as we have already established above:

God's intentions were to cover every possible use of leaven (not just in bread) we might come up with, and in that context we are not to use it, not to have it, and not to eat anything made with it or from it. Pretty straight forward, isn't it?

GOD'S INTENTIONS FOR THE DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

In the days of Moses the only leaven available to the Israelites was yeast. Yeasts have the ability to produce fermentation in dough or in a liquid, where the end products include carbon dioxide and alcohol. It is the carbon dioxide that produces the "leavened look and feel" in baked products. [The small amount of alcohol that was produced in the dough is totally destroyed by the intense heat of baking.]

This fermentation process gives the bread a softer texture and also some elasticity. It puffs up the bread. It is this ability to puff up the dough which God focused on in giving His instructions for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It is this ability to puff up dough that identifies the yeast as "leaven".

Having correctly identified yeasts as leaven, this then means that during the Feast of Unleavened Bread we are: not to use yeasts, not to have yeasts around, and not to consume anything made with yeast or from yeast.

Today, in addition to yeasts, we also use certain chemicals to produce a leavening effect in dough. We use baking soda and baking powder to produce a gas which lightens both dough and batter. Typically these chemicals produce the same softer texture in dough but without the same elasticity of yeasty baked goods; items baked with these chemicals tend to be more crumbly. This ability to lighten the

texture of the dough means that we need to include these chemicals in the category of "leaven" in our preparations for this Feast. So therefore we have the same points for these chemicals: don't use them, don't have them around, and don't consume anything made with them or from them.

The difference between yeasts and these chemicals is that yeasts are single cell micro-organisms, a type of fungus, whereas these chemicals are basically "dead substances". Now since the yeasts are micro-organisms, it means that they exist in two different states: yeasts are either **alive and active**, or they are **dead and inactive**.

In order to produce fermentation the yeast must be alive. Once the yeast has died, it is no longer capable of producing any fermentation. But it is still yeast, dead yeast to be precise. For example, the yeast in baked bread is dead, killed by the heat of baking. Since we are not allowed to eat anything made with or from yeast, this proves that **we must also get rid of "dead yeast"**. The criterion for getting rid of yeast is NOT ONLY: is it STILL capable of causing dough to rise? The correct criterion is:

EITHER is it capable of leavening dough in its present state? OR was it at some point in its past state capable of leavening dough? If it currently has OR in the past HAD that ability (e.g. the dead yeast in fully baked bread) to leaven dough, THEN it is also a substance that we are not supposed to have in our homes during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

So we could be faced by five different things in our de-leavening endeavors:

- 1) We could have **yeast cells** that are **alive** and capable of leavening dough.
- 2) We could have **yeast cells** that are **dead** and thus incapable of leavening dough.
- 3) We could have **yeast extracts** that are also **dead** and incapable of leavening dough.
- 4) We could have **"dead" chemicals** that are capable of leavening dough.
- 5) We could have **beverages** with **living or dead yeast cells** in them.

God's instructions for the Feast of Unleavened Bread affect all five of the above categories. Perhaps now is a good time to examine the matter of "yeast extracts".

SOME CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING "YEAST EXTRACTS"

As mentioned above, yeast is a single cell fungus. There are many different strains of yeasts, including some that can cause us health problems. The yeasts we are here concerned with have the ability to convert sugar and starch into carbon dioxide gas and alcohol.

Today there are many foods which list "yeast extract" as one of their ingredients. Do you know what yeast extract actually is? Have you ever looked into this? Have you ever asked yourself the question: WHY do food manufacturers even include yeast extract in their products? What noble goals are THEY, the food manufacturers, trying to achieve by adding yeast extract to their products?

There is a vast amount of information available on the internet. You simply have to do a search on the expression "yeast extract" to find hundreds of sources of information. For example, the European Association for Specialty Yeast Products (www.eurasyp.org) has a good definition for yeast extract, as well as an explanation of the production process for yeast extract, including a clear diagram. The website

www.fantastic-flavour.com also has a good discussion of the subject of yeast extracts. You can also find useful discussions about yeast extracts in Wikipedia and other reference websites. There is a wealth of information about yeast extracts available "out there". The fact that there even is something like an association for "specialty yeast products" in Europe should tell us that today yeast is a significant part in many people's diet. That was not the case in the days of Moses.

The following is derived from information presented on these websites and others like them.

Yeast is a single cell fungus that consists of a **cell wall**, a membrane, which is insoluble, and the **cell content** which is soluble. The insoluble cell wall is the yeast cell's main means of protection from outside attack.

Now it is the soluble cell content of the yeast cell, which is extremely rich in proteins, that the food industry wants primarily. So they kill the cells and then extract that soluble content by centrifugation (a process where the more dense components, the cell walls, migrate away from the axis of the centrifuge, while the less dense components, the cell contents, migrate towards the axis of the centrifuge). Different methods (like autolysis or the addition of other enzymes or osmotic shock, etc.) are used to kill (i.e. to permanently inactivate) the yeast cells. But the result is basically always the same, namely, people can then separate the yeast cell walls from the content of the yeast cells. Think of this as separating the peel of an orange from the fruity part inside the peel. They want the inside of the orange and in most cases they don't want the peel. That's basically what happens in the production of yeast extracts.

So let's now ask ourselves a question:

When God instructs us that "**seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses**" (Exodus 12:19), did God intend to mean that **no leaven whatsoever** is to be found in our houses, or was God only referring to living active yeast, and if we at some future point long after the time of Moses would devise various ways to inactivate yeast cells and to "discard the peel and just keep the inside of the fruit" (i.e. the yeast extract), THEN it would be perfectly acceptable for us to keep that "dead" yeast cell content? After all, who would want that yeast cell wall (the peel) anyway? (People have also found various uses for those cell walls.)

What was God's intention?

The yeast cell wall is to the yeast what the skin or peel is to a piece of fruit. The yeast cell wall is absolutely essential to keep the yeast viable, but apart from that function the yeast cell wall has a lesser value to the food industry than the cell content. It is the pharmaceutical industry which especially uses the cell walls of baker's yeast to produce medications that stimulate the immune system by activating the white blood cells. But for the food industry the cell content is of greater value than the cell walls.

It is the yeast cell content (those amino acids) that gives the yeast its inherent properties. For the food industry it is the yeast cell content (i.e. after autolysis) that is the more desirable part of yeast. And it is the yeast cell content that is captured in yeast extracts, though there are also some products that retain the cell walls.

Supposing you brew your own beer. You buy a very small quantity of yeast for your next batch. But instead of starting a new brew, you open that vacuum packed little yeast packet and put those yeast granules into an empty clear glass jar and then screw the lid onto the jar. You then put that jar on a well-lit shelf in your neighbor's garage and forget it there for 5 years (off your property and so you don't think about it when the Days of Unleavened Bread come around). After 5 years you find that jar again in your neighbor's garage and you decide to use the yeast in that jar to make a new batch of beer. Will it work? Maybe? But there is also the chance that much or all of the yeast in that glass jar has died and is

no longer capable of producing an effective fermentation.

The point is if yeast cells die on their own accord, can we keep them around, or must we also discard them during the Days of Unleavened Bread? Is dead yeast okay to have or must it also be thrown out?

When God gave these laws in the days of Moses, the Israelites were not capable of inducing autolysis in yeast or of treating yeast with osmotic shock or of separating the yeast cell walls from the yeast cell content. [In the food industry autolysis refers to the process of inducing self-digestion in the yeast cells, where enzymes in the yeast break down proteins and other parts of the cell, releasing amino acids, vitamins and peptides, which are then available for "harvesting".] God just said: get rid of it during the Days of Unleavened Bread. It doesn't matter whether it is alive or dead, it doesn't matter whether it is active or inactive; for the Days of Unleavened Bread just get rid of it! I don't believe that our modern highly technical skill of "harvesting the cell content while discarding the cell walls" in any way changes God's basic instruction that no leaven is to be found in our houses.

It doesn't matter whether the yeast extract is in a liquid form or in a light pasty form or whether it is a dry powder; it is always the same basic stuff, the soluble content of yeast cells, which is valued for its properties.

Now the soluble components of yeast cells are known as yeast autolysates. In Europe these yeast extracts are produced from **baker's yeast**. Here in the U.S. in addition to baker's yeast these yeast extracts are also produced from **brewer's yeast**. Both sources are edible yeasts, and collectively they are known as *saccharomyces cerevisiae* (these two words literally mean "sugar fungus of beer"). The health food industry uses yeast extracts primarily for their extremely high nutritional value and the food industry in general uses yeast extracts for the unique tastes they are able to impart to a food item. Those unique flavors are due to the amino acids and the small peptides that are formed from the yeast protein during the process of autolysis. They are thus referred to as "natural flavors". This process can be manipulated to create a bouillon flavor or meaty flavors or cheesy flavors.

So now we know WHY the food industry craves these yeast extracts; they are a cheap way of creating a meaty or cheesy flavor in their products, without actually having to use any meat or cheese. We are conned into thinking that we are eating something that contains meat or cheese, when in fact we are just eating some dead yeast cells without their cell walls, which have been manipulated to mimic the flavor of meat or cheese. So even when the product labels tell us that we are eating only yeast extract, our taste buds tell us that we are getting some meat or cheese, and we like it, and so we buy more of that product. Nice sales technique (adding yeast extracts to foods), don't you think?

As an aside, when a product label lists "meat extract" and also "yeast extract" for the same item, this means that the producer is trying to con us even more. We are supposed to think that we are getting some "real meat extract", when in actual fact the producer has used a minuscule amount of real meat and then exponentially compounded that "real meat flavor" by the use of a flavor-specific yeast extract. It is just a cheap trick, and I mean literally "cheap". Yeast extracts are also used to give soy chunks a meaty flavor, the "non-meat meat products" we can find in health food stores.

And of course, dogs and cats never read the labels for ingredients in the foods that are prepared for them. So dogs and cats can be conned even more so into thinking their foods made with yeast extracts somehow contain lots of real meat and cheese. Or else very tiny amounts of meat in those foods can be supplemented with yeast extracts to create a far more meaty impression than the tiny amounts of meat on their own could make, enough to fool our pets into thinking they are eating meat. You've got to hand it to those manufacturers of pet foods; they know how to make our pets like their brands of food. And it all comes back to yeast extracts.

Here in the U.S. the F.D.A. has ruled that yeast extracts are a natural flavor. Below I quote Section 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) from point 101.22.

"(3) The term **natural flavor** or **natural flavoring** means the essential oil, oleoresin, **essence or extractive**, protein hydrolysate, distillate, or any product of roasting, heating or enzymolysis, **which contains the flavoring constituents derived from** a spice, fruit or fruit juice, vegetable or vegetable juice, **edible yeast**, herb, bark, bud, root, leaf or similar plant material, meat, seafood, poultry, eggs, dairy products, or fermentation products thereof, whose significant function in food is **flavoring rather than nutritional**. Natural flavors include the natural essence or extractives obtained from plants listed in 182.10, 182.20, 182.40, and 182.50 and part 184 of this chapter, and the substances listed in 172.510 of this chapter." (my emphasis)

So here a food manufacturer who adds yeast extracts to his products has a choice as to what he states on the label of ingredients. He can state "**yeast extract**" or he can state "**natural flavor**" or he can state "**natural flavoring**". Now sometimes a manufacturer may wish to highlight that his product contains yeast extract, and so he then states "yeast extract". However, there are also other products where a manufacturer may wish to downplay as much as possible the presence of yeast extract in his product, and then he will simply state "natural flavor" or "natural flavoring", because the manufacturer knows that the public generally assumes that "natural flavoring" refers to a flavor derived from "the real thing", and not from yeast extract which can convincingly mimic the flavor of "the real thing". And the public is likely to value a flavor that is derived from "the real thing" higher than a flavor that is due to yeast extract. So manufacturers will in those cases just list "natural flavoring" in their ingredients. They can engage in a bit of legalized deception, to make us think we are getting more of the real thing than we are getting.

Now if a product that tastes like peaches or bananas lists "natural flavoring", then that is not a reference to yeast extract. But if the product in any way tastes like meat or cheese or bouillon, then we can be pretty certain that the "natural flavoring" in the list of ingredients for that product **is in fact yeast extract**. It would be a mistake for us to assume that "natural flavoring" in the area of meat and cheese is derived from "the real thing", even though that is precisely what the producers hope we will think. The manufactured food industry is extremely grateful to the F.D.A. for classifying yeast extract as natural flavor, when in fact yeast extract is not in any way associated with the item whose flavor the yeast extract is able to mimic.

We should understand that "natural flavor" and "natural flavoring" are a **deliberately vague** description for a vast range of ingredients, where **the manufacturers simply don't want us to know** the exact identity of the ingredients they have used in that product, lest the true identity of those ingredients dissuades us from buying those products. The term "natural flavor(ing)" is explicitly intended to deliberately withhold specific information from us, the consumers. And so the F.D.A. has conveniently defined these two terms to accommodate the manufacturers' wishes. See again point 101.22 of the CFR above for the enormous scope and latitude for these two terms, which scope reaches far, far beyond the use of yeast extract.

And there are many products on the shelves in our supermarkets where "natural flavor" really means yeast extract, the soluble part of the yeast cell. It's got nothing to do with whether or not that "natural flavoring" could still be used to leaven our dough; it is the actual yeast cell minus its cell wall which has been used in the manufacture of that product with the explicit purpose of mimicking a specific taste.

When God said that we are to get rid of all leaven, God did not mean that it is okay for us to keep the leaven if we first kill it. Dead leaven is still the same stuff as when it was alive. If God had said "throw out all oranges", it would not be right for us to peel all our oranges and then throw out all the orange peels while keeping the actual fruity parts of our oranges, which we could then also call "orange extract". That's what keeping yeast extract during the Days of Unleavened Bread is like.

Yeast extract is the most significant part of the yeast cell, and **keeping the yeast extracts in our homes during the Days of Unleavened Bread defies God's intentions** for these days! We should recognize that we live in a much more deceptive society today than was the case in the days of Moses. Deception on almost every level plays a huge role in the economies of our world today. And a very tiny part of that economic deception at times also includes the use of the term "natural flavor" to refer to yeast extracts.

Eating yeast extract is just a way of eating the yeast itself (minus the insoluble cell wall) instead of using the yeast to achieve a leavening effect in dough. When God tells us that we are not to eat the yeast (and remember that God did NOT use the word "bread" in His instructions), then we can't possibly eat the cell content of the yeast.

Yeast extracts are commonly used as bread spreads in the U.K. and in the former British colonies of the southern hemisphere (South Africa, Australia and New Zealand). Brand names of products available in these countries that are made from yeast extracts include **Marmite, Oxo, Promite and Vegemite**. In Germany the equivalent product is called **Vitam-R**, and in Switzerland it is called **Cenovis**. There are probably other yeast extract products like these available elsewhere under other brand names. All of these products are basically yeast minus the cell walls. It follows that we should not have any of these products in our homes during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Yeast spreads like Marmite and Vegemite are made by adding salt to a solution of yeast. The salinity causes the yeast cells to shrivel up, and this triggers the process where the yeast cells then self-destruct. The dying yeast cells are then heated to complete their breakdown, after which the cell walls are then removed by centrifugation. The removal of the cell walls both concentrates the flavors that resulted from the breakdown of the amino acids, and it also changes the texture of the end product. Now you have Marmite and Vegemite. I hope we can now see that when we spread some Marmite on our bread, we are simply spreading dead yeast cells (very nutritious!) that have been treated with salt on our bread. And that isn't something we should eat or have around during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

In addition there are numerous other processed food products where the manufacturer has used yeast extract "to enhance" the flavor of his product. In some cases he will list the yeast extract in the list of ingredients, and in other cases the manufacturer has disguised his use of yeast extract with the catch-all designations "natural flavor" and "natural flavoring". But if that product in any way, however remotely, reminds us of the taste of meat or cheese, then it is always safe to assume that the "natural flavoring" added to that product is in fact yeast extract.

Yeast extracts and yeast products are also used in nutritional supplements. About thirty years ago I had a lady in the congregation who insisted that **brewer's yeast** was something she absolutely needed for her health and that it certainly was not something God would want her to go without during the Days of Unleavened Bread, and so she kept her brewer's yeast. (At that time we also used brewer's yeast as a nutritional supplement, but we always made sure that we didn't have it around during the Days of Unleavened Bread.) Now whether or not it can be used to leaven dough (and brewer's yeast can't) is not the criterion. It is a product that is derived from yeast and which retains the most significant components of yeast. Eating brewer's yeast amounts to eating the major components of yeast! And that is not something we should be doing during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

So much for yeast extracts. Now let's examine the question of beer.

DOES GOD WANT US TO HAVE ACCESS TO BEER DURING THIS FEAST?

When God gave His instructions to Israel in the days of Moses, the Israelites did not have any beer. They were familiar with wine, but they didn't know anything about beer. So therefore God's instructions obviously did not address the question of beer directly. It follows that we must therefore look at the principles that are involved, in order to establish God's intentions in this matter.

Some people reason:

"Well, we know that **wine** is acceptable during this Feast because even Jesus Christ Himself drank wine at the Passover, and God tells us that we may use our second tithe for "wine" and for "strong drink" (Deuteronomy 14:26) at the three annual feasts. So since wine and "strong drink" are okay, it follows that **beer must also be okay**. And besides, it is not supposed to be the "Feast of Unleavened Drinks" but the "Feast of Unleavened BREAD"! And God didn't say anything about what we may or may not drink. So as far as we are concerned, beer is perfectly acceptable during the Feast of Unleavened Bread."

Would you reason like that?

Apart from the fact that both drinks contain some alcohol, there are some major differences between wine and beer, and these differences impact the answer to our question. Simply because God approves of some alcoholic drinks during this Feast, it doesn't mean that therefore all alcoholic drinks are equally acceptable.

Wine is made from the juice of a fruit (grapes) in its natural state, while beer is made from grains (barley or wheat) that have been malted (i.e. softened in water to initiate germination to increase the sugar content). Beer is made from the grains that are also used to make bread. One drink is made from a fruit and the other from a grain. And the Bible makes quite clear that wine is an acceptable drink during this Feast.

Historically wine was produced by the fermentation of the yeasts that naturally occur on the skins of grapes. Now all edible yeast strains are susceptible to alcohol poisoning. Some strains of yeast (those used in beer brewing, not in the fermentation of wine) start to die off at around 5% alcohol by volume (BV), while other strains only die off around 8% alcohol BV. The yeast strains involved in the fermentation of wine typically die off at around 10% to 13% alcohol BV.

Thus most natural wines are typically in the range of 10% to 13% alcohol BV. If all the natural sugar in the grapes is used up, then the fermentation ceases. And if the alcohol content reaches the level where all the yeast cells are killed off by the alcohol, then the fermentation also ceases. That is why it is impossible to produce a spirit alcohol (whiskey, brandy, rum, etc.) by fermentation alone; spirit drinks are produced by a process of distilling. Yeasts cannot survive in liquids with such a high alcohol content.

Now if one were to add some sugar to such a 13% alcohol natural wine, this would just make the wine sweet, but it wouldn't rekindle further fermentation, because at that alcohol level the yeast cells have already been killed off by the alcohol. There is no more yeast present in the wine. And **wine is not a yeasty drink**.

Grains have a lower sugar content than grapes. So in beer brewing the sugar is typically used up when the alcohol level reaches around 4% to 6% BV, and then fermentation ceases. However, at that point the beer still contains some yeast that is still alive, albeit dormant. As any home brewer could tell us, if the beer is then bottled and a small amount of sugar is added to each bottle before it is capped, then that dormant yeast is rekindled and fermentation is re-initiated, providing the carbonated pressure within the bottle. In beer some of the yeast is still alive, even if it is dormant in the absence of more sugar.

So beer is definitely a yeasty drink. Some people make use of that dormant yeast in beer by

using beer to make bread.

Now as already pointed out earlier, at no point did God actually use the word "bread" in His instructions for this Feast. And so the issue is not "bread" versus "drink". The only real issue for this Feast is "no leaven" versus "leaven", or "no yeast" versus "yeast", irrespective of whether the food source we are speaking about is solid or liquid. And beer is certainly a food.

Thus, since beer still contains yeast that is alive, therefore when God says "seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses" (Exodus 12:19), it means that beer is also something we are not to have in our houses (and therefore not to consume) during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Let's now consider some other issues.

WHAT ABOUT UNLEAVENED PUFFY FOODS?

When they are deprived of leaven, there are a number of things people do to achieve effects that at least somewhat resemble the effects of leaven.

For example, people can whip egg whites and then fold this mass of whipped egg white into a batter or other food, in order to produce a "fluffy" effect. The idea with the whipped egg white is to trap some air in the food item during its preparation. The whipped egg white very effectively trapped the air for us. And where the use of yeast traps carbon dioxide in the food item that is leavened, the use of whipped egg white or a large amount of "folding over" unleavened dough results in trapping regular air in the food item. To resemble a "leavened" texture in food, the gas involved doesn't have to be carbon dioxide (from yeast); we can create a similar texture by trapping normal air in the food item and then baking it. And there are things we can do to trap air in the foods we are preparing.

We are so clever! When God said "no leaven", God thought He had deprived us of being able to prepare foods which trap some air in themselves, thus making their textures much lighter and fluffier. And God didn't know that we could easily get around this restriction by simply whipping some egg whites (and they are certainly unleavened, right?) and then folding that mass of egg white into our food item. Yes, we really are very clever, aren't we?

Why is it that when God gives us some restriction or limitation, we almost invariably look for a way to get around those restrictions? We "intuitively" look for the exceptions that will allow us to get around God's restrictions, don't we? The thing we need to understand is THE SOURCE of such "intuition", because that is never a God-given intuition; it always comes from the other source, the adversary who vehemently hates everything that stands for God.

So if you want to argue and use every trick in the book to trap as much air as possible in the foods you are preparing for baking, without in the slightest way using any real leavening, then I say to you: GO FOR IT! If you aren't going to seek to please God from the heart by diligently seeking to comply with God's INTENTIONS underlying His instructions to us, then you may as well go the whole hog in the other direction, doing as much as the letter of the law appears to allow you to do.

The worst offender in this regard are the Jewish matzos that are prepared for Passover use and for eating during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Yes, technically they are unleavened. They comply with the letter of the law. But they flagrantly and brazenly violate God's intentions for bread to be "unleavened". They actually contain even MORE air than virtually any loaf of fully leavened bread will contain. In the production process air is forced into the dough for the matzos. Matzos are an insult and

an offence to real unleavened bread.

But if you are indeed seeking to earnestly understand God's intentions for all His instructions to us, then God's instructions regarding "whosoever eats that which is leavened ... shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel" (Exodus 12:19 again) will motivate you to avoid trying to achieve a leavened effect in your foods during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And you will avoid the hundreds of "unleavened" recipes that any number of clever people have presented, that enable you to prepare "guaranteed 100% unleavened food items" that will be soft and fluffy and get as close as possible to a leavened feel when we eat those items. **Don't think that Satan doesn't also publish his recipes for the Days of Unleavened Bread.** Satan will show us how to still have soft and fluffy foods even without using any leaven; after all, Satan wasn't born yesterday, was he?

IN CONCLUSION

When God instructs us to avoid all leaven and all leavened products during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, then we need to seek to understand God's intentions with these instructions. It is never enough for us to comply with the letter of the law. We need to seek to please God by seeking to understand His intentions for every instruction that He has given us in the Bible.

So yes, we need to get rid of all leaven and yeast and baking soda and baking powder. And we also need to get rid of all breads, cakes and cookies that are leavened. But we should also understand the way our modern food industry makes use of yeast and yeast extracts and "natural favoring". Where in biblical times the use of yeast was restricted to baking bread, in our society today yeast and yeast extracts (think of the orange without the peel) have found their way into many hundreds of products. It's a matter of knowing what we are looking for. Yes, looking for leaven and for extracts of yeast is far more complex than it ever was in biblical times. But that is not God's doing; that's our doing. And we need to understand that beer contains yeast cells that would spring into activity if they were given some sugar.

Now you have "the rest of the story". What you do with this information is up to you.

Frank W Nelte